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Writing and some Related Topics in the pre-Islamic Poems of *al-Mu^callaqāt* and *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*

TAKASHINA Yoshiyuki *

アラブ古詩におけるイスラーム前の文字記録と関連事項 —— ムアッラカートとムファッダリーヤートより ——

啓示から短期間での聖典クルアーンの成立、クルアーン中に文字記録関係の表現の存在などは、預言者と彼以前の時代の北アラブ社会に文字記録の慣行が存在したことを背景としている。また、その時代の碑文や岩壁の刻文もこれを力強く証言している。一方、古代南アラビアでは木簡状の記録が発見されているが、碑文や刻文以外の同時代の記録は北アラブにはない。歴史時代に編纂の文献には、預言者が同様の木片に書信を認めたとの記録もあるなど、情報は錯綜している。詩人たちは読み書きに無関心であったが、イスラーム前の詩を含む二大詩集などから関連表現を拾い出すことは、池田修訳のお陰で今は調査が飛躍的に容易となった。そこで先行研究より時間の経過もあることから、二大詩集から証拠を拾い出して再検討し、当時の社会で読み書きは日常的だったと論じた。よって、これは文学研究ではない。

0. A Few Introductory Remarks

0.1. The aim of this study

As is known well in this field of research, writing in the pre-Islamic north Arabia or during the lifetime of the prophet is quite a precarious theme to discuss and it is nearly impossible to get a lucid picture of it. This is not only because the prophet is portrayed in al-Qurʾān as *al-^uummīy* ‘illiterate’¹⁾, but because the pre-Islamic poets did not describe a scene in which they or their contemporary did read and write. What is worse still, we know no texts written on soft materials such as papyri or wooden sticks

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1) The phrase *الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيُّ الْأُمِّيَّ* (al-Qurʾān 7:157) is now interpreted ‘the messenger, the prophet who is ignorant of revealed letters’. Ikeda says “ignorant of letters, i.e., an Arab prophet to whom no holy book has ever been revealed” (FBI, 2002, 1:217), while other Japanese translations either interpret literally ‘illiterate’ or follow Arberry’s English ‘of the common folk’. The 1st edition of FBI (1970) had also followed Arberry.

unearthed in the north Arabia.

On the other hand, we know very well that the pre-Islamic north Arabia was a literate society thanks to the texts written on stones or rocks. No doubt, writing was an inseparable part of the cultural system in the days of the prophet and it was precisely this level of literacy that could produce the current format of al-Qurʾān in due time. In other words, we are at a loss how to account for this contradiction, namely, the compilation process of al-Qurʾān testifies to a highly literate society, whereas ancient poems composed in pre-Islamic days speak very little about writing.

Fortunately, we are now able to collect very easily verses related to writing from ancient Arabic poems of *al-Muʿallaqāt*²⁾ and *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt* in our native tongue³⁾. With the help of this Japanese work, we thought it feasible to renew the study of writing in the pre-Islamic days and to collect whatever little hints from the poems coming from pre-Islamic times. Please see the item 4) in the next section (0.2) about how to pick up pre-Islamic poems only, excluding those composed after Islam.

In addition, it goes without saying that we were equipped with excellent studies published hitherto. To acknowledge our indebtedness to them, we shall name just two scholars who left most important works in the field: Adolf Grohmann⁴⁾ and M. Maraqtan⁵⁾. Thanks to them, we could concentrate on picking up additional examples from diwans as well as on checking etymological facts identified more recently.

Along with the study on writing, we collected, in Section 2, words and phrases that would shed new light on the pre-Islamic life, such as relations with the outer world beyond Arabia or so many terms concerning ships. In Appendix, we also discussed a series of textile names found in these poems, including ‘silk’. In Section 2 and Appendix, examples come only from *al-Muʿallaqāt* and *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*.

2) As to *al-Muʿallaqāt*, Charles James Lyall, a great scholar in Arabic poetry, did not make a complete translation. Instead, he edited the original text. In the days of Lyall, others had finished with the translation into English. See Arberry, pp. 7-30.

3) We are very grateful to Osamu Ikeda for his Japanese translation of these works which helped us greatly in preparing this work. He had translated the whole of the 137 poems (7 in *al-Muʿallaqāt* and 130 in *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*) into Japanese all by himself. This journal (JAIS), which he took the initiative in publishing, printed them all, and is now accessible at this URL, <https://sites.google.com/view/kansai-arab/>. In the small search window at the upper right, type ‘Ikeda’. With *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt* (407 p. in the Cairo edition by *Šākir* and *Hārūn*; 892 p. in Lyall’s edition) in view, we are indeed thankful to Ikeda’s great work. Beside Lyall’s, we know no complete translation of the work into any other language except Ikeda’s. Ikeda incorporated the earlier studies of Ban, his teacher, about ʿImrū al-Qays (Ban 1969) and Tarafa (Ban 1971) in his translation (JAIS 3, p. 4 and JAIS 4, p. 8 respectively).

4) Grohmann, 1952; 1955; 1967. The three works often overlap with one another, but in two of his older works, we sometimes find what is lacking in the latest voluminous work. He took up Arabic writing as a whole and did not concentrate on the pre-Islamic writing. Nonetheless, his encyclopedic expertise on Arabic writing and tradition guides us onto the right path.

5) Maraqtan, 1998. In quite a contrast to Grohman’s work, Maraqtan confined himself strictly to “Writing Materials in Pre-Islamic Arabia” and described systematically what was known in his days and listed many citations from Arabic sources, most of which were brought to light for the first time. We are indeed thankful to Maraqtan, for we took up all the verses we judged relevant in our study.

0.2. Some technical matters in this study

- 1) Phrases in a poem are quoted by *bayt*, or by the line⁶⁾, which we call a *verse*.
- 2) Since *al-Muʿallaqāt* has no standard edition, we followed Ikeda's text. The text of *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* is that of Lyall. If the Cairo edition has an additional line, Ikeda follows it. When the line number differs between editions, it is noticed accordingly.
- 3) The 7 poets⁷⁾ in *al-Muʿallaqāt* are taken as pre-Islamic.
- 4) *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* covers 67 poets⁸⁾. In order to grasp their lifetime, we judged each on the basis of descriptions by Lyall and by Ikeda and classified them as in the table below⁹⁾. Since we confine ourself to pre-Islamic poems, poets in the categories of 7*b* and 99 had to be avoided¹⁰⁾.

periods	500-549 AD	550-599	6 C	Ġāhiliy	600-622	622-	no info	total
categories	6 <i>a</i>	6 <i>b</i>	6 <i>c</i>	6 <i>j</i>	7 <i>a</i>	7 <i>b</i>	99	
poets	5	24	4	9	9	13	3	67

The Approximate Lifetime of the Poets in al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt

- 5) Every verse, when quoted, is preceded by such information as follows.

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6*b*, line 30: 02m) = the second in *al-Muʿallaqāt*
 054) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6*a*, line 2: 054) = No. 54 in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt*
 000) al-Nābiḡa, 6*c*, Ahlwardt No. 17, line 5: 000) = taken from the dīwān specified
- 6) Though we take up many verses, ours is not a literary study. Used like a corpus, they provide us with a sufficient image of writing in the pre-Islamic north Arabia, not to say prolifically. Out of 164 verses cited, including 37 in footnotes, 43 are cited for writing and 84 for related topics. *Al-Muʿallaqāt* covers the source of 40 verses, while *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* covers 88, but 36 belong to other dīwāns or the like.
- 7) Other points to be noted:
 - (a) Every verse is accompanied by a simple gloss with graduate students in mind, for which we beg scholars' indulgence.
 - (b) English renderings are ours including the texts of al-Qurʾān.
 - (c) The transcription is a conventional one, except: *malika* and *tawrā*¹¹⁾ instead of *malikah* or *tawrah*.
 - (d) The nisba ending is *īy* (not *ī*) but for those later than medieval times: al-Suyūṭī.
 - (e) Some abbreviations common in philological studies are used: *fem.*, *sg.*, *pl.*

6) A number of two successive lines are quoted, if need be, but they are counted as one example.

7) One of them, al-Ḥārīṭ bn Ḥilliza, appears also in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt*. Labīd bn Rabīʿa lived long, but the verse taken up are those before Islam according to Lyall and Ikeda.

8) They include one by an anonymous poet, one by a woman and one by a Jew. The number of poems covered by the work is 130 (126 with 4 in Supplement).

9) In many cases, it is admitted, this estimation is very approximate.

10) Four verses or poets of 7*b* were taken up in the text for argument's sake with an explicit statement. Also, there are those cited in footnotes: nineteen verses (nine poets) out of 7*b* with one out of 99.

11) See sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.6 in Takashina, 2020. But in citations, the original is followed.

1. Terms in Ancient Arabic Poems related to Writing

1.0. Writing and *ʿaqlāl* in poems

It is now an established fact that Arabs have a long history of writing since the first millenium BCE¹²⁾, and we have good studies that added much to this fact. Our concern lies, however, in collecting every reference to writing and related topics to know how wide and often they were mentioned in our sources. To attain this goal, we quote all the references herein, defying some sort of prolixity.

What led us to the present study in particular was the traditional technique in *nasīb*, the first part of the tripartite setup of *qaṣīda* ‘ode’¹³⁾. Poets had made it a rule to lament over *ṭalal* (pl. *ʿaqlāl*) ‘ruins of an old dwelling place’¹⁴⁾. To describe the ruins, they often liken them to the faint lines of writing as in the following verse.

000) ʿImruʿ al-Qays, 6a, Ahlwardt No. 63 (p. ١٥٩; Qays, p. 170), line 1¹⁵⁾: لِمَنْ طَلَّلَ أَبْصَرْتُهُ فَشَجَانِي * كَحَظِّ الرَّبُّورِ فِي عَسِيبِ يَمَانٍ
‘To whom is the (dwelling) trace I have seen? For it saddened me like the line of the writing on a Yemenite’¹⁶⁾
palm stalk’. Cf. *ṣagā* (u) ‘to grieve’; *zabūr* (see 1.5.1); *ʿasīb* (see 1.1.5.1, a).

We find here three words related to writing that recur in ancient Arab poetry. Since this poet was in the highest esteem in pre-Islamic days, this simile became one of the poets’ favorite styles. For instance, he was imitated by the famous poet of Huḍayl, a contemporary of the prophet.

000) ʿAbū Duʿayb al-Huḍalīy¹⁷⁾, 7b, Part 1, No. 7 (Huḍayl 1:98), line 1: عَرَفْتُ
الْدِّيَارَ كَرَفْمِ الدَّوَا * ۞ يَذْبُرُهَا الْكَاتِبُ الْحِمْيَرِيُّ
‘I knew the dwellings (appearing) like the letter of the inkstand, (which) a Himyarite writer writes’. Cf. *raqm*

12) See Macdonald (2004) about the various language groups. Unlike Ancient South Arabian, the language sites of Ancient North Arabic are scattered over the northern part of the peninsula.

13) According to Nicholson (p. 77), al-Muhalhil bn Rabīʿa (d. ca. 531) is said to have composed the first Arabic ode (a dirge or eulogy) on the death of his brother Kulayb bn Rabīʿa, leader of the North Arab warriors, who defeated the South Arabians in the battle *Yawm Ḥazāz* (or *Ḥazāzā*). Nöldeke (1899:44, Nicholson, footnote 2 on p. 5) held this historical setting as totally legendary (*durchaus sagenhaft*).

14) Beside Maraqtan (p. 302) who termed this ‘traces-introduction’ (al-muqaddimah al-ṭalalīyah), many scholars took up this: Nicholson, p. 77; Goldziher, p. 10; Arberrry, 1965:5; Wagner, p. 87. LA explains a certain verse in the similar wording (p. 3592c), but we could not make out who the poet Maḥaṣṣ al-ʿUqaylīy in LA is. Other studies are also listed in the footnote 1 of Montgomery (p. 283). For this last work, the anonymous referee cannot be thanked enough.

15) Referred to also by Maraqtan on p. 293 (footnote 48), and quoted on p. 304.

16) According to Wright (I:154A), *al-Yaman* has three nisba adjectives: 1) *yaman-īy-un*, 2) *yamān-īy-un* and 3) *yamān-in*. While 1) and 2) are regular, 3) inflects like *ʿāl-in* ‘high’: *yamān-in* (nominative, genitive), *-iyan* (accusative), *al-yamānī* (nominative, genitive), *al-yamāniya* (accusative).

17) We owe this reference to Maraqtan (p. 301, footnote 118). The poet is a *muḥaḍram* poet of Huḍayl who died in early days of Islam. He is found in al-ʿAḡānī (6:58-64) but without this verse. Al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt again takes up another poem of his (No. 126). See footnote 157 for more about this verse. Though the poet died after Islam, we quote this to know about things in the prophet’s days.

‘writing (verbal noun), letter (= *ḥaṭṭ*)’ (see 1.4.3 and 1.3.1.5) ; *dabara* = *zabara* ‘to write’ (see 1.5.1, [Note]).

In the second verse, we learn that four words of writing were used in the days of the prophet. It is interesting that two different roots of writing are used side by side, the older √DBR¹⁸⁾ and the new √KTB as in al-Qurʾān. Further ‘an inkstand’ tells eloquently that writing was usual in the north (composed in North Arabic) as well as in the south (the Himyarite writing as known to this North Arab poet of Huḍayl).

000) Ḥassān bn Tābit¹⁹⁾, 7b, No. 15, line 1 (Ḥassān, p. 18): عَرَفْتَ دِيَارَ زَيْنَبَ بِالْكَثِيبِ * كَخَطِ الْوَحْيِ فِي الرِّقِّ الْقَشِيبِ ‘Do you know the dwelling of Zaynab at the sandhill? (It is) like a line of the writing on the new parchment’. Cf. *qaṣīb* = *ḡadīd*.

The above verse, composed by the Prophet’s poet, shows another new trait. With the use of the verb √HTT ‘to write’ (al-Qurʾān 29:48) and *raqq* ‘parchment’ (52:1), *ḥaṭṭ* connotes a line of letters, while the old term *waḥy* ‘a letter, writing’ is in use ignoring the new sense in al-Qurʾān (see 1.3.1.4).

1.1. Writing materials

To begin with, we are going to take up such a term as concerns the format of the product, disregarding what it is made of.

1.1.1. Parchment or papyrus

1.1.1.1. *qirṭās* (pl. *qarāṭīs*) ‘a sheet of parchment or papyrus’²⁰⁾

Since the main point of this word lies in ‘a sheet for writing’, as Maraḡten notes (p. 295), the real source material used depends on each situation. This is why the word could coexist with ‘paper’ when it later came into general use.

Concerning the definitions in lexicā, Lane will suffice (*bardīy* on p. 185a; *qirṭās* on

18) According to lexicons, √DBR is a variant of √ZBR (see 1.5.1, [Note]). Al-Sukkarīy, the commentator of Huḍalī poems (d. 888/9), mentioned another sense of √DBR ‘to read swiftly or lightly’ (Huḍayl 1:98) on the authority of al-ʿAṣmaʿīy (d. c. 828). As both scholars were philologists, this remark diffused in later lexicā (See Ṣiḥāḥ, 1:322 and MM, p. 708b), though the remark helped nothing to understand the verse, but added a needless ambiguity to the Arabic lexicography. With the lapse of two centuries since the prophet’s death, it is not certain how reliable al-ʿAṣmaʿīy’s informant was.

19) Again we owe this reference to Maraḡten (p. 302, footnote 133). The poet of the preceding verse (ʿAbū Duʿayb) was almost contemporary to the prophet, while Ḥassān bn Tābit died about the beginning of the Umayyad dynasty (ca. 659-673).

20) According to Maraḡten (p. 295), *qirṭās* is defined as *ṭawāmīr* (pl. of *ṭūmār* or *tāmūr* ‘a roll of paper or papyrus’; Lane, pp. 1880b, 2517c). But Lane (p. 1880b) suspects the usage of *ṭūmār* in the sense ‘a roll of papyrus’ to be post-classical. So it is by no means clear if *qirṭās* meant ‘a scroll of papyri’ in pre-Islamic times. There exist variant spellings: *qarṭās*, *qurṭās*, *qarṭas*, *qirṭas*. See Grohmann 1967:70a, footnote 5 for native sources.

p. 2517a). As to ‘parchment’, see 1.1.2, and for the Persian loan *kāgīd* ‘paper’ (unit noun, -a), see footnote 23.

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6b, line 30: وَوَجْهَهُ كَقِرْطَاسِ الشَّامِيِّ وَمِشْفَرٍ * كَسِبَتْ أَلْيَمَانِي قَدُّهُ لَمْ يُحَرِّدْ ‘and a face²¹⁾ like the Syrian’s parchment²²⁾ and a lip like the Yemenite’s tanned skin, (whose) slit is not twisted’. Cf. *mišfar* ‘camel’s lip’; *sibt* ‘tanned skin’; *qadda* (u) *qadd* ‘to cut, slit’; *ḥarrada* ‘to twist’.

[Note] The route of borrowing *qirṭās*:

The route of borrowing of this word has long been established: Arabic < Aramaic < Greek χάρτης ‘a leaf of papyrus’ < Latin *charta* (*fem.*) ‘a sheet of papyrus’. The Aramaic route is unquestionable (Fraenkel 245-246; Jeffery 235-236; Maraqtan 295-296), and we can adjust the route of borrowing thanks to M. Sokoloff’s indefatigable compilation of Aramaic dictionaries.

Jewish Palestinian Aramaic: *k/qṛṭys* ‘document, sheet of papyrus’ (p. 269a); Syriac: *k/qarīṣā* (spelled also *k/qṛṭs*) ‘writing sheet, papyrus’ (pp. 650a, 1405b); JBA: *qarṭāsā* ‘sheet for writing’ (p. 1039b). With -ṭīs- and -ṭās- in view, it is likely that the Arabic form came via the southern Iraq (around al-Ḥīra). In addition, Syriac variant spellings also support this route. In the past, there was a suggestion in favor of the northern root on the strength of Ṭarafa’s verse above.

{al-Qurʾān} *qirṭās* (pl. *qarāṭīs*) ‘parchment’

1) singular (only once):

وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ‘Even if we had sent down on you a book (written) on parchment and they had touched it with their hands, yet those who disbelieve would have said, “This is nothing but a manifest sorcery”’ (6:7).

2) plural (only once):

مَنْ أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ مُوسَى نُورًا وَهُدًى لِلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ قُرَاطِيسٍ تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا ‘Who sent down the book that Moses brought as a light and a guidance to people? You made (from) it parchments, showing them (while) hiding many (of them)’ (6:91).

1.1.1.2. *waraq* ‘a sheet of parchment or (possibly) of papyrus’

It must be admitted first that in pre-Islamic poems that we checked, there is no phrase in which *waraq* is used in this sense. This is why we have to discuss it here for the sake of the importance of the word in the history of writing. In view of its wide use as ‘paper’ after mid 8 C²³⁾, it is certain that, in the preceding long years, it covered

21) Namely, the face of the she-camel mentioned in line 11: مِرْقَالٍ ‘swift-running (she-camel)’.

22) Ikeda follows the reading وَوَجْهَهُ (line 30), while Arberry (p. 84) translates the corresponding line (line 32): “Her cheek (وَجْهٌ) is smooth as Syrian parchment.”

23) When ‘paper’ came into wide use, many words were used to call it in Arabic: *qirṭās*, *ṭirs*, *waraq*

both ‘parchment’ and ‘papyrus’, as if it had been a universal term for writing²⁴⁾ from long before.

a) *waraq* = ‘papyrus’:

It was Grohmann who discussed to this effect. He quoted one papyrus (PER Inv. Ar. Pap. 8391) as the specimen bearing the following two terms: وَرَقُ الْقَصَبِ ‘reed paper’ and وَرَقُ الْأَبْرَدِيِّ ‘papyrus paper’²⁵⁾. Fortunately he supplied us, in his another study²⁶⁾, with the possible date of this papyrus according to his estimation as 8-9 C. No doubt the date happens to fall on the early period of the introduction of paper into the Abbasid empire. This taken into account, such a phrase at this period suggests the possibility that *waraq* was a general term for thin and wide writing material, and had a long history in this sense before ‘paper’ succeeded in monopolizing *waraq*.

b) *waraq* = ‘parchment’:

Scholars quote in this argument passages from al-Suyūṭī’s *al-ʾItqān*, seemingly inconsistent, and we are at a loss how to understand them as a whole. To overcome this, we shall quote some in the order of al-Suyūṭī’s composition.

[al-Suyūṭī 01] لَمَّا جَمَعُوا الْقُرْآنَ، فَكَتَبُوهُ فِي الْوَرَقِ، قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ التَّمَسُّوا لَهُ اسْمًا فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُم السِّفْرُ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُم الْمَصْحَفُ، فَإِنَّ الْحَبْشَةَ يُسَمُّونَهُ الْمَصْحَفَ وَكَانَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ أَوَّلَ مَنْ جَمَعَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَسَمَّاهُ الْمَصْحَفَ ‘When they collected al-Qurʾān and wrote it on parchment (*waraq*), ʾAbū Bakr said, “Choose a name for it!” So some said “al-Sifr (the Book)” while others said “al-Muṣḥaf”, for Ethiopians used to call it so. Thus ʾAbū Bakr became the first person that collected the Book of God and called it al-Muṣḥaf” (*al-ʾItqān*, 1857:120; 1326:344).

[al-Suyūṭī 02] جَمَعَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ الْقُرْآنَ فِي قَرَاتِيْسٍ، وَكَانَ سَأَلَ زَيْدَ بْنَ ثَابِتٍ فِي ذَلِكَ، فَأُلِيَ ʾAbū Bakr collected (the text of) al-Qurʾān on parchments (*qarāṭīs*), and he had (in fact) asked Zayd bn Ṭābit about this, but he (Zayd) refused (the request at first), till he (ʾAbū Bakr) had to ask Umar for help about him. So he (Zayd) did it” (*al-ʾItqān*, 1857:137; 1326:386).

Grohmann (1967:70b), taking *qarāṭīs* as ‘papyri’²⁷⁾, says that it implies a kind of reservation among people to write the text of al-Qurʾān on the fragile material. But we find nothing to hinder us from interpreting the word as ‘parchments’, and would like

(Grohmann, 1967:98a; Maraqtan, p. 296). Since they were mostly used to refer to another material in the preceding years, caution is needed. The Persian loan *kāgīd* has many variant spellings: *kāgīd*, *kāgād*, *kāgāq*, etc. (see WKAS, 1:10a).

24) Once Maraqtan wrote: “The meaning of the word *waraq* is not quite clear” (p. 296).

25) Grohmann, 1952:22, 1967:70a.

26) Grohmann, 1955:64.

27) In view of section 1.1.1.1, we are reluctant to take it as ‘papyri’ with this much of argument. Maraqtan writes that “the Qurʾān is said to have been written on it” (p. 296) in the section of *qirṭās* as ‘papyrus’.

to interpret Zayd's reaction as referring to other factors among them.

[al-Suyūṭī 03] لَمَّا أُصِيبَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ بِالْيَمَامَةِ فَرَعَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، وَخَافَ أَنْ يَهْلِكَ مِنَ الْقُرَاءِ طَائِفَةٌ، فَأَقْبَلَ النَّاسُ بِمَا كَانَ مَعَهُمْ وَعِنْدَهُمْ حَتَّى جُمِعَ عَلَى عَهْدِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ فِي الْوَرَقِ، فَكَانَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ أَوَّلَ مَنْ جَمَعَ الْقُرْآنَ فِي الصَّحَفِ. When Muslims were defeated at al-Yamāma, °Abū Bakr was afraid and expressed his fear that a group of readers (of al-Qurʾān)²⁸⁾ might be lost. Then people brought him what (written verses) they had or were available to them, and at last it (al-Qurʾān) was collected during °Abū Bakr's caliphate on the parchment (*waraq*). So °Abū Bakr was the first person to collect al-Qurʾān on the parchments (*ṣuḥuf*)' (*al-ʿItqān*, 1857:138; 1326:387).

This passage is usually taken to mean 'parchment',²⁹⁾ As to *ṣuḥuf* as 'parchments', see below in this section.

[al-Suyūṭī 04] إِنَّمَا كَانَ فِي الْأَدِيمِ وَالْعُسْبِ أَوَّلًا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُجْمَعَ فِي عَهْدِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، ثُمَّ جُمِعَ فِي الصَّحَفِ فِي عَهْدِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، كَمَا دَلَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الْأَخْبَارُ الصَّحِيحَةُ الْمُتَرَادِفَةُ. The only thing is, it (the text of al-Qurʾān) had been at first on the red leather (°adīm³⁰⁾) and palm branches (°usub³¹⁾) before it was collected during °Abū Bakr's caliphate, and thereafter it was collected on the parchments (*ṣuḥuf*) during °Abū Bakr's caliphate, as similar pieces of genuine information showed it' (*al-ʿItqān*, 1857:138 bis; 1326:387 bis).

As this last citation shows, the raw material was written on leather and wooden material before the collection started. The collected material then went through steps of compilation on parchments. In this summary statement, there is no reference to 'papyrus', be it *qirṭās* or *waraq*. When we understand that this statement could cover other passages (01-03), the only solution left is to take *waraq* (al-Suyūṭī 01, 03) and *qirṭās* (al-Suyūṭī 02) as denoting 'parchments'. Moreover, it should be noted that the result of compilation is called either *ṣuḥuf* or *al-Muṣḥaf*, suggesting that it was somehow bound into one. For the referent of *ṣaḥīfa* (plural *ṣuḥuf*), see 1.5.4 and footnote 177, since it is very important for our interpretation here.

{al-Qurʾān} *waraq* (unit noun, -a) 'leaf'

Out of three usages, one is a unit noun (6:59) while the rest are collectives (7:22, 20:121).

1.1.2. Leather

28) The 1857 edition reads: من القرآن طائفة.

29) Grohmann, 1967:109b.

30) See 1.1.2.2 below.

31) See 1.1.5.1, a).

‘Parchment’ is processed without tanning (Maraqten, p. 288) while other types of leather go through it, but the former needs its own elaborate steps (Grohmann, 1967:108b).

1.1.2.1. *raqq* ‘thin skin > parchment’

The Arabic term proper for ‘parchment’ is *raqq*³²⁾. According to Maraqten (p. 290), the local production of parchment in Arabia rendered its price cheaper than papyrus.

041) al-ʿAḥnas bn Šihāb al-Taḡlibīy, 6b, line 1: *لَابَنَةِ حِطَّانَ بْنِ عَوْفٍ مَنَازِلُ * كَمَا رَقَّشَ الْغُنْوَانُ فِي الرَّقِّ كَاتِبُ* ‘To the daughter of Ḥiṭṭān son of ʿAwf belong (these) dwellings, (which now look) as if a writer had embellished the (cover) page³³⁾ in parchment (document)’.

{al-Qurʾān} *raqq* ‘parchment’

وَالطُّورِ وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ فِي رَقٍّ مَنَشُورٍ ... إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ‘By the Mount (Sinai), by a book inscribed in an unrolled parchment ..., surely the chastisement of your Lord falls (on you)’ (52:1-7, used once).

1.1.2.2. *ʿadīm* (pl. *ʿādām*, *ʿudum*) ‘red skin’

Yemen was well-known for this material (Grohmann 1967:107a), especially since it fell under the Sasanids for a short time, when Persians built tanneries in Yemen (Grohmann 1952:45). When the material was collected to edit al-Qurʾān, there were texts written on *ʿadīm* (see 1.1.1.2, al-Suyūṭī 04). This speaks of itself that ‘red skin’³⁴⁾ was in high quality and precious.

054) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6a, line 2: *الدَّارُ فَفَرَّ وَالرُّسُومُ كَمَا * رَقَّشَ فِي ظَهْرِ الْأَدِيمِ قَلَمٌ* ‘the dwelling is (now) a waste land, and the traces are as if a pen had embellished the surface of the leather’. Cf. *raqqaša* ‘to embellish’.

1.1.2.3. *qaḏīm* (pl. *quḏum*) ‘white leather’

LA left us a brief definition of this word (p. 3664c): ‘white leather to be written on; white sheet (*ṣaḥīfa*); ... any skin (*ʿadīm*)’ with a tradition by al-ʿAzharī³⁵⁾ to the effect

32) As in the verse cited here, the term may be read *riqq*. Dictionaries define for *raqq* ‘thin skin upon which one writes (Lane, p. 1130c); vellum, sheet of paper (Hava, p. 264a)’ and for *riqq* ‘a thin thing (Lane, p. 1131a), parchment, paper (Steingass, p. 427b)’. In addition to *qirṭās* (1.1.1.1) and *waraq* (1.1.1.2), sources may employ yet another term: *ḡild* ‘skin’ (Grohmann 1967:108b). As for the alleged origin of *raqq* in Ethiopic (Fraenkel, p. 246; Jeffery, p. 143), we have to dismiss it, for we can account for it far better otherwise (Maraqten, p. 288). The Syriac form *raq* ‘parchment’ (p. 1488a), borrowed from Arabic, suggests that *raqq* was more regular than *riqq*.

33) According to Lane, *ʿunwān* or *ʿulwān* is ‘the inscription on the back, or outside, of a book or writing, and the address of a letter’ (pp. 2146c, 2179b). About *kātib* ‘writer’, see 1.3.1.1.

34) According to native lexicographers, *ʿadīm* signifies: ‘tanned skin or hide ... or red skin or hide ... or skin, or hide, in the state ... when it is complete [in its tanning] and has become red’ (Lane, p. 36c).

35) For this tradition, see 1.1.5.1, d).

that one of the materials of holy verses before collection was ‘white leather’. Fortunately, LA (loc.cit.) and TA (33:284b) quote a verse from al-Nābiḡa³⁶⁾.

000) al-Nābiḡa al-Ḍubyanīy, 6c, Ahlwardt No. 17, line 5³⁷⁾: كَأَنَّ مَجَرَ الرِّامِسَاتِ * دُيُولَهَا عَلَيْهِ فَضِيْمٌ نَمَقَتْهُ الصَّوَانِعُ ‘The winds, effacing traces (on the ground), dragged their tails, (and it was) as if on it (dragging) were (spread) a white leather (which) skillful (women) wrote beautifully’. Cf. *al-rāmis-āt* ‘the winds which efface traces on the surface with sands’; *ḡarra ḡayl-an* ‘to drag a trail’; *nammaqa* (see 1.3.1.6); *ṣāni^c-a* (pl. *ṣawāni^c*) ‘a woman who manufactures well’.

1.1.2.4. *ḡirs* (pl. *ṣaḡrās, ḡurūs*) ‘palimpsest’

This term is slightly different from others in that it stands for a reused or reborn sheet of leather, after what was written once is obliterated in some way. Also, the word may mean an ordinary sheet of leather (or later, of paper; footnote 23).

000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd, No. 17, line 8 (p. 155): فَأَجَازَنِي مِنْهُ بِطُرْسٍ نَاطِقٍ * وَبِكَلِّ أَطْلَسَ جَوْبُهُ فِي الْمَنْكِبِ ‘Then he (a certain Abyssinian king) let me in from it with a talking palimpsest, and with every Abyssinian his shield was in the shoulder (blade)³⁸⁾’. Cf. *ṣaḡāza-nī* = *ṣaḡtā-nī*; *ṣaḡlas* ‘blackish, Abyssinian’; *ḡawb* ‘shield’.

1.1.3. Papyrus

1.1.3.1. *bardīy* ‘writing sheet’

The papyrus in Arabic is a collective noun *bardīy* (unit noun, *-a*). It is the source material of the ‘writing sheet’ called *qirṭās* (see 1.1.1.1).

In our pre-Islamic poems, we find no reference to ‘papyrus’ as material of the product to write on. This is either because people wrote mostly on palm branch rather than on papyri, or because writing was too commonplace a daily habit. Likewise, it is to be noted that we find no usage of this word in al-Qurʿān.

1.1.3.2. *bardīy* used figuratively

But some poets employed the word to portray the elegance of girls, comparing them to papyri growing in the water³⁹⁾. This metaphor lingered even after Islam⁴⁰⁾.

36) From the comment in TA, we learn the two lexicographers took the verse from Ṣiḥāḥ (2:326).

37) While lexicographers adopted *qaḍīm* for this verse, editions of al-Nābiḡa’s *dīwān* printed *ḡaṣīr* ‘mat’ in place of the former (Ahlwardt, p. ١٨; al-Nābiḡa, p. 72).

38) Grohmann interpreted *ḡirs nāṭiq* as ‘talking parchment’ (1952:46, 1967:109a), but our literal understanding will suit the poet’s imagination better. Be it a sheet of ‘parchment’ or ‘palimpsest’, the poet depicted the Abyssinian as the king’s messenger. To whatever the poet might say, he answered the king’s word, as if he got it instantly from the king in a letter. In such a fancy, the poet must have found it more fitting to liken him to a sheet of ‘palimpsest’ usable again for a new reply.

39) There is an interesting verse in which a papyrus is depicted as if it grew somewhere on the Arab land. 073) ʿAbd al-Masīḥ bn ʿAsala, 99, line 5: إِذَا أَوَاضِعُ مِنْهُ مَرٌّ مُنْتَحِيًا * مَرَّ الْأَتِيِّ عَلَيَّ بِرَدِيَّةٍ الطَّافِي

01m) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, line 36: وَكَشَحَ لَطِيفٍ كَأَلْجَدِيلٍ مُخَصَّرٍ * وَسَايٍ ۖ كَأَنْبُوبِ السَّقْيِ الْمُدَلَّلِ
‘[... she shows (*tubdī ʿan*) a cheek (face) ...] and a waist slender (and) as soft as the rein (of the camel’s nose), and a leg like the cane of the well-watered and tender (reed)’⁴¹. Cf. *kašh* ‘waist, flank’; *ḡadīl* ‘twisted rope, rein’; *muḥašṣar* ‘slender in the waist’; *ʿanbūb* ‘an internodal portion of a reed or cane’ (Lane, p. 2752c); *muḡallal* ‘humiliated > bent > tender, soft’ (Lane, p. 974ab).

021) al-Muḥabbal⁴², 6j, line 11: بَرْدِيَّةٌ سَبَقَ النَّعِيمُ بِهَا * أَقْرَانَهَا وَعَلَا بِهَا عَظُمُ
‘(She is like) a papyrus with which a comfortable life excelled (that of) her equals (in age), and the physique grew splendid with her’. Cf. *qirn* or *qarn* (pl. *ʿaqrān*) ‘equal in age’; *ḡalā* ‘to exceed’.

1.1.4. Cloth

1.1.4.1. *muhraq* (pl. *mahāriq*) ‘a sheet of white silk’

Grohmann (1967:105a-106a)⁴³ first took up this material in detail with a citation from LA, which in fact Lyall had put into English far earlier (Lyall, 2:91, note 1)⁴⁴.

06m) al-Hārīt bn Ḥilliza, 6b, line 42⁴⁵: حَذَرَ الْخَوْنِ وَالْتَعَدَّى وَهَلْ يَ * نَنْفُصُ مَا ۖ فِي الْمَهَارِقِ الْأَهْوَاءِ
‘[and recollect the covenant and about what the pledges were taken] with caution to betrayal and enmity; and (we shall ask you) whether whims

‘When I restrain him (= horse), he crosses ahead heading (for the wild animal) like the crossing of a torrent over its floating papyrus’. Cf. *wādaʿ* ‘to restrain’ (according to the commentary, no registry of this sense in lexica); *marra* (u) *marr* ‘to cross’; *ʿintaḥā* ‘to lean, head for’; *ʿatīy* (√TW; Lane, p. 15b) ‘rivulet, torrent’; *tafā* (u) ‘to float’.

40) 017) al-Muzzarid bn Ḍirār al-Ḍubyanīy, 7b, line 11: وَتَحْطُو عَلَى بَرْدِيَّتَيْنِ غَذَاهُمَا * نَمِيرُ الْمَيَاوِ ۖ وَالْعَيُونُ الْغَلَاغِلُ
‘And she steps with two (legs compared to stems of) papyri, which wholesome waters and springs deep under the earth nourish’. Cf. *namīr* ‘wholesome’; *ḡalāḡil* (pl.) ‘extending far into the earth’ (Lane, p. 2279b). The poet’s name is spelled *Muzarrid*, in the other poem (015), without *al-*.

41) Though without an explicit ‘papyrus’, the verse apparently presupposes it. Other translations run: “smooth shank like the reed of a watered, bent papyrus” (Arberry, p. 63); “and a shank resembling the stalk of the irrigated papyrus that is bent down by saturation” (Lane, p. 974a).

42) The poet died after Islam and the last lines (39 - 40) in this poem leave traces of amendment. This allows us to accept other lines as pre-Islamic. The next line 12 is cited in 1.5.4.

43) In Grohmann’s earlier studies (1952 and 1955), there is no mention of this.

44) Relying on Lyall’s rendering (*ibid.*), we record here a literal translation of LA (p. 4656a; see the Arabic text in Grohmann, 1967:105b, note 1; TA, 16:19b-20a): “a cloth of white silk which is dipped in a gum resolution (i.e., it gets stiffened with *ṣamgh* ‘rubber’) and is polished, and then it is written on. It is *muhr kard* in Persian, and is (also) called *mahrh* because a shell (or a bead), with which it is polished, is called so in Persian”. So words may surely be used figuratively, but definitions quoted below are sort of a confusion: ‘glazed paper ... parchment, papyrus’ (Hava, p. 825a) or ‘sheet, page; book; shell for smoothing paper; smooth paper, parchment; sheet of papyrus’ (Steingass, pp. 1075b-1076a).

45) In some editions, line 42 corresponds to line 67, while many editions read *ḡawr* ‘wrong-doing’ for *ḥawn* (see al-Tibrizīy, pp. 132-133; Nöldeke, 1899, p.57). We read *ḥawn* after Ikeda.

can decrease what is (written) on the sheets of silk⁴⁶⁾. Cf. *ḥaḍar* ‘caution’; *ḥawn* ‘betrayal’; *ta‘addā* = ‘*adā* ‘*alā* ‘to act wrongfully against (Lane, p. 1977b)’; *hawa-n* (pl. *‘ahwā*) ‘desire, caprice’.

025) al-Ḥārīt bn Ḥilliza al-Yaškurīy, 6c, line 1: * لِمَنْ الدِّيَارُ عَقَوْنَ بِالْحُبْسِ
آيَاتُهَا كَمَهَارِقِ الْفُرسِ ‘Whose are the dwellings at al-Ḥubṣ? Their signs got (almost) erased (becoming) like (letters written on) Persians’ sheets of silk’.

000) al-ʿAswad bn Yaʿfur al-Nahšalīy, 7a, ʿAswad No. 68, line 4: سَطُورُ يَهُودِيَّيْنِ
فِي مَهْرَقَيْهِمَا * مُجِيدَيْنِ مِنْ تَيْمَاءٍ أَوْ أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ‘the writings of two Jews, from Taymāʾ or (from) the people of Madyan, on their sheets of silk which they recite perfectly⁴⁷⁾. Cf. *saṭr* (pl. *suṭūr*; see 1.4.4 for a verbal noun).

[Note] The etymology of *muhraq*

The passage “It is *muhṛ kard* in Persian” (footnote 44) is now obsolete, seeing that *muhraq* is derived from Pahlavi *muhrak* and it was the name of the shell to polish the stuff with. Lyall (loc.cit.) says that the final *k* or *g* still persisted when it was borrowed by the Arabs⁴⁸⁾ (see 1.1.5.3, d, *ult.*; Appendix A1, j). This interpretation seems to be established now. In view of the Persian loan in Armenian, we need not postulate a route into Arabic via Aramaic (Maraqten, p. 297). If we are to follow this, the source Aramaic would be JBA (*muhraqā* ‘document’, p. 646a). But we should like to assume that each language took the word from Persian. To say the least of it, al-Ḥīra was full of things Persian, as the two verses above suggest.

1.1.4.2. Other kinds of cloth used for writing

There are five more terms related to cloth, which scholars count as used for writing, but in our poems we find no example. See Appendix for details (A.2).

1.1.5. Wood

1.1.5.1. *naḥla* (pl. *naḥīl*) ‘a palm tree’

46) To be sure, it is easier to translate the word as ‘parchment’: “caprice can never annul what’s inscribed on the parchments” (Arberry, p. 224). The ‘sheets of silk’ mentioned here are the documents of peace after the War of Basūs between Bakr and Taglib through the mediation of the Lakhmid king al-Mundir III bn Nuʿmān [Ibn Māʾ al-Samāʾ] (ca. 505-553), mentioned in line 37 of this poem. But a little later, the peace was about to collapse and this poet of Bakr (al-Ḥārīt bn Ḥilliza) speaks against his antagonist poet of Taglib (ʿAmr bn Kulṭūm) and appeals to the then Lakhmid king, ʿAmr bn al-Mundir [Ibn Hind] (ca. 554-569), rebuking the Taglib poet who entreated the same king (line 21).

47) The verse was quoted by Jones as a phrase in poetry referring to Jewish writings (EQ 3:588b).

48) Nevertheless, we must comment on Asbaghi’s study on Arabic loan words from Persian. He writes (1988:252): *muhraq* “Blatt, Seite” from Persian *muhre* < Mittelpersisch *muhrak* “Kugel, Murrel” with no mention of ‘shell’. But in a standard work the word is: *mohre* ‘small shell; vertebra; bead’ (Lambton, p. 162). Fortunately Steingass-P fills the gap: *muhraq* ‘a shell used in smoothing or glazing paper; glazed paper, etc.’ (p. 1354a) and *muhra* ‘a kind of small shell resembling pearls; glass or coral-beads, etc.’ (p. 1354b).

The most common wooden material for writing was no doubt taken from palm trees (for other kinds of tree, see 1.1.5.2). But we must exercise caution about the terms referring to (parts of) this tree, for there are many similar words which Arab lexica explain only ambiguously.

a) *ʿasīb* (pl. *ʿusub*) ‘a leafless palm branch’⁴⁹⁾

Within our data of ancient poems, two verses employ *ʿasīb* to depict an agile horse trained well⁵⁰⁾. In view of the high esteem of horses among Arabs, *ʿasīb* must have enjoyed a good favor among them.

In some lexicons, *saʿaf* is defined as having almost the same meaning. However, we understand that the same object had two names: *saʿaf* when it is green or alive with leaves, and *ʿasīb* when it is dry with no leaf⁵¹⁾. We find this word used with *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*) ‘a writing, book’ (see 1.5.1) in our data of pre-Islamic poetry.

At the same time, it is very important to notice that a set of basic notions of writing is mentioned in the following verse of Labīd: *zubur* for the result of writing, *qalam* for the writing tool and *ʿusub* for the material to write on. This reflects a good consciousness of writing by the poet. This is the same with the verse of ʿImruʿ al-Qays quoted in 1.0: *ḥaṭṭ* for the script, *zabūr* for the result of writing and *ʿasīb* for the material to write on.

000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd No. 16 (p. 138)⁵²⁾,
 line 2: *فَنِعَافٍ صَارَةً فَالْقَنَانِ كَأَنَّهَا * زُبُرٌ يُرْجَعُهَا وَلَيْدُ يَمَانٍ* ‘[Traces of dwellings were wiped out at ... and became old at ..., and at al-Sūbān], then at slopes of Ṣāra, and at Mt. al-Qanān; (they all look) as if they were writings over which a Yemenite boy moved (his hand) to and fro’. Cf. *naʿf* (pl. *niʿāf*) ‘top of the valley or the slope’; *zubur* (see *zabūr* in 1.5.1);
 line 3: *مُتَعَوِّدٌ لِحِنْ يُعِيدُ بِكَفِّهِ * قَلَمًا عَلَى عُسْبٍ دُئِلْنِ وَبَانٍ* ‘being accustomed, the clever (boy) repeats a pen in his hand over palm stalks which got dry, and (over pieces of) a ben-tree’. Cf. *lahin* = *ḍakīy*; *ḍabula* = *yabisa*; *bān* ‘ben tree’.

In the citation above, the poet portrayed a scene of a Yemenite boy. So people may

49) Taken from Hava, p. 471a. In other dictionaries: ‘palm branch stripped of leaves’ (MSA, pp. 142a, 716a; Lane, pp. 407a, 2041ab). Date palms actually have no ‘branch’ owing to the different botanical make-up. In our study ‘palm branch’ is often used for ‘palm stalk’.

50) 055) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAṣḡar, 6a, line 12: *عَدَوْنَا بِصَافٍ كَالْعَسِيبِ مُجَلَّلٍ* ‘In the morning we went out on a pure (horse) like a palm stalk, covered with a horse-blanket’. Cf. *ḡull* ‘horse-blanket’. 082) Murra bn Hammām, 6c, line 7: *وَعَلَوْتُ أَجْرَدَ كَالْعَسِيبِ مُشَدَّبًا* ‘And I would have mounted a short-haired horse like a pruned palm stalk’. Cf. *ʿaḡrad* ‘short-haired’, *ṣaḡḡaba* ‘to bark, prune’.

51) See *saʿaf* below in this section concerning the usage in al-Yaman according to Ibn Durayd. His definition is to the point with no inconsistency left.

52) Quoted in Jones as one of passages implying “south Arabian forms of writing” (EQ 3:588a). This passage is also referred to by Maraqtan (footnotes 49, p. 293; 59, p. 294), but it was Grohmann 1967:93b (footnote 7) who made the first reference to the older edition (Labīd3, pp. 61-62) with the German translation (Labīd2, p. XXII).

think that writing on a palm branch or a stalk was a Yemenite tradition. Yet it should be made clear that both the vocabulary and the syntax in them belong to genuine North Arabic⁵³⁾. The verses do not speak more than what is written, and the terms used are all common words in North Arabic: *ḥaṭṭ*, *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*) and *ʿasīb* (pl. *ʿusub*). The poet mixed in his poem no South Arabian vocabulary (see 1.5.1, [Note]).

When we turn to the days of Muḥammad, we come across quite an interesting piece of information. If we are to rely on *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* (the classified biographies beginning with Muḥammad) by Ibn Saʿd (784/5-845)⁵⁴⁾, the prophet wrote a missive on *ʿasīb* to send his personal message.

وكتب الى عُذرة في عسيب وبعث به مع رجل من بنى عُذرة فعدا عليه ورد بن مِرْدَاس
احد بنى سعد هُذَيم فكسر العسيب وأسلم واستشهد مع زيد بن حارثة في غزوة وادی
القُرْدَة او غزوة القُرْدَة and he wrote to ʿUḍra on a palm-stalk and sent it with a
man of the Banū ʿUḍra; but Ward bn Mirdās, one of the Banū Saʿd Ḥuḍaym,
rushed upon him and broke the palm-stalk, and he (later) became a Muslim and
fell a martyr with Zayd bn Ḥārīṭa in the raid of Wādī al-Qurā or the raid of
al-Qarada,⁵⁵⁾.

b) *ḡarīd* (unit noun, -a) ‘a leafless palm branch’

It is impossible to know what the difference is between this and the foregoing *ʿasīb* ‘a leafless palm branch’. Amidst unclear explanations, we follow Lane (p. 407a). But as is the case with synonyms, we find a certain semantic development in *ḡarīd*, about which see 1.1.5.3, d). Still, we are frankly ignorant of the exact relation between this and its unit noun *ḡarīd-a* ‘newspaper’ in MSA (Maraqten, p. 294; our footnote 85).

Maraqten lists another synonym (p. 293): *ḥirṣ* or *ḥurṣ* (pl. *ʿaḥrās*, *ḥurṣān*) ‘a leafless palm branch’⁵⁶⁾. According to the source of Maraqten (ʿAlī, 8:132), there are Arab authorities who left documents using this term, but it is not known to us if *ḥirṣ* or *ḥurṣ* is a simple synonym, or if such phrases in historical documents date back to the actual usage of the term in pre-Islamic days.

c) *saʿaf* (unit noun, -a) ‘leaves on the palm-stalk’

Likewise, heed must be taken of *saʿaf*⁵⁷⁾. It is said to have been put to use for

53) To be sure, *qalam* is ultimately a loan (see 1.2.1).

54) We are not quite sure if the work, compiled at so late a period, is to be relied on. Considering that Ibn Saʿd, however, lived one generation earlier than the great historian al-Ṭabarī (838-923), we follow other scholars in that he collected authentic information.

55) Grohmann (1967:94a), quoted by Maraqten (p. 293). The Arabic text = Saʿd2, p. ٢٢, German translation = Saʿd2, pp. 127-128; Saʿd, vol. I, part 2, p. ٣٣. The title of the chapter that contains this passage: ذكر بعثة رسول الله الرسل بكتبه الى الملوك يدعوهم الى الاسلام. In Wellhausen’s text, it is divided into 75 cases of written messages by Muḥammad.

56) = جريد النخل (TA, 17:546b).

57) MSA, pp. 479-480; Lane, p. 1365a. Explanations in lexis may appear confused, but it turns out simple when we understand that the focus of the word is on palm-leaves, with or without a stalk.

writing⁵⁸⁾, but when we learn the difference between *‘asīb* and *sa‘af* (see Ğ2 below), the purport of the statement is very obscure.

To get a clear image of *sa‘af*, *Ġamhara al-Luġa* of Ibn Durayd (837-933)⁵⁹⁾ must be consulted, which offers us noteworthy definitions of words as used in al-Yaman.

Ġ1) وكانوا يكتبون في عَسِيب النخل ‘and they (Yemenites) used to write on palm-stalks’ (*Ġamhara*, under √ZBR, p. 308a).

Ġ2) والعَسِيب: عَسِيب النَّخْلِ، وَهُوَ السَّعَفُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَبْسَ. وَلَا يَسْمَى عَسِيباً حَتَّى يُجَرَّدَ عَنْهُ الْخُوصُ. ‘and *‘asīb* (the palm-stalk) is the stalk of the date, and it is *sa‘af* before it gets dry; and it is not called *‘asīb* till leaves are taken from it’ (*Ġamhara*, under √SB, p. 338a).

d) *ki/urnāfa* (pl. *karānīf*) or *karaba* (pl. *‘akrāb*, *kirāb*) ‘a stalk of the palm-leaf’

We learn that the holy verses were left unedited when Muḥammad died. About this situation, we possess a tradition by al-ʿAzharī (see 1.1.2.3) recorded in lexica, which we shall cite after Lane’s version (≈ LA, p. 3664c) registered under the entry *‘asīb* ‘palm-branch’: “فَبِضَ وَالْقُرْآنُ فِي الْعُسْبِ وَالْقُضْمِ وَالْكَرَانِيفِ” ‘He (Muḥammad) was taken (died) while the Qur-ān was written only upon leafless palm-branches, and skins (or white skins), and stumps of palm-branches” (Lane, p. 2041b).

As in this tradition, *ki/urnāf-a* (pl. *karānīf*), as well as *karab-a* (pl. *‘akrāb*, *kirāb*), is said to have been put to use for writing, but frankly the difference between the two is very hard to tell, with the same definition for both in WKAS: ‘stalk of the palm-leaf which remains on the trunk, leaf-stalk’ (I:113b; I:150b-151a)⁶⁰⁾.

[Note] Writing on the palm-stalk in the north

To the poets like Labīd bn Rabīʿa (see the first verse in this section), the scene might have appeared typical to al-Yaman, but by the time of Muḥammad, people in the north had also employed writing. The existence of many words pertinent to writing leads us to postulate a similar custom current also in the north. So it will not be long before written palm-stalks are found somewhere also in the north. The roles of palm sticks and shoulder bones (see 1.6) are sure to corroborate this.

Then the term *zabūr* should be reserved exclusively for the North Arabic cursive script, which is to be found written on *‘asīb* ‘a palm-stalk’ somewhere in the north. Inscriptions and graffiti became known first from South Arabia but now they are

58) Maraqtan, p. 293; Grohmann, 1967:93b. But *sa‘af* in this context should mean ‘palm-stalks’. See Ibn Durayd’s Ğ2 below. If they were ‘palm-leaves’, *hūṣ* (unit noun, -a) ‘leaves of a palm-tree’ should have been employed.

59) Maraqtan, footnote 45, p. 293. It would be questionable how a scholar, who lived in declining years of Abbasids long after Islam, could have collected original pieces of information about pre-Islamic days in Yemen, not registered so far. But his long stay in Oman might have afforded to him chances to gather relevant information.

60) Maraqtan, p. 294. Honestly, we cannot see what *karab* is from Lane (p. 2602c). TA writes that *karab* = *karānīf* (4:132b).

known engraved in many parts of North Arabia. To put it otherwise, we see today in every copy of al-Qurʾān the result of the development of *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*) on *ʿasīb* (pl. *ʿusub*) in the pre-Islamic days (see 1.5.1, [Note]).

1.1.5.2. Other kinds of tree

Three other kinds of wood are said to have been put to use for writing. However, we find no verse, in the ancient poetry, referring to writing on them.

a) *bān-a* ‘ben tree, Moringa’ (MSA, p. 102a)⁶¹⁾.

b) *ʿilb-a* (pl. *ʿulūb*) ‘rhamnus nabeca or rhamnus spina Christi’ (Lane, p. 2126b)⁶²⁾.

c) *ʿarʿar* ‘juniper’⁶³⁾.

1.1.5.3. Types of wooden objects

a) *ʿasīb* (pl. *ʿusub*) ‘a palm stick’

It is a regret that the length or the size of *ʿasīb* ‘a palm-leaf stalk’ (see 1.1.5.1) is not known, but in view of the episode cited at the end of 1.1.5.1. a), it was as handy and portable as those discovered in the south.

b) *lawḥ* (pl. *ʾalwāḥ*) ‘a (wooden) tablet’⁶⁴⁾

Akkadian *lēʾu(m)* (AHw, pp. 546b-547a), the cognate of Arabic *lawḥu(n)*, covers ‘a writing board of wood or stone (often with wax)’ as well as ‘other types of board including those of metal’. This coverage is amply testified in Arabic *lawḥ* (WKAS, II:1709b-1716b) through the overwhelming quantity of examples and by the precise classification of usages. But in the pre-Islamic poems, we find only a limited number of contexts of ‘a wooden board’ in its literal sense:

000) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, Ahlwardt No. 10 (p. ١٢٢; Qays, p. 83) line 13: وَعَنْسِ

61) Grohmann, 1967:93b; Maraqtan, p.294. To be sure, we find ben-trees in the poems. 000) Bišr bn ʾAbī Ḥāzim, 6b, No. 16, line 2 (Bišr, p. 69): وَصَغِبَ يَزَلُ الْغُفْرُ عَنْ قُدْفَاتِهِ * بِخَافَاتِهِ بَانَ طَوَالَ وَعَزَعُرُ ‘And many a difficult (place), (where) the young of the wild goat slips from the top of the mountain, at the sides (of which grow) tall ben trees and juniper-bushes’. Cf. *zalla* (i) ‘to slip’; *gufr* ‘young of the wild goat’; *quḍfa* (pl. *quḍufāt*) ‘top of a mountain’; *ḥāfa* ‘side, border’. We followed the reading in LA (p. 3275b), while Bišr (p. 69) prints a little different reading. See also the verse quoted by al-ʾAnbārīy (Lyall, 1:625). 015) Muzarrid bn Ḍirār, 7b, line 19: تَسَمَّهْتُ عَنْ مَالِهِ إِذْ رَأَيْتُهُ * غَلَامًا كَعُصْنِ الْبَانَةِ الْبَانَةِ ‘You cheated him about his wealth (camels), for you saw that he was a boy like a branch of the pliant ben tree’. Cf. *tasaffaha* ‘to cheat’; *tagāyada* ‘to be pliant’. Also in 1.1.5.1 we quoted 000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd No. 16, line 3 (p. 138).

62) According to Lane (p. 2126b), *ʿilba* is originally the place where *sidr* (Lane, p. 1331a) grows. It is a species of lote-tree. Grohmann (1967:94b) and Maraqtan (p.294) cites another name: *Zizyphus Spina Christi* L.

63) Maraqtan (p. 294) took up this tree from the comment on our first citation in 1.1.5.1: 000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd No. 16, line 3. The comment is in footnote 3 of Labīd (p. 138). See also the verse of Bišr in footnote 61.

64) Jeffery (pp. 253-254) is inclined to take this word as a loan from Aramaic with Judaic and Christian connotations in mind. But this does not hold good in view of the similar semantic range of the Akkadian cognate. See our discussion just below.

كَأَلْوَاكِ الْإِرَانِ نَسَائُهَا * عَلَى لَاحِبٍ كَالْبُرْدِ ذِي الْحَبِرَاتِ
 ‘I rode many a strong she-camel, (its back being) like boards of the litter, along the road resembling a mantle with many stripes’⁶⁵). Cf. *‘ans* ‘strong she-camel’; *‘irān* ‘coffin, litter to carry the dead’ (LA, p. 67a); *nasa’a* (a) ‘to drive a beast along’; *lāhib* ‘road’; *burd* ‘garment made of streaky cloth’; *hibara* ‘striped garment’.

Or in its figurative sense:

000) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, Ahlwardt No. 1, line23 (p. ٧٤; Zuhayr, p. 61, line 24): وَإِنْ مَالًا لَوَغِثْتُ، خَادَمْتُهُ * بِالْوَاكِ، مَفَاصِلُهَا ظِمَاءُ
 (asses, female and male,) incline (totter) due to difficulty (of the sandy road), she(-ass) fights (against) him [the male] (for the road) with (her hard bones like) wooden boards, joints of her limbs being hard and stiff’. Cf. *waʿt* ‘difficult road’; *ḥādama* = *ḡāhada*; *mafāṣilu ẓimāʿun* ‘hard joints’ (see Lane, p. 1923c).

With no hint of writing in the examples from pre-Islamic times, we must interpret the ‘tablet’ in al-Qurʾān, be it the board for Noah’s ark (54:13), the tablet given to Moses (7:145), or the ‘guarded tablet’ in which is ‘a glorious Qurʾān’ (85:22⁶⁶).

As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to combine these holy verses and the lack of references to writing in pre-Islamic poems⁶⁷. Still, granted that the revelation was understood in the straightforward sense among Muslims, it should be surmised that there existed a certain milieu to take a keen interest in the holy writings of other religions including Sabians, to say nothing of those in Judaism and Christianity.

The Sabians *al-Ṣābiʿūn* (later *al-Ṣābiʿa*)⁶⁸ is mentioned three times in al-Qurʾān (2:62, 5:69, 22:17). Outside of al-Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, we find a very early passage of *lawḥ* in the very secular work *al-ʿAḡānī* (15:138, line 19), with *al-Ṣābiʿūn* at that. Used in the sense of ‘holy tablets’, Jeffery once expressed his concern about the verse⁶⁹. Now we shall check the text (do., 15:137-138) to see if we can do away with Jeffery’s concern. The verse is found in the story why the poet Labīd (bn Rabīʿa bn Mālik bn Ḡaʿfar) composed elegies for his stepbrother (on the mother side) ʿArbad bn Qays.

65) This phrase of ʿImruʿ al-Qays seems to have fascinated later poets, for we find an apparent imitation in Tarafa’s Muʿallaqa: 02m) Tarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6b, Ahlwardt No. 4 (p. ٥٥) line 12: [يَعُوجَاءُ ... أُمُونِ] كَأَلْوَاكِ الْإِرَانِ نَسَائُهَا * عَلَى لَاحِبٍ كَأَنَّهُ ظَهْرُ بُرْجُدٍ
 ‘[on (my) lean-flanked (she-camel) ...] trusty, (its back being) like boards of the litter. I drove her along the road resembling the back of a striped mantle’. Cf. *ʿawḡā* (feminine of *ʿawḡ*) ‘lean (she-camel)’; *burḡud* ‘a streaky woollen garment’. For other similar cases, see WKAS, II:1709b.

66) For the three verses, see the end of this subsection 1.1.5.3, b).

67) It is surely out of place to refer here to a metallic board with an inscription or to a small wooden board, both written in the South Arabian script.

68) As an active participle of *ṣabaʿa* (a) ‘to change one’s religion’, *ṣābiʿ* ‘he who embraces the new al-Islām’ may have another plural *ṣubā*, like *al-qāḏī* and *al-quḏā*, meaning ‘Muslims’. The Arabs used to call the Prophet الصّٰبِی (Lane, p. 1040b). See *Concordance*, 3:231b-232a.

69) Jeffery: “If we can trust the genuineness of a verse ..., we may judge that the word was used in this technical sense among Muhammad’s contemporaries” (p. 254).

Towards the last years of Muḥammad's mission, many tribes had sent delegations to him and accepted Islam, and the leader⁷⁰⁾ of Labīd's tribe, ʿĀmir bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar (a noted family in the famous lineage of ʿĀmir bn Ṣaʿsaʿa) had a due respect for the prophet, though he died a pagan. Probably after he retired from the leadership, he asked Labīd to visit the prophet on a private mission⁷¹⁾. During this visit, he is said to have read al-Qurʾān and copied for himself Sūra 55 'The All-Merciful', and when he met ʿArbad later, he told him about the prophet (do., 15:137, line 28 - p. 138, line 3). It happened, after this, that ʿArbad was stricken by a thunderbolt to death.

The new leader, ʿĀmir⁷²⁾ bn al-Ṭufayl bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar, is said to have tried to negotiate on equal terms with the prophet (the 1st deputation, 8 AH)⁷³⁾. The meeting ended in vain and he died of 'a plague' and, somehow or other, the unnatural death of ʿArbad was brought into the story⁷⁴⁾. The tribal members chose Labīd in the 2nd deputation (9 AH) and there was only one choice left. Labīd came back as a Muslim with 'the account of Resurrection, Paradise and Hell' (do., 15:138, line 14).

It was on this occasion that Surāqa bn ʿAwf bn Rabīʿa (called al-ʿAḥwaṣ) bn Ġaʿfar recited a poem⁷⁵⁾, in derisive words in front of Labīd, the fourth line of which reads:

000) Surāqa bn ʿAwf bn al-ʿAḥwaṣ, 7a, al-ʿAḡānī 15:138, line 14: وَجِئْتُ بِدِينِ
بِأَلْوَحٍ نَجَدٍ بَعْدَ عَهْدِكَ مِنْ عَهْدِ
الصَّابِيِّينَ تَشْوِبُهُ * 'And you brought back the
religion of Sabians, mixing it with the tablets of Najd, to the utmost of what you
know out of knowledge'⁷⁶⁾.

Setting aside if Labīd got hurt or not, Surāqa left a very decisive testimony in this simple verse. He surely had the least interest in the call to Islam but left a very clear footprint of his knowledge about Islam, that Sabians have a certain status, that holy scriptures are written on *ʿalwāḥ*, but that it is new with mixtures of Najd (= Arabic culture). Well done, Surāqa! Be his remark in words only, the prophet's call had permeated well into those who were among the last to convert to Islam.

Thus, whether tablets were put into actual use or not, Arabs had a good cognizance

70) The sequence of the tribal leader in these days: Rabīʿa (called al-ʿAḥwaṣ) bn Ġaʿfar > ʿĀmir (called ʿAbū Barāʿ) bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar > ʿĀmir bn al-Ṭufayl bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar. The second (ʿAbū Barāʿ), Labīd's uncle, is also called *Mulāʿib al-ʿAsinna* 'Player of Spearheads'.

71) The former tribal leader (ʿAbū Barāʿ) had a certain malady and asked the prophet for help. Lyall puts the date around 4 AH (ʿĀmir, p. 90).

72) He was indeed a Bedouin leader, blamed for treachery by some but praised by others for his poems, two of which we find in *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt* as Nos. 106 and 107.

73) About this first deputation to the prophet, part of the same text is found in *Sīra* (Sīra-E, pp. 631-634),

74) Though the sequence of the two deaths is not clear, the text describes them as if in a divine punishment and people interpreted that ʿArbad was also in the fruitless meeting with the prophet and tried to kill him. C. Brockelmann writes that such a plot 'is quite incredible' (EI², V:584a).

75) As his name shows, he is the son of ʿAwf bn al-ʿAḥwaṣ, whose poems we find in *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, Nos. 35 and 36. Surāqa and Labīd have the same great grandfather Ġaʿfar in common, though the former is little known as a poet.

76) See WKAS, II:1710b and Horovitz, p. 122. On account of this mockery or not, he later chose to leave the desert to live his latter life in Kūfa, where he ended his extremely long life (EI², V:584a).

of its use for writing. So the following ḥadīth must have been readily understood.

Musnad 4:431 ult.⁷⁷): وكان الله تبارك وتعالى قبل كل شيء، وكان عرشه على الماء، وكتب في اللوح ذكر كل شيء
 'and before everything was God, Blessed and Exalted, his throne being above water, and he had written the admonition of everything in the tablet'.

To sum up, no linguistic evidence confirms the use of tablets for writing before Islam. Yet the notion of its use in the holy writings had spread through the prophet's mission. Since this was only a concept⁷⁸, the difference in the Hebrew *lūʾh* between 'a stone tablet (of the covenant with Moses)' and 'a wooden board for Noah's ark' was lost in Arabic *lawḥ* 'a tablet or a board'. Just see the following verses from al-Qurʾān.

{al-Qurʾān} *lawḥ* ' (wooden) tablet'

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 'And we wrote for him (Moses) in the Tablets an admonition about everything, and a detailed (explanation) for everything' (7:145, cf. 7:150, 154).

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ
 'Rather it is a glorious Koran in a preserved tablet' (85:21-22).

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْأَوَاحِ وَدُسْرٍ
 'And we transported him (Nūḥ) on (a vessel made of wooden) boards and caulks' (54:13).

c) other wooden objects

As other wooden objects used for writing, Maraqtan listed several items (p. 295)⁷⁹. In addition to *qatab* 'a small saddle for camels' (Lane, p. 2485b; see footnote 95), his list includes: (a) *rahl* 'a saddle for a camel' (Lane, p. 1053c)⁸⁰, (b) *ʾikāf* 'a saddle of an ass' (do., p. 71a)⁸¹, (c) *qidḥ* (pl. *ʾaqdāḥ*) 'featherless divining arrow'⁸²

77) Concordance 6:152a. This location (4:431) corresponds to Musnad, vol. 15, p. 62 (No. 19762) in the edition available to us; see also WKAS, II:1711b. This is nothing but a paraphrase of al-Qurʾān 7:145 (see just below).

78) This has nothing to do with its later utilization for various instruments, e.g. 'school slate or notepad' (WKAS, II:1713a).

79) Maraqtan (p. 295) took up *rawsam* (pl. *rawāsīm* or *rawāsīm*) 'a small wooden board with some words engraved' (Lane, p. 1085c; LA, p. 1646b-c; TA, 32:257b). Explanations in cited lexica suggest that some were used like a stamp or a seal, and others like a tag. But we found no hint of its usage before Islam, nor the sense 'certain books in pre-Islamic times' (Lane, *ibid.*) is without grounds, for in the two editions of the Dīwān of *Dū al-Rumma* (d. 735), whose verse is adduced for this meaning, it is explained otherwise.

80) Maraqtan took up this (p. 295) on account of the famous episode related to the poem No. 45 of *al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʾAkbar* recorded in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* (I:460). Wounded badly, there was nothing for the poet but this for writing.

81) This saddle is generally said to be stuffed with straw (Lane, *do.*), and we found no case of writing.

82) In the passage referred to by Maraqtan (p. 295, footnote 68; Sīra-A2, I, 152 [perhaps to be corrected to I, 53]; Sīra-A1, 23), a boy, on hearing each name of God, wrote it on *qidḥ* to know what the sorcerer did not teach him. To add another sample, seven *qidḥ* were put near Hubal at the Kaʿba, each with a

and (d) *‘aṣā* [*sic*] ‘a walking stick’.

No doubt, an emergency would oblige people to write on something unusual, but such things were by no means used regularly. Some might have been simply a kind of mark or sign due to the nature of the object.

d) The mystery of *sabbūra* ‘a board memo’

It was a surprise to find *sabbūra* in Concordance of Wensinck (2:390b), for the word means ‘a blackboard’ in today’s Arabic, written and spoken⁸³⁾. But the word is clouded with ambiguities, the first of which is the explanation in Arab lexicons.

LA (p. 1920c) defines the word⁸⁴⁾: هي (جريدة من) الألواح من الساج يُكتب فيها (عليها) التذاكير ‘It is ... (*ġarīda* of) boards of a teak tree in (on in TA) which memos are written’. Namely, both *sabbūra* and *ġarīda* are a set of more than one small wooden board. According to Lane (p. 407a), *ġarīda* ‘a palm-branch’ also means “a tally, by which to keep accounts; because a palm-stick is used for this purpose”⁸⁵⁾.

Likened to ‘a memo pad’ in our days, we would like to interpret this as ‘a (set of) memo boards > a board memo’ in the size of what is put in the sleeve (see just below)⁸⁶⁾. Due to the difficulty of the image of *ġarīda*, the meaning of *sabbūra* also remains somewhat vague.

Then we shall be able to interpret the *ḥadīth* quoted in Arab lexica thus: لا بأس أن يصلي الرجل في كُتْمِهِ سُبُورَةً ‘It does not matter that a man may pray with a board memo in his sleeve’ (LA, p. 1920c)⁸⁷⁾.

Reflecting the irrefutable oneness, WAS (p. 429c) divides the usages in two: (a) ‘a board memo to write on’ and (b) ‘a blackboard to write on’ with *muḥḍaṭa* ‘modern’.

Secondly, we were at a loss how to interpret the *ḥadīth* in these lexica, for it has no register in Concordance. If not authentic, it is quite out of place to argue it here, and the same is true with the *ḥadīth*, which Concordance has registered a single occurrence in al-Dārimīy (see 1.5.8): رأيت أبان يكتب عند أنس في سبورة ‘I saw ʿAbān writing on the board memo at (the place of) ʿAnas’ (al-Dārimīy, Muqaddima 43⁸⁸⁾). No matter

word such as: *‘aql* ‘blood money’, *naʿm* ‘yes’, *lā* ‘no’, *min-kum* ‘from you’ and the like (Sīra-A1, 97; A2, 156).

83) MSA (p. 458a), Egyptian (*sabbūra*, p. 395a), Iraqi (*sabbūra*, p. 211b), Moroccan (*sebbura*, p. 134a). There are regions where (*lawh* >) *lōh* prevails as in Syria and Palestine.

84) Words in parentheses are those added or replaced with by TA (11:493a-b). MM (p. 914a) faithfully repeated TA, which was accordingly copied into WAS (p. 429c). TA did not only inherit (11:493a-b) the definition of LA, but also picked up its variant سُبُورَةً (12:41b-42a; Hava, p. 324a). In older dictionaries such as *Ṣiḥāḥ*, the word is missing.

85) To wit, they could make sure, in our imagination, the latest amount of their money. In that case, we wonder how they noted numerals on the palm-stick, even if we understand *ġarīda* as what tells them the latest sum of the money left.

86) This image reminds us of narrow strips of bamboo or wood, used for writing in China and Japan before the days of paper. They were grouped into one, if need be, by thin cords or strings.

87) The sense of this saying is not clear and we may infer that a man can pray with a bankbook in his pocket, following the explanation in Lane above (p. 407a).

88) Registered thus in Concordance (2:390b). This corresponds to No. 509 in Bāb 43 (Dārimīy-1, 1:433) = No. 492 in Bāb 43 (Dārimīy-2, 1:137). In other editions, numbers of both Bāb and *ḥadīth* vary.

who ʿAbān or ʿAnas may be, this saying has no relevance to the prophet’s utterance so that it cannot testify that *sabbūra* was in use in his days.

The third point concerns another version of the same saying: رَأَيْتَ أَبَانَ بْنِ أَبِي عِيَّاشٍ يَكْتُبُ عِنْدَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ فِي سَبُورَةٍ يَعْنِي أَلْوَا حًا (Taḡyīd, p. 109⁸⁹). After quoting the remark of MM (footnote 84), the editor added his observation: ‘*Ġīm* is perhaps from the remnants of the Persian origin in the word’ (ibid., footnote 249)⁹⁰. Earlier TA had stated: *muʿarrab* ‘arabised (from Persian)’ (11:493a and 12:42a)⁹¹.

The comment by this editor surely meets our linguistic concern. Let us recall that at an early stage *Ġīm* was not [dʒ] but [g] ~ [j], and, that some words of Persian origin have gone through irregular spellings for the final -ag [-aɣ] between -ak, -aq and -ag (see 1.1.4.1 [Note] and Appendix A1, j). So the spelling here seems to suggest the earlier stage of the pronunciation shift: *sabbūraya > *-raḡa > *-raha > -ra.

We have argued at some length to remove the phonetic difficulty, but we must state that we know no other specimen of this rare spelling. The worst thing is that no Persian original is known for *sabbūra*. None of the works in the field of Persian loans into Arabic took up this word. Then, seemingly authentic, this is a groundless ghost⁹².

1.1.6. Other materials for writing

Concerning the codification process of al-Qurʿān, al-Suyūṭī lists many things used to record the revelations. In the passage he enumerated⁹³: palm-sticks, flat stones⁹⁴,

89) The editor states in his footnote 249 (ibid.) that this saying corresponds to that of al-Dārimī cited above. To this work, we were referred by ʿAlī (8:265). In view of the extremely rare word form, we are grateful both to the original author (al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, 11 C) and to the editor of the text (Yūsuf al-ʿAṣṣ).

90) The Arabic text reads: وَلَعَلَّ الْجِيمَ مِنْ بَقَايَا الْأَصْلِ الْفَارْسِيِّ لِلْكَلِمَةِ. Contrary to Yūsuf, another work that probably refers to the same source prints: سَبُورَجَة (Dārimī-1, p. 434).

91) See footnote 84.

92) On the contrary, another word has a good Persian etymology in Pahlavi (p. 83): *taxtag* ‘tablet, plank’ > Modern Persian *taxte* ‘board, plank, table’ (Lambton, p. 39). In Arabic, the related form *taḥt* (pl. *tuḥūt*) ‘wardrobe’ was recorded first as a Persian loan in 14 C (LA, p. 422a) followed by TA (18C, 4:468a-b). In 19C, Lane (p.298c) listed *taḥta* ‘a board or plank’ corroborated by *taḥtaḡ* (pl. *taḥāṭiḡ*) ‘wood, board’ in the contemporary MM (pp. 159b-160a), recently by *taḥta* (pl. *tuḥat*) ‘board, desk, blackboard’ (MSA, p. 111b) and by *taḥta* ‘blackboard; wooden chair for pupils [*muwallad* ‘postclassical’]’ (WAS, p. 85a). The word shows a further semantic development in the colloquial: *taxta* (pl. *tuxat*, *tuxūta*, *taxtāt*) ‘school desk and chair set; blackboard’ (Egyptian, p. 123a), while in Iraqi (p. 55a) it is confined to the kitchen: *taxta* ‘chopping board, bread board’. The biggest difference, however, from *sabbūra* is that it has no registry in Concordance.

93) Grohmann, 1967:96a; Maraḡten footnote 67, p. 295. For palm-sticks, leather or skin, see above; for saddles in particular, see the previous section (1.1.5.3, c). For *liḥāf* ‘flat stones’, see footnote 95.

94) As a type of stone used for writing, Maraḡten referred to *salima* (pl. *silām*) in line 2 of Labīd’s Muʿallaqa (see 1.4.2) and writes that the poem mentions it as a writing material. We found, however, no hint of this in commentaries nor in translations. Also, he writes that it ‘is said in Arabic sources to be of Yemeni origin’ (p. 300). But as lexica states clearly, it is the form of the definite article (in the quoted verse in lexica) that was ascribed to *luḡatun li-Ḥimyara* (Ṣiḡāḥ, II:298). Lane also blames Freytag that “(the word is) incorrectly said by him to be of the dial. of the people of Ḥimyer” (p. 1414c).

small fragments, red skin, bones (shoulder and rib) of livestock and saddles for camels⁹⁵⁾.

Certainly it seems that most of them were put to use on urgent occasions, but in no way under ordinary situations. Nonetheless, we learn that the contrary is true, as far as bones of livestock are concerned. The following episode of the prophet speaks for itself:

‘The Messenger of God said, “Bring me a shoulder (bone) and an inkstand. I will write for you so that you will not err later”’ (Sa’d, vol. II, part 2, p. 37, ll. 9-10).

In addition to bones, scholars have taken up other materials such as bark (or bast), clay, metals, stones and pottery, glass⁹⁶⁾. The texts written on most of them are generally termed as inscriptions and discussed in epigraphical studies. Certainly North Arabic texts have been discovered in several inscriptions, but they are doubtless beyond our study of pre-Islamic poetry.

1.2. Writing utensils

1.2.1. *qalam* (pl. *ʾaqlām*) ‘a writing-reed, pen’

1.2.1.1. The etymology of *qalam*

What with the famous title of the sixty-eighth Sūra of al-Qurʾān and what with usages in pre-Islamic poetry, it is evident that this term has a deep root in Arabic. But it at once turns out to be a loan in front of Greek *κάλαμος* or Latin *calamus* ‘reed, writing-reed’.

As regards the route of borrowing, no Aramaic language is of help, since Syriac uses another word: *qanyā* ‘a reed, scribe’s pen’ (Syriac, pp. 1383b-1384a)⁹⁷⁾ and in other Jewish Aramaic languages the phonetic forms are different, no matter how

95) وقد تقدّم في حديث زيد أنه جمع القرآن من العُشب والليخاف ... والرقاع ... وقطع الأديم ... والأكتاف ... والأضلاع ... والأقتاب. فالعشب ... والليخاف ... صفائح الحجارة والرقاع جمع رُقعة وقد تكون من جلد أو رَقّ أو كاغد، والأكتاف جمع كتف وهو العظم الذي للبعير أو الشاة كانوا إذا جفّ كتبوا ‘It was stated above in the saying of Zayd (bn Tābit) that he collected al-Qurʾān from palm-sticks, flat stones ... small fragments ... pieces of red skin ... shoulders ... ribs ... and saddles. Namely, palm-sticks ... and *liḥāf* ... are flat thin surfaces of stones, *riqāʿ* (plural of *ruqʿa* “a small piece”; it may be of leather or thin skin [or paper <to be deleted>]), and *ʾaktāf* (plural of *katif* “a shoulder”; it is the bone of a camel or a sheep, on which they had written when it got dry), and *ʾaqtāb* (plural of *qatab* “a saddle”; it is wood which is put on the back of a camel to ride on)’ (*al-ʾItqān*, 1857:137; 1326:385-386). This Arabic text says that *liḥāf* is the plural of **lahfa* and Arab lexica repeat this. But WKAS (II:430a) corrected this by listing *liḥāf-a* as its unit noun taken from ḥadīth. This had been transmitted with an error and all the usages go back to the same ḥadīth. So **lahfa* is a ghost word with no attestation out of this ḥadīth.

96) Maraqtan, pp. 297-300; Grohmann, 1967:94a, 111-116.

97) There are two confusing words in Syriac: **qālāmōs* (Thesaurus, col. 3456), a simple phonetic transcription of the Greek, and *qalamā* (Thesaurus, col. 3635), a very late loan from Arabic. Neither one of them belongs to the authentic Syriac.

apparent the borrowing may be: **qulmōs* ‘reed (of the scribe)’ (JPA, Addenda, p. 843b), *qulmōsā* ‘scribe’s reed’ (JBA, p. 991b)⁹⁸ or *qulmas* (Targum Jonathan)⁹⁹. The word is found in Ancient South Arabian, to be sure, but the meaning is quite different: *qlm* ‘kind of incense’ (calamus odoratus or aromatic calamus)¹⁰⁰. All in all, Nöldeke had to choose the route via Ge’ez, evidently due to the least phonetic obstacle: ቀለም *qalam* ‘ink, color, pen, reed’¹⁰¹, generally followed by others¹⁰².

Certainly the influence of the Ethiopic language cannot be ignored in view of the two important events in Muḥammad’s lifetime¹⁰³. Notwithstanding, the usage of the term in the poetry is sure to date back to days earlier than these events. For instance, al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar¹⁰⁴ lived in the earlier days of 6 C.

All things considered, we may renew Nöldeke’s view according to Leslau’s note. In view of the polysemy of the word¹⁰⁵, Leslau is of the opinion that the meanings ‘reed, stalk’ of the word, if set apart from ‘ink, color’, would come directly either from Greek or through Ar[abic]. *qalam*, whereas *qalam* ‘ink, color’ is an Ethiopian root (Leslau, pp. 428b-429a)¹⁰⁶. It is well-known that Arabia had a good cultural relationship with the Hellenistic world, not to mention the expedition into deep Arabia (26-24 BCE) by Aelius Gallus under the command of Augustus.

Thus it would be more logical that Arabia had got in direct touch with κάλαμος or *calamus* as a writing utensil. Once in Arabic, it soon became a general term for writing, be it used on a papyrus, a piece of cloth, a parchment or a wooden stick. As regards the usage of *qalam* in the pre-Islamic poems, see sections: 1.1.2.2 (al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar), 1.1.5.1 (Labīd bn Rabīʿa), 1.5.2 (ʿUmayya bn ʿAbī al-Ṣalt), 1.5.3 (Muʿāwiya bn Mālik bn Ǧaʿfar).

Concerning other terms¹⁰⁷, we know *mirqam* (1.3.1.5), *mizbar* (1.5.1 [Note]) and *yarāʿ* (1.2.1.2), but they are all mere synonyms. It so happened that we found no usage of these as ‘a pen’ in pre-Islamic poems¹⁰⁸. Lastly, Grohmann lists various virtues

98) In these languages, *qanē*, *qanyā* means ‘reed, cane’ only (JPA, pp. 496b-497a; JBA, pp. 1028b-1029a).

99) The language(s) of most Targums are difficult to classify: u-miš-šēḇaṭ Zəḇūlūn kālēḇīn bə-*qulmas* də-sāḇar “and from the tribe of Zebulun, they were writing with the pen of a scribe” (Targum Jonathan, Judges 5:14).

100) Biella, p. 457; Ricks, p. 147.

101) Nöldeke, p. 50; Leslau, p. 428b.

102) Jeffery (pp. 242-243); Hebbo, pp. 301-302.

103) First, the year of his birth is called ‘the year of the elephant’, traditionally calculated to 570, when Abraha’s Ethiopian army came near Makka. Second, believers in the earliest difficult period took refuge in Abyssinia across the Red Sea, who must have brought back many things. Moreover, the most important point is that people went and came across the Sea long since.

104) See section 1.1.2.2 for the verse 054) by this poet. We find other usages also by Labīd bn Rabīʿa (see 1.5.1, 07m), but he died long after al-Hiǧra.

105) *Qalam* in Ge’ez means: ‘ink, color, inkstand, pen, reed, stalk, letter, words, knowledge derived from books’ (Leslau, pp. 428b-429a).

106) But he also adds: “Since, however, ‘reed’ and ‘ink’ are used in writing, it is also possible that they go back to a single root *qalam*” (loc.cit.).

107) See Gacek (p. 40) for more terms.

108) LA (p. 1804c) and TA (11:399b) provide us with a so-called *ḥadīth* about ʿAbū Bakr (d. 634): وَ

Arabs had attributed to *qalam* (1967:117a-123a). Just one of them in advance (1967:118a): القلم أحد اللسانين.

1.2.1.2. *qalam* ‘pen’ or ‘reed’?

It is not known if Arabic inherited the sense of ‘reed’ for *qalam* from the original Greek or Latin, or if it was exploited in Arabic independently. Seeing that *qalam* is defined as a pen when it (*yarāʿa*) is sharpened (TA 33:290b), the distinction between ‘reed’ and ‘pen’ was somewhat ambiguous.

However, *qalam* generally seems to have meant ‘pen’ in our corpus of the ancient pre-Islamic poems¹⁰⁹⁾, though *qaṣab* and *yarāʿ*¹¹⁰⁾ are said to have stood sometimes also for ‘pen’. In the following example¹¹¹⁾, *yarāʿ* means ‘reed’.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 35: مَحْفُوفَةٌ وَسَطَ الْبَرِّاعِ يُظِلُّهَا * مِنْهُ
(the water) surrounded by (*lit.* among) the reeds, casting a shadow (over the water), some of the thicket broken, and (many others) standing upright’. Cf. *ḥaffa* (u) ‘to surround’; *ṣarraʿa* ‘to throw down’; *qawīm* (pl. *qiyām*) ‘upright’.

{al-Qurʾān} *qalam* ‘a pen’

As distinct from other words related to writing, one *sūra* (the 68th) has *Qalam* as its title. It is used four times in the text, but in one verse the usage is somewhat exceptional¹¹²⁾. As seen above, *qalam* is made of reed, but the last verse below takes it for granted that there exist pens made of trees.

1) singular (twice):

وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ ‘By the pen and (by) what they write, you are not, by the blessing of your Lord, possessed (of the devil)’ (68:1-2).

and in the *ḥadīth* of ʿAbū Bakr is that he called for an inkstand and a pen in his disease and then wrote the name of Caliph after him’.

This episode is a good witness that *mizbar* was a synonym of *qalam*.

109) But the word *miqlam* ‘a stick (*qaḍīb*) for domestic animals’ (LA, p. 3729c) may presuppose that the stick is made from the stalk of the reed. For another word *miqlama* ‘a pen case’, see Grohmann, 1967:123a. This suggests that *miqlama* ‘pen’ (Hava, p. 625b) is an error. But we did not find them used in the corpus of the pre-Islamic poetry.

110) Grohmann, 1967:117a, footnote 3. See also Maraqtan, p. 303.

111) To understand the following verse (line 35), please read in advance line 34 here. 07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 34: مَسْجُورَةٌ مُتَجَاوِرًا فَلَامُهَا * فَتَوَسَّطَا عُرْضَ السَّرِيِّ وَصَدَعَا ‘Then the two (a couple of asses) jumped at the middle of the side of the streamlet and crossed the water full to the brim, the saltwort plant (growing) thickly’. Cf. *ʿurḍ* ‘lateral part’; *sarīy* ‘trench for watering, streamlet’; *ṣaddaʿa* ‘to split, cross’; (*ʿayn*) *masgūra* ‘a full eye or source (Lane, p. 1309a)’; *qullām* = *qāqullā* ‘saltwort’ (LA, p. 3730a). In the commentary of al-Tibrīzīy (p. 76), *qullām* is said to be *qaṣab*.

112) We find in the dictionaries: *ʿaqlām* ‘divinatory arrow (Hava, p. 625b); arrow in the game (Steingass, p. 854a); a headless arrow used in casting lots (Penrice, p. 120b)’. وَمَا كُنْتُ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَفْلاَمَهُمْ ‘And you were not with them when they were casting their lot pens, (to decide) which of them should have charge of Mary’ (3:44 once).

وَرُبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ‘And your Lord is the Most Generous who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know’ (96:3-5).

2) plural (once):

وَلَوْ أَنَّكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ ‘Even if what there are of a tree on the earth should be pens, and (even if) the sea (as the source of ink), the seven seas should extend (themselves to help) it after it (had been exhausted), God’s words would not be exhausted’ (31:27).

1.2.2. *midād* ‘ink’

Concerning ink¹¹³⁾, we must admit that the usages are much limited in ancient poems we have studied. We know three words for ‘ink’ (see [Note] below) but it was *midād* before Islam and during the prophet’s lifetime. It is very strange that we find no plural for this word.

000) al-Mutalammis al-Ḍubāʿīy, 6b, No. 3, line 2¹¹⁴⁾: رَمَيْتُ بِهَا حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ * مِدَادَهَا * يَطُوفُ بِهَا النَّيَّارُ فِي كُلِّ جَدْوَلٍ ‘I threw it so that I saw its ink (of the letter and) the waves go round it in the whole creek’. Cf. *ḡadwal* ‘creek, trench’.

114) ʿAbd Allāh bn ʿAnama al-Ḍabbīy, 7a, line 5¹¹⁵⁾: فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا دِمْنَةٌ وَمَنَارِلٌ * كَمَا رُدُّ فِي خَطِّ الدَّوَاةِ مِدَادُهَا ‘Nothing had remained except traces, and dwellings were as if (new) ink had traced along the (old) line of the ink-pot again’. Cf. *dimna* ‘traces of encampment’.

{al-Qurʾān} *midād* ‘ink’

Though used only once, the metaphor has an excellent persuasion. Supposedly, the phrase relies on the natural pair ‘pen and ink’, providing us with a hint that they belonged to everyday commodities.

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ‘Say, “If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord are exhausted, even if we should bring (him) its like as a replacement”’ (18:109, used only once).

[Note] Two synonyms of ‘ink’

a) *nīqs* (pl. *ʿanqus*, *ʿanqās*)

113) See Grohmann, 1967:127-131.

114) We owe this reference to Fraenkel (p. 247), which quoted Jacut (4:228). This verse pictures a famous scene, where he threw the king’s letter into the creek. Out of several transmitted texts, we followed the reading in Mutalammis (p. 67). The first line of the poem is found in 1.5.2.

115) About the poetic license, see Wright, § 249 (2:387).

This word was very ephemeral¹¹⁶⁾ as ‘ink’ due to no trace before Islam or in our days. The only example with us is the work by a very late poet, al-Marrār bn Sa‘īd al-Faq‘asīy¹¹⁷⁾. This verse seems to have been once well-known, for it is quoted in al-‘Anbārīy’s commentary to the verse of 114) ‘Abd Allāh bn ‘Anama al-Ḍabbīy (cited just above, Lyall, 1:743) and in LA (pp. 3592c and 4522b)¹¹⁸⁾.

b) *ḥibr* (pl. *‘ahbār, ḥubūr*)

In Fihrist (1:9, note 2:5) compiled by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995), scholars first noticed two phrases *man kataba bi-l-midād* ‘he who wrote in *midād*’ and *man kataba bi-l-ḥibr* ‘... in *ḥibr*’, and later scholars identified the former as carbon ink and the latter as tannin ink¹¹⁹⁾. By the days of Ibn al-Nadīm (around 1000), Arabic calligraphy had reached its zenith with various tints of *ḥibr* for adornment. This might allow us to assume that *ḥibr* is a native Arabic vocabulary¹²⁰⁾. After this period¹²¹⁾, non-Arab peoples came into Islamic centers one after another, and today two words are almost synonyms.

1.2.3. *dawā* (pl. *dawa-n, dawayāt*) ‘ink-stand’

In addition to the verse below, another one by 114) ‘Abd Allāh bn ‘Anama al-Ḍabbīy has been quoted above (see 1.2.2)¹²²⁾. Moreover, we have learned that the prophet made use of it, though we do not find the word in al-Qur‘ān (see 1.1.6).

074) Ta‘laba bn ‘Amr, 6j, line 3: أَكَبَّ عَلَيْهَا كَاتِبٌ بِدَوَاتِهِ * يُقِيمُ يَدَيْهِ تَارَةً
وَيُخَالِفُ ‘A writer leaned with his inkpot (in hand) over them (parchments), at

116) See the discussion about *ḥibr* below. Against the newcomer *ḥibr*, *midād* kept its traditional sense.

117) Al-‘Aḡānī (9:159) wrote: ‘and al-Marrār is one of *muḥaḍrams* (footnote 226) of two dynasties; also it is said that he did not overtake the Abbasid dynasty’. So he lived mostly in the Umayyad period.

118) Ambiguous as it was in the citation of LA (ibid.), TA identified who al-Marrār was in the footnote (16:575a) referring to ‘Ubāb (p. 464). Despite subtle differences in reading the text among the cited works, we follow that of Lyall (1:743). 000) al-Marrār bn Sa‘īd al-Faq‘asīy, 7b, LA, p. 4522b: عَفَّتِ الْمَنَازِلُ غَيْرَ مِثْلِ الْأَنْفُسِ * بَعْدَ الزَّمَانِ عَرَفْتَهُ بِالْقُرْطُسِ ‘The dwellings have been effaced, (it was) not (written) as in inks; after (a lapse of) the time, you knew it on the parchment’.

119) Grohmann, 1967:127; EI², 6:1031b; Gacek, p. 132.

120) In contrast to the simple black ink, *ḥibr* (< √HBR ‘to beautify’, Lane, p. 498c) could supply various tints. Once Nöldeke stated that “[Syriac] *hebrā* stands for ordinary ink” (1875, p. 61, footnote 1) and Fraenkel (p. 247) understood this to mean that Arabic took it from Syriac *hebrā*. But these remarks should be corrected. According to Wright-Cat, all the three references in Syriac (Nöldeke’s source) date from 10 C. The first instance (Wright-Cat, 2:580b) reads: *hebrā dā raq* ‘*hebrā* of parchment’ (see footnote 32), while the second (2:580b-581a) reads: *dāyōlā dā raq ‘awkēl hebrā* ‘ink of parchment, that is, *hebrā*’. In Arabic and Karshuni text of 9 C (3:1085a-b) we read: *ṣifa al-ḥibr al-‘aswad* ‘the description of black ink’ and in another Karshuni (3:1207b, date unspecified): *ṣifa ‘amal al-ḥibr al-‘aswad* ‘the description of making black ink’. From these we might say that the basic word of ink in Syriac is *dāyōlā* while *hebrā* was borrowed from Arabic *ḥibr* by 9 C at the latest. In Syriac, the etymology of *hebrā* is hard to explain and Hatch (pp. 10-11) used only *dāyōlā* in his work. In this footnote, we owe much to bibliographical information in Sokoloff’s Syriac Lexicon (p. 294b).

121) Roughly speaking, after the days of Ibn Muqla (d. 940) and Ibn Bawwāb (d. 1022). See Takashina, 2020, section 3.3.

122) Also from the very late date: 000) ‘Abū Du‘ayb al-Hudālīy, 7b (see 1.0).

one time making his hands straight and (at another) returning them back’. Cf. *ʿakabba* ‘to lean over’; *ḥālafa* ‘to do differently from’.

While we speak of the etymological relation between Arabic *dawā* and Biblical Hebrew *dəyō* ‘ink’ hesitatingly, Hebrew scholars take it practically confirmed (HAL, p. 211a). So far as Aramaic is concerned, it shares the same etymology with Hebrew: *dəyōtā* ‘black ink’ (Syriac, p. 294b¹²³); JBA, p. 328b).

So we might suspect a mystery in this word. If no scholar can deny the cognate relationship between Arabic *ḥayā* ‘life’ (feminine singular) and Hebrew *ḥayy-īm* (masculine plural) ‘life’, we might also take the relation of ‘ink’ between the two as cognate. Then the history of ink in Arabic can rush back to the long past at once. We know Nabataean documents were written on papyri in ink (2 C AD). So undoubtedly Arabs knew the name of ink. With no evidence, it is to be conjectured that, as Arabic *dawā* shifted its sense to ‘ink-stand’, ‘ink’ itself began to be felt necessary and *midād* filled its place¹²⁴. Certainly, *miḥbar(a)* ‘inkstand’ is a later coinage.

1.2.4. *ḥātām* (pl. *ḥawātim*) ‘seal’

In the days we are discussing, seals were certainly indispensable to some types of written document.

103) Zabbān bn Sayyār, 6b, line 4 (see 1.5.4 for line 3): مَنَى تَفَرُّوْهَا تَهْدِيْكُم مِّنْ ضَلَالِكُمْ * وَتَعْرِفْ إِذَا مَا قُضَّ عَنْهَا الْحَوَاتِمُ ‘When you read it (a sheet of skin), it will guide you from your error, and it shall be known if seals are to be broken’. Cf. *faḍḍa* (u) ‘to break a seal’.

{al-Qurʾān} *ḥātām* ‘seal’

The one-time phrase below is well-known, and by virtue of this figurative usage, no one can deny the actual role and effect of seals in the society.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ‘Muḥammad is not the father of one of your men but (he is) the Messenger of God and the Seal of the prophets. God is all-knowing about everything’ (33:40).

1.3. Writing and reading

1.3.1. Writing

1.3.1.1. *kataba* ‘to write’

Though we do not find any example of finite forms of this verb, its active participle

123) For Syriac *ḥebrā*, see footnote 120.

124) The pattern of this word is that of the verbal noun of *mādda* (III) ‘to stretch, spread (ink)’. Does this explain why *midād* has no plural?

kātib ‘writer’ is by no means rare in pre-Islamic poetry: ʾAbū Duʾayb al-Huḍalīy (see 1.0, contemporary with the prophet), al-ʾAḥnas bn Šihāb al-Taḡlibīy (1.1.2.1) and Taʿlaba bn ʿAmr (1.2.3). It was perhaps a common word among Arabs. Considering that there were many Christian Arabs, they probably have heard Syriac *kāṭab* (√KTB) from Syrian or Nestorian missionaries¹²⁵).

{al-Qurʾān} *kataba* ‘to write’

The overwhelming frequency of this verb in al-Qurʾān (56 times including 5 times as ‘a writer’) marked a beginning of another writing civilization. Here one example will be enough (see 1.1.5.3, b) *ult.*). On the other hand, three other verbs ‘to write’ in al-Qurʾān (see below) show an old tradition lingering in the new era.

1.3.1.2. *saṭara* ‘to write’

We found no example of this verb in pre-Islamic poems of our corpus except its verbal noun *saṭr* (see 1.4.4) in the sense of ‘a line’. However, verses in al-Qurʾān enables us to assume its use as a verb in pre-Islamic days.

{al-Qurʾān} *saṭara* ‘to write’

Thanks to some inflected forms except perfect, we infer its more frequent use in pre-Islamic days. For imperfect, see verse 68:1 (once) in 1.2.1.2 *ult.* Here we list a passive participle. For مُسْتَطَرَّ ‘inscribed’ (54:53 once), see 1.5.1, *ult.*

كَانَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ‘that is inscribed in the book’ (17:58; 33:6; cf. 52:2).

1.3.1.3. *ḥaṭṭa* ‘to draw lines > to write’

For this verb, see Maraqtan (p. 307). We found no example in pre-Islamic poems, but an example in al-Qurʾān below ensures its use in pre-Islamic times¹²⁶ (see 1.4.1).

{al-Qurʾān} *ḥaṭṭa* ‘to write’

As with *saṭara* in al-Qurʾān (see 1.3.1.2), we wonder what connotation the use of this

125) Unlike *kitāb* ‘a book’ (see 1.5.3), it is difficult to judge if the verb is also a loan. Nabataean Arabs worshiped a god ʾl-ktb (ʾal-*kutbā*) at Ramm or at Tell eš-Šuqāfiye (near ʾIsmāʿīliya, Egypt). Still earlier, another god hn-ktb (**han-ʾaktab*) is found at al-ʿUlā (JS liḥ 37 and 62), of which *han-* is a variant of the article. They correspond to *al-ʾAʿazz* and *al-ʿUzzā*, which scholars compare to the Babylonian scribe god Nabu. For the Syriac witness (3 C AD), we quote from the edition different from the one cited hitherto (Cureton, Syriac on p. 25 with English on p. 44): “The people of Mesopotamia also worshiped Hebrew (*sic*) KWTBY (goddess, كُتْبَي kutbay?), for it saved Bakr the patrician of Edessa from his enemies.” With the precise Arabic morphology in these names, Arabs could have used the verb *ktb* since old times. As to the references, see Maraqtan (p. 307 with his footnote 173) and Patrich, p. 61.

126) A very late sample of the verb *ḥaṭṭa* is quoted in footnote 140. The word has a deep root in Ancient North Arabic: *ḥṭṭ* ‘to write’ in Hismaic (Harding - Some, p. 52b) and Safaitic (see footnote 190) *ḥṭṭ* ‘writing, writer’ (Al-Jallad, p. 320a). Hismaic has had other names in the past (Thamudic, Thamudic E, Tabuki Thamudic or South Safaitic) and dates back roughly between 1 C BC and 1 C AD.

verb, other than *kataba*, had.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخْطُهُ بِيَمِينِكَ
‘Before it, you did not recite from a book or inscribe it with your right hand’ (29:48 once).

1.3.1.4. *waḥā* ‘to write’

In ancient poems, traces of old dwellings, which are left in a dim line on the stony or sandy ground, are often compared to ‘writing’. In this part of the poem (see 1.0), we find a verbal noun *waḥy* (see 1.4.2) of the verb *waḥā* (i) ‘to write’. But strangely, we know no usage of this verb in a conjugated form. So we can cite no example here from pre-Islamic poems. While the term *waḥā* ‘to write’ is taken to have existed in pre-Islamic times by Muslim scholars, it is doubted if the verb was put to actual use before Islam, granted that it had meant ‘to write on a stone’ (see 1.4.2). On top of it, we have no record of this verb in ancient North Arabic inscriptions either.

The probable discovery, in the future, of *zabūr* or *‘asīb* in the northern part of the peninsula will make clear whether *waḥy* was limited to writing on stones, or whether the verb was used in its full inflection.

{al-Qurʾān} *ʾawḥā* ‘to reveal’

In al-Qurʾān, there is a shift of the usage of √WHY. The verbal noun *waḥy* is now a common noun ‘revelation’¹²⁷⁾, and the verb is used in the derived stem *ʾawḥā* (IV) ‘to reveal, let know, make a signal’ (Lane, p. 3050c; Kassis, p. 1264). In the early Islamic period, we find an example in the verse of 016) al-Marrār bn Munqid¹²⁸⁾ who speaks about ‘writing books’. This verse is clearly different from those in 1.4.2, because *waḥy* here is a real verbal noun signifying an actual writing, if it is not an inflected form.

016) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 56: وَتَرَى مِنْهَا رُسُومًا قَدْ عَفَتْ * مِثْلَ خَطِّ
‘you will see traces of it (the abode) erased, (leaving something) like the line *lām* in writing books’.

We observe the same nuance also in the poem of Dū al-Rumma (d. 735) quoted below. It seems as if poets tried to ‘revive’ the verb *waḥā* ‘to write’ in order to add the taste of a desert life to his poem. It was now in the days of Islam, when al-Qurʾān is full of *kataba* and its derivatives.

000) Dū al-Rumma, 8 C, No. 45 (No. 66 in Macartney), line 4: كَأَنَّ قَرَأَ جَرْعَائِهَا * يَهُودِيَّةُ الْأَقْلَامِ وَخَيَ الرِّسَائِلِ
‘It is as if on the back of its sandy ground the pens of Jews¹²⁹⁾ repeated writing missives’. Cf. *qara-n* = *ṣahr*; *ḡarʿā*

127) Neuirth discussed this (pp. 52ff.), but frankly we could not avail ourself of her argument. We owe this work of Neuirth once again to the anonymous referee.

128) For the sake of discussion, we cite here successively two verses composed after Islam.

129) Seeing that the ordinary interpretation yields no practical sense, we tentatively understand thus.

‘sandy ground’; *rağğā‘a* ‘to repeat’.

1.3.1.5. *raqama* ‘to write’

As quoted in 1.0, we find a verbal noun in the verse of a muḥadram poet ʿAbū Duʿayb al-Hudalīy. This suggests to us that the verb was also in use in pre-Islamic days and our assumption is in good harmony with the usage in al-Qurʾān below. See also 1.4.3.

{al-Qurʾān} *raqama* ‘to write’

It is difficult to get a precise meaning of *kitāb marqūm* in al-Qurʾān used only twice in almost the same context. Lane lists from Arabic lexica for *raqama* (u) ‘to write; to seal, stamp; to mark the writing with dots’ (p. 1138c) and explains this phrase as ‘a writing sealed or stamped’¹³⁰⁾ (do., p. 1140a). But in view of *raqīm* ‘a book or a writing’ (do., p. 1139b) and *mirqam* ‘= *qalam*’ (LA, p. 1709a), it seems fitting to take the basic sense as ‘to write’. Moreover, this sense would suit the second verse in section 1.0 best.

وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا سَجَّيْنِ كِتَابٍ مَرْقُومٍ ‘and what has taught you what Siğğīn is? (It is) a written book’ (83:8-9).

وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا عَلَيُّونَ كِتَابٍ مَرْقُومٍ ‘and what has taught you what ʿIllīyūn is? (It is) a written book’ (83:19-20).

1.3.1.6. *nammaqa* ‘to write (elegantly)’

For this verb, we have only one example by al-Nābiḡa al-Ḍubyānīy (see 1.1.2.3) recorded in Arab lexica: Ṣiḡḡāḥ (2:123), LA (p. 4549b), TA (26:439b-440a)¹³¹⁾. LA explains *nammaqa al-ḡild* as equal to *naqqaša-hū wa-zayyana-hū bi-l-kitāba* ‘to embellish and decorate the parchment (leather) by writing’¹³²⁾.

In other words, the verb signifies adornment rather than writing itself¹³³⁾. But when we take it literally, the phrase connotes a great thing. There were people who wanted to adorn something by writing or by letters. Such a society must have attained quite a mature degree of cultural development. But to our regret, we find no usage of this verb in al-Qurʾān.

1.3.1.7. ʿaʿlama ‘to put a mark’

130) Maraqtan gives it a ‘stamped book’ (p. 303), quoting from M. ʿA. Ghul’s work (p. 303, footnote 136).

Though in the second place in TA after ‘to write’ (32:272a), LA lists first ‘to supply a writing with diacritical dots’ (p. 1709a) and *kitāb marqūm* as its example, and in this point TA follows LA.

131) There is a variant *nabaqa* which the three registered as a separate entry: Ṣiḡḡāḥ (2:121), LA (p. 4328b), TA (26:411b).

132) Instead of ‘to engrave’, LA (p. 4522c) writes that *naqqaša* is *namnama-hū* ‘to embellish it’.

133) LA writes (loc. cit.): “*ṭawb namīq* or *munammaq* is *manqūš* ‘(a garment) adorned’; it is said that this is the origin and the usage increased until it was applied to writing: *al-namaq* ‘a (beautifully written) book’”. Due to, however, no information about what period of Arabic LA ascribes this to, we cannot take it as pre-Islamic. TA missed *al-namaq* ‘a book’.

With some reservation, we list *ʿa^clama* ‘to put a mark’ (Lane, p. 2139c) which means at times ‘to impress, inscribe’ as in the following verse.

04m) ʿAntara bn Šaddād al-ʿAbsīy, 6b, line 38: * وَلَقَدْ شَرِبْتُ مِنَ الْمُدَامَةِ بَعْدَمَا رَكَدَ الْهَوَاجِرُ بِالْمَشُوفِ الْمُعْلَمِ ‘I drank from wine, after the hottest hours (of the day) got abated, (wine) bought for the glittering (coin with marks of letters or images) engraved’. Cf. *mudāma* ‘wine’, *rakada* ‘to become still’, *hāğira* (pl. *hawāğir*) ‘the hottest hour of the day’, *mašūf* ‘polished (pp. of *šāf*) > glittering coin’.

1.3.2. Reading

In pre-Islamic poems we have studied, we know only one verb for reading, while in al-Qurʾān we have some verbs related to reading.

1.3.2.1. *qaraʾa* ‘to read’

In pre-Islamic poems, it was difficult for us to locate this verb. In addition to the verse of Zabbān bn Sayyār, 6b (see 1.2.4), we quote the following. The derived verb *muqtariʿ* (VIII) ‘a reader’ in the verse of Šaḥr al-Ġayy, 7a (see 1.5.1 [Note] *ult.*) will also corroborate the use of *qaraʾa* ‘to read’.

000) ʿAdīy bn Zayd bn al-ʿIbādīy, 6j, ʿAdīy, No. 103, line 17 (p. 160): وَأُوتِيَا الْمُلْكَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ نَقَرُوهُ * نَشْفِي بِحِكْمَتِهِ أَخْلَامَنَا عِلَلًا ‘They (Adam and Eve) were given kingship and the Gospel, (which) we read (and) cure our minds (and) illnesses by its wisdom’. Cf. *ḥilm* (pl. *ʿaḥlām*) ‘mind’; *ʿilla* (pl. *ʿilal*) ‘illness, diversion’.

{al-Qurʾān} ‘to read’ and ‘to recite’

In most cases it is hard to tell if it is reading or reciting.

1) *talā* (u) ‘to recite, read’

The verb is used 63 times in this sense excepting one verse¹³⁴). We have quoted one example 29:48 above (1.3.1.3).

2) *qaraʾa* ‘to read (aloud)’

The verb is used 15 times, all in this sense.

3) *ʿamlā* (IV) ‘to recite’

As against 8 times of ‘to respite, grant indulgence’, this sense has one occurrence.

أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ‘(It is) fairy-tales of the ancients which he asked to be written down, so that they are recited to him morning and evening’ (25:5).

134) Namely al-Qurʾān 91:2 where the verb means ‘to follow’.

1.4. Letters

Here ‘letters’ stand for members of an alphabet or a script (a character or a letter). There was no distinction yet between the writing system and each member of it.

1.4.1. *ḥaff* ‘a letter’

Admittedly it is difficult to tell ‘a line’ from ‘a letter’. For an example, see the verse of ʿAbd Allāh bn ʿAnama al-Ḍabbīy, 7a (see 1.2.2). See also its verb (1.3.1.3 ‘to write’). In al-Qurʿān, the only usage of this root is an imperfect verb (1.3.1.3 *ult.*).

1.4.2. *wahy* (pl. *wuḥīy*) ‘a letter, writing’

Maraqten¹³⁵) once wrote (pp. 299-300): “writing on stones is called *al-wahy* by the pre-Islamic poets”. So the noun *wahy* (pl. *wuḥīy*) was originally a verbal noun of *wahā* ‘to write’ (see 1.3.1.4): ‘writing > a letter’.

It is very important to note that the verses below do not testify that Arabs wrote on stones in pre-Islamic days. To be sure, inscriptions engraved on stones or rocks are known, but the following three verses do not talk about such things. They are all used in a simile and there is no actual writing on stones.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 2: فَمَدَافِعُ الرَّيَّانِ عُرِّيَ رَسْمُهَا * خَلَقًا
كَمَا ضَمِنَ الْوُجِيَّ سِلَامُهَا ‘The trace of the torrent beds of al-Rayyān was made naked by becoming smooth (due to the torrent) as if stones (of the dwellings) had guaranteed (preserved) letters’. Cf. *madfaʿ* ‘channel of a torrent’; *ʿarrā* ‘to make naked’; *ḥaliqa* (a) *ḥalaq* ‘to become smooth’; *salima* (pl. *silām*) ‘stone’¹³⁶).

000) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, No. 21, line 1 (Zuhayr, p. 194)¹³⁷): لِمَنْ الدِّيَارُ
عَشِيَّتْهَا بِالْفَدْفَدِ * كَالْوُحْيِ فِي حَجَرِ الْمَسِيلِ الْمُخْلِدِ
‘To whom are the dwellings at the hard ground, (where) you came, (their traces now lying) like a writing in the stone of the ever-existing water-bed?’. Cf. *ḡaṣiya* ‘to come to’; *fadfad* ‘a hard flat place’; *masīl* ‘a stream bed’; *ʾaḥlada* ‘to be ever-existing’.

000) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, No. 15, line 5 (Ahlwardt, p. ٩١; Zuhayr, No. 7, p. 102): لِمَنْ طَلَّلَ كَالْوُحْيِ عَافٍ مَنَازِلُهُ * عَفَا الرَّسُّ مِنْهُ فَالْرُسُيْسُ فَعَاقِلُهُ
‘To whom is the (dwelling) trace, (now looking) like a (line of) writing, its houses being effaced; (the stream) al-Rass effaced (a bit) of it, then (the stream) al-Rusays and then its (wadi) ʿĀqil’. Cf. *ṭalal* (see 1.0); *ʿafā* ‘to be erased’.

135) Maraqten noted a reference to ʿAlī (8:265) who had mentioned earlier to the same effect. Ali quoted in his work the first two of our three examples here. The first one is from the famous Muʿallaqa.

136) For this word of ‘stone’, see footnote 94.

137) This is one of the two examples cited in ʿAlī (8:265) as written on stones.

It is a regret to state, against what Arab lexicons prescribe¹³⁸⁾, that we know no example of the verb *waḥā* ‘to write (on a stone)’ in pre-Islamic poems, and that those used in the sense ‘to write’ were composed far later (1.3.1.4). Owing to the semantic shift of *waḥy* in al-Qurʾān (1.3.1.4 *ult.*), we have no trace in it.

1.4.3. *raqm* ‘a writing, a letter’

At present, we have only one example of this sense (see the second verse in 1.0). It was assumed in the verse that *raqm* meant ‘a letter’ but it may mean ‘writing’ as a verbal noun. See 1.3.1.5 *ult.* for *raqama* in al-Qurʾān.

1.4.4. *saṭr* ‘a line’ (pl. *suṭūr* or *ʿasṭur*)

We find only a verbal noun *saṭr* in the sense of ‘writing > a line’ (see 1.1.4.1)¹³⁹⁾ for *saṭara* ‘to write’ (see 1.3.1.2). No use is found in al-Qurʾān in this sense¹⁴⁰⁾.

1.4.5. Letter names¹⁴¹⁾

No mention of a letter name is found in pre-Islamic poems we have studied, but we are able to state that people knew letter names, not to say all of them. The text of al-Qurʾān and its reading tradition speaks to this effect. See below.

{al-Qurʾān} Mysterious letters

Of late, a parchment (Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572a) was identified as the earliest text of al-Qurʾān (mid 7 C) and it had diacritical dots. This usage of diacritic marks conforms well to the writing in the secular papyrus (PERF No. 558, 643 AD)¹⁴²⁾.

The employment of diacritic points in the Mingana parchment was not as regular as in the current printing. So we may say that they were used if need be. There is no knowing today if a letter had a different name when it had a diacritical dot. In other words, people could not perhaps tell how many letters their script had¹⁴³⁾.

138) Most Arab lexicons inherit foregoing works. So it is hard to find a lexicon that provides us with actual usages.

139) Maraqtan, p. 306. In Ḥadīth, too, we find only nouns (Concordance, 2:461). Earlier scholars wrote many things about the etymology of this word (Fraenkel, p. 250; Jeffery, pp. 169-170), while at present it is safe to think that there was no borrowing. See Kaufman, p. 101, especially footnote 352. To see the entry *saṭara* in Selwi (pp. 109-110), one would wonder why the word is of Yemenite origin.

140) The verse here is cited three times in al-ʿAnbārī’s commentary to al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt (Lyll, vol. 1). The poet is a brother of Muzarrid bn ʿDirār (al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt, Nos. 15 and 17). 000) al-Šammāḥ bn ʿDirār, 7b, No. 5 (al-Šammāḥ, p. 129), line 2: *كَمَا حُطَّ عِبْرَانِيَّةٌ يَمِينِهِ * بِتَيْمَاءَ حَبْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَضَ أُسْطُرًا* ‘[Do you know a disappearing trace (of a dwelling) ...] as if a (Jewish) scholar, at Taymāʾ, wrote Hebrew with his right hand and then spoiled (its) lines?’. Cf. *ḥaṭṭa* (see 1.3.1.3); *ḥabr* = *ḥabir* ‘a Jewish scholar’; *ʿarraḍa* ‘to spoil a book in writing’.

141) Our argument in this section should be added to Takashina (2020), section 3.2 between the second and the third paragraphs, though some adjustments are necessary.

142) See Takashina (2020), sections 2.1-2.2.

143) Arab grammarians (Wright, 1:4) used terms *muhmala* ‘neglected > undotted’ and *muḡama* ‘made for non-Arabs > dotted’. So al-Bakrīy used them to secure spellings in his work (11 C): al-Bāʾ al-muḡama

Yet al-Qurʾān can witness to linguists a very important fact in an awkward way. Out of 114 sūras of al-Qurʾān, 29 have a set of ‘mysterious letters’ between the *basmala* and the text itself. The number of such letter sets is 30 (two in Sūra 42). The real number of letter sets is 14 in view of those shared by other sūras, e.g. *الْم* in Sūras 2, 3, 29, 30, 31, 32¹⁴⁴). We are not concerned with the asserted significance of these letters and rely on encyclopedias for many things related to this topic (EI², vol. 4, pp. 412-414; EQ, vol. 3, pp. 471b-477a). It is sufficient for us only to recall that some of these has been used for personal names: Ṭāhā, Yāsīn.

What counts with us is the reading of them as *ṭāʾ* and *hāʾ* as in Ṭāhā. Taking out all the letter names out of 14 sets, we get 14 letter names as below (in the *Abjad* order):

ا *ʾalif*, ه *hāʾ*, ح *ḥāʾ*, ط *ṭāʾ*, ي *yāʾ*, ك *kāf*, ل *lām*, م *mīm*, ن (ن) *nūn*, س *sīn*, ع *ʿayn*, ص *ṣād*, ق (ق) *qāf*, ر *rāʾ*¹⁴⁵).

These 14 letters need no dot to be identified except three: *qāf* (twice, Sūras 42, 50); *yāʾ* (twice, Sūras 19, 36); *nūn* (once, Sūra 68 used alone). These letter sets were mysterious, because they were simply character strings with no meaning.

Muslims could not read al-Qurʾān without learning first how to read these simple character strings. We may not be mistaken if we assume that Zayd bn Thābit knew it, who, being secretary of Muḥammad, engaged in the codification of the holy text twice during the orthodox caliphate. Once confirmed by the authority, reading these letters as a simple string of letter names spread quickly. So we can say that the current reading of mysterious letters has been transmitted from the days of Zayd.

At last we have arrived at the start of our discussion. We now possess letter names valid during the first four caliphates, fossilized in the mysterious letters. It was long after this period that the Arabic script got fixed with diacritical marks, comprising 28 letters in all. The days were yet to come long afterwards (about 1000 AD) when we find the Arabic language possessed of the Arabic script we now know¹⁴⁶).

Nonetheless, let us read the letter names belonging to the mysterious letters again, and we find that the names are just those we know. We mentioned that the mysterious letters comprise 14. Then it is time to see the remaining 14 letters added long afterwards to form the complete present-day Arabic script (in the *Abjad* order):

ب *bāʾ*, ج *ǧīm*, د *dāl*, و *wāw*, ز *zāy*, ف *fāʾ*, ش *šīn*, ت *tāʾ*, ث *ṭāʾ*, خ *ḫāʾ*, ذ *dāl*, ض *ḍād*, ظ *ẓāʾ*, غ *ǧayn*.

In one glance, we see that this is the group of letters furnished with pointing except for two: *dāl* and *wāw*. With no incongruity with the first set, Zayd must have missed them.

The second set of letters (14) had no chance of being in the mysterious letters. The

bi-wāḥida (p. 426), al-Ḥāʾ al-muḥmala (p. 427), al-Ṭāʾ al-muḡama bi-ṭnatayni min fawqi-ḥā (p. 239), al-Šīn al-muḡama wa-l-Ṭāʾ al-muṭallāṭa (p. 96), etc. Though of very late illustration, these might reflect part of the usage in the earlier days.

144) Four *sūra* titles coincide with the corresponding mysterious letter sets: طه (20), يس (36), ص (38) and ق (50). Naturally our discussion covers them.

145) Please notice that we quoted *nūn* and *qāf* in the letter forms imitating actual forms written in earlier manuscripts, that is, without points.

146) See Takashina, 2020, 3.2-3.5.

grouping of mysterious letters may well be a mere coincidence. But it is very difficult to deny that the second set comprises mostly letters unidentifiable with no dot or name. It was either because they did not have a name in this period, or at least, because their names were not stable enough to be accepted by everyone. This in turn lends support to our understanding that the letter names of the first group have been transmitted from the time of Zayd (mid 7 C)¹⁴⁷⁾. It is almost certain that the prophet shared the knowledge, though it should remain our conjecture.

Lastly we should like to comment on three letters out of the first group (see above). During the prophet's days, the first group were unpointed. Used alone, ن *nūn*, do not hinder the group principle, because its peculiar letter form needed no dot when it stands alone. *Qāf*, used twice, needed no dot at the word-final position (Sūra 42) and alone (Sūra 50), because this letter form (with no dot) stood for *qāf* in the traditional Nabataean or Aramaic script from which the Arabic script evolved.

Yāʾ (كَيْعَصَ Sūra 19; يَسَ Sūra 36), the third in our concern, on the other hand, proved to be a real obstacle for other letters, such as ب (ب) *bāʾ* and ت (ت) *tāʾ*, to become members of mysterious letters due to the bivalence of the letter form.

Finally we should like to mention one of after-effects of this development in letter names. In section 1.3.1.4, we quoted a verse from 016) al-Marrār bn Munqidh, 7b, who, according to Lyall (2:41), was a contemporary of ʿĠarīr bn ʿAṭīya (d. 114 AH, 732-3). This verse shows that in the Umayyad period the letter name *Lām* could occupy a position among poets, who showed little interest in writing in pre-Islamic days. No doubt, it is al-Qurʾān that spread letter names everywhere in the Islamic world.

1.5. Written products

1.5.1. *zabūr* (pl. *zabur*) ‘a writing > a book’

We list below one example in the singular (ʾImruʾ al-Qays) and the other in the plural (Labīd). ʾImruʾ al-Qays lived in the earliest days of the pre-Islamic poetry and displayed an ideal command of the (North) Arabic language¹⁴⁸⁾ in spite of his lineage in al-Yaman, while Labīd lived in the last years before Islam and died after al-Hiğra.

000) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, Ahlwardt No. 65 (p. ١٦٠; Qays, p. 173), line 2: أَتَتْ جَجَجٌ بَعْدِي عَلَيْهَا فَأَصْبَحَتْ * كَحِطِّ زُبُورٍ فِي مَصَاحِفِ رُهْبَانٍ ‘Years came after me upon them (= remaining marks of dwellings in the years gone by) and they became like the line of the writing in the books of (Christian) monks’. Cf. *hiğga* (pl. *hiğgağ*) ‘year’; *rāhib* (pl. *ruhbān*) ‘monk’.

147) Nonetheless some may contend that later there might have been a reformation of letter names by Arab grammarians. Against this least probable contention, we may rephrase that in the days of Zayd letters had their own names. Otherwise, relevant verses in al-Qurʾān could not have been transmitted to us orally.

148) Perhaps this is due to his unparalleled linguistic intuition and a life among North Arabian tribes over whom his grandfather ruled.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 8: وَجَلَا السُّيُولُ عَنِ الطُّلُولِ كَأَنَّهَا * زُرُرٌ
 نُجِدُ مُتُونَهَا أَفْلَامُهَا ‘And the torrents disclosed the ruins (of dwellings) as if they
 were writings whose texts their pens have renewed’. Cf. *ḡalā* (u) ‘to disclose’;
sayl (pl. *suyūl*) ‘flow, torrent’; *matn* (pl. *mutūn*) ‘main part (of a speech), text’.

Somewhere in the peninsula, ʿImruʿ al-Qays must have seen a monk¹⁴⁹⁾ with a book in his hands. What counts with us is the poet’s observation: *ḥaṭṭ* for the script, *zabūr* for the result of writing, *maṣāḥif* (sg. *muṣḥaf*) as the material to write on¹⁵⁰⁾. With Labīd, *zubur* and ʿaqlām are used as any common noun (see 1.1.5.1, a).

[Note] √ZBR in the north and in the south

According to Nebes and Stein (pp. 146-147), the first instances of writing on wooden sticks were found at Wādī al-Ġawf to the far north of Ṣanʿāʾ in the early 1970s, and we learn from Stein (p. 1044) that the script inscribed on these wooden sticks is termed *zabūr* ‘minuscule’. Indeed photos¹⁵¹⁾ give an impression of a cursive variant of the Old South Arabian script. So today *zabūr* stands for ‘Old South Arabian cursive minuscule’.

However, the term *zabūr* belongs to the North Arabic lexicon. We should like to confirm the derivation of the root √ZBR (Lane, pp. 1210a-1211c): *zabara* (u) *zabr* ‘to write’; *zibr* (pl. *zabūr*) ‘anything written’; *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*) ‘book, writing, psalms of David’; *zabīr* = *zibr*; *mizbar* ‘a writing-reed’. But in Ancient South Arabian √ZBR means ‘to build; a building’¹⁵²⁾.

This fact taken into account, *zabūr* is quite a misnomer for the Old South Arabian minuscule. Instead, we should like to suggest that *zabr* can be a good alternative for it, for *zabr* is registered in the lexicon of Ibn Durayd as a term pertinent to al-Yaman, and in North Arabic *zabr* is a verbal noun with little fear of confusion. Also we know no other example of *zabr* in our data of pre-Islamic poems at present¹⁵³⁾. On the other hand, we do not know why Ibn Durayd did not list other South Arabian words derived from this root¹⁵⁴⁾. As regards verses in which we find *zabūr*, they conform to the description in the lexica of the North Arabic language (see Lane, *ibidem*).

Ibn Durayd¹⁵⁵⁾ reports that in al-Yaman the root √ZBR is the common word for

149) This verse was taken up by Jones (EQ 3:588b) as referring in particular to the Christian writing.

Though it is not known where the poet saw these Christian monks, it is enough to recall that there existed many routes of missionary activities across the peninsula, north and south.

150) In this verse, *maṣāḥif* = *ṣuḥuf*. About this, see 1.1.1.2 *ult*.

151) If the wooden stick were shorter and slenderer, ‘a cylinder’ would fit best.

152) Ricks (p. 59) and Biella (p. 158) list Modern Yemeni *zābūr* ‘mud wall’ as its etymology. But ‘to build’ could be derived from North Arabic *zabara* more readily (see Lane, p. 1210a). So it is very strange that al-Selwi quoted no usage of √ZBR ‘to write’ in Ancient South Arabian texts to show its Yemenite origin (p. 103).

153) In an extensive search into the vast corpus of pre-Islamic poems, examples of *zabr* may be located.

154) According to Maraqtan (p. 306), Ibn Durayd “also notes the form *zibr*”, but in the edition we referred to, *zibr* is not found in the corresponding registry (Ġamhara, p. 308a).

155) See 1.1.5.1 [Note] and footnote 59.

writing and that *zabr* (verbal noun) means anything written (= *kitāb*).

Ĝ3) “and I repelled the man, *وَزَبَرْتُ الرَّجُلَ*, إذا انتهرته. *وَزَبَرْتُ* الكتاب، فهو مزبور (Ĝamhara, under √ZBR, p. 308a).

Ĝ4) “People of al-Yaman call every writing *zabr*” (Ĝamhara, *ibid.*)¹⁵⁶.

Quite naturally a mere use of √ZBR (Lane, p. 1210b) or √D̤BR (Lane, p. 955b; our footnote 18) in the poem does not mean that the poet composed in the South Arabian language or Himyarite, but he produced a poem with North Arabs as audience¹⁵⁷.

000) Ṣaḥr al-Ġayy¹⁵⁸, 7a, Part 3, No. 2 (Huḍayl 1:256), line 7: *فِيهَا كِتَابٌ ذَبَّرَ* * *لِمُقْتَرِي* * *يَعْرِفُهُ أَلْبُهُمْ وَمَنْ حَشَدُوا* ‘In it is a hand-writing, (namely) a writing for a reader (which) all of them and whoever assembled know’. Cf. √QR° VIII = *qara*°; °alb ‘gathering’; *ḥašada* ‘to get together’.

It is *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*), not *zabr*, that we find in our ancient poems¹⁵⁹. Even when the poets portray a Yemenite writing on a palm stick, words used are all North Arabic, namely, the language of the audience in the north. The same is true with what al-Hamdānī (d. 945) wrote in his famous work *Kitāb al-ʾIklīl* ‘The Crown’¹⁶⁰.

156) Ibn Durayd quotes an anonymous verse of the unknown date. We were obliged to interpret the verse as printed with no context. Take a good notice that, except *zabr*, the vocabulary and the syntax is perfect North Arabic: 000) anonymous, no date: *أَوْ زَبَّرَ جَمِيرَ بَيْنَهَا أَخْبَارَهَا* * *بِالْحَمِيرَةِ فِي عَسِيبٍ ذَابِلٍ* ‘or writing by Himyarites among it its stories in Himyarite (language) on a withered palm stick’ (Ĝamhara, *ibid.*; Maraqtan, p. 301).

157) So it is very difficult to understand the remark of al-Sukkarīy (see footnote 18): *الذبر الكتاب* ‘al-ḏabr is a book in the Himyarite language’ (Huḍayl 1:256). Does he say that the poet used a Himyarite vocabulary in the North Arabic poetry? All of a sudden, why does the poet switch to Himyarite for one word? Did the Huḍalī poet have some important relation with South Arabia? On the other hand, Ibn Durayd wrote simply ‘Huḍayl makes *al-zabr* writing and *al-ḏabr* reading’ and quoted the verse of °Abū Duʾayb (see 1.0). Thus Ibn Durayd (Ĝamhara, p. 304a under √D̤BR and p. 1293a) confined al-Sukkarīy’s remark within the language of Huḍayl (North Arabic), but the fact is that, in the cited verse of °Abū Duʾayb, √D̤BR means writing (see 1.0). But in another work of Ibn Durayd, he said about this phenomenon as *luḡa yamānīya* (°Iṣṭiqāq, p. 43). So he should have explained why a North Arab (°Abū Duʾayb) employed *luḡa yamānīya*.

158) We learned the location of this verse from Maraqtan (p. 301, footnote 118). About the poet, see al-ʾAḡānī (20:20-22), but this verse is not found there. He is said to have died in early years of Islam.

159) For the singular, see 1.0 for 000) [°Imruʾ al-Qays] and 1.5.1 for 000) [°Imruʾ al-Qays]; and for the plural, see 1.1.5.1 for 000) [Labīd], 1.3.1.4 for 016) [al-Marrār bn Munqidh] and 1.5.1 for 07m) [Labīd]. The number of occurrences is sure to increase, when we check all the poems concerned.

160) According to Maraqtan, a certain Yemenite scholar, named °Abū Naṣr al-Ḥanbaṣīy, could read texts of *musnad* and *zabūr* (p. 304 *ult.*), and quoted a passage from *al-ʾIklīl* (p. 301 *ult.*). Al-Hamdānī writes about him: *وكان بجائته قد لقي رجالا وقرأ زبر حمير القديمة ومساندها الدهرية* ‘and he was a great scholar, who had met many men and read books of ancient Himyar and its inscriptions’ (Iklīl-1:5; Iklīl-2:62-64). It is without question that al-Hamdānī wrote in Classical (North) Arabic and that *zabūr* belongs to this language, while *musnad* came from Ancient South Arabian (Biella, *msnd-*, p. 338 and *mśnd-*, p. 507;

{al-Qurʾān} *zabūr* (pl. *zubur*) ‘Psalms or a scroll’

With an overwhelming usage of *kitāb* ‘a book’ in al-Qurʾān (1.5.3 *ult.*), the meaning of *zabūr* ‘a writing > a book’ (see 1.5.1 *supra*) had to modify itself and acquired a very specialized sense¹⁶¹.

1) *zabūr* (sg.) ‘psalms’:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ‘and we have written in the Psalms, after the admonition (to Moses, i.e., al-Tawrā), that my righteous servants will inherit the earth’ (21:105).

وَوَعَّائِينَ دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ‘and we gave to David Psalms’ (4:163; 17:55).

2) *zubur* (pl.) ‘psalms’:

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ‘But if they call you a liar, messengers, who brought clear signs, the Psalms and the illustrious book before you, were (also) called a liar’ (3:184).

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ‘Ask the people of the remembrance, if you should be ignorant of the clear signs and the Psalms’ (16:43-44).

وَإِنْ يَكْذِبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رَسُولُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ‘Even if they call you a liar, those to whom messengers came, before them, with the clear signs, the Psalms and the illustrious book, also called (them) liars’ (35:25).

3) *zubur* (pl.) ‘scrolls or scriptures’¹⁶²:

وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ‘Truly it is in the Scriptures of the ancients’ (26:196).

أَكْفَرُكُمْ حَيًّا مِنْ أَوْلِيَكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ‘Are your unbelievers better than those (Pharaoh’s folk), or have you an immunity in the Scrolls?’ (54:43).

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ كُلِّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌّ ‘Everything that they did is in the scrolls, and everything, great and small, is inscribed’ (54:52-53).

1.5.2. *qitt* (pl. *quṭūṭ*) ‘a document, writing’

Since the single use of the word in al-Qurʾān offered no help (see below), the meaning of this word remained ambiguous until recently¹⁶³. It was Kaufman (p. 52)

Ricks, *ms³nd-*, p. 175).

161) As regards the reasons for the semantic change, see Fraenkel (p. 248), Jeffery (pp. 148-149) and Hebbo (pp. 146-147).

162) There are verses in which *zubur* = *zubar* (plural of *zubra* ‘a piece of iron (Lane, p. 1211a) > lump > fraction’): فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ‘But in their affair, they got split among them (forming various) lumps; every party is pleased with what is with them.’ (23:53 once); آتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ ‘Bring me lumps of iron!’ (18:96 once).

163) There is no fixed rendering in English. The commentator of the following verse writes ‘*al-kitāb ʿaw-i l-ṣahīfa*’ and suggests even a piece ‘cut from *al-kāgid wa-l-riqq*’ (ʿUmayya, p. 466, footnote 1), while lexicons give us: ‘a writing, writing of reckoning’ (Lane, p. 2540c), ‘a book’ (Miṣbāḥ, p. 697), plus

that put an end to the question of the source, linking Aramaic data¹⁶⁴⁾ to Akkadian¹⁶⁵⁾.

000) al-Mutalammis al-Duba'iy, 6b, No. 3, line 1¹⁶⁶⁾: وَأَلْقَيْتُهَا فِي اللَّيْنِ مِنْ جَنْبِ * كَافِرٍ كَذَلِكَ أَقْنُو كُلَّ قِطِّ مُضَلِّلٍ 'And I threw it in the winding (water) from the riverside of al-Kāfir, (and) thus appropriated every deceitful writing'. Cf. *tiny* 'winding'; (*al-*)*kāfir* = the name of the creek or river; *qanā* (*u*) 'to acquire, appropriate'; *dallala* 'to mislead, deceive'.

000) al-ʿAṣṣā Maymūn bn Qays, 6j¹⁶⁷⁾, No. 33, line 13 (al-ʿAṣṣā, p. 219): وَلَا أَلْمَلِكُ الْتُعْمُنُ يَوْمَ لَقَيْتَهُ * بِإِمَّتِهِ يُعْطِي الْقُطُوطَ وَيَأْفِقُ 'Nor King al-Nuʿmān, on the day you met him in his easy state of life, gave (someone) writings (of promise), giving others more'. Cf. *ʿimma* 'an easy and ample state of life (Lane, p. 90c)'; *ʿafaqa* (i) 'to give more to some than to others (Lane, p. 68c)'.

The next one merits our serious attention, for the poet was not only a contemporary with the prophet but, in a sense, his rival¹⁶⁸⁾, and as such it suggests a lot.

000) ʿUmayya bn ʿAbī al-Ṣalt, 7a, ʿUmayya, No. 71 (p. 466), line 3 (= ʿUmayya2, No. 140, p. 128, line 4): قَوْمٌ لَهُمْ سَاحَةُ الْعِرَاقِ إِذَا * سَارُوا جَمِيعًا وَالْقِطُّ وَالْقَلَمُ '([ʿIyād¹⁶⁹⁾ are) a people to whom Iraq's open land shall belong, when they move (thither) altogether, and (their skill of) book and pen'.

In this verse, the phrase *al-qitt wa-l-qalam* may be taken as equivalent to 'pen and paper'. According to the commentator, the poet said that writing was known among

'account book' (TA, 20:41) and 'money order, check' (WAS, p. 772).

164) Fraenkel (p. 249) and Jeffery (p. 241) had picked up Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (see footnote 165).

165) Kaufman (loc. cit.) tied Akkadian *giṭtu* (< Sumerian) 'oblong tablet' (CDA, p. 95a), written in a single column, often referring to 'parchment document' (CDA, ibid.) to Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, which took it as *giṭṭā* 'document, deed', usually in a specialized meaning 'document of divorce' (p. 279a). One tractate of the Talmud dedicated to the discussion of divorce is titled *Giṭṭ-īn*. So the contact point is Babylonia or al-Ḥīra. The difference in sound (Arabic *q* for Aramaic *g*) is accounted for by the fact that Arabic *g* had begun moving forward to [j] (1.1.5, d *ult.*, ultimately to ġ [dʒ]), as a result of which an adjacent *q* was chosen for it. Thus *qitt* can be a witness for the start of *g* > ġ in Arabic.

166) For the line 2 of this poem, see 1.2.2, and for the background of the poem, see footnote 114. We owe the two verses (Mutalammis and al-ʿAṣṣā) quoted here to Jeffery (footnote 2, p. 241).

167) He is said to have been a Christian when he died (c. 627). Ṣiḥāḥ (1:562) and Lane (p. 68c) read *giḥtati-hī* for *ʿimmati-hī* quoted by us.

168) The poet was a well-known *ḥanīf*, about which see EI², 10:839. For the traditional view about a *ḥanīf*, see Nicholson, pp. 149-150. In the course of transmission of the verse, variations arose. In lexica, *ʿidā sārū* fell away (LA, p. 3673c; TA, 20:41b), while the number of the verse line is at variance according to the edition of *dīwāns*: 2nd line (a certain edition), 3rd (ʿUmayya) or 4th (ʿUmayya2). The verse quoted in al-Bakrīy (p. 45; al-Bakrīy2, pp. 68-69) is the 4th-line version, while that in *Sīra* is the 2nd-line version (*Sīra*-A1, p. 32; *Sīra*-A2, pp. 64-65; *Sīra*-E, pp. 23-24).

169) ʿIyād, son of Maʿadd, was at first in Tihāma. Later, the clan could control over Mecca, but after a defeat in a conflict, they left for Baḥrayn and joined the confederation of al-Tanūḥ there. Then they moved into al-Sawād and played a marked role in the pre-Islamic Arab history (EI², 4:289a).

°Iyād (p. 466, footnote 1). The people of °Anbār, one of their large settlements in Iraq, are said “to have the first (*sic*) to introduce the Arabic characters there” (EI¹, p. 565b under Iyād), and the comment¹⁷⁰⁾ given by the editors of Sīra-A2 also conforms to these statements.

Aside from details, we can collect some points from these sayings. Those who once controlled Mecca, before Islam, knew writing and they brought writing into Iraq. So it is not that North Arabs learned it from Iraq (al-Hīra) but that they continued to write, in deserts or in the new settlements. The sayings as a whole point to writing among Arabs since olden times, though there is no specifying in what script °Iyād wrote.

{al-Qur°ān} *qitt* ‘a document, writing’

As argued just above, it was difficult to interpret this word¹⁷¹⁾ due to no clear context in al-Qur°ān. But now it is safe to follow the new interpretation.

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنًا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ‘They said, ‘Our Lord, send us in haste the writing about us (our fate) before the Day of Reckoning’ (38:16)¹⁷²⁾.

1.5.3. *kitāb* ‘a writing, a book’

Though much limited, we have some examples of *kitāb* in the pre-Islamic poems, among which the first one is the most interesting¹⁷³⁾.

03m) Zuhayr bn °Abī Sulmā, 6b, line 28 (see below, 2.1.1, d).

105) Mu°āwiya bn Mālik bn Ġa°far, 6c,
line 7: مِنَ الْأَجْزَاعِ أَسْفَلَ مِنْ نُمَيْلٍ * كَمَا رَجَعْتَ بِالْقَلَمِ الْكِتَابَا ‘[... I stopped] at one of the places of bending (in the valley), lower than Namlā; it was as if you had repeated, with the pen, (the line of) the writing’. Cf. *ġiz°* (pl. °aġzā°) ‘the place of bending in the valley’ (Lane, p. 419c); *raġġa°a*, see 1.3.1.4 *ult.*;

170) ‘For it is said to Qurayš: From whom did you learn *al-qitt*? Then they said: We learned it from the people of al-Hīra and the people of al-Hīra learned it from the people of al-°Anbār’ (Sīra-A2, 1:65, footnote 1). The saying of Qurayš that they took the Arabic script from al-Hīra, we may conjecture, is a circumlocution that they took it from °Iyād, the ancient ruler of Mecca, settled now around al-Hīra.

171) Arberry, 38:15: They say, ‘Our Lord, hasten to us our share before the Day of Reckoning’. Penrice, p. 119a: ‘a judge’s sentence’. In view of a tune or an air of Babylonia (al-Hīra) in the two verses above (al-Mutalammis and al-°A°šā), *qitt* was very likely a word in vogue in the closing years of the pre-Islamic Arabia. But in the new era, it went out of the scene quickly and fell into oblivion. Perhaps this is why the word remained puzzling to Muslim scholars, born out of Arabia and ignorant of the social situation just prior to the new era.

172) ‘Bring us our written fate quickly’ (Sīra-E, p. 696, note 36).

173) Most scholars accept the word as of Aramaic origin, but see 1.3.1.1 for *kataba* ‘to write’. There is another verse with *kitāb* in al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt, but Lyall suspects its original composition (2:288, note to line 45). 098) Bišr bn °Abī Hāzim, 6b, line 51 (line 45 in Lyall, 1:676): * وَجَدْنَا فِي كِتَابِ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ ‘We have found in the book of the Sons of Tamim that the fittest horse to be galloped hard is one that is borrowed’. Cf. *rakaḍa* (u) *rakḍ* ‘to gallop (a horse)’.

line 8: كِتَابَ مُحَيَّرٍ هَاجَ بَصِيرٍ * يُنَمِّقُهُ وَحَادَرَ أَنْ يُعَابَا ‘the writing of (a person who) writes in ink¹⁷⁴), spells fine and has a good eyesight to adorn it; and is all attentive not to be blamed’. Cf. *ḥabbara* ‘to embellish, put ink in’; *haḡā* (u) ‘to spell’; *nammaqa* (see 1.3.1.6); *ḥāḡara* ‘to be heedful of’; *āba* (i) ‘to blame’.

{al-Qurʾān} *kitāb* ‘a book’

In al-Qurʾān, *kitāb* is used 261 times (including 6 times in the plural *kutub*). During the prophet’s mission, there must have been a clear image of ‘a book’ among Arabs, seeing that names of revealed books, *al-Tawrā* (18 times) and *al-ʾInḡīl* (12 times), are mentioned. The word covers a wide semantic range, but it never fails to connote ‘what is written in it’. See 1.1.1.1 *ult.* (6:7) for the singular and 1.5.7 *ult.* (21:104) for the plural. Here we should like to quote a rare example, in which ‘a book’ signifies a register of doings in one’s lifetime rather than the general usage ‘the revealed book’.

كُلِّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا ‘It is every man that we have tied his bird of omen upon his neck [= we have allotted a fate to every man]; and we shall take out for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book (which) he finds wide open’ (17:13).

1.5.4. *ṣaḥīfa* (pl. *ṣaḥāʾif*) ‘a written piece of skin’

Native lexica such as LA (14 C) and TA (18 C) are of no help about this word, and we look to Lane: “a written piece of paper or of skin” (p. 1655ab)¹⁷⁵. Before or after a printing machine was introduced, this term has stood for ‘a sheet of a book’ irrespective of the material¹⁷⁶. So in view of the pre-Islamic poetry, we get ‘a written piece of skin > vellum, parchment’¹⁷⁷.

However, it was the surface of the parchment, be it written or not, rather than the actual ‘written sheet or piece of skin’, that attracted some poets, perhaps due to the association with, or the interference of, *ṣafīḥa* ‘a flat surface’.

174) We followed Lyall’s interpretation ‘a skilled scribe’ (2:295).

175) As Lane’s definition shows, he relied on al-Fayyūmī’s *Miṣbāḥ* (14 C) that mention explicitly: جلد أو قرطاس كتب فيه “a written skin or *qirṭās*” (p. 455), the latter of which Lane took as ‘paper’.

176) Though very late, another native work supports Lane’s interpretation very strongly. MM (1867-70) writes: *الصحيفة قرطاس مكتوب ... وتطلق الصحيفة ايضا في العرف على وجه او ورقة من الكتاب* ‘*ṣaḥīfa* is a written *qirṭās* (parchment) ... and also *ṣaḥīfa* is in practice applied to a face or a (sheet of) paper of the book” (p. 1163b). In this definition, *qirṭās* cannot be other than ‘parchment’ since for ‘paper’ *waraq* is used. Thus *ṣaḥīfa* is a written sheet of ‘parchment’. The third verse below by 021) al-Muḥabbal exemplifies the application to ‘a face’.

177) The Arabic *ṣaḥīfa* is said to have come either from Ancient South Arabian *ṣḥft* ‘document’ (Biella, p. 421; Ricks, p. 135) or from Geʾez (Ethiopic). In the former case, the noun pattern is unidentified without a vowel, while in the latter we do not find a suitable word that fits the Arabic phonetic form (Nöldeke, 1910, p. 50; Leslau, p. 552) except *ṣaḥfat* ‘writing, inscription’ (Leslau, *ibid.*). See bibliographies in Maraqtan, p. 309 and Selwi, p. 128. *Al-Muṣḥaf* (1.1.1.2 *ult.*) was taken incorrectly from Geʾez *maṣḥaf* ‘book’ (Nöldeke, *loc.cit.*). For the passages in *Sīra*, see Hebo, pp. 226-228.

000) Laqīṭ bn Bakr¹⁷⁸⁾, 6c, al-ʿAḡānī, 20:24, line -2: كِتَابٌ فِي الصَّحِيفَةِ مِنْ لَقِيطٍ * إِلَى مَنْ بِالْجَزِيرَةِ مِنْ إِيَادٍ
al-Ġazīra of (the tribe) ʿIyād’.

000) ʿAntara bn Šaddād al-ʿAbsīy, 6b, Ahlwardt No. 27 (p. ٥٢), line 2: كَوْخِي
صَحَائِفٍ مِنْ عَهْدِ كِسْرَى * فَأَهْدَاهَا لِأَعْجَمٍ طِمْطِمِي [O ʿAbla’s dwelling ...]
like a writing on sheets of vellum from the time of Khosrau, for he had sent it to a
foreigner poor in Arabic’. Cf. *waḥy* (see 1.4.2); *ʿahdā* ‘to send (as a gift)’; *kisrā*
‘Khosrau or a Persian king’; *ṭimṭimīy* ‘speaking poor Arabic’.

021) al-Muḥabbal, 6j, line12¹⁷⁹⁾: وَثُرَيْكَ وَجْهًا كَالصَّحِيفَةِ لَا * ظَمَانٌ مُخْتَلَجٌ وَلَا
جَهْمٌ ‘And she shows you a face like a (sheet of) vellum, not dry (and) lean nor
rough’. Cf. *ẓamʿān* ‘thirsty > dry of skin’; *muḥtalaġ* ‘lean of face (Lane, p.
783c)’; *ġahm* ‘coarse, rough of face (Lane, p. 478b)’.

000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd No. 42, line 1 (p. 278): عَفَا الرَّسْمُ أَمْ لَا بَعْدَ حَوْلٍ
تَجَرَّمَا * لِأَسْمَاءَ رَسْمٌ كَالصَّحِيفَةِ أَعْجَمَا
‘Was the trace (of dwellings) erased or not after a year that elapsed? To ʿAsmā belongs an obscure trace like (effaced letters
on) a sheet of vellum’. Cf. *ʿafā* (see the last verse in 1.4.2); *rasm* ‘trace’; *ḥawl*
‘year’; *taġarrama* ‘to be elapsed’; *ʿaġam* ‘unclear, obscure’¹⁸⁰⁾.

074) Ṭaʿlaba bn ʿAmr, 6j, line 1: لِمَنْ دِمْنٌ كَأَنَّهُنَّ صَحَائِفٌ * قِفَارٌ خَلَا مِنْهَا
الْكُثَيْبُ فَوَاحِفٌ ‘Whose are the traces of dwellings, (which lie) as if they were
sheets of vellum (covered with writing), bare deserts in which al-Kaṭīb as well as
Wāḥif (the poet’s old village) is empty?’ Cf. *dimna* (pl. *diman*) ‘traces of
encampment’; *qafr* (pl. *qifār*) ‘wild land’.

103) Zabḥān bn Sayyār, 6b, line 3¹⁸¹⁾: وَإِنَّ قَتِيلًا بِالْهَبَاءَةِ فِي أَسْتِهِ * صَحِيفَتُهُ إِنْ
عَادَ لِلظُّلْمِ ظَالِمٌ ‘And verily in al-Habāʿa (lies a man) killed, in whose buttocks is
a sheet of skin (written on it): if the wrong-doer should retrace to wrong!’.

{al-Qurʾān} *ṣaḥīfa* (pl. *ṣuḥuf*)

Compared with the usage in pre-Islamic poetry (see the preceding), this term has
gained a very specific signification in al-Qurʾān, in which no singular occur.

1) ‘pages’ (twice)

178) We owe the first two samples to Jeffery, p. 193. The first poet, Laqīṭ, is portrayed *šāʿir ḡāhiliy qadīm*
(al-ʿAḡānī, 20:23). This is the first line of the rhymed address on the letter sent to his fellow of ʿIyād in
Iraq. About ʿIyād and writing, see the last verse in 1.5.2 by ʿUmayya bn ʿAbī al-Šalt and footnote 169.

179) The preceding line 11 is cited in 1.1.3.2.

180) Jones understood this verse in another context (EQ 3:590b). Contrary to our expectation, diacritics
are yet to be testified for pre-Islamic times. In our understanding, moreover, it is too early to take
ʿaġam as ‘dotted’; much less, unless it is *ʿuġīma*.

181) For the next line 4 of this poem, see 1.2.4.

حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ ... till the clear sign comes to them, a Messenger from God reciting purified pages in which are invaluable Books' (98:1-3; see the other 80:13 quoted 1.5.6 *ult.*).

2) 'scrolls' (four times)

مَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى 'what is in the ancient scrolls' (20:133).

يَمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى 'about what is in the scrolls of Moses' (53:36).

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى 'verily this is in the ancient scrolls, the scrolls of Abraham and Moses' (twice, 87:18-19).

3) 'unrolled scrolls' (twice)

بَلْ يَرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى صُحُفًا مُّنشَرَةً 'Rather every man of them wants to be given unrolled scrolls' (74:52).

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ... عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَا أَحْضَرْتَ '... when the scrolls are to be unrolled ... (then) a soul shall know what it has brought about' (81:10, 14).

1.5.5. *maḡalla* 'a scroll, book'

As a matter of fact, we have two instances only, one in *Sīra* and the other in the pre-Islamic verse of al-Nābiḡa¹⁸²). In other words, we find no sample in al-Qurʾān and this is why we owe to Hebbo (pp. 331-332) a summary of older studies in *Sīra*. Fortunately we can now make use of reliable dictionaries of Aramaic languages.

One candidate for the source is Hebrew *maḡillā* 'a scroll'¹⁸³) and the other is Aramaic: *maḡallatā* 'scroll' (Syriac, p. 709b); *maḡallatā* or *maḡillatā* 'leather sheet, document, Scroll of Esther' (JBA, p. 641a). In view of the phonetic correspondence, the best choice would be Syriac, in which the word is native, not a loan from Hebrew.

In *Sīra*, 'the Scroll of Luqmān' was uttered in a reply to the prophet by a man from Yathrib¹⁸⁴) who had the scroll in question. Seeing that the prophet read the scroll, it was doubtless written in Arabic. Since no work is known by this name, the work is presumed to be 'the story of Ḥayqār the Wise' *خبر حيقار الحكيم* (Aḥīkar, p. 130)¹⁸⁵).

182) *Siḥāḥ* (2:166) listed al-Nābiḡa with its variant reading *maḥalla* 'a place' but with no reference to *Sīra*, and it was LA (p. 665a) that included, in addition to al-Nābiḡa, the passage of *Sīra* with a comment: "it is said that it was arabised from Hebrew". This comment is now incompatible (see below). The entry in TA (28:224-225) lacks this comment. As to the ḥadīth of ʿAnas (LA, loc.cit.), we could not locate.

183) Biblical Hebrew *maḡillā* 'a scroll' is a common noun, but the five books of the bible that are read on festive occasions are named 'Five *Maḡillōt*', one of which has a special tractate in the Mishnah (≈ the Talmud) titled *Maḡillā* which argues the book (scroll) of Esther. So any member in the Jewish community knows the word. It was a regret that reliable data was not available in earlier studies (Hebbo, loc.cit.; Fraenkel, p. 247).

184) It is not known why he was a man of Yathrib. According to the text, he was killed by al-Ḥazraḡ on his return to Yathrib.

185) As far as the Aramaic text is concerned, the text on papyri dates back to 5 C BC in Egypt. Though far later than 7 C, we can read the story of Aḥīkar in Syriac and Arabic (transcribed from Karshuni). That is, the Syrian or the Nestorian church had transmitted the text of Aḥīkar and it was by no means impossible for an Arab in Yathrib to have a copy of the Arabic text in early 7 C. Granted that *ʿAmīāl Luqmān*

وَمَا الَّذِي مَعَكَ قَالَ مَجَلَّةٌ لُقْمَانَ يَعْني حِكْمَةً لُقْمَانَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَعْرِضْهَا عَلَيَّ “What is it that you have?” The man said, “The Scroll of Luqmān [i.e. the Wisdom of Luqmān].” “Show it to me,” said the prophet.” (Sīra-A1, p. 285 = Sīra-A2, 1:389 = Sīra-E, p. 196).

The following verse by al-Nābiḡa is a part of the poem he composed at the Ghassanid court to praise the king after he had fled from the last king of al-Ḥīra. In view of the fact that the episode in Sīra is rather in an earlier stage of the prophet’s mission, perhaps around the turn of the century, the poet might have composed his poem also about the same time. The poet was not a Christian, yet he could pick up the gist of the Christian faith, as he used to do in the court of al-Ḥīra.

000) al-Nābiḡa al-Ḍubyanīy, 6c, Ahlwardt No. 1, line 24¹⁸⁶: مَجَلَّتُهُمْ ذَاتُ الْإِلَهِ وَدِينُهُمْ * قَوِيٌّ فَمَا يَرْجُونَ غَيْرَ الْعَوَاقِبِ ‘Their scroll (book) is that of God and their faith is steadfast; so they do not hope except the world to come [what comes just after]’. Cf. *‘āqiba* (pl. *‘awāqib*) ‘something that follows’.

1.5.6. *sifr* ‘a book’ and *sāfir* ‘a scribe’

Since these words share the root, we discuss them together, but in pre-Islamic poems we have studied, no example of these is found.

{al-Qur’ān} *sifr* (pl. *ʿasfār*) ‘a book’, *sāfir* (pl. *safara*) ‘a scribe’

It is almost a wonder that the corresponding singular form has never been disputed, though we find them used only once in the plural. This means that the words were in use before and after Islam uninterruptedly, and that in all probability they belong to the genuine heritage of the Arabic language¹⁸⁷.

Before Islam, North Arabs had left various documents, at some time and place in the Aramaic language they used¹⁸⁸, and at another time and place in the local pre-Islamic North Arabic. As to Aramaic, Nabataean papyri in 1 C CE is the most important: *spr* ‘document, record’ and *spr* ‘scribe’¹⁸⁹. As to pre-Islamic Arabic,

al-Ḥakīm ‘the Parables of Luqmān the Wise’ is definitely a translation of Aesop’s Fables, *Luqmān* in Sīra may be identified with later Arabic *Ḥayqār = Aramaic *Aḥīqār (أخ وقور). See Maraqtan, p. 310.

186) In dīwāns, it is printed *maḥallat-hum* (Ahlwardt, p. 3; al-Nābiḡa, p. 15) with *maḡallat-hum* in notes (Ahlwardt, p. 2; al-Nābiḡa, footnote 1 on p. 15). Fortunately, Lyall left us a translation of the poem (1930, pp. 95-97). Though he followed the reading *maḥallat-hum*, Lane (p. 438c) gives us “Their book is that of God”.

187) To Jeffery, *sifr* “is clearly a borrowing from Aramaic” (pp. 170-171) and *sāfir* “is from Christian rather than from Jewish Aramaic” (p. 171). Fraenkel’s interest was in the root √SFR or √ŠFR in the light of Hebrew (p. 247).

188) To get a clear phonetic form, Syriac forms are cited: *sāpār* (< *siṣr), *seṣrā* ‘something written, book’ (p. 1035a); Syr. *sāpār* (< *sāpēr), *sāpārā* ‘scribe’ (p. 1035b). From Aramaic languages which Arabs are known to have written, Hatran is conspicuous for *spr* ‘scribe’ (DNWSI, entry *spr*₂, p. 798).

189) P.Yadin 1, line 23 (Yadin, p. 178); P.Yadin 1, line 66 (Yadin, p. 182) and P.Yadin 3, line 55 (do., p.

Safaitic deserves a special mention: *sʿifr* ‘writing’¹⁹⁰⁾.

1) *sifr* (pl. *ʿasfār*) ‘a book’

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ‘The parable of those who have been loaded with the Torah and then could not carry it, is like the parable of the ass carrying books’ (62:5 once).

2) *sāfir* (pl. *saḥfara*) ‘a scribe’

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ‘Never! It is a reminder — so he who wills shall remember it — (written) upon pages revered, lifted high (and) purified by the hands of noble (and) pious scribes’ (80:11-16 once).

1.5.7. *siḡill* ‘a scroll’

This word, which means ‘scroll, list’ in MSA (p. 463b), has its first appearance in al-Qurʾān. Accordingly, there is no usage in pre-Islamic poems.

{al-Qurʾān} *siḡill* ‘scroll’

It is said that early Muslim scholars found it difficult to interpret the verse¹⁹¹⁾. Seeing that, however, the verse has been transmitted as we read now, the audience must have understood the passage at the time of revelation. When it was found obscure for some reason, scholars sought to pinpoint the meaning. Thanks to Fraenkel, Nöldeke and Jeffery¹⁹²⁾, the original is now identified: Latin *sigillum* ‘seal’ > Byzantine Greek *σιγίλλων* (sealed) ‘Imperial edict’. This must have been a large rolled sheet of parchment, since Syriac *siḡilliyyōn* ‘patent of authority’ is in actuality the document in which the caliph confirms the patriarch (p. 999b). Therefore, it is not that the prophet took the word from Syriac, but that he used the word in the sense as most people understood it in his days.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ‘On the day when we roll up heaven, like rolling up a scroll for (writing) books, just as we started the first creation, so we shall repeat it’ (21:104 once).

1.5.8. *kurrās* (unit noun, -a; pl. *karārīs*) ‘a quire, booklet’

Neither in pre-Islamic poems nor in al-Qurʾān, we find this word. But in *ḥadīth* literature (Concordance, 5:559a), we find it employed. Compared with ‘a notebook’ in MSA (p. 960b), the sense in the ancient days¹⁹³⁾ still reflects the Syriac original¹⁹⁴⁾.

240). These are Nabataean papyri in the Nabataean cursive script (see Takashina 2021, Appendix).

190) Al-Jallad, p. 340b. Safaitic is assumed to date roughly from 1 - 4 C AD. We are grateful to the author who prepared very useful tables, one of which is ‘Terms for inscriptions’ (p. 210).

191) Jeffery, pp. 163-164.

192) Fraenkel, pp. 251-252; Nöldeke (1910), pp. 27-28.

193) Older native lexicons do not state what it is, listing the morphological information only: Ṣiḥāḥ,

كان يكره أن يُكتب الحديث في الكراريس ‘he hated *ḥadīṭ* to be written in quires’ (al-Dārimīy, Muqaddima 42¹⁹⁵).

كره أن يُكتب العلم في الكراريس ‘he hated *‘ilm* to be written in quires’ (al-Dārimīy, Muqaddima 42).

In view of the difficulty which al-Dārimīy’s work entails (see 1.1.5.3, d), we frankly doubt if these sayings were uttered in the earliest days of Islam. We would rather like to know why the word is missing in other *ḥadīṭ* collections¹⁹⁶. It is because the source language is Syriac that we have taken up the word here. In all probability, Christian Arabs knew the word.

1.6. Writing, a scene too commonplace to picture in poetry

Even if the Persian original of *sabbūra* ‘a board memo’ is unknown (see 1.1.5.3, d), it sheds a new light on the custom of Arabs. They had a handy memo in their sleeve and this implies that writing was as common as their trade was with Arab merchants.

Also, the prophet’s utterance (see 1.1.6) shows that it was no rare occasion for him to write on the shoulder bone. What is more astonishing, his words suggest that there was a stock of bones in his residence. It is a very logical inference that the bones kept in stock had been processed into a uniform size. The prophet’s words confirm that pens and inkstands belonged to daily utensils among a certain group or class of Arabs.

So long as literary pieces are concerned, we know that memory (*riwāya*) is made most of, yet writing was felt indispensable in other aspects of social life. Supposedly people made simple utensils manually for themselves in those days. But in centers of trade, religion and culture, like Makka and al-Madīna, it is no wonder if there were stationery shops for writing such as pens, inkstands, small boards for memo, chopped shoulder bones and every item discussed in this work¹⁹⁷.

Then a daily scene, that people write something on their *ḡarīd* or *‘asīb*, had nothing to arouse poets’ genius. Writing was too commonplace to picture in their poems. Taking things thus, we will be able to see why poets paid no interest in writing.

1:472; LA, p. 3854c. It was TA (16:438a-b) that first mentioned the meaning: *al-ḡuz’ min al-ṣaḥīfa* ‘a part consisting of the sheet’. MM’s definition (p. 1805a) ‘a part of the book containing mostly 8 leaves; a small part less than a book’ is followed by Lane: ‘A quire, or parcel, of paper, generally consisting of five sheets, forming ten leaves, of a book’ (p. 2606a). These dictionaries teach us how and why the word acquired the modern meaning.

194) This borrowing, suggested first by Fraenkel (p. 251), is now established (see WKAS, 1:127b). For Syriac ‘quire, section (of a book)’, see p. 614a.

195) The register in Concordance corresponds to No. 479 in Bāb 42 (Dārimīy-1, 1:417) = No. 463 in Bāb 42 (Dārimīy-2, 1:132). As to the latter, the same register in Concordance (5:559a) covers also No. 482 in Bāb 42 (Dārimīy-1, 1:418) = No. 466 in Bāb 42 (Dārimīy-2, 1:132). The two are almost the same.

196) In the sayings above, the usages seem to point rather to ‘memo pads’ or ‘notebooks’ than to ‘quires’. If the former is intended, such usages in other early works should be brought to light.

197) Interestingly, this inference of ours almost matches Neuwirth’s phrase “Man is ‘encircled’ by writing” (p. 52) as an explanation for the ubiquity of the concept of writing.

Instead, poets had left us this amount of vocabularies related to writing that testify unawares to the full function of writing in their society. In other words, their poems compensate the lack of unearthed findings of North Arabic written in 6 - 7 C.

2. Some Related Topics about pre-Islamic Arabia

2.1. God or gods

2.1.1. The One God

a) *Allāh*

In some cases, Allāh may stand for Christian God as in the third verse (al-Hārīt bn Ḥilliza), for the subject of the verb is ʿAmr bn Hind, king of al-Hīra. Also in the first example, the girl who uttered Allāh's name is probably a Christian.

01m) ʿImruʿ al-Qays, 6a, line 27: فَقَالَتْ يَمِينَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكَ حِيلَةً * وَمَا إِنِّ أَرَى عَنكَ الْغَوَايَةَ تَنْجَلِ
(guarding against) you! And I do't see the mischief will be removed from you'. Cf. *yamīn* 'right hand, oath'; *mā'in* 'not'; *gawā* (i) *gawāya* 'to go astray, lose the way'; *ingālā* 'to become removed'.

03m) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, line 27: فَلَا تَكْتُمَنَّ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ * لِيَخْفَى وَمَهْمَا يُكْتَمِ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمِ
that it may be hidden, and whatever is concealed from Allāh, He knows'. Cf. *ḥafiya* (a) 'to be concealed'.

06m) al-Hārīt bn Ḥilliza, 6b, line 62¹⁹⁸: فَهَدَاهُمْ بِالْأَسْوَدَيْنِ وَأَمَرَ اللَّهَ * هِ بِلْعَ يَشْقَى بِهِ الْأَشْقِيَاءُ
penetrating, by which the miserable (men) are to become more miserable'. Cf. *al-ʿaswad-āni* 'dates and water (Lane, p. 1463c)¹⁹⁹'; *bilg*²⁰⁰ = *balg* = *balīg* = *bālīg* 'attaining, penetrating (Lane, pp. 251c-252b)'; *ṣaqiya* (a) 'to be wretched'; *ṣaqīy* (pl. *ʿasqiyā*) 'miserable'.

06m) al-Hārīt bn Ḥilliza, 6b, line 75²⁰¹: وَفَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ كَمَا عَلِمَ اللَّهُ * هِ وَمَا إِنِّ لِلْحَائِنِينَ دِمَاءُ
'and we did to them as Allāh knew (then), and to those to whom time is up, there is no blood (revenge)'. Cf. *ḥāna* (i) 'to be up (time)', *ḥā'in* 'he to whom time is up'; *dam* (pl. *dimā*) 'blood'.

198) This line corresponds to line 44 in some editions.

199) Its antonym *al-ʿabyaḍ-āni* 'bread and water' (Lane, p. 284a) is quoted in the commentary to show the function of the dual *al-qamar-āni* 'the sun and the moon'.

200) As to *bilg*, Ikeda followed the reading of al-Zawzanīy (p. 275), while others may read *balg*.

201) This line corresponds to line 55 in some editions.

006) Saḷama bn al-Ḥuṣṣub al-ʿAnmārīy, 6c, line 2: * فَإِنْ تُقْبِلْ بِمَا عَلِمْتَ فَإِيَّي * بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ وَصَّالَ صَرُومٌ ‘So if she comes near with what she knew (before), then verily I am, by the praise of Allāh, (a man) easy to be in touch with (and) quick to cut off (the relation)’. Cf. *waṣṣāl* ‘easy to get connected’; *ṣarūm* ‘cutting, stern’.

012) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām al-Murrīy, 6b, line 1: * جَزَى اللَّهُ أَفْنَاءَ الْعَشِيرَةِ كُلِّهَا * بِدَارَةِ مَوْضُوعٍ عَقُوقًا وَمَأْتَمًا ‘May Allāh reward all the tribe of mixed people, all of them, for disobedience and their sin at Dārat Mawḍūʿ (the battle place)!’. Cf. *ʿafnāʾ min al-nāsi* ‘mixed sorts of men’; *ʿaqqa* (u) *ʿuqūq* ‘to disobey’; *ʿaṭima* (a) *maʿtam* ‘to commit a sin’.

031) Dū al-ʿIṣbaʿ al-ʿAdwānīy, 6j, line 4: * لَا إِلَهَ أَبْنُ عَمِّكَ لَا أَفْضَلْتُ فِي حَسَبٍ * عَنِّي وَلَا أَنْتَ دِيَانِي فَتَحْزُونِي ‘To God is your uncle’s son (= myself)²⁰², you are neither better than I in lineage nor my judge who can rule (over) me’. Cf. *lāhi* = *li-llāhi* (Lyll, 2:116 note to line 4); *ḥasab* ‘noble descent’; *dayyān* ‘judge’; *ḥazā* (u) ‘to rule’.

031) Dū al-ʿIṣbaʿ al-ʿAdwānīy²⁰³, 6j, line 16: * وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُنِي وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُكُمْ * وَاللَّهُ يَجْزِيكَ عَنِّي وَيَجْزِينِي ‘Allāh knows me and Allāh knows you, and Allāh will reward you about me and will reward me (about you)’.

045) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6a, line 4: * إِنَّ أَفْلَتَ الْعُقْلِي * اللَّهُ دَرُكُمَا وَدَرُّ أَبِيكُمَا * حَتَّى يُفْتَلَا ‘How great you two are and your father is, even if the man of Ġufayla should escape so that he may (not) be killed’. Cf. *darr*²⁰⁴ ‘abundant milk’; *ʿaflata* ‘to escape’.

054) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6a, line 33: * لَا يُبْعِدُ اللَّهُ التَّلَبُّبَ وَالْغَارَاتِ إِذْ قَالَ * أَلْحَمِيسُ نَعَمَ ‘Would that ʿAllāh may not forbid getting armed and raiding, when the army said, “Camels!”’. Cf. *talabbaba* ‘to gird oneself for fight’; *ḡāra* ‘raid on horseback’; *ḥamīs* ‘army divided into five (van, rear, right, left and the main body)’; *naʿam* (pl. *ʿanʿām, nuʿmān*) ‘camels, sheep’.

084) Maqqās bn ʿAmr al-ʿĀʿidīy, 7a, line 3: * إِذَا وَضَعَ الْهَزَاهِزُ آلَ قَوْمٍ * فَزَادَ اللَّهُ * أَلَكُمُ ارْتِفَاعًا ‘If was lower the appearance of a people, may Allāh add highness to your guise!’. Cf. *hazhaza* (pl. *hazāhiz*) ‘affliction, war’; *ʿāl* (= *ṣaḥṣ*) ‘corporeal form or figure’ (Lane, p. 127b).

202) *li-llāhi* is often used for admiration ‘by God’ (see footnote 204). But this verse follows a complicated logic: first, taken literally as above > ‘what a man I am’ (in a lament about himself). There is another reading (*lāhi bn-i ʿammi-ka*) taking it for *wa-rabbi bn-i ʿammi-ka*, about which see Lyall (1:322) or the Cairo edition (p. 160). What interests us here is *Allāh*.

203) According to Lyall (2:109), the date of the poet ‘was long before Islam’.

204) *li-llāhi darru-* is the set phrase for admiration (Wright, 2:150B; Lyall, 2:169 note to line 4), and this example shows that it goes back to very ancient times.

087) Rāšid bn Šihāb, 6b, line 7: فَلَا تَحْسِبُنَا كَالْعُمُورِ وَجَمَعْنَا * فَحَنُّ وَبَيْتِ اللَّهِ 'So don't think we are like 'Amrs, nor our group! For we are, by the House of Allāh (the Ka'ba), nearer to 'Amr²⁰⁵ (than you)!' Cf. -an (Energetic II) -nā; 'umūr 'pl. of 'Amr'.

096) Bišr bn 'Abī Hāzim, 6b, line 8: أَجَبْنَا بَنِي سَعْدِ بْنِ ضَبَّةٍ إِذْ دَعَوْا * وَلِلَّهِ مَوْلَى 'We answered the sons of Sa'd son of Ḍabba when they called (for help), and to Allāh is the owner of the call who won't answer it!²⁰⁶'. Cf. *mawlā* = *ṣāhib*.

105) Mu'āwiya bn Mālik bn Ja'far, 6c, line 22: بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ عَطَاءٍ قَوْمٍ * [...] I stood up [...] with the praise to God, then to the bounty of men who set free (plundered) herds and captives'. Cf. 'atā' 'the act of giving > bounty'; *fakka* (u) 'to loose, set free'; *raqaba* (pl. *riqāb*) 'slave, captive' (Lane, p. 1133c).

116) 'Abd Qays bn Ḥufāf, 6b, line 3: اللَّهُ فَاتَّقِهِ وَأَوْفِ بِنَذْرِهِ * وَإِذَا حَلَفْتَ مُمَارِيًا 'God, of course, fear Him and fulfil the vow to Him! And when you swear in a conflict, swear with an exception (just in case)'. Cf. *ittaqa* 'to fear, be pious'; 'awfa bi- 'to fulfil'; *naḍr* 'vow'; *ḥalafa* (i) 'to swear'; *mārā* 'to oppose'; *taḥallala* 'to swear with an exception'.

b) *rabb* 'Lord'²⁰⁷

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-'Abd, 6b, line 80: فَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبِّي كُنْتُ قَيْسَ بْنَ خَالِدٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ * رَبِّي كُنْتُ عُمُرُو بْنَ مَرْثَدٍ 'So if my Lord willed, I would be Qays bn Ḥālid and if my Lord willed, I would be 'Amr bn Marṭad'.

116) 'Abd Qays bn Ḥufāf, 6b, line 14: وَأَسْتَعْنِ مَا أَغْنَاكَ رَبُّكَ بِالْغِنَى * وَإِذَا تُصِيبَكَ خِصَاصَةٌ فَتَجَمَّلْ 'Be content as long as your Lord enriches you with riches, and when poverty afflicts you, then restrain yourself'. Cf. *istaḡnā* 'to be content'; 'aṣāba 'to afflict'; *ḥaṣāṣa* 'poverty'; *taḡammala* 'to restrain oneself' (Lane, p. 460a).

c) Qur'ānic epithets of God

Though not belonging to *al-'asmā' al-ḥusnā* 'the 99 Most Beautiful Names', there

205) We followed simply the Arabic text, but Lyall reads 'Bakr' following another version to get a sense for the verse (Lyall, 2:249, Note for line 7).

206) Namely, 'what a merciless man the owner of the call is not to answer it!'

207) We may add here a verse by a poet of the Umayyad period. 014) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 4: فَإِنَّ لَنَا خُطَايِرَ نَاعِمَاتٍ * عَطَاءَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ 'for we have fences of gardens (of palm-trees), the gift of God, Lord of the universe'. Cf. *ḥaṣīra* (pl. *ḥaṣā'ir*) 'wall, fence, fold'; *nā'ima* 'garden' (TA, 33:520b).

are verses in which a Qurʾānic epithet of God is employed. The first example has *malīk* ‘the Sovereign’ (al-Qurʾān, 54:55) and *ʿallām* ‘the Knower’ (5:109), while in the second (line 85 of the same poem) we find *qassām* ‘the Divider’. The last one is not found in al-Qurʾān but the poet was surely acquainted with the notion ‘One God’.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 84: * فَأَقْنَعِ بِمَا قَسَمَ الْمَلِكُ فَإِنَّمَا *
فَسَمَ الْخَلِيقَ بَيْنَنَا عَلَامُهَا
(to you), for the Knower of the created beings has divided them among us’. Cf. *ḥalīqa* (pl. *ḥalāʾiq*) ‘created being’.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 85: * وَإِذَا الْأَمَانَةُ قُسِمَتْ فِي مَعْشَرٍ * أَوْفَى *
بِأَعْظَمِ حَقِّنَا فَسَامُهَا
it has given our greatest due in full’. Cf. *maʿšar* ‘people, tribe’; *ʿawfā* ‘to pay in full’.

d) *Yawm al-Ḥisāb* ‘the Day of Reckoning’

So far as this verse is concerned, it is as if it had been revealed to Zuhayr in advance. It reminded Ikeda of the holy verse 25:68-69 (see JAIS, vol. 5, p. 17, footnote 10). As to another comment on this verse, see 1.5.3.

03m) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, line 28: * يُؤَخَّرُ فَيُوضَعُ فِي كِتَابٍ فَيُدْخَرُ * لِيَوْمِ *
أَلْحِسَابِ أَوْ يُعَجَّلُ فَيُنْقَمِ
Day of Reckoning; or it is speeded up to be punished (in no delay)’. Cf. *naqama* (i) ‘to punish’.

e) *al-Bayt* ‘the Holy House’

According to Zuhayr, the temple was in the custody of Ġurhum before Qurayš. No mention of ʾIbrāhīm or ʾIsmāʿīl shows that the poet was sure of Ġurhum’s role.

03m) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, line 17: * فَأَقْسَمْتُ بِالْبَيْتِ الَّذِي طَافَ حَوْلَهُ *
رِجَالُ بَنُوهُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ وَجُرْهُمِ
of Qurayš and Ġurhum who built it circled’.

2.1.2. *al-ʾilāh* ‘God’

Since the poet of this verse died a Muslim (muḥaḍram), by the term *al-ʾilāh*, instead of Allāh, he perhaps meant the Christian God at some time in pre-Islamic days.

114) ʿAbd Allāh bn ʿAnama al-Ḍabbīy, 7a, line 11 : * كَفَاكَ الْإِلَٰهُ إِذْ عَصَاكَ مَعَاشِرُ *
ضِعَافٌ قَلِيلٌ لِلْعَدُوِّ عَتَادُهَا
rebelled you, whose equipment is too little for the enemy’. Cf. *maʿšar* (pl.

*ma^cāšīr*²⁰⁸⁾ ‘a company of people (Lane, p. 2053b)’; *di^cāf* = *du^cafā*’; *‘atād* ‘equipment’.

2.1.3. Idol gods

a) *zūr* ‘idol’

000) al-Kalḥaba al-^cUranīy (al-Yarbū^cī), 6j, (al-^cAnbārī’s introduction to the poem No. 3): رَدَدْتُ ظَعَائِنِي مِنْ قَرْنِ ظُبْيٍ * وَهْنٌ عَلَى شَمَائِلِهِنَّ زُورٌ ‘I returned my womenfolk on the camels’ back from Qarn Zaby and in their left hands was an idol’. Cf. *ḡa^cīna* (pl. *ḡa^cā^cin*) ‘woman in a litter on camel’s back’; *šimāl* (pl. *šamā^cil*); *zūr* ‘idol, idolatry’.

b) *Wadd*

050) al-Muraqqiṣ al-^cAkbar, 6a, line 11: إِذَا * أَنْ هَجَرْتُهُمْ * أَشَجَدَ الْأَقْوَامَ رِيحُ أَطَائِفٍ ‘By your Wadd²⁰⁹⁾, what is my people, though I left them when the (cold) wind of (Mt.) ^cUzā‘if worried people?’. Cf. *‘ašḡaḡa* ‘to inflict’²¹⁰⁾.

2.1.4. *rāhib* ‘(Christian) monk’²¹¹⁾

01m) ^cImru^c al-Qays, 6a, line 39: نُضِيءُ الظَّلَامَ بِالْعِشَاءِ كَأَنَّهَا * مَنَارَةٌ مُنْسَى رَاهِبٍ مُتَبَتِّلٍ ‘She (= her brightness) lightens the darkness in the evening, as if she were a lamp in the night cell of a monk devoting himself to God’. Cf. *ḡalām* ‘darkness’; *mums-an* ‘monk’s night cell’; *tabattala* ‘to devote oneself to God’.

01m) ^cImru^c al-Qays, 6a, line 72: أَمَالَ السَّلِيْطَ * أَوْ مَصَابِيحُ رَاهِبٍ يُضِيءُ سَنَاهُ أَوْ مَصَابِيحُ رَاهِبٍ * أَمَالَ السَّلِيْطَ ‘It is its lightning that flares up, or (it is) lamps of a monk (who) has inclined the oil over the twisted wicks (sparking instantly)’. Cf. *san-an* ‘lightning’; *salīṭ* ‘oil’; *ḡubāla* (pl. *ḡubāl*) ‘wick’; *fattala* ‘to twist’.

2.2. Names in history

2.2.1. *‘Abū Karib*, a South Arabian name

^cAbū Karib, one of *kunya*, has a root in South Arabia and Muslim scholars knew it through various works such as *Sīra Rasūl Allāh* in which a certain ^cAbū Karib Ḥassān bn Tibān ^cAs‘ad is said to have invaded Yaṭrib in the dim past²¹²⁾. This agrees on the whole with the distribution of personal names in the pre-Islamic inscriptions²¹³⁾.

208) About this poetic license, see Wright, § 249 (2:387).

209) One of the idol gods among pre-Islamic North Arabs, listed in al-Qur‘ān (71:23).

210) This meaning is very rare, for it is lacking in Ṣiḥāḥ, Ḡamhara, LA and Lane, while TA (9:421a) and MM incorporate the signification. There is no Arabic-English dictionary that has registered this sense.

211) See another example in the first sample in 1.5.1.

212) *Sīra-A1*, p. 12; *Sīra-A2*, p. 40. The declension of compound proper names is explained in Wright, 1:244B (§ 309, Rem. c), and *ṭibān* *‘as‘ad* is said to be one.

213) Under the name ^cBKRB in Harding (p. 14), we find 50 instances all in Ancient South Arabian with

Concerning *Karib* in the ancient poetry, we must mention three points. First, a muḥaḍram poet and warrior, *ʿAmr bn Maʿdī-Karib*, was known for his renowned sword *al-Ṣamṣāma*. The second is *ʿAbū Karib*, a legendary governor of al-Baḥrayn²¹⁴, who had served *ʿAmr bn Hind*, king of al-Ḥīra (mid 6 C) and committed himself to killing Ṭarafa as written in the king’s epistle which the poet had handed to him. As the story is a legend, so the governor of al-Ḥīra bears a South Arabian name, though not improbable. Stationed on the coast of al-Baḥrayn, he might possibly have been a representative of Ḥimyar on the trade route to the Gulf area.

The third is a person’s name in a poem by a poet from Naḡrān. Lyall informs us that this *ʿAbū Karib* was Biṣr bn *ʿAlqama bn al-Ḥārīt* (2:113, note 4). Then this may suggest that a complicated change was under way in the linguistic situation in South Arabia. Taken on the surface, the verse implies that the poet had friends in Yemen who understood this North Arabic poem, one of them living even in Ḥaḍramawt. Perhaps living in the vicinity of Naḡrān, the poet could compose this poem in North Arabic.

030) *ʿAbd Yaḡūṭ al-Ḥārītīy*, 7a, line 4: أَبَا كَرْبٍ وَالْأَيْهَمَيْنِ كَلَيْهِمَا * وَفَيْسًا بِأَعْلَى
حَضْرَمَوْتَ الْيَمَانِيَا [‘Tell my fellow-drinkers from Naḡrān that there is no more meeting (with me), to] *ʿAbū Karib*, two *ʿAyhams* both and *Qays* (living) in Yemenite²¹⁵ Upper Ḥaḍramawt!’.

2.2.2. *Taymāʾ*

The oasis of *Taymāʾ* had a great importance in the ancient history, and in the days of *ʿImruʾ al-Qays* the name was perhaps still reminiscent of the past glory²¹⁶.

01m) *ʿImruʾ al-Qays*, 6a, line 77: وَتَيْمَاءٌ لَمْ يَتْرُكْ بِهَا جَذْعَ نَخْلَةٍ * وَلَا أُجْمًا إِلَّا
مَشِيدًا بِجَنْدَلٍ [... the fallen water passed over (the hills of) al-Qanān ...], and over *Taymāʾ* it did not leave (even) a stock of a palm-tree or a stronghold except one strengthened by a stone’. Cf. *ḡiḍʿ* ‘stock of a palm tree’; *uḡum* ‘stronghold’; *šāda* (i) ‘to coat with plaster, strengthen’; *ḡandal* ‘stone’.

2.2.3. *Ṭamūd* or *ʿĀd*

none in Ancient North Arabic inscriptions, and many compound names with KRB are listed (p. 497) like M^cDKRB (p. 553). Though the compilation is of earlier date, Harding’s work is indispensable. Since people moved on various occasions, a limited number of exceptions are no wonder. In Guidi’s *Tables Alphabétiques du Kitāb al-Aḡānī* (p. 568a), three persons bear the name *ʿAbū Karib*, two *Karib* alone and two *Maʿdī-Karib*.

214) As stated, this is a legend about which other transmissions exist. Ikeda follows Seligsohn (Ṭarafa, p. 14, footnote 1) who restored the name to *ʿAbū Karib Rabīʿa bn al-Ḥārīt* as against the usual text without a *kunya*, relying on his poem No. 14, line 6 (do. p. 113) = Ahlwardt, No. 6, line 6 (p. ٦٤).

215) See footnote 16.

216) The town was *min ʿummaḥāt l-qurā* ‘one of the mother towns’ (al-Bakrīy, p. 208). But in the days of early Islam, no one knew that it was once a capital of the Assyrian empire. The nisba adjective of *Taymāʾ* follows that of *Ṣanʿāʾ* (Wright, 1:157C): تَيْمَانِيٌّ and صَنْعَانِيٌّ.

around'; *nabaṭ* (pl. *nabīṭ*, *ʿanbāṭ*) 'Nabataeans'.

2.2.5. Yemen

2.2.5.1. A Yemenite merchant

Since this is the single occurrence of a scene of a Yemenite merchant, we do not know if he was on his usual business visit of nomads' camps.

01m) ʿImruʿ al-Qays, 6a, line 80: *وَأَلْقَى بِصَحْرَاءِ الْغَبِيطِ بَعَاغَهُ * نَزُولَ الْيَمَانِي ذِي*
أَلْعِيَابِ الْمُحْمَلِ 'it (the cloud) threw out (its water) at al-Ġabīṭ desert (as in the case of) the stoppage of a Yamani (merchant), owner of bags (of colorful clothes) loaded²²³⁾ (on the camel) [thus the site blooming on the spot]'. Cf. *baʿāʿ* 'water in the cloud'; *ʿayba* (pl. *ʿiyāb*) 'leather-bag'.

2.2.5.2. *tubbaʿ* (pl. *tabābiʿa*) 'a king of Yemen'²²⁴⁾

Apart from the folk etymology (deriving from √TBʿ 'to follow'), two points are certain: 1) TBʿ is an onomastic element in Ancient South Arabian (Harding, p. 128.); 2) *tabʿa* in Geʿez 'to be manly, courageous'²²⁵⁾ offers a persuasive link. So in the days of Ḥimyar, the word was already obsolete and lingered only in a compound names.

009) Mutammim bn Nuwayra, 6j²²⁶⁾, line 41: *وَلَهُنَّ كَانَ الْحَارِثَانِ كِلَاهُمَا * وَلَهُنَّ*
كَانَ أَخُو الْمَصَانِعِ تَبْعٌ 'And they (*ḥādītāt*) had two al-Ḥārīt's²²⁷⁾ both of them, and they had Tubbaʿ, master of huge buildings'. Cf. *ḥādīṭa* 'accident, fate';

223) The rhyme forced *al-muḥammalati* to be *al-muḥammali*.

224) In 126) ʿAbū Duʿayb al-Ḥudālīy, 7b, line 61 (= line 59 in Lyall), the poet (see 1.0) mentioned a coat of mail made for Tubbaʿ or David, while 012) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām (2.3.2.2) took up a coat of mail made by the Davidic weaving. So Tubbaʿ and David are a stock phrase to boast of a coat of mail. Being a muḥaḍram, he deserves but a brief comment on his line 62 (line 60 in Lyall = Ḥudayl [1:38], No. 1, line 60): *وَكِلَاهُمَا فِي كَفِّهِ يَزْنِيَّةٌ* 'and each of them had in his hand a lance of Dū Yazan ([*qanā*] *yazanīya*)'. According to Lyall (2:362, note to line 60), Dū Yazan is a title of the Himyarite royal member with Yazan as the name of his castle (source unknown). What we know of him is rather as a father of the hero in Sīra of Sayf bn Dī Yazan, but little is known about Dū Yazan. The hero is said to have expelled Ethiopians from Yemen with the help of the Sasanid Khosrow I (traditionally dated to 575). It is striking that, in the days of this poet, the prophet's contemporary, Dū Yazan was used as an image of superb spears in a poetic device, and the name was eternized later in a roman of his son.

225) Leslau, p. 568b. See also Jeffery, p. 89 and Selwi, pp. 48-49.

226) See footnote 222. We found another verse but by a muḥaḍram (born before Islam and died a Muslim) poet. 017) al-Muzarrid bn Ḍirār al-Dubyanīy, 7b, line 38: *وَأَهَا الْفَتِيرُ * وَمَسْفُوحَةٌ فَضْفَاضَةٌ تُبْعِيَّةٌ*
تَحْتَوِيهَا الْمَعَابِلُ 'and (also I have) an ample coat of mail (made for) the king of Yemen, which the (iron) nail keeps (together) and which arrow-heads dislike (failing to pierce the coat)'. Cf. *masfūḥa* 'coat of mail'; *faḍfāḍ* 'ample, wide'; *waʿā* (i) 'to bind, keep'; *qatīr* 'head of the nails of a coat of mail'; *iḡṭawā* 'to dislike'; *miʿbala* (pl. *maʿābil*) 'broad and long arrow-head'.

227) Namely, the two Ghassanid kings: al-Ḥārīt al-ʿAkbar and al-Ḥārīt al-ʿAṣḡar. The Elder may perhaps be identified with al-Ḥārīt bn Ġabala (ca. 529-569) while the Younger, (said to be) son of the Elder, is difficult to identify. Perhaps somewhere between 583 and 614 (Nöldeke, 1887, p. 53). However, for the sake of poetry, imagination is the foremost motive. In view of many persons in history with the name al-Ḥārīt or al-Munḍir, it is needless to identify who the Younger was.

maṣnaʿ ‘huge building (palace, fortress)’.

2.2.5.3. *Ḥimyar*

The verse below imparts to us a colorful image of Ḥimyar or al-Yaman, and this was true of ʾImruʾ al-Qays’s verse in 2.2.5.1. It is likely that North Arabs had such a fancy about the southern part of the peninsula, though we need more proofs.

112) Subayʿ bn al-Ḥaṭīm al-Taymīy, 7a, line 22: * تَنْفِي الْحَصَى حَجْرَاتُهُ وَكَأَنَّهُ * بِرَحَالِ حِمَيْرٍ بِالصُّحَى مَحْفُوفُ ‘The sides (of the rainy clouds) sweep away (down on the ground) pebbles (by torrents of rain) and, in the forenoon, it looks as if it were surrounded by (grasses and flowers as colorful as) the camel-saddles of Ḥimyar’. Cf. *naḥā* (i) ‘to refuse, sweep away’; *ḥağra* (pl. *ḥağarāt*) ‘side’; *ḥaṣa-n* ‘small stones’; *rahl* (pl. *riḥāl*) ‘camel’s saddle’; *ḥaffa* (u) ‘to surround’.

2.3. Things overseas

2.3.1. *al-Hind* ‘India’

Among foreign peoples or lands, India is referred to oftenest. Since Arab tribesmen were warriors, all references mention India as the source land of iron for their weapons. This image of India was shared widely but had to remain very vague, sometimes imaginary²²⁸. Yet the example below is vivid enough to confirm that this kind of conflict could happen once in a while.

041) al-ʿAḥnas bn Šihāb al-Tağlibīy, 6b, line 9: * وَإِنْ يَأْتِيَهَا بَأْسٌ مِنْ أَلْهَنْدِ كَارِبُ * لُكَيْزٌ لَهَا الْبَحْرَانِ وَالسَّيْفُ كُلُّهُ * ‘To (the tribe of) Lukayz (*fem.*) belong the (cape of) the Two-Seas (*al-Baḥrānī*) and all the coast, and if a grievous worry should come to it (her) from India,’. Cf. *sīf* ‘seashore’; *karaba* (u) ‘to grieve’; line 10: * جَهَامٌ أَرَأَقُ مَاءَهُ فَهُوَ آئِبٌ * تَطَايَرُ عَنْ أَعْجَازِ حُوشٍ كَأَنَّهَا * ‘it (she) flies (back to the upland) on buttocks of wild camels as if it (she) were a cloud which, having poured water, is now going back’. Cf. *taṭāyara* ‘to be shattered, scatter’ [**taṭāyaru < ta-taṭāyaru*]; *ʿağz* (pl. *ʿağāz*) ‘buttocks’; *ḥūš* ‘wild camels (Lane, p. 669b)’; *ğahām* ‘waterless cloud’; *ʿarāqa* ‘to pour’; *ʿāba* (u) ‘to return’.

2.3.2. Swords made of Indian iron

True or imaginary, swords made of Indian iron were made most of, and a special nisba adjective may be employed. But they mostly called it *muḥannad*.

228) So the following verse by a muḥadram poet is a fancy. 015) Muzzarid bn ʾDirār al-Ḍubayānīy, 7b, line 4: * عَرَابِيْبُ كَالْهِنْدِ الْخَوَافِي الْخَوَافِي * مَعَاهِدُ تَرْعَى بَيْنَهَا كُلُّ رَعْلَةٍ * ‘As to (our former) meeting places, there pastures now every ostrich among them, very black like Indians barefooted and quick in pace’. Cf. *maʿhad* (pl. *maʿāhid*) ‘meeting place’; *raʿla* ‘ostrich’; *ğirbīb* (pl. *ğarābīb*) ‘intensely black (grapes)’; *ḥāf-in* (pl. *ḥufā*), *ḥāfiya* (pl. *ḥawāf-in*)²²⁸ ‘barefooted’; *ḥāfid* (pl. *ḥawāfid*) ‘quick in pace’.

a) *hunduwanīy* ‘Indian (sword)’²²⁹

103) Zabbān bn Sayyār, 6b, line 2: لِسَانٌ كَصَدْرِ * لِسَانٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ * يُطِيفُونَ بِالْأَعَشَى ‘They go around with the night-blind man, and a sharp tongue like the blade of an Indian sword was poured (upon them)’. Cf. *ʾaṭāfa* ‘to go around’; *ʾaʿšā* ‘night-blind’; *ṣabba* (u) ‘to pour water’; *ṣārim* ‘cutting, sharp’.

b) *muḥannad* ‘made from Indian iron’²³⁰

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6b, line 78: وَظَلَمَ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى أَشَدَّ مَضَاضَةً * عَلَى الْمَرْءِ مِنْ وَقَعِ الْحُسَامِ الْمُهَنْدِ ‘The injustice of relatives is severer in pain for a man than the strike of an Indian sword’. Cf. *dū l-qurbā* ‘relative’; *maḍāḍa* ‘pain, distress’; *ḥusām* ‘sword’.

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6b, line 83: فَالَيْتُ لَا يَنْفَكُ كَشْحِي بِطَانَةٍ * لِأَبْيَضَ عَضْبِ الشَّفَرَتَيْنِ مُهَنْدِ ‘So I vowed that my waist should continue to be a lining for an Indian white (sword), a sharp sword of both edges’. Cf. *ʾālā* (III) ‘to vow’; *mā infakka* = *mā zāla*; *kašh* ‘flank, waist’; *biṭāna* ‘lining of clothes’; *ʿaqb* ‘sharp sword’; *ṣafra* ‘edge of a sword’.

04m) ʿAntara bn Šaddād al-ʿAbsīy, 6b, line 56: فَطَعَنْتُهُ بِالرُّمَحِ ثُمَّ عَلَوْتُهُ * بِمُهَنْدٍ صَافِي الْحَدِيدَةِ مَحْدَمِ ‘So I thrust him with the lance, then I struck him with an Indian sword, pure of Iron (and) sharp’. Cf. *ʿalā* (ū) ‘to strike one’s head (with a sword)’; *miḥdam* ‘sharp sword’.

090) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām²³¹, 6b, line 7: بِكُلِّ رُقَاقٍ الشَّفَرَتَيْنِ مُهَنْدٍ * وَأَسْمَرَ عَرَاصِ الْمَهْرَةِ أَرْقَبَا ‘[We fell upon them ...] by each of the two thin edges, an Indian (sword), and by a spear, quivering intensely of a quiver (like a) broad-necked (beast)’. Cf. *ruqāq* = *raqīq* ‘thin’ (Lane, p. 1131b); *ṣafra* ‘edge of a

229) In addition to the verse cited here, a (probably) late poet also used the same nisba. 081) al-Mumazzaq al-ʿAbdīy, 7b, line 6: أَخَذَ كَصَدْرِ الْهَنْدَوَانِيِّ مِخْفَقٌ * يَوْمٌ بِهِنَ الْحَزَمِ خَرَقٌ سَمِيدَعٌ ‘A noble chief directs them (horses) toward the rugged ground, (who is) quick-handed (with) a broad sword like an Indian blade’. Cf. *ʾamma* (u) ‘to direct toward’; *ḥazm* ‘elevated, rough and rugged ground’ (Lane, p. 561b); *ḥirq* ‘noble, generous’; *samaydaʿ* ‘master, chief’ (Lane, p. 1424c); *ʾaḥadd* ‘quick-handed’ (Lane, p. 533c); *miḥfaq* ‘broad sword’. A late (muḥaddam) poet employs a usual nisba *hindīy* ‘Indian’. 017) al-Muzarrid bn Ḍirār al-Ḍubaynīy, 7b, line 46: وَأَمْلَسَ هِنْدِيٌّ مَتَى يَغْلُ خَدُّهُ ذَرَى الْبَيْضِ لَا تَسْلَمُ عَلَيْهِ ‘[and a sharp sword ...] and (it is) a smooth (blade) of Indian (iron), when its edge goes over the tops of the helmets, the necks will not be safe on it’. Cf. *ʿalā* (u) ‘to go up over’; *ḍurwa* (pl. *ḍur-an*) ‘top’; *bayḍ* ‘egg > helmet of iron’; *kāhil* (pl. *kawāhil*) ‘base of the neck’.

230) This term was employed also by a late poet. 075) ʿAbū Qays bn al-ʿAslat al-ʿAnṣārīy, 7b, line 7: أَخْفَرُهَا عَنِّي بِذِي رَوْنَقٍ * مُهَنْدٍ كَالْمِلْحِ قَطَاعِ ‘I hook it (= the skirt of a mail-coat) away from me on (the sheath of) wavy streaks (= glittering) of the Indian blade, as white as salt, all-cutting’. Cf. *ḥafaza* (i) ‘to push or hook from behind’; *rawnaq* ‘splendor, wavy streaks of a sword’.

231) It is very interesting that this poet mentioned three types of sword, two in the same poem (see *mašrafiy* in 2.3.2.1; *Buṣrā* in 2.3.2.2) and the third (*muḥannad*) here. In our corpus of pre-Islamic poems, it is only this poet that boasted of a sword ‘of Bostran make’.

sword or a spear-head'; *ʿasmar* 'brown, spear'; *ʿarrāṣ* 'quivering (lance)'; *mahazza* = *hazz* (verbal noun of *hazza*, 'to quiver'; Lane, p. 2892b); *ʿarqab* 'broad-necked like an animal'.

2.3.2.1 *mašrafīy* 'a Mašrafī sword'

There are contradicting etymologies for *mašrafīy*, deriving it from the village *Mašārīf* either in Syria or in Yemen, or from the manufacturer *Mašraf* (Lyall, 2:38, note to line 10). Unlike 'Indian iron', the word is indifferent to the source of iron.

012) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām al-Murrīy, 6b, line 10: عَشِيَّةٌ لَا تُغْنِي الرِّمَاحُ * وَلَا النَّبْلُ إِلَّا الْمَشْرِفِيُّ الْمُصَمِّمًا 'In the evening, (when) both spears and arrows do not suffice for the place (of our battle), except the piercing Mašrafīy (sword)'. Cf. *nabl* (unit noun, -a) 'arrow'; *šammama* 'to pierce'.

022) Salāma bn Jandal al-Saʿdīy, 6j, line 24 (line 17 in Lyall): بِالْمَشْرِفِيِّ وَمَصْفُولٍ * أَسْنَتْهَا صُمُّ الْعَوَامِلِ صَدَقَاتِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ 'we frightened them away by the Mašrafīy sword and by the polished (spear-)head, (the bamboo being) stuffed in the part connecting the iron-head, hard in the internodal portions (of the bamboo)'. Cf. *šaqaḷa* 'to polish'; *ʿašamm* (pl. *šamm*) 'deaf (stuffed earhole) > hard, not hollow'; *ʿāmil* (pl. *ʿawāmil*) 'the part of the spear connecting the iron-head'; *šadq* 'hard and even or straight (applied to a spear)' (Lane, p. 1667c).

071) Bišr, 6b, line 9: وَتَرَى حِيَادَ ثِيَابِهِمْ مَحْلُولَةً * وَالْمَشْرِفِيَّةَ قَدْ كَسَوْهَا الْمُذْهَبَا 'You see their good garments full of holes, and (as to) their Mašrafīy (swords), they have clothed them gilded (garments)'. Cf. *ḡayyid* (pl. *ḡiyād*); *hall* (u) 'to pierce'; *ʿadhaba* 'to gild'.

086) Rāšid bn Šihāb, 6b, line 5: وَلَا تُوعِدْتَنِي إِنِّي إِنْ تُلَاقِنِي * مَعِيَ مَشْرِفِيٌّ فِي مَضَارِبِهِ قَضْمٌ 'And don't threaten me! If you meet me, I shall have with me a Mašrafīy sword, with a notch in its edges (after killing many)'. Cf. *ʿawʿada* 'to threaten', -an (Energetic II) -nī; *maḍrib* (pl. *maḍārib*) 'a sword edge'; *qaḍam* 'rip'.

089) al-Ḥārīṭ bn Zālim al-Murrīy, 6b, line 19: أَقَامُوا لِلْكَتَائِبِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ * سِيُوفَ الْمَشْرِفِيَّةِ وَالْحِرَابَا 'Every day they held their Mašrafīy swords and javelins against the squadron'. Cf. *katība* (pl. *katāʾib*) 'squadron'; *ḥarba* (pl. *ḥirāb*) 'javelin'.

108) Ḥidāš bn Zuhayr²³², 6b, line 5: حَبَّتْ دُونَهُمْ بَكَرٌ فَلَمْ نَسْتَطِعْهُمْ * كَأَنَّهُمْ بِالْمَشْرِفِيَّةِ سَامِرٌ 'Bakr drew near without them (= in their defence), and we could not (resist) them; it was as if they were night-talking (boys playing) with a Mašrafīy sword [= we were defeated]'. Cf. *ḥabā* (u) 'to draw near'; *sāmīr*

232) While the Arabic text attributes this poem to ʿAwf bn al-ʿAḥwaš (6b, see Nos. 35 and 36 in Lyall), Lyall regards the real poet as Ḥidāš relying on al-ʿAḡānī (see Lyall, 2:302).

‘night-talker, often boys (collective)’.

2.3.2.2 *Buṣrā* ‘(a sword) of Bostran make’

Ever since *Buṣrā* (a little to the north of Jordanian-Syrian border, south of Damascus) became the capital of Provincia Arabia of the Roman empire (March 22, 106 AD), the town had enjoyed a reputation as a political and cultural center²³³).

012) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām²³⁴, 6b, line 15: * صَفَائِحُ بُصْرَى أَخْلَصَتْهَا قُيُونُهَا ‘Blacksmiths have purified the broad blade of Buṣrā and (a coat of mail) smoothened by Davidic²³⁵ weaving with no fissure’. Cf. *ṣaḥīḥa* (pl. *ṣaḥā’ih*) ‘broad-bladed sword’; *ʿaḥḥaṣa* ‘to purify’; *qayn* (pl. *quyūn*) ‘blacksmith’; *iṭṭarada* ‘to be continuous’; *nasg* ‘weaving’; *mubham* ‘ambiguous, concealed, flawless’.

2.3.2.3 *Rūmīy* ‘(a sword) of Byzantine make’

We do not know what background swords of this type had more than Lyall suggested (2:260 note to line 10).

091) ʿĀmir al-Muḥāribīy al-Ḥaṣafīy, 6b, line 10 : * نُرَاوُحُ بِالصَّخْرِ الْأَصَمِّ رُؤُوسَهُمْ ‘We did their heads in turn between the hard rock (and our sword), and look, our sword of Byzantine make got blunt’. Cf. *rāwaḥa* ‘to do in turn’ (Lane, p. 1179a); *ʿaṣamm* ‘deaf > hard (of stone)’; *qalaʿ* = *qalʿīy* ‘of Qalʿa > steel > sword’ (Lyall, *ibid.*); *taṭallama* ‘to be blunted’.

2.3.3. Indian bamboo for spear-shafts

2.3.3.1. *al-Ḥaṭṭ*, a port town on the Arabian Gulf

Al-Bakrīy’s geographical dictionary says that *al-Ḥaṭṭ* is a coast between ʿUmān and al-Baṣra (pp. 314-315), and scholars have given up identifying the location (Lyall, 2:38-39, note to No. 12, line 16; 2:316 note to No. 113, line 10). We take the name as a fancy coast town, situated somewhere around al-Baḥrayn (the coastal area) where *Rudayna* (see below) imported bamboo from India and sold it as the best spear-shaft.

05m) ʿAmr bn Kulṭūm, 6b, line 31: * دَوَابِلَ أَوْ بَيْضٍ بِسُمْرٍ مِنْ قَنَا الْخَطِيِّ لَدُنْ دَوَابِلَ أَوْ بَيْضٍ ‘With brown spear-shafts of al-Ḥaṭṭ, pliant and slender, or with white

233) Shortly after the Nabataean Arab kingdom was annexed to the Roman Empire under Trajanus, the capital was moved to *Buṣrā* from Petra. Nabataean inscriptions mostly followed the Bostran Era that began on this date for a long time after the annexation.

234) The poet depicts the war of Dārat Mawḏūʿ, the name of the battle place, in which he won the victory with an ally nicknamed al-ḥuraqa ‘sharp (of arrow, spear or sword, Lane, p. 551c)’. So the battle is also known as *Yawm al-Ḥuraqa*. The battle took place sometime toward the end of 6 C (Lyall, 2:16).

235) In contrast to the defective spelling in al-Qurʿān (ذُؤُدُ, 4:163), *dāʾūdu* has here a full spelling (Wright, 1:18D, § 17 (b), Rem. c).

(sword-blades) which are raised high'. Cf. *ʿasmar* (pl. *sumr*) 'brown'; *qanātun* (pl. *qan-an*) 'spear, reed-lance'; *ladn* (pl. *ludn*) 'limber, pliant'; *dābil* (pl. *dawābil*) 'slender and adhering the shaft firmly > spear-shaft, spear (Lane, p. 956b)'.

022) Salāma bn Ǧandal al-Saʿdīy, 6j, line 39 (line 32 in Lyall): وَمَا تُثْنَىٰ طَعَائِنُنَا * يَأْخُذْنَ بَيْنَ سَوَادِ الْخَطِّ فَأَلْلُوبُ
 'Not hindered are our women who take the road between the cultivated coast-land of al-Ḥaṭṭ and then the lava upland'. Cf. *tanā* (i) 'to avert, prevent'; *ṣaʿīna* (pl. *ṣaʿā'in*) '(woman travelling in) a litter set on a camel's back'; *ʾahāda* (u) 'to take the road'; *lūba* (pl. *lūb*) 'lava, rocky ground'.

113) Rabīʿa bn Maqrūm, 7a, line 10: وَأَسْمَرَ خَطِيٍّ كَأَنَّ سِنَانَهُ * شِهَابٌ غَضَا شَيْعَتُهُ فَتَلَهَّبَا
 '[I checked the attack with ...] and with a brown (spear-shaft) of al-Ḥaṭṭ, whose blade is, as it were, a blaze of (burning) tamarisk which I set fire to and blazed up'. Cf. *šihāb* 'blaze'; *ḡaḍ-an* 'tamarisk'; *šayyaʿa* 'to consume by burning'; *talahhaba* 'to blaze up'.

2.3.3.2. Rudayna

As stated above (2.3.3.1), *Rudayna* was a legendary woman trader. See Lyall (2 :38-39, note 16) and Lane (*rumḥ rudaynīy*, p. 1070b).

012) al-Ḥuṣayn bn al-Ḥumām al-Murrīy, 6b, line 16: يَهْرُؤُونَ سُمْرًا مِنْ رِمَاحِ رُدَيْنَةٍ * إِذَا خُرِجَتْ بَضَّتْ عَوَامِلُهَا دَمًا
 'They brandish brown ones (got) from spears of Rudayna's. When spears are moved, their spear heads ooze (drips of) blood'. Cf. *hazza* (u) 'to brandish'; *rumḥ* (pl. *rimāḥ*) 'spear'; *baḍḍ* (i) 'to ooze'; *ʿāmil* (see the verse of 022) Salāma in 2.3.2.1).

064) ʿAmīra bn Juʿal, 6j, line 9: جَمَعْتُ رُدَيْنِيًّا كَأَنَّ سِنَانَهُ * سَنَا لَهَبٍ لَمْ يَسْتَعِنْ بِدُخَانِ
 'I have gathered a Rudayna's (spear), (it is) as if its head were a lightning of a blaze that needs no help of smoke'. Cf. *sinān* 'spear-head'; *san-an* 'lightning'; *lahab* 'blaze'.

2.3.4. Ships and related words

Though we need commentaries to interpret ancient poems, people in pre-Islamic Arabia understood the poem the instant it was uttered. To wit, they lived in the society where these things were not uncommon. Please notice that poets did not portray ships or seascapes but described camels comparing them to ships on the sea or on the Tigris.

2.3.4.1. *saḥīn* (unit noun, -a) 'ships'²³⁶

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-ʿAbd, 6b,

236) See also 48) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6a, line 1 (2.3.4.2). For a unit noun, see 42) Jābir bn Ḥunayy al-Taglibīy (2.3.4.3).

line 3: كَأَنَّ خُدُوجَ الْمَالِكِيَّةِ عُذُوَّةٌ * خَلَايَا سَفِينٍ بِالنَّوَاصِفِ مِنْ دَدٍ ‘That morning, the camel litters of the Mālikīy women (stepping) in the middle of watercourse of Wādī Dad (looked) like large ships of vessels’. Cf. *hidḡ* (pl. *hudūḡ*) ‘camel litter for women (Lane, p. 630a)’; *ḡudwa* ‘morning’; *halīya* (pl. *halāyā*) ‘large ship’; *nāṣifa* (pl. *nawāṣif*) ‘the middle of a stream-bed’;
 line 4: عُدُولِيَّةٌ أَوْ مِنْ سَفِينِ ابْنِ يَامِنْ * يَجُورُ بِهَا الْمَلَاخُ طَوْرًا وَيَهْتَدِي ‘(The ships are either) from ‘Adawlā or of Ibn Yāmin’s ships²³⁷⁾; the sailor loses its course at times but (at other times) goes straight’. Cf. *ḡāra* (u) ‘to wander, go astray’.

05m) ‘Amr bn Kulṭūm, 6b, line 94: مَلَأْنَا الْبَرَّ حَتَّى ضَاقَ عَنَّا * وَنَحْنُ الْبَحْرَ نَمْلُؤُهُ سَفِينًا ‘We filled the land till it is narrow to us and we will fill the sea with ships’.

076) al-Muṭaqqib al-‘Abdīy, 6b,
 line 7: وَهُنَّ كَذَاكَ حِينَ قَطَعْنَ فَلَجًا * كَأَنَّ حُمُولَهُنَّ عَلَى سَفِينٍ ‘And they (women on the camel’s litter) were like this, when they cut across Falḡ, as though their burdens were upon ships’;
 line 8: يُشَبِّهْنَ السَّفِينِ وَهُنَّ بُحْتُ * عُرَاضَاتُ الْأَبَاهِرِ وَالشُّؤُونِ ‘They are likened to ships, and they were Bactrian camels, broad in the back and the sutures of the skull’. Cf. ‘*urāḡ* = ‘*arīḡ* ‘broad’ (Lane, p. 2010c); ‘*abhar* (pl. ‘*abāhir*) ‘a back’.

2.3.4.2. Types of ship

a) *halīya* (pl. *halāyā*) ‘large ship’²³⁸⁾

48) al-Muraqqiṣ al-‘Akbar, 6a, line 1: لِمَنْ الظُّعْنُ بِالضُّحَى طَافِيَاتٍ * شَبَّهَهَا * الدَّوْمُ أَوْ خَلَايَا سَفِينٍ ‘Whose are the women’s litters (on camels), floating (on the sun-mist) in the forenoon, of which the likeness are dom-palms or large ships in a fleet’. Cf. *ṣa‘īna* (pl. *ṣu‘n*) ‘litter on the camel’s back’; *ḡuḡā* ‘forenoon’; *ṭafā* (u) ‘to float on water’; *dawm* ‘doom palm’.

b) *būṣīy* ‘boat, ship’²³⁹⁾

02m) Tarafa bn al-‘Abd, 6b, line 28: وَأَتْلَعُ نَهَاظًا إِذَا صَعَدَتْ بِهِ * كَسْكَاةٍ بُوصِيٍّ ‘The long-neck is rising high when she (camel) raises it up, like the rudder of a ship (striving to) go up on the Tigris’. Cf. ‘*atla* ‘long-necked’; *nahhāḡ* ‘rising high’; *būṣīy* ‘boat, ship’; *sukkān* ‘rudder’.

c) (*saḡīna*) *qarwā* ‘long-backed ship’²⁴⁰⁾

076) al-Muṭaqqib al-‘Abdīy, 6b, lines 32: كَأَنَّ الْكُورَ وَالْأَنْسَاعَ مِنْهَا * عَلَى فَرْوَاءٍ ‘The saddle and the thongs of her (= camel’s) girth looked as if (they

237) According to the commentators, ‘Adawlā is a certain island and Ibn Yāmin was a ship builder.

238) See another example in 02m) Tarafa bn al-‘Abd, 6b, line 3 (2.3.4.1).

239) MM (p. 142a) says that the word is a loan from the Persian *būzīy*, but it seems that the discussion of the etymology is not fixed (Fraenkel, pp. 217-218).

240) According to LA (p. 3616c), (*saḡīna*) *qarwā* (fem. only) = *ṭawīla al-qarā* ‘long of back’.

were) on a long-backed (ship), greased well in a good speed'. Cf. *kūr* 'a camel saddle'; *nis*^c (pl. ^a*ansā*^c) 'thong of a camel's girth'; *māhir* 'skilful > swift in water'; *dahana* 'to anoint, grease'.

2.3.4.3. Terms of ships

a) *ḡuḡu*^c 'prow'

076) al-Muṭaqqib al-^cAbdīy, 6b, line 33: يَشْقُ الْمَاءَ جُجُؤُهَا وَيَعْلُو * غَوَارِبَ كُلِّ ذِي حَدَبٍ بَطِينٍ 'Its prow breaks the water, and goes up onto every far-extending wave (lit. owner of the hump)'. Cf. *ḡārib* (pl. *ḡawārib*) 'upper part'; *ḥadab* 'hump'; *baṭīn* 'far-extending' (Lane, p. 221b).

b) *ḥayzūm* 'prow, chest'

02m) Ṭarafa bn al-^cAbd, 6b, line 5: يَشْقُ حَبَابَ الْمَاءِ حَيَزُومَهَا بِهَا * كَمَا قَسَمَ أَلْتَرَبَ الْمُفَايِلُ بِأَلْيَدٍ playing the *ḥayzūm* game²⁴¹ split (the sand) by hand'. Cf. *ḥabāb* 'bubbles, ripples, dew-drops (Lane, p. 497b)'; *turb* = *turāb*; *fāyala* 'to play the game called *ḥayzūm* or *fāyāl* or *fīāl* (Lane, p. 2474c)'.²⁴¹

c) *ṣirā*^c 'sail of a ship'

011) al-Musayyab bn ^cAlas, 6b, line 11: وَكَأَنَّ غَارِبَهَا رِبَاوَةٌ مَحْرِمٌ * وَتَمْدُ ثَنِيَّ جَدِيلِهَا بِشِرَاعٍ 'and it is as if her (she-camel) withers were a hill of a mountain peak, and she stretches the folding of her twisted rein by (the method of) a sail (which stretches ropes when lifted)'. Cf. *ḡārib* 'withers of a camel'; *rabāwa* 'hill'; *maḥrim* 'peak of a mountain'; *ṭiny* 'fold (of clothes)'; *ḡadīl* 'twisted rope'.

d) *qil*^c 'sail of a ship'

010) Bašāma bn ^cAmr, 6b, line 21: وَإِنْ أَذْبَرْتَ فَلْتٌ مَشْحُونَةٌ * أَطَاعَ لَهَا الرِّيحُ فَلَعًا جَفُولًا 'And if she (camel) turns the back, you would say: she is a full-laden (ship), which the wind obeys (with its) sail clearing off the clouds'. Cf. ^a*adbara* 'to turn the back'; *ṣaḥana* (a) 'to lade (a ship)'; *ḡafūl* 'clearing off the clouds'.

e) *kawṭall* 'helm, tiller'

042) Jābir bn Ḥunayy al-Taḡlibīy, 6b, line 13: بِحَيِّ كَكُوْنَلِّ السَّفِينَةِ أَمْرُهُمْ * إِلَى سَلَفٍ عَادٍ إِذَا أَحْتَلَّ مُرْزِمٌ like a helm (that steers) the ship; their power (goes beyond) to ancestors; once it has settled, it is firm'. Cf. *ḥayy* 'tribe'; ^a*amr* 'power'; ^a*adā* (u) 'to go beyond (Lane, p. 1977b)'; *iḥṭalla* 'to settle'; *murzim* 'firm (Lane, p. 1078a under *ruzam*)'.

f) *sukkān* 'rudder'

See an example in 02m) Ṭarafa bn al-^cAbd, 6b, line 28 (2.3.4.2).

241) For the *ḥayzūm* game, see Lane (p. 2474c).

2.3.4.4. Other maritime terms: *baḥrīy* ‘diver’

In the next sample, *baḥrīy* ‘sailor or seaman’ is used instead of ‘pearl diver’ (al-Tibrīzīy, p. 78). Presumably the audience took it for a pearl diver with no difficulty. Then the verse testifies that this job was known in the desert.

07m) Labīd bn Rabīʿa al-ʿĀmirīy, 6j, line 43: * وَتُضِيءُ فِي وَجْهِ الظَّلَامِ مُنِيرَةً *
 كَجُمَانَةِ الْبَحْرِيِّ سَلَّ نِظَامُهَا
 ‘and she (wild cow) sheds light brightly in the face
 of the darkness as a pearl of a diver, (when) its thread was removed’. Cf. *baḥrīy*
 ‘sailor, = *ḡawwāṣ*’; *ḡumān* (unit noun, -a) ‘pearl’; *salla* (u) ‘to extract gently’;
niḡām (pl. *nuzum*) ‘string of pearls’.

2.4. Some Words and Grammatical Points

2.4.1. Some words and phrases

2.4.1.1. Greeting phrases

a) *ʿim ṣabāḥan* ‘Good morning!’

Lane lists this greeting with its plural (p.1642b): *ʿimū*. ‘Antara gave us its feminine *ʿimī* (due to *dār*). They belong to a hypothetical verb **waʿama* (i), though Arab lexica explain it from *naʿima* (i) (LA, p. 4479c), of which the imperfect **yanʿim* is evidenced in Zuhayr: *inʿim ṣabāḥan*. But Arab lexica list (LA, ibid.) *ʿanʿama* (a) *llāhu ṣabāḥa-ka*.

04m) ʿAntara bn Šaddād al-ʿAbsīy, 6b, line 2: * يَا دَارَ عِبْلَةَ بِالْجَوَاءِ تَكَلِّمِي *
 وَعِمِّي صَبَاحًا دَارَ عِبْلَةَ وَأَسْلَمِي
 ‘O Abī’s dwelling at al-Ġiwā, tell (me) ! O
 Abī’s dwelling, Good morning and stay safe!’

03m) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, line 6: فَلَمَّا عَرَفْتُ الدَّارَ قُلْتُ لِرَبْعِهَا * أَلَا أَنْعِمُ *
 صَبَاحًا أَيُّهَا الرَّبْعُ وَأَسْلَمُ
 ‘When I found the dwelling (place), I said to its abode. O
 abode! Is it not²⁴²⁾ “Good morning and stay safe!”?’ Cf. *rabʿ* ‘abode’.

b) Welcome!

Lyall thinks (2:83) that the verse is dated after the poet’s conversion to Islam²⁴³⁾.

2.4.1.2. *ʿās-in* ‘a physician’

242) Usually *ʿalā* is taken as interjection ‘oh!’ But since the vocative stands separately after this, we understood *ʿa-lā* ‘is it not?’ The poet sees in his vision (line 7) the camels leaving the spot twenty years before. He is back now and asks the traces of her dwelling if he had to utter that morning, ‘Good morning and stay safe!’

243) But the phrase certainly goes back to pre-Islamic days. 023) ʿAmr bn al-ʿAhtam bn Sumayy al-Saʿdīy, 7b, line 11: فَكُلْتُ لَهُ أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا وَمَرْحَبًا * فَهَذَا صَبُوحُ رَاهِنٍ وَصَدِيقُ *
 ‘And I said to him: (We shall be your) people and (this place will be as) easy and broad (as your place)! This is the usual morning cup of drink, and friend!’ Cf. *ṣabūḥ* ‘morning draught’; *rāhin* ‘ready, usual’. Lyall interprets thus (2:85, note to line 11): ‘(Thou hast come to) thine own people, to a smooth and level ground, to a broad place with no straitness in it’.

Arabic took this word from Aramaic²⁴⁴⁾, which had taken it from Akkadian *asû*²⁴⁵⁾, and passed it to Geez. This borrowing route is now certain. Hence in pre-Islamic poems, we find *ʿas-in* (pl. *-ūna*, *ʿusā*, *ʿisā*) for ‘a physician’, not later *ṭabīb*²⁴⁶⁾. Regarding al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt, we find it in a verse of al-Muzzarid²⁴⁷⁾ (a muḥaḍram), while in al-ʿAnbārī’s commentary (Lyll, 1:134), al-Farazdaq and al-Kumayt (of the Umayyad period) are quoted. So we cite ʿAdīy bn Zayd instead.

000) ʿAdīy bn Zayd bn al-ʿIbādīy, 6j, ʿAdīy, No. 8, line 20 (p. 61): لَا تَكُونَنَّ كَأَسِي عَظْمِهِ * بِأَسَى حَتَّى إِذَا أَلْعَظُمَ جَبْرٌ (who treats) with a grief, till the (broken) bone gets restored’. Cf. *ʿasā* (u) *ʿas-an* [أَسَا] ‘to dress the wound’; *ʿasiya* (a) *ʿas-an* [أَسَى] ‘to grieve, mourn’; *ḡabara* (u) ‘to be restored’.

2.4.1.3. *ḡundab* ‘a locust’

In the Assyrian inscriptions, we find a North Arabic vocabulary, recorded for the first time as the name of a certain Arab leader: *Gindib*²⁴⁸⁾. It was quite natural that scholars identified the name with *Ḡundab* or *Ḡindab*, born by eight persons in al-ʿAḡānī²⁴⁹⁾. It is a miracle that one North Arabic word ‘a locust or grasshopper’ should have served as an appellation for about a millenium and a half in their history.

However, the use of *ḡundab* as a common noun in pre-Islamic poems is much limited²⁵⁰⁾. We can pick up the following²⁵¹⁾ composed by al-ʿAʿšā, but other poets in

244) Fraenkel, p. 261; Leslau, p. 45a. For Syriac *ʿāsyā* ‘doctor’ and other Aramaic sources, see Syriac (p. 72a).

245) The Akkadians borrowed it from Sumerian, but according to Kaufman (p. 37), the Sumerian (LÚ) A.ZU may be of pre-Sumerian origin.

246) Both *ṭibb* and *ṭabīb* were taken up later for the new medical science from genuine Arabic vocabularies, not a loan. Late Arabic took up still other words like *ḥakīm*, *mudāw-in* or *ni/aṭāsiy*. As to how *ṭibb* came to bear the new sense, see Takashina (2019). For the details of this argument, see *Excursus J* in Takashina (forthcoming), in which Hebrew and many Aramaic languages are discussed together with data from modern Arabic and Aramaic dialects.

247) 015) al-Muzzarid bn Ḍirār al-Ḍubyanīy, 7b, line 15: صَقَعْتُ أَبْنَ ثَوْبٍ صَفْعَةً لَا حِجَى لَهَا * يُؤْلُولُ مِنْهَا كُلُّ آسٍ وَعَائِدٍ ‘I would strike (not by sword but by satire) Ibn Tawb on the head, a strike of no sense (< wit), so that every physician and (every) repeating (visitor) would wail over it (the strike)’. Cf. *ṣaqaʿa* (a) ‘to strike on the head’; *ḥiḡ-an* ‘sagacity, wit’; *walwala* ‘to wail, shriek’.

248) The Arabs are called *Arbāy* (-āy as a gentilic or nisba, formerly written *Aribi* [EI², I:562a]) in the Assyrian annals. *Gindib* is an Arab who joined the anti-Assyrian allies in the battle of Qarqar, north of Ḥamā, with 1000 camels against Shalmaneser III in 853 BCE (Retsö, p. 126). Though named only as *Arbāy*, he certainly deserved to be called a king, granted that he had been asked to join the ally by neighboring kings who acknowledged his control over the desert. Many other Arab names have been identified in these documents. The related texts are collected in English in Pritchard, pp. 276-301.

249) See *Tables Alphabétiques*, p.275. There is a third phonetic form *Ḡundub*.

250) The only example we found in al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt is the work of the poet who lived in the Umayyad period quoted here. 016) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 34: لَهَبَانٌ وَقَدَتْ جَزَائُهُ * يَرْمِضُ الْجُنْدُبُ مِنْهُ فَيَصِيرُ ‘A fierce blaze, its rugged grounds took fire (and) the locust gets its own feet scorched from it and makes creaky (sound)’. Cf. *lahiba* (a) *lahabān* ‘to blaze fiercely’; *ḥazīz* (pl. *ḥizzān*) ‘rugged ground’ (Lane, p. 558c); *ramiḍa* (a) ‘to be scorched by the ground (foot)’; *ṣarra* (i) ‘to creak (locust)’.

251) There is another verse by Zuhayr cited here. But it is ‘suspected’ by al-Mufaḍḍal (Zuhayr, p. 191),

al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt all use its synonym *ḡarād*²⁵²). Seeing that we find the latter twice in al-Qurʾān (7:133, 54:7), it is quite sure that the replacement was under way, or was almost finished, during the lifetime of the prophet.

a) *ḡundab* (pl. *ḡanādib*) ‘a locust’

000) al-ʿAʿšā Maymūn bn Qays, 6j²⁵³, No. 12, line 30 (al-ʿAʿšā, p. 97): فَطَعْتُ إِذَا سَمِعَ السَّامِعُ * نَ لِلْجُنْدِ الْجَوْنُ فِيهَا صَرِيرًا ‘I cut (the desert) when people hear black locusts, in it (full of their crying) acute sounds’. Cf. *ḡawn* ‘black’; *ṣarīr* ‘cry, acute sound’.

b) *ḡarād* (unit noun, -a) ‘locust’

024) Taʿlaba bn Ṣuʿayr, 6j, line 20: وَمُغِيرَةٍ سَوْمَ الْجَرَادِ وَزَعْتُهَا * قَبْلَ الصَّبَاحِ بِشَيْئَانِ ضَامِرٍ ‘I restrained many a raiding horseman, hovering around like locusts, before the morning on a far-sighted slender (horse)’. Cf. (*ḥayl*) *muḡīra* ‘raiding horses or horsemen’ (Lane, p. 2308b; *ḥayl* is feminine, being a quasi-plural, Lane, p. 835b); *sāma* (u) *sawm* ‘to hover around’; *wazaʿa* (a) ‘to curb, restrain’; *ṣayyiʿān* ‘far-sighted (Lane, p. 1614c)’; *dāmīr* ‘lean, slender’.

030) ʿAbd Yaḡūṭ al-Hārīṭī, 7a, line 18: وَعَادِيَةٍ سَوْمَ الْجَرَادِ وَزَعْتُهَا * بِكَفِّي وَقَدْ أَنْحَوْا إِلَيَّ الْعَوَالِيَا ‘I restrained many an enemy (troop), swarming around like locusts, by my hand while they turned heads (of their spears) toward me’. Cf. (*ḥayl*) *ʿādiya* (see the preceding), *ʿād-in* ‘enemy’; *ʿanḥā* ‘to pinpoint the corner’; *ʿāliya* (pl. *ʿawāl-in*) ‘top of the spear’.

098) Bišr bn ʿAbī Hāzim, 6b, line 44 (39 in Lyall, 1:673): مُهَارِشَةَ الْعِنَانِ كَأَنَّ فِيهَا * جَرَادَةً هَبْوَةً فِيهَا أَصْفَرَارُ ‘[mares ...] pulling the bridle (restless) as if in them there were a locust of whirlwind (having turned) yellow’. Cf. *hāraša* ‘to quarrel with’; *ʿinān* ‘bridle’; *habwa* ‘whirlwind’.

2.4.1.4. Colocynth

The plant *colocynth* bears fruits famous for its bitterness (sometimes called bitter cucumber). Since we learned this in Ban’s course of ancient Arab poetry (footnote 3), we would often liken the difficult course to a colocynth. So the word cannot escape this study. In the pre-Islamic poems, we found four words. Two other terms are said to

and is not found in Ahlwardt. 000) Zuhayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, 6b, No. 20, line 5 (Zuhayr, p. 191): تَرَأَيْتُ نُرَاقِبُ * أَلْمُخَصَّدَ، أَلْمُمَرَّ، إِذَا * هَاجِرَةً، لَمْ تَقُلْ جَنَادِيْهَا ‘The she(-camel) watches the strongly twisted rope. Lo, it’s midday! (Yet) its251) locusts did not nap’. Cf. *rāqaba* ‘to watch over’; *muḥṣad* ‘a rope strongly twisted’; *amarra* ‘to twist strongly’; *hāḡira* ‘midday (Lane, p.288b)’; *qāla* (i) ‘to nap’.

252) In the poem of 002) al-Kalḥaba al-ʿUranīy (al-Yarbūʿīy) 6j, line 5, we find عَرَادَةٌ as the name of the poet’s horse. Lane (p. 1998a) explains that this is ‘a single locust or a female locust’. Without an actual example in the context of ‘locust’, no one can tell if it is a unit noun or a feminine. See also TA, 8:370a.

253) See footnote 167.

be synonyms: *ḥantam* (unit noun, -a) and *ṣāb* (unit noun, -a)²⁵⁴.

a) *ḥadağ* (unit noun, -a)²⁵⁵

024) Ṭaʿlaba bn Ṣuʿayr, 6j, line 12: طَرَفَتْ مَرَاوِدُهَا وَغَرَّدَ سَقْبُهَا * بِالْأَاءِ وَالْحَدَجِ
 'Her (ostrich) pasturing places were far-flung and her youngling warbled at the (tree of) ʾā and (at) the colocynth irrigated well, thick and fat'. Cf. *ṭarifa* (a) 'to pasture keeping away from other she-camels (cf. Lane, p. 1842b)'; *marād* (pl. *marāwid*) 'a place where camels pasture (Lane, p. 1186a)'; *ğarrada* 'to warble, sing'; *saqb* 'youngling'; ʾā (unit noun -a) 'the fruit of a tree called *sarḥ* (Lane, p. 1345a)'; *rayyān* (pl. *riwāʾ*) 'irrigated well'; *ḥādir* 'thick and fat'.

b) *ḥanḏal* (unit noun, -a)

01m) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, line 4: كَأَنِّي عِدَاةَ الْبَيْنِ يَوْمَ تَحَمَّلُوا * لَدَى سَمُرَاتٍ
 'On the morning of departing, on the day they loaded (things on camels), under the acacias of the tribe, (I stood in tears) as if I had split a colocynth²⁵⁶'. Cf. *bayn* 'separation'; *taḥammala* 'to load beasts for setting off, depart'; *samur* (unit noun, -a), 'acacia tree'; *naqaḥa* (i) 'to cut open a colocynth'.

01m) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, line 62: كَأَنَّ سَرَاتَهُ لَدَى الْبَيْتِ قَائِمًا * مَدَاكَ عَرُوسٍ أَوْ
 'his (the horse) back, standing near the dwelling, is (as smooth) as a pounding stone of the bride (perfume) or a stone pounder of the colocynth'. Cf. *sarā* 'back'; *madāk* 'pounding stone'; *ṣalāya* 'stone-pounder for aromatics'.

120) ʿAlqama bn ʿAbada, 6a, line 19: يَظَلُّ فِي الْخَنْظَلِ الْخُطْبَانِ يَنْفُقُهُ * وَمَا
 'He (a male ostrich) remains among the colocynth striped with green and yellow, breaking them open (to take seeds out), and whichever (shoot of) the *tannūm*-tree that has risen up (over the surface) is stricken (by him)'. Cf. *ḥuṭbān* 'yellow colocynth striped with green'; *naqaḥa* (u) 'to break open'; *istaṭaffa* 'to be, become or rise, near (Lane, p. 1857b)'; *tannūm* 'tree of the desert'; *ḥaḍama* (i) 'to strike with talons';

c) *ṣary* (unit noun, -a)

120) ʿAlqama bn ʿAbada, 6a, line 18: كَأَنَّهَا خَاضِبٌ رُغْرٌ قَوَادِمُهُ * أَجْنَى لَهُ
 'The she(-camel) is like a male ostrich with red legs, whose fore-feathers are scanty-haired (and for whom) the colocynth and the *tannūm*-tree have ripened (their fruit) near the winding of sand'. Cf. *ḥāḍib* 'a male ostrich whose legs have become red (Lane, p. 753c)'; *ʿazʿar* (pl. *zuʿur*) 'scanty-haired';

254) We quote from the poet of the Umayyad period. 016) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 41: لَمْ يَضِرْنِي * وَلَقَدْ بَلَّغْتُهُ * قِطْعَ الْعَيْظِ بِصَابٍ وَصِرْ
 'He did not harm me, and I made him swallow pieces of wrath with (bitter juices of) the colocynth and the aloe'. Cf. *ḍāra* (i) 'to harm'; *ṣabir* 'aloe'.

255) This may imply 'an unripe hard colocynth' (Lane, p. 530a).

256) The bitterness of a colocynth is 'tears'.

qādima (pl. *qawādim*) ‘fore-feathers of the wings’; *ʿaḡnā* ‘to have ripe fruit’; *liwa-n* ‘winding of sand’.

d) *ʿalqam* (unit noun, -a)

04m) ʿAntara bn Šaddād al-ʿAbsīy, 6b, line 37: فَإِذَا ظَلِمْتُ فَإِنَّ ظُلْمِي بِأَسَلٍ * مُرٌّ مَذَاقُهُ كَطَعْمِ الْعَلَقَمِ ‘but if an injustice is done to me, then my injustice is severe, its taste being as bitter as the taste of the colocynth’. Cf. *bāsil* ‘brave, strong’.

099) Bišr bn ʿAbī Hāzim, 6b, line 22: حَتَّى سَقَيْنَاهُمْ بِكَأْسٍ مُرَّةٍ * مَكْرُوهَةٍ خُسُوءَاتُهَا كَالْعَلَقَمِ ‘... until we poured for them in a hateful bitter cup, sips of which were (as bitter) as colocynth’. Cf. *ḥuswa* (pl. *ḥusu/aw-āt*) ‘a sip’.

100) Sinān bn ʿAbī Hāriṭa, 6b, line 2: تَلَقَّ الَّذِي لَأَقَى الْعُدُوَّ وَتَصْطَبِخَ * كَأَسًا صَبَابَتُهَا كَطَعْمِ الْعَلَقَمِ ‘[if (ʿin) ... , then] you shall meet what the enemy is to encounter and shall drink a morning cup in the bottom of which is a liquid (as bitter) as the taste of colocynth’. Cf. *ʿiṣṭabaḥa* ‘to drink a morning drink’; *ṣubāba* ‘water left in the vessel’.

2.4.1.5. *han* (pl. *han-ūna*) ‘a thing’²⁵⁷⁾

018) ʿAbd Allāh bn Salima al-Ghāmīdīy, 6j, line 5: عَلَيَّ مَا أَنَّهَا هَزَّتْ وَقَالَتْ * هُنَّ أَجْنٌ مَنَشَأُ ذَا قَرِيبٍ ‘But she scoffed (at me) and said, “O men, is he²⁵⁸⁾ mad? The origin of this [= his birth] is near!²⁵⁹⁾”. Cf. *ʿalā mā ʿanna* = *ʿalā ʿanna*; *haziʿa* (a) ‘to scoff’.

2.4.2. Some grammatical points

2.4.2.1. *dā* ‘this’ (without *hā-*)

The preceding verse by ʿAbd Allāh bn Salima provides us with a demonstrative without *hā-* (see above, 2.4.1.5).

2.4.2.2. A relative *dū*, *dāt* without an antecedent

In the verse below, we take ذَاتُ = الَّتِي, a relative pronoun²⁶⁰⁾. So the phrase in question is equivalent to: *lays-at bi-dāt-i taqall-at* ‘she is not such that burns in anger’, whereas the rhyme compels the ending to be -i, *taqall-at* > *taqall-at-i*²⁶¹⁾.

257) See Wright 1:196A.

258) ‘He’ is the poet of this verse, a very old man. *han-ūna* ‘things’ = people who hear my voice.

259) To wit, the birthday of this man is very near (i. e., he is still a baby), and yet is he already mad?

260) Fischer (§ 281.2, p. 148; § 421.1, p. 216) says that they are invariable in this usage, but Wright (I:272-3, § 347, Rem. e) admits of both usages.

261) The latter part of the line 6 (*wa-lā bi-dāti talaffuti* ‘and not a woman of looking around’) could also suggest that the inflected verb *taqallat* ‘she got burned up’ is employed like a noun (as in *talaffuti*) taking the genitive -i. For this interpretation of -i in *taqallati*, see Wright, 2:385-6, § 247.

020) al-Šanfarā al-ʿAzdīy, 6a, line 5: *فَيَا جَارَتِي وَأَنْتِ غَيْرُ مُلِيمَةٍ * إِذَا ذُكِرْتَ وَلَا*
بَذَاتٍ تَقَلَّتْ ‘O my neighbor (woman), you are neither (such) a blameworthy
 (woman) when she is talked about, nor (a woman) who once got burned up (in
 anger)’. Cf. *ʿalāma* ‘to do something blameworthy’; *taqallā* ‘to burn with anger’.

2.4.2.3. The dual and plural of *bunayy* ‘a little son’

Seeing that the poem below describes the event in the Umayyad period (see Lyall 2:261), the verse should fall out of our concern. But the poet left us very interesting words prior to the codification of Arabic grammar. Wright specifies the diminutive of *ʿibn* to be *bunayy* (1:174B, § 282²⁶²), but among very irregular ones (1:175A, § 284 Rem.) we find *ʿubayn-ūna* ‘little sons’ from *ban-ūna* ‘sons’. Now we see here diminutives of both the plural and the dual, which merit our comment²⁶³.

a) *ʿubayn-ūna* (masculine regular plural)

092-1) al-Saffāh bn Bukayr bn Maʿdān al-Yarbūʿīy, 7b, line 12 (Lyall, 1:632; Cairo, p. 323): *مَنْ يَكُ لَا سَاءَ فَقَدْ سَاءَنِي * تَرَكُ أَبْيْنِيكَ إِلَى غَيْرِ رَاغٍ*
 ‘No matter who he may be, it may not be bad; but surely it is bad to me, to leave your little sons to him who is not a shepherd’. Cf. *yaku* = *yakun*.

b) *ʿubayn-āni* (dual)

092-2) al-Saffāh bn Bukayr bn Maʿdān al-Yarbūʿīy, 7b, line 7 (Lyall, 1:633; Cairo, p. 324): *مَنْ يَكُ لَا سَاءَ فَقَدْ سَاءَنِي * تَرَكُ أَبْيْنِيكَ إِلَى غَيْرِ رَاغٍ*
 ‘Whom doesn’t it hurt? It surely hurts me to leave your two little sons to him who is no shepherd’.

2.4.2.4. A possible ‘ethical dative’

In the verse below, the person addressed is a woman (Lyall, 2:291 note to line 3) and the commentary (Lyall, 1:691) refers to a phrase *idhab fa-lā ʿandahu sarba-ka* ‘Go, and I shall not drive your cattle’ in the sense ‘I have no need of you; go where you want (*idhab hayt šī-ta*)’. Further, according to this commentary, it was also a phrase of divorce (see also LA, p. 4386c). So the phrase meant a symbolic utterance to sever the relation with those tribes mentioned in other lines of the poem.

102) Zabbān bn Sayyār, 6b, line 3: *سِيرِي إِلَيْكَ فَسَوْفَ يَمْنَعُ سَرَبَهَا * مِنْ آلِ مَرَّةَ*
بِالْحِجَازِ خُلُولُ ‘Go to you, for (the whole of) the settlement shall defend camels of the clan of al-Murra in the Hijaz’. Cf. *sarb* ‘camels’; *ḥalla* (u) *ḥulūl* ‘to settle’.

However, the phrase *sīrī ʿilay-ki* sounds out of harmony in Arabic. Though LA

262) See also the discussion in Lane (p. 263a).

263) The English renderings are ours, different from Lyall’s analysis. The rhetorical question in the second (92-2) depends on Ikeda’s interpretation.

(ibid.) says that this means *iḏhabī ʿilā ʿahli-ki* ‘Go to your people!’, Lyall’s phrase ‘Go your way!’ (2:291) is far natural. Further, the sentence structure chances to match the so-called *dativus ethicus*, or the *dativus commodi*, in Hebrew or in Aramaic²⁶⁴).

To be sure, we have here *ʿilay-ki*, not *la-ki*. What is worse still, examples of this dative in Arabic are known so far only in some modern dialects²⁶⁵). Still, we would like to consider it as a remnant of this dative, once used also in Arabic, or as a calque of Syriac Gospels brought among the Arabs by Christian monks²⁶⁶).

264) About the two terms, see Jouön-Muraoka, § 133d, p. 459 (or p. 405 in the French original) for Biblical Hebrew, and for Syriac, see Nöldeke, 2001, § 224, p. 177. To abridge Jouön-Muraoka (do.) in terms of Arabic, this *dative* 1) is a prepositional phrase, *li* + suffixed pronoun corresponding to the subject, 2) which mostly stands just after the verb of motion, often in the imperative, 3) with an indirect reflexive nuance. Biblical Hebrew: *leḳ la-ḳā* ‘Go for you!’ Genesis 12:1. Syriac (instead of Aramaic): *qūm[y] l-ēk[y]* ... *wā-zel l-ēk[y]* ‘Stand for you (*fem.*) ... and go for you!’ Songs 2:10 (Peshitta). Hebrew *la-ḳā* = Arabic *la-ka*, Syriac *l-ēk[y]* = Arabic *la-ki*.

265) For the overall picture, see Brockelmann (2:380). Out of modern dialects, those from Syria and Yemen were known to Brockelmann (loc. cit.). To them is now added Bʿēri spoken near Luxor in Upper Egypt (EALL, 1:308a).

266) Quite naturally, monks knew the two Arabic equivalents of Syriac *la-*: Arabic *li-* and *ʿilā*.

Appendix: Silk and Other Textiles in Ancient Arabic Poetry

Here we take up some kinds of cloth, which scholars maintain to have been used for writing. Except *muhraq* ‘a sheet of white silk’ (see 1.1.4.1), however, we actually find no use of them in pre-Islamic poems and hence shall discuss their etymology²⁶⁷.

A.1. Words of ‘Silk’ in pre-Islamic Poetry

Though ‘silk’ itself has nothing to do with writing except *muhraq*, pre-Islamic poems testify to many silk products. They mostly came from Persia and are of Persian origin²⁶⁸.

a) *ibr̥sam* ‘silk’

Since there is no difficulty in the direct borrowing from Pahlavi *abrēšom* (p. 4), we need no Aramaic equivalents²⁶⁹, but we found no usage in our pre-Islamic data.

b) *istabraq* ‘silk garment embroidered with gold’

From Pahlavi *stabrag* ‘short silk’ (p. 77), both Arabic and Syriac *estabrāḡā* ‘silk garment, brocaded silks’ (p. 68a) borrowed the word²⁷⁰. The word is used four times in al-Qurʾān, in three cases of which *istabraq* is paired with *sundus*²⁷¹ (see h) below), while in one it is used alone²⁷². This is the same with the two single usages in *Sīra al-Nabīy* (Hebbo, p. 29). No attestation in pre-Islamic poems is quite strange.

c) *harīr* ‘silk’

While it is hard to explain why ‘silk’ belongs to the root √HRR, the word pattern

267) Grohmann discussed *kattān* ‘linen’ used for writing far later (1952:58, 1955:80, 1967:97a).

268) Regarding *bazz* (pl. *buzūz*) ‘cloths or stuffs or garments’ (Lane, p. 108c), Fraenkel (p. 42) once wrote “originally perhaps *byssus* (fine linen), then splendid garment in general” and suggested the word meant costly clothes or cloth. In fact, there are dictionaries that state ‘linen, silk, cloth’ (Hava, p. 32a); ‘clothes, in general, of linen, cotton or silk’ (Kazimirski, I:120b). But larger dictionaries tend to avoid silk or linen and define simply: ‘a kind of clothes’ (LA, p. 274c; TA, 15:28a; MM, p. 90a). Fraenkel is in favor of the Persian origin, but with no decisive evidence, and *bizyawn* or *buzyūn* ‘brocade’ is Persian (Steingass-P, p. 184b) with nothing to do with Arabic *bazz*. Fraenkel (loc. cit.) picked up phrases from al-Ṭabarīy and al-Mubarrad’s al-Kāmil, both containing *buzūz*, but it is to be pointed out that costly value of the clothes are suggested by other modifying elements. So *bazz* is simply ‘clothes’.

269) Listed in Syriac (p. 5b) and Asbaghi (p. 3).

270) For the arguments in the past, see Jeffery (pp. 58-60).

271) Though the texts belong to al-Qurʾān, we quote them here as a proof of the pre-Islamic usage. <18:31> *وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ* “and they shall wear green clothes of silk and brocade, therein reclining upon couches” *ittakaʾa* (VIII) ‘to recline’; *arika* (pl. *arārik*) ‘couch’. <44:53> *يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ* “they shall wear (clothes) of silk and brocade, facing one another”. <76:21> *عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ* “over them shall be green clothes of silk and brocade”.

272) <55:54> *مُتَكِّينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ* [those who have feared standing (before) the Lord (55:46) are] “reclining upon couches (which are) lined with brocade”. Cf. *biṭāna* (pl. *baṭāʾin*) ‘inner lining of cloth’.

fits Arabic grammar well, but strikingly the word appears in the early 7 C²⁷³⁾.

d) *hazz* (pl. *huzūz*) ‘silk, tissue of silk and wool’²⁷⁴⁾

In view of another meaning ‘the cloth made of its [beaver’s] fur’ (Lane, p. 731b), the word is likely a loan from Pahlavi *xaz* ‘marten’ (p. 94; Asbaghi, p. 108). There is no arguing the relation with *qazz* (see k) below) at present.

e) *dībāḡ* (pl. *dayābīḡ*, *dabābīḡ*) ‘(silk) brocade’

Pahlavi *dēbāḡ* ‘brocade’ (p. 26) is the source of both this Arabic and Syriac *dībāḡā* ‘garment with gold embroidery’ (p. 293a). The origin is very lucid but one thing²⁷⁵⁾. It is lacking in al-Qurʾān, but it seems to be accidental, for there are many usages in *Sīra al-Nabīy* (Hebbo, p. 122). We do not know, however, if it is again a coincidence that we found earlier poetic usages only in poems composed by muḥaḍram poets²⁷⁶⁾.

f) *dimaqs*, *dimqās* ‘raw silk’

On entering Arabic (Hava, p. 216b; MSA, p. 338b), the word suffered metathesis, about which Fraenkel (p. 40) stated long ago. Greek μέταξα ‘silk’ entered Aramaic, probably in the Hellenistic times: Syriac *miṭaḡsā* ‘silk’ (p. 752a)²⁷⁷⁾. Long later, Arab lexicographers collected words from ancient poems and European scholars knew *dimaqs* ‘silk’. When they found *midaqs* as its variant (LA, p. 4160c), a scholar found the contrary to be true, i.e., Arabs took Aramaic (or Syriac) *miṭaḡsā* as *midaqs* at first and changed it to *dimaqs*. Since TA (p. 16:92a) lists another variant: *diqams*, the reason for such an instability of the phonetic form should be made clear²⁷⁸⁾.

273) See the verse by 000) al-Munahḡhal al-Yaṣkurīy, 7a (footnote 278). The following is from the early Islamic period: 123) ʿAmr bn al-ʿAhtam bn Sumayy al-Saʿdīy, 7b, line 23: وَلَا عَيْنِي عَلَى الْأَنْمَاطِ لَغُسْ * عَلَيْنِي * “and red-lipped (girls) would have joked with me on the carpets (wearing) shirts and silk on them” (line 20 in Lyall’s edition). Cf. *luʿs* (pl. of ʿalʿas ‘red-lipped’); *miḡsad*, *muḡsad* ‘garment dyed with saffron’.

274) See Lane, p. 731b; MSA, p. 275a. We cite here a verse by the early Islamic poet: 016) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 81: تَطَأُ الْحَزَّ وَلَا تُكْرِمُهُ * وَتُطِيلُ الذَّنْلَ مِنْهُ وَتُحْزِرُ “She treads on the silk and does not make much of it, lengthening its trail made of it and dragging.”

275) See Fraenkel, p. 41; Asbaghi, p. 129. Whether the term ‘brocade’ presupposes ‘silk’ or not, Persian dictionaries lack it in their definitions (Pahlavi, p. 26; Steingass-P, p. 551a; Lambton, p. 74), whereas Arabic dictionaries do not fail to add ‘silk’ (Lane, p. 843a; Hava, p. 195a; MSA, p. 312a).

276) We shall quote one of them from al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt: 040) Suwayd bn ʿAbī Kāhil al-Yaṣkurīy, 7b, line 52: كُفَّ خَدَّاهُ عَلَى دِيْبَاجَةٍ * وَعَلَى الْمَتْنَيْنِ لَوْنٌ قَدْ سَطَعَ “His (a wild bull) two cheeks are hemmed on the brocade (due to multicolored patches), and on two sides of his back is (clearly) a color (white), spread wide.” Cf. *kaffa* ‘to hem’; *matn* ‘back’; *saṭaʿa* ‘to spread’. Others are found in Ḥassān bn Tābit, No. 158, line 5 (Ḥassān, p. 69) and Ibn Muqbil, No. 2, line 9 (p. 10); No. 23, line 9 (p. 170).

277) Though unvocalized, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic *mīksh* (p. 302b) also supports the northern route.

278) Three verses are quoted here. Firstly, 01m) ʿImruʿ al-Qays, 6a, line 12 (= line 10 in Ahlwardt, p. ١٤٦): فَظَلَّ الْعَذَارَى يَرْبِمِينَ بِلَحْمِهَا * وَشَحْمَ كَهْدَابِ الدِّمْقَسِ الْمُفْقَلِ “and the virgins kept throwing (to one another) the flesh (of the camel) and the (frilly) lard like a fringe of twisted silk” (Arberry, p. 61; ʿaḡārā = pl. of ʿaḡrā; *huddāb* ‘fringes of a garment’; *fattala* ‘to twist’). Secondly, 106) ʿĀmir bn al-Tufayl bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar, 6b, line 10: وَمَا رَمْتُ حَتَّى بَلَ نَحْرِي وَصَدْرُهُ * نَجِيعَ كَهْدَابِ الدِّمْقَسِ “And I did not stop until the blackish blood moistened my throat and his breast like the fringe of the blackish blood” (Arberry, p. 61; *ḡaḡārā* = pl. of *ḡaḡrā*; *huddāb* ‘fringes of a garment’; *fattala* ‘to twist’). Thirdly, 107) ʿĀmir bn al-Tufayl bn Mālik bn Ġaʿfar, 6b, line 11: وَمَا رَمْتُ حَتَّى بَلَ نَحْرِي وَصَدْرُهُ * نَجِيعَ كَهْدَابِ الدِّمْقَسِ “And I did not stop until the blackish blood moistened my throat and his breast like the fringe of the blackish blood” (Arberry, p. 61; *ḡaḡārā* = pl. of *ḡaḡrā*; *huddāb* ‘fringes of a garment’; *fattala* ‘to twist’).

g) *radan* ‘spun-silk’

The word signifies ‘silk’ (Lane, p. 1070b), for which Fraenkel (p. 41) could not trace the source. Also we know that native lexicographers defined the term in the concept of spinning or weaving: ‘spun thread, silk’ (Lane, loc.cit.)²⁷⁹. Seen thus, this term may possibly, instead of being a loan, come from the genuine Arabic lexicon.

Of old, spinning and weaving was women’s important work. Though not in every part of Arabia, merchants were expected to bring ‘raw silk’ and ‘various kinds of silk thread’ on top of ‘silk-cloth’. Then *radan* ‘spun thread’ of raw silk can cover ‘silk’²⁸⁰.

h) *sundus* ‘fine silk-brocade’

In al-Qurʾān, *sundus* is used three times, always with *ʾistabraq* (see b) above). Unlike the latter, the former’s source is not clear (Fraenkel, p. 41; Jeffery, pp. 179-180; Asbaghi, p. 168). Lyall says, if it is from Greek σινδών (Fraenkel, loc.cit.), “it should rather mean cambric or muslin” (2:237).

Likewise when we trace σινδών, we find Syriac *seddōnā*²⁸¹ ‘fine linen cloth’ (p. 970b), whose phonetic form is not in harmony with Arabic *sundus* if they come from the same source. This Greek is now suspected to be somehow related to Akkadian *saddinu* ‘a piece of cloth’ (Kaufman, pp. 94-95; CDA, p. 310a; Jeffery, p. 180). It was lucky of us that we could pick up a sample from pre-Islamic poems²⁸².

i) *siyarāʾ-u* ‘a sort of striped garment mixed with silk’²⁸³

of a striped (cloth) of silk’. Cf. *mā rāma* (i) = *mā zāla*; *balla* (u) ‘to moisten’; *naḥr* ‘throat, upper part of the chest’; *naḡṭ* ‘blackish blood’; *huddāb* ‘fringe of a garment’; *sayyar* ‘to stripe a garment’. Thirdly, 000) al-Munahḥal al-Yaškuriy, 7a, line 2 (al-ʾAḡānī, 18:154): الْكَاعِبِ الْخُنْسَاءُ تَرَى * فُلٌ فِي “(I entered into the girl, at her private place, who was with) rounded breasts (and) a snub nose, walking in (her skirt made of) silk, white and pure, (and dragging trails)”. Cf. *kāʿib* ‘having rounded breasts (females only)’; *rafala* (u) ‘to drag a skirt and walk’. See also Lyall’s note to No. 106, line 10 (2:300).

279) See also Ṣiḥāḥ 2:376; LA, p. 1628c; TA 35:83. Cf. ‘spun thread, silk-cloth’ (Hava, p. 248a). As Fraenkel writes (loc.cit.), Arab lexicographers quote two verses from ancient poets, out of which we quote here that of ʿAdīy bn Zayd (most probably died before Islam), while the other is that of al-ʾAʿšā (died after Islam), 000) ʿAdīy bn Zayd bn al-ʾIbādīy, 6j, ʿAdīy, No. 128, line 1 (p. 177): وَلَقَدْ أَهْوَى بِكِ * رُسْلِي * مَسْهَا أَلَيْنُ مِنْ مَسِّ الرَّدَنِ “(someday) I may pass time with a first-born girl, whose touch is softer than the touch of silk”. Being a one-verse fragment according to the editor of the *Dīwān*, it seems to have been well-known among scholars, and as a result there is a slight divergence of the text. We followed the reading of LA (p. 1645c; cf. Ṣiḥāḥ 2:376), in which we find a very rare word: *rusul* ‘a girl too little to wear a veil’ (Lane, p. 1083a; LA, p. 1645c).

280) In Japan, producers of raw silk (*ki-ito*) did not always know the name of the product ‘silk’ (*kinu*)’.

281) Coming from Greek, *n* was assimilated. No one produced a Persian candidate worth a serious study.

282) 079) Yazīd bn al-Ḥazzāq, 6b, line 2: وَدَاوَيْتُهَا حَتَّى شَتَّتْ حَبَشِيَّةٌ * كَأَنَّ عَلَيْهَا سُنْدُسًا “I bred her (the mare I loved) on the training-food till in winter she was Abyssinian (in skin color), as if upon her were a silk brocade and a brownish hood”. Cf. *dāwā* ‘to control the nourishment of (a horse)’. Also, in the verse of al-Mutalammis (No. 14, line 3, p. 228), the word is used.

283) Lane’s too long a definition (p. 1484b) is shortened. For the sake of argument, we discuss this item (*siyarāʾ-u*) before the following (*saraq*) in the reverse alphabetical order.

The notion of ‘silk’ is disappearing from this term in a handy dictionary: ‘garment striped with yellow’ (Hava, p. 347a), while in larger lexica we still find a reference to it²⁸⁴, and also a pre-Islamic poem testifies that Arabs used the word before Islam²⁸⁵.

Today we know the probable route of borrowing. About the time Middle Iranian *šērāi* entered Syriac (p. 1498a), it probably entered Arabic also. First we list the Aramaic forms: *šērāy-ā* ‘silk garment’ in Syriac (loc.cit.); *šērā-ā* ‘silk, (pl.) silk garments’ in JBA (p. 1140b). When we see them, an argument in favor of the Arabic variant *sīrāʾ-un* (Lane, p. 1484b; LA, p. 2170b) looks very attractive²⁸⁶. But the form in Jonathan Targum *šayār-ān* (*-ān* = fem. pl.; Ezekiel 27:19) is quite in harmony with Arabic *siyarāʾ-u* and suggests that both **siyar-* and **sīr-* existed as variants in the pre-history of the word.

All these language data come from pre-Islamic times, and we could have finished with this much of discussion, if ‘silk’ had been a Persian product. But it was produced only within China, which had forbidden to take ‘silk’ and its production know-how out of it. Granted that the world west of Central Asia had to get it from someone else, the name ‘silk’ went wherever it went as ‘Wanderwort’ (see A.2, a) and footnote 299).

Greeks called those from whom they got it ‘(people) of the silk’ (σηρικός ‘of the Seres, silken’) and Romans followed them (*Sericus* ‘of the Seres’, *sericum* ‘silk’), believing *serik-* to be ‘silk’. People continued to call it ‘of the Seres’ in many European languages, till in Old Norse *sel-* replaced *ser-* as we find *sioloc*, *seol(o)c* ‘silk, silken cloth’ in Old English²⁸⁷, which is today’s ‘silk’. Since the Chinese *si* 絲 (‘silk, thread’ lacks *-r-k-*, the Greek *serik-* did not come from Chinese. Then nomadic peoples in Inner Asia, probably like Huns, were suspected to have carried it to the west, and it was *-rk-* in these languages that solved the mystery: Written Mongolian *sirkeg* ‘fiber, thread, texture’; Manchu *sirge/sirhe*, ‘(silk) thread’²⁸⁸.

In mid 6 C a Nestorian traversed Central Asian deserts with the minimum elements of silk industry defying death penalty, while the name ‘silk’ had established itself by then everywhere. However, compared with European languages, it remains a mystery why Iranian *šērāi* and Arabic *siyarāʾ-u* lack the final *-k*.

j) *saraq* ‘piece of silk-cloth’²⁸⁹

Doubtless this goes back to the same source with that of the preceding *siyarāʾ-u*. So we shall resume the discussion.

284) In addition to Lane (loc. cit.), see LA, p. 2170b; TA, 11:119b-120a; MM, p. 1038a.

285) 051) al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, 6a, line 9: كَسْبِيَّةُ السَّيْرَاءِ ذَاتُ غَلَالَةٍ * تَهْدِي الْجِيَادَ غَدَاةً غَرِبَ لِقَائِهَا
“Like a piece of silk, with good strength reserved, she (my mare) leads (other) horses the next morning after the battle.” Cf. *ʿulāla* ‘remaining portion’; *gibba* ‘after (prep.)’.

286) Fraenkel thought that it was Arab grammarians that took it as belonging to فِعْلَاءُ (pp. 40-41).

287) The same change (*-r- > -l-*) took place also in Balto-Slavic. OED alluded, in both the 1st and 2nd eds., to the Chinese people and language, which will be withdrawn in due time.

288) Wang, p. 234; Lessing, p. 718a. ‘Mongolian *sirkeg*’ is often cited as if it were ‘silk’, but ‘silk’ is *torpo* (*torgo*) in Written Mongolian (Lessing, p. 826a) and in Mongolian (Khalkha; Hangin, p. 217b).

289) Hava, p. 318b. As a collective, it has a unit noun: *saraq-a*.

Scholars all agree that the word came from Persian²⁹⁰. As Pahlavi *stabrag* became *ʿistabraq* in Arabic (see b) above), so the Arabic *saraq* must have come from **sarag*, which in turn explains Persian *sarah* ‘a strip of white silk’ (Steingass-P, p.680a)²⁹¹.

When we see that the core sense of *siyarāʾ-u* suffered blurring already in 6 C (see *siyarāʾ-u* just above and footnote 284), it may be assumed that in the days of the prophet *siyarāʾ-u* was going out of use. But in the case of *saraq*, the memory of ‘silk’ is clear in lexica, as, for example, in *Sīra al-Nabīy* (only once; see Hebbo, p. 190) and in the related literature²⁹² of the same period, though *harīr* is soon to replace them.

As we saw just above, it is presumed that Middle Iranian *šērāi* had a weak final *-k* in view of Greek or Latin equivalents (σηρικός, *sericum*). Seen thus, we can say that this *saraq* had petrified the Persian weak *-k* or *-h* (*sarah*) as *-q* in Arabic. If this weak sound goes back to *-k* of some (East or Central) Asian language like Written Mongolian (see above), then it is certain that this transmission route of ‘silk’ belongs to another layer of the history of ‘silk’. This (*s-r-q/k*) preserves the original consonants far better than the former (*s-r-*).

k) *qazz* (pl. *quzūz*) ‘(raw) silk’²⁹³

This is again a loan from Persian, but no usage is found in our data.

A.2. Other Kinds of Cloth used before Islam

As regards textiles other than silk, three words related to ‘cotton’ are argued first and then two others whose etymology remain unknown.

a) *kirbās* (pl. *karābīs*) ‘cotton fabric’²⁹⁴

Though WKAS (I:117b) registers examples of the usage of this material for writing, they are from Islamic times. Fortunately, WKAS (loc. cit.) registers a location of the passage in al-ʿAḡānī depicting a scene around the Day of Dū Qār II just before

290) LA, p. 1998c; TA, 25:443b; Lane, p. 1352b. For other Arab scholars, see Hebbo, pp. 189-190.

291) There is a variation for *sarah* in transliteration or *sare* in transcription (Asbaghi, p. 159).

292) We find some usages in Hadīth (see *سَرَقَةٌ* in *Concordance*, 2:457a), and lexicons register the following passage as *hadīth* of ʿĀʾiṣa (TA, 25:443b): قَالَ لِعَائِشَةَ رَأَيْتُكَ فِي الْمَنَامِ مَرَّتَيْنِ؛ أَرَى أَنَّكَ فِي سَرَقَةٍ مِنْ خَرِيرٍ أَتَانِي بِكَ الْمَلَكُ “He said to ʿĀʾiṣa, ‘I saw you in the sleep twice; behold, I see you in cloth of silk; an angel had escorted you to me’”.

293) Lane, p. 2520a; MSA 891b. The Persian form is *kaž* (کج, کز) ‘coarse silk of little value’ (Steingass-P, p. 1027b). A part of Asbaghi (p. 218) should be amended. There are loans from Arabic in Aramaic that had contact with Arabic (Syriac *qaz* ‘silk’ p. 1347a), while JBA *qazzā* ‘cotton seed’ (p. 1004b) is quite another thing (*pace* Fraenkel, p.42). *Qahz*, *qihz*, *qahzīy* ‘cloth of wool and silk’ (LA, pp. 3764c-3765a; Hava, p. 631b) are said to have come from Persian (LA, do.; Asbaghi, p. 222), but the original Persian is hard to trace. It is not clear if *qahīz* ‘(coarse) silk’ (MM, p. 1770a; cf. Asbaghi, loc. cit.) may belong to the same etymon, and moreover, the assumed relation of these to *qazz* is difficult to argue at once (Fraenkel, p. 42).

294) Maraqten p. 296; Hebbo, p. 319.

Islam²⁹⁵⁾. A passage in Ibn Hisham's *Sīra al-Nabīy* (Hebbo, p. 319; TA, 15:433a) is known but is not used as writing material.

About the etymology²⁹⁶⁾, Hebbo (p. 319) thought that it came from Persian via Aramaic. His opinion seems very attractive, because his term 'Aramaic' means virtually Syriac (*karbāsā*, p. 647a) only²⁹⁷⁾. But contrary to this much of Semitic cognates, we find Indo-European parallels in a far wider distribution²⁹⁸⁾. This fact leads us to some different approach, namely, 'Kulturwort' or 'Wanderwort'²⁹⁹⁾. It is said that imported 'cotton' was very expensive, until it was brought near Europe in quite a different situation (see *quṭ(u)n* below) long afterwards. In a new situation, *kirbās* is used in a narrower sense now: كِرْبَاسٌ 'a white cotton fabric' (MSA, p. 959a).

b) *kursuf* (pl. *karāsif*) 'cotton'³⁰⁰⁾

Concerning the etymology of this word, no scholar could add much to what Fraenkel (p. 145) suggested. His reference was to Greek γοσσύπιον 'cotton' and Latin *gossypium* 'cotton', to which WKAS (I:128a) had little to add. So there is nothing made clear about the etymology of this word³⁰¹⁾.

As to *Sīra al-Nabīy*, we are thankful to Hebbo (p. 319) for an interesting passage³⁰²⁾, and *Concordance* teaches us that the word is found in *Ḥadīth* twice with *quṭn* (5:434a) as well as several times by itself (5:559b). However, when we find the the word in the verse of a pre-Islamic poet³⁰³⁾ in WKAS (loc.cit.), we are sure to

295) *Dū Qār* is the place name near al-Kūfa in southern Iraq. The Day of *Dū Qār* II is the battle between the tribe of Bakr and the Sasanids around 610 AD (after Nicholson, p. 70). The Arabs gained the first victory over the Persians, but it should be noted that, in the Sasanid army, there were many Arabs of (the confederation of) al-Tanūh (see footnote 169). The passage in al-ʿAḡānī is this: فَكَانَ يَأْتِيهِ مِنْ أَتَاهِ مِنْهُمْ فَيُعْطِيهِ جِلَّةَ تَمْرٍ وَكِرْبَاسَةٍ "and to such as would visit him among them, he gave a basket of dates and a cotton piece of clothing" (al-ʿAḡānī, 20:133).

296) HAL, p. 475b; Hebbo, p. 319; Lane, p. 2603c; WKAS, I:117b.

297) Within West Semitic languages, the Biblical Hebrew has *karpas* 'linen' used once (Esther 1:6). A very rare example in Aramaic Targum to Esther II (*karpāsā* 8:15; Dalman, p. 209b) belongs to a rather late layer in the Targumic literature, as with the Hebrew Book of Esther among many books in the Bible.

298) Sanskrit *karpāsa* 'cotton shrub'; Greek *κάρπασος* 'a fine flax'; Latin *carbasus* 'Spanish flax'; Persian *kerbas* (Lambton, p. 125). A ghost *κάρβασα* in the Little Liddell (1989, p. 349b), taken from the earlier Big Liddell (before the 4th ed. [1855, p. 681b]) for the irregular plural *κάρπασα*, should be corrected.

299) Some examples: coffee, rice (Arabic *ʿuruzz*, Latin *oryza*, Japanese *uruchi*), sugar, tea, wine (وَيْنٌ 'black grapes' may be added). See Kaufman, pp. 18-19.

300) Lane admits a metathesis: *kurfus* 'cotton' (p. 2607c), while LA admits another: *kursūf* (p. 3855c).

301) Someone may assert that *kursuf* < *kurfus* (see footnote 300) < *kirbās*.

302) [Arabic from *Sīra-ʿAl*, p. 252, ll. 11-13; modified English from *Sīra-E*, p. 175]: فَوَاللّٰهِ مَا زَالُوا بِي حَتَّىٰ أَجْمَعْتُ أَنْ لَا أَسْمَعَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَلَا أَكَلِمَهُ حَتَّىٰ خَشَوْتُ فِيَّ أَذًى حِينَ غَدَوْتُ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ كَرَسُفًا قَرَقًا مِنْ أَنْ يَبْلُغَنِي شَيْءٌ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ وَأَنَا لَا أَرِيدُ أَنْ أَسْمَعَهُ "and by God they remained so toward me that I decided not to hear from him or to speak to him, until I stuffed cotton in my ears when I went to the mosque, fearing that something might reach me from his saying even if I do not want to hear it". Cf. *ḥašā* > *maḥšī* (colloquial) 'stuffed dish'; *ḡadā* (u) 'to do/go in the morning'.

303) 000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd, No. 35, line 50 (p. 245) = Labīd2, No. 40, line 50 (p. 22): لَهَا غَلَلٌ مِنْ زَارِقِيٍّ وَكَرْسُفٍ * بِأَيْمَانٍ عَجْمٍ يَنْصُفُونَ الْمُقَاوِلَ "to (the vessels of wine) there is a strainer of white flaxen cloth and of cotton, in the right hands of non-Arabs that serve kings (after Lane, p. 1077a)". Cf.

wonder what the difference is between *kursuf* and *kirbās* (see above), but native lexica mostly keep silent about the source language (e.g. TA 24:302a).

Later in Islamic times, we find *kursuf* and *qut(u)n* (see just below) used in one of the writing tools. Grohman (1967:124b) writes about the ink-soaked wad: “It consists of torn raw silk, wool or cotton”. Lexica register such a usage: ‘flake of cotton for inkstands’ (Hava, p. 651a) or ‘cotton as an inkwell-stopper’ (WKAS, I:128b).

c) *qut(u)n* (pl. *ʾaqṭān*) ‘cotton’

In quite a different phonetic form, *qut(u)n* signifies the same as the preceding. This time the source language is Arabic. Under the Islamic civilization, the cultivation of cotton made a remarkable advance and spread westwards, until it reached the Mediterranean region in mid 12 C³⁰⁴). No sooner had they learned that it was cultivable near Europe than the cotton industry became a part of the world economy. It is indeed a pity that such harsh colonialistic policies were executed under this Arabic name in India as well as in America.

The word appears in the verse of Labīd (6 C)³⁰⁵), one of the seven poets of the Muʿallaqāt. As Fraenkel might have felt (p. 42), it is a wonder why Labīd could use the word so early. In fact, this verse of Labīd’s may well be older than that of *kirbās*, seeing that the reference of the latter in *al-ʾAḡānī* (see above) is not from the poem itself. But in all probability ‘cotton’ came from the east (the Indus valley civilisation)³⁰⁶). Then it is quite natural that the word *kirbās* entered Arabic on the usual trade route via Persia.

We do not know what has become of ‘cotton’ between 6 C (Labīd) and 12 C. As a matter of fact, the cotton plantation advanced westward, and Europeans found the price so low as to think it quite new. So the word ‘cotton’ spread worldwide.

This explains why Arabic *qut(u)n* has no etymology. But when we find it registered under *kuttōneṭ*, with *kattān* ‘flax, linen’, in HAL (p. 481a; see above), the distinction disappears between ‘linen’ and ‘cotton’.

d) *kattān* ‘flax, linen’

Though not for writing, we find this word in the verses of pre-Islamic poets who were almost contemporaries³⁰⁷). The word is of Aramaic origin³⁰⁸) and only relevant

galal ‘strainer’; *rāziqiy* ‘white flaxen cloth’; *yamīn* (pl. *ʾaymān*); *uḡm* = *ʾaḡam*; *naṣafa* (u) ‘to serve’; *miḡwal* (pl. *maḡāwil*; Lane, pp. 1233c, 2995a) = *qayl* ‘spokesman > Himyarite king, kinglet’.

304) The first appearance of ‘cotton’ in English is 1286, a little after Baghdad yielded to Mongols in 1258. Being ignorant of the cotton plant, most Europeans imagined that a woolen tree (*eine Baumwolle*) produced ‘cotton’ (*ein Baum* ‘a tree’ + *eine Wolle* ‘wool’).

305) 000) Labīd bn Rabīʿa, 6j, Labīd, No. 48, line 12 (p. 300): شَاقَتَكَ طُعْنُ الْحَيِّ حِينَ تَحْمَلُوا * فَتَكَنَّسُوا “when they moved, women of the tribe made you anxious; they entered camel-litter (covered with cloths of) cotton, while the tents (litter) produced creaking sound”. Cf. *zaʿīna* (pl. *zuʿn*) ‘(woman on the) litter; *hīna* = *yawma* (in some version); *takannasa* ‘to enter a hiding place’ (Lane, p. 2633c). This verse has long been an example in Arab lexica: Ṣiḥāḥ 2:402; LA, p.3683b; TA, 36:5a.

306) For the Sanskrit cognate of ‘cotton’, see footnote 298.

307) 01m) ʾImruʾ al-Qays, 6a, line 48 (line 46 in Ahlwardt, p. ١٤٨): بِأَمْزَاسٍ كَتَّانٍ “by stout flax cables”

forms will suffice: *kittānā* ‘flax, linen’ (JBA, p. 579a), *kettānā* ‘do.’ (Syriac, p. 663a). Owing to Aramaic attestations in 5 C BCE, it surely came into Arabic very early.

The origin of Arabic *kattān* ‘linen’³⁰⁹⁾ was once sought in Akkadian with another West Semitic word: *kuttīnā* ‘tunic’ (Syriac, p. 616a). Since the two Syriac words sound alike and had a probable relation to Greek χιτών ‘tunic’ and Latin *tunica*, the etymological data for Biblical Hebrew *kuttōneṭ* ‘shirt-like tunic, not necessarily of linen’ needed a wide space (HAL, pp. 480b-481a). Though it seemed as if the Akkadian *kitū* ‘flax, linen’³¹⁰⁾ were an ultimate source, Kaufman wrote: “Neither ... are unquestionably derived from Akkadian”, for “a form with final *-n* does not occur in Akkadian until the Neo-Babylonian period, perhaps as an Aramaic loan³¹¹⁾,” (p. 28).

e) *rayṭ* ‘a single piece of thin and soft cloth’

Lexica do not specify what the material of this cloth is³¹²⁾ but it is certain that such a cloth as specified thus must have been very expensive³¹³⁾. Among the modern dictionaries, Kazimirski is the only, and the last, one that registered this word (1:962a): ‘a kind of veil of one single piece that women wear on their head’. We have no witness whatever that this material was put to use for writing.

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(Arberry, p. 64); 120) °Alqama bn °Abada, 6a, line 43: وَلَيْدٌ أَعْجَمٌ بِالْكُتَّانِ مَقْدُومٌ “a slave boy of a Persian (noble with his mouth) covered by (a slip of) linen [like a face mask]” (also in line 44). The references of Grohmann (1952:58, 1955:80, 1967:97a) are all to those written in Islamic times.

308) Maraḡten p. 297; Fraenkel, p. 42; Hebbo, p. 318.

309) Under this entry, WKAS (1:54b) listed: akk. *kitinnu*, aram. *kettānā*, ... χιτών.

310) Conversely, AHW listed these Semitic words under *kitū* (p. 495b).

311) Namely, *kitinnū* = *kidinnū* ‘a fabric, textile?’ (CDA, p. 156b; AHW, p. 473a). On the other hand, *kitītu* ‘linen robe’ (with *kitittu*, *kitintu* and *qitītu* as variants), derived from *kitū*, is found in both the Babylonian and the Neo-Assyrian periods (CDA, p. 162b; AHW, p. 493b). Kaufman added further: “the relationship with the Old Assyrian woolen garment *kutānu* ... is uncertain” (p. 28). In fact, AHW (*qutānu*, p. 930b) also questions this. In Ugaritic, another ancient Semitic language, we find KTN ‘(type of garment)’ (p. 322) while another work (2008) does not tell ‘linen’ from ‘tunic’.

312) See Lane, p. 1200c and Fraenkel, p. 50. The following verse uses the word in the least expected scene. 028) al-Muṭaqqib al-°Abdīy, 6b, line 5: وَصَاحَتْ صَوَادِيخُ النَّهَارِ وَأَعْرَضَتْ * لَوَامِغٌ يُطَوِّى رِطْلُهَا وَيُرْوِذُهَا “and the noisy locusts of the daytime shrilled, and the mirage showed (itself), with its thin covering, as well as its garment, folded up.” Cf. *ṣaydāḡ* (pl. *ṣawādīḡ*) ‘noisy’ = *ḡanādīb* ‘locusts’; *lawāmi°* = *sarāb* ‘mirage’; *bard* (pl. *burūd*) ‘garment’.

313) Though the following belongs to the poet a little after Islam, the word is used as we expect. 016) al-Marrār bn Munqid, 7b, line 82: شَعْرًا تَلْبَسُهَا بَعْدَ شَعْرٍ * وَتَرَى الرِّطْلَ مَوَادِيْعَ لَهَا “and you will see (that costly) linen is for her daily dresses, wearing as undergarments after another.” Cf. *midā°a* (pl. *mawādī°*) ‘daily dress’; *šī°ār* (pl. *šū°ur*) ‘undergarment’.

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