

The *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥaġġāġ* from the University Library in Bratislava

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a description, scholarly edition, and translation of an interesting variant of a well-known folk narrative entitled *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥaġġāġ* about the famous Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf and a young man. The story also appears in various other manuscripts but has rarely been studied. In this case, it is preserved in Ms. TF 136 No. 387 from the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts, which is housed at the University Library in Bratislava, Slovakia. The variation of the story was also integrated into the Arabian Nights, being a part of the well-known Wortley-Montague manuscript stored in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. To preserve the authentic scribal practices, the presented edition offers the text with all its orthographic and linguistic peculiarities, regardless of how insignificant or incomprehensible they might seem. The edition is accompanied by a translation and explanatory notes. This is probably the first time that a complete text from the Bašagić's Collection has been thoroughly studied.

KEYWORDS

al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, Arabic popular literature, the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts, the Tale of Tawaddud, the Arabian Nights

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INTRODUCTION

The University Library in Bratislava has an important collection of early prints (365 volumes) and Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts (284 volumes).¹ This collection was obtained in 1924² from the well-known Bosnian scholar, journalist, and politician Dr Safwet Beg Bašagić (1870–1934).³ It is one of many such collections created in the past by an educated individual. Although the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts is not that big when compared to other collections of a similar nature, it is remarkable for several reasons; for one thing, it comes from the Balkans rather than from an Islamic country in Asia or Africa.⁴ In addition, it has been the subject of little scholarly attention and is not very well known. The only scholarly work that has been published on it so far is a comprehensive catalogue that was compiled by notable Czech and Slovak Orientalists in 1961.⁵ Other works are of a more informative character and concern the content of the collection and its owner.⁶ Thanks to the efforts of Professor Ján Pauliny, the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme in 1997.

The content of the collection is dedicated to various fields related to Islamic studies (theology, jurisprudence, astronomy, philosophy, linguistics, and literary criticism). There are also works of prose and poetry, including examples that originated in popular heritage. Here, under TF 136 No. 387⁷ (henceforth Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387), a narrative was discovered that was entitled *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥaġġāġ*⁸ which belongs to the realm of Arabic popular literature (*al-adab ash-sha'bi*)⁹

¹ Two hundred and eighty-four manuscript volumes contain 393 Arabic, 117 Turkish, and 88 Persian individual works as well as rare Slavic texts from Bosnia and Herzegovina which are written in Arabic script.

² The collection was obtained by the University Library thanks to the efforts of its director, Dr Jan Emler. The purchase was assisted by the Czech Orientalist Dr Jan Rybka. For the details of this precarious journey, see Mészárosová 2006.

³ Safwet Beg Bašagić was a notable personality in the Muslim community in the Balkans at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He was a student of Oriental Studies at the University of Vienna. After graduation, he returned to Bosnia, where he edited various journals and worked as a grammar school teacher in Sarajevo. In 1910 he was appointed to a professorship at the Department of Oriental Languages in Zagreb. From December 1919, he worked in Sarajevo as the curator of the Municipal Museum. He held this position until May 1927, when he retired for health reasons. He died and was buried in Sarajevo in 1934. See the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts: <http://retrobib.ulib.sk/Basagic/frames.htm> [22 July 2021].

⁴ See the Bašagić's Collection of Islamic Manuscripts: <http://retrobib.ulib.sk/Basagic/frames.htm> [22 July 2021].

⁵ Blaškovičs, Petráček, and Veselý 1961.

⁶ The collection was mostly examined by scholars from Bosnia. On the basis of their research, several books were published (e.g. Ljubović 1995, 1996, 1998), but thus far they have been inaccessible (electronic communication with the Director of the Manuscripts Department of the University Library, Klára Mészárosová, 4 April 2020).

⁷ Here the mark TF 136 indicates the number of the convolute volume where the story appears together with other texts. No. 387 is a reference number of the text in the only thorough catalogue of the collection: Blaškovičs, Petráček, and Veselý 1961: 270 (a brief description of the manuscript).

⁸ The name of the Umayyad governor appears throughout the whole article as al-Ḥajjāj. It is only when the title of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 is concerned that the name appears as it is written in the previously mentioned catalogue (al-Ḥaġġāġ). The form al-Hajjaj appears only when the name is directly quoted from the titles of particular tales of Richard F. Burton's translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. See: *Plain and Literal Translation of The Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entitled as The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 10 volumes, 6 volumes of *Supplemental Nights to the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* 1888.

⁹ For more information on the advancements of research in this field of Arabic popular literature – which developed within a large corpus of traditions that includes Arabic popular *siyar*, pseudo-historical accounts of military campaigns (*maġhāzī*), stories of prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*), numerous genres of popular poetry and tales of wonder and fantasy, the best known being *The Thousand and One Nights* – see for one a valuable and still highly



or, more precisely, which serves as an example of what Jaroslav Oliverius referred to as ‘semi-popular literature’ (*pololudová literatúra*)¹⁰ owing to the active role of the texts’ editors and scribes.

MANUSCRIPTS WITH FOLK STORIES ABOUT AL-ḤAJJĀJ IBN YŪSUF

Manuscripts with widely circulated folk stories about the highly capable yet ruthless governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Aqil ath-Thaqafī (661–714) with the *kunya* Abū Muḥammad,¹¹ who served under the Umayyad Caliphate, are numerous and can be found in libraries and private collections all over the world.¹² Several stories even became integrated into the *Arabian Nights*,¹³ and this is also the case of the story from Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387. After thorough scrutiny, the tale seems to be a version of *History of al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf and the Young Sayyid*,¹⁴ which is part of the Wortley-Montague manuscript of the *Arabian Nights* stored in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.¹⁵

relevant volume of *Studies in Arabic Epics: Oriente Moderno* 2, 22, 2003 edited by Giovanni Canova, particularly Canova 2003, with the following bibliography (v–xxii). Any evaluation or commentary on these sources is beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁰ This term could be regarded as more ‘accurate’ due to the fact that many works of popular origin were not passed down from generation to generation exclusively in an oral manner. A lot of them entered the realm of ‘written’ literature due to the active role of scribes, see Oliverius 1995: 360–373.

¹¹ The legacy and the list of deeds of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf is enormous. Scarcely has any figure from the early period of Islam become the subject of Arabic literature to such an extent as this Umayyad governor. Unprejudiced evaluators see him as one of the most important statesmen of the Umayyads and the whole Islamic world. For general information about his life and deeds, see Dietrich 1986: 39–43; for a detailed account of his deeds, see *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Vols. XXI, XXII, and XXIII.

¹² See the Berlin State Library (Ms. We. 1766; Ms. Pm. 340; Ms. 1782; Ms. We. 702; Ms. We. 701; and Ms. Pm. 460); cf. also Ahlwardt 1896: 45–47; the Vatican Apostolic Library (Ms. Sbath 362); the King Saud University Library (Ms. 218); Dār al-Kutub, Egypt (Ms. 113 Adab); Dār al-Kutub al-Qatariya (Ms. 6/1055); Khizānat Ibn al-Walid (Ms. 2009), Adrār, Algeria; Khizānat shaykh al-Maddānī ibn al-Ḥājj (Ms. 2118); al-Wāta, Algeria Khizānat Sayyidī Ibrāhīm (Ms. 1390) and possibly elsewhere. Presenting a complete list of manuscripts with stories about al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf is beyond the scope of this study.

¹³ Al-Ḥajjāj generally appears in these stories as a powerful and severe yet wise and respected governor. See *A Plain and Literal Translation of The Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entitled as The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 10 volumes, 6 volumes of *Supplemental Nights to the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* 1888: ‘Al-Hajjaj and the Pious Man,’ Vol. 5: 269–271; ‘Hind, Daughter of al-Nu‘man and al-Hajjaj,’ Vol. 7: 96–99; ‘Al-Hajjaj and Three Young Men,’ Suppl. Nights Vol. 1: 47–51; ‘History of al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf and the Young Sayyid,’ Suppl. Nights Vol. 5: 37–60. In these narratives, al-Ḥajjāj’s name appears in the title. For other stories in the collection, where he plays minor yet important roles, see e.g. ‘The Pilgrim and the Old Woman,’ Vol. 5: 186–188, and ‘Nī‘ma bin al-Rabi‘a and Naomi his Slave Girl,’ Vol. 4: 1–24. Only in the last story does al-Ḥajjāj play a distinctly negative character as he tricks and kidnaps a beautiful slave girl from her master and lover and gives her to Caliph ‘Abd-al-malik. The wise Caliph ultimately returns the woman to her lover.

¹⁴ Cf. *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 37–60. As Burton himself explains in ‘The Translator’s Foreword’ to *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: xiii: ‘There are no names or titles to the tales so every translator must have given his own title to the tales.’ Probably influenced by Jonathan Scott’s six-volume edition, he gave the story the title ‘History of al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf and the Young Sayyid.’ This title was accepted by later translators, cf. Tauer 1975: 295. The title *sayyid* may also indicate that the young man is the direct descendant of al-Ḥusayn, the younger son of ‘Alī and the Prophet’s daughter Fāṭima, see Anishchenkova 2020: 161.

¹⁵ Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 550–7 (7 volumes, dated to 1764–1765). The story covers Vol. 553, ff. 107a–120a and the nights No. 510–519. The writer and traveller Edward Wortley Montague (1713–1776) brought the manuscript from the East. The Bodleian Library bought it from Captain Jonathan Swift for £50. This manuscript is known



The narrative is, however, often recorded as an independent story.¹⁶ In fact, many of the stories that became part of the *Arabian Nights* may have had a partly (or completely) independent textual history which intertwined with the collection only from certain stages,¹⁷ and this applies to Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 as well. In the present research, it was possible to identify – and in several cases also obtain – reproductions of other manuscripts of this narrative. Although it is highly demanding and perhaps not very rewarding to compare and analyse the existing variabilities and alterations between individual manuscript witnesses of Arabic popular heritage, they are of the utmost importance in those instances where Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 itself becomes difficult to decipher. Indeed, ‘decipher’ is the right word for reading the manuscript’s unvocalized and often carelessly dotted cursive *nasta’liq*. Whenever the original text was unclear, illegible, or obscure, the present author consulted the Wortley-Montague manuscript of the *Arabian Nights* – Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 (henceforth Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553) and the anonymous Ms. No. 218 from the Library of King Saud University (henceforth Ms. King Saud University No. 218) entitled in the digital catalogue *Qiṣṣa ḥadathat fi majlis al-Ḥajjāj ath-Thaqafi* [The Story that Happened in the Council of al-Ḥajjāj ath-Thaqafi]. They are both written in a legible *naskhī* script and more or less correspond to the story of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387, albeit often with a different wording. Some minor passages have been omitted, and some new ones have been added. The story in Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 is frequently interrupted by repetitive insertions related to the division of the narrative into nights, which makes the whole story more voluminous. It must also be noted that the digital version of Ms. King Saud University No. 218 has recently ceased to be accessible online for unknown reasons.

Within the wider context of the fluid and active traditions of Arabic folk literature, whose texts show consistent fluctuations, each witness can be seen as a *unicum* and regarded separately for editorial purposes.¹⁸ With this in mind, the present author decided to select and work on Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387. It is also important to point out that this is probably the first time that a complete text from the Bašagić’s Collection was edited and translated, even though several interesting works about the collection have already been published.¹⁹

A description of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387

The narrative forms a part of a larger convolute volume (TF 136) along with four other texts in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish written partially by the same scribe. The volume measures 210 mm x 140 mm; *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥağğāğ* occupies a section of fol. 57b–61a with a layout that covers 140 mm x 70 mm with 26–29 lines to each page written in black ink.²⁰ The title (*Qiṣṣat al-Ḥağğāğ*) was

for its high percentage of jocular and otherwise popular tales not contained in other manuscripts of the Arabian Nights. Richard F. Burton translated parts of the manuscript for *Supplemental Nights* Vol. 5. For more about the history of the manuscript, see Moussa-Mahmoud 1976: 7–23.

¹⁶ Thanks to its popularity, the story gradually underwent a remarkable development from individual manuscript variants to twenty-first century live-action remakes. Indeed, there is a film version of the narrative which contains passages that correspond exactly to those in our edition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu2lV3PsZrI> [accessed: 22 July 2021].

¹⁷ See Bellino 2017: 103–132.

¹⁸ On this topic, see Raggetti 2014: 73–75.

¹⁹ E.g. Mészárosóvá 2006: 95–107.

²⁰ Cf. Blaškovičs, Petráček, and Veselý 1961: 270.



probably given to the text by the compilers of the catalogue based on its colophon, where there is the direct statement that ‘this is the end of the complete qīṣṣat al-Ḥajjāj as it reached us’ – *wa hādihā mā intahā ilaynā min qīṣṣat al-Ḥajjāj ‘alā tamām* (Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 61a, lines 15–16). The subtitle of the text in the catalogue is *Masā’il al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ* [al-Ḥajjāj’s questions], and it was given this name probably upon the basis of a discovered analogy between this text and Ms. 9050 We. 1766²¹ at the Berlin State Library, which is referred to by the cataloguers.

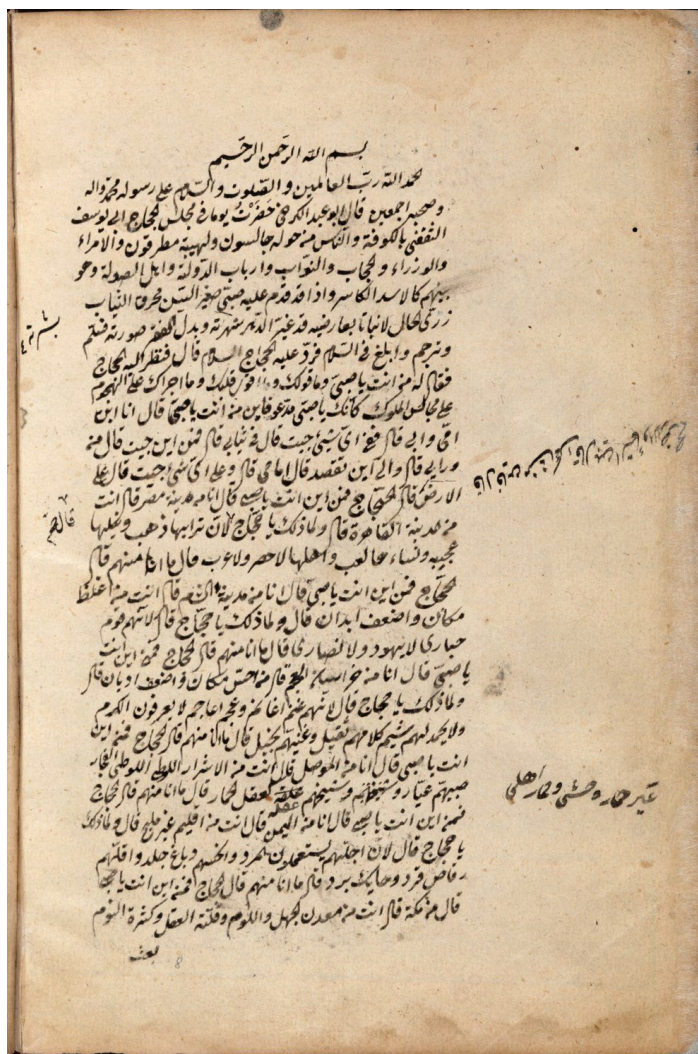


Fig. 1. Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387, fol. 57b

²¹ Ms. Berlin We. 1766 *Hādihī masā'il al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī wa mā waqa'a baynahu wa bayna 'l-Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn ibn Sayyidnā 'l-Ḥusayn*. [These are the questions of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī and what occurred between him and Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn ibn Sayyidnā 'l-Ḥusayn], see Ahlwardt 1896: 45.

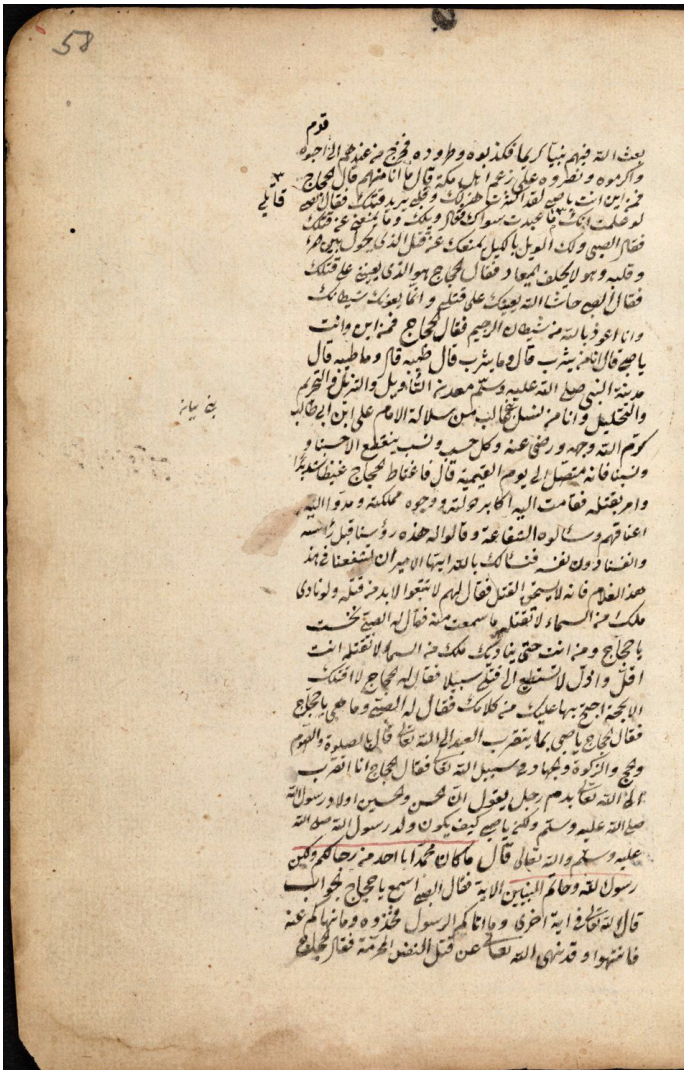


Fig. 2 Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387, fol. 58a

The work is anonymous; according to the catalogue information, the scribe was supposed to have been a certain Šālih ibn al-Ḥājǧ ‘Alī, who had written down the text in 1191AH/1777 on quite thick and occasionally stained yellow paper in a somewhat regular cursive *nasta‘līq* script. Some parts of the text were underlined by red colour; this was most probably done by a later user as the same practice can be observed in other texts in the convolute volume. On each b-page (verso) of the text, there is a last word (catchword, arab. *ta‘qība*) written horizontally below the last line and repeated as the first word of the following page (a-page, recto) which is marked in the edition by double brackets. The text displays some scribal idiosyncrasies, such as the shape of the final *ya’* with the descender often turned to the right (*al-ya’ ar-rāǧi’a*), the shape of the word *ta‘ālā* after the

word of Allāh with *lām* written above the first two syllables (*taā*), and the occasionally curtailed final *nūn* which alternates with the *nūn* that looks like a semi-circle or bowl, which is a typical feature of the *nasta'liq* script.

THE CONTENT OF THE STORY

At first sight, *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥağğāğ* from Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 presents a witty discourse between the well-known Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf and a young man, who is apparently from a Shī'a background, at the governor's council (*majlis*) in al-Kūfa. The narrative form of a test or competition through a long series of questions and answers was not confined to Arabic high and popular literature²² and can also be found in Persian,²³ Latin, Greek, and Spanish literature.²⁴ The polemic between the protagonists is far from innocent as they open various important religious topics.²⁵ Nevertheless, this story shows that debates about religious issues could easily turn into either serious punishment, due to the seemingly rude behaviour of the protagonist, or into some form of entertainment. The young man gives answers in a rather bold and courageous manner which is improper for his age and social position; he even dares to show a kind of intellectual superiority over the governor. Some of al-Ḥajjāj's questions concern particular Qur'ānic verses,²⁶ and the young man's bold answers include direct quotations from al-Qur'ān as well as allusions to sacred texts and pieces of poetry. All of this is intermingled with seemingly irrelevant and amusing pieces of information from daily life which occasionally drift into embarrassing topics that concern sexual matters and women. The language, influenced by a rhymed prose *saj'*, also varies from being highly formal to being somewhat colloquial. The young man's answers evoke Shī'ism, and the titles of several other manuscripts with similar stories make it clear that al-Ḥajjāj's opponent in debate could represent an important Shī'a personality: either Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the

²² For high literature, see the dialogue of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf and Yahyā ibn Yamar in Ibn Khallikān 1871: Vol. IV, 60–61. For popular literature, see 'Abu al-Husn and His Slave Girl Tawaddud' from *A Plain and Literal Translation of The Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entitled as The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* 1888, Vol. 5: 189–145. Elsewhere this tale is also known simply as 'The Tale of Tawaddud'. It is a long and unique narrative which tells of a brilliant slave girl who is put into a disputation (*munāẓara*) with ten eminent scholars of Hārūn ar-Rashīd's court. The link cannot remain unnoticed as a lot of questions and answers, especially those that concern the knowledge of al-Qur'ān, are identical with the passages in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387.

²³ Cf. *Risālah-i Ḥusniyah* [Ḥusniyah's Treatise], the story of a scholarly Shī'i slave girl and former student of the sixth Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq (d. 765), who debates the Sunni scholars of the fifth 'Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd on religious law and roundly defeats them all. The link between this narrative and 'The Tale of Tawaddud' is apparent. The comparison of a portion of the two tales illustrates a shared framework to each story as well as an ideological common ground between them (Stanfield-Johnson 2017: 159).

²⁴ Cf. Talmon 1999: 120–127.

²⁵ Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf was widely known for his eloquence. Muslim sources record countless references to his public addresses from the pulpit, for more, see Klasová 2018: 199.

²⁶ This may in a way reflect the fact that the codification of the Qur'ān and the related reform of the Arabic script was ascribed to al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. In Muslim sources, he is presented as the initiator of the 'second *maṣāḥif* project', which was decisive for the consolidation of the 'Uthmānic text. For Muslim accounts of the Qur'ānic codification and al-Ḥajjāj's role therein, see Hamdan 2010: 795–836.



fifth Imām in Shī'a Islam, or Zayn al-Ābidīn, the fourth Imām in Shī'a Islam,²⁷ which would give the narrative quite a different perspective.²⁸

The Shī'a affiliation of the young man is alluded to several times in the text, such as in this utterance: 'I am from the descendants of the Ghālib tribe, from the lineage of al-Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib' (*Anā min nasl banī Ghālib min sulālat al-Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*).²⁹

Al-Ḥajjāj played a significant role in the establishment of the Umayyad government, and he was well known for his hostile attitude to Shī'a and to all anti-Umayyad influences such as al-Khārijīya.³⁰ In accordance with this stance, the governor in the narrative does not hide his hostile attitude to Shī'a leaders: 'I draw near to Almighty God with the blood the man who declares that al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were the sons and successors of the Prophet of God' (*Anā aqtarib ilā 'llāh ta'ālā bi dam rajul yaqūl inna 'l-Ḥasan wa 'l-Ḥusayn awlād rasūl 'llāh*).³¹

The story of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 goes as follows: at an assembly of notables held by al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of al-Kūfa, a strange youth comes forward. The interrogative discussion between him and al-Ḥajjāj over the young man's identity follows with al-Ḥajjāj's apparent intention to disrespect his background. The young man answers in a witty and wise manner. Other questions quickly follow and include a discussion about the well-known peculiarities of various Islamic regions and cities such as Cairo, Khurāsān, al-Yaman, Mecca, and Medina. Finally, the young man claims to be a descendant of the fourth Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Al-Ḥajjāj wants to have him executed for his apparent impudence, but the notables intervene. Al-Ḥajjāj then declares that he will not kill him unless the young man gives him a reason to do so by giving improper answers to his questions. Then he interrogates the young man about his faith. When the young man insults him again, al-Ḥajjāj wants to have him killed immediately; however, the notables stop him. Then the young man is interrogated about the Qur'ān, women, physiology, agriculture, and poetry, and the conversation even drifts into sexual matters. Al-Ḥajjāj is impressed by his knowledge and offers him three gifts: a purse with money, a noble horse, and a beautiful girl. Al-Ḥajjāj secretly intends to kill him for preferring mundane items if he chooses the money and for lasciviousness if he chooses the girl. Only by choosing the horse would the young man prove to be brave and thus deserve not to be slain. The young man makes the right choice, ends up actually receiving all three gifts, and is allowed to leave the assembly.³²

THE EDITION OF MS. BAŠAGIĆ TF 136 NO. 387

The edition of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 needs a brief introductory explanation. *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥağğāğ* evidently straddles the borderline between high and popular Arabic literature. It could

²⁷ Cf. Ms. Berlin Pm. 340 entitled *Hikāyat al-Ḥajjāj ath-Thaqafī ma'a Muḥammad al-Bāqir* [Story of al-Ḥajjāj ath-Thaqafī with Muḥammad al-Bāqir] and Ms. Berlin We. 1766 entitled *Hādhihi masāyil al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī wa mā waqa'a baynahu wa bayna 'l-Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn ibn Sayyidnā 'l-Ḥusayn*. [These are questions of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī and what occurred between him and Imām Zayn al-Ābidīn ibn Sayyidnā 'l-Ḥusayn] and others. Ahlwardt 1896: 45–47.

²⁸ The Umayyads, represented by al-Ḥajjāj, understood their political and religious authority as coming directly from God, and they perceived themselves as the inheritors of prophethood.

²⁹ Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58a, line 11.

³⁰ For more, see Dietrich 1986: 39–43.

³¹ Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58a, lines 24–25.

³² Cf. Marzolph; Van Leeuwen; Wassouf 2004: 199.



be seen as a Middle Arabic text in its moderate use of certain dialecticisms and features common to Middle Arabic.³³ On the other hand, the scribe makes extensive use of stylistic and formulaic devices borrowed from Classical Arabic.

In the following edition, the original text has been rendered as faithfully as possible, including all orthographic and linguistic peculiarities, regardless of how insignificant or incomprehensible they might seem, in order to authentically preserve the scribal practices, including apparent instances of confusion in diacritics (mainly missing diacritic points).³⁴ After careful study, it is evident that the text contains a certain amount of deviation from the norms of Classical Arabic that were common and typical for many compiled narrative texts from a popular background:

- There are numerous examples of non-classical writing of the *hamza*. It often disappears, especially at the beginning of words as well as elsewhere, and it is replaced by the glide *yā'* when *yā'* is its original *kursī* (e.g. حيت 'I came', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 57b, lines 11 and 12; حايك البرد 'a weaver of the coats', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 57b, line 26) which reflect a process of colloquialization. An interesting example is the replacement of the *hamza* with *yā'* in the case of the elative (e.g. ومن اشيم العرب 'and who is the most unfortunate of Arabs', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58b, line 7).
- There are instances when the *hamza* is clearly written (e.g. خذ ما شئت منهم 'take what you desire from them', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 60b, line 22), although this is sometimes done incorrectly (e.g. سنلوه 'they asked him', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58b, line 10). There is an instance when the *hamza* is indicated above its *kursī* with the dots of *yā'* (e.g. الملائكة 'angels', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58b, line 26), which also reflects a process of colloquialization.³⁵
- Occasionally, *tā' mabsūṭa* is used instead of *tā' marbūṭa* (e.g. سورت and سورة, Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 59b, line 18; فلعنن الله على الخوان, 'God's curse be upon the traitors', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 61a, line 12).
- *Alif maqṣūra* frequently interchanges with the letter *yā'* and vice versa (e.g. من وراي 'from behind', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 57b, line 12).
- A colloquial influence can be seen in the phrase وكان لمدينة الحجاج بابين 'and the city of al-Ḥajjāj had two gates' (Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 61a, lines 4–5) in which the word بابين in Classical Arabic would require a nominative كان لمدينة الحجاج بابان.
- Occasionally, an *alif* replaces *tā' marbūṭa* (e.g. زردية instead of زردية 'a coat of mail', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 60b, line 17, and صينيا instead of صينية 'a large round metal plate', Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 60b, line 16).

No attempt has been made to conform these features to their classical usage. The sporadic vocalization (e.g. حَضَرْتُ, Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 57b, line 3) is preserved in the edition, including many inconsistently applied instances of *shadda*. Each numbered line of the edition corresponds to the line of the text in the manuscript. Traces of careless writing and the most apparent scribal errors are occasionally amended at the foot of the page, especially where the

³³ See the abundant literature on 'Middle Arabic'. Out of numerous studies, Blau 1966 and Lentin 2003: 99–111 are particularly worthy of mention. For a brief overview of the topic and basic sources, see Lentin 2008: 215–224; for a thorough bibliography, see Lentin 2022. For the specific features in the works of Arabic popular literature, see e.g. Halfants 2007 and Bellino 2008.

³⁴ On the issue of the edition of Middle Arabic texts, see Den Heijer 2012: 18–19; Lentin 2012: 207; Gažáková 2015: 401–402.

³⁵ Cf. Blau 1966–1967: 84.



meaning is disputed. If the scribe made a mistake, he just crossed out the incorrect word and this is marked as such in the edition (e.g. *السمع* Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 59b, line 24). The text has several omissions (*suqūṭ*) of whole phrases, which were added quite carelessly by the scribe in the outer and inner margins of the folio (sometimes in an upside-down manner) or above the words (if it was only a minor omission, e.g. the inserted word *قال* Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 59b, line 25). If the corrections were in the margin, the scribe usually left marks in the body of the text where they were supposed to fit, and these passages are directly included in the edition and are marked by square brackets ([]). An uncertain reading with an estimated solution is indicated by regular brackets and a question mark (?).

Our text contains many, often fragmentary, quotations from the Qurʾān which are identified, specified, and quoted fully in the footnotes of the edition. In Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387, the Qurʾānic verses lack vocalization and are not accompanied by the usual ceremony. The quoted verses are often incomplete; however, it is possible that the reader was expected to know the content of the whole verse. Some verses which are quoted fully in Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 appear in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 in a shortened form, e.g. al-Qurʾān 2:164; Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 59a, lines 9–10. The Qurʾānic verses give the conversation between the governor and young man a more scholarly tone; however, the dialogues become less comprehensible for those unfamiliar with al-Qurʾān.³⁶ The occasional insertions of poetry are not graphically distinguished.

In addition, al-Ḥajjāj's questions are introduced in a different order in different manuscript versions and the texts use different synonyms, e.g. *ablah* 'stupid' (Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387: fol. 58b, line 15) compared to *qalīl al-aql* 'of little brain' (Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 111, lines 1–2). This is a common trace of the 'fluidity' of the Arabic narrative tradition as each scribe allowed himself the freedom to re-edit, amend, reformulate, and correct the original text according to his own tastes and circumstances;³⁷ therefore, no particular attention is paid to this matter. Both versions of the story in Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 and Ms. King Saud University No. 218 have several passages of poetry; however, the large poem about women's beauty in the different periods of life and the poetry that the young man exchanges with the slave girl are missing in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387.³⁸

³⁶ This incomprehensibility often results in the Islamic Holy Book being viewed as a miraculous and divine revelation whose proper understanding belongs solely to God. The (in)completeness of Qurʾānic quotations depends on whether scribes allowed themselves to select only the semantically most relevant parts of the verse for the given context, or whether they considered it more appropriate to keep the verses in full. The use of Qurʾānic verses to support a statement may be aimed at increasing the value of the work, see Lacináková 2020: 217, refs. 115 and 116.

³⁷ Fluidity characterizes the manuscript transmission of many genres of popular Arabic literature, see Gažáková 2015: 397–402.

³⁸ Cf. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 116 lines 12–fol. 117 (complete); fol. 119b, lines 1–5; fol. 119b, lines 7–11. Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 4, lines 5–13; fol. 5a, lines 4–8 and lines 8–10.



The beginning of the text (fol. 57b):

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. الحمد لله رب العالمين³⁹ والصلوات⁴⁰ على رسوله محمد وآله
3. وصحبه اجمعين قال ابو عبد الكرخي خُصِرْتُ يوماً في مجلس الحجاج ابي يوسف
4. النخعي⁴¹ بالكوفة والناس من حوله جالسون لهيبته مطرقون والامراء
5. والوزراء والحجاب والنواب وارباب الدولة واهل الصولة وهو
6. بينهم كالاسد الكاسر واذا قد قدم عليه صبي صغير السن محرق الثياب
7. زرى الحال لا نباتاً بعارضيه قد غيّر الدهر (بشرته)⁴² وبذل الفقر صورته فسلم
8. وترجم وابلع في السلام فردّ عليه الحجاج السلام قال فنظر اليه الحجاج
9. فقال له من انت يا صبي وما قولك وما اقوى قلبك وما اجرارك على الهجوم
10. على مجالس الملوك كائنك يا صبي مدعو فابن من انت يا صبي قال انا ابن
11. امي وابي قال ففي ائ شيى جيت قال في ثيابي قال فمن اين جيت قال من
12. ورايى قال والى اين تقصد قال امامي قال وعلى ائ شيى جيت قال على
13. الارض [قال اين منشائك قال بين السماء والارض]⁴³ قال الحجاج فمن اين انت يا صبي قال انا من مدينة مصر قال
14. من مدينة القاهرة قال ولما ذلك يا حجاج [قال]⁴⁴ لان ترابها ذهب ونيلها
15. عجيبة ونساءها لعب واهلها لاحصر⁴⁵ ولا عرب قال ما انا منهم قال
16. الحجاج ومن اين انت يا صبي قال انا من مدينة الشام قال انت من اغلط
17. مكان واضعف ابدان قال ولما ذلك يا حجاج قال لآتهم قوم
18. حبارى⁴⁶ لا يهود ولا نصارى قال ما انا منهم قال الحجاج فمن اين انت
19. يا صبي قال انا من خراسان العجم قال من اخسن مكان واضعف اديان⁴⁷ قال
20. ولما ذلك يا حجاج قال لآتهم غنم اغانم وعجم اعاجم لا يعرفون الكرم
21. ولا يحمد لهم شيم كلامهم ثقيل وغنيهم بخيل قال ما انا منهم قال الحجاج فمن اين
22. انت يا صبي قال انا من الموصل قال انت من الاشرار اللوطى اللوطى الفجار
23. صبيهم عيارو (شيخهم)⁴⁸؟ شيخهم⁴⁹ عقله كعقل الحمار [غير حمار وحشى وحمار اهلى]⁵⁰ قال ما انا منهم قال الحجاج
24. فمن اين انت يا صبي قال انا من اليمن قال انت من اقليم غير مليح قال ولما ذلك
25. يا حجاج قال لان اجلهم يستعملون (المردد) واخسهم دباغ جلد واقلهم
26. رقاص فرد وحايك برد قال ما انا منهم قال الحجاج فمن اين انت يا صبي
27. قال من مكة قال انت من معدن الجهل واللوم وقتلت العقل وكثرة النوم ((بعث))

³⁹ *Al-Qur'ān* 1:2.

⁴⁰ An archaic spelling of صلاة cf. *al-Qur'ān*, 24:58 written with *tā' mabsūta*.

⁴¹ الحجاج يوسف النخعي, cf. Ms. King Saud University No. 218: الحجاج بن يوسف.

⁴² The word is written in a rather unclear manner but is corrected in the margin. Cf. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 107b, line 1: *غير الدهر بشرته*: 'his fate changed his complexion.' Cf. Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 1b, line 4: *غير الدهر شيرته* which does not make much sense.

⁴³ The passage is written in an upside-down manner in the margin as an omission.

⁴⁴ The word is written in the margin as an omission.

⁴⁵ Possibly *حضر* cf. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 107b, line 13, and Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 1b, line 6.

⁴⁶ *حبارى* may have the meaning 'of mixed race'; however, Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 108a, line 1 offers the word *حباري*, as does Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 1b, line 7, with the clear vocalization *حَبَارِي*, which means 'confused' and 'perplexed'.

⁴⁷ Here we would expect either the indefinite singular – *أضعف دين* or the determined plural *أضعف الأديان*. The non-classical alternative *أضعف اديان* came into being probably under the influence of the rhymed prose *saj'*.

⁴⁸ The word marked in the edition with the question mark could stand for *شيخهم* 'their old man', which the scribe crossed out and rewrote. See Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 1b, line 12: *شيخهم عقله عقل حمار*.

⁴⁹ Sic.

⁵⁰ This passage is written in the outer margin as an omission or explanation.



Folio 58a:

1. بعث الله فيهم نبيا كريما فكذبوه وطردوه فخرج من عندهم الى [قوم]⁵¹ احبوه
2. واکرموه ونصروه على رغم اهل مكة قال ما انا منهم قال الحجاج
3. فمن اين انت يا صبي لقد اكثرت هزلك وقلبي يريد قتلك فقال الصبي
4. لو علمت انك [قاتلي]⁵² ما عبدت سواك فقال ويلك وما يمنعني عن قتلك
5. فقال الصبي ولك الويل بالكيل يمنعه عن قتل الذي يحول بين المرء
6. وقلبه⁵³ وهو لا يحلف الميعاد⁵⁴ فقال الحجاج هو الذي يعينني على قتلك
7. فقال الصبي حاشا الله يعينك على قتلي وانما يعونك شيطانك
8. وانا اعوذ بالله من شيطان⁵⁵ الرجيم فقال الحجاج فمن اين وانت
9. يا صبي قال انا من يثرب قال وما يثرب قال طيبة قال وما طيبة قال
10. مدينة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم معدن التأويل والتنزيل والتحريم
11. والتحليل وانا من نسل [بنى]⁵⁶ غالب من سلالة الامام على ابن ابي طالب
12. كرم الله وجهه ورضى عنه وكل حسب ونسب ينقطع الا حسينا و
13. ونسبنا فانه متصل الى يوم القيمة⁵⁷ قال فاغتاظ⁵⁸ الحجاج غيظا شديدا
14. وامر بقتله فقامت اليه اكابر دولته ووجوه مملكته ومدوا اليه
15. اعناقهم وسألوه الشفاعة وقالوا له هذه رؤسنا⁵⁹ قيل رأسه
16. وانفسنا دون نفسه فنسألك بالله ايها الامير ان تشفعنا في هذا⁶⁰
17. هذا الغلام فانه لا يستحق القتل فقال لهم لا تتعبوا لا بد من قتله ولو نادى
18. ملك من السماء لا تقتله ما سمعت منه فقال له الصبي (نخست؟)⁶¹
19. يا حجاج ومن انت حتى يناديك ملك من السماء لا تقتله انت
20. اقل واذل لا تستطيع الى قتلي سبيلا فقال له الحجاج لا اقتلك
21. الا بجهة احتج بها عليك من كلامك فقال له الصبي وما هي يا حجاج
22. فقال الحجاج يا صبي بما يتقرب العبد الى الله تعالى قال بالصلوة والصوم
23. والحج والزكاة⁶² والجهاد في سبيل الله تعالى فقال الحجاج انا اتقرب
24. الى الله تعالى بدم رجل يقول ان الحسن والحسين اولاد رسول الله
25. صلى الله عليه وسلم ولكنه يا صبي كيف يكون ولد رسول الله صلى الله
26. عليه وسلم والله تعالى قال ما كان محمد ابا احد من رجالكم ولكن

⁵¹ The word is written in the margin as an omission.

⁵² The word is written in the outer margin as an omission.

⁵³ *Al-Qur'ān*, 8:24, incomplete.

⁵⁴ *Al-Qur'ān*, 3:9, incomplete.

⁵⁵ Possibly a scribal error for الشيطان. It can be, however, also viewed as a particular construction found in the dialects as well as in the Classical Arabic e.g. بيت المقدس cf. Wright II: 233–234 or *Tell el-Kibir* cf. Grotzfeld 2000: 7–14.

⁵⁶ The word is written in the outer margin as an omission.

⁵⁷ القيامة.

⁵⁸ اغتاظ.

⁵⁹ رؤوسنا.

⁶⁰ Sic.

⁶¹ The word seems to be written in this manner; however, see Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 109b, line 4 تخسا Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 2a, line 9: تخسا with the clearly written *hamza*. For a possible meaning, see Dozy 1927: 370 خسى sans hamza chez le vulgaire être frustré, for نخس cf. Lane 1863–1893: 2777 نخسه 'he goaded him; he pricked him like a beast with a stick'.

⁶² An archaic spelling of زكاة cf. *al-Qur'ān*, 2:43.



27. رسول الله وخاتم النبيين⁶³ الآية⁶⁴ فقال الصبي اسمع يا حجاج الجواب
 28. قال الله تعالى في آية أخرى وما اتاكم الرسول فخذوه وما نهاكم عنه
 29. فانتهوا⁶⁵ وقد نهى الله تعالى عن قتل النفس المحرمة فقال الحجاج

Folio 58b:

1. صدقت يا صبي ولكن يا صبي فاخبرني ما افضل العرب واطيبها و
2. وازكاها قال قريش قال ولما ذلك قال لأن نبيا⁶⁶ محمدا صلى
3. صلى الله عليه وسلم منهم قال فمن اشجع العرب وافرסה و
4. وافرهما حربا قال بنى هاشم ولما ذلك قال لأن جدى الامام
5. علي بن ابي طالب منهم قال فمن اكرم العرب وافرهما لل
6. للضيف قال بنى طي قال ولما ذلك قال لأن خاتم طي⁶⁷ منهم
7. قال ومن اشيم العرب وابخلها واقلها خيرا واكثرها شرا قال
8. بنى ثقف قال ولما ذلك لأنك يا حجاج منهم قال فاعتاظ
9. الحجاج غيظا شديدا وامر بقتله فقامت اليه اكابر دولته
10. وسئلوه⁶⁸ الشفاعة فقبل الشفاعة وعفى عنه ثم قال الحجاج
11. يا صبي فاخبرني عن هذا الجد الذي في السما هل هو ذكر ام
12. انثى واراد ان يقطعه عن الكلام فقال الصبي يا حجاج اكشف
13. لى عن ذنبيه حتى اقول لك عنه ما هو فضحك الحجاج ثم قال الحجاج
14. يا صبي فاخبرني فيما ترعى قرون الجمال قال في اوراق الحجارة
15. فقال الحجاج يا ابله وهل للحجارة ورق فقال الصبي يا ابله وهل
16. للجمال قرون فقال الحجاج يا صبي كأنك عاشق قال نعم وفي الشق⁷⁰
17. غارق قال ولمن تعشق قال اعشق ربى الذى ارجوه ان
18. يفرج كربى ويخلصنى منك اليوم يا حجاج فقال الحجاج وانت
19. تعرف ربك قال نعم وبما عرفت ربك قال بكتابه المنزل على نبيه
20. المرسل قال وانت تحفظ القرآن قال والقران هارب متى
21. حتى احفظه فهل استحكمته قال قد انزله الله كتابا محكما⁷¹ فقال الحجاج
22. فهل قرأته وعلمت ما فيه قال نعم فقال الحجاج يا صبي (ان؟)⁷² كنت
23. قرأته وعلمت ما فيه فاخبرني عن آية آية فيه اعظم وائى آية
24. فيه احكم وائى آية فيه اعدل وائى آية فيه اخوف وائى آية فيه ارجى
25. وائى آية فيه صدقوا فيها اليهود والنصارى وائى آية قالها الله تعالى
26. حالصا⁷³ لنفسه وائى آية قالها الملائكة وائى آية قالها الانبياء و
27. وائى آية قالها اهل الجنة وائى آية قالها اهل النار وائى آية فيها
28. عشر آيات بينات وائى آية قالها ابليس لعنه الله فقال الصبي ((اسمع))

⁶³ *al-Qur'ān*, 33:40, incomplete. مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

⁶⁴ The word *al-āya* indicates that the verses of *al-Qur'ān* were quoted.

⁶⁵ *al-Qur'ān*, 59:7, incomplete. وَمَا اتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

⁶⁶ نبينا

⁶⁷ Sic.

⁶⁸ الطائى a ruling prince and poet of the Tayyi' tribe. See Van Arendonk 1986: 274–275.

⁶⁹ سألوه

⁷⁰ العشق

⁷¹ This passage evidently alludes to *al-Qur'ān* 3:7 مُحَمَّدًا مِّنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ هُوَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ مِّنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ

⁷² Ms. Bodl. Orient 553: fol. 111a, line 11.

⁷³ خالصا



Folio 59a:

1. اسمع يا حجاج الجواب بعون الله الملك الوهاب قال اما اعظم
2. اية في كتاب الله تعالى فهي اية الكرسي⁷⁴ واما احكم اية فهي قوله
3. تعالى ان الله يامر بالعدل والاحسان⁷⁵ واما عدل⁷⁶ اية فهي قوله
4. تعالى فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة خيرا يره ومن يعمل مثقال ذرة شرا يره⁷⁷
5. واما اخوف اية فهي قوله تعالى ابطع كل امرئ منهم ان يدخل
6. جنة نعيم⁷⁸ واما ارجى اية فهي قوله تعالى قل يا عبادي الذين اسرفوا
7. على انفسهم لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله ان الله يغفر الذنوب جميعا انه
8. هو الغفور الرحيم⁷⁹ واما الآية التي فيها عشر آيات بينات فهي قوله
9. تعالى ان في خلق السموات والارض واختلاف الليل والنهار
10. والفلك التي تجري في البحر بما ينفع الناس⁸⁰ واما الآية التي صدقوا فيها
11. اليهود والنصارى فهي قوله تعالى وقالت اليهود ليست النصارى
12. على شيء وقالت النصارى ليست اليهود على شيء⁸¹ صدقوا جميعا
13. وليسهم على شيء واما الآية التي قالها الله تعالى خالصا لنفسه
14. فهي قوله تعالى وما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدون⁸² واما
15. الآية التي قالها الملائكة فهي قوله تعالى سبحانك لا علم لنا الا ما
16. ما علمتنا انك انت العليم الحكيم⁸³ واما الآية التي قالها الانبياء
17. فهي قوله تعالى وما كان ان (يأتيتكم؟)⁸⁴ بآية الا باذن الله وعلى الله
18. فليتوكل المؤمنون⁸⁵ واما الآية التي فيها قول اهل الجنة فهي قوله تعالى
19. وقالو الحمد لله الذي اذهب عنا الحزن ان ربنا لغفور شكور⁸⁶
20. واما الآية التي فيها قول اهل النار فهي قوله تعالى ربنا اخرجنا منها فان
21. عدنا فاننا ظالمون⁸⁷ واما الآية التي فيها قول ابليس لعنه الله فهي
22. قوله تعالى فيعزبك لاغويتهم اجمعين الا عبادك منهم المخلصين⁸⁸
23. قال فعند ذلك قال الحجاج سبحان الله وبجمده يؤتى الحكمة من
24. من يشاء⁸⁹ فما رايت صبيا اعطا⁹⁰ الله تعالى العقل والعلم والمعرفة
25. على صغر سنه الا انت يا صبي فقال الصبي انا من اهل ذلك
26. يا حجاج فقال الحجاج يا صبي فاخبرني عن ابن آدم ما يضره و ما ينفعه
27. فقال الصبي نعم يا حجاج انت والحاضرين من اراد البقاء ولا يبقى
28. الا الله تعالى فليباكر بالغداء ولا يتمسى بالعشاء ويخفف في الصيف

⁷⁴ *Al-Qur'ān*, Āyat al-Kursī – The Throne Verse 2:255.

⁷⁵ *al-Qur'ān*, 16:90, incomplete.

⁷⁶ اعدل.

⁷⁷ *al-Qur'ān*, 99:7–8.

⁷⁸ *al-Qur'ān*, 70:38.

⁷⁹ *al-Qur'ān*, 39:53.

⁸⁰ *al-Qur'ān*, 2:164, incomplete.

⁸¹ *al-Qur'ān*, 2:113, incomplete.

⁸² *al-Qur'ān*, 51:56.

⁸³ *al-Qur'ān*, 2:32.

⁸⁴ Sic. A scribal error for يأتيتكم.

⁸⁵ *al-Qur'ān*, 14:11, incomplete and distorted.

⁸⁶ *al-Qur'ān*, 35:34.

⁸⁷ *al-Qur'ān*, 23:107.

⁸⁸ *al-Qur'ān*, 38:82–83.

⁸⁹ *al-Qur'ān*, 2:269, incomplete.

⁹⁰ اعطاه.



Folio 59b:

1. الرداء ويثقل الرأس في الشتاء ويحفظ الرأس وما حول والجوف
2. وما وعى ومن ابتدئ في أول أكله بالملح فانه يصرف عنه اثنين
3. وسبعين نوعا من البلاء ومن افطر كل يوم على سبع زبيبات⁹¹
4. حمر لم ير في جسده ما يكرهه ومن افطر كل يوم على ثلاث⁹² تمرات
5. قتلت كل دودة في بطنه ومن أكثر من اكل لحم الصديد والسمك
6. يضعف الحبل ويقف الجماع وعليك يا حجاج بالمرهم الأكبر فقال
7. وما هو قال الكسرة اليابسة على الرقيق فانها يخلو⁹³ جميع ما على
8. فم المعدة من البلغم واياك ولحم البقر فانه داء ولبنها دواء
9. سمنها شفاء وجلدها حذاء⁹⁴ وعليك يا حجاج ولا تجامع
10. في الحمام فانه يورث الارتعاش ولا تخرج دما في الحمام فانه
11. يضعف الحبل ولا تنظر الى جامات الحمام فانه يورث غشاوة
12. في البصر ولا تجامع وانت شبعان ولا وانت جيعان ولا وانت
13. سكران ولا وانت غضبان ولا تحت شجرة مثمرة ولا تجامع
14. عجوزا فانه تأخذ منك ولا تعطيك وتختم بالعقيق فانه امان
15. من الفقر والنظر الى المصحف كل يوم يريد في الرزق⁹⁵ وانظر الى
16. الماء الجارى يحذ البصر وانظر الى وجه والدين لانه عبادة ولا تتكح وانت
17. متكئ على جنبك فانه يورث عرق الانثى واذا ضللت في طريق
18. فاقراء سورة تبارك واذا عطشت فاقراء سورت
19. يس⁹⁶ تروى باذ⁹⁷ الله تعالى فقال الحجاج لله درك يا صبي فقد
20. اغرقتني في بحر علمك يا صبي ولكن ياصبي فاخبرني فاين موضع
21. الحشمة منك قال في العينين قال فاين موضع العقل منك
22. قال في الدماغ قال فاين موضع الخير منك قال في اللسان قال
23. فاين موضع السمع منك قال في الاذنين قال فاين موضع
24. السمع⁹⁸ الشم منك قال في الانف قال فاين موضع الذوق
25. منك [قال] في [الحلق] قال فاين موضع الفرح منك قال في القلب قال فاين
26. موضع الحزن منك قال في النفس قال فاين موضع الغضب
27. منك قال في الكبد قال فاين موضع الضحك منك قال
28. الطحال⁹⁹ قال فاين موضع القوة منك قال في الكتفين ((قال))

Folio 60a:

1. قال فاين موضع الضعف منك قال في الساقين قال فعند ذلك
2. قال الحجاج يا صبي اني ارى عندك من كل شيء فتأ فاخبرني عن
3. الزرع قال اجوده ما غلظت سنبلته وكبرت فصلته¹⁰⁰ وجفت

⁹¹ raisins. See both Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 2b, line 11, as well as Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 113a, line 6.

⁹² ثلاث.

⁹³ تجلو.

⁹⁴ حذاء.

⁹⁵ Insufficient diacritics for يزيد في الرزق, 'increase you means of living', cf. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 113b, line 15.

⁹⁶ Ya'sin, the 36th sūra of *al-Qur'an*.

⁹⁷ ياذن.

⁹⁸ Sic.

⁹⁹ The preposition *fi* 'in' is missing. Cf. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 114b, line 9: في الطحال.

¹⁰⁰ Possibly فصلته.



4. حبيته قال فما تقول في النخل قال أجوده ما غلظ جناه ودنا
 5. ودنا (انباعه؟)¹⁰¹ وصغر في لحم نواه قال فما تقول في الكرم قال أجوده
 6. ما غلظ عوده وكبر عنقوده قال فما تقول في السماء قال هي
 7. مدّ البصر ومسكن النجوم والشمس والقمر قائمة بغير عمد مظلة لمن
 8. تحتها من العدد قال فما تقول في الأرض قال هي واسعة الطول
 9. والعرض قال فما تقول في المطر قال أجوده ما ملأ الحفيرة وفاض
 10. في الأودية والانهار قال فعنده فعنده¹⁰² ذلك قال الحجاج ياصبي
 11. فاخبرني أي النساء احسن والذ¹⁰³ ذات الدلال الكامل والجمال الفاضل
 12. والنطق قاتل¹⁰⁴ التي ير هج جنسها عجيبة من تكوينها من ملأ عيناه منها
 13. اورثته الكمد التي قعد نهدها وكبر كفلها واحمرت حنيتها¹⁰⁵ و
 14. واسودت عينها وتكلمت شقتها التي لو نظرت الى السماء
 15. لاعشب الصفا ولو نظرت الى الأرض لامطر ثغرها لولوء لم يتقرب
 16. وريقها من الزلال اعذب التي ليس لها في الجمال نظير ولا لها في الحسن
 17. حطير¹⁰⁶ قرة عين الصغير والكبير كما قال فيها بعض واصفها هذه
 18. الابيات شعر قال فعند ذلك¹⁰⁷ الحجاج احسنت واجملت يا صبي
 19. ما تقول في جارية عمرها عشر سنين قال نزهة للناظرين قال
 20. وبنت العشرين قال قرة عين الناظرين قال وبنت الثلاثين
 21. قال لذة للمتمتعين قال وبنت الاربعين قال ذات لحم وشحم
 22. ولبن قال وبنت الخمسين قال ذات اولاد وبين¹⁰⁸ قال وبنت
 23. الستين قال ابي عنها السائلون قال وبنت السبعين قال
 24. عجوز في الغابرين قال وبنت الثمانين قال لا تصلح لا للعالم ولا
 25. للدين قال وبيت التسعين قال لا تسال عن اصحاب الجحيم قال
 26. وبنت المائة قال اعوذ بالله من شيطان¹⁰⁹ الرجيم قال فعند ذلك ضحك
 27. الحجاج والحاضرون ثم قال الحجاج يا صبي من أول من نطق بالشعر

Folio 60b:

1. فقال الصبي يا حجاج اول من نطق بالشعر ابونا آدم عليه السلام يقول
 2. هذه الابيات تغيرت البلاد ومن عليها فوجه الأرض مسود قبيح
 3. تغير كل ذي طعم ولون وقيل بشاشة الوجه المليح ايا هابيل
 4. تقتل فاني عليك اليوم منكيب قريح قاتل قابيل هابيل اخاه
 5. فوا اسفا على الوجه المليح فقال الحجاج يا صبي فمن اجابه على
 6. شعره قال ابليس لعنه الله حيث يقول هذه الابيات تنوح
 7. على البلاد وساكنيها وفي الفردوس ضاق¹¹⁰ لك الفسيح وكنت
 8. بها وحوى في نعيم من الدنيا وعيشك مستريح فلا زالت مكا

¹⁰¹ Possibly 'a tree whose wood was used in arrow making'. See Wehr 1960: 939 and Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 115a, line 1: ارتفاعه 'whose height is low grown'.

¹⁰² Sic. عند.

¹⁰³ Here the word *qāla* is probably missing. It would indicate that the young man's answer should follow. See Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 115b, line 4.

¹⁰⁴ Missing a definite article for القاتل.

¹⁰⁵ خنيتها.

¹⁰⁶ خطير.

¹⁰⁷ Here the word *qāla* is probably missing. This would stress al-Hajjāj's answer.

¹⁰⁸ A possible scribal error for بنين 'sons'. See Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 116a, line 7.

¹⁰⁹ See the note no. 55.

¹¹⁰ ضاق.



9. مكايدي ومكرى الى ان فاتك العمل الربيح¹¹¹ قال فعند ذلك
 10. قال الحجاج احسنت واجملت يا صبي فاخبرني عن أول بيت قالته
 11. العرب في الكرم فقال الصبي يا حجاج أول بيت قالته العرب في الكرم
 12. قول حاتم طي¹¹² حيث نقول هذا البيت واكرم الضيف حتما حتى
 13. يطرقني قبل العيال عسرى واليسارى¹¹³ قال فعند ذلك قال
 14. الحجاج احسنت واجملت يا صبي فقد وجب حقك علينا لأنك قد
 15. قد اغرقتنا في بحر علمك يا صبي قال ثم ان الحجاج التفت الى بعض حدامه¹¹⁴
 16. وقال لهم اتؤنى الساعة ببدره في (صينيا؟)¹¹⁵ من الذهب الاحمر¹¹⁶ وبدله
 17. من افخر ملابسي وجوادا من احسن حيلي¹¹⁷ بسرج من الذهب وعليه زردية¹¹⁸
 18. ورمح طويل وجارية من احسن جوارى قال ثم اتهم غابوا ساعة
 19. ثم احضروا الجميع الى بين يدي الحجاج فقال الحجاج يا صبي بدره
 20. في (الصنيي؟)¹¹⁹ من الذهب الاحمر وجوادا من احسن خيلي بعدته وجارية
 21. وجارية من احسن جوارى فخذ ما شئت منهم ان شئت الفرس
 22. وما عليها وان شئت البدره الذهب وان شئت الجارية
 23. وقال الحجاج في نفسه ان اخذ البدره الذهب فيكون محب الدنيا
 24. فاقتله وان اخذ الجارية فيكون يحب النساء فاقتله وان اخذ
 25. الفرس وما عليها فيكون شجاعا والشجاع لا يستحق بالقتل قال
 26. فتقدم الغلام واخذ الفرس وما عليها قال وكانت الجارية ((قريبا))

Folio 61a:

1. قريبا من الصبي فغمزته بعينا¹²⁰ وقالت له خذني وخل الجميع قال
 2. لا فقال الحجاج خذ الجميع لا جل¹²¹ الله لك فيهم بركة¹²² فقال
 3. الصبي هاتهم يا حجاج كما اعطيت لا اخلف الله عليك و
 4. ولا جمع بيني وبينك في مثل هذا اليوم مرة اخرى¹²³ قال وكان
 5. لمدينة الحجاج بابين مهلك و باب نجاة فقال الصبي يا
 6. يا حجاج اخرج من هذا الباب او من الباب [او من الاخر قال الحجاج اخرج من هذا الباب]¹²⁴ و اشار الى باب السلامة

¹¹¹ The answer of Iblis is missing in Ms. King Saud University No. 218.

¹¹² A scribal error for حاتم الطائي a ruling prince and poet of the Tayyi' tribe. See Van Arendonk 1986: 274–275.

¹¹³ The reading of this verse is also most probably corrupt, *recte*: عسرى يطرقني قبل العيال على عسري. See al-Mahdi 2009: I. 609, who does not give a precise source to the verses and introduces them only with *qāla ākhar* [another one said]. Ms. King Saud University No. 218: folio 4b, lines 18–19 offers a slightly modified version: واكرم الضيف حتما حين يطرقني قبل عيال على عز وارسل.

¹¹⁴ خدامه.

¹¹⁵ Here the script is not legible, but the word seems to look like صينيا. See Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 118b, line 4 and line 9; possibly it is صينية 'a large round metal plate with raised brim, esp. one made of copper.' See Wehr 1980: 533.

¹¹⁶ الأحمر.

¹¹⁷ خيلي.

¹¹⁸ زردية 'a coat of mail'. See Lane 1863–1893: 1225.

¹¹⁹ See footnote 115.

¹²⁰ بعينها.

¹²¹ جعل. See Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 119b, line 13: جعل.

¹²² See the positive precative sentences (positive wishes) 'أدام الله بقاءك' 'may God perpetuate your existence' and their negative counterparts (negative wishes) present in this text which aim at averting anything undesirable or which are used when cursing, e.g. لا بارك الله فيك 'may not God bless you', Palmer 1874: 170, cf. Badawi, Carter, and Gully 2003: 441.

¹²³ A similar negative wish construction.

¹²⁴ The passage is written in the margin as an omission.



7. قال وخرج فاخذ الصبيّ الجميع وخرج¹²⁵ من الباب الذي اشار
 8. له اليه الحجاج وهو باب السلامة قال فخرج الصبي وراح
 9. الى حال سبيله فقالوا له اكابر دولته يا مولانا كيف انك
 10. اعطيته ولم يكثر خيرك دولته¹²⁶ على باب السلامة فقال
 11. لهم على انه استشار في و المشير امين والامين
 12. لا يكون خوانا فلعت الله على الخوان
 13. فلهذا لا يجوز عليه اللعنة لعلمه و
 14. ولا يجوز عليه الرحمة لظلمه
 15. وهذا ما انتهى الينا
 16. قصة¹²⁷ الحجاج على التمام
 17. والكمال وصلى الله
 18. على سيدنا
 19. محمد وعلى
 20. اله وصحبه
 21. وسلم

TRANSLATION

This section provides a translation of Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 and a necessary commentary. Naturally, the previous Czech and English translations of the story made by Tauer and Burton were consulted, and they are often referred to herein. No attempt was made to preserve the rhymed prose *sajʿ* of the original in the way Tauer and Burton had attempted.¹²⁸ The text in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387 has the form of a prolonged never-ending sentence which represented a common compositional practice of that time. For practical reasons, it is split when necessary into meaningful sentences with the appropriate punctuation. Each replica of the question-and-answer format of the story is preceded by the word *qāla* or *faqāla* ‘he said’, which is the way quotations in Classical Arabic were usually introduced.¹²⁹ Despite the frequency of repetition, this does not present a stylistic problem in Arabic composition. The English translation, on the other hand, requires such repetitions to be limited or replaced. The name of the Umayyad governor appears throughout the translation as al-Ḥajjāj, in contrast to some translators (e.g. Burton) who omit the definite article (al-) after the vocative and the exclamatory particle *yā*.¹³⁰ The catchwords and words that occasionally appear twice – at the end of a line and at the beginning of the following line – are mentioned only once. The names of the historical figures appear in the translation as they are offered in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387. The translation of the Qurʾānic verses was primarily checked against the English translation of M. A. S. Abdel Haleem.¹³¹ If the verse seemed to have been distorted, it was translated according to how it appeared in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No.

¹²⁵ خرج.

¹²⁶ Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 120a, line 8, and Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 5a, line 16: دلّيت ‘advise, inform’.

¹²⁷ The preposition *min* ‘from’ is missing between lines 15 and 16 – من قصة –.

¹²⁸ *Tisíc a jedna noc* (Tauer) 1975: 295–305.

¹²⁹ Badawi, Carter, and Gully 2004: 24.

¹³⁰ See *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 37–60.

¹³¹ *The Qurʾān* 2010.



387. The numbers in the brackets refer to particular lines in the manuscript folio. The additional text was added in order to provide a fluent and comprehensible translation, and it appears in brackets ().

Fol. 57b:

(1) In the name of God the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

(2) All praise is for God, Lord of the worlds, and God's blessings be upon His messenger Muḥammad and His family (3) and all His companions.¹³² Abū al-Karkhī¹³³ narrated: 'One day I was present at the council of al-Ḥajjāj Abī Yūsuf (4) ath-Thaqafi in al-Kūfa, and people were sitting around him and bowing their heads in respect. They were princes, (5) ministers, chamberlains, officers, representatives of the state, and people of the command, and he was (6) among them like a ferocious lion. Suddenly, a young man in ragged clothes came to him. (7) He was in a miserable condition. His cheeks were still hairless, time had changed his complexion, and need had altered his appearance. He greeted (8) him and was eloquent in his salutation. Al-Ḥajjāj responded in kind to the greeting, looked at him, (9) and said: "Who are you, young man? What are you going to say and what strengthened your heart that you dared to storm into (10) the assemblies of kings as if you were invited as a guest? Whose son are you, young man?" "I am (11) the son of my mother and my father." "In what fashion have you come?" He said: "In my clothes." "Where did you come from?" "From (12) behind me." "And where are you heading to?" "In front of me." "And upon which ground have you come?" "On the (13) soil."¹³⁴ "Where is your hometown?" "Between the sky and the ground." Al-Ḥajjāj said: "Where are you from, young man?" "I am from the city of Miṣr." "Are (14) you from Cairo¹³⁵?" "Why are you asking, o al-Ḥajjāj?" "Because the soil there has the price of gold, and the water of the Nile (15) is marvellous. The women are their lovers' toys, and the citizens are neither Bedouins nor settled." "I am not of them." (16) Al-Ḥajjāj asked: "So where are you from, young man?" "I am from the city of Damascus." "So, you are from the rudest of (17) places and the feeblest of races." "Why so, o al-Ḥajjāj?" "Because they are confused folk (18), neither Jewish nor Christian." "I am not of them." Al-Ḥajjāj asked: "So where are (19) you from, young man?" "I am from Persian Khurāsān," he said. "From the lowest place and the most primitive of religions." (20) "Why so, o al-Ḥajjāj?" "Because they are like a flock of sheep, the most Persian of Persians. They do not know generosity (21) and do not praise virtues. Their speech is coarse, and the rich among them are stingy." "I am not of them." Al-Ḥajjāj asked: "So where (22) are you from, young man?" "I am from Mosul." "You are from the filthiest Sodomites, Sodomite adulterers. (23) Their boys are scoundrels and their old men have

¹³² This is a short introductory part of the text which is called a *khuṭba* (exordium). In most instances, it begins with a formulaic doxological statement such as *ḥamdala*, e.g. *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi* 'all praise is for God.' This is usually followed by *ṣalwala* (*taṣliya*) – *ṣallā 'llāhu 'alā Muḥammad* 'God's blessings be upon Muḥammad.'

¹³³ The name of the narrator, Abū 'Abd al-Karkhī, seems to be defective. The word 'Abd (a servant) usually forms a part of a composite Arabic name such as 'Abdallāh (a servant of God). Indeed, both Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 and Ms. King Saud University No. 218 give a full version of the narrator's name as Abū 'Abdallāh al-Karkhī. Al-Karkhī is a nisba related to or coming from a place named al-Karkh, which is historically either the western half of Baghdād or the western shore of the Tigris River as it flows through that city.

¹³⁴ The popular author of the narrative plays with the polysemy of the Arabic prepositions *fī* and *'alā*.

¹³⁵ An interesting anachronism. Cairo was founded in 986, and al-Ḥajjāj died in 714.



donkeys' brains, different from savage donkeys and domestic donkeys."¹³⁶ "I am not of them." Al-Ḥajjāj asked: (24) "So where are you from, young man?" "I am from al-Yaman." "You are from the region that is not agreeable." "Why so, o (25) al-Ḥajjāj?" "Because the noblest of them use beardless boys,¹³⁷ the most contemptible are tanners, and the lowest of them train monkeys to (26) dance and weave coats."¹³⁸ "I am not of them." Al-Ḥajjāj asked: "So where are you from, young man?" (27) "I am from Mecca." "So you are from a mine of ignorance and blame and lack of wisdom and over-abundance in sleep.

Fol. 58a:

(1) God sent them a noble-minded Prophet, they, however, proclaimed him a liar and expelled him. So, he went away from them to the folk that loved him and (2) honoured him and helped him win despite the people of Mecca."¹³⁹ "I am not of them." Al-Ḥajjāj asked: (3) "So where are you from, young man? You are abundant in joking, and my heart wants to kill you." The youth said: (4) "If I had known that you would be my killer, I would not have worshipped anyone other than you." "Woe onto you! What prevents me from killing you?" (5) The young man answered: "Woe onto you by the same measure! You will be hindered by the One who stands between a person and his (6) heart,¹⁴⁰ and He is One who never break His promise."¹⁴¹ Al-Ḥajjāj said: "He will help me kill you." (7) The young man answered: "God forbid that He appoints you to kill me. Rather you are assisted by the Devil, and I (8) seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan."¹⁴² Al-Ḥajjāj asked: "So where are you from, (9) young man?" "I am from Yathrib." "What is Yathrib?"¹⁴³ "It is Ṭayba."¹⁴⁴ "And what is Ṭayba?" (10) "The City of the Prophet, peace be upon him, the mine of exegesis and revelation, prohibition, and (11) permission."¹⁴⁵ I am from the descendants of the Ghālib tribe,¹⁴⁶ from the lineage of al-Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, (12) may God exalt

¹³⁶ The specification of donkeys comes from an explanation in the margin of the original. It does not appear in other available manuscript witnesses.

¹³⁷ Most likely *murd* is a plural from of *amrad* (أَمْرَدٌ), which can be translated as 'a youth, young man, as yet beardless'. See Lane 1885: 2706. Also see a similar solution in the Czech translation 'holobriadok', which was preferred by Tauer 1975: 296.

¹³⁸ The translation is an approximation. In the original, there is *burd* (بُرْدٌ) – an oblong piece of thick woollen cloth, generally brown or of a dark or ashy dust colour, and either plain or with stripes so narrow and close together that they appear as one colour from a short distance. It was used to envelop a person during the day and to cover them at night. See Lane 1886: Book 1, 184.

¹³⁹ An allusion to *hijra*, i.e. the journey of the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina.

¹⁴⁰ Allusion to *al-Qur'ān* 8:24.

¹⁴¹ Allusion to *al-Qur'ān* 3:9.

¹⁴² The so-called *isti'ādha*, i.e. the invocation of God's protection against Satan.

¹⁴³ It is strange that al-Ḥajjāj does not know Yathrib as he exhibits detailed knowledge of the whole empire. The anonymous author probably intended to point out the superiority of the young man over the mighty governor.

¹⁴⁴ According to classical Arabic sources, *Ṭayba* (lit. 'the sweet-smelling') was an honorific name bestowed on Medina by the Prophet Muḥammad. See Ibn Manẓūr 1405 AH: Vol. 1, 567.

¹⁴⁵ Here there are four well-known theological terms: *ta'wīl* (the exegesis or the interpretation of *al-Qur'ān*), *tanzīl* (the revelation of *al-Qur'ān*), *tahrim* (making any action *ḥarām*), and *taḥlīl* (the opposite: making an action legal – *ḥalāl*). See also *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 43.

¹⁴⁶ Banū Ghālib – the Children of Ghālib, a tribe which Ghālib ibn Fihr, one of the predecessors of the Prophet Muḥammad, originated from.



his face¹⁴⁷ and be pleased with him. All noble descents and lineages¹⁴⁸ will be interrupted apart from our lineage, (13) which will continue until the day of final judgement.” Hereupon al-Ḥajjāj became exceedingly angry (14) and ordered the young man’s execution. At that moment, the representatives of the state stood up against him and the nobility of the kingdom stretched out their necks to him. (15) They called for mercy, saying: “Here are our heads before his head and (16) our lives before his life. By God! O Prince! Have mercy with us in the matter of (17) this youth as he does not deserve to be killed.” He said to them: “Do not tire yourselves out. It is necessary that he be killed, even if (18) an angel from heaven cried out ‘Do not kill him!’ I would not listen to him.” The young man said: “Were you pricked,¹⁴⁹ (19) o al-Ḥajjāj? Who are you that an angel from heaven should cry out to you ‘Do not kill him!’? You are (20) far less and lower. You are not able to find a path to slaughter me.” Al-Ḥajjāj answered: “I will not kill you (21) unless you give me a reason coming from your own words.” The youth responded: “What is that, o al-Ḥajjāj?” (22) Al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, how does a worshipper draw near Almighty God?” “By prayer, fasting, (23) pilgrimage, almsgiving, and the striving for the cause of Almighty God.”¹⁵⁰ Al-Ḥajjāj said: “I draw near (24) Almighty God with the blood of the man who declares that al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were the sons of the Prophet of God, (25) peace be upon him. However, young man, how can they be the children of God’s Prophet, peace be (26) upon him, when Almighty God said: ‘Muḥammad is not the father of any one of your men but he is (27) God’s Messenger and the seal of the prophets?’”¹⁵¹ “Listen, o al-Ḥajjāj, to my answer (28) in what Almighty God said in a different verse: ‘Accept whatever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from whatever he forbids you.’”¹⁵² (29) And Almighty God had forbidden the taking of life.” Al-Ḥajjāj said:

Folio 58b:

(1) “You speak the truth, young man, but inform me who is the most excellent of the Arabs – the best and (2) the purest of them?” “The people of Quraysh.” “And why so?” “Because Prophet Muḥammad, (3) peace be upon him, is one of them.” “And who is the bravest of the Arabs, the most chivalrous and (4) the firmest in war?” “The Ḥāshim tribe.” “And why so?” “Because my grandfather al-Imām (5) ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was one of them.” “And who is the most generous of the Arabs and the most hospitable to guests?” “The Ṭayy¹⁵³ tribe.” “And why so?” “Because Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭayy¹⁵⁴ is one of them.” (7) “And who is the most unfortunate of the Arabs and the most greedy?”

¹⁴⁷ Arab. *karrama* ‘*llāhu wajhahu* – a pious formula which is usually used to honour the first Shī‘a Imām and the fourth Rāshidūn Caliph ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

¹⁴⁸ In the text there is a dual term with the features of paronomasia (*muzāwaja*) – *ḥasab wa nasab*. It covers two aspects of the single idea of nobility. The first term, *ḥasab*, is related to memorable deeds and outstanding virtues. It can be acquired by an individual through extraordinary acts. The second term, *nasab*, denotes kinship, the ancestral relationship, and the genealogy of an individual. See Ed. 1986: 238–239.

¹⁴⁹ Here I translated in a rather free manner opting for the variant of Lane (1863–1893: 2777): نخسه ‘he goaded him; he pricked him.’ See the Czech translation *klid se*, *al-Ḥadždžādži!* ‘calm down, al-Ḥajjāj’, which was preferred by Tauer, cf. *Tisíc a jedna noc* 1975: 297.

¹⁵⁰ Possibly an enumeration of the five pillars of Islam (*arkān al-Islām*). It is interesting that the ‘declaration of faith’ (*shahāda*) is missing. Instead of that, there is a ‘striving for the cause of God’ (sometimes translated as a ‘holy war in the path of God’ – i.e. *jihād*).

¹⁵¹ *Al-Qurʾān*, 33:40, incomplete.

¹⁵² *Al-Qurʾān*, 59:7, incomplete.

¹⁵³ The Ṭayyī tribe.

¹⁵⁴ Sic. Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭāī.



Whose goodness is the smallest and whose ill is the greatest?” (8) “The Thaqif tribe.” “And why so?” “Because you, o al-Ḥajjāj, are one of them.” Hereupon (9) al-Ḥajjāj became exceedingly angry and ordered the young man’s execution. At that moment, the representatives of the state (10) stood up against him and they begged him for mercy, and so he granted him mercy and pardoned him. Then al-Ḥajjāj said: (11) “O young man, inform me about the Capricorn which is in the sky. Is it a male or (12) a female?” And he intended to cut short his words. The young man answered: “O al-Ḥajjāj, uncover (13) its tail for me so that I could tell you about it.”¹⁵⁵ Al-Ḥajjāj laughed and then asked: (14) “O young man, tell me, on what pasture do the horns of camels graze?” “On the leaves of stones.” (15) Al-Ḥajjāj exclaimed: “O stupid! Do stones bear leaves?” The youth answered: “O stupid! And do (16) camels have horns?” Al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, it is as if you were deeply in love.” “Yes, I am drowned in love.” (17) “And who do you love?” “I love my Lord, who I hope (18) will turn my sorrow into joy and who will save me from you today, o al-Ḥajjāj.” Al-Ḥajjāj said: “And do you (19) know your Lord?” “Yes, I do.” “And how did you learn about Him?” “From His book that He descended to His delegated Prophet.” (20) “And do you know al-Qur’ān by heart?” “Does al-Qur’ān run away from me (21) so that I had to retain it in my memory?”¹⁵⁶ “So, did you firmly engrave it in your mind?”¹⁵⁷ “God revealed it as a firm (definitive) book.”¹⁵⁸ Al-Ḥajjāj said: (22) “Did you read it and master what is inside?” “Yes.” Al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, if you (23) read it and mastered what is inside, tell me which verse inside is the most powerful, which verse (24) is the wisest, which verse is the most righteous, which verse is the most fearful, which verse is the most hopeful, (25) in which verse do both the Jews and the Christians tell the truth, in which verse does Almighty God speak frankly about himself, (26) which verse was mentioned by the Angels, which verse was pronounced by the prophets, (27) which verse was announced by the people of Paradise, which verse was said by the people of the Fire, which verse has (28) ten indisputable signs, and which verse was pronounced by Iblis, God’s curse be upon him.” The boy answered: “Listen,

Folio 59a:

(1) o al-Ḥajjāj, to the answer with the help of God, the generous Bestower. The most powerful (2) verse in the book of Almighty God is the Throne verse.¹⁵⁹ The wisest verse is the word of the Almighty: (3) ‘God commands justice and doing good.’¹⁶⁰ Regarding the most righteous verse, there is the word of (4) the Almighty: ‘Whoever has done an atom’s weight of good will see it, and

¹⁵⁵ الجدي – the zodiac sign of Capricorn, the term *dhanab al-jady* ‘the tail of the Capricorn’ has been applied since medieval times to Delta Capricorn, which is a multiple star system located in the constellation of Capricornus. See Kunitzsch and Smart 2006: 24–25.

¹⁵⁶ Here the anonymous author makes use of the rich synonymy of the Arabic language. The root of the verb *ḥafīẓa* has several meanings: ‘to guard, to preserve, to protect, to remember, to keep, to retain in the memory, and to know by heart’. See: Lane 1863–1893: 601–602.

¹⁵⁷ The translation is an approximation, taking into account the meaning of *istahkama* (an affair, a case): ‘It was, or became, in a firm, solid, sound, or good, state, or on a firm, solid, sound or good footing’. See Lane 1863–1893: 617.

¹⁵⁸ Allusion to *al-Qur’ān* 3:7 – ‘It is He who has sent this Scripture down to you [Prophet]. Some of its verses are definitive in meaning – these are the cornerstone of the Scripture – and others are ambiguous.’

¹⁵⁹ *Al-Qur’ān*, 2:255. This eight-sentence long verse is regarded as one of the most powerful and popular in *al-Qur’ān* because when it is recited the greatness of God is believed to be confirmed.

¹⁶⁰ *Al-Qur’ān*, 16:90, incomplete.



whoever has done an atom's weight of evil will see it.'¹⁶¹ (5) The most fearful verse is the word of the Almighty: 'Does every one of them expect to enter (6) a Garden of Bliss?'¹⁶² Regarding the most hopeful verse, it is the word of the Almighty: 'O my servants who have harmed yourself (7) by your own excess, do not despair of God's mercy. God forgives all sins. (8) He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.'¹⁶³ And the verse in which there are ten indisputable signs is the word of (9) the Almighty: 'In the creation of the heavens and earth; in the alteration of night and day; (10) in the ships that sail the seas with goods for people.'¹⁶⁴ The verse in which both (11) the Jews and the Christians tell the truth is: 'The Jews say: "The Christians (12) have no ground whatsoever to stand on," and the Christians say: "The Jews have no ground whatsoever to stand on."¹⁶⁵ They both said the truth (13) as they have nothing to stand on. Regarding the verse in which Almighty God speaks frankly about Himself, (14) so it is the word of the Almighty: 'I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me.'¹⁶⁶ Regarding (15) the verse which was mentioned by the Angels, so it is the word of the Almighty: 'They said: "May You be glorified! We have knowledge only of what (16) You have taught us. You are the All Knowing and All Wise."¹⁶⁷ Regarding the verse which was pronounced by prophets (17) so it is the word of the Almighty: 'It is not for us to bring you any sign without God's permission. And in God (18) let the believers put their trust.'¹⁶⁸ Regarding the verse which was pronounced by the people of Paradise, so it is the word of the Almighty: (19) 'And they will say, "Praise be to God, who has separated us from all sorrow. Our Lord is indeed most forgiving, most appreciative."¹⁶⁹ (20) Regarding the verse which was pronounced by the people of the Fire, so it is the word of the Almighty: 'Lord take us away from this and (21) if we go back to our old ways, then we shall really be evildoers.'¹⁷⁰ Regarding the verse which was pronounced by Iblis, God's curse be upon him, so it is (22) the word of the Almighty: 'I swear by Your might, I will tempt all but Your chosen servants.'¹⁷¹ (23) At this moment, al-Ḥajjāj said: "Praise the Lord! With his commendation He gives the wisdom to whoever (24) He will."¹⁷² I have never seen a youth like you to whom Almighty God has bestowed the brain, knowledge, and erudition (25) despite his young age!¹⁷³ The young man said: "I am of those people, (26) o al-Ḥajjāj." Al-Ḥajjāj said: "O my boy, inform me concerning the son of Ādam. What hurts him and

¹⁶¹ *Al-Qurʾān*, 99:7, 8.

¹⁶² *Al-Qurʾān*, 70:38.

¹⁶³ *Al-Qurʾān*, 39:53.

¹⁶⁴ *Al-Qurʾān*, 2:164, incomplete. Here it is evident that the reader is expected to know the rest of the verse as its shortened form does not contain all ten "indisputable signs".

¹⁶⁵ *Al-Qurʾān*, 2:113, incomplete.

¹⁶⁶ *Al-Qurʾān*, 51:56.

¹⁶⁷ *Al-Qurʾān*, 2:32.

¹⁶⁸ *Al-Qurʾān*, 14:11, incomplete and distorted.

¹⁶⁹ *Al-Qurʾān*, 35:34.

¹⁷⁰ *Al-Qurʾān*, 23:107.

¹⁷¹ *Al-Qurʾān*, 38:82–83.

¹⁷² *Al-Qurʾān*, 2:269, incomplete.

¹⁷³ The majority of questions and answers concerning particular Qurʾānic verses overlaps with the Story of Tawaddud, cf. 'Abu al-Husn and His Slave Girl Tawaddud' from *A Plain and Literal Translation of The Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entitled as The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* 1888, Vol. 5: 211–212. In addition, the framing of the following polemic between Tawaddud and the learned men alongside her recommendations resembles the Story of al-Ḥajjāj because their conversation similarly drifts into physiology and sexual matters and covers similar topics, e.g. the benefits of a bathhouse and women who are of an inappropriate age for men. Tawaddud, however, hangs her head in shame and confusion when sensitive issues are concerned, whereas the young man speaks boldly and fearlessly.



what is beneficial for him?” (27) The young man answered: “Yes, o al-Ḥajjāj, you and the guests present who wish to live a permanent life, and none lives permanently (28) except Almighty God, be early with your lunch and do not be late with the supper. Wear light clothes in the summer

Folio 59b:

(1) and cover the head in the winter, and mind your head and what is around, and the belly and (2) what is inside. The one who starts the first meal with salt will get a rid of seventy-two (3) sorts of maladies. The one who has seven red raisins (4) for breakfast will not see in his body anything unpleasant, and if one eats every day three dates for breakfast, (5) all worms in his belly shall be slain. And he who exceeds in his diet with sun-dried meat¹⁷⁴ and fish will (6) lower his sexual strength and weaken the union. And you should, o al-Ḥajjāj, take the greatest liniment.¹⁷⁵ (7) “And what is it?” “A slice of dry bread before breakfast.¹⁷⁶ It dissolves all (8) the phlegm on the mouth of the stomach. And beware of eating beef because it is a malady, soured cow’s milk is (however) a remedy (9). Its clarified butter is a cure, and its skin is (good) for shoes. And you should not, o al-Ḥajjāj, make love (10) in the bathhouse as it could cause you a tremor, and do not let any blood flow in the bath for (11) it enfeebles sexual strength. And do not gaze upon metal or glass vessels¹⁷⁷ as (12) it causes blurry vision. Do not make love when you are full, when you are hungry, or when you (13) are drunk, or when you are angry, or when under a tree full of fruit. And do not make love with (14) an old woman, because she will take from you and not give you anything in return. And seal (documents) with carnelian¹⁷⁸ (in the ring) because it is a guard (15) against poverty. And looking at al-Qur’ān every day will increase your means of living. Take a look at the (16) running water. It could sharpen your sight. And take a look at the faces of the parents because it is an act of devotion. Do not have sexual intercourse when you are (17) lying on your side, because it could cause you (the irritation) of sciatica.¹⁷⁹ And if you have lost your

¹⁷⁴ Here we translate as لحم قديد according to Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 2b, line 13, and Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 113b, line 3.

¹⁷⁵ المرهم الأكبر ‘the best liniment,’ see Chipman 2010: 281; *marham*, pl. *marāhim* ‘liniment,’ i.e. a liquid or semi-fluid preparation that is applied to the skin as an anodyne or a counterirritant. Cf. ‘the greater Salve’ of Burton in *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 51. Cf. ‘nejlepší mast’ [the best ointment] *Tisíc a jedna noc* 1975: 299–300.

¹⁷⁶ الرقيق ‘saliva, the water of the mouth in the early morning,’ على الرقيق ‘before breakfast’ see Lane 1863–1893: 1203.

¹⁷⁷ بجامات, sg. جام ‘a vessel of glass or silver.’ See Lane 1863–1893: 490; cf. ‘lázeňské zrcadla’ [bathhouse mirrors], *Tisíc a jedna noc* 1975: 299–300.

¹⁷⁸ العقيق ‘carnelian’ is a transparent semi-precious stone. The best specimens are mined in Yemen, and the highly prized ones are red. It is a popular stone among Shī‘ites. The sixth Imām Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣādiq also praised the merits of carnelian, ‘which increases the assets of whoever wears a ring set with it, increases his children, and gives him livelihood in plenty.’ See Sindawi 2012: 307–308.

¹⁷⁹ عرق الأنثى ‘sciatica,’ i.e. a term that refers to any type of pain caused by the pressure on or inflammation of the sciatic nerve. Cf. عرق النسا Wehr 1980: 607.



way, (18) recite the sūrat Tabāraka.¹⁸⁰ And when you get thirsty, recite the sūrat (19) Yāsīn¹⁸¹ and you will quench your thirst with the help of Almighty God.” Al-Ḥajjāj said: “God bestowed on you abundantly. O boy, (20) you immersed me into the sea of your knowledge. O boy, but tell me, where is the seat of (21) your shyness?” “In the eyes.” “And where is the seat of your intellect?” (22) “In the brain.” “And where is the seat of your goodness?” “In the tongue.” (23) “And where is the seat of your hearing?” “In the ears.” “And where is the seat of (24) your smell?” “In the nose.” “And where is the seat of your taste?” (25) “In the throat.” “And where is the seat of your joy?” “In the heart.” “And where (26) is the seat of your sadness?” “In the soul.” “And where is the seat of your anger?” (27) “In the liver.” “And where is the seat of your smile?” “In the (28) spleen.” “And where is the seat of your power?” “In the shoulders.”

Folio 60a:

(1) “And where is the seat of your weakness?” “In the legs.” And at this moment, (2) al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, I see that you are knowledgeable in everything. Inform me about (3) the seed for sowing.” “The best one is with a thick ear, big awns, and dry (4) grain.” “And what can you say about palm trees?” “The best is the one with an abundant harvest, (5) a low grown height,¹⁸² and a small stone in the flesh.” “And what do you say about a vineyard?” “The best is the one (6) with a stout stem and a big bunch.” “And what can you say about heaven?” “It is (7) the extent of sight; the dwelling place of the stars, the sun, and the moon which are raised without columns; and a shading for (8) all the people below it.” “And what can you say about the Earth?” “It is widespread in length (9) and breadth.” “And what can you say about rainfall?” “The best one is when it fills pits and overflows (10) into valleys and rivers.” At this point al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, tell me which women are the best and the most enjoyable?” “The one full of coquetry, exceeding beauty, and a killing tongue (12). Her (feminine) sex radiates from her (marvellous) figure,¹⁸³ when a man has full eyes of her, (13) he will suffer from sadness – with firm breasts, large buttocks, red cheeks, (14) black eyes, and speaking lips. If she looked into the sky, (15) the grass would grow (even) on stones. And if she looked into the earth, unpierced pearls would rain from her mouth. (16) Her saliva is sweeter than clear water. She is ultimately the one that in her beauty has no peer and in her loveliness she has no (17) rival. A big and small consolation for the eye

¹⁸⁰ The 67th sūrat al-Mulk, known also as sūrat Tabāraka (because it opens with the word *tabāraka* ‘blessed’), presents the teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophet’s mission only briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. They are particularly focused on making people shun heedlessness, making them think, and arousing their dormant conscience. See Surat al-Mulk, The Quran – القرآن الكريم online translation and commentary, available at www.quran.com [22 July 2021].

¹⁸¹ The 36th sūrat Yāsīn is considered to be the heart of al-Qur’ān (*qalb al-Qur’ān*) as it is believed to be a key to all goodness in life and hereafter. Among other things, it is believed that a thirsty person will quench his thirst after its recitation. See Surat Yasin, The Quran – القرآن الكريم online translation and commentary, available at www.quran.com [22 July 2021].

¹⁸² The translation is an approximation owing to the low legibility of the script in the original. See Burton’s alternative ‘whose height is low grown’ in *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 53.

¹⁸³ The translation is an approximation, the corresponding passage in Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 is as follows: برهج حبيبتها عجيبة من تكوينها fol. 115b, line 5–6, cf. Burton’s translation ‘one whose brow glanceth marvellous bright’ in *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 54.



as someone described her (18) in these verses, poetry.”¹⁸⁴ At this point al-Ḥajjāj said: “You said it well and spoke fairly, o young man, (19) and what do you say concerning a ten-year-old girl?” “An amusement for observers.” (20) “And a twenty-year-old woman?” “Consolation for the eyes of observers.” “And a thirty-year-old woman?” (21) “Delight for pleasure seekers.” “And a forty-year-old woman?” “The one with flesh, fat, and (22) milk.” “And a fifty-year-old woman?” “The one with daughters and sons.”¹⁸⁵ “And a (23) sixty-year-old woman?” “Men are not asking about her.” “And a seventy-year-old woman?” (24) “An old woman of a bygone past.” “And an eighty-year-old woman?” “Suitable neither for the world nor for (25) the faith.” “And a ninety-year-old woman?” “Do not ask about the people of Hell.” (26) “And a one-hundred-year-old woman?” “I seek refuge with God from accursed Satan.”¹⁸⁶ At this point, al-Ḥajjāj and (27) those present laughed.¹⁸⁷ And then al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, who was the first to recite poetry?”

Folio 60b:

(1) The youth said: “O al-Ḥajjāj, the first one who recited poetry was our father Ādam, peace be upon him, who said (2) these verses: ‘The country changed and all thereon, the face of the earth is blackened and ugly (3). Everything coloured and tasty changed, and the smile on the pleasant face became faint. O Ḥābil (4) you are slain. For your sake, this day I am depressed and wounded. Qābil slew Ḥābil,¹⁸⁸ his brother.’¹⁸⁹ (5) O what woe on that lovely face.”¹⁹⁰ Al-Ḥajjāj said: “O boy, and who gave him an answer to his poetry?” (6) “Iblīs, God’s curse be upon him, who said these verses: ‘You lament over (7) the country and its inhabitants, although the wide Paradise became too narrow for you. (8) You were there with Eve enjoying the comforts of the world and the relaxing way of living. (9) My deception and intrigues were ongoing till you missed this profitable acting.’”¹⁹¹ At this point, (10) al-Ḥajjāj said: “You said it well and spoke fair. O young man, tell me about the first verse told (11) by the Arabs concerning generosity.” The boy said: “O al-Ḥajjāj, the first verse the Arabs said concerning generosity is (12) the word of Ḥātim Ṭay¹⁹² when he said this verse: ‘I honour a guest absolutely when (13) he comes at night to me, before my family in distress

¹⁸⁴ At this point, verses of poetry should follow. They are indicated by the word شعر ‘poetry’ but are missing. See Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 115b, line 14 – fol. 116a, line 2. Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 4a, lines 18–19.

¹⁸⁵ This is translated according to Ms. King Saud University No. 218: fol. 4a, line 22: قَالَتْ ذَاتُ بَنَاتٍ وَبَنِينَ. In this way, Burton also translates: ‘the mother of men and maids in plenty’. Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553: fol. 116, line 6–7 offers the same version as Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387. See *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 55.

¹⁸⁶ So called *istiʿādha*, see note 142.

¹⁸⁷ At this moment in Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 and in Ms. King Saud University No. 218, the young man is asked by al-Ḥajjāj to turn the conversation about women’s ages into verses of poetry. This poetry is missing in Ms. Bašagić TF 136 No. 387.

¹⁸⁸ Ḥābil and Qābil: the names of the first two sons of the prophet Ādam in the Muslim tradition for general information. See Vajda 1986: 13–14.

¹⁸⁹ The poem is shortened in comparison to Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 and Ms. King Saud University No. 218. See the translation by Franz Rosenthal in *The History of al-Ṭabarī* Vol.1: 319: ‘The land and those upon it have changed. The face of the earth is now ugly and dusty. Everything tasty and colorful has changed. The cheerfulness of a handsome face has become rare.’

¹⁹⁰ Similar verses can be found in other popular sources (e.g. al-Kisaʿi 1922/1923: 73) as well as in the sources considered to be a part of the high Arabic literary tradition even though they are intermingled with popular lore, e.g. Ibn Munabbih 1996: 24–25; al-Ṭabarī s.a: Vol. 1: 145; and al-Masʿūdī: 2005: Vol. 1, 29.

¹⁹¹ Cf. al-Masʿūdī 2005: Vol. 1, 29 and Ibn Munabbih 1996: 25.

¹⁹² Sic., cf. also the note 112.



or abundance.” At this point, (14) al-Ḥajjāj said: “You said it well and spoke fair. O young man, your right is our obligation because (15) you immersed us into the sea of your knowledge.” Then al-Ḥajjāj turned towards some of his servants (16) and said to them: “Bring me this very moment a purse¹⁹³ on a tray of red gold, a suit (17) of my most splendid clothes, a horse from my best steeds with a saddle of gold with a mail-coat (18) as well as a long lance, and a girl from among my most beautiful slave girls.” They disappeared for a while and (19) then brought everything in front of al-Ḥajjāj. Al-Ḥajjāj said: “O young man, (here) is a purse (20) on a tray of red gold, a horse of my best steeds with equipment, and a slave girl (21) from among my maidens, so take whatever you desire from these: if you wished for a horse (22) and everything upon it, or if you wished for a purse with gold, or if you wished for a slave girl.” (23) And al-Ḥajjāj said to himself: “If he takes the purse, he loves mundane things (24) and I will kill him. If he takes the slave girl, he loves women and I will kill him. And if he takes (25) the horse with everything upon it, he is brave. And a brave man does not deserve to be killed.” (26) The young man came closer and took the horse with everything upon it. The slave girl was near

Folio 61a:

(1) the young man. She winked at him with her eyes and told him: “Take me and leave the rest!” (2) He said: “No.”¹⁹⁴ Al-Ḥajjāj said: “Take everything. May God not give you therein the blessing.” (3) The young man answered: “Here with them. O al-Ḥajjāj, when you give them to me, may God not recompensate you (4) and may He not unite us again like today.” (5) And al-Ḥajjāj’s city had two gates: a gate of destruction and a gate of salvation. So the young man said: (6) “O al-Ḥajjāj, how will I get away? Through this gate or the other gate?” Al-Ḥajjāj answered: “Get away through this gate.” And he pointed to the gate of salvation. (7) The young man got away and took with him all the gifts and got away through the gate which was pointed out (8) to him by al-Ḥajjāj, and it was the gate of salvation. The young man got out and went on (9) his way. (At this point) a grandee of the country said: “O our Lord, how (10) (possibly) have you given him (all the gifts), and he did not wish you well?”¹⁹⁵ And you advised him of the gate of salvation?” He said (11) to them all: “He asked me for advice, and a counsellor is trustworthy, and a trustworthy person (12) is not a traitor. May God curse all the traitors, (13) therefore, the curse does not work for him owing to his knowledge, and (14) compassion also does not work for him owing to his unfairness.” (15)

This is the very end of (16) the complete (17) story of al-Ḥajjāj as it reached us, peace be (18) upon our master (19) Muḥammad and upon his (20) family and companions.’

¹⁹³ بكرة ‘a purse’ that may contain different amounts of money (one thousand dirhams, ten thousand dirhams, or seven thousand dinārs), see Lane 1886: 166. Burton makes a similar note about the different amounts of money in the purse, and he chose for his translation ‘a purse containing ten thousand dirhams’. See *Supplemental Nights*, Vol. 5 1888: 58.

¹⁹⁴ At this point Ms. Bodl. Orient No. 553 and Ms. King Saud University No. 218 contain a major poetic exchange between the young man and the slave girl.

¹⁹⁵ لم يكثر خيرك. See the phrase كثر الله خيرك ‘may God increase your wellbeing’.



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