The Qur'an Seminar Commentary
Le Qur'an Seminar

Mehdi Azaiez, Gabriel S. Reynolds, Tommaso Tesei, Hamza M. Zafer

The Qur'an Seminar Commentary
Le Qur'an Seminar

A Collaborative Study of 50 Qur'anic Passages
Commentaire collaboratif de 50 passages coraniques

DE GRUYTER

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Dedicated to the Memory of Patricia Crone (1945 – 2015)

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We would also like to express our gratitude to all of the scholars who participated in this project, whether that participation involved attending one or more conferences at Notre Dame, posting commentaries to our collective forum, and/or contributing to the present *Commentary*. In many ways this project was experimental. Those who participated agreed to work with our selection of 50 passages for our project (even if on occasion they pointed to ways in which we could improve that selection). They also agreed to gather in a round-table format for discussions, and to follow a "Qur'ānist" approach to the text, an approach which involves setting aside the categories of later exegesis for a direct encounter with the Qur'ān. In all of these ways the Qur'ān Seminar participants showed enormous trust in us, and we do not take that trust for granted.

We would like to express our gratitude also to Breanna Nickel and Andrew O'Connor for their extraordinary work with the editing of this manuscript. We are grateful as well to the two anonymous reviewers of this work (whose insights helped improve the manuscript substantially) and to De Gruyter Press for coordinating the editing and publication of the final manuscript. Special thanks are due to Alissa Jones Nelson, for her support of our proposal to produce a book with De Gruyter and to Sophie Wagenhofer, who oversaw the rather complicated process of copyediting and preparing the work for publication. Finally we would both like to express our deepest gratitude to our families, for their patience with us, and for their love.

Mehdi Azaiez
Gabriel Said Reynolds
September 2015

List of Abbreviations

AJT	*American Journal of Theology*
Al-Kitâb	De Smet, Daniel, Callatay, Godefroid, & van Reeth, Jan M. F., eds. 2004. *Al-Kitâb. La sacralité du texte dans le monde de l'Islam*. Leuven: Belgian Society of Oriental Studies (*AOB*, Subsidia 3).
AOB	*Acta Orientalia Belgica*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
CoC	Segovia, Carlos A., & Lourié, Basil, eds., 2012. *The Coming of the Comforter: When, Where, and to Whom? Studies on the Rise of Islam and Various Other Topics in Memory of John Wansbrough*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.*
EI²	*The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Leiden: Brill, 1954-Present.
EQ	McAuliffe, Jane, 2001–6. *The Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*. Leiden: Brill.
FBI	Dye, Guillaume, & Nobilio, Fabien, eds. 2011. *Figures bibliques en islam*. Bruxelles-Fernelmont: EME.
GdQ²	Nöldeke, Theodor & Schwally Friedrich Zacharias. 1909, 1919, 1938. *Geschichte des Qorans*, 2nd edition. Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JA	*Journal asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society.*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies.*
JQS	*Journal of Qurʾānic Studies*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam.*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies.*
MW	*The Muslim World*
OJC	*Orientalia Judaica Christiana*
PSAS	*Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*
QC	Neuwirth, Angelika, Sinai, Nicolai & Marx, Michael, eds. 2010. *The Qurʾān in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*. Leiden: Brill.
QHC	Reynolds, Gabriel Said, ed. 2008. *The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context*. London: Routledge.
QHC²	Reynolds, Gabriel Said, ed. 2011. *New Perspectives on the Qurʾān*. *The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context 2*. London: Routledge.
RMM	*Revue du Monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*
Schlaglichter	Groβ, Markus, & Ohlig, Karl-Heinz, eds. 2008. *Schlaglichter. Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler.

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Abbreviations

Gen	Genesis	Eccl (or Qoh)	Ecclesiastes (or Qohelet)
Exod	Exodus	Song (or Cant)	Song of Songs (or Canticles)
Lev	Leviticus	Isa	Isaiah
Num	Numbers	Jer	Jeremiah
Deut	Deuteronomy	Lam	Lamentations
Josh	Joshua	Ezek	Ezekiel
Judg	Judges	Dan	Daniel
Ruth	Ruth	Hos	Hosea
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Joel	Joel
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Amos	Amos
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Obad	Obadiah
2 Kgs	2 Kings	Jonah	Jonah
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Mic	Micah
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Nah	Nahum
Ezra	Ezra	Hab	Habakkuk
Neh	Nehemiah	Zeph	Zephaniah
Esth	Esther	Hag	Haggai
Job	Job	Zech	Zechariah
Ps/Pss	Psalms	Mal	Malachi
Prov	Proverbs		

New Testament Abbreviations

Matt	Matthew	1 Tim	1 Timothy
Mark	Mark	2 Tim	2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet	1 Peter
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet	2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1 John	1 John
Eph	Ephesians	2 John	2 John
Phil	Philippians	3 John	3 John
Col	Colossians	Jude	Jude
1 Thess	1 Thessalonians	Rev	Revelation
2 Thess	2 Thessalonians		

Transliteration of Arabic

Consonants

ء	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ى
ʾ	b	t	ṯ	ǧ	ḥ	ḫ	d	ḏ	r	z	s	š	ṣ	ḍ	ṭ	ẓ	ʿ	ġ	f	q	k	l	m	n	h	w	y

Vowels

ا	ي	و	َ	ِ	ُ
ā	ī	ū	a	i	u

* These and other elements of transliteration follow the guidelines for *Arabica: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*.

References to "QS [Number]"

The abbreviation QS followed by a number is a reference to one of the fifty Qurʾānic passages examined in this volume.

Qurʾān Translations

English Qurʾān translations of the QS passages are taken from:
Khalidi, Tarif. 2008. *The Qurʾān: A New Translation*. London: Penguin Classics.

French Qurʾān translations of the QS passages are taken from:
Hamidullah, Muḥammad. 1989. *Le noble Coran et la traduction en langue française*. Medina: Complexe Roi Fahd pour l'impression du Noble Coran.

Introduction

Gabriel Said Reynolds

The present volume is the work of 25 scholars who participated in the 2012–13 Notre Dame Qurʾān Seminar. The Qurʾān Seminar scholars represent various specializations important to the study of the Qurʾān, including Arabic language, comparative Semitic linguistics, paleography, epigraphy, history, rhetorical theory, hermeneutics, and Biblical studies. The 2012–13 Qurʾān Seminar project involved five conferences, each of which consisted of a series of ten sessions, with each session dedicated to a passage of the Qurʾān. After those conferences the editors of this work solicited written commentaries from the Qurʾān Seminar scholars. Subsequently we narrowed those commentaries down, seeking to eliminate redundancy, to the number found in the present work. A list in the opening section of this work ("Commentary Sections by Scholar") indicates the passages for which each scholar has contributed a commentary.

In this brief introduction to the *Qurʾān Seminar Commentary* I will address three topics: first, the rationale behind the "Qurʾānist" approach which distinguishes this project; second, the criteria behind the selection of the 50 passages covered by this commentary; and third, the contribution which the present work makes to the field of Qurʾānic Studies.

1. Introduction to the Qurʾānist Approach

The Qurʾānist approach involves setting aside divisions or classifications which might be imposed on the text of the Qurʾān and predetermine possible readings of it. The point of the Qurʾānist approach is to encounter the Qurʾān itself, and not the Qurʾān as it has been categorized, classified, and explained by others. In this the Qurʾānist approach might be contrasted with the way some studies in the field of Qurʾānic studies are shaped by the assumptions of medieval Islamic exegesis, or *tafsīr*. Now, scholars who follow the Qurʾānist approach may end up with a conclusion that agrees with medieval Islamic exegetes, but they will have arrived there because of evidence in the Qurʾān itself.

It is the Qurʾānist approach that distinguishes this volume, and not any one argument about the origins or meaning of the text. In this work scholars with different perspectives employ this approach, and they do so without compromising their scholarly (or religious) convictions. Nor do they necessarily arrive at the same conclusions. Indeed they often arrive at dramatically different interpretations of the same Qurʾānic passage.

The Qurʾānist approach is thus not meant to support any one school of thought or to suggest any particular historical conclusions about the Qurʾān. Instead it is

meant to encourage intellectual creativity by awakening scholars to the way in which our thinking about the Qurʾān can be limited by certain assumptions. For example, most readers encounter the Qurʾān in a manner that privileges, if it does not render inevitable, a chronological reading of the text. In many Arabic editions of the Qurʾān readers will find, along with a title, the term "Meccan" or "Medinan," although the text of the Qurʾān itself does not refer to a single *sūra* in this way. In the original 1924 printing of the Cairo edition of the Qurʾān (which has since become the standard text) readers will find even more. The *sūra* headings therein indicate the exact place of the *sūra* in a chronological classification of the Qurʾān's revelation, all the while noting specific verses which were revealed separately from the rest of the *sūra* (but meant by God nevertheless to be part of that *sūra*). For example, at the opening of Q 2 in the 1924 edition readers will find the following heading:

> *sūrat al-baqara madaniyya wa-āyātuhā miʾatāni wa-sittu wa-ṯamānūn wa-hiya awwalu sūratin nazalat bi-l-Madīna illā āyata* ٢٨١ *fa-nazalat bi-Minan fī ḥağğati l-wadāʿ* ("The Medinan *sūra* al-Baqara, two hundred and eighty-six verses; it is the first *sūra* revealed in Medina except for v. 281 which was revealed in Mina during the Farewell Pilgrimage").

Now, whether or not *al-Baqara* was revealed in the city of Medina at a certain moment in Muḥammad's prophetic career (and verse 281 somewhere else at some other moment), nothing of this is found in the text of Q 2. The idea that *al-Baqara* should be thought of in the light of the category of "Medinan," or associated with a certain element of the Prophet's biography, comes from outside of the Qurʾān, and it necessarily shapes and mediates analyses of it.

This sort of presentation is also common in translations of the Qurʾān. While some exceptions can be found,[1] translators of the Qurʾān often preface *sūra*s with the same, or similar, traditions found in the headings in the Arabic Cairo edition. In his translation of the Qurʾān (originally published in 1980) Muḥammad Asad (d. 1992) writes in the introduction to Q 2:

> The title of this *sūra* is derived from the story narrated in verses 67–73. It is the first *sūra* revealed in its entirety after the Prophet's exodus to Medina, and most of it during the first two years of that period; verses 275–281, however, belong to the last months before the Prophet's death (verse 281 is considered to be the very last revelation which he received) (Asad 2003: 13).

Muḥammad Hamidullah (d. 2002), in his French translation of the Qurʾān (first published in 1959), takes the same approach, even if he is more succinct. At the opening of Q 2 he writes: "283 versets, *Post-hég. n° 87*, Titre tiré des v. 67/73, Le v. 281 a été révélé lors du pèlerinage du Prophète" (Hamidullah 1421:2).

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1 In his recent translation (which we have used in the present volume), T. Khalidi refrains from adding introductory notes to the *sūras* on their supposed historical context. In the introduction he explains, "But the very allusiveness of the text, its impersonality, its meta-historical tone, seem almost deliberately to de-emphasize context" (Khalidi 2008: xii).

Now Asad and Hamidullah are generally considered to be confessional scholars writing for a religious audience, yet even translators who write for the general public, or for academics in particular, tend to frame the Qurʾān in a similar manner. Régis Blachère (d. 1973; translation published 1949) shows some discretion regarding the nature of traditions that connect the revelation of Q 2 with a particular chapter of the Prophet's biography. Nevertheless, he still introduces the *sūra* with a discussion of such matters:

> La Tradition biographique considère que cette sourate est la première révélée à Médine. Des données traditionnelles viennent d'ailleurs contredire cette assertion et disent qu'elle fut révélée à Mahomet, partie durant le voyage de la Mekke à Médine, partie dans cette ville (Blachère 1949: 30).

Muḥammad Abdel Haleem, in his widely read 2004 English translation of the Qurʾān, introduces Q 2 with the observation: "This is a Medinan *sūra* and the longest in the Qurʾān, containing material revealed over several years, and named after the story of the cow which the Israelites were ordered to slaughter (verses 67 ff.)." (Abdel Haleem 2004: 4). In his 2010 German translation Hartmut Bobzin simply puts "Mekkanisch" or "Medinensich" at the opening of *sūra*s, making no mention of verses which are traditionally held to be exceptions to the *sūra*'s classification.

Such annotations encourage readers to think about the Qurʾān, as the *mufasirrūn* do, in light of the traditional biography of the Prophet. They do not encounter the Qurʾān itself, so much as the Qurʾān as it has been categorized and interpreted for them.

The goal of the Qurʾān Seminar is to provoke new ways of thinking about the Qurʾān by asking participants to suspend their habits of reading the text according to these traditional categories and to read the Qurʾān as though it were new to them. This does not mean that traditional Islamic scholarship should be ignored. It does mean, however, that medieval Muslim scholars are referred to more as colleagues and less as authoritative transmitters of "what really happened." This approach to medieval Islamic scholarship is seen, for example, in Munther Younes' remarks on QS 14 (Q 11:35–99) in the present volume. In his consideration of a grammatical question, Younes refers to Abū Isḥāq al-Zaǧǧāǧ (d. 311/923), but without assuming that Zaǧǧāǧ's analysis is authoritative:

> The same challenge is faced with the accusative case in the word *šayḫan* in *wa-hāḏā baʿlī šayḫan* (v. 72). According to the rules of Arabic syntax, which apply to the overwhelming majority of cases in the *Qurʾān*, the word *šayḫ* should receive the nominative case. In "explaining" the accusative case, al-Zaǧǧāǧ writes (2007, II:335) that *šayḫan* is a circumstantial accusative. But he realizes the difficulty of such a case assignment and adds: "And the circumstantial accusative here is a nice but mysterious aspect of syntax" *wa-l-ḥāl hāhunā naṣbuhā min laṭīf al-naḥw wa-ġāmiḍih* (ibid.).
>
> A meaningful linguistic account of these irregularities would have to look for explanations beyond those offered by al-Zaǧǧāǧ and the other grammarians whose approach lies within the

> *tafsīr* tradition rather than a sound linguistic framework with a clear and consistent set of rules. (Younes on Q 11:25–99; QS 14)

In other cases participants in the Notre Dame Qurʾān Seminar reach original and reasonable explanations (readers might decide for themselves if they are also convincing) of Qurʾānic passages through an appreciation of the religious context of Late Antiquity in which the Qurʾān emerged. In his consideration of QS 39 (Q 53) Tommaso Tesei proposes a minor emendation to the Cairo text in v. 16, so that it reads – *iḏ taġšā l-sidratu mā tuġšā* (and not *iḏ yaġšā al-sidrata mā yaġšā*). Thus this phrase would not mean "when there covered the tree what covered it" but rather "as the tree covers what is to be covered." Tesei argues that the term *sidra* refers not to just any tree but to the "tree of knowledge," the tree that acts as a barrier between two levels of heaven. By his reading, in other words, the Qurʾān here declares that Muḥammad saw beyond this barrier, "directly into the Holy of Holies." This verse would then offer an "almost perfect parallelism with Ephrem's description of Paradise found in the third *Hymn on Paradise*."

Other original insights in this volume come from a close analysis of the text itself. In his comments on QS 21 (Q 20:9–99) Shawkat Toorawa notes the manner in which the Qurʾān evokes speech and silence:

> Just as Zachariah asks God to grant him an heir: "*fa-hab lī... waliyyā*," "so grant me... an heir"—viz. John the Baptist (Q 19:5), so too Moses asks for a successor from his family in this passage: "*wa-ǧʿal lī wazīran min ahlī*," "so grant me a helper from my family" (v. 29)—viz. Aaron. Zachariah is asked by God to keep silent (19:10); Moses has trouble speaking (v. 27). It would seem that in this *sūra*, as in *sūrat Maryam*, speech and silence as well as speaking and silencing are important.

Such examples illustrate not only how the Qurʾānist approach encourages original insights on the Qurʾān, but also how this same approach leads different scholars to a diverse range of insights.

2. Introduction to the Fifty Passages

The present work, with its analysis of 50 passages, also presents the diversity of material in the Qurʾān itself. Our selection of these passages began with two practical concerns.

First, we decided to include selections from the full range of the Qurʾānic text so that the Notre Dame Qurʾān Seminar would have a certain comprehensiveness, even if it was not possible to discuss the entire Qurʾān (although the 50 passages represent a significant portion – approximately 18.7% – of the Qurʾānic text). Accordingly we divided the text into five parts. We then selected ten passages from each part for discussion at each of the five meetings of the Notre Dame Qurʾān Seminar. Thus the

reader will note that the passages studied in the present volume can be arranged into five groups:

1. Q 1–7 (QS 1–10)
2. Q 8–19 (QS 11–20)
3. Q 20–34 (QS 21–30)
4. Q 35–55 (QS 31–40)
5. Q 56–114 (QS 41–50)

Second, in regard to particular passages, as a rule we chose selections of text that are long enough to raise a variety of questions for discussion, but short enough to lend that discussion coherence. This is a rule that we broke on occasion. QS 8 (Q 5:32), 19 (Q 17:85), 24 (Q 24:35), and 30 (Q 33:40) are each a single verse only, and QS 15 (Q 12) is quite long. These are exceptions that we made quite consciously. For example, we decided to include all of *Yūsuf* (Q 12) in light of the opening of the *sūra*, where the divine voice of the Qurʾān relates, "We narrate to you the fairest of tales" (v. 3), and of the end of the *sūra*, where the Qurʾān refers again to stories ("In their stories is a lesson to those possessed of minds;" v. 111). In light of these references it seemed to us worthwhile to invite discussion on the construction of the *sūra* as a whole.

Here an important note might be made about the *sūra*s. Islamic tradition relates that God Himself willed for the Qurʾān to be arranged as it is, into 114 *sūra*s (even if He revealed it in different pieces which were later assembled into these *sūra*s). Among Muslim exegetes one can find those who focus on smaller segments of the Qurʾān (indeed many classical *mufassirūn* tend to analyze individual verses with no particular concern for the structure of complete *sūra*s) and those who emphasize the arrangement (*naẓm*) of complete *sūra*s, and even of the Qurʾān as a whole. In the modern period the Indian exegetes Farāhī (d. 1930) and Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī (d. 1997) distinguished themselves for their theoretical work in this latter direction.

A similar division is found among western scholars of the Qurʾān. Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930), following Gustav Weil (d. 1889) placed the *sūra*s of the Qurʾān, as complete units, in one of four chronological categories. Hartwig Hirschfeld (d. 1934) and Richard Bell (d. 1952) responded to Nöldeke's work by insisting that the Qurʾān is better understood according to smaller units, whether these units be identified by form (Hirschfeld) or by the historical moment of their composition (Bell). More recently Angelika Neuwirth and Michel Cuypers, a contributor to the present volume, have argued in distinctive ways for the coherence of complete *sūra*s of the Qurʾān. While 16 of the 50 passages in this volume are complete *sūra*s, this volume does not reflect a position for or against the idea of *sūra*s as original units (or coherent redacted units) of the Qurʾān. The great majority of complete *sūra* passages are short *sūra*s, and so their inclusion is a simple consequence of our concern to identify passages of a modest length.

Readers might judge for themselves whether the manner of proceeding "passage by passage" as opposed to "*sūra* by *sūra*" is deleterious. We believe it is not, above all

because scholars commenting on particular passages are invited, indeed encouraged, to discuss its place within its *sūra*, and indeed within the Qurʾān.

Having settled upon the model of ten passages for each fifth of the Qurʾān, and the rule of selecting passages of a modest length, we proceeded to think about the identification of passages according to three criteria:

1. themes of central importance to the text itself
2. a diversity of literary genres
3. topics which have received particular attention in classical and contemporary exegesis

In regard to the first criterion ("themes of central importance to the text itself") we looked for themes that are frequently repeated in the Qurʾān. These include:

- Exhortations (meant to convince the audience to repent and believe–often with reference to divine signs, or to eschatological judgment), e.g. QS 14, (Q 11:25–99), 16 (Q 13:1–7); 28 (Q 29); 36 (Q 44:43–57); 40 (Q 55); 42 (Q 75); 44 (Q 90); 45 (Q 96); 49 (Q 108).
- Reflections on Biblical narratives, e.g.: 2 (Q 2:30–39, on Adam); 6 (Q 3:33–63, on John, Mary, and Jesus); 8 (Q 5:32, on Moses); 9 (Q 5:109–20, on Jesus and the disciples); 10 (Q 6:74–83, on Abraham); 15 (Q 12, on Joseph); 21, Q 20: 9–99 (on Moses); 26 (Q 26:105–22, on Noah); 27 (Q 27:15–44, on David and Solomon); 34 (Q 38, 17–26, on David).
- Discussions of God, e.g.: 4 (Q 2:255–56); 17 (Q 13:27–43); 24 (Q 24:35); 33 (Q 37:149–82); 35 (Q 43:81–83); 50 (Q 112).
- Allusions to events surrounding the Prophet, e.g.: 11 (Q 8:1–19); 13 (Q 9:111–18); 29 (Q 30:1–7); 38 (Q 48).
- Legal prescriptions, e.g. QS 3 (Q 2:178–79); 7 (Q 4:1–28); 18 (Q 17:22–39); 23 (Q 24:1–17)
- Cosmological descriptions, e.g. QS 32 (Q 37:6–11); 41 (Q 72)

The second criterion ("a diversity of literary genres") involves a consideration of literary forms in Qurʾānic passages, regardless of the topic addressed therein. Our sense of form and genre was shaped by the work of Muhammed Arkoun (d. 2010), who writes: "J'ai montré comment le 'désordre' cache un ordre sémiotique profond et, par suite, la nécessité de repérer les types de discours utilisés dans le Coran" (Arkoun 1992: 75).[2] While participants in the Qurʾān Seminar have different views regarding order (semiotic or otherwise) in the Qurʾānic text, as organizers we found Prof. Arkoun's views an important starting point for thinking about types of discourse in the Qurʾān. Ultimately we decided to select passages according to the fol-

2 Arkoun identifies five such "types de discours" : 1. le discours prophétique ; 2. le discours législatif 3. le discours narratif ; 4. les discours sapientiaux ; 5. l'hymne.

lowing four "types of discourse" (as the reader will notice, we hold that more than one type of discourse can be found in the same passage):

- Prayers or hymns to God, e. g. QS 1 (Q 1); 5 (3:1–7); 16 (Q 13:1–17); 24 (Q 24:35); 44 (Q 55).
- Polemical engagement with the views of opponents, e. g. QS 9 (Q 5:109–20); 12 (Q 9:29–33); 17 (Q 13:27–43); 25 (Q 26:105–22); 33 (Q 37:149–82); 35 (Q 43:81–83); 37 (Q 46:7–12).
- Meta-textuality, or the scripture's references to itself, e. g.: 5 (Q 3:1–7); 16 (Q 13:1–17); 25 (Q 25:1–10); 39 (Q 53); 41 (Q 72); 46 (Q 97)
- Homiletic, e. g.: 14 (11:25–99); 20 (Q 18:9–26); 28 (Q 29); 44 (Q 90); 45 (Q 96); 49 (Q 108)

The third criterion (passages which have "received particular attention in classical and contemporary exegesis") reflects a concern to include passages that are frequently discussed in courses on the Qurʾān and studied in academic scholarship. Among such passages we included:

- Q 1, *al-Fātiḥa* (QS 1)
- Q 2:30–39, the angelic prostration before Adam (QS 2)
- Q 2:255, the "Throne Verse" (QS 3)
- Q 3:7, the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* (QS 5)
- Q 4:3, polygamy and monogamy (QS 7)
- Q 5:112–15, the table (*al-māʾida*) from heaven (QS 9)
- Q 9:29, fighting the People of the Book and the *ǧizya* (QS 12)
- Q 12, the story of Joseph (QS 15)
- Q 18:9–26, the Companions of the Cave (QS 20)
- Q 24:45, the "Light Verse" (QS 24)
- Q 30:1–7, *al-rūm* (QS 29)
- Q 33:40, the "seal of the Prophets" (QS 30)
- Q 53, the "satanic verses" (QS 39)
- Q 96, including the passage often described as the "first revelation" (QS 45)
- Q 97, the "night of *qadr*" (QS 46)
- Q 105, the "Companions of the Elephant" (QS 47)
- Q 112, on God and the denial of a divine son (QS 50)

Our decision to include these passages reflects a concern to produce a commentary of value to students of the Qurʾān. We hope that this will prove to be the case.

3. Contribution of the Present Volume

The Qurʾān Seminar Commentary opens with short methodological statements from each of our contributors which we have named "Research Perspectives." These Research Perspectives, accompanied by a brief biography, are meant to act as frames

for the commentaries. They will help readers understand why certain scholars focus on certain aspects of the Qurʾān. They are also something like self-portraits of these scholars, and in this they are important documents for what they show of how various academics approach the study of the Qurʾān.

The commentaries on the 50 passages are ordered according to their place in the canonical text. In this section the Qurʾānic text is presented first, with the canonical Medina Muṣḥaf Arabic text (*Al-Qurʾān al-Karīm, Muṣḥaf al-Madīna al-Nabawiyya*, 1415/1994–5), the English translation of Tarif Khalidi, and the French translation of Muhammad Hamidullah. The commentaries of Qurʾān Seminar scholars follow thereafter, organized in alphabetical order. Bibliographic references are given with abbreviated parenthetical notes. The details for these references can be found in the comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. (There readers will also find a general index of People, Places, and Subjects). Internal references to commentaries on other passages are given with the abbreviation: QS [number of passage].

The commentaries of the present volume are distinguished from other works in Qurʾānic Studies in three ways. First, they provide insights which emerge from a Qurʾānist approach to the text. Most academic works on the Qurʾān begin (and sometimes end) by asking what medieval Islamic exegetes say about a certain passage. This tendency is dominant, for example, in the *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* (*EQ*), the standard reference work in Qurʾānic Studies. The overwhelming majority of entries therein are focused not on the Qurʾān and its conversation with earlier traditions, but rather on what *mufassirūn* have said about the Qurʾān through the centuries, or on the stories involving the Prophet and his companions told by the *mufassirūn* or other medieval scholars.[3]

For example, the *EQ* article "Cain and Abel" includes one (not entirely accurate) sentence on the relation between the Qurʾān and earlier traditions on Cain and Abel: "The Qurʾānic account of Cain and Abel (Q 5:27–32) closely follows the narrative in the Bible" (H. Busse 2001: 270a). It continues with three pages on the history of *tafsīr* on this passage. In contrast, the commentaries on QS 8 in the present volume (Q 5:32) include various insights on the way in which the Qurʾānic passage on Cain and Abel interacts with a rich tradition of Jewish and Christian thought on the Biblical story.

A number of commentators, for example, note the relationship of Q 5:32 with Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5: "...whosoever destroys a single soul is regarded as though he destroyed a complete world, and whosoever saves a single soul is regarded as though he saved a complete world" (trans. Danby). Michael Pregill notes: "The larger context is telling, since *min aǧal ḏālik* at the beginning [of Q 5:32] refers back to the sin of Cain, described in vs. 27–31, which is precisely the context of the rabbinic dictum in the Mishnah." Holger Zellentin notes that a version of this dictum found in

3 One might also contrast this work with the recently published (2015) HarperOne *Study Qurʾan* (ed. S.H. Nasr, et al.) which appears to be something like an "Interpreters' Qurʾān" (and indeed is quite unlike the HarperOne *Study Bible* in terms of method).

the Palestinian Talmud is particularly close to the Qurʾānic verse. Michel Cuypers, noting the mishnaic background of this passage, discusses the significance of the way in which the Qurʾān uses the formula *katabnā ʿalā banī isrāʾīl* ("We prescribed to the Israelites") to introduce prescriptions found not in the Bible but in the Mishna. For his part, Gabriel Said Reynolds contends that in this passage the Qurʾān is particularly in conversation with late antique Syriac Christian texts which make the murder of Abel into an anticipation of the Crucifixion of Christ.

Shalom Goldman, the author of the *EQ* article "Joseph" is concerned only with the way in which the *mufassirūn* have understood *sūrat Yūsuf* (12). He notes that *asbāb al-nuzūl* traditions place the revelation of this *sūra*, "at the point where Muḥammad is challenged by skeptics who doubt his knowledge of the narratives of the Children of Israel" (Goldman 2003: 56a). He continues with the assertion: "The *sūra* is one response to this challenge, and is thus greatly detailed and includes information not known from earlier tellings of the stories of Jacob's family" (Ibid.).

The discussion of the Qurʾān Seminar scholars on Q 12 (QS 15) is focused not on the *asbāb al-nuzūl* stories of the medieval *mufassirūn* and the putative historical context that they provide for this passage, but rather on the Qurʾān itself. Holger Zellentin notes how in the opening of this *sūra* the Qurʾān claims divine authority for its account of the Joseph story, and argues that the Qurʾān means to present the "divine original" of the Joseph story (and not later Jewish and Christian versions thereof). Prof. Zellentin concludes: "Hence, the Qurʾān sees itself as self-authenticating not so much in the way Calvin sees the Bible as such, but precisely in its relation to previous Scripture." Shawkat Toorawa also reflects on the Qurʾān's claim to offer the "fairest of narratives" in this *sūra*. He argues that the Qurʾān does not mean thereby to claim its Joseph account is especially complete, but rather that its rhetoric is especially artful.

For his part Mun'im Sirry considers not the beginning but the end of this *sūra*, noting that the Qurʾān describes its account of Joseph as an "admonition" (*ʿibra*). He comments:

> Since the Qurʾān explicitly claims that the purpose of Qurʾānic narratives is nothing but *ʿibra*, does not the Qurʾān itself encourage a literary approach to its narratives, rather than an historical one? This question was raised by Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḫalafallāh in his controversial book, *al-Fannu l-qaṣaṣī fī-l-Qurʾān*. Even when the Qurʾān recounts Biblical stories, according to Ḫalafallāh, it does not intend to report history, whether it really happened or not, but rather to elicit a response from its listeners.

The *EQ* article "Light" includes a discussion of the various Qurʾānic terms for light, followed by a translation of the "Light Verse" (Q 24:35) and some remarks on the esoteric and symbolic interpretations of this verse among Sufis such as Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) and Rūzbihān al-Baqlī al-Šīrāzī (d. 606/1209). The article does not raise the possibility that the Qurʾān has any knowledge of, or concern with, the use of light in earlier Jewish or Christian traditions to describe God or the heavenly realm.

On the other hand, several commentaries on the Light Verse (QS 24) in the present volume note that by referring to an olive tree here the Qurʾān is in conversation with Biblical traditions. Guillaume Dye and Marcin Grodzki refer to the heavenly olive trees in Zechariah's apocalyptic vision (Zech 4:2–3; 13). Abraham Winitzer notes that other elements in the Qurʾān's portrayal of God here mark an important development of a cosmology with roots in the Ancient Near East:

> Almost certainly this cosmological image builds on earlier precedents, of which the Biblical (Old Testament) appears in the opening theophany in Ezekiel (chap 1; also 10), the one that provides the basis for the Merkavah mysticism in Late Antiquity.... In fact the mythologem of the deity seated in the sky with a glass-ensconced light at his side represents in itself a borrowing from ancient Near Eastern conceptions, as the following, concerning in this instance the Babylonian chief god: "He (Bēl) sat in the lapis-lazuli dais; he lit a lamp of *elmēßu* in it."

For his part Mehdi Azaiez emphasizes the sophisticated rhetorical structure of the Light Verse: "Le segment '*maṯalu nūrihī ka-miškātin fīhā miṣbāḥun al-miṣbāḥu fī zuǧāǧatin al-zuǧāǧatu*' s'apparente, sans l'être intégralement, à une anadiplose, figure de style consistant à la reprise du dernier mot d'une proposition à l'initiale de la proposition qui suit. Cette forme rhétorique qui procède d'une forme d'oralisation fixe l'attention sur les mots importants qui se trouvent être tous des hapax (*miškāt*), (*miṣbāḥ*), (*zuǧāǧa*)." Thus in the Qurʾān Seminar commentary on the "Light Verse" readers will find their attention drawn both to the Qurʾān's conversation with earlier religious texts, and to the Qurʾān's particular rhetorical strategies.

Second, the present volume is also a reference work, as it offers detailed and rigorous analyses of specific Qurʾānic passages from a number of different disciplinary perspectives. The arrangement of this volume will allow readers to find a wide range of scholarly insights on the same passage, in one place, as with Q 2:255–56 (QS 4). Regarding this passage Emran El-Badawi notes the close relationship between the Arabic vocabulary in this passage and the Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic translations of certain New Testament passages, such as Matthew 5:33–35. Frédéric Imbert, a specialist in early Arabic epigraphy, analyzes this passage in light of ancient Arabic rock inscriptions. After describing an abridged citation of the "Throne Verse" from an inscription dating to 83/712 in Ǧabal Usays in Syria, he notes that a later, complete citation of this verse is followed by, "Cursed be anyone who erases or changes this inscription." Imbert comments:

> La présence de ces malédictions après des citations coraniques nous rappelle que jusqu'à la fin de l'époque omeyyade, l'unanimité n'était sans doute pas encore faite autour d'une version unifiée et standardisée du texte : des amalgames ou des citations adaptées du Coran étaient encore courantes sur les pierres.

For his part Andrew Rippin asks what this verse reflects of the Qurʾān's theology of God. In particular Prof. Rippin highlights a certain concern with the question of God's embodiment:

> The "fluidity" of God's body is clearly rejected (there is only one God) but his embodiment is important, reflecting a long standing tension between God as having both a heavenly body and an earthly one (or more than one). What we tend to dismiss as "anthropomorphism" or attempts to use language to express ideas about the divine can perhaps be seen to reflect more literal ideas about the way God was conceived.

A similarly rich diversity of insights can be found in the commentary on Q 9:111–18 (QS 13). Reuven Firestone comments on the way this passage – with its declaration that it would not have been right for Abraham to pray for his unbelieving father (v. 114) – invokes themes of kinship relations, an important theme in earlier Jewish and Christian tradition. Devin Stewart's commentary sheds light instead on questions of Qurʾānic rhyme and rhythm: "Quite striking is the concatenation of *fāʿilūn*, even without *wa-* or particles, in v. 112. The effect of this verse is due in large part to the repeated rhythm – — v —/— – v —/ as well as the internal *–ūn* rhyme."

Munther Younes discusses an aspect of this passage from the perspective of grammar. He notes that the traditional reading of v. 117 ("after the hearts of a party of them had almost swerved aside, then He (God) turned unto them in mercy," trans. Pickthall) rests upon interpreting the verb *yazīġu* ("swerved aside") as the subject of *qulūb* ("hearts"), an interpretation which contradicts the rules of Classical Arabic (one would expect *tazīġu*). Accordingly he proposes that God be understood as the subject of *yazīġu*, so that this phrase would mean, "after He (God) had almost swerved aside the hearts of a party of them."

Shawkat Toorawa is also interested in language, but focuses not on grammar but on vocabulary. He notes that the term *awwāh* (v. 114) occurs only twice in the Qurʾān (here and Q Hūd [11] 75): "Both times in an identical rhetorical context, viz. describing Abraham as kind-hearted and prudent (Tawba) and prudent, tender-hearted and penitent (Hūd)." Finally the commentaries on this verse also include the perspective of a specialist on early Qurʾānic manuscripts, Asma Hilali. She notes that the Ṣanʿāʾ Qurʾān fragments include a key phrase – *fī sabīl Allāh* – not found in the Cairo edition, in two different passages of Q 9.

Third, this volume is also an illustration of the principal areas of scholarly disagreement in Qurʾānic Studies. This diversity is evident, among other places, in the commentary on Q 1 (QS 1). Michael Pregill argues that the way in which the Qurʾān divides humanity into good and bad in the last two verses of this *sūra* reflects a religious vision that was prevalent in Late Antiquity: "Communal sclerosis: society is divided into believers and infidels, without any room in between – the most characteristic mark of the shift from classical antiquity to the empires of faith that dominated medieval life." Holger Zellentin, for his part, argues that *al-Fātiḥa* reflects theological concepts found specifically in the Clementine Homilies, and thus has a particular connection to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Daniel Madigan focuses instead on the rhetorical structure of *al-Fātiḥa*. He concludes that it has the sort of literary coherence that indicates a certain independence from the rest of the Qurʾān:

> As the text stands, it is an elegant and neatly rounded prayer of praise and invocation, that can easily be considered in isolation from the corpus of the Qurʾān. Though it is traditionally given the title *fātiḥat al-kitāb,* there is nothing in particular about it that would indicate any role in relation to a corpus of scripture (as distinct, for example, from the opening of the next *sūra* with its evocation of *al-kitāb*).

Shawkat Toorawa likewise presents *al-Fātiḥa* as a text which is in a sense independent from the rest of the Qurʾān: "It seems to me that the Qurʾānic message, as it were, begins with the opening lines of the second *sūra* (Q 2), and not this one, which strikes me as being exactly what its name (*Fātiḥa*) suggests, namely a prolegomenon, something preparatory, providing entry into something else (and which is later ritualized in its capacity as an 'opener')." However, he also suggests that this *sūra* has a certain substantial relationship with that which follows, describing it as, "a prolegomenon, something preparatory, providing entry into something else." For his part Munther Younes argues that a process of redaction, or editing, can be detected in *al-Fātiḥa*. The first six verses, he contends, form a unit, but the seventh verse, "has the hallmarks of an addition to an originally coherent and otherwise well-written passage."

Thus the Qurʾān Seminar commentary is a polyvalent work. In this it is not unlike some classical Qurʾān commentaries, such as those of Abū Ǧaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) or Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), which record the views of various religious authorities. If the commentaries in the present volume do not end with the pious declaration "And God knows best!" (in the way that classical exegetes often end their discussions), this work still reflects a conviction that it is salutary to offer readers a presentation of conflicting interpretations. Thereby readers are invited to reflect on their own understanding of the text or question at hand.

The polyvalent nature of the Qurʾān Seminar commentary will allow students of the Qurʾān to appreciate the disagreements and uncertainties that mark the field of Qurʾānic Studies. Hopefully, however, readers will not be left with a sense of despair, but rather with a sense of motivation to contribute to the important task of advancing our understanding and appreciation of the Qurʾān. After all, the study of the Qurʾān is the sort of task that calls for more than one master theory. It calls for a community of scholars and an ongoing conversation marked by academic rigor and mutual enrichment.

Research Statements

Azaiez

Notre contribution au Qur'ān Seminar est le prolongement d'un parcours universitaire essentiellement dédié aux études coraniques et qui se poursuit dans le cadre d'un projet international intitulé « Mapping the Qur'ān » à l'Université de la KU Leuven. Notre thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'Université d'Aix Marseille en 2012 s'intitulait « La polémique dans le Coran, essai d'analyse du Contre-discours et de la riposte coranique ». Publié récemment sous le titre Le contre-discours coranique (Berlin : De Gruyter, 2015), ce travail étudie les discours rapportés directs tenus par les adversaires réels ou fictifs dans le Coran. Cette forme explicite de la polémique est l'occasion d'interroger les thèmes, les formes, les stratégies discursives mobilisées mais aussi le contexte supposé de la polémique coranique (en lien notamment avec la littérature de l'Antiquité Tardive).

Fidèle à cette recherche et parfois au-delà de celle-ci, nous proposons vingt commentaires issus d'une sélection de passages choisis principalement pour leur forme littéraire polémique. L'analyse utilise les méthodes et les concepts des sciences du langage et de l'argumentation. Plus précisément, nous avons utilisé des méthodes de lecture empruntées à l'analyse rhétorique (QS 4, 25, 36, 39) et à la narratologie (QS 2, 21, 31, 34), mais également à de nombreux concepts tels que le contre-discours (passages principaux QS 12, 16, 22, 26, 37), la polyphonie et le dialogisme (QS 2, 21, 31), la métatextualité (QS 5, 31, 42), le mono-prophétisme et l'anaphore (QS 2, 10, 26, 31) ou encore les figures et tropes (QS 24, 27, 39, 41).

Chaque commentaire est l'occasion de définir ces méthodes ou notions et d'illustrer leur application sur le texte coranique. Trois exemples viendront illustrer notre propos. Premièrement, la méthode de l'analyse rhétorique issue des études bibliques et initiée pour les études coraniques par Michel Cuypers, propose de rechercher (en premier lieu) la disposition des textes et les structures de composition des sourates du Coran. Appliqué aux QS 4, 25, 39, cette méthode révèle des dispositions textuelles répondant à des structures concentriques, l'une parfaite comme pour le cas du verset dit du « trône » -2, 255- (QS 4, 25) ou spéculaire dans le cadre de description (QS 39). Deuxième exemple, le concept de « mise en scène » emprunté à la narratologie permet d'être attentif entre autres à la singularité de la narration coranique et particulièrement à la présence de plusieurs types de temporalité dans un même texte (QS 21). Enfin, troisième exemple, la notion de polyphonie permet d'être sensibilisé à la mise en scène de « voix » qui se confrontent. Ces confrontations dialoguées sont l'un des ressorts les plus visibles de l'argumentation coranique. La présence du contre-discours coranique comme mise en voix de la parole de l'adversaire en est une parfaite illustration.

Dans le cadre de ces commentaires, nos analyses souhaitent illustrer la pertinence d'une application raisonnée des outils de la linguistique et de la rhétorique contemporaine pour une meilleure intelligence du discours coranique. L'objectif est

d'interroger à la fois les singularités formelles et structurelles du texte mais également d'introduire une réflexion future sur les techniques d'écriture qui président à la rédaction et à la composition du Coran.

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Crone

I come to the Qurʾān as a historian interested in the question of how a new religion arose in the Near East, in a quite unexpected time and place. Like so many others, I am trying to place the Qurʾān on the religious map of Late Antiquity, by which I mean the period from c. 200 to 600 on both the Greek and the Persian sides of the Euphrates, with a view to making it possible one day to trace an uninterrupted history of the development of religious beliefs in the Near East from ancient times to the Qurʾān (and beyond: the religious history of the Islamic Near East interests me greatly too). Unlike many others, I focus particularly on the views of the people that the Qurʾān condemns because they represent the milieu with which the Qurʾānic prophet broke: they give us a sense of what things looked like before he started preaching. But this concern is not reflected in the comments I have written for the present project thanks to the particular time at which I was able to participate. The fact that I spend so much time reading sources for the Near East outside Arabia in no way means that I underestimate the importance of Arabia itself. On the contrary, north-western Arabia is the immediate environment in which the Qurʾān arose, and we really need to know what happened there. But unfortunately the sources for the religious developments in that region are both poor and late: brief inscriptions apart, they form part of the Islamic tradition, which emerged well after the Qurʾān. Accordingly, I have found the wealth of literature composed in the pre-Islamic Near East in languages other than Arabic to be more rewarding to work with.

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Cuypers

Je suis venu aux études coraniques par l'analyse littéraire. J'ai d'abord pratiqué celle-ci en littérature persane, en appliquant l'analyse structurale moderne du récit à une œuvre de littérature persane (thèse à l'Université de Téhéran, 1983). Vers le milieu des

années 1990, après des études d'arabe, j'ai voulu comprendre quelle pouvait être la structure du texte coranique, réputé ne pas en avoir. L'analyse structurale ne me semblait pas très pertinente pour éclairer la question. C'est dans les études bibliques que j'ai trouvé la réponse, dans l'analyse rhétorique du texte, selon les principes de la rhétorique sémitique, très différente de la rhétorique grecque. Après une série d'articles sur les sourates courtes, j'ai publié une longue étude sur la sourate 5, *al-Mā'ida* (Cuypers 2007), suivie d'un livre théorique expliquant la méthode de l'analyse rhétorique, appliquée au Coran (Cuypers 2012b). Un livre reprenant les articles sur les sourates courtes est paru en 2014 (Cuypers 2014). Tous les passages analysés pour le Séminaire reprennent des points que l'on trouve dans le premier livre et le troisième. Les illustrations de structures montrées dans des tableaux manifestent toutes la fréquence, dans le Coran, de la structure circulaire ABA', à côté d'autres structures : les parallélismes (AA', BB' ou AB/A'B'), les structures en miroir (AB/B'A') ou les structures circulaires complexes (ABCD/x/D'C'B'A').

Cette approche du texte est commandée par l'idée que le sens du texte ne se révèle que si ce dernier est replacé dans son contexte littéraire immédiat, c'est-à-dire, dans sa structure rhétorique. Ce principe d'exégèse s'oppose à la pratique traditionnelle d'une exégèse « atomiste », verset par verset, ainsi qu'à l'explication du texte par les « occasions de la révélation » (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), lesquelles sont le plus souvent des constructions *a posteriori*.

Le contexte intégral du texte est cependant plus large que la simple structure rhétorique et englobe aussi l'intratextualité (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*) (Q. 8, 49) et l'intertextualité, chaque fois que le texte coranique manifeste une référence à d'autres textes, antérieurs à la rédaction du Coran (Bible, littérature parabiblique, rabbinique etc.). C'est pourquoi il convient de joindre une étude intertextuelle à l'analyse rhétorique, chaque fois que le sens y invite.

Je me réfère aux *ḥadīṯs*, non comme source d'interprétation, mais éventuellement comme confirmation d'une interprétation (QS 49, *ḥadīṯ* de 'Ikrama).

L'usage, par le Coran, d'une rhétorique sémitique en usage chez les scribes de l'Antiquité du Moyen Orient, et les nombreuses relations intertextuelles du Coran avec le monde des écrits religieux qui circulaient à l'époque de son avènement, situent clairement le Livre dans le contexte littéraire de l'Antiquité tardive.

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Dye

Je considère le Coran comme un texte du VIIe siècle, relevant pour l'essentiel du « monde biblique » proche-oriental. Je me propose donc de l'étudier selon des méthodes qui ont porté leurs fruits dans des domaines comparables, comme les études bibliques (moyennant, bien sûr, les ajustements nécessaires) – notamment la

Formgeschichte et la *Redaktionskritik* (une telle approche ne nie nullement le substrat arabe préislamique). On peut présenter une esquisse de cette méthode en cinq points.

Premièrement, d'un point de vue strictement historique: il convient de s'écarter du lien systématiquement établi entre le Coran et la Sīra. Il est souvent plus éclairant de lire le Coran à la lumière de ses références à la littérature biblique, à savoir non seulement la Bible et les écrits apocryphes, mais également la littérature exégétique, homilétique et liturgique chrétienne et juive, sans oublier bien sûr les traditions orales et populaires, plus difficiles cependant à étudier, puisqu'elles ont naturellement laissé moins de traces écrites. C'est là un moyen plus sûr de replacer le Coran dans son contexte historique et littéraire.

Deuxièmement, d'un point de vue linguistique : il n'y a aucune raison de penser que l'environnement dans lequel naît le Coran n'était pas, d'une façon ou d'une autre, multilingue (l'ensemble du Proche-Orient l'était) – autrement dit, il convient de reconnaître la présence de nombreuses traces de bilinguisme/multilinguisme dans la langue même du Coran (le dogme théologique de « l'arabe pur » n'a aucun sens linguistiquement et historiquement).

Troisièmement, du point de vue de la *critique textuelle* : il est parfois nécessaire de faire abstraction de la mise en place des points diacritiques et des voyelles, telle qu'on la trouve dans le *textus receptus*. Même si elle est correcte la plupart du temps, elle ne remonte pas aux plus anciens témoins matériels du texte, et il n'existe pas de tradition orale, fiable et ininterrompue, qui nous assurerait de sa nécessaire justesse. Idéalement, il faut donc partir du *rasm* seul.

Quatrièmement, du point de vue de la *Formgeschichte* : quels que soient les procédés littéraires et herméneutiques destinés à accréditer l'idée d'un ouvrage doté d'une profonde unité, le Coran est moins un livre qu'un *corpus* (qui plus est composite et, élément remarquable, sans cadre narratif), à savoir la réunion de textes relativement indépendants, pour ne pas dire hétérogènes (relevant de genres littéraires assez variés, et qui n'étaient pas initialement destinés à être réunis en un *codex*), dont la signification et la fonction originelles peuvent avoir été en partie modifiées, voire masquées, par la collecte elle-même – notamment en devenant une *partie* d'un corpus clos, bien déterminé, et considéré comme canonique. Il ne faut donc pas confondre le *Sitz im Buch* (dans le texte canonique) et le *Sitz im Leben* originel de la (strate la plus ancienne de la) péricope ou de la sourate.

Cinquièmement, du point de vue de la *Redaktionskritik* : si de nombreux passages du Coran datent de l'époque du Prophète, il ne convient pas pour autant de se limiter *a priori* au Hijaz du premier tiers du VIIe siècle pour comprendre l'histoire de la composition du Coran. Il semble en effet qu'il y ait eu une activité, non seulement éditoriale, mais aussi *rédactionnelle*, après la mort du Prophète. Le texte (*rasm* seul) issu de cette activité éditoriale et rédactionnelle prend vraisemblablement forme, pour l'essentiel, entre le début et la fin de la seconde moitié du VIIe siècle. En d'autres termes, le ou plutôt les rédacteurs du Coran sont bel et bien des *auteurs* (et non de simples compilateurs) qui ont pu réorganiser, réinterpréter et partiellement

réécrire des textes préexistants, voire ajouter des péricopes, selon leur propre perspective. Les éléments indiquant un travail de rédaction, par des interpolations, suppressions, ou diverses interventions éditoriales, doivent systématiquement être pris en compte (le Coran est donc un texte certes composite, mais aussi composé). Il convient par conséquent d'envisager le Coran selon une diachronie plus large que la chronologie traditionnelle entre sourates mecquoises et médinoises (la confiance en cette chronologie, souvent arbitraire, constitue d'ailleurs un des moyens les plus sûrs de stériliser la recherche).

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El-Badawi

The commentaries I provide in this volume are informed by my training as a historian and philologist at the University of Chicago. Readers seeking more detail on my views are encouraged to consult my book on *The Qurʾān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (2013). For me, studying the Qurʾān means paying close attention to what Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (d. 2010) calls the "instruments of the text" (*āliyyāt al-naṣṣ*). Therefore, comprehending the Qurʾān undoubtedly requires a mastery of its "clear Arabic language" (*lisān ʿarabī mubīn*), including its rhyme and rhetorical devices. However, our comprehension of the Qurʾān today has also benefited a great deal from advancements in the areas of Biblical Studies, Historical Linguistics, Paleography, Archeology and other related disciplines.

Despite the pious and legal nature of later Islamic tradition, a critical reading of some reports in the *tafsīr*, *sīra* and *ḥadīṯ* literature can on occasion yield what Fred Donner refers to as a "kernel of truth," and provide researchers with useful insights concerning the world surrounding the text. Islamic tradition is also useful since medieval exegetes sought to better understand the Qurʾān in light of the Biblical canon and loan words, like al-Biqāʿī (d. 808/1460) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). Such works provide a foundation upon which modern Qurʾānic Studies can build and improve. In sum, the Qurʾān is most fully and honestly appreciated as a bridge between the religious traditions of Late Antiquity and that of Islam.

It is fair to accept a number of traditional views concerning the Qurʾān which are germane to the text itself, including the fact that it is an Arabic text from an Arabian geographical context between Yathrib, Bakkā (Mecca?; Q 3:96) and Jerusalem (Q 17:1). The details of this context, of course, are not so clear. It is also fair to accept that the core of its articulation goes back to a man called Muḥammad, a messenger and

prophet styled after heroes in earlier Biblical, Arabian and Hellenic traditions (Q 33:40).

However, I am not fully convinced of the extent to which the Qurʾān's environs were pagan in nature, nor the extent to which its audience were simple idol worshippers. To the contrary, the text appears to be speaking primarily to monotheistic groups, including believers, Jews, Christians, Sabaeans, and Zoroastrians (Q 2:62; 22:17) who were, furthermore, steeped in the clear expression (*bayān*) and sophisticated argumentation (*ǧadal*) of religious discourse. It appears to me, furthermore, that the Qurʾān operates in a cosmopolitan society where bilingualism and religious syncretism are widespread.

I have some reservations about the traditional chronology in which Qurʾānic *sūra*s are placed. Numerous literary and rhetorical indicators within the text—such as its self referentiality, its self-designation in some *sūra*s as "recitations" (*Qurʾān*) and elsewhere as "epistle, scripture" (*kitāb*), and insertions or interpolations between the short verses within what are known as the Meccan *sūra*s—demonstrate its development over time. However, the detailed and all too neat chronology proposed by later Islamic tradition and revised by Theodor Nöldeke are not apparent in the Qurʾānic text itself.

For me, the Qurʾān's overall concern that mankind worship the one God with no partners before the coming of the Day of Judgment, and its disputation with the People of the Scripture are the result of its masterful conversation with late antique Syriac Christian homiletic literature and Rabbinic commentary. Likewise, I see its promotion of scriptural authority as a move towards simpler, less hierarchical religious practice, and as a response to the splintering of the Eastern Churches into competing patriarchal authorities. We also find that the text's ethical and legal sensibilities, especially its criticism of the Christian and Rabbinic clergy (Q 9:31–34) and its defense of widows and orphans (Q 4:2–12), echo that of Jewish-Christian conservatism.

These considerations have given shape to my commentaries, in which I both try to propose answers as well as ask questions shedding light on several dimensions of the Qurʾān's message. They include: its distinct anti-Trinitarian theology which come in response to the Christological controversies of the time (QS 4, 6, 9, 32, 33, 35, 39, 40); its vivid apocalypticism (QS 36, 42); its affirmation of earlier prophecy and emphasis on the authenticity of its revelation (QS 9, 31, 37, 46); and the ethical as well as legal concerns of the community that crystallized around the text (QS 7, 38, 44).

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Firestone

I come to the Qurʾān Seminar with training in traditional and modern approaches to the study of Judaism, its sacred texts and its practices, followed by academic training in Arabic literature, Qurʾān and Islamic studies. I have written on the Qurʾān separate from Jewish literatures in such works as *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*, but even in such research my methodology is informed by my training in Judaic Studies. I hope that such background does not prejudge my appreciation for the depth, complexity and spiritual power of the Qurʾān, but it does always place it in relationship with a long tradition of revelatory literature. This is something the Qurʾān itself very clearly articulates (2:41; 3:3; 5:48; 46:12).

Every time I approach a topic or issue in the Qurʾān I employ the same methodology to an examination of Biblical scripture. The purpose is not comparative, per se, but rather methodological. That is, I need to be certain that I am not engaging in a tendentious approach to the scripture of an "other" that I would not employ to "my own" scripture. In the course of working out of this method I sometimes discover particularly interesting issues in either scripture that might have otherwise been missed. One result of this method is my book on holy war in Judaism, which emerged out of my earlier work on holy war in Islam with particular focus on the scriptural layers of the Qurʾān.

One of my professors of Hebrew Bible mentioned forty years ago that he was sometimes criticized for his particular method of analysis in which he refused to consult traditional Jewish commentaries for fear that they would negatively influence his strict contextual approach. He believed, rightly I would add, that the traditional commentaries might derail one from allowing the text to speak purely for itself. On the other hand, he would consult pre-Biblical or contemporary literatures in his diachronic method, because he understood that irrespective of a scripture's claims for revelatory authenticity, it must appear in a human language, and language conveys cultural *realia* that reflect contemporary and prior oral or written literatures. This training informs my reading of the Qurʾān. However, after having struggled with the meaning of the Qurʾān in its own *Sitz im Leben*, I examine traditional commentaries, which adds layers of understanding that can deepen illumination of its meaning.

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Grodzki

I arrived in the field of Qurʾānic Studies by way of Semitic linguistics in general, and the Arabic language in particular. My doctoral work (at the University of Warsaw, 2007) is an analytical commentary and critical text edition of one of the great classics

of Arab grammar – *al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣanʿat al-iʿrāb*— by the Persian polymath Abū l-Qāsim al-Zamaḫšarī (d. 538/1144). Yet, however enlightening and fascinating classical Arabic grammatical treatises may be for Semitic linguists, they do not offer answers or clues to help resolve and better understand the intricacies, peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of Qurʾānic Arabic. Although the Qurʾānic text is considered an authoritative linguistic system on its own, a critical scholar of the text is faced with borrowings, irregularities, ambiguities, hapax legomena, unorthodox morphology and syntax and other abrupt and seemingly inexplicable divergences from normative grammatical structures. These features of Qurʾānic Arabic pose a great challenge to uncovering both explicit and subliminal meanings of the text.

In terms of the Qurʾān's language and its linguistic structure, my commentaries (inter alia, QS 11, 13, 31) hone in on certain recurrent patterns in the text, e.g., the repetition of the lexeme *qāla*/*qālū*/*qīla* at the head of verses 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 26 in *sūra* 36; the evidently anachronistic ordering of verses 7–17 in *sūra* 8 and the elusive *al-muqaṭṭaʿāt* (mysterious letters that precede several *sūra*s). Building from the various scholarly attempts to explain such linguistic phenomena, my aim is to understand why the Qurʾān (or its final redactor, if you will) applied these conventions and forms, what it tried to convey to its audience through their usage, and to what extent can other contemporary Near Eastern literary traditions help us better understand their application. A perfect command of the Arabic language is not sufficient to comprehend and excavate the intertwined inner *strata* of such linguistic features the Qurʾān.

As for my theological points of interest, I am convinced that the Qurʾān possesses a scriptural history which encapsulates the natural evolution of the theology and worldview of the early religious community. As a text, the Qurʾān may yield some insight into its early history to those who want to delve into it, by means of various scholarly methodologies. Thus, in my commentaries on theological issues (e.g., passages 22, 25, 33) I approach the Qurʾān's metaphysical and eschatological dimensions as elaborations on or developments of certain Jewish-Christian ideas circulating in the late ancient Near East. I thus argue for a historical continuity in the transmission of certain theological concepts, traces of which are present in the allusive text of the Qurʾān.

Astonishingly even within Western scholarship on Islam, the Qurʾān is seldom approached through the prism of its historical, doctrinal, philological and social background, i.e., the multicultural, multireligious and multilingual world of the late ancient Near East. This background can be reconstructed through evidence, which includes the vast repository of treatises from the Jewish-Christian as well as non-monotheistic communities, the non-Arabic contemporary literature of various peoples in Syriac, Hebrew, Persian, Greek, Ethiopic, Latin, Armenian, and Coptic, the eschatological anxieties, apocalyptic dimensions, political and military tensions experienced by those who lived during these times, as well as the important archeological, paleographical and numismatic evidence that is now available to us.

Traditional Muslim understandings of the Qurʾānic text thus must be combined with source-critical, form-critical and tradition-critical Western methodologies. The field of Qurʾānic studies remains largely uncultivated and thereby receptive to new methodologies that are attuned to the Qurʾānic text and that can enhance our understanding of the Muslim scripture. John Wansbrough noted in the seventies that, "as a document susceptible of analysis by the instruments and techniques of Biblical criticism [the Qurʾān] is virtually unknown" (1977:1). His observation remains largely true to this day.

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Hawting

For an historian of the early and pre-modern Islamic world, the Qurʾān is a primary source, offering evidence about the environment from which the religion and culture that was to become Islam began to emerge. The evidence naturally relates mainly to religious matters, but may also throw light on, e.g., social, economic and political conditions. It is not, however, simply lying there, evident to any or every reader of the text. If it were possible to uncover the evidence simply by reading the holy book, historical analysis of the emergence of Islam would not be the complex and contested issue that it still is, for the Qurʾān is one of the most read and studied texts in history, its contents known not only to millions of believers but also to generations of non-Muslim readers, academics and others. The question, obviously, is how one reads it and what one brings to the reading of a text that is characterized by its extreme allusiveness.

The long and rich tradition of Muslim exegesis of the Qurʾān (*tafsīr*) informs us about the multiple and various ways in which believers made sense of their scripture, but there are other, equally feasible ways of understanding it. In common with many of the other contributors to this volume I share the view that the text arises out of and responds to diverse ideas and discourses existing in the Middle East in Late Antiquity. Because those ideas and discourses are only known to us through texts, that means that the attempt to understand the Qurʾān must largely be a process of contextualization in the literal sense.

The Qurʾānic prophet, however, probably did not respond directly to texts but to people, and it is especially interesting to try to obtain some idea of the views of those who rejected him and his teachings. In many passages the Qurʾān, in the course of refuting them, seems to reproduce the ideas and arguments of its opponents. Even

allowing for a degree of polemical exaggeration and distortion, the text offers us the prospect of understanding the religious views of those against which it is arguing, and the results are not easy to reconcile with the portrait of the opponents (most frequently called *mušrikūn*) that we find in the traditional commentaries and other traditional literature.

More fully to understand the views of the opponents, however, it is not enough to reproduce what the Qurʾān tells us about them. In order to make sense of what it tells us we have to turn to the textual evidence from Late Antiquity to see how far that casts light on the information provided in the Qurʾān. How far do the views that the Qurʾān attributes to those who reject its prophet seem comparable to those reported of others in literature that has survived from Late Antiquity? That question may have implications for any discussion of influences and the environment from which the Qurʾānic texts came, but primarily is intended to make the Qurʾān itself more comprehensible.

Very few scholars command all the linguistic and other skills required for the knowledge and understanding of all the evidence of the late antique Middle East, and for me one of the prospective benefits of participating in this joint project is that the insights, knowledge and skills of others will compensate for my own deficiencies.

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Hilali

My contribution to the Qurʾān seminar consists of analyzing the issues which arise in the Qurʾānic passages through the perspective of history of transmission of religious texts in early and medieval Islam. In my comments, I use two main sources: *ḥadīṯ* literature including theoretical writings about authenticity as well as collections of apocryphal *ḥadīṯ* (*mawḍūʿ* pl. *mawḍūʿāt*) and the oldest manuscript of the Qurʾān, manuscript 27.1 DAM (the so-called Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest) and more precisely the lower text of the manuscript dated to the 7th century. Manuscript 27.1 provides evidence of the transmission of the passages when they occur, in their oldest form and sometimes shows discrepancies between the manuscript and the standard Qurʾān (for this perspective I use the so-called Cairo edition of 1924.). The *ḥadīṯ* literature, often mixed with exegetical material, offers a view on the interpretation of the passages and reports medieval discussions. In my contribution, I build bridges between the Qurʾānic text as it has been transmitted in its, perhaps, oldest state, and the Qurʾān as it is interpreted in the medieval literature. When the various textual issues in the Qurʾān manuscript allow me, I proceed by the *deconstruction* of the exegetical categories and propose the re-interpretation of the text.

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Imbert

Chercheur en épigraphie arabe et islamique au Proche-Orient (discipline qui étudie les inscriptions arabes gravées sur la pierre), mes travaux se sont concentrés depuis plus d'une dizaine d'années sur la question des graffiti islamiques datant des premiers siècles de l'Hégire (viie et viiie s. ap. J.-C.). Dès 1985, j'ai mené des prospections de terrain en Jordanie, Syrie et dernièrement en Arabie Saoudite afin de rassembler ces textes épigraphiques gravés sur des rochers et qui représentent les plus anciennes traces écrites de l'histoire de l'islam. Mes premières recherches (en Jordanie dans les années 1980–90) ont permis de montrer que plus de 70% des inscriptions que l'on pouvait relever étaient des graffiti et que la grande majorité de ces textes était antérieure au iiie / ixe siècle (Imbert 1998). Ainsi, ma démarche scientifique s'est petit à petit construite autour de ces textes qui développent une problématique particulière: ils ont été apposés librement par les musulmans appartenant aux toutes premières générations qui suivirent l'avènement de l'islam; n'étant pas soumis à la recopie ni à la censure politique, religieuse ou linguistique, les graffiti nous livrent des informations historiques, anthropologiques et religieuses mais également linguistiques totalement inédites. Massivement analysés, ils nous fournissent une photographie étonnante de la société arabe durant les deux premiers siècles de l'Hégire. Les informations relatives aux toutes premières décennies de l'islam sont inédites et particulièrement intéressantes dans la mesure où notre connaissance de cette période cruciale ne reposait, jusque là, que sur les textes de la tradition historiographique, hagio-biographique et littéraire tardive d'époque abbasside, mais aussi sur des papyri au contenu plutôt administratif.

L'analyse du corpus des graffiti est longue et fastidieuse. En effet, le nombre de graffiti actuellement relevé sur des rochers de la steppe ou des murs de monuments (arabes ou antiques) s'élève à 600 ou 700 textes environ dont seuls deux tiers ont été publiés dans des articles ou des monographies généralement saoudiennes à la diffusion toutefois assez restreinte (al-Rāšid 1993; al-Muaikel 1994; al-Kilābī 2009, 2010; al-Ghabbân 2011; Ragheb 2011). La réalité du terrain est tout autre: les prospections menées ces dernières années au Proche-Orient font état de plusieurs milliers de graffiti répartis principalement sur l'Arabie, la Jordanie, la Syrie, le Liban, la Palestine, sans parler de l'Egypte et de l'Irak où encore peu de prospections ont été menées.

C'est dans le domaine de l'histoire et de l'anthropologie religieuse que mes récentes découvertes peuvent aider à renouveler un certain nombre d'approches

méthodologiques. En effet, les graffiti au contenu surtout religieux citent des formulations qui permettent de mieux appréhender la figure du divin aux premières heures de l'islam, mais également celle du prophète Muhammad. De même, des extraits du Coran ont été relevés dans des graffiti et il convient également de les analyser, non pas uniquement à la lumière du Coran tel qu'il nous est parvenu aujourd'hui, mais à la lumière du texte tel qu'il était présent dans l'esprit et la mémoire de ces premiers musulmans. C'est le *Coran des pierres,* des extraits coraniques cités dans les graffiti et qui représentent l'un des fondements de mes recherches (cf. Hoyland 1997; Imbert 2000, 2011, 2013). Dans la veine des études sur le corpus coranique ancien impulsées par F. Déroche ou sur les variantes dans les palimpsestes de Ṣanʿāʾ menées par A. Hilali, ce travail de recension évolue au fur et à mesure des découvertes de graffiti citant des extraits du Coran (Déroche 2009; Hilali 2010). J'ai répertorié 85 textes mentionnant du Coran sous forme soit de versets isolés (très rare), soit d'implants coraniques (extraits implantés à l'intérieur d'un autre formulaire), soit en début ou fin de graffito. Seuls 36 % seulement peuvent être considérés comme conformes à la lettre au texte de la vulgate dite de ʿUṯmān. Autre constatation étonnante: l'ensemble des extraits coraniques retrouvés sur les pierres appartient au Coran plutôt tardif, à savoir des sourates révélées, selon la tradition, à la fin de la période mecquoise et à la période médinoise. Du Coran "ancien," celui du début de la prédication muhammadienne, nous n'avons pas de trace. Cette étude pose frontalement la question de la diffusion du texte coranique durant le premier siècle de l'Hégire, de sa place au sein de la première société musulmane. Elle interroge aussi la question de la souplesse avec laquelle les lapicides anonymes utilisaient les extraits coraniques afin qu'ils s'insèrent dans la phraséologie de leurs graffiti et non le contraire. L'analyse des versets *verbatim* et des expressions d'inspiration coranique est longue et exige beaucoup de recul vis-à-vis du texte; elle aboutit à une sorte de cartographie coranique du i^er^ / viie siècle dans les milieux privés de l'Arabie et du Proche-Orient. Ce recul est nécessaire afin de travailler le texte à la lumière de son contexte d'origine et non en reproduisant nos connaissances actuelles sur ce que l'on pourrait appeler un Coran en phase de constitution.

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Khalfallah

Mes commentaires ont pour objectif d'analyser les ambiguïtés lexicales, syntaxiques et rhétoriques de certains énoncés coraniques. Les innombrables embarras, hésitations et contradictions de la tradition exégétique en sont les témoins. J'ai donc essayé

de mettre en évidence les aspects d'ambiguïté et d'en proposer des explications plutôt d'ordre linguistique: constructions syntaxiques, choix morphologiques ou structures imagées qui seraient derrière l'incompréhension de ces expressions, mais aussi des solutions imparfaites et contradictoires qu'on a envisagées pour dissiper l'ambigüité.

Ces incohérences s'expliquent en partie par la mobilisation d'une encyclopédie (au sens de Eco 1995), elle-même contradictoire et inachevée. D'autre part, elles se justifient par le poids des contraintes interprétatives, d'ordre dogmatique et politique, qui auraient orienté la lecture en imposant des lignes orthodoxes (cf. Larkin 1999**).** Je me suis donc efforcé d'examiner ces deux sources d'embarras afin de voir comment on a géré le sens pour maintenir intacte la théorie de l'inimitabilité.

Gilliot (2004b) et avant lui Birkeland (1956) ont esquissé ce genre d'études qui théorisent les générateurs d'ambiguïté, souvent reliés à des phénomènes d'agrammaticalité, d'emprunts lexicaux et de ressemblances phonétiques ou thématiques.

Aussi, sur les pas de Djaït (2007) et ceux de Chabbi (2010), j'ai essayé de réintégrer davantage ces ambigüités dans le cadre d'une sémantique anthropologique qui reprend les codes, les symboles, les références métaphoriques issues des paysages, peuples, institutions, pratiques religieuses, politiques, culturelles, au sein desquels le Coran a émergé. Cette réintégration aiderait à comprendre non seulement ces ambigüités, mais les distances que certains exégètes ont prises dans leurs interprétations.

D'un autre côté, les études de Cohen (1966, 1979), et celles des écoles stylistiques occidentales nous ont été d'une grande utilité pour analyser les phénomènes d'agrammaticalité (ambiguïté où le lecteur aura l'impression que le texte, qui ne renvoie à rien, perd temporairement son sens) dans ces passages. Cf. M. Riffaterre, « La production du texte » (Paris: Seuil, 1979, 16)

L'approche sur laquelle j'ai plus particulièrement fondé mes commentaires est la sémantique moderne. Lors des trois dernières décennies, les sémantiques: structuraliste, cognitive, fonctionnelle ont fourni de nombreux outils qui permettent de comprendre les phénomènes de l'ambigüité et de sa gestion. Appliquée aussi bien au texte coranique qu'aux ouvrages exégétiques (produits de l'Histoire des idées et des institutions politiques), cette approche aide à déconstruire les dessous d'un processus collectif et symbolique visant à combattre l'ambigüité et le *tašābuh*, perçus comme une menace au dogme de la clarté.

Dans mon parcours, cette approche s'est développée en deux étapes: la première, en cours de la préparation de mon doctorat portant sur la théorie du sens d'après 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Ǧurǧānī (m. 1078) qui s'est ingénié à défendre que l'inimitabilité coranique réside dans sa composition (*naẓm*), où se conjuguent les structures syntaxiques et rhétoriques. Nos analyses sur son oeuvre montrent à quel point la structuration syntaxique rend le sens subtil, voire impossible à atteindre. La seconde, en consultant les ouvrages exégétiques, j'ai pu mesurer des divergences fondamentales allant même à l'encontre du dogme de la clarté absolue du Coran.

Dans ce travail, j'ai observé une exigence méthodologique: ne point taxer d'insensés ces passages ambigus, car je pense que notre connaissance de l'univers sémantique dans lequel s'est mu et a évolué le Coran est encore loin d'être affinée. J'ai conséquemment évité le recours aux explications systématiques qui rattachent l'ambigüité, sans le moindre argument, à des sous-textes supposés, à des « fautes » de rédaction ou à une vague circulation de notions communes.

Au fil des commentaires, une hypothèse est née: ce sont ces ambigüités mêmes qui font la singularité des structures sémantiques du Coran (et peut-être de tout texte liturgique). Cette hypothèse s'inscrit dans l'optique lancée par Arkoun, (Lectures du Coran, 1982: ch. 1), à la recherche des structures sémantiques propres aux modes de signifiance des textes religieux. Une des principales fonctions anthropologiques que jouent ces textes est d'étonner l'auditoire par des proclamations, doctement ambiguës, dont le but n'est nullement de transmettre un contenu intelligible, mais de provoquer l'éblouissement.

En somme, mon travail est une recherche dans l'histoire des interprétations, et des codes, institutions et héritages qui s'infiltrent pour façonner la lecture et la « gestion » de ce qui pourrait paraître comme une ambigüité embarrassante.

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Kropp

I came to Qurʾānic studies quite late in my work as philologist and historian in the field of Semitic Studies, following the wise council of Hans Jakob Polotsky, given to me in a personal conversation at the 6th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Tel Aviv, April 1980: "Betreiben Sie Arabisch unter Ausschluß des Korans" (study Arabic excluding the Qurʾān). And in fact the state of Qurʾānic Studies in the 2nd half of the 20th century in Germany was not really attractive to critical minds and from the perspective of comparative historical, cultural and religious studies, as proven by the most clamorous case of Günter Lüling and how his works were received, better: often totally ignored by the German Islamic Studies *academia*. Finally it was a biographical detail, i. e., the relationship to Christoph Luxenberg which made me take up this kind of studies, as a complement to my research work in Ethiopian history and Semitic (South Arabian and pre-Islamic Arabic) epigraphy.

The critical distance to conventional and traditional Qurʾānic and Islamic Studies proved fruitful, even though the material amount of this new field of studies remains limited. It nevertheless added a colourful accent to my historical studies mainly in Ethiopian history, epigraphy and manuscript studies. There the accent lies on

pragmatical, juridical texts in stark contrast with the nature of texts one has to deal with in the Qurʾānic corpus.

Thus my first approaches to Qurʾānic texts came definitely from the Ethiopian side: continuing the work of Nöldeke on "Lehnwörter in und aus dem Äthiopischen" I proposed new etymologies or explanations for *māʾida*, *šayṭān*, *ǧibt* and *tawrāt* and then tried a new overview of Ethiopian loan words or words deriving ultimately from Ethiopic. A step further was to distinguish Ethiopian influence beyond single words.

An unexpected offer for a year's chair and lectures at the Collège de France gave me the opportunity to deepen the question of Aramaic influence on Qurʾānic language, fostered by the famous (otherwise infamous) works of Christoph Luxenberg. This gradually led to more questions as to the nature of Qurʾānic discourse. But first I have to declare some position towards this text.

I am not interested in questions of revelation, inspiration, or truth: this I leave to people who have peculiar talents and, perhaps, specific interests. For an academic scholar there are no holy texts, but only human products which must be analysed and seen as any other human linguistic artefacts.

We as historians, historians of religion, treat religion and its phenomena as an object with the inner distance and coolness required by a scientific approach and methodology. We are not exchanging our personal faith or trying to harmonise it. We are not comparing our beliefs, but we try to know about others' beliefs in order to give a plausible image of the past. Taken as such a scientific object, the Gospels represent a patchwork of citations of the Old Testament and ancient literature, written in a rather poor Greek and on a mediocre level as a piece of literature. Long, impartial and sincere research has to be done, before one may come to an analogous and similarly short description of the Qurʾānic corpus. We thus strive for "scientific," if relative and limited, truth in the framework of possible human knowledge. In short, we should look for what we can know about our subject, not for what is believed about and around the subject. What unites scholars and researchers of this type is – and that may be very different from harmony and mutual and individual understanding – is the participation in this human and universal enterprise of positive secular science.

But back to my actual fields of interest – besides those already mentioned above – in the Qurʾānic corpus.

[1] Inquire as to which – Arabic – language was intended to be written down by the undotted and unvocalised *rasm* of the text. If it was what we call Classical Arabic today, the orthography could be considered strange at least. Notwithstanding some groundbreaking studies in the last century, the problem remains unsolved, even while many details point to an Arabic of the "modern, analytic" type without *iʿrāb*. This leads, naturally, to the next historical question and problem: why and how the original *rasm* was partially changed, but mostly reinterpreted and "completed" by the actually quite sophisticated Qurʾānic (and Classical Arabic) orthography?

[2] Collect and study the written witnesses of pre-Islamic Arabic in order to elucidate the historical and linguistic background from where the Qurʾānic texts could have originated.

[3] Broaden the "(Syro-)Aramaic" track by multiplying and thus rendering more solid and plausible the examples where a "Syro-Aramaic" reading offers solutions to opaque and enigmatic words and passages. This micro-linguistic approach has to be paralleled by deepened research into the literary background of the Qurʾānic corpus, i.e., Biblical and other parallel and sub-texts.

[4] See and study the Qurʾānic texts as speech acts in the realm of a) psychology and b) ideology and politics. Quite different from other approaches – self-referentiality, discussion in the community, second audience etc. – I am following the hint at political, multiple-addressed discourse, whatever the author or the authors may have been and how the final canonical text was established. Thus the rapid and often unmotivated change of speaker, addressee, subject in language and contents is seen as a highly sophisticated political or ideological discourse – speech act – which at the surface has much in common with psychologically unbalanced discourse. The question could be: was the author a religiously motivated but unbalanced individual or is the actual text structure the result of careful elaboration under the premises of politico-religious goals. Given the complexity of early Islamic history these two perspectives are not, perhaps, alternative but complementary.

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Madigan

What drew me to the study of the Qurʾān in the first place was its obvious influence on the theology of fellow Christians in Pakistan. The Qurʾān and the tradition that grew from it was the air they breathed, so it is not surprising that their understandings of revelation and scripture seemed more attuned to the Qurʾān than to the New Testament.

In approaching the text, I take very seriously the Qurʾān's own assertion that it belongs to the same realm of discourse as the Christian and Jewish scriptures – that like them it is *kitāb*, originating with God and establishing with humanity a relationship of guidance: a sharing of God's knowledge and a clear insight into what God wills. Far from seeking to conceal its context (or at least one major element of its context) in the discourse of late antique Christians and Jews, the Qurʾān boasts of its relationship with them and claims that it is recognizable to them. I find myself more willing than many of the classical *mufassirūn* were to take these claims at face value and to acknowledge the echoes of the Qurʾānic text with the earlier traditions.

At the same time, I recognize that it has its own voice, which keeps its distance from those traditions and sees itself offering a corrective to them. An example of this would be QS 2 (Q 2:30–39) in which the story of Adam and his wife has echoes both of Genesis and of Rabbinic materials, yet recounts the story with its own independent voice.

I would want to distinguish carefully between, on the one hand, this recognition of a common discourse and, on the other, the stronger claim of intertextuality. Of course, that term is used in many ways, sometimes merely to point to the shared world of discourse, but at others to propose a connection between two specific texts, precisely as *texts*. One might be tempted, for example, in considering the story of David in QS 34 (Q 38:17–26), to propose a textual link with 2 Sam 12. However, there are many elements in the Qurʾānic version that suggest the story had already developed a life of its own beyond the Biblical text, and that any "intertextuality" is substantially mediated rather than direct.

It seems to me that the apparently very strong self-referentiality of the Qurʾān – a phenomenon that has long intrigued me – can often exist more in the eye of the beholder than in the text itself (Madigan 2001, 2006). After the canonization and codification of the recitations, it is easy to read these passages as self-consciously claiming to be a canon of scripture. However, I try to hear such texts in the still oral, still partial, still fluid and interactive situation in which they are understood to have first been announced. In this regard, see my comment on QS 5 (Q 3:1–7). Having said that, however, I should note that I do not approach the text taking for granted the context and chronology proposed by Islamic tradition. The diversity and inconsistency of the proposals for the context and dating of particular parts of the Qurʾān surely indicates that they are based on more or less plausible attempts at reconstruction rather than on certain knowledge. Furthermore, the reconstructed contexts are arguably chosen more with an eye to the desired interpretation of a polyvalent text than with a concern for recovering historical detail.

Though for me the Qurʾān does not hold the status of scripture – a category that is necessarily defined by the community of faith to which one belongs – this self-confident new voice emerging in the 7th century CE within the broader discourse of Abrahamic religion addresses Christians and poses challenges to me as a theologian. I take seriously its perplexities about Christian affirmations about God, its call to return to the pristine religion of submission to the one God, and its claim to offer guidance towards the truth, since it is a voice many have found convincing, and there is no denying that it has borne lasting fruit.

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Pregill

My approach to Qurʾānic Studies is informed by two distinct, yet complementary, concerns. First, I am interested in thinking about the Qurʾān not only as the product of the religious discourses and sociohistorical trends of the late antique world, but as an integral part of the long process through which the legacy of ancient Israelite monotheism was claimed, contested, and reinterpreted by various communities. This process occurred over centuries, from the Second Temple period to the high Middle Ages, and would eventually produce the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions as we know them today. Second, I am interested in the Qurʾān's reception in the Islamic societies established after the Arab conquests – not only the substantial scholarly edifice built up around the Qurʾān in Islamic commentary literature proper (*tafsīr*), but the wider impact exegesis of the Qurʾān had on the formation of Muslim beliefs, values, and culture. (I should also add that as far as I am concerned, the impact of the Qurʾān and its interpretation upon the Jewish and Christian cultures of the Islamic world is an important, even indispensable, aspect of Qurʾānic Studies, though it is one that has largely been ignored.)

A contextual approach to the Qurʾān often produces readings of the text that collide with the diverse meanings assigned to scripture by classical Islamic tradition. Such conflicts are inevitable, but they should serve to draw our attention to the fact that *both* the contextual meaning and that assigned to scripture by the commentators are worthy of scholarly investigation. The emergence of an emphatically "scripturalist" approach to the Qurʾān among some scholars working in the Western academy today – a "Qurʾānist" school – is surely a welcome development. But this approach must not supplant the complementary project of fully exploring what the Qurʾān has meant throughout the history of its reception in Islamic societies. On the contrary, the attempt to distinguish what the Qurʾān meant to its original audience at the time of its revelation – the precanonical Qurʾān known to the "paleo-Islamic" community – from what it came to mean in classical Islamic interpretation should lead us to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of traditional exegesis.

Historically, the attempt to examine the larger literary, cultural, and religious contexts of the Qurʾān has often been marred by polemical agendas. At the very least, examination of parallels from the literatures of older monotheistic communities has sometimes been conducted in reductionist and problematic ways; today, overly sensationalistic efforts at uncovering the "hidden origins" of the Qurʾān justifiably inspire suspicion. But this should not discourage us from the critical work of illuminating the dense penumbra of allusions, associations, and subtexts that endow the Qurʾān with its unique depth, power, and mythopoetic force. Comparison of the Qurʾān with older literary materials drawn from the scriptural and parascriptural traditions of various late antique religious communities, in Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Persian, Ethiopic, and other languages, should not be misunderstood as an attempt to "colonize" the Qurʾān or reduce it to a cacophony of "influences" that were dimly understood, garbled in transmission, and deployed in a maladroit or

even incomprehensible way by its author or authors. Rather, I proceed from the assumption that the originators of Qurʾānic discourse – at least in its precanonical state – naturally drew upon the constellation of literary resources available to them in an extremely sophisticated and nuanced way. To me, careful examination of the text confirms its rich, complex, and subtle artistry time and time again.

I cannot accept the premise that the Qurʾān's original language was not Arabic, or that its original audience could not or did not understand it. I am likewise unsympathetic to attempts to alienate the Qurʾān from the revelatory context of seventh-century Arabia. Rather, I firmly believe that exploration of the cultural, social, political, and religious processes through which Arabia was integrated into the wider world of the late antique Near East, especially the expansion of the Roman and Sasanian dominions through cultural and religious imperialism, will continue to enrich our understanding of the origins of the Qurʾān. I am convinced that examination of the Qurʾān's relationship to the traditions of older monotheistic communities demonstrates that it is not a conglomeration of random vectors of "influence" presented to an overwhelmingly pagan audience; rather, it reflects a highly sophisticated engagement with the civilizations of the larger Near Eastern and Mediterranean *oikouménē*, particularly late antique Christianity. Its audience must have been quite familiar with this world – if they were not already an important part of it.

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Reynolds

I come to the Qurʾān Seminar with an academic background in Islamic Studies, Muslim-Christian relations, and in particular the study of the Qurʾān. As regards Qurʾānic Studies, my principal work is *The Qurʾān and Its Biblical Subtext* (2010). This work is shaped by my study of the languages and literatures of Late Antiquity and by my conviction that the Qurʾān has a special relationship with the literature of Christians written in Syriac. My commentaries in the present volume are largely concerned with two questions: first (and above all), the Qurʾān's relationship to its Biblical subtext and, second, the Qurʾān's theology.

By the Qurʾān's relationship to its Biblical subtext I mean the Qurʾān's allusions to, or transformations of, Jewish and Christian narratives and traditions of Late Antiquity. This relationship seems to be important, for example, in QS 6 (Q 3:33–63), where the Qurʾān alludes (v. 44) to the elders' casting *aqlām* over Mary. Many commentators assume that this allusion concerns a contest (won by Zachariah) among scribes (hence the *aqlām*, understood to mean 'pens') over who would be Mary's guardian in the Temple (thus they connect v. 44 to v. 37). However, in the light of works such as the *Protoevangelium of James* it appears that the Qurʾān is alluding

instead to the contest among Israel's widows (who come bearing rods, which may be the proper meaning of *aqlām* here) over Mary. The Qurʾān does not retell the tradition of this contest; it rather refers to this tradition while articulating its distinct religious message. In other cases the relationship of the Qurʾān with its subtext is less direct. The complications of this relationship are evident, for example, in the way the Qur'ān puts the figure of Haman in Egypt instead of Persia (Q 28:6, 8, 38; 29:39; 40:24, 36), or the way it identifies Mary the mother of Jesus with Miriam the sister of Aaron (Q 3:35–66; 19:28; 66:12).

As for the Qurʾān's theology, I mean what the Qurʾān says about God, the manner in which the Qurʾān critiques what its opponents say about God, and the ways in which the things the Qurʾān says about God are shaped by its concern to convince its audience to fear God and obey the Prophet. In regard to QS 35 (Q 43:81–83), for example, I ask whether the Qurʾān implies that the idea of God having a son is logically absurd or simply not true of its God. In regard to QS 40 (Q 55), with its description of God's signs (including the detection and punishment of the guilty), I argue that the Qurʾān's theological rhetoric reflects its interest in the conversion of the audience through fear and wonder.

In my commentaries I try always to work without reference to any traditional narratives that are meant to provide a historical context for a particular passage. I believe that there is no way to confirm that such narratives are historically authentic, and that there is often reason to think otherwise. For example, traditional Muslim scholars might insist that QS 30 (Q 33:40) was revealed because the Prophet had no adult sons. It seems to me at least possible, however, that the Prophet was thought to have had no adult sons because of this verse. In the case of QS 29 (Q 30:1–7) two quite different historical contexts are offered depending on whether a word is read *ġulibat* or *ġalabat*. In such cases it seems to me that the historical context given by medieval Islamic literature can limit scholarly creativity and offer a decidedly unstable foundation for sound scholarly reflection.

Finally, I might add that I am interested in philology more than history. I am not particularly interested in proposing any new or revisionist context for the Qurʾān's origins. Instead I am interested in understanding and appreciating the Qurʾānic text and its message.

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Rippin

As someone with an interest in the Qurʾān and how Muslims relate to it, the focus of my attention in my scholarly work has primarily been on *tafsīr*, as illustrated in my Variorum volume, *The Qurʾān and Its Interpretative Tradition* (Aldershot 2001). I have

not understood my main work as fitting within the emerging Qurʾānist focus as the Qurʾān Seminar project has defined its goal. But I have always been up for a challenge and so the idea of attempting to approach the Qurʾān as a naïve reader and to supplement that approach with some concern about the late antique context seemed like a stimulating idea. I have previously written a few essays that do deal with Qurʾān directly (my own favorite is "The Commerce of Eschatology" in *The Qurʾān as Text*, ed. S. Wild, Leiden 1996) but those all involve a synthetic approach to the scripture. Reading the Qurʾān linearly without *tafsīr* is not something I have written much about previously.

Thus, in the process of reading the Qurʾān in this manner and just thinking about what the text means, I discovered (not to my great surprise) that my attention tended to fall on issues of word use and striking images. I am not convinced by efforts to pay attention to the structure of the Qurʾānic chapters, and while I did note occasions where vocabulary choice is driven by considerations of rhyme and where line-length appeared to create natural divisions in the text, those "macro" issues remained for the most part in the background for me in my approach.

Of course, my focus on words and images served to confirm my view that reading the Qurʾān "outside" the Muslim tradition is not really possible. We inevitably must turn to the resources of Arabic lexicography to understand the text (even if on occasion parallels in other languages can help us see connotations of words). The significance of this struck me forcefully when I saw other scholars turn to Arabic dictionaries to find meanings of words that were different from the majority traditional point of view (and thus one can claim to be reading the text "outside" tradition) yet appealing to the authority of those dictionaries to justify that other meaning. It seems to me that, in fact, we cannot escape from this circularity.

Even if there are fundamental methodological issues that arise with the approach of reading the Qurʾān naïvely, that certainly does not reduce the fascination of the text itself or of the experience of reading it. When occasions were noted by others in the seminar of instances in which the text seemed to convey an immediacy of context – that is, something must have happened to stimulate such a text – a new challenge arose. How do we (if we can) explain such passages without resort to the traditional context of Muḥammad's life? On other occasions apparent thematic shifts in a passage necessarily produce questions about intrusions, editorial control and composition. And finally, resonances with material from the Biblical tradition – especially in instances where explicit reference is made in the Qurʾān to the Torah and the Gospel – stimulate concerns about how we determine what constitutes an inter-textual passage. All this combines to say that the process of reading is complex and the act of reflecting upon it thought-provoking. I will continue to ponder this, as I did in my "Commerce of Eschatology" essay noted above.

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Sirry

I approach the text of the Qurʾān as a scholar who is interested in inter-religious issues, including scriptural polemics. As such, for me, the Qurʾānic text represents an ongoing engagement with religious beliefs and practices of other, already established traditions in the early formation of Islam. Like other scriptures, the Qurʾān reflects the mood and attitude of the early community of believers in the earliest stages of their emergence into history. However, how much we can know of this early engagement and emergence is the subject of much discussion and debate. Certainly the problem of sources from which we can learn of the formation of the Qurʾānic text is responsible for much of our disagreements to such an extent that, as Donner has rightly noted, Western studies of the Qurʾān seem today "to be in a state of disarray" (2008:29) in the sense that there is little in consensus among them. Contrary to the nineteenth-century French scholar Ernest Renan's contention, Muslim sources concerning Islam's founding events are mostly problematic and do not show that Islam was born "in the full light of history." I may also add that the text of the Qurʾān is so allusive as to presume the knowledge of Biblical traditions on the part of its listeners/readers. However, how and to what extent such traditions might have shaped the text of the Qurʾān is still disputed.

My approach in this regard is modest. The Qurʾān is certainly in conversation with Biblical traditions. Even if we grant that the Qurʾān is the word of God verbatim, we may still want to ask how its audience in early 7th century Arabia might have possibly understood the Qurʾān's highly allusive and often opaque references to Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets without prior knowledge of Biblical materials. Therefore, Biblical sources are useful to illuminate and explain the allusive Qurʾān. Even on the most elaborate story of Joseph in the Qurʾān, as I demonstrate in my comment on QS 15 (Q 12), reading it side by side with the Biblical narrative of Joseph can tells us something about the Qurʾānic way of telling and retelling of the Biblical stories. It is interesting to note that the Qur'ān often presents its own version of those stories to fit into its own culture and audience. Scholars have for a while been perplexed by the ways in which the Qur'ān describes the religious beliefs of others, notably Jews and Christians, which seems to suggest that it addresses heretical sects or whose who believe in heretical teachings. While the existence of those sects is not unlikely, it is also possible that the Qur'ān develops a distinct rhetorical argumentation in such a polemical environment to win over the debate against those who rejected its theological agenda.

I would also argue that looking at Biblical literature should not be the only way of explaining and understanding the Qurʾān. Equally important is to understand a certain passage in light of other passages. This method of interpreting the Qurʾān through the Qurʾān (*tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān*) has a profound impact on my com-

mentaries. It has been generally acknowledged that a certain part of the Qurʾān may shed some light on another. By examining how one theme or story is retold in another place or places we can understand the specific rhetorical devise the Qurʾān employs to convey its message. Perhaps, if we consider the Qurʾānic recasting of Biblical narratives as rhetorical strategies to achieve its own purposes, then the discrepancies and differences between the Biblical and Qurʾānic narratives can be understood not as historical inaccuracies, but rather as literary strategies. The most appropriate way to approach such narratives is a literary method, not a theological one.

Since my specialization is on modern Islamic thought, I am interested in exploring how and to what extent the Qurʾān can be interpreted in such a way that it addresses issues of modern concern. How can this seventh-century text be understood in the twenty-first century? For me, the text of the Qurʾān is multi-vocal in the sense that it opens to various interpretations. There is no fixed meaning of the Qurʾān. As the historian of religion W.C. Smith has argued, "the meaning of the Qurʾān is the history of its meaning" (1980: 504). Our understanding of the Qurʾān, as of any other texts, is conditioned by our situated perspectives, or what Gadamer calls "effective history" and thus "*understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event*" (2004: 299). In a somewhat different way from that of Gadamer, Rahman (1982) proposes what he calls "a double movement" in his reading of the Qurʾān, namely, from the present situation to Qurʾānic times, then back to the present. The problem with Rahman's approach is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the meaning of a given Qurʾānic passage in the past. I would argue that Gadamer's theory of "effective history" is useful in that it does not assume that the objective situation of the past can be ascertained. Once the meaning of the Qurʾān is understood within the situatedness of the past and the present, then our reading of this scripture is as authoritative as that of the past generations.

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Stefanidis

Originally trained in social anthropology, I am currently a doctoral student at the Sorbonne in Paris. My dissertation focuses on diachronic readings of the Qurʾān, which claim that variations in the style and content of the Muslim scripture are best explained by ascribing the Qurʾānic texts to different moments in the Prophet's career. From this perspective, short rhythmic *sūra*s asserting the truth of the Day of Judgement typically represent an early stage of the Qurʾānic revelation while longer passages addressing community regulations indicate a later Medinan context. This particular way of making sense of the Qurʾānic corpus shaped the early Orientalist study of the Muslim sacred text and culminated in a number of chronological reorderings of the *sūra*s. In recent decades, however, this reading strategy has been shak-

en by the complex and delicate question of the historical reliability of the *sīra*, the Prophet's traditional biography. Since the *sīra* literature itself often seems to have been elaborated on the basis of Qurʾānic data, its use to explain the Qurʾān runs the risk of circularity. In my article "The Qurʾān Made Linear" (2008), which analyzed the Qurʾānic reordering suggested by Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930), I reflected on the ways scholars, as readers, fashion the Qurʾān into an intelligible historical document.

As is well known, not only are documentary sources about seventh century Arabia scarce but the Qurʾān itself offers few direct clues about the context in which it emerged. Devoid of both a social context and a constraining narrative framework, the Qurʾān can be aptly described as an "open" text (Eco 1962), that is a work which is ultimately completed by the reader's choices to make certain connections and fill in things left unsaid. In the specific case of historical-philological approaches, the hypothetical reconstructions of the Qurʾānic milieu influence the way the text is interpreted and vice versa, providing striking examples of hermeneutic circles. Some interpretative choices are of great consequence: for example, whether we understand the *mušrikūn* to be pagans, as Muslim exegesis and historiography assert, or rather Bible-inspired monotheists (QS 12, 22); whether or not we assume that the Qurʾānic singular addressee is Muḥammad (QS 11); and whether or not we grant a literary unity to the Qurʾānic corpus (QS 46). Even readings that share an acceptance of the overall *sīra* framework can end up being widely divergent depending on how a passage is fitted into the Prophet's biography (QS 49).

Besides these methodological concerns, my commentaries have been guided by the question: what is the Qurʾān here trying to *do?* This question rests on two main assumptions. Firstly, it presupposes that the Qurʾānic corpus, despite its fragmented character, displays broadly coherent understandings of the world, of its environment and of itself as a supernatural communication. Secondly, it posits a direct engagement with a living audience (rather than with texts), emphasizing the oral dimension of the recitation (*Qurʾān*) over its current written form (the *muṣḥaf*). Unresolved questions surrounding the writing of the Qurʾānic corpus and its transmission over time, which are the legitimate concerns of tradition and textual criticism, do not prevent us from considering the Qurʾān as a polemic that intended to persuade its immediate interlocutors of the truth it is announcing. How did the Qurʾān proceed in doing so (QS 2, 21, 27, 30, 41)? As a number of scholars have suggested, assuming the oral performance of the Qurʾānic proclamations and taking into account their irreversible temporality highlights the dramatic and dialogical tension that characterizes the Muslim scripture (QS 13). The Qurʾān thus appears as the expression of "an ongoing dialogue raising questions and giving answers, only to be questioned again and responded to again" (Neuwirth 2004: 75).

Finally, I have from time to time offered my own interpretations regarding the social context in which the Qurʾān might be situated. In some cases, the textual evidence appears to me to be persuasive. For example, I argue that the Qurʾānic understanding of the *lex talionis*, which implies collective moral responsibility, strongly

suggests a society organized along tribal lines (QS 3). In other cases however, I keep in mind that, as literary theorist Stanley Fish has put it, "text, context, and interpretation all emerge together, as a consequence of a gesture (...) that is irreducibly interpretative" (Fish 1980: 340).

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Stewart

Beyond an awareness of the Qurʾān as a fundamental text in Muslim societies, I knew little of Islam's scripture when in the early stages of my studies of Arabic and Islam, which concentrated on the history of Shiʿite Islam and Islamic institutions, and none of the professors who taught me especially focused on the Qurʾān in his work. It was an unexpected turn in research for a course on medieval Arabic literature that first caused me to investigate the Qurʾān assiduously. Prompted by the professor's remark that the medieval critics had written exhaustively on poetry but had said nothing on *saǧʿ*, I set out to trawl the Arabic rhetorical tradition for discussions of *saǧʿ* composition. It was surprising to find that the medieval rhetoricians quoted Qurʾānic verses in nearly all of the examples they chose to illustrate the features of *saǧʿ*. The result of my investigation was a preliminary attempt to describe the prosody of *saǧʿ* (Stewart 1990). This effort revealed to me that questions of rhyme, rhythm, and meter are regularly ignored in the translation, interpretation, and investigation of the Qurʾān despite their tremendous importance, and I have continued to investigate these aspects of the text (Stewart 2009; 2013; forthcoming—b). I aim eventually to produce a comprehensive work on rhyme and rhythm in the Qurʾān. End-rhyme is very regular in the Qurʾān and constitutes one of the most fundamental features of Qurʾānic style. The necessity to create end-rhyme has profound influences on the structure and syntax of verses, many of which have profound implications for the translation and interpretation of the text.

Attention to genre also has shaped my approach to the Qurʾān, and in this I have been influenced by Bakhtin's essay "The Problem of Speech Genres" [in Bakhtin, M.M. (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.] and by experience not only with pre-modern Arabic texts but also with Arabic dialectal speech genres, including blessings, curses, proverbs, and so on. Genres, whether written or spoken, follow conventional rules, and an understanding of those rules helps one to understand better texts that draw on those genres. This was the fundamental insight of Hermann Gunkel, the founder of Biblical form criticism, and I believe that form criticism has much to offer for the investigation of the Qurʾān. Some medieval Islamic critics engaged in critical investigations that involve form critical insights, such as Ibn Qayyim al-Ǧawziyyah's

work *Aqsām al-Qurʾān* (Oaths of the Qurʾān), and some modern critics of the Qurʾān have performed form critical work, including Anton Baumstark's article on prayers in the Qurʾān and several 20th-cen. German studies of the parable (*maṯal*) in the Qurʾān, but much remains to be done.

The material in the Qurʾān draws on three great traditions: Jewish tradition, including the Hebrew Bible and post-Biblical literature, such as commentaries on the Biblical books; Christian tradition, including the gospels and non-canonical books such as the Life of Adam and Eve; and pagan, pre-Islamic tradition. In my view, the Qurʾānic text suggests that it draws both on textual as well as oral or folkloric sources. Western scholarship on the Qurʾān has tended to concentrate on the first two, the Biblical traditions, because of Western scholars' expertise in Judaism and Christianity, and since the 19th century has involved a prolonged argument over which tradition was crucial. The truth is of course that both are important, so the extreme statements of the debaters regarding this may be ignored. The Islamic tradition in many ways suppressed the connections with pre-Islamic pagan tradition for the same reasons that early Christians denounced the Romans and the Greeks, and Western scholars for the most part followed suit, influenced as they were by Muslim scholarship. In both cases, there were exceptions, such as the works of Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Hamdānī on pre-Islamic lore, and Wellhausen's work *Die reste des arabischen Heidentums*. Still, I feel that pre-Islamic religious tradition's contribution to the Qurʾān has been relatively ignored, and I have explored some aspects of the Qurʾān that may be related to pre-Islamic traditions from a form-critical perspective in Stewart 2011.

It is my view that the early Muslims felt themselves to be living in an extension of Biblical history, and that subsequent events and doctrines served to separate the Qurʾān from the Bible in ways that have obscured the extent of the Qurʾān's involvement with Biblical tradition. It is therefore not only useful but essential to pursue the investigation of Qurʾānic references to Biblical tradition and parallels between the Qurʾān and Biblical texts, but one must also be aware that the Qurʾān has brought together and shaped the three traditions into a unified whole with the Qurʾānic theory of prophecy at the center.

The differences one finds between Biblical and Qurʾānic versions of Biblical narratives generally reflect an ideological commentary on or adjustment of Biblical material for specific purposes, and it is the task of scholars to identify the purposes and strategies involved.

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Tengour

Quel que soit l'objet qu'il choisit d'étudier, l'historien doit l'inscrire dans un temps et dans un espace qu'il aura au préalable défini. Le Coran comme objet historique ne saurait échapper à cette règle. Sa parole – car c'est d'abord ce qu'il a été – est née au début du VIIe siècle à La Mecque, portée et proclamée par un homme de tribu au nom du devoir de solidarité qui le liait à son groupe. Si cette parole est devenue le texte fondateur du dernier monothéisme issu du Proche Orient, l'historien qui s'est assigné la tâche d'en saisir le sens s'efforcera de ne pas l'appréhender depuis ce devenir. Il mobilisera son énergie pour en retrouver l'enracinement sociétal, mental, temporel et territorial à partir duquel il entreprendra de raisonner.

Il s'agira ici de lire les seize passages coraniques choisis au sein du *Qur'ān Seminar* en interrogeant les mots et leurs sens les plus anciens dans la langue arabe. Bien sûr, ces acceptions ne sont pas un gage de certitude, mais elles permettent d'apprécier, à travers les glissements de sens et/ou l'apparition de mots nouveaux, l'évolution des représentations coraniques au fil de la Révélation ainsi que l'évolution de l'homme Muḥammad dans ses rapports avec son dieu, d'une part et avec ses différents adversaires, de l'autre. Le manque de sources arabes antérieures au VIIe siècle, et même datant directement de celui-ci est la principale motivation de ma démarche qui s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une méthode de travail qui s'appuie sur l'anthropologie historique et la sémantique – méthode que j'ai éprouvée lors de mes recherches sur les représentations et les croyances dans l'Arabie du VIIe siècle, en particulier sur les djinns dans le Coran.

Un autre aspect de cette démarche consiste à soulever les points de décalages, parfois de contradictions, qui mettent en scène dans le discours coranique des représentations singulières ou non et les inscrivent comme telles parce qu'ils sont précisément ce qui va rendre l'analyse historique possible. Au-delà du fait que ces points de décalage aident à retrouver la chronologie des passages étudiés, ils obligent à expliciter le rapport du discours coranique à son milieu d'origine. Cette mise en relation est aussi le moyen de comprendre la portée d'un certain nombre d'emprunts bibliques dont le Coran s'empare et qu'il recontextualise dans son propre univers de représentation et de croyance. Elle est enfin, peut-être même surtout, le moyen de saisir la manière dont se symbolisaient les relations entre ces hommes qui ne sont plus et auxquels le Coran était destiné.

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Tesei

I came to the Qurʾān thanks to (or because of) Alexander the Great. During my previous studies on the Alexander legends in the Islamic tradition, I followed backwards the steps that this incredible character left in the Arabic literature. This research path eventually led me to *sūrat al-Kahf* and to the stories displaying strong affinities with the Alexander stories of the water of life and of the wall against Gog and Magog (vv. 60 – 82 and 83 – 102). The *sūra* presented a number of complications susceptible of disorienting somebody like me, who had no background in Qurʾānic studies and at the time was completely unaware of the debate about the Qurʾān's history. Above all, the apparently close connection of the two consecutive pericopes on Moses and Dhū l-Qarnayn with contemporary Syriac texts raised the question of the dating of the passage and of the religious and geographical context from which it originated. The necessity to answer such questions represented the starting point of my involvement in the field of Qurʾānic studies.

My research interests mostly focus on two main aspects. [1] The Qurʾān's engagement with previous and contemporary Judeo-Christian literatures. [2] the Qurʾān's textual history and its connection with the development of the religious identity of the early Muslim community. I am particularly concerned with the relationship between the Qurʾānic text and its paratext, that is, the ensemble of knowledge transmitted by the Muslim tradition. In general, I consider the Qurʾān as a text reflecting the rapid evolution of (at least a part) of a nascent religious community over the 7th century, while I take traditional sources as containing elements of both continuity and discontinuity as regards the original core of such a community. I believe that the traditional understanding of the Qurʾānic text often reflects the process of loss or dilution of memory that followed the rapid territorial expansion of the early Muslim community and its removal from its original cradle. I have a special interest in those elements of the traditional framework of Muḥammad's life that are contradicted by the Qurʾān itself. In particular, I focus on the different representations of the surrounding social, religious and cultural environment reciprocally found in the Qurʾān and in traditional sources (a possible illustrative example being the massive presence of anti-Christian polemics and the constant evocation of Christianizing elements in the Qurʾān vs. the very marginal role Christians are credited with by the Islamic traditions on Muḥammad's life).

I should specify that, while acknowledging the (more than) occasional discrepancy between Qurʾān and tradition, I am not sympathetic with extremely revisionist views about the origins of Islam, neither with too skeptical attitudes toward the Islamic tradition. Instead of dismissing as unreliable the bulk of this transmitted knowledge, I am more inclined to investigate the reasons that provoked such discrepancy. I believe that a likely explanation to this phenomenon is that the Qurʾān and traditional sources do not always refer to the same historical context. In more concrete terms, I address the Qurʾān as a literary document that reflects not only Muḥammad's prophetic career in Central Arabia, but also the dramatic developments of his community during the first decades of its territorial expansion. I believe

that the Qurʾān as we have it now is not the product of or the collection of texts produced by a single author; it is rather the result of a redactional processes that involved the transmission, alteration, re-elaboration or even composition *ex nihilo* of a diversity of literary materials, some of which going back directly to Muḥammad, some others having been composed after his death and attributed to him. I consider the extremely heterogeneous character of the Qurʾānic corpus to be the consequence of a multiple authorship phenomenon and not of the stylistic evolution of Muḥammad's *modus comunicandi* over time. I think that the task of Qurʾān scholar is to detect the different redactional strata which the text is composed of by studying the literary, linguistic and rhetorical internal Qurʾānic features and by comparing them with reliable literary and material extra-Qurʾānic evidence. In other words, their task is a stylistic and historical analysis of the Qurʾānic material independent from any a priori assumptions.

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Toorawa

When I arrived at University in the early 1980s as a just turned 18-year old, the only thing I knew was that I wanted to learn new languages and thereby gain access to new literary traditions (in the original). For a variety of reasons—principally the combination of influential teachers and the challenge it posed—I devoted most of my time to Arabic. Once I was able to, I read pre-Islamic poets, medieval critics, modern novelists and more besides in Arabic. I also read the Qurʾān, a text I had previously only intoned liturgically. Fascinated as I was by the Qurʾān, I turned my energies mostly to modern poetry and classical and medieval materials. This was because I was not (and am still largely not) interested in religious questions, but rather in narrative (and the ways stories are told) and in rhetoric (and the way stylistic choices have an impact)—in short, in the act and art and craft of authoring or composing a literary text. In the late 1990s, I realized that I could apply these interests to the Qurʾān. The phrase *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning* (the title of a volume which appeared in 2000), to some extent captures what interests me.

My entry into Qurʾānic studies was through rhyme, scholarly attention to which was seriously lacking. I did not at first look at the way rhyme worked in the Qurʾān, but at the almost complete absence of it in English translations, something I found, and continue to find, inexplicable. *Qurʾān* means recitation, so to ignore one of its most insistent aural features—rhyme—strikes me as a flawed, and impoverished, way of thinking about it (or the 85% of it that rhymes). Translating the Qurʾān—the great French poet and translator, Yves Bonnefoy, has said we translate better to understand—inevitably led me to think more deeply and seriously about other sty-

listic, rhetorical and lexical considerations, such as characterization, dramatic irony, narrative structure, word choice and placement, the (re)deployment and repetition of words and roots, the presence of loan words (I reject the characterization "foreign words"), and the presence of hapaxes (words that occur only once or rarely in a text or corpus).

Hapaxes are of special interest to me as I believe they (can) reveal a great deal about Qurʾānic rhetoric; they are for example often in evidence in passages describing wonder and awe. Hapaxes are often of unknown or conjectural meaning, or loan words. This has led scholars to look for meanings of Qurʾānic words in other languages, an enterprise I regard as very risky because of what I term "the chocolate croissant effect." Imagine encountering a text a millennium from now and discovering in it the phrase "chocolate croissant." Linguistic research might tell us that the word "chocolate" derives from the Nahuatl *xocolātl* which means "bitter" (from *xococ*) and refers to a foodstuff. That research might tell us that "croissant" is a loan word from French *croissant*, meaning "crescent-shaped" (or "incipient," as with the crescent moon, also called *croissant* in French), commonly applied to a baked good. Relying on this we would surmise that a "chocolate croissant" is a bitter, crescent-shaped baked good of the croissant family. We would only be right about the family of baked goods, but wrong about its specificities. "Chocolate croissants" it turns out are sweet and almost never crescent-shaped, but rectangular (called *pain au chocolat* in French, which eschews the word croissant for precisely this reason). The decision to call this item in English a "chocolate croissant" completely ignores the "original" meaning of "croissant" and to some extent of "chocolate." As Robert Hoyland has said, a word means what it means in its own language, not in another (Hoyland, "The Earliest Written Evidence of the Arabic Language and Its Importance for the Study of the Quran," a keynote "delivered" at the University of Notre Dame, April 21, 2009).

It is, I think, fair to say that generally speaking, attention is disproportionately paid by scholars to subtexts and paratexts and contexts, whereas the nuts and bolts of the Qurʾān's prose itself—such as the *thumma* in QS 42 (Q 75) below—are often either forgotten or worse, emended, in the service of these very subtexts, paratexts and contexts. My own interest is, rather, in how words (especially rhyme-words and hapaxes) are deployed in the Qurʾān, in how those words produce meaning, and in how the stories that are told make meaning.

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Winitzer

I come to the Qurʾān Seminar from the outsider's perspective of an academic training in Assyriology that is coupled with interests in the *Nachleben* of ancient Mesopotamia in later texts from the Near East, in particular the Hebrew Bible but also others, the Qurʾān included. My approach to the Qurʾān corresponds thus to the historical study of the Hebrew Bible, which turns to the intellectual contexts within and against which Israel formed to shed light on her constitutive text. In the case of the Qurʾān, as with the Bible,, this does not gainsay the creative genius of the younger tradition; it does, however, deny implicit variations of *creatio ex nihilo* that are inevitably afforded to the texts by other interpretive paths.

I have centered my comments on passages with clear ancient Near Eastern ancestry, even if such lineage is only known to the Qurʾān from its immediate forbears. The other possibility, that the Qurʾān enjoyed direct access to Mesopotamian remains has been deliberately avoided (for good reason). But if in the aggregate my comments are taken to suggest that the Qurʾān somehow perceived a measure of depth in some of the traditions it contended with, I shall not object. This would further highlight this text's discerning ear and underscore its placement within the stream of scriptural tradition that gushes forth in Late Antiquity, a stream that on occasion yielded waters going back to deep sources.

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Younes

My interest in the Qurʾān Seminar and in the Qurʾān in general is purely linguistic. I am convinced that understanding the language of the Qurʾān, for which sound knowledge of Arabic is key, is crucial to understanding its message.

It is a well-known fact that medieval Muslim commentators and interpreters of the Qurʾān did not fully understand certain Qurʾānic terms. One can cite as evidence the varying and often conflicting interpretations given these terms by different interpreters. I would like to use the different linguistic tools available to me, including comparisons with closely related languages such as Hebrew and Syriac, which are known to have had direct influence on the language of the Qurʾān, to try to understand these terms.

Another area of interest for me is the differences in the composition of different parts of the Qurʾān, which could be taken to imply different authorships or different times of composition. To illustrate, some groups of verses look like well-written hymns composed in rhymed prose on one specific theme which are interrupted by

a set of verses of a completely different structure, often of a different rhyme, and a message of warning or a threat of punishment. I will be examining cases of apparent "insertions" with an attempt at finding out if they follow certain patterns and what these patterns tell us about the linguistic structure of the Qurʾān and its composition.

A third area of interest is the case and mood system (*iʿrāb*) as it is applied in the Qurʾān. Although the system was first developed primarily to ensure the correct reading of the holy book, there are numerous instances in which the system is violated. I look at cases in the 50 passages in which such violations occur and attempt to explain them.

My interest in the language of the Qurʾān is quite recent. My formal training was in Arabic linguistics, but my long career in Arabic instruction has led me to teach courses on the language of the Qurʾān, which in turn led me to examine this language more closely. And the more I examine it, the more fascinated I am by it and the more I feel there is more to understand about it.

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Zellentin

I am predominantly a scholar of Jewish studies and of the sociology of religion, having published on rabbinic and Jewish Hellenistic literature and late ancient heresiology. Over the past decade, my work has increasingly focused on the Qurʾān. I came to its study with special attention for ritual and practice, and for the retelling of traditional materials in ancient cultures.

In my volume *The Qurʾān's Legal Culture* I present the Qurʾān as testifying to the prevalence of three Aramaic religious discourses in the Hijaz in the seventh century C.E.: a specific type of Arabian rabbinic Judaism with especially close ties to Palestine; the Jacobite (i. e. Syriac orthodox) Christian tradition as embodied perhaps most fully by Jacob of Serugh and his interlocutors; and the clearly definable "Judaeo-Christian Legal Culture" that can be accessed by jointly considering the *Clementine Homilies* (only part of which is preserved in Syriac, see my comments on passages QS 1, 4, 5, 6, 19, 24, 25, 27, 41, 44, and 49) and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (which offers a close and contentious outsider's perspective on this tradition, see my comments on QS 6, 7, 11, 12, 18, and 44). In my view, the Qurʾān stands in closest relationship to the Judaeo-Christian tradition without being commensurate with it; it most openly confronts the rabbis, whose divine sanction it continues to recognize; and it implicitly, yet most emphatically and pervasively, polemicizes against those gentile Christians who "associate" (*yušrikūna*) Jesus, allegedly as a second divinity, with the one undividable God.

My defining scholarly pursuit is to read ancient texts in their historical context, and to define ancient groups by understanding their relationship to internal, external, and marginal outsiders (both real and constructed). I derive meaning from the reconstructible echoes which the texts instill in their intended audiences. It is no surprise, then, that I see the Qurʾān as a document that allows for glimpses at various stages in the life of a community that is in the process of emancipating itself from Judaism, Christianity, and the Judaeo-Christian tradition. As I argue at length in *The Qurʾān's Legal Culture*, I do not think that this Judaeo-Christian tradition was preserved by a socially distinct group; rather, it constitutes a demonstrable tendency within mainstream Christian and perhaps also Jewish groups. (There, I also reluctantly subscribe to a rudimentary, two-partite chronology of the Qurʾānic text, while admitting the likelihood of redactional interventions.) Reminiscent of and in close dialogue with aspects of the early Christian experience in the first century of the Common Era, the Qurʾān's emancipation from previous movements allowed the emerging Muslim community to reformulate Judaeo-Christian doctrine from a gentile point of view, and to shatter what it constructs as the Jewish "fetters" of the rabbis, all the while exhorting gentile Christians to reform their imperfect monotheism.

For the Qurʾān, in contrast to the Judaeo-Christian tradition (as embodied in the two aforementioned texts, the *Clementine Homilies* and the *Didascalia Apostolorum*), the ideal religion for Jews and gentiles alike is embodied neither in Judaism nor in any Jewish attempt to embrace the gentiles. This Judaeo-Christian compromise had arguably led to a status for the gentiles in between Jewish election and pagan condemnation, better than the latter but necessarily inferior to the former. In its stead, the Qurʾān emphasizes the primacy—both chronologically and theologically—of the "gentile" over the "Jewish" revelation. The full emancipation of the gentiles, and the (not entirely supercessionist) subsummation of Judaism and Christianity within its own system, allows the Qurʾān to respond to the deficiencies it attributes to rabbinic Judaism and to Syriac Christianity with more forcefulness than the Judaeo-Christians had been able to. Its effective answer to pervasive and to posited intellectual tensions of its time may account in no small measure for the rapid success of Islam during the lifetime of Muḥammad and the Rāshidūn Caliphate.

The Qurʾān, like some Church Fathers, portrays its (mitigated) supercessionism as a return to the origins. It is not anti-Jewish, however, but merely anti-legalistic, deploring the alleged legal excesses it associates with parts of the Torah (here, as a punishment of the Jews) and with its rabbinic Jewish contemporaries (who add to the Torah). At the same time, the Qurʾān maintains the "Jewish" fulfilment of the eternal and universal parts of the divine law as prerequisite to salvation. It is not anti-Christian either, but anti-Christological, rejecting any divine status for Jesus. At the same time, it retains Jesus' "Christian" centrality and divine election as the one who is sent first to the Jews, and then extends divine salvation to the gentiles. The Qurʾān indeed occupies a middle position between Judaism and Christianity, but this position in and of itself is not an invention of the seventh century: rather,

it stands in a continuous intellectual tradition that started developing when the first century Jesus movement started admitting gentiles in its midst, and encompasses texts such as the Didache and the Clementine Homilies.

To summarize, I fully welcome the "Syriac turn" of Qurʾānic studies which we are currently witnessing, yet would much rather see a more inclusive "Aramaic turn," also including all "Judaeo-Christian" and Jewish traditions to whose pertinence the Qurʾān testifies. All the while, we should realize how much all of us, *nolens volens*, continue to stand in the Muslim exegetical tradition. Some recent scholarship operates on what I would like to call the "Piñata Principle": the harder you hit the tradition, the more sweets you get. Luxenbergian methods give me a belly ache all of their own, and looking for a text behind the text, rather than to uncover a finely spun web of intertextual references within an oral culture, seems a misguided exercise. We first have to understand the text as we have it before digging any deeper in the sands of our own literary imagination. My efforts, hence, are to reconstruct the Qurʾān's implied and historical audience, to read the text as a call to reform to its contemporaries (with whom it shared most of its theological assumptions), and to improve our general historical understanding of late antique religion in the process.

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QS 1 Q 1:1 – 7

1.1 In the name of God,
Merciful to all, Compassionate to each!
1.2 Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds:
1.3 Merciful to all,
Compassionate to each!
1.4 Lord of the Day of Judgment.
1.5 It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help.
1.6 Guide us to the Straight Path,
1.7 The path of those upon whom Your grace abounds,
Not those upon whom Your anger falls,
Nor those who are lost.

1.1 Au nom d'Allah, le Tout Miséricordieux, le Très Miséricordieux.
1.2 Louange à Allah, Seigneur de l'univers.
1.3 Le Tout Miséricordieux, le Très Miséricordieux,
1.4 Maître du Jour de la rétribution.
1.5 C'est Toi [Seul] que nous adorons, et c'est Toi [Seul] dont nous implorons secours.
1.6 Guide-nous dans le droit chemin,
1.7 le chemin de ceux que Tu as comblés de faveurs, non pas de ceux qui ont encouru Ta colère, ni des égarés.

سورة الفاتحة
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (1) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (2) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (3) مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (4) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
(5) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (6) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (7)

Azaiez

La *Fātiḥa* est le seul chapitre coranique dont nous ayons deux versions approchantes qui n'ont pas été compilées dans le *muṣḥaf* d'aujourd'hui. Ces deux versions intitulées respectivement *al-ḫalʿ* (« le reniement ») et *al-ḥafd* (« la course ») auraient appartenues à deux corpus ou *muṣḥaf* aujourd'hui perdus, celui d'Ubayy et celui d'Ibn ʿAbbās (Blachère 1959: 189 – 190 ; Crapon de Crapona 1981: 506 – 507; Nöldeke & Schwally *GdQ*[2]*:* 34 – 35; Sfar 2000: 44 – 45; Jeffery 1939: 158 – 162). S'agissant de la sourate *al-ḥafd*, Crapon de Crapona s'est employé à démontrer sa facture coranique en la rapprochant stylistiquement de la sourate *al Fātiḥa* (elle-même absente de la recension d'Ibn Masʿūd). Au-delà des convergences thématique et stylistique, Crapon de Crapona écrit : « Sur le plan purement métrique, les deux prières ont incontestablement une allure coranique » (Crapon de Crapona 1981: 508). La question qui demeure ici est la raison pour laquelle ces deux prières furent exclues et la *Fātiḥa* préservée dans la vulgate dite de ʿUṯmān. Si la question reste débattue (Sfar 2000: 44 – 45), ces divergences soulignent que rien ne permet d'affirmer avec certitude que l'événement du discours coranique fut transposé scrupuleusement et dans sa totalité dans le texte que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. La présence de la *Fātiḥa* rappelle, au contraire, combien le Coran a une histoire complexe. Cette histoire a été définitivement marquée par la prééminence d'un *muṣḥaf* sur d'autres (cf. Ṭabarī *Annales* VI: 2952. On peut y lire : *wa-qālū kāna al-Qurʾān kutub*[an] *fa-taraktahā illā wāḥid*[an]), et par la perte d'un Coran intégral (Suyūṭī: II, 46. On peut y lire : *qad ḏahaba minhu Qurʾān*[un] *kaṯīr*[un]). Ainsi, les données mêmes transmises par la tradition corroborent

pour le moins ce constat. Sur ce point, on lira les pages instructives de Burton (1979: 117 ff.) et Amir-Moezzi (2010: 1–16).

Cuypers

La première sourate du Coran, *al-Fātiḥa*, est un parfait exemple de sourate construite conformément à la rhétorique sémitique, sur la base de correspondances binaires.

– [1] Au nom de Dieu,	*le Très-Miséricordieux, le Miséricordieux.*
= [2] Louange à Dieu,	**Seigneur des mondes**,
– [3]	*le Très-Miséricordieux, le Miséricordieux.*
= [4]	**Maître du Jour du Jugement**

+[5a] *Toi*	nous adorons
+ [b] et *Toi*	nous sollicitons.

– [6] Guide-nous	dans ***la voie*** droite,
– [7a] ***la voie***	de ceux que tu as gratifiés,
= [b] *non*	[de ceux qui] ont encouru la colère,
= [c] *ni*	des égarés.

Les quatre premiers versets se regroupent en deux segments parallèles de deux membres chacun (1–2 // 3–4). Les premiers membres (1 et 3) sont partiellement identiques ; les deuxièmes (2 et 4) sont synonymes. Les quatre derniers membres (6–7) forment deux segments parallèles de deux membres chacun (6–7a et 7b–c). Ils opposent la voie droite (6–7a) à celle des égarés (7b–c). Au centre (5), figure un segment de deux membres complémentaires, donnant le sens de toute la sourate : « Toi, nous adorons » (5a) renvoie à ce qui précède, qui est une prière d'adoration ; « et Toi nous sollicitons » (5b) annonce la suite, qui est une prière de demande. Ainsi, la sourate unit adoration et demande, les deux formes fondamentales et complémentaires de la prière.

Il y a une forte similitude entre cette sourate qui sert de prière d'introduction au Coran, et le Psaume 1 qui introduit au livre du Psautier. Les deux textes sont pareillement construits de manière concentrique (ABA'), forme très courante dans la rhétorique sémitique ; et la thématique des deux voies, développée dans le dernier morceau de la *Fātiḥa*, est celle de l'ensemble du Psaume 1. La fin des deux textes est quasiment la même : « ... ni des égarés » (*Fātiḥa* 1:7c) // « la voie des impies se perd » (Ps 1:6).

Avec les sourates 113 et 114, la sourate *al-Fātiḥa* forme un encadrement liturgique pour le texte du Coran. La très ancienne recension d'Ibn Mas'ūd ne les contenait pas, signe probable de leur introduction relativement tardive dans le Livre.

Dye

Poème liturgique, à connotation eschatologique (v. 4). On y trouve de nombreuses réminiscences bibliques, par exemple autour de l'opposition entre le droit chemin, ou le chemin des justes, et le chemin des égarés (cf. v. 6 / Ps 1:6 et Isa 35:8). Le propos de la *Fātiḥa*, ainsi que son statut et son rôle dans le culte musulman, invitent à une comparaison avec diverses prières chrétiennes ou juives : le *Pater Noster*, mais aussi le Psaume 1 (comme texte liminaire d'un corpus, cf. Cuypers 2004) ou l'*enarxis* de la liturgie de Jean Chrysostome (comme poème destiné à être chanté au début d'un office religieux, cf. Neuwirth & Neuwirth 1991).

Le v. 5 opère une transition remarquable : *iyyāka naʿbudu* fait référence aux vv. 1–4, et *iyyāka nastaʿīn* annonce les versets suivants. Par son contenu, mais aussi par le subtil changement rythmique et phonétique qu'il introduit, notamment dans ses premières syllabes, ce verset évoque un répons psalmodique (cf. Van Reeth 2006: 520–521). Autrement dit, dans le cadre du probable *Sitz im Leben* originel de la sourate, les vv. 1–4 apparaissent comme une doxologie, psalmodiée par le célébrant principal, à laquelle répond la prière d'invocation que constituent les vv. 5–7, psalmodiés par l'assemblée, ou par un autre célébrant. Cette division de la sourate permet de rendre compte du changement de personne dans l'adresse à Dieu : les vv. 1–4 parlent de Dieu à la troisième personne du singulier, alors que les versets suivants en parlent à la deuxième personne du singulier.

Le v. 7 est nettement plus long que les versets précédents, et il marque, dans sa seconde partie (*ġayri l-maġḍūbi ʿalayhim wa-lā l-ḍāllīn*), une *profonde* rupture de rythme par rapport au reste de la sourate. Il est très tentant d'y voir un ajout postérieur. On notera par ailleurs le raccord entre le v. 6 (*ihdinā l-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm*) et Q 2:2 (*ḏālika l-kitābu lā rayba fīhi hudan li-l-muttaqīn*), par des motifs thématique (la guidance) et phonétique (*mustaqīm/muttaqīn*, cf. Dye 2014:155–158, 164).

Hilali

A large number of apocryphal Islamic traditions (*mawḍūʿ* pl. *mawḍūʿāt*) are dedicated to the interpretation and to the "extension" of the *Fātiḥa*. The contrast between the length of this chapter and the expansive aspect of its exegesis is striking. It is a closed/open text. There is a sort of amplification of its importance in the exegesis as well as in the ritual performances that replace in a way the ambiguity of its status in the section of the Qurʾān. In the manuscript 27.1, Ṣanʿāʾ, this chapter is missing in the upper text as well as in the lower text.

Imbert

La plus ancienne mention épigraphique de la sourate *al-Fātiḥā* entière et dans l'ordre canonique des versets remonte à la période omeyyade. Il ne s'agit pas d'une inscription mais d'un graffito, œuvre d'un personnage anonyme. Gravé sur un bloc de basalte, ce graffito coranique proviendrait du site de *Ḫirbat al-Samrāʾ* (35 kilomètres

au nord-est d'Amman, en Jordanie) dans la région d'al-Zarqāʾ. Le bloc aurait été déposé dans l'église d'al-Zarqāʾ avant de rejoindre la collection privée du Patriarcat d'Amman, où nous l'avons étudiée et photographiée en 1993.

Le bloc est de petite taille (39 x 23 cm) et compte 12 lignes d'écriture gravée avec une extrême finesse. Le style de la graphie est apparenté au coufique anguleux archaïque d'époque omeyyade qui se caractérise notamment par des allongements et étirements de caractères. L'écriture ne porte, bien sûr, aucun point diacritique ni aucune voyelle ou signe de lecture. L'analyse paléographique reste notre seul moyen de dater ce texte: en comparaison avec d'autres graffiti de même facture, nous proposons de le dater de la première moitié du iie siècle de l'Hégire soit entre 720 et 750 environ.

La sourate est clairement introduite par la mention de la *basmala* entière et développée. Le texte est conforme en tout point à celui de la vulgate. On relève deux écarts d'orthographe: à la ligne 6, le personnage a gravé un *ṭāʾ* au lieu d'un *ṣād* dans le mot *ṣirāṭ* (écrit *ṭirāṭ*) ; à la ligne 7, il a écrit *al-nʿamta* au lieu de *anʿamta*. Dans la logique de la *scriptio defectiva*, il ne note pas les *alif* dans les expressions *rabb al-ʿ(ā)lamīn et wa-lā l-ḍ(ā)llīn*.

L'extrait coranique occupe 9 lignes sur les 12 ; dans les trois dernières lignes, après la sourate, se trouve une invocation en faveur du personnage qui a gravé le texte (*Allāhumma iġfir li-Rabāḥ b. Ḥayyān wa-li-wālidayhi wa-li-mā waladā wa-li-man qara'a hāḏā l-kitāb wa-qāla Āmīn Āmīn rabb al-ʿālamīn* : "ô Dieu pardonne à *Rabāḥ b. Ḥayyān* ainsi qu'à ses parents et à ceux qu'ils ont enfantés, à celui qui lira cette inscription et dira Amen, Amen, Seigneur des mondes!").

L'épigraphie et la graffitologie n'ont pas encore fourni d'attestations de versets de la sourate *al-Fātiḥā* antérieurs à celui que nous présentons. De fait, ce graffito est sans doute l'une des premières matérialisations de ces versets, à l'époque où ils commencèrent à connaître un statut particulier au sein de la communauté des musulmans. Alors qu'il est devenu un verset emblématique récité en de nombreuses occasions, son extrême rareté en épigraphie ancienne est plus qu'étonnante. Elle pose la question du statut de ces versets ou de ces groupes de versets au sein même de la vulgate coranique.

Kropp

Q 1 is clearly (*mubīn* in its correct sense! Kropp 2014) a prayer, related to the magic prayers (Q 113; 114). As prayers they are not of the same nature as the rest of the corpus, but stand in normal position (beginning and end) in a religious compilation.

Much has been said about the parallels between Biblical texts, Jewish and Christian prayers and the *Fātiḥa*. One should not forget, though, that here most basic statements of faith are to be expressed. Seen in the general situation of monotheistic religions in the 6th, 7th centuries CE and their interactions and common roots, this prayer cannot be too deviant from others of the same kind.

The question whether the *Fātiḥa* is part of the "revelation" is a theological question, irrelevant to a philologist and historian. For the scientist there are only human texts of different kind and functions. All else is faith which cannot be discussed. However, the question why and how human beings believe certain texts to be divine may be an object of research in several fields of scientific research.

The *Fātiḥa*, the last two *sūra*s and Q 112 have a good chance to be the oldest documented pieces of religious texts in Arabic, possibly pre-Qurʾānic.

Variants to the text are important as the substitution of *ṣirāṭ* by *sabīl*, clearly a *lectio facilior* (Jeffery 1939: 159). But one has to remark that *ṣirāṭ* and its variant forms probably do not derive from Latin *strata* as the development of the Latin (and Greek) consonant cluster *S-T-R* in other words proves and do not mean "path, street." *Ṣirāṭ* is derived from the root *S-Ṭ-R* by metathesis and emphasis of S to Ṣ (as attested in Syriac). Furthermore *ṣirāṭ* "line" is an adverbial exponent, *sirāṭ mustaqīm* meaning "straight, straightforward." The parallel to Psalm 1 is weak then, though there is the same linguistic device ("path of the just"). Translating sacred texts there is a tendency to literal translation which produces false results in the target language.

A remark on the *basmala:* it is a Biblical citation (Exod 34:6; Ps 86[85]:15 and passim) in use already in pre-Islamic times till today by Coptic and Ethiopic Christians (even if *teutisca non leguntur*; cf. Kropp 2013).

Madigan

As the text stands, it is an elegant and neatly rounded prayer of praise and invocation, that can easily be considered in isolation from the corpus of the Qurʾān. Though it is traditionally given the title *fātiḥat al-kitāb,* there is nothing in particular about it that would indicate any role in relation to a corpus of scripture (as distinct, for example, from the opening of the next *sūra* with its evocation of *al-kitāb*). Of course one can discern in these verses' vocabulary and in the stark differentiation of the two ways an epitome of the Qurʾānic worldview. However, the division into three groups (the graced, those under wrath, and those who are astray), which most translations and *tafāsīr* prefer, can seem forced. Abdel Haleem in his translation takes the latter two attributes as glosses on "those whom you have graced," as had Yusuf Ali before him. That is, those whom God has graced are no longer under wrath (note the impersonal form of *al-maġḍūb ʿalayhim,* which is often ignored in translations) nor are they any longer wandering about aimlessly. Interestingly there is nothing about the *sūra* which indicates a divine speaker or a privileged human addressee – in the canonical ordering of the text the question of who precisely the speaker might be and who the singular addressee is only raised in the fourth verse of *al-Baqara*, where a second-person singular possessive is used.

Pregill

Succinctly and elegantly encompasses the major themes of the scripture: monotheism, praise, eschatology, worship and supplication, guidance, and the gulf that yawns between the damned and the saved. These are characteristic concerns of the period in which the Qurʾān was revealed, and thus the *Fātiḥa* clearly communicates exactly why the text must be understood in the cultural and religious context of Late Antiquity. The selection of this *sūra* as the opening to the canonical scripture is hardly surprising – if it was not deliberately composed specifically for this purpose.

V. 1: *Allāh:* the universal name for the one God in Arabic; *al-Raḥmān*, the proper name for God in Yemenite monotheism, perhaps derived from Jewish usages (see Jomier 1957 and Rippin 1991); *al-raḥīm*, the merciful, perhaps a gloss on *al-Raḥmān*. "In the name of God, Raḥmān, [that is,] the Merciful One."

The oscillation between Allāh and al-Raḥmān as divine names has always struck me as similar to that between Elohim and YHWH in the Pentateuch, with Allāh/al-Lāh al-Raḥmān reminiscent of the compromise formulation YHWH-Elohim. On al-Raḥmān as the particular name (≈ YHWH) and Allāh as the more generic (≈ Elohim), cf. Q 20:90: "Aaron had said, 'O my people, you are only being tested with it [viz., the Golden Calf], however, your lord is al-Raḥmān.'" This seems like an allusion to the Biblical precursor: "Aaron made proclamation and said, 'A feast dedicated to YHWH tomorrow'" (Exod 32:5).

Vv. 6–7: the most quintessentially late antique gesture of the entire *sūra*. The revelatory community is on the straight path; others are objects of wrath or led astray. Communal sclerosis: society is divided into believers and infidels, without any room in between – the most characteristic mark of the shift from classical antiquity to the empires of faith that dominated medieval life (see Brown 1989: 172–187). Cf. Donner 2010 on the fluidity of the Qurʾānic community – the nominal boundaries between Believers, Christians, and Jews can be transcended, but not the behavioral boundaries established and upheld by true monotheists.

Traditional interpretation says that those who receive *ġaḍab* are Jews, those characterized by *ḍalāla* are Christians. Perhaps this is *tafsīr*, perhaps not; *ġaḍab* does seem to be consistently associated with *Banū Isrāʾīl* in the Qurʾān. Is it possible to determine if *ḍalāla* is predominantly associated with the doctrinal excesses of Christians?

Rippin

The prayer function of the passage emerges from its speaking voice, dissonant within the context of most of the Qurʾān. That might suggest a separate composition for strictly liturgical purposes (as opposed to the doctrinal and potentially liturgical purpose of others sections). It also draws attention to the artificiality of the use of *qul* to deflect this voice elsewhere in the text.

The parallel to the Lord's Prayer has often been pointed out but that would seem to be more relevant in terms of function and prominence than in content. In making

that comparison, the absence of the divine-human symbol of the family in the Qurʾān is notable. Much of the vocabulary in the passage has Hebrew/Syriac parallels – Noldeke's treatment is extensive (*GdQ*[2] I, 111 ff) – with special attention to *raḥmān* and *ʿālam*, but also to most other phrases in one way or another.

An interesting textual issue arises which may reflect the late emerging canonization of this prayer (but may be the result of other technical factors to do with the inscription): the inscription in the Dome of the Rock has sometimes been said to include v. 2 (as well as v. 1, the *basmala*, of course) on the South-east portion of the outer inscription (where the name of the founding caliph is found). However, it actually reads *rabb al-ʿālamīn li-llāh al-ḥamd*, thus effectively being the verse in reverse.

Sirry

Why is this chapter (*sūra*) named *al-fātiḥa*, which means the opening? As is known, the word *fataḥa* (to open) and its derivatives do not occur in this *sūra*. It is most likely that this *sūra* is named so because of its being the first chapter of the Qur'ān, though it is not some sort of introduction to the Qur'ān. Interestingly, this *sūra* along with the last two *sūras* of the Qur'ān, known as *al-muʻawwaḏatayn* (because they begin with "*qal aʻūḏu*"), are missing in Ibn Masʻūd's codex. In terms of its content, this opening *sūra* takes the form of a prayer. As such, the speaker in the entire *sūra* is the reciter/reader. This *sūra* sets forth fundamental teachings of the Qurʾān. It begins with addressing God by those very attributes whose manifestations surround one all the time. The *sūra* seems to establish the powerful image of God vis-à-vis the powerless human beings. However, in between the two contrasting images lies the contested issue of the extent to which humans can attain in their life. The powerful God is described with the two most frequent attributes mentioned in the Qurʾān, namely *raḥmān* and *raḥīm*, as well as two attributes that signify his authority in this world (*rabb al-ʿālamīn*) and his absolute mastery of the hereafter (*mālik yawm al-dīn*). The interplay between *raḥmān* and *raḥīm* is intriguing. In a number of verses, the Qurʾān uses the former as a synonym of Allah, suggesting that *raḥmān* has an exclusively divine connotation. One of such striking verses is "Say: Call upon Allah or call upon *raḥmān*" (Q 17:110). It has been pointed out by scholars that that *raḥmān* was the name given to the God of the heavens worshipped in pre-Islamic Yemen and central Arabia. However, it seems that the latter (*raḥīm*) does not acquire such a status in the Qurʾān. The recognition of God's power is then followed by human declaration of obedience and submission. This opening *sūra* ends by situating human existence within the salvation history. The transition from praising God and entering into history, the speaker seeks guidance, "Guide us to the straight path" (v. 5). This straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) is a universal gift from God. It is not exclusive to any race or any people or religious group and is not exclusively delivered in any particular language. The notion of guidance is central to the Qurʾānic understanding of salvation. The Qurʾān often refers to guidance (*hudā* or *hidāya*) as the most inclusive concept

used to express God's initiative for humanity's salvation. How would God guide human beings to the straight path? This question has occupied Muslim scholars from the early period of Islam to modern times. Certainly the answer to the above question is more complex than simply delineating two mutually exclusive ways, namely, through revelation or reason. Furthermore, while seeking His guidance, the speaker identifies with certain figures in the drama of history, i.e., "those on whom your grace was bestowed" on the one hand, and on the other, "those on whom your anger fell" or "those who went astray." This identification with the righteous and rejection or condemnation of the evildoers becomes a central theme in the Qurʾān. Thus, one's salvation does not depend on his/her belonging to a particular race, creed, or group but on his/her own right belief and right action (Q 2:62; 5:69).

Stefanidis

Using the voice of the believer rather than that of God, this *sūra* differs from the rest of the Qurʾānic text by its tone which does not convey the same dramatic and polemical tension so characteristic of the Qurʾān. The *Fātiḥa* presents a rather clear and condensed theological discourse (vv. 1–4), followed by a liturgical supplication (vv. 5–7) which has parallels in other monotheistic traditions. The two parts that compose this *sūra* are marked by a change of address: in vv. 1–4 God is referred to in the third person, whereas in vv. 5–7 God is directly addressed by use of the second person.

The above, together with the use of the first person plural (*ihdinā*, *naʿbudu*) rather than the more intimate singular (cf. Ps 27: 11), would indicate that this carefully composed *sūra* had an important liturgical function in the early Muslim community. If that is the case, we would have access through this *sūra* to the core theological concepts of early Islam: *rabb al-ʿālamīn*, *yawm al-dīn*, *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* etc.

Tesei

The opening *sūra* presents substantial differences compared to most of the Qurʾānic texts. For instance, the basmala is counted among the verses and the *sūra* is not named after a word it contains. As other scholars have already noticed, the invocation at vv. 5–7 is directly formulated by the believer (or by the community of the believers) without being introduced by the typical Qurʾānic *qul*. Thus, the text here does not seem to claim to be emitted by God. It is also noticeable that, unlike the titles *al-raḥmān*, *al-raḥīm* and *rabb al-ʿālamīna*, that of *mālik yawm al-dīn* does not appear elsewhere in the Qurʾān. The possibility that *al-Fātiḥa* represents a composition independent from the rest of the corpus is a concrete one. From this perspective, Cuypers' observation about the parallelism between Q 1 and the Ps 1 appears to be of great importance. In fact, the evocation of an opening text would suggest that al-Fātiḥa was composed with a similar specific aim, i.e., to open the Qurʾān. In other words, the composition of the opening *sūra* would be part of a real redactional proc-

ess operated by scribes. Neuwirth & Neuwirth (1991) maintain the view of several classical commentators, according to whom al-Fatiḥa is alluded to in the seven *maṯānī* mentioned in Q 15:87: *wa-laqad ātaynāka sabʿan min al-maṯānī wa-l-qurʾāna l-ʿaẓīm*. This would point to an early composition of the *sūra*. However, it seems to me more probable that al-Fātiḥa was composed at a later date, when the idea of collecting/redacting the Qurʾān had already been developed.

Toorawa

Aspects of the *Fātiḥa* that are of special interest to me include:

[1] The typically Qurʾānic change in person (*iltifāt*): third person (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, "all praise to God"), second person (*iyyāka naʿbudu*, "it is you we worship"), first person (*ihdinā*, "guide us").

[2] The fact that the Prophet Muḥammad's personal voice is not really implicated. Indeed, there is no second person singular addressee other than the deity, and the first person speaker is plural, leading me to think not of a nascent community engaging in a liturgy, but rather of a group of initiates far more comfortable with the cosmic terms in which the deity is described. I imagine adepts, prophets, angels.

[3] The unusual use of the impersonal in *ġayri l-maġḍūbi ʿalayhim wa-lā l-ḍāllīn* ("not those angered with, nor those straying"), especially as that use might relate to rhyme, something that is undoubtedly the case with the use of *iyyāka* ("it is you") earlier in order to produce first *naʿbudu* ("we worship") and then *nastaʿīn* ("we ask for help").

I also think it is worth asking how this *sūra* is part of the Qurʾān, whether it is a *sūra* «proprement dit.» It seems to me that the Qurʾānic message, as it were, begins with the opening lines of the second *sūra* (Q 2), and not this one, which strikes me as being exactly what its name (*Fātiḥa*) suggests, namely a prolegomenon, something preparatory, providing entry into something else (and which is later ritualized in its capacity as an 'opener').

Much has been written about the *basmala* (the opening pious phrase to all but one of the Qurʾān's *sūra*s) being an integral part of the *sūra*. Just as there is a question about the relationship of the *basmala* to the verses that follow it, for me there is a question about the relationship of this "*sūra*" to the rest of the Qurʾān.

Winitzer

The opening divine epithet may contain an echo of the self-disclosure by Israel's deity to Moses in Exod 34:6–7 (esp. *ʾēl raḥûm*, "a merciful God"). Rabbinic Judaism took this Biblical passage to describe the 13 attributes of mercy (*middôt*) of Israel's deity (*b. Roš Haš.* 17b), most dealing with justice; in turn this became the source text for a central theological tenet in Judaism, something recited regularly in the synagogue, especially in contexts of judgment (e.g., Yom Kippur), as a proclamation of

the divine's preeminence. Its place and knowledge by those disputing Jewish theological claims thus cannot be ignored.

Younes

Two comments:

[1] The spelling of the first word of the *sūra* suggests an original Hebrew or Syriac connection. In Arabic, the word meaning "name" is written with an initial *alif:* اسم. The basmala seems to be the only exception in the language where this particular spelling is found.

[2] The last verse (v. 7) has the hallmarks of an addition to an originally coherent and otherwise well-written passage. As I will show in my comments on other passages, one shared feature of what I argue to be additions is the inclusion of a negative element and the threat of punishment in a verse that is typically much longer than other verses of a well-written original set.

Zellentin

Al-Fātiḥa recasts major psalmic and prophetic themes; especially the references to Ps 1 (see Cuypers) and Isa 35 (see Dye) seem helpful. Yet the Qurʾān addresses scripture by taking into account how it was understood by its Late Ancient contemporaries. Casting the community as belonging to the camp of either good or evil, and juxtaposing a path for each, is of course a topos universally shared by Jews, Christians, and others, yet nowhere does such language feature as distinctly as in the Judaeo-Christian literature.

The conceptuality of *ṣirāṭa llaḏīna anʿamta ʿalayhim*, "the way of those on whom you have bestowed grace" as opposed to those *al-maġḍūbi ʿalayhim*, "on whom you have bestowed wrath," and who are *al-ḍāllīna*, "astray," in v. 7, may best be understood as addressed to an audience that is familiar with the Judaeo-Christian "Two-Ways" doctrine. (This holds true even if we construct the way of the wicked ones as an explanation, *via negativa*, of the way of the good ones, as Madigan suggests: Q 37:23 informs us about the complementary *ṣirāṭ al-ǧaḥīm*, the path to hell.) The cognate image of a path of life and a path of death is attested already in Qumran and in early Jewish and Christian literature; it also features elsewhere in the Qurʾān as I discuss in my comments on QS 44. The formulation of the "Two Ways" that should be resounding most forcefully in one's ear when hearing the Qurʾān, here and in Q 90, may be the one preserved in the *Clementine Homilies*, which puts it as follows: "These good and evil deeds I knowingly declare to you as two ways. Those strolling down the one will *perish*, while those trekking the other will be rescued. For the way of those who will perish is wide and smooth—*it ruins them without troubling them*. The way of those who will be *saved*, however, is narrow and difficult—but will finally save those braving its difficulties. Before these two

ways stand *Unbelief and Faith*. Setting out in Unbelief are those who ... have forgotten Judgment Day" (*Clementine Homilies* 7.6 – 8, my emphases).

The literary affinities between *al-Fātiḥa* and the *Clementine Homilies* are limited, encompassing concepts shared by the Jewish and Christian tradition more broadly: two paths, condemnation, and the judgement day (v. 4). Yet if we cast the intertextual net more widely throughout the Qurʾān, a much more specific affinity emerges. The *Homilies*' main point that the path of the good is difficult ("steep") is evoked in Q 90:11. Theologically, both the Qurʾān and the Judaeo-Christian text combine the concept of human choice with a sense that God has already sealed the fate of individuals. Elsewhere, e. g., in Q 2:10, God is portrayed as amplifying both good and evil inclinations, leading to a clear judgment at the end of time, a concept cognate to the *Clementine Homilies* as well, esp. in *Homilies* 2 and 3. All this, of course, does not amount to an argument of literary "influence." Rather, the *Clementine Homilies* constitute secondary evidence for a cluster of teachings that the Qurʾān presupposes part of its audience to know, and part of it newly to embrace, preserving and transforming the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

QS 2 Q 2:30 – 39

2.30 And remember when God said to the angels: “I shall appoint a deputy on earth”, and they answered: “Will you place therein one who sows discord and sheds blood while we chant Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?” God said: “I know what you do not.”
2.31 He taught Adam the names of all things. Then He displayed them to the angels and said: “Tell me the names of these things, if you are truthful.”
2.32.They said: “Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You taught us. You! You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.”
2.33 God said: “O Adam, reveal to them their names”. When Adam revealed their names, God said: “Did I not tell you that I know the Unseen of the heavens and the earth? That I know what you make public and what you hide?”
2.34 And remember when God said to the angels: “Kneel before Adam”; they knelt, all except Satan, who disdained, grew proud and became an unbeliever.
2.35 We said: “O Adam, inhabit the Garden, you and your wife. Eat of it in comfort and ease, wherever you wish. But do not come near this tree, or else you will transgress.”
2.36 Satan seduced them from it, and caused them to leave their earlier abode. We said: “Go down, an enemy each to each! On earth you will find habitation and a certain term of life.”
2.37 And Adam obeyed the words of his Lord, and his Lord pardoned him.
He is Ever-ready to pardon; He is Compassionate to each.
2.38 We said: “Go down from it, all of you. And when My guidance comes to you, whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall fall upon them, nor shall they grieve.
2.39 But those who disbelieve and call Our wonders lies, these are the people of the Fire, in which they shall abide for ever.”

2.30 Lorsque Ton Seigneur confia aux Anges: «Je vais établir sur la terre un vicaire «Khalifa». Ils dirent: «Vas-Tu y désigner un qui y mettra le désordre et répandra le sang, quand nous sommes là à Te sanctifier et à Te glorifier?» – Il dit: «En vérité, Je sais ce que vous ne savez pas!».
2.31 Et Il apprit à Adam tous les noms (de toutes choses), puis Il les présenta aux Anges et dit: «Informez-Moi des noms de ceux-là, si vous êtes véridiques!» (dans votre prétention que vous êtes plus méritants qu’Adam).
2.32 – Ils dirent: «Gloire à Toi! Nous n’avons de savoir que ce que Tu nous a appris. Certes c’est Toi l’Omniscient, le Sage».
2.33 Il dit: «O Adam, informe-les de ces noms ;» Puis quand celui-ci les eut informés de ces noms, Allah dit: «Ne vous ai-Je pas dit que Je connais les mystères des cieux et de la terre, et que Je sais ce que vous divulguez et ce que vous cachez?»
2.34 Et lorsque Nous demandâmes aux Anges de se prosterner devant Adam, ils se prosternèrent à l’exception d’Iblis qui refusa, s’enfla d’orgueil et fut parmi les infidèles.
2.35 Et Nous dîmes: «O Adam, habite le Paradis toi et ton épouse, et nourrissez-vous-en de partout à votre guise; mais n’approchez pas de l’arbre que voici: sinon vous seriez du nombre des injustes».
2.36 Peu de temps après, Satan les fit glisser de là et les fit sortir du lieu où ils étaient. Et Nous dîmes: «Descendez (du Paradis); ennemis les uns des autres. Et pour vous il y aura une demeure sur la terre, et un usufruit pour un temps.
2.37 Puis Adam reçut de son Seigneur des paroles, et Allah agréa son repentir car c’est Lui certes, le Repentant, le Miséricordieux.
2.38 – Nous dîmes: «Descendez d’ici, vous tous! Toutes les fois que Je vous enverrai un guide, ceux qui [le] suivront n’auront rien à craindre et ne seront point affligés».
2.39.Et ceux qui ne croient pas (à nos messagers) et traitent de mensonge Nos révélations, ceux-là sont les gens du Feu où ils demeureront éternellement.

سورة البقرة
وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلاَئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ
وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ (30) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلاَئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلاَءِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (31) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (32) قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا
أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ (33) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلاَئِكَةِ
اسْجُدُوا لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (34) وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلاَ مِنْهَا
رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلاَ تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (35) فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا
اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ (36) فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (37) قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (38)
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (39)

Azaiez

Ce passage illustre la dimension polyphonique de l'énonciation coranique. La polyphonie désigne comme le suggère l'étymologie grecque la pluralité des voix qui se font entendre dans une énonciation (Larcher 1998: 203 – 224). Cette pluralité de voix est notamment introduite par la présence du verbe *qāla* qui demeure le verbe le plus usité du Coran (ʿAbd al-Bāqī: 663 – 684). Ainsi, la présence de discours rapportés, d'échanges de paroles, d'indications quant à l'attitude des protagonistes de ces mêmes dialogues (qui s'apparentent à des didascalies) permet de rapprocher ce court récit à une forme scénique et théâtrale (Ben Taïbi 2009: 155). Or cette polyphonie et cette "mise en scène" dialoguée sont en l'occurrence le cadre privilégié où peuvent s'exprimer des « voix » qui s'affrontent ou qui sont en désaccords. Ces confrontations dialoguées sont l'un des aspects les plus marquants à la fois de l'argumentation et de la polémique dans le Coran (Larcher 2000: 453 – 454) mais aussi de la narration dans le Coran (Azaiez: QS21). Ce style dialogique est sans doute à rapprocher des soghyata (sing. soghita) ou poèmes religieux syriaques.

Dye

Ce passage combine trois péricopes : vv. 30 – 33 ; v. 34 ; vv. 35 – 38. Les versets 30 – 33 ont de fortes affinités avec les traditions rabbiniques (qui pouvaient facilement circuler entre les différentes communautés de l'époque) : dialogue entre Dieu et les anges, et enseignement des noms des êtres à Adam (comparer Gen 2:20, où c'est l'homme qui nomme les êtres).

Le v. 34 fait allusion à l'histoire de la prosternation des anges, que l'on trouve dans plusieurs apocryphes chrétiens. L'épisode est narré moins allusivement ailleurs dans le Coran (Q 7:11 – 24; 15:26 – 43; 17:61 – 65; 18:50 – 51; 20:115 – 124; 38:71 – 85). La question centrale est celle de la hiérarchie entre l'homme et les anges. S'y ajoutent deux autres questions: comment Dieu a-t-il permis à Satan de tenter l'homme et de conduire à la chute d'Adam? Quelle est l'origine des différents noms du diable? Ces

questions, à des degrés divers, se retrouvent dans le Coran. La première pose toutefois un problème.

Logiquement, les anges devraient être supérieurs à l'homme (ils ont été créés avant, d'une matière plus éminente). Si Adam est supérieur, c'est parce qu'il a été créé à l'image de Dieu. Les récits chrétiens reposent ainsi sur l'idée que l'homme est créé à l'image de Dieu et sur une typologie Adam/Christ. Cette typologie est présente dans le Coran, même si ce n'est pas dans le cadre d'une christologie chrétienne « orthodoxe » (cf. Van der Velden 2007 et Reynolds 2010: 46 – 54). Mais comment comprendre la prosternation des anges, si aucune explication de la supériorité de l'homme n'est donnée, et si la thèse de la création de l'homme à l'image de Dieu n'est pas affirmée ? Le Coran, et l'islam à ses débuts, ne sont pas clairs sur ce point (cf. Q 42:11 et le *ḥadīṯ ḫalaqa llāhu Ādama ʿalā ṣūratihi*). Les destinataires du message coranique étaient sans doute familiers des récits chrétiens et savaient pourquoi les anges devaient se prosterner. Il se pourrait cependant que Q 2:30 – 33 (récit unique dans le Coran) entende donner une explication *différente* : les anges ne savent pas répondre à la question posée par Dieu, Adam si – pour des raisons qui relèvent, non des capacités naturelles de l'homme, mais seulement de la décision divine. Le texte insiste ainsi sur le fossé qui sépare Dieu et Adam, qui tient son savoir uniquement de Dieu.

Grodzki

Typical of the Qurʾānic narrative is the re-telling and elaborating on well-known old Jewish-Christian topoi circulating in the Middle East at that time. Here – the story of creation, prostration, fall of angels and the original sin of man. A question arises: if Adam was not created in God's image, why would the angels of the Qurʾān bow to him? Would the answer lie in the here enigmatic term *ḫalīfa?* Or simply a test of obedience? Or knowledge of something that the angels wouldn't know, but which was revealed to Adam or inscribed into his nature (perhaps as a task for him to fulfill through his creation and life)?

Hilali

In the core of this passage there is the element of the test given both to Adam, to the Angels and to Iblis and by extension, to human beings. The test is a leitmotiv in religious literature and in the ancient Arabic narratives. Knowledge about the Prophets, their mission and their access to legitimacy is often introduced by the "theatralisation" of the test. We find the same structure in *ḥadīṯ* literature especially in the narratives about the dialogues between the Prophet Muḥammad and non-Muslims. The function of this argumentation is related to the faith issue often presented in Qurʾānic discourse to a matter of knowledge (Those who know and those who do not).

Imbert

Commentaire concernant le verset 33. La question d'Adam est rarement évoquée dans les inscriptions arabes anciennes. À notre connaissance, en épigraphie arabo-islamique, jamais Dieu n'est appelé *rabb Ādam* ("Seigneur d'Adam"), alors qu'il est maintes fois qualifié de *rabb Ibrāhīm, rabb Mūsā wa-Hārūn, rabb ʿĪsā, rabb ʿUzayr* et bien sûr *rabb Muḥammad* (cf. Imbert 2001: 73). Plus rarement, il est assimilé à un Seigneur des anges: *rabb Ǧibrīl, Mīkā'īl wa-Isrāfīl* (cf. al-Ṣanduq 1955: 213–17). En ce qui concerne l'extrait à proprement parler, il s'agit d'un bref extrait du v. 33, un texte d'inspiration coranique cité dans un graffito du iie siècle, relevé dans le nord-est de la Jordanie (site du Wādī Salmā. Cf. al-Ḥisān 2006: 23–4, n. 6). C'est avant tout la question du *ġayb* qui semble avoir intéressé le lapicide et non la nature ou le statut d'Adam. L'extrait de verset se trouve réintroduit dans une formule de *šahāda* développée: *lā ilāha illā anta taʿlam ġayb al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ* ([...] tu connais le mystère des cieux et de la terre). Immédiatement après cette citation, nous trouvons un second extrait de verset sous la forme d'une simple mention de *ilayka l-maṣīr* (Q 2:285 ou Q 60:4). L'ensemble forme ce qu'il est convenu de nommer une construction ou amalgame coranique : il s'agit d'une reformulation de verset produite à partir d'un montage de plusieurs extraits coraniques. Cet usage rappelle l'extrême souplesse du texte coranique dans les deux premiers siècles de l'Hégire.

Madigan

The Midrash often recounts discussions between God and the angels, for example, about the creation of humanity. The context is the question of why the plural is used in the Genesis account: "Let us make man." Is God perhaps addressing the elements that will provide the physical aspects of the human being? Or is God consulting the angels? In *Genesis Rabbah* 8 we find, "Rabbi Simon said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create man, the ministering angels were divided into camps and factions. Some said, 'Let Him create man;' others said, 'Let Him not create man.'"

Another midrash (*Sanhedrin* 38b) has God creating angels and asking them whether he should create man. They ask God what man will do, whereas the angels in this passage seem already to know what man will do. When the midrashic angels opposed the creation of man after learning from God what the creature will do, God burns them up and creates a second set of angels—with the same outcome. Finally, a third set of angels reply to God's question by asking what purpose the first two sets of angels served. The world is God's, they say, and so God should do with the world whatever he wishes.

It is interesting to note the doubly negative reaction of the midrashic angels as in the Qurʾānic passage. At the same time, the positive evaluation of Adam in both is left to God.

There is a stark difference between the understanding of knowledge of names here (vv. 31–33) and in the Biblical narrative (Gen 2:19–23). There God brings each

animal to the man to see whether it will be a fit mate; the text stresses that whatever the man called it, that was its name. With the creation of woman God eventually succeeds in eliciting from the man a cry of recognition (v. 23). It is the first time the human being speaks.

One sees in the Qurʾānic passage a different approach to the first sin—though perhaps the first sin is really Iblis's refusal to bow—from that in Genesis. In the Biblical scene humans allow themselves to be convinced by the serpent that God is a rival trying to keep them away from something that could easily be theirs—divinity! Precisely in that lies the drama and the tragedy of the human person in relationship to God. The Qurʾān does not tell us what specifically the sin of Adam and his wife was. Yet there seems a strange imbalance between, on the one hand the banishment from *al-ǧanna* (v. 38) and the life of mutual enmity (v. 36) that are the punishment for the crime, and on the other the relative ease with which Adam is pardoned (v. 37).

Pregill

A superlative example of Qurʾān as rewritten Torah: a Biblical narrative is drawn out of its original context and reshaped according to both the larger exegetical tendencies of the day and the predominant thematic concerns and theological outlook of Qurʾānic discourse. The direct parallels in wording between vv. 35–39 and the narrative of the Fall in Genesis 2–3 suggest a close relationship with the canonical precursor, but combined with certain well-established mythemes that circulated widely in Late Antiquity, knitted together into a coherent whole and reshaped to advance the Qurʾān's particular viewpoint and agenda.

In Second Temple and late antique Jewish literature, the mytheme of angelic opposition to the creation of humanity overlaps with that of angelic opposition to the revelation of the Torah. Here it is synthesized with two other narrative complexes, the fall of Adam and the fall of Iblīs; the latter conspicuously draws on still other well-established mythemes, especially Enochic traditions on the fallen angels as well as the prostration story, which unlike most of the other narrative components here seems to be distinctively Christian (see Reynolds 2010: 39–54). The symmetry between Iblīs' sin and that of Adam is largely implicit here, but more developed elsewhere in the Qurʾān.

The major theme of the story is not the perversion of human will or the inevitability of ruptures in the divine-human relationship (the abiding themes of Christian and Jewish exegesis of the story respectively) but rather that of God's overwhelming sovereignty, which is here asserted over the angels, Adam, and Iblīs alike. The *ḫalīfa* reference (v. 30) highlights the theme of delegation of authority; cf. David (Q 38:26) and Aaron (Q 7:142). Notably, in all three cases the *ḫalīfa* sins and is forgiven after sincere repentance or intercession.

V. 34: A verse which features the ubiquitous root *K-F-R*, forms of which are deployed more than five hundred times in the Qurʾān. The centrality of this root links the Qurʾān both linguistically and conceptually with a rich array of late antique

precursors, both Jewish and Christian. In particular, the overlap between the semantic range of extremely significant terms in Syriac discourse (e.g., *sāhdā*, *deḥltā*, *kāfūrā*) and their Arabic cognates or correspondents (e.g., *šahīd, taqwā, kāfir*) – often utilized together in similar configurations – compels us to take the Qurʾān's links to the various monotheisms of Late Antiquity very seriously (see Becker 2009: 333–334).

Reynolds

The tradition of the prostration of the angels before Adam, which the Qurʾān develops here, is distinctly Christian. The Jewish midrash *Genesis Rabbah* (8:10) explains that the angels desired to worship Adam when they saw in him the image of God. However, God (in order to save them from a sacrilege) made Adam fall asleep so that the angels would know that he is not divine. To Christian sources such as the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (*La caverne des trésors* 1987, 17–21), however, there is nothing sacrilegious in the prostration of the angels before Adam. To them Adam (who bore the perfect image of God until his sin) is a prototype of Christ, the divine (and sinless) son of God. For Syriac Christian authors the prostration of the angels before Adam at the beginning of human history anticipates the prostration of the angels at the end of human history referred to in Phil 2:10 ("So that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus"). The Qurʾān evidently does not share this Christological concern. It transforms this story to make a point about the debt of gratitude which humans owe God, who made them even greater than the angels.

Sirry

This passage illustrates perfectly how the Qur'ān uses what we may call "Biblical materials" for its own purpose. This narrative certainly relates to the Bible's account of creation in Genesis 1–3, however, the Qur'ān does not present the creation of Adam and his eventual expulsion in one continuous narrative but rather it is recounted in several places (Q 2:30–39; 7:11–27; 15:26–45; 20:115–123). The Qurʾān does not offer a single sustained narrative concerning the creation of Adam, but instead, in each narrative the Qur'ān puts emphasis on certain moral lessons. It seems clear that the purpose here is somehow related to the immediate concern of its audience and the internal differences in the way the Qurʾān recasts the story should be understood as such. In addition, there are striking differences between the Qurʾānic account and the Biblical account, which lead modern Muslim scholars like Ziauddin Sardar to argue that "this is not the Biblical story of Adam and Eve" (Sardar, 2011:90). The Qurʾān is silent on many details that are important to Jewish and Christian interpretations. For instance, there is no mention of the creation of Eve from a rib, though the Qur'ān states in many places that "God has created you [plural] from a single soul" (e.g. Q. 7:189). In fact, even the word "*ḥawwā*" (Eve) does not

occur in the Qurʾān. Moreover, she is never presented as the cause for Adam's disobedience and their subsequent downfall. Thus, Adam's companion is not blamed for leading him astray. To reiterate my point, these differences between the Qurʾānic and Biblical accounts can best be explained as a rhetorical creativity of the Qurʾān to recast the Biblical stories for its own theological purpose. The Qurʾān does not support the idea of "Original Sin" and it is, therefore, understandable that its emphasis is not on the drama of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise, but rather on the disobedience of *Iblīs*. While the etymological debate of the term *Iblīs* has not been resolved, in the passage under discussion *Iblīs* is described as an angel in origin. The Qurʾān describes *Iblīs*, otherwise known as *Šayṭān*, as the main source of evil from which human beings are commanded to take refuge to God.

Stefanidis

One function of this passage, and others parallel to it, is to present arrogance as the primordial sin. Since the condemnation of arrogance (*istikbār*, *takabbur*) is a topos in Qurʾānic polemics, this narrative not only retells a foundational myth, but also serves a function in the Qurʾānic attempt to persuade its immediate interlocutors of the truth of its message.

The interweaving of polemics and theology can also be seen in the way the particular '*mise en scène*' (to use Azaiez's expression) of this passage introduces the characteristic belief that God saves humanity through the sending of guidance (*hudā*, v. 38). In Christian understanding, Adam's fall is only redeemed by the sending of Jesus and his death on the cross. The Qurʾān follows a similar narrative pattern where Adam's fall brings about a divine rescue, but the means to salvation is different: to follow God's guidance whenever it reaches humanity, as is the case through this *Qurʾān*.

Tesei

The story of Iblīs' rebellion is related to Enochic mythemes on the fallen angels, which as in other late antique sources are "retroprojected" to the beginning of time (cf. Forsyth 1998: 222–5; Reed 2005: 220–1; Crone 2013: 32–3). A main point of interest of the account (I include in the discussion also parallel passages found in other *sūra*s) is the simultaneous representation of Iblīs as both an angel and a *ǧinn* (cf. esp. Q 18:50). It is suitable to address this issue in light of the parallel motif of Satan's fall in the *Cave of Treasures* (1987; henceforth referred to as *CoT*). Here Satan is first described as the chief of the lesser order (*tegmā taḥtāyā*, rec. II 3:1–4) which rebelled against God. We are also informed that this is "the order of demons (*tegmā d-šīdē*) who fell from heaven" (recs. I&II, 7:4). The latter information is though made ambiguous by the successive description of Satan as "one of the Cherubins who fell [from heaven]" (rec. II, 18:15). Thus, the character of Satan in *CoT* is ambiguously represented as "angelic and demoniacal" at once just as Iblīs

in the Qurʾān. *CoT* and Qurʾān also agree on the fact that Satan/Iblīs and the demons/*ǧinn*s are made of fire. But again, this is a characteristic that late antique sources credit angels with as well.

Another interesting point of convergence between the two texts concerns the etiology on the origins of evil and evil beings. What we can understand from *CoT* is that a lesser order of beings rebelled against God and, presumably as a consequence, fell from heaven. While there is confusion between its angelic or demoniacal character, the lesser order appears as a distinguished category of beings already before its rebellion. In some Qurʾānic passages we find much the same conception. In Q 18:50 Iblīs is presented as being one of the *ǧinn*s already at the moment of his rebellion and not as becoming such after refusing to bow. Furthermore, in Q 15:26–27 the creation of the *ǧinn*s is said to happen before the creation of humankind and thus before Iblīs' rebellion (which is noticeably referred to in the following verses). It seems that as the lesser order of *CoT*, *ǧinn*s are conceived of as a separate category of beings already before their rebellion. Furthermore, as the author of *CoT*, the Qurʾān rejects the alternative myth on the origins of demons enrooted in Enochic traditions on the fallen angels (cf. Tesei QS 33, 41).

Winitzer

The description of Allah's instruction to Adam concerning the names of all things in v. 33 builds on Gen 2:19–20, which, significantly, ascribes to humanity, and not to Israel's deity (cf. Gen 1–2:4), what is the seminal role in many among the ancient Near Eastern creation accounts: delineation by naming. The current passage, it seems, downgrades Adam's role some, even as it retains for him a special status. The passage continues in v. 35 with further recognition of materials reflected in Gen 2–3; see, e.g., v. 35 and Gen 2:17; v. 36 and Gen 3:15. In this respect one interesting question involves what might stand behind the "companions of the fire" in v. 39: should this be connected to Gen 3:24 with its Cherubs and "fiery, whirling sword"?

Younes

Three comments:

[1] The word *ḫalifa* in v. 30 is probably a misreading of *ḫaliqa* (creation, things created), which shares the same *rasm* with it. Creation or created beings makes better sense in this context than "viceroy" (Pickthall's trans.).

[2] According to the standard syntactic rules of Classical Arabic, nouns with a non-human reference behave as feminine singular nouns for purposes of agreement and noun-pronoun substitution. But in v. 31, instead of the feminine singular pronoun *hā*, the plural masculine pronoun *hum* appears attached to the verb *ʿaraḍa: ʿaraḍahum* instead of *ʿaraḍaha:* "He showed them, i.e,. the names." The same verse, in fact, includes one form that follows the rule (*kullaha:* "all of them") side by side with the word that violates it. This suggests that the rules of Arabic syntax

as found in the Qurʾān were more flexible than they were later made to be by the Arab grammarians.

[3] It is interesting that there were differences among the canonical readers in v. 37 *fa-talaqqā ʾādamu min rabbihi kalimātin*, with Ibn Kaṯir reading it as *fa talaqqā Ādama min rabbihi kalimātun* (Ibn Muǧahid 1972: 153). It is clear from the structure that "Adam" received "words" and hence Adam is the subject and should be assigned the nominative case, while *kalimāt* is the object and should be assigned the accusative case. The fact that both readings were accepted is a strong indication of an unstable case system or a case system that was in a state of development.

Zellentin

The Biblical basis of this narrative details the creation, the temptation, and the fall of Adam, yet the Qurʾān here presumes and creates knowledge of a much richer oral tradition. The Biblical story inspired centuries of vivid debate among Jews and Christians, who richly added to the story. I read this Qurʾānic passage as seeking to calibrate its own view of Adam, on the one hand created in God's image and superior to all other beings, yet on the other hand not as holy or as knowledgeable as God Himself, as intimated to a degree by the Syriac and the rabbinic tradition—the Qurʾān counters both. The Syriac *Cave of Treasures,* to begin with, retells the story of Satan's refusal to worship Adam, Satan's fall, and the ensuing strife between the two, a story also known from Greek, Latin, Ge'ez and other Christian literature some (oral) knowledge of which the Qurʾān presupposes (see Reynolds). Here, Adam is presented as "king, priest, prophet, lord, and head, and ruler," having been given the rule (*šwlṭnʾ*) over everything God has made (Bezold 1883:14–7 of the Syriac and Arabic edition). The Qurʾān aptly summarizes such a list when calling Adam God's *ḫalīfa*, "viceroy" (see *ḥlp*, "to substitute," in Jewish and Christian Aramaic). Yet the Qurʾān back-pedals a bit when compared to the Christian tradition, and stops short of making Adam God's full equal and the subject of worship: whereas the Christian Adam seemingly knows all the names of the animals by himself, the Qurʾān specifies that God first has to *teach* the names to Adam. This detail seems weighty in light of the Qurʾān's view of God as the fountain of all knowledge, and a close dialogical reading of the respective rabbinic tradition emphasizes this aspect even more.

In the Palestinian rabbinic tradition (*Genesis Rabbah* 8.5), we find an account of the reaction of the *mlʾky hšrt*, "the ministering angels," addressing God as *rbwn hʿwlmym*, "Lord of the Universe," to the impending creation of Adam, some of them favouring, some of them opposing it. Notably, the Midrash points, on the one hand, to the *ṣdqwt*, the "righteous deeds," humans will commit, and on the other hand to the lies and the strife they will cause. Moreover, the rabbis portray Adam as inferior to God, yet superior to the angels. Once Adam is created, the angels initially mistake him for God and want to say *qdwš*, "holy," whereupon God corrects their mistake (ibid. 8.10). Unlike the angels, however, Adam *by himself* knows the *šm*,

"the name," of each animal God shows him, while the angels do not (ibid. 17.4). The Qurʾān recasts the story by emphasising Adam's dependence on God for learning the names. Intriguingly, it repeats and amplifies the rabbinic tradition, slightly transposing many of the rabbinic themes while making use of (admittedly common) similar lexemes. Like the rabbis' angels, the Qurʾān's *malāʾika*, "angels" invoke the strife humans will cause. Yet in the Qurʾān they do so by juxtaposing the destruction and bloodshed in which humans engage with the praise and sanctity in which they themselves engage: here, they want to *nuqaddisu* "sanctify" God, not Adam, effectively toning down Adam's exalted status in the rabbinic tradition. Furthermore, like in the rabbinic text, the Qurʾān names God *rabbuka*, "your Lord," and also has him challenge the angels to tell, *al-asmāʾa*, "the names" (likely also of animals), if they are *ṣādiqīna*, "truthful"—a root (with a different meaning) applied to Adam in the rabbinic text. The Qurʾān hence combines the theme of the naming competition between Adam and the angels with the Syriac theme of the refusal and fall of a chief angel, all the while widening the gap between Adam and God in both contemporary traditions.

QS 3 Q 2:178 – 179

2.178 O believers, retaliation for the slain is ordained upon you:
A free man for a free man, a slave for a slave, a female for a female.
But if a brother is forgiven by another regarding what is ordained, then gracious pardon must be offered, and seemly deliverance of payment made. This is an act of leniency from your Lord and a mercy. Whoever aggresses thereafter, painful torment awaits him.
2.179 The prospect of retaliation saves lives, O you who are possessed of minds – perhaps you will fear God.

2.178 O les croyants! On vous a prescrit le talion au sujet des tués: homme libre pour homme libre, esclave pour esclave, femme pour femme. Mais celui à qui son frère aura pardonné en quelque façon doit faire face à une requête convenable et doit payer des dommages de bonne grâce. Ceci est un allègement de la part de votre Seigneur, et une miséricorde. Donc, quiconque après cela transgresse, aura un châtiment douloureux.
2.179 C'est dans le talion que vous aurez la préservation de la vie, ô vous doués d'intelligence, ainsi atteindrez-vous la piété.

سورة البقرة
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالأُنْثَى بِالأُنْثَى فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ
فَاتِّبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (178) وَلَكُمْ فِي
الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (179)

Dye

L'arrière-plan biblique et évangélique de la *lex talionis* est bien connu (Exod 21:24, Lev 24:17 – 22, Deut 19:21, Matt 5:38 – 42). Ce passage s'insère dans un ensemble plus large de règles adressées aux croyants (*yā-ayyuhā allaḏīna āmanū*, cf. vv. 172, 183). Le Coran choisit ici, comme souvent, une voie médiane : la règle antérieure est rappelée – elle n'est donc pas abolie, car il convient de juger selon ce qu'Allāh a fait descendre (Q 5:45), mais elle est allégée, ou admet des exceptions, qui peuvent être encouragées. Le v. 178 et Q 5:45 paraissent complémentaires. Tous deux sont relatifs à la règle du talion, et aux cas où elle peut être suspendue : le premier insiste sur l'attitude que doit adopter le coupable si la famille de la victime accorde son pardon, alors que le second encourage la victime à accorder son pardon. Cela revient *in fine* à une combinaison d'attitudes rabbinique et chrétienne. Cette stratégie permet de se distinguer des juifs et des chrétiens et de proposer une voie susceptible de leur paraître attrayante.

Le v. 178 soulève cependant une difficulté sérieuse, comme l'a bien vu Stefanidis. *Selon une certaine lecture*, il permet, en représailles au meurtre d'un homme libre (d'une femme, d'un esclave) de tuer un homme libre (une femme, un esclave) qui *ne soit pas* le meurtrier. Une telle règle (qui pourrait être implicitement condamnée par Q 17:33) serait peu conforme à la *lex talionis* biblique, que le Coran est pourtant censé suivre. Je suis donc tenté d'interpréter le texte autrement, et d'y voir une allusion au principe de compensation (qui est précisément la manière dont la *lex talionis* était comprise à l'époque) : les dommages sont proportionnés au statut social de la

victime, et ils doivent être payés de bonne grâce (v. 179 : par exemple, c'est le coupable, et non une tierce personne, qui doit s'acquitter de la dette).

Plus généralement, le fait que ce verset glose des passages bibliques (rédigés dans le cadre d'une organisation sociale bien particulière) et que les catégories sociales invoquées (*ḥurr*, *ʿabd*, *unṯā*) soient extrêmement répandues (et pas qu'en Arabie) à l'époque où est composé le Coran rend hasardeuse toute tentative de tirer des conclusions précises, *à partir de ce texte*, sur l'organisation sociale de la communauté à laquelle la prédication coranique s'adresse.

Grodzki

Looking at this verse with a more unconventional approach, we could perhaps have, first, a reminiscence of Exod 21:12, then listing (in the same order): free man Exod 21:18 – 19, slave Exod 21: 20 – 21, (pregnant) woman Ex 21:22 – 23. If we followed logically, we could perhaps then have the atonement of an unsolved murder (Deut 21 4 – 6) which should be solved perhaps by breaking the heifer's neck (Hebrew *ʿarafa*).

Pregill

Initially, it seems unclear whether the penalty of retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) for murder being simultaneously reiterated and ameliorated here is the Biblical *lex talionis* (Exod 21:23 – 25, Lev 24:19 – 20, Deut 19:21) or merely a tribal custom. The specific reference to this penalty being "prescribed for you" (*kutiba ʿalaykum*) certainly implies a scripturalist context. Moreover, *taḫfīf*, alleviation, is characteristically associated with the trope of the lightening the burden of the Law imposed on Israel, and the theme is much developed in later Islamic exegesis and jurisprudence (see Maghen 2006). The strong discursive link to ancient Christian understandings of Israel and the Law here – epitomized by the *Didascalia Apostolorum* – is undeniable, though the theme of the amelioration of especially severe prescriptions or prohibitions of Biblical law is also found in rabbinic discourse, esp. the halakhic midrashim.

Here, the Qurʾān is not so much "borrowing" from precursors per se but rather rehearsing their particular modes of engagement with the Pentateuch. The parallel passage at Q 5:43 – 45 explicitly identifies the law of *qiṣāṣ* with the Biblical *lex talionis* and terms its voluntary remission by the aggrieved party *taṣadduq*. Why is remission merely recommended in these passages and not formally legislated? The most interesting precedent is found in Matthew 5:38: the Law is acknowledged as binding, but merit accrues to the one who willingly forgoes the retaliation to which they are legally entitled.

Stefanidis

Although the Qurʾānic notion of *qiṣāṣ* certainly draws on the Biblical talion, as Q 5:45 explicitly acknowledges, it should be noted that this passage departs in significant

ways from the Biblical application of retaliation. Here, it is the social body of the group understood as being constituted primarily of free men, slaves and women, which provides the basis for the assessment of just retaliation, rather than the individual's body parts (such the eye and the tooth mentioned in Lev 24:19). Only tribal conceptions of individuality, social solidarity and collective moral responsibility explain why v. 178 seems to tolerate the taking of a life other than that of the slayer in response to murder. Retaliation here is not primarily a means to punish the perpetrator but a way to preserve the balance of power among different groups within a social system of segmentation. It is an important passage that can help us identify the type of society in which the Qurʾān emerged.

Winitzer

It may be of interest to note that the reworking of the *lex talionis* here continues a long tradition, since in its own thinking on this point the Bible builds on and refashions precursors in law collections from the ancient Near East, especially the best-known case from Hammurabi, whose law collection was taught to pupils in Babylonia for over a millennium after it was first composed. For a recent word on the Biblical building on the Mesopotamian law collection traditions, in particular Hammurabi's, see Wright 2009; but cf. Wells 2006.

Zellentin

The Biblical *lex talionis*, the laws of retribution, as formulated esp. in Exod 21:18–35, Lev 24:17–21 and Deut 19:21, oscillate between mandating a quid pro quo exchange either physically (life for life) or through monetary compensation. The rabbinic tradition reflects both views, but clearly decides in favour of the latter option from early on (see e.g., *Mishna Bava Qamma* 8.1). Christian tradition, based on Matt 5:38–42, glosses over the idea of monetary compensation ("You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,'."..) and exhorts its audience to forego retribution entirely (... "but I say to you, do not resist an evildoer"). The Qurʾān combines aspects of the rabbinic and the Christian attitude, reflecting its notion of the continuity of the Torah and the Gospel (see e.g. Q 2:136 and my comments on QS 31 and 34).

In the passage at hand and elsewhere (Q 4:92–93, Q 5:45, Q 17:33–35, and Q 25:63–72), the Qurʾān holds fast to the Biblical mandate that one can decide to kill the killer, limiting this right to the heirs of the victim. In line with the rabbinic view, it then emphasizes the option of the heir of the slain person to accept monetary retribution instead. Unlike the rabbis, however, and more akin to the Matthean exhortation, the Qurʾān portrays the option to accept the compensation *as* a divine *raḥma*, "mercy" (v. 178). Its legal hermeneutics may be closest related to, without being commensurate with, the Judaeo-Christian tradition, as exemplified in a passage of Ptolemy's "Letter to Flora" (quoted by Epiphanius in his *Panarion* 33.5.3,

see also my commentary on QS 5); Gobillot (2009:9) intriguingly points to anti-Manichean debates about the laws of retribution in the Hebrew Bible and in the Gospel, such as *Acta Archelai* 31 and 40). Ptolemy comments on the *leges talionis* that "in any case this commandment was and is just, though owing to the frailty of its recipients it was given in violation of the pure law. But it does not fit with the nature and goodness of the Father at all." The Qurʾān, like Ptolemy, combines the legislation of the Torah and the Gospel on the *leges talionis*, but unlike Ptolemy, it does not see the Torah's law as incompatible with God's character, and therefore continues to allow the heirs of the slain person to revenge the death (without excess!). Yet the Qurʾān also encourages them to forgive it—in this sense does the Qurʾān state that there is "life in retribution" (Q 2:179), allowing us crisply to perceive how the text adapts Judaeo-Christian law into its specific Arabian and monistic legal context (see also my comments on QS 18).

QS 4 Q 2:255 – 256

2.255 God,
There is no god but He,
Living and Everlasting.
Neither slumber overtakes Him nor sleep.
To Him belongs what is in the heavens and what is on earth.
Who shall intercede with Him except by His leave?
He knows their present affairs and their past.
And they do not comprehend of His knowledge except what He wills.
His throne encompasses the heavens and the earth;
Preserving them is no burden to Him.
He is the Exalted, the Majestic.
2.256 There is no compulsion in religion.
Right guidance has been distinguished from error.
He who repudiates idols and believes in God,
Has grasped a handle most firm, unbreakable.
God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2.255 Allah! Point de divinité à part Lui, le Vivant, Celui qui subsiste par lui-même «Al-Qayyûm». Ni somnolence ni sommeil ne Le saisissent. A Lui appartient tout ce qui est dans les cieux et sur la terre. Qui peut intercéder auprès de Lui sans Sa permission? Il connaît leur passé et leur futur. Et, de Sa science, ils n'embrassent que ce qu'Il veut. Son Trône «Kursiy», déborde les cieux et la terre, dont la garde ne Lui coûte aucune peine. Et Il est le Très Haut, le Très Grand.
2.256 Nulle contrainte en religion! Car le bon chemin s'est distingué de l'égarement. Donc, quiconque mécroit au Rebelle tandis qu'il croit en Allah saisit l'anse la plus solide, qui ne peut se briser. Et Allah est Audient et Omniscient.

سورة البقرة
اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ
يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ
حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (255) لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (256)

Azaiez

Appliquons, ici, une lecture particulière du « verset du Trône » à l'appui de l'analyse rhétorique. Cette méthode, qui a été développée par Michel Cuypers pour les études coraniques consiste à déterminer les techniques d'écriture et de composition qui présidaient déjà à la rédaction des textes des scribes du monde sémitique ancien (Cuypers 2007, 2012b). Le terme « rhétorique » s'apparente ici à ce qu'Aristote entendait par l'une des parties de la Rhétorique qui s'intéresse à l'ordonnancement et au plan du discours: la *dispositio* (gr. *taxis, oikonomia*). Recherchant « l'art de la composition du discours », l'analyse rhétorique est fondée sur le repérage de symétries (parallélismes synonymiques, antithétiques ou complémentaires), de chiasmes (parallélisme inversé: AB/B'A') et de concentrismes (deux versants symétriques partagés par un centre: AB/x/B'A'). Appliquer cette méthode au célèbre verset du Trône révèle qu'il s'agit d'une structure parfaitement symétrique, dans laquelle les unités de texte sont disposées de façon concentrique (ABCD / x / D'C'B'A'). La

relation entre ces unités est celle de l'identité: les termes et les segments ont des significations analogues, et chaque segment répond ou correspond à un segment parallèle. Les premiers segments (A, A') présentent chacun trois mots. Les deux partagent un terme identique (*huwa*) et l'utilisation de synonymes qui correspondent aux attributs de Dieu (*al-ḥayyᵘ al-qayyūmᵘ* répond à *al-ʿaliyyᵘ al-ʿaẓīmu*). Les seconds segments (B et B') soulignent le rôle de Dieu comme celui qui maintient l'existence de l'Univers (*lā taʾḫuḏuhu sinatun wa-lā nawmun/ lā yaʾūduhū ḥifẓuhumā*). Le parallélisme des troisièmes segments (C, C') fait référence à la cosmologie et à la souveraineté de Dieu (*lahū mā fī-l-samāwāti wa-mā fī-l-ʾarḍi / wasiʿa kursiyyuhu as-samāwāti wa-l-arḍa*). Et enfin, le parallélisme des quatrième segments (D, D') attire l'attention sur la volonté de Dieu (*allaḏī yašfaʿu ʿindahū 'illā bi-ʾiḏnihī / wa-lā yuḥīṭūna bi-šayʾin min ʿilmihī ʾillā bi-mā šā'a*). Ces quatre attributs principaux de sujets-Dieu, la puissance de Dieu, la souveraineté de Dieu et la volonté de Dieu, convergent sur une idée centrale: la connaissance de Dieu embrasse toutes choses (*yaʿlamu mā bayna aydīhim wa-mā ḫalfahum*). Situé dans le centre de la structure, ce segment n'a pas de relation d'identité avec d'autres segments. Il en est le segment central et le pivot sémantique. Dans la perspective de l'analyse rhétorique, le centre donne le sens à toute la structure. Dans cette perspective, le sens général de ce verset peut être compris comme la glorification de la toute connaissance de Dieu.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا
A هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
B لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ
C لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
D مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ
يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
D' وَلا يُحيطونَ بِشَيءٍ مِن عِلمِهِ إِلّا بِما شاءَ
C' وَسِعَ كُرسِيُّهُ السَّماواتِ وَالأَرضَ
B' وَلا يَئودُهُ حِفظُهُما
A' وَهُوَ العَلِيُّ العَظيمُ

Dye

V. 255 : hymne au Dieu souverain, à la puissance et à la connaissance insondables pour les hommes. L'expression « vivant et subsistant », qui apparaît trois fois dans le Coran (ici même, et en Q 3:2 et Q 20:111), est le calque d'une formule araméenne (qui reprend Ps 121:4) que l'on rencontre dans le livre de *Daniel* araméen (6:27) et dans le targum (palestinien) du Pseudo-Jonathan (Tg. Ps-Jon. sur Gen 16:6 – 16 et 24:62, « le Vivant et le Subsistant, qui voit et qu'on ne voit pas ») : comparer *allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayyu l-qayyūm*, et Dan 6:27, *dī-huwa êlāhā ḥayyā w-qayyām le-ʿalēmīn* (« c'est Lui le Dieu vivant et subsistant pour toujours »). L'influence du livre de *Daniel* sur le développement des premières communautés musulmanes (et du Coran)

est un sujet qui n'a pas reçu l'attention qu'il mérite (voir cependant De Prémare 2000b).

Yaʿlamu mā bayna aydīhim wa-mā ḫalfahum : les traductions oscillent entre un sens temporel (avant/après) ou spatial (devant/derrière). Si on relie le verset à Ps 121:4, qui parle du Dieu gardien d'Israël, on préférera le sens spatial.

Par son genre littéraire, ce verset n'a que peu de rapport avec les versets qui le précèdent et qui le suivent, même s'il s'intègre assez bien au propos des vv. 254 – 257. J'y vois un texte ayant une unité forte, et qui était sans doute récité dans des cérémonies liturgiques avant même la compilation du Coran.

V. 256 : ce célèbre verset a fait l'objet des interprétations les plus diverses, aussi bien dans la tradition musulmane que chez les historiens (cf. Crone 2009). La question (politique) de la liberté religieuse ne me semble pas abordée ici. Par *dīn*, je comprends plutôt le jugement (autrement dit, le jugement, ou la décision, que l'on doit prendre sur la voie à suivre). Le texte explique que ce choix est naturel, pour ne pas dire évident (ni contraint, ni répugnant, cf. Q 9:32 – 33 et le champ sémantique de la racine *K-R-H*), puisque la différence entre le droit chemin et l'égarement est claire (comme celle entre les ténèbres et la lumière, cf. v. 257), et que le soutien de Dieu pour les croyants est assuré (cf. v. 255 / Ps 121:4).

El-Badawi

This striking verse is generally in dialogue with numerous illustrations of God's majesty in the Bible and—if reliable—the poetry of Umayyah b. Abī al-Salṭ al-Thaqafī (d. ca. 1/623). More specifically Q 2:255 is in dialogue with teachings from the Hebrew Bible concerning the seriousness of 'swearing an oath' (2 Chronicles 9:18; Isaiah 66:1). However, this dialogue is mediated through the Syriac, CPA versions of Matthew 5:33 – 35; 23:20 – 22, where 'in the heavens' (*ba-šmayā*) God sits upon 'his throne' (*kūrsyā... d-alāhā*), and where 'on earth (*b-arʿā*)' is His 'footstool beneath his feet.' The simultaneous use of *ʿarš* (cf. Aramaic *ʿarsā*, "bed") and *kursī* (Syriac *kūrsyā*, "chair, throne") may be a result of separate traditions from which each word has come to us (cf. Q 27:38 vv. 38:34). Also, is Q 2:255 in dialogue with Gnostic literature?

Grodzki

The expression from v. 255 *Allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayyu al-qayyūmu* is reminiscent of Isa 43:11 ("I, I am the Lord, and there is no deliverer besides me"), apart from Deuteronomy. As for "neither drowsiness overtakes Him or sleep" it is a reference to Ps 121:4 in inversed order. Also *kursiyyuhu al-samāwāti* is interesting. In Isa 66:1 there are similar words in use, only in the reversed order: "The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool (*ha-šamayīm kisʾi*)."

Hilali

This passage constitutes in my view the most important example of the transformation process of religious texts during their recitation by the believers. The use of this very well-known verse in a variety of social and ritual contexts gives it an almost independent status. This verse is an autonomous fragment. Its fragmentary aspect allows its mobility and its citation in a variety of literary genres. This verse has a value almost independent of the Qurʾān itself.

Imbert

Commentaire concernant le verset 255 dit āyat al-Kursī. C'est dans le palais omeyyade de Qaṣr al-Ḫarrāna (Jordanie) que nous avons relevé la plus ancienne mention épigraphique connue du verset *āyat al-Kursī.* Il s'agit du verset entier écrit à l'encre noire à même la paroi du palais. Le graffito, strictement coranique, compte 11 lignes et se trouve dans un contexte daté: il est en effet placé sous un autre graffito portant la date de 92 / 710 et signé d'un certain ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmar (les deux écritures sont similaires). Le texte est entouré d'un cadre noir intégrant un prolongement décoratif sous la forme d'une saillie rectangulaire. Cet encadrement d'un verset est rare durant le premier siècle et semble rappeler l'importance emblématique que va prendre cet extrait coranique, vers les années 90 de l'Hégire (cf. Imbert 1995: 407).

Ce n'est pas un hasard si nous retrouvons le début du même verset sous la forme d'un isolat coranique (un verset gravé isolément) immédiatement suivi d'une signature, en 93 / 712 au *Ǧabal ʾUsays* (sud-est de Damas, Syrie) : *Allāh, lā ilāh illā huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm wa-kataba ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh fī šawwāl sanat 93,* "[...] écrit par ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh en *šawwāl* 93." Le verset, cité isolément, est "incomplet" en comparaison de son développement dans le *muṣḥaf.* Ces citations correspondent sans doute à la période de mise en place des éléments fondamentaux du *credo* autour desquels le Coran semble s'être constitué. Leur apparition au sein des graffiti montre le degré d'expansion de ces formules ou versets dans les sphères privées de la première société musulmane. Quelques années plus tard, en 127/744 en Arabie, un autre graffito évoque une malédiction faisant suite à la citation du même verset 2/255: *laʿana man maḥā hāḏā l-kitāb aw ġayyara-hu*, "que soit maudit celui qui aura effacé cette inscription ou l'aura changée!" (Inscription inédite de Ǧibāl Banū Šihr en Arabie. Voir également la même malédiction datant du i^er^ siècle de l'Hégire sur le site palestinien de ʿAyn Zurayb. Cf. Sharon 2004, 167, n° 11, fig. 39). La présence de ces malédictions après des citations coraniques nous rappelle que jusqu'à la fin de l'époque omeyyade, l'unanimité n'était sans doute pas encore faite autour d'une version unifiée et standardisée du texte: des amalgames ou des citations adaptées du Coran étaient encore courantes sur les pierres. Certains, semble-t-il, ne les appréciaient pas.

Pregill

Overflowing with epithets and attributes, a kind of monotheist manifesto glorifying divine majesty, with conspicuous parallels in Biblical and especially psalmic imagery. The tripartite emphasis on omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence seems to reflect the concerns of late antique Christian philosophical theology (i. e., the synthesis of Israelite-Judaic monotheism and Greek philosophical imperatives), anticipating the later emergence of *kalām*. It is interesting to me that the Qurʾānic acknowledgement and appropriation of aspects of this discourse does not extend to an avoidance of anthropomorphism elsewhere in the text, since Jews and Christians had already been problematizing scriptural descriptions of the divine (references to affective or physical manifestations, God's anger, God's hands, etc.) for centuries by the time of the Qurʾān's revelation. Intriguingly, both intermediation and incarnationism – conspicuous aspects of late antique Judaism and Christianity respectively – are decisively rejected here.

Rippin

A major description of God. Nöldeke (*GdQ*[1]*:* 184, n. 2), suggests a number of Biblical sources. The divine royal-warrior imagery dominates here but the issue of divine materiality seems to be troubling the author. The extent to which this was an issue in ancient times has been treated very well in Sommer (2009) and the presence of these assertions in the Qurʾān suggests that it was still alive as a topic of concern. The "fluidity" of God's body is clearly rejected (there is only one God) but his embodiment is important, reflecting a long standing tension between God as having both a heavenly body and an earthly one (or more than one). What we tend to dismiss as "anthropomorphism" or attempts to use language to express ideas about the divine can perhaps be seen to reflect more literal ideas about the way God was conceived.

Sirry

This passage along with other "throne verses" has been the subject of much discussion especially in regard to the anthropomorphic expression of the Qur'ān. However, there is a certain tension in this passage. God's transcendence is expressed in terms of what he is not (*via negativa*), the passage also describes God's throne in such a worldly manner on which He, as in other verses (e. g. Q 10:4; 13:2; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4), reclines (*istawā*). One may understand this passage as being polemical in nature because it seems to polemicize the Biblical notion that "God rested on the seventh day." Like Genesis, the Qurʾān holds that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then took a seat on a throne. However, nowhere in the Qurʾān is it written that he rested on the seventh day. The passage rejects any possibility of associating human attributes such as slumber and sleep with God. Can we infer that the Qurʾān addresses an audience with a tendency of making comparison and anal-

ogy? The phrase "No slumber can seize him nor sleep" is striking not only because it suggests that God is not subject to physical limitations. Of the twenty-two verses, known as "throne verses" (Q 7:54; 9:129; 10:3; 11:7; 13:2; 17:42; 20:5; 21:22; 23:86; 23:86, 116; 25:59; 27:26; 32:4; 39:75; 40:15; 43:82; 57:4; 69:17; 81:20; 85:15), it is the only passage to use *kursī,* an Aramaic loanword, instead of the Arabic *ʿarš*, for God's throne.

The Qurʾānic phrase *wasiʿa kursiyyuhu l-samāwātī wa-l-arḍ* (His chair encompasses the heavens and the earth) is intriguing because in other places (Q 40:7) it is God himself to whom it is said: *wasiʿta kulla šayʾ* ("You encompass everything"). This echoes the description of the throne in Jewish aprocryphal and rabbinic literature (1 Enoch 25–4; 22:2; 4 Ezra 8:21) in which although created, it there possesses qualities that raise it above other creatures and bring it closer to God: it is made from light; it originates before the world begins; it is inaccessible and endowed with a certain transcendence. Based on this, O'Shaughnessy argues that "the throne in the Qurʾān confirms its scriptural and rabbinic origins" (1973: 205). However, as noted above, like other "throne" verses, the passage under discussion is polemical in nature in such that it is preceded by an argument for the unicity and transcendence of God, the two most important concepts of the nature of God in the Qurʾān.

Tesei

The adjectives *al-ḥayyu al-qayyūmu* ("the Living, the Everlasting") at v. 255, recall the description of God in Dan 6:26: *ḥayyā wəqayyām* ("Living and Enduring"). Furthermore, the following Qurʾānic statement: *lā taʾḫuḏuhū sinatun wa-lā nawmun* ("slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep") evokes the sentence of Ps 121:4: *lō-yanūm wəlō yîšān* ("[God] will neither slumber nor sleep"). Thus, the verse seems to be characterized by the use of Biblical vocabulary and phraseology.

Toorawa

This verse appears to me to be a response, or reaction, to a number of doctrinal positions from which the Qurʾānic speaker wants to distance himself. This distancing is accomplished by asserting the following: the deity's oneness (as opposed to multiplicity); everlastingness (as opposed to perishability or death); not being subject to human-like tendencies (as opposed to being in need of rest or upkeep); being fully in control of both terrestrial and otherworldly realms (as opposed to being subject to them); intercession by the deity's will (as opposed to intercession through offerings or sacerdotal authority); true knowledge of past and future (as opposed to divination); limiting and delimiting human capacity (which is not something humans can do). As for the throne, it may be that similar descriptions are found in Christian and Jewish texts, but it strikes me that the refutations in the characterizations and epithets employed in the verse are equally applicable to other religious groups

and to pagans. It is a rare belief system that does not imagine its deity on a throne and on high.

Younes

[1] The spelling of the word *al-qayyūm* suggests a Syriac origin with the pronunciation *qayyōm*.

[2] The word *yaʾūduhū*, a *hapax legomenon* in the Qurʾān, and written in the *rasm* as *ywdh*, is probably a forced reading of the word *yuʾḏihi* "to hurt or harm him." According to the standard rules of *iʿrāb*, the word in that position would be spelled with *yāʾ:* يوذيه, not يوذه since it is in the declarative mood. يوذه would be the spelling in the jussive mood. Since the grammarians did not have the option of adding the letter *yāʾ* to the *rasm*, they inserted a *hamza* before the *wāw*. The insertion of *hamza* in the *rasm*, along with points and diacritics, was of course a wide-spread practice, hence the reading *yaʾūduhū*, a word probably coined to solve a spelling problem.

Zellentin

The theme that neither drowsiness nor sleep befall God is well attested in the Bible already, an illuminating parallel is Isa 40:28 (the Hebrew original and its Syriac translation are quite similar here): "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, nor is he weary. There is no searching of his understanding." The Biblical verse combines God's lack of weariness with an emphasis that humans cannot access his knowledge. The Qurʾān likewise states that God does not grow weary, that his is the earth and that his creatures, heavenly or earthly "do not comprehend anything of his knowledge." The text indeed builds up to the concession, perhaps in response to ideas such as Isaiah's summary dismissal of any understanding of the divinity, that humans *can* understand what God wants us to—such as, for example, the Qurʾānic revelation. If there is any dialogue here with "gnosticism," the broader discourse of salvific knowledge, then we should think about the Jewish anti-gnostic tendencies in texts such as exemplified in the *Clementine Homilies* (see my comments on QS 19) and in *Genesis Rabbah*, the latter of which prohibits to discuss "what is above (the heavens) and what is below (the earth), what is before (creation) and what is after (its end, *Genesis Rabbah* 1:10)." God alone, the Qurʾān states, as if to assent to the rabbis' law, "knows that which is before them, and that which is behind them," and He not only knows, but owns and governs "whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth (v. 255)."

The economy of divine knowledge, here as in many other passages (see my comments on QS 3), is thus paramount to the Qurʾān's theology. Moreover, I would always leave open the possibility that the text, as much as being in dialogue with Syriac and rabbinic traditions, often echoes a likely oral direct engagement of the Hebrew Bible (or its Syriac or Palestinian Aramaic translation). Given the density of Biblical allusions, this seems very likely in the poetic passage at hand. To the ref-

erences mentioned by others we can also add (see Speyer 1931:311) 1 Chr 29:11, which addresses God with *kl b-šmym w-bʾrṣ l-kʾ*, "all that is in heavens and on earth is yours," quite close to the Qurʾānic *lahū mā fī as-samāwāti wa-mā fī al-ʾarḍi*.

Of course the Qurʾān's evocation of "heaven and earth" are testimony to its broadly perceivable Scriptural culture before constituting its specific "use" of particular Biblical verses. Yet the density of the references to various verses may have a clear hierarchy: intriguingly, also in passage from Dan 6:27, mentioned by Dye, Darius declares God's never ending reign and announces God's working of miracles and wonders *b-šmyā w-bārʿā*, "in heaven and on earth," pointing to the prominence of this intertext for the Qurʾānic passage at hand (perhaps read by employing the lens of Jewish anti-gnosticism). Is the passage then "about" Chronicles or "about" Daniel? The layering of multiple allusions may lead the uninitiated to perceive any "chasing" of such intertexts as confusing and confused, but multi-vocal intertextuality is part of the Qurʾān's theology: its embarrassment of intertextual riches continues the Biblical, rabbinic, and Christian tradition of alluding thickly and simultaneously rehearsing many texts—or many aspects of the one perceived divine text.

QS 5 Q 3:1–7

3.1 Alif Lam Mim
3.2 God!
There is no god but He!
Ever-Living, Everlasting.
3.3 He sent down to you the Book with the Truth,
Confirming His previous Scriptures.
And He sent down the Torah and the Evangel,
3.4 beforehand: A Guidance to mankind. And He
sent down the Criterion.
Those who blaspheme against the revelations of God shall meet with terrible torment. God is Almighty, Vengeful.
3.5 From God nothing is hidden on earth or in heaven.
3.6 It is He who gives you shape in the wombs, in any manner He pleases.
There is no god but He, Almighty, All-Wise.
3.7 It is He who sent down the Book upon you. In it are verses precise in meaning: these are the very heart of the Book. Others are ambiguous. Those in whose heart is waywardness pursue what is ambiguous therein, seeking discord and seeking to unravel its interpretation. But none knows its interpretation save God, while those deeply rooted in knowledge say:
"We believe in it. All is from our Lord." Yet none remembers save those possessed of minds.

3.1 Alif, Lâm, Mîm.
3.2 Allah! Pas de divinité à part Lui, le Vivant, Celui qui subsiste par Lui-même «Al-Qayyum».
3.3 Il a fait descendre sur toi le Livre avec la vérité, confirmant les Livres descendus avant lui. Et Il fit descendre la Thora et l'Evangile.
3.4 auparavant, en tant que guide pour les gens. Et Il a fait descendre le Discernement. Ceux qui ne croient pas aux Révélations d'Allah auront, certes, un dur châtiment! Et, Allah est Puissant, Détenteur du pouvoir de punir.
3.5 Rien, vraiment, ne se cache d'Allah de ce qui existe sur la terre ou dans le ciel.
3.6 C'est Lui qui vous donne forme dans les matrices comme Il veut. Point de divinité à part Lui, le Puissant, le Sage.
3.7 C'est Lui qui a fait descendre sur toi le Livre: il s'y trouve des versets sans équivoque, qui sont la base du Livre, et d'autres versets qui peuvent prêter à d'interprétations diverses. Les gens, donc, qui ont au cour une inclination vers l'égarement, mettent l' accent sur les versets à équivoque cherchant la dissension en essayant de leur trouver une interprétation, alors que nul n'en connaît l'interprétation, à part Allah. Mais ceux qui sont bien enracinés dans la science disent: «Nous y croyons: tout est de la part de notre Seigneur!» Mais, seuls les doués d'intelligence s'en rappellent.

سورة آل عمران
الم (1) اللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ (2) نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنْجِيلَ (3) مِنْ
قَبْلُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ (4) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ
شَيْءٌ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فِي السَّمَاءِ (5) هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (6) هُوَ الَّذِي
أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ
ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلاَّ أُولُو
الأَلْبَابِ (7)

Azaiez

Ce passage illustre la nature et la fonction du métatexte, ou métadiscours (Ben Taïbi 2009: 65–67) ou encore autoréférence dans le Coran (Boisliveau 2010, 2012). A la suite d'Andrée Borillo, on définit le métadiscours comme « à la fois discours et glose sur le discours dans lequel il est immergé (...) l'objet visé reste le code de la langue

(…) soit il porterait sur les signes eux-mêmes – leur forme, leur sens – pour l'expliciter, les définir, soit il mentionnerait des énoncés pour les mettre à distance, les rapporter a une autre source » (Ben Taïbi 2009: 65). Ici, le discours sur le discours vient dans ce passage expliciter : [1] le processus de la révélation (l'acte de descendre: *nazzala*) et ses protagonistes (Allah et un allocutaire : *ʿalayka*) ; [2] la nature de la révélation (*ḥaqq*, *ḥudā*, *āyāt*) ; [3] l'auto-désignation de la révélation (*kitāb*, *furqān*) ; [4] la finalité de la révélation (*muṣaddiqan li-mā bayna yadayhi*) ; [5] les conditions d'interprétations (*mā yaʿlamu taʾwīlahu ʾillā allāhu*). On peut affirmer avec cet exemple que le Coran se dote avec la métatextualité d'un discours pour expliquer son code.

Dye

Les débuts (et les fins) des sourates sont souvent porteurs d'un important message théologique, mais ce sont aussi des passages où peut transparaître une intervention éditoriale. Leur composition peut ainsi être fort embrouillée. J'ai donc plus de questions que de réponses. Par exemple : s'il y a ici de la métatextualité, ou la supposée autoréférentialité du Coran, doit-on penser que ce texte a été composé du vivant de Muḥammad, avant même la compilation du Coran – à une époque où il n'était vraisemblablement pas question de faire un codex ? Ou la métatextualité ne concernerait-elle *que* la sourate Āl ʿImrān ? Ou la rédaction de cette péricope ne serait-elle pas postérieure, et devrait être imputée, *au moins en partie*, aux scribes responsables de la collecte du Coran ?

V. 1 : Une hypothèse plausible est que les « lettres mystérieuses » soient des abréviations de formules, possiblement syriaques (Luxenberg 2008). On pourrait lire *emar lī Māryā* (*ʾ-L-M*), « le Seigneur m'a dit ».

V. 3 : *muṣaddiqan li-mā bayna yadayhi* : doit-on comprendre « confirmant ce qui est descendu avant lui », à savoir *al-kitāb*, auquel cas *al-kitāb* est soit le Coran, soit la sourate, soit l'ensemble des révélations antérieures (notamment la Tora et l'Évangile) ? Ou « confirmant ce qui est devant lui », le pronom *hi* faisant référence à Dieu, et *al-kitāb* désignant l'Écriture céleste? Le parallèle avec Jésus et la Tora, signalé par Reynolds, paraît pertinent : le rédacteur du texte ferait du destinataire de la sourate un prophète annoncé par les révélations antérieures, les accomplissant, tout en étant habilité à en donner l'interprétation juste.

V. 7 : *al-kitāb* est souvent identifié au Coran, et on voit dans les *āyāt muḥkamāt* et les *āyāt mutašābihāt* des versets coraniques. Cette lecture ne va pas de soi : normalement, *al-kitāb* ne désigne pas le Coran (cf. Q 10:37 ; noter que Q 43:4 dit qu'un Qurʾān arabe est *dans* la « mère du Livre », ce qui n'implique pas qu'il lui soit identique). Les *āyāt muḥkamāt* pourraient être, non les versets, mais les signes clairs, les preuves évidentes, qui apportent la sagesse, tels qu'ils sont relatés dans l'Écriture. Sur les *āyāt mutašābihāt* : le texte semble simplement condamner les chicaneurs.

Hilali

There are three types of time put together in a circular order: an absolute time in which the divine acts subscribe (vv. 1–2), the past and the present (vv. 3–4). The time is broken in the verse by the intervention of the scripture in human history (v. 7). The revelation modifies the relationship with time from the time of *tanzīl* (revelation) to the time of *taʾwīl* (interpretation). One of the meanings of the word *taʾwīl* is to go back to the beginning. The issue of *ʿilm* (knowledge) determines the time of interpretation and refers to the future. The mention of knowledge is kept out of time and out of the verse itself since the present time of the verbs express in Arabic both the present and the future. The end of the verse is opened to the absolute knowledge and absolute time and gives to the verse a circular structure in which the past and the future are situated successively in the time of revelation and interpretation while the absolute knowledge, like God himself, is situated out of the frame of time: Absolute time (God); Past (revelations); Future (interpretation); Absolute time (knowledge).

Madigan

V. 7 is the classic case of an apparently extremely self-referential statement. However, we can see how things change if we think beyond—or perhaps we should say before—a closed corpus of scripture. Are we to understand this as a metatextual intrusion into what could otherwise stand as the immediate engagement of the divine word with the Prophet and his hearers? In a conference discussion some years ago, Neal Robinson suggested that if one were to understand the term *kitāb* in the broad way I had proposed in *The Qurʾān's Self-image* (2001)—as a metaphor for God's knowledge and authority, rather than as a closed corpus of scripture—then the *āyāt mutašābihāt* of v. 7 could be taken as referring to the perplexing nature of the rout at the battle of Uḥud, which Robinson considers to be the context for the whole *sūra*. Following his lead, we can propose a reading of the verse in terms like this: God's sovereign decree (*kitāb*) is revealed in His acts (*āyāt*) some of which (like the victory at Badr) are unambiguous and plainly understandable (*muḥkamāt*) and so reflect the essential thrust of what God has determined for the future (*umm al-kitāb*). The meanings of other events (for example, the defeat of Uḥud) are not immediately apparent (*mutashābihāt*). Those who are perverse appeal to these ambiguous events in order to divide the community and cause it to lose faith. However, only God knows how these events are to be understood in the light of his overall plan, and everyone who knows God's ways (*al-rāsiḫūn fī-l-ʿilm*) believes that all these events come from God and manifest God's will. Even if one were not to tie this verse to Uḥud, it would still make good sense as a general statement about faith in God and in God's knowledge and authority, and so would not seem such an interruption to the repeated creedal affirmations of Q 3:1–7.

Pregill

A programmatic statement in which the revelatory community's relationship to Christian tradition is asserted, but its distinctive characteristics highlighted as well. In this regard, this *sūra* is one of the most insistently sectarian revelations in the Qurʾān, in Wansbrough's sense of the term.

This *sūra* would have to be central to any attempt to rethink the emergence of what became the Islamic community in the late antique environment, especially in the context of what the building consensus would agree was a mixed ethnic, cultural, and religious milieu in which Syrian Christianity in particular had become well established. Throughout the *sūra* the author seems to be elaborating his particular vision of a rectified religion, particularly by revisiting Christianity's Israelite roots and rethinking its relationship to the Bible.

V. 2: *al-ḥayy al-qayyūm:* the Living, the Abiding, as in Q 2:255 above. Here combined with other epithets of a conspicuously Biblical ambience in v. 6: *Allāh ʿazīz wa-ḏū intiqām*, i.e., *Êl Šaddây, Êl Qannâʾ*. The subsequent references to God as He who searches things out and shapes humanity in the womb likewise evoke Biblical precedents.

V. 3: *al-kitāb:* "Scripture" in its most diffuse, dynamic sense, a process of revelation rather than an entified example of it (cf. Madigan 2001). Concrete examples follow.

V. 4: *furqān:* the logic of the verse would seem to dictate that this is the title of another particular example of scripture (thus the identification with *al-Zabūr* in the *tafsīr*). Donner (2007) identifies *furqān* here with Syriac *pūqdānā* "commandment"; Rubin (2009), on the other hand, asserts that philological evidence preserved by the lexicographic tradition proves that the word has a well-established, and presumably authentically ancient, Arabic meaning of "dawn," which the Qurʾān adopts in the sense of "guiding light."

All that said, drawing on Bell (1953) in particular, I have wondered if this might instead be construed as a reference to an eschatological text particular to the community that our speaker is addressing that was eventually integrated into the *muṣḥaf;* that is, *al-Furqān* is a proper noun. Given the overarching concern with eschatology in the final *ǧuzʾ* of the canonical Qurʾān – a section of the scripture that seems thematically and stylistically coherent – could Q 77–112 be the *al-Furqān* to which this verse refers? Walid A. Saleh's recent critique of scholarship on *furqān* ("A Piecemeal Qurʾān: *furqān* and its Meaning in Classical Islam and Modern Qurʾānic Studies," *JSAI* 42 (2015): 31–71) takes a rather different approach, though he likewise emphasizes the term's significance in the context of the Qurʾān's self-presentation.

V. 7: *muḥkamāt* and *mutašābihāt:* much discussed in traditional exegesis. The verse denounces, in a general way, people who approach scripture and argue over trivialities, as opposed to those who recognize that scripture's primary purpose is to be an instrument for attaining salvation, perhaps as a criticism against the midrashic impulse to over-scrutinize scripture. The foundational things (*muḥkamāt*)

are the essence of scripture (*umm al-kitāb*); regarding its obscurities (*mutašābihāt*), only those with deviation in their hearts pursue them; "they are looking for trouble by looking for its ultimate meaning, for none knows its ultimate meaning but God."

Reynolds

In its presentation of Jesus the Qurʾān makes him a prophet who confirms (*muṣaddiq*) the *tawrāt* (Q 3:50; 5:46; 61:6; on this see Paret, *Kommentar*, ad loc.). Here (v. 3) the Qurʾān's prophet is said to receive a revelation (*kitāb*) which confirms what came earlier (*mā bayna yadayhi*) from the *tawrāt* and *inǧīl*, thus at once making him a prophet like Jesus and a prophet who succeeds Jesus.

Rippin

I continue to think, despite some scholarly arguments against this, that the Qurʾān has been written in light of an understanding of religion as focused around scripture and that the assertion of the status of scripture is fundamental to the author. The reference to "book" here refers to that status. The use of *furqān* perhaps suggests an attempt to name this book.

With that understanding, the interpretation of *muḥkam* and *mutašābih* do become more problematic, for sure. If, after all, *kitāb* has more the sense of "ruling" then understanding *muḥkam* as an explicit reference to laws makes some sense. If *kitāb* does suggest scripture as such, then the meaning of those words is less obvious.

Bell (1991: I, 65) suggests that "yet none remembers save those possessed of understanding" in v. 7 is an awkward intrusion, since the words being spoken prior to it continue in the speaking voice of those "well-grounded in knowledge" in the following verses. This passage should rightly be understood to continue for another two verses but that does not solve (it draws attention to) the problem of the awkwardness.

Stefanidis

The terms *mutašābihāt* and *muḥkamāt* (v. 7) are customarily translated as "ambiguous" and "clear." Medieval Muslim exegetes diverged over which verses were ambiguous or clear, but they generally agreed that the Qurʾān offered here a binary opposition that is in theory applicable to the whole corpus.

Taking into account the traditional context given for the first part of Q 3 which mentions a dispute with Christian interlocutors (namely the *Naǧrān* delegation, see al-Wāḥidī), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd suggests a different interpretation. In his view, the categories *mutašābihāt* and *muḥkamāt* do not refer to the *kitāb* as a whole but only to the Qurʾānic presentation of Jesus, which underlines his humanity while at the same time recognizing his miraculous birth. It seems indeed possible that Christian polem-

icists (who, according to this reading, would be those referred to by *allaḏīna fī qulūbihim zayġun*) would have realized the ambiguous status of Jesus in the Qurʾān and used it as an argument in their favor. Abu Zayd's assessment is that, in order to refute any Christian misunderstanding, "the verses in which the Qurʾān describes Jesus as the "word and the "spirit" of God were declared "ambiguous" whereas the verses emphasizing his humanity as only a prophet and messenger were declared the "clear," the backbone of the book." (Abu Zayd 2004: 33).

Tengour

Composée de deux cents versets, la sourate *Āl ʿImrān* est considérée comme étant médinoise par la tradition musulmane et mecquoise par l'orientalisme. La controverse avec les Chrétiens de Naǧrān (vv. 59–63) ; la nativité de Marie et l'Annonce faite à Zacharie (vv. 38–46) ; la nativité de Jésus (vv. 47–58) comptent parmi ses thèmes. La séquence que forment les sept premiers versets est relative au dieu coranique et à la Révélation qu'il fait ou a déjà fait descendre.

Le verbe *nazzala*/ *yunazzilu* (v. 3), qui donne le nom verbal *tanzīl*, connote une répétition et une récurrence de l'action de faire descendre. Le verbe *anzala*/ *yunzilu* (vv. 3, 4, 7) à partir duquel est formé le nom verbal, *inzāl*, désigne quant à lui une descente déjà accomplie. Dans les deux cas, nous avons affaire à la racine arabe *N-Z-L* qui dans la langue ancienne renvoie d'abord à la descente de la pluie. Ce sens concret et particulièrement significatif pour le terrain aride de l'Arabie occidentale du début du VIIe siècle, est toujours sous-jacent aux emplois coraniques des dérivés de la racine *N-Z-L* lorsqu'il s'agit de désigner la Révélation faite à l'homme Muḥammad ou aux autres peuples.

Des mots comme *hudā* et *āyāt*, *āya* au singulier (vv. 4, 7), auxquels est ensuite associée la Révélation, entrent dans le champ sémantique de la guidance coranique. Le premier est construit sur la racine *H-D-Y* qui renvoie à l'idée de montrer et de mettre sur la bonne piste. Ce sens est toujours présent dans les dictionnaires médiévaux tardifs comme le *Lisān al-ʿArab* d'Ibn Manẓūr (m. 711/1312) où le mot *hudā* est donné comme étant opposé au mot *ḍalāl* (l'égarement de la bonne piste) et comme synonyme du mot *rašād* (le fait d'être sur la bonne piste). Dans le contexte tribal de l'époque, être sur la bonne piste lors des déplacements, nomades ou caravaniers, était une nécessité vitale. Le mot *hudā* est ainsi très occurrent dans le Coran. Son emploi métaphorique où le « bon chemin » est forcément celui du dieu coranique ne doit pas occulter le sens concret. S'agissant du mot *āya*, celui-ci désigne d'abord le signe de piste que l'on voit clairement de loin (voir *Lisān al-ʿArab* à cette entrée). Là encore, la parole coranique l'emploie à dessein pour signifier que la Révélation portée par Muḥammad est un signe probant, autrement dit un signe qu'il n'est pas possible de ne pas voir.

Dans une perspective d'anthropologie historique, le retour aux sens concrets d'une racine s'avère nécessaire à la compréhension d'une parole dont l'enjeu de

conviction était d'importance. Les images qui se profilent derrière ces mots devaient sans doute trouver un écho chez ceux à qui ils étaient destinés.

Toorawa

Alif Lām Mīm. One cannot ignore these inscrutable letters that appear as the beginning of *sūra*s (called *fawātiḥ*, "openers," or *muqaṭṭaʿāt*, "discrete [letters]"), an insistent component of the Qurʾānic text. In spite of a considerable amount of scholarship on these discrete and "mysterious" letters, as Devin Stewart has shown there is still something (perhaps even much) to be said (Stewart 2013). The relationship of the letters to the verses immediately following them—a relationship rooted in almost all cases in end-rhyme—must perhaps be looked at more closely.

Zellentin

The last verse of this passage (v. 7) differentiates between two parts of "the book" that was sent down: there are parts that are *muḥkamāt*, "clear," which derive directly from the heavenly "mother of the book" and there are parts that are *mutašābihāt*, "ambiguous," "likenesses," or perhaps more precisely "similes" (see Witztum 2014). The Qurʾān itself states that it only contains parts that have no doubt in them (e.g., Q 2:1) and associates itself with the "mother of the book" (e.g., in Q 43:4). Would this suggest that the similes in question would mainly be found in the previous parts of the heavenly "mother of the book" already explicated in v. 3 of the passage at hand, the Torah and the Evangel? This is not the case, since the Qurʾān also contains distinct similes: according to Q 2:26, for example, God uses parables that at the same time lead astray transgressors and guide the righteous, a saying that is related to the statement here that "those in whose hearts is deviance" pursue the "ambiguous" verses—or perhaps similes. How do we reconcile these apparently divergent tendencies of both employing and denouncing ambiguity?

The rabbinic exegetical tradition values the multiplicity of meaning of divine speech and fully endorses the mode of parable. For example, it classifies divine speech in ten categories, ranging from clearer forms such as "speech," "saying," and "command," to semiotically more complex ones such as "parable (*mšl*), metaphor, and enigma" (*Genesis Rabbah* 44:6). Arranging the breadth of divine speech on a continuum between clear and opaque, applying rabbinic thought to the passage in question would muddy the waters of the Qurʾān's respective clear-cut taxonomy. Rather, considering that the Qurʾān seems to integrate two late antique tendencies known from the Christian and the Judaeo-Christian tradition, we might even perceive of it as a model counter to the rabbinic one.

Namely, when the Qurʾān classifies the law into parts that are eternally valid and clear (*muḥkamāt*), parts that are allegorical (*mutašābihāt*), and, elsewhere, parts abrogated, mainly by Jesus (see Q 3:50), it seems to echo an oral tradition embodied most fully in the Judaeo-Christian three-partite classification of Scripture into the

pure law, the symbolic law, and the laws abrogated by Jesus, as attested in Ptolemy's "Letter to Flora" (see Epiphanius' *Panarion* 33.6, Ptolemy is discussed also in my commentary on QS 3). At the same time, the Qurʾān states that some ambiguous scriptural verses are a test for people that will lead some astray; this idea is well attested throughout the Christian and Judaeo-Christian literature (in addition to Ephrem, see e. g., *Clementine Homilies* 2.38 and 3.50).

In this case, hence, the Qurʾān places itself outside of the rabbinic attitude towards parables, which enables it to marshal "Christian" discourse against all those who "pursue" (v. 7) Scriptural ambiguity—likely a charge directed precisely against its rabbinic contemporaries who indeed valued the multiplication rather than the simplification of the meaning of Scripture.

QS 6 Q 3:33 – 63

3.33 God chose Adam and Noah, the House of Abraham and the House of ‘Imran above all mankind:
3.34 a progeny one from another. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
3.35 Remember when the wife of ‘Imran said: “ My Lord, I pledge to You what is in my womb. It shall be dedicated to Your service. Accept this from me for it is You – You who are All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”
3.36 When she gave birth to a female, she said: “ My Lord, I have given birth and it is a female – and God knew best what she had given birth to – and a male is not like a female. I have called her Mary. I seek refuge in You for her and her progeny from Satan, ever deserving to be stoned.”
3.37 God accepted her offering graciously and caused her to grow up admirably, and entrusted Zachariah with her upbringing. Whenever Zachariah entered in upon her in the sanctuary, he found food by her side.
He said: “Mary, from where do you have this?” She said: “It is from God. God provides for whomever He wills, without reckoning.”
3.38 It was then that Zachariah prayed to his Lord, saying: “My Lord, grant me from on high a blameless progeny. You always hear prayers.”
3.39 The angels called out to him while standing in prayer in the sanctuary: “God brings you glad tidings of the coming of John, confirming the truth with a word from God – a lord among men, chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous.”
3.40 He said: “My Lord, how will I have a son when old age has come upon me, and my wife is barren?”
He said: “Thus is God. He does whatever He pleases”.
3.41 He said: “My Lord, grant me a sign.”
He said: “Your sign is that you shall not speak to people for three days, except in gestures. Remember Your Lord frequently, and glorify Him each evening and dawn.”
3.42 Remember when the angels said: “O Mary, God has chosen you, made you pure and chosen you above all the women of the world.

3.33 Certes, Allah a élu Adam, Noé, la famille d’Abraham et la famille d’’Imran au-dessus de tout le monde.
3.34 En tant que descendants les uns des autres, et Allah est Audient et Omniscient.
3.35 (Rappelle-toi) quand la femme de ’Imran dit: «Seigneur, je T’ai voué en toute exclusivité ce qui est dans mon ventre. Accepte-le donc, de moi. C’est Toi certes l’ Audient et l’Omniscient.
3.36 Puis, lorsqu’elle en eut accouché, elle dit: «Seigneur, voilà que j’ai accouché d’une fille» or Allah savait mieux ce dont elle avait accouché! Le garçon n’est pas comme la fille. «Je l’ai nommée Marie, et je la place, ainsi que sa descendance, sous Ta protection contre le Diable, le banni».
3.37 Son Seigneur l’agréa alors du bon agrément, la fit croître en belle croissance. Et Il en confia la garde à Zacharie. Chaque fois que celui-ci entrait auprès d’elle dans le Sanctuaire, il trouvait près d’elle de la nourriture. Il dit: «O Marie, d’où te vient cette nourriture?» – Elle dit: «Cela me vient d’Allah». Il donne certes la nourriture à qui Il veut sans compter.
3.38 Alors, Zacharie pria son Seigneur, et dit: «O mon Seigneur, donne-moi, venant de Toi, une excellente descendance. Car Tu es Celui qui entend bien la prière».
3.39 Alors, les Anges l’appelèrent pendant que, debout, il priait dans le Sanctuaire: «Voilà qu’Allah t’annonce la naissance de Yahya, confirmateur d’une parole d’Allah. Il sera un chef, un chaste, un prophète et du nombre des gens de bien».
3.40 Il dit: «O mon Seigneur, comment aurais-je un garçon maintenant que la vieillesse m’a atteint et que ma femme est stérile?» Allah dit: «Comme cela!», Allah fait ce qu’Il veut.
3.41 – «Seigneur, dit Zacharie, donne-moi un signe.» – «Ton signe, dit Allah, c’est que pendant trois jours tu ne pourras parler aux gens que par geste. Invoque beaucoup Ton Seigneur; et, glorifie-Le, en fin et en début de journée.»
3.42 (Rappelle-toi) quand les Anges dirent: «O Marie, certes Allah t’a élue et purifiée; et Il t’a élue au-dessus des femmes des mondes.

3.43 O Mary, pray constantly to your Lord, and bow down in worship, and kneel alongside those who kneel."
3.44 These are reports from the Unseen which We reveal to you. For you were not with them when they threw down their quills to determine which of them would care for Mary. Nor were you there when they quarreled amongst themselves.
3.45 Remember when the angels said: "O Mary, God gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him. His name is the Christ Jesus son of Mary, greatly honored in this world and the next, and among those drawn nearest to God.
3.46 He shall speak to mankind from the cradle, and in maturity, and shall be among the righteous."
3.47 She said, "My Lord, how shall I have a child when no human has touched me?"
He said: "Thus is God. He creates whatever He pleases. When He decrees a matter, He merely says to it: Be! And it is."
3.48 He shall teach him the Book and the Wisdom, the Torah and the Evangel.
3.49 He shall be a Messenger to the Children of Israel, declaring: "I bring you a sign from your Lord. I will fashion for you from clay the likeness of a bird, and I shall breathe upon it and it will become a bird, by God's leave. I shall cure the blind and the leper and revive the dead by God's leave. I shall reveal to you what you eat and what you store in your homes. In this assuredly is a sign for you, if you are true believers.
3.50 I confirm what lies before me of the Torah and to make licit for you some of what had been made illicit. I come to you with a sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me.
3.51 God is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him, for here lies a path that is straight."
3.52 When Jesus detected unbelief from them, he said: "Who are my supporters on the path to God?" The Apostles said: "We are the supporters of God and believe in God. Witness that we are Muslims.
3.53 Our Lord, We believe in that which You have revealed, and follow the Messenger. So inscribe us among those who bear witness."
3.54 They schemed. But God schemed; and God is the best of schemers.

3.43 «O Marie, obéis à Ton Seigneur, prosterne-toi, et incline-toi avec ceux qui s'inclinent».
3.44 – Ce sont là des nouvelles de l'Inconnaissable que Nous te révélons. Car tu n'étais pas là lorsqu'ils jetaient leurs calames pour décider qui se chargerait de Marie! Tu n'étais pas là non plus lorsqu'ils se disputaient!
3.45 (Rappelle-toi) quand les Anges dirent: «O Marie, voilà qu'Allah t'annonce une parole de Sa part: son nom sera «Al-Masîh», «'Issâ», fils de Marie, illustre ici-bas comme dans l'au-delà, et l'un des rapprochés d'Allah».
3.46 Il parlera aux gens, dans le berceau et en son âge mûr et il sera du nombre des gens de bien».
3.47 – Elle dit: «Seigneur! Comment aurais-je un enfant, alors qu'aucun homme ne m'a touchée?» – «C'est ainsi!» dit-Il. Allah crée ce qu'Il veut. Quand Il décide d'une chose, Il lui dit seulement: «Sois» et elle est aussitôt.
3.48 Et (Allah) lui enseignera l'écriture, la sagesse, la Thora et l'Evangile,
3.49 et Il sera le messager aux enfants d'Israël, [et leur dira]: «En vérité, je viens à vous avec un signe de la part de votre Seigneur. Pour vous, je forme de la glaise comme la figure d'un oiseau, puis je souffle dedans: et, par la permission d'Allah, cela devient un oiseau. Et je guéris l'aveugle-né et le lépreux, et je ressuscite les morts, par la permission d'Allah. Et je vous apprends ce que vous mangez et ce que vous amassez dans vos maisons. Voilà bien là un signe, pour vous, si vous êtes croyants!
3.50 Et je confirme ce qu'il y a dans la Thora révélée avant moi, et je vous rends licite une partie de ce qui vous était interdit. Et j'ai certes apporté un signe de votre Seigneur. Craignez Allah donc, et obéissez-moi.
3.51 Allah est mon Seigneur et votre Seigneur. Adorez-Le donc: voilà le chemin droit.»
3.52 Puis, quand Jésus ressentit de l'incrédulité, de leur part, il dit: «Qui sont mes alliés dans la voie d'Allah?» Les apôtres dirent: «Nous sommes les alliés d'Allah. Nous croyons en Allah. Et sois témoin que nous lui sommes soumis.
3.53 Seigneur! Nous avons cru à ce que Tu as fait descendre et suivi le messager. Inscris-nous donc parmi ceux qui témoignent».

3.55 Remember when God said: “O Jesus, I shall cause you to die and make you ascend to Me. I shall purify you from those who blasphemed, and I shall raise those who followed you above those who blasphemed until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me is your return, and I shall judge between you concerning that in which you disputed.
3.56 As for those who blasphemed, I shall torment them most severely in this world and the next, and no helpers will they have.”
3.57 As for those who believed and performed good deeds, He shall pay them their wages in full. God loves not the evildoers.
3.58 These are verses We recite to you, and a Wise Remembrance.
3.59 The likeness of Jesus in God’s sight is like Adam. He created him of dust then said to him Be! And he was.
3.60 This is the truth from Your Lord, so be not among those who doubt.
3.61 Whoso argues with you about him after the Knowledge that has come to you, say: “Come, let us call together our children and your children, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, and let us devoutly pray, and call down God’s curse upon those who lie.”
3.62 This is the true narrative. There is no god but God. It is God Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise.
3.63 If they turn away, God knows full well who are the sowers of discord.

3.54 Et ils [les autres] se mirent à comploter. Allah a fait échouer leur complot. Et c’est Allah qui sait le mieux leur machination!
3.55 (Rappelle-toi) quand Allah dit: «O Jésus, certes, Je vais mettre fin à ta vie terrestre t’élever vers Moi, te débarrasser de ceux qui n’ont pas cru et mettre jusqu’au Jour de la Résurrection, ceux qui te suivent au-dessus de ceux qui ne croient pas. Puis, c’est vers Moi que sera votre retour, et Je jugerai, entre vous, ce sur quoi vous vous opposiez.
3.56 Quant à ceux qui n’ont pas cru, Je les châtierai d’un dur châtiment, ici-bas tout comme dans l’au-delà; et pour eux, pas de secoureurs.
3.57 Et quant à ceux qui ont la foi et font de bonnes ouvres, Il leur donnera leurs récompenses. Et Allah n’aime pas les injustes.
3.58 Voilà ce que Nous te récitons des versets et de la révélation précise.
3.59 Pour Allah, Jésus est comme Adam qu’Il créa de poussière, puis Il lui dit: «Sois»: et il fut.
3.60.La vérité vient de ton Seigneur. Ne sois donc pas du nombre des sceptiques.
3.61 A ceux qui te contredisent à son propos, maintenant que tu en es bien informé, tu n’as qu’à dire: «Venez, appelons nos fils et les vôtres, nos femmes et les vôtres, nos propres personnes et les vôtres, puis proférons exécration réciproque en appelant la malédiction d’Allah sur les menteurs.
3.62 Voilà, certes, le récit véridique. Et il n’y a pas de divinité à part Allah. En vérité, c’est Allah qui est le Puissant, le Sage.
3.63 Si donc ils tournent le dos... alors Allah connaît bien les semeurs de corruption!

سورة آل عمران

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ (33) ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (34) إِذْ
قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (35) فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ
إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَى وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعَتْ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَى وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
الرَّجِيمِ (36) فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا
قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (37) هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ
هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ (38) فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى
مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (39) قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي
عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ (40) قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ
كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ (41) وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ
(42) يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ (43) ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ
أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ (44) إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ

الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ (45) وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (46)
قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكِ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (47)
وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ (48) وَرَسُولًا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ
الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ
وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (49) وَمُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ
الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ (50) إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (51)
فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ (52)
رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ (53) وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ (54) إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا
عِيسَى إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ (55) فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَأُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
نَاصِرِينَ (56) وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ (57) ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ (58) إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (59) الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا
تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ (60) فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ
وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ (61) إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (62) فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ (63)

Dye

Ce passage a été bien étudié dans Van der Velden 2007, qui y voit un texte de convergence, répondant à, mais aussi cherchant un compromis avec, diverses positions christologiques (notamment nestoriennes). La nature de l'argumentation, le profil de l'auteur, la manière dont est conduite la polémique, indiquent que le contexte le plus plausible pour la composition de cette péricope est la Syrie-Palestine des années 650.

Quelques remarques sur les vv. 33–44. Le *Protévangile de Jacques* se situe clairement à l'arrière-plan, mais le texte va plus loin, et approfondit des développements présents dans Q 19:1–33. La mère de Marie est appelée « femme de ʿImrān » au v. 35, ce qui fait d'elle, logiquement, la « fille de ʿImrān » (Q 66:12). Cela rappelle le « Marie, sœur d'Aaron » de Q 19:28. On a ici un détail très important pour comprendre la mariologie coranique. On a parfois supposé que le Coran confondait Marie, mère de Jésus, et Miryam, sœur de Moïse et d'Aaron (les prénoms en araméen et en grec sont identiques) – hypothèse invraisemblable. On a aussi supposé que le Coran entendait seulement souligner le lignage de Marie, et dire qu'elle était la *descendante* d'Aaron et de ʿImrān, non la sœur du premier et la fille du second. Cette lecture est contredite par les vv. 35–36 (la femme de ʿImrān ne peut pas être sa descendante). La seule solution est une identification *typologique* de Marie et Miryam, qui a sa source dans les traditions liturgiques de l'église du Kathisma, concernant la fête de la « Mémoire de Marie ». L'une des lectures pratiquées lors de cette fête parle d'« Aaron, le frère de Marie », exactement avec le sens typologique du Coran (Dye 2012). La « famille de ʿImrān » au v. 33 concerne donc aussi bien Moïse et sa fratrie que Marie et Jésus.

La source de cette typologie pourrait remonter à un apocryphe de la Dormition du VIe siècle, le *Transitus grec « R* . » Dans la « prière de Marie » (§ 12), on lit : « Je te bénis, toi et tes trois serviteurs envoyés d'auprès de toi pour le service des trois voies ». Selon Manns (1979: 514–515), ces trois serviteurs seraient les trois chefs d'Israël : Moïse, Aaron et Myriam. Dans la tradition juive, Miryam était morte dans un baiser de Dieu, comme ses deux frères.

El-Badawi

This fascinating passage discusses the lineage, life and legacy of Jesus, the son of Mary, and—more importantly—delves deep into late antique theological debates, ultimately asserting a Qurʾānic Christology. It is significant that Q 3:33–63 addresses a broad audience known as "People of the Scripture" (*ahl al-kitāb*)—whose fragmentation is itself the result of theological debates centered around the person of Jesus. Q 3:33–63 may be divided accordingly:

[1] Vv. 33–35, Jesus' elected prophetic ancestry (cf. *iṣṭafā*, *iǧtabā*, Syriac *gbā*, "to elect"). Jesus's prophecy transcends the Davidic lineage in the Gospels, which binds him exclusively to the tribe of Judah/Judaea and the children of Israel. By underscoring his descent from Abraham and Amram, Jesus' prophecy transcends Israel and reaches all mankind. This is consistent with the views of the Qurʾān and select pseudepigrapha.

[2] Vv. 36–37a, The "Immaculate Conception" and honoring Saint Anne (i.e., Mary's mother; see further *Protoevangelium of James* 2–6).

[3] Vv. 37b-41, Angels give good news to Zachariah (*Cf.* Luke 1:26–38; Syriac *ʿ-q-r*, "barren, sterile").

[4] Vv. 42–47, Angels give good news to Mary/"Virgin Birth" (cf. Luke 2:8–14). Following up Mary's episode with the angels immediately after that of Zachariah means that the author knows the chapter (and verse?) sequence of Luke's Gospel.

[5] Vv. 46, 48–51 Jesus' "Ministry" and miracles (cf. esp. *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*/Syriac/*Arabic Infancy Gospel*).

[6] Vv. 52–58, An alternate "Passion." This pericope does not explicitly state that Jesus was saved from crucifixion, just that God [made him die? *mutawaffīka*] raised and purified him. Who precisely are *allaḏīna āmanū* and *allaḏīna kafarū* in vv. 55b-57?

[7] V. 59, Qurʾānic "Christology." This verse responds to Paul's doctrine of Christ as the "second Adam" (1 Cor 15:22).

[8] Vv. 60–64, New "Proselytism" (*daʿwah*). What precisely is v. 61 referring to, a congregational prayer or some sort of council? Furthermore, can *laʿnah* here be construed as "anathema, excommunication?" Is v. 64 in fact some sort of binding compromise, contract or creed? At any rate, the early community of believers who accept this call (*daʿwah*) are cast as Jesus' apostles in v. 52, declaring "bear witness that we are Muslims."

Grodzki

Interestingly enough, B. Bonnet-Eymard translates the problematic v. 54 as following: "Alors ils livrèrent et le Dieu livra, mais le Dieu délivre ceux qui sont livrés" through the prism of Hebrew *makhar* (to sell) following this word's usage in John 6:70 – 71 of Judas betraying Jesus and initializing Christ's passion (also used in Gen. 37:28 when the brothers sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites). There is also no apparent grammatical liaison between vv. 48 and 49.

Imbert

Commentaire concernant le verset 37. Du passage concerné de la sourate Āl ʿImrān, l'épigraphie ancienne n'atteste que 2 versets. Dans une invocation adressée à un fils du calife al-Walīd Ier relevée dans un graffito du *Ǧabal ʾUsays* (Syrie), on souhaite que le jeune homme devienne vertueux et qu'il grandisse harmonieusement: *anbithu nabatan ḥasanan*. Le verset est introduit sans la formule de *basmala*. Nous pouvons noter un détournement d'une partie du v. 37: le verbe est adapté de l'accompli à l'impératif afin de se conformer à l'invocation débutant par *Allāhumma* ("ô Dieu") qui l'impose grammaticalement. Au-delà de cette simple réadaptation du verset, le choix d'un extrait inspiré de l'histoire de Marie est particulièrement remarquable en un lieu où le choix de versets coraniques à saveur chrétienne semble une constante. En effet, sur le même site, nous avons relevé un autre verset gravé isolément sur un rocher et tiré de la sourate *Maryam* (Q 19:30 – 31). C'est également sur ce volcan de Syrie que fut trouvé le célèbre graffito en caractères coufiques rappelant la présence d'un soldat ghassanide envoyé par al-Ḥāriṯ en 528, soit en -94 de l'hégire.

Ce qui est remarquable dans le cas du verset que nous traitons, c'est qu'il reflète la grande liberté avec laquelle les lapicides anonymes du début de l'islam traitaient des versets coraniques: ils étaient librement adaptés afin de se conformer grammaticalement au texte du graffito alors qu'on se serait attendu au contraire, à savoir que le texte du graffito aurait dû s'adapter au texte coranique. Cette "élasticité" du texte coranique est une donnée fondamentale de ce que nous appelons le Coran des pierres.

Commentaire concernant le verset 59. Comme nous l'avons mentionné pour Q 2:33, les mentions d'Adam sont extrêmement rares et tout à fait indirectes dans l'épigraphie des débuts de l'islam. Dans l'imaginaire collectif, Adam ne semble pas avoir encore acquis le statut des autres personnages majeurs du monothéisme à l'image de Moïse, Abraham, Jésus ou Aaron dont les auteurs anonymes des graffiti répètent inlassablement les noms. Dans le Wādī al-Ḥurumān (La Mecque, Arabie Saoudite), c'est très indirectement et en association avec Jésus que nous trouvons mention de l'expression *ḫalaqahu min turāb*. Les noms de Jésus et d'Adam ne sont pas cités et le verset d'origine paraît détourné au sein d'une profession de foi: *āmana [...] bi-llaḏī ḫalaqahu min turāb*, "il a cru en celui qui l'a créé à partir de poussière" (cf. al-Rāšid 1995: 59, n. 16).

Pregill

The *Āl ʿImrān* (House or People of ʿImrān) are clearly prophetic precursors; their chosenness is specifically associated with their priestly status, signaled most of all by their purity. Thus, *iṣṭifāʾ* here seems to mean selection through purification and sanctification, an equation later applied to Muḥammad in hagiographic traditions. Mary is consecrated in the womb (*muḥarrar,* i. e., *muḥarram?*); her *miḥrāb* (v. 38) is surely in the Temple, where Zachariah is found when the birth of John is announced (v. 39); cf. the *miḥrāb* of David at Q 38:21 and *maḥārib* of Solomon at Q 34:13. She is sexually pure, as "none have touched me" (*lam yamsasnī*), unambiguously signaling her holy/priestly status. Cf. the untouchability of the Qurʾān as a *kitāb maknūn, lā yamassuhu,* Q 56:77–79, on which see Kister 2008; also *al-sāmirī* Aaron, commissioned as High Priest, *lā misāsa*, Q 20:97. Thus also the reference to Mary as *uḫt hārūn* in the parallel narrative at Q 19:28.

The Qurʾān is overall not particularly interested in the Temple cult, but the *ritual* purity of Israelite priestly precursors seems to have evolved here into *moral* purity, foreshadowing the post-Qurʾānic formulation of the doctrine of *ʿiṣma*. So the eventual emergence of prophetic impeccability – present only in an incipient form in the Qurʾān itself – reflects not only a late antique exegetical trajectory that is largely apologetic in function (especially when applied to Moses as lawgiver or David as messianic forebear) but perhaps also the Qurʾānic attempt to construe priestly purity as a distinct type of divine election.

Attributing priestly descent to Jesus here also seems like a strategy to appropriate and defang the doctrine of Christ's dual priesthood that is commonly found in Syriac tradition, which posits that Jesus is heir both to the spiritual priesthood of Melchizedek (universally asserted in Christian exegesis of Ps 110:4) and the corporeal priesthood of Israel transmitted through the Aaronides down to Zachariah and John and then to Jesus himself. The juxtaposition of an assertion of Jesus' priestly lineage with a strident denial of his divinity seems to simultaneously acknowledge this larger context while limiting its significance – being priestly *only* means that Jesus is pure, from a pure vessel, descended from a pure lineage, signifying his and his family's special selection as divine messengers.

V. 50: The first passage we have examined here using a form of the important root *W-Q-Y*; cf. the Syriac parallel discussed in Becker (2009), and also the important treatment of Ohlander (2005), who makes a compelling argument that the trajectory of development of the concept of the "fear of God" in the Qurʾān actually vindicates the traditional chronology of revelation.

Reynolds

The Qurʾān's interest here in the nativity of Mary seems to me an indication that it was proclaimed in a Christian context; the interest of Christians in Mary's nativity in Late Antiquity is evident from texts such as the *Protoevangelium of James* (translated into Syriac in the fifth century) and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (usually

dated to the early 7th century). Indeed the nativity of Mary here follows closely the narratives found in those texts (for example, v. 44 refers to the contest in which the elders of Israel cast their rods – *aqlām* – for the right to be betrothed to Mary; cf *Protoevangelium* 9:1). The Qurʾān's interest in the stories of Mary's nativity might emerge from the Christian concern with Jewish incredulity, or even with Jewish calumny of Mary (regarding which cf. Q 4:156).

Sirry

The passage under discussion offers a detailed account of not only the birth narratives of the Christian gospels, including Mary's virginity and events of the Announcement, but also several miracles of Jesus, including those which are not mentioned in the canonical gospels. These Qurʾānic accounts, along with Q 19:22–27, have puzzled scholars as they are quite different from the traditional Christian accounts found in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. While this difference has often been explained by Western scholars such that the Qurʾān depends on non-canonical gospels, i.e., apocryphal Christian sources, though they have disagreed from which non-canonical gospels the Qurʾān most likely borrows, Muslim scholars contend that the Qurʾān preserves the authentic account of the narrative, and hence its independence from Jewish and Christian sources. One of the puzzling issues facing critical scholars is that the Qurʾān seems to combine in its account different narratives of Mary and Jesus found in distinct Christian apocryphal traditions. According to Stephen J. Schoemaker, this "mixture of two otherwise independent early Christian traditions" can be traced to the church of the "Kathisma of the Theotokos" (the Seat of the God-Bearer), recently discovered in between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This leads Schoemaker to conclude that "the Kathisma's peculiar combination of the traditions of Christ's Nativity and Mary's encounter with the Palm have generated the Qurʾān's unique account of Jesus' birth" (2003: 38). Not only is Schoemaker content with the "Christian influence on the Qurʾān" argument but also with the hypothesis that the Qurʾān did not originate in the Ḥiǧāz. Many such arguments have been subject to critical scrutiny.

One should also note that the Qurʾān recounts the story of Mary and Jesus in a polemical environment, which is evident in v. 58 onward. The polemical context of the Qurʾānic narrative is more clearly stated in vv. 61–62: "Whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus)" and then "Verily this is true story." In light of this, the famous Qurʾānic phrase *kalima sawāʾ baynanā wa-baynākum* ("a word common between us and you") in v. 64 should not be understood as the Qurʾānic *magna carta* of inter-religious dialogue, as many scholars tend to argue. The verse is not less polemical than any other exclusivist passages of the Qurʾān. It is misleading to read the verse as supporting inter-religious collegiality. On the contrary, the verse's invitation to the people of the book to "come to a word common between us and you" is followed by polemical arguments to suppress the Christian understanding of monothe-

ism ("that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto him").

Toorawa

This passage has been compared to parts of Q 19, but not, to my knowledge in terms of word choice. Consider the juxtaposition of Q 3:38:

hunālika daʿā zakariyyā ***rabbahū*** *qāla rabbi* ***hab lī min ladunka*** *ḏurriyyatan ṭayyibatan innaka samīʿu al-****duʿā****ʾ*

with Q 19:3–5:

iḏ nāda ***rabbahu*** *nidāʾan ḫafiyyā * wa lam aku bi-****duʿā****ʾika rabbi šaqiyyā * ... fa-****hab lī min ladunka*** *waliyyā*

Among other considerations is the choice of *duʿāʾ* as a rhyme-word (v. 38) and the resultant end-rhyme, which re-appears only in v. 40:

qāla rabbi annā yakūnu lī ġulāmun *wa-qad* ***balaġa****niya* ***l-kibar****u wa-****mraʾatī ʿāqiru****n qāla ka-ḏālika allāhu yafʿalu mā yašāʾ*

Verse 40 also echoes 19:8–9:

qāla rabbi annā yakūnu lī ġulāmun *wa-kanat* ***imraʾatī ʿāqir****an wa-qad* ***balaġa****t min* ***al-kibar****i ʿitiyya * **qāla ka-ḏālika****...*

It is to be expected that the same story would reprise similar words and tropes—what remains to be studied is the precise ways in which this is accomplished, by looking notably at the positioning of words, often—but not always—dictated by rhyme.

Younes

[1] One thing that attracts one's attention in this passage is the spelling of يمريم in vv. 37, 42, and 45, and يعيسى (v. 55). يمريم was "corrected" in the standard readings of the Qurʾān with the addition of the dagger *alif* to يـٰمريم, which was further corrected to يا مريم (*yā-maryam*) in more modern printings. The same was done to يعيسى (*yaʿīsā*) which was corrected to يا عيسى (*yā ʿīsā*). It is interesting to note that in colloquial Arabic *ya-maryam* and *ya-ʿīsā* are the standard pronunciations of these two phrases.

[2] The change from first person singular (v. 56) to third person singular (v. 57) to first person plural (v. 58) suggests the combining of two different texts with no attempt at correcting an obvious anomaly.

[3] V. 60 is incomplete and appears to be missing a subject.

Zellentin

Jesus predicts four of his miracles; after each of them he insists that they occurred *bi-iḏn illāhi*, "by God's leave." The Qurʾān here leaves no doubt about Jesus' status subservient to God, yet the miracles also show Jesus' special status—and it is precisely this status that justifies the validity of Jesus' abrogation of the Torah. The continuity

between Jesus' laws and those of the Qurʾān is in turn indicated by the similar phrasing in Q 5:5. In contrast with the Christian and especially Pauline concept of the abrogation of "the Law" more broadly, its *partial* abrogation in the Qurʾān—Jesus allows only *baʿḍa allaḏī ḥurrima ʿalaykum*, "*some* of the things that were forbidden to you" (my emphasis)—also stands in line with the similar approach of the Judaeo-Christian tradition expressed in the *Didascalia* (esp. 26) and in the *Clementine Homilies* (esp. *Homily* 7:8). The hermeneutical affinity of these three texts also extends to the many shared actual laws, within the broader matrix of Judaeo-Christian legal continuity, as I have argued (Zellentin 2013, esp. 55–126).

Another concept in the passage at hand that intrigues me is Jesus' exhortation to his disciples to be *anṣāru allāhi*, "helpers towards God" (v. 52, see also my comments on QS 13). In Q 61:14, the Qurʾān takes its evocation of the "helpers of God" as an occasion to note that "a group of the Children of Israel believed, and a group disbelieved, then We strengthened the faithful against their enemies, and they became the dominant ones." The Qurʾān associates the helpers in question with Jesus' discipleship, and they are to be found among the Children of Israel, and are even portrayed as the dominant group—these believers among Jesus' followers are thus Israelites, and they seem to be more dominant than rabbinic Jews. I have argued that the Qurʾān here portrays Christians as one of the two Israelite groups, in line with the strong Christian claim to be the *verus Israel*, exemplified most strongly in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (see Zellentin 2013, p. 163–4). In line with the double association of the helpers of God with Jesus and Judaism, we should also note the linguistic proximity of the Arabic terms for "helpers" and "Christians." Sidney Griffith has pointed out that "one might … assume that the Naṣārā of the Qurʾān are thought to be the spiritual descendants of Jesus' first disciples" (Griffith 2011, 302), the founders of the Church.

Corroborating the Qurʾānic evidence, the term "helpers" has a long and weighty "Christian" and Judaeo-Christian history. In the Pseudo-*Clementine Homilies*, Jesus, as the true prophet, is introduced as "the man who is the helper" (*Hom.* I,19). Also, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* exhorts the bishops, the spiritual and clerical successors of the apostles, to be "helpers of God" (*mʿdrnʾ ʿm ʾlha*, XII, Vööbus 1979:143). The association of "Helpers of God" with Jesus and his disciples provides a rich context for the Qurʾān's usage of the term (see Zellentin 2013:162, 190, and 228).

QS 7 Q 4:1 – 28

4.1 O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul, and created from it its spouse, and propagated from both many men and women. Fear God in Whose name you make requests one of another, and sever not the ties of kinship. God watches well over you.
4.2 Deliver their monies to orphans and do not substitute corrupt for pure. Do not consume their wealth by adding it to your own, for this would be an outrage most grievous.
4.3 If you fear you will not be fair towards orphans, so too with marriage. Marry whoever pleases you among women – two, three or four; but if you fear you will not be fair to them all, then one only, or else what you own of slaves. This would be closer to impartiality.
4.4 Give women their dowry, a free-offering. And if they willingly offer you any of it, then consume it in peace of mind and wholesomeness.
4.5 Entrust not your wealth to spendthrifts, wealth that God provided you for maintenance. Provide for them from it, and clothe them and speak kindly to them.
4.6 Put orphans to the test until they reach the age of marriage. If you observe in them maturity of mind, hand their monies over to them. Do not consume it in dissipation or in haste before they come of age. Whoever is rich should hold back, abstemious; whoever is poor should spend it fairly and honestly. When you deliver their monies to them, bring in witnesses thereof. God suffices as Reckoner.
4.7 To males belongs a share of what was left by parents and closest relatives, and to females belongs a share of what was left by parents and closest relatives, be it little or much – a portion decreed.
4.8 If the division of inheritance is attended by close of kin, orphans or the needy, give them from it and speak kindly to them.
4.9 And let those who leave behind progeny that is weak and for whom they fear – let them beware! Let them fear God and let them speak a fitting word.

4.1 O hommes! Craignez votre Seigneur qui vous a créés d'un seul être, et a créé de celui-ci son épouse, et qui de ces deux là a fait répandre (sur la terre) beaucoup d'hommes et de femmes. Craignez Allah au nom duquel vous vous implorez les uns les autres, et craignez de rompre les liens du sang. Certes Allah vous observe parfaitement.
4.2 Et donnez aux orphelins leurs biens; n'y substituez pas le mauvais au bon. Ne mangez pas leurs biens avec les vôtres: c'est vraiment un grand péché.
4.3 Et si vous craignez de n'être pas justes envers les orphelins,... Il est permis d'épouser deux, trois ou quatre, parmi les femmes qui vous plaisent, mais, si vous craignez de n'être pas justes avec celles-ci, alors une seule, ou des esclaves que vous possédez. Cela, afin de ne pas faire d'injustice (ou afin de ne pas aggraver votre charge de famille).
4.4 Et donnez aux épouses leur mahr, de bonne grâce. Si de bon gré, elles vous en abandonnent quelque chose, disposez-en alors à votre aise et de bon cour.
4.5 Et ne confiez pas aux incapables vos biens dont Allah a fait votre subsistance. Mais prélevez-en, pour eux, nourriture et vêtement; et parlez-leur convenablement.
4.6 Et éprouvez (la capacité) des orphelins jusqu'à ce qu'ils atteignent (l'aptitude) au mariage; et si vous ressentez en eux une bonne conduite, remettez-leur leurs biens. Ne les utilisez pas (dans votre intérêt) avec gaspillage et dissipation, avant qu'ils ne grandissent. Quiconque est aisé, qu'il s'abstienne d'en prendre lui-même. S'il est pauvre, alors qu'il en utilise raisonnablement: et lorsque vous leur remettez leurs biens, prenez des témoins à leur encontre. Mais Allah suffit pour observer et compter.
4.7 Aux hommes revient une part de ce qu'ont laissé les père et mère ainsi que les proches; et aux femmes une part de ce qu'ont laissé les père et mère ainsi que les proches, que ce soit peu ou beaucoup: une part fixée.
4.8 Et lorsque les proches parents, les orphelins, les nécessiteux assistent au partage, off-

4.10 They who consume the monies of orphans unjustly are in truth consuming fire in their bellies, and shall be scorched by a raging Flame.
4.11 God commands you regarding your children: to the male what equals the share of two females. If they are females, and more than two, they inherit two thirds of what he leaves. If it be one female, she inherits half. To the two parents of the deceased belongs a sixth each of what he leaves, if he has children. If childless, and his parents inherit, his mother receives one third of what he leaves. If he has brothers, his mother receives one sixth, after deducting any bequests or debts. Your parents or your children – you know not which of them is nearer to you in benefit. This is an apportionment from God. In truth, God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
4.12 To you belongs half of what your wives leave, provided they have no children. If they have a child, your portion is a quarter of what they leave, after deducting any bequests they have made or debts. Your wives' share is a quarter of what you leave, if you have no child. If you have a child, their share is one eighth, after deducting any bequests or debts. If a man or woman dies leaving no heirs, but has a brother or sister, then the share of each is one sixth. If more, they are partners in one third, after deducting any bequests or debts, and provided the bequest is not to their detriment. Such is the decree of God. In truth, God is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing.
4.13 These are the bounds set by God. Whoso obeys God and His Messenger, God shall admit him into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. And this is the greatest of triumphs.
4.14 Whoso disobeys God and His Messenger, and transgresses His bounds, God shall admit him into a Fire, abiding therein for ever, and abasing torment awaits him.
4.15 As for your women who commit adultery, call four among you to witness against them. If they so witness, confine them to their homes until death overtakes them or else God provides another way for them.
4.16 And if two males among you commit indecency, rebuke them harshly. If they repent and make amends, leave them alone. God always ac-

rez-leur quelque chose de l'héritage, et parlez-leur convenablement.
4.9 Que la crainte saisisse ceux qui laisseraient après eux une descendance faible, et qui seraient inquiets à leur sujet; qu'ils redoutent donc Allah et qu'ils prononcent des paroles justes.
4.10 Ceux qui mangent [disposent] injustement des biens des orphelins ne font que manger du feu dans leurs ventres. Ils brûleront bientôt dans les flammes de l'Enfer.
4.11 Voici ce qu'Allah vous enjoint au sujet de vos enfants: au fils, une part équivalente à celle de deux filles. S'il n'y a que des filles, même plus de deux, à elles alors deux tiers de ce que le défunt laisse. Et s'il n'y en a qu'une, à elle alors la moitié. Quant aux père et mère du défunt, à chacun d'eux le sixième de ce qu'il laisse, s'il a un enfant. S'il n'a pas d'enfant et que ses père et mère héritent de lui, à sa mère alors le tiers. Mais s'il a des frères, à la mère alors le sixième, après exécution du testament qu'il aurait fait ou paiement d'une dette. De vos ascendants ou descendants, vous ne savez pas qui est plus près de vous en utilité. Ceci est un ordre obligatoire de la part d'Allah, car Allah est, certes, Omniscient et Sage.
4.12 Et à vous la moitié de ce que laissent vos épouses, si elles n'ont pas d'enfants. Si elles ont un enfant, alors à vous le quart de ce qu'elles laissent, après exécution du testament qu'elles auraient fait ou paiement d'une dette. Et à elles un quart de ce que vous laissez, si vous n'avez pas d'enfant. Mais si vous avez un enfant, à elles alors le huitième de ce que vous laissez après exécution du testament que vous auriez fait ou paiement d'une dette. Et si un homme, ou une femme meurt sans héritier direct, cependant qu'il laisse un frère ou une soeur, à chacun de ceux-ci alors, un sixième. S'ils sont plus de deux, tous alors participeront au tiers, après exécution du testament ou paiement d'une dette, sans préjudice à quiconque. (Telle est l') Injonction d'Allah! Et Allah est Omniscient et Indulgent.
4.13 Tels sont les ordres d'Allah. Et quiconque obéit à Allah et à Son messager, Il le fera entrer dans les Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux, pour y demeurer éternellement. Et voilà la grande réussite.

cepts repentance, and is Compassionate to each.
4.17 Repentance, however, rests with God only for those who commit an evil unwittingly and soon repent- -these God shall accept their repentance, and God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
4.18 But repentance is not for them who commit evil deeds until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "I now repent"; nor for those who die as unbelievers. For these We have readied a painful torment.
4.19 O believers, it is not licit for you to inherit women against their will, nor must you coerce them so as to take possession of part of what you had given them, unless they commit manifest adultery. Live with them in kindness. And if you come to loathe them, perhaps you may loathe something in which God places abundant good.
4.20 If you desire to substitute one wife in place of another, and you had given the first a heap of riches, take nothing back from it—would you dare take it back falsely and in manifest sin?
4.21 And how can you take it back when you have been intimate with each other, and your wives have secured from you a most solemn pledge?
4.22 Do not marry women that your fathers had married, unless that act belongs to the past, for this would be an indecency, a thing most hateful and evil in its consequences.
4.23 Forbidden to you are your mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts paternal and maternal, nieces on your brothers' or sisters' sides, milk-mothers who suckled you and milk-sisters, mothers of your wives, and step-daughters in your custody from wives with whom you have consummated marriage – unless you have not consummated marriage with them, in which case no blame attaches to you. Forbidden too are legal wives of your own sons, and marriage with two sisters – unless that act belongs to the past. God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.
4.24 Forbidden too are married women, unless they be your slaves.
The Book of God thus commands you. Licit for you is all that lies outside these limits, provided you use your wealth to contract legal marriage, not fornication. To those women among them

4.14 Et quiconque désobéit à Allah et à Son messager, et transgresse Ses ordres, Il le fera entrer au Feu pour y demeurer éternellement. Et celui-là aura un châtiment avilissant.
4.15 Celles de vos femmes qui forniquent, faites témoigner à leur encontre quatre d'entre vous. S'ils témoignent, alors confinez ces femmes dans vos maisons jusqu'à ce que la mort les rappelle ou qu'Allah décrète un autre ordre à leur égard.
4.16 Les deux d'entre vous qui l'ont commise [la fornication], sévissez contre eux. S'ils se repentent ensuite et se réforment, alors laissez-les en paix. Allah demeure Accueillant au repentir et Miséricordieux.
4.17 Allah accueille seulement le repentir de ceux qui font le mal par ignorance et qui aussitôt se repentent. Voilà ceux de qui Allah accueille le repentir. Et Allah est Omniscient et Sage.
4.18 Mais l'absolution n'est point destinée à ceux qui font de mauvaises actions jusqu'au moment où la mort se présente à l'un d'eux, et qui s'écrie: «Certes, je me repens maintenant» – non plus pour ceux qui meurent mécréants. Et c'est pour eux que Nous avons préparé un châtiment douloureux.
4.19 O les croyants! Il ne vous est pas licite d'hériter des femmes contre leur gré. Ne les empêchez pas de se remarier dans le but de leur ravir une partie de ce que vous aviez donné, à moins qu'elles ne viennent à commettre un péché prouvé. Et comportez-vous convenablement envers elles. Si vous avez de l'aversion envers elles durant la vie commune, il se peut que vous ayez de l'aversion pour une chose où Allah a déposé un grand bien.
4.20 Si vous voulez substituer une épouse à une autre, et que vous ayez donné à l'une un qintâr, n'en reprenez rien. Quoi! Le reprendriez-vous par injustice et péché manifeste?
4.21 Comment oseriez-vous le reprendre, après que l'union la plus intime vous ait associés l'un à l'autre et qu'elles aient obtenu de vous un engagement solennel?
4.22 Et n'épousez pas les femmes que vos pères ont épousées, exception faite pour le passé. C'est une turpitude, une abomination, et quelle mauvaise conduite!

whom you take pleasure in marrying, you must render their dowries, as a legal obligation. But no blame attaches to you regarding what you have willingly agreed upon, once the legal obligation is fulfilled. God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
4.25 If there is one among you who has not the means to marry free, chaste and believing women, let him marry from among your female slaves, believing maidens. God knows best your true faith, one and all alike. So marry them with their owners' consent and render them their dowries in kindness, as legal wives and not as lovers or as prostitutes. Once in legal wedlock, and if they commit adultery, upon them falls half the punishment of free and married women. This is a commandment addressed to those among you who fear fornication. But if you bear with patience, this is best for you. God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.
4.26 God wishes to make clear to you, and to guide you concerning the laws of those who came before you, and to pardon you. God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
4.27 So also God wishes to pardon you, but those who pursue their passions wish you to veer utterly from your path.
4.28 Yet God wishes to lighten your burden, for humans were created feeble.

4.23 Vous sont interdites vos mères, filles, sours, tantes paternelles et tantes maternelles, filles d'un frère et filles d'une sour, mères qui vous ont allaités, sours de lait, mères de vos femmes, belles-filles sous votre tutelle et issues des femmes avec qui vous avez consommé le mariage; si le mariage n'a pas été consommé, ceci n'est pas un péché de votre part; les femmes de vos fils nés de vos reins; de même que deux sours réunies – exception faite pour le passé. Car vraiment Allah est Pardonneur et Miséricordieux;
4.24 et, parmi les femmes, les dames (qui ont un mari), sauf si elles sont vos esclaves en toute propriété. Prescription d'Allah sur vous! A part cela, il vous est permis de les rechercher, en vous servant de vos biens et en concluant mariage, non en débauchés. Puis, de même que vous jouissez d'elles, donnez-leur leur mahr comme une chose due. Il n'y a aucun péché contre vous à ce que vous concluez un accord quelconque entre vous après la fixation du mahr Car Allah est, certes, Omniscient et Sage.
4.25 Et quiconque parmi vous n'a pas les moyens pour épouser des femmes libres (non esclaves) croyantes, eh bien (il peut épouser) une femme parmi celles de vos esclaves croyantes. Allah connaît mieux votre foi, car vous êtes les uns des autres (de la même religion). Et épousez-les avec l'autorisation de leurs maîtres (Waliy) et donnez-leur un mahr convenable; (épousez-les) étant vertueuses et non pas livrées à la débauche ni ayant des amants clandestins. Si, une fois engagées dans le mariage, elles commettent l'adultère, elles reçoivent la moitié du châtiment qui revient aux femmes libres (non esclaves) mariées. Ceci est autorisé à celui d'entre vous qui craint la débauche; mais ce serait mieux pour vous d'être endurant. Et Allah est Pardonneur et Miséricordieux.
4.26 Allah veut vous éclairer, vous montrer les voies des hommes d'avant vous, et aussi accueillir votre repentir. Et Allah est Omniscient et Sage.
4.27 Et Allah veut accueillir votre repentir. Mais ceux qui suivent les passions veulent que vous vous incliniez grandement (vers l'erreur comme ils le font).

4.28 Allah veut vous alléger (les obligations,)
car l'homme a été créé faible.

سورة النساء

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا (1) وَآتُوا الْيَتَامَى أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَى
أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا (2) وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَى فَانْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ
خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَلَّا تَعُولُوا (3) وَآتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ
مِنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَرِيئًا (4) وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ
قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (5) وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَى حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا
وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفَى
بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا (6) لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ
كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا (7) وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَارْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (8)
وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَافًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا (9) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ
الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا (10) يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ فَإِنْ
كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ
وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَاؤُكُمْ
وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا (11) وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ
يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ
لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوِ امْرَأَةٌ
وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ
غَيْرَ مُضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ (12) تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (13) وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ
(14) وَاللَّاتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ
الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا (15) وَاللَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَانِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَآذُوهُمَا فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا
رَحِيمًا (16) إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَكِيمًا (17) وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ
كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (18) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ
مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِينَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ
خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا (19) وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمُ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا
مُبِينًا (20) وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا (21) وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ
النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا (22) حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ
وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي
حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ
تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا (23) وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكُمْ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً
وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا تَرَاضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا (24) وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكِحَ
الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَتَيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ فَانْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ
أَهْلِهِنَّ وَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَّ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ
نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (25) يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ
لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (26) وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا (27) يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا (28)

El-Badawi

At the heart of this passage – beginning with vv. 2–3, 10 – is the concern for [1] safeguarding an orphan's right to inherit from his/her deceased father and, therefore, [2] re-marrying his/her widowed mother to a reputable suitor. This leads into a much broader discussion on [3] inheritance law (vv. 11–14) and [4] marriage law (15–28).

The passage's concern for orphans and widows is in dialogue with numerous passages in earlier scriptures (especially Job 24:2–5; Jas 1:27) and later tradition (*Didascalia* 17–18). In the context of widows and orphans, the limitation of marrying four wives—and later the striking legislative detail of Q 4:11–28—are in dialogue with *Tractate Kethuboth* 93. The use of the *nisāʾ* (lit. "women") suggests non-virgins (unlike *banāt*, "maidens, virgins") and their juxtaposition beside *yatāmā* (lit. "fatherless, orphans;" Q 4:3) warns its audience to protect 'the widow and the orphan' throughout the HB (e.g. Exod 22:22–24; Isa 1:17). The warnings against 'devouring the wealth of orphans' (especially Q 4:10) are in dialogue with condemning the Pharisees who "devour the households of widows" in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic versions of Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

Beyond parallels in scripture and tradition, this passage suggests that the community that formed around the Qurʾān was, broadly speaking, Jewish Christian.

The death of male heads of household in this community left behind women (widows) and children (orphans) to fend for themselves in a precarious position. This community was likely threatened by war and its men died in battle (see Q 3:144–68).

Grodzki

This passage deals with the ethical and legal complexities of social life in a rather well-organized community, including issues of women, marriage, orphans, family, laws of inheritance. It also lists different obligations and rights related to them and may give one a good insight into the milieu and character of the community targeted by these instructions, with many sources in the Judeo-Christian texts.

Pregill

One of the most significant passages in the Qurʾān dealing with domestic affairs such as marriage and inheritance. The legislation of rules governing sexual ethics and familial structures, grounded in divine law, is implicitly intended to distinguish the community from outsiders; as such, following these guidelines allows for the drawing and maintenance of social boundaries. This is another distinctive concern of Late Antiquity: the regulation of intimate matters plays an analogous role in rabbinic culture and in Christian law codes like the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. The avoidance of sin in such matters is as definitive of communal identity as the avoidance of cultic infractions such as idolatry, which is exactly why idolatry and sexual transgressions are so closely associated in monotheistic discourse, going back at least

as far as the Prophetic books of the Bible. (I have noted elsewhere that the Qurʾān is actually quite anomalous in generally avoiding an association between idolatry and sexual transgression.) Strikingly, the Qurʾān treats not only questions of purity and appropriate relations in its code of sexual ethics, but addresses itself to questions of social welfare and justice here as well, integrating the legal rights of orphans and dependents into this discussion.

It is noteworthy that consuming the property of orphans under one's care is a *ḥūban kabīran* (v. 2). In the rich Qurʾānic lexicon of terms for sin and transgression, *ḥūb* is a *hapax legomenon,* identified in *tafsīr* as a loan-word from Ethiopic. However, the term has an obvious parallel with usages in rabbinic and Syriac Christian juridical discourse based on the Aramaic root *Ḥ-W-B* (cf. the ubiquitous rabbinic *ḥayyāv,* guilty or liable, and the Syriac *ḥaveṯ*, *ḥawbtā,* I sinned, I am guilty). This may signal some discursive relationship to analogous discussions in the Talmud or the *Didascalia*.

Reynolds

Vv. 26 – 28 seem to provide the Qurʾān's own justification or explanation of the legal material in the preceding verses. Evidently the Qurʾān means for this legislation [1] to match the *sunna*s of those who came before – presumably the Jews and Christians (who received the heavenly *kitāb* before it was given to the Arabs), and [2] to offer rules which will allow humans (but men in particular) to satisfy their desires (both sexual and material) within the bounds of the law. This latter point (see v. 28) suggests that the Qurʾān has a low anthropology (at least as concerns moral instincts) and reminds me of Q 3:14: *zuyyina li-l-nāsi ḥubbu l-šahawāt*.

Rippin

I am fascinated by the focus in these legal verses on a number of social entities, but especially by the focus on orphans. Polygyny is presented as a way to deal with orphans (but how is that a solution if one "fears that one cannot deal justly with the orphans" as in v. 3?). This seems to suggest ownership (as slaves?) of the orphans.

The theme of the passage might be said to be social justice, establishing entitlements in an explicit manner. The complexity of it all is overwhelming. But, given the way the rest of the passage turns, perhaps this needs to be understood in light of the Qurʾān's constant concern with establishing paternity. Can that provide a moral basis for this immense amount of detail? It is worth noting that a passage such as this has the potential to tell us about family structures at the time (especially in the forbidden degrees of marriage) and comparative anthropological information might be useful here.

Younes

[1] Q 4:3 seems to be addressing an immediate problem of orphans and their mothers. The main concern seems to be offering a solution to a social welfare issue and not the permission given to men to marry up to four women.

[2] The most striking aspect of this passage in linguistic terms is the case assignment of the word *imraʾa* in v. 12. A native Arabic speaker, proficient in the use of the Arabic case system, who reads the text without being told what the case assignment is in the two words *kalāla* and *imraʾa* and who has no previous knowledge of their case assignment in this verse would assign both words the same case. Words conjoined by *'aw* always receive the same case in the Qurʾān. However, while *kalāla* correctly receives the accusative case, *imra'a* is assigned the nominative case, resulting in probably one of the most awkward phrases in the Arabic language. To my mind, this is a clear manipulation of the case system to impose a different reading on a text to produce a new meaning.

The word *kalāla* has been the focus of a great amount of research and has been written about extensively. David Powers' (2009: Chapter 8) suggestion to treat *kalāla* as originally *kalla*, which was part of the phrase *kalla aw imraʾa* (a daughter-in-law or a wife), instead of the extremely complicated, often contradictory, definitions of *kalāla* found in traditional *tafsīr* accounts, eliminates the grammatical awkwardness caused by the different case assignment in *kalāla* and *imraʾa*.

Zellentin

Care for orphans has been at the heart of the Biblical tradition since Israelite times; it is hence difficult to read the Qurʾān's respective laws in dialogue with any specific part of the vast rabbinic and Syriac discourse on the topic. Within this broader tradition, however, detailed instructions for the care for orphans are a special concern not only for the Qurʾān (on *al-yatāmā* see here, Q 4:8–10 and Q 25:63–72) but also for the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (on *ytmʾ* see esp. chaps. VIII, XVII, XVIII). It is worthwhile exploring the conceptual affinities of the two texts.

For example, the *Didascalia* instructs its audience that if there is an orphan and a member of the community who has no children, "he should take the child in place of (his lack of) children" (Vööbus 1979:176). The *Didascalia* also specifies that a man with a son may adopt a girl, "and when her time has come, let him give her to him (i.e., the man's son) as a wife" (ibid.). Combined with these instructions, chapter 17 of the *Didascalia* threatens with the Judgment Day those who enrich themselves by mistreating orphans. The Qurʾān presupposes a similar attitude towards orphans and shares the *Didascalia*'s emphasis on the well-being of and charity for them. It also regulates the transition to adulthood "once they reach the age of marriage" (Q 4:6), and it threatens those who enrich themselves at the expense of orphans with hellfire (ibid. v. 10).

While these general affinities are noteworthy only in conjunction with the broader legal affinity between the Qurʾān and the *Didascalia* (as argued in Zellentin 2013a),

they offer a tentative basis to allow us to perceive of points of departure. Elsewhere, for example, the Qurʾān prohibits the practice of a name change during adoption, insisting that God has *not* "made your adopted sons your sons (Q 33:4, a passage of some importance in recent scholarship). It seems that changing an orphan's name would have been the case in the previous tradition. The Qurʾān, moreover, does not consider the possibility of marrying one's son to an adopted girl orphan, as does the (strictly monogamous) *Didascalia*, yet it also raises the issue of the orphan girl's marriage once she comes of age, namely when legislating just treatment of orphan girls in case a caregiver intends to marry the girl himself (Q 4:127). Hence, we can see that the Qurʾān has general legal affinities with late antique legal culture, and possibly with the way in which the issue of orphans are addressed by the *Didascalia* in particular. At the same time, the Qurʾān's legal policies reflect an autonomous adaptation of the broader legal tradition to its specific Arabian context, as illustrated by its departure from the established practices in this case and many others.

QS 8 Q 5:32

5.32 It is for this reason that We decreed to the Children of Israel that he who kills a soul neither in revenge for another, nor to prevent corruption on earth, it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; whereas he who saves a soul, it is as if he has saved the whole of mankind. Our Messengers came to them bearing clear proofs, but many of them thereafter were disobedient on earth.

5.32 C'est pourquoi Nous avons prescrit pour les Enfants d'Israël que quiconque tuerait une personne non coupable d'un meurtre ou d'une corruption sur la terre, c'est comme s'il avait tué tous les hommes. Et quiconque lui fait don de la vie, c'est comme s'il faisait don de la vie à tous les hommes. En effet Nos messagers sont venus à eux avec les preuves. Et puis voilà, qu'en dépit de cela, beaucoup d'entre eux se mettent à commettre des excès sur la terre.

سورة المائدة

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ (32)

Cuypers

Le début du v. 32 est composé de la manière suivante :

32a	C'est pourquoi Nous avons prescrit *[katabnā]* aux fils d'Israël	
= b	que	*celui qui tue une âme*,
	– c non pour une [autre] âme, ou pour un désordre sur la terre –	
+ d	***c'est comme s'il avait tué l'humanité entière*** ;	
= e	et	*celui qui la fait vivre*,
= f	***c'est comme s'il faisait vivre l'humanité entière.***	

Un membre narratif (32a), introduit à une sentence de sagesse, construite en parallélisme antithétique (32b-d ↔ e-f). Le membre 32c est une incise, introduisant une exception à l'interdit du meurtre.

Dans plusieurs occurrences coraniques, le verbe *katabnā* introduit une citation de la Bible, tantôt au sens de « prescrire », tantôt au sens d'« écrire » : la loi du talion en Q 5:45 (// Ex 21:23 – 25) ; les tablettes de la Loi en Q 7:145 (// Ex 24:12) ; Ps 37:29 en Q 21:105. Ici (5:32), il s'agit d'un texte de la Mishna Sanh 4:5, repris presque littéralement :

> « C'est pourquoi un seul homme a été créé dans le monde pour enseigner que si quelqu'un a causé la perte d'une seule âme d'Israël [certaines version omettent « Israël »], l'Écriture le lui impute comme s'il avait causé la perte d'un monde entier, et si quelqu'un sauve la vie d'une seule âme d'Israël, l'Écriture le lui impute comme s'il avait sauvé la vie d'un monde entier ».

Or, les deux textes, celui de la Mishna et celui du Coran, sont précédés immédiatement par le récit du meurtre de Caïn, ce qui ne laisse aucun doute sur la relation

entre les deux textes. Le texte du Coran a supprimé le nom d'Israël, ce qui généralise la prescription à toute l'humanité. Mais il ajoute une incise qui introduit une exception à cette prescription et prépare au verset suivant (5:33) qui menace de mort « ceux qui combattent Dieu et son Envoyé et s'évertuent à semer le désordre sur la terre ».

L'importance du v. 5:35 est soulignée par le fait qu'il se situe au centre exact de la séquence (5:27–40), ce qui le met particulièrement en valeur.

La citation de la Mishna est, par ailleurs, révélatrice du fait que le Coran assimile des textes rabbiniques aux Écritures.

Firestone

The phenomenon of a parallel literary theme occurring in the Qurʾān despite the lack of linguistic link that ties it to the narrative in a Biblical parallel is not limited to the episode in which Sarah laughed (Q 11:69–73). Another example can be found in *al-Mā'ida* 5:27–32, the story of the two sons of Adam, named Qābil and Hābil in post-Qurʾānic literature. In the parallel Hebrew Bible rendering of the narrative in Genesis, God asks Cain where his brother is. Cain answers with a question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen.4:9). God then responds, "What have you done! Behold, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!" (4:11), thus giving away the murder. The Hebrew word blood (*dām*) occurs uniquely there in the plural form, though the word can also be found in Hebrew as a collective noun in the singular form. In the plural it is *dāmīm* (it actually appears in the plural construct form: *d^{e}mey aḥīkha* – "your brother's bloods"), which functions as a linguistic "hook" upon which is constructed a famous exegesis in post-Biblical literature. The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 4:5) explains, "The [narrative] does not say, 'your brother's blood', but rather 'your brother's bloods' – his blood and the blood of his descendants. Adam was thus created alone, to teach you that anyone who destroys one human soul is considered as if he destroyed an entire world, and anyone who establishes one human soul is as if he has saved an entire world." This linguistic fulcrum – an unusual plural upon which the exegesis is based – does not work in the Arabic, for although Arabic *damm* is a cognate to the Hebrew *dām*, no such motif appears in the Qurʾānic rendering of the two sons of Adam. Yet the identical lesson remains associated with the same scriptural story and the exegetical conclusion endures: destruction of a single soul is equivalent to the destruction of all humankind. In the Qur'ānic rendering, therefore, the association between the narrative and the ethical and cosmic conclusion is not inherent but rather a result of influence.

Pregill

A classic example of the supposed Qurʾānic "debt" to rabbinic discourse. *Pace* Geiger, Goitein, et al., we might not wish to reduce this to a case of direct "borrowing" from rabbinic sources, but rather see this verse as simply drawing on a wisdom say-

ing common to many Near Eastern traditions. However, the larger context is telling, since *min aǧal ḏālika* at the beginning refers back to the sin of Cain, described in vv. 27–31, which is precisely the context of the rabbinic dictum in the Mishnah (Sanh 4:5).

As related in this *sūra*, the story of Cain and Abel is thus not merely "rewritten Torah" of a general sort, but rather seems to presuppose a specific midrashic intertext that is being appropriated for a larger purpose; the direct allusion to a Jewish precursor actually seems to be intentional, signaled by *wa-laqad ǧāʾathum rusulunā al-bayyināt*. God gave Israel this rule prohibiting murder, with the explicit exemption of retaliation or cases of *fasād fī-l-arḍ* (ironic since this is exactly what the Jews are held to be culpable for here and elsewhere). The Qurʾān repeatedly asserts that the Jews kill without justification, in particular the prophets (cf., e.g., Q 2:61), so the clear subtext is that they do not follow this rule even though it is unambiguous divine law.

The larger "ethnopolitics" of the passage are interesting when we compare it to the Mishnah, since in the original the dictum states specifically that one who kills or saves a member of *Israel* kills or saves the world entire; here the principle is extended to all humanity. The mishnaic dictum reflects an underlying concern with communal boundaries, as evinced by the passage that follows: "for the sake of peace was [man] created, that he (presumably a Jew) might not say to his companion, 'my ancestor was greater than yours,' and that *minim* (sectarians) might not say 'perhaps there are many powers in heaven.'" In contrast, the Qurʾānic context is deliberately universalizing; cf. vv. 18–19 preceding, where the exclusivist claims of Jews and Christians are explicitly challenged. Overall, it seems almost undeniable that some direct knowledge of the rabbinic precursor informs the Qurʾān here, given not only the parallel wording but the close analogy in context; at the same time, we must also acknowledge the Christian precedents for other aspects of the passage (Witztum 2011b: 111–153), which demonstrates the richness and complexity of the Qurʾān's use of older literary materials here.

Reynolds

As Michel Cuypers (2007: 155–6) mentions, it is not to be missed that the Qurʾān has God speak about "writing" for the Israelites a decree that is found not in the Bible but in the Mishna (Sanhedrin 4:5). The phrase *min aǧal ḏalika* ("because of this") appears to be a non sequitur in the Qurʾān and, remarkably, it seems to makes sense only in light of the Hebrew of Genesis, where Cain's blood is described in the plural "bloods," and the Mishna, which explains this plural with the remark that Cain is guilty not only for the blood of his brother Abel, but also the blood of Abel's posterity.

However, in the Mishnah the comment which is closest to v. 32 is connected instead to Adam, "For this reason man was created one and alone in the world: to teach that whosoever destroys a single soul is regarded as though he destroyed a

complete world, and whosoever saves a single soul is regarded as though he saved a complete world" (trans. Darby). Moreover, as Joseph Witztum (2011b) illustrates, the passage on Cain and Abel generally (vv. 27–32) involves particular Christian motifs (in particular the presentation of Abel as a willing victim) and is closer to Syriac Christian retellings of the Genesis story than that found in Jewish sources.

Zellentin

Many Qurʾānic sayings have parallels with rabbinic teachings that are attested both in the Palestinian and in the Babylonian tradition. The close rabbinic parallel of the saying in Q 5:32 gives a possible entry way to the difficult question if either of the two traditions, the Palestinian or the Babylonian, is more pertinent for the studies of the Qurʾān (see also my comments on QS 14, but cf. QS 36). The Palestinian version of this text, in the Mishna, in the context of discussing Cain and Abel (see Reynolds), states that: "for this reason man was created alone, to teach you that whosoever destroys a single soul (*npš*), scripture (*hktwb*) imputes (guilt) to him as though he had destroyed a complete world, and whosoever preserves a single soul, scripture ascribes (merit) to him as though he had preserved a complete world" (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5 according to the early manuscripts and Geniza fragments, assumed in Talmud Yerushalmi 4.11, 22b). The *editio princeps* of the Babylonian Talmud, however, quotes the Mishna with one additional important specification, stating that "whosoever destroys a single soul *in Israel*," and "whosoever preserves a single soul *in Israel*" (Sanh 37a, also with reference to Cain and Abel, this is also what one will find in popular translations of the Mishna). This saying is recorded in a variety of passages in the manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud, and the majority of manuscripts considers the destruction of any soul to be like the destruction of all mankind, yet only the creation of a soul "in Israel" to be like the creation of a world. Only one manuscript (Cambridge F-S-F2 (1)26) preserves the Palestinian tradition unchanged, without any specification of an *Israelite* soul—the version closest to the Qurʾān (even though here, of course, the entire verse is addressed to the sons of Israel).

In my view, this is yet another indication that here and in general- with noteworthy exceptions- the Palestinian rabbinic tradition is more relevant than the Babylonian one for the study of the Qurʾān, even though it is chronologically more removed from the redaction of the Palestinian Amoraic texts. (Also, the two rabbinic communities stood in vivid intellectual exchange, including polemics, see Zellentin 2010: 1–5 and 95–136.). Hence, I do not think the Qurʾān is universalizing the rabbinic saying, I think the Babylonian rabbis "particularized" the more universalist Palestinian version, with which the Qurʾān is familiar—without the restriction that only Israelites are concerned. As already noted by Rippin, the Qurʾān applies the saying in a general sense, and apparently even to its own community, clearly with a polemical aside is since the Jews themselves elsewhere are accused of *fasād*, as Pregill correctly states (see especially the *fasād*, "violence," in Q 2:60).

QS 9 Q 5:109 – 120

5.109 Beware a Day when God gathers the Messengers together, and He will ask: "What was the response to you?" They answer: "We have no knowledge of this, for it is You who are the All-Knower of the Unseen."
5.110 Remember when God said: "O Jesus son of Mary, remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother, when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, and how you spoke to people in the cradle and in your manhood;
When I taught you the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah and the Evangel;
When you created from clay the likeness of birds, by My leave,
Breathing upon them, and they became birds, by My leave;
When you cured the blind and the leper, by My leave,
And when you raised up the dead, by My leave;
When I held back the Children of Israel from you when you came to them with miracles,
And those who disbelieved said: 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery';
5.111 When I inspired the disciples to have faith in Me and in My Messenger, And they said: 'We believe, so witness that we are Muslims';
5.112 When the disciples said: 'O Jesus son of Mary, can your God
Send down upon us a table from heaven?'
He said: 'Fear God if you are true believers'.
5.113 They said: 'We wish to eat from it so that our hearts are at peace,
And we know that you have spoken the truth to us, and we be witnesses thereof;'
5.114 Said Jesus son of Mary: 'O God our Lord, send down upon us a table from heaven,
And it shall be a feast-day for first and last amongst us, and a miracle from You,
And grant us Your bounty – You are the best of providers.'"
5.115 God said: "I shall send it down upon you. Whoso among you disbelieves hereafter, I shall torment him with a torment the like of which I shall torment no other human being."

5.109 (Rappelle-toi) le jour où Allah rassemblera (tous) les messagers, et qu'Il dira: «Que vous a-t-on donné comme réponse?» Ils diront: «Nous n'avons aucun savoir: c'est Toi, vraiment, le grand connaisseur de tout ce qui est inconnu».
5.110 Et quand Allah dira: «O Jésus, fils de Marie, rappelle-toi Mon bienfait sur toi et sur ta mère quand Je te fortifiais du Saint-Esprit. Au berceau tu parlais aux gens, tout comme en ton âge mûr. Je t'enseignais le Livre, la Sagesse, la Thora et l'Evangile! Tu fabriquais de l'argile comme une forme d'oiseau par Ma permission; puis tu soufflais dedans. Alors par Ma permission, elle devenait oiseau. Et tu guérissais par Ma permission, l'aveugle-né et le lépreux. Et par Ma permission, tu faisais revivre les morts. Je te protégeais contre les Enfants d'Israël pendant que tu leur apportais les preuves. Mais ceux d'entre eux qui ne croyaient pas dirent: «Ceci n'est que de la magie évidente».
5.111 Et quand J'ai révélé aux Apôtres ceci: «Croyez en Moi et en Mon messager (Jésus)». Ils dirent: «Nous croyons; et atteste que nous sommes entièrement soumis».
5.112 Rappelle-toi le moment) où les Apôtres dirent: «O Jésus, fils de Marie, se peut-il que ton Seigneur fasse descendre sur nous du ciel une table servie?» Il leur dit: «Craignez plutôt Allah, si vous êtes croyants».
5.113 Ils dirent: «Nous voulons en manger, rassurer ainsi nos cours, savoir que tu nous as réellement dit la vérité et en être parmi les témoins».
5.114 «O Allah, notre Seigneur, dit Jésus, fils de Marie, fais descendre du ciel sur nous une table servie qui soit une fête pour nous, pour le premier d'entre nous, comme pour le dernier, ainsi qu'un signe de Ta part. Nourris-nous: Tu es le meilleur des nourrisseurs.»
5.115 «Oui, dit Allah, Je la ferai descendre sur vous. Mais ensuite, quiconque d'entre vous refuse de croire, Je le châtierai d'un châtiment dont Je ne châtierai personne d'autre dans l'univers.»
5.116 (Rappelle-leur) le moment où Allah dira: «O Jésus, fils de Marie, est-ce toi qui as dit aux

5.116 Remember when God said to Jesus son of Mary: “Did you really say to people ‘Take me and my mother as two gods, instead of God’”? He said: “Glory be to You! What right have I to assert what does not in truth belong to me?
If I had said it, You would have known it;
You know what is in my soul and I know not what is in Your soul,
For it is You who are the All-Knower of the Unseen.
5.117 I said nothing to them except what You commanded me:
‘Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.’
I was a witness to them while I lived among them,
But when You caused me to die, it was You who was watcher over them.
You are a witness over all things.
5.118 If you torment them, they are Your servants,
And if You forgive them, it is You who are Almighty, All-Wise.”
5.119 God said: “This is a day when the truthful profit from their truthfulness. For them shall be Gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein for ever and ever. God is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. This is the greatest of triumphs.”
5.120 To God belongs sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and what lies therein. God is Omnipotent.

gens: «Prenez-moi, ainsi que ma mère, pour deux divinités en dehors d’Allah?» Il dira: «Gloire et pureté à Toi! Il ne m’appartient pas de déclarer ce que je n’ai pas le droit de dire! Si je l’avais dit, Tu l’aurais su, certes. Tu sais ce qu’il y a en moi, et je ne sais pas ce qu’il y a en Toi. Tu es, en vérité, le grand connaisseur de tout ce qui est inconnu.
5.117 Je ne leur ai dit que ce que Tu m’avais commandé, (à savoir): «Adorez Allah, mon Seigneur et votre Seigneur». Et je fus témoin contre eux aussi longtemps que je fus parmi eux. Puis quand Tu m’as rappelé, c’est Toi qui fus leur observateur attentif. Et Tu es témoin de toute chose.
5.118 Si Tu les châties, ils sont Tes serviteurs. Et si Tu leur pardonnes, c’est Toi le Puissant, le Sage».
5.119 Allah dira: «Voilà le jour où leur véracité va profiter aux véridiques: ils auront des Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux pour y demeurer éternellement.» Allah les a agréés et eux L’ont agréé. Voilà l’énorme succès.
5.120 A Allah seul appartient le royaume des cieux, de la terre et de ce qu’ils renferment. Et Il est Omnipotent.

سورة المائدة

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (105) يَا
أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ
ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلاَةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لاَ نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ
كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى وَلاَ نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الآَثِمِينَ (106) فَإِنْ عُثِرَ عَلَى أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا إِثْمًا فَآَخَرَانِ يَقُومَانِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ
الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الأَوْلَيَانِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا اعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (107) ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى
أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَى وَجْهِهَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ أَيْمَانٌ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْمَعُوا وَاللَّهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (108)
يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ قَالُوا لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلاَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ (109) إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ
نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلى وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلاً وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ
وَالإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ
الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ (110) وَإِذْ
أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آَمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا آَمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ (111) إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (112) قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ
قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ (113) قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآَخِرِنَا وَآَيَةً مِنْكَ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ (114) قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ

فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (115) وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَهَيْنِ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ (116) مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ
فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (117) إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (118) قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (119) لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (120)

Cuypers

Les vv. 5:109 – 120 contiennent trois passages, disposés de manière concentrique (ABA'), évoquant trois temps ou moments de la vie de Jésus : [1] l'enfance et la vie publique (vv. 109 – 111) ; [2] la promesse de la nourriture céleste, allusion à la Cène (vv. 112 – 115) ; [3] le Jugement de Jésus par Dieu (vv. 116 – 120).

Le premier passage reprend des données de deux apocryphes : la *Vie de Jésus en arabe* et l'*Histoire de l'enfance de Jésus*.

Le deuxième passage ne doit pas être mis en relation, comme certains le font, avec la vision de Pierre dans les Actes des Apôtres (chap. 10) ni avec les récits de la multiplication des pains, dans les évangiles (par ex. Matt 14:13 – 21 et 15:32 – 39), mais avec le « Discours du pain de vie », dans Jean, chap. 6, dont il reprend nombre d'éléments. Le récit coranique est un récit de discours, non d'action, comme Jn 6 : dans aucun de ces deux récits la nourriture n'est donnée, sinon en promesse. Jn 6 cite le v. 24 du Ps 78 : « Il leur a donné à manger le pain du ciel (la manne) » ; le Coran en cite un autre, du même psaume : « Est-il capable, Dieu, de dresser une table au désert ? » (Ps 78:19), qui devient, dans le Coran : « Est-ce que ton Seigneur peut faire descendre vers nous une table du ciel ? » (Q 5:112). Ces versets du Ps 78, dans les deux textes (Jean et Coran), font allusion au livre de l'Exode. Il en va de même pour le verset suivant du Coran : « Elle [la nourriture céleste] sera pour nous une fête, pour les premiers d'entre nous et pour les derniers d'entre nous » (Q 5:114) // « vous le fêterez… dans vos générations, c'est un décret perpétuel » (Ex 12:14).

Le troisième passage se situe dans l'au-delà. Au centre exact de ce passage, Jésus atteste devant Dieu le caractère parfaitement monothéiste de son enseignement, contre ceux qui le divinisèrent : « Je ne leur ai dit que ce que tu m'as commandé : "Adorez Dieu, mon Seigneur et votre Seigneur." C'est sur cette affirmation solennelle de Jésus que se termine la sourate *al-Mā'ida*, qui se présente comme un texte testament qui clôt la prédication mohammadienne.

Dye

Le v. 110 doit être rapproché d'autres épisodes du Coran parlant de Jésus, notamment Q 3:42 – 55 et Q 61:6. Tout se passe comme si le rédacteur du verset entendait résumer en quelques lignes les traits saillants de la carrière prophétique de Jésus, *telle que le Coran la raconte*. On peut s'interroger sur la date à laquelle ce passage a été com-

posé : la tradition musulmane le situe à la fin de la période médinoise, mais je ne serais pas surpris s'il s'avérait qu'il a été composé après la mort du Prophète, probablement peu de temps avant la collecte – ou plutôt de la composition – du Coran.

Comme l'ont remarqué Reynolds (2012a) et Cuypers (2007: 340 – 358), l'épisode de la « table servie » fait un usage créatif de péricopes bibliques (Ps 78:19, Exod 16 – 17) et évangélique (John 6:22 – 71, dont le sous-texte est précisément constitué par les deux passages bibliques mentionnés précédemment), mais dans une perspective antichrétienne. L'abondance de termes empruntés au guèze (*inǧīl*, *ḥawāriyy*, *māʾida*) est frappante.

V. 116 : ce verset a donné lieu à de nombreuses spéculations. On a ainsi imaginé des adorateurs arabes de Marie, qui seraient les cibles de ce verset, ou on y a vu une preuve de la méconnaissance du christianisme de la part de l'auteur du Coran, qui ferait de Marie une des personnes de la Trinité. Il me semble plutôt qu'il faut voir ici un argument polémique, une *réduction à l'absurde* des discours chrétiens, qui peut opérer de deux manières (on peut bien sûr aussi y voir une polémique contre les pratiques cultuelles chrétiennes). Soit : puisque Jésus a été engendré par l'Esprit saint, et que les chrétiens persistent à appeler Jésus « fils de Dieu », alors, si Dieu est le père, l'Esprit saint (l'arabe *rūḥ* est féminin, comme le sont les termes apparentés en hébreu ou en araméen), par lequel Jésus a été engendré (Luke 1:35), doit être la mère (cf. Gallez 2005: 74 – 83). « Soit, plus plausiblement : vous (chrétiens) » faites de Jésus Dieu et le fils de Dieu, et par conséquent, vous devez aussi faire de Marie, dont vous dites qu'elle est la mère de Dieu, un être divin. « L'objection rappelle les polémiques nestoriennes contre la thèse de Marie Theotokos (Marie, mère de Dieu) »

El-Badawi

Q 5:110 – 15 is the Qurʾān's take on the Last Supper from Christian Scripture and tradition. This episode immediately shifts to narrating God's questioning of Jesus, the son of Mary (Q 5:116 – 20), nullifying what appears to be, on the surface, the worship of a Trinity or Duality (?) composed of "Jesus and his mother." This wording is striking and may point towards the devotion of 'Mother and Child.' Icons of the Madonna and baby Jesus have been a staple of the Eastern Orthodox Church since Late Antiquity. Since then as well, the feast known as the "Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Greek *theotokos*)" has been celebrated in the East on January 1, just before Christmas on January 6 or 7. How much of this is being criticized by Q 5:116 – 20 is unclear given the brevity characteristic of such Qurʾānic language.

Pregill

Contains many details featured in the description of Jesus' life in Q 3:45 – 57, but what was prophecy in that *sūra* is now a retrospective narration of a conversation between God and Jesus – one that will, however, take place in the eschatological future (a

context established in v. 109). Comparison of the two passages demonstrates the Qurʾān's sophisticated use of different temporal frames in its narratology.

The *māʾida* passage (vv. 112–115) is quite clearly not eucharistic but rather describes the waywardness of the disciples (cf. Q 3:52–53) who here demand a kind of evidentiary miracle from Jesus; as Reynolds 2012a masterfully demonstrates, the subtext is a comparison with Moses' provision of the Israelites in the desert, with the specific literary intertext here provided by Psalm 78:19, almost indisputably channeled through Ethiopic (Hebrew *shulḥan* → Geʾez *māʾedd*), especially given that *māʾida* is a near-*hapax*, occurring only twice, and only in this passage (vv. 112, 114). The threat against those who disbelieve after being given this sign (v. 115) is indeed ominous given the following allusion to the Christians' unjust deification of Jesus and Mary. The whole passage seems tailored to exonerate the prophets of the crimes of their followers (and underscore the latter), with Jesus the prime example. The forensic quality of the exchange is foreshadowed in v. 109 and confirmed in v. 116.

Reynolds

For my analysis of the *māʾida* passage (vv. 112–115), and its connection to Ethiopic Psalm 78:19 see Reynolds 2012a. In verse 111 (*wa-iḏ awḥaytu ilā al-ḥawāriyyīna an āminū bī wa-bi-rasūlī*) the Qurʾān has God remember the *waḥy* He once gave to the apostles. Traditional commentators generally define this as a different sort of *waḥy* from the revelation given to prophets, comparing it, for example, to the *waḥy* which God gives to the bees (Q 16:68) or to the earth (Q 99:5). However, the Qurʾān suggests here that the apostles' *waḥy* was verbal dictation (i.e. God said to them: "*āminū bī wa-bi-rasūlī*"; one might compare the *waḥy* given to Moses' mother in Q 28:7). Thus it may be that the Qurʾān's understanding of revelation is more expansive than is often assumed.

Tesei

The sentence *ǧannātun taǧrī min taḥtihā l-anhāru* (v. 119) should be related to a cosmological concept fairly widespread during Late Antiquity, according to which the rivers of Paradise reach the inhabited part of the world by flowing under the sea. The expression *min taḥtihā* would represent an allusion to both the place of origin and the subterranean course of the paradisiacal rivers. The presence of the determinative article before the word *anhār* suggests that the Qurʾān is here speaking of *all* the rivers. This would reflect the ancient Near Eastern (and Biblical) idea that the rivers of the Earth have a divine origin and a source located in a paradisiacal land. This view is consistent with Toelle's observation that the Qurʾān implies a direct relationship between the sweet waters of Paradise and that of the Earth, as the paradisiacal and terrestrial watercourses are indicated through the same terminology (Toelle 1999: 122). The cosmological notion of the underground course of the rivers of Paradise

goes back at least to Ephrem, according to whom the rivers enter the sea surrounding Paradise "as it were down a water pipe and after passing through the ground beneath the sea they reach this earth" (1994: 101). Much the same idea is expressed by Philostorgius (*Church History*, III, 10), Severian of Gabala (*Homilies on Creation and Fall*, V), Epiphanius of Salamis (*Ancoratus*, 58:1–8), Augustine (*Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 7:14; Cf. Philo of Alexandria, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, I, 12) and Cosmas Indicopleustes (*Christian Topography*, II, 81). Narsai refers to a very similar concept about the course of the rivers from Paradise, which – he states – is "like a tunnel in the sea" (1968: I, 395–6). The Qurʾān more explicitly alludes to this same cosmological notion in Q 18:61, where a fish is said to take its way through a tunnel/subterranean passage (*sarab*) in the sea. The episode of the fish's escape is related to the theme of the paradisiacal rivers through the Alexander legend of the water of life, that is evoked in Q 18:60–65 (cf. Tesei 2014a).

Younes

[1] This passage includes a number of beautifully crafted phrases and sentences which strike the reader, and probably even more, the listener, with their careful choice of words repeated at regular intervals. For instance, the particle *iḏ* is used in the first verse of the passage (v. 110) seven times, while the word *bi'iḏnī*, which includes the sounds of *iḏ* in it, is repeated at the end of four phrases in the same verse. Such language must have had and probably continues to have a special effect on the reader/hearer of the Qurʾān.

[2] The phrase *rūḥ al-qudus* (also found in Q2: 87, 253, and Q16: 102) is probably a borrowing from a sister Semitic language. In English translations of the Qurʾān, e. g. Pickthall, the phrase is translated as "the holy spirit." This translation fails to reflect the original structure, which is a construct phrase, more correctly translated as "the spirit of the holy," as in the Hebrew *ruaḥ ha-kōdeš*.

Zellentin

The Qurʾān's table *min al-samāʾ*, "from heaven," and the promised festival of the disciples, may echo a series of rabbinic and Syriac traditions. In the Babylonian Talmud, to begin with, a "table of fire… descended from heaven (*mn hšmym*, Menahot 29b)," serving as a model for the table Moses then makes for the tabernacle. This is the only actual table from heaven of which I am aware in late antique literature. In the Syriac *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, however, Jesus' disciples gather, and some object is placed in front of them that is *mlyn kl ṭwbyn*, "*full of all good things*" (Harris 1900: 9) which Jesus himself had eaten. The manuscript is torn here, yet regardless of whether or not this object is a *ptwr'*, "a banquet table," as is Harris' conjecture, it is clear that the Qurʾān presupposes knowledge of a similar event that the disciples witnessed. It is furthermore remarkable that in the same *sūra* at hand, the cognate Arabic root *Ṭ-Y-B*, "good things," is repeatedly used to describe the foods the Qurʾān per-

mits (Q 5:5, 87 and 88), in explicit reference to Jesus' partial abrogation of Jewish food laws (Q 3:50).

I would suggest, *pace* many others, that the pertinence of the symbolic breaching of food laws in Acts 10:6–16 (where it sanctions the inclusion of "impure" gentiles) should therefore not be entirely dismissed from consideration in the present context. The most relevant recorded passage against which to hear the Qurʾān here, however, as remarked by Cuypers and Reynolds, is surely Jesus' disciples' explicit demand for the "bread of God … which came down from heaven" in John 6:27–52. This becomes clear especially when considering the passage as recorded by the *Diatessaron* 19:16–35. The disciple's request here is similar to their demand in the Qurʾān to "send down to us a table from the heavens" (v. 112). Moreover, this Gospel passage shares with the Qurʾānic passage under discussion a discourse on Jesus' "signs," on "faith," "unbelief," "witness," and on the Jew's actions against Jesus. The *Diatessaron's* commands to "*tuʾminū bi-man ārsala*," "believe in him whom [God] has sent" (Ciasca 1888:75, the Arabic *editio princeps*, the Syriac *Diatessaron* is lost, the Peshitta has *d-thymnwn b-mn d-hw šdr*)," that is in Jesus, is repeated and slightly amended in the Qurʾān by God's command to *'āminū bī wa-bi-rasūlī* "believe in Me and in My apostle," that is in God and Jesus. While the language of the Arabic *Diatessaron* is of course likely influenced by the Qurʾān, the direction of "influence" would if anything be inverted when it comes to the message: In both texts, food from heaven is then actually sent, with the remarkable difference that in the *Diatessaron* the climax is that Jesus himself is the heavenly food and the object of belief, whereas in the Qurʾān, the heavenly food is a sign that leads to belief in God and in Jesus' mission. If read against texts such as Acts and John, the Qurʾān's shift becomes not an anti-Christian, but an anti-Christological statement and a clear response to the (likely oral) Christian tradition.

QS 10 Q 6:74 – 83

6.74 Remember when Abraham said to his father Azar: “Do you take idols as gods? I find you and your people manifestly astray.”
6.75 This is how We made Abraham see the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he would have certain faith.
6.76 When night enveloped him he saw a star; He said: “This is my Lord.”
When the star set, he said: “I love not things that set.”
6.77 When he saw the rising moon, he said:
“This is my Lord”, but when it set, he said:
“If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be among those who go astray.”
6.78 When he saw the rising sun he said:
“This is my Lord, for it is larger,” but when it set he said:
“O people, I am quit of your idolatry.
6.79 I have set my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, pure in my worship, nor am I one who associates anything with God.”
6.80 His people disputed with him. He said:
“Do you dispute with me about God now that He has guided me?
I have no fear of your idol worship, unless my Lord intends some matter.
My lord encompasses all in His knowledge. Will you not reconsider?
6.81 How can I fear the idols you worship while you do not fear associating with God that for which no sanction has been revealed to you?”
Which of these two groups has the better right to feel secure, if only you knew?
6.82 Those who believe and mix not their faith with evil – these shall feel secure and these are rightly guided.
6.83 This was Our argument which We conveyed to Abraham against his people. We elevate in degrees whomsoever We wish. Your Lord is All-Wise, Omniscient.

6.74 (Rappelle le moment) où Abraham dit à ‘Azar, son père: «Prends-tu des idoles comme divinités? Je te vois, toi et ton peuple, dans un égarement évident!»
6.75 Ainsi avons-Nous montré à Abraham le royaume des cieux et de la terre, afin qu’il fût de ceux qui croient avec conviction.
6.76 Quand la nuit l’enveloppa, il observa une étoile, et dit: «Voilà mon Seigneur!» Puis, lorsqu’elle disparut, il dit: «Je n’aime pas les choses qui disparaissent».
6.77 Lorsqu’ensuite il observa la lune se levant, il dit: «Voilà mon Seigneur!» Puis, lorsqu’elle disparut, il dit: «Si mon Seigneur ne me guide pas, je serai certes du nombre des gens égarés».
6.78 Lorsqu’ensuite il observa le soleil levant, il dit: «Voilà mon Seigneur! Celui-ci est plus grand» Puis lorsque le soleil disparut, il dit: «O mon peuple, je désavoue tout ce que vous associez à Allah.
6.79 Je tourne mon visage exclusivement vers Celui qui a créé (à partir du néant) les cieux et la terre; et je ne suis point de ceux qui Lui donnent des associés.»
6.80 Son peuple disputa avec lui; mais il dit: «Allez-vous disputer avec moi au sujet d’Allah, alors qu’Il m’a guidé? Je n’ai pas peur des associés que vous Lui donnez. Je ne crains que ce que veut mon Seigneur. Mon Seigneur embrasse tout dans Sa science. Ne vous rappelez-vous donc pas?
6.81 Et comment aurais-je peur des associés que vous Lui donnez, alors que vous n’avez pas eu peur d’associer à Allah des choses pour lesquelles Il ne vous a fait descendre aucune preuve? Lequel donc des deux partis a le plus droit à la sécurité? (Dites-le) si vous savez.
6.82 Ceux qui ont cru et n’ont point troublé la pureté de leur foi par quelqu’inéquité (association), ceux-là ont la sécurité; et ce sont eux les bien-guidés».
6.83.Tel est l’argument que Nous inspirâmes à Abraham contre son peuple. Nous élevons en haut rang qui Nous voulons. Ton Seigneur est Sage et Omniscient.

سورة الأنعام
وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزَرَ أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (74) وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ (75) فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ
(76) فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ (77) فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ
بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ (78) إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (79) وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِّي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (80) وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (81) الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ
وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ (82) وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَنْ نَشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ (83)

Azaiez

Ce texte met en scène Abraham confronté à l'idolâtrie de son père (*Āzar*) et de son peuple (*qawm*). L'échange est sans conteste polémique et les dialogues – si l'on retranche les maigres références bibliques – peuvent tout à fait s'apparenter à ce que Muḥammad aurait pu dire ou entendre face à l'incrédulité des siens (Chabbi 2008: 280 – 281). C'est du moins ce que le texte coranique suggère lui-même. Pour s'en convaincre, la lecture des versets 80 – 81 et leur concomitance avec d'autres parties du texte coranique sont éloquentes. Considérons les deux versets suivants présents dans l'épisode abrahamique :

wa-ḥāǧǧahū qawmuhū qāla a-tuḥāǧǧūnnī fī Allāhi wa-qad hadāni wa-lā aḫāfu mā tušrikūna bihī illā an <u>yašāʾa rabbī šayʾan wasiʿa rabbī kulla šayʾin ʿilman</u> a-fa-lā tataḏakkarūna

et

wa-kayfa aḫāfu mā ašraktum wa-lā taḫāfūna annakum <u>ašraktum bi-Allāhi mā lam yunazzil bihī ʿalaykum sulṭānan fa-ayyu l-farīqayni aḥaqqu bi-l-amni ʾin kuntum taʿlamūna</u>

Si l'on se réfère aux expressions surlignées, on découvre à l'appui des tables de concordances d'ʿAbd al Bāqi (1962: 436) et de Rudi Paret (1980: 145) qu'elles sont similaires aux discours tenus, pour la première par le prophète *Šuʿaīb* (Q 7: 89) mais aussi, pour la seconde expression, par l'allocutaire coranique (place symétrique de celle du locuteur ou destinataire premier du message coranique, cf. Ben Taibi 2008: 77 – 78) identifié traditionnellement à Muḥammad (Q 7:33). Cette proximité des discours entre Muḥammad et les prophètes antérieurs a déjà été soulignée par les spécialistes occidentaux (Nöldeke 1892: 29 – 30). Elle l'a été également, quoique de manière différente et originale, par l'exégèse musulmane la plus contemporaine, celle en particulier d'Iṣlāḥī (1999: 468 – 476). Mais, l'évidente relation intra-textuelle entre les discours des prophètes a une incidence méthodologique non négligeable car, dès lors, une interrogation s'impose. En effet, jusqu'à quel point ces dialogues reflètent la polémique dont Muḥammad aurait été le protagoniste (bien entendu, l'hypothèse ne s'éprouve qu'à la condition que ces controverses aient bien eu lieu en Arabie selon la perspective communément présentée en Islam) ? C'est d'ailleurs cette

question que pose explicitement Ettinghaussen (1933: 6) dès l'introduction de son ouvrage consacré à la polémique dans le Coran.

Dye

Récit de la conversion d'Abraham. D'autres passages reviennent sur son combat contre l'idolâtrie et la dispute avec son père (Q 19:41–50; 21:51–73; 26:69–104; 37:83–113). Ce texte est cependant à part. Si on suit le *textus receptus*, c'est le seul passage où le nom du père d'Abraham est indiqué. Or le prénom Āzar ne correspond pas au Têraḥ de la Bible. Il s'agit probablement d'une erreur de lecture : Bellamy (2001: 3–4) suggère de lire *izrāʾan*, « contemptuously » (c'est paléographiquement plausible). Par ailleurs, c'est le seul texte coranique qui reprenne le thème de l'observation des astres comme voie vers le monothéisme. Cet épisode apparaît, parmi d'autres histoires, dans le « cycle d'Abraham », dont le *Livre des Jubilés* est l'un des plus anciens témoins. Comme souvent, le Coran propose une variation sur un sujet bien connu dans les milieux juifs et chrétiens du Proche-Orient tardo-antique.

Le récit est très allusif et présuppose la connaissance d'une version plus détaillée de l'histoire (ainsi, on ne sait pas à quel moment de la vie d'Abraham se déroule cet épisode, et presque rien n'est dit du raisonnement qui mène Abraham au monothéisme). On notera plusieurs points remarquables. Premièrement, les vv. 76–79 ne suivent pas, chronologiquement, le v. 74 (Abraham, avant de s'être lui-même converti, peut difficilement reprocher à son père d'adorer des idoles avant de s'être converti). Deuxièmement, il est plausible que le v. 75 fasse référence à un voyage céleste. Est-ce durant ce voyage qu'Abraham se convertit ? C'est une lecture possible, mais on peut aussi comprendre que le v. 75, comme le précédent, est seulement le rappel d'un épisode de la vie d'Abraham, sans que cela ait de rapport direct avec l'histoire narrée ensuite. Troisièmement, l'ordre lune/soleil (vv. 77–78) suit une progression « logique », de l'astre le plus petit à l'astre le plus grand, et un ordre chronologique : dans le judaïsme et l'islam, le jour commence au coucher du soleil, pas au lever. Quatrièmement, dans les récits pré-coraniques, Abraham découvre l'unicité de Dieu par son seul raisonnement, en autodidacte. Or l'insistance du Coran sur le secours que Dieu lui apporte crée une tension entre la morale de l'histoire, telle que le Coran l'emprunte, et la modification qui y est apportée.

Sur *ḥanīf* : non pas « païen », mais *Gentil*, c'est-à-dire non lié par la loi juive, mais monothéiste, voir De Blois (2002: 16–25) et Reynolds (2010: 80–87).

Pregill

The theme of the idolatry of Abraham's people is common in the midrash, appearing as early as *Genesis Rabbah* (3rd c. CE), but the most pertinent parallel to this Qurʾānic passage is actually pre-rabbinic. Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* 1.154–168 is one of the earliest portrayals of Abraham's rejection of his ancestral polytheism on account of his observation of the heavenly bodies. As Reed (2004) has shown, Josephus here

puts a uniquely Jewish spin on an older Greek conception of astrology and astronomy as a quintessentially barbarian art; appropriating this "alien wisdom" as the source of Abraham's discovery of monotheism establishes it as the very foundation of Israel's religion. Here in Q 6, the progression from polytheism to monotheism via observation of the heavenly bodies is exactly the same. It is striking that the consequence is that Abraham states that "I turn to the one who created the heavens and the earth as a *ḥanīf*" (v. 79). The term *ḥanīf* is of course much discussed, with the derivation from Syriac *ḥanpā*, "pagan," largely taken for granted, but the implications of its appropriation and subversion are still debated. Syriac sources, which would term the idolatry Abraham abandoned as *ḥanpūtā*, construct the following polarity:

GOOD = virtuous of Israel, Christians = faith of Abraham
// BAD = Jew, pagan (*ḥanpā*).

The term *ḥanpā* is thus pejorative, marking one who is outside of the true faith, an infidel. The critical move made in the Qurʾān seems to be to shift the moral valence of the term: in identifying the faith it reveals (or revives) as the same as Abraham's, though it is emphatically *not* Judaism or Christianity (cf. Q 3:67), the Qurʾān reconstructs the polarity as:

GOOD = virtuous of Israel, Believers = faith of Abraham (*ḥanīf, ḥanpā* in the new sense) // BAD = Jew, Christian, pagan (*mušrik, ḥanpā* in the literal sense)

The mentality behind the shift in the Qurʾān seems similar to that of Josephus. In depicting Abraham as discovering monotheism through the "alien wisdom" of astronomy, Josephus asserts that the worship of one God is an "outsider" development, in contrast to the culture of civilized Hellenes who nevertheless maintained polytheism. The Qurʾān likewise associates monotheism with astral observation, but also specifically marks it as an essentially "outsider" development of "pagans" (*ḥanpē/ḥunafāʾ*), people like Abraham himself who was neither Jew nor Christian. Its claim to outsider status, reasserting the "pagan" (or better, gentile) nature of original monotheism, implies that the corrupt monotheism of Jews and Christians is tantamount to idolatry.

Reynolds

This passage is sometimes compared to the tradition of Abraham's contest with the idolaters in *Jubilees*. In that tradition, however, Terah (Abraham's father) recognizes that Abraham is right to reject idolatry and flees with Abraham to Harran in order to escape the idolaters (after Abraham mischievously burns down a temple of idols). Much closer to the Qurʾānic passage at hand is the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (ch. 8), which makes Terah an idolater and describes his conflict with Abraham.

It seems that the idea of Abraham learning not to worship heavenly bodies (a widespread tradition in Jewish and Christian literature as well) is ultimately based in Deut 4:19: "When you raise your eyes to heaven, when you see the sun, the moon, the stars – the entire array of heaven – do not be tempted to worship them and serve them. Yahweh your God has allotted these to all the other peoples under heaven."

Rippin

I note the use in v. 81 of *amn*, in the sense of "security," that is contrasted with fear, *ḫāfa*; this pair is then paralleled in v. 82 with belief, *āmana*, in contrast to injustice, *ẓulm*. That belief can overcome the fear of injustice and provide security seems a central theme and the moral of this story.

Younes

As is the case in QS 9, certain linguistic tools are masterfully used to produce beautifully sounding phrases. Consider in particular the contrastive use of *lammā raʾā* "when he saw" and *lammā afala(t)* "it disappeared, set." The three verses, vv. 76–78, have a similar structure, with each consisting of three parts. The first part starts with the temporal/conditional particle *lammā* "when" and the verb *raʾā* "he saw," the second part consists of *lammā* and the verb *afala* "to set," and the third part is different in the three verses but ends in the same rhyming letter *nūn: al-āfilīn*, *al-ḍāllīn*, *tušrikūn*.

Zellentin

Abraham intends to take a star, the moon, and the sun as gods, but is corrected (v. 76–8). The scene is difficult to apprehend on its own, but could be understood within the context of a panoply of late antique Abraham traditions, and as the culmination of a long history of the dramatization of a moment in Abraham's life.

First, the post-Biblical Jewish tradition begins with Abraham's complete piety. In the *Book of Jubilees* (see Dye), Abraham despises idols from early childhood (11); as an adult he states that all the heavenly bodies are in God's hands (12:17, the tradition is also preserved in Armenian, and in Josephus, see Pregill). The planets Abraham considers are the same in both texts, yet in the *Book of Jubilees* Abraham has already internalized their status as subservient to God—the very lesson he is about to learn in the Qurʾān.

Second, Abraham is equally pious in the rabbinic tradition, yet here, he begins to explore the possible divinity of objects in more depth—if only to deny it. In the rabbinic version of events, Nimrod confronts Abraham and in turn proposes to worship fire, water, the clouds, the wind, human beings, or the fire. Each time, Abraham retorts that the respective subsequent elements have power over the previous ones (water extinguishes fire, the clouds bear water, etc.), arguing that only

these subsequent ones, and perhaps none at all, should be considered divine (*Genesis Rabbah* 38.13). The rabbinic tradition of the limits of power of a series of natural objects records an element that together with the lack of divinity of the planets known from Josephus and Jubiliees will form the core of the later Qurʾānic narrative.

Third, the dialogical exploration of the power of the elements is also preserved in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* VII, a text preserved only in Slavonic, in the Christian tradition. Here, Abraham mockingly explains to his idolatrous father (who is also present in the rabbinic story) that despite their powers, he does not call the objects (fire, water, earth, and the sun) gods. Most importantly for the Qurʾān, the *Apocalypse* contends that Abraham then explains that the sun *could* be taken to be divine (I.7). Here, Abraham lays out his arguments against the divinity of the sun, the moon, or the stars even more fully than in the rabbinic text, yet in doing so explores the realm of polytheism ever deeper, even if still only as intellectual exercise.

Finally, the Qurʾān turns the hermeneutical screw yet a bit further. It mentions Abraham's discussion with his father, the narrative frame in previous traditions, merely in passing (v. 74). The Qurʾān does so in order poetically to bring to life Abraham's *own* struggle with the divinity of the planets, which must have happened *before* he realized that only God is divine. In this struggle, the Qurʾān emphasizes, Abraham "would surely have been among the stray lot" (v. 77) had not God guided him—and this seems to be the punch line of the Qurʾān that emerges when reading it in dialogue with the Jewish and the Christian Abraham traditions, which moved towards this view, but continued to showcase Abraham's immaculate piety. In the Qurʾān, Abraham, in intriguing contrast to the righteousness of many of its main figures, did not and could not break with idol worship on his own, to the contrary, he himself was on the verge of *kufr* had not God intervened, and shown Abraham "the dominions of the heaven and the earth" (v. 75)—employing yet another late antique tradition, Abraham's heavenly journey (the *Testament of Abraham*, 10 in Version 1, similar to 8 in Version 2).

QS 11 Q 8:1 – 19

8.1 They ask you about booty.
Say: "Booty belongs to God and His Messenger. So fear God, settle your disputes, and obey God and His Messenger if you are true believers."
8.2 The true believers are those who, when God is mentioned, their hearts grow fearful; and if you recite to them His revelations, they increase them in faith; they are those who place their trust in their Lord;
8.3 who perform the prayer and spend from Our bounty.
8.4 They are the true believers. High in rank they stand with their Lord, and they shall enjoy His forgiveness and glorious provisions.
8.5 Just as it was in truth your Lord who drove you out of your home, though a group of believers were most reluctant,
8.6 so also they dispute with you regarding the Truth after it has become evident, as if they are being led to death with their eyes open.
8.7 Remember when God promised that one of the two caravans shall be yours whereas you had wanted the unarmed one to be yours. But God wishes to vindicate the truth with His words, and utterly to uproot the unbelievers,
8.8 in order to vindicate the truth and nullify falsehood, even if the wicked should hate it.
8.9 Remember when you prayed fervently to your Lord and He answered you: "I shall reinforce you with a thousand angels, coming in waves."
8.10 God did not bring this about except as glad tidings, and so that your hearts might be calmed thereby. Victory comes only from God; God is Almighty, All-Wise.
8.11 Remember when He brought drowsiness upon you in order to reassure you, and made water to descend upon you from the sky in order to purify you, to rid you of Satan's enticement, to brace your hearts and make firm your feet.
8.12 Remember when God revealed to the angels: "I am with you, so grant the believers resolve. I shall cast terror in the hearts of the unbelievers. So strike above the necks, and strike their every finger!"

8.1 Ils t'interrogent au sujet du butin. Dis: «Le butin est à Allah et à Son messager.» Craignez Allah, maintenez la concorde entre vous et obéissez à Allah et à Son messager, si vous êtes croyants.
8.2 Les vrais croyants sont ceux dont les cours frémissent quand on mentionne Allah. Et quand Ses versets leur sont récités, cela fait augmenter leur foi. Et ils placent leur confiance en leur Seigneur.
8.3 Ceux qui accomplissent la Salât et qui dépensent [dans le sentier d'Allah] de ce que Nous leur avons attribué.
8.4 Ceux-là sont, en toute vérité les croyants: à eux des degrés (élevés) auprès de leur Seigneur, ainsi qu'un pardon et une dotation généreuse.
8.5 De même, c'est au nom de la vérité que ton Seigneur t'a fait sortir de ta demeure, malgré la répulsion d'une partie des croyants.
8.6 Ils discutent avec toi au sujet de la vérité après qu'elle fut clairement apparue; comme si on les poussait vers la mort et qu'ils (la) voyaient.
8.7 (Rappelez-vous), quand Allah vous promettait qu'une des deux bandes sera à vous. Vous désiriez vous emparer de celle qui était sans armes, alors qu'Allah voulait par Ses paroles faire triompher la vérité et anéantir les mécréants jusqu'au dernier.
8.8 afin qu'Il fasse triompher la vérité et anéantir le faux, en dépit de la répulsion qu'en avaient les criminels.
8.9 (Et rappelez-vous) le moment où vous imploriez le secours de votre Seigneur et qu'Il vous exauça aussitôt: «Je vais vous aider d'un millier d'Anges déferlant les uns à la suite des autres.»
8.10 Allah ne fit cela que pour (vous) apporter une bonne nouvelle et pour qu'avec cela vos cours se tranquillisent. Il n'y a de victoire que de la part d'Allah. Allah est Puissant et Sage.
8.11 Et quand Il vous enveloppa de sommeil comme d'une sécurité de Sa part, et du ciel Il fit descendre de l'eau sur vous afin de vous en purifier, d'écarter de vous la souillure du Diable, de renforcer les cours et d'en raffermir les pas! [vos pas].

8.13 For they defied God and His messenger, and whoso defies God and His messenger, God is severe in retribution.
8.14 Here it is: so taste it! For the unbelievers the torment of the Fire!
8.15 O believers, when you meet the unbelievers in combat, turn not your backs to them.
8.16 Whoso turns his back upon them that day, except to retreat and re-attack, or to join another troop, suffers the burden of God's anger and his refuge is hell– a wretched fate indeed.
8.17 You did not slay them; it was God who slew them. It was not you who flung when you flung, but God it was who flung, in order to bestow upon the believers, from His grace, a fine achievement. God is All-Hearing, Omniscient.
8.18 That is so, and God shall subvert the cunning of the unbelievers.
8.19 If you desire a verdict, the verdict has already come to you; and if you desist, it would be best for you. But if you resume your enmity, We too shall resume it, and your army, though numerous, will be of no avail. God stands with the believers.

8.12 Et ton Seigneur révéla aux Anges: «Je suis avec vous: affermissez donc les croyants. Je vais jeter l'effroi dans les cours des mécréants. Frappez donc au-dessus des cous et frappez-les sur tous les bouts des doigts.
8.13 Ce, parce qu'ils ont désobéi à Allah et à Son messager.» Et quiconque désobéit à Allah et à Son messager... Allah est certainement dur en punition!
8.14 Voilà (votre sort); goûtez-le donc! Et aux mécréants le châtiment du Feu (sera réservé).
8.15 O vous qui croyez quand vous rencontrez (l'armée) des mécréants en marche, ne leur tournez point le dos.
8.16 Quiconque, ce jour-là, leur tourne le dos, – à moins que ce soit par tactique de combat, ou pour rallier un autre groupe, – celui-là encourt la colère d'Allah et son refuge sera l'Enfer. Et quelle mauvaise destination!
8.17 Ce n'est pas vous qui les avez tués: mais c'est Allah qui les a tués. Et lorsque tu lançais (une poignée de terre), ce n'est pas toi qui lançais: mais c'est Allah qui lançait, et ce pour éprouver les croyants d'une belle épreuve de Sa part! Allah est Audient et Omniscient.
8.18 Voilà! Allah réduit à rien la ruse des mécréants.
8.19 Si vous avez imploré l'arbitrage d'Allah vous connaissez maintenant la sentence [d'Allah] Et si vous cessez [la mécréance et l'hostilité contre le Prophète..], c'est mieux pour vous. Mais si vous revenez, Nous reviendrons, et votre masse, même nombreuse, ne vous sera d'aucune utilité. Car Allah est vraiment avec les croyants.

سورة الأنفال

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (1)
إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (2) الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (3) أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ (4) كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ
رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَارِهُونَ (5) يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَمَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ
يَنْظُرُونَ (6) وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ
بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ (7) لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ (8) إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي
مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ (9) وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَى وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (10) إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ (11) إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ (12) ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (13) ذَلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ (14) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ (15) وَمَنْ يُوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَى فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ
جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ (16) فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (17) ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ (18) إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ
تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (19)

Grodzki

A question that arises from this Qurʾānic passage is what can we actually understand and extrapolate from it without clinging to interpretations by the *tafsīr?* Are there any reminiscences of the ongoings/events or topoi/mythemes to which this passage makes its allusions to sources of the Jewish-Christian traditions? There seems to be an anachronic (dis)order of verses relating to a battle (vv. 7–9 with a suggestion indirectly that the clash may have already ended; then later vv. 15 and 16 chronologically seem to precede the battle, giving guidance to the believer before it started; then later v. 17 speaks of the fight again in the past tense). May it suggest that this passage contains a collection of fragments from some variant reports (coming from more than one oral source of transmission) corroborated together into the *corpus coranicum* to describe the same given event? Or, as the passage does not mention any specific context, neither names, places, may it be a collection of verses referring in general (with some guidance, rules etc.) to the spoils of war, fighting unbelievers, conduct at warfare etc.? If so, according to which assumptions, premises and logic?

Kropp

This illustrative example leads to a general remark on Qurʾānic style. There are abrupt changes in God's speech. He speaks of himself in the third person; then in the first person, changing from singular to plural. The messenger or the medium speaks in the first or the third person. The addressee is changed in the same abrupt manner; it can be the messenger or his public. All this in a few lines; cf. Robinson (1996: 254): "Sudden pronominal shifts are characteristic of the Qurʾānic discourse." Rippin (2000: 307) speaks of "rushed composition." One of the best and most concise analysis of this Qurʾānic style is to be found in Richter 1940: 78 and passim. But Richter does not go beyond literary and functional description.

An attempt to explain these facts is recently made by Pohlmann (2012: 61 ff. and passim). He sees different layers of composition, compilation and redaction. The principle of the redactors and/or authors was to change the Prophetic word from indirect divine speech in the third person to direct and thus more authoritative speech in the first person. This is a parallel to the text history of prophetic books in the OT. Thus far the diachronic view.

One can have a look at the result – the canonical text as we have it now – and try to give a synchronic analysis – not properly "canonical approach" in the sense of OT-studies. Even when there are different layers the final result should have its logical

and intended structure of its own. Looking for linguistic parallels in the modern ideological and political style, analysed by speech act theory, one finds the same phenomena: obfuscation of the actants (*Aktantenverschleierung*), be it speaker or addressee – double or multiple addressed speech (*Mehrfachadressierung*; cf. Kühn, 1995.) In short, we are before highly sophisticated ideological texts parallel to what totalitarian movements in the last two centuries produced. Maxime Rodinson already drew this parallel – applied to the origins of Islam in general. I made an attempt to analyse Qurʾānic speech in this direction (Kropp 2008: 795–98). Reading through Klemperer (1975) and having in mind Qurʾānic passages, one cannot but be shaken by the effect.

Diachronic and synchronic analyses are complementary. While the first can elucidate the history of the text – and the Qurʾān has a history – the second may elucidate the intentions and goals of the ones who ordered or directly executed the final composition.

Pregill

A classic example of a *sūra* so embedded in the traditional interpretation provided by the *sīra* literature that it is extremely difficult to extricate ourselves and attain an objective reading of it. The idea that this refers to Badr is deeply entrenched in scholarly consciousness, and so it is almost impossible to correlate these references with any other context.

Those of us who might wish to discard the *sīra* tradition as the dominant interpretive frame, reading the homiletic-parenetic, eschatological, and liturgical material in the Qurʾān as reflecting an ongoing confrontation between monotheist religious groups – the oft-mentioned "sectarian milieu" –might be able to make a compelling argument for an alternative understanding of the context that generated that material. But what do we do with the other material in the Qurʾān, that which is much more closely tied up with Muḥammad's career as statesman, and thus with the foundation of the early Islamic state? If these passages are not linked to a context in which a fledgling community takes up arms under prophetic leadership and establishes itself against not just religious but political rivals – the context described in the portions of Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra* relating to the Hijra and *maġāzī*, emphasizing above all else *ǧihād fī sabīl Allāh* – then what other plausible context could possibly give them meaning? The most thorough attempt at constructing an alternative explanation of the jihad material in the Qurʾān, one that not only takes the problem of the diversity of attitudes towards outsiders in this material seriously but actually makes deciphering the reasons behind the Qurʾān's inconsistencies and contradictions the very foundation of its approach, is Firestone 1999, which has not received the attention it deserves.

Vv. 5–9 are the most critical ones here. Following Wansbrough et al., we may skeptically reject the traditional understanding of these verses as allusions to the Hijra and the seemingly hopeless odds faced by the *umma* at Badr as mythology.

Perhaps this does not really mean that sometime after the Hijra the Believers were confronted with two groups affiliated with the Qurayš, a caravan and a war-band, and were forced to take on the stronger one rather than the weaker one (*ġayr ḏāt al-šawka*, assuming that the *hapax legomenon šawka* is really to be read as "might, valor"), eventually triumphing with the help of divine intervention (*alfin min al-malāʾika murdifīna*). Is it possible to link these two groups with another context instead, namely the confrontation between the Romans and their enemies alluded to in Q 30:1–7? The providential and eschatological ambience of both passages is striking. (See my comments on QS 29 below.)

Rippin

The challenge of this passage is nicely summed up by the heading "contemporary events." How can this be interpreted outside the Muslim tradition? The reference in v. 7 to "two groups" is totally context-less. Perhaps this is where we need to resist the desire to "interpret" and just leave it that this refers to events for which we have no information by which to fully understand its referent and emphasize the religious message of the passage of reflecting on God's control and power.

V. 3 is also worth study in terms of the developing vocabulary that becomes associated with *ṣalāt* – often *zakāt* (a word that is complex when considered alongside *ṣadaqa*) but not here, where we have *yunfiqu* ("spend"?) rather than *atā* ("give") as with *zakāt* elsewhere.

Stefanidis

The first verse mentions *allāh wa-l-rasūl*. At the risk of stating the obvious, I would like to ask: who is this "messenger"? Can we agree that this character is also the implied addressee of much of the Qurʾānic material (addressed for example in *yaʾalūnaka*)? Can we reach this conclusion by studying the text alone, or does this understanding rely on "Muslim tradition"?

Considering the fact that a skeptic reception of "traditional material" seems to have become the hallmark of Western studies of the Qurʾān, it might be useful to reflect on what we actually include in the category "Muslim tradition." This expression appears to be a catch-all notion. Sometimes it is used to refer specifically to *ḫabar* types of material which display an *isnād* (chain of transmitters) and a *matn* (the anecdote or teaching transmitted). Those self-contained transmissions which constitute the bulk of *tafsīr* works have been shown to often be of limited use to a modern historian of early Islam. However, the expression "Muslim Tradition" sometimes seems to be extended so as to include all information pertaining to early Islam recorded by medieval Muslim authors, including the basic understanding that Islam emerged in seventh-century Arabia and that its early struggles are reflected in the Qurʾānic material.

I would like to ask: what are the reasons, if any, for rejecting the "traditional" view that this passage refers to violent confrontations between the emerging religious community led by the *rasūl* and its opponents? We may not be able to specify in which exact year this battle took place and whether or not it was at Badr, but it seems to me that as long as we hold the usual framework to be reliable this passage is rather clear in its general lines.

Stewart

The joining together of God and the Messenger in the command "Obey God and the Messenger" in v. 1 and elsewhere and the joining together of God and the Messenger in other phrases serve to establish the authority of the Prophet. From the top-down perspective, it indicates that the Prophet's authority is dependent on and sanctioned by God. From the bottom-up perspective, God is in the realm of the supernatural, so obeying God and the Messenger is in practical terms accomplished by obeying the Messenger tout court. Related to these phrases is 4:53, where *wa-ulī l-amri minkum* is appended to this dual command, and this becomes one of the main verses cited in attempts to justify the religious authority of any particular claimants after the Prophet.

V. 19 is interesting in its use of the first person plural in the phrase *in taʿūdū naʿud* "If you return, so shall We." This strikingly succinct statement puts God in the midst of the fray, so to speak, going along with the statements above that God was the one who slew them in v. 17. The cognate paronomasia—which appears in many other passages in a variety of forms—suggests here one-upmanship: God will best you at your own game.

The term *fiʾah* in modern Arabic is used mainly for technical classes, like percentiles, quartiles, or the denominations of banknotes. Here, however (*fiʾatukum* in v. 19) and perhaps elsewhere in the Qurʾān, has a quite different sense. Used to refer to the enemy host, it suggests both that they are the enemy and therefore probably evil or dangerous and that they are numerous. It thus may have a pejorative sense like "horde." When the Qurʾān describes the good guys, "our" host, it is often *ǧamʿ*, and *ǧamʿ* would also be the neutral term, for outbreak of war is described in several passages as *yawma ltaqā l-ǧamʿāni* "the day when the two hosts met."

Toorawa

Given my interest in hapaxes, the words *al-šawka* (v. 7, "arms"), *zaḥf* (v. 15, "marching") and *mutahayyiz* (v. 16, "turning away") should attract the bulk of my attention. But instead it is the word *anfāl* ("spoils [of war?]") that does so. I did not list *anfāl* in my article on hapaxes (Toorawa 2011a) even though it is clearly a "form-hapax," i.e. a word the root of which may occur elsewhere, but which only occurs rarely in that morphological shape. I see now that the omission from my hapax list was a significant oversight as it occurs only twice (in exactly the same context—what

I term an "isolate"), and in an opening verse too. And although the root *N-F-L* is attested elsewhere (Q 17:79, Q 21:72), the meaning there is different… or is it? Might we be able to set aside the context of battle imputed to the opening verses and now read *anfāl* in light of the other attestations? One justification for doing so is that the first few verses are rhetorically linked and linkable to other Qurʾānic passages (e. g. in Āl ʿImrān), as others have noted.

The expression *yasʾalūnaka* (*ʿan*) ("they ask you [about]"), is very interesting in this regard. It occurs as an expression fifteen times, and always with a following *qul*, "respond," (except in Q 79:42, but the *qul* is not needed there). What does/can the deployment of this rhetorical device tell us? What is more, only in Anfāl is this expression the opening of a *sūra*. This and other openings are worth studying. End-words and end-rhymes are beginning to get a little attention; openings (besides the *fawātiḥ* letters) deserve attention too. Such attention will allow us to answer questions such as: Is the opening of Anfāl in fact an opening? Might the *sūra* have "started" differently?

Younes

The general theme of these verses seems to center around a battle and the spoils of war. However, there is no coherent narrative running through the whole passage. Some verses seem to be unrelated to the general theme.

While v. 1 discusses the spoils of war, vv. 2–4 give a definition of who the believers are. V. 5 seems to stand on its own, with no clear connection to the previous or following verses. The main idea of v. 6 concerns those who argue with the Prophet because they do not want to go to war. Vv. 7–14 seem to be related to the theme of the opening verse, the spoils of war, but logically they should come before it, since they include God's promise of victory over the unbelievers, an account of a battle and God's assistance to the believers. While v. 14 suggests that the battle has ended and the defeated unbelievers will meet their punishment, vv. 15–16 suggest that the battle has not yet begun and includes a strong warning to those who turn their backs and run away (in defeat). V. 17 clearly states that the battle has ended and the enemy has been defeated and God was instrumental in this defeat.

Zellentin

What strikes me as important about the *yasʾalūnaka … qul*, "they ask you… say" (see also Azaiez) construction in v. 1 and throughout the Qurʾān, usually followed by a narrative or legal clarification, is that no matter how common the juncture of the verbs "ask" and "tell" may be, there are not many clear Jewish post-biblical precedents to the Qurʾān's precise usage. This fact may point to the prominence of Christian narrative matrixes for our understanding of the Qurʾān's rhetoric.

The first thing that comes to mind is of course the often-repeated scenes between God and Moses in the Hebrew Bible, and Moses' actions as judge before the people are of course a valid model for Muḥammad.

"God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites," followed by an instruction (e.g., Exod 3:15). This scenario is prominently re-enacted in the Palestinian Midrashic tradition, which several times states that "God said to Moses: 'Tell them...,'" i.e., tell the Israelites (see e.g., *Exodus Rabbah* III.6 and 8, *Numbers Rabbah* II.6, *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* IX.4). By attributing itself to divine authorship, the Qurʾānic formulation hence evokes the language as well as the scenario of the Biblical and Midrashic tradition without fully spelling it out. The Qurʾān, rather than reporting what God told the Prophet to say, has God *say* to Muḥammad in His own words: "tell," i.e., tell the people; the "sons of Israel" are often one of the main inscribed and intended audiences of the Qurʾān. However, "asking" hardly ever occurs in the Biblical-Midrashic tradition of the scenario, and if it does, as in the (very late Midrash) *Numbers Rabbah* 7:4, the question is not for information, but for food, and they do not ask, but demand ("God said to Moses: What do they demand (*mbqšym*)? Flesh? Tell (*ʾmwr*) them that I will give them flesh ...," cf. Num 11 and Exod 16). Yet in light of the many instances in which the Qurʾān associates Muḥammad with Moses, this evidence still may explain the background against which part of the Qurʾān's audience may have perceived the Biblical stage on which the Prophet addresses the people. In one instance in the Bible the people do ask, though the answer is disheartening: when God says to Jeremiah, evoking the example of Moses, that "when [the Israelites] say (*ymrw*) to you, 'Where shall we go?' you shall say (*wʾmrtʾ*) to them..." followed by a condemnation of the people (Jer 15:2). The Qurʾān's usage of the "they ask-tell them" scenario is thus closer to the Pentateuch than to the Prophetical book.

Part of the audience, however, may well have heard an echo of Jesus, and it seems to me that this is a more prominent context for the Qurʾān's usage of the scenario. The *Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, for example, portrays Jesus three times in a row as stating "if people ask you: .... "tell them..." followed by a theological explanation (*Gospel of Thomas* 50). The most important stylistic precedent, also evoking Jesus, may be the Gospel of Matthew. Here, the people or Pharisees many times "ask," whereupon "he said to them," followed by a legal or narrative explanation, often very detailed, as in our passage. The Gospel's style and scenario therefore seems closest to that of the Qurʾānic passage at hand. The scene, in many variations, is very central in Matthew (see 12:10 – 11, 16:1 – 2, 17:10 – 11, 22.35 – 37, always using the terms *šʾl* and *ʿmr* in the Syriac), and the tradition of Matthew in turn is central in the Qurʾān.

The same depiction of Jesus (as well as of "the Prophet (*nbyʾ*) John," i.e., the Baptist), is also used several times in a similar role in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* ("as our Saviour said (*dʾmr*) when we asked (*šʾlhnyh*) Him," (XI, Vööbus 1979:130), "as our Lord and Teacher said (*dʾmr*) when they asked (*šʾlwhy*) Him," (XXI, ibid:205); and "when they asked (*šʾlywhy*, i.e., John) for an answer, he said (*ʾmr*) to them...," (X,

ibid:119). While the *Didascalia*'s ensuing Gospel quotes are all ethical, it is paramount to consider the context in which they are employed. For the Didacalia uses Jesus' response to those who ask him as its blueprint for the authority of its own "bishop and the presbyters" (see also my comments on QS 12) to take legal cases, and to "judge circumspectly," (11, ibid. 130). Most centrally, the *Didascalia* reminds its audience how much Jesus detested that "men should have lawsuits with one another" (ibid.). Hence, I would suggest hearing the Qurʾān's "they ask you—tell them" as a stylistically precise re-enactment of the Gospel and the *Didascalia* in the context of the Qurʾān's self-depiction as direct divine speech. Muḥammad, as he does so often, takes on the role of Jesus as well as that of Moses, combining the Evangel and the Torah, and judges, like the Bishops and the elders judge, proposing a very similar message: "be wary of God and settle your differences, and obey God and his Apostle, should you be faithful" (v. 1).

QS 12 Q 9:29 – 32

9.29 Fight those who do not believe in God or the Last Day, who do not hold illicit what God and His Messenger hold illicit, and who do not follow the religion of truth from among those given the Book, until they offer up the tribute, by hand, in humble mien.
9.30 The Jews say Ezra is the son of God while the Christians say Christ is the son of God. This is what they say, from their very mouths, thereby agreeing with the speech of the unbelievers who came before. May God strike them down! How they pervert the truth!
9.31 They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords instead of God – as also the Christ son of Mary. They were commanded to worship but one God – there is no God but He, glory to Him, far above their polytheism!
9.32 They seek to quench the light of God with their mouths, but God insists on blazoning forth His light, even if the unbelievers find it abhorrent.

9.29 Combattez ceux qui ne croient ni en Allah ni au Jour dernier, qui n'interdisent pas ce qu'Allah et Son messager ont interdit et qui ne professent pas la religion de la vérité, parmi ceux qui ont reçu le Livre, jusqu'à ce qu'ils versent la capitation par leurs propres mains, après s'être humiliés.
9.30 Les Juifs disent: «'Uzayr est fils d'Allah» et les Chrétiens disent: «Le Christ est fils d'Allah». Telle est leur parole provenant de leurs bouches. Ils imitent le dire des mécréants avant eux. Qu'Allah les anéantisse! Comment s'écartent-ils (de la vérité)?
9.31 Ils ont pris leurs rabbins et leurs moines, ainsi que le Christ fils de Marie, comme Seigneurs en dehors d'Allah, alors qu'on ne leur a commandé que d'adorer un Dieu unique. Pas de divinité à part Lui! Gloire à Lui! Il est au-dessus de ce qu'ils [Lui] associent.
9.32 Ils veulent éteindre avec leurs bouches la lumière d'Allah, alors qu'Allah ne veut que parachever Sa lumière, quelque répulsion qu'en aient les mécréants.

سورة التوبة
قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ (29) وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ
قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ (30) اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (31) يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ
اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (32)

Azaiez

Cette séquence polémique est remarquable par la présence de deux « contre-discours » dans un même verset (v. 30). J'entends par cette expression les discours rapportés tenus par des adversaires réels ou fictifs dans le cadre de la polémique coranique (Azaiez: 2012). Dans le cas présent, il s'agit des deux énoncés suivants : *ʿUzayrun ibnu Allāhi* / *al-masīḥu ibnu Allāhi*. Ces deux contre-discours appartiennent à l'une des trois catégories des contre-discours coraniques : les contre-discours dits passés, présents et futurs. La somme de ces trois formes rassemble 588 versets soit environ 10 % du corpus coranique total. Les contre-discours passés se définissent comme la mise en scène de paroles d'adversaires qui s'opposent à des personnages bibliques (Moïse, Abraham, Noé, Jésus…) ou péninsulaires (*Hūd*, *Šuʿayb*…) incarnés par les prophètes arabes. Il peut s'agir d'individus (par exemple Pharaon), de

groupes humains (les peuples réfractaires) ou d'un être surnaturel (*Iblīs*). Quant aux contre-discours présents, ils constituent l'ensemble des énoncés qui se laisse entrevoir comme contemporain à la prédication supposée du Coran. Il regroupe les discours des détracteurs, suppose-t-on, de Muḥammad. Enfin, les contre-discours futurs concerne l'ensemble des propos tenus par les damnés qui déniaient la croyance et qui sont promis aux affres de l'enfer. Dans cette perspective, les deux énoncés du v. 30 se définissent donc comme deux contre-discours présents (ou contre-discours rapportés directs présents). Selon notre nomenclature, ils constituent le 80ème contre-discours du groupe des contre-discours présents qui en compte 270 dans le Coran (cf. Azaiez 2012).

Dye

Passage obscur, qui a visiblement subi plusieurs remaniements.

V. 29 : l'expression *ʿan yadin* a fait couler beaucoup d'encre. Rubin (2006) examine son usage dans la poésie des VIIe-IXe siècles. Trois sens se dégagent : *generously*, *voluntarily*, *submissively*. Ce dernier sens conviendrait dans le Coran, mais Kropp a raison de rappeler le caractère tardif ou douteux des vers supposés justifier cette signification. L'idée selon laquelle la seconde moitié du v. 29 (à partir de *min allaḏīna*) serait une interpolation est plausible.

Sur *ǧizya* : comparer moyen-perse *gazîdag/gazîtag*, qui est très exactement le nom de la *poll-tax* dont s'inspire la *ǧizya*. Il semble que le mot et l'institution aient été empruntés (Gignoux 2012: 484) : sous les Sassanides, les hommes entre vingt et cinquante ans devaient payer la *gazîdag*, une taxe de 4, 6, 8 ou 12 drachmes (montant calculé selon leur moyens – *ʿan yadin* !), à l'époque de Khusrô I (531–579). Au VIIe siècle, cette taxe s'applique à tous les non-zoroastriens en échange de la liberté religieuse. Le principe de la *ǧizya* n'a guère de sens dans l'Arabie de l'époque du Prophète ; il est en revanche naturel après les conquêtes, lorsqu'il s'agit d'administrer un empire.

V. 30 : il n'y a aucune commune mesure entre le statut de ʿUzayr dans le judaïsme et celui du Christ dans le christianisme. La mise en parallèle paraît forcée. Sur l'identité de ʿUzayr (seule occurrence de ce nom dans le Coran), état de la question chez Comerro (2005). Je doute que la figure visée soit Esdras. Comerro suggère une hypothèse intéressante : ʿAzarya, l'un des compagnons de captivité de Daniel (Dan 1:6 et Dan 3:25, où on peut facilement croire que « l'ange du Seigneur qui a l'aspect d'un fils de Dieu » est justement ʿAzarya). Une certaine mauvaise foi polémique de la part de l'auteur du texte n'est pas exclue…

V. 31 : D'un strict point de vue grammatical (*a fortiori* si l'arabe du Coran est à l'origine sans *iʿrāb*), il faudrait lire *wa-l-masīḥi* – ce qui change radicalement le sens du propos. On peut donc se demander si *wa-l-masīḥa* ne serait pas une interpolation.

Grodzki

A quite unambiguous tone of the passage in Ṭawba with a distinctly militant background in the beginning against polytheists or associators. Being placed within this context, can expressions such as *qātilū*, *qātalahum Allāh* (often understood in the meaning of "fight" or "assail") be conceived in a more metaphoric sense?

Hilali

In the lower text of the manuscript 27.1 DAM, Yemen (the so called Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest), the chapter *al-Tawba* (Repentance) contains the most important amount of textual issues in comparison with the Cairo edition of Qurʾān edited in the twenties and often considered in Qurʾānic Studies scholarship as the Standard Qurʾān. This passage is missing in the manuscript but the expression *bi-afwāhihim* (with their mouths) occurs in another passage (v. 8) and contains a difference with the Cairo edition (that I avoid in this context to call *qirāʾa*, pl. *qirāʾāt* (variant) since the manuscript is historically anterior to the very concept of Qur'ānic variant and reading.) In this passage, instead of *bi-afwāhihim* (with their mouths) we read *bi-alsinatihim* (with their tongues/with their languages). The verse underlines the opposition between the discourse of the pagans who tend to please the believers with their words (mouths/tongues/languages) and hide in the same time their rejection and keep it in their "hearts" (*qulūbihim*). The word *alsinathim* (tongues/languages) displaces the description of the pagans by adding one important descriptive element: the pagans speak a different language (*lisān, pl. alsina*).

Kropp

There are other verses opening with *qātilū* "fight!" V. 29 is different and does not fit into the series; especially strange is the mention of taxes and the "People of the Book" in this context. I propose to see an addition. It fits into the political and social situation of the late 7th century when Muslim administration was developed. This verse can be seen as legitimising the actual tax system towards non-Muslims. As there was no *naṣṣ* for it in the Qurʾān one was fabricated out of existing elements combined to juridical terminology. *ʿAn yadin* probably was the Arabic rendering of an earlier Sasanian principle that taxes should be paid according to means of the tributaries, as the word *ǧizya* itself is best explained as a Persian loan-word.

Rubin's analysis (2006) of *ʿan yadin*, according to tax treaties and to Arabic poetry, gives the relevant material, but comes to another conclusion ("generously, submissively"). But the two examples of pre-Islamic poetry he adduces are of uncertain authenticity. All others are later and under influence of the Qurʾānic text. In conclusion he cites a passage which gives all the history of the text in a nutshell.

By way of conclusion, a look at what Ibn al-Qayyim al-Ǧawziyya (d. 751/1350) has to say on the matter might be useful:

> *ʿAn yadin* describes a state (*ḥāl*), i.e., they must give the *ǧizya* while they are humiliated and oppressed (*aḏillāʾ maqhūran*). This is the correct (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*) interpretation of the verse. Some said that the meaning is "from hand to hand, in cash, not on credit." Others said: "From his hand unto the hand of the receiver, not sending it nor delegating its payment." Others said: "It means due to a benefaction on your part unto them by agreeing to receive payment from them." But the accurate opinion is the first one, and the people are agreed on it. The most far-fetched opinion that misses God's intention is that of those who say that the meaning is: "Out of their ability to pay it, which is why [the *ǧizya*] is not collected from those who can't afford it." This rule is correct, but its application to the verse is wrong. No one of the Companions of the Prophet and of the Successors interpreted it in this manner nor anyone of the old masters of the *umma*. It is only the witty inference of some later scholars."

One cannot better describe how this verse was created and what happened to it, just by reversing the last statement into its contrary. A fine example of ideological exegesis and history writing.

Pregill

V. 29: Those to be fought are defined by their deficient belief and practice, but not (at least at this juncture) by their nominal communal affiliation. Much ink has been spilled regarding the *ǧizya* verse; the interpretations of Bravmann (1963) and Kister (1964) are mostly acceptable, though it is probably a mistake to read this as already implying establishment of something like *ḏimmī* status for those defeated in battle and subordinated to the community (note also Rubin 2006, who updates the older treatments on the basis of new philological data culled from previously neglected samples of Arabic poetry). By identifying this *sūra* as revealed almost at the very end of Muḥammad's career, the tradition conveniently establishes a foundation for presenting what became the classical doctrine of jihad (fight polytheists until they convert, monotheists until they submit and pay the *ǧizya*) as the culmination of the Qurʾān's supposed progression from tolerance to truculence. That is, the less strident passages are assumed to have originated in the Meccan period and are thus presumably abrogated in favor of the more militant approach of the Medinan period that carried the community into the *ridda* wars and the campaigns of conquest.

V. 30: Probably too much effort has been expended in the attempt to identify the specific sects of Jews and Christians intended here. I am sympathetic to the hypothesis (most recently advanced by de Blois) that *naṣārā* are specifically "Jewish Christians," "Nazoreans," as this correlates well both with the Christological conceptions attributed to these people by the Qurʾān and with what we know about the varieties of heterodox Judaism, Christianity, and "Jewish Christianity" that populated the literal and figurative margins of the Roman and Persian dominions in Late Antiquity. On the other hand, *nāṣrāyā* is the standard term that was supposedly applied to *all* Christians by non-Christian Persians, at least according to the testimony of Sasanian-era Syriac texts; the possible derogatory connotation in that context is interesting when we consider the term's largely polemical use in Qurʾānic discourse.

Assuming it is not mere rhetoric, the complaint about what the Jews say about ʿUzayr, paralleling what the Christians say about the Messiah, most likely points to some conception of an angelic being as an intermediary figure, an idea that is now generally recognized as a common feature of various forms of late antique Judaism, especially those found in the imperial interstices of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia. I find the suggestion that ʿUzayr may be linked to ʿAzazel, and thus to Metatron, to be provocative but difficult to substantiate (cf. Crone 2013; Crone QS 32); another possibility, probably requiring a less tortured manipulation of the evidence, is that this claim about ʿUzayr reflects ascent traditions associated with Ezra/Esdras.

That the problematic statements of the Jews and Christians are like the ones of disbelievers of old (*kafarū min qabli*) is an important indication that *kufr* is an error associated with monotheists in the Qurʾān, and not (or not necessarily) "pagans." Cf. also the next verse: "He is exalted above what they associate with Him" (*ʿammā yušrikūna*) – that is, beyond the *širk* of their flawed worship, which cannot truly be called monotheism. As Hawting and others have argued, there is strong internal evidence that *kuffār* and *mušrikūn* are Jews and Christians (or "Jewish Christians" and the like).

V. 31: Condemnation of sanctified religious personnel as tantamount to deification of prophets or angels. This is wholly compatible with the ideal hierarchy presented in the Qurʾān: one God, without any rivals or intermediaries, and one prophet-lawgiver, also without rivals or intermediaries.

Rippin

It would be valuable to compile a list of ways in which the statement "Ezra is the son of God" has been "explained" – from "deviant Jewish group" to "Uzayr is not Ezra." The explanation that involves the association of Ezra with "taken their rabbis … as lords apart from God" still makes sense to me but it does seem to gloss over a good deal of historical difficulties. Is there a way to solve this that does not involve a "misunderstanding" on the part of the author when speaking to the presumed audience or inventing a historical context for which there is no evidence?

Sirry

One of the exegetical problems facing Muslim Qurʾān exegetes, classical and modern, is why the Qurʾān (v. 29) refers to the People of the Book as not believing in God and the Day of Judgment. In fact, this passage describes the People of the Book with three negative attributes: [1] they do not believe in God and the Last Day, [2] they do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and [3] they do not follow the religion of truth. Are the three negative attributes sufficient causes for fighting against the People of the Book? One may argue, as Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) does, that the passage indeed restricts the general applicability of the doctrine of war against the People of the Book. Rāzī has his imaginary inter-

locutor posed the following question: What is your opinion about the fate of Jews who believe in the unity of God? He responds to this question in this way: "We say that those Jews are not included within the scope of this verse" (1980: vol. 16, 28). The problem is that the three negative attributes can be interpreted differently.

Richard Bell contends that the phrase *min allaḏīna ūtū l-kitāb*, which is usually rendered as "the People of the Book," might have been a later insertion. In the footnote of his translation of the verse Bell asserts "The position of this phrase [*allaḏīna ūtū al-kitāb*] suggests that it may have been interpolated, or that the verse, originally earlier, has been added to at the end" (1937: vol. 1, 177). Commenting on this suggestion, Jørgen Bæk Simonsen notes: "Bell's view is supported by the fact that it was not until later that the main opponents of the Islamic State were Christians. Apart from a few scattered Jewish settlements and the Christians in Najrān, the main enemy of Arabia had surrendered to Medina at the time of the revelation of Q 9, but there were still some tribes that had not entered Pax Islamica. These were the ones meant by this verse" (1988: 87).

Other key terms in the passage that have been much discussed are *ǧizya*, *ʿan yadin* and *ṣāġirūn*. Modern Muslim scholars, such as the Indian Shibli Nuʻmani and the Egyptian Rashid Rida, tend to downplay the importance of the concept of *ǧizya*, claiming that *ǧizya* was not an Islamic invention but one that had existed before Islam. In his widely read monograph, *Muwāṭinūn lā ḏimmiyyūn*, Fahmi Huwaydi contends that *ǧizya* should be discarded altogether, arguing that *ǧizya* was a political institution, rather than religious one, and with the emergence of nation states it has been overtaken by the modern concept of citizenship. What concerns Huwaydi and other progressive Muslims is the depiction of Islam as discriminately restricting the political rights of non-Muslims living in Islamic lands as "second class citizens."

Stefanidis

This passage seems to construct Jews and Christians as *de facto* (but not *de jure*) *mušrikūn*. Not only do Jews and Christians refuse to obey God and his messenger but they also ascribe partners unto him: first by affirming that God has a son, then by worshipping their religious dignitaries (v. 31). The insistence that Jews and Christians have practices that can reasonably be understood, from a Qurʾānic perspective, as *širk* could indicate that fighting those "to whom the book was given" (v. 29) was not a straightforward affair but required a redefinition of their status.

It is, however, particularly noteworthy that the polemical representation of Jews and Christians as "associators" is performed without *explicitly* calling them *mušrikūn*. *Subḥānahu ʿammā yušrikūna* (v.31) is, to my knowledge, the only instance where the root *Š-R-K* is used in relation to Jews and Christians. By contrast, the Qurʾān uses the root *K-F-R* a number of times to refer to members of these communities (Q 2:105; 5:17, 59:2, 11; 98:1, 6). While it has recently been suggested that the term *mušrikūn* is better understood as a derogatory address to Jewish and Christian groups rather that to actual polytheists (Hawting 1999; Crone 2010), this passage underlines

the extent to which these distinctive audiences are consistently differentiated in Qurʾānic discourse.

Stewart

Qātalahumu llāh is a curse – literally "may God fight them" – and one of the most common in the Qurʾān. Curses most often occur in the perfect form, understood with an optative sense, and in a number of passages, the translators get them wrong because they render them as ordinary verbs in the past tense. Other curse forms include noun phrases such as *waylun li-* etc. In this case, one suspects that the functional equivalent would be a notch down from the literal meaning, just as a curse like *lā abālaka* "may you not have a father" might be understood as "you sly dog!" Ibn Hağar states that it is used to urge one to do something—perhaps "get a move on, lazybones!" In this case, perhaps "God confound them!" would be the correct level of invective, for the Jews and the Christians are making heretical statements. But why is this particular curse used here? One might argue that it is referring back to the imperative *qātilū* two verses earlier. I would argue, however, that it is used primarily because of the forms of the verb *qāla* that occur earlier in the same verse: ***wa-qālat*** *il-yahūdu ʿUzayru bnu llāhi* ***wa-qālat*** *in-naṣārā al-masīḥu bnullāh dhālika* ***qawluhum*** *bi-afwāhihim yuḍāhiʾūna* ***qawla*** *lladhīna kafarū min qablu* ***qātalahumu*** *llāhu annā yuʾfakūn* in v. 30 refers back to *qātilū* in v. 29 a cognate curse in effect. Four forms derived from the verb appear in quick succession in the same verse, and this is a case of a cognate curse. The cognate paronomasia is not complete because the root consonants of *qāla* are *Q-W-L* and those of *qātalahum* are *Q-T-L*, but they are quite close, and the *-T-* actually occurs twice in the forms *qālat* and *qālat*. It is worth noting the occurrence of *qablu*, also with *q* and *l*, just before the curse. I have discussed cognate curses, including several in the Qurʾān and classical Arabic literature, in Stewart (1997) and Stewart (forthcoming).

Ittaḫadhū aḥbārahum wa-ruhbānahum arbāban min dūni llāh ... This verse is also cited in Islamic contexts to argue against assigning excessive authority to claimants to religious authority. For example, the Fatimid jurist al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān uses it against Sunnis who uphold the religious authority of the jurists, as opposed to the Imams, claiming that the Sunnis are treating them as the Jews and Christians have treated rabbis and priests. He cites *ḥadīṯ* reports to show that the Jews and Christians did not actually worship rabbis and priests, but they accepted their rulings on legal issues without any evidence, and acquiescing to their declarations regarding forbidden and permitted things was tantamount to worshipping them.

Toorawa

Both *ʿUzayr* ("Ezra") and *yuḍāhiʾūna* ("mouthing, mimicking") in v. 30 are hapaxes. If one of my broad claims about the presence of hapaxes is correct—namely, that they are often deployed to underscore wonder/awe/surprise (Toorawa 2011a: 243)—then

the presence of *yuḍāhiʾūna* is apposite, perhaps even expected, given the presence of the first and the tenor of the claim. Like *rikzā* ("murmur") in Q 19:98, which I see no reason to emend, *yuḍāhiʾūna*—which I also see no reason to emend—is about speech. Indeed, there appears to be a link in the Qurʾān generally between speech on the one hand, and asserting that God cannot have offspring on the other (see Toorawa 2011b: 61–62).

Regarding the unusual use of *wa-l-masīḥa* (accusative), which is the dominant reading, versus *wa-l-masīḥi* (genitive), I do not know the reason of course, but I can observe that the use of *masīḥ* ("Messiah") rather than the uninflected ʿĪsā ("Jesus") may be relevant (especially as ʿUzayr is named...).

Winitzer

The complexities in a clear-cut identification of the character behind the "Ezra" character mentioned in this passage are clearly presented by fellow commentaries in these pages. To the materials cited I only add the observation that in normative Judaism Ezra was already the bearer of considerable prestige – second, indeed, to Moses himself (*b. Sanh.* 21b), as the conduit of the Torah to Israel. It is from this fountainhead that the Esdras tradition springs, and thus while it makes sense to include all of the latter in considerations of the background of this character's mention in v. 30, one should not forget the origin of this tradition. As in the case of Enoch, the Biblical picture of Ezra is eclipsed in Late Antiquity by a rich literature that refashions the character practically beyond recognition, providing for him new meanings and relevance. But still it seems rash to disconnect entirely the ʿUzayr tradition from the Biblical Ezra, even if the connection is faint at best.

Zellentin

The Qurʾān here uses an insider's term to designate Jewish dignitaries, *aḥbār* (often translated as "scribes"): rabbinic literature often uses the cognate Aramaic *ḥbry* to designate members of the rabbinic movement. Moreover, while "rabbis" are not named explicitly in the passage at hand, the Qurʾān elsewhere associates the *aḥbār* with the *rabbāniyyūna*, a morphological cognate of Aramaic *rabbanan*, "the rabbis" (see Q 5:44 and 64), indicating that the audience should consider both titles here as well. And indeed, just as the Qurʾān, with polemical hyperbole, here charges that the Jews have taken their scribes as *arbāban min dūni llāhi*, as "lords besides God" (v. 31, note the wordplay on "*rb*"!), the Rabbis have indeed long expressed human authority in terms of the divine, for example when instructing its audience to let "the honour of your *ḥbr* be as the fear of your *rb*, and the fear of your *rb* as the fear of Heaven (*Mishna Avot* 4.12, see also e. g. Mekhilta *Amaleq* 1, Yerushalmi *Nedarim* 29.1 (41b, 36); "Heaven" designates God in rabbinic parlance).

In parallel, the Qurʾān accuses the *Naṣārā* of bestowing divine honors on *ruhbānahum*, "their fearing ones," by making them, as well as Jesus, lords, *ʾarbāb* (note

the playful homophony of *rhb* and *rb*). The title *rbʾ*, "lord" for Jesus is indeed attested in Syriac, e.g., in the *Didascalia* (see XIX, Vööbus 1979:190). In my view, the deictic field of the Qurʾānic term *ruhbān*, often understood narrowly as "monks," must surely been broadened in light of the prominent ideology built on the central notion of the "fear" of God in Syriac literature (Becker 2009), to include other kinds of Christian leaders either awesome themselves or in perpetual state of the fear of God, such as ascetics, holy men, and especially clerics, or more precisely, bishops (see also Q 57:27). My arguments for doing so, spelled out in Zellentin (2016), are threefold.

First, the Qurʾān correctly identifies the rabbinic dignitaries. In parallel, it associates two dignitaries among the *naṣārā*, namely the "*qissīsīn and ruhbān*" *(Q 5:82)*. The former term designates the elders, *qšyšʾ* in Syriac, and I have argued that the latter term designates the head of the elders, or bishop, for it makes as little sense to name the elders without their head (on the bishop as the head of the elders see DA XII, Vööbus 1979 143.23–5).

Second, the charge of elevating the bishops highly (as is also the case with rabbis), reflects late antique practice since the first century. Especially, consider the following passage from the *Didascalia*, ripe with designations in conflict with the Qurʾān's own theology: "The bishop is … your chief (*ryshkwn*) and your leader and he is a mighty king (*wmlkʾ*) to you. He guides in the place of the Almighty (*ʾḥyd kl*). But let him be honoured by you as God, because the bishop sits for you in the place of the Almighty God" (IX, Vööbus 1979:103). Again, the Qurʾān seeks to lead Christian tradition ad absurdum by pointing to the consequences of such high regard for religious leaders: it may end in taking humans for God.

Thirdly, the charge of "wrongfully eating up the people's wealth" in the sequel (v. 34) places the dignitaries in question in a position of financial responsibility. This is well attested for rabbinic and episcopal recipients of the tithe, along with warnings against the misappropriation of these funds, equally expressed as "swallowing" in the Didascalia (VIII, Vööbus 1979:94.13–24). The Qurʾān's polemic seems to incorporate an established Jewish and Christian discourse and to turn it against its authors.

QS 13 Q 9:111 – 118

9.111 God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth and, in exchange, the Garden shall be theirs. They fight in the cause of God, they kill and are killed – a true promise from Him in the Torah, the Evangel and the Qur'an. Who is more truthful to his promise than God? So be of good cheer regarding that business deal you transact. That is the greatest of triumphs.
9.112 The repentant,
The worshippers,
The thankful,
The fasting,
They who kneel and prostrate,
The bidders to good and forbidders of evil,
The respecters of the bounds of God – give glad tidings to the believers!
9.113 It is not right for the Prophet and the believers to ask forgiveness for polytheists, even if they are relatives, once it has become clear to them that they are denizens of hell.
9.114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, this was only to fulfill a promise he had promised him. But once it became clear to him that he was an enemy of God, he washed his hands of him – Abraham was one who sighed much, and was self-restrained.
9.115 God would never lead astray a people once He had guided them until He has made clear to them what they are to fear in piety. God is Omniscient.
9.116 To God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth;
He gives life and He deals death;
Apart from God, you have neither friend nor champion.
9.117 God has pardoned the Prophet, the Emigrants and the Helpers, those who followed him in the hour of hardship, after the hearts of a group of them were about to fall into temptation. Then He pardoned them, for to them He is All-Tender, Compassionate to each.
9.118 Likewise He pardoned the three who were left behind. Once the earth, so wide in expanse, had become constricted for them, and their very souls were constricted, and they came to believe that there can be no refuge from God except

9.111 Certes, Allah a acheté des croyants, leurs personnes et leurs biens en échange du Paradis. Ils combattent dans le sentier d'Allah: ils tuent, et ils se font tuer. C'est une promesse authentique qu'Il a prise sur Lui-même dans la Thora, l'Evangile et le Coran. Et qui est plus fidèle qu'Allah à son engagement? Réjouissez-vous donc de l'échange que vous avez fait: Et c'est là le très grand succès.
9.112 Ils sont ceux qui se repentent, qui adorent, qui louent, qui parcourent la terre (ou qui jeûnent), qui s'inclinent, qui se prosternent, qui commandent le convenable et interdisent le blâmable et qui observent les lois d'Allah... et fais bonne annonce aux croyants.
9.113 Il n'appartient pas au Prophète et aux croyants d'implorer le pardon en faveur des associateurs, fussent-ils des parents alors qu'il leur est apparu clairement que ce sont les gens de l'Enfer.
9.114 Abraham ne demanda pardon en faveur de son père qu'à cause d'une promesse qu'il lui avait faite. Mais, dès qu'il lui apparut clairement qu'il était un ennemi d'Allah, il le désavoua. Abraham était certes plein de sollicitude et indulgent.
9.115 Allah n'est point tel à égarer un peuple après qu'Il les a guidés, jusqu'à ce qu'Il leur ait montré clairement ce qu'ils doivent éviter. Certes, Allah est Omniscient.
9.116 A Allah appartient la royauté des cieux et de la terre. Il donne la vie et Il donne la mort. Et il n'y a pour vous, en dehors d'Allah, ni allié ni protecteur.
9.117 Allah a accueilli le repentir du Prophète, celui des Emigrés et des Auxiliaires qui l'ont suivi à un moment difficile, après que les cours d'un groupe d'entre eux étaient sur le point de dévier. Puis Il accueillit leur repentir car Il est Compatissant et Miséricordieux à leur égard.
9.118 Et [Il accueillit le repentir] des trois qui étaient restés à l'arrière si bien que, toute vaste qu'elle fût, la terre leur paraissait exiguë; ils se sentaient à l'étroit, dans leur propre personne et ils pensaient qu'il n'y avait d'autre refuge d'Allah qu'auprès de Lui. Puis Il agréa leur

with Him, it was then that God turned towards them in pardon that they might turn to Him. It is God who is All-Pardoning, Compassionate to each.

repentir pour qu'ils reviennent [à Lui], car Allah est l'accueillant au repentir, le Miséricordieux.

سورة التوبة

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي
التَّوْرَاةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (111) التَّائِبُونَ
الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْآمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (112) مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولِي قُرْبَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (113) وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ (114) وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (115) إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ (116) لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ
رَحِيمٌ (117) وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ
مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (118)

Dye

Passage déroutant, à de nombreux égards. Le texte fait allusion à des épisodes dont nous ne connaissons rien (par exemple les vv. 117–118, voir aussi un peu avant, vv. 107–110), mis à part ce qu'en dit la tradition musulmane – ce qui ne nous est pas forcément d'un grand secours.

V. 111 : ceux qui combattent dans le chemin de Dieu échangent leur vie et les biens de ce monde contre la vie (éternelle) dans le Paradis – telle est la promesse de Dieu. Le point curieux est bien sûr le vocabulaire utilisé (*ištarā*). Ce genre de métaphore n'est pas totalement inconnu du christianisme syriaque. Cf. *Synodicon Orientale, ou Recueil de synodes nestoriens:* les fidèles doivent distribuer leurs biens et leurs aumônes pour la rémission des péchés (Syn. 585, Canon XV, p. 182) ; les fidèles prélèvent une part de leur bien pour la donner à Dieu (et à l'Église), en vue de la rémunération lucrative dans l'autre monde (Syn. 585, Canon VII, p. 143). Mais il y a une différence importante avec le verset coranique, où Dieu apparaît comme un partenaire *actif*, comme s'il avait l'initiative dans la transaction, et où ce ne sont pas certains biens, mais tous les biens, et la personne même du croyant, qui sont l'objet de « l'achat ».

D'une certaine manière, le Coran, dans la manière dont il conçoit Dieu et ses liens avec les créatures, est éminemment politique. La façon dont il insiste sur la toute-puissance divine institue un rapport de dominateur à dominé. Le thème est certes aussi présent dans le judaïsme et le christianisme, mais le christianisme souligne tout autant l'idée de *paternité* divine – idée que le Coran rejette résolument. Ce qui compte est l'obéissance à Dieu, et l'installation du règne terrestre de cette volonté (Q 11:19–20). Il me semble que l'on a ici des échos de cette idée, dans un contexte très fortement eschatologique.

Vv. 113–114 : sur Abraham, comparer Q 19:47; 60:4. Contrairement à d'autres passages du Coran, ces versets (et l'ensemble de la sourate) s'opposent à toute tentation de convergence avec les autres confessions.

Grodzki

I wonder whether v. 111, with the here very enigmatic verb *ištarā*, succeeded by a seemingly quite unorthodox usage of *bi-anna* (in the meaning of *li-kay*) introducing an adverbial purpose clause (in reverse order of the *ḫabar* and *ism* of a nominal sentence), followed by (textually with no clear semantic continuity) fighting in the way of Allah, killing and being killed (?), may be better understood through its back translation into Syriac or Hebrew, perhaps revealing a helpful syntactical or semantic hint or reference? Otherwise we face here a quite original image of making a bargain with God for entering paradise.

Hilali

This passage does not appear in the manuscript 27.1 DAM, Yemen. Nevertheless, the expression *fī sabīl Allāh* (in God's way) occurs two times in the same chapter with differences from the Cairo edition of the Qurʾān. This expression occurs often in order to specify the character of the action of fighting the enemies: *qitāl, ǧihād*. The fight is qualified as a fight "in God's way" and is most of the time associated with the verb *ǧāhada*. There is a superposition of a certain number of adjectives that designate the believers (v. 112). In the context of this verse, the category of the believers announced (v. 111) seeks a precision introduced by a number of adjectives. I am not suggesting that a part of the text is "original" and another part contains "additions" but I propose to consider the process of textual composition implied in every text. The composition of the passage is built on the specification of the category of the believers and the category of "fighting". The expression *fī sabīl Allāh*, like the list of adjectives of the believers, contextualizes the content of the passage (the category of "fighting" and the category of "believers") and gives to the passage a Qurʾānic meaning in harmony with the rest of the occurrences of the same expression.

Pregill

Another passage that seems to require heavy interpolation of details from the *sīra* tradition in order to be rendered comprehensible. The context of the emergence of *ǧihād fī sabīl Allāh* as the central ideology or ethos of the community after the Hijra seems to be writ large here, but unmoored from the particular (hiero-)history of what Muslim tradition claims about the Medinan period, what is the context?

Why is the authority of Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾān alike invoked to guarantee posthumous reward for those who kill and are killed? When does the Gospel as we know it ever command believers to kill anyone? Placed in a larger context, one

can imagine that a possible socio-political subtext here is the use of religious language in the propaganda of the Roman Empire after Justinian, especially in the time of Heraclius – the late Roman precedent is the most proximate context in which the Gospel or Christian teachings in general were invoked to legitimate violence. But when did late antique Jews ever cite Torah to justify violence? When or why would this have been necessary?

But perhaps this approach is too literal; could it be that Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾān are invoked together here simply as a way of saying that all those who recognize the authority of revelation, *kitāb,* must acknowledge that their lives are God's, and that true fidelity to Him may require either killing or being killed as a warrant of that fidelity? (Cf. the "salvific covenant," Q 4:74 and various other passages on martyrdom.)

Vv. 113 – 114: Abandonment of family ties in the forging of new communal bonds. Likewise hard to separate from the framework of the *sīra* tradition, or at least from some broader context of a major shift in the revelatory community's circumstances such as that effected by a mass communal migration.

Ibid. for vv. 117: *anṣār* and *muhāǧirūn*. It is again hard to explain this without cribbing from the *sīra*. On the other hand, *muhāǧirūn/-īn* only occurs a handful of times in the Qurʾān, and is only paired with *anṣār* twice, here and in v. 100 above. It seems quite natural to interpret these terms as designations of specific, discrete groups, but it is by no means self-evident from the text itself that we must do so, and in fact, one wonders why this pairing is so rare in the Qurʾān given the purported centrality of these two groups in the Medinan community.

Reynolds

The way in which the Qur'ān describes God's purchasing the very souls and possessions of the believers (v. 111) follows closely the use of similar metaphors among the Syriac fathers to describe the sacrifices of a religious life. In his *Hymns to Abraham Kidunaya* (Ephrem 1972), Ephrem declares, "Your alms and prayers / are everywhere given as loans / which enrich those who received them / while you possess the capital and the gain" (1:7). Meanwhile, the notion that martyrs have a particular promise of paradise involves a conviction, similarly found with the Syriac fathers, that their death works as expiation for their sins (regarding this cf. Q 3:157, 195; 47:4 – 6). As noted already by Andrae (1955:168) Mar Jesse (d. late 6th cen.) writes in his *Treaty on the Martyrs:* "The true martyrs who, by way of a death that covers their sins, demonstrate even more the beauty of their deeds and receive this glorious inheritance by virtue of their blood. By leaving this life they have prepared for their souls an honorable abode in paradise. It was thought that they are already dead, but by their death they have killed their sin, and they are alive with God" (Mar Jesse 1911:32).

The interdiction of prayer for *al-mušrikūn* in verse 113 could be understood as emerging from an abstract theological concern (i. e. that polytheism per se is a heinous crime). But the case of Abraham's father – or better, the description of Abra-

ham's father as an "enemy of Allah" – in the following verse suggests a second possibility, namely that the Prophet preached in the name of Allah who is not god in some abstract sense but a god with particular characteristics. The *mušrikūn* are not those who have rejected monotheism, but rather those who have rejected his god.

Rippin

V. 111 has received extensive modern attention in terms of the motivation for suicide such that it needs a special study. The idea of God "buying" (*ištarā*) from the believers (the only instance, I believe) moves commercial vocabulary into the divine realm in a way that suggests a special usage that emphasizes the eschatological meaning more strongly than in most instances (see Rippin 1991). The idea that one can "buy" one's way into paradise, that such is a "promise" (*waʿd*) made in the Torah, Gospel and Qurʾān, and that this is a "transaction" (*bayʿ*) creates a theological picture that poses a considerable challenge. For scholarly reflections such as these, the verse must be put within a broader context of a discussion of metaphorical language (unless we wish to revert to Torrey's 1892 vision of the use of commercial language as a reflection of the situation in Mecca).

The reference to *al-ṯalāṯa* who were left behind in v. 118 again challenges us about how to understand this outside tradition unless we are willing to live with that sort of ambiguity.

Sirry

The juxtaposition of the Qurʾān with the *tawrāt* and the *inǧīl* is interesting. Does the Qurʾān refer to itself as a text similar to that of Torah and Gospel? For Wild, the answer is affirmative in such that "The Qurʾān is aware of itself as a recitation and as a text" (2006: 4). The question of the Qurʾān's self-referentiality has recently been the subject of much discussion. For Madigan (2001), such self-referential elements of the Qurʾān can also be understood as reflecting the broader phenomenon of divine engagement with humanity. However, a more relevant question for the passage under discussion is: What promise (*waʿd*) is in the Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾān? The first verse of the passage under discussion may be understood as reinforcing Donner's argument that the community of believers (*muʾminūn*) at the time of Muḥammad were more inclusive than have been commonly assumed, which may include Jews and Christians whose primary concern is monotheism.

The central theme of this passage, it seems to me, is the proximity between human *istiġfār* and divine *tawba*. As in Q 4:116, in this passage *širk* is described as an unforgivable sin. The Prophet Muḥammad and the believers were asked not to seek forgiveness (*istiġfār*) for the *mušrikūn* even though they were close relatives with a justification by referring to Abraham's relation to his father. It is assumed that the audience was familiar with Abraham's story. Why Abraham? The passage seems to place a central importance of Abraham as a quintessential monotheist,

and the Prophet was put in line with this tradition in the fight against the *mušrikūn* of his time. Perhaps, this is a strategy of the Qurʾān to claim Abraham for the community of the believers. He is claimed as one who prefigured the faith of the Prophet, rather than that of Jews and Christians. The Qurʾānic claim for Abraham, however, can also be seen as a plea that Christians and Jews should not assume that they alone have the truth. Abraham was a monotheist, not just a Jew or a Christian, but both and more. Presumably, this passage reflects its well-acquaintance with the significance of Abraham in early Jewish-Christian polemics. Here we can see how Abraham becomes a divisive figure, rather than a unifying one as some modern scholars tend to present.

Stefanidis

V. 113, which forbids the Prophet and the believers to pray for the forgiveness of the "polytheists," is immediately followed by the explanation of Abraham's own attempt to ask forgiveness for his father. This detail of Abraham's life is mentioned in three other passages, Q 19:47, Q 26:86 and Q 60:4, without, however, any condemnation on the part of the Divine voice. How could a prophet like Abraham perform an act that God dislikes? V. 114 seems to respond to puzzlements on the part of the believers or to pre-empt criticism from opponents. It can reasonably be argued that we are here faced with an instance of Qurʾānic intertextuality: proclamations adding to or specifying previous proclamations in response to new circumstances and to the needs of the community. Holding the Qurʾān to provide a "live transcript' of its own emergence, Sinai and Neuwirth (2010:10) have called for locating Qurʾānic communications along their plausible sequence in time. As Sinai notes, previous proclamations "must have continued to play a role within the religious life of their adherents – most likely within the context of worship – that ensured they were sufficiently well-known by ordinary believers in order to merit and require being brought *à jour* rather that simply discarded and substituted by new texts" (Sinai 2010: 431–32). In this particular case, v. 114 assumes the prior circulation of Q 19:47, Q 26:86 and Q 60:4.

Stewart

In v. 111 mention of a promise that is contained in the Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾān makes it clear not only that the Qurʾān is not sui generis but belongs to a particular genre inhabited by other texts as well. The genre is *kitāb* "scripture," and these three are the main representatives of the genre, though the Qurʾān also mentions the Psalms of David and the puzzling Scrolls of Abraham. The verse suggests as well that these scriptures have a unified content, or at least share key parts of their message.

Quite striking is the concatenation of *fāʿilūn*, without *wa-* or other intervening particles, in v. 112. The effect of this verse is due in large part to the repeated rhythm – — v —/— – v —/ as well as the internal *–ūn* rhyme.

The two parallel instances of *tabayyana* "it became clear, evident" in vv. 113–114, stating that it became clear to the Prophet that the unbelievers were destined for hellfire and to Abraham that his father was an enemy of God, join those two events together, serving as yet another example of prophetic typology. The Prophet is like Abraham; just as Abraham cut off relations with his relatives, so the Prophet is cutting off relations with his tribe when he became aware of their true nature—that they were a lost cause. This of course corroborates many other indications in the Qurʾān, similar to Jewish discussions of Abraham's leaving his father and his father's land and to Jesus' statements in the Gospels, that faith trumps blood ties, and that the true family is the family of believers. The two uses of *tabayyana* lead up to, or are resolved in a sense, by the form II *yubayyinu* in v. 115, in which the fact that God makes clear His message to them requires them to make a decision. The divine epithet *ʿalīm* is used at the end of this verse, one imagines, mainly because of the verb *yubayyinu*, which suggests that once God explains his message, things are known and out in the open, and definitive decisions about belief may be required.

The phrases *thumma tāba ʿalayhim innahu bihim raʾūfun raḥīm* in v. 117 and *thumma tāba ʿalayhim li-yatūbū inna llāha huwa l-tawwābu l-raḥīm* in v. 118 illustrate two types of closing rhyme phrases. In v. 117 there is a semantic link between *raʾūf raḥīm* and *tāba*, whereas in v. 118, *tawwāb* exhibits cognate paronomasia with *tāba*, *li-yatūbū*, while *raḥīm* is still semantically related.

Toorawa

Awwāh ("tender-hearted") is a hapax (and missing from Toorawa 2011a). I am thrilled to find more candidates and unsurprised that the Qurʾān is yielding more rarities and isolates than I, and others, have catalogued. It seems right that there would be more hapaxes given [1] the Qurʾān's rhetorical "needs"; [2] the Qurʾān's—and Arabic's—recourse to other late antique texts and lexicons; [3] the greater attention scholars are (finally) paying to words in rhetorical context, as opposed to words in isolation and there to be excavated. *Awwāh* occurs only twice (here and in Hūd 11:75), both times in an identical rhetorical context. Thus Abraham is described as "tender-hearted and prudent" in Tawba, and "prudent, tender-hearted and penitent" in Hūd—to use Alan Jones's translation of the end-words (trans. Jones 2007: 193, 214), though Jones curiously and inexplicably renders *ḥalīm* differently):

Inna Ibrāhīma la-awwāhun ***ḥalīm*** (Tawba)
*Inna Ibrāhīma la-**ḥalīmun** awwāhun munīb* (Hūd)

The placement of *ḥalīm* last in Tawba is dictated by the end-rhyme (it is flanked by *ǧaḥīm* and *ʿalīm*). The same goes for *munīb* in Hūd, which is in the following sequence:

Lūṭ – Yaʿqūb – ʿaǧīb – maǧīd – Lūṭ – ***munīb*** *– mardūd – ʿaṣīb –rašīd*

Given the *ḥilm* ("prudence" (?), "forbearance," "mildness," "discernment") the Qurʾān associates with Abraham, it is unsurprising to discover the Qurʾān also attributing *taʾawwuh* ("tender-heartedness") to him.

Younes

The phrase *min baʿdi mā kāda yazīġu qulūbu farīqin minhum* in v. 117 is traditionally understood to mean *after the hearts of a party of them had almost swerved aside* (Pickthall). According to the standard rules of Arabic grammar, such a reading would be ungrammatical: the word *qulūb* "hearts," being a non-human plural, requires the feminine form of the verbal elements *kāna* and *yazīġu*, thus: *kādat tazīġu*.

A careful study of the syntactic structure of the phrase makes the following reading more likely: *min baʿdi mā kāda yuzīġu qulūba farīqin minhum. After He* (*God*) *had almost swerved aside the hearts of a party of them* (*then He* [*God*] *turned unto them in mercy*). In addition to the correct syntax, this reading makes straightforward the reference of the subject of the three conjoined verbal elements *kāda*, *yazīġu* and *tāba*- there is only one subject, i.e. God.

Zellentin

As several commentators note, the traditional notion of the *ʿanṣār*, "helpers," who are mentioned here alongside the *muhāǧirīn*, "emigrants" (v. 100 and v. 117), attributes to both groups a specific role during the career of the Prophet. There is currently no scholarly consensus that would allow us to verify this claim, yet tradition may be helpful in as far as it allows us to think about two concrete groups in the early community of the Prophet. Such a concrete social context can be corroborated by the text itself when reading it along ethno-religious lines.

In order to gain a preliminary understanding of who these "helpers" may have been, I suggest considering the *anṣārī ilā llāhi*, "helpers for God," whom I have placed in a dual context of Jesus' discipleship and Christianity in my comments on Passage 6. These "helpers," the heirs of Jesus' first disciples, form the dominant group among the Israelites in the time of the Qurʾān, and are to be associated with the *naṣārā*, the Christians.

Variants of the verb "to help," of course, are quite common in the Qurʾān, and used in many other ways. For example, the emigrants themselves in turn "help" the believers in Q 9:72 and 74; in Q 59:8, they even "help God (*wa-yanṣurūna llāha*) and his apostle. Yet the terminology and description for the "helpers" in the present passage (v. 100 and v.117) suggests the designation of a specific group, which in turn would make an association with the "helpers for/towards God" in Q 3:52 and Q 61:14 very suggestive.

While this possibility is of course speculative, it is upheld by the fact that the Qurʾān is very consistent in its ethnic presentation of both "helper" and "emigrants," for while the helpers may well be Christian *Israelites*, the "emigrants" seem to be

gentiles. (Syriac patristic sources from Ephrem to the Didascalia describe the church more fully in ethnic continuity with "Israel" and with "the (chosen) people" than the later Greek or Latin church fathers.) Intriguingly, out of the many instances in which the term "emigrants" occurs in the Qurʾān, only one evokes any "Christian" or "Jewish" theme: namely the reference to the Torah and the Evangel in v. 111 of the present passage (note Pregill's and Rippin's comments). Yet here, the emigrants are mentioned along with the "helpers," whose presence explains the reference fully. I would hence suggest the possibility that the "helpers" are a group of Israelite, "Christian" Jesus-believers, whereas the "emigrants" are gentiles, and that the Qurʾān itself preserves concrete designations for the ethnic groups that make up its early community: some Jews and many Christians, the two *Israelite* groups, and gentiles. (See passage VI and Zellentin 2013:163–4)

QS 14 Q 11:25 – 99

11.25 We sent Noah to his people, saying: “I am come to you as a clear warner.
11.26 You are not to worship anything but God. I fear for you the torment of a grievous Day.”
11.27 The council of those who disbelieved among his people said: “We do not see you as anything but a human being like us. We do not see that any have followed you except our riff-raff, as it seems. We do not see that you have any advantage over us. Rather, we think you are liars.”
11.28 He said: “My people, tell me this. If I am certain of my Lord, and He has brought me a mercy from Him which was hidden from you, are we to force you to accept it when you are averse to it?
11.29 My people, I ask you no money for it: my wage falls only on God. I am not about to drive away those who believed: they shall encounter their Lord. But I see you are a people that do not understand.
11.30 My people, who will take my side against God if I drive them away?
11.31 Will you not recollect? I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of God. I do not know the Unseen, nor do I say I am an angel, nor do I tell those whom your eyes despise that God will not bring them good, for God knows best what is in their hearts. If I did so I would indeed be wicked.”
11.32 They said: “O Noah, you have argued with us; indeed, you have exceeded the limit in argument. So now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are truthful.”
11.33 He said: “It is God who will bring it upon you, if He wills. Nor can you escape it.
11.34 My counsel, should I wish to counsel you, will be of no benefit to you if God desires to confound you. He is your Lord, and to Him you shall return.”
11.35 Or do they say: “He fabricated it”? Say: “If I fabricated it, upon me falls my sinful act, and I am quit of your sinning.”
11.36 It was revealed to Noah: “None shall believe from your people except those who have already believed, so do not feel sad because of what they do.

11.25 Nous avons déjà envoyé Noé à son peuple: «Je suis pour vous un avertisseur explicite
11.26 afin que vous n’adoriez qu’Allah. Je crains pour vous le châtiment d’un jour douloureux».
11.27 Les notables de son peuple qui avaient mécru, dirent alors: «Nous ne voyons en toi qu’un homme comme nous; et nous voyons que ce sont seulement les vils parmi nous qui te suivent sans réfléchir; et nous ne voyons en vous aucune supériorité sur nous. Plutôt, nous pensons que vous êtes des menteurs».
11.28 Il dit: «O mon peuple! Que vous en semble? Si je me conforme à une preuve de mon Seigneur, si une Miséricorde, (prophétie) échappant à vos yeux, est venue à moi de Sa part, devrons-nous vous l’imposer alors que vous la répugnez?
11.29 O mon peuple, je ne vous demande pas de richesse en retour. Mon salaire n’incombe qu’à Allah. Je ne repousserai point ceux qui ont cru, ils auront à rencontrer leur Seigneur. Mais je vous trouve des gens ignorants.
11.30 O mon peuple, qui me secourra contre (la punition d’) Allah si je les repousse? Ne vous souvenez-vous pas?
11.31 Et je ne vous dis pas que je détiens les trésors d’Allah, je ne connais pas l’Inconnaissable, et je ne dis pas que je suis un Ange; et je ne dis pas non plus aux gens, que vos yeux méprisent, qu’Allah ne leur accordera aucune faveur; Allah connaît mieux ce qu’il y a dans leurs âmes. [Si je le leur disais], je serais du nombre des injustes.
11.32 Ils dirent: «O Noé, tu as disputé avec nous et multiplié les discussions. Apporte-nous donc ce dont tu nous menaces, si tu es du nombre des véridiques».
11.33 Il dit: «C’est Allah seul qui vous l’apportera – s’Il veut – et vous ne saurez y échapper.
11.34 Et mon conseil ne vous profiterait pas, au cas où je voulais vous conseiller, et qu’Allah veuille vous égarer. Il est votre Seigneur, et c’est vers Lui que vous serez ramenés».
11.35 Ou bien ils disent: il l’a inventé? Dis: «Si je l’ai inventé, que mon crime retombe sur moi!

11.37 Build the Ark where We can see you and with Our inspiration, and do not plead with Me regarding those who are wicked. They shall be drowned."
11.38 Noah then builds the Ark. Whenever a group of notables of his people passed by, they would mock him.
He said: "If you mock us, we mock you as you mock.
11.39 You will surely know upon whom shall fall a torment that will abase him, upon whom shall fall an everlasting torment."
11.40 And so it came to pass that when Our command went out, and water gushed forth to the surface, We said: "Load up on board two of every kind, and your family – except for those foretold – and those who believed." But the believers with him were few.
11.41 He said: "Go on board. In the name of God may it sail and anchor! My Lord is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each."
11.42 And so it sailed with them amidst waves like mountains. Noah called out to his son, who had kept away: "My son, embark with us and do not remain among the unbelievers."
11.43 He said: "I shall find refuge on a mountain which shall protect me from the waters." He said: "Today there is no protector from the command of God, except he to whom God shows mercy."
Then the waves came between them and he was among those who were drowned.
11.44 It was said: "O earth, swallow your waters! O sky, desist!" The waters subsided, the judgment was passed. The Ark settled upon mount Judi and it was proclaimed: "Away with the wicked!"
11.45 Noah then called out to his Lord saying: "Lord, my son is of my family. Your promise is the truth, and you are the fairest of judges."
11.46 He said: "O Noah, he is not of your family. It is an act unrighteous. So ask Me not for that of which you have no knowledge. I counsel you not to be foolish."
11.47 He said; "My Lord, I seek refuge in You lest I be one who asks You for what I have no knowledge of! If You do not forgive me and show me mercy, I shall surely be lost."
11.48 It was said: "O Noah, disembark in Our peace, and with Our blessings upon you and

Et je suis innocent de vos criminelles accusations».
11.36 Et il fut révélé à Noé: «De ton peuple, il n'y aura plus de croyants que ceux qui ont déjà cru. Ne t'afflige pas de ce qu'ils faisaient.
11.37 Et construis l'arche sous Nos yeux et d'après Notre révélation. Et ne M'interpelle plus au sujet des injustes, car ils vont être noyés».
11.38 Et il construisait l'arche. Et chaque fois que des notables de son peuple passaient près de lui, ils se moquaient de lui. Il dit: «Si vous vous moquez de nous, eh bien, nous nous moquerons de vous, comme vous vous moquez [de nous].
11.39 Et vous saurez bientôt à qui viendra un châtiment qui l'humiliera, et sur qui s'abattra un châtiment durable!»
11.40 Puis, lorsque Notre commandement vint et que le four se mit à bouillonner [d'eau], Nous dîmes: «Charge [dans l'arche] un couple de chaque espèce ainsi que ta famille – sauf ceux contre qui le décret est déjà prononcé – et ceux qui croient». Or, ceux qui avaient cru avec lui étaient peu nombreux.
11.41 Et il dit: «Montez dedans. Que sa course et son mouillage soient au nom d'Allah. Certes mon Seigneur est Pardonneur et Miséricordieux».
11.42 Et elle vogua en les emportant au milieu des vagues comme des montagnes. Et Noé appela son fils, qui restait en un lieu écarté (non loin de l'arche): «O mon enfant, monte avec nous et ne reste pas avec les mécréants».
11.43 Il répondit: «Je vais me réfugier vers un mont qui me protègera de l'eau». Et Noé lui dit: «Il n'y a aujourd'hui aucun protecteur contre l'ordre d'Allah. (Tous périront) sauf celui à qui Il fait miséricorde». Et les vagues s'interposèrent entre les deux, et le fils fut alors du nombre des noyés.
11.44 Et il fut dit: «O terre, absorbe ton eau! Et toi, ciel, cesse [de pleuvoir]!» L'eau baissa, l'ordre fut exécuté et l'arche s'installa sur le Jûdi, et il fut dit: «Que disparaissent les gens pervers»!
11.45 Et Noé invoqua son Seigneur et dit: «O mon Seigneur, certes mon fils est de ma famille et Ta promesse est vérité. Tu es le plus juste des juges».

upon the nations with you. Other nations We shall grant prosperity, and then there shall touch them from Us a torment most painful."
11.49 These are reports of the Unseen which We reveal to you. You knew them not, neither you nor your people, beforehand. So be patient: the final outcome will vindicate the pious.
11.50 To 'Ad We sent their fellow tribesman Hud.
He said: "My people, worship God; you have no other god but He. You do nothing but spin lies.
11.51 My people, I ask you no wage for it: my wage falls only on Him who created me. Will you not be reasonable?
11.52 My people, ask your Lord's forgiveness and repent to Him and He will pour down the heavens in torrents upon you, and increase you in strength above your strength. Do not turn away and be wicked."
11.53 They said: "O Hud, you bring us no certain sign. We shall not forsake our gods just because of your word, nor will we believe in you.
11.54 We say only that one of our gods must have afflicted you with harm."
He said: "I call God to witness, and you too are to witness, that I am innocent of your associating other gods,
11.55 apart from Him. So practice your cunning against me, all of you, and do not hesitate.
11.56 I have put my trust in God, my Lord and yours. There is no beast but He holds tight by its forelock. My Lord is upon a straight path.
11.57 If they turn away, I have delivered to you what I was sent to you with. My Lord shall choose a people other than you to be your successors. You cannot harm Him one whit. My Lord is Guardian over all things."
11.58 When Our judgment was passed, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, through a mercy from Us. We saved them from a torment most onerous.
11.59 Such was 'Ad! They repudiated the signs of their Lord and disobeyed His Messengers, and followed the lead of every obdurate tyrant.
11.60 They were pursued by a curse in this world and on the Day of Resurrection.
Yes, indeed! 'Ad blasphemed against their Lord! Away with 'Ad, the people of Hud!
11.61 To Thamud We sent their fellow tribesman Salih.

11.46 Il dit: «O Noé, il n'est pas de ta famille car il a commis un acte infâme. Ne me demande pas ce dont tu n'as aucune connaissance. Je t'exhorte afin que tu ne sois pas du nombre des ignorants».
11.47 Alors Noé dit: «Seigneur, je cherche Ta protection contre toute demande de ce dont je n'ai aucune connaissance. Et si Tu ne me pardonnes pas et ne me fais pas miséricorde, je serai au nombre des perdants».
11.48 Il fut dit: «O Noé, débarque avec Notre sécurité et Nos bénédictions sur toi et sur des communautés [issues] de ceux qui sont avec toi. Et il y (en) aura des communautés auxquelles Nous accorderons une jouissance temporaire; puis un châtiment douloureux venant de Nous les touchera».
11.49 Voilà quelques nouvelles de l'Inconnaissable que Nous te révélons. Tu ne les savais pas, ni toi ni ton peuple, avant cela. Sois patient. La fin heureuse sera aux pieux.
11.50 Et (Nous avons envoyé) aux 'Aad, leur frère Hûd, qui leur dit: «O mon peuple, adorez Allah. Vous n'avez point de divinité à part Lui. Vous n'êtes que des forgeurs (de mensonges).
11.51 O mon peuple, je ne vous demande pas de salaire pour cela. Mon salaire n'incombe qu'à Celui qui m'a créé. Ne raisonnez-vous pas?
11.52 O mon peuple, implorez le pardon de votre Seigneur et repentez-vous à Lui pour qu'Il envoie sur vous du ciel des pluies abondantes et qu'Il ajoute force à votre force. Et ne vous détournez pas [de Lui] en devenant coupables».
11.53 Ils dirent: «O Hûd, tu n'es pas venu à nous avec une preuve, et nous ne sommes pas disposés à abandonner nos divinités sur ta parole, et nous n'avons pas foi en toi.
11.54 Nous dirons plutôt qu'une de nos divinités t'a affligé d'un mal». Il dit: «Je prends Allah à témoin – et vous aussi soyez témoins – qu'en vérité, je désavoue ce que vous associez,
11.55 en dehors de Lui. Rusez donc tous contre moi et ne me donnez pas de répit.
11.56 Je place ma confiance en Allah, mon Seigneur et le vôtre. Il n'y a pas d'être vivant qu'Il ne tienne par son toupet. Mon Seigneur, certes, est sur un droit chemin.
11.57 Si vous vous détournez... voilà que je vous ai transmis [le message] que j'étais chargé

He said: “My people, worship God; you have no other god but He. He it was Who raised you up from the earth and made you build upon it. So ask your Lord’s forgiveness and repent to Him – My Lord is ever at hand, ever ready to respond.”
11.62 They said: “O Salih, amongst us you were one from whom much was expected before this matter. Are you forbidding us to worship what our ancestors worshipped when we are in perplexing doubt about what you call us to?”
11.63 He said: “My people, tell me this. If I am certain of my Lord, and He has brought me a mercy from Him, who shall protect me from God if I disobey Him? For then you would merely increase me in loss.
11.64 My people, here is the she-camel of God, a sign for you. Set it free to graze in God’s earth, and touch it not with harm lest an imminent punishment should overtake you.”
11.65 But they hamstrung the she-camel.
He said: “Enjoy your homes for three days – that is a promise not to be denied.”
11.66 When Our command came to pass, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, through a mercy from Us, and from the humiliation of that day. Your Lord is All-Powerful, Almighty.
11.67 The Scream overtook those who were wicked and, on the morrow, they were found prostrate in their homes,
11.68 as if they had never prospered therein.
Yes, indeed! Thamud blasphemed against their Lord! Away with Thamud!
11.69 Our envoys came to Abraham, bearing glad tidings.
They said: “Peace!”
He said: “Peace!”
At once he brought forth a roasted calf.
11.70 When he saw that their hands did not stretch forth to it, he was in doubt about them and harbored some fear of them.
They said: “Fear not. We were sent to the people of Lot.”
11.71 His wife, standing by, laughed, so We brought her glad tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob.
11.72 She said: “Alas for me! Am I to give birth, me an old woman, and here is my husband, an old man? That would indeed be a marvel!”

de vous faire parvenir. Et mon Seigneur vous remplacera par un autre peuple, sans que vous ne Lui nuisiez en rien, car mon Seigneur, est gardien par excellence sur toute chose».
11.58 Et quand vint Notre Ordre, Nous sauvâmes par une miséricorde de Notre part, Hûd et ceux qui avec lui avaient cru. Et Nous les sauvâmes d’un terrible châtiment.
11.59 Voilà les ’Aad. Ils avaient nié les signes (enseignements) de leur Seigneur, désobéi à Ses messagers et suivi le commandement de tout tyran entêté.
11.60 Et ils furent poursuivis, ici-bas, d’une malédiction, ainsi qu’au Jour de la Résurrection. En vérité, les ’Aad n’ont pas cru en leur Seigneur. Que s’éloignent (périssent) les ’Aad, peuple de Hûd!
11.61 Et (Nous avons envoyé) aux Thamûd, leur frère Sâlih qui dit: «O mon peuple, adorez Allah. Vous n’avez point de divinité en dehors de Lui. De la terre Il vous a créés, et Il vous l’a fait peupler (et exploiter). Implorez donc Son pardon, puis repentez-vous à Lui. Mon Seigneur est bien proche et Il répond toujours (aux appels)».
11.62 Ils dirent: «O Sâlih, tu étais auparavant un espoir pour nous. Nous interdirais-tu d’adorer ce qu’adoraient nos ancêtres? Cependant, nous voilà bien dans un doute troublant au sujet de ce vers quoi tu nous invites».
11.63 Il dit: «O mon peuple! Que vous en semble, si je m’appuie sur une preuve évidente émanant de mon Seigneur et s’Il m’a accordé, de Sa part, une miséricorde, qui donc me protègera contre Allah si je Lui désobéis? Vous ne ferez qu’accroître ma perte.
11.64 O mon peuple, voici la chamelle d’Allah qu’Il vous a envoyée comme signe. Laissez-la donc paître sur la terre d’Allah, et ne lui faites aucun mal sinon, un châtiment proche vous saisira!»
11.65 Ils la tuèrent. Alors, il leur dit: «Jouissez (de vos biens) dans vos demeures pendant trois jours (encore)! Voilà une promesse qui ne sera pas démentie».
11.66 Puis, lorsque Notre ordre vint, Nous sauvâmes Sâlih et ceux qui avaient cru avec lui, – par une miséricorde venant de Nous – de l’ignominie de ce jour-là. En vérité, c’est ton Seigneur qui est le Fort, le Puissant.

11.73 They said: “Do you marvel at the command of God? May the mercy of God and His blessings descend upon you, O members of the house! He is All-Praiseworthy, All-Glorious.”
11.74 When fear left Abraham, and glad tidings came to him, he began to argue with Us regarding the people of Lot.
11.75 Abraham was gentle, sighing much, penitent.
11.76 “O Abraham, make no mention of this matter. The command of your Lord is come and they – there shall come to them a torment irreversible.”
11.77 When Our envoys came to Lot, he was annoyed and grew impatient with them, saying; “This indeed is an arduous day.”
11.78 His people came to him, hurrying in haste – beforehand, they had committed misdeeds.
He said: “My people, here are my daughters; they are more pure for you. So fear God and do not shame me with my guests. Is there not among you a man of discernment?”
11.79 They said: “You know we have no right to your daughters, and you know well what we want.”
11.80 He said: “If only I had some power against you, or else I could take refuge in a pillar of great strength!”
11.81 They said: “O Lot, we are the envoys of your Lord. They shall not reach out to harm you. So set out with your family in the course of the night, and let none of you turn their heads back except your wife. She will be smitten with that which will smite them. Their appointed time shall be the morning: is not the morning close at hand?”
11.82 When Our command came to pass, We turned it upside down and rained down upon it stones of baked clay, piled up,
11.83 and marked by your Lord. Nor are these stones remote from the wicked!
11.84 To Midian We sent their fellow tribesman Shu‘ayb.
He said: “My people, worship God; you have no other god but He. Do not shortchange the measure and the balance. I see you are prosperous, and I fear for you the torment of a Day, all-encompassing.

11.67 Et le Cri saisit les injustes. Et les voilà foudroyés dans leurs demeures,
11.68 comme s’ils n’y avaient jamais prospéré. En vérité, les Thamûd n’ont pas cru en leur Seigneur. Que périssent les Thamûd!
11.69 Et Nos émissaires sont, certes, venus à Abraham avec la bonne nouvelle, en disant: «Salâm!». Il dit: «Salâm!», et il ne tarda pas à apporter un veau rôti.
11.70 Puis, lorsqu’il vit que leurs mains ne l’approchaient pas, il fut pris de suspicion à leur égard et ressentit de la peur vis-à-vis d’eux. Ils dirent: «N’aie pas peur, nous sommes envoyés au peuple de Lot».
11.71 Sa femme était debout, et elle rit alors; Nous lui annonçâmes donc (la naissance d’) Isaac, et après Isaac, Jacob.
11.72 Elle dit: «Malheur à moi! Vais-je enfanter alors que je suis vieille et que mon mari, que voici, est un vieillard? C’est là vraiment une chose étrange!»
11.73 Ils dirent: «T’étonnes-tu de l’ordre d’Allah? Que la miséricorde d’Allah et Ses bénédictions soient sur vous, gens de cette maison! Il est vraiment, digne de louange et de glorification!»
11.74 Lorsque l’effroi eut quitté Abraham et que la bonne nouvelle l’eut atteint, voilà qu’il discuta avec Nous (en faveur) du peuple de Lot.
11.75 Abraham était, certes, longanime, très implorant et repentant.
11.76 O Abraham, renonce à cela; car l’ordre de Ton Seigneur est déjà venu, et un châtiment irrévocable va leur arriver».
11.77 Et quand Nos émissaires (Anges) vinrent à Lot, il fut chagriné pour eux, et en éprouva une grande gêne. Et il dit: «Voici un jour terrible».
11.78 Quant à son peuple, ils vinrent à lui, accourant. Auparavant ils commettaient des mauvaises actions. Il dit: «O mon peuple, voici mes filles: elles sont plus pures pour vous. Craignez Allah donc, et ne me déshonorez pas dans mes hôtes. N’y a-t-il pas parmi vous un homme raisonnable?»
11.79 Ils dirent: Tu sais très bien que nous n’avons pas de droit sur tes filles. Et en vérité, tu sais bien ce que nous voulons».

11.85 “My people, give full share in the measure and balance, acting justly. Do not cheat people of their goods and do not act wickedly on earth, corrupting it.
11.86 What remains from God is better for you if you are true believers. But I am not a guardian over you.”
11.87 They said: “Is it your mode of worship that commands you that we abandon what our ancestors worshipped? Or are we to do with our wealth what we please? For you are gentle and discerning.”
11.88 He said: “My people, tell me this. Though I am certain of my Lord, and He has granted me a fair livelihood from Him, I desire not to do the opposite of what I forbid you to do. I merely wish to reform you, as much as I can. My good fortune comes solely from God: in Him I trust, to Him I repent.
11.89 My people, let not your enmity towards me bring upon you a calamity such as befell the people of Noah, or of Hud, or of Salih; nor is the example of Lot’s people remote from you.
11.90 Ask your Lord’s forgiveness and repent to Him: My Lord is Compassionate to each, All-Tender.”
11.91 They said: “O Shu‘ayb, we do not understand most of what you say. We hold you to be a weak man amongst us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you, nor are you too powerful for us.”
11.92 He said: “My people, is my clan more powerful against you than God, whom you have cast behind your backs? My Lord encompasses all that you do.
11.93 My people, do your best, and I shall do likewise. You shall learn to whom shall come a torment that abases him, and who is the liar. So wait and watch, and I shall wait and watch with you.”
11.94 When Our command came to pass, We saved Shu‘ayb and those who believed with him through a mercy from Us, and the Scream overtook those who were wicked. On the morrow they were found prostrate in their homes,
11.95 as though they had never prospered therein. Away with Midian, as was done away with Thamud!
11.96 We sent Moses, with Our revelations and with manifest proof,

11.80 Il dit: «[Ah!] si j’avais de la force pour vous résister! ou bien si je trouvais un appui solide!»
11.81 Alors [les hôtes] dirent: «O Lot, nous sommes vraiment les émissaires de ton Seigneur. Ils ne pourront jamais t’atteindre. Pars avec ta famille à un moment de la nuit. Et que nul d’entre vous ne se retourne en arrière. Exception faite de ta femme qui sera atteinte par ce qui frappera les autres. Ce qui les menace s’accomplira à l’aube. L’aube n’est-elle pas proche?»
11.82 Et, lorsque vint Notre ordre, Nous renversâmes [la cité] de fond en comble, et fîmes pleuvoir sur elle en masse, des pierres d’argile succédant les unes aux autres,
11.83 portant une marque connue de ton Seigneur. Et elles (ces pierres) ne sont pas loin des injustes.
11.84 Et (Nous avons envoyé) aux Madyan, leur frère Chuayb qui leur dit: «O mon peuple, adorez Allah; vous n’avez point de divinité en dehors Lui. Et ne diminuez pas les mesures et le poids. Je vous vois dans l’aisance, et je crains pour vous [si vous ne croyez pas] le châtiment d’un jour qui enveloppera tout.
11.85 O mon peuple, faites équitablement pleine mesure et plein poids, ne dépréciez pas aux gens leurs valeurs et ne semez pas la corruption sur terre.
11.86 Ce qui demeure auprès d’Allah est meilleur pour vous si vous êtes croyants! Et je ne suis pas un gardien pour vous».
11.87 Ils dirent: «O Chuayb! Est-ce que ta prière te demande de nous faire abandonner ce qu’adoraient nos ancêtres, ou de ne plus faire de nos biens ce que nous voulons? Est-ce toi l’indulgent, le droit?»
11.88 Il dit: «O mon peuple, voyez-vous si je me base sur une preuve évidente émanant de mon Seigneur, et s’Il m’attribue de Sa part une excellente donation?... Je ne veux nullement faire ce que je vous interdis. Je ne veux que la réforme, autant que je le puis. Et ma réussite ne dépend que d’Allah. En Lui je place ma confiance, et c’est vers Lui que je reviens repentant.
11.89 O mon peuple, que votre répugnance et votre hostilité à mon égard ne vous entraînent pas à encourir les mêmes châtiments qui atteignirent le peuple de Noé, le peuple de Hûd,

11.97 to Pharaoh and his grandees, but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh's command was not guided aright.
11.98 He shall be at the head of his people on the Day of Resurrection, for he has led them into the Fire – wretched the place he placed them in!
11.99 They were pursued by a curse in this world and on the Day of Resurrection – wretched the lot allotted to them!

ou le peuple de Sâlih et (l'exemple du) peuple de Lot n'est pas éloigné de vous.
11.90 Et implorez le pardon de votre Seigneur et repentez-vous à Lui. Mon Seigneur est vraiment Miséricordieux et plein d'amour».
11.91 Ils dirent: «O Chuayb, nous ne comprenons pas grand chose à ce que tu dis; et vraiment nous te considérons comme un faible parmi nous. Si ce n'est ton clan, nous t'aurions certainement lapidé. Et rien ne nous empêche de t'atteindre».
11.92 Il dit: «O mon peuple, mon clan est-il à vos yeux plus puissant qu'Allah à qui vous tournez ouvertement le dos? Mon Seigneur embrasse (en Sa science) tout ce que vous ouvrez.
11.93 O mon peuple, agissez autant que vous voulez. Moi aussi j'agis. Bientôt, vous saurez sur qui tombera un châtiment qui le déshonorera, et qui de nous est l'imposteur. Et attendez (la conséquence de vos actes)! Moi aussi j'attends avec vous».
11.94 Lorsque vint Notre ordre, Nous sauvâmes, par une miséricorde de Notre part, Chuayb et ceux qui avaient cru avec lui. Et le Cri terrible saisit les injustes, et ils gisèrent dans leurs demeures,
11.95 comme s'ils n'y avaient jamais prospéré. Que les Madyan s'éloignent comme les Thamûd se sont éloignés.
11.96 Et Nous avions envoyé Moïse, avec Nos miracles et une autorité incontestable,
11.97 à Pharaon et ses notables. Mais ils suivirent l'ordre de Pharaon, bien que l'ordre de Pharaon n'avait rien de sensé.
11.98 Il précédera son peuple, au Jour de la Résurrection. Il les mènera à l'aiguade du Feu. Et quelle détestable aiguade!
11.99 Et ils sont poursuivis par une malédiction ici-bas et au Jour de la Résurrection. Quel détestable don leur sera donné!

سورة هود

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ (25) أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ (26) فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ
فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ (27) قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَآتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنُلْزِمُكُمُوهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ (28) وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ
مُلَاقُو رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ (29) وَيَا قَوْمِ مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (30) وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ
عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي

أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (31) قَالُوا يَا نُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (32) قَالَ
إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ (33) وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ
هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (34) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَيَّ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُجْرِمُونَ (35) وَأُوحِيَ إِلَى
نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ (36) وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ (37) وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ
مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ (38) فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ (39) حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ
التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (40) وَقَالَ
ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجْرَاهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (41) وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ
فِي مَعْزِلٍ يَا بُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ (42) قَالَ سَآوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ
أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِينَ (43) وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ
الْمَاءُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (44) وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي
وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ (45) قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ
عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ (46) قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي
أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (47) قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أُمَمٍ مِمَّنْ مَعَكَ وَأُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِنَّا
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (48) تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ
(49) وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ (50) يَا قَوْمِ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا
إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (51) وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ
قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ (52) قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي آلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ
(53) إِنْ نَقُولُ إِلَّا اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ (54) مِنْ دُونِهِ فَكِيدُونِي
جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنْظِرُونِ (55) إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ
(56) فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئًا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ
(57) وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ (58) وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ (59) وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلَا
بُعْدًا لِعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ (60) وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ (61) قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ
نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّنَا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ (62) قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَآتَانِي مِنْهُ
رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ (63) وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةً فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي
أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ (64) فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوبٍ
(65) فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ (66) وَأَخَذَ
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (67) كَأَنْ لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا أَلَا إِنَّ ثَمُودَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِثَمُودَ (68)
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ (69) فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ
نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ (70) وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ
وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ (71) قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَى أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ (72) قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ
أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ (73) فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا
فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ (74) إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ (75) يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ
غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ (76) وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ (77) وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ
إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ
رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ (78) قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ (79) قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ
شَدِيدٍ (80) قَالُوا يَا لُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ
مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ (81) فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا
حِجَارَةً مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ مَنْضُودٍ (82) مُسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ (83) وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ (84)

وَيَا قَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (85) بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ (86) قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا
نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ (87) قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ
أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَى مَا أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ (88) وَيَا قَوْمِ لَا
يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ (89) وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا
رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ (90) قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ
لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ (91) قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ وَرَاءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيًّا إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
مُحِيطٌ (92) وَيَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ وَارْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي
مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ (93) وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي
دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (94) كَأَنْ لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا أَلَا بُعْدًا لِمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُودُ (95) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ (96)
إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ (97) يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ
الْمَوْرُودُ (98) وَأُتْبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ (99)

Dye

Il faut replacer ce passage dans le contexte de l'ensemble de la sourate. Les vv. 1–24 se focalisent sur le châtiment à venir et le statut d'avertisseur (*naḏīr*) du destinataire du message. Il est donc logique que la suite de la sourate insiste sur le récit de châtiment *par excellence*, à savoir le déluge. L'histoire de Noé occupe ainsi les vv. 25–49. Elle est suivie par des récits comparables, relatifs à Hūd (vv. 50–60), Ṣāliḥ (vv. 61–68), Abraham/Loth (vv. 69–83), Šuʿayb (vv. 84–95), Moïse (vv. 96–99).

On a souvent affaire, dans le Coran, à la même histoire qui se répète : 1) envoi d'un prophète ou d'un messager, qui appelle un peuple à reconnaître le dieu unique, 2) incrédulité du peuple, 3) punition divine, qui anéantit le peuple. Tous les prophètes apparaissent comme des prophètes de l'islam, appelant à reconnaître l'unicité divine et l'obligation d'observer les commandements divins. Il semble que la présentation de ces histoires soit adaptée à l'image qui veut être donnée de la carrière prophétique de Muḥammad. On peut parler d'une vision de l'histoire, *apocalyptique* (elle révèle le sens du passé selon les événements actuels) et *eschatologique* (il est toujours question du Jour du jugement) (De Prémare 1988).

L'identité de trois figures pose problème : Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Šuʿayb. Hūd est envoyé au ʿĀd, tribu sur laquelle on ne sait rien – si tant est qu'il faille interpréter *ʿĀd* comme un nom propre. Ṣāliḥ (mais n'est-ce pas plus un surnom qu'un prénom ?) est envoyé au Ṯamūd, tribu historiquement bien attestée. Les récits sur la chamelle appartiennent manifestement à une forme de mythologie préislamique qui, bien avant l'époque du Prophète, avait pu être réinterprétée dans une perspective biblique. Deux partis s'opposent autour de Ṣāliḥ et du dieu qu'il proclame. Le conflit autour de la chamelle (animal nomade par excellence) et de son droit à paître suggère fortement que l'origine de cette légende doit être cherchée dans une rivalité entre nomades et sédentaires.

Le contenu des récits coraniques montre bien que leur sous-texte doit souvent être cherché dans les récits populaires, et dans les différentes réinterprétations et

réactualisations des histoires bibliques, telles que les littératures homilétiques peuvent parfois nous les faire connaître.

Firestone

The Qurʾānic Noah story, as well as the Qurʾānic depictions of other prophets living prior to Muḥammad, has occasionally been considered by scholars in light of Muḥammad's experience as a prophet scorned by his own people. The psychological association has been duly noted, but the ethical implication has yet to be explored fully. Note in 11:27 how the elite of the community scorn Noah and claim that he can only attract the riffraff among the people. They do not accept his prophetic status and consider him no more than a bothersome troublemaker. In verse 32, the people challenge him on his warnings and say (I paraphrase in what follows), "so enough with the threats, let us have the punishment if you are really truthful!" Noah then has to respond, "Well, God will bring the punishment, and then you will be in real trouble!" And then, in another wonderful premonition (or retrovision) to the situation that Muḥammad found himself in, verse 35 acknowledges the anxiety and painful reality of the Prophetic role when God says to Noah, "They claim that you made this all up. Fine. If you did not tell the truth regarding your claim to prophethood, then you must bear your punishment. But even if you are *not* a prophet (which in this context is absurd and impossible), the people to whom you are preaching are not in any way excused from the evil of their acts." Prophet or not, the people who counter Noah must assume responsibility for their lives and behavior. In this section the issue at the end of the day is not whether or not Muḥammad was a prophet, but that humanity is held responsible to live according to God's ethical teachings. This moral-ethical aspect is sometimes lost in the discussion.

Abraham's wife laughs in 11:71 when she hears the divine promise of progeny. This is typical of the Hebrew Bible narrative in which humans, even heroes, do not epitomize the faith expectations that are assumed for heroes in later scriptures. In Genesis 17:17, for example, Abraham falls flat on his face and laughs in amazement and skepticism when God informs him at the age of ninety nine years that he would soon have a son through Sarah. And Sarah laughs for the same reason in Genesis 18:11–15, when informed that she would soon have a child despite the fact that she was old and barren. Yet they would indeed have a son together, and God commands Abraham to name that divinely promised son Isaac.

The root meaning of Isaac in the Hebrew language is laughter, which immediately calls to mind Abraham and Sarah's laughter when hearing the divine annunciation of the promised son. The association is suggestive of the deep and conflicting emotions that the episode evokes. Although the linguistic basis for the link between Abraham and Sarah's incredulous response to God's annunciation and Isaac's name is lost in the Qurʾānic rendering of the parallel story, the laughter motif remains nevertheless. This is interesting. The play on words in the Biblical rendering rests on the common root in Hebrew for laughter and the name of the promised

son, both of which derive from the root, *Ṣ-Ḥ-Q*. The linguistic association is lost in the Arabic of the Qurʾān, since the Arabic parallel for the Hebrew "laughing" *Ṣ-Ḥ-Q* is *Ḍ-Ḥ-K*. This is confusing for the commentators, who have difficulty making sense of the lack of faith suggested by the laughter. They come up with some interesting solutions, such as the observation among some Bedouin that female rabbits appear to laugh when they first become fertile at the onset of their menstrual cycle. The parallel of course would be the sudden onset of Sarah's fertility after so many years of barrenness.

What is often missed in all this is that the nature of scripture is understood differently in distinct religious cultures and civilizations. In the context of the Hebrew Bible there are no perfect heroes. Even Moses, the greatest of prophets, is a flawed character for which he is punished by God through his death scarcely before he would reach the promised land that he so longed for. So too is David, the great king and progenitor of the messianic redeemer, a sinner who is duly punished by God in the Hebrew Bible for his horrific transgression of lust and murder. The lesson learned is that even the greatest of heroes have their flaws. People must therefore acknowledge the limitations of their natural moral frailty, remain humble and strive always to do the good, while recognizing that even the greatest heroes are only human and must struggle at times to do the right thing. In the Qurʾān, however, the heroes serve as role-models of the highest order. They are protected from error, thus representing figures to whom humans must aspire even though we are unlikely ever to reach their level of moral-ethical perfection.

People who grow up with the scriptural expectations of a Qurʾānic milieu tend to view the flawed, human characters of the Hebrew Bible as poor exemplars and therefore false representations of the divine will in a flawed revelation. They might naturally hold the view that the Hebrew Bible could not possibly convey the actual will and word of God, because God would not support such unethical characters as heroes. The text must therefore have been corrupted, perhaps purposefully by people who wished to justify their own unethical behaviors. On the other hand, those who grow up within a Biblical milieu, who intuitively take Biblical discourse as the base-line for scriptural expectation, tend to see the characters of the Qurʾān as flat, transparent in their exaggerated perfection, and essentially unhuman. They see them less as role-models than as simplistic characters lacking depth and humanity, and would likely take the view that such characters would not appear in a truly profound revelation. From this standpoint, the Qurʾān could not represent the actual word of God.

These two conflicting perspectives tend to govern the intuitive reading strategies not only of believers within the two faith traditions, but even sometimes of scholarly academic researchers, most of whom derive from one cultural (if not religious) context or another. These unconscious assumptions can lead to tension or even conflict in the study of religious text at a variety of levels.

Grodzki

The Biblical story of Noah, interweaving thematically and bound logically with the ancient Arab prophet Hūd (Eber? – uncertain Biblical identity) sent to the people of ʿĀd, succeeded by the ignorance of the Ṯamūd in front of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ (Shelah of the Hebrew Bible?), then again drawing on Genesis with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot, ending with the rejection of the Prophet Šuʿayb (Biblical Jethro?) by the Midianites, and Moses. Altogether it is very coherent thematically with a bit of enigmatic linguistic discords here and there, such as *fār at-tannūr* etc.

Imbert

Commentaire concernant les Ṯamūd et le verset 73. Du long passage à commenter (Q 11: 25 – 99), il semble que les traces épigraphiques anciennes soient extrêmement peu nombreuses. Pour la période de constitution et d'élaboration du Coran ancien, les auteurs anonymes des graffiti se font indirectement l'écho des récits concernant les peuples anéantis. C'est avant tout un récit arabe local, celui de Ṣāliḥ, qui a poussé quelques musulmans à évoquer succinctement cet épisode. C'est la notion de *takḏīb* qui se trouve avant tout retenue. Ainsi, à al-Aqraʿ, à proximité de l'actuelle cité saoudienne de Madā'in Ṣāliḥ, un graffito mentionne en 83/702: *āmantu bi-mā kaḏḏaba bihi aṣḥāb al-Ḥiǧr,* "J'ai cru en ce que les habitants d'al-Ḥiǧr ont nié." Cette mention renvoie directement à un autre récit de *takḏīb* contenu dans Q 15:80 (*wa-laqad kaḏḏaba asḥābu al-Ḥiǧr al-mursalīn*). Dans un second texte graffitologique, c'est au peuple des Ṯamūd auquel on se réfère, toujours dans le champ du *takḏīb* : dans la région d'al-ʿUlā (sud de Madā'in Ṣāliḥ), un texte rapporte: *āmantu bi-mā kaḏḏabat bihi Ṯāmūd*, "j'ai cru en ce que les Ṯamūd ont nié." Dans les deux cas, notons que le prophète Ṣāliḥ n'est jamais mentionné. La citation des habitants de la cité remplace, dans ces textes, le nom de la divinité et la croyance se porte d'une manière assez floue sur ce qu'aurait dû croire le peuple dénégateur.

Quant à la formulation très répandue *raḥmat Allāh wa-barak(ā)tuhu* qui apparaît au v. 73, elle est aussi employée en épigraphie ancienne. Nous trouvons la formulation sans doute la plus archaïque dans un graffito de Ǧubba en Arabie où le verset est mentionné tel que nous le connaissons dans le *muṣḥaf*, à l'exception de l'expression [*wa-barak(ā)tuhu*] : *raḥmat Allāh ʿalaykum ahl al-bayt. Innahu ḥamīd maǧīd.* Dans un autre texte daté de 40/660 (Wādī Šāmiyya en Arabie), nous relevons une formulation approchante avec la mention de [*wa-barak(ā)tuhu*] (cf. Sharafaddin 1977: 69 – 70, pl. 49; cf. aussi sur le site de *Ǧabal Bint Ḥāmir* en Arabie Grohmann 1962: 134, Z 225). Dans les deux cas le mot *raḥmat* est écrit non pas avec un *tāʾ marbūṭa* mais avec un *tāʾ* final ouvert, dit *mafṭūḥā*, transcrivant la réalisation orale. C'est d'ailleurs ainsi que cette expression figure dans la version écrite du Coran. Cette formulation sera régulièrement reprise, dès la fin du iième siècle de l'Hégire, dans les stèles funéraires, particulièrement en Egypte.

Pregill

A tour de force of Qurʾānic parenesis. The stories of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham, Lot, Šuʿayb and Moses are related in succession, the language of each echoing the others in clear and distinct ways. This exposition of a prophetic succession in which cycles of revelation, rejection, and destruction inevitably succeed one another anticipates the parenetic present in which the Qurʾān and its prophet seek to communicate their own message to their audience. By implication, the contemporary experience of rejection points forward to an impending cataclysm that will consume this prophet's people as well. Language such as *i<u>d</u>ā ǧāʾa amrunā*... and *buʿdan!* is repeated formulaically to underscore the inevitable annihilation of the sinners in the community; the Eschaton (*al-ʿĀqiba*) is surely coming. The subject of the early Muslims/Believers as an apocalyptic or eschatologically-oriented community is receiving significant attention now; cf., e.g., Shoemaker 2011.

Vv. 27, *illā basharan* and 31, *lā aqūlu innī malakun*, seemingly reflect the audience's expectation that revelation occurs through a supernatural agent and not a human being; on this see Crone 2011.

V. 37: the term *fulk* occurs numerous times in the Qurʾān either as a singular or a collective noun; Donner (1998) convincingly argues that the derivation of this term from the Greek *efólkion* points to a western Arabian/Red Sea milieu.

Vv. 42–43: The drowned son. Newby 1986 is the classic discussion of this, though likely in need of updating.

The "Arabian prophets" are understudied; the Qurʾān's assimilation and presumed adaptation of indigenous pre-Islamic Arabian lore may be productively compared with the passages on the "Biblical" prophets here, for example vv. 69–76 on Abraham. The latter combine rewritten Torah (cf. Gen 18) and thematic adjustments of an apologetic sort that echo earlier Jewish and Christian exegetical treatments (the angels' refusal of the proffered food, Sarah laughing before the annunciation of the birth of Isaac). By contrast, the scene with Lot and his daughters seems extremely close to the Biblical precursor in Genesis 19, and the Qurʾānic author(s) does not miss the oft-overlooked pathos of the scene.

V. 89: Unusually, the intertextual resonances between the stories are underscored by Šuʿayb's explicit invocation of the examples of his predecessors Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ,, and Lot.

Reynolds

The Qurʾān's concern with family ties, or rather, with the importance of obeying God even when this involves breaking family ties, is notable here. When Noah (v. 45) asks God for mercy for his unfaithful son who has been drowned in the flood, God replies (v. 46): "Indeed he is not of your family." Thus the Qur'ān suggests here something which it makes explicit elsewhere (see Q 9:113–14), that believers should not pray for family members who are unbelievers. Meanwhile the virtue of breaking ties with an unbelieving family (at the center of the Abraham material elsewhere in the Qurʾān:

6:74 – 83; 19:41 – 48; 26:69 – 104; 29:16 – 17. 24 – 25; 37:83 – 96; 43:26 – 27; 60:4) is suggested by the description of Ṣāliḥ as "the brother" of Ṯamūd (v. 61) and Šuʿayb as "the brother" of Midian (v. 84).

The presence of an unfaithful son of Noah in the Qurʾān (who dies for his sins) presumably owes something to Ezek 14:20, which, speaking of a sinful land, declares: "Even if Noah and Daniel and Job were living there, as I live – declares the Lord – they would be able to save neither son nor daughter, only themselves by their uprightness" (cf. also Ezek 18:4 – 13).

Rippin

An intrusion in the extensive dialogue of Noah with his people draws my attention. V. 35 with its invocation of the idea of "forging" (*iftarā*) seems totally out of context. Attention to this was drawn by Barth (2002: 420 [=v. 37]) who suggests that the reference must be to the Qurʾān (and the "I" must be the recipient of revelation). Is there any way to make this coherent with the Noah story?

The use of *fāra l-tannūr* in v. 40 is a puzzle. Several translations have it literally as "the oven boiled." Is this an apocalyptic image of volcanos within the story of Noah and the Ark?

V. 75 *inna Ibrāhīma la-ḥalīmun awwāhun munīb* is worthy of note, given the way such phraseology is more "normal" when invoking *Allāh/rabb*. *Ḥalīm* is also used of God 11 times. A similar phrase occurs in Q 9:114 with Abraham again (although not as a verse by itself) and those appear to be the only two instances (at least with Abraham and if one does not consider *ḥanīf*).

Sirry

Recently, the Qurʾānic narrative of Noah has been much discussed by scholars. It seems that the Qurʾān recounts the story of Noah to fit its own conception of prophethood. There is no mention at all about Noah's embarrassing drunkenness and nakedness. Perhaps, such a character simply does not fit the profile of the *Muslim* prophets. In this passage, Noah appears suddenly as a prophet whose mission is to call his people to worship God and to warn them about the consequence of their evil doings (v. 25). Whereas in Genesis Noah took his entire household, in the Qurʾān only those righteous were saved. Even Noah's own son was drowned, because salvation depends upon submission to God's will, and not upon blood kinship. Scholars like Neal Robinson understand the Qurʾānic twist regarding Noah's lost son as a means by which the Qurʾān relates to the Prophet's own experience. Robinson writes, "[T]he poignant scene in which Noah pleads in vain with his son to enter the ark (11.42 – 46) probably mirrors the anguish of the Muslims who left relatives behind when they migrated to Yathrib" (1996: 156).

Stewart

When they make the Qurʾān into a film, one of the critical scenes must be the tidal wave in the story of Noah and his son. Because few illustrated versions of the Qurʾān exist, one may lose sight of the fact that the Qurʾān is a very visual text, a point made by Sayyid Qutb in *al-Taṣwīr al-fannī fī al-Qurʾān al-karīm*. Dialogue also contributes to the drama of the text. This includes the artful conversation between Noah and God in which Noah politely accuses God of not keeping His word, which may reveal something about the conventions of registering a complaint with a superior in pre-Islamic speech genres.

V. 49 makes it clear that the Unseen includes history, and not just the secrets of the supernatural realm, the universe, far-removed lands, or the future. Note the use of *anbāʾ* "news, accounts" here, as opposed to *qaṣaṣ* "story, relation" in the next *sūra*. The repeated curse *buʿdan li-* is an example of the noun-phrase curse, as opposed to an optative verb, but unlike *waylun li-* it must be construed as elliptical in order to explain the accusative case, most likely as a cognate accusative to a suppressed verb.

V. 67 *al-ṣayḥah:* Both the *ṣayḥah* "shout" and the trumpet blast, as they occur in apocalyptic passages, come from battle imagery. The *ṣayḥah* is the battlecry, like the slogans of the Scottish clans, the rebel yell of the American Civil War, and so on. The *ṣayḥah* here is evidently borrowed from that realm of apocalyptic imagery, but its concrete equivalent is unclear. Is it a lightning bolt, thunder, earthquake, explosion, or blast? If we understand the end of the verse as meaning that they are prostrate in their homes, then it cannot be an earthquake, for the homes appear to be intact, but *diyār* could mean their territory instead.

Tesei

The motif of Noah being mocked by the unbelievers (v. 38) is not found in the Biblical account. On the contrary, many rabbinical sources refer to the episode (references to primary sources in: *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Noah"). In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Ephrem too reports: "But they mocked him [saying], 'How will all the beasts and birds that are scattered throughout every corner of the earth come from all those regions?'" (1994: 139). The Qurʾānic statement "whenever a council of his people passed by him they scoffed at him" parallels this exegetical tradition. It seems that, as in many cases, this Qurʾānic passage is more closely related to late antique traditions and exegeses about the Biblical texts than to the Scripture itself.

Worth nothing is also the motif concerning Noah's son (vv. 42–43, 46), who is said to die in the flood. As in the previous case, the episode does not occur in the Biblical account, where on the contrary God states: "I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you" (Gen 6:18). It seems possible that the Qurʾān is here remodeling Noah's story after a pattern also certified in the episode of Lot's wife, which is incidentally mentioned in the suite of the *sūra* (v. 81). Indeed, in both cases a member of

a prophet's family perishes during a catastrophe caused by God to punish impious people. From this perspective, it might also be observed that in the same *sūra* the Qurʾān traces a similar internal parallelism between Noah's and Abraham's stories. In fact, God's words at v. 36, "None of thy people shall believe but he who has already believed; so be thou not distressed by that they may be doing" (in this case too, no parallelism is to be found in the Biblical account) recall Abraham's attempt to intercede in favor of Lot's people, referred to at vv. 74–76. These internal connections between prophetical stories are connected to the Qurʾān's concept and presentation of sacred history, which appears as a circular and repetitive succession of events.

Toorawa

Tannūr ("oven"?) in the phrase *fāra l-tannūr* (v. 40, "the oven boiled"?, "the waters gushed"?) is rightly another hapax, occurring only twice, and in identical contexts (also at Q 23:27). Some hapax scholars argue that culinary items do not count as hapaxes since their isolated use is not remarkable, but the use here is evidently metaphorical and therefore, significantly for me, rhetorical.

I am interested in the relationships between fathers and sons, and also sons and fathers in the Qurʾān. I find Noah's forced repudiation of his son and Noah's acknowledgment of his community as his true kin, as it were, significant as part of the Qurʾān "expectation" that prophets must repudiate their fathers' religion and sacrifice their sons. Before Abraham, there were fathers with unbelieving or transgressing biological/metaphorical/rhetorical sons (God/Adam; God/Satan; Adam/Cain; Noah/son...). When we come to Abraham, we find him repudiating his father and offering his son as a sacrifice. Abraham is pivotal. After him, repudiation has already taken place (through him) and the only progeny who matter are the righteous community: e.g. Moses (with an insignificant father, no son); Jesus (absent father, no son); Muḥammad (absent father; no son). This explains, rhetorically/narratively at any rate, the importance of wondrous events—and calls for the use of hapaxes: *ḥanīḏ* (v. 69), *rawʿ* (v. 74), *awwāh* (v. 75).

Winitzer

It is incumbent to recall the antiquity of the Noah tradition, which builds on the account in the *Gilgameš* Epic of Utnapištim's survival of the flood; on this famous case of ancient intertextuality, see, more recently, George 2003: 508–28. It also bears mention that already in *Gilgameš* the flood story reflects a case of intertextuality, since that epic literally and consciously quotes a large portion of the earlier *Atraḫasīs* Myth (early-middle second millennium B.C.), in which that story is first told at length (in Semitic Akkadian); for an overview of these developments, see Chen 2013. The Genesis version thus represents a borrowing of a tradition that has been borrowed in itself.

Against this background it must be said that the Qurʾānic version of this tradition does not seem to contain elements with clear unadulterated Mesopotamian origins. (This stands in contrast, perhaps, with another tradition in the Qurʾān, namely that of Ḏū-l-Qarnayn in Q 18, which may contain elements of the *Gilgameš* story that go back to this Mesopotamian – in this case, pre-Greek – source.) To the contrary, at several instances the Qurʾān version appears to share in Biblical interpretive traditions of the flood story. To those noted we add only a couple: The tradition of the derision of Noah by his people appears elsewhere, e. g., *b. Sanh.* 108b. A parallel to the judgment for the generation of the Flood may be found in *b. Zebaḥ.* 113b.

With respect to Mt. Ǧūdī, one wonders whether the reason that the Qurʾān takes a stand on this place name owes something to the plethora of alternative traditions that circulated in antiquity. In the *Gilgameš* version this is Mt. Nimuš, in Genesis Noah's Ark lands upon the mountains of Ararat (*ʾărārāṭ* [< Urartu]); in Jubilees, Lûbâr, etc.

Younes

This passage presents a number of challenges to the Arabic syntactic rules as formulated by the early grammarians. On the positive side for the linguist studying the language of the Qurʾān, they demonstrate that the text of the Qurʾān was stabilized early so when the grammarians developed their descriptions of the case system and other aspects of Classical Arabic grammar they were "stuck" with a text that they couldn't change to fit their rules. The only thing they could do was to find ways, sometimes quite far-fetched and completely unacceptable by sound methodologies of linguistic description, to account for those "exceptional" instances.

One of these challenges is the accusative case assignment in the words *salāman* and *šayḫan*. The same word *salām(un)/salām(an)* is found in the same verse (v. 69) and in the same position syntactically, but one is assigned the accusative case and the other the nominative case. Al-Zaǧǧāǧ (2007, II:333) writes that for the accusative case it is assumed that there is a verb (we greeted) and for the nominative case it is assumed that there is a noun subject (my command): *fa-ammā qawluhu salāman fa-manṣūb ʻalā sallamnā salāman, wa-ammā salāmun fa-marfūʻ ʻalā maʿnā amrī salāmun.*

The same challenge is faced with the accusative case in the word *šayḫan* in *wa-hāḏā baʿlī šayḫan* (v. 72). According to the rules of Arabic syntax, which apply to the overwhelming majority of cases in the Qurʾān, the word *šayḫ* should receive the nominative case. In "explaining" the accusative case, al-Zaǧǧāǧ writes (ibid. 335) that *šayḫan* is a circumstantial accusative. But he realizes the difficulty of such a case assignment and adds: "And the circumstantial accusative here is a nice but mysterious aspect of syntax" *wa-l-ḥāl hāhunā naṣbuhā min laṭīf al-naḥw wa-ġāmiḍih* (ibid.).

A meaningful linguistic account of these irregularities would have to look for explanations beyond those offered by al-Zaǧǧāǧ and the other grammarians whose approach lies within the *tafsīr* tradition rather than a sound linguistic framework with a

clear and consistent set of rules. The standard practice of these grammarians when faced with violations of the rules they developed, which are numerous in the Qurʾān, was to invent "explanations" that did not meet the minimal standards of a coherent linguistic analysis.

Among the questions that a linguistic inquiry into these problems needs to address are: 1. Could these irregularities be the result of scribal errors? 2. What is the nature of the case system: was it as systematic when applied to the language of the Qurʾān as it became known and viewed later? 3. Does the accusative in words like *šayḫan* in the phrase *wa-hāḏā baʿlī šayḫan* suggest a category in older forms of Arabic that is similar to the emphatic case in Syriac? An important phenomenon to remember in this regard is that the accusative case in singular, indefinite, masculine nouns is the only case involving singular nouns that is represented by a letter, and that letter is *alif*, the same as the Syriac emphatic case marker. The nominative and genitive are marked by a diacritic. Compare شيخٌ, شيخٍ with شيخا.

Zellentin

The image of the punishment of the generation of the flood with an oven gushing water in v. 39–40 (see also Q 23:27) once again points to the pertinence of the Palestinian Rabbinic tradition for the Qurʾān, and to the secondary importance of the Babylonian one (see also my comments on QS 8, but cf. 36). As has been noted by Geiger, the Babylonian Talmud relates about the generation of the flood that "with hot passion they sinned, and by hot water they were punished;" the Talmud derives this knowledge from a specific reading of the Hebrew term *wyškw hmym* in Genesis 8.1 (see Geiger 1883: 110–11, cf. also 1 Enoch 89:3). This is certainly a relevant image, but it too connects the earthly punishment of the generation to the one in the afterlife only symbolically and therefore indirectly. The Qurʾān specifies that it is an *ʿaḏābun muqīmun*, "a lasting punishment," (v. 39) that will descend, and then immediately *fāra l-tannūr,* "the oven gushed forth," (v. 40) indicating that the punishment in question begins in this world and carries on into hell (perhaps in the possible ways specified in QS 36). A more pertinent intertext, identified by Sidersky (1933:27), may therefore be *Genesis Rabbah*, which states that "the Holy One, blessed be He, will boil up in Gehenna every single drop which He poured out on [the generation of the flood], produce it and pour it down upon them" (ibid, 28.8). Only in the Palestinian Rabbinic Midrash, but not in the Babylonian Talmud, do we find the explicit continuity between the earthly deluge and the post-mortem punishment with which the Qurʾān may assume its audience to be familiar, and, what is more important, against which the traditional depth of the Qurʾānic allusion becomes more palpable.

QS 15 Q 12

12.1 Alif Lam Ra'. Behold the revelations of the Manifest Book!
12.2 We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an; perhaps you will understand.
12.3 We narrate to you the fairest of tales, through what We revealed to you – this Qur'an. And yet before it you were heedless.
12.4 Remember when Joseph said to his father: "O Father, I dreamt of eleven stars, and of the sun and moon. I dreamt they were bowing down before me."
12.5 He said: "My son, do not relate your dream to your brothers, else they will contrive and plot against you. Satan to man is a manifest enemy.
12.6 Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of reports, and perfect His grace upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He perfected it upon your ancestors before you, Abraham and Isaac. Your Lord is Omniscient, All-Wise."
12.7 In the story of Joseph and his brothers there were clear signs to those who seek answers.
12.8 Remember when they said: "Joseph and his brother are more dear to our father than we are, though we are a band. Our father is in manifest error.
12.9 So kill Joseph or drive him away to some land, and the face of your father shall be wholly yours, and after him you shall be a virtuous community."
12.10 One of them said: "Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the darkness of the well, where some travelers will pick him up – that is, if you carry through that deed."
12.11 They said: "O Father, why is it that you do not trust us with Joseph, though we care for him?
12.12 Send him with us tomorrow to roam and play, and we will surely guard him well."
12.13 He said: "It grieves me that you take him away, and I fear the wolf might eat him when you are not minding him."
12.14 They said: "Were a wolf to eat him, we being a band, we would most surely be good for nothing!"

12.1 Alif, Lâm, Râ. Tels sont les versets du Livre explicite.
12.2 Nous l'avons fait descendre, un Coran en [langue] arabe, afin que vous raisonniez.
12.3 Nous te racontons le meilleur récit, grâce à la révélation que Nous te faisons dans ce Coran même si tu étais auparavant du nombre des inattentifs (à ces récits).
12.4 Quand Joseph dit à son père: «O mon père, j'ai vu [en songe], onze étoiles, et aussi le soleil et la lune; je les ai vus prosternés devant moi».
12.5 «O mon fils, dit-il, ne raconte pas ta vision à tes frères car ils monteraient un complot contre toi; le Diable est certainement pour l'homme un ennemi déclaré.
12.6 Ainsi ton Seigneur te choisira et t'enseignera l'interprétation des rêves, et Il parfera Son bienfait sur toi et sur la famille de Jacob, tout comme Il l'a parfait auparavant sur tes deux ancêtres, Abraham et Isaac, car ton Seigneur est Omniscient et Sage.
12.7 Il y avait certainement, en Joseph et ses frères, des exhortations pour ceux qui interrogent,
12.8 quand ceux-ci dirent: «Joseph et son frère sont plus aimés de notre père que nous, alors que nous sommes un groupe bien fort. Notre père est vraiment dans un tort évident.
12.9 Tuez Joseph ou bien éloignez-le dans n'importe quel pays, afin que le visage de votre père se tourne exclusivement vers vous, et que vous soyez après cela des gens de bien».
12.10 L'un d'eux dit: «Ne tuez pas Joseph, mais jetez-le si vous êtes disposés à agir, au fond du puits afin que quelque caravane le recueille».
12.11 Ils dirent: «O notre père, qu'as-tu à ne pas te fier à nous au sujet de Joseph? Nous sommes cependant bien intentionnés à son égard.
12.12 Envoie-le demain avec nous faire une promenade et jouer. Et nous veillerons sur lui».
12.13 Il dit: «Certes, je m'attristerai que vous l'emmeniez; et je crains que le loup ne le dévore dans un moment où vous ne ferez pas attention à lui».
12.14 Ils dirent: «Si le loup le dévore alors que nous sommes nombreux, nous serons vraiment les perdants».

12.15 When they set out with him, and all agreed they would hurl him into the darkness of the well, We revealed to him: "You shall acquaint them with this act of theirs at a time when they shall recall it not."
12.16 So they came to their father in the evening, weeping.
12.17 They said: "O Father, we went off to race each other and left Joseph near our luggage, so the wolf ate him. But you will not believe us even though we speak the truth."
12.18 And they brought forth his shirt with fake blood upon it.
He said: "Rather, your souls have tempted you to some act. O seemly patience! God's help against that which you describe!"
12.19 A band of travelers passed by. They sent off their water carrier and he lowered his bucket.
He said: "Glad tidings! Here is a young man!" And they hid him inside their luggage, and God knew full well what they did.
12.20 And they sold him for a paltry sum, a few *dirham*s, for they had little regard for him.
12.21 The man who bought him, from Egypt, said to his wife: "Treat him hospitably, for he might be of use to us, or else we might adopt him as a son."
Thus did We establish Joseph firmly on earth, in order that We may teach him the interpretation of reports. God's decree will prevail, but most people do not know.
12.22 When he grew to full manhood, We granted him sound judgment and knowledge—thus do We reward those who act righteously.
12.23 The woman in whose house he dwelt sought to seduce him and shut firm the doors upon them. She said: "Come to me!" He said: "God forbid! He is my lord and has treated me hospitably. Sinners do not prevail."
12.24 For she was about to possess him, and he to possess her, were it not that he saw the proof of his Lord.
Thus did it turn out, so that We might avert from him sin and debauchery. He was one of Our faithful worshippers.
12.25 They raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind. They found her master by the door.

12.15 Et lorsqu'ils l'eurent emmené, et se furent mis d'accord pour le jeter dans les profondeurs invisibles du puits, Nous lui révélâmes: «Tu les informeras sûrement de cette affaire sans qu'ils s'en rendent compte».
12.16 Et ils vinrent à leur père, le soir, en pleurant.
12.17 Ils dirent: «O notre père, nous sommes allés faire une course, et nous avons laissé Joseph auprès de nos effets; et le loup l'a dévoré. Tu ne nous croiras pas, même si nous disons la vérité».
12.18 Ils apportèrent sa tunique tachée d'un faux sang. Il dit: «Vos âmes, plutôt, vous ont suggéré quelque chose... [Il ne me reste plus donc] qu'une belle patience! C'est Allah qu'il faut appeler au secours contre ce que vous racontez!»
12.19 Or, vint une caravane. Ils envoyèrent leur chercheur d'eau, qui fit descendre son seau. Il dit: «Bonne nouvelle! Voilà un garçon!» Et ils le dissimulèrent [pour le vendre] telle une marchandise. Allah cependant savait fort bien ce qu'ils faisaient.
12.20 Et ils le vendirent à vil prix: pour quelques dirhams comptés. Ils le considéraient comme indésirable.
12.21 Et celui qui l'acheta était de l'Egypte. Il dit à sa femme: «Accorde lui une généreuse hospitalité. Il se peut qu'il nous soit utile ou que nous l'adoptions comme notre enfant.» Ainsi avons-nous raffermi Joseph dans le pays et nous lui avons appris l'interprétation des rêves. Et Allah est souverain en Son Commandement: mais la plupart des gens ne savent pas.
12.22 Et quand il eut atteint sa maturité Nous lui accordâmes sagesse et savoir. C'est ainsi que nous récompensons les bienfaisants.
12.23 Or celle [Zulikha] qui l'avait reçu dans sa maison essaya de le séduire. Et elle ferma bien les portes et dit: «Viens, (je suis prête pour toi!)» – Il dit: «Qu'Allah me protège! C'est mon maître qui m'a accordé un bon asile. Vraiment les injustes ne réussissent pas».
12.24 Et, elle le désira. Et il l'aurait désirée n'eût été ce qu'il vit comme preuve évidente de son Seigneur. Ainsi [Nous avons agi] pour écarter de lui le mal et la turpitude. Il était certes un de Nos serviteurs élus.

She said: “What is the punishment for one who intended evil against your wife except to be imprisoned or suffer painful torment?”
12.26 He said: “It was she who attempted to seduce me.”
A witness from her family witnessed as follows: “If his shirt is torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is lying.
12.27 But if his shirt is torn from behind, then she is lying and he is telling the truth.”
12.28 When he saw that his shirt was torn from behind, he said: “This is women’s cunning; indeed, your cunning is great.
12.29 O Joseph, mention this matter to no one; and you, woman, ask forgiveness for your offense, for you have truly been sinful.”
12.30 Now some women in the city said: “The governor’s wife is attempting to seduce her youthful servant, who has infatuated her with ardent passion. We find her to be in manifest error.”
12.31 When she heard their sly gossip, she invited them, preparing for them a banquet on couches, and gave each of them a knife. Then she said: “Come out and appear before them.” When they saw him, they admired him so much that they cut their hands, saying:
“God forbid! He is no human being! He is nothing but a noble angel!”
12.32 She said: “Here he is, the one you reproached me with! I attempted to seduce him but he resisted my seduction. And yet, if he does not do what I order him, he will assuredly be imprisoned and suffer humiliation.”
12.33 He said: “My Lord, prison is dearer to me than what they invite me to do. If You do not ward off their guile from me, I shall long for them, and so become a man of base desires.”
12.34 His Lord answered his call and averted their guile from him – He is All-Hearing, Omniscient.
12.35 Thereafter, it occurred to them, having witnessed these wonders, that they should imprison him for a while.
12.36 One of them said: “I dreamt I was pressing grapes.”
The other said: “I dreamt I was carrying on my head bread from which the birds were eating. Tell us its interpretation, for we see you are a virtuous man.”

12.25 Et tous deux coururent vers la porte, et elle lui déchira sa tunique par derrière. Ils trouvèrent le mari [de cette femme] à la porte. Elle dit: «Quelle serait la punition de quiconque a voulu faire du mal à ta famille, sinon la prison, ou un châtiment douloureux?»
12.26 [Joseph] dit: «C’est elle qui a voulu me séduire». Et un témoin, de la famille de celle-ci témoigna: «Si sa tunique [à lui] est déchirée par devant, alors c’est elle qui dit la vérité, tandis qu’il est du nombre des menteurs.
12.27 Mais si sa tunique est déchirée par derrière, alors c’est elle qui mentit, tandis qu’il est du nombre des véridiques».
12.28 Puis, quand il (le mari) vit la tunique déchirée par derrière, il dit: «C’est bien de votre ruse de femmes! Vos ruses sont vraiment énormes!
12.29 Joseph, ne pense plus à cela! Et toi, (femme), implore le pardon pour ton péché car tu es fautive».
12.30 Et dans la ville, des femmes dirent: «la femme d’Al-’Azize essaye de séduire son valet! Il l’a vraiment rendue folle d’amour. Nous la trouvons certes dans un égarement évident.
12.31 Lorsqu’elle eut entendu leur fourberie, elle leur envoya [des invitations,] et prépara pour elles une collation; et elle remit à chacune d’elles un couteau. Puis elle dit: «Sors devant elles, (Joseph!)» – Lorsqu’elles le virent, elles l’admirèrent, se coupèrent les mains et dirent: «A Allah ne plaise! Ce n’est pas un être humain, ce n’est qu’un ange noble!»
12.32 Elle dit: «Voilà donc celui à propos duquel vous me blâmiez. J’ai essayé de le séduire mais il s’en défendit fermement. Or, s’il ne fait pas ce que je lui commande, il sera très certainement emprisonné et sera certes parmi les humiliés».
12.33 Il dit: «O mon Seigneur, la prison m’est préférable à ce à quoi elles m’invitent. Et si Tu n’écartes pas de moi leur ruse, je pencherai vers elles et serai du nombre des ignorants» [des pécheurs].
12.34 Son Seigneur l’exauça donc, et éloigna de lui leur ruse. C’est Lui, vraiment, qui est l’Audient et l’Omniscient.
12.35 Puis, après qu’ils eurent vu les preuves (de son innocence), il leur sembla qu’ils devaient l’emprisonner pour un temps.

12.37 He said: “No food, with which you will be served, shall come to you but I shall inform you of its interpretation – before it has come to you. This is part of what my Lord taught me.
I have forsaken the religion of a people who do not believe in God and who blaspheme against the hereafter.
12.38 I follow the religion of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We were not meant to associate anything with God, this being part of God’s grace upon us and upon mankind. But most people do not render thanks.
12.39 My fellow inmates, many and diverse gods are better or the One Omnipotent God?
12.40 What you worship instead of Him are merely names that you and your ancestors coined, and for which no authority has come from God. Sovereignty belongs solely to God. He commands that you worship none but Him. This is the upright religion, but most mankind have no understanding.
12.41 My fellow inmates, as for one of you, he shall serve his master wine to drink; as for the other, he shall be crucified and the birds shall eat from his head. The issue is settled upon which you seek my opinion.”
12.42 To the man he imagined was about to be released from the two of them, he said: “Mention me to your master.” But Satan caused him to forget the mention of this to his master, and he languished in jail for a few years.
12.43 The king said: “I saw in a dream seven fat cows being eaten by seven thin; seven green ears of corn, and others seared. O Council, give me your opinion of my dream if you can interpret visions.”
12.44 They said: “A meaningless medley of visions! But we are no experts in the interpretation of dreams.”
12.45 Said he who had been saved from the two of them, now having, after the passage of time, remembered: “ I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me out.”
12.46 “Joseph, you who are worthy of all trust, give us your opinion of seven fat cows being eaten by seven thin and of seven green ears of corn, and others seared, so I may return to the people and let them know.”

12.36 Deux valets entrèrent avec lui en prison. L’un d’eux dit: «Je me voyais [en rêve] pressant du raisin...» Et l’autre dit: «Et moi, je me voyais portant sur ma tête du pain dont les oiseaux mangeaient. Apprends-nous l’interprétation (de nos rêves), nous te voyons au nombre des bienfaisants».
12.37 «La nourriture qui vous est attribuée ne vous parviendra point, dit-il, que je ne vous aie avisés de son interprétation [de votre nourriture] avant qu’elle ne vous arrive. Cela fait partie de ce que mon Seigneur m’a enseigné. Certes, j’ai abandonné la religion d’un peuple qui ne croit pas en Allah et qui nie la vie future».
12.38 Et j’ai suivi la religion de mes ancêtres, Abraham, Isaac et Jacob. Il ne nous convient pas d’associer à Allah quoi que ce soit. Ceci est une grâce d’Allah sur nous et sur tout le monde; mais la plupart des gens ne sont pas reconnaissants.
12.39 O mes deux compagnons de prison! Qui est le meilleur: des Seigneurs éparpillés ou Allah, l’Unique, le Dominateur suprême?
12.40.Vous n’adorez, en dehors de Lui, que des noms que vous avez inventés, vous et vos ancêtres, et à l’appui desquels Allah n’a fait descendre aucune preuve. Le pouvoir n’appartient qu’à Allah. Il vous a commandé de n’adorer que Lui. Telle est la religion droite; mais la plupart des gens ne savent pas.
12.41 O mes deux compagnons de prison! L’un de vous donnera du vin à boire à son maître; quant à l’autre, il sera crucifié, et les oiseaux mangeront de sa tête. L’affaire sur laquelle vous me consultez est déjà décidée.»
12.42 Et il dit à celui des deux dont il pensait qu’il serait délivré: «Parle de moi auprès de ton maître». Mais le Diable fit qu’il oublia de rappeler (le cas de Joseph) à son maître. Joseph resta donc en prison quelques années.
12.43 Et le roi dit: «En vérité, je voyais (en rêve) sept vaches grasses mangées par sept maigres; et sept épis verts, et autant d’autres, secs. O conseil de notables, donnez-moi une explication de ma vision, si vous savez interpréter le rêve».
12.44 Ils dirent: «C’est un amas de rêves! Et nous ne savons pas interpréter les rêves!»
12.45 Or, celui des deux qui avait été délivré et qui, après quelque temps se rappela, dit: «Je

12.47 He said: “You will sow for seven years, as is your custom. What you harvest you are to leave on the ear, save a little for you to eat from.
12.48 Thereafter shall come seven years of hardship which will consume what you had laid up before, save a little for you to store.
12.49 Afterwards shall come a year when people are sent rain and in which they will work at the press.”
12.50 The king said: “Bring him to me.” When the messenger came to Joseph he said: “Go back to your master and ask him about the matter of the women who cut their hands. My Lord knows full well their cunning.”
12.51 He said: “What drove you women to seduce Joseph?”
They answered: “God forbid! We know no sin of which he is guilty.”
The governor’s wife said: “Now the truth has come to light! It was I who attempted to seduce him but he is indeed a man of true faith.
12.52 This I avow in order that my husband may know that I did not betray him in secret, and that God guides not the scheming of betrayers.
12.53 I do not declare my soul innocent: the soul ever urges to evil, except when my Lord shows mercy. My Lord is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.”
12.54 The king said: “Bring him to me, so that I may make him my personal attendant.”
When he had talked to him, he said: “Today you are secure in our favor, worthy of our trust.”
12.55 He said: “Appoint me to oversee the treasures of the land, for I am a careful guardian and well qualified.”
12.56 This is how We established Joseph firmly in that land, to live therein wherever he wished. We cast Our mercy upon whomsoever We wish, and We do not neglect the reward of the righteous.
12.57 But the reward of the hereafter is better for those who believe and are pious.
12.58 And the brothers of Joseph arrived and came into his presence. He recognized them but they knew him not.
12.59 When he had provided them with their provisions he said: “Bring me a brother of yours, born of your father. Do you not see that

vous en donnerai l’interprétation. Envoyez-moi donc».
12.46 «O toi, Joseph, le véridique! Eclaire-nous au sujet de sept vaches grasses que mangent sept très maigres, et sept épis verts et autant d’autres, secs, afin que je retourne aux gens et qu’ils sachent [l’interprétation exacte du rêve]».
12.47 Alors [Joseph dit]: «Vous sèmerez pendant sept années consécutives. Tout ce que vous aurez moissonné, laissez-le en épi, sauf le peu que vous consommerez.
12.48 Viendront ensuite sept années de disette qui consommeront tout ce que vous aurez amassé pour elles sauf le peu que vous aurez réservé [comme semence].
12.49 Puis, viendra après cela une année où les gens seront secourus [par la pluie] et iront au pressoir.»
12.50 Et le roi dit: «Amenez-le moi». Puis, lorsque l’émissaire arriva auprès de lui, [Joseph] dit: «Retourne auprès de ton maître et demande-lui: «Quelle était la raison qui poussa les femmes à se couper les mains? Mon Seigneur connaît bien leur ruse».
12.51 Alors, [le roi leur] dit: «Qu’est-ce donc qui vous a poussées à essayer de séduire Joseph?» Elles dirent: «A Allah ne plaise! Nous ne connaissons rien de mauvais contre lui». Et la femme d’Al-’Azize dit: «Maintenant la vérité s’est manifestée. C’est moi qui ai voulu le séduire. Et c’est lui, vraiment, qui est du nombre des véridiques!»
12.52 «Cela afin qu’il sache que je ne l’ai pas trahi en son absence, et qu’en vérité Allah ne guide pas la ruse des traîtres.
12.53 Je ne m’innocente cependant pas, car l’âme est très incitatrice au mal, à moins que mon Seigneur, par miséricorde, [ne la préserve du péché]. Mon Seigneur est certes Pardonneur et très Miséricordieux».
12.54 Et le roi dit: «Amenez-le moi: je me le réserve pour moi-même». Et lorsqu’il lui eut parlé, il dit: «Tu es dès aujourd’hui près de nous, en une position d’autorité et de confiance».
12.55 Et [Joseph] dit: «Assigne-moi les dépôts du territoire: je suis bon gardien et connaisseur».
12.56 Ainsi avons-nous affermi (l’autorité de) Joseph dans ce territoire et il s’y installait là où il le voulait. Nous touchons de Notre misér-

I fill the measure with fairness and that I am the best of hosts?
12.60 If you do not bring him to me, there will be no measure for you with me, and you are not to come near me again."
12.61 They said: "We will try to lure his father to let him go, and we will succeed."
12.62 He said to his retainers: "Place their merchandise in their saddle bags; hopefully they will recognize it when they head back to their people, and hopefully they will come back."
12.63 When they returned to their father they said: "Father, measuring has been forbidden to us, so send with us our brother and we shall be given the measure again. We shall take good care of him."
12.64 He said: "Am I to trust you with him as I trusted you with his brother before? God is the best of guardians, the most merciful of the merciful."
12.65 When they opened their luggage, they found that their merchandise had been returned to them. They said: "Father, what more can we want? Here is our own merchandise returned to us. We shall provision our families, take good care of our brother and increase our wealth by a camel's load – this indeed is easy commerce."
12.66 He said: "I shall not send him with you until you swear to me an oath from God that you will bring him back to me; unless, that is, you are overwhelmed." When they swore him their oath, he said: "God oversees what we say."
12.67 Again he said: "My sons, do not enter through one gate but enter through different gates. I find that nothing whatever will avail you save God. Judgment belongs to God alone; in Him I place my trust, and in Him let all trust who place their trust."
12.68 When they entered from where their father had commanded them, nothing would have availed them against God, were it not for a certain desire in the soul of Jacob that he satisfied. He was indeed possessed of a knowledge We had taught him, but most people have no understanding.
12.69 When they entered upon Joseph he embraced his brother, saying: "I am your brother, so do not grieve for what they have done."

icorde qui Nous voulons et ne faisons pas perdre aux hommes de bien le mérite [de leurs ouvres].
12.57 Et la récompense de l'au-delà est meilleure pour ceux qui ont cru et ont pratiqué la piété.
12.58 Et les frères de Joseph vinrent et entrèrent auprès de lui. Il les reconnut, mais eux ne le reconnurent pas.
12.59 Et quand il leur eut fourni leur provision, il dit: «Amenez-moi un frère que vous avez de votre père. Ne voyez-vous pas que je donne la pleine mesure et que je suis le meilleur des hôtes?
12.60 Et si vous ne me l'amenez pas, alors il n'y aura plus de provision pour vous, chez moi; et vous ne m'approcherez plus».
12.61 Ils dirent: «Nous essayerons de persuader son père. Certes, nous le ferons».
12.62 Et il dit à ses serviteurs: «Remettez leurs marchandises dans leurs sacs: peut-être les reconnaîtront-ils quand ils seront de retour vers leur famille et peut-être qu'ils reviendront».
12.63 Et lorsqu'ils revinrent à leur père, ils dirent: «O notre père, il nous sera refusé [à l'avenir] de nous ravitailler [en grain]. Envoie donc avec nous notre frère, afin que nous obtenions des provisions. Nous le surveillerons bien».
12.64 Il dit: «Vais-je vous le confier comme, auparavant, je vous ai confié son frère? Mais Allah est le meilleur gardien, et Il est Le plus Miséricordieux des miséricordieux!»
12.65 Et lorsqu'ils ouvrirent leurs bagages, ils trouvèrent qu'on leur avait rendu leurs marchandises. Ils dirent: «O notre père. Que désirons-nous [de plus]? Voici que nos marchandises nous ont été rendues. Et ainsi nous approvisionnerons notre famille, nous veillerons à la sécurité de notre frère et nous nous ajouterons la charge d'un chameau et c'est une charge facile».
12.66 – Il dit: «Jamais je ne l'enverrai avec vous, jusqu'à ce que vous m'apportiez l'engagement formel au nom d'Allah que vous me le ramènerez à moins que vous ne soyez cernés». Lorsqu'ils lui eurent apporté l'engagement, il dit: «Allah est garant de ce que nous disons».
12.67 Et il dit: «O mes fils, n'entrez pas par une seule porte, mais entrez par portes séparées. Je ne peux cependant vous être d'aucune utilité

12.70 When he had provisioned them with their provisions, he placed his drinking cup in his brother's saddlebag. Then a herald called out: "O caravan, you are thieves!"
12.71 Turning towards them, they asked: "What is it that you find missing?"
12.72 They said: "We are missing the king's drinking cup. Whoever hands it in will receive a camel load; this I warrant."
12.73 They said: "By God, you know well that we came not to do corruption on earth, nor are we thieves."
12.74 They said: "What is his punishment if you are lying?"
12.75 They said: "His punishment is that if it is found in anyone's saddlebag, he will suffer due penalty – thus do We reward wrongdoers."
12.76 So he commenced with their sacks before his brother's sack, until finally he extricated it from his brother's sack – thus did We work this stratagem for Joseph. He was not about to submit his brother to the king's punishment, unless God had willed it.
We elevate whomever We will in rank.
Above every person possessed of knowledge is One All-Knowing.
12.77 They said: "If he is a thief, a brother of his had stolen before." Said Joseph to himself, revealing it not to them: "You are worse in moral standing, and God knows best what tale you are spinning."
12.78 They said: "O governor, he has a father, a very old man. So take one of us in his place, for we see you are a man of virtue."
12.79 He said: "God forbid that we arrest anyone except him with whom we found our property. Otherwise, we would be unjust."
12.80 When they despaired of him, they retired to consult amongst themselves. The eldest among them said: "Do you not know that your father made you swear an oath from God and, before that, you had been remiss with Joseph? I shall not move from this spot until my father gives me leave or else God reveals His judgment to me; He is the fairest of judges.
12.81 So go back to your father and tell him: 'Father, your son is a thief. We merely bear witness to that which we know for sure. Nor are we privy to the Unseen.

contre les desseins d'Allah. La décision n'appartient qu'à Allah: en Lui je place ma confiance. Et que ceux qui placent leur confiance la placent en Lui».
12.68 Etant entrés comme leur père le leur avait commandé [cela] ne leur servit à rien contre (les décrets d') Allah. Ce n'était [au reste] qu'une précaution que Jacob avait jugé [de leur recommander]. Il avait pleine connaissance de ce que Nous lui avions enseigné. Mais la plupart des gens ne savent pas.
12.69 Et quand ils furent entrés auprès de Joseph, [celui-ci] retint son frère auprès de lui en disant: «Je suis ton frère. Ne te chagrine donc pas pour ce qu'ils faisaient».
12.70 Puis, quand il leur eut fourni leurs provisions, il mit la coupe dans le sac de son frère. Ensuite un crieur annonça: «Caravaniers! vous êtes des voleurs».
12.71 Ils se retournèrent en disant: «Qu'avez-vous perdu?»
12.72 Ils répondirent: «Nous cherchons la grande coupe du roi. La charge d'un chameau à qui l'apportera et j'en suis garant».
12.73 «Par Allah, dirent-ils, vous savez certes que nous ne sommes pas venus pour semer la corruption sur le territoire et que nous ne sommes pas des voleurs».
12.74 – Quelle sera donc la sanction si vous êtes des menteurs? (dirent-ils).
12.75 Ils dirent: «La sanction infligée à celui dont les bagages de qui la coupe sera retrouvée est: [qu'il soit livré] lui-même [à titre d'esclave à la victime du vol]. C'est ainsi que nous punissons les malfaiteurs».
12.76 [Joseph] commença par les sacs des autres avant celui de son frère; puis il la fit sortir du sac de son frère. Ainsi suggérâmes-Nous cet artifice à Joseph. Car il ne pouvait pas se saisir de son frère, selon la justice du roi, à moins qu'Allah ne l'eût voulu. Nous élevons en rang qui Nous voulons. Et au-dessus de tout homme détenant la science il y a un savant [plus docte que lui].
12.77 Ils dirent: «S'il a commis un vol, un frère à lui auparavant a volé aussi.» Mais Joseph tint sa pensée secrète, et ne la leur dévoila pas. Il dit [en lui même]: «Votre position est bien pire encore! Et Allah connaît mieux ce que vous décrivez.»

12.82 Make enquiries in the city where we were or among the caravan in which we returned, for we speak the truth.'"
12.83.He said: "Rather, your souls have tempted you to some act. O seemly patience! It may be that God will bring them all back to me; He is All-Knowing, All-Wise."
12.84 So he turned his face away from them saying: "How I mourn Joseph!" His eyes turned white from sorrow, but he restrained himself.
12.85 They said: "By God, you will never cease from mentioning Joseph until you waste away or perish."
12.86 He said: "To God alone do I complain of my heartache and my sorrow. I know from God what you do not know.
12.87 My sons, go and search about for news of Joseph and his brother. Despair not from the solace of God. Only the unbelievers despair from the solace of God."
12.88 When they entered into his presence, they said: "O governor, harm has touched us and our family. We come to you with inferior merchandise. Fill out our measure and be charitable to us, for God rewards the charitable."
12.89 He said: "Do you know what you did to Joseph and his brother when you were wild and heedless?"
12.90 They said: "Is that you, Joseph?"
He said: "I am indeed Joseph, and here is my brother. God has been gracious to us. He who is pious and patient – God wastes not the reward of the virtuous."
12.91 They said: "By God, God has preferred you to us, and we were indeed sinners."
12.92 He said: "No blame shall fall upon you; today, God forgives you, for He is the most merciful of those who show mercy.
12.93 Take this shirt of mine and throw it over my father's face, and he will see again, and bring me your family, one and all."
12.94 When the caravan set off, their father said: "I detect the scent of Joseph, unless you think I am senile."
12.95 They said: "By God, you are still in your former dotage."
12.96 But when the bearer of glad tidings arrived and threw it on his face, he recovered his sight and said: "Did I not tell you that I know from God what you do not know?"

12.78 – Ils dirent. «O Al-'Azize, il a un père très vieux; saisis-toi donc de l'un de nous, à sa place. Nous voyons que tu es vraiment du nombre des gens bienfaisants».
12.79 – Il dit: «Qu'Allah nous garde de prendre un autre que celui chez qui nous avons trouvé notre bien! Nous serions alors vraiment injustes.»
12.80 Puis, lorsqu'ils eurent perdu tout espoir [de ramener Benyamin] ils se concertèrent en secret. Leur aîné dit: «Ne savez-vous pas que votre père a pris de vous un engagement formel au nom d'Allah, et que déjà vous y avez manqué autrefois à propos de Joseph? Je ne quitterai point le territoire, jusqu'à ce que mon père me le permette ou qu'Allah juge en ma faveur, et Il est le meilleur des juges.
12.81 Retournez à votre père et dites: «O notre père, ton fils a volé. Et nous n'attestons que ce que nous savons. Et nous n'étions nullement au courant de l'inconnu.
12.82 Et interroge la ville où nous étions, ainsi que la caravane dans laquelle nous sommes arrivés. Nous disons réellement la vérité.»
12.83 Alors [Jacob] dit: Vos âmes plutôt vous ont inspiré [d'entreprendre] quelque chose!... Oh! belle patience. Il se peut qu'Allah me les ramènera tous les deux. Car c'est Lui l'Omniscient, le Sage».
12.84 Et il se détourna d'eux et dit: «Que mon chagrin est grand pour Joseph!» Et ses yeux blanchirent d'affliction. Et il était accablé.
12.85 – Ils dirent: «Par Allah! Tu ne cesseras pas d'évoquer Joseph, jusqu'à ce que tu t'épuises ou que tu sois parmi les morts».
12.86 – Il dit: «Je ne me plains qu'à Allah de mon déchirement et de mon chagrin. Et, je sais de la part d'Allah, ce que vous ne savez pas.
12.87 O mes fils! Partez et enquérez-vous de Joseph et de son frère. Et ne désespérez pas de la miséricorde d'Allah. Ce sont seulement les gens mécréants qui désespèrent de la miséricorde d'Allah».
12.88 Et lorsqu'ils s'introduisirent auprès de [Joseph,] ils dirent: «O al-'Azize, la famine nous a touchés, nous et notre famille; et nous venons avec une marchandise sans grande valeur. Donne-nous une pleine mesure, et fais-

12.97 They said: “Father, ask forgiveness for our sins for we were sinners.”
12.98 He said: “I shall ask forgiveness for you from my Lord. He it is who is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.”
12.99 When they entered into Joseph’s presence, he hugged his parents and said: “Enter into Egypt, if God wills, safe and secure.”
12.100 Then he raised his parents up upon the throne, and they fell prostrate before him.
He said: “Father, this is the interpretation of my former dream; now my Lord has brought it to pass. He was gracious to me when He delivered me from prison and brought you from the wilderness, after Satan had sowed conflict between me and my brothers. My Lord turns with kindness to whomsoever He wills. He is Omniscient, All-Wise.
12.101 My Lord, You have granted me power and taught me the interpretation of reports. Creator of the heavens and earth!
You are my Protector in this world and in the hereafter!
Let me die a Muslim and make me join the company of the virtuous!”
12.102 These are reports of the Unseen which We reveal to you. You were not present among them when they agreed together and plotted.
12.103 Nor are most people believers, no matter how hard you try.
12.104 You ask them no wage for it: it is merely a Reminder to all mankind.
12.105 How many a wonder in the heavens and earth that they pass by, taking no notice!
12.106 And most of them believe not in God unless they associate other gods with Him.
12.107 Are they sure they will not be overwhelmed by a torment from God, or that the Hour will come upon them suddenly, unawares?
12.108 Say: “This is my way. I call to God, clear-sighted – I and those who follow me.
Glory be to God! Nor am I one to associate others with Him.”
12.109 Before you, We sent not but city men whom We inspired.
Have they not journeyed on earth?
Have they not noticed the fate of those who came before them?
Surely the abode of the hereafter is better for those who are pious – will you not reason?

nous la charité. Certes, Allah récompense les charitables!»
12.89 – Il dit: «Savez-vous ce que vous avez fait de Joseph et de son frère alors que vous étiez ignorants? [injustes]».
12.90 – Ils dirent: «Est-ce que tu es... Certes, tu es Joseph!» – Il dit: «Je suis Joseph, et voici mon frère. Certes, Allah nous a favorisés. Quiconque craint et patiente... Et très certainement, Allah ne fait pas perdre la récompense des bienfaisants».
12.91 – Ils dirent: «Par Allah! Vraiment Allah t’a préféré à nous et nous avons été fautifs».
12.92 – Il dit: «Pas de récrimination contre vous aujourd’hui! Qu’Allah vous pardonne. C’est Lui Le plus Miséricordieux des miséricordieux.
12.93 Emportez ma tunique que voici, et appliquez-la sur le visage de mon père: il recouvrera [aussitôt] la vue. Et amenez-moi toute votre famille».
12.94 – Et dès que la caravane franchit la frontière [de Canâan], leur père dit: «Je décèle, certes, l’odeur de Joseph, même si vous dites que je radote».
12.95 Ils Lui dirent: «Par Allah te voilà bien dans ton ancien égarement».
12.96 Puis quand arriva le porteur de bonne annonce, il l’appliqua [la tunique] sur le visage de Jacob. Celui-ci recouvra [aussitôt] la vue, et dit: «Ne vous ai-je pas dit que je sais, par Allah, ce que vous ne savez pas?»
12.97 – Ils dirent: «O notre père, implore pour nous la rémission de nos péchés. Nous étions vraiment fautifs».
12.98 – Il dit: «J’implorerai pour vous le pardon de mon Seigneur. Car c’est Lui le Pardonneur, le Très Miséricordieux».
12.99 Lorsqu’ils s’introduisirent auprès de Joseph, celui-ci accueillit ses père et mère, et leur dit: «Entrez en Egypte, en toute sécurité, si Allah le veut!»
12.100 Et il éleva ses parents sur le trône, et tous tombèrent devant lui, prosternés. Et il dit: «O mon père, voilà l’interprétation de mon rêve de jadis. Allah l’a bel et bien réalisé... Et Il m’a certainement fait du bien quand Il m’a fait sortir de prison et qu’Il vous a fait venir de la campagne, [du désert], après que le Diable ait suscité la discorde entre mes frères et moi.

12.110 Until, when the Messengers despaired, and imagined that they had been branded as liars, Our victory came to them and We save whomsoever We will. Our might shall not be turned away from the wicked.
12.111 In their stories is a lesson to those possessed of minds. This is no tale being spun but a confirmation of what came before it, a clear explication of all things, and a guidance and mercy to the faithful.

Mon Seigneur est plein de douceur pour ce qu'Il veut. Et c'est Lui l'Omniscient, le Sage.
12.101 O mon Seigneur, Tu m'as donné du pouvoir et m'as enseigné l'interprétation des rêves. [C'est Toi Le] Créateur des cieux et de la terre, Tu es mon patron, ici-bas et dans l'au-delà. Fais-moi mourir en parfaite soumission et fais moi rejoindre les vertueux.
12.102 Ce sont là des récits inconnus que Nous te révélons. Et tu n'étais pas auprès d'eux quand ils se mirent d'accord pour comploter.
12.103 Et la plupart des gens ne sont pas croyants malgré ton désir ardent.
12.104 Et tu ne leur demandes aucun salaire pour cela. Ce n'est là qu'un rappel adressé à l'univers.
12.105.Et dans les cieux et sur la terre, que de signes auprès desquels les gens passent, en s'en détournant!
12.106 Et la plupart d'entre eux ne croient en Allah, qu'en lui donnant des associés.
12.107 Est-ce qu'ils sont sûrs que le châtiment d'Allah ne viendra pas les couvrir ou que l'Heure ne leur viendra pas soudainement, sans qu'ils s'en rendent compte?
12.108 Dis: «Voici ma voie, j'appelle les gens à [la religion] d'Allah, moi et ceux qui me suivent, nous basant sur une preuve évidente. Gloire à Allah! Et je ne suis point du nombre des associateurs.
12.109 Nous n'avons envoyé avant toi que des hommes originaires des cités, à qui Nous avons fait des révélations. [Ces gens là] n'ont-ils pas parcouru la terre et considéré quelle fut la fin de ceux qui ont vécu avant eux? La demeure de l'au-delà est assurément meilleure pour ceux qui craignent [Allah]. Ne raisonnerez-vous donc pas?
12.110 Quand les messagers faillirent perdre espoir (et que leurs adeptes) eurent pensé qu'ils étaient dupés voilà que vint à eux Notre secours. Et furent sauvés ceux que Nous voulûmes. Mais Notre rigueur ne saurait être détournée des gens criminels.
12.111 Dans leurs récits il y a certes une leçon pour les gens doués d'intelligence. Ce n'est point là un récit fabriqué. C'est au contraire la confirmation de ce qui existait déjà avant lui, un exposé détaillé de toute chose, un guide et une miséricorde pour des gens qui croient.

سورة يوسف

الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ (1) إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (2) نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ (3) إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ (4) قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (5)
وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَى أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (6) لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ لِلسَّائِلِينَ (7) إِذْ قَالُوا لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَى أَبِينَا مِنَّا
وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (8) اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا
صَالِحِينَ (9) قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَةِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ (10) قَالُوا يَا
أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ (11) أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ (12) قَالَ إِنِّي
لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ (13) قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَخَاسِرُونَ
(14) فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيَابَةِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (15) وَجَاءُوا
أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ (16) قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا
صَادِقِينَ (17) وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ
(18) وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَى هَذَا غُلَامٌ وَأَسَرُّوهُ بِضَاعَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ (19)
وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ (20) وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَى
أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (21) وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (22) وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ
وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ (23) وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا
أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ (24) وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ
دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (25) قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَنْ
نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (26) وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ
فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (27) فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ (28) يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ
هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنْبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ (29) وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَةُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا
إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (30) فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ
اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ (31) قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي
لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا أَمُرُهُ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونًا مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ (32) قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ
أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ (33) فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ
كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (34) ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوُا الْآيَاتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهُ حَتَّى حِينٍ (35) وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانِ قَالَ
أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ (36) قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ إِلَّا نَبَّأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ (37) وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ (38) يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَأَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ
اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (39) مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءً سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ
أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (40) يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا
وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ (41) وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ
رَبِّكَ فَأَنْسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ (42) وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ
عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ (43) قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ
أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالِمِينَ (44) وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ (45) يُوسُفُ
أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (46) قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ (47) ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ (48) ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ

(49) وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ اللَّاتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي
بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ (50) قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ الْعَزِيزِ
الْآنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (51) ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ
الْخَائِنِينَ (52) وَمَا أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (53) وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ
أَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ (54) قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ (55)
وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَبَوَّأُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (56) وَلَأَجْرُ
الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ (57) وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُونَ (58) وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ
بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلَا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ (59) فَإِنْ لَمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ
عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرَبُونِ (60) قَالُوا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ (61) وَقَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (62) فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَى أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ (63) قَالَ هَلْ آمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَى أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (64)
وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي هَذِهِ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا
وَنَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ (65) قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنَّنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّا آتَوْهُ
مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ (66) وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ
مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ (67) وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُمْ مَا كَانَ
يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (68)
وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (69) فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ
السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ (70) قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقِدُونَ (71) قَالُوا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ
الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ (72) قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ (73)
قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ (74) قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ (75) فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَتِهِمْ
قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَرْفَعُ
دَرَجَاتٍ مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ (76) قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسَرَّهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا
لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ (77) قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ (78) قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَظَالِمُونَ (79) فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْئَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيًّا قَالَ
كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي
أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ (80) ارْجِعُوا إِلَى أَبِيكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا
لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ (81) وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ (82) قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا
فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (83) وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ
عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ (84) قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتَأُ تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ (85) قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو
بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (86) يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْئَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَيْئَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ (87) فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ
مُزْجَاةٍ فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ (88) قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
جَاهِلُونَ (89) قَالُوا أَئِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ (90) قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ آثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ (91) قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ
الرَّاحِمِينَ (92) اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَأَلْقُوهُ عَلَى وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا وَأْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (93) وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ
أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَنْ تُفَنِّدُونِ (94) قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ (95) فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى
وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (96) قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ
(97) قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (98) فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِنْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ (99) وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا
وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا
يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (100) رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ
وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ (101) ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ

أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ (102) وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ (103) وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِلْعَالَمِينَ (104) وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ (105) وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ
إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ (106) أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (107) قُلْ هَذِهِ
سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (108) وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا
نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (109) حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْئَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّيَ مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ (110) لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (111)

Dye

Plus long récit du Coran – mais cependant bien trop allusif pour pouvoir être compris sans la connaissance de l'histoire biblique sous-jacente. Analyse textuelle chez De Prémare (1989) et examen des sources syriaques chez Witztum (2011a).

L'existence d'une telle sourate soulève une question. Il n'est guère contestable que les trois figures bibliques les plus importantes dans le Coran soient Abraham, Moïse et Jésus. Or aucune sourate ne porte le nom de Moïse ou de Jésus (il y a certes la sourate 19, mais elle n'est pas entièrement consacrée à Marie et Jésus – et elle est de toute façon, comme son titre l'indique, centrée sur Marie), et si la sourate 14 s'intitule bien *Ibrāhīm*, elle ne porte que très marginalement sur Abraham (les titres sont bien sûr des additions postérieures à la rédaction des sourates, mais ils ne sont pas arbitraires, en principe). En revanche, les sourates 12 et 71 s'intitulent respectivement *Joseph* (Yūsuf) et *Noé* (Nūḥ), et elles portent, *dans leur totalité*, sur ces personnages. Autrement dit, un personnage biblique secondaire a droit à une sourate qui lui est entièrement consacrée, alors que les personnages bibliques les plus importants (du point de vue même du Coran) n'ont pas de sourate qui leur soit *explicitement* consacrée. Il y a sans doute ici un indice à creuser concernant la nature et les intentions du travail éditorial qui a pu être fait lors de la collecte et de la rédaction du Coran.

Firestone

One repeated question is why, given what appears to be the unique nature of the Joseph story from a variety of perspectives, does it appear in such detail in the Qurʾān? I would like to consider the question in terms of the particular nature of revealed scriptures.

Of the three great scriptural revelations in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qurʾān, only the latter seems to be consistently self-defining as revelation. One does not need to repeat the well-known linguistic and rhetorical language used in the Qurʾān to stress that it is authentic divine revelation, despite allegations to the contrary that it records from skeptical individuals among its audience. The Qurʾān repeatedly states that it is authentic scripture – the word of God. The Hebrew Bible,

on the other hand, seems to have very little consciousness of itself as something that we would call "scripture." Some sections certainly do express such consciousness, such as those rare occasions that specifically describe the transcription of God's word (Exodus 34:27), but the Hebrew Bible appears more as a collection of national literature, family or tribal lore and history that includes some contact with the divinity and a lot that has little or nothing to do with the divinity. The sanctity of the Hebrew Bible seems to have appeared self-evident because it was the sacred narrative of a people who naturally revered its own story. The Joseph cycle appears in that scripture as a beloved part of the national narrative.

The New Testament also seems to express little urgency in making a case for itself as an authoritative scriptural text. More important is its open argument over the meaning of prior revelation as realized in its own present. In the competition between new religion and established religions that always accompanies the emergence or birth of a new religion, the burden rests on the new religion to show that it is authentic, that it represents the divine will, and that it offers something of significant value to its members and potential members. The New Testament engages in this quest through its self-conscious appropriation of well-known Hebrew Bible themes into its salvation history. Since the Qurʾān itself notes how the story of Joseph is so well-known and so beloved (Q 12:3), perhaps an Arabic revelation of the narrative to the members of a new dispensation might be reason enough for its inclusion.

Grodzki

According to the Islamic tradition, the story of Joseph was unknown to the Qurayš, so Muḥammad was able to prove his prophethood by reciting the whole Joseph story which he could have learned through revelation only. The other thing is the explicit implication of the parallels between the disposal of Joseph and the rejection of Muḥammad by his own people. It seems semantically clear, that vv. 102–111 are no more a narrative than v. 1–101, but already a revealed moral or commentary (perhaps added at a later stage of edition?). Anyway, the question to be raised is whether without knowing the Biblical story of Joseph would it be possible to retrieve its course coherently just from the textual contents of this *sūra?*

Imbert

Commentaire concernant les versets 101 et 108. Si l'histoire de Joseph a toujours connu un grand retentissement dans l'imaginaire arabo-musulman, au travers notamment de grands déploiements littéraires dans les divers ouvrages du genre *qiṣāṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, il ne semble pas en être de même dans les textes épigraphiques les plus anciens. Yūsūf fait partie des figures coraniques sur lesquelles les musulmans des premières décennies de l'Islam ne semblent pas s'être focalisés. Dans le Coran des pierres, nous n'avons trouvé que deux extraits de la sourate Yūsūf, tous deux introduits sans la formule de *basmala*.

Le premier extrait tiré du v. 101 a été trouvé à Badā au nord-ouest de l'Arabie; totalement décontextualisé, il consiste en une reprise des paroles de Joseph pour le compte du personnage qui écrit. *[Allāhumma] tawaffa-nī musliman wa-alḥaqnī bi-l-ṣāliḥīn*, "[ô Dieu], fais-moi mourir soumis et fais-moi rejoindre les justes" (cf. al-Kilābī 2010: 104). Une légère variante est à noter: la coordination entre les deux propositions est faite par la particule *fa*, alors qu'elle est *wa* dans le *muṣḥaf*.

Quant au v. 108, il ne s'agit en fait que de quelques mots (*mā anā min al-mušrikīn*) qui, hors contexte, vont venir enrichir un amalgame coranique. Ainsi à al-Ḥanākiyya (Arabie, fin du i^er^ siècle de l'Hégire) nous assistons à un véritable montage réfléchi (cf. Donner 1984: 184–85, n° W1): *āmantu annahu lā ilāh illā llaḏī āmanat bihi Banū Isrāʾīl ḥanīfan musliman wa-mā anā min al-mušrikīn*, "je crois qu'il n'est de dieu autre que celui en qui les Fils d'Israël ont cru, comme un vrai croyant soumis à Dieu et je ne suis pas au nombre des polythéistes!" A partir d'un extrait *verbatim* de Q 10:90, on a ajouté l'extrait de Q 12:108. Pour ce qui est du couple *ḥanīfan musliman*, il provient de Q 3:67. Cette construction montre à quel point le texte coranique pouvait être utilisé avec souplesse en se pliant à la volonté des personnes qui l'utilisaient. En rien le Coran ne semblait représenter un cadre rigide qui imposait l'ordre et la disposition de ses versets.

Kropp

One could call this *sūra* a *soghīthā* (Syriac dialogue poem). The *soghīthā* is the model, both for the subject (Biblical themes) and the literary form. But it is an adapted model, and a quite successful one: Adapted to the spirit of the Arabic language and the taste of an Arabic public. The main point is a parallel to Arabic poetry: the verse is an atomistic, isolated unit which simply by its shortness cannot be but laconic and allusive. The public must know the whole repertoire of possible images, similes and metaphors in the case of poetry, and thus be able to appreciate the slightest variation. In the case of Qurʾānic tales the whole story must be known in order to be able to appreciate the choice out of a much larger material and the accentuation expressed by that choice. In the case of repeated and parallel tales one may discover different layers of redaction and composition. But that is one aspect. Q 12 is an exception by its length and has much of an elaborated text of a long sermon. As for the tiny fragments of tales in the shorter *sūra*s (e.g., Q 85) I wonder if these are simply short *aide-mémoires* for the preacher which were *ex tempore* elaborated and presented orally to the public, but not recorded or written down later – from the memory of some members of the public, or from the memory of the preacher himself.

This last idea has been developed independently (Kropp 2009b: 486–487). Only later I found its parallel in Wolff's (1961: XXV; 92ff. and passim) and others' concept of "*Auftrittsskizzen*" (sketches of the scenes of the Prophet's appearances).

Madigan

Two short comments on the opening verses of the *sūra*. Once more we see in commentary and translation the tendency to overemphasize self-referentiality. Once more we have a remote demonstrative *tilka* (those), which is almost universally translated "these" as though the original were *hāḏihi*. In Q 12:1 we have *ḏālika*, yet it is almost always translated as though it were *hāḏa*. How much we should make of the text's reference beyond itself is not clear, but it does raise questions about the kind of self-referentiality we attribute to it. Similarly in v. 2, the term *qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan* is normally only half-translated: "as an Arabic Qurʾān." In the post-canonization period, Qurʾān has come to be thought of as primarily the name of the canon. As William Graham (1984) has pointed out, the verbal force of the *maṣdar* tends to be lost. The accusative *qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan*, which occurs six times, can be construed in two ways—as a *ḥāl* construction (a description of circumstances) or as a *mafʿūl li-ağlih* (a purpose clause). These constructions together express both aspects of the role of recitation: the *kitāb* is revealed by being recited in Arabic, and it is revealed in order to be recited in Arabic.

Reynolds

The second verse suggests that at the heart of the Qurʾān is the idea that now, finally, a divine revelation has come to the Arabs. No longer will the Arabs (who would have known of the Bible – first translated into Arabic in the Islamic era, as Griffith has shown (*The Bible in Arabic*) – only in the languages of other peoples) need to hear about the story of Joseph in a foreign language. Now God has given to them this (Arabic) *qurʾān* (v. 3) that they might understand (and no longer be among the *ġāfilīn*).

Rippin

I would simply like to raise the issue of the common response to this story that it is the most complete/coherent of the Biblical narratives found in the Qurʾān (Wikipedia: "The story of Joseph in the Qurʾān moves in a stream from beginning to end; its substance and form are equally coherent"). Such an assertion depends upon the definition of narrative ["stream"?] being suggested, of course, and that is crucial. But more to the point is, how coherent is the story as told here, if by coherent we mean that it stands by itself and does not require supplementary information to make sense as a narrative?

Sirry

As many have noted, the story of Joseph in the Qurʾān is the most detailed narrative in a single *sūra*. Parallel readings of the story of Joseph in the Qurʾān and the Bible (Gen 37–46) have been attempted by scholars, including John Kaltner (2003) and Ahmed Meliebary (2010). Such readings point to similarities and differences. In

terms of literary structure, both the Qurʾān and the Bible use the same technique of what Mustansir Mir calls "involution and evolution in reverse" (1986:1). Given the relatively similar plot lines in Q 12 and Genesis 37–46, Rendsburg contends that "it is hardly surprising that some would see the structure of the Arabic version as a conscious imitation of its Hebrew antecedent" (1988: 119). In spite of their striking similarities, Meliebary explores – by using a narratological approach – the originality of the Qurʾānic way of retelling of the story. Certainly, each version of the Biblical and Qurʾānic narratives uniquely develops a particular theme or includes a scene that the other does not. The question then: Why is the same story told differently? What are the reasons for the particular choice made in each presentation? What function does each version serve?

It seems that the Qurʾānic story of Joseph is framed within the context of the Prophet's encounters with his rejecters as is evident from v. 102 onward. Several phrases are used to describe the Prophet's opponents: "they deceive"; "they turn away"; "the *mušrikūn*." It is possible to see in the story a parallel to Muḥammad's prophetic mission. He was rejected by his kin and was exiled, just like Joseph. The passage ends with a moral lesson of the story as an admonition (*ʿibra*). Since the Qurʾān explicitly claims that the purpose of Qurʾānic narratives is nothing but *ʿibra*, does not the Qurʾān itself encourage a literary approach to its narratives, rather than an historical one? This question was raised by Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḫalafallāh in his controversial book, *al-Fannu l-qaṣaṣī fī al-Qurʾān*. Even when the Qurʾān recounts Biblical stories, according to Ḫalafallāh, it does not intend to report history, whether it really happened or not, but rather to elicit a response from its listeners.

Stewart

This *sūra* is recognized in the text itself as particularly attractive as a story (*aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*) and not just as an account of events, which is usually *nabaʾ* or *ḥadīth*. The reference to the best of stories at the outset of the *sūra* in intended to highlight the aesthetic appeal of the text, but does the appeal lie in the plot, or language, or rhetorical flourishes? The *sūra* has been a favorite in the Western study of the Qurʾān, and continues to be, but for a different reason: that it most resembles Biblical narratives in the way it is situated in the Qurʾān. Nearly the entire *sūra* is devoted to the Joseph story, and the Joseph story occurs only in this *sūra*, except for a few short mentions of Joseph elsewhere. However, the emphasis on this *sūra* gives a skewed view of the Qurʾān and Qurʾānic style, because this *sūra* is not typical, as it includes one narrative, rather than several, and has nearly no introduction. More typical are *sūras* with a tripartite structure in which the middle section is made up of a series of often parallel narratives, and the whole middle section is framed by introductory and concluding sections—*sūrat al-Qamar* is a good example. I have discussed the structure of *sūrat al-Qamar* in detail earlier (Stewart 2000). Angelika Neuwirth has discussed the tripartite structure of many Qurʾānic *sūras* in several studies.

A nagging question is the relationship between the Joseph story and the Prophet Muḥammad's own mission. One would expect the conclusion of the *sūra* to draw the typological parallel more directly, pointing out that, just as Joseph was abused by his brothers but still forgave them, so, too, the Prophet Muḥammad has been abused by the members of his tribe but will nevertheless forgive them and treat them with kindness that they do not really deserve. Instead, the conclusion refers more generally to past peoples and prophets, as if avoiding making that close connection, while references to the Prophet's detractors and yet-unconvinced audience as his close kin occur in other passages of the Qurʾān.

Toorawa

There is much to say—and much has already been said—about this *sūra*. I confine myself to two points: the first, something A. H. Johns has pointed out, namely that the style of presentation of this story is "dramatic" (Johns 1993: 42); Johns talks about the *sūra*'s *mise-en-scène* (Johns 1993: 43). I would go a step further and deem the presentation cinematographic: I find that it is recounted the way one might expect a screenplay to be written, or storyboarded.

In v. 3 reference is made to this *sūra* as the "best of stories." How is it the best? Is this claim based on the fact that the *sūra* is a continuous narrative (as Muslim tradition would have us believe)? Or is the claim more sophisticated and, rather, about the *sūra*'s rhetorical and narrative features? Take the deployment of *mubīn*, a common Qurʾānic term and end-word to be sure (it appears 106 times): in Yūsuf it appears four times, thrice in close proximity. In its first use, God uses it to describe Scripture (v. 1); in the second use, Jacob uses it to describe the nature of Satan (v. 5); and in the third use, the treacherous brothers use it to characterize their view of Jacob's error (v. 8). This deployment by three different "speakers" in such close proximity, in rhyme position (and as the very first rhyme too), is highly rhetorically, narratively, and indeed aurally effective. Put differently, this might well be regarded as a hallmark of the best kind of storytelling.

Winitzer

The mention of Allah raising the heavens without pillars in v. 2 is noteworthy, since the mythologem of the "pillars of heaven" in an old one, appearing in various ancient Near Eastern conceptions of the cosmos. In Job 26:11, e. g., these, described there as *ʿammûdê šāmayim*, are said to "tremble" (< √*rpp*; Arab. *raffa*), and cannot help but point the proximity of this word to *rafaʿa*, even if this is accidental (these are not cognates). Here too it would seem that the Qurʾānic conception of the deity it promotes strives to distance itself from older, mythological ideas known to it.

More significant still is the description of the setting of the sun and moon for specified terms in v. 2. This seems to reflect ideas, originating in the ancient Near East but especially popular in Late Antiquity, concerning the etiology of appointed

times and the role of the luminaries in their determination. Reflexes of this idea are too numerous to count, though a measure of its significance can be appreciated when one recalls a central Hebrew benediction of Israel's deity as one who "sanctifies Israel and the appointed times" (*t. Ber.* 3:13). That Allah should be said to subdue the luminaries is, therefore, not entirely new. The Bible contains an almost identical statement, written into the account of the world's creation in its opening chapter (Gen 1:14–16; note *ʾōtôt* therein and cf. *al-āyāti* here), and it seems reasonable to assume that this text and others (cf. Q 16:12) would have been aware of the Biblical tradition. In this regard it should be added that the Biblical is not the first word on the topic. As has been demonstrated convincingly, Israel's claim concerning its deity's mastery over the luminaries for the sake of fixing time counters and borrows the same claim made concerning the Babylonian deity Marduk in that nation's "Creation Epic," *Enūma Eliš* (see Speiser 1964: 10, and more recently and generally on the borrowing of *Enūma Eliš* by Genesis, Frahm 2011: 364–68).

Younes

Following my comments on the use of the accusative case in QS 14, the present passage, includes at least two instances of violations of the standard rules of case assignment, both involving a singular, indefinite, masculine noun in the accusative case. These are found in vv. 31 and 64: *mā hāḏā bašaran* and *fa-allāhu ḫayrun ḥāfiẓan*, respectively. The accusative case assignment in *bašaran* is explained as a result of the presence of *mā al-ḥiǧāziyya*, which functions like *laysa* in those instances where the standard rules of case assignment fail to apply. Needless to say, such an ad hoc solution fails to meet the minimal standards of a coherent linguistic analysis of the phenomenon in question. It falls within the domains of *tafsīr*, where it is a matter of opinion. Except for the case assignment violation in *bašaran*, the phrase is well-formed and has a clear meaning.

On the other hand, the phrase *fa-allāhu ḫayrun ḥāfiẓan* is quite awkward as it is traditionally understood, with *ḥāfiẓan* treated as either a circumstantial accusative (*ḥāl*) or an accusative of distinction (*tamyīz*) (al-Zaǧǧāǧ 2007, 3: 21). The fact that the word could be either implies a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty. But neither the circumstantial accusative nor the accusative of distinction really works if they are applied the way they are supposed to apply in the language in general.

The two-word combination *ḫayrun* and *ḥāfiẓan* makes better sense if understood as a construct (*iḍāfa* phrase) with *ḥāfiẓan* treated as the second term i.e. the best keeper/maintainer, (or the best of keepers/maintainers). This, of course, requires a different case assignment, i.e. the genitive.

Zellentin

Sūrat Yūsuf closes with a verse that summarizes its self-conceptualization vis-à-vis previous tradition, be it Biblical or post-Biblical: "This (Qurʾān) is not a fabricated discourse, rather it is a confirmation (*taṣdīqa*) of what was before it (*bayna yadayhi*, lit.: "in his hands," perhaps in God's hands), and an elaboration of all things, and a guidance and mercy for a people who have faith." (v. 111). The Qurʾān repeats its central claim that it is "confirming what was before it" or "that which is with you" numerous times (see e. g., Q 2:41, 89, 91, 97, and 101; Q 3:3 and 81; Q 4:47; Q 5:48; Q 6:92; Q 10:37; Q 35:31; Q 37:37). Notably, the same language of "confirmation" is also used to describe John (Q 3:39), Jesus (ibid. v. 50; Q 5:46; Q 61:6) and Mary (Q 66:12) "confirming" what was before them, illustrating how the Qurʾān views itself as a reiteration and clarification of the message already given to Jesus.

The audience of Jesus as well as that of Muḥammad are called explicitly to compare and contrast the current message with respective previous ones they have heard, and to realize that the present one is a repetition not so much of the diverging teachings circulating in the seventh century CE, but rather of the perceived divine original to which the Qurʾān grants fuller access. (Pointing to divergence among various contemporary parties is an established rhetorical tool equally employed, e. g., by the Clementine Homilies against the philosophical schools of its time, see e. g. I:3). Hence, the Qurʾān sees itself as self-authenticating not so much in the way Calvin sees the Bible as such, but precisely in its relation to previous Scripture. It does not claim to stand on its own, and may not want to be read as such. In this way, the Qurʾān as a "rewritten Bible" (to use Pregill's extrapolation of the Second-Temple genre), or perhaps even more precisely as a "retold Bible," can rely on the Biblical and post-Biblical traditions about Joseph (the pertinence of which is beautifully illustrated by Goldman 1995) at the same time as generating a message by retelling the familiar story in an unfamiliar way.

QS 16 Q 13:1 – 17

13.1 Alif Lam Mim Ra'.
Behold the verses of the Book!
What has been sent down upon you from your Lord is the truth, but most men do not believe.
13.2 God is He who raised up the heavens without any pillars that you can see.
Then He settled firmly on the Throne.
He made the sun and moon to do His bidding, each running for an appointed time.
He governs the world;
He makes clear His revelations;
Perhaps you will be convinced of the encounter with your Lord.
13.3 He it was who spread out the earth and placed in it towering mountains and rivers.
Of all fruits He planted therein two pairs.
He causes the day to envelop night.
In these are wonders to a people who reflect.
13.4 On earth are tracts of land, adjoining one other: gardens of vines, cultivation, and palm trees, bunched up or single. They are all watered by one stream. Yet some We prefer to others in the nourishment they yield. Surely in these are signs to a people of understanding.
13.5 Should you wonder, then wondrous indeed is what they say: "How can it be that once we are turned to dust we find ourselves created anew?" These are people who blaspheme against their Lord. These – chains shall encircle their necks. These are the people of the Fire, in which they shall abide for ever.
13.6 They ask you to hasten calamity upon them rather than good fortune, though punishments in plenty have passed before them. Your Lord is forgiving towards mankind, despite their wickedness, but your Lord is grievous in torment.
13.7 Those who blaspheme say: "If only some miracle is sent down upon him from his Lord!" You are but a warner, and for every people there is a guide.
13.8 God knows what each female is bearing, what wombs shorten their terms and what they lengthen. With Him, all things have their due measure.
13.9 Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, Almighty, Exalted!

13.1 Alif, Lâm, Mîm, Râ. Voici les versets du Livre; et ce qui t'a été révélé par ton Seigneur est la vérité; mais la plupart des gens ne croient pas.
13.2 Allah est Celui qui a élevé [bien haut] les cieux sans piliers visibles. Il S'est établi [istawâ] sur le Trône et a soumis le soleil et la lune, chacun poursuivant sa course vers un terme fixé. Il règle l'Ordre [de tout] et expose en détail les signes afin que vous ayez la certitude de la rencontre de votre Seigneur.
13.3 Et c'est Lui qui a étendu la terre et y a placé montagnes et fleuves. Et de chaque espèce de fruits Il y établit deux éléments de couple. Il fait que la nuit couvre le jour. Voilà bien là des preuves pour des gens qui réfléchissent.
13.4 Et sur la terre il y a des parcelles voisines les unes des autres, des jardins [plantés] de vignes, et des céréales et des palmiers, en touffes ou espacés, arrosés de la même eau, cependant Nous rendons supérieurs les uns aux autres quant au goût. Voilà bien là des preuves pour des gens qui raisonnent.
13.5 Et si tu dois t'étonner, rien de plus étonnant que leurs dires: «Quand nous seront poussière, reviendrons-nous vraiment à une nouvelle création?» Ceux-là sont ceux qui ne croient pas en leur Seigneur. Et ce sont eux qui auront des jougs à leur cou. Et ce sont eux les gens du Feu, où ils demeureront éternellement.
13.6 Et ils te demandent de hâter [la venue] du malheur plutôt que celle du bonheur. Certes, il s'est produit avant eux des châtiments exemplaires. Ton Seigneur est Détenteur du pardon pour les gens, malgré leurs méfaits. Et ton Seigneur est assurément dur en punition.
13.7 Et ceux qui ont mécru disent: «Pourquoi n'a-t-on pas fait descendre sur celui-ci (Muhammad) un miracle venant de son Seigneur?» Tu n'es qu'un avertisseur, et à chaque peuple un guide.
13.8 Allah sait ce que porte chaque femelle, et de combien la période de gestation dans la matrice est écourtée ou prolongée. Et toute chose a auprès de Lui sa mesure.
13.9 Le Connaisseur de ce qui est caché et de ce qui est apparent, Le Grand, Le Sublime.

13.10 It is all the same whether one of you conceals his speech or proclaims it, whether he goes into hiding by night or follows a road by day.
13.11 With him are attending angels, ahead and behind, guarding him in accordance with God's command.
God alters not what is in a people unless they alter what is in themselves.
If God desires to bring evil to a people, nothing can turn it away, nor, apart from Him, have they any protector.
13.12 He it is who shows you the lightning, causing both fear and expectation;
He it is who raises heavy-laden clouds.
13.13 Thunder glorifies His praise and the angels His awe.
He casts thunderbolts and strikes therewith whomsoever He wills.
Yet they dispute regarding God, though Mighty in devising!
13.14 To Him belongs the Call to Truth.
As for those whom they worship apart from Him, they answer not their prayer in any wise, save like one who spreads the palms of his hands towards water to convey to his mouth, and the water will not reach it. The prayers of unbelievers are nothing but illusion.
13.15 To God prostrate all who are in the heavens and on earth, willing or unwilling, as do their shadows, at dawn or at dusk.
13.16 Say: "Who is the Lord of the heavens and earth?"
Say: "God!"
Say: "So have you taken to yourselves as protectors, instead of Him, such as are powerless to benefit or harm themselves?"
Say: "Is the blind man the equal of one who sees? Or is darkness the equal of light? Or have they fashioned partners to God who created something similar to His creation, and so creation became a matter that perplexed them?"
Say: "God is the Creator of all things; He is One, Overpowering."
13.17 He sent down water from the sky, and the valleys flowed in due measure.
The torrent carried away a swell of froth, like the froth they light a fire upon, seeking to fashion an ornament or an article of pleasure –

13.10.Sont égaux pour lui, celui parmi vous qui tient secrète sa parole, et celui qui la divulgue, celui qui se cache la nuit comme celui qui se montre au grand jour.
13.11 Il [l'homme] a par devant lui et derrière lui des Anges qui se relaient et qui veillent sur lui par ordre d'Allah. En vérité, Allah ne modifie point l'état d'un peuple, tant que les [individus qui le composent] ne modifient pas ce qui est en eux-mêmes. Et lorsqu'Allah veut [infliger] un mal à un peuple, nul ne peut le repousser: ils n'ont en dehors de Lui aucun protecteur.
13.12 C'est lui qui vous fait voir l'éclair [qui vous inspire] crainte et espoir; et Il crée les nuages lourds.
13.13 Le tonnerre Le glorifie par Sa louange, et aussi les Anges, sous l'effet de Sa crainte. Et Il lance les foudres dont Il atteint qui Il veut. Or ils disputent au sujet d'Allah alors qu'Il est redoutable en Sa force.
13.14 A Lui l'appel de la Vérité! Ceux qu'ils invoquent en dehors de Lui ne leur répondent d'aucune façon; semblables à celui qui étend ses deux mains vers l'eau pour la porter à sa bouche, mais qui ne parvient jamais à l'atteindre. L'invocation des mécréants n'est que vanité.
13.15 Et c'est à Allah que se prosternent, bon gré mal gré, tous ceux qui sont dans les cieux et sur la terre, ainsi que leurs ombres, au début et à la fin de la journée.
13.16 Dis: «Qui est le Seigneur des cieux et de la terre?» Dis: «Allah». Dis: «Et prendrez-vous en dehors de Lui, des maîtres qui ne détiennent pour eux-mêmes ni bien ni mal?» Dis: «Sont-ils égaux, l'aveugle et celui qui voit? Ou sont-elles égales, les ténèbres et la lumière? Ou donnent-ils à Allah des associés qui créent comme Sa création au point que les deux créations se soient confondues à eux? Dis: «Allah est le Créateur de toute chose, et c'est Lui l'Unique, le Dominateur suprême».
13.17 Il a fait descendre une eau du ciel à laquelle des vallées servent de lit, selon leur grandeur. Le flot débordé a charrié une écume flottante; et semblable à celle-ci est [l'] écume provenant de ce qu'on porte à fusion, dans le feu pour [fabriquer] des bijoux et des ustensiles. Ainsi Allah représente en parabole la Vérité et le Faux: l'écume [du torrent et du métal fondu]

upon that too is a similar froth. Thus does God strike a parable of truth and falsehood.
As to the froth, it vanishes into the earth, but that which benefits mankind remains on the ground. Thus does God strike parables.

s'en va, au rebut, tandis que [l'eau et les objets] utiles aux Hommes demeurent sur la terre. Ainsi Allah propose des paraboles.

سورة الرعد

المر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (1) اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ
تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ
تُوقِنُونَ (2) وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ
النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (3) وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ
صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (4) وَإِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ
قَوْلُهُمْ أَئِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَئِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ (5) وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثُلَاتُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (6) وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ (7) اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ
كُلُّ أُنْثَى وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ (8) عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ (9) سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ
مَنْ أَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ (10) لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ
مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ
(11) هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ (12) وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ
الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ (13) لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا
يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (14) وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ
مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلَالُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ (15) قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ
أَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ
أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (16) أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهُ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ (17)

Azaiez

Passage centré sur la grandeur de la création et de son auteur. On notera la présence d'un contre-discours au v. 5 : *a-iḏā kunnā turāban a-ʾinnā la-fī ḫalqin ǧadīdin*. Il s'agit d'un « contre-discours eschatologique » que je définis comme un discours rapporté des adversaires relatifs à l'eschatologie et plus précisément, ici, à la résurrection des corps. C'est en effet, l'un des trois thèmes des contre-discours eschatologiques. Il en existe deux autres autour des thèmes de l'Heure eschatologique (Q 7:187 ; 10:48 ; 17:51 ; 21:38 ; 27:71 ; 32:28 ; 34:3, 29 ; 36:48 ; 41:50 ; 45:32 ; 51:12 ; 67:25 ; 75:6 ; 79:42) et de la rétribution des actes (Q 2:80, 111 ; 3:24 ; 10:53 ; 11:8). Dans notre nomenclature (thèse de doctorat), le v. 5 est le 107ème contre-discours coranique. Ce verset est à rapprocher des contre-discours suivants : Q 13:5 ; 17:49, 98 ; 23:82–83 ; 27:67 ; 32:10 ; 36:78 ; 37:15–17 ; 44:34–35 ; 50:2–3 ; 56:47–48 ; 79:10. Ce contre-discours est également employé dans un traité du Talmud, le Sanhédrin (90 b) : « un hérétique disait au rabbi Gamaliel: Vous prétendez que les morts revivront, mais ils sont réduits en poussière; la poussière peut-elle prendre vie ? » (cf. Azaiez 2012).

Dye

Hymne sur les preuves de la résurrection et les signes de Dieu. Le texte se situe dans le droit fil de l'apologétique chrétienne, notamment l'homilétique syriaque (voir par exemple Aphraate, *Dem.* VIII). Les vv. 2–4, 8–10 décrivent l'omnipotence et la sollicitude divines. Ils fournissent ainsi les arguments susceptibles de répondre à la question posée au v. 5 : comment la résurrection est-elle possible ?

Les arguments principaux sont les suivants : si Dieu a pu créer le monde une première fois, il pourra aussi procéder à une nouvelle création lors de la Résurrection (Q 7:54, verset parallèle à Q 13:2; 17:98; 29:19: 36:81; 46:33; 50:15) ; c'est Dieu qui est à l'origine de la vie, et qui fournit ce dont les êtres vivants ont besoin pour vivre – en premier lieu, l'eau (Q 25:48–50; 30:48–49; 36:33–35).

Des versets relatifs à la menace du châtiment sont intercalés dans le propos, formant ainsi une habile polyphonie. Les deux lignes mélodiques convergent toutefois vers la même idée : la folie des infidèles, incapables de reconnaître la puissance et la bonté divines, et insensibles aux menaces des châtiments qui les attendent, alors qu'ils ont pourtant été dûment avertis (v. 7).

Grodzki

Another *sūra* introduced by the *ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿa* (Arab: disconnected letters) or *muqaṭṭaʾāt*, however the only one having this very combination of *alif, lā, mīm* and *rāʾ* letters. Al-Ṭabarī lists in his *Tafsīr* fourteen different hypotheses elucidating the possible functions of these letters. Three centuries later, al-Rāzī already mentions about twenty ways of interpreting them. Later, we have dozens of other creative and inventive attempts to explain this mystery (inter alia, vocative forms used by the Islamic prophet to address representatives of different tribes; signs to be understood through different mnemonic and semiotic techniques; abbreviations used in pre-Islamic poetry; "names and attributes of" creation; part of the "mathematical miracle of the Qurʾān"; alternative names for Qurʾānic *sūra*s commonly used in different cultural/geographic milieus; initials of Qurʾānic editors; battle cries used by the Prophet Muḥammad to communicate with his army; oath formulas of allegiance pledged in the Arabic dialect of Hijaz; hints indicating the proper rhythm in which given *sūra*s of the Qurʾān should be recited; or – following the Syriac liturgical tradition – a reminiscence of some customary letter abbreviations and other notations intended as reference marks to liturgical doxological formulas, psalms, responsorial chants, antiphons, intonation of hymns in appropriate tones and reading passages from the scripture. According to this theory (Luxenberg 2008) *alif, lām, mīm* and *rāʾ* introducing Q 13 are supposed to mean: *emar lī Māryā rabbā* (Arab. *qāla lī l-Rabb al-ʿAẓīm*, Eng. *the almighty Lord spoke to me*).

Pregill

A sermon about divine providence. To me, the heavy emphasis on the manifold signs of God's governance of natural phenomena here echoes similar passages in the Psalms, especially in the drawing of an explicit connection between correct interpretation of manifest signs and acknowledgement of the Creator.

As Hirshman and others have argued, the emphasis on divine guidance and providence in early Jewish and Christian exegesis of scripture probably points to a subtext of gnostic-dualist critique, and one wonders if Qurʾānic passages like this might be intended to play a similar function, especially given the possibility of some penetration of Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism into Arabia in Late Antiquity. (Notably, passages and verses from the Qurʾān pertaining to the themes of providence and divine subtlety in creating the world often appear as inscriptions in medieval Islamic architecture in Iran, for example on the burial towers at Marāgha and Kharraqān; while they are often interpreted as sly references to the artistry of the builders, it is also possible that they were intended to polemicize against Zoroastrians or even Muslims who leaned in the direction of dualism).

In this connection, I like Hawting's suggestion during the Seminar at Notre Dame that *ṭawʿan wa-karhan* in v. 15 signifies good and evil spirits – meaning that both realms, dark and light, are under the dominion of the one God.

V. 7: Reference to the sign demanded of the Qurʾānic prophet by unbelievers anticipates vv. 27–43, in which the issue of evidentiary miracles is taken up again and further developed. The message here is obviously one of legitimating the Qurʾānic prophet, who lacks signs to bring other than the Qurʾān itself, by pointing to the signs that vindicate his message that are to be found all around in the natural world. These function as copious evidence of the Creator, His providence, and, by implication, the inevitability of judgment for anyone who can interpret those signs correctly.

Reynolds

This passage might be read as a response to the Christian adoration of Jesus Christ. Here the Qurʾān presents Allah as the god to be adored instead of Christ. This theologically charged reading is more evident if one understands *Allāh* as a proper name, and not simply as the Arabic word for God (on these question see especially Gimaret 1988). Thereby one might perceive more clearly that the Qurʾān is not so much describing the nature of God as much as insisting (against Christians) that its God is the true creator and judge of the world. To this end I wonder if v. 15 (to *Allāh* bow all who are in the heavens and the earth) is a response to Phil 2:9–11: "And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Stewart

The *maṯal* is of course a genre in the Qurʾān, and in pre-Islamic Arabic, and in later Arabic and the Arabic dialects comes to be the normal term for proverb. It is clearly based on the idea that a proverb is essentially a comparison, as in the Egyptian proverb *zayy il-minshār—ṭāliʿ wākil, nāzil wākil* [He is] like a saw—he eats on the way up and eats on the way down" (which refers to the characteristic action of a broker, who takes his fee whether you are buying or selling, gaining or losing) or Moroccan *bḥal libra ketkassi w-hiyya ʿoryāna* "Like a needle—it clothes others while it is itself naked" etc. It would appear to be very ancient, perhaps even proto-Semitic, for the Hebrew has the etymologically related *mashal* with a similar meaning, which Arabic could not have borrowed directly. It is not entirely clear to me how far back the term *amṯāl* used in v. 17 goes: does it refer only to the statements in v. 17, or vv. 16–17, or more? It is used with the verb *yaḍribu* and this seems to be part of the convention of the speech genre. This is taken over in Persian, where the term for proverb is actually *zarbo l-masal* instead of simply *masal*. In the Qurʾān they tend to be short comparisons, but there are a few longer ones that look more like the parables of Jesus in the Gospels. There have been several studies in German on the parable in the Qurʾān (Bulh 1924; Lohmann 1966; Sister 1931).

Toorawa

I am struck by the deployment—i.e. the rhetorical use—of the word and image of *māʾ* ("water") in this *sūra*. It appears three times, in vv. 4, 14 and 17. In v. 4, reference is made to watering (*yusqā*, "is watered") with "one water" (*māʾ wāḥid*). In v. 14, water is used in a powerful simile of deprivation: "*illā ka-bāsiṭi kaffayhi ilā l-māʾi li-yabluġa fāhu wa-mā huwa bi-bāliġihi*" ("except as one who stretches out his hands to water, that it may reach his mouth, and it does not do so" [trans. Jones 2007: 235]). In v. 17, the water is the quotidian one sent from the skies, a water that generates rivers (*awdiya*), torrent (*sayl*), and foam (*zabad*). This *zabad* ("foam"), which appears three times in the verse, appears only here in the Qurʾān and is therefore an isolate and hapax. Indeed, water in this early part of the *sūra* appears precisely where the hapaxes also appear: v. 4 (*ṣinwān*, "palms with multiple and single stems"), v. 13 (*miḥāl*, "plans"?), and v. 17 (*ǧufāʾ*, "scum, froth"; *zabad*, "foam"). And there is a hapax sequence of *fawātiḥ* letters too in the very opening, namely *Alif-Lām-Mīm-Rāʾ* (v. 1).

These seventeen verses have been recognized as rhetorically productive as a passage in terms of imagery—*vide* nature, natural processes, agriculture, metalwork—the figurative nature of which is signaled by the text itself (by mentioning *ʿaǧab*, "wonder," in v. 5, and *amṯāl*, "parallels," in v. 17). Attention must also be paid to *individual* words and images, such as water, which I mentioned above, but also e.g. *ḥilya* ("ornament, jewelry") and *matāʿ* ("wares, utensils, goods"), or else we run the risk of having an incomplete picture of the Qurʾān.

Younes

I have argued elsewhere (Younes 2011) that there is strong evidence to suggest that *yudabbiru al-amr* (v. 2) in fact refers to "speaking the word" and not to "ordering the course or managing the affair," as it is traditionally understood.

The traditional understanding and interpretation of the word *al-maṯulāt* in v. 6 is problematic. Not only is this word a *hapax legomenon* in the Qurʾān, but its morphological structure *faʾulā*(*t*) is unique in the language and does not conform to any known morphological pattern. The word is traditionally understood to mean "punishments or "severe torture." There seems to be a pattern followed by the traditional interpreters (e. g. Ṭabarī 2005, 7: 340) where words that seem to be vague, exceptional, or difficult to understand for one reason or another are given a negative "spin" with punishment as a common theme and with the perpetrators often turned into pigs and monkeys.

Ṭabarī (ibid. 341) quotes an interpretation of the word by Muǧāhid as "examples" (*'amṭāl*). This makes better sense in the context of the *sūra*. In addition, no word derived from the root *M-Ṭ-L* has a meaning related to punishment or torture, but several derivatives share the meaning of "example."

QS 17 Q 13:27 – 43

13.27 The unbelievers say: “If only a miracle is sent down upon him from his Lord!”
Say: “God leads astray whomever He wills and guides to Him whoever repents,
13.28 They who believe and whose hearts feel secure at the remembrance of God” – in truth, let hearts feel secure at the remembrance of God!
13.29 They who believe and perform good deeds – blessings be upon them and the Abode of Bliss!”
13.30 Likewise did We send you to a nation before whom many nations had passed away, in order to recite to them what We had revealed to you, when they had blasphemed against the All-Merciful.
Say: “He is my Lord. There is no god but He! In Him I trust and to Him is my journey’s end.”
13.31 If only it had been a Qur’an wherewith mountains are moved or the earth is cut in pieces or the dead are spoken to!
But to God belongs dispensation of all matters. Do the believers not realize that if God had willed, He would have guided all mankind? And yet the unbelievers continue to be stricken by a calamity because of their actions, or else by one which alights close to their homes, until there shall come the promise of God. Surely God fails not His appointed time.
13.32 Other Messengers before you were met with ridicule. I granted the unbelievers respite and then I seized them – and what a punishment it was!
13.33 Is He who watches over every soul for what it earns...and yet they ascribe partners to God!
Say: “Name them! Or do you wish to inform Him of what He knows not on earth? Or is this speech a mere show?”
Rather, to those who disbelieve, their cunning was made attractive in their eyes, and they were driven away from the path of righteousness.
Whoever God leads astray, no guide has he.
13.34 Torment awaits them in this present life but the torment of the hereafter is even more

13.27 Ceux qui ont mécru disent: «Pourquoi n’a-t-on pas descendu sur lui (Muhammad) un miracle venant de son Seigneur?» Dis: «En vérité, Allah égare qui Il veut; et Il guide vers Lui celui qui se repent,
13.28 ceux qui ont cru, et dont les cours se tranquillisent à l’évocation d’Allah». Certes, c’est par l’évocation d’Allah que les cours se tranquillisent.
13.29 Ceux qui croient et font de bonnes ouvres, auront le plus grand bien et aussi le plus bon retour.
13.30 Ainsi Nous t’envoyons dans une communauté – que d’autres communautés ont précédée – pour que tu leur récites ce que Nous te révélons [le Coran], cependant qu’ils ne croient pas au Tout Miséricordieux. Dis: «C’est Lui mon Seigneur. Pas d’autre divinité à part Lui. En Lui je place ma confiance. Et à Lui je me repens».
13.31 S’il y avait un Coran à mettre les montagnes en marche, à fendre la terre ou à faire parler les morts (ce serait celui-ci). C’est plutôt à Allah le commandement tout entier. Les croyants ne savent-ils pas que, si Allah voulait, Il aurait dirigé tous les hommes vers le droit chemin. Cependant, ceux qui ne croient pas ne manqueront pas, pour prix de ce qu’ils font, d’être frappés par un cataclysme, ou [qu’un cataclysme] s’abattra près de leurs demeures jusqu’à ce que vienne la promesse d’Allah. Car Allah, ne manque pas à Sa promesse.
13.32 On s’est certes moqué des messagers avant toi. Alors, J’ai donné un répit aux mécréants. Ensuite, Je les ai saisis. Et quel fut Mon châtiment!
13.33 Est-ce que Celui qui observe ce que chaque âme acquiert [est semblable aux associés? ...] Et pourtant ils donnent des associés à Allah. Dis [leur:] «Nommez-les. Ou essayez-vous de Lui apprendre ce qu’Il ne connaît pas sur la terre? Ou avez-vous été simplement séduits par de faux noms?» En fait, on a embelli aux mécréants leur stratagème et on les a empêchés de prendre le droit chemin. Et quiconque Allah laisse égarer, n’a plus personne pour le guider.

terrible. From God they can expect nothing to shield them.
13.35 The likeness of the Garden promised to the pious is one beneath which rivers flow. Its nourishment is everlasting, and so is its shade. This is the reward of the pious, but the reward of unbelievers is the Fire.
13.36 Those to whom We brought the Book are happy with what has been sent down upon you. But among religious sects there are some who reject a portion of it.
Say: "I was merely commanded to worship God and associate none with Him. I call to Him, and to Him is my final return."
13.37 So also did We send it down as an Arabic code of law.
Had you followed their fancies, after Knowledge had come to you, you would have found no protector or shield from God.
13.38 We sent Messengers before you to whom We gave spouses and progeny. But no Messenger could have worked any miracle except by God's leave.
For every matter decided there is a Register:
13.39 God erases what He wills, and ratifies.
With Him is the Archetype of the Book.
13.40 Whether We show you part of what We promised them or whether we cause you to die, it is your duty to convey the message, but Ours is the accounting.
13.41 Do they not see how We descend upon their territory, causing it to shrink from its margins? It is God who judges, and nothing can hold back His judgment. He is quick to settle accounts.
13.42 Those before them also practiced their cunning, but to God belongs all cunning. He knows what each soul earns, and the unbelievers shall surely know to whom belongs the destiny of the Abode.
13.43 Those who blaspheme say: "You are no Messenger."
Say: "Let God suffice as witness between me and you – He who has knowledge of the Book."

13.34 Un châtiment les atteindra dans la vie présente. Le châtiment de l'au-delà sera cependant plus écrasant et ils n'auront nul protecteur contre Allah.
13.35 Tel est le paradis qui a été promis aux pieux: sous lequel coulent les ruisseaux; ses fruits sont perpétuels, ainsi que son ombrage. Voilà la fin de ceux qui pratiquent la piété, tandis que la fin des mécréants sera le Feu.
13.36. se réjouissent de ce qu'on a fait descendre vers toi. Tandis que certaines factions en rejettent une partie. Dis: «Il m'a seulement été commandé d'adorer Allah et de ne rien Lui associer. C'est à Lui que j'appelle [les gens], Et c'est vers Lui que sera mon retour».
13.37 Ainsi l'avons-Nous fait descendre (le Coran) [sous forme] de loi en arabe. Et si tu suis leurs passions après ce que tu as reçu comme savoir, il n'y aura pour toi, contre Allah, ni allié ni protecteur.
13.38 Et Nous avons certes envoyé avant toi des messagers, et leur avons donné des épouses et des descendants. Et il n'appartient pas à un Messager d'apporter un miracle, si ce n'est qu'avec la permission d'Allah. Chaque échéance a son terme prescrit.
13.39 Allah efface ou confirme ce qu'Il veut et l'Ecriture primordiale est auprès de Lui.
13.40 Que Nous te fassions voir une partie de ce dont Nous les menaçons, ou que Nous te fassions mourir (avant cela), ton devoir est seulement la communication du message, et le règlement de compte sera à Nous.
13.41 Ne voient-ils pas que Nous frappons la terre et que Nous la réduisons de tous côtés? C'est Allah qui juge et personne ne peut s'opposer à Son jugement, et Il est prompt à régler les comptes.
13.42 Certes ceux d'avant eux ont manigancé (contre leur Messager); le stratagème tout entier appartient à Allah. Il sait ce que chaque âme acquiert. Et les mécréants sauront bientôt à qui appartient la bonne demeure finale.
13.43 Et ceux qui ne croient pas disent: «Tu n'es pas un Messager». Dis: «Allah suffit, comme témoin entre vous et moi, et ceux qui ont la connaissance du Livre (sont aussi témoins)».

سورة الرعد

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنَابَ (27) الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ
قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (28) الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَى لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَآبٍ (29) كَذَلِكَ
أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لِتَتْلُوَ عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ (30) وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتَى بَلْ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا أَفَلَمْ
يَيْئَسِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِنْ
دَارِهِمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ (31) وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ عِقَابِ (32) أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ قُلْ سَمُّوهُمْ أَمْ تُنَبِّئُونَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ
بِظَاهِرٍ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ (33) لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ (34) مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
أُكُلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ (35) وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ
الْأَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُنْكِرُ بَعْضَهُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُو وَإِلَيْهِ مَآبِ (36) وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا
وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَمَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍ (37) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ (38) يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ
(39) وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ (40) أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ
نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (41) وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا يَعْلَمُ
مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفَّارُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ (42) وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ (43)

Grodzki

In reference to Rippin's interesting comment on the sense of *suyyirat*, I would follow here Luxenberg's suggestion of a slightly different dotting – *suttirat* (through the Syriac root *sṯar* – destroy, tear down, pull down) which applies well to all three mentions vv.: 13:31, 78:20 and 81:3, always in passive, and always referring to mountains. It seems much more plausible to have mountains destroyed/falling apart rather than being set in motion, especially when in all cases the surrounding verses speak of destruction using cognate vocabulary (Luxenberg 2007a: 144–5). This, however, does not solve the mysterious usage (and very unusual meaning) of *qurʾān*^{an} followed by *bihi* (if it is in fact *bihi*) in v. 13:31.

Khalfallah

L'expression *umm al-kitāb* est à mon sens le réceptacle où confluent théologie, rhétorique et exégèse. Il a fallu mobiliser des principes de *balāġa* (assortis de données lexicales) pour montrer qu'il s'agit d'une synecdoque désignant : « source de ce qui est écrit ». Ensuite, les *mutakallimūn* (théologiens musulmans) ont longuement débattu pour savoir comment Dieu pouvait effacer et établir des Ordres, Décrets, Destins… sans être en contradiction. Quant aux *mufassirūn*, ce verset était un prétexte pour discuter de leur théorie de l'abrogation. Les termes : *umm*, *umma*, *ummī* (et leurs autres dérivés) nécessitent, à mon sens, une plus longue étude exclusive en se référant aux sources préislamiques pour en connaître le socle tribal, non-arabes

(syriaque et hébreu) et non-musulmanes (chrétienne et juive) afin de mieux déterminer ses contours métaphoriques et anthropologiques.

Kropp

The core statement seems to me v. 27: *Allāhu yuḍillu man yašāʾu wa-yahdī man anāba*. Here I do not aim at the evidently broken logical connection between the two parts. In the first the divine action is absolute; in the second there seems to be a condition in the action of man. Other and frequent parallel statements clearly point to the absolute freedom in the almighty God's actions. It is not necessary to step into the never ending discussion (in other religions as well) of man's free will or related matters. But I want to point out that on the basis of the Qurʾān's fundamental verses such as v. 13:27 a discussion of God's justice is simply not possible. The more religious than philosophical problem of theodicy cannot arise. Add to this a rather terse and pessimistic view of human nature expressed in many verses and you easily understand why so many early Muslims resigned to the simple statement: *al-dunyā šarr!*

Madigan

This passage is intriguing for its rich use of scriptural language, sometimes in slightly unexpected ways. All the relevant terms are here: the verbs *anzala, awḥā, hadā* and *talā:* the nouns Qurʾān, *ḏikr, āya, ḥukm, amr, rasūl, balāġ* and particularly *kitāb*, including its use in the phrases *umm al-kitāb* and *allaḏīna ātaynāhum al-kitāb*.

Discussions of *umm al-kitāb* (v. 39) tend to take their cue from this passage and from Q 43:4 and presume it to mean an archetypal heavenly canon. However, the other use of *umm al-kitāb*, in Q 3:7 (see QS 5), should perhaps give us pause. There it is identified with the *ayāt muḥkamāt* and so with only part of the *kitāb*. The use of both Qurʾān (v. 31) and *kitāb* (v. 38) in indefinite form (and these are not by any means the only places in the Qurʾān where such occurs) alerts us to some of the complexities of those terms, which are so often read in an oversimplified identification with scriptural texts, actual or archetypal. Pickthall brings out some of this complexity when he translates *umm al-kitāb* as "the source of ordinance" (Q 13:39) and "the source of decrees" (Q 43:4). However in Q 3:7 (see QS 5) he uses "the substance of the Book."

Rippin

The use of qurʾān^{an} in v. 31 is fascinating – something along the line of "decree" might be suggested as a meaning – if the sense of *suyyirat bihi* does suggest that agency of the object (the use of the passive verb is also found in Q 78:20 and Q 81:3 both with mountains but without the agent indicated by *bihi*).

Also of clear interest is v. 38, *li-kulli aǧalin kitāb*, for what it means about the concept of *kitāb*; here it is a deemed a "sign" from God of a messenger's divine mission.

Sirry

One of the issues addressed in this passage is the opposition to the prophets before Muḥammad. Perhaps, this also reflects Muḥammad's contemporaries' rejection of his message. Vv. 34 and 35 deal with worldly and eschatological punishments for rejecters of the message of the previous prophets and rewards for believers. It seems that the moral message of this is that as God punished past generations of unbelievers, so in the same way He will punish those who rejected the Prophet's message. V. 36 is intriguing because it clearly implies confidence that the People of the Book will support the Prophet by recognizing the truth of his claims: "those to whom we have given the book rejoice at what has been revealed to you." Scholars offer different explanations as to why the Meccan revelations refer to Jews and Christians as those who support and confirm the truth of Muḥammad's message. Goitein, for instance, argues that Muḥammad did encounter some positive response from Jews and Christians at Mecca. "There is little doubt," says Goitein, "that Muḥammad's beginnings were met with approval by at least some of his monotheistic acquaintances" (1971:81). In line with Goitein, Rahman argues that "From the Qurʾān, it is abundantly clear that there were, among the followers of Judaism and (whether orthodox or not) of Christianity, some who affirmed the truth of the Prophet's mission and, in fact, encouraged him to in the face of Meccan opposition" (1982:137). However, Rahman admits that it would be hard to establish conclusively the presence of a significant number of Jews and Christians at Mecca because "history tells us next to nothing about them, nor do we know whether these are the same persons with whom the Prophet held discussions." David Marshall (2001) offers a different explanation. For him, the Meccan allusions to the People of the Book are based on theoretical assumptions about what Jews and Christians *should be like* and about how they can be *expected* to respond, rather than on concrete encounters with specific people, as at Medina. This is similar to what Rahman has said: "This attitude (that his message was a continuation or revival of earlier Prophets) is, however, on a purely theoretical or ideal religious plane and has no reference to the *actual* doctrine and practice of the 'People of the Book' and the two must be distinguished" (Rahman 1982:26).

Stewart

v. 32 Many earlier prophets were mocked before you. This not only reveals something about the Prophet's experience that shows up in other stories of the Prophets but also hints at something about Qurʾānic style, for the text responds to this mockery with mockery. Certain passages in the Qurʾān do not only inform the unbelievers of their errors or denounce or curse them, but rather taunt them in such passages as *fa-bašširhum bi-ʿaḏābin alīm* "So give them the good news of a painful torment!" or *fa-ḏuq innaka anta l-ʿazīzu l-karīm* "So taste! For you are the powerful and noble!" etc.

At the end of the *sūra* occur a number of references to books that are distinct but in close proximity, and this seems intended.

V. 36 Those to whom We have given the Book, meaning the Bible.

V. 37 *ḥukman ʿarabiyyan* refers to the text that has been revealed to the Prophet > the Qurʾān.

V. 38 For each appointed time is a book > God's decree, determination.

V. 39 the Mother of the Book > the inaccessible exemplar from which the verses of the Qurʾān are revealed, which lies in the supernatural realm.

V. 43 and he who has knowledge of the Book > Is this a reference to God? The Book appears many times in this section, in verses, 36, 38, 39, and 43, with distinct meanings. I am not sure what the cause of this arrangement is exactly, but the effect would seem to be to create a sense of connection and perhaps of conflation between the various senses of book, even while recognizing that they have distinct denotations.

Toorawa

Two Qurʾānic concepts, present in this *sūra*, and to which I would like to devote further thinking, are: (1) the maternal; (2) mountains.

The maternal is well discussed in the context of God not having offspring, and in connection with the root *R-Ḥ-M* (see Roberts 2009)—if less so in terms of mothers as Qurʾānic characters. But we need a more sophisticated handle on the Qurʾān's maternal lexicon (and, indeed, its kinship lexicon generally). In v. 39, for example, we find *umm al-kitāb* ("the matrix of the Scripture"?). When are things in fact maternal or matricial? How is such vocabulary coded? What is the relationship of these words with the Qurʾān's conception of God, prophets, their mothers, mothers generally, generation? And how are mother-characters described? These are all questions awaiting answers.

As for mountains, they appear in another of this *sūra*'s very interesting verses, namely v. 31. The image here is of mountains *suyyirat*, "moved, set in motion," thus a figurative expression. How else are mountains figuratively deployed in the Qurʾān? We find them described as *rawāsī* ("firm, stable") elsewhere in this *sūra* (v. 13), but for example as *awtād* ("pyramids"?) in other *sūra*s (e.g. Q 78:7). Creating a meaningful lexicon of mountain vocabulary would be very helpful.

Younes

Vv. 31 and 33 seem to be missing part of a longer text. V. 31 contains an antecedent (protasis) but lacks the necessary "consequent" (or apodosis). The apodosis is filled in in English translations. Note the parenthesis in Pickthall's translation, for example: "Had it been possible for a Lecture to cause the mountains to move, or the earth to be torn asunder, or the dead to speak, (this Qurʾān would have done so)"...

V. 33 starts with *a-fa-man huwa qāʾimun ʿalā kulli nafsin bimā kasabat* "*Is He Who is aware of the deserts of every…*". A new sentence begins: *wa-ǧaʿalū li-llāhi shurakā*', which Pickthal translates as "Yet they ascribe unto Allah partners" after filling in (as he who is aware of nothing).

V. 31 has an additional problem in the word *yayʾas*, which is written in the Cairo edition يايئس, with *hamza* sitting on the seat of the second *yāʾ*. In the *rasm*, which does not include the *hamza*, the word is written as follows: يايس. *yayʾas* and other words sharing the same root are quite common in the Qurʾān with the general meaning of "to despair, give up hope." Such a meaning would not work here. That is why Pickthall translates it as "to know." What he is translating is most likely the word يأنس, which means "to know or become familiar with" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1: 147). *Yaʾnas* more faithfully conforms to the *rasm*.

Finally, a careful examination of the language of this passage suggests that it consists of two distinct layers, with one having the same rhyme, one coherent theme, and is free of the kind of syntactic problems mentioned above. This layer includes all the verses that have "b" as their rhyme, namely 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43. The other layer includes the remaining verses.

QS 18 Q 17:22 – 39

17.22 Take not with God another deity, or you will end up disgraced, thwarted.
17.23 Your Lord decrees: that you worship none but Him, and graciousness to parents.
If they attain old age with you, either or both, say not to them: “Phew!” and do not scold them but speak to them words of kindness.
17.24 And lower to them the wing of humility, out of compassion, and say: “My Lord, grant them mercy, as they raised me up when I was young.”
17.25 Your Lord knows best what lies in your souls; if you are virtuous, He is All-Forgiving to those who turn back to Him.
17.26 Give kinsmen their due, as also the poor and the wayfarer. But do not squander and dissipate,
17.27 for squanderers are the brothers of devils. And Satan has ever been ungrateful to his Lord.
17.28 And if you turn away from them, seeking a mercy from your Lord which you hope for, speak to them words of comfort.
17.29 Let not your hand be chained to your neck, nor spread it out as far as it extends, or else you will end up worthy of blame, regretful.
17.30 Your Lord spreads out His bounty to whomever He wills – and withholds it. In respect of His servants, He is All-Versed, All- Seeing.
17.31 And do not kill your infants for fear of poverty; it is We who provide for them as well as you. Killing them is a mighty sin.
17.32 Do not come near to adultery; it is debauchery and a wretched path to follow.
17.33 Do not kill the soul which God declares hallowed except in justice. Whoever is killed unjustly, We have granted authority to his guardian. But he should not exceed the limit in killing, for he has already obtained divine support.
17.34 Do not come near the property of orphans, except in the fairest manner, until the orphan attains manhood. Be faithful to your compacts, for a compact shall be a thing questioned about.
17.35 Be fair in measures when you measure out, and weigh with a balance that is true: that would be better and more rewarding.

17.22 N’assigne point à Allah d’autre divinité; sinon tu te trouveras méprisé et abandonné.
17.23 Et ton Seigneur a décrété: «N’adorez que Lui; et (marquez) de la bonté envers les père et mère: si l’un d’eux ou tous deux doivent atteindre la vieillesse auprès de toi, alors ne leur dis point: «Fi!» et ne les brusque pas, mais adresse-leur des paroles respectueuses.
17.24 et par miséricorde, abaisse pour eux l’aile de l’humilité, et dis: «O mon Seigneur, fais-leur, à tous deux, miséricorde comme ils m’ont élevé tout petit».
17.25 Votre Seigneur connaît mieux ce qu’il y a dans vos âmes. Si vous êtes bons, Il est certes Pardonneur pour ceux qui Lui reviennent se repentant.
17.26 «Et donne au proche parent ce qui lui est dû ainsi qu’au pauvre et au voyageur (en détresse). Et ne gaspille pas indûment,
17.27 car les gaspilleurs sont les frères des diables; et le Diable est très ingrat envers son Seigneur.
17.28 Si tu t’écartes d’eux à la recherche d’une miséricorde de Ton Seigneur, que tu espères, adresse-leur une parole bienveillante.
17.29.Ne porte pas ta main enchaînée à ton cou [par avarice], et ne l’étend pas non plus trop largement, sinon tu te trouveras blâmé et chagriné.
17.30 En vérité ton Seigneur étend Ses dons largement à qu’Il veut ou les accorde avec parcimonie. Il est, sur Ses serviteurs, Parfaitement Connaisseur et Clairvoyant.
17.31 Et ne tuez pas vos enfants par crainte de pauvreté; c’est Nous qui attribuons leur subsistance, tout comme à vous. Les tuer, c’est vraiment, un énorme péché.
17.32 Et n’approchez point la fornication. En vérité, c’est une turpitude et quel mauvais chemin!
17.33 Et, sauf en droit, ne tuez point la vie qu’Allah a rendu sacrée. Quiconque est tué injustement, alors Nous avons donné pouvoir à son proche [parent]. Que celui-ci ne commette pas d’excès dans le meurtre, car il est déjà assisté (par la loi).

17.36 Follow not what you have no knowledge of: hearing, sight and the heart – all of these, a person shall be questioned about.
17.37 Do not stride forth jauntily on earth: you will not thereby traverse the earth, nor reach up to the mountains in height.
17.38 All these are a sin in God's sight, and hateful. This is part of what your Lord has revealed to you of Wisdom.
17.39 Take not with God another deity, else you will be cast in hell, blameworthy and thwarted.

17.34 Et n'approchez les biens de l'orphelin que de la façon la meilleure, jusqu'à ce qu'il atteigne sa majorité. Et remplissez l'engagement, car on sera interrogé au sujet des engagements.
17.35 Et donnez la pleine mesure quand vous mesurez, et pesez avec une balance exacte. C'est mieux [pour vous] et le résultat en sera meilleur.
17.36 Et ne poursuis pas ce dont tu n'as aucune connaissance. L'ouïe, la vue et le cour: sur tout cela, en vérité, on sera interrogé.
17.37 Et ne foule pas la terre avec orgueil: tu ne sauras jamais fendre la terre et tu ne pourras jamais atteindre la hauteur des montagnes!
17.38 Ce qui est mauvais en tout cela est détesté de ton Seigneur.
17.39 Tout cela fait partie de ce que ton Seigneur t'a révélé de la Sagesse. N'assigne donc pas à Allah d'autre divinité, sinon tu seras jeté dans l'Enfer, blâmé et repoussé.

سورة الإسراء
لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَخْذُولًا (22) وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ
الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (23) وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ
وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (24) رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِنْ تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا (25)
وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَى حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا (26) إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ
كَفُورًا (27) وَإِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا (28) وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى
عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَحْسُورًا (29) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا
بَصِيرًا (30) وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا (31) وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ
فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا (32) وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسْرِفْ فِي
الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا (33) وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا
(34) وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا (35) وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ
وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا (36) وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ
طُولًا (37) كُلُّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا (38) ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَى إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَتُلْقَى فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَدْحُورًا (39)

Dye

Comme pour d'autres passages étudiés précédemment, nous avons affaire ici à un texte d'*instruction*, ou d'édification morale, encadré par deux versets condamnant le *širk* (vv. 22, 39), et énonçant plusieurs règles morales, dans la lignée de l'éthique biblique (notamment certains aspects du Décalogue). On peut rapprocher ce texte de Q 6:151–153, et d'autres versets épars (cf. Günther 2007).

La transition entre le v. 22 et le v. 23 évoque très directement celle entre le premier commandement et les suivants (Ex 20:3, Dt 5:7) même si, comme le note

Hawting, on rencontre ici (comme souvent) le problème de l'identité exacte du locuteur.

Pregill

Although it does not explicitly mention Moses or the Torah, this passage is the main version of the Biblical Decalogue in the Qurʾān, although novel elements are found here in addition to the more familiar rules; thus, infanticide, infringing on orphans' property, and cheating with regard to weights and measures are specifically prohibited as well as idolatry and murder. See the discussion in Günther 2007, where this passage is linked to the *kalima sawāʾ* of 3:64 – that is, the "common word" is the Decalogue itself, which all monotheists share and by which they should all abide. This argument seems especially plausible to me given the distinct echo of the First Commandment found in the latter half of 3:64.

The Israelite context of the *sūra* is clear, given the well-known allusion to Jerusalem at its opening (the identification of *al-masǧid al-aqṣā* in v. 1 as the Temple is confirmed by the reference to the destruction of both the Solomonic and the Second Temple in vv. 4–7 following).

Stefanidis

In contrast to Q 4:36–38 and Q 6:151–52, most of the injunctions in this passage are addressed to the second person singular. Bell (1937: 262) suggests that the original passage was intended for the Prophet and that the prohibitions addressed to the "people" (vv. 31–35) were inserted later, probably at Medina.

The passage is framed by two strong menaces: v. 22 *lā taǧʿal maʿa llāhi ilāhan āḫara fa-taqʿuda maḏmūman maḫḏūlan* and v. 39 *lā taǧʿal maʿa llāhi ilāhan āḫara fa-tulqā fī ǧahannama malūman madḥūran*. The notion that the Prophet was capable of committing the greatest sin and liable to be punished in hell was offensive to many exegetes. Muslim scholars devised a special category of Qurʾānic address (*ḫiṭāb ʿayn wa-l-murād bihi ġayruhu*; cf. Zarkašī 2009: 151) to characterize passages such as these. By holding that a verse formally addressed to the Prophet is in fact destined to humankind, they preserved the dogma of the Prophet's infallibility as well as the general understanding that the Qurʾān is primarily addressed to Muḥammad. Beyond these theological considerations, the singular address recalls the conspicuous use of the singular second person in the Biblical commandments (Exod 20 and Deut 5). This parallel does not, however, shed much light on the alternation of the singular and the plural address in the Qurʾānic passage.

Stewart

The reference to the inquiry on the Day of Judgment about one's hearing, eyesight, and heart is striking. Does the heart (*fuʾād*) refer to one's innermost thoughts, to

one's feelings, or to one's intentions? This sounds reminiscent of a Christian theological approach—inquisition—rather than a legal approach, and that is odd here, because this is a list of legal rules.

Toorawa

Scholars are, rightly, interested in the similarities between certain passages in the Qurʾān and the Decalogue (see Lewinstein 2001). For me, of greater interest are the *departures* from the Decalogue. The moderation—if that is the right characterization—enjoined in vv. 26–27, including the use of the agricultural root, and hapax, *B-Ḏ-R* in v. 26 is suggestive in this regard: "*wa-lā tubaḏḏir tabḏīrā*," "and do not squander."

Moderation might be a productive way of thinking about the underlying theme of the *sūra*, in particular the first half. Moderation is evoked by images of duality/twoness, e.g. *marratayn* (v. 4, "two times"), *ūlāhumā* (v. 5, "the first of two"), *āyatayn* (v. 12, "two signs"), *wālidayn* (v. 23, "[two] parents"), *lahumā* (v. 24, "to the two of them"); images of alternation, e.g. Night and Day in v. 12, "*man kāna yurīdu... wa man arāda*" (vv. 18–19, "Whosoever wishes... And whoever wishes"); and images of (choosing) the middle path, e.g. *aqwam* (v. 9, "most right/stable"), "*wa-lā tubaḏḏir tabḏīrā*," "and do not squander" (v. 26) and the similar advice in v. 29, and "*fa-lā tusrif*" (v. 33, "do not go to excess").

This passage also contains a hapax phrase: "*wa-lā tamšī fī-l-arḍi maraḥan*" ("do not strut arrogantly [about the earth]") in v. 37, which reprises, or is reprised, verbatim at Q 31:18. I find the concept of hapax phrase useful in thinking about Qurʾānic rhetoric, Qurʾānic narrative, and Qurʾānic poetics. Unsurprisingly, this hapax phrase also contains the hapax, *maraḥan* ("insolently"), the root for which (*M-R-Ḥ*) occurs in only one other place in the Qurʾān (Q 40:75).

Younes

The standard (Egyptian edition) reading of v. 38 is as follows: *kullu ḏālika kāna sayyiʾuhu ʿinda rabbika makrūhan* ("The evil of all that is hateful in the sight of thy Lord" – Pickthall). According to Ibn Muǧāhid (1972: 380), this was the reading of four of the seven canonical readers: ʿĀṣim, Ibn ʿĀmir, Ḥamza and al-Kisāʾi. Such a reading strikes me as awkward. Although the adjective *sayyi'* is found four times in the Qurʾān (Badawi and M. Abdel Haleem 2008: 462), this is the only occurrence of the four to which a possessive pronoun is attached. The form is thus unique.

A linguistically and stylistically sounder reading is the one attributed by Ibn Muǧāhid to Ibn Kaṯīr, Nāfiʾ and Abū ʿAmr: *kullu ḏālika kāna sayyiʾatan ʿinda rabbika makrūhan* "This is all evil (a sin) hateful in the sight of thy Lord." The noun *sayyi'a* is quite common in the Qurʾān, with 22 occurrences (ibid.).

Zellentin

The commandment not to be wasteful (v. 27–29) reads well as the Qurʾān's development of the pre-Islamic trope of the flamboyant poet and squanderer, as has been remarked by Neuwirth (2010:697–701, see also my comments on QS 44). Apart from this negation of aspects of pagan pre-Islamic Arabic culture, most other Qurʾānic laws stand in one relationship or another to the legal code of the Hebrew Bible. It is true that infanticide for the fear of penury seems to have been a widespread problem in Qurʾānic times, and Hawting is right in pointing out that the practice was indeed very common all around the Mediterranean. The theme of its prohibition is widespread in Christian and Jewish literature. (It is thus remarkable that the prohibition of infanticide in v. 31 does not make any reference to the Biblical Moloch tradition.)

Yet we may be able to identify a late antique channel of transmission of Biblical law, which in turn allows us to identify how the Qurʾān updates its received framework of established law. For the specific *combination* of a prohibition of idol worship, murder, and fraudulent measures in v. 22–35, along with the emphasis on prohibition of infanticide here and elsewhere (see also Q 6:151, Q 17:31, Q 60:12 and Q 81:8–9), has a special affinity to the *Didascalia Apostolorum* XVIII (esp. Vööbus 1979:32 and 181, and Zellentin 2013a:72–3). In this sense, it seems that against the background of the laws the Qurʾān's shares with the *Didascalia*, we can identify the Qurʾān's specific Arabic emendations of a broader Judaeo-Christian legal culture. We may even be able to pinpoint a timeline of this process.

In my comments on QS 3, I have sought to illustrate how the Qurʾān may adopt the Judaeo-Christian legal tradition to its specific Arabic context in the case of the *leges talionis*, only part of which it iterates here in v. 33. Intriguingly, when comparing the formulation of the *leges talionis* here and in Q 2:178–9, it seems that the latter passage reflects a much fuller engagement with the Judaeo-Christian tradition than does the present passage. This would corroborate basic aspects of the historical context of the Qurʾān from the point of view of its legal development, which I see as increasingly engaging its Jewish, its Christian, and its Judaeo-Christian framework.

QS 19 Q 17:85

17.85 They ask you about the soul.
Say: "The soul belongs to the realm of my Lord, and of knowledge you have been granted but little."

17.85 Et ils t'interrogent au sujet de l'âme, – Dis: «L'âme relève de l'Ordre de mon Seigneur». Et on ne vous a donné que peu de connaissance.

سورة الإسراء
وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا (85)

Dye

Le propos est *mis en scène* (*wa-yasʾalūnaka ʿan*), comme un discours de Dieu au Prophète, fournissant la réponse à une question qui lui aurait été posée. Il me paraît impossible de savoir s'il s'agit seulement d'un procédé littéraire et rhétorique, ou si cela traduit un événement réel (l'identité des questionneurs restant de toute façon mystérieuse).

Le passage est très obscur, *rūḥ* et *amr* étant très polysémiques (étude classique sur ce dernier terme : Baljon 1958), et pouvant donc recevoir des significations différentes selon les contextes. On peut le rapprocher de Q 16:2 et Q 40:15, et y voir une brève explication de la vision coranique de la prophétie. *Rūḥ* ne désigne pas ici le souffle de vie (Q 15:28), l'ange Gabriel (Q 19:17), ou le contenu du message inspiré (Q 42:52), mais bien plutôt l'esprit de Dieu censé parler à travers les propos du prophète (à rapprocher, bien sûr, de l'Esprit saint, cf. Q Baqara 2:87, 253). *Amr* (qui peut avoir une connotation eschatologique, mais pas nécessairement dans le présent contexte) me paraît simplement désigner ici l'ordre, la décision, divine – qui peut s'exprimer dans une parole (cf. par exemple Q 3:59). La préposition *min* peut être ambiguë : elle paraît signifier ici l'origine (l'esprit vient de l'ordre divin, il descend selon la décision divine).

On rencontre sans doute ici une référence à une conception de la prophétie très courante dans l'Antiquité : une seule et même essence divine, l'Esprit saint, s'est personnifiée dans les prophètes ou les a inspirés, jusqu'à trouver en Christ sa révélation pleine et entière (ce qui pourrait expliquer que le terme *rūḥ* apparaisse souvent dans des versets relatifs à Jésus). Mais on trouve aussi l'idée selon laquelle le bénéficiaire de l'Esprit, après Jésus, sera le Paraclet, ou que le Paraclet parlera à travers ses propos : ainsi, Dieu envoie, accorde l'Esprit, à qui il le décide (Q 40:15 ; Voir aussi Hebr/Hé 2:3).

Kropp

There are two difficult terms *ruḥ* (*allāh*) and *amr* (*allāh*). There is the suspicion that both of them are ambiguous and that their actual meaning in the context may be

very different, changing from verse to verse, e.g., *rūḥ* is simply the breath of God in one passage, a separate being bearing this breath or the message of God in another. The same is true for *amr*. In the case of *amr*, the Semitic cognates (in Aramaic) play an even more important role. As the phonetic shape in many cases does not indicate a foreign or a loan word this fact has to be established by the semantic part: Not an easy task in the case of the Qurʾān where allusion and not explicit narration prevails and to which we do not have parallel contemporary texts in Arabic.

Reynolds

Rūḥ is usually translated "spirit/Spirit" (Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Arberry, Hilali-Khan,) or "soul" (Shakir, Sher Ali, Hamidullah). Asad is typically idiosyncratic: "divine inspiration." *Amr* is translated "command" (Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Sher Ali, Asad: "...comes at my Sustainer's behest," Hamidullah) or "thing" (Hilali-Khan). The Latin paraphrase of Marracci reflects the traditional *sabab:* "Et interrogabunt te *Judei* de Spiritu (idest de anima). Responde: Spiritus est ex negotio Domini mei (*idest ex iis rebus, quarum scientia spectat ad Deum*) neque datum est vobis de scientia, nisi parum." Others raise the possibility that *amr* is something else entirely. Paret translates this verse: "Man fragt dich nach dem Geist. Sag: Der Geist ist Logos (amr) von meinem Herrn. Aber ihr habt nur wenig Wissen erhalten." Behind this translation is a notion found already in Jeffery, "In its use in connection with the Qurʾānic doctrine of revelation, however, [*amr*] would seem to represent the Aramaic *mēmrā*" (2007: 69). Rudolph comes to a similar conclusion: "Hier zeigt sich deutlich eine Emanationskette Gott – *amr* – *rūḥ*, die mit der abgestuften Trinitätslehre eines Origines, wo der Logos aus Gott, der Geist aus dem Logos emaniert" (1922: 41).

Rippin

Bell (1991: I, 475 [=v. 87]) views this verse as "detached" but I don't quite see why; but then he is not quite sure what to make of the verse either. Spirit here could be the spirit of revelation connected to knowledge (*ʿilm*) and the command (*amr*).

Sirry

This passage presents the *rūḥ* (spirit) as a divine mystery. One may ask: Why did the question of *rūḥ* become an issue? Who were "they" asking such a question in the passage? O'Shaughnessy, in his extensive study on the meaning of *rūḥ* in the Qurʾān (*The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran*), classifies the passage as belonging to the third Meccan period (according to the chronology of Nöldeke and Blachère). According to O'Shaughnessy, while in the first Meccan period, the *rūḥ* is often presented as a personal being, in the second period it is often associated with divine creative power (for instance, in the case of creation). Due to the shift from the personal to the impersonal use of the *rūḥ*, O'Shaughnessy argues, Muḥam-

mad's adversaries at Mecca "asked him what he meant by the term" (1953: 34). O'Shaughnessy also discusses some possible sources (Biblical and post-Biblical) for the Qurʾānic use of the term *rūḥ* either in its personal or impersonal senses. The fourth use of the *rūḥ* in Medina is connected with the spirit of holiness (*rūḥ al-quds*), which, according to O'Shaughnessy, "appears to have come increasingly under Jewish and Christian influence" (1953: 42). Although this is a possible explanation, it is also possible that *rūḥ* had been used for various meanings in the pre-Qurʾānic time, and the Qurʾān simply follows the course, not necessarily in chronological order. The Qurʾānic phrase "the *rūḥ* belongs to the command (*amr*) of my Lord" seems to suggest mystery. However, in three other places (Q 16:2; 40:15; 42:52) *rūḥ* is linked to *amr* in a more straightforward manner.

Stewart

The presentation of questions in this manner suggests that these were actual question presented by the Prophet's contemporaries and not hypothetical queries or casuistry. Such questions and their answers support the view that the Qurʾān was the result of a process of community building or a collective work in which many individuals played a role, as Neuwirth and Gilliot have suggested. The answer in this case, like those regarding the time of the Day of Judgment, is a disclaimer, deferring to the superior knowledge of God. It is important to realize, though, that in prophetic and other religious discourse, the denial of authority is one of the main methods of claiming authority, because he who conveys God's words is not speaking for himself but rather speaking for the higher power who must be obeyed. "The duty of the messenger is only to deliver the message" may be as sure a claim of religious authority as the prophets' repeated phrase in Q 26: "Fear God and obey me!"

Tesei

According to a tradition first recorded in the *tafsīr* ascribed to Muqātil, Q 17:85 would have been revealed alongside Q 18:9–26 and 18:83–102 as an answer to three questions through which the Meccan polytheists would have tested Muḥammad's prophetical authority. Such questions would have been suggested by the Jews of Medina. The historical value of this traditional account is highly doubtful (cf. Wansbrough 1977: 122–9; Reynolds 2010: 203–4). Indeed, the whole situation described seems to be written around the same verses the tradition is supposed to explain. Furthermore, one of the three passages referred to (i.e., Q 18:83–102) has been successfully traced back to a Syriac work composed after 629 CE (cf. van Bladel 2007b). This external evidence invalidates the "Meccan" dating implied by the tradition (cf. Tesei 2011). Finally, it might be observed that, even if we accepted that the account of the "prophetical test" is based on a real historical record, the attribution of the questions to either the Meccan polytheists or the Jews of Medina would still be suspicious. In fact, all three subjects which Muḥammad would have been asked about

concern religious and literary themes mostly widespread among Christians: the (Holy) Spirit; the miracle of the Sleepers of Ephesus (certified only in Christian sources); the legend of Alexander's wall against Gog and Magog (occurring in 7th c. Syriac apocalypses). Thus, even if the introducing sentence *wa-yasʾalūnaka ʿan al-rūḥ* reflected a religious quarrel that really occurred, this should have more likely involved a Christian audience rather than Jewish or polytheist opponents. Whatever it may be, despite the reconstruction of the traditional account, Q 17:85 seems to reveal an interest for Christian themes. In fact, it is worth remarking that in the Qurʾān, the word *rūḥ* often occurs in verses concerning Jesus and Mary (e.g., Q 2:87; 2:253; 4:171; 5:110; 19:17; 21:91; 66:12).

Toorawa

This verse features another (see QS 11 above) *yasʾalanūka* ("they ask you about") phrase. It is certainly possible that this forms part of a public disputation, and that therefore it is a *response* to a question. But it is also possible that this phrase deployed *in anticipation* of a question, preemptively as it were: "They will ask you about X, tell them X is..."

The similarity of the deployment of *rūḥ* ("spirit"), *amr* ("command") and *rabb* ('lord") in "*quli* ***l-rūḥ****u min* ***amr****i* ***rabb****ī*" ("Say/reply: The spirit comes (?) by the command of my lord") here is similar to the deployment of the same words in Q 97:4: *tanazzalu l-malāʾikatu wa* ***l-rūḥ****u fīhā bi-iḏni* ***rabb****ihim min kulli* ***amr*** ("the angels and the spirit descend in it, by permission of their lord [fulfilling] every command"). This echoing is worthy of deeper consideration. As for the vexing word *rūḥ*, could it mean/be God's will, i.e. the expression of it, or even simply revelation in an active sense, rather than "spirit"? That meaning seems tenable in all its Qurʾānic occurrences, even when it is *rūḥ al-qudus* (literally, "spirit of the holy,") though in three of those four instances, the connection with Jesus suggests that if we are dealing here with revelatory will, then it is one that was breathed into Jesus, at the moment of divinely willed conception. The traditional connection of *rūḥ* and *rūh al-qudus*—frequently imprecisely translated "the Holy Spirit"—with the Archangel Gabriel is not an impossible one, but that the *rūḥ* itself actually is Gabriel seems to me unlikely.

Zellentin

The divine origin and measured dispensation of knowledge, here (only *qalīlan* "a little" has been given) and throughout the Qurʾān, invites a discussion of the role of the "gnostic" tradition. It should be noted that the heresiological construct of "Gnosticism" has been thoroughly deconstructed by Williams (1999) and others, and when reading the Qurʾān, we are not even reminded of such movements as Valentinian and Sethian Gnostics (see King 2005). What we encounter in the Qurʾān, on the one hand, is the broad Christian consensus that *gnosis*, divine knowledge, is indeed part of the revelation (see also Dye's comment on this passage). On the other hand,

the Qurʾān's concept of *ʿilm*, here and throughout the book, has affinities to the respective pervasive concept of what the *Clementine Homilies* understand as *Gnosis* (especially in Books 2 and 3), which in turn contains anti-"Gnostic" tendencies shared with the rabbinic tradition (as suggested in my comments on QS 4).

The relationship of the Qurʾān to Gnosticism deserves an independent study, yet we can note already here that the *Clementine Homilies*, like the Qurʾān, associate the sprit with knowledge (as well as with reasoning and the fear of God, *Clementine Homilies* 20:2). This is of course a notion shared with the broader Christian tradition as well, yet more specifically, the *Homilies* describe Jesus as a faultless prophet who knows the "hidden things" and the unseen, and as the true Prophet who *always* foreknows through the spirit (ibid. 3:14). The Holy Spirit, in the *Homilies*, comes from "the divinity of the Spirit that is in (the Prophet)" (ibid. 2:10, see also 3:17). We may hence better understand the Qurʾān's linkage between the Spirit and knowledge, and especially the type of scarce knowledge in the passage at hand, when reading it in light of the respective Clementine and the Qurʾān's prophetology. Divine knowledge is concrete, it relates to the hidden things and the future, and will be bestowed upon the believers and withheld from the unbelievers through the true prophet, Muḥammad in the Qurʾān and Jesus in the *Homilies* (see also Tesei's comments on this passage on the affinity of Jesus and the spirit).

A broader inquiry into this shared concept of knowledge could allow us also to appreciate the differences between the way in which the concept of knowledge is employed in both texts: for example, the *Homilies*, as mentioned above, construct true *gnosis* explicitly as a rejection of the putative "Gnosticism" of its adversaries, the Qurʾān seems more focused simply on conveying its concept of *ʿilm* rather than defining it against diverging conceptions of it.

QS 20 Q 18:9 – 26

18.9 Or did you imagine that the people of the Cave and al-Raqim were a unique wonder among Our revelations?
18.10 Remember when the youths took refuge in a cave, saying: “Our Lord, bring down upon us mercy from on high, and make it easy for us to find the right way to follow in this matter.”
18.11 So We sealed their ears in the cave for a number of years,
18.12 then We brought them forth in order to learn which of the two groups was more accurate as to the time they spent.
18.13.We shall now narrate to you their story, in truth.
They were youths who believed in their Lord, and whom We increased in guidance.
18.14 And We strengthened their hearts when they rose up, saying: “Our Lord, Lord of the heavens and earth! We shall call upon no other god besides Him, else we utter a falsehood.
18.15 These our people have taken to themselves gods apart from Him. If only they could show some manifest proof for them! But who is more wicked than he who fabricates lies from God?
18.16 And now, having abandoned them and what they worship other than God, let us take refuge in a cave, and God will spread out His mercy and make it easy for you to find the prudent path to follow in this matter.”
18.17 And you would have seen the sun, as it arose, veering away from their cave on the right, and, as it set, cutting them out of its path on the left, they being in a cavity therein. That was a wonder of God.
He whom God guides is truly guided; he whom He leads astray, for him you shall find no protector, no mentor.
18.18 And you would have imagined them to be awake as they slept on. And We would turn them from right side to left, as their dog spread its paws across the entrance. If only you had seen them, you would have turned and fled from them, filled with terror of them.
18.19 Thus did We make them rise up again, to question one another.

18.9 Penses-tu que les gens de la Caverne et d’ar-Raquîm ont constitué une chose extraordinaire d’entre Nos prodiges?
18.10 Quand les jeunes gens se furent réfugiés dans la caverne, ils dirent: «O notre Seigneur, donne-nous de Ta part une miséricorde; et assure nous la droiture dans tout ce qui nous concerne».
18.11 Alors, Nous avons assourdi leurs oreilles, dans la caverne pendant de nombreuses années.
18.12 Ensuite, Nous les avons ressuscités, afin de savoir lequel des deux groupes saurait le mieux calculer la durée exacte de leur séjour.
18.13 Nous allons te raconter leur récit en toute vérité. Ce sont des jeunes gens qui croyaient en leur Seigneur; et Nous leur avons accordé les plus grands moyens de se diriger [dans la bonne voie].
18.14 Nous avons fortifié leurs cours lorsqu’ils s’étaient levés pour dire: «Notre Seigneur est le Seigneur des cieux et de la terre: jamais nous n’invoquerons de divinité en dehors de Lui, sans quoi, nous transgresserions dans nos paroles.
18.15 Voilà que nos concitoyens ont adopté en dehors de Lui des divinités. Que n’apportent-ils sur elles une preuve évidente? Quel pire injuste, donc que celui qui invente un mensonge contre Allah?
18.16 Et quand vous vous serez séparés d’eux et de ce qu’ils adorent en dehors d’Allah, réfugiez-vous donc dans la caverne: votre Seigneur répandra de Sa miséricorde sur vous et disposera pour vous un adoucissement à votre sort.
18.17 Tu aurais vu le soleil, quand il se lève, s’écarter de leur caverne vers la droite, et quand il se couche, passer à leur gauche, tandis qu’eux-mêmes sont là dans une partie spacieuse (de la caverne)... Cela est une des merveilles d’Allah. Celui qu’Allah guide, c’est lui le bien-guidé. Et quiconque Il égare, tu ne trouveras alors pour lui aucun allié pour le mettre sur la bonne voie.
18.18 Et tu les aurais cru éveillés, alors qu’ils dorment. Et Nous les tournons sur le côté droit et sur le côté gauche, tandis que leur

Said one of them: “How long did you remain thus?”
They said: “We remained for a day, or a part thereof.”
He said: “Your Lord knows best how long you remained. So send out one of you, with this your silver money, to the city, and let him find out which is the tastiest of food, and let him bring back to you a provision of it. Let him be discreet, and let no one know of your presence.
18.20 For, if they catch sight of you, they will stone you or force you back into their religion, and thus you will never prevail.”
18.21 Nevertheless, We divulged their presence, that they might know that God’s promise is true and that the Hour shall come, no doubt about it.
Remember when they argued amongst themselves, saying: “Build on top of them a structure – their Lord knows best about them.” Those who won the argument said: “Let us build on top of them a house of prayer.”
18.22 They shall say: “They were three in number, their dog a fourth.” Others will say: “They were five in number, their dog a sixth” – predicting the Unseen. Yet others will say: “Seven, their dog an eighth.”
Say: “My Lord knows best what their number was, and none knows it but a few.” So do not dispute this issue with them except in a superficial manner, and do not solicit the opinion of any of them concerning their number.
18.23 And do not say of anything: “I shall do this tomorrow”
18.24 unless you add “If God wills.” And remember your Lord if you forget, and say: “Perhaps my Lord will guide me to a path nearer than this in righteousness.”
18.25 They remained in their cave for three hundred years, to which were added nine.
18.26 Say: “God knows how long they remained. To Him belongs the Unseen in the heavens and earth. How He sees all! How He hears all! Apart from Him they have no protector, nor does He associate anyone with Him in His judgment.”

chien est à l’entrée, pattes étendues. Si tu les avais aperçus, certes tu leur aurais tourné le dos en fuyant; et tu aurais été assurément rempli d’effroi devant eux.
18.19 Et c’est ainsi que Nous les ressuscitâmes, afin qu’ils s’interrogent entre eux. L’un parmi eux dit: «Combien de temps avez-vous demeuré là?» Ils dirent: «Nous avons demeuré un jour ou une partie d’un jour». D’autres dirent: «Votre Seigneur sait mieux combien [de temps] vous y avez demeuré. Envoyez donc l’un de vous à la ville avec votre argent que voici, pour qu’il voie quel aliment est le plus pur et qu’il vous en apporte de quoi vous nourrir. Qu’il agisse avec tact; et qu’il ne donne l’éveil à personne sur vous.
18.20 Si jamais ils vous attrapent, ils vous lapideront ou vous feront retourner à leur religion, et vous ne réussirez alors plus jamais».
18.21 Et c’est ainsi que Nous fîmes qu’ils furent découverts, afin qu’ils [les gens de la cité] sachent que la promesse d’Allah est vérité et qu’il n’y ait point de doute au sujet de l’Heure. Aussi se disputèrent-ils à leur sujet et déclarèrent-ils: «Construisez sur eux un édifice. Leur Seigneur les connaît mieux». Mais ceux qui l’emportèrent [dans la discussion] dirent: «Elevons sur eux un sanctuaire».
18.22 Ils diront: «ils étaient trois et le quatrième était leur chien». Et ils diront en conjecturant sur leur mystère qu’ils étaient cinq, le sixième étant leur chien et ils diront: «sept, le huitième étant leur chien». Dis: «Mon Seigneur connaît mieux leur nombre. Il n’en est que peu qui le savent». Ne discute à leur sujet que d’une façon apparente et ne consulte personne en ce qui les concerne.
18.23 Et ne dis jamais, à propos d’une chose: «Je la ferai sûrement demain»,
18.24 sans ajouter: «Si Allah le veut», et invoque ton Seigneur quand tu oublies et dis: «Je souhaite que mon Seigneur me guide et me mène plus près de ce qui est correct».
18.25 Or, ils demeurèrent dans leur caverne trois cents ans et en ajoutèrent neuf (années).
18.26 Dis: «Allah sait mieux combien de temps ils demeurèrent là. A Lui appartient l’Inconnaissable des cieux et de la terre. Comme Il est Voyant et Audient! Ils n’ont aucun allié en

dehors de Lui et Il n'associe personne à Son commandement.

سورة الكهف
أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا (9) إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً
وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا (10) فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا (11) ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا
لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا (12) نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى (13) وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا
رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا (14) هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ
عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا (15) وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأْوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ
لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِرْفَقًا (16) وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ
تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا (17)
وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ
فِرَارًا وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا (18) وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا
رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ
بِكُمْ أَحَدًا (19) إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا (20) وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا
عَلَى أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا (21) سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ
سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا (22)
وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا (23) إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا
رَشَدًا (24) وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِئَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا (25) قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ
بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا (26)

Dye

Version coranique de la célèbre légende chrétienne des Sept Dormants (étude classique : Huber 1910). Les vv. 8 à 17 semblent combiner deux versions de l'histoire.

Je reprends ici l'analyse de Tardieu 2011.

Plusieurs traits de la légende chrétienne se retrouvent dans le Coran : des jeunes gens (en nombre incertain), persécutés pour leur foi en un Dieu unique, trouvent refuge dans une caverne où ils « dorment » très longtemps ; le soleil ne les atteint pas ; l'entrée de la caverne a été murée puis démolie ; de retour en ville, après leur réveil, ils sont découverts par leur monnaie périmée ; ils sont la preuve de la résurrection des morts. Le Coran sous-entend qu'ils sont l'objet d'un culte de la part des chrétiens.

D'autres éléments coraniques sont absents de la légende chrétienne : la caverne est un lieu non clos ; elle est orientée sud-nord (fond-entrée) – le parcours du soleil ne passe jamais à l'intérieur de la caverne – ; l'ange de Dieu tourne les jeunes gens côté droit, puis côté gauche, selon, peut-on supposer, que le soleil est à l'est ou à l'ouest. La résurrection des corps passe apparemment par leur soustraction au rayonnement solaire. Les éléments qui distinguent le récit coranique des récits chrétiens concernent l'espace-temps des Dormants, notamment la symbolique de l'espace.

Les *Homélies* de Jacques de Saroug (plus ancien témoignage *littéraire* conservé) parlent d'un veilleur (ange), non d'un chien. Cela ne signifie pas que le veilleur des

homélies est devenu un chien dans le Coran. Il convient de voir les choses à l'inverse. Au début du VIe siècle, Theodosius (*De situ Terrae sanctae* p. 148, § 26 Geyer), dans son guide de pèlerinage, mentionne la légende et parle du chien, dont le nom serait *Viricanus*. On peut penser que le conte oral, antérieur à la mise par écrit, mentionnait la présence du chien, qui a été supprimée par Jacques de Saroug, pour des raisons dogmatiques évidentes (incompatibilité avec le dogme de la résurrection de la chair). Moins tatillon, plus proche des récits populaires, l'auteur du récit coranique conserve le chien.

La légende des Dormants fait partie de la classification internationale des contes de tradition orale (n°766 Aarne-Thompson). Un autre passage de cette sourate (vv. 59–81, où Moïse rencontre un mystérieux personnage), appartient aussi au genre des contes de tradition orale (celui du sage ou du prophète déconcerté par les cheminements de la justice divine).

Grodzki

The Islamic tradition, followed by some Western scholars, attempts to explain the ambiguity of the numerals 300 and 9 in verse Q 18:25 as the difference between the solar and lunar calendars. Interestingly, the phrase *wa-izdādū tisʿan* may also well mean an imperative form: "and add nine [more to that number]" apart from its understanding as "and they added nine [more to that number]" which doesn't seem to make much sense. Would this mean an instruction to the editors/readers? What is its sense being mentioned here? The *wa-izdādū tisʿan* is not a later insertion, because it plays well with the rhyme of the preceding and following verses.

Pregill

The treatments of Griffith (2008) and more recently Reynolds (2010: 167–185) are convincing to me. This passage is of prime interest from a methodological perspective because it illustrates the variety and scope of late antique literary materials drawn into and evoked by Qurʾānic discourse, repurposed in pursuit of its particular goals and message. The clear Syriac precursors for the story of the *aṣḥāb al-kahf* are particularly interesting given the compelling argument of van Bladel (2008) about the dependence of the subsequent narrative about Ḏū'l-Qarnayn on the *Syriac Alexander Legend* and the particular time and place the latter seems to have been produced. The proximate sources of both of the main narratives in the *sūra* seem unusually transparent.

Vv. 21–26: A striking expression of intertextual self-consciousness; those who have tarried uselessly over superfluous details of the story are condemned, while believers are enjoined to cleave to the clear essence of the story's message and not investigate the obscurities too deeply (cf. Q 3:7?). The pioneering study of Madigan (2001) gives us a clear idea of the Qurʾān's self-conception, but a comprehensive examination of inner-Qurʾānic hermeneutics – that is, of the metatextual passages in

which the Qurʾān explicitly instructs its audience about how it should be approached and interpreted – is still a clear desideratum in the field.

The famous command to never say "I will do it tomorrow" without adding "God willing!" has an obvious precedent in James 4:13–16, where the context is likewise an admonition against valuing one's own power and autonomy over God's determination of everything (the theme of knowledge providing the critical link to the story of the *aṣḥāb al-kahf*). In James, the warning is specifically against saying "We will go to a certain town and spend a year there" – ironic, since the sleepers may have had such plans, and yet spent far more than a year in the cave.

Reynolds

The dog (v. 18) is a brilliant example of how closely connected the Qurʾān is to the Christian culture of the late antique Near East. In Jacob of Serugh's (d. 521) account of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus he presents them as lambs, threatened by a wolf (the devil) but protected by the good shepherd (Christ) who "left a *watcher* to be the guardian of their limbs" (Guidi 1885: 20). One suspects (in light of the metaphor employed) that the watcher would be a guard dog. Sure enough the pilgrim Theodosius—who traveled to the region of Ephesus in 530 – describes Ephesus as the city of "the seven sleeping brothers, and the dog Viricanus at their feet" (Theodosius 1893: 16).

Rippin

It is hard to avoid the impression that vv. 25 and 26 are out of place here. V. 26 picks up directly on the disputation theme of v. 22, whereas vv. 23 and 24 at best might be viewed as wanting to leave the resolution of all disputes – especially those regarding the future – to God. But vv. 23 and 24 seem to fit better with what comes after, verses which seem to be providing general guidance in their moral impact and then moving into the picture of the hereafter. The relationship between v. 25 and v. 26 also needs considering: is v. 26 a revision of v. 25 (as Bell [1991: I, 486 (=v. 25)] suggests) or is this a dispute between some people who say it was 300 years and others who say it was 309?

Stewart

The rhyme-words *hudā* (v. 13) and *ġadā* (v. 23) do not match the form of the rhyme words in the other verses, which are mostly of the pattern *faʿalā*, sometimes *faʿilā*, *fuʿulā*, with the accent on the first syllable, the ante-penultimate in the verse. However, *hudā* and *ġhadā* would have to have the accent on the penultimate, unless that they are combined as far as accent is concerned with the previous words. This is not entirely farfetched, because it clearly occurs in *mā-hiyah* and *awḥā-lahā* elsewhere. But is the text meant to be read *ḏālika-ġadā*, with one accentual contour, or even

less likely *zidnāhum-hudā?* Another alternative is to suggest that these are not, in fact, intended to be the endings of verses, so perhaps they should be joined to the following verses thereby removing the problem.

For the same reason, the final word in v. 18 *ruʿbā* should be read *ruʿubā* instead.

One must supply medial vowels in order to create the appropriate rhyme and rhythmical form.

In v. 22 mention of different numbers of sleepers and their dogs suggests an awareness of alternative or competing versions of the story.

In v. 25 *ṯalāṯ miʾat sinīna* This phrase not idiomatic, even in the Arabic dialects. It strongly suggests that the text is drawing on a text written in another language. In this case, the idea that there are traces of another language behind passages of the Qurʾān, just as Aramaic usage is detectable in the Greek of the New Testament, seems justified. The mention of 309 years is another indication of a close connection. The other versions of the story have many different numbers of years, but most of them are 300 and something.

Tesei

Within the story of the Companions of the Cave, the Qurʾān refers twice (vv. 12, 19) to the common topos about the impossibility to correctly perceive the length of time between death and the resurrection (cf. Q 2:259; 10:45; 17:52; 20:103–104; 23:112–114 30:55; 46:35). The idea that the dead fall completely unconscious until the Day of Judgement is strictly connected to the doctrine of the sleep of souls taught by late antique Syriac theologians (cf. Andrae 1955: 165–7; O'Shaughnessy, 1969: 69–70). In particular, it is worth remarking that a few years before the period assumed for Muḥammad's preaching, Babai the Great (d. 628) referred to the miracle of the Seven Sleepers to illustrate his doctrine about the soul's dormant state (1912: 30–31). As in the case of other Syriac writers (e.g., Ephrem and Narsai), in Babai's teaching the belief in the soul's sleep is intimately connected to his strong affirmation of the physical resurrection of the body on the Day of Judgment. Babai opposes his creed to Ḥenana of Adiabene (d. 610), whom he polemically accuses of professing Origenist doctrines and to deny "not only the resurrection of Our Lord's body, but also the general resurrection of the body of all men" (1915: 195). What is interesting is that the Qurʾān refers to the same miracle of the Sleepers with much the same theological purposes: to illustrate the post-mortem condition of the dead – characterized by a complete oblivion – and to affirm the final resurrection of the body. Indeed, in the account of the Companions of the Cave the aim to demonstrate God's ability to resuscitate the dead is evident (cf. v. 21). It might also be observed that the Qurʾān often refers to the topos of the post-mortem forgetfulness in passages that specifically argue against the denial of the resurrection. Thus, it seems that not only the Qurʾān refers to a theological concept very similar to that of the sleep of souls taught by the Syriac theologians, but that it also uses it with roughly the same theological and po-

lemical purposes, namely as an answer to those who deny the reality of the physical resurrection.

Toorawa

Sidney Griffith (2008: 125–127) has dealt masterfully with the question of the meaning of the hapax, *al-raqīm* (v. 9), namely "inscription" (or even "tablet"). As for the hapax *fağwa* (v. 17), this refers to a part of the cave, where the wondrous sleep took place, rendered by the form-hapax *ruqūd* (v. 18, "asleep"); the only other attestation of this root being *marqadinā* ("resting-place") at Q 36:52. Hapaxes are often to be found in close proximity, even in the same verse: this is the case with the strict hapax, *ayqāẓ* ("awake"), which also appears in v. 18.

Several rhyme-words in this passage are also of interest, all hapaxes of one sort or another

ʿağabā in v. 9 is reprised in v. 63;
rašadā in v. 10 is reprised in v. 24;
ʿadadā, *amadā* and *šaṭaṭā* also appear in Q 72;
kaḏibā in v. 15 reprises v. 5, and is also in Q 72;
mirfaqā is a form-hapax, but *murtafiqā*, formed from the same *R-F-Q* root, appears in vv. 29 and 31;
muršidā in v. 17 is a form-hapax;
aḥadā in v. 19 is reprised in v. 22.

Younes

Devin Stewart brings up an interesting point about the rhyme scheme of the verses in this passage, with the *faʿalā* (*faʿilā*, *fuʿulā*) pattern found in all of them except vv. 13, and 23. It is worth noting that these two verses play the same role: interrupting the flow of the story with the insertion of a lesson or a moral about piety.

This suggests that the passage may in fact consist of two layers, with the first layer forming the original story, and the second the addition of pious lessons to be drawn from it (*those who believe will receive more guidance from Allah*, and *don't say "I am doing something tomorrow"* [since everything is in the hands of Allah].)

Zellentin

The magisterial article by Griffith (2008) has shown the famous Qurʾānic story of the sleepers to have many points of contact with the respective Christian tradition, which heralds the triumph of Christianity over a pagan Roman Empire. One may now go further by trying to read the Qurʾānic story in turn as a perceptive polemic against the new Christian rulers of *al-rūm*, "Rome," substituting the Christian for the

pagan Roman Empire, and Christianity for paganism. (This would parallel a similar rabbinic technique of accusing the Roman Christian Empire as effectively remaining in the footsteps of their idolatrous forbearers, see Zellentin 2013b). A close reading of the Qurʾānic account in dialogue and contrast with the Christian one suggests a specific polemic against a concrete narrative, perhaps epitomized by the homily on the sleepers by Jacob of Serugh, and a broader polemic against the entirety of the Syriac Christian tradition on the sleepers.

Jacob of Serugh, through the eyes of a group of youths who go to sleep in Diocletian's time and wake up under Theodosius, conjures the miracle of the Christianization of Rome after the persecutions. Jacob portrays the youths as fleeing to the cave because they piously reject the "pagan" (*ḥnpʾ*, Bedjan 2006:53 and 73; see the comment by Pregill on QS 10 on the Qurʾānic use of the term) emperor's decree to burn incense to the idols, contrasting impiety of the pagan emperor with the piety of the Christian one. The Qurʾān, by contrast, depicts the sleepers as lamenting that "our people have taken gods besides Him" (v. 15) and as fleeing to the cave in order to dissociate themselves from "their people" and "from what they worship except God" (v. 16), formulations the Qurʾān elsewhere associates with Jesus-worship. The Qurʾān's language makes best sense if "their people" are Christian, exchanging the accusation of pagan worship for that of Christian *širk*. The Qurʾān makes it clear that while the Christian Romans may nominally worship one God, their new idolatry is to worship Jesus besides Him. It delivers its hardest blow by announcing that should "their people," i. e., the Christians, prevail over the sleepers, they would surely stone them to death, or force them back "into their *milla*, 'creed'—and then you will never be saved (v. 20)."

More broadly, the Qurʾān opens its narrative frame by indicating that an argument persists between two unnamed parties (*ḥizb*) about the number of years the youths effectively slept (v. 12), and closes it by mocking disputes about how many sleepers there were (v. 22, they include the dog!). Such differences of detail cannot of course be found within Jacob's homily. Yet vis-à-vis the Christian tradition as a whole, the Qurʾān seems to imply that the Christians miscalculated the years of sleep and engage in a futile argument about the number of sleepers, since in effect, "God knows best their number" (v. 22) and "God knows best how long they remained (v. 25)." Intriguingly, already the pre-Qurʾānic Syriac manuscripts show a wide variety of years of sleep, and can be grouped in two families arguing for seven or eight sleepers respectively, as noted by Brock (2007:16 and 20). The Qurʾān may then indeed best be understood as assuming its audience to know at least about various Christian versions of the account, and as artfully turning a central Christian narrative about the Christian triumph over pagan Rome into an anti-Christological polemic.

QS 21 Q 20:9 – 99

20.9 Has there come to you the narrative of Moses?
20.10 When he saw a fire, he said to his family: “Stay behind. I have glimpsed a fire; perhaps I will bring you a brand from it, or find at the fire guidance.”
20.11 When he drew near it, a voice called out to him: “O Moses!
20.12 It is Me, your Lord. Remove your sandals. You are in the sacred valley, Tuwa.
20.13 I have chosen you, so listen to what is being revealed.
20.14 It is Me, God: there is no god but I. So worship Me and perform the prayer for My remembrance.
20.15 The Hour is coming – I am about to reveal it – so that every soul is rewarded for what it has achieved.
20.16 Let him not turn you away from it, he who does not believe in it and follows his base desires, else you will perish.”
20.17 “And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?”
20.18 He said: “It is my staff; I lean upon it, and tend my sheep with it, and I have other uses for it.”
20.19 He said: “Throw it down, O Moses.”
20.20 He threw it down, and behold, it turned into a serpent, swiftly crawling.
20.21 He said: “Pick it up and fear not; We shall return it to its former state.
20.22 And tuck your hand into you armpit and it shall come out white, but without harm – another miracle.
20.23 Thus will We show you some of Our greatest wonders.
20.24 Go to Pharaoh: he has grown tyrannical.”
20.25 He said: “My Lord, open my breast,
20.26 make my mission easy for me,
20.27 and untie the knot in my tongue,
20.28 so that they may understand my speech.
20.29 And appoint for me one to share my burden, from my family,
20.30 Aaron my brother,
20.31 That through him I may brace my strength,
20.32 and make him a partner in my mission.

20.9 Le récit de Moïse t’est-il parvenu?
20.10 Lorsqu’il vit du feu, il dit à sa famille: «Restez ici! Je vois du feu de loin; peut-être vous en apporterai-je un tison, ou trouverai-je auprès du feu de quoi me guider».
20.11 Puis, lorsqu’il y arriva, il fut interpellé: «Moïse!
20.12 Je suis ton Seigneur. Enlève tes sandales: car tu es dans la vallée sacrée, Tuwâ.
20.13 Moi, Je t’ai choisi. Ecoute donc ce qui va être révélé.
20.14 Certes, c’est Moi Allah: point de divinité que Moi. Adore-Moi donc et accomplis la Salât pour te souvenir de Moi.
20.15 L’Heure va certes arriver. Je la cache à peine, pour que chaque âme soit rétribuée selon ses efforts.
20.16 Que celui qui n’y croit pas et qui suit sa propre passion ne t’en détourne pas. Sinon tu périras.
20.17 Et qu’est-ce qu’il y a dans ta main droite, ô Moïse?»
20.18 Il dit: «C’est mon bâton sur lequel je m’appuie, qui me sert à effeuiller (les arbres) pour mes moutons et j’en fais d’autres usages».
20.19 [Allah lui] dit: «Jette-le, O Moïse».
20.20 Il le jeta: et le voici un serpent qui rampait.
20.21 [Allah] dit: «Saisis-le et ne crains rien: Nous le ramènerons à son premier état.
20.22 Et serre ta main sous ton aisselle: elle en sortira blanche sans aucun mal, et ce sera là un autre prodige,
20.23 afin que Nous te fassions voir de Nos prodiges les plus importants.
20.24 Rends-toi auprès de Pharaon car il a outrepassé toute limite.
20.25 [Moïse] dit: «Seigneur, ouvre-moi ma poitrine,
20.26 et facilite ma mission,
20.27 et dénoue un noud en ma langue,
20.28 afin qu’ils comprennent mes paroles,
20.29 et assigne-moi un assistant de ma famille:
20.30 Aaron, mon frère,
20.31 accrois par lui ma force!
20.32 et associe-le à ma mission,

20.33 Thus will we glorify You often,
20.34 and remember You often.
20.35 You have ever been mindful of us."
20.36 He said: "Your request has been granted, O Moses.
20.37 We had favored you once before;
20.38 Remember when We revealed to your mother what was revealed:
20.39 'Throw him into a basket and fling him into the river,
And let the river deliver him to the bank,
Where an enemy of Mine and his will pick him up.
I have cast upon you a love from Me, and you shall be brought up under My caring eye.'
20.40 That was when your sister went about, saying: 'Shall I point out to you one who will take charge of him?'
We then returned you to your mother so that she may be of good cheer and not sorrow.
And you once killed a soul but We delivered you from distress, and subjected you to an ordeal most severe.
For years you remained with the people of Midian,
And then you came back at a time appointed, O Moses.
20.41 And I made you My very own.
20.42 So go forth, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not neglect My remembrance.
20.43 Go to Pharaoh: he has grown tyrannical,
20.44 And speak gently to him; perhaps he will remember or be in awe of Me."
20.45 They said: "We fear he might fly into a rage against us, or grow tyrannical."
20.46 He said: "Fear not. I am with you, listening and seeing.
20.47 Go to him and say: 'We are the Messengers of your Lord. Send out with us the Children of Israel, and do not torment them. We bring you a wonder from your Lord, and peace be upon him who follows right guidance.
20.48 To us has been revealed that torment shall fall upon him who denies and turns away.'"
20.49 He said: "Who is your Lord, O Moses?"
20.50 He said: "Our Lord is He who gave each thing its likeness in form, and then guided it."
20.51 He said: "What of earlier ages?"

20.33 afin que nous Te glorifions beaucoup,
20.34 et que nous T'invoquions beaucoup.
20.35 Et Toi, certes, Tu es Très Clairvoyant sur nous».
20.36 [Allah] dit: «Ta demande est exaucée, ô Moïse.
20.37 Et Nous t'avons déjà favorisé une première fois
20.38 lorsque Nous révélâmes à ta mère ce qui fut révélé:
20.39 «Mets-le dans le coffret, puis jette celui-ci dans les flots pour qu'ensuite le fleuve le lance sur la rive; un ennemi à Moi et à lui le prendra».
Et J'ai répandu sur toi une affection de Ma part, afin que tu sois élevé sous Mon oil.
20.40 Et voilà que ta sour (te suivait en) marchant et disait: «Puis-je vous indiquer quelqu'un qui se chargera de lui?» Ainsi, Nous te rapportâmes à ta mère afin que son oil se réjouisse et qu'elle ne s'afflige plus. Tu tuas ensuite un individu; Nous te sauvâmes des craintes qui t'oppressaient; et Nous t'imposâmes plusieurs épreuves. Puis tu demeuras des années durant chez les habitants de Madyan. Ensuite tu es venu, ô Moïse, conformément à un décret.
20.41 Et je t'ai assigné à Moi-Même.
20.42 Pars, toi et ton frère, avec Mes prodiges; et ne négligez pas de M'invoquer.
20.43 Allez vers Pharaon: il s'est vraiment rebellé.
20.44 Puis, parlez-lui gentiment. Peut-être se rappellera-t-il ou [Me] craindra-t-il?
20.45 Ils dirent: «O notre Seigneur, nous craignons qu'il ne nous maltraite indûment, ou qu'il dépasse les limites».
20.46 Il dit: «Ne craignez rien. Je suis avec vous: J'entends et Je vois.
20.47 Allez donc chez lui; puis, dites-lui: «Nous sommes tous deux, les messagers de ton Seigneur. Envoie donc les Enfants d'Israël en notre compagnie et ne les châtie plus. Nous sommes venus à toi avec une preuve de la part de ton Seigneur. Et que la paix soit sur quiconque suit le droit chemin!
20.48 Il nous a été révélé que le châtiment est pour celui qui refuse d'avoir foi et qui tourne le dos».
20.49 Alors [Pharaon] dit: «Qui donc est votre Seigneur, ô Moïse?»

20.52 He said: “Knowledge of them is with my Lord in a Book. My Lord strays not, nor does He forget.”
20.53 It is He who made the earth level for you, and marked out in it highways for you, and made water to descend from the sky, through which We caused to come forth pairs of diverse plants.
20.54 Eat, and pasture your animals – in this are signs for those possessed of reason.
20.55 From it We created you, to it We shall return you, and from it We shall once more resurrect you.
20.56 And We showed him all Our wonders, but he called them lies, and disdained.
20.57 He said: “Did you come to drive us out of our land,
20.58 through your magic, O Moses?
We will indeed bring you magic to match it.
So set a date for us and you, not to be missed by us or you, at a place agreed upon.”
20.59 He said: “Your appointment is on the Feast of the Pageant, and all people must be gathered there, in the morning.”
20.60 Pharaoh retired, gathered together all his cunning, and came back.
20.61 Moses said to them: “Wretches! Do not lie in God’s name, or He will ravage you with a torment; liars shall surely fail.”
20.62 So they argued amongst themselves over their plan of action, and consulted in secret.
20.63 They said: “These two are sorcerers who intend to drive you out of your land by their sorcery, and do away with your customary practice.
20.64 So muster your cunning and go forth in single file. Today, whoso comes out on top will surely prosper.”
20.65 They said: “O Moses, either you cast, or we cast first.”
20.66 He said: “No, you cast first.”
And it was as if their ropes and staffs appeared to him, through their sorcery, to be swiftly crawling.
20.67 In his heart Moses sensed fear.
20.68 We said: “Fear not; you shall indeed be the victor.
20.69 Cast down what is in your right hand and it shall swallow what they devised. They merely devised a sorcerer’s deception, but the sorcerer shall not prosper, wherever he may be.”

20.50 «Notre Seigneur, dit Moïse, est Celui qui a donné à chaque chose sa propre nature puis l’a dirigée».
20.51 «Qu’en est-il donc des générations anciennes?» dit Pharaon.
20.52 Moïse dit: «La connaissance de leur sort est auprès de mon Seigneur, dans un livre. Mon Seigneur [ne commet] ni erreur ni oubli.
20.53 C’est Lui qui vous a assigné la terre comme berceau et vous y a tracé des chemins; et qui du ciel a fait descendre de l’eau avec laquelle Nous faisons germer des couples de plantes de toutes sortes.»
20.54 «Mangez et faites paître votre bétail». Voilà bien là des signes pour les doués d’intelligence.
20.55 C’est d’elle (la terre) que Nous vous avons créés, et en elle Nous vous retournerons, et d’elle Nous vous ferons sortir une fois encore.
20.56 Certes Nous lui avons montré tous Nos prodiges; mais il les a démentis et a refusé (de croire).
20.57 Il dit: «Es-tu venu à nous, ô Moïse, pour nous faire sortir de notre terre par ta magie?
20.58 Nous t’apporterons assurément une magie semblable. Fixe entre nous et toi un rendez-vous auquel ni nous ni toi ne manquerons, dans un lieu convenable».
20.59 Alors Moïse dit: «Votre rendez-vous, c’est le jour de la fête. Et que les gens se rassemblent dans la matinée».
20.60 Pharaon, donc, se retira. Ensuite il rassembla sa ruse puis vint (au rendez-vous).
20.61 Moïse leur dit: «Malheur à vous! Ne forgez pas de mensonge contre Allah: sinon par un châtiment Il vous anéantira. Celui qui forge (un mensonge) est perdu».
20.62 Là-dessus, ils se mirent à disputer entre eux de leur affaire et tinrent secrètes leurs discussions.
20.63 Ils dirent: «Voici deux magiciens qui, par leur magie, veulent vous faire abandonner votre terre et emporter votre doctrine idéale.
20.64 Rassemblez donc votre ruse puis venez en rangs serrés. Et celui qui aura le dessus aujourd’hui aura réussi».
20.65 Ils dirent: «O Moïse, ou tu jettes, [le premier ton bâton] ou que nous soyons les premiers à jeter?»

20.70 The sorcerers were hurled to the ground, prostrate.
They said: “We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses.”
20.71 He said: “You believe in him before I grant you leave? He is merely the greatest among you, the one who taught you sorcery. I shall cut your hands and feet, alternately, and I shall crucify you on the trunks of palm trees. And you will surely know which of us is more grievous in torment and more lasting!”
20.72 They said: “We will not prefer you to what has come to us by way of clear proofs, nor to Him who created us. Decree what you wish to decree: your decree runs only in this present life.
20.73 We believe in our Lord that He may pardon our sins, and what you forced upon us of sorcery. God is better and more abiding.
20.74 Whoso comes to his Lord a sinner, hell shall be his lot, where he is neither dead nor alive.
20.75 Whoso comes to his Lord a believer, having done righteous deeds, to these belong the highest of ranks:
20.76 the Gardens of Eden, beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever. Such is the reward of one who purifies his soul.”
20.77 We revealed to Moses: “March out at night with My worshippers, and stake out a dry path for them through the sea. Fear not pursuit, and be not anxious.”
20.78 Pharaoh pursued them with his troops, and there flowed over them from the sea what flowed.
20.79 And Pharaoh led his nation astray, and guided them not.
20.80 O Children of Israel, We delivered you from your enemy and promised you the right side of the mountain. We caused manna and quail to descend on you.
20.81 Eat of the good things We provides you, but do not transgress, or My wrath shall fall upon you. He upon whom My wrath falls will sink to the depths.
20.82 And yet I am All-Forgiving towards him who repents, and believes, and does good deeds, and then is guided aright.
20.83 And what made you hurry forward, away from your people, O Moses?

20.66 Il dit: «Jetez plutôt». Et voilà que leurs cordes et leurs bâtons lui parurent ramper par l’effet de leur magie.
20.67 Moïse ressentit quelque peur en lui-même.
20.68 Nous lui dîmes: «N’aie pas peur, c’est toi qui auras le dessus.
20.69 Jette ce qu’il y a dans ta main droite; cela dévorera ce qu’ils ont fabriqué. Ce qu’ils ont fabriqué n’est qu’une ruse de magicien; et le magicien ne réussit pas, où qu’il soit».
20.70 Les magiciens se jetèrent prosternés, disant: «Nous avons foi en le Seigneur d’Aaron et de Moïse».
20.71 Alors Pharaon dit: «Avez-vous cru en lui avant que je ne vous y autorise? C’est lui votre chef qui vous a enseigné la magie. Je vous ferai sûrement, couper mains et jambes opposées, et vous ferai crucifier aux troncs des palmiers, et vous saurez, avec certitude, qui de nous est plus fort en châtiment et qui est le plus durable».
20.72 «Par celui qui nous a créés, dirent-ils, nous ne te préférerons jamais à ce qui nous est parvenu comme preuves évidentes. Décrète donc ce que tu as à décréter. Tes décrets ne touchent que cette présente vie.
20.73 Nous croyons en notre Seigneur, afin qu’Il nous pardonne nos fautes ainsi que la magie à laquelle tu nous as contraints». Et Allah est meilleur et éternel.
20.74 Quiconque vient en criminel à son Seigneur, aura certes l’Enfer où il ne meurt ni ne vit.
20.75 Et quiconque vient auprès de Lui en croyant, après avoir fait de bonnes ouvres, voilà donc ceux qui auront les plus hauts rangs,
20.76 les jardins du séjour (éternel), sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux, où ils demeureront éternellement. Et voilà la récompense de ceux qui se purifient [de la mécréance et des péchés].
20.77 Nous révélâmes à Moïse: «Pars la nuit, à la tête de Mes serviteurs, puis, trace-leur un passage à sec dans la mer: sans craindre une poursuite et sans éprouver aucune peur».
20.78 Pharaon les poursuivit avec ses armées. La mer les submergea bel et bien.
20.79 Pharaon égara ainsi son peuple et ne le mît pas sur le droit chemin.

20.84 He said: “These others are pursuing my tracks, and I hurried on to you, my Lord, that You may be content with me.”
20.85 He said: “We beguiled your people, after you left them, and the Samaritan has led them astray.”
20.86 Moses returned to his people, angry and in sorrow.
He said: “O people, did not your Lord make you a fine promise? Has time stretched too long for you, or did you wish your Lord’s anger to blaze upon you, and so broke my appointment?”
20.87 They said: “We did not break your appointment through any wish of ours, but we were made to carry burdens from the ornaments of these people, and we cast them, as did the Samaritan, into the pit of fire.”
20.88 He brought out to them a calf, with a body that lowed.
They said: “Here is your god and the god of Moses.” The Samaritan had forgotten.
20.89 Can they not see that it gives them back no response, and cannot bring them either harm or benefit?
20.90 Aaron had already said to them: “O people, you are merely enchanted with it. Your Lord is the All-Merciful, so follow me and obey my command.”
20.91 They said: “We shall continue to minister to it until Moses returns to us.”
20.92 He said: “O Aaron, what held you back, when you saw they had erred, from following me?
20.93 Or did you disobey my command?”
20.94 He said: “Son of my mother, seize me not by beard or head! I feared you would say: ‘You have divided the Children of Israel and paid no heed to my word.’”
20.95 He said: “What then is the matter with you, O Samaritan?”
20.96 He said: “I was aware of something they were not aware of. So I picked up a handful from the traces of the Messenger and flung it away. Thus did my soul tempt me to do.”
20.97 He said: “Depart! Your lot in life is to say: ‘No touching!’ You shall have an appointed time which you will not miss. Look at your god, near which you remained, ministering to it! We shall burn it all up, and then shall blow it away into the sea, like powder.

20.80 O Enfants d’Israël, Nous vous avons déjà délivrés de votre ennemi, et Nous vous avons donné rendez-vous sur le flanc droit du Mont. Et Nous avons fait descendre sur vous la manne et les cailles.
20.81 «Mangez des bonnes choses que Nous vous avons attribuées et ne vous montrez pas ingrats, sinon Ma colère s’abattra sur vous: et celui sur qui Ma colère s’abat, va sûrement vers l’abîme.
20.82 Et je suis Grand Pardonneur à celui qui se repent, croit, fait bonne ouvre, puis se met sur le bon chemin».
20.83 «Pourquoi Moïse t’es-tu hâté de quitter ton peuple?»
20.84 Ils sont là sur mes traces, dit Moïse. Et je me suis hâté vers Toi, Seigneur, afin que Tu sois satisfait.
20.85 Allah dit: «Nous avons mis ton peuple à l’épreuve après ton départ. Et le Sâmirî les a égarés».
20.86 Moïse retourna donc vers son peuple, courroucé et chagriné; il dit: «O mon peuple, votre Seigneur ne vous a-t-Il pas déjà fait une belle promesse? L’alliance a-t-elle donc été trop longue pour vous? ou avez-vous désiré que la colère de votre Seigneur s’abatte sur vous, pour avoir trahi votre engagement envers moi?»
20.87 Ils dirent: «Ce n’est pas de notre propre gré que nous avons manqué à notre engagement envers toi. Mais nous fûmes chargés de fardeaux d’ornements du peuple (de Pharaon); nous les avons donc jetés (sur le feu) tout comme le Sâmirî les a lancés.
20.88 Puis il en a fait sortir pour eux un veau, un corps à mugissement. Et ils ont dit: «C’est votre divinité et la divinité de Moïse; il a donc oublié»!
20.89 Quoi! Ne voyaient-ils pas qu’il [le veau] ne leur rendait aucune parole et qu’il ne possédait aucun moyen de leur nuire ou de leur faire du bien?
20.90 Certes, Aaron leur avait bien dit auparavant: «O mon peuple, vous êtes tombés dans la tentation (à cause du veau). Or, c’est le Tout Miséricordieux qui est vraiment votre Seigneur. Suivez-moi donc et obéissez à mon commandement».

20.98 Your god is but God, and there is no god but He. His knowledge encompasses all things."
20.99 Thus do We narrate to you reports of times gone by.
And from on high We brought you a Remembrance.

20.91 Ils dirent: «Nous continuerons à y être attachés, jusqu'à ce que Moïse retourne vers nous».
20.92 Alors [Moïse] dit: «Qu'est-ce qui t'a empêché, Aaron, quand tu les as vus s'égarer,
20.93 de me suivre? As-tu donc désobéi à mon commandement?»
20.94 [Aaron] dit: «O fils de ma mère, ne me prends ni par la barbe ni par la tête. Je craignais que tu ne dises: «Tu as divisé les enfants d'Israël et tu n'as pas observé mes ordres».
20.95 Alors [Moïse] dit: «Quel a été ton dessein? O Sâmirî?»
20.96 Il dit: «J'ai vu ce qu'ils n'ont pas vu: j'ai donc pris une poignée de la trace de l'Envoyé; puis, je l'ai lancée. Voilà ce que mon âme m'a suggéré».
20.97 «Va-t-en, dit [Moïse]. Dans la vie, tu auras à dire (à tout le monde): «Ne me touchez pas!» Et il y aura pour toi un rendez-vous que tu ne pourras manquer. Regarde ta divinité que tu as adorée avec assiduité. Nous la brûlerons certes, et ensuite, nous disperserons [sa cendre] dans les flots.
20.98 En vérité, votre seul Dieu est Allah en dehors de qui il n'y a point de divinité. De Sa science Il embrasse tout.
20.99 C'est ainsi que Nous te racontons les récits de ce qui s'est passé. C'est bien un rappel de Notre part que Nous t'avons apporté.

سورة طه

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى (9) إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى
(10) فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَا مُوسَى (11) إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى (12) وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا
يُوحَى (13) إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي (14) إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
تَسْعَى (15) فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَى (16) وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَا مُوسَى (17) قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ
أَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَى غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرَى (18) قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَا مُوسَى (19) فَأَلْقَاهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى (20)
قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَى (21) وَاضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةً أُخْرَى (22)
لِنُرِيَكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَى (23) اذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى (24) قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي (25) وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي (26)
وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي (27) يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي (28) وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي (29) هَارُونَ أَخِي (30) اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي (31)
وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي (32) كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا (33) وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا (34) إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا (35) قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا
مُوسَى (36) وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى (37) إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى (38) أَنِ اقْذِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْذِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ
الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِي وَعَدُوٌّ لَهُ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَى عَيْنِي (39) إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ
عَلَى مَنْ يَكْفُلُهُ فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَى أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ
مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَى قَدَرٍ يَا مُوسَى (40) وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي (41) اذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تَنِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي (42) اذْهَبَا
إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى (43) فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى (44) قَالَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا نَخَافُ أَنْ يَفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَى
(45) قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنَّنِي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى (46) فَأْتِيَاهُ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ قَدْ

جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى (47) إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ عَلَى مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (48) قَالَ فَمَنْ
رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى (49) قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى (50) قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَى (51) قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ
رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى (52) الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْ نَبَاتٍ شَتَّى (53) كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي النُّهَى (54) مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا
نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى (55) وَلَقَدْ أَرَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى (56) قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا
مُوسَى (57) فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِثْلِهِ فَاجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَا نُخْلِفُهُ نَحْنُ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى (58) قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ
الزِّينَةِ وَأَنْ يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى (59) فَتَوَلَّى فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَتَى (60) قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنِ افْتَرَى (61) فَتَنَازَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّجْوَى (62) قَالُوا إِنْ هَذَانِ لَسَاحِرَانِ يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ
يُخْرِجَاكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثْلَى (63) فَأَجْمِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوا صَفًّا وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنِ اسْتَعْلَى
(64) قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَى (65) قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ
سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَى (66) فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَى (67) قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى (68) وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ
مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدُ سَاحِرٍ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى (69) فَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى
(70) قَالَ آمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي
جُذُوعِ النَّخْلِ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى (71) قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَى مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ
قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (72) إِنَّا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَايَانَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (73)
إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَا (74) وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ
الْعُلَا (75) جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (76) وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَسْرِ
بِعِبَادِي فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَا تَخَافُ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَى (77) فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِنَ الْيَمِّ مَا
غَشِيَهُمْ (78) وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَى (79) يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ قَدْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوَاعَدْنَاكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنَ
وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى (80) كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي وَمَنْ يَحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي
فَقَدْ هَوَى (81) وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى (82) وَمَا أَعْجَلَكَ عَنْ قَوْمِكَ يَا مُوسَى (83) قَالَ هُمْ
أُولَاءِ عَلَى أَثَرِي وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى (84) قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ (85) فَرَجَعَ مُوسَى
إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَأَخْلَفْتُمْ مَوْعِدِي (86) قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا وَلَكِنَّا حُمِّلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِنْ زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذَلِكَ أَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ (87)
فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَى فَنَسِيَ (88) أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا (89) وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي (90)
قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَى (91) قَالَ يَا هَارُونُ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا (92) أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ
أَمْرِي (93) قَالَ يَا ابْنَ أُمَّ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا بِرَأْسِي إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي (94)
قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَا سَامِرِيُّ (95) قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي
نَفْسِي (96) قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَنْ تُخْلَفَهُ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى إِلَهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ
عَاكِفًا لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا (97) إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (98) كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ
مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا (99)

Azaiez

On recense trop peu d'études sur l'art de la narration dans le Coran qui tente de « saisir les relations qu'entretiennent les personnages entre eux et les forces qui agissent sur le déroulement de l'action » (Aletti, Gilbert & Ska 2005: 69). La seule étude marquante mais non publiée est celle de Gasmi Laroussi (1977). La démarche narratologique serait en l'occurrence une contribution utile à la détermination des spécificités du discours coranique. Le récit mosaïque est ici l'occasion d'en observer quelques caractéristiques. La narration est amplement dialogique (*cf.* QS 2). On

pourrait aisément parler d'énonciation théâtrale (Ben Taïbi 2009: 155) avec un récit (s'apparentant à des didascalies) et un discours (échanges de paroles et de points de vue antagonistes). En se fondant sur cette distinction, on parvient à diviser le récit en sept scènes dialogiques avec systématiquement trois personnages (l'un parfois muet) qui sont en interactions verbales. Ces scènes développent, elles-mêmes, un décor minimaliste avec des indications temporelles réduites. A cet égard, on distingue plusieurs types de temporalité : linéaire (progression du récit selon le schéma biblique : en Egypte/Hors d'égypte), anticipée (Dieu donne à Moïse et Aaron des instructions qui décrivent par anticipation ce qui va être dit), inversée ou « flash-back » (Le veau d'or est raconté à l'intérieur même du texte), condensée (les péripéties sont résumées), simultanée (l'épisode du veau d'or se place au moment de la rencontre avec Dieu), itérative (épisode du bâton qui se répète). Mais il est aussi ici intéressant de noter l'insertion systématique et décisive de points doctrinaux évidents qui contribuent à orienter le sens du récit et définir l'agenda théologique spécifique du Coran (on pense par exemple pour la première séquence aux vv. 14 – 16, au v. 48 (2ème séquence) ...

Actants	Versets	Temps (indices)	Espace (Toponymes)	Objet
Moïse / Famille (muet) / Dieu	11 – 36	L'Heure eschatologique (*al-sāʿata, v.* 15)	*ṭuwā*	Bâton (*ʿaṣāya, v.* 18) jeté
Moïse (muet) / Dieu / Famille	37 – 48	Années (*sinīna*, *v.* 40)	*madyan*, Fleuve (*al yam, v. 39*)	Coffret (*tābūt*, *v.* 39) jeté
Moïse / Pharaon / Famille	49 – 59	Rendez-vous (*mawʿidan, v.* 58)	Territoire (*ʾarḍ*, *v.* 57, 63)	Livre (*kitāb*, *v.* 52)
Moïse / Magicien / Pharaon	60 – 76	Aujourd'hui (*al-yawma*, *v.* 64)	Enfer/Paradis (*ǧahanna, v. 74*/*ǧannā, v.* 76)	Bâtons, (*ʿiṣiyyu)* et cordes (*ḥibāl, v. 66*)
Moïse / Dieu / Pharaon	77 – 82	Fixé un rendez-vous (*wā ʿadnākum, v.* 80)	Mer/Mont (*baḥr*/*ṭūr, v.* 78, 80)	La Manne et les cailles (*al-manna wa-l-salwā, v. 80*)
Moïse / Dieu / Peuple	83 – 91	*Flash-back* littéraire...	Mont (sans mention explicite); Traces (*ʾaṯar, v.* 84)	Veau d'or (*ʿiǧʾlan*, *v.* 88)
Moïse / Frère / *Sāmirī*	92 – 99	Rendez-vous (*mawʿidan, v.* 97)	Mont (sans mention explicite)	Barbe/Tête (*raʾs*, *liḥyat*, v. 94) Traces (*ʾaṯar, v.* 96) Cendres (sans précision explicite, *v.* 97)

Grodzki

What is the meaning of the two disconnected letters – the *muqaṭṭaʿāt* – put at the beginning of this *sūra?* Among many theories there is one pointing to their hypothetically mnemonic or semiotic significance, i. e., carrying a reference to the contents or theme of the passage (one of the proponents of this thesis was Hamiduddin Farahi). The letter *ṭāʾ* symbolizing in the Arab tradition the serpent, prefixes four *sūra*s which adduce the story of Moses and the serpent(s): 20, 26, 27 and 28.

Pregill

The importance of Moses as a mythic precursor to the Qurʾānic prophet can hardly be overstated. The overall structure of the *sūra* is significant and it must be read as a unified composition. The opening passage in vv. 1–8 is reminiscent of dedicatory proems in Syriac *memrē*, and the *sūra* as a whole may profitably be compared with Jacob of Serugh's cycle of hymns on Moses.

In my forthcoming monograph *The Living Calf of Sinai: Bible and Qur'an between Late Antiquity and Islam* I propose a new reading of the Calf episode (vv. 83–98) that challenges the traditional understanding of the story as depicting the intervention of a malevolent "Samaritan" who caused the Calf to appear to be alive, thus tricking the credulous Israelites into worshipping it. This episode is a prime example of the way in which *tafsīr* functioned to radically reconstrue the meaning of Qurʾānic narratives in keeping with the exegetical and theological priorities of the emergent Muslim community.

The Qurʾān's retelling of the story reflects substantial engagement with a precursor narrative that must have resembled the canonical version in Exodus 32 closely, recast according to the prevailing narrative priorities of Qurʾānic discourse and also partially informed by larger trends in late antique exegesis.

The phrase *ʿiǧl ǧasad la-hu ḫuwārun* (v. 88), "an image of a lowing calf" (and not a "lowing image of a calf"), is an echo of Psalm 106:20, where the Golden Calf is referred to as "an image of an ox, eater of grass"; the idea that the Calf actually gave the impression of being alive is the creation of the *mufassirūn*.

Al-Sāmirī (vv. 85, 87, 95) is not a "Samaritan" but rather a "Samarian," and the term refers to Aaron, not a separate individual involved in the incident. The Qurʾānic account is constructing an etiology of the worship of golden calves in the kingdom of Samaria that is depicted in the Bible (cf. 1 Kgs 12) by positing Aaron as the inventor of "Samarian" worship, called this because of its association with Aaron, the *sāmir/ samīr* (watchman or guardian) of the Israelites in Moses' absence.

The "curse" of exile imposed on *al-Sāmirī* (v. 97) is actually an assignment of a new role to Aaron: *inna la-ka mawʿīdan lan tuḫlafahu*, "you have an obligation you will not shirk," i. e., the duties of the Israelite priesthood, which is understood as one aspect of the Israelite Law imposed as a penalty for the Calf in Syriac sources. Note also the ironic resonance with a key phrase from the parallel narrative in Q 7:142, *aḫlufnī fī qawmī*, the commissioning of Aaron as *ḫalīfa* to Moses.

Reynolds

With the phrase *inna al-sāʿata ātiyatun akādu uḫfīhā* (v. 15), the God of the Qur'ān warns humans of the arrival of the judgment day and express His desire to keep it hidden, thereby (presumably) to keep infidels from repenting and escaping the punishment of hell. This declaration epitomizes the concern of the Qurʾān's author with effective exhortation/paraenesis.

The reference to Midian in v. 40 (the Qurʾānic form *madyan* is closer to the Syriac *madyan* than Hebrew *midyān*) raises the question of the relationship between the Moses and Šuʿayb material in the Qurʾān. One possibility, raised by John Jandora, is that Q 7:159 ("Among the people of Moses is a nation who guide [the people] by the truth and do justice thereby.") refers to the pre-Islamic community of Šuʿayb which thought of itself as Mosaic and located itself in Midian, the land of Moses (Jandoura 2012, 117 ff.).

Rippin

With appropriate apologies I will point to my own article on the word *Ṭuwā* as it occurs in v. 10, (Rippin 2012; see also Kropp 2009a). There I survey the various solutions proposed by classical and modern exegetes as well as recent scholarly works. Most translations take the word as a toponym as do most exegetes, although many exegetes also see a meaning to the name. The interesting thing (to me) is that clearly the exegetes knew the Biblical tradition and thus perceived a problem with the name and thus were driven to interpret it in some way; many modern scholars too see the problem and, especially in the case of Bellamy (2001: 2–3), want to change the text in order to have it "make sense" in light of the Biblical tradition.

Stefanidis

Among the notable differences between this version of the account of Moses' call and mission and the Biblical one are the Qurʾānic attempts to universalize the narrative. Thus, God in the Qurʾān introduces himself to Moses as *rabbuka* (v.12), *allāhu l-ʿazīzu l-ḥakīm* (Q 27:9), *rabbu l-ʿālamīn* (Q 28:30) but never as the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6). Q 2:133 is the only mention of "the god of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac" in the Qurʾān, appropriately put in the mouths of Jacob's sons. More fundamentally perhaps, God does not primarily send Moses to Pharaoh because he has taken pity on his people (Ex 3:7) but rather to punish Pharaoh for his arrogance and unbelief (vv. 24, 43). The Qurʾānic encounter of Moses and Pharaoh becomes another example of how God destroys unjust peoples who rejected their messenger. Consequently, the Qurʾān implies that Pharaoh's people as a whole were drowned and not just his army pursuing the Hebrews (Q 43:55, also Q 40:30–1). As a story belonging to the Jews, the Exodus' narrative had to be universalized to become meaningful to the emerging Muslim community.

Tengour

Comme un certain nombre de récits bibliques, les récits mosaïques font leur entrée dans le Coran vers le milieu de la période mecquoise (entre 615 et 619, dates présumées). La vingtième sourate renferme le plus long d'entre ces récits où la figure de Moïse, *Mūsā* en arabe, est citée aux côtés de Pharaon dont il ne sera plus autant question dans les passages mosaïques de période médinoise. Ce récit sur Moïse est également le plus complet que compte le Coran. Cependant, certaines zones d'ombres subsistent. Ainsi, la remise des Tables, *'alwāḥ* (il y est question dans Q 7:145) et plus généralement ce que fait Moïse lorsqu'il s'absente pendant que le Samaritain, *al-Sāmirī*, détourne son peuple (vv. 85–96), sont ici totalement passés sous silence.

Dans une perspective historienne, ce passage devra être lu à la lumière du contexte dans lequel il a été dit, celui de la polémique qui continue d'opposer l'homme Muḥammad à sa tribu des *Qurayš* qui demeure sourde à son avertissement, *'inḏār*. De manière globale, les emprunts relatifs à Moïse serviront la cause coranique qui espère, par ce biais, convaincre des Mecquois de plus en plus sceptiques et railleurs à l'encontre de Muḥammad d'entrer dans l'alliance d'*Allāh*. Muḥammad, quant à lui, est dans le même temps exhorté à prendre son mal en patience. C'est ce dont rendent compte les passages suivants : Q 10:109; 20:130; 30:60; 38:17; 40:55, 77; 46:35; 50:39; 52:48; 68:48; 70:5; 73:10; 74:7; 76:24.

Un autre argument peut être identifié dans le choix que fait la parole coranique en recourant à une figure biblique comme celle de Moïse afin de plaider la cause de son intermédiaire, celui de trouver chez d'autres des exemples d'avertisseurs mis en échec et rejetés par les leurs. Pour la tribu dénégatrice, ces exemples ont pour but de leur montrer que leur surdité risque de les conduire à un sort aussi funeste que celui que connurent Pharaon et son peuple, punis d'engloutissement, *'iġrāq* (v. 78).

Toorawa

I should like to draw attention to three features of this passage:

Rhyme. Mūsā is frequently deployed as an end-word (vv. 9, 11, 17, 19, 36, 40, 49, 57, 67, 70, 83, 91). Did this guide the choice of rhyme sound for the entire *sūra*, including the *fawātiḥ*, namely *Ṭā-Hā?* And why is al-Sāmirī (the "Samaritan"?), one of the individuals mentioned in this passage, only mentioned in end-word position (vv. 85, 87, 95), but in violation of the rhyme scheme?

Story. Just as Zachariah asks God to grant him an heir: "*fa-hab lī... waliyyā*," "so grant me... an heir"—viz. John the Baptist (Q 19:5), so too Moses asks for a successor from his family in this passage: "*wa-ǧʿal lī wazīran min ahlī*," "so grant me a helper from my family" (v. 29)—viz. Aaron. Zachariah is asked by God to keep silent (19:10); Moses has trouble speaking (v. 27). It would seem that in this *sūra*, as in *sūrat Maryam*, speech and silence as well as speaking and silencing are important.

Characters. Where is Moses' (and therefore Aaron's) father? Indeed, who is their father? More attention needs to be paid to the mention of kin, or silence about them —this seems to me to be important rhetorically and narratively.

Younes

[1] A similar pattern to the one I suggested in my comment on QS 20 is repeated in this passage. But instead of interrupting the narrative, the break between two parts of the story is used to insert a lesson about piety. A dialogue is taking place between God and Moses (and Aaron in a few cases), which ends with v. 52. V. 57 does not seem to follow from v. 52. The change to the second person plural in v. 53 marks the beginning of the lesson about God's miracles with a third party as the addressee. The lesson ends in v. 56 and the story of Moses and the Pharaoh resumes in v. 57.

[2] The phrase *inna hāḏāni la-sāḥirāni* in v. 63 has attracted a great deal of attention since the word *hāḏāni* violates the standard rules of Arabic case assignment. As the subject of *inna* it should be assigned the accusative case and be spelled *hāḏayni* according to these rules. Different ways have been followed to address the problem. 'Ā'isha is reported to have said that this was a scribal error (al-Farrā' 2002, 1:106). Some readers read the word as *hāḏayni* in spite of the spelling which does not support such a reading.

In the standard Cairo edition, the problem is resolved by substituting the case changing *inna* (إِنَّ) by the homographic *in* (إِنْ), which is case-neutral.

QS 22 Q 23

23.1 The believers have prevailed!
23.2 They who in prayer are humble;
23.3 Who abstain from idle chatter;
23.4 Who constantly fulfill the obligation of almsgiving;
23.5 Who guard their shame,
23.6 except with spouses or what their right hands own, For then they are not to blame –
23.7 But whoso covets what lies beyond this, These are transgressors –
23.8 Who are faithful in their trusts and contracts;
23.9 Who persevere in prayer.
23.10 These are the inheritors,
23.11 Who shall inherit Paradise, abiding therein forever.
23.12 We created man from the essence of clay,
23.13 Then made him a sperm in a well guarded cavity,
23.14 The sperm We turned into a blood clot, the blood clot into a morsel,
The morsel into bones,
The bones We clothed with flesh,
And then We reared him into another creation. Blessed is God, the most excellent of Creators!
23.15 Thereafter you will surely die,
23.16 And on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be brought out, alive.
23.17 Above you We created seven heavens, nor were We heedless of creation.
23.18 We made water to descend from the sky, in measure,
And settled it on earth,
But We are in truth capable of blotting it out.
23.19 For you We reared therewith gardens of palms and vines,
From which you garner much fruit, and from which you eat.
23.20 A tree too We reared, sprouting on Mount Sinai,
Which brings forth oil and flavoring to those who eat from it.
23.21 In livestock you have a lesson:
From their bellies We give you to drink;
In them are many benefits to you;
From them you eat.

23.1 Bienheureux sont certes les croyants,
23.2 ceux qui sont humbles dans leur Salât,
23.3 qui se détournent des futilités,
23.4 qui s'acquittent de la Zakât,
23.5 et qui préservent leurs sexes [de tout rapport],
23.6 si ce n'est qu'avec leurs épouses ou les esclaves qu'ils possèdent, car là vraiment, on ne peut les blâmer;
23.7 alors que ceux qui cherchent au-delà de ces limites sont des transgresseurs;
23.8 et qui veillent à la sauvegarde des dépôts confiés à eux et honorent leurs engagements,
23.9 et qui observent strictement leur Salât.
23.10 Ce sont eux les héritiers,
23.11 qui hériteront le Paradis pour y demeurer éternellement.
23.12 Nous avons certes créé l'homme d'un extrait d'argile.
23.13 puis Nous en fîmes une goutte de sperme dans un reposoir solide.
23.14 Ensuite, Nous avons fait du sperme une adhérence; et de l'adhérence Nous avons créé un embryon; puis, de cet embryon Nous avons créé des os et Nous avons revêtu les os de chair. Ensuite, Nous l'avons transformé en une tout autre création. Gloire à Allah le Meilleur des créateurs!
23.15 Et puis, après cela vous mourrez.
23.16 Et puis au Jour de la Résurrection vous serez ressuscités.
23.17 Nous avons créé, au-dessus de vous, sept cieux. Et Nous ne sommes pas inattentifs à la création.
23.18 Et Nous avons fait descendre l'eau du ciel avec mesure. Puis Nous l'avons maintenue dans la terre, cependant que Nous sommes bien Capable de la faire disparaître.
23.19 Avec elle, Nous avons produit pour vous des jardins de palmiers et de vignes, dans lesquels vous avez des fruits abondants et desquels vous mangez,
23.20 ainsi qu'un arbre (l'olivier) qui pousse au Mont Sinaî, en produisant l'huile servant à oindre et où les mangeurs trempent leur pain.
23.21 Vous avez certes dans les bestiaux, un sujet de méditation. Nous vous donnons à

23.22 Upon them, and aboard ships, you are carried.
23.23 We sent Noah to his people.
He said: “My people, worship God. You have no other god but He. Will you not turn to piety?”
23.24 The chieftains of his people who disbelieved said: “This fellow is nothing but a human being, like you, who seeks preferment over you. Had God willed, He would have sent down angels. We never heard the like of it among our ancient forefathers.
23.25 He is but a man in whom there is madness. So watch him closely for a while.”
23.26 He said: “My Lord, help me against their lies about me.”
23.27 So We inspired him: “Build the Ark where We can watch over you, and with Our inspiration.”
And it came to pass that when Our command went forth, and water gushed up to the surface, We said: “Load up on board two of every kind, and your family – except for those foretold – and do not plead with Me regarding those who are wicked. They shall be drowned.
23.28 When you and your followers are safely settled aboard the Ark, say: ‘Praise be to God, Who delivered us from an evil people’,
23.29 and say: ‘My Lord, grant me a blessed resting place: You are the best of those who grant a place of rest.’”
23.30 In this are signs. We brought upon them a true calamity.
23.31 Then, after them, We reared another generation.
23.32 And We sent them a Messenger, from their number, saying: “Worship God. You have no other god but He. Will you not be pious?”
23.33 The chieftains of his people, who blasphemed and denied the encounter of the hereafter – We had granted them a life of luxury in this present world – said: “This fellow is nothing but a human being like you, who eats what you eat and drinks what you drink.
23.34 If you obey a mere human like you, you would truly be the losers.
23.35 Does he promise you that, once dead and turned into dust and bones, you will again be brought forth?
23.36 How ludicrous, how ludicrous that which you are promised!

boire de ce qu’ils ont dans le ventre, et vous y trouvez également maintes utilités; et vous vous en nourrissez.
23.22 Sur eux ainsi que sur des vaisseaux vous êtes transportés.
23.23 Nous envoyâmes Noé vers son peuple. Il dit: «O mon peuple, adorez Allah. Vous n’avez pas d’autre divinité en dehors de Lui. Ne [Le] craignez-vous pas?»
23.24 Alors les notables de son peuple qui avaient mécru dirent: «Celui-ci n’est qu’un être humain comme vous voulant se distinguer à votre détriment. Si Allah avait voulu, ce sont des Anges qu’Il aurait fait descendre. Jamais nous n’avons entendu cela chez nos ancêtres les plus reculés.
23.25 Ce n’est en vérité qu’un homme atteint de folie, observez-le donc durant quelque temps.
23.26 Il dit: «Seigneur! Apporte-moi secours parce qu’ils me traitent de menteur».
23.27 Nous lui révélâmes: «Construis l’arche sous Nos yeux et selon Notre révélation. Et quand Notre commandement viendra et que le four bouillonnera, achemine là-dedans un couple de chaque espèce, ainsi que ta famille, sauf ceux d’entre eux contre qui la parole a déjà été prononcée; et ne t’adresse pas à Moi au sujet des injustes, car ils seront fatalement noyés.
23.28 Et lorsque tu seras installé, toi et ceux qui sont avec toi, dans l’arche, dis: «Louange à Allah qui nous a sauvés du peuple des injustes».
23.29 Et dis: «Seigneur, fais-moi débarquer d’un débarquement béni. Tu es Celui qui procure le meilleur débarquement».
23.30 Voilà bien là des signes. Nous sommes certes Celui qui éprouve.
23.31 Puis, après eux, Nous avons créé d’autres générations,
23.32 Nous envoyâmes parmi elles un Messager [issu] d’elles pour leur dire: «Adorez Allah. Vous n’avez pas d’autre divinité en dehors de Lui. Ne le craignez-vous pas?»
23.33 Les notables de son peuple qui avaient mécru et traité de mensonge la rencontre de l’au-delà, et auxquels Nous avions accordé le luxe dans la vie présente, dirent: «Celui-ci n’est qu’un être humain comme vous, mangeant de ce que vous mangez, et buvant de ce que vous buvez.

23.37 There is nothing but our present life: we die and we live and we shall not be resurrected.
23.38 He is merely a man who fabricates lies from God, and we do not believe in him."
23.39 He said: "My Lord, support me, seeing that they called me a liar."
23.40 He said: "In a short while, they will wake up and be truly repentant."
23.41 The Scream seized them in truth, and We turned them into flotsam. Away with a wicked people!
23.42 Then, after them, We reared other generations.
23.43 No nation can bring forward its appointed span of time, nor can they delay it.
23.44 Then We sent Our Messengers, one after the other. Whenever a Messenger came to a nation, they called him a liar. So We made them follow one another into destruction, and made them into moral examples – Away with a people who do not believe!
23.45 Thereafter We sent Moses and his brother Aaron, with Our revelations and manifest proof,
23.46 to Pharaoh and his chieftains. But they grew arrogant and were a haughty people.
23.47 They said: "Are we to believe in two humans, like us, while their own people are serving us?"
23.48 So they called them liars and were among those condemned to perish.
23.49 To Moses We brought the Book, that they may find guidance.
23.50 And We made the Son of Mary and his mother a wonder.
We caused them to retire to a high place, with level ground and a fountain.
23.51 O Messengers, eat what is licit and wholesome, and perform righteous deeds;
I know full well what you do.
23.52 This, your nation, is a single nation, and I am your Lord. So fear Me.
23.53 Mankind, however, rent the true faith into Books, each sect content with what they have.
23.54 So leave them in their depths of ignorance – for a while.
23.55 Do they suppose that, in furnishing them with wealth and progeny,
23.56 We are ever ready to bring them favors? In truth, they are oblivious.

23.34 Si vous obéissez à un homme comme vous, vous serez alors perdants.
23.35 Vous promet-il, quand vous serez morts, et devenus poussière et ossements, que vous serez sortis [de vos sépulcres]?
23.36 Loin, loin, ce qu'on vous promet!
23.37 Ce n'est là que notre vie présente: nous mourons et nous vivons; et nous ne serons jamais ressuscités.
23.38 Ce n'est qu'un homme qui forge un mensonge contre Allah; et nous ne croirons pas en lui».
23.39 Il dit: «Seigneur! Apporte-moi secours parce qu'ils me traitent de menteur».
23.40 [Allah] dit: «Oui, bientôt ils en viendront aux regrets».
23.41 Le cri, donc, les saisit en toute justice; puis Nous les rendîmes semblables à des débris emportés par le torrent. Que disparaissent à jamais les injustes!
23.42 Puis après eux Nous avons créé d'autres générations.
23.43 Nulle communauté ne peut avancer ni reculer son terme.
23.44 Ensuite, Nous envoyâmes successivement Nos messagers. Chaque fois qu'un messager se présentait à sa communauté, ils le traitaient de menteur. Et Nous les fîmes succéder les unes aux autres [dans la destruction], et Nous en fîmes des thèmes de récits légendaires. Que disparaissent à jamais les gens qui ne croient pas!
23.45 Ensuite, Nous envoyâmes Moïse et son frère Aaron avec Nos prodiges et une preuve évidente,
23.46 vers Pharaon et ses notables mais ceux-ci s'enflèrent d'orgueil: ils étaient des gens hautains.
23.47 Ils dirent: «Croirons-nous en deux hommes comme nous dont les congénères sont nos esclaves».
23.48 Ils les traitèrent [tous deux] de menteurs et ils furent donc parmi les anéantis.
23.49 Et Nous avions apporté le Livre à Moïse afin qu'ils se guident.
23.50 Et Nous fîmes du fils de Marie, ainsi que de sa mère, un prodige; et Nous donnâmes à tous deux asile sur une colline bien stable et dotée d'une source.

23.57 Those who, from awe of their Lord, are fearful;
23.58 Those who have faith in their Lord's revelations;
23.59 Those who associate no partners with their Lord;
23.60 Those who expend what they expend with hearts anxious for acceptance,
Knowing that they will surely return to their Lord;
23.61 These outstrip one another to do righteous deeds,
And, because of this, they shall have precedence.
23.62 We charge not a soul except with what it can bear.
With Us is a Book that utters the Truth, and they shall not be wronged.
23.63 Rather, their hearts are sunk in ignorance of it.
Their works are inferior to those who have faith,
And they persist in their acts of sin.
23.64 Until, when We seize the decadent among them with torment,
See how they shriek for help!
23.65 Do not shriek Today! You shall have no support from Us.
23.66 My verses used to be recited to you, and you used to turn heel, recoiling,
23.67 Too arrogant to give heed, and would spend your evenings defaming it.
23.68 Did they not reflect on what was said?
Or has something come to them that did not come to their ancient forefathers?
23.69 Or did they fail to recognize their Messenger, and so denied him?
23.70 Or do they say there is madness in him?
Rather, he brought them the Truth, but most of them detest the Truth.
23.71 Had the God of Truth indulged their whims, the heavens and earth, and all therein, would have been corrupted. Instead, We brought them their Remembrance, but they turn away from it.
23.72 Or do you ask them for a wage for it? But your Lord's wage is better, and He is the best of Providers.
23.73 You are calling them to a straight path,
23.74 But those who believe not in the hereafter are surely wandering off that path.

23.51 O Messagers! Mangez de ce qui est permis et agréable et faites du bien. Car Je sais parfaitement ce que vous faites.
23.52 Cette communauté, la vôtre, est une seule communauté, tandis que Je suis votre Seigneur. Craignez-Moi donc».
23.53 Mais ils se sont divisés en sectes, chaque secte exultant de ce qu'elle détenait.
23.54 Laisse-les dans leur égarement pour un certain temps.
23.55 Pensent-ils que ce que Nous leur accordons, en biens et en enfants,
23.56 [soit une avance] que Nous Nous empressons de leur faire sur les biens [de la vie future]? Au contraire, ils n'en sont pas conscients.
23.57 Ceux qui, de la crainte de leur Seigneur, sont pénétrés,
23.58 qui croient aux versets de leur Seigneur,
23.59 qui n'associent rien à leur Seigneur,
23.60 qui donnent ce qu'ils donnent, tandis que leurs cours sont pleins de crainte [à la pensée] qu'ils doivent retourner à leur Seigneur.
23.61 Ceux-là se précipitent vers les bonnes actions et sont les premiers à les accomplir.
23.62 Nous n'imposons à personne que selon sa capacité. Et auprès de Nous existe un Livre qui dit la vérité, et ils ne seront pas lésés.
23.63 Mais leurs cours restent dans l'ignorance à l'égard de cela [le Coran]. [En outre] ils ont d'autres actes (vils) qu'ils accomplissent,
23.64 jusqu'à ce que par le châtiment Nous saisissions les plus aisés parmi eux et voilà qu'ils crient au secours.
23.65 «Ne criez pas aujourd'hui. Nul ne vous protègera contre Nous.
23.66 Mes versets vous étaient récités auparavant; mais vous vous [en] détourniez,
23.67 s'enflant d'orgueil, et vous les dénigriez au cours de vos veillées».
23.68 Ne méditent-ils donc pas sur la parole (le Coran)? Ou est-ce que leur est venu ce qui n'est jamais venu à leurs premiers ancêtres?
23.69 Ou n'ont-ils pas connu leur Messager, au point de le renier?
23.70 Ou diront-ils: «Il est fou?» Au contraire, c'est la vérité qu'il leur a apportée. Et la plupart d'entre eux dédaignent la vérité.
23.71 Si la vérité était conforme à leurs passions, les cieux et la terre et ceux qui s'y trouvent seraient, certes, corrompus. Au contraire,

23.75 If We show them mercy and draw away the hardship they suffer, they would persist in their outrage, groping in blindness.
23.76 We had seized them with torment, but they neither submitted to their Lord, nor entreated Him.
23.77 Until, when We open wide to them a gate of terrible torment, behold how they despair!
23.78 It is He who devised your hearing, eyesight and hearts, but little thanks do you offer.
23.79 It is He who created you upon the earth, and to Him you shall be mustered.
23.80 It is He who gives life and deals death, And He who contrived the alternation of night and day:
Will you not consider?
23.81 Instead, they spoke as did the ancients.
23.82 They said: "Are we, once dead and become dust and bones, to be resurrected?
23.83 We and our forefathers had been promised this before.
This is nothing but fables of the ancients."
23.84 Say: "To whom does the earth and all upon it belong, if you happen to know?"
23.85 And they shall respond: "To God."
Say: "Will you not reflect?"
23.86 Say: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, the Lord of the Great Throne?"
23.87 And they shall respond: "God."
Say: "Will you not be pious?"
23.88 Say: "Who holds in His hand sovereignty over all things, who shelters but cannot be sheltered from, if you happen to know?"
23.89 And they shall respond: "God."
Say: "How then can you be so bewitched?"
23.90 Indeed, We brought them the Truth, but they are liars.
23.91 God did not take to Himself a son, nor has He another god with Him, or else every god would have appropriated his own creation, and some would be superior to others.
23.92 May God be exalted far above what they recount!
Knower of the Unseen and the Seen:
May He be far above what they associate with Him!
23.93 Say: "My Lord, if only You could show me what they have been promised!
23.94 My Lord, place me not among the wicked!"

Nous leur avons donné leur rappel. Mais ils s'en détournent.
23.72 Ou leur demandes-tu une rétribution? Mais la rétribution de ton Seigneur est meilleure. Et c'est Lui, le Meilleur des pourvoyeurs.
23.73 Et tu les appelles, certes, vers le droit chemin.
23.74 Or, ceux qui ne croient pas à l'au-delà sont bien écartés de ce chemin.
23.75 Si Nous leur faisions miséricorde et écartions d'eux le mal, ils persisteraient certainement dans leur transgression, confus et hésitants.
23.76 Nous les avons certes saisis du châtiment, mais ils ne se sont pas soumis à leur Seigneur; de même qu'ils ne [Le] supplient point,
23.77 jusqu'au jour où Nous ouvrirons sur eux une porte au dur châtiment, et voilà qu'ils en seront désespérés.
23.78 Et c'est Lui qui a créé pour vous l'ouïe, les yeux et les cours. Mais vous êtes rarement reconnaissants.
23.79 C'est Lui qui vous a répandus sur la terre, et c'est vers Lui que vous serez rassemblés.
23.80 Et c'est Lui qui donne la vie et qui donne la mort; et l'alternance de la nuit et du jour dépend de Lui. Ne raisonnerez-vous donc pas?
23.81 Ils ont plutôt tenu les mêmes propos que les anciens.
23.82 Ils ont dit: «lorsque nous serons morts et que nous serons poussière et ossements, serons-nous vraiment ressuscités?
23.83 On nous a promis cela, ainsi qu'à nos ancêtres auparavant; ce ne sont que de vieilles sornettes».
23.84 Dis: «A qui appartient la terre et ceux qui y sont? si vous savez».
23.85 Ils diront: «A Allah». Dis: «Ne vous souvenez-vous donc pas?»
23.86 Dis: «Qui est le Seigneur des sept cieux et le Seigneur du Trône sublime?»
23.87 Ils diront: [ils appartiennent] «A Allah». Dis: «Ne craignez-vous donc pas?»
23.88 Dis: «Qui détient dans sa main la royauté absolue de toute chose, et qui protège et n'a pas besoin d'être protégé? [Dites], si vous le savez!»
23.89 Ils diront: «Allah». Dis: «Comment donc se fait-il que vous soyez ensorcelés?» [au point de ne pas croire en Lui].

23.95 And We are surely able to show you what We promised them!
23.96 Ward off insolence with what is more seemly:
We know best what they recount.
23.97 And say: “My Lord, I seek Your protection against the whisperings of devils.
23.98 I seek Your protection, my Lord, from any harm they may do me.”
23.99 Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: “My Lord, bring me back to life.
23.100 Perhaps I will perform a virtuous deed among others I neglected.”
Oh no! It is a mere word that he utters, but behind them lies a rampart, until the Day they are resurrected.
23.101 But when the Trumpet is blown, no ties of kinship between them shall there be on that Day, nor will they question each other about them.
23.102 They whose scales are weighed down – these shall prevail.
23.103 They whose scales are light – these have lost their souls, and in hell shall abide forever.
23.104 The fire shall scorch their faces, and in it their visage shall be grim.
23.105 Were not My revelations recited to you, and you cried lies to them?
23.106 They said: “Our Lord, our wickedness gained mastery over us, and we were a people in error.
23.107 Our Lord, remove us hence, and if we relapse we would truly be evil.”
23.108 He said: “Cower in it, and speak not to Me.
23.109 Once there was a group of My worshippers who would call out: ‘Our Lord, we believe, so pardon us and have mercy upon us, for You are the best of those who show mercy.’
23.110 But you took them for mockery until they made you forget My Remembrance. And you would laugh at them.
23.111 I have rewarded them Today for what they bore with patience, and it is they who are the victors.”
23.112 He shall say: “How long did you remain on earth, in number of years?”
23.113 They will respond: “We remained for a day or a part thereof. Ask those who count.”

23.90 Nous leur avons plutôt apporté la vérité et ils sont assurément des menteurs.
23.91 Allah ne S’est point attribué d’enfant et il n’existe point de divinité avec Lui; sinon, chaque divinité s’en irait avec ce qu’elle a créé, et certaines seraient supérieures aux autres. (Gloire et pureté) à Allah! Il est Supérieur à tout ce qu’ils décrivent.
23.92 [Il est] Connaisseur de toute chose visible et invisible! Il est bien au-dessus de ce qu’ils [Lui] associent!
23.93 Dis: «Seigneur, si jamais Tu me montres ce qui leur est promis;
23.94 alors, Seigneur, ne me place pas parmi les gens injustes.
23.95 Nous sommes Capable, certes, de te montrer ce que Nous leur promettons.
23.96 Repousse le mal par ce qui est meilleur. Nous savons très bien ce qu’ils décrivent.
23.97 Et dis: «Seigneur, je cherche Ta protection, contre les incitations des diables.
23.98 et je cherche Ta protection, Seigneur, contre leur présence auprès de moi».
23.99 ...Puis, lorsque la mort vient à l’un deux, il dit: «Mon Seigneur! Fais-moi revenir (sur terre),
23.100 afin que je fasse du bien dans ce que je délaissais». Non, c’est simplement une parole qu’il dit. Derrière eux, cependant, il y a une barrière, jusqu’au jour où ils seront ressuscités».
23.101 Puis quand on soufflera dans la Trompe, il n’y aura plus de parenté entre eux ce jour là, et ils ne se poseront pas de questions.
23.102 Ceux dont la balance est lourde seront les bienheureux;
23.103 et ceux dont la balance est légère seront ceux qui ont ruiné leurs propres âmes et ils demeureront éternellement dans l’Enfer.
23.104 Le feu brûlera leurs visages et ils auront les lèvres crispées.
23.105 «Mes versets ne vous étaient-ils pas récités et vous les traitiez alors de mensonges?»
23.106 Ils dirent: «Seigneur! Notre malheur nous a vaincus, et nous étions des gens égarés.
23.107 Seigneur, fais nous-en sortir! Et si nous récidivons, nous serons alors des injustes».
23.108 Il dit: «Soyez-y refoulés (humiliés) et ne Me parlez plus».
23.109 Il y eut un groupe de Mes serviteurs qui dirent: «Seigneur, nous croyons; pardonne-nous

23.114 He will say: “You remained only a short while, if only you knew.”
23.115 Do you imagine that We created you in vain? That you will not return to Us?
23.116 Exalted is God, the True King!
There is no god but He, Lord of the Noble Throne!
23.117 Whoso calls upon another god with God, and has no proof thereof,
His account is with his Lord, and the blasphemers shall not prevail.
23.118 Say: “My Lord, forgive, and be merciful! You are the best of the merciful.”

donc et fais-nous miséricorde, car Tu es le meilleur des Miséricordieux»
23.110 mais vous les avez pris en raillerie jusqu’à oublier de M’invoquer, et vous vous riiez d’eux.
23.111 Vraiment, Je les ai récompensés aujourd’hui pour ce qu’ils ont enduré; et ce sont eux les triomphants.
23.112 Il dira: «Combien d’années êtes-vous restés sur terre?»
23.113 Ils diront: «Nous y avons demeuré un jour, ou une partie d’un jour. Interroge donc ceux qui comptent.»
23.114 Il dira: «Vous n’y avez demeuré que peu [de temps], si seulement vous saviez.
23.115 Pensiez-vous que Nous vous avions créés sans but, et que vous ne seriez pas ramenés vers Nous?»
23.116 Que soit exalté Allah, le vrai Souverain! Pas de divinité en dehors de Lui, le Seigneur du Trône sublime!
23.117 Et quiconque invoque avec Allah une autre divinité, sans avoir la preuve évidente [de son existence], aura à en rendre compte à son Seigneur. En vérité, les mécréants, ne réussiront pas.
23.118 Et dis: «Seigneur, pardonne et fais miséricorde. C’est Toi le Meilleur des miséricordieux».

سورة المؤمنون

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (1) الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلاَتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ (2) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ (3) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ
(4) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ (5) إِلاَّ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ (6) فَمَنِ ابْتَغَى وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ (7) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ (8) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ (9) أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْوَارِثُونَ (10) الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (11) وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلاَلَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ (12) ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً
فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ (13) ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا
آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ (14) ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ (15) ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ (16) وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ
طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ (17) وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَّاهُ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ (18)
فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ (19) وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ
بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِلآكِلِينَ (20) وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ (21)
وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ (22) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ (23)
فَقَالَ الْمَلأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لأَنْزَلَ مَلاَئِكَةً مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي
آبَائِنَا الأَوَّلِينَ (24) إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِهِ حَتَّى حِينٍ (25) قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ (26) فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنِ
اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلاَّ مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ
مِنْهُمْ وَلاَ تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ (27) فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّانَا
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (28) وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَنْزِلْنِي مُنْزَلاً مُبَارَكًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ (29) إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ (30)
ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ (31) فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِنْهُمْ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ (32) وَقَالَ

الْمَلأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ الآَخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَا إِلاَّ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ
وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ (33) وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَخَاسِرُونَ (34) أَيَعِدُكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَنَّكُمْ
مُخْرَجُونَ (35) هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوعَدُونَ (36) إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ (37) إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ
رَجُلٌ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ (38) قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ (39) قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ
(40) فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً فَبُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (41) ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آَخَرِينَ (42) مَا تَسْبِقُ
مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ (43) ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَى كُلَّ مَا جَاءَ أُمَّةً رَسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَأَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
أَحَادِيثَ فَبُعْدًا لِقَوْمٍ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ (44) ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآَيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ (45) إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عَالِينَ (46) فَقَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَابِدُونَ (47) فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ
(48) وَلَقَدْ آَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ (49) وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ آَيَةً وَآَوَيْنَاهُمَا إِلَى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ (50) يَا
أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ (51) وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ (52)
فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ (53) فَذَرْهُمْ فِي غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّى حِينٍ (54) أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ
مِنْ مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ (55) نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَل لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ (56) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ (57) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِآَيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ (58) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ (59) وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آَتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ
(60) أُولَئِكَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ (61) وَلاَ نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنْطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لاَ
يُظْلَمُونَ (62) بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْمَالٌ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَامِلُونَ (63) حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِمْ بِالْعَذَابِ
إِذَا هُمْ يَجْأَرُونَ (64) لاَ تَجْأَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُمْ مِنَّا لاَ تُنْصَرُونَ (65) قَدْ كَانَتْ آَيَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنْكِصُونَ
(66) مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَامِرًا تَهْجُرُونَ (67) أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آَبَاءَهُمُ الأَوَّلِينَ (68) أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُونَ (69) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ (70) وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ
السَّمَوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ (71) أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ
خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ (72) وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (73) وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالآَخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنَاكِبُونَ (74) وَلَوْ
رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِنْ ضُرٍّ لَلَجُّوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ (75) وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا
يَتَضَرَّعُونَ (76) حَتَّى إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ (77) وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ
وَالأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلاً مَا تَشْكُرُونَ (78) وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ (79) وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلاَفُ
اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ (80) بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الأَوَّلُونَ (81) قَالُوا أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَئِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ (82) لَقَدْ
وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَآَبَاؤُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَا إِلاَّ أَسَاطِيرُ الأَوَّلِينَ (83) قُلْ لِمَنِ الأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (84)
سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ (85) قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ 86)) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ
(87) قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلاَ يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (88) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ (89)
بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (90) مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ
عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (91) عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (92) قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيَنِّي مَا يُوعَدُونَ
(93) رَبِّ فَلاَ تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (94) وَإِنَّا عَلَى أَنْ نُرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ (95) ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ
نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ (96) وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ (97) وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ (98) حَتَّى إِذَا
جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ (99) لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلاَّ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى
يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (100) فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلاَ أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلاَ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (101) فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ (102) وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ (103) تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا
كَالِحُونَ (104) أَلَمْ تَكُنْ آَيَاتِي تُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ (105) قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ (106)
رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ (107) قَالَ اخْسَئُوا فِيهَا وَلاَ تُكَلِّمُونِ (108) إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا
آَمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (109) فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّى أَنْسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ (110)
إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (111) قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ (112) قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ
يَوْمٍ فَاسْأَلِ الْعَادِّينَ (113) قَالَ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (114) أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لاَ تُرْجَعُونَ
(115) فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ (116) وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آَخَرَ لاَ بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا
حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لاَ يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ (117) وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (118)

Azaiez

Les versets 82 et 83 se définissent comme des contre-discours eschatologiques (cf. QS 16). Ce sont des discours rapportés des adversaires au sujet de l'eschatologie. Il s'agit du cent quarante-deuxième contre-discours dans l'ordre du *muṣḥaf*. Sa structure est simple avec un Contre-Discours Citant introductif (« ils disent ») suivi d'un contre-discours (« Lorsque nous serons morts et que nous serons poussière et os, comment serions-nous ressuscités? ») Ce contre-discours est une réfutation questionnante qui du point de vue argumentatif peut être considéré comme une objection. Elle est employée dans un traité du Talmud, le Sanhédrin: « Un hérétique (min) disait au rabbi Gamaliel : Vous prétendez que les morts revivront, mais ils sont réduits en poussière ; la poussière peut-elle prendre vie ? » (cf. QS 16). Ce contre discours est à mettre en lien avec le verset qui lui succède d'autant plus qu'il s'apparente à un autre contre-discours présent dans le Nouveau Testament (2 P 3, 4). On y lit: « (Ils [les faux docteurs] dirent : Où est la promesse de son avènement ? Depuis que les Pères sont morts, tout demeure comme au début de la creation). [καὶ λέγοντες (*legontes*), Ποῦ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία (*epangelia*) τῆς παρουσίας (*parousias*) αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες (*pateres*) ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως (*archēs ktiseōs*)] ." Il est frappant de constater que le Coran ne désigne jamais ces opposants dans le cadre des contre discours eschatologiques. Dans le cas du Talmud, ils sont ici désignés par le terme *min*. D'autres passages indiquent les termes suivants (Caesar, Cléopâtre, Antoine, un Officier de Rome). Pour ces désignations, il faut y voir des noms dénués de toute valeur historique et qui renvoient probablement à un contexte de querelles contre le paganisme gréco-latin. Plus difficile à saisir est le terme *min* (pl. *minim*) dont l'identité reste sujette à caution et qui peut désigner éventuellement des chrétiens, des païens, des zoroastes ou des manichéens (Mimouni 2004: 60 – 71). Ces contre-discours similaires inviteraient-ils à penser que les opposants non désignés des contre-discours coraniques feraient références non à des protagonistes situés à la Mecque ou à Médine mais à des personnages fictifs empruntés à la littérature biblique et parabiblique ?

Dye

On notera la structure concentrique des vv. 1 – 11 (Cf. Dye 2014: 159 – 163). Le vv. 1 renvoie aux vv. 10 – 11 : les croyants sont appelés au Paradis à condition d'adopter le comportement défini aux vv 2 – 9. Il s'agit donc d'un texte d'édification morale. Le croyant doit pratiquer la prière avec humilité et rigueur, il doit se détourner des paroles vaines et futiles et adopter un rapport juste et honnête à l'argent. Le v. 5 recommande la continence.

On pourrait presque penser à la version arabe d'un texte de direction spirituelle syriaque, tant ce passage paraît influencé par la piété monacale syrienne, que ce soit sur l'importance de la prière, de la continence, de l'aumône, ou sur la nécessité d'un genre de vie paisible et humble, loin des futilités et de la malhonnêteté : cela vaut évidemment pour les moines, mais aussi pour les laïcs, cf. par exemple le *Testamen-*

tum Domini (II : 1, p. 110 – 112 ed. Rahmani), dont l'*esprit* est assez proche des vv. 1 – 11 – à condition, bien sûr, que l'on ne prenne pas en compte les vv. 6 – 7, qui posent quelques problèmes. Ils rompent le rythme de la psalmodie, ainsi que l'harmonie syntaxique de la sourate, les versets avoisinants commençant tous par *wa-llaḏīna*. Leur contenu pose problème : on peut admettre que le Coran n'exclue pas le bonheur domestique, et ne recommande pas nécessairement une vie ascétique, mais l'exception que ces versets accordent à la continence est quand même suffisamment large pour qu'un libertin résolu puisse la trouver attrayante…

L'hypothèse la plus plausible est qu'il s'agit, au moins en partie, d'une interpolation, qui modifie substantiellement l'esprit du texte. Peut-être une version antérieure du texte s'arrêtait-elle à *ʾillā ʿalā ʾazwāǧihim*, en entendant par-là, non que chaque croyant a plusieurs épouses, mais que les différents croyants auquel le texte s'adresse ont chacun *une* épouse ?

V. 50 : l'allusion s'explique bien si l'on suit quelques hypothèses récentes (Shoemaker 2003 et Dye 2012), selon lesquelles le récit coranique de la Nativité, et les versets décrivant le retour de Marie vers son peuple, sont directement tributaires des traditions populaires et liturgiques de l'église du Kathisma (église aujourd'hui disparue, située à mi-chemin entre Jérusalem et Bethléem), qui rapprochent le récit de la Nativité du miracle du palmier. La zone dans laquelle est située l'église du Kathisma est en effet très précisément marquée par la présence d'eau (citernes, puits, et même plus anciennement, un aqueduc) et de collines.

Grodzki

The debate on the identity and beliefs of the Qurʾānic *mušrikūn* continues. I don't think that it can be easily proved or disproved that *mušrikūn* are historically or dogmatically identifiable with one specific religious community of the late antique or early Islamic period – in the Qurʾān there is simply too wide a range of their manifold beliefs and disbeliefs (with elements sometimes contradictory to each other), and often – to make it worse – put into polemical frames. In the recent article of Patricia Crone (2012:449 – 50), she suggests that the *mušrikūn* were not really polytheists, but "monotheists of the inclusive type (monists), that is to say they believed in one God and saw the lesser gods, also called angels, as manifestations of Him rather than as false deities who had to be renounced in His favour. They may still have been pagans in the sense of not being Jews or Christians, but there were too many gradations between Bible-based monotheism and gentile paganism in Late Antiquity for this to tell us very much."

Khalfallah

Ce passage dépeint davantage un portrait idéal contenant les éléments devant caractériser le « vrai » *muʾmin*, qu'une règle normative. Le terme clé qui condense, à mon sens, l'intégralité de cette sourate est *falāḥ*. Souvent traduit par « félicité », cette

notion se rapporte également aux idées de: *réussite, droiture, bonheur*... bien que son origine étymologique dénote le labeur. Ainsi, la structure profonde de cette sourate s'apparente aux modalités à suivre pour atteindre le *falāḥ*. Ici, le discours coranique ne se situe pas dans un niveau normatif, mais tend davantage vers un horizon éthique. Il indique davantage une voie à suivre qu'il instaure une Loi à observer. Conscient de la différence de ses deux registres, les juristes et exégètes établissent une nette distinction entre la validité (juridique) d'un acte et sa plénitude spirituelle. Cette sourate foisonne en exemples : a- Plutôt que de parler des conditions de la prière, elle évoque le *ḫušūʿ* (présence révérencielle de l'esprit pendant la prière). b- Plutôt que d'interdire les vices (de la parole), elle insiste sur la vertu d'éviter les futilités. c- Plutôt qu'interdire l'adultère, elle exhorte à la vertu de « préserver le sexe ." d- Plutôt que de déterminer le montant de l'aumône, elle en loue l'acquittement. En somme, la tonalité de la sourate est de tracer les voies de la Perfection, de titiller la sensibilité religieuse et d'amener le « vrai » croyant à vivre le sens profond des préceptes coraniques. Nous comprenons pourquoi les phrases d'avertissement, *inḏār*, y sont-elles rares. C'est l'exhortation qui l'emporte sur l'intimidation.

Cette sourate révèle donc une des nombreuses structures sémantiques du Coran : l'idéalisation des portraits afin d'inviter, à travers cette idéalisation même, à suivre un idéal dont l'observance assure « le bonheur dans ce bas-monde et le salut à l'au-delà », autre traduction du *falāḥ*.

Lorsqu'il analyse cette structure, bien que dans le domaine de *ḥadīṯ*, Ibn ʿAšūr évoque, dans ses *Maqāṣid*, la notion de *ḥaml al-nufūs ʿalā al-akmal*, (amener les âmes vers le plus parfait). Si les versets à portée juridique dessinent des lois à observer et les conditions de validité à réunir, cette sourate indique un horizon existentiel et eschatologique à atteindre.

Pregill

Homiletic and eschatological, with brief allusion to legends of pre-Islamic prophets as thematically relevant. Providence is a major theme, and the introduction establishes a tidy parallel between embryology and cosmology: the arrangement of the human body, like that of the cosmic order, is ordained and governed by God. The reference to ships sailing on the sea in v. 22 marks the segue to the narrative of Noah, apposite since it is the preeminent example of a story in which God's governance of the natural order and His power over human lives are intimately intertwined.

In the stories of Noah, the anonymous prophet (evidently Ṣāliḥ; cf. Q 11:61–68), and Moses and Aaron, the rejecters consistently object to being sent a messenger who is a mere human like themselves (vv. 24, 33–34, 47), a complaint expressed elsewhere in the Qurʾān (see QS 14 above).

In vv. 37–38, the rejecters refuse to believe in resurrection, but acknowledge God. If we suppose that the *mušrikūn* are really monotheists, then what is the significance of their continual rejection of resurrection and final judgment? The similarity to the Sadducees – Jews of the Second Temple period who denied the immortality of the

soul – is striking. Is this portrayal of the *mušrikūn* hyperbole, their refusal to accept the Qurʾānic message and the leadership of its prophet equated to disbelief in the afterlife (since if they did truly believe, they would recognize the necessity of changing their ways) solely for rhetorical purposes?

If the Qurʾān's aim is actually to reform a society in which monotheism is already present, albeit somehow imperfect, what exactly does that monotheism consist of? The *kuffār* supposedly recognize the existence of God, but they are cultically deficient, associating intercessor entities with Him instead; they refuse to be held morally accountable, denying both the resurrection and the final reckoning. The tradition's insistence that Muḥammad's interlocutors were pagans is surely not correct; but it is not correct to think of the *mušrikūn* simply as monotheists either. Is it perhaps better to think of the belief system of the *mušrikūn* as fundamentally polytheistic but somehow assimilated to or inflected with monotheistic themes (viz., intercessor spirits are identified as angels and recognized as the primary vehicle for revelation)?

In this connection, it seems relevant that the Qurʾān's warnings are dismissed as "fables of the ancients" (vv. 81–83). This implies that this people formerly believed in the resurrection, but has now come to reject it, which again begs the question of what exactly their monotheism is supposed to consist of if they are not actually pagans.

Reynolds

Vv. 82–83 here (They said: "Are we, once dead and become dust and bones, to be resurrected? * We and our forefathers had been promised this before. This is nothing but fables of the ancients.") suggest that there was nothing new about the preaching of the resurrection of the body in the Qurʾān's context. Patricia Crone (2012: 455) comments insightfully about such passages: "What is so interesting about these passages is that the Messenger's opponents rejected his message as old nonsense, not as a new kind of delusion." Indeed it is very difficult in light of such passages to imagine that the *mušrikūn* were idolatrous pagans. On the other hand one must keep in mind, as does Mehdi Azaiez (2015) in his work on the Qurʾān's counter-discourse, that it is very difficult to conclude with certainty that the *mušrikūn* actually said the things which the Qur'ān attributes to them. It is quite possible that the *mušrikūn* are simply playing a dramatic role in a script penned by the Qurʾān.

Stefanidis

V. 83 has the Qurʾānic opponents dismiss the notion of resurrection as an old promise made to their fathers. As Reynolds suggests following Crone (2012), this could be read as evidence that the *mušrikūn* in fact belonged to a monotheistic community. Alternatively, one could see here a reference to missionary activities prevalent in the Qurʾānic milieu: the Arab pagans and their fathers were approached by Christian

or Jewish preachers but had so far refused to enter their respective alliances with the One God.

Perhaps the expression *asāṭīr al-awwalīn* (v. 83) is worth exploring. What makes it such a pejorative expression? Elsewhere in the Qurʾān, ancestors (*ābāʾ*) and their traditions appear to be deeply esteemed by those who reject the Qurʾānic alliance (e.g. Q 2:170; 5:104). Why, then, would their *asāṭīr* be ridiculous? The etymology of the term *asāṭīr* itself does not seem to convey a pejorative sense, whether we take it to be an Arabic term from the root *S-Ṭ-R* or a loanword from Greek or Syriac (cf. Khalfallah 2012).

Jacqueline Chabbi (2010: 483) has suggested that the depreciatory dimension of this expression lies in the fact that it underlines the exogeneity of the Qurʾānic Biblical material in the eyes of the Prophet's kinsmen: *asāṭīr al-awwalīn* refers to the stories of the non-Arabs, which were written down (as the Arabic root *S-Ṭ-R* would suggest) in contrast to the indigenous stories which would have been characteristically oral. (The idea that *asāṭīr* refers to written documents could also be supported by Q 26:196: *zubur al-awwalīn* – which, remarkably, is not pejorative – and by Q 25:5 : *asāṭīr al-awwalīna ktatabahā*). In other words, according to Chabbi, Muḥammad's people rejected those stories and the beliefs that structured them, such as the belief in resurrection (Q 23:82–3, 46:17) and in the divine destruction of unjust peoples (Q 8:31–2) because these, although familiar, were not their stories but those of outsiders. Hints of identity politics might also be found in the recurrent assertions that the Qurʾān is in Arabic, and by passages such as Q 26:198–9 ("Had We revealed it to any of the non-Arabs, and had he recited it to them, they would not have believed in it," trans. Yusuf Ali).

Tesei

The Qurʾānic scene of the sinner uselessly begging God to be returned to act righteously (Q 23:99–100) evokes the parable of the rich and the poor in the Gospel of Luke. Here a sinner asks in vain that a dead person might return to the world of the living to prevent others from acting impiously (Luke 16:19–31). The Qurʾānic passage seems to be related to late antique traditions and exegesis about these verses of the Gospel of Luke. A homily Narsai wrote about the Lucan parable is worth of special consideration. Here Abraham's negative answer to send the poor back to the rich man's family (Luke 16:27–31) is followed by these words: "A strong barrier (*syāgā*) rises in front of the faces of the dead * and none among them can break it because of its solidity. * Insurmountable is the wall (*šurā*) which death built up in front of the faces of the dead, *why do you ask for something whose accomplishment is impossible to be allowed?" (1984: 55). The barrier Narsai refers to is connected to the common late antique representation of the realm of death as a citadel surrounded by walls and impossible to flee from (c.f. Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns* 10:12; Jacob of Serugh, *Hom*. 67:311–312, 54:20, 39–40). Much the same imagery is referred to in the

Qurʾānic passage, where the *barzaḫ* represents an obstacle confining the dead into an unspecified place until the time of their resurrection (cf. Tesei 2014b).

Younes

In v. 52, there is a clear violation of the case assignment rules. According to these rules, the words *umma* and *wāḥida* should be assigned the nominative case since the first is the predicate of *inna* and the second modifies it. But both are assigned the accusative case. The same violation is also found in Q 21:92. It is interesting that the traditional sources (e.g. al-Farrāʾ, al-Zağğāğ, Ṭabarī) say nothing about this irregular case assignment. One conclusion that can be drawn from the silence of these sources is that case assignment was not as important as it was made out to be later since the meaning is not affected by differences in case.

QS 23 Q 24:1 – 17

24.1 Here is a *Sura* that We have sent down, and made obligatory, and sent down in it verses manifest, that you might remember.
24.2 The adulteress and the adulterer: flog each of them a hundred lashes. And let not pity for them overcome you in regard to the law of God, provided you believe in God and the Last Day. And let their punishment be witnessed by a group of believers.
24.3 The adulterer shall marry none but an adulteress or an idolatress; and the adulteress shall marry none but an adulterer or an idolater. But this is forbidden to believers.
24.4 Those who falsely accuse married women of adultery, and fail to produce four witnesses, flog them eighty lashes and never thereafter accept their witness. These are the dissolute.
24.5 Except for those who later repent and reform their ways, for God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.
24.6 Those who accuse their wives of adultery, and have no witnesses but themselves, let each of them witness four times by God that he is telling the truth,
24.7 and a fifth time that the curse of God shall fall upon him if he is a liar.
24.8 They are then to ward off punishment from her if she testifies four times by God that he is a liar,
24.9 and a fifth time that God's wrath shall fall upon her if he is telling the truth.
24.10 Were it not for God's favor upon you and His mercy – and that God is All-Forgiving, All-Wise!
24.11 Those who made up that libel were a gang among you. Count it not as an evil that befell you, but rather as something good. To every one of them is due what he earned of sin, and to him among them who had most to do with magnifying that libel, there awaits a terrible torment.
24.12 Why is it that, when you heard it, the believers, men and women, did not think well of themselves, and say: "This is a manifest libel"?
24.13 If only they had produced four witnesses! But since they did not produce witnesses, these people, in God's sight, are indeed liars.

24.1 endre et que Nous avons imposée, et Nous y avons fait descendre des versets explicites afin que vous vous souveniez».
24.2 La fornicatrice et le fornicateur, fouettez-les chacun de cent coups de fouet. Et ne soyez point pris de pitié pour eux dans l'exécution de la loi d'Allah – si vous croyez en Allah et au Jour dernier. Et qu'un groupe de croyants assiste à leur punition.
24.3 Le fornicateur n'épousera qu'une fornicatrice ou une associatrice. Et la fornicatrice ne sera épousée que par un fornicateur ou un associateur; et cela a été interdit aux croyants.
24.4 Et ceux qui lancent des accusations contre des femmes chastes sans produire par la suite quatre témoins, fouettez-les de quatre-vingts coups de fouet, et n'acceptez plus jamais leur témoignage. Et ceux-là sont les pervers,
24.5 à l'exception de ceux qui, après cela, se repentent et se réforment, car Allah est Pardonneur et Miséricordieux.
24.6 Et quant à ceux qui lancent des accusations contre leurs propres épouses, sans avoir d'autres témoins qu'eux-mêmes, le témoignage de l'un d'eux doit être une quadruple attestation par Allah qu'il est du nombre des véridiques,
24.7 et la cinquième [attestation] est «que la malédiction d'Allah tombe sur lui s'il est du nombre des menteurs».
24.8 Et on ne lui infligera pas le châtiment [de la lapidation] si elle atteste quatre fois par Allah qu'il [son mari] est certainement du nombre des menteurs,
24.9 et la cinquième [attestation] est que la colère d'Allah soit sur elle, s'il était du nombre des véridiques.
24.10 Et, n'étaient la grâce d'Allah sur vous et Sa miséricorde...! Allah est Grand Accueillant au repentir et Sage!
24.11 Ceux qui sont venus avec la calomnie sont un groupe d'entre vous. Ne pensez pas que c'est un mal pour vous, mais plutôt, c'est un bien pour vous. A chacun d'eux ce qu'il s'est acquis comme péché. Celui d'entre eux qui s'est chargé de la plus grande part aura un énorme châtiment.

24.14 Were it not for God's favor and mercy upon you, in this world and the next, terrible torment would have touched you in regard to the libel that you spread about.
24.15 You would lap it up with your tongues, and utter with your mouths what you had no knowledge of. You imagined it was a simple matter, but it is momentous with God.
24.16 Why is that, when you heard it, you did not say: "It is not fitting for us to speak of such matters. Glory be to You! This is a dreadful falsehood?"
24.17 God admonishes you never to return to its like again if you are true believers.

24.12 Pourquoi, lorsque vous l'avez entendue [cette calomnie], les croyants et les croyantes n'ont-ils pas, en eux-mêmes, conjecturé favorablement, et n'ont-ils pas dit: «C'est une calomnie évidente?»
24.13 Pourquoi n'ont-ils pas produit [à l'appui de leurs accusations] quatre témoins? S'ils ne produisent pas de témoins, alors ce sont eux, auprès d'Allah, les menteurs.
24.14 N'eussent-été la grâce d'Allah sur vous et Sa miséricorde ici-bas comme dans l'au-delà, un énorme châtiment vous aurait touchés pour cette (calomnie) dans laquelle vous vous êtes lancés,
24.15 quand vous colportiez la nouvelle avec vos langues et disiez de vos bouches ce dont vous n'aviez aucun savoir; et vous le comptiez comme insignifiant alors qu'auprès d'Allah cela est énorme.
24.16 Et pourquoi, lorsque vous l'entendiez, ne disiez-vous pas: «Nous ne devons pas en parler. Gloire à Toi (ô Allah)! C'est une énorme calomnie»?
24.17 Allah vous exhorte à ne plus jamais revenir à une chose pareille si vous êtes croyants.

سورة النور
سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (1) الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ
وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (2) الزَّانِي لَا
يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (3) وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (4) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (5) وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ
شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (6) وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (7) وَيَدْرَأُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ
أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (8) وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (9) وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ (10) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ
مِنْهُمْ مَا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (11) لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُبِينٌ (12) لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ (13)
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (14) إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ
بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ (15) وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا
سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ (16) يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (17)

Khalfallah

C'est bien ce passage qui est souvent cité pour rappeler le *dalīl* (source) de la peine encourue suite à un adultère, à une diffamation ainsi que du serment d'anathème (*liʿān*). Ce passage illustre le caractère général (*ʿāmm*) des versets relatifs aux dis-

positions légales et montre comment les docteurs de Loi se sont ingéniés à l'expliciter. Le verset parle du *zānī* sans préciser ni âge, ni condition sociale (libre ou esclave), ni statut marital (marié ou célibataire)... Ce sont donc les écoles jurisprudentielles postérieures qui se sont appliquées à élaborer des détails et des casuistiques précisant toutes les conditions de l'applicabilité des peines.

Nous savons que la lapidation a été retenue pour sanctionner un rapport sexuel établis hors le cadre du*nikāḥ*. La tradition distingue les partenaires mariés (*muḥṣan* pour la femme et *muḥṣin* pour l'homme) des non- *muḥṣan*-s auxquels on réserve la flagellation : les cents coups de fouets, cités dans ce passage.

Il en va de même pour le crime de la diffamation (*qaḏf*) auquel nulle précision n'a été donnée et ce sont les juristes qui se sont chargés d'en expliciter les conditions.

Ces verstes constituent le fondement de ce que la Tradition islamique allait appeler la théorie de *ḥudūd* ou les prérogatives pénales qui appartiennent à Dieu ; où nulle grâce n'est possible même si les ayants- droit renoncent à la sanction.

Le troisième point concerne un élément formel de la procédure pénale : hormis les deux procédés (aveu et quatre témoignages), ce verset établit le *liʿān* comme manière de prouver l'adultère. Il s'agit d'une tradition préislamique.

Si le Coran ne dit aucun mot sur la lapidation, (*raǧm*), ce sont les *ḥadīṯ*s qui ont établi l'autorité de cette peine. Or, cette peine fut appliquée sur un couple juif conformément à la Torah, dit un hadîth, rapporté par al-Buḫārī.

Au niveau de l'intertextualité, ces versets nous rappellent la célèbre scène où on a amené une prostituée à Jésus pour la lapider.

Cet exemple suffit à démontrer que l'œuvre de *tafsīr* était également un processus de déduction jurisprudentielle (*istinbāṭ*). Il nous invite à mieux mesurer la contribution des hommes (juristes et *mufassirūn*), historique et intertextuelle, dans la production de la normativité, dite divine alors qu'elle est largement conjecturale et temporelle...

Pregill

The famous prescription of penalties for fornication, followed by what is seemingly an allusion to the notorious "Affair of the Necklace." The former may profitably be read in tandem with the prescriptions regarding marriage and inheritance at Q 4:2–28.

The overarching purpose of the passage is clearly to ensure the integrity of the community by enforcing strict rules governing chastity. The equation of the *zānī* with the *mušrik* as a class of persons, in contrast to the *muʾmin*, is interesting. *Pace* those who might argue that *mušrik* is a floating signifier of fluid application, more of a rhetorical device than a stable category (I include myself in this), here *mušrik* appears to be a legally enforceable designation of identity (albeit one presumably defined behaviorally and not ontologically).

It seems especially noteworthy that Qurʾānic denunciations of idolatry hardly ever characterize false worship as adulterous, as is so frequently the case in Biblical, Jewish, and especially Syriac Christian tradition (the case of the Golden Calf is especially important in this connection; Syriac authors repeatedly cast Israel's sin with the Calf as adultery and whoredom, and there are occasional parallels to this in rabbinic sources). The juxtaposition of *zānī* and *mušrik* here seems like an exception, though the equation here is at most only implicit, and is not really exploited for full rhetorical and polemical effect either here or elsewhere.

A synoptic study of depictions of marriage and adultery in various scriptural traditions from the Bible to the Qurʾān is an obvious desideratum.

Stefanidis

If we take Q 24 to be an intentional unit, and not a collection of passages mostly dealing with sexual morals and etiquette, the *sūra* does seem to be reacting to some crucial event involving sexual misconduct and/or slandering that shook the community. The punishment for *zinā* (vv. 2–3) appears to be a by-product of the urgent concern for protecting modesty and respecting privacy (vv. 27–31, 59–61). Interestingly, it is not only the propagation of lies (*ifk* v. 11) which is condemned but also publicizing actual immoral sexual behavior (v. 19: *allaḏīna yuḥibbūna an tašīʿa l-fāḥišatu fī llaḏīna āmanū*). Maybe this insistence to be both modest and "look the other way" explains the intriguing refrain that God is merciful (vv. 10, 14, 20: *wa-law lā faḍlu llāhi ʿalaykum wa-raḥmatuhu wa-anna llāha raʾūfun raḥīm*).

Toorawa

The locutions, *la-min al-ṣādiqīn* (v. 6, "indeed one of the truthtellers"), *min al-kāḏibīn* (v. 7, "one of the liars"), *la-min al-kāḏibīn* (v. 8, "indeed one of the liars") and *min al-ṣādiqīn* (v. 9, "one of the truthtellers"), cannot but evoke Q 12:26–27, where Joseph is exonerated precisely because the evidence points to him being *min al-ṣādiqīn* (v. 27, "one of the truthtellers"), rather than *min al-kāḏibīn* (v. 26, "one of the liars"). In both this passage and Q 12, the context is the possibility of illicit sexual encounter. What is more, and what is more interesting than this lexical echo, is that just as in sūrat *Yūsuf*, where there is a "witness" (*šāhidun*, 12:26) to exonerate or incriminate the possible transgressor, so too in this passage there is a witness, but here it is not someone from the household (*min ahlihā*, 12:26), but God himself (vv. 7, 9).

The rhyme-words in Q 24 are stock ones that often recur, e.g. *taḏakkarūn*, *muʾminīn* (x3), *fāsiqūn*, *ṣādiqīn* (x2), *kāḏibīn/ūn* (x3), *ḥakīm*, *ʿaẓīm* (x4), *mubīn*. The rhyme-word *ʿaẓīm* ("serious," lit, "mighty") is noteworthy for being in three *consecutive* verses, underscoring through repetition the enormity of what is being described, first "serious punishment" (*ʿaḏābun ʿaẓīm*, v. 14) commensurate to the accusation of illicit sex; second, "serious allegations" ("... *wa-huwa ʿinda llāhi ʿaẓīm*, v. 15); and third, "serious slander" (*buhtānun ʿaẓīm*, v. 16).

Younes

One noticeable feature of this passage is the frequent use (five times) of the conditional particle *lawlā*. It is also used once each in vv. 20 and 21, which results in a "cluster" of *lawlā* occurrences, a total of seven in 12 verses, vv. 10 – 21. While the typical meaning of *lawlā* is *if not for* or *had it not been for*, which initiates a *protasis* followed by a main clause (*apodosis*), it is used this way in only two out of the seven cases: vv. 14 and 21. In three of the other five verses *lawlā* is followed by *iḏ* with the combined meaning of "if ... when...." In the two remaining verses, 10 and 20, no *apodosis* is provided, so the condition is not complete and the meaning of *lawlā* is not clear.

QS 24 Q 24:35

24.35 God is the light of the heavens and the earth.
His light is like a niche in which is a lantern,
The lantern in a glass,
The glass like a shimmering star,
Kindled from a blessed tree,
An olive, neither of the East nor of the West,
Its oil almost aglow, though untouched by fire.
Light upon light!
God guides to His light whomever He wills,
And strikes parables for mankind.
God has knowledge of all things.

24.35 Allah est la Lumière des cieux et de la terre. Sa lumière est semblable à une niche où se trouve une lampe. La lampe est dans un (récipient de) cristal et celui-ci ressemble à un astre de grand éclat; son combustible vient d'un arbre béni: un olivier ni oriental ni occidental dont l'huile semble éclairer sans même que le feu la touche. Lumière sur lumière. Allah guide vers Sa lumière qui Il veut. Allah propose aux hommes des paraboles et Allah est Omniscient.

سورة النور
اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ
شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لاَ شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلاَ غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (35)

Azaiez

Le segment *maṯalu nūrihī ka-miškātin fīhā miṣbāḥun al-miṣbāḥu fī zuǧāǧatin al-zuǧāǧatu* s'apparente, sans l'être intégralement, à une anadiplose. Il s'agit d'une figure de style consistant à la reprise du dernier mot d'une proposition à l'initiale de la proposition qui suit. Cette forme rhétorique qui procède d'une forme d'oralisation fixe l'attention sur les mots importants qui se trouvent être tous des hapax (*miškāt*), (*miṣbāḥ*), (*zuǧāǧa*).

Dye

Sur ce verset, voir notamment Böwering (2011).

On notera la présence, dans le cotexte du verset, des notions de *maṯal* (v. 34), de lumière (vv. 40, 44 – jour et nuit), et de direction, de guide (v. 46). Surtout, le cotexte le plus immédiat nous indique que ce verset parle implicitement de formes de dévotion chrétienne, notamment celles des *moines* (vv. 34, 36–37). On peut considérer que les vv. 34–37 constituent une unité littéraire (même si on ne peut exclure quelques interpolations).

L'arrière-plan chrétien du « verset de la lumière » nous donne la clé pour en comprendre les belles métaphores. Durant leurs vigiles nocturnes, les moines faisaient briller des lampes dans leurs cellules, lampes dont la lumière pouvait guider les voyageurs. Le phénomène est souvent relevé dans la poésie arabe (voir par exemple Imruʾ al-Qays, *al-Muʿallaqa*, v. 40 : *tuḍīʾu l-ẓalāma bi-l-išāʾi ka-ʾannahā manāratu mumsā rāhibin mutabattil*).

Un phénomène physique simple explique l'imagerie coranique : en plaçant la lampe (*miṣbāḥ*, un hapax dans le Coran), ou plutôt la mèche (allumée), dans une niche (*miškāt* – mot emprunté à l'éthiopien *maskot*, « fenêtre », un autre hapax), derrière un verre (*zuǧāǧā*, encore un hapax), on augmente fortement sa luminosité.

La mention de l'olivier se comprend mieux si on pense à Zeck/Za 4:2–3 : Zacharie décrit sa vision à l'ange, parlant notamment d'un lampadaire avec un réservoir à son sommet, et sept lampes tout en haut. Près de cette lampe se trouvent deux oliviers, l'un à la droite du réservoir, l'autre à sa gauche. L'ange explique ensuite à Zacharie la signification de cette vision, et notamment des oliviers : « Ce sont les deux Oints qui se tiennent devant le Seigneur de toute la terre » (Zech/Za 4:13, les deux Oints sont sans doute Josué et Zorobabel). On retrouve cette imagerie dans l'Apocalypse de Jean : « Ce sont les deux oliviers et les deux flambeaux qui se tiennent devant le Maître de la terre » (Rev/Ap. 11:4, il s'agit ici de Moïse et d'Élie). Il faudrait suivre le développement de cette métaphore dans la littérature chrétienne préislamique, et saisir l'enjeu du passage de deux à *un* olivier.

Grodzki

The Qurʾānic *Allāhu nūr al-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi, "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth,"* also finds a parallel in another verse of the *Apocalypse of John* 21:23–24 (aside from the one mentioned above 11:4 by Dye) when describing the new promised (heavenly-earthly) Jerusalem: "*And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof*." Together with other Biblical references (Zech 4:2–3; 4:13, Exod 27:20–21 – and not only) it seems to sketch out a mysterious image of a mystical reality circulating amongst ancient peoples of Middle Eastern traditions.

Hilali

In the manuscript 27.1 DAM, Yemen (the so-called Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest), we can read a large part of chapter 24. V. 35 presents textual issues. We note a difference with the Cairo edition of Qurʾān. We read *min qabli an tamsashu nār* ("Before any fire touches it") while in the Cairo edition we read *wa law lam tamsashu nār* ("even when no fire touches it"). This difference is interesting if we consider the distinction between *nūr* (light) and *nār* (fire). In the Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest, the distinction between light and fire focuses on the opposite order of the succession in time: light is anterior to its own source, fire. The divine is submitted to a certain temporality, a progression in which the element of fire occupies the last step or the very condition of light.

Khalfallah

Malgré son apparente limpidité, le début de ce verset a généré un nombre important de problèmes d'ordre théologique, restés irrésolus. Construit par une annexion, *iḏāfa*, la première phrase (*Allāhu nūru s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi*) laisse supposer plusieurs relations sémantiques, métaphoriques et logiques entre ses deux termes, ou le nom et son complément. Le péril qu'il a fallu écarter, dans l'esprit des *mufassirūn*, était la similitude entre Dieu et ses créatures. Ainsi, ils ont proposé huit interopérations, toutes différentes, pour rendre intelligible cette *iḏāfa*, plutôt ambigüe. Il conviendrait peut-être, dans une future étude, de dresser la liste exhaustive de ces suggestions, et surtout d'en élucider les fondements théologiques et logiques.

Cependant, c'est le terme *nūr* (lumière) qui a suscité le plus de problèmes puisqu'il renvoie à la fois à une entité abstraite et à une autre, concrète. Définir Allah comme lumière, avec toutes les connotations que le mot pourrait inviter, serait de L'associer à l'une de Ses propres créatures ! Et c'est précisément cet écueil même que les exégètes ont tenté d'éviter. D'autres, comme al-Ǧurǧānī, y ont vu une figure de *tamṯīl* (analogie), pour sauver l'intelligibilité du verset.

Il serait également intéressant de comparer les connotations de ce terme, longuement analysées par les études rhétoriques, à ses équivalents sémitiques (hébreu, syriaque...) afin de voir s'ils évoquent les mêmes images connotant : guidance, *hudā*, gestion, (*tadbīr*) luminosité, omniscience...

C'est également sur ces creusets, plutôt micro- linguistiques (un mot, une image) que notre travail d'analyse et de comparaison pourrait explorer des nouvelles pistes.

Reynolds

In the latter part of this verse the Qurʾān suggests that its description of God here is a *maṯal* (Hebrew *māshāl*; Aramaic/Syriac *matlā*). The *maṯal* is an important feature of the Qurʾān (e. g. Q 2:17, 19, 171, 261, 264 passim). Q 29:43 has God proclaim "And We draw these *maṯal*s for mankind; but no one grasps them except those who have knowledge." Again in our verse here (Q 24:35) the Qurʾān makes the ability to coin *maṯals* a particular quality of its God. We might think of the divine voice of the Qurʾān competing with the voice of Christ in the Gospels in the light of Matthew 13:34 – 35: "In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. * This was to fulfill what was spoken by the Prophet: I will speak to you in parables, unfold what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

Toorawa

Four aspects of this passage interest me. The first is the presence of repeated words: *Allāh* (x4, "God"), *nūr* (x4, "light"), *maṯal* (x2, "likeness") and *amṯāl* (x1, "parallel, comparison"), *ka* (x2, "like"), *miṣbāḥ* (x2, adjacent, "lamp"), *zuǧāǧa* (x2, adjacent, "glass").

The second is the way in which the larger metaphor(s) and simile(s) are elaborated, notable with the use of expressions of similitude: *ka* ("like"), *ka-annahā* ("as if it is"), *yakādu* ("almost"), *wa-law lam* ("even though no"), *yaḍribu l-amṯāl* ("coins/draws parallels/comparisons").

The third is the use of the K sound (i.e. the letter *Kāf*): ***k**a-miš**k**āt*, ***k**a-annahā **k**aw**k**ab*, *mubāra**k**a*, *ya**k**ādu*.

The fourth is the limited use of verbs early on. The first verb does not appear until two-fifths of the way through, viz. *yūqadu* ("lit").

Winitzer

Almost certainly this cosmological image builds on earlier precedents, of which the most significant version appears in the opening theophany in Ezekiel (chaps 1, 10), the one that provides the basis for the Merkavah Mysticism in Late Antiquity. The key passage is Ezek 1:26–27:

> [26]Above the expanse over their (= the vehicle's creatures) heads was the semblance of a throne, in appearance like sapphire/lapis lazuli; and atop the semblance of the throne there was a semblance of a human form. [27]From what appeared as his loins up, I saw a gleam as that of amber – what looked like a fire encased in a receptacle.

In fact the mythologem of the deity seated in the sky with a glass-ensconced light at his side represents in itself a borrowing from ancient Near Eastern conceptions, as the following, concerning in this instance the Babylonian chief deity, Marduk (= Bēl):

> He (Bēl) sat in the lapis-lazuli dais; he lit a lamp of *elmēßu* in it (Livingstone 1989: 100, l. 32)

For a more detailed discussion of this borrowing in Ezekiel, see Winitzer 2014: 167–70. In the light of the appropriation of the Ezekiel cosmology and theophany in later traditions, the question of whether a specific tradition (let alone a *Vorlage*) can be pinpointed as the one behind this āya seems misguided or at least premature. Still there seems little doubt to our mind that the background of this image is, in fact, old and widespread.

QS 25 Q 25:1 – 10

25.1 Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant, to be a warning to mankind!
25.2 He to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and earth,
Who took to Himself no son,
Who never had a partner in His kingship,
Who created all things in perfect order.
25.3 And yet, instead of Him, they procure for themselves gods that create nothing, but are themselves created, that have no power to do themselves harm or benefit, and no power over life, death or resurrection.
25.4 Those who blaspheme say: “This is but falsehood which he contrived, and other people have helped him with it. They have committed iniquity and perjury.”
25.5 They say: “These are legends of the ancients that he has had written down, and they are read out to him, morning and evening.”
25.6 Say: “He sent it down Who knows the secret of the heavens and earth. He is Ever- Forgiving, Compassionate to each.”
25.7 They say: “What is it with this Messenger who eats food and wanders in the marketplace? If only an angel were sent down to be alongside him as a warner!
25.8 Or if only a treasure is dropped down upon him or he had an orchard from which he could eat!”
The wicked say: “You are merely following a man bewitched.”
25.9 Behold how they draw parables for you and how they go astray, and cannot find the right way.
25.10 Blessed is He Who, if He so wishes, can provide you with better than this: Gardens beneath which rivers flow – and provide you with palaces.

25.1 Qu’on exalte la Bénédiction de Celui qui a fait descendre le Livre de Discernement sur Son serviteur, afin qu’il soit un avertisseur à l’univers.
25.2 Celui à qui appartient la royauté des cieux et de la terre, qui ne S’est point attribué d’enfant, qui n’a point d’associé en Sa royauté et qui a créé toute chose en lui donnant ses justes proportions.
25.3 Mais ils ont adopté en dehors de Lui des divinités qui, étant elles-mêmes créées, ne créent rien, et qui ne possèdent la faculté de faire ni le mal ni le bien pour elles-mêmes, et qui ne sont maîtresses ni de la mort, ni de la vie, ni de la résurrection.
25.4 Les mécréants disent: «Tout ceci n’est qu’un mensonge qu’il (Muhammad) a inventé, et où d’autres gens l’ont aidé». Or, ils commettent là une injustice et un mensonge.
25.5 Et ils disent: «Ce sont des contes d’anciens qu’il se fait écrire! On les lui dicte matin et soir!»
25.6 Dis: «L’a fait descendre Celui qui connaît les secrets dans les cieux et la terre. Et Il est Pardonneur et Miséricordieux.
25.7 Et ils disent: «Qu’est-ce donc que ce Messager qui mange de la nourriture et circule dans les marchés? Que n’a-t-on fait descendre vers lui un Ange qui eût été avertisseur en sa compagnie?
25.8 Ou que ne lui a-t-on lancé un trésor? Ou que n’a-t-il un jardin à lui, dont il pourrait manger (les fruits)?» Les injustes disent: «Vous ne suivez qu’un homme ensorcelé».
25.9 Vois à quoi ils te comparent! Ils se sont égarés. Ils ne pourront trouver aucun chemin.
25.10 Béni soit Celui qui, s’Il le veut, t’accordera bien mieux que cela: des Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux; et Il t’assignera des châteaux.

سورة الفرقان

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا (1) الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا (2) وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا (3) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ
فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا (4) وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا (5) قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا (6) وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ

مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا (7) أَوْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا (8)
انْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا (9) تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكَ قُصُورًا (10)

Azaiez

Ces dix premiers versets relèvent explicitement du genre de la polémique. A l'appui de la méthode de l'analyse rhétorique, il est possible de cerner une composition structurée en trois morceaux composés pour le premier et le troisième de six assertions chacune. En l'occurrence, ces assertions incarnent trois actes argumentatifs fondamentaux : célébrer Dieu par une louange (vv. 1, 2/10), affirmer la grandeur de Dieu et la véracité de la mission de l'allocutaire coranique par des assertions théologiques (vv. 3/9), mettre en scène la voix de l'opposant par l'emploi d'un contre-discours (vv. 4 – 5/7 – 8). Symétriquement disposé tel un miroir (tout en étant inversé: ABC/x /C'B'A'), l'ensemble se distingue par la place stratégique des contre-discours qui enserrent le morceau central de la séquence : une injonction introduite par *qul*. Cette centralité confère sans aucun doute à l'énoncé de la riposte une place toute particulière. Dans la perspective de l'analyse rhétorique, le centre oriente le sens global de la séquence tout en permettant, dans le cas présent, de neutraliser les contre-discours « enfermés » entre les assertions théologiques du Coran et la riposte coranique. La parole paradoxale ou contre-discours qui nie le Coran (et son propre discours) est ainsi rhétoriquement neutralisée.

Disposition rhétorique des versets 1 à 10 de la sourate al Furqān

1. Préambule (Louange)
تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا
(1ère assertion)
الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا
(2ème assertion)
2. Thèse (Assertion théologique)
وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَّا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا
(3ème assertion)
3. Réfutation (Contre-discours)
وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ
(4ème assertion)
فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا
(5ème assertion)
وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا
(6ème assertion)

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4. Contre-réfutation (Injonction, assertion et riposte au centre)
قُلْ أَنزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

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5. Réfutation (Contre-discours)
وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ
(7ème assertion)

لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا
(8ème assertion)
أَوْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ
(9ème assertion)
إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا
(10ème assertion)
6. Thèse (Assertion théologique)
انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا
(11ème assertion)
7. Epilogue (Louange)
تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِن شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّن ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَل لَّكَ قُصُورًا
(12ème assertion)

Dye

L'ambiance psalmique est manifeste dans le contenu, le style et la phraséologie. Deux formules liturgiques (et stéréotypées), introduites par *tabāraka* (vv. 1–2 / v. 10), encadrent les sections polémiques, qui reprennent des *topoi* bien présents, pour la plupart, ailleurs dans le Coran, les réponses au « contre-discours » (pour reprendre l'expression d'Azaiez) se trouvant aux vv. 6 et 9.

V. 1 : Sur l'étymologie de *furqān*, voir le débat récent entre Donner 2007 et Rubin 2009. Du strict point de vue de la linguistique historique, la question ne me semble pas réglée, pour diverses raisons qu'il est impossible d'expliquer ici. Mais on peut au moins penser que *furqān* signifie ici soit « salut », soit « guidance », soit « lumière ». Le verset est suffisamment ambigu pour pouvoir désigner Muḥammad ou un autre messager (par exemple Moïse) ayant antérieurement reçu une révélation.

Vv. 3–4 : On retrouve le vaste problème des *informateurs* de Muḥammad (voir par exemple Q 16:103). Voir à ce sujet Gilliot: 1998. La question est très délicate, et il reste difficile de déterminer ce qui a quelque chance d'être historiquement avéré. Le contre-discours parle d'informateurs (donc d'individus précis) informant *un* individu (Muḥammad) jouant un rôle décisif dans l'énoncé du message, et le discours coranique réfute ce contre-discours. il me semble qu'il s'agit là d'une idéalisation, une stylisation, d'une situation, et d'une histoire de la composition du Coran, beaucoup plus compliquées.

Grodzki

Does the list of the limitations of the *mušrikūn*'s gods in v. 3 reflect the real doctrine of an existing religious group, or is it to be understood solely in the polemical sense (gnostics, monists, polytheists etc.)? Are the Qurʾānic *kuffār* or *mušrikūn* always meant to be the same specific religious group of non-Muslims, or is it – primarily – a rhetorical device to highlight the Qurʾānic dogmatic message, and – only secondarily – perhaps a distant distorted allusion to a specific group of disbelievers in the Qurʾānic mesage ? Here the ironic formulation *wa-lā yamlikūna li-anfusihim ḍarran*

wa-lā nafʿan in regard to gods doesn't apparently seem to help us much further in this quest.

Khalfallah

Pour examiner ce passage, je tente d'appliquer la méthode argumentative qui consiste à analyser la structure démonstrative du texte (cf. Azaiez 2012). La « structure démonstrative », est l'ensemble d'arguments et d'arguties que le discours mobilise pour construire sa trame logique : défendre des idées et en saper d'autres selon une approche polémique et/ou dialectique.

Arguments coraniques	Contre- arguments (hostiles)	Identité des adversaires
Dieu a révélé le Coran à son serviteur.	Le Coran est inventé par Muḥammad	Polythéistes mecquois.
Dieu a tout créé.	Le *Dahr* (Temps, éternité) a tout créé.	Les *Dahriyya*
Dieu possède le pouvoir d'accorder la vie et d'y mettre terme.	Le *Dhar* est celui « qui fait périr »	Les *Dahriyya*
Dieu n'a pas d'enfants.	Jésus est le fils de Dieu	Les chrétiens d'Arabie.
Le Coran est une parole sensée venant de Dieu.	Le Coran est mensonge, *ifk*et « fables des Premiers»	Les Quraysītes et en particulier al-Nadr b. Hārit
Ce Coran est désormais écrit.	Les fables des premiers furent également écrites.	Les mêmes
Muḥammad est Messager de Dieu ; il reçoit Sa Parole via 5 modalités de révélation.	Muḥammad est un homme ensorcelé/ envoûté, *masḥūr*	Les polythéistes
Muḥammad est l'Avertisseur, *nadīr* de Dieu	Muḥammad a besoin d'un ange pour le soutenir dans sa mission d'avertissement	Les mêmes
Muḥammad n'est que humain- Messager	Muḥammad doit être doté des pouvoirs surnaturels : découvrir des trésors, avoir un jardin…	Les mêmes
Dieu donne les exemples	Muḥammad est faillible = Il mange, il fréquente les marchés	Les polythéistes

Dans ce passage, le discours coranique reprend une longue polémique qui oppose d'une part Dieu qui « défend » la véracité de son Messager, son authenticité ainsi que l'origine divine de son message ; d'autre part, les polythéistes et les chrétiens qui mettent en doute l'authenticité du message Muḥammadien et l'assimilent aux « fables insensées, aux mythes, aux histoires niaises des Anciennes nations."

Ainsi, cette méthode nous aidera à mieux connaître les éléments suivants :

– Les arguments et les contre-arguments présentés par les uns (Dieu, Coran et Muḥammad) et par les autres dans le cadre des débats et polémiques de l'islam des origines.

- Les milieux intellectuels d'alors, les textes connus (Rustum et Asfandiyār), la circulation des rares documents écrits d'alors.
- Les stratégies et styles coraniques (rhétoriques et logiques) dans la reproduction de ces arguments.

Pregill

The description of God's majesty and the explicit contrast with the impotence of other (non-) deities here strikes me as extremely psalmic in ambience; in Biblical terms, the theology here is postexilic, strongly reminiscent of P, with the specifically anti-Christian flourish *lam yattaḫiḏ waladan* added in.

V. 1: *furqān:* again the etymological problem. The following verses describing God's dominion seem creedal, and thus I infer that the *furqān* that has been sent down is not a "commandment" (as if from Syriac *pūqdānā*) but rather the "criterion" that separates the damned and the saved. I still incline to the idea that *al-Furqān* was an early draft or recension of Qurʾānic material (cf. Bell 1953), similar or even identical to the canonical *ǧuzʾ ʿammā*.

v. 2: *qaddarahu taqdīran:* i.e., He determined its order and structure; cf. Genesis 1, the Priestly cosmogony, itself modeled on much older Near Eastern mythologies.

V. 3: *lā yamlikūna ḍarran wa-lā nafʿan:* there are at least twenty occurrences of this phrase in the Qurʾān in reference to beings worshipped *min dūn Allāh*; it is used of the Golden Calf in Q 20:89. The phrase is reminiscent of the language of Israelite icon parodies of the Exilic age, in which the non-existence of foreign objects of worship is contrasted with the undeniable power and sovereignty of YHWH, to whom the Israelite must remain loyal.

nushūr: not quite "resurrection" (thus Abdel Haleem) but rather an uncovering or unfolding – i.e., *apokálupsis* (cf. *al-ʿĀqiba*, the Eschaton).

Vv. 4–5: allegations of forgery. Another *qawm* has helped him with these "fables of the ancients," written down for him and dictated day and night (see QS 22 above). Such statements have often supplied grist for the mill of those who posit that the Qurʾān is plagiarized from Jewish and Christian antecedents. While the simplistic model of foreign influence in the shaping of the Qurʾān that was once prevalent must be discarded, we must nevertheless acknowledge the significance of the Qurʾān's repeated assertion that those who opposed its message alleged that it originated from outside the community.

V. 7: Again the familiar allegation that revelation brought by a mere mortal man, without an angel to help him, is illegitimate (cf., e.g., 11:27, 31 and repeatedly in Q 23; see discussion of QS 14). Note also the treasure "cast down," an odd image.

Reynolds

As Patricia Crone (2011) proposes, the objection dealt with in passages such as vv. 6–7 here is not so much polytheism v. monotheism as much as the expectation

of the *mušrikūn* that a divine messenger come from heaven, or at least ascend to heaven and then return with something. In this light the "gods" (*āliha*) of v. 3 might not reflect polytheism but rather the Qurʾān's tendency to exaggerate the views of its opponents (we might compare this strategy to Q 5:116, which would suggest that Christians worship Mary; or Q 9:31, which would suggest that Jews worship their rabbis and Christians worship their monks).

Tengour

Ce passage de la vingt-cinquième sourate s'articule autour de thèmes proprement mecquois. D'abord, la Révélation est ce que le dieu coranique fait descendre, *nazzala*, pour avertir les tribus (v. 1). Ensuite, la Création et la Résurrection sont fortement associées au dieu coranique. Ces deux thèmes sont absents dans le Coran de la première phase où le Seigneur, *Rabb*, prôné par Muḥammad ne semble pas se distinguer des autres *Rabb(s)* locaux auxquels les Mecquois, et sans doute lui-même, rendaient un culte. Comme eux, Il est un Protecteur de surnature solidaire des hommes entrés dans son alliance, *walaʾ*. Il est pour ceux qu'il a fonction de protéger un Guide et enfin, un Donateur.

Lus dans leur contexte historique et anthropologique, les passages relatifs au Seigneur coranique rendent compte d'une continuité entre les représentations du Coran et celles de son milieu d'origine. Il ne pouvait sans doute pas en être autrement pour un homme de tribu qui cherchait désespérément à rallier les siens à sa cause. Son échec à se faire entendre l'amènera à puiser dans les croyances et l'imaginaire bibliques à la fois des arguments pour convaincre et la force de continuer à le faire et ce, en dépit de l'hostilité grandissante qu'il devait affronter.

L'émergence du dieu coranique en tant que dieu Créateur et Résurrecteur en est la conséquence. Cela nous permet de mieux saisir la portée des railleries des Mecquois qui considérèrent ces nouvelles fonctions comme étant ni plus ni moins qu'un mensonge que leur compagnon aurait forgé, *ʾifk ʾiftarā-hu* (v. 4), pire encore qu'il leur raconte des histoires appartenant à d'autres, *qawm ʾāḫarūn* (v. 4), des histoires d'anciens, *'asāṭīr al-'awwalīn* (v. 5).

Dans le contexte tribal du VIIe siècle, l'expression *ʾasāṭīr al-ʾawwalīn* est redoutable car ce qui se profile derrière c'est l'absence de lignage de ces hommes enfouis dans les profondeurs d'un temps primitif auquel renvoie très clairement le participe *ʾawwalūn*. Pour des hommes de tribus, et donc pour Muḥammad lui-même, être sans généalogie revenait à être sans intérêt. C'est là un trait de mentalité dont on aurait tort d'ignorer ou de sous-estimer les effets. Ces propos mis dans la bouche des Mecquois disent tout l'invraisemblable qu'il y avait pour eux à écouter des propos d'hommes aussi lointains et dont plus aucune trace ne subsiste quand le groupe est censé suivre la voie de ses ancêtres bien connus.

Toorawa

This is a rhetorically rich passage, exhibiting among other things the following five features:

[1] Symmetry, e.g. the use of *tabāraka llaḏī* in vv. 1 and 10.

[2] The use of terms from material culture in close proximity in vv. 7 and 8: *ṭaʿām* ("food"), *aswāq* ("markets"), and *kanz* ("treasure").

[3] The recurrence of endwords, e.g. *naḏīrā* twice, in vv. 1 and 7 (and also twice more in the *sūra* at vv. 51 and 56); *sabīlā* seven times (vv. 9, 27, 34, 42, 44 and 57); and *nušūrā* thrice (vv. 3, 40 and 47).

[4] Endwords shared with Q 76, namely *taqdīrā*, *aṣīlā* and *sabīlā*.

[5] The presence of words about different types and kinds of speech(-acts): *tabāraka* (v. 1, "blessed is"); *al-furqān* (v. 1, "Scripture," lit. "Differentiator"); *naḏīrā* (v. 1, "admonition"); *ifk* ("lie") and *zūrā* ("falsehood") (v. 4); *asāṭīr al-awwalīn* ("tales/fables of the ancients"), *iktataba* ("written down"), *tumlā* ("dictated") (v. 5); *sirr* (v. 6, "secret"); *mashūrā* (v. 8, "bewitched"); *ḍarabūka l-amṯāl* (v. 9, "coined/drawn parallels/comparisons"); *tabāraka* (v. 10, "blessed is").

Younes

In my comments on the use of *lawlā* in QS 23, I mentioned that it has two distinct meanings, the first is *if not for* or *had it not been for* and the second meaning, when followed by *iḏ* is *if*. In this passage, *lawlā*, found in v. 7, has a third meaning, which is "why not?"

QS 26 Q 26:105 – 122

26.105 Noah's people cried lies to the Messengers.
26.106 This is when their fellow tribesman Noah said to them: "Will you not fear God?
26.107 To you I am a trustworthy Messenger,
26.108 so fear God and obey me.
26.109 I ask you no wage for it; my wage falls solely upon the Lord of the Worlds.
26.110 So fear God and obey me."
26.111 They said: "Are we to trust you when only the riff-raff have followed you?"
26.112 He said: "How should I know what they do?
26.113 Their account rests only with my Lord, if only you knew.
26.114 I am not one who drives away believers.
26.115 I am solely a manifest warner."
26.116 They said: "If you do not desist, O Noah, you shall be stoned."
26.117 He said: "My Lord, my people are liars.
26.118 So pronounce between me and them a judgment, and deliver me and those with me among the believers."
26.119 So We delivered him and those with him in the teeming Ark,
26.120 And thereafter drowned the others.
26.121 In this was a sign – but most of them were not believers.
26.122 It is your Lord who is Almighty, Compassionate to each.

26.105 Le peuple de Noé traita de menteurs les Messagers,
26.106 lorsque Noé, leur frère, (contribule) leur dit: «Ne craindrez-vous pas [Allah]?
26.107 Je suis pour vous un messager digne de confiance.
26.108 Craignez Allah donc et obéissez-moi.
26.109 Et je ne vous demande pas de salaire pour cela; mon salaire n'incombe qu'au Seigneur de l'univers.
26.110 Craignez Allah donc, et obéissez-moi».
26.111 Ils dirent: «Croirons-nous en toi, alors que ce sont les plus vils qui te suivent.
26.112 Il dit: «Je ne sais pas ce que ceux-là faisaient.
26.113 Leur compte n'incombe qu'à mon Seigneur. Si seulement vous êtes conscients.
26.114 Je ne suis pas celui qui repousse les croyants.
26.115 Je ne suis qu'un avertisseur explicite».
26.116 Ils dirent: «Si tu ne cesses pas, Noé, tu seras certainement du nombre des lapidés!»
26.117 Il dit: «O mon Seigneur, mon peuple me traite de menteur.
26.118 Tranche donc clairement entre eux et moi; et sauve-moi ainsi que ceux des croyants qui sont avec moi».
26.119 Nous le sauvâmes donc, de même que ceux qui étaient avec lui dans l'arche, pleinement chargée.
26.120 Et ensuite nous noyâmes le reste (les infidèles).
26.121 Voilà bien là un signe. Cependant, la plupart d'entre eux ne croient pas.
26.122 Et Ton Seigneur, c'est lui vraiment le Puissant, le Très Miséricordieux.

سورة الشعراء

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (105) إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (106) إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ (107) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ
(108) وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (109) فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ 110)) قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ
وَاتَّبَعَكَ الْأَرْذَلُونَ (111) قَالَ وَمَا عِلْمِي بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (112) إِنْ حِسَابُهُمْ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ (113) وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (114) إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ (115) قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَا نُوحُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ (116) قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي
كَذَّبُونِ (117) فَافْتَحْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَنَجِّنِي وَمَنْ مَعِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (118) فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ (119) ثُمَّ
أَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ الْبَاقِينَ (120) إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (121) وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (122)

Azaiez

On notera l'usage de deux contre-discours passés vv. 111, 116 (discours rapportés des adversaires dans le passé – biblique). Par ailleurs, les propos tenus par Noé ressemblent à s'y méprendre aux discours portés par l'allocutaire coranique (e. g. Q 7:188). Il s'agit d'un processus d'anaphorisation qui conduit à associer et confondre les adversaires de Noé avec les adversaires de l'allocutaire coranique. Comme l'écrit Mustapha Ben Taïbi : « on peut établir un parallélisme entre dialogues dans le passé et dialogues dans le présent, qui montre que les seconds se construisent en procédant à l'anaphorisation des données des premiers » (Ben Taïbi 1998: 200). définissant ainsi le caractère monoprophétique du message coranique (De Prémare 1988: 12).

Grodzki

The dialogue between Noah and the disbelievers in vv. 26:111–14 seems to be an allusion perhaps to an (explicitly not mentioned) incident/situation/happening/behavior known to all interlocutors (the enigmatic *al-arḏalūna* doesn't help much in getting at the idea). Noah's response is not what one might expect it to be in this *sūra* – he doesn't respond by rehabilitating his followers – the *al-arḏalūna* – for having been called so, but proceeds to comment indirectly on that given incident (which may imply that the word *al-arḏalūna* doesn't have to possess a pejorative meaning). Are there any ancient literary sources helpful to explain which incident might be meant here? Or is it rather to be understood generally as the past bad conduct of the *al-arḏalūna* in some situations? It also seems as if Noah is trying to explain himself for not being held responsible for the faults of his followers, which reminds me of vv. 5:116–17 when the Qurʾānic Jesus is also trying to explain himself in front of God who is asking: "Was it you who said to the people: 'Take me and my mother for gods besides Allah?'"

Hawting

This version of the story of Noah appears in the context of a series of accounts of the rejection of previous messengers of God by the peoples to whom they had been sent, and the consequences of that rejection. Several of the themes in this account occur in versions of his story elsewhere in the Qurʾān (e. g., Q 11:25–49), or in the punishment stories involving other messengers: the messenger is a "brother" of those to whom he is sent; he asks for no reward for what he does; he comes as a warner; he and those who believe are saved while the unbelievers perish.

In v. 111 we are told that Noah was rejected on the grounds that he was supported by the weak (?) elements in society (*al-arḏalūna*). The root *R-Ḏ-L* only occurs four times in the Qurʾān, in two repeated formulae: with regard to the followers of Noah, as well as in the passage under consideration, they are referred to as *arāḏilunā* in Q 11:27; the other is in the expression, "God creates you, then causes you to die,

and some of you are returned to the weakest of lives (? *ilā arḏali l-ʿumur*) so that they may know nothing after knowing" (Q 16:70 and 22:5). If this latter formula is taken as an allusion to dementia in old age, then a basic sense of "weakness" seems plausible in the root (with further connotations of worthlessness and contempt) and a connection with words and expressions derived from *ḍ-ʿ-f* suggests itself (e.g., *allaḏīna stuḍʿifū* at Q 7:75). The traditional notion of the prophet as the champion of the weak and oppressed elements in society is evident in such passages, and is sometimes reflected in *sīra* material regarding the attitude of the Qurayš to Muḥammad and his supporters. Cf. the use of *mustaḍʿafīn* and associated vocabulary in the propaganda of contemporary Islamic parties and movements, especially Shiʿite ones.

Khalfallah

Ce passage contient une indication très précieuse au sujet de la pratique de lapidation (*raǧm*). Nous savons que les dérivés de la racine *R-Ǧ-M* revient treize fois dans le Coran. Les sept premières occurrences concernent Satan qui fut exclu de la miséricorde de Dieu ; et c'est le premier sens de cette racine. Les autres occurrences, qui nous intéressent dans ce commentaire, désignent cette pratique archaïque connue, semble-t-il, à toutes les époques et par toutes les cultures dont parle le Coran. Voici les principales allusions: [1] Q 11:91, lapidation pratiquée par le peuple de Šuʿayb (Péninsule arabe). [2] Q 18:20, pratiquée par les pouvoirs qui administraient les gens de la Caverne (Tarsus). [3] Q 19:46, pratiquée par le peuple d'Abraham (à Our). [4] Q 26:116, pratiquée par le peuple de Noé. [5] Q 36:18, par les gens du Village ? [6] Q 44:20, pratiquée par le peuple de Moïse (en Égypte).

Dans ce passage, cette allusion concerne donc la plus ancienne époque, celle de Noé. Le Coran rapporte la menace proférée par les Riches de son village qui ne voulaient pas être associés aux pauvres. Ce qui signifie qu'il s'agit d'une sorte de punition, plutôt courante et admise par ce peuple. Il s'agirait de la peine qu'encouraient les hérétiques, ceux qui apportaient une nouvelle prédication et exhortaient les leurs à la suivre.

En islam, cette pratique est présentée comme une peine légale sanctionnant l'adultère commis par un *muḥṣin* (homme protégé par un contrat valide de mariage, musulman, doté de ses forces mentales, de condition libre) ou une femme *muḥṣan* (femme libre, mariée, musulmane et dotée de ses forces mentales) [remarquez la différence entre le participe actif propre à l'époux et le participe passif réservé à l'épouse]. Il est à noter, comme l'ont dit les Ḫawāriǧ, que la lapidation avec ce sens pénal n'est pas mentionnée dans le Coran. En effet, les docteurs de Loi musulmans se sont référés à la Tradition du prophète pour instaurer cette peine. Actuellement, je suis en train de recenser les cas de lapidation pratiqués par le Prophète. Ces mêmes Docteurs de Loi se sont ingéniés, dans le même temps, à rendre son application impossible de par les conditions drastiques qu'ils exigent pour prouver l'adultère.

Pregill

The story of Noah again, embedded in one of the most thorough treatments of the *topos* of the pre-Islamic prophets in the Qurʾān. According to the traditional chronology of revelation, this appears to have been the first *sūra* to do so; among all of the prophets who are included here (Moses, Abraham, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot, Šuʿayb), that of Noah stands out as the paradigmatic warner-story or *ʿibra*.

The thematic parallels between the narratives of the prophets recounted here and the biography of Muḥammad are consistent and conspicuous: warnings are issued to the unbelievers; the message is rejected and the prophet is denounced, particularly on account of the low status of his followers; the sincerity of the believers is asserted as the only true criterion for inclusion in the saved community; the prophet's welfare is threatened; divine protection is invoked; and finally the warnings of destruction to unbelievers and promises of deliverance to believers are fulfilled. The thematic links to the *sīra* tradition are obvious, but this once again raises the classic chicken-and-egg question provoked by revisionist historiography decades ago. While I am extremely sympathetic to the revisionist approach, it seems easier to believe that the narrative pattern we see here was crafted to evoke and resonate with the particular experience of the Qurʾānic prophet and his community than that all of the details of the *sīra* were crafted in conformity with the template provided here.

V. 118: much seems to hinge on the meaning of *fa-ftaḥ fatḥan* here; Abdel Haleem translates "make a firm judgment between me and them," but this does not seem quite right to me.

Reynolds

Here Noah is a model of patience although his people have rejected him, mocked him for the "riffraff" who follow him (v. 111), and threatened to stone him (v. 116). In response Noah asks God to rescue him and his followers (117–18). In the *sūra* named after him (Q 71) Noah is more direct: he asks God to destroy the infidels (v. 26). The idea that Noah's people would have threatened to stone him is part of a topos in the Qurʾān: Šuʿayb (Q 11:91), the Companions of the Cave (Q 18:20), Abraham (Q: 19:46), two anonymous messengers (Q 36:18), and Moses (44:20) are all threatened with stoning by their unbelieving opponents. This topos is perhaps a reflection of Matt 23:37 (which has Jesus refer to the stoning of the prophets) along with John 10:31 (which reports that the Jews indeed sought to stone Jesus [perhaps an echo of Exod 17:4]) and of early Christian texts such as the *Lives of the Prophets* (traditionally attributed to Epiphanius [d. 403]) which make the prophets into martyrs.

Rippin

I am intrigued by the mention of the threat of Noah's people that he will be *marǧūm* in v. 116. Most interpretations see this as Noah's people see him as having to "desist"

in his preaching. Arberry (1964: 375), however, suggests "givest not over" which seems to read into the verse a broader context of an elaborated Noah story.

Tengour

Il est question dans ce passage de la dénégation des gens de Noé, *qawm Nūḥ*. Celle-ci est rendue par le verbe *kaḏḏaba*, *yukaḏḏibu*, dénier. Particulièrement récurent dans le Coran, le thème de la dénégation, *takḏīb*, est d'abord associé à la tribu des *Qurayš* qui, durant toute la période mecquoise (610 – 622, dates présumées), va persister dans son refus d'entendre l'avertissement, *'inḏār*, que Muḥammad lui adresse au nom du devoir de solidarité tribale qui le lie à elle. Le même mot sera ensuite repris pour désigner la dénégation des peuples locaux historico-mythiques des *'Ād* et des *Ṯamūd* et celle des peuples des prophètes bibliques, en particulier Moïse et, comme ici, Noé, que la parole coranique se représente toujours comme ayant été rejetés par les leurs de la même manière que Muḥammad est rejeté par les siens, si bien qu'il va de plus en plus s'identifier à eux.

Dans ce passage de la sourate *al-Šuʿarāʾ*, Noé est raillé par les hommes de sa tribu qui, dans v. 11, le pointent du doigt comme n'étant suivi que par des hommes de rien, *al-ʾarḏalūn*. On pourra mettre ce verset en chronologie avec Q 11:27. Ces propos d'adversaires – qui n'ont pas la parole directement – ne sont pas sans rappeler la condition basse des partisans mekkois de Muḥammad et même de Muḥammad lui-même qui n'avait pas le statut que la tradition lui prêtera plus tard. C'est là un exemple frappant de réappropriation du parcours biblique de Noé dont le devenir coranique a pour but de servir la cause de Muḥammad. La rencontre avec cet *autre* lui permet ainsi de continuer d'avertir sa tribu du péril qui, croit-il, la menace, mais aussi de s'inscrire dans la lignée d'un Noé qui, bien que rejeté par les siens, est néanmoins protégé par une divinité au pouvoir grandissant.

QS 27 Q 27:15 – 44

27.15 We bestowed knowledge on David and Solomon.
They said: “Praise be to God who preferred us above many of His believing worshippers.”
27.16 And Solomon inherited David. He said: “O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and granted of all gifts. This is truly a favor most conspicuous.”
27.17 To Solomon were mustered his troops of humans, *Jinn* and birds, all held in strict order.
27.18 Until, when they arrived at the Valley of Ants, an ant said: “O ants, enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his troops should crush you unawares.”
27.19 He smiled in amusement at its words and said: “My Lord, inspire me to offer thanks for the bounty You bestowed upon me and upon my progeny, and to do a good deed of which You will approve, and admit me, through Your mercy, into the company of your virtuous servants.”
27.20 And he inspected the birds. He said: “Why do I not see the hoopoe? Or is he among the absent?
27.21 I shall punish him most harshly or even slit his throat, unless he brings me a clear justification.”
27.22 But the bird was not absent for long.
He said: “I have learnt what you have not. I come to you from Saba’, with a sure report.
27.23 I found a woman ruling over them, and one granted of all gifts, with a magnificent throne.
27.24 I found her and her people bowing in worship to the sun, instead of God. Satan has made their works appear attractive to them, and barred them from the way; thus they are not guided aright.
27.25 If only they would bow in worship to God, who reveals whatever is hidden in the heavens and on earth, who knows what you conceal and what you openly declare!
27.26 God, there is no god but He, Lord of the Mighty Throne!”
27.27 He said: “We shall wait and see if you speak the truth or you are a liar.

27.15 Nous avons effectivement donné à David et à Salomon une science; et ils dirent: «Louange à Allah qui nous a favorisés à beaucoup de Ses serviteurs croyants».
27.16 Et Salomon hérita de David et dit: «O hommes! On nous a appris le langage des oiseaux; et on nous a donné part de toutes choses. C’est là vraiment la grâce évidente.
27.17 Et furent rassemblées pour Salomon, ses armées de djinns, d’hommes et d’oiseaux, et furent placées en rangs.
27.18 Quand ils arrivèrent à la Vallée des Fourmis, une fourmi dit: «O fourmis, entrez dans vos demeures, [de peur] que Salomon et ses armées ne vous écrasent [sous leurs pieds] sans s’en rendre compte».
27.19 Il sourit, amusé par ses propos et dit: «Permets-moi Seigneur, de rendre grâce pour le bienfait dont Tu m’as comblé ainsi que mes père et mère, et que je fasse une bonne ouvre que tu agrées et fais-moi entrer, par Ta miséricorde, parmi Tes serviteurs vertueux».
27.20 Puis il passa en revue les oiseaux et dit: «Pourquoi ne vois-je pas la huppe? est-elle parmi les absents?
27.21 Je la châtierai sévèrement! ou je l’égorgerai! ou bien elle m’apportera un argument explicite».
27.22 Mais elle n’était restée (absente) que peu de temps et dit: «J’ai appris ce que tu n’as point appris; et je te rapporte de Saba’ une nouvelle sûre:
27.23 J’ai trouvé qu’une femme est leur reine, que de toute chose elle a été comblée et qu’elle a un trône magnifique.
27.24 Je l’ai trouvée, elle et son peuple, se prosternant devant le soleil au lieu d’Allah. Le Diable leur a embelli leurs actions, et les a détournés du droit chemin, et ils ne sont pas bien guidés.
27.25 Que ne se prosternent-ils devant Allah qui fait sortir ce qui est caché dans les cieux et la terre, et qui sait ce que vous cachez et aussi ce que vous divulguez?
27.26 Allah! Point de divinité à part Lui, le Seigneur du Trône Immense.

27.28 Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them, then leave them and see what answer they return."
27.29 She said: "O Council, a noble letter has been delivered to me.
27.30 It is from Solomon and begins 'In the name of God, Merciful to all, Compassionate to each.'
27.31 It says: 'Hold not your head high against me, and come to me as Muslims.'"
27.32 She said: "O Council, give me your considered opinion on this matter, for I am not accustomed to decide a matter unless you are present before me."
27.33 They said: "We are men of might and great courage, but the decision is up to you. So consider what you wish to command."
27.34 She said: "When kings enter a city they corrupt it, and reduce its grandees to abject misery. This is how they act.
27.35 I am sending them a gift, and will see what the messengers bring back."
27.36 When the messenger came to Solomon, he said: "Are you really handing out money to me? What God has provided me with is better than what He provided you. Indeed, you seem happy with your gift!
27.37 Go back to them and tell them that we shall advance against them with troops they cannot resist, and shall drive them out, abject and humbled."
27.38 He said: "O Council, which one of you can bring me her throne before they come to me as Muslims?"
27.39 A giant *jinni* said: "I shall bring it to you, before you rise from your seat. I am powerful
27.40 and trusty enough to do it."
Said one who had knowledge of the Book: "I shall bring it to you before you blink your eye." When he saw it set up firmly in his presence, he said: "This is a favor from my Lord, in order to test me whether I shall give thanks or be ungrateful. Whoso gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own good. Whoso is ungrateful, my Lord is All-Sufficient, All-Munificent."
27.41 He said: "Disguise her throne and let us see whether she will be guided to it, or unguided."
27.42 When she arrived, she was asked: "Is this what your throne looks like?"

27.27 Alors, Salomon dit: «Nous allons voir si tu as dis la vérité ou si tu as menti.
27.28 Pars avec ma lettre que voici; puis lance-la à eux; ensuite tiens-toi à l'écart d'eux pour voir ce que sera leur réponse.
27.29 La reine dit: «O notables! Une noble lettre m'a été lancée.
27.30 Elle vient de Salomon; et c'est: «Au nom d'Allah, le Tout Miséricordieux, le Très Miséricordieux,
27.31 Ne soyez pas hautains avec moi et venez à moi en toute soumission».
27.32 Elle dit: «O notables! Conseillez-moi sur cette affaire: je ne déciderai rien sans que vous ne soyez présents (pour me conseiller)».
27.33 Ils dirent: «Nous sommes détenteurs d'une force et d'une puissance redoutable. Le commandement cependant t'appartient. Regarde donc ce que tu veux ordonner».
27.34 Elle dit: «En vérité, quand les rois entrent dans une cité ils la corrompent, et font de ses honorables citoyens des humiliés. Et c'est ainsi qu'ils agissent.
27.35 Moi, je vais leur envoyer un présent, puis je verrai ce que les envoyés ramèneront».
27.36 Puis, lorsque [la délégation] arriva auprès de Salomon, celui-ci dit: «Est-ce avec des biens que vous voulez m'aider? alors que ce qu'Allah m'a procuré est meilleur que ce qu'Il vous a procuré. Mais c'est vous plutôt qui vous réjouissez de votre cadeau.
27.37 Retourne vers eux. Nous viendrons avec des armées contre lesquelles ils n'auront aucune résistance, et nous les en expulserons tout humiliés et méprisés.
27.38 Il dit: «O notables! Qui de vous m'apportera son trône avant qu'ils ne viennent à moi soumis?»
27.39 Un djinn redoutable dit: «Je te l'apporterai avant que tu ne te lèves de ta place: pour cela, je suis fort et digne de confiance».
27.40 Quelqu'un qui avait une connaissance du Livre dit: «Je te l'apporterai avant que tu n'aies cligné de l'oil». Quand ensuite, Salomon a vu le trône installé auprès de lui, il dit: «Cela est de la grâce de mon Seigneur, pour m'éprouver si je suis reconnaissant ou si je suis ingrat. Quiconque est reconnaissant c'est dans son propre intérêt qu'il le fait, et quiconque est ingrat... alors

She said: “It is nearly so.”
He said: “We were granted Knowledge before her, and became Muslims.
27.43 Barring her from right guidance is that which she worships instead of God. She belongs to a disbelieving nation.”
27.44 It was said to her: “Enter the roofed terrace.” When she saw it, she thought it was a large body of water, and exposed her legs.
He said: “This is a terrace burnished with glass.”
She said: “My Lord, I have wronged myself and I have submitted, along with Solomon, to God, Lord of the Worlds.”

mon Seigneur Se suffit à Lui-même et Il est Généreux».
27.41 Et il dit [encore]: «Rendez-lui son trône méconnaissable, nous verrons alors si elle sera guidée ou si elle est du nombre de ceux qui ne sont pas guidés».
27.42 Quand elle fut venue on lui dit: «Est-ce que ton trône est ainsi?» Elle dit: «C’est comme s’il l’était». – [Salomon dit]: «Le savoir nous a été donné avant elle; et nous étions déjà soumis».
27.43 Or, ce qu’elle adorait en dehors d’Allah l’empêchait (d’être croyante) car elle faisait partie d’un peuple mécréant.
27.44 On lui dit: «Entre dans le palais». Puis, quand elle le vit, elle le prit pour de l’eau profonde et elle se découvrit les jambes. Alors, [Salomon] lui dit: «Ceci est un palais pavé de cristal». – Elle dit: «Seigneur, je me suis fait du tort à moi-même: Je me soumets avec Salomon à Allah, Seigneur de l’univers».

سورة النمل

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالاَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (15) وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ (16) وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ
وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (17) حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لاَ يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لاَ يَشْعُرُونَ (18) فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ
وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ (19) وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لاَ أَرَى
الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ (20) لأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ (21) فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ
أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ (22) إِنِّي وَجَدتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ
(23) وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لاَ يَهْتَدُونَ (24)
أَلاَّ يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْءَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ (25) اللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ رَبُّ
الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ (26) قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (27) اذْهَبْ بِكِتَابِي هَذَا فَأَلْقِهِ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا
يَرْجِعُونَ (28) قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ (29) إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (30) أَلاَّ
تَعْلُوا عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ (31) قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونِ (32) قَالُوا نَحْنُ
أُولُو قُوَّةٍ وَأُولُو بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ وَالأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانْظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ (33) قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ
أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ (34) وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ (35) فَلَمَّا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ
بِمَالٍ فَمَا آتَانِيَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا آتَاكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ (36) ارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لاَ قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ
مِنْهَا أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ (37) قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ (38) قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا
آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ (39) قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ
طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ
رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ (40) قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَهْتَدُونَ (41) فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكِ
قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ (42) وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ
(43) قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّدٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي
ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (44)

Azaiez

V. 42: "On nous a donné la science..." (... *wa-ūtīnā al-ʿilma min qabliḥā wa-kunnā muslimīna*). La dimension dialogique du récit ne permet pas de déterminer qui parle précisément. Est-ce la Reine de Saba? Dans ce cas, le verset suivant pose difficulté. Il serait donc plus logique d'attribuer ces propos rapportés à Salomon. Cette hésitation serait-elle le résultat d'une intention délibérée (ce que nous croyons) ou le fruit d'un remaniement ou d'une lacune du texte (Blachère 1957: 407)?

Dye

On peut rappeler l'arrière-plan biblique (1Kgs 10:1–13 ; 2Chr 9:1–12), targoumique (Targum Sheni d'Esther, mais la mise par écrit du texte est postérieure au Coran) et surtout midrashique (Mischlé, ha-Hefets, Ma'aseh Malkat Sheba...) de l'épisode coranique. Les données préislamiques restent cependant assez maigres, surtout si on les compare à celles qui sont à notre disposition pour d'autres personnages bibliques. Il est possible que certains aspects de la légende aient été considérés comme tabous, ou en tout cas comme ne relevant pas du genre de récit qu'il convient d'inclure dans la littérature homilétique. Quoi qu'il en soit, on peut penser qu'à la fin de l'Antiquité, et même avant, les récits midrashiques dont le Coran présuppose ici la connaissance étaient fort bien connus hors des communautés juives, notamment en Arabie, où la figure de Salomon jouissait sans doute d'un certain prestige : ainsi, selon le poète al-Nābiġa al-Ḏubyānī (m. 604), Salomon aurait construit Tadmor (Palmyre) avec l'aide des *ǧinn*s.

On notera la capacité de Salomon à communiquer avec toutes les créatures (cf. l'usage de *ʿilm* au v. 15). Cette grâce (*faḍl*) concerne la connaissance du langage des oiseaux (v. 16). Salomon est par ailleurs souverain sur l'ensemble des créatures d'ici-bas – hommes, animaux, *ǧinn*s (v. 17). D'autres passages coraniques vont plus loin : le vent, et certains des démons (*šayāṭīn*), sont soumis à Salomon (Q 21:81–82; 34:12–13; 38:36–39).

Ce qu'il y a peut-être de plus frappant dans le récit coranique, c'est *ce qui ne s'y trouve pas*, à savoir l'épisode des questions de la reine à Salomon. C'est au contraire Salomon qui sonde les connaissances de la reine. Autre différence intéressante entre les sources juives et le Coran : lorsque la reine arrive à Jérusalem, Salomon la reçoit dans les thermes royaux, selon les sources juives, ou dans son palais pavé de cristal. La reine prend le sol de l'entrée pour un plan d'eau, et soulève un pan de sa robe pour ne pas la mouiller, découvrant ainsi ses jambes, dont le roi admire la beauté, mais regrette l'excessive pilosité. C'est alors que la reine, blessée par les remarques peu galantes de Salomon à son sujet, lui pose une série d'énigmes, évidemment résolues par Salomon. Ce dernier aspect de l'histoire est absent du Coran.

Hawting

This version of the meeting between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is marked by jumps in the narrative, changes of speaker, lack of explanations, etc. Such features suggest that its audience was already familiar with the story, and/or that segments from other, fuller narratives were juxtaposed without much concern to provide connectives.

The links between this version and Jewish midrashic versions of the story, especially that found in the Targum Sheni to Esther, have been explored by scholars like Speyer, (1931) and, recently, Lassner, (1993). Is there any source for the "valley of the ants" incident in v. 18 (the transition to v. 19 being a notable case of the sudden change in speaker)? In this context it emphasizes Solomon's understanding of the speech of animals. Vv. 19 (Solomon's reaction to the words of the ant) and 40 (his reaction to the bringing of the Queen's throne) emphasize his gratitude (in v. 40 contrasted with ingratitude: *kufr*), and seem to echo v. 15 in which David and Solomon praise God for the favours, especially knowledge, He has bestowed on them above other believers. The meaning of the incident of the bringing and disguising of the Queen's throne (vv. 38 – 42) is here difficult to grasp. It recalls to some extent the midrash in which the Queen tests Solomon by sending him children who look alike and he has to be able to distinguish between them. Here, though, it is Solomon who tests the Queen, who, it seems, has been granted knowledge, just as David and Solomon had (cf. v. 42 and v. 15), and so she can pass the test. Note, however, the comments of Azaiez regarding the ambiguity concerning who is speaking in v. 42 and the apparent disjunction between it and the following verse if the words, "we have been given knowledge previously and are *muslimīn*," are understood as the Queen's.

It is notable that Solomon here is not referred to as a prophet, but is portrayed as a wise and powerful ruler with authority over the whole of creation. Like his father David (and Orpheus), he understands and controls the animals (and the *ǧinn*s). Is that because, like his father (cf. Q 38:26), he was God's *ḫalīfat fī l-arḍ?*

Khalfallah

Ce passage présente le récit de Salmon et la reine de Sabā (dite Balqīs) avec des détails abondants et précis. C'est parmi les rares récits où tous les éléments de la nature rentrent en symbiose pour incarner la volonté de Dieu que représente le roi – prophète Salomon. (cf. Toelle 1999). Cependant, nous constatons la présence des créatures surnaturelles; ce qui permet de faire fonctionner les « structures mythiques » du Coran. Le récit s'adresse ainsi à l'imaginaire populaire. D'ailleurs, il est le noyau engendrant un nombre important de légendes populaires qui nourrissent, jusqu'à nos jours, l'imaginaire non seulement des couches sociales les moins instruites, mais encore des cinéastes et des romanciers, (cf. documentaire sur la Reine de Saba produit par la chaine ARTE, France-Allemagne: 2000).

La perception qu'instaure ce genre de récits où se mélangent les éléments historiques aux éléments fictifs, est une perception mythique du monde qui s'oppose à

la raison positive et rentre en conflit avec elle, voire en surenchères symboliques. On pourrait même extraire, à l'instar, de V. Propp (1970), des fonctions narratives propres au Coran, (que l'on appliquerait ensuite aux traditions juives et chrétiennes). Je pense aux *ǧinn*s, oiseaux, à la mer en cristal, aux fourmis qui parlent....), pour ne citer que les éléments les plus saillants. Il conviendrait ainsi de parler des pouvoirs imaginaires accordés aux *ǧinn*s, capables de tout faire. Est-il possible, dès lors, d'évoquer la vérité historique que comportent ces récits. Ce serait même une excellente opportunité pour discuter des rapports entre la vérité historique et la vérité dogmatique et d'instaurer une nouvelle corrélation entre ces deux registres de langue, ces deux niveaux d'entendement du monde.

Il conviendrait enfin de proposer une monographie historique sur les éléments que les Arabes préislamiques connaissaient avant la révélation de ce passage au sujet de la reine de Saba et d'effectuer une comparaison entre ces éléments, déjà connus et ceux apportés par le Coran.

Pregill

An incredibly rich and multi-layered narrative that seems to operate on multiple levels. On the face of it, this is simply a morality tale, a conversion story; however, the subtler literary symmetries and parallelisms point to a deeper, even subversive, level of meaning; and still further, these other levels possibly conceal what can only be termed an esoteric meaning.

Regarding the birds and the ants, Abo Haggar's recent work on this narrative emphasizes the theme of investigation (*naẓar*) and the underlying message of equality – the ants, the hoopoe, and Sheba are rational, moral, spiritual beings who are all the equal of male believers and even the prophets.

Lassner's classic treatment is indispensable for understanding later interpretation, but not so helpful for understanding the Qurʾānic material per se. Although he acknowledges the debate over its date, the Jewish text he most often brings into conversation with the Qurʾānic story is *Targum Sheni*, a fluid midrashic work that contains significant material on Solomon and his reign. It may include some material that is genuinely amoraic, but it is for the most part dateable to after the Arab conquests, and so it would be most judicious to conclude that many of the narrative coincidences with the Qurʾānic account are due to the impact of either the Qurʾān itself or the *tafsīr* on Jewish circles.

Note the repeated *yā-ayyuhā* (vv. 16, 19, 29, 32, 38) which both establishes a structural frame and carries significant ironic and homiletic force.

The meaning of the test to which Solomon puts the Queen (vv. 41–44) is obscure. We may readily conclude that her falling for Solomon's trick in thinking that the smooth stone or glass floor of the hall is actually water proves that he is better guided than she is, since she comes from a disbelieving people (v. 43). The test in relation to the throne must be read in conversation with Q 38:34, where God tests Solomon by placing a *ǧasad* on his throne (the meaning of which is much contested). It may also

be profitable to compare it with the following well-known passage from rabbinic tradition, though I am uncertain about the significance of the parallel:

"Four entered the Garden (*pardes*): Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma, "Other" [*Aḥer*, the discredited rabbi Elisha ben Avuya], and Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Akiba said to them: 'When you come to the pure marble stones, do not say "Water! Water!" Scripture says: 'A liar will not abide before my eyes' (Ps 101:7)" (bHag. 14b).

Stefanidis

Jacob Lassner (1993) convincingly suggests that the main theme of the Solomon/Queen of Sheba narratives in Jewish post-biblical accounts and Muslim exegesis is to emphasize the paramountcy of the divinely established natural order which attributes clearly defined roles to both genders: men are manly and rule; women are feminine and subdued. The theme of gender confusion (the queen is hairy, her men do not know how to fight) does indeed appear to be understood as a threat that needs to be dealt with. Leaving aside the delicate issue of the dating of the Jewish narratives, we may still ask whether the Qurʾānic version fulfills a similar function.

Interestingly, the Qurʾān leaves out the crucial detail of the queen's hairiness – leaving the reader wondering why v. 44 mentions that she uncovered her legs – while her counselors (*al-malaʾ*) are depicted as proud and strong warriors. Moreover, the queen seems to be endowed with what might be considered feminine traits: she is humble, caring, prudent and seeks to consult. Those traits are further highlighted by the contrast with Solomon who is made to exhibit rather virile attributes: he is authoritarian, violent, prone to anger, and feared. The theme of gender confusion is therefore greatly attenuated in the Qurʾānic account. The Qurʾān seems to construe the queen not as a challenge to the natural order but rather as the ideal believer who recognizes the Signs and immediately submits. Verse 81 – addressed to the Prophet – might be seen as summarizing the lesson to be learnt from the Queen of Sheba's story : *wa-mā anta bi-hādī l-ʿumyi ʻan ḍalālatihim in tusmiʿu illā man yu'minu bi-āyātinā fa-hum muslimūna*.

If, as Lassner suggests, the story was used in Jewish circles to illustrate the failure of perversion (symbolized by a woman ruling over men) to undo God's work, the Qurʾān appears to redirect the narrative to show that the only fundamental threat to the divine order is the refusal to submit to God, and by extension to the Qurʾān and its proclaimer. Thus, the wise female ruler as well as the hot-tempered and impatient king-prophet, despite their anomalous characters, do not threaten the divinely established order as long as they are able to recognize God's signs and accept his authority.

V. 76 (*inna hāḏā l-Qurʾāna yaquṣṣu ʿala banī isrāʾīla akṯara llaḏī hum fīhi yaḫtalifūna*) could indicate that the Queen of Sheba narrative was polemically aimed at Jewish groups familiar with the story: if they failed to recognize the Signs and convert, they were to prove themselves more deviant than the deviant woman who rules over men.

Tengour

Moins nombreux que les récits relatifs à d'autres figures bibliques comme Moïse ou Noé, les récits coraniques relatifs à Salomon n'en demeurent pas moins d'importance dans la mesure où ils tiennent toujours lieu d'arguments dans la polémique opposant l'homme Muḥammad à sa tribu. Il n'est cependant pas indifférent de faire observer que la parole qui se les approprie ne les exploite pas de la même manière. Dans le Coran, Salomon n'est pas, comme Noé ou Moïse, un alter ego auquel la parole coranique fait appel pour plaider la cause de Muḥammad et celui-ci n'est jamais comparé à Salomon, figure hors du commun, à la fois par son rang élevé et par ses pouvoirs surnaturels lui permettant de maîtriser les vents et d'asservir les djinns. Pourtant Muḥammad va se trouver un point commun avec le grand roi biblique; celui de partager la même divinité car, dans le Coran, les pouvoirs de Salomon lui sont octroyés par *Allāh*, le dieu coranique.

Ce passage de la vingt-septième sourate rend ainsi compte de la manière dont le Coran s'approprie les récits bibliques qu'il emprunte pour tenter de convaincre son auditoire septique. Les moments phares du récit biblique, comme la construction du Temple de Jérusalem, sont totalement omis. L'action des démons, *šayāṭīn*, au service de Salomon est bien différente elle aussi. Dans ce passage, comme dans tout le Coran, ils n'entravent pas la construction du Temple, puisqu'il n'y a pas de Temple. Il en va de même de la visite de la reine de Saba qui, dans la version coranique, est une visite forcée dont l'unique dessein est de la soumettre au dieu coranique, elle qui est donnée comme adorant le Soleil, en dehors d'*Allāh* (v. 24).

On peut aussi se demander à quelles fins la parole coranique fait figurer les djinns, réputés dans la vieille société des tribus pour leur insoumission, au nombre des armées, *ǧunūd*, de Salomon (v. 17). L'objectif est double car il s'agit d'une part de tenter de les contrôler en les impliquant dans des récits où ils sont privés de leur liberté d'agir, et de l'autre de les inscrire dans une chronologie lointaine et autre que celle de la tribu d'appartenance de Muḥammad. Il s'agit dans le même temps d'inscrire le dieu coranique dans la même chronologie lointaine et d'étendre ainsi son pouvoir au-delà des limites de l'espace et du temps de la tribu mecquoise.

Winitzer

The tradition of Solomon's outstanding knowledge derives from the Biblical text, which depicts Solomon as exceedingly wise in matters of the natural world (1 Kings 4:33). But the reference to Solomon's floral and faunal expertise is notable nonetheless, in that it undoubtedly builds on an ancient Near Eastern conception of one constituent of knowledge (one which, incidentally, Scripture is invested in effacing): the lexical-list tradition, which by the first millennium BC had presented in canonical series of thousands of entries an attempt to order various aspects of the ancients' world, the natural especially prominent among them. These series were the subject of primary-level instruction in the Babylonian schools, such that the boast of their mastery implies a command of literacy as well as arguably the most

established form of ancient scholarship. For an introduction to these texts, see Veldhuis 2014.

One obvious twist in the present instance involves Solomon's ability to speak with the animals. To be sure, this idea testifies further to the commitment to the portrayal of his supreme intelligence. And yet the possibility of human-animal (inter-) communication is in itself noteworthy, since this too was the subject of deliberation in the ancient world. A reflex of this point appears of course in the Garden of Eden, concerning the snake, whose supreme intelligence (Gen 3:1) is noted in part to overcome the problem of mutual intelligibility between it and the woman. That Solomon possesses in the current passage the foil to this diabolic intelligence seems thus to imply something of the understanding of his supernatural being.

QS 28 Q 29

29.1 Alif Lam Mim
29.2 Do people imagine they would be left alone if they simply say “We believe”, and are not put to the test?
29.3 We put to the test those who came before them, that God may know who were sincere and who were lying.
29.4 Or do those who commit sin imagine they can escape Us? Wretched is their opinion!
29.5 Whoso desires the encounter with God, God’s final destiny shall arrive. He is All-Hearing, Omniscient.
29.6 Whoso exerts himself, does so for his own benefit. And God has no need of mankind.
29.7 As for those who believe and perform righteous deeds, We shall grant remission for their sinful deeds and reward them for the best of their acts.
29.8 Upon man We enjoined charity towards father and mother. And yet, should they pressure you to associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, when I shall inform you of what you used to do.
29.9 And those who believe and perform righteous deeds, these We shall admit among the virtuous.
29.10 There are people who say: “We believe in God.” If he meets with harm in the cause of God, he considers harm done by other people as the equal of God’s punishment. If, however, a victory comes from God, he would say: “We were always on your side.” Does not God know best what lies in the breasts of mankind?
29.11 God shall surely know those who truly believe and those who are hypocrites.
29.12 The unbelievers tell the believers: “Follow our way and we shall shoulder your sins.” But they cannot shoulder their sins in any wise. Indeed, they are liars.
29.13 They shall shoulder their own burdens – and burdens atop their burdens! On the Day of Resurrection they shall be questioned about the lies they fabricated.
29.14 We sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years,

29.1 Alif, Lâm, Mîm.
29.2 Est-ce que les gens pensent qu’on les laissera dire: «Nous croyons!» sans les éprouver?
29.3 Certes, Nous avons éprouvé ceux qui ont vécu avant eux; [Ainsi] Allah connaît ceux qui disent la vérité et ceux qui mentent.
29.4 Ou bien ceux qui commettent des méfaits, comptent-ils pouvoir Nous échapper? Comme leur jugement est mauvais!
29.5 Celui qui espère rencontrer Allah, le terme fixé par Allah va certainement venir. Et c’est Lui l’Audient, l’Omniscient.
29.6 Et quiconque lutte, ne lutte que pour lui-même, car Allah peut Se passer de tout l’univers.
29.7 Et quant à ceux qui croient et font de bonnes ouvres, Nous leur effacerons leurs méfaits, et Nous les rétribuerons de la meilleure récompense pour ce qu’ils auront accompli.
29.8 Et Nous avons enjoint à l’homme de bien traiter ses père et mère, et «si ceux-ci te forcent à M’associer, ce dont tu n’as aucun savoir, alors ne leur obéis pas». Vers Moi est votre retour, et alors Je vous informerai de ce que vous faisiez.
29.9 Et quant à ceux qui croient et font de bonnes ouvres, Nous les ferons certainement entrer parmi les gens de bien.
29.10 Parmi les gens il en est qui disent: «Nous croyons en Allah» puis, si on les fait souffrir pour la cause d’Allah, ils considèrent l’épreuve de la part des hommes comme un châtiment d’Allah. Or, s’il vient du secours de ton Seigneur, ils diront certes: «Nous étions avec vous!» Allah n’est-Il pas le meilleur à savoir ce qu’il y a dans les poitrines de tout le monde?
29.11 Allah connaît parfaitement les croyants et connaît parfaitement les hypocrites.
29.12 Et ceux qui ne croient pas disent à ceux qui croient; «Suivez notre sentier, et que nous supportions vos fautes». Mais ils ne supporteront rien de leurs fautes. En vérité ce sont des menteurs.
29.13 Et très certainement, ils porteront leurs fardeaux et d’autres fardeaux en plus de leurs propres fardeaux. et ils seront interrogés, le Jour de la Résurrection, sur ce qu’ils inventaient.

less fifty. And the Deluge swept them away, being wicked.
29.15 But him We saved, as also the passengers in the Ark, making it a wonder to mankind.
29.16 Remember Abraham too, when he said to his people: “Worship God and fear Him; that would be best for you if only you knew.
29.17 It is mere idols you worship, instead of God, thereby engendering falsehood. Those you worship, instead of God, cannot provide you with livelihood; so seek your livelihood with God. Worship Him and give thanks to Him, for to Him you shall return.
29.18 If you deny the truth, other nations before you also denied it. The Messenger is bound only to deliver the Message with total clarity.”
29.19 Have they not observed how God originates creation and then revives it? Such is an easy matter for God.
29.20 Say: “Journey in the land and observe how He began His creation, and how God then brings into being the life hereafter. God has power over all things.
29.21 He punishes whom He wills, and shows mercy to whom He wills, and to Him you shall be restored.
29.22 Nor can you escape His power, on earth or in the heavens. Apart from God, you have no protector, no champion.”
29.23 Those who deny God’s revelations and the encounter with Him – these have despaired of My mercy, and there waits them a painful torment.
29.24 No answer did his people give but to say: “Kill him, or burn him!” But God delivered him from the fire. In this are signs for a people who believe.
29.25 He said: “You took up the worship of idols, instead of God, only to please one another in this present life. However, on the Day of Resurrection, you shall charge one another with unbelief, and shall curse one another, and your refuge shall be the Fire. None shall come to your aid.”
29.26 Lot, following his example, said: “I shall emigrate to my Lord. He is Almighty, All-Wise.”
29.27 We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and made prophecy and the Book to descend in his progeny, and granted him his reward in

29.14 Et en effet, Nous avons envoyé Noé vers son peuple. Il demeura parmi eux mille ans moins cinquante années. Puis le déluge les emporta alors qu’ils étaient injustes.
29.15 Puis Nous le sauvâmes, lui et les gens de l’arche; et Nous en fîmes un avertissement pour l’univers.
29.16 Et Abraham, quand il dit à son peuple; «Adorez Allah et craignez-Le: cela vous est bien meilleur si vous saviez».
29.17 Vous n’adorez que des idoles, en dehors d’Allah, et vous forgez un mensonge. Ceux que vous adorez en dehors d’Allah ne possèdent aucun moyen pour vous procurer nourriture; recherchez votre subsistance auprès d’Allah. Adorez-Le et soyez-Lui reconnaissants. C’est à Lui que vous serez ramenés.
29.18 Et si vous criez au mensonge, d’autres nations avant vous, ont aussi traité (leurs prophètes) de menteurs. Au Messager, cependant, n’incombe que la transmission claire.
29.19 Ne voient-ils pas comment Allah commence la création puis la refait? Cela est facile pour Allah.
29.20 Dis: «Parcourez la terre et voyez comment Il a commencé la création. Puis comment Allah crée la génération ultime. Car Allah est Omnipotent».
29.21 Il châtie qui Il veut et fait miséricorde à qui Il veut; et c’est vers Lui que vous serez ramenés.
29.22 Et vous ne pourrez vous opposer à Sa puissance ni sur terre, ni au ciel; et il n’y a pas pour vous, en dehors d’Allah, ni allié ni secoureur.
29.23 Et ceux qui ne croient pas aux versets d’Allah et à Sa rencontre, désespèrent de Ma miséricorde. Et ceux-là auront un châtiment douloureux.
29.24 Son peuple ne fit d’autre réponse que: «tuez-le ou brûlez-le». Mais Allah le sauva du feu. C’est bien là des signes pour des gens qui croient.
29.25 Et [Abraham] dit: «En effet, c’est pour cimenter des liens entre vous-mêmes dans la vie présente, que vous avez adopté des idoles, en dehors d’Allah. Ensuite, le Jour de la Résurrection, les uns rejetteront les autres, et les uns maudiront les autres, tandis que vous aurez le Feu pour refuge, n’aurez pas de protecteurs.

this life while in the hereafter he shall be among the righteous.
29.28 Remember Lot, when he said to his people: “You are committing a disgraceful act, unprecedented before you among mankind.
29.29 You fornicate with men, you do violence to passersby and you commit foul deeds in your own assembly.” No answer did his people give but to say: “Bring on us the torment of God if you speak the truth.”
29.30 He said: “My Lord, help me against a people who work corruption.”
29.31 When Our heralds brought Abraham the good news, they said: “We are about to destroy the inhabitants of this town, for its people are wicked.”
29.32 He said: “But Lot lives there.”
They said: “We know best who lives therein. We shall deliver him and his family, all but his wife, who shall remain behind.”
29.33 When Our heralds came to Lot, he was annoyed and grew impatient with them.
They said: “Fear not, and do not grieve. We are about to save you and your family, except for your wife who shall remain behind.
29.34 We are about to send down on the inhabitants of this town a terrible torment from heaven because of their depravity.”
29.35 We left behind a clear trace of it to a people who understand.
29.36 To Midian was sent their fellow-tribesman, Shu‘ayb.
He said: “My people, worship God and keep the Last Day in view, and do not work corruption on earth.”
29.37 They called him a liar, and a great quake seized them and, on the morrow, they lay dead in their houses.
29.38 So also with ‘Ad and Thamud: you can see this clearly in their habitations. Satan had made their deeds attractive in their eyes, and barred them from the right path, even though they were a discerning nation.
29.39 So also with Korah, Pharaoh and Haman: Moses had brought them manifest signs, but they grew arrogant on earth, and could not escape torment.
29.40 Each We seized for his sin: upon some We sent down a fire storm; some were seized by the Scream; some We caused the earth to cave in

29.26 Lot crut en lui. Il dit: «Moi, j’émigre vers mon Seigneur, car c’est Lui le Tout Puissant, le Sage».
29.27 Nous lui donnâmes Isaac et Jacob, et plaçâmes dans sa descendance la prophétie et le Livre. Nous lui accordâmes sa récompense ici-bas, tandis que dans l’au-delà, il sera parmi les gens de bien.
29.28 Et Lot, quand il dit à son peuple: «Vraiment, vous commettez la turpitude où nul dans l’univers ne vous a précédés.
29.29 Aurez-vous commerce charnel avec des mâles? Pratiquerez-vous le brigandage? Commettrez-vous le blâmable dans votre assemblée?» Mais son peuple ne fit d’autre réponse que: «Fais que le châtiment d’Allah nous vienne, si tu es du nombre des véridiques».
29.30 Il dit: «Seigneur, donne-moi victoire sur ce peuple de corrupteurs!»
29.31 Et quand Nos Anges apportèrent à Abraham la bonne annonce, ils dirent: «Nous allons anéantir les habitants de cette cité car ses habitants sont injustes».
29.32 Il dit: «Mais Lot s’y trouve!» Ils dirent: «Nous savons parfaitement qui y habite: nous le sauverons certainement, lui et sa famille, excepté sa femme qui sera parmi ceux qui périront».
29.33 Et quand Nos Anges vinrent à Lot, il fut affligé pour eux, et se sentit incapable de les protéger. Ils lui dirent: «Ne crains rien et ne t’afflige pas... Nous te sauverons ainsi que ta famille, excepté ta femme qui sera parmi ceux qui périront.
29.34 Nous ferons tomber du ciel un châtiment sur les habitants de cette cité, pour leur perversité».
29.35 Et certainement, Nous avons laissé (des ruines de cette cité) un signe (d’avertissement) évident pour des gens qui comprennent.
29.36 De même, aux Madyan (Nous envoyâmes) leur frère Chuayb qui leur dit: «O mon peuple, adorez Allah et attendez-vous au Jour dernier, et ne semez pas la corruption sur terre».
29.37 Mais ils le traitèrent de menteur. Le cataclysme les saisit, et au matin, ils gisaient sans vie dans leurs demeures.
29.38 De même (Nous anéantîmes) les ’Aad et les Thamûd. – Vous le voyez clairement à travers leurs habitations – Le Diable, cependant,

beneath them, and some We drowned. Nor would God have wronged them; rather, it was themselves they wronged.
29.41 The likeness of those who took to themselves patrons instead of God is like the spider that builds a house. But surely the most fragile of houses is the spider's house, if only they knew!
29.42 God knows what thing they worship instead of Him. He is Almighty, All-Wise.
29.43 These parables We strike for mankind, and only the wise understand them.
29.44 God created the heavens and earth in truth. In this is a sign to people who have faith.
29.45 Recite what has been inspired to you, and perform the prayer constantly: prayer repels debauchery and vice. The remembrance of God is the greatest of devotions; and God knows what you do.
29.46 Do not argue with the People of the Book except in the best manner, save the wicked among them, and say: "We believe in what has been sent down upon us, and sent down upon you. Our God and yours is One God, and to Him we submit."
29.47 So too did We send down the Book upon you. Those to whom We brought the Book believe in it, as do some of them here present. None but the unbelievers repudiate Our revelations.
29.48 You never recited any Book before it, nor ever wrote it down with your right hand. Otherwise, the impious would have had their doubts.
29.49 Rather, it contains revelations most clear in the hearts of those granted knowledge, and none repudiates Our revelations save the wicked.
29.50 They say: "If only some wonders had been sent down on him from his Lord!"
Say: "Wonders are with God. I am only a manifest warner."
29.51 Was it not enough for them that We sent down the Book on you to be recited to them? In this is a mercy and a remembrance to a people who have faith.
29.52 Say: "God suffices as witness between you and me. He knows what is in the heavens and on earth. And those who believe in falsehood and repudiate God – these are truly the losers."

leur avait embelli leurs actions, au point de les repousser loin du Sentier; ils étaient pourtant invités à être clairvoyants.
29.39 De même (Nous détruisîmes) Coré, Pharaon et Hâmân. Alors que Moïse leur apporta des preuves, ils s'enorgueillirent sur terre. Et ils n'ont pas pu [Nous] échapper.
29.40 Nous saisîmes donc chacun pour son péché: Il y en eut sur qui Nous envoyâmes un ouragan; il y en eut que le Cri saisit; il y en eut que Nous fîmes engloutir par la terre; et il y en eut que Nous noyâmes. Cependant, Allah n'est pas tel à leur faire du tort; mais ils ont fait du tort à eux-mêmes.
29.41 Ceux qui ont pris des protecteurs en dehors d'Allah ressemblent à l'araignée qui s'est donnée maison. Or la maison la plus fragile est celle de l'araignée. Si seulement ils savaient!
29.42 Allah connaît toute chose qu'ils invoquent en dehors de Lui. Et c'est Lui le Tout Puissant, le Sage.
29.43 Telles sont les paraboles que Nous citons aux gens; cependant, seuls les savants les comprennent.
29.44 C'est pour une juste raison qu'Allah a créé les cieux et la terre. Voilà bien là une preuve pour les croyants.
29.45 Récite ce qui t'est révélé du Livre et accomplis la Salât. En vérité la Salât préserve de la turpitude et du blâmable. Le rappel d'Allah est certes ce qu'il y a de plus grand. Et Allah sait ce que vous faites.
29.46 Et ne discutez que de la meilleure façon avec les gens du Livre, sauf ceux d'entre eux qui sont injustes. Et dites: «Nous croyons en ce qu'on a fait descendre vers nous et descendre vers vous, tandis que notre Dieu et votre Dieu est le même, et c'est à Lui que nous nous soumettons».
29.47 C'est ainsi que Nous t'avons fait descendre le Livre (le Coran). Ceux à qui Nous avons donné le Livre y croient. Et parmi ceux-ci, il en est qui y croient. Seuls les mécréants renient Nos versets.
29.48 Et avant cela, tu ne récitais aucun livre et tu n'en écrivais aucun de ta main droite. Sinon, ceux qui nient la vérité auraient eu des doutes.
29.49 Il consiste plutôt en des versets évidents, (préservés) dans les poitrines de ceux à qui le

29.53 They ask you to hasten the torment upon them. Were it not for a stated term, the torment would have befallen them. It will indeed fall upon them suddenly, unawares.
29.54 They ask you to hasten the torment upon them, but hell shall surely engulf the blasphemers.
29.55 A Day shall come when the torment overshadows them from above and from below their feet, and He shall say: "Taste that which you used to commit!"
29.56 O worshippers of Mine who believe, My earth is wide.
It is Me you must worship.
29.57 Every soul shall taste death and then to Us you shall revert.
29.58 And those who believe and do good deeds – We shall lodge them in the Garden, in lofty chambers, beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. Excellent indeed is the reward of those who do good,
29.59 they who stand fast, and who put their trust in their Lord!
29.60 How many a beast of burden there is that stores not its provisions. Rather, it is God who provides for it – and for you. He is All-Hearing, Omniscient.
29.61 And if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth, and who made the sun and moon to do His bidding?" They will answer: "It is God."
How then can they possibly lie?
29.62 God spreads wide His bounty to whomever He wishes among His servants, but He also withholds it. God has knowledge of all things.
29.63 And if you ask them: "Who brings water down from the sky and therewith revives the earth after it is dead?" They will answer: "It is God." Say: "Thanks be to God!" But most of them have no understanding.
29.64 This present life is nothing but frivolity and amusement. But the Abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if only they knew!
29.65 Embarked on a ship, they pray to God, sincere of faith. Once He delivers them safely to shore, behold, they ascribe partners to Him!
29.66 Let them blaspheme against what We brought them, and let them enjoy themselves – they will surely know!

savoir a été donné. Et seuls les injustes renient Nos versets.
29.50 Et ils dirent: «Pourquoi n'a-t-on pas fait descendre sur lui des prodiges de la part de son Seigneur?» Dis: «Les prodiges sont auprès d'Allah. Moi, je ne suis qu'un avertisseur bien clair».
29.51 Ne leur suffit-il donc point que Nous ayons fait descendre sur toi le Livre et qu'il leur soit récité? Il y a assurément là une miséricorde et un rappel pour des gens qui croient.
29.52 Dis: «Allah suffit comme témoin entre moi et vous». Il sait ce qui est dans les cieux et la terre. Et quant à ceux qui croient au faux et ne croient pas en Allah, ceux-là seront les perdants.
29.53 Et ils te demandent de hâter [la venue] du châtiment. S'il n'y avait pas eu un terme fixé, le châtiment leur serait certes venu. Et assurément, il leur viendra soudain, sans qu'ils en aient conscience.
29.54 Ils te demandent de hâter [la venue] du châtiment, tandis que l'Enfer cerne les mécréants de toutes parts.
29.55 Le jour où le châtiment les enveloppera d'en haut et sous leurs pieds. Il [leur] dira: «Goûtez à ce que vous faisiez!»
29.56 O Mes serviteurs qui avaient cru! Ma terre est bien vaste. Adorez-Moi donc!
29.57 Toute âme goûtera la mort. Ensuite c'est vers Nous que vous serez ramenés.
29.58 Et quant à ceux qui croient et accomplissent de bonnes ouvres, Nous les installerons certes à l'étage dans le Paradis sous lequel coulent les ruisseaux, pour y demeurer éternellement. Quelle belle récompense que celle de ceux qui font le bien,
29.59 qui endurent, et placent leur confiance en leur Seigneur!
29.60 Que de bêtes ne se chargent point de leur propre nourriture! C'est Allah qui les nourrit ainsi que vous. Et c'est Lui l'Audient, l'Omniscient.
29.61 Si tu leur demandes: «Qui a créé les cieux et la terre, et assujetti le soleil et la lune?», ils diront très certainement: «Allah». Comment se fait-il qu'ensuite ils se détournent (du chemin droit)?

29.67 Do they not see that We established a peaceful sanctuary while all around them people are rent by violence? And yet they believe in falsehood and disown the bounty of God!
29.68 Who is more wicked than he who fabricates lies from God, or calls the Truth a lie once it has come to him? Is not hell the final berth of blasphemers?
29.69 But those who exerted themselves in Our cause – these We shall guide to Our ways. God will assuredly stand with the righteous.

29.62 Allah dispense largement ou restreint Ses dons à qui Il veut parmi Ses serviteurs. Certes, Allah est Omniscient.
29.63 Si tu leur demandes: «Qui a fait descendre du ciel une eau avec laquelle Il fit revivre la terre après sa mort?», ils diront très certainement: «Allah». Dis: «Louange à Allah!» Mais la plupart d'entre eux ne raisonnent pas.
29.64 Cette vie d'ici-bas n'est qu'amusement et jeu. La Demeure de l'au-delà est assurément la vraie vie. S'ils savaient!
29.65 Quand ils montent en bateau, ils invoquent Allah Lui vouant exclusivement leur culte. Une fois qu'Il les a sauvés [des dangers de la mer en les ramenant] sur la terre ferme, voilà qu'ils [Lui] donnent des associés.
29.66 Qu'ils nient ce que nous leur avons donné et jouissent des biens de ce monde! Ils sauront bientôt!
29.67 Ne voient-ils pas que vraiment Nous avons fait un sanctuaire sûr [la Mecque], alors que tout autour d'eux on enlève les gens? Croiront-ils donc au faux et nieront-ils les bienfaits d'Allah?
29.68 Et quel pire injuste que celui qui invente un mensonge contre Allah, ou qui dément la Vérité quand elle lui parvient? N'est-ce pas dans l'Enfer une demeure pour les mécréants?
29.69 Et quant à ceux qui luttent pour Notre cause, Nous les guiderons certes sur Nos sentiers. Allah est en vérité avec les bienfaisants.

سورة العنكبوت

الم (1) أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لاَ يُفْتَنُونَ (2) وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ (3) أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (4) مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ
اللَّهِ لآتٍ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (5) وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ (6) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (7) وَوَصَّيْنَا الإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ
لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلاَ تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (8) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ (9) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِنْ جَاءَ نَصْرٌ
مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ (10) وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
(11) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ
(12) وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالاً مَعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ (13) وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلاَّ خَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ (14) فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ (15)
وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (16) إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (17) وَإِنْ
تُكَذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلاَّ الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِينُ (18) أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ (19) قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنْشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(20) يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ (21) وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ (22) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَئِكَ يَئِسُوا مِنْ رَحْمَتِي وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (23) فَمَا كَانَ
جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (24) وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ (25) فَآمَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (26) وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا
فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (27) وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ
الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (28) أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ
جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (29) قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (30) وَلَمَّا
جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُو أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ (31) قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ (32) وَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا
وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنَجُّوكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ (33) إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَى أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ (34) وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (35) وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (36) فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ (37)
وَعَادًا وَثَمُودَ وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ مِنْ مَسَاكِنِهِمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ (38) وَقَارُونَ
وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ (39) فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ
أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ (40) مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ
الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ (41) إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ 42)) وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ
نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ (43) خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (44) اتْلُ مَا
أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ (45)
وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ
وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (46) وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا
يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ (47) وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ (48) بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ
بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ (49) وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ (50) أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَى لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ
(51) قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيدًا يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ (52) وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْلَا أَجَلٌ مُسَمًّى لَجَاءَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (53)
يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ (54) يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (55) يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ (56) كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ
(57) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ
(58) الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (59) وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ لَا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (60)
وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ (61) اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (62) وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا
لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (63) وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ
كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ (64) فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ (65) لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا
آتَيْنَاهُمْ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (66) أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا آمِنًا وَيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ
اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ (67) وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِلْكَافِرِينَ (68)
وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (69)

Dye

L'ordre de présentation des prophètes relève des intentions homilétiques du (ou des) rédacteur(s) de la sourate, et non de considérations chronologiques. Ce phénomène n'a rien d'exceptionnel dans la littérature homilétique. Un ordre fixe apparaît dans certaines sourates, ainsi la succession (dont on ne peut savoir si elle suit ou non la chronologie) *Noé – Hūd – Ṣāliḥ – Loth – Šuʿayb* que l'on trouve dans les sourates 7, 11 (avec ajout de versets relatifs à Abraham dans la péricope relative à Loth) et 26 (une étude comparée de ces sourates selon la méthode utilisée par Pohlmann 2012 serait d'ailleurs bienvenue). L'ordre de la présente sourate est un peu différent : Noé – Abraham/Loth (les mentions d'Isaac et de Jacob ne constituent pas des histoires séparées, mais simplement des exemples de la grâce de Dieu accordée à Abraham) – Šuʿayb – Hūd et Ṣāliḥ (v. 38) – Moïse.

Point important : dans les vv. 36 à 40, ce n'est pas, contrairement à ce qui est le cas précédemment, le nom du prophète que le Coran mentionne en premier, mais le nom du peuple ou des individus auxquels le prophète est envoyé. L'accent est donc mis sur l'identité des mécréants, qui sont ainsi placés au premier plan, ce qui prépare, d'un point de vue rhétorique, la parabole de l'araignée (v. 41).

Grodzki

Among the more recent unorthodox theories on deciphering the meaning of *alif, lām, mīm* prefixing *sūra*s 29 – 32 we have Luxenberg (2007b) arguing for the Syro-Aramaic phrase *emar lī Māryā* (Arab. *qāla lī al-Rabb,* Eng. *God spoke to me*) which occurs frequently in the Biblical sources in relation to prophets. A similar assumption regarding the meaning of these letters was put forward in the late 70′s of the last century by a scholar hiding under the pseudonym of Abū Mūsā al-Ḥarīrī (1979) in his study *Qass wa-nabī* (in the French edition – entitled *Le Prêtre et le Prophète. Aux Sources du Coran* – published under his real name: Joseph Azzi*)*. Luxenberg saw analogically in the letters *alif, lām, rāʾ* the Syro-Aramaic *emar lī [ar-Rabb]* (Arab. *qāla lī [ar-Rabb] al-ʿAẓīm*, Eng. *the almighty [Lord] spoke to me*) (Luxenberg 2007b: 449 – 50) They both argue that it can be seen in old Arabic Qurʾānic manuscripts that above these letters (as well as above other enigmatic letter abbreviations preceding the remaining *sūra*s) there is a short horizontal wavy dash which in the Syriac tradition would normally represent an abbreviation.

Hawting

Again the invitation to comment on a whole *sūra* suggests questions about structure and cohesion. This *sūra* seems possible to break down into distinct sections, but the thematic or logical connections between them are not apparent. The first section (vv. 1 – 13) seems to focus on the difficulties and temptations facing Believers, the rewards awaiting those who stand firm and the punishment for those who do not. Then vv. 14 – 40 allude to the stories of a series of messengers and the peoples to whom

they were sent (punishment stories), with vv. 41–44 as a sort of general summation. Finally, in vv. 45–69 the prophet is addressed directly (except vv. 56–59, where it is the Believers who are addressed) on a variety of topics. So, whereas the beginning and the end of the *sūra* address the community and its members, the central section would seem to be directed against the opponents.

In the section that refers to the stories of earlier messengers, the space given to that of Noah (vv. 14–15) is limited compared to the following account of Abraham and to some other accounts of Noah in the Qurʾān. This seems to be the only Qurʾānic version that calls the ark a *safīna* (elsewhere it is a *fulk*).

The structure of the material about Abraham is fragmentary: it is not always obvious who is speaking and the stories of Lot and of Abraham become intermingled. After Abraham's initial accusation of idolatry (literally, not *širk*) against his people (vv. 16, 17, and 18?), vv. 19–23 then could be read as an interpolation with reference to the contemporary opponents, vv. 19–20 rebutting their rejection of bodily resurrection. At v. 24 the story of Abraham is picked up again, with v. 25 repeating the accusation of idolatry. From v. 26 to v. 35 the stories of Abraham and Lot become intermingled in a discontinuous way: one expects vv. 27 to be the end of the Abraham story, but then vv. 31 and 32 revert to his reaction when God's messengers (the angels) came to tell him of the impending destruction of the wicked towns. However, the "news" or "good news" (*al-bušrā*) that the messengers bring must be an allusion to the coming birth of Isaac (cf. Q 11:69 ff.), which has already been mentioned in v. 27, and not to the impending destruction of the *qarya*. The dramatic scene in Genesis where Abraham bargains with God in an attempt to avert the destruction of the towns seems here to be transformed into his reminding the messengers that Lot was there (v. 32). V. 27 with its reference to Isaac and Jacob (where one might expect Ishmael), and to *nubuwwa* and *kitāb* as being established among Abraham's progeny, is notable. It seems to assume the Israelite nature of Abraham's progeny, and possibly conflicts with the idea that God sends prophets to all peoples. In v. 35 the verb *taraka* implies that the sign is still to be seen (cf. the many other references to God having performed something as a sign, where the evidence is merely a report), and in v. 38 a similar point is made about ʿĀd and Ṯamūd. In the final section, vv. 61, 63, and 65 again indicate that the opponents recognize Allāh, but nevertheless practise *širk*, and regarding v. 67 we may ask what is this *ḥaram āmin*, and what it means that the *nās* are being snatched away from around them?

Khalfallah

Cette sourate comporte les récits de huit prophètes dont voici les noms selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte : Noé, Abraham, Loth, Isaak, Jakob, Šuʾayb, Moïse et Muḥammad. Nous constatons déjà que l'ordre des récits ne correspond pas nécessairement et souvent à l'ordre chronologique de leur présence dans la « vraie » histoire. Les études en narratalogie, réalisées par P. Ricœur et T. Todorov, seraient ici d'une très grande utilité pour analyser les correspondances, décalages, ellipse, etc...

entre temps de l'intrigue et celui du discours. Ce nombre important de prophètes cités ainsi que l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte nous conduit aux remarques suivantes : [1] L'ordre coranique correspond-t-il à l'ordre historique et quelles sont les fonctions discursives que joue le maniement des relations narratives entre Temps/ récit/ histoire. [2] La différence des récits selon le nombre des détails évoqués à chaque fois. Le nombre de détails qui varie d'une sourate à l'autre mérite d'être réévalué selon les fonctions narratives aussi. Il est parfois plus efficace de mentionner tel détail et non un autre, de l'omettre, de le mettre en exergue ou de le minimiser.... Une vue d'ensemble est à envisager en récoltant la totalité des détails, relatifs à un seul prophète, épars dans le Coran. [3] Rapports de ces récits avec l'état psychologique, mental et spirituel de Muḥammad au moment même de leur révélation. D'ores et déjà, je pourrais avancer la thèse suivante : les récits des prophètes des communautés passées jouent des fonctions immanentes : renforcer la position politique du Prophète, l'encourager, l'exhorter à la patience, l'apaiser, lui rappeler un fait, lui donner l'exemple d'un autre prophète ayant vécu la même situation... [4] S'interroger sur la portée législative de ces récits. Nous savons par exemple que la peine qu'encourent les homosexuels n'a jamais été mentionnée dans le Coran. Dans ce sens, elle ne constitue pas un des *ḥadd* prévus par le Coran. Cependant, ce sont les docteurs de Loi qui se sont référés au récit de Loth et de son peuple, ainsi qu'au châtiment qu'ont subis Sodome et Gomorrhe pour condamner le *lūṭī* à la peine capitale. [5] Les finalités des récits coraniques pour le public des croyants. Ibn ʿAšūr a consacré une de ses prolégomènes à l'étude des *qiṣaṣ* coraniques.

Tengour

La sourate *al-ʿAnkabūt* compte soixante-neuf versets. Plusieurs thèmes s'y mêlent comme la création et la résurrection (vv. 19 – 20, 44, 57) ; la parabole de l'araignée à la demeure fragile (vv. 41 – 43) ; Noé (v. 14 – 15) ; Abraham (vv. 16 – 17) ; Loth (vv. 26, 28 – 35) ; Isaac et Jacob (v. 27) ; Jethro (vv. 36 – 37), etc. Je m'en tiendrai donc à donner deux définitions en contexte.

Il est question v. 6 du verbe *ǧāhada*, *yuǧāhidu*. Celui-ci provient de la racine *Ǧ-H-D* qui dans le contexte tribal du VIIe siècle connote l'idée de faire effort en vue d'accomplir une action ou une tâche difficile. C'est ce sens que renferment les dérivés de cette racine dans le Coran, non celui de « guerre sainte », sens extrapolé et postérieur d'au moins un siècle et demi par rapport à l'époque de Muḥammad. Dans le Coran de période médinoise, il s'agit tantôt de faire l'effort de rejoindre Muḥammad en accomplissant l'*hégire*, c'est-à-dire en s'éloignant des siens, tantôt de s'engager dans une action pour servir sa cause. La récurrence de ces incitations au ralliement dans le discours coranique d'époque médinoise indique combien celui-ci était loin d'être acquis pour Muḥammad. Dans la mentalité des tribus, le ralliement n'était en effet jamais forcé, mais devait au contraire faire l'objet d'un accord consenti. La contrainte, s'il en était, provenait davantage du fait qu'un homme allait se sentir obligé d'accomplir une action si tous les membres du groupe en décidaient

ainsi. (Voir sur cette question notamment E. Conte, « Alliance et parenté élective en Arabie ancienne. Éléments d'une problématique » in *L'Homme*, 1987, n°102, pp. 119–138).

Le même v. 6 compte un autre mot d'importance: *ʿālamīn*, *ʿālam* au singulier, dont l'habituelle traduction est « monde(s) ». Un sens qui semble s'être largement généralisé dans les dictionnaires arabes d'époque médiévale comme le *Lisān al-'Arab* précédemment cité. Il faut remonter à des ouvrages plus anciens comme le *Kitāb ǧamharat al-luġa* d'Ibn Durayd (m. 321/933) pour trouver que le sens ancien renvoie plutôt au territoire tribal dont les limites se voient marquée avec un *ʿalam*, et partant à la tribu elle-même. La comparaison avec l'hébreu *ōlam* n'est pas non plus dénuée d'intérêt puisque là encore, le mot va renvoyer à la tribu. La traduction, moins extrapolée, du mot *ʿālamīn* par « tribus » ou bien « peuples » sera, en contexte, beaucoup plus appropriée. Ainsi, dans le verset 28 de la même sourate, *ʾaḥad al-ʿālamīn*, difficilement traduisible par « l'un des mondes », désigne très clairement un homme de tribu.

Younes

The *sūra* contains three derivatives of the root *S-B-Q:* vv. 4, 28, 39. A total of 37 derivatives are found in the Qurʾān, with two basic meanings: *to come before* or *to race*. Neither of these meanings seems to fit the word *yasbiqūnā* in v. 4. I would like to propose, as I have proposed for Q 79:4 in a previous publication (Younes 2011), that the meaning of the cognate Syriac *šbaq* "to forgive" is more likely to be the meaning intended here. The theme of forgiveness is affirmed in v. 7 for those who do good deeds in contrast with those who do bad ones in v. 4 and will not be forgiven.

QS 29 Q 30:1–7

30.1 Alif Lam Mim
30.2 The Byzantines have been defeated
30.3in the nearer part of the land, and yet, after their defeat, they shall be victorious –
30.4 in a few years.
It is God who decides – as it was in the past, so it shall be in future.
That day the believers shall rejoice
30.5 at God's victory, for He grants victory to whomever He wishes. He is Almighty, Compassionate to each.
30.6 This is God's promise, and God does not renege on His promise. But most people are ignorant.
30.7 They know only the externals of this present life, but as for the hereafter they are totally heedless.

30.1 Alif, Lâm, Mîm.
30.2 Les Romains ont été vaincus,
30.3 dans le pays voisin, et après leur défaite ils seront les vainqueurs,
30.4 dans quelques années. A Allah appartient le commandement, au début et à la fin, et ce jour-là les Croyants se réjouiront
30.5 du secours d'Allah. Il secourt qui Il veut et Il est le Tout Puissant, le Tout Miséricordieux.
30.6 C'est [là] la promesse d'Allah. Allah ne manque jamais à Sa promesse mais la plupart des gens ne savent pas.
30.7 Ils connaissent un aspect de la vie présente, tandis qu'ils sont inattentifs à l'au-delà.

سورة الروم
الم (1) غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ (2) فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ (3) فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ
وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (4) بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (5) وَعْدَ اللَّهِ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (6) يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ (7)

Dye

Texte extrêmement ambigu, pour de nombreuses raisons.

On sait que les plus anciens témoins matériels du texte coranique ne connaissent ni points diacritiques ni voyelles. Or si la mise en place, par la tradition musulmane, des points diacritiques et des voyelles est souvent correcte, elle ne l'est pas toujours, car il n'existe pas de tradition orale fiable et ininterrompue qui en garantirait l'exactitude. Il peut donc être légitime, au moins d'un point de vue méthodologique, de la remettre en question.

Concernant le présent passage, on est face à au moins deux problèmes. Premièrement, comment comprendre le verbe à l'accompli (quelle que soit la vocalisation) du v. 2 ? Pour en rester au *textus receptus* : *ġulibat al-rūmu* signifie-t-il « les Romains ont été vaincus » ou « Que les Romains soient vaincus ! » ?

Deuxièmement, doit-on suivre le *textus receptus*, et comprendre que les Romains ont été vaincus, puis qu'après leur défaite, ils vaincront *fī biḍʿi sinīna* ? La référence aux guerres byzantino-sassanides serait alors évidente, et on aurait affaire à une prophétie *ex eventu* (et rédigée, par conséquent, après 629). Ou doit-on lire plutôt *sayuġlabūna*, comme le suggère Kropp, et voir ici une malédiction prophétique (même si Q 30 ne commence pas par des serments, contrairement à Q 85:1–3) ? Ou peut-on lire *ġalabati al-rūmu… sayuġlabūna*, et comprendre que les Romains ont

vaincu, mais qu'ils seront défaits dans un avenir proche ? Dans ce dernier cas, on verra dans ce passage un oracle du Prophète destiné à remobiliser et encourager ses troupes après la défaite de Muʾtah (dans les tous les cas, cela s'accorde mal avec l'idée qu'il s'agit d'une sourate mecquoise – ce qui me paraît être plutôt un argument supplémentaire contre la chronologie traditionnelle que contre les interprétations proposées ici). Je serais tenté de rester fidèle au *textus receptus*, mais j'avoue n'avoir aucune certitude sur la question.

V. 4 : pourquoi les croyants se réjouissent-ils? Parce qu'ils se sentent plus proches des Byzantins que des Sassanides? Cela reste à prouver (la suite des événements ne le confirme guère), même si Bowersock (2012: 60 – 77) argumente en ce sens. Ou plus probablement, parce que la victoire byzantine confirme leurs espérances eschatologiques, en rapport avec les apocalypses que mentionne Tesei?

Hawting

The conventional understanding that this passage alludes to the fighting between Byzantines and Sasanids seems plausible, in spite of the lack of reference to the Persians. Since the accepted vocalizations of *ġulibat* and *sayaġlibūna* could just as well be reversed (*ġalabat* and *sa yuġlabūna*), the conventional interpretation that the passage refers to Byzantine defeat at the start of the long war and a prophetic prediction that the Byzantines would win in the end is not the only one possible.

Whatever the background to the allusion, it is made to emphasize God's power in the determining of events. The rejoicing of the believers "on that day," although it seems to relate to the foretold victory (of the Byzantines?), has an eschatological ring to it. The apparent break in the sentence at the end of v. 3 and the start of v. 4 is disconcerting. Is the fact that the Byzantines have been defeated (?) "in the nearest land" (v. 3) relevant to the issue of the geographical origins of the materials collected in the Qurʾān?

Imbert

Sur le site syrien du *Ǧabal ʾUsays*, se trouve un isolat coranique (un verset coranique gravé isolément, sans aucun contexte): *li-llāh al-amr min qabl wa-min baʿd wa-yawmaʾiḏ*^{in} *yafraḥ*^{u} *l-muʾminūn* (cf. *al-ʿUšš* 1964: 249, n. 23). Le verset souffre d'une totale décontextualisation; le Coran *muṣḥaf* rappelle l'omnipotence de Dieu et son action sur la destinée humaine dans le cadre précis d'une prédiction concernant la défaite puis la victoire des Byzantins sur les armées perses qui devait advenir vers 624. Cet épisode est totalement effacé dans le graffito d'Usays, ce qui paraît étrange sur un site occupé par les Romains et les Ghassanides pour le compte des Byzantins. La péricope d'Usays écarte totalement ce contexte et nous sommes en droit de nous demander à quoi réfère la seconde partie où il est question d'un jour précis où les croyants se réjouiront. Dans le texte du Coran, ils se réjouissent du secours apporté par Dieu (*bi naṣr*^{i} *Llāh*) ; sur le rocher d'Usays, rien n'est sûr.

Kropp

Since Edmund Beck's 1944 articles on Q 30 little progress has been made, even for the first verses. It seems that the ways of interpretation are blocked by the nearly unanimous thought that these verses refer to historical and recent events, and what could be nearer than to think of the great war between Byzantium and Persia in the 7th century.

But simple questions perhaps could help one to think in another direction.

Why should early Muslims, near to heterodox Christianity or heterodox Judaism, sympathize with either of these two powers? Byzantium was the sworn religious enemy; Persia, after having conquered Jerusalem, very quickly was disappointed in their hopes for getting back the "promised land" and in general was not more generous to both confessions.

This leads to the interpretation as a prophetic curse, meant for the future, the near one and the one in some years. The first perfect is clearly parallel to *qutila* in Q 85 and other examples. And the second exact future *sa-yuġlabūna* adds to this first curse by saying that "they certainly will be defeated in some years" (and not only at the borders of their country, but everywhere). It is perhaps an idle attempt of an historian's vain mind to find out an event in Muḥammad's or Early Islam's history – if we ever know something reliable from them – which fits to this now reconstructed prophecy. This curse could be uttered at every moment by a member of the growing Muslim community against the Byzantines.

"May the Byzantines be vanquished at the borders of their country! And, certainly, after this their (first) defeat they certainly will be vanquished (definitely and everywhere) in some years. God decides at any time (expression *per merismum!* Not idiomatically translated in almost any of the existing translations!). And that day the believers will rejoice!" (Q 30:1–4).

I frankly admit that for me the main difficulty of this interpretation is not so much grammar and sequence of statements but the fact that the Byzantines (Rūm) are mentioned, the only mention in the Qurʾān. After I succeeded some years ago to eliminate Byzantines and Persians in the pre-Islamic Arabic inscription of en-Nemara (Kropp 1993), I tried here, but without success. Certainly, a prophetic curse against enemies of God and Muslim faith in general fits better into the context; cf. again Q 85:1–9 as the next parallel, where a historical allusion has to be eliminated as well.

Pregill

The first verse is seemingly a reference to a Roman defeat in the Great War with Persia, to be quickly overturned by the Romans; this is perhaps an allusion to the Roman counterstrike under Heraclius in the 620′s. The crux here seems to be the rejoicing of the Believers at the Romans' victory (v. 4), which is left unexplained.

A traditional variant alters *ġulibat al-rūm… sa yaġlibūna* (they [the Romans] are vanquished… but they will vanquish) to *ġalabat al-rūm… sa yuġlabūna* (they have

vanquished… but they will be vanquished) – meaning that in the present the Romans are victorious, but in the future the Believers will overthrow them (which makes better sense of their rejoicing). Cf. Cheikh 1998: the conflicting interpretations of this verse in *tafsīr* reflect shifts in historical circumstances; preference for one or the other reading seems to have been dictated by whether the Byzantines were perceived positively (the Believers will rejoice at their victory) or negatively (the Believers will rejoice at their defeat) at the time.

The strong emphasis here on divine providence in determining such matters implies to me some palpable investment in the outcome by the community. This suggests two different possibilities for interpretation, both of which challenge the traditional account of Islamic origins. If it is the triumph of the Romans that will cause the Believers to rejoice, this implies that the community may have been directly involved in the Roman-Persian conflict in some way while the prophet was still alive (that is, while the Qurʾān was still being revealed). In this connection, I wonder if the oblique verses of Q 8:7–10, universally assumed to be about Badr, might actually refer to such involvement (see comments on QS 11 above).

Alternatively, if it is the Roman defeat that is anxiously hoped for, the obvious context would be a prophesied conquest of Roman territory by the *umma* in the future; this implies a point of origin for this passage after the commencement of the *futūḥ* campaigns, assuming the "prophecy" is actually a reference to current events (e. g., the battle of the Yarmuk in 636), as prophecies typically are. The acknowledgment of Roman victory and anticipation of Roman defeat could also point to the defeat at Muʾta in 629 as the context, if one is inclined to rely on the *sīra*.

To me, this all indicates most of all the fluidity of the canonical text: the tradition preserves diametrically opposed interpretive options, linked to different vocalizations of the *rasm*, but it is by no means clear which of these possibilities are most plausible without knowing the larger context in which the text was actually composed.

Tesei

The prophecy in these verses clearly describes the conflict between Byzantines and Sasanians, during which the former defeated the latter after a period of initial crisis. It is plausible that we are in the presence of a *vaticinium ex eventu*. The prophecy about the destiny of the Rūm seems in fact a description *a posteriori* of events that already took place. A *terminus post quem* for this Qurʾānic passage could be fixed for the year 628, when Heraclius signed the peace treaty that put an end to the conflict with the Sasanians. The prophecy of the Rūm finds a very precise parallel in a passage of the *History of Maurice* by Theophylact Simocatta (written during the reign of Heraclius). Here, the Sasanian sovereign Khosrow II predicts that the Persians "will hold the Roman state in their power" and that, however, the "Romans will enslave the Persians" after a certain lapse of time (V, 15). What is interesting in this prophecy is the attribution of an eschatological dimension to the victory of the Grae-

co-Roman Empire. In fact, according to Khosrow's prophecy the victory of the Byzantines over the Sasanians would be the very last event before the Last Day (cf. Reinink 2002: 86). A similar eschatological view seems to be expressed at the end of the Qurʾānic prophecy about the Rūm. In particular, I refer to the claim at v. 4 that the believers will rejoice in the day of the Romans' victory. This enigmatic statement is best explained if read as a prognostication about the coming of the Last Day, that would immediately follow the historical events referred to in the previous verses. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand why the Qurʾān should express sympathetic feelings toward the Byzantines' victory. This view seems to be corroborated by the claim at v. 4, "God is in command, first and last," and that at v. 5, "God helps whomever He pleases," both suggesting that the victory of the Rūm follows God's wish and is part of the divine project. That the Qurʾān here is not addressing secular but sacred history is also confirmed by the temporal expression at v. 4: *wa-yawmaʾiḏin* ("and on that day"), and by the sentence at v. 6: "this is the promise (*waʿd*) of God, He does not break His promise." In fact, such terminology sets the day of the Romans' victory in an apocalyptic framework. Thus, it seems that the *vaticinium* found in al-Rūm predicts the same development of sacred history expressed in Khosrow's prophecy: the defeat of the Romans is followed by their victory; this event immediately precedes the end of times. Both predictions reflect larger apocalyptic expectations widespread in the Middle East in the third decade of the 7th century. In fact, several sources of that period certify that the conclusion of the wars between Byzantines and Sasanians was understood as the last event preceding the imminent end of the world.

QS 30 Q 33:40

33.40 Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Prophet of God and the Seal of Prophets. God has knowledge of all things.

33.40 Muhammad n'a jamais été le père de l'un de vos hommes, mais le messager d'Allah et le dernier des prophètes. Allah est Omniscient.

سورة الأحزاب
مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (40)

Dye

Si le verset s'arrêtait après *riǧālikum*, on pourrait penser que le propos de cette péricope est de légitimer le mariage de Muḥammad et de Zaynab. La suite du verset montre que l'enjeu de ce passage est totalement différent – et plus profond.

Un détour est ici nécessaire. Il me semble qu'il faut prendre très au sérieux l'idée défendue par Casanova (1911: 8), et reprise par divers collègues récemment, selon laquelle Muḥammad considérait qu'il était le dernier prophète, choisi par Dieu pour présider, conjointement avec le Messie revenu sur terre, à la fin du monde, à la résurrection universelle et au Jugement dernier. Rappelons que cette conception du message de Muḥammad ne dépend pas nécessairement de l'interprétation que l'on fait de la formule *ḫātam al-nabiyyīn*.

Or si Muḥammad se considérait comme le prophète de la fin du monde, alors la question de la *continuité de la prophétie* ne se posait pas de son vivant… Une fois le Prophète mort, et les espérances eschatologiques déçues, cette question ne pouvait que resurgir. Les héritiers de la prophétie étaient précisément les descendants mâles de Muḥammad, autrement dit les alides. En d'autres termes, ce verset pourrait être, dans son état actuel, une addition tardive, destinée à contrer les prétentions des alides.

L'expression « sceau des prophètes » se trouve chez Tertullien (*Adv. Judaos* 8:12), où elle désigne le Christ, appelé *signaculum omnium prophetarum* (Jean Baptiste est qualifié de *clausula prophetarum*). L'idée pourrait venir de Dan 9:24, où l'idée de *clôture*, de *fin*, semble plus importante que celle de *confirmation*. Noter que juste avant (Dan 9:23), Daniel est appelé « [l'homme] des prédilections » (*iš-ḥamuḏot*), ce qui ressemble beaucoup au surnom *Muḥammad*, (sur Muḥammad comme épithète, surnom, et non comme prénom, cf. Reynolds 2011a et Gilliot (2011)).

Post-scriptum sur les enfants du Prophète : c'est un sujet sur lequel beaucoup de légendes se sont développées (cf. Kister 1993). Il me semble à peu près impossible de retrouver la réalité historique derrière tous ces récits, mais l'idée traditionnelle selon laquelle le Prophète aurait eu sept enfants (un chiffre qui n'est pas anodin dans la culture biblique) ne paraît pas être une information historique. Par ailleurs, quel que soit l'avis que l'on a sur Ibrāhīm, il est clair que Māriya la Copte n'est pas un personnage historique, mais une fiction littéraire (cf. Cannuyer 2008).

Hawting

Usually understood in the present tense, the expression *mā kāna Muḥammadun…* is ambiguous as to its time specification: it could be read in the past tense. Note, however, that vv. 36 and 38 both begin also with *mā kāna*, and v. 36, at least, seems to require understanding as a present tense.

The traditional understanding of v. 40 involves reading it in the light of the events apparently alluded to in Q 33: 36–7, and the traditional understanding of those verses in turn relies heavily on *sīra* material. However, if v. 40 literally means that Muḥammad was not the father of any male (since Zayd, according to the tradition, was not his real son but only one of the *adʿiyāʾ:* Q 33:4, 37), it is only with some difficulty reconcilable with *sīra* material about the male children of Muḥammad (one has to assume it was known, at the time of the revelation, that none of them would reach maturity). The statement is perhaps also at odds with those frequent passages in the Qurʾān that emphasize that God's messengers are fully human (against the views of the opponents). It is difficult to read the verse without having the *sīra* material regarding Zayd, Zaynab and Muḥammad in mind, but it is not obvious how the mundane events recorded in *sīra* would inspire a statement that Muḥammad was the Messenger of God and the Seal of the prophets.

This verse is, of course, the proof text for the dogma that Muḥammad was the final prophet, and that prophecy had come to an end with him. One problem there is the meaning of "seal" (*ḫātam*, read by some as *ḫātim*). The metaphor has been used in monotheist scriptural and other texts in various languages to convey a variety of ideas: see Colpe, 1984–6; Stroumsa, 1986, and Bobzin, 2010. Using that and other evidence, a number of scholars (including Friedmann 1989, Powers 2009, and Rubin 2014) have put forward conflicting ideas about why and when it became widely, but not unanimously, accepted in Islam that prophecy had come to an end with Muḥammad. Discussion of these issues needs to take into consideration not merely whether and how a single and ambiguous Qurʾānic verse might influence the development of such a fundamental matter of belief, but also what sort of political and religious factors (notably, ideas about authority) would lead a religious community to accept that prophecy was no longer possible.

Pregill

One of only four explicit references to Muḥammad in the Qurʾān.

"Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men…": cf. the magisterial discussion in Powers 2009.

Ḫātam al-nabiyyīn: in addition to Powers, see also my discussion (Pregill 2011a: 303–304) responding to Stroumsa (1986). The gist is that Stroumsa seeks to refute older scholarship that posited some connection between the Manichaean use of the phrase "seal of the prophets" and the later application of the same phrase to Muḥammad, on the grounds that the Manichaean phrase does not mean that Mani was

the final prophet but rather the one who verifies older prophets. *Pace* Stroumsa, I note that in its original context it is likely that this is exactly what the Qurʾānic phrase means – as I sometimes explain it to students, "sealing" prophecy does not mean tying a bow on it and wrapping it up, but rather giving it the stamp of approval to ratify it. Cf. also Friedmann 1986, who observes that Islamic tradition does preserve evidence of an early, alternative understanding of *ḫatm al-nubuwwa* that was more in keeping with the Manichaean concept and what I would argue is the indigenous concept in the Qurʾān as well.

Stefanidis

Regarding the distinction between *rasūl* and *nabī*, W. A. Bijlefeld (1969) has suggested that *nubūwwa* is the privilege of Adam's and Noah's progeny through Abraham and his descendants and was only belatedly attributed to Muḥammad. The understanding of prophecy as belonging to one's family would explain why it is relevant that the *ḫātam al-nabiyyīna* (and not *ḫātam al-mursalīna*) has no sons (Powers 2009). If the understanding of *ḫātam* as entailing "last" is sound, this expression might have been polemically aimed at a Jewish audience to underscore that God has now put an end to their prophetic pretenses.

Q 3:81 (*wa-iḏ aḫaḏa llāhu mīṯāqa l-nabiyyīna*) also addresses Muḥammad's relationship to previous prophets. The fact that Q 33:7 might be pointing to that mythical event (*wa-iḏ aḫaḏnā mīṯāqa l-nabiyyīna,* although here the content of *mīṯāq* is not specified) makes Q 3:81 even more relevant to the discussion of *ḫātam al-nabiyyīna*.

Winitzer

Against the traditional view, I follow Wansbrough 1977: 64 – 65 in part on what he described as the "eschatological significance" of Muḥammad's title as "Seal of the Prophets." An initial parallel for this position avails itself from similar conceptions of Christ in the New Testament, e. g., in John 6:27's depiction of Christ as "sealed by God." That image, too, should be seen as more than just figurative, a point supported by the understanding of Christ as the second Adam (1 Cor 15). As contended elsewhere (Winitzer 2014: 191 – 95), the sense of the primordial man in Eden as a seal of a divine blueprint appears in the Old Testament, specifically in the Eden tradition in Ezek 28 (v. 12).

This need not deny the traditional view's understanding of the title figuratively, with the sense that with Muhammad a finality in prophetical election has been reached. It simply supports another, mythological, sense of the image, in which the intermediary between the divine and human realm is envisioned as a constituent of the "heavenly blueprint/writing" motif. This motif, of course, is well attested already in the case of Moses (who was also conceived as a second Adam and thus somehow larger than life); in Late Antiquity it develops considerably, as can be seen in Jewish writings from Jubilees to the rabbinic corpus.

QS 31 Q 36:13 – 27

36.13 Strike for them the parable of the people of the town, when Messengers arrived.
36.14 We had sent them two but they called them liars, so We backed them up with a third, and they said: “We are Messengers to you.”
36.15 They said: “You are merely human beings like us. The All-Merciful has revealed nothing. You are nothing but liars.”
36.16 They said: “Our Lord knows that we are sent as Messengers to you.
36.17 Ours is only to convey a manifest declaration.”
36.18 They said: “We hold you to be an evil omen. If you do not desist, we will stone you and a most painful torment will touch you from us.”
36.19 They said: “Your evil omen is upon you. Is it because you have been sent the Remembrance? You are indeed a people far gone in sin.”
36.20 A man came running from the other end of the city, saying: “O people, follow the Messengers.
36.21 Follow him who asks you no wage. These men are guided aright.
36.22 How can I not worship Him who created me, and to whom you shall return?
36.23 Am I to take other gods instead of Him? If the All-Merciful wishes me ill, their intercession will not benefit me in the least, nor will they be able to save me.
36.24 I would then be in manifest error.
36.25 I believe in your Lord, so listen to me.”
36.26 It was said to him: “Enter the Garden.” He said: “If only my people knew
36.27 how my Lord forgave me and placed me among the honored!”

36.13 Donne-leur comme exemple les habitants de la cité, quand lui vinrent les envoyés.
36.14 Quand Nous leur envoyâmes deux [envoyés] et qu’ils les traitèrent de menteurs. Nous [les] renforçâmes alors par un troisième et ils dirent: «Vraiment, nous sommes envoyés à vous».
36.15 Mais ils [les gens] dirent: «Vous n’êtes que des hommes comme nous. Le Tout Miséricordieux n’a rien fait descendre et vous ne faites que mentir».
36.16 Ils [les messagers] dirent: «Notre Seigneur sait qu’en vérité nous sommes envoyés à vous,
36.17 et il ne nous incombe que de transmettre clairement (notre message)».
36.18 Ils dirent: «Nous voyons en vous un mauvais présage. Si vous ne cessez pas, nous vous lapiderons et un douloureux châtiment de notre part vous touchera».
36.19 Ils dirent: «Votre mauvais présage est avec vous-mêmes. Est-ce que (c’est ainsi que vous agissez) quand on vous [le] rappelle? Mais vous êtes des gens outranciers!»
36.20 Et du bout de la ville, un homme vint en toute hâte et dit: «O mon peuple, suivez les messagers:
36.21 suivez ceux qui ne vous demandent aucun salaire et qui sont sur la bonne voie.
36.22 et qu’aurais-je à ne pas adorer Celui qui m’a créé? Et c’est vers Lui que vous serez ramenés.
36.23 Prendrais-je en dehors de Lui des divinités? Si le Tout Miséricordieux me veut du mal, leur intercession de me servira à rien et ils ne me sauveront pas.
36.24 Je serai alors dans un égarement évident.
36.25.[Mais] je crois en votre Seigneur. Ecoutez-moi donc».
36.26 Alors, il [lui] fut dit: «Entre au Paradis». Il dit: «Ah si seulement mon peuple savait!
36.27....en raison de quoi mon Seigneur m’a pardonné et mis au nombre des honorés».

سورة يس
وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ (13) إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ
مُرْسَلُونَ (14) قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا

بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ (15) قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ (16) وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ
الْمُبِينُ (17) قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (18) قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ أَئِنْ ذُكِّرْتُمْ بَلْ
أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُسْرِفُونَ (19) وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ (20) اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا
وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ (21) وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (22) أَأَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِنْ يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِ
عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونِ (23) إِنِّي إِذًا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (24) إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ (25) قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا
لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ (26) بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ (27)

Azaiez

Ce passage se caractérise par une narration dialoguée avec échange de points de vue contradictoires. La présence de plusieurs protagonistes dans l'échange de paroles n'est pas inédite. La singularité de ce passage viendrait plutôt de l'absence d'une voix divine (sauf peut-être l'ellipse v. 26 notée par Guillaume Dye) et qui rapproche ce récit de ceux mettant en scène Noé face à son peuple (sourate 71). Par ailleurs, ce passage révèle une des fonctions argumentatives du *maṯal:* suggérer que la mission de l'allocutaire coranique est à l'image de la mission des messagers antérieurs. Cette relation est possible selon trois modalités que sont 1. la concomitance des désignations (la désignation de *mursalīn* donnée à fois à l'allocutaire coranique au v. 3 et aux protagonistes du récit, v. 13) ; 2. la concomitance du message transmis (on remarque, en l'occurrence, une forme de métatextualité implicite avec l'expression *balāġ al-mubīn* au verset 17 qui vient en écho des expressions *imām mubīn* au v. 2 et *Qurʾān al-mubīn* au v. 68) ; et enfin, la concomitance des formes de contre-discours (les objections des adversaires sont de même nature pour l'allocutaire coranique et les adversaires des envoyés, *cf.* QS 10).

Dye

Texte extrêmement allusif et, hormis sa morale, difficilement compréhensible. Le sous-texte exact reste mystérieux. La tradition musulmane rapproche souvent cet épisode du martyre d'Agabus (devenu Ḥabīb al-Naǧǧār), mais cela ne semble pas très convaincant. Il est peu probable que les « envoyés » soient des disciples de Jésus : on attendrait plutôt ici *ḥawāriyy* au lieu de *mursal*. Le lien avec Gen 19 est peut-être plus naturel, mais il reste très hypothétique, et cela ne nous dit rien sur la personne qui vient *min aqṣā al-madīna* (v. 20). Il paraît donc difficile de rapprocher ce passage (qu'il conviendrait, comme l'indiquent d'autres commentaires, de poursuivre jusqu'au v. 32) d'épisodes bibliques *précis* et reconnaissables.

L'hypothèse de la jonction de deux récits initialement séparés (vv. 13 – 19 et vv. 20 – 27), voire trois récits, n'est pas à écarter, mais elle ne s'impose pas vraiment non plus. Plus généralement, il s'agit d'un « exemple » (sens de *maṯal* dans ce contexte) de l'anéantissement d'un peuple – *topos* qui revient constamment dans le Coran (cf. vv. 28 – 29). D'une certaine manière, l'identité exacte des protagonistes

importe peu : ce qui compte, c'est l'attitude des uns et des autres, et les conséquences qui en découlent.

Comment comprendre le contraste entre *qarya* (v. 13) et *madīna* (v. 20) ? « Ville » *versus* « région » (district administratif), ou « village » *versus* « ville » ?

On notera l'ellipse au début du v. 26. *Qui* dit à l'homme d'entrer au Paradis ? L'homme s'adresse aussi bien aux habitants de la cité qu'aux envoyés. Si ce sont les habitants de la cité qui parlent, c'est une façon cynique de lui annoncer qu'ils entendent le mettre à mort. Si ce sont les envoyés : est-ce dit comme une promesse d'entrée au Paradis pour sa foi ?

El-Badawi

I would extend this passage to include vv. 28 – 32, in which case the entire narration seems to merge the function of parable (*maṯal*; e. g. Q 18:32) with that of didactic stories (*qaṣaṣ*; cf. Q 26; 37). The passage's lesson concerning a people who reject simultaneous messengers, to their own peril, retells the parable of the 'landowner and his vineyard' (Matthew 21:33 – 41; Mark 12:1 – 11; Thomas 65). Parallels made to Acts 11:27 – 30 are secondary at best.

The terminology is striking in places. Is the function of *mursalūn* (messengers; cf. Q 6:48) the same as *rusul* (apostles? Cf. Q 2:87, 253)? It seems the "village people" (*aṣḥāb al-qarya*) and messengers both worship al-Raḥmān—acknowledged by the messengers as "our Lord" (*rabbanā*) and by the believing man in v. 22 as "the one who originated me" (*allaḏī faṭaranī*)—where the former disbelieve in the prophecy of the latter because they are human (*bašar*), i. e. not angels. Q 14:10 – 11 illustrates a similar scene where Allah is evoked instead of al-Raḥmān. What change took place in the audience or author to allow for the shift from al-Raḥmān to Allah, or vice versa (cf. Q 1:1; 27:30; 17:110)? Is al-Raḥmān Himself the savior, i. e., the only source of "abundance/intercession" (*afāʿa*; cf. Syr. *sēpʿā*) without whom we are all "lost" (*ḍalāl*, *ḍalāla*) as implied by Q 19:95 (cf. Q 78:38)? If so, then this passage and others may provide clues to a rather intricate Qurʾānic soteriology.

The trope of "the man running out of the city" occurs in Q 28:20 where he cautions Moses about the conspiracy to kill him and stands in contradistinction, as Andrew Rippin implies, to the "village." (This further resembles the story of city warners who precede the capitulation of cities to the Muslim armies in the *tārīḫ*/*maġāzī* literature.) In the didactic stories of the Qurʾān, good people often live in the "city" (*madīna*) and evil people live—without exception—in "villages/towns" (*qarya*, pl. *qurā*; i. e., destroyed cities?, ruins?; e. g., Q 2:58; 21:74). V. 26 suggests the believing man entered paradise after dying; his martyrdom is not explicit in this passage although it is suggested in the *Tafsīr* literature.

The word *mukramūn* here means "pruned" (i. e., hand-picked, special; cf. Syr. *K-R-M*) and points back to the parable in the Gospels. More specifically it describes those who believe and are rewarded in paradise (*al-ǧanna*) by *al-Raḥmān*. This imagery is confirmed by Q 21:26 (which implies that *al-Raḥmān* occupies the place of

the "Father" in Christian theology) and, furthermore resonates with fruit of the garden in Q 37:42; 70:35 and the angels of Q 51:24 (i. e., while disbelievers ask for angels in this life, believers become angelic in the afterlife).

On the stoning of messengers see the case of Šuʿayb in Q 11:91.

Grodzki

This passage is rather polymorphic in terms of language and structure, as other Qurʾānic *amthāl* (parables or examples) with their typical function of admonition/paraenesis, evokes for me the question about the ways and methods by which the Qurʾānic *sūra*s were edited and composed to receive their final shape. To the two different uses of *iḏ* in two consecutive verses (13–14), the problem of town/village (*qarya*) in v. 13 versus city (*madīna)* in v. 20 along with other problematic syntactical and semantic issues raised by Rippin (below), I would tentatively add the numerous repetitions of *qāla/qālū/qīla* used to initiate vv. 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 26 which may perhaps give "the impression of mechanically linked prophetical *logia*" (Wansbrough 1977: 115) where two or more independent narratives could have been combined together. The hypothesis is that the mechanism of insertions by the means of syntactical instruments such as *iḏ* or *qāla* (in its different forms) etc., although typical of the narrative style, may have well been developed by the Islamic masoretes to link together sub-canonical materials into one uniform text. Another example of this phenomenon would be the abrupt changes from the 1st to 3rd person sing. as in Q 16:51 *wa-qāla Allāhu lā tattaḫiḏu ilāhayni ithnayni, innamā huwa ilāhun waḥidun fa-iyyāya farhabūna* (cf. the shift to the 1st person in Q 36:22).

Hawting

The messengers and *qarya* alluded to in this "exemplum" (*maṯal*) are so anonymous that it is difficult to agree with any of the suggestions about a Biblical referent. Various themes and motifs occur elsewhere in the Qurʾān in other narratives about the rejection of God's messengers by the people to whom they have been sent: the messengers are rejected on the grounds that they are merely men; the opponents say that God (al-Raḥmān) has not sent down anything; the messengers are accused of lying (falsely claiming to be messengers); they say that a messenger's duty is only *al-balāġ*; a formula similar to the opponents' words in vv. 18–19 about *taṭayyur* appears in Q 27:47 regarding the rejection of Ṣāliḥ by Ṯamūd (cf. the reaction of the sailors to Jonah in the Bible, Jonah 1:7); as for the incident of the man who comes hastening from the furthest part of the town and exclaims his belief (v. 20), the same phrase, "a man came hastening from the furthest part of the town," occurs in the story of Moses at Q 28:20 (cf. also Q 80:8); the messengers ask for no recompense (*aǧr*); the believer denies the ability of gods other than al-Raḥmān to intercede.

Khalfallah

Ce récit de la sourate XXXVI appelle celui qui se trouve dans les Actes des Apôtres, de 11 à 26. Toutefois, dans le Coran, ce récit est présenté comme un *maṯal* (exemple, récit sapientiel, histoire exemplaire, modèle...) ; et est reproduit avec un peu plus de détails sur la conversation qui eut lieu entre Paul et Barnabé d'une part et les habitants de la Cité (Antioche ?) d'autre part. La question qui se pose concerne les modalités discursives par lesquelles le Coran reprend des phrases, thèmes et motifs qui seraient exprimés par les Apôtres non-arabophones. Deux pistes se dessinent :

Il s'agirait de la reproduction (*ḥikāya*) fidèle de cette conversation, mais en langue arabe. Il pourrait s'agir – cette hypothèse est plus problématique- de la retraduction non seulement arabe, mais aussi islamique de leurs propos. C'est-à-dire, le discours coranique reprend à son compte les propos qu'auraient prononcés les divers protagonistes de ce récit et les revêt d'un habillage islamique après les avoir moulés selon les structures sémantiques et narratives de l'arabe. Pour étayer cette hypothèse, je cite les thèmes suivants : [a] Le nom *al-Raḥmān* que même les Quraysītes ne connaissaient pas ; [b] La notion de *šafā'a* (intercession) que les muʿtazilītes nient ; [c] la notion de *risāla* (Apostolat)...

Cette seconde piste pourrait s'appliquer à tous les récits coraniques où des événements anciens ont été reportés et des conversations reproduites...Elle permettrait d'observer, de manière minutieuse et sur des mini- thématiques, les parallèles entre les diverses traditions...

Madigan

Certainly the *mathal* here seems more 'example' than 'parable.' However, whether we can trace a connection to Gen 19 and Lot seems to me doubtful. As several colleagues have noted, there is little to this story beyond the usual tropes of prophetic rejection. The two-messengers-then-three confusion (is it a confusion?) seems tantalizingly close to Genesis (where it is three messengers in Gen 18 then two in Gen 19). However, the fact that others can see in it a reference to Paul, Barnabas and the third, John-also-known-as-Mark, in Acts indicates just how much of a stretch it is to see a relation to Genesis. We might ask ourselves whether when we read of Barnabas, Paul and the third lesser companion in Acts it immediately suggests to us an echo of the Abraham/Lot cycle. I doubt that it does. That should warn us against claiming too much here.

In teaching I use *sūrat Yā Sīn* as a whole, since it seems to me to contain the Qurʾānic thought world in a relatively short space; and it has the stylistic elements and the vocabulary that are so characteristic of the text as a whole. You could say I use it as a *mathal*.

The man running from the furthest part of the city is the model believer – it is striking that, though he is not himself *min al-mursalīn* he actually preaches to his townsfolk the message that the two-then-three *mursalūn* did not preach—God as creator to whom we will all be brought back; the futility of seeking the help of other

powers; error and guidance; faith, following, worship. Their message, on the other hand, seems to have been just the claim to have been sent; and the conflict with them centered not on the doctrine of God, but on messengerhood and prophecy. Did the man from the furthest part of the city not understand that you can warn people as much as you like, but they will not believe (v. 10)?

Rippin

V. 13 through (perhaps) v. 27: does this passage consist of a single story or is it composed of two stories joined together? A simple observation (made by others): v. 13 refers to the people of the town (*qarya*) while v. 20 refers to the people of the city (*madīna*). However, it could even be more complicated than simply two stories that follow one after the other (somewhat modified to make them flow together). Vv. 13–14 seems to combine two narrative elements, with the announcement of *al-mursalūn* in v. 13, followed by mention of two men and then a third man in v. 14. The presence of two uses of *iḏ* (vv. 13 and 14) reinforces the sense of two stories right at the beginning. Then a third version seems to start in v. 20 with the introduction of yet another person who brings something of a similar message.

Stefanidis

[1] The familiarity with which the proselyte addresses the villagers (*ya-qawmī*, v. 20) contrasts with the emissaries' formal tone and could be understood to imply that the latter are foreigners. Foreign envoys are unusual in the Qurʾān and, as it is well known, many verses insist on the "ethnocentric position of prophets" (Wansbrough 1977: 53). (The pious Egyptian addressing his people in Q 40:28–45 serves a similar literary function to Q 36:20–25 since Moses himself does not belong to Pharaoh's people). If, as Zellentin suggests, this passage somehow draws on Gen 19, the emissaries' alien origin could reflect an angelic nature. What then should we make of the unbelievers' reply in v.15: *mā antum illa basharun miṯlunā?* Should it be understood as an oblique allusion to Lot's people menace of rape (of men)? It seems, however, clear that the Qurʾān is here taking part in sectarian disputes on the nature of God's messengers (Crone 2011). Moreover, Qurʾānic retellings of Gen 18 (Q 11:69–73; 15:51–56; 51:24–30) are explicit about the angelic nature of Abraham's visitors who, while on their way to Lot's people, refuse to eat food (Reynolds 2010: 94–5). Overall, it is difficult to make sense of the ambiguous origin of the *mursalūn*. If there was indeed a Biblical subtext (or many), its traces seem to have been blurred. This might have be done deliberately in order to present the narrative as exemplary.

[2] In v.18, the unbelievers warn the messengers of a "painful punishment" (*ʿaḏāb alīm*). The use of common vocabulary to refer both to the divine sphere and to those who reject it is a striking literary device. Other examples include Q 26:19 (where Pharaoh rebukes Moses for being *min al-kāfirīn*), Q 7:127 (where Pharaoh's circle (*malaʾ*) call upon him not to let Moses and his partisans *yufsidū fī l-arḍ*), Q 27: 23

(describing the throne of the Queen of Sheba as *ʿarš ʿaẓīm*). As with the rich narrative of the Queen of Sheba (QS 27), one could argue that this mirroring rhetoric complicates and maybe even subverts the otherwise straightforward dualistic worldview of the Qurʾān. In any case, it subtly underlines the thinness of the line that separates the "right path" from that of "perdition" and, consequently, the human need for divine guidance.

Tengour

Dès le début de la sourate trente-six, le discours qui est ici tenu par le dieu coranique pose Muḥammad comme « avertisseur de périls » (v. 6). Jusqu'au v. 13, le verbe *ʾanḏara*, *yunḏiru* se répète cinq fois. Mais l'on notera également une évolution vers un statut plus défini pour Muḥammad qui, dans le v. 3, est reconnu comme faisant partie des messagers/transmetteurs désignés par la Divinité, *ʾinna-ka la-min al-mursalīn*. Dans la séquence formée des versets 13 à 27, le mot *mursalūn* va se répéter quatre fois.

Je m'arrêterai sur le mot *ʾağr* dont il est question au v. 21 et qui signifie la récompense attribuée en échange d'un travail accompli. Ce mot compte cinquante-quatre occurrences dans le Coran, réparties dans trente-et-une sourates où il ne désigne pas toujours une récompense dans l'au-delà. C'est le cas dans ce passage, comme dans quatorze autres, tous mecquois, où le mot *ʾağr* est associé de manière significative à l'avertissement (*ʾinḏār*) et/ou au rappel (*ḏikr*). Il s'agit là d'un thème particulièrement tribal, celui des rétributions octroyées aux devins comme aux sorciers pour leurs prédictions car, à l'évidence, celles-ci n'étaient pas gratuites.

On peut, à cet égard, se demander quel rapport prévaut entre les mots *ʾağr*, *ʾinḏār* et *ḏikr* et pourquoi la parole coranique exclut une rétribution de l'avertisseur en échange de son avertissement. Pour y répondre, il faut se souvenir que durant la période mecquoise, la parole de Muḥammad est mise en échec par sa tribu et que l'une des raisons de ce rejet est son assimilation à un devin, à un sorcier, à un poète et à un homme sous l'emprise d'un mauvais djinn.

Dans la mentalité des tribus arabes, devins, sorciers et poètes étaient en effet considérés comme étant en relation avec le monde invisible des djinns puisque les djinns étaient perçus comme des médiateurs de l'inspiration, qu'elle ait été bonne ou mauvaise, et du destin qu'il fallait connaître pour en déjouer les mauvais coups annoncés.

Lorsque la parole coranique écarte la rétribution de l'avertisseur c'est donc pour mieux signifier à ses interlocuteurs mecquois que celui-ci n'a rien à voir avec les autres médiateurs que sont les devins et les sorciers ou les poètes. Ce qui se profile derrière ce dispositif étant l'arrière plan de l'accusation d'une mauvaise emprise djinnique sur Muḥammad. Une accusation qui s'inscrit dans le contexte plus global de la polémique l'ayant opposé à sa tribu.

Younes

I agree with Rippin that the narrative may in fact be based on three stories, but with a different division: vv. 13–19, 20–21, 22–27. The use of the word *madīna* (v. 20) as opposed to *qarya* marks the transition from the first to the second story, and the shift to the first person in v. 22 marks the transition to the third story.

In terms of its language, the passage is clear and the grammar is straightforward.

Having said that, the verses demonstrate the importance of rhyme in the language of the Qurʾān, which plays a stronger role than case and mood endings (often dropped to maintain the rhyme scheme) and some other aspects of the grammar. In order to rhyme with the previous verses, the final object pronoun of v. 25 *ī* is dropped: *fa-smaʿūnī* is spelled *fa-smaʿūn*.

Zellentin

The passage indeed alludes to the Qurʾān's own versions of the story of Lot and Sodom (but not so much to Gen 19) as well as possibly to Matt 21:33–41 (see also El-Badawi), yet in a way that is more complex and more specific than it may first appear. The Qurʾān combines these two scriptural narratives—both about endangered servants sent to a sinful place which is in turn destroyed—in a way that illustrates its key hermeneutical strategy to read the Torah and the Gospel jointly as *one* text (see also my comments on QS 3 & 34), all the while building on the midrashic reading of Genesis in *Genesis Rabbah* and thereby allowing a grasp of its intricate intertextuality.

The Qurʾān, however, recasts the Gospel narrative in light of its own reading of Genesis 19, the story of the destruction of Sodom, with which the present passage shares three crucial elements. First, in Q 51:24–37, Lot's town is the only specific singular place destroyed in the Qurʾān that remains unnamed (to the best of my knowledge), the only other singular place that is destroyed is the town in the simile in our passage. While one should not argue *ex silentio*, the lack of specificity in *sūra*s Q 36 and Q 51 alone certainly invite reading one in light of the other. Second, in only two of the Qurʾānic stories of warning and destruction of a town more than one warning messenger appears at one time: the unspecified group of messengers that visit Abraham and then continue on to Lot and his people, and in the case of three messengers who call the people to repentance in our simile. (This holds true even in light of the often-repeated phrase that the people "impugned the prophets," see e.g. Q 26:123). While the plurality is telling, the difference between "several" and "three" remains noteworthy. Third, the locution "rather, you are a profligate people" in v. 19 points to the similar accusation against Lot's people in Q 7:81. The unnamed man in our simile, however, speaks not about his people's homosexuality, as does Lot, but about *širk*, pleading to his contemporaries that there is no sense in taking gods besides God since their intercession will not avail him anything. Intriguingly, this fact jibes with the rabbis' view of the Sodomites as worshipping the sun and the moon.

The rabbis insist that Sodom, here compared to a *mdynh* ("province") was idolatrous, the citizens expect their deities to intercede for them on the day of judgment (*Genesis Rabbah* 50:12, see also 50:4); in the Qurʾān, the man from the city (*madīna*, Q 36:20) likewise insists that he must not take gods beside God, that intercession will not occur, and that none will come to rescue his compatriots (Q 36:23; sun and moon are mentioned later in the sūra as subservient to God, see Q 36:40). Lot is of course the man who has to hurry in Genesis (19:15 and 22), and the rabbis calculate how fast he could have walked, and even speculate that the angels straightened the way for him (*Genesis Rabbah* 50:10); the man in the Qurʾān also hurries (v. 20). The rabbis relate that Lot prayed for the Sodomites all night, seeking mercy (*rḥmn*) for them, yet from the moment that they seek to rape the angels, Lot is not allowed to defend them any more (*Genesis Rabbah* 50:5); in the Qurʾān , the man from the city pleads with, not for, his people, evoking his faith in *al-raḥmān*, and we learn that after him, no host came to them from heaven, and nothing else, either (v. 28, a difficult passage). The overlap is too vague to speak of a specific, rather than a broader oral affinity. The similarities, as well as the lexical affinity, it is true, are rather general, yet they are close enough to safeguard that anyone familiar with rabbinic similes would feel an uncanny sense of familiarity when hearing the Qurʾānic one. The simile in our passage, hence, remains an autonomous simile, but invites its audience to hear it in dialogue with Lot's narrative in the Qurʾān and with the rabbinic tradition.

QS 32 Q 37:6 – 11

37.6 We adorned the lower sky with the adornment of stars,
37.7 A protection against every rebellious demon.
37.8 They cannot listen in on the Highest Assembly, And are pelted from every side,
37.9 Thrown back, and theirs is an eternal punishment;
37.10 Except for one who happens to catch a scrap,
And is then pursued by a shooting star.
37.11 So sound them out: "Are they more difficult to create, or those others We created?"
We created them from viscous clay.

37.6 Nous avons décoré le ciel le plus proche d'un décor: les étoiles,
37.7 afin de le protéger contre tout diable rebelle.
37.8 Ils ne pourront être à l'écoute des dignitaires suprêmes [les Anges]; car ils seront harcelés de tout côté,
37.9 et refoulés. Et ils auront un châtiment perpétuel.
37.10 Sauf celui qui saisit au vol quelque [information]; il est alors pourchassé par un météore transperçant.
37.11 Demande-leur s'ils sont plus difficiles à créer que ceux que Nous avons créés? Car Nous les avons créés de boue collante!

سورة الصافات
إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ (6) وَحِفْظًا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَارِدٍ (7) لَا يَسَّمَّعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَإِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقْذَفُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ
جَانِبٍ (8) دُحُورًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ (9) إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ (10) فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ
خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ (11)

Crone

This is one out of many passages in the Qurʾān alluding to or telling the story of *ǧinn* or demons trying to penetrate the heavens in order to hear what is being decided there, only to be chased away by having fireballs thrown at them. Their knowledge is not always illicit: in two passages, including by far the longest, it is the recitation of Qurʾānic material that they hear, causing some of them to convert to Islam (Q 46:29 ff; 72:1 ff). In what follows I first comment on the passage line by line and next discuss the pre-history of the story, the use to which it is put in the Qurʾān, and what we can infer about the composition and chronology of the Qurʾān from the variant versions, with a few remarks on the reception of the story as well.

6. We've adorned the lower heaven with stars/planets (*kawākib*): The *kawākib* are elsewhere replaced by constellations (*burūǧ*), cf. Q 15:16 – 18: "We have placed the constellations (*burūǧ*) in the sky and adorned them (*zayyannāhā*) for those who look at them." Also Q 25:61: "Blessed is He who placed the constellations in the sky and placed a lamp (*sirāǧan*) in it and a moon giving off light." Also Q 85:1: "By the sky endowed with constellations."

The lower heaven: the one nearest to the earth. There are seven heavens in the Qurʾān (Q 2:29; 17:44; 23:86; 41:12; 65:12; 67:3; 71:15).

7. Protection against demons: It is not clear whether God sets up the lower heaven or the stars/planets/constellations to serve as protection. Two variants sug-

gest the former (Q 15:16; 67:5); one is ambivalent (Q 21:32), and two suggest the latter (Q 21:32; 41:12). Either way, the demons can't get to the higher heavens because they are stopped here. The idea also appears elsewhere in the Qurʾān:

15:16 – 18: "We have placed the constellations (*burūǧ*) in the sky and adorned them (*zayyannāhā*) for those who look at them; and We have protected them against every accursed demon (*šayṭān raǧīm*), except for such as listens by stealth (*istaraqa l-samʿ*) – and he is pursued by a bright fireball (*šihāb mubīn*)."

21:32: "We have made the sky a well-guarded roof (*saqfan maḥfūẓan*)."

41:12: "We adorned the lower heaven with lamps (*maṣābīḥ*) and [made them/gave them?] protection."

55:33: "O company of spirits and humans (*al-ǧinn wa-l-ins*), if you can penetrate the regions of heaven and earth, then [go ahead and?] penetrate! You will not penetrate without authorization (*sulṭān*)."

67:5: "We adorned the lower heaven with lamps (*maṣābīḥ*) and set them up as missiles (*ruǧūman*) against the demons (*šayāṭīn*), and prepared for them the punishment of the blaze (*ʿaḏāb al-saʿīr*)."

72:8: The *ǧinn* examined the heaven and found it to be "filled with stern guards and fireballs (*ḥarasan šadīdan wa-šuhuban*)."

7. Demons trying to listen in: This, too, is mentioned elsewhere, though the *šayāṭīn* have a tendency to turn into spirits (*ǧinn*) of a more benevolent kind when this part is told. What they are trying to hear is the reading of the revelations that the Messenger would recite (after they had been transmitted to him) during the congregational service. A session was known as a "reading" or "recitation" (*qurʾān*), which eventually became the name of the book in which they were collected. The demons do not manage to hear anything (Q 26:210 – 12), but two passages present the *ǧinn* as listening to it in the same respectful manner as the Messenger's followers (Q 46:29 f; 72:1 – 8), seated in places where they can avoid the stern guards and fireballs, an option they declare not to exist anymore (Q 72:9).

8. The highest council (*al-malaʾ al-aʿlā*) (on which, see further *EQ*, s.v. "Court"): The idea that God presides over a council of lesser deities or, as here, angels is a very old one, clearly inspired by the councils of earthly kings; it appears in ancient Mesopotamian, Ugaritic and Phoenician literature, and in the Hebrew Bible. The term *malaʾ* without the qualification "highest" was presumably current in Arabia for earthly councils of advisers, for we hear of human councils, too (Pharaoh and his *malaʾ*, Q 12:43; the *malaʾ* of the unbelievers in Noah's time, Q 23:24; that of the Queen of Sheba, Q 27:32 f, etc.). The other Qurʾānic reference to the highest council envisages its members as disputing (Q 38:69, where the Messenger disclaims any knowledge of *al-malaʾ al-aʿlā iḏ yaḫtaṣimūna*), which suggests Jewish transmitters: God is frequently disputing with the angels in rabbinic literature, inter alia in connection with the creation of man, and this, too, is reflected in the Qurʾān (Q 2:30). The Christians did not to my knowledge envisage the angels as so forward as to argue with God, and they certainly denied that God was disputing with them when He created Adam.

10. The one who snatches away something: The demons are envisaged along the lines of wild animals or dogs who rush in and snatch some food, whereupon they are pelted with stones and run away.

10. Brilliant fireball (*šihāb ṯāqib*): A *šihāb* is anything that shines brightly in the sky, including shooting stars (meteors), comets and asteroids. The reference (cf. Q 72:8; 55:35, which refers instead to *šuwāẓ* and *nuḥās*) is presumably to one or all of these.

11. So ask them (*fa-staftihim*), Are they more difficult to create (*ašaddu ḫalqan*) or those that We created (*am man ḫalaqnā*)? A similar question is asked in Q 79:27 (*a-antum ašaddu ḫalqan am al-samāʾu banāhā*) and answered in 40:57 (*la-ḫalqu l-samawāti wa-l-arḍi akbaru min ḫalqi l-nās*). The variants show that the question is addressed to the Messenger's opponents, not to the spirits (*ǧinn*), and that the opponents are being asked whether they are more difficult than other beings to create (as in Paret's and Yusuf Ali's translations), not whether they are stronger in constitution (as in Arberry's). The opponents must have denied that God had created them; they scoff at the idea of bodily resurrection in the continuation (Q 37:16) and should perhaps be seen as belonging to the radicals who denied that there was any kind of afterlife and that it was God (as opposed to time) who made people die: the view that He did not kill people implies that He had not created them either (Q 45:24; cf. Crone 2012, esp. 471 f). The Qurʾān responds that they were no more difficult to create than any (other) human beings He had created, or any other thing such as the sky (Q 79:27); indeed, creating the heavens and the earth was more difficult than creating people (Q 40:57). Q 37:11 forms the transition from the pericope about the demons to polemics against the infidels.

The pre-history of the story.

The Qurʾānic versions of the myth have Zoroastrian, Jewish and probably also Arabian roots. The idea of demons trying to penetrate the highest heaven, to be repelled by the stars and/or the divine beings inhabiting it, is Zoroastrian. According to the *Dādestānī dēnīk*, 36:15 ff, Ohrmazd divided the sky (the first thing he created) into three parts. The top third, known as Garodman, was where Ohrmazd himself resided. It was a fortress inaccessible to the evil one, defended by the divine beings called *amahraspand*s and the righteous servants who fearlessly destroy demons. The bottom third was connected with darkness and Ahriman; and the middle third is where we find ourselves, and our job is also to do battle against the demons, though some of us have been seduced by them. When Ahriman attacked with his forces, the creation became dark "and the demons rushed from below and above; they even hastened to the uppermost third, where the pure Garodman is found," but there they were stopped by the barricade over which the pure religion shines "like the star-studded and spirit-fashioned girdle of the good religion" (*Dd*, 36:35, Jaafari-Dehaghi; cf. the different transliteration and translation by Molé 1963: 438, here *Dd*, 37:25 f). According to the *Bundahišn*, Ohrmazd set up the primordial creations as

an army in divisions for battle so that they could save the creations when the assault came. First he created the twelve constellations, each one of them a soldier, followed by 6,480,000 stars to assist them. He also appointed four generals over the constellations, and a chieftain to be in overall charge, with more stars as their assistants, and ensured the safety of the highest zone by placing unmixable stars there, appointing the glory (*khwarra*) of the good religion as its general. *Khwarra* is a word with many meanings, but the relevant meaning here is overwhelming and terrifying brilliance (cf. Crone, 2012: 321 f). Then he created the sun and the moon and made them leaders of those stars (*GrBd*, 2:1–12, Anklesaria). In short, every single "good" heavenly body was a warrior (the "bad" heavenly bodies were the planets and other mobile heavenly bodies). When Gayomard woke up after Ahriman's attack, the world of the living was resounding with the thundering of the giant *dēv*s fighting the constellations (*GrBd*, 4:23, Anklesaria). The spirit of heaven itself (*mēnog ī asmān*) was an invisible armoured force which resisted the destructive spirit until Ohrmazd had built a stronger fortress (*GrBd*, 60:11, Bailey 1971: 142 f; cf. also Henning 1942; Raffaeli 2009). In *Zādspram* (ch. 2, Gignoux &Tafazzoli), Ahriman makes a whole series of incursions. In the first Ohrmazd leaves the earth, where he has apparently been up to now, and goes to heaven where he builds a better fortress (2:8; compare the similar versions known to Abu ʿĪsā in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 2nd ed., 639, quoted in many other sources at diverse length). All these things are still going on, for every night Ahriman and the demons rush forth to destroy Ohrmazd's creatures (*PrDd*, 64:14, Williams), and the sun, moon and stars participate in this: Ohrmazd had fixed the luminous sun and resplendent moon and glorious stars at the summit of the middle third containing the earth and arranged them so that they would destroy the "sorcerers and witches" who rushed from below to destroy the creatures (*Dh*, 36:1 f, J-D – it is the good creatures on the earth, not the heavenly world above the sun and the moon, that are being protected here).

All these works were composed well after the Qurʾān, but the idea of the mobile comets and planets as part of the evil forces of Ahriman fighting the fixed stars, sun and moon, representing Ohrmazd, is of Avestic origin (Raffaeli 2009: 105 f; cf. Panaino 1990: 20). What is more, the military model is so pervasive, with endless exhortations to fight evil in any form (clearly including the Romans), that the material must reflect the militant Sasanian empire, not the emasculated Zoroastrian community left behind in Iran of the post-conquest period.

The Qurʾānic demons/spirits are not warriors, however. Like the Iranian demons they are trying to penetrate the heavens, but their aim is not to destroy God or the angels; what they are after is knowledge of what God and the angels are talking about. This takes us to Judaism. It is in Jewish works, and Christian works so early that they are still Jewish, that the demons listen in. The starting point is presumably Job 15:8, where Eliphaz the Temanite tells Job that he does not know anything about God: "Have you listened in the council of God?" The Qurʾānic Messenger seems to have been faced with a similar question by opponents who thought that he did not know anything about God, for he openly admits that he does not know what

is going on in the highest council (Q 38:69 f); but he claims supernatural knowledge even so, by way of revelation. What came in between the two?

There must have been plenty of exegetical attempts at the Job passage, but I don't know of any until we reach the *Testament of Solomon*. This work was composed or redacted in Greek in the first, second or early third century by a Christian, but it contains material reflecting first-century Palestinian Judaism (see Duling 1983: 940 ff). It is in this work that Solomon subdues the demons and forces them to build the temple, an idea which is also familiar to the Qurʾān (Q 21:82; 38:37 f). In the *Testament of Solomon* the demon Ornias tells Solomon that "We demons go up to the firmament of heaven, fly around among the stars, and hear the decisions which issue from God concerning the lives of men" (20:12). This is pretty close to what the Qurʾān tells us about the *ǧinn:* what is missing is only the sense that this is an illicit activity which the defensive mechanisms of heaven prevent them from bringing to fruition. In the *Testament of Solomon* the demons are not chased away either; rather, they fall down on their own "like leaves from a tree" out of sheer exhaustion because they do not have a resting place in the heavens (whereas the *ǧinn* of Q 72:9 do have places to sit on *maqāʿid*). It is the demons themselves who are shooting stars; more precisely, this is what people think when they see them fall, we are told, with the assurance that it is not correct (ch. 20). This suggests that the Zoroastrian conception of shooting stars as demonic had reached Palestine already before the rise of the Sasanians. There has been much debate about the question of how far Zoroastrianism affected the Jews in the centuries before and after the rise of Christianity (esp. in connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls), much of it by scholars with insufficient knowledge and by now dated ideas about Zoroastrianism; but as a leading Iranianist well informed about Judaism notes, there are too many similarities between the two sides for them to have developed independently (Shaked 1984: 324).

Demons listening in also figure in the Babylonian Talmud, where the (perfectly amiable) demon Ashmodai is envisaged as going up to the "academy in heaven" every day to study there and as participating in academies on earth as well, with the result that he has knowledge of the future (*Babylonian Talmud*, Gittin 68a). Another Talmudic passage claims that the demons, like the ministering angels, know what will happen, whereupon it is objected, "You cannot mean that! Rather, they hear from behind the veil like the ministering angels" (*Ḥagigah* 16a; cf. *Fathers*, ch. 37, without the objection). The objection is to the effect that the demons do not *know:* only God does. Both the ministering angels and the demons learn from behind the curtain or veil in front of God's throne (a mode of revelation also mentioned in Q 42:51).[1] In practice, then, it is fully accepted that the demons have knowledge of the future, and that they do so in precisely the same way as the ministering angels.

1 I am indebted to Peter Schäfer for an explanation of this piece of rabbinic reasoning.

Again, there is nothing illicit about their knowledge; this feature seems to be unique to the Qurʾān.

The presumed Arabian input shows in the transformation of the demons (*šayāṭīn*) into spirits (*ǧinn*), who are not intrinsically good or evil, but simply members of a parallel society. Whereas the *šayāṭīn* who are being shot down by flaming missiles are clearly envisaged as evil, the *ǧinn* who overhear the Qurʾān in Q 72 react just like the Messenger's own people: some convert and some remain foolish. In Q 46:29 they react like the Messenger himself by becoming warners to their own people. According to these *ǧinn*, it is only *now* that anyone trying to do the same would be chased away by a fireball (Q 72:9). Eichler is probably right to suspect that here we have an Arabian development of a Jewish or, as I would say, Irano-Jewish theme (Eichler 1928, 30 ff).

From where had the theme been transmitted to Arabia? The combination of Jewish and Zoroastrian elements obviously suggests Babylonia, or in other words Sasanian Iraq. It was also in Iraq that the Zoroastrian *amahraspand*s Hordād and Amordād turned into the fallen angels of the Book of Enoch, Hārūt and Mārūt (Crone 2013: 28), and probably there that Enoch acquired the name of Idrīs as well (Crone 2016). If the Qurʾānic ʿUzayr is a corruption of Azael (a possibility examined in Crone 2013: 41–50), he, too, has his roots in Iraq. In all four cases the material is likely to have been transmitted by Babylonian Jews to their coreligionists in Arabia, and to have passed from them to the Arabs. Perhaps there was also an input from Palestine, as suggested by the presence in the Qurʾān of the story of Solomon and the demons from the *Testament of Solomon*, but that work could have been read, or known from paraphrases, in Babylonia as well. Either way, the presence of Zoroastrians in Arabia before the rise of Islam means that the myth is likely to have been told and retold with further Zoroastrian and Arabian elements.

The use of the myth in the Qurʾān.

The myth seems to have been well known to the Messenger's audience, for he does not usually tell it in full, but rather briefly refers or alludes to it, taking knowledge of it for granted. But as Hawting notes, it is not always easy to see why the myth is being adduced where it is or how it relates to a larger argument (Hawting 2006). In Q 37 it seems to be used to illustrate God's power: He is the lord of the heavens, the earth and everything in between (Q 37:6) and He has created all of it, as we are told numerous times in the Qurʾān; and on top of that He has made the heavens impenetrable to demons, or almost so. It is also in the context of God's powers that the myth is mentioned in Q 15:17 ff. But in Q 46:29 ff and 72:1 ff the *ǧinn* serve as model Muslims. Their speech forms the first half of a monotheist sermon, and it is hard to tell where they stop speaking and the Messenger (or, in Q 72:17, God) takes over.

The variant versions.
There are numerous variations in the wording of the relevant passages, but they all sound like the Messenger ringing the changes. In terms of contents, the most obvious feature to call for explanation is obviously the identification, in some *sūra*s, of the supernatural beings as demons (*šayāṭīn*) roundly condemned as accursed and destined for hell (esp. Q 15:17; 37:9; 67:5) and, in other *sūra*s, as spirits (*ǧinn*) who hear the reading (Qurʾān) that the Messenger himself was to receive and convert to warn their own peoples (Q 46:29 ff; 72:1 ff). The tradition assigns one *sūra* in which they are converted *ǧinn* to the Meccan period and another to the Medinese period (72 and 46, respectively), identifying the rest as Meccan, while Nöldeke assigns all the passages in question to the second and third Meccan periods regardless of whether the supernatural beings are demons or *ǧinn*. This shows the traditional chronology to be untenable, as has in fact been suspected for a while (cf. Reynolds 2011b). But should we explain the coexistence of these two different evaluations with a theory of authorial development or in terms of different versions of the same account collected from a number of communities who claimed to preserve the Messenger's words? I do not know the answer.

The reception of the story.
A poem ascribed to Umayya b. Abī l-Ṣalt refers to the inaccessible nature of the seventh heaven and to shooting stars as missiles launched to chase away demons (cf. Seidensticker 1996: 95 f). It does not add anything to the Qurʾān. There is a more interesting adaptation of the story in the *Sirr al-ḫalīqa* attributed to Balīnūs al-Ḥakīm (II, 15:15). Here we are told that the demons and their offspring (*šayāṭīn* and their offspring on a second occurrence) try to listen in on the highest council, here explained as the spiritual beings in charge of the sphere of the sun; when the sun rises in the east, these spiritual beings know everything that will happen that day, so the angels in charge of the sun tell the angels in charge of the moon, and the latter rub the stars until they become fiery and use them to chase the demons away. This certainly comes from pre-Islamic sources along with the Qurʾān. How far the story is used in other Islamic cosmological works I don't know, but the idea of shooting stars as anti-demonic missiles is so colorful that one would expect it to be widely used. Not everyone liked it, though. There were Dahrīs who found it ridiculous: it was absurd, they said, to suppose that creatures endowed with superior intelligence should go on trying to eavesdrop instead of learning from the Qurʾān that God always does as He threatens, quite apart from the fact that they would have learned from long experience (al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, VI, 4 f.; Crone 2010 – 11: 70). Al-Ǧubbāʾī tries to meet their objections in his comments on 37:10 (Gimaret 1994).

The *aḫbārī*s handle the myth quite differently. According to Ibn Hišām's recension of Ibn Isḥāq (I:204 ff., al-Ṣaqqā and others; trans. Guillaume: 90 ff.), the Qurʾān is targeting soothsayers. The latter owed their knowledge to the *ǧinn*, who had snatched their information from the lower heavens (not the highest council)

and mixed it with falsehood. But God put an end to this by having the *ǧinn* chased away, and so soothsaying disappeared. This is also widely told in the exegetical tradition. The ancient Arab fear of falling stars does get a mention in Ibn Hišām (I:206; trans. 91), but the rest of the traditional accounts first encountered in Ibn Isḥāq illustrate the discontinuity between, on the one hand, the Arabian and Syrian traditions (if we may take Balīnūs to represent the Syrian tradition) and, on the other hand, that of ʿAbbāsid Iraq, including the Medinese heritage patronized there. It was from the Iraqi tradition, not that of western Arabia and Syria, that classical Islamic culture was formed.

Dye

Ce passage doit être rapproché de textes parallèles, notamment Q 15:16 – 18, Q 21:32, Q 41:12, Q 67:5, Q 72:8 – 9. Certes, le Coran est moins un livre qu'un *corpus* (au demeurant fort composite), et on court parfois le risque, en interprétant le Coran par lui-même, de postuler une cohérence et une systématicité qui peuvent être étrangères aux textes originellement épars et indépendants qui, réunis en un codex, ont fini par constituer le Coran. Néanmoins, dans le cas présent, l'ensemble des passages parallèles permet de dégager une image cohérente, à savoir : Dieu empêche les démons (vv. 6 – 10, Q 15:16 – 18, Q 67:5) ou les *ǧinn*s (Q 72:8 – 9) de pénétrer les cieux, mettant une protection, une barrière, au niveau du ciel le plus bas ; les démons et les *ǧinn*s ne peuvent donc pas entendre ce qu'ils voudraient entendre, en l'occurrence les chants de louange des anges, et le conciliabule divin.

Il semble bien que les ginns soient assimilés à des démons (et peut-être aussi à des anges déchus). Il faut voir là un phénomène d'acculturation, similaire à ce qu'il s'est passé ailleurs dans le monde antique : on interprète des croyances et des entités pré-juives, pré-chrétiennes, pré-islamiques…, selon une nouvelle cosmologie – on ne nie pas l'existence de ces entités (tout le monde croyait aux démons et aux esprits dans l'Antiquité), mais on en donne une autre interprétation, dans un nouveau cadre hiérarchique. De ce point de vue, le Coran se situe à la fin d'une longue histoire, celle des traditions énochiennes sur les anges déchus (cf. le *Livre des Veilleurs*, dans 1 Enoch 1 – 36), et de leurs réinterprétations, notamment dans la littérature hérésiographique et démonologique chrétienne. C'est probablement une confiance excessive dans la tradition musulmane, et dans le « grand récit » (*master narrative*) qu'elle met en place pour rendre compte de l'émergence de l'islam, qui explique l'incapacité de nombreux commentateurs à placer cette polémique coranique dans sa juste perspective, à savoir la démonologie et l'angélologie.

V. 7 : *mārid* est un hapax, vraisemblablement justifié par des raisons de rime. On rencontre plutôt, dans ce contexte, l'expression *kull šayṭān raǧīm* (Q 15:17 ; Q 16:98 ; Q 81:25), « tout diable (ou démon) *maudit* », selon le sens de l'éthiopien *rəgəmt* (cf. Kropp 2005).

El-Badawi

The discourse on the "inhabitants of the firmaments" (*al-malaʾ al-aʿlā*; cf. also Q 38:69) seems to be in dialogue with the angelic hierarchy in the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic and Early Church literature, especially the "Sons of God" (*benē hā elōhīm*; e. g., Genesis 6). The "demon" (*šayṭān*) does not seem to be referencing the reified "Devil" (*al-šayṭān*) as much as one of an evil/fallen class of angels (*šayatin*) embodied in the constellations—perhaps "watchers" (Aram. *ʿīr*; cf. Dan 4; 1 Enoch 6 – 36). Similarly, throughout the Qurʾān "demons" ([*al*-]*šayāṭīn*) appear to offer alternate—misguided —divine knowledge (Q 2:102; 6:121; 7:30; 38:37) and yet they are accountable for their deeds in the hereafter along with human beings (Q 17:27; 19:68).

Although the Qurʾān's cosmology taps into the vast reservoir of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern imagery, it is sobering that the text subverts actions of *šayāṭīn* to God's will (e. g., Q 26:210 – 21).

Grodzki

The motifs of the shooting star and "decorating"/ "guarding" the sky, whose origins may be probably traced back to the Jewish or Christian religious literature (as the Book of Job) or other ancient (Middle Eastern) myths or imagery, appear in different Qurʾānic passages, e. g., *al-samāʾ* has *al-burūǧ* (Q 85:1; 25:61; 15:16), has (or has not?) *furūǧ* (Q 50:6), *al-samāʾ al-dunyā* is decorated by *maṣābīḥ* (Q 41:12) and *al-kawākib* (Q 37:6) etc. However the question is whether the different Qurʾānic passages altogether, with their allusive and unsystematic descriptions, propose a coherent and unique picture of the celestial world (if so, what is it?) or does the Qurʾān only recast previous traditions in a way for its own purpose? Or is it, as Günter Lüling suggests (2003: 393) that the editorial reworking of the pre-Islamic Christian texts (e. g., hymns) and the modification of their original (strophic) structure has blurred the text so much that its original meaning as a Qurʾānic variant of the well-known shooting-star-myth got totally lost.

Hawting

In v. 6 *al-samāʾ al-dunyā* (cf. 67:5) is presumably "the lowest heaven," rather than – as some translators want - "the lower heaven"; it reflects the idea of the seven heavens (e. g., Q 2:29, Q 41:12). In v. 7 *šayṭān mārid* (cf. *šayṭān marīd* in Q 4:117 and Q 22:3) seems to allude to the myth of the rebellion against God of Satan and the rebel angels, as does the rest of the passage. Why is the heavenly council/assembly called *al-malāʾ al-aʿlā* in v. 8? In Q 2:246 there is reference to the *malāʾ* of the children of Israel after Moses (evidently alluding to the elders of Israel who assembled and asked Samuel to appoint a king for them in 1 Sam 8:4 – 5). In the Islamic historical tradition we read of the *malāʾ* of Mecca before Islam – apparently some sort of council of leaders. Presumably *malāʾ* in the sense of assembly derives from the root sense of fullness and plenitude?

Pregill

The invocation in vv. 1–5 seems to me to be indispensable for understanding the larger cosmological and angelological context of vv. 6–11: the ministering angels described in the opening verses are contrasted with the satans denounced in the following ones. The key phrase *al-tāliyāt ḏikran* is surely not "reciting scripture" as it is sometimes rendered, but rather something like "chanting [His] remembrance," a reference to the angels reciting the Trisagion as is depicted in Isaiah 6:3 and elsewhere.

In light of the direct parallels between this passage, Q 15:16–18 (where it is *kull šayṭān raǧīm,* "every cast-down satan"), and Q 72:8–9 (where the description of the attempt at eavesdropping and the eavesdroppers being chased away by the *šihāb* is put in the mouth of a *ǧinn*), it is puzzling to me why modern commentators have hesitated to simply identify the *ǧinn*s as fallen angels. The entire complex mythology surrounding angels, satans, *Iblīs*, *ǧinn*s, and the Daughters of Allah in Qurʾānic discourse is essentially angelological, and largely drawn from older late antique precedents and materials, especially the so-called Enochic literature. The Qurʾān's references to these entities have generally been seen as incoherent, and confusion seems to stem at least in part from the tradition's insistence on casting the Daughters as pagan goddesses and not angels, as well as its obscuring of the basic identity of satans and *ǧinn*s by often (but not always) asserting that they are separate species.

Given the *sūra*'s overarching emphasis on divine sovereignty and unity, its use of the image of the divine council is ironic. The Biblical precursors to this image originated as an Israelite domestication of the older Canaanite concept of the council of gods, transforming it into a court of angels or spirits subordinated to El/Elohim/YHWH (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 22, Job 1). By emphasizing that God's fellow inhabitants in the heavens are His created ministers and servants and not His equals, the Qurʾān is largely recapitulating a much older theological discourse and repurposing it in a new context – which is presumably not so different from the ancient Israelite context, insofar as such a construct functions to polemicize against people who exalt these secondary beings too much, making them equal to God Himself. (This is one major function of the image of the divine retinue; the other – which is more in keeping with the traditional emphasis of the Enochic literature – is theodical, which is actually the main purpose behind the Qurʾān's other use of this theme in the story of Iblīs.)

Reynolds

The term *ḥifẓ* ("protection") of v. 7 suggests that the stars really act as guardians of heaven, here presented as a celestial fortress (in Q 15:16 the stars are described as *burūǧ* – which may mean not "constellations" but "towers"). This cosmological imagery should be understood in light of the expulsion of *Iblīs* from heaven after his refusal to prostrate before Adam. Iblīs (and his hosts, see Q 26:95) were sent "down" (Q 7:13) from the heavenly realm and now cannot get back in despite their

best efforts. When they try to do so they are *yuqḏafūna* (v. 8), that is, "cast away" (not "shot at" [Quli Qaraʾi] or "pelted" [Arberry, Pickthall], translations which rely on the idea that God stones the demons with the stars or other bits of celestial matter).

Rippin

v. 10: *man ḫaṭifaʾ l-ḫaṭfa*, "he who snaps up the snapping up" [translations: "snatches a fragment," "eavesdropped once"] (note the parallels cited in Paret 1977: 414 to Q 15:18 and Q 72:8 depend on the following use of "comet"/"shooting star" *šihāb* – Q 15:18 associates this with "eavesdropping" in a more explicit way). Other uses of the root are in Q 2:20, "snatch away their sight" and Q 22:31, "snatched by birds." The sense of "eavesdropping" then depends upon the reference back to v. 8 "They do not listen to the higher assembly" followed then by this "exception" who "snatches," and the parallel back to Q 15:18, *man istaraqa l-samʿa*, "he who steals the sound."

Tengour

Ce début de la trente-septième sourate met en scène la représentation d'un ciel coranique dorénavant protégé et gardé par les *Ṣāffāt* qui font mur et se tiennent prêtes, en cas d'intrusion d'un djinn-démon rebelle, *šayṭān mārid* (ici le mot *šayṭān*, djinn-démon, précédé du partitif *kull*, tout, est encore employé comme nom commun et non encore comme nom propre servant à désigner le Satan coranique), à décocher des traits de feu qui atteignent leur cible, *šihāb ṯāqib*. Dans le même temps, ce début de sourate confirme a contrario que les djinns pouvaient accéder au ciel et au *Ġayb* pour capter subrepticement l'écoute (*istirāq al-samʿ*) qu'ils transmettaient, selon les croyances des anciens Arabes, aux hommes qui avaient le pouvoir de communiquer avec eux comme le sorcier (*sāḥir*), le poète (*šāʿir*) ou le devin (*kāhin*).

Ce passage qui devra être mis en chronologie avec celui de Q 72:8–9 marque l'entrée définitive des djinns dans le discours coranique qui dans un premier temps avait cherché à les exclure. Cette tentative a échoué après que l'accusation d'une mauvaise emprise djinnique sur l'homme Muḥammad n'a pu être écartée et la parole coranique a dû se résoudre à les intégrer en son sein au prix d'une dépossession progressive de la plupart de leurs fonctions, à commencer par la principale, celle de pouvoir monter jusqu'au ciel et en capturer les secrets du *Ġayb* (*ʾistirāq al-samʿ*) pour ensuite les transmettre à autres devins et sorciers.

Mais que l'on ne s'y méprenne pas, car c'est uniquement pour servir sa cause que la parole coranique s'en est prise à cette fonction majeure des djinns. L'accès au ciel devait absolument leur être interdit pour qu'ils ne puissent plus avoir accès au *Ġayb* et que Muḥammad puisse, lui, de son côté, continuer à s'y référer sans risquer d'être accusé d'imposture comme il n'a cessé de l'être durant toute la période mecquoise. Pourtant, cette dépossession des djinns n'aura pas le résultat attendu et Muḥammad continuera à être dénié par les hommes de sa tribu jusqu'à sa sortie forcée, *ʾiḫrāǧ*, de La Mecque.

Tesei

[1] Context: the populations of late antique Near East had two diverse and somehow conflicting cosmological models. The first – usually labeled as Greco-Roman, or Aristotelian – describes the Earth as located at the center of a Universe composed by different heavens (usually seven), represented as concentric spheres. The second model derives from ancient Semitic traditions and is predominant in the Biblical descriptions of the Universe. This model represents the Earth as a flat disk encircled by waters and surmounted by a dome-like sky. During Late Antiquity, the two different views generated a dispute among the erudite Christians of the Byzantine Empire who debated about which was the true one (cf. van Bladel 2007a). As interestingly as surprisingly, the Qurʾān refers at once to both cosmological models widespread among the communities of its cultural environment.

[2] The expression *al-samāʾ al-dūnyā*, "lowest sky" (v. 6), occurs with much the same features in two other Qurʾānic passages (41:12, 67:5): it acts as a protection and it is adorned with lamps (*bi-maṣābīḥ*, that stand for the stars mentioned in Q 37:6). Q 41:12 makes it clear that *al-samāʾ al-dūnyā* designates the first of seven heavens. The cosmological picture that emerges is an interesting one. In fact, on the one hand, the author(s) of these Qurʾānic passages refer(s) to a multiple heavens concept of the cosmos. However, on the other hand, the presence of the stars in the first heaven is surprising, as in the "multiple heavens" model the (fixed) stars are usually located in the last heaven. Furthermore, the stars' function as protection against Satan suggests the presence of the firmament, a feature that, however, is usually absent in the "multiple heavens" model. On the contrary, the image of "the lowest sky" adorned with stars finds quite precise parallelisms in late antique exegesis on the Biblical cosmology. For instance, according to Ephrem's commentary of Genesis "the firmament was adorned with the sun and the moon and the stars" (1994: 89). Thus, the Qurʾānic passage mingles elements drawn from both Greco-Roman and Biblical representations of the cosmos. In general terms, it is not clear whether the Qurʾān has coherent imagery about the shape of the world and to what extent it mediates between the two models it refers to. Of course, the necessity of providing a coherent cosmological picture is not a main point of the Qurʾān's theological agenda and thus we have only incidental hints and allusions to it.

Younes

One is left wondering why the two words *bi-zīnatin* and *yassammaʿūn* are rendered the way they are in the standard reading of this passage instead of the more straightforward *bi-zīnati* and *yasmaʿūn* as a normal reading of these verses would be on the basis of the Arabic text without the diacritics.

Zīnat al-kawākib, the construct phrase, with no *nunation* on *zīna*, would mean *the ornament of the planets*. The standard reading treats *al-kawākib* as a noun in apposition with *zīna*, resulting in a linguistically awkward construction: *an ornament*, *the planets*.

Yassammʿūn, a hapax legomenon, is based on the Form V verb *yatasammaʿūn* and is obtained by deleting the *a* that follows the *t* and then merging the *t* with the following *s* (like *yataḏakkarūn* → *yaḏḏakkarūn*.) The obvious goal is to give the word the meaning "they eavesdrop" as opposed to "they hear" or "listen." The simpler *yasmaʿūn*, based on the Form I verb *samiʿ* is quite common in the Qurʾān, with 78 occurrences (Badawi and Abdel Haleem 2008:455).

QS 33 Q 37:149 – 182

37.149 So sound them out: “To your Lord daughters are born, and to them sons?
37.150 Or did We create the angels female, in their presence?”
37.151 It is only their deceit that makes them say
37.152 that God begat progeny;
They are indeed lying.
37.153 So He preferred girls to boys?
37.154 What is it with you and your judgments?
37.155 Will you not remember?
37.156 Or do you possess some obvious proof?
37.157 Go bring your book then, if you speak the truth!
37.158 And they set up a kinship between Him and the *Jinn,*
Even though the *Jinn* know that they shall be summoned to judgment –
37.159 May God be glorified far above what they allege! –
37.160 Save for the devout worshippers of God.
37.161 You, and what you worship,
37.162 shall not lead any astray from Him,
37.163 Save those to be scorched in hell.
37.164.“None of us there is but has a well known station.
37.165 We are indeed arrayed in ranks;
37.166 We are indeed the glorifiers.”
37.167 Once they would have said:
37.168.“If only we had a Remembrance from the ancients,
37.169 we would be devout servants of God.”
37.170 But they blasphemed against it, and they will surely know!
37.171 Our Word has already passed to Our servants the Messengers,
37.172 That they shall be granted victory,
37.173 That Our troops shall prevail.
37.174 So leave them alone for a while,
37.175 And observe them, and their eyes shall be opened.
37.176 Is it Our torment they wish to hasten?
37.177 When it descends upon their vicinity, grievous shall be the dawn of those who were warned!
37.178 So leave them alone for a while,

37.149 Pose-leur donc la question: «Ton Seigneur aurait-Il des filles et eux des fils?
37.150 Ou bien avons-Nous créé des Anges de sexe féminin, et en sont-ils témoins?».
37.151 Certes, ils disent dans leur mensonge:
37.152.«Allah a engendré» mais ce sont certainement des menteurs!
37.153 Aurait-Il choisi des filles de préférence à des fils?
37.154 Qu’avez-vous donc à juger ainsi?
37.155 Ne réfléchissez-vous donc pas?
37.156 Ou avez-vous un argument évident?
37.157 Apportez donc votre Livre si vous êtes véridiques!»
37.158 Et ils ont établi entre Lui et les djinns une parenté, alors que les djinns savent bien qu’ils [les mécréants] vont être emmenés (pour le châtiment).
37.159 Gloire à Allah. Il est au-dessus de ce qu’ils décrivent!
37.160 Exception faite des serviteurs élus d’Allah.
37.161 En vérité, vous et tout ce que vous adorez,
37.162 ne pourrez tenter [personne],
37.163 excepté celui qui sera brûlé dans la Fournaise.
37.164 Il n’y en a pas un, parmi nous, qui n’ait une place connue;
37.165 nous sommes certes, les rangés en rangs;
37.166 et c’est nous certes, qui célébrons la gloire [d’Allah].
37.167 Même s’ils disaient:
37.168.«Si nous avions eu un Rappel de [nos] ancêtres,
37.169 nous aurions été certes les serviteurs élus d’Allah!
37.170 Ils y ont mécru et ils sauront bientôt.
37.171 En effet, Notre Parole a déjà été donnée à Nos serviteurs, les Messagers,
37.172 que ce sont eux qui seront secourus,
37.173 et que Nos soldats auront le dessus.
37.174 Eloigne-toi d’eux, jusqu’à un certain temps;
37.175 et observe-les: ils verront bientôt!

37.179 And observe, and their eyes shall be opened.
37.180 May your Lord, Lord of Might, be glorified far above what they allege!
37.181 Peace be upon the Messengers!
37.182 Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

37.176 Quoi! est-ce Notre châtiment qu'ils cherchent à hâter?
37.177 Quand il tombera dans leur place, ce sera alors un mauvais matin pour ceux qu'on a avertis!
37.178 Et éloigne-toi d'eux jusqu'à un certain temps;
37.179 et observe; ils verront bientôt!
37.180 Gloire à ton Seigneur, le Seigneur de la puissance. Il est au-dessus de ce qu'ils décrivent!
37.181 Et paix sur les Messagers,
37.182 et louange à Allah, Seigneur de l'univers!

سورة الصافات

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ (149) أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ (150) أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ (151) وَلَدَ
اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (152) أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ (153) مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ (154) أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (155) أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطَانٌ
مُبِينٌ (156) فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (157) وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ (158)
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (159) إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ (160) فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ (161) مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَاتِنِينَ (162) إِلَّا مَنْ
هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ (163) وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَعْلُومٌ (164) وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُّونَ (165) وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ (166) وَإِنْ كَانُوا
لَيَقُولُونَ (167) لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ (168) لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ (169) فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (170) وَلَقَدْ
سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ (171) إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ (172) وَإِنَّ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ (173) فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى حِينٍ
(174) وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ (175) أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ (176) فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ (177) وَتَوَلَّ
عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى حِينٍ (178) وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ (179) سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (180) وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ
(181) وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (182)

El-Badawi

A profoundly poignant and perplexing passage.

Hawting frames "the daughters of God" in a generally monotheistic context. Lüling speaks of a "Qurʾānic angelology" in a specifically Christian context. Vv. 149–60 appear to respond to a Christian (and perhaps syncretistic) audience, who are not faithful (*muḫliṣ*) to God, but are serving/worshiping divine beings on account of their female superiority (v. 153; the same assumption is found in Q 53:19–22 when discussing Al-Lāt, Manāt and ʿUzzā). Vv. 156–57 challenge the audience by reminding them that these female deities possess neither "authority" (*sulṭān*) nor "written mandate" (*kitāb*)—terminology pregnant with meaning in the Aramaic Biblical and post-Biblical literature of the late antique Near East.

Is there alternately an anthropological study of the "mother goddess" or feminist reading that can shed some light?

Vv. 161–70 serve as a warning to the audience. Still, how do the "[male] rank makers" (*al-ṣāffūn*) in v. 165 line up with the "[female] rank makers" (*al-ṣāffāt*) at the very start of this very same *sūra* (Q 37:1), and after which it is named? Is the entire

sūra a lesson to the audience that while (female?) angels are the rank makers (*al-ṣāffāt?*) on the Day of Judgment, that God is somehow in charge?

Vv. 171–82 conclude the *sūra* in cryptic fashion by repeating the warning in vv. 175, 179, fulfilling the promise to the (human?) messengers (*mursalūn*) and asserting that victory belongs to the (angelic?) army (*ǧund*). Another general observation is the assonance in final words like *ṣāffūn*, *muḫlaṣūn*, *manṣūrūn*, *yubṣirūn* and *yaṣifūn*.

Grodzki

The idea of female angels seems perplexing. This is why following the trail of the Elchasaites, mentioned by Tesei, is interesting as that syncretic ancient sect (related perhaps to the Ebionites and Gnosticism) claimed to have received a part of its revelation from a female angel. Although active mostly between the 2nd and 4th century C.E., it seems that their existence might not have entirely ceased in some pockets of the Middle East till the arrival of Islam. Is the Qurʾān alluding to them perhaps? (unfortunately the Elchasaite apocrypha are not extant, and all we can deduce about them is from secondary literature such as Epiphanius of Salamis or Origen from their "counter-discourse" or polemics). As far as these sources tell us, the Elchasaites were practicing baptism, keeping prescriptions of the Mosaic law such as the Sabbath and circumcision and were praying towards Jerusalem; they rejected the letters of St. Paul and regarded the Holy Spirit to be female.

Khalfallah

Ce passage aiderait à affiner la "méthode argumentative" qui consiste à étudier les textes à travers l'analyse des structures argumentatives (polémique, réfutation, démonstration...). Cf. Azaiez 2012 sur les questions argumentatives. Notre but ici est d'examiner la stratégie du Coran lorsqu'il décrit une catégorie de ses adversaires dont il ne présente pas, délibérément, l'identité. Une fois ces traits réunis, nous brosserons un portrait général de l'Adversaire- type. On verra ensuite s'il s'agit d'un adversaire archétypique ou d'un ennemi historique. Autrement dit, le Coran dessine-il le portrait des détracteurs, bien identifiés par les récits historiques, ou au contraire, il en dessine un visage universel? La question philosophique qui sous-tend cette courte analyse est de savoir comment la Parole de Dieu intervient dans l'Histoire et quelles sont les lignes de clivage entre l'immanence et la transcendance. Voici les traits distinctifs des adversaires : [1] Ils prétendent que Dieu n'a que des filles, alors qu'eux, ont des garçons. [2] Dieu a attribué aux anges le sexe féminin. [3] Ils sont des gens d'*ifq* (imposture, affabulation...) [4] Ils prétendent qu'Allah engendre des enfants. [5] Ils ne possèdent pas la capacité de produire des « jugements » justes. [6] Ils ne se remémorent pas. [7] Ils ne se basent sur aucune preuve évidente. [8] Ils ne sont pas sincères. [9] Ils prétendent que Dieu a un lien de filiation avec les *Ǧinn*s. [10] Ils auront l'Enfer comme rétribution. [11] Ils espèrent avoir une gloire (*ḏikr*), comme celle

des Anciens. [12] Ils précipitent l'avènement du châtiment divin. [13] Ils auront une matinée funeste.

Ces remarques s'imposent : [1] Ces versets ne mentionnent pas les adversaires de manière explicite ; ils ne disent rien ni sur leur religion, leur noms, identité, appartenance… Selon le cas, il s'agirait des juifs, chrétiens ou des impies de Qurayš. Mais, ce silence est voulu, car il fait partie de cette description qui rompt avec l'histoire et installe un modèle universel. [2] Le Coran rapporte sans gêne leurs discours blasphématoires et ce dans le but de les ridiculiser. Les Docteurs de Loi en ont déduit une règle: *naqlu l-kufr laysa kufran* (reproduire des paroles blasphématoires n'est pas un blasphème). [3] Ce passage est construit selon le célèbre style d'*iltifāt*, qui permet de passer du discours direct au discours indirect, de tenir un dialogue avec les adversaires (polémiquer, répondre, réfuter, argumenter…). [4] Dieu parle uniquement au pluriel.

Madigan

The tone of this segment somehow recalls for me the last chapters of the book of Job, where God takes Job to task for what he has been saying and challenges him on his knowledge and powers. In the Biblical text the confrontation is directly between God and Job, whereas in this *sūra* the prophet is told to do the questioning (*fa-staftihim*) in v. 149 as he has also been commanded to do earlier in v. 11. However, in the very next verse the prophet is cut out of the conversation and God takes over direct address to the interlocutors. The divine impatience with those who refuse to acknowledge God's messengers is brought out repeatedly in this *sūra* with the refrain (occurring 43 times in the Qurʾān) *a-fa-lā* … (will they not then …?). In this passage at v. 155 it is *a-fa-lā taḏakkarūna* (will they not, then, reflect?). Similar exasperation is often expressed by the repeated *laʿallakum*, or *laʿallahum*, which occurs 118 times in the Qurʾān. The tangle of not always announced speakers (e. g., at v. 164) gives a wonderfully dramatic feel to this passage, suggesting its origins in oral performance.

Pregill

This passage's strong thematic and linguistic symmetry with the opening verses of the *sūra*, along with the closing invocations, demonstrate that the chapter is a unitary composition and should thus be read as thematically coherent. This indicates to me that the extended denunciation of the raising of the Daughters to the status of deities here at the end of the chapter must be interpreted in light of the initial references to good and bad angels. The implication would seem to be that the Daughters are essentially divinized angels and not pagan goddesses, as Hawting (1999) demonstrates. One wonders if there is also a distant echo here of the Christian claim that pagan deities are actually demons (that is, fallen angels). This provokes the question I raised in my comments on the last passage (QS 32) of whether we should under-

stand the Daughters not only as angels or quasi-angelic intermediaries, but actually as linked with (or the same variety of being as) the satans and *ǧinn*s.

The challenge to the Prophet's interlocutors to bring a *kitāb* as warrant for their claims about the Daughters is provocative, since the witness of the Hebrew scriptures would in fact confirm that angels are not deities (at least as the Biblical passages with the divine council are generally interpreted), just as the witness of the New Testament would largely confirm that Jesus is not God but rather only the Word/Logos or its incarnation, as he is in the Qurʾān. This links the passage at hand with the larger Qurʾānic discourse about *taḥrīf*, which in the context of the Qurʾān itself seems to signify the erroneous interpretation of scripture by Jews and Christians rather than their corruption through interpolation and omission and the like, as the later exegetical tradition has it.

Here the objectors say that they have not received a warning before – *law anna ʿindanā ḏikran min al-awwalīn* – which is suggestive given that in other places, the Qurʾān itself is likened to a message that has been heard of old (see QS 22 and 25). Is the Qurʾānic message something old (i.e., *asāṭīr al-awwalīn*) or something really new?

Reynolds

In vv. 151–52 the Qurʾān polemicizes against those who say that God has "begotten" (*walada allāh*), apparently, "daughters." This might be compared to those passages (Q 2:116; 10:68; 18:4; 19:88; 21:26; 23:91; 72:3) where the Qurʾān polemicizes against those who say that God has "taken a son" (*ittaḫaḏa llāhu walad*), passages often imagined to be refutations of Christians, although *walad* could be understood in the general sense as "offspring." The similarity of these refuted theological propositions is curious. The key question, examined in detail by Azaiez (2015) is the nature of the Qurʾān's "counter-discourse." Should we imagine that any of these quotations reflect real opponents and things those opponents really said? Is it not plausible (although perhaps impossible to prove) that the Qurʾān has instead created theological opponents in order to articulate its own theological positions by way of refutation?

Rippin

Despite all the significant, interesting and difficult aspects of this passage, my attention here was drawn to the little word *sāha* in v. 177. I was struck that translations try to make this specific – "backyard" (although in colloquial English I suppose that could be pretty general) or "courtyard," certainly the meaning given to the word in the dictionaries ("the open space in a house"). Yet the context tells us nothing and the image of God's punishment descending into one's backyard seems to miss what would better be taken as a metaphor (e.g., "coming in one's direction," "taking aim at someone"). This is the only time the root is used in the Qurʾān and, while the word is insignificant and is easily glossed over, it does demonstrate the challenges of

studying the Qurʾān outside the context of the tradition. That said, it's tempting to suggest that the text has been mis-read and this should be *nāḥiya* (a word which Lane [1863: IV, 184] notes could be taken as a synonym of *sāḥa*), a more common word for just a general direction. However, ironically perhaps, that is no easier a reading since that root is also not found in the Qurʾān (as noted by Brunschvig [1956, 24] in his classic article on vocabulary not used in the Qurʾān).

Sirry

The Qurʾān criticizes unbelievers for their belief that God has daughters on a number of different occasions (Q 37:149–154; 16:57–59; 17:40; 43:16–20; 52:39; 53:19–23). In the passage under discussion, the daughters of God were thought to be angelic or celestial beings who acted as intercessors between God and humanity. In Q 37:153–54, the Qurʾān complains that the unbelievers have ascribed to God preference of daughters over sons. Compare with Q 16:57–59, where the Qurʾān uses logic to undermine the association of females with God by juxtaposing this belief with the typical reaction when one hears the news of the birth of female: "When one of them brought news of a female, his face darkens and he is filled with anger." It is unthinkable that they ascribe to God what they hate for themselves. However, this criticism can be extended as polemics against Christians: Does the Christian God have a son, while the Arab God only has daughters? The Qurʾān seems reluctant to state explicitly the gender of angels: "Those who do not believe in the hereafter name the angels with female names" (v. 53:27). Is the identification of angels as the daughters of God a product of the Arab culture? It seems that there is no evidence in the post-Biblical literature that identifies the angels as female. For Hawting, however, the Qurʾānic accusation of its opponents' belief (that angels are God's female offspring) simply reflects a "polemical statement" (1999: 130–149).

Tengour

Cette dernière partie de la sourate *al-Ṣāffāt* a donné lieu, dans les sources post-coraniques, à des interprétations que l'historien aura du mal à reprendre sans quelques réserves. Les croyances prêtées *a posteriori* aux adversaires mecquois de Muḥammad à partir de ce passage entrent en contradiction d'une part avec ce que la même parole affirme en d'autres moments, et de l'autre avec ce que nous savons du contexte social de l'Arabie du VIIe siècle. Pour en comprendre la teneur, il faudrait sans doute replacer ce passage dans le contexte de polémique où il s'est dit, le mettre en chronologie avec des passages analogues, comme ceux de Q. 16:57; 17:40; 42:49; 43:16; 52:39, et tenir compte du fait qu'il s'agit là de propos d'adversaires qui ont été rapportés par la parole coranique dans le seul but de les dénoncer et que les Mecquois n'ont la parole qu'indirectement.

Si l'on considère l'opposition filles/fils dont il est nettement question au début de cette séquence (vv. 149–153), on constate que le Coran en rend toujours compte à

travers l'expression : *banāt*/*banūn*, filles/fils, ou bien *ʾināṯ*/*banūn*, femelles/fils. Une telle opposition est loin d'être fortuite dans une société tribale et patriarcale où une progéniture exclusivement féminine était négativement perçue. On peut supposer que dans le contexte de polémique ambiant entre Muḥammad et ses dénégateurs mecquois, ceux-ci, excédés, aient pu lui rétorquer que son Seigneur avait une préférence pour les filles ou était tout juste bon à engendrer des filles – lui-même, n'était-il pas le père de filles ? L'accusation est jugée comme étant totalement absurde par la parole coranique, ce qui *a contrario* confirme que l'opposition filles/fils constituait bel et bien un trait de mentalité dans l'Arabie d'alors.

Il est à remarquer aussi que ce que la parole coranique nie, en la présentant à la fois comme étant mensongère et absurde, c'est la fonction procréatrice ou adoptante d'*Allāh*. Ce passage devra être mis en chronologie avec ceux de Q 6:101; 72:3 et 112:3, où l'idée qu'*Allāh* ait engendré quoi que ce soit est également repoussée. Ce thème apparaît dans le Coran vers le milieu de la période mecquoise et s'accompagne d'une mise en avant de plus en plus nette de la figure d'*Allāh*, en même temps que d'un évincement progressif des autres déités locales.

Tesei

I agree with other commentators that the polemic about the Daughters is essentially angelogical. This seems to be related to the angelic interpretation of Gen 6:2–4—and notably to the identification of the "sons of God" with the Watchers. The unparalleled references to female angels (however, cf. the Christian heresiologists' reports on the Elchasites listed in Klijin & Reinink 1973: 265–7), and to daughters alongside the sons of God, could be either functional to the polemic (i.e., representation of female deities as angels) or reflect a local syncretic cult.

The reference to the *ǧinn*s in the frame of this polemic also points to the rejection of mythemes from the Watchers story. The lineage (*nasab*) between God and the *ǧinn*s which the Qurʾān holds against its opponents (Q 37:158, cf. Q 6:100) recalls the Enochic myth on the origins of demons—described as spirits emanating from the Watchers' bastard progeny (i.e., the Giants) destroyed in the Flood. From the Qurʾān's perspective, to accept the Watchers' status of "sons of God" and the story of their demoniac offspring, would imply the establishment of a lineage between the latter and God—who would appear as a kind of grand-parent of the demons. The Qurʾān actually refers to a different etiology on the origins of demons, which would have pre-existed the creation of the man. *Ǧinn*s existed as such already before the rebellion of Satan (cf. Tesei QS 2).

The rejection of the Enochic myth as part of a religious quarrel is not peculiar to the Qurʾān. Christian authors as Ephrem and Jerome had already done the same in the cadre of their anti-Manichaean polemic. Still previously, other Christian polemicists (e.g., Lactantius) used the myth of the Watchers' demonic offspring (though without rejecting its "historicity") to argue against pagan cults (on this point see also Crone QS 41). From this perspective, it is interesting to note that the Syriac

term *genyātā* (plur. of *gny*, "demon") is used in several passages of the Peshitta to designate idols (e.g., 1 Sam 7:3–4, 12:10, 31:10; 2 King 5:24; Isa 1:29, 32:02,). The same use of the term occurs in Jacob of Serugh's homilies in the framework of anti-Jewish polemic (e.g., *Hom. Against the Jews* V, 206, 264; VI, 56). Furthermore, the related Aramaic term *gnyʾk* occurs in Targum Jonathan on Isa 65:3 & 66:17 to describe a pagan altar. Very relevant is also Lactantius' reference to the myth of the Watchers, and in particular his utterance that pagans venerate demons as "terrestrial gods" and that these demons "took for themselves the name of *genii*, for thus they translate the word *daemonas* into Latin" (cf. VanderKam 1996: 84–5). This last statement is quite enigmatic. It is actually unclear why demons should take for themselves a Latin name to translate the Greek word *daemon*. It is tempting to speculate that Lactantius is trying to provide an explanation to the Syro-Aramaic *gny* and that for assonance he connected it to the Latin *genius*—which incidentally has a similar meaning. In this case we would have a hint that a term related to the Arabic *ǧinn* was already associated to the Enochic mytheme of demons.

QS 34 Q 38:17 – 26

38.17 Be patient with what they say,
And remember Our servant David, a man of great power, a man of constant penitence.
38.18 We made the mountains submit and, with him, glorify God at evening and dawn,
38.19 And the birds too, mustered from all sides – all turn in penitence to Him.
38.20 And We buttressed his rule, and granted him wisdom and overpowering eloquence.
38.21 Has there come to you news of the disputants, when they climbed up the entrance gate?
38.22 Remember how they entered upon David, and he was frightened of them.
They said: "Be not afraid. Two disputants are we, and one has done the other wrong. So judge between us in justice, and do not be biased, but guide us to an upright path.
38.23 This, my brother, has ninety-nine ewes and I have but one. And yet he says to me: 'Place her in my charge', and he overcomes me in argument."
38.24 He said: "He has done you wrong by badgering you to add your ewe to his. Indeed, many who own in common transgress against one another – save those who believe and do good deeds, and they are few in number."
And David imagined that We had put him to the test. So he sought his Lord's forgiveness, fell in prostration, and repented.
38.25 And We forgave him that act; to Us he shall be drawn near, and shall have a goodly place to rest.
38.26 O David, We appointed you a deputy on earth, so judge between people in truth, and follow not your caprice, for this will lead you astray from the path of God. Those who stray from the path of God shall meet with terrible torment, for they forget the Day of Reckoning.

38.17 Endure ce qu'ils disent; et rappelle-toi David, Notre serviteur, doué de force [dans l'adoration] et plein de repentir [à Allah].
38.18 Nous soumîmes les montagnes à glorifier Allah, soir et matin, en sa compagnie,
38.19 de même que les oiseaux assemblés en masse, tous ne faisant qu'obéir à lui [Allah].
38.20 Et Nous renforçâmes son royaume et lui donnâmes la sagesse et la faculté de bien juger.
38.21 Et t'est-elle parvenue la nouvelle des disputeurs quand ils grimpèrent au mur du sanctuaire!
38.22 Quand ils entrèrent auprès de David, il en fut effrayé. Ils dirent: «N'aie pas peur! Nous sommes tous deux en dispute; l'un de nous a fait du tort à l'autre. Juge donc en toute équité entre nous, ne sois pas injuste et guide-nous vers le chemin droit.
38.23 Celui-ci est mon frère: il a quatre-vingt-dix-neuf brebis, tandis que je n'ai qu'une brebis. Il m'a dit: «Confie-la-moi» et dans la conversation, il a beaucoup fait pression sur moi».
38.24 Il [David] dit: «Il a été certes injuste envers toi en demandant de joindre ta brebis à ses brebis». Beaucoup de gens transgressent les droits de leurs associés, sauf ceux qui croient et accomplissent les bonnes ouvres – cependant ils sont bien rares -. Et David pensa alors que Nous l'avions mis à l'épreuve. Il demanda donc pardon à son Seigneur et tomba prosterné et se repentit.
38.25 Nous lui pardonnâmes. Il aura une place proche de Nous et un beau refuge.
38.26.«O David, Nous avons fait de toi un calife sur la terre. Juge donc en toute équité parmi les gens et ne suis pas la passion: sinon elle t'égarera du sentier d'Allah». Car ceux qui s'égarent du sentier d'Allah auront un dur châtiment pour avoir oublié le Jour des Comptes.

سورة ص

اصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُودَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (17) إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ (18)
وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ (19) وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ (20) وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ نَبَأُ الْخَصْمِ إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا
الْمِحْرَابَ (21) إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى دَاوُودَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ خَصْمَانِ بَغَى بَعْضُنَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ (22) إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ أَكْفِلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي فِي
الْخِطَابِ (23) قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ وَظَنَّ دَاوُودُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ (24) فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا
لَزُلْفَى وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ (25) يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ (26)

Azaiez

Cette péricope autour de la figure davidique est l'occasion d'interroger la spécificité formelle et structurelle de la narration coranique. On relève plusieurs caractéristiques qu'il est très fréquent de retrouver dans nombre de textes narratifs :

[1] Présence d'un allocutaire (injonction de patienter: *āṣbir ʿalā mā yaqūlūna* et interpellation interrogative : *wa-hal ʾātāka nabaʾu al-ḫasmi*).

[2] Formulation introductive type (injonction de se remémorer : *wa-āḏkur*).

[3] Dialogisme (échange de paroles au style direct omniprésence de la racine *Q-W-L*).

[4] Disdacalies (description minimaliste de l'action, *ʾIḏ daḫalū ʿalā Dāwūda fa-fazi'a minhum*).

[5] Formulations répétitives et partagées dans d'autres récits coraniques. Les similarités lexicales sont frappantes avec le récit de marial (Q 19:18) et adamique (Q 2:30 – 39). L'effet est double : donner une unité stylistique au récit coranique, relier les récits entre-eux en créant une histoire continue du salut.

Récit marial: *sabbiḥū bukratan wa ʿašīyā* (Q 19:11) / Récit davidique : *yusabbiḥna bi-l-ʿašīyi wa-l-išrāqi* (38 :18) ; Récit adamique: *ʾinnī ǧāʿilun fī-l-ʾarḍi ḫalīfatan* (Q 2:30) / Récit davidique : *ʾinnā ǧaʿalnāka ḫalīfatan* (Q 38:26).

[6] Langage performatif (l'acte de pardonner : *faǧafarnā lahu*).

[7] Absence ou rareté des toponymes (*miḥrāb*)

[8] Temporalités multiples et unifiées (Temps du récit et de l'action des personnages liés aux didascalies, Temps référé et mythique induits par le pardon donné par Dieu, Temps eschatologique avec la mention de *yawm*[a] *l-ḥisāb*).

Il serait, en l'occurrence, très utile de comparer ces formes déterminées et répétitives avec les structures et formes des poèmes liturgiques syriaques que l'on appelle les *soghyata* (Brock 1991: 109 – 119).

Dye

Les caractéristiques structurelles et formelles de ce passage ont été bien analysées par Azaiez. Le texte fait écho à 2 Sam 12:1 – 16, avec bien sûr des différences. Ce n'est plus Nathan qui s'adresse à David, au moyen d'une parabole, mais « deux disputeurs » (v. 21) – justement les personnages de la parabole de Nathan – qui vont directement porter leur querelle auprès de David (situation qui évoque celle d'un autre personnage biblique, Salomon). Noter que David n'est pas présenté comme étant simplement chez lui (2 Sam 12:1), mais (implicitement) comme se trouvant dans le *miḥrāb* (v. 21).

Vv. 18–19 : l'idée selon laquelle les montagnes et les oiseaux louent Dieu en compagnie de David apparaît à plusieurs reprises dans le Coran (Q 21:79 ; Q 34:10). Comme le note Madigan, on a là une référence très nette à Ps 148:9–10 (voir aussi Dan 3:75, 80).

V. 21 : *miḥrāb* désigne très clairement le Temple de Jérusalem dans trois autres passages du Coran. Au singulier, le terme concerne soit Marie (Q 3:37), soit Zacharie (Q 3:39 ; Q 19:11). Ce sens pourrait bien être évoqué ici, même si c'est Salomon, et non David, qui est censé avoir construit le Temple. Naturellement, l'idée qu'il s'agisse de la « Tour de David » est pertinente, mais pourquoi le Coran emploie-t-il alors ce terme? Ce n'est peut-être pas un hasard si David est rapproché ici de Marie et Zacharie (intéressant rapprochement David/Jésus : Q 5:78).

V. 26 : *ḫalīfa* me semble dans ce verset avoir le sens de « lieutenant, vicaire de Dieu », et non celui de « successeur » (sur cette question, cf. Crone & Hinds 1986: 4–23). L'homme reçoit délégation de Dieu pour administrer la terre : l'insistance, dans ce contexte, sur les notions de péché et de repentance est à rapprocher, bien sûr, de « l'épisode inaugural » – à savoir la faute puis le repentir d'Adam, qui sont le « modèle » des fautes et repentirs postérieurs (on a là un autre exemple du monoprophétisme du Coran).

Les vv. 17–30 sont suivis, dans les vv. 31–40, d'une péricope sur Salomon. Comme souvent dans le Coran, la figure de David est liée à celle de Salomon (Q 4:163; Q 6:84; Q 21:78–82; Q 34:10–14).

Grodzki

The recurring refrain-like *fa-inna lahu ʿindanā la-zulfā wa-husna maʾābin* of v. 25 and v. 40 is not very smooth in terms of language or grammatical structure. *Zulfā* here is generally understood (mostly through its contextual juxtaposition with nine other Qurʾānic uses of this stem) as "a station of nearness" (translation by Ali Quli Qara'i), "a Near Approach" (Yusuf Ali), "access to [Our] presence" (Pickthall). Its oddity made some scholars raise the conjuncture (as Lüling 2003: 216–7) that in some of these instances it is a misread *Z-L-Q* stem, as suggested by the readings of Ibn Masʿud, Ubayy, and Ibn ʿAbbās in regard to Q 26:64 and 26:90. However, because of the peculiarity of Q 38:25, neither *zulfā* nor *zulqā* seem to help much with clarifying the semantic stratum of this verse.

Hawting

Why this story of David, with its – in the Qurʾānic perspective – unusual content, should occur here is not easy to understand. Earlier verses in this *sūra* have focused on the theme of the rejection of the Qurʾānic messenger by his opponents and references to earlier messengers who had been rejected by their people, presumably to comfort and reassure him. The opening of the passage under consideration with its imperative *iṣbir* suggests that more words of comfort will follow, but the story

of David does not follow the pattern of the punishment narratives, and its message is difficult to relate to what has preceded it.

Similar to the presentation of Solomon in Q 27, vv. 17–20 here portray David as the wise ruler not merely of men but of the natural world too. Then (vv. 21–25) there is the completely reworked but nevertheless still recognizable version of what in the Bible is the final part of the story of David's dealings with Uriah the Hittite and his adultery with Bathsheba: the prophet Nathan's reproving of him by means of a thinly disguised parable (2 Sam. 11:2 ff.). Only the parable survives in the Qurʾān, and the absence of the earlier parts of the story (although some commentators obviously knew of it) led to much discussion of the nature of the sin for which David had to ask forgiveness from God (v. 24), especially when that was read in the light of later doctrines about the infallibility of prophets. Nathan's parable is presented here as a sort of legal contest between two disputants, reflecting the idea of David (and Solomon) as a wise judge and a *ḫalīfa* (v. 26).

Khalfallah

Certains termes de ce passage se prêtent à la méthode qui s'inspire de la sémantique historique (étude des évolutions du sens, omissions, manipulations, amplifications, rétrécissements collectifs et involontaire des lecteurs successifs des textes sacrés). Crucial dans la littérature sultanesque musulmane, le terme *ḫalīfa*, que le Coran attribue ici à David, mérite d'être exploré selon cette approche. Sur le plan morphologique, il ne s'agit pas d'un nom féminin, mais d'une forme intensive, exprimée par le *tāʾ* final. Ce verset ne fait pas donc de David un Roi ou Seigneur, mais un *ḫalīfa* (vicaire, successeur, remplaçant...). En effet, ce mot, construit selon le schème d'un adjectif, possède le sens d'un participe actif : « celui qui succède». Or, toute la question est de savoir : succéder à qui ou à quoi? Transférant la parabole de David dans le champ politique musulman ultérieur, les juristes ont fourni deux réponses : [1] Le *ḫalīfa* est l'ombre de Dieu sur terre. Il Le représente. [2] Le *ḫalīfa* est le successeur du Prophète et doit représenter la *umma*. La première réponse visait à renforcer les pouvoirs surnaturels des souverains. La seconde, plus humaine, est celle qui a constitué le dogme principal du sunnisme. Cependant, si on reste attaché au cadre historique du mot, son sens exact ne pourrait être révélé que par une étude examinant tous les dérivés de sa racine, ses corrélations et évolutions sémantiques. De même, une comparaison s'impose avec son équivalent biblique. Sans être spécialiste de la Bible, je note : « Je t'ai livré la maison de ton seigneur Saül, j'ai mis les femmes de ton seigneur dans tes bras et je t'ai établi chef sur Israël et sur Juda; et si cela était trop peu, j'étais prêt à y ajouter encore d'autres dons. » (2 Sam, 12) où l'on trouve le mot chef. Il serait enfin judicieux de comparer ces charges avec celles que suppose la « sémantique tribale » élaborée par Chabbi (2008), où elle limite les significations coraniques à l'univers tribal. Mais les sens des mots ne cessent d'évoluer. Le Coran lui-même se propose comme une rupture sémantique. Ibn Fāris en fut conscient. Il a consacré un chapitre aux *alfāẓ islāmiyya*...

Madigan

The Uriah and Bathsheba 'unpleasantness' is so far in the background here as to be virtually irretrievable. This, of course, raises the question of whether the passage was intended to evoke the memory of the adulterous affair and the murder, or whether long before those aspects may already have become disconnected from the story of David's repentance provoked by a 'parable' involving sheep. It is of the nature of liturgical readings that they are pericopes chosen from within a larger narrative for a particular purpose in preaching. On this subject, see Neuwirth 2006: 90–91. Interestingly this very story from 2 Samuel is used in the Roman Catholic lectionary in precisely this way. There is no recounting of the affair that called for repentance on David's part, just the moment of repentance itself. This snippet of text (2 Sam 12:7–10, 13) is paired with the gospel reading about the repentant woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears (Luke 7:36–8:3) since it announces the theme of repentance.

It is interesting that in the 2 Sam passage we have a prophet (Nathan) chastising a king, whereas in the Qurʾān's account the prophet disappears altogether (his parable becomes a litigation) and David straddles the categories of king and prophet.

As to the question of the submission of the hills and the birds to David in praise of their Lord, could this be an allusion to the psalm (Ps 148) attributed to David in which he calls on the mountains and also the birds (among other things) to praise the name of the Lord? The Canticle of the Three Children (Dan 3:52–90), which is rather similar to a psalm, has the same elements.

Pregill

A skillful recasting of Nathan's parable from 2 Sam 12, alluding only indirectly to the Bathsheba affair. The clandestine reference to David's sin here fits well into the larger pattern evident in this *sūra*, since its overarching theme is that of transgression and repentance. Skeptics who deny Muḥammad's message (vv. 2–8) are juxtaposed first with those who rejected earlier prophets (vv. 12–14), then with David and Solomon, who initially failed God's tests due to their arrogance, but were subsequently exalted by Him after they repented (vv. 17–26, 30–40), and finally with Iblīs, whose conceit led him to refuse to bow before Adam and rebel against the direct command of God (vv. 71–85). Significant linguistic and structural parallels between the various vignettes suggest that the *sūra* is a carefully composed unity.

The indirect allusion to the Bathsheba affair may be compared to the treatment of Aaron's sin in the Golden Calf episode in Q 20. In both cases the Qurʾān's delicacy in addressing the sin of a prophet or leader of Israel reflects late antique precursors, as well as anticipating the later articulation of the doctrine of *ʿiṣma*, which would in this case lead Muslim authors to wholly deny any wrongdoing on David's part, though early authors and traditionists did relate the story of David and Bathsheba with some candor (see Mohammed 2014). The story of David's sin is also linked in provocative ways with the story of Muḥammad and Zaynab, suggesting that the latter

is more likely to be a parable than actual history; cf. Pregill 2011b, to which should be added the authoritative treatment of the sources in Powers 2009.

V. 21: the *miḥrāb* is a place of seclusion in the Temple; cf. Solomon's *maḥārib* (Q 34:13) and the various references to the *maḥārib* of Mary and Zachariah. Here, David is either praying in the Temple or is actually imagined as dwelling therein; if the latter, this is perhaps a distant memory of the Antonia, the fortified palace structure built by Herod that was adjacent to the Temple Mount.

V. 26: David as *ḫalīfa*, enjoined to deal justly (as in v. 22 above). Note that in Q 2 Adam is created as *ḫalīfa* but subsequently sins and repents; here, David first sins (at least implicitly) and repents, and then is commissioned as *ḫalīfa*. Aaron is Moses' *ḫalīfa* in Q 7 and sins in Q 20. Why is *ḫilāfa* so consistently associated with sin and repentance?

Rippin

If we take this passage as a parallel to the parable of Nathan in 2 Sam 12, then the sense of the Qurʾān as "referential" is both apparent and complex. Vv. 23 and 24a recap the Biblical narrative in a somewhat abstract (referential) fashion. But the Qurʾān seems to tell this story as though it was an event in the life of David (as David himself reacts in 2 Sam 12:5–6, of course) and not a parable, as Nathan explains in 2 Sam 12:7. (And thus there emerges the identification of the two disputants of v. 22 as angels traditionally, especially because David was afraid of them). But then the Qurʾān moves to the meaning of the parable in v. 25 when David is told he is a *ḫalīfa* ("I anointed you king over Israel," 2 Sam 12:7). It makes for a complicated "parallel" mixing narrative and parable; one might well imagine that there are intervening stages in the transformation of the story and its meaning.

The use of *miḥrāb* in v. 21 is worthy of note, especially given the fact that it is spoken of as needing to be "scaled," *tasawwarū*, so it is obviously not a *miḥrāb* in its later sense. This has been looked at by Busse (1994) and understanding this *miḥrāb* as the "Tower of David" emphasizes that the passage is a part of the Bathsheba episode, once again in the Qurʾān as the faintest of allusions through this idea of being on "the roof of his palace" (II Sam 11:2). But as Busse points out, the word makes sense of accounts about ʿUmar and the conquest of Jerusalem and ʿUmar's going to the *miḥrāb* (the existing "Tower of David/Phasael"). As Busse says (1994: 155), we have a meaning that is "of an earlier date than 'place of prayer' or 'prayer niche'" as it becomes, likely (it seems to me) through contamination with this story of ʿUmar's conquest (and the later expectation that the first thing ʿUmar would have done is pray).

Zellentin

As Gobillot has shown convincingly (2013), the passage once again reads the Torah along with the Gospel (see my comments on QS 3 and 31). More specifically, the

Qurʾān reads 2 Sam 12:1–4 ("the rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb") along with Matt 18:12–14 ("if a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?"). The number of sheep that appears in the Qurʾān and in the Gospel, ninety-nine plus one, along with the explicit discussion of David in 2 Sam and in the Qurʾān, makes this a very forceful example to appreciate how suggestive such combined exegesis of the two texts must have been to an audience that was familiar, or was supposed to become familiar, with both scriptural stories, and with their compatibility—the intended audience of the Qurʾān.

QS 35 Q 43:81–83

43.81 Say: "If the All-Merciful had a child, I would be the first to worship."
43.82 Glory be to the Lord of the heavens and earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they assert!
43.83 So leave them to sink further in falsehood, and amuse themselves, till they encounter the Day they have been promised.

43.81 Dis: «Si le Tout Miséricordieux avait un enfant, alors je serais le premier à l'adorer».
43.82 Gloire au Seigneur des cieux et de la terre, Seigneur du Trône; Il transcende ce qu'ils décrivent.
43.83 Laisse-les donc s'enfoncer dans leur fausseté et s'amuser jusqu'à ce qu'ils rencontrent le jour qui leur est promis.

سورة الزخرف
أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَى وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ (80) قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ (81) سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (82) فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ (83)

Crone

"*Al-Raḥmān*": A term for God of Jewish Aramaic origin that is often assumed to be an import from South Arabia (cf. Böwering 2002: 317, 331, with Gajda 2009: 224–32).

"Offspring": The reference could be to Christ, to the deities/angels of the *mušrikūn*, or to both. The assumption of some commentators at the Notre Dame gathering that it is directed against the Nicene Creed strikes me as gratuitous. Why that target as opposed to so much else? Besides, I must agree with Neuwirth (2011b: 505) that the Meccan *sūra*s do not reflect interaction with "official Christians" of any kind but rather, as she puts it, with "syncretistic" circles perhaps related to Jewish Christians (similarly Neuwirth 2005: 232).

Unlike some of the Notre Dame commentators, I see no adoptionism here either. Translating *ittaḫaḏa* as "adopt" works well in connection with phrases involving adopting idols, views or attitudes, but it does not mean to adopt children (*tabannā* in classical Arabic). In Q 16:51 God says *lā tattaḫiḏū ilāhayni ṯnayni*, which you could certainly translate as "Don't adopt two gods," but which would not persuade anyone that there were adoptionists who believed God to have adopted anyone other than Jesus. In the Medinese 5:116 we are told that on the day of judgment God will ask Jesus, *a-anta qulta li-l-nāsi ttaḫiḏūnī wa-ummī ilāhayni min dūni llāhi*, "Did you tell people, Adopt me and my mother as two gods apart from God?" Were there adoptionists who believed God to have adopted Mary? The reference is to veneration of God, Mary and Jesus as a triad, which is about as far from Nicene Christianity as you can get, for all that there was a massive increase in Mary veneration in sixth-century Chalcedonian (Melkite) and Monophysite (Jacobite) Christianity alike.

"Wading into things" ["sink further" v. 83]: I have suggested that this is a contemptuous metaphor for participation in disputations (Crone 2012: 468 f).

El-Badawi

This passage is part of the Qurʾānic discourse against Christology.

Refuting Nicene Christology: Q 43:81 asks, "if (*in*) the Beneficient (*al-Raḥmān*) has a son, then I would be [his] first worshiper." It shares the rhetoric and syntax of the question in Q 6:101, "how can He [i.e., God] have [i.e. beget!] a son?" (*annā yakūnu lahu walad*) and the question asked by Zachariah and later Mary, "how can I have/beget a son/boy?" (*annā yakūnu lī walad/ġulām*; Q 3:40, 47; 19:8, 20). It seems that Q 38:81 is refuting the Nicene Christology which claims that Christ is "the eternal begotten son."

Refuting Pre-Nicene Adoptionism: Q 43:81 is better understood in consideration with Q 39:4, which asks a slightly different question, "if (*law*) God wanted to take a son, He would have chosen whatever He wanted from what He creates." This verse belongs to a series of Qurʾānic verses refuting Allah/al-Raḥmān "taking/adopting" (*ittiḫaḏ*; Q 17:111; 19:92; etc) a son. So it would seem that Q 39:4 refutes the pre-Nicene Christology called "adoptionism."

Back to Q 43: v. 83 disparages those who "twist/make firm (*yaḫūḍū*; cf. Syr. *Ḥ-W-Ṣ*) and misbehave" (*yalʿabū*; cf. Syr. *L-ʿ-B*; cf. also Q 43:83; 70:42), i.e. the different Churches fashioning Christologies and disputing among themselves. In this context, one may translate the end of the verse as, "glorified is [God]... above what they are troubled (*yaṣifūn*; cf. Syr. *Y-Ṣ-P*)."

On the shifting rhetoric employed in disputing Jesus' divinity *vis-à-vis* God, between al-Raḥmān and Allah, see my comments on Q 36:13–27 (QS 31).

Khalfallah

Le v. 81 contient une ambigüité d'ordre logico-syntaxique dont le sens est très fin. C'est une injonction adressée à Muḥammad (*qul*) lui demandant de transmettre cette phrase aux adversaires dont on ne connaît pas l'identité. Il paraît que cet énoncé s'adresse aux Mecquois qui adoraient les anges, filles de Dieu. D'où la variante *wuld* (collectif de *walad*, enfant englobant les deux sexes) et non *walad*. L'on doit vérifier si les Chrétiens sont concernés par cet énoncé ou pas.

Il s'agit en effet d'une proposition conditionnelle que je tente de déconstruire comme suit : [1] La protase est un postulat où l'on suppose qu'Allah a des enfants ; [2] Ces enfants (filles pour les Qurayšītes ; fils pour les Chrétiens) sont issus d'une essence divine et méritent par-là d'être adorés. [3] Muḥammad est un homme doué de raison et connaît, mieux que quiconque, le devoir de les adorer s'ils existaient. [4] Il doit par conséquent reconnaître ce dogme avant tous les autres. [5] Or, ce postulat est faux ; la protase l'est encore plus, par conséquent. [6] Toute l'argumentation s'autodétruit. On l'a qualifiée de *bāṭil* (erronée, insensée, illogique).

Pour justifier ce recours à cette tournure complexe, on a présenté deux pistes: [1] Le contexte historique puisqu'on sait que Muḥammad avait combattu le dogme de filiation; [2] La fonction rhétorique: cette tournure sert à attirer l'attention des destinataires et à les amener à méditer ce faux argument pour se rendre compte eux-

mêmes de son absurdité. D'ailleurs, les rhétoriciens ont baptisé ce procédé Maḏab *kalāmī*, figure de style qui se construit par une phrase conditionnelle et une fausse argumentation…

Rippin

In v. 82, *subḥāna rabbi al-samawāṭi …ʿammā yaṣifūna* merits attention. Often translated as "May God be far removed from…" or "exalted above," in this passage it is a repudiation of the lives of the disbelievers who "romp and frolic" (in v. 83, in the translation of Fakhry 2002); also see the use of *subḥān ʿan* in, among others, Q 23:91 (in refutation of God having a son); Q 28:68 (above what is associated with Him); Q 37:159 (above what they ascribe); Q 52:43 (what they ascribe); Q 59:23 (above what they associate). Ambros/Procházka (2004: 121) suggest that this expression results from "contamination with" *taʿālā ʿan*, "to be exalted above s.th./s.o.," pointing to the interesting example in Q 6:100, *subḥānahu wa-taʿālā ʿammā yaṣifūna*. The translations certainly show that "contamination." The contrast is to be made here with the frequent use of *subḥān* in a clear sense of "Praise be [to God etc]." It would be good to know more about the Syriac usages pointed to by Jeffery (1938: 161f).

Sirry

The Qurʾān denies the possibility of God's having sons and daughters and this applies both to pagan beliefs and Christian belief about Jesus. As this passage indicates, the problem with the belief that God has sons or daughters has nothing to do with a gender, but rather with a false concept that has been ascribed to God. The word *walad* is usually understood as an "offspring," while *ibn* has both physical and metaphorical connotations. In a number of verses, the Qurʾān rejects the notion that God adopted a son – with an Arabic term *walad* (*ittaḫaḏa waladan*), for instance, Q 2:116; 4:171; 10:68; 17:111; 18:4; 19:35, 88, 91–92; 21:26: 23:91; 37:152; 39:4; 43:81. As noted by Kropp (2011: 247–264), the expression *ittaḫaḏa waladan is the most basic and common in the Qur'ān*. In addition to this expression, the Qur'ān also uses another phrase, namely, "*lā yakūnu lahū waladun*" (He cannot have a child) in e.g. Q 6:101. The two expressions occur in one verse, saying "*allaḏīna lahū l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-lam yattaḫiḏ waladan wa-lam yakun la-hū šarīkun fī l-mulk*" (Q 25:2). Whether this passage is related to Jesus or not, the Qurʾān uses the term *walad* twice in reference to Jesus (Q 4:171; 19:34–35) and *ibn* only once (Q 9:30). In both verses where the word *walad* is mentioned the Qurʾān responds with an exclamation *subḥānahū,* "glorified be He," which is typical of the Qurʾānic argument against the error of projecting offspring onto God. In most cases the Qurʾān reacts to the claim that God has a son by saying *subḥāna llāh ʿanmā yasifūn* (vv. 6:100; 19:35; 23:91; 37:159; 43:82). While the Qurʾān explicitly criticizes the Chris-

tians for saying *al-masīḥ ibn allāh*, it does not seem to accuse them of calling Jesus *walad allāh*.

Stefanidis

Considering vv. 57–64 which mention Jesus, it could seem that this passage refers to the Christian belief in the divine sonship of Christ. However, this *sūra* seems to be concerned with the issue of divine plurality and progeny in general and not only in relation to Christian beliefs (vv. 15–16). Elsewhere in the Qurʾān (i.e., Q 21:26; 23:91), the parallel expression *ittaḫaḏa waladan* is used to denounce *multiple* divine progeny, not necessarily a divine *son*.

Vv. 57–60, which claim to report the reaction of the prophet's people (*qawmuka*) to the mention of Jesus, seem crucial to our understanding of the audience's religious beliefs. Whether we read يصدون as *yaṣiddūna* (make noise?) or *yaṣuddūna* (turn away?), the messenger's opponents are not here portrayed as believers in Jesus' mission. On the contrary, v. 58 shows them mocking him: "Are our gods better or is he?" If we hold the *sūra* to be a unity, we should strive to understand vv. 81–83 in relation to the surrounding verses and in particular vv. 57–59. From that perspective, it becomes unlikely that vv. 81–83 are a refutation of trinitarian beliefs addressed to Christians. They seem rather to exemplify the Qurʾānic attempt to walk a thin line: defend Jesus' honor from pagan derision while at the same time firmly denouncing Christian belief that he is the son of God.

Interestingly, the *sabab al-nuzūl* for v. 57 also points towards a complex religious landscape marked by multiple references (Christian, pagan...) and disputative awareness. It narrates that the messenger's opponents made fun of the Qurʾānic proclamation which, on the one hand, confirms Jesus' election and, on the other, condemns to hell worshipped entities together with their worshippers (e.g. Q 21:98). Since Jesus is taken by Christians as their lord – they are said to have remarked maliciously – will he also go to hell?

Zellentin

When discussing the Qurʾān's negation of God's fatherhood, and in turn of Jesus' sonship, we should note how broad the range of Christological positions continued to be even after Nicea and Chalcedon. For the Qurʾān, it may be especially important to note that adoptionist theology (see also El-Badawi) is by no means pre-Nicene alone, but continues to be developed in response to the Trinitarian debates after Nicea. For example, the *Clementine Homilies*, in their present Greek form, should be dated to the latter part of the fourth century C.E. or the early fifth at the latest, yet the text continued to be translated and retold past the seventh century C.E., and constitutes an important witness to the Qurʾān's oral discursive sphere (see my statement).

The Homilies emphasize strict monotheism, and portray Jesus as the son of God in the following words: "it is the peculiarity of the Father not to have been begotten, but of the son to have been begotten; but what is begotten cannot be compared with that which is unbegotten or self-begotten" (Hom. 15:16). The echoes, and the negation, of the Nicene Creed are clear. Jesus is omniscient, however, he is *not* himself divine in the *Clementine Homilies*. At one point Peter explicates that Jesus did "not proclaim himself to be God," denouncing any attempt to establish Jesus' divinity. Being asked whether "he who comes from God is God," Peter answers, "We cannot affirm this, because we did not hear it from [Jesus]" (ibid. 16:15). The *Homilies*' emphasis on Jesus' omniscience, combined with Jesus' sonship and the fact that the Jesus himself did *not* affirm his divinity in the quoted passage may allow us better to understand continuity and change in the way in which the Qurʾān deconstructs Jesus' sonship.

Corroborating the present verse, we may well consider Q 5:116–17, where Jesus denies the divinity of himself and Mary with a clear reference to God's omniscience, in contrast to his own ignorance. All the while, Jesus denies precisely what the *Homilies* claim about him. The Qurʾān, just like the Homilies, invokes words spoken by Jesus himself: "Had I said it, You would certainly have known it. You know what is in my self, And I do not know what is in Your Self. Indeed You are the knower of the Unseen." I suggest reading this Qurʾānic verse, as well as QS 50 (see my commentary) and the present passage, as part of a well-informed dialogue on the essence of God. If we allow for this, then the Qurʾān may quite precisely answer to various Christological positions, yet perhaps chiefly one such as also preserved in the *Clementine Homilies*, whose post-Nicean non-divine adoptionist Christology leads us to perceive that the Qurʾān's Christology may in turn be not far removed from that of some of its opponents.

QS 36 Q 44:43 – 57

44.43 The Zaqqum tree
44.44 shall be the food of the grave sinner,
44.45 Like molten brass, boiling in stomachs
44.46 like boiling water.
44.47 “Seize him, and hurl him into the pit of hell
44.48 Then pour over his head a torment of boiling water.
44.49 Taste it, you who are mighty and noble!
44.50 Here it is, that which you used to doubt!”
44.51 But the pious shall be in a dwelling secure,
44.52 Amidst gardens and springs,
44.53 Clothed in silk and brocade, face to face.
44.54 And, too, We married them to spouses with dark and large eyes.
44.55 Therein they call for every kind of fruit, in peace of mind.
44.56 Therein they do not taste death, except for the first death,
And He has spared them the torment of hell – a favor from your Lord.
44.57 This in truth is the greatest of triumphs.

44.43 Certes l’arbre de Zakkûm
44.44 sera la nourriture du grand pécheur.
44.45 Comme du métal en fusion; il bouillonnera dans les ventres
44.46 comme le bouillonnement de l’eau surchauffée.
44.47 Qu’on le saisisse et qu’on l’emporte en plein dans la fournaise;
44.48 qu’on verse ensuite sur sa tête de l’eau bouillante comme châtiment.
44.49 Goûte! Toi [qui prétendait être] le puissant, le noble.
44.50 Voilà ce dont vous doutiez.
44.51 Les pieux seront dans une demeure sûre,
44.52 parmi des jardins et des sources,
44.53 Ils porteront des vêtements de satin et de brocart et seront placés face à face.
44.54 C’est ainsi! Et Nous leur donnerons pour épouses des houris aux grands yeux.
44.55 Ils y demanderont en toute quiétude toutes sortes de fruits.
44.56 Ils n’y goûteront pas à la mort sauf leur mort première. Et [Allah] les protègera du châtiment de la Fournaise,
44.57 c’est là une grâce de ton Seigneur. Et c’est là l’énorme succès.

سورة الدخان
طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ (44) كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ (45) كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ (46) خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ (47) ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ
رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ (48) ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ (49) إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ (50) إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ
(51) فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ (52) يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ (53) كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (54) يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا
بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ (55) لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَى وَوَقَاهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ (56) فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ (57)

Azaiez

Quel sens donner au terme *zaqqūm?* Une réponse possible se déduirait d’une analyse structurelle et rhétorique de la séquence où s’inscrit ce vocable. Comme le souligne Guillaume Dye, nous sommes face à une forme spéculaire (deux parties du texte en opposition se font face). En analysant rhétoriquement une autre séquence où apparaît le terme *zaqqūm* (Q 56:41 – 54), on découvre que le terme qui lui répond et lui fait face symétriquement est *samūm*. En rhétorique sémitique, on parlera alors de paronomase. On peut tout à fait émettre l’hypothèse qu’il s’agit d’un terme fictif qui

aurait pour rôle unique de fonctionner comme rime tout en ayant la particularité de frapper l'esprit par son obscurité sémantique.

Dye

Discours eschatologique, construit en deux parties : les vv. 43–49 décrivent le sort des pécheurs, les vv. 50–57 celui des pieux. Noter le parallélisme *ḏuq* (v. 49) / *yaḏūqūna* (v. 56).

Le texte est composé de manière spéculaire. Les vv. 43–44 décrivent la nourriture (élément *solide*) des pécheurs, et le v. 55 celle des justes. Les vv. 47–48 décrivent la demeure des pécheurs (une fournaise dans laquelle on verse un *liquide* bouillant sur les condamnés), et les vv. 51–52 celle des pieux, où se trouvent jardins et *sources*.

On a probablement exagéré le caractère proprement « arabe » de ces descriptions. Après tout, la description coranique du paradis est très proche de celle des *Hymnes sur le paradis* d'Éphrem (Andrae 1955: 151 ff.). Quant à celle de l'enfer, elle se fonde sur des *topoi* bibliques et évangéliques bien connus. Restent deux problèmes.

D'abord, l'arbre de Zaqqūm (v. 43), que l'on rencontre dans d'autres passages (Q 37:62–68, Q 56:52—à l'indéfini; voir aussi Q 17:60). L'étymologie est obscure. Est-ce un mot rare, ou étranger, voire un terme inventé ? La rareté du mot contribue à frapper l'imagination de l'auditoire.

Ensuite, les fameuses houris (v. 54). Je ne sais si Luxenberg (2007a: 247–283) a raison dans ses émendations: la principale difficulté de son hypothèse (ou de celle, peut-être plus convaincante, de Van Reeth 2006) est qu'il faut réinterpréter un nombre assez conséquent de passages *différents*, dont tous ne contiennent pas l'expression *ḥūr ʿīn* (Q 78:31–34 ; Q 55:56–58). D'un autre côté – et cela ne relève ni du puritanisme ni de la polémique interreligieuse –, il faut reconnaître que la thèse des houris a quelque chose de saugrenu (quid des croyantes qui entreront au paradis avec leur époux ?). Leur présence dans les passages concernés (ici-même, et en Q 52:19–20) est étrange, puisqu'elles apparaissent, de manière assez inattendue, dans un propos insistant sur la quiétude, les fruits et la boisson, comme chez Éphrem (*Hymnes sur le paradis* 5:6 ; 9:6). La possibilité que les images d'Éphrem (notamment *Hymnes sur le paradis* 7:18) aient été mal comprises (sous l'influence de conceptions zoroastriennes ?), soit par le rédacteur du texte (les houris seraient alors bien dans le Coran), soit par la tradition musulmane postérieure, dans la mise en place des points diacritiques et des voyelles, et dans l'interprétation du texte, me paraît une hypothèse plausible.

El-Badawi

A characteristic description of hell and paradise, with the phrases *šağarat al-zaqqūm* and *ḥūr ʿīn* of particular interest. Do we know what the word *zaqqūm* means?

Luxenberg's analyisis of *ḥūr ʿīn* as "white grapes" is too reductionist (or polemical) and problematic to be accepted as is. While it is quite clear that the Qurʾānic

description of *ḥūr ʿīn* does not refer to white grapes but rather women, it is equally clear that the description of Q 56 taps into the imagery of the bridal chamber (see Matt 9:15) in Syriac literature, e.g., Aphrahat's *Demonstration on Death and the Last Days*. It is not uncommon to find descriptions of paradise associated with hanging fruit in both the Qurʾān and the extant corpus of Syriac literature, Ephrem, "Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de paradiso und contra Julianum," 19, 18 (Hymn 5.15). Yousef Kouriyhe systematically discusses the role of the Qurʾānic *ḥūr ʿīn*—which Luxenberg fails to do—and the relationship to its counterpart in Syriac literature, esp. Jacob of Serugh's *mēmrē*. Kouriyhe ultimately corroborates the Qurʾānic notion of the term while staying true to its conceptual, Syriac precedent. He argues that the *ḥūr/ḥūrāyē* are symbols—hanging fruit—of virgin female companions for which desert hermits longed, but to whom they could only allude. (See generally Kouriyhe 2007).

Grodzki

Already Josef Horovitz (1923: 1–16) has pointed to the oddity of the traditional idea that godwary men will be rewarded in heaven by houris while their earthly wives will also be there with them. There is no doubt that wives will accompany their husbands in paradise (Q 36:56, 43:70). Or shall perhaps the v. 54 of Q 44 be understood according to the New Testamental *those who are regarded as worthy to share in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage* (Luke 20:35), or is there another way of understanding this apparent ambiguity?

Pregill

A compelling example of Qurʾānic imprecation. The rhythm and meter seem to heighten the urgency of the dreadful warning contained in these lines. The tone and style of passages like this are so different from those of the longer narrative or legislative passages (or, for that matter, from that of some of the apocalyptic and mantic passages found towards the end of the corpus) that for me the question of multiple points of origin seems inevitable, though scholars seldom broach this topic directly. Form criticism of the Qurʾān almost always proceeds through the hermeneutic lens of the *sīra* tradition; that is, our understanding of the evolution of Qurʾānic discourse is typically anchored in the biography of a particular individual, which then seems to limit the possibilities for formal analysis considerably. (I understand Wansbrough's groundbreaking critique of the *sīra* tradition as *Heilsgeschichte* as an early attempt to overcome the limits of this approach).

Neuwirth's pioneering attempts to analyze Qurʾānic genre in terms of shifting communal priorities have stimulated an important hermeneutic shift from the presumed individual composer of the Qurʾān to the conjectured audience that supplied its primary context of reception; even here, though, we seem to be constrained by the Meccan-Medinan paradigm. What would be the requisite methodological commit-

ments for the field to advance to a serious and disciplined form criticism of the Qurʾān that was not primarily grounded in the *sīra* tradition?

V. 49: I read this as ironic: *anta al-ʿazīzu al-karīm*, not "you [were in life]..." as it is often rendered, but rather a question – "So you think you are ... ?"

Reynolds

The God of the Qurʾān is being sarcastic when He declares v. 49: "Taste [the boiling water], you who are mighty and noble!" Evidently, the person being tortured with boiling water would not exactly feel mighty or noble. Unlike Khalidi (whose translation I have cited), most translators get rid of the sarcasm. Quli Qaraʾi has "you are the [self-styled] mighty and noble"; Muḥammad Asad, "thou who [on earth] hast considered thyself so mighty, so noble"; Hilali-Khan, "Verily, you were (pretending to be) the mighty, the generous." In so doing they seem to underestimate the Qurʾān's rhetorical creativity.

Rippin

The word *muhl* in v. 45 is generally glossed as some kind of molten metal: lead, brass, copper (the choice being metals that it might be assumed would be known as subject to casting at the time perhaps). The word is also used in Q 18:29 (scalding the faces), Q 70:8 (a description of the sky on the last day) [translators sometimes even vary their metal among these three usages]. The description of it in v. 46 that the *mulh* is boiling in the bellies of the sinners "like boiling water" obviously does not help with the specification of the image. Schreiner (1977: 111–13) suggests hot oil (also found in some translations), reminiscent of ancient punishments and warfare and connected to post-Biblical Hebrew usage of *mohal*.

Tesei

The idea that the sinners will undergo a second death is related to similar Biblical concepts. The expression "second death" often occurs in the Targums, where it designates the punishments the wicked will experience. For example, TgJ on Jeremiah 51:39 (cf. 51:57) states: "they shall die the second death (מוֹתָא תִנְיָנָא) and shall not live in the world to come." In much the same way, TgJ on Isaiah 65:6 affirms: "Their punishment will be in Gehenna ... [I will] deliver the bodies to the second death" (cf. TgJ on Isaiah 22:14 and on Isa 65:15). The same image occurs four times in the Book of Revelation (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8), where the second death designates the punishment of sinners, or the Gehenna itself: "this is the second death (ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός), the lake of fire" (20:14). Furthermore, the trope of the second death is prominent in Syriac literature. Both Aphrahat and Ephrem speak of the second death (*mawtā tinyānā*) as the eschatological punishment of sinners, while Babai's *Life of George* refers to the second death of the Origenist Ḥenana (on this point cf.

Reinink 1999: 183, n. 65). The expression is less common in Rabbinical literature. Nevertheless, the attention might be focused on an interesting passage of the *Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer* (34), that infers: "Every nation who says that there is a second god, I will kill with a second death, wherein there is no resurrection" (quoted in Williams 2000: 139). Elsewhere the Qurʾān manifestly refers to much the same imagery (cf. Q 17:75; 37:58 – 59; 40:11).

Zellentin

The *zaqqūm* tree here is described as "the food of the sinful" (v. 44) which will boil in their bellies "like molten copper, boiling like boiling water." (v. 45 – 6). Afterwards, they are dragged "to the middle of Gehenna (*sawāʾi l-ǧaḥīmi*)" in order to receive the punishment of boiling water (v. 47 – 8). What can we learn about the geography of hell from this verse? Elsewhere, the *zaqqūm* tree *taḫruǧu*, "emerges," from the "root of Gehenna" *(aṣli l-ǧaḥīmi*), the wrongdoers will eat from it, "they will take a solution of scalding water, then indeed their retreat will be toward Gehenna" (Q 37:64). In contrast to our passage, this description inverts the order of events: here, the sinners move towards hell only *after* they are punished with boiling water. What the two passages share is the notion that the tree does not itself stand at the "middle" or "root" of hell, from which it conversely emerges: in both texts, the sinners move towards hell after encountering the tree, presupposing their own initial externality.

The tree's outward position invites us to reconsider Geiger, who noted that the Babylonian Talmud understands two *ṣny hr hbrzl*, "thorn-palms of the iron mountain" (*Mishna Sukkah* 3:1) to be located "in the Valley of Hinam" (*bgyʾ bn hnm*); the trees mark a "gate of Gehenna" (*ptḥh šl ghynm*, *bSukkah* 22b and *Eruvin* 19a). If we assume that the Qurʾān presupposes familiarity with this rabbinic tradition, then its depiction of the *zaqqūm* tree "emerging" from Gehenna would likely also mark its position at the *entrance* of Gehenna in the Qurʾān, whilst the sinners are dragged in only *after* consuming from the tree—if so, we can trace a remarkable development of rabbinic lore in its Arabian context. The pertinence of the rabbinic tradition can be corroborated. The punishment by boiling water, for example, has a parallel not only in Q 11:39 – 40 and Q 23:27, but also in the rabbinic tradition presupposed there (see my comments on QS 14). In addition to the tree's association with Gehenna and its situation liminal to it in both the Qurʾān and the Talmud, we should also note that the Hebrew term *ṣnh*, denoting the tree at the entrance of Gehenna, indeed describes any of various palms with spiny trunks, a fact which in turn illuminates the Qurʾān's statement that the *zaqqūm* tree's "sphates are as if they were devil's heads" (Q 37:65).

Intriguingly, yet more ambiguously, we should note that the Arabic *zaqqūm* may well have an affinity with Jewish Babylonian Aramaic *zyqtʾ*, "goad" (cf. Syriac *zqtʾ*, "sting," "goad," and Akkadian *zyqtw*, "barb, "point"). Likewise, the fact that the Talmud *ṣnh* tree grows on an "iron mountain" allows for a loose association with its ef-

fect on those who consume it in the Qurʾān, acting like molten copper in their bellies (v. 45). Using molten metal as a punishment is also recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 92b); here, molten gold is suggested as a punishment for Nebuchadnezzar.

Hence, the Qurʾān's tree seems to integrate a range of rabbinic traditions, perhaps broadened in light of similar Persian apocalyptic traditions. For example, a woman guilty of infanticide (or abortion) stands in hell in molten copper as a punishment in the Pahlavi text Ardā Wirāz Nāmag (Vahman 1986, 40:5). Furthermore, molten copper (v. 45) is poured on the breast of Ādurbād as a religious test (Vahman 1986, 2:12 and Macuch 1987).

Ardā Wirāz Nāmag is of course a post-Qurʾānic composition, and it is difficult to relate the Pahlavi material to the Qurʾān. Should we hence also consider the use of the "cursed tree" as a *fitnah*, a "test" or "temptation," in Q 17:60, in light of the test of Ādurbād's true religion? This would make sense if we equate this "cursed tree" with the *zaqqūm* trees and with its effect like molten copper, not a very long stretch in my mind. Moreover, one could pursue the possibility whether there is any relationship between Pahalavi *zaxm* (i.e., *ztm* or *zʾhm*, "wound, pain, torment") and Arabic *zaqqūm*, which, unlike the Aramaic *zyqtʾ* has a final *mīm*, but of course there is no medial *qāf* here, and no dense web of corroborating intertextual references, suggesting an Aramaic rather than a Persian etymology.

QS 37 Q 46:7 – 12

46.7 And when Our revelations are recited to them, plain and clear, they who renounced the Truth when it came to them, say: “This is manifest sorcery.”
46.8 Or do they say: “He fabricated it?”
Say: “If I have fabricated it, you can do me no good at all against God. He knows best your constant haranguing concerning it. Let it suffice as witness between me and you.” He is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.
46.9 Say: “I am not a novelty among Messengers. I know not what is to be done to me or you. I merely follow what is inspired to me. I am nothing but a manifest warner.”
46.10 Say: “Consider if it be from God and you blasphemed against it; and then someone from the Children of Israel witnesses to its like, and believes, while you stand on your pride.” God guides not wrongdoers.
46.11 The blasphemers say to the believers: “Had it been anything good, they would not have preceded us to it.” But since they have not gained guidance from it, they say: “This is an age-old falsehood.”
46.12 Before it there was the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy; and this is a Book that confirms it, in the Arabic tongue, to warn the wicked and bring glad tidings to the righteous.

46.7.Et quand on leur récite Nos versets bien clairs, ceux qui ont mécru disent à propos de la vérité, une fois venue à eux: «C’est de la magie manifeste».
46.8.Ou bien ils disent: «Il l’a inventé!» Dis: «Si je l’ai inventé alors vous ne pourrez rien pour moi contre [la punition] d’Allah. Il sait parfaitement ce que vous propagez (en calomnies contre le Coran): Allah est suffisant comme témoin entre moi et vous. Et c’est Lui le Pardonneur, le Très Miséricordieux».
46.9.Dis: «Je ne suis pas une innovation parmi les messagers; et je ne sais pas ce que l’on fera de moi, ni de vous. Je ne fais que suivre ce qui m’est révélé; et je ne suis qu’un avertisseur clair».
46.10.Dis: «Que direz-vous si [cette révélation s’avère] venir d’Allah et que vous n’y croyez pas qu’un témoin parmi les fils d’Israël en atteste la conformité [au Pentateuque] et y croit pendant que vous, vous le repoussez avec orgueil... En vérité Allah ne guide pas les gens injustes!»
46.11.Et ceux qui ont mécru dirent à ceux qui ont cru: «Si ceci était un bien, ils (les pauvres) ne nous y auraient pas devancés». Et comme ils ne se seront pas laissés guider par lui ils diront: «Ce n’est qu’un vieux mensonge!»
46.12.Et avant lui, il y avait le Livre de Moïse, comme guide et comme miséricorde. Et ceci est [un Livre] confirmateur, en langue arabe, pour avertir ceux qui font du tort et pour faire la bonne annonce aux bienfaisants

سورة الأحقاف
وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ (7) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا
تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَى بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (8) قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِنَ
الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ (9) قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَآمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (10) وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ (11) وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً
وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ (12)

Azaiez

Passage marqué par une succession de contre-discours et de ripostes coraniques. Arrêtons-nous sur le contre-discours v.8 et l’expression *iftaraʾ*. Le terme apparait

dans un contre-discours à 7 reprises dans l'ensemble du Coran (Q 10:38; 11:13, 15; 21:5 ; 25:4; 42:24; 46:8). L'intérêt est ici de comparer pour un même contre-discours (l'accusation de forger un Coran) les différentes ripostes que le Coran engage dans cette polémique. On découvre ainsi trois formes de réponses (on laissera ici les évolutions thématiques) : l'injonction donnée aux adversaires de produire un même discours, l'intervention de l'allocutaire qui prend la parole, l'intervention exclusive du locuteur coranique qui s'adresse en premier lieu à son allocutaire pour le consoler et le rassurer sur sa mission. Ces trois formes conduisent à définir différentes stratégies de communication dans le cadre de la polémique que l'on peut (rapidement) définir par trois mots clés : contre -argumenter (face à l'adversaire), justifier (le discours coranique) et soutenir (l'allocutaire). Cf. Azaiez 2012.

Dye

Sur ce passage très concis, et passablement obscur, on peut avoir plus de questions que de réponses.

Qui sont exactement les protagonistes ? S'agit-il de polémiques réelles, remontant par exemple à la prédication du Prophète, et si oui, de quand datent-elles (le v. 10 semble impliquer un conflit avec les Juifs) ? Ou ne s'agirait-il pas plutôt de la *mise en scène*, par les rédacteurs du Coran, de la figure d'un prophète, d'un avertisseur, en butte à l'incroyance de certains ? Dans ce dernier cas, est-il possible (je crains que non) de faire le départ entre ce qui relève d'une mise en scène rhétorique et littéraire, et ce qui relève de débats ayant eu lieu effectivement, du vivant du Prophète, ou éventuellement après les conquêtes, entre les conquérants et les populations conquises ?

Vv. 7–8 : il est remarquable que les deux objections adressées au messager (magie, invention) ne reçoivent pas de réponse satisfaisante – absence de réponse pure et simple dans le cas de la magie, et manœuvre dilatoire dans le cas de l'invention.

V. 9 : l'idée que ce que doit dire le destinataire du message (Muḥammad, selon la lecture la plus naturelle) est la même chose que ce qui a été dit par les messagers précédents se retrouve par exemple en Q 41:43. Par ailleurs, on trouve dans le Coran l'idée qu'il ne convient pas de faire de distinction ou de hiérarchie entre les messagers (Q 2:136, 285). Comme le note Wansbrough (1977: 55–56), cette position est contredite par d'autres passages coraniques, notamment Q 17:21, 55. Est-il possible de réconcilier ces thèses apparemment divergentes ?

V. 10 : que désigne exactement *kitāb* ici? Les sourates dites al-Ḥawāmīm (Q 40–46) sont axées, dans leurs versets liminaires, sur la révélation (*tanzīl*, *kitāb*) que reçoit le destinataire du message. Que *kitāb* doive être identifié au *muṣḥaf* coranique – autrement dit, que le Coran soit, purement et simplement, un texte autoréférentiel – ne va nullement de soi (sauf à considérer que ces versets sont contemporains de la composition-collecte du Coran, auquel cas la thèse de l'autoréférentialité est plus plausible) : *kitāb* pourrait-il simplement désigner « les révélations » reçues par le

Prophète (sans que l'on sache clairement l'étendue des révélations concernées, ni si elles ont déjà été mises par écrit) ?

El-Badawi

This passage illustrates the dispute over the authenticity of revelation, where v. 8 accuses the prophet (Muḥammad) of "fabrication" (*iftirāʾ*). He replies, "I am not a novelty (*bidʿ*) among messengers...[but rather] a clear warner" (v. 9). The prophet supports his claim by referencing—without any detail—an episode concerning the "Children of Israel" (vv. 10 – 11). In this episode the rebels/unbelievers denounce the truth (cf. *al-ḥaqq* in v. 7) as "old reversion" (*ifk qadīm*; cf. J.B. Aram/Syr. *a-p-k*), i. e., "going back to the old ways." These old ways were none other than the Scripture (Law?) of Moses (*kitāb mūsā*). Now there is a new scripture (or law?) "confirming" (*muṣaddiq*) earlier scripture (v. 12).

The use of the words "novelty" (*bidʿ*) and "confirming" (*muṣaddiq*) echo "We matched" (*qafaynā*) and "they perverted" (*ibtadaʿūhā*) in Q 57:26 – 27, which I believe illustrate the passage's condemnation of the Church once it freed itself from the Law of Moses. Could Q 46:7 – 12, similarly, be directed to a doubting Christian audience, reluctant to observe the outdated Jewish Law?

Hawting

Another passage that gives some insight into the views and arguments of the opponents, although the precise meaning of some of it is difficult. The opponents accuse the Qurʾānic messenger of sorcery (*siḥr*) and of forgery (*iftirāʾ*), both accusations familiar from other passages in the Qurʾān. The former accusation echoes the distinction made in the Bible between the true prophets of Israel and the pseudo-prophets of other nations, who are merely soothsayers, augurs and sorcerers (e. g., Deut 18:10 – 11). The charge of forgery may imply the claim that material plagiarized from other human beings is revelation from God (cf., e. g., Q 25: 4 – 6). The messenger's defence against the charge of forgery is hard to understand: it seems to mean that it would have been such a serious matter that, had he committed it, nobody could avert God's punishment of him (cf. Q 11: 35 where Noah is told to defend himself against the same accusation by saying, "If I had forged it, the offence would be mine (*ini ftaraytuhu fa-ʿalayya iǧrāmī*)." The remainder of the messenger's reply is familiar from other passages in the Qurʾān: he is a messenger like previous ones, he does not claim to know the unknown ("what will be done with me and with you"), he merely follows what has come to him as *waḥy*, and he is merely a warner.

Vv. 10 – 12 then repeat the familiar idea that what the messenger brings (called a *kitāb* in v. 12) is similar to, and confirms, the earlier revelation to the children of Israel, but there are allusions to some less familiar arguments. In v. 10 the authenticity of the message is supported by the fact that a witness from the children of Israel has testified to its similarity (*ʿalā miṯlihi*), presumably to their own scripture, "and has

believed." That seems to imply that the messenger is claiming contemporary Jewish support for him and his message, and is difficult to reconcile with the traditional view that this is a Meccan passage. The unbelievers' arrogance (*istikbār*), however, means that the messenger's claim has had quite the opposite result to what was intended: the opponents reply that if it (the message?) were good, they (the believers, or the children of Israel?) would not have accepted it ahead of the unbelievers (*mā sabaqūnā ilayhi*) – thus they will call it an old falsehood. That echoes, in an inverted form, several New Testament passages that say that the message was offered first to the Jews and, only after they had rejected it, to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, the passage concludes, this is a confirmation in Arabic of the book of Moses, in order to warn the wicked and give good tidings to the righteous.

The passage is clearly hard to reconcile with the traditional idea that these opponents were idolatrous polytheists. The messenger assumes that they might be persuaded by references to the children of Israel and the book of Moses, and he attributes their refusal to be persuaded to their pride and feeling of superiority over those who have accepted the messenger.

Hilali

There is an opposition in this passage between the authentic character of the sacred text and its apocryphal character. Both sides don't depend on the text but seem to be exterior to it. The authenticity of the text depends on the *šahāda* (testimony) of God and of Banū Isrāʾīl. The Prophet is represented in the negative way *ma kuntu bidʿan* (I'm not a novelty...); *mā adrī mā yufʿalu bī wa-lā bikum* (I don't know what will be done...). When he is described in the positive way, his mission as *intermediary* is highlighted and he only *follows* what is revealed to him *in atbaʿu illā mā yūḥā ilayya* (I only follow what is revealed to me). My second remark concerns the verb *talā* (to recite) v. 7. Neither the subject of the verb nor its object is determined except the vague notion of *āyāt* (signs). Frederick Denny shows in his study of the religious expressions that the *tilāwa* (recitation) as reading in a loud voice concerns in the beginning of Islam not only the Qurʾān but the scriptures of "the People of the Book," meaning among others the Jews and Christians (Denny, "Qur'ān Recitation: A Tradition of Oral Performance and Transmission," *Oral Tradition* 4/1–2 (1989): 5–26). The text referred to as object of *tilāwa* (recitation) in (v. 7) could be identified to writings other than the Qurʾān. The difference of the designation of the sacred writings between v. 7 and v. 12 reinforce the idea that v. 7 may refer to a text other than the Qurʾān.

Khalfallah

Je m'arrête sur le v. 12 de ce passage, plus particulièrement sur le terme *kitāb* qui n'est pas, malgré sa clarté trompeuse, sans poser des difficultés sémantiques de taille. Il est communément admis que, tout au long de sa vie, Muḥammad n'a jamais procédé

à la compilation des sourates dans un seul livre. Au sens matériel, nul livre (*muṣḥaf*) n'a existé jusqu'au règne de ʿUṯmān. Les sourates inachevées et les versets séparés étaient appris par cœur et transmis par voie orale. Au moment de la révélation de ce verset, nul *kitāb*, au sens propre (livre matériel), n'existait. L'ambigüité de ce terme réside dans le fait qu'il n'a pas de référent matériel. Pour dissiper cette difficulté, on a fait appel à la rhétorique pour forger la figure du *maǧāz ʿaqlī*, trope fondé non sur la relation de similitude (comme c'est le cas de la métaphore, la comparaison et l'analogie), mais sur une autre relation logique. Le mot *kitāb* est alors considérés comme une image ; le rapport existant entre le sens propre et le sens figuré est appelé *iʿtibārmāyakūn* (prise en considération du devenir du premier terme du trope). Ainsi, cette image anticipe l'état futur du Coran : à partir de son état oral, épars et non-écrit, on fera un livre. Ces rhétoriciens y voient même un miracle, puisque le Coran anticipe les événements futurs, en l'occurrence, sa recension, consignation et refonte en un livre écrit.

La deuxième thèse, plus polémique, défend qu'il s'agissait d'une comparaison avec le Livre des Juifs, la Torah, et pour certains ceux des Chrétiens. Deux récits historiques sont d'une importance capitale, mais peu examinés par les chercheurs : [1] Muḥammad qui regardait devant le Rabbin de Médine l'*isṭiwāna* (cylindre ?) de la Torah. [2] Muḥammad qui regardait la *maǧalla* de Luqmān en disant que c'était bien. L'histoire de l'écrit et des écrits de cette époque est à revisiter…

Pregill

To my mind, this passage epitomizes the reformist ideology of Qurʾānic discourse; here the revelation and the recipient's mission are concisely located in salvation history. The bearer of this revelation brings "clear signs" that are denied, likened to mere invention or witchcraft; the prophet is not an innovator among the prophets or one who claims to foresee the future, but rather only conveys what is revealed to him, a "clear warner."

Vv. 10 – 12 are critical: if one of Israel acknowledges it – that is, witnesses that it is like what came before, i. e. the Torah – but the audience continues to reject… That the suspension of the apodosis signals an unspoken threat is quite obvious. The objectors retort: if it was any good, they [Israel] would not accept it [optative, not perfect?] before us. Not being guided, they say: this is an old lie. No; this book confirms the law of Moses before it, but in Arabic (in a clear Arabic tongue); it is a warning to evildoers and a gospel (good news, glad tidings, evangelion) for men of good will.

In line with the view of Ohlig and others that the Qurʾān positions itself as an "Arabic Deuteronomy," I might surmise that the subtext here is that the revelation is similar to – a revival or rejuvenation of – the Torah, but in clear Arabic (and not Hebrew or Syriac) speech; a Jew would recognize it, and the audience should as well – but they deny it precisely because of the appeal to the potential role of Jews in confirming it, which seems like a very Christian move. The audience further objects: this attempt to bring a new/old scripture – or perhaps the whole message of

revival – is an *ifk qadīm*, an old lie – we've seen this sort of thing before. The passage closes with the strident assertion that this revelation's authority should be manifestly clear; it is not only like the *kitāb Mūsā* (presumably of value to the audience) but also like the Gospel (*bušrā*, also of presumed worth to the audience). Again, the context seems to be one in which a new revelation that particularly draws on Torah, invoking the authority of Moses but also the revivalist/confirming mission of Jesus, is brought to people who have every reason to acknowledge and accept it, but they don't – suggesting an at least superficially Christian discursive context.

Reynolds

All of the *sūra*s 40 – 46 begin with the letters *ḥāʾ mīm* and continue with a reference to the divine "book" or divine revelation (Q 42 has additional letters in v. 2, and so the mention of revelation appears only in v. 3). In the passage at hand the revelation itself is presented as a distinctive proof of Muḥammad's prophethood. The importance of the Qurʾān's self-referentiality here is further apparent in light of a parallel with Q 61:6, where the Qurʾān has the Israelites explain away Jesus' miracles (or signs: *bayyināt*) with the explanation: "This is plain magic." Here (v. 7) the Qurʾān has the unbelievers explain away Muḥammad's recitation of signs (*āyāt*) with the same words. Yet if the Prophet is not a miracle-maker but only a warner (v. 9), it matters to the Qurʾān that this warning is in Arabic (v. 21). With this "warning" the Arabic speakers have a prophet for themselves, who delivers God's revelation in their own language.

Rippin

In v. 10, the reference to *šāhid min banī Isrāʾīl* produces the expected range of speculation: the person is either the 7th century Hijazi, ʿAbd Allah ibn Salām, or the Biblical Moses. The passage is likely best taken as a part of the conversation that involves the Jews in general with the positive note that the person witnesses *ʿalā l-miṯlihi*, with the "likeness" clearly being the message from God; those who reject God are those who are proud. That the reference is to Moses is reinforced in v. 12 with the *kitāb Mūsā* being "a guidance and a mercy" that confirms (*muṣaddiq*) the Arabic book.

Sirry

The shift of voices is so characteristic of the Qurʾānic discourses. In this passage we are presented with various layers of speakers. Assuming that *qul* is representing a divine voice, the addressee (the prophet) is ordered to refute the opponents' view regarding the authenticity of revelation. In arguing against their rejection, the passage reminds its opponents of one witness of the children of Israel who acknowledges its similarity to the book of Moses. Does the passage refer to one of the children of Israel

who followed Muḥammad's teaching, or does this reflect Muḥammad's confidence that the Jews would accept it as similar to their own? The use of the term *banū isrāʾīl* rather than *yahūd* or *hūd* or *allaḏīna hādū* is intriguing. Is this ethnic reference to contrast with *lisānan ʿarabiyan?* Interestingly, the words *yahūd* or *hādū* are not used in the supposedly Meccan passages. The historical significance of the Qurʾānic uses of these different terms in referring to Jews needs to be explored.

Younes

In my comments on a number of passages (QS 14, 15, 22) I pointed out several instances in which the accusative case is found in violation of the standard rules of Arabic case assignment. V. 12 of this passage includes three such instances: *imāman*, *lisānan*, and *ʿarabiyyan*, all of which should receive the nominative case according to these rules.

Zellentin

The logic of Q 46:11 is a powerful rhetorical trope still employed today: accusing a hostile audience of rejecting a good idea since it did not originate with them. How frustrating it must have been for the Prophet to have found what came from his mouth rejected *both* as "fabricated" (*ftarāh*, v. 8) apostolic innovation (*bidʿan min al-rusuli*, v. 9) *and* as "ancient lie" (*ifkun qadīmun*)! The Qurʾān subtly constructs the perceived accusation as self-defeating, as erroneously claiming that its wine is bad both because it is old and because it is new. Its intended audience is supposed to share the sense of the Gospel that nobody drinks old wine and then desires fresh wine, "for he says, the old is better" (*Diatessaron* 7:36). In truth, the Qurʾān counters, it confirms Jesus and the Gospel, just as the Gospel in turn confirms the Torah (all the while deferring the consumption of actual wine until the end of days, in line with Matt 26:29).

The Qurʾān's claim that it "confirms" (*muṣaddiqun*) previous revelation, and especially the Torah and the Gospel, is a central notion (see my comments on QS 15). The continuous invocation of those Scriptures should guide a critical audience to see how much is at stake for the prophet had it been easy to falsify his claim to soundness with other traditions available at the time: a single rabbi, a single Christian elder in command of his Scripture could have easily swayed the audience should the Qurʾān's understanding of Scripture not have matched that of the seventh century Hijaz. Paying close attention to the rhetoric and its socio-historical implications reinforces my sense that the text's unique dual endorsement of the Torah and the Gospel, in theory and in practice, in religious symbolism and in ritual observance, made eminent sense to an audience that was familiar with both texts. As I suggested repeatedly, we can see this combination in practice throughout the Qurʾān. Many in the Syriac Church upheld its "Old Testament" at the same time as abrogating it; the one religious culture that would be familiar with the combination of these same

texts, symbols, and rituals is the Judaeo-Christian one that had produced the *Clementine Homilies* and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (see my opening statement).

QS 38 Q 48

48.1 We have granted you a conspicuous victory,
48.2 That God may forgive your sins, past and to come,
And complete His favor upon you,
And guide you to a straight path,
48.3 And lend you His mighty aid.
48.4 It is He who sent down the spirit of serenity into the hearts of the believers, that they may increase in faith, over and above their faith.
To God belong the troops of the heavens and the earth.
God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
48.5 He will admit the believers, male and female, into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever, and He shall pardon their sins – this is the greatest triumph in God's sight.
48.6 And He shall punish the hypocrites, male and female, and the idolaters, male and female, they who entertain evil thoughts of God. Upon them shall turn the wheel of misfortune. God shall be wrathful towards them, curse them and prepare hell for them – a wretched destiny!
48.7 To God belong the troops of the heavens and the earth.
God is Almighty, All-Wise.
48.8 We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner,
48.9 That you may believe in God and His Messenger,
That you may lend Him your aid, be in awe of Him and glorify Him, morning and evening.
48.10 Those who pay you homage are in fact paying homage to God – the hand of God rests above their own.
Whoso breaks his word has only himself to blame for breaking it;
Whoso fulfills the obligations that God enjoined upon him, God shall bestow on him a glorious reward.
48.11 The Bedouins left behind will say to you: "We have been preoccupied with our properties and our families, so please ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues what lies not in their hearts.

48.1 En vérité Nous t'avons accordé une victoire éclatante,
48.2 afin qu'Allah te pardonne tes péchés, passés et futurs, qu'Il parachève sur toi Son bienfait et te guide sur une voie droite;
48.3 et qu'Allah te donne un puissant secours.
48.4 C'est Lui qui a fait descendre la quiétude dans les cours des croyants afin qu'ils ajoutent une foi à leur foi. A Allah appartiennent les armées des cieux et de la terre; et Allah est Omniscient et Sage
48.5 afin qu'Il fasse entrer les croyants et les croyantes dans des Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux où ils demeureront éternellement et afin de leur effacer leurs méfaits. Cela est auprès d'Allah un énorme succès.
48.6 Et afin qu'Il châtie les hypocrites, hommes et femmes, et les associateurs et les associatrices, qui pensent du mal d'Allah. Qu'un mauvais sort tombe sur eux. Allah est courroucé contre eux, les a maudits, et leur a préparé l'Enfer. Quelle mauvaise destination!
48.7 A Allah appartiennent les armées des cieux et de la terre; et Allah est Puissant et Sage.
48.8 Nous t'avons envoyé en tant que témoin, annonciateur de la bonne nouvelle et avertisseur,
48.9 pour que vous croyiez en Allah et en Son messager, que vous l'honoriez, reconnaissiez Sa dignité, et Le glorifiez matin et soir.
48.10 Ceux qui te prêtent serment d'allégeance ne font que prêter serment à Allah: la main d'Allah est au-dessus de leurs mains. Quiconque viole le serment ne le viole qu'à son propre détriment; et quiconque remplit son engagement envers Allah, Il lui apportera bientôt une énorme récompense.
48.11 Ceux des Bédouins qui ont été laissés en arrière te diront: «Nos biens et nos familles nous ont retenus: implore donc pour nous le pardon». Ils disent avec leurs langues ce qui n'est pas dans leurs cours. Dis: «Qui donc peut quelque chose pour vous auprès d'Allah s'Il veut vous faire du mal ou s'Il veut vous faire du bien? Mais Allah est Parfaitement Connaisseur de ce que vous ouvrez.

Say: “Who can do anything against God’s will should He intend you harm or intend you benefit?” Rather, God knows perfectly well what you do.
48.12 Or did you imagine that the Messenger and the believers will never return home to their families? This notion was made to appear attractive in your hearts, and you entertained evil thoughts, and were a worthless people.
48.13 Whoso believes not in God and His Messenger, We have prepared a raging Fire for the unbelievers.
48.14 To God belongs sovereignty of the heavens and earth.
He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills.
God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each.
48.15 Those left behind will say, once you have set forth to capture booty: “May we please follow in your tracks?”
They merely wish to warp the speech of God. Say: “No, you shall not follow us. God has already spoken.”
And they shall respond: “Ah no! You begrudge us this.”
In fact they are a people of little understanding.
48.16 Say to the Bedouins left behind: “You shall be called up against a people of great might, whom you are to fight, or else they might surrender. If you are obedient, God will grant you a fair reward. But if you turn tail, as you did before, He will punish you most painfully.”
48.17 No blame attaches to the blind, the lame or the sick.
Whoso obeys God and His Messenger, He shall admit into Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Whoso turns tail, He shall punish most painfully.
48.18 God was well pleased with the believers, when they made their pledge to you beneath the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and sent down the spirit of serenity upon them, and rewarded them with news of an imminent victory,
48.19 and much booty for them to capture.
God is Almighty, All-Wise.
48.20 God has promised that you will capture much booty, and hastened this present booty for you. He has restrained the hands of people from you, that this may be a sign to the believ-

48.12 Vous pensiez plutôt que le Messager et les croyants ne retourneraient jamais plus à leur famille. Et cela vous a été embelli dans vos cours; et vous avez eu de mauvaises pensées. Et vous fûtes des gens perdus».
48.13 Et quiconque ne croit pas en Allah et en Son messager... alors, pour les mécréants, Nous avons préparé une fournaise ardente.
48.14 A Allah appartient la souveraineté des cieux et de la terre. Il pardonne à qui Il veut et châtie qui Il veut. Allah demeure cependant, Pardonneur et Miséricordieux.
48.15 Ceux qui restèrent en arrière diront, quand vous vous dirigez vers le butin pour vous en emparer; «Laissez-nous vous suivre». Ils voudraient changer la parole d’Allah. Dis: «Jamais vous ne nous suivrez: ainsi Allah a déjà annoncé». Mais ils diront: «Vous êtes plutôt envieux à notre égard». Mais ils ne comprenaient en réalité que peu.
48.16 Dis à ceux des Bédouins qui restèrent en arrière: «vous serez bientôt appelés contre des gens d’une force redoutable. Vous les combattrez à moins qu’ils n’embrassent l’Islam, si vous obéissez, Allah vous donnera une belle récompense, et si vous vous détournez comme vous vous êtes détournés auparavant, Il vous châtiera d’un châtiment douloureux».
48.17 Nul grief n’est à faire à l’aveugle, ni au boiteux ni au malade. Et quiconque obéit à Allah et à Son messager, Il le fera entrer dans des Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux. Quiconque cependant se détourne, Il le châtiera d’un douloureux châtiment.
48.18 Allah a très certainement agréé les croyants quand ils t’ont prêté le serment d’allégeance sous l’arbre. Il a su ce qu’il y avait dans leurs cours, et a fait descendre sur eux la quiétude, et Il les a récompensés par une victoire proche.
48.19 ainsi qu’un abondant butin qu’ils ramasseront. Allah est Puissant et Sage.
48.20 Allah vous a promis un abondant butin que vous prendrez et Il a hâté pour vous Celle-ci et repoussé de vous les mains des gens, afin que tout cela soit un signe pour les croyants et qu’Il vous guide dans un droit chemin;
48.21 Il vous promet un autre butin que vous ne seriez jamais capables de remporter et qu’Allah

ers, and that He may guide you along a straight path.
48.21 There was other booty which you could not seize but which God has encompassed in His knowledge, and God has power over all things.
48.22 Had the unbelievers fought you, they would have turned tail and fled, thereafter having none to protect or aid them.
48.23 Such has been the precedent of God beforehand, and you shall not find God's precedent to vary.
48.24 It was He who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them, after having granted you victory over them in the vale of Mecca. God knew full well what you were doing.
48.25 It is they who blasphemed, and they who kept you away by force from the Sacred Mosque, while sacrificial animals were prevented from reaching their rightful place.
Were it not for the presence of believing men and women, unknown to you, and lest you trample them underfoot and so become guilty of an unintentional crime, and that God may admit into His mercy whom He wills, God would have granted you leave to conquer Mecca. And had believers and unbelievers been clearly separated from one another, We would have punished the unbelievers most painfully.
48.26 For He had planted in the hearts of the unbelievers a zealotry, the zealotry of lawlessness, so God sent down the spirit of serenity upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and charged them with the word of piety, of which they were more worthy – indeed its true keepers. And God is All-Knowing.
48.27 God has confirmed the vision of His Messenger by making it come true: you shall indeed enter the Sacred Mosque, God willing, in security, your heads shaved, your hair cropped short, and having no fear. So He knew what you did not know, and has decreed an imminent victory to precede that entry.
48.28 It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above all religions. Let God suffice as witness.
48.29 Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and those who are with him, are adamant against

a embrassé en Sa puissance, car Allah est Omnipotent.
48.22 Et si ceux qui ont mécru vous combattent, ils se détourneront, certes; puis ils ne trouveront ni allié ni secoureur.
48.23 Telle est la règle d'Allah appliquée aux générations passées. Et tu ne trouveras jamais de changement à la règle d'Allah.
48.24 C'est Lui qui, dans la vallée de la Mecque, a écarté leurs mains de vous, de même qu'Il a écarté vos mains d'eux, après vous avoir fait triompher sur eux. Et Allah voit parfaitement ce que vous ouvrez.
48.25 Ce sont eux qui ont mécru et qui vous ont obstrué le chemin de la Mosquée Sacrée [et ont empêché] que les offrandes entravées parvinssent à leur lieu d'immolation. S'il n'y avait pas eu des hommes croyants et des femmes croyantes (parmi les Mecquois) que vous ne connaissiez pas et que vous auriez pu piétiner sans le savoir, vous rendant ainsi coupables d'une action répréhensible... [Tout cela s'est fait] pour qu'Allah fasse entrer qui Il veut dans Sa miséricorde. Et s'ils [les croyants] s'étaient signalés, Nous aurions certes châtié d'un châtiment douloureux ceux qui avaient mécru parmi [les Mecquois].
48.26 Quand ceux qui ont mécru eurent mis dans leurs cours la fureur, [la] fureur de l'ignorance... Puis Allah fit descendre Sa quiétude sur Son Messager ainsi que sur les croyants, et les obligea à une parole de piété, dont ils étaient les plus dignes et les plus proches. Allah est Omniscient.
48.27 Allah a été véridique en la vision par laquelle Il annonça à Son messager en toute vérité: vous entrerez dans la Mosquée Sacrée si Allah veut, en toute sécurité, ayant rasé vos têtes ou coupé vos cheveux, sans aucune crainte. Il savait donc ce que vous ne saviez pas. Il a placé en deçà de cela (la trêve de Houdaybiya) une victoire proche.
48.28 C'est Lui qui a envoyé Son messager avec la guidée et la religion de vérité [l'Islam] pour la faire triompher sur toute autre religion. Allah suffit comme témoin.
48.29 Muhammad est le Messager d'Allah. Et ceux qui sont avec lui sont durs envers les mécréants, miséricordieux entre eux. Tu les vois inclinés, prosternés, recherchant d'Allah grâce et

the unbelievers but merciful towards one another.
You see them bowing in prostration, seeking God's favor and good will. Their marks are upon their foreheads from the traces of prostration. Such is their description in the Torah and their description in the Evangel: like a sown field that sends forth its shoots, then braces it so it thickens and rests firmly on its stalk – a sight pleasant to farmers, but thereby to mortify the unbelievers.
God promises those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a glorious reward.

agrément. Leurs visages sont marqués par la trace laissée par la prosternation. Telle est leur image dans la Thora. Et l'image que l'on donne d'eux dans l'Evangile est celle d'une semence qui sort sa pousse, puis se raffermit, s'épaissit, et ensuite se dresse sur sa tige, à l'émerveillement des semeurs. [Allah] par eux [les croyants] remplit de dépit les mécréants. Allah promet à ceux d'entre eux qui croient et font de bonnes ouvres, un pardon et une énorme récompense.

سورة الفتح

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا (1) لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا (2)
وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا (3) هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا (4) لِيُدْخِلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفِّرَ عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا (5) وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّانِّينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ
عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (6) وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا (7) إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا (8) لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلًا (9) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ
عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (10) سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ
مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا (11) بَلْ
ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَى أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَزُيِّنَ ذَلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا (12) وَمَنْ
لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا (13) وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا (14) سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى مَغَانِمَ لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلَامَ اللَّهِ قُلْ
لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا (15) قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
سَتُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسْلِمُونَ فَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (16) لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (17) لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ
الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا (18) وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا
(19) وَعَدَكُمُ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا
مُسْتَقِيمًا (20) وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا (21) وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوُا
الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا (22) سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا (23) وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ
أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا (24) هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيَ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحِلَّهُ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَئُوهُمْ
فَتُصِيبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (25) إِذْ جَعَلَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا
أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (26) لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا (27) هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا (28) مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ
بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ

وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ((29

Dye

Cette sourate pose quelques problèmes de composition.

Le lien entre les vv. 1 et 2 est curieux : le discours à la première personne du pluriel dans le v. 1 semble être une parole d'Allah, mais il est ensuite question d'Allah à la troisième personne du singulier dans les versets suivants. De plus, on ne saisit pas bien pourquoi la victoire serait octroyée au Prophète *afin* de lui pardonner ses péchés : logiquement, ce serait plutôt *une fois que ses péchés lui sont pardonnés, ou parce qu'ils lui sont pardonnés* (le Prophète aurait-il donc péché ?) que le Prophète serait susceptible de bénéficier du secours d'Allah et de la victoire.

Vv. 8 – 9 : bel exemple de « discours pluri-adressé », pour reprendre une idée de Kropp (2008: 794 – 797), puisque le locuteur (censé être Dieu) s'adresse à la fois au Prophète et aux destinataires concrets du message coranique (la communauté du Prophète). On peut se demander qui désigne exactement *wa-rasūlihī* (Moïse et Jésus sont des référents possibles, même si le texte, dans sa version reçue, entend clairement désigner Muḥammad – auquel le verset précédent s'adressait pourtant à la deuxième personne du singulier). On peut aussi se demander si *wa-rasūlihī* ne serait pas un ajout postérieur.

V. 13 : il semble qu'il y ait une lacune après *wa-rasūlihī*.

Le v. 29, anormalement long, et dont le propos s'éloigne quelque peu des versets précédents, pourrait lui aussi être une interpolation (quelques arguments en ce sens chez Gallez 2005: 358 – 360).

El-Badawi

The *sūra* seems to be concerned with purifying the army (or community) of the prophet Muḥammad against "those who rebelled and prevented them from entering the sacred house of worship" in Mecca (vv. 24 – 25) and precedes God's promise that they will "surely enter the sacred house of worship by God's will" (v. 27)—whose imagery distantly resembles Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (e. g., Matthew 21:1 – 11; cf. in relation Isaiah 26:1 – 3; Zachariah 14:1 – 5).

Q 48's classification of the different groups reminds me of the principle in "seniority of faith" (*sābiqa*, i. e., those who entered Islam first) employed in later Islamic biographical works (*riǧāl, tabaqāt*) to create a hierarchy of companions (*saḥāba*) and later generations (*tābiʿūn*). In this *sūra*, the rank of one's faith is measurable by military service and loyalty. The classes identified in the *sūra* are:

[1] Believers (*muʾminūn/at*; v. 4) who (v. 29) after a major military victory (*naṣr*; cf. Q 110). The battle was fought with Muḥammad and his army who remained loyal throughout.

[2] Hypocrites (*munāfiqūn/at*) + Associators (*mušrikūn/at*) who presumably fought with Muḥammad and his army of believers only to betray/desert them (v. 5).

[3] Entrusted/auxillary Arab fighters (cf. Syr. D stem, *Ḥ-L-P*; *al-muḫallafūn min al-aʿrāb*) who were expected to but did not fight with Muḥammad and his believers, but whose soldiers are still needed for future battles (vv. 11–16).

[4] Blind (*aʿma*) + Lame (*aʿraǧ*), who are excused from battle (v. 17).

[5] Rebels/Unbelievers (*kuffār*) who fought against Muḥammad and his army of believers (v. 22). Since *ǧāhiliyya* is associated with Christians and Jews in Q 5:50, what is the religion of the *kuffār* in v. 26?

By swearing public allegiance to the prophet Muḥammad, the believers solidified their commitment to his cause (v. 18), the proof of which is in the abundance of war booty and the victory of his faith (vv. 20–21, 28). Was their allegiance quintessentially the statement, "Muḥammad is the messenger of God" (v. 29)? Are the implications of this understanding upon the Islamic declaration of faith (*šahāda*), or considering it an 'oath of allegiance'?

Pregill

A *sūra* heavily burdened with references to unknown circumstances, assigned by tradition to the trying period after the treaty of Hudaybiyya. As is so often the case, the interpretive framework imposed by the *sīra* tradition does not seem all that obvious from the composition itself, though the martial context is undeniable.

V. 11: *al-muḫallafūn:* "laggards"? The term appears three times in this *sūra,* in vv. 11, 15, and 16, and only once elsewhere (Q 9:81). Two of these references (vv. 11, 16) are explicitly aimed at *aʿrāb*; this presumably relies upon a distinction between the Bedouin and the urban Arab population that is supposedly the Qurʾān's main audience. Since the specific issue is the lack of commitment to the cause of God among the *aʿrāb*, the obvious parallel is with the polemical use of Latin *paganus* (literally a rustic) in early Christian texts.

Most of the ten references to *aʿrāb* in the Qurʾān (more than half are in the highly martial Q 9, which seems noteworthy) are derogatory, emphasizing their backsliding, hypocrisy, unbelief, lack of trustworthiness, etc. Only Q 9:99 seems positive, recognizing that some of them believe and do good works (cf. the positive note about a portion of the people of Moses at Q 7:159). The implication of most of these verses seems to be that these people will not support the community or prophet in war, as is the case here in this *sūra*.

V. 18: God sent down His *sakīna* to the believers; mentioned again in v. 26 below, in which the fury of the unbelievers, the fury of *ǧāhiliyya*, is contrasted with the *taqwā* of the believers. Compare the *ḥāmiyyat ǧāhiliyya* here with the *nār ḥāmiyya* of Q 101:11: "blazing" is what the unbelievers do in life; "blazing" is what they're going to get in the end.

The *sakīna* is here closely associated with *taqwā*; Abdel Haleem and others render it as "tranquility," "restraint," and the like, though this reading seems to impose

the Hudaybiyya narrative context too strongly. Q 2:248 associates the *sakīna* with the Ark and Saul, and given the martial context there and in other passages where it appears, the *sakīna* seems to be something like the strengthening presence of God, especially given that in v. 18 here the sending down of the *sakīna* is associated with victory. This seems much closer to the divine presence associated with the Ark as a war standard in the Bible than with the Shekhinah as it is known from rabbinic tradition (note, however, that the divine presence is not termed Shekhinah in the Bible).

V. 29: *sīmāhum fī wuǧūhihim: sīmā* occurs only six times in the Qurʾān, and refers in every case to a mark that demonstrates moral disposition, whether positive or negative – an outward sign of good or evil by which human nature may be known. A systematic comparison with the semantic range of Greek *sēmeîon* in the New Testament and patristic discourse would no doubt be illuminating.

Rippin

V. 29, those with the mark of prostration, *sīmāhum fī wuǧūhihim min athari l-suǧūd* (the focus of a recent anti-Muslim rant in the USA) are declared to be *maṯaluhum* in the Torah and so the reference is often suggested to be to the phylacteries of Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18. The literal sense of "mark" in this passage is thus reinforced by the literal Jewish interpretation of the Biblical command once the connection is made. The Qurʾān passage goes on to say (in a loose translation), "Their likeness is in the Gospel in the parable of the seed...," sometimes taken as a reference to Mark 4:26–9 and 4:30–2. It is interesting that translators seem to take a variety of approaches to this overall passage, perhaps depending on the extent to which they see these parallels. Abdel Haleem (2004: 336), for example, divides the passage such that it reads "upon their faces they bear the marks of their prostration. They are pictured in the Torah and the Gospel as being like a seed...." Fakhry (2002: 522) goes in the other direction: "their mark is on their faces, as a trace of their prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah and their likeness in the Gospel; just as a seed...." Arberry (1964: 535), on the other hand, through the clever use of a colon separates the two ("Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel: as a seed ....") and thereby successfully suggests both references.

Note that the word *sīmā* is used elsewhere (Q 2:273, Q 7:46, Q 7:48, Q 47:30, Q 55:41; also see Q 3:125 (those having marks; Q 11:83 and Q 51:34, marked) as a mark that distinguishes people but as Q 55:41 makes clear, this is not necessarily always to be understood as the mark of prostration. For further consideration of these topics, see Andrew Rippin, "The trace of prostration and other distinguishing bodily marks in the Quran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 78/1 (2015): 41–51.

Zellentin

For a couple of reasons, I find the translations much more convincing which read the *maṯal* given in the Torah and in the Gospel (v. 29) as a reference to the "parable" given in Mark 4:26–32, and not as a "description," or Fakhry's "likeness" of the marks of prostration (see Rippin). First, the term introduces the parable about the seeds; the cognate Syriac term for parable, *mtlʾ*, is used twice in the Aramaic rendering in the Peshitta of Mark 4:30; the term for seed, *zrʿ*, is in turn used twice both in v. 29 and in Mark 4:26–7. (Both can be said about the parallel in Matthew 13 as well; the *Diatessaron* moreover also groups all the "seed" sayings together, both texts emphasize the "parable" character of Jesus prophecy by quoting Isaiah.) Second, the verse in Mark 4:29, "But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come," is in turn a quotation of Joel 3:13, "put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe." Hence, both the Gospel and the Torah depict the Day of Judgment; the Qurʾān therefore depicts this parable correctly as stemming both from the Torah and from the Gospel (v. 29).

Moreover, the reading of the "mark on the face" as a reference to the Tephilin on the head is flawed—how would the Tephilin be *aṯari l-suǧūdi*, indicating a clear causal relation between the proskynesis and the sign? Occam's razor applies here: the believers simply pressed their head against the ground. There is of course a good reason for citing Deuteronomy 6:8, the metaphor that the Jewish tradition incarnated in form of Tephilin, which states indeed that one should "bind [these words] as a *sign* (*ʿwt*) on your hand, fix them as an emblem between your eyes," evoking the "sign" (*sīmā*) on the face in the Qurʾān. Yet there is no reason to think of Tephilin through this verbal connection: the words instructing to use Tefilin come from the *Sh'ma Yisrael*, the central prayer well known to the Qurʾān (see my comments on QS 50). If the verse is relevant at all to the present passage (and I am not sure it is), a putative liturgical context of proskynesis during the well attested twice daily recitation of the Sh'ma seems more likely than imagining "the Apostle of God and those who are with him" as putting on tefilin – it is, after all, the emerging Muslim *gentile* (*ḥanīf*") community who are the subject of the verse, not the Jews!

In turn, bowing and full prostration, the term evoked by *rukkaʾan* and *suǧǧadan* in v. 29, is a commonplace practice not only in ancient Christianity, but also in the Hebrew Bible and in rabbinic Judaism, and the presence of the practice in the Qurʾān is not surprising. In rabbinic Judaism, while the actual *proskynesis* is performed only during the Day of Atonement and Rosh haShannah (and that never on the ground itself lest the impression of worshipping the earth should arise), references to priestly *proskynesis* in the Temple and in other contexts abounds in Mishna, Midrash, and Talmud. Moses, for example, when in heaven, is said not to have left any "corner in the firmament upon which he did not prostrate himself (*ntḥbth*)" in supplication (*Deuteronomy Rabbah* 3:11, a medieval, yet still perhaps an illustrative text). The Qurʾānic verse should be understood as a simple depiction of the piety of the Apostle's followers, evoking the parable from the Torah and the Gospel.

QS 39 Q 53

53.1 By the star when it plunged!
53.2 Your companion has not veered from the truth, nor is he misguided.
53.3 Nor is he uttering his own fancies.
53.4 It is but an inspiration, being inspired,
53.5 Taught him by one immense in power,
53.6 daunting. He took his stand,
53.7 being on the upper horizon,
53.8 Then came near and hung suspended,
53.9 And was two-bows length, or closer.
53.10 And He inspired His servant with what He inspired him.
53.11 The mind did not question what it saw.
53.12 Do you dispute with him what he saw?
53.13 And he saw him a second time,
53.14 By the lote-tree of the Extremity,
53.15 Near which is the Garden of Refuge,
53.16 When there covered the lote-tree that which covered it.
53.17 The eye neither veered nor overreached.
53.18 He saw some of his Lord's greatest wonders.
53.19 Have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza?
53.20 And Manat, the third, the other?
53.21 To you belong males and to Him females?
53.22 What a crooked way of sharing!
53.23 They are but names that you and your forefathers coined:
Regarding them God sent down no authority.
They merely follow their caprice, and what their souls hanker for,
Even though Guidance has come to them from their Lord.
53.24 Or will man obtain what he longs for?
53.25 To God belong the Last and the First.
53.26 How many an angel there is in heaven whose intercession is of no avail,
Save when God permits it to whom He wills, and with whom He is well pleased.
53.27 Those who believe not in the hereafter give the angels female names,
53.28 But of this they have no knowledge,
And merely follow surmise,
Though surmise avails nothing when compared to truth.
53.29 Therefore, shun him who turns away from Our Remembrance,

53.1 Par l'étoile à son déclin!
53.2 Votre compagnon ne s'est pas égaré et n'a pas été induit en erreur
53.3 et il ne prononce rien sous l'effet de la passion;
53.4 ce n'est rien d'autre qu'une révélation inspirée.
53.5 Que lui a enseigné [l'Ange Gabriel] à la force prodigieuse,
53.6 doué de sagacité; c'est alors qu'il se montra sous sa forme réelle [angélique],
53.7 alors qu'il se trouvait à l'horizon supérieur.
53.8 Puis il se rapprocha et descendit encore plus bas,
53.9 et fut à deux portées d'arc, ou plus près encore.
53.10 Il révéla à Son serviteur ce qu'Il révéla.
53.11 Le cour n'a pas menti en ce qu'il a vu.
53.12 Lui contestez-vous donc ce qu'il voit?
53.13 Il l'a pourtant vu, lors d'une autre descente,
53.14 près de la Sidrat-ul-Muntahâ,
53.15 près d'elle se trouve le jardin de Ma'w?:
53.16 au moment où le lotus était couvert de ce qui le couvrait.
53.17 la vue n'a nullement dévié ni outrepassé la mesure.
53.18 Il a bien vu certaines des grandes merveilles de son Seigneur.
53.19 Que vous en semble [des divinités], Lât et Uuzzâ
53.20 ainsi que Manât, cette troisième autre?
53.21 Sera-ce à vous le garçon et à Lui la fille?
53.22 Que voilà donc un partage injuste!
53.23 Ce ne sont que des noms que vous avez inventés, vous et vos ancêtres. Allah n'a fait descendre aucune preuve à leur sujet. Ils ne suivent que la conjecture et les passions de [leurs] âmes, alors que la guidée leur est venue de leur Seigneur.
53.24 Ou bien l'homme aura-t-il tout ce qu'il désire?
53.25 A Allah appartiennent la vie future et la vie d'ici-bas.
53.26 Et que d'Anges dans les cieux dont l'intercession ne sert à rien, sinon qu'après qu'Al-

And desires only the present world.
53.30 Such is the extent of their knowledge.
Your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path,
And knows best who has found guidance.
53.31 To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth,
That He may requite the wicked for what they committed,
And reward the good with good.
53.32 And they who refrain from major sins and debaucheries, save minor misdemeanors –
Towards them your Lord is assuredly expansive in His forgiveness.
He knows you best, ever since He created you from the earth,
Ever since you were embryos in your mothers' wombs.
Therefore, do not acclaim your own virtue,
For He knows best who is truly pious.
53.33 Have you considered him who turned away?
53.34 Who gave a little and then withheld?
53.35 Does he possess knowledge of the Unseen, and hence can see far?
53.36 Or was he not apprized of what is in the scrolls of Moses
53.37 and of Abraham, he who kept faith?
53.38 That no soul burdened shall bear the burden of another;
53.39 That man shall gain only what he endeavors;
53.40 That his endeavor shall be noted;
53.41 Then He shall reward him with the most ample reward,
53.42 And to your Lord is the final destination.
53.43 That it is He who causes laughter and weeping;
53.44 Who brings about death and life;
53.45 Who created pairs, male and female,
53.46 From a sperm-drop, when discharged;
53.47 That it is He who shall undertake the Second Creation;
53.48 And He who is richest and most bountiful;
53.49 That He is Lord of Sirius,
53.50 And He who destroyed ancient 'Ad
53.51 and Thamud, leaving no trace of them,
53.52 And before them the people of Noah—assuredly more wicked and transgressing.

lah l'aura permis, en faveur de qui Il veut et qu'Il agrée.
53.27 Ceux qui ne croient pas en l'au-delà donnent aux Anges des noms de femmes,
53.28 alors qu'ils n'en ont aucune science: ils ne suivent que la conjecture, alors que la conjecture ne sert à rien contre la vérité.
53.29 Ecarte-toi donc, de celui qui tourne le dos à Notre rappel et qui ne désire que la vie présente.
53.30 Voilà toute la portée de leur savoir. Certes ton Seigneur connaît parfaitement celui qui s'égare de Son chemin et Il connaît parfaitement qui est bien guidé.
53.31 A Allah appartient ce qui est dans les cieux et sur la terre afin qu'Il rétribue ceux qui font le mal selon ce qu'ils ouvrent, et récompense ceux qui font le bien par la meilleure [récompense],
53.32 ceux qui évitent les plus grands péchés ainsi que les turpitudes et [qui ne commettent] que des fautes légères. Certes, le pardon de Ton Seigneur est immense. C'est Lui qui vous connaît le mieux quand Il vous a produits de terre, et aussi quand vous étiez des embryons dans les ventres de vos mères. Ne vantez pas vous-mêmes votre pureté; c'est Lui qui connaît mieux ceux qui [Le] craignent.
53.33 Vois-tu celui qui s'est détourné,
53.34 donné peu et a [finalement] cessé de donner?
53.35 Détient-il la science de l'Inconnaissable en sorte qu'il voit?
53.36 Ne lui a-t-on pas annoncé ce qu'il y avait dans les feuilles de Moïse
53.37 et celles d'Abraham qui a tenu parfaitement [sa promesse de transmettre]
53.38 qu'aucune [âme] ne portera le fardeau (le péché) d'autrui,
53.39 et qu'en vérité, l'homme n'obtient que [le fruit] de ses efforts;
53.40 et que son effort, en vérité, lui sera présenté (le jour du Jugement).
53.41 Ensuite il en sera récompensé pleinement,
53.42 et que tout aboutit, en vérité, vers ton Seigneur,
53.43 et que c'est Lui qui a fait rire et qui a fait pleurer,

53.53 And it was He who toppled the towns, now in ruins,
53.54 When there enveloped them what enveloped.
53.55 So which of your Lord's bounties do you wish to question?
53.56 Here now is a warner, one among others before him.
53.57 The Imminent Event is at hand!
53.58 It shall have no revealer apart from God.
53.59 So is it this discourse that you find so strange?
53.60 And you laugh instead of weeping –
53.61 lost in your frivolity?
53.62 Bow to God and worship!

53.44 et que c'est Lui qui a fait mourir et qui a ramené à la vie,
53.45 et que c'est Lui qui a crée les deux éléments de couple, le mâle et la femelle,
53.46 d'une goutte de sperme quand elle est éjaculée
53.47 et que la seconde création Lui incombe,
53.48 et c'est Lui qui a enrichi et qui a fait acquérir.
53.49 Et c'est Lui qui est le Seigneur de Sirius,
53.50 et c'est Lui qui a fait périr les anciens 'Aad,
53.51 ainsi que les Thamûd, et Il fit que rien n'en subsistât,
53.52 ainsi que le peuple de Noé antérieurement, car ils étaient encore plus injustes et plus violents,
53.53 de même qu'Il anéantit les villes renversées.
53.54 Et les recouvrit de ce dont Il les recouvrit.
53.55 Lequel donc des bienfaits de ton Seigneur mets-tu en doute?
53.56 Voici un avertisseur analogue aux avertisseurs anciens:
53.57 l'Imminente (L'heure du Jugement) s'approche.
53.58 Rien d'autre en dehors d'Allah ne peut la dévoiler.
53.59 Quoi! vous étonnez-vous de ce discours (le Coran)?
53.60 Et vous [en] riez et n'[en] pleurez point?
53.61 absorbés [que vous êtes] par votre distraction.
53.62 Prosternez-vous donc à Allah et adorez-Le.

سورة النجم

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَى (1) مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى (2) وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى (3) إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَى (4) عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ
الْقُوَى (5) ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى (6) وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى (7) ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى (8) فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى (9) فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ
مَا أَوْحَى (10) مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى (11) أَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَى مَا يَرَى (12) وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى (13) عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى
(14) عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى (15) إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى (16) مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (17) لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ
الْكُبْرَى (18) أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّى (19) وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَى (20) أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنْثَى (21) تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَى
(22) إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ
جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَى (23) أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى (24) فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى (25) وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي
شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى (26) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ
الْأُنْثَى (27) وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا (28) فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى عَنْ
ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (29) ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدَى (30)
وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى (31) الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ

كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ
فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى (32) أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى (33) وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى (34) أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى
(35) أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى (36) وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى (37) أَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (38) وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ
إِلَّا مَا سَعَى (39) وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى (40) ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى (41) وَأَنَّ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَى (42) وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ
وَأَبْكَى (43) وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا (44) وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنْثَى (45) مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى (46) وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّشْأَةَ
الْأُخْرَى (47) وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَى وَأَقْنَى (48) وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى (49) وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَى (50) وَثَمُودَ فَمَا أَبْقَى (51)
وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَى (52) وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى (53) فَغَشَّاهَا مَا غَشَّى (54) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى
(55) هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِنَ النُّذُرِ الْأُولَى (56) أَزِفَتِ الْآزِفَةُ (57) لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ (58) أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ
(59) وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ (60) وَأَنْتُمْ سَامِدُونَ (61) فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا (62)

Azaiez

Les versets 4 à 18 constituent une figure de composition où les unités en rapport deux à deux sont disposées de manière parallèle ABCD x A’B’C’D’. Cette construction a un élément central qui est une question et qui oriente le sens de l’ensemble. La cohérence de cette composition est renforcée par la présence d’une paronomase (*kuwa-kubra*) et une assertion centrale qui oriente le sens de l’ensemble:

4. إن هو إلا وحي يوحى
5. علمه شديد القوى (*kuwa*)

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a. 6. ذو مرة فاستوى
b. 7. وهو بالأفق الأعل
8. ثم دنا فتدلى
9. فكان قاب قوسين أو أدنى
c. 10. فأوحى إلى عبده ما أوحى
d. 11. ما كذب الفؤاد ما رأى

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(12) أفتمارونه على ما يرى

---

a’ 13. ولقد رآه نزلة أخرى
b’ 14. عند سدرة المنتهى
15. عندها جنة المأوى
c’ 16. إذ يغشى السدرة ما يغشى
d’ 17. ما زاغ البصر وما طغى

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18. لقد رأى من آيات ربه الكبر (*kubra*)

Crone[2]

Q 53, *al-Nağm*, "The Star," is a famous short *sūra* describing a vision of God or His angel. It consists of 62 verses in rhymed prose, with the same rhyme used in all but the last six verses, and it falls into four parts.

I. The disputed *ṣāḥib*

This unit opens with an oracular verdict on the credibility of "your man (*ṣāḥibukum*)" narrated in the style of a pre-Islamic diviner (*kāhin*) delivering a verdict in a dispute brought to him, if we may trust the tradition on *ğāhilī* Arabia.[3] The verdict is that the disputed person is speaking the truth when he claims to have seen a heavenly being and is neither mistaken nor trying to mislead: he has indeed received a revelation from a mighty power. The *sūra* proceeds to describe how this revelation was imparted and concludes by rhetorically asking why the opponents refuse to believe what he says (53:1–18).

There are several problems in this section. Leaving aside the oddity of the *fa-* in verse 6, where it introduces an earlier event rather than a subsequent one, a major problem is the identity of the speaker; I shall leave that question till the end of part I. Another problem is the identity of the heavenly being imparting revelation to the disputed person. One takes the revealer to be to God, since the recipient is identified as "His servant" (53:10), but this identification has always been controversial, and a parallel passage in Q 81 identifies the power as the angel by the throne:

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2 A later version of this commentary has been published as "Problems in Sura 53," *BSOAS* 78 (2015) 1, 15–23.

3 For *kāhin*s (of whom there were several different kinds) acting in dispute settlements, see Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Munammaq*, ed. Ḫ. A. Fāriq (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif, 1964). The procedures are particularly well described in the cases at 114–6 (disputed presence at a *mağlis*) and 118–20 (accusation of adultery; also in other works). Ibn Ḥabīb strangely calls both cases a *munāfara*, a boasting competition, perhaps because honour was the issue in both of them, but real boasting competitions were about the relative merit and nobility of two men and normally settled by *ḥakam*s, usually translated "umpires" or "arbitrators" (correctly, if by that one means judges whose verdict cannot be enforced). There were several kinds of them too. The key difference between *ḥakam*s and *kāhin*s was that *ḥakam*s were knowledgeable about tribal law, whereas *kāhin*s had knowledge of the supernatural. *Ḥakam*s were chosen on the basis of their "nobility, truthfulness, reliability, leadership, age, dignity and experience", as al-Yaʿqūbī says (*Taʾrīḫ*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma [Leiden: Brill, 1883], 2:299), and many were chiefs. By contrast, diviners had opted out of their tribes and lived in isolation, or they were women, sometimes slave women, who stood outside the tribal system of authority. It was for their supernatural knowledge that they were chosen, and they were always tested for their access to the unseen before being asked to deliver a verdict. Ibn Ḫaldūn saw this very well (T. Fahd, *La divination arabe* [Leiden: Brill, 1966], 118, citing his *Muqaddima*, ed. M. Quatremère, Paris 1858, I, 196; trans. F. Rosenthal, 2nd ed. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967], 1:218 ff., on *ʿarrāf*s and *kuhhān*). Diviners always delivered their verdict in rhymed prose (*sajʿ*). Al-Ğāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. ʿA.-S. M. Hārūn, 2nd printing (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḫānğī, 1960–61), 1:284, 289 f, claims that *ḥukkām* (enumerated by name) did so as well, thereby starting a confusion that has endured to this day.

here the oracular verdict on the disputed person's claim is that "This is the statement of a noble messenger (*rasūl karīm*), a powerful one by the firm throne whom your *ṣāḥib* did see in the clear horizon" (81:19–23), presumably giving us the oracular verdict on the disputed person's claim again (the passage is preceded by an oath of the type used by *kāhin*s, but is otherwise unexplained). Maybe there is no contradiction, for in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere angels are sometimes manifestations of God, not least the angel of the throne; but it is at odds with the rest of the Qurʾān, for the Messenger devotes immense energy to distinguishing angels from God, stressing that they are beings created by Him, not His "partners," as the pagans reputedly claimed; in other words, they did not share in His divinity and could not do anything on their own initiative. This point seems to be unknown to Q 53. It is also noteworthy that the word used for the angel in 81:19 is *rasūl*. This term does indeed appear elsewhere in the Qurʾān in the sense of angel (e.g. 11:69 f. and 51:26 f., on how the *rusul* did not touch the calf that Abraham prepared for them; cf. also the angels of death as now *rusul* and now *malāʾika* in 4:97; 6:61; 7:37; 16:28). But normally the Messenger prefers the term *malak*. In his understanding a *rasūl* was a human messenger (*apostolos*), such as he claimed to be himself. He sometimes clarifies this by glossing *rasūl* as *nabī*, prophet (e.g. 19:51), or by using *nabī* alone (e.g. 7:157). He even asserts that all the *rusul* sent before him were human (12:109; 13:38; cf. also 2:98, where the *malāʾika* and *rusul* appear together as angels and human messengers respectively). It is his opponents who think that a *rasūl* is an angel (*angelos*) and who mockingly ask what sort of *rasūl* it is that eats food and walks about in the markets (25:7).[4] The *rasūl karīm* also appears in the account of the exodus from Egypt in Q 44:17, where one takes him to be the angel of the throne (as in Q 81) identified with the angel of the Lord who accompanied the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt in the Bible (Exod. 14:19: Hebrew *malʾāk YHWH*, Greek *angelos tou theou*); but he is now understood as Moses. Here the Messenger is reshaping material that he seems to owe to Jews or Christians with a Greek-speaking past.[5] In Q 53, by contrast, he seems to be sharing not only their terminology, but also their conception of the relationship between angels and God.

Another oddity is that the divine being descends to the human recipient of the revelation: he drew near and came down, *danā fa-tadallā* (v. 8), as we are told; the image is of a bucket being lowered down a well. The second occasion on which the disputed person saw the divine being is explicitly called a *nazlatan uḫrā*, a second descent. This suggests that the divine being is indeed envisaged as an angel here. One would otherwise have expected the human recipient of divine knowledge to ascend to the divine realm. In fact, Fossum takes it for granted that

4 See further P. Crone, "Angels versus Humans as Messengers of God," in P. Townsend and M. Vidas (eds.), *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 316–18.

5 Cf. Crone, "Angels versus Humans," esp. 320–23.

Q 53:13–18 (the second vision) records an ascent to heaven,[6] and one has to grant him that we do seem to be in the heavenly realm here; but contrary to what Fossum says, the Messenger never claims to have ascended to heaven in the Qurʾān but only in the tradition, in the light of which Fossum unwittingly reads Q 53:13–18 and 17:1. It is the Messenger's opponents who undertake, or just read about, heavenly journeys: as the Messenger says, they would not believe in him unless he ascended to heaven and brought down a book (17:95). He sarcastically asks them whether they have a ladder for climbing to heaven (52:36–38) and challenges them to ascend on the heavenly cords (38:10),[7] declaring that they would not believe even if God opened a gate of heaven for them so that they could go on ascending (15:14 f). He never speaks of going on such a journey himself. On the contrary, he repeatedly stresses that the book has been sent *down* to him.[8] If a heavenly journey is indeed described in Q 53, the Messenger is once more sharing the conception of his opponents.

Yet another problem is where the first section ends. The traditional answer is at verse 18, but it is difficult to see why, for verses 18–22 are written in the same oracular style as the beginning, whereas polemics in a more prosaic style with long sentences begin in verse 23 and continue till the end of part II in verse 32. What is more, practically all of this polemical section is generally regarded as a later addition,[9] so that if part I ends at verse 18, we are left with 5 verses constituting an unmotivated section of their own. It seems considerably more likely that these seemingly unmotivated verses belong in part I and should be read in the light of it.

The verses in question ask a famous question, or rather two: "Have you seen al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, the third, the other? Have you [opponents] got males and He females? That would be an unjust division." The precise significance of this hinges on the meaning of "have you seen" (*a-fa-raʾaytum*). It is normally held to have the sense of "have you thought about/reflected on?", and this is certainly what it often means in the Qurʾān, as also in the forms *a-raʾaytum, a-lam tarā* and *a-lam tarā ilā*. But a more idiomatic translation would usually be "haven't you seen" or "can't you see" in the sense of "haven't you understood" (e.g. 36:71;

6 J. Fossum, "The Apostle Concept in the Qur'an and Pre-Islamic Near Eastern Literature," in M. Mir (ed.), *Literary Heritage of Classical Islam: Studies in Honor of James A. Bellamy* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1993), 157. Similarly Th. Nöldeke, *GdQ*[2], 1:100.

7 On them, see K. van Bladel, "Heavenly Cords and Prophetic Authority in the Quran and its Late Antique Context," *BSOAS* 70 (2007) 2, 223–46.

8 Cf. Crone, "Angels versus Humans," 334 ff.

9 The exceptions are verses 24 and 25, cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte,* 1:103 (one of the many examples where current academic orthodoxy turns out to rest on one line in this book). Nöldeke saw these verses as forming part of the original composition, presumably because they retain the oracular style. But verse 24 makes sense only against the background of verse 23 (i.e. the polemical addition) for verse 23 assures us that the devotees of the female angels are following nothing but conjecture and "what [their] souls fancy" (*mā tahwā l-anfus*), and verse 24 continues this line of thought by rhetorically asking, "Shall man have whatever he desires?" (*am li-l-insānī mā tamannā*). Verse 25, on the other hand, is just a nondescript claim that this world and the next belong to God.

56:58, 63; 58:7), and the dividing line between seeing in the literal sense and understanding is often thin (e.g. 22:65; 31:31; 36:71; 105:1).[10] Here we should probably take the question to be about literal seeing, for there is no doubt that visual evidence was an issue in connection with the pagan angels. "Have you seen your partners (*a-fa-raʾaytum šurakāʾakum*) whom you call upon apart from God?" the Messenger asks in another *sūra*, using the same expression as in 53:19 and clearly meaning seeing in a literal sense: "Show me (*arūnī*) what they have created," he continues, "or do they have a partnership (*širk*) in the heavens, or have We given them a book providing them with clear evidence?" (35:40; similarly 46:4). The answer to all four questions is clearly negative: the unbelievers have not seen their alleged deities; they cannot point to any creative activity by the deities in question; they have no partnership in heaven endowing them with privileged knowledge; and God has not given them a book vouchsafing the existence of their alleged deities. In short, the unbelievers have no evidence at all. By contrast, we are told no less than five times that the disputed person *saw* the heavenly being, a point repeated in Q 81 (v. 23): "The heart [of the viewer] did not lie about what it saw" (53:11). The reference is clearly to seeing in the literal sense, and the five passages are closely bunched together: "Will you then dispute about what he saw?" (v. 12); "He also saw him at another descent" (v. 13); "His sight never swerved" (v. 17); "He saw the greatest of the signs of the lord" (v. 18). When the continuation asks, "Have you seen al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt?" it is accordingly somewhat artificial not to understand the question literally here as well: what the oracular verdict is saying is that *he*, the disputed person, has seen a divine being whereas *they*, his opponents, have never seen their false deities, because these deities do not actually exist.[11] They are empty concepts devised by the

10 Q 105:1 has, "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?" (*a-lam tarā kayfa faʿala rabbuka bi-aṣḥābi ʿl-fīl*). Compare Zuhayr in Th. Nöldeke (ed.), *Delectus Veterum Carminum Arabicorum* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1933; repr.1961), 106.9: "Have you not seen Ibn Sinān, how he favoured him (*a-lam tarā bna Sinānin kayfa faḍḍalahu*); he does not buy people's praise of him for a price." Obviously Zuhayr is speaking of what one should learn from Ibn Sinān's example, but he presupposes that his audience has seen Ibn Sinān's behaviour. As regards 105:1, an African elephant was brought by a man from Ayla to Anastasius I in 496, almost certainly as a gift from the ruler of Axum; an extremely rare sight, it was depicted in a papyrus (S. M. Burstein, "An Elephant for Anastasius: a Note on P. Mich. Inv. 4290," in id. *Graeco-Africana* [New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas 1994], 215–17.) Compare the enormous impression made by an elephant sent by an embassy from western Sudan to Marrakesh in 1593, or that made by the Indian elephant Hanno sent to Pope Leo X around 1510 (M. García-Arenal, *Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco* [Oxford: OneWorld, 2009], 2.) It is presumably the elephant seen at Ayla that *sūra* 105 is referring to, though it fuses it with some other story, identified in the tradition as Abraham's campaign against Mecca; cf. A. L. de Prémare, "Il voulut détruire le temple: L'attaque de la Kaʿba par les rois yémenites avant l'Islam. Aḫbār et histoire," *Journal Asiatique* 288 (2000) 2, 261–367.

11 Similarly Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, 1:100, cited in J. Hämeen-Anttila, "Qur. 53:19, The Prophetic Experience and the 'Satanic Verses' – A Reconsideration," *Acta Orientalia* 58 (1997), 26, cf. also p. 30 (drawn to my attention by J. Witztum). Hämeen-Anttila plays it safe by interpreting the seeing as both literal and metaphorical.

pagans without any authority (53:23; similarly 7:71; 12:40); or they are misconstructions of genuine angels by the unbelievers, who wrongly give them female names (53:27). Either way, the pagans are venerating figments of their own imagination.

In the rest of the Qurʾān the Messenger frequently asks his opponents whether they were present at an event of which they claim knowledge, such as when Jacob died (2:133), or when God enjoined something (6:144); but in these passages he never claims that he was present or saw these events himself. On the contrary, he denies it (3:44; 12:102; 28:44–46). He has no knowledge of the occult (*al-ġayb*), as he frequently declares: the only reason he knows better than his opponents is that revelation has been sent down to him. One has to separate verses 19–22 from 1–18 in Q 53 in order not to see that he is saying something quite different here.

This brings us to the question of the identity of the speaker in part I. The answer cannot be God, for the speaker is addressing his audience directly ("Your man (*ṣāḥibukum*) is not in error or misled," 53:2; also 53:12). God does not speak directly to human beings; more precisely, he did speak to Moses, but He did not make a public statement, as the speaker does here: the verdict is addressed to a set of people who had doubted or denied the disputed person's claims, and this rules out the voice being God's. It cannot be the Messenger who is the speaker either, for one assumes him to be the disputed *ṣāḥib*. The oracular section is spoken by an external authority delivering a verdict on the disputed person, whose visions he declares to be genuine and whose sanity he endorses: this evidently is not a role that the disputed person himself could fulfil.

Who then is the speaker? Who had the authority to sit in judgement of the Messenger's claim to contact with the divine? In the rest of the Qurʾān, the Messenger regards himself as the direct representative of God and thus the ultimate authority on earth. But he does describe the recipients of the earlier book (presumably meaning that of Moses) as a source of authoritative knowledge second only to God Himself, and in a passage in which he himself doubts the veracity of his revelations, God assures him that "If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to you, ask those who recited/read the book before you" (10:94). Is he following God's instructions in Q 53? The speaker would in that case be a Jewish or Christian *kāhin*, meaning a person renowned for his knowledge of the unknown who used the techniques of his pagan counterparts. But in 10:94 it is the divine origin of what was sent down to the Messenger that the recipients of the earlier book can confirm, and God is not sending down anything to the disputed *ṣāḥib* in Q 53. What the *kāhin* is confirming is that the disputed person saw God, if perhaps only in the form of an angel, and received oral revelation (*waḥy*) from Him; we are not told anything about the contents of the revelation, nor is there any reference to a book. All this is so different from the manner in which the Messenger normally speaks that one wonders whether the disputed *ṣāḥib* is really the Messenger after all. Did the latter have a predecessor who envisaged revelation as taking place by direct contact with a divine being rather than by a book being sent down (whether as a whole or in installments), who claimed to have enjoyed such contact himself, and who objected to the pagan angels, not

because they violated the dividing line between God and created beings (which appears to have played no role in his thinking), but rather because they were female? We do not hear of such a predecessor elsewhere in the Qurʾān, but we do learn that the Messenger had competitors in his own time, at least in Yaṯrib (2:79, where they share his concept of revelation as a book), so there is nothing implausible about the proposition that there were preachers before him too, including some whose preaching anticipated features of his own. If we accept the existence of such a predecessor, we could postulate that part I had come to form part of the literary corpus of the Messenger's community before the latter appeared on the scene, for example by incorporation in a book of oracular decisions. The Messenger would in that case have liked the piece for its relevance to his own situation and recited it as he found it without taking everything it said as reflecting his own experience or, more probably, without noticing that it was not consistent with his own claims. It is striking that his comments in part II of Q 53 say nothing further about the visions and revelations of the disputed person, only about the female angels. He is equally silent about the visions and revelations elsewhere in the Qurʾān, whereas polemics against the pagan angels abound. It suggests that he had no personal experience of the visions and revelations in question.

The alternative would be to accept the identification of the disputed *ṣāḥib* as the Messenger and see the opening part of the *sūra* as reflecting an early stage in his religious life when he still shared the religious views of the pagans, including their non-exclusive concept of religious authority. But was there ever such a stage? With the exception of the Messenger's diminishing use of the term *rasūl* in the sense of angel, there is no sign of a transition from the one to the other in the Qurʾān. If there was indeed such a stage, one would have expected the Messenger to do his best to suppress it when he had reached his mature convictions; but in fact he highlights it in Q 53, seemingly oblivious to the implications. It is above all the apparent innocence with which he recites a piece endorsing ideas far from his own which suggests that he is reciting something old. But it has to be admitted that this solution is somewhat speculative. Maybe other reconstructions are possible.

(a) The Satanic verses

The tradition claims that after reciting "Have you seen al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, the third, the other?", Muḥammad was prompted by Satan to insert the verse, "These are the high-flying cranes whose intercession is sought," as a concession to the Qurayš, who reacted by being very pleased until Muḥammad withdrew it. This story has usually been accepted as true by Western historians on the grounds that it is so unflattering to Muḥammad that no Muslim could have invented it. According to Peters, for example, the story is "indubitably authentic" because "it is impossible to imagine a Muslim inventing such an inauspicious tale."[12] But this rather

12 F. E. Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 161.

presupposes that the quality of inauspiciousness, whatever exactly that may be, is an unchanging universal. Certainly, the story became problematic when the doctrine of prophetic infallibility was accepted; and today it is regarded as quite unacceptable.[13] But why should this have been how it was seen back in the early days? The story is no more unflattering to Muḥammad than is that about Gethsemane to Jesus. Jesus prays that the cup be taken from him, in fear of death; Muḥammad compromises with his kinsmen, in fear of ostracism. Both display a human weakness that makes it easier for us to identify with them. The only problem with the story of the Satanic verse is that it does not fit its supposed Qurʾānic context. The question whether the opponents have seen the three deities is clearly posed in a hostile vein, and the continuation is sharply polemical. There simply is no room for a concession here. Presumably the exegetes (or the story-tellers who preceded them) were inspired by Q 7:200 or 22:52, on Satanic suggestions assailing the Messenger's mind, and picked on Q 53 to show exactly where the Messenger's mind had been temporarily subverted.

II. Polemics against the false angels/deities

Unlike the oracular part I, the prosaic part II voices views familiar from the rest of the Qurʾān, mostly in the form of polemics against the angels or deities of the opponents. We are assured that the alleged deities are just names that the opponents and their fathers have made up without authority from God and that the culprits are just following conjecture (*ẓann*, fallible human reasoning as opposed to revelation) and their own fancies (vv. 23–25, an unflattering synonym for the same); no angel (*malak*) can intercede without God's permission (v. 26); those who give the angels (*al-malāʾika*) female names are "those who don't believe in the afterlife" (*lā yuʾminūna bi-l-āḫira*, v. 27); they follow mere conjecture (*al-ẓann*), as we are told again (v. 28). God knows better and to Him belongs everything in heaven and on earth. He will punish those who do evil and reward those who do good, and He is forgiving of those who only commit minor sins. As noted already, the prosaic polemics of part II are generally regarded as a later addition, except for verses 24–25, and this makes good sense if we take part I to predate the Messenger and part II (including verses 24–25) to have been added by the Messenger himself.[14] For example, he could have started his preaching on a particular day by reciting the oracular part I during the communal morning service (cf. 17:78) and then commented on it in the prosaic style that comes naturally in a sermon. He will in any case have thought of all of it as revelation from God (which is why it was all preserved together), for he saw the book he had received not just as confirmation (*taṣdīq*) of earlier revelations, but also as *tafṣīl*, a spelling out or explanation, and held both the verses

13 Cf. S. Ahmed, "Satanic Verses," *EQ*, 4:531–35; idem, forthcoming book entitled *The Formation of Islamic Orthodoxy in Early Islam: The Problem of the Satanic Verses in the First Two Centuries.*

14 Cf. above, note 9.

and the explanation to come from God: God established the verses first and then explained their meaning, as emerges from 11:1 (*kitābun uḥkimat āyātuhu ṯumma fuṣṣilat min ladun ḥakīmin ḫabīrin*; cf. also 7:52). It is similarly God who has spelt out (*faṣṣala*) the types of food He has forbidden (6:119), and the verses or signs (*faṣṣalnā al-āyāt*, 6:126). As Sinai observes, only God can act as the exegete of the heavenly book.[15] The Qurʾān is *tafṣīl al-kitāb*, an explanation of the (heavenly) book (10:37); it was sent down *mufaṣṣalan*, endowed with an explanation (6:114); the verses of the heavenly book were "unpacked" in the form of an Arabic recitation (*fuṣṣilat qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan*, 41:3).[16] The Qurʾān is both a translation and an explanation of the heavenly book, as Sinai remarks; but whereas some of the formulations suggest that the two were indistinguishable, Q 11:1 (cited above) envisages them as consecutive. This is the scenario proposed here in connection with Q 53:23 ff: first the Messenger recites the "translation," then he proceeds to the explanation. The abrupt transition from the oracular to the prosaic style probably struck both him and his audience as perfectly natural.

III. Polemics against the miser

After the polemics against the female angels the sentences become short again and we are back in the oracular style of the beginning, including the peculiar use of *fa-* to explain an antecedent (v. 35). Once again the question, "Have you seen?" is asked, this time addressed to "you" in the singular: "Have you seen the one who turns back, gives a little, then hardens [his heart]: does *he* have knowledge of the unseen, having seen it?" This is plainly a continuation of the question whether the opponents have seen the three goddesses. Here the first "have you seen" should probably be understood in the normal Qurʾānic sense of "have you considered" or "haven't you seen how", but what the next line denies is that the miser has actually seen the unseen. (The variation is undoubtedly deliberate.) The passage continues by asking, "Has he not been told what is in the scrolls of Moses and Abraham, who fulfilled [their obligations], [namely] that no [soul] bearing a burden can bear the burden of another [soul], that man shall have only as he has striven, that his striving will be seen, and that then he will be amply rewarded for it" (vv. 36–41). In other words, has the miser not learnt from the writings of those two prophets that people will be requited for what they have done? The implicit contrast is with people who think they can rely on the merits of their forefathers (presumably the Israelites, cf. e. g. Q 2:47 ff., 80). It is followed by some Qurʾānic commonplaces on how God is the bringer of death and life (53:44, where the Messenger uses the Deuteronomic word order also current among his opponents),[17] as well as the creator of male and female, the bring-

15 N. Sinai, "Qurʾānic Self-Referentiality as a Strategy of Self-Authorization", in S. Wild (ed.), *Self-Referentiality in the Qurʾān* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 127. (I owe my knowledge of this study to J. Witztum).

16 The formulation here is Sinai's ("Self-Referentiality," 121).

17 Cf. P. Crone, "The Qurʾānic *Mushrikūn* and the Resurrection, Part I," *BSOAS* 75 (2012) 3, 461 ff.

er of a second creation, and the destroyer of the people of Noah, ʿĀd and Ṯamūd, all of which one can read in many other *sūra*s. The passage culminates in yet another question: "So what benefits of your lord will you dispute? This is a warner from among the warners of old" (vv. 55 f).[18]

This passage is a mirror image of the first. Both contrast the fanciful ideas of the opponents with the certainty possessed by prophets: have you polytheists seen your alleged deities, has the miserly person seen the *ġayb?* (vv. 19, 34). Why then do you dispute your *ṣāḥib*'s claims, why do you dispute the benefits of your lord, who has sent you a warner? (vv. 12, 55 f). The two units are built around the same themes of seeing and wrongly disputing, and the passage about the uncharitable person also echoes the first by re-using the same words: *nazlatan uḫrā* is echoed in *wizra uḫrā* and *al-našʾata l-uḫrā* (vv. 13, 38, 47), *sidrati l-muntahā* is echoed in *ilā rabbika l-muntahā* (vv. 14, 42), *ṭaġā* in *aṭġā* (vv. 17, 52), *yaġšā* in *ġašā* (vv. 16, 54), and *unṯā* in *al-ḏakaru wa-l-unṯā* (vv. 21, 45). The piece on the uncharitable person is not nearly so striking a composition as the first oracular section, however, and it voices views that accords with the rest of the book, suggesting that it is the Messenger himself who is composing here. If he is citing an earlier work in part I, here he is simply imitating it, composing a continuation in the same style.

IV. Warnings of the imminent end

The last six verses retain the oracular style but introduce new rhymes in a manner suggesting a deliberate variation to wake people up. "The end is imminent; nobody but God can unveil it [different translations are possible]. So do you marvel at this talk? Will you laugh rather than weep, diverting yourselves? Rather, prostrate to God and worship!" (vv. 57–62). This sounds like the Messenger composing again.

Dye

Cette sourate entend répondre à l'accusation selon laquelle le messager serait fou ou possédé. Il s'agit donc d'affirmer l'origine divine de la révélation, et d'en fournir les preuves (même si le raisonnement est circulaire) en faisant référence aux « visions » reçues par le messager. Le reproche de « possession » adressé à un messager (pas nécessairement Muḥammad) n'est pas inhabituel dans le Coran (Q 23:25 ; Q 34:8 ; Q 51:52).

Les vv. 1–18, très ambigus, doivent être rapprochés de Q 81:15–29.

Vv. 1–2 : Le sujet de *hawā* est-il l'étoile, ou *ṣāḥibukum*, comme le suggère Luxenberg 2011: 282–284 ? Le parallèle avec Q 81:15–16 conforte plutôt la lecture traditionnelle. Néanmoins, le v. 3 concerne très directement *ṣāḥibukum*...

18 The precise meaning of this is open to debate since no benefits have been mentioned, only punishments, but we can leave that aside here.

V. 5 : on considère généralement qu'il est question ici d'un ange à la force prodigieuse (Gabriel ?) qui enseigne la révélation au messager. Mais noter Q 55:2, qui dit que c'est Dieu (*al-Raḥmān*) qui a enseigné *al-Qurʾān* (sans mentionner le destinataire de cet enseignement).

V. 10 : ce verset concerne Dieu (et non l'ange), ce qui pose un problème de composition, car les vv. 5–9 sont censés parler de l'ange.

V. 17 : l'usage de *ṭaġā* est curieux. Que signifie « la vue n'a pas outrepassé les limites » ? Luxenberg (2011: 296) suggère de voir ici le syriaque *ṭʿā*, « errer, être trompé », et il n'a peut-être pas tort.

V. 18 : quel est l'objet de la vision ? Rien ne contraint ni n'interdit de penser que Dieu est *l'objet même* de la vision. Le v. 10 ne dit rien de précis sur ce qui est révélé (et ne parle pas de vision) ; le v. 18 parle des signes du Seigneur, ce qui reste évasif. Un sous-texte possible est la troisième *Hymne sur le paradis* d'Éphrem, comme le note Tesei. J'ajoute un autre sous-texte (cf. Van Reeth 2010), également eschatologique, à savoir le *Pasteur d'Hermas* 67. 8. 1 (œuvre très populaire dans l'Antiquité). Il y est question d'un saule gigantesque auprès duquel se tient un ange immense : l'ange coupe une partie des branches de cet arbre ; il donne une branche, un rameau, à chacun des trépassés qui se trouvent sous l'arbre, et leur degré de sainteté et de pureté est déterminé par l'état de la branche qu'ils ont reçue…

El-Badawi

This *sūra* articulates the shift away from astrolatry-syncretism towards a renewed worship of God (*Allāh*) alone. Al-Lāt, Manāt, ʿUzzā and Shu'rā were associated with constellations worshiped throughout the Ancient Near East, cf. Venus-Aphrodite, Mitra, Sirius-Tishtria-Sopdet.

The vision of the speaker (presumably Muḥammad) in vv. 1–18 is aimed at adherents of these star cults, in order that they appreciate the signs (*āyāt*) of God, but not worship them. V. 1 relegates these heavenly deities into mere stars that were created stating, "by the star when it became [was created? Cf. Syr. *H-W-Y*]."

Vv. 19–30 condemn these adherents on account of their unfair (*ḍīzā*) identification of angels as females (ostensibly because they and their forefathers simply made it up), their limited knowledge (*mablaġuhum min al-ʿilm*) and their recourse to speculation (*ẓann*).

Vv. 31–56 warns and guides these adherents by demonstrating the wonder of God's signs, including the stories of Arabian and Biblical prophets. V. 55 shares most of the otherwise unique formulas articulated in Q 55, namely "so by which of the favors of your Lord will you…?"

The rhyme in vv. 57–62 changes along with the content, calling for the audience to turn away from extravagance and laughter towards weeping and worship.

The structure of Q 53 appears to be composite, with longer Medinan-style verses providing legislation and commentary inserted. This includes v. 26 which suggests at this stage that the "intercession/abundance" (*šafāʿāh*, Syr. *šēpʿā*) of angels is still

possible, given God's permission (not their gender). There are at least 2 literary layers (for more see Uri Rubin, "Muḥammad," *EQ*):

Layer I: 1–22... 24–25... 33–62

Layer II: ...23... 26–32... (52?)

Carl Ernst (2011: 100–3) does not find Tabari's account of the "Satanic Verses" "*qissat al-ġarāniq*" consistent with the stylistic features and structure of Q 53. I agree.

Khalfallah

Il conviendrait d'exploiter cette sourate, notamment ses débuts, pour rediscuter des modalités du *waḥy* dans une optique comparée. A dessein, je laisse de côté la question des versets dits sataniques, couramment repris par tous. J'attire cependant l'attention sur la nouvelle explication, plutôt originale, que propose Ibn ʿAšūr, ainsi sur l'analyse de Djaït (2008) dans *La vie de Muḥammad*.

Le début de cette sourate fait allusion aux trois modalités exclusives, expliquées dans Q. 42:51–53, selon lesquelles la Parole d'Allah se transforme en message intelligible par les humains. Décortiquer ces divers cheminements pourrait aider à instaurer une nouvelle théorie comparée des modes de reproduction de la Parole divine, selon les trois religions monothéistes, mais aussi selon les autres formes de la créativité artistique. Retrouve-t-on ces mêmes modalités dans la Bible et la Torah, sachant que le Coran décrit la manière dont Moïse avait reçu cette Parole, et qu'il présente Jésus comme la Parole même de Dieu.

Au long terme, mon objet, je l'espère, est d'aboutir à des éléments de réponse, aux énigmes du transfert du vouloir-dire de Dieu en langage humain, ou le passage du *kalām nafsī* au *kalām lafẓī* qui, autrefois, intriguaient les théologiens musulmans.

Fait abstrait et subtil, ce passage de l'état « psychique » à l'état verbal avait plusieurs raisons d'échapper aux contemporains de Muḥammad qui l'avaient accusé d'être devin, fou ou sorcier...

Rippin

These vision passages (vv. 5–12 and 13–18) tend to be interpreted in tradition as a vision of Gabriel as the divine messenger. The idea that they are visions of God has been suggested, partially on the basis of v. 10 and its use of *ilā ʿabdihi*. It also makes some sense when put with vv. 19ff where the audience is asked if they have seen their own gods, al-Lāt, al-ʿUzza and Manāt. This then makes the parallel suggested by some to the Mosaic paradigm and the suggested reference in v. 10 not to Muḥammad but Moses (and Deut 34:4) somewhat possible.

Sirry

The first eighteen verses are highly allusive and ambiguous in the sense that the identity of the subject and object is so unclear. Assuming that "your companion"

in v. 2 means "Muḥammad," who is not going astray and that the words he uttered do not arise out of his own desires, who did teach him in "He was taught by one mighty in power" (v. 5)? Who is this "one mighty in power"? Is it God or Gabriel? Does it make any difference? Most *mufassirūn* are inclined to the idea that it was Gabriel who taught Muḥammad. However, the problem with this interpretation is that in v. 10 "he revealed to his servant what he revealed," which seems to suggest that it is God who taught and revealed, because it is unthinkable that Muḥammad is called "Gabriel's servant." The object of Muḥammad's vision in vv. 11–13 is also unclear. According to van Ess (1999), the object of Muḥammad's vision was initially understood to be God, but later on was explained as Gabriel because of theological reason of associating God with a physical presence. In fact, this unnamed character identified simply with "one mighty in power" opens the possibility for theological differences. In addition, the inclusion of this passage in the account of the prophet's ascension is difficult to understand because it is He who descended (v. 4) rather than Muḥammad who ascended. V. 13: Muḥammad saw him at another descent. But, again, who is the identity of "he" who descended and whom Muḥammad saw is unclear. This passage provides a good example of how allusive the Qurʾān is. It lacks words or units of information which might otherwise be considered essential to a clear expression of meaning, which gives the impression of being addressed to an audience which could supply the missing details to which the text only alludes.

Tesei

In his article in *QHC*[2], Luxenberg argues that the word *sidra* is in fact the Syriac term *sedrā*, meaning veil. He then proposes to read v. 16 as *iḏ taġšā l-sidratu mā taġšā*, "although the veil covered what it covered" (2011: 294–5). Nevertheless, this reading is complicated by the absence of the suffix *-hu* after the final verb. In fact, one would expect the sentence to be *iḏ taġšā l-sidratu mā taġšāhu*. It seems to me that, keeping the meaning of *sidra* as tree, we have an almost perfect parallelism with Ephrem's description of Paradise found in the third *Hymn on Paradise*. In fact, Ephrem describes the tree of knowledge as marking the boundary between the two levels of Paradise (*Hymn on Paradise* III. 3). This image is recalled by the Qurʾānic expression *sidrat al-muntahā* (v. 14), while that of *ǧannat al-maʾwā* suggests that the scene occurs at the boundary between different (two?) sections of the Garden (the idea of the two levels of Paradise is possibly alluded to as the *ǧannatāni* mentioned in Q 55:46). At the same time, Ephrem states that the tree of knowledge veils and hides the sanctuary, namely the Holy of Holies (*Hymn on Paradise* III. 5). In this case, the sentence at v. 16 could be read as *iḏ taġšā l-sidratu mā tuġšā*, "as the tree covers what is covered" (which could be better interpreted as "what must/ought be covered," as Christian Lange suggested to me). In this case, the following sentence at v. 17 would mean that the visionary has looked at what is found beyond the tree, that is directly into the Holy of Holies. This reading is confirmed by the closing sen-

tence at v. 18, *laqad raʾā min āyati rabbihi l-kubrā*, stating that the visionary has seen the greatest sign of his Lord.

QS 40 Q 55

55.1 The All-Merciful!
55.2 He taught the Qur'an,
55.3 He created man,
55.4 He taught him eloquence.
55.5 Sun and moon move in measured order;
55.6 Stars and trees bow down;
55.7 The sky He raised, and established the balance,
55.8 So that you do not infringe the balance,
55.9 But measure in fairness, and not short-change the balance.
55.10 The earth He laid out for the living,
55.11 Wherein are fruits and palms in clusters,
55.12 Grains on stalks, and sweet-scented flowers.
55.13 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.14 He created man from thin clay, like earthenware,
55.15 And created the *Jinn* from shimmering flame.
55.16 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.17 Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests!
55.18 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.19 He brought the two seas together, but as they meet,
55.20 Between them is a barrier they do not trespass.
55.21 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.22 From both come forth pearl and coral.
55.23 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.24 To Him belong running ships, galleons, plowing the sea like mountain-tops.
55.25 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.26 All who are upon it shall perish,
55.27 And there remains the face of your Lord, Majestic and Noble.
55.28 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.29 All in the heavens and earth beseech Him;
He is ever engaged upon some matter.

55.1 Le Tout Miséricordieux.
55.2 Il a enseigné le Coran.
55.3 Il a créé l'homme.
55.4 Il lui a appris à s'exprimer clairement.
55.5 Le soleil et la lune [évoluent] selon un calcul [minutieux].
55.6 Et l'herbe et les arbres se prosternent.
55.7 Et quant au ciel, Il l'a élevé bien haut. Et Il a établi la balance,
55.8 afin que vous ne transgressiez pas dans la pesée:
55.9 Donnez [toujours] le poids exact et ne faussez pas la pesée.
55.10 Quant à la terre, Il l'a étendue pour les êtres vivants:
55.11 il s'y trouve des fruits, et aussi les palmiers aux fruits recouverts d'enveloppes,
55.12 tout comme les grains dans leurs balles, et les plantes aromatiques.
55.13 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.14 Il a crée l'homme d'argile sonnante comme la poterie;
55.15 et Il a créé les djinns de la flamme d'un feu sans fumée.
55.16 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.17 Seigneur des deux Levants et Seigneur des deux Couchants!
55.18 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.19 Il a donné libre cours aux deux mers pour se rencontrer;
55.20 il y a entre elles une barrière qu'elles ne dépassent pas.
55.21 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.22 De ces deux [mers] sortent la perle et le corail.
55.23 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.24 A Lui appartiennent les vaisseaux élevés sur la mer comme des montagnes.
55.25 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.26 Tout ce qui est sur elle [la terre] doit disparaître,

55.30 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.31 We shall apply Ourselves to you, you two great masses of creation!
55.32 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.33 Species of *Jinn* and humans, if you can make your escape,
From the regions of the heavens and earth, escape!
You shall not escape except by divine authority.
55.34 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.35 Hurled upon the two of you shall be flames of fire and brass,
And none shall come to your aid.
55.36 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.37 When the sky is split,
Turning rose-colored like leather;
55.38 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.39 That Day none shall be questioned regarding their guilt,
Neither human nor *Jinn*.
55.40 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.41 Sinners shall be known by their outward visage,
And they shall be seized by forelocks and feet.
55.42 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.43 Here is the hell that sinners deny!
55.44 They shall wander between it and water, fiercely boiling.
55.45 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.46 But to him who fears the encounter of his Lord are two gardens,
55.47 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.48 Both covered with foliage.
55.49 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.50 In it are two running springs.
55.51 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.52 In it are, of every fruit, two kinds.
55.53 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.27.[Seule] subsistera La Face [Wajh] de ton Seigneur, plein de majesté et de noblesse.
55.28 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.29 Ceux qui sont dans les cieux et la terre L'implorent. Chaque jour, Il accomplit une ouvre nouvelle.
55.30 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.31 Nous allons bientôt entreprendre votre jugement, ô vous les deux charges [hommes et djinns].
55.32 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.33 O peuple de djinns et d'hommes! Si vous pouvez sortir du domaine des cieux et de la terre, alors faites-le. Mais vous ne pourrez en sortir qu'à l'aide d'un pouvoir [illimité].
55.34 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.35 Il sera lancé contre vous un jet de feu et de fumée [ou de cuivre fondu], et vous ne serez pas secourus.
55.36 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.37 Puis quand le ciel se fendra et deviendra alors écarlate comme le cuir rouge.
55.38 Lequel des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.39 Alors, ni aux hommes ni aux djinns, on ne posera des questions à propos de leurs péchés.
55.40 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.41 On reconnaîtra les criminels à leurs traits. Ils seront donc saisis par les toupets et les pieds.
55.42 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.43 Voilà l'Enfer que les criminels traitaient de mensonge.
55.44 Ils feront le va-et-vient entre lui (l'Enfer) et une eau bouillante extrêmement chaude.
55.45 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.46 Et pour celui qui aura craint de comparaître devant son Seigneur, il y aura deux jardins;
55.47 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.48 Aux branches touffues.

55.54 They recline on couches, their mattresses of brocade,
With the fruit of the two Gardens close to hand.
55.55 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.56 Therein are spouses, chaste of glance,
Undefiled before them by humans or *Jinn*.
55.57 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.58 As if they were rubies or coral.
55.59 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.60 Can the reward of goodness be other than good?
55.61 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.62 Below these two are two other Gardens,
55.63 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.64 Adumbral.
55.65 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.66 In them are two fountains, ever gushing.
55.67 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.68 In these two are fruits, palms and pomegranates.
55.69 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.70 In them are maidens, virtuous and beautiful.
55.71 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.72 Dark-eyed, confined to pavilions.
55.73 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.74 Undefiled before them by humans or *Jinn*.
55.75 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.76 They recline on green cushions, and sumptuous rugs.
55.77 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.78 Blessed be the name of your Lord, Majestic and Noble!

55.49 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.50 Ils y trouveront deux sources courantes.
55.51 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.52 Ils contiennent deux espèces de chaque fruit.
55.53 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.54 Ils seront accoudés sur des tapis doublés de brocart, et les fruits des deux jardins seront à leur portée (pour être cueillis).
55.55 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.56 Ils y trouveront [les houris] aux regards chastes, qu'avant eux aucun homme ou djinn n'aura déflorées.
55.57 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.58 Elles seront [aussi belles] que le rubis et le corail.
55.59 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.60 Y a-t-il d'autre récompense pour le bien, que le bien?
55.61 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.62 En deçà de ces deux jardins il y aura deux autres jardins.
55.63 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.64 Ils sont d'un vert sombre.
55.65 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.66 Dans lesquelles il y aura deux sources jaillissantes.
55.67 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.68 Ils contiennent des fruits, des palmiers, et des grenadiers.
55.69 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.70 Là, il y aura des vertueuses et des belles.
55.71 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.72 Des houris cloîtrées dans les tentes,
55.73 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.74 qu'avant eux aucun homme ou djinn n'a déflorées.

55.75 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.76 Ils seront accoudés sur des coussins verts et des tapis épais et jolis.
55.77 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.78 Béni soit le Nom de ton Seigneur, Plein de Majesté et de Munificence!

سورة الرحمن
الرَّحْمَنُ (1) عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ (2) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ (3) عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (4) الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (5) وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (6)
وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (7) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (8) وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (9) وَالْأَرْضَ
وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (10) فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (11) وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ (12) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (13)
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (14) وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ (15) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (16) رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ
وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (17) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (18) مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ (19) بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ (20) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (21) يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (22) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (23) وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنْشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ
كَالْأَعْلَامِ (24) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (25) كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ (26) وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (27) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (28) يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ (29) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (30) سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ
أَيُّهَا الثَّقَلَانِ (31) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (32) يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ (33) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ 34)) يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِنْ نَارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا
تَنْتَصِرَانِ (35) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (36) فَإِذَا انْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ (37) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (38)
فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ (39) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (40) يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي
وَالْأَقْدَامِ (41) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (42) هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ (43) يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آنٍ (44)
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (45) وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ (46) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (47) ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ (48) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (49) فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ (50) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (51) فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ (52) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (53) مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ (54) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (55) فِيهِنَّ
قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ (56) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (57) كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (58) فَبِأَيِّ
آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (59) هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (60) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (61) وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ (62)
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (63) مُدْهَامَّتَانِ (64) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (65) فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ (66) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبَانِ (67) فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ (68) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (69) فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ (70) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبَانِ (71) حُورٌ مَقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ (72) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (73) لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ (74) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (75) مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ (76) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (77) تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي
الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (78)

Dye

Du point de vue de la *Formgeschichte*, on peut dire que cette sourate a beaucoup des caractéristiques d'un psaume – et on devrait même parler d'un *psaume coranique*. Les vv. 1–32 développent le thème des bienfaits de Dieu (thème ô combien présent dans les Psaumes), et les versets suivants des considérations eschatologiques.

La présence d'un refrain (vv. 13, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77) indique-t-elle la possibilité d'un chant alterné ? On remarque par ailleurs, à partir du v. 46, la présence de deux versions d'un même propos. Outre, bien sûr, les répétitions du refrain, nous avons

des reprises évidentes entre les versets suivants : 46/62, 48/64, 50/66, 52/68, 54/76, 56/70 (le fait qu'il soit question de « jardins » juste avant me semble favoriser le sens de « fruits » sur celui de « vierges », mais cela reste à discuter), 58/72, 60/76. Ce n'est pas le seul exemple dans le Coran où deux récits parallèles, à certains égards redondants, sont conservés (cf. Q 18:9 – 16). Quelles conclusions peut-on en tirer concernant l'histoire de la composition du texte ? Normalement, la présence de deux traditions parallèles dans un ouvrage indique, avec une certaine probabilité, que le texte concerné a fait l'objet de révisions, soit parce que deux traditions originellement indépendantes ont été combinées, soit parce que le rédacteur de la tradition parallèle la plus récente a choisi d'intégrer sa composition à la tradition originale.

Concernant le duel du v. 13, si souvent répété : l'hypothèse la plus simple me semble être celle d'un duel avec valeur d'augmentatif, comme le note Blachère (1956: 568) et cela s'accorde bien avec la rime en *–ān* de la quasi-totalité de la sourate (sauf vv. 24, 27, 41, 72 et 78, avec une rime en *–ām*, mais cela ne rompt pas la continuité de la rime ; noter cependant vv. 14 – 15, rime en *–ār*, 17, rime en *–ayn*, et 43, rime en *–ūn*). L'autre hypothèse, fondée sur le v. 33, explique ce duel par une référence conjointe aux hommes et aux *ǧinn*s.

El-Badawi

The combination of rhyme (the dual *faʿlān, fuʿlān* form and similar nouns) and refrain (*fa-bi-ayy ālāʾi rabbikumā tukaḏḏibān*) make this *sūra* unique. Only Q 77, which is much shorter, makes use of a refrain (*waylun yamaʾiḏin li-l-mukaḏḏibīn*); and only Q 53:55 comes close to the wording of Q 55's refrain.

The epistemological sequence in vv. 1 – 4 is meaningful: *al-raḥmān–>al-*Qurʾān*–>al-insan–>al-bayān*. The parallelism (*taṭābuq*) of the remaining verses is striking, e. g., mankind and *ǧinn*; the two seas; inhabitants of hell and paradise; two gardens etc. On *ḥūr ʿīn* see my comments on Q 44. For further analysis of Q 55 in light of Psalm 136 see Neuwirth 2010.

Pregill

Spectacularly evocative of the Psalms in structure and theme; see especially Neuwirth's analysis comparing it to Ps 136 in particular (2010: 215 – 223). The *sūra* epitomizes the approach to the psalmic tradition found in Qurʾānic discourse: it is referential, even reverential, but stridently revisionist as well, as the classic images and themes of the Psalter are rendered into a new linguistic register and adapted to a new context. I would add only that it is worth considering both how the Qurʾān may be evoking the Psalms themselves and how the forms of engagement with the Psalms found in older literary forms that preceded the Qurʾān may have had some impact on it as well. Antiphonal compositions are a hallmark of various branches of late antique Christian literature, and here, as elsewhere, what we might call the

Qurʾān in its "psalmic mode" should be analyzed carefully for signs of mediation through or resonance with psalmic forms in Syriac, Greek, Ethiopic, et al.

Reynolds

The *mīzān* of v. 7 seems to be a cosmic balance by which God will measure the deeds of souls on the Day of Judgment. This would match the larger theme of the *sūra*, namely the signs of God's majesty. Q 57:25(a) (cf. Q 42:17), however, explains that God has sent down this "balance" with the prophets: "Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice." Here "balance" seems to refer to the (divine) judgment/authority given to the prophets. In v. 9 of our *sūra* this balance seems to be offered to all people. In other words, here the Qurʾān does not mean to teach merchants how to act in the market (as Paret would have it: "vielmehr das Gewicht setzt, so wie es recht ist, und Waage nicht fälscht [so daß der Kunde zu wenig Ware erhält]"). Instead the Qurʾān means to admonish all humans – all of whom are vicegerents (or *ḫalīfa*s) of God and given the power to judge – to judge well (as God does).

The *sūra* as a whole presents reasons to believe in the Qurʾān's God – both because nature attests to Him and because of the pleasures of paradise that will be the lot of believers, or the torments of hell that will be the lot of unbelievers. Its articulation of these reasons is shaped beautifully here with the refrain. On the other hand God does not appear especially merciful (as the title of the *sūra* might suggest). It is not so much bounties/favors of which this *sūra* speaks but rather His wondrous signs – and those who deny these signs will suffer the torments of hell.

Tesei

The two seas mentioned at v. 19 are elsewhere described as two cosmic bodies of sweet and salt water (Q 25:53, 27:61, 35:12). Considering the late antique cultural context, it is clear that these two seas correspond to the waters that according to the Biblical cosmology are located above and below the firmament (cf. Gen 1:6–8). In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Ephrem explains that the lower waters became salty "when they were gathered into seas on the third day," while the upper waters remained sweet and did not become bitter "for they had not been left on the land to become stagnant" (1994: 82–4). Furthermore, in his description about the creation of the firmament Narsai states: "Oh balance which divided the great water cistern and gathered it in two seas (*tryn ymmyn*), in the heaven and in the deep!" (1968: 528).

The Qurʾān never mentions the presence of the firmament to divide the two seas (which is however implied) but it rather refers to different partitions between them: the *barzaḫ* in Q 25:53 and 55:20; the *ḥiǧr maḥǧūr* in Q 25:53; the *ḥāǧiz* in Q 27:6. The term *barzaḫ* occurs elsewhere (Q 23:99–100) to designate an obstacle that prevents the dead from returning to the world of the living (see commentaries on QS 22). Thus

in the Qurʾān the term *barzaḫ* has the twofold function of cosmological and eschatological ban. Quite the same situation can be observed about the notion of *ḥiǧr maḥǧūr*. In fact, Q 25:22 states that *ḥiǧr maḥǧūr* are the words the angels say while barring the way to Paradise to sinners. Thus, as well as the *barzaḫ*, the *ḥiǧr maḥǧūr* seems to have the twofold function of cosmological and eschatological partition. It is also notable that while the two seas are said to be separated by these partitions, elsewhere the Qurʾān states that they also meet somewhere. This place is called *maǧmaʿ al-baḥrayn* (Q 18:60–65) and within the Qurʾānic cosmology it holds a special connection with the water flowing out from Paradise (cf. Tesei 2014a). Therefore, it seems that the zones connected to the two cosmic seas occupy a central place within the Qurʾānic "eschatological cosmology."

Younes

For the word *ālāʾ*, variously translated as *favors*, *blessings*, *bounties*, *boons*, or *benefits*, lexicons list *alan* (ألىً), *ilan* (إلىً), or *ilyun* (إليٌ) as the singular counterpart (Badawi and Abdel Haleem 2008: 41). This singular form about which there seems to be a good amount of uncertainty, judging by the three alternative forms, may have been specifically created to explain *ālāʾ*. For one thing, it seems to be completely absent in the language outside of the context of Qurʾānic *ālāʾ*. For another, its morphological structure is unique among Arabic nouns.

If we start with *ālāʾ* and look for other nouns in the Qurʾān that have the same morphological structure we find the two words *ābāʾ* "fathers," used 64 times (*ibid.:* 7) and *ānāʾ* "times, hours," used three times (*ibid.:* 60). The singular forms of these two words are *ʾab* and *ʾān*, respectively.

This suggests that the singular form of *ālāʾ* is most probably *al* or *āl*, which in turns suggests a connection with the Semitic *el* or *al* "deity." The refrain of Q 55 *fa biʾayyi ālāʾi rabbikumā tukaḏḏibān* could accordingly be understood as "Which of the deities of your Lord do you deny?"

This may also explain the phrase *il yāsīn* in Q 37:130 around which there is a great deal of uncertainty (see Tabarī 2005, X: 523–25). If *il* were understood to stand for *el* (same spelling), then the phrase would mean *yāsīn's* God or *yāsīn's* Lord.

Zellentin

In line with the comments by El-Badawi and Pregill: The psalms can be seen as the core of the rabbinic and the Syriac liturgy in several ways. The Jewish prayer book, indirectly attested to already in Late Antiquity, uses the psalms repeatedly in its liturgy for the daily prayers, for Shabbat or specific holy days. The usage is closely connected to the use of Psalms in the Palestinian Hebrew literature called *Piyut*, perhaps priestly inspired poems that address liturgical, ecclesiastical, and political issues of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire. Likewise, the East Syrian rite prominently incorporates the Psalms in its daily and holy day prayers. The antiquity of the rite is of course

difficult to fathom both in the rabbinic and in the Syriac tradition, yet the conservative nature of liturgies often allows us to extrapolate a late antique basis wherever there are clear medieval attestations. Psalms, hence, were a genre that in many ways was alive in the time of the Qurʾān, and its continuation of the tradition by no means constitutes an innovation or even derivation from Jewish and Christian practice— the one quite likely innovation is the Qurʾān's liturgical use of Arabic rather than Hebrew and Aramaic.

QS 41 Q 72

72.1 Say: "It was revealed to me that a handful of *Jinn* gathered to listen, then said:
'We have heard a wondrous Qur'an,
72.2 Guiding to righteousness, so we believed in it,
And shall associate none with our Lord.
72.3 And we affirm – may our Lord's majesty be exalted! – that He took neither wife nor son;
72.4 That the impudent amongst us ascribed to God things far from true;
72.5 That we never imagined that humans and *Jinn* would forge lies on God;
72.6 That some men among humans used to pray for safety to some men from the *Jinn*,
But they only increased them in insolence;
72.7 That they imagined, as you imagine, that God shall resurrect no one;
72.8 That we probed the sky and found it filled with mighty guards and shooting stars;
72.9 That we would seat ourselves in seats nearby, to listen,
But whoever listens now is pursued by a shooting star, lying in wait;
72.10 That we know not whether evil is intended for mankind,
Or whether their Lord intends them good;
72.11 That amongst us there are the righteous, and there are the less so – of diverse persuasions are we;
72.12 That we know we cannot escape God's might on earth, nor escape Him by fleeing;
72.13 That when we heard the Guidance, we believed it,
For whoso believes in his Lord fears neither unfairness nor prejudice;
72.14 That some of us are Muslims and some are transgressors;
That as for the Muslims, these have chosen the path of guidance,
72.15 But the transgressors shall be fire-wood for Hell.'"
72.16 If only they had kept true to the path, we would have given them much water to drink,
72.17 To test them therewith;
But whoso turns away from the mention of his Lord, He will lead him on the road to a torment ever mounting.

72.1 Dis: «Il m'a été révélé qu'un groupe de djinns prêtèrent l'oreille, puis dirent: «Nous avons certes entendu une Lecture [le Coran] merveilleuse,
72.2 qui guide vers la droiture. Nous y avons cru, et nous n'associerons jamais personne à notre Seigneur.
72.3 En vérité notre Seigneur – que Sa grandeur soit exaltée – ne S'est donné ni compagne, ni enfant!
72.4 Notre insensé [Iblis] disait des extravagances contre Allah.
72.5 Et nous pensions que ni les humains ni les djinns ne sauraient jamais proférer de mensonge contre Allah.
72.6 Or, il y avait parmi les humains, des mâles qui cherchaient protection auprès des mâles parmi les djinns mais cela ne fit qu'accroître leur détresse.
72.7 Et ils avaient pensé comme vous avez pensé qu'Allah ne ressusciterait jamais personne.
72.8 Nous avions frôlé le ciel et nous l'avions trouvé plein d'une forte garde et de bolides.
72.9 Nous y prenions place pour écouter. Mais quiconque prête l'oreille maintenant, trouve contre lui un bolide aux aguets.
72.10 Nous ne savons pas si on veut du mal aux habitants de la terre ou si leur Seigneur veut les mettre sur le droit chemin.
72.11 Il y a parmi nous des vertueux et [d'autres] qui le sont moins: nous étions divisés en différentes sectes.
72.12 Nous pensions bien que nous ne saurions jamais réduire Allah à l'impuissance sur la terre et que nous ne saurions jamais le réduire à l'impuissance en nous enfuyant.
72.13 Et lorsque nous avons entendu le guide [le Coran], nous y avons cru, et quiconque croit en son Seigneur ne craint alors ni diminution de récompense ni oppression.
72.14 Il y a parmi nous les Musulmans, et il y en a les injustes [qui ont dévié]. Et ceux qui se sont convertis à l'Islam sont ceux qui ont cherché la droiture.
72.15 Et quant aux injustes, ils formeront le combustible de l'Enfer.

72.18 Houses of worship belong to God, so call upon none besides Him;
72.19 But when a servant of God began to pray to Him,
They almost fell on him in a mass.
72.20 Say: “I pray solely to my Lord, and associate none with Him.”
72.21 Say: “I have no power to do you evil or bring you right guidance.”
72.22 Say: “None can grant me shelter from God, nor will I ever find, apart from Him, any hideout.
72.23 I merely convey a proclamation from God, and His messages.”
Whoso disobeys God and His Messenger, for him awaits the fire of hell, abiding in it for ever.
72.24 And when they come face to face with what they have been promised, they will know who has the weaker and less numerous supporters.
72.25 Say: “I know not whether what you are promised is imminent, or whether my Lord shall set a longer term for it.
72.26 Knower of the Unseen is He! He discloses His Unseen to no one,
72.27 save to whomever He pleases among His Messengers, and then He stations, before and behind him, sentinels,
72.28 that He may know that they have delivered the messages of their Lord. He knows all that concerns them, and has tallied everything by number.”

72.16 Et s’ils se maintenaient dans la bonne direction, Nous les aurions abreuvés, certes d’une eau abondante,
72.17 afin de les y éprouver. Et quiconque se détourne du rappel de son Seigneur, Il l’achemine vers un châtiment sans cesse croissant.
72.18 Les mosquées sont consacrées à Allah: n’invoquez donc personne avec Allah.
72.19 Et quand le serviteur d’Allah s’est mis debout pour L’invoquer, ils faillirent se ruer en masse sur lui.
72.20 Dis: «Je n’invoque que mon Seigneur et ne Lui associe personne».
72.21 Dis: «Je ne possède aucun moyen pour vous faire du mal, ni pour vous mettre sur le chemin droit».
72.22 Dis: «Vraiment, personne ne saura me protéger contre Allah; et jamais je ne trouverai de refuge en dehors de Lui.
72.23.[Je ne puis que transmettre] une communication et des messages [émanant] d’Allah. Et quiconque désobéit à Allah et à Son Messager aura le feu de l’Enfer pour y demeurer éternellement.
72.24 Puis, quand ils verront ce dont on les menaçait, ils sauront lesquels ont les secours les plus faibles et [lesquels] sont les moins nombreux.
72.25 Dis: «Je ne sais pas si ce dont vous êtes menacés est proche, ou bien, si mon Seigneur va lui assigner un délai.
72.26.[C’est Lui] qui connaît le mystère. Il ne dévoile Son mystère à personne,
72.27 sauf à celui qu’Il agrée comme Messager et qu’Il fait précéder et suivre de gardiens vigilants,
72.28 afin qu’Il sache s’ils ont bien transmis les messages de leur Seigneur. Il cerne (de Son savoir) ce qui est avec eux, et dénombre exactement toute chose.

سورة الجن
قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا (1) يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا (2)
وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا (3) وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا (4) وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَنْ تَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ
وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا (5) وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا (6) وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ
أَنْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا (7) وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا (8) وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ
يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا (9) وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا (10) وَأَنَّا مِنَّا
الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قِدَدًا (11) وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَنْ نُعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا (12) وَأَنَّا لَمَّا

سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَى آمَنَّا بِهِ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا (13) وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ
تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا (14) وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا (15) وَأَنْ لَوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَاهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا (16) لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ
فِيهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا (17) وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا (18) وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ
يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا (19) قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا (20) قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا (21)
قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا (22) إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ
نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا (23) حَتَّى إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا (24) قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي
أَقَرِيبٌ مَا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا (25) عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا (26) إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا (27) لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا (28)

Azaiez

Je m'en tiendrai ici à quelques remarques d'ordre structurel. Tout d'abord, l'imperatif *qul* est une forme rhétorique avérée plus de 350 fois dans le Coran (Kassis 1984: 936–946). J'ai dénombré 251 occurrences qui impliquent une injonction directement adressée à un allocutaire coranique ou destinataire premier du message, presqu'autant que les contre-discours présents ou citations des propos des adversaires du Coran (Azaiez: 2012). De plus, on a noté que cette forme rhétorique est quasi absente de la partie finale du corpus coranique à l'exception des sourates 109 et 112–114. Par contraste, on dénombre 31 occurrences de cet impératif pour la seule sourate 6. On s'est déjà interrogé sur la fonction d'une telle formulation (Wansbrough 1977: 14–15; Radscheit 1997). Pour notre part, elle revêt trois fonctionnalités : théologique (souligné par Dye, il s'agit de créer un locuteur divin), prophétologique (souligné par Radscheit 1997, il s'agit d'asseoir l'autorité prophétique de l'allocutaire coranique), performative (chaque nouvelle lecture ou audition du Coran reproduit et réactualise *de facto* cette relation). Dans le cas présent, le *qul* introduit un procédé de mise en abyme. Un premier discours en enchâsse un autre. L'effet produit ici est de troubler l'auditeur qui pourrait s'interroger sur l'identité de celui qui parle (l'allocutaire coranique ou les *ǧinn*s).

Crone

Q 72 consists of two parts, one spoken by the *ǧinn*, and the other by the Messenger (not God, except in verses 16f).

72:1–15: The first part runs from verse 1 to verse 15, and it, as other participants note, is one out of many passages in the Qurʾān about supernatural beings called now *šayāṭīn* and now *ǧinn* who try to eavesdrop on proceedings in heaven, whereupon they have balls of fire thrown at them. Several participants in the Notre Dame gathering wanted these beings to be fallen angels, meaning those "sons of God" who descended to mate with the "daughters of men" according to Gen 6:2–4 and whose story is developed in 1 Enoch (the Enoch book preserved in Ethiopic). This seems impossible to me. For one thing, there is absolutely nothing in the tradition on the fallen angels at any time in its long history to suggest that these angels

tried to, or even could, fly back to eavesdrop on proceedings in heaven; and the *ǧinn* in Q 72 are never actually called angels. What is more, in 1 Enoch, or more precisely that section of it called the Book of Watchers, we are told that the two leaders of the wayward angels, Asael and Shemihazah, "and the others with them" were bound by obedient angels and cast into underground pits to stay there in darkness until the day of judgment, when they would be led away to everlasting punishment (1 Enoch 10:4–6; 11–13; cf. also 21:10). In the Islamic tradition, too, they are immobilized, here by being hung upside down in a well in Babylon, where people come to them for knowledge of magic (told *ad* Q 2:102). They were not in a position to fly around. On top of that, the Qurʾān and the Islamic tradition know of only two fallen angels, Hārūt and Mārūt (2:102), though originally there were 200 (for the process whereby the number of angels was reduced to two, see Crone 2013: 24–6). By contrast, the *ǧinn* of Q 72 come across as a whole population.

In addition, angels and *ǧinn* belonged to two quite different species, and in principle, the dividing line between them could not be crossed. The *ǧinn* lived on the earth, where they formed a parallel society to that of humans: there are believing and unbelieving *ǧinn* already in the Qurʾān, with many more categories in the tradition. By contrast, the angels lived with God in heaven and did nothing but execute His will; the fallen angels are the only exception. There are two exceptions to the rule that a demon cannot be an angel, however. First, according to the Christian Athanagoras (d. 190), the angels who "fell" from heaven haunt the air and the earth, no longer able to rise to heavenly things. "Along with the souls of the giants, they are the demons which wander about in the world." Of these, he says, there were two classes, the demons proper and the angels who (still?) act in accordance with the lusts they indulged (cited in Forsyth 1998: 354). Athanagoras is confusing the spirits (or "souls") of the slain giants with the angels who were the fathers of these giants (or alternatively, he is simply following 1 Enoch 19:1), but here at least the fallen angels are classified as demons and may even haunt the air. I have found no trace of this in either the Qurʾān itself or the tradition, however.

The second exception is Satan/Iblīs. Satan in the sense of the devil originated as a fallen angel, but the Christians preferred the story of Adam and Eve as the fatal event that corrupted human history and so moved the introduction of sin, and him along with it, from the pre-history of the flood to the pre-history of mankind, a move which seems to have been accomplished between the first and the third centuries (cf. Forsyth 1998: parts 3 and 4, and cf. esp. pp. 222, 271, 383). The Qurʾān duly gives us to understand that Iblīs was an angel (7:11; 15:30; 17:61; 38:73 f); but it also explicitly says that he was of the *ǧinn* (18:50), perhaps because it was felt that a disobedient heavenly being could not be an angel. In any case, demoting him to a demon was a solution with long roots in the Christian tradition: Theophilus of Antioch (d. 180s), for example, describes him as an evil demon, also called Satan, who was originally an angel (II, 28). To the exegetes, however, the question whether Iblīs was an angel or one of the *ǧinn* was a big problem, nicely discussed in Ṭabarī (de

Goeje, I, 78 – 86), where some ingenious solutions are proposed. It does not, however, have any bearing on Q 72.

The defenders of the thesis that the *ǧinn* of Q 72 are fallen angels also claimed that there is an important Enochic substratum in the Qurʾān. This may well be true (there are certainly *some* Enochic elements in it), but it does not prove that the *ǧinn* of Q 72 form part of that substratum. There are references to the demonic aspect of false worship in the Qurʾān, such as, for example, the charge that the *mušrikūn* have made the *ǧinn* partners of God, i. e., as his sons or daughters (6:100; cf. also 34:40 f; 41:29) and that they have set up a genealogical relationship between Him and the *ǧinn*, again meaning by crediting Him with sons or daughters (37:158, where the *ǧinn* themselves know better). This idea did indeed originate in the Book of Watchers (part of 1 Enoch), where the giant offspring of the wayward angels are killed but leave behind evil spirits that lead astray, do violence and cause illnesses (1 Enoch, 15:8 – 11; 16:1), or it is the spirits of their jailed fathers who make mankind worship demons (1 Enoch 19:1). But the theme had been taken over by Christians, who developed it to explain Greek and Roman idolatry: each image was inhabited by a demon, seeking worship at the expense of God (cf. Reed 2005: chs. 5 – 6). The theme of the false gods as demons is ubiquitous in their literature. It appears in their inscriptions too, including one of 514 from Zorava (*Zorʿa*) near the Dead Sea celebrating the fact that "The abode of *daimōnes* has become the house of God" (Trombley 1993 – 94: 2:363). It was presumably from Christians that the theme had passed to the Messenger and his followers. The tradition abounds in stories about horrid demons appearing when an idol was destroyed or a holy tree was cut down. All this is very interesting, but it does not show that Q 72 has anything to do with Enoch. (Cf. also my comments on QS 32.) So much for the first part.

72:16 – 17: God briefly explains that it would have been better for them, apparently meaning the evil-doers mentioned by the *ǧinn*, if they had stayed on the right path and that He would in that case have tested them with plenty of water (rather than drought, one assumes) and punished anyone who turned away from *ḏikr Allāh*. This forms the linkage to the second section.

72:18 f: "The *masāǧid* belong to God, so don't call upon anyone along with God [in them]": the interest of this lies in the implication that the Messenger's "polytheist" opponents would conduct their religious services in places of worship called *masāǧid* and audibly invoke their objects of worship there, presumably by way of *duʿāʾ*. The continuation says that when the servant of God (*ʿabd Allāh*) stands up and calls upon Him (alone?), they press in on him (or the like); the wording is difficult, but the meaning seems to be that the servant of God who denies that God has partners is made to feel unwelcome. The "servant of God" is probably the Messenger himself, though the reference could be generic. Some people take the passage to refer to a specific event in the past rather than something experienced by the Messenger or any believer now, but this runs counter to the parallelism between the two parts of the *sūra:* the *ǧinn* preach against the foolish unbelievers among their people in the first part, and the Messenger does the same among his own people in the second.

72:20 – 28: In the final portion the Messenger affirms his monotheist belief, saying that he has no power over his opponents, but that nobody can deliver him from God, whose message he must deliver, namely that anyone who disobeys God will go to hell. He does not know when this will happen since God alone knows the *ġayb*, and He does not share His knowledge *except* with whatever messenger He is pleased with and then equips with guards (*raṣad*) in front and behind, so that He may know that *they* (rather than he) have delivered the message of their lord; He encompasses (in His knowledge) everything *they* have and counts everything. Apart from the *raṣad*, the apparent admission that the Messenger does know the *ġayb* or some of it after all, and the sudden shift to the plural in v. 28, there are no surprises here. The whole *sūra* is a monotheist sermon.

Dye

La sourate peut être divisée en trois parties : 1 – 15, 16 – 19, 20 – 28. Les vv. 1 – 15 constituent un long discours rapporté, à un double niveau (« dis », « il m'a été révélé »). Il s'agit, d'une certaine manière, d'une *apocalypse*, remarquable en ce que la prédication du message divin est transférée du monde humain à un monde non-humain, celui des *ǧinn*s. Pourquoi un tel dispositif littéraire et rhétorique – y aurait-il un lien entre le *contenu* du texte, et sa *forme* ?

V. 1, *qul* : ajout relevant du travail éditorial et rédactionnel des scribes, destiné à présenter le Coran comme une parole émanant de Dieu.

V. 3 : *taʿālā* est en principe une locution autonome, qui fait référence à Dieu, et non à l'une de ses qualités. Kropp (2011: 259 – 260) propose de lire, non pas *ǧadd*, mais l'araméen *ḥad*, et reconstruit une formule tripartite, anti-polythéiste et anti-trinitaire : *ʻinnahū taʿālā ḥad ! / rabb(i)nā mā ttaḫaḏ / ṣāḥibatan wa-lā waladan*.

Les vv. 1 – 15 mettent en scène les *ǧinn*s, qui apparaissent comme des démons et des anges déchus (voir commentaire du QS 32) – et cela ne concerne pas que le désir d'entendre le concile divin (vv. 8 – 9). Comparer v. 6 et Q 2:14 ; 6:71, 121 ; 7:27, 30 ; 43:37. Les démons, et les *ǧinn*s, enseignent un savoir trompeur (ou illicite) aux hommes.

Or il y a ici une idée centrale pour la mise en perspective historique du texte : on assiste à une démonisation de l'hérésie (et de l'idolâtrie) chez les hérésiographes chrétiens, à partir du IIe siècle (Athénagore, Irénée, Tertullien, plus tard Lactance, etc. : cf. par exemple Reed (2005: 160 – 189) pour quelques références). S'inspirant de traditions énochiennes, ces auteurs font des démons ceux qui enseignent l'idolâtrie et les hérésies. La sourate 72 reprend à son compte ce *topos* chrétien mais, en faisant témoigner certains *ǧinn*s contre d'autres, elle le renverse – contre, notamment, les chrétiens, puisque parmi les cibles de la profession de foi du v. 3, il y a le christianisme et la thèse de Jésus fils de Dieu !

V. 18 : *al-masāǧida* ne désignent pas nécessairement les lieux de culte des « musulmans » (traduire par « mosquées » est anachronique). Rapprocher de Q 9:17 – 18. Gallez (2005: 250 – 251) voit là un reproche adressé aux chrétiens, qui se prosternent dans leurs églises, alors que leur foi n'est pas pure. L'idée est plausible.

Hawting

The allusions in vv. 1–19 to the activities of the *ǧinn*s are the subject of a disagreement among some colleagues as to whether the *ǧinn*s might overlap with the fallen angels of Biblical tradition (and who appear in in the Qurʾān in the forms of Hārūt and Mārūt (Q 2:102). In an original online post for the Qurʾān Seminar, I did assume such an overlap, and in an earlier article (Hawting 2006) asserted it more strongly, without attempting an analysis of all the evidence. Pace Patricia Crone's strong arguments against (commentary on QS 41), it still seems likely to me that, in the Qurʾān, *ǧinn*s, *šayāṭīn* and fallen angels are not always distinguishable (cf. QS 32). One argument made by Crone is that it is a characteristic of the fallen angels that they had fallen from heaven, not that – as we read of the *ǧinn*s in the passage under consideration – they try to get back up to it. Louis Ginzberg, however, did refer to some midrashic developments of the story of the Tower of Babel (a place associated with Hārūt and Mārūt in Q 2:102) in which the builders of the tower are identified as *nefilim*, the name given to the fallen angels in Genesis 6:4. The builders of the tower, of course, were motivated by their desire to attain heavenly knowledge. In the Qurʾānic passages about the attempts of the *ǧinn*s or the *šayāṭīn* to access the secrets of heaven, a number of myths and ideas that had circulated in the pre-Islamic Near East are alluded to and developed, and it is not at all easy to be precise about the various ingredients. One could envisage the transference of themes and motifs between various categories of "demons." The occurrence of *raṣad* in v. 9 and again in v. 27 possibly echoes the idea of the angels as "watchers" in 1 Enoch. A major concern in the Qurʾān is to deny that (any of) the revelation is of demonic origin, and in that connection it may be noted that the follower of Marcion, Apelles, asserted that a fiery angel (*angelus igneus*), which had spoken to Moses out of the burning bush, is the source of all the lies, fables, absurdities, and inconsistencies in the Old Testament (Harnack, 1920 [1990], 119–20; Schoeps, 1949, 148–9).

Vv. 18–19 serve as a transition to the following vv. 20–28 which emphasise the role of the Qurʾānic prophet as a faithful messenger with no knowledge or power other than what has been given to him by God. Looking for evidence of composition in the organisation of this *sūra*, one could suggest a contrast between the attempts of some of the *ǧinn*s to obtain knowledge for themselves and the prophet's faithful transmission of God's words. In vv. 18–19, Crone's argument here that we should envisage a shared place of worship where the servant of God who stood in prayer was jostled or harassed by those around him seems very plausible. It is the sort of scenario envisaged in the traditions about the Satanic Verses (where, again, a concern to reject the charge that the revelation was corrupted by Satan is evident), and it is just how one would imagine a new sect began to emerge.

Khalfallah

C'est le discours rapporté le plus long du Coran. Il contient 13 propositions complétives, toutes commencées par la conjonction de subordination: *inna*, impliquée

par l'impératif : *qul*. Cependant, le rapporteur de ces 13 séquences est double. Il est d'une part Dieu qui a révélé ces phrases à Muḥammad. D'autre part, il est le Prophète lui-même qui transmet ce que Dieu lui avait rapporté. L'objet de ces séquences est l'ensemble des phrases prononcées par un groupe de *Ǧinn*s (*nafar*). Les questions que soulève ce passage sont en effet nombreuses. Hormis la croyance ou pas au monde invisible qui ne relève pas de la recherche scientifique, nous sommes en droit de nous interroger sur la nature même de la parole *ǧinn*ienne. Première difficulté. Pour la résoudre, on a supposé que le verbe : *qālū*, attribué aux *Ǧinn*s, n'est qu'une métaphore signifiant : [1] le fait de transmettre cet événement à leurs semblables selon les modes de communication qui sont les leurs. [2] la parole intérieure, idées traversant « leurs esprits », *kalāmnafsī*.

Pris au premier degré, ce passage indique que les *Ǧinn*s possèdent le même mode d'entendement que les humains. Par conséquent, ils s'étonnent, croient, réfutent le polythéisme et l'exagération. Ils émettent des conjectures (*ẓann*) ; s'inquiètent pour les humains et font, comme eux, la distinction entre les Justes et les Injustes...Cet entendement passe-t-il par la compréhension des structures sémantiques de l'arabe, propres au Coran, qu'ils avaient entendues? Ou s'agit-il d'un « échange entre eux » que Dieu avait révélé au Prophète pour qu'il en informe ses contemporains. Cet échange a été coulé dans les moules des notions, verbes et images que les arabophones connaissent. Nous sommes enfin en droit de nous interroger : dans quelle mesure le Coran engage-t-il les *ǧinn*s? Son Message les concerne-t-il ou pas?

Pregill

The testimony of the believing *ǧinn*. As I have noted elsewhere, the traditions on the *ǧinn*s eavesdropping on Heaven seem to me like evidence of a significant 'Enochic substrate' informing Qurʾānic mythology and cosmology (cf. the narratives on the fall of Iblīs, and perhaps also the depiction of the Daughters of God). Arguably, Qurʾānic demonology represents a fusion of the Enochic traditions common to both Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity (cf. Reed 2005) with a particularly Christian polemical tendency to represent varieties of false worship not only as idolatrous (cf. Hawting 1999) but as demoniacal as well.

In this connection, the possible etymology of *ǧinn* is significant; two possibilities that link these beings to discourses surrounding demonolatry and idolatry in Late Antiquity present themselves. First, as Tesei points out (Tesei QS 33), *ʿashtārôt* of 1 Sam 7 and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible becomes *genyātā* in the Syriac of the Peshitta – "hidden" or "shameful" things, understood as idols in the original context, but commonly taken to refer to a demon or demons as well. A second possibility is a connection to Latin *genius,* presumably reflecting an older Christian polemic against the familial gods of Roman religion – a tantalizing possibility given the implication in Qurʾānic discourse that the opponents take *ǧinn*s as their protectors and intercessors.

If the *ǧinn* may be understood as fallen angels or demons who take some humans as their confederates but ultimately lead them astray, then what do we make of the depiction of some *ǧinn*s as believers here? I would argue that this represents a unique development in the Qurʾān; just as Iblīs' portrayal is not entirely unsympathetic, and his rehabilitation is hinted at in some Qurʾānic verses (and fully developed in later exegesis, esp. among Sufis; cf. Awn 1983), so too does the Qurʾān hold out the possibility of these demonic beings rising above their fallen natures and responding to divine guidance. Just as the Qurʾān acknowledges that there are evil forces in the world, but insists that they cannot really infringe upon divine sovereignty, so too are His mercy and justice so bountiful that even demons – and the Devil himself – may be redeemed if they genuinely repent.

V. 11: *kunnā ṭarāʾiq qidadan:* "we are divergent paths," presumably for those who follow them.

V. 14: Some are *muslim*, and some deviant. Note Donner's (2010) critique of *muslim* as signifying the disposition of believers (or "Believers") who have no other guidance to follow; believing Christians are Christians, believing Jews Jews, but demons, like pagan Arabs, can only become submitters, *muslim*.

V. 18: The places of worship are God's alone – perhaps pointing to the demonolatrous context.

Vv. 23 and 28: *balāġ:* true revelation as opposed to false teachings, revelation being a central theme in Enochic tradition.

Reynolds

The first part of this *sūra* (vv. 1–17) has *ǧinn*s complain of their banishment from the heavenly council in a way that seems to identify them with the *šayāṭīn* spoken of in Q 15:17–18; 37:6–8 and 67:5. These passages all describe heaven as something like a heavenly fortress into which the *šayāṭīn* are prevented from entering. In vv. 8–9 of our passage the *šayāṭīn* are called *ǧinn*s. Islamic tradition, of course, insists that these two names refer to two different sorts of creatures, i.e. that the genus of *ǧinn*s, made from fire, might become believers but the genus of *šayāṭīn*, who are fallen angels, may not. Yet this distinction seems to be prompted by v. 11 of the present *sūra*. Indeed it seems better to think of *šayāṭīn* and *ǧinn*s as two names for the fallen angels; the notion that fallen angels might believe is already found in Jas 2:19 ("You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder.").

One should connect cosmological passages such as this one with the story of the fall of the devil upon his refusal to bow before Adam (Q 2:35–38; 7:11–24; 15:28–35; 17:61–63; 38:71–78). In that story the devil is sent *down* from the heavenly realm where God speaks to his council of angels (notice the command in Q 7:13, *fa-hbiṭ minhā*). In this passage (as in Q 15:17–18; 37:6–8; and 67:5) the devil's hosts are trying get back up to where they once belonged.

Rippin

Vv. 18–19 are joined by their use of *tadʿū /yadʿū*, 'calling'. The use of *masāǧid* needs to be taken as a general reference to places of worship, as is common in the use of the plural (as distinct from the usage of *al-masāǧid al-ḥaram*). The idea that these places "belong to God" is notable. That God is to be called upon (the emphasis not being upon prayer in a technical sense here) in these places draws attention to the ambivalent nature of this act/term of "calling upon" which, in the Qurʾān, can be either negative or positive: people are spoken of as calling both on Allah and on other divine beings. The relationship between *duʿā* and *ṣalāt* as actions in the Qurʾān might be worthy of extended attention. When ʿAbd Allāh calls out to God (which he did after *qāma*, note, again with *ṣalāt* in mind), "they" swarm him. This sounds negative, *kādū yakūnūna ʿalayhi*, but the traditional interpretation sees this as the *ǧinn*s who are crowding around to listen to Muḥammad's words (with enthusiasm, it seems). This makes the passage a reference back to v. 1, although that is far from obvious.

Stefanidis

Corroborating previous declarations that categorically deny any access to occult knowledge to the *ǧinn*s (or the *šayāṭīn*), the Qurʾān puts here on stage, so to speak, the *ǧinn*s themselves and has them admit their own powerlessness (vv. 8–10). The capacity of the Divine voice to summon different characters beyond any time and space constraints is a remarkable and powerful component of Qurʾānic argumentation. Q 5:116–117, where Jesus himself is said to denounce any kind of trinitarian worship, provides a similar example.

The aural/oral dimension of the Qurʾānic proclamation is underlined in this passage: it is by listening to it that the *ǧinn*s convert.

The repetitive and equivocal use of the verb *ẓanna* (to think, to believe) in vv. 5, 7 and 12 is intriguing. Although the noun *ẓann* is used in the pejorative sense of "false opinion" (e.g. Q 53: 27–8, Q 38: 27, Q 4:157), as a verb it sometimes refers to beliefs that are true as is the case in v.12: "And we know (*ẓanannā*) that we cannot escape from God in the earth, nor can we escape by flight" (see also Q 2:46). How then should we understand v.5: *wa-annā ẓanannā an lan taqūla al-insu wa l-ǧinnu ʿalā llahi kaḏiban?* Does this mean that the *ǧinn* rightly know that God does not let anyone lie about himself (without incurring punishment)? Or is it to be understood as a theologically loaded statement that God *does* let people and *ǧinn*s profess enormities about him? This latter understanding brings to mind passages where the *mušrikūn* argue that, had God willed, he would not have let them worship other beings beside him (Q 6:148; 16:35; 43:20).

Tengour

La sourate *al-Ǧinn* a pour thèmes: [1] La soumission d'une partie des djinns au dieu coranique après avoir entendu le *Qurʾān* ; [2] La dénégation des Mecquois à qui, pourtant, le *Qurʾān* se destine. Les djinns qui se voient consacrer près de la moitié de la sourate (vv. 1–15) prennent directement la parole dans une double adresse destinée à leurs semblables et aux Mecquois. Il s'agit, avec Q 46:29 d'un passage unique dans tout le Coran où l'émerveillement d'un groupe, *nafar*, de djinns suscité par l'écoute du *Qurʾān* est là pour confirmer leur soumission de plein gré au dieu coranique.

C'est dans les raisons perceptibles de cette adhésion qu'il est possible de discerner l'argument rhétorique qu'emploie la parole coranique pour convaincre la tribu dénégatrice. Ce que le Coran dit substantiellement c'est que même des êtres aussi insoumis que les djinns se sont ralliés à la cause de Muḥammad quand il leur a été donné d'ouïr le *Qurʾān*.

L'argument devait trouver un écho d'autant que, dans les versets 8 à 10, les djinns vont, de leur propre aveu, admettre n'être plus ce qu'ils étaient jusque-là et ne plus accéder au *Ġayb* depuis que le ciel est gardé. Cette reconnaissance confirme *a contrario* qu'ils y avaient accès avant que le dieu coranique ne s'approprie les espaces célestes (thème qui apparait en milieu de période mecquoise), de même que le passage est en contradiction avec Q 34:14 où la parole coranique s'évertue à démontrer que déjà à l'époque de Salomon, les djinns qui lui étaient pourtant soumis n'avaient aucune connaissance du *Ġayb*. D'un point de vue historique, ces décalages doivent être soulevés si l'on veut se faire une idée sur la chronologie des passages étudiés. À cet égard, la séquence formée des versets 8, 9 et 10 de la sourate *al-Ǧinn* est peut-être plus ancienne que le passage relatif à la mort du roi biblique dans Q 34:14.

Remarquons enfin qu'après « l'émerveillement des djinns », ce sont les thèmes du dieu coranique comme dieu Créateur et Résurrecteur qui sont présentés et donnés comme autant de raisons qui amènent une partie des djinns à croire en *Allāh*.

Tesei

The idea that the *ǧinn*s may be believers possibly parallels James 2:19: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and tremble." Referring to this passage, Ḥenana of Adiabene (d. 610) states: "Also demons [*šēḏē*] know the Truth" (cf. *PO* VII: 66). Given the Enochic reminiscences in the Qurʾānic demonology (*vide infra*), one may also refer to 1 Peter 3:19–20 where Jesus preaches to *the spirits* of the Watchers enchained in Sheol (cf. VanderKam 1996: 62–3). By contrast, the recurring statement that *ǧinn*s will be judged at the end of time (e. g. Q 37:158) parallels the widespread idea that demons will be punished alongside sinners. Among the most interesting examples is the statement in *the Cave of Treasures* that those who accept the demonic teachings on astrology "will be punished with the demons on the day of judgment" (27:17–22). In the 6th cen., Jacob of Serugh defended this

view against Stephen Bar Sudaili's claim – later shared also by Isaach of Nineveh – that demons will receive God's mercy.

Now the question of *ǧinn*s/fallen angels. That the *ǧinn*s/*šayāṭīn* are kinds of demonic entities is suggested by their being subjected to Solomon (Q 21:82; 34:12–23; 38:37–38). This idea is indeed inspired by extra-Biblical traditions about Solomon's control over the *demons* (e. g., already Josephus in *Ant*. VIII, II, 5). It is also noticeable that a Mandaic magic bowl mentions the "*ǧinnee* (גינא) of King Solomon" with reference to a demoniac entity (cf. Montgomery 1913: 105; two more bowls are mentioned in Davilla 2001: 220). Crone rightly points out that the closest parallel to the *ǧinn*s' attempted ascension occurs in the *Testament of Solomon*, where demons and not fallen angels try to reach heaven. However, her claim that the *ǧinn*s in Q 72 are extraneous to any Enochic mytheme (cf. Crone QS 41) does not take into account that it is just in relation to traditions about Solomon that the Qurʾān reports its own version of the story of the fallen angels (Q 2:102). This points to a possible association of stories about the Watchers and Solomon in the Qurʾān's context. Furthermore, there is a strong indication that the Qurʾān perceives the story of the *ǧinn*s' failed ascension as related to that of Satan's fall, which – as Crone herself notices (Crone QS 41 & 2013: 32–3) – is reminiscent of the myth of the Watchers. In fact, the episode of Iblīs' rebellion is very likely alluded to in Q 72:4, where the *ǧinn*s complain that "the fool among us spoke against God outrage" (on Iblīs as a *ǧinn* see Tesei QS 2). Furthermore, it is noticeable that the adjective *raǧīm* is used to designate both Iblīs/Šayṭan at the moment of his banishment (Q 15:34; 38:77; 3:36; 16:98; 81:25) and the *ǧinn*s/*šayāṭīn* who try to ascend to heaven (Q 15:17). It is likely that the Qurʾān reflects the ambiguous relationship between demons and fallen angels, documented in several late antique sources, such as the *Cave of Teasures* (cf. Tesei QS 2) or in Tatian's and Athanagoras' receptions of the myth of the Watchers (on the former cf. VanderKam 1996: 65; on the latter, cf. Crone QS 41). Nevertheless, at least in one case the Qurʾān seems to acknowledge the distinction between the two categories of evil beings. In fact, it is meaningful that in the Qurʾānic version of the myth of the Watchers, the two angels Hārūt and Mārūt are presented as playing a positive role while rebellious acts are attributed to the demons (*al-šayāṭīn*). This suggests that the Qurʾān intentionally transfers to demons the rebellious actions of the Watchers, probably as a rejection of the embarrassing Enochic concept of the angelic sin.

Zellentin

Only part of the *ǧinn*s manage to listen to the heavenly discourse (v. 1), and it seems that even the ability of this group seems to have been curtailed by fire (v. 8–9). This passage should perhaps be understood against the background of, as a reaction to, and a further development of two broad discourses: the ignorance of heavenly beings and their possible transformation towards sinfulness.

Firstly, the competition between humans and angels, as discussed in my comments on QS 2, include the fact that God taught the original names to Adam, but

not the angels. God hence chooses to privilege humans over angels, which may explain why the *ǧinn*s likewise profess their past ignorance: they used to think that God has taken spouse or son until they listened to the Qurʾān (v. 3, in their "Christian" error, the *ǧinn*s apparently had a very concrete concept of how the alleged son of God was conceived). The *ǧinn*s' ignorance of and appetite for the Qurʾān in the present context moreover recalls God's decision to withhold the Torah from the angels in the rabbinic tradition: In *Leviticus Rabbah* 31:5, for example, we learn that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the angels that the Torah is not found in the land of the living, i. e., it is not intended for the undying angels (see also *Bavli Qiddushin* 54a). In *Song of Songs Rabbah* 8:15, finally, we learn that even Gabriel and Michael fled from the Torah, and that the angels engaged in a long discourse with God, trying to convince him not to divulge the Torah to humans. Likewise, in the [likely medieval Midrash] *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 7:9, we learn that the ministering angels (*mlʾky hšrt*) coveted God's Torah.

Most importantly, the Babylonian Talmud classifies demons as half-way in between angels and humans: "in regard to three, they are like the ministering angels; and in regard to three, like human beings" (*bHagiga* 16a). As noted by Crone, they eavesdrop and learn about the future fate of humans "from behind the veil" (ibid.), offering precisely the scenario presupposed in v. 9 and 10, before God barred them from doing so (see also Q 42:51).

Likewise, when the *ǧinn*s now learn Qurʾān from the mouth of God's messenger (in v. 1–2), it seems to me that we are witnessing a further turn of the hermeneutical screw: not only did God choose to teach heavenly discourse to humans rather than to angels, the *ǧinn*s even become dependent on one particular human to learn Qurʾān in order to safeguard their own salvation!

But are then the *ǧinn*s angels? It surely seems to me that they must be placed in this class of beings, since God created the *ǧinn*s "earlier (than man), from the smokeless flame of fire" (Q 15:27, see also Q 55:15). The sequel of the passage ("when your Lord said to the angels…" Q 15:28), God's address to the angels, only makes sense if we allow for a clear affinity or even subclassification between angels and *ǧinn*s, akin to what we saw in the Talmud.

This leads us to the angels' corruptibility. We may be well advised not to presuppose *all* of the Enochic tradition as informing the Qurʾān; the rabbis likewise distance themselves from it. Yet I think the Qurʾān very clearly responds to some idea of "fallen" or at least degenerate angels – how could they teach erroneously about God's spouse and son if they hadn't fallen, and how can we account for their banishment from heaven in v. 9? The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* introduces Satan as the head of the "low order of the spirits" (*tgmʾ hnʾ tḥthʾ*, Bezold 1883:16–7). Likewise, the *Clementine Homilies* (8:12–3) teach that "the *spirits* who inhabit the heaven, *the angels who dwell in the lowest region*," ask for permission to mingle among men in order to test them. They end up corrupting themselves, however, and then become "unable to turn back to the first purity of their proper nature, their members turned away from their fiery substance: for the fire itself, being extinguished by the weight of lust, and

changed into flesh, they trod the impious path downward. For they themselves, being fettered with the bonds of flesh, were constrained and strongly bound; wherefore they have no more been able to ascend into the heavens." The Qurʾān's *ǧinn*s, like the Clementine spirits, may well be the lower angels who compromised their pure fiery nature, which explains why the heavenly fire now thwarts their ascent—again a further development of a clearly recognizable tradition.

QS 42 Q 75

75.1 Yes indeed!
I swear by the Day of Resurrection!
75.2 Yes indeed!
I swear by the soul that remonstrates!
75.3 Does man imagine We shall not reassemble his bones?
75.4 Indeed, We can reshape his very fingers!
75.5 In truth, man wishes to persist in his debauchery;
75.6 He asks when the Day of Resurrection shall come.
75.7 When eyes are dazzled,
75.8 And the moon is eclipsed,
75.9 And sun and moon are joined together,
75.10 Man that Day shall ask: "Where to escape?"
75.11 No, there is no refuge!
75.12 To your Lord that Day is the journey's end.
75.13 Man that Day shall be informed,
Of all his works, from first to last.
75.14 In truth, man shall witness against his own soul,
75.15 Even as he advances his excuses.
75.16 Move not your tongue with it, seeking to hasten it along;
75.17 Up to Us is its collection and recitation.
75.18 When We recite it, follow its recitation,
75.19 Then it is up to Us to expound it.
75.20 No, but in truth you people love this fleeting life,
75.21 And pay no heed to the life hereafter.
75.22 On that Day, some faces shall be resplendent,
75.23 To their Lord their eyes are lifted;
75.24 On that Day, some faces shall be snarling,
75.25 Knowing a back-breaker shall befall them.
75.26 But when a soul has reached the neck-bones,
75.27 And a voice is heard: "Can anyone cure?"
75.28 And he knows it is the final parting,
75.29 And leg is entwined with leg,
75.30 To your Lord that Day is the rounding up.
75.31 But he neither believed nor prayed.
75.32 Instead, he cried lies and departed.
75.33 Then sauntered homewards.

75.1 Non!... Je jure par le Jour de la Résurrection!
75.2 Mais non!, Je jure par l'âme qui ne cesse de se blâmer.
75.3 L'homme, pense-t-il que Nous ne réunirons jamais ses os?
75.4 Mais si! Nous sommes Capable de remettre à leur place les extrémités de ses doigts.
75.5 L'homme voudrait plutôt continuer à vivre en libertin.
75.6 Il interroge: «A quand, le Jour de la Résurrection?»
75.7 Lorsque la vue sera éblouie,
75.8 et que la lune s'éclipsera,
75.9 et que le soleil et la lune seront réunis,
75.10 l'homme, ce jour-là, dira: «Où fuir?»
75.11 Non! Point de refuge!
75.12 Vers ton Seigneur sera, ce jour-là, le retour.
75.13 L'homme sera informé ce jour-là de ce qu'il aura avancé et de ce qu'il aura remis à plus tard.
75.14 Mais l'homme sera un témoin perspicace contre lui-même,
75.15 quand même il présenterait ses excuses.
75.16 Ne remue pas ta langue pour hâter sa récitation:
75.17 Son rassemblement (dans ton cour et sa fixation dans ta mémoire) Nous incombent, ainsi que la façon de le réciter.
75.18 Quand donc Nous le récitons, suis sa récitation.
75.19 A Nous, ensuite incombera son explication.
75.20 Mais vous aimez plutôt [la vie] éphémère,
75.21 et vous délaissez l'au-delà.
75.22 Ce jour-là, il y aura des visages resplendissants
75.23 qui regarderont leur Seigneur;
75.24 et il y aura ce jour-là, des visages assombris,
75.25 qui s'attendent à subir une catastrophe.
75.26 Mais non! Quand [l'âme] en arrive aux clavicules
75.27 et qu'on dit: «Qui est exorciseur?»
75.28 et qu'il [l'agonisant] est convaincu que c'est la séparation (la mort),

75.34 Alas for you! Alas!
75.35 Then again: Alas for you! Alas!
75.36 Does man think he shall be abandoned to futility?
75.37 Was he not a drop of sperm, to be discharged,
75.38 Then became a blood-clot, which He created and fashioned?
75.39 And made from it a pair, male and female?
75.40 Is such a Being not capable of reviving the dead?

75.29 et que la jambe s'enlace à la jambe,
75.30 c'est vers ton Seigneur, ce jour-là que tu seras conduit.
75.31 Mais il n'a ni cru, ni fait la Salât;
75.32 par contre, il a démenti et tourné le dos,
75.33 puis il s'en est allé vers sa famille, marchant avec orgueil.
75.34 «Malheur à toi, malheur!»
75.35 Et encore malheur à toi, malheur!
75.36 L'homme pense-t-il qu'on le laissera sans obligation à observer?
75.37 N'était-il pas une goutte de sperme éjaculé?
75.38 Et ensuite une adhérence Puis [Allah] l'a créée et formée harmonieusement;
75.39 puis en a fait alors les deux éléments de couple: le mâle et la femelle?
75.40 Celui-là [Allah] n'est-Il pas capable de faire revivre les morts?

سورة القيامة
لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (1) وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ (2) أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ (3) بَلَى قَادِرِينَ عَلَى أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ
بَنَانَهُ (4) بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ (5) يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ (6) فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ (7) وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ (8) وَجُمِعَ
الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ (9) يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ (10) كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ (11) إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ (12) يُنَبَّأُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ
بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ (13) بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ (14) وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ (15) لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ (16) إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا
جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ (17) فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ (18) ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (19) كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ (20) وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ (21)
وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ (22) إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ (23) وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ (24) تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ (25) كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ
التَّرَاقِيَ (26) وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ (27) وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ (28) وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ (29) إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ (30) فَلَا
صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّى (31) وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (32) ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّى (33) أَوْلَى لَكَ فَأَوْلَى (34) ثُمَّ أَوْلَى لَكَ فَأَوْلَى
(35) أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (36) أَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُمْنَى (37) ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (38) فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ
الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنْثَى (39) أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى (40)

Azaiez

Dye a sans aucun doute raison de souligner le rapport très lâche qui existe entre l'ensemble de la sourate et les versets 16–19. Pourtant, une lecture attentive des termes et de leurs usages pourrait donner une explication à la présence de ces trois versets qui sont clairement de l'ordre du métatexte. Ces quatre versets indiquent que le locuteur (le Dieu coranique) est le responsable de l'action de rassembler la « prédication » (*Qurʾān*). Tout l'enjeu de la sourate tient à cette action de « rassembler » contenue dans la racine *Ǧ-M-ʿ* (vv. 4, 17, 30). De même qu'il rassemble la prédication, le Dieu coranique rassemble les hommes pour le jugement dernier. N'y a-t-il pas ici la volonté de lier cette action de « rassembler » à ces deux plans: eschatologique (rassembler les hommes) et métatextuel (rassembler le Coran)? La métatexte jouerait ici le rôle d'unification des deux textes prélablement disjoints ;

serait-il dès lors un indice supplémentaire d'une activité rédactionnelle et de composition ?

Dye

Les deux premiers versets jouent le rôle de « sonnette » destiné à attirer l'attention du destinataire du message. Sur cet aspect des serments coraniques cf. Kropp 2008: 786.

V. 1, *lā ʾuqsimu* : on peut comprendre le *lam-alif* non comme la particule de négation *lā*, mais comme la particule d'insistance *la*, écrite avec un *alif* ortho-épique indiquant l'allongement de la voyelle brève devant *hamza* (cf. Puin 2011: 178–179). Donc : « certes, je jure… . »

Les versets suivants sont mis dans la bouche de Dieu. *Topoi* classiques de la prédication syriaque et coranique (thèmes sur lesquels il convient de renvoyer, une fois de plus, à Andrae 1955: chap. 3) : Dieu est créateur tout-puissant (donc destructeur et résurrecteur – c'est ce qui est implicitement indiqué dans le v. 3, et l'idée est reprise à la fin de la sourate, vv. 37–40) ; l'homme continue à vivre dans les futilités et le péché (l'idée est là encore reprise à la fin de la sourate, vv. 31–36, mais aussi aux versets 20–21).

Les vv. 7–9 décrivent quelques-uns des signes de la fin des Temps (voir aussi vv. 22–25). Comparer Mt 24 : 29 : « Aussitôt après la tribulation de ces jours-là, le soleil s'obscurcira, la lune ne donnera plus sa lumière, les étoiles tomberont du ciel, et les puissances seront ébranlées ». On n'aurait aucune difficulté à trouver d'autres sous-textes.

Les vv. 16–19 s'intègrent assez mal dans le déroulement général du propos. On doit reconnaître que ce passage est extrêmement obscur : qui s'adresse à qui, et à propos de quoi ? La tradition musulmane a bien sûr une réponse : Dieu demande au Prophète de ne pas hâter la récitation ou la communication du Coran – or cette réponse n'a guère de rapport avec le cotexte.

El-Badawi

Q 75 belongs to the category of so called early Meccan *sūra*s as delineated in Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Korans* and whose literary structure have been discussed by Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* and—more recently—Carl Ernst, *How to Read the Qurʾān*. The "oath formulas" which make up the opening verses of these *sūra*s are the Qurʾān's apocalyptic signature and, moreover, are in dialogue with the Hebrew and Christian Bible, Rabbinic commentary and Syriac Christian homiletics.

As Reynolds and Dye have alluded to in the case of Q 75, chief along 'intertexts' of the opening verses of the so called early Meccan *sūra*s is the Syriac text of Matt 5:24, as well as its reception in Syriac Christian literature. The former is discussed in Lüling 2003 and the latter in Andrae 1926. For a more detailed discussion on

the intersection of the apocalyptic verses of the Meccan *sūra*s and the Gospel of Matthew see El-Badawi 2013: ch. 6.

Dye rightly cites Gerd Puin's emendation of "I do not swear!" (*lā uqsim*) in vv.1–2 to "Indeed I swear!" (*la uqsim*) on orthographical grounds. Is this also the case with Q 56:75; 69:38; 70:40; 81:15; 86:16 and 90:1? The (deliberate) tension between this reading and Matthew 5:34–37 as Reynolds points out is most acute in the verse, "Indeed I swear by this city!" (*la uqsim bi-hāḏā l-balad*, Q 90:1).

Ernst's tripartite layout—as Michael Pregill notes—is a useful approach to examining Q 75. Vv. 3–5 may echo the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37; vv. 6–12 are in dialogue with Matt 24.

In relation to points made by Khalafallah, Rippin and Younes, there is a rhetorical, and perhaps ontological, relationship that may be mapped out between "humankind" (*insān*), "recitation" (Qurʾān) and "clarification, gnosis?" (*bayān*)—cf. in conjunction with "the Compassionate" (*al-raḥmān*) in Q 55:1–4.

Hilali

I agree with the allusion of Azaiez to the resonance between the eschatological context of the fragmented bodies destined to be recollected and the collection of the Qurʾān. There are two occurrences of the root (*Ǧ-M-ʿ*) before v. 17. The totality of the passage could be read as an evolution from fragmentation to collection: a. the day of resurrection (vs .1–15); b. the news that God is able to assemble the bodies as he is able to assemble the Qurʾān (vv. 16–19); c. back to the context of fragmentation of the bodies and the promise of their reconstruction following the ways God created them. The complexity of the passage is built on the duality between fragment (portions: man/female; bones; the moon/the sun) and the totality (the *nutfah* and, if we accept the interpretation of the pronoun *huwa* [he/it] in v. 16 as the Qurʾān, the Qurʾān itself is part of this totality). Leaving man alone (v. 36) is excluded from the cycle fragmentation/collection. The mobility of the pronouns follows the evolution of the passage from the fragmentation/collection axes: He (human being, God); you (human being, the prophet?); We (God); You pl. (human beings); He (human being, the prophet?). Following this, (vv. 16–19) are not exterior to the context but their meaning may be extended beyond the *tafsīr* tradition. The word *bayān* as clarification seems to be part of the collection process with the insistence on the lapse of time (*ṯumma*) between the collection and the interpretation. If we understand the passage as warnings and promises addressed to the human being, I would propose to consider vv. 16–19 as part of the self-referential Qurʾānic statements. The Qurʾān presents itself as a performance of recitation and a process of interpretation that is independent of the text itself.

Pregill

Ernst's recent discussion of this *sūra* (2011) elegantly demonstrates the importance of rhyme scheme here. In particular, the change in rhyme in the middle of the *sūra* appears to indicate that a gloss has been inserted that breaks the perfect thematic and metrical symmetry that characterizes the composition as a whole.

Vv. 1–15: God's creation of mortals; threat of punishment

Vv. 15–18: Aside about reciting the revelation

Vv. 19–40: Threat of punishment; God's creation of mortals

Parallels in phraseology likewise indicate a deliberate underlying symmetry: v. 36 (closure with *a-yaḥsab al-insān*) echoes v. 2; v. 38 (*fa-sawwā*) echoes v. 4; ibid. v. 40 emphasizing divine power over the human person as a coda to the entire *sūra*, restating the theme with which the *sūra* opened in vv. 1–6.

Reynolds

If indeed vv. 1–2 are oaths (and not explanations of things that the speaker will *not* swear by – cf. Matt 5:34–37) then the "self-blaming soul" of v. 2 might be a reference to the souls of the damned in hell who finally admit their wrongdoing (when doing so no longer will save them from their terrible suffering). In other words, this is not "the accusing voice of man's own conscience!" as Asad has it, or "the self-reproaching person (a believer)," as Hilali-Khan have it, or "l'âme qui ne cesse de se blamer," as Hamidullah has it. From this perspective v. 2 corresponds well with vv. 10–15.

Rippin

Vv. 16–19, "Do not move your tongue to make haste with it; ours it is to gather (*jamʿa*) it and recite (Qurʾān) it. When we have recited it, then follow its recitation. Then it is for us to explain (*bayān*) it." The vocabulary here is non-technical, it would seem, but can easily be taken as referring to oral composition. The prophet (who, it may reasonably be assumed, is the person addressed) is commanded to "follow (*ittabaʿa*) its recitation." This idea is also found in reference to the Satans in the context of Solomon (Q 2:102) (and maybe also in Q 6:50, Q 7:203) but in general the verb is used to follow ideas (i.e., the way of Islam, or the way of the disbelievers) or someone (e.g., Satan), not to "follow" a recitation in a sense that seems to demand "follow along" while it is being recited.

The idea that inspiration is something that controls one's tongue is common – also see Q 20:27, "unloose the knot upon my tongue" and Q 26:13, "my tongue will not be loosed."

Younes

It is clear that there is a problem with the word *baṣīra* in v. 14. Its masculine counterpart *baṣīr* is quite common in the Qurʾān, with the clear and consistent meaning of

"knowing, seeing." In addition to its occurrence in this passage, the feminine form *baṣīra* is used once in the phrase *'alā baṣīra* "knowingly, with knowledge" (Q12: v. 108). In v. 14 of this *sūra*, it is understood as an adjective modifying the masculine noun *al-insān*. As it stands, such a construction is grammatically incorrect. What might have happened is that the adjective was originally *baṣīrā*, but was written with *tā' marbūṭa* since the two endings would have sounded the same: *baṣīrā*/ *baṣīra* (بصيرا/بصيرة). Correcting the form to *baṣīrā* would have resulted in a violation of the case assignment rules developed by the grammarians and commentators, according to which *baṣīr* should receive the nominative case since it is the predicate of *al-insān*. Using *baṣīra* (بصيرة) would have been the lesser of two evils for the commentators who had more flexibility assigning different shades of meanings to words than violating the case assignment rules they developed.

QS 43 Q 85

85.1 By the sky, with its constellations!
85.2 By the Day portended!
85.3 By a witness and what is witnessed!
85.4 Perish the People of the Trench,
85.5 With its fire and its faggots,
85.6 As they sat above it,
85.7 Witnessing what they did to the faithful!
85.8 All they held against them was their belief in God,
Almighty, All-Praiseworthy,
85.9 He to whom belongs sovereignty over the heavens and the earth;
And God is Witness over all things.
85.10 They who oppress faithful men and faithful women,
And do not repent,
There awaits them the punishment of hell,
And the punishment of the Blaze.
85.11 But they who believe and do righteous deeds,
There awaits them Gardens beneath which rivers flow,
And that is the greatest of triumphs.
85.12 Harsh is your Lord in might!
85.13 It is He who originates and restores,
85.14 He who is All-Forgiving, All-Kind,
85.15. August Lord of the Throne,
85.16 Ever accomplishing what He wishes.
85.17 Has the story of the troops reached you?
85.18 Of Pharaoh and Thamud?
85.19 And yet the unbelievers continue to deny,
85.20 As God encompasses them from behind.
85.21 In truth, this is an august Qur'an,
85.22 In a well guarded Tablet.

85.1 Par le ciel aux constellations!
85.2 et par le jour promis!
85.3 et par le témoin et ce dont on témoigne!
85.4 Périssent les gens de l'Uhdûd,
85.5 par le feu plein de combustible,
85.6 cependant qu'ils étaient assis tout autour,
85.7 ils étaient ainsi témoins de ce qu'ils faisaient des croyants,
85.8 à qui ils ne leur reprochaient que d'avoir cru en Allah, le Puissant, le Digne de louange,
85.9 Auquel appartient la royauté des cieux et de la terre. Allah est témoin de toute chose.
85.10 Ceux qui font subir des épreuves aux croyants et aux croyantes, puis ne se repentent pas, auront le châtiment de l'Enfer et le supplice du feu.
85.11 Ceux qui croient et accomplissent les bonnes ouvres auront des Jardins sous lesquels coulent les ruisseaux. Cela est le grand succès.
85.12 La riposte de ton Seigneur est redoutable.
85.13 C'est Lui, certes, qui commence (la création) et la refait.
85.14 Et c'est Lui le Pardonneur, le Tout-Affectueux,
85.15 Le Maître du Trône, le Tout-Glorieux,
85.16 Il réalise parfaitement tout ce qu'Il veut.
85.17 T'est-il parvenu le récit des armées,
85.18 de Pharaon, et de Thamûd?
85.19 Mais ceux qui ne croient pas persistent à démentir,
85.20 alors qu'Allah, derrière eux, les cerne de toutes parts.
85.21 Mais c'est plutôt un Coran glorifié
85.22 préservé sur une Tablette (auprès d'Allah).

سورة البروج

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ (1) وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ (2) وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ (3) قُتِلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ (4) النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ (5) إِذْ هُمْ
عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ (6) وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ (7) وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ (8) الَّذِي لَهُ
مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (9) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ (10) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ (11) إِنَّ
بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ (12) إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ (13) وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ (14) ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ (15) فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ (16) هَلْ
أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ (17) فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ (18) بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ (19) وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ (20) بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ
مَجِيدٌ (21) فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ (22)

Cuypers

Les versets suivants (85:4–7) ont suscité des interprétations très diverses: « Ils ont péri les Gens d'*al-Uḫdūd*, du feu pourvu de combustible, tandis qu'ils sont sur lui assis, et témoins de ce qu'ils faisaient aux croyants ." Qui sont en effet ces Gens d'*al-Uḫdūd* (*aṣḥāb al-uḫdūd)* ? Deux lignes d'explication s'affrontent, selon que l'on prend les v. 4–7 en un sens historicisant (position de la tradition islamique et de quelques orientalistes) ou un sens purement eschatologique (position d'autres orientalistes).

Selon l'interprétation la plus courante chez les commentateurs musulmans, le texte ferait allusion à la persécution des chrétiens de Naǧrān par le roi juif ḥimyārite Ḏū Nuwās, en 523. Ils auraient été brûlés vifs dans « une fosse » *(uḫdūd)*. Toute une série de savants occidentaux (e.g., Grimme 1895: II, 77, n. 4; Horovitz 1926: 11–12, 92–93; Bell 1950: II, 646; Paret 1986: 505–6) ne voient, au contraire, dans ces versets qu'une scène du Jugement dernier : les *aṣḥāb al-uḫdūd* seraient des incroyants qui sont précipités dans la fosse de l'Enfer pour leurs exactions envers les croyants (v. 7). Ces deux lignes d'interprétation ne sont en réalité pas exclusives l'une de l'autre.

La sourate est composée de trois morceaux, disposés en concentrisme (ABA') : vv. 1–9, 10–11, 12–22. Le sens global de la sourate doit être compris à partir du centre (vv. 10–11), comme c'est le plus souvent le cas des compositions concentriques : « En vérité, ceux qui éprouvent les croyants et les croyantes, puis ne se repentent, à eux le châtiment de la Géhenne et à eux le châtiment de la calcination. » Encadrant cette assertion centrale, plusieurs exemples historiques sont donnés, dans les morceaux extrêmes A et A' : les Gens d'*al-Uḫdūd*, qui, après avoir persécuté les chrétiens, se retrouvent en Enfer (premier morceau, vv. 1–9), mais aussi les armées de Pharaon, englouties dans la mer alors qu'ils poursuivaient les Israélites, et les Ṯamūd qui, selon la tradition coranique, persécutèrent le prophète arabe Ṣāliḥ (dernier morceau, vv. 17–18). Autrement dit, ceux qui s'opposent aux croyants subiront la destinée des cités rebelles châtiées par Dieu, thème classique du Coran.

Il faut donc comprendre les versets 4–7, comme le propose G. Gobillot (2006 : 366, 2e col.), de manière très synthétique, chose tout à fait courante dans le style coranique : ceux qui ont jeté les chrétiens dans le feu sont déjà virtuellement dans le feu de l'Enfer, où ils contemplent ce qu'ils ont fait.

Dye

La sourate est composée de trois parties distinctes, aisément identifiables par les changements thématiques ou rythmiques.

Vv. 1–9 : rythme rapide, surtout au début ; contexte de prédication orale. Le passage est obscur. Qui sont les *ʾaṣḥābu l-ʾuḫdūd* ? Quels sont les référents des pronoms personnels ? On a souvent vu, à tort, une allusion au massacre de Naǧrān. Il s'agit plutôt d'une imprécation : plus précisément, un discours adressé aux croyants mais maudissant les incroyants (voir le commentaire de Kropp).

Vv. 10 – 11 : rythme plus lent. Il s'agit de la partie centrale de la sourate, qui en résume l'enseignement eschatologique.

Vv. 12 – 22 : retour à un rythme plus rapide. Les vv. 13 – 16 constituent une eulogie divine. Les vv. 21 – 22 posent plusieurs problèmes. Le v. 21 commence par *bal*, comme le v. 19. Le *bal* du v. 19 est logique : il existe un récit, ou des récits bien connus, de la puissance de Dieu et du châtiment qui attend les incroyants, et malgré cela, certains persistent à ne pas croire. En revanche, les vv. 21 – 22 s'intègrent moins harmonieusement au propos, et il semble que le *bal* du v. 21 serve à connecter ces deux versets à ceux qui précèdent.

Il est question d'*un* coran (*Qurʾānun*) et non pas *du* Coran (*al-Qurʾān*). Est-il donc certain que la « table » soit la place où est conservé *le Coran* ? C'est ainsi que la tradition musulmane comprend ce passage, mais ce n'est peut-être pas si simple : quel est l'antécédent de *huwa* dans *bal huwa Qurʾānun maǧīdun* ? Manifestement, c'est seulement le récit (*ḥadīṯ*) dont parle le v. 17.

Comment lire le dernier mot de la sourate : *maḥfūzin* ou *maḥfūzun* ? Les deux lectures sont possibles : soit c'est un « coran » qui est dans (*sic* !) une *table bien conservée*, soit il est *conservé dans une table*. Noter que Q 56:77 – 78 parle aussi d'un coran (*Qurʾānun*) et non du Coran.

Enfin, l'usage de *fī* (v. 22). Une table étant une surface (bidimensionnelle, et non tridimensionnelle), on s'attendrait à *ʿalā*. L'usage de cette préposition avec le terme « table » m'évoque un passage d'Éphrem où Marie est identifiée à la Table : « Moïse avait porté les tables de pierre que son Seigneur avait écrites ! Joseph escortait *la Table pure en laquelle* (*b-lūḥā dkyutā*) habitait le Fils du Créateur » (*Hymnes sur la Nativité* XVI: 17).

Grodzki

Referring to Dye's remark, also for J. Wansbrough, *bal huwa qurʾānun maǧīdun fī lawḥin maḥfūzin* (Q 85:21 – 22) evokes a celestial archetype being part of "an ancient and well-attested tradition, in which of course the referent was the word of God as injunction, law, even register, but not 'scripture' in the sense of record of revelation" (1977: 83). It seems to make sense when juxtaposing it with other verses of the Qurʾān speaking of the *qurʾān* but not of the Qurʾān (cf. Q 56:77 – 78) as if equated with the Mosaic law, and/or – as Wansbrough wants it – "with the Rabbinic concept of the pre-existent Torah as the immutable word of God" (*ibidem*). It was also suggested by other scholars (inter alia, Stein 2010, 261) that the expression "heavenly tablet" – *lawḥ maḥfūz* – might be linked to the idea of representative metal tablets hung in (South) Arabian temples which might have been known also to visitors from other regions of the peninsula

Hawting

This *sūra* seems designed to reassure the believers, in a situation of perceived persecution, that they will eventually be successful. Three *exempla* are offered to comfort them: the *aṣḥāb al-uḫdūd*, the armies of Pharaoh, and Ṯamūd, all of whom perished as a result of their treatment of the believers. The identity of the *aṣḥāb al-uḫdūd* is not obvious. Although it is tempting to read the initial *qutila* (v. 4) as a simple past tense, and hence to identify the *aṣḥāb al-uḫdūd* as victims, if we take into account the 3rd person plural subjects in vv. 6–8, and remember that the armies of Pharaoh and Ṯamūd were destroyed because of their behaviour, then it becomes plausible to read *qutila* as an optative and hence the *aṣḥāb* as the persecutors. Some sort of play of words involving the root *Š-H-D* seems to be taking place in this part of the *sūra* (vv. 3, 7 and 9), and one wonders if this is connected with the use of that root to convey the notion of martyrdom.

In v. 21, is it a glorious *qurʾān* preserved in a tablet, or in a preserved tablet? Whatever the answer, *qurʾān* here seems to refer to something other than the Qurʾān.

Hilali

The core of the passage is about the very act of belief and it is built on the contrast between bearing witness (the root: *Š-H-D*, vv. 3, 7, 9) and disclaiming (*takdhīb* v. 19). There is a superposition of witnesses: God himself swears: (vv. 1, 2, 3) and declares himself as witness over everything *ʿalā kulli šayʾin šahīd* (v. 9). The unbelievers bear witness of themselves (v. 7). The passage mentions two categories of evidence to support the act of belief: the reported narrative (*ḥadīṯ*) about the people of the past without any precision of the origin of the narratives even if we understand that there is an issue of transmission and witness *hal atāka ḥadīṯu*...? (have you not heard...?). The second evidence is the Qurʾān itself even if the word Qurʾān in v. 21 is mentioned without any reference to the book. There is an ambiguity about the Qurʾānic character of the word *ḥadīṯ* (v. 17) since the pronoun *huwa* (he) in (v. 22) could refer to the word *ḥadīṯ* mentioned (v. 17). The passage (vv. 18–22) is intriguing because the Qurʾān refers to its own capacity to narrate events from the past as evidence of its capacity to narrate the crucial event of the future: the day of resurrection.

Kropp

This time I will start with the principal remarks and then come to the specific case.

Religious discourse and its literary forms offer quite an astonishing number of typological similarities and parallels to schizophrenic and psychopathic discourse (as does political discourse). Thus reading through a collection of materials as Schmidt-Knaebel 1983 (similar text collections and studies are available in English, I presume) offers plenty of ideas for interpreting texts from the religious sphere. As a review of Schmidt-Knaebel rightly pointed out, though, the author did not deepen her study by discourse analysis and speech act theory which furnishes the theo-

retical basis for understanding distinct peculiarities: masking (concealing, hiding) of actants (speaker, addressee, public), use of impersonal actants, euphemistic or opposite metaphors, multiple addressed speech etc.). These are the most useful instruments even for interpreting the text collection of the Qurʾān. My first attempts of application are documented in French (Kropp 2008) and in German (Kropp 2009b). As, perhaps, both languages are not so widely read anymore, I try to resume the results for vv. 1–9:

After "purging" the concealed speakers and addressees the passage appears to be an enraged outburst of a frustrated missionary directed to his followers, but primarily to or against his opponents.

1 By the heaven with constellations,

2 and by the promised Day,

3 and by absolute witness (remark: *per merismum!*):

4 To hell with (you) the people of the glazing flame (*uḫdūd* corrected into *uǧdūd*, foreign, Aramaic term adapted to Arabic)

5 (explanation:) the fire always fed with fuel

6 where you will remain forever! (*qaʿada* "to sit" as – grammatical – verb of temporal duration "to remain").

7 You exactly know what you are doing to us, the believers,

8 who only eagerly (or angrily) urged (*naqamū*) you to believe in God, the Sublime, the Praiseworthy,

9 to whom belongs the realm of heavens and the earth. ...

Explanatory details are given in the aforesaid articles and, hopefully soon, in a revised English version.

Pregill

In contrast to Q 75 (QS 42), the underlying structure of this *sūra* is rather elusive, as the rhyme scheme is complex and seems to evade simple analysis.

Even if we discount the anomalously lengthy vv. 10–11, the underlying logic of the rhyme scheme is still not readily discernible, unless we break the *sūra* up into four discrete, non-symmetrical sections:

Vv. 1–7: A A A A A A A

Vv. 8–13: B B B B B B (or B B [B B] B B)

Vv. 14–17: A B B A

Vv. 18–22: A B B B A

This is acceptable enough on the face of it, and the alternation between A and B in the shifting rhyme pattern makes for a very compelling experience of the *sūra* as an auditory phenomenon. The problem, however, is that we do not seem to gain anything in our understanding of the conceptual structure (or compositional and redactional history) of the *sūra* by breaking it into these four units, since the thematic continuities and symmetries overlap the boundaries of the sections as divided according to rhyme.

V. 4: *Aṣḥāb al-Uḫdūd:* the "People of the Trench." Typically taken to refer to the Yemenites who persecuted the Christians of Najrān during the Ḏū Nuwās affair in the early sixth century, though this passage can also be read in such a way that this group is the persecuted and not the persecutors (see my comments on QS 47 below).

V. 8: Transitional, referring to "those who took revenge on them solely because they believed in the Mighty, the Most-Praised," with following verses an encomium of the divine. One wonders why exactly revenge is specified.

Vv. 10–11: These are the two verses it would be tempting to exclude based on their slightly anomalous length. Thematically they fit the context at hand well, but insofar as they are rather generic reflections on divine retribution for persecutors and reward for the persecuted using stock phraseology found throughout the Qurʾān, it is quite possible that these two lines are interpolations.

Vv. 17–18: A brief reference to the forces gathered by Pharaoh and Ṯamūd. Some have claimed that this brief reference to narratives recounted elsewhere is incongruous, but it seems to me to parallel the reference to the *Aṣḥāb al-Uḫdūd* at the beginning (which thus reinforces the identification of these people as the persecutors and not the persecuted).

Rippin

Verses 17–18, "Has the story of the hosts [*ǧunūd*], Pharaoh and Ṯamūd, reached you?" follows a passage about the torments of hell that will repay those who take revenge on and persecute the believers. It is a simple invocation of the past, with absolutely no narrative or context provided before or after. The names themselves stand as exemplars of tyranny as performed by an individual and by a community. In other contexts, simple names of people of the past are invoked as well (e.g., Q 14:9) but those tend to come in the context of the recounting of other prophet stories. The introductory phrase "Has the story of... reached you?" is used elsewhere (Q 20:9, Q 38:21, Q 51:24, Q 79:15, Q 88:1 [non-prophet related]). *Ǧunūd*, hosts/troops, is used in relationship to Pharaoh at least four other times. This invocation of the past, such an important overall motif of the Qurʾān, is thus provided here in its shortest possible form.

Stefanidis

Bell (1939: 646) understands the verb *qutila* as a past tense and identifies the *aṣḥābu l-uḫdūd* as referring to Qurayš opponents finally being defeated by the early Muslim community, possibly during the battle of Badr. His Medinan dating of this short and overall lyric *sūra* might have led him to reconsider the hitherto accepted principle, established by Nöldeke, that the Qurʾān's style evolved from a passionate and ecstatic to a more prosaic expression. He points out that "it is inherently probable that Muḥammad varied his style according to subject and the effect he aimed at producing," and that any stylistic evolution was unlikely to have been strictly irreversible

because of the continual recalling, among the believers, of previous recitations (Bell 1939: 690).

Tengour

Le mot *burūǧ*, *burǧ* au singulier, donné comme titre à la présente sourate, provient du grec *πυργος* qui signifie « tour ». Il désigne d'une part la muraille d'une cité sur laquelle sont construites des demeures fortifiées, et de l'autre les douze constellations zodiacales. Pour les Arabes des tribus, celles-ci revêtaient une importance particulière, dans la mesure où elles leur servaient de repaires – aussi fixes qu'une construction fortifiée justement – lors des déplacements nocturnes sur les pistes. Le serment prononcé dans le v. 1 sur ces « Tours célestes » puise sa force de persuasion dans ce sens très concret du mot *burūǧ*.

Bien que considérée comme étant mecquois, cette sourate comprend des thèmes de facture médinoise. Le v. 4 évoque ainsi *ʾaṣḥāb al-ʾuḫdūd*, « les Compagnons de la fosse de feu ». Il s'agirait, selon les plus anciens commentateurs du Coran, des Chrétiens de *Naǧrān* persécutés par le roi yéménite, *Ḏū Nuwās*. Celui-ci, après avoir embrassé le judaïsme, les aurait fait brûler vifs en les jetant dans une fosse de feu. Selon toute vraisemblance historique, l'événement se situerait en l'an 523.

Younes

Vv. 10 – 11 fit into what can be described as a punishment-reward insertion or addition. I have pointed out such insertions/additions in my comments on QS 1, 17, 20, 21. They appear to have a number of features in common such as the following: 1. They all include the promise of a reward for those who do good deeds in combination (following or preceding) with a threat of punishment for wrong-doers. 2. They interrupt the flow of a story or a prayer or are inserted between different parts of it. 3. They frequently have a different rhyme scheme and are longer than adjacent verses.

QS 44 Q 90

90.1 No indeed!
I swear by the City,
90.2 While you live in this City!
90.3 By a begetter and what he begot!
90.4 We created man in hardship.
90.5 Does he imagine that none can overpower him?
90.6 He says: “I wasted abundant wealth.”
90.7 Does he imagine that none has seen him?
90.8 Did We not give him two eyes?
90.9 A tongue and two lips?
90.10 And guided him to the two highways?
90.11 He did not storm the Steep.
90.12 But how can you know what is the Steep?
90.13 The freeing of a slave,
90.14 Or feeding, in time of famine,
90.15 An orphan near in kin,
90.16 Or a poor man, dirt-poor,
90.17 Then joined those who believe,
Who enjoin patience on one another,
Who enjoin mercy on one another.
90.18 They are the People of the hand dextral.
90.19 But they who blaspheme Our revelations,
These are the People of the hand sinistral,
90.20 Upon them a Fire, firmly padlocked.

90.1 Non!... Je jure par cette Cité!
90.2 et toi, tu es un résident dans cette cité -
90.3 Et par le père et ce qu’il engendre!
90.4 Nous avons, certes, créé l’homme pour une vie de lutte.
90.5 Pense-t-il que personne ne pourra rien contre lui?
90.6 Il dit: «J’ai gaspillé beaucoup de biens».
90.7 Pense-t-il que nul ne l’a vu?
90.8 Ne lui avons Nous pas assigné deux yeux,
90.9 et une langue et deux lèvres?
90.10 Ne l’avons-Nous pas guidé aux deux voies.
90.11 Or, il ne s’engage pas dans la voie difficile!
90.12 Et qui te dira ce qu’est la voie difficile?
90.13 C’est délier un joug [affranchir un esclave],
90.14 ou nourrir, en un jour de famine,
90.15 un orphelin proche parent
90.16 ou un pauvre dans le dénuement.
90.17 Et c’est être, en outre, de ceux qui croient et s’enjoignent mutuellement l’endurance, et s’enjoignent mutuellement la miséricorde.
90.18 Ceux-là sont les gens de la droite;
90.19 alors que ceux qui ne croient pas en Nos versets sont les gens de la gauche.
90.20 Le Feu se refermera sur eux.

سورة البلد
لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (1) وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (2) وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ (3) لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (4) أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
أَحَدٌ (5) يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا (6) أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ (7) أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (8) وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ (9) وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ
(10) فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ (11) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ (12) فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ (13) أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (14) يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ (15)
أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ (16) ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (17) أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ (18)
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ (19) عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤْصَدَةٌ (20)

Dye

Zellentin note à juste titre que la description du Jugement dernier en Matt/Mt 25:31–46 constitue un des sous-textes de cette sourate (l’auteur de la sourate semble bien combiner ce texte et Matt 7:13, ou des traditions parallèles). Outre la question des « Gens de la droite » et des « Gens de la gauche » (à rapprocher de Q 56:1–56, où il est cependant question de trois catégories de personnes ; cf. v. 7), on notera le point suivant : Matt 25:34–36 insiste sur l’amour du prochain, et c’est exactement ce que

font les vv. 13ss. Ces versets constituent la réponse à la question *wa-mā ʻadrāka mā l-ʻaqabat* (v. 12) : question brève (*wa-mā ʾadrāka mā* revient à de nombreuses reprises dans le Coran : Q 74:27 ; 77:14 ; 83:8, 19 ; 86:2, 97:2 ; 101:3, 10 ; 104:5 ; très souvent dans un contexte eschatologique), située au centre de la sourate, après les reproches adressés à ceux qui ont choisi « la voie facile ».

Je partage les analyses de Younes 2010 sur les problèmes de composition de cette sourate, concernant notamment les ruptures de rime et de rythme des vv. 5–7, ainsi que les difficultés sémantiques attachées à certains termes, à savoir *fī kabad* (v. 4) et *al-nağdayn* (v. 10). Pour reprendre une image récemment proposée par Segovia (2012: 235–239), le Coran fonctionne comme un *palimpseste*, arrangeant, retravaillant, des textes préexistants (dans le même ordre d'idée, cf. Kropp QS 46). Il n'y a donc rien de surprenant à ce que l'on puisse trouver différentes strates de composition à l'intérieur de nombreuses sourates.

Vv. 1–2 : sur *lā ʾuqsimu*, voir mon commentaire du QS 42. Si on ne se contente pas des réponses de la tradition musulmane, la grande question est de savoir à quoi exactement peut faire référence *al-balad*...

El-Badawi

This *sūra* is about Jerusalem, and the prophet Muḥammad's entitlement to it.

The opening of Q 90 is probably a response and reversal of Matt 25:34–36 (cf. in relation to Gabriel Reynolds' comments on Q 75; cf. further comments on Q 38), which states "But I say to you, *Do not swear at all*, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, *or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King*" (NRSV). Vv. 1–2 state (I use Munther Younes' translation), "I truly swear by this city, and you are a rightful dweller in this city."

There is an echo in v. 3 of the 'Qurʾānic creed' (Q 112:3). Also, I wonder if vv. 4–7 can be translated/interpreted as the following:

V. 4 – We have indeed created man in [a state of] respect/power? (cf. Syr. *K-B-D*)

V. 5 – Does he think that no one can overpower him? [Because God can!]

V. 6 – He says 'I have given away sizeable wealth.' [...which is a lie!]

V. 7 – Does he think that no one can see him? [Because God can!]

The duality of *kabad* and *labad* is a play on words conveying the sense of "thick."

The quintessential Qurʾānic themes found this *sūra*—especially the judgment of two people (*aṣḥāb al-maymana* vs. *aṣḥāb al-mašʾama*) and charity—are in dialogue with Matthew 25, perhaps even through the intermediaries proposed by Holger Zellintin. In this respect Q 90 should be considered along with Q 56; 74. For more on this see El-Badawi 2013: ch. 6.

Grodzki

In the shorter, Meccan *sūra*s it's always inspiring to observe the rhyme and rhythm structure of subsequent verses, especially patterns of (dis)continuity, structural subdivisions, rhetorical conventions, inserted repetitions or other efforts made to match the rhyme, as well as other syntactical and morphological peculiarities. For example, as once argued by Lüling (2003: 167–168), the repetition of *bi-hādha al-balad* in the first two verses may be "charged (...) to the account of the editorial reworking of the text to make out of the strophic text a prosaic one or: to simplify the poetically crosswise joined clauses." Also, as Lüling saw it, the Qurʾānic oath formula of v.1 should be rather understood as an Islamic interpretation of an older formula of prohibition of swearing. He reads Q 90:1–4 after cancelling these allegedly editorial alterations as:

90:1–2 Do not swear, where you are dwelling, by this land.
90:3 And not by a father and by what he begot!
90:4 Truly, He has created man in holy seriousness.

Hawting

The warning against a false sense of self-sufficiency (vv. 5–9), the exhortation to works of charity (vv. 10–17), and the promise of reward and threat of punishment according to whether one has listened to the exhortation or rejected the signs (vv. 18–20) are traditional, and a number of colleagues have pointed to similarities with concepts in the Gospel of Matthew (*aṣḥāb al-maymana/mashʾama; al-nağdayn; al-ʿaqaba*). But the initial oath (vv. 1–3) is difficult. What is the *balad*, who is the *ḥill al-balad*, and what does the phrase mean? It seems to imply that for others the *balad* is *ḥaram*. One expects such oaths to invoke God, and v. 3 uses terms that inevitably remind us of Q 112:3, except, of course, that the latter denies that God "begot or was begotten." What is being invoked here is puzzling.

Pregill

In support of the revisionist reading of this *sūra* proposed by Younes, I note the following: if vv. 17–20 are interpreted as an allusion to Matthew 25:31–46 (the sheep and the goats), or at least as an appropriation of its basic imagery, that would seem to confirm Younes' exegesis of the *hapax legomenon kabad* in v. 4 not as "toil, hardship" as traditionally held, but rather as "glory, dignity" (cf. the cognates in Hebrew and other Semitic languages), for a very specific reason. Matthew 25:31 states that the Final Judgment – the separation of the sheep and the goats – will occur when Christ returns ἐν τῇ δόξῃ, that is, *in glory*. Jesus is no longer the agent of the Eschaton as he is in Christianity; rather, reduced to the status of a mortal being – who is actually himself subject to judgment at the end (see Q 5:116–118, QS 9 above) – he is equated with Adam, both being created directly through divine fiat. In ancient Christianity, Christ's Second Coming in glory is sometimes understood

as a restoration of Adam's original glorified state, spoiled by the Fall. In echoing Matt 25 here, the Qurʾān seems to recognize this equation on some level, except that creation in glory is not the legacy simply of Adam, but of all people – *laqad ḫalaqnā l-insān fī kabadin*. This would thus reinforce Younes' argument, especially insofar as the creation of all humanity in glory, greater even than the angels (cf. Q 2:30 – 39, QS 2), fits well with the overarching positive tone of the passage as it was originally conceived before the interpolation of the more pessimistic verses forced a reinterpretation of *kabad* as denoting something negative.

Rippin

The way in which rhyme has been used and has constrained the vocabulary in this *sūra* is particularly noticeable in vv. 18 and 19. The phrases Companions of the Left and Companions of the Right appear elsewhere frequently but with left designated by *šimāl* (used in total 8 times plus twice in the plural) and right, *yamīn* (a word used about 65 times in total, including 6 times when it is used in the phrase Companions of the Right). The words used in these verses are *mašʾama* and *maymana*, otherwise only used (twice each) in Q 56, where they are used interchangeably with *šimāl* and *yamīn* for Companions of the Left and Companions of the Right. This choice of vocabulary is clearly driven by the constraints of the rhyme (which is marked by a final 'a' sound). [This observation is derived from Rippin 2013 which studies this *sūra*].

Stefanidis

V. 6 (*yaqūlu ahlaktu mālan lubadan*) should perhaps be understood in reference to potlatch type of practices known under the name *mumāǧada* or *taqāʿur* and alluded to many times in early Arabic poetry. During these self-destructive feasting competitions, two opponents would strive to surpass one another in terms of camel slaughtering and wine offerings (Bonner 2003: 19 – 21). More specific references relevant to this *sūra* can be found in Neuwirth (2011: 241 – 2).

Tengour

Si le mot *balad* sur lequel est prêté le serment qui inaugure la sourate *al-Balad* renvoie bien à la cité mecquoise, il ne serait pas vain de mettre ce passage en chronologie avec celui de Q 95:3 où l'expression coranique « *balad amīn* », territoire sûr, est employée pour désigner La Mecque. On retrouve la même expression dans Q 2:126 et Q 14:35 dans deux séquences relative à Abraham.

Une recherche pourra aussi être entreprise à partir de l'expression coranique *qarya āmina*, cité sûre, employée aussi pour désigner La Mecque comme étant une cité protégée par son Seigneur local, *Rabb al-Bayt*, celui-là même autour duquel l'homme Muḥammad a cherché à rallier les siens de manière préférentielle.

Younes

A careful examination of the language of Q 90 shows that certain verses are well written while others suffer from unnecessary repetition, vagueness, and lack of a rhythmic structure, as is shown by a comparison of vv. 1–4 and 8–16 on the one hand and with vv. 5–7 and 17–20 on the other.

Another striking feature of the *sūra* is the existence of elements that show God's favors to man in a generally positive context side by side with a strongly negative portrayal of man as an arrogant braggart.

Due to space limitations, I will restrict my comments to the first half of the *sūra*. A new reading of the whole *sūra* is found in Younes (2011).

Two terms in particular, both *hapax legomena*, attracted my attention as I examined vv. 1–10: *fī kabad* "in toil and suffering" (v. 4) and *al-naǧdayn* "the path of good and the path of evil" (v. 10). Thinking that they might provide the key to a better understanding of the *sūra* and remove some of the contradictions in it I consulted the earliest Qurʾān commentaries available. These include Muǧāhid (d. 104/722), al-Daḥḥāk (d. 105/723), Muqātil (150/767), al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), Abū 'Ubayda (d. 210/825), 'Abd al-Razzāq (d. 211/827), all pre-Ṭabarī commentators.

For *fī kabad* the traditional meaning of "in toil and suffering" is given by Mujāhid (2005:337), Al-Farrā' (2002, III:264), Abū 'Ubayda (1962, II:299), and 'Abd al-Razzāq (1999, III:428), while another completely different meaning, "upright, straight," is given as an alternative by Muǧāhid (2005:337), Al-Farrā' (2002, III:264), and 'Abd al-Razzāq (1999, III:428) and the only meaning by al-Daḥḥāk (1999, II:967) and Muqātil (1988, IV:701). For *al-naǧdayn*, all six commentators give the traditional "the paths of good and evil," while two (al-Daḥḥāk 1999, II:968 and 'Abd al-Razzāq 1999, III:429) give "the two breasts."

There is strong evidence to suggest that the meanings of "upright, straight" and "the two breasts" are the original meanings of these two terms. A comparison of Q 95:4 with Q 90:4 supports a positive interpretation of *fī kabad*. Compare Q 95: v. 4: *la-qad ḫalaqnā al-insāna fī 'aḥsani taqwīm* "we created man in the best form," and Q 90: v. 4: *la-qad ḫalaqnā al-insāna fī kabad* "we created man upright, straight."

Interpreting *al-naǧdayn* as the (mother's two) breasts is supported by internal linguistic evidence. The Arabic root *N-Ǧ-D* and its derivatives revolve around a rise in the ground. The meaning of "the path of good and evil" seems to have been created for the context of this *sūra* only; it doesn't exist in the language outside of it.

If the traditional meanings of these two terms are replaced by the meanings I am proposing here and the parenthetical verses 5–7, which I believe to be insertions whose purpose is to elaborate on the negative meaning of *fī kabad* created by the commentators, are removed, then Q90: vv. 1–10 look like a hymn about God's creation and his favors to man, as follows:

I truly swear by this city,	*la-uqsimu bi-hāḏa al-balad*
And you are a rightful dweller in this city.	*wa-anta ḥillun bi-hādah al-balad*
And by the begetter and the begotten,	*wa-wālidin wa mā walad*
Verily We have created man upright (in a unique form),	*la-qad ḫalaqnā al-insāna fī kabad*
Have We not made for him a pair of eyes?	*a-lam naǧʿal lahu ʿaynayn*
And a tongue, and a pair of lips?	*wa-lisānan wa-shafatayn*
And guided him to [his mother's] breasts,	*wa-hadaynāhu al-naǧdayn*

Zellentin

Neuwirth has illustrated that the present *sūra* reflects a (likely oral) echo of Matt 25:31–46, in which we learn about the separation of two peoples, one on the right hand, and one on the left hand (2010:702). In Matthew, in turn in dialogue with Isaiah 58:6–7, the themes of hunger, food, and charity for a brother—a close of kin—are also discussed, as is eternal fire. While such a close cluster of correspondences is suggestive on its own, all of these themes, and especially the imagery of right and left hand groups, and the specific acts of charity, are of course very traditional (on left and right peoples see e. g., Platon's *Politeia* 10:614, and, as pointed out by Dye, *Apocalypse of Abraham* 21; they occur throughout the Qurʾān, see Rippin's commentary on this passage). Intriguingly, however, the Qurʾān introduces themes to its Matthean echo that are found only in Isaiah: whereas Matthew speaks of visiting prisoners (Matt 25:36), the Qurʾān specifies the "freeing of a slave," or literally, of a "neck," (*fakku raqabatin* v. 13), evocative of Isaiah's breaking of the yoke (58:6). It thus reads the Gospel in light of the Torah.

A closer look at what the Judaeo-Christian tradition *adds* to Matthew leads to an even more specific context in which to read the Qurʾān. Namely, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* quotes almost the *entirety* of the Matthean passage that is pertinent for the Qurʾān (namely Matt 25:34–40 and 46, see DA XIX 186.14–187.15, see also DA XI.128.22–129.1 and DA XV.168.15). A few verses before, moreover, the *Didascalia* instructs its audience to engage in the following catalogue of good deeds reminiscent of that of Isaiah, yet specifically in the context of freeing a slave: to bestow for buying off, or ransoming of the faithful (*mhymnʾ*); and to redeem slaves and captives and prisoners and those who suffer violence. The *Didascalia* hence features a combination of Matthew and Isaiah similar to that of the Qurʾān, thereby providing us with a numerically suggestive (albeit painfully modular) argument that the Qurʾān here stands in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, without any trace of direct textual influence.

Neuwirth has rightfully argued that the Qurʾān's language and conceptuality of *hadaynāhu n-naǧdayni*, "we have guided [humankind] on the two paths," evokes Matthew's description of the easy road that leads to destruction, and the hard road that leads to life (Matt 7:13 f). We can confidently follow tradition when translating the Qurʾānic hapax legomenon *naǧdayni* as "two paths" since this meaning of *ngd*

is well attested in Jewish and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. (No association with a high place is necessary.) As mentioned in my commentary on the cognate two paths in Q 1, the motif of "two paths" is widespread throughout the Qurʾān and beyond (see e. g., Didache 1–6, Mishna *Avot* 2:9, *Genesis Rabbah* 21:5, or Is 40:3, quoted in turn in Matt 3:3). Yet the Judaeo-Christian tradition, as recorded by the *Clementine Homilies* (7.6–8), is again the most pertinent context in which and against which to understand how the Qurʾān hears the Matthean passage. For the Qurʾān again shares much with the *Clementine Homilies* that is *not* to be found in Matthew.

In all *three* texts, namely, humankind is shown two alternatives, one of which is called the "steep," or "narrow and rugged one" (*l-ʿaqabata*, v. 11), and in all *three* texts the easy choice leads to damnation. Yet it is the *Clementine Homilies* that, just like the Qurʾān, and unlike Matthew, emphasize God's "guidance" as well as His omniscience in this context, which in the Qurʾān becomes the key message directed to the squanderers amongst the townspeople. Most importantly, the *Clementine Homilies here* express the opposition of the two paths as corresponding to the juxtaposition of *apistis kai pistis*, of "unbelief and faith" in the same way that the Qurʾān juxtaposes *allaḏīna kafarū* (v. 19) and *allaḏīna āmanū* (v. 17). As Shlomo Pines points out, the terms "believing" and "unbelieving," while part of late antique discourse in general, are especially crucial in the Clementine literature, and in its Syriac witnesses, just like in the Qurʾān, they are denoted by the lexemes *hmn*/*āmn* and *kpr* (1984:136, see also Zellentin 2013a:162). While the Qurʾān, hence, has general affinities with the many general Jewish and Christian themes, it arranges them in a way particularly close to the Judaeo-Christian tradition which maintains a dense web of intertextual references within and against which it expects to be heard.

QS 45 Q 96

96.1 Recite, in the name of your Lord!
He who created!
96.2 He created man from a blood-clot.
96.3 Recite! Your Lord is most bountiful.
96.4 He taught with the pen.
96.5 He taught man what he knew not.
96.6 And yet, man grows intemperate,
96.7 For he thinks himself exempt!
96.8 But to your Lord is the journey's end.
96.9 What do you think of one who forbids,
96.10 A worshipper as he prays?
96.11 What do you think?
What if he were guided aright?
96.12 Or commands to piety?
96.13 What do you think?
What if he cries lies and departs?
96.14 Does he not know that God is watching?
96.15 No indeed!
If he does not desist, We shall drag him by the forelock,
96.16 That deceitful, sinful forelock!
96.17 Let him summon his mates,
96.18 And We shall summon the watchmen of hell.
96.19 No! Do not obey him,
But kneel down, and draw near!

96.1 Lis, au nom de ton Seigneur qui a créé,
96.2 qui a créé l'homme d'une adhérence.
96.3 Lis! Ton Seigneur est le Très Noble,
96.4 qui a enseigné par la plume [le calame],
96.5 a enseigné à l'homme ce qu'il ne savait pas.
96.6 Prenez-garde! Vraiment l'homme devient rebelle,
96.7 dès qu'il estime qu'il peut se suffire à lui-même (à cause de sa richesse).
96.8 Mais, c'est vers ton Seigneur qu'est le retour.
96.9 As-tu vu celui qui interdit
96.10 à un serviteur d'Allah [Muhammad] de célébrer la Salât?
96.11 Vois-tu s'il est sur la bonne voie,
96.12 ou s'il ordonne la piété?
96.13 Vois-tu s'il dément et tourne le dos?
96.14 Ne sait-il pas que vraiment Allah voit?
96.15 Mais non! S'il ne cesse pas, Nous le saisirons certes, par le toupet,
96.16 le toupet d'un menteur, d'un pécheur.
96.17 Qu'il appelle donc son assemblée.
96.18 Nous appellerons les gardiens [de l'Enfer].
96.19 Non! Ne lui obéis pas; mais prosterne-toi et rapproche-toi.

سورة العلق
اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (1) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (2) اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (3) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (4) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ
(5) كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغَى (6) أَنْ رَآهُ اسْتَغْنَى (7) إِنَّ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَى (8) أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى (9) عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى
(10) أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَى (11) أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى (12) أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (13) أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى (14) كَلَّا لَئِنْ
لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعَنْ بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (15) نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ (16) فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ (17) سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ (18) كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ
(19)

Cuypers

Selon la tradition islamique, cette sourate serait composée de deux fragments indépendants (vv. 1–5, 6–19). Le premier correspondrait à la première révélation, avec l'injonction de l'ange Gabriel à l'adresse de Muḥammad : *iqrāʾ bi-smi rabbika*, « lis » ou « récite, au Nom de ton Seigneur ». Le deuxième fragment serait plus tardif, contenant un encouragement à persévérer dans la prière, malgré la persécution d'un ennemi. Plusieurs orientalistes estiment cependant que les premiers mots de la sourate reprennent la formule biblique : « Invoque le Nom de ton Seigneur ».

Comprise ainsi, la sourate retrouve unité et cohérence, autour du thème de la prière. Elle est en réalité composée non pas de deux parties, mais de trois (vv. 1–5, 6–8 et 9–19). Les deux parties extrêmes développent le thème de la prière : invitation à la louange (vv. 1–5), encouragement à persévérer dans la prière (vv. 9–19). La partie centrale qui les relie (vv. 7–8) est une sentence de sagesse, mettant en garde contre le danger des richesses qui détournent de Dieu, et donc aussi de la prière.

La sourate apparaît ainsi comme un psaume invitatoire, proche du Ps 95. Après l'impératif initial invitant à la prière (v. 1), la sourate évoque la création en général (v. 1), puis celle de l'homme en particulier (v. 2). Or, le Ps 95 présente une même séquence : appel à la louange, à l'impératif (« Venez, crions de joie pour le Seigneur », Ps 95:1) ; Dieu créateur (« à lui la mer, *c'est lui qui l'a faite*, la terre ferme, ses mains *l'ont façonnée* », Ps 95:5) ; et créateur de l'homme (« à genoux devant le Seigneur *qui nous a faits* », Ps 95:6). Cet ensemble est suivi, dans les deux textes, par une formule de justification similaire : « Car ton Seigneur est le Très-Généreux… » (Q 96:3) / « Car c'est lui notre Dieu » (Ps 95:7). La suite de la sourate est également comparable à la deuxième partie du psaume. Les deux textes sont en effet des réquisitoires : contre la rupture de l'Alliance par le peuple de Dieu (Ps 95:8–11), contre les riches et contre un individu impie (Q 96:6–18). On notera encore la similitude des versets du psaume : « Entrez, courbons-nous, *prosternons-nous* » (Ps 95:6) et « *approchons* de sa face en rendant grâces » (Ps 95:2) avec « Prosterne-toi et approche-toi » (Q 96:19).

Dye

Quelques remarques éparses, sur ce que l'on peut appeler un *psaume coranique*.

V. 1 : *iqraʾ bi-smi rabbika:* il faut comprendre « invoque (=glorifie) le nom de ton Seigneur ». Comparer hébreu *qrā ḇ-šem Yahwē* et formules parallèles (Ps 105 (104) : 1 ; 116 : 13, 17) et syriaque *qrā ḇ-šem māryā*. La formule est équivalente à *sabbiḥ bi-sma rabbika* (Q 56:74 ; 59:52), *sabbiḥi sma rabbika* (Q 87:1), *uḏkur isma rabbika* (Q 73:8 ; 76:25). D'un point de vue grammatical, le *bāʾ* de *bi-smi rabbika* est un *bāʾ zāʾida*. La manière de traduire ce verset constitue d'ailleurs, à mes yeux, un véritable schibboleth, permettant de faire le départ entre les traductions authentiquement « historiennes » et celles qui se révèlent trop tributaires de la tradition musulmane.

Görke, Schoeler, Motzki (2012: 30–33), en se fondant, entre autres choses, sur l'existence d'une version parallèle au récit musulman sur la première révélation (Gabriel enjoignant à Muḥammad de lire le Coran, Muḥammad refusant, etc.) dans l'*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* de Bède le Vénérable (texte achevé en 731), mais à propos, non bien sûr de Muḥammad, mais du moine Caedmon, affirment que la tradition sur la première révélation du début de Q 96 existait déjà à la fin du Ier siècle de l'Hégire (et dans la version de la *Sīra* d'Ibn Isḥāq). D'après eux, elle aurait été transmise à la source de Bède. S'ils ont raison, on peut en déduire, non que la bonne interprétation du verset serait « récite au nom de ton Seigneur », mais que le

travail de réinterprétation, plus ou moins libre, des versets coraniques (en relation avec la « vie du Prophète), a commencé assez tôt dans le milieu des *quṣṣās*.

V. 2 : *ʿalaq* s'explique ici par des raisons de rime. Il faut probablement comprendre *ṭīn*.

Vv. 6, 15 et 19 : comment comprendre *kallā* ? Ce ne peut pas être une négation de ce qui précède, et pas non plus de ce qui suit (et ce n'est pas non plus une réponse à un propos que le texte ne mentionnerait pas). Faut-il y voir simplement, sur le modèle des serments introductifs de certaines sourates, une sorte de « sonnette » destinée à attirer l'attention ou rythmer le discours ? Ou comme une particule destinée à assurer la transition entre deux idées antithétiques (« et certes…») ?

Hawting

Vv. 1–8 seem a self-contained unit referring to mankind (*al-insān*) in general, while vv. 9–19 hint at concern with immediate circumstances (*alladhī yanhā ʿabdan iḏā ṣallā*, which reminds us of Q 72:19 *lammā qāma ʿabdu llāhi yadʿūhu kādū yakūnūna ʿalayhi libadan*). It is easy to see why vv. 1–5 could be identified as the first verses of Q to be revealed, but equally they could be understood as an introductory formula for the *sūra* alone – taking the place of the introductory oath in, e. g., Q 90. (The reference to the pen in v. 4 calls to mind Q 68: 1, where the pen is the subject of the introductory oath.) Vv. 6–8 then warn against assumed self-sufficiency and remind about the inevitability of death. In vv. 9–14 the thrice repeated *a-raʾayta* appears ironic in view of the statement in v.14 that it is God who sees (*yarā*). Perhaps the passage reinforces the warning against relying on human self-sufficiency when only God can really see and know. Vv. 15–18 emphasise the punishment awaiting this anonymous individual if he persists in preventing an *ʿabd* from praying, and v. 19 urges the Qurʾānic messenger to ignore him and to prostrate in prayer. The root *Q-R-B* in the concluding *wa-qtarib* may indicate sacrifice rather than proximity: cf. Q 108:2 (*fa-ṣalli…wa-nḥar*).

Hilali

The first contact between Muḥammad and Gabriel is described in various narratives in the Muslim sources and gives to this chapter of the Qurʾān a special status. Many remarks could be made about the peculiarities of the passage and I would suggest understanding v. 6 as the object of the injunction *iqraʾ* (read!). Like many other passages of the Qurʾān, the transition from a discourse to another is not announced and vv. 6–19 could be read as the text Muḥammad was ordered to read. The Muslim exegetical tradition already alludes to this hypothesis but mentions other Qurʾānic passages as object of reading. Phonetically and in terms of argumentation, the preposition *kallā* sets the tone in this passage and introduces the atmosphere of controversy absent in the apparent meaning of the text but present in the narratives about the experience of the first revelation (Muḥammad resisting the order to read). I suggest

reading this passage not only horizontally but also vertically as the expression of the confrontation between the act of reading associated with the obedience to God and the acts of disobedience expressed in various ways (vv. 6–18). This confrontation ends by the second injunction at the end of the passage introduced dramatically as Reynolds mentions. The controversial context is framed by two injunctions expressing the intimacy and the proximity of the revelation context: read and bow down in worship and draw close.

Imbert

Je ne parlerai que des versets les plus célèbres, ceux qui font l'ouverture historique du Coran: *iqrāʾ bismi rabbīka*, etc. Leur absence totale en épigraphie arabe ancienne, ainsi que dans le corpus du Coran des pierres, est étonnante. Dans le cas des isolats coraniques (des versets gravés seuls sur un rocher ou un mur), nous aurions pu imaginer trouver de tels versets tant ils sont célèbres et connus de tous. Il n'en est rien. La Tradition islamique tardive et la littérature du *ḥadīṯ* notamment, se sont emparé de ces versets symboliquement très forts (il s'agit de l'ouverture historique du Coran) et ont développé très largement le contexte de la révélation de ces premiers versets. Il paraît en être autrement dans l'imaginaire des premiers musulmans qui ne semblent pas avoir donné une importance particulière à cet épisode fondateur. Ce qui semble emblématique dans le Coran du xxie siècle ne l'était sans doute pas à l'aube de l'Islam. Tout comme le mot *Qurʾān* dont nous n'avons aucune attestation épigraphique durant les deux premiers siècles de l'Hégire.

Khalfallah

La dernière partie de cette sourate contient un élément qui relève de l'eschatologie musulmane: le nom des gardiens de Ǧahannam. Le Coran les évoque par un terme, peu récurrent, qui porte une triple ambigüité d'ordre morphologique, étymologique et symbolique. Le terme *zabāniya* ne revient qu'une seule fois dans le Coran. Dans un autre passage, (Q 74:30) ils sont présentés comme les dix-neuf Anges administrant le châtiment dans l'Enfer, comme les assistants de Mālik, Gardien de la Fournaise. L'imaginaire populaire a ensuite brodé de nombreux récits eschatologiques sur ces Anges. Cependant, la principale difficulté était de s'accorder sur une étymologie plausible pour ce mot et d'en expliquer le schème. Les philologues proposent que le mot serait dérivé de la racine (*Z-B-N*) ayant le sens de : *pousser, refouler.* Quant à sa forme, ils avancent quatre hypothèses : a- le mot est le pluriel de *zabāniyy* ; b- le pluriel de *zibanya* dont le schème est rare ; c- le pluriel de *zibniyy* ; d- un collectif sans singulier. On constate donc l'embarras et la difficulté de ces propositions. Peut-être, fallait-il chercher dans les langues sémitiques avoisinantes ? A. Jeffery ne le cite pas dans sa liste des emprunts coraniques. G. Lüling (2003 : 73) l'interprète comme la reprise de *rabbaniyya* provenant de l'araméen *rabbouni* (Seigneur), titre par lequel Jésus était baptisé dans : Mark 10:51 et John, 20:16.

Pregill

Must we read this as a compound *sūra*, as the tradition holds? The rhyme and meter definitely change between vv. 1–5 and 6 ff., but they also change *within* vv. 1–5. There is a conspicuous thematic coherence to the *sūra* as a whole. I find the argument that vv. 6–19 constitute the text that the prophet is commanded to recite in vv. 1–5 compelling.

Vv. 15–16: Memorable imagery of the "lying, sinning forelock"; note the synecdoche, and also the parallel use of *nāṣiyya* in Q 11:56, where "grasping by the forelock" clearly indicates God's power over life and death, though there it is beasts that God exercises power over ("there is no riding-animal that He does not control (by taking it by its forelock)," *mā min dābbatin illā huwa ākiḏun bi-nāṣiyyatihā*). The usage seems like it was extrapolated from a more literal, quotidian context to a figurative, eschatological one. In this, the parallel to Matthew 25:31–32, the sheep and the goats, is noteworthy (other allusions to this may be found in Q 56:7–11 and 90:17–20; see QS 44 above).

V. 18: *zabāniyya:* memorably rendered as "myrmidons" in one less-than-memorable translation. Who are these beings? An eschatological context is indicated, so "guardians of hell" or "punishing angels" seems appropriate. Jeffery (1938: 148) accepts the explanation of Andrae (1926: 154), who notes that in Ephrem *dbhūrē* are the *ductores,* angels who lead the deceased to final judgment.

Reynolds

The final verse here contrasts dramatically (in terms of rhyme and length) with the verses which precede it, and the meaning is hardly clear (who, exactly should not obey whom? Hilali-Khan explain that Muḥammad should not obey Abū Ǧahl, but this interpretation has no basis in the text). Perhaps the best that can be said is that this verse seems to match the opening verse of the *sūra*. The *sūra* opens with a second person singular imperative ("Recite!" or perhaps, "Invoke!") and ends with the three second person singular imperatives of v. 19.

Rippin

Nāṣiya, forelock or perhaps forehead, is used twice here (vv. 15 and 16) as well as in Q 11:56 and 55:41 (the latter in the plural). The forelock is declared to be *kaḏiba*, lying, and *ḫāṭiʾa*, in error. That suggests this is a metaphor (contra Ambros/Procházka 2004: 269), as seems also to be suggested in Q 11:56 (as suggested by Ambros//Procházka 2004: 269) conveying the sense of having power over someone/something. So, the forelock here symbolizes the person as a whole (and is thus a synecdoche). But why "forelocks"? The reference found in Ezekiel 8:3 seems positive, the forelock being used to drag Ezekiel to Jerusalem. A reference to the Jewish *peʾot*, side-curl, seems unlikely (cf. Ḏūʾl-Nuwās as meaning "he of the side-curls" to confuse things further). Jastrow (1903: I, 172) understands the meaning of *belorit* in Mishnah *Avodah*

Zarah 1:3 as referring to "*plait* or *locks*, esp. the long hair worn by the Roman and Greek youths of the upper classes and offered to the gods on arriving at puberty." Such were forbidden in the Mishnah on the grounds of being a custom of idolaters. It involved shaving (or simply gathering hair) in order to create a tuft of hair on the crown of the head that could then be braided and worn as a ponytail. The forelock is common in Christian iconography (and, I read, on the Shroud of Turin, see http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n59part4x.pdf). It is interesting that in some Christian paintings the forelock becomes a simple "mark" of spirituality on the forehead like the *sīmā* of the Qurʾān – that both "forelock" and "mark" occur in Q 55:41 may be worth considering (see my comments on QS 38).

There's a YouTube video called "Forelock [The miracles of the Qurʾān]" that ties the structure of the cranial fore-lobe to the forelock (which is thought to explain why the Qurʾān calls the forelock lying and in error).

Younes

There are a number of structural problems connected with the phrase *'an ra'āhu* in v. 7. The particle *an* is generally used in two ways: the first, in the sense of "to" as in *yurīdu an*... "he wants to...," and the second, after particles like *ba'da* "after" and *qabla* "before" where it serves as a buffer between the particle and a following verb. *An* in Q96: v. 7 does not fit either category.

The verb *ra'āhu*, literally means "he saw him," with no clear reference of the object pronoun *hu*. According to the Qurʾān commentators, the word should be understood as "he saw/sees himself," although there is no trace in the text of the equivalent of "himself" (*nafsahu*).

Lüling (2003: 95) suggests that *an* (أن) should be read as *in* (إن) "if, when, whenever" and that the pronoun *hu* refers to God. So, according to him, Q90: vv. 6–7 should be understood as:

V. 6 Not at all that man shall be presumptuous,

V. 7 Whenever he sees Him (God) overbearingly independent.

Grammatically, such a reading of v. 7 has more support than the traditional interpretation.

Zellentin

The forelock in Ezek 8:3, which some of the commentaries on the passage mention, is grabbed by the "hand of God;" Ezekiel is then lifted up "between the earth and the heaven." In the rabbinic tradition, the hand of God is understood to be that of "one of the angels who is a third of the world," who upon God's command "stretches out his hand from heaven and touches the earth" (*Exodus Rabbah* 3:6, a medieval text part of which may well be late antique, see also Babylonian Talmud Menahot 42a and Yoma 76b). While the hand in our passage seems to be that of God Himself, the Qurʾān then evokes the "keepers of hell," introducing an agent to perform some

action, just like the rabbis did. More intriguingly, the rabbis, just like the Qurʾān, do away with the original context of the "lock," which explains Ezekiel's vision of the Temple, and place it into a discourse on God's attribute of judgment, the freedom of the individual to disobey, and God's power to intervene in the lives of individuals. The imagery of grabbing an individual "by the forelock" is attested elsewhere in the Babylonian Talmud (see e.g. *Sanhedrin* 82a, "(Zimri) then seized (the Medianite princess) by her forelock (*tpsh bblwryth*) and brought her before Moses"). There is hence some broad affinity between this passage and the rabbinic tradition. At the same time, however, there are no lexical or further conceptual affinities between the Midrash and the Qurʾān that I can see, showing again the latter's likely oral exposure to the former, or indeed even the former's exposure to the letter in this case, as well as the Qurʾān's independence from and further development of the traditions of its time.

QS 46 Q 97

97.1 We sent it down in the Night of Power!
97.2 But how can you know what is the Night of Power?
97.3 The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.
97.4 In it, the angels and the Spirit are sent swarming down,
By their Lord's leave, attending to every command.
97.5 Peace is it that Night, till the break of dawn.

97.1 Nous l'avons certes, fait descendre (le Coran) pendant la nuit d'Al-Qadr.
97.2 Et qui te dira ce qu'est la nuit d'Al-Qadr?
97.3 La nuit d'Al-Qadr est meilleure que mille mois.
97.4 Durant celle-ci descendent les Anges ainsi que l'Esprit, par permission de leur Seigneur pour tout ordre.
97.5 Elle est paix et salut jusqu'à l'apparition de l'aube.

سورة القدر
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (1) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (2) لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (3) تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (4) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (5)

Cuypers

Deux textes juifs semblent pouvoir être rapprochés de la sourate *al-Qadr*. Le premier est un passage du *Livre de la Sagesse* (18:14–15), qui évoque la nuit pascale, durant laquelle les premiers-nés des Égyptiens furent exterminés : « Alors qu'un *silence paisible* enveloppait toutes choses et que *la nuit* parvenait au milieu de sa course rapide, du haut des cieux, ta *Parole toute-puissante s'élança* du trône royal ; guerrier impitoyable, elle fondit au milieu d'une terre vouée à l'extermination. Portant pour glaive aigu ton irrévocable *décret*, elle s'arrêta, et remplit de mort l'univers. »

Les éléments communs avec la sourate sont mis en italiques. La liturgie chrétienne de Noël applique le début de ce texte à l'Incarnation du Verbe. Le Coran semble l'appliquer à la révélation, référent possible du pronom *hu*, au v. 1.

Le second texte est extrait des *Testaments des douze patriarches*, apocryphe juif du 2e siècle av. J.-C., mais contenant certains remaniements chrétiens (ce qui semble le cas dans la citation ci-dessous). Dans la section intitulée *Testament de Juda*, on lit la prophétie suivante du Messie, descendant de Jacob et de Juda: « Après cela, une étoile *se lèvera* pour vous de Jacob, dans *la paix*, et un homme se lèvera de ma descendance, comme un soleil de justice, marchant avec les hommes dans la douceur et la justice, et on ne trouvera en lui aucun péché. *Les cieux s'ouvriront sur lui, pour répandre l'Esprit*, la bénédiction du Père saint, et c'est lui qui *répandra l'Esprit* de grâce sur vous. Vous deviendrez ses fils en vérité, et vous marcherez dans ses *ordonnances*, les premières et les dernières. »

Dans les deux textes on peut retrouver l'envoi par Dieu, du Coran (Q 97) ou du Messie (*Testament*), dans la paix. L'Esprit descend pour communiquer aux hommes tous les ordres de Dieu.

S'il y a une allusion à la nuit de Noël, dans la sourate 97, comme certains l'ont pensé, ce n'est qu'indirectement, par la réutilisation d'un texte (Sg 18:14–16) qui signifie au sens littéral la Pâque juive, et seulement en un sens accommodateur la nuit de Noël, et la relecture d'un autre texte (*Testament de Juda*) qui, lui, porte directement sur le Messie, mais auquel le Coran se substitue.

Dye

Je résume Dye 2011.

Quel est l'antécédent de *hu* (v. 1) ? Y voir le Coran paraît anachronique. Que signifie *qadr*/*qadar* dans *fī laylati l-qadri* (v. 3) ? Les autres occurrences coraniques de la racine n'aident guère. L'explication traditionnelle (fête du Nouvel an, durant laquelle descendent sur terre les décrets pour l'année à venir) n'a aucun rapport avec la descente du Coran et n'explique pas *salām* (« paix ») au v. 5 (terme souvent présent dans le Coran, *jamais* en ce sens).

On doit partir du *texte*. Le champ sémantique évoque la nuit de la Nativité. Luxenberg (2004a and b) a de bonnes intuitions, qu'il faut nuancer et approfondir.

V. 1 : « destin » et « naissance » peuvent être synonymes, la position des étoiles à la naissance déterminant le destin du nouveau-né (*Homélies Ps-Clémentines* IV:12.3). Le pronom pers. 3e pers. sg., sans antécédent, est souvent utilisé dans la littérature syriaque pour désigner Jésus. Originellement, *hu*=Jésus, d'où « nous l'avons fait descendre=naître », mais le texte a pu être réinterprété (*hu*=Coran), voire en partie modifié, par une communauté de lecteurs postérieure (lors de la composition du *muṣḥaf*, ou postérieurement, en lien avec Q 44:1–6 – texte peut-être pas si proche). Ne pas confondre le *Sitz im Buch* (dans le texte canonique *ultérieur*) et le *Sitz im Leben* originel (d'une strate plus ancienne) de la sourate.

V. 3, *šahr* : pas « mois ». Rapprocher de syriaque *šahrā*, « veillée », « vigile » ; arabe *sahar*, « veillée », à comprendre comme *vigile* (phénomène de *Lehnbedeutung*). Éphrem : « Ne comptons pas notre vigile comme une vigile ordinaire. C'est une fête dont le salaire dépasse cent pour un » (*Hymnes sur la Nativité*, XXI:2.1–2).

V. 4 : texte obscur en l'état. Probable syriacisme (Q 17:89 ; 31:10) : *tunazzilu... min kulli 'amr*, « les anges font descendre toutes sortes de *'amr* ». Éphrem : « les anges et les archanges, ce jour-là, sont descendus entonner sur terre un nouveau Gloria » (*Hymnes sur la Nativité*, XXI:3.1–2), cf. Luk 2:13–14. *'Amr* s'explique par des raisons de rime ou comme corruption de *z(a)mar* (« chants ») (*Hymnes sur la Nativité*, XXI:5.1–2, 10.1).

Le Coran décrit la nuit d'*al-qadr* comme Éphrem celle de la Nativité : l'hymne d'Éphrem apparaît comme la *source* du texte. Selon les traditions chrétiennes, la nuit de Noël est caractérisée par la paix, la venue du Christ mettant fin aux pouvoirs des mages et des démons (cf. l'opposition *qadr*/*salām* ; les traditions musulmanes substitueront le Coran à Jésus).

El-Badawi

There is no doubt that this *sūra* builds upon the imagery and lore of Biblical and para-Biblical literature. And Guillaume Dye's thorough discussion of Luxenberg's interpretation is valuable and enlightening. However, I am only partly convinced.

I wonder if this line of thought risks being 'too literal.' In other words, if Q 97 integrates imagery from the Nativity of Christ, does this *literally* mean that the pronoun *–hu* from *innā anzalnāhu* refers to Christ himself? It appears to me that a figurative interpretation referring to divine "revelation" (*tanzīl*; cf. also *anzal*) is *explicitly* justifiable through dozens of Qurʾānic references (e. g. Q 17:106; 39:1; 76:23; etc). In this respect Nicolai Sinai has a point.

In El-Badawi 2013: ch. 3, I claim that Q 17:107–9 builds upon the imagery of the Nativity of Christ. However, when integrated into Qurʾānic as well as extra Qurʾānic passages, these verses demonstrate a deliberate, non-literal "dogmatic re-articulation" of Matt 2:1–2, which serves a new purpose. So too is the case with Q 97.

On a different note, could v. 3 be referring to "a thousand moons (*šahr*; cf. Aram. *sahrā*)" which increases the cosmological significance of the *sūra* as a whole?

Hawting

The lack of explicit referent for the suffix pronoun in v. 1 obviously invites the question, what is "it" (or "him") that has been sent down on the Night of Power (if that is how we should translate *laylat al-qadr*)? The frequent association of derivatives of the root *N-Z-L* with revelation elsewhere in Q suggests that we should make the same association here. The common identification of "it" as the Qurʾān, however, involves accepting that *laylat al-qadr* here has the same meaning as it does in normative Islam, i. e., that it is a night in Ramaḍān, and then making a link with Q 2:185, which refers to the month of Ramaḍān in which "We sent down the *Qurʾān*." The idea that the whole Qurʾān was revealed at a particular time conflicts, of course, with the Islamic understanding that its revelation was a serial process, and it was necessary to reconcile the two concepts by, e. g., the theory that it was brought down as a whole to a lower heaven, whence Gabriel brought it to Muḥammad in segments, or that Muḥammad received his first revelation at a certain time in Ramaḍān and then continued to receive others until the end of his life. The difficulty of reconciling the two concepts of revelation cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the suffix pronoun does refer to the Qurʾān.

An alternative would be to envisage some other act of revelation. Q 44:3 has a similar formula to v. 1 here: *innā anzalnāhu fī laylatin mubārakatin*. An act of revelation on "a blessed night"/ "the Night of Power," at a particular moment distinct from human time (v. 3) and marked by a descent of the angels and the Spirit (v.4), might be applicable to the Torah. In Rabbinical Judaism that is associated with the festival of Pentecost/Shavuot, although the Jews of Medina (according to Muslim tradition) celebrated it on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ (the Day of Atonement). In Rabbinic tradition, the festival is marked by readings of the Torah during the night. According to Chris-

tian tradition as recorded in Acts 2, it was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles.

As Emmanuelle Stefanidis remarks, it is possible that the Qurʾān here has drawn on Christian (and one might add "or other") *topoi* to express its own idea. Possibly in Q 44:4, and certainly in some of the traditional Islamic beliefs about Laylat al-Qadr, there is evident the ancient idea of a particular night of the year when God causes to be recorded in writing in a heavenly book His decisions and decrees regarding the coming year, especially His decisions about who is to die.

Pregill

The use of *qadr* here seems rather anomalous, which is strange given that it seems wholly central to the meaning of the *sūra*. Most of the handful of uses of the word found in the Qurʾān occur in the phrase "they do not apportion to God His just portion" (*mā qadarū li-llāh ḥaqqa qadrihi,* Q 6:91, 22:74, 39:67; *qadar* with medial *kasra* is somewhat more common, and verbal forms from the *Q-D-R* root are very common, so the basic meaning of the word is hardly in dispute). The three occurrences of the phrase *laylat al-qadr* never really help us to pin down what the sense of the word is here.

This is universally understood as describing the beginning of the process of the revelation of the Qurʾān to Muḥammad, and generally identified as 27 Ramadan, partially on the basis of Q 2:185. The theories advanced in the tradition as to how the descent mentioned in v. 4 correlates with the descent of the Qurʾān in preparation for the process of revelation seem generally incoherent, and only loosely connected to the actual subject matter of this short chapter. All we know from the *sūra* itself is that this "Night of Power" (or Destiny, or Determination, or Apportioning) is awesome, better than other nights (or a thousand months), and that the angels and Spirit descend on it. The various theories proposed regarding possible Jewish or Christian antecedents are intriguing, especially the interpretation of the *sūra* as actually being about the Incarnation of Jesus that relies upon reading *amr* in v. 4 as cognate with Syriac *amrā* (word) rather than assigning it the standard Arabic meaning of "matter, affair."

Reynolds

As Guillaume Dye (2011) has pointed out, this *sūra* has a number of commonalities with Syriac Christian texts on the nativity of Christ. But we might keep in mind that the author of the Qurʾān is creative (and polemical) enough to reinterpret, transform, and subvert Christian concepts. We might then (especially in light of Q 44:2–3) imagine that the Qurʾān is here applying Christian language on the Incarnation for the *kitāb* given to the Qurʾān's prophet.

Stefanidis

To hold that the pronoun *hu* following the verb *anzalnā* refers to Jesus rather than to the content of divine communication (*Qurʾān*, *ḏikr*, *kitāb*...), as Dye suggests following Luxenberg (2004a and b), raises a series of methodological questions: Where should we look for the "meaning" of the Qurʾānic text? Should we preferably read the Qurʾānic material in light of other Qurʾānic passages or through extra-Qurʾānic religious literature? Wherein lies the literary unity, if any, of the Qurʾānic text?

The fact that the Qurʾānic corpus, just like the Biblical one, has a prehistory, drawing and reshaping previously known narratives, topoi and beliefs, can hardly be denied. Does this mean that we should understand the Qurʾānic text only in relation to these older traditions? Does the Qurʾān express a unified vision or is it a 'heap of materials' that can only be decoded by identifying the various traditions that it is made of? One might argue that the understanding of the Qurʾān as a closed text – indeed a self-conscious, metatextual one – derives from a post-Qurʾānic Muslim theological perspective. However, on what basis can it be denied that the Qurʾān carries a fundamental cohesion, whether resulting from the work of its author(s)/editor(s), from the particular horizon of expectations in which it emerged or from its specific use by an early community?

If we hold that the Qurʾānic corpus is not a disconnected collection of preexisting traditions but a polemical discourse exhibiting a coherent worldview, then the pronoun *hu* can in all likelihood be understood as referring to the divine guidance (*hudā*) that is being "sent down" in the form of *Qurʾān*, *kitāb* or *ḏikr*. That al-Qadr draws on Christian topoi and literature to formulate this view remains, of course, a possibility.

Tengour

L'ensemble des cinq versets composant la sourate *al-Qadr* est mis dans la bouche du dieu coranique qui déclare avoir « fait descendre la Révélation lors de la nuit du Destin » (v. 1).

La révélation faite à l'homme Muḥammad est ainsi représentée comme une descente à la manière de la pluie bénéfique. C'est le sens sous-entendu dans le verbe *ʾanzala/yunzilu* (sur le verbe *ʾanzala/yunzilu*, voir nos remarques concernant QS 5) et la parole coranique reprend à dessein cette imagerie positive dans la mentalité des hommes auxquels elle s'adresse dans le but de les convaincre de rallier sa cause. Il importe à cet égard de se souvenir que, durant toute la période mecquoise (610 – 622, dates présumées), l'auditoire de Muḥammad est demeuré à la fois sourd et sceptique, précisément parce qu'il considérait que sa parole lui était inspirée par de mauvais djinns. Il fallait par conséquent éloigner les djinns du champ de la Révélation et pour ce faire, un des procédés mis en place par la parole coranique a été de proclamer que c'est le Seigneur prôné par Muḥammad qui fait lui-même descendre la Révélation en question. Dans la société des tribus, en effet, les djinns n'étaient pas perçus comme étant à même de faire descendre quoi que ce soit, mais plutôt comme étant des

intermédiaires ou des médiateurs du *Ġayb*, le Destin attendu, tel qu'on se le représentait alors.

Cependant, si ce thème est présent relativement tôt dans le Coran pour les enjeux de véracité que nous venons d'expliquer, la sourate *al-Qadr* est sans doute plus tardive que ce que la tradition post-coranique dira. À cet égard, elle devra sans doute être mise en chronologie avec le passage du Q 2:185.

QS 47 Q 105

105.1 Have you not considered what your Lord did,
To the People of the Elephant?
105.2 Did He not turn their guile into futility?
105.3 He sent against them feathered flocks,
105.4 Hurling at them stones from hell-fire,
105.5 And left them like worm-eaten leaves.

105.1 N'as-tu pas vu comment ton Seigneur a agi envers les gens de l'Eléphant?
105.2 N'a-t-Il pas rendu leur ruse complètement vaine?
105.3 et envoyé sur eux des oiseaux par volées
105.4 qui leur lançaient des pierres d'argile?
105.5 Et Il les a rendus semblables à une paille mâchée.

سورة الفيل
أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (1) أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ (2) وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ (3) تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ
مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ (4) فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ (5)

Cuypers

Quels que soient les oiseaux de proie capables de lancer des projectiles, et le sens exact des termes obscurs *abābīl* et *siǧǧīl* (vv. 3, 4), cela reste secondaire par rapport au sens du récit. Mieux vaut accepter celui-ci tel quel, avec sa part de merveilleux, que le Coran intègre sans la discuter. Il s'agit d'un de ces nombreux récits légendaires ou semi-légendaires, conservés dans la mémoire collective arabe, que le Coran utilise pour transmettre son message prophétique. Abraha, vice-roi chrétien du Yémen, avait tenté une expédition contre la Mecque, mais son armée (les Gens de l'Éléphant), qui comptait un éléphant, aurait été mise en déroute par des pierres d'argile lancées par des oiseaux, en sorte que la Mecque fut miraculeusement préservée.

Du point de vue littéraire, ce texte fait partie d'un genre coranique, celui des récits de cités rebelles détruites par Dieu. La question : « *N'as-tu pas vu comment ton Seigneur a agi envers* les Gens de l'Éléphant ? » introduit pareillement la destruction des ʻĀd, des Ṯamūd et de Pharaon dans Q 89:6, 9.

La tradition exégétique fait coïncider les faits rapportés par la sourate 105 avec l'année de la naissance de Muḥammad, correspondant à l'an 570 après J.-C. Cette coïncidence (contestée par les historiens) a peut-être moins une portée historique que symbolique. Elle pourrait signifier l'importance de ce récit dans la naissance, non pas physique, mais spirituelle, du Prophète. La préservation miraculeuse de la Mecque lui aurait dévoilé l'identité de la divinité qui s'était révélée à lui : c'est son « Seigneur » qui est le maître de l'Histoire, et non les idoles. C'est Lui qui régit les événements, et c'est lui qui a protégé la Mecque contre ses ennemis. C'est donc un Dieu puissant et bienveillant qui s'est fait connaître à lui. Non pas une divinité abstraite ou une idole, mais Quelqu'un que Muḥammad expérimente comme étant « son Seigneur » et qui intervient dans l'histoire des hommes. Ce sont là autant de traits de la divinité que l'on peut retrouver dans le prophétisme biblique. La fin de la

sourate (v. 5), contient d'ailleurs une image biblique : « Le chaume dévoré » (v. 5) désigne, dans la Bible hébraïque, les hommes impies ou infidèles, dévorés par le feu de la colère divine (e. g. Ex 15:7; Is 5:24).

Dye

Sur cette sourate, cf. De Prémare 1998 et 2000a.

L'hypothèse d'une référence à la supposée expédition d'Abraha contre La Mecque me paraît absurde. On peut se demander pourquoi cette explication continue à être avancée dans la littérature (censée être) scientifique, sans même qu'on pense à la justifier.

On retrouve ici un *topos* omniprésent dans le Coran : la destruction d'un peuple ou d'un groupe (ici, *aṣḥāb al-fīl*) par Allah, ou al-Rabb (ici, *rabbuka*).

V. 1 : *a-lam tara kayfa faʿala rabbuka bi-* : cf. Q 89:6. Q 105 est très similaire à Q 89:6 – 14, et il est possible que la suite du texte manque. La formule *ʻa-lam tara* est très présente dans le Coran.

De Prémare (2000a, corrigeant De Prémare 1998) a proposé de voir ici un midrash coranique sur la légende des éléphants de Ptolémée, narrée notamment en 3 Macc 2 – 6. L'hypothèse est très plausible, et rend bien compte de nombreux détails de la sourate (même si le sous-texte peut être une version légèrement différente de cette légende).

Cette légende se déroule lors du règne de Ptolémée IV Philopator (r. -246/-241). Ptolémée persécute les Juifs d'Alexandrie et veut les obliger à sacrifier aux idoles. Ceux qui refusent sont raflés et rassemblés sur l'hippodrome. Une rumeur hostile est également lancée contre les Juifs pour faire douter de leur loyauté envers la dynastie au pouvoir. 3 Macc 3 décrit ainsi la manière dont les Juifs sont pris au piège, et cela pourrait être la *ruse* (*kayd*) dont parle le Coran. Les Juifs sont destinés à être piétinés par les éléphants de Ptolémée, auxquels on a fait boire des parfums broyés avec du vin pur (3 Macc 5:2). Mais grâce à la prière du prêtre Eléazar (3 Macc 6), deux anges interviennent. Paniqués, les éléphants se retournent contre les soldats et les piétinent.

V. 3 : *ṭayran ʾabābīl* : des oiseaux de proie (Gen 15:11), en troupeau (syriaque *ebbaltā*, « troupeau de chameaux »). Cf. Muth 2007: 156. On peut traduire « une horde d'oiseaux de proie ». Il pourrait s'agir de chérubins (*kerûb*) – non les angelots joufflus des peintres de la Renaissance, mais des bêtes ailées, des créatures célestes à l'aspect féroce.

V. 5 : le « chaume dévoré » est une métaphore biblique, indiquant le sort de ceux qui ont encouru la colère de Dieu (Exod 15:7 ; Isa 5:24).

Grodzki

The short *sūra* 105 is often read in the Islamic tradition together with the following short *sūra* 106 as one syntactical narrative unit (although with the disjunctive basma-

la) attesting to God's benevolence towards the Qurayš. Their contents are not instructive nor regulative, but paraenetic (cf. Wansbrough 1977: 42). As Wansbrough points out, the literary tradition represents here an elaboration of three themes: "the holy war (Abraha's campaign), the inviolate sanctuary and its protectors (Mecca and Qurayš), and the actions of God in history (birds as bearers of plagues). By means of these, the elliptical Qurʾānic passage was incorporated into salvation history as an episode both lively and easily understood." The question is, how much of these ellipses and allusions (to stories? which perhaps were no stories at all) would be comprehensible to us and decipherable by us without the recourse to the traditional tafsīr. On the other hand, limiting oneself to tracing mentions of "elephants," "birds in flocks," "stones of hard clay" or "eaten straw" in texts of more ancient traditions may never be satisfactory enough to come up with a persuasive argument for the meaning of such highly allusive (or symbolic) passages.

Hawting

The traditional understanding of the *aṣḥāb al-fīl* as the army of Abraha is open to question, and Dye and others have suggested other possibilities. Whatever it is, some particular referent must be intended. The expression *ḥiǧārat min siǧǧīl* also occurs in Qurʾānic allusions to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Q 11:82; Q 15:74), whereas in the allusion to that event at Q 51:33 we have *ḥiǧārat min ṭīn* (presumably meaning the same thing). The idea of fire and burning seems to have fallen away from the Biblical *gāfrīt vāʾēš* (Gen. 19:24).

Khalfallah

La signification du terme *siǧǧīl* continue de susciter plusieurs débats. J'espère me fonder sur cet échantillon pour formaliser, à la suite de ces études, une théorie générale des ambigüités coraniques en m'inspirant, entre autres, de la théorie de W. Empson (1930), *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Voici les sources possibles d'ambigüité dans ce cas précis.

[1] Supposer (ou pas) une origine étrangère, en l'occurrence persane, à ce terme. Les partisans de l'arabité absolue du Coran l'ont cependant rattaché à une racine arabe. Jeffery le cite dans son *Foreign Vocabulary of the* Qurʾān (1938: 164–56). Il semble que la thèse de l'emprunt au persan s'est imposée ; le terme serait l'arabisation des deux mots persans : *sig* et *ǧil* ...

[2] Sur le plan étymologique, on ne s'est pas mis d'accord sur la racine du mot. 4 thèses sont avancées : *saǧl* (grand seau), ou *asǧala* (verbe de la forme IV, envoyer ; le mot signifierait alors des envois infernaux), ou encore *siǧīll* (registre écrit ; le mot serait alors un châtiment écrit= décrété). Emprunt au persan.

[3] On a également débattu sur le schème *fiʿʿīl* qui désigne l'intensité pour savoir s'il s'appliquait à ce mot ou pas.

[4] On a également divergé sur la nature morphologique de ce mot: adjectivale ou substantive. Le débat a porté de surcroît sur la fonction grammaticale de la préposition *min* qui le précède.

[5] Ceux qui admettent la nature substantive du mot se sont étalés sur son sens. Trois thèses sont avancées : « ciel », « enfer », « boue ».

[6] Proposer (ou pas) une possible commutation phonologique entre les deux phonèmes « N » et « L . » Le mot *siǧǧīl* serait commué de *siǧǧīn*.

[7] Se tenir au sens général du mot, à savoir un châtiment divin terrifiant, comme c'était le cas pour Sodome et Gomorrhe ou se référer aux nombreux récits légendaires sur cet événement.

Hormis ces difficultés, l'hypothèse de de Prémare et la présentation de Dye proposant « de voir dans ce texte un midrash coranique sur la légende des éléphants de Ptolémée » (cf. commentaire de Dye) pose, à mon sens, la difficulté de justifier le remplacement d'une légende par une autre ; l'argument principal de cette démarche étant la similitude entre les deux récits ; similitude attestée par le Coran même...

Kropp

This *sūra* is probably not referring to – rather recent – historical events (see principles of interpretation for Q 108). If there were historical allusions ever, than they would consist in broken reflexes of Jewish or Christian historical legends. De Prémare has opened this perspective of interpretation, as has remarked Dye.

Arabs knew Elephants in battle from the Persian army (*Ḏū Qār* and *al-Qādisiyya*). But this is another field.

On the other hand, Abrəha's (the Ethiopian king of Yemen) campaigns into Central Arabia are documented, before all by his own inscriptions he left on the road. One has been known for more than 50 years now, several new ones have been discovered recently. If these campaigns were in the "year of the Elephant," Muḥammad's birth in this year reveals to be a hagiographical construct, because they are to be dated several decades before Muḥammad's (probable) birth.

But what is striking is the fact that the (one!) elephant in Abrəha's army can't be found. And there, the believers' and theologians' eagerness to see miracles in human history is only exceeded by philologists' (Germans in above all) lack of realism and loss of contact to reality. This last peculiarity forms part of an idisosyncratic deformed worldview to be defined as *Die Welt als Text* "the world as a text" – and here a most famous example in *Simplicissimus* (1903: 96) "*Da ich in meiner letzten Arbeit über die Substanz des assyrischen Brotes mich des weiteren verbreiten mußte, habe ich mich bemüßigt gesehen, mich über die Zusammensetzung des heute verwendeten zu informieren, und habe dabei gefunden, daß dieses Hauptnahrungsmittel des Menschengeschlechtes aus dem sogenannten Mehl bereitet ist.*"

A masterpiece of this kind is Paret's comment (others of the same kind could be cited) to Q 105 (1971: 522): "*Bei dem Unternehmen Abrahas soll ein Elefant mitgeführt*

worden sein." I would not have liked to be the responsible officer for water supply of this army detachment during a campaign in Central Arabia.

Pregill

The interpretation of this *sūra* quite obviously hinges on the authenticity of the account of the Ethiopian invasion of Yemen, and the subsequent expedition to the Hijaz, found in the *sīra* tradition. As this account is clearly tailored to function as *Heilsgeschichte*, incorporating pre-Islamic Mecca into the fabric of the larger monotheistic world as part of the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, one might quite reasonably be skeptical about the historicity of this episode. As usual, no convincing alternative frame presents itself.

Research into Yemen and the Red Sea communities in Late Antiquity has advanced tremendously in the last decade (cf. Yule 2007; Hatke 2011, 2012; Bowersock 2013). Scholars continue to be divided on the historicity of the Abraha incident. The thesis advanced by Prémare (1998, 2000) about the Ethiopian incursion against the Kaʿba essentially being derived from midrashic traditions about Ptolemy's attack on the Jerusalem Temple is provocative, but I am hesitant to dismiss the whole story as mere trope given the mounting inscriptional evidence for a religiously motivated campaign of conquest by the Ethiopians in South Arabia.

V. 4: *siǧǧīl:* not quite a *hapax*; cf. Q 11:82; 15:74. In the parallel at Q 51:33 we see *ṭīn* substituted for *siǧǧīl*, and so glossing the term as "baked clay" seems sensible. Jeffery quotes Ṭabarī's identification of the term as derived from Persian *sang-gil*, which actually does seem to mean "baked stone."

Rippin

v. 2, the sentence *a-lam-yaǧʿal kaydahum fī taḍlīl*, is often translated as speaking of their "cunning" (*kayd*). But the use of "being misled" ("confound," "led to perdition") after this might suggest that *kayd* wants to convey more than a simple behavior but rather some maneuvers and strategy connected to battles. That would fit with the rest of the *sūra* which seems to refer to an attack (the translation "make their plans into confusion" suggested as a literal rendering in Badawi/Abdel Haleem (2008: 555 under *taḍlīl*) is a bit loose for my liking, although the idea of "plans" does convey the strategy sense nicely).

Tesei

I agree with Kropp's remark that the passage should not necessarily be related to historical events. At the same time, it might be observed that the Qurʾān's reference to the divine intervention against elephant(s) reflects a sentiment of impotence against the militaristic use of these animals (reflected also in the passage of the Book of the Maccabees quoted by Dye, where elephants are defeated by the angels' intervention).

This sentiment is well attested in late antique chronicles. A good example is represented by the story of the siege of Nisibis by the army of Shapur. Here, the bishop Jacob is able to defend the city from the Sasanian elephant corps by evoking the divine aid. The episode is reported in Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (II, 30), in the Syriac *Chronicon* of Michael the Syrian (VII, 3) and in the Syriac text known as the *Historia Sancti Ephraemi* (6–7). I quote a passage of the latter: "The blessed man had scarcely finished praying when a cloud of gnats and midges went out, which overwhelmed the elephants" (trans. in Dodgeon & Lieu 2002: 149)

QS 48 Q 106

106.1 To bring harmony to Qurayš,
106.2 Their harmony being the journey of winter and summer.
106.3 So let them worship the Lord of this House,
106.4 Who fed them against hunger,
And secured them against fear.

106.1 A cause du pacte des Coraïch,
106.2 De leur pacte [concernant] les voyages d'hiver et d'été.
106.3 Qu'ils adorent donc le Seigneur de cette Maison [la Ka'ba],
106.4 qui les a nourris contre la faim et rassurés de la crainte!

سورة قريش
لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ (1) إِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ (2) فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (3) الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (4)

Azaiez

La sourate ne recueille aucun des motifs classiques de la polémique coranique (Azaiez. 2012). Il n'est question d'aucun discours eschatologique, d'aucune présence d'un destinataire premier ou allocutaire, d'aucun discours métatextuel, d'aucune allusion à une communauté de croyants. Le terme même de Dieu est *Rabb* et non Allah. Peut-on, dès lors, considérer cette sourate comme préislamique comme le suggère également Dye ?

Cuypers

On sait, par les commentaires classiques (Ṭabarī, Zamaḫšarī...) que dans la recension d'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, les deux sourates 105 et 106 n'en faisaient qu'une.

Considérée en elle-même, la sourate 106 est composée de manière concentrique (ABA') :

– [1] ...pour *(li)* **la sécurité**	**des Qurayš**,	
– [2] **leur sécurité**	pour la caravane	d'hiver et d'été,
* [3] *(fa)* qu'ils adorent donc	le Seigneur	de ce Sanctuaire,
= [4a] qui les a nourris	*contre* la faim	
= [b] et les a assurés	*contre* la crainte.	

Les segments bimembres extrêmes se répondent comme la cause (1–2) à l'effet (4a-b) : la sécurité des caravanes des Qurayš assure le ravitaillement et le bien-être des Mecquois. Au centre, bien mis en valeur, la conséquence morale: que les Qurayš adorent le véritable Seigneur de leur Sanctuaire.

La particule *li*, par laquelle le texte commence, fait problème. Elle introduit habituellement une subordonnée causale: « À cause de... ». Mais, selon la grammaire, une subordonnée causale ne saurait précéder la principale. Reste la possibilité que la phrase introduite par *li* soit une subordonnée finale qui continue la

sourate 105, *al-Fīl*, manifestant ainsi l'entière unité des deux sourates. C'est ainsi que traduit M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2005) : "[He did this] to make the Qurayš feel secure, secure in their winter and summer journeys."

Comprises comme une unité, les deux sourates ont pour thématique la protection que le « Seigneur » assure à l'égard des Mecquois, en écartant d'eux la « crainte » (Q 106, 4b) des dangers extérieurs, symbolisée par l'attaque des Gens de l'Éléphant, et en garantissant de ce fait la sécurité des caravanes et donc la nourriture et la tranquillité des Qurayš. En réponse à cette double protection, ceux-ci sont invités à adorer « le Seigneur (*Rabb*) de ce Sanctuaire ». Ce Seigneur est qualifié de « ton Seigneur » (Q 105:1), car il est celui dont le Prophète a fait personnellement l'expérience. C'est Lui que le Prophète appelle à adorer dans la Kaʿba, au lieu des idoles qui s'y trouvaient. Car lui seul est la source de tous les bienfaits dont jouissent les Mecquois.

Il semble bien que ces deux sourates témoignent de l'éveil d'une nouvelle conscience religieuse, chez Muḥammad. Antérieurement ou concomitamment à la révélation eschatologique (Q 81), c'est un Dieu bienveillant, Maître de l'Histoire, qui s'est révélé à lui.

Dye

Certaines traditions ne séparent pas les sourates 105 et 106, faisant donc de la présente sourate la suite de la sourate 105. Le fait que les sourates 105 et 106 diffèrent fondamentalement par le rythme, la rime et le contenu conduit à rejeter cette hypothèse. Ajoutons qu'Ibn al-Nadīm parle dans son *Fihrist* d'un codex de Ubayy, où les deux sourates sont indépendantes, la sourate *al-Ṭīn* suivant la sourate *al-Fīl*. Les deux sourates se suivent, et sont donc séparées, dans le codex attribué à Ibn Mas'ūd.

Ce texte, très allusif, a donné naissance à d'innombrables traditions sur le commerce mecquois. Sur ce sujet, cf. Crone 1987: 203–226.

La sourate contient trois hapax : *ʾīlāf* (« entente »), *qurayš*, *rabb hāḏā l-bayt* (et non *rabbuka*, comme dans la sourate précédente), « le seigneur de ce temple, de cette maison ». Comme le note De Prémare 1998: 263, cette dernière expression est typique des inscriptions préislamiques que l'on peut trouver à Petra, Hegra, et plus généralement dans le nord de l'Arabie. En général, il est implicitement question dans ces inscriptions de Ḏū l-Šarā (Dusarès), dieu auquel est voué un culte dans un sanctuaire (*al-bayt*). Une divinité féminine (al-ʿUzza ou Manāt) lui est souvent associée. Dans le cadre de cette sourate, *rabb hāḏā l-bayt* pourrait-il toujours être Ḏū l-Šarā, ou (moins plausiblement) Hubal ? En tout cas, le caractère extrêmement archaïque de cette sourate (il n'est pas impossible que le début manque), ainsi que son style, me font penser que l'on pourrait bien avoir affaire ici, tout simplement, à un texte *préislamique*. La question que l'on a alors envie de poser est : pour quelle(s) raison(s) ce texte a-t-il été intégré dans le Coran ?

Hawting

This is the only reference in the Qurʾān to God as "the Lord of this House." As such, the expression is not Biblical although the Bible often calls the Temple "the House of the Lord," especially in some Psalms. The opening invocation of Qurayš is striking in a text that has so few explicit mentions of the people and places associated with the life of the prophet in extra-Qurʾānic tradition. Presumably it refers to the Qurayš we know from Muslim tradition, but if so why would a passage in the Qurʾān celebrate a benefit bestowed by God on a group that tradition paints as mainly enemies of the prophet in his lifetime?

Khalfallah

Ce passage est un échantillon représentatif de l'ambigüité syntaxique du Coran. Si le vocabulaire de cette sourate est plutôt clair, (*riḥa, šitāʾ, ṣayf, ǧūʿ, ḫawf...*), sa construction syntaxique renferme maintes difficultés grammaticales. Je tâcherai ici de décrire les nœuds de cette ambigüité et de proposer une piste intertextuelle.

– Première difficulté : Pour expliquer la présence du *lām* de *li-īlāfi*, deux solutions ont été avancées :

[1] Considérer qu'il s'agit du *lām* de *taʿlīl* (finalité : *pour, afin que*). Le premier verset est une phrase complétive dont la fonction grammaticale est un complément de cause. Cependant, la principale de cette cause (*fa-l-yaʿbudū*) est séparée par cinq mots ; ce qui en fait une complétive pré-posée, c'est-à-dire mentionnée avant la principale. Cette pré- position (*taqdīm*) a ainsi engendré un sens conditionnel dont la teneur serait : s'ils n'adorent pas Dieu pour ses grâces subtiles, qu'ils l'adorent pour celle-ci, plus évidente : avoir l'habitude de voyager....

[2] Considérer ce *lām* comme une particule exclamative. On a donc imaginé un verbe- exclamatif omis (*fiʿl taʿağğub maḥdūf*). Par conséquent, les deux premiers versets seraient vus comme un complément d'objet direct.

– Deuxième difficulté : L'emploi d'une annexion sémantique (*iḍāfa maʿnawiyya*) dans : *īlāfi Qurayšin*. Nous savons que *īlāf* est un nom d'action de la forme IV de la racine (*ʿ-L-F*). Toutefois, le nom d'action remplace ici le verbe dont le sujet est *Qurayš*. Quant au complément d'objet de ce verbe nominal est : *riḥla*.
– Troisième difficulté : L'emploi d'une apposition d'où la répétition de *īlāfi* à deux reprises.
– Quatrième difficulté : L'emploi d'une annexion dont le deuxième terme est doublé (*šitāʾ* et *ṣayf*). Cet emploi est jugé comme dérogatoire et n'est permis qu'en cas de nécessité.
– Cinquième difficulté : L'orthographe de *īlāf* sans le *yāʾ*. L'explication qui a été donnée pour cette omission est que l'écriture est une tradition à suivre, établie par les premiers scribes qui l'ont fait juste comme aide-mémoire et non comme une reproduction fidèle.

Pregill

A shibboleth that separates traditionalists from skeptics: to the former, the meaning of this *sūra* is entirely transparent, while to the latter it is utterly inscrutable. The classic treatment of Rubin (1984) focuses on controversial variants to the reading *li-īlāf,* e.g. *li-yaʾlaf* or *li-taʾlaf* or *la-yaʾlaf*, which produce the imperative "Keep to it [i.e., the worship referred to in v. 3], O Qurayš!" These variants were clearly contrived to defang the problem posed by a supposedly early *sūra* seemingly describing religious rectitude on the part of Qurayš before their embracing Islam. Rubin asserts that the *tafsīr* on the *sūra* can provide us with important clues about its authentic historical background; in contrast, Crone's analysis (1987: 204–214) casts doubt on the possibility that the traditional account can yield any reliable information about its composition at all. This begs the question of what the *sūra* is really describing if *īlāf* cannot be plausibly interpreted either as trading expeditions or treaties of security allowing such expeditions to occur. (Rubin's revision of his argument in response to Crone (2011) is admittedly more compelling than his original treatment, at least in its interpretation of the *sūra* itself.) Does the suggested connection of the word with the Syriac term for "ship" rescue us from the exegetical impasse before us? It might help insofar as we have other philological evidence that corroborates that reading (as opposed to the seemingly arbitrary assignment of the 'pure Arabic' meaning of "expedition" for *īlāf*), but it raises another problem, namely that of the rather inexplicable association of the Qurayš with maritime trade.

Tengour

Comme dans la sourate cent cinquième, les hommes de la tribu de Muḥammad, les *Qurayš*, sont ici sommés de se soumettre au Seigneur de la Demeure mecquoise (ou du bétyle mecquois), *Rabb al-Bayt*. Il s'agit du Seigneur local de la cité où s'étaient installés les *Qurayš* quelques cent cinquante ans auparavant et dont la sourate qui porte leur nom rappelle qu'Il a été pour eux à la fois un Nourrisseur, *'aṭ'ama-kum min ǧū'*, et un Protecteur, *wa 'āmana-kum min ḫawf*. Dans la société d'alors, ces deux fonctions sont, avec la Guidance, celles qui caractérisent les *Rabb(s)*. L'Alliance, la Guidance et le Don représentent précisément les trois fonctions autour desquelles semble s'être articulé, le divin dans la vieille société des tribus.

À ce stade de la Révélation, le Seigneur coranique ne se distingue donc pas encore des autres Seigneurs locaux. Cette distinction va apparaître progressivement au cours de la période mecquoise et s'intensifiera, au fur à mesure que la polémique opposant l'homme Muḥammad aux siens grandira. Sans jamais perdre sa dénomination de *Rabb*, le Seigneur de la Demeure mecquoise va s'octroyer des fonctions que l'on pourra qualifier de bibliques, telles que la maîtrise de tous les espaces aussi bien terrestres que célestes, la création et la résurrection. Il devient *ʾilāh*, divinité, puis *Allāh*, la Divinité.

Les sourates cent-cinquième et cent-sixième font sans doute partie du substrat coranique le plus ancien où il n'est pas encore question d'eschatologie et d'autres

thèmes bibliques. Ce sont des sourates courtes et homogènes qui se caractérisent par une adresse à la deuxième personne du masculin singulier, un *ʻanta* jamais nommé de manière explicite dont on suppose qu'il s'agit de l'homme Muḥammad, à travers lequel c'est la tribu entière qui fait l'objet de l'adresse.

Aussi, l'historien considérera-t-il que ce sont ces sourates de chronologie plus ancienne qui représentent la Révélation initiale, non pas le début de Q 96:1–5 comme l'affirmera la tradition sacrée et comme le soutiendra la majeure partie des coranistes contemporains l'ayant reprise à leur compte.

Younes

It is clear that the Qurʾān commentators had particular difficulty with the first word of the *sūra*. This is reflected in the different ways it was read: *īlāf*, *ilāf*, and *ilf* .

In terms of its meaning, Tabarī (2005, XII: 700–702) lists *niʻma* "blessing," *ulfa* "familiarity, tameness, group solidarity," and *luzūm* "abiding, staying." Other meanings cited in the literature include "covenant," "agreement," "protection," and "composing."

Interestingly, a Syriac word sharing the same root, *ʾ-L-F* (pronounced *'elaf*), means "ship." There is good reason to believe that in the context of a journey in the winter and the summer and the provision of food and the protection from fear (of drowning, for example) that the Arabic *īlāf* should be understood to refer to a ship. This is not an argument that the word is of Syriac origin, which it might well be, but that, on the basis of comparative linguistic evidence of two closely related languages, the meaning of "ship" for *īlāf* could have existed in the earlier history of Arabic and had died out by the time of the commentators who based their explanations on other meanings of the root.

QS 49 Q 108

108.1 We gave you in abundance,
108.2 So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice.
108.3 He who baits you: it is he who shall be childless!

108.1 Nous t'avons certes, accordé l'Abondance.
108.2 Accomplis la Salât pour ton Seigneur et sacrifie.
108.3 Celui qui te hait sera certes, sans postérité.

سورة الكوثر
إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ (1) فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ (2) إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (3)

Cuypers

Plusieurs savants occidentaux, ces dernières années, ont estimé que cette sourate, la plus courte du Coran, « ne faisait pas sens » (Gilliot 2004a), malgré ce qu'en disent les commentaires classiques. Luxenberg a pensé déceler, derrière cette sourate, le texte syriaque des vv. 5:8–9 de la première Lettre de saint Pierre. Un examen philologique et intertextuel pourra cependant donner un sens tout à fait satisfaisant à cette sourate, en corrigeant quelque peu l'interprétation traditionnelle. Deux termes font particulièrement difficulté : *kawṯar* et *abtar*.

Le terme *kawṯar* dérive d'une racine signifiant « abondance ». Les sourates 93 et 94 (qui reflètent une même situation de crise que la sourate 108) énumèrent les dons abondants accordés par Dieu à son Prophète, dont le dernier est assurément le plus important : « N'avons-nous pas élevé pour toi ton renom ? » (Q 94:4), allusion claire à la mission prophétique de Muḥammad. Pas n'est besoin d'imaginer le don d'un fleuve paradisiaque appelé *Kawṯar*, comme le font certains commentateurs.

Le v. 3 est compris par les commentateurs comme une réponse à une insulte raillant Muḥammad de n'avoir pas eu d'héritier mâle. Le terme *abtar* désigne en effet les animaux qui ont la queue coupée, d'où le sens de « mutilé », et, dans le domaine humain, de « sans postérité ». Le sens premier du mot est toutefois simplement « coupé de »: "Anything cut off, or anything of which the effect is cut off, from good or prosperity" (Lane). Pour le verbe *batara*, de même racine, Lane donne entre autres: "He cut, or severed the ties, or bonds, of his relationship; he disunited himself from his relations." D'où notre traduction par « paria ». Cela rejoint une tradition attribuée à 'Ikrama : « Quand la révélation parvint au Prophète, Qurayš dit : "Muḥammad est séparé de nous" ; alors descendit le verset : "En vérité, celui qui te hait, c'est lui le séparé" ; celui qui t'accuse de séparation, c'est lui qui est séparé » (Ṭabarī). On trouve une formule semblable dans la sourate 83:29–32 où les incrédules traitent les croyants à leur tour d'« égarés » *(ḍāllūn)* : « En vérité, ceux qui ont péché, de ceux qui croyaient se moquaient (...). Et quand ils les voyaient, ils disaient : « En vérité, *c'est ceux-là les égarés* ! »

La sourate exprime donc simplement le réconfort de Dieu à l'égard de son Prophète, traité d'égaré ou de paria par ses concitoyens.

Dye

Une *crux interpretum* des études coraniques – et un bon moyen de tester nos principes méthodologiques. Cette sourate, la plus brève du Coran, reste en effet très obscure. De nombreux termes sont ambigus, et le sens que l'on donnera à l'un influera sur celui que l'on donnera à l'autre (notamment avec le couple *kawṯar*/*abtar*).

La tradition musulmane relie cette sourate à un épisode *supposé* de la vie du Prophète. Rien n'oblige à la suivre ici. Kropp propose d'y voir une prière apotropaïque, sans doute retravaillée lors de l'édition/composition du Coran. Cela me semble plus fructueux.

Il est en effet naturel de lire, derrière *kawṯar*, le syriaque *kūṯrā*, « constance, persévérance ». La sémantique de la racine *K-Ṯ-R* est, dans le Coran, influencée par son équivalent syriaque. Cf. Q 20:33–34 : *kay nusabbiḥaka kaṯīran*/*wa-naḏkuraka kaṯīran*, qui signifie « afin que nous Te glorifiions *avec constance*, et T'invoquions *avec constance* », et non « beaucoup », qui n'a guère de sens.

Lire *ngar* et non *nḥar*, en comprenant *ngar*, non pas selon le sens de la racine attesté en arabe (« raboter »), mais selon le sens le plus usité en syriaque (« persister, persévérer »), est également défendable : on peut penser à une forme de calque, ou à une technique de traduction dans laquelle on attribue au terme arabe toutes les variétés sémantiques du terme syriaque qu'il traduit (ce qui explique assez bien pourquoi le terme aurait été mal lu par la suite). *Ngar* et *kawṯar* étant presque synonymes, on a un beau parallélisme, ce qui rend la rhétorique de la sourate plus convaincante ; par ailleurs, on rend mieux compte du sens de *šāniʾa-ka*.

Il faut insister sur deux points : d'une part, il n'y a aucune raison de penser que l'environnement dans lequel naît le Coran n'était pas, d'une façon ou d'une autre, multilingue (l'ensemble du Proche-Orient l'était) – autrement dit, il convient de reconnaître la présence de nombreuses traces de bilinguisme/multilinguisme dans la langue même du Coran (il faut bien sûr sortir du dogme théologique de « l'arabe pur », qui n'a aucun sens linguistiquement et historiquement) ; d'autre part, un tel système de calque est un phénomène bien connu par ailleurs. Un bel exemple : syriaque *šubḥā* (« gloire », cf. arabe *subḥān*) pour traduire grec *doxa*, lorsque *doxa* signifie « gloire », *mais aussi* lorsque *doxa* signifie « opinion ».

Hawting

In v. 2 the explicit conjunction of prayer and (animal) sacrifice (without reference to a locality) – *ṣalāt wa-naḥr* – as a means of thanking God is notable. *Al-abtar* is a hapax legomenon, and although apparently a normal Arabic word, its sense is questionable

(cut off/curtailed, and if so, from what?). *Al-kawṯar* is also problematic: cf. Ps. 68:6, where the pl. of *kōšārāh* appears to mean something like "prosperity."

Khalfallah

Dans le cadre de mes recherches sur l'ambigüité des structures lexicales, syntaxiques et rhétoriques du Coran, l'étude de ce passage me permettrait de souligner un fait particulier de la sémantique coranique. Si le principe de *Mubtakarāt al*-Qurʾān (mots inédits que le Coran « introduit » pour la première fois) est connu, le fait d'instituer *ex nihilo* un sens mérite d'être examiné. Parfois, c'est Muḥammad lui-même qui arrête le sens des mots nouveaux, le propose et en délimite l'étendue. Cette remarque s'applique, en l'occurrence, au mot *kawṯar* dont il a précisé le sens référant au « *fleuve dans le Paradis*." Même règle pour le mot *wayl* où c'est le prophète qui intervient pour créer une signification et l'arrêter.

Cependant, ce qui est étonnant est que l'on continue à commenter ces mots pour en proposer des sens moins eschatologiques, plus concrets. Comme si le but de cette démarche était d'asseoir la convention religieuse sur un socle linguistique. Ainsi, on a tenté de relier ce terme *kawṯar* à la racine *K-Ṯ-R*. Cependant, fait nouveau que Gilliot (2004b) souligne dans son étude : « *L'embarras d'un exégète musulman face à un palimpseste : Maturidi et la sourate de l'Abondance*, une cinquième hypothèse propose une entrée morphologique (le schème *fawʿal*) pour mieux comprendre le mot et l'ancrer dans son environnement arabe.

Kropp

al-Kawṯar = (Prayer for) Endurance (perseverance).

"*Interpretatio religiosa communis (adversus historicam, singularem) est praeferenda*."

The shortest *sūra* of the Qurʾān lends itself to be treated as a paradigmatic example of exegetic principles to be applied all over this text collection. First the application of the aforesaid principle to the case of this peculiar text is given; then a short note on the principle itself will follow.

The evident and simple identification of *šāniʾa-ka* "the one who hates you" in the religious context is man's hater and foe par excellence, the devil. This defines the short passage as an apotropaic, short and fervent prayer for shelter against the devil's seductions.

Now, the prayer is put in a form which anticipates and thus formulates the positive answer of the divinity implored, and as such is most comforting for the believer in seductions' woe. As such a typical stylistic and rhetoric device of these texts, where utterances are given in constant change of speaker and addressee, consequent use of personal pronouns in the first, second and third persons etc. If reduced to a single source, it could be an interesting investigation to explore the mental background and horizon of this person (Kropp 2008: 794–797). If seen as the result of

heavy redactional overhaul of these texts, one could try to discern the several layers of the text's history and to define the special competences and aims of this group of learned and skilful scribes. Anyhow, one can formulate the corresponding prayer as follows:

[1] اعطني يا رب الكوثر
[2] فاصل لك / لربي وانحر
[3] اما شانئي فليكن الابتر

–
[1] Give me, o Lord, the *kawṯar!*
[2] Then I will pray to You / my Lord and sacrifice (one diacritical point added: endure!)
[3] As for my foe, he shall be the defeated (ruined)!

Once the text genre has been detected it is fine tuning to think about the *hapax legomenon* (*kawṯar*) and other words not really fitting in the context. That is where Luxenberg's working hypothesis of an underlying Syro-Aramaic lexicon comes in; and the case of Q 108 is one of his convincing examples.

Kawṯar can well be taken as Syro-Aramaic *kut(t)ārā* "remain steadfast"; I will not discuss here problems of mechanisms of transfer from Aramaic to Arabic (oral versus written, transcription versus transliteration). In this case seemingly transliteration is the first candidate which would point to a written source (Vorlage).

Furthermore to read *N-Ḥ-R* "sacrifice" is possible, but *N-Ǧ-R* as a semantic calque from Aramaic in the sense of "endure" fits better.

Lastly the endlessly discussed *abtar* finds its emendation in *T-B-R* (attested in the Qurʾān several times, clearly an Aramaic calque as well) "destroy, ruin."

This – in form of an anticipated and paradoxical answer to an apotropaic prayer – fits well into the series of Q 113 and Q114. And it is in fact a parallel to the most frequent formula *aʿūḏu bi-llāh min aš-šayṭān ar-raǧīm*.

Coming back to the exegetic and hermeneutic principle cited in the beginning, it is exactly the contrary of the endeavour of traditional Muslim exegesis which tries to find links and allusions in the Qurʾān's text to individual events and situations in Muḥammad's – traditionally known – biography, an endeavour collected and systematically arranged and commented upon in the *asbāb an-nuzūl* literature. Many of these links and allusions are not really convincing. The counter principle applied, I doubt if any of them will resist historico-textual criticism.

To conclude, one may formulate the Latin phrase in English: Every historical and individual interpretation of a Qurʾānic passage has to be rejected if there is a plausible alternative based on the general religious character of these texts, and if there are no other independent sources testifying the respective historical occasion.

Ironic addendum: As can be seen in Paret's commentary on Q 108 (1971: 525–527) and the studies and works cited there, especially Birkeland's, it was in fact Western scholars who made the most extravagant digressions and came to the most

learned, but nearly abstruse conclusions, clinging to the premisses that the passage treats an individual event in Muḥammad's life.

Rippin

According to Badawi/Abdel Haleem (2008: 921), the command in v. 2, *anḥar*, might mean "stand upright" in the sense of "fulfilling duties" (or simply "perform") in reference to prayer. But it might also mean "sacrifice." To connect prayer (*ṣalla*) and sacrifice does not appear to happen elsewhere in the Qurʾān (in the use of words connected to *ḏabaḥa*, *ḏakkā*, or *qurbān*, for example) and certainly this use here is striking (as compared to the linking of prayer and the giving of charity, for example, which is so frequent).

It is interesting to read how Bell (1991: II, 591) tries to work this out: "It seems improbable that Muḥammad would have taken part in the sacrifices of the Pilgrimage in the Meccan period of his activity. Hence this exhortation is probably Medinan." In the same manner as Bell, then, the emergence of a meaning not related to "sacrifice" may well stem from concerns that if the *sūra* is Meccan (as tradition holds) then Muḥammad would not be taking part in pre-Islamic sacrifice practices around the Kaʿba; rather than follow Bell's reasoning, providing a different interpretation for the word is a solution.

Stefanidis

Chabbi (2010: 450) understand *abtar* (v.3) in the sense of "castrated" and sees in this term the reflection of a grave sexual insult that was addressed to Muḥammad, who was despised for having no sons. In her view, the short *sūra* is meant to console the prophet : "l'abondance du don [...] est manifestement destinée à compenser l'énormité de l'insulte que donne à lire sans aucune ambiguïté le troisième et dernier verset de la sourate."

Earlier, Birkeland (1956: 92–3) had advanced a drastically divergent reading of the same *sūra*. He suggested that *al-kawṯar* refers to the material abundance and real social influence resulting from Muḥammad's marriage to Khadīǧa. Correspondingly, *abtar*, in the sense of being "cut off" from society, "rejected," "hated," is not an insult originally addressed to Muḥammad but an apt description of whoever would dare to stand against him, at least in this very initial stage of his prophetic mission: "Muḥammad had become so important and influential that the hating of him implies a severance from socio-economic goods represented by him [...] Or perhaps more sharply expressed: when a man is characterized so that his enemy is suffering loss, the man is really in good circumstances."

The wide gap between these two interpretations illustrates the limits of a psychological and biographical interpretation of the Qurʾān (on this issue, cf. Rippin 1992).

Tengour

Comme les sourates *al-Ḍuḥā* et *al-Šarḥ*, la sourate *al-Kawṯar* est une adresse directe dans laquelle le Seigneur coranique déclare octroyer à Muḥammad cette profusion de bienfaits, *kawṯar*, (v. 1) et c'est pourquoi, celui-ci est sommé de Le remercier en accomplissant le grand sacrifice de camélidés (v. 2), ainsi que cela se faisait dans la société des tribus d'alors, à des moments spécifiques de l'année.

Je m'arrêterai sur le dernier verset :

v. 3 : *'inna šāniʾa-ka huwa l-'abtar*

« C'est celui qui t'insulte [l'adresse est à Muḥammad] qui est le châtré ! »

L'adjectif *'abtar* est construit sur la racine *B-T-R* qui connote l'idée de retrancher et de couper. Ainsi, dans son *Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, le lexicographe Ibn Sīda (m. 458/1066) glose: *al-batr : 'istiʾṣāl al-shayʾ, taqaṭṭuʿu-hu wa-kull qaṭʿ batr.* Le verbe *batara/yabturu* signifie littéralement « castrer » et s'emploie en parlant d'un homme ou d'un animal. Ibn Sīda définit le terme *'abtar* comme suit :

al-'abtar: al-maqṭūʿ al-ḏanb [...] wa-l-'abtar : allaḏī lā ʿaqib la-hu.

« *al-'abtar* est celui dont le membre a été coupé [...] de même qu'*al-'abtar* se dira de celui qui n'a pas de descendant mâle ».

Qualifier un homme de *'abtar* revient par conséquent à le traiter de « castré » (ou d'« impuissant ») ou d'« incapable d'avoir des fils ».

Il importe de comprendre que dans la mentalité des tribus du VIIe siècle, un homme sans descendance mâle était perçu comme étant un homme accablé par le mauvais sort et voué à une disparition certaine puisque sans fils, son nom disparaîtra avec lui.

La cinglante réplique du v. 3 donne à penser que l'insulte a été proférée contre Muḥammad qui n'avait effectivement pas de fils. Dans le contexte de polémique ambiant entre lui et ses adversaires mecquois, l'échange est vraisemblable (voir également J. Chabbi, *Le seigneur des tribus. L'islam de Mahomet*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2010, 239–246).

Pour l'historien, tenter de remettre les mots dans leur contexte est d'importance car c'est de cet effort que dépendra la compréhension du statut de l'homme Muḥammad dans sa tribu. Ce passage montre qu'il n'était à l'évidence pas considéré de manière positive par les siens et c'est sans doute ce qui explique pourquoi sa parole a été en échec tout au long de la période mecquoise, jusqu'à son expulsion, *iḫrāǧ* – là encore, le terme qu'emploie le Coran dans Q 9:40 ; Q 47:13 ; Q 60:1 est sans ambiguïté – de sa cité d'origine.

Zellentin

The following considerations are dependent on three assumptions that are hopefully not too far-fetched: reading *nḥar* (v. 2) as denoting sacrifice, *abtaru* (v. 3) as referring in some sense to the lack of posterity, and the passage as a whole as implying that the absence of offspring may disqualify from sacrificing.

The relationship between earthly honor and posterity lies at the heart of many traditions; it is acutely dismissed already in Isaiah 56:5. More specifically, the high priest needs to be married and have children according to the Bible and the rabbinic tradition (see *Leviticus Rabbah* 20:9). The Qurʾān's likely sense that sacrifice presupposes offspring also figures prominently in one text that is of key relevance for understanding many of the Qurʾān's Jesus passages: the Infancy Gospel of James originated as a Judaeo-Christian text in the third century (Vuong 2011), and was incorporated in the broader Christian tradition and translated into Syriac not long before the time of Muḥammad. Here, the story begins by Joachim being dismissed from being the first to sacrifice since he has not produced seed in Israel. The shortcoming is more than corrected by the birth of the pure Mary; Joachim remains, like Muḥammad, without a son and may well be one of the models for the prophet.

If the connection between posterity and sacrifice is maintained here (and the reading is indeed difficult as so many commentaries illustrate far better than I could), then we may want to consider the role of sacrifice in the Qurʾān as a whole. For the Qurʾān shares the *criticism* of sacrifice so prominent in the Bible's prophetical books and emphasized by Christian and Judaeo-Christian tradition, which we also see in the *Didascalia* and the *Clementine Homilies*. Ritual slaughter does not effectuate salvation: rather, the Qurʾān elsewhere states, "it is not the (slaughtered camel's) flesh or their blood that reaches God, rather it is your Godwariness (*taqwā*) that reaches Him (Q 22:37, see also Q 5:27). Accordingly, in the Jewish and Christian and especially Judaeo-Christian tradition, sacrifice is essentially seen as abrogated, and replaced respectively with prayer or the Eucharist. (The rabbis' daily prayer schedule based on the three daily temple sacrifices, as well as the Syriac term for Eucharist, *qwrbn*', based on the Biblical term for "sacrifice," may suffice as illustrations of this complex issue of the replacements for sacrifice, see Mishna *Berakhot* and Gelston 1991, but cf. Conybeare 1903 on the case of Armenia).

The Qurʾān, by contrast, emphasizes that the slaughter of camels in the context of the Hajj is a "sacrament of God," (*šaʿāʾiri llāhi*, Q 22:36), maintaining sacrifice within its ritual code in contrast to most of its known contemporaries but perhaps in continuity with local custom. The Qurʾān's notion of "abrogation" of the Torah, hence, actually seems to place more emphasis on immediate continuity with the Torah not only than the Christian tradition more broadly, but in some ways even more so than the *Clementine Homilies* or the *Didascalia*, and more so than the rabbis. Its likely notion that, according to its adversaries, sacrifice presupposes offspring, illustrates the Qurʾān's continuity with the position expressed in the Infancy Gospel of James, and both texts maintain a view of sacrifice and of ritual purity embodied by the Temple and by Mary.

QS 50 Q 112

112.1 Say: “He is God, Unique,
112.2 God, Everlasting!
112.3 Neither begetting nor begotten,
112.4 And none can be His peer.”

112.1 Dis: «Il est Allah, Unique.
112.2 Allah, Le Seul à être imploré pour ce que nous désirons.
112.3 Il n’a jamais engendré, n’a pas été engendré non plus.
112.4 Et nul n’est égal à Lui».

سورة الإخلاص
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (1) اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (2) لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (3) وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (4)

Dye

Profession de foi, centrée sur le thème de l’unicité de Dieu (la rime en *–ad*, dans le Coran, est généralement réservée à ce thème). Elle est fort présente dans les « graffitis coraniques », et dans les inscriptions (comme celle du Dôme du rocher), même si c’est parfois sous une forme un peu différente. Kropp (2011) a raison de la rapprocher des *talbiya*-s préislamiques, souvent tripartites. La présente sourate est donc une *talbiya* quadripartite (et originellement tripartite si on considère le v. 2 comme une insertion ultérieure : l’idée peut se défendre, mais elle reste hypothétique).

V. 1 : le *qul* est vraisemblablement une addition des éditeurs, dont le rôle est de mettre dans la bouche de Dieu un texte qui est une prière – autrement dit, un texte qui s’adresse à Dieu. La syntaxe du verset pose problème. Si on supprime *huwa* (comme dans certaines traditions), alors on a une phrase nominale ; si on conserve *huwa*, qui fait donc référence à l’objet de cette sourate – Dieu –, on a un problème de congruence entre *allāhu* (défini) et *aḥad* (indéfini). Comparer de ce point de vue v. 2, *allāhu ṣ-ṣamad*. Certaines traditions lisent donc *al-aḥad* ou *al-wāḥid*. Je ne vois pas de raison de les suivre. Il faut donc soit comprendre *huwa llāhu huwa aḥad*, soit faire de *aḥad* un nom propre, autrement dit un calque de l’hébreu *e(ḥ)ḥād* (cf. Deut 6:4) ou de son équivalent araméen (*ḥād*). Le fait que *aḥad* n’ait pas, en principe, le sens de « un, unique » va dans le sens de cette dernière solution.

V. 2 : apposition, et glose, du v. 1. Sur le sens de *ṣamad*, nul besoin d’aller chercher des solutions exotiques. Comprendre *allāhu ṣ-ṣamad* « Allah, le Seigneur », sous-entendu, celui que l’on doit adorer (cf. *al-maṣmūd*, de même racine). Cette interprétation s’accorde parfaitement au contexte.

V. 4 : plusieurs variantes de lecture sont attestées, et le *rasm* est ambigu (il faudrait d’ailleurs aborder les questions relatives à *hamza*, et à la nature même de l’arabe du Coran – très certainement un arabe parlé, sans *iʿrāb*, comme le remarque Kropp dans son commentaire).

Hawting

Although v. 3 is usually seen as a rejection of the claims of Christianity (and clearly could be used for that end), other opponents (Gnostics) could be envisaged. The hapax *al-ṣamad* in v. 2 has received much attention regarding its etymology and possible meaning, both of which remain debatable. When was the title of this *sūra* (which is not derived from the text itself) first given to it? Implicit in the title (on the basis of other Qurʾānic occurrences of forms of the root *Ḫ-L-Ṣ*) is an opposition to *širk*.

Imbert

Cette courte sourate est loin d'être la plus représentée en épigraphie coranique ancienne. Toutefois, nous en connaissons deux attestations complètes durant les i^er^ et iième siècles de l'Hégire. L'une d'elles provient de Tell Rāḥiba au nord de la Jordanie: un rocher porte deux sourates entières totalement conformes au *muṣḥaf* et précédées de la *basmala:* il s'agit des sourates *al-Naṣr* et *al-Iḫlāṣ*. Cependant, elles ne se trouvent pas dans le bon ordre par rapport au classement de la vulgate; la sourate *al-Iḫlāṣ* (112) entière (avec l'impératif *qul*) se trouve gravée avant *al-Naṣr* (110).

Ce que nous pouvons dire, à ce stade de nos recherches, c'est que cette sourate a été largement et très librement glosée par les auteurs arabes des graffiti. En voici quelques exemples:

À al-Mṭeirdeh au sud de la Palestine, en 170/786, nous lisons (en respectant les erreurs grammaticales du lapicide): *inna-hu aḥadan, aḥadan ṣamad, lā wālid wa-lā walad*, "il est un, un et impénétrable, il n'a pas de géniteur ni d'enfant" (cf. Nevo & Koren 2003: 398, ST 649(34)). Nous pouvons nous interroger sur la question du choix du mot *aḥad* (textuellement le chiffre 1) dans le verset coranique, une sorte d'exception grammaticale là où l'on se serait plutôt attendu à trouver la forme participiale *wāḥid*. Le Coran des pierres répond à nos attentes: à Nağd Ḥarīr en Arabie, nous trouvons la formulation suivante: *[Allāh] lā ilāh^a^ wāḥid wa-lā ḥafīda lahu*, "Il n'y a pas d'autre divinité, il est seul et sans petit fils" (cf. Grohmann 1962: 143, Z 246). Citons une autre variante: *Allāh lā ilāh^a^ illā huwa, wāḥid*, "Dieu, il n'est d'autre divinité que lui, unique" (cf. al-ʿUšš 1964: 296, n° 96).

Sur le site du Qāʿ Banī Murr en Arabie, nous avons relevé une étrange version de ces versets: *Allāh aḥad ṣamadan (sic) lam yalid wa-lam yūlad kāna awwal kull šayʾ wa-huwa l-bāqī ḥattā lā yakūn šayʾ baʿdahu*, "Dieu est un, impénétrable; il n'engendre pas et n'est pas engendré. Il est le commencement de toute chose, celui qui demeure afin qu'il ne se trouve rien après lui." Le degré d'inspiration de la sourate du *muṣḥaf* est d'environ 50 % et la partie finale est en totale divergence avec le texte tel qu'il est connu. *Kāna awwal kull šayʾ* est absolument inconnu du Coran. Quant au nom divin *al-Bāqī*, il est lui aussi non présent sous cette forme dans le Coran; il est en fait extrapolé de Q 55:26: *wa-yabqā wağh rabbika ḏū-ğalāl wa-ikrām*. Ce nom divin consacré par la tradition tardive est pourtant présent dans le Coran des pierres.

Khalfallah

Si l'on reprend l'expression de Rippin : « *al-Ṣamad continue de fasciner*», on est en droit d'explorer les raisons de cette « fascination ». Une de ces raisons est, sans doute, la polysémie de ce terme au point qu'al-Rāzī cite dix-huit sens. Le mot a en outre un trait morphologique ambigu que j'appelle, en me référant aux études poétiques de J. Cohen, l'écart morphosémantique, nommé par les rhétoriciens: *qiyām ṣīġama qāma ṣīġa*. En l'occurrence, le schème *faʿal* désigne ici, non sa propre valeur adjectivale, mais celle d'un participe passif ; *ṣamad* signerait alors *maṣmūd*.

Troisième raison: l'éventuelle influence des sectes juives et chrétiennes. Les *mušabbiha* (entendre : groupes anthropomorphistes) se sont appuyés sur ce verset pour montrer que Dieu est corps. Il serait dès lors intéressant d'explorer les voies par lesquelles cette croyance était arrivée à leurs milieux. Est-elle un résidu des traditions mésopotamiennes et syriaques, étudiées par Sommer, Benjamin D., *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge, 2009).

Il semble cependant que le débat sur le sens du mot a été tranché en faveur d'une perception plus « arabe », c'est-à-dire plus ancrée dans l'univers sémantique des bédouins : *ṣamad* a été assimilé à un Seigneur tribal auquel l'on s'adresse pour exaucer les vœux et subvenir aux besoins. Il fallait ensuite attendre les générations des théologiens tardifs qui ont donné au terme une signification abstraite englobant les Attributs de Dieu.

Ainsi, je proposerais une lecture plus diachronique de l'interprétation de ce terme afin de mieux voir l'évolution de ses strates herméneutiques.

Kropp

Structure: the *sūra* can be explained in parallel to pre-Islamic *talbiyas* in their different forms, mostly tri-partite. Another *talbiya* can be discovered in Q 72 and 73. Thus v. 2 appears as a later and explanatory addition to the last word of v. 1 *aḥad* (to which genuine Arabic substitutions exist in the the *qirāʾāt*).

Ṣamad: a word has its meaning only in a given language and in a given context; it does not mean what etymology tells us. Thus it is useless to trace back *ṣamad* in several Semitic languages to Ugaritic (14th c. BC) and find it there to be a divine epitheton.

According to Bible orientated interpreters it means "rock," as a metaphor for "shelter," in parallel to numerous Biblical passages where God is *ṣūr* "rock" for his believers. In fact Arabic *ṣumda* or similar means an elevated, rocky place, but is not used as a metaphor for "shelter" or similar.

Thus Arabic as represented in *as-sayyid aṣ-ṣamad* has a good chance to yield the actual context meaning "a chief, lord whose support is looked for," according to the basic meaning of the Arabic root *Ṣ-M-D*. The root and the meaning exists in the form of the adjective *ṣindīd* expressing high grade of quality (*M* is assimilated to the following dental), pl: *ṣanādīd* "lord, master, chieftain" (Schall 1984 – 86: 372 – 373). This explanation gives an Arabic word of lofty style as substitute for rather strange *aḥad*

(Hebrew sounding) or in the other passage *ḥad* (Syriac) "the only one" (conjecture for Q 72, 73), and seemingly does not intend a parallel to the rock-metaphor of the Bible.

Lam yalid wa-lam yūlad: Q has quite a number of *figurae etymologicae* in form of *per merismum:* for describing a totality, a comprehensive unity of qualities, actions etc. the two extreme borders are expressed. The formula is not to be understood literally in its two parts, but only by summing up the two in one general meaning. This literary device – often idiomatic and typical for a given language – should be recognised and respected, even when translating a "holy text." The general tendency of theological commentators and translators "*in via telogizzante*" is to ignore this and to find peculiar theological meanings in both of the two parts. *Lam yalid wa-lam yūlad* means: "God has absolutely nothing to do with the action of generation." There is no reflection about one who begets and one who is begotten.

Linguistic addendum v. 4: careful analysis of v. 4 gives evidence that the language meant by the original writing had no *iʿrāb* and probably was of the analytic "neo-Arabic" type.

Pregill

Is this incongruously attributed to the Meccan period? Once again pedagogical experience underscores an obvious problem: students often point out the anomaly of calling this an early Meccan *sūra*, since a condemnation of orthodox Christology is presumably out of place in that context. But note that according to the traditional scheme of the order of revelations, this precedes Q 53, in which we find a distinctive polemic against the worship of the Daughters.

Neuwirth's extensive research on the echoes of the Psalter in the Qurʾān is once again pertinent. Her most comprehensive statement is "Qurʾānic Readings of the Psalms" (2009), in which she convincingly distinguishes between different modalities of Qurʾānic engagement with psalmic texts. The *sūra* under consideration here is her most compelling example of this phenomenon (on which see now Neuwirth 2010: 761–67 as well): it echoes both the Jewish *shmaʿ* (*shĕma yiśrāʾēl YHWH ĕlohēnû YHWH eḥād*, Deut 6:4), the direct impact of which is perceptible in the *Ungrammatikalität* of the Qurʾānic formula *huwa Allāhu aḥadun*, and the Nicene Creed, which it both reflects and rejects with its anti-Trinitarian assertion *lam yalad wa-lam yūlad*. Here the Qurʾān demonstrates its intimate familiarity with the verbatim texts of older monotheistic tradition in a very conspicuous way.

If Q 113–114 are later additions to the canon, as has often been asserted (even in the tradition itself), and this *sūra* was in fact originally the concluding passage in the canonical scripture, then a striking parallelism with the opening passage, Q 1, becomes evident. Q 1 begins by invoking what seems to be an older name for God familiar from Yemenite monotheism in particular, *Raḥmān*, which is then glossed as *raḥīm,* merciful (see my comments on QS 1). Here, two new appellations are introduced at the very end of the canon: *aḥad,* the One, and *ṣamad*. The latter is a *hapax legomenon,* and is possibly derived from yet another ancient Arabian name

for God, *Ṣamdān* – the Eternal? – which in form obviously parallels *Raḥmān*, and may likewise have been deliberately invoked to assert continuity with older traditions of vernacular or provincial monotheism in Arabia familiar to the Qurʾān's audience. The function of Q 1 and 112 together as the original bookends to the scripture has not generally been appreciated. Should we call Q 112 the *Ḫāriǧa* or the *Ḫātima?*

Reynolds

In his, "Some Minor Problems in the Qurʾān," (1953: 67–84), Franz Rosenthal studies 46 translations of the term *ṣamad*, a large number of Arabic texts which employ this term, and the relationship of this Arabic *ṣamad* to other Semitic terms which share the same root. It is hard to imagine that we could be more thorough or careful in our research on this term. Similarly a number of scholars have tried to understand the peculiar lexeme *aḥad* (in v. 1), or have tried to find meaning in the Qurʾān's use of this term as opposed to *wāḥid*. Yet I wonder if these two terms (like the name *ʿĪsā*) have led scholars on a wild goose chase. Could it be that the Qurʾān is so intent on preserving its rhyme that it is willing to create new lexemes for that purpose, and that purpose alone? (Incidentally, and interestingly, the rhyme here works only without the *iʿrāb*).

Tengour

Composée de quatre versets, la sourate cent-douzième est considérée aussi bien par la tradition musulmane que par l'orientalisme comme étant mecquoise. Son thème est celui de la Profession de foi de manière sincère. Le nom verbal *'iḫlāṣ* (racine *Ḫ-L-Ṣ*) est construit à partir du verbe à la quatrième forme *'aḫlaṣa/yuḫliṣu* qui signifie être sincère. Ici la profession de foi concerne directement l'unicité d'*Allāh* (v. 1) et l'impossibilité qu'Il engendre ou qu'Il ait été engendré (v. 3). Ce thème fait son apparition vers le milieu de la période mecquoise, à une date incertaine que l'on pourrait néanmoins tenter de retrouver en mettant en chronologie ce passage avec ceux des sourates Q 6:101 ; Q 37:152 et Q 72:3, dans lesquels l'idée qu'*Allāh* ait engendré quoi que ce soit est également rejetée. Les passages Q 6:101 et Q 72:3 sont toutefois les seuls passages coraniques où, en raison de la présence du mot *ṣāḥiba*, compagne, il est clairement question d'une fonction procréatrice du dieu coranique.

Dans d'autres passages, il s'agit plutôt de rejeter l'idée d'une fonction adoptante d'*Allāh*. Ce sont ceux où il est dit à travers l'expression coranique *'ittaḫaḏa waladan* avec les variantes *mā ttaḫaḏa waladan* (ou *min waladin*), *lam yattaḫiḏ waladan*, *mā kāna ʾan yattaḫiḏa waladan*, *law ʾarāda ʾan yattaḫiḏa waladan*, que le dieu coranique prend ou ne prend pas pour Lui des enfants. Ces passages sont les suivants : Q 2:116; 10:68; 17:111; 18:4; 19:35, 88, 91–92; 21:26; 23:91; 25:2; 39:4.

S'agissant des passages de Q 19:35, 88, 91–92, c'est l'idée qu'*Allāh* ait pu prendre pour lui un « fils divin » qui est rejetée.

La parenté avec les Protecteurs de surnature, les *Rabb(s)*, ne faisait à l'évidence pas partie des croyances tribales. Celle-ci était nécessaire seulement aux alliances, *wala'*, entre hommes de tribus. En s'attribuant des fonctions bibliques, le dieu prôné par Muḥammad devient un dieu Créateur et Résurrecteur, mais il continue d'être pour les hommes entrés dans son alliance un Protecteur qui en aucun cas ne se mélangera avec les hommes qu'Il a pour fonction de protéger.

Tesei

I would like to make a general commentary addressing the whole selection of the last ten passages. Many participants have pointed out the presence of hapaxes in passages 41–50. I would like to raise the question about the unusually high concentration of hapaxes in these passages. This phenomenon quite systematically occurs in most "short *sūras*" (I deliberately avoid to speak about Meccan, or first Meccan *sūras*). The concentration of hapaxes and rare expressions in these *sūras* is quite astonishing, given the reduced amount of verses in which they occur. In statistical terms, one would rather expect that *sūras* composed by so few words contained more common than uncommon terms. In general, I have the impression that the vocabulary used by the author(s) of "short *sūras*" is less homogeneous than that used for the redaction of "long *sūras*." I also have the impression that we are in presence a different linguistic register.

Zellentin

The verse is rightfully understood by Neuwirth as engaging both the *Sh'ma Yisrael*, the Biblical (see esp. Deut 6:4) and rabbinic declaration of God's oneness, and the Nicene Creed, the Christian declaration of God's triune nature (2010:761–4). Moreover, Neuwirth rightly holds that the Qurʾān's peculiar use of the rare grammatical form *aḥad* must surely be heard in the context of the cognate word in the Sh'ma in the Bible's Hebrew (*ʾḥd*, which is equally preserved in the Aramaic translation of the Sh'ma in Targum Onkelos, as *ḥd*, and in the Syriac Peshitta, equally as *ḥd*). Yet it is again the *Clementine Homilies* which show us how the Qurʾān's audience may have been prepared for the Qurʾān's integration of Jewish and Christian faith. In effect, the *Clementine Homilies* emphatically and repeatedly quote the Sh'ma, along with cognate verses:

"As I live, says the Lord, there is no other God but me. I am the first, I am after this; except me there is no God" (see Is 44:6, 45:21, and 49:18). And again: "You shall fear the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve" (see Deut 6:13). And again: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord" (see Deut 6:4, CH 16:7)."

The *Clementine Homilies*, like the Qurʾān, combine their emphasis on the Sh'ma with a clear reaction to the Nicene Creed. They portray Jesus as not divine, yet as the son of God in the following words: "It is the peculiarity of the Father not to have been begotten, but of the son to have been begotten; but what is begotten cannot be com-

pared with that which is unbegotten or self-begotten" (*Clementing Homilies* 15:16, see already my comments on QS 35). The language evokes and rejects the Nicene formula, but likewise emphasizes sonship. (The "Aryan controversy," of course, is hardly pertinent in the seventh century, and even before that, at least in the way that has been transmitted, at least partially a fabrication of Athanasius and his acolytes.) The dual emphasis on the Sh'ma and on Jesus' lack of divinity in the *Clementine Homilies* constitutes the background against which the Qurʾānic passage at hand resounds most fully: it points to the dialogue with a community that combined their belief in non-Trinitarian Biblical monotheism with the belief that the non-divine Jesus is omniscient and the son of God. This is certainly not the position for Christians, for whom Jesus *is* God; it is rather the position of the audience leaning towards the Judaeo-Christian tradition for which the Son is not himself divine in the first place.

A Note on Qurʾān Seminar Sessions

The present volume is the product of the Qurʾān Seminar, a project involving 50 discussion sessions, each on a passage of the Qurʾān, which unfolded over the course of five conferences at the University of Notre Dame during the academic year 2012–13. The scholars who participated in the Qurʾān Seminar ultimately produced brief commentaries on a selection of Qurʾānic passages, and these commentaries were edited to form the basis of this book.

The Qurʾān Seminar project is ongoing on the IQSA (International Qur'ānic Studies Association) website (iqsaweb.org, through the members "login"). That website contains many of the commentaries found in this work in an interactive, hypertext format. It also contains the commentaries which emerge from the new Qurʾān Seminar sessions, on additional Qurʾānic passages, which are convened each year at IQSA's North American conference. Thus the number of passages on the Qurʾān Seminar website continues to increase. IQSA's website also allows for the emendation of individual commentaries, and the contribution of new commentaries on earlier passages in a moderated format. Thus new voices and perspectives are regularly added to the Commentary as it moves towards comprehensive coverage of the Qurʾānic text.

At the same time it is our hope that IQSA will not be the exclusive home of the Qurʾān Seminar. It is our conviction that the method of the Qurʾān Seminar is a useful one for the advancement of Qurʾānic Studies, and our hope is that others will establish their own Qurʾān Seminar sessions. In other words, the Qurʾān Seminar is not meant to be an initiative of Notre Dame or of IQSA, so much as a useful method or format for serious scholarly conversation on the Qurʾān to be used freely by others. Here, then, we include some basic guidelines for those who would like to establish their own Qurʾān Seminar sessions.

Qurʾān Seminar sessions involve a roundtable discussion of individual passages of the Qurʾān. As a rule these passages should be brief. Organizers of the sessions should look for segments of the Qurʾānic text that have a certain coherence. However, the selection of passages itself should not be thought of as a scholarly argument; that is, the work of the organizers is not to identify "original" units of the Qurʾānic text, but rather to identify passages of the text which will generate a meaningful discussion. Moreover, organizers should in any case encourage participants to discuss the logic behind the selection of a passage, and to reflect on the passage's relationship to that which precedes and follows it. Such a discussion often proves to be a significant and profitable element of Qurʾān Seminar sessions.

Ultimately the goal of Qurʾān Seminar sessions is to offer students and scholars of the Qurʾān a new encounter with the text. This new encounter is possible above all when standard readings of the text are *not* assumed to be authoritative. Thus Qurʾān Seminar participants should be encouraged not to read the text of the Qurʾān through the lens of classical Islamic tradition (whether *asbāb al-nuzūl* or *nāsikh wa-mansūkh* traditions, or standard interpretations found in *tafsīr*, *ḥadīṯ*, or lexico-

graphical works). They should also be encouraged not to assume that a proper interpretation has been established by any individual theory, nor to defer to any participant in the session who is known for having studied the passage at hand. These principles are inspired by a practical concern: to promote a collegial setting in which open discussion fosters creative ideas and *all* participants feel a sense of purpose and usefulness in their study of the Qurʾān. They do not reflect a negative judgment of the reasonableness of interpretations found in the classical Islamic tradition, or the cogency of any arguments in the academic tradition.

The structure of individual Qurʾān Seminar sessions is meant to foster this sense of equal engagement. Organizers should dedicate 45–60 minutes for the discussion of each passage, and ask one participant to serve as a presenter/moderator for each session. In advance of the sessions participants should compose a brief commentary (approximately 1–2 paragraphs) on each passage and send them to the organizers (or, as in the case of the Notre Dame Qurʾān Seminar, post them to an online forum). The organizers should integrate the commentaries of all participants into one document for each passage, and distribute this document in advance of the session. This document will help animate discussion and will allow participants to refer to the views of others with precision.

Qurʾān Seminar sessions should always take place in a room with seating in a roundtable format. The Arabic text of the Qurʾān (with or without diacritical points) and a translation of the text might be made available on a screen or integrated into the document with commentaries. The session itself should begin with a brief (5–10 minutes) introduction in which the presenter/moderator offers a reflection on the commentaries on the passage at hand (and *not* on the passage itself). This may involve a description of similar points made by a number of different participants, differences in interpretation among participants, questions raised in the participants' commentaries, or elements of the Qurʾānic passage at hand which do not appear in those commentaries. The point of the introduction is *not* to give a conference paper on the Qurʾānic passage, but rather to present questions or topics that can be taken up in the subsequent discussion.

The rest of the session is dedicated to that discussion, for which the opening presenter acts as a moderator (while also participating in the discussion). During this discussion participants should be encouraged to raise new points and to respond to points made in the introduction or by others during the discussion. The focus of the discussion should always be the Qurʾānic passage at hand. Participants should be encouraged to consider the context of the passage in the Qurʾān and the relation of the passage to other segments of the Qurʾān. Participants might also consider the way in which the passage at hand develops, interprets, or refutes earlier literature or traditions, Biblical or otherwise. In addition they might consider how the evidence of linguistics, grammar, epigraphy, or Qurʾānic manuscripts contributes to our understanding of the passage. References to academic scholarship on these matters are welcome, but such references should be articulated in a way

that encourages conversation and invites response, and not in a way that closes down the conversation.

Participants might also discuss interpretations and traditions of classical Islamic scholarship or *sīra* narratives that are meant to explain the passage at hand. However, classical Muslim exegetes should be thought of as scholars, even colleagues, whose views might inform discussion, and not as authorities who have recorded or remembered the original meaning of the Qurʾān or what things really took place when a passage was revealed. For example, whereas classical exegetes might be quoted for their insight on the meaning of a Qurʾānic term, the idea that a certain passage is "Meccan" or "Medinan" should not be imposed on the group. Participants might argue for such an idea, but their argument should always be based on the text at hand. In other words, there is only one authority in Qurʾān Seminar sessions: the Qurʾān itself, and no other work, whether *ḥadīṯ*, *tafsīr*, or an academic article.

Finally, organizers should make it clear that the goal of Qurʾān Seminar session is *not* for the participants to reach a consensus. On the contrary, Qurʾān Seminar sessions are meant to be polyvalent (not unlike many classical *tafsīr*s). The goal of these sessions is to encourage creative thinking and the exchange of ideas, and not to reduce these ideas to a definitive explanation. In light of this, Qurʾān Seminar organizers should seek to establish an atmosphere of respectful dialogue, and participants in Qurʾān Seminar sessions should always listen and respond to the observations of others in a spirit of charity.

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