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

Jan Just Witkam

Preamble

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

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The story of King Šābūr and the gazelle, an outline

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. The young man sails back to Basra, with his three wives and the treasures. He sells his possessions and builds a house in Baghdad. The
daughter of the uncle dies there, and the young man consol...is the recurrent mention of 'the storyteller'. These frequent mentions may also have served to give the storyteller a moment of pause in order to recover his breath.

Introducing the source

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


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

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


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

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

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

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

(1) ff. 44b–23b. Ghażwat Ḥisn al-Ǧurāb (title on f. 44b), 'The expedition against the Fortress of the Raven'. The proficient transmitter Ibn 'Abbās is indicated as the authority (nawya, al-Rāwī) for the story (mentioned al-Khābar, f. 39b, or al-Hadīth, f. 37a). It tells about the Muslim expedition against Ḥisn al-Ǧurāb in the Yemen. Basically it belongs to the genre of conversion stories. Beginning (f. 44b):

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

The earlier edition of the story of 'King Ṣabūr and the gazelle'6

The text of the story of 'King Ṣabūr and the gazelle' has been edited before. This was done by Maḥmūd Tāshūn in his edition of Mī'at Layla wa-Laylā,
'Hundred and One Nights', Tarshîna mentions five manuscripts in all of Mi'at Layla wa-Layla, three in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (Arabe 3660, Arabe 3661 and Arabe 3662) and two in al-Maktābah al-Wâqfîyya, the National Library, in Tunis (Nos. 4576 and 18260). He based his edition on the two oldest dated manuscripts of these five manuscripts: MS Paris, BnF Arabe 3602 (2), which is dated 1190/1776 and MS Tunis, al-Maktābah al-Wâqfîyya, No. 4576, which is dated 1268/1852. The content of each of the five manuscript volumes is far from identical, but either manuscript on which Tarshîna did base his edition, contains a version of the story of 'King Sâbûr and the gazelle'. The other manuscripts do not contain the story. So, with Tarshîna's edition and the version of the story that is herewith presented on the basis of the manuscript in Toulouse, all presently known textual witnesses are taken into account by me.

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

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


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


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

14. To try to identify him with the equally unidentified magician and alchemist Mahîrî (see above him Manfred Ullmann, Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam. Leiden (E.J. Brill) 1972, p. 1779) is tempting, but it leads nowhere. In the context of the 'Hundred and One Nights' he may best be seen as an exotic and legendary wise man of old times. I am grateful to Dr. Lucia Raggetti for suggesting to me Mahîrî's name as a possible explanation for the name Fährits.
gazelle’ is an older substrate from before the compilation of the collection of the ‘Hundred and One Nights’.

Comparative table of the beginning and the end of the story of ‘the King and the gazelle’ in the Paris manuscript, in Tarshīhna’s edition and in the Toulousse manuscript.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. MS Paris, BnF, Arabic</th>
<th>2. Edition Mahmoud Tarshihna</th>
<th>3. MS Toulousse 899 (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>جَالَتُ مَعَ الْقَرْنِيَّةَ ٣٤٦</td>
<td>جَالَتُ مَعَ الْقَرْنِيَّةَ ٣٤٦</td>
<td>جَالَتُ مَعَ الْقَرْنِيَّةَ ٣٤٦</td>
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<tr>
<td>(titles lack) ٣٣٨</td>
<td>(titles lack) ٣٣٨</td>
<td>(titles lack) ٣٣٨</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تَمُرُّ الْقَرْنِيَّةُ لَمَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا نَعْلَمُ</td>
<td>تَمُرُّ الْقَرْنِيَّةُ لَمَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا نَعْلَمُ</td>
<td>تَمُرُّ الْقَرْنِيَّةُ لَمَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا نَعْلَمُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣٤٦</td>
<td>٣٤٦</td>
<td>٣٤٦</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I am most grateful to Ms. Marie-Geneviève GUBERON, chargée des manuscrits arabes in the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Paris, for putting images of MS Arabic 3662 at my disposal. In July 2016 she permitted me an exceptional Autopsy of the manuscript. The photos of the Paris version of the text that I took in 2016 can be seen at: www.islamicmanuscripts.info/files/Paris-MS-Arabic-3662-7/238b-239a.pdf

I have not seen the Tunis manuscript and for my information about it I rely on TARSHÎHNA’s description and variant readings.

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

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

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

The second story in MS Toulousse 899 is the one which follows hereafter. It occupies ff. 238b–13a in the volume. It is not titled and its present title

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16 I have not seen the Tunis manuscript and for my information about it I rely on TARSHÎHNA’s description and variant readings.

17 TARSHÎHNA, Mîr Lâyâ, p. 11.
كد أن الملك صابر خرج يوماً يشيد في مستحث عهده، غرفة القلعة فأغفل الملك صابر قلبه الفزع الذي تمدد بين قلبه والوارث في تلك اللحظة. كان مثلما يغرق في الشوق والخوف، يعيش بين الصمت والغموض، يتنقل بين الحزن والرضا، يمر في أحلامه ورموزه، ينظر إلى حبابات الأمل والرغبة.

وكان صابر في تلك اللحظة يتأمل شطبة الظلام والكرامة، ينظر إلى الثغرات التي خرج فيها الصبح، يلاحظ الطيور التي تفجأ من جديد، يدرّك أن الأمل والرغبة قد خرجت في هذا اللحظة.

وكان يتأمل فيما يصاحب الشوق والخيبة، ينظر إلى الرمال التي تغمر جزءًا كبيرًا من العالم، يذكر أن الأمل والرغبة قد خرجت في هذا اللحظة.

وكان يتأمل في العشق والحنين، ينظر إلى النجوم التي تلمع في السماء، يذكر أن الأمل والرغبة قد خرجت في هذا اللحظة.

وكان يتأمل في الذاكرة والغفلة، ينظر إلى الصور التي تأتي في ذهبه، يذكر أن الأمل والرغبة قد خرجت في هذا اللحظة.

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لي ان تبدي فاعليتكم بما جرى على نطاق واسع من كل جزء من المجتمع. وقد أدت هذه الممارسات إلى إنسيان الإرادة والقوة التي كان يعرف بها الأفراد في الماضي. أما بالنسبة للمجتمعات التي تعاني من الفقر والبطالة، فإنی أعتقد أن هذه التجربة تأتي كأداة للتوضيح حول أهمية العمل الجماعي في سياق الأزمات، وتعبئة جميع القوى لتقديم الحلول المستدامة للأزمات. النتائج الحالية تشير إلى أن المجتمعات التي تعمل معاً لتقديم حلول مجتمعية تظهر أداءً أفضل في التعامل مع الأزمات.

تبايد في أوقات المواجهات التي تعيشها بلداننا وفقًا لما ورد في بعض الدراسات، إلا أن التحولات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية التي تشهدها المجتمعات تتطلب منا الالتزام بالسلل ودعمًا لجهودنا المشترك في التغلب على الأزمات.

بالنسبة لعمل الجماعي الذي نقوم به، فإننا نแผนده أن نعمل على تحسين الظروف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لل граждан، وتعزيز الوعي الشعبي حول أهمية العمل الجماعي في مواجهة الأزمات والتحديات. النتائج الحالية تشير إلى أن العمل الجماعي كأداة للتضامن والدعم والمساندة هو أمر ضروري لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة وتحقيق الهدف من التنمية، وأن الوعي الشعبي حول أهمية العمل الجماعي في مواجهة الأزمات والتحديات هو أمر ضروري لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة وتحقيق الهدف من التنمية.

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من المعجبين فاخرتهما بما جراة في فازلاني، إذ أحبب وسرت مراكزهم، وبعت كل ما كان عن من حاويجات وحادي وحاحا مشاريع وسطا فائدةاخذ فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا فضاء، وأخذوا F 23b: The story goes that King Sâbûr on a certain day went out to hunt, and there a gazelle presented itself to him. His horns were covered with gold, silver, precious stones, rubies and pearls and around its neck it wore a necklace of precious stones. King Sâbûr said: I think that this gazelle belongs to one of the kings. Then he sent the dogs and the falcons after it, and they ran after it. When a falcon and a dog were near it (Fig. 23a) and it smelled them, it avoided them. King Sâbûr was very amazed by this. He rode a horse in order to get hold of the gazelle. So he said to his vizier, let us go after it, maybe we will overtake it. The gazelle was in front of them and after a while it came on a meadow with many rivulets, trees, fruits.
gardens, cows and small cattle and in between the trees was a river where there were servants and slaves.

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

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

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

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

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

Then my father said to me: My son, I have an idea about you. I said: What is that, father? He said to me: I want to marry you off while I am alive so that I can be happy about this before I die. You have the daughter of an uncle, who is being asked in marriage by the lords of Damascus and the sons of its kings. She is gifted with goodness [f. 21a] and beauty, in a way that is not given to anyone else of the daughters of this time and to those who live in this era. In addition she has culture, intelligence and
understanding. I said to him: Father, I am content with whatever you are content with on my behalf. Marry me therefore off to the daughter of my uncle. When I had consummated the marriage with her, I found that she was exactly as he had described her to me. So my father had married me off to intelligence, culture, beauty and perfection. I then passed a full year with her in a most complete life of leisure. When that year had passed my father died. The earth became narrowing for me because of my loss of him, and the town became too small.

"3"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

« 4 »

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

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

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

He flew away with her between heaven and earth. I fainted, and my intelligence and my heart flew away, while my tears streamed over my cheek. The narrator continued: I then arrived at the ship and the people
came out consoling me about the daughter of my uncle. I said to them:
Do you know a place to where this ‘ifrit takes refuge beyond this island?
They said to me: On certain times he takes refuge in a place several days of
travel away. He stays there for a few days, and its dwelling is near a town
which is called ‘the white city’ in a large wadi. Nobody goes there because
of the devils that live there and because of the sinister echoes. Thereupon
I said to the captain: I want us to go to that town, so bring us towards it. I
was sad and deprived myself from eating and drinking, while my compan-
ions told me about the disasters that they had seen.

5

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

6

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

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

6

The king said: This well is in a land where nobody can come because of
the ‘ifrit’s great force and tyranny. No wild animal approaches him, nor do
vermin. He said that it was his wish to come with me, he and his soldiers, in order to be near the well, while I would go with some of my slaves to the well and descend into it to see what I could do there. When he had complied with my request, the king and his retinue and the people of his kingdom mounted, and I took with me my best slaves. We travelled till we arrived at the wādī. They halted aside and I went on, till I stood [f. 15b] at the well. Then they tied me with a great and long rope of about a hundred fathoms. I gave it to the slaves and I said to them: When I move the rope for you, I have arrived at the bottom of the well. Do not depart till you have me back or when you have no hope for me anymore. When I move the rope for you, you must bring me up. The narrator continued: Then I descended to the bottom of the well. I drew my sword and attached the amulet to my upper arm.

The narrator continued: Far away I saw a sort of light, and I went towards it. I came out in a large and wide open space, and there was a great castle, which had a gate of copper, and there was an old woman sitting by the gate of the castle. In her hand she held keys. When she saw me, she said to me: Your are the man from Damascus. I think you have come in search of the daughter of your uncle. I said to her: Yes. She said: May joy be in your soul and delight in your eye. By God, he has not come to her and he has not obtained carnal knowledge of her because of the pain of the wound. Every day she goes up to the highest part of the castle and she says: Maybe the son of my uncle has come. Then I say to her: How can he come to you in this place? Then she said: He would not forsake me for one single hour. The narrator continued: And when I was standing there, and I saw a young woman high up in the castle, it was as if the sun started to shine because of the light coming from her face, which was even better than the daughter of my uncle. When she looked at me she said: Whom are you after, man from Damascus? I said to her: [f. 15a] How do you know that I am the man from Damascus? She said to me: My brother described you to me. I said to her: Who is your brother? She said: The 'īfrīt, who abducted the daughter of your uncle. Then I said to her: How can you welcome me while I am the enemy of your brother? She said: I hope that he finds his death at your hand. You have arrived to this place, but who will let you enter the castle and let you come near him? I said: I don't know, but God is with me. She said: It is as I told you. My brother is dying from the blow that you inflicted on him in the cave, when he came to fetch the daughter of the king. And I have to tell you that he is my brother through my father, but he is not my full brother because my mother was human and my father a ġinnī. I am closer to humans than to the ġinnī. If you promise me solemnly that you will marry me and that I will be your wife and that you will be my lord, I will bring you to him and I will help you killing him. If you don't promise you will never come near him. I said to her: Yes, on condition that the daughter of my uncle agrees.

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

He was sleeping on it as a great elephant, lying prostrate because of the pain of the wound. When the ‘īfrīt saw her, he said to her: Woe unto you. I smell on you the scent of the man from Damascus. She said: That is because of your fear [f. 14b] for him. How can the man from Damascus come to you? Then she held her hand under his head, she drew his sword, gave it to me and said to me: Hit him with his sword and do not hit him with anything else. Then I inflicted a blow on his throat, and I let the sword come out between his shoulderblades. Then I cut off his head, and I attached a rope to his foot. I called together the young women of the castle
and said to them: pull him after me to a large pit that was in the castle, so deep that no one could see the bottom. Then we threw him in it and he went down till the bottom. Then his sister said: We have thrown him into the pit so that the Ginān and the devils cannot find anything from him. If they would be informed of this, they would kill us.

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

= 7 =

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

Then the daughter of my uncle died, and I remained with the sister of the 'îfrīt, and she is the gazelle that you have seen, and with the daughter of the king. I consoled myself with the gazelle for the loss of the daughter of my uncle. I am very much in love with her, when she is with me in this form. In the morning she takes on every shape she wishes. Sometimes she is shaped in the form of a peacock, and love is on her mind, or in the shape of any sort of onager. Sometimes she gives herself the form of a young woman, as you see, and then she is like the sun or the moon. This is all of my story and my news.

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

Notes

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

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

It is evident that the story of King Šābūr and the gazelle is not in classical Arabic. There are no doubt many elements of the spoken languages in it, and there are maybe also typically Maghribī features. One striking example of Maghribī influence on the orthography is the shift of long and short vowels in either way, short ones become long and long vowels become short, not seldom in one word. A number of such instances have been indicated in the notes. They show that orality has played a role when the story was put into writing.
No attempt has been made here to find and analyze features on the syntactical level of spoken language in general or of Maghribi speech in particular, although these can be discerned. This as well falls outside of the scope of the present study.

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

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

f. 23b, line 12: إذا بلغها بآذا وكتبا. The *nunation* in ُبِذَام and ُكَلْبَان is used to indicate the single unit while the two words are the subject of the verb بلغها.

f. 23a, line 2: إذا بلغتها بآذا وكتبا. A common feature in the Maghribī.

f. 23a, line 1: إذا بلغتها بآذا وكتبا. At end of line 5: -ةُم is used for graphical purposes, to fill up the line.

It anticipates the full word (ْفَضْتَهَا) which is given in the next line. This is a common feature of the copyist, see also f. 22a, line 10.

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

f. 23a, line 12: إذا بلغها بآذا وكتبا. أَتَّكَا, ultimately form III of أَتَّكُ؟

f. 23a, line 13: فَرَضَةٌ أَتَّكَا, instead of أَتَّكَا (ْفَرَضَةٌ أَتَّكَا)?

f. 22b, line 5: مَرَى وَإِنْ يَلْفَِّهَا, no apocopate form used.

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

f. 22a, line 10, end: لما. Anticipation of the complete word المَلِك on the next line, for graphical purposes. See also the note on f. 23a, line 8, above.

The same phenomenon in f. 21b, line 1.

f. 22b, line 12: إذا بلغها بآذا وكتبا.

f. 22a, line 13: فَرَضَةٌ أَتَّكَا, and at other instances.

f. 22a, line 7: أَلِيْل, the sun letter after the article is assimilated, and then written only with one آم with a *tashdīd* assumed. The same occurs twice in f. 19a, line 11. The occurrence of this in al-*Lay"lī* is very common in Maghribī orthography including texts in *fushā*, but it is not limited to that. See for instance also the *nunation* in the incipit of the third story in the volume (f. 13a), where one would have expected أَلِيْل.
f. 16b, line 10: [؟] a line filler, anticipating the first word of the next line.
f. 16b, line 17: [أخذ] a line filler, anticipating the first word of the first line on the next page.
f. 16a, line 14: [الخ] a variant for [الخ]?
f. 15b, line 1: [محفQA] translated as 'fathom' according to Hinz, *Measures*, §3.5 (p. 80), s.v. bā'ā. The fathom equals c. 2 meter.
f. 15b, line 3: [ننوا] reading not clear, as the yd may be just the carrier of the hamza. See for a similar instance also line 9, hereafter with [جيئت]?
f. 15b, line 5: [عجي] so in the MS, but translated as if there had been written [جيئت], see Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. جَيْد (part 2, p. 373).
f. 15a, line 2: [لذي] read as [لذي]?
f. 15a, line 3: the sign ل at the end of the line is a line filler, as in line 7, below.
f. 15a, line 9: [لاخذ] read as [لاخذ]?
14b, line 9: [والموقت] read as [والموقت]?
14b, line 14: the word [زيرد] I could not find in the dictionaries, but a reading of [سيرد], 'cellar, subterranean vault' (Wehr), fits into the context, and was therefore adopted for the translation.
14b, line 14: [أخترح] translated as [أخترح]?
f. 14a, line 6: [جوار] for [جوار], as in line 17, below.
f. 14a, line 10: [مرادت] meaning not clear.
f. 14a, line 11: [والمضارع] for [والمضارع]?
f. 14a, line 13: [الملك] for [الملك]?
f. 14a, line 14: [فهمت] to be read as [فهمت]?
f. 14a, line 15: [وضرورتي] translated as [وضرورتي]?
f. 13b, line 9: [وخارى] the MS has [وخارى]
f. 13b, line 9: [الاطلالة] ditography or a line filler crossed out.
f. 13b, line 14: [وخارى] translated as [وخارى] or [وخارى] which is probably meant.

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20 Suggestion by David Hirsch, Los Angeles.

Beginning of the story of King Sibūr and the gazelle. MS Toulouse 899 (2), f. 23b.
"Critical Thinking in Early Islam"

Hans Daiber

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

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

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

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

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


3 The section on Ibn al-Muqaffa' (here p. 120-126) is part of a longer article, in which we compare the letters by 'Abd al-Jamal al-Kittîb, a contemporary of Ibn al-Muqaffa', moreover the apocryphal exchange of letters between Aristotle and Alexander the Great from the same time and the letter of the Zoroastrian priest Tisna/Tisa. A. Daiber, "Das Kittîb al-Abî al-Kabîr des Ibn al-Muqaffa' als Ausdruck griechischer Ethik, islamischer Ideologie und iranisch-sassanidischer Hofetikette", in Orient 43, 2015, 273–292.

4 Cf. H. Daiber, Islamic Thought, 21f.
Albrecht Fuess, Stefan Weninger (Eds.)

A life with the Prophet?

Examining Hadith, Sira and Qur'an

_In Honor of Wim Raven_
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Wim Raven

Layout: Rainer Kuhl

Copyright: EB-Verlag Dr. Brandt
Berlin 2017

ISBN: 978-3-86893-229-4

Homepage: www.ebverlag.de
E-Mail: post@ebverlag.de

Printed and bound: CPI, Birkach
Printed in Germany