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ARABIC LITERATURE: POETICS AND STYLISTICS. VII: “LIFE OF THE PROPHET” BY IBN ISHAQ—IBN HISHAM AS A MONUMENT OF MEDIEVAL ARABIC LITERATURE. ATTEMPT AT A LITERARY ANALYSIS

The monument “Life of the Prophet” (al-Sira al-nabawiyya [1]) by the two authors Ibn Ishaq (d. after 416/1027) and Ibn Hisham (d. 139/758), which is well known in world studies as historical source, has been studied to a much lesser degree as a literary monument.

For example, in the “Sources” by A. E. Krymskii, an analysis of the work by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Hisham occupies a significant place [2], but it is mainly of a biographical (when it concerns the authors of the work) and source study (when it describes the monument) type.

In another work by the scholar, “The History of Is- lam”, in the section entitled “Instead of a fourth chapter. Sources and manuals for studying the story of Muhammad”, the biographical and source study material is extremely reduced compared to the previous work [3], and the characteristic of Sira as a literary monument is also absent. In the works by L. I. Khrachkovskii, the au-
tors of “Life of the Prophet”—Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham — are mentioned repeatedly, but, as a rule, in connection with the discussion of issues that are not di-
rectly related to the topic that concerns us.

In the “History of Arabic Literature” by I. M. Flištinskii, “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Ishaq—
Ibn Hisham is not specially studied, although its authors are mentioned more than once [4].

The most substantial attention to the work by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Hisham is given by G. G. Boškálov in his “History of the Caliphate”, but exclusively, which is quite natural, as a historical source [5].

A special study of literary analysis of Sira has not been made yet by western European and Arab scholars. In the well known study by H. A. R. Gibb “Muslim Historiography”, the monument is merely characterised as a historical source [6]. A recent work of J. Schloemer sums up, in a sense, the study of “Life of the Prophet” in the framework of historiography [7]. Judging by the re-
view, the same goes for the overall direction of the book by M. A. Murdż, published in 2001, where he subjects to a critical analysis the historical information contained in the “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Hisham [8].

We are far from aspiring to any kind of complete presentation of the works of this kind. Our goal is differ-
et: we aim merely to show by some examples the main tendency in the study of the monument. As important exceptions against this background we should mention a number of articles, published in the works of the collo-
quium “Life of the Prophet Muhammad” (1983) in Strasbourg [9] and especially the corresponding sections of the Cambridge “History of Arabic Literature” [10], where the essential elements of the approach to the “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Hisham as a literary monument are outlined.

The utility and even necessity of this approach, which does not at all conflict with everything that has been done in the historiographical study of the mon-
ument, is determined, in our opinion, by its peculiar na-
ture, which we should say a few preliminary words about.

The “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Hisham has long since been looked upon as an historical source and, of course, first of all as a source of information about the life and work of the founder of Islam. And for almost as long, the first of the authors — and if we bear in mind the attitude towards Ibn Ishaq in al-Madina, when he had not yet started on his work and was known merely as an expert on hadith, then even longer — has been criticised precisely as a gatherer of historical in-
formation and hadith, and then as the author of an his-
torical work as well. It is well known that many modern hadith scholars doubted the authenticity of hadith told by Ibn Ishaq. Maliki b. Anas (713—795), the head of the hadith scholars of al-Madina and the eponymous founder of the

Mālikī theologcal and legal school, did everything to discredit Ibn Ishaq and called him a “lyar” [11]. Among his critics one of the hardest was Almādān b. Hambol (789—855), the prominent founder of the Hanbal school in jurisprudence, who used to say of Ibn Ishaq that he was a “great liar” (khalfir al-talādis fikri) [12].

And indeed, what could the strict hadith scholars think of hadith cited by Ibn Ishaq with an isnād as follows:

“‘The Messenger of Allah, bless him and Allah and greet him, as it became known to me, used to say: ‘There hasn’t been a single man, that I called upon to adopt Islam who didn’t waver, wept and hesitated, except Abi Bakr b. Abi Quāfalī. When I explained to him what Islam was, he (im-
mediately accepted it), casting away indiscipline and doubts’” [13].

Or how could one accept hadith with no isnād at all:

“The Messenger of Allah said: ‘Every mourner begets, except the one who mourns over Sur’ā b. Maqiyih’.”

Still even if an isnād was present, Ibn Ishaq’s com-
mentary could produce a negative reaction. For example, a hadith in: ‘Ibn Ishaq told me, he heard from Khaļīf b. Mar’ād al-Kālīr, a man of mature age, that they asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, about Ibn Ishaq al-Qāruni, [15], and he answered: ‘it was an angel who measured the parts under the bot-
tom [16] using reed’...’ Ibn Ishaq said: ‘Allah knows better if the Messenger of Allah said it or not, may Allah bless and greet him. But if he said that, then it is true’” [17].

This kind of citation could hardly meet with ap-
proval of the hadith scholars of al-Madina. The use of other materials in Ibn Ishaq’s work quite often occurs completely anonymously or with a kind of references to the source that could only cast doubt upon their reliabil-
ity. Ibn Ishaq’s contribution to this peculiarity is

“Ibn Ishaq said: ‘One of those, who communicates the messages, told me...’” [18].

“One learned man told me that when prayer was im-
plored as a duty upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, Jibril came to him...’”

“Ibn Ishaq said: ‘I was told by one of my friends, whose honesty I do not question, who learned it from ‘Abd Allah b. Abī Najāf, and the latter learned it from Muḥājir b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hujjāj, who cited ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas, and by another [man], whose honesty I do not question, who learned it from the same ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas’’” [19].

“Ibn Ishaq said: ‘Some man from bāl‘āsh [tribe] told me that he had been told that Jibril — may peace be above him! — went to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, and told him...’” [20].

“Ibn Ishaq said: ‘One learned man told me that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, called the ‘Allah of Dust’ (Abī Turbīh) because if he gets angry without a cause, he does not reproach or say a word to him, but he takes a handful of dust and pours it over his he-
head. So that when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, was told of certain: ‘All had got angry with Fātimah, and simply asked him: ‘What happened, the Man of Dust?’’” [21].

Things were no better, in the opinion of medieval scholars, with the verses that Ibn Ishaq included in the “Life of the Prophet”. In his time, Ibn Hisham, when describing the principles of the work, in the writing of Ibn Ishaq, declared that he omitted the verses and gāshālās that “no poetry connoisseur recognises” [22]. Later, Ibn Ishaq’s lack of criticality in the selection of verses in Sira was in the principle tradition. For example, Ibn Sallām al-Jamāhi (756—846 or 847) says that Ibn Ishaq included in the “Biography” “verses by people who never wrote them” [23].

Thus, according to the above-cited authoritative evi-
dence of medieval and the conclusions of the contempo-
rary scholars, we can establish that: (i) Sira is a historical source, but not a rigorous historical source; (ii) Sira contains many hadith, but it cannot be considered a rig-
orous collection of hadith; (iii) there is a considerable number of verses in Sira, but in its version as a source of authentic texts it is inferior to the well known medieval anthologies of poetry. If we conducted a further review, we would note that: (iv) Sira contains a considerable number of various, both figurative and figurative geometrical works, but it cannot be qualified as a hagiographic monument which fully meets the requirements of the genre [24].

So, let’s neither judge Ibn Ishaq, nor the third, nor the fourth, and at the same time it’s this and that and the third and so on together. A question arises: how can we then explain the undoubtedly impor-
tant place it has occupied over many centuries in the Arabic-Muslim world, and in the whole Muslim culture in general? At first we are forced to content ourselves with the following statement: Sira is a monument of medieval Arabic written tradition; in special characteristics which were precisely what ensured its success, and so it should probably be judged by special criteria. But in 1926 the well known Egyptian writer and scholar Thāl Husyn, undoubtedly with the specific handling of historical information in the work by Ibn Ishaq in mind, compared the latter to Alexandre Dumas [25]. The com-
parison with Alexandre Dumas at the time when it was expressed is had rather a disparaging connotation: Sira by Ibn Ishaq could not be regarded as something serious, but as fiction. However, the comparison is shaky, as the work and the authors in question are sepa-
rated from the prolific French novelist by more than a thousand years (even 1,100 years from Ibn Ishaq). But the fact of comparing authors of the 8th and 9th centuries with Alexandre Dumas Pére — despite all the possible exaggeration — should arrest the attention of research-
ers. It is interesting at least because a connoisseur and expert of Arabic classics noticed in the “Life of the

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Prophet" by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn al-Hajjami the first distinct signs of fictionalization of a historical event: such an early stage of the development of medieval Arabic literature. This phenomenon merits special consideration and is the focus of the present chapter for raising the issue expressed in the title of our article.

With several examples of fictionalization of an historical context in the text of Sīra we will try to show the grounds on which Ibn Ishaq could have constructed his comparison of Ibn Ishaq with Alexandre Dumas.

In the narration about the battle at Badr there is the following story with typical "fictional" details.

*Ibn Ishaq said: 'I was told by Husayn b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbas who heard it from 'Ikrima, a freedman of Ibn Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Ka'b who said: 'Abd Raffi, a freedman, said: 'I heard from 'Abd Allah, a freedman of the Mosque of 'Ali, that Muhammad's wife — 'A'isha: When the Muslims started dividing the booty after another successful campaign, among the female captives was a very beautiful woman Juwayriyya bint al-Harith. About her her father said: ‘Abd al-Malik b. al-Mughira, who at the time was governor of Damascus. al-Tabari has recorded this tradition as well. But when the troops of al-Tabari were in the neighborhood of Bani Qays, they were defeated and taken as prisoners. Their leader was a woman who was named Juwayriyya. She was beautiful, a very attractive woman; she touched the heart of everyone who looked at her... I saw to Allah, the moment I saw her in the doorway of my room, I immediately hid her and understood that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and grant her, would see in her what I saw."

The presentiment didn't deceive 'A'isha: Muhammad right away proposed to Juwayriyya bint al-Harith to be his wife [29].

Worthy of mentioning in this respect is also the description of Sīra in the conflicting feelings of 'Umar's soul, when he pondered right after the prophet's funeral whether it would be worth it or not to address the Muslims before Abū Bakr, that is to lay claim to become, according to unwritten protocol, the first successor of Muhammad [30], and many other episodes.

In Sīra are also found short but very accurate portrait descriptions of characters other than Muhammad's enemies — even the temporary idea of fiction and don't have established precedents in the early narrative tradition of the Arabs. Let us cite just one example. Here is the description of Muhammad's worst enemy — Abū Jahl:

He was a fierce man, with a pointed face, a sharp tongue, a quick eye [31].

To conclude the discourse on this topic, let us give an answer to the question how Sīra as a historical source can be used in the field of literary analysis. Thus, for instance, poetical extracts, according to their purpose, can be tentatively divided into the following groups.

1. Verses as extra-plot elements of Sīra
   1. Verses as an object of philological argumentation about the questionable authorship of the verses.
   2. Verses as an object of literary criticism.
   3. Verses as philological evidence (lexicological, grammatical and so on).
   4. Verses as toponymic evidence.

2. Verses as a constituent element of the plot
   1. Verses as quasi-historical evidence.
   2. Verses as historical evidence: the reflection of intra-tribal and inter-tribal struggles, religious propaganda and conflicts for religious reasons and so on.

3. Poetry and revelation

Let us start our analysis with long-established facts concerning the questionable authorship of many verses in Sīra (L.1).

Without going into details of this question, let us observe that the authorship of Sīra and other people about the authorship of various verses create compositional discrepancies and disrupt the orderliness of the plot organisation of the narrative.

Let us give an example.

And 'Abd Allah, 'Abd Allāh, may Allah be pleased with him, made a razor on that day. They are not equal, the one who builds mosques, Working hard, rising to his feet and squatting. And the one who shams [construction] dust.

Ibn Ishaq said: 'I asked several contemporaries of poetry for their opinion of this rozāj, and each of them answered: 'We were told that 'Abū b. 'Abd Allāh ruled this rozāj, and I don't know if it was he who made it or someone else.'" [33].

The verses in rozāj meter, attributed to 'Abī b. 'Abd Allāh, are cited as an illustration to a particular event, which is mentioned in Sīra, and in that way they serve the interests of the narrator, although the philological commentary by Ibn Ishaq about the authorship of the verses interrupts the description of this event.

Let us cite another example, characteristic of the work by Ibn Ishaq—Ibn Ishaq after quoting one of qasidas within the limits of the extensive narrative about the battle at Badr, Ibn Ishaq argues that "this is the most authentic version of the qasida, as it is based on (the) qasida (the) qasida of 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mutūlī (the reasons of the sending down of the Qur'anic ayāt and sûras); (iii) elements of tafsir (interpretation) of Qur'anic sûras and ayāt; (iv) hadiths; (v) the messenger's speeches, official documents; (vi) various kinds of name enumerations (lists); (vii) narration about "miraculous" events and phenomena; (viii) stories (al-bi'd) of Allah's legend."

Poetical elements in Sīra are represented by:

1. poetical pieces of various sizes and purpose.
   2. Many of the elements listed break up into smaller components, which are then compared in analysis. Thus, for instance, poetical extracts, according to their purpose, can be tentatively divided into the following groups.

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   2. Verses as an object of literary criticism.
   3. Verses as philological evidence (lexicological, grammatical and so on).
   4. Verses as toponymic evidence.

2. Verses as a constituent element of the plot:
   1. Verses as quasi-historical evidence.
   2. Verses as historical evidence: the reflection of intra-tribal and inter-tribal struggles, religious propaganda and conflicts for religious reasons and so on.

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played an accessory part and were not directly a plot element.

Let us turn now to the last group in the first subdivision, in which verses are used as toponymic evidence (II.4).

Let us give an example.

"Ibn Hisham says: 'Abī 'Ubayd told me that Bakkā is the name of a valley, because they yaktubān bi-in it, i.e. they crowd around. And he quoted to me: 'If your portrait is suffering from the fierce heat at the watering place.

Then leave him alone, so that [the camels] rush [to the water] and begin crowding around'.

That is, do not interfere with him, until his camels rush [to the water], in order to water them, until he brings them to the water and they start crowding around. This is the place of the [Holy] House and Mosque. These two sayyān belong to 'Ammān k.b. 'Abd al-Azīz b. Mas'ūd b. Zamīl b. Taslim [42].

We have counted in Sīra about 10 cases of the use of verses as toponymic evidence; as the verses in the other groups of this subdivision, they have an accessory function in the monument under examination.

Verses as a constituent component of the plot. Verses as quasi-historical evidence (II.1).

Let us cite an example.

"Ibn Hisham says: '... They say that al-Mustakhrīj lived 130 years, in all the Madīr [tribe] he lived longer than anyone else. It was he who said: 'I got tired of life and its duration; the number of the years of my life amounted to hundreds.' He therefore killed the second, and he wanted to avenge him; he came to Dhu al-Khulasa and started to tell his fortune by arrows, and an arrow fell for him interdicting it, then it was that he uttered these bayyins. And some people attribute these verses to 'Isa b. Zayd b. Jābabī b. Kāshī [43]."

The verses serve as a confirmation of the legendary report, i.e. they serve the interests of the plot; at the same time they are also an object of argument about the authorship.

We have counted about 110 similar evidence in Sīra. I am not going to present them here. The information given here is only half-legendary, and, as a rule, confirms what is said in the prosaic text. On the whole this can be considered to be an essential part of the plot.

II.2. Verses as historical evidence (the reflection of intra-tribal and intertribal struggle; religious propaganda and conflicts because of religion and so on).

Let us cite some examples.

"Ibn Hisham says: 'I was told by a man who I trust that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and grant him, said, when he was in Medina: 'Who will bring 'Ayyūsh b. 'Abī Rabi' and 'Abdul-Malik b. 'Āṣa to me?' Then al-Walid b. al-Walid b. al-Muqthār said: 'I will bring them to you, oh Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and grant him, and he went to the city of Mecca and se-cretly got into the city. There he met a woman, who was carrying food, and asked her: 'Where are you going, oh slave of God?' She said: 'I am going to see those two prisoners (meaning 'Ayyūsh and 'Abdul-Malik). He followed her in order to find out where they were kept. They were imprisoned in a house without a roof. At night he climbed to them [up the wall], took a stone and put it under their chains, struck them with his sword and cut them. That is why they called this sword the Master of stones. Then he put them on his camel and took them away. At this mo- ment he tripped over and hurt his finger, and it started bleeding. Then he said:

'But you are only a bleeding finger, and on Allah's way, what did you meet?'

[44].

Let us give two more poetic examples.

"And when the warriors met and approached each other. Hind bint 'Ubayd and the woman who were with her, stood behind the fighting, took up tumbasries and started beating them, inspiring their warriors to fight. And Hind sang, among other calls:

'Courage, oh sons of 'Abd al-Dār! Courage, oh you, defending the rear! Cut with this sword! And she also sang:

'If you go forward, we will take you in our arms and lay out small pillows, But if you go back, we will part you with you as with useless people' [45]."

A significant place in the group II.2 is occupied by works about battles and battles and their enemies. An important property of the last subgroup is that Ibn Ḥishām included in it verses by both, and they, naturally, often contain directly opposite assessments of the events that took place. Thus, here Sūra deviates from the pros- nounced pro-Muslim bias of the prosaic narration about the same battles. In prosaic passages "polytheists" re-ceive detailed descriptions, give remarks and so on, in short, they have a "voice", but not for a single moment will the reader doubt on whose side the truth is. Verses are quite another matter; in them both Muslims, and their opposites express their views in equal terms, and the author of "Life" takes the stand of a would-be exterior observer, a passionless chronicler of the events. Let us cite one example from the selection of verses about the battle at Badr.

"Ibn Ḥishām says: 'From the poetic works about the battle at Badr, that the participants of it from both sides have exchanged, we will mention first of all verses by 'Abdul-Malik b. 'Abī al-Majābbī (Ibn Ḥishām says: 'The majority of people express their view do not recognize [their authentic- ity], as well as verses made in response to them'): '[Look, a deed not witnessed before has been done: For the first time people were led — and brought [46] — to death. (Considering that death has certain reasons) By their adherence to disobedience and lack of faith! Thus the day of为你 and the hour for Badr altogether And became hostages of the well of Badr. While we were looking only for a caravan and nothing else, they set out to meet us, and we met as the Fate had willed. And when we met, we had no choice, But to turn dark spears against them And to unshorten white slashing swords, Blinding with their shine.

And we left 'Uthma to lie on the ground, And threw Shuyba along with the other dead into a big well;

And 'Amr lay among the Quraisyh defenders, And the mourners tore their shirts, bewailing 'Amr, 'The shirts of noble women of the Lūayy b. Ĥishīl [clan].

That belong to the noblest families by Fār. These people were killed, when they were deluded And they abandoned the banner, that wasn't destined for victory.

The banner of delusion — Bills led people, who went with it
And he betrayed them: for vile Bills is inclined to treachery. And he told them, when he saw the end of the battle clearly:
I don't care about you, and today I don't want to wait any longer, Because I see, what you don't see, and I Am afraid of Allah's punishment, and Allah is power-

He pushed them towards death, and they died Although he knew what they didn't know. On the day of the battle at the Well there was a thou-

And three hundred of us, and we were like white camels. And among us were also Allah's warriors, when he with

Supported us at a certain point [of the battle], And, having joined our ranks, 'Abīrī with them Doomed our enemies to certain death [47]'.

'Abī al-Majābbī b. Ḥishām al-Mughīrah replied to him in the following verses:

'Oh my beloved fellow tribesmen, what [suffering I go through] because of Parting with you and the sorrow and fever in my breast, Because of the tears running from my eyes abundantly, that are like Pearls that have fallen from the thread of the one stringing them, Tears shed over the hero, full of superior merits, When he fell, having become a hostage at the well of Badr [48].

Oh 'Amr, do not move away from the relative, From the table companion, a man of generous nature. And if it happens that you turn away from you, Then it will certainly be that the Fate will go otherwise. For in former times you often made Then walk down the rough ways of shame. If only I am alive, I will not leave you, oh 'Amr, un-

And I will not spare my brother, or brother-in-law. And I will kill as many people from their noble Clans, as they killed among my people,
about several other battles with selections of verses by conflicting sides) the version without doubt considerably influence the plot side of the monument.

Altogether in group II we have counted about 400 poetic quotations.

III. A large body of material in Stru is made up of verses and correspondences. It could be conventionally joined under the heading "Poetry and revelation.' This material also has a direct bearing on the subject of our article, but it applies to both groups, as it were: it can be characterized both as an accessory element and as an immediate constituent of the plot of the monument (as historical and other kind of evidence). The serious character is present in this material as poetic passages, where this subject is touched upon, need to be examined along with the mixed (verses and prose) and poetic segments proper of the text, because they form an ideological pattern of the monument.

Taking in the hands swords like lightning, which Will take off enemies' heads and show new glorious deeds.

On their bladed [you see] the likeness of jets' trucks [49].

On the day when these swords are unshielded against human enemies.

Ibn Tellah: 'We replaced two words in the last qua'da, that were in Ibn Ishaq's version, with the following words: al-fajah at the end of the bayt [No. 10] and with al-fajah at the beginning of the bayt [No. 12], because the poet exceeds the Prophet with vain words, may Allah bless and greet him' [50].

The last two works attract special attention. But before we turn to them, we should say a few words about the rules according to which such "twin" works were written. In the "replay" version the rhyme (the overwhelming majority of medieval Arabic poetic works are monosomes), the meter, many motives and individual marked figurative elements of the work to which the "replay" was written were always repeated in the "replay", which in the medieval tradition was called nazqal plural of nazq, literally means "refutations", "this verse entered into a competition" in absence with the poet who initiated the poetic duel. And it is important to note that the contendes in the eyes of the judges (if we exclude the fellow-travelers of each of them) initially had equal rights [51].

In accordance with the last statement Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Tellah, citing nazqal about the battle at Badr, abstract their minds, as it were, from the position of their authors in struggle between Islam and paganism. Thanks to this circumstance, it is from verses, and not from the proscriptive passages of Stru, that the contemporary researchers can often make a bet. But we say he is also a musician (al-sharqi)." No, he is not a musician, we have seen musicians and their magic, but they don't believe how they do, and they don't believe in the magic [53]." So what should we say, O Abu 'Abd Allah?" — I swear to Allah, his speech is sweet, his origin is sound as a palm tree root, his branch is fruitful... and you won't say anything about this, you won't have to consider this. And the most exact words about him would be if you said that he was a magician, who came with words that are magic, with which he separates one man from his father, another from his brother, a third one from his wife, a fourth from his tribe." [54].

The authors of Stru return to this topic several more times, and even scenes against the messenger or judges about him (as in the extract just quoted) are built on whether or not he is a khalif, mujtahid, shii or sahaba [55].

These episodes carry us right into the centre of discussing the problem of general (allegedly critical) attitude of the Qur'an towards poets and poetry, which is given various explanations. For an examination of this issue we need to analyse the role of shii'ir, which is most often seen as a common poet, in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabia.

The name shii'ir is a substantivized participial from the verb tahara, which has the first meaning of 'alma' ("to know"). In the Qur'an this verb is used with the meaning "know intuitively". See, for example:

"They would trick God and the believers, and only themselves they deceive, and they are not aware (and yahuri). ... Truly, they are the workers of corruption but they are not aware (al-yahuri). When it is said to them, 'Believe as you are commanded', they say, 'Shall we believe as fools believe?' Truly, they are the foolish ones, but they do not know (la yusaman) [56]."

Thus, the name shii'ir designates "someone who knows intuitively", which is roughly what can be designated by a concept from Russian culture — veden. Shii' irrigated according to the ideas of pre-Islamic Arabs, to supernatural beings — jinns and qibltam [58], which were seen as his mediators and inspirers in contacting the other world.

The information presented to us examine in greater detail the thesis about distinguishing in Islamic doctrine the nature of inspiration of pre-Islamic and early Islamic shii'ir, on the one hand, and prophetic inspiration on the other. If we jump ahead somewhat, we will say that this analysis is bound to us an understanding of the reasons of the radical reconsideration of shii'ir function and their new status they gained on the Arabian Peninsula after the coming of Islam.

The propagation of Islam in Mecca had raised this problem acutely. Many of Muhammad's contemporaries saw his similarity to khalif (soothsayers) and shii'ir. At first, even Muhammad himself, when the revelations started to come him, got scared that he was becoming a shii'ir or khalif. In the Qur'an there are typical, in this respect, testimonies of "sinner" (the pagans of Mecca): "...for when it was said to them, "There is no god but God", they were ever wanting proof, saying, 'What, shall we forsake our gods for a poet possessed (shii'ir majnaun)?'"

And a firm denial of Muhammad's ability to make verses:

"We have not taught him poetry (shii'ir) if it is not seemly for him" [60].

It is appropriate to give here another quotation from the Qur'an, where just as categorically it is denied that there is any similarity whatsoever between his preaching and the words of shii'ir and khalif:

... it is the speech of a noble Messenger. It is not the speech of a poet (shii'ir) (little do you believe) nor the speech of a soothsayer (khalif) (little do you remember). A sending down from the Lord of All Being" [61].

And, at last, we quote well known ayatul, in which the attitude of the Qur'an strictly to shii'ir is defined:

"And the poets (shi'ura) is the plural from shii'ir— the perverse follow them; hast thou not seen how they wander in every valley which they choose? They do not give up those that believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember God, and help themselves after being wronged" [62].

With precisely the last ayatul in mind, European scholars of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century pointed to the negative attitude of the Qur'an, Muhammad and his followers to shii'ir and poetry on the whole, which was accounted for, in their opinion, by the fact that poetry was the "incarnation of paganism", and couldn't raise discomfort in fear that it might cause interreligion, religious and other clashes again; researchers have also noted that an exception was made only "for poets of Muslim tendency" [63]. These ideas can be very exact today as R. Bachtever correctly observes, the Qur'an virtually contains no prohibition of poetry as such anywhere (and the above given quotations confirm it). The information from hadith and other sources (regardless of the degree of their reliability, in view of their contractions, also do not allow them to be used to demonstrate an aversion of the prophet, his family and his circle to all poetry in general [64]. Indeed, on the other hand, for many believers, who cited authoritative sayings, love for poetry was incompatible with their faith. "It is better to have a stomach full of pus, than poetry" — this was what Muhammad said, according to a hadith [65]. However, on the other hand, hadith put the aphorism into Muhammad's mouth: "Wisdom comes from poetry" [66].

According to hadith, the prophet highly regards and also asks to be read to him verses by poets of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period because they are full of wisdom similar to wisdom of the new religion, and for other reasons [67]. The evidence cited gives a rather contradictory picture. Let us try to examine it. Let us single out the most important things for us from what is said in the Qur'an about shii'ir and verses. It stresses the difference between "words" and "verses" of shii'ir and khalif (1); Muhammad's inability to make verses (shii'ir) and the incomparability of this ability with his status of prophet (2); it is maintained that shii'ir
"say that which they do not do" (3), except for shi'is "that act in accordance with their beliefs," and do righteous deeds, and remember God off" (4).

From the verses listed the clearest are Nos. 1—2 and 4. The idea is that the emphasis on the difference between words of a messenger and words of kabhun and shi'is, according to medieval and contemporary authors, lies in demonstrating that Muhammad and his prophetic word are not identical with anything to do with the prophecies of either of them. The interpretation of the reservation about pious shi'is creates so many problems. An author like Saniye Salmoni commentator of the Koran al-Baydawi (d. between 1284 and 1316), specifically explains that shi'is, "that believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember God off," can also refer to 'Abd Allah b. Rawada, Hazim b. Hisham, Ka'b b. Zuhayr and Ka'b b. Mātī. His commentary al-Baydawi supported with a reference to a hadith, according to which the prophet said, encouraging Hassan b. Thabit, who spoke in support of Muhammad and the Followers of the new dogma: "Read [verses] and the Holy Spirit (rūh al-qulūb) will be with you" (68).

Thesis No. 3: shi'is "say that which they do not" also serves to deny any similarity of Muhammad to them whatever. According to al-Baydawi's commentary, most shi'is verses are full of tales, groundless, false (khudāh) promises, unlikely self-praises and glorification of the unworthy (69).

In another well known commentary of the century it is said that in al-Baydawi's interpretation of shi'is verses, it is not clear when to stop, and tell lies (yakīhbūt) (70). In short, the emphasis of the Thesis No. 3 is in contrasting the false shi'is verses with the truth contained in the words of the prophet.

In the light of sending down the revelation this conclusion receives a negative assessment: shi'is spread falsehood (i.e. conflicting with the truth) information, received from jinn, and so they are reprehensible. The verses of shi'is who broke off with jinn and came to believe in shi'ism (like Hassan b. Thabit), are not false, since they make them with the approval of the "Holy Spirit" itself.

Hadith cited by al-Baydawi recorded a gradual change in the function of shi'is in the first half of the 7th century. It is at this time that they are less and less like vedanas and become more and more like poets. This process also is reflected in the interpretation of the concept of "falsehood" in poetry. In the Islamic period "falsehood" is not perceived as an antithesis of the poetic truth any more, but started to be qualified as artisitic imagination. This radical reinterpretation later allowed Qudūnā b. Ḥarīrāj (d. 948) to formulate the famous principle: "The best poetry is the falsest (akhūdūhā)" (71). This is, that images, imagination, unlike possibility, which has reached a high level and resemble themselves with the traits of the revelation, show the superior poetic mastery of a particular author. Al-Aṣkari (d. after 1005) supports Qudūnā regarding this issue:

"Some philosopher was told: 'So-and-so lies (yakīhbūt) in his verses.' And he answered: 'From a poet beauty of speech is required, but the truth one seeks from prophets.' " (72).

Ibn Hīṣām (d. 1063 or 1071), reviewing the discussion of this problem in the medieval philosophy, insists that:

"Among the orisn of poetry should be considered that falsehood and their beauty, but it is dishonest in people's opinion, in poetry is beautiful." (73)

Thus, we see that in the epoch of Muhammad, preparatory work started for a new understanding of the function of poetry and poet in medieval Islamic society, which lasted several centuries. An important component of this process was a fundamental change in the concept of Arab poetry in the spirit of Islam, which created, one may say, objective grounds for its rehabilitation (R. Bächer's expression). After the completion of this process the shi'is verses, inspired by a jinn, turns into a master poet, the laws of whose trade are determined, in the opinion of Islamic ideologists, in the end, by high Providence.

In the historical and poetological respect the process described can be viewed as acquiring by text in the Arabic "real literature" of 6th—7th centuries, in many ways identified in the beginning of that period with reality itself, a status of an image of reality towards its end (74). At the same time, the author plays an increasingly greater part in the creation of a text, whose "falsehood" is now perceived as a prophetic parody, pseudo-poetry, but as "the truth of his art" (75), as evidence of his ever-growing individual skill in portraying reality.

I.3. Poets with citing of verses about the facts of the life of the prophet that give an idea about the role of poetry in Muslim community, about the correlation of poetry and religious propaganda in the sphere of practice. Here we should note that Muhammad by his opinions and actions, shows: (a) approval and disapproval of particular verses; (b) change of opinion about one or another person because of their verses; (c) request to recite the verses on particular topics; (d) delegating a poet-Muslim to participate in negotiations—contests with poets-pagans; (e) personal participation of the Muslim community in collecting verses and so on — providing irrefutable proof of the significance he attached to poetry in the decisive period of the formation of Islam.

Let us cite an example:

"The Highness' wife, Qatayfa bint al-Harith, the sister of al-Nābi b. Ḥarith, said: "...Oh, Muhammad, oh the best of the noblest mother and father, descended from an ancient clan! What do you say if you, if you pity—a magnificent man often shows mercy even in rage and fury,..."

Or if you took a ramos (and then without fail the most precious would be paid for at what people pay)? Isn't it true that al-Nābi is the closest of kin [to you] among those who you took prisoners, and the worthless, you be not set free among them, if [prisoners] were freed,..." (76).

Ibn Hīṣām said: "They say, and Allah knows better, that, when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, was told these lines, he said: off he had become known to me before his execution, I would certainly pardoned him." (77).

Let us cite another example.

Ibn Iṣāq said: 'And (He the Messenger of Allah) gave 'Abd b. Nābi [several] camel, and the latter was dissatisfied [with his share of the loot] and started to blame the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him. And 'Abd b. Nābi said, blaming the Prophet, may Allah bless and greet him: "it was the loot that I captured thanks to my attack on the horse in the valley."

And thanks to my warning to the people not to sleep, and when they slept, I didn't sleep.

And my loot and the loot of [my horse] 'Ubdūn is divided between [Uyayna and al-Asqa']

And although I had been the protection for my people in the battle, nothing was given to me, and no one protect me.

Nothing except young camels, that were given to me by the number of their hooves.

But neither Ḥatīr, nor Ḥāsid excels my father in assembly.

And I am not lower than either of them, and the one who You illuminate today will not be raised'.

Ibn Hīṣām said: 'Yūnas the Grammarian cited to me (the last bayt differently):

'Still neither Ḥatīr, nor Ḥāsid excels Mirād in assembly.

Ibn Iṣāq said: 'the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, said: Take him away and cut off his tongue by my order. And they gave more to 'Abd b. Mihrān from the loot until he was satisfied. And this was the cutting off of the tongue, executed by the order of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him'" (77).

I.3. Poems about the enemies of Muslims with citations of verses that can be correlated with the topic at hand: (a) pagans' declaration in the presence of the head of Muslim community of the adoption of Islam, that is done in poetic form; (b) praise of the prophet by his former enemies; (c) offensive verses about the prophet and his associates; (d) derogatory nicknames of the prophet; (e) verse derision of the elements of the doctrine that Muhammad supported; (f) bewailing of the worst enemies of Muhammad, who died fighting Muslims and so on.

To this subgroup can be ascribed a considerable number of poetic pieces in 50s. Let us limit ourselves with a few examples.

I.3a:

"Abu Sufyān b. Ḥarith read to him (the Messenger of Allah) his verses about the adoption of Islam and asked forgiveness for this past behavior: "I swear on my life, that on that day, when I will raise the banner so that al-Lat'īn (78) cavalry defeats Muhammad's cav-

I.3b: I will become like a confused night traveler in the pitch darkness; so the time has come for me to be guided and to get on the right track.

And I was put on the right track by the Leader, and by myself, and together with Allah, (I mean I persecuted with all my might [a good deed] for me).

Ibn Iṣāq said: 'They say, that when Abu Sufyan read to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, the words: «...and together with Allah did [a good deed] for me» for the me, who I persecuted with all my might, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, him in the chest and said: «Weren't you the one who persecuted me with all your might»?" (79).

Of great interest are the verses that could be ascribed to the subgroup I.3b. As in the case with nāqīd, we are dealing here with a rather unexpected objectivist approach of the authors of Sīra in citing anti-Islamic verses, which directly contradicts their ideological purpose in the prosaic parts of the monuments.

The "Life of the Prophet" contains frequent mentions of the hostile activities of one of the most dangerous adversaries of Muhammad and the Muslim community as a whole, Abī Jahl. That is why his death in the battle of Badr is described as a great victory of Islam. Let us cite an example from Ibn Iṣāq:...

"The Messenger of Allah! Here is the head of the enemy of Allah! Abī Jahl! The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, exclaimed: 'Has it really hap-

pened? I swear to Allah, he did not die but him — such was the oath of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him. I answered: 'Yes, I swear to Allah, there is no death but Him", then threw the head in front of the Mes-

senger of Allah, may Allah bless and greet him, and praised Allah'" (81).

Abū Jahl is condemned in the Qur'ān too. He is, in the opinion of Muslim commentators, precisely the "sin-
er" which is mentioned in the following āyāt: "Lo, the Tree of Ez-Zakum is the food of the guilty" (82). This makes it all the more surprising to read in the "Life of the Prophet" "mourning" for Abū Jahl, where, according to the tradition of this genre of medieval Arabic poetry, posthumous praise is given to the "enemy of Allah."

"Deer b. Abī Jahlīl b. Fāhīrī said, mourning over Abū Jahl b. Hīṣām: "What happened to the eyes that sleep the night without sleep and watch the stars in dark night?"..." (83) as if speaks of death had got them, but they are not speaks of death, but tears, flowing continuously.

So tell the Quraysh, that the best of their assembly and the noblest of the mortal people, because of making war on battle at Thād a hostage of a narrow well, and this hostage is a man of noble deeds, not low-born and not misery.
You see the debris of [khat] [83] spears, that defended his home, which stuck out of the lacquered wounds in his breast. And the lion that lives in the heart of [high] [84] near the water which flows down the river-bed in the thick of the trees. There are none more violent than he, when in battle spears meet and the cry is heard: «Dismount!», addressed to every man present.

So do not grieve, clan of Al-Mughira, and be firm, the one who grieves over him does not deserve to be blamed. So be firm (in fighting), indeed death is an honour for you, because at the end of life his [Abu Jahl's] death nothing remains that you could be sorry for!

And I said: ‘No sensible person doubts that the wind is favourable [85] to you and that you will gain power [86]’.

As we can see, the author of the “mourning” doesn’t limit himself to expressing his condolences, he also calls for firmness in fighting Muslims and hopes for revenge. Let us cite another example to show that quoting verses like this is not accidental at all.

Ihn Isāqī said: ‘[Abu Jahl] b. Hīgām said, bewailing his brother Abī Jahl: 

“Oḥ, how my soul grieves after the death of ‘Amr [87], but it is that death that will bring back the dead!”

I was told that ‘Amr is the first among all [the noble men] who lie in the well.

If long time has led to this truth so that it is, and you have only confirmed the accuracy of what has been well known for a long time.

I prospered, while you were alive, and now I like a splinter thrown into a stormy torrent.

Before, in the eventide, when he was not near, I felt weak-willed, burdened with heavy cares; and now I pass my evenings in recollections of ‘Amr, and because of them my eyes become dim.” [88]

The second verse, although it is not as hostile towards the victors of the battle of Badr as the first, is still made in the spirit of eulogy on the praise of the memory of the man who in the prosaic part is described by the authors of Sūrā as “the enemy of Allāh”.

As is evident from the examples cited, the poetic elements of the groups II and III are to a considerable extent significant elements of the narration. The poetic component is not restricted to the function of an illustration to the prosaic parts, but often plays an independent role. It not only supplementes, but is also often discordant with the prosaic reports, on which the main burden of the plot in the “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Isāqī— Ibn Hīgām falls.

It should be added that even a fleeting glance at the poetic extracts from these groups II and III, allows us to say that as well as many prosaic elements, they have a high level of fictionalization.

The observations about the change of the function of poetry with the coming of Islam help us to understand how verses at a particular moment increasingly became literature. But their explanatory power goes beyond that. They support our opinion, a starting point for understanding the important elements of the process of fictionalization not only of poetic material in Sūrā, but also of the whole work. It appears that in this light the facts cited in the article give grounds to consider the “Life of the Prophet” by Ibn Isāqī— Ibn Hīgām a work where also a considerable number of elements (even though they don’t constitute a systematic whole) have features peculiar to the component of literature. At the same time, the gradual evolution of the concept of “falsehood” within the limits of the earlier Muslim culture could give Ibn Isāqī’s contemporaries and nearest descendants grounds to give the expression kalījī taliṣāmī fidākī not only — and even not so much — the meaning “a great liar”, as “a great inventor”, and even “great dreamer”, since they understood that the daring imagination and bright innovation of its author were precisely what gave rise to the creation of a remarkable work of medieval Arabic literature.

Notes


2. The element “stratéj” is in Sūrā by Ibn Isāqī— Ibn Hīgām — despite all the importance of their role — do not give grounds to define this work as a monument of hagiography. Since the 9th century, stories about “miracles” connected with the life of the messenger, began to be gathered in works of a special genre, stră, a Śâhīr or imārī-umul-munna. The most well known works of this genre belong to ‘Abd-al-Jabār al-Hamadani (d. 1025), Abūd b. Husayn al-Bayhaqi (d. 1066), Abī Nā‘um al-Iskandari (d. 1038) and al-Mawardi (d. 1058) (for more details see: Kister, op. cit.).


26. An expressive version is in the Egyptian edition: instead of “yagūlsabna kařaf šaẖ’a” (lit.: “they killed those among us who they wanted to”) “yagūlsabna kařaf šaẖ’a” (lit.: “they ruled us over as they wanted”) (Al-Stra al-Nahawiyah, vii, p. 647).

27. A traditional element of a description of a character's appearance, a “bright (and even ‘radiant’) face”, is evidence of his noblesse. The character can also be dark-skinned; in the Medina army, as is well known, there were many dark-skinned freedmen.

28. Das Leben Muhammad’s, pp. 466—1.

29. Ibid., p. 729.

30. Ibid., p. 1016.

31. Ibid., p. 430.

32. Ibid., pp. 369. Here and subsequently all the quotations from the Qur’ān are in the translation by A. J. Arberry.

33. Das Leben Muhammad’s, p. 337.

34. Ibid., pp. 353—5.

35. Ibid., pp. 516—8, 521, 524, 526—7, 529, 530.

36. Ibid., pp. 59—60.

37. 937.

38. 939.

39. Ibid., p. 152.


41. Das Leben Muhammad’s, p. 317.

42. Ibid., p. 73.

43. Ibid., pp. 56—7.
44. Ibid., pp. 320—1. Here an important circumstance should be noted which was disregarded by both medieval commentators and contemporary editors, researchers and translators of Sura. Authoritative sources (for example, the collection of hadith "Sahih" by al-Bukhari) attribute this ra'isate to Muhammad himself (for more details see: Kudelin, "Islamiska sverige", p. 248). There are two possible interpretations of this case: (i) al-Walid b. al-Walid quotes a well-known verse by the prophet, and the authors of Sura do not consider it necessary — on account of it being well known — to comment on this circumstance; (ii) or they simply didn't know about this and the verse acquired a second author's attribution, as it were.

45. Das Leben Mohammed's, p. 562. According to al-Suhayli and the "Dictionary of the Arabs", these ra'is verses belong to Hind bint Ta'far b. Bayad'a al-lydidiyya, who sang in the war against Persians, inspiring lyd, and Hind bint 'Ubu cited him as an example (Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya, iii, p. 68, n. 4).

46. We give the translation according to the Cairo edition: jimalu (lit.: "and they died") (ibid., p. 9). Winterfeldt has: fsahdhali ("and they betrayed") (Das Leben Mohammed's, p. 516).

47. jismu — shyamli, "the name of the angels who fell from Heaven and become an enemy of Allah" (for more details see: Pietrowski, "Islam, Enklopediegeschichte der Isla"m, pp. 81—2. "White camels" are particularly valuable camels (because of their unusual colour). Jiburi is "the name of the angel, closest to Allah, the main mediator between Him and the prophets, Muhammad in particular" for more details see: ibid., Jiburi, ibid., p. 64—5.

48. A direct echo of the third part of the preceding chapter.

49. A conventional descriptive motive: the patterns on the sword's blade is likened to ants' tracks.

50. Das Leben Mohammed's, pp. 516—7.

51. For more details about the tradition of writing "answerers" see: Kudelin, "K probleme socinodnienia tradiciono’nogi i originalnego w sredniowiekowej piśmiennictwie (o podrzucanej w klasycznych literackich Bl哈nego i Srednego Wschoda)" ("On the problem of correlation of the traditional and the original in medieval poetics (about "imitation" in classical literature of the Near and the Middle East)", Russ.;—Vestok—Zeap (Moscow, 1998), pp. 256—64.

52. Relying on Ibn Hajar's observation, contemporary researchers propose to correct the original Arabic text. In the first case the English translator Guillaume, and after him also the French translator Badawi propose to read instead of lqr al-fqir ("the Most Glorious", literally "possessor of glory"), which doesn't agree with the context of the work lqr al-fqir ("libertine") (Ibn Hajar, La vie du prophète Mohammed...). In the second case A. Badawi proposes instead of Imr ("merek") — which in the original applies to Muhammad and doesn't agree with the context — to read Imr ("merek") (ibid., p. 394).

53. According to the commentary to the Cairo edition (Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya, i, p. 270): an allusion to a wizar who knots a rope, and then blows on it; compare with the indication of sorcery in the Qur'an: "...from the evil of the women who blow on knots..." (113—4).

54. Das Leben Mohammed's, p. 171.

55. See, for example: ibid., pp. 183, 186, etc.

56. 2, 8, 11—13.


58. About the correspondence of shyamun and jansu for more details see: Pietrowski, "Islam, Enklopediegeschichte der Isla"m, pp. 66; idem, "Shayatin", ibid., p. 289.

59. 37—34—35.

60. 36—69.

61. 69—40—43.

62. 26—224—228.

63. Krymski, ArabskiIA literatura w echerkah i obruzyaki (Arabic Literature in Studies and Examples) (Moscow, 1911), i, pp. 32—3.


65. Al-Baghdadi, Al-Suhlu (Cairo, 1887), iv, p. 47.

66. Ibid., p. 46.

67. Ibid. For more details see: Bischeder, op. cit., p. 55, n. 7.

68. Al-Baydawi, Atrak al-tarif wa-qarar al-a'sita (Cairo, 1926), p. 528. Gabriel (Jibril) is meant by "the Holy Spirit", according to Muslim commentators (See: Pietrowski, "Jibril", Islam, Enklopediegeschichte der Isla"m, pp. 64—5). In the sources the bodhis is told in different versions (in one of them Jibril is openly mentioned). See: Al-Baghdadi, op. cit., p. 47; Abi al-Faraj al-Ishakhi, Krab al-aghhal (Cairo, 1925—1974), iv, p. 137, 143.


71. Qudamun, "J. Ba far, Naq al-al'hir" (Cairo, 1963), p. 65.


73. Ibn Rusud, Al- 'Umda f il-mu'tafrin al-al'hir (Beirut, 1972), i, p. 22.


76. Das Leben Mohammed's, p. 539.

77. Ibid., p. 881—2.
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