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ḤANĪFIYYA AND KA'BA

An inquiry into the Arabian pre-Islamic background of *dīn Ibrāhīm*

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Modern scholars usually treat Muslim reports concerning the pre-Islamic *ḥunafā'* (sing. *ḥanīf*), who allegedly followed the monotheistic religion known as *dīn Ibrāhīm*, with a great deal of scepticism. W.M. Watt, for instance, stresses the apologetic nature of these reports, suggesting that the term *ḥanīf* in its monotheistic sense was never actually used before the Quran. This means that traditions about pre-Islamic monotheistic *ḥunafā'* are merely the result of an apologetic projection of Quranic concepts.[1] Casual examination of the Muslim sources seems at first to justify this sceptical approach. There is, for instance, a whole series of traditions presenting Muḥammad's genealogical ancestors (e.g., Ma'add, Muḍar, al-Ya's, Asad b. Khuzayma), as following the *ḥanīfiyya* of Abraham; in these traditions Muslims are requested not to curse these persons.[2] The apologetic nature of these traditions is obvious, their chief aim being to present the prophet as descended from noble monotheistic ancestors who allegedly never practiced idolatry. In other cases, however, the apologetic motive is not quite self-evident. Some western scholars have already noted that among those persons whom Muslim sources describe as *ḥunafā'* are some bitter opponents of Muḥammad. The reports concerning these persons must be taken as authentic, because, as

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1 *EI*[2] s. v. "Ḥanīf". See also *Hagarism*, 13-14. And see Wansbrough, *Milieu*, 6, where the stories about the *ḥanīf*s and other seekers of the true faith are labelled as *praeparatio evangelica*, and p. 7, where they are said to represent "a myth devised to interpret the spriritual, intellectual, and social transformation brought about by the mission of an Arabian prophet."

2 Abū l-Baqā', 48, 55-56, 59; Ḥalabī, I, 17; Kalā'ī, I, 68; *Munammaq*, 4. See also Rubin, "Nūr", 77.

already noted by Fueck, no Muslim could have had any interest in characterizing these opponents of the prophet as *ḥunafā'*.[3] In the following pages an attempt is made at elucidating the basic elements of the *ḥanīfiyya* professed by these opponents of Muḥammad and the reasons for their strife with the prophet. This may give us a better insight into the Arabian background of the *ḥanīfiyya* and *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

1. The *ḥanīfiyya* of Muḥammad's enemies

Some reports deal with Abū ʿĀmir ʿAbd ʿAmr b. Ṣayfī,[4] who was one of the prominent leaders of the Aws in Medina and an implacable enemy of Muḥammad. Shortly after the latter's arrival in Medina, Abū ʿĀmir reportedly set out to Mecca with fifty or fifteen people of the Aws, all refusing to embrace Islam. Abū ʿĀmir is said to have taken an active part on the Meccan side in the battle of Uḥud. In fact, he is said to have been the first to attack the Muslims along with the Aḥābīsh of Quraysh.[5] Following the expulsion of Banū al-Naḍīr to Khaybar (3H/625), Abū ʿĀmir is again said to have gone to Mecca along with some Jews and certain people of Aws. They reportedly urged Quraysh to attack Muḥammad, and made an alliance with the Quraysh in order to fight the prophet and destroy him.[6] After the conquest of Mecca (8H/630), Abū ʿĀmir is said to have fled to Ṭā'if, and when Ṭā'if surrendered to Muḥammad (9H), Abū ʿĀmir went off to Syria, where he eventually died.[7]

The name of Abū ʿĀmir is connected with the affair of the building of the mosque known as *masjid al-shiqāq*,[8] or *masjid al-ḍirār*.[9] It is related that on the eve of Muḥammad's raid on Tabūk (9H/630), some people built a mosque in Medina and asked

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3 Fueck, 98 n. 11, concerning Abū l-Qays b. al-Aslat.

4 See about him Gil, 87 ff.

5 Ibn Hishām, III, 71. See also Wāqidī, I, 205-206; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 313; Ḥalabī, II, 240. It is related that the prophet fell into one of the ditches which were dug by Abū ʿĀmir. See Ḥalabī, II, 232, 240.

6 Wāqidī, II, 441-442.

7 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282 (from al-Wāqidī); *ʿUyūn al athar*, I, 222.

8 Cf. Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 146.

9 Cf. Quran IX/107 ff. See Gil, 70 ff.

Muḥammad to pray with them in it. At first the prophet intended to oblige, but eventually found out that the people had mischievous intentions, the nature of which is not disclosed in the sources. Whatever their motives, it is stressed that they had contacts with Abū 'Āmir who was at the time in Syria. They reportedly prepared the mosque as headquarters for Abū 'Āmir's supporters who expected his return. When their plans were exposed the prophet ordered that the mosque be torn down and set on fire.[10] Some reports say that Abū 'Āmir himself ordered his supporters to build that mosque and collect weapons in it, telling them that he was about to bring Byzantine troops who would expel Muḥammad and his Muslims from Medina.[11]

The sources contain important details concerning the spiritual orientation of this enemy of Muḥammad. Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150H/767) says about him:[12]

> *wa-kāna qad tarahhaba fī l-jāhiliyya wa-labisa l-musūḥa wa-kāna yuqālu lahu l-rāhibu*
> He used to practice *tarahhub* and wore hair mantles and was called "*al-rāhib*"

A good insight into the meaning of this report may be gained from a verse by Ḥassān b. Thābit, Muḥammad's poet, who, mourning the death of the prophet, describes his sorrowful wives "like nuns putting on hair mantles" (*mithla l-rawāhibi yalbasna l-musūḥa..*).[13] From Ḥassān's description it may be inferred that Abū 'Āmir was known as "*al-rāhib*" mainly because of his hair mantle which, like those of Muḥammad's mourning wives, resembled the garments of the *rāhib*s, i.e., the Christian monks. In other words, Abū 'Āmir's *tarahhub* was not necessarily a Christian practice as suggested by Wellhausen,[14] but merely a kind of ascetic conduct resembling Christian manners only in its outer manifestations.

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10 Wāqidī, III, 1046; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282, 283; *Bidāya*, V, 21ff.

11 Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 276; *Qiṣaṣ*, 212; 'Adawī, 253[a].

12 Ibn Hishām, II, 234. See also *'Uyūn al-athar*, I, 221; Ibn Sa'd, II, 37; *Istī'āb*, I, 380; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 281; Wāqidī, II, 441; Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 276; Halabī, II, 240; *Murūj*, I, 74.

13 Ibn Sa'd, II, 321. Cf. Ibn Hishām, IV, 322.

14 *Reste*, 239. Cf. Gil, p. 91, note 60.

Al-Balādhurī (d. 279H/892) reports that Abū ʿĀmir wished to present himself as a prophet,[15] which seems to indicate that he probably used to recite certain prophetic utterances. The content of his utterances may be deduced from the report of Ibn Ḥajar to the effect that Abū ʿĀmir used to speak about the resurrection and the *ḥanīfiyya*.[16] There seems to be no reason to suspect this report. Themes dealt with in the prophetic utterance of Muḥammad could very well be included in the preachings of other contemporaries having similar prophetic claims.

The relation of Abū ʿĀmir to the *ḥanīfiyya* is indicated in a report of al-Wāqidī (d. 207H/823) concerning a conversation between the Jews of Medina and Muḥammad b. Maslama of the Aws,[17] which took place before Muḥammad's arrival in Medina. The Jews told Ibn Maslama that nothing seemed to prevent him from embracing their religion, except for the fact that it was the religion of the Jews. They claimed that he probably preferred the *ḥanifiyya* about which he had heard, but, they stressed, Abū ʿĀmir had already abandoned it.[18] This report implies that both Muḥammad b. Maslama and Abū ʿĀmir, who were fellow tribesmen, used to adhere to a kind of monotheistic *ḥanīfiyya*, not too far removed from the Jewish religion, and that Abū ʿĀmir eventually abandoned it, unlike Ibn Maslama who stuck to it. From the general context of this conversation it is clear that the Jews actually alluded to Muḥammad's message, which, in their view at least, was based on that *ḥanīfiyya* which was eventually rejected by Abū ʿĀmir, but supported by Ibn Maslama.

Abū ʿĀmir's rejection of the kind of *ḥanīfiyya* which Muḥammad adopted as "Islam" is also indicated in a direct confrontation between him and the prophet. Gil describes it quite rightly as an "encounter between two *ḥanīfs* of different

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15 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282.

16 *Iṣāba*, II, 137: *wa-kāna yadhkuru l-baʿtha wa-dīna l-ḥanīfiyya.*

17 See about him *Iṣāba*, VI, 33ff.

18 *ka-annaka turīdu l-ḥanīfiyyata llatī samiʿta bihā. ammā inna Abā ʿĀmir qad sakhiṭahā wa-laysa ʿalayhā* (Wāqidī, I, 367).

persuasions."[19] Ibn Isḥāq reports that Abū ʿĀmir came to Muḥammad when the latter arrived in Medina, and asked him what was the religion he had brought. Muḥammad said: "I have brought the *ḥanīfiyya*, the *dīn* of Abraham." Abū ʿĀmir said: "That is what I follow." Muḥammad said: "You do not." Abū ʿĀmir said: "Yes, I do," and added that Muḥammad had introduced in the *ḥanīfyya* things which did not belong to it (*innaka adkhalta, ya Muḥammad, fī l-ḥanīfiyya ma laysa minhā*). Muḥammad said: "I have not. I have brought it pure and white."[20] The break between these two *ḥanifs* was never bridged, and it is reported that Muḥammad changed Abū ʿĀmir's appellation from "*al-rāhib*" to "*al-fāsiq*".[21]

What was the origin of the dispute between Muḥammad and Abū ʿĀmir? The sources examined thus far do not allow a clear-cut answer. Gil's conclusion, following a thorough examination of a wide range of source material, is that Abū ʿĀmir was a leader of a group of dissenters with "a kind of pacifistic orientation", who were also opposed to "the new system of justice personified by Muḥammad", and hence "to the very essence and foundations of the Muslim *umma*."[22] It seems, however, that the roots of the conflict must be looked for within the *ḥanīfiyya* which occurs in the above-cited dialogue as the main issue disputed by Abū ʿĀmir and Muḥammad. In order to elucidate the origin of this "inter-*ḥanīfī*" conflict, one has to study the reports concerning other rivals of Muḥammad who are likewise presented as monotheistic *ḥunafā'*.

The poet Abū Qays b. al-Aslat[23] was the leader of the Medinan tribe Aws Allāh of the Aws, i.e., Abū ʿĀmir's tribe. Ibn Isḥāq reports that he kept his people back from Islam until after the battle of the Khandaq (5H/627). This was the only section of

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19 Gil, 90.

20 Ibn Hishām, II, 235. See also *'Uyūn al-athar*, I, 222; *Qiṣaṣ*, 212.

21 Ibn Hishām, II, 235, III, 71; Ibn Sa'd, II, 37; *'Uyūn al-athar*, I, 222; *Qiṣaṣ*, 212.

22 Gil, 91.

23 See about him Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 287.

the Anṣār in which there were no Muslims at all.[24] According to another report, Abū Qays fled to Mecca and stayed there with Quraysh until the submission of Mecca.[25]

This opponent of Muḥammad is said to have been known in Yathrib as "*al-ḥanīf*."[26] Ibn Sa'd (d. 230H/845) stresses that he was more eager in observing the *ḥanīfiyya* than anyone else in Medina. He allegedly used to say: "I adhere to the religion of Abraham, and will not cease till I die."[27] The *ḥanīfiyya* of Abū Qays, like that of Abū 'Āmir, seems to have been at variance with the *ḥanīfiyya* of Muḥammad, although they had a lot in common. Ibn Sa'd reports that Abū Qays "almost" embraced Islam, and used to refer to the *ḥanīfiyya* in his poems and to describe the prophet who was about to appear in Mecca.[28] The circumstances which hindered Abū Qays from embracing Islam are elucidated in a report recorded by Mughulṭāy.[29] It says that Abū Qays resembled Qays b. al-Khaṭīm in poetic vigour and courage; he was God-fearing, a follower of the *ḥanīfiyya* and urged Quraysh and the Aws to follow the prophet. 'Abdallāh b. Ubayy (the leader of the Munāfiqūn in Medina and a relative of Abū 'Āmir) heard about it and said to Abū Qays: "You have abandoned our party (*ludhta min ḥizbinā kulla malādh*). Once you seek alliance with Quraysh and once you wish to follow Muḥammad." (*marratan taṭlubu l-ḥilfa fī Quraysh wa-marratan bi-ittibā'i Muḥammad*). Abū Qays became angry and swore that he would not embrace Islam for a whole year. He died before the end of that year. Some say that before his death he was heard uttering the *shahāda*. This report indicates that Abū Qays was wavering between attraction to Muḥammad and loyalty to Quraysh. His faithfulness to Quraysh and, in fact, his devotion to Mecca, is clearly indicated in some poetic verses recorded on his authority,

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24 Ibn Hishām, II, 80. See also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 384; Sam'ānī, 345.

25 *Istī'āb*, IV, 1734; *Iṣāba*, VII, 335.

26 Ibn Sa'd, IV, 383, 384.

27 Ibid, IV, 384.

28 *Loc. cit.* See also *Iṣāba*, VII, 334.

29 Mughulṭāy, 32[a]-32[b]. Cf. also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 385; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 274; *Iṣāba*, VII, 334.

where the basic tenets of his *ḥanifiyya* are set out. The verses have already been noted by Wellhausen[30] and others,[31] but no attention has been drawn to their special significance. Though Wellhausen cavils at the authenticity of these verses, his doubt does not seem justified. As pointed out above, themes like *ḥanīfiyya* and monotheism in general, which are treated at length in the Quran, may very well occur independently in the poetic utterances of other contemporaries of Muḥammad. The verses to which we refer are recorded by Ibn Isḥāq.[32] The first four run as follows (tr. Guillaume, 201):

1. Lord of mankind, serious things have happened /
   the difficult and the simple are involved.
2. Lord of mankind, if we have erred /
   guide us to the good path.
3. Were it not for our Lord we should be Jews /
   and the religion of the Jews is not convenient.[33]
4. Were it not for our Lord we should be Christians /
   along with the monks on Mount Jalīl.

The final two verses read [tr. U. R.]:

5. *wa-lākinnā khuliqnā idh khuliqnā /*
   ḥanīfan dīnunā 'an kulli jīlī
6. *nasūqu l-hadya tarsufu mudh'ināti /*
   mukashshafata l-manākibi fī-l-julūlī
5. But when we were created, we were created /
   with our religion distinct from (that of) any other generation
6. We lead the sacrificial animals walking obediently in iron /
   their shoulders bare under the clothes.

The fifth verse suggests that the *ḥanīfiyya* is a primordial, natural religion preserving the basic monotheism inherent in man since

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30 *Reste*, 238, note 1.
31 E.g., Buhl-Schaeder, 69.
32 Ibn Hishām, II, 80. See also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 384-385.
33 Better: has no counterparts.

creation, and is thus distinct from any other acquired religion. The sixth line sheds light on the ritual practices of the *ḥanīf*s. They lead sacrificial animals which are called *hady*. This term, which occurs also in the Quran (e.g. V/2, 95, 97), stands for sacrificial animals consecrated to the Kaʿba. They were usually slaughtered near the Kaʿba, especially during the *ʿUmra*. In the above verse, the animals are described as *tarsufu mudhʿināt*in. *Rasafa* means to walk heavily with iron fetters and the like.[34] It seems that an allusion is here being made to a special feature of the sacrificial animals which used to be brought to Mecca. The Arabs used to hang on each animal a pair of iron horse-shoes, an act referred to in Muslim sources as *taqlīd al-naʿl*.[35] Muslim scholars explain that the horse-shoes symbolized travels.[36] In the same verse the sacrificial animals are also described as being covered with clothes named *julūl* through which their shoulders are seen. This again is characteristic of animals led to the Kaʿba during the pilgrimages. The act of covering the animals with these clothes is named *tajlīl al-hady*.[37] The pilgrims sometimes used to make holes in the clothes so that the special scars made on the skin of the animal remained visible. The scars signified that the animal was consecrated to Allāh.[38]

The verses of Abū Qays indicate that the ritual practices observed by *ḥanīf*s like Abū Qays were focused on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and on the veneration of the Kaʿba.[39] In some further verses of Abū Qays recorded by Ibn Isḥāq,[40] the attitude of the

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34 E.g., Ibn Hisham, III, 332: *...idh jā'a Abū Jandal b. Suhayl b. 'Amr yarsufu fī l-ḥadīd.*

35 E.g., *Qirā*, 566.

36 *Fatḥ al-bārī*, III, 438.

37 E.g., *Qirā*, 569.

38 *Fatḥ al-bārī*, III, 438-439.

39 Buhl-Schaeder (p. 69-70) contend that these verses were composed by a follower of Muḥammad who wished to glorify the religion of Abraham as having the pilgrimage at its centre. But even so, this does not necessarily mean that the pilgrimage was not really a central element in *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

40 Ibn Hishām, I, 302 ff.

former towards the Ka'ba, as well as towards Quraysh, is stated very clearly. Introducing these verses Ibn Isḥāq says that Abū Qays used to love Quraysh, being their relative by his wife, Arnab bint Asad. Ibn Isḥāq adds that in this *qaṣīda* the poet magnifies the sanctity of Mecca. A few verses addressed to Quraysh may illustrate the attitude of Abū Qays: [41]

aqīmū lanā dīnan ḥanīfan fa-antumū /
lanā ghāyatun qad yuhtadā bi-l-dhawā'ibī
Raise up for us a *ḥanīfī* religion /
you are our object; one is guided in travel by heights
fa-qūmū fa-ṣallū rabbakum wa-tamassaḥū /
bi-arkāni hādhā l-bayti bayna l-akhāshibī
Rise and pray to your Lord and rub yourselves /
against the corners of this house between the mountains
fa-in tahlikū nahlik wa-tahlik mawāsimū /
yu'āshu bihā, qawlu mri'in ghayri kādhibī
If you perish we shall perish, and the fairs by which men live / these are the words of a truthful man.

In these verses the people of Quraysh feature as representing the *ḥanīfiyya*; they are urged by the poet to go on observing it, while they are also requested to worship their Lord, i.e. Allāh, and to venerate the Ka'ba which functioned as His sanctuary, and was usually known as "*baytu llāhi l-ḥarām*." The poet states that the existence of Quraysh is vital for the survival of the entire Meccan ritual system; this means that *ḥanīf*s like Abū Qays regarded Quraysh as the legitimate custodians of the main centre of *ḥanīfī* worship.

At this point one may cast another look at the material concerning Abū 'Āmir. It seems that his *ḥanīfiyya* too was based on the veneration of the sanctity of Mecca and the Ka'ba, as well as on loyalty to Quraysh. Apart from his personal relations with Meccan leaders like Abū Sufyān,[42] Abū 'Āmir greatly admired the

41 Tr. Guillaume, 128 ff.

42 Abū 'Āmir once presented Abū Sufyān with a *mawlā* of his. See Ibn Sa'd V, 311.

ritual position of Quraysh. Al-Wāqidī reports that when Abū ʿĀmir left for Mecca with fifty people of Aws Allāh, following Muḥammad's *hijra* to Medina, he said to Quraysh that their ritual conduct was right, whereas what Muḥammad had brought was wrong.[43] Furthermore, after the expulsion of the Jews of al-Naḍīr to Khaybar, some of their leaders came to Mecca along with Abū ʿĀmir and asked Quraysh to conclude a treaty against Muḥammad (see p. 86 above). The way in which the oath of this alliance was taken is most instructive. All parties reportedly entered behind the hangings of the Kaʿba and pressed their bodies against its walls.[44] This ceremony could not have taken place were it not for the deep devotion to the sanctity of the Kaʿba on the part of Abū ʿĀmir as well as on the part of the Jewish leaders.[45]

Another rival of Muḥammad known as a *ḥanīf* was the poet Umayya b. Abī l-Ṣalt from Ṭāʾif.[46] His monotheistic orientation is indicated, to begin with, in the fact that some considered him a Jew.[47] But it seems that he was closer to people of the sort of Abū ʿĀmir. This is implied by the fact that his name occurs alongside that of Abū ʿĀmir in the commentaries on Quran VII/175 which deals with "him to whom we gave Our signs, but he cast them off and Satan followed after him..." (tr. Arberry). According to Ibn ʿAbbās, the Anṣār claimed that the verse referred to the *rāhib* for whom *masjid al-shiqāq* was built (i.e., Abū ʿĀmir), whereas Thaqīf claimed that the verse dealt with Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt.[48] According to another tradition, the persons meant by this verse were people from among the Jews, the Christians and the *ḥunafāʾ*.[49]

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43 Wāqidī, I, 205–206.

44 Ibid, II, 442.

45 On the attitude of the Jews of Arabia towards the Kaʿba see more below.

46 See about him Buhl-Schaeder, 97 ff; Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 298 ff. For the traditions concerning him see already Sprenger, I, 110 ff.

47 *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

48 Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 146. See also *Iṣāba*, I, 250; *Aghānī*, III, 187; *Bidāya*, II, 221; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

49 Suyūṭī, loc. cit.

It is noteworthy that the *ḥunafā'* are mentioned in this interpretation alongside other monotheistic groups who "cast off" the "signs" of Allāh, i.e., rejected Muḥammad.

Like Abū 'Āmir, Umayya, too, used to wear rough hair clothes (*musūḥ*). Al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256H/870) reports that Umayya was well versed in holy books, wore *musūḥ*, was God fearing and used to mention Abraham and Ishmael and the *ḥanīfiyya* in his poems. He prohibited wine-drinking and did not believe in the idols. He was a seeker looking for the true religion.[50]

The nature of the poetry of Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt may be deduced from the fact that Muḥammad reportedly stated that Umayya "almost" embraced Islam in his poetry.[51] The most characteristic verse recorded on his authority is perhaps the following[52] (tr. Guillaume p. 30):

kullu dīnin yawma l-qiyāmati 'inda l- /
-lāhi illa dīna l-ḥanīfati būrū
In God's sight at the resurrection every religion /
but that of the *ḥanīf* is doomed to perdition.

The authenticity of the verses attributed to Umayya has been doubted more than once.[53] The above quoted verse is described by Watt as "presumably of Islamic inspiration".[54] Against this supposition it may again be pointed out that the same themes may have been treated independently by the prophet as well as by various contemporary poets with a similar monotheistic orientation. As a rule, if one does not suspect the authenticity of the Quran one does not have any immediate reason for rejecting the authenticity

50 *Aghānī*, III, 187. Cf. also *Iṣāba*, I, 250; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 28.

51 Muslim, VII, 48-49; Bukhārī, V, 53; *Iṣāba*, I, 249; *Bidāya*, II, 228.

52 Ibn Hishām, I, 62. See also *Iṣāba*, I, 251; *Aghānī*, III, 187.

53 See for details Buhl-Schaeder 70; Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 299.

54 Watt, "Ḥanīf", *EI*^{2}.

of other utterances containing a similar religious or ethical message.[55]

Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt apparently never embraced Islam. There is a tradition recorded by Ibn ʿAsākir on the authority of al-Zuhrī (d. 124H/742) to the effect that Umayya met Muḥammad in Mecca before the *hijra* and being deeply impressed by his preachings decided to embrace Islam. But in the meantime the battle of Badr took place, in which many Meccan leaders, including some of Umayya's relatives, were killed. He thereupon abandoned his former intention to embrace Islam and returned to Ṭāʾif.[56] He also composed a special *qaṣīda* lamenting the death of the Meccans at Badr,[57] and Muḥammad reportedly forbade its recitation.[58] From that time on, Umayya used to stir up Quraysh against Muḥammad.[59]

Umayya, like the former *ḥanīfs*, doubted whether Muḥammad represented the true *ḥanīfiyya*. On his death-bed he reportedly said: "I know that the *ḥanīfiyya* is true, but I have my doubts concerning Muḥammad" (*...wa-anā aʿlamu anna l-ḥanīfiyya ḥaqqun wa-lākinna l-shakka yudākhilunī fī Muḥammad*).[60] Muḥammad, on his part, said about him: "*āmana shiʿruhu wa-kafara qalbuhu.*"[61] To this must be added the personal rivalry between them. Umayya, like Muḥammad, tended to consider himself a prophet, and was jealous of Muḥammad's prophetic success.[62]

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55 Not even *Hagarism* seems to produce conclusive evidence that the Quran is not authentic, i.e., did not come into existence in Arabia in Muḥammad's days.

56 *Bidāya*, II, 226. See also Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 146; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116-117; *Iṣāba*, I, 250.

57 Ibn Hishām, III, 31 ff.; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 306ff.

58 *Aghānī*, III, 187.

59 *Loc. cit.*

60 Ibid., III, 191; *Iṣāba*, I, 252; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

61 *Aghānī*, III, 191; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 28; *Iṣāba*, I, 251; *Bidāya*, II, 228; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

62 Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif, 28; Aghānī, III, 187; Iṣāba*, I, 250; *Murūj*, I, 70-71. Cf. Suyūṭī, *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, I, 60. Umayya, like Muḥammad, features in the sources as being subjected to a miraculous opening of his breast. See e.g., *Bidāya*, II, 224 ff.; *Aghānī*, III, 188 ff.; *Iṣāba*, I, 252.

The reports concerning the above mentioned *ḥunafā'* lead to the conclusion that their *ḥanīfiyya* consisted mainly of: (i) adherence to what they used to call "the religion of Abraham" (Abū Qays, Umayya); (ii) close contacts with Mecca and Quraysh, and devotion to the sanctity of the Ka'ba (Abū 'Āmir and Abū Qays). The link between these two elements seems to have been the conviction that Mecca was an Abrahamic *ḥaram*, and that the Ka'ba was the House of Abraham. This idea was shared by Muḥammad, as is attested in the numerous Quranic passages stressing the relation of Mecca and the Ka'ba to Abraham and Ishmael (e.g. II/125, 126, 127; XIV/35).

The break of these *ḥanīf*s with Muḥammad seems to have been the result of a change in Muḥammad's practical attitude towards Quraysh and Mecca, following the *hijra*. The act of the *hijra* from Mecca to Medina came after Muḥammad had lost his last hope of establishing monotheism in Mecca through peaceful preaching to Quraysh. When the opposition of Quraysh became unbearable, for reasons which cannot be treated here, the prophet not only left Mecca, but started launching military attacks on Meccan caravans. Thus he violated the pre-Islamic sacredness of Quraysh as *ahlu llāh* which he had previously recognized.[63] For him Quraysh were no longer under God's protection, nor were they the legitimate agents of the Abrahamic sacredness of Mecca and the Ka'ba. Moreover, shortly before leaving Mecca, Muḥammad stopped praying towards the Ka'ba and appointed Jerusalem as *qibla* instead, but only for a limited time. Soon afterwards he resumed the *qibla* of the Ka'ba, and from then on, his prophetic message was directed not only against *shirk*, but also and foremost against the *mushrikūn* themselves, i.e., Quraysh. In Muḥammad's perception, they deviated from the true Abrahamic ideals, or, from the original *ḥanīfiyya*, which he had set out to restore.

At this stage, Arabian *ḥanīf*s had to decide with which side they should throw in their lots. Upholding Muḥammad would have meant supporting the struggle against *shirk*, but it would also have

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63 This is seen in *Sūrat Quraysh*. See Rubin, "Ilāf".

meant admitting that Quraysh had no longer any Abrahamic sacredness, and no longer deserved to be the custodians of the House of Allāh. In practical terms, it would have forced them to sever their connections with the central *ḥanīfī* sanctuary in Mecca. Those *ḥanīf*s whose personal ties with Quraysh were strong and whose devotion to the Pre-Islamic sacredness of Quraysh and the Ka'ba was great could not choose Muḥammad's side. So they became his enemies, and accused him of distorting the basic principles of the true *ḥanīfiyya*. They were persons of the sort of Abū 'Āmir, Abu Qays and Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt.

But there were also some other *ḥanīf*s who eventually did embrace Islam. One of them was the poet Abū Qays Ṣirma b. Abī Anas of Banū 'Adiyy b. al-Najjār.[64] His ascetic conduct resembled that of Abū 'Āmir. Ibn Isḥāq reports that Ṣirma used to practice *tarahhub* in the Jāhiliyya, and to wear *musūḥ*. He abandoned the idols, purified himself with water, and avoided menstruating women. He once contemplated becoming a Christian, but gave it up. He set up a private sanctuary of his own, into which impure people were not allowed. He used to say: "I worship the Lord of Abraham." When Muḥammad came to Medina, Ṣirma embraced Islam at a very advanced age.[65] His attachment to Muḥammad is demonstrated in a special *qaṣīda* he composed in praise of the prophet.[66] Ṣirma's relations with Quraysh and Mecca seem to have been less predominant than his wish to support a leader who, in his view, had good chances to succeed as a *ḥanīfī* prophet preaching the religion of Abraham in Medina. Or, one may suppose that the stress laid on the fact that when he became a Muslim he was already a very old man, indicates an apologetic elaboration typical of *akhbār* relating to several pre-Islamic poets who actually passed away before they had any real chance to embrace Islam.

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64 See about him Buhl-Schaeder, 98; Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 294.

65 Ibn Hishām, II, 156. See also Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 28; *Istī'āb*, IV, 1735, II, 737; *Iṣāba*, III, 422-423; *Murūj*, I, 74.

66 Ibn Hishām, II, 157 ff.; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 268; Ibn Qutayba *Ma'ārif*, 28; *Istī'āb*, II, 738.

Other names of pro-Muḥammadan *ḥunafā'* are mentioned by al-Tha'labī in his commentary on Quran III/113. This verse deals with members of *ahl al-kitāb* who were "a nation upstanding" (*umma qā'ima*). Al-Tha'labī quotes a report to the effect that before Muḥammad came to Medina, there were there people like As'ad b. Zurāra, al-Barrā' b. Ma'rūr, Muḥammad b. Maslama and Abū Qays Ṣirma b. al-Aslat(!), monotheists practicing ablution and the *sharā'i'* of the *ḥanīfiyya*. When Muḥammad arrived, they believed in him and rallied round him.[67]

2. *Ḥanīfiyya* in pre-hijra Mecca

Muḥammad's attachment to the idea of *dīn Ibrāhīm* started already before the *hijra*, while he was still at Mecca.[68] Here there were some older *ḥunafā'* who probably introduced this idea to the young Muḥammad. The most notable of them was Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl.[69] The name of this *ḥanīf* appears, to begin with, in a report recorded by Ibn Isḥāq and others, mentioning four persons

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67 Al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, MS Tel Aviv University, 508750, p. 148.

68 Since the days of Snouck Hurgronje western scholars believed that the idea connecting the history of Mecca and the Ka'ba with Abraham appears only in verses labelled Medinan. But later on, scholars like E. Beck and others showed that the idea appears already in Meccan verses (for details see R. Paret, "Ibrāhīm", *EI*[2]). In fact, there is striking evidence for the early possible date of the introduction of *dīn Ibrāhīm* in Arabia. Sozomenos (fifth century A.D.) who was born near Gaza and had a good knowledge of the Arabs, describes them as descendants of Ishmael who, due to the influence of their pagan neighbours, had corrupted the old "discipline" of their ancestor, according to which the old Hebrews used to live prior to Moses. Sozomenos even knows of a certain group among the Arab descendants of Ishmael who eventually came in contact with the Hebrews, and by learning from them resumed their original conduct. See *Sozomeni historia ecclesiastica* Lib. VI, 38, in *Patrologia Graecia* Vol.LXVI, 1411-1412. This reference was given to me by my student G. Algazi, who also translated the relevant passages. And see also a reference to the same source in M. Cook, *Muḥammad*, Oxford, 1983, 81, 92. And cf. the (unjustified) criticism of H. T. Norris in *BSOAS*, XLVIII 1985, p. 131.

69 Most of the traditions concerning this person were already gathered and translated by Sprenger (I, 119, ff.).

including Zayd, who decided to abandon the idolatry of Quraysh and left Mecca in search of the true religion. Zayd b. ʿAmr is said to have been the only one who did not adopt Judaism or Christianity but rather insisted that he worshipped the Lord of Abraham.[70] The monotheistic attitude of Zayd is implied in some poetic verses attributed to him in which he voices his aversion to the worship of the Daughters of Allāh and other deities.[71] In other verses he professes his exclusive devotion to Allāh.[72] A purely monotheistic *talbiya* which he is said to have uttered during the *ḥajj* is also attributed to him.[73] Some reports describe a strife between Zayd and his fellow tribesmen. His paternal uncle, al-Khaṭṭāb (father of ʿUmar) is said to have forced him out of Mecca so that he had to remain on Mount Ḥirāʾ, being able to enter Mecca only secretly. Al-Khaṭṭāb reportedly feared lest other Meccans should follow Zayd in abandoning the old *dīn* of Quraysh.[74]

Tradition lays special emphasis on Zayd's attachment to *dīn Ibrāhīm*. Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr reportedly said that she had seen Zayd leaning his back against the Kaʿba saying: "Oh Quraysh, by Him in whose hand is the soul of Zayd, not one of you follows the religion of Abraham but I".[75]

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70 See Ibn Hishām, I, 237 ff.; *Muḥabbar*, 171-172; *Munammaq*, 175 ff.; *Bidāya*, II, 237 ff.

71 Ibn Hishām, I, 241; *Bidāya*, II, 242; *Aghānī*, III, 15-16; Zubayr b. Bakkār, I, 416-417.

72 Ibn Hishām, I, 246: *wa-aslamtu wajhī li-man aslamat / lahu l-arḍu taḥmilu ṣakhran thiqālā*. See also Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 27; *Aghānī*, III, 17; Zubayr b. Bakkār, fol. 167[b] ; *Bidāya*, II, 242; Bayhāqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 400.

73 Ibn Saʿd, III, 380; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil*, I, 384; *Bidāya*, II, 240; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 117.

74 Ibn Hishām, I, 246; *Aghānī*, III, 15; Zubayr b. Bakkār, fol. 166[b] ; *Murūj*, I, 70; *Bidāya*, II, 238.

75 Ibn Hishām, I, 240: *...mā aṣbaḥa minkum aḥadun ʿalā dīni Ibrāhīma ghayrī*. See also Ibn Saʿd, III, 381; *Iṣāba*, II, 614; Bukhārī, V, 51; *Aghānī*, III, 15, 16; *Mughulṭāy*, 107[a] ; Zubayr b. Bakkār, fol. 166[b]-167[a] ; Khargushī, Brit. Lib., 29[a] ; *Bidāya*, II, 237; Suhaylī, I, 256.

Of special interest are the traditions recounting the meeting between Zayd b. 'Amr and the young Muḥammad, which took place shortly before the latter's first revelation.[76] In the earliest versions of these traditions Muḥammad presents Zayd with a bag of meat which he, Muḥammad, had sacrificed to the idols. Zayd refuses to partake of it explaining to him that he does not eat what has been offered to idols. He also explains that he has searched for the true religion and is now a follower of the religion of Abraham.[77] The immediate motivation for the circulation of such a tradition was to highlight the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of Zayd as Muḥammad's mentor. On the other hand, however, one must remember that even *faḍā'il* traditions may more often than not contain a grain of authenticity. This seems to be the case with the tradition about Zayd which implies that he was a monotheistic adherent of *dīn Ibrāhīm*, while Muḥammad was still an idolater. Such a tradition could never have been invented, not even for the mere purpose of glorifying Zayd. From this tradition, which Muslim scholars indeed tried to reshape, one must, therefore, conclude that Zayd was indeed a *ḥanīf* who introduced to Muḥammad the monotheistic idea of *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

The Abrahamic *ḥanīfiyya* of Zayd is described in the sources as being focused on the veneration of the Ka'ba. Many traditions assert that the Ka'ba served as Zayd's *qibla*. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230H/845) has recorded a tradition relating that Zayd used to pray facing the Ka'ba, saying: "This is the *qibla* of Abraham and Ishmael. I do not worship stones and do not pray towards them and do not sacrifice to them, and do not eat that which was sacrificed to them and do not draw lots with arrows. I will not pray towards anything but this House till I die."[78] According to another tradition Zayd used to say: "I follow the religion of Abraham and I prostrate

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76 See a thorough examination of these traditions, Kister, "A bag of meat", passim.

77 E.g., Khargūshī, Brit Lib. 27^{b}–28^{a} ; Kister, "A bag of meat", 270, with further references.

78 Ibn Sa'd, III, 380. See also *Bidāya*, II, 240; Zurqānī, VII, 27.

myself towards the Ka'ba which Abraham built." So he used to prostrate himself towards the Ka'ba in the Jāhiliyya.[79] A similar tradition recorded by al-Khargūshī (d. 406H/1015) relates that Zayd b. 'Amr used to pray towards the Ka'ba saying: "my Lord is the Lord of Abraham and my *dīn* is the *dīn* of Abraham." Waraqa b. Nawfal also used to pray towards the Ka'ba saying: "My *dīn* is the *dīn* of Zayd and my Lord is the Lord of Zayd."[80] People like Zayd believed that already Abraham himself used to pray towards the Ka'ba. The following *rajaz* verse is reported to have been uttered by Zayd when praying towards the Ka'ba:[81]

'udhtu bi-mā 'ādha bihi Ibrāhim /
mustaqbila l-qiblati wa-huwa qā'im
I seek refuge in what Abraham sought refuge /
when he was facing the *qibla* while standing (in prayer).[82]

Muḥammad himself used the Ka'ba as *qibla* during the first years of his prophetic activity in Mecca, before adopting, for a limited time, the *qibla* of Jerusalem. The prophet is said to have prayed towards the Ka'ba in general,[83] or towards the Black Stone in particular,[84] or towards Maqām Ibrāhīm.[85]

The authenticity of all these traditions which imply that the Ka'ba functioned as a *ḥanīfī* and Islamic *qibla* ever before Jerusalem replaced it, is self-evident in view of the fact that no one in early Islam was interested in fabricating traditions implying that the *qibla* of the Ka'ba could ever be replaced in favour of another *qibla*, be it only for a short time. Muslim theologians tried

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79 Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 400.

80 Khargūshī, Brit Lib. 28[b]. See also *Bidāya*, II, 237, 241.

81 Ibn Hishām, I, 245; *Aghānī*, III, 15; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 117; Zubayr b. Bakkār, fol. 166[b].

82 For Abraham's prayer towards the Ka'ba see also Ibn Sa'd, I, 162, III, 379; *Iṣāba*, II, 616; *Bidāya*, II, 239; *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VII, 108.

83 Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 401; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'iṣ*, I, 233-234; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, II, 4.

84 Ḥalabī, I, 264.

85 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 164, 165; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 369; Muqātil, II, fol. 26[b].

rather to tone down these traditions, labelling them as *ḍa'īf*.[86] They gave predominance as *ṣaḥīḥ* to other traditions stating that Muḥammad, while at Mecca, never used the Ka'ba as *qibla*, but prayed always towards Jerusalem.[87] In this manner, the Ka'ba could never have been abrogated by the *qibla* of Jerusalem; there was only one abrogation, which occurred after the *hijra*, when the Ka'ba replaced Jerusalem forever.[88]

3. The Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba and Quraysh

The observation that the *ḥanīfiyya* at both post-*hijra* Medina and pre-*hijra* Mecca was focused on the veneration of the Ka'ba, entails the conclusion that the Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba is pre-Islamic by origin. This may be confirmed through some further reports concerning this sanctuary.

The pre-Islamic deity of the Ka'ba was Hubal. His was the one and only statue situated inside the Ka'ba. The rituals performed in front of this statue contained typical Abrahamic elements, circumcision in particular. Ibn Isḥāq reports that when the Arabs wanted to circumcise a boy, or to marry someone, or

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86 See for instance, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, I, 88: *wa-qāla ākharūna: kāna yuṣallī ilā l-Ka'ba fa-lammā taḥawwala ilā l-Madīna istaqbala Bayta l-Maqdis. wa-hādhā ḍa'īf wa-yalzamu minhu da'wā l-naskhi marratayni...*

87 E.g., *itḥāf al-akhiṣṣā'*, I, 183: *wa-l-ṣaḥīḥ alladhī aṭbaqa 'alayhi l-aktharūna annahu lam yuṣalli bi-Makkata illā ilā Bayt al-Maqdis.*

88 For these matters see further Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, II, 287 ff.; *Bidāya*, III, 252 ff.; Zurqānī, I, 399 ff.; *Uns*, I, 193-194; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'iṣ*, I, 486; Rubin, "Ka'ba", note 29. A reference to the history of the *qibla* is made in *Hagarism*, 23-24, with the attempt to prove that originally the *qibla* was located not in Mecca but rather "somewhere in north-west Arabia". But the adduced archeological and literary evidence seems to prove nothing of the sort. It shows merely that in many cases, *qiblas* of certain mosques were not built in the mathematically exact direction of the Ka'ba but rather faced the general direction of Arabia. In Iraq it was, of course, west, whereas in Egypt it was east. In Judaism as well, it is not obligatory to search the exact direction of Jerusalem, the general direction of the "mizrāḥ" (east) being perfectly sufficient.

bury a body, or when they doubted someone's descent, they would take the person to Hubal with a hundred dirhams and a sacrificial animal and would cast the arrows of Hubal and thus know what their conduct should be.[89] That circumcision was common among the Arabs since pre-Islamic times is a well-established fact.[90] Muslim tradition, like the Jewish one, connects it with Abraham who was the first to be circumcised.[91] The link between circumcision in Arabia and Abraham dates back to the pre-Islamic times. This link was already known to Josephus Flavius who says in his *Antiquities* that the Arabs "circumcise after the thirteenth year, because Ishmael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham of the concubine, was circumcised at that age..."[92]

The ritual of casting arrows in front of Hubal was in itself Abrahamic. The image of Abraham holding these arrows was actually painted inside the Ka'ba, and when Mecca was conquered by the Muslims, Muḥammad ordered it to be erased.[93]

The Ka'ba was the site where the offering of Abraham's son was believed to have taken place. This is indicated, to begin with, in the reports about an ancient, dried up, pair of horns of the ram (*kabsh*) which Abraham had allegedly hung on the spout of the Ka'ba till the days of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr when they disintegrated.[94] A similar pair of horns, claimed to be of the same significance, was hung in the Dome of the Rock since the days of 'Abd al-Malik, which reflects, of course, the view locating the Abrahamic sanctuary in Jerusalem. The 'Abbāsids, however, are said to have transferred these horns to the Ka'ba.[95] That the motive of the offering of Abraham's son was well-known already

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89 Ibn Hishām, I, 160-161. See also Azraqī, 73; 'Adawī, 41[a].

90 E.g., Wellhausen, *Reste*, 174 ff.

91 E.g., Ibn Sa'd, I, 47, 51; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 175. Cf. also *Fatḥ al-bārī*, XI, 74 ff.; Bukhārī, VIII, 81; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 114 ff.; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I, 416.

92 Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book I, chap. XII/2.

93 Ibn Hisham, IV, 55; Azraqī, III, 113; Wāqidī, II, 834.

94 E.g., Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 189, 194; idem, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 53; 'Adawī, 60[b]; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, V, 284; *Qiṣaṣ*, 80, 82; Rubin, "Ka'ba", note 142.

95 Wāsiṭī, 75-76; *Itḥāf al-akhiṣṣā'*, I, 225, 244; *Uns*, I, 275.

in pre-*hijra* Mecca is indicated by the fact that it occurs in a Meccan sūra (XXXVII/102-111). It is also dealt with in poetic verses of Umayya b. Abī l-Ṣalt, which appear to be entirely independent of the Quran.[96] Muslim tradition is not unanimous concerning the exact place of the sacrifice. One tradition states that Abraham slaughtered the ram "at the *Maqām*",[97] but most traditions locate the whole scene in Minā, the most notable Arabian slaughter area near Mecca, where sacrificial rites were performed on each pilgrimage since pre-Islamic times.[98] As is to be expected, another set of traditions locates this crucial Abrahamic episode in *Bayt al-Maqdis*.[99]

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96 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 195; *Qiṣaṣ*, 83.

97 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 55.

98 Some traditions mention specific sites at Minā, e.g., Mount Thabīr, the *Jamarāt*, etc. For these traditions see the commentaries on Quran XXXVII/107, and especially Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 51 ff.; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, V, 280 ff. See also Fākihī, 515[b] ; Azraqī, 401; *Qirā*, 540, 665 (where Masjid al-Kabsh in Minā is mentioned). The prophet is said to have slaughtered in Minā in the slaughter place of Abraham. See *Qirā*, 448. Some of the traditions do not specify the name of Abraham's son, whereas others say it was Isaac, in contrast to traditions naming Ishmael. For traditions naming Isaac see also Zurqānī, I, 98; Azraqī, 401; Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 192[a] ; *Qirā*, 448. For traditions naming Ishmael see also *Mustadrak*, II, 556; *Qiṣaṣ*, 82, 83; Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 74[a]. The view identifying Abraham's son with Ishmael was the origin of Muḥammad's epithet: *Ibn al-Dhabīḥayni* (son of the two offered persons, namely Ishmael and 'Abdallāh). See e.g., Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 74[a] ; idem, Tübingen, 70[a] ; 'Ajlūnī, *Kashf*, I, 199; Ḥalabī, I, 37; Zurqānī, I, 97-98; Rāzī, XXVI, 153; *Mustadrak*, II, 554; *Qiṣaṣ*, 81; *Uns*, 41; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'iṣ*, I, 112-113.

99 E.g., Muqātil, II, 112[b] ; Rāzī, XXVI, 155. Cf. Zurqānī, I, 98. Partisans of this view would, of course, name Isaac as the offered son, claiming that he was never in Arabia. For the discussion of these matters see Rāzī, XXVI, 153; Zurqānī, I, 98; *Mustadrak*, II, 555; *Uns*, I, 41.

The pre-Islamic Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba is clearly demonstrated in the belief that Abraham's footprints could be seen on one of its sacred stones. This belief is reflected in the very early verses attributed to Abū Ṭālib in which numerous pre-Islamic places of worship are described in a manner which is totally independent of the phraseology of later Islamic sources. The verse referring to Abraham's footprints reads:[100]

wa-mawṭi'i Ibrāhīma fī l-ṣakhri raṭbatun /
'alā qadamayhi ḥāfiyan ghayra nā'ilī
By Abraham's footprint in the rock still fresh /
with both feet bare, without sandals

Later on, Muslim tradition applied to the stone bearing Abraham's footprints the Quranic epithet "*Maqām Ibrāhīm*".[101]

Even the view that the *ḥaram*, i.e., the sacred territory of Mecca, was founded by Abraham may be regarded as pre-Islamic in origin. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d. 245H/859) has recorded in his *Munammaq* a remarkable report saying that Quraysh once asked Thaqīf to become their partners in the Meccan *ḥaram*, in return for equal partnership of Quraysh in the territory of Wajj which was owned by Thaqīf. Thaqīf refused saying: "How can you be partners in a land in which our father settled, and dug it out of the rocks with his bare hands, without iron tools. And you have not founded the *ḥaram* by yourselves. It was Abraham who founded it."[102] In other words, Thaqīf maintained that Quraysh had no right to make transactions with the Meccan land due to its Abrahamic sacredness. Later on, Muḥammad established the *ḥaram* of Medina on the model of the Abrahamic *ḥaram* of Mecca.[103]

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100 Ibn Hishām, I, 292. Tr. Guillaume, 123.

101 For the Islamic legends explaining the circumstances of these footprints see *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Maḳām Ibrāhīm" (M.J. Kister).

102 *Munammaq*, 280: *...kayfa nushrikukum fī wādin nazalahu abūnā wa-ḥafarahu bi-yadayhi fī l-ṣakhri lam yaḥfirhu bi-l-ḥadīd..wa-antum lam taj'alū l-ḥarama innamā ja'alahu Ibrāhīm...*

103 E.g., Wāqidī, I, 22, before Badr.

The pre-Islamic sacred position of Quraysh as *ahlu llāh* (above, note 63) was also based on Abrahamic elements. Some early verses ascribed to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib deal with the divine protection under which Mecca, the Ka'ba and Quraysh were put. One of these verses reads:[104]

naḥnu ahlu llāhi fī baldatihī /
lam yazal dhāka 'alā 'ahdi [A]braham
We are the people of Allāh in His town /
this has always been according to Abraham's covenant.

Generally speaking, the pre-Islamic Arabs seem to have been well aware of their genealogical descent from Abraham and Ishmael, and, in fact, the authority of Quraysh among the rest of the Arab tribes was based on this descent. Ibn Ḥabīb, for instance, reports that the people of Muḍar used to say: "Quraysh carried out for us the obligation of the *dīn* which Ishmael bequeathed us" (*qaḍat 'annā Quraysh madhammata mā awrathanā Ismā'īl mina l-dīn*).[105] Similarly, Ibn Isḥāq reports that the Arabs recognized that Quraysh were their leaders and that they were the noblest descendants of Ishmael (*ṣarīḥ wuld Ismā'īl*).[106] The immediate motivation for the circulation of such reports may have been the apologetic wish to stress the *faḍā'il* of Quraysh, but it may again be stressed that even *faḍā'il* material does not have to consist only of lies. In view of the rest of the material adduced in this paper there does not seem to be any serious reason for doubting the authenticity of the reports about the pre-Islamic Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba and Quraysh.

4. The origin of the idea of the "House of Abraham"

The view that the Ka'ba was the sacred "House of Abraham" is indeed very early. Its origins may be traced back to the *Book of*

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104 Ya'qūbī, I, 253. See also Azraqī, 96; Fākihī, 416[a]; 'Adawī, 52[a]. Cf. Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 69.

105 *Muḥabbar*, 264; Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm", 128.

106 Ibn Hishām, IV, 205.

Jubilees.[107] In chapter XXII Abraham addresses Jacob (!) saying (verse 24 ff): "This house have I built for myself that I might put my name upon it on the earth; it is given to thee and to thy seed for ever, and it will be named the house of Abraham; it is given to thee and to thy seed for ever; for thou wilt build my house and establish my name before God forever..." It seems that in this passage Jacob is actually ordered to build an eternal sanctuary named "the House of Abraham."[108] In chapter XXXII Jacob actually sets out to accomplish this task. The place he chooses is Beth El. He plans to build this place and to surround it with a wall and make it an eternal sanctuary for himself and for his seed. But that night he has a vision. An angel shows him seven tablets on which is written the history of all generations to come. The angel says to him (verse 22): "...do not build this place, and do not make it an eternal sanctuary, and do not dwell here, for this is not the place..."[109] In this passage it is stressed that Beth El was not destined to be the place for the eternal Abrahamic sanctuary, but the right place is not specified. The appropriate place for it, according to the prevalent Jewish concept, was on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, where Solomon built the Temple (2 Ch, III/1). This place was said to have been the site of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. XXII/1). The messianic idea of the building of the "House of Abraham" as formulated in *Jubilees* could easily have been known in pre-Islamic Arabia through the Abyssinian Christians for whom

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107 R.H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, London 1917. Some of the relevant passages in *Jubilees* were already noticed by S.D. Goitein. See his *Ha-islām shel Muḥammad*, Jerusalem, 1966 (in Hebrew), pp. 166-167.

108 Charles, op. cit., 126 note 3, remarks that "House" throughout this passage means "family"; but the general context implies that the passage deals with the actual building of a sanctuary. And see also Goitein, loc. cit.

109 The Hebrew translation by Hartom (Tel Aviv, 1969) reads: ...ואל תשב במקום הזה, כי לא יהיה המקום הזה לְךָ לבית אברהם אביך... "...Do not dwell in this place; for this place will not be for you the House of Abraham your father." This seems most plausible, but the Ethiopic version as translated by Charles reads: "...and do not dwell here; for this is not the place. Go to the house of Abraham thy father..." This seems to imply לְךָ לבית instead of Hartom's לְךָ לבית.

this book was sacred. Thus the Arabian monotheistic adherents of "*dīn Ibrāhīm*" in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina could quite naturally locate their own "House of Abraham" in the most notable sanctuary of the area, the Ka'ba.

This location was also shared by some Jews. 'Abdallah b. Salām, a well known Jew of Medina, (Qaynuqā')[110] belonged to those monotheistic groups who finally embraced Islam. He seems to have been closer to the *ḥanīf*s than to the majority of the Jews in this, that he regarded the Ka'ba as the House of Abraham. This is indicated in the following tradition which says that 'Abdallāh b. Salām once told the Jewish leaders of Medina: "I wish to visit the mosque of *our father Abraham.*" Thereupon he went to Mecca where he happened to meet Muḥammad by whom he was deeply impressed.[111] But for the majority of the Jews of Arabia, the "House of Abraham" was not in Mecca. When Muḥammad diverted his *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca, the leaders of the Medinan Jews reportedly told him that if he claimed to be an adherent of *dīn Ibrāhīm* he must return to the former *qibla.*[112] This means that for those Jews the *qibla* of the true religion of Abraham was Jerusalem.[113]

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110 See about him *Iṣāba*, IV, 118 ff.

111 Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 410. See also Rubin, "Ṣamad", 208. For other traditions in which some Arabian Jews refer to the Ka'ba as the House of their father Abraham see Ibn Hishām, I, 25 (Jews of Medina addressing the Tubba'). Some other Jews who collaborated with Abū 'Āmir took part in a ritual ceremony in which they entered under the clothes of the Ka'ba pressing their bodies against its walls (see p. 94 above). Christians as well may have venerated the Ka'ba, towards which some of them reportedly used to pray. See Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 143: *...ṣallat al-naṣārā naḥwa l-Ka'ba ḥawlayni qabla qudūmi l-nabī (ṣ).*

112 Ibn Hishām ,II, 199. See also Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 142.

113 And see *Itḥāf al-akhiṣṣā'*, I, 181: *...li-annahum kānū yaz'umūna qiblat Ibrāhīm kānat Bayt al-Maqdis.*

ABBREVIATIONS

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