

Variations in Eight Manuscript Versions of al-Kisā'ī's Depiction of Seven Heavens*

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ABSTRACT

This contribution presents the concept of 'seven heavens' as preserved by eight manuscripts of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Kisā'ī's collections of Islamic religious tales *Kitāb 'Aḡā'ib al-Malakūt* and *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*. It focuses on and compares the contents and composition of the chapter devoted to the topic and analyses the variations in the mss., which shed light on the way the tales are transmitted. Some of them represent variability in the original information, whereas others (including significant semantic shifts) may easily have emerged as a result of even minor scribal lapses.

KEY WORDS

variations, seven heavens, al-Kisā'ī, manuscripts, Islam, angels

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The phrase ‘seventh heaven’ surely stems from the symbolic character of the number ‘seven’ representing ‘fullness.’¹ This character is also mirrored in the concept of ‘seven heavens’² in Islamic tradition,³ the seventh one having the greatest qualities of them all. The structure of the universe has always interested mankind, which has brought about the invention of amazing myths. Finding answers to cosmological questions has been a goal of both theologians and folk story-tellers, who make their living entertaining a wide public by narrating multiple kinds of tales.⁴ Let us look in more detail at the matter of ‘seven heavens’ from the (obviously not only canonical)⁵ Islamic point of view as preserved by Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Kisā’ī (ca. 10th/11th c.),⁶ the compiler of two collections of folk⁷ religious tales *Kitāb ‘Ağā’ib al-malakūt* [The Book of Marvels of the World and the Otherworld⁸]⁹ (henceforth ‘Marvels’) and *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* [The Tales of the Prophets]¹⁰ (henceforth ‘Prophets’). To be more specific, five mss. of Marvels and three mss. of Prophets¹¹ are compared in terms of their treatment of the concept. Editions (of the latter) and some further authoritative sources are taken into account as well. The objective is to describe and analyse (and possibly reveal the reasons and consequences of) the substantial structural, scriptural, semantic and quantitative differences between individual ms. witnesses within the relevant extract (mostly constituted by one chapter). Paragraph 1. of this paper offers a description of the chapter, making use of tables and translated quotations in an edition-like manner.¹² The analysis

¹ On this character see Hehmeyer 2017: 1086.

² As well as ‘seven earths’ and many other items, see al-Tha’labī 2002: 19–20, Heinen 1995. These heavens/‘heavenly spheres’ (Jarrar 2017: 275)/‘levels of heaven’ (Rustomji 2017: 296) are not to be confused with the ‘gardens of Paradise,’ for which see Gardet 1965: 447–448, 450.

³ The term ‘tradition’ here is not to be confused with the ‘Tradition’ in its narrower sense, i.e. the ḥadīṭ, see Pauliny 1975–1976: 219–223, Robson 1971: 23.

⁴ For more details on their role and conduct see Tottoli 2002: 86–89, Gažáková 2009: 137–163.

⁵ See Pauliny 1974b: 186–187, Thackston 1978a: xiii–xv, Tottoli 2007: 466, Lacináková 2016b: 113–116, 124–128.

⁶ For his identity see the works stated in refs. 9 and (partly) 10.

⁷ For a discussion of (in)aptness of this label see the works stated in ref. 5.

⁸ The word ‘malakūt’ is a calque of Syriac ‘malkutā’ and refers to the eternal otherworldly sphere where ‘friends of God’ (i.e. righteous believers) live after death and which they can perceive in glimpses during their worldly lives (Lange 2016: 187–188). However, the Book also describes the earthly physical world.

⁹ Pauliny (1974a, 1974b, 1975–1976) describes the overall character of the work within the frame of Arabic folk literature of the same or close to the same genre; he compares three mss. of similar works and adopts a stance on the circumstances and probable time of its origin, and thus also on the lifetime of its compiler. So far, only the prologue and the first two (of ca. 70) chapters were edited (al-Kisā’ī 2005: 85–155), which edition and commentary were reviewed by Tottoli (2007).

¹⁰ There exist several editions of the Arabic text. Al-Kisā’ī 1922–1923 posed a template for Thackston’s annotated translation into English (al-Kisā’ī 1978: 5–336), and was reviewed by Pauliny (1969, 1970), who analyses the Arabic piece in detail. Newer editions to my knowledge are: al-Kisā’ī 2004, al-Kisā’ī 1998 and al-Kisā’ī 2008, which, however, lacks the chapter on heavens. The latter two were kindly brought to my attention by Roberto Tottoli in an e-mail communication of Sept 18, 2017, who treats in detail the known existing sources on the whole genre (2011: 525–539). Among further relevant authors is Nagel (1967).

¹¹ For their bibliographical data, see Abbreviations. Only one of them (Ms. 854) was included in al-Kawwāz’s edition (al-Kisā’ī 2004). There exist many more mss. of both works (as is evident from the works cited in the preceding two refs.). Here a limited number of them are chosen to facilitate the illustration of variabilities as targeted by this brief contribution.

¹² The orthographical features of the mss. were respected in order to shed light on how even possible ‘errors’ may have modified the eventually conveyed contents and thus contribute to the multiplicity of versions of supposedly the same notion, as opposed to the neglect of non-standard ones as mere scribal errors in normalizing (or ‘literarizing’) editing, which is admittedly effective for its purposes; for more discussion on these and related topics see Gažáková 2015: 398–402, Lacináková 2016a: 24–25, 27–28, 141–143. In the quotations, variations in data or



is then given in §2.–2.8. with the numbering of subparagraphs corresponding to §1.–1.8., where the second numbers accord with the nos. of the parts of the chapter as divided below.

1. THE CHAPTER OF SEVEN HEAVENS (HENCEFORTH ‘THE CHAPTER’)¹³

For clarity, let us divide the Chapter into the following thematic parts (henceforth ‘P1’–‘P8’):

P1: creation of the heavens

P2: qualities of the heavens (with far richer descriptions and additional information on both heavens and their inhabitants in B)

P3: contents of the seventh heaven (only KD and B)

P4: ways in which the inhabitants of the heavens praise God (except for B)

P5: veils with angels above the heavens and golden gates/locks (except for B)

P6: layers above the heavens (except for Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854)

P7: angels with legs like flags (except for B)

P8: descriptions of further angels (these constitute a part of the Chapter in Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854 only, and a separate one in the rest of the mss. except for B, which, however, describes more broadly the angels in individual heavens within P2 and P3, displaying (together with KD in P3 to a lesser degree) certain common features with the matter after P7 in the others. Here, let us treat as ‘P8’ selected passages by which the accounts of the Chapter in Marvels and Prophets somehow overlap (whether by common objects of description or common/very similar qualities that may, but need not, pertain to the same beings; see below).

1.1. Part 1: The Creation of the Heavens

‘Ibn [al-]‘Abbās¹⁴ said that God ordered [vapours {above water}¹⁵]¹⁶ to rise [in]¹⁷ the air and turned them into [{seven}¹⁸ heavens]¹⁹ [in two days]²⁰. [There were one earth and one heaven {and water between the two in six days}²¹. Then, the heaven and earth split into seven heavens and

wordings, parentheses and necessary signs and amendments are indicated by square brackets and footnotes (if not presented otherwise).

¹³ The exact wording of its title varies: B, L, KA: ‘The Chapter of Seven Heavens, Their Contents, Names and Veils Above Them,’ R: ‘The Chapter of Seven Heavens, Their Names, Substances Behind Them and Veils Above Them,’ KD: ‘The Chapter of the Creation of Seven Heavens and Seven Earths, Their Contents, Horizons, Heavens Above Them and Veils Above the Heavens,’ Ms. 2702: ‘The Tale of the Heavens, Their Names and Inhabitants,’ Ms. 3466: ‘The Tale of the Heavens, Their Inhabitants and Qualities of Angels,’ Ms. 854: ‘The Tale of the Heaven, its Inhabitants and Names, Sorts of Angels and Creation of the Sun and Moon.’

¹⁴ The ‘Father of Qur’ānic exegesis’ (d. ca 687), his name frequently (and in our mss. as well) occurs without the definite article (Vaglieri 1960: 40). For the sake of brevity, honorific formulae such as *raḍīya l-Lāh ‘anhu* (‘may God be pleased with him’) are omitted.

¹⁵ Ms. 2702: ‘on the surface of water’ KD: ‘hanging in the air.’

¹⁶ Ms. 3466: ‘seas on the surface of the earth.’

¹⁷ L: ‘from.’

¹⁸ Missing from Ms. 854.

¹⁹ Ms. 3466: ‘a heaven.’

²⁰ Missing from B.

²¹ Only Ms. 854.



seven earths {out of fear of their God}²². Such is the Word of God: (Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity and We separated them {and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?})²³²⁴ {And also (and He completed them as seven heavens within two days and inspired in each heaven its command.)²⁵}²⁶²⁷ (B, fol. 14a–b, L, fol. 8b, R, fol. 9a, KA, fol. 1b, KD, fol. 1b, Ms. 2702, fol. 6a, Ms. 3466, fol. 5a, Ms. 854, fol. 3b, Ms. 2702, fol. 6a, Ms. 3466, fol. 5a, Ms. 854, fol. 3b)

1.2. Part 2: Quality and Inhabitants of Individual Heavens (B, fol. 14b–16b, L, fol. 8b, R, fol. 9a–b, KA, fol. 1b–2a, KD, fol. 1b–2a, Ms. 2702, fol. 6a–b, Ms. 3466, fol. 5a–b, Ms. 854, fol. 3b)

This part provides the basic data on individual heavens, whose manuscript versions are given in Tables 1–4 below.²⁸ For the sake of brevity, let us abbreviate the heavens and their names to H1–7, those of their respective guardians to G1–7, their materials to M1–7 and the shape of their inhabitants to I1–7.

1.2.1. Proper Names

Table 1. Names of the Heavens

	L	R	KA	KD	Ms. 2702	Ms. 3466	Ms. 854
1 ^[1]	Barf/qa‘ / ḥyā	B.r.q.y.‘ ā’	B.r.f.w.yā	B.r.w.ṣā or B.r.q.y.‘ .ā ^[2]	Barq.y.‘ ā	T.w.q.y.‘ ā	T.r.f.y.‘ an ^[3]
2 ^[4]	Q.y.d.w.m	Q.y.d.w.m	Q.y.d.w.m	M.d.w.r or Q.y.d.w.m	Q.y.dūm	Q.f/ ḍ.l.w.m ^[5]	Q.y.w.d
3 ^[6]	Mā‘ .w.t	Mā‘ .w.n	Mā‘ .w.n	Māḥ.w.n	Mā‘ ūn	Mā‘ .w.n	Mā‘ .w.n
4 ^[7]	.r.q.w.n	Arqilūn	Ar.q.y.w.n	Ar.q.l.w.n	.r.f.lūna ^[8]	J.r.q.lūm	Ram.l.w.n

²² Only Ms. 2702, Ms. 3466.

²³ The Qur’ān 21:30.

²⁴ Only Ms. 854.

²⁵ The Qur’ān 41:12: ‘Then He fashioned them seven heavens in two days, and revealed in every heaven its law. And We adorned the lower heaven with lamps and guardians. That is the decree of the Mighty, the Omniscient.’ Throughout the paper, Qur’ānic translations follow those of The Bounteous Koran 1986.

²⁶ Only Ms. 2702, Ms. 3466.

²⁷ Only Prophets.

²⁸ The transcriptions of proper names do not represent the only possible readings; certain groups of similar graphemes may have been misread. The missing vowel marks (taškīl) are indicated by dots. The graphemes ‘w’ and ‘y’ for the semi-vowels wāw (w/ū) and yā’ (y/ī), which may represent both consonants and vowels, are transcribed uniformly as consonants, except for those in clearly vowelized or well-known names and endings (names of angelic beings typically end in نِيلِ ʾl – representing Hebrew ʾel ‘God’ (Bürge 2009a: 70, 72)). (The scrutinized mss. of Prophets are easier to decipher than those of Marvels and even include some clear vowelization, whereas the sporadic vowel marks in the latter are often even more puzzling than would be their absence.) References by ordinal numbers provide their versions in the editions and a few further edited sources (ḥadīṭ-literature is not an exception to record varying accounts of identical notions).



5 ^[9]	R.b.qā	D.y.qā	R.t.qā	R.t.qā	R.t.qā	R.t.qā	R.t.qā
6 ^[10]	Daf.tā	D.f.yā	D.q.yāh	Z.f.qā or az-Z.h.rā ^[11]	D.f.nā	R.f.qā	R.m.qā
7 ^[12]	‘.r.y.b.ā	Ġ.r.b.yyā ^[13]	‘.r.b.yā	‘.r.y.qā	‘ar.b.yyā	‘.ġ.r.m.yyā	‘.l.yā

- [1] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘Birqī’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 29: ‘B.r.q.y.‘ā’, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘Y.r.q.y.‘ā’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Dināh’, *ibid.*: 22: ‘Barqī‘ā’, *Ḥadīṭ*-transmitter al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: ‘Raqī‘. Šāfī‘i jurist al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 171) agrees with al-Iṣbahānī on the explanation that the name stems from the first (= lowest) heaven being ‘patched’ (*marqū‘*) by stars, yet also records ‘B.r.q.y.‘ (approximately agreeing with the mss.), which he considers ‘less right.’ Cf. some versions of the name of H2, 3, 7; Table 1, notes 4, 6, 12.
- [2] KD states two versions of H1, 2, 6 according to different templates (or other sources).
- [3] a dot under the ‘t’ ت, possibly producing ‘b’ ب (thus ‘B.r.f.y.‘an’), assuming that the two dots above the primary line (rasm) do not belong to the script (although very much looking like that). The final ‘n’ is to retain written vocalic mark *tanwīn* - indicating grammatical indefiniteness.
- [4] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘Faydūm’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 29: ‘Q.y.w.d’ and ‘Q.y.d.w.m.’, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘Q.y.d.w.m.’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Ḍīqā’, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: ‘Arqlūn.’ Speaking of Hebrew lore, Davidson (1967: 268, 340) (disregarding scientific transcription) records *Raqia* (cf. some versions of H1, 3, 7; Table 1, notes 1, 6, 12).
- [5] Colloquial Arabic displays a certain interchangeability of emphatic consonants with their non-emphatic counterparts, which indicates a potential affinity of the version with ‘q’ to the others.
- [6] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘.wn’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 29, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘Mā‘.w.n’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Raqī‘ (cf. some versions of H1, 2, 7; Table 1, notes 1, 4, 12), *ibid.*: 22: ‘al-Mā‘ūn’ and ‘Qaydūm.’ The latter version is also provided by al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387, al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 172. *Ibid.*, vol II: 174: ‘Q.y.d.w.n.’
- [7] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘Arq.lūn’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 30: ‘D.m.l.w.n’, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘n.y.l.w.n’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21, 23: ‘Filūn’, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: ‘Mā‘ūn’, al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 172: ‘Mā‘.w.n’, i.e. almost the same form as the previous one but divided into two words (which distinction is not always clear in handwritten texts, as the letter in question is written separately from the next one). Speaking of Hebrew lore, Davidson (1967: 268, 340) records *Maḥen*. Cf. H3 as edited by Eisenberg; Table 1, note 6.
- [8] The final ‘a’ mirrors the presence of vocalic mark *fatha* -.
- [9] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā’i 2004: 30, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘Ratqā’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Ṭifṭāf’, *ibid.*: 23: ‘Lāḥuqūn’, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: ‘Ray‘.
- [10] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘Rafqā’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 30: ‘R.m.qā’, al-Kisā’i 1998: 100: ‘R.tqā’(!), al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Simsāq’, *ibid.*: 23: ‘Ārūs’, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1388: ‘Dift’, al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 172: ‘D.q.n’, *ibid.*: 178: ‘D.q.yā‘.
- [11] Is there a link with *az-Zuhara* ‘Venus’?
- [12] Al-Kisā’i 1922–1923: 12: ‘Ġaribyā’, al-Kisā’i 2004: 30: ‘.l.yā’, al-Kisā’i 1998: 101: ‘.r.y.mā’, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 21: ‘Iṣḥāqā‘il’ and ‘Iṣḥāfā‘il’(!), *ibid.*: 23: ‘ar-Raqī‘ (cf. some versions of H1, 2, 3; Table 1, notes 1, 4, 6), al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1388: ‘Arīb’ Al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 173: ‘.r.b.y’, *ibid.*: 178: ‘.r.y.b.ā’, *ibid.*: 179: ‘S.‘.wā‘.
- [13] The double yā’ mirrors the presence of doubling orthoepic mark *šadda* -.



Table 2. Names of the Guardians

	B	L	R	KA	KD	Ms. 2702	Ms. 3466	Ms. 854
1 ^[1]	S.m.s.māyil ^[2]	Isma' īl ^[3]	Isma' īl	Ismā' īl	Ismā' īl	Ismā' īl	Ismā' īl	Isma' īl
2 ^[4]	D.r.d.yāyil ^[5]	Mīḥ.yāyil	Mīḥ.yāyil	Mīḡāyil	Mīḥāyil	Mīḥā' īl ^[6]	Mīḥā' īl	M.n.ḥāyil ^[7]
3 ^[8]	Ġ.ḡ.bāyil ^[9]	Ṣā' idyāyil ^[10]	Ṣā' .d.nāyil	' .d.nāyil	Ṣā' .dāyil	Ṣā' .d.nā' īl ^[11]	Ṣ' .d.yā' īl	Ṣ' .dayāyil
4 ^[12]	Ṣ.l.ṣ.yāyil	Ṣ.l.ṣ.yāyil	Ṣilṣilyāyil	Ṣ.l.ṣāyil ^[13]	Ṣ.l.ṣāyil	Ṣal.ṣā' īl	Ṣ.l.ṣ.yāyil	Ṣal.ṣāyil
5 ^[14]	S.m.ḥ.yāyil	K.l.kāyil	K.l.k.l.yāyil ^[15]	Kāl.kāyil	S.m.ḥāyil	K.l.kā' īl	K.k.yā' īl	K.l.k.yāyil
6 ^[16]	Ṣ.w.r.yāyil ^[17]	S.ḥ.sāyil ^[18]	S.m.ḥ.yāyil	S.y.ḡ.yāyil	Isrāyil ^[19]	Sam.ḥ.yā' īl	Ṣ.m.ḥāyil	S.m.ḥāyil
7 ^[20]	–	D/R.w.q.yāyil	Q.d.l.yāyil	D/R.q.w.l.yāyil	R.q.yāyil	D.q.d.l.yāyil	B.r.q.yāyil ^[21]	R.m.yāyil ^[22]

- [1] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'Ismā' īl,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 151 and also corroborated by the description of Muḥammad's night journey through the heavens (Mi'rāḡ) given by al-Ḥarkūšī ([n. d.], vol II: 170). The angel is etymologically akin to Hebrew Sama'ēl (Bürge 2009a: 74), recorded by Davidson (1967: 255) as *Sam(m)ael*.
- [2] 1 Enoch 8:3, 3 Enoch 14:3–4 mention *Šimšī' el=Šams/šiel* – the angel of day (literary '... of Sun') (source: Bürge 2009a: 75–76, 81). Davidson (1967: 271) provides information that this angel rules the fourth heaven. Bürge (2009a: 75–76) points out that it is strange that the name did not penetrate into Islamic angelic nomenclature along with its 'colleagues.' Is it mirrored in the above one?
- [3] The opposition of short versus long 'ā/ā' in the prevalent name may stem from an application of the dagger alif (which does not obligatorily appear in the script), as also in al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, or the fact that it is only in the 9th c. that the long medial alif was prescribed to be written consistently (Fischer 2006: 403). Also see Wright 1967, vol I: 9, and specifically for this name Hopkins 1984: 11.
- [4] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'Mīḥā' īl,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 196. Al-Kisā'i 2004: 29: 'M.n.ḥāyil' and 'Mīḥā' īl,' al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 174: 'R.q.yāyil', cf. *Ragiel=Raguel* in this or the fourth heaven recorded by Davidson (1967: 238, 341) (throughout his dictionary speaking by far not only of the Islamic lore. Angels' origin is sometimes hard to 'localize,' as various traditions intermingle in both canonical and non-canonical sources of several religions, but also miscellaneous sects, myths, lores, philosophies, occult circles etc.).
- [5] Obviously *Darda' il* recorded by Davidson (1967: 95), but without linkage to any heaven.
- [6] It is usual that hamza on support (*kursī*) *yā'* ʾ is colloquially replaced by *yā'* ʾ (y).
- [7] Assuming a skip of two dots, the name may also read 'Mīḥāyil,' closer to the prevalent version.
- [8] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12: 'Ṣā' adyā' īl,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 251. Al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'Yāyil' and 'Yāyil' – probably a result of a lexemic misunderstanding; 'ṣā'id' and 'ṣa'id(a)' are written separately from what follows and have their own lexical meanings ('ascending' and 'ascend' respectively). It is thus not surprising that only the latter part is considered the proper name. Al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'Ṣ' .dyāyil,' al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 174: 'K.w.k.yāyil' – perhaps akin to *Kokabiel=Kakabel* or *Kokaviel*, both recorded by Davidson (1967: 168).
- [9] Is he akin to *Gebiel* recorded by Davidson (1967: 122, 348) as an angel of 'the fourth altitude'?
- [10] In the script, there is a hollow support of *hamza* on the place of the 'y' in the ending -yil, most probably due to the omission of the dots of *yā'* rather than of the *hamza*-sign; see Table 2, note 6, and the prevalent scriptural representation of the other names.
- [11] The support *yā'* of *hamza* obviously has two dots, which may be a result of a fusion of *hamza* and 'ī' into seemingly one letter. Thus, the ending of the name may well read -'īl (although it is usually not explained in this way, but as a kind of 'compromise' with the colloquially disappearing *hamza* being now pronounced as *yā'* (Hopkins 1984: 19).
- [12] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12: 'Ṣalṣā' īl,' al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'Ṣ.l.ṣāyil,' al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'Ṣ.l.māyil' – perhaps akin to *Šalmial* in the third heaven or *Salamiel*, both recorded by Davidson (1967: 254, 341). Al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 176: 'M.w.m.z.yāyil.'



- [13] This name (but with *hamza* instead of *yā'*) is said to be borne by the guardian of Mount Qāf, which encompasses the Earth (*az-Zabīdī* [n.d.]: 290–291).
- [14] Al-Kisā'i 1922–1923: 12: 'Kalkā'il', agreeing with Davidson 1967: 164. Al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'K.l.kāyil', al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'K.l.kyāyil', al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 177: 'S.q.ṭ.yāliḷ' – probably akin to *Šatkiel* with the same appointment, or the semantically less probable but graphemically more similar *Šaftiel* ruling in Hell, both recorded by Davidson (1967: 113, 269, 271) (the root *s-q-ṭ* implies 'a fall').
- [15] See Table 2, note 10.
- [16] Al-Kisā'i 1922–1923: 12: 'Šamḥā'il', al-Kisā'i 2004: 30, al-Kisā'i 1998: 101: 'S.m.ḥāyil', approximately agreeing with *Samaha'il* recorded by Davidson (1967: 256). Al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 178: 'R.w.ḥ.yāliḷ' – probably akin to *Ruhiel* recorded by Davidson (1967: 247). Angels with names similar to some of the above ones are mentioned by Davidson (1967: 170) at the description of *Mi'rāğ*, but with no linkage to their respective heavens and in a different order: 'Mikā'il [...] M.y.ḥā'il [...] S.m.ḥā'il [...] K.l.kā'il [...] 'š.d.yāliḷ'.
- [17] Is he akin to *Suriyel* recorded by Davidson (1967: 280–281)?
- [18] See Table 2, note 2.
- [19] Obviously akin to *Israel* recorded by Davidson (1967: 151).
- [20] Al-Kisā'i 1922–1923: 12: 'Razkā'il' – probably akin to *Rugziel*=*Dalkiel* (cf. the versions above) recorded by Davidson (1967: 247), who is ascribed to the seventh 'compartment' of Hell. Al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'F.r.ḥāyil', al-Kisā'i 1998: 101: 'F.r.hyāyil', al-Ḥarkūšī [n. d.], vol II: 179: 'N.w.r.yāliḷ' – probably akin to *Naaririel* with the same appointment or the semantically less probable but graphemically more similar Islamic *Nura'il* or *Nuriel*, both recorded by Davidson (1967: 203, 209), who also records *Ruba'il* for this function (1967: 247). Some forms of the name recall *Degaliel*, *Raquiell*, *Requiell* or *Dalquiell* – the latter in the third heaven, all recorded by Davidson (1967: 94, 95, 242, 245).
- [21] Is he akin to *Barakiel* – the angel of lightning and the second heaven recorded by Davidson (1967: 69)?
- [22] This name (but with *hamza* instead of the second *yā'*) is said to be borne by the angel guarding Muslims' souls (as-Suyūṭī 1988: 85), and is etymologically akin to Hebrew *Rami'el* (Bürge 2009a: 74), recorded by Davidson (1967: 239–240, 245, 247) as *Ramiel/Remiel/Rumael/Uriel/Jeremiell...*, or *Rumiell/Rumial*, who is ascribed to the sixth heaven (Davidson 1967: 248, 341).

1.2.2. Common Nouns

Table 3. Material of the Heavens²⁹

	B	L	R	KA	KD	Ms. 2702	Ms. 3466	Ms. 854
1 ^[1]	Smoke	Chrysolite	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald
2 ^[2]	White silver	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby
3 ^[3]	Chrysolite	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz	Topaz
4 ^[4]	Ruby	Silver	Silver	Silver	White silver	Silver	White silver	Silver
5 ^[5]	White pearl	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold
6 ^[6]	Red gold	White pearl	White pearl	White pearl	White pearl	White pearl	White pearl	White pearl
7 ^[7]	White pearls	Sparkling light	Sparkling light	Sparkling light	Sparkling light	Sparkling light	Sparkling light	Sparkling light

²⁹ The heavens have typically been levelled according to the preciousness of their materials, which notion was not uniform but developed over the centuries (Rustomji 2017: 296).



- [1] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: 'emerald,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'an overflowing wave.'
- [2] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'ruby,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'stone,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: 'white silver;' one may notice an exceptional agreement with B on the material of this heaven.
- [3] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'topaz,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'iron,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: 'ruby;' it is noteworthy that most mss. attach this material to the heaven with the same or very similar name as al-Iṣbahānī does ('Q.y.d.w.m'), which is however placed in a different position in the sequence (Table 1, note 6). The same is true of H4 'Arqilūn' of silver (Table 1, note 4).
- [4] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'silver,' al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'silver' and 'white silver,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'brass,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: 'white pearl.'
- [5] Al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'gold,' al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1387: 'red gold,' al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'gold' and 'red gold,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'silver.'
- [6] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'white pearl,' al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'white emerald,' 'sapphire' and 'pearl,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20: 'gold,' *ibid.*: 23: 'ruby,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1388: 'topaz.'
- [7] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12: 'light that glows like pearl,' al-Kisā'i 2004: 30, al-Kisā'i 1998: 101, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol IV: 1388: 'sparkling light,' al-Tha'labī 2002: 20, 23: 'white pearl.'

Table 4. Inhabitants

	B	L	R	KA	KD	Ms. 2702	Ms. 3466	Ms. 854
1 ^[1]	Cows	Cows	Cows	Cows	Cows	Cows	Cows	Cows
2 ^[2]	Horses	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles	Eagles
3 ^[3]	Birds	Vultures	Bulls	Vultures	Vultures	Vultures	Vultures	Bulls
4 ^[4]	Eagles	Horses	Horses	Horses	Horses	Horses	Horses	Horses
5 ^[5]	Children	Houris	Houris	Houris	Children	Houris	Houris	Houris
6 ^[6]	Houris	Children	Children	Children	Houris	Children	Children	Children
7 ^[7]	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men	Men

- [1] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'cows,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 151.
- [2] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'eagles,' al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'scorpions' and 'eagles,' the latter agreeing with Davidson 1967: 196.
- [3] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12: 'vultures,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 251. Al-Kisā'i 2004: 29, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'bulls,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'men.'
- [4] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12; al-Kisā'i 2004: 30, al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'horses,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'houris.'
- [5] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'houris,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 164. Al-Kisā'i 1998: 100: 'al-'y.q(?) – most probably a mistake for *al-'ayn 'eye*,' which constitutes a part of *hūr al-'ayn* 'houris;' see al-Maḥlabī [online] 2013 [acc. June 11, 2018]. Al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'vultures.'
- [6] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 30: 'children,' agreeing with Davidson 1967: 256. Al-Kisā'i 1998: 101: 'draught animals,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'horses.'
- [7] Al-Kisa'i 1922–1923: 12, al-Kisā'i 2004: 30, al-Kisā'i 1998: 101: 'men,' al-Iṣbahānī 1998/9, vol III: 1055: 'angels,' both agreeing with Davidson 1967: 247: 'angels in disguise of men.'



1.2.3. Further Data Incorporated into P2 in B

These include pieces of information about the size of the heavens and detailed descriptions of their inhabitants' activities and complex bodies (except for those of H1, who are only provided with the basic information of their shape). The heavens are huge. The higher the heaven, the greater its size and qualities, as well as the qualities and capabilities of its inhabitants. The length of H1–3 is 'five hundred quadrillion years'³⁰ (fol. 14b–15a). H4 is 'only' 'eight hundred trillion years' long (fol. 15a), but the growing tendency of the qualities of heavens indicates that one of the words *alf* ('thousand'), each representing three nulls,³¹ was omitted by mistake. The figure expressing the length and width of H5 again contains five words 'thousand': 'nine hundred quadrillion years' (fol. 15b). Noticeable expressions represent the length of H6–7: 'one hundred billion – up to two hundred words "thousand," and sixty'³² (fol. 15b–16a) and 'two hundred billion – up to two hundred words "thousand".'³³ (Fol. 16a) The description of H1 contains two parentheses of exaltation of God beginning with the first part of the *Šahāda*.³⁴

The descriptions of their inhabitants' ways of praise are topically akin to those in P4 (but far richer and more detailed than the modest mentions in the latter) and together with the depictions of their bodies also to the (sub)chapter on angels in the other mss., and therefore they will be treated together later as P8.

1.3. Part 3: Entities in H7 (Only KD and B)³⁵

At first, KD describes 'the Fiery Sea' (*al-Baḥr al-mašğūr*) in H7, its size and qualities, making more use of the poetic language of rhythmical rhymed prose (*sağ'*)³⁶ than elsewhere, as well as than the rest of the mss. do (within the excerpt of the first seven chapters). It is the only one to add that the Sea is spoken of in the Qur'ān;³⁷ perhaps because the name of the sūra fits well into the rhythmical-rhyming pattern of the verse and thus contributes to the poetic image of the passage: 'Wa-fihā [s-samā'] as-sābi'a al-Baḥr al-mašğūr al-maḍkūr fi Sūrat Wa-ṭ-Ṭūr.' [In H7,] there is the

³⁰ The unit of measure for distances is the time needed to pass them.

³¹ Quantifiers like 'a million' are not denoted by the modern *malyūn* etc. but *alf alf* 'a thousand thousands' etc. It is no wonder that with this kind of numeric expressions, it is easy for huge semantic lapses to emerge.

³² I.e. '1e602 and sixty'. The here awkward 'and sixty' may (but not necessarily) have penetrated into the passage by mistake (e.g. confusion of lines while copying or the like).

³³ I.e. '2e602'. Al-Tha'labī (2002: 22–23) gives an equal number of five hundred years for the measures and distances between individual heavens, as opposed to the account that the higher the heaven the greater its size and qualities, given by Ibn Kaṭīr (2004: 27). According to some Qur'ānic exegeses, the seven heavens being layered one above another form a dome-like structure over the Earth, and Paradise stretches above all that. However, the borders (if any) are far from clearly set (Lange 2016: 41–42, Heinen 1995).

³⁴ The Islamic Profession of Faith: *Lā ilāha illa l-Lāh. Muḥammad rasūl al-Lāh.* 'There is no god but God. Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.' In Islamic sources, the expression *šahādatayn* 'two professions [of faith]' is to be found as well, i.e. in God and Muḥammad as His Messenger.

³⁵ For the location of the items spoken of here according to the other mss. see below.

³⁶ For a translated example see Lacináková 2016b: 124. For *sağ'* generally see e.g. Abdeselem 1995.

³⁷ 52:6: 'and by the swollen sea.' Khatib (1986: 697, ref. 7) provides various exegeses of what is meant by it.



Fiery Sea, mentioned in Sūra Mount Tūr. (Fol. 2a) ‘By God’s power, angel R.w.qāyīl³⁸ holds the Sea in his hand.’ (Fol. 2a)

After the Sea, KD describes ‘the Inhabited House’ (*al-Bayt al-ma‘mūr*)³⁹ in H7: ‘God created it from ruby, there are lamps of pearls and its magnitude is like that of the Holy *Ka‘ba* (*al-Ka‘ba al-mušarrafa*).⁴⁰ Every day, seventy thousand angels enter and leave it, who will never return until the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-qiyāma*).⁴¹ There leans God’s friend (*al-ḥalīl*)⁴² Ibrāhīm.⁴³ [In H7,] there is also a great angel who would swallow the world if [God]⁴⁴ wished.’ (Fol. 2a–b)

As opposed to KD, B in this part describes the Inhabited House in H7 first, providing data on others of its qualities: ‘there are 370 doors of red gold, the distance between each two is a thousand years, each of them is five hundred years long and wide and angels circulate around the House just as people do around *Ka‘ba*. They cry over people when leaving⁴⁵ and pray for mercy for them.’ (Fol. 16b)

Then, B adds that ‘above that [heaven/House?], God created the Uplifted Canopy (*as-Saqf al-marfū‘*),⁴⁶ which is as high as the distance between the Canopy (*al-‘Arš*)⁴⁷ and the Pleiades’ (fol. 16b), and above that, there is the Sea, which is guarded by ‘K.l.k.yāyīl’⁴⁸ (disagreeing with KD). B also describes angels in the Sea (P8) and concludes this part by a rhymed eulogy of God.

1.4. Part 4: Ways of Praise (Except for B)

This part provides an enumeration of kinds of angels and positions in which those in individual heavens praise God:

³⁸ Cf. G7 in L, KA and KD; P2; Table 2. As-Suyūṭī (1988: 76) mentions an angel connected with lightning called Rūfīl/Rufā‘īl, probably akin to Raphael despite bearing different functions (Bürge 2009a: 74–75, Heinen 1982: 232).

³⁹ Mentioned in the Qur’ān 52:4: ‘and by the inhabited House.’ Also see Thackston 1978b: 339, n. 14. In all mss. of Marvels, the Inhabited House is described more thoroughly in a separate chapter later in the work (R, fol. 13a, L, fol. 10b–11a, B, fol. 19a, KA, fol. 5a, KD, fol. 5a–b).

⁴⁰ The earthly *Ka‘ba* is believed to have a heavenly prototype – the Inhabited House, as is also the case with the Qur’ān being inscribed in ‘the Well-Preserved Tablet’ (*al-Lawḥ al-mahfūz*) in heaven (Pauliny 1980: 13, Bürge 2009b: 223).

⁴¹ Cf. al-Tha‘labī 2002: 27.

⁴² The Islamic epithet of Ibrāhīm on the basis of the Qur’ān 4:125: ‘And who has a better religion than he who surrenders his face to God while doing good, and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright? And God took Abraham for a bosom friend.’

⁴³ Cf. Peters 1994: 169.

⁴⁴ The word ‘God’ is apparently missing by mistake, as according to Islam, angels do not possess free will (Thackston 1978b: 341, n. 23, Bürge 2009a: 72).

⁴⁵ ‘*Inda firāqihim* (‘when they leave’) may perhaps also mean ‘when [people] leave the right path.’

⁴⁶ Or ‘Heaven Raised High.’ Mentioned in the Qur’ān 52:5: ‘and by the uplifted canopy.’ Literary ‘roof.’ The heavens are considered a roof over the Earth (Thackston 1978b: 337, n. 3). However, this ‘roof’ is placed in or above H7 (P6, §2.3.) and thus cannot be considered a common expression for them all. For a further explanation see Khatib 1986: 697, ref. 6.

⁴⁷ The pair of the heavenly bodies *al-‘Arš* and *al-Kursī* also translate ‘the Throne’ and ‘the Footstool’/‘Seat’ respectively, as opposed to ‘the Canopy’ and ‘the Throne’ (Thackston 1978b: 337, n. 3, al-Tha‘labī 2002: 26) adopted in the present paper. The consulted edition of the Qur’ān is not wholly consistent in this matter and there appears ‘the Throne’ for both *al-Kursī* and *al-‘Arš*.

⁴⁸ Cf. the G5 in each ms. except for KD (P2; Table 2).



‘[Ka^cb⁴⁹ said that the angels [in the heavens] never cease exalting {and worshipping}⁵⁰ God.⁵¹]⁵² [The inhabitants of H1 say ‘*subhāna l-Lāh*’ while]⁵³ standing, [those in H2 say ‘*lā ilāha ’illa l-Lāh*’ while standing(!),]⁵⁴ [those in H3 are]⁵⁵ kneeling, [those in H4 are]⁵⁶ prostrating, [those in H5 are crying in fear of God, those in H6 are {shivering}⁵⁷ in fear of God while {sitting},⁵⁸ those in H7 exalt God by various kinds of exaltation while standing on one leg.]⁵⁹ [Such is the word of God: (They glorify (Him) by night and day, and never subside.)⁶⁰ ‘Abdallāh b. Salām⁶¹ said that]⁶² they are cherubim (*karūbiyūn*), [seraphim (*muqarrabūn*),⁶³ archangels (*rūḥāniyūn*),]⁶⁴ rankers (*ṣāffūn*),⁶⁵ [circling around [the Throne] (*ḥāffūn*)⁶⁶],⁶⁷ kneeling (*rāki’ūn*) and prostrating (*sāğīdūn*). [Some angels stand between mountains of light on a high place and exalt God.]⁶⁸ (L, 169fol. 8b, R, fol. 9b, KA, fol. 2a, KD, fol. 2b, Ms. 2702, fol. 6b, Ms. 3466, fol. 5b, Ms. 854, fol. 3b)

1.5. Part 5: Veils and Golden Gates/Locks (Except for B)

‘Wahb⁶⁹ said that above the seven heavens, there are veils [with]⁷⁰ so many angels that they do not know one another and exalt God by various languages like roaring thunders. [The heavens have

⁴⁹ Ka^cb al-Aḥbār, a Muslim traditionist, a convert from Judaism (d. ca. 652 according to Thackston 1978b: 337, n. 2).

⁵⁰ Only Ms. 854.

⁵¹ The eternal exaltation is mentioned multiple times in the Qur’ān, e.g. 21:19: ‘To Him belongs all who are in the heavens and the earth. And those who are in His presence scorn not haughtily to worship Him, nor do they grow weary.’

⁵² Only Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁵³ Ms. 3466, Ms. 854: ‘while.’

⁵⁴ Ms. 3466, Ms. 854: ‘sitting.’

⁵⁵ Missing from Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁵⁶ Missing from Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁵⁷ KD: ‘praying,’ Ms. 2702: ‘adoring.’

⁵⁸ L: ‘standing.’

⁵⁹ Missing from Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁶⁰ The Qur’ān 21:20.

⁶¹ Muḥammad’s companion, a convert from Judaism (d. 664 according to Thackston 1978b: 339, n. 12).

⁶² Only Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁶³ Literary ‘those near [to God]:’ Mentioned in the Qur’ān 4:172: ‘The Messiah does not disdain to be a servant to God, neither the angels who are near. And whoever disdains to be His servant, and is haughty, He will surely muster them to Him.’

⁶⁴ Missing from Ms. 3466. Ms. 854: ‘lying prone’ (ḡāṭūn).

⁶⁵ Or ‘aligned.’ Mentioned in the Qur’ān, e.g. 37:165: ‘And we are the rankers.’ Khatib (1986: 596, ref. 57) explains these angels as those ‘who array in the service of God in obeying and carrying out His behest.’

⁶⁶ Mentioned in the Qur’ān 39:75: ‘And you shall see the angels circling around the Throne [sic; al-‘Arš], extolling the praise of their Lord. And it shall be judged between them with equity. And it shall be said, “Praise be to God, Lord of all beings.”’

⁶⁷ Missing from Ms. 2702, Ms. 3466. R: ‘hastening’ (ḥāffūn).

⁶⁸ Only Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁶⁹ Wahb b. Munabbih, a Muslim traditionist (ca. 656–ca. 730 according to Thackston 1978b: 337–338, n. 4).

⁷⁰ Ms. 854: ‘and above them, there are.’



{closed golden gates}⁷¹ whose key is {*Basmala*⁷² and}⁷³ *Takbīr*⁷⁴.]⁷⁵ (L, fol. 8b, R, fol. 9b, KA, fol. 2a, KD, fol. 2b, Ms. 2702, fol. 6b–7a, Ms. 3466, fol. 5b, Ms. 854, fol. 3b–4a).

1.6. Part 6: Things Above the Heavens (Except for Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854) (B, fol. 17a–b, L, fol. 8b–9a, R, fol. 9b–10a, KA, fol. 2a–b, KD, fol. 2b–3a, Ms. 2702, fol. 7a)

In this part, there is an enumeration of things and layers ‘above [the seven heavens]⁷⁶’ (disregarding the veils mentioned in P5).

Table 5. Layers Above the Heavens⁷⁷

	R	L	KA	KD	B	Ms. 2702
1.	the Sea of Eternal Life (<i>Baḥr al-ḥayawān</i>) ^[1]	+	+	+	–	+
2.	the Sea of Great Water (<i>Baḥr al-qamqām</i>)	+	+	+	–	–
3.	the Sea of Grazing Livestock (<i>Baḥr al-an‘ām</i>) ^[2]	+	+	+	–	+
4.	the Sea of Veils (<i>Baḥr al-ḥuḡub</i>)	the Sea of the Living (<i>Baḥr al-ḥayy</i>)	=R	=R	–	=R ^[3]
5.	the Sea of Help/Plea for Help (<i>Baḥr al-ḡawt</i>)	–	–	–	–	–
6.	the Parchment Unrolled (<i>ar-Raqq al-manšūr</i>) ^[4]	+	+	+	–	+

⁷¹ KD: ‘gates with golden locks.’

⁷² The usual opening formula Bi-sm al-Lāh (ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm) ‘In the name of God (the most Merciful).’

⁷³ Only KD.

⁷⁴ ‘The Great Exaltation:’ formula al-Lāh akbar ‘God is great.’

⁷⁵ Missing from Ms. 3466, Ms. 854.

⁷⁶ B: ‘that,’ see §2.3.

⁷⁷ The first column provides items present in R. The other columns show a ‘+’ sign for items present in their respective ms. and a ‘–’ sign for those missing. When there is a different version of an item in the given sequence in some mss., the proper item in the rest of the mss. is indicated by the abbreviation of the respective ms. following an equation mark ‘=’. The position of items in relation to the preceding ones is that they are ‘above’ them, where not indicated otherwise (the positional designations are subsequently valid for each column where further not specified otherwise). An exclamation mark ‘!’ by the ‘+’ sign highlights items present in the respective ms., yet not in P6, but P3 (which thus cannot be filed in the given sequence; for whether their location is in or above H7, see §1.3 and below). Three dots ‘...’ represent repeated numbers of items. Considering the rich polysemy of Arabic, some terms may translate variously. Names of unique ones are provided with transcriptions.



7.	the Light in Lines (<i>an-Nūr al-maṣṭūr</i>)	the Book Inscribed (<i>al-Kitāb al-maṣṭūr</i>) ^[5]	=R	=R	-	=L
8.	the Inhabited House (<i>al-Bayt al-ma'mūr</i>)	-	-	+!	+!	-
9.	the Uplifted Canopy (<i>as-Saqf al-marfū'</i>)	-	-	-	+!	-
10.	the Fiery Sea (<i>al-Baḥr al-maṣḡūr</i>)	+	+	+	+!	+
11.	-	-	-	-	seventy thousand veils of iron	-
12.	-	-	-	-	... veils of white silver	-
13.	-	-	-	-	... veils of red gold	-
14.	seventy thousand veils of light	+	+	+	+	-
15.	... ^[6] veils of dark	+	+	+	... veils of ruby	-
16.	... veils of thunder	-	+	+	-	+
17.	... veils of lightning	-	+	... veils of light as moonlight	-	+
18.	... veils of light as sunlight	+	-	... veils of lightning	-	+
19.	... veils of light as moonlight	+	+	... veils of light as sunlight	-	+
20.	-	... seas	=L	=L	-	=L
21.	... eyes/springs (<i>'uyūn</i>)	+	+	+	-	+
22.	... hills	-	-	-	-	-
23.	... veils of emerald	-	-	-	-	-
24.	... mountains	+	+	+	... ^[7] mountains of red gold	+



On each of them:						
25.	... standards	+	+	+	... standards of white silver, on each of them is <i>Šahāda</i> inscribed	+
Under each of them:						
26.	... rows of angels	+ ^[8]	+	+	-	+
In each of them:						
27.	five hundred thousand angels	+	+	+	-	fifty thousand angels
Above the mountains:						
28.	seventy thousand veils of corundum	+	-	-	-	+
29.	... veils of gold ^[9]	+	+	-	-	+
30.	... veils of silver	+	+	-	-	+
31.	The Ultimate Lote Tree (<i>Sidrat al-muntahā</i>) ^[10]	+	-	-	-	+
Near that:						
32.	The Garden of Abode (<i>Ġannat al-ma'wā</i>) ^[11]	+	-	-	-	+
Above that:						
33.	The Hill of Praise (<i>Tall al-ḥamd</i>)	-	+	-	-	+
34.	The Standard of Praise (<i>Liwā' al-ḥamd</i>)	+	+	+	-	+
35.	veils of pearls	veils of praise of pearls	=R	=R	-	-
36.	veils of musk	+	-	-	-	+
37.	veils of ambergris	+	-	-	-	+
38.	The Throne (<i>al-Kursī</i>)	+	+	+	-	veils of the Throne! ^[12]

[1] The given sense of the word is supposed because of its Qur'anic usage (as opposed to the modern 'animal'): 29:64: 'And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter – that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew.' Al-Tha'labī (2002: 27) speaks about 'a sea of light called *al-Ḥayawān*' in H7.

[2] Assuming the variant reading *Baḥr al-in'ām*, the word may translate 'the Sea of Benefaction.'

[3] Items no. 3 and 4 are present, yet not in the stated sequence, but following 'the Book Inscribed' (no. 7).



- [4] Mentioned in the Qur’ān 52:3: ‘In parchment unrolled.’
- [5] Mentioned in the Qur’ān 52:2: ‘By the inscribed Book.’ Khatib (1986: 696, ref. 3) explains it as either the Qur’ān, or its heavenly prototype, or the tablets with the Ten Commandments – probably stemming from the name of the *sūra* in which it occurs, taken from Mount Tabor (*aṭ-Ṭūr*), where they are said to have been sent down to Moses.
- [6] The ms. states ‘seventy.’ Taking into account the huge numbers of other items (and in general), as well as this particular one in the other mss., it is supposed that the word ‘thousand’ was omitted by mistake.
- [7] The number cannot be read due to a stain on the Ms., but is most probably the same as above.
- [8] The Ms. does not state where these rows are situated in relation to the standards. Syntactically, the two items are simply joined by copulative ‘and,’ which may well be caused by omission of a text like ‘under each of them, there are...’
- [9] See the previous note but in relation to the veils of corundum.
- [10] Or ‘the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.’ Mentioned in the Qur’ān 53:14: ‘By the Ultimate Tree.’ Explained by Khatib (1986: 701, ref. 9) as the end of the known world. Also see Thackston 1978b: 347, n. 63, al-Tha’labī 2002: 28. Prophet Muḥammad is said to have had a beatific vision at this tree during his night journey (*Mīrāğ*) (Jarrar 2017: 274).
- [11] Mentioned in the Qur’ān 53:15: ‘whereby is the garden of abode.’ Also see Khatib 1986: 701, ref. 10.
- [12] ‘[...] *wa-fawqa dālīka ḥuḡub#u l-Kursī*’ (‘and above that, there are veils of the Throne’); it is possible that ‘*ḥuḡub*’ lacks the definite article by mistake, which would produce a meaning wholly corresponding to that of the first four mss. (although with slightly deviating grammar: ‘[...] *wa-fawqa dālīka [tilka] l-ḥuḡub#i l-Kursī*’).

B has fewer layers and of a different material or sequence, but provides more details about the contents and appearance of each and compares some of them with the preceding ones (in terms of the measure of components or qualities of angels). It applies a more dynamic mode of expression: verbal predication such as ‘then, God created there... and filled it with angels...’ as opposed to the brief enumeration of items introduced by the plain, static ‘there is’ of the previous mss.

1.7. Part 7: Angels with Legs like Flags (Except for B)

‘Ibn [al-]‘Abbās said that above the [seven]⁷⁸ veils, there are angels whose legs pierced the [seven]⁷⁹ heavens and [lower]⁸⁰ [earths],⁸¹ went as far as five hundred years beyond them and hang there like white flags.’ (L, fol. 9a, R, fol. 10a, KA, fol. 2b, KD, fol. 3a, Ms. 2702, fol. 7a–b, Ms. 3466, fol. 5b, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

1.8. Part 8: Description of Further Angels

Selected excerpts from the matter after P7 in each ms. except for B will here be compared with their semantic analogies incorporated into P2 and P3 of B and P3 of KD.

⁷⁸ Only Ms. 2702.

⁷⁹ Missing from KD.

⁸⁰ Only Prophets.

⁸¹ KD: ‘earth.’



‘Ka‘b said that [above]⁸² the Inhabited House [in the lowest heaven]⁸³ there are [countless angels]⁸⁴.’ (L, fol. 9a–b, R, fol. 10b, KA, fol. 3a, KD, fol. 3a, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a, Ms. 3466, fol. 6a, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

Countlessness (from people’s part) is also ascribed to the angels of H3, 6 in P2 of B. (Fols. 15a, 16a)

‘God empowered with them an angel with [seventy]⁸⁵ faces, [seventy mouths]⁸⁶ on each face and [seventy tongues]⁸⁷ in each [mouth].⁸⁸’ (L, fol. 9b, R, fol. 10b, KA, fol. 3a, KD, fol. 3a, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a, Ms. 3466, fol. 6a, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

Many body parts made up of many smaller body parts are typical for supernatural protagonists of this genre. B ascribes such body parts to the angels of H3, 4 in P2 and provides further characteristics:

- ‘All angels [of H3] have seventy wings whose colour is between green, red and yellow, seventy thousand heads, seventy thousand faces on each head and seventy thousand tongues on each face.’ (Fol. 15a)

- ‘All angels [of H4] have a thousand wings, seventy thousand feathers on each wing and Šahāda inscribed by light on each feather. Each angel has seventy heads, seven mouths on each head and seven⁸⁹ tongues in each mouth.’ (fol. 15a–b)

The description in the excerpt from the matter after P7 continues:

‘Each tongue praises God by [seventy]⁹⁰ languages.’ (L, fol. 9b, R, fol. 10b, KA, fol. 3a, KD, fol. 3a–b, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a, Ms. 3466, fol. 6a, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

The (constant) exaltation is understood. B qualifies its manner similarly with the angels of H3–5 and a group of angels in H2 (see below); moreover, those in H2, 4 are provided with the description of their voice when praising:

- ‘Each tongue [of the angels in H3] constantly praises God by multiple languages.’ (Fol. 15a)

- ‘Each tongue [of the angels in H5] eternally praises God by seventy thousand languages.’ (Fol. 15b)

- ‘Each tongue [of the angels in H4] praises God by multiple languages by voices like roaring thunders.’ (fol. 15b)

- ‘Each angel [releasing embers in H2] permanently exalts God by voices like roaring thunders.’⁹¹ (fol. 14b)

Then the excerpt from the matter after P7 moves on to higher groups of angels:

⁸² Prophets: ‘behind,’ KD: ‘around.’

⁸³ Only KD.

⁸⁴ Prophets: ‘angels whose number nobody knows but God.’

⁸⁵ KA: ‘seventy thousand,’ Ms. 3466: ‘ninety thousand.’

⁸⁶ KA: ‘seventy thousand mouths,’ R, Ms. 3466: ‘a mouth.’

⁸⁷ KA: ‘seventy thousand tongues,’ Ms. 3466: ‘a tongue.’

⁸⁸ Ms. 2702: ‘tongue,’ probably instead of ‘mouth’ by mistake.

⁸⁹ Some lower numbers still may (but need not) have been caused by an omission of ‘thousand’ or the like.

⁹⁰ KA, Ms. 854: ‘seventy thousand,’ Ms. 3466: ‘ninety thousand.’

⁹¹ The likening to roaring thunders is also present in P5.



‘Above these angels, there are [bigger ones {separated from those below by (veils)⁹² so that those below do not burn from their light}⁹³, and above them, there are]⁹⁴ [great]⁹⁵ angels, out of whose mouths embers fall when praising[. From those embers, God makes angels⁹⁶ {flying in the air}⁹⁷],⁹⁸ who exalt Him.’ (L, fol. 9b, R, fol. 10b–11a, KA, fol. 3a, KD, fol. 3b, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a, Ms. 3466, fol. 6a, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

B assigns the latter two groups of angels to H2 and adds that those created from embers ‘release light from their mouths.’ (Fol. 14b)

The excerpt from the matter after P7 continues:

‘Above them, there is an angel shaped like a man [...] [If God {ordered him to}⁹⁹ swallow the heavens and earths, he would do so easily.]¹⁰⁰’ (L, fol. 9b, R, fol. 11a, KA, fol. 3a, KD, fol. 3b, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a, Ms. 3466, fol. 6a, Ms. 854, fol. 4a)

The latter quality is ascribed to the unnamed angel in H7 in P3 of KD and the governor of the Sea in P3 of B (see below).

Later in the matter after P7, there follows an account of angels in the Fiery Sea, which is spoken of in P3 of B (as well as of KD, but without the description of angels, which it supplies here). Because of the common denotation, the versions by all the mss. are edited here together:

‘[Ka‘b said that in {the seventh}¹⁰¹ heaven, there is the Fiery Sea, in which there are]¹⁰² angels [a hundred years tall]¹⁰³ with spears of [gem]¹⁰⁴ in their hands. Each spear is [a year]¹⁰⁵ long. God empowered angel [Mikā‘il]¹⁰⁶ by the Sea. His qualities [and degree of exalting]¹⁰⁷ are known to no one but God. [Should he open his mouth, {the heavens and earth would be like a mustard seed in

⁹² Ms. 2702, KA: ‘a veil’

⁹³ Only Ms. 2702, R, KA, KD.

⁹⁴ Missing from L, Ms. 854.

⁹⁵ Missing from KD.

⁹⁶ A similar notion but with units of praise instead of embers is recorded by as-Suyūṭī (1988: 63) and is ascribed to the angel called ‘the Spirit’ in H4.

⁹⁷ Missing from KD.

⁹⁸ Missing from Ms. 854.

⁹⁹ Ms. 2702, Ms. 854: ‘wished that he.’

¹⁰⁰ Missing from L. R: ‘If he wished to swallow [...]’, obviously produced by the erroneous omission of the word ‘God;’ see Table 5, note 7.

¹⁰¹ Ms. 2702: ‘fourth.’

¹⁰² Only Prophets. L, R, KA, KD: ‘In the Fiery Sea, there are.’ B: ‘Then, God created above that a great sea called the Fiery Sea and filled it with.’

¹⁰³ Only B.

¹⁰⁴ B: ‘light.’

¹⁰⁵ B: ‘a thousand years,’ Ms. 3466: ‘five hundred years.’

¹⁰⁶ B: ‘K.l.k.yāyil,’ L: ‘Mikāyil,’ KD: ‘Mikāyil’ (i.e. mere spelling/orthographic variants of the same name), Ms. 2702: ‘H.y.kāyil,’ Ms. 854: ‘H.n.kāyil.’ The angel is etymologically akin to Hebrew Miḳa‘el (Bürge 2009a: 74). Cf. G2 in each ms. except for B (P2; Table 2), who is however considered another one; see below.

¹⁰⁷ Only L, R, KA, Ms. 2702.



the largest sea.}¹⁰⁸ }¹⁰⁹ (B, fol. 16b–17a, L, fol. 9b, R, fol. 11a, KA, fol. 3b, KD, fol. 3b, Ms. 2702, fol. 8a–b, Ms. 3466, fol. 6b, Ms. 854, fol. 4a–b)¹¹⁰

B awards the ability to swallow (roughly speaking) the world, using the same parable, also to all angels of H7 in P2 and provides further characteristics:

- ‘If one of them opened his mouth, he would swallow the angels under him, as well as the heavens and earth, and they would be like a mustard seed in his mouth. They constantly praise God, pray for mercy for Muslims and lament over their sins.’ (Fol. 16a–b)

For a complete image of the angels ascribed to individual heavens in P2 of B, let us mention what qualities pertain to those of H6:

- ‘God adorned them by a special beauty; their wings are embellished by pearls, gems and corals, from their mouths pungent musk emanates while exalting. When greeting God, they cover their faces with their wings.’ (Fol. 16a)

2. ANALYSIS OF VARIATIONS

The comparison of the treated mss. on the structural level reveals that the highest degree of divergence from the rest of the mss. is displayed by B. It differs not only by the lack of some parts and (together with KD) the presence of an extra one, but also by both qualitative and quantitative features of some parts they have in common.

As for KD, the presence of P3 brings it closer to B (although elsewhere its contents more greatly resemble those of L, R and KA). ‘The seven earths’¹¹¹ was obviously added to its title by mistake, as they are spoken of neither in the Chapter nor the subsequent ones.

It is noticeable that the division, contents and wordings of the Chapter in Ms. 2702 are closer to those in R, L and KA than to those in Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854, and closer than those in B and KD are, although Ms. 2702 represents another piece of literature.¹¹² Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854 lack P6 but include the description of angels in the Chapter, whereas Marvels and Ms. 2702 treat these in a separate one, and Ms. 854 comprises the account of the creation of the Sun and Moon.¹¹³

It goes without saying that some of the explanations proposed below for the variances between the mss. are hypothetical and some items admit more of them. For clarity, each part (1–8) is treated separately.

¹⁰⁸ L: ‘the people of the heavens and earth would be easy for him [to swallow];’ R: ‘the people of the heavens and earths [...] [to swallow];’ KA: ‘the heavens and earths [...] [to swallow].’

¹⁰⁹ KD: ‘If God ordered him to swallow the heavens and earths and their contents, he would do so easily;’ B: ‘If God ordered him to swallow the seven heavens and earths with all their contents and what is between them, he would do so at once and they would be in his mouth like a mustard seed in the mouth of one of you.’

¹¹⁰ The rest of the (sub)chapter on angels (which comprises descriptions of the most distinguished ones and tales about them) does not appear in the Chapter of Marvels in any ms. of ours, and thus is beyond the scope of this paper, as well as the description of the creation of Sun and Moon, which is included in the Chapter only in Ms. 854.

¹¹¹ See ref. 13.

¹¹² The creation and arrangement of the world are traditionally more or less dealt with in both the genres of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* and *ʿaḡāʾib al-malakūt* – a feature corroborating the mixed character of these and similar genres of Arabic folk literature.

¹¹³ See ref. 13.



2.1. The Variations Offered in P1

They may be categorized as follows:

- A quantitative or qualitative phrasal or lexemic ones representing a mere rewording of basically the same contents (refs. 15,¹¹⁴ 17, 18–19¹¹⁵).
- A qualitative lexemic one that may have resulted from a scribal confusion of diacritics producing another acceptable version (a shift called *mash*) without significantly changing the meaning (ref. 16¹¹⁶).
- Quantitative phrasal ones that evoke a feeling of having stemmed from an intentional omission due to a lack of semantic clarity (refs. 18–21¹¹⁷).
- Quantitative phrasal ones that may reflect a different level of comprehensiveness as they increase/decrease the informative value. A decrease may not only stem from an erroneous omission, but (more probably) from a copyist's intentional selection/supplement of the most relevant data from other sources for the purpose of their transcript (or *new edition*) (refs. 20, 21, 27).
- Quantitative phrasal ones that seem only to increase/decrease the degree of descriptiveness (ref. 22¹¹⁸), or to reflect the scribe's attitude towards the matter (refs. 24,¹¹⁹ 26¹²⁰).

2.2. The Variations Offered in P2

In most of the mss. (partly except for B), P2 follows basically the same structure, which makes clear that the variances therein will mostly concern the quality of lexemes. It goes without saying that proper names (here the names of the heavens and their guardians) display a far higher degree of variability than common nouns, as it is harder for them to be deduced or deciphered by the scribes in the course of transmission (perhaps apart from the well-known ones, be it by copying from written templates or recording an oral performance). That is why they are treated separately below, as well as the additional descriptions of heavens present in B.

¹¹⁴ Vapours usually do emerge in the air above water.

¹¹⁵ Seven heavens are said to have emerged after a split of one heaven and are considered seven parts of one whole. Disregarding that, the terms 'heaven' and 'heavens' are not only in Muslim sources used interchangeably (Wright 2000: 132–133).

¹¹⁶ The difference between the words بخار *buḥār* 'vapours' and بحر *biḥār* 'seas' is in a dot only. The meaning is approximately retained, as seas do turn into vapours when evaporating (and thus rising in the air).

¹¹⁷ The meaning intended by Ms. 854 is probably that one heaven and one earth were created in six days and the heaven split into seven pieces in two days. A confusion may have arisen from the two temporal expressions being joined to a variously stated number of heavens, which is, however, not strictly contradictory, as also explained by Khatib (1986: 631, ref. 9). Cf. al-Tha'labi 2002: 13.

¹¹⁸ The fear of God is an important criterion of angels' 'rank' (Tamcke 2017: 773), which is why it is supposed to be taken more or less for granted.

¹¹⁹ The (in)completeness of Qur'ānic quotations depends on whether scribes allow themselves to select only the semantically most relevant part of the verse for the given context, or consider it more appropriate to keep the verses in full.

¹²⁰ The supplying of an extra Qur'ānic verse to support a statement may aim at increasing the persuasiveness and/or theological value of the work.



2.2.1. The Accounts of the Proper Names

Most differences between them are of a phonetic/graphemic nature, which may have emerged quite easily by mistake (a type called *tahrif*). The following shifts may have occurred or factors may have contributed to them:

- A confusion of similar letters, such as those only differing in a dot (H1, 4, 6,¹²¹ H6,¹²² H5,¹²³ H7¹²⁴) or more dots (G6¹²⁵) or their position above or under the primary line (H5¹²⁶), or both the number and position of dots (H1,¹²⁷ G2, 3¹²⁸). Some letters carry very similar primary lines, mainly when carelessly executed (H1,¹²⁹ H6,¹³⁰ H6,¹³¹ H3¹³²). Some confusions may arise gradually through the mediation of the similarity of other pairs. The transposition of dots may be facilitated by the oblique style of writing (*ḥaṭṭ mā'il*). A certain role may have been played by 'dots' belonging to the writing surface rather than the script (Table 1, note 3). Some less similar ones still may have been mistaken if contracted (*mudḡama*)¹³³ (H4¹³⁴).

- The influence of the colloquial language (Table 1, note 5).

- An exchange of letters in sequence (H1,¹³⁵ H2¹³⁶).

- A fusion of clusters (G2,¹³⁷ Table 2, note 11¹³⁸) and a rather inverted process, especially when written in *ruq'a*¹³⁹ (G2¹⁴⁰).

- A fusion of words (H1 when compared to the versions recorded by al-İşbahānī and al-Ḥarkūšī; Table 1, note 1¹⁴¹). On the other hand, cf. some versions of H2, 3, 7 (Table 1, notes 4, 6, 12), which indicate the existence of several suspiciously similar names for different heavens and/or their exchanges in certain sources.

¹²¹ Medial ق-ف.

¹²² ن-ت medial ر-ز.

¹²³ Initial and medial ب-ي.

¹²⁴ ع-غ.

¹²⁵ ث-س.

¹²⁶ Medial ي-ت.

¹²⁷ ب-ت.

¹²⁸ Medial ن-ي.

¹²⁹ ر-و.

¹³⁰ د-ر/ز.

¹³¹ Medial ق-ت.

¹³² Final ت-ن.

¹³³ See Gacek 2009b: 318.

¹³⁴ Final ت-ن.

¹³⁵ ع-ي.

¹³⁶ و-د.

¹³⁷ ج into حي.

¹³⁸ ي into ئي.

¹³⁹ A simplified type of Arabic script widely used up to the present mainly in quick handwriting; for details see Gacek 2009a: 98–100, and more thoroughly Mitchell 1958.

¹⁴⁰ ن into خ.

¹⁴¹ The preposition bi- 'by/with...' may have become a part of its name in the chain of transmission; it is written together with the operated word and may have followed an expression like *summiya bi[smi]* 'it was called...', which is why the versions without b- at the beginning may (but need not) be considered 'more authentic'.



• A grammatical case-based confusion (H1 in all the mss. and H4 in Ms. 2702 when compared to the majority of the given edited sources¹⁴²).

• A lexemic misunderstanding (as of which word denotes the name; H7 in Ms. 854¹⁴³).

Within the quantitative graphemic differences some special categories may be discerned:

a) The ‘orthography’ of *hamza* varies greatly in handwritten (but also edited) texts,¹⁴⁴ mainly in those of not strictly high (Classical) style. It is often elided (*maḥdūfa*) but may be added in striving for classicization¹⁴⁵ or for pronounciational purposes.¹⁴⁶ *Hamza* after *alif* (*mamdūda*) at the end of a word (H1 in R) may serve as an ‘insurance’ so that *alif* will not be considered the Accusative grapheme.¹⁴⁷

b) *Hā*’ at the end of a word (H6 in KA) may indicate the feminine gender – in which sense it is affiliated to *tā’ marbūṭa* (Wright 1967, vol I: 184) –, or even *sukūn*, thus representing no surplus at all (Gacek 2009b: 289).

c) Letters of prolongation *l*, *o*, *y* (mainly the final parts of all G) are still widely used to indicate unknown vowels to avoid misunderstandings (e.g. in foreigners’ names). The same method was used to facilitate the task of reading or narrating tales by means of mss. (Gažáková 2015: 399–400).

There also appear quantitative differences formed by one or two graphemes¹⁴⁸ (H2, 4, G2–7), a syllable (probably skipped (*saqāṭa*) from G3 in KD), or a definite article (H6 in KD). Certain extra letters, on the other hand, do not necessarily display variations, as they do not obligatorily appear in the script (Table 1, notes 3, 8, 13, Table 2, note 3).

In the case of some more complex differences, it is hard to decide whether the final variants are a result of graphemic ‘confusions’ of less similar letters (H7,¹⁴⁹ H1,¹⁵⁰ H6,¹⁵¹ H4¹⁵²) or combinations of several confusions, exchanges and additions or rather of different archetypal information (*aṣl*) (all the guardians in B except for G4, H4 in Ms. 854, H7 in Ms. 3466, Ms. 854, G5 in B equaling the one in KD and remarkably resembling G6 in R, Prophets, G6 in L, KA, KD, G7 in Ms. 3466, R – the latter one resembling the one in Ms. 2702, H1, 2, 6 in KD, where two versions (*ḥilāf*) are stated referring to different model copies¹⁵³).

¹⁴² All the names of the heavens in al-*Iṣbahānī* 1998/9, vol IV: 1387–1388 obligatorily bear a final *alif* (or *fatha*), as they are in the Accusative case of the direct object complement following the expression *sammā s-samā’ a...* ‘He [God] called the heaven...’ The silent final Accusative-grapheme *alif* may in an unvocalized text mistakenly be considered a letter of prolongation of -ā and thus penetrate into the Nominative domain following the expression *ismuhā* ‘its name is...’ That is why the versions without the cognate endings -ā (represented by *alif al-mamdūda*)/-an (represented by *alif at-tanwīn*)/-a (represented by *fatha*), too, may be considered ‘more authentic’

¹⁴³ Al-‘*ulyā*’ *العليا*, literally ‘the upper’, is the common epithet given by al-*Iṣbahānī* (1998/9, vol IV: 1388) to this heaven to denote its position, its proper name following afterwards.

¹⁴⁴ Proper rules of its scriptural demonstration are even by contemporary educated Arabs not considered of much importance, see e.g. Lahlali 2009.

¹⁴⁵ See the abundant literature on ‘Middle Arabic,’ for a brief overview and some sources e.g. Lentin 2008: 215–224.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. the classical rules for shortening and elision of auxiliary vowels in certain surroundings in fluent speech and the possible dialectal divergences, specifically also Coetzee 2007: 228–231.

¹⁴⁷ See Wright 1967, vol I: 11, al-Labādī 1985: 210.

¹⁴⁸ More complex ones are treated below.

¹⁴⁹ Medial *ي-ق*.

¹⁵⁰ Medial *ع-و*.

¹⁵¹ Medial *م-ق/ف*.

¹⁵² Medial *ل-ل*, initial *ا-ي* (as the initial *hamza*-sign is usually elided).

¹⁵³ The second versions of H1, 2 and the first one of H6 approximately agree with their counterparts in the rest of the mss. (except for B, which does not even mention the names of the heavens).



2.2.2. The Accounts of the Common Nouns

They offer the following variations:

- Qualitative lexical ones that may (but not necessarily) have been effected by graphemic confusions producing other acceptable versions (M1,¹⁵⁴ I3¹⁵⁵).
- Quantitative lexemic ones constituted by a lack/surplus of attributes that may be considered as particularizing the sort of material (M4 in KD and Ms. 3466, M2 in B – all of which are equal, M6 in B).
- A reversed order of items (I2 with I4, M2 with M4, I5 with I6 and M5 with M6 in B when compared to the other versions, I5 with I6 in KD, on which exchange it agrees with B).
- Qualitative lexical ones obviously tracing back to different archetypal information (M1 in B,¹⁵⁶ I3 in B,¹⁵⁷ M1, M3 in most of the mss. when compared to B¹⁵⁸).
- A qualitative lexical one that may have stemmed from a confusion of words/lines (or generally the place in the model) while copying or from blending different traditions into an incoherent result (identical M5 and M7 in B¹⁵⁹).

What all the mss. exceptionally agree on are I1, I7 and (approximately) G4.

2.2.3. The Additional Descriptions in B

Within them, there may be assumed:

- A semantic variation in a numeral that may easily have arisen by a simple erroneous omission (*saqt*) of its constituent (ref. 70).
- A confusion of the place in the model while copying (ref. 71).

2.3. The Variations Offered in P3

Between the two mss. that contain P3, there are the following differences:

- The reversed order in which the items are described.
- Different qualities (of the Sea¹⁶⁰ and the House) are spoken of with no contradictions.
- A qualitative lexemic one obviously tracing back to different archetypal information (name of the guardian of the Sea).
- Quantitative stylistic ones (the verses in the rhythmical rhymed prose (*sağc*) containing the reference to the Qur'ān in KD, the concluding eulogy in B).

¹⁵⁴ The Arabic words زبرجد *zabarġad* 'chrysolite' and زمرد *zumurrud* 'emerald' differ graphically in two letters only: *bā'* ب and *mīm* م may have been mistaken for each other and *ġīm* ج added/elided.

¹⁵⁵ The Arabic words ثور *ṭawr* 'bulls' and نسور *nusūr* 'vultures' are similar especially in *ruq'a*, where *sin* س takes the shape of an almost horizontal or just slightly sloping line.

¹⁵⁶ 'Smoke' دخان *duḥān* does not appear as the material of any heaven in the other mss., but is said to be the proto-material of the heaven before its split (see §1.1. and refs. 115, 117) (al-Tha'labī 2002: 6).

¹⁵⁷ 'Birds' طير *ṭayr* is at least a superordinate of the prevalent version.

¹⁵⁸ In which they are not ascribed to any heaven, but cf. the following item.

¹⁵⁹ There is not another case of ascribing the same quality to any pair of heavens. The edited sources consulted indicate that the error occurred in the former (Table 3, notes 5, 7).

¹⁶⁰ Its own qualities are described in KD as opposed to B, which rather describes angels therein.



- Quantitative (but stylistically neutral) phrasal and clausal ones increasing/decreasing the informative value (the mention of the Uplifted Canopy in B and the unnamed angel in KD; see below).
- Qualitative and quantitative phrasal ones by which certain ‘facts’ are obscured, whether intentionally or not (an (in)definite place adverbial, (non)determining the place relation of two items; see below).
- A quantitative lexemic one apparently caused by an erroneous omission producing a different meaning whose invalidity can easily be discerned on the basis of external knowledge (ref. 44).

2.4. The Variations Offered in P4

They may be categorized as follows:

- A qualitative lexical one that may (but not necessarily) have stemmed from a scribal confusion of diacritics producing another acceptable version (ref. 66¹⁶¹).
- Qualitative lexical ones expressed by graphically dissimilar words, thus obviously tracing back to different archetypal information, whether contradictory (refs. 54, 58¹⁶²) or not (refs. 57,¹⁶³ 64¹⁶⁴).
- Quantitative lexemic or phrasal ones constituted by a lack/surplus of some items in an enumeration, which mistake does not call for correction at a potential cursory proof-reading unless there is a mindful textual collation with the original/model (refs. 59, 64, 67).
- A quantitative clausal one constituted by a (non)presence of a Qur’ānic quotation to support a statement (ref. 62).
- Quantitative phrasal and clausal ones increasing/decreasing the informative value (refs. 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 62, 64, 67, 68¹⁶⁵).
- A quantitative lexemic one that seems only to increase/decrease the degree of descriptiveness (ref. 50¹⁶⁶).

2.5. The Variations Offered in P5

They may be categorized as follows:

- Quantitative phrasal and clausal ones increasing/decreasing the informative value (refs. 105, 107).
- A qualitative lexemic one representing a slight modification of a place adverbial, which may reflect a mere different perception of the described matter (the span of the veils; ref. 70).

¹⁶¹ The graphical difference between the words حَافُونَ ḥāffūn ‘circling around [the Throne]’ and حَافُونَ ḥāffūn ‘hastening’ is in a dot only.

¹⁶² قعود qu‘ūd ‘sitting’ – قِيَامٌ quyyām ‘standing’.

¹⁶³ يرتعدون yarta‘idūn ‘shivering’ – يدعون yad‘ūn ‘praying’ – يعبدون ya‘budūn ‘adoring’.

¹⁶⁴ مقربون وروحانيون muqarrabūn wa-rūḥāniyūn ‘seraphim and archangels’ – جاثون ḡātūn ‘lying prone’.

¹⁶⁵ While most of the mss. link each way of praise to the angels in their respective heaven, Ms. 3466 and Ms. 854 just enumerate them without linkage to the heavens, on the other hand, the latter mention an extra group of angels and provide two one-person isnāds when compared to the others (although it is not clear from the text whether Ka‘b is the muḥaddiṭ of both the exaltation and inhabitants’ activities or just of the former).

¹⁶⁶ Angels’ eternal exaltation and worship should be understood; see ref. 51.



• A qualitative lexemic one that may stem from a confusion of two words with the same root producing another acceptable version (ref. 71¹⁶⁷).

2.6. The Variations Offered in P6

The whole of P6 is constituted by an enumeration of items, which is in some respects specific when an analysis of variations is targeted. There are:

- Quantitative lexemic or phrasal ones constituted by a lack/surplus of some items in an enumeration (no pair of mss. present the same number of items, the highest number being recorded by R, the lowest by B, only nos. 10, 24, 25 are listed by all the mss. – to which also 12, 13 may perhaps be added when compared to 29, 30 respectively, but for the presence of an attribute modifying the sort of the material).¹⁶⁸

- Quantitative lexemic ones probably stemming from an erroneous omission of the place adverbials when linking the enumerated items, producing a different but acceptable (although slightly blurred) meaning (regarding their location in relation to the previous ones), which does not arouse suspicion (Table 5, notes 8, 9).

- A grammatical one constituted by an opposition of (in)definiteness that may (but not necessarily) have contributed to an emergence of a slightly altered version of an item (to what degree the meaning is different depends on the perception of its quality) (no. 38; Table 5, note 12).

- Quantitative phrasal and clausal ones increasing/decreasing the informative value (the extra descriptions of some items in B).

- A quantitative lexemic one constituted by a lack/surplus of an attribute only contributing to an increase/decrease in the degree of descriptiveness (no. 35).

- Quantitative lexemic ones constituted by a lack/surplus of attributes that may be considered as particularizing the sort of material (maybe nos. 24, 25, mainly nos. 12, 13 when compared to 29, 30 respectively).

- Stylistic phrasal ones (the manner of introducing each item in B).

- A semantic variation in a numeral, most probably caused by an erroneous omission of its constituent (Table 5, note 6).

- A qualitative lexical one of a numeral, which is perhaps easier to confuse when transcribing or recording large (mainly routine) texts even despite a graphical dissimilarity of the clusters of letters in question, but which may as well point to a different archetypal information (no. 27).

- Inequalities of items in a given sequence that may be analysed as both qualitative lexical and quantitative phrasal ones, as they may either point to different archetypal information on the same items or a lack/surplus of not the same archetypally nonidentical ones on both the mss.' part (nos. 4, 7, 15).

- A reversed order of items (Table 5, note 3, nos. 4, 17–19, maybe also 12, 13 when compared to 29, 30 respectively, but for the presence of an attribute modifying the sort of the material).

¹⁶⁷ The word *أقفالها* *aqfāluhā* 'their locks' in KD occupies the same position in the sentence as *مغلقة* *muḡlaqa* 'closed' in the others, which is semantically very near to *مقفلة* *muqaffala* 'locked' – a word also provided as a marginal explication in L.

¹⁶⁸ Some items in B and KD (those marked by an exclamation mark) are not mentioned in P6 but P3, where their surroundings from among these layers are not stated.



2.7. The Variations Offered in P7

They may be categorized as follows:

- A quantitative lexemic one represented by the lack/surplus of a quantifier (ref. 78¹⁶⁹), which is rather the result of a confusion of heads of the quantification ('veils' with 'heavens') or of a skip of some text between the quantifier ('seven') and the following word ('veils') or of an extension of the symbolic figure to express the totality of another item ('veils') apart from the 'heavens' (as well as 'earths,' 'hells,' etc.).
- Quantitative and qualitative lexemic ones (refs. 79,¹⁷⁰ 80,¹⁷¹ 81¹⁷²) that add or remove nothing to/from the meaning in the given context.

2.8. The Variations Offered in P8

They may be categorized as follows:

- A qualitative lexemic one representing a slight modification of a place adverbial, yet not (to any great extent) a contradiction to the meaning (ref. 82).
- A qualitative lexical one obviously caused by a mental slip (ref. 88).
- Qualitative lexemic ones in a proper name that may both have emerged due to graphemic confusions and represent different archetypal information (ref. 106¹⁷³).
- A qualitative lexical one that may have arisen by misreading a letter or ligature, producing another acceptable version with a substantial shift in meaning (ref. 101¹⁷⁴).
- Semantic variations in numerals produced by both quantitative (refs. 85, 86, 87, 90, 105) and qualitative lexemic inequalities (refs. 85, 90, 93, 105).
- A qualitative lexical one obviously tracing back to different archetypal information (ref. 104).
- A quantitative phrasal one constituted by a lack/surplus of an evidently unclear piece of information (ref. 83¹⁷⁵).
- A quantitative lexemic one constituted by a lack/surplus of a qualifier only contributing to an increase/decrease in the degree of descriptiveness (refs. 95,¹⁷⁶ 97¹⁷⁷).
- Quantitative phrasal and clausal ones that may either indicate a confusion of the place in the model while copying or a deliberate selection/addition of data from other sources to increase/decrease the informative value (refs. 93, 95, 98, 103, 107). An error is undeniable when the omission results in an unacceptable meaning (on the basis of external knowledge) (ref. 100).
- A different location of a meaningful unit (about the Fiery Sea) within the P1–8.

¹⁶⁹ No mention of such a number of veils in any layer precedes.

¹⁷⁰ The whole book states that the heavens are seven.

¹⁷¹ If they pierced the lower earths, they naturally pierced all of them.

¹⁷² See ref. 178.

¹⁷³ ميكائيل Mikāyīl/ميكائيل Mikāyīl-هيكائيل H.y.kāyīl-هنكائيل H.n.kāyīl.

¹⁷⁴ An assimilated *sīn* (*sīn al-mu‘allaqa*) may easily be mistaken for *rā*, producing رابعة *rābi‘a* ‘fourth’ instead of سابعة *sābi‘a* ‘seventh’.

¹⁷⁵ There exist several contradictory versions; see below.

¹⁷⁶ Everything in the heavens is described as great, it is only the degree of greatness that is modified.

¹⁷⁷ Figuratively, perhaps all angels are perceived as capable of the flying in the air.



- Stylistic phrasal and clausal ones with basically the same contents (refs. 84,¹⁷⁸ 99,¹⁷⁹ 102, 108, 109).

The accounts of the groups of angels linked to individual heavens in P2 of B and the unnamed angel in P3 of KD cannot be compared in this way to those in the matter after P7 because obviously, there are different denotates spoken about.

SUMMARY

The Islamic view on the arrangement of both the visible and the invisible world is undoubtedly highly attractive as far as contents are concerned. It is even more interesting to observe the divergences in individual ms. witnesses and their probable causes and results, which shed light on the transmission of the work (even if only within the scope of the limited material at our disposal) and on what could have impelled the scribes to preserve it in this particular form. Striving to understand the characteristic features of manuscript texts (especially of folk literature transmitted mostly orally) and to solve the problems arising in their examination may lead to unexpected deductions, however irrelevant some details may seem. This article represents a try to present and describe the chapter on seven heavens and what pertains to them in eight mss. of two al-Kisāʾī's works and to analyse the variations found therein in terms of their most probable reasons. Based on that, a few outcomes may be pointed out. The (non)compliance and potential affinity of the data with those traced in the editions and further authoritative edited sources were implied in references to the text so that the versions are easy to compare.

- The highest degree of each quantitative, qualitative, stylistic and structural divergency from the other mss. is found in B, which makes it clear that it represents another branch of Marvels' stemma.

- Of Marvels, KD follows B in the degree of differentiatedness. The two display some mutual affinity by the common features and versions of some notions, but KD is in some places more poetic than all the others (P3) and explicitly refers to at least two unequal witnesses (P2; Table 1).

- Ms. 2702 seems to display a kind of 'oscillation' between the contents of the mss. of Marvels and Prophets (P4, P5, P6), which may also be perceived from its division of parts and chapters.

- The comparison of the versions of proper names in some cases brings about a hypothesis about which of them is closer to the origin based on the probability of a morphological shift, which here mostly concerns the opposition of certain edited sources and the mss. (apart from Ms. 2702 having possibly been more affected by the case-based confusion (P2; Table 1, §2.2.1).

- The scrutinized text is not free from disagreements on certain data (which is not an unusual phenomenon in this genre¹⁸⁰). It mainly concerns the location of some entities and some angels' names, which suspiciously resemble other ones, which casts doubt on their archetypal 'identity.'

¹⁷⁸ God's omnipotence is taken for granted.

¹⁷⁹ In this spiritual sense, the 'order' may well be perceived as equal to a wish.

¹⁸⁰ See Heinen 1995: 1016.



a) There are three different versions of the location of the Inhabited House:¹⁸¹ *the seventh heaven*¹⁸² (P3 of KD, B), *the lowest (=first) heaven*¹⁸³ (the chapter on angels of KD) and *the layers above the seven heavens* (P6 of R). It must be borne in mind that the traditional imagination places the earthly and heavenly counterparts one immediately above the other so as to shape an axis rising through the heavens like a skyscraper; thus, such a ‘House’ may be supposed in each of them (Bürge 2009b: 221–225). An assumption may well arise that H7 is meant to never end and thus comprises all the layers (P6), which is negated by the expression ‘above the seven heavens.’ The Canopy and its pillars are said to limit the heavens from above (Heinen 1995) (and obviously also the layers above them).

b) There are three different versions of the location of the Fiery Sea: *the seventh heaven* (P3 of KD, P8 of Ms. 3466, Ms. 854), *the layers above the heavens*¹⁸⁴ (P6 of L, R, KA, KD, Ms. 2702) and *the fourth heaven* (P8 of Ms. 2702), which is, however, considered a result of a scribal mistake rather than a semantic variant (ref. 174). B seems to have purposefully avoided clearly specifying the place (P3); one has a feeling that the scribe – possibly having considered the two (within the excerpt) prevailing versions – applied critical judgement and wit and ‘elegantly’ avoided specifying the place in such a manner that the reader is left to ‘choose’ between both (a skill many students benefit from at examinations).

c) An angel called ‘K.l.k.yāyīl’ is said to guard the Sea in P3 of B. P3 of KD disagrees and proposes ‘R.w.qāyīl’ for this function.

As the mss. record various accounts by different *muḥaddiṭūn* and story-tellers, it is understandable that various versions are also recorded by one and the same ms.¹⁸⁵ As for the Inhabited House and the Fiery Sea, the issue here mainly concerns KD (Ms. 2702 is out of consideration). Due to the lack of relevant parts or sentences in some mss., however, a conclusion cannot be made regarding the rate of their variability in the respective contexts.

- Apart from the contradictions, the excerpt offers some further semantic unclarity:

a) If Wāhb’s mention of veils above the seven heavens in P5 is compared with the data in P6,¹⁸⁶ it is not clear whether these veils should be *under* or *in* the seas or even whether veils in the Sea of Veils (P6; Table 5; no. 4) are meant. One only knows that both are above the seven heavens.

b) From P3 of KD, we only know that both the Inhabited House and the Fiery Sea are in H7, but not their location in relation to each other, which is clearly determined in P3 of B: the Sea is above ‘the Uplifted Canopy,’ which is above the House. On the other hand, due to a vague pronoun ‘that’ following the preposition ‘above,’ we do not know from B whether all the things above the House (including the layers enumerated in P6) are within H7 or above it.

¹⁸¹ Outside the excerpt, the work contains a further one (at least): the sixth heaven (B, fol. 19a, R, fol. 13a, A, fol. 5a), cf. Thackston 1978b: 339–340, n. 14.

¹⁸² Agreeing with a tradition given by as-Suyūṭī (1988: 142).

¹⁸³ Agreeing with a tradition given by al-Tha’labī (2002: 27).

¹⁸⁴ Perhaps supported by al-Iṣbahānī (1998/9, vol II: 652): ‘under the Canopy’ (which is above the Throne), as the Throne is included among these layers in P6. The Qur’ān 2:255 says that the ‘[...] Throne embraces the heavens and the earth [...]’. Also see ‘Abdalwāḥḥāb 2002: 637: ‘between the seventh heaven and the Throne, there is a distance of five hundred years’ (as is, according to some Islamic sources, also the case with all the heavens and earths; see Heinen 1995: 1016, cf. ref. 33).

¹⁸⁵ Also see Bürge 2009a: 67–68.

¹⁸⁶ Between P5 and P6, no other transmitter to ‘say [so]’ is mentioned, which indicates that the contents of both trace back to the same one (Wāhb [b. Munabbih]).



c) The quality of the unnamed angel in H7 mentioned in P3 of KD suspiciously resembles that of the guardian of the Sea in the same heaven according to P3 of B, who is given different names in the two mss. Do ‘both’ angels trace back to the same original one?

d) An angel called ‘K.l.k.yāyīl’ (or a spelling variant) is said to guard the Sea in P3 of B, but is attached to H5 in P2 of the other mss. (except for KD, which approximately agrees with B on ‘S.m.ḥ(y)āyīl’ as G5 in P2). An angel called ‘R.w.qāyīl’ (or a spelling variant) is said to guard the Sea in P3 of KD, but P2 of L, KA and KD join him with H7.¹⁸⁷ The given tradition may appoint the two angels to guard two items, which possibility is but rejected for angels (excluding the archangels Gabriel and Michael; Bürge 2009a: 79). The same angels may be meant, but the same qualities (or even names) need not be (meant to be) borne by the same ones. The similar names/qualities may also have originated from one archetypal source (wherever its provenance) and then shifted to different beings,¹⁸⁸ whether under the influence of other traditions or by various other editorial/narrative processes, including imagination and shortcomings in written/oral transmission and understanding.

Generally, scattered pieces of information may have been compiled and processed in the same way, giving rise to markedly different versions of the subject, which are sometimes not strictly contradictory but also not clearly set.

If we are to determine which version of the excerpt is the oldest and/or closest to al-Kisā’i’s one – or rather to the original versions of the given notions in general – we are hindered by several problems.

- Witnesses with a greater informative value and/or degree of descriptiveness may represent either an older or younger layer; both earlier and later scribes may have added pieces of information according to their own style, strategy, or purpose, and they may have omitted items by mistake or may have considered them of lesser importance for their goals; they may also have displayed different attitudes or levels of mindfulness in respect of the (in)completeness of Qur’ānic verses.

- The varying frequency of versions need not speak about authenticity and age but may reflect merely a varying amount of copies of a certain ms. version (which may have been produced at any time).

- Qualitative variations do not necessarily represent layers of different ages; various versions of individual notions may coexist.

- It is questionable whether it is apt to speak only about the age of a layer (and transmission) of a not strictly fixed literary piece (such as the one in question); it is rather individual notions that could be analysed in this way (by thorough research). Various story-tellers and scribes gathered plentiful (often contradictory) material from various layers and multiple written and oral external traditions, and applied a critical method of selection/collation/editing, details of which often remain hypothetical. Scattered pieces of information from various sources (and layers) penetrate into/leave and intermingle within the sum of the witnesses (and layers) in the course of trans-

¹⁸⁷ As for the seeming dichotomy of Mikā’il (or a spelling variant) for the Sea (as given in the (sub)chapter on angels)–Miḥā’il for H2 (as given in P2 of all the mss. except for KD and B), there are in fact recorded two different angels with very similar names (Wensinck 1993: 25, Davidson 1967: 193–194, 196).

¹⁸⁸ The same is supposed in the case of other pairs of angelic names within Islamic sources (Bürge 2009a: 74–75).



mission.¹⁸⁹ If we are to search for all the existing accounts striving to establish the stemma of the notions dealt with now, which are widely spread in several ancient traditions,¹⁹⁰ we may well fail to come to a satisfactory conclusion after life-long research (which may be successful but is beyond the present author's aspiration).

- Even if we are to speak solely about the transmission of Marvels (which has not yet been wholly edited), the comparison of the limited selection of the mss. of the two al-Kisāʿī's works together with the editions (of Prophets), mainly in terms of items described above as indicating a different archetypal information, leads us to suspect B and to a lesser degree KD of being out of the mainstream (though we cannot know for sure); it would be strange (although not impossible) for one and the same author to give certain data in one of his works and totally different ones in another one on the same subject. As for Prophets, based on the same principle, we may consider Ms. 2702 closer to the author's intended versions, followed by Ms. 3466. However, even the authority of the editions should not be overestimated without a thorough revision of their source mss. to determine whether enough authoritative ones were scrutinized. Our suspicion cannot be decisive unless we have the authographed ms. or unless there exists a complete critical edition of (at least nearly) all the (known) existing witnesses of Marvels as well, which has already been set as a (long-term) goal by certain researchers. Even then, we are never sure whether enough material is at our disposal; each new witness may reveal valuable facts contributing to the research.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the article effectively shows the variances in the excerpt and their possible reasons and scope of consequences (in some cases also their previously established or potential relation to data traced in other sources and traditions), and thus helps understand and perceive from a broader perspective the elements affecting the overall development of the work, or will ideally inspire further researchers to elaborate on the topic (and possibly come to more satisfactory discoveries).

ABBREVIATIONS

B = Ms. 6160 AL-KISĀʿĪ, Abū Ġaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh 1785. *Kitāb ʿAġāʾib al-malakūt* [The book of marvels of the world and the otherworld]. Staatsbibliothek Berlin.

EALL = VERSTEEGH, Kees et al. (eds.) 2006–2009. *The Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. I–IV. vols. Leiden [a. o.]: Brill.

EI = BEARMAN, P[eri] et al. (eds.) 1960–2005. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New [= 2nd] Edition*. I–XII. vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill NV.

KA = Ms. 3345/23552 AL-KISĀʿĪ, Abū Ġaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh 1860. *Kitāb ʿAġāʾib al-malakūt* [The book of marvels of the world and the otherworld]. Al-Qāhira: Maktabat al-Azhar aš-šarīf.

¹⁸⁹ In this particular case, some sources may have matched certain material to a heaven with a certain name while others matched the heaven with a given name to a certain position in sequence, some may have mentioned the existence of certain angels while others provided knowledge of where such angels were, etc. These and similar processes are evident e.g. from the fact that Ms. 2702 of Prophets resembles R, L and KA of Marvels more than it resembles the other two mss. of Prophets, B and lesser KD of Marvels are in some respects more divergent from the other mss. of both Prophets and Marvels than the other mss. of the latter are from Prophets, the degree of (non)agreement between the witnesses is not uniform but varying with individual data, etc.

¹⁹⁰ See Davidson 1967, Wright 2000: 210, Heinen 1995.



- KD = Ms. 8/2949 AL-KISĀ'Ī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh [n. d.].¹⁹¹ *Kitāb 'Aġā'ib al-malakūt* [The book of marvels of the world and the otherworld]. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-kutub wa-l-waṭā'iq al-qawmiya.
- L = Ms. Or. 538 AL-KISĀ'Ī, Abū Ġaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad 1470. *Kitāb 'Aġā'ib al-malakūt wa-šan'at al-Ḥayy al-laḏī lā yamūt* [The book of marvels of the world and the otherworld, creation of the living who does not die]. Leiden University Library.
- Ms. 854 = AL-KISĀ'Ī, Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh 1563. *Kitāb Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' 'alayhim aṣ-ṣalāt wa-s-salām* [The book of the tales of the prophets, may peace be upon them]. Al-Qāhira: al-Maktaba at-taymūriya.
- Ms. 2702 = AL-KISĀ'Ī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh 1595/6. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' ṣalawāt al-Lāh 'alayhim* [The tales of the prophets, may peace be upon them]. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-kutub wa-l-waṭā'iq al-qawmiya.
- Ms. 3466 = AL-KISĀ'Ī, Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydallāh [n. d.].¹⁹² *Kitāb Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' 'alayhim as-salām* [The book of the tales of the prophets, may peace be upon them]. Al-Qāhira, Dār al-kutub wa-l-waṭā'iq al-qawmiya.
- R = Ms. 5717 AL-KISĀ'Ī, Abū Ġaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh 20th c. *Kitāb al-Malakūt* [The book of the world and the otherworld] [online]. Ar-Riyāḏ: Maktabat Ġamiʿat al-malik Saʿūd, <http://makhtota.ksu.edu.sa/makhtota/6129/1#.UuZSZPs1XI>. Accessed Jan 27, 2014.

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¹⁹¹ According to the script, Pauliny (Comenius University in Bratislava) assumes 16 c. (personal communication Jan. 2014).

¹⁹² According to the script and paper, Pauliny assumes 16/17 c. (personal communication Jan. 2014).



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