

## Notes

1. For plates 1–3 and figs. 1–32 see the first part of the article, published in *Manuscripta Orientalia* XIV/1 (2008), pp. 32–56.
2. A. Shikhsaidov, pers. comm., 19/03/2008.
3. Christie's, *Islamic and Indian Works of Art* (Catalogue of a sale on 18 October 2002 (London, 2002) p. 89.
4. With thanks to V. Nersessian for reading these stamps.
5. 20 Shawwāl AH 1286 fell on Sunday 23 January AD 1870; as the weekday is the most significant indicator of a Muslim date (cf. I. Proudfoot, *Old Muslim Calendars of Southeast Asia* (Leiden, 2006), p. 74) and adjustment should be made accordingly, therefore Tuesday 20 Shawwāl 1286 is equivalent to Tuesday 25 January 1870.
6. A. Shikhsaidov, pers. comm., 19/03/2008.
7. Sotheby's, *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures* (Catalogue of a sale on 24 April 1996) (London, 1996), lot 19.
8. Published in *The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia*, ed. by P. K. Fong (Kuala Lumpur, 2002), p. 186; *The Message and the Monsoon: Islamic Art of Southeast Asia*, ed. by L. Guise (Kuala Lumpur, 2005), pp. 68–9; *Al-Qur'ān: the Sacred Art of Revelation*, ed. by L. de Guise (Kuala Lumpur, 2006), pp. 258–9.
9. With grateful thanks to Michael Laffan for help with the translation.
10. The British Library acquired this Dāghistāni Qur'ān manuscript as this article went to press.

## Illustrations

- Fig. 33.** Qur'ān A 5. Paper, 13.7×8.7 cm, 306 ff. Kota Batu, 1845. Christie's, first page. Courtesy of Christie's.
- Fig. 34.** Qur'ān B 2, beginning of *sūra* "al-Baqara". Paper, 43×33 cm, 499 ff. 1777/8. The British Library, BL Or. 16127, ff. 3v–4r. Courtesy of the Library.
- Fig. 35.** The same MS, colophon copied by Murād. F. 497r.
- Fig. 36.** Three examples of stylised marginal 'ayn in red ink, from left to right: a) Qur'ān B 6. Paper, 36×22 cm, 432 ff. 1888. the British Library, BL Or. 15605. Courtesy of the Library; b) Qur'ān B 5. Paper, 34.5×21 cm, 469 ff. 1882. Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, IAMM 2001.1.177. Courtesy of the Museum; c) Qur'ān A 3. Paper, 35×22 cm, 547 ff. Philippines (?), 1821. The British Library, BL Or. 16058, ff. 274v–275r. Courtesy of the Library.
- Fig. 37.** Qur'ān B 4. Paper, 35×21 cm, unfoliated. 1870/1. The Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti, Malaysia, MN JMA.PDN.655.02.A1.45. Courtesy of the Museum.
- Fig. 38.** Qur'ān B 8, beginning of *sūra* "Maryam". Paper, 39.5×30 cm, 502 ff. 19th c. The British Library, BL Or. 16033, ff. 253v–254r. Courtesy of the Library.
- Fig. 39.** Qur'ān B 9, beginning of *sūra* "Maryam". Paper, 35.5×21 cm, 308 ff. 18 Sha'bān 1299 / 5 July 1882). The British Library, BL Or. 16595, ff. 1v–2r. Courtesy of the Library.

## TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

A. Kudelin

ARABIC LITERATURE: POETICS AND STYLISTICS. IX:  
ON INTERPRETING THE ELEMENTS OF "MIRACULOUS"  
IN "LIFE OF THE PROPHET" BY IBN ISHĀQ — IBN HISHĀM

"Life of the Prophet" (*al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*) by the two authors Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) and Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833 or 213/828) is well known in the world scholarship and until recently it has been studied mainly as a historical source. However such approach significantly impoverishes interpretation of this monument that combines a number of heterogeneous elements. For example, its prosaic elements are represented by historical records and stories (*akhabār*), *ahādīth*, quotations from the Qur'ān, narratives with the so called *asbāb al-nuzūl* ("the occasions of the revelation" of a particular *āya* or *sūra*), interpretations or exegesis of *sūras* and *āyāt* (*tafsīr*), miraculous events and appearances, etc [1]. Among the poetic pieces of different length and purpose there are verses that constitute the plot of the narration itself and verses that serve as examples in explaining the meaning of a rare word, toponym, etc [2].

The present article is aimed at describing narration elements related to miraculous events and appearances in *Sīra*. It seems reasonable to open the detail analysis of such elements with some general remarks.

First of all a few words should be told about the manner, in which the above mentioned heterogeneous elements are combined in *Sīra*. Even after a rapid glance one can assert that *Sīra* is neither an example of the so-called *enfilade* combination of various genres within a single text [3], nor a conglomerate, i. e., a random combination of components from the pieces of various genres. *Sīra* presents a piece of systematically structured heterogeneous elements combined according to certain integrated principles. One of these principles has been mentioned in previous works. It is called the principle of belletrisation (fictionalization) according to which the components of *Sīra* are organized and combined [4]. We believe that within the context of the present article this principle is worth mentioning as it allows us to combine two different approaches to the text under study — historiographical and hagiographical.

Leaving out the discussion of fundamental differences between historiography and hagiography let us indicate two major distinctions between them (after A. Ia. Gurevich). Historical narration follows the chronological order of events, while in hagiographical literature it is rare that the dates of birth and death of saints as well as other dates are pointed, since he "exists beyond time belonging to the world of eternal truth and virtue". The second distinction is related to different views on causality of the events described. As a rule medieval historians were looking for "rational causes of the events and chronological order itself presupposed such explanation". On the contrary a hagiographical narration on miraculous events and deeds of a saint was devoid of a causal structure. Due to the fact that a saint acted in accordance with the will of God, the miracles that he performed were acasual, i. e., they were breaking the earthly causality [5].

However it is worth noticing that in *Sīra*, as well as in many other medieval texts, historiographical and hagiographical components are closely related to each other creating a unique character of the record. A story about a real historical event often gradually transforms into the description of a miracle. In its turn a description of miraculous events can precede an accurate and detail documentation of a certain episode.

Let us consider "Life of the Prophet" by Ibn Ishāq — Ibn Hishām. In the chapter describing the battle at Badr (2/624), where the Muslims won the first significant victory over the pagans of Makka, a special paragraph contains "eye witnesses' accounts" of the angels fighting on the side of the people from Madina. The elements of miraculous are so skilfully included into authentic documentation of the battle progress that they acquire a historical character.

1. One "pagan" told: "And my cousin and I went to the mountain top, where the whole field of Badr was spread before the eyes. We were polytheists then. We waited for

the wheel of war to turn to somebody's side in order to plunder with the winner. And while we were standing there, a cloud approached us and we heard a horse neigh. I heard a voice that exclaimed, 'Go, Ḥayzūm!' My cousin's heart burst and he fell dead. I was struck too, but I managed to control my fear.

Fear overcame the polytheists as they immediately realized that the horse called Ḥayzūm could take orders only from its owner — archangel Jabrā'il, who arrived to Badr to help the Muslims.

2. Abu Usayd Malik b. Rabī'a, from *anṣār*, told already after he got blind: "If I were at Badr and if I could see, I would show you the gorge where the angels came from. I had neither doubts, nor hesitations about who they were".

3. Abu Dāwūd al-Māzinī from Madina who took part in the battle at Badr told: "I followed one polytheist in order to strike a blow. Suddenly, even before my sword touched him, his head fell off his shoulders. I realized that somebody else killed him".

4. Finally, 'Alī b. Abī Tālib is told to have witnessed the following: "...a white turban lowered to the back was a sign of angels on the day of Badr. Only Jabrā'il had a yellow turban" [6].

Thus, apart from authentic information used by contemporary historians *Sīra* includes other elements characteristic of hagiographical texts. Both types of information become integral within one mostly belletrized narration. Without contradicting true historical events, miraculous actions extol them to everlasting acts of sacred history. Let's give some more examples.

It is natural that a significant part of miraculous elements in *Sīra* is directly related to the Muslim community leader. Let us illustrate it with several examples from the chapter "The great battle at Badr".

The first two episodes tell about a god-given miraculous power of the Prophet of Islam to learn those things about past and future that are hidden from the men of mould.

The first episode describes conversion to Islam of Muḥammad's vigorous critic 'Umayr b. Wahb, namely, the miraculous circumstances under which the latter decided to become Muslim.

The son of 'Umayr b. Wahb was taken prisoner by Muslims in the battle at Badr. Soon after the battle he told the following in a conversation with another Meccan Ṣafwān b. Umayya:

If it weren't for the debt that I can't pay back, and if it weren't for the children that I'm afraid would die without me, I swear to Allāh that I would go and kill Muḥammad. I even have a reason to do it — my son is held captive there. Ṣafwān answered him: "I take your debt and I will pay it for you. You children will be like my own children. I will take care of them and they will have everything that I have".

On this condition 'Umayr agreed to go to Madina and the companions decided to keep their arrangement in secret.

In Madina an armed and dangerous "enemy of Allāh" seeking a meeting with the Prophet rose suspicion of the Muslims, but Muḥammad ordered to let 'Umayr approach him. Then they had a dialogue that we find reasonable to quote in full here.

Then the messenger of Allāh, may the prayers and peace of God be upon him, asked: "Why are you here, 'Umayr?"

— I came for one captive that you hold. I hope you are treating him well.

— Why do you have a sword on your neck?

— Let Allāh curse all the swords. Have they saved us from anything?

— Be honest and tell why you have come?

— Only for reasons that I have just told you.

— Oh, no! You were sitting with Ṣafwān b. Umayya... and you were thinking of the Qurayshits thrown into the well. At that moment you told: "If it weren't for my money and my children, I would go and kill Muḥammad". Then Ṣafwān took upon himself your debts and your children on condition that you would kill me, but Allāh has prevented you from that.

On hearing that 'Umayr exclaimed: "I witness that you are Allāh's messenger. Messenger of Allāh, we thought that the word from heaven that you told us and the revelations that came to you were lie, however, during that conversation there were only two of us — Ṣafwān and I. I swear to Allāh, only Allāh could tell you what we were talking about. Praise be to Allāh, who set me on the path of righteousness by converting to Islam and showed me the witness of truth" [7].

In the second episode the Prophet of Islam can see visions, thus, showing a miraculous ability to foresee actions of people in future. Suhayl b. 'Amr, who had caused a lot of troubles to the Muslims before, was among the imprisoned in the battle at Badr. The winners agreed to keep his life because of a rich ransom, but to avoid possible troubles in future 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb made the following proposal to the Prophet:

Messenger of Allāh! Let me pull out two front teeth of Suhayl b. 'Amr. His tongue will be falling out and he will never be able to talk against you at the meetings. And Muḥammad answered: "I will not maim him, otherwise Allāh will maim me, although I am his Prophet".

*Sīra* gives another variant of Muḥammad's answer: "What if he takes an honourable position? Don't defame him" [8].

The Prophet of Islam disagrees with his closest companion knowing that Suhayl is under high protection for the pieties that will be accomplished by him in future. Indeed, in the end of "Life" after the description of Muḥammad's death Suhayl stood up against "polytheists" being converted to Islam by that time [9].

A miraculous ability to know things that are hidden from ordinary people is one of the elements of Muḥammad's hagiographical portrait. The third episode from chapter "The great battle at Badr" describing the Prophet's miraculous deed contributes to this portrait.

This deed demonstrates to the true believers the ability of the Prophet to perform miracles: by the will of Allāh the Prophet turns a wooden pole in the hands of a valiant Muslim soldier into a smashing sword.

'Ukkāsha b. Miḥṣan b. Ḥurthān al-Asadī... was fighting with his sword till it broke in his hand at the battle of Badr. 'Ukkāsha came to Allāh's messenger, may the prayers and peace of God be upon him, and the Prophet gave him a wooden pole and said: "Fight with this, 'Ukkāsha!" He took it from the hands of Allāh's messenger, may the prayers and peace of God be upon him, shook it and it turned into a long, heavy and glaring sword in his hand. 'Ukkāsha was fighting with it till the Almighty granted Muslims with victory..." [10].

Other chapters of *Sīra* also include descriptions of miracles performed by the Prophet. Let us mention just several examples. In the course of a battle known as "The Battle of the Trench" (5/627) the Muslims dug a trench 6 km long in quite a short time period to protect Madina from the Meccans. When digging, the Muslims dashed against a large rock that could not be cut into pieces. The Prophet of Islam said a prayer to Allāh and poured a bucket of water onto the rock turning it into sand dunes. During those days in the presence of Muḥammad a handful of dates and, then, a roasted lamb multiply into an abundant meal helping to restore many Muslims exhausted after long hours of digging [11].

At least twice during war campaigns (Ḥudaybiyya 6/628, Tabūk, 9/630) the Prophet provides soldiers with water in a miraculous way according to *Sīra* [12].

Without any doubts miracles in "Life of the Prophet" aimed at glorifying Islam and actions of the Muslim community leader attributing to them special meaning of sacred historical events. At the same time inquisitive minds called for sophisticated theoretical conceptions of a prophetic miracle in view of interpreting these episodes as acts of Divine Providence

It is worth mentioning that medieval Muslim scholars had no uniform concept of miracle. Without openly disputing traditionally accepted miracles performed by Muḥammad one group of theologians nevertheless unambiguously declared that Muḥammad performed no miracles at Allāh's will, the only miracle related to him being the Qur'ān. Another group of scientists developed theoretical grounds to support an opposite point of view. Beginning with the 5/11th century scholars of this group started to combine stories about miracles in the Prophet's life into narratives of hagiographical genre (*dalā'il, a'lām* or *amārāt al-nubuwwa*, literally meaning: "signs, indications of Prophecy").

Overview of the first group position can be found in the book "Perfection in Qur'ānic Sciences" by a renowned and prolific scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (849—911 / 1445—1505) [13].

Al-Suyūfī gives the following definition to a miracle:

"Know, that a miracle (*mu'jiza*) is something raising above the limits of ordinary (*amrun ḥārikun li al-'āda*) containing a challenge, but impossible to compete with

(*sālimun 'an al-mu'āraḍa*). It can be perceived with senses or with mind" [14].

The scholar refers to the following *ḥadīth*:

The Prophet, may the prayers and peace of God be upon him, told: "Each Prophet got something corresponding to him that people believed in. I came with a revelation that Allāh sent to me and I hope that I will have more followers than other prophets" [15].

Then, two possible interpretations of this *ḥadīth* are discussed:

They said that this phrase meant the following: "Miraculous deeds of other prophets did not outlive their time and only the contemporaries eye-witnessed them. The miracle of the Qur'ān will last till the Resurrection Day. The Qur'ān style, eloquence and its message about the sacred go far beyond the limits of the ordinary..." They also said: "The thing is that obvious miracles of the past were perceived with senses. One could see them with the eyes... Miracles of the Qur'ān can be perceived with spiritual vision... That is why it will have more followers, as what is seen with the eyes will not outlive the observers, while what is seen with mind vision is open to anybody, who will come after the first witnesses, whenever it happens" [16].

Thus, according to al-Suyūfī a miracle as "something raising above the limits of ordinary" is characteristic of all prophets. However, the miracle of Muḥammad is "perceived with mind" and not "with senses" as is the case with other prophets. That is why it "will live till the Day of Resurrection" and will attract more followers than other prophetic miracles.

In the end of his theoretical conception al-Suyūfī argues that the scripture sent to the Prophet of Islam is already a sufficient sign that makes further miracles unnecessary:

And the Almighty said: "They say, 'Why have signs (*āyāt*) not been sent down upon him from his Lord?' Say: 'The signs (*āyāt*) are only with God, and I am only a plain warner. What, is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down upon thee the Book that is recited to them?'" (29:49—50). By these words He proclaimed that the Scripture belongs to His signs, that the testimony of the Scripture is all-sufficient and that it substitutes the miracles and signs of other prophets [17].

In his work al-Suyūfī summed up findings of the relevant Muslim research of a long time period. Many of the ideas had been expressed long before him, which he repeatedly mentions in the "Perfection in Qur'ānic Sciences". Divergence in interpretation of certain provisions makes no essential difference for us. Most important is that the followers of this viewpoint build a certain hierarchy of prophets with their miracles and placing Muḥammad on top of it, one way or another they recognize the Qur'ān as the main, if not the only miracle of the Prophet of Islam.

Let us consider the position of their opponents now. The most famous works about the miracles performed by the Prophet belong to 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (325—936/1025), Abū Nua'ym al-Iṣfahānī (336—430/948—1038), al-Māwardī (364—450/974—1058) and Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (384—458/994—1066). In works of Aḥmad b. Taymiyya (661—728/1263—1328) some essential provisions of the second group viewpoint are generalized.

Taking into account that in the course of time this approach underwent many changes we will mention only the landmarks of its formation.

In the work *A'lām al-nubuwwa* ("Indications of Prophecy") by a renowned Shāfi'ī faqīh al-Māwardī [18] we find a description of two groups of miracles: the first includes only the Qur'ān, the second contains other miracles performed by Muḥammad at Allāh's will.

Al-Māwardī characterizes the Qur'ān as the first miracle (*mu'jiza*), with the help of which the Allāh called Muḥammad to prophecy. Unique characteristics of Qur'ān (inimitableness) single Muḥammad out among other messengers making the Qur'ān the most evident of all miracles (*āyāt*) of the Almighty.

Then, al-Māwardī develops his idea. Miracles performed by any messenger totally corresponded to the idea of miracle in people's minds at that time. Being sent with a mission in the epoch of thaumaturgy dominance, Mūsā put all magicians to shame with his miracle of dividing the Red Sea and turning his staff into a snake. 'Īsā was sent in the epoch of medicine dominance and by curing incurable patients and resurrection of the dead he amazed all doctors. When in the epoch of eloquence Muḥammad was granted the Qur'ān, neither pompous orators, nor poets could compete with him.

Concluding remarks of al-Māwardī are rather close to those of al-Suyūfī: the miracle of Qur'ān will be more enduring and will find more followers than the eye-witnessed miracles that stayed in the past. Having a greater persuasive power the Qur'ān takes the first place among other miracles [19].

However, as the author of "Indications of Prophecy" unfolds his viewpoint, it significantly departs from that of theologians making a hierarchy of miracles "perceived with senses and with mind". After considering indications of the Qur'ān inimitableness [20] al-Māwardī turns to detail enumeration of actions and events related to Muḥammad. Here we find already mentioned events during preparation to "The Battle of the Trench" with a reference to al-Bukhārī ((194—256/810—870) one of the most renowned *sunni* *ḥadīth* collectors), namely, getting over an obstacle in the form of a rock, multiplying small quantities of food for as many as 600 or 800 diggers. Al-Māwardī noted that the latter "could be compared to 'Īsā's miracle with food" [21]. We also find mentioning other miraculous events like finding water in the desert. The author of "Indications of Prophecy" points out again that Muḥammad's miraculous actions here resemble those of Mūsā [22].

Al-Māwardī also compares Muḥammad to Mūsā in the story about a miracle that took place during the campaign to conquer the oasis of Khaybar (7/628). Accord-

ing to 'Alī b. Abī Tālib's witness that underlies the story, in a critical moment the Muslims found themselves in front of a *wādī* with turbulent torrents pulling out trees with their roots and shaking the mountains. The Muslims measured the depth of the river that equalled 14 man's heights. The Prophet prayed and told: "Go in the name of Allāh". The Muslim soldiers with horses and camels crossed the *wādī* and won the battle. Al-Māwardī finds this event similar to Mūsā's division of the sea [23].

Let us mention two more cases, where al-Māwardī insists on resemblance between Muḥammad and 'Īsā. In the first case the Prophet of Islam rose a girl from the dead, in the second — cured a leper [24].

Giving an account of Muḥammad's miracles, the author of "Indications of Prophecy" repeatedly emphasizes that such actions can be performed at the will of Allāh only by a prophet. Particularly, he mentions that once people came to Muḥammad complaining about poor water and the Prophet of Islam made it good for drinking. When they turned with the same request to a false prophet Musaylima, the source immediately filled with bitter water resembling ass's urine. In another case a woman brought to the Prophet a boy who was losing his hair. Muḥammad put his hand on the boy's head and healthy hair started to grow there. Musaylima tried to do the same thing, but the boy, whose head he touched, turned bold [25].

The above mentioned examples allow us to make an important conclusion. In relation to the Qur'ān al-Māwardī contraposes Muḥammad to the previous prophets emphasizing that the miracle of the Muslim Sacred Scripture is preferred to short-lived miracles of Mūsā and 'Īsā. However, in the stories about miraculous actions performed by the Prophet of Islam the author of "Indications of Prophecy" singles out in every possible way their similarity to miracles of Mūsā and 'Īsā. Al-Māwardī uses a new context to do justice to the eye-witnessed short-lived miracle. In other words, Muḥammad is not different from Mūsā and 'Īsā being neither inferior nor superior to those prophets.

Examination of all Muḥammad's miracles recorded by the tradition clearly showed an antinomy (equality — inequality) in the hierarchy of prophets and their miracles by al-Māwardī. The defects of al-Māwardī's approach and inconsistent juxtaposition of Mūsā and 'Īsā to Muḥammad, all the three figures being prophets of the so-called Abrahamic monotheism [26], were eliminated in the work *Kitāb al-Nubuwwat* ("The Book of Prophecies") by a renowned Ḥanbalī scholar Aḥmad b. Taymiyya [27]. Without claiming to give an exhaustive analysis of this significant and multiple-aspect composition, we will briefly characterize it in relation to the present research.

First of all Ibn Taymiyya tries to give a definition to the notion of "miracle" stating that "a prophetic miracle should raise above the limits of the ordinary in the sense that it is an extraordinary event for common people". However, according to Ibn Taymiyya, it would be wrong to see a miracle in any extraordinary phenomenon. Soothsayers (*kāhins*), magicians, doctors, astrologists, theologians, and grammarians know and perform things

that are more than ordinary practices. For instance, people will be amazed at an astrologer predicting the time of solar or lunar eclipse as they do not possess the same knowledge, but still there is no prophetic miracle in this event. In the same way monumental work "The Book" by a great grammarian Sībawayhi (2th/8th century), Hippocrates' knowledge in medicine, erudition of a renowned Muslim scholar surpassing the abilities of common people, will not indicate their prophecy. Here we are talking only about high degree of professionalism in a certain field of human activity that can be attained by other people with the same kind of professional training. In contrast to the abovementioned examples one of the main characteristics of prophetic miracle is that "all humankind apart from prophets" can not "compete" with it.

Asserting that miracles can be performed and repeated only by prophets, Ibn Taymiyya draws another clear distinction between prophetic miracles and magic actions of false prophets and magicians. Magic of the latter only has an appearance of a miracle. On the contrary, miracles of prophets and messengers have little to do with magic despite speculations of their detractors [28].

Then, Ibn Taymiyya compares miracles performed by the prophets of Abrahamic monotheism. We realize that in certain respects al-Māwardī places the Qur'ān higher than Mūsā and 'Īsā's miracles. The author of "The Book of Prophecies" assumes a different position that allows him to overcome the weak point of al-Māwardī antinomian conception that claimed the prophets to be simultaneously equal and non-equal in relation to the performed miracles.

Ibn Taymiyya takes the following statement as an initial point in his conception: "Miracle of any of the prophets is a miracle for all prophets". In other words, if a prophet performed a miracle at Allāh's will, then other prophets (here we speak only about the prophets of Abrahamic monotheism) are allowed to perform a similar miracle. For instance, a miracle of resurrection was a distinctive feature of the prophets before Muḥammad as well as of the prophetic mission of Muḥammad himself [29]. In an analogous way Ibn Taymiyya turns to the discussion of miraculous inimitableness of the Qur'ān from the retrospective viewpoint of his conception of prophetic miracle.

The Qur'ān as a sacred scripture is indeed inimitable in many respects and any attempt to imitate it is condemned to failure. However, this statement refers to ordinary people and ordinary texts. It is inconsistent in

relation to the prophets of Abrahamic monotheism that are also called "prophets of the Scripture" [30]. Being Sacred Scriptures the Tawrāt, the Injīl and the Zabūr are also unique, but this circumstance cannot impair the Muslims, since it is evident that the prophets of Abrahamic monotheism can be equally involved and actually were involved in performing miracles including that of the Sacred Scripture. According to Ibn Taymiyya the Tawrāt, the Injīl and the Zabūr constitute a miracle from the viewpoint of sacred information they contain. The miraculous status of these scriptures as compared to the Qur'ān can be questioned in terms of *naẓm*, i. e., certain features of language constructions used. However, even in this case before making such conclusion about the Tawrāt, for example, one should consult with the connoisseurs of Hebrew (*ahl al-lughā al-'ibrāniyya*) and conduct considerable research. In other respects the abovementioned scriptures of the prophets without any doubt present a miracle. To fully convince his potential opponents Ibn Taymiyya brings forward the last argument that hardly any Muslim would dare to call in question. These scriptures constitute a miracle already for the reason that at the will of the Almighty they predict Muḥammad's prophecy long before he started to perform his mission: "miracles performed by Mūsā, 'Īsā and others actually indicate Muḥammad's prophecy as they help other prophets to notify Muḥammad of his prophecy".

Final discussion leads Ibn Taymiyya to an important conclusion that preferences make no sense, when we consider miracles performed by prophets of Abrahamic monotheism or "prophets of the Scripture". The author of "The Book of Prophecies" sums up his arguments in the following statement:

Our purpose here is not to show preference to one prophets among others (*tafḍīl ba'd al-anbiyā' 'alā ba'd*), but to emphasize that prophets differ from other people by a unique ability to perform miracles, which serves as an evidence of their prophecy for reasonable people [31].

Ibn Taymiyya was probably the most important figure in the second group of theologians, who in the course of time created a theoretically valid and consistent Islamic conception of prophetic miracle. In our opinion, it is in the light of this conception that for a long time educated Muslims have been interpreting numerous miraculous elements in "Life of the Prophet" by Ibn Ishāq — Ibn Hishām.

## Notes

1. See more in: A. B. Kudelin, "Arabic literature: poetics and Stylistics. VII: "Life of the Prophet" by Ibn Ishāq—Ibn Hishām as a monument of Medieval Arabic literature. Attempt at a literary analysis", *Manuscripta Orientalia* XII/2 (2006), pp. 36—49.

2. See more in: idem, "O poëticheskom komponente v 'Zhizneopisanii Proroka' Ibn Ishaka — Ibn Khishama" ("On poetic components in 'The Life of The Prophet' by Ibn Ishāq — Ibn Hishām"), *Pis'mennye pamiatniki Vostoka* II (V) (2006), pp. 178—89.

3. D. S. Likhachëv introduces this term defining composition of a significant number of works in ancient Russian literature:

Very often the writings were connected with each other like an enfilade of rooms... Every piece of writing belonged to a larger ensemble being complete in its own way... Chronicles, chronographs, paterikons, menologies, palaea, and even some collections of indefinite content are written in an enfilade manner.

- (D. S. Likhachëv, *Poëtika drevnerusskoï literatury* (Poetics of Ancient Russian Literature) (Moscow, 1979), pp. 253—4).
4. See more in: Kudelin, (“The Life of the Prophet’ Ibn Ishāq — Ibn Hishām: on characteristics of the basic components”), *Chetvërtaiia mezhdunarodnaia nauchania konferentsiia “Iazyk, kul’tura, obshchestvo”. Plenarnye doklady* (Moscow, 2007), pp. 112—33.
5. See more in: A. Ia. Gurevich, *Problemy srednevekovoi narodnoi kul’tury* (Problems of Medieval Folk Culture) (Moscow, 1981), pp. 42—3.
6. *Das Leben Muhammed's nach Muhammed Ibn Ishāk bearbeitet von Abd el-Malik Ibn Hishām*, herausgegeben von F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858—1860), i, SS. 449—50. Translated from Arabic by A. B. Kudelin and D. V. Frolov.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 471—4. Translated from Arabic by A. B. Kudelin and D. V. Frolov.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 462—3. Translated from Arabic by A. B. Kudelin and D. V. Frolov.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 1022.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 452. Translated from Arabic by A. B. Kudelin and D. V. Frolov. ‘Ukkāsha (d. 11/633) — a commander who took part in campaigns and battles with Muḥammad.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 671—2.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 742, 904.
13. See more in: E. Geoffroy, “Al-Suyūfī”, *EI*; introduction by D. V. Frolov, *As-Suiuti Djalal ad-Din, “Sovershenstvo v koranicheskikh naukakh”. Vypusk I: uchenie o tolkovanii Korana* (Al-Suyūfī Jalāl al-Dīn, “Perfection in Qur’ānic Sciences”. Issue I: Doctrine of the Qur’ān Exegesis) (Moscow, 2000), pp. 7—24.
14. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Al-itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Perfection in Qur’ānic Sciences) (Al-Qāhira, 1978), ii, p. 148. Herein after the quotes from al-Suyūfī are given following the Russian translation by D. V. Frolov from: *As-Suiuti Djalal ad-Din, “Sovershenstvo”. Vypusk V: uchenie o nepodrazhaemosti Korana* (Al-Suyūfī Jalāl al-Dīn, “Perfection”. Issue V: Doctrine on Inimitableness of the Qur’ān) (Moscow, 2006), p. 15.
15. Al-Suyūfī, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 149; Frolov, *As-Suiuti Djalal ad-Din, “Sovershenstvo”. Vypusk V*, p. 15.
16. Al-Suyūfī, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 149; Frolov, *As-Suiuti Djalal ad-Din, “Sovershenstvo”. Vypusk V*, pp. 15—6.
17. Translation by A. J. Arberry. Al-Suyūfī, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 149; Frolov, *As-Suiuti Djalal ad-Din, “Sovershenstvo”. Vypusk V*, p. 16.
18. See more in: C. Brockelmann, “Al-Māwardī”, *EI*; B. Weiss, “Al-Māwardī”, *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature* (London—New York, 1998), ii, p. 519.
19. Abu al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī, *A’lām al-nubuwwa* (Indications of Prophecy) (Bayrūt, 1989), pp. 73—4.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 74—91.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 103—4.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 106 and others.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 107—8.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 106—7.
26. See more in: A. Gaīnutdinova, *Obrazy prorokov v Korane* (Images of Prophets in the Qur’ān) (Moscow, 2002), pp. 81—141; eadem, *Profetologiya Korana: istorii prorokov kak element postroeniia koranicheskogo teksta* (Prophetology of the Qur’ān: Stories About Prophets as a Compositional Element of the Qur’ānic Text). Abstract of PhD in philology (Moscow, 2008), pp. 8, 19, 22, etc.
27. Ibn Taymiyya together with al-Ghazālī (450—505 / 1058—1111) and Ibn al-‘Arabī (560—638 / 1165—1240) belong to the group of medieval scholars, who had most pronounced influence on modern Islam. His ideas that were further developed in the 12th / 18th century formed the basis of Wahhābism. See more in: H. Laoust, “Ibn Taymiyya”, *EI*; T. Ibrahim, A. V. Sagadayev, “Ibn Taymiyya”, *Islam. Èntsiklopedicheskiĭ slovar’* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 85—6; C. E. Bosworth, “Ibn Taymiyya”, *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, i, pp. 377—8.
28. Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Nubuwwat* (“The Book of Prophecies”) (Bayrūt, 1985), pp. 5—7, 19—23, 35, 47, 309, etc. It should be noted that ideas of Ibn Taymiyya in general and in particular correspond to theistic concept of miracle in Christianity.
- If an Old Testament Prophet or a Christian “thaumaturge” (“miracle-worker”) call for a miracle to be performed, unlike a shaman or a magician they do not act “at their will”, “with their own power”, but inspired by devotion and “conformity” to God... The Satan and his messengers (magicians, false prophets, antichrist) are accepted to have an ability to overcome natural limits in their actions, but this ability is considered a forgery of God-inspired miracles.
- (S. S. Averintsev, “Chudo” (“Miracle”), *Filosofskaia èntsiklopediia* (Moscow, 1970), v, pp. 491—2).
29. Ibn Taymiyya, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
30. See more in: Gaīnutdinova, *Obrazy*, pp. 81—141.
31. Ibn Taymiyya, *op. cit.*, pp. 164—6. It is important to emphasize one more time that we are considering the prophets of Abrahamic monotheism or “prophets of the scripture”. In other cases, according to Ibn Taymiyya one should follow the conception of hierarchy of prophets and their miracles, since the Allāh
- has showed preference to one prophets before others (*faḍḍala ba’da al-nabiyyin ‘alā b’ad*), that is why only the superior (*al-fāḍil*) should be distinguished by an ability to perform actions that the inferior (*al-mafḍūl*) is unable to perform.
- (*Ibid.*, pp. 327—9).

E. Rezvan

## THE QUR’ĀN AND POWER IN RUSSIA. I: MANUSCRIPT

Archival materials indicate that the Qur’ān was included in the personal libraries of such Russian Tsars as Ivan the Terrible (1530—1584), Peter the Great (1672—1725), and Catherine II (1729—1796). The fate of publications, translations, and rare manuscripts of the Qur’ān was also bound up with the personal decisions of the supreme rulers of Russia. As in the East the Sacred Text have been widely used by the local powers for the purposes of both inner and foreign politics. The history of most important Qur’ānic manuscripts can only prove this statement [1].

Recently there has been increased interest in the ancient manuscripts of the Qur’ān and a particularly interesting part of them — the group of manuscripts called “the Qur’āns of ‘Uṭhmān”. This topic was actively discussed in Cairo during unprecedented meetings between European and Egyptian specialists organized by Professor Sergio Noya Nosedá in 2006 and 2007. It was reflected in a recently published article by Professor Noya [2]. An article on “the Qur’āns of ‘Uṭhmān” circulated in Arabic Spain and Northern Africa is being prepared by Professor David James [3].

The manuscripts in question are among the most ancient. They are seriously damaged, and frequently damaged no less than those which were regularly removed from circulation in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH. In most cases, these copies made their way to special repositories in large mosques where they slowly decayed. They could also be “buried” with a special ritual [4]. However, the manuscripts we are discussing now were preserved. Why? Firstly, at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries AD, evidently those Qur’ānic copies were preserved which corresponded to the *ijmā’* canon adopted for that time [5], and secondly, they began to be seen as a symbol of supreme power equal to the *khirqa* of the Prophet, and there is numerous evidence of this.

Dr. David James has found a reference to the Qur’ānic manuscript attributed to ‘Uṭhmān which shows that it was in Cordova around 870. All other references to it date from after 1150. While working on the “history” of it — how and why it came to Cordova — he found reference to another “Qur’ān of ‘Uṭhmān” which belonged to Ibn al-Aḥmar, the founder of the Kingdom of Granada and which he gave as a present to the Almohad *sultān*. The Cordova manuscript was lost when

the ship carrying it from Tunis to Morocco sank in the 14th century.

In 1243, the Egyptian *sultān* Baybars sent the *khān* of the Golden Horde Berke a letter of “accession to citizenship and subjugation” [6]. Soon the Egyptian ambassadors brought presents to the Horde: clothes of honour, a throne incrustated with ebony, ivory and silver and the “Qur’ān of ‘Uṭhmān”. The book was bound in red satin embroidered with gold and placed in a case of dark red leather padded with silk. Additionally, a stand (*lawh*) for the Qur’ān was sent, which like the throne was encrustated with ebony, ivory and silver [7]. It is not difficult to note that insignia were sent from Egypt to the Horde [8]. Surprisingly enough, in sources connected with the Golden Horde we do not find another line about this important relic and symbol of power. Today, however, it is obvious that the history of this manuscript did not end with the demise of the Golden Horde. The facts show that this copy continued to have the status of a symbol of power for several centuries to follow. Its history is linked with the name of Timūr, and subsequently with the names of “religious masters” — famous *ṣūfī shaykhs*. But all this will be discussed in its turn.

For several years I was studying two Qur’ānic MSS, which were venerated by the Muslims of Central Asia as “Qur’āns of ‘Uṭhmān” [9]. The analysis of the historical sources shows that both MSS were preserved as the most valuable sacred relics and were transmitted inside the structure of *ṣūfī* brotherhoods.

The history of the first one, so called “Samarqand *kūfī* Qur’ān” had been studied in detail, but only since early 15th century. Nobody ever has written a line on the history of the MS before this date. It is well known that for decades it was one of the most important relics belonging to the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood. Existing traditions insist that its appearance in Mā warā’ al-nahr is connected with the name of Khwāja Aḥrār (1404—1490) one of the most prominent religious and political leaders of the region of Timūrid times. He was incontestable authority. He brought up Timūrid princes, was in friendly correspondence with such famous poets as Nawā’ī and Jāmī. Khwāja Aḥrār was an influential political figure and one of the richest persons of his time. The rise of Naqshbandiyya influence both in Mā warā’ al-nahr and beyond its frontiers as well as

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**Front cover:**

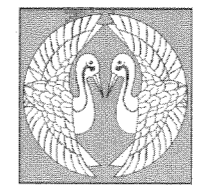
**Plate 1.** The miniature “Travelling tortoise”, *Tuhfat al-aḥrar*. Size of the miniature: 22×13 cm. Central Asia, 16th century. NLR, call No. Dorn 425, fol. 46a. Courtesy of the Library.

**Back cover:**

**Plate 2.** *Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara*. Early 20th century. Canvas, gouache, 36×23 cm. MAE RAS, No. 807–1. Photo by the author. Courtesy of the Museum.

**Plate 3.** *Buddha Śākyamuni*. Early 20th century. Canvas, gouache, 72×122 cm. MAE RAS, No. 1157–4. Photo by the author. Courtesy of the Museum.

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