

# Was Arabian Idol Worship Declining on the Eve of Islam?\*

The role of idol worship is of crucial importance for the study of Arabia on the eve of Islam. The very existence of the Arabian idols has recently been questioned, but the thorough investigation of the primary sources undertaken here suggests that their existence is beyond doubt.<sup>1</sup> A great many idols of various kinds must have been known all over Arabia. Idolatry was perhaps in retreat in other places, but in Arabia it showed no signs of weakening. It may well be impossible to gauge the Arabs' devotion to their idols, but it stands to reason that their worship formed a major obstacle for Muḥammad both in Mecca and in Medina.

The rejection of idol worship is a permanent element in the accounts of the pre-Islamic *ḥanīfs*. Idols also appear in legendary and stereotypical conversion stories of the Prophet's Companions who lived in various parts of Arabia. I shall argue that the details regarding the idols are reliable since they belong to the background information on which the stories were based. More significantly, in Medina, where the spiritual influence of the dominant Jewish population was considerable, idol worship flourished on every level of tribal organization. If idol worship flourished in Medina, it flourished everywhere, or in any case in the Arabian settlements; there is no indication that the people of Medina were more devoted to their idols than the people of other places. Claims in the primary sources purporting to reflect indifference to idols among the Jāhilī Arabs must be considered apologetic and tendentious.

It is widely assumed that on the eve of Islam idol worship in Arabia was in decline and hence did not form a major challenge for Muḥammad. Nöldeke ascribed the ease with which the Arabs gave up idol worship to the spiritual progress that they had achieved before the rise of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Wellhausen argued that the

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<sup>1</sup>G.R. Hawting (see Abbreviations) is of the opinion that the Qur'anic *mushrikūn* were not real idolaters but monotheists. See Y. Dutton's review of Hawting's recent book in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12,ii (2001), 177–179.

<sup>2</sup>“Die Araber hatten bis zum Anfang des 7. Jahrhunderts ausserordentliche geistige Fortschritte gemacht wie nicht leicht ein Volk in so ungünstigen Wohnsitzen. Sie waren ihrer alten Religion entwachsen und liessen diese daher fast ohne Widerstand fallen, als sich ihnen der

Meccans clung to idol worship mainly because they were concerned about their livelihood; conversion was a political rather than a religious matter, yet when a person converted, his pagan tribe stood by him when others fought against him.<sup>3</sup> Goldziher approvingly quoted Dozy's words that "religion, of whatever kind it may have been, generally had little place in the life of the Arabs, who were engrossed in worldly interests like fighting, wine, games and love".<sup>4</sup> Goldziher, basing himself on the testimony of Arabic poetry, had in mind the tribes of central Arabia whose religious concept he contrasted with the religious monuments of South Arabia. Nicholson argued: "Religion had so little influence on the lives of the Pre-Islamic Arabs that we cannot expect to find much trace of it in their poetry . . . . Of real piety the ordinary Bedouin knew nothing. He felt no call to pray to his gods, although he often found them convenient to swear by. He might invoke Allah in the hour of need, as a drowning man will clutch at a straw; but his faith in superstitious ceremonies was stronger. He did not take his religion too seriously . . .".<sup>5</sup> However, Levi Della Vida correctly observed that the poetry and stories of battles from which we draw what we know of the life of the Arabs before Islam are not a true reflection of bedouin life and the verses which attribute religious indifference to the famous warriors should not be trusted.<sup>6</sup>

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Islām mächtig imponierend darbot. Allderdings, im Vorbeigehn gesagt, vertauschten auch die meisten christlichen Araber ihr Christenthum ohne jedes Bedenken mit dem Islām, der ihrem Wesen viel besser zusagte"; see Nöldeke's review of Wellhausen's *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (henceforward: *Reste*) in *ZDMG* 41 (1887), 707–26, at 720.

<sup>3</sup>*Reste*, 220–21, and passim. Lammens agreed with Wellhausen regarding the weakness of religious feeling; *l'Arabie occidentale*, 139, 181. Buhl too mentioned in this context the indifference of the business-minded Meccans; Buhl, *Leben*, 93. Paret did not think that the idols and their indifferent followers who only wanted to cling to their fathers' beliefs posed a serious challenge for Muḥammad. He interpreted the passivity of the Arabs when their idols were destroyed at the time of Muḥammad as follows: "Die altarabischen Glaubensvorstellungen waren schon lange verblaßt, bevor sie endgültig durch den Islam abgelöst wurden"; Paret, *Mohammed und der Koran*, 18. Paret was surprised that of all places Muḥammad should have appeared among the businessmen of Mecca; *ibid.*, 23. Stummer argued: "Ja, schon Muhammad traf auf ein Heidentum, dessen geistige Kraft bereits gebrochen und erlahmt war, denn offenbar waren die Einflüsse, die vom Judentum und Christentum auf das vorislamische Arabertum ausstrahlten, nicht unwirksam gewesen"; Stummer, "Bemerkungen zum Götzenbuch des Ibn al-Kalbī", 393–94. Arafat remarks: "...[A]ny idea of religion as such was very vague, and the majority of the bedouins, as the Qur'ān testifies, were finding it difficult to acquire intelligent as well as deep faith. Possible direct benefit played a large part in their belief"; Arafat, "Fact and fiction", 20.

<sup>4</sup>*Muslim Studies*, I, 12.

<sup>5</sup>Nicholson, *Literary History*, 135.

<sup>6</sup>Levi Della Vida, *Les sémites et leur rôle dans l'histoire religieuse*, 89–90. He is quoted by Henninger in connection with the common claim regarding the religious indifference of the Bedouins: pre-Islamic poetry is rigid, conventional and limited with regard to its choice of subjects; Henninger, "Pre-Islamic bedouin religion", 7–8. See also Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 176 (poetry fails to provide details on the religious life of the Bedouin because religious themes were not among the motives of the *qaṣīda*). Still, while idols are rarely encountered in poetry, Allāh is mentioned very often, among others by poets who had no link

# 1 Conversion stories involving idols

Idols appear in many autobiographical accounts which are in fact conversion stories, describing the road of certain Companions of Muḥammad to Islam. In general outline these accounts are often stereotypical and formulaic, but the evidence they contain regarding idols provides background information which by definition is more reliable than the rest of the account. Conversion stories are a fine source of evidence about idol worship because they do not belong to Ibn al-Kalbī's much quoted *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, nor are they part of Islamic heresiography. The stories were usually preserved by the Companions' descendants and were in fact family traditions. It would be unrealistic to anticipate that the ideological element would be lacking in them, but the details regarding the idol, above all the fact of its existence, form solid evidence and should not be doubted. At some stage the autobiographical accounts found their way into compilations that have a strong ideological framework, namely *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa* or *Proofs of Muḥammad's Prophethood*. But this secondary usage does not detract from their value for the study of Arabian society. Some of the stories about the conversion of pagan Arabs (for example, the accounts about the *wufūd* or the tribal delegations that visited Muḥammad) do not contain references to idols. But this does not indicate that some tribes had idols while others did not, or that their idols are intentionally hidden from the reader. Simply, the tribal informants concentrated on other themes, or their original accounts were later curtailed by compilers who found them too long for their purposes. Clearly, the tribesmen conceived of Muḥammad's message as an antithesis to idol worship.<sup>7</sup>

In Islamic historiography the original sources of the reports are often missing because the compilers or copyists omitted them. Luckily, some sources meticulously record the earliest authorities, thereby showing that the reports originated with members of the tribes involved.

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to Muḥammad, either because they lived before his time or because they were not influenced by him. This would demonstrate not only that religious elements can be found in pre-Islamic poetry, but also the decline of idol worship; Krone, *ibid.*, 183–86. However, Krone remarks, this “argument from silence” is not decisive: pre-Islamic poetry could easily be “Islamized” and manipulated. Krone realizes that the affair of the “Satanic verses” contradicts the assumption that idol worship at the time of Muḥammad was in decline (“stark im Niedergang”), and hence unconvincingly interprets it as a political rather than a religious affair; 204–207. Andrae, however, found in Arabia “an undeveloped polytheism, in which a development had just barely begun which would have gradually produced a pantheon consisting of a hierarchy of gods, formed by associating together a number of independent individual divinities”; Andrae, *Mohammed*, 16–17.

<sup>7</sup>The delegation of the Nahd declared: *bari'nā ilayka yā rasūla llāh minā l-wathan wa-l-athan*; *Usd al-ghāba*, III, 66 (printed: *wa-l-ʿanan*). *ʿAthan* is interpreted as a small idol (*al-ṣanām*), while *wathan* means a big one; *Lisān al-ʿarab*, s.v. The Khawlān delegation promised Muḥammad that upon returning home, they would destroy their idol *ʿUmyānis*; Goldfeld, “*ʿUmyānis the idol of Khawlān*”, 110–11.

## 1.1 Conversion stories of Qurashīs from Mecca

Conversion stories concerning Medina will be discussed in the latter part of the study. Let us first turn to Mecca. The conversion stories that demonstrate the multitude of household idols in Mecca are invariably associated with Muḥammad's conquest of his hometown. The ideological dimension is not absent: Muḥammad purified Mecca of the polytheistic cult, precisely as his ancestor Quṣayy ibn Kilāb had done five generations earlier, when he drove out the corrupt Khuḏā'a. But without the factual underpinning, the ideological claim would have collapsed.

Wāqidī adduces several reports about the destruction of household idols. They are no doubt invented and aim at providing their protagonists with Islamic credentials; but the background details figuring in them are trustworthy.

One report (< Sa'īd ibn 'Amr al-Hudhalī) begins with a general statement and provides a specific example. After the conquest of Mecca, Muḥammad's announcer proclaimed that those who believed in Allāh and his messenger had to break up every idol (*ṣanam*) in their houses. The Muslims started to break them. Now whenever 'Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl (of the Makhzūm) heard of an idol in one of the houses of Quraysh, he went there in order to break it up. In the Jāhiliyya, the report goes on, Abū Tijrāt (below, 37) used to make and sell them. At this point Sa'īd (printed: Sa'd) ibn 'Amr al-Hudhalī adds that his informant told him that he had seen Abū Tijrāt manufacturing and selling them. Every Qurashī in Mecca had an idol in his house (*wa-lam yakun rajul min Quraysh bi-Makka illā wa-fī baytihi ṣanam*).

According to the following report in Wāqidī (< Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im), the announcer proclaimed that every idol had to be broken up or burnt and that it was forbidden to sell it (*wa-thamanuhu ḥarām*, i.e. to be used as firewood). Jubayr himself had seen the idols being carried around Mecca (i.e., by peddlers); the Bedouin would buy them and take them to their tents (*wa-qad kuntu arā qabla dhālika l-aṣnām yuṭāfu bihā [bi-]Makka fa-yashtarihā ahlu l-badw fa-yakhrujūna bihā ilā buyūtihim*). Every Qurashī had an idol at home. He stroked it when he entered and when he left, to draw a blessing from it.<sup>8</sup>

Wāqidī presents a report (< 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Suhayl) according to which when Hind bint 'Utba embraced Islam, she started striking an idol in her house with an adze (*qadūm*), cutting oblong pieces from it (*fildha fildha*). As she was doing this, she kept saying: "We have been deceived by you" (*kunnā minka fī ghurūr*).<sup>9</sup> Hind's idol was no doubt made of wood, and she was probably us-

<sup>8</sup>See also Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 61 (*wa-nādā munādī rasūli llāh man kāna fī baytihi ṣanam fa-l-yaksirhu fa-kasarū l-aṣnām*).

<sup>9</sup>Wāqidī, II, 870–71. See Guillaume, "Stroking an idol". On the magical power of the *maṣḥ* see also Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 395; Kohlberg, "Vision and the Imams", 150–51. Abraham circumcised himself using the same tool; Kister, "'And he was born circumcised'", 10–11 (where it is rendered pick-axe).

ing the tool with which it had been carved. The inventors of the reports about ‘Ikrima and Hind wished to emphasize the zeal of the new converts. Hind was Abū Sufyān’s wife and Mu‘āwiya’s mother, and hence the Umayyad court attempted to elevate her image. A (pseudo-)autobiographical report with a distinctly Umayyad chain of transmitters including the caliphs ‘Umar II, Marwān I and Mu‘āwiya — quoting his mother — elaborates on Hind’s road from idol worship to Islam. The centerpiece of this report is a dream which continues for three nights. On the first night she was in pitch darkness when the Prophet appeared to her in a beam of light. On the second night she was on the road, with the idols Hubal and Isāf calling her on both sides and the Prophet in front of her, showing her the right path. On the third night she found herself on the brink of Gehenna. Hubal called on her to enter while the Prophet seized her by the clothes from behind. In the morning she went to an idol in her house. As she struck it she said: “You have misled me for a long time”! Then she converted to Islam at the Prophet’s hands and pledged her allegiance to him.<sup>10</sup>

It would be naive to see this as a precise account of historical fact; but we only need the background information which clearly supports the testimony of other reports on the popularity of small household idols in pre-Islamic Mecca. The informants did not invent the setting of these reports: idols were found in every Meccan household.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 More conversion stories

**Kalb:** ‘Iṣām al-Kalbī, the custodian of ‘Amra ‘Iṣām, a Kalbī of the ‘Āmir ibn ‘Awf subdivision, was the custodian of a tribal idol called ‘Amra (read: ‘Amr?). No further details are given about ‘Iṣām, probably because the report was not preserved by one of his descendants but by members of another family. ‘Amr ibn Jabala ibn Wā’ila al-Kalbī reports that they had an idol (*kāna lanā ṣanam* — the wording suggests that it was a tribal idol) whose custodian (*tawallā nuskahu*) was called ‘Iṣām. The existence of a custodian again indicates that this was a tribal idol, not a household one. One day they heard a voice from within the idol which announced that idol worship had come to an end, following which ‘Amr and ‘Iṣām went to Muḥammad and embraced Islam.<sup>12</sup> ‘Amr ibn Jabala is

<sup>10</sup>Ibn ‘Asākir, LXX, 177 (*ṭāla mā kuntu minka illā fī ghurūr*). See also Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 237. Cf. the inferior reading in *Iṣāba*, VIII, 156 (*kunnā ma‘aka fī ghurūr*). Hind and ‘Ikrima’s wife appear at the beginning of the list of Qurashī women who after the conquest of Mecca swore allegiance to Muḥammad; Ibn ‘Asākir, LXX, 179.

<sup>11</sup>Fahd wrongly assumed that the idols in question were made of stone and that ‘Ikrima was their manufacturer; Fahd, *Le panthéon*, 26–27, 29–30. Cf. Höfner, “Die vorislamischen Religionen Arabiens”, 359: “Die Idole als solche waren Steine” etc.

<sup>12</sup>*Iṣāba*, IV, 501 (quoting Khargūshī’s *Sharaf al-muṣṭafa*). The entry is entitled “‘Iṣām ibn ‘Āmir al-Kalbī” although I could find no support for his father’s name. He was *min Banī Fāris*(?). ‘Amr’s son, ‘Abd, appears to have played some role here, otherwise there would have been no entry on him in the *Iṣāba*. According to the entry, Wā’ila’s father was called al-Julāḥ;

listed by Ibn al-Kalbī and Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām among those who paid a formal visit to the Prophet (*wafada*).<sup>13</sup> The listing was probably based on ‘Amr’s own report.

‘Amr was the grandfather of one of the most influential figures in Umayyad administration, namely Sa‘īd ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Amr al-Abrash al-Kalbī who was Hishām’s *ḥājib*.<sup>14</sup> In another perhaps more trustworthy pedigree of al-Abrash his grandfather’s name is not ‘Amr but ‘Abd ‘Amr; this may suggest that the idol’s name was in fact ‘Amr rather than ‘Amra.<sup>15</sup> A variant of the account on the idol gives the custodian no role. Rather, the voice from within the idol addresses Bakr/‘Abd ‘Amr himself.<sup>16</sup> The report was recorded by Ibn al-Kalbī whose informants were al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Amr and others. If indeed al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Amr directly reported to Ibn al-Kalbī, he could not have been the protagonist’s son.<sup>17</sup>

At all events, by tracing al-Abrash’s pedigree we can identify the ‘Āmir ibn ‘Awf among whom the idol ‘Amra (or ‘Amr) was found: ‘Āmir al-Akbar ibn ‘Awf ibn Bakr ibn ‘Awf ibn ‘Udhra, more precisely ‘Āmir al-Julāḥ ibn ‘Awf ibn Bakr ibn ‘Awf ibn ‘Āmir al-Akbar.<sup>18</sup> ‘Abd ‘Amr’s brother, al-Nu‘mān, who was a military commander of his tribe, is said to have come to the Prophet with his brother.<sup>19</sup>

One cannot help suspecting that the influential Abrash strove to secure for his ancestor a place among the Prophet’s Companions. However, the evidence concerning the idol’s existence must be reliable.

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*Iṣāba*, IV, 387 (printed here Wā’il instead of Wā’ila).

<sup>13</sup>*Iṣāba*, IV, 613 (again, Wā’il instead of Wā’ila; Wā’il’s father was Qays ibn Bakr; see al-Abrash’s pedigree below, where these two appear together with al-Julāḥ). Abū ‘Ubayd may have been the compiler of a monograph on *wufūd*. For a possible quotation from this presumed monograph see *Iṣāba*, I, 456, s.v. Jabala ibn Thawr al-Ḥanafī.

<sup>14</sup>*Iṣāba*, IV, 613 (the “ibn” between “Sa‘īd” and “al-Abrash” is superfluous).

<sup>15</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Nasab Ma‘add*, II, 608 (printed Sa‘d instead of Sa‘īd). A longer pedigree of al-Abrash makes him a great-great-grandson of ‘Abd ‘Amr rather than his grandson: Sa‘īd ibn Bakr ibn ‘Abd Qays ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd ‘Amr ibn Jabala ibn Wā’il ibn Qays ibn Bakr ibn al-Julāḥ (he is referred to as Hishām’s *wazīr*); Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 458. But the words “ibn Bakr ibn ‘Abd Qays” are superfluous; he could not have had a grandfather called ‘Abd Qays who lived in the Islamic period. See al-Abrash’s full pedigree in Ibn ‘Asākir, VII, 295.

<sup>16</sup>This of course cannot be reconciled with the claim that it was Muḥammad who changed his name to Bakr.

<sup>17</sup>The idol is called here ‘Ayr, var. ‘Amr; Ibn Manda, quoting Ibn al-Kalbī, in *Iṣāba*, I, 322. See an entry on Bakr/‘Abd ‘Amr in Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqa al-rābi‘a*, 851–52. Ibn Sa‘d is quoted in Ibn ‘Asākir, VII, 298. In *Usd al-ghāba*, I, 203 (with reference to the Companion dictionaries of Ibn Manda and Abū Nu‘aym), the idol’s name is ‘.th.r.

<sup>18</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Nasab Ma‘add*, II, 607–608; Caskel, I, no. 289.

<sup>19</sup>*Iṣāba*, VI, 441 (where the *nisba* al-‘Udhri is misleading). For a reference to al-Nu‘mān as Ibn al-Julāḥ see Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq*, 541.

**Juhayna: the former custodian ʿAmr ibn Murra** Under *wafd Juhayna* Ibn Saʿd quotes two reports, both from Ibn al-Kalbī. The former deals with two persons while the latter deals with one and refers to idol worship. Ibn al-Kalbī quotes Khālīd ibn Saʿīd < an unspecified man from the Juhayna, more precisely the Duhmān < his father who was a Companion < ʿAmr ibn Murra: “We had an idol and we used to worship it (*nuʿazzimuhu*). I was its custodian and when I heard about the Prophet I demolished it and set out for the Prophet in Medina”.<sup>20</sup> The words “we had an idol” indicate that the idol in question belonged to a tribal group, which is also shown by the existence of a custodian. ʿAmr’s custodianship is not a matter of embarrassment for the tribal informant; on the contrary, it is a source of pride because the shift of the former functionary from idolatry to Islam involved a sacrifice on his part, unlike the conversion of rank and file idol worshippers.

**ʿUdhra: Ziml ibn ʿAmr and Ḥumām** The idol of the ʿUdhra, Ḥumām, is associated with the conversion to Islam of Ziml ibn ʿAmr al-ʿUdhri. Under *wafd ʿUdhra* Ibn Saʿd adduces two reports. The former deals with the *wafd* as a whole (it included twelve members, four of whom are specified), while the latter, quoted from Ibn al-Kalbī < Sharqī ibn al-Quṭāmī < Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml ibn ʿAmr, deals only with the informant’s grandfather, Ziml ibn ʿAmr. For part of the report Ibn al-Kalbī relied on another informant, namely Abū Zufar al-Kalbī (possibly quoting the same family *isnād*). Ziml’s idol is not specified here. Ziml came to the Prophet and informed him about what he had heard from their idol. The Prophet replied: “This is a believer from among the *jinn*”.<sup>21</sup>

It was Ziml’s offspring who preserved the report on their ancestor’s idol. Elsewhere we find a report on this matter going back to Abū l-Ḥārith Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hānīʾ ibn Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml ibn ʿAmr < his father < his (father’s) father < his (father’s) grandfather < Ziml ibn ʿAmr. From this account, which is more detailed, we learn that the idol belonged to the ʿUdhra (and not to Ziml alone) and that its name was Ḥumām. More specifically, the idol was among (i.e., belonged to) the Hind ibn Ḥarām ibn Ḍinna ibn ʿAbd ibn Kabīr ibn ʿUdhra. It had a custodian called Ṭāriq and they used to sacrifice sheep (or goats, *yaʿtirūna*) near it.<sup>22</sup>

Ziml himself and some of his offspring had a prominent place in the Umayyad

<sup>20</sup>Ibn Saʿd, I, 333–34; Ibn ʿAsākir, XLVI, 343. ʿAmr abandoned the stone idols (*ālihat al-ahjār*), according to a verse of his attached to the report. In another report (*ibid.*, 344), the custodian was ʿAmr’s father.

<sup>21</sup>Ibn Saʿd, I, 332. The same report is quoted from Ibn Saʿd in Ibn ʿAsākir, XIX, 77. This source refers to an account in which Mudlij reports on the authority of his father, and Abū Zufar al-Kalbī is replaced by al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAmr ibn Juzayy (perhaps identical with Abū Zufar al-Kalbī) < his paternal uncle, ʿUmāra ibn Juzayy. In *Iṣāba*, II, 567, no. 2818, who quotes Ibn Saʿd, the text is garbled.

<sup>22</sup>Ibn ʿAsākir, XI, 489–490.

regime. Ziml received from Mu‘āwiya a court (*dār*) in Damascus and for a certain period was in charge of Mu‘āwiya’s *shurṭa*. He fought on his side in Şiffin, reportedly carrying the banner with which the Prophet had given him authority over his tribe. He was also one of Mu‘āwiya’s witnesses at the Arbitration and was killed at the Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ.<sup>23</sup> Under Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya he had been in charge of the *khātām*.<sup>24</sup>

The preservation of Ziml’s story continued for generations among his offspring, regardless of its incorporation into the general literary tradition. Tammām ibn Muḥammad adduced it in his *Fawā’id* on the authority of Abū l-Ḥārith Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hānī’ ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hānī’ ibn Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml < his fathers. In Tammām’s book the idol is called Khumām.<sup>25</sup> The family story which was probably written down at an early stage coexisted with the literary tradition. Thus Ziml’s grandson Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād transmitted his *ḥadīth* to his son, Hānī’, and to two non-family members: Sharqī ibn al-Quṭāmī and Yazīd ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Absī.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike Ziml’s banner which allegedly accompanied him from the time of Muḥammad to his death at Marj Rāhiṭ, Ḥumām’s marginal role in the background of the report lends reliability to the fact of the idol’s existence.

**Hudhayl: Sā‘ida al-Hudhalī and Suwā‘** Ibn Sa‘d quotes the following from Wāqidī < ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd (ibn Qanṭas) al-Hudhalī<sup>27</sup> < ‘Abdallāh ibn Sā‘ida al-Hudhalī < his father. Sā‘ida reports on a voice which he heard from “their idol” Suwā‘. Several Hudhalīs including himself were leading two hundred scabby sheep to the idol to ask for its blessing, but a voice calling from the idol’s belly (*jawf al-ṣanam*) announced that the deceit of the *jinn* was no longer effective: they were shot dead by falling stars because of a prophet called Aḥmad.<sup>28</sup> The idol or rather the *jinn* residing in it or associated with it had a healing power.<sup>29</sup> A similar report is quoted by Wāqidī from the same ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd al-Hudhalī < Sa‘īd ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhalī < his father. ‘Amr slaughtered upon their

<sup>23</sup>Ibn ‘Asākir, XIX, 76–77.

<sup>24</sup>Ibn ‘Asākir, XXI, 95. Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml who was a *sharīf* in Syria was married to Amīna bint ‘Abdallāh al-Qasrī, Khālīd’s sister; Ibn ‘Asākir, LVII, 189 (read al-Qasrī instead of al-Qushayrī); *Iṣāba*, II, 568.

<sup>25</sup>Ibn ‘Asākir, LII, 245; *Iṣāba*, II, 568. On Tammām ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Rāzī (d. 414/1023) see *GAS*, I, 226–27; al-Kattānī, *al-Risāla al-mustaṭrafa*, 71.

<sup>26</sup>Ibn ‘Asākir, LVII, 189.

<sup>27</sup>Ibn ‘Adī, *Du‘afā’*, IV, 1550.

<sup>28</sup>*Qad dhahaba kaydu l-jinn wa-rumīnā bi-l-shuhub li-nabī smuhu Aḥmad*; Ibn Sa‘d, I, 168. Cf. Ibn Sa‘d, I, 167 (*lammā bu‘itha Muḥammad ṣ duḥira l-jinn wa-rumū bi-l-kawākib, wa-kānu qabla dhālika yastami‘ūna*). Ibn Ḥajar who quotes this report from Abū Nu‘aym’s *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* brands the *isnād* “weak”; *Iṣāba*, III, 7–8.

<sup>29</sup>A *shayṭān* called Mis‘ar that used to talk to the people through idols was killed by believing *jinn*s, one of whom was Samḥaj; Abū Nu‘aym, *Dalā’il*, 109–10. The wording *hādḥa shayṭān yukallimu l-nās fī l-awthān* may suggest that it was not associated with a specific idol.



idol Suwāʿ the first slaughter animal which was a fat cow, and then he and the others heard a voice from within it announcing the appearance of a prophet in Mecca. When the Hudhalīs inquired about it in Mecca, only Abū Bakr could confirm the Prophet's appearance. The Hudhalīs refrained from embracing Islam there and then, which they later regretted.<sup>30</sup>

The entry on ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd al-Hudhalī in Ibn Ḥajar's Companion dictionary refers to three sources which adduce this report: Abū Nuʿaym's Companion dictionary, Abū Nuʿaym's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* (where there is a long version) and al-Khargushī's *Sharaf al-muṣṭafā*.<sup>31</sup>

So instead of Sāʿida al-Hudhalī it is ʿAmr (or ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd) al-Hudhalī and instead of sheep a cow. Whatever the case Hudhayl's association with Suwāʿ remains. Be it Sāʿida or ʿAmr, we have here a family report mainly interested in establishing a Companion status for the protagonist; the idol belongs to the background.

Suwāʿ was in wadi Naʿmān and hence could not have been identical with the other Suwāʿ which was located in wadi Ruhāt. The latter was worshipped by the Sulaym and the Hudhayl and had a Sulamī custodian (below, 15).<sup>32</sup> The former was worshipped by the Kināna, Hudhayl, Muzayna and ʿAmr ibn Qays ʿAylān. Its custodians were the Ṣāhila from the Hudhayl.<sup>33</sup>

**Saʿd ibn Bakr: Ḍimām ibn Thaʿlaba repudiates the idols** Under *wafd Saʿd ibn Bakr* Ibn Saʿd quotes from Wāqidī the story of Ḍimām ibn Thaʿlaba who arrived in Rajab 5 A.H. He returned to his people as a Muslim, having repudiated the idols.<sup>34</sup> Wāqidī is the source of the report according to which Ḍimām came in Rajab 5 A.H., forming the first Arab delegation that came to Muḥammad.<sup>35</sup> While Wāqidī dated his arrival to 5 A.H., Ibn Hishām, quoting Abū ʿUbayda,

<sup>30</sup>Ibn Saʿd, I, 167–68.

<sup>31</sup>*Iṣṣāba*, IV, 639.

<sup>32</sup>Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 255, mentions the Kināna alone as the owners of Suwāʿ, but perhaps the text is garbled.

<sup>33</sup>*Muḥabbar*, 316. In Lecker, *The Banū Sulaym*, 54, the statement associating Suwāʿ with wadi Naʿmān is presented as a variant report regarding its location; I now realize that there were two Suwāʿs not far from each other, which may have caused some confusion between them. Cf. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, 119–121 (on p. 121, read Ṣāhila instead of Ṣāḥāla). The most prominent member of the Ṣāhila was the Prophet's Companion ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd.

<sup>34</sup>*Qad khalaʿa l-andād*; Ibn Saʿd, I, 299. Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb and others dated his arrival to 5 A.H.; *Istīʿāb*, II, 752.

<sup>35</sup>*Wa-kāna awwal man qadīma min wafdi l-ʿarab*; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ghawāmiḍ*, I, 58. The *isnād* goes back to Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar, i.e., Wāqidī's son < his father. For an *isnād* including Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī < his father, see e.g. Abū Nuʿaym, *Iṣṣāḥān*, II, 44; al-Khaṭīb, *Mubhama*, 356. For an entry on Wāqidī's son see *Taʾrīkh Baghdad*, III, 196–97, s.v. Muḥammad ibn al-Wāqidī (he transmitted from his father, among other books, the latter's *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh*).

dated it to 9 A.H. Ibn Ḥajar, probably correctly, preferred the later date.<sup>36</sup>

Ḍimām began the report to his people on his visit to Muḥammad by cursing Allāt and al-‘Uzzā, and his shocked audience warned him of leprosy, elephantiasis and madness.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, these two idols, located in Ṭā’if and Nakhla respectively, were not far from the territory of the Sa’d ibn Bakr.

Several versions of Ḍimām’s story enjoy a high profile in Islamic literature where it is used in connection with certain legal questions. Hence it is accompanied by respectable *isnāds* rather than obscure tribal authorities.

**‘Uqayl: Abū Ḥarb ibn Khuwaylid al-‘Uqaylī remains pagan** Among the ‘Uqaylīs mentioned in Ibn Sa’d under the title *wafd ‘Uqayl ibn Ka’b* there was one who remained pagan, namely Abū Ḥarb ibn Khuwaylid ibn ‘Āmir ibn ‘Uqayl. He cast lots with arrows (*wa-ḍaraba bi-l-qidāh*) in order to decide between Islam and his own religion (*dīn*), and after the arrow of disbelief had come up three times, he did not convert.<sup>38</sup> Ibn Sa’d quotes the two reports on *wafd ‘Uqayl ibn Ka’b* including this one from Ibn al-Kalbī < a man of the ‘Uqayl < their elders (*ashyākh qawmihi*). Abū Ḥarb’s attitude as described in this account would not make him eligible for Companion status; yet Ibn Ḥajar includes him in the first category of Companions, i.e. among those whose Companion status is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* of any level of reliability, or is proven otherwise.<sup>39</sup>

This prominent warrior of the ‘Uqayl is evidently mocked with regard to his misguided attempt at divination; but there can be no doubt that the religion he chose to cling to was idolatry.

**Thaqīf and Allāt** The idol Allāt was a central theme in the negotiations between Muḥammad and the Thaqīf delegation that came to Medina in Ramaḍān 9 A.H. Ibn Sa’d’s report on *wafd Thaqīf* contains only this laconic reference: “They asked to be exempted from having to demolish Allāt and al-‘Uzzā [*sic*] by themselves, to which he [the Prophet] assented. Al-Mughīra ibn Shu’ba said: ‘And I was the one who demolished it’”.<sup>40</sup> His comment refers to Allāt. Indeed

<sup>36</sup>*Iṣāba*, III, 487. Note that in the report on Ḍimām in Ibn Hishām, IV, 219–21, there is no mention of Abū ‘Ubayda or the date of Ḍimām’s arrival. Wāqidī dated his arrival to the year of the Khandaq, after the departure of the *aḥzāb*; a third source dated his arrival to 7 A.H.; Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, IV, 144. Either Ḍimām or Bilāl ibn al-Ḥārith al-Muzanī formed the first *wafd* that came to Muḥammad; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Tamhīd*, XVI, 167.

<sup>37</sup>Ibn Hishām, IV, 220; Ibn Shabba, II, 521–23; Ṭabarī, I, 1722–24.

<sup>38</sup>Ibn Sa’d, I, 302. Contrast the famous story of Imru’ al-Qays’s breaking of the arrows of Dhū l-Khalāṣa in Tabāla. His forceful action is thought to have put an end to the practice of *istiḡsām* there; e.g. Ibn ‘Asākir, IX, 239 (*fa-lam yustaqsam ‘inda Dhī l-Khalāṣa ḥattā jā’a llāh bi-l-islām*).

<sup>39</sup>*Iṣāba*, VII, 88; Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 334. Abū Ḥarb demanded that his tribe be exempted from *‘ushr* and *ḥashr*; see on these terms Lecker, “Were customs dues levied at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad?”, 32–38 = no. VII in this volume.

<sup>40</sup>Ibn Sa’d, I, 313.

besides exemption from having to destroy their idols (plural) themselves they asked to keep Allāt for one year, but Muḥammad rejected the latter demand. Muḥammad's reply mentions *al-ṭāghīya* which is glossed as Allāt and al-ʿUzzā;<sup>41</sup> the mention of al-ʿUzzā in this context is superfluous and wrong.<sup>42</sup>

It is reported that after the conclusion of the treaty the Thaḳīf asked to keep Allāt for three years, and they kept on haggling until they came down to a respite of one month after their return to Ṭāʿif. But Muḥammad would not give them a postponement for a definite period.<sup>43</sup>

The core report in the relatively long chapter on *wafd Thaḳīf* in Ibn Shabba is from Mūsā ibn ʿUqba < Zuhri. One assumes that Zuhri based it on reports from Thaḳafī informants. Thaḳīf's idol is called here al-Rabba. The Thaḳīf feared that if it knew they were hastening to destroy it, it would kill their families. This fear was voiced by the delegation head, ʿAbd Yālīl, and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb replied that it was merely a stone which could not tell those who worshipped it from those who did not. When the delegation returned from Medina, its members visited Allāt before going to their homes. It was a sanctuary in the middle of Ṭāʿif which was veiled and received gifts of slaughter camels. They (i.e., the Thaḳīf) made it similar to the Kaʿba and worshipped it (*bayt kāna bayna ḡhrayi l-Ṭāʿif yustaru wa-yuhdā lahā [sic] l-hady, ḡāhaw bihi bayta llāh wa-kānū yaʿbudūnahā*). The Thaḳafīs did not believe that Allāt could be demolished and Mughīra ibn Shuʿba mocked them by pretending to have been struck by the idol upon his first blow. He then smashed the door and with the help of others levelled the sanctuary. Yet

<sup>41</sup>Kister, "Some reports concerning al-Ṭāʿif", 4=Baghawī, *Tafsīr*, IV, 140. Kister discussed the economic factor behind their demand, namely Thaḳīf's revenues from pilgrims; *ibid.*, 4–5=Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, X, 299. Note however that the report speaks of idols (plural) and does not specifically mention Allāt (*mattiʿnā bi-ālīhatinā sana ḡattā naʿkhudha mā yuhdā ilayhā fa-idhā akhadhnāhu kasarnāhā wa-aslamnā*). Muḡātil ibn Sulaymān's commentary, with regard to Qurʾān 17,73, also includes Allāt and al-ʿUzzā in Thaḳīf's demand; however, when they repeated it following the Prophet's hesitation, they only cited Allāt (*wa-an tumattiʿanā bi-ʾllāt wa-l-ʿUzzā sana wa-lā naksirahā* [sing.] *bi-aydīnā min ḡhayr an naʿbudahā li-yaʿrifā l-nās karāmatanā ʿalayka wa-faḡlanā ʿalayhim ... fa-ḡālū tumattiʿunā bi-ʾllāt sana*). The cunning Thaḳafīs advised Muḥammad what he should tell the other Arabs should they reprove him with regard to Thaḳīf's prerogative (*wa-in kāna bika malāmatu l-ʿarab fī kasr aḡnāmihim wa-tark aḡnāmīnā fa-qul lahum inna rabbī amaranī an uḡirra llāt bi-arḡihim sana*); Muḡātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, I, 217b–18a; Kister, "Some reports concerning al-Ṭāʿif", 6–7. Muḡātil does not mention his source for this report, but he could have taken it from his contemporary Kalbī; an abridged version of the same report in Ibn Shabba, II, 510–11, goes back to Kalbī. The wording of Thaḳīf's advice here is slightly different (*tumattiʿunā bi-ʾllāt sana, fa-in khashīta lāʾimata l-ʿarab fa-qulī llāh [!] amaranī rabbī bi-dhālīka*). Kalbī's report as found in Ibn Shabba was transmitted by Ḥammād ibn Salama; cf. an *isnād* in which Ḥammād quotes Kalbī in Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, XXIII, 163. Since Kalbī's report specifically refers to Qurʾān 17,73, it stands to reason that it is from Kalbī's *Tafsīr*.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. also Ibn Hishām, IV, 187: Abū Sufyān and al-Mughīra ibn Shuʿba are sent *ilā hadmi l-ṭāghīya*; in *Iṣāba*, V, 403, the name al-ʿUzzā was erroneously added: *li-hadmi l-ʿUzzā l-ṭāghīya*.

<sup>43</sup>Ibn Hishām, IV, 184–85; Wāḡidī, III, 968.

the *ṣāhib al-mafātīḥ* (i.e., the custodian)<sup>44</sup> thought that the foundation would be provoked and the aggressors would be swallowed up (*la-yaghḍabanna l-asās wa-la-yukhsafanna bihim*), so the foundation was dug up and the idol's jewels and covers (*thiyāb*) were taken out.<sup>45</sup> These details about Allāt are taken from Zuhri's report.<sup>46</sup>

The factual background of Mughīra's mock death at the hands of Allāt is the shock and bewilderment among the superstitious Thaqāfī. Most Thaqāfis, it is reported, did not believe that the idol was going to be demolished and considered it invulnerable.<sup>47</sup> Beforehand, an old Thaqāfī who still had a residue of idolatry in his heart declared the demolition of Allāt a touch-stone. A fellow Thaqāfī, ʿUthmān ibn Abī l-ʿĀṣ, replied that just like Allāt, al-ʿUzzā could not tell those who worshipped it from those who did not; Khālīd ibn al-Walīd destroyed it single-handedly. Also Isāf, Nāʾila, Hubal, Manāt and Suwāʿ were each destroyed by one person.<sup>48</sup>

Allāt's treasury included funds (*māl*) in gold and onyx in addition to jewels.<sup>49</sup> When the custodian expected the foundation to be provoked, Mughīra dug it up, reaching half a man's height. He reached the Ghabghab which is Allāt's treasury and they took out its jewels and cover, in addition to the perfume, gold or silver found there.<sup>50</sup>

We have further evidence regarding the treasury. Muḥammad paid out from *māl al-ṭāghīya* or *ḥulīyy l-Rabba* a debt of two hundred *mithqāl* of gold left by the murdered ʿUrwa ibn Masʿūd al-Thaqāfī. He did this at the request of ʿUrwa's son, Abū Mulayḥ. He also paid a debt of the same amount left by the former's brother, al-Aswad ibn Masʿūd, at the request of the latter's son, Qārib.<sup>51</sup> There were also other unspecified beneficiaries; part of the treasure was spent on weapons for the Jihād.<sup>52</sup>

The Kaʿba too had a treasury (*māl al-Kaʿba*), also referred to as *khizānat al-Kaʿba*. The *khizānat al-Kaʿba* was in the court (*dār*) of Shayba ibn ʿUthmān, as

<sup>44</sup>Wāqidī, III, 972, has *sādin*.

<sup>45</sup>Ibn Shabba, II, 499–515; Zuhri's report, 501–507. The passage on al-Rabba, 503–504, is garbled (*law taʿlami l-Rabba annaka turīdu hadmahā qatalat ahlīnā*). Read as in Wāqidī, III, 967 (*law taʿlami l-Rabba annā awdaʿnā fī hadmihā qatalat ahlānā*).

<sup>46</sup>The custom of visiting the idol upon returning from a journey is also mentioned elsewhere. Having embraced Islam, ʿUrwa ibn Masʿūd returned home without first visiting al-Rabba, which the Thaqāfis found unusual; Wāqidī, III, 960. They became suspicious when he did not approach Allāt and did not shave his head near it; *ibid.*, 961.

<sup>47</sup>*Lā tarā ʿāmmat Thaqīf annahā mahdūma wa-yazunnūna annahā mumtaniʿa*; Ibn Shabba, II, 506.

<sup>48</sup>Wāqidī, III, 970–71.

<sup>49</sup>Ibn Hishām, IV, 186.

<sup>50</sup>... *Balagha niṣf qāma wa-ʾntahā ilā l-Ghabghab khizānatihā wa-ʾntazaʿū ḥilyatahā wa-kuswatahā wa-mā fihā min ṭīb wa-min dhahab aw fidḍa*; Wāqidī, III, 972.

<sup>51</sup>Ibn Hishām, IV, 187; Wāqidī, III, 971; Ibn Saʿd, V, 504–505.

<sup>52</sup>Wāqidī, III, 972 (*wa-aʿtā ... Abā Mulayḥ wa-Qāriban wa-nāsan wa-jaʿala fī sabīli llāh wa-fī l-silāḥ minhā*).

we learn for example from the evidence on Ibn al-Zubayr's works in the Ka'ba.<sup>53</sup> The Prophet is supposed to have found seventy thousand ounces of gold in the pit (*jubb*) which was in the Ka'ba. Against 'Alī's advice to use this for his war expenses Muḥammad decided not to touch it and Abū Bakr followed his example.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere there are conflicting reports about the fate of the treasure after Muḥammad's conquest of Mecca.<sup>55</sup> Reportedly 'Umar too did not touch it. The Ka'ba's custodian at the time of Muḥammad, Shayba ibn 'Uthmān, who lived to the end of Mu'āwiya's caliphate, is quoted as protecting this institution. A man who donated money to the Ka'ba told him that had it been from his own money he would not have donated it. Shayba is supposed to have told him that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb took an oath to distribute the treasure, but changed his mind because Shayba convinced him not to do so. He told 'Umar that the Prophet and Abū Bakr who were more in need of it than 'Umar had not touched it.<sup>56</sup> The Ka'ba's treasury also served as a safe place for the storing of important documents. When caliph 'Umar II turned a court he owned in Mecca into a charitable endowment for the housing of pilgrims, he deposited the document in the treasury and instructed the custodians to look after the court.<sup>57</sup>

In short, the abolition of Allāt and the plundering of its treasury deprived the Thaqafīs of a central financial institution which may well have functioned as a bank, providing loans and guarantees. The Islamization of the Ka'ba made it possible for the Qurashīs in the rival town of Mecca to preserve their rival institution.

The tribal aspect is not absent from the reports about Allāt. The Thaqīf were divided into two rival subdivisions, the Aḥlāf or the allies, and the Mālīk. In the battle of Ḥunayn and during the siege of Ṭā'if by the Muslims, Qārib ibn al-Aswad carried the banner of the Aḥlāf.<sup>58</sup> There are two versions regarding the person who murdered 'Urwa ibn Mas'ūd: he was either of his own clan, the Aḥlāf, or of the Mālīk; Wāqidī preferred the latter version.<sup>59</sup>

Mughīra belonged to the Aḥlāf: those members of the Thaqīf delegation that visited the Prophet who were of the Aḥlāf lodged with him.<sup>60</sup> When Mughīra

<sup>53</sup>Azraqī, I, 207. See also *ibid.*, II, 253 (Shayba's court in which the Ka'ba's treasury was located was near *Dār al-Nadwa* and had a gate connecting it to the Ka'ba).

<sup>54</sup>Azraqī, I, 246–47.

<sup>55</sup>Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 61 (*wa-rawā ba'dhum anna rasūla llāh qasama mā kāna fī l-Ka'ba minā l-māl bayna l-muslimīna wa-qāla ākharūna aqarrahū*).

<sup>56</sup>Ibn 'Asākir, XXIII, 259–60 (*qad ra'ayā makānahu fa-lam yuḥarrikāhu wa-humā aḥwaju ilā l-māl minka*); cf. Azraqī, I, 245–46. The Jurhum unjustly took from the money donated to the Ka'ba; Ṭabarī, I, 1131 (*wa-akalū māla l-Ka'ba lladhī yuhdā ilayhā*).

<sup>57</sup>Azraqī, II, 241.

<sup>58</sup>*Iṣāba*, V, 403.

<sup>59</sup>Wāqidī, III, 961.

<sup>60</sup>Ibn Sa'd, I, 313. Mughīra's court in the Baqī' was granted to him by the Prophet (*khitta khattahā al-nabī ṣ lahu*); Wāqidī, III, 965. The usage of the term *khitta* with regard to Medina is unusual. Cf. *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Khitta*, where it is defined as a "piece of land marked out for building

demolished Allāt, he was sheltered by his clan, the Banū Mu‘attib.<sup>61</sup> Mu‘attib was Mughīra’s great-great-grandfather, as can be seen from the latter’s pedigree: Mughīra ibn Shu‘ba ibn Abī ‘Āmir ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Mu‘attib.<sup>62</sup> Mu‘attib was also the great-grandfather of two of the three Aḥlāf representatives in the Thaḳīf delegation, al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Amr ibn Wahb ibn Mu‘attib and Shuraḥbīl ibn Ghaylān ibn Salama ibn Mu‘attib. The delegation head, ‘Abd Yālīl, was from another branch of the Aḥlāf. Incidentally, the Prophet chose to appoint as the governor of Ṭā’if the youngest member of the delegation, the above mentioned ‘Uthmān ibn Abī l-‘Āṣ who was of the Mālik. For good measure, Muḥammad’s tax collector was of the Aḥlāf. More precisely, he was yet another great-grandson of Mu‘attib, Sālīf ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir ibn Mu‘attib.<sup>63</sup>

The custodians of Allāt were of the Aḥlāf. They were the Banū l-‘Ajlān ibn ‘Attāb ibn Mālik ibn Ka‘b; ‘Attāb may have been the first custodian.<sup>64</sup> Another source takes us one or two generations later by reporting that the custodians were the Banū Shubayl ibn al-‘Ajlān. One of them is specified, namely Munabbih ibn Shubayl.<sup>65</sup>

Surprisingly, there is yet another claim regarding the identity of the custodians. The family (*āl*) of Abū l-‘Āṣ of the Mālik (more precisely the Yasār ibn Mālik) were reportedly Allāt’s custodians.<sup>66</sup>

The rich evidence about the complicated negotiations with the Thaḳīf delegation and the demolition of Allāt’s sanctuary point to the idol’s central role both economically and spiritually. Thaḳīf’s request to be exempted from having to destroy it with their own hands can only be attributed to their deep emotional attachment to it, or at least to their superstitious belief in its power to cause mischief.

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upon”, a term used of the lands allotted to tribal groups and individuals in the garrison cities founded by the Arabs at the time of the conquests. Also the cousins Abū Mulayḥ ibn ‘Urwa and Qārib ibn al-Aswad lodged with him; Wāqidi, III, 962.

<sup>61</sup>Ibn Hishām, IV, 186; Wāqidi, III, 971–72.

<sup>62</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 387. The Thaḳafis murdered by Mughīra before he embraced Islam were of the Mālik; Wāqidi, III, 964–65.

<sup>63</sup>Wāqidi, III, 963; Kister, “Some reports concerning al-Ṭā’if”, 11; *Iṣāba*, III, 8.

<sup>64</sup>*Wa-ṣāḥibuhā minhum ‘Attāb ... thumma banūhu ba‘dahu*; Wāqidi, III, 972. Wellhausen thought that Mu‘attib and ‘Attāb were the same, but this is not the case; *Reste*, 31; Caskel, I, no. 118. See also Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 427–29.

<sup>65</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 388.

<sup>66</sup>*Muḥabbar*, 315. For Abū l-‘Āṣ’s pedigree see Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 266. The family in question played a significant role in Islam. The above mentioned ‘Uthmān ibn Abī l-‘Āṣ was the son of an Umayyad woman and at one time had an Umayyad wife. After officiating as Muḥammad’s governor in Ṭā’if, he had a prominent career. Muḥammad instructed him to locate the mosque of Ṭā’if at the former place of the idols (*haythu kānat ṭawāghīṭuhum*); Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, VIII, 255. The left minaret of the Ṭā’if mosque was later built on the site of Allāt; Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, XVII, 99.

**Sulaym: Rāshid ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi and Suwā’** Under *wafd Sulaym* Ibn Sa’d has three reports, the second of which deals with the former custodian of an idol belonging to the Sulaym, Rāshid ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi. His pagan name, Ghāwī ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā, was Islamized by the Prophet. Rāshid became convinced of the fallacy of idol worship when he saw two foxes urinating on the idol, following which he smashed it and came to the Prophet. The latter gave him a place called Ruhāt in which was a well called ‘Ayn al-Rasūl.<sup>67</sup> Whether or not we accept the background to Rāshid’s conversion, it clearly meant the repudiation of idol worship, probably depriving him of his livelihood. Ibn Sa’d does not specify his source of information regarding Rāshid, but the style is reminiscent of other reports of the same type.

A family tradition which goes back to Rāshid (no doubt via his offspring) is preserved. It was paraphrased by Samhūdī, but even in the abridged form it provides illuminating evidence. Rāshid’s report twice includes the expression *al-Ma‘lāt min Ruhāt*, or the upper part of wadi Ruhāt: it was the location of the idol Suwā’ worshipped by the Hudhayl and the Banū Zafar of Sulaym, and it defined the Prophet’s grant of land to Rāshid. In other words, Rāshid received the site of the idol. The spring miraculously created by the Prophet’s blessing is called here Mā’ al-Rasūl. Rāshid’s custodianship is only alluded to: he heard a mysterious voice (*hātif*) from Suwā’’s belly and from other idols announcing Muḥammad’s prophethood. He also saw two foxes licking the ground around the idol, eating the gifts brought to it and then urinating on it.<sup>68</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar’s Companion dictionary has an entry on Rāshid which as usual includes passages from earlier Companion dictionaries, among them Abū Nu‘aym’s.<sup>69</sup> In his turn Abū Nu‘aym quotes Ibn Zabāla’s lost book on the history of Medina which was one of Samhūdī’s main sources. Ibn Zabāla has a quotation from none other than Rāshid’s grandson (or great-grandson), Ḥakīm ibn ‘Aṭā’ al-Sulamī. He identified the idol as Suwā’ and gave its location as al-Ma‘lāt.<sup>70</sup> A slightly longer quotation from Abū Nu‘aym occurs elsewhere. In it we find that Suwā’ was *bi-l-ma‘lāt min Ruhāt*.<sup>71</sup> The place name al-Ma‘lāt links us directly to Rāshid’s paraphrased report in Samhūdī, and hence we may conclude that Samhūdī probably copied it from Ibn Zabāla’s book.

Another passage in Ibn Ḥajar is from Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī’s Companion dictionary. According to this account, Rāshid’s former name — it is said here to have been Ghāwī ibn Zālīm — was replaced by the Prophet with the name Rāshid ibn ‘Abdallāh. In this report, one of the foxes which approached the idol raised its leg and urinated on it. These differences are immaterial and what we have

<sup>67</sup>Ibn Sa’d, I, 307–308.

<sup>68</sup>Samhūdī, IV, 1225; Lecker, *Sulaym*, 52–59, with further discussion.

<sup>69</sup>Abū Nu‘aym, *Ṣaḥāba*, only has the entries to, and including, the letter *thā’*.

<sup>70</sup>*Kāna l-ṣanamu iladhī yuqālu lahu Suwā’* [printed: *Suwa’*] *bi-l-Ma‘lāt, fa-dhakara qiṣṣat islāmīhi wa-kasrihi iyyāhu*; *Iṣāba*, II, 434.

<sup>71</sup>Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā’is*, II, 193.

here are versions of the story of Rāshid's conversion.<sup>72</sup>

Rāshid's offspring transmitted yet another report about their father. The *Manāsik* has the following *isnād*: Abū Muḥammad al-Warrāq, i.e., 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Sa'd al-Warrāq<sup>73</sup> < Yaḥyā ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ismā'īl al-Sulamī < Numayr ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Uqayl al-Zafarī (the *nisba* refers to the Zafar subdivision of Sulaym mentioned above among the worshippers of Suwā') < his grandfather (or great-grandfather), who informed him that their father Rāshid ibn Rāshid, formerly known as Zālim ibn Ghāwī, was with the Prophet in a wadi called Ruhāt. The latter granted him a spring which he had miraculously created, together with the declivity in which it ran. When the report was recorded the place still belonged to Rāshid's offspring.<sup>74</sup> The spring mentioned above as 'Ayn al-Rasūl and Mā' al-Rasūl is evidently identical to 'Ayn al-Nabī.<sup>75</sup> While there is no mention of Rāshid's former career, the mention of Ruhāt shows that Rāshid ibn Rāshid is in fact Rāshid the former custodian, and thus we have here other descendants who preserved a report about him. There is a certain discrepancy between the known pedigree of Rāshid and that of his offspring: the informant who was Rāshid's descendant was of the Zafar ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Buhtha ibn Sulaym, while Rāshid's pedigree indicates that he was of the Ka'b ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Buhtha ibn Sulaym. But in another report Rāshid is referred to as "a man of the Zafar, of Sulaym".<sup>76</sup> It seems that at a certain point the distinction between the brother clans Zafar and Ka'b disappeared, or a genealogical shift took place.<sup>77</sup>

Five general remarks may be made here. First, Rāshid's custodianship was not concealed and his offspring were not ashamed of it. On the contrary, the more Rāshid was implicated in idol worship, the greater his sacrifice. Second, the former territory of the idol became venerated family property. Third, it appears that Muḥammad merely recognized Rāshid's right to the land rather than granted it to him. Perhaps custodians owned the grounds on which the idols stood; they may have even owned the idols themselves. Fourth, assuming that the place had had plenty of water even before it enjoyed the Prophet's blessing, we have here an

<sup>72</sup>*Iṣāba*, II, 434–35. Ibn Ḥibbān's book quoted here is probably *Asmā' al-ṣaḥāba*, on which see *GAS*, I, 191. *Istī'āb*, II, 504, provides us with a *kunya*: Rāshid ibn 'Abdallāh Abū Uthayla; his former name was Zālim or, according to another version Ghāwī ibn Zālim, which the Prophet replaced with the name Rāshid ibn 'Abdallāh. Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ta'rīkh al-ṣaḥāba*, 100, calls him Rāshid ibn Ḥafṣ al-Sulamī Abū Uthayla; he was of the people of Ḥijāz and the Prophet replaced his former name Zālim with the name Rāshid.

<sup>73</sup>*Manāsik*, 124–25.

<sup>74</sup>*Manāsik*, 350.

<sup>75</sup>*Manāsik*, 349. The unspecified Zafarī mentioned here is no doubt Rāshid. He asked the Prophet *an yasqiyahu bi-Ruhāt 'aynan*, i.e., that he grant him a spring in Ruhāt. This is parallel to Rāshid's request that the Prophet grant him a *qaṭ'a* in Ruhāt; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is*, II, 194.

<sup>76</sup>*Manāsik*, 349.

<sup>77</sup>Lecker, *Sulaym*, 59. Zuhri (< 'Urwa < 'Ā'isha) reported that when the Prophet appointed Abū Sufyān as the governor of Najrān, he sent with him Rāshid ibn 'Abdallāh; Dāraqutnī, *Sunan*, IV, 16.



association between idol worship and a source of water also known from elsewhere. Fifth, one does not have to accept the mysterious voice and the urinating foxes as historical facts in order to establish the idol's existence.<sup>78</sup>

**Hamdān: al-ʿAwwām and Yaghūth** Al-ʿAwwām ibn Juhayl al-Hamdānī was the custodian of Yaghūth, as shown by the story of his conversion to Islam. The autobiographical story goes back to al-ʿAwwām himself (*kāna l-ʿAwwām yuhaddithu baʿda islāmihi*).<sup>79</sup> He slept at the idol's sanctuary (*bayt al-ṣanam*), and following a stormy night he heard a mysterious voice (*hātīf*) announcing the end of idolatry. Al-ʿAwwām set out for Medina and arrived on time to see the Hamdān delegation surrounding the Prophet.<sup>80</sup>

**Saʿd al-ʿAshīra: Dhubāb and Farrāṣ** An idol called Farrāṣ<sup>81</sup> appears in the story of *wafd Saʿd al-ʿAshīra*. Ibn al-Kalbī (< Abū Kubrān al-Murādī < Yaḥyā ibn Hānī) ibn ʿUrwa < ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Sabra al-Juʿfī) quotes a report on the visit of Dhubāb, a man of the Anas Allāh ibn Saʿd al-ʿAshīra, to the Prophet. When Dhubāb and his fellow tribesmen heard about the appearance (*khurūj*) of the Prophet, Dhubāb came to him after having smashed the idol Farrāṣ.<sup>82</sup> Ibn al-Kalbī's immediate source was Abū Kubrān al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUqba al-Murādī. A report on Farwa ibn Musayk al-Murādī's visit to the Prophet is also accompanied by the *isnād* Ibn al-Kalbī < Abū Kubrān al-Murādī < Yaḥyā ibn Hānī) al-Murādī.<sup>83</sup> It was only natural that Murādīs should concern themselves with the history of fellow Murādīs, especially when it was associated with the first contact between the Prophet and one of themselves. Farwa and Yaḥyā were of the same subdivision of the Murād, namely the Ghutaṭayf.<sup>84</sup> Abū Kubrān was also one of Sayf ibn ʿUmar's sources.<sup>85</sup> As to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Sabra al-Juʿfī, one has to recall that Juʿfī is a branch of the Saʿd al-ʿAshīra. Moreover, the Anas Allāh ibn Saʿd al-ʿAshīra were incorporated into Juʿfī.<sup>86</sup>

A version of Ibn al-Kalbī's report which is fuller than the one found in Ibn Saʿd appears in Ibn Shāhīn's Companion dictionary. There Ibn al-Kalbī's informant is

<sup>78</sup>For other anecdotes involving urine cf. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 173–74.

<sup>79</sup>Following the example of similar stories one assumes that the report was preserved by al-ʿAwwām's offspring.

<sup>80</sup>*Iṣāba*, IV, 736–37, quoting Ibn al-Kalbī. Ibn Ḥajar quotes Ibn al-Kalbī's report from an unspecified treatise of Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī who in turn quotes Ibn Durayd's *al-Akḥbār al-manthūra*. In *Uṣd al-ghāba*, IV, 153, who similarly quotes Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī, we find that Ibn Durayd quotes al-Sakan ibn Saʿīd < Muḥammad ibn ʿAbbād < Ibn al-Kalbī.

<sup>81</sup>*Reste*, 67; Naṣr, *Amkina*, 118a.

<sup>82</sup>Ibn Saʿd, I, 342 (printed: Farrād).

<sup>83</sup>*Iṣāba*, VI, 713.

<sup>84</sup>Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 406.

<sup>85</sup>Ibn ʿAsākir, LXIII, 246.

<sup>86</sup>Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 407 (*dakhalū fī akḥīhim Juʿfī*). For an entry on ʿAbd al-Raḥmān see *Iṣāba*, IV, 308. For an entry on Abū Sabra Yazīd ibn Mālik al-Juʿfī see *Iṣṭiʿāb*, IV, 1667.

not Abū Kubrān al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Uqba but, probably due to a misprint, al-Ḥasan ibn Kathīr. Sa‘d al-‘Ashīra’s idol is called Qarrāṣ (the *fā’* and the *qāf* being differentiated only by a diacritical point) and we have the custodian’s name: Ibn Waqsha. The custodian had a jinni that was visible to him (*ra’ī minā l-jinn*) and used to inform him of what was to happen. One day the jinni came to Ibn Waqsha and told him something, then he turned to Dhubāb and informed him of Muḥammad’s appearance in Mecca (which places the event at the time when the Prophet was still in Mecca). So Dhubāb smashed the idol and came to Muḥammad. The report is also found in Ibn Manda’s *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* (but not in his Companion dictionary), in Bayhaqī’s *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* and in al-Mu‘āfa ibn Zakariyyā’s *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ*.<sup>87</sup> Evidently, the literary merits of the account secured it a place in the last mentioned *adab* work.

The existence of Farrāṣ, the idol of Sa‘d al-‘Ashīra, is arguably the only trustworthy detail in the tradition on Dhubāb’s conversion.

**Ṭay’: Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba and Bājir** The Prophet’s Companion Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba was of the Ṭay’, more precisely of a group called Kḥitāma, hence the *nisba* al-Kḥitāmī. Kḥitāma was his great-great-grandfather.<sup>88</sup> The full version of his story was preserved in Ṭabarānī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*. Māzin was the custodian of an idol called Bājir<sup>89</sup> located in a village in ‘Umān called Samā’il (or Samāyil; elsewhere we encounter the variants al-Simāl, Samāyā and Sanābil).<sup>90</sup> According to Māzin’s statement, he was in charge of his people (*fa-kuntu l-qayyim bi-umūrihim*). One day, when he and others were sacrificing sheep (or goats, *fa-‘atarnā . . . ‘atīra*) to it, he heard a voice from inside it announcing the appearance of a prophet from Muḍar and calling upon him to abandon his stone idol. A rider from the Ḥijāz confirmed the appearance of Aḥmad, and Māzin broke the idol to pieces and travelled to the Prophet. The latter cured him of his excessive love for music, wine and women of ill repute, and his blessing gave the childless Māzin a boy called Ḥayyān. The *isnād* of this report goes back to ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb al-Mawṣilī < Ibn al-Kalbī < his father < ‘Abdallāh al-‘Umānī < Māzin ibn

<sup>87</sup>*Iṣāba*, II, 402–403; Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il*, II, 259. In Mu‘āfa, *Jalīs ṣāliḥ*, I, 557–58, the idol is called F.rās and the custodian is Ibn Waqsha/Ibn Daqsha. In *Usd al-ghāba*, II, 136, the idol is Qarrāḍ and the custodian Ibn Ruqayba/Ibn Waqsha. The entry is taken from the Companion dictionary of Abū Mūsā Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Abī ‘Isā al-Madīnī al-Iṣfahānī, *Dhayl ma‘rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, which includes corrections to Ibn Manda’s dictionary and additional materials. According to *Usd al-ghāba*, I, 4, al-Madīnī’s book was shorter than Ibn Manda’s by one third. See an entry on Abū Mūsā in *Nubalā’*, XXI, 152–59.

<sup>88</sup>*Iṣāba*, V, 704; *Iṣṭi‘āb*, III, 1344; Ibn al-Kalbī, *Nasab Ma‘add*, I, 261; ‘*Ujāla*, 55, s.v. al-Kḥitāmī. An entry on Māzin can also be found in Ibn Qānī, *Mu‘jam al-ṣaḥāba*, III, 121–22.

<sup>89</sup>Or Bāhir, or Nājir; see below.

<sup>90</sup>See the last mentioned variant in Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 326, s.v. Sanābil. Regarding the idol’s name cf. *Aṣnām*, 63, quoting Ibn Durayd: Bāj(a/i)r was worshipped by the Azd and their neighbours from the Ṭay’ and Quḍā’a; Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-luḡa*, I, 267.

al-Ghaḍūba himself.<sup>91</sup> ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī<sup>92</sup> ibn Ḥayyān ibn Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba al-Ṭā’ī al-Mawṣilī (d. 265/878–79) was, as is shown by his pedigree, the great-great-grandson of Māzin’s only child, Ḥayyān.<sup>93</sup> Al-Kalbī’s source, ‘Abdallāh al-‘Umānī, was probably a member of Māzin’s family who transmitted Māzin’s story with all its embellishments and verse. Although ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb transmitted *ḥadīth*, among others, from his father, Ḥarb ibn Muḥammad, with whom he travelled to learn *ḥadīth*; and although the former was an expert on the history, genealogy and wars of the Arabs (*wa-kāna ‘āliman bi-akhbārī l-‘arab wa-ansābihā wa-ayyāmihā*),<sup>94</sup> he turned to Ibn al-Kalbī in order to learn or transmit his own family history. ‘Alī and other scholarly family members proudly carried the *nisba* al-Māzinī with reference to their famous ancestor, the former custodian Māzin.<sup>95</sup>

Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) received ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb’s report through Mūsā ibn Jumhūr al-Tinnīsī al-Simsār. But Mūsā was not the only person who transmitted it from ‘Alī. ‘Alī also transmitted it to his great-grandson — in other words the family tradition was still preserved into the 4th/10th century — who in turn transmitted it in Baghdad in 338/949–50 to a *muḥaddith* called Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān. Al-Qaṭṭān transmitted it to Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) who included it in his *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa*. ‘Alī’s great-grandson inserted into the report taken from his great-grandfather’s written source (*aṣl jaddī*)<sup>96</sup> details received from a friend in ‘Umān who referred to a local tradition (*‘an salafihim*). Following his conversion, Māzin became separated from his tribe<sup>97</sup> and established a mosque which had magical qualities: if someone who had been wronged prayed in it and cursed his oppressor, his prayer was accepted. An anonymous hand added on the margin of the manuscript (*aṣl al-samā’*) that a leper was almost cured there, and hence the mosque to this day is called *mubriṣ* (literally: “causing one to become leprous”).<sup>98</sup> In this version of the report ‘Alī describes his meeting with Ibn al-Kalbī in detail. When the latter found out that the former was a descendant of Khiṭāma, he asked: “From the custodian’s offspring?” Then he reported to him what he had heard from *shuyūkh Ṭay’ al-mutaqaddimīna*, or the elders of the Ṭay’. The family’s attitude to Māzin’s custodianship was far from apologetic; it was its claim to fame.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>91</sup>Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XX, 337–39. See also Ṭabarānī, *Ṭiwāl*, 154–56. In *Majma‘ al-zawā’id*, VIII, 247–48, the text is garbled.

<sup>92</sup>Printed: Ḥarb.

<sup>93</sup>Mizzī, XX, 361–65.

<sup>94</sup>Mizzī, XX, 361, 363–64. ‘Alī’s father was a merchant; *Nubalā’*, XII, 251. His entry is followed by entries on three of his brothers; *ibid.*, 253–56.

<sup>95</sup>Sam‘ānī, V, 165, who mentions a Māzinī called Salama ibn ‘Amr.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 132.

<sup>97</sup>The fact of the separation is mentioned in Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XX, 339, where it is reported that he moved to the coast.

<sup>98</sup>Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il*, II, 255–58.

<sup>99</sup>In this version, Māzin was a custodian of several idols belonging to his family (*wa-kāna*

‘Alī ibn Ḥarb also transmitted the report to a *muḥaddith* called ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanzalī, whence it reached al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014–15; perhaps it is found in his *Ta’rīkh Naysābūr*) via another transmitter.<sup>100</sup>

The family was naturally interested in establishing Companion status for the former custodian on the basis of the above story. In this it was very successful, as shown by Māzin’s entries in the Companion dictionaries<sup>101</sup> and by quotations in other types of literature. Ṭabarānī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr* has already been quoted. The *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* literature merits special mention here.<sup>102</sup> Māzin’s story was made attractive for later compilers by its legendary elements and verse. Historians looking for solid facts may find this story worthless; but the existence of the specified village in ‘Umān and Māzin’s custodianship of an idol are unlikely to have been invented.

Another family tradition is interwoven with the one discussed above. An Arab *mawlā* or manumitted slave of Māzin called Abū Kathīr Ṣāliḥ (or Yasār/Nashīṭ/Dīnār) ibn al-Mutawakkil is supposed to have been introduced by him to the Prophet as his slave (*ghulām*). Prompted by the Prophet, Māzin there and then manumitted the slave. It is not hard to find out who preserved this report, no doubt because he benefited from it: Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005) received the report about the *mawlā* from none other than ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb. ‘Alī in turn transmitted it from a descendant of the manumitted slave, al-Ḥasan ibn Kathīr ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr < his father < his grandfather. Ibn Manda reports that Ṣāliḥ and his master Māzin were killed in Bardha‘a during ‘Uthmān’s caliphate.<sup>103</sup>

Ṣāliḥ played a useful role for Māzin’s descendants: he transmitted a *ḥadīth* which Māzin reported on the Prophet’s authority. The *ḥadīth* which is in favour of truthfulness is vague enough to be ascribed to anyone; this is yet another technique employed by Māzin’s offspring in order to secure Companion status for their ancestor.<sup>104</sup>

**Bajīla: Jarīr ibn ‘Abdallāh and Dhū l-Khalaṣa** Under *wafd Bajīla* Ibn Sa‘d quotes a report from Wāqidī who in turn quotes a Medinan authority, ‘Abd

*yasḍunu l-aṣnām li-ahlīhi*); he had an idol called Bājir, var. Nājir.

<sup>100</sup>Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il*, II, 258 (the name of the village here is al-Simāl).

<sup>101</sup>Somewhat dissenting from the consensus was Ibn Ḥibbān (quoted in *Iṣāba*, V, 704: *yūqālu inna lahu ṣuḥba*); see the same cautious remark in Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, III, 407.

<sup>102</sup>Abū Nu‘aym, *Dalā’il*, 114–17 (the beginning of the account is garbled; the name of the village was Samāyā; the idol’s name was Bājir); Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il*, II, 255–58; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā’iṣ*, I, 256–57.

<sup>103</sup>Quoted in *Iṣāba*, III, 403. For an entry on Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr see Mizzi, XXXI, 504–11. He was tortured and flogged and had his beard removed for reviling the Umayyad rulers (*mtuḥina wa-ḍuriba wa-ḥulīqa li-kawnihi ntaqaṣa Banī Umayya*); *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, I, 128.

<sup>104</sup>*Iṣāba*, V, 705, with reference to earlier Companion dictionaries and Wakī’s *Nawādir al-akḥbār* (*GAS*, I, 376); Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XX, 337 (with some variants in the *isnād*).

al-Ḥamīd ibn Jaʿfar < his father. The story includes details about the destruction of Dhū l-Khalāṣa by Jarīr ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Bajalī.<sup>105</sup> But a comparison with reports on the destruction in other sources points to Jarīr himself as the origin of the story. A good authority on this is al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* where all the reports on this matter go back to Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālīd < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, with two exceptions: one from Bayān ibn Bishr al-Bajalī < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, and another from Ṭāriq ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim.<sup>106</sup>

The Kūfan Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālīd al-Bajalī al-Aḥmasī was a *mawlā* of the Aḥmas.<sup>107</sup> Also the Kūfan *faqīh* Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim is referred to as al-Bajalī al-Aḥmasī.<sup>108</sup> The same is true of the Kūfan Bayān ibn Bishr who was al-Bajalī al-Aḥmasī<sup>109</sup> and of the Kūfan Ṭāriq ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bajalī al-Aḥmasī.<sup>110</sup>

The pattern is clear: only fellow Bajalīs were concerned with telling the story of Jarīr and Dhū l-Khalāṣa. Although they were all Aḥmasīs while Jarīr belonged to another branch of the Bajīla, namely the Qasr,<sup>111</sup> this is tribal history *par excellence*. The military power with which Jarīr set out to demolish Dhū l-Khalāṣa included Aḥmasīs, which made the expedition a matter of special interest for the Aḥmasī transmitters. Dhū l-Khalāṣa was at the background of their attempt to capture the glorious moments in the history of their tribe.

A brief comment associating Jarīr with idol worship is found in a long report about Jarīr's visit to the Prophet quoted by Ibn Shabba from Ibn Zabāla. The *isnād* goes back to Zuhri < ʿUbaydallāh ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿUtba ibn Masʿūd < Ibn ʿAbbās (hence this is not a family tradition): the Prophet told Jarīr that he would not attain the *sharīʿa* or religious law of Islam until he abandoned idol worship.<sup>112</sup>

Some notes on the worship of Dhū l-Khalāṣa are in place here. As a rule the tribes who rebelled after the Prophet's death did not threaten, nor did they intend, to return to idol worship. But at least in one case such a possibility is thought to have been taken into account. Abū Bakr ordered Jarīr ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Bajalī to fight the Khathʿamīs who had rebelled because of their anger on behalf of Dhū l-Khalāṣa, wanting to reinstate it.<sup>113</sup>

Dhū l-Khalāṣa was not just another tribal idol but rather a cultic centre. Under *wafd Bajīla* Ibn Saʿd reports that when Jarīr came to the Prophet for the first time and reported that the tribes had destroyed their idols, the Prophet specifically inquired about Dhū l-Khalāṣa and found out that it was still intact. Jarīr

<sup>105</sup>Ibn Saʿd, I, 347–48.

<sup>106</sup>Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, 299–301, 310–12.

<sup>107</sup>Mizzī, III, 69–76.

<sup>108</sup>Mizzī, XXIV, 10–16; Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 389.

<sup>109</sup>Mizzī, IV, 303–305.

<sup>110</sup>Mizzī, XIII, 345–48.

<sup>111</sup>Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 387.

<sup>112</sup>Ibn Shabba, II, 568.

<sup>113</sup>... *Wa-amarahū an yaʿtiya Khathʿam fa-yuqātila man kharaja ghaḍaban li-Dhī l-Khalāṣa wa-man arāda iʿādatahu*; Ṭabarī, I, 1988.

was sent to destroy it and he took what was on it (i.e., jewellery or weapons) and set fire to it.<sup>114</sup> In other words, Dhū l-Khalaṣa lasted longer than the other idols, at least in its vicinity. This is also reflected in the Prophet's alleged statement that of the *ṭawāghūt* of the Jāhiliyya only the *bayt* of Dhū l-Khalaṣa remained.<sup>115</sup> It took a large military force to overcome the resistance of the Khath'am there.

Jarīr came to Muḥammad in Ramaḍān, 10 A.H.<sup>116</sup> This means that news about the demolition of Dhū l-Khalaṣa reached Muḥammad shortly before his death. The demolition and the death of the Khath'amīs who defended it are in the background of the visit of *wafd Khath'am*.<sup>117</sup>

Dhū l-Khalaṣa possibly enjoyed a status similar to that of the Ka'ba: it was called al-Ka'ba al-Yamāniyya or the Yemenite Ka'ba, while the Meccan Ka'ba was al-Ka'ba al-Shāmiyya.<sup>118</sup> As was the case with the Ka'ba (see below, 32n), Dhū l-Khalaṣa was probably a place where many idols — possibly tribal idols — were located.<sup>119</sup> It stands to reason that tribes worshipping Dhū l-Khalaṣa were not among those associated with the cult of the Ka'ba. This can be shown with regard to the Khath'am, the tribe most closely associated with Dhū l-Khalaṣa: the Ṭay', Khath'am and Quḍā'a did not respect the sanctity of Mecca's *ḥaram* and that of the sacred months, while the other tribes performed the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba and respected it.<sup>120</sup> Ṭay' and Khath'am did not perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and were called *al-afjarāni*.<sup>121</sup> One is not surprised to find Khath'amīs in Abraha's army which attacked Mecca.<sup>122</sup>

Among those who worshipped Dhū l-Khalaṣa were the Azd al-Sarāt.<sup>123</sup> Now while the Khath'am delegation only came to the Prophet after the demolition of their idol, some seventy or eighty men from important families (*ahl bayt*) of the

<sup>114</sup>Ibn Sa'd, I, 347–48.

<sup>115</sup>Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, II, 312.

<sup>116</sup>*Ansāb al-ashrāf*, I, 384.

<sup>117</sup>Ibn Sa'd, I, 348. Under the title *mawāḍi' al-'ibāda* or places of worship, Hamdānī (*Ṣifa*, 240), lists the following: Mecca, ʿIlīyā', Allāt in the upper part (*bi-a'lā*) of Nakhla, Dhū l-Khalaṣa near (*bi-nāḥiyat*) Tabāla, Ka'bat Najrān, Riyām in the land of Hamdān and the church of al-Bāghūta in Ḥīra. In fact Allāt was located in Ṭā'if, while al-'Uzzā was located in Nakhla.

<sup>118</sup>Yāqūt, s.v. al-Khalaṣa, 383b.

<sup>119</sup>Note the definition of al-Khalaṣa as *bayt aṣnām*; *ibid.*, 383a. The word *al-zūn* is supposed to mean a place of this kind. It is interpreted as *mawḍi' tuḡma'u fihī l-aṣnām wa-tuṣṣabu*; also: *al-zūn baytu l-aṣnām ayy mawḍi' kāna*; Yāqūt, s.v. al-Zūn. See also *Lisān al-'arab*, the end of s.v. *z.y.n.* (*wa-l-zūn mawḍi' tuḡma'u fihī l-aṣnām wa-tuṣṣabu wa-tuzayyanu*).

<sup>120</sup>M.J. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm", 119. When Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī (Quḍā'a) refers to his pilgrimages before Islam, he does not have the Ka'ba in his mind but probably Yaghūth; Ibn 'Asākir, XXXV, 472 (*aslamtu fī ḥayāt rasūli llāh š wa-qad ḥajajtu bi-Yaghūth* [read probably *Yaghūtha*] *wa-kāna ṣanamān min raṣāṣ li-Quḍā'a timthāla mra'a wa-dawwartu l-adwira*). The mention of the Khath'am among the tribes of the *ḥums* is no doubt erroneous, while the reading Jusham is correct; Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm", 132.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, 134, n. 5.

<sup>122</sup>M.J. Kister, "Some reports concerning Mecca from Jāhiliyya to Islam", 69–70, 72.

<sup>123</sup>*Aṣnām*, 35; *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, I, 384.

Daws, a subdivision of the Azd, among them Abū Hurayra and ‘Abdallāh ibn Uzayhir, arrived some two years earlier, when the Prophet was in Khaybar.<sup>124</sup> When the Daws linked themselves to Muḥammad, Dhū l-Khalaṣa lost many of its worshippers.

The Daws are singled out among former worshippers of Dhū l-Khalaṣa as the ones most prone to return to their pagan ways. The Dawsī Abū Hurayra transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad: “Before the arrival of the Hour the buttocks of the women of Daws will move from side to side around Dhū l-Khalaṣa” (*lā taqūmu l-sā‘a ḥattā taḍṭariba alayāt nisā’ Daws ḥawla Dhī l-khalaṣa*).<sup>125</sup> The Prophet’s alleged utterance no doubt reflects actual practice. In eschatological times the Ka‘ba would remain safe while the southern tribes’ yearning for idolatry would revive the cultic centre at Dhū l-Khalaṣa.

Let us sum up this section. Many conversion stories involving idols are recorded in the sources; their number could probably be multiplied. Other similar stories were not as successful and remained outside the literature. The stories were usually preserved by tribal authorities who were often the direct descendants of the persons involved. The identification of these authorities is not always possible because many of them were not involved in the transmission of “prestigious” *ḥadīth*, and hence were not of interest for the *rijāl* experts. The main concern of the tribal authorities was to establish their ancestors’ entitlement to Companion status. At a later stage the stories entered the general Islamic heritage through their inclusion in specialized types of literature. Most relevant are the Companion dictionaries and compilations regarding *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* or “Proofs of Muḥammad’s Prophethood”, where the former functionaries of idolatry testify to the collapse of idol worship. Most of the conversion stories are not widely disseminated, but this does not weaken their relevance for the study of idol worship. After all, nobody in his right mind would assume that so many tribal informants

<sup>124</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, I, 353; *Muntaẓam*, III, 304. The arrival of the Dawsīs may well have been part of the Ḥudaybiyya agreement: ‘Abdallāh ibn Uzayhir was probably a relative of Abū Uzayhir since the name Uzayhir is fairly rare. I could find no entry on ‘Abdallāh in the Companion dictionaries. Abū Uzayhir was the *ḥalīf* or protected neighbour and father-in-law of Abū Sufyān; Ḥassān, *Dīwān*, II, 258. The former was called by his daughter *sayyid ahl al-Sarāt*, 259. He entered Mecca under Abū Sufyān’s protection (*wa-kāna yadkhulu Makka fī jiwār Abī Sufyān*); Ibn ‘Asākir, XL, 273. After the Battle of Badr he was murdered by Hishām ibn al-Mughīra, and Quraysh sent a messenger to the Sarāt to warn the Qurashī traders there about a possible Dawsī reprisal; *Aghānī*, II, 243 (printed al-Sharāt). The Qurashī trade route to the Yemen of course passed through the Sarāt. In fact Abū Uzayhir was not of the Daws but of al-Ṣa‘b ibn Duhmān. He was only called al-Dawsī because on the battlefield his tribe belonged to the military forces of the Daws (*lianna ‘idādahu kāna fī Daws*); Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 385–86.

<sup>125</sup>Muslim, IV, 2230 (*Kitāb al-fitan wa-ashrāṭ al-sā‘a*). The following eschatological *ḥadīth* speaks of a return to the worship of Allāt and al-‘Uzzā. For variants on the topic of Dhū l-Khalaṣa see *Fitan*, 302 (*idhā ‘ubīdat Dhū l-Khalaṣa . . . kāna ṣuhūru l-Rūm ‘alā l-Shām*), 364 (Abū Hurayra: . . . *ka-‘annī bi-alayāt nisā’ Daws qadi ṣṭafaqat ya‘budūna Dhā l-Khalaṣa*); Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*, 124.

could plot together to invent idols which had not existed. The legendary elements in the conversion stories of pagan Arabs can be rejected, but the factual details about the idols remain intact. In short, unless the converts to Islam were Christians, Jews or Zoroastrians, conversion meant the abandonment of idolatry.

Two more observations may be added. Whether or not there was a “lapse of a long time” before the recording of these stories in a literary source is not a matter of crucial importance.<sup>126</sup> In any case, since conversion stories involving idols go back to the early days of Islam, it would be mistaken to assume a large gap between the actual idol worship and the preservation of the evidence about it.<sup>127</sup>

## 2 The system of idol worship in Medina

The second part of this study focuses on Medina. It is widely assumed that on the eve of the Hijra idol worship in Medina was declining, and hence Muḥammad only had to deal it the final blow. Wellhausen argued that the Medinans were even more indifferent to their idols than were the Meccans. In his view the Jews and Christians brought monotheism to the Anṣār and prepared them for Islam. Islam spread among them very quickly, and even before the Prophet's Hijra almost all the Anṣār were Muslims. To the extent that they resisted the Prophet, Wellhausen said, the background for this was political and not religious: they mourned yesterday's freedom and not yesterday's idols.<sup>128</sup>

In fact, most of the Medinans did not convert to Islam before Muḥammad's arrival. For several years after the Hijra a significant section of the population remained pagan. Only the downfall of the Jewish Qurayza on whom many Medinans were politically, economically and militarily dependent made them embrace Islam.<sup>129</sup>

The actual number of members of the Aws and Khazraj who converted to Judaism was relatively small. It is true that in the crucial negotiations which led to the Hijra a significant role was played by Medinans who had learned to read in

<sup>126</sup>Cf. Arafat, “Fact and fiction”, 9.

<sup>127</sup>Cf. Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 14: “Kunde über das arabische Heidentum geben uns zahlreiche Werke der Arabischen ‘Gelehrten Literatur’. Zwar wurde in dem ersten Generationen nach dem Siegeszug des Islam noch bewußt auf eine Beschäftigung mit der Religion der Ġāhiliyya verzichtet, um diese in Vergessenheit geraten zu lassen, doch schon im 2. Jh. der Hīra erwachte ein lebhaftes Interesse an der Erforschung des altarabischen Heidentums”; Krone assumes a gap of at least one hundred years between the end of idol worship and the beginning of scholarly interest in idols; *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>128</sup>*Skizzen*, IV, 15–16. Also Watt, *Mecca*, 23 (“... it is generally agreed that the archaic pagan religion was comparatively uninfluential in Muḥammad's time”).

<sup>129</sup>Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 19–49. Wensinck said about the inhabitants of Yathrib: “Their receptiveness for monotheism can only be explained by their long contact with the Jews”; *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina*, 4.



the Jewish *Bayt al-Midrās*;<sup>130</sup> but most Medinans remained immersed in private and public idol worship. The latter was closely connected to the different levels of tribal organization.

It is impossible to measure the intensity of religious feeling among the Medinans,<sup>131</sup> and hence it is best to stick to the evidence. This is undertaken in what follows.

## 2.1 Household idols

The existence of house or family idols has been known for many years but has not been given due weight.<sup>132</sup> Acquaintance with the household idols is very significant for the evaluation of idol worship in Medina and elsewhere, since this form of private worship was the one most common among the settled people of Arabia. The Medinan household idols, exactly like the Meccan, were made of wood. In Mecca they used to stroke their idols (above, 4) and in Medina they did the same, as is shown by the story of Kaʿb ibn ʿUjra.<sup>133</sup>

There is a relatively large number of conversion stories from Medina involving idols, but only a handful regarding Meccans. This may be accounted for by the different circumstances of conversion in these towns. When Mecca was conquered by Muḥammad in 8/630, its pagan inhabitants converted, or are supposed to have converted, immediately. In Medina conversion was a long process accompanied by internal strife. In addition, the people of Mecca probably displayed more internal cohesion in comparison with the Medinans, many of whom were prepared to defy the existing system of leadership and idol worship.

Many of the idols mentioned in the Medinan conversion stories were household idols. In every or almost every Medinan and Meccan house there was a small

<sup>130</sup>Lecker, “Zayd ibn Thābit”, 271; *idem*, “Idol worship”, 343.

<sup>131</sup>Goldziher wrote: “At Yathrib the indigenous disposition of immigrant tribes from the south produced a mood more easily accessible to religious thought which was a great help to Muhammed’s success”; *Muslim Studies*, I, 13f. Goldziher had in mind the influence of Yemenite monotheism on the Arabs of Yathrib who were supposed to have been more religious than the other Arabs in central Arabia. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 25, remarks cautiously, without specifically referring to Goldziher: “A great scholar, indeed, from whom it is unsafe to differ, finds a difference between the central and the southern Arabians, and supposes the latter to have been earnest worshippers, while the former were indifferent”. According to Margoliouth, “the Arabs of Central Arabia were not wanting in piety”.

<sup>132</sup>Wellhausen mentioned the *Hausgötze*. Lammens, *L’Arabie occidentale*, 139, correctly criticized Wellhausen for conflating the “dieux domestiques” with the idols held by the leaders (on which see below). Lammens (140) erroneously assumed that the pre-Islamic Arabs knew only of a public cult, such as was performed by the tribal group (“Inutile . . . de parler de culte privé, de dieux lares ou domestiques. L’Arabe de la préhégire n’a jamais entrevu que la culte public, celui pratiqué par le clan, dont les rares manifestations suffisaient à épuiser sa courte dévotion”).

<sup>133</sup>*Istaʿkhara islām Kaʿb ibn ʿUjra wa-kāna lahu ṣanam yukrimuhu wa-yamsaḥuhu . . .*; *Nubalāʾ*, III, 53 (quoting Wāqidi); Lecker, “Idol worship”, 340–41.

carved wooden idol. In other words, in both towns there was an intensive religious life on the family level. Since Mecca and Medina differed from each other in many ways, one can expect this common denominator, namely household idolatry, to have been general in other Arabian settlements as well. The ubiquity of these idols among the settled population and the level of attachment to them speak against the assumption that idol worship was declining in the years preceding the advent of Islam.

A wooden idol presented an obstacle to Abū Ṭalḥa of the Najjār (Khazraj) when he proposed to a Najjārī woman, Umm Sulaym bint Miḥḥān (Anas ibn Mālik's mother). Abū Ṭalḥa wanted to marry her after Anas's father had died, but she refused because he was a polytheist (*mushrik*). She reproached him for worshipping a stone which did neither harm nor good and a piece of wood hewed for him by a carpenter (*khashaba ta'tī bihā l-najjār fa-yanjuruhā laka*), that similarly could not hurt nor benefit. He agreed to embrace Islam and she accepted his conversion as dowry.<sup>134</sup>

Among the Ghanm ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār there was a man called 'Amr ibn Qays known as *ṣāhib ālihatihim fī l-jāhiliyya*, "the person in charge of their gods (or idols) in the Jāhiliyya". He was once expelled from the mosque of the Prophet together with other *munāfiqūn*. While he was being ejected, he complained about his forcible removal from the *mirbad*, or the drying floor for dates, of the Banū Tha'laba.<sup>135</sup> Since we know that he was of the Ghanm ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār, we can easily identify the Tha'laba in question as the Tha'laba ibn Ghanm ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār.<sup>136</sup>

In connection with Medinan idols we encounter the verb *laṭṭakha*, "to defile, soil". The source of what follows is supposed to be 'Alī: during a funeral (i.e., a Muslim's funeral outside Medina) Muḥammad looked for one who would volunteer to break every idol (*wathan*) in Medina, level every tomb and defile or besmear with slime every statue or figure (*ṣūra*). An unidentified person who volunteered returned without carrying out this mission since he feared the people

<sup>134</sup>The report is autobiographical: it is reported on the authority of Ishāq ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Ṭalḥa (d. 132/749–50 or 134/751–52) who quotes his grandmother, Umm Sulaym; Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 425–26. Abū Ṭalḥa was of the Maghāla, or the 'Adī ibn 'Amr ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār; Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 49–50. Umm Sulaym was of the Ḥarām ibn Jundab ibn 'Āmir ibn Ghanm ibn 'Adī ibn al-Najjār; *ibid.*, 36–40. See an entry on Ishāq in Mizzi, II, 444–46. Other reports (*ibid.*, 427) more precisely reflect the material of which household idols were made: they refer to a wooden idol hewed by a slave who was a carpenter and to an Ethiopian slave: *inna ālihatakumu llatī ta'budūna yanḥutuhā 'abd āl fulān al-najjār wa-innakum law sha'altum fihā nāran la-ḥtaraqat; a-lastā ta'lamu anna ilāhaka lladhī ta'budu innamā huwa shajara tanbutu mina l-arḍ wa-innamā najarahā ḥabashī banī fulān?* In itself the verb *naḥata* is indifferent to the material used; when said of wood it is synonymous with *najara*; Lane, 2773b.

<sup>135</sup>Ibn Hishām, II, 175; Lecker, "Idol worship", 335. The identification put forward in *ibid.*, n. 25, is uncertain.

<sup>136</sup>Cf. Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 56–64, especially 63–64 (regarding the two orphans who owned the *mirbad* on which the Prophet's mosque was built).

of Medina, so ‘Alī had to do it.<sup>137</sup> A variant of this *ḥadīth* has it that the Prophet ordered a man of the Anṣār to level every tomb and defile (*yulattikha*) every idol. The man protested against entering the houses of his people (*buyūt qawmī*), and hence ‘Alī was sent for.<sup>138</sup> Regardless of its value as a historical source, the environment in which the *ḥadīth* was created evidently included rampant idol worship.

In the Jāhiliyya As‘ad ibn Zurāra (Najjār) and Abū l-Haytham ibn al-Tayyihān (a Balawī client of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal or the Za‘ūrā’) hated idols and were disgusted by them; both men were monotheists.<sup>139</sup> As we shall see, the former was also involved in the actual destruction of idols.

There are several accounts of young Medinans who enthusiastically received Muḥammad and broke or smashed (*kasara/kassara*) the idols of their tribal groups. They are found among both the Aws and Khazraj, more specifically the Salima, Bayāḍa, Sā‘ida, Mālik ibn al-Najjār and ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār of the Khazraj, and the ‘Abd al-Ashhal, Ḥāritha, ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, Khaṭma and Wāqif of the Aws.

The evidence regarding idol worship among the Khazraj subdivision called Salima is relatively abundant, probably not because idolatry was more widespread among them, but because they were more numerous than the other subdivisions, or because the Prophet had more supporters among them.

### 2.1.1 Idols in Medinan conversion stories

Idols play a significant role in stories of Medinan conversions. Ziyād ibn Labīd and Farwa ibn ‘Amr of the Bayāḍa broke the idols of the Bayāḍa.<sup>140</sup> Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubāda, al-Mundhir ibn ‘Amr and Abū Dujāna broke the idols of the Sā‘ida.<sup>141</sup> ‘Umāra ibn Ḥazm, As‘ad ibn Zurāra and ‘Awf ibn ‘Afrā’ broke the idols of the Mālik ibn al-Najjār.<sup>142</sup> Salīṭ ibn Qays and Abū Ṣirma broke the idols of the ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār.<sup>143</sup> One of the ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār, Abū Qays Ṣirma ibn Abī Anas, who embraced Islam at an advanced age, had rejected idol worship in the Jāhiliyya.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>137</sup>Aḥmad, I, 87; *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, V, 172. Both texts are garbled. *Fā‘iq*, II, 366, has instead of *laṭṭakha*: *ṭalakha*, “to besmear with slime”.

<sup>138</sup>Aḥmad, I, 139:18; *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, V, 172–73.

<sup>139</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 448; *Nubalā’*, I, 190; Lecker, “Idol worship”, 336.

<sup>140</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 598.

<sup>141</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 614.

<sup>142</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 486, 609–610.

<sup>143</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 512. According to some, Abū Ṣirma was of the Māzin ibn al-Najjār, not of the ‘Adī; Mizzi, XXXIII, 426; *Istī‘āb*, IV, 1691 (the Māzini version regarding his origin was more widespread).

<sup>144</sup>Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 350 (*rafaḍa l-awthān*); Ibn Hishām, II, 156 (*wa-fāraqa l-awthān*); *Murūj*, I, 81 (*wa-hajara l-awthān*); Rubin, “Ḥanifiyya”, 98. Note that the sources quoted by Rubin do not refer to him as a *ḥanīf*. The source of Ibn Ishāq’s report which is missing in Ibn Hishām is provided elsewhere: Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām; *Iṣāba*, III,

We now turn to the Aws. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr broke the idols of the 'Abd al-Ashhal.<sup>145</sup> Usayd belonged to 'Abd al-Ashhal's leading family: his father, Ḥuḍayr, was the *ra'īs* or battlefield commander of the Aws at the Battle of Bu'āth and was known, as was his son after him, as *al-kāmil* or "the highly accomplished one" since they were both literate and excelled in swimming and archery.<sup>146</sup> Abū 'Abs ibn Jabr and Abū Burda ibn Niyār (a Balawī client of the Ḥāritha) broke the idols of the Ḥāritha.<sup>147</sup> One pedigree of Abū 'Abs makes him a member of the Ḥāritha, but an alternative pedigree adds Majda'a before the eponym Ḥāritha.<sup>148</sup> This would make him one of the Majda'a, whose most famous member was Muḥammad ibn Maslama. In any case, Abū 'Abs's mother and two of the three women to whom he was married at different times of his life were of the Majda'a: one of them was Muḥammad ibn Maslama's sister and the other was Muḥammad's daughter.<sup>149</sup> Muḥammad was a client (*ḥalīf*) of the 'Abd al-Ashhal,<sup>150</sup> and one assumes that Abū 'Abs too was not a prominent figure in Medinan society before the advent of Islam. The same applies of course to the client Abū Burda.

'Abdallāh ibn Jubayr and Sahl ibn Ḥunayf used to break up idols and bring the pieces to the Muslims who used them as firewood.<sup>151</sup> The two belonged to different subdivisions of the 'Amr ibn 'Awf: the former was of the Tha'laba and the latter was of the Ḥanash,<sup>152</sup> and it is thus clear that the idols in question were those of the 'Amr ibn 'Awf. Khuzayma ibn Thābit and 'Umayr ibn 'Adī ibn Kharasha broke the idols of the Khaṭma.<sup>153</sup> Hilāl ibn Umayya broke the idols of the Wāqif.<sup>154</sup>

Abū Ṭalḥa's idol (above, 26) was made of wood, and this is of course true of the broken pieces used as firewood. Wood is also specifically mentioned in the case of another household idol. 'Abdallāh ibn Rawāḥa rebuked its owner (who was perhaps Abū l-Dardā'; see below) for worshipping a piece of wood which he had crafted with his own hand; the owner replied that he did not attack it because he feared for his young children.<sup>155</sup> In other words, the wooden household idol was perceived as a tutelary idol.

422. Muḥammad's source may have been 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Uwaym b. Sā'ida from whom Muḥammad quoted another report regarding Ṣirma; *ibid.*, 423. On Muḥammad see Mizzī, XXIV, 579–80.

<sup>145</sup>Ibn Sa'd, III, 421.

<sup>146</sup>Ibn Sa'd, III, 604; Lecker, "Zayd ibn Thābit", 268, n. 64.

<sup>147</sup>Ibn Sa'd, III, 450–51.

<sup>148</sup>*Iṣāba*, VII, 266.

<sup>149</sup>Ibn Sa'd, III, 450.

<sup>150</sup>Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 242.

<sup>151</sup>*Ansāb al-ashraf*, I, 265; Lecker, "Idol worship", 333.

<sup>152</sup>Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 320–23.

<sup>153</sup>Ibn Sa'd, IV, 378.

<sup>154</sup>*Tahdhīb al-asmā'*, I, ii, 139; *Usd al-ghāba*, V, 66.

<sup>155</sup>Lecker, "Idol worship", 338.

Some further characteristics of the household idols should be added. Before ‘Abdallāh ibn Rawāḥa destroyed Abū l-Dardā’s idol using an adze (*qadūm*; above, 4), he brought it down (*fa-anzalahu*). This probably indicates that the idol was placed in an elevated place, such as a shelf. In addition it is reported that Abū l-Dardā’ hung a veil over his idol (*wa-qad waḍa‘a ‘alayhi mindīlan*).<sup>156</sup> In order to act against the household idol one had to enter the house.<sup>157</sup> These characteristics were probably shared by household idols whether they were in Medina or elsewhere in Arabia.

Among the twenty-odd persons mentioned as acting against idols, only three could be considered prominent members of pre-Islamic Medinan society, namely Mu‘ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ (see below) who belonged to a leading family of the Salima, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubāda of the Sā‘ida and the “highly accomplished man” Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal. Some correlation can be found between this list and the list of literate people: at least five of the idol breakers, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubāda, al-Mundhir ibn ‘Amr, Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal, Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr and Abū ‘Abs ibn Jabr were literate, which in the Medinan context meant that they were educated in the local *Bayt al-Midrās*.<sup>158</sup> However, the typical idol destroyer belonged to the rank and file of his tribal group; two of the destroyers were clients.

The reports on idol breakers are not documentary or archival evidence and some of them may have been invented. But it is no coincidence that so many of them are found in Ibn Sa‘d’s third volume which includes the biographies of the Prophet’s Companions who participated in the Battle of Badr. More precisely, they are in the latter part of the volume which is dedicated to the Badrīs among the Anṣār. All of those involved were unmistakably among the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of Muḥammad in Medina. The accounts of their actions against the idols take for granted the existence of many such idols in Medina.

In Mecca and Medina household idols were the most popular form of idol worship, and hence the evidence about them is crucial for assessing the extent of this worship. In what follows other categories of Medinan idols are discussed.<sup>159</sup> These can all be linked to the tribal organization and belong to the public sphere, as opposed to the private cult discussed above.

## 2.2 Idols of noblemen

In Ibn Shabba’s *Akhbār Makka* there are several passages containing rare testimony on idol worship in Medina. One passage speaks of idols held by every noblemen (*raḥul sharīf*). ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ had Manāf, al-Barā’ ibn Ma‘rūr had

<sup>156</sup>Lecker, “Idol worship”, 340.

<sup>157</sup>Hence the above mentioned reluctance of the Anṣārī to enter the houses of his people (*buyūt qawmī*).

<sup>158</sup>Lecker, “Zayd ibn Thābit”, 267–71.

<sup>159</sup>The discussion relies in part on Lecker, “Idol worship”.

al-Dībāj and al-Jadd ibn Qays had Zabīr. All three belonged to the Salima. To the characteristics of noblemen in Medina we can probably add ownership of a fortress, since at least two of the above mentioned noblemen who owned idols were owners of fortresses.<sup>160</sup> Although these are the only examples of idols owned by noblemen, there is no reason to assume that this type of idols was restricted to the Salima. That the three men belonged to leading families is also shown by Muḥammad's intervention with regard to the leadership of the Salima. In one version he is said to have replaced their *sayyid*, al-Jadd ibn Qays, by 'Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ, while according to another al-Jadd was replaced by al-Barā' ibn Ma'rūr's son, Bishr.<sup>161</sup> The versions reflect rival traditions among the Salima, probably among the descendants of the leaders involved; al-Barā' was of the 'Ubayd subdivision of the Salima, while 'Amr was of the Ḥarām subdivision.

One report on the shift of leadership from al-Jadd to 'Amr creates the mistaken impression that it was associated with idols. Al-Jadd was deposed and replaced by 'Amr because of his (the former's) stinginess. The report goes on to tell us about 'Amr: *wa-kāna 'alā aṣṇāmihim fī l-jāhiliyya wa-kāna yūlimu 'alā rasūli llāh ṣ idhā tazawwaja*, "and he was responsible for their idols in the Jāhiliyya and used to give a feast for the Messenger of God whenever he got married". The *isnād* goes back to Abū l-Zubayr < Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh.<sup>162</sup> Jābir was an obvious source in this case since he was 'Amr's second cousin.<sup>163</sup> It is tempting to link 'Amr with the *munāfiq* regarding whom it was said that he was *ṣāhib ālihatihim* (above, 26). But being put in charge of idols is not a direct response to stinginess and is inconsistent with giving the feasts for Muḥammad. The correct reading is *'alā adyāfihim*, "he was responsible for their guests in the Jāhiliyya".<sup>164</sup>

There is no unanimity regarding 'Amr's role before his conversion. An account by 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr on the activity of Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr (of the Qurashī clan 'Abd al-Dār) in Medina before the Hijra includes details which do not appear in Ibn Hishām's version of the report; perhaps they were also absent from Ibn Ishāq's biography of Muḥammad. Muṣ'ab settled among the Ghanm ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār with As'ad ibn Zurāra. At a certain point, after the conversion to

<sup>160</sup>Lecker, "Idol worship", 336–38. In Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il*, 310–12, read Manāf instead of Manāt (it was no doubt masculine); Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, I, 643–44; *Nubalā'*, I, 253. Read Manāf instead of Manāt also in Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 537.

<sup>161</sup>See e.g. Ḥassān, *Diwān*, I, 460–61; Ibn 'Asākir, XII, 413. Ibn Ishāq and Ma'mar, on the authority of al-Zuhri, said that al-Jadd was replaced by Bishr. As we shall see, the version which mentions al-Jadd's replacement by 'Amr goes back to Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh.

<sup>162</sup>*Istī'āb*, III, 1170–71. See an entry on Abū l-Zubayr al-Makkī, Muḥammad ibn Muslim (d. 126/743–44 or 128/745–46), in Mizzi, XXVI, 402–11.

<sup>163</sup>Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 151–54.

<sup>164</sup>*Shu'ab al-imān*, VIII, 431. In *Fath al-bārī*, V, 128, the verb *ya'tariḍu* was added: *wa-kāna 'Amr ya'tariḍu 'alā aṣṇāmihim fī l-jāhiliyya*. Obviously, it was felt that the idols did not go with the feasts and that 'Amr's image had to be corrected: he was not in charge of the idols but opposed them.

Islam of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal, the Najjār drove Muṣ‘ab out and persecuted (*wa-’shtaddū ‘alā*) their fellow tribesman As‘ad. Muṣ‘ab moved to Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal where he continued his missionary work. Finally in every court (*dār*) of the Anṣār there were Muslim men and women. Their noblemen embraced Islam, among them ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ. Their idols were broken and the Muslims became the strongest people in Medina.<sup>165</sup> Muṣ‘ab’s expulsion from the court of the Najjār and his shift to Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh, both probably historical facts, were left out of the *sīra* because they were considered embarrassing for the Najjār. The conversion of the noblemen, particularly that of ‘Amr, the only one to be specified, and the breaking up of the idols at this early stage (even before the second or major ‘Aqaba meeting), are an invention. ‘Urwa’s report is favourable to ‘Amr in that it dates his conversion to this early date.<sup>166</sup> According to Ibn Ishāq, however, ‘Amr’s conversion took place shortly after the major ‘Aqaba meeting, following the repeated humiliation of his wooden idol, Manāf, at the hands of his own son, Mu‘ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ, who cooperated with Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal and other young men of the Salima.<sup>167</sup> The source of Ibn Ishāq’s report is missing in Ibn Hishām. However, ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn Qatāda who is often quoted by Ibn Ishāq specifically stated that ‘Amr’s conversion was delayed (*ta’akhhara*).<sup>168</sup> According to Ibn al-Kalbī, ‘Amr was the last Anṣārī to embrace Islam.<sup>169</sup>

Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal also figures in another report related to idols. Mu‘ādh, Tha‘laba ibn ‘Anama al-Salamī of the Sawād subdivision of Salima and ‘Abdallāh ibn Unays al-Juhanī, having converted to Islam, broke up the idols of the

<sup>165</sup>Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XX, 362–64; *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, VI, 40–42; *Ḥilya*, I, 106–107. Wāqidi’s combined report in Ibn Sa‘d, III, 118, does not mention Muṣ‘ab’s shift from the Najjār to the ‘Abd al-Ashhal. This was probably one of the details omitted by Wāqidi in the process of creating the combined report. However, in the entry on Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh in Ibn Sa‘d, III, 420–21, it is reported that Sa‘d moved Muṣ‘ab and As‘ad to his court — Sa‘d and As‘ad were maternal cousins. The source of this report is Sa‘d’s grandson, Wāqid ibn ‘Amr.

<sup>166</sup>The same can probably be said of ‘Ikrima’s report on ‘Amr’s conversion which similarly links it to Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr; *Nubalā’*, I, 253 (quoting ‘Ikrima). Initially ‘Amr apologized to Muṣ‘ab, arguing that he had to consult his people: *inna lanā mu‘āmarā fī qawminā, wa-kāna sayyid banī Salima* (in fact he was one of their *sayyids*). But soon afterwards the humiliation of his idol made him realize how weak and defenceless it was. Some of the themes of this humiliation are known from Ibn Ishāq’s account of ‘Amr’s conversion.

<sup>167</sup>Ibn Hishām, II, 95–96 (erroneously printed Manāt). ‘Amr was one of the *sayyids* of the Salima and one of their noblemen (*sayyidan min sādāt banī Salima wa-sharīfan min ashrafihim*). In his house he had a wooden idol, as was common among noblemen. They would take for themselves an idol, honour and purify (i.e. consecrate) it (*kamā kānati l-ashraf yaṣna‘ūna, tattakhidhuhu ilāhan tu‘azzimuhu wa-tuṭahhiruhu*). The report on Mu‘ādh’s idol in *Bad’ wa-ta’rikh*, V, 117–18, is erroneous: Mu‘ādh should be replaced by Abū l-Dardā’; Lecker, “Idol worship”, 339–40. On Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal see now van Ess, “Die Pest von Emmaus”.

<sup>168</sup>See the paraphrased fragment quoted in *Nubalā’*, I, 253–54. Note that a report on ‘Amr’s burial is quoted by Ibn Ishāq from his father < *ashyākh* of the Salima; Ibn Hishām, III, 104.

<sup>169</sup>*Iṣāba*, IV, 615.

Salima.<sup>170</sup> It is noteworthy that only one of these three was a full member of the Salima. Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal was not of the Salima, being descended from Udayy ibn Sa‘d, the brother of Salima ibn Sa‘d. ‘Abdallāh ibn Unays al-Juhanī was a client (*ḥalīf*) of the Salima. As has already been noted, Mu‘ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh belonged to a leading Salima family.

‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh’s idol and the idols belonging to other noblemen were one level above the household idols. They had names, which the latter did not, and the same is true of the idols of higher levels to be discussed below. Perhaps the noblemen’s idols were larger or more richly decorated than the household idols.<sup>171</sup> They were probably anthropoid (or were interpreted anthropomorphically): the young attackers of ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh’s idol threw it on its head; at some stage ‘Amr hung a sword on it and asked it to defend itself.<sup>172</sup> ‘Amr’s idol had a sanctuary (*bayt*) of its own,<sup>173</sup> and the same was probably the case with the idols of noblemen in general. With regard to this specific idol it is reported that whenever people wanted to talk to it (i.e., consult it), an old woman would stand behind it and answer on its behalf.<sup>174</sup>

### 2.3 Idols belonging to *batns*

One level above the nobleman’s idol we find the idol of the *batn*, which also had a name. *Batns* mentioned as owners of idols were the subdivisions of the Nabīt group (Aws), i.e., ‘Abd al-Ashhal, Ḥāritha and Ḍafar; the Salima; and the Najjār subdivisions, ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār, Dīnār ibn al-Najjār and Mālīk ibn al-Najjār (Khazraj). Many *batns* in Medina are not listed among the owners of idols, simply because the list is incomplete. The *batn*’s idol was placed in a sanctuary (*bayt*) and belonged to the whole *batn* (*li-jamā‘at al-batn*). Sacrifices were offered to it.<sup>175</sup> One expects the sanctuary to have been converted into a mosque. An association between *batns* and worship can also be found elsewhere: in Kūfa there were mosques belonging to *batns* of the Kinda.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>170</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, III, 580, 583; Ibn Qudāma, *Istibṣār*, 136–37, 165, 166; *Iṣāba*, IV, 15–16 (‘Abdallāh ibn Unays). The reports on the breaking of the idols by the three do not mention Mu‘ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh.

<sup>171</sup>Decoration of idols in general is suggested by the saying *aḥsan mina l-dumya wa-mina l-zūn wa-humā l-ṣanam*; Maydānī, *Amthāl*, I, 227.

<sup>172</sup>Ibn Hishām, II, 95–96.

<sup>173</sup>*Dakhalū bayt ṣanamihī*; *Nubalā’*, I, 254. This is also suggested by the words *wa-dakhala ‘alā Manāf*; *ibid.*, 253.

<sup>174</sup>*Fa-ajābat ‘anhū*; Abū Nu‘aym, *Dalā’il*, 311 (called here Manāt, read: Manāf); Lecker, “Idol worship”, 337.

<sup>175</sup>Regarding the association between *batns* and idols cf. Abbās, “Two hitherto unpublished texts”, 12: *wa-kānat awthānu l-‘arab idh dhāka musnada ilā l-Ka‘ba thalāthami’a wa-sittīna wathanan, li-kull ḥayy mina l-‘arab wathan, wa-kāna yakūnu fī l-ḥayyi l-butūnu l-kathīra mina l-‘arab, fa-kāna li-kull batn minhā wathan.*

<sup>176</sup>Lecker, “Kinda on the eve of Islam”, 344–45.



## 2.4 Huzam

One level above the *batns* in the tribal organization of Medina we find the major subdivisions of the Aws and Khazraj. For the time being I have been able to find only one idol in this category: the Ḥārith ibn al-Khazraj had an idol called Huzam, located in their *majlis*, or place of assembly similarly called Huzam, in wadi Buṭḥān. One expects the other subdivisions of the Aws and Khazraj to have had similar idols.<sup>177</sup> Unlike the *batn*'s idol which had a sanctuary, the idol of the major subdivision was located in the tribal place of assembly. There is no mention of sacrifices, but since sacrifices were offered to the idols of the *batns*, one would expect to find them in this category as well.

## 2.5 Al-Khamīs

One level above the major subdivisions of the Khazraj (and the Aws) we find the Khazraj themselves. There is evidence of an idol worshipped by the Khazraj, or indeed by the Khazraj and the Sulaym tribe whose territory was not far from Medina. The idol's name was al-Khamīs and it appears in a verse attributed to the Prophet's grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who swore by it.<sup>178</sup>

## 2.6 Al-Saʿīda

One level above the idol of the Khazraj we find al-Saʿīda. Located on Mt. Uḥud near Medina, it was worshipped by the Azd and the whole of the Quḍāʿa (the Saʿd Hudhaym are specifically mentioned), with the exception of the Banū Wabara. On this level and the next one there is evidence of custodians and of a *talbiya*: the custodians of al-Saʿīda were the Banū l-ʿAjlān.<sup>179</sup> In the period immediately preceding the rise of Islam most of the Quḍāʿa did not live near Medina, although Medina had a significant population belonging to the Quḍāʿa branch of Balī. But we are mainly concerned here with the Azd, since the Aws and Khazraj who were of the Azd must have been among the worshippers of this idol. The Aws and Khazraj who were the more recent settlers in Medina joined the older population of the Balī in its worship of al-Saʿīda. Unsurprisingly, the custodians belonged to the older population. The ʿAjlān (a *batn*) had a client relationship (*ḥalīf*) with

<sup>177</sup>Cf. the expression *majālis al-anṣār*; Ibn ʿAsākir, XLI, 56. There is no reason to assume that their *majālis* were abolished after the advent of Islam; the idols were of course removed from them.

<sup>178</sup>*Abliḡ banī l-Najjārī in jīʾtahum annī minhum wa-ʿbnuhum wa-l-Khamīs*; Ṭabarī, I, 1085; *Ansāb al-ashraf*, I, 70; *Munammaq*, 85. Cf. Ṭabarī, trans., VI, 12 (“The meaning of *wa-l-khamīs* is somewhat obscure”). Elsewhere the verse is attributed to al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Manāf; Ibn Saʿd, I, 82–83; Lecker, *Sulaym*, 99 (pointing out the possibility that “Khazraj” refers to both the Khazraj and Aws; *Aṣnām*, 14; Fākihī, IV, 236).

<sup>179</sup>*Muḥabbar*, 316–17; Kister, “Labbayka”, 56.

the ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, more precisely the Banū Zayd ibn Mālīk ibn ‘Awf ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf.<sup>180</sup> The worshippers of al-Sa‘īda had a *talbiya* of their own.<sup>181</sup>

## 2.7 Manāt

After al-Khamīs which was worshipped by the Khazraj and al-Sa‘īda which was probably worshipped by both the Aws and Khazraj, we move one level higher to arrive at the most important idol of these two tribes, namely Manāt.<sup>182</sup> It was located in Qudayd near al-Mushallal not far from the coast. According to some, it was a rock in Qudayd belonging to the Hudhayl, while others said that Manāt belonged to the Hudhayl and Khuẓā‘a. But in several more reliable reports which are partly supported by coinciding evidence, the Azd and Quḍā‘a are mentioned as its worshippers. It was worshipped by the Anṣār, the Azd Shanū‘a and other Azdīs, among them the groups of Ghassān (who also belonged to the Azd).<sup>183</sup> The Sa‘d Hudhaym of the Quḍā‘a are again mentioned specifically among its worshippers. At the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca the Aws and Khazraj, together with their followers from the Arabs of Yathrib and others, would not cut their hair with the other pilgrims, but would remain near Manāt (*wa-aqāmū ‘indahū*) and cut their hair there. They believed that the pilgrimage was not complete without this. Also the Quraysh and all the Arabs worshipped Manāt. On his way to conquer Mecca in 8/630 Muḥammad sent ‘Alī to destroy Manāt. He brought back as part of the spoils two swords which the king of Ghassān al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Shamir had given the idol, Mikhdham and Rasūb. But elsewhere it is reported that ‘Alī found the swords at al-Fals, the idol of the Ṭay’, when he destroyed it. The custodians of Manāt were the Ghaṭārīf from the Azd.<sup>184</sup> The Ghaṭārīf are the family (*āl*) of al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Ubaydallāh ibn ‘Āmir

<sup>180</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Nasab Ma‘add*, 711–12, listing no less than six members of the ‘Ajlān who were Muḥammad’s Companions; Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 443; Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 135–37, and index. Serjeant (“Dawlah”, 143, n. 49) suggests that ‘Ajlān be identified with “‘Ajlān b. ‘Abdullāh of Rabī‘a” (he refers to Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq*, 296; read: 297); but this is not possible. Besides, Ibn Durayd speaks of the Qays ‘Aylān, not of the Rabī‘a.

<sup>181</sup>Kister, “Labbayka”, 52 (read Sa‘īda instead of Sa‘īd). In the *talbiya* the pilgrims declared that they did not come to the idol for (material) benefit nor for gain; cf. Tritton, “Notes on religion in early Arabia”, 194. This is confirmed by the fact that the Quḍā‘a and some tribes of the Azd were among the *ḥilla* tribes that did not engage in trade during their pilgrimage; Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, I, 257. When they were on pilgrimage, they bought only meat; *Muḥabbar*, 181. According to *Muḥabbar*, 179, the *ḥilla* included the Quḍā‘a (with the exception of ‘Ilāf and Janāb) and the Anṣār. Wellhausen, *Reste*, 65, argues, following the verse in Yāqūt, s.v. al-‘Uzzā, 116b, that al-Sa‘īda was originally a nickname of al-‘Uzzā. See also *Aṣṇām*, 19. Another idol with the same name was located near Sindād or on the nearby bank of the Euphrates; Yāqūt, s.v. al-Sa‘īda.

<sup>182</sup>Krone, *Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 521–39.

<sup>183</sup>Lecker, “The levying of taxes” = no. I in this volume.

<sup>184</sup>Yāqūt, s.v. Manāt; *Aṣṇām*, 13–15; *Muḥabbar*, 316. Wellhausen (*Reste*, 28) argues that two pilgrimages are incorrectly conflated here, one to Mecca and another to Manāt. Krone, *Die*

al-Ghiṭrīf,<sup>185</sup> or Banū al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Yashkur ibn Mubashshir from the Azd. Their land was at the southernmost part of the Sarāt mountains,<sup>186</sup> in an area called al-Ḥazz. The Ghaṭārīf conquered al-Ḥazz from the Amalekites, and hence the name al-Ghaṭārīf or the noble ones.<sup>187</sup>

The custodians were probably a family of the Ghaṭārīf that emigrated to northern Arabia. While the reports on the location of Manāt are consistent, its worshippers are given as either the Hudhayl, the Hudhayl and Khuzā’a or the Azd, including the Aws and Khazraj. The Hudhayl and Khuzā’a might reflect an earlier stage in the worship of Manāt, before the arrival of the Azd from the Yemen. In any case, in the immediate pre-Islamic period Manāt was worshipped, among other Azdis, by the Aws and Khazraj.

This is borne out by a report which originated with a great-grandson of Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa’id ibn Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda, in praise of his fathers. Sa’d’s grandfather Dulaym used to donate ten slaughter camels to Manāt every year. Sa’d’s father, ‘Ubāda, followed suit and Sa’d himself did the same before his conversion to Islam. Sa’d’s son, Qays, used to donate the same number of camels to the Ka’ba.<sup>188</sup> The report is not concerned with idol worship as such but with generosity and leadership. It is noteworthy that Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda himself, before his conversion to Islam, used to donate camels to Manāt. In other words, the cult of Manāt was not a matter of remote history but continued to the very advent of Islam.

Manāt concludes the discussion of the idols worshipped by the people of Medina. A man of the Aws or Khazraj had a household idol at home; noblemen had idols which were probably more impressive than the household idols; the *baṭn* as a whole had an idol kept in a special sanctuary; the subdivision of Aws or Khazraj had an idol in its *maḡlis*; the Khazraj as a whole worshipped a special idol (and the Aws presumably had an idol of their own); both the Aws and Khazraj worshipped al-Sa’ida on Mt. Uḥud; and finally the Aws and Khazraj concluded their pilgrimage near their main idol, Manāt.

In all this there is no indication of the decline of idol worship on the eve of Islam. Quite to the contrary, it appears that the whole life cycle of a Medinan,

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*altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt*, 537, says that the pilgrimage to Manāt could have been attached to the Meccan pilgrimage. On the sacrifice of hair cf. *ibid.*, 415–18. Wāqidi, II, 870, reports that Sa’d ibn Zayd al-Ashhālī was sent by Muḥammad to demolish Manāt in Mushallal. The “Bakr” mentioned in the *talbiya* of those who worshipped Manāt and/or in that of the Qays ‘Aylān were not the Bakr ibn Wā’il but the Bakr ibn ‘Abd Manāt ibn Kināna, on whom see Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 180–82; cf. Kister, “Labbayka”, 45. The Bakr ibn ‘Abd Manāt ibn Kināna were among the *ḥilla* tribes; *Muḥabbar*, 179. This would explain the threat they posed to pilgrims heading for Mecca. See also *Muḥabbar*, 318; Kister, “Labbayka”, 57 (Hubal belonged to the Bakr, Mālik and Milkān and the rest of the Kināna).

<sup>185</sup>Hassān, *Dīwān*, II, 263 (the affair of Abū Uzayhir; above, 23).

<sup>186</sup>On which see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. al-Sarāt.

<sup>187</sup>Yāqūt, s.v. al-Ḥazz.

<sup>188</sup>*Istī‘āb*, II, 595; Ibn ‘Asākir, XLIX, 416–17.

whether of the Khazraj or the Aws, was associated with idolatry. Ibn Ishāq's opinion about the influence of monotheism on the Arabs on the eve of Islam was "that it was merely superficial; the Arabs were illiterate and what they heard from Jews and Christians had no effect on their lives". Guillaume, adducing this view, was surprised: "It must be remembered that he was talking about Western Arabia, and one would have thought that the influence of the synagogue or synagogues in Medina and its suburbs would have been considerable, especially when one bears in mind the close agreement between the Koran and the Talmud in teaching and terminology".<sup>189</sup> But Ibn Ishāq accurately describes the situation in Medina on the eve of the Hijra.<sup>190</sup>

The power of idol worship in Arabia must not be underestimated. The evidence adduced above shows that idol worship in Mecca, Medina and among the nomads prospered on the eve of Islam. The evidence for Medina is particularly rich and idols were found on all levels of tribal organization. This must have been the case in all parts of Arabia.<sup>191</sup>

For ten frustrating years Muḥammad attempted to convert his fellow Meccans to Islam. Their resistance was motivated not only by fear for their commercial interests. While the intensity of their spiritual attachment to the idols cannot be gauged, clearly idols played a major role in their lives.

The accounts of the demolition of idols often provide Islamic writers with

<sup>189</sup>Guillaume, *New Light*, 6–7. See also *ibid.*, 21: "The Arabs were illiterate. They did not study writing. All that they knew of heaven and hell, the resurrection, the mission of prophets and so on was the little they had heard from Jews and Christians. This teaching had no effect on their lives". In Ibn Hishām, I, 225 (< ʿĀsim ibn ʿUmar ibn Qatāda), the Arabic text is as follows: *inna minnā daʿānā ilā l-islām maʿa raḥmatī llāh wa-hudāhu lanā la-mā kunnā nasmaʿu min riḡāl yahūd, wa-kunnā ahl shirk aṣḡāb awthān wa-kānū ahl kitāb, ʿindahum ʿilm laysa lanā . . .*

<sup>190</sup>Serjeant, in his review of Guillaume's *New Life*, in *BSOAS* 26 (1963), 427–28, remarks with regard to Ibn Ishāq's view on the superficial influence of monotheism that it "strikes the reviewer as very likely to be near the truth, and the existence of synagogues in ancient west Arabia is no more likely to have influenced the religious attitudes of tribesfolk than those in the Yemen (which were numerous enough until some twelve years ago) influenced the dominant Muslim population's outlook though relations were in other ways very close".

<sup>191</sup>Evidence of the persistence of idol worship after the advent of Islam is inconclusive. Ibn al-Jawzī (*Talbīs iblīs*, 59) reports that at the time of the last Sassanian emperor, Yazdjird, idols were worshipped and some people apostatized (*wa-rajaʿa man rajaʿa ʿani l-islām*). Elsewhere we find that three people found with idols in an underground place of passage (*sarab*) were brought before ʿAlī who ordered them burnt alive; Ṭabarī, *Tahdhīb al-āthār* (Musnad ʿAlī), 81. But there is no certainty that the three were Arabs. The next report in the same source speaks of people of the Zutt whom ʿAlī had burnt alive for the same offence, and it appears that the three mentioned earlier were also non-Arabs. Incidentally, Muʿāwiya was accused of having exported anthropomorphic brass (or gold) "idols" to Hind and Sind (*aṣnām min ṣufr tamāthīl al-riḡāl*). They were shipped down the Tigris and sold on his behalf; *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, IV,i, 130. When Sicily was conquered at the time of Muʿāwiya, "idols" of gold and silver adorned with jewels which had been taken as spoils were sent to the caliph who in turn sent them to Hind via al-Baṣra to be sold there; *Futūḥ*, 235. These two reports are probably linked.

an opportunity to ridicule the polytheists and their cult. But the shock and fear attributed to the polytheists indicate their belief in the power of their idols. The acts of destruction were not always peaceful and custodians were sometimes prepared to sacrifice their lives rather than abandon their idols.

### Appendix: The Meccan maker of household idols

Some details are available about a Meccan carpenter called Abū Tijrāt<sup>192</sup> who carved wooden idols. He was a Christian (*naṣrānī*). His father was called Yasār Abū Fukayha after a daughter of his named Fukayha.<sup>193</sup> Abū Tijrāt was the son-in-law of a member of the Umayyad family, Mu‘āwiya ibn al-Mughīra ibn Abī l-‘Ās; his Christian faith is mentioned to the detriment of this Umayyad family.<sup>194</sup>

Regarding his activity as a manufacturer of idols we rely on Wāqidī. On a closer inspection of this account one realizes that something is missing. Having reported on ‘Ikrima’s destruction of every idol he found out about (above, 4), Wāqidī says: *wa-kāna Abū Tijrāt ya‘maluhā fī l-jāhiliyya wa-yabī‘uhā, qāla Sa‘d* [read: Sa‘īd] *ibn ‘Amr: akhbaranī [the word abī is missing] annahu kāna yarāhu ya‘maluhā wa-yabī‘uhā. Wa-lam yakun rajul min Quraysh bi-Makka illā wa-fī baytihi ṣanam.* Wāqidī’s source is ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd [al-Hudhalī] < Sa‘īd ibn ‘Amr.<sup>195</sup> Sa‘īd ibn ‘Amr’s informant was probably his father. Elsewhere Wāqidī quotes from ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd < Sa‘īd ibn ‘Amr < his father, a report on the worship of Hudhayl’s idol, Suwā‘. As in the passage discussed here, the father’s testimony is an eye witness account: *ḥaḍartu ma‘a rijāl min qawmī ṣanamanā Suwā‘ . . .*<sup>196</sup> The same is probably true of Sa‘īd’s eye witness account concerning Abū Tijrāt’s manufacturing of idols: it was received from his father, ‘Amr.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>192</sup>Wāqidī/Wellhausen, 350, has erroneously Abū Bajrāt (“Abu Bajrāt machte und verkaufte sie; es wurde mit ihnen ein lebhafter Handel an die Beduinen getrieben”).

<sup>193</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, VIII, 246. In another version his father’s name was Aflah; *Iṣāba*, I, 100.

<sup>194</sup>*Wa-hum yu‘ābūna bi-dhālika; Ansāb al-ashraf*, IV, i, 479.

<sup>195</sup>Wāqidī, II, 869–870.

<sup>196</sup>Ibn Sa‘d, I, 167–68; above, 8.

<sup>197</sup>Abū Nu‘aym’s Companion dictionary has it that ‘Amr’s father was called Sa‘īd; *Iṣāba*, IV, 639.

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