



Gerd Marie Ådna

Muhammad and the Formation of Sacrifice

Islam has a festival of sacrifice, *id al-adha*, which is celebrated each year in the month of pilgrimage. Simultaneous to the celebration and the sacrificial ritual in Mecca, during *haji*, sheep, camels and cows are slaughtered all over the Muslim world. The story about how Abraham nearly sacrificed his son, Ishaq or Isma'il (Q 37), is important. Also other parts of the Qur'an contribute to the understanding of the *id al-adha*. Further, texts from the first 500 years after *hijra* contribute to a new comprehension of the theology of sacrifice in Islam. In this monograph insights from the wider field of religious and anthropological studies (esp. R.A. Rappaport) are applied to the source texts about sacrifices and rituals in pre-Islam and Islam.

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Muhammad and the Formation of Sacrifice

Europäische Hochschulschriften

European University Studies

Publications Universitaires Européennes

Reihe XXIII **Theologie**

Series XXIII Theology

Série XXIII Théologie

Band/Volume **944**

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Muhammad and the Formation of Sacrifice

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

The TranslitLSU font used in this work
is available from www.linguistsoftware.com/stu.htm.

ISSN 0721-3409

ISBN 978-3-631-62995-6 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-653-04637-3 (E-Book)

DOI 10.3726/ 978-3-653-04637-3

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Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

Frankfurt am Main 2014

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Peter Lang – Frankfurt am Main · Bern · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

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Dieses Buch wurde vor Erscheinen peer reviewed.

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Acknowledgements

A long time's critical interest for and love of the Islamic culture is crystallised in this book. Ever since my first conscious awareness of the Afghani culture during my youth I have been curious about the "otherness" of Muslims from the Middle East and, later, about Norway's new Muslim citizens. "Curiosity for otherness" does not suffice for academic research, but it has definitely been a good friend that kept me on the track when various difficulties in the writing process challenged me.

The idea for this project was born in the late 1990s. I had already worked on elements from early Islam in my Master thesis about *tawhīd*. I realised that the question of "sacrifice in Islam" had not found much attention in research. I was lucky to be granted a three years' scholarship from the Research Council of Norway (1999–2003), and became enrolled in the doctoral programme at the University of Bergen. The School of Mission and Theology (MHS) in Stavanger was so kind to offer me an office, an academic milieu, and an excellent library with an excellent staff. This specialised university became after some years my regular working place and is until date my stimulating academic home. The doctoral defence of my PhD thesis took place in the department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Bergen in 2007.

I am grateful to the seminars for Theology and for Religious and Islamic studies at the universities of Bergen, Norway; Tübingen and Berlin (FU), Germany; and Cambridge, UK. The warm and inspiring atmosphere in Tyndale House, at the Faculty of Oriental Studies and in the University Library in Cambridge, was for three extensive periods immensely important to me. I do appreciate responses given at academic conferences in Freiburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Bergen and Stavanger.

My warmest thanks go to the professors Dr. Håkan Rydving, Richard J. Natvig, Dr. Einar Thomassen (University of Bergen), Dr. Ulrika Mårtensson (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim) and Dr. Bernd Radtke (The Netherlands). I also want to express my gratitude towards Dr. Rania Maktabi (University College of Østfold), Anne Marie Borgvad (Brussels/Oslo) and Dr. Nora Stene (University of Oslo) who have been cherished friends and colleagues ever since we studied together in Cairo. Thinking of Cairo, in particular the two late gentlemen, Alfi Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Aẓīz, as well as Dr. Muḥammad Sa'd Shehata (University of Ein Shams and al-Sharouk newspaper) have inspired me to dive into academia. Further, I will also thank Afrah Ghalion and Mansur Rajih, Zerina

Parker-Knapp, Dr. Ina Kötter, Taghrid and Dr. Omar Hamdan, Betty From Jenssen, Hazel Forecast, Dr. Alexandra Leontieva, Liv-Reidun Aamodt, Elin Vangen and Ellen Sofie J. Saltveit. My family, especially my siblings Olav, Birgit and Kari Mette with their families, and even more my mother, Kirsten Julie Eide, have been immensely supportive during all these years. Peter Cripps, Berlin, has highly improved my English text, so has Ellen Marie Crocker, Stavanger. All remaining mistakes and errors, however, must be blamed on me.

Peter Lang Publishing Group with its Senior Acquisitions Editor Ute Winkelkötter has through the process of preparing the manuscript for print demonstrated patience, friendliness and flexibility in spite of my shortcomings in the matter of many technical issues. I am indebted to their long experience.

At last, there is one person who more than all others, has given me comfort and strength and who has read the whole book more than once: my husband, professor Jostein Ådna, has never ceased to believe in me and my project.

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Stavanger, Norway

April 2014

Gerd Marie Ådna

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Note on Transliteration, Dates and Technical Standards

The transliteration follows in general the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* system with the two modifications customary in works in English (i.e., *q* instead of *k* and *j* instead of *ḍ*). Also in quotations taken from the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* I have made this modification. Still, due to varying transliteration customs prevailing in different languages and to changes during the last two centuries, there will be some deviating transliterations.

Sometimes, the *a* of the definite article *al-* is omitted in a continuous Arabic transcription. I have chosen to write all nouns ending with a *ṭaʾmarbūṭa* without the *h* at the end of the word.

Arabic names are predominantly written in full, in the transcribed way, as, e.g., Mūsā (Moses). However, some of the often mentioned city names are written in their regular Anglicized version: Mecca (Makka), Medina (Madīna), Mina (Minā). I have chosen to use “God” and “Allāh” interchangeably.

Dates are usually given according to both the Islamic calendar, viz. Hijrī = “AH”, and to the Christian calendar, viz. Anno Domini = “AD”, e.g., “Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767)”.

The numbering of Qurʾānic verses differs in some Qurʾān editions and in some translations. Therefore, sometimes there will be written two numbers, like “14 (15)”.

Only few abbreviations are used throughout the text; in the bibliography, the *Encyclopedia of Islam* is called *EI*.

Chapter 1

Sacrifice in Islam?

A festival of sacrifice, *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, takes up a prominent position in Islam, celebrated annually in the month of pilgrimage, *dhū l-ḥijja*. At the same time as the *ḥajj* and the sacrificial ritual take place in Mecca, sheep, goats, camels and cows are slaughtered all over the Muslim world. The performance of this sacrificial ritual in a religion that regards God as totally omnipotent and in no need of offerings, gives cause to many questions, some of which will be discussed in this study.

There are many possibilities for anyone who intends to study sacrifice in Islam. My approach has been delimited by a chosen theme (the formation of sacrificial rituals in early Islam), a certain body of texts (the Qurʾān and some early Muslim writers), and a clearly defined analytical perspective (ritual theory as it has been formulated by Roy A. Rappaport). On the following pages, I will introduce my points of departure: the theme, the texts, and the perspective.

I would like to begin by presenting some of the questions related to the development of the *ʿumra*, the *ḥajj* (including the Farewell-*ḥajj* of Muḥammad some months before he died in 10/632), and *ʿīd al-aḍḥā* that I will pose, and try to answer, in this study. First, does the Islamic offering really contain a *sacrifice* in the sense the concept is usually used in the history of religions, like Widengren defines it, for example?

As a sacrifice one designates the religious act, the ritual, which through the consecration of a living creature or a species of plant, or a liquid substance or an object to a deity – in case of a living creature, with or without killing – establishes a connection between this deity and the person who performs the ritual. It is thereby assumed that the ritual is able to influence the deity in a way hoped for by the sacrificer.¹

Alternatively, are the aspects of *fellowship* among the believers, *loyalty* towards Muḥammad's example and the idea of *charity* the essential base and goals?

1 My translation; German: "Unter einem Opfer versteht man die religiöse Handlung, den Ritus, der durch die Weihung eines lebenden Wesens, einer Pflanzenart, einer Flüssigkeit oder eines Gegenstandes an eine Gottheit – wenn es sich um ein lebendes Wesen handelt, mit oder ohne Tötung – eine Verbindung schafft zwischen dieser Gottheit und dem Menschen, der den Ritus ausführt, von welchem man annimmt, daß er die Gottheit in einer vom Opfernden gewünschten Richtung beeinflussen kann" (Widengren 1969: 280).

What *reasons* are there for obeying Allāh through sacrificial rituals similar to those Muḥammad performed during his first and only *hajj* in Islamic times? Further, *why* does a sacrificial ritual take place in Islam at all? *How* important is this sacrificial part of the pilgrimage ritual, which is to be undertaken to fulfil the *ihrām*-status of the Muslim? What *obstacles* might affect or even hinder the practice of sacrifice? Why is a sacrifice *required* in the Islamic ritual when a *bloody* sacrifice seems to have no ability to change God and his actions? Does early Islam see the sacrifice as something *more* than an *isolated ritual slaughtering*? Has the sacrificial ritual become an *empty* ritual or is it a ritual that expresses something *else*, for instance, something different from a regular slaughtering in Allāh's name?

How did the *pre-Islamic* sacrifices that were undertaken in Mecca and Mina, influence the idea of the Islamic sacrifice during *hajj* and *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*? Why is *any* ritually clean animal a *valid* victim in the feast's sacrificial ritual when Allāh found a *ram* for Ibrāhīm's son in the first place? What is Muḥammad's role in this and the later sacrificial act during *hajj*? Is his life to be compared to Ibrāhīm's life – or to Ibrāhīm's *son's* life? Is there an idea of a sacrificial *prototype* behind the immolation and the rituals connected to it?

My assumption is that the early Islamic sacrifice² is related to the complexity of *hajj* and its model narratives – where the biography of Muḥammad and his family and friends is immensely important. These texts and narratives are developed through the rituals (*ʿibadāt*) and through the regulations (*manāsik*) for the pilgrimage and the sacrificial rituals in Mecca and Mina, but also more and more in connection with the rituals of *ʿīd al-aḍḥā* all over the Muslim world.

In early Islamic literature, there are several narratives and smaller texts, which tell about sacrificial rituals or comment on sacrificial matters. The story about Ibrāhīm almost sacrificing his son (Qurʾān 37) and the attributed interpretations, which during the early years of Islam were divided on the question whether Ishaq or Ismāʿīl was the intended sacrifice, are significant.

Another sacrifice to which I refer, is found in the narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's father, ʿAbd Allāh, who was nearly sacrificed by his father ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hishām. Admittedly of less significance than Ibrāhīm's sacrifice, it is still important for the later evaluation of Muḥammad's status. But it is

2 I have chosen to use the term “Islamic sacrifice” and not the more extensive “Arabic sacrifice” that Chelhod (1955) uses already in the title, *Le sacrifice chez les arabes*, of his book. Even if I draw examples from pre-Islamic sacrifices, they are described by Muslims in an Islamic context. The majority of examples Chelhod brings are *Islamic*, and he emphasises that “libations” and “funeral traditions” among “the Arabs” are “Arabic sacrifices” and not solely “Islamic” (Chelhod 1955: 140–143).

relevant to ask *why* the symbolic narrative of the near sacrifice of Muḥammad's father is seldom taken into consideration regarding the *ḥajj* and *ʿid al-adḥā* even though it has many similarities with the Abrahamic sacrifice.

Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is – as far as I know – the oldest source³ for the following sentence addressed to Muḥammad, “O son of the two sacrifices (*yā ibn al-dhabīḥayni*)!”⁴ Later, al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) takes up the same idea and says, “The Prophet is glorious, peace be upon him, and he said: ‘I am the son of the two sacrifices (*anā ibnu l-dhabīḥayni*).’”⁵ In the late 19th century, the often quoted historian, al-Ālūsī, refers that Muḥammad said about himself, “I am the son of the two sacrifices (*anā ibnu al-dhabīḥayni*).”⁶ Most often these two sacrifices seem to be understood as the near sacrifices of Ibrāhīm and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. Consequently, I want to examine these narratives that are found in different early Islamic sources.

Additionally, other texts that interact with these texts, either thematically or symbolically, will be considered. The Qurʾān (*suwar* 2, 22, 108 and more) will contribute to the understanding of the two sacrifices and the sacrificial activity during *ʿid al-adḥā*.⁷ One last relevant question linked to these sacrifices is what sort of *sanctity*, *hierarchy* and understanding of *time* is defined in these sacrificial rituals. Here, the sources are in addition to those mentioned above, al-Wāqidi's (d. 207/822) important work about the challenger Muḥammad.⁸ This study aims at answering these and other questions, and these answers will hopefully enlighten my main subject of inquiry: Is there *one ultimate concern* behind the two sacrifices?

Moreover, Islamic texts from the five first centuries AH will be subjects of my investigation, in particular the above mentioned narratives from al-Ṭabarī's *History of the Messengers and the Kings* from the beginning of the 10th century AD, but also other texts, for instance by the early *ḥadīth* collector and jurist

3 Rubin (1990: 105) points to an early source al-Azraqī, *Akbār Makka*. However, the last Arabic edition that Wüstenfeld uses for his edition (1861) is from the transmitter Abū Ḥassan Muḥammad ibn Nūfīʿ al-Khuẓāʿī who died *after* 350/961 according to Fück (1960: 826–827). Hence, al-Ṭabarī is earlier even if they partly use the same sources.

4 Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) 1987 vol. 2: 83 [Arabic vol. 1: 291].

5 Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506: “Je suis le fils des deux victimes sacrificielles”. Cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

6 Al-Ālūsī (d. 1924) 1896 (1883?): vol. 3: 46–49. S.P. Stetkevych (1993: 38) only mentions the al-Ālūsī-source when she refers to the saying of the Prophet.

7 Even if the *ʿid* is never mentioned in the Qurʾān.

8 Al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822) 1966. Cf. Leder 2002: 102–103. *The Life of Muḥammad: Al-Wāqidi's Kitāb al-Maghāzī*. 2011. Rizwi F. Faizer (ed.) Translated by R.F. Faizer, Amal Ismail and AbdulKader Tayob. Milton Park / New York: Routledge.

Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795),⁹ the historian al-Yaʿqūbī (d. ca. 293/905),¹⁰ and the historian Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/821) with his exciting text about pre-Islam, *The Book of the Idols*.¹¹ The literature in the genre of the Histories of the Prophets (*Qiṣāṣ al-anbiyāʾ*)¹² put down in writing in the 10th and 11th centuries AD is also interesting regarding the development of the reception of the tradition of the sacrificial rituals. In a few cases Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198),¹³ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373),¹⁴ and others are consulted to see whether the views of Mālik ibn Anas in particular, are still taken into consideration in the 6th/14th Century. All this literature will contribute to a new comprehension of the formation of sacrifice in early Islam.

This work is based on studies of Arabic texts and the application of ritual and sacrificial theories, especially with the help of some major analytical concepts found in the monograph *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* by the late Roy A. Rappaport.¹⁵ During the 20th century, the research on ritual and sacrifice has looked upon the sacrificial rituals within the Abrahamic and other religions in different ways. Recent contributions (e.g. J. Drexler, B. Gladigow and H. Seiwert) are especially pointing at the *complexity* of sacrificial rituals. Rappaport goes even further and combines anthropological and religious ritual theories into a meaningful whole, which will be used to illuminate the Muslim sacrificial praxis as found in early Islamic writings.

9 Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) 1951.

10 Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. ca 293/905) 1960.

11 Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/821) (1914 and 1924) 1965 and 1952.

12 Al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035) 1991 and al-Kisāʾī (3rd–4th/10th century) 1922 and 1978.

13 Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) (1994 and 1996) 2000.

14 Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) 1996.

15 Rappaport 1999.

Chapter 2

Theoretical and Research Historical Perspectives

2.1 Islamic sacrificial rituals seen in the light of Roy A. Rappaport's *Religion and Rituals in the Making of Humanity*

Islam is not one of the main religions dealt with in Roy A. Rappaport's *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. He hardly mentions early Islam, and does not comment on Islam's sacrificial practices at all. Instead, his main examples are taken from his research among the Maring people of Papua New Guinea, from the rituals and related activities of Jews, American Indians and a variety of other ethnic and religious groups, and from rituals associated with secular institutions such as the Olympic Games and certain theatrical traditions.¹

Rappaport compares various elements of both religious and social rituals. The connections that he identifies promise to be a useful tool in my description and analysis of the Islamic material. Although his discussion is in some respects unfinished, due to the fact that his monograph was published posthumously in 1999,² it is nevertheless of broad scope and considerable interest, and I shall therefore use it to throw some light on the Islamic rituals connected to pilgrimage and sacrifice.

Viewed in the light of the broader academic discussion about ritual, I have chosen some of Rappaport's terms that are likely to enrich my discussion about sacrifice in Islam. These fall into various groups of concepts: firstly, *ritual order*, *self-referential* and *canonical messages*, secondly, *Ultimate Sacred Postulates* and *sanctified expressions*, and thirdly, the contrasted ideas of *analogue* and *digital time*, *eternity* and *mundane time*, *hierarchy* and *simultaneity*.

1 Rappaport 1999: 25; 259–260.

2 Rappaport died from cancer in 1997.

2.1.1 Ritual orders and self-referential and canonical messages

Let me begin with a quotation that presents Rappaport's perspective on liturgical order, since this might serve as a suitable and valid theoretical starting point for the discussion of sacrifices in early Islam. "It is simple, that liturgical orders can and do organize, or even construct socially, the temporal orders of at least some societies, and that 'temporal' orders, when organized by ritual, make a place for eternity as well as for mundane time."³

This perspective offers an approach to many aspects of sacred and mundane *time* and the rituals that cover both these aspects of religious and worldly life. The development of the rituals of sacrifice relating to the Islamic *ḥajj* seems to demonstrate an increasingly settled, prescribed order. The *ḥajj* became a far more complex affair than ever the rituals of Ibrāhīm and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib had been. In this context it is legitimate to ask whether early Islamic teaching actively transformed pre-Islamic texts to account for this complexity.

Rappaport has defined ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers".⁴ Evidently, this is a rather open definition that leaves the performer facing an intricate task, namely, to discover the profounder significance of his or her ritual. Rappaport "privileges ritual over belief, form over content, and general, abstract argument over the interpretation of the historically particular".⁵ This illustrates an important aspect of his research, which allows for the *ritual* of the Islamic pilgrimage to be as important as the theologically formed teaching *about* it, although the aspect of dogma will not be overlooked in this study.

Rappaport's theory of *liturgical orders* provides a background for an analysis of the Islamic pilgrimage (*ḥajj* and *manāsik*) and of sacrificial rituals,⁶ in terms of the system that constitutes this liturgical order. In Rappaport's terminology "liturgical order" does not refer to individual rituals in isolation, but to "the more or less invariant sequences of rituals that make up cycles and other series as well".⁷

In keeping with Rappaport's definition, I will call the *ḥajj* rituals of early Islam "liturgical orders", since the elements of the *ḥajj* constitute a complete

3 Rappaport 1999: 175.

4 Rappaport 1999: 24.

5 Lambek 2001: 248.

6 *Dhibḥ* is one of the main Arabic words for 'sacrifice', while *ʿibadāt* means 'Islamic religious rituals'.

7 Rappaport 1999: 169. This opinion is opposed to van Gennepe, who uses this term of liturgical order in a more precise sense. See van Gennepe (1909) 1960.

liturgy with essential religious and liturgical signs. In this system, time (the month of *dhū l-ḥijja*), and place (Mecca and Mina, or wherever Muslims happen to be celebrating the festival of *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*) are essential. This will be discussed with the help of Rappaport's idea of placing "ritual over belief, form over content".⁸ He states that "liturgical orders, even those performed in solitude, are *public* orders and participation in them constitutes an acceptance of a public order *regardless* of the private state of the belief of the performer".⁹

This raises a question with regard to the intention (*niyya*) that the Muslim is supposed to utter, even if only silently, before and often during the pilgrimage ritual (despite receiving no mention in the Qurʾān and my other main sources). Is participation in the pilgrimage and sacrificial ritual a *public* Muslim act even when the pilgrim does not understand the content of the rituals and does not anticipate the consequences of what he or she is doing? What sort of attitude is required according to our texts? Rappaport says that "*acceptance* is not a private state, but a public act, visible both to witnesses and to performers themselves".¹⁰

To describe the double stream of messages that rituals involve, Rappaport uses the terms *self-referential* and *canonical* messages.¹¹ These he compares respectively with *doing* and *saying*. Self-referential messages are shown through actions, while canonical messages are realised through utterances.¹² Self-referential messages express something about the participants, and can be classified according to *three levels*, which are characterised as orders of meaning: "low" (referring to distinction), "middle" (referring to similarities) and "high" (referring to identity). These orders can be distinguished but not separated.¹³ There is not just a *hierarchy of subjectivity* but also one of *integration*. Self-referential messages are transmitted through participation.¹⁴ "Self-referential messages are sanctified, which is to say certified, through their association with the highly invariant canonical stream."¹⁵

Concerning "canon"¹⁶ and "canonical messages", which carry the self-referential messages through the rituals to the public and to the participants themselves, Rappaport says,

8 Lambek 2001: 248.

9 Rappaport 1999: 121.

10 Rappaport 1999: 120.

11 Rappaport 1999: *inter alia* 52, 107–109, 328.

12 Rappaport 1999: 107.

13 Rappaport 1999: 72–73.

14 Rappaport 1999: 83.

15 Rappaport 1999: 329.

16 Rappaport 1999: 224: "Canon – the punctiliously recurring and therefore apparently unchanging spine of liturgical order."

Without canon, self-referential messages would be meaningless or even non-existent as such. [...] The canonical guides, limits and indeed, defines the self-referential. But this does not mean that the self-referential is unambiguously subordinated to the canonical.¹⁷

When words are uttered in a ritual, they “bring conventional states of affairs, or ‘institutional facts’ into being, and having been brought into being they are real as ‘brute facts’”.¹⁸ The canon that underlies the ritual and the words actually spoken are intertwined, and the “‘magical power of words’ may be related to their illocutionary force or performativeness”.¹⁹

2.1.2 Ultimate Sacred Postulates

“Cosmological axioms are manifested in social and physical phenomena”; they “can be changed” and they “serve as the *logical* basis from which both specific rules of conduct and the proprieties of social life can be derived”.²⁰ Cosmological axioms, like mathematical or other scientific axioms, are different from what Rappaport calls “Ultimate Sacred Postulates”. In Islam this postulate is the *shahāda*, the *credo* that says that Allāh is the only God and that Muḥammad is his messenger.²¹ Such postulates are “deeper than logic and beyond logic’s reach, upon which cosmological structures can change—expand, contract, or even be radically altered structurally”.²² Ultimate Sacred Postulates are characterised as “more vague” with regard to their social content.²³ They do not stipulate the actions to be undertaken in particular circumstances, nor under particular categories of circumstances, nor do they even specify the general principles to be used in the rituals in which these actions should be undertaken. They do, however, provide the ground for those principles.²⁴ The Ultimate Sacred Postulates are “not fully of this world and can be regarded as eternal verities”;²⁵ they are “beyond empirical verification”²⁶ and can be “falsified neither logically nor empirically”.²⁷

17 Rappaport 1999: 106.

18 Rappaport 1999: 117.

19 Rappaport 1999: 117.

20 Rappaport 1999: 288.

21 See Qur’ān 112.

22 Rappaport 1999: 265.

23 Rappaport 1999: 265.

24 Rappaport 1999: 273.

25 Rappaport 1999: 265.

26 Rappaport 1999: 280.

27 Rappaport 1999: 281.

Does this correspond to the religious rituals of prayer and physical activities in the Muslim *hajj* rituals? It can be asked whether people can be participants in the rituals if they are unwilling to be followers and lack the right to question *and* change the actual rituals. Can they be believers and followers if they are merely silent marionettes? Rituals might be changed even if they are said not to be! Those who participate in the rituals have a varying ability to perceive the various elements they involve. However, Rappaport states that participation in a ritual underlines the performer's acceptance of it.²⁸

2.1.3 Sanctified expressions and *logos*

Rappaport does not flinch from using terms such as “sacred”, “holy”,²⁹ “divine”³⁰ and “sanctified”, which some scholars avoid.³¹ “Sacred” we have already encountered above, in the expression “Ultimate Sacred Postulates”. When it comes to the term “sanctified” and its cognates, they are closely related to Rappaport’s thesis about how rituals change their object. “Ritual [...] sanctifies whatever it encodes” and “sanctity is a product of ritual”.³² He also explicitly states that “there is, first, the *sacred*, a category composed entirely of Ultimate Sacred Postulates. Secondly, there is the *sanctified*, a category of expressions *associated* with Ultimate Sacred Postulates but not themselves ultimately sacred”.³³ Interestingly, he explains, “*The concept of the sacred may be as old as language, which is a way of saying as old as humanity itself.*”³⁴ Sanctity is also a “quality of religious discourse rather than of objects of that discourse”.³⁵

Rituals almost always involve words and utterances. Rappaport divides these uses of language into fourteen different groups, which I take to be groups that belong among the concerns characterised as “ultimately sacred”. He calls

28 Rappaport 1999: 119.

29 Rappaport 1999: 405: “In the Holy – the union of the sacred and the numinous – the most abstract of conceptions are bound to the most immediate and substantial of experiences.”

30 Rappaport 1999: 304: “The God of Word may have first been created in the ritual that first established the truth of the Word of God. This is to suggest that the notion of the divine, like the idea of the sacred, is as old as language.” See also Rappaport 1999: 378 (on Durkheim and divinity).

31 For example Flood (1999: 5, 71, 112), who uses “sacred” and “sacredness” only when discussing Otto and Eliade, scholars to whom Rappaport (1999: 371–373) also refers.

32 Rappaport 1999: 323.

33 Rappaport 1999: 314. Italics by the author.

34 Rappaport 1999: 286. Italics by the author.

35 Rappaport 1999: 345; see also 281–282.

these utterances not *sacred*, but *sanctified* expressions, and orders them in the following way:

1) myths; 2) cosmological axioms; 3) rules ordaining ritual performances and constituting taboos; 4) socially transforming fictive acts and utterances (e.g. rites of passage); 5) privileged exegeses; 6) prophecies, auguries, divinations and oracles; 7) acts and utterances mobilising occult efficacy to achieve physical effects; 8) social directives; 9) taxonomies; 10) expressions establishing authorities; 11) directives of sanctified authorities; 12) testimony; 13) commissives; 14) ritually transmitted self-referential information (which may also be indexically signalled).³⁶

Rappaport explains that this listing does not mean that the various modes of expression, for instance myths, are always sanctified or sacred. “It is clear that although ritual may be the locus of the sacred and, as such, the font of sanctity, sanctity escapes from ritual and may flow to all of the expressions through which a society is regulated.”³⁷ He continually emphasises that there are different levels in language and employs the Greek term *logos* in his theory to refer “generally to the cosmic orders represented by liturgical orders”.³⁸ Liturgical orders are thus sanctified by the Ultimate Sacred Postulates, and they “re-present themselves”; they are also “meta-orders”.³⁹ Hence, the use of the expression *logos* is Rappaport’s attempt to co-ordinate all aspects of rituals, and it completes the central idea of *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*.⁴⁰

2.1.4 Analogue and digital time

A further interesting aspect of Rappaport’s work is his remarks on the themes of *time* and of *hierarchy* and *simultaneity*, which are also very relevant to the study of Islamic sacrifice and ritual. These concepts serve to digitalise continuously running time, or analogue time.⁴¹ Rappaport writes: “Analogic processes can be, and often are, represented digitally. Although time is continuous, and may even

36 Rappaport 1999: 320–321.

37 Rappaport 1999: 321.

38 Rappaport 1999: 346–348, 353.

39 Rappaport 1999: 345.

40 Rappaport 1999: 351.

41 Rappaport 1999: 86. He (1999: 87) says further: “The term ‘analogic’ refers to entities and processes in which values can change through continuous imperceptible gradations in, for instance, temperature, distance, velocity, influence, maturation, mood, prestige and worthiness. Signals, like other phenomena, may be analogic. [...] The term ‘digital’, in contrast, refers to entities or processes whose values change not through continuous infinitesimal gradations but by discontinuous laps.”

be conceived as such, it can be represented digitally, and is on many watches; so can distance.”⁴²

It is, however, “unfortunate” to speak about “punctual” time, Rappaport argues.⁴³ All time is durational time, but there are two temporal conditions, mundane or profane time on the one hand, and extraordinary or sacred time on the other.⁴⁴ There is a change from one time to the other.⁴⁵ Rappaport’s ideas help to clarify certain aspects of the *‘īd al-aḏḥā*. In the feast profane and sacred time in Islam come together and merge. Its digital time becomes sacred time. Through the rituals time is digitalised. Thereby, a difference between sacred and non-sacred is created.

Rappaport says that there is no “time between times”, in contrast to van Gennep and Turner, who talk about liminal, marginal or infinitesimal periods.⁴⁶ What is time more than continuous time? There is no time without duration; there is in effect no punctual time. However, rituals are different. They “stop” time and create what tend to be precise boundaries; they are distinctive and repetitive. They are sharply formed, and different from natural forms and processes.⁴⁷ *Liturgy* divides time into periods (natural ones according to year, age etc.). They may succeed each other and become part of a greater whole. Thus time is constructed.⁴⁸ When time is constituted in the *heavens* (and not in the mundane world), the distinction between time itself and significant changes in the world is clearer. We might talk of either *cyclical* or *progressive* (continuous) time, the latter being illusory.⁴⁹

When I intend to analyse the Islamic pilgrimage rituals, especially the sacrificial elements, in the light of Rappaport’s ideas of continuity and process, of analogic and digital time, I do it knowing that time and the lunar calendar are of extreme importance in Islam. Muslims’ anxiety ahead of the fasting or the pilgrimage month, not knowing when – today or tomorrow –it will begin, is adequate to consider here illuminated from the perspective of intention (*niyya*).

Time in Mecca and Mina is continuous, but can be represented digitally by the rituals that interpose sharp boundaries between beginnings and ends. What is

42 Rappaport 1999: 87.

43 Rappaport 1999: 181.

44 Rappaport 1999: 225: “‘Liturgical time,’ ‘sacred time,’ ‘extraordinary time,’ is literally time out of ordinary social time, for the temporal region characteristic of mundane social interaction is vacated.”

45 Rappaport 1999: 181.

46 Rappaport 1999: 97. Van Gennep (1908) 1960; Turner 1964.

47 Rappaport 1999: 178.

48 Rappaport 1999: 179.

49 Rappaport 1999: 183.

time outside these two places, one might ask. Rappaport says that there are digital aspects of ritual communication, but ritual communication is not *only* digital.⁵⁰ This world's "changeability" is compared with the lack of change in the sacred world, which is "neither coming nor passing away".⁵¹

When I try to understand the Islamic rituals (*ʿibadāt*) according to the system that constructs its liturgical order, I shall include therein the aspects of time (the month of *dhū l-ḥijja*) and place (Mecca and all the places where Muslims celebrate the festival). This means that a celebration of the festival in Cairo is conducted with the same matter of course as in Mecca. This involves ethical regulations of many kinds. In all places people meet face to face and are confronted with the regulations contained in the written and oral law. Traditions and unspoken expectations are an especially important part of the less centralised rituals, i.e., those rituals that in Mecca are performed outside the Ka'ba area.

2.2 From the history of the study of sacrifice

2.2.1 Sacrificial terms and schemes

2.2.1.1 Sacrifice and terminology

Whereas *rituals* and *liturgical orders* have been defined above according to Rappaport's proposals, the rite of *sacrifice* needs further theoretical discussion. A number of standard works have been written about sacrificial rites. My intention is *not* to present a new extensive survey of these theories, but to pick out those elements that I think will illuminate the analysis of *Islamic* sacrifice. Even where these elements are taken from Greek sacrifices,⁵² the Nuer,⁵³ or others, they will be used to help in the analysis of *Islamic* sacrifice.

For Tylor⁵⁴, sacrifice is tribute; for Robertson Smith⁵⁵, it is a communal meal with the gods. Frazer⁵⁶ sees the death of the priest / king as the destruction of an envelope

50 Rappaport 1999: 89.

51 Rappaport 1999: 176; see also 203.

52 Among the most important works on Greek sacrifice are those by Burkert 1972 and 1983. Cavallin (2003: 49) points out that Burkert's idea of sacrifice is implicit in the title of his book, *the Killing Man (Homo Necans)*. "He deduces from this axiom the conclusion that violence is therefore also at the core of religious traditions, and more specifically that the sacred is derived from sacrificial killing."

53 Evans-Pritchard 1954 and 1956.

54 Tylor (1871) 1970.

55 Robertson Smith (1889; 1901) 1927.

56 Frazer 1890–1964. Cf. Milbank 1996: 36.

of power, in order to release that power. Hubert and Mauss⁵⁷ portray sacrifice as the knife's edge that balances the sacred and the profane. Evans-Pritchard⁵⁸ stresses rather the banishment of the divine by sacrificial means, while de Heusch⁵⁹ understands sacrifice as a mimesis of death and rebirth.⁶⁰

This is how Bruce Chilton sums up the most important sacrificial theories from the end of the 19th century onwards. The theme could be dismissed with this quotation. But of course, there are relevant and important topics that remain to be discussed.

2.2.1.2 The terms “sacrifice”, “offering”, “victim”, “immolation” and “slaughtering”

The word *sacrifice* is derived from the Latin *sacrificium*, which can be divided into *sacer*, ‘dedicated’ or ‘consecrated to a divinity, holy, sacred’,⁶¹ and *facere* from *facio*, ‘to create’ or, in the context of ritual, ‘to perform a religious rite; to offer sacrifice; make an offering; to sacrifice’.⁶² The combined meaning then becomes ‘to bring something into the sphere of the sacred’.⁶³ The word is, however, used in two ways, either to denote the sacrificial *act*, or to denote the *victim*, the person, animal or thing to be sacrificed. The words *offer* and *offering*, and the German words for sacrifice, *Opfer*, derived from the Old German *opfarn*, may have been borrowed from Latin *operari*, originally from *operatio*, ‘performing’ or ‘bringing of offerings’. One of the Christian meanings that developed is ‘beneficence’ or ‘charity’.⁶⁴ However, also the Latin *offere*, ‘to bring before and to present’,⁶⁵ contributes to the sense of the English ‘offer’, which is more suggestive of ‘bringing a gift’. In scholarly discourse, however, the use of both *offer* and *sacrifice* as terms has obscured the discussion.⁶⁶ In the English and French tradition, *sacrifice* has often been understood as ‘the immolated victim’, while *offer* and *offering* have been understood as ‘the gift that is given to the gods or God’.⁶⁷ Henri Hubert (1872–1927) and Marcel

57 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964.

58 Evans-Pritchard 1954 and 1956.

59 de Heusch 1985.

60 Chilton 1992: 13.

61 Lewis (1879) 1980: 1610.

62 Lewis (1879) 1980: 716–717. See also Seiwert 1998: 270.

63 Seiwert 1998: 270.

64 Lewis (1879) 1980: 1267.

65 Lewis (1879) 1980: 1259.

66 Seiwert 1998: 269.

67 In his interesting monograph about Vedic sacrifice, Clemens Cavallin (2003: 1, n. 1) maintains that “it is hard to draw a clear line between offering and sacrifice”. He refers

Mauss (1872–1950) explicitly designate *sacrifice* as “destroyed” victims and rituals “where blood is shed”.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, they admit that in many cases the two meanings are intertwined.⁶⁹

The word *victim* has been used both in a ritual sense, as in the context of *sacrifice*, but more often to describe someone who has been involuntarily subjected to any negative influence or illness. When I use *victim* here, I use it exclusively about the ritual object or about an animal that is sacrificed. This is in fact the original Latin meaning of the word.⁷⁰

Two words that are important in the scholarly discussion and for this study of Islamic sacrifice are the nouns *immolation* and *slaughter*. *Immolation* is derived from Latin *immolatio* (noun) and *immolo* (verb), meaning respectively ‘a sacrificing; a sacrifice; an offering’ and ‘to bring as an offering, to sacrifice’,⁷¹ while “slaughter” comes from Old Norse *slátr*, meaning ‘to slay’ (verb).⁷² There might, however, be ritual slayings or slaughterings that are *not* part of a sacrifice.⁷³ Today, both words can be used to describe acts that may be part of either a religious ritual or an ordinary everyday act in an official slaughterhouse or in a private courtyard.

Regardless of the Latin background of the word, Hubert and Mauss defined sacrifice as “a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it or that of certain objects with which he is concerned”.⁷⁴ With regard to the “objects of sacrifice”, Hubert and Mauss defined them as “those things for whose sake the sacrifice takes place”.⁷⁵ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defined in 1977 sacrifice as “a cultic act in which objects were set apart or consecrated and offered to a god or

to Raymond Firth who “treats sacrifice as a subtype of offering, the *differentia* being that sacrifice implies a substantial offering and that the resources are limited; sacrifice is thus ‘giving up something at a cost’.” Firth ([1963] 1996: 97–101) refers to “the economic and ecological contexts, and the distinction between sacrifice and offering is thus relative to factors outside the ritual realm proper”.

68 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 12.

69 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 12.

70 Lewis (1879) 1980: 1987: “*victima*, a beast for sacrifice adorned with the fillet (*vitta*), a sacrifice, victim”.

71 Lewis (1879) 1980: 894.

72 Cf. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 10th edition, CD-edition.

73 Henninger 1987: 545: “Eliminatory rites, though they may include the slaying of a living being or the destruction of an inanimate object, are not directed to a personal recipient and thus should not be described as sacrifices.”

74 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 15.

75 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 10.

some other supernatural power”.⁷⁶ Geo Widengren’s already quoted definition is interesting in this context (see p. 1). He emphasises the possible influence a sacrifice may have on the deity. In the chapter on “earlier sacrifices”, Widengren calls the Islamic sacrifice a “survival” from pre-Islamic religion.⁷⁷ In the quoted statement, however, he seems to underline the intentional part of the sacrificer(s) offering the sacrifice.

2.2.1.3 Sacrificial schemes

Hubert and Mauss (1898) categorised the same four elements as Augustine had done, these are 1) To whom was the sacrifice given? 2) By whom? 3) What was handed over? 4) For whom was the sacrifice made?⁷⁸, and added three major aspects, namely the *place*, the *instruments*, and the *sequential rituals* that transfer the “religious agents” from a profane to a sacred status.⁷⁹ Important for later research is also the fact that Hubert and Mauss stressed the role of the *sacrifier*, who is *not* the person who performs the offering or slaughtering (the *sacrificer*), but “the subject to whom the benefits of sacrifice thus accrue, or who undergoes its effects”.⁸⁰ The *sacrifier* and the *sacrificer* might be one and the same person, but this need not always be the case.

Hubert and Mauss also described sacrifices in terms of three further phases according to their idea of sacred and non-sacred elements.⁸¹ Firstly, preliminary rites sanctified the involved persons, places, victims, objects or periods of time. Secondly, immolation brought the victim into closer contact with the sacred sphere, enabling energy to circulate between the sacred and non-sacred spheres. Thirdly, what had been sanctified, hence made dangerous, must be de-sanctified before the return to everyday life.⁸² In other words, Hubert and Mauss emphasised the *complex* character of the rituals into which sacrifices were

76 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1977, vol. 16: 128.

77 Widengren 1969: 326.

78 Pointed out by Brandt (2000: 252). She found this in Cancik-Lindemaier (1991: 47).

79 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 19–20; 25–26. See also Brandt 2000: 252–253.

80 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 10 (italics by the authors). Cf. Cavallin, who like Hubert and Mauss, has examined Vedic sacrificial rituals. He asks one main question in his monograph, namely about the efficacy of sacrifice. He understands “the efficacy of sacrifice” as “the mechanisms that enable an act to achieve a certain goal” (Cavallin 2003: 2; see also 35).

81 This idea shows the influence of van Gennep and his liminal thoughts. Rappaport is opposed to this idea. Cf. Cavallin, who says that Hubert and Mauss understand the “sacred” as “a blind force that has to be controlled” (Cavallin 2003: 41).

82 This three-phase scheme is taken from a review by Noal Mellott, written in 1983, of Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964. Critical voices say that this model fails to clarify the distinction between the sacred and the non-sacred spheres.

integrated. Thus, none of the elements could be isolated from the others.⁸³ Even if they were opposed to the evolutionist view of sacrifice that William Robertson Smith advocated,⁸⁴ they wrote that this structure of interdependence was common to most sacrificial rituals.

Burkhard Gladigow and Hubert Seiwert emphasise that sacrifices should be regarded as *complex rituals*.⁸⁵ Following Josef Drexler, Gladigow writes that no sacrifice can be seen without its ritual framework. These complex rituals are *not* comparable from religion to religion, and there are as many schemes as there are rituals.⁸⁶ Additionally, he maintains that the term *Opfer* is “misleading, unsuitable and insufficient”.⁸⁷ At least, the “focus of interpretation is not some implicitly clear conception of sacrifice – obviously there is no such conception – but rather the ability of the element ‘sacrifice’⁸⁸ to be assimilated into complex rituals, and about complex rituals in ‘culture’.”⁸⁹ Gladigow chooses to look at sacrifice from another angle. Thus he also considers elements such as catharsis,⁹⁰ economy and “economy of prestige”,⁹¹ but even more important, he underlines the element of *divination* or seeking knowledge by supernatural means.⁹²

The most general scheme of the actors and components of the sacrificial ritual consists of a division into six parts: the sacrificer, the material of the offering, the time and place of the rite,⁹³ the method of the sacrifice, the recipient of the sacrifice, and the motive or intention of the rite. Compared to former studies of sacrificial rituals that tried to find what was common to and valid for *all* sacrificial rituals, a rather impossible but useful task, one has to admit that there is a tendency for “sacrifices” to be defined as “dozens of

83 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 95.

84 Cf. Cavallin (2003: 40), who says that “they instead analysed the internal structure and logic of sacrifice”.

85 Gladigow 2000: 87. Seiwert 1998: 268–284.

86 Cf. Gladigow 2000: 87, 104.

87 Drexler 1993: 164; quoted in Gladigow 2000: 93; my translation.

88 Gladigow 2000: 93; my translation.

89 Gladigow 2000: 93; my translation.

90 Gladigow 2000: 93; my translation.

91 Gladigow 2000: 93; my translation.

92 Cf. Gladigow 2000: 99–102.

93 Jonathan Z. Smith (1995: 22, 23–25) says that places and sacrifices have changed, for instance “from Temple to domicile, and the act of sacrifice was wholly replaced by narrative and discourse. Early rabbinic traditions [for instance M. *Pesahim* 10.5] talked endlessly about sacrifices no longer performed, in many cases, never experienced, and, in its ritual praxis, substituted speech for deed”.

practised rituals”.⁹⁴ In this sense, several local anthropological studies of rituals have been published, also about sacrifices in the Muslim world.⁹⁵

Another categorisation has been proposed by Raymund Firth, who distinguishes between seven groups of sacrifices: 1) sacrifices of *propitiation* and *expiation*, a category that includes sacrifices of substitute, the sin offerings in the Hebrew Bible, and the sacrifice of Christ; 2) the so-called *gift sacrifices*, which are often combined with the making of vows; 3) *thanksgiving offerings*, which are made especially in agricultural societies when the first fruits are harvested so as to de-sanctify the food that was considered sacred prior to the making of the offering; 4) sacrifices of *fertility*, which are often connected to first fruit offerings; 5) *building* sacrifices, which take place when new buildings are constructed; 6) *mortuary* sacrifices, which are offered to the dead and to ancestors, who are deemed worthy of respect and honour, but which also serve to supplicate the deities of the particular patch of ground to give long life to those still living; and 7) the *communion* sacrifice⁹⁶ that needs to be discussed in greater detail. For our purpose, it seems that especially the second and the last of Firth’s categories that will be relevant and assist the analysis. In spite of a simplification, such categories enable us to present, summarise and extend this topic.

2.2.1.4 Sacrifice, communion and communication

The two terms *communion* and *communication* belong together and point in the direction of a common origin – the *communio* – the fellowship of beings, whether they be gods or human beings, that communicate in prayer and sacrifice. As this study will demonstrate, it is not always easy to know whether the receiver is a god or the one who performs the ritual here on earth. However, both parties seem to participate in the fellowship, as most beings do when they participate in celebrations or events involving shared emotions, such as trust and anxiety, as the example taken from Robertson Smith in the next section will show.

Communication is neither unknown in literature on religion and theology in general, nor is it a novelty in the study of sacrifice in particular. As early as 1871, Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) published *Primitive Culture* and *Religion in Primitive Culture*,⁹⁷ both of which influenced later research on sacrifice. Even if Tylor’s main thesis was that sacrifices of humans must be seen

94 My translation of Gladigow 2000: 86. Cf. Jay 1992: 147.

95 Hammoudi (1988) 1993; Combs-Schilling 1989; Brisebarre 1989 and 1998.

96 These categorisations are predominantly taken from Firth (1963) 1996: 93–109.

97 Tylor (1871) 1970.

as an example of “primitive” beliefs in the ancestral journey of souls,⁹⁸ he also emphasised how closely sacrifice and prayer were related. He held that they have a common origin in the early period of culture. When a person prays or sacrifices to a god, he bows to an anthropomorphic model.⁹⁹ The sacrifice was seen as the offering of a gift to the deity in a situation similar to the offering of a gift to a human being. Tylor discussed sacrifices of tribute and homage and sacrifices where a person divests himself of or breaks off his relationship with the god(s). This model of sacrifice might be called a “gift model”. It means that human beings make offerings and sacrifices to their forefathers (ancestors and spirits) in order to receive blessings from them.¹⁰⁰ This model is also called the *do-ut-des* model, i.e., “I give so that you will give in return.”¹⁰¹

To a certain extent, this sharing, even with a god or the gods, is *one* fundamental part of the *communicative model* that I want to emphasise in connection with Islamic sacrifice, especially the role of *receiving* blessings, even though Islam involves few ideas about ancestors and even fewer about ancestral journeys. Even so, the idea of respect and of paying tribute to the elderly and to those who have passed away is clearly present in the *pre-Islamic* material. Hence, I can defend an overall assumption of communicative elements, also those taken from Tylor.

However, there is one major problem with Tylor’s view concerning the gods or God. Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954) has rightly pointed out the difficulty in making humans equal to the gods or to God.¹⁰² The mere mentioning of a similarity between God and man in Islam might represent an offence against the unity of Allāh. Instead, Schmidt proposed the idea that sacrifice was intended as a gift of homage to the gods or to God. In other words, he regarded the sacrifice as a ritual recognition of God’s power. He showed that the firstlings sacrifice

98 Tylor (1871) 1913: vol. 1: 417–419. Tylor used the word *animism* (from Latin *anima*, soul) for the earliest form of religion, thus implying “primitive” beliefs in spirits and dead souls. See more in Bell 1997: 4.

99 Tylor (1871) 1913: vol. 2: 375. See also Drexler 1993: 18.

100 In the history of the study of religion Tylor’s animistic thesis is out-dated. Later research has shown that even hunters and collectors had an idea of a high-god, and that ideas of animistic spirits were rather the exception. Drexler shows, however, that this idea may be combined with other ideas in for instance the Afro-Brazilian cult of the Yoruba. Cf. Cavallin (2003: 36–38) who emphasises that the homage theory “implies that it is not the value of the actual thing offered which is important, but it is instead the honour given to a deity through the act of offering which is in focus”, and the abnegation theory “concentrates on the abstention from something on the part of the worshipper”. Both are developed from the gift theory.

101 Henninger 1987: 550.

102 Schmidt (1912) 1926–1955. Cavallin (2003: 47) has more on Schmidt’s theories.

was given to the “supreme being to whom everything belongs and who therefore cannot be enriched by gifts”.¹⁰³

The idea of communication is also present in the important work of the English theologian, William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), even though he was primarily interested in the meal and the communion. In his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, published in 1889,¹⁰⁴ he followed Tylor’s work on the Old Testament and linguistics, while at the same time arguing “for the primacy of the rituals” over the role of the soul in the forming of the religion.¹⁰⁵ He never stressed the aspect of myth as strongly as Tylor did, nor followed him in viewing sacrifice as a gift to the god(s).¹⁰⁶ The gift sacrifice was in Robertson Smith’s opinion a later development.¹⁰⁷ He recognised a fellowship and communion between the sacrificer and the deity in the sacrifice. Indeed, he took this interpretation to the extreme in imputing identity between the recipient, the victim and the sacrificer. These three had a blood relationship, and “the sacrifice was thus originally a meal in which the offerers entered into communion with the totem”.¹⁰⁸ This was the oldest form of sacrifice, he maintained, and it was from this that the Semitic sacrifice derived, the latter being a sacrifice of *atonement*. He thus depicted the sacrificial meal as something that expressed a fellowship between the participants, but also between them and their deity. The meal could have either a harmful or a useful effect on the fellowship. Robertson Smith’s communicative ideas about rituals had “the effect of sacralizing the social unity and solidarity of the group”.¹⁰⁹

103 Quoted in Henninger 1987: 550. For more on Schmidt and sacrifices of firstlings, see Cavallin 2003: 47–48.

104 Robertson Smith (1889; 1901) 1927.

105 Cf. Bell 1997: 4. Cf. Milbank, who critically states, “Robertson Smith fused such a Darwinized ‘religion of humanity’ with a liberal protestant Christianity in terms of the thematic of sacrifice. Sacrifice, he claimed, had an origin which explained all later sacrificial practice, although its origin had been lost, and survived only in ‘traces’ or ‘vestiges’ akin to redundant elements in organisms, left over from previous evolutionary phases. Hence, all historical sacrificial practice is a scene of ruination and ignorant perplexity, whose practitioners manage a heritage which they cannot comprehend. Those condemned, by decree of tradition, to slay animals on stone altars fantasize a history of original human sacrifice, sometimes a judicial punishment, which was later commuted to animal offering, although precautionary insurance dictates that such a story leads to the occasional revival of a practice which never existed” (Milbank [1996: 32–33]; he refers to W. Robertson Smith [1889; 1901] 1927: 365–368).

106 Cf. Milbank 1996: 32.

107 Robertson Smith (1889; 1901) 1927: 375–377. Cf. Cavallin 2003: 39.

108 Robertson Smith (1889; 1901) 1927: 51–52; cf. Henninger 1987: 551.

109 Bell 1997: 4.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) writes a whole chapter about sacrifice in his *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* of 1912¹¹⁰, “The Positive Cult: The Elements of the Sacrifice”. The term “positive” is opposed to the term “negative”, which describes different systems of prohibitions, magic and religious, sacred and profane.¹¹¹ Hence, the positive cult is the context in which the sacrificial ritual is analysed and explained as life-giving¹¹² and promoting the young man’s transition to maturity.¹¹³

Durkheim describes the sacrificial rituals – or we may say, the sacrificial scheme – in terms of the following elements: different forms of exhibits, visits to sacred places, spreading of sacred dust or shedding blood¹¹⁴ with the aim of bringing about the reproduction of the totemic species; ritual eating of the totemic plant or animal, the communion meal; the alleged absurdity of the sacrificial offerings. When Durkheim comments on these rites, he identifies the same elements as in the sacrificial rituals of the “higher religions”.¹¹⁵ He also approves of the idea of Robertson Smith that one element of the sacrifice is *food*,¹¹⁶ thus acknowledging that the sacrifice consists of “a meal of which the faithful who offers it partakes at the same time as the god to whom it is offered. Certain parts of the victim are reserved for the deity; others are conferred on the celebrants, who consume them.”¹¹⁷

Durkheim’s general idea is that the role of the whole group (society with its cyclical rituals and the collective) is in opposition to individual actions.¹¹⁸ Religion is formed through people’s experiences, witnessed as something which makes the community stronger. This has consequences also for the individual because the society “develops and [...] awakens that feeling of support, safety,

110 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995.

111 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 303–329. The preceding chapter is called, “The negative cult and its functions: the ascetic rites”.

112 Cf. Beattie 1980.

113 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 330–354, 330–331, 341–342. Cavallin (2003: 42) describes Durkheim’s theories about religious notions and rites as “ways for a human community to speak about itself”. The sentence, “He becomes a person through it”, might correspond to Rappaport’s (1999) main idea expressed in the title of his monograph, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*.

114 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 335, 346.

115 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 340.

116 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 340.

117 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 341.

118 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 353–354.

and protective guidance which binds the man of faith to his cult”.¹¹⁹ Durkheim is opposed to Robertson Smith’s idea that the meal is exclusive,¹²⁰ although he still thinks that the communion was one of two focal elements in all sacrificial rituals, and it balances the idea of the gift to the gods.

Hubert and Mauss maintain that communion was one function of sacrifice; this is a refinement of Robertson Smith’s ideas and in accordance with Durkheim’s views.¹²¹ When the victim was destroyed or killed, strong powers, originally connected to the consecration, were set free. The settled communication between the holy and the profane changed the attitude and status of those who were sacrificing.

In the chapter “The Logic of Sacrifice” in his book *Culture and Communication*, Edmund Leach (1910–1989) applied theories of communication to the sacrificial rituals in Leviticus.¹²² Generally, he compared religious rituals to the alphabet and how different words and syllables were made by putting different letters together. “The elements of the ritual (‘the letters of the alphabet’) do not mean anything in themselves; they come to have meaning by virtue of contrast with other elements.”¹²³ Similar to the point

119 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 421. He ([1912; 1915] 1995: 351, 423) speaks of religion with great respect, describing it as the basis for all aspects of life even including what appears physically or morally ugly.

120 For Robertson Smith, the meal, the *communio*, was the *only* essential element of the sacrifice. In accordance with his evolutionary perspective, he maintained that offerings were a much later phenomenon than the meal. Milbank criticises Robertson Smith who claimed that “tithes were older than sacrifice and not linked to it”, and “fire was a late intrusion upon the sacrificial scene, and the savouring of smoke by the deity a later rationalization still” (Milbank 1996: 34, who refers to Robertson Smith [1889; 1901] 1927: 224–227). Cf. Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 344. Robertson Smith ([1889; 1901] 1927: 242) surprisingly maintains, “All through the old history it is taken for granted that a religious feast necessarily implies a victim slain.” In (1927: 242, note 3) Robertson Smith reduces his statement and says that his friend J.G. Frazer has shown him from Wilken (*Alfoeren van het eiland Beroe*, p. 26) that a true sacrificial feast is made of the first-fruit of rice. Robertson Smith (1927: 242) seems to understand the eating of rice as eating the rice’s souls and thus similar to the eating of an animal victim. “Agricultural religions seem often to have borrowed ideas from the older cults of pastoral times.”

121 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 341–343. Cf. Cavallin (2003: 43), who maintains that “Durkheim did not altogether escape from the heuristic allurements of evolution, i.e. the primacy of origin”.

122 Leach 1976: 81–93.

123 Leach 1976: 95.

Rappaport would later make in his *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Leach stated that “the rite is prior to the explanatory belief”.¹²⁴

Here also Jan van Baal’s contribution to sacrifice theory must be mentioned. He defines an offering to be “any act of presenting something to a supernatural being”, and a sacrifice to be “an offering accompanied by the ritual killing of the object of the offering”.¹²⁵ Contrary to Hubert and Mauss, van Baal does not consider the offering or sacrifice to be held sacred by the performers, but instead he regards both as gifts.¹²⁶ Further van Baal considers killing of animals to be a ceremony of wealth more than of religious devotion.¹²⁷ Like Leach, he underlines the communication between the sacrificer and the recipient that includes an “exchange of messages”. Together with belief they “lend meaning to human existence”.¹²⁸ van Baal divides between “low-intensity rites” and “high-intensity rites”. The first group consists of rituals connected to “routine expressions of belief and worship, and the ‘high-intensity’, the more occasional responses to misfortune and disaster”.¹²⁹ Hence, “gifts” and “sacrifice” belong to the first group, and “sacrifice” and “holocausts” made to avoid something bad or to re-establish a broken relation, belong to the last group.¹³⁰ Moreover, van Baal emphasises the link between communication and the idea of sacrifice as a gift.

J.M.H. Beattie joins Durkheim in stressing that sacrifice is a process of communication between the sacred and the non-sacred spheres involving the ceremonial destruction of a victim.¹³¹ If the idea is that the sacrificer contracts an exchange without giving himself, yet while trying to receive life force, then it may be a useful tool and symbol in the study of Islamic sacrifice.

124 Leach 1968: 524.

125 van Baal (1976) 2003: 277.

126 van Baal (1976) 2003: 278.

127 van Baal (1976) 2003: 278. Firth ([1963] 1996: 94–99, esp. 98) also underlines this aspect of economy.

128 Carter 2003: 276 (from the introduction to van Baal’s text).

129 Carter 2003: 277 (from the introduction to van Baal’s text).

130 van Baal (1976) 2003: 281. Van Baal also makes an interesting distinction between “gifts” and “offerings”. He maintains that a gift is *not* a bribe but a free rendering that does not expect something in return except from protection or blessings. In the vocabulary of trade words like bribe and exchange, reciprocity and contracts are used. The vocabulary of religious sacrifice and gift-exchange, however, van Baal underlines, is different, and includes phenomena like “unbalanced reciprocity”, “obligation to give and to accept a gift”, and “turn[ing] participants into partners”. This is part of van Baal’s exchange with Tylor’s (1871) and partly van der Leeuw’s *do-ut-des* theory (1933; 1956).

131 Beattie 1980: 29–44.

Communication is a key word in Josef Drexler's and Burkhard Gladigow's analysis of Greek sacrifice. Gladigow emphasises the idea of interactive solidarity among the participants and refers to "the regular sacrifices as an indicator of a 'consensus about norms within the group of sacrificers and deities'".¹³² Further, he underlines that "the sacrifice protects against the social decline or the physical extermination of the people".¹³³ The dividing of the sacrificial meat to which Gladigow also draws attention is part of this solidarity agreement.¹³⁴ The participants are challenged by this united effort. Adapted to an Islamic sacrificial practice – if we analyse the Islamic dividing of the meat in this way – it has far-reaching consequences.

2.2.3 Sacrifice, community and gender

Ivan Strenski introduces topics such as community, purity and gender into his examination of sacrificial theories. He praises the work of Hubert and Mauss and refers to the development of the idea of community.¹³⁵ Further, Strenski bridges the topics of social boundaries and gender when he reviews Nancy Jay's work of 1992.¹³⁶ Hence, we can say that community *or* disconnection between the sexes is strongly emphasised. Jay and Strenski both underscore the gender aspect of the sacrificial ritual itself, and even more how the rituals have been described and analysed by men in Western scholarly work.¹³⁷

According to Strenski, Jay intends to "point out a *de facto* exclusion of women in traditional societies, and to argue that sacrificial rituals have something to do with maintaining this exclusion".¹³⁸ Strenski admits that sacrificial rituals, where "men are initiated, 'born', into his extra-familial order of obligations and behaviours", will necessarily exclude women.¹³⁹ However, he criticizes Jay's emphasis on the "counter-reformation spirituality of sacrificial annihilation", in connection with which she analyses the Tridentine mass and the sacrificial conception of the Eucharist.¹⁴⁰

132 Gladigow 2000: 95; my translation.

133 Gladigow 2000: 95; my translation.

134 Gladigow 1984 and 2000: 98, 104.

135 Strenski 1996: 16.

136 Jay 1992.

137 Strenski 1996: 11–12, 13–17.

138 Strenski 1996: 16.

139 Strenski 1996: 16.

140 Strenski 1996: 18. William Beers (1992) pursues an evident difference between men and women concerning sacrifice. Men sacrifice, and women do not. Influenced by Sigmund Freud, Heinz Kohut and Nancy Jay, Beers explains that unconscious

Strenski remarks that Jay has avoided the topic of the biblical *aqedā*, where he considers the topic of the relationship between father and son and between male and male to be so obviously present that it should be treated as part of “her” gender topic. This is, however, not quite true. Jay discusses parts of the various biblical versions about the Abrahamic family and offspring. She is especially concerned with the similarities, but also the differences, between Abraham and Isaac: the father was about to complete the *near sacrifice* of his son; the latter was *without sacrifice*.¹⁴¹ Additionally, Jay analyses Abraham’s later relatives, Laban and Jacob, in *their* sacrificial activities with regard to descent, sacrificial meal. Hence, *patriliny* was restored, she convincingly claims.¹⁴² In spite of his criticisms, Strenski by and large supports Joy’s critical analysis of the gender-based sacrificial culture in Hawaii, among the Ashanti and within the early and contemporary Catholic Church, and the consequences she draws from her research.

M.E. Combs-Schilling has examined human and economic as well as gender aspects of certain Islamic sacrificial rituals connected to the Great Ritual, *ʿīd al-kabīr* or *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, in certain parts of the Maghreb. In what appears both as a work of anthropology and an original theory of sacrifice, she explains that the celebration has been “an important part of collective experience [...] for nearly three hundred years”.¹⁴³ Further, she relates that every household uses almost twenty percent of its annual income on this festival. For our study her consideration of sacrifice and offspring is especially interesting.¹⁴⁴

Just one year before Combs-Schilling, Abdullah Hammoudi examined the Great Ritual in the Maghreb region in terms of concepts of the victim, which he describes in his book *The Victim and Its Masks*.¹⁴⁵ He addresses the gender aspects, which he illustrates by describing the different roles of men and women. Men perform female work during the festival and women are allowed to participate more in religious rituals that correspond to everyday male activities. The woman may dye different parts of animals and human bodies with *henna*,

maleness means to show power and prestige through sacrificial activity. “The need to sacrifice occurs when the male narcissistically invested social structures have their boundaries tested and threatened, that is, whenever self-objects intrude” (Beers 1992: 147; cf. Carter 2003: 384–394).

141 Jay 1992: 101–103, esp. 102.

142 Jay 1992: 106–111, esp. 108.

143 Combs-Schilling 1989: 223.

144 Combs-Schilling 1989: 242–243. Neuwirth (2011: 502, n. 11) also points to Combs-Schilling’s research on the role of gender and violence linked to the Islamic celebration of Abraham’s sacrifice.

145 Hammoudi (1988) 1993.

and she offers “the victim a false meal composed of grain, henna, salt, and water”.¹⁴⁶ Hence, she is linked to symbols like *kohl* for the eyes, and *henna* and salt, which are used as signs of beauty and attraction.¹⁴⁷ In accordance with different parts of the rituals, both sexes may slaughter the victim. Other duties are entrusted exclusively to the men.¹⁴⁸ *She* “offers the gift of ornament while the victim provides a substance (blood) that is forbidden to eat”.¹⁴⁹ Hammoudi claims, almost as forcefully as Combs-Schilling, that sacrificial rituals tend to be symbols of a fruitful future for the whole community in terms of crops and children, although Hammoudi stresses the element of *gift* more strongly than Combs-Schilling did.¹⁵⁰ Hammoudi further states, “From the outset Muslim sacrifice undertakes these determinations of ritual activities that underscore sociological boundaries and roots them [...] in a mythology of the birth of civilization as an ideal Abrahamic community.”¹⁵¹

2.2.4 Sacred and profane

Durkheim adds aspects other than communication linked to the meal, for instance, matters concerning the sacredness of the animal, the food and the sacrificer.¹⁵² Concerning the change from the animal’s profane status, Durkheim maintains that it becomes completely transformed into sacredness. “A whole series of preliminary steps in the sacrifice (washings, anointings, prayers, and so on) transform the animal to be immolated into a sacred thing, the sacredness of which is thereafter communicated to the faithful who partake of it.”¹⁵³ Additionally, profane beings eat sacred food. He calls this a *contradiction* that exists in all “positive” cults. “Man can have no dealings with the sacred beings without crossing the barrier that must ordinarily keep him separate from them.”¹⁵⁴

146 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 119.

147 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 117.

148 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 123.

149 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 121.

150 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 104, 119, 185 n. 10. Cf. Combs-Schilling’s (1989: 242–243) comparison between the slaughtering of the ram and the birth of the infant. See also Evans-Pritchard 1954 and 1956, following him with Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1979) 1989.

151 Hammoudi (1988) 1993: 120.

152 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 341.

153 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 341. Durkheim also refers to Hubert and Mauss 1898 (French): 40–42; English translation 1964: 30–32. van Baal (1976) 2003: 278 opposes the idea of the sacredness of the gift or sacrifice.

154 Durkheim (1912; 1915) 1995: 342–343.

Hubert and Mauss make a distinction between the rites of sacralisation and those of desacralisation.¹⁵⁵ Luc de Heusch uses the terms “conjunctive” and “disjunctive” to express the same distinction.¹⁵⁶ Within this perspective, Beattie goes on to define four classes or categories of sacrifice: 1) sacrifice to obtain or maintain closer contact with God or with other individual spirits; 2) sacrifice to achieve some degree of separation from such spirits; 3) sacrifice to acquire for the sacrificer (or for the person sacrificed for, i.e. the sacrificer) an increase, or input, of non-personalised ‘power’; and 4) sacrifice to achieve separation from, or the removal of, such diffuse force or power. These elements or categories are, according to Beattie, not mutually exclusive, but might appear in the same sacrificial complex.¹⁵⁷

In his work of 1924, *Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange les sociétés archaïques*, Mauss emphasised the element of the gift and the reciprocal exchange of gifts that the sacrifice often involves. This creates an interdependence that is in accordance with the *power* of the sacrificial material, and not so much with the material itself.¹⁵⁸ In his introduction to the English edition of Mauss’ work, Evans-Pritchard comments on the author’s respect for sacrificial complexity.¹⁵⁹

Gerardus van der Leeuw¹⁶⁰ (1890–1950) uses an idea similar to that of the later Mauss, but lays greater emphasis on the fact that the sacrificer gives the gift away and does not necessarily know about or is not necessarily conscious of the receiver of the sacrifice. van der Leeuw underlines that the power of life (*mana*) is channelled through the sacrifice.¹⁶¹ The elements of gift and mutual dependence are connected not only to the sacrifice itself but to the influential powers to which the sacrifice is given. It could probably be argued that van der

155 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: Chapter 2. Cf. Milbank’s (1996: 38) comment in reference to Hubert and Mauss: “All sacrifice transports the person who offers it either into or out of the realm of the sacred—whose essence is deemed to consist in the pressure exerted by the social organism, embedded in a wider and more ambiguous sphere of nature or divinity.”

156 de Heusch 1976: 39.

157 Beattie 1980: 38–39.

158 Mauss (1924) 1978.

159 Mauss (1924) 1978: Foreword by Evans-Pritchard to a new English edition. This coincides with Gladigow’s emphasis on economy. The latter does not, however, mention the aesthetic element. Raymond Firth ([1963] 1996) reflects also on economic consequences and says that the development towards the use of surrogate victims could indicate an effort to mitigate a shortage of resources.

160 van der Leeuw 1920–1921.

161 van der Leeuw 1920–1921: 243. This corresponds to Durkheim’s idea of sacrifice as the “positive cult”, the life-giving ritual.

Leeuw's perspective would also fit into a communicative model. Other elements of sacredness, sanctity and power involved in Islamic sacrifice, connected to blessings and other ritual elements, will be further analysed in due course.

2.2.5 Complementary ideas about sacrifice

Edmund Leach refers to the metaphor of death as the central “puzzle about sacrifice”. “What has the killing of animals got to do with communication between Man and Deity or with changing the social status of individuals?”¹⁶² This is not, however, his main concern. As an anthropologist he feels challenged by the complexity of the sacrificial ritual. “At the very least, any ritual activity has visual, verbal, spatial and temporal dimensions; in addition, noise, smell, taste, touch may all be relevant.”¹⁶³ He discusses the distinctions the observer is bound to make between all parts of the sacrificial ritual and the impressions made by the process; and how the observer might, during the process, distinguish between “the significant, the accidental and the redundant”.¹⁶⁴

René Girard's name is associated with topics such as “desire” and “violence”.¹⁶⁵ A professor of literature in the USA, Girard has analysed several phenomena involving killing and destruction in various fields of research, including religion, in the light of the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), whereby the father-son relationship, *fratricide* and taboos combine to form one complex idea.¹⁶⁶

It is interesting to note that Chilton, who is fascinated by Girard, disagrees with him and refers to an alternative understanding of “sacrifice”: “[I]n sacrifice, consumption is probably a better metaphor to describe what is happening than death.”¹⁶⁷ Further, Chilton thinks, “Sacrifice is a feast with the gods, in which life as it should be—chosen and prepared correctly—is taken in order to produce life as it ought to be.”¹⁶⁸

The social dimension and consequences of sacrifice have been emphasised by several scholars, but I shall conclude by drawing attention to another point made by Hubert and Mauss, opposed to Girard's later idea about *desire* as the source of *violence*. “The act of abnegation implicit in every sacrifice, by

162 Leach 1976: 81.

163 Leach 1976: 81.

164 Leach 1976: 81.

165 Girard (1972) 1977.

166 Chilton (1992: 15) maintains that this is especially evident in Girard's early book, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* (1961) 1965.

167 Chilton 1992: 41. Cf. Endsjø 2003: 333–336.

168 Chilton 1992: 41.

recalling frequently to the consciousness of the individual the presence of collective forces, in fact sustains their ideal existence.”¹⁶⁹ The same idea was emphasised by Durkheim, who says that through religious ritual “the group periodically renews the sentiment which it has of itself and of its unity”.¹⁷⁰ This statement would seem to differ in some ways from the characterisations of Hammoudi and Combs-Schilling of the gender-divided Maghrebi society and its emphasis on sacrificial rituals intended on the one hand to show this division and on the other to preserve the continuity of their society. The Maghrebi seem to show abnegation *and* desire at the same time, that is slaughtering *and* intercourse. As mentioned earlier, it is not necessarily inconsistent to claim that sacrifice aims “to achieve separation from, or the removal of, such diffuse force or power”.¹⁷¹ These aspects of sacrificial practices are put forward by the mentioned scholars based on evidence much later than the texts from early Islam that I shall analyse. Still, they represent a sign of recognition across both the centuries and mountain ranges.

In order to illuminate the double aspect of *sacrifice* and *ritual* I find the views of Josef Drexler, presented in his book *Die Illusion des Opfers* from 1993, useful, even though they do not completely satisfy our needs in relation to Islamic practice. Drexler is unwilling to continue to use the term “Opfer”.¹⁷² Like Drexler, Strenski insistently questions whether the term “sacrifice” is more than a label for “ritual killing”, “offering”, “cooking”, and “consecrating”. He goes on to say that, when we “see all these things as intimately related to each other, and believe that this unity persists over periods of time”, and if “we still wanted to apply the term sacrifice to such a syndrome, then we would really have something to talk about”.¹⁷³ Here I follow Strenski’s view, and I find it useful *not* to give up the terms “sacrifice”, respectively “Opfer”. In other words, in formulating his “total perspective”, Drexler thinks that all existing theories of

169 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 102.

170 Durkheim (1912) 1995: 375.

171 Beattie 1980: 39.

172 All the following translations from Drexler’s text are mine. See Drexler 1993: 164–165. In his view the word ‘Opfer’ covers too many different rituals and practices. He concludes that these words are inadequate to describe practices in non-Christian religious societies.

173 Strenski 1996: 20. Luc de Heusch (1985: 23) was among the first to talk about a “sacrificial illusion” arising from the multitude of incompatible definitions of “sacrifice”. Milbank (1996: 27) refers to Detienne’s work of 1979, written before de Heusch’s article, in the following terms: “There is no such thing as ‘sacrifice’, a concept which he [Detienne] thinks belongs in the rubbish dump of such other 19th century western projections as ‘totem’, ‘taboo’, ‘mana’ and ‘the sacred’” with reference to Detienne and Vernant (1979) 1989.

sacrifice are inappropriate when it comes to the reality of “sacrifice”.¹⁷⁴ He builds his “total perspective” notion of Burkert, who says, “In the sacrificial rituals of the ancient civilizations the different categories of sacrifices are already intertwined in multiple ways.”¹⁷⁵

At the same time, Drexler asserts that it is necessary to discuss the religious and philosophical aspects of sacrifice.¹⁷⁶ He reflects upon the consequences of the context *and* the aspects relating to the position of the sacrificer. Secondly, he considers theories that describe the “ritual”, or rather “the complex ritual process”, as a means of “communication with the sacred area”, to be more convincing than theories that regard those processes merely as “sacrifice”.¹⁷⁷ Even so, Drexler does not completely abandon theories of sacrifice but considers that *these* theories of sacrifice reciprocally complement one another.¹⁷⁸ He combines Victor Turner’s definition of ritual as a “prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to belief in mystical beings or powers”¹⁷⁹ with Horst Reimann’s definition of communication, saying that communication must be understood as “the established relation between two subjects as the result of a communication process”.¹⁸⁰

For Drexler it is important to see the whole context of a sacrificial rite. He claims that it is impossible to separate “sacrifice” and “culture”, because the religious phenomena are *not* independent of the rest of the culture.¹⁸¹ He proposes “sacred rituals of communication”¹⁸² as the most appropriate phrase to

174 Drexler 1993: 152.

175 Burkert 1972: 182 in Drexler 1993: 152.

176 Cf. Drexler 1993: 159.

177 Drexler 1993: 166.

178 Drexler 1993: 154.

179 Turner 1967: 19.

180 Reimann 1968: 74; my translation.

181 For instance, Drexler (1993: 160–162) refers to the meal after the sacrifice as an example of solidarity with the poor. He also alludes to the fact that different groups do whatever they want with the meat, some of them giving not a single piece to the ancestors even if the sacrifice was intended for them. In contrast to van der Leeuw, according to whom “‘communio’ often is not about a ‘sacramental sacrificial meal’ with a god, but is eating with the *ancestors*”, Drexler (1993: 162) underlines that the sacrificial meat, connected to the Afro-Brazilian sacrifices, is often of a small amount and fairly worthless. The participants eat most of it themselves and the ancestors get only a small portion or nothing. This obviously stands in contrast to the Islamic sacrificial animals, which are generally expensive (camels and sheep) and for some people too expensive to afford.

182 Drexler 1993: 167.

describe his theory. This fits better to the original definition of *sacrificium*, which was “sacred performance”.¹⁸³ In the process of communication Drexler is mainly interested in the communicative encounter between man and his gods, and less in the communication between the different persons who perform the rites, which is one of the most important elements in the Islamic sacrificial ritual.¹⁸⁴

Drexler lists the actors in the sacrificial ritual as follows:¹⁸⁵ the senders (sacred beings who communicate in the manner of spiritual beings such as gods, spirits, and forefathers) and the receivers (profane and either connected to or divided from the senders, including the ritual makers and religious experts such as priests, soothsayers, slaughterers, cooks and others).¹⁸⁶ He also mentions a group of participants who may be passive believers or “bystanders”.¹⁸⁷ In addition to these figures, the communicative process involves various actions and utterances such as declarations, petitions, admonitions, requests and demands, recitation of the sacral codes (myths), trance, dance, music, killing, dividing the food, cooking, eating. Drexler admits that his own categorization has one major defect, namely that it does not take into account the aspect of *time*, the “fourth dimension”.¹⁸⁸ A ritual of sacrifice and communication consists of elements of ritual processes and, hence, of time. Further, when he describes everyday communication and rituals, he adds the emotional, visual, chronological dimensions, as well as aesthetic aspects such as sound, smell, sense of beauty and ugliness, and taste to the ritual processes.¹⁸⁹ He maintains that everyday rituals are less emotional than for instance sacrificial rituals.¹⁹⁰ For this reason, like many other scholars, he differentiates between communication that takes place during religious rituals and communication that occurs during

183 Drexler 1993: 166–167.

184 Drexler 1993: 166.

185 Drexler 1993: 168.

186 Everything in the middle of this scheme may be sacred *and* profane. Drexler (1993: 167) does not distinguish between these two aspects as categorically as Hubert and Mauss do. He says that he would certainly not describe each sacrifice as a sacrificial ritual of transition.

187 Bystanders are people who participate casually in the ritual. They are characterised by their consumption-oriented attitude (Drexler 1993: 169).

188 Drexler 1993: 171.

189 Drexler 1993: 171.

190 Feelings such as anxiety arise as a result of sickness and fatalities (Drexler 1993: 171, 177; 178–179).

everyday rituals and routines.¹⁹¹ Evans-Pritchard and Rappaport, however, make a smoother gradation between different stages of ritual, and thus of time.¹⁹²

One main aspect of all rituals is the performer's *intention*. Does the ritual participant first need to establish the communication, or does he make use of a pre-established basis of communication? Drexler objects to Seiwert's definition of sacrifice as "a religious act, which consists of the ritual relinquishment of material sacrifice".¹⁹³

Drexler's and Seiwert's theories emphasise that rituals cause a change in reality for those who participate in them.¹⁹⁴ The ritual is not only symbolic. It also involves genuinely functional elements and can lead to real change. Even more distinctively, Rappaport emphasises the close link between the act, which may or may not involve a physical transformation, *and* the context and utterances surrounding the act.¹⁹⁵ This act may include a sacrificial practice as well. This type of efficacy is closely related to the complexity at all stages of the sacrificial process.

Seiwert's texts about sacrifice help us to recognise which elements are essential in the total process. Indicative of the complexity of both sacrificial rituals and of the theories that have been put forward to explain them over the past 150 years is his summary, in which he suggests that we should view sacrificial rituals in terms of five aspects *instead of* complete theories. 1) Sacrifice is a gift (Tylor and Mauss); 2) sacrifice is a ritual of perfection of the relationship between man and divinity (Robertson Smith); 3) sacrifice is a ritual means of communication between the sacred and the profane spheres (Hubert and Mauss); 4) sacrifice is a ritual means of perpetuating life (van der Leeuw and the later Mauss); and 5) sacrifice is a ritual recognition and acceptance of God's power over life and also an expression of dependence on the divine.¹⁹⁶ Seiwert's structure coincides to a great extent with Chilton's,¹⁹⁷ and helps us analyse the Islamic sacrificial rituals in the following chapters, especially in chapter 9. These aspects will in various ways throw light on Islamic practices.

191 Drexler 1993: 171.

192 Evans-Pritchard 1940: 95; Rappaport 1999: 183.

193 Drexler 1993: 173. Seiwert's article was not yet published when Drexler wrote his book in 1993, but he had apparently read the manuscript. Cf. Seiwert 1998: 269.

194 This is exemplified by the Catholic act of communion in the Holy Eucharist.

195 Rappaport 1999: 112–114. His example is a "man dubbed to knighthood", where neither a physical nor a chemical or biological alteration takes place.

196 Seiwert 1998: 278–280.

197 Chilton 1992: 13.

2.3 Primary sources of the Islamic reception of sacrifice

In my reading of Islamic texts I have had to *choose* among quite a high number of sources. Originally, I intended to embrace texts ranging from the years soon after 622 AD until as late as the 15th century AD. Of course, this search soon proved to be too broad, and I had to realise that *early* texts were difficult to trace due to the fact that there are probably no written Islamic texts preserved from before the end of the 7th century AD, and these texts were not collected or published before almost one hundred years later (i.e., from 750 AD onwards).¹⁹⁸

A major source has been al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh*, now available in an English multi-volume translation. For some topics, like that of Muḥammad's Farewell Pilgrimage, I have used Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* and al-Wāqidi's *al-Maghāzī*. Some of these texts have a history of being more or less dependent on or related to other texts, e.g. al-Ṭabarī using Ibn Ishāq's work. More information about the genres of literature, the authors (when they are known to us) and the contexts of these pieces of work can be found in different lexica and scholarly presentations.¹⁹⁹

2.4 The Islamic sacrifice in scholarly discussions

Over the past 150 years the topic "sacrifice in Islam" has been illuminated in a number of works by different scholars. The literature that I am aware of can be divided into four groups. First, there are historical and religious analyses of the pilgrimage to Mecca; secondly, there are studies about the pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrifices, which also include exegetical discussions about the narratives in the Qurʾān and in *ḥadīth*. Thirdly, there are discussions of and reports on the narratives concerning the intended sacrifices of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hishām and Ibrāhīm and the Feast of Sacrifice, *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*; and, finally, there are some judicial analyses of the role of sacrifice and slaughtering in Islam. All these sorts of works I will refer to during my discussion of sacrifice in early Islam.

198 Khalidi (1994: 30) writes that fragments of the works by ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr (d. 94/712), who was a nephew of ʿĀʾisha, and his student al-Zuhri (d. 124/742) are found in later writers. My earliest source, perhaps after the Qurʾān, is Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) whom we only know through his editor Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833). Cf. Farstad 2012.

199 See primary and secondary literature as we are delving into the coming text studies.

2.4.1 Historical and religious analyses of the pilgrimage to Mecca

In the first group, I count C. Brooke's²⁰⁰ excellent socio-geographical review about the pilgrimage to Mecca and Mina in the 20th century to be an eye-opening article. Brooke uses statistical material that was formerly known to the Meccan pilgrimage administration only. To some degree, he sheds light on today's practice by quotations from the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and various historical sources. J. Hjärpe²⁰¹ has analysed the symbolic meaning of Mecca and the *ʿīd al-adḥā* from the perspective of the phenomenology of religion. F.E. Peters²⁰² is one scholar who has examined the Meccan pilgrimage and explained it extensively to a wider English speaking audience. In spite of his wide approach he has touched upon the role of the sacrificial ritual. J.E. Campo²⁰³ has attributed to the discussion about pilgrimage and time especially in the light of Victor Turner's theory of rites of passage. Likewise, M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes,²⁰⁴ C. Rathjens,²⁰⁵ J. Jomier,²⁰⁶ A.J. Wensinck and B. Lewis²⁰⁷ have all made important contributions concerning the economic and religious aspects of pilgrimage.

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- 200 Clarke Brooke 1987. "Sacred Slaughter: The Sacrificing of Animals at the Ḥajj and ʿĪd al-Adḥā", *Journal of Cultural Geography* 7, 67–88. Every year there are several pilgrimage reports for instance in the Saudi-Arabian newspaper *Arab News* and others, bringing detailed information about all aspects of the pilgrimage.
 - 201 Jan Hjärpe 1979. "The Symbol of the Centre and its Religious Function in Islam", *Religious Symbols and their Functions*. Based on Papers read at the Symposium on Religious Symbols and their Functions held at Åbo on the 28th–30th of August 1978; ed. by Harald Biezais, Stockholm, 30–40.
 - 202 Francis E. Peters 1994a. *The Hajj: the Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. See also Peters. 1994b. *Mecca: a Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Another report that has been written for a larger audience is David Edwin Long. 1979. *The Hajj Today. A Survey of the Contemporary Makkah Pilgrimage*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
 - 203 Juan Edvardo Campo. 1991. "Authority, Ritual, and Spatial Order in Islam: the Pilgrimage to Mecca", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 5, 65–91. See also Bell 1997: 128.
 - 204 Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes. 1923. *Le Pèlerinage à la Mekka*. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press.
 - 205 Carl Rathjens. 1948. *Die Pilgerfahrt nach Mekka. Von der Weihrauchstrasse zur Ölwirtschaft*. Hamburg: Robert Mölich Verlag.
 - 206 Jacques Jomier (1966) 1986. "Role et importance du pèlerinage en Islam", *Lumière et vie* 79, 723–735.
 - 207 A.J. Wensinck and Bernhard Lewis. 1971c. "Ḥadjdj", *EF*, vol. 3: 31–38; Wensinck. 1971d. "Ihrām", *EF*, vol. 3: 1052–1053; Wensinck [J. Jomier]. 1978. "Ka'ba", *EF*, vol. 4: 317–322.

M.M. Bravmann's studies on early Islam have often been referred to with high appreciation.²⁰⁸ S. Faruqi²⁰⁹ has combined historical and cultural studies in her thorough description of the pilgrimage under Ottoman rule. I.R. Netton²¹⁰ has edited a volume called "Golden Roads", which deals with the pilgrimage in mediaeval and modern Islam but hardly touches upon the sacrificial ritual at all. M.N. Pearson²¹¹ is another scholar who has contributed to the history of pilgrimage, focusing especially on pilgrims from Asia.

All these writers are more or less indebted to the great work by C. Snouck Hurgronje, who managed to enter Mecca and stay there for several months.²¹² His books are still mentioned in every second scholarly work about Mecca. Additionally, there are several well-known reports about the pilgrimage in primary sources from 287/900 and onwards, but unfortunately only a few of them focus on the sacrificial ritual and the Feast of Sacrifice. Many of these sources, narratives and illustrations have been collected, reprinted and published by a German team²¹³ and by A. Rush in an American pilgrimage project.²¹⁴ Some scholars compare pilgrimage and sacrifice in several religions or with other rituals within the same religion.²¹⁵

208 M.M. Bravmann. 1972. *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam: Studies in Ancient Arab Concepts*. Leiden: Brill.

209 Suraiya Faruqi. (1990) 2000. *Herrscher über Mekka. Die Geschichte der Pilgerfahrt*. Düsseldorf / Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag; 1994. *Pilgrims & Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans 1517–1683*. London / New York: I.B. Tauris. The last book has an excellent bibliography on Mecca and pilgrimage.

210 Ian Richard Netton (ed.). 1993. *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Mediaeval and Modern Islam*. London: Curzon Press.

211 M.N. Pearson. 1994. *Pious Passengers: The Hajj in Earlier Times*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

212 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. 1880. *Het Mekkaansche Feest*. Leiden: E.J. Brill; Hurgronje. 1888. *Mekka*. 2 vols. The Hague. The 2nd volume is translated into English, 1931. *Mekka in the Later Part of the 19th Century*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

213 Otto Baumhauer (ed.). 1965. *Arabien. Dokumente zur Entdeckungsgeschichte*. Band I. Einleitung von Hermann von Wissmann. Stuttgart: Henry Goverts Verlag.

214 Alan Rush (ed.). 1993. *Records of the Hajj: A Documentary History of the Pilgrimage to Mecca*. 10 vols. Cambridge: Archive Editions. Esp. volumes 1 and 2 are useful for early Islam in addition to the last volume 9 that presents documents and maps.

215 'Abās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād. 1974. "Al-daḥīyatu fi muqāranati al-idyān", *Al-majmū'a al-kāmila*, Mujallad 6, Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-lubnānī, 83–87 [thanks to Oddbjørn Leirvik, University of Oslo, for this reference]; Andreas Kaplony. 1994. "Eine wenig bezeugte Mit-Feier des islamischen Opferfestes in Jerusalem: das 'Vor-Gott-Stehen wie in 'Arafāt (ta'rif)'"', *Jerusalem – Visions, Phantasies and Transpositions of the Holy City. Comparison*. Bern: Peter Lang, 91–108.

2.4.2 Studies of pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrifice in the Qurʾān and *hadīth*

The Islamic sacrifice must be discussed and defined in relation to sacrificial practices in pre-Islam and also customs in popular Islam. These offerings are discussed first and foremost by I. Goldzieher,²¹⁶ J. Wellhausen,²¹⁷ W. Robertson Smith,²¹⁸ R. Bell,²¹⁹ J. Henninger,²²⁰ C. Pellat,²²¹ Th. Juynboll,²²² D. Müller,²²³ J. Pirenne,²²⁴ A.J. Wensinck,²²⁵ T. Fahd,²²⁶ and G.R. Hawting.²²⁷ Henninger's,

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- 216 Ignaz Goldzieher. 1886. "Le sacrifice de la chevelure chez les Arabes", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 14, 49–52.
 - 217 Julius Wellhausen. (1887) 1897. *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten. Reste arabischen Heidentums – gesammelt und erläutert*. Berlin: Georg Reimer Verlag.
 - 218 William Robertson Smith. (1889) 1901. *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*. London: Black.
 - 219 Richard Bell. 1933. "The Origin of the ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā", *Muslim World* 23, 117–120.
 - 220 I will mention just a few of his most important articles: Joseph Henninger. 1942–45. "Das Opfer in den altsüdarabischen Hochkulturen", *Anthropos* 37–40, 779–810; Henninger. 1948. "Le Sacrifice chez les Arabes", *Etnos* 13, 1–16; Henninger. (1950) 1981. "Zur Herkunft eines islamischen Opfergebetes", *Arabica Sacra*, 311–318; Henninger. 1956. "Zur Frage des Haaropfers bei den Semiten". Sonderabdruck aus *Die Wiener Schule der Völkerkunde*, Festschrift zur 25jährigen Bestand 1929–1954, hrsg. von J. Haeckel, Horn-Wien, 349–368; Henninger. (1959) 1981. "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion", *Studies on Islam*. Transl. and edited by Merlin L. Swartz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3–22; Henninger. 1963. "Über Frühlingsfeste bei den Semiten", *Verbo Tuo*. Festschrift zum 50jährigen Bestehen des Missionspriesterseminars St. Augustin bei Siegburg / Rheinland Steyl, 375–398; Henninger. 1987. "Sacrifice", *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Mircea Eliade (ed.). vol. 12, New York / London: Macmillan Publishing Company, 544–557.
 - 221 Charles Pellat. 1960. "«Athira», *EF*², vol. 1: 739; Pellat. 1971. "Ibīl", *EF*², vol. 3: 665–669; Pellat. 1981. "Dam [blood]", *EF*², suppl.: 188–191.
 - 222 Th. W. Juynboll and J. Pedersen. 1960. "«Aqīqa», *EF*², vol. 1: 337.
 - 223 Dorothea Müller. 1969. "Hadīth-Aussagen zum Erstlingsopfer", *Festgabe für Hans Wehr*, ed. by W. Fischer, 93–96.
 - 224 Jacqueline Pirenne. 1976. "La religion des Arabes préislamiques d'après trois sites rupestres et leurs inscriptions", *Al-Bāḥith*. Festschrift Joseph Henninger, *Studia Instituti Anthropos* 28, St. Augustin bei Bonn, 177–217.
 - 225 A.J. Wensinck. 1986. "Qurbān". *EF*², vol. 5: 436–437.
 - 226 Toufic Fahd. 1966. *La divination arabe*. Leiden: E.J. Brill; Fahd. 1968. *Le pantheon d'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'hégire*. Paris: Paul Geuthner; Fahd. 1991. "Al-maysir", *EF*², vol. 6: 923–924; Fahd. 1995. "Nuṣub", *EF*², vol. 8: 154–155; Fahd. 1997b. Shiʿār, *EF*², vol. 9: 424.
 - 227 Gerald R. Hawting. 1982. "The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca", G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.). *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 23–47; Hawting. 1986. *The First Dynasty of Islam*. 661–750.

Fahd's and Hawting's investigations of sacrificial rituals in pre-Islamic Arabia and the deities venerated there are especially interesting in this connection. P. Crone and M. Cook²²⁸ roused the academic world to discussion in 1977 with some ideas about the Samaritan influence on the Islamic sacrifice. Later, Crone and A. Silverstein,²²⁹ R.G. Hoyland,²³⁰ and J.E. Montgomery²³¹ have written influential articles and books about early Islam. No less important are the articles by various authors in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*.²³²

One of the most important attempts to understand Islamic sacrifice within the frame of the Islamic festival calendar was made in a small but very useful book by G.E. von Grunebaum.²³³ His work was continued and expanded by H. Lazarus-Yafeh,²³⁴ who wrote quite critically about Islamic sacrifices.²³⁵ A

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- London: Croom Helm; Hawting. 1990. "The 'Sacred Offices' of Mecca from Jāhiliyya to Islam, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13, 62–84; Hawting. 1993. "The Tawwābūn, Atonement and 'Āshūrā", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17, 166–181; Hawting. 1994. "An Ascetic Vow and an Unseemly Oath? 'ilā' and 'zihār' in Muslim law", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, 113–125; Hawting. 1997. "The Literary Context of the Traditional Accounts of Pre-Islamic Arab Idolatry", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 21, 21–41; Hawting. 1999. *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 228 Patricia Crone and Michael Cook. 1977. *Hagarism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 229 Patricia Crone and Adam Silverstein. 2010. "The ancient Near-East and Islam: The case of lot-casting", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55, 423–450.
- 230 Robert G. Hoyland. 1997. *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*. Princeton N.J.: Darwin Press. Hoyland. 2001. *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. London / New York: Routledge.
- 231 James E. Montgomery. 2006. "The Empty Hijāz", J.E. Montgomery (ed.) *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 37–97.
- 232 Eugen Mittwoch. 1971a. "ʿid", *EF*², vol. 3: 1007; Mittwoch. 1971b. "ʿId al-adḥā", *EF*², vol. 3: 1007–1008; W. Montgomery Watt, A.J. Wensinck [C.E. Bosworth], R.B. Winder and D.A. King. 1991. "Makka", *EF*², vol. 6: 144–187; G.-H. Bousquet. 1965. "Dhabīḥa", *EF*², vol. 2: 213–214; Joseph Schacht. 1991b. "Mayta", *EF*², vol. 6: 924–926. See also about dying camels: J. Hell [Ch. Pellat]. 1960. "Baliyya", *EF*², vol. 1: 997.
- 233 Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum. (1951) 1988. *Muhammedan Festivals*. New York: Olive Branch Press; von Grunebaum. 1962. "The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities", *Mélanges Taha Husain*. Cairo, 25–37.
- 234 Hava Lazarus-Yafeh. 1978. "Muslim festivals", *NUMEN* 25, 52–64; 1981a. "The Religious Dialectics of the Ḥadjdj", 17–37, endnotes 136–142; 1981b. "Modern Muslim attitudes toward the Kaʿba and the Ḥadjdj: The rise of Neo-Fundamentalism in Islam",

colleague of the latter at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, M.J. Kister, has written more extensively on pre-Islam, the Qur'ān and other topics from early Islam; I shall only mention a few articles from his production.²³⁶ For my study, his commentary on the *labbayka* (*talbiya*) is of special interest.²³⁷ S.M. Ḥusain²³⁸ and T. Fahd²³⁹ are two other scholars who have discussed the pre-Islamic *talbiya*. Islamic popular sacrifices have been dealt with by E. Doutte²⁴⁰ and R. Kriss and H. Kriss-Heinrich.²⁴¹ In 1955 J. Chelhod²⁴² contributed extensively to the study of sacrifice in Islam. With its extensive material and profound discussion, his main book, *Le sacrifice chez les arabes*, marked a turning point in the discussion of Islamic sacrifice. W.A. Graham has also an

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- 106–129, endnotes 163–167, both articles in Lazarus-Yafeh. 1981c. *Some Religious Aspects of Islam: A Collection of Articles*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- 235 Lazarus-Yafeh (1978: 56) writes, “As a matter of fact Islam does not really know of sacrificial rites and the sacrifice is more of a family meal.”
- 236 M.J. Kister. 1970. “‘A Bag of Meat’: A Study of an Early Hadith”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33, 267–275; Kister. 1971a. “Maqām Ibrāhīm, a Stone with an Inscription”, *Le Muséon* 84, 477–491; Kister. 1971b. “‘Rajab is the Month of God...’: A Study in the Persistence of an Early Tradition”, *Israel Oriental Studies* I. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv: Faculty of Humanities, 191–223; Kister. 1979. “‘Sha‘abān is my Month...’: A Study of an Early Tradition”, *Studia orientalia memiae D.H. Baneth dedicata*, ed. J. Blau et. al. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 15–37.
- 237 M.J. Kister. 1980b. “Labbayka, allāhumma, labbayka ... : On Monotheistic Aspects of a Jāhiliyya Practice”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2, 33–57, add. notes 1–9, Kister. 1990. *Society and Religion from Jahiliyya to Islam*. Collected Studies Series, Hampshire / Brookfield: Variorum Reprints.
- 238 S.M. Ḥusain. 1937. “Talbiyāt al-Jāhiliyya”, *Proceedings of the 9th All India Oriental Conference*, 361–369.
- 239 Toufic Fahd. 2000. “Talbiya”, *EP*, vol. 10: 160–161.
- 240 Edmond Doutté. (1909) 1984. *Magie et religion dans l’Afrique du Nord*. Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions 30, Paris: Geuthner. Popular Islamic sacrifices will not be any major theme of my discussion.
- 241 Rudolf Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich. 1960. *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islam*. Band I: Wallfahrtswesen und Heiligenverehrung. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- 242 Joseph Chelhod. 1952. “Le sacrifice Arabe nommée ‘ḍaḥīya’”, *Revue de histoire des religions* 142, 206–215; Chelhod. 1955. *Le sacrifice chez les Arabes. Recherches sur l’évolution la nature et la fonction des rites sacrificiels en Arabie occidentale*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; Chelhod. 1964. *Les structures du sacré chez les Arabes*. Paris: Maisonneuve (Islam d’hier et d’aujourd’hui 13); Chelhod. 1965b. “Fīḍya”, *EP*, vol. 2, 884; Chelhod. 1971a. “Hady”, *EP*, vol. 3: 53–54; Chelhod. 1971b. “Ḥawṭa”, *EP*, vol. 3: 294; Chelhod. 1971c. “Ḥimā”, *EP*, vol. 3: 393; Chelhod. 1978. “Kaffāra”, *EP*, vol. 4: 406–407.

interesting discussion on Islamic rituals.²⁴³ N. Grandin²⁴⁴ has undertaken a shorter, but nevertheless, thorough analysis of the topic. E. Platti²⁴⁵ is among those who continued the discussion in the 1990s. U. Rubin's²⁴⁶ work about pre-Islam and early Islam must also be mentioned. His book entitled *The Eye of the Beholder* is not a work about sacrifice; yet it contains among other things an interesting analysis of the role that sacrifice played in forming Muḥammad's life. In the field of Arabic poetry, S.P. Stetkevych²⁴⁷ has made some interesting anthropological and linguistic points about sacrificial ideas in pre-Islam and Islam. B.M. Wheeler²⁴⁸ has convincingly showed that the sacrifices during *ḥajj* belong to the inner kernel of Islam. He has also exposed how conceptions about *Mecca and Eden* may contribute to a better understanding of the pilgrimage rituals.²⁴⁹

Neither are T. Khalidi²⁵⁰ and F.M. Donner²⁵¹ primarily concerned with the topic of sacrifice, nevertheless, their historical analyses provide important

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- 243 William A. Graham. (1983) 2010. "Islam in the Mirror of Ritual", *Islamic and Comparative Religious Studies: Selected Writings*. Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Religion: Collected Works, Farnham: Ashgate, 86–106.
- 244 Nicole Grandin. 1978. "Note sur le sacrifice chez les Arabes musulmans", *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire* 2, Michel Cartry and Luc de Heusch (eds.), 87–114.
- 245 Emilio Platti. 1994. "Le sacrifice en Islam", Marcel Neusch (ed.): *Le sacrifice dans les religions*. Sciences théologiques & religieuses 3, Paris: Beauchesne, 157–174.
- 246 Uri Rubin. 1982. "The Great Pilgrimage of Muhammad: Some Notes on Sura IX", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 27, 241–260; Rubin. 1986. "The Ka'ba: Aspects of its Ritual Functions and Position in pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8, 97–131; Rubin. 1990. "Ḥanifiyya and Ka'ba: An Inquiry into the Arabian pre-Islamic Background of dīn Ibrāhīm", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13, 85–112; Rubin. 1995. *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims. A Textual Analysis*. Princeton N.J.: Darwin Press.
- 247 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych. 1986. "The Rithā' of Ta'abba'a Sharran: A Study of Blood-Vengeance in Early Arabic Poetry", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31, 27–45; Stetkevych. 1993. *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- 248 Brannon M. Wheeler. 2010. "Gift of the Body in Islam: The Prophet Muhammad's Camel Sacrifice and Distribution of Hair and Nails at his Farewell Pilgrimage, *NUMEN* 57, 341–388.
- 249 Brannon M. Wheeler. 2006. *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam*. Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press.
- 250 Tarif Khalidi. 1994. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 251 Fred McGraw Donner. 1998. *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton N. J.: Darwin Press; Donner. 2010. *Muhammad and the*

foundations for my study. To this duo I should add U. Mårtensson²⁵² whose doctoral thesis and article about al-Ṭabarī and his historical writings have greatly inspired my analysis of Islamic sacrifice.

2.4.3 Discussions of the two sons and the Feast of Sacrifice, *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*

Within the Qurʾān the most important narrative about sacrifice is the story of Ibrāhīm in Q 37. This text has been discussed in several articles and monographs. With his immense knowledge in Qurʾānic exegesis, S. Bashear²⁵³ has thrown light on this *sura*, especially on the debate about Ibrāhīm's sons, Ishāq and Ismāʿīl. N. Calder²⁵⁴ has brought material from the Jewish tradition into the discussion. Likewise, N. Sinai²⁵⁵ has showed how Ibrāhīm and his sons are interpreted in the larger Qurʾānic context. The duo M.M. Caspi and S.B. Cohen²⁵⁶ have written about the tradition and history of the narrative of the *aqedā* ('binding of Isaac'), in Genesis 22, its reception in ancient Judaism, and

Believers: At the Origins of Islam. Cambridge, Mass. / London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- 252 Ulrika Mårtensson. 2001. *The True Testament: Sealing the Heart's Covenant in al-Ṭabarī's Taʾrīkh al-Rasul wa'l-Mulūk*. Avhandling för teologie doktorexamen religionshistoria, Department of Theology, University of Uppsala, Sweden; Mårtensson. 2005. "Discourse and Historical Analysis: The Case of al-Ṭabarī's History of the Messengers and the Kings", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 16, 287–331.
- 253 Suliman Bashear. 1990. "Abraham's Sacrifice of His Son and Related Issues", *Der Islam* 67, 243–277. Cf. also his important articles on early Islam; Bashear. 1992. "The Images of Mecca: A Case-study in Early Muslim Iconography", *Le muséon* 105, 361–377; Bashear. 1993. "On Origins and Development of the Meaning of the Zakāt in Early Islam", *Arabica* XL, 84–113; Bashear. 1997. *Arabs and Others in Early Islam*. Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 8. Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press.
- 254 Norman Calder. 1988. "From Midrash to Scripture: The Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition", *Le muséon* 101, 375–402; Calder. 1993b. "Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham", Gerald R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (eds.). *Approaches to the Qurʾān*. London and New York: Routledge, 101–140.
- 255 Nicolai Sinai. 2011. "The Qurʾān as process", A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai and M. Marx (eds.). 2011. *The Qurʾān in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*. Leiden: Brill, 407–439.
- 256 Mishael Maswari Caspi and Sascha Benjamin Cohen. 1995. *The Binding [Aqedah] and its Transformations in Judaism and Islam: The Lambs of God*. Mellen Biblical Press Series 32, Lewiston / Queenston / Lampeter; Mishael Maswari Caspi. 2001. *Take Now Thy Son: The Motif of the Aqedah (Binding) in Literature*. Bibal Monograph Series 5, North Richland Hills, Texas: Bibal Press.

even the possible influence it had on the Arabian peninsula before and during the life of the prophet Muḥammad, and eventually its influence on the Islamic narrative. This topic is extensively analysed in theological literature.²⁵⁷ Comparisons between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic versions, a theme I will leave aside, are presented in many books and articles.²⁵⁸ R. Firestone²⁵⁹ and F.

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- 257 Only a few examples, also on related topics: J.B. Segal. 1961. "The Hebrew Festivals and the Calendar", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6, 74–94; Herbert Schmid. 1991. *Die Gestalt des Isaak. Ihr Verhältnis zur Abraham- und Jakobtradition*. Erträge der Forschung 274. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft; Ole Davidsen. 1995. "Om pagt, omskærelse og offer i Abrahamhistorien", *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift* 27, 79–118; Saul M. Olyan. 1998. "What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish and What Do They Signal in Biblical Contexts?", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, 611–622; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer. 2002. "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature", *Biblica* 83, 211–229; Lutz Richter-Bernburg. 2007. "Göttliche gegen menschliche Gerechtigkeit: Abrahams Opferwilligkeit in der islamischen Tradition". B. Greiner, B. Janowski, H. Lichtenberger (eds.) *Opfere deinen Sohn! Das ‚Isaak-Opfer‘ in Judentum, Christentum und Islam*. Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 243–256; Richter-Bernburg builds most of his understanding on Leemhuis 2002.
- 258 Herbert Schmid. 1976. "Ismael im Alten Testament und im Koran", *Judaica* 32, 67–81; 119–129; Michael Krupp. 1995. *Den Sohn opfern? Die Isaak-Überlieferung bei Juden, Christen und Muslimen*. Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser Gütersloher Verlagshaus; Frédéric Manns (ed.). 1995. *The Sacrifice of Isaac in the Three Monotheistic Religions*. Proceedings of a Symposium on the Interpretation of the Scriptures held in Jerusalem, March 16–17, 1995. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Analecta 41, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press; Martin B. Bourguine. 1996. "Das Opfer Abrahams in jüdischer und christlicher Auslegung: Gen 22,1–19 im Midrasch Bereschit Rabba und in den Genesis-Homilien des Origenes", *Una Sancta* 4, 308–315; Lukas Kundert. 1998. *Die Opferung / Bindung Isaaks*. Band 1: *Gen 22,1–19 im Alten Testament, im Frühjudentum und im Neuen Testament*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 78, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag; Kundert. 1998b. *Die Opferung / Bindung Isaaks*. Band 2: *Gen 22,1–19 in frühen rabbinischen Texten*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 79, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag; Friedmann Eissler. 2009. "Abraham im Islam". Christfried Böttrich, Beate Ego, F. Eissler (eds.), *Abraham in Judentum, Christentum und Islam*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 116–185.
- 259 Reuven Firestone. 1989. "Abraham's Son as the Intended Sacrifice (al-dhabīḥ, Qurʾān 37:99–113): Issues in Qurʾānic Exegesis", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34, 95–131; Firestone. 1990. *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegeses*. New York: State University of New York Press; Firestone. 1991. "Abraham's Association with the Meccan Sanctuary and the Pilgrimage in the pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times", *Le muséeon* 104, 359–387; Firestone. 2004. "Sacrifice", *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*, Leiden: Brill, 516–518.

Leemhuis²⁶⁰ have dedicated a lot of work to the Islamic version and perception of Ibrāhīm's near sacrifice.

Concerning other parts of the Qur'ānic texts that involve sacrificial ideas, H. Birkeland²⁶¹ has contributed immensely to our understanding of Q 108. J. van Ess²⁶² has translated many early Islamic texts into German. Although he has not written specifically about sacrifice and pilgrimage, he has nevertheless commented on some texts that are important for the Islamic and *mu'tazila* concept of sacrifice. His work therefore definitely deserves inclusion in this overview.

In her study of the feast of sacrifice as celebrated in France, A.-M. Brisbarre²⁶³ has contributed to the discussion not just with anthropological aspects, but also with important exegetical aspects. Additionally, she and others have edited a volume on sacrificial rituals in Islam.²⁶⁴ Also worthy of mention in the anthropological field are A. Hammoudi²⁶⁵ and M.E. Combs-Schilling,²⁶⁶ whose research on Islam in Maghrib has its emphasis on the Feast of Sacrifice and gender roles. M. Rashed²⁶⁷ has written an interesting monograph about the celebration of *ʿīd al-aḍḥā* in Egypt, which also touches upon the early sources for this practice. Y. Sherwood²⁶⁸ has written a fascinating article about the role of Abraham's near sacrifice viewed in the three Abrahamic religions after September 11, 2001. She emphasises for instance the understanding of self-

260 Fred Leemhuis. 2002. "Ibrāhīm's Sacrifice of his Son in the Early post-Koranic Tradition", Ed Noort and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.) *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and its Interpretations*, Leiden: Brill, 125–139.

261 Harris Birkeland. 1956. *The Lord Guideth: Studies on Primitive Islam*. Oslo: Aschehoug.

262 Josef van Ess. 1991–1997. *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*. 6 vols., Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter.

263 Anne-Marie Brisebarre. 1989. "La celebration de l'ayd el-kebir en France: Les enjeux du sacrifice", *Archives de sciences sociales de religions* 34, 9–25 ; Brisbarre. 1998. *La fête du mouton : Un sacrifice musulman dans l'espace urbain*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

264 Pierre Bonte, Anne-Marie Brisebarre, Altan Gokalp (eds.). 1999. *Sacrifices en islam: Espaces et temps d'un rituel*. Paris: CNRS Anthropologie.

265 Abdellah Hammoudi. (1988) 1993. *The Victim and Its Masks*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

266 M. Elaine Combs-Schilling. 1989. *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice*. New York: Colombia University Press.

267 Mohammed Rashed. 1998. *Das Opferfest (ʿīd al-aḍḥā) im heutigen Ägypten*. Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 215, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

268 Yvonne Sherwood. 2004. "Binding – Unbinding: Divided Responses of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to the 'Sacrifice' of Abraham's Beloved Son", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, 821–861.

sacrifice related to the terms *jihād* and *aslama* in the frame of many Islamic texts; something that is not found in my material.

2.4.4 Judicial analyses of the role of sacrifice and slaughtering in Islam

The idea of making a vow has always been important in connection with pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrifices. W. Gottschalk²⁶⁹ has shed considerable light on the pre-Islamic material. This is a topic which later sacrificial practice had to consider, since vows belong to the judicial aspect of both Islamic pilgrimage and sacrifice. P.R. Powers²⁷⁰ has analysed the connection between intention (*niyya*) and practice in the legal and religious ritual (*‘ibadāt*). The hunting and slaughtering of animals in pre-Islam and Islam is focused on in E. Graef’s study²⁷¹ from 1959. In the same field, B. Andelshauser²⁷² has written an excellent study, which, despite its subtitle “modern conditions”, contains much material about Islamic *fiqh* relevant to the study of ritual slaughtering in early Islam. F. Viré²⁷³ has also written extensively on the slaughtering of animals. Finally, I must mention Y. Dutton²⁷⁴ who has shed new light on the sacrifice as it is presented in the Mālik ibn Anas tradition.

Also literature, such as translations and commentaries, used in my text analyses, often throw light on my main topic. There is also research made on *related* topics that I will take into consideration. Even more extensively, I will use books of reference and encyclopaedic works in the History of religions and other related and useful areas. Some of these handle Islamic sacrifice as well, some in a provoking way such as A. Schimmel (1960) when she writes: “Even if Islam does not at all know the real term of sacrifice, there is a hint of the idea of

269 Walter Gottschalk. 1919. *Das Gelübde nach älterer arabischer Auffassung*. Berlin: Verlag von Mayer und Müller.

270 Paul R. Powers. 2004. “Interiors, Intentions, and the ‘Spirituality’ of Islamic Ritual Practice”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, 425–459.

271 Erwin Graef. 1959. *Jagdbeute und Schlachtthier im islamischen Recht: Eine Untersuchung zur Entwicklung der islamischen Jurisprudenz*. Bonner Orientalische Studien 7. Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn.

272 Beate Andelshauser. 1996. *Schlachten im Einklang mit der Scharia: Die Schlachtung von Tieren nach islamischem Recht im Lichte moderner Verhältnisse*. Sinzheim: Pro Universitate Verlag.

273 F. Viré. 1997. “Sayd”. *EF*², vol. 9: 98–99.

274 Yasin Dutton. 1999. *The Origins of Islamic Law: The Qurʾān, the Muwaṭṭa and Madinan ‘Amal*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

merits touched to it.”²⁷⁵ Likewise, Robert L. Faherty in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* writes about Islamic sacrifice in a provoking way,

Sacrifice has little place in orthodox Islam. Faint shadows of sacrifice as it was practiced by the pre-Islamic Arabs have influenced Muslims, so that they consider every slaughter of an animal an act of religion. They also celebrate feasts in fulfillment of a vow or in thanksgiving for good fortune, but there is no sacrificial ritual connected with these festive meals. On the last day of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, animals are sacrificed; nevertheless, it is not the sacrificial rite that is important to the Muslims but rather their visit to the sacred city.²⁷⁶

Apparently, Faherty seems to be almost ignorant about the long and intertwined story of Pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrificial rituals that preceed the contemporary practice, and about how it has influenced our knowledge about it. When he writes that, “it is not the sacrificial rite that is important to the Muslims”, I am also wondering what his definition of ‘sacrificial rite’ is. Whereas L. Berger in his article in *Religion Past and Present* (2012) has a more respectful attitude to contemporary Islamic sacrificial rituals,²⁷⁷ R. Firestone (2004) utters his views about early Islamic sacrifice in the *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān* and describes it with vast knowledge and respect.²⁷⁸ This is the attitude and manner I hope to exhibit in the following.

275 Annemarie Schimmel. 1960. “Opfer”, *RGG*, third ed., vol. 4, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1638–1641; 1640. German: “Selbst im Islam, der den echten Opferbegriff gar nicht kennt, klingt der Verdienst-Gedanke an.”

276 "sacrifice (religion)". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2014. Web. 26 Feb. 2014 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/515665/sacrifice>>.

277 Lutz Berger. 2012. “Sacrifice; Islam”, *Religion Past and Present*, vol. 11, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 392–393.

278 Reuven Firestone. 2004. “Sacrifice”, *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*, Leiden: Brill, 516–518.

Chapter 3

The Qurʾān

3.1 Selection of texts

It is not the ambition of this chapter to provide an extensive analysis of the Qurʾānic texts on sacrifice. However, there is a need for a survey of the pertinent Qurʾānic material, and it is my intention to offer such a presentation in this chapter. The criteria for the selection of texts are that they refer to the sacrifice, the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), the places Mecca and Mina, or to the connection between sacrifice and Ibrāhīm and/or Muḥammad. The selected texts are from *suwar* 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17, 22, 37, 48, 58 and 108. The pericope Q 37: 99–113 is the most important; other Qurʾānic texts are, at first sight, less obviously about sacrifice. In an article about Q 37, Suliman Bashear (1990) dealt only briefly with the *sūra* itself.¹ In his view, more interesting material was to be found in the *ḥadīth* and historical reports. I will try to demonstrate that there are many elements in the Qurʾānic text(s) that are decisive for an understanding of sacrifice in early Islam,² even if we here do not make use of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* to any notable extent. Topics concerning pre-Islamic deities and practices are present in our Qurʾānic material (Q 6:136–137; 22:31; 5:3 and elsewhere).

3.2 The offering of Ibrāhīm's son according to Q 37

3.2.1 Context of the narrative

The story about Ibrāhīm offering his son in Q 37 (*al-ṣaffāt*) is found in vv. 99–113. Before presenting and shortly commenting on these verses, we must take a brief look at the verses that precede and succeed them.

1 Norman Calder (1988: 395) applies a similar approach when he writes, “The Quranic version of the story is of course familiar”, before he presents his own translation and gives some comments.

2 This is opposed to Nicole Grandin (1978: 90), who maintains that the Qurʾān only allows us to picture the broad lines of the formal sacrifice: “on n’y trouve rien sur des points tels que le rituel du sacrifice, la consommation de la viande, etc.”. In correspondence with such an assessment of the evidence she does not examine carefully any material from the Qurʾānic sources in her article, and only provides a couple of examples therefrom (Q 2:125–127 on p. 95, Q 22:37 on p. 96 and some references on pp. 99, 101 and 105).

The first part of the *sūra* tells about the unrighteous who will be judged by Allāh, and the righteous who will go to Paradise. According to vv. 69–71 the ungodly were admonished to desist from the actions of their forefathers, but they continued in their evil ways. The only exceptions were Allāh’s true servants, his prophets, Nūh (Noah),³ Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Ishāq (Isaac),⁴ Mūsā (Moses),⁵ Harūn (Aaron),⁶ Ilyās (Elias),⁷ Lūṭ (Lot),⁸ and Yūnūs ibn Mattā (Jonah),⁹ who are mentioned before and after our narrative. Ibrāhīm was an example of righteousness not only in a general sense, but in particular in virtue of averting the divinities (*ālīha*) “without God” (*dūna Allāhi*) that his father had worshipped. “He stole away to their idols and said to them: ‘Will you not eat [your offerings]¹⁰? Why do you not speak?’ With that he fell upon them, striking them down with his right hand” (v. 91).¹¹ His opponents tried to throw him into the fire, but he looked to the sky and said that he was sick. The people left him without harming him (cf. vv. 90 and 98).

3 Heller 1995: 108. Nūh and Ismā‘īl were among the prophets who were buried at the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* at the Ḥaram. See Kister (1991: 106), referring to al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, Cairo 1314 AH, vol. 1: 136.

4 Watt (1978: 109) gives an excellent survey: “‘God gives Abraham good tidings of Isaac, a prophet, of the righteous, and blesses them both (Q 37:112f.). In a fuller description, when messengers concerning Lot come to Abraham, his wife ‘laughed, and we gave her good tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob’ (Q 11:71/74). Several verses speak of Isaac and Jacob being given to Abraham (Q 6:84; 19:49/50; 21:72), and 29:27/26 adds that God made prophethood and the Book to be among his offspring (cf. Q 38:45f.). Ishmael is joined to Isaac in Q 14:39/41, where Abraham praises God for giving him the two although he was old. Elsewhere the name only occurs in lists: Joseph follows the creed of his fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Q 12:38), and speaks of God’s favour to them (Q 12:6); Jacob’s sons serve the God of his fathers, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac (Q 2:133/127); and revelations are given to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Patriarchs (Q 2:136/130, 140/134; 3:84/78; 4:163/161).”

5 B. Heller [MacDonald] 1993: 638.

6 See Weisenberg and Vajda 1971: 231.

7 He is *not* Elisha, but Alisā‘ ibn Ukhtūb in the Islamic tradition. See also Q 6:86 where both prophets are mentioned. In Q 38:48 Alisā‘ is mentioned together with Ismā‘īl and Dhūl Kifl. See Seligsohn and Vajda 1960: 404.

8 Heller [Vajda] 1986.

9 Heller [Rippin] 2002.

10 “Eat your offerings” is not explicit in the Arabic text even if this is probably the meaning here.

11 Cf. Q 37:86.91–93.97–99. Dawood 1994: 315. See also Q 19:41–48 where Ibrāhīm’s rejection of his father’s idols is rewarded by Ishāq and Ya‘qūb, both of whom are called prophets (*nabī*), but *not* by Ismā‘īl (v. 49).

Following the narrative about Ibrāhīm and the near sacrifice of his son, we are told that Mūsā and Harūn were saved from “the mighty scourge”¹² or “great distress”¹³ (*al-karb al-‘aẓīm*) (v. 115). But the prophets were given victory and the clear book, the straight path, and the praise of the later generations. “They were two of Our believing servants,”¹⁴ the Qur’ān states. In the last part of this *sūra*, the topics of Allāh’s potential daughters (*al-banāt*) and divine females (*malā’ika*) are brought into the text. However, the answer is clear, “Surely they lie when they declare: ‘God has begotten children’.”¹⁵ Those who maintain such errors will be punished, but the prophets will gain victory and peace.¹⁶ In other words, the link to verse 4, “Your God is one”, is underlined here. But still, the topic of ‘later generations’ (*al-akhirīna* and *dhurriyyitihimā*) is decisive (vv. 108, 113, 119 and 129). Does this also lead us to Q 108 and its emphasis on sacrifice and offspring?

3.2.2 Q 37:99–113

This narrative has been thoroughly explained in many Islamic commentaries, which I cannot take time and space to refer to here. Over the past fifteen years, Calder, Firestone, Bashear, Leemhuis and others have analysed this narrative extensively and discussed most of the exegetical material known to them.¹⁷ To some extent I will use their comments where they support or are opposed to my findings. I present two different translations of the Qur’ānic text that are both extensively used among scholars and believers. By and large these translations agree with each other despite minor differences. In some cases it is useful to compare the two. I have added an Arabic transcription in a third column.

The Qur’ān	Dawood’s translation ¹⁸	Arberry’s translation ¹⁹	Arabic transcription
37:99	He said: “I will take refuge with my Lord; He will give me	He said, “I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.	<i>qāla innī dhāhibun ilā rabbi sayahdīni.</i>

12 Dawood 1994: 315.

13 Arberry 1983: 460.

14 Q 37:114–122; 122.

15 Q 37:151–152.

16 Q 37:171–182.

17 Calder 1988; Firestone 1989: 107–131, esp. 107–108, and 1990; Bashear 1990; Leemhuis 2002.

18 Dawood 1994: 315.

19 Arberry 1983: 59–60.

	guidance.		
37:100	Lord, grant me a righteous son.”	My Lord, give me one of the righteous.”	<i>rabbi habu lī min al-ṣāliḥīna</i>
37:101	We gave him news of a gentle son.	Then We gave him the good tidings of a prudent boy;	<i>fa-bashsharnāhu bi-ghulāmīn ḥalīmīn</i>
37:102a	And when he reached the age when he could work with him, his father said to him: “My son, I dreamt that I was sacrificing you. Tell me what you think.”	and when he reached the age of running with him, he said, “My son, I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice thee; consider, what thinkest thou?”	<i>fa-lammā balagha maʿahu al-saʿya qāla yā-bunayya innī arā fī al-manāmi innī adhbahuka fa-aṇṭur mādhā tarā</i>
37:102b	He replied, “Father, do as you are bidden. God willing, you shall find me steadfast.”	He said, “My father, do as thou art bidden; thou shalt find me, God willing, one of the steadfast.”	<i>qāla ya-abtati aʿf al mā tuʾmaru sa-tajidunī inn shāʾa Allāh minā l-ṣābirīna</i>
37:103	And when they had both submitted to God’s will, and Abraham laid down his son prostrate upon his face,	When they had surrendered, and he flung him upon his brow,	<i>fa-lammā aslamā wa-tallahu li l-jabīni</i>
37:104	We called out to him, saying: “Abraham,	We called unto him, Abraham,	<i>wa-nādināhu yā-Ibrāhīm</i>
37:105	You have fulfilled your vision.” Thus do We reward the righteous.	thou hast confirmed the vision; even so We recompense the good-doers.	<i>qad ṣaddaqa al-ruʿayā innā ka-dhālika najzī al-muḥsinīna</i>
37:106	That was indeed a bitter test.	This is indeed the manifest trial.	<i>inna hādhā al-huwa al-balāʾū al-mubīn</i>
37:107	We ransomed his son with a noble sacrifice	And we ransomed him with a mighty sacrifice	<i>fadaynāhu bi-dhibḥīn ʿaẓīmīn</i>
37:108	and bestowed on him the praise of later generations.	and left for him among the later folk.	<i>wa-taraknā ʿalayhi fī l-akhirīna</i>
37:109	“Peace be on Abraham!”	“Peace be upon Abraham!”	<i>salām ʿalā Ibrāhīma</i>
37:110	Thus do We reward the righteous.	Even so We recompense the good-doers;	<i>ka-dhālika najzī l-muḥsinīna</i>
37:111	He was one of Our	he was among Our	<i>innahu min ʿibādīnā</i>

37:112	believing servants. We gave him Isaac, a saintly prophet,	believing servants. Then We gave him the good tidings of Isaac, a Prophet, one of the righteous.	<i>l-mu'minīn</i> <i>bashsharnāhu bi-</i> <i>iṣḥāqa nabīyan minā</i> <i>l-ṣāliḥīna</i>
37:113	and blessed them both. ²⁰ Among their offspring were some who did good works and others who clearly sinned against their souls.	And we blessed him, and Isaac; and of their seed some are good-doers, and some manifest self- wrongers.	<i>wa-baraknā ʿalayhi</i> <i>wa ʿalā iṣḥāqa wa-</i> <i>min dhurriyyatihimā</i> <i>muḥsinun wa-</i> <i>ẓālimun li-nafsihi</i> <i>mubinun</i>

This narrative contains few if any details of the context of the situation. It is very short and succinct in what it seeks to tell. Nothing is said about place or time. Its chronological scheme is only vague. Shaytān does not try to interfere in the Qurʾānic version.²¹ Nothing is said about anxiety or joy. Neither is there any mention of other relatives or persons who may have been present. A selection of key words from the narrative might include: Father Ibrāhīm and his son, who is probably not mentioned by name; a dream, vision or a call; a test; a solution, and God who has a plan for this exceptional action. A possible structure for this passage (vv. 99–113) would then be:

- A* Trust in Allāh, request for a righteous son; divine answer (vv. 99–101)
- B* Ibrāhīm's vision and its consequences (vv. 102–105)
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 - D.1* Allāh releases the son by a sacrifice (v. 107)
 - D.2* Allāh blesses and rewards Ibrāhīm, thus securing the praise of later generations; He grants him peace and gives him the son Iṣḥāq (vv. 108–113)

Before I shall consider this passage in greater detail, following the above structure, I will quote Leemhuis with whom I disagree, "Obviously, this is not a usual narrative like the story in Genesis 22. It is true that the elements of a story are present, but in its form, the Koranic message is too fragmentary and the style

20 Dawood (1994: 315) does not repeat Iṣḥāq's name as does the Arabic text.

21 Firestone 1989: 99.

too formal and elliptical to even look much like a story.”²² Verily, this is a narrative, sharp and short-cut.

A Trust in Allāh, request for a righteous son, divine answer (vv. 99–101)

Vv. 99–101 express confidence in Allāh; he will guide his servant (v. 99) and give him a son who is among the righteous (*min al-ṣāliḥīna*) (v. 100). In v. 112, the same term is used of Ishāq. This first boy is described as a ‘gentle son’ (*bi-ghulmin ḥalīmin*), who does not oppose his father’s will (v. 101).²³ The *majestatis pluralis* “we” (here in v. 101 and elsewhere) is important and lifts the narrative from the level of daily life to one of dynamic transcendence, indicating that man’s future is at stake.

B Ibrāhīm’s vision and its consequences (vv. 102–105)

B.1 The time, content, father and son (v. 102)

In verse 102a we read that the boy is “running with him”. The wording used here is the same as that which later became the term for the running between al-Marwa and al-Ṣafā, *al-sa‘y*, which a Muslim pilgrim performs following the *tawāf* seven times around the Ka‘ba. This ritual is mentioned in Q 2:158, where it is told that the runner will gain Allāh’s reward. This term may also have been taken over from pre-Islamic times, describing a race between the two stone deities, Nā‘ila at al-Marwa and Isāf at al-Ṣafā.²⁴ But as translated by Dawood and others, the word may well mean ‘to work’. The son “reached the age when he could work (*al-sa‘y*) with him”.²⁵ In this translation it is emphasised that the child is able to work physically. In Arberry’s translation, however, the emphasis is on the age of religious maturity when the child can follow an adult on the walk between al-Marwa and al-Ṣafā.²⁶ In combination the translations express both physical *and* spiritual maturity.²⁷

22 Leemhuis 2002: 126.

23 Paret (1985a: 315) translates in German ‘brav’ that means ‘prudent, good, well-behaved, obedient, worthy’.

24 Fahd (1997a: 97) mentions that the root *s-‘-y* is used 30 times in the Qur’ān. See also Lane (1872: 1366), who points out the occurrence of both meanings in the first derivation of the root. Cf. Joel, Braemer and Macdonald 1995: 756.

25 Dawood 1994: 315.

26 Paret (1985a: 315) supports this view. Also Firestone (1990: 107) supports this and translates: “When he reached the age of running with him, he said ...”

27 Calder (1986: 17–21) discusses the question whether *sa‘y* means ‘work’ (*‘amal*) or ‘running’. Calder (1986: 19) also refers to an interesting work by Wahb ibn Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tijān*, available in the version of Ibn Hishām, in which the author recounts a

I should also point out the continuation of v. 102a, “his father said to him: ‘My son, I dreamt that I was sacrificing you (*adhbahuka*).’” The reference to a dream is an indicator of transcendent intervention. A dream (*manām*),²⁸ a vision (*ruʿaya*), and a heavenly voice (*nādaynā*) (v. 104) are all clearly mentioned, but no other audible phenomena are referred to except for the conversation between Ibrāhīm and Allāh. The father understands the divine message and tells his son. This suggests a very close relationship between father and son, an impression that is further reinforced by the ensuing, “Tell me what you think”. The focus is on the relation between father and son, and the relation between these two and Allāh. In these relations there is complete harmony; both father and son obediently accept the sacrifice. This intimate relationship possibly stands as a compensation for Ibrāhīm’s break with his own father – and his deities – described in the earlier narrative of *sūra* 37:83–96.²⁹

The son is eager to obey his father: “He replied, ‘Father, do as you are bidden. God willing, you shall find me steadfast (*min al-ṣabirīn*).’”³⁰ Wensinck

narrative concerning the *hajj* that Adam and his children undertook from Mecca to Jerusalem, where “they used to offer a sacrifice (*qurbān*) at Jabal al-Ṭūr”. “In this context it is stated that he whose *saʿy* was accepted would see his sacrifice eaten by a heavenly fire, [...] This phenomenon is described at some length, involving the use of the word *saʿy* four times, always in close association with *qurbān*.” In Q 37, however, the term *qurbān* is *not* present. Calder (1986: 19) then concludes that *saʿy* is to “be understood here as implying striving specifically in order to please the deity, and so be translated as ‘worship’, equivalent to the Arabic *ʿibāda*”. Calder (1986: 21) ends up with the interpretation ‘place of worship’, also used in Q 37:102. He translates, “When Abraham brought him – his son – to the place of worship”. Calder’s (1986: 21–22) interpretation is then followed by an analysis of the concept, *saʿy*, concluding that it implies “working for the sake of God” and “bringing of somebody (the victim?) to the place of sacrifice, here a mountain or a hill”. Hence, Abraham and not the son is made the subject of the verb *balagha*.

28 Here the word *manām*, from the root *n-w-m* meaning ‘sleep’ or ‘dream’, is used. It occurs only four times in the Qurʾān. Cf. Q 12:36–49 where Yūsuf interprets dreams, understood as coming from Allāh, in order to tell the king and the people that He is the only God.

29 Parallel narratives with minor variations are found in Q 26:69–89; 19:41–50; 21:51–73; 29:16–26; 6:74–84. Cf. Paret’s (1971: 980–981) excellent article.

30 Wensinck 1995b: 685. Lane (1872: 1643–1646) offers many interpretations of this extensively used root in the Arabic language, pointing to ‘to be patient’ as the main meaning. *ṣabūr*, meaning “the one who does not hastily avenge Himself upon the disobedient”, is one of Allāh’s 99 beautiful names. Lane also offers examples for ‘to be bound or set up for slaughter’. The root may even mean ‘he slew him in retaliation’ and ‘he was put to death’. It may also be combined with the act of ‘taking an oath’ (Lane 1872: 1644). The modern and apologetic translator of the Qurʾān, Yusuf Ali

maintains that this term means ‘being among the patient ones’, but it is often connected with the status of an intended sacrifice. It means ‘to restrain or bind’, “thence *qatalahu ṣabran* ‘to bind and then slay someone’. The slayer and the slain in this case are called *ṣābir* and *maṣbūr* respectively”.³¹ This indicates that this narrative may have suggested the image of a martyr at the point where the boy bows down, although the text does not use the term *shāhid*. Consequently, ‘steadfast’, used in the translations of both Dawood and Arberry, is too weak. It would be better to translate, ‘restrained’, ‘deprived of freedom’, ‘bound’, or ‘submissive’, as Calder suggests.³²

There are suggestions of making a vow in the form of the son’s saying, “do as you are bidden” (v. 102b), and “You have fulfilled your vision” (v. 105), but no explicit term for an oath appears.³³ This may have led to the importance of making a vow and having the right intention (*niyya*) before the *ḥajj* rituals. The later v. 106 about the ‘bitter test’ may also indicate that the father was severely tested by his vision and his son’s words to him.

B.2 The act (v. 103)

Both father and son surrender to Allāh’s will. They surrender (*aslamā*), a word that has become the Islamic term for obedience.³⁴ Ibrāhīm “laid down his son prostrate upon his face (*li-jabīni*)”. The latter term occurs only here in the Qur’ān. Hence, Calder does not translate the word, but leaves it in Arabic. However, following Hebrew and other Arabic sources, he explains that the word can be taken to mean ‘a hill’, “the place where the sacrifice takes place”.³⁵

(1975: 1205, footnote 4100), underlines that Abraham and Ismā‘īl were commanded to be willing for sacrifice. Ali maintains that the sacrifice was intended to be *symbolic*. “God does not require the flesh and blood of animals (Q xxii, 37), much less of human beings.”

31 Wensinck (1995b: 685) shows in his article about *ṣabr* many interesting developments of the term in the Qur’ān and *hadīth*. It became an extremely positive epithet for human beings, especially the apostles of Allāh. It may be a part of Muslim attitude in *jihād* (Q 3:140; 8:66), in *ṣalāt* (Q 2:42, 148), and generally in the attitude of gratefulness. For some it leads to the status of being a *ṣūfi*.

32 Calder 1988: 395.

33 Firestone (1990: 108–109) points at Abraham’s vision in v. 106 and the special circumstances under which he became a father; see Chapter XXX, “Tabari and Abraham’s sacrifice”. See Gottschalk (1919: 106–134), where the author writes about the *Jahiliya* sacrifices and the connection between sacrifice and vow. See also Hebrew *neḏer*, ‘a vow’. Cf. Kaiser 1998.

34 *Aslamā* is the fourth derivation from the root *s-l-m*, rendered in past tense dualis.

35 Calder (1988: 395) renders *jabīn* only. Cf. Calder (1986: 22–26), where he says that this phrase is not found in any similar form in any Rabbinic or Christian exegesis, nor in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 22). Calder (1986: 24–25) shows that the root *j-b-n* often

Personally, I find this unconvincing. The ritual of submitting to God does, however, have a corresponding expression in the Islamic prayer ritual (*ṣalat*) and prostration (*rakʿa*).³⁶

B.3 Allāh's intervention (vv. 104–105)

At the climactic point of the narrative, when Ibrāhīm is about to irrevocably fulfil the sacrifice of his son by killing him, Allāh suddenly intervenes and stops him, calling him by name and declaring that Ibrāhīm has already confirmed or fulfilled (*qad ṣaddaqta*) the vision (*al-ruʿuya*) (v. 105) – rather than the dream, which was the term used in v. 102a. This second derivation of the stem *ṣ-d-q* points to ‘a belief in something’; it is ‘an acceptable and verified’ message. Additionally, the root *ṣ-d-q* is the same as that of the word for ‘alms’ and ‘gift of mercy’ (*ṣadaqa*).³⁷ In the sentence, “Thus do We reward (*najzī*) the righteous (*al-muḥsinīna*)”,³⁸ the verbal (*najzī*), from the stem *j-z-y*, is used. It has the same consonant root as in *jizya*, which has become the main word for ‘tribute’, one of the Islamic five pillars (*rukun*). Nevertheless, it occurs only once as a noun in the Qurʾān (9:29).³⁹ This sentence is repeated five times in *sūra* 37 (vv. 80, 105, 110, 121, 131) and makes an interesting regular pattern for the reward of those who are *muḥsin*. Calder calls this sentence “a formulaic locution, peculiarly appropriate to the life of Abraham, and adapted here to a particular context,

has to do with a ‘curve, hump or elevation’ in Hebrew, Aramaic and South Semitic. Calder also attempts to substantiate his point by referring to the fact that corresponding Hebrew and Arabic sources describe Ibrāhīm as sacrificing his son on a mountain (Mount Moriah) or a hill (*jabal*), hence the chosen translation ‘hill’.

36 Here Calder (1986: 23) explains that the Jewish Midrashic sources “lay considerable stress on the fact that Isaac was looking up, and indeed the requirements of ritual sacrifice are such that it would be difficult to carry out the appropriate actions if the victim actually had his forehead (or even his temple) on the ground. The Muslim exegetes knew this and were notably inventive in their reactions to this phrase.”

37 Wehr 1980: 509. The stem *ṣ-d-q* is close to ‘speaking the truth’. In early Islamic times it was used mixed with *jizya* (cf. Weir [Zysow] 1995: 708–715).

38 Izutsu compares the word used for Abraham, he was among the *muḥsinīna* (plural), with the same word in Q 3:3–5 (“The *muḥsinīna* who perform the prayer steadfastly, and give alms, and have unswerving faith in the Hereafter. Those are upon the guidance from their Lord; those are sure to prosper.”). Abraham, who “in complete obedience to God’s command, attempted to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, is called, in reference to this very act, a *muḥsin* [...] Such being the case, it is hardly surprising that *muḥsin* should sometimes be opposed to *kāfir* or some of its semantic equivalents.” (All quotations are taken from Izutsu [1959] 2002: 225.) See also Q 5:85–86.

39 Cf. Q 23:111; 6:146; 34:17; 3:145; 6:84 and many other verses.

rhyme, scheme etc.”⁴⁰ The sentence is also combined with another sentence, “he is one of our believing servants” (*min ‘ibādīnā l-mu’imīn*),⁴¹ except in v. 105, where Ibrāhīm is rewarded, playing the main role. This leads us to a consideration of the connection between the intended sacrifice, the gift of mercy and the tribute.⁴²

C Characterisation of the episode: “the manifest trial” (v. 106)

In one way, Ibrāhīm is only one among many “righteous” prophets. However, we can infer from the more specific and detailed description given to him in Q 37 that he is granted a much more prominent position than most of the others. One thing that indicates this among the biographical details in this passage is the characterisation of the near sacrifice as “the manifest trial” (*al-balā’ al-mubīn*).⁴³ In the Qur’ānic text nothing is said about *what* the test really was. Was his loyalty to Allāh tested? Or did Allāh demand the sacrifice from Ibrāhīm? No other trials are mentioned here, but commentaries and later narrative details in *sūra* 37 introduce more ideas of the tests Ibrāhīm was subjected to. Firestone emphasises al-Ṭabarī’s idea that this test, *balā’*, “was one of a series of tests that Abraham had to pass in order to merit being a patriarch of Islam”.⁴⁴ Further, Firestone points at the connection al-Ṭabarī and others make between *balā’* and Q 2:124: “Remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with *kalimāt* which he fulfilled.”⁴⁵

D The response of Allāh (vv. 107–113)

D.1 Allāh releases the son by a sacrifice (v. 107)

Q 37:107 is the only place in the Qur’ān where the noun *dhibh*, ‘a sacrificial victim’, occurs. This stem *dh-b-ḥ* is used in two other *suwar* as well, viz. Q 5:3,

40 Calder (1988: 395) calls v. 105 a “formulaic filler having the right form and rhyme for the context”, and further states, “The formulaic part of v.105 and the following verses, 108 and 109, function in this *sūra* as refrains, imposing a patterned uniformity on the litany of prophets which is the subject matter.”

41 V. 122 says about Mūsā and Harūn, “they were two of our believing servants”.

42 Cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1981c: 38–47.

43 *Balā’* means ‘trial; visitation; scourge; creditable performance; heroic action’ (Wehr 1980: 75). *Mubīn* means ‘clear, plain, evident, obvious, patent, final’ (Wehr 1980: 88).

44 Firestone 1990: 108. Cf. Genesis 22:12. For a comparison of the biblical and the Qur’ānic renditions, see Waldman 1985: 1–16. Cf. Firestone 1989: 95–131.

45 Firestone’s translation (1990: 108). Dawood (1994: 22) translates: “When his Lord put Abraham to the proof by enjoining on him certain commandments and Abraham fulfilled them.”

dhubiha ‘*alā l-nuṣubi*’ (‘it was slaughtered at a sacrificial stone’),⁴⁶ and Q 2:71, *dhabaḥūhā* (‘they slaughtered or sacrificed her [the cow]’). In Q 37:102a this root is used in the first person imperfect and with the suffix *ka*, you, *adhbaḥuka*, which then means, ‘I will offer you’. The *dhibh* (sometimes called *dhabīḥa*, which is *not* used here)⁴⁷ must be slaughtered according to a strict ritual known as *dhakā’a*, i.e. ‘cutting the animal’s two external jugular veins’, the *wadajān* (dualis) *awdāj* (plural), or ‘cutting the throat, from beneath, at the part next to the head’. *Dhakā’a* differs from *al-naḥr* that is cutting “in the pit above the breast, between the collar-bones, where the camels are stabbed”.⁴⁸

But in our passage nothing is said about *how* the slaughtering takes place. The term is used but not explained. However, the sacrifice is not a ‘normal’ *dhibh*; it is a *dhibh* ‘*aẓīm*, a *mighty* sacrifice (v. 107).⁴⁹ This combination occurs only here.⁵⁰ The mighty sacrifice is not necessarily a ram, but also a camel be slaughtered. An interesting tradition maintains that this ram is the same as the ram that Adam’s son sacrificed.⁵¹ The animal is not mentioned in the Qur’ānic passage prior to the occurrence of any specified physical action. There is no

46 My translation. Dawood and Arberry both use “idols” for *nuṣub* in their translations (Arberry 1983: 99; Dawood 1994: 79).

47 Lane (1867: 953) says that the feminine *a*-ending sometimes “denote[s] that the word is applied to a sheep, or a goat, [to be slaughtered or sacrificed] not yet slaughtered [or sacrificed]”. See also Wehr 1980: 307.

48 Lane 1867: 953. The root *dh-b-ḥ* occurs in Ugaritic and Ugarit Akkadian texts. Lete (1995: 37–38) and Clemens (2001: 12–14, 48 and 70–72) show that this root is the most important term for sacrifice. The most frequent term in Ugarit for offering, whether sacrificial or otherwise, is *dh-b-ḥ*. “Its original semantic value is ‘sacrifice’ / ‘to sacrifice’ (an animal victim), in both cultic and extra-cultic contexts [...] but the term loses its original value and becomes a general synonym for ‘ritual ceremony’, ‘festival’, ‘feast’, including different kinds of rite, even non-sacrificial ones” (Lete 1995: 37–38). The Arabic translation of Genesis 22:10 uses *li-yadhbaḥa ibnahu*, ‘in order to sacrifice his son’ and thus the stem *dh-b-ḥ*, as here in Q 37:102a. Bousquet (1965: 213) maintains that the *dhakā’a* does not differ from the ritual slaughter of animals permitted as food.

49 The word ‘*aẓīm*’ occurs 97 times in the Qur’ān, and thus it is difficult to deduce from this usage in Q 37 and 3 that the word indicates something specific. The stem ‘-ẓ-m’ will be analysed later in connection with the verbal ‘*aẓẓama*’, which is used in younger texts.

50 The adjective ‘*aẓīm*’ is, however, used in v. 76 where Nūḥ and in v. 115 where Mūsā and Harūn were saved from the “mighty scourge” (*al-karb al-‘aẓīm*), and Allāh promises “the supreme triumph” (*al-qawz al-‘aẓīm*) (Q 37:60), and in Q 3:172 and 179 he promises the believers “a great reward” (*ajrun ‘aẓīmun*). Cf. Q 48:10; and Penrice 1971: 124.

51 Firestone 1990: 129.

knife, table or altar; the only things that are specified are a vision and two obedient males in a position of surrender. The *dhibh* ‘*azīm* is, however, suddenly present and seems utterly different from the son. This major event is not accompanied by exclamations or astonishment. There is no explanation of *why* and *how* this *dhibh* ‘*azīm* suddenly comes forward. It appears just at the right moment and in the right place. The *dhibh* is connected to the verbal with the exalted ‘we’, “We ransomed him” (*fadaynāhu*). *Fadaynāhu* and *dhibh* constitute the two sacrificial terms in this text.

Concerning the verbal root *f-d-y*, Lane states that the background is uncertain. It may well have been used, but not exclusively, among the Arabs connected to the pre-Islamic institution of *al-ḥimā*, which was a closed field where animals were kept for religious reasons and in order to protect the animals’ health.⁵² Lane gives examples of different uses of this verbal in conjunction with a pronominal prefix: ‘he gave his ransom’, ‘he gave a thing or a captive for him, and so liberated him’, ‘he liberated him, or ransomed him [from captivity]’, ‘he loosened him, or set him free, and took his ransom’, and, ‘giving a man and taking a man [in exchange]’, or ‘the preserving a man from misfortune by what one gives by way of compensation for him’.⁵³ Lane renders v. 107 as follows: “And we made an animal prepared for sacrifice to be a ransom for him, and freed him from slaughter.”⁵⁴

52 Lane 1877: 2353. Cf. Chelhod (1971c: 393), who explains: Only the *haram* (Q 28:57; 29:67) is reckoned to be a sacred area. But the Qur’ān “does however make a discreet allusion to the institution of *ḥimā* when it evokes the history of the prophet (Q 10:64; 7:73). This apparently refers to a consecrated animal which had to live in freedom on the territory of the god. Nevertheless, Islam, which turned against *wasm* [branding] and the consecration of animals to divinities (Q 5:103; 6:138f.), intended to put an end to these pagan practices. Henceforward, the sole territory to be strictly sacred was Mecca, its inviolability having been decreed by Himself (Q 17:91).” Chelhod (1965b: 884) notes that *fidya* has close links to *ḍaḥiyya*, and both terms have the meaning of ‘blood sacrifice’. But there is an important distinction, “*ḍaḥiyya* is essentially an offering to the dead made on the occasion of ‘*īd al-aḍḥā*, the *fidya*, on the other hand, is practised in the interests of the living, without any limitation of time. It is offered up before Allāh for the delivery of a man, his family, his cattle and his goods, from some imminent misfortune, such as an epidemic.”

53 The verb is also used in first person singular, “I ransomed him”. This information is taken from Lane 1877: 2353. None of these forms is found in my texts. See Q 2:229 with *f-d-y* in the eighth derivation, “...if the wife ransoms herself (*aftadat bihi*)”; a better translation would here be, “if she buys him off”; see *The Noble Qur’an*: 36.

54 Lane 1877: 2354. Penrice (1971: 108) explains that the noun, *fidyatun*, is “a ransom, that which is paid as ransom or to redeem a fault”.

N. Sinai states that the rendering of the Abrahamic narrative and the surrounding verses in Q 37 want to emphasise “the miraculous assistance that God gives to his ‘sincere servants’”.⁵⁵ Ibrāhīm is clearly reckoned as one of these servants. Sinai also convincingly writes that there are structural and thematic connections between this narrative and the narrative about Ibrāhīm and the guests who announced to him the good message (*tabshīr*) of having a son “endowed with knowledge” (Q 51:24ff; 28).⁵⁶ In Q 37:107, we have seen that this promise was tested but in due time, it was fulfilled. Such abruptions of God’s promises, in this case it was called an abrogation (*nashḥ*) of the Qur’ān, were to be considered as a dilemma by the Muslim juridical scholars; God ordered Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son but He obviously found another solution and saved the boy’s life.⁵⁷

D.2 Allāh blesses and rewards Ibrāhīm, thus securing the praise of later generations; He gives him the son Ishāq (vv. 108–113)

We do not know from this narrative whether the father had only *one* son. We do not know whether he would have any descendants if this son were killed. When the son is released, the next topic of the narrative is: ‘later generations’, ‘folk’, ‘seed’ (*dhurriyya* [v. 113]⁵⁸ and *al-akhirīna* [vv. 108, 119 and 129]). This indicates that the focus of the story is offspring as an abundant blessing from Allāh, a theme of great importance for human and religious (Islamic) life as a whole.

The prospective heirs fall into two groups, the “righteous” (*muḥsinīna*) (vv. 105 and 113) and the “self-wrongers” (*ẓālim*) (v. 113). The patient and pious boy willing to be sacrificed is opposed to these “manifest self-wrongers”, the unjust and the sinners.⁵⁹ The same phrase used in v. 105 is repeated here in v. 110, “Thus do We reward the righteous”, followed in v. 111 by the additional sentence of reverence, “He was one of Our believing servants”.

55 Sinai 2011: 435.

56 Dawood 1994: 368. Sinai 2011: 432–433 and 435. I have not examined Q 51 any further.

57 Radtke 2003: 66.

58 *Dhurriyyat* comes from the root *dh-r-y* or *dh-r-ʿ*, most likely the latter, according to Lane (1867: 964). Lane (957) also explains that the word means ‘things that are created’. Further, he (958) points to the tradition whereby ‘Umar said, “Perform the pilgrimage with the women ... because they are the sources of offspring” (*ḥujjū bi-l-dhurriyyati*). Allāh is called the ‘creator’ (*al-dhārīʿu*) (Lane 1867: 958).

59 Arberry 1983: 460; Wehr 1980: 583.

One offspring in this narrative is Ishāq who is called the “blessed” in v. 113.⁶⁰ Was he then the son who was brought to the sacrificial place and eager to be offered? Or was the intended sacrifice his brother Ismāʿīl, who is not mentioned by name here at all? As will be evident from the ensuing chapters, the Islamic exegesis has been preoccupied with this topic ever since the writing of the Qurʾān.

Firestone is one among recent Western scholars who observes that the name of the intended sacrifice is never mentioned in Q 37.⁶¹ He says that the Qurʾān is not interested in sacred genealogy, as the Bible is.⁶² Both sons are, however, identified as prophets. In Q 19:54, Ismāʿīl is characterised as a righteous man (*ṣādiq*), a messenger (*rasūl*) and a prophet (*nabī*), but without any reference to him as the intended sacrifice. Ishāq is called “one of the righteous” by means of a different term (*al-ṣāliḥīna*), and a prophet (*nabī*) (Q 37:112). Ismāʿīl is associated with the building of the Kaʿba together with his father Ibrāhīm (Q 2:127). Ishāq, however, is mentioned more often than Ismāʿīl in the Qurʾān (17 times compared to 12). Firestone maintains that later *ḥadīth* and *qīṣṣ al-anbiyāʾ* literature recounts this story and tries to fill some of the gaps that the Qurʾān leaves open.⁶³ Bashear’s comments concerning the two sons in this sacrificial narrative are valuable.⁶⁴ He evaluates most *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* in order to see which role the different traditions and *isnāds* seek to emphasise. But, as mentioned above, Bashear does not discuss the Qurʾānic text as such.⁶⁵

60 Cf. Watt. 1978: 109.

61 Firestone 1989: 98.

62 Firestone 1989: 99. It is not necessary to go to the Bible to find an interest in genealogy. Within the Islamic literature there are transmissions in al-Tabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, that exemplify a strong interest in genealogy. Even more obviously, the interest in genealogy is manifest in the so-called *Qisas al-anbiyāʾ*.

63 Cf. Firestone 1990.

64 Bashear 1990.

65 Crone and Cook (1977) are critical. “[T]he Koranic treatment of the binding of Isaac, the key example of Abrahamic submission, is accompanied by an interpretation which is characteristically Samaritan” (Crone and Cook 1977: 19). These authors use targums [Aramaic renderings of the Hebrew Bible], analysed in G. Vermes 1961. *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, Leiden: Brill, Chapter 8, and argue accordingly: “The Koran follows the targumic narrative in building up the voluntary role of Isaac only to omit the interpretation which this narrative was designed to support, viz. the redemptive force of Isaac’s self-sacrifice. Instead the Koran interprets the incident as an instance of God’s recompensing the righteous (37:105,110). It is not a very arresting theme, but it is precisely the one whose association with the Samaritan submission has just been noted” (Crone and Cook 1977: 36, note 170).

3.2.3 Some episodes linked to the portrait of Ibrāhīm

3.2.3.1 Q 17:31–33 and Q 6:136–137, “*You shall not kill*”

The context in Q 17 uses words relating to avariciousness and wealth. The believer is asked to give richly to near kin and to the destitute and wayfarers. Then “God gives abundantly to whom He will and sparingly to whom He pleases” (v. 30). The text continues,

31. You shall not kill your children (*awlādakum*) for fear of want. [...] To kill them is a great sin.
32. You shall not commit adultery, for it is foul and indecent.
33. You shall not kill any man (*al-naḥṣa*) whom God has forbidden (*ḥarrama llāhu*) you to kill, except for a just cause (*illā bi-l-ḥaqqi*). If a man is slain unjustly, his heir shall be entitled to satisfaction. But let him not carry his vengeance too far, for his victim will in turn be assisted and avenged.⁶⁶

The question is whether these prohibitions are ever brought into connection with Q 37 and the narrative about Ibrāhīm nearly sacrificing his son. Is Ibrāhīm’s near sacrifice a “just cause” (*illā bi-l-ḥaqqi*)? If not, it would be possible to imagine that his son’s relatives – mother and brothers – would avenge this killing. Q 17:33 would give the right (*ṣulṭān*) to avenge the unjust murder of a close relative. This prohibition is also mentioned in *sūrat al-anʿām*, known as “The Cattle”, Q 6:136–137. But there, it is connected to the customs of killing children in pre-Islam, what is said to “ruin” and “confuse” those believing in Allāh, and, consequently, this becomes a warning to them.

136. They set aside for God a share of their produce (*al-ḥarṭh*) and of their cattle (*al-anʿām*), saying, “this is for God” – so they pretend – “and this for our idols (*shurakāʾihim*).” Their idols’ share does not reach God, but the share of God is wholly given to their idols. How ill they judge!
137. Their idols have induced many pagans to kill their children (*qatala awlādiḥim*), seeking to ruin them and to confuse them in their faith (*dīnahum*). Had God pleased they would not have done so. Therefore leave them to their false inventions.⁶⁷

Here we hear about the pre-Islamic traditions of giving donations from agriculture to God and deities other than Him. It is an uneven relation between them. The sentence “Their [idols’] share does not reach God (*fa-lā yaṣīlu ilā Allāhi*)”, but the share of God is wholly given to their idols (*shurakāʾihim*)” underlines this fact.

In the following passage (from Q 6:141) it is emphasised that Allāh is the creator of all animals and plants, and the order of nature is regulated in pairs of

66 Dawood 1994: 199.

67 Dawood 1994: 105.

animals (vv. 143–144). Although the *sūra* is called ‘The Cattle’, this passage is ambivalent concerning their use as offerings, probably because such offerings were made to deities other than Allāh. The worst example of this is the demand of the deities to kill (*qatalū*) children (vv. 137 and 140). This action is characterised as “ruinous”, “confused” and a “false invention”. Not quite as serious but almost so, according to this text, are regulations concerning cattle and crops that God does not accept because His name (*ism Allāhi*) is not invoked over them (v. 138); i.e., they were given to deities other than God. This is condemned as an “invented lie”. Quite possibly the killing of children was a sacrificial act in pre-Islamic times, a practice that was subsequently condemned. In this respect, it is interesting that the passage is followed by regulations concerning prohibited and accepted food in Islamic times.

3.2.3.2 Q 3:96–97a, Ibrāhīm’s religion and signs

This passage is only loosely concerned with sacrifice, yet it contains terms denoting symbols and signs involved in the sacrificial ritual. Ibrāhīm’s religion (*millat*)⁶⁸ is described as the example to be followed. His principle virtue consists in his denial of divinities other than Allāh. He was a *ḥanīf*. The text continues,

96. The first temple (*bayt*) ever to be built for mankind was that at Bakkah, a blessed site, a beacon (*hudan*) for the nations (*li-l-‘alamīna*).

97a. In it there are veritable signs (*ayā bayyana*) and the spot where Abraham (*maqām ibrahīm*) stood. Whoever enters it is safe (*amin*). Pilgrimage to the House (*ḥajj al-bayt*) is a duty to God for all who can make the journey. As for the unbelievers, God can surely do without them.⁶⁹

The two symbols of guidance, *hudan*⁷⁰ and *ayā*,⁷¹ attest the divine presence and accompany and testify to the work of the Prophets connected to the pilgrimage.

68 *Milla* means ‘religion’ or ‘sect’. The word is probably borrowed from Hebrew, and it is not found in the pre-Islamic vocabulary. It occurs 15 times in the Qur’ān, and it means always ‘religion’, Christian as well as others (so Buhl [Bosworth] 1993c: 61).

69 Dawood 1994: 50–51.

70 *Hudan*; this form of the stem is used 43 times in the Qur’ān. Its main rendering is ‘guidance’, often associated with the role of Muḥammad or other prophets as signs of guidance. Chelhod (1971a: 53–54) has pointed to the interesting fact that the *hudan* is linked to one of the dominating words for sacrifice, *hady*, from the “root *h-d-y* which has the meanings ‘to guide’, ‘to put on the right path’, ‘to make a present’”.

71 *Ayā* is used hundreds of times in the Qur’ān, mainly to describe ‘a sign, a message and a token’ from Allāh. Later it was used as a term for the ‘verses’ of the Qur’ān. Cf. the short but excellent article on this subject, Jeffery 1960: 773–774.

The claim here is that in the House of God one finds “veritable signs (*ayā bayyana*)”.⁷²

3.2.3.3 Q 6:162, Prayer and service of sacrifice

In Q 6:161 Ibrāhīm appears as the main character. He is not only the follower of the one god, Allāh, but also linked to one of the most important utterances all Muslims are supposed to pronounce, “My prayers and my devotions (*ṣalāti wa-nusuki*), my life and my death, are all for God” (v. 162).⁷³ Here there is a connection between prayer and devotions, or prayer and “my service of sacrifice”, as Ali translates.⁷⁴ Later, we will see that the connection between prayer and other ritual elements is emphasised in many aspects of Islamic pilgrimage and ritual life. Concerning Dawood’s translation of *nusuk* as ‘devotions’, it should be mentioned that in Q 2:196 the same word is often translated as ‘sacrifice’ or ‘offerings’. This is the only place in the Qur’ān where the term *nusukī*, ‘my sacrifices’, is used.⁷⁵ Probably this refers to the *attitude* of devotional ritual, whether in the context of prayer or of sacrifice.

Immediately prior to the verse just quoted, the believer is reported to say, “My Lord has guided me to a straight path, to an upright religion, to the faith of saintly (*hanif*) Abraham, who was no idolater” (v. 161).⁷⁶ In combination these two verses suggest a possible connection between Muḥammad’s view of his own role compared to that of Ibrāhīm – both were leaders along the straight path. Additionally, the monotheist Ibrāhīm had the important task of combining prayers with sacrifice, as they are understood to have been combined in the first *hajj*.

3.3 Other texts

3.3.1 Sacrificial rituals

3.3.1.1 Q 22:26–35, Sacred rites and animals

Sūra 22 is called ‘the Pilgrimage’ (*al-ḥajj*) and contains a couple of passages that are important for the understanding of the sacrificial ritual and sacrificial

72 Compare Q 2:158: *ṣafā* and *marwa* are God’s signs (*shā‘ā’ir Allāhi*). Dawood (1994: 25) translates, ‘two of God’s beacons’ (that is, ‘fire lit on a mountain top’).

73 Dawood 1994: 108.

74 Ali 1975: 338.

75 See also Q 2:196 and, to a lesser extent, Q 14:14, where the same root *n-s-k* is used.

76 For interesting views on the *ḥanīfiyya* movement on the eve of Islam, see Rubin 1990: 85–112.

animals. In v. 25 Allāh is said to have established the sacred mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*), which he gave to all mankind. This house is mentioned later, but then as “My House” (*baytiya*) (v. 26) and “the old house” (*bayt al-ʿatīq*) (vv. 29 and 33). Ibrāhīm was placed there and is presented as an example of someone with the right belief. He and other visitors are supposed to keep Allāh’s House clean (*ṭahhir*) for those who make the walk (*li-l-ṭaʿīfina*),⁷⁷ who stand (*al-qāʾmīna*), prostrate themselves (*al-rukkaʿa*) and fall down (*al-sujūd*) (v. 26). These four expressions are all Islamic ritual terms known from the later pilgrimage and prayer ritual. The pilgrims are described as coming on foot and on skinny animals (camels) (*ḍāmīr*)⁷⁸ (v. 27).

28. They will come to avail themselves of many a benefit, and to pronounce on the appointed days (*ayyām maʿalūma*) the name of God over the cattle (*al-bahīmat l-anʿān*) which He has given them for food. Eat of their [flesh], and feed the poor and the unfortunate (*wa-aʿimū l-bāʿisa l-faqīra*).
29. Then let the pilgrims spruce themselves (*thumma li-yaqdū tafathahum*),⁷⁹ make their vows (*wa-li-yūfū nudhūrahum*), and circle the Ancient House.
30. Such is God’s commandment. He that reveres the sacred rites of God (*wa-man yuʿazzim ḥurumāti Allāhi*) shall fare better in the sight of his Lord. The flesh of cattle is lawful to you (*wa-uḥillat lakum al-anʿām*), except for that which has been specified before. Guard yourselves against the filth of idols (*al-rijsa min al-awthān*); and avoid all falsehoods.
31. Dedicate yourselves to God, and serve none besides Him. The man who serves other deities besides God is like him who falls from heaven and is snatched by the birds or carried away by the wind to some far-off region. Even such is he.
32. He that reveres (*yuʿazzim*) the offerings made to God (*shaʿāʾira llāhi*) shows the piety of his heart (*fa-innamā min taqwā l-qulūbi*).
33. Your cattle are useful to you in many ways until the time of their slaughter (*ilā ajalīn musamman*).⁸⁰ Then they are offered for sacrifice at the Ancient House.

77 *Ṭaʿīfina* has the same stem as *tawāf*, which later became the main term for the seven circumambulations of the Kaʿba.

78 *Ḍāmīr* comes from the stem *ḍ-m-r* (Wehr 1980: 545). This stem occurs in the Qurʾān only here in 22:27.

79 This phrase is difficult to translate. *tafatha* means either ‘to perform the sacred rites at Mecca’, or, ‘to cleanse’. A combination of these two ideas, whereby the cleansing ritual is included in the general rituals, is offered by Penrice (1971: 23), when he translates the whole phrase *li-yaqdū tafathahum*, “Let them put an end to their want of cleanliness”, or, “Let them complete the rites”. Arberry (1983: 336) translates, “Let them then finish with their self-neglect”. Ali (1975: 858, note 2803) adds: “*tafath* – the superfluous growth on one’s body, such as nail, hair etc., which it is not permitted to remove in *iḥrām*. These may be removed on the tenth day, when the *ḥajj* is completed: that is the rite of completion.”

34. For every community (*umma*) We have ordained a ritual (*manāsik*), that they may pronounce the name of God over the cattle (*bahīma l-anʿām*) which He has given them for food. Your God is one God; to Him surrender yourselves. Give good news to the humble,
35. whose hearts are filled with awe at the mention of God; who endure adversity with fortitude, attend to their prayers, and bestow in charity (*yunfiqūna*)⁸¹ of that which We have given them.⁸²

This passage mentions many different aspects of ritual life. Pilgrims are supposed to purify themselves and to perform the rituals and the corresponding ablutions. They are asked to make their promises, walk around the House (v. 29), and to pray and show charity (v. 34). They must also revere (*yūʿazzim*) the rites of Allāh (vv. 30 and 32). The verb *yūʿazzim* is second derivation from the root ʿ-ḏ-m, and of the same root as ʿaẓīm, the adjective used to describe the sacrifice in Q 37:107. It is a word with a wide range of meanings, some connected to ‘honour’, others to nouns like ‘charms’ and ‘spells’.⁸³ Here it no doubt has the meaning ‘honour and awe’ (cf. v. 35).

The text uses two different terms for these rites, *ḥurumāti Allāhi* (v. 30) and *shaʿāʾir Allāhi* (v. 32).⁸⁴ Arberry translates *ḥurumāti* as ‘the sacred things of God’, and *shaʿāʾir* as ‘God’s waymarks’;⁸⁵ thus underlining the aspect of sacred guidance in these terms. The root *sh-ʿ-r* combines different meanings: ‘to be known; symbols or signs; hair; poetry; cultic shrine; falseness, feelings’.⁸⁶ Thus

80 Here the Arabic text says *ilā ʿajalin musamman*, which means ‘for a limited period’ and not necessarily ‘until the time of their slaughter’, as Dawood translates.

81 *Yunfiqūna* from the root *n-f-q*, fourth derivation, which means ‘to support’ and is used for offering the Islamic charitable gift (*nafaqa*).

82 Dawood 1994: 236.

83 Lane 1874: 2037–2038. The root is also used in Q 20:114 and 97:23.

84 *Shaʿāʾir*, see Q 22:36; 5:2; 2:158, where *al-ṣafā wa-l-marwa* in Mecca are called *min shaʿāʾir llāhi*. Dawood translates this as ‘beacons’, i.e. ‘fire[s] lit on a mountain top’. See also Q 36:69; 26:224 – where ‘poetry’ is the closest meaning. In Q 53:49, *al-shiʿrā* means the star Sirius, the Dog Star. A derivation of *shaʿāʾir* is *mashʿar* (sing.) *mashāʿir* (plural), which Lane translates as ‘cultic shrine for ceremonies of the *ḥajj*’, although he also notes the meaning ‘a sensory organ; pl. senses, feelings, sensations’. *Mashʿar al-ḥarām* has become the name of the *ḥajj*-station of Muzdalifa east of Mecca’ (Lane 1872: 1559–1562; Wehr 1980: 474). See also Fahd’s (1997b: 424) excellent article about different usages and practices. *Shaʿāʾir* may mean more generally ‘the rites of God which are connected to the pilgrimage’. Ali (1975: 859, footnote 2807) understands the sacrifice symbolically and says that the symbols of God, *shaʿāʾir llāhi*, are “marks by which something is known to belong to some particular body of men, such as flags.”

85 Arberry 1983: 336–337.

86 Lane 1872: 1559–1562.

the root carries interesting connotations in addition to the main meaning, ‘symbol’. Paret says that here *sha‘ā’ir* means the sacrificial animals that the pilgrims took with them on their pilgrimage to Mecca.⁸⁷ These signs can be placed in the same group as “the clear signs” (*ayātin bayyinātin*) that God sent (v. 16). He who follows this guidance (v. 16) and reveres these rites or signs “shall fare better in the sight of his Lord” (v. 30), and “shows the piety of his heart” (v. 32).

The animals allowed for sacrifice and intended as signs are cattle (*al-an‘ām* and *al-bahīma al-an‘ām*) (v. 30). Cows are prohibited unless the name of Allāh is pronounced over them (v. 34). The usefulness of these animals – at certain times – is obviously connected with daily needs, such as milk, wool and transportation. It is not clear whether the *pluralis majestatis* demands a ritual (*manāsik*) to be performed by *all* communities or only by all Muslim communities.⁸⁸ Neither is it obvious whether these rituals are the same or different from each other (v. 34). The sacrifices, or rites, – are necessary in order to achieve acceptance from Allāh. He has given and wants something in return, their commitment (v. 35). The text emphasises that he wants people who surrender and are humble, in other words, people who are sincere Muslims.

Firestone says that Ibrāhīm is “recalled” in this context because the story about his life was important in order to “emphasize to Muḥammad the Ka‘ba’s originally pure state as a shrine to the one God”, and Muḥammad should “refrain from associating any other divinity with God and to purify the original monotheistic shrine from the corruption of the many idols there.”⁸⁹ Firestone adds that the Qur‘ān links Ibrāhīm with the sacred *sites* in Mecca and thus relates it to pre-Islamic associations.⁹⁰ Dawood’s translation at this point, “Then they are offered for sacrifice at the Ancient House” (*thumma maḥillahā ilā bayti al-‘atīq*)⁹¹ is inaccurate. A better rendering would be “their [or its] sacrificial place (*maḥilla*) [is] at the ancient house”.

87 Paret 1986: 349.

88 *Ummatin* (singular dative) has become *the* term for the Muslim community. Arberry (1983: 337) translates: “We have appointed for every nation a holy rite”.

89 Firestone 1991: 387.

90 Firestone 1991: 387, who also adds that Ibrāhīm’s “association with the Pilgrimage [...] is an Islamic innovation that was unknown in pre-Islamic times”.

91 Firestone (1991: 386) translates correctly: “You have advantages in them till a fixed time, then their place of sacrifice is the Ancient House. Remember, We established Abraham at the site of the House. So do not associate anything with Me, and Purify My House for those who circumambulate it, stand [before it in prayer], and bow and prostrate themselves. Proclaim the Pilgrimage among humankind! They will come to you on foot and on all kinds of steeds from every corner [of the world].”

3.3.1.2 Q 22:36–38, “*Their flesh and blood does not reach God*”

This passage follows immediately after the former discussion in Q 22:26–35 about the different animals suitable for sacrifice and accentuates a strong warning against an apparently tempting misapprehension of sacrifice (v. 37).

36. We have made the camels a part of God’s rites (*wa-l-budna jaʿalnāhā lakum min shaʿāʾir Allāh*). They are of much use to you. Pronounce over them the name of God as you draw them up in line (*ṣawāffa*) [and slaughter them]; and when they have fallen to the ground eat of their flesh and feed the poor and destitute. Thus have We subjected them to your service (*sakḥkharnāhā lakum*), so that you may give thanks.⁹²
37. Their flesh (*lan yanāla Allāh luḥumūhā*) and blood does not reach God (*wa-lā dimāʾuhā*); it is your piety (*al-taqwā*) that reaches Him.⁹³ Thus has He subjected them to your service (*ka-dhalika sakḥkharahā lakum*), so that you may give glory to God for guiding you (*li-tukabbirū Allāha ʿalā mā hadanakum*). Give good news to the righteous (*wa-bashshiri al-muḥsinīna*).
38. God will ward off evil from true believers. God does not love the treacherous (*khawān*) and the thankless (*kafūr*).⁹⁴

In the next verse follows a statement that victory is reserved for those who take up arms when they are attacked (v. 39). This suggests that the whole passage may have been used to motivate the Ḥudaibiya expedition. Q 22:32 and 36 describe the camels (*budna*) an integral part of the offerings made to God or God’s symbols (*shaʿāʾir illāh*)⁹⁵, and the person that shows the piety of his heart (v. 32). Additionally, cows are said to be “useful in many ways until” their limited time, when they were sacrificed at the Kaʿba (v. 33). The first verse in the section to be discussed here (v. 36) is also positive about sacrifice. The camels will be lined up (*ṣawāffa*) in order to be seen and admired as the best gift for God.⁹⁶ These animals are then described as being turned on their sides (*wajabat wujūbuhā*); this is probably the position in which they lay after the killing. It is not mentioned how many animals are required, but meat of camels was obviously attractive. The food was not only for those who did the slaughtering; it was supposed to be distributed generously among those who begged and those who did not. The division is not described in greater detail.

In spite of the initial positive statement, the ensuing verses are extremely critical. Neither flesh nor blood (*luḥumūhā wa-lā dimāʾuhā*) reaches God even if

92 Cf. Paret 1985a: 234.

93 Cf. Paret 1985a: 234; Arberry 1983: 337.

94 Dawood 1994: 237.

95 See also v. 32 where the same word is used.

96 The root is ṣ-f-f and means, ‘to set up in a row or a line’ (Wehr 1980: 516); *aṣ-ṣaffat*, ‘The Ranks’, has become the name for Q 37.

the opposite was claimed just a few sentences before.⁹⁷ It is interesting that the verbal *yanāla* contains an element of “being acceptable to”.⁹⁸ The same verbal is used in Q 7:35–37 where the terms for signs (*ayāt*) (and not *shā‘ā’ir* as here in this passage), piety (*taqwā*) and something good are combined in a way that parallels the use of “reaching them (*yanāluhu*)” in Q 22:37.⁹⁹ It is assumed that a person’s piety (*taqwā*) is the only thing acceptable to Allāh (*yanāluhu*). Izutsu translates *taqwā* with ‘pious fear’ and shows that the word is almost synonymous with ‘faith’ or ‘devotion’.¹⁰⁰ Neuwirth underlines that v. 37 is forever tabooing a connection between Islamic sacrifice and “eine Sühne-Handlung”, even if Islam knows the sacrifice of *kaffara*.¹⁰¹

The denial of intercession and ransom is also touched on in Q 5:36 (39). But there, it is only related to the disastrous fate of non-Muslims. Their potential sacrifice or self-made redemption is not acceptable to Allāh.

As for the unbelievers (*kafarū*), if they offered all that the earth contains and as much besides to redeem themselves (*li-yaftadū*) from the torment of the Day of Resurrection (*min ‘adhābi yawm l-qiyāma*),¹⁰² it shall not be accepted from them (*mā tuqubila minhum*). Theirs shall be a woeful punishment. (Q 5:36)¹⁰³

3.3.1.3 Q 2:67–73, Mūsā sacrifices a cow

The narrative in *sūra* 2 about Mūsā¹⁰⁴ concerns Allāh, Mūsā and the children of Israel. Mūsā received “the Scriptures and knowledge of right and wrong” (v. 53). He was given manna in the desert (v. 57) and received water – twelve springs – after striking a rock with his stick (v. 60). The people of Mūsā

97 Ali (1975: 860, footnote 2810) comments, “This is the true end of sacrifice, not propitiation of higher powers, for God is one, and He does not delight in flesh or blood (Q 22:37) but a symbol of thanksgiving for God by sharing meat with fellow-men. The solemn pronouncement of God’s name over the sacrifice is an essential part of the rite.”

98 Penrice 1971: 152.

99 In Q 9:120 the same verbal is used more negatively. See also Q 22:36.

100 Izutsu ([1959] 2002: 70) adds two examples from Q 22:1 (“O, men, have fear of your Lord!”), and Q 59:18 (“Believers, have fear of God! fear God. Let every soul look to what it offers for the morrow. Fear God; God is cognizant of all your actions.”). *Taqwā* means ‘God-fearing, devout’ (*taqiya*, eighth derivation of *waqā*, so Penrice 1971: 23).

101 Neuwirth 2007a: 68.

102 *Yaftadū min ‘adhābi* is the eighth derivation of *f-d-y* and means ‘to obtain by sacrificing something else’ (Wehr 1980: 701). Paret (1985a: 83) translates ‘loszukaufen’.

103 Dawood 1994: 83.

104 Heller and MacDonald 1993.

“disbelieved (*yakfurūna*) God’s signs (*ayāti Allāhi*)” (v. 61). These signs are mentioned once more in v. 73, and thus connected to the guilt of manslaughter mentioned in v. 72.

67. When Moses said to his people: ‘God commands you to sacrifice a cow (*inna Allāha yaʿamurukum an tadhibuhū baqaratan*),’ they replied: ‘Are you making game of us?’¹⁰⁵ ‘God forbid that I should be so foolish (*min al-jāhilīna*)!’¹⁰⁶ he rejoined.
68. ‘Call on your Lord,’ they said, ‘to make known to us what kind of cow she shall be.’ He replied: ‘Your Lord says, “Let her be neither an old cow nor a young heifer, but in between (*innahā baqaratun lā fāriḍun wa-lā bikurun ʿawānun bayna dhālika*).” Do, therefore, as you are bidden.’
69. ‘Call on your Lord,’ they said, ‘to make known to us what her colour (*lawnuhā*) shall be.’ He replied, ‘Your Lord says: “Let the cow be yellow (*ṣafrā*), a rich yellow (*fāqīʿ*) pleasing to those that see it.”’
70. ‘Call on your Lord,’ they said, ‘to make known to us the exact type of cow she shall be; for to us cows look all alike. If God wills we shall be rightly guided.’
71. Moses replied: ‘Your Lord says: “Let her be a healthy cow (*musallama*), not worn out with ploughing the earth or watering the field; a cow free from any blemish (*lā shiyata fihā*).”’ ‘Now you have told us all,’ they answered. And they slaughtered a cow [her] (*fa-dhabahūhā*), after they had nearly declined (*kādū yaflūna*).¹⁰⁷
72. And when you slew a man and then fell out with one another concerning him, God made known what you concealed. We said: ‘Strike him with a part of it.’ Thus God restores the dead to life and shows you His signs (*ayātihi*), that you may grow in understanding.¹⁰⁸

The cow to be sacrificed should be neither old (*fāriḍ*) nor a young heifer (*bikur*), but in between (v. 68).¹⁰⁹ The term *fāriḍ* is only found here in the Qurʾān and means ‘an old cow’, while *bikur* means ‘a virgin’ or ‘a young heifer’, i.e. a cow that has not yet born a calf, or that has born only one calf.¹¹⁰ Is this a reflection of the notion of the ideal balance? The cow has to be yellow (*ṣafrā*), rich yellow (*fāqīʿ*)¹¹¹ (v. 69), healthy (*musallama*)¹¹² and free from any blemish (*lā shiyata*

105 See Numbers 19:1–10, where God says to Moses and Aaron that they should sacrifice a red cow without any blemish. The body of the cow was burnt and the ashes kept for the purification of sin.

106 *Min al-jāhilīna* means ‘among the ignorant’; it is likely that the listeners also took this to mean those who lived before Islam, *al-jāhiliya*, ‘the time of ignorance’.

107 “Now thou hast brought the truth; and therefore they sacrificed her, a thing they had scarcely done” (Arberry 1983: 9).

108 Dawood 1994: 16.

109 See Penrice 1971: 109.

110 See Penrice 1971: 109.

111 The word *fāqīʿ* is found only here in the Qurʾān. Cf. Penrice 1971: 111.

fīhā) (v. 71). Mūsā acted on a command from Allāh. But the reaction of Mūsā's audience was negative: they accused him of being ignorant and of possibly belonging to the people of the 'time of ignorance' (*min al-jāhilīna*). It is not clear whether this sacrifice is an accepted Islamic sacrifice or not. Even if Allāh ordered it, the whole narrative seems vaguely unreal and infused with disbelief. The story is a parallel to the narrative about the reactions Muḥammad met with when he first started his preaching in Mecca (Q 96). The style of the text is almost ironical, as if the audience or the reader would not know what a heifer looks like. After the detailed prescriptions Mūsā's audience followed Allāh's command and sacrificed the cow (*dhabaḥūhā*). The text does not tell the reason for the near failure of the ritual, but underlines the Islamic aspect of Allāh as the only one who can resurrect life.

In this text slaughter has a double significance; on the one hand, it provides meat, but, on the other, it can also be explained in more religious terms. The sacrifice of the cow seems to have been performed as a compensation – a ransom – for the manslaughter committed by Mūsā (Q 20:40). The touch of some of the heifer's flesh induces Allāh's resurrection of the dead. Thus, the murder was indirectly exchanged for life.

3.3.1.4 Q 5:1–4, Permitted and non-permitted animals

This passage is said to contain the last verses Muḥammad received during his first and last *hajj* in the year 10 AH.¹¹³ The text is therefore an important witness of one stage in the development of the pilgrimage, even more so, since the context in which the verses appear was probably a speech to the pilgrims. It mentions some traditions that are pre-Islamic and now forbidden in Islam.

1. Believers, be true to your obligations (*awfū b-il-ʿuqūdī*). It is lawful (*uḥillat*) for you to eat the flesh of all beasts (*bahīma l-anʿāmi*)¹¹⁴ other than which is hereby announced for you. Game (*al-ṣayd*) is forbidden while you are on pilgrimage (*w-antum ḥurum*). God decrees what He will.
2. Believers, do not violate the rites of God (*shaʿāʾir Allāh*) or the sacred month (*wa-lā al-shahra l-ḥarām*), or the offerings (*wa-lā l-hadā*) or their ornaments (*wa-lā l-qalāʾida*), or those that repair (*lā ʾammīna*) to the Sacred House seeking God's grace and pleasure. Once your pilgrimage is ended, you shall be free to go hunting.

112 In 2:71 *musallama* has the same meaning as our text's next term, 'being unblemished'. The word is found two more times in Q 4:92; cf. Dawood 1994: 70.

113 Ali 1975: 237.

114 When we compare this to Q 22:27–30, we see a similar content: *Uḥillat lakum baḥīmatu l-anʿāmi illā mā yutlā ʿalaykum*. The term *baḥīmatu l-anʿāmi* is translated 'cattle' in Q 22:30.

3. You are forbidden carrion (*ḥurrimat ‘alaykumu l-maytahu*), blood (*al-dam*), and the flesh of swine (*laḥm l-khinzīri*); also any flesh dedicated to any other than God (*wa-mā uhillā li-ghayri llāhi bihi*). You are forbidden the flesh of strangled animals (*al-munkhaniqa*) and of those beaten or gored to death (*al-mawqūdha*); of those killed by a fall (*al-mutaraddiya*)¹¹⁵ or mangled by beasts of prey (*al-naṭiḥa*) (unless you make it clean by giving the death-stroke yourselves); also of animals sacrificed to idols (*wa-mā dhubiḥa ‘alā l-nuṣub*). [You are forbidden] to settle disputes by consulting the Arrows (*an tastaqīmū bi-l-azlāmi*). That is a pernicious practice. [...]
4. They ask you what is lawful to them. Say: ‘All good things are lawful to you, as well as that which you have taught the birds and beasts of prey to catch, training them as God has taught you. Eat of what they catch for you, pronouncing upon it the name of God. And have fear of God: swift is God’s reckoning.’¹¹⁶

The obligations (*al-‘uqūd*) mentioned in this text may well relate to the pilgrimage.¹¹⁷ If we compare these verses to Q 5:95–96, there is an obvious correspondence. It is forbidden to hunt in the status of *iḥrām* during the *ḥajj*, although fishing is allowed.¹¹⁸ Allāh has made the sacrificial animals *hady*¹¹⁹ and *qalā’id* (plural of *qilāda*). Neither is the status of these animals described nor how they serve man.¹²⁰ Paret maintains that the sacrificial animals were decorated with *qilāda* around the neck, a symbolic sign or ornament that accounts for the name *qalā’id* being given to the animals themselves. Hence, he does not distinguish this term from the term *hady*. V. 1 has a parallel in Q 2:173 and is also briefly reflected in Q 16:115a: “He has forbidden you carrion (*mayta*), blood (*dam*), and the flesh of swine; also any (flesh) consecrated other than in the name of God.”¹²¹ The practice of collective slaughtering, and the cutting off of a part of an animal or the removal of its skin is condemned.¹²² In Q 6:145 we encounter several similar divine rules regarding food. Here it is said that the *al-mayta*, self-dead meat and carrion, running blood, the flesh of swine and any flesh that has been consecrated to gods other than Allāh are unclean (*rijs*). Any other food is permissible for consumption. In the same category as

115 *Mu’arada*, ‘ard, ‘irād means ‘a chase’. See Viré 1997: 98.

116 Dawood 1994: 79–80.

117 So also Paret 1986: 113.

118 Paret 1986: 96.

119 Paret 1986: 113. Cf. Chelhod. 1971a: 53–54.

120 Paret (1986: 130) sees no connection between this verse and vv. 98–100.

121 See Watt ([1956] 1988: 200) who points out the correspondence with Acts 15:28–29 (which does not mention pork): “[O]ne wonders whether this represents a common level of observance among monotheists in the Arabian peninsula, both Jews of Arab descent and Christians.”

122 Bousquet 1965: 213.

blood is anything that is poured forth or shed (*dam masfūh*).¹²³ The flesh of swine is also mentioned as impious and sinful (*fisqan*).¹²⁴ In addition, the same rule is emphasised forbidding the use of anything over which the *tasmiyya* has not been uttered.¹²⁵ The time for these activities is the so-called “sacred month” (also Q 2:194), but it is not stated which of the sacred months the reader should take this to be. In other words, whether the text points to the only month mentioned in the Qurʾān, that of Ramaḍān,¹²⁶ or one of the four “sacred months” of *al-Muḥarram*,¹²⁷ *Dhū l-Qaʿda*, *Dhu-l-ḥijja* or *Rajab*,¹²⁸ we do not know.

In this passage the different applied terms for ‘sacrifice’ derive from the roots *dh-b-h*, *k-f-r*, *h-d-y*, *q-l-d* and *sh-ʿ-r*. There are sacrifices given to Allāh and sacrifices given to the stone deities (*nuṣūb*) (v. 3).¹²⁹ Arrows (*azlām*) are condemned,¹³⁰ and later in the *sūra* (v. 90), it is said that the “*maysir* and the deities (*al-anṣāb*) and the arrows (*al-azlām*) are the filthy (*rijsun*) work of Shayṭān”; it will “keep you from the remembrance of God and from your prayers” (v. 91).¹³¹

3.3.1.5 Q 5:30–32, The offerings by Adam’s two sons

These verses are the first of six verses in this *sūra* about Adam and his two sons.¹³²

123 Penrice 1971: 69.

124 Penrice 1971: 110; Wehr 1980: 713.

125 *Tasmiyya*, *bismillāh*, or *basmala*, see Carra de Vaux and Gardet 1960.

126 Plessner 1995: 417–418. For an extensive article on calendar and time, see van Dalen et al 2000: 258–301. Concerning the month of *shaʿbān*, see Wensinck 1997:154.

127 If *al-Muḥarram* was declared free (for non-sacred activities like war etc.), the month *Ṣafar* was declared sacred instead. This was done in order “to balance the calendar” (Guillaume 1955: 21–22).

128 *Rajab* is the only sacred month that is not preceded or followed by another sacred month, hence its special status. Cf. Lane 1867: 1033. In its second derivation the word *rajab* is also associated with “sacrifice”. Lane (1867: 1033–1034) mentions that the noun *rajabiya* has the meaning ‘sacrificial victim’. He infers this from the pre-Islamic practice of sacrificing “a sheep or a goat” to their “gods” in the holy month of *Rejeb*, when the days were called the days of *tarjīb*, and the victim was often called *ʿatīra*. Note the interesting article by M.J. Kister 1971b.

129 Fahd 1995: 154–155.

130 Fahd 1991: 923–924. See also Q 2:219. Concerning the narrative about ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who does not appear in the Qurʾān, see Chapter 6.

131 Dawood 1994: 89. Two short passages from this *sūra* are analysed below, Q 5:30–32, “The offerings by Adam’s two sons”, and Q 5:95–103, “Killing or sacrifice!”

132 Cf. Genesis 4:3–16.

30. Recount to them in all truth the story of Adam's two sons: how they each made (*qarrabā*) an offering (*qurbān*), and how the offering of the one was accepted while that of the other was not. One said: "I will surely kill you." The other replied: "God accept [offerings] (*yataqabbalu Allāhu*) only from the righteous (*al-muttaqīna*).
31. If you stretch your hand to kill me, I shall not stretch mine to slay you; for I fear God, Lord of the Universe.
32. I would rather you should add your sin against me to your other sins and thus become an inmate of the Fire (*al-nār*). Such is the reward of the wicked (*al-ẓalimīna*)."¹³³

Here, the righteous (*al-muttaqīna*) and the wicked (*al-ẓalimīna*) are opposed to each other and represented by two brothers who are not referred to by name.¹³⁴ Only their father's name is mentioned as Adam. Further, the text explains that murder is the result when one of two sacrifices (*qurbān*) is not accepted. The term is derived from the root *q-r-b*, 'to draw near', and occurs as a noun three times in the Qur'ān (here and in Q 3:183 and 46:28).¹³⁵ The verb connected with the sacrifice is from the same root, *qarrabā*, which is intensified through the second derivation, and it appears in *dualis*. Who the righteous (*al-muttaqīna*) and the wicked (*al-ẓalimīna*) are, is not mentioned here, but the reader is informed that the righteous "fear[s] God, Lord of the Universe", and the wicked "become[s] an inmate of the Fire".

The sacrifice of one of the brothers was accepted, the sacrifice of the other not.¹³⁶ K. Kueny comments that "The Qur'ān turns the sons into generic types who represent the righteous and the unrighteous, and asserts that God only recognizes offerings from the righteous."¹³⁷ Allāh is the one who attests. But it is

133 Dawood 1994: 82.

134 Vajda (1971: 13) wrongly identifies this passage as Q 55:27–32 / 30–35, and not *sūra* 5, same verses. Vajda correctly identifies the verses that follow, which, unlike the Bible, describe how one should bury the victim's body.

135 Wensinck 1986: 436.

136 When Bork-Qaysieh (1993: 29–32) covers the Islamic exegesis of this verse, she points to al-Ṭabarī, who in his *Tafsīr* (vol. 10: 207–208) underlines that *God* – and not Adam – had commanded this sacrifice to take place. She refers to parts of the *tafāsīr* discussion about *what* the sacrifice consisted of: Ḥābil's best sheep (or in some cases, a fat camel and/or a cow or the firstborn animal; additionally, he had a pure heart) and Qābil's worst grain? Regarding Ḥābil's sheep, it was the favourite lamb of his, which he carried on his shoulders and never left out of sight. When he sacrificed this lamb, God received it as a sacrifice. Then it grassed in Paradise until it became the sacrificial lamb of Ibrāhīm (Bork-Qaysieh 1993: 30; cf. al-Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*, vol. 10: 202).

137 Kueny 2008: 111.

not explained *why* the *qurbān* of the righteous is approved of by Allāh.¹³⁸ V. 35 compares the evil of slaying *one* person to the slaughter of *all* people (*qatala al-nās jamī'an*).¹³⁹ Allowed are, however, murders that happen in the frame of revenge and blood money. Allāh's clear signs as conveyed through the prophets are to be followed.

3.3.2 Compensation

3.3.2.1 Q 2:196 and 48:25, *Ḥajj* and sacrifice, fasting and almsgiving

In this section we will look at texts according to which compensation is an aspect of the sacrificial rituals. Q 2:196 has a similar wording as Q 48:25. Both texts describe the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra*. This impression is conveyed by the word *manāsikakum*, 'your rules or rituals', which denotes the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra*. Dutton convincingly translates Q 2:196:

And complete *ḥajj* and *ʿumra* for Allah (*manāsik*); and if you are prevented (*fa-inn uḥṣirtum*)¹⁴⁰ [you should sacrifice] whatever sacrificial animal is easy [Dawood: send such offerings as you can afford] (*fa-mā (i)staysara mina l-hady*); and do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal reaches its place of sacrifice [Dawood: their destination]. And whoever among you is ill, or suffers harm (*adhā*) to his head, [should pay] a recompense (*fidya*) of fasting (*min ṣayām*) or almsgiving (*sadaqa*) or a sacrifice (*nusuk*). Then, when you are safe, whoever does *tamattuʿa*¹⁴¹ with an

138 Kueny (2008: 112) refers to discussions about the role of Eve as mother and educator of her two sons.

139 Vajda (1971: 13) points out the resemblance to *Mishna, Sanhedrin*, 4.5, which says: "to take the life of an innocent being is as serious a crime as to cause the death of the whole of humanity; to save the life of a single person is as meritorious as to do so for all men."

140 Dutton (1999: 93) says that Abu Hanifa recognises the verse belonging to the Ḥudaybiya event, and that he refers to *uḥṣirtum* as "a 'non-enemy' situation. Like al-Shāfiʿī, he holds that sacrificing a *hady* for *iḥsār* is obligatory, but unlike al-Shāfiʿī, he holds that, whatever the situation, this *hady* must always be sacrificed in the *ḥaram*, even if that means sending it on with someone else, and quite unlike al-Shāfiʿī, he holds that, whatever the situation, the *qadāʿ* is necessary." See also Dutton 1999: 210, footnote 96. Cf. Schenke and Birkeland ([1952] 1989: 176) who refer to two of the *madhāhib*, the *maliki* and the *shāfiʿī* that say that the hindering was caused by enemies. Cf. al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/819) 1989. vol. 2: 135.

141 *Tamattuʿa* originally meant 'to enjoy'. Schenke and Birkeland ([1952] 1989: 176) say that this refers to the time between *ʿumra* and *ḥajj* when *iḥrām* is interrupted, and the pilgrim is allowed to enjoy his freedom as for instance in sexual intercourse, hunting and other such activities. Schenke and Birkeland maintain that this interruption was

‘*umra* until the *hajj* [should sacrifice] whatever sacrifice is easy (*istaysara mina l-hady*). And whoever does not have one should fast three days during the *hajj* and seven when you return; that is ten altogether. This is for those whose families are not present at the Sacred Mosque. And have fear for Allah, you know that Allah’s punishment is severe.¹⁴²

To facilitate a better understanding of this passage it is necessary to quote most of the text from Q 48:25, 27, as well:

25. Those were the unbelievers who debarred you from the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-haram*) and prevented your offerings from reaching their destination (*wa-l-hadiy ma‘akūf*¹⁴³ *an yablughah maḥillahu*).¹⁴⁴ [...]
27. God has in all truth fulfilled His apostle’s vision, in which He had said: ‘If God will, you shall enter the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-haram*) secure and fearless, with hair cropped (*muḥallikīna ru‘ūsakum*) or shaven (*muqaṣṣirin*).’ He knew what you knew not; and what is more, He granted you a speedy victory.¹⁴⁵

Q 2:196 is divided into two parts, one of which may have originated in the year 6 AH, the other in the year 10.¹⁴⁶ They are therefore connected with two different occasions, one with the treaty at al-Ḥudaibiya in the sixth year AH,¹⁴⁷ with which Q 48:25 also seems connected, and the second with Muḥammad’s Farewell Pilgrimage four years later. Probably the verse refers to the slaughtering of camels at or around the al-Ḥudaibiya, which was not a part of the *hajj* as such, but was associated with the gathering nomads and tradesmen, who were having fun playing games for stakes of valuable animals. Still, Q 2:196 as a whole and Q 48:25, 27 have similar wordings and terminology that must be examined in order to achieve a thorough understanding of the texts.

Different words for sacrifice are used in these texts. The words *manāsik* and *nusuk* derive from the root *n-s-k*, which means ‘to lead a religious life; to sacrifice’,¹⁴⁸ or as Lane says, ‘to worship’.¹⁴⁹ He also mentions the fourth

organised because Muḥammad himself wanted to see his wives. The term *tamattu‘a* has become the main word for the combined pilgrimage, ‘*umra* and *hajj* performed together.

142 Dutton 1999: 92–93. Cf. Schenke and Birkeland (1952) 1989: 77.

143 *Ṣaddūkum* is not repeated here, but *ma‘kūfan* that means ‘restraint’ is used.

144 Arberry (1983: 534) translates: “They are the ones who disbelieved, and barred you from the Holy Mosque and the offering, detained so as not to reach its place of sacrifice.”

145 Dawood 1994: 362. Cf. Wheeler 2010.

146 Bell ([1970] 1991: 41) maintains that parts of this passage deal with other events than these two.

147 Görke 1997: 193–237. For Snouck Hurgronje’s opinion, see Paret 1986: 41. Cf. Dutton 1999: 92–93.

148 Penrice 1971: 146.

derivation of the root, which is *ansaka*, ‘he washed and purified a garment’, and the fifth derivation, *tanassaka*, ‘he devoted himself to religious exercises’.¹⁵⁰ *Nusuk* denotes the sacrificial victim, and this is one of two places where *nusukin* occurs in the Qurʾān. The plural of *mansak*, meaning the ‘ceremonial’, is *manāsik*, which can also mean the place(s) where the religious rites are performed.¹⁵¹ Later the word became synonymous with all the rituals of the *hajj* and *ʿumra*, and the word has become the appropriate designation for the book(s) where these rituals are found.

Another important word in Q 2:196 is *fidyatun*. This refers to the close relationship between fasting, alms and the offering of a sacrifice. As already mentioned in the context of Q 37, the word *fidya* comes from the root *f-d-y*, and it is rendered as “compensation” in Ali’s translation, but another possibility is ‘ransom’, which is the term used by Dawood, and which can be understood in the sense ‘redemption or that which is paid to redeem a fault’.¹⁵² From the sentence that requires the pilgrim, under certain circumstances, to “pay a ransom (*fidya*) either by fasting or almsgiving (*sadaqa*) or a sacrifice (*nusuk*)”, it would appear that *fidya* is a wider term than *nusuk*.¹⁵³ The term *fidya* is also used in Q 2:183,¹⁵⁴ 57:15,¹⁵⁵ and 57:17,¹⁵⁶ occurrences that I will return to in due course. Dawood and Arberry translate *al-hady* in a very general sense; they say “offerings” and not “sacrificial animals”, which is the term used by Ali. Penrice¹⁵⁷ supports the more general translation by saying “a victim for sacrifice, an offering” without specifying that the victim is an animal. The word comes originally from the root *h-d-y*, meaning ‘to lead in a right way’.

149 Lane 1893: 3032.

150 Lane 1893: 3032.

151 Lane 1893: 3032.

152 *Fidyatun* means ‘a ransom, that which is paid as ransom or to redeem a fault’ (Penrice 1971: 108); cf. Wehr 1980: 700–701; Lane 1877: 2353.

153 Cf. Schenke and Birkeland (1952) 1989: 176.

154 Q 2:183: “Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you; perchance you will guard yourselves against evil. Fast a certain number of days, but if any one among you is ill or on a journey, let him fast a similar number of days later; and for those that cannot endure it there is a ransom: the feeding of a poor man. He that does good of his own accord shall be well rewarded; but to fast is better for you, if you but knew it” (Dawood 1994: 28).

155 Q 57:15: “Therefore, today no ransom (*fidyatun*) shall be taken from you, neither from those who disbelieved” (Arberry 1983: 565).

156 Q 57:17: “Surely those, the men and the women, who make freewill offerings and have lent to God a good loan, it shall be multiplied for them, and their heirs shall be a generous wage” (Arberry 1983: 566).

157 Penrice 1971: 153.

According to this original meaning we might say that the *hady* is something that should lead the believer on the right path and give guidance, as already suggested above.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, the *hady* can be understood in a looser sense referring merely to the sacrificial act. Independent of the question about what sort of sacrifice the *hady* is, it is necessary to see it in its ritual context, whether pre-Islamic or Islamic. Ali translates *al-hady* as “sacrificial animals”, and he comments that the “Muslims from Medina had brought the animals for sacrifice with them, and had put on the *iḥrām* or pilgrim’s garb, but they were not only prevented from entering Mecca, but were also prevented from sending the sacrificial animals to the place of sacrifice in Mecca as they could have done under 2:196”.¹⁵⁹ Ali and others state that the sacrifice was actually offered at Ḥudaibiya to mark the settling of the treaty.¹⁶⁰ Bell comments that the reason for the constraints on the use of certain types of animals mentioned in Q 2 and 48 likely was the economic aspect of the Meccan pilgrimage. Merchants would lose money if they were prevented from selling their animals as sacrificial goods in the market.¹⁶¹

In these texts two aspects of hair-shaving are mentioned, both of which figure in the sacrificial ritual. Firstly, “Do not shave your heads until the offerings have reached their destination” (Q 2:196). Secondly, hair-shaving is mentioned as a sign that someone is allowed to enter the sacred mosque in Mecca: “With hair cropped [or shortened] (*muḥalliḡina ru’ūsakum*) or shaven (*wa-muqaṣṣirīna*)” (Q 48:27).¹⁶² The two aspects may be interconnected. Interestingly, Robertson Smith has stated, “The sacrifice of the hair was a common part of the ritual in every Arabic pilgrim-city or -place.”¹⁶³ In the Islamic context the shaving of the head seems exclusively to be linked to the *hajj* or the *‘umra*, and to the performance of the *‘aqīqa* sacrifice linked to the days after a baby’s birth.¹⁶⁴

V. 196 twice says that the pilgrim should sacrifice “*istaysara mina l-hadyi*”. This has been translated as both “the sacrifices that you can afford” and “the sacrifice that is easy”, suggesting the presence of a linguistic dilemma.

158 Chelhod 1971a. *Hady* occurs seven times in the Qur’ān (2:196; 5:2, 95, 96; 98:25). *Ḥadīth* and Qur’ānic exegesis are generally in agreement in restricting the word to victims chosen from the *an‘ām* (6:143).

159 Ali 1975: 1398, footnote 4903.

160 Also supported by early Muslim *tafsīr*. Cf. Görke 1997.

161 Bell (1970) 1991: 40–41.

162 Cf. Wheeler 2010.

163 Robertson Smith (1889) 1927: 331. See also Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 124.

164 Cf. Juynboll and Pedersen 1960: 337; Wheeler 2010.

*Istaysara*¹⁶⁵ is the tenth derivation of the root *y-s-r*, third person perfect, and has the same meaning as in the fifth derivation, ‘to be easy’¹⁶⁶ or ‘to be made ready for someone’. Lane translates, “What is easy [to give], of camel and kine and sheep or goats: or as some say, either a camel or a cow or a sheep or goat.”¹⁶⁷ However, it is likely that Dutton is closer to the original meaning, and I therefore consider his translation, “the sacrifice that is easy”, more appropriate.

It is interesting that the word for the old Arabic game of chance, *maysir*,¹⁶⁸ is derived from the same root, *y-s-r*; the noun *yāsir* means ‘dividing a thing into parts or portions’.¹⁶⁹ Hence, there is a connection with the slaughtering of an animal that has to be divided after it has been killed. The game *maysir* is forbidden in the Qurʾān (2:219; 5:3 and 90–91).¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, one of Allāh’s epithets is *muyassir*, which derives from the same root, and has the meaning ‘facilitator’.¹⁷¹ So how should *istaysara* be translated in this context? Dawood’s translation, “If you cannot [make the pilgrimage], send such offerings as you can afford”, seems to be the best alternative. This also explains that, although the offering is obligatory, someone who is unable to buy the required gifts for economic reasons is allowed to fast instead. This became a religious principle, which we find discussed and expanded upon by Mālik ibn Anas.

In his translation of Q 48:25, Dawood leaves the destination of the sacrificial animals, *maḥillah*, unspecified, but in the Arabic text there is a clear indication that this place is the “place of sacrifice”, which is how Penrice,¹⁷² Arberry, Ali and Paret¹⁷³ translate it.¹⁷⁴ The word is derived from *ḥalla*, which

165 See Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) 1982: 20, 51, 168.

166 Penrice 1971: 165. Cf. Lane 1893: 2976.

167 Lane 1893: 2976.

168 Lane (1893: 2978) provides three different explanations, one of which is that *maysir* is “[a] game of the Arabs, played [by ten men] with ten unfeathered and headless arrows: they first slaughtered a camel [bought on credit], and divided it into ten portions, or, as some say, [...], into twenty-eight”.

169 Lane 1893: 2977; Wehr 1980: 1107.

170 *Maysara*, plural: *mayāsir* means ‘left or left side, limb, or direction’ (Lane 1893: 2977). For an excellent overview, see Fahd 1991.

171 Badawi and Hinds 1986: 962.

172 Penrice 1971: 37. Cf. also *ḥalāl*, ‘lawful’; this indicates one who has performed all the rites and ceremonies of a pilgrim.

173 Cf. Paret 1985a: 362; he also refers to for the first part Q 5:2; 2:217; 8:34; 22:25, and for the second part to Q 2:196; 5:95. Cf. Graef 1959: 56–58.

174 In modern Arabic one finds a completely non-sacrificial meaning of *maḥill*, which is “due date; date of delivery” (Wehr 1980: 200).

means ‘to untie, unbind, unfasten; to release, set free; to be allowed, lawful’.¹⁷⁵ In the Qur’ānic context the word *ḥalla* means “to fulfil the rites and ceremonies required of a pilgrim, to become *ḥalāl* after being *aḥrām*”, in other words, loosened from the status of *aḥrām*. The word *taḥilla*, also from the root *ḥ-l-l*, means ‘dissolution of a vow’. This word indicates a connection between sacrifice and vow (*nadhṛ*; plural *nudhūr*¹⁷⁶), which will prove significant in the later analysis.¹⁷⁷

Paret comments that the *maḥill* in both verses (48:25 and 2:196) has to be localised in the holy area.¹⁷⁸ Based on parallels in Q 2:196, Snouck Hurgronje proposes two different interpretations for the whole context, one of which relates predominantly to the al-Ḥudaibiya treaty, and the other to the *ḥajj* rituals as well as to the connection between rituals and power.¹⁷⁹

The 14th century exegete Ibn Kathīr says, “they hindered *al-hady* to reach its *maḥill*; that was their fault and their obstinacy. And *al-hady*, they were 70 camels (*budna*) which came at God’s order.”¹⁸⁰ Here, Ibn Kathīr definitely understands *al-hady* to be “camels”. Dutton¹⁸¹ has interestingly connected *maḥill* with “the place of destination”. The fact that Q 22:33 regards the *ḥaram* as the *maḥill* – and not Mina only – reflects the two *different* sacrifices that occurred in Mecca.¹⁸²

175 This is more or less the *opposite* of the Hebrew *aqeda*, the binding, which is the Jewish designation for the binding of Isaac; in Genesis 22:9 the verbal cognate of the root ‘-q-d is used.

176 *Nudhūr* also means ‘votive offerings’. See Gottschalk (1919: 106–134), who discusses the *Jahiliya* sacrifices and the relations between the vow and the sacrifice. Kaiser (1998) gives a brief overview over the etymology and the forms and usage of the root *n-d-r* in different Semitic languages (242f. with due references for further, more detailed literature), followed by a presentation of the Old Testament occurrences of *nāḍar* (verb) and *neḍer* (noun) (243ff.).

177 Q 5:92: “Fast for three days and keep the oaths!”

178 Paret 1986: 41.

179 Paret (1986: 41) refers to Snouck Hurgronje (1880 [Paret’s ed.]: 52 [37]).

180 Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) 1987. vol. 4: 193.

181 Dutton 1999: 94.

182 Dutton 1999: 94: “‘Do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal reaches its place of sacrifice’, this ‘place of sacrifice’ (*maḥill*) being interpreted as ‘the *ḥaram*’ by virtue of Q 22:33’s *thumma maḥilluhā ilā l-bayti l-‘atīq* (‘and then its place of sacrifice is the Ancient House’), and that sacrificing of a *hady* was a special act of devotion (*qurban*) and should, like the *hady* for *tamattuʿ* in the same verse, be sacrificed in a special place at a special time, i.e. in the *ḥaram* during the days of sacrifice, and that although it might have seemed from the Ḥudaibiya incident that the Prophet’s *hady* was not sacrificed in the *ḥaram*, in fact half of Ḥudaibiya lies within the bounds of the *ḥaram*, and his *hady* was sacrificed in that part which lies within the *ḥaram*.”

Q 2:196 contains so many aspects that it is easy to overlook the verses that follow, 197–200, which also contain some important references to rites and traditions emphasised in the pilgrimage. Q 2:197 mentions the sacred months. The pilgrims are told to avoid obscenity and wickedness and to struggle for goodness, piety and remembrance of ‘Arafāt and the sacred monument (*al-mash‘ar al-ḥarām*). “And when you have fulfilled your sacred duties (*manāsikakum*), remember God as you remember your forefathers or with deeper reverence” (v. 200). In other words, Q 2:196–200 describes sacrificial rituals within the frame of elements of the pilgrimage. At the same time, these verses, especially Q 2:196, refer to a sacrifice as the compensation (*fidyatun*) and to a sacrifice (*nusuk*) that is performed when another ritual sacrifice (*hady*) has not been fulfilled. In any case the ritual actor is supposed to bring something “for His sake”, “in the memory of Allāh” (*fa-adhkurū Allāha*) (v. 196).¹⁸³

3.3.2.2 Q 5:95–103, Killing or sacrifice

The first verse in this pericope seems to be addressed to the believers heading for Mecca. They may be concerned about their rights regarding hunting and food.¹⁸⁴

95. Believers, kill no game while on pilgrimage. He that kills game (*ṣayd*) by design, shall present, as an offering to the Ka‘ba (*hady bāligha l-ka‘ba*), an animal (*al-na‘am*) equivalent to the one he killed, to be determined by two just men among you; or he shall, in expiation (*kaffāra*), either feed the poor or fast so that he may taste the evil consequences of his deed. God has forgiven what is past; but if anyone relapses into wrongdoing God will avenge Himself on him: God is mighty and capable of revenge.¹⁸⁵

If the pilgrim is unfortunate to kill an animal, this creature must be compensated for. The compensatory animal is a cow (*al-na‘am*) and the offering is here also called a *hady*, but unlike the cases mentioned above, the offering should be made at the Ka‘ba. The expiatory offering, the *kaffāra*,¹⁸⁶ is made when the prescribed ritual is not fulfilled. It requires the same number of animals in order to qualify as valid. Chelhod combines the idea of *kaffāra* with the early Islamic (and pre-Islamic) Bedouin Arab tradition of burying each other’s offences.¹⁸⁷ A second possibility if a man has acted wrongly is to feed the poor or to fast; the requisite number of days is not mentioned here. Among the Arabic words used

183 Cf. Chelhod 1955: 60–62.

184 See Mālik (d. 179/795) 1982: 20, 51, 168.

185 Dawood 1994: 89–90.

186 Cf. Chelhod 1978; Paret 1986: 129, 349; and Q 22:28, 33.

187 Chelhod 1965a: 248.

for ‘to atone for’ is *kaffāra*.¹⁸⁸ This word comes from the root *k-f-r*, which has a secondary meaning, ‘to be infidel’, and is an antonym to ‘to believe’ (*anama*).¹⁸⁹ Other interesting examples from the Qurʾān are Q 3:195; 4:31; 5:12 and 65:5, where *kaffāra* means ‘to erase’ and ‘to conceal [a crime or a sin]’, all with Allāh as subject. A particular penalty (*ḥanītha*)¹⁹⁰ is imposed when someone breaks one of the oaths that people take for and during the *ḥajj* and which are constitutive for the state of *iḥrām*. In such a case it is necessary to recompense and make a *kaffāra*, or to distribute food, or to free a slave (Q 5:89). However, Chelhod says, even if “this is [...] a propitiatory act [...] the idea of expiation seems lacking”.¹⁹¹ He still links the idea of *kaffāra* with the early Islamic and pre-Islamic Arab tradition of burying each other’s offences, known as *daḥn al-dhunūb*.¹⁹²

V. 96a informs the believer that he is allowed to eat seafood, but once again it is repeated that the killing of game is forbidden in *iḥrām*. The next verse states that Allāh has made the Kaʿba and that this place is a goal for the believers, “and the sacrificial offerings with their ornaments (*wa-l-hadya wa-l-qalāʿida*), eternal values for mankind; so that you may know God has knowledge of all that the heavens and earth contain”.¹⁹³ Muḥammad is then described as one who warns, and Allāh as the forgiver and the merciful. “God demands neither a *baḥīrah*, nor a *sāʾibah*, nor a *waṣīlah*, nor a *ḥāmi*. The unbelievers invent falsehoods about God. Most of them are lacking in judgement” (v. 103).¹⁹⁴

All these unfamiliar words are terms for describing camels at different stages of their development and according to different grazing traditions. *Baḥīrah* is “a name given to a camel in pre-Islam which was turned loose to feed, after being slit in its ears”.¹⁹⁵ *Sāʾiba* is the “name of a she-camel” in pre-Islam to

188 Cf. Lane 1885: 2620–2623.

189 Q 3:156; 4:137; 29:12. Q 21:94 (*kufirān*). Lane 1885: 2620.

190 Wehr 1980: 209. This term is not found in my material.

191 Chelhod 1978: 407; and Q 5:5.

192 Chelhod 1965a: 248.

193 Dawood 1994: 90.

194 Dawood 1994: 90.

195 Penrice 1971: 15. Ibn Hishām (n.d. vol. 1: 58) “show[s] that the ancient Arabs used to carry out certain religious ceremonies with respect to their cattle, which consisted firstly in letting the animal go about loose without making any use of it whatever, and secondly in limiting to males permission to eat its flesh (after it had died). In the various cases the animals bore special names. [...] The lexicographers are not quite agreed on the point in which cases a camel or sheep had its ear slit. According to some, it was after it had borne ten young ones, according to others when its fifth young one was female etc.—The Qurʾān abolished these customs and stigmatised them as arbitrary inventions” (Wensinck 1960: 921).

which “certain superstitions, among others the right of free pasture” were connected.¹⁹⁶ *Waṣīla* is “a she-camel or ewe” that was considered in pre-Islam as “wont to certain superstitions in honour of their idols”.¹⁹⁷ Finally, *ḥāmi* is the “name of a camel concerning which certain superstitious usages were observed by Pagan Arabs”.¹⁹⁸ These were all regarded as forms of pre-Islamic sinfulness and thus associated with the unbelievers. It was therefore necessary to distinguish between those animals (camels) that were purified or in some other way sanctified for sacrifice, and other animals that were forbidden to be presented at the Sacred House. It is also noteworthy that the place of offering is not the *maḥill* (mentioned in Q 2:196 and 48:25), but, as mentioned above, the Ka’ba itself.

3.3.3 Positive and negative statements

3.3.3.1 Q 108:1–3, “Pray to your Lord and sacrifice to Him”

The shortest, but no less important, *sūra* in the Qur’ān, 108, is called ‘Abundance’ (*al-kawthar*). It is generally considered very difficult to understand and has been continuously under discussion.¹⁹⁹

1. We have given you abundance (*innā aṭaynāka al-kawthar*).²⁰⁰
2. Pray to your Lord and sacrifice to Him (*fa-ṣalli li-rabbika wa-nḥar*).²⁰¹
3. He that hates you shall remain childless (*innā shānīʾaka huwa al-abtar*).²⁰²

196 Penrice 1971: 75. Irving (1992: 124) translates “twin-bearing goat or ewe”.

197 Penrice 1971: 159.

198 Penrice 1971: 38. Concerning these names, see Q 22:36–38, where the camels (*al-budun*) are the preferred sacrificial animals. Q 6:139–140 seems to refer to these animals; “and they say: these cattle and fruits of the earth are sacred; none shall eat thereof but whom we wish (so they say); and [there are] cattle on whose backs it is forbidden [to ride] etc.”; “and they say: that which is in the bellies of these animals, is only for our men and forbidden to our wives; but if it be born dead then both partake of it. He will reward them for their attributing [these things to him] for He is wise and knowing” (so the translation of Wensinck 1960: 921).

199 Ali 1975: 1798, footnote 6286.

200 Dawood 1994: 433. Arberry (1983: 663) translates, “Surely We have given thee abundance.” Birkeland (1956: 56) translates, “Lo! We have given thee Abundananee.”

201 Dawood 1994: 433. Arberry (1983: 663) translates, “So pray unto thy Lord and sacrifice.” Birkeland (1956: 56) translates, “So pray unto thy Lord, and sacrifice!”

202 Dawood 1994: 433. Arberry (1983: 663) translates, “Surely he that hates thee, he is the one to cut off.” Birkeland (1956: 56) translates, “Lo! Thy hater is it who is suffering loss.”

Verse 1

After the “we” – *pluralis majestatis* – combined with the word for ‘presenting’ or ‘offering’ (with the root ʿ-ṭ-w), the important term *al-kawthar* occurs; it is used only here in the Qurʾān, and is derived from the frequent root *k-th-r*, meaning ‘it was or became abundant, numerous’.²⁰³ According to Birkeland, it can be seen from many early *isānid* that *al-kawthar*’s main meaning is “abundance of good”, *al-kawthar al-khayr*, and that it has little to do with a river or pool of water in Paradise, as some of the exegetes have suggested.²⁰⁴ However, the traditional interpretation of *al-kawthar* as “the fountain of abundance” is interesting in the current context, and Lane supports this reading when he says that *kawthar* is “a certain river in paradise from which flow all the [other] rivers thereof, pertaining specially to the Prophet, described as being whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and as having its margin composed of pavilions of hallowed pearls”.²⁰⁵ The question is whether this fountain can be identified with the important Zamzam-well in Mecca, which is called “the water of Paradise”²⁰⁶ and which may for a long time have been the site of sacrificial

203 Lane 1885: 2593.

204 E.g. Ibn Ishāq. According to Birkeland (1956: 60), this “interpretation came into existence after the death of Muḥammad and was primarily applied to the verse as an isolated unity without regard to the context”. It is to be assumed that Muḥammad saw *al-kawthar* as a gift from Allāh, given through his wife Khadija, who changed his life in a decisive way. This change is not recognised among Muslim scholars, who are of the opinion that Muḥammad was under divine guidance throughout his life. This *sūra* “is so old that Muḥammad still performed religious ceremonies belonging to the pagan religion” (idem). A compromise made by some scholars is to maintain that it was revealed twice (for more on this, see Birkeland 1956: 74–75). Buhl [Welch] (1993: 363) identifies a similar ambivalence: “He must have accepted the sacrifices offered there (Q 108:2), and his followers took part in the ancient Meccan pilgrimage rituals before he combined them to form the great Islamic *hajj*.”

205 Lane 1885: 2594.

206 Ashraf 1987: 120. There are at least two other terms for ‘fountain of paradise’. The first of these, *salsabil*, occurs only in Q 76:18, where it is said, “They shall be served with silver dishes [...] and cups brim-full with ginger-flavoured water from a fount called Salsabil” (Dawood 1994: 414). The exegetes disagree with regard to the origin of the name, but there are two main opinions, ‘the water’s taste is good’, i.e., the term derives from a description, and ‘ask me for a path to it (the fountain)’, consisting of the two Arabic words *saʿila* (to ask) and *sabil* (the way) (Rippin 1995: 999). The second word for the fountain in paradise, *tasnīm*, occurs only in Q 83:27, where it is described as “a spring at which the favoured will refresh themselves” (Dawood 1994: 421). Wensinck (2000: 360) points out that this spring provides sustenance to *al-muqarribūn*, ‘those who are admitted to the divine presence’. We can also translate, ‘those who have come near’, in accordance with the stem *q-r-b*, which we also know

offerings in pre-Islam. In spite of divergence among the scholars, I find the *al-kawthar* to be an interesting metaphor of “abundance” and “gift from Allāh” that I will bring into the analysis of v. 3.

Verse 2

In v. 2 the term *naḥar* is used to denote “sacrifice”. *Naḥara* (the root *n-ḥ-r* in perfect) means ‘to injure the jugular vein; to sacrifice by cutting the jugular vein’.²⁰⁷ Here the word is used in imperative and linked to the technical term for ritual prayer *ṣalli*, pray! This “sacrifice” refers sometimes to cows or generally to all sacrificial animals (*hady*) but more often specifically to camels.²⁰⁸ The term also means ‘to stab or to stick a camel or a beast’.²⁰⁹ In a comment to the translation of the noun *‘id al-naḥr*, Lane renders it as, “The day of the stabbing of camels, or also of cows and bulls”.²¹⁰ The tradition also combines the term *qurbān* with the *ṣalāt*, and says that *ṣalāt* is the sacrifice of every pious man.²¹¹ According to Birkeland, *naḥara* is interpreted differently among different groups of Muslim exegetes. Firstly, it means “to master their affairs or knowledge”,²¹² whereby it is used to describe a person performing his prayers, *naḥara al-ṣalāt*.²¹³ Secondly, one tradition, narrated by Abū Ja‘far, understands *naḥr* as “lifting hands during the first time of the *takbīr*”. Both interpretations were rejected by later orthodox exegetes who said that *naḥr* had to be “*naḥr al-budun*”, ‘the slaughter of beasts of sacrifice’.²¹⁴ Thirdly, the consensus from about year 200 AH (Ibn Sa‘d) gives a more legally-oriented understanding of the term *naḥr*. “The *ṣalāt* is the prescribed ritual *ṣalāt*, the sacrifice is *an-nusk* (‘sacrifice’) and *adh-dhabḥ* (also: ‘sacrifice’) on the day of *al-aḏḥā*.”²¹⁵

Instead of praying to other gods or idols, devotion is attracted to the *al-kawthar*, the abundance, or Allāh himself. This *naḥr* should be a sign of

from *qurbān*, ‘sacrifice’. The word *tasnīm* is a derivative from the root *s-n-m*, ‘being high’. It can also be a proper name. The *muḥrim* drinks from this source after the second *tawāḥf* around the Ka‘ba.

207 Penrice 1971: 144.

208 There are some differences between the later four schools of law. So Bousquet (1965: 213) who also mentions that “[t]he camel remains upright but at the same time facing the *qibla*. The knife ought to be well sharpened”.

209 The term *dhibḥ* focuses on the animal’s throat, cf. Lane 1893: 2774. See Q 37.

210 Lane 1893: 2774.

211 Birkeland 1956: 56.

212 Lane 1893: 2774.

213 Six traditions support this. So Birkeland 1956: 78.

214 Birkeland 1956: 76. See also Q 22:27 and 48:25: *al-budna*.

215 Birkeland 1956: 77.

gratitude towards God.²¹⁶ The main point of these narrations is that this particular *naḥr* and *ṣalāt* are obviously identical with the *Muslim naḥr* and *ṣalāt* that constitute the essence of *tawḥīd*, and that they are not to be equated with the pagan devotions around the Kaʿba.²¹⁷ Birkeland maintains that the sacrifices are signs of thanksgiving for Allāh’s rich gifts to Muḥammad, and they do not necessarily mean *the* Islamic practice, even if the word for prayer used here, *ṣalli*, does suggest the Islamic ritual rather than a freer prayer, *duʿāʾ*.²¹⁸

Fifthly, one late tradition infers the sense of *sūra* 108 from *sūra* 107. In this case the prayer (*ṣalāt*) in 108:2a corresponds to the neglect of prayer in 107:5 and the withholding of alms (*zakāt*) in 107:7 to “sacrifice!” (*nḥar*) in 108:2b. Birkeland characterises this connection between the two *suwar* as a product of “post-traditional, speculative-dogmatic *tafsīr*”.²¹⁹ Rāzī, however, considers the *zakāt* (alms’ tax) to be closely related to *ṣalāt* (prayer), and especially to *al-naḥr* (the sacrifice), claiming that “the distribution of meat to the needy was an important aspect of the Muslim sacrifice”.²²⁰ Rāzī’s exegetical combination of Q 107 and 108 is, in particular, the strongest argument for regarding the *zakāt* and the *naḥr* as closely related.

Verse 3

At first sight, the third verse seems to have little connection with the two preceding verses, but we will see that it may be important. “He that hates you shall remain childless”²²¹ represents the opposite of “offering of abundance”, which was the key term in v. 1. *Shāniʾa* means ‘to hate’,²²² and this probably refers to the Quraysh tribe that hated Muḥammad so that he was forced to leave Mecca. This event in the year 622 AD is commemorated in later tradition as the *hijra*.²²³ The word *al-abtar* means ‘without a tail’; and can be understood as

216 Birkeland (1956: 78) shows that this tradition goes back to Ibn ʿAbbās through the traditionalist al-Qurazī. It is also confirmed by the early traditions, Qatāda and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Consequently, there is a strong *isnād* for this point of view.

217 Birkeland (1956: 77) says that al-Ṭabarī underlines the *tawḥīd*, connected to the *naḥr*.

218 Birkeland 1956: 86 and 97.

219 Birkeland 1956: 82. Paret (1986: 526–528) agrees that Birkeland’s reading is the most plausible.

220 Birkeland 1956: 83. This is the famous Islamic theologian from Rayy and author of many books, Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who died in 606/1209. One of the most important books is *Tafsīr al-kabīr*. See Anawati 1965: 754.

221 Dawood 1994: 433.

222 Wehr 1980: 487; Penrice 1971: 79.

223 Birkeland (1956: 96–97) translates, “But there may as well have been others who disliked him, and to whom it is pointed at here.”

being ‘without sons’.²²⁴ The meaning is then that the opponent, the one who hates Allāh or his prophet, “may remain without blessings, such as abundant descendants, a good reputation etc., that which the prophet will receive”.²²⁵ The traditional context for this *sūra* also underlines this meaning, since Muḥammad was reputed to have received this message on being taunted about his “sonless” condition and the fact that only his daughters had grown up.²²⁶ Arberry has translated this as “he is the one cut off” without any further explanation. This could, however, in my opinion be extended as to cut off from the richness (*al-kawthar*), the richness of blessings and of children. This alludes to the role played by Ibrāhīm and his intended sacrifice, his own son.

3.3.3.2 Q 3:183 and 46:28, Sacrifice and signs

These two short verses in Q 3 and 46 are not direct reports about sacrificial rituals, but rather insults or criticisms directed at those who have been taught that an acceptable message has to come from someone who offers a sacrifice. This offering had to be accepted by the respective god.

To those that declare: “God has commanded us to believe in no apostle unless he brings down fire to consume an offering (*qurbān tākuluhu l-nār*),” say: “Other apostles before me have come to you with veritable signs (*bayyināt*) and worked the miracle you asked for. Why did you slay them, if what you say be true?”²²⁷ (Q 3:183)

This passage – like the one in Q 46 – also uses the combination of sacrifice (*qurbān*)²²⁸ and signs (*bayyināt*). The signs are miracles, and so is the fire that consumes the sacrifice. The connection between sacrifice and fire resembles the Elijah and Aaron narratives in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kings 18 and Lev 9).²²⁹ That fire is also called *nār al-riḍā*, the fire of acceptance.²³⁰ The message in Q 46:28

224 Lane (1863: 149) mentions that the root *b-t-r* in its first derivation is definitely used to express something like “a tail or the like” that is “cut off”. In the fourth derivation it is used to express “being without off-spring”, in which sense it also occurs here in v. 3. See also Birkeland (1956: 97), who is undecided whether the word really can be translated “without sons”. Wehr (1980: 40) adds terms such as ‘curtailed; imperfect, incomplete’.

225 Birkeland 1956: 46.

226 Birkeland 1956: 92.

227 Dawood 1994: 58.

228 Lane (1885: 2507) mentions this as a clear example of the meaning ‘an offering, or oblation: and hence it sometimes means a sacrifice’.

229 Cf. 1 Kings 18:38 and in particular Lev 9:24. See also Paret 1986: 86.

230 Fahd (1993: 958) refers to Ibn al-Athīr (*Kāmil*, vol. 1: 40), “who has said that Qābil was the first to establish a sanctuary for fire and to worship it”.

involves a similar idea, together with a warning to those who trust and sacrifice to others than the God “who created the heavens and the earth” and has “power to raise the dead to life” (v. 33). His signs are words of warning against the erroneous path. Seemingly, it is also a message of comfort for those who have been believers and supporters since the historical *hijra* (vv. 22–26).

We destroyed the cities which once flourished around you, and made plain Our revelations (*sarrafnā al-ayā allāh*) to their people, so that they might return to the right path. Why did their gods not help them, the gods they had set up besides God to bring them close to him (*attakhadhū min dūna allāh qurbān ʿālihata*)? Indeed, they utterly forsook them. Such were their lies, and such their false inventions.²³¹ (Q 46:28)

In this verse, Dawood translates as if the other deities,²³² here in accusative and thus objects of “they set up”, served only ‘to bring them close to’ God. It is likely, however, that *qurbān ʿāliha* could be translated as ‘an offering to the deities’ even when there is no preposition to express the directory ‘to’ or ‘for’.²³³ The sentence “Why did their gods not help them” resembles the passage in the narrative in 1 Kings 18 that describes the Baal deity at Mount Carmel as deaf and dumb (cf. vv. 24–29). The Qurʾānic text informs us that Allāh is different.

3.3.3.3 Q 9:99, Coming close or sacrifice

The verbal root *q-r-b* means, as we have seen above, ‘to draw near’.²³⁴ In the first derivation it may well have the connotation of ‘seeking to attain’.²³⁵ The second derivation clearly contains both meanings. The fifth derivation, *taqarraba (min Allāh)*, shows traces of an association with ritual activity; “he drew near unto God by prayer or the like, and righteous actions”.²³⁶ Concerning the noun used below, *qurba*, Lane underlines that all translations point to

231 Dawood 1994: 355–356.

232 The reference here is probably to ‘the pre-Islamic deities’ who were also part of Muḥammad’s earlier life.

233 Wensinck’s translation; he continues, “did those help them, whom they had taken for *qurbān* as gods to the exclusion of Allāh”. He also refers to commentators who take the same view and the word is then explained as ‘mediator’ (*shafīʿ*) (Wensinck 1986: 436). Firestone (2004: 517) says that this verse is difficult to translate, and that al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143) 1977, vol. 3: 526) mentions that it means ‘mediators’, but this translation has no support in the syntax and context. However, this is a difficult term when used in connection with Allāh, since *sūra* 2:48 says: “He does not need any mediator (*shafāʿa*) and there is no intercession [on the Last Day]”.

234 Lane 1885: 2504–2509.

235 Lane 1885: 2505.

236 Lane 1885: 2506.

‘nearness’ or ‘admission into favour’.²³⁷ However, in this short verse from *sūra* 9 we can still observe a certain ambivalence with regard to the understanding of the Arabic word.

99. Yet there are others among the desert Arabs (*al-aʿrāb*) who believe in God and the Last Day (*yawm al-ākhir*), and regard what they give as a means of bringing them close to God²³⁸ (*mā yunfiqū qurubātin ʿinda Allāh*) and to the Apostle’s prayers. Indeed, closer they shall be brought (*qurba lahum sa-yudkhilluhum*); God will admit them to His mercy. God is forgiving and merciful.²³⁹

Dawood’s translation, “closer they shall be brought”, does not support my understanding. But we agree on the understanding that this – in my opinion, to be identified as sacrifice *and* prayers – is “bringing them close to Allāh”. The verse is followed by statements about the reward of those who assisted the Prophet in fleeing from Mecca to Medina and those who supported him on his arrival in Medina. They will have unreduced admittance to all joy and running water (v. 100), a real blessing for a person who inhabits the arid region of the Arabian Peninsula. This description is reminiscent of the one in Q 108:1 about *al-kawthar*. In other words, it is possible to see the words *quruba* and *qurba* as expressions for bringing Allāh gifts or sacrifices. Almost certainly, there is a message in the use of words derived from the root *q-r-b*: the believers bring their gifts or sacrifices to the Holy One, and through this act they are brought close(r) to Him.

237 Lane 1885: 2507.

238 See also Bell ([1970] 1991: 316), who translates ‘means of being near’.

239 Dawood 1994: 143.

Chapter 4

Pre-Islamic Sacrifices

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier,¹ there are not many written sources available that describe pre-Islamic sacrifices and deities in the Arabian region. Where Islam showed an interest in this topic, it would appear that two ideas governed what was written: a sincere willingness to understand the earlier religious rituals, and an apologetic interest in convincing new believers that Islam was the most natural, the strongest and the best religion. But despite a certain intention to promote Islam, the Islamic texts and narratives that have come down to us do contain authentic information about the pre-Islamic period. There are several significant reasons why I wish to combine information about practices in both pre-Islam and Islam. Firstly, the few written sources that survive about pre-Islam are attributable to Islamic authors; they were written in Islamic times, and, at least partly, in an Islamic style and language. Secondly, the reports about pre-Islamic idols and sacrifices are not purely Islamic but are inherited from a culture with Jewish, Christian and Arabic roots. Thus, the language that came to characterise the “new” Islamic world reflects these cultures. Pre-Islamic idols and sacrifices were often associated with pilgrimages and markets, of various kinds,² just as subsequently the Islamic *hajj* and *ʿumra* were to become a frame around Islamic ritual. Thus, the texts I examine present reports from pilgrimages and sacrificial rituals. These two themes are not always easy to separate, since some sources contain no more than a brief remark about sacrifice in a much broader context.

In the broad sense of the term, the pre-Islamic material also contains narratives about sacrificial episodes and rituals involving biblical characters. In some cases the interval between that distant epoch and the Islamic period is reduced to a minimum; the different periods are described as almost simultaneous. The narratives about Adam, Ibrāhīm and ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib are as much *pre-Islamic* as *Islamic*. Additionally, Adam and Ibrāhīm are Jewish and Christian characters. The Arabic term *jāhiliya*, meaning ‘[time of] ignorance’ conveys the attitude of Muslims towards the pre-Islamic period as one lacking in knowledge about God and his apostle, Muḥammad.

1 Cf. Chapters 1 and 2.

2 Hoyland 2001: 157.

4.2 Ibn al-Kalbī's description of the sacrificial rituals associated with pre-Islamic deities

4.2.1 Deities and the superiority of Mecca

After a lengthy introduction, Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/821) in *Kitāb al-aṣnām*³ narrates that Ismāʿīl, son of Ibrāhīm, “had settled in Mecca” and that “he begot many children (*awlād kathīr*)”.⁴ Hence, Ibn al-Kalbī demonstrates his interest in the genealogy of the Meccans,⁵ explaining how they spread and threatened the original inhabitants, the ʿAmāliq.⁶ He then presents the following reason for their commitment to the deities,

No one left Mecca without carrying away with him (*iḥtamala maʿahu*) a stone of the stones of *al-ḥaram* (*ḥajaran min ḥajārati l-ḥaram*) as a token of reverence to it, and as a sign of deep affection to Mecca. Wherever he settled he would erect that stone and circumambulate it (*ḡafū*) in the manner he used to circumambulate the Kaʿba [before his departure from Mecca], seeking thereby its blessing and affirming this deep affection (*hubban*) for *al-ḥaram*.⁷

Thus, al-Kalbī makes Mecca the centre of his text, and he situates the deities and the sacrifices offered to them in and outside the Meccan centre, the Kaʿba. The father of the tribe of Khuzāʿa, called ʿAmr ibn Laḥayy or ʿAmr ibn Rabīʿa, was “the first to set up images, [and to] institute the practices of the *baḥīra*, the

3 The Arabic text of *Kitāb al-aṣnām* was found by the Egyptian scholar Aḥmad Zakī Pasha in Cairo who published the first edition in 1912 and the second with minor supplements in 1924. The scholars had already known about this work due to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī's (d. 626/1229) alphabetically organized geographical lexicon, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (621/1224). The text which Pasha used for his edition, is found in the National Library in Cairo (Atallah 1969: xxxvii). Atallah (xlii–xlvii) has convincingly tried to reconstruct its way through history. Wellhausen's *Reste Arabischen Heidentums* from 1887 was built mainly on Ibn al-Kalbī's and Yāqūt's sources. In 1896, Muḥammad Shukrī al-ʿAlūsī (d. 1324/1924) published *Bulāgh al-arab fī maʿrifat aḥwāl al-ʿarab* ('Desired reports on the common conditions of the Arabs'), obviously, he had used *Kitāb al-aṣnām* as his main source but did not say so (Atallah 1969: xxxi–xxxii).

4 (Ibn al-Kalbī) Faris 1952: 4; cf. (Ibn al-Kalbī) Atallah 1969: 3. Atallah (1969: xviii) says that Ibn al-Kalbī's father died in 146/763.

5 Genealogy is mentioned only at the beginning of the text; it is obviously important for Ibn al-Kalbī who is known for also having written an important book about genealogy, *Jamharāt al-nasāb*, cf. Khalidi 1994: 52.

6 See also Judges 6: 3–5, Exodus 17:8–16 and 1 Samuel 30, where the Amalekites attack the Israelites. They are described as coming from the east and owning camels. See also Hoyland 2001: 58.

7 Faris 1952: 4; Atallah 1969: 3. I have substituted the word used in the Arabic text, *al-ḥaram* for Faris' term “Sacred House”.

waṣīla, and the *sā'iba*, the *ḥām*”,⁸ and he was the first “to change the religion of Ismā‘īl”.⁹ This man who had been sick and sought healing at the spring of al-Balqā in Syria (*Shā‘m*), brought with him images of deities that were supposed to help in bringing rain and winning in battle. These he erected and took care of.¹⁰ In several ways, Ibn al-Kalbī says that the Arabs were “passionately fond of idols”. They built temples (*bayt*, singular, and *buyūt*, plural) and erected stones (*ḥajaran*), which they circumambulated.¹¹ Sacrificial rituals associated with these stones were very common. But Ibn al-Kalbī maintains that “they were aware of the excellence and superiority of the Ka‘ba”.¹² He claims that these “others than Muslims” were Arabs who worshipped “whatever took their fancy (*‘abadū mā istaḥabbū*)”.¹³ “They forgot what had been before, exchanged the religion of Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl for another (*istabdalū bi-dīni Ibrāhīm wa-Ismā‘īl ḡayrahu*)”¹⁴ and “worshipped the idols (*‘abadū l-awṭhān*)”.¹⁵ Later, their religion is called “the religion of the people (*dīn qawmī*)”.¹⁶ The deities probably belonged to all kinds of households.¹⁷ Ibn al-Kalbī compares them with the

8 All the four terms describing livestock animals in this text are found in Q 5:103. See Hawting 1999: 59 and Faris 1952: 6, footnote 22, 23, 24 and 25. See Chapter 3.3.2.2.

9 The version (Faris 1952: 6) is mainly identical to the one on p. 50; the latter version adds, “and summon the Arabs to worship the images”. Faris (1952: 6, footnotes 22–25) explains who the idols were. According to Faris (1952: 50, footnote 66) Yāqūt (*Buldān*, vol. 4: 915) reads here Abraham, “in order to conform to the Koranic tradition that the true faith was that of Abraham.” See also Ibn Ishāq, *Sira*, p. 51.

10 Faris 1952: 7 and 10. See al-Mas‘ūdī ([d. 345/956] 1973, vol. 2: 239), who also mentions Syria as the place where the gods and goddesses of Mecca originated.

11 Faris 1952: 28–29; Zakī 1924: 33.

12 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 33.

13 Faris 1952: 4; cf. Zakī 1924: 6.

14 *Dīn* is often translated ‘religion’, but should rather be translated ‘custom’ or ‘habit’.

15 Faris 1952: 4; cf. Zakī 1924: 6; Atallah 1969: 3, 27 and 33. The last phrase is my own translation, since Faris’ translation of it is unprecise.

16 Faris 1952: 16–17; cf. Zakī 1924: 19.

17 Lecker (1993: 338) states, “Domestic idols presumably existed in every household. In other words, we may speak of a hierarchy of idols which correlated with the social status of the owners.” Lecker also says that there were three influential types of deities in Medina, despite the monotheistic influence of the Jews in the city, “clan idols worshipped by the whole clan (*jama‘at al-baṭn*),” [...] “idols held by each nobleman (*raḡul sharīf*) of the Aws and the Khazraj” and “lesser idols of the domestic families”. He also underlines the connection between the deities and the leadership of the clans. To destroy the idols was a “political act”. But Lecker (1993: 342–343) concludes by saying that the stories about conversions from idolatry to Islam “were of little value as a direct historical source, but they are a true reflection of conditions in Yathrib”. Cf. Crone and Silverstein 2010.

people of the time of Nūḥ, when people venerated deities.¹⁸ At that time, there was a change of religion (*dīn*) that had to do with the fact that among the devotional practices of these idolaters there were some which, in Ibn al-Kalbī's opinion, were acceptable to a certain point. Obviously, both religions, Ibrāhīm's and the one that is here characterised as different from it due to the worship of other gods, are not really comparable.

When he deals with the pilgrimages to Mecca in pre-Islam *and* Islam, Ibn al-Kalbī says that "the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumra* (*yaḥajjūna wa-yaʿtamirūna*) were inherited from (*ʿalā irth*) Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl" or, from "what was left from the time (*ʿahd*)¹⁹" of these two. "They worshipped it (*yatanassakūna bihā*)."²⁰ Not only does Ibn al-Kalbī mention the general Islamic terms for the greater (*ḥajj*) and the lesser pilgrimage (*ʿumra*). He also refers repeatedly to the specific rituals associated with these two as if in pre-Islamic times they already had the significant marks of the Islamic rituals, "such as the veneration of the House (*taʿẓīm al-bayt*) and its circumambulation (*al-ṭawāf*)". Ibn al-Kalbī continues and mentions "the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), the lesser pilgrimage (*al-ʿumra*), the vigil (*al-wuqūf*)²¹ on ʿArafa and al-Muzdalifa, sacrificing she-camels (*iḥdāʾi l-budun*), and making the cry (*w-iḥlāl*)²² at the pilgrimage and the visitation."²³

Apparently, Ibn al-Kalbī associates pilgrimage customs with the North Arabian tribe Rabīʿa, which continued their worship during the days immediately after those of the sacrifice.²⁴ When "they performed the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), observed the sacred rites (*al-manāsik*), and carried out the vigils at the [appointed] places, they are wont to start back with the first returning group and not wait until the *ayyām al-tashrīq*."²⁵ Following the remarks presented above,

18 Faris 1952: 4; cf. Atallah 1969: 3.

19 *ʿahd* may also be translated 'covenant'.

20 *Tanassaka*, fifth derivation from *n-s-k*, means 'to be pious, devout' (Wehr 1980: 962).

21 At the *wuqūf* the celebration of a 'whole sacrifice' (Gesamtopfer) around the altar or the sacrificial stone was performed (Wellhausen 1897: 76).

22 *Al-iḥlāl bi-l-ḥajj*: Faris 1952: 5: "raising the voice in the acclamation of the name of the deity". Cf. Atallah (1969: 4) who translates in French, "cri rituel".

23 All quotations in this paragraph are taken from Faris 1952: 4–5; cf. Atallah 1969: 3–4.

24 Faris (1952: 6, footnote 21) offers the following interpretation: "These are the days next after the day of sacrifice. [...] They are now days of rest after the peripatetic performance of the last four days. Evidently they had pre-Islamic antecedents."

25 Faris 1952: 6. "The *tashrīq* may either mean turning eastward in worship, or drying up blood of the sacrifice in the torrid sun of Mecca. It may also mean sunrise prayer, to which meaning I incline. Cf. *Sūrah* II: 199" (Faris 1952: 6, footnote 21). Wellhausen (1897: 79) says that *ayām al-tashrīq* means "the three days after the slaughtering; when the meat which had been slaughtered and not eaten was cut into strips and dried, it could be preserved for a longer time" (my translation). *Tashrīq*, from *sharraqa*, the

he goes on to explain that they “introduc[ed] to it things not belonging to it (*laysa minhu*)”. He mentions the *labbayka* rituals, and continues mentioning the main sign of monotheistic belief, “Thou hast no associate save one who is thine (*lā sharīka lak illā sharīkun huwa lak*).”²⁶ Ibn al-Kalbī explains in Islamic terms, “They would declare His unity (*yawaḥidūnahu*) through the *talbiya*, and they associated their gods (*ālahitahum*) with Him, and they placed their affairs in His hands.”²⁷ In this way, Ibn al-Kalbī implies that this was the basic reason why the Prophet had no alternative than to accept Allāh’s call, as mentioned in Q 12:106, and which Ibn al-Kalbī quotes, namely to believe in no other god beside Him; those who did not are called *al-mushrikūn*.²⁸

Ibn al-Kalbī seems to know more about the *talbiya* practices and refers to a South-Arabian tribe, ‘Akk, that also performed the *talbiya* whenever they set out on pilgrimage.²⁹ “They used to slaughter (*yanḥarūna*) and sacrifice (*yadhbaḥūna*)”³⁰ before all of them and they sacrificed to them (*yataqarribūna ilayhā*).” At the same time, Ibn al-Kalbī writes that “they practiced according to the superiority (*al-faḍl*) of the Ka‘ba, to which they went on *ḥajj* and ‘*umra*.” He describes their travels as “an imitation (*iqtidā‘i*) of what they did at the Ka‘ba, because of their devotion to it”.³¹ In this passage, the author uses three different expressions that convey the notion of sacrifice: *yanḥaru*, *yadhbaḥu* and *yataqarribu*.

In another section, he uses the second expression for the sacrifice, *dhabā‘ih*. In explaining the names of the different sacrifices, Ibn al-Kalbī gives an example from pre-Islamic poetry where the same vocabulary is applied,

second derivation from the root *sh-r-q*, which means “to cut into strips and dry in the sun” (Wehr 1980: 467).

26 Faris 1952: 5; cf. Atallah 1969: 4; Zakī 1924: 7. Faris translates into old English to reflect the religiously loaded language. Cf. al-Bukhārī [d. 257/870] n.d., *Al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*, *Hajj* (book).

27 Faris 1952: 5; cf. Atallah 1969: 4; Zakī 1924: 7.

28 This relates to the discussion in Hawting 1999 about who were the *mushkrikūn* and how and what did they believe. “And most of them believe not in God, without also associating other deities with Him” (Faris 1952: 5).

29 Faris 1952: 5–6.

30 Here both Faris and Atallah translate with only one term, “were wont to sacrifice” and “l’habitude de sacrifier” respectively. But because the Arabic text uses both *yanḥarūna* and *yadhbaḥūna* it is appropriate to translate with two different English words. See also Atallah’s comment (1969: 23) on *naḥara* as a specific word of interest. In another passage *naḥara* is associated with Isāf and Nā‘ila (Atallah 1969: 23) and al-‘Uzzā (Atallah 1969: 15).

31 All quotations are taken from Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 33–34.

describing the language thereof by means of the adjective *dhabīḥiya*: the poetry is “in the Arabic language of sacrifice”.³²

The sheep which they offered and slaughtered before their idols and baetyls were called *‘atā’ir* and *‘atira* in the Arabic language of sacrifice (*kānū yusammūna dhabā’iḥan al-ghanam allatī yadhbaḥūna ‘anda aṣṇāmiḥim w-aṣṇābiḥim tilka ‘atā’ir wa-‘atira fī-kalām l-‘arab l-dhabīḥiya*). The place on which they slaughtered and offered their sacrifice was called an altar (*wa-l-madhbaḥa alladhī yadhbaḥūna fīhi lahā li-‘itra*).³³

The poem (and Ibn al-Kalbī) refers to sacrifices to a certain deity: “He moved from there and reached the mountain top.” The altar is then described “as a high altar (*maṣṣib l-‘itr*)”³⁴ sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice (*dammā ra’sahu al-nusuk*).³⁵ The terms applied here, *‘atā’ir* (plural) and *‘atira* (singular), are derived from the root *‘-t-r*. According to Lane, the verb *‘atara* means ‘he slaughtered a sheep or a goat’. In pre-Islam *‘atara* was often connected to a man’s vow, and thus, *‘atira* and *‘atā’ir* mean ‘a sheep or a goat, which they slaughtered in the month of *Rajab*³⁶ to their gods or to their idols’. *‘Itr* means ‘an idol such as had victims (*‘atā’ir*) sacrificed to it.’³⁷ Atallah translates *‘atā’ir* as

32 “In the Arabic language of sacrifice”; this utterance is very interesting. The term *‘arabi* is witnessed as early as the 9th century BC, in some forty proper names in Assyrian accounts and later in tribal names in a North Arabian script. Pre-Islamic Arabian dialects are documented from the 3rd through the 6th century AD. Cf. Rabin 1960: 562, and Hoyland 2001: 229f.

33 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Atallah 1969: 28; Zakī 1924: 34.

34 *Maṣṣib* may mean ‘a place where something is planted, set up or erected; office, dignity, rank, position, post’ (Wehr 1980: 969). Cf. Hawting (1999: 59), who refers to some discrepancy in the research with regard to this word, but “it is generally understood to refer to stones connected to idolatry”. Cf. Crone and Silverstein 2010.

35 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 34.

36 The seventh month in the Islamic calendar. Wellhausen (1897: 74) emphasises that the month of *Rajab* was the month for sacrificial rituals and the pre-Islamic *‘umra*.

37 Lane 1874: 1946. He continues by saying that this was a habit in “the time of ignorance, and in the beginning of Islam” it was forbidden. The word *‘itra* originally meant ‘a stem of a tree’. Thus, it was used to signify ‘a man’s offspring, or progeny’. It is used for those descendents of the prophet’s family (*‘atira al-nabī*) that came after ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. There are also other definitions of sections of his family clan. Cf. Müller (1969), who maintains that the sacrifice “[l]eitete im Pre-Islam das Sommerhalbjahr ein. Die Umra fand statt – die nur auf Mekka beschränkte Wallfahrt” (93). Cf. Kister 1971b and von Grunebaum (1988: 36) who writes, “Like Passover it [*‘umra*] was held in early spring, in the month of *Rajab*, which Islam endeavoured to replace with its own sacred month of *Ramaḍān*. As late as the 12th century, however, the local population preferred performance of the *‘umra* in *Rajab* to any other time, though the connection between the nature of the festival and its timing had long since

‘pierres dressées’, ‘clothed stones’,³⁸ thereby underlining the characteristics of the deities Isāf and Nāʿila, that were dressed by the celebrants.

In his narrative about Amir ibn Wāthila Abū l-Ṭufayl, Ibn al-Kalbī introduces an analogy that refers back to pre-Islamic sacrificial practice. This man’s horse is described as covered in blood following a battle, just as the baetyls (*anṣāb*) were covered in (*darrajathu*) sacrificial blood before the advent of Islam.³⁹ The tension and possible conflict between the pre-Islamic sacrifices, where the offerings were made to a group of different idols, and the Islamic disregard of these is obvious in the following presentation. “The custodian of the idol Khuzāʿi ibn ʿAbd Nuhm (of the tribe of Muzayna) [...] heard of the Prophet, speeded to the image of the idols (*al-ṣanam*), and destroyed it (*kasarahu*).”⁴⁰ The custodian, who was at that time known for belonging to a group of divination practioners,⁴¹ continues his conversion story,

I went to Nuhm in order to offer unto it (*dhaḥabtu ilā Nuhm li-adhbaḥa ʿindahu*). A sacrifice of devotion, as I was wont to (*ʿatīrata nuskin kaʿlladhī kuntu aʿfalu*). But on second thought I said to myself, “This is but a mute god (*ilātun ʿayyukum*)⁴², dumb and mute of wit,” And I refused; from this day my faith is that of Muḥammad (*fa-dīnī l-yawm dīn Muḥammad*).⁴³ He is the God of heaven, the glorious, the generous.⁴⁴

The reason for *not* sacrificing is obviously the shortcomings of the deities.⁴⁵ They are *not* alive, as Ibn al-Kalbī says they must be. “Whenever”, he continues,

been forgotten.” In other words, Islam tried to move the celebration of the ʿumra from the month of *Rajab* to the month of *Ramaḍān*. See Faris 1952: 29; cf. Atallah 1969: 28 and Zakī 1924: 34.

38 Atallah 1969: 28.

39 Faris 1952: 37; Zakī 1924: 43. See also Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) 1993: 173–174.

40 My translation, cf. Faris 1952: 34 and Atallah 1969: 32. See Wellhausen 1897: 57–58 for more about Nuhm. Cf. Zakī 1924: 47 and Scagliarini 2007: 253.

41 Cf. Wheeler 2006: 29.

42 Faris and Atallah read the Arabic *abkamun*, ‘mute’. See Zakī 1924: 40 and footnote 2; Atallah 1969: 33, footnote 1, both French and Arabic part.

43 In his translation Faris adds ‘to sacrifice’ to “I refused”. Although the Arabic text lacks such a specification, this might be implied.

44 The last sentence is my translation, and I find it better than Faris’ (1952: 34): “[Servant of] the great God of heaven, the Excellent [Lord].” See Atallah 1969: 32–33; cf. Zakī 1924: 39–40.

45 The “shortcomings”, such as an animal’s defect or something wrong with the cow’s eyes, are also mentioned in Faris 1952: 18; cf. Zakī 1924: 20. Cf. Hawting (1997: 27) who refers to the Hellenistic-Jewish work, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (1st century BC or AD) 14:22–27, which describes the defects of the idols and maintains that they are “the cause of every evil” (v. 27).

“these stones resembled a living form (*tamāthil*) they called them idols (*aṣnām*).” *Ṣanam* (singular) and *aṣnam* (plural) are among the most common terms for ‘wooden idols’, but also idols made of gold or silver belonged to this category. Stone idols were “called *watan*”.⁴⁶

Consequently, from that day on he refused to bring offerings. Rather, like another passage renders, “he followed the Prophet, embraced Islam (*aslama*), and guaranteed to him the conversion of his tribe, the Muzayna”.⁴⁷ Ibn al-Kalbī uses both the terms *li-adhbaḥa* and *‘atīrata nuskin*. Other sacrificial expressions are absent. These short passages show that the pre-Islamic Arabs, according to Ibn al-Kalbī, had the Ka‘ba and the rituals around it as their main centre for religious practices but it was changed from the arrival of Islam and Muḥammad, the Prophet.

4.2.2 Other idols that were worshipped according to Ibn al-Kalbī

Isāf and Nā‘ila were two of the stone deities which the Meccans had in their midst. They were said to have been a couple that once undertook the pilgrimage. But they had (marital) sex (“committed fornication”) in the Ka‘ba at a time when it was forbidden, and in punishment they were transformed into two stones (*mishk*).⁴⁸ Each tribe that came to the Ka‘ba worshipped this couple.⁴⁹ Copies of the two stones were raised outside Mecca as a warning against sexual sins. Even so, “as their origin became remote and therefore forgotten, idol worship came into vogue, they were worshipped with the other images of deities”.⁵⁰ Ibn al-Kalbī continues by describing two idols that stood close to the the Ka‘ba and the Zamzam. He also mentions that the one close to the Ka‘ba was moved beside the Zamzam idols, “where they [the Quraysh] slaughtered (*yanḥarūna*) and sacrificed to both (*yadhbaḥūna ‘indahumā*)”.⁵¹ It was said that Isāf and Nā‘ila still wore the clothes they had been wearing at the time when they were turned

46 Faris 1952: 28; cf. Atallah 1969: 27; Zakī 1924: 33. Faris adds, “and images (*awthān*)”; however, there is no basis for this in either Atallah’s or Zakī’s version of the Arabic text. Lecker (1993: 337) refers to a story about a certain ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūh who, before he turned to Islam, wanted to talk to his idol. Behind this deity a woman stood and partly answered ‘Amr’s questions.

47 Faris 1952: 34; cf. Atallah 1969: 33.

48 In the same way as Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back. See Genesis 19:26.

49 Faris 1952: 8; cf. Zakī 1924: 9.

50 Faris 1952: 24–25.

51 See Faris 1952: 24–25; cf. Zakī 1924: 29; Atallah 1969: 23.

to stone. Later people redressed them in new clothes.⁵² Surprisingly, both terms, *yanḥarūna* and *yadhbaḥūna*, are used here to indicate that different kinds of sacrifices were brought to this place.⁵³ Isāf was also the deity for the tribe Banū Salima. They venerated her and sacrificed to her.⁵⁴

Riḥām in Ṣanʿā was another deity: “The Ḥimayr had also another sacred house (*bayt*) in Ṣanʿā. It was called Riḥām. And the people venerated it (*tuʿazzimūnahu*) and offered to it sacrifices (*wa-yataqarrabūna ʿindahū bi-l-dhabāʾih*).”⁵⁵ Ibn al-Kalbī uses here two terms for sacrificial rituals, *yataqarrabūna* and the noun *dhabāʾih*.⁵⁶

Another female deity was Manāt who was situated in Qudayd, between Mecca and Medina. She was the “most ancient of all (the deities) (*aqdamahā kullihā Manāt*)”, says Ibn al-Kalbī.⁵⁷ “All the Arabs used to venerate her (*tuʿazzimūhu*)⁵⁸ and sacrifice before her (*tadhbaḥu ḥawlahu*).⁵⁹ [...] They used to bring unto her their offerings (*wa-yuhdūna lahu*).”⁶⁰ They also named their children after her. Here again, Ibn al-Kalbī uses two sacrificial terms, *yadhbaḥūna* and *yihdūna*.

There is an interesting note on the religion of the Maʿadd tribe. They “were followers of a faith which still preserved a little of the religion of Ismāʿīl (*ʿalā baqīyya min dīn Ismāʿīl*)”.⁶¹ The Rabīʿa and Muḍar tribes were also “followers of a similar faith. But none venerated Manāt more than the Aws and the

52 Hawting (1997: 30) refers to Ibn Hishām ([d. 218/833] n.d. vol. 1: 82–83). See Wellhausen (1897: 77–78), who notes that al-Wāqidi (1966: 324, 336) and al-Ṭabarī (vol. 1: 1076, line 11) also talk about this pair of stones. Faris (1952: 34) and Zakī (1924: 39) also record that al-Uqayṣir wore garments.

53 Atallah (1969: 23) notes that this word is striking (‘frapper’) here, and he explains the slaughtering practice known as *naḥara*, which involves cutting the jugular vein of a big animal such as an ox or a horse, or only the throat of a small animal such as a goat or a sheep. He says that Ibn al-Kalbī thus shows how different animals were used for sacrifice.

54 Lecker (1993: 332) has especially analysed the deities of Medina and their relation to the different Median genealogies and the narratives about conversions to Islam.

55 Faris 1952: 10–11; cf. Zakī 1924: 11–13.

56 The terms *ḍaḥīyya*, *naḥara* and *hady* are absent.

57 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13–14.

58 *Tuʿazzimūhu*, second derivation from ʿ-ḏ-m, ‘to venerate; glorify’ (Wehr 1980: 623).

59 The Arabic text says *hu*, meaning ‘him’. Even if the name is female, the idol is a stone, referred to by an Arabic masculine noun. Al-Ālūsī adds this from his sources (so Zakī 1924: 13).

60 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13.

61 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13.

Khazraj”.⁶² There were pilgrimages to her sanctuary, and devotees observed vigils at specific locations. They also shaved their heads at Manāt’s sanctuary.⁶³ The pilgrimage to the Ka’ba was not considered complete by the tribe of the Aws and the Khazraj without a visit to Manāt.⁶⁴ According to Ibn al-Kalbī, an oath was also made to Manāt at the sacred place (*maḥall*) of the Khazraj.⁶⁵

Al-Lāt, a female deity, also called Allāt, a cubic rock standing in the Thaqīf, was “younger than Manāt (*aḥdāth min manāt*)”⁶⁶ and worshipped by “the Quraysh and all the Arabs”, who named their children after her.⁶⁷ Ibn al-Kalbī does not explicitly say that they sacrificed to her, but they venerated her around the advent of Islam. Under the stone of the goddess there was a cave (*ghabghab*),⁶⁸ where various gold ornaments and elaborate clothes etc. were

62 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13. Lecker (1993: 336–337) says that Manāt was also called Manāf and that this was a wooden idol. Moreover, Lecker (1993: 337, footnote 34) says that Manāf “was identical with the idol of the Salima and the idol of ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ, mentioned above as ‘Isāf’ and ‘Sāf’”. He goes on to explain that “Isāf is also the name of a Meccan idol”. In other words, these deities are *not* identical but two different ones.

63 Faris 1952: 12. Shaving at al-Uqayṣir is mentioned in Faris 1952: 33. Cf. Wheeler 2010.

64 Faris 1952: 13; cf. Zakī 1924: 14. See also Wellhausen 1897: 23–24. Al-Waqidi says that the *hajj* to the Ka’ba was not completed unless they shaved their heads at Manāt’s place. Those who shaved their heads did not undertake the run between al-Safa and al-Marwa. See Wellhausen (1897: 23–24), who also says that the Muslims knew the *mahall* or *mahill* (Q 2:192; 22:34; 48:25), the place where they sacrificed and shaved the head, the place where one went from sacred to profane space. Obviously, the Muslims removed the last station, namely the visit to Manāt’s place. Cf. Q 2:196.

65 Faris 1952: 13; cf. Zakī 1924: 14.

66 Faris 1952: 14; cf. Zakī 1924: 16. Yāqūt writes *akhadat*, ‘she took’, according to Zakī 1924: 16, note 1.

67 Faris 1952: 14; cf. Zakī 1924: 16. For more about al-Lāt, see Krone 1992. Hoyland says that Allāt was worshipped in the Hawran and the Syrian Desert and that a funerary text containing her name has been found in the modern Arab Emirates (Hoyland 2001: 142, 144 and 209).

68 Wellhausen (1897: 34) has shown that the sacrificial stones were often found close to caves (*ghabghab* or also referred to as *‘ab‘ab*). Lane (1877: 2222) emphasises that *ghabghab* comes from the noun *ghababun* that signifies the skin that hangs down beneath the chin and lower jaw on several animals. *Ghabghab* also means ‘a place where victims are sacrificed’, such as ‘a mountain’, or the place ‘where they used to sacrifice to al-Lāt’, or ‘an appellation of any place of sacrifice in Mina’. It has close connections to the pre-Islamic sacrificial rituals in Mecca. It was also used to signify a stone god or goddess. One was situated in the corner opposite the Black Stone at the Ka’ba (Lane 1877: 2222). The place of slaughter (*manḥar*) was called *al-ghabghab*,

kept. These facts indicate that sacrifices were offered to al-Lāt. She was called the “the Mother of the idols”.⁶⁹ It seems that the blood from the slaughter was thrown into the cave together with votive gifts. The caves were called *shizāna*, meaning treasure chambers.⁷⁰ Later, gifts were thrown into the Zamzam well.⁷¹

There is a third goddess beside Manāt and al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā, and she is the youngest (*aḥdath*) among them.⁷² She was located in the valley of Ḥurād on the road between Mecca and ʿIrāq. “They used to venerate her, offer gifts unto her (*yuhdūna lahā*), and seek her favours through sacrifice (*wa-yataqarrabūna ʿindahā bi-l-dhibḥi*).”⁷³ Over al-ʿUzzā, Zālim ibn Asʿad built a house, which became known as Buss, in which people received oracles.⁷⁴ Al-ʿUzzā was called the “the goddess of the morning star”.⁷⁵ According to al-Kalbī, all the Quraysh served al-ʿUzzā through sacrifices⁷⁶ and pilgrimages,⁷⁷ and there was an annual feast in her honour.⁷⁸ He even mentions that “the Apostle of God (*rasūl Allāh*) was once saying, ‘I have offered a dust-coloured sheep to al-ʿUzzā (*aḥdaytu li-l-ʿUzzā shātan ʿafrāʾan*)’,⁷⁹ while I was a follower of the religion of the people (*w-anā ʿalā dīni qawmī*)”.⁸⁰ Interestingly, there is no sign of hiding the pre-Islamic practice of the Prophet here, *dīn qawmī*.⁸¹ He sacrificed, as did his neighbours and relatives. In this passage, Ibn al-Kalbī uses many terms to express sacrificial matters: the verbs *yuhdūna lahā* and *yataqarrabūna ʿindahā*, and the nouns *dhibḥ* and *shātan ʿafrāʾ* for the sacrificial sheep itself.

the same as the sacrificial place for al-Lāt. Wellhausen (1897: 34) says that *this* cave was *not* used as a treasury; on this point he agrees with Lane (1877: 2222).

69 Wellhausen 1897: 27–29. Its name is found in Nabataean scripts.

70 Here gold and pure gifts were found during the renovation of the Kaʿba in ancient times.

71 Wellhausen 1897: 100.

72 Pavlovitch (1998–99: 73) refers to al-Ṭabarī’s commentary on Q 7:180, where he derives the name al-ʿUzzā from one of Allāh’s 99 beautiful names, *al-ʿazīz*. Likewise, he maintains that al-Lāt’s name derives from the name Allāh.

73 Faris 1952: 16; cf. Zakī 1924: 18.

74 Faris 1952: 16; cf. Zakī 1924: 18. Regarding oracles, see the narrative about ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in Chapter 7.

75 Wellhausen 1897: 29.

76 Faris 1952: 23; cf. Zakī 1924: 27.

77 See Wellhausen 1897: 33, where he refers to Ibn al-Kalbī.

78 Wellhausen 1897: 35.

79 Wehr (1980: 624) writes ‘dust-coloured’ and not ‘white’, the term used in Faris’ translation, 1952: 17.

80 Faris 1952: 16–17; cf. Zakī 1924: 19.

81 See Rubin (1995) and the discussion about whether or not Islamic literature concealed the non-Islamic practices of Muḥammad.

The three goddesses were often mentioned together and, as we have seen, they were compared in terms of age. Ibn al-Kalbī argues that there were a well-attested practice of naming children after the goddesses.⁸² “The Quraysh were wont to circumambulate the Kaʿba and said, ‘by al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā, and Manāt, the third deity besides. Verily they are the most exalted females’⁸³ whose intercession is to be sought’.”⁸⁴ Then Ibn al-Kalbī quotes the Qurʾān, 53:19–20, where it is said that God sent a warning that these three goddesses were only names; God had not sent any mediators.⁸⁵ Ibn al-Kalbī also refers to the interesting testimony of a man who turned away from serving al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā, and who no longer venerated Hubal either, “although”, as the man said, “it was our lord when I was young”.⁸⁶

The image of the idol Dhū l-Khalaṣa was made of white quartz with a crown upon its head.⁸⁷ It was situated seven nights’ journey from Mecca in the direction of Ṣanʿā. Here at least six different tribes came to sacrifice. Ibn al-Kalbī relates how people demolished the building standing over the stone after a battle in which more than a hundred people were killed. He says that, until his own time, this building had been the threshold of the mosque at Tabāla.⁸⁸

4.2.3 Divination arrows and oracles

In Ibn al-Kalbī’s account of pre-Islam divination arrows are referred to four times. Two of references are associated with the above mentioned stone idol Dhū l-Khalaṣa. The first (A) combines the aspects of breaking the arrows and throwing them at the sacred stone.⁸⁹

82 Faris 1952: 16; cf. Zakī 1924: 17.

83 *Gharānīq* in Arabic, which Lane (1877: 2253) says is usually translated with the name of the Numidian crane. But Lane also refers to different black and white birds with long necks that fly high in the air. Thus they are used in the Qurʾān to signify the three goddesses that are supposed to be intercessors sent by God and called the ‘daughters of God’ (*banāt Allāhi*) (Q 53:19–20). This idea has been a source of major controversy in Islamic theology. See al-Ṭabarī. *Jāmiʿul Bayān fī tafsīr il-Qurʾān*, vol. 27: 34–36.

84 Faris 1952: 17.

85 Faris 1952: 17; cf. Zakī 1924: 19.

86 Faris 1952: 19; cf. Zakī 1924: 22; for more on the validity of such statements, see Hawting 1999, Ch. 1. See also Pavlovitch (1998–99)’s interesting article about the pre-Islamic Kaʿba and the development of deities and one god.

87 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 34.

88 Faris 1952: 31; cf. Zakī 1924: 36.

89 This narrative is associated with Abraha al-Ashram, the ruler of Yemen (525–571 AD), who built a huge church called al-Qalīs, and threatened to bring an end to the

When Imru' al-Qays ibn Hujr [the famous poet] was on his way to raid the tribe of Asad, he passed by Dhū l-Khalaṣa. This was an idol at Tabala [in west Arabia], which all the Arabs venerated. Before it were three arrows (*thalata aqduḥ*): one indicating 'do it' (*al-āmir*), one indicating 'don't do it' (*al-nāhī*), and one indicating 'wait' (*al-mutarabbiṣ*). In its presence Imru' al-Qays three times (*thalātat marrāt*) made a random choice (*istaqsama*), and each time the 'don't do it' arrow came up. Thereupon he broke the arrows (*kasara l-qidāḥ*) and threw them at the face of the idol (*daraba bihā wajh l-ṣanam*), saying: "Confound you! If it had been your father who was killed, you wouldn't have been so obstructive."⁹⁰ Then he went off and successfully raided the tribe of Asad.⁹¹

These arrows are thrown at the images of the deities, when Imru' al-Qays wanted to sacrifice to them. He is then described as the "the first to denounce and renounce" what was practised in front of Dhū l-Khalaṣa.⁹² Only three arrows are thrown, and the main person throws them three times. It should be noted that the term *maysir* for this oracle ritual is not used here.

(B) In Ibn al-Kalbī's text this deity is mentioned once earlier, in connection with divination and the revenge of a father's death. "He, therefore, went to Dhū l-Khalaṣa, and shuffled the divination arrows (*astaqsama ʿindahū bi-l-azlāmi*), but they resulted in a negative message forbidding him to seek revenge."⁹³ This could be interpreted as a denial of an old tradition. Blood revenge does not seem to be a punishment accepted by Ibn al-Kalbī, even though we know that there were strict rules for avenging someone's murder.⁹⁴

(C) Divination arrows are mentioned in connection with the Ka'ba, the Quraysh and the deity Hubal, who was the greatest of all deities.⁹⁵ An image of Hubal was erected inside the Ka'ba, and is described as made of "red agate (*ʿaqīq aḥmar*), in the form of a man with the right hand broken off". He was called "Khuzayma's Hubal", because Khuzayma was the man who erected the image.⁹⁶

Arabs' pilgrimage in Mecca. Later he actually set out with his elephants for Mecca, in 570 AD, the probable year of Muḥammad's birth.

90 Faris (1952: 41) translates: "Go and bite your father's penis! Had it been thy father who had been murdered, thou wouldst not have forbidden me avenging him."

91 Translation by Hoyland 2001: 155–156; cf. Zakī 1924: 47.

92 Faris 1952: 41; 30; cf. Zakī 1924: 47.

93 Faris 1952: 30; cf. Zakī 1924: 35.

94 Crone 2002: 61–62.

95 Faris 1952: 23; cf. Zakī 1924: 27–28. See al-Masʿūdī ([d. 345/956] 1973. vol. 2: 239), who mentions that Hubal was found in Syria and brought to Mecca together with Isāf and Nāʾila. "The people in Mecca venerated and served them until Allāh revealed Islam and sent Muḥammad, peace be upon him."

96 Faris 1952: 23; cf. Zakī 1924: 27.

In front of it were seven divination arrows (*aqdūh*).⁹⁷ On one of these arrows was written (*maktūb*) ‘pure’ (*ṣariḥ*),⁹⁸ and on another ‘consociated alien’ (*mulṣaq*). Whenever the lineage of a new-born baby was doubted (*shakkū fī mawlūd*), they would sacrifice to it [Hubal] (*ahdaū lahu hadiya*) and then shuffle (*ḍarabū*) the arrows (*bi-l-qidāḥ*) and throw them. If the arrows showed the word ‘pure’, [the child would be declared legitimate and the tribe] would accept it. If, however, the arrow showed ‘consociated alien’ (*mulṣaq*), [the child would be declared illegitimate and the tribe] would reject him. The third arrow was for divination concerning the dead, while the fourth was for divination concerning marriage. The purpose for the three remaining arrows has not been explained.⁹⁹ Whenever they disagreed concerning something, or purposed to embark upon a journey, or undertake some project, they would proceed to it [Hubal] and shuffle the divination arrows before it (*istaqsamū bi-l-qidāḥi ‘indahū*). Whatever result they obtained they would follow and do accordingly.¹⁰⁰

Therefore, these arrows were used to decide on matters of life and death, whenever difficulties and questions arose that required solution.¹⁰¹ The text makes it clear that the oracle’s counselling was believed and trusted even if the answer was unpleasant or against the practioners’ logic.

(D) The fourth reference to arrows is very short. This is the tradition behind the sacrifice that was almost fulfilled by Muḥammad’s grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. In this text it is closely linked to the report about Hubal and the arrows thrown at him. Ibn al-Kalbī’s account is brief: “It was before [Hubal] that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib shuffled the divination arrows (*al-qidāḥ*).” The Arabic text adds, “*alā ibnihi ‘Abd Allāh*”, meaning, ‘(it showed) his son ‘Abd Allāh’.¹⁰²

We see that the specific names of the arrows are different, *al-azlām* (used only in B)¹⁰³ and *al-qidḥ* (used in the three other reports). Moreover, the names written on the arrows are not identical in the two different groups. Since the number of arrows varies, three and seven or unspecified, we must conclude that there was more than one kind of divination arrows. Were there at least two

97 *Qidḥ* (singular), *qidāḥ* or *aqdūh* (plural); both plural forms are used here. *Qidḥ* means ‘arrow shaft, divination arrow, arrow used for oracles’ (Wehr 1980: 745).

98 *Ṣariḥ* was also the term used for ‘fully accredited members’ of a tribe as distinct from the *shiqq* (‘side’) or the *shazā* (‘dispersed and scattered elements’) in pre-Islam, according to Crone 2002: 59.

99 What about the seventh arrow, *al-qidḥ al-mu‘allā*, which “was the best of them which won seven shares of the slaughtered camel”? See Wehr 1980: 745.

100 Faris 1952: 24; cf. Zakī 1924: 27.

101 Faris, 1952: 23–24; cf. Zakī 1924: 28.

102 Faris, however, adds, “in order to find out which of his ten children he should sacrifice in fulfilment of a vow he had sworn”. Cf. S.P. Stetkevych 1993. See Chapter 6.

103 *Azlām* (plural) of *zalam* means ‘arrow without head and feathers, used in divination’ (Wehr 1980: 381).

traditions, suggesting different things about how the ritual was performed? According to Wehr, the verb ‘to make a random choice’ (*istaqsama*) is used both for seeking ‘an oracle from the deity’ and for ‘casting lots’.¹⁰⁴ The verb is used in the first three passages (A, B, C) in relation to three and seven arrows, but not in the short report about Muḥammad’s grandfather (D). Ibn al-Kalbī’s text uses *ḍaraba bi-l-qidāḥ* twice (C and D). One possibility, following this review, is that we are dealing here with two different rituals with arrows or two variations of the same ritual. Alternatively, we are dealing with two oral traditions that Ibn al-Kalbī has combined.

4.2.4 Deities, sacrifices and altars

Concerning the deity al-Uqayṣir it is mentioned that the pious said, “I swore by the baetyl of al-Uqayṣir a solemn oath, where the foreparts of the heads and the lice are shaven.”¹⁰⁵ In pre-Islamic poetry there is a similar oath by Zuhayr, “I swear with all my might by the camps in Mina and by the place where the heads and (the nests of) the lice are shaven.”¹⁰⁶ This shows the practice of shaving the heads at the end of the pre-Islamic pilgrimage. The deity Suʿayr was once so covered with blood that a camel was frightened. The rider then said, “My young camels were startled by the blood of sacrifice (*naḡarat qulūṣī min ʿataʿira ṣurriʿat*), offered (*yaqdūmi*) around [...] on pilgrimage, and stand before it in fear and awe. Motionless and silent, awaiting its oracular voice.”¹⁰⁷ Here we are made aware of the celebrant’s sense of expectation, which involves strong feelings while awaiting the oracle’s answer. The terms *ʿataʿira* and *ṣurriʿat*¹⁰⁸

104 Wehr 1980: 763.

105 Faris 1952: 33; cf. Zakī 1924: 38.

106 Wagner (1988, vol. 2: 5) says that because the hair was not allowed to be cut during the pilgrimage, the lice increased immensely, thus creating a big problem for the pilgrim. See also W. Ahlwardt. 1870. *The Divans of the six ancient Arabic poets Ennābiga, ʿAntara, Tharafa, Zuhair, ʿAlqama and Imrūlqais*. London, 14, 6; *Primeurs arabes*, prés. par C. Landberg, II: *Diwān de Zoheyr avec le comm. d’el-Aʿlam*: 94, 12; *Sharḥ Diwān az-Zuhair. Ṣaḡʿat Thaʿlabī*, Ed. A.Z. al-ʿAdawī. 1964, Cairo, 99, 2. All references are taken from Wagner 1988.

107 Faris 1952: 35; cf. Zakī 1924: 41.

108 *Ṣurriʿat* is found as *ṣarʿā ladayhi* in a poem or saying from “one of the Arabs”, in connection with a place called *Ruhā* in the valley of Nakhla, where *Suwāʿ* was worshipped by the neighbouring Muḍar. Faris (1952: 49; cf. Zakī 1924: 57) translates: “And fill its courts with sacrifice / Picked from among the choicest flock.” Lane (1872: 1678–1679) says that the word *ṣurriʿat* comes from the root ṣ-r-ʿ, second derivation, passive, third person feminine. It originally meant ‘to be thrown down, prostrated’. Sometimes it is connected to madness or epilepsy. The word *ṣarīʿ* also signifies to be

are used. The latter word corresponds to the much more common term, *dhubihat*, which means ‘it was sacrificed’.¹⁰⁹ It is said that the circumambulation of the image of the deity was performed every evening¹¹⁰ and that young men did it over so many years that their hair or eyebrows became “almost grey”.¹¹¹ This suggests a continuous sacrificial tradition that seems to have lasted into the author’s own time. At least, the poem with its remarkable content was recited among Ibn al-Kalbī’s contemporaries.

A god called al-Fals was considered holy by the tribe of the Ṭayyīḥ. Its image “was a red (rock), in the form of a man”.¹¹² “They were wont to worship it (*kāna yaʿbudūnahu*), present their offerings unto it (*yuhdūna ilayhi*), and slaughter their sacrifices on its altars (*yaʿtirūna ʿindahu ʿatāʾirahum*).”¹¹³ A certain ʿAdī ibn-Ḥātim offered a sacrifice to (*ʿatara ʿindahu*) al-Fals, converted to Christianity and later to Islam.¹¹⁴ Here, Ibn al-Kalbī uses *yuhdūna* and the more uncommon, *yaʿtirūna ʿindahu ʿatāʾirahum*, both terms used as both verbs and nouns.

Ibn al-Kalbī deals with the subject of “sacrificial meat” twice. One of the passages in which he does so is a short note: “It was customary to divide (*qasama*) the flesh of the sacrifice (*hadāyāhum*) among those who had offered it and among those present.”¹¹⁵ *Hadāyā* is here the only term used for the sacrificial animal. The verb *qasama* is used to express the dividing of the meat. The second passage is satirical and starts with an interesting remark about the locality, which is once again the Ghabghab cave of al-ʿUzzā. “She also had a place of sacrifice where they used to slaughter their sacrifices (*kāna manḥar*

‘slain’, like a branch cut from a tree (Lane 1872: 1679). The word *maṣraʿ* (singular) from the same root means ‘a place of throwing down’, but also has another meaning, ‘a place of slaughter’. The plural *maṣāriʿu al-qawm* signifies the ‘places of slaughter of the people, or the party’ (Lane 1872: 1680).

109 Zakī 1924: 41, footnote 5.

110 Faris 1952: 42; cf. Zakī 1924: 36.

111 Faris 1952: 42; cf. Zakī 1924: 36.

112 My translation. Faris 1952: 51.

113 My translation. Faris (1952: 51) adds here in brackets “before its [ascent]”, but I do not know what he wants to underline. See also Zakī 1924: 59. *ʿatāʾir* is plural of *ʿatira*. It means either ‘sacrificial animals’ or the ‘altars’. Al-Wāqidi mentions that al-Fals or al-Fuls, as he writes, was destroyed by Ibn Khazm in year 9 AH (Wellhausen 1882: 389).

114 Faris 1952: 52; cf. Zakī 1924: 61; Wellhausen 1897: 51–53.

115 Faris 1952: 18; cf. Zakī 1924: 20.

yanḥarūna fīhi hadāyāhā) called al-Ghabghab.”¹¹⁶ This is the second time these rare terms, both derived from the root *n-ḥ-r*, occur in Ibn al-Kalbī’s text.¹¹⁷

Asmā’ was married to the jawbone (*lahy*) of a little cow (*buqayra*). Which one of the banu Ghanm¹¹⁸ had offered [as a sacrifice] (*ahdāhā*)? He noticed some defects (*qada’an*) of its eye (*fī ‘aynihā*) when he led it to the Ghabghab of al-‘Uzzā. Then it lay down, And they divided its sacrificial meat (*yuqasimūna luḥūm hadāyāhum*) among those who were present.¹¹⁹

An altar is not mentioned in this passage. Ibn al-Kalbī seems to stress the laying down of the animal and the subsequent dividing of the meat. The important message is the fact that the defects of the animal’s eyes are responsible, not for the unusual or inferior quality of the meat, but probably for the reputation of the persons connected to this incident.

4.3 Ibn Ishāq’s and Ibn Hishām’s descriptions

4.3.1 Pre-Islamic Mecca and its surroundings

In the first part of the *Sīra nabawiyya*,¹²⁰ pre-Islamic Mecca is described as having a place containing “pearls, topaz, rubies, gold, and silver”. Furthermore, Ibn Ishāq continues, “it was a temple in Mecca in which its people worshipped and where they prayed”.¹²¹ People circumambulated the temple, and venerated and honoured it. They shaved their heads and behaved with “all humility”. It was the temple “of their father Abraham, but the idols which the inhabitants had

116 My translation from Zakī 1924: 20. See also Faris 1952: 18.

117 Atallah 1969: 15; cf. Zakī 1924: 20. Another time it is associated with Isāf and Nā’ila (Atallah 1969: 23), leading Ibn al-Kalbī to remark that this word is surprising here. He explains the slaughtering practice known as *naḥara* (see Atallah 1969: 23). Cf. also a third usage, which is associated with the veneration of the ‘dressed idols’ (Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 33).

118 *Ghanm* was a man, called Ghanm ibn Firās de Kināna (Atallah 1969: 15). There is an interesting coincidence with the word *ghanam* (collective), which means ‘sheep, goats, small cattle’ (Wehr 1980: 686).

119 My translation is closer to that of Atallah 1969: 15. Cf. Faris 1952: 18; Zakī 1924: 20.

120 Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) 1955. *The Life of Muhammad*. A translation of Ishāq’s *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, with an introduction and notes by Alfred Guillaume. Oxford: Oxford University Press; hereafter: ‘Guillaume 1955’. See Guillaume 1955: xl. The edited Arabic text is: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām (218/833) n.d. *Al-sīra al-nabawiyya*. Ed. by Ṭaha ‘Abd ar-Ra’ūf Sa’d. 3 double vols. Beirut: Dār al-Jayl; hereafter ‘Ibn Hishām 218/833’.

121 Guillaume 1955: 8.

set up around it, and the blood which they shed there, presented an insuperable obstacle. They are unclean polytheists”.¹²²

After arriving at Mecca a king [Abū Karib Tibān As‘ad from Yemen] “went around the Ka‘ba, sacrificed and shaved his head, staying there six days (so they say) sacrificing animals which he distributed to the people and giving them honey to drink”.¹²³ He was also the first man to cover the Ka‘ba. He ordered people not to shed blood close to this sacred place and he made a door with a key for the building. It was also forbidden to commit grievous sins there. Such offences were to be punished in the most rigorous way.¹²⁴ Ibn Ishāq also describes the origin of the Jewish religion, without any hints at sacrificial practices, in Yemen.¹²⁵

More important for this study is the narrative about the temple of Riṭām, where *Shayṭān* was said to deceive his followers “in this way”, namely acting as the master of the place where “they offered sacrifices and received oracles when they were polytheists”.¹²⁶ Later the temple was destroyed, “and I am told”, Ibn Ishāq continues, “that its ruins to this day show traces of the blood that was poured over it”.¹²⁷

122 Guillaume 1955: 9.

123 Guillaume 1955: 9.

124 Guillaume 1955: 9. Lazarus-Yafeh (1981a: 27 and 139, n. 30) refers to the discussion whether the Ka‘ba should be washed or not, also whether it was allowed to enter it. Ibn Djubayr (d. 1217 AD) tells that it was opened twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, and the whole of the month *Rajab*. It was in the 13th century seen as a normal house of worship, empty and undecorated.

125 Guillaume 1955: 10: “The Yamanites say that a fire used to settle matters in dispute among them by consuming the guilty and letting the innocent go scatheless (*sic!*). So his people went forth with their idols and sacred objects, and the two rabbis went forth with their sacred books hanging like necklaces from their necks until they halted at the place whence the fire used to blaze out. On this occasion when it came out that the Yamanites withdrew in terror, but their followers encouraged them and urged them to stand fast, so they held their ground until the fire covered them and consumed their idols and sacred objects and the men who bore them. But the two rabbis came out with their sacred books, sweating profusely but otherwise unharmed. Thereupon the Himyarites accepted the king’s religion. Such was the origin of Judaism in the Yaman.”

126 Guillaume 1955: 10.

127 Guillaume 1955: 10.

4.3.2 Sacrifices and deities, and their abolition

According to Ibn Ishāq, the deities in pre-Islam originated because some people changed the pure religion of Ismāʿīl into “idolatry”. “The apostle said [to Akhtam ibn al-Jaun al-Khuzāʿī], ‘for you are a believer and he [ʿAmr ibn Luḥayy ibn Qamʿa ibn Khindif] is an infidel. He was the first to change the religion of Ishmael, to set up idols, and institute the custom of *baḥīra*, *sāʿiba*, *waṣīla*, and *ḥām*.’”¹²⁸ We find more passages about the images of the deities, in which the sacrificial rituals associated with them are also described. It starts with a people’s demand for more space and how they began to make stone pillars. “They say that stone worship among the sons of Ishmael began when Mecca became too small for them, and they wanted more room in the country.” Further, they took with them “a stone from the sacred area (*al-ḥaram*) to do honour to it (*taʿzīman li-l-ḥaram*). Wherever they settled, they set it up and walked round it as they went round the Kaʿba. This led them to worship what stones they pleased and those which made an impression on them.”¹²⁹

Thus as generations passed they forgot that which was before them and adopted (*istabdalū*) another religion (*bi-dīn*) for that of Abraham and Ishmael. They worshipped idols (*fa-ʿabadū l-awthān*) and adopted the same errors as the peoples before them. Yet they retained and held fast practices going back to the time of Abraham, such as honouring the temple and going round it, the great and the little pilgrimage, and the standing of ʿArafa and Muzdalifa, sacrificing the victims (*waḥadī al-budna*), and the pilgrim cry at the great and little pilgrimage, while introducing elements which had no place in the religion of Abraham. Thus, Kināna and Quraysh used the pilgrim cry: ‘At Thy service, O God, at Thy service! At Thy service. Thou without an associate but the associate Thou hast. Thou ownest him and what he owns.’

They used to acknowledge his unity (*fa-yuwaḥḥidūnahu*) in their cry (*bi-l-talbiyati*) and then include their idols with God (*thumma yudkhitūna maʿahu aṣnāmahu*), putting his ownership of them in His hand. God said to Muhammad: ‘Most of them do not believe in God without associating others with Him,’ in other words, they do not acknowledge My oneness with knowledge of My reality, but they associate with Me one of My creatures.¹³⁰

128 Guillaume 1955: 35. The passage opens with the *isnād*, “Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥārith al-Tamīmī has informed me that Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Sammān informed me”. Guillaume (1955: 35, footnote 3) refers to Ibn al-Kalbī. *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, Cairo 1924, 58. See Q 5:102–104. Ibn Ishāq explains these four deities in a separate chapter. In one of his comments he refers to the Qurʾānic material (Guillaume 1955: 40).

129 All quotations in this passage are taken from Guillaume 1955: 35–36. Cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 203–204.

130 Guillaume 1955: 35–36. Cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 203–204.

This passage is very similar to that of Ibn al-Kalbi.¹³¹ Especially interesting is the emphasis on God's unity. All terms are Islamic, thus making the time of Ibrāhīm totally Islamic. Twice the author uses the expressions *adkhala* and *idkhāl*,¹³² probably to emphasise what belongs and what does not belong to the Meccan area. Combined with the phrases *aḥrama* and *ḥaram*, the term *adkhala* directs the reader towards the idea that there are two different parts, the sacred and the non-sacred.¹³³

Al-Lāt¹³⁴ and Manāt are both referred to in Ibn Ishāq's text, and both are linked to idolatry, according to Islamic ideas, and to apostasy.¹³⁵ The most important point is that they are destroyed in Allāh's name. Ibn Ishāq mentions Muḥammad's victory over the deities many times.¹³⁶ When Muḥammad entered the Ka'ba, it was obviously the most important sign for the Meccans that he erased the drawings of the deities except those of Isā and Maryam, and that the idols were smashed. "You would have seen God's light become manifest. And darkness covering the face of idolatry," Faḍāla ibn al-Mulawwiḥ al-Laythī commented on commemorating the day of conquest.¹³⁷ The destruction of al-ʿUzzā in Nakhla was undertaken by Khālid on Muḥammad's instructions in the year 8 AH. It was "a temple", says Ibn Ishāq, "which the tribe of Quraysh and Kināna and all Muḍar used to venerate". Khālid met the defenders of the deity

131 Guillaume (1955: 36, n. 2) that this passage is borrowed from Ibn Kalbi's *Kitab al-asnam*. However, Ibn Ishāq, tends to follow the Qur'ān more closely than Ibn al-Kalbi does. Cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 203.

132 This means 'to bring in, to include' (Wehr 1980: 273).

133 Ibn Sa'd similarly reports that the prophet said: "I do not serve stones and I do not pray to them (*lā ʿabadu ḥajaran wa-lā aṣallī lahu*) and do not sacrifice to them and do not eat from that which was sacrificed to them (*wa-lā adhbāhu lahu wa-lā ākalu mā dhubiḥa lahu*) and I do not seek any oracle from the idols and I only pray to this house till I die (*wa-lā astaqsamu bi-l-azlāmi wa-lā aṣallī illā ilā hadhā al-bayti ḥattā amūtu*)." Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) (1904–1921) 1956. vol. 3: 380.

134 Guillaume 1955: 145 (Arabic text: 207).

135 Guillaume 1955: 207 (Arabic text: 303): "He [ʿAmr ibn al-Jamūḥ] was one of the tribal nobles and leaders and had set up in his house a wooden idol called Manāt as the nobles used to do, making it a god of reverence and keeping it clean." Some from his tribe became Muslims and in the night they crept to the idol and carried it away and threw it "on its face into a cesspit." ʿAmr was furious and searched for the idol, found it, cleaned it and perfumed it. The same happened several times until ʿAmr clothed the idol with his own sword and said that it must defend itself. His enemies came, cut the head off the idol and placed a dead dog around its neck. When ʿAmr saw this "he accepted Islam by the mercy of God and became a good Muslim." See Lecker 1993: 337.

136 Guillaume 1955: 552 (Arabic text: 821).

137 Guillaume 1955: 552 (Arabic text: 821; referring to al-Azraqī, vol. 1: 70 and 107).

and achieved a victory for Islam and against the Christian belief, Ibn Ishāq recounts.¹³⁸

4.3.3 *Hajj* and sacred time in pre-Islamic Mecca according to Ibn Ishāq

The people of Mecca, the tribe of the Ḥums, were proud of being the descendants of Ibrāhīm and the guardians of the sacred area, and especially of the House, the Kaʿba.¹³⁹ With regard to their ritual purity it is said, “They thought it wrong that they should eat cheese made of sour milk or clarify butter while they were in the state of *ḥaram* (*aḥrama*).”¹⁴⁰ Ibn Ishāq tells us that Q 7:27–29 was revealed in order to answer the question about clean or unclean food and traditions.¹⁴¹ The Ḥums kept the “sacred months and never wronged their protégés therein nor wronged anyone therein”.¹⁴² There were four sacred months, Rajab, Dhū l-Qaʿda, Dhū l-Ḥijja and al-Muḥarram, which, according to Ibn Ishāq, were already established in pre-Islam.

4.3.4 The Zamzam well and sacrifice

ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad’s grandfather, is associated with the digging of the well of Zamzam, which was situated between the images of the two deities (*al-wathanayn*), Isāf and Nāʾila, “where about the Quraysh slaughtered sacrifices (*tanḥaru ʿandahumā dhabāʾiḥahā*).”¹⁴³ [...] It is the well of Ismāʿīl the son of Ibrāhīm where God gave him water when he was thirsty as a little child.”¹⁴⁴ Ibn

138 Guillaume 1955: 565–566.

139 Guillaume 1955: 87 (Arabic text: 127).

140 Guillaume 1955: 87 (Arabic text: 127–128).

141 Q 7:27–29: “Children of Adam! Let not Satan deceive you, as he deceived your parents out of Paradise. He stripped them of their garments to reveal to them their nakedness. He and his minions see you whence you cannot see them. We have made the devils guardians over the unbelievers. When they commit an indecent act, they say: ‘This is what your fathers used to do. God enjoined it.’ Say: ‘God does not enjoin what is indecent. Would you tell of God what you know not?’ Say: ‘My Lord has ordered you to act justly. Turn to Him wherever you kneel in prayer and call on Him with true devotion. Even as He created you, so shall you return to Him’” (Dawood 1994: 110–111).

142 Guillaume 1955: 89 (Arabic text: 129).

143 *Tanḥaru ʿandahumā dhabāʾiḥahā*. Here, two different terms for the sacrificial elements are used, *n-ḥ-r* and *dh-b-ḥ*.

144 Guillaume 1955: 45 (Arabic text: 71). The first part is my translation from Ibn Hishām 218/833: 281.

Ishāq refers to a second version of this narrative that includes a small poem. When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib had asked, “What is Zamzam?”, he was told (by a woman), “‘Twill never fail or ever run dry. ‘Twill water the pilgrim company. It lies ’twixt the dung and the blood [of the flesh] (*wa-hiya bayna l-farṭhi wa-l-dami*).”¹⁴⁵ Guillaume considers it likely that the sacrificial animals were brought to a certain spot, and then led to the stone where they were sacrificed.¹⁴⁶

In one account, told by Ibn Hishām, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib dug the well although Shayṭān tried to stop him¹⁴⁷ and Quraysh did not like his digging.¹⁴⁸ Still, on doing so ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib found not just water, but also several valuable objects.¹⁴⁹ A female diviner (*kāhina*) from Syria (*al-sham*) was to be consulted, and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib rode to her with his men.¹⁵⁰ On their way, they were running out of water. He asked his fellow men to dig a hole, each of them in turn, but none of them found water. Then he asked them to ride on. As he stood up from his rest with his camel, a spring of fresh water spouted up and it was sufficient for everyone to drink.¹⁵¹ This was seen as a sign of God’s providence for his men. And thus, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was appointed guardian of the Zamzam in Mecca, and he and his companions interrupted the visit to the female diviner.¹⁵² This episode concludes with the following poetic injunction: “Then pray for much water as crystal clear. To water God’s pilgrims at the sites they

145 I have changed Guillaume’s (1955: 62) “the flesh bloody” to “the blood [of the flesh]”, since the Arabic word in the text is *dam* that means ‘blood’. Guillaume (1955: 62, footnote 2) comments that this is a typical example of an Arab oracle using the compositional structure called *saḥf*. He also refers to Q 16:65–67, “God sends down water from the sky with which He quickens the earth after its death. Surely in this there is a sign (*hudā wa-raḥmatan* means ‘guiding and grace’) for prudent men. In cattle (*an‘ām*) too you have a worthy lesson. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between the bowels (*garṭhin*) and the blood-streams (*damīn*): pure milk (*labanan khālīṣan*), pleasant for those who drink it. And the fruits of the palm and the vine, from which you derive intoxicants and wholesome food. Surely in this there is a sign (*āyatan*) for men of understanding” (Dawood 1994: 191). However, this does not correspond with this passage of Ibn Ishāq. The passage is probably rather based on a local narrative about a cow coming into the sacred area. She was slaughtered and the blood flowed into the earth. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib did not find any blood and dung, but the two nests of the ants and the raven. See Arabic text, Ibn Hishām 218/833: 277.

146 Guillaume 1955: 62 (Arabic text: 91).

147 Ibn Hishām 218/833: 280–281.

148 Guillaume 1955: 64.

149 Guillaume 1955: 64.

150 Ibn Hishām 218/833: 279.

151 Guillaume 1955: 64.

152 Guillaume 1955: 62–63 (Arabic text: 92).

revere (*yasiqī ḥajīja allāhumma fī kullī mabar*).¹⁵³ As long as it lasts you've nothing to fear."¹⁵⁴

When the Quraysh expressed doubt about 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's sincerity and ability to guard the spring of Zamzam, he was given a divine message, associating the spring with images of sacrifice and slaughter like "the blood [from the flesh]" and echoing the lines above with terms like "father eternally", "pact (*ʿaqdan*)" and "God hears most graciously".¹⁵⁵ The passage ends with the impressive and sacrificially related words, "It [the Zamzam] lies 'twixt the dung and the blood [of the flesh] (*wa-hiya bayna l-farṭhi wa-l-dam*)."¹⁵⁶

Still, another version conveys information about the sacrificial place between the two deities. This time Ibn Ishāq's text talks about a raven (also mentioned earlier) that was picking in the dust at the place where the well would be dug. A man from Quraysh appeared and forbade 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to dig there, but he did not cease with his activity and went on to find the valuable water. He also uncovered certain precious objects, two golden gazelles and two swords, left by former servants of the sacred place.¹⁵⁷ In order to decide whom these things belonged to, he used the method of the divination arrows (*mayṣir*), throwing six arrows, two for the Ka'ba, two for the Quraysh and two for himself. A male leader was in charge of the activity. The arrows were thrown beside Hubal, the god in the middle of the Ka'ba. The result came out in favour of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and the Ka'ba. The two golden gazelles were assigned to the sacred place, the two swords to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. But he went to the Ka'ba, "made the swords into a door for the Ka'ba and overlaid the door with the gold of the gazelles", and after that he became the keeper of the water supply for the pilgrims.¹⁵⁸ Henceforth he was associated with the centre of Mecca by eternal ties. Later, Ibn Ishāq informs the reader that Zamzam was superior (*afḍal*) to all other wells the Meccans had dug. One account says that "people went to it because it was in the sacred enclosure, [...] and because it was the well of

153 *Allāhu fī kullī mabar*; the editor of the Arabic text says that *mabar* comes from *al-barr* and means 'land' (Wehr 1980: 49) (Ibn Hishām 218/833: 280, footnote 1). This might tell the reader that God is supposed to be everywhere.

154 Guillaume 1955: 63, cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 280.

155 Ibn Ishāq says, "God sent Gabriel, who hollowed out a place in the earth with his heel where water appeared" (Guillaume 1955: 45).

156 Guillaume 1955: 63–64 (Arabic text: 93); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 280.

157 Wheeler (2006: 29ff) delves into several narratives where mythical and real swords play a role in the Islamic history. The treasury was said to have been the tomb of Adam; cf. Wheeler 2006: 15.

158 Guillaume 1955: 64 (Arabic text: 94). Lots and arrows, see Crone and Silvestein 2010: 423–450.

Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm”.¹⁵⁹ The pride of the people is obviously an important aspect of the following poem in praise of Zamzam. Here Ismā‘īl’s name is not mentioned:

Glory came to us from our fathers.
 We have carried it to greater heights.
 Do not we give the pilgrims water (*alam nasq al-ḥajjīja*)
 And sacrifice the fat milk camels (*wa-nanḥaru d-dallāfa r-rufadā*)?
 When death is at hand we are found
 Brave and generous.
 Though we perish
 A stranger shall not rule our kin (*fa-lam numlik*),
 For none can live for ever (*wa-man dhā khālid abadan*).
 Zamzam belongs to our tribe (*fī arūmatinā*).¹⁶⁰
 We will pluck out the eyes of those who look enviously at us.¹⁶¹

Here, the Zamzam well is a sign of enduring traditions connected to “us”, “our kin”, “our tribe” or “our roots”, as opposed to “a stranger” and “those who look enviously at us”. It is not surprising that water should be considered important for pilgrims in the desert, but the meat coming from “fat milk camels” is also an ingredient of Arabian nutrition. The digging of wells, and especially of the Zamzam, seems to be an essential part of the image this text wants to create of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and consequently of his grandchild, Muḥammad.

4.4 Pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrifices described by al-Ṭabarī

4.4.1 *Tawḥīd* and time

The introduction in al-Ṭabarī’s main historical work, *Taʾrīkh*,¹⁶² about Allāh’s unity and oneness (*tawḥīd*), constitutes a point of entry to his texts on sacrifice and to the narratives containing sacrificial elements. It is impossible to understand his writings on rituals, including sacrifice, without first studying this introduction. His understanding of fixed time(s) that reflect(s) Allāh’s will and plan is also significant for his writings about topics like pilgrimage and other

159 Guillaume 1955: 65 (Arabic text: 96); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 285.

160 *Arūma* or *urūma* means ‘root, origin; stump of a tree’ (Wehr 1980: 13). This underlines the aspect of origin and originality more than the word ‘tribe’.

161 Guillaume 1955: 66 (Arabic text: 96); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833: 286.

162 Al-Ṭabarī. (d. 310/923) 1989, volume 1, the Arabic text is *Taʾrīkh ar-rasūl wa l-mulūk*. Ed. by J. Barth, Th. Nöldeke. The references for the quotations are given as follows: the English translation is always first; the Arabic original follows in square brackets.

characteristically Islamic rituals. In this section I will look at what he writes about pre-Islamic sacrifices, however, aware and conscious of the inclusion of “Islamic” elements in these narratives, since al-Ṭabarī’s presentation of the pre-Islamic topics is mixed with and coloured by later Islamic views.

Al-Ṭabarī underlines the importance of *tawhīd* as the background for all the Islamic rituals and religious duties. He argues for Allāh’s fixed time for the pilgrimage by quoting Q 2:189, where it is said, “They question you about phases of the moon. Say: ‘They are seasons fixed for mankind and for the pilgrimage.’”¹⁶³ The seasons of harvest and spring, for example, are seen as signs sent by Allāh for people who fear him. Time is a symbol for Allāh’s graciousness and generosity. When al-Ṭabarī asks, “What is time?” and “How long is its total extent?”¹⁶⁴ the main answer is that Allāh is the only one that is eternal, unique and all-powerful. It is impossible to say what came before He created and what will follow the final annihilation.¹⁶⁵ This argument is used against those who say that the total extent of time is seven thousand years, and against others who say six thousand years.¹⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī continues his introductory exposition with an account of “the times of the messengers and prophets and how they lived, [...] as well as the events that took place in their age”.¹⁶⁷ The events he describes include details of sacrificial rituals and ideas from pre-Islam as well as from the Islamic era.¹⁶⁸

The author trusts in Allāh to give him the strength to write what he intends. He continues by saying that “time (*zaman*) is the hours of night and day. This may be said of both long and short extents of time.”¹⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī presents several sources and *aḥādīth* in which the Prophet expresses his closeness to Allāh’s time(s), here called “the Hour”: “I was sent together with the Hour like these two, pointing with his two fingers, the middle finger and the index finger,

163 Dawood 1994: 29.

164 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 169 [I: 5].

165 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 169 [I: 5].

166 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 172–173 [I: 8]. He mentions different sources for these time assessments.

167 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 169 [I: 6].

168 Mårtensson (2001) argues that in order to understand al-Ṭabarī’s concept of time and continuity between pre-Islam and Islam, we need to use the term “testament”. Supposedly, he is open to the idea of a Third testament, following after the Old and the New Testaments. Hence, according to Mårtensson, al-Ṭabarī understands the agreement between God and the Muslims as the Third testament. I am not convinced about this idea, and will, consequently, analyse the pre-Islamic and Islamic sacrificial rituals in al-Ṭabarī’s *History* in the light of ritual theory.

169 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 171 [I: 7].

like the excess length of that one.”¹⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī presents many aspects of philosophical and Qur’ānic argumentation. He concludes by repeating the essential idea of his introduction: he is an advocate for *tawḥīd*. In the text about Adam and his children, he considers Iblīs or Shaitān as the main threat to Allāh’s unity.¹⁷¹ Iblīs came to Hava (Eve) to tempt her and offered to let her son, if born healthy, bear the name, ‘Abd al-Ḥārith, meaning ‘the servant of the ploughman’.¹⁷² The text clearly implies that the son therefore would be a sign for Shaitān’s rule in her life. The son was born,¹⁷³ but although Adam¹⁷⁴ had warned Hava against Iblīs’ temptation *after* both of them being driven “out of Paradise”, he still had to confront the fact that he could have been tempted by Iblīs.¹⁷⁵ Hence Adam is understood to be a Muslim long before the Islamic era.

4.4.2 The aspect of time in Adam’s life

Al-Ṭabarī reminds the reader of the unity and sovereignty of Allāh. Nothing is ever free from his sight and will. Allāh is thus the ruler over time and all the rituals He has ordered. “Thus, the conclusion is that the Creator of all things existed while there was nothing but He. He originated all things and then administered them.”¹⁷⁶ Al-Ṭabarī says that the prophets underline the validity of this message, and then he adds for his own part,

We have mentioned as much as we have in this book of ours only because it is our intention to fulfil the condition laid down by us in its beginning that we would mention time (*al-azminah*, ‘the times’) and the history of the kings, prophets, and messengers. Dates and times are fixed as to their (precise) moments by the measurements of the hours indicated by the sun and the moon running in their spheres, as we have mentioned in the reports transmitted by us on the authority of

170 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 181 [I: 13].)

171 Al-Ṭabarī (1989. vol. 1: 249 [I: 78]) about Iblīs or Shaitān.

172 Wehr 1980: 166.

173 “God brought him out healthy. Yet Hava called him ‘Abd al-Ḥārith. This is (meant by) God’s word: ‘They set up for Him associates in connection with what he had given [...] And God is above your associating (others with Him)’” (al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 321 [I: 150]). Cf. Q 7:190: “Yet when He had granted them a goodly child, they set up other gods besides Him in return for what He gave them. Exalted be God above their idols!” Cf. al-Ṭabarī: *Tafsīr*, vol. 9: 100.

174 For details of Adam’s life in early Islam, see Schöck 1993.

175 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 321 [I: 150].

176 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 198 [I: 29].

the Messenger of God. Whatever took place before God created the sun and the moon, took place outside of moments and hours and night and day.¹⁷⁷

The first persons to be introduced by al-Ṭabarī are Adam and Hava. Both Adam and his sons Qābil and Ḥābil perform slaughters and sacrifices and are thus of interest to the current study. Al-Ṭabarī's concept of time is seen in Adam's life first and foremost through the emphasis he puts on Friday as opposed to the other days. His argumentation is presented in a long study of different traditions.¹⁷⁸ God's creation of Adam, His expulsion of him from Paradise, His acceptance of his repentance all occurred on Fridays. It was also on a Friday that He let Adam die. God will let the Hour come on a Friday. Friday is "the lord of the days".¹⁷⁹ During a particular hour on Friday God will even "give a human everything he asks for, unless it be something forbidden".¹⁸⁰ Additionally, al-Ṭabarī transmits traditions about Friday as "more revered in the eyes of God than the Day of Breaking the Fast (the first of *Shawwāl*) and the Day of Slaughtering (the tenth of *Dhū-l-ḥijja* 10)."¹⁸¹

Adam's importance as a messenger is stressed throughout the texts that al-Ṭabarī wrote about him.¹⁸² Adam was "created by [God's] own hand and He blew some of His spirit into him. He commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam, and they did." Iblīs, however, refused to do so.¹⁸³ Adam is described as having "royal authority and rulership on earth". "God made him a prophet and a messenger to his children,"¹⁸⁴ al-Ṭabarī says, and continues, "He revealed to Adam twenty-one scrolls. Adam was taught them by Gabriel and wrote them down with his own hand."¹⁸⁵ And "among the things God reportedly revealed to Adam was the prohibition against eating dead

177 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 248 [I: 77]; cf. al-Ṭabarī. 1990: vol. 9: 113 [I: 1754], where he says, "Time has completed its cycle [and is] as it was on the day that God created the heavens and the earth. The number of months with God is twelve: [they were] in the Book of God on the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred, the three consecutive [months] and the Rajab, [which is called the month of] Muḍar, which is between Jumādā [II] and Sha'bān."

178 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 282, 290 [I: 111, 119].

179 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 282, 334 [I: 111, 163].

180 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 283 [I: 112].

181 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 282 [I: 111]). This reverence may be stressed in the description of the Islamic pilgrimage. Compare the importance of Friday to the importance of the Sabbath in Jewish tradition.

182 See Schöck 1993: 173 and esp. her chapter 6 about the prophethood of Adam. Cf. Katz (2004: 111) underlines the role of the Adamic prototype of the *ḥajj*.

183 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 327 [I: 156].

184 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 322 [I: 151].

185 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 322 [I: 151].

animals, blood, and pork”.¹⁸⁶ Adam is thrown out of Paradise by God and lands, according to most of al-Ṭabarī’s texts, in India.¹⁸⁷ After some time he is sent to Mecca.¹⁸⁸ “(On the way, every) place where he set his foot became a village, and (the interval between) his steps became a desert until he reached Mecca.”¹⁸⁹ He also met his wife Hava again on ‘Arafāt.¹⁹⁰ There, God sent down a jewel (*yāqūt*) from Paradise which marked the location for the *Ka’ba*. Therefore, Adam “continued to circumambulate it, until God sent down the flood. That jewel was lifted up, until God sent His friend Abraham to (re)build the House. This is God’s word: ‘We established for Abraham the place of the House as residence.’”¹⁹¹ Adam’s greatness and tasks are described in different ways.

Then, when God saw the nakedness of Adam and Hava, He commanded Adam to slaughter a ram from the eight couples of small cattle He had sent down from Paradise. Adam took the ram and slaughtered it. [...]¹⁹²

Then he took its wool, and Hava spun it. He and Hava wove it. Adam made a coat for himself, and a shift and a veil for Hava. They put on that clothing. Then God revealed to Adam: I have a sacred territory around My Throne. Go and build a house for me there! Then crowd around it, as you have seen My angels crowd around My Throne. There I shall respond to you and all the children who are obedient to Me.¹⁹³

This narrative can be seen as a story about a necessary slaughtering so that Adam and his wife can make clothes for themselves. It is also possible to regard this slaughtering as probably being a sacrifice. In other words, al-Ṭabarī introduces the themes of slaughter and sacrifice from the very beginning. They constitute activities that naturally belong to the condition of being human and a Muslim. But in these versions nothing is said in Allāh’s name, *bismillāhi*, and there is no indication in the text itself that the sacrifice was seen as being made to Allāh.

186 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 324 [I: 152].

187 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 290–292 [I: 119–121].

188 See also Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845) 1985. vol. 1: 35, line 18; al-Ya’qūbī (d. c. 293/905) 1960. vol. 1: 3, 9–11; al-Tha’labī (d. 427/1035) 1991: 31, line 6–7; Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) (1960) 1993: 15, line 9.

189 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 293 [I: 122].

190 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 303–304 [I: 133, lines 12–14]. See also Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845) 1985: vol. 1: 36, line 9; al-Mas’ūdī (d. 345/956) 1973. vol. 1: 37.

191 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 293 [I: 122]. Another version adds more details, and importantly, the loud cry of *labbayka* (al-Ṭabarī [d. 310/923] 1989. vol. 1: 301 [130–131]). See also Q 22:26. See further, as well, al-Ṭabarī: *Tafsīr* (to Q 2:30), vol. 1: 448, 599; vol. 1: 199, 8–10.

192 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 294 [I: 123].

193 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 294 [I: 123]).

Another version does not emphasise the slaughtering, but rather the practical side of life, their clothing only. Allāh sent an angel to teach them what to wear as coverings for themselves. The main issue here is their nakedness and how Allāh found a solution to this problem. Rituals that included the naked performance of pre-Islamic rites were to be avoided. Nakedness is seen as one of the ungodly signs of *jāhiliyya*, the time of ignorance.¹⁹⁴

4.4.3 Questions about slaughtering and food

Questions need to be raised about Adam's rituals in and outside of Mecca. Had any slaughtering taken place before this? Or is this slaughtering the first and original one? Did Adam and Hava need any food, any meat? Al-Ṭabarī's text does not say anything about this. However, he does tell us that Allāh's providence was sufficient. There were sixteen sheep (or cattle), and one of them was to be slaughtered in order to provide what was needed for clothing. Later al-Ṭabarī tells us that Adam was cast down from Paradise to a place where "there was no longer plentiful food and drink. He was taught how to work iron, and he was commanded to plough."¹⁹⁵ Instead of being a slaughterer, Adam is described here as the first farmer. All his hard work is seen as a result of Iblīs' tempting of him and Hava. Their disobedience to God leads to difficulties in obtaining food and clothing.¹⁹⁶ In another version Adam and Hava do not eat at all during their first two hundred years on earth because they were mourning the loss of Paradise.¹⁹⁷

Al-Ṭabarī refers to Persian sources which indicate that Adam was not the initiator of slaughtering. The original slaughterer was a ruler called Oshajanj who ruled over seven regions for forty years. He was the "one who commanded people to kill beasts of prey and use clothing made from their skins as well as mats and to slaughter cows, small cattle, and wild animals and eat their meat".¹⁹⁸

Another source used by al-Ṭabarī gives a shorter version than the one recorded above.¹⁹⁹ It says that Adam left India to go to Mecca on pilgrimage. He performed the rituals of the pilgrimage. When he wanted to return to India he was told by the angels standing in the mountain passes of 'Arafāt that he had undertaken the rituals faultlessly. "This surprised him. When the angels noticed

194 Al-Bukhārī (d. 257/870). n.d. vol. 5: 108–110; al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 303–304 [I: 133].

195 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 299 [I: 129].

196 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 300 [I: 129–130].

197 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 303 [I: 132–133].

198 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 341–342 [I: 171].

199 A shorter version than in al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 290–292 [I: 119–121].

his surprise, they said: ‘Adam! We have performed the pilgrimage to this House two thousand years before you were created.’”²⁰⁰ Here, al-Ṭabarī underlines the ideas of time once more. The rituals have been performed since the dawn of time, and Adam, the first man, performs them correctly after he has been thrown out of Paradise. Two thousand years before him man was absent, only Allāh and the angels existed.²⁰¹ We are given the impression that the religious rituals associated with Mecca and its surroundings have never been changed or transformed. Before the advent of man, the angels were performing the rituals, which have existed in the sacred sphere from the very beginning of time, a realm where they are beyond the invention of man. Only Allāh could have imagined them, and besides Him, the angels, as this passage tells us. Al-Ṭabarī’s text shows that the eternal rituals in Mecca are meant to exist for one reason only, to honour Allāh’s name and majesty.²⁰²

Al-Ṭabarī continues to describe the sanctuary and its functions, which exceed the House itself. God “being in everything and together with everything, shall make that House a safe sanctuary whose sacredness will extend to those around, those underneath, and those above it. He who makes it sacred with My sacredness obligates Me to be generous to him.”²⁰³ Then al-Ṭabarī continues describing the tired pilgrims coming to Mecca and crying the *talbiya* and the *takbīr*.²⁰⁴ God promises that Adam shall remain in Mecca “as long as you live. Then the nations, generations, and prophets of your children shall live there, one

200 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 295 [I: 124]; cf. al-Yaʿqūbī (d. ca. 293/905) 1960. vol. 1: 3.

201 See also al-Yaʿqūbī 1960. vol. 1: 3, line 15, and al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035) 1991: 75, lines 13–15. Schöck (1993: 183–185) has shown on the basis of early Arabic sources that Adam was considered to be the first man to build a house and the person to have built the Kaʿba, which he circumambulated (*tawāff*); or he circumambulated a tent from Paradise (*khayma*) that was later taken up to heaven, where it represented the ‘visited house’ (*bayt al-maʿmūr*). All the main pilgrimage rituals were introduced by Adam according to the sources referred to in Schöck’s research. Cf. Katz 2004.

202 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 301 [I: 131]; God addresses Adam thus, “I shall have some of your children praise and sanctify Me on it. I shall have houses raised for mentioning Me on it, houses in which My creatures will give praise and mention My name. I shall have one of those houses singled out for My generosity and distinguish it from all others by My name and call it My House. I shall have it proclaim My greatness, and it is upon it that I have placed My majesty.” Cf. al-Masʿūdī ([d. 345/956] 1973. vol. 2: 238), who writes about “the seven glorious houses (*al-buyūt al-sabaʿ al-muʿazzama*)” that are found in various Islamic and non-Islamic areas. The house of *al-ḥarām* takes the most prominent position among them.

203 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 301 [I: 131].

204 See Kister 1980b.

nation after the other, one nation after the other.”²⁰⁵ There are elements of the pilgrimage ritual in this passage. Allāh is the great host who receives his guests. The ideal of hospitality is addressed to the Meccans. All needs of the pilgrims have to be taken care of. The promises are clear, the pilgrims’ children, or more extensively, all mankind, will be blessed and receive Allāh’s eternal grace. Adam is supposed to stay there for the remainder of his life. After Adam the House was meant as a residence for Ibrāhīm, who was also the one to rebuild it.²⁰⁶

4.4.4 Adam’s offspring and sacrifice as a test

Adam begot sons and daughters. They are all described as followers of Allāh, who makes covenants with them. They are also asked, “‘Am I not your Lord?’ and they said: ‘Yes’”.²⁰⁷ Al-Ṭabarī refers to Adam’s two sons, Qābil and Ḥābil. Interestingly, these two sons find a peculiar solution for their complex attitude to their sisters. They argue about them as if they were potential wives rather than sisters. Qābil is in all senses presented in more negative terms than Ḥābil. He boasts of his age, being their father’s legatee, and of being better than Ḥābil. Further, he boasts that his twin sister is more beautiful than Ḥābil’s sister. Adam is absent during the marriage ceremony. Having left for Mecca he is unable to influence his sons (and daughters). The question about marriage between brothers and sisters is not raised in the first text; later traditions include warnings against intermarriage.²⁰⁸ It was also said that marrying one’s sister was the only way to find a wife when there were no other women on earth.²⁰⁹

Qābil was a farmer and Ḥābil a herdsman. Qābil was the older of these two. [...] When Adam had left, Qābil and Ḥābil offered a sacrifice. Qābil had always boasted of being better than Ḥābil, saying: I am more deserving of her, because she is my sister, I am older than you, and I am the legatee (*waṣī*) of my father. For their sacrifices, Ḥābil offered a fat young sheep, and Qābil a sheaf of ears of corn. Finding a large ear, Qābil husked and ate it. A fire came down from heaven. It consumed Ḥābil’s offering and left that of Qābil. Whereupon Qābil got angry and said: “God accepts only from those who fear Him. If you stretch out your hand to

205 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 301 [I: 131].

206 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 320 [I: 149].

207 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 304 [I: 134].

208 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 309 [I: 139].

209 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 310 [I: 140].

kill me, I shall not stretch out my hand to kill you to.” And his soul suggested to him that he kill his brother.²¹⁰

Beauty is the standard of value in this text.²¹¹ The question of which woman is the more beautiful and who deserves this beautiful woman is tested through sacrifice. Could this be interpreted as an aetiological case where the source seeks to explain the origins of sacrifice? An explanation might also be intended for the significant linkage of beauty and sacrifice.²¹² However, probably of greater importance is the standard of piety in relation to the offerings of the sons. Prior to the sacrifice, this story says nothing explicit about their piety, and no Islamic or *jāhili* signs of recognition or denial are attributed to them. They are Adam’s sons, from his loin.²¹³ It is said: “Qābil got angry and said: ‘God accepts only from those who fear Him’”. This indicates that Qābil realises that his corn sacrifice is less acceptable to Allāh than Ḥābil’s ram. But the account is inconclusive with regard to the matter of who is the more pious of the two.

The shortest and most explicit version of the narrative about Qābil’s and Ḥābil’s sacrifices describes a few of the pilgrimage rituals, among which the most important is the *ramī*, the seven throws of pebbles at the three *jamarāt* at Mina. Here we are confronted with long historical lines beginning with the sentence, “I went with Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr”, whereupon we are told that the persons mentioned in the story went to Mina to throw pebbles during the Islamic *ḥajj*. After a lengthy discussion about who married whom, the narrative ends by telling that they offered sacrifices. The sacrifice consisting of a ram was accepted, while the one made by the farmer was rejected. “That ram remained in custody with God until He let it go as Isaac’s ransom. He [Ḥābil] slaughtered it upon this rock on Thabīr at the mansion of Samurah al-Ṣawwāf, [that] is at your right hand when you throw your pebbles.”²¹⁴ “So they offered a sacrifice” is mentioned as an obvious and natural matter of fact. What the offering of the farmer consisted in is not mentioned; it might be of no interest. The main topic is the ram even if it is not described. Here the long line of history contained in this text finds its starting point.

The chosen ram of Ḥābil was appointed to be the chosen ram of Ibrāhīm. It was under Allāh’s guardianship for an unknown number of years. It never grew old or unworthy of divine acceptance. The core phrase is possibly, “That of the

210 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 308 [I: 138]. The same as Genesis 4:2, “Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.”

211 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 308–310 [I: 137–139].

212 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 340 [I: 169–170].

213 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 315, 320 [I: 145, 149].

214 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 310 [I: 140].

one with the ram was accepted, while that of the farmer was not.”²¹⁵ It might be that this sentence contains the key to understanding the sacrifice offered by Ibrāhīm. Allāh’s acceptance is accorded only to the ram and the person who sacrificed it, Ḥābil. The sacrifice of the farmer, Qābil, i.e. both his sacrificial material and his way of offering it, is not accepted by Allāh. Incidentally, the strong and ideal man is consequently the shepherd rather than the farmer.

There are no further comments by al-Ṭabarī and the transmitters he draws from.²¹⁶ They are preoccupied with the idea of binding and keeping the “Adamic” and the “Abrahamic” worlds together. The whole world is under divine rule and not led by any human being, but exclusively by Him. The ram is kept by the everlasting Allāh. Thus, the ram is the connecting link between these two periods of time; it passes into the time of al-Ṭabarī himself and of those who read his history. Even more important, Allāh the ram-keeper is the binding element between these two episodes of great sacred relevance. Allāh is described as the one who has the authority to “let the ram go” in order to serve as Ibrāhīm’s sacrifice. He is the one who can release a ram for sacrifice here, and he can also bind and refuse because he is *al-māni‘u*, one who refuses and sends away.²¹⁷ In this version the ram is not given such a significant description as in the former version, where the ram is described as “the noblest, fattest, and best of his small cattle, which he was fond of”.²¹⁸

Interestingly, it is Ishāq who is the victim in this narrative about Ibrāhīm’s near sacrifice, and not his brother Ismā‘īl. On this topic al-Ṭabarī seems to feel more or less free from any dogmatic understanding of the sacrifice and he is referring to sources in which both Ishāq and Ismā‘īl occur as the intended sacrifice.²¹⁹ The two stories mentioned above take place on the same mountain peak, Thabīr, close to the place where Muslims later were instructed to throw pebbles at the image of Shaitān. Al-Ṭabarī refers to this link in history without further comment and, as usual, shows his command of historical lines.

215 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 310 [I: 139].

216 But another source relates that Qābil killed Ḥābil by crushing his head with a big rock. The problem in the story that follows this version is not so much Ḥābil’s death, but the fact that Qābil does not bury his brother and leaves him naked (al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 309 [I: 138]). Another source tells us that Qābil followed his brother who was with the herd, and killed him (al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 311 [I: 141]). In the Genesis version the shepherd’s precedence is probably based on God’s care for the socially weaker person; the shepherd was of lower social status than the farmer, who was also in most cases a landowner.

217 One of Allāh’s so-called 99 most beautiful names.

218 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 313 [I: 142]. These are signs that are found in other descriptions of the sacrificial ram in Mina.

219 The intended sacrifice in Q 37, cf. Chapter 3. Cf. Firestone 1990a; Mårtensson 2001.

4.4.5 Mortality and sacrifice, fire and sacrifice

Al-Ṭabarī could have omitted any philosophical and hermeneutical questions on the sacrificial topic later in his book, but he does not. Instead, he continues,

Let us now return (to our narrative) and provide further clarification concerning the error of those who said that the first to die on earth was Adam, and who denied that the two whose story is told by God in His word: ‘And recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam truthfully! They offered a sacrifice,’ came, as shown by this verse, from Adam’s loin.²²⁰

Even if the main question raised in this passage is whether Adam was the first mortal man, the sacrifices made by Qābil and Ḥābil are of importance to the Muslim descendants. Have they influenced the later practice of sacrificial rituals associated with the *ʿid al-aḍḥā*? This narrative is obviously important to al-Ṭabarī, but I wonder why he gives expression to such doubt. Apparently, it is a question that had to be confronted. Further, we must ask: were questions about this story and its validity raised already among Muḥammad’s contemporaries, as well, or only later in al-Ṭabarī’s own time?

The author refers to a further source which says that Ḥābil’s sacrifice was accepted by fire, and he is sometimes described as a fire worshipper.²²¹ Then the reader is urged to “set up a fire for yourself and your descendants”.²²² This is an invitation to a practice at quite some distance from Islamic monotheism. The custom in question goes back to Persian religion. Thus, in the way they perform their rituals, neither Qābil nor Ḥābil is considered a Muslim. Qābil is linked to the killing of his brother Ḥābil in this text, but this happened before Iblīs came to him.

In another passage it is said that Qābil fled to his father Adam in Yemen when Iblīs appeared. How this flight took place is not explained. Qābil is not punished for his killing, but is referred to as “the temple builder”. And this temple is not the Ka’ba in Mecca, but a fire temple. Hence, Ḥābil is interpreted as the first man who worshipped fire. His brother and murderer, Qābil, was the person who followed up his religious duties.²²³

220 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 320 [I: 149]. The Qur’ān quotation is taken from Q 5:27.

221 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 337, see also 308 [I: 167, 138].

222 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 337 [I: 167].

223 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 337 [I: 167]. This differs from Genesis 4:4–5, where God did not show his acceptance of Abel’s offering by fire but just accepted it without any explicit signs. I will also mention the interesting version rendered by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035) 2002: 76, where he writes: “(Ibn Ishāq) said: ‘They both placed their offerings on the mountain; fire came down from Heaven and consumed not one grain of Cain’s offering because he was not pure of heart, whereas the offering of Abel was accepted because he was pure of heart. That lamb kept grazing in the Garden until it

4.4.6 Al-Ṭabarī's version of the narrative about Qābil and Hābil

Al-Ṭabarī gives an astonishing version of Qābil's lack of repentance after the killing of his brother, which he must have taken from an Aramaic or Syriac Bible translation.²²⁴ It is interesting to see that al-Ṭabarī leaves this version, with merely minor variations from the Hebrew Bible, without contradiction and almost without comment.²²⁵ Al-Ṭabarī's use of the Bible is an interesting topic that cannot be analysed here.²²⁶

Al-Ṭabarī does not refer to the story of the sacrifice when discussing the text from the Torah, but, interestingly, having recounted the story, he continues by saying that there is a connection between sacrifice and murder, "others have said concerning the subject: The one of them killed his brother because God commanded them to offer a sacrifice. The offering of one of them was accepted, but that of the other was not. The latter loathed the other and killed him."²²⁷ Hence, the one who killed his brother was provoked to do so by Allāh's rejection of his sacrifice. Consequently, there is an implicit accusation against Allāh for not having prevented the murder, which He could have done had He not asked for a sacrifice. Hatred or envy is what motivated the killing. Al-Ṭabarī seems to wish to give a broad presentation of this narrative. Probably, he wants to express all the feelings of mankind; hatred, love, evil, murder, etc., and his sources help him to handle this task. He also presents sources that seek to explain the origin of killing. This aetiological account of illegitimate killing places responsibility firmly on the shoulders of Adam's son. "Adam's first son shares the responsibility for every soul that is wrongfully killed. That is because he was the first to institute killing."²²⁸

was sacrificed as a ransom for the son of Ibrāhīm, for that is what He said: *'It was accepted of one of them and not accepted by the other; ["I will surely slay you," said one. "God accepts only from the righteous," said the other].'* (Q 5:27). They went down from the mountain and parted ways, but Cain was angry because God had declined his offering."

224 Rosenthal (al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 312, footnote 877) writes: "What follows is one of the rare instances of a quite literal translation from the Bible (Genesis 4:9–16). It is based not on the Hebrew Bible but on one of the early translations, most likely one into Aramaic / Syriac."

225 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 312 [I: 141–142].

226 Hence, I must content myself at the moment with recommending the works of Calder 1993b; Rippin 1993 and Mårtensson 2001 and 2014.

227 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 312–313 [I: 142].

228 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 315 [I: 145].

4.4.7 Sacrifice and charity according to Islamic tradition

Al-Ṭabarī deliberately uses his broad knowledge to present a number of versions of this story, which seem to connect the sacrifice with the idea of charity.

In connection with the affair of Qābil and Ḥābil, (it should be kept in mind that) there were no indigents to be given charity (from the sacrifice). Sacrifices were simply offered. While the sons of Adam were sitting (at leisure some day), they said: “We should offer a sacrifice.” When someone offered a sacrifice pleasing to God, God sent a fire to consume it. If it was not pleasing to Him, the fire went out. So they offered a sacrifice. One of them was a shepherd, and the other a farmer. The shepherd offered the best and fattest of his animals, while the other offered some of his agricultural produce. Adam’s son said to his brother: “Should you (be allowed to) walk among men who have come to know that you offered a sacrifice that was accepted, while my sacrifice was rejected?” “Indeed not! The people must not look at me and at you (and think of) you as being better than I.” And he said: “I shall kill you.” His brother countered: “What is my sin? God accepts only from those who fear Him.”²²⁹

The phrase, “When someone offered a sacrifice pleasing to God”, suggests that the two brothers must have known an earlier sacrificial narrative or practice. The rest of the sentence, “God sent a fire to consume it”, also indicates that offerings were regularly made in those times. Allāh’s sending of a fire to consume the sacrifice is understood as a sign of His acceptance thereof. The fire in this case is not related to Persian fire worship, but to Allāh’s well arranged appraisal of this specific sacrifice. The focus is Allāh and not man.

This version conveys the idea that the story happened so early in history that nobody was poor or in need of charity. The sentence, “Sacrifices were simply offered”, suggests that the transmitters want to explain *that* offerings were made, but not *why*. They do not support their argument with specific reasons, aims or consequences. From the point of view of the transmitters, and also probably from al-Ṭabarī’s, the offerings were simply a part of daily life. Additionally, it seems that they want to emphasise that man has made sacrifices since the beginning of his existence. We saw above that where the Meccan rituals are concerned, offerings were previously made by the angels. This seems to be one of al-Ṭabarī’s main pillars concerning Mecca.

At the time of the transmitters and of al-Ṭabarī himself (about 900 AD), the question of charity was a familiar theme in relation to offerings to Allāh. Charity must have been associated with offerings throughout al-Ṭabarī’s time.²³⁰ Was the sacrifice thus explained as an action done in honour of Allāh? The transmitters describe their own experience in terms of stories from the past and

229 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 313 [I: 143]; cf. al-Ṭabarī: *Tafsīr*, vol. 6: 120, to Q 5:27.

230 Cf. Zysow 2002 and Weir [Zysow] 1995.

seem to regard chronology as more or less irrelevant. However, chronology is one of the distinguishing marks of al-Ṭabarī's history.²³¹

231 Al-Ṭabarī. 1989. vol. 1: 318–320 [I: 147–149]. “The history (or chronology) of the world's bygone years is more easily explained and more clearly seen based upon the lives of the Persian kings than upon those of the kings of any other nation. For no nation but theirs among those leading their pedigree back to Adam is known whose realm lasted and whose rule was continuous. [...] Thus, a history based upon the lives of the Persian kings has the soundest sources and the best and clearest data” (al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 319 [I: 148]). Mårtensson (2005) offers some interesting comments on chronology.

Chapter 5

The Sacrifice of Ibrāhīm

5.1 Introduction

Many early Islamic sources present Ibrāhīm and his family in Mecca.¹ We have already discussed the material from the Qurʾān. The texts selected here are taken predominantly from al-Ṭabarī, supplemented with some texts from al-Yaʿqūbī, who restricts the use of *asānid* and shows a critical distance to his sources and to the historical events, especially those that occurred long before his own time,² and further with some texts from al-Kisāʾī,³ who represents the same historical period as al-Ṭabarī, but writes in a much more popular style. Because al-Ṭabarī analyses a conspicuous number of versions, his work has become the most important source for many academic studies.⁴

5.2 Al-Yaʿqūbī

The *Taʾrīkh* al-Yaʿqūbī⁵ constitutes the earliest surviving world and “universal” history in the Arabic historical tradition. In his two-volume world history, al-Yaʿqūbī includes a lengthy story about Ibrāhīm and a narrative about the near sacrifice of his son. After a long description of the holy places around Mecca, in which Ibrāhīm takes Ismāʿīl to the different stations of the *ḥajj* rituals and explains all the names (etiological stories), the story continues,⁶

1 For more about Ibrāhīm, see Athamina 2004 and Sinai 2011.

2 Khalidi 1994: 115–116.

3 Al-Kisāʾī (3rd–4th/10th cent.) 1978. Al-Thaʿlabī ([d. 427/1035] 2002) will also be examined to some extent.

4 Especially Firestone 1989 and 1990.

5 Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 293/905) 1960.

6 My translation is based on the Arabic edition al-Yaʿqūbī. 1960: vol. 1: 27–28. Professor (emeritus) Stefan Schreiner, whose lectures I attended at the University of Tübingen in 1999, has made an interesting comparison between this passage and the text about Ibrāhīm in *Pirque DeRabbi Eliezer* (9th century AD) 1916, according to which the *aqedah* was the last and the greatest of the ten tests of Ibrāhīm, and where the author uses many Arabic names for the persons associated with Ibrāhīm. I am sorry that I do not have had access to Schreiner’s article about the “binding” of Isaac (Schreiner 2012).

Then he went to al-Mash'ar, and he fell asleep there, and Allāh ordered him to sacrifice (*dhaḥbuhu*) him [his son]. Here the traditions differ between Ismā'īl and Ishāq. Some say that it was Ismā'īl, because he was the one who founded his House (*baytahu*), while Ishāq was in al-Sha'm (Syria). And others say that it was Ishāq, because he [Ibrāhīm] had expelled him [Ismā'īl] and his mother with him. At that time he was [still] a boy (*ghulām*) and Ismā'īl was a grown up man.⁷ The traditions are multiple in these two questions, and people differ between them.⁸

There is an openness regarding both sons as potentially having been the object of the near sacrifice. Al-Ya'qūbī is not afraid of admitting the ambivalence among Muslims in this matter; they “differ between them”. But he obviously regards Ishāq as the most satisfactory candidate of the two because he was the younger. The following morning the father went to Mina, where he said to the boy, “Visit me in the House”, and “Allāh has ordered me to sacrifice you”. Here we notice a clear geographical correlation between the sacred house, understood as the Ka'ba, and the subsequent sacrificial act. The son answered, “My father, do what you are ordered!” The father then instructed him to lay down on his side, even to his forehead (*jamrat al-ʿaqaba*), and he took

the knife on to his throat, and turned his face away from him. Jibrīl turned the knife over. And when Ibrāhīm looked up [again], the knife was turned over (*maqlūb*).⁹ And he did this three times. Then [there was] a voice (*nūdiya*) [saying], “O Ibrāhīm, you have been truthful to the vision (*ru'yā*).” Jibrīl took the lad, and a ram fell down from the top of Thabīr.¹⁰ Then he placed it on his [the lad's] place and slaughtered it (*dhabahahu*).¹¹

Al-Ya'qūbī comments that “the People of the Book say that it was Ishāq, and this happened with him in the desert of al-Amūriyīn in al-Sha'm”. Thus the reader is notified that the geographical link to Ishāq is al-Sha'm (Syria) and *not* Mecca or Mina. Neither is the reader left in any doubt that this narrative is meant to explain the pilgrimage ritual in relation to Mecca, and that Ibrāhīm's oldest son was *the* teacher of the sacred rites. “He ordered (*awṣā*) his son Ismā'īl to stay at the holy house (*bayt al-ḥarām*) and to keep on [teaching] to the people their pilgrimage and their rituals (*hajjahum wa-manāsikahum*).”¹²

7 Or rather, ‘A man to whom there were born [children]’.

8 Al-Ya'qūbī 1960. vol. 1: 27–28.

9 Al-Tha'labī (2002: 159) also states that the knife was turned over, but does not mention the name of Jibrīl.

10 Al-Tha'labī (2002: 159) mentions this mountain as the place of the whole sacrificial act.

11 Al-Ya'qūbī 1960. vol. 1: 27–28.

12 Al-Ya'qūbī 1960. vol. 1: 27–28.

In the passage that follows, al-Yaʿqūbī includes a controversial sentence that seems to contradict the statement of Q 112, according to which “He [Allāh] begot none”; in contrast, the universal historian says, “And he [Ibrāhīm?] said that Allāh is rich [in terms] of numbers (*makhṭūrun ʿadadihi*), and fruitful (*muthmirun*) [in terms] of descendents (*naslihi*), granting his son blessing and goodness.” This sentence can be interpreted in two ways. Either, Allāh, has many “descendants”, understood as ‘followers’, or alternatively, the statement refers to the fruitfulness of the living son of Ibrāhīm, and hence of the children of Adam and of man. To finish the story al-Yaʿqūbī writes that “Sara died on their travel back to al-Shaʿm, and Ibrāhīm married Qatūra and she bore to him many children [...] And Ibrāhīm died on the 13th day of the last part of the month of Ab, and his time was 195 years”.¹³ Hence, the reader realises that Ibrāhīm did not die without children. None of them was sacrificed even if the father had shown the willingness to do so.

5.3 Al-Ṭabarī

5.3.1 Ibrāhīm

Al-Ṭabarī wrote extensively about Ibrāhīm, the *ḥanīf* and the friend of the Merciful. I will not cover all aspects of his life here,¹⁴ but will concentrate on what is related to pre-Islamic idols and sacrifices. According to al-Ṭabarī, Ibrāhīm stood out as exceptional already from his early childhood. His father, Āzar, was visited by astrologers, who told him that he would beget a son by the name Ibrāhīm, “who will abandon your religion and break your idols”.¹⁵ The

13 Al-Yaʿqūbī 1960: vol. 1: 27–28. Al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 164) adds that Sara became 127 years old and died in Jabāriah in Canaan. Hagar died in Mecca, before Sara, and was buried in Hijr. Ibrāhīm had thirteen sons in total from four wives. Ismāʿīl settled in Hijaz and Ishāq in Shaʿm. When they complain that they are scattered on dry land, their father answers them that they have been taught one of Allāh’s names and it will support them with rain and assistance, and later a breeze from Paradise comforts Ismāʿīl. Al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 164–169) writes that Ibrāhīm was the most pious man of all Muslims before the Prophet Muḥammad.

14 Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) 1987. *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh al-rasul wa al-mulūk): an annotated translation*. vol. 2. Prophets and Patriarchs (Bibliotheca Persica), translated by William M. Brinner. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press. Hereafter “Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2”, with the Arabic text noted in brackets “[I: pp.]”.

15 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 50–51 [I: 254–256]. Making idols was his father’s living. Further, Abraham was born in a cave by his young mother, who was afraid of King Nimrod. She left the boy in the cave and on returning to look after him, she “found

narrative tells how he wonders about the creation and refers his creed to the one God, “I am free from all the things which ye associate. [...] I am not an idolater.”¹⁶ Although Ibrāhīm sold idols for his father,¹⁷ he was destined to fulfil the saying of the astrologers. One day he saw his neighbours placing food in front of the gods. The gods did not eat it and they did not answer the worshippers’ requests. “Then he attacked them, striking them with his right hand. He took a piece of iron and cut off each idol’s extremities, then suspended the axe from the neck of the largest idol and went out.”¹⁸ Later, when Ibrāhīm was accused of destroying the idols, he said that the bigger one had done it himself.¹⁹ The fact that the god did not speak was the main proof of its falsity.²⁰ In order to convince the worshippers further “[h]e told them proverbs and provided examples to make them see that God had more right to be feared and worshipped than anything else that they worshipped besides Him”.²¹

Al-Ṭabarī explains in several ways how Ibrāhīm consistently and diligently held on to his monotheism even when king Nimrod and his people imprisoned him and the women began to gather firewood in order to burn him.²² Having been put in a cave, he was observed together with another person, whom Ibrāhīm said was an angel sent “to comfort him”.²³ This narrative ends with an extraordinary history of a near conversion and sacrifice. King Nimrod was so impressed by Ibrāhīm’s faith and courage that he said,

“O Ibrāhīm! I shall offer a sacrifice to your God (*innī muqarribun ilā ilāhika qurbānan*)²⁴ because of his glory and power, which I have seen, and because of what He did for you when you refused to worship or ascribe unity to any but Him. I shall offer up to Him four thousand cattle (*innī dhābiḥun lahu arba‘a alāf baqara*).” Thereupon Ibrāhīm said to him. “God will not accept anything from you (*lā yaqbalu*

him alive, sucking his thumb. It is said—and God knows best—that God had placed Ibrāhīm’s sustenance in it.”

16 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 51–53 [I: 255–257]. According to this and other versions, Ibrāhīm grew up very fast. He was also hidden from people other than his mother and his father.

17 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 55 [I: 259]. See Ginzberg (1937) 1998. vol. 1: 195.

18 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 55 [I: 259]. Ibn Ishāq’s version says, however, that he used an axe, and “[w]hen the largest of the idols remained, he tied the axe to the idol’s hand and left them” (al-Ṭabarī: II: 56 [I: 260]).

19 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 56 [I: 260].

20 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 57 [I: 261].

21 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 57 [I: 261].

22 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 58–59 [I: 262–263]. See Ginzberg (1937) 1998. vol. 5: 212, footnote 33.

23 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 60 [I: 264–265].

24 *Muqarribun* and *qurbān* both derive from the root *q-r-b*.

Allāhu minka) as long as you keep any vestige of this [old] religion of yours (*min dinika*).²⁵ You must leave it for my religion (*tufāriquhu ilā dīni*).” Nimrod answered, “O Ibrāhīm! I cannot abandon my kingship, but I will slaughter the cattle for Him (*adhabaḥuhā lahu*).” And he slaughtered them (*dhabaḥahā*). Then he left Ibrāhīm alone, and God held him back from him.²⁶

The text tells us what the king thought about this sort of sacrifice and why he was willing to sacrifice such a large amount of animals. The king was probably surrounded by religions for which slaughtering of animals was a regular part of their rituals.²⁷ When Nimrod’s offer was rejected in favour of Ibrāhīm’s own religion, we cannot, however, observe any further concern about the consequences of a discrepancy between the king’s willingness and the actual rejection.

Al-Ṭabarī lets Ibrāhīm speak of his religion as the religion of Islam. When he travelled through a land of “a certain tyrant”, he lied about his wife, Sara, saying she was his sister.²⁸ However, later he told her that, “You are my sister in God, for in this land there are no Muslims except ourselves”.²⁹ Thus, Ibrāhīm and Sara are described as exclusively Muslim, different from the rest of their neighbours. Sara³⁰ was the daughter of the king of Ḥarrān, and Ibrāhīm married her “since he would thus be able to have a believing wife without having to convert her”.³¹ Ibrāhīm’s own father was, however, no Muslim, and, according to al-Ṭabarī’s text, Ibrāhīm asked his father³² to convert to his religion, but he refused.³³

Sara and Ibrāhīm did not have any children, but according to al-Ṭabarī they were told by a “guest who had more goodness and beauty than any guests to

25 *Din* means ‘religion’ or rather ‘custom’.

26 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 61 [I: 265].

27 Mythical Persian figures, like Azi Dahāka, “who sacrifices a hundred stallions, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep to Anāhitā in order to obtain a wish”, are mentioned by Brinner among those who might have been the Middle Persian Bēwarāsp, also called al-Ḍaḥḥāk (al-Ṭabarī. 1991. vol. 3: 18, footnote 107).

28 Later, the author (1987. vol. 2: 64 [I: 269]) says, “Ibrāhīm never said anything untrue except these things”. For Abraham’s lie about Sara in the Hebrew Bible, see Genesis 12:11–13, 17–19 and 20:2–5.

29 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 63 [I: 268].

30 Al-Ṭabarī (1987. vol. 2: 62 [I: 267]) says, she is “one of the best human beings that ever existed. She would not disobey Ibrāhīm in any way, for which God honoured her.”

31 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 62 [I: 267].

32 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 128 [I: 346] remarks that “[h]is father was in charge of King Nimrod’s idols”. Later this version says that Nimrod imprisoned him for seven years.

33 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 62 [I: 267].

whom he had given hospitality before” that they would get a child in spite of Sara’s old age, according to some, ninety years. Sara laughed at this.³⁴ This message provides the background for the further narratives about Ibrāhīm and his sons, Ishāq and Ismā‘īl.

5.3.2 Ibrāhīm and his family in Mecca

Al-Ṭabarī emphasises the story of Ibrāhīm’s and Ismā‘īl’s building of “the House”, i.e. the Ka‘ba,³⁵ before continuing the narrative about Sara and Hagar and the sons Ibrāhīm had with his two wives.³⁶ Evidently, several versions of these narratives were in existence, and al-Ṭabarī was aware of the differences. Sometimes he refers to them without stating a clear preference for any of the two sons, or occasionally, it seems that he prefers Ishāq.

The narrative about Hagar searching for water for her son, Ismā‘īl, is repeated several times with minor differences.³⁷ The search led to the finding of the Zamzam well, and her running seven times forth and back between the two mountain tops al-Marwa and al-Ṣafā provided the basis for the pilgrimage ritual of the *sa‘y*. Then “[...] God commanded Ibrāhīm to build the House and call on humanity to perform the pilgrimage, [...]”³⁸ and to “proclaim unto mankind the

34 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 67 [I: 272]. See also Ginzberg (1937) 1998. vol. 1: 241–242; al-Kisā‘ī 1978: 155–156; al-Tha‘labī 2002: 70–71; See also al-Ṭabarī (1987. vol. 2: 115 [I: 331]), where he refers to another version of this narrative about Ibrāhīm and guests coming to him and his wife. Reynolds (2011: 588) refers to different Islamic interpretations of Sara’s laughter. We may also ask whether al-Ṭabarī mentions this laughter because he wants to allude to the fact that the proper name Ishāq comes from the Semitic root *s-h-q* or *ṣ-h-q*, which in Hebrew means ‘to laugh’; cf. Genesis 21:3–6 about the giving of the name Ishāq to be the son, prepared in the earlier incidents related in Genesis 17:17 (Abraham laughs at the news of becoming a father) and 18:12 (Sara laughs).

35 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 69–72, 79 [I: 274–277, 285–86].

36 See al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 127 [I: 345], where al-Ṭabarī says that “Ibrāhīm had eight sons altogether, including Ismā‘īl and Ishāq. Ismā‘īl was his firstborn, the eldest of all his offspring.” Later, the text says, “Ismā‘īl, his eldest, whose mother was a Copt named Hagar; and Ishāq, who was blind and whose mother was Sara bint Bethuel ibn Nahor ibn Serug ibn Reu ibn Peleg ibn Eber ibn Shelach ibn Arpachshad ibn Sem ibn Noah” (al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 129 [I: 348]).

37 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 73, 74–75, 76 [I: 279, 280–81, 282–83].

38 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 71 [I: 277].

pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on lean camels; they will come from every deep ravine.”³⁹

When Ibrāhīm complained to Allāh about his weak voice while calling to pilgrimage, our text says that God answered, “Proclaim! The reaching is my responsibility”,⁴⁰ whereupon Ibrāhīm cried out the call. Al-Ṭabarī also introduces the cry of *labbayka* here, in connection with Ibrāhīm’s pilgrimage, although the first versions include no account of a complete Islamic pilgrimage ritual.⁴¹ However, in what follows al-Ṭabarī presents the whole *manāsik* of the pilgrimage in a version that he attributes to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salama—Muḥammad ibn Ishāq—ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUrwa.⁴² This version is introduced by the sentence, “Then he took Ismāʿīl out and went with him on the day of Tarwīya⁴³ and stayed at Mina with him and with the Muslims who were with him, and he prayed with the prayers of midday, afternoon, sunset, and late evening,”⁴⁴ just like a good Muslim should perform the prayer (*ṣalat*) in the Islamic era. As mentioned above, it is vaguely explained *whom* Muslim transmitters regarded to be Muslims in Ibrāhīm’s days. Al-Ṭabarī then describes in detail the different prayers performed during *ḥajj*. However, when it comes to the rituals in Mina, he says, “He showed them the sacrifice-ground of Mina (*w-arʿāhu l-manḥara min Minā*), then performed the sacrifice (*thumma naḥara*) and shaved his head (*ḥalaqa*).”⁴⁵

Interestingly, neither the earlier version nor the later of the near sacrifice of his son, nor any other parts of the narrative about him sacrificing his son, are alluded to in this part of the *manāsik*. What is given is a fairly short, but detailed order of the pilgrimage rituals. In this passage Ibrāhīm is the one who showed the whole ritual to his son and to his fellow Muslims. Several times it is repeated that “[h]e showed them how to perform”.⁴⁶ One source adds, “According to Abū Jaʿfar—the Messenger of God and some of his companions: Gabriel was the one

39 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 79 [I: 286]. See also Q 22:28: “Exhort all men to make the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on the backs of swift camels from every distant quarter” (Dawood 1994: 236).

40 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 79 [I: 286].

41 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 78, 80 [I: 285, 287].

42 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 81 [I: 288].

43 Brinner says to *tarwīya*: “The eighth day of the pilgrimage. The name is interpreted as meaning either ‘satisfying thirst’ [because camels are given drink] or, more likely, ‘paying attention,’ because Ibrāhīm gave attention (*rawwā*) to the vision which instructed him to sacrifice his son on the next day” (Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 81, footnote 218).

44 Al-Ṭabarī. vol 2: 80–81 [I: 288].

45 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 81 [I: 288].

46 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 81 [I: 288].

who showed Ibrāhīm the ritual acts when he made the pilgrimage.”⁴⁷ A shorter version attributed to the Abū Kurayb, underlines that Jibrīl played an even more significant role when he guided Ibrāhīm in the pilgrimage ritual(s). This version is shorter and pays less attention to the ritual of sacrifice than the former version did, “After that [the prayer] he rushed Ibrāhīm to Mina, threw the stones, performed the sacrifice (*dhabaha*), shaved his head (*halafa*), and finally hurried to the House.” The author adds, “Then God ordered Muḥammad to ‘follow the religion of Ibrāhīm, as one upright by nature. He was not an idolater’.”⁴⁸

5.3.3 Son of the two sacrifices – versions by al-Ṭabarī and al-Shahrastānī

Al-Ṭabarī frames the big discussion with regard to which son was sacrificed, either Ishāq or Ismāʿīl, with the following opening:

The earliest sages of our Prophet’s nation disagree about which of Ibrāhīm’s two sons it was that he was commanded to sacrifice (*umira Ibrāhīm bi-dhibḥihi min ibnihi*). Some say it was Ishāq, while others say it was Ismāʿīl. Both views are supported by statements related on the authority of the Messenger of God. If both groups of statements were equally sound (*ṣaḥīḥun*), then—since they both come from the Prophet—only the Qurʾān could serve as proof (*al-dalīl min al-qurʾān*) that the account naming Ishāq is clearly the most truthful of the two.⁴⁹

After clearly supporting the primacy of Ishāq, al-Ṭabarī still presents all the evidence in favour of Ismāʿīl as the chosen victim. However, he wants to support both sides and says, “Now we will speak of those early authorities who said it was Ishāq, and those who said it was Ismāʿīl.”⁵⁰ Before al-Ṭabarī carries out his intentions to cover all, he refers to the following report.⁵¹

We were with Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān and the subject of the victim (*al-dhabīḥ*), Ismāʿīl or Ishāq, came up. You have to come to a person who knows the answer. We were with the Messenger of God when a man came to him and said, “O Messenger of God! Repeat to me the knowledge God has given you, O son of the two sacrifices (*yā ibn al-dhabīḥayni*)!” The Messenger of God laughed (*fa-daḥika rasūlu Allāhi*)

47 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 81 [I: 288].

48 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 82 [I: 289]. The last quotation al-Ṭabarī has taken from Q 16:123.

49 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 82 [I: 290].

50 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 83 [I: 291].

51 According to Muḥammad ibn ʿAmmār al-Rāzī—Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUbayd ibn Abī Karīma—ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Khaṭṭābī—ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-ʿUtībī, a descendant of ʿUtbah ibn Abī Sufyān—his father—ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿīd—al-Ṣunābiḥī. This *isnād* seems quite different from the others.

and they said to him, “Who are the two victims (*wa-mā l-dhabihān*), O Messenger of God?” He said, “When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was ordered to dig Zamzam, he vowed (*nadhara*) that if God would make it easy for him, he would sacrifice one of his sons (*li-yadhbaḥanna aḥada waladayhi*). The choice fell upon (*kharaja l-sahmu ‘alā*)⁵² ‘Abd Allāh, but his maternal uncles prevented it, saying, ‘Ransom your son with one hundred camels (*ifdi bnaka bi-miaʿtin min al-ibil*).’ So he did that (*fadāhu bi-miaʿtin al-ibil*),⁵³ and Ismāʿil was the other victim (*wa-Ismāʿil al-thānī*).”⁵⁴

In this passage a man who is not named, praises Muḥammad with the epithet, “O son of the two sacrifices”. This description is also used by the much later author al-Shahrastānī in his book *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihāl*,⁵⁵ in which he writes: “the Prophet [...], said: ‘I am the son of the two sacrifices (*anā ibnu l-dhabihayni*).’” Al-Shahrastānī goes on to describe the sacrifices Muḥammad speaks of.

The first sacrifice was Ismāʿil, peace be upon him, he was the first on whom the light fell; and then it vanished (*arāda bi-l-dhibhi l-awwali Ismāʿil ‘alayhi al-salām, wa-huwa awwalu man inḥadara ilayhi al-nūru f-akhtafā*.) And the second sacrifice was ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (*bi-l-dhabihī l-thānī* ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib), and he was the last one [...] on whom the light fell (*wa-huwa ākhiru man inḥadara ilayhi l-nūr*), and on him is revealed the most glorious [light] (*ṣahara kulla l-ṣuhūr*).⁵⁶

The question in both versions is whether Ishāq or Ismāʿil was the intended sacrifice. In al-Ṭabarī’s adaptation, the Prophet laughed (*ḍahaka rasūl allāh*). This may signify that he found the question strange or intelligent.⁵⁷ The answer he gives relates to his grandfather’s vow and the experiences that followed. It is presented briefly and succinctly.

In al-Shahrastānī’s rendition the near sacrifice of Ismāʿil is the first of the two sacrifices alluded to. The second is mentioned but not described. Both sacrifices are linked to the ‘visible splendour’ (*ṣahara* and *ṣuhūr*) and the ‘light’ (*al-nūr*) that surround them. This kind of divine light is absent in all versions of

52 *Al-sahm* (singular), means ‘arrow; portion, share, lot’ (Wehr 1980: 438).

53 Here Brinner renders freely, but the Arabic text repeats actually the whole content, “Then he sacrificed the one hundred camels”.

54 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 83 [I: 291].

55 Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) 1968 (Kaylānī. vol. 2). All the English translations are mine, based on the Arabic original and the French translation made by Jolivet and Monnot (1993. vol. 2: 505–509) who refers to an Arabic edition by Badrān (1239–1244) which I do not have access to.

56 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

57 Examples of the Prophet laughing or smiling are found for instance in a *ḥadīth* describing him smiling when he was looking at his followers a few hours before he died (al-Bukhārī [d. 257/870]. n.d. *Al-Jāmiʿ aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*, The Book of the Call to Prayer, Number 649).

al-Ṭabarī about ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Ibrāhīm except in the narratives about Ibrāhīm’s early childhood. In other words, Muḥammad was not only the son of one victim, his grandfather’s, he was also the heir of Ibrāhīm’s son who was elected to receive life instead of a premature death.

5.3.4 The near sacrifice of Ibrāhīm’s son

5.3.4.1 Version A

Al-Ṭabarī presents several versions of the near sacrifice of Ibrāhīm’s son. In the first, he gives preference to the *asānid* that keep Ishāq as the elected victim. But more interesting is the particular structure of this passage. “Kaʿb said to Abū Hurayra, ‘Should I tell you about Ishāq, the son of the prophet Ibrāhīm?’ Abū Hurayra answered, ‘Certainly.’ So Kaʿb gave the following account.”⁵⁸ In the next passage in al-Ṭabarī’s text there is a clear division into three parts. In all parts, Shayṭān is the main figure. The first person to be addressed by him is Sara, the wife of Ibrāhīm.

When Ibrāhīm was told to sacrifice Ishāq, Shayṭān said, “By God! If I cannot deceive the people of Ibrāhīm with this, I shall never be able to do it.” So when Ibrāhīm went out with Ishāq to sacrifice him (*li-yadhbaḥahu*), Shayṭān visited Ibrāhīm’s wife, Sara, in the shape of a man whom Ibrāhīm’s people knew, and asked her, “Where is Ibrāhīm going so early with Ishāq?” She said, “He went off early on some errand.”⁵⁹ Shayṭān said, “No, by God! That is not the reason he left so early.” Sara asked, “Then what is the reason?” He said, “He took him out early to sacrifice him (*ghadan bihi li-yadhbaḥahu*).” Sara said, “There is no truth in that, he would not sacrifice his own son (*lam yakun li-yadhbaḥu ibnahu*).”⁶⁰ Shayṭān said, “By God, it is true.” Sara said, “And why should he sacrifice him (*fa-limma yadhbaḥuhu*)?” He replied, “He claims that his Lord ordered him to do that (*anna rabbahu amarahu bi-dhālīka*), it is best that he obeys (*qālat sārātun fa-hādhā aḥsana*).”⁶¹

The second addressee for Shayṭān’s questions is Ishāq.

Then Satan left Sara and went to Ishāq, who was walking with his father, and said, “Where is your father taking you so early?” Ishāq answered, “He is taking me on some errand of his.” Satan said, “No, by God, he is not taking you out on an errand.

58 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 84 [I: 293]. According to Yūnus—Ibn Wahb—Yūnus—Ibn Shihāb—ʿAmr ibn Abī Sufyān ibn Usaʿyd ibn Jāriya al-Thaqafī.

59 Other texts have “to gather firewood”. See Firestone 1990: 111.

60 Al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 160) renders a version where Sara says that “[h]e [Ibrāhīm] is kinder to him than I, and loves him too much for such a deed”.

61 In the Arabic original the text says, *qālat sārātun fa-hādhā aḥsana*, that actually means, “Sara said, ‘This is the best’”. See al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 84–85 [I: 293, 11].

He is taking you out early to sacrifice you (*li-yadhbiḥuka*).” Iṣḥāq said, “My father would not sacrifice me.” Satan told him, “Certainly he would.” Iṣḥāq asked, “Why?” Satan told him, “He claims that his Lord ordered him to do it.” Iṣḥāq answered, “By God! If the Lord told my father to do that, he would certainly obey Him (*li-yuṭīʿunnahu*).”⁶²

The third recipient of Shayṭān’s words concerning the awful truth is Ibrāhīm himself.

So Satan left him and went on to Ibrāhīm, saying, “Why are you taking him out so early?” Ibrāhīm said, “I am taking him on an errand.” Satan answered, “By God, you took him out early to sacrifice him.” Ibrāhīm asked, “Why would I do that?” Satan said, “You claim that your Lord ordered you to do it.” Ibrāhīm said, “By God, if my Lord orders me to do that, I will surely do it.”⁶³

All three parts are presented with a parallel structure and application of the present Arabic term for ‘sacrifice’ (*dh-b-ḥ*). Shayṭān goes to the addressee and questions the early walk. The person addressed answers that Ibrāhīm is only performing an errand. This claim is then indirectly said to be false; the goal of the early walk is the sacrifice of Ibrāhīm’s son. Shayṭān tells the addressees the truth, and their repeated use of “by God” indicates that they are aware of the connection to the truth. Two of the addressees maintain that Ibrāhīm obeys Allāh, and neither he nor the other two will object to His commands. Shayṭān knows that Allāh has ordered Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son and that God tests those who follow him.⁶⁴ Following this structured passage al-Ṭabarī presents the sacrificial narrative.

When Ibrāhīm took Iṣḥāq to sacrifice him (*fa-lamma akhada Ibrāhīm Iṣḥāq li-yadhbaḥahu*), God protected Iṣḥāq (*wa-sallama*)⁶⁵ and ransomed him with a “tremendous victim” (*aʿfāhu Allāhu wa-fadāhu bi-dhibḥin ʿaẓīmin*). Ibrāhīm said to Iṣḥāq, “Arise, my little son,⁶⁶ for God has released you (*fa-inna Allāha qad aʿfāka*).” And God said to Iṣḥāq, “I will grant you any prayer you choose to make now.” Iṣḥāq

62 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 85 [I: 293].

63 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 85 [I: 294].

64 Al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 160) renders narratives transmitted from Abū Hurayrah about the role of Shayṭān, who assumed the shape of a man to tempt first Ibrāhīm, then his son, then Sara, and, finally, Ibrāhīm again. None of them trusted Iblīs and they dismissed him. “Iblīs the cursed left in a great hurry, not having achieved anything that he wanted from Ibrāhīm and his family, for they had turned him down with Allāh’s help and assistance” (al-Thaʿlabī 2002: 160).

65 At this point Brinner renders: “God stayed his hand”.

66 “Iṣḥāq was seven when he was sacrificed, while Sara was ninety when she bore him. The place of sacrifice was about two miles from Bayt Iliyā” (al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 68 [I: 273]). Another source that al-Ṭabarī refers to says that this happened when he “had become old enough to walk” (al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 90 [I: 301]).

said, “My God! I pray to You that I be granted this, that You grant entry into paradise to any worshipper, past or present, who encounters You and does not make anything a partner with You.”⁶⁷

The goal of this version seems to be approval of entry into paradise (*al-janna*). Allāh is the only one who grants the worshipper – past or present – entry to His territory, but clearly on the one condition that the worshipper accepts the oneness and exclusiveness of Allāh.

5.3.4.2 Version B

This version⁶⁸ starts with Sara, who is told by the angel Jibrīl that, in spite of her old age, she will bear a child. She doubts this divine message, but says that Allāh “is the Praiseworthy One (*ḥamīdun*), the Glorious One (*majīdun*)”. Then Sara says to Jibrīl, “What is the sign of this matter?” Jibrīl then takes a piece of dry wood (*‘ūdān*) in his hand and bends it between his fingers, whereupon it quivers and turns green (*fa-htazza wa-ḥḍarra*). Then Ibrāhīm says, “He is therefore a sacrifice to God (*idhan l-illāhi dhabīḥun*).”⁶⁹ This is a theological statement that expresses that *God* can receive sacrifices. What does this green branch mean as a token for Ishāq’s chosen role? Does al-Ṭabarī intend to say that Ishāq is like the new fresh branch and a hope also for the people of Islam? Then al-Ṭabarī narrates the story about Ibrāhīm and the intended sacrifice of his son Ishāq in a much more extensive way than described in Q 37.⁷⁰

When Ishāq grew up, Ibrāhīm had a dream in which he saw him (*urā Ibrāhīm fī l-nawm*) and was told, “Fulfil your promise that if God granted you a son by Sara you would sacrifice him (*an tadhbīḥuhu*).” Then Ibrāhīm said to Ishāq, “Let us go out and offer (*nuqarrīb*) a sacrifice to God (*qurbānan ilā Allāhi*)!” So he took a knife (*sakinan*) and a rope (*ḥiblan*) and set out with Ishāq. When they reached the mountains (*al-jibāl*) the boy (*al-ghulām*) asked him, “O my father, where is your victim (*qurbānaka*)?” Ibrāhīm replied, “O my son! I saw in my dream that I should sacrifice you (*innī adhbāḥuka*). But consider the matter. What do you think?” Ishāq told him, “O my father! Do as you have been commanded. God willing, you will find me steadfast in belief (*min al-ṣābirīna*). Fasten my bonds (*ushdud ribāṭī*) so that I do not move about, and tie back your garments so that none of my blood splashes

67 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 85 [I: 294].

68 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 90 [I: 302]. “According to Mūsā ibn Hārūn—‘Amr ibn Ḥammād—Asbāṭ—al-Suddī—Abū Malik and Abū Ṣāliḥ—Ibn ‘Abbās and Murra al-Ḥamdānī—‘Abd Allāh and some of the companions of the Prophet.”

69 All quotations in this paragraph are from al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 91–93 [I: 302–305].

70 This version has many more details than the previous one, and therefore corresponds to what Leemhuis (2002) describes as a “real narrative”.

them, lest Sara see it and be saddened.⁷¹ And move the knife quickly on my throat (*w-uşru marra al-sakkina ‘alā ḥalqī*) so that death comes easily to me. And when you come back to Sara, greet her with peace.” Ibrāhīm approached him to kiss him after tying him up; both of them cried until the tears gathered in a pool beneath Ishāq’s side (*ḥattā istanqa‘a al-dumū‘ taḥt khaddi ishāq*).⁷² Then he drew the knife across Ishāq’s throat, but the knife did not even scratch him, for God had placed a sheet of copper (*ṣafīḥatun min naḥāsīn*) on Ishāq’s throat (*‘alā ḥalqī Ishāq*). When Ibrāhīm saw that, he turned him over and tried to cut him on the nape of his neck, as God has said, “Then, when they had both surrendered, and he had flung him down upon his face.”⁷³ Then they turned the matter over to God, and God proclaimed, “O Ibrāhīm! You have carried out the dream in full (*qad ṣaddaḡta l-riwayā bi-l-ḥaqqi l-tafīṭ*). Turn around!” He turned around and saw a ram (*kabshīn*). He seized the ram and kissed his son, saying, “O my son! Today you have been given to me (*al-yawma wuhibta lī*).” This is the meaning of God’s saying, “Then we ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice (*wa-fadaynāhu bi-dhibḥīn ‘aẓīmīn*).” Then he went back to Sara and told her the story, and Sara became sad and said, “You wanted to sacrifice my son and did not tell me (*aradta an tadhbahu ibnī wa-lā tu‘allimunī*).”⁷⁴

One of the characteristics of this narrative is its frankness; Ishāq is willing to be sacrificed and makes very specific suggestions: “fasten my bonds, so that I do not move about” and “move the knife quickly on my throat so that death comes easily to me”. He even foresees the problems his father will have with cutting his neck. He is characterised as “steadfast in belief”.⁷⁵ Ibrāhīm is so patient and committed that he tries a second time when a copper plate is put between his knife and the boy’s neck.⁷⁶ Then he leaves the result to Allāh, who sees that “they had both surrendered”, not only the father, but also his son. When the sacrificial act reaches its peak, a magnificent ram (*dhibḥīn ‘aẓīmīn*) is sent to the scene under the echo of the Qur’ānic words from *sūra* 37. The compassion of the son, especially with regard to his mother, but also his father, is exemplified here.⁷⁷

71 This report is similar to that of al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 159), who also underlines the use of the rope and the binding of the young boy.

72 *Istanqa‘a* is the tenth derivation of *n-q-ʿ*. It means ‘to stagnate, be stagnant; to become impure and foul by stagnation (water)’ (Wehr 1980: 993). *Al-dumū‘* means ‘tears’ (plural).

73 Q 37:103.

74 Al-Tabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 91–93 [I: 302–305].

75 Many of the Islamic prophets are described as *al-ṣābirūn*.

76 Cf. al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 159), who also mentions the “sheet of copper”.

77 Cf. al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 159), who also transmits a version where the compassion felt by the son towards his father and his mother is clear and unmistakable.

5.3.4.3 Version C⁷⁸

The following version is the one which offers the strongest support to Ismāʿīl as the intended sacrifice. It is longer than version B and has some elements that correspond to version A, where the main character was Shayṭān. Although I will not review the entire narrative, some parts need to be examined. Al-Ṭabarī introduces his account with the words, “According to Ḥumayd—Salama—Ibn Ishāq—and certain scholars”. He continues:

When Ibrāhīm was ordered to sacrifice his son (*in Ibrāhīm ḥīna umira bi-dhibḥi ibnihi*), he said to him, “O my son! Take the ropes (*al-ḥibl*) and the knife (*al-mudya*)⁷⁹ and let us go this trail to gather firewood for your family there.” He did not at this point mention anything about what he had been told to do. When he headed for the trail, Iblīs, the enemy of God, stood in his way in the form of a man in an attempt to dissuade him from carrying out God’s command. He said, “Where are you going, old man (*al-shaykh*)?”⁸⁰

Ibrāhīm discovered the devil – here Iblīs is used as a proper name instead of Shayṭān –⁸¹ and responded to his attempt to mislead him with the truth about his plans to sacrifice his son, “Go away, O enemy of God (*ʿadūw Allāhi*)! By God, I am obeying the command of my Lord in this matter.”⁸² Iblīs continues by tempting Ismāʿīl, but he resists. Then the devil turned to Ismāʿīl’s mother⁸³ asking her, “Do you know where Ibrāhīm has taken Ismāʿīl?” Her answer indicates that it is a daily routine to gather wood to take care of the family’s needs. Iblīs then insists, “He took him only to sacrifice him (*adhbaḥuhu*).” Hagar rejects, saying, “Never! He is too merciful to him and loves him too much for that.” Then Iblīs renders a similar version as in version A, but here in third person and not in first, “He claims that God commanded him to do it.” The woman piously answers, “If his Lord commanded him to do it, then one should surrender (*taslīman*) to the command of God (*l-amri llāhi*).”⁸⁴ Iblīs leaves the stage, “enraged, for he had not achieved anything with the family of Ibrāhīm. They had all refused to deal with him, by God’s help, and they had agreed with God’s command, saying, ‘to hear is to obey (*fa-samʿan wa-tāʿatan*)’”⁸⁵ Not

78 See Firestone 1990: 111–112.

79 *Al-mudya*, *midya* or *madya*, means ‘butcher’s knife; knife’ (Wehr 1980: 899).

80 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 92 [I: 303–304].

81 See Firestone 1990: 14, footnotes 44, 45 and 46.

82 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 92 [I: 304].

83 Cf. al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 160), who puts Sara under the same pressure as Hagar in this story. Of course, in this version Ismāʿīl is the intended victim.

84 All quotations are taken from al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 93 [I: 304].

85 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 93 [I: 304]. This is repeated twice.

even their parental love held them back from following Allāh's command, his *amr*, and offering their son to Him.

5.3.4.4 Version D

In an *isnād* with the same transmitters as version C, al-Ṭabarī renders a version that is similar to version B except that Ismā'īl is the victim. Ismā'īl worries about his father's troubles in sacrificing him. He seeks to avoid every possible temptation that might deter his father from the course of action determined by God. He shows great concern and takes initiatives that are very different from those we would expect from a youngster in his position. Even the grief of his mother after his death is on his mind while being tethered to the wood.

O my father! If you want to sacrifice me, tighten my bonds so that nothing of me will strike you and lessen my reward, for death is mighty and I am not sure that I will not move with it when I become aware of its touch. Sharpen your knife-blade (*shafrataka*)⁸⁶ so that it will finish me off quickly and give me rest (*hatta tajhaza 'alayya fa-turiḥanī*).⁸⁷ When you lay me down to sacrifice me (*li-tadhbaḥunī*), turn me with my face down; do not lay me on my side, for I fear that if you look at my face pity will overcome you and hold you back from carrying out God's command. If you think that taking my shirt back to my mother may console her for my loss, then do it.⁸⁸

In his continuation of the story, al-Ṭabarī has Ibrāhīm do the things the son has already suggested to him: "He bound Ismā'īl as he had said, and made him fast, and sharpened his blade (*shaḥadha shafratahu*). Then he laid him down (*thumma tallahu*) on his front (*li-l-jabīnī*) to guard (*w-attaqā*) his gaze from his face." Turning the face down is not an Islamic way of placing an animal. The right thing is to turn it on its side in the way Ismā'īl was placed.⁸⁹ This far the elements of the narrative have been repeated in a simplified way. But suddenly, something unexpected happens,

Then he plunged the blade into Ismā'īl's throat (*thumma adhkhala l-shafrata li-ḥalqihi*), but God turned it on its backside in his hand (*fa-qalabahā Allāhu li-qifāhā fī yaddihī*). When he pulled it back and forth to complete the act the words were proclaimed (*thumma ijtadhabahā ilayhi li-yafrughu minhu fa-nawwadā*), "O Ibrāhīm! You have carried out the dream (*ya Ibrāhīm qad ṣaddaḡta l-ru'yā*). This

86 In this part the word used for the knife is *al-shaфра* ('big knife'; Wehr 1980: 478) and not *al-mudya*.

87 *Turiḥunī* from *rayyaḥa*, second derivation, 'to give rest, make relax' (Wehr 1980: 364).

88 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 93 [I: 305].

89 See also version F, with the same way of placing the child.

victim is yours as (*hadhihi dhabīḥatuka*) a ransom for your son (*fidāʾun li-bnika*), so sacrifice it instead of him (*f-udhibuḥā dūnahu*).”⁹⁰

Ibrāhīm hears the Master’s voice with the Islamic epithet *ʿazza wa-jalla* added to the name. The divine word is spoken not by an angel, like Jibrīl, but by Allāh himself directly to his servant. Al-Ṭabarī explains the situation by adding what *God* said,

“Then when they both surrendered (*aslamā*), and he had flung him down on his face,” however, victims are flung on their sides (*tutalla al-dhabāʾiḥa ʿalā khudūdihā*). One of the things which confirms that Ismāʿīl did indeed say, “Turn me on my face”, as the account says, is God’s saying, “[...] We called unto him, ‘O Ibrāhīm! You have already fulfilled the dream.’ Thus do We reward the good (*najzia l-muḥsinīna*). That was indeed a clear test (*inna hādḥā lahuwa l-balāʾu l-mubīnu*). Then We ransomed him with a tremendous victim (*wa-fadaynāhu bi-dhibḥin ʿaẓīmīn*).”⁹¹

5.3.4.5 An interlude

There are many shorter accounts in the next part of the text. But first, I will consider an interlude in which al-Ṭabarī refers to a source transmitted by Ḥumayd—Salama—Ibn Ishāq—ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd—al-Ḥasan, where Ibrāhīm’s sacrifice is explicitly connected to the Islamic sacrificial practice in general.

Ismāʿīl was ransomed only by a mountain goat (*innahu kāna yaqūlu mā fudiya Ismāʿīl illā bi-taysin*), which was sent down to him from Thabīr. God’s words, “We ransomed him (*wa-fadaynāhu*) with a tremendous victim (*bi-dhibḥin ʿaẓīmīn*),” do not refer only to this sacrifice (*li-dhabīḥtihi faqat*), but rather to the practice of slaughtering animals according to His religion (*l-dhibḥu ʿalā dīnihi*), for that is the *sunnah* until the Day of Resurrection (*fa-tilka l-sunnatu ilā yawmi l-qiyāmati*). Know that sacrifice wards off incorrectly dead animals (*f-uʿlumū in l-dhabīḥatu tadfaʿu maytatan*⁹² *l-sūʾi*), so sacrifice (*fa-ḍaḥḥū*).⁹³ O servants of God!⁹⁴

The passage begins with Ismāʿīl’s ransom, although this is achieved *only* (*illā*) by means of a mountain goat. This *taysin* was sent down to Ibrāhīm from the mountain Thabīr, and it is as if an additional voice mentions that this goat was not as glorious as the “tremendous victim” described in Q 37:107. When al-Ṭabarī makes this analysis of the sacrificial situation, he says, “God’s words do

90 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 93–94 [I: 305].

91 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 94 [I: 305–306]. Cf. Q 37:107a.

92 *Mayta* means ‘corpse, carcass, carrion; meat of an animal not slaughtered in accordance with ritual requirements’ (Wehr 1980: 930).

93 *Ḍaḥḥū* means ‘sacrifice!’, second person plural imperative of *ḍaḥḥā*, second derivation of *ḍ-ḥ-y* and *ḍ-ḥ-w*, the same root as in *ʿid al-aḍḥā* (Wehr 1980: 536).

94 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 96 [I: 308].

not refer only to this sacrifice, but rather to the practice of slaughtering animals according to His religion (*‘alā dīnihi*).” Brinner has translated with “His” religion, where the capital H indicates that it is ‘God’s religion’. However, *dīnihi* may also refer to ‘Ibrāhīm’s religion’. Al-Ṭabarī apparently understands it to be ‘the Islamic religion’. He knows that there are *different* sacrifices in the world, but without mentioning any other specific religion or sacrificial ritual. Here, he says “this sacrifice”, i.e. the sacrifice of Ismā‘īl, and “the sacrifice according to his religion”. Does this second reference to sacrifice mean that there according to the text had been established a fixed sacrificial or slaughtering ritual already before Ibrāhīm’s near sacrifice took place? Ibrāhīm seems not only to be the one who introduced the sacrificial ritual associated with the pilgrimage but also the one who was responsible for the general Islamic slaughtering ritual, as well. Our text suggests that Ibrāhīm was the one who introduced the religiously correct form of the sacrifice. The near sacrifice of his son led to the sacrifice of an animal, which then became *the* normative practice for all sorts of slaughterings. The Islamic term *sunna* is used to support the theological and traditional quality of sacrificial rituals. The ritual will be defended and kept until “the Day of Resurrection”. This perspective is not limited to the duration of Ibrāhīm’s life, but until eternity and new life. The goal is not worldly but divine. Sacred time begins with ritual performed in the religiously correct way.

“Know that sacrifice wards off incorrectly dead animals, so sacrifice”, indicates that the sacrificial and slaughtering practice is a means of avoiding “incorrectly dead animals” (*mayta*), which Muslims are prohibited from eating. It also indicates that the words said (*tabbīr* and *tasmiyya*) during the slaughtering prevent the corruption of true belief and avert evil judgement on the last day. These comments are followed by a narrative presenting the intended sacrifice.

Al-Ṭabarī’s use of the word *dahḥū*, meaning ‘sacrifice!’, refers to the consequences of the near sacrifice of Ismā‘īl. In other words, this version contains terms that are not found in the other versions, such as *taysin* for ‘the mountain goat’ and “the practice of slaughtering animals according to his religion”, and the demand to remember this until the “day of resurrection”, indicating that *dahḥū* is a term that was probably influenced by the group of transmitters to which Mālik ibn ‘Abbās had been linked, many years prior to the final editing of al-Ṭabarī’s writings around 298/910.

5.3.4.6 Version E, a poetic version

In the following way al-Ṭabarī introduces a different version of the narrative: “In a poem about the reason for which Ibrāhīm was commanded to sacrifice his

son (*umira Ibrāhīmu bi-dhibhi ibnihi*), ‘Umayyah ibn Abī Ṣalt verifies the account of al-Suddī to the effect that the sacrifice was required of Ibrāhīm to fulfil a vow (*nadhr*) which he had made (*amarahu Allāh*).’⁹⁵ This version emphasises certain elements that are not stressed in the prose versions.

1. Ibrāhīm, the one who carries out the vow (*nadhr*)
to satisfaction, and the bearer of easy-burning firewood.
2. For his firstborn, could not desist from him
or see himself in a company of enemies.
3. “O my son! I have consecrated you to God (*innī nadhartuka Allāha*)
as a slaughtered kid (*shaḥīṭan*), but be steadfast; a ransom for you is ready (*aṣḥīr fadan laka ḥālī*).
4. Bind the fetters; I shall not turn from the knife (*al-sikkīn*)
the head of the manacled captive.”
5. For he has a knife which is quick in the flesh
a cutting edge curved like a crescent moon (*al-hilāl*).
6. While he was taking his garments from him
his Lord ransomed him with the best of rams (*fakkahu rabbuhu bi-kabshin jalālīn*).
7. “So take this and release your son; verily (*f-arsili ibnaka innī*)
do not dislike what you have done.”
8. A God-fearing father and the other, his offspring;
they fled from him on hearing, “Do it!”.
9. People often are unhappy about a thing
which brings relief, like the untying of bonds (*ḥalli l-iqāl*).⁹⁶

Here, the author uses different words for the elements in the narrative of the near sacrifice. The father makes a vow (*nadhr*) (v. 1). This is repeated once (v. 3). The person at stake is his firstborn son. But early in the story (v. 3) the ransom (*fadyan*) is presented, and probably described as a remote, and perhaps slaughtered young goat (*shaḥīṭan*). From verse 4 onwards the act is lively in its frightening description. Chains or fetters (*aghlāl*)⁹⁷ and a knife, (*sikkīn*) (v. 4) or (*madya*) (v. 5), are among the implements at hand, but the latter is not used even if it is capable of reaching deep into the flesh. There is also an interesting allusion to the Islamic symbol of the moon (*hilāl*) (v. 5). At the moment of removing the boy’s clothes (v. 6) the Lord (*rabb*) intervenes, ransoming (*fakka*) the boy’s life by offering as a substitute a ram (*khabsh*) that is characterised as *jalāl*, the best, or, rather, “the mighty”;⁹⁸ this is reminiscent of the adjective

95 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 96 [I: 308]. The vow is also a central aspect of the narrative about ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his sacrifice as we will see in Chapter 6.

96 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 96–97 [I: 308–309]. The numbering of the verses is mine.

97 *Aghlāl* plural of *ghull* means ‘chains, shackles, fetters’ (Wehr 1980: 679).

98 Only twice in the Qur’ān (55:27 and 78).

‘*aẓīm*, which is applied to the sacrificial animal (*dhibh*) in Q 37:107. The verb *fakka* from the root *f-k-k*, meaning ‘to ransom, redeem, set free and unbind’, is not used in the Qur’ān. The Transcendent One speaks (v. 7) and provides an offering, with a parallel comment to release the boy’s life, without saying *how*. The sentence is followed by an instruction to the father not to regret his behaviour when looking back on his actions. The father is described by means of the verb “being pious” (*taqā*) in the eighth derivation (v. 8),⁹⁹ and thus showing what Izutsu calls the uttermost *taqwa*.¹⁰⁰ His son is neither mentioned by name nor characterised in terms of age or similar attributes.¹⁰¹ Finally, it is told that they fled (*tārā*) from “him”. It is not clear to whom this refers. Is it a shadow of Shaytān’s temptation that we know from other versions?

5.3.4.7 Version F

Having acknowledged his source as “Ibn Ḥumayd—Yaḥyā ibn Wāḍih—al-Ḥusayn, meaning Ibn Wāqid—Zayd—Ikrima”, al-Ṭabarī starts by stating,

The boy was satisfied to be the sacrifice (*raḍiya l-ghulāmu bi-l-dhabīhi*), and the father was content to sacrifice him (*wa-raḍiya l-abu bi-an yadhbaḥahu*). The son said, “O my father! Throw me down on my face, lest you look at me and have pity on me, or I look at the knife (*al-shafrata*) and become anxious. Thrust the knife from beneath me and obey God’s command.” For it is as God said, “Then, when they both surrendered (*salamā*), he flung him down on his face (*wa-tallahu li-l-jabīni*).” When he had done that, “then We called unto him, ‘O Ibrāhīm! You have already fulfilled (*saddaḡta*) the dream.’ Thus do We reward the good.”¹⁰²

This version is very short, but its distinctiveness is still very interesting. “The boy was satisfied¹⁰³ to be the sacrifice.” Neither the boy’s name nor Shaytān is mentioned, and there are no temptations like those found in other versions. In spite of this, the passage continues describing Ibrāhīm and his son as “content to sacrifice”, respectively as being “satisfied to be the sacrifice”. The Islamisation of the narrative and of the description of the attitude of the two actors is provided through the verbal *salamā*, ‘they surrendered’, which has become the main word for ‘surrender to Allāh’.¹⁰⁴

99 Wehr 1980: 95.

100 Cf. Izutsu (1959) 2002: 70.

101 Cf. al-Ya‘qūbī (1960. vol. 1: 27), who says, “At that time he [Ishāq] was [still] a boy (*ghulām*) and Ismā‘īl was a grown up man (*rajilun qad wulida lahu*).”

102 Al-Ṭabarī. 1987. vol. 2: 97 [I: 309].

103 *Raḍiya* or *riḍān*, both forms mean ‘to be satisfied’ (Wehr 1980: 344).

104 Here, the 1st derivation is used. To express the Islamic surrender the 4th derivation, *aslama*, is generally used, as in al-Ṭabarī (vol. 2: 94 [I: 305–306]), version D.

5.4 Al-Kisāʾī's and al-Thaʿlabī's versions – some notes

Al-Kisāʾī narrates¹⁰⁵ in a simple way¹⁰⁶ that Ibrāhīm and his seven year old son Ishāq¹⁰⁷ walked to “the Sacred Temple”, where Ibrāhīm went to sleep. He had three dreams, first to sacrifice a bull, then a camel, and finally his own son.¹⁰⁸ The flesh of the two animals was to be distributed among the poor. The father asked what could be greater than a camel. The dialogue between father and son shows that the son is also prepared for the challenge. Iblīs intervenes but it seems that he is not considered as a serious threat.¹⁰⁹ “Even if you wanted to sacrifice me, I should not resist,” Ishāq says.¹¹⁰ Ibrāhīm took him to the House, fetched a knife and a rope and went to a mountain, which is not named.¹¹¹ The grief of Sara, Ishāq’s mother, is a strong element in this version. She does not want to act against the will of Ibrāhīm and Allāh, but still the storyteller acknowledges that she will be comforted if they bring her son’s (bloody) shirt after the sacrifice. The knife is ineffective, and we are told, “The knife itself turned away and spoke, saying: ‘There is no might or power save that of God the Sublime, the Magnificent.’”¹¹² For the second time, after its blade has been whetted, the knife again turns away and speaks with Allāh’s permission, “Do not blame me, O prophet of God, for thus am I commanded to do!”¹¹³

A voice speaks from heaven and “then cried, ‘Ibrāhīm, take this ram and ransom your son. Offer it in sacrifice, for God has made this day a holy day for you and your children.’” In this version, the ram also spoke, saying, “O Friend of God, sacrifice me instead of your son, for it is more fitting for me to be sacrificed than him.”¹¹⁴ Further, it continues its wonderful speech, saying, “I am the ram of Hābil son of Adam, which he sacrificed to his Lord and which He

105 Al-Kisāʾī 1922; al-Kisāʾī 1978.

106 He uses a typical popular *qīṣṣ al-anbiyāʾ* style, with little discussion.

107 Ishāq was born on a Friday eve, on the Ashura. It is also said about him, “From his forehead shone a light that lit up everything about him” (al-Kisāʾī 1978: 160). The same is narrated of ʿĀliḥ’s birth (al-Kisāʾī 1978: 120).

108 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 160.

109 Interestingly, al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 160) is much more preoccupied with the role of Shayṭān than al-Kisāʾī seems to be. Al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 161) notes that Ibrāhīm throws seven stones and then seven pebbles at Shayṭān before he leaves for good. This has become the basis for the ritual stoning of the *jamrāt* during the *ḥajj* to Mecca.

110 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 160–161.

111 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 160–161. Q 37:102 and, later, *ayāt* 105 and 107 are then cited.

112 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 161.

113 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 161.

114 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 161.

accepted. I have grazed in the meadows of Paradise for forty autumns.”¹¹⁵ Ibrāhīm praises his Lord for ransoming Ishāq, and on going to untie him, he finds the bonds already loose, a sign of transcendent intervention. “Who untied you, my son?”, Ibrāhīm asks. “He who brought the ram for sacrifice,” Ishāq answers. Then Ibrāhīm takes the ram, slaughters it and sees a white, smokeless fire coming down from heaven and consuming the whole ram, except the head, which father and son take with them to their home. When they tell Sara what has happened, she falls down prostrate in thanks to God.¹¹⁶

Al-Kisāʾī combines the two offerings, Ḥābil’s and Ibrāhīm’s, in telling us that the ram talks. Time seems irrelevant to the transmitter. However, it is odd that this ram is not young, perfect and white and that it lacks other signs of perfection. It is an extremely old ram; after forty years the flesh is dogged and not at all fine. Forty years must symbolise something else, probably ‘variety’ or simply that the ram was unrealistically old. What counts is that this was the same ram that had been offered by Ḥābil. It is a ram from Paradise, and it has grown fat on the meadows there where the grass is better than anywhere else. The fire confirms that the sacrifice has been accepted by Allāh.

Also al-Thaʿlabī renders the story about Qābil and Ḥābil, writing that “(Ibn Ishāq) said: ‘They both placed their offerings on the mountain; fire came down from Heaven and consumed not one grain of Qābil’s offering because he was not pure of heart, whereas the offering of Ḥābil was accepted because he was pure of heart.’”¹¹⁷ Further, the ram is described as an animal that “kept grazing in the Garden until it was sacrificed as a ransom for the son of Ibrāhīm”.¹¹⁸ Like al-Kisāʾī, al-Thaʿlabī obviously identifies the ram of Adam’s son *and* the ram that released Ibrāhīm’s son. As an explanation this author then quotes *sūra* 5:27: “It was accepted of one of them and not accepted by the other.”¹¹⁹ Al-Thaʿlabī closes this passage by stating, “They went down from the mountain and parted ways, but Qābil was angry because God had declined his offering.”¹²⁰ Here, we realise that al-Thaʿlabī does not exclusively identify the two lambs but also the place, the mountain top, where the sacrificial act was performed. Later in his book, he is also preoccupied with a part of the narrative that was transmitted by Ibn ʿAbbās, which informs us that “the head of the ram is still hanging by its two

115 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 161. Cf. al-Thaʿlabī (2002: 159), who transmits the same information about Ḥābil’s ram grazing in Paradise for forty autumns.

116 Al-Kisāʾī 1978: 162.

117 Al-Thaʿlabī 2002: 76.

118 Al-Thaʿlabī 2002: 76.

119 Dawood’s (1994: 82) translation is: “One said: ‘I will surely kill you’. The other replied: ‘God accepts offerings only from the righteous.’”

120 Al-Thaʿlabī 2002: 76.

horns from the water-spouts of the Kaʿba, and it had dried up”.¹²¹ In other words, the text demonstrates that the ram was real and could be observed by everyone in Mecca.

121 Al-Thaʿlabī 2002: 160.

Chapter 6

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s Sacrifice

6.1 Introduction

In the analysis of the Qur’ānic texts we observed that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad’s grandfather, was not mentioned there. However, we encountered warnings against casting lots by means of arrows (*tastaqsimū bi-l-azlāmi*) (Q 5:4 and 5:93), although the term *maysir* only occurs in the latter verse. In Q 3:44 the husband of Maryam is picked out by casting lots,¹ and in Q 37:140–142 Jonah’s destiny is decided by a similar procedure.

Crone and Silverstein have shown that lot-casting was not an exclusive Arabic or Islamic tradition but was found in many neighbour communities before and after Islam.² They also characterise descriptions of such practices in reports of Islamic writers as “hardly to be taken at face value as historical reports. Taken as literature, however, they certainly suggest that Muslims who came out of Arabia took the use of lots for the division of conquered land and booty for granted.”³ However, the practice was discussed by the Islamic commentators and lawyers, and then, it seems to have disappeared.⁴

The narrative that I will discuss in this chapter, linked to choosing people by lot, takes, irrespective of its slightly legendary character up a significant position in a number of texts comprising important Islamic traditions. Clearly, it offers a better comprehension of the genealogy of Muḥammad. In any discussion of ‘sacrifice in early Islam’, the actions of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his sacrificial dilemma must be included and taken into consideration.

1 Farstad 2012: 204; n. 998.

2 Crone and Silverstein (2010: 423–450) do not mention casting of lots practised by Muḥammad’s grandfather although their study comprises the most common practices, lot casting for assigning land and property, and the more rare practice of choosing people by lot, in pre-Islam and during the early Islamic era.

3 Crone and Silverstein 2010: 429. This study (429–438) mentions incidents of the Prophet casting lots and, consequently, draws the conclusion that this was a practice accepted by him.

4 Crone and Silverstein 2010: 441–445. Cf. Guillaume (1955 [for this reference, see footnote 5]: 66–67) where Ibn Ishāq refers to the customary law regarding lots.

6.2 Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām

In the texts of Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām⁵ there is a clear link between ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s digging of the Zamzam well and the following narrative about his near sacrifice of his youngest son. In one of these texts we read, “when he was digging Zamzam, he vowed that if he should have ten sons to grow up and protect him, he would sacrifice (*l-yanḥaranna*) one of them to Allāh at the Ka‘ba.”⁶ Having eventually become the father of ten grown sons he felt compelled to fulfil his promise. He told his sons about the vow (*nadhr*).

He said that each one of them must get an arrow (*qidḥan*), write his name on it, and bring it to him: this they did, and he took them before Hubal in the middle of the Ka‘ba. (The statue of) Hubal stood by the well (*ba‘ir*) there. It was that well in which gifts made to (*yuhdā li*) the Ka‘ba were stored.⁷

After Ibn Ishāq has described the seven arrows and their role in connection with various decisive aspects of life, such as marriage and doubts about a person’s genealogy, he recounts that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s sons “took him to the Hubal with a hundred dirhams and a slaughter camel (*jazūr*) and gave them to the man (*ṣāḥib*) who cast the lots”.⁸ Then the ritual of decision is described, and the report ends with the information, “They used to conduct their affairs according to the decision of the arrows.”⁹ Then the narrative is brought to the point with ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s command: “‘Cast the lots for my sons with these arrows (*qidāḥ*)’, and he told him of the vow which he had made. Each man gave him the arrow on which his name was written.”¹⁰ Ibn Ishāq then gives a detailed report about the names of the youngest boy, ‘Abd Allāh, and his mother, “Fāṭima bint ‘Amr ...”.

It is alleged that ‘Abd Allāh was ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s favourite son, and his father thought that if the arrow missed he would be spared. [...] When the man took the arrows to cast lots with them, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’ stood by Hubal praying to Allāh. Then the man cast lots and ‘Abd Allāh’s arrow came out. His father led him by the

5 Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) 1955; hereafter: ‘Guillaume 1955’. See Guillaume 1955: xl; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām (d. 218/833) n.d.; hereafter ‘Ibn Hishām 218/833’.

6 Guillaume 1955: 66 (Arabic text: 97). Cf. al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) 1988. vol. 6: 1–2 [Arabic text, I: 1076].

7 Guillaume 1955: 66 (Arabic text: 97); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 286–287.

8 Guillaume 1955: 66. Ibn Hishām (218/833: 287) underlines several times that there were *seven* (*al-saba‘atu*) arrows. The term for a ‘slaughter camel’ is always *jazūr*.

9 Guillaume 1955: 66–67 (Arabic text: 97).

10 Guillaume 1955: 67 (Arabic text: 98); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 287.

hand and took a large knife; then he brought him (*aqbala bihi*) up to Isāf and Nā'ila to sacrifice him (*li-yadhbaḥahu*).¹¹

However, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's intention to sacrifice his son caused a vehement reaction among the members of the Quraysh tribe who were present and observed what was happening, and they all urged 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to abandon his violent course of action. "By God (*w-allāh*)! You shall never sacrifice him (*lā tadhbahahu*) until you offer an expiatory sacrifice for him (*ḥatta tu'dhiru fihi*)."¹² Then the author renders an ethical and general warning, "If you do a thing like this there will be no stopping men from coming to sacrifice their sons, and what will become of the people then?"¹³ The Quraysh say that even if the ransom of the son requires all their property, they will redeem him. They continue to advise the father, and suggest that he visit and consult a sorceress (*ʿarraḡatun*) in Khaybar at Medina. Then they say, "If she told him to sacrifice him (*yadhbaḥuhu*), he would not be worse off; and if she gave him a favourable response, he would accept it."¹⁴ 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib goes there and meets the woman several times. The second time she asks, "How much is the blood money among you?" The answer is, "ten camels", and Ibn Ishāq confirms this in his text without initially mentioning the number of one hundred camels.¹⁵ 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib is instructed to return to Mecca and to take with him his son and ten camels and to cast lots with the arrows. Moreover, every time the arrows fall against his son, he is to add a further ten camels (*al-ibl*) to the number he is prepared to offer, and to repeat this procedure "until your lord is satisfied (*yardā*)".¹⁶ This process is described in detail until he reaches one hundred camels.¹⁷ 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib prays to Allāh between each cast until the lots fall against the hundred camels rather than 'Abd Allāh. To be completely sure 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib casts the arrows a second and a third time. But the result remains the same, and his favourite son is set free. "They [the camels] were duly slaughtered (*nuḡirat*) and left there and no man was kept back or hindered [from eating them]."¹⁸ Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām do not present any other versions of this narrative. Unlike al-Ṭabarī, they seem to know of no alternatives.

11 Guillaume 1955: 67 (Arabic text: 98); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 288–289. Guillaume writes that al-Ṭabarī renders "two idols of Quraysh at which they slaughtered their sacrifices".

12 Ibn Hishām 218/833: 289. Wehr 1980: 600.

13 Guillaume 1955: 67 (Arabic text: 98).

14 Guillaume 1955: 67 (Arabic text: 98); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 289.

15 Guillaume 1955: 67 (Arabic text: 98); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 289.

16 Guillaume 1955: 68 (Arabic text: 99); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 290.

17 Guillaume 1955: 68 (Arabic text: 99); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 290.

18 Guillaume 1955: 68 (Arabic text: 99); Ibn Hishām 218/833: 290.

6.3 Al-Ṭabarī: *Taʾrīkh*

6.3.1 Introduction

Al-Ṭabarī presents the lineage of the Prophet's life by starting with his grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim. He tells the story about the youngest son of this man, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who was elected to the prominent position of being the father of the future chosen one, Muḥammad. Al-Ṭabarī presents two versions, supplemented with an important interlude that he has positioned between them. Both versions and the interlude have to be considered here.¹⁹

6.3.2 The first version

Yūnus ʿAbd al-Aʿlā ibn Wahb Yūnus ibn Yazīd ibn Shihāb Qubaysa ibn Dhuʾayb: [Part 1:] A woman had sworn (*nadharat*)²⁰ to sacrifice (*tanḥuru*) her son at the Kaʿba if she achieved a certain matter; she did (in fact) achieve it and then she came to Medina to seek a legal opinion²¹ on her oath. She went to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, who said, “I do not know that God has given any command concerning oaths other than that one should be faithful to them (*illā al-wafāʾa bihi*).” “Am I to sacrifice (*a-fa anḥuru*) my son then?” she asked, ʿAbd Allāh replied, “God has forbidden you to kill one another (*qad nahākum Allāhu an taqattalū unfusakum*),” and said no more to her than that. Then she went to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās and asked his opinion. He replied, “God has commanded you to be faithful to your oaths (*amara Allāh bi-wafāʾi al-nadhari*) and has forbidden you (*nahākum*) to kill one another (*an taqattalū unfusakum*).” [Part 2:] ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim vowed (*nadhara*) that if ten of his sons (*ʿasharatu raḥṭ*) grew to manhood he would sacrifice one of them (*an yanḥuru aḥadahum*). He cast lots among them (*aqraʿa baynahum*), and the lot fell on ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib, whom he loved more than any other. Then he said, “O God, shall I sacrifice²² him or a hundred camels?” He cast lots between him and the camels, and the lot (*al-quṛʿa*) fell on the hundred camels.” [Part 3:] Then Ibn ʿAbbās said to the woman, “My opinion (*wa-ʿarī*) is that you should sacrifice (*tanāḥiri*) a hundred camels in place of your son.”²³

19 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6.

20 The word used here is *nadharat*, and not *ḥalafat*, which is often used in relation to ‘taking an oath’. Regarding the corresponding Hebrew word *neder*, cf. especially Numbers 30 and the *Nedarim* tractate in the Talmud (see Kaiser 1998).

21 The term *l-tistaftā* used here is the formal Islamic term for “asking a legal opinion”; it is the tenth derivation of *f-t-w*.

22 The verb is omitted in the Arabic text.

23 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 1–2 [I: 1073–1074]. Similar conflicts between oaths and undesirable consequences, and with variable results, can be found in the narratives in Judges 11:30–40 (Jephthah) and 1 Samuel 14:24b–46 (Saul and Jonathan).

Al-Ṭabarī's first version is short and with a precise message: you are to keep your vow, but not kill anybody even if you have promised God that you will do so. This version consists of three parts. According to the *isnād* this topic is raised through a narrative about a nameless woman who has not kept her promise to Allāh. However, she asks the advice of two Islamic legislators in the main Islamic city, Medina, which is invoked by its Islamic name rather than the pre-Islamic Yathrib.

The second part tells the story about ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim, who intends to sacrifice one of his sons and receives the answer that one hundred camels will be enough to balance his life. The third part connects the first two parts by having ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, the legislator from the first part, say to the woman that *she* should sacrifice one hundred camels in place of her son. This indicates that these two narratives are brought together by an editor, most probably al-Ṭabarī himself.

Three of the four male persons are referred to as ʿAbd Allāh, meaning Allāh's slave or servant, likely an indication of editorial activity. Both legislators and the man who is to become the father of the ideal slave of Allāh, Muḥammad, are thus symbolised as the prototype of the Islamic God-man-relationship. It is also remarkable that the place where she goes to sacrifice her son, is said to be *at* the Kaʿba. We know that the Kaʿba was an important site for sacrificial rituals in pre-Islam, and it is reasonable to suppose that this was a sensitive issue that pre-Islamic idolatry and Islamic monotheism raised.²⁴ That the Prophet's father and grandfather were among those who attended such ceremonies, and even came to the brink of carrying out the ritual, contradicts important aspects of Islamic belief such as the father's use of the name of God, Allāh, when praying. In this text ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim appears both as an ignorant pre-Islamic man *and* as a pious Muslim according to Islamic standards.

In addition, it is interesting that an oath should be annulled with the words "God has forbidden you to kill one another". It is not clear in this text from where this apparently divine commandment is taken. Prior to this, al-Ṭabarī has

24 See Hawting 1999. Levine (1974: 126) notes that there are two main different meanings from the root *k-f-r* (first derivation, 'ungrateful'; 'infidel', and second derivation, 'to cover; to hide'). Wehr (1980: 832–833) says that there are two homonymous roots. Thus also Janowski ([1982] 2000: 89), who says that *kafara* (first derivation), when used to mean 'ungrateful; infidel', is genuine Arabic, because it is already used in this sense in Arabic poetry. The meaning of 'cover' and 'atone' may, however, be connected.

mentioned no other source than the *isnād*. One possibility might be the *ḥadīth* that Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) has passed on.²⁵

That oaths do not seem to have relevance is important when one looks at, for example, the strict procedure for the oath concerning the obligatory rituals of the *ḥajj*. Does this mean that, with regard to her oath, the woman perjures herself? She had even received what she had prayed for in her original oath but was reluctant to fulfil her promise. It does not seem that al-Ṭabarī blames her in any way. He may be of the opinion that two ethical rules apply at the same time. Therefore, he lets his narrative present the ultimate injunction against killing as the supreme idea. Hence, the lesser concern of keeping one's oath is overridden by the concern of protecting life. The two legislators in the first version answer the woman with some variation, but both of them end by saying that killing is forbidden by Allāh.

One hundred camels are an enormously expensive and valuable sacrifice. However, there is no mention of a possible problem caused by the woman's or 'Abd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim's lack of so many camels or their incapacity of buying them. The realistic, day-to-day concerns that one might expect to be of relevance are left out. One hundred camels are to be found and slaughtered. The decision reached by means of the arrow is simply accepted.

6.3.3 An interlude

Al-Ṭabarī's two versions are linked by a history about Marwān,²⁶ who says the following, thus resuming the former discussion about swearing and keeping an oath at odds with the sacred injunction against killing.

"I do not think that either 'Umar or Ibn 'Abbās has given a correct opinion; no vow which contravenes God's (*fī ma'ṣiyati Allāhi*) commands can be binding. Ask God's forgiveness, repent, give alms, and perform such charitable actions as you are able.

25 "Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik that Yaḥyā ibn Sayyid heard al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad say, 'A woman came to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās and said, "I have vowed to sacrifice my son." Ibn 'Abbās said, "Do not sacrifice your son." 'Do *kaffāra* for your oath.' An old man with Ibn 'Abbās said, 'What *kaffāra* is there for this?' Ibn 'Abbās said, 'Allāh the Exalted said, "Those of you who say, regarding their wives [...], and then He went on to make the *kaffāra* for it as you have seen" (Mālik ibn Anas [d. 179/795] 1951. Book 22, Number 22.4.7).

26 Probably Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, who is said to have been the governor (*amīr*) of Medina "at that time" (that is, some time before Muḥammad's birth around 570), although probably he was the Umayyad caliph from 684 to 685, according to Watt and McDonald; see al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2, footnote 2.

As for sacrificing your son, God has forbidden you to do that (*f-ammā an tanḥūrī ibnaki fa-qad nahāka Allāhu ‘an dhālik*).” The people were delighted and lost in admiration at this verdict, and concluded that Marwān’s opinion was the correct one; from that time on they adopted the opinion that no vow, which contravenes God’s commands can be binding.²⁷

Hence, the apparent contradiction between a sacred command and the keeping of an oath is clarified. Allāh has commanded that the sacrifice of any son is forbidden. In al-Ṭabarī’s text there seems to be no doubt about the authoritativeness of this judgement, since caliph Marwān is presented as a credible witness. Thus the text portrays the legal proclamation as forming the sacred basis for all later questions concerning binding vows.

6.3.4 The second version

Al-Ṭabarī’s second version, transmitted by Ibn Ḥumayd Salama ibn al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, presents, albeit in al-Ṭabarī’s own words, the tradition from Ibn Ishāq, which is a “fuller account of this matter of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s vow than the one given above”.²⁸ This narrative is set in Mecca, with the Ka’ba as the place of sacrifice. The woman from the first version is not mentioned.

[Part 1:] When he had ten sons grown to maturity and he knew that they would protect him, he brought them together, told them of his vow, and called them to keep faith with God in this matter. They expressed their obedience, and asked what they should do. He replied, “Let every one of you take an arrow (*qidḥan*), write his name on it, and bring it to me.” They did this, [Part 2a:] and he went into the presence of Hubal in the interior of the Ka’ba. Hubal was the greatest of the idols (*al-ʿzam aṣnām*) of the Quraysh in Mecca, and stood by a well (*biʿr*) inside the Ka’ba in which were gathered the offerings made to the Ka’ba (*allatī yujmāʿ fihā mā yuḥdā li-l-kaʿbatī*). [Part 2b:] Beside Hubal there were seven arrows, on each of which there was writing. On one was written, ‘the blood money’ (*ʿaql*); when a dispute arose as to which of them was responsible for paying blood money, they cast lots with the seven arrows to settle the matter. On another arrow was written ‘yes’; when they were considering some course of action, they cast lots, and if the ‘yes’ arrow came out they acted on it. Another arrow had ‘no’, and if that came out they did not proceed with their course of action. On the other arrows was written ‘of you’, ‘attached’ (*mulṣaq*), ‘not of you’, and ‘water’. When they wanted to dig for water they cast lots with the arrows, including this last one, and wherever it fell they started digging.²⁹

27 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

28 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

29 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2–3 [I: 1074–1075].

Al-Ṭabarī continues by describing the circumstances in which ‘Abd al-Muṭṭallib and his family used this method of decision-making; it was employed whenever there were questions concerning marriage, boys’ circumcision, where a person should be buried or, as in this case, when the “Quraysh made difficulties for him about the digging of the Zamzam”.³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī maintains that arrow casting was “their ultimate method of deciding their affairs”.³¹ The decision described above accords with an authoritative tradition that is highly respected. A son obeys his father and their God. Anything else is unimaginable.

Al-Ṭabarī goes on to describe how ‘Abd al-Muṭṭallib lets the arrows be cast for his ten sons, and the lot falls on his youngest, ‘Abd Allāh, destined to become the father of the future Muḥammad. He prepares to sacrifice his son.

[Part 3:] The custodian of the arrows (*ṣāhib al-qidāḥ*) cast, and the lot fell against ‘Abd Allāh. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him by the hand, took a large knife (*shaḡra*), and went up to Isāf and Nā‘ila, two idols of the Quraysh at which they used to slaughter their sacrifices (*alladhānī tanḡuru ‘indahumā dhabā’ihā*), to sacrifice him (*li-yadhbaḡahu*). However, the Quraysh rose from their assemblies and came to him, saying, “What do you intend to do, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib?” He replied, “To sacrifice him” (*adhbaḡahu*), but the Quraysh and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s other sons said, “By God! You shall never sacrifice him (*lā tadhbīḡuhu ‘abadan*) but must get an excuse for not doing so. If you act thus men will never stop bringing their sons to sacrifice them, and how will the people survive in this way?” Then al-Muḡhira ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn Makhzūm, from whose tribe ‘Abd Allāh’s mother was, said, “By God! You shall never sacrifice him (*lā tadhbīḡuhu ‘abadan*), but must get an excuse for not doing so (*ḡattā tu‘dhiru fihī*). If it takes all we possess to ransom him, we shall do so (*kāna fidā’uhu bi-anwālīnā fadīnāhu*).”³²

The Quraysh asked him to take his son to Ḥijāz where a sorceress (*‘arrāḡatun*) would tell him what to do. “If she commands you to sacrifice him, you will sacrifice him, and if she commands you to do something which offers relief to you and to him, you can accept it.”³³ They went to Medina, where they met and consulted her in Khaybar. After having told her the whole story, she asked them to wait one day and then return.

On the following day they went back to her and she said, “Yes, news has come to me. How much is the blood money (*al-dabba*) among you?” They replied, “Ten camels (*‘asharun min al-ibīlī*),” which it was. “Go back to your country, then,” she said, “and bring forward the young man and ten camels, and cast the arrows. If they fall against the young man, add to the camels until your Lord is satisfied (*ḡattā*

30 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

31 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

32 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

33 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

yadayu rabbukum). If they fall against the camels, sacrifice them (*unḥurūhā*), and your Lord will be satisfied (*raḍiya*) and the young man will be saved (*najan*).³⁴

Thus, on returning to Mecca, they had an exciting story to tell. The father was supposed to start with ten camels to compensate for his son. He did, but was at the same time praying “beside Hubal to God” in the Kaʿba. When they cast the arrows, they fell against ʿAbd Allāh. Ten camels were evidently not enough to satisfy the Lord. They continued, adding ten more camels for each time the arrows fell against ʿAbd Allāh. They reached ninety camels and the arrows still fell against him. His father ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib went on praying. When they cast the arrows following the sacrifice of the hundredth camel, the arrow fell against the animals, and the son was free.

Then the Quraysh and those others present said, “Your Lord is satisfied (*riḍā rabbikum*) at last, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.” They claim that he said, “No, by God, not until I cast the arrows against them three times.” So they cast the arrows between the camels and ʿAbd Allāh while ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib prayed, and they fell against the camels; then they did it again, a second and a third time, with the same result. Then the camels were slaughtered (*fa-naḥarat*) and left there, and no man or wild beast was turned back from eating them (*thumma turikat lā yaṣaddu ʿanhā insānun wa-lā sabuʿun*).³⁵

It was necessary for the community to be reassured about this difficult operation. Twice more the arrows were cast to check the outcome, and each time there was a clear answer. The son was not the intended sacrifice for the god or the gods. The meaning of the meal that followed the slaughtering of the one hundred camels, is impossible to tell from Ibn Hishām’s or al-Ṭabarī’s versions, but the slaughter of such a large number of beasts would inevitably result in a huge feast for men and animals alike, as the text also tells. However, there is no speculation about who the participants were or what happened with the meat that was not eaten.

6.3.5 Comparison and comments

As we see, with its three parts, the second version is much longer and far more detailed than the first. In terms of general content, it is probably incorrect to talk of two *versions*, even if Ibn Ishāq presents a “fuller account of this matter of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib’s vow than the one given above”.³⁶ Judging by al-Ṭabarī’s own text, the second version has so much more information that it has to be

34 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 5 [I: 1077]. For *najan*, see also Q 12:110, where the word occurs in the passive, *nūjiya*, ‘were saved’.

35 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 5 [I: 1077–1078].

36 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

evaluated as a separate text. Still, it is possible to compare the two. For my concerns, there are interesting additions throughout the second version that must be considered and commented upon. I will go through the different parts and review the function of the elements involved and consider the significance of the varying formulations, especially concerning sacrificial acts, for the whole context.

6.3.6 The narratives' participants

6.3.6.1 God, gods and goddesses

Allāh is not explicitly mentioned as the recipient of the sacrifices in the first version. However, when ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim asks, “shall I sacrifice him [my son] or a hundred camels?” he begins, “O God”. Consequently, in both versions Allāh is seen as the one *to whom* oaths concerning sacrifices are made and *to whom* this individual wants to sacrifice. In the second version the purpose and the effect of satisfying “your Lord (*riḍā rabbikum*)” is mentioned three times in connection with the number of camels to be offered in sacrifice.³⁷ Thus, it is reasonable to infer that Allāh is the recipient of the sacrifices, since He completely agrees to them. However, he halts the sacrifice of a human being and allows a different offering, one of camels, to substitute for it.

In the first version and in the interlude, Allāh is characterised as the One who issues a decree. “God has forbidden you to kill one another (*qad nahākum Allāhu an taqattalū unfusakum*)” (from the first version), and “As for sacrificing your son (*tanḥurī ibnaki*), God has forbidden you to do that (*fa-qad nahāka Allāhu ʿan dhālik*)” (from the interlude). In the second version this straightforward injunction is given by the Quraysh and the other sons of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib, all of whom add that ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib “must get an excuse for not doing so”. This may suggest that this version is a later narrative from the family chronicle of the chosen Muḥammad, which portrays the important tribe of Quraysh as carrying a message. This does not mean that the commands of Allāh have become less important over time, but rather that the new informants or transmitters are as influential as the old ones. Additionally, the message itself shows its validity, at least for the readers of al-Ṭabarī’s text, by being delivered by new and now more highly favoured mouthpieces.

The pre-Islamic g(G)od, the gods and goddesses are referred to by means of their Islamic terms, Allāh, *rabb*, and their proper names, Hubal, Isāf and Nāʿila. There is no rejection of pre-Islamic ideas. The Islamic terms are used in the pre-Islamic context without restraint. The god Hubal inside the Kaʿba was important

37 E.g., “and your Lord will be satisfied (*raḍiya*)” (Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 5 [I: 1077]).

with regard to prayers and arrow casting. It (He) is characterised as the “greatest of the idols (*a‘zam aṣnām*)” of the Quraysh. Hence the goddesses, Isāf and Nā‘ila, *at*, meaning probably *outside*, the Ka‘ba, were divinities of some reduced prominence compared to Hubal. Isāf and Nā‘ila were also gods of the Quraysh. Here they are associated with the place where the Quraysh “used to slaughter their sacrifices (*tanḥuru ‘indahumā dhabā’iḥhā*)”. Hubal “stood by a well (*ba‘ir*) inside the Ka‘ba in which were gathered the offerings made (*yuhdā*) to the Ka‘ba”, and “beside Hubal there were seven arrows”, al-Ṭabarī writes, and therefore conveys important knowledge about the pre-Islamic gods. However, it is not clear here whether the sacrifices were bloody sacrifices or material gifts.

It is interesting to observe that al-Ṭabarī is not reacting against the obviously Islamic-influenced demand to “ask for God’s forgiveness, repent, give alms, and perform such charitable actions as you are able”, quoted in the interlude. This is an indication that the interlude is a later addition and therefore an editorial link between the two versions. It is worthy of note that al-Ṭabarī, writing at the beginning of the 10th century, did not question that the Islamic views were imposed upon the pre-Islamic story presented in these narratives. Are they seen as originally belonging to the pre-Islamic narratives, or are they understood as an acceptable interpretation of those earlier narratives in accordance with the new Muslim revelation, with its own codes of practice and its own views of divine acceptance?³⁸

6.3.6.2 The father

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib of the Banū Hāshim clan of the Quraysh is presented in both versions as a pious person who emphasises prayer and obedience. He stands to his vow(s), and he follows the rules of the rituals. He is also well integrated in his clan although there is some opposition against his digging of the Zamzam well.

In the second version it is said, “‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him [his son] by the hand, took a large knife (*shafra*), and went up to Isāf and Nā‘ila, two idols of Quraysh at which they used to slaughter their sacrifices, to sacrifice him.” A touching description of a seemingly caring father taking his son by the hand is suddenly undermined by his grabbing a knife in the other. Something terrible for all involved, the family and the whole clan, was about to happen. Consequently, the tribe reacted and prohibited from fulfilling his intentional vow.

The first tradition, transmitted by Ibn Ishāq, regards the pre-Islamic ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib as a *Muslim* at the same time as he (or the custodian) throws the seven

38 Crone and Silverstein (2010: 437) question the use of *public* practices concerning lots even if they admit that the Prophet practised throwing of arrows publicly.

arrows that are placed beside the pre-Islamic god, Hubal, thus engaging in a clearly polytheistic practice that has deeper theological consequences than casting lots for property reasons.

6.3.6.3 The sons and the youngest one

In both versions of al-Ṭabarī the topic of reaching maturity underlies the whole line of action. If ten (this number is identical to both versions) of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s sons reached maturity, then he would sacrifice one of them. They remain obedient and respectful and do not doubt their father’s good intentions. They are willing to accept and take their part in what G(g)od has ordered him to do. The sons do not protest or undertake anything to stop their father from fulfilling his vow.

In the first version the woman who inquires about the correct way to proceed has only one son; in the second version the father has ten sons and there is no mention of a woman. Here, the adult sons’ duty to protect their father is mentioned explicitly. When the nine oldest sons intervene on behalf of their youngest brother and vehemently protest against the father’s intention of sacrificing him, this reaction might perhaps be regarded as a consequence of their duty to protect. For they must protect their father against the immense grief to which his intended action is likely to lead. Their supportive actions are not a part of the first version because there the good solution, throwing the arrows and the straightforward decision to sacrifice the hundred camels, is reached so abruptly that nobody needs to fear a negative outcome.

The youngest son’s position is of special interest. In the first version ‘Abd Allāh is the one “whom he [the father] loved more than any other”.³⁹ In the second version the reader is told that “he was the smallest (*aṣghar*) boy of his father, [and] it is claimed, the one he loved most (*aḥabbun waladun*)”.⁴⁰ There is a parallel narrative about a father’s love for his youngest son in Q 12:8, where the brothers of the seventeen-year-old boy, Yūsuf, say, “Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we.”⁴¹

6.3.6.4 The Quraysh and other tribes

When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was about to sacrifice his youngest son, according to the second version the Quraysh rushed to him to exclaim their dismay over his intended action. “However, the Quraysh rose from their assemblies (*min*

39 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

40 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

41 This Qur’anic narrative has a parallel in Genesis 37:3, where the same is said about Joseph, the second youngest son of Jacob, the patriarch.

andiyatihā)⁴² and came to him, saying, ‘What do you intend to do, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib?’” Together with his other sons they stopped the killing of Muḥammad’s father and thus secured the line of sacred selection towards Muḥammad’s birth and life. But another relative of ‘Abd Allāh, al-Mughīra ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn Makhzūm, from the same tribe as ‘Abd Allāh’s mother, also defends his young relative. His role *could* be compared with that of the two legal practitioners in the first version. Al-Mughīra says, “By God! You shall never sacrifice him, but must get an excuse for not doing so,” or, in Guillaume’s translation of Ibn Hishām’s text, “until you offer the expiatory sacrifice for him”.⁴³ He was willing to pay whatever was necessary to release ‘Abd Allāh, “If it takes all we possess to ransom him, we shall do so (*kāna fidā’u hu bi-anwālīnā fadīnāhu*)”.⁴⁴ Such willingness is not witnessed in the first version.

Both tribes were afraid of what would happen in the future if somebody was allowed to kill his son. “If you act thus, men will never stop bringing their sons to sacrifice them, and how will the people survive in this way?”⁴⁵ There were also negative aspects to relations with the Quraysh, as when “the Quraysh made difficulties for him about the digging of the *Zamzam*”.⁴⁶ This too was resolved by the throwing of arrows. Nothing more is said on that topic.

6.3.6.5 The custodian and the oracle

The custodian (*ṣāḥib al-qidāḥ*) serves the god Hubal in the Ka‘ba. He is asked by ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib to throw the arrows only in the second version; in the first version ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib casts the lots himself. In the second version another group is described as throwing the arrows in the explanation about the blood money. “They” are probably the custodian and his helpers. Later ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib asks the custodian directly, “Cast my sons’ arrows to determine their fate [...] Each of them gave the custodian his arrow with his name written on it.”⁴⁷ It seems that the functions of the custodian, who cast the arrows, and of the oracle, who was consulted in difficult situations, were well known.⁴⁸ Their roles are clearly defined in al-Ṭabarī’s text, even the custodian’s fee: he received either one hundred dirhams or a slaughter-camel for casting lots with the seven

42 *Andiya* is the plural of *nādin*, which means ‘a club, circle’ (Wehr 1980: 953).

43 Guillaume 1955: 67; cf. Ibn Hishām: 289.

44 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

45 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

46 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 2 [I: 1074].

47 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

48 Cf. Crone and Silverstein 2010.

arrows.⁴⁹ The ritual wording uttered by the custodian is important, “O god of ours (*yā ilahunā*), this is so-and-so the son of so-and-so, about whom we wish to know such-and-such; so reveal the truth concerning him.”⁵⁰ The addressee of this speech, “our god” (*ilahunā*), is obviously Hubal, who is mentioned earlier in this narrative.

6.3.6.6 The two women

In the first version, an ordinary woman swears to sacrifice her son. In the second version she is absent, but instead a remarkable sorceress (*‘arrāfatun*)⁵¹ appears there as the decisive element in the sacrificial process when the custodian has finished his job.⁵² The first woman is a parallel figure to ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and has no power to release anyone. But the second woman has a role corresponding to that of the three men whom the first woman asks what to do, and consequently she is extremely powerful in terms of possessing authority to annul or reaffirm people’s vows. She stands in the place of G(g)od and is a sort of sacred voice which is respected and trusted by all. “If she commands you to sacrifice him, you will sacrifice him, and if she commands you to do something which offers relief (*faraj*) to you and to him, you can accept it.”⁵³ Although, in this narrative, no daughters are included among ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s children, al-Ṭabarī obviously sees no reason why these two women should not be mentioned, all the more so because the sorceress is attributed with important duties in the Prophet’s selection history.⁵⁴

6.3.6.7 The camels

The number of camels to be sacrificed, increasing from ten to one hundred, is never questioned. In the second version ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib assesses the value of the son whom he intended to sacrifice beginning with ten camels, and not with the settled one hundred, which is stipulated without any excitement in the first version. The repeated throwing of the arrows in the second version results in the

49 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 3 [I: 1075].

50 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 3 [I: 1075].

51 Lane 1874: 2013. The root *‘-r-f* also occurs in the name of the mountain in Mecca, ‘Arafāt, coming from ‘to know’, here in the second derivation, ‘to cause to know’. The second derivation is also used to express the halt at ‘Arafāt during the *hajj*. The *‘arrāfa* means ‘one who informs about the past’. It may also mean a ‘diviner’, an ‘astrologist’ and in some sources a ‘physician’ (Lane 1874: 2016).

52 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

53 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

54 Regarding such an exceptional and remarkable role for a woman compare e.g. the prophetess Hulda in 2 Kings 22.

maximum of one hundred camels, identical with the only number mentioned in the first and shorter version of the story. This is an enormous number, representing a considerable material cost. According to anthropological literature one hundred animals of a domestic kind can be considered to represent the *total* flock of animals.⁵⁵ Further, “a hundred camels is the standard bloodwite according to early Arabic sources”.⁵⁶ It would then imply that the owner would sacrifice his whole income when he or she slaughtered one hundred animals. The answer given by a family member of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s wife indicates this willingness of a total cost: “If it takes all we possess to ransom him, we shall do so (*kāna fidḍūhu bi-anwālīnā fidīnāhu*).”⁵⁷

Ten camels were the usual fixed blood money. An arrow with “blood money” (*‘aql*) written on it was used to settle disputes. “[W]hen a dispute arose as to which of them was responsible for paying blood money, they cast lots with the seven arrows to settle the matter.”⁵⁸ It was expected that ten camels would cancel or balance the offender’s guilt. In the second version a sorceress (*‘arrāfatun*) is aware of this penalty. “On the following day they went back to her and she said, ‘Yes, news has come to me. How much is the blood money (*al-dabba*) among you?’ They replied, ‘Ten camels,’ which it was.”⁵⁹

6.3.7 Vows and oaths

The vows play a less important role in the second version than in the first. The first narrative emphasises the tension between an oath and the faith that should accompany it. Two men and an *amīr* are asked for their legal opinion concerning the woman’s oath, and this process of questioning seems as important as the complex matter itself.⁶⁰ The hierarchy that subsists between God, ‘Abd al-

55 “As a rule, a sacrifice was dedicated in order to obtain good fortune in a particular respect. The promise to dedicate an animal when the herd had reached the number of a hundred had an effect on the prosperity of the animals because the word anticipated the fact.” So Pedersen 1993: 846.

56 Khan 1999: 59, n. 33. She examines in her paper sacrificial narratives in pre-Islamic poetry in the light of Girard’s ideas, and she underlines that substitution and gift, exchange and sacrifice, are important elements in a certain marriage narrative, where the bride is exchanged for one hundred camels.

57 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

58 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 3 [I: 1075]. Cf. Silverstein and Crone 2010.

59 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 5 [I: 1077]. *Al-ibl* and *al-da(ā)bba*; cf. Wehr 1980: 270.

60 This version is similar to the regulation in the Hebrew Bible about keeping one’s vows to the sacred commander. In Numbers 30:2b–3 Moses says to the heads of the tribes of Israel: “This is what the Lord commands: When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do

Muṭṭalib and his ten sons is a cultural and religious phenomenon that is not questioned at all in this narrative.

In the second version, part 1, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib mentions the vow (*al-nadhār*)⁶¹ as if there was nothing surprising about it, neither for his sons nor for his neighbours and others. He then asserts obedience to God to be a higher duty than anything else. There is no trace of seeking a legal opinion on the vow in this version. The legal practitioners lack any importance when it comes to this version’s practices relating to the Ka’ba, the throwing of the arrows and the decision-making aspect of the ancient ritual.

6.3.8 The place

In the first version “[a] woman had sworn to sacrifice (*tanḥuru*) her son *at* the Ka’ba”. That is the only statement concerning the sacrificial place. In the second version we are given a number of details about the inside and the outside of the sacred building. In the second version ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s problem is connected to the digging of the nearby Zamzam well.

The sacred cities of Medina and Mecca are also mentioned. In the first version Medina is the place where the woman seeks a legal opinion on her oath. In the second version Mecca and the Ka’ba are the centres of the events.⁶²

6.3.9 Words used for sacrifice and offerings

In the first version al-Ṭabarī does not specifically narrate the sacrificial act. The material did not let him go that far. However, he still uses terms for “sacrifice”, and these can be compared to the second version’s much more detailed account with its more diverse language. In the first version, only the root *n-ḥ-r* is used, in

everything he said” (vv. 1b–2 according to the counting in English Bibles). This may be compared to Numbers 30:9 and 13 (vv. 8 and 12 in English Bibles), where it is said that a husband “nullifies the vow that binds her” and, “her husband has nullified them, and the Lord will release her”. Even if none of the three men in the first version and in the interlude of al-Ṭabarī’s narrative is married to the first woman, there are interesting similarities in the way they test her, a woman’s, oath.

61 See Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 193; Gottschalk 1919: 81; Janowski 2000: 90, n. 344.

62 Q 5:95 and 97 are the only two verses in the Qur’ān where the Ka’ba is called *al-ka’ba*. The name al-Madīna means *al-madīnatu l-nabī*, ‘the city of the Prophet’, which was introduced after *hijra* in year 622 AD. Previously, the city was called Yathrib, used once in the Qur’ān, 33:13. See Winder (1986: 994–997), who doubts that al-Madīna means *al-madīnatu l-nabī*, since the opponents of Muḥammad also used the word al-Madīna (Q 63:8).

first and third person singular and second person singular feminine.⁶³ The word for sacrifice contrasts with the word for killing, derived from the root *q-ṭ-l*, which is then understood as an action of murder that will threaten the whole clan.

The second version shows greater variation. The root *n-ḥ-r* is used several times, and once in the same sentence as a word from another root, *dh-b-ḥ*, “at which [the site of the two deities Isāf and Nāʿīla] they used to slaughter their sacrifices, to sacrifice him (*alladhānī tanḥuru ʿindahumā dhabāʿiḥhā li-yadhbahahu*)”.⁶⁴ In the significant response, “You shall never sacrifice him [your son]”, uttered by the Quraysh, the brothers and by al-Mughīra ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar ibn Makhzūm, al-Ṭabarī uses the root *dh-b-ḥ* (*lā tadhbihuhu*). A third root, *h-d-y*, is also found, here applied in a verbal form about the offerings that were “given (*yuhdā*) to the Kaʿba”; hence, its meaning is: “that which was offered”, often in the sense of a “gift”.⁶⁵ The fourth expression relating to sacrifice is the word *fidāʾ* from the root *f-d-y*, meaning “redemption; sacrifice”.⁶⁶ “If it takes all we possess to ransom him, we shall do so (*in kāna fidāʾuhu bi-anwālinā fadaynāhu*).”⁶⁷

6.3.10 Are two or more traditions combined?

The arrows are not mentioned at all in the first version. There is only the hint, “he cast lots among them”, but without any specification of how the lots are to be determined. Even if the verbal (*aqraʿa*) is used, the arrows are not mentioned explicitly. The reference to lots (*al-qurʿatu*) does not necessarily indicate the *maysir* play with the arrows (*qidh* singular, *qidāḥ* plural), which, however, is obviously meant in the second version.

It is not clear whether the seven arrows in the last part of the second version are among the ten already mentioned. Probably the narrative is referring to two different sets of arrows. Firstly, there are the *ten* arrows on which the *ten* sons’ names were written and which were then brought to the custodian, who threw them. It is also said that these arrows were brought into the Kaʿba by ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib ibn Hāshim. Secondly, there are the *seven* arrows that lay beside the god Hubal and which were used in the old *maysir* ritual; it is the latter that are

63 “Sacrifice your son! (*tanḥurī ibnaki*)” (al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 1 [I: 1074]); “(A woman had sworn) to sacrifice her son at the Kaʿba (*tanḥuru ibnahā ʿinda l-kaʿbati*)” and “Am I to sacrifice (*a-fa-anḥuru*) (my son?)” (al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 1–2 [I: 1074]).

64 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

65 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 3 [I: 1075].

66 Wehr 1980: 700–701.

67 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 4 [I: 1076].

decisive in this text. These seven arrows are inscribed with the following characteristics: “the blood money”, “yes”, “no”, “of you”, “attached”, “not of you” and “water”. Are these terms written anew in each and every situation in which the arrows are used, so that, for example, “water” becomes a relevant factor in every matter for which a decision is sought, or only in cases that concern digging for water?⁶⁸ The third possibility is that these terms were written on the arrows in order to deal specifically with the difficult matter of deciding how ‘Abd al-Muṭṭallib should act with regard to his oath. The reader is not informed clearly about how this procedure was carried out.

I believe that the first part of the second version originally consisted of two stories, one about the ten sons and the ten arrows somewhere outside the Ka’ba, and another about the traditional throwing of the seven arrows inside the Ka’ba. Since the ten names – and hence the ten arrows – and the seven numbered and named arrows do not fit together, these two narratives are made complementary by being set in the same sacred area, inside the Ka’ba, and by using ‘Abd al-Muṭṭallib as the unifying figure. The excitement in the first version lies in the sense of anticipation concerning how the legal experts will respond. The excitement in the second version is connected with the number of arrows and the result that will come from casting them.

6.3.11 The conclusion, radiance and prophets

This narrative is followed by al-Ṭabarī’s comments on the young man’s, that is ‘Abd Allāh’s, radiance, which is attractive to women. One woman, Umm Qattāl bint Nawfal ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā, the sister of the Christian, Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Asad, even proposes and tells him that she will give him one hundred living camels if he sleeps with her. He refuses, and is married instead to Āmina bint Wahb, who is soon pregnant and becomes the mother of Muḥammad.⁶⁹ The radiance (or “the white blaze between your eyes”, as one version says) is gone and the first woman no longer shows any interest. The Prophet is conceived through divine guidance and selection. His father was not sacrificed, but one hundred camels were the massive ransom that was needed before Allāh was satisfied.⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī mentions that there are “proofs of

68 Cf. Silverstone and Crone 2010.

69 Khan 1999.

70 Al-Ṭabarī 1988, vol. 6: 5–6 [I: 1078–1079]: “A woman of the Banī Asad called Umm Qattāl bint Nawfal ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā, [...] said, ‘Where are you going, ‘Abd Allāh?’ ‘With my father,’ he said. She said, ‘I have for you as many camels as were slaughtered for you, so sleep with me now.’” “This has to be an allusion to the hundred camels the father had just sacrificed as a ransom for his son” (Mårtensson 2001: 98,

prophethood”. In connection with one narrative, in which Muḥammad looks at a cluster of dates hanging from a palm tree, orders it to him and then to return to its original position again, al-Ṭabarī says, “The stories of the proof of his prophethood are too numerous to be counted. We shall devote a book to this subject, if God wills.”⁷¹

6.4 Al-Shahrestānī

Of particular interest is al-Shahrestānī’s emphasis on the narrative about Muḥammad’s grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and the near sacrifice of his tenth and youngest son in his book *Kitāb al-milāl wa-l-nihal*.⁷² He wants to connect the generations from long before the Prophet and starts this part by saying, “Regarding the Arabs, in the time of *Jāhiliya* they had three kinds of science.” This he specifies as “the science of genealogies (*al-ansāb*), chronologies (*al-tawārikh*), and religions (*al-adyān*)”.⁷³ He then categorises the incident with ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib as belonging to the first of these. How does he interpret this? He immediately says that Muḥammad is “the great light (*al-nūr al-wārid*)”. He describes Muḥammad’s descent from his forefathers Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl, and then runs forward through the genealogical line until “it reaches the children (*dhuriyatihi*) of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib [...] the chief of the valley (*sayyid al-wādī*)”.⁷⁴ The text goes on to say that the blessing (*baraka*) of the Prophet’s coming happened in the year of the Elephant (570 AD) when Muḥammad was born.

If we look at the text more closely, we see that it is constructed in a special way. A special phrase, *wa-bi-barakati(n) dhalika al-nūri* (‘and the blessing of that light’), occurs seven times. As a praise of the light of the coming prophet, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib is granted a vision (*rawāya*) about the Zamzam source, and it was regarded a happy moment when someone found the gazelle and the swords [probably sacrificial gifts and tools] that had been hidden there by the Jurhum clan.⁷⁵ Further, he is said to have been inspired by the light to “make a vow to sacrifice his tenth son (*al-nadhara alladhī nadhara fī dhibḥi l-‘āshiri min*

n.147). See Rubin (1995: 103–112), who presents an interesting analysis of the role of radiance in connection with Muḥammad.

71 Al-Ṭabarī 1988. vol. 6: 66–67 [I: 1146].

72 Al-Shahrestānī (d. 548/1153) 1968 (Kaylānī. vol. 2). All the English translations in the following are mine, based on the Arabic original and the French translation made by Jolivet and Monnot (1993. vol. 2: 505–509) who refers to an Arabic edition by Badrān (pp. 1239–1244) which I do not have access to.

73 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 505, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1239; Kaylānī: 238.

74 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 505, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1239.

75 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

awlādihi)”.⁷⁶ It is also written, “the Prophet is glorious, peace be upon him, and he said: ‘I am the son of the two sacrifices (*anā ibnu l-dhabīḥayni*)’.”⁷⁷ Next, al-Shahrastānī explains the sacrifices to which Muḥammad is referring.

The first sacrifice was Ismāʿīl (*arāda bi-l-dhibḥi l-awwalī Ismāʿīl*), peace be upon him, he was the first on whom the light fell (*wa-huwa awwalun min inḥadari ilayhi al-nūru*) and he quickly hid himself (*fa-akhtaḥā*). And the second sacrifice (*bi-l-dhabīḥi l-thānī*) was ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, and he was the last one [...] on whom the light fell (*wa-huwa ākiru(n) min inḥadarin ilayhi l-nūr*), and unto him is revealed the most glorious (light) (*fa-ṣahara kullu l-ṣuhūr*).⁷⁸

He then explains *why* this light was given to them. They were granted these great gifts because they, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib’s sons, should “avoid (*taraka*) injustice (*al-ẓulm*) and violence (*al-baḡḥā*), and should strive for mercy (*makrām*)”.⁷⁹ Further the texts says, “By the blessed power of this light, he [ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib] was commended to judge in the matters of the Arabs and be a judge between the two parties. He placed a pillow to the right of the Black Stone, and sat at the Kaʿba judging in the matters of the people.”⁸⁰ Al-Shahrastānī follows up by praising the House, the Kaʿba, which Allāh himself will defend and take care of. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib’s family is supposed to function as caretakers.

Therefore, concern for the House influences even the divine judgement and the life to come. “A man of injustice (*ẓulūm*) cannot leave this world (*al-dunyā*) if Allāh is not taking revenge on him.”⁸¹ Al-Shahrastānī then asks, “By Allāh, is there another life after this which is better for man?”⁸² ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib is told to have convinced people about his uniqueness because Allāh let him use the arrows (*qidāḥ*) in the matter of his son.⁸³ ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib then uttered, “O Lord, you are the king of the praised one (*ya-rabb anta al-malik l-maḥmūd*), and you are my lord.”⁸⁴ After a while he turned towards the Kaʿba and prayed, My Lord,

76 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506.

77 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506: “Je suis le fils des deux victimes sacrificielles”. In footnote 7, Monnot says that this *ḥadīth* is absent in Wensinck’s collection. Cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239. In the Arabic text there is no note about the *isnād* in connection with this saying.

78 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

79 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

80 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 506, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239. Cf. Wheeler 2006: 24–29; however, he does not mention al-Shahrastānī’s text.

81 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 507, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1241; Kaylānī: 239.

82 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 507.

83 Cf. Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 507, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1242; Kaylānī: 240. Monnot points at Ibn Ishāq, vol. 1: 160–162, cf. Guillaume 1955: 66f.

84 Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 507, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1242; Kaylānī: 240.

“this is really the boy (*bi-ḥaqqi ḥādhā -l-ghulām*)”. And he threw (the arrows) the second and third time.⁸⁵ In this convincing way, the topic of eternal life is introduced to the reader. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Prophet, is the valid witness for the life to come.

6.5 Ibn Kathīr

In his text in *Qiṣāṣ al-anbiyā*⁸⁶ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) describes Muḥammad’s life in its entirety, but what interests us at the moment is Muḥammad’s birth. The short narrative that follows demonstrates how sacrifice was a part of the boy’s life and cultural context:

It has been told above how ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib sacrificed the one hundred camels, God having saved him from fulfilment of his vow to sacrifice his son ‘Abd Allāh. This was in accordance with what He had decreed of old, that the *nabī al-ummī*, the unlettered Prophet, ‘the seal of the prophets’, and the Lord of the progeny of Adam would appear.⁸⁷

Earlier in his history Ibn Kathīr writes, “Al-‘Abbas was the one who drew ‘Abd Allāh out from beneath his father’s foot when he had placed it on him to sacrifice him. And it is said that he scarred his face so badly that it remained visible there till he died.”⁸⁸ After recounting several wonderful and sad aspects of Muḥammad’s early life, Ibn Kathīr mentions a couple of incidents relating to sacrificial rituals. His grandfather “took him to Hubal in the Ka‘ba”, where he prayed and thanked God and realised that the boy had a special task in life for which he needed protection.⁸⁹ The boy “was born circumcised and with his umbilical cord detached”.⁹⁰ When he was seven days old, a sacrifice (*‘aqīqa*) was made and the Quraysh came to hear that his grandfather had given him the name Muḥammad.⁹¹ These wonders and details about the life of the Prophet indicate that he was the chosen one in the eyes of the Muslim believers.

However, the author Ibn Sa‘d does not suppress that there are also aspects of discontinuity between Muḥammad and his ancestors when he reports that the Prophet said: “I do not serve stones and I do not pray to them, and I do not sacrifice to them and I do not eat from that which was sacrificed to them (*wa-lā adhbaḥu lahu wa-lā ākalu mā dhubiḥa lahu*) [...] I do not seek any oracle by

85 See Jolivet and Monnot 1993: 507, cf. Badrān Arabic: 1242; Kaylānī: 240.

86 Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) 2000. vol. 1.

87 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 1: 145.

88 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 1: 126.

89 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 1: 148.

90 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 1: 149.

91 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 1: 150.

using arrows (*wa-lā astaqsamu bi-l-azlāmī*), and I only pray directed towards this house until I die (*wa-lā uṣallī llā ilā hādhā al-bayti ḥattā amūtu*).”⁹² Hence, in this version, the Prophet excludes his own grandfather’s practice of asking the female oracle about advice through arrows concerning his son’s future. Simultaneously, he emphasises the importance of the House, towards which all Muslims pray five times a day.

92 Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230/845) 1956. vol. 3: 380.

Chapter 7

Sacrifices during Muḥammad's Pilgrimages

7.1 Introduction

In the years after Muḥammad's *hijra* to Medina in 622 AD, his main desire was to return to Mecca. Various undertakings of Muḥammad and his companions and some of the agreements he made with his enemies were associated with sacrificial activity. Muḥammad himself performed the “small” pilgrimage, *ʿumra*, which involved sacrifices, to Mecca in the year 6/628, following the Ḥudaybiya agreement, and then again in the years 7/629 and 8/630.¹ There are also some fascinating allusions to and descriptions of sacrificial activities during some *ʿumrāt* and in connection with certain military campaigns organised by Muḥammad's friends.

These reports form an interesting background to Muḥammad's first and only *ḥajj*, and include ritual elements that Muḥammad developed into a comprehensive ritual during his last visit to the *ḥaram*. The *ḥajj*, called the *ḥijjat al-wadāʿ*, the ‘Farewell Pilgrimage’, because Muḥammad died six months later (June 8, 632 AD), took place almost ten years after he had fled from the city. When he entered Mecca and Mina in 632, sacrifices were offered at different places.² Actually, the *ḥijjat al-wadāʿ* marked and represented a peak in the intensity of Muḥammad's ritual activities. This is made clear in Ibn Kathīr's

1 The counting of Muḥammad's small pilgrimages (*ʿumrāt*) has been questioned. See al-Ṭabarī (1990. vol. 9: 125, n. 864). Jones (al-Wāqidi d. 207/822 1966: 1088) says that we have to do with four occasions: *ʿumrat al-ḥudaybiya* in AH 6, *ʿumrat al-qaḍiyya* in 7 AH, *ʿumrat al-jīʿrāna* in 8 AH, and the *ʿumra* with the Farewell *ḥajj* in 10 AH. Al-Wāqidi (1966: 1088) mentions the first three in his introduction to the Farewell Pilgrimage. On the *ʿumrat al-qaḍāʾ* in 7 AH, see also Ibn Kathīr, who calls it *ʿumrat al-qīṣāṣ*, and explains *qīṣāṣ* as, “because they blocked the way of the Messenger”, and *ʿumrat al-qaḍiyya* as “the decision pilgrimage”. See Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) 2000. vol. 3: 307, and vol. 4: 150–151. According to the historical reconstruction of Görke (1997: 193–195) the *ʿumrat al-Ḥudaybiya* was not performed in the same year as the conclusion of the treaty itself, i.e. in 6/628, but one year later. However, Muḥammad sacrificed and shaved immediately after the agreement, which ratified ten years of peace, and before *sūra* 48 was revealed to him. See Donner (1998: 249–254, esp. 251) who, in his overview of the early and uncertain Islamic chronology, maintains with Mālik and others that the treaty of Ḥudaybiya took place in year 6 AH.

2 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1088. Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 532f.

account of this event in which he describes how Muḥammad performed the rituals at the Kaʿba: he “only did this [the pilgrimage] because of the tribe of Quraysh and what he had heard of them, until the *ḥijjat al-wadaʿ*, the ‘farewell pilgrimage’; the *sunna*, the normative Muslim practice, continued it”.³

7.2 Slaughterings associated with the Ḥudaybiya treaty in the year 6/628, *ʿumrat al-Qaḍiyya* in the year 7/629 and *ʿumrat al-Jʿirrāna* in 8/630⁴

7.2.1 Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī

Ibn Ishāq⁵ narrates that Muḥammad performed the *ʿumra* in the sacred month of *dhū l-qaʿda* without any intention to make war. His peaceful intentions are validated by the fact that Muḥammad took “the sacrificial victims with him and donn[ed] the pilgrim garb so that all would know that he did not intend war and that his purpose was to visit the temple (*al-bayt*) and to venerate it”.⁶ Also on the second occasion Muḥammad appeared peacefully, but this time it is added that he also brought seventy camels for sacrifice.⁷ Ten men share one camel as their sacrifice. Different figures are recorded for how many men were involved – seven hundred or 1400.⁸ One of the camels did not stand up after kneeling, and it is said that the reason for this problem might have been a lack of water.

3 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 3: 308 and 314. The latter reference is concerned with the way Muḥammad walked or ran at the *ṭawāf*, but both texts have the goal of showing the link between the former *ʿumra* and the Farewell Pilgrimage.

4 Donner (1998: 251) writes that Muslim historians do not agree about these two last years.

5 Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) 1955; hereafter: ‘Guillaume 1955’. See Guillaume 1955: xl; Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hishām (d. 213/828) n.d.; hereafter ‘Ibn Hishām 218/833’. Guillaume 1955: 499–507 (Arabic text: 740–751).

6 Guillaume 1955: 499–500 (Arabic text: 740).

7 See also al-Wāqidi (1966: 1088), who mentions that 60 camels were slaughtered in year 7 AH. According to Görke (1997: 209), there are also versions that do not mention the slaughtering at all, but conclude with the dividing of the spoils from Khaybar into 18 parts, each of which was allocated to one hundred men. Lorenz I. Conrad points out the symbolic meaning of *seventy*, implying “a large number in a general way”, or suggesting “divine influence in the course of human affairs”. See Conrad 1988: 48; cf. Görke 1997: 213–214, n. 72.

8 Guillaume 1955: 500 (Arabic text: 741). Ibn Kathīr says that there were seventy camels for sacrifice and seven hundred men, but the total number of men was 1400 according to other sources. He also refers to a certain disagreement between Ibn Ishāq and al-Bukhārī on this matter. See Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 3: 223 and 233.

Muḥammad therefore “took an arrow from his quiver and handed it to his companion”.⁹ He stuck the arrow in the middle of a dry waterhole and water spouted up to satisfy their thirst.¹⁰ The sacrificial animals that are ushered in front of Muḥammad as they approach the enemy must be regarded as a peace offering. Ibn Ishāq then describes how the camels arrived with festive collars around their necks.¹¹ Then Muḥammad concluded what later became known as the *Treaty of Hudaibiya*.

Here in the “profane country”, while praying “in the sacred area”, Muḥammad “slaughtered his victims and sat down and shaved his head. [...] When the men saw what the apostle had done they leapt up and did the same.”¹² Then, Muḥammad blessed the men who had shaved their heads, and after being asked three times, he also blessed those who had *cut* their hair short. He said that the shavers “did not doubt”, but without explaining further what he meant thereby.¹³ Ibn Ishāq’s text also mentions that the same authorities had told him that one of Muḥammad’s camels – belonging to Abū Jahl – had a “silver nose-ring, thus enraging the polytheists”.¹⁴ Neither here nor in the text by the much later author, Ibn Kathīr, is explained why this decoration should have this effect.¹⁵

Because Muḥammad had not performed the *‘umra* before settling the Hudaibiya treaty, he undertook a new *‘umra* one year later.¹⁶ In connection with this pilgrimage Ibn Ishāq does not mention anything about the slaughtering of camels. Guillaume has reconstructed Ibn Hishām’s text and added a note taken from al-Ṭabarī, which says, “The apostle ordered them to change the (normal) sacrificial animal and did so himself. Camels were hard to come by so he allowed them to offer oxen.”¹⁷ Ibn Ishāq does not mention anything about sacrifice or the slaughtering of camels in connection with Muḥammad’s *‘umra* in year 8, but says, “The people made the pilgrimage that year in the way the

9 This was obviously regarded as a sacred token from God. Cf. Görke 1997: 207 and 209. Ibn Kathīr (2000. vol. 3: 230) relates that Ibn Ishāq is the source.

10 Guillaume 1955: 501 (Arabic text: 741–742).

11 Guillaume 1955: 502 (Arabic text: 743). Ibn Kathīr (2000. vol. 3: 233) repeats this detail about the necklaces around the animals’ necks.

12 Guillaume 1955: 505 (Arabic text: 749).

13 Ibn Kathīr (2000. vol. 3: 230) repeats this narrative in accordance with Ibn Ishāq without any further explanation.

14 Guillaume 1955: 505 (Arabic text : 749).

15 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 3: 230.

16 Guillaume 1955: 531–540 (Arabic text: 791–802).

17 Guillaume 1955: 531 (Arabic text: 790).

(pagan) Arabs used to do.”¹⁸ The new Muslims have not yet been educated in the traditions of Muḥammad and his friends, but he leaves a man in Mecca who will “instruct the people in religion and teach them the Quran”.¹⁹

7.2.2 Al-Wāqidi and Ibn Kathīr

Al-Wāqidi includes references to various sacrificial and pilgrimage rituals, or predecessors thereof, in his reports and narratives about the Ḥudaybiya event and the conquest (*futūḥ*) of Mecca. In the year 6 AH Muḥammad “saw in a dream (*raʾā fī l-nawmī*) that he entered the House (*al-bayt*) and he shaved his head (*ḥalaqa raʾsahu*), and he got the key to the House (*al-bayt*) and he announced (*ʿarrafa maʿa*) the *muʿarrifna*”. Then he invited his people to the *ʿumra* and they prepared themselves for *iḥrām*. The Prophet bought sacrificial camels from Busr ibn Sufyān al-Kaʿbī, and they were taken from Medina to Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. This was a sign of victory for the Muslims, but they were still unsure about the final outcome if a battle would take place.

The messenger of God set out from Medina on a Monday in Dhū l-Qaʿda. He washed in his house and put on two garments from the fabric of Ṣuḥār. He rode his camel al-Qaṣwā, from the door of his house. The Muslims set out. The messenger of God prayed the *zuhr* at Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. He then called for the sacrificial camels to be covered (*jalalat*)²⁰ and himself marked (*ashʿara*) some of those on the right side, as they stood facing *al-qibla*. Some say that he marked one camel on the right side, and then commanded Nājiya b. Jundub to mark the rest of them, and he hang upon them sandal after sandal (*qalladahā naʿlan naʿlan*). There were seventy sacrificial camels (*budana*) [...]. The Muslims marked their sacrificial animals, and strung sandals (*wa-qalladū l-naʿāla*) on the necks of the animals (*fī riqābi l-budni*). [...] [Muḥammad] called Busr b. Sufyān from Dhū l-Ḥulayfa and sent him as his spy.²¹

Al-Wāqidi says that Muḥammad himself signed (*ashʿara*) many of the camels on their right side.²² At the mosque in Dhū l-Ḥulayfa, Muḥammad went into *iḥrām*. After these rituals he sent 1600 plus 1400 plus 1525 men to Mecca. The sacrificial camels went in front, with the leading man right behind them. The

18 Guillaume 1955: 597 (Arabic text: 887).

19 Guillaume 1955: 597 (Arabic text: 887).

20 *Jalalat* means ‘to honour, dignify, exalt’ (Wehr 1980: 128). The second derivation also means ‘to cover’, with the possible specification ‘to cover with a garment conferring honourable status’.

21 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 282; al-Wāqidi 1966: 572–573.

22 Jones offers a plausible explanation of this practice: “On their hump he cut with a piece of iron and smeared with its blood in order to make a sign that this was a sacrificial animal, a *hady*.” (See al-Wāqidi 1966: 573, n. 3.)

question about what food it is right to consume during *iḥrām* was raised. The Prophet ate the meat of a tame donkey but rejected the meat of a wild one. He also drank some milk given to him by a non-Muslim. He was brought meat from slaughtered animals, had cucumbers and milk and ate and drank with pleasure.²³

When a man came to Muḥammad and asked what he should do with the lice in his hair during *iḥrām*, Muḥammad told him to cut his hair and sacrifice a sheep in its place, or fast three days or give six poor people two heaps of barley each.²⁴ Then al-Wāqidī mentions that this was the moment at which Q 2:196 was given to Muḥammad.²⁵ On this occasion Kaʿb had brought a cow to be sacrificed, and he put sandals on it and decorated it. When a camel fell in front of a man called al-Abwāʾ, Muḥammad ordered it to be sacrificed, and he dipped the camel's fur into its own blood. Subsequently, he let the meat be left for the people.²⁶

Al-Wāqidī writes that Muḥammad met with al-Ḥulays ibn ʿAlqama during the Ḥudaybiya raid and ordered the sacrificial camels to be driven towards him. The animals were decorated with necklaces (*al-hady fī qalāʾidihi*). Further on, we read the remarkable comment, “[T]his people made the sacrificial animal magnificent (*hādhā min qawmin yaʿizzimūna al-hady*) and they made it into a deity (*wa-yataʿallahūna*).”²⁷ Faizer, Ismail and Tayob translate alternatively, “this man is from a people who honor the sacrificial animal and respects acts of devotion”,²⁸ but do not come to terms with the strong emphasis on divination or sanctification in this statement.

23 For more on Islamic dietary laws, see Cook 1984 and 1986.

24 Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 284; al-Wāqidī 1966: 578. This is also a case mentioned earlier by al-Wāqidī: “After all his wives, the sacrificial animals, and the rest of the pilgrims had come together in *Dhū l-Ḥulayfa*, he went to the mosque after the midday prayer. He bowed twice. When he returned he decorated the camels on their right side and hung on each side a pair of shoes. Then he mounted his camel, and at the height of Baidā he began the *iḥrām*.”

25 Q 2:196: “Make the pilgrimage and visit the Sacred House for His sake. If you cannot, send such offerings as you can afford and do not shave your heads until the offerings have reached their destination. But if any of you is ill or suffers from an ailment of the head, he must pay a ransom either by fasting or by almsgiving or by offering a sacrifice” (Dawood 1994: 29).

26 Cf. al-Wāqidī 1966: 578 (my translation); Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 284. Meri (2010: 106ff) discusses the reliquic status of the Prophet's sandals for the believers.

27 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 599. *Yataʿallahūna*. *Taʿallaha* means ‘to become a deity, to deify’ (Wehr 1980: 24).

28 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 599; Faizer, Ismail and Tayob (2011: 294) have no further comment.

The people and the animals were hungry, and al-Wāqidi continues, “I saw the decorated animals and they had eaten their wool.”²⁹ The reader is then told that the sacrificial animals were restrained from reaching (*maʿakūfan* ‘an) its *maḥill*, its ‘way station’ or rather ‘final destination’.³⁰ The pilgrims were in a bad condition after fifteen days of waiting; they went to Muḥammad uttering the *labbayka*. He wanted to perform the *tawāf* and to sacrifice (*al-hady nanḥiruhu*), but the author of this text writes that “we denied [him this]”.³¹

Al-Wāqidi reports that Muḥammad ordered his men and women to sacrifice and to shave their heads. Muḥammad repeated this order three times but nobody obeyed him.³² Angrily, he turned to Umm Salama and complained, whereupon she wisely suggested that he should begin the sacrifice himself. He rushed out to the sacrificial animal with his knife (*ḥarba*) drawn, crying, “In the name of Allāh (*b-ismi-llāh*)” and “Allāh is the greatest (*Allāhu akbar*)”. He was followed by the others, and Umm ʿUmara watched Muḥammad as he slaughtered.³³

Al-Wāqidi goes on to note how many animals Muḥammad and his men were about to sacrifice. There were seventy camels in total. A special story is attached to one of the animals. The camel stallion of Abū Jāl had run from the fields and waited for his master in front of his house. The people of Mecca were ready to exchange one hundred camels for this particular one. Muḥammad did not approve of this offer because the camels were sacrificial animals. Instead, he slaughtered the stallion on behalf of seven people including Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.³⁴ There were seventy sacrificial animals and seven hundred men.

Regarding the sacrificial animals that were brought, al-Wāqidi says that boys were given a sheep each and the girls likewise.³⁵ There was a sharing of the meat after the slaughtering, and “also the rest of the Muslims gave the poor to eat from their slaughtered animals. [...] Muḥammad let twenty camels be slaughtered by an Aslamite at the hill of al-Marwa and he distributed the

29 Cf. Wellhausen 1882: 252 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 294.

30 *Maʿakūfan* from *ʿakafa* means ‘to hold back, restrain, keep from’ (Wehr 1980: 632). This expression is repeated twice in Jones’ Arabic text, al-Wāqidi 1966: 599–600. The pronomen is in singular (*hi*) and not in plural (*him*).

31 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 599–600 and Wellhausen 1882: 252–253 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 294.

32 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 613 (my translation); Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 302. This triple questioning concerning shaving is also recounted by Ibn Ishāq connected to the story about Muḥammad being asked to bless the cutters after having blessed the shavers (Guillaume 1955: 505. Arabic text: 749).

33 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 613 (my translation); Wellhausen 1882: 258. Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 302 and 303 (second narrative about her watching the Prophet).

34 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 614 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 302.

35 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 615 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 303.

meat.”³⁶ After the slaughtering, Muḥammad entered his red leather tent and shaved. He informed the men around him that a complete shaving of the head was the preferable thing to do. However, the women were not totally shaved; only the ends of their tresses were cut.³⁷ Some people collected the hair from Muḥammad’s head in order to save it as mementoes or for medical use.³⁸

Al-Wāqidi also tells that Muḥammad equipped his companions for the *‘umra* with sixty camels in the year 7 AH. This was just one year after the incomplete *‘umra* and the treaty at Ḥudaybiya.³⁹ “The animal guide was Nājiya ibn Jundab, who went in front of the herd and let them eat from the trees.” Further, it is recounted, “Others say that Abū Rūhm and Abū Hurayra were among the guides, the first of these two was said to have ridden one of the sacrificial animals.”⁴⁰ This tells us that the men in charge of the camels were important. It was also always important to clarify which animals were intended for sacrifice and which were not. Ibn Kathīr says that the *ḥadīth* collector Abū Dā’ūd related to him the following:

When we encountered the Syrians, they prevented us from going inside the sacred area. So I sacrificed the animals where I was, performed the other pilgrimage rites and returned home. When I went out the following year [7 AH] to complete the *‘umra*, I went to see Ibn ‘Abbās [...] and he replied, “You should change the animals for sacrifice, for the Messenger of God ordered his companions to sacrifice different animals than they had in the year of al-Ḥudaybiya on the *‘umrat al-qaḍiyya*.”⁴¹

The accounts differ regarding whether the consecrated animals should be changed or not. This discussion is referred to in Ibn Kathīr’s text. Other sources also mention that the sacrificial animals were prevented from reaching the Ka’ba.⁴² In this difficult situation Muḥammad allowed his people to sacrifice cattle instead of the expensive camels.⁴³ Horses and camels were loaded with weapons, and Muḥammad sent both these *and* the sacrificial animals before

36 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 615 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 303; Wellhausen 1882: 258–259.

37 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 615 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 303.

38 Wellhausen 1882: 258–259 (my translation). Cf. Wheeler 2010: 356ff.

39 Ibn Kathīr (2000, vol. 3: 311) refers to al-Wāqidi and repeats this information about Muḥammad’s *‘umra* in the following year.

40 Wellhausen 1882: 300 (my translation).

41 Ibn Kathīr 2000, vol. 3: 312.

42 Ibn Kathīr 2000, vol. 3: 312.

43 Ibn Kathīr 2000, vol. 3: 312.

himself and his men. Muḥammad went into *iḥrām* “at the mosque”,⁴⁴ and later, he rode al-Qaṣwa into Mecca. His companions intoned the *labbayka* incessantly until they touched the Black Stone.⁴⁵

7.3 Abū Bakr’s *hajj* in the year 9/631

7.3.1 Ibn Ishāq

Muḥammad was not allowed to perform the *hajj* in year 9 AH. In his place he sent Abū Bakr in command of the pilgrims.⁴⁶ It seems that the Muslim pilgrimage was formed that year, one year before the Farewell Pilgrimage took place. Non-Muslims and anybody without the required clothing were prohibited from entering the city. On the theme of the sacrificial rituals Ibn Ishāq makes only a few, but clear comments. “On the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥr*) when they assemble at Mina, [...] no unbeliever (*kāfirun*) shall enter Paradise and no polytheist (*mushrik*) shall make the pilgrimage after this year, [...]”⁴⁷ These commands were carried out; *how* is not my focus here. However, the exclusive role of the Quraysh and the Ḥums in the protection of Mecca and the supervision of the rituals is clearly communicated to all future pilgrims, as we already noted when we analysed the role of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and the Zamzam well.⁴⁸

7.3.2 Al-Wāqidi

Al-Wāqidi writes that in year 9 AH Muḥammad’s friend Abū Bakr undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca together with three hundred men from Medina.⁴⁹ Muḥammad sent twenty sacrificial camels (*badana*) with them, and “he adorned them with sandals (*qalladahā rasūl Allāhi al-naʿāla*), and he marked them with his hand on the right side (*wa-ashʿarahā bi-yadihi fī al-jānibi al-aymin*)”.⁵⁰ Nājiya ibn Jundub al-Aslamā led the pilgrimage on this occasion, as well, guiding the animals and pilgrims towards Mecca. Al-Wāqidi says that some rich

44 Wellhausen 1882: 300. Ibn Kathīr (2000. vol. 3: 31) also refers to the many weapons and the fear that this roused among the Quraysh as to whether the peace treaty would be broken.

45 Wellhausen 1882: 301.

46 Guillaume 1955: 617 (Arabic text: 919).

47 Guillaume 1955: 619 (Arabic text: 921). Ibn Hishām ([d. 218/833] vol. 5: 232–233) repeats this three times in almost the same way. Each time he uses “*yawm al-naḥr*”.

48 See Chapter 6.

49 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1076–1078; Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 527–528.

50 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 527; cf. al-Wāqidi 1966: 1077.

people in Medina sent five additional camels with them. Abū Bakr went into *ihrām* in Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. Suddenly, ‘Alī arrived riding on Muḥammad’s camel, al-Qaṣwa. Muḥammad had ordered ‘Alī to read out the Barā’a (Q 9:9) on the day of the slaughter and to proclaim the peace treaty.⁵¹ Al-Wāqidi does not comment on this proclamation but continues with an account of Abū Bakr’s rituals. He did not perform the *‘umra*, only the *hajj*. Muḥammad had ordered him to make a halt at the station (*wuqūf*), not only in ‘Arafa but also in Jam‘. The reason for these two stops was the fact that in *jāhiliya* they had stopped only in ‘Arafa. They probably felt this to have been insufficient, and this time it should be different. Moreover, the pre-Islamic rituals had been performed at a non-Islamic time. Hence, it was now wrong “to leave ‘Arafa before sunset and to leave Jam‘ before sunrise in order to start the running”.⁵² Abū Bakr performed the pilgrimage with all prescribed rituals included. He even held sermons in Batn ‘Urana and offered the prayers in each approved place. It is not said on which day he reached Mina.

Before sunset he prayed the early prayer, he stood (*waqafa*) until sunset and then he broke up departed. He trotted to Muḥassir, then he rode more patiently, then he trotted again to al-Jamra, where he threw the seven pebbles from the back of the camel. [...] Then he turned towards the place of sacrifice (*al-manḥar*), he sacrificed (*fa-naḥara*) and shaved his head (*thumma ḥalaqa*). At al-Jamra on the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥr*) ‘Alī read the approval (*qara’a riḍwān Allāhi*) and proclaimed the treaty. He said: “This is the word of the Prophet, after this year no idolater (*mushrikun*) is allowed to celebrate the pilgrimage or to run naked around the House.”⁵³

Interestingly, three different names are used for the days of sacrifice in the passage that follows, *yawm al-naḥr*, ‘day of sacrifice’ (twice), and *yawm al-ḥajj al-akbar*, ‘the day of the greatest pilgrimage’. The latter is the first appearance of this term in the work of al-Wāqidi. The term *yawm al-ṣaḍar* is used twice; originally it meant ‘the day of early morning’,⁵⁴ but here it probably carries the

51 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1077; Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 527. Cf. Wellhausen 1882: 416. Q 9:9: “How can you trust them? If they prevail against you they will respect neither agreements nor ties of kindred. They flatter you with their tongues, but their hearts reject you. Most of them are evil-doers” (Dawood 1994: 134).

52 All narratives are taken from al-Wāqidi 1966: 1078 (my translation).

53 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1078 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 527.

54 Wehr 1980: 506–507.

meaning ‘the fourth day of the feast of sacrifice’.⁵⁵ Both Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidi emphasise that “no idolater (*mushrikun*)” can enter the sacred place.⁵⁶

Abū Bakr was observed by Abū Huraira, who told that he had heard Abū Bakr preach three times from his camel during the days of the main festival, once in Mecca before the noon prayer, once in ‘Arafa at noon, and, finally, he had held a sermon in Mina on the *‘īd al-aḍḥā* after the noon prayer. The rest of the pilgrimage he carried out according to the strict rules for all later pilgrimages.⁵⁷

7.3.3 Ibn Kathīr

Ibn Kathīr adds some interesting points to the former two narratives about Abū Bakr’s pilgrimage in his version of the story, even though his reports contain less information than the other two. Like al-Wāqidi he says that the pilgrimage could be undertaken that year because “the polytheists (*mushrikūn*)”⁵⁸ were at the stations for their own pilgrimage. The Muslims were no longer refused access to the Ka‘ba.”⁵⁹ He also mentions that Q 9:9 was recited on this occasion.⁶⁰ This message was to be announced “to the people when they gather on the day at Mina to make sacrifice there”.⁶¹ The announcement was made by ‘Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib. Actually, Ibn Kathīr mentions this a number of times, thus indicating that there must have been some discussion about granting the Meccans a four month period to change their un-Islamic rituals and stop running naked around the Ka‘ba.⁶²

The term *yawm al-ḥajj al-akbar*, ‘the day of the greatest pilgrimage’, is repeated and explained with reference to al-Bukhārī’s book *Kitāb al-Jihād*, in which the author says that this refers to the “day when sacrifice is made” and is regarded as ‘greatest’ “because people refer to the *‘umra* as the *ḥajj al-asghar*, ‘the lesser pilgrimage’.”⁶³ The author then states that in the next year (10 AH) “no polytheist took part”.⁶⁴ Ibn Kathīr concludes the chapter on this *ḥajj* by

55 According to Jones (al-Wāqidi 1966: 1078, n. 5); cf. p. 1113, n. 2. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob (2011: 528) translate in a similar way, “the fourth day after the slaughter”.

56 The debate about the identity of the *mushrikun* cannot be pursued here.

57 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1078; Wellhausen 1882: 417; cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 528.

58 Ibn Kathīr uses this term many times to characterise the unbelievers in Mecca.

59 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 48 and 49.

60 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 48.

61 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 49.

62 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 49–50. He tells that this is also recounted by al-Bukhārī.

63 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 50.

64 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 50.

referring al-Wāqidī's information about Abū Bakr, who brought five camels for sacrifice, and about the twenty sacrificial camels that Muḥammad sent with him.⁶⁵ However, he makes no allusions to any sacrificial decoration.

7.4 *Hijjat al-wadāʿ* in the year 10/632

7.4.1 Ibn Ishāq

On the 25th Dhū l-Qaʿda in 10/632,⁶⁶ Muḥammad began the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is described as the first pilgrimage since he left the city in 622. His wife ʿĀʾisha is the source for this *hadīth*. “Neither he nor his men [...] having brought their victims (*al-hady*) successfully to Sarif, as had also certain dignitaries—he ordered all the people except those who had brought victims (*l-hadya*) to remove their pilgrim garments.”⁶⁷ ʿĀʾisha then told her husband that she was menstruating and for this reason was not allowed to undertake the pilgrimage with him. He replied that she was allowed to do everything except the *tawāf*, walking seven times around the Kaʿba. ʿĀʾisha continues to relate how the pilgrimage took place.

The Apostle entered Mecca and everyone who had no sacrificial victims, and his wives and all those who had no sacrificial victims removed their pilgrim garments (*yahallū*). When the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥar*) came I was sent a lot of beef (*bi-laḥmi baqar kathīr*) and it was put in my house. When I asked what it was they said that the apostle had sacrificed (*dhabaḥa*) cows (*al-baqara*) on behalf of his wives.⁶⁸

A man called Nāfiʿ told the women that Muḥammad did not end his *iḥrām* before he had sacrificed his victims (*anḥaru hadya*), but he had sent off his victims and matted his hair (*labbadtu*).⁶⁹ Then another person who has said he wanted to invoke Allāh's name over the victim (*al-hady*) is allowed to share (*ashraka*) in Muḥammad's sacrificial animal and then to be released from *iḥrām*. Muḥammad sacrificed (*naḥara*) on behalf of both, Ibn Ishāq tells his readers.

After some discussion about the clothing during the pilgrimage, Muḥammad continued his rituals, showing the people how to perform them (*manāsikahum*),

65 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 4: 52.

66 All early Islamic authorities agree on this year. Cf. Donner 1998: 252.

67 My translation. Cf. Guillaume 1955: 649; Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 5–6.

68 My modification of Guillaume 1955: 649 (Arabic text: 966); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 5–6. Al-Ṭabarī (1990. vol. 9: 110 [I: 1751]) reports the same.

69 Guillaume (1955: 650) refers to Ibn al-Athīr's *Nihāya*, in which the latter says that this was “a sort of gum that is put on the hair to prevent it becoming dishevelled and lousy”.

and teaching them the tradition of the pilgrimage (*w-a'lamahum sunnan hajjihim*).⁷⁰ Then the main sermon (*khutba*) by Muḥammad follows.

O men, listen to my words. I do not know whether I shall ever meet you in this place again after this year. Your blood (*dimā'ukum*) and your property (*amwālukum*) are sacrosanct (*ḥarāmun*) until you meet your Lord, as this day and this month are holy. You will surely meet your Lord and He will ask you of your works.

All blood shed in the pagan period (*jāhiliya*) is to be left unavenged. The first claim on blood I abolish is that of ibn Rabī'a ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abdu l-Muṭṭalib (who was fostered among the B. Layth and whom Hudhayl killed). It is the first blood shed in the pagan period (*jāhiliya*) which I deal with. Satan despairs of ever being worshipped in your land, but if he can be obeyed in anything short of worship he will be pleased in matters you may be disposed to think of little account, so beware of him in your religion.⁷¹

After this warning against Shayṭān, Muḥammad mentions the four sacred months and the prohibition against putting them off at random. After rhetorically asking which month and land they are in, he repeats, "God has hallowed your blood and your property until you meet your Lord like the sanctity of this month."⁷² He also emphasises the brotherhood of all Muslims.⁷³ They are not to make the sacred profane and the profane sacred. Allāh draws the correct distinctions.⁷⁴ Having performed the different stations of the pilgrimage, Muḥammad concludes by saying,

"This station goes with the mountain that is above it and all 'Arafa is a station (*mawqif*)." When he stood on Qusāḥ on the morning of al-Muzdalifa he said, "This is the station and all al-Muzdalifa is a station (*mawqif*)." Then when he had slaughtered (*naḥara*) in the slaughtering place (*al-manḥar*) in Mina he said, "This is the slaughtering place (*hādhā l-manḥar*) and all Mina is a slaughtering place (*wakullu Minā manḥarun*)."⁷⁵

This interesting triple repetition concerning three different stations underlines the ritual and demonstrates the pedagogical purpose of this text. What is expressed is to be remembered, now and for ever. Just a few lines before this, Muḥammad had given his followers moral instructions, telling them to refrain from usury and to avoid the problems associated with unjust distribution of testamentary gifts and with false fatherhood. People involved in such matters deserve the curse of Allāh, the angels and men everywhere. The main reason for

70 Guillaume 1955: 650 (Arabic text: 968); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 8.

71 Guillaume 1955: 650–651 (Arabic text: 968); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 8–9.

72 Guillaume 1955: 652 (Arabic text: 969).

73 Guillaume 1955: 651 (Arabic text: 969); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 10.

74 Guillaume 1955: 652 (Arabic text: 970); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 11.

75 Guillaume 1955: 652 (Arabic text: 970); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 12.

this harsh judgement is given as follows: “God will not receive from him [any man] compensatory atonement, however great (*ṣarfan wa-lā ‘adlan*).”⁷⁶ Ibn Ishāq ends this narrative telling about the throwing of pebbles and the circumambulation around the House. In this case the description lacks the repetitive ritual structure of the foregoing. Life during the pilgrimage is obviously dominated by the two concerns of what is forbidden (*ḥaram*) and what is permitted (*aḥilla*). “It was the pilgrimage of completion (*al-balāgh*) and the pilgrimage of farewell (*al-wadāʿ*), because the apostle did not go on pilgrimage after that.”⁷⁷

In this text the terms *naḥara* and *manḥar* are repeated many times. *Dhabāḥa* occurs once. The only sacrificial animal mentioned explicitly is the cow, *al-baqar*. The term for the victim is *hady*. There are no other words describing the animals. Words derived from the two roots *ḥ-r-m* and *ḥ-l-l*, of which there are many, are used to refer to entry into and emergence from the sacred state of *iḥrām*. Allāh deserves a man’s blood and property; nothing is beyond his realm.

7.4.2 Al-Wāqidi, with some references to Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr

Muḥammad began his pilgrimage on a Saturday evening, five days before the end of Dhū l-Qaʿda (the 11th month of the Muslim calendar); he prayed the noon prayer (*fa-ṣallā al-zuhr*) in Dhū l-Ḥulayfa and began the *iḥrām*. According to al-Wāqidi, “this is the right thing to do”.⁷⁸ Next he presents a second version, making the same point, which says that Muḥammad “pilgrimaged with all his wives in hawdas”⁷⁹ and that the followers of the Prophet (*aṣḥābuhu*) were assembled in Dhū l-Ḥulayfa. Muḥammad went to the mosque after the noon prayer and bowed twice (*rakaʿtayn*). “Then he went out, called for the sacrificial animals (*dāʿā bi-l-hady*) and he marked them (*ashʿarahu*) on the right side (*fī al-jānibi l-ayman*) and adorned them with two sandals⁸⁰ (*qallada naʿalayn*). Then

76 Guillaume 1955: 652 (Arabic text: 970); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 12.

77 Guillaume 1955: 652 (Arabic text: 970); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 12.

78 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1089; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 422 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 532ff.

79 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 533; cf. al-Wāqidi 1966: 1090.

80 The topic of sandals is also mentioned by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his shorter creed as the fourth of fourteen points, “the moistening of the sandals” (Ibn Ḥanbal: *Tabaqāt*, vol. 1: 130; in Watt (1994: 32 and 40, n. 4) who explains this by saying, “It is strange to see this minor point being given much prominence in the creeds, but it was a matter of dispute between the main body of the Sunnites on the one hand and the Khārijites and

he rode his she-camel. When he ascended al-Baydā' he put on his *iḥrām* (*aḥrama*).⁸¹ A third version follows according to which Umm Salama observed the Prophet, and she “saw the camels (*al-hady*) that were brought to him (*yu'araḍ 'alayhi*). When he had prayed the noon prayer (*al-zuḥr*) he signed the victims (*ash'ara hadyahu*) and decorated them (*qalladahu*) before he put on *iḥrām*.”⁸²

Another tradition reports that Muḥammad “signed each camel (*yash'aru budnahu atī bi-badanatin*) and he did it personally (*ash'arahā huwa bi-nafsihi*) and he decorated them (*qalladahā*).⁸³ It is also said that “he signed the animals (*ash'arahā*) with their faces towards the *qibla* (*wajhuhu 'alā l-qibla*).⁸⁴ Muḥammad led one hundred animals (*sāqa mā'ita badnatan*), and he ordered Nājiya ibn Jundub to be the leader of the animals and this person signed the rest of them”.⁸⁵ Muḥammad's camels were dressed in coats (*'alayhā al-jilāl*). However, it is not clear what kinds of coats is meant. Probably it was a coat that signalled the animal's honour or position.⁸⁶ Faizer, Ismail and Tayob translate, “and on them were clothes for protection”.⁸⁷

Al-Wāqidī says that the Prophet ordered regarding a wounded animal that it should be slaughtered (*tanḥaruhu*), and “put its neck rope (*qalā'idahu*)⁸⁸ in its blood and mark it with that blood on its right hand side (*thumma taḍribu bihi saḥḥatahu l-yumnā*), and do not eat from it or let your companions eat from it (*lā ta'akulu minhā wa-lā aḥadun min ahli l-rufqatika*).⁸⁹ They continued to Mecca.

the Shī'ites. It meant that, in the ablutions preparatory to formal worship (*ṣalāt*), it was sufficient to moisten the sandals instead of washing the feet completely”.

81 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 533; cf. al-Wāqidī 1966: 1090; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 422.

82 My translation from al-Wāqidī 1966: 1090. See also Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 422, and Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 533.

83 My translation from al-Wāqidī 1966: 1090; cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 533.

84 Wellhausen (1882: 423, n. 2) refers to al-Wāqidī and says that the camel is turned towards the *qibla* and that there were 100 camels.

85 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1090 (my own translation). Nājiya ibn Jundub is mentioned many times here and by Ibn Kathīr.

86 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1090; in n. 1, Jones says that *jilāl* is plural of *jull*, denoting a garment indicating one's honour. See also Wehr 1980: 531–532; and Wellhausen 1882: 422.

87 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 534.

88 Or perhaps the reins of the camels; *qalā'id* and the verb *qallada* occur many times in the texts analysed in this study. Here it seems rather likely that the decoration meant is the reins that guide the camel.

89 Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 534. Cf. Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1091; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 422–423.

On the day of *tarwīyya* we went to ‘Arafa with the sacrificial animals (*al-hady*). Then we descended and reached Jam‘. Then from Jam‘ we reached a station of the Prophet in Mina (*ilā manzili l-nabī bī Minā*), [Faizer, Ismail and Tayob add: where he struck up his tent]. He directed that the sacrificial animals be taken to the place of sacrifice (*an suqqi al-hady ilā l-manḥar*). [...] And I saw the Prophet (*wa-raʿaitu al-rasūla llāhi*), slaughter the animals with his own hands (*yanḥaru l-hady bi-yadayhi*), as I brought them to him each with one leg tied (*anā uqaddimuhā ilayhi taʿtabu fī l-ʿaqli*).⁹¹

Al-Wāqidi says that there was disagreement about Muḥammad’s purposes in undertaking the pilgrimage. Did he intend to perform the *ḥajj* or only the *ʿumra*?⁹² The author then records a saying of Muḥammad, “I have matted my hair (*labbadtu rasī*) and decorated my sacrificial animal (*qalladtu hady*) and I am not released [from my obligation to do the *ʿumra*] before I have sacrificed my animal (*lā aḥillu ḥattā anḥaru hady*).”⁹³ After the insertion of a narrative about a young boy, al-Wāqidi describes Muḥammad as responding to the praise he is offered, saying, “the best in *jāhiliyya* are also the best in Islam, if they understand them.”⁹⁴

Al-Wāqidi goes on to describe Muḥammad’s rituals. He draws a picture of an elderly man who had become quite weak and complained about pains in his feet. On arriving at the Kaʿba, Muḥammad did something remarkable. “He lifted his hands (*rafaʿa yadayhi*). The reins of his she-camel fell from his hands (*waqafa zimām nāqatihi*), but he caught them in his left hand (*akhadhahu bi-shamālihi*).”⁹⁵ He then prayed and said, “Supply this house with honour, splendour (*taʿzīman*), tribute and honour, dignity, and reverence.”⁹⁶ After the prayer he kissed the stone and said, “in the name of Allāh (*b-ismi-llāh*)” and “He is the greatest (*Allāhu akbar*)”, and he asked his followers to believe in God. He then recited Q 2:201. Afterwards, he prayed behind the *maqām* and bowed twice

90 *Taʿtabu fī l-ʿaqli*. *ʿaqala* means ‘to hobble with the *ʿiqāl* (*al-baʿīra* the camel)’. *ʿiqāl* singular, *ʿuqul* plural, means a ‘cord used for hobbling the feet of a camel’, but also ‘a headband made of the camel’s hair, holding the *kūfiya* in place’ (Wehr 1980: 630). Jones says that *al-ʿatbu* means ‘to walk on three feet’ (al-Wāqidi 1966: 1091, n. 2).

91 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1091 (my translation); Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 534; twice their translation in square brackets; cf. Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 423.

92 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1092. Cf. Wellhausen 1882: 424.

93 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1092 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 534.

94 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1095 (my translation). Cf. Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 424 and n. 1. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob (2011: 536) translates: “People remain what they were originally. The best of them in *jāhiliyya* are the best of them in Islam when the understanding of Islam comes to them.”

95 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1097 (my translation); cf. Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 425.

96 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1097 (my translation).

while reciting Q 109⁹⁷ and Q 112:1, which emphasise the oneness of Allāh. It was later discussed how many times he touched the stone.⁹⁸ Further, it is told that Muḥammad held three sermons during these days, “on Thursday after the noon prayer in Mecca, on the day of ‘Arafa before the noon prayer, and thirdly, in Mina at the slaughtering after the noon prayer”.⁹⁹ Entering the Ka‘ba he prayed there, but he regretted this afterwards because it was obviously understood as an exclusive practice that his followers could not repeat after him.¹⁰⁰ Referring to al-Wāqidi, Ibn Kathīr adds that Muḥammad had prayed inside the Ka‘ba also during the *‘umrat al-qisṣ* in year 7 AH.¹⁰¹

In Mina, ‘Ā’isha wanted to build a hut of leaves or wood (*kanīfan*),¹⁰² but Muḥammad wanted to stay overnight in ‘Arafa, and he said, “Mina is a campsite for those who have already performed the *sa‘y* between Marwa and Ṣafā.”¹⁰³ In ‘Arafa he then raised a tent of camel hair. Another tradition says that he rested in the shadow of a cliff.¹⁰⁴ In this connection al-Wāqidi refers to Muḥammad’s words on ascending the hill of Ṣafā, where he invited people to pray, before descending to al-Marwa. He recited seven *takbīr* and then uttered the crucial words, “There is no god except Allāh, the one and only. He has no equal. His is the power. His is the praise. And to him belong everything and all strength. Allāh fulfilled his promise. He helped his servant. He defeated the troops.”¹⁰⁵

When it comes to the different stations on the pilgrimage route in Mecca and Mina, al-Wāqidi refers that Muḥammad stopped at the hill of al-Hiḍāb at ‘Arafa, where he proclaimed that “the whole of ‘Arafa is a station (*kullu ‘arāfa mawqif*) except the valley of Baṭna ‘Urana”, and “the whole of al-Muzdalifa is a station

97 Q 109: “Say: ‘Unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship. You have your own religion (*dīn*), and I have mine” (Dawood 1994: 433).

98 See Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 425.

99 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1101 and Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 425–426 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 538.

100 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1100–1101 (my translation); Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 538.

101 Ibn Kathīr 2000. vol. 3: 315. He also adds that this might have happened for the first time at the “conquest of Mecca” and not in year 7 AH.

102 *Kanīf* means ‘shelter’ (Wehr 1980: 843); al-Wāqidi 1966: 1101.

103 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1099 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 537.

104 Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 426–427; he writes that Muḥammad did not want to own a house in Mecca. Therefore he stayed in a tent at al-Aboah before and after the journey to ‘Arafāt until he returned to Medina. Al-Wāqidi writes that the Prophet “did not alight in a house or take shelter in one”; so Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 538.

105 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1099 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 537.

(*kullu l-muzdalifa mawqif*) except the valley of Muḥassir”,¹⁰⁶ and, importantly, “the whole of Mina (*kullu Minā*) is a place of sacrifice (*manḥar*) except the parts behind al-‘Aqaba.”¹⁰⁷ This proclamation is rounded off with an interesting comment that links the pilgrims and the order of the pilgrimage to Ibrāhīm as his descendants. Muḥammad said to the pilgrims at the outer ridge of ‘Arafa, “Keep hereafter to the sacred stations (*alzamū mashā‘irakum*),¹⁰⁸ you are the heirs of that which Ibrāhīm has left (*innakum ‘alā irthīn min irthi Ibrāhīm*).”¹⁰⁹

Having completed further parts of the pilgrimage, Muḥammad arrived in al-Muzdalifa, where, while seated, he threw the pebbles sitting at his own camel, but without uttering the *labbayka*. Another tradition records that he spoke the *labbayka* “before throwing the pebbles (*ramā al-jamrata*)”,¹¹⁰ Back in Mina he repeated some of the statements recounted above, and added the following, which is a key to understanding his pilgrimage: “The whole of Mina is the place of sacrifice (*wa-kullu Minā manḥar*) and the roads between the two mountains (*fijā*) in Mecca are a place of sacrifice (*kullu fijāji Makka ṭarīq wa-manḥar*).”¹¹¹ Al-Wāqidi continues by describing the way Muḥammad and the others slaughtered the camels and how the meat was prepared and eaten afterwards.

Then he slaughtered with his own hands (*thumma naḥara bi-yadihi*) and the knife (*bi-l-ḥarbat*) 63 camels. Then [another] man slaughtered what was left. He took a piece of each camel and they were thrown into the boiling kettle (*ju‘ila fī qidrin*) and he cooked it (*ṭabakhahu*); then he ate from the meat (*akala min laḥmihā*) and slurped the broth (*ḥasā min maraqihā*). [...] Then the Prophet ordered me [to give] as *ṣaddaqa* the coats of his camels (*bi-jilāli budnihi*), the fur (*julūdhā*) and the meat

106 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1103–1104 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 538. This is said shortly after “*‘ahd Ibrāhīm*” was cared for by the Quraishites in Mecca.

107 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1104 (my translation). The last ‘except’ (*ilā*) is not added on page 1108, where this sentence occurs. Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 540.

108 *Alzama*, fourth derivation of *lazima*, means ‘to pursue or practice incessantly’ (Wehr 1980: 864); *mashā‘ir* plural of *mash‘ar* means ‘cultic shrine for ceremonies of the ḥajj’ (Wehr 1980: 474). *Sha‘īra* means ‘religious ceremony, rite, cultic practice’; plural, also ‘place of worship cultic shrines’.

109 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1104 and Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 427 (my translation). Faizer, Ismail and Tayob (2011: 540) translate “Keep to the ritual practices. Indeed your inheritance is according to the rituals of Abraham.”

110 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1108; see also Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 429 (my translation).

111 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1108 and Wellhausen [1887] 1897: 403 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 541. Al-Ṭabarī (1990. vol. 9: 115 [I: 1755]) reports the same, even with use of the same words.

(*laḥmihā*). It was not allowed to take any money for it (*lā minhā fī jazrihā shayʿan*).¹¹²

The sentence, “he took a piece of each camel”, indicates that each sacrificed camel was a real part of the total sacrifice and was worthy of being sacrificed. Choosing one part of each also shows that this sacrifice is *sufficient* for the sacrificer as well as the receiver.

The next narrative shows that, having completed the main rituals, Muḥammad’s hair became an object of blessings. After the slaughtering he let his hair be shaved, and the Muslims who stood around him tried to get some of it (*yaṭlubūna min shaʿri rasūli Allāhi*). Abū Ṭalḥa al-Anṣārī got the hair from the right side of Muḥammad’s head; Khālīd ibn al-Walīd got the hair from his forehead (*nāṣiyatihi*) and put into his hood (*qalansuwatihi*).¹¹³ ʿĀʾisha also received some of the Prophet’s hair, which she kept. What Muḥammad cut from his moustache (*min shāribihi*), beard (*ʿarīdayhi*) and nails (*azfārahu*) was buried.¹¹⁴ The cutting of Muḥammad’s hair was an important event for the early Muslim community. Likewise, al-Wāqīdī’s pupil Ibn Saʿd writes that these parts of the Prophet’s body were buried after the ritual, as if Ibn Saʿd wants to indicate the Prophet’s sudden death.¹¹⁵

Interestingly, Wheeler has renewed our knowledge about ritual cutting of hair and nails, seen as funeral rites and mourning because of the dead. It is well described how hair and nails were placed on the top of tombs immediately after the burial, and that hair and nails were cut when someone heard about the death of a relative.¹¹⁶ Wheeler indicates that these ideas are included in the whole mind-set of Islamic writers when they described the Farewell pilgrimage. As

112 Al-Wāqīdī 1966: 1108 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 541. Ibn Kathīr (2000. vol. 4: 161–162) recounts this story, “This shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed this marking and neck decoration with his own hands on this sacrificial camel, while others undertook the marking and decoration of the other sacrificial animals. For he had with him a large number of animals for sacrifice, 100, or close thereto. He himself sacrificed by his own hand 63 animals and allowed ʿAlī to slaughter the remainder.” He adds that ʿAlī brought the animals from Yemen and that some sources said that the Prophet and ʿAlī sacrificed all the 100 camels he had brought.

113 *Qalansuwatu* (singular) *qalānisu* (plural) means ‘tall headgear, tiara, cidaris; hood, cowl, capuche; cap’ (Wehr 1980: 788). Al-Wāqīdī 1966: 1108 and Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 429 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 542.

114 Al-Wāqīdī 1966: 1109; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 429 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 542. Wheeler 2010: 341–388.

115 Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) (1904–1921) 1956. vol. 6: 215.

116 Wheeler 2010: 358f. He gives many more examples also from other religious groups with similar practices.

Wheeler has exposed, also in the 13th century the common understanding of this event was that it had been “allowed for people to consider the hairs of the Prophet as a blessing [*barakah*]”.¹¹⁷

Later Muḥammad received guests, and al-Wāqidi presents the different *ahādīth* about the Muslims who were supposed to shave their heads, before or after the slaughtering. This is done in the context of a narrative about Muḥammad’s recent slaughtering and shaving, and it shows how carefully the author deals with the various questions. Wheeler contends that the shaving of heads *after* the sacrifice was obligatory. It was, as we have seen, forbidden to shave *before* the slaughtering of animals. Hence, the Prophet’s practice of matting his hair, shaving his head and cutting his nails at the conclusion of the pilgrimage, became *sunna*.¹¹⁸ Muḥammad threw the pebbles at the three different stones while allowing the animals’ guides to rest outside Mina. The guides were allowed to throw the pebbles at night, as were also Muḥammad’s wives.¹¹⁹ According to one tradition Muḥammad held a speech from the back of his camel, al-Qaṣwa, in which he addressed geographical and chronological issues that are.

“Oh my people, listen to me and remember my words, because who knows whether I will come here again. Which month is this (*ayyu shahrin hādihā*)?” They kept silent. He said, “A sacred month (*hādihā shahrūn ḥarāmūn*).” He asked, “Which land is this (*ayyu baladīn hādihā*)?” They kept silent. He said, “A sacred land (*baladūn ḥarāmūn*).” He asked, “Which day is this (*ayyu yawmin hādihā*)?” They kept silent. He said, “A sacred day (*yawmun ḥarāmūn*).” The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “Allāh has sanctified (*ḥarrama*) your blood (*dimāʾakum*), your goods (*amwālakum*), and your honour (*aʿrāḍakum*). So sacred (*ḥurmatin*) is your month (*shahrakum*), your land (*baladikum*), and your day (*yawmikum*). Have you understood me?” They answered, “Yes!” “You will surely have to come in front of your Lord and to render account.” [...] “To whom foreign goods have been given, he shall return them. However, all interest from the time of ignorance (*al-jāhiliya*) shall be waived, and all the blood from the time of ignorance shall be waived.”¹²⁰

Al-Wāqidi’s presentation of Muḥammad’s charismatic speech obviously aims at strengthening the links to the area of Mecca and Mina, but also at underlining

117 Wheeler (2010: 356) refers to Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1279) for this information.

118 Wheeler 2010: 357–358.

119 Wellhausen ([1887] 1897: 430, n. 3) reminds the reader of the fact that according to one tradition recorded by Ibn ʿAbbās, Muḥammad forbade the Muslims to celebrate the days of festival outside Mina. Here, it is done differently. Cf. al-Wāqidi 1966: 1109.

120 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1111; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 430–31 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 543.

the importance of the Islamic lunar calendar, in particular of the four sacred months.¹²¹

7.5 Some comments on the sacrificial rituals practised during the six last years of the Prophet

During his final years Muḥammad performed sacrificial rituals on several occasions, primarily in connection with treaties concluded after battles. In giving his book the title *al-maghāzī* ('military campaigns'), al-Wāqidi suggests a view of Muḥammad as the conqueror, also when he entered Mecca for the last time some months before he died. It seems that the sacrifice or slaughter of one or more animals was a natural way for him to ritualise the peace agreement. The *hajj al-waḍāʿ* was no exception.

Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidi are related in their use of sources. Ibn Ishāq writes, "Your blood (*damāʾikum*) and your property (*amwālukum*) are sacrosanct (*ḥarāmūn*) until you meet your Lord, as this day and this month are holy."¹²² Al-Wāqidi gives God a more superior role and writes, "Allāh has sanctified (*ḥarrama*) your blood (*dimāʾakum*), your goods (*amwālukum*), and your honour (*aʿrāḍakum*)".¹²³ Ibn Ishāq's statement may mean that the real sacrifice is the self-sacrificial attitude, possibly related to the intention (*niyya*), but this topic is not developed and cannot be examined further here. Both authors underline that the comments on blood and property form context that includes sacrificial rituals. The yearning for Mecca – seen from Medina – and the victorious joy on arriving there, cannot be divorced from the sacrificial rituals associated with that city and its surroundings. Al-Wāqidi calls the pilgrims "heirs of what Ibrāhīm has left".¹²⁴ This continuity is the reason for keeping to the ritual "stations".

Ibn Ishāq's and al-Ṭabarī's versions of Muḥammad's pilgrimages (*ʿumra* and *hajj*) are almost identical. The versions of Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Kathīr include some additional comments. However, it is al-Wāqidi who by far offers the most extensive and, consequently is the most informative and exciting version of the Prophet's pilgrimages.¹²⁵ He describes the preparation of the sacrifices and the decoration of the animals in unrivalled detail. He presents a variety of terms used for the animals, informs us of their number, and describes how the Prophet

121 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1112; cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 544.

122 Guillaume 1955: 650–651 (Arabic text: 968); cf. Ibn Hishām 218/833. vol. 6: 8–9.

123 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1111.

124 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1104; Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 427; cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 540.

125 Görke (1997: 212) refers this to the sources and *asānīd* that al-Wāqidi uses.

slaughtered them, ate their meat and drank the broth from the cooking. The animals were “signed (*sha‘ara*), decorated (*qallada*) with sandals (*na‘l*) and struck on their right exterior side”. This sentence is repeated several times and sounds like a ritual refrain belonging to these sacrificial rituals. The camels were also hobbled to make them stand on three feet. Muḥammad did the signing and decorating himself, or other men did it. It is not clear from these texts *what* this signing and decoration always signified, but in addition to the sandals around the animal’s neck, “turning in blood” is spoken of. The sacrificial animals were called *hady* and *budna*. Ibn Ishāq also uses *baqar*, a cow. The number of camels was either seven (Ibn Sa‘d), seventy, one hundred, or unspecified (al-Wāqidi). Two other terms are used for the sanctification of the animals, the camels “were honoured (*jallalat*)”,¹²⁶ and, “[T]his people made the sacrificial animal magnificent (*ya‘izzimūna al-hady*) and they made it into a deity (*wa-yata‘allahūna*).”¹²⁷ The fact that Muḥammad had a dream or a vision before entering Mecca underlines the divine intervention in his life.

The act of sacrificing is described by the verbal *naḥara*, while *dhabaḥa* is absent in al-Wāqidi’s text, but present in Ibn Ishāq’s. A knife (*ḥarba*) or merely “his own hands” are mentioned as the instrument of slaughter. A piece from each animal was put in a pot and boiled, thus emphasising that all animals participated in the *total* sacrificial act, and Muḥammad ate and drank. It is interesting that not only the meat of the animals was divided, but also their coats and fur. It was not allowed to take money from the receivers (according to al-Wāqidi). The poor should have a portion of the meat, but it is not said how much.

When it comes to the characteristics of the sacrificial place, the authors diverge. Ibn Ishāq and al-Ṭabarī are in agreement, but again al-Wāqidi has another opinion. “The whole of ‘Arafa is a station (*mawqif*) except the valley of Baṭna ‘Urana”, and “the whole of al-Muzḍalifa is a station (*mawqif*) except the valley of Muḥassir”,¹²⁸ and, “the whole of Mina is a place of sacrifice (*manḥar*) except the parts behind al-‘Aqaba.”¹²⁹ Later al-Wāqidi adds the most peculiar sentence that “the roads between the two mountains (*fijāḥ*) in Mecca are a place of sacrifice (*ṭarīq wa-manḥar*)”.¹³⁰ Presumably, al-Wāqidi wanted to emphasise

126 *Jallalat*, second derivation, can also mean ‘to cover’ (Wehr 1980: 128–129).

127 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 599, from year 6 AH.

128 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1103–1104 (my translation); cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 538. This is said shortly after “*‘ahd Ibrāhīm*” was cared for by the Quraishites in Mecca.

129 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1104 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 540.

130 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1108 and Wellhausen [1887] 1897: 403 (my translation). Cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 541. Al-Ṭabarī (1990. vol. 9: 115 [I: 1755]) reports the same, even with use of the same words.

the *sacred* places. Al-Ṭabarī also emphasises the significance of Mina.¹³¹ Once however, Muḥammad let twenty camels be slaughtered by an Aslamite at the hill of al-Marwa in Mecca, thus not in Mina.¹³²

The pre-Islamic sacrificial places are referred to in some reports in conjunction with warnings against sacrificing to idols that threaten the oneness of Allāh. More than other authors, Ibn Kathīr stresses the role of the *mushrikūn* when describing the rituals in Mecca, although he rarely alludes to pre-Islamic sacrificial practices.

The sacredness of land and month – space and time – is emphasised in all reports, albeit to a lesser degree by Ibn Kathīr. Another line of sacredness connects the states of being forbidden (*ḥaram*) and being permitted, or better, of being freed from the obligation to do something (*aḥillu*). Every change is noted and described. Especially at the *ʿumra* in year 6/628, Ibn Ishāq wants to show that Muḥammad’s intentions on wanting to enter Mecca as a *muḥrim* were peaceful. It meant that no war was to be expected from his side.

The sacrificial ritual is sometimes linked to other ethical topics, such as the prohibition of usury, and of performing the *tawāf* while in a ritually impure state. Typical is also the pious habit of sharing the meat with the poor, although this is not always mentioned. Often the sacrifice took place in conjunction with the noon prayer (*al-zuhr*), and sometimes with the *labbayka*, which would be intoned before the act itself. There are also cases when Muḥammad ordered a sacrifice – after a political treaty –, and then it is viewed in isolation from the ritual prayer. On one occasion, when his people did not obey him, a woman told him to begin the sacrifice. He did as she requested, and the others followed his example.

According to all texts, Muḥammad shaved his hair (*ḥalaqa*) after both the *ʿumra* and the *ḥajj* and after the sacrifices that concluded certain political agreements. It seems that the shaving may have symbolised his emergence from the sacred state and return to the realm of daily life, but at the same time, two of the texts say that Muḥammad’s hair – and nails – were preserved and/or buried as sacred relics. From the perspective of popular Islam, this was *the* sacred link between the act itself and the believer. Although Muḥammad’s principal goal in the Farewell Pilgrimage was to teach the rituals (*manāsik*) as an aspect of the continuity with Ibrāhīm, the believer in one God and denier of the many, nevertheless the early Muslims appreciated the blessings from relics. “The people made the pilgrimage that year in the way the (pagan) Arabs used to do”, Ibn Ishāq tells us – the only author to mention this point – without saying

131 Al-Ṭabarī. 1990. vol. 9: 115 [I: 1755].

132 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 615; cf. Faizer, Ismail and Tayob 2011: 303.

anything about sacrifice or the slaughter of camels.¹³³ Or, as Ibn Kathīr claims, the *hajj* of Abū Bakr in 9 AH practically anticipated Muḥammad's final pilgrimage.

In these reports about Muḥammad's last years there are signs of pre-Islamic practices and a re-definition thereof. The Islamic literature has given the Farewell Pilgrimage five different names, 1) *ḥijjat al-wadāʿ* ('the farewell pilgrimage'); 2) *ḥijjat al-tamām* ('the pilgrimage of perfection'); 3) *ḥijjat al-balāgh* ('the pilgrimage of completion'); 4) *ḥijjat al-islām* ('the pilgrimage of *islām*') and 5) *ḥijjat al-waṣīya* ('pilgrimage of his last will and testament'). The second and third terms convey the notion of the pilgrimage as a completed and eternally consummate ritual – in spite of the pre-Islamic traces involved therein. As such and in accordance with according to the *sunna*, as Ibn Kathīr says, it had to be repeated annually. The fourth and fifth terms characterise a similar notion, but they also include more comprehensive connotations of a sanctified leader bearing a universal message that is not to be denied or suppressed.

133 Guillaume 1955: 597 (Arabic text: 887).

Chapter 8

Prescriptive Views on Sacrifice

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), and how he was preoccupied with the topic of Islamic sacrifice in a regulatory perspective. Through his disciples Mālik founded the first Islamic law school (*madhhab*), from which the three other main Islamic law schools originate. His works, and especially the collection *Muwaṭṭaʿ*² include and narrate several important channels of transmission of *ḥadīth*.¹

8.2 Slaughtering of animals

It can be asked whether Islam operates with a difference between the slaughter of animals during *ḥajj* and their slaughter at ordinary non-festival times. Mālik discusses the slaughter of animals in book 24 (*kitāb al-dhabāʾiḥ*) in his major work *Muwaṭṭaʿ*². The chapter in Mālik's text is short, consisting of merely four sections (*bawāb*), divided into nine sub-sections each.

Mālik begins with a tale about a man who came to consult the prophet. The visitor asked whether it is permissible to eat the meat of an animal that has been killed by “some people from the desert”, when he did not know whether Allāh's name had been uttered over it at its slaughter. The prophet answered, “Utter the name of Allāh over it and eat.” Then Mālik adds, “That was the beginning of Islam.”² In his next story an animal has been slaughtered by a slave, and once again the Muslim who intends to eat it does not know whether Allāh's name has

1 I use the edition by Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, in the following referred to as *Muwaṭṭaʿ*. Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) 1951. *Muwaṭṭaʿ al-Imām Mālik*, 2 volumes in one book, ed. by Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqī. Cairo: Dār iḥyāʾi l-kutubī l-ʿarabiya, and the translation, Mālik ibn Anas. (d. 179/795) 1982. *Al-Muwatta Imam Malik*. Translated by ʿIṣḥā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Turjumana and Yaʿqūb Johnson. Norwich, UK: Diwan Press. The subsection numbers are not always identical in the different editions of *Muwaṭṭaʿ*. In my text I indicate references to the translation text; Arabic subsection numbers are marked in []. Sometimes I refer to Ibn Ziyād (288/900) 1980. *Muwaṭṭaʿ al-Imām Mālik, qirʿa minhu bi-riwāyat Ibn Ziyād*, Ed. by Muḥammad al-Shādhilī al-Nayfar, Beirut. This is the edition of an early parchment, dated 288/900. See Dutton 1999: 23.

2 Mālik 1982: 24 [‘book’], 1 [‘section’], 1 [‘subsection’].

been uttered over it. The slave claims that he uttered Allāh's name, but the Muslim does not believe him and demands that the slave shall do so again. But the slave refuses, whereupon the Muslim says, "By Allāh, I shall never eat it!"³ Mālik is concerned here with the purity of the meat, and whether an animal that has been slaughtered in dubious circumstances or by methods such as killing with a stone should be eaten or not. The answer of the prophet is, "There is no harm in it, eat it!" A similar question was whether it was right to eat the meat of an animal slaughtered by Christian Arabs. "Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik from Thawr ibn Zayd al-Dīlī that 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās was asked about animals slaughtered by the Christian Arabs. He said, 'There is no harm in them,' but he recited this *aya*, 'Whoever takes them as friends is one of them'" [Q 5:54].⁴ Any animal slaughtered by means of a cutting edge used to sever the jugular vein could be eaten.⁵ The harmful animals, Mālik says, are those that move after the fatal incision. These are not permitted to be eaten.⁶ If a pregnant she-camel is slaughtered, then the kid should be slaughtered right away, provided "it is perfectly formed and its hair has begun to grow. If it comes out of its mother's womb, it is slaughtered so that blood flows from its heart."⁷ A similar case is mentioned in the specific situation of *ḥājj*, but here the kid has already been born and has drawn milk from its mother. "If necessary, ride on your sacrificial animal (*badanatika*), without burdening it, and if necessary, drink its milk after its young one has drunk its fill, and when you sacrifice it (*naḥartahā*), sacrifice the young one with it (*fa-nḥar faṣīlahā ma'ahā*)."⁸ However, selling a kid, a so-called *al-madamīn*, before it is born, is not allowed.⁹ Neither is it allowed to exchange a living sheep for two slaughtered

3 Mālik 1982: 24, 1, 2.

4 Mālik 1982: 24, 2, 5. A similar situation occurs if a Muslim uses the knife or the bow of a magician or some other non-Muslim; in such cases it is still permissible to eat the meat. But if a magician slaughters an animal with the Muslim's knife, the Muslim is not allowed to eat the meat (Mālik 1982: 25, 2, 8). Cf. Q 5:5, where it is written that the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book, is lawful for Muslims. Q 6:121 utters a much more sceptical attitude; when the meat has been consecrated in the name of others than God, it is not lawful for Muslims. Siddiqui (2012: 74–75) comments that the jurists who emphasised Q 6:121 over Q 5:5, would be sceptical of eating the animals slaughtered by Christians and other non-Muslims. Siddiqui (2012: 80; with support from Cook 1984) states that mostly, the animal slaughtered by Christians and Jews was lawful for Muslims.

5 Mālik 1982: 24, 2, 6.

6 Mālik 1982: 24, 3, 7.

7 Mālik 1982: 24, 4, 8.

8 Mālik 1982: 20, 45, 145 [Arabic 144].

9 Mālik 1982: 31, 26, 63.

sheep; this is regarded as a form of pre-Islamic gambling (*min maysir ahl al-jāhiliya*).¹⁰

8.3 ‘*aqīqa*

The sacrifice called ‘*aqīqa* is not among the main topics of the current study; yet it is a theme that deserves to be mentioned in any analysis of Mālik’s views on sacrifice and slaughtering. Mālik begins his small book (*kitāb*) or chapter on this domestic sacrifice (*kitāb al-‘aqīqa*) with a rather reluctant question about whether a ‘*aqīqa* should be performed for a newborn child. Muḥammad answers, “‘I do not like disobedience (*lā uḥibbu al-‘uqūqa*)’.”¹¹ He says, ‘If anyone has a child born to him, and wants to sacrifice for his child (*f-aḥabba an yansuka ‘an waladihi*), then let him do so.’”¹² *Al-‘uqūqa* in the context of *Muwatṭa*’ means “that Muhammad acted with dislike as though he saw them to regard it as of evil omen, and desired them to use *al-nasīka* instead”.¹³

The noun ‘*aqīqa* comes from the root ‘-q-q, which means ‘to cleave, split, slit’. The verbal is used for ‘he slaughtered as a sacrifice – for his newborn child’. Lane says that the goats were the preferred sacrifices on the seventh day after the birth. The most common meaning is, ‘the hair that the newborn child already has in its mother’s womb’. The term also denotes the sacrificial animal itself. But interestingly enough, the verbal has also been used to express the tradition of shooting an arrow into the sky in the so-called ‘*aqqa bi-l-sahmi*; the arrow itself is also called ‘*aqīqa*, “and it was the arrow of self excuse [...] in the time of ignorance”. This pre-Islamic tradition was based on the fact that the life of a slain man had to be compensated. The men then shot an arrow towards the sky, and the arrow always returned clean, without any blood on it. Then it was said that they were commanded to pay a blood-wit, whereby they would bring about their reconciliation.¹⁴

The action of Muḥammad’s daughter Fāṭima is described as an example of what an ‘*aqīqa* might be like. In two quotations it is said that she weighed the hair of her four children, Ḥussayn, Ḥassan, Zaynab and Umm Khalthūm,¹⁵ “and gave away in *ṣadaqa* an equivalent weight of silver (*fa-taṣaddaḡat bi-wazni*

10 Mālik 1982: 31, 27, 65.

11 *Al-‘uqūqa* means ‘disobedience, ill manners; see Lane 1874: 2095–2097.

12 Mālik 1982: 26, 1, 1. Cf. another editor of Mālik’s text, Ibn Ziyād 1980: 134.

13 Lane (1874: 2097) refers to different sources, but gives no further details within these sources.

14 See Lane 1874: 2095–2096 (all quotations in this paragraph are taken from there). Cf. Chapter 6.

15 All four children are mentioned by Ibn Ziyād 1980: 135.

dhālīka fiḍḍatan)”.¹⁶ Later a gift of silver is evidently considered insufficient; an animal, even if no more than a sparrow (*ʿuṣfūr*),¹⁷ has to be offered.¹⁸ Somewhat later in Mālik’s text, a single sheep (*bi-shāʿtin shāʿtin*) is required, regardless of whether the offspring is male (*al-dhukūr*) or female (*al-ināth*).¹⁹ But eventually, the tradition developed of offering two animals for a boy and one for a girl.²⁰

In his book Mālik does not explain how these animals are to be slaughtered. He uses terms such as “he would give it to them” (*ʿaṣāhu*),²¹ and “made an *ʿaqīqa* for his children” (*kāna yaʿuqqu ʿan banīhi*).²² In the latter passage Mālik says that the “*ʿaqīqa* is not obligatory (*laysat al-ʿaqīqa bi-wāgiba*), but it is desirable that it should be done.”²³ He continues by presenting the regulations and conditions for the animals and their significant signs.

If someone performs an *ʿaqīqa* (*ʿaqqa*) for his children, the same rules apply as with all sacrificial animals (*bi manzilati l-nusuk wa-l-ḡaḥāyā lā yajūzu fihā*)—one-eyed (*ʿawrāʾ*), emaciated (*ʿajfāʾ*), injured (*maksūra*),²⁴ or sick (*marīḍa*) animals must not be used,²⁵ and neither the meat nor the skin is to be sold. With such an animal, the bones should be broken (*wa-yuksaru ʿāmuḥā*) and the family should eat the meat [...] The child should not be smeared with any of the blood (*yuhassu*²⁶ *al-ṣabiyu bi-shayin min damihā*).²⁷

This passage prompts two questions. First, by stating, “the same rules apply as with all sacrificial animals”, does Mālik imply that all sacrificial actions

16 Mālik 1982: 26, 1, 2; according to 26, 1, 3 only the hair of her two sons is weighed. Lane (1874: 2097) says that Herodotus (*Historiae* ii, 65) mentions a similar tradition in ancient Egypt.

17 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 5.

18 Also according Ibn Ziyād 1980: 135.

19 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 4, 7. See also Ibn Ziyād 1980: 134, 135, and 136.

20 Ibn Rushd ([d. 520/1126] 1994: 560–561 [the Book of *ʿaqīqa*]) confirms the development concerning the number of animals for girls and boys, and presents an additional commentary to the choice of animal for *ʿaqīqa*: “Mālik, [...], preferred sheep in accordance with his views in the case of sacrifice. His opinion differed over whether a camel or a cow is valid. The remaining jurists abide by their principle that a camel has greater merit than a cow and a cow has greater merit than sheep.”

21 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 4.

22 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 7.

23 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 7.

24 Cf. Ibn Ziyād 1980: 136.

25 Cf. Ibn Ziyād 1980: 136.

26 *Yuhassu* comes from *ḥassa*, which has several meanings. The best known is ‘he felt or was compassionate’. Lane (1865: 563) also mentions a second meaning that is interesting in the current context, namely, ‘he slew them, he extirpated them by slaughter,’ *ḥissun* is ‘the act of slaying and destroying’; cf. Q 3:145.

27 Mālik 1982: 26, 2, 7.

essentially amount to the same kind of sacrifice? Second, is the tradition of smearing blood from healthy animals on the child something so obvious for Mālik and his contemporaries that they do not even question it?²⁸ He mentions the tradition as something known to them, but yet no *isnād* exists to approve this domestic tradition. It is clear, however, that no sacrifice is made for a child that is not yet born. “[...] ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar did not sacrifice for the child in the womb.” Mālik said, “The sacrifice is *sunna*, and it is not obligatory. I prefer that anyone who can afford the animal should not abandon it.”²⁹ Mālik wishes to show that there are both qualities and difficult topics in the pre-Islamic tradition that ought not to be ignored.³⁰ Mālik’s prohibitions against usury (*riban*) and speculation (*gharar*)³¹ include also orders against acts that are more pre-Islamic than Islamic in their character. “In other words”, Dutton states, “the impulse is Qur’anic. Even such sections as those dealing with the ‘*aqīqa* sacrifice, or *tadbīr*,³² or the oath of *qasāma*,³³ which reflects pre-Islamic rather than Qur’anic norms”. Further, Dutton emphasises that these norms “are effectively treated as extensions of the Qur’anic injunctions on sacrifices, setting free slaves and blood-money respectively, as is shown by their juxtaposition with these latter

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- 28 This tradition of blood smearing is well known in most Muslim countries when for instance the animal has been slaughtered at *‘īd al-aḏḥā*, or when a house is under building and needs protection from evil by the blood of a ritually slaughtered animal.
- 29 Mālik 1982: 23, 6, 13; both last quotations.
- 30 Dutton (1999: 25) underlines this, characterising Mālik’s traditions in the chapter on the ‘*aqīqa* sacrifice as “very similar to those in the other transmissions (although Ibn Ziyād includes some extra comments from Mālik)”. For more about such practices, including more recent ones, see Wheeler 2010: 369–371.
- 31 *Gharar* means here the ‘speculation’ when for instance trade is hazardous. See Lane 1877: 2239. “*Gharar* is implicitly forbidden by extension from the prohibition of *maysīr*, i.e. gambling (*qimār*), in Q 2:219 and 5:90–91.” So Dutton 1999: 224, n. 5.
- 32 *Tadbīr* means the “thinking or meditation upon a thing”; connected to *ḥadīth* it means the relating of traditions from one person to the other (Lane 1867: 844–846). Today the secular meaning of the word is ‘planning; direction; economy’ (Wehr 1980: 270).
- 33 *Qasāma* or just *qasam* or *aqsama* ‘*alayhi* means to swear an oath by Allāh (see Lane 1893: 2989). In *Muwattaʿ* there is a book called *qasāma*, no. 44; however, it is not possible to include an analysis of it in this study. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that “blood money”, sometimes called *qasāma*, could be 100 camels (or going to war) even for a non-Muslim. A Jew, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sahl, had been killed due to extreme poverty. The prophet sent the 100 camels “to their house” and it was “from his own property”, so Mālik 1982: 44, 1, 1.

topics of the *Muwaṭṭaʿ*”³⁴ We observed this with regard to selling animals in exchange for meat, as the custom was in pre-Islamic times.³⁵

8.4 Slaughtering of animals during *ḥājj* and *ʿīd al-adḥā*

8.4.1 Introduction

Two of Mālik’s books, 23 and 24, are called *kitāb al-dhabāʾiḥ*, ‘slaughtering animals’, and *kitāb al-ḍaḥāyā*, ‘sacrificial animals’. We observe that he uses two different terms for sacrifice, *dhabāʾiḥ* and *ḍaḥāyā*, from the roots *dh-b-h* and *ḍ-h-y*. But also in the book, number 25, about games, *kitāb al-ṣayd*, interesting notes on sacrificial animals are found.

8.4.2 Game (*ṣayd*)

It is clear that no animal, bird or insect that has died before it could be killed is not to be eaten.³⁶ Arrows and spears are allowed for the killing of wild, but not for domestic animals.³⁷ Although camels are animals to be ridden, it is permitted to eat them. The *ḥaram* animals are therefore horses, donkeys and mules. Concerning whether cows may be eaten, Mālik says that some of them are to be ridden and some to be eaten, and in this connection he quotes Q 16:8, 6:79 and 22:34. This nuance with regard to cows is not applied to camels.³⁸ Wheeler maintains that the camel has become “an epitome of domesticated animals. [...] In Islamic law, the camel is the sacrifice par excellence and all camels are to be treated as though they were domesticated.”³⁹

Killing or hunting during *iḥrām* is absolutely forbidden also elsewhere in Mālik’s books (number 20). During *iḥrām* it is even forbidden for a man to kill lice in his hair and beard. If he does so despite the prohibition, he is required to make a sacrifice in compensation. Presumably, the killing was not the original problem but the fact that it would normally result from the act of shaving. Due to the fact that the lice were in the man’s beard or hair, he shaved his head too

34 Dutton 1999: 158.

35 Cf. Dutton 1999: 224, footnote 5. Games of dice are also forbidden; it is even said that those who ignore this prohibition are against Allāh and his messenger. Later, chess is also seen as worthless (*lā khayra fī al-shaṭranjī*). See Mālik 1982: 52, 2, 7.

36 Mālik 1982: 25, 1, 1–2.

37 Mālik 1982: 25, 1, 3.

38 Mālik 1982: 25, 5, 15.

39 Wheeler 2010: 371.

early, to avoid getting lice, compared to the rules of the *manāsik*. The most common compensations (*fidya*) for the untimely shaving of a louse-infested head were three days of fasting, the feeding of six poor persons or the sacrifice of a sheep.⁴⁰ Such compensation was obligatory.⁴¹ The killing of lice during *iḥrām* is compared to the cutting of nails or the shaving of the head during that period, all of which is forbidden.⁴² The compensation can be paid *wherever* the person happens to be, but it has to be made whenever an offence is committed against an “obligatory” requirement, that is, whenever someone breaks an obligation or a promise.⁴³ In this connection, Mālik mentions an analogous case in which a man is accidentally killed by a group of men (having nothing to do with *ḥājj*). The *kaffāra* in this case requires the group or one person from that group to free a slave or to fast for two consecutive months.⁴⁴

If a man during *iḥrām* kills a pigeon or some other wild animal accidentally, he must sacrifice another animal. The recommended sacrifice is a sheep for a bird, or a she-goat (*‘anz*) for a young gazelle (*ḡaby*).⁴⁵ If a man kills a locust, he is supposed to give a handful of food or a dirham in compensation.⁴⁶ If anyone intentionally forgets to make the prescribed rituals, he must slaughter a sheep (*insuk bi-shātīn*),⁴⁷ or he must fast for three days or feed six poor persons (*masākīn*), providing two *muddaynī*⁴⁸ for each person⁴⁹ or “giv[ing] away the quantity of food that he can scoop up with both hands”.⁵⁰ When it comes to the killing of an ostrich when a person is in *iḥrām*, special rules for compensation seem to apply, and “a camel (*badanatan*) is due”.⁵¹ Mālik continues more generally, “For everything for which a penalty (*fa-kullu shayin fadiya*) is paid, the assessment is the same, whether the animal is old or young. The analogy here is that the blood money for the young and the old free man is considered to

40 Mālik 1982: 20, 78, 246 and 247 [Arabic 237–238].

41 Mālik 1982: 20, 78, 248 [Arabic 239].

42 Other forbidden acts are sexual intercourse, using perfume, and wearing wrong clothes (Mālik 1982: 20, 80, 250 [Arabic 241]).

43 Mālik 1982: 20, 78, 248 [Arabic 239].

44 Mālik 1982: 20, 80, 250 [Arabic 241].

45 Mālik 1982: 20, 76, 240 [Arabic 231].

46 Mālik 1982: 20, 77, 244 and 245 [Arabic 235 and 236].

47 Mālik 1982: 20, 78, 248 [Arabic 239].

48 *Muddaynī* dualis; there are different definitions of this measurement, from 18 litres in Palestine to 46,6 litres in Tangier (see Wehr 1980: 897). Here it means that what you can take in two hands; see the next example (so Lane 1877: 2697).

49 Mālik 1982: 20, 73, 250 [Arabic 241].

50 Mālik 1982: 20, 78, 248 [Arabic 239]. Here it refers to Q 5:95–97.

51 Mālik 1982: 20, 76, 243 [Arabic 234].

be the same.”⁵² On the other hand, if a *muḥrim* is threatened by wild animals, he is allowed to kill them. These include rats and mice, scorpions, crows, kites and wild dogs.⁵³ As wild dogs, “any animals that are wounded, or that attacked, or terrorised men, such as lions, leopards, lynxes and wolves were recognized”.⁵⁴

8.4.3 Sacrificial animals

In book 20 and 23, Mālik writes about animals intended for sacrifice during *ḥajj* and under other circumstances. He starts in book 23 with those that are not suitable for sacrifices during *ḥajj*. When asked which animals should not be sacrificed (*madhā yuʿaqqā min al-ḍaḥāyā*), Muḥammad gave four criteria. The respective blemishes are mentioned, however, without any specifying explanation why they rather than others disqualify the animals from serving as sacrifices. “A lame animal whose lameness is evident (*al-ʿarjāʿu al-bayīnu almuḥā*), a one-eyed animal which is clearly one-eyed (*ʿawrāʿu al-bayīnu ʿawruḥā*), an animal which is clearly ill (*al-marīḍa al-bayīn maraḍuḥā*), and an emaciated animal with no fat on it (*al-majfāʿu allatī lā tunqī*).”⁵⁵ Additionally, young camels or camels (*l-budn*) with physical defects (*allatī lam tusinna, wallatī naqaṣa min khalqihā*) were to be avoided for sacrifice. On the other hand, preferable animals are said to include “an excellent horned ram” (*kabshan faḥīlan aqrana*),⁵⁶ and camels are mentioned several times.⁵⁷

In contrast to the discussion of the *ʿaqīqa*, animals that are injured (*maksūra*) are not mentioned as unsuitable in the context of the *ḍaḥāyā*. Even if an animal is accidentally injured (*bimā ʿaṭiba*) during the preparations for pilgrimage or during pilgrimage itself, it is still considered suitable for sacrifice. A man who was “in charge of the sacrificial animal (*ṣāḥib hady*) of the Messenger of Allāh”, asked, “Messenger of Allāh, what should I do with a sacrificial animal that gets injured (*bimā ʿaṭiba min al-hady*)?” Muhammad answers, “Slaughter any sacrificial animal that is injured (*kullu badanatin min*

52 Mālik 1982: 20, 76, 243 [Arabic 234].

53 Mālik 1982: 20, 28, 91 and 92.

54 Mālik 1982: 20, 28, 92.

55 Mālik 1982: 23, 1, 1.

56 Mālik 1982: 23, 2, 3. *Kabshan* (sing. accusative) means ‘a ram or male sheep, whatever be his age; or a male sheep that has entered his third year’. The female counterpart is called *naʿjatun* (so Lane 1877: 2589). *Faḥīlan* signifies mostly a healthy he-camel that is sent into the flock of she-camels; it gets healthy offspring. When it is used with *kabsh*, it means ‘a ram that resembles the *fahl* of camels in his excellence’ (Lane 1877: 2345–2346). *Aqrana* means ‘having horns’ (Lane 1877: 2988).

57 Mālik 1982: 20, 45, 139, 140 [Arabic 139], 141–145 [Arabic 140–144].

al-hady f-anḥarhā). Then throw the garlands in its blood (*qilādatahā fī damihā*), and then give the people a free hand in eating it.”⁵⁸

This quotation leads us to the only definition of a sacrificial animal that Mālik seems to give. “Yaḥyā related to me and used to say, ‘A sacrificial animal is one that has been garlanded (*qullida*), branded (*ushʿira*), and stood with on ‘Arafa (*wa-yuqifa bihi bi-ʿArafata*).’”⁵⁹ There is another explanation of garlanding. “Yaḥyā related to me that when he brought an animal to be sacrificed from Medina he would garland it (*qalladahu*) and brand it (*ashʿarahu*) at Dhuʾ l-Hulayfa, doing both in the same place, while facing the *qibla*.” Next, he tells that the Prophet would “garland the animal with two sandals (*bi-naʿlayni*) and brand it on its left side (*bi-l-shaqqi l-aysari*)”. Then we read that the standing at ‘Arafa takes place, and that “when he arrived at Mina on the morning of the sacrifice (*ghadāta al-naḥr*), he would sacrifice it (*naḥarahu*),⁶⁰ before he shaved his head [or shortened (it)] (*qabla an yaḥliqa aw yuqṣṣira*)”. As we have seen in Chapter 7, the Prophet is described as one who “sacrifice[s] the animals with his own hands (*huwa yanḥiru hadyahu bi-yadihi*), lining them up standing (*yaṣuffuhunna qiyāman*) and facing the *qibla*. He would then eat some of the meat, and give some away (*thumma yʾakulu yuʿimu*)”.⁶¹

There are several ways of draping a camel. Another tradition that Mālik mentions is the custom of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar of draping the sacrificial animals in Egyptian linen, saddlecloths and sets of clothing, subsequently sent to the Kaʿba so that it could be draped in them.⁶² This is believed to be the background of the *kiswa*, the embroidered fabric that until the 1960s was made in Egypt and carried in procession to Mecca in order to cover the Kaʿba. The sacrificial animal’s linen was meant as a *ṣadaqa*.⁶³ Mālik tells us that the animals were draped only when ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar went from Mina to ‘Arafa.⁶⁴

In this context, the garlands (*qilādat*) serve explicitly to identify those animals that are brought to Mecca for sacrifice.⁶⁵ A further symbol is the sandal

58 Mālik 1982: 20, 47, 154 [Arabic 148]; see also 20, 15, 52.

59 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 148 [Arabic 146]. The ritual in which the animal takes part in the standing, *wuqūf*, is probably one of the most important parts of *ḥājj*.

60 The Arabic text merely uses a pronoun; no ‘animal’ is mentioned.

61 These quotations are taken from Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 146 [Arabic: 145]. The Arabic text says, “then he ate and gave away”. The lining up of the animals is mentioned in Q 22:36.

62 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 149.

63 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 150.

64 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 152.

65 Lane 1885: 2557.

(*naʿl*, literally, ‘old worn-out sandal’) around the neck of the animal. The sandals (*naʿl*) that the Prophet had used were also in other situations evaluated as *baraka*, as ‘divine blessings’ for the believers.⁶⁶ The pre-Islamic Arabs used to hang not only sandals, but also pieces of bark from the *lihāʾ* tree, found around the sacred site of Mecca, around their camels’ necks like necklaces. This they perceived as protection against their enemies.⁶⁷

It would appear that the garlanded camel has an extended value and a special significance. When it is garlanded and thus marked out as an *intended* sacrificial animal, it has an impact on the place where it is held and on the persons sending it away, who are sanctified through the animal’s new status. The animal’s decorations function as sacred bonds between the sacred goal and the man who intends to sacrifice an animal. It is as if the garlands eliminate the extension of being in *ihrām*. When an Iraqi who intended to go on pilgrimage decorated his camel, his plans became evident to anyone observing him. It is even said that, on garlanding his sacrificial animal in Iraq, he entered the state of *ihrām* already there and not upon the arrival at one of the *maqāʾil* (gates), where he would put on the *muḥrim*’s clothes.⁶⁸ All the same, the garlanding was a task that had to be performed, together with other duties connected to the pilgrimage.

ʿĀʾisha, the wife of the Prophet, pbuh, [was] saying, “‘Abd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās said that whatever was *ḥaram* for someone doing *ḥājj* was also *ḥaram* for someone who sent a sacrificial animal (*man ahdā hadyan*) until the animal was sacrificed (*hattā yunḥara al-hady*).” ʿĀʾisha also said, “It is not as Ibn ʿAbbās has said. I once plaited the garlands for the sacrificial animal of the Messenger of Allāh (*qalʿida hady rasūl allāh*), with my own two hands.” She continues saying, “Then the messenger of Allāh, himself put the garlands on the animal with his own hands (*thumma qalladahā rasūlu Allāh bi-yadihi*) and sent it with my father.”⁶⁹

The passage ends with a theological and ethical teaching, “And there was nothing that Allāh had made *ḥalal* for the Messenger of Allāh, that was *ḥaram* for him until such time as the animal had been sacrificed (*hattā nuḥira al-hady*).”⁷⁰ Hence, there were no special rules for Muḥammad concerning pilgrimage to Mecca, or at least none of which the transmitter is aware. Later, it is mentioned that “[i]f there was anything that was *ḥaram* for someone who sent a sacrificial animal (to Mecca) but did not go there himself”, this person would

66 Meri 2010: 105–112.

67 Lane 1885: 2557.

68 Mālik 1982: 20, 15, 54.

69 All quotations in this paragraph are taken from Mālik 1982: 20, 15, 52 [Arabic 51].

70 Mālik 1982: 20, 15, 52 [Arabic 51] where *n-ḥ-r* and *hady* are used.

not achieve the state of *iḥrām*. However, “if someone goes into *iḥrām* for *ḥājj* and begins saying the *talbiya* for whom things are *ḥaram*”, they seem to be in *iḥrām*.⁷¹ Muḥammad’s role as an ordinary pilgrim is referred to when Mālik says that “he sacrificed some animals himself (*naḥara baʿḍa hadīhi*) and someone else killed the rest (*naḥara ghayruhu baʿḍahu*)”.⁷² His customs in performing rituals are also mentioned in a remark shortly before the one just quoted. The subject here is his endurance in keeping *iḥrām* in focus:

Yaḥyā related to me that Ḥaḥṣa, *umm al-muʾminīn*, once said to the Messenger of Allāh, “Why is it that everyone has left *iḥrām* and you still have not left *iḥrām* from your *ʿumra*?” and he replied, “I have matted my hair (*anā labbadtu rāsi*) and garlanded my sacrificial animal (*qalladtu hady*) and will not leave *iḥrām* until I have sacrificed the animal (*wa-lā ʾaḥillu ḥattā anḥara*).”⁷³

This short story mentions the matting of hair,⁷⁴ and is followed by another remark on garlanding, but in this case the reader is given a couple of additional details compared to the passage quoted above.⁷⁵

Yaḥyā related to me that ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar said, “Someone who vows to sacrifice a camel or a cow (*man nadhara badanatan*) should garland it with two sandals around⁷⁶ its neck (*fa-innahu yuqalliduhā naʿlayni*), and brand it (*wa-yushʿiruhā*).⁷⁷ He should then sacrifice it either at the House or at Mīna on the day of sacrifice (*thumma yanḥaruhā ʿinda al-bayt aw bi-Mīnā yawm l-naḥar*). There are no other correct places apart from those (*laysa lahā maḥillun dūna dhālika*). However, someone who vows (*nadhara*) [to slaughter] a camel or a cow as a sacrifice (*jazūran min al-ibli*), can sacrifice it (*yanḥarhā*) wherever he wishes (*ḥaythu shāʾa*).”⁷⁸

Whereas the first text above situates the garlanding and the branding at Dhū al-Ḥulayfa,⁷⁹ the second tells neither where this takes place nor that the animal should face the *qibla* during this ritual. Further, while the first text says that the animal is to be branded on its *left side* (*bi-l-shaqqi l-aysari*), the second says nothing in this regard. Both texts state that the man in charge would garland the

71 Mālik 1982: 20, 15, 53 [Arabic 52].

72 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 190 [Arabic 181].

73 Mālik 1982: 20, 58, 189 [Arabic 180].

74 See also Mālik 1982: 20, 62, 200 and 201, where the matting of hair – and the braiding or plaiting of it – requires a full shaving afterwards. Cf. Wheeler 2010.

75 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 146) [Arabic 145].

76 The Arabic text does not mention the sandals being around the animal’s neck. This is obviously what the translator imagines as the positioning of the garlanded sandals.

77 “By causing blood to flow from its side” is added in the Mālik 1982 translation, but is not mentioned in the Arabic text.

78 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 191 [Arabic 182].

79 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 146 [Arabic 145].

animal with two sandals. The second text then goes on with similar remarks about the *place* (*maḥill*) where the sacrifice will be performed. The ambivalence on this point is interesting. We know that both the House (*al-Kaʿba*) and Mina were places of sacrifice in pre-Islam, but later it seems that the House was never used for this purpose. Mālik’s remark that the House is also a valid sacrificial place can be interpreted in various ways. Both places seem to have the same value with regard to sacrifice. There is no mention of a third alternative. However, the place also becomes irrelevant. If a person has made a vow to sacrifice in another place, he may do that, as well. “Wherever he wishes”, is the answer a Muslim gets when he or she asks where they are supposed to sacrifice.

8.4.4 Do all animals have the same sacrificial value?

Sheep (*shāʿa*) are regarded as the most efficient of the sacrificial animals (*mā staysara min al-hady shāʿtun*).⁸⁰ Later, Mālik says that a camel or a cow (*baqara*) is the minimum acceptable as a sacrificial animal.⁸¹ In another case a sheep is also proposed and accepted rather than the fasting. A Yemenite came to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar and told him that he wished to undertake the *ʿumra*. ʿAbd Allāh answered that he should perform the *ḥājj* and the *ʿumra* together. But the Yemenite held on to his own idea. Then ʿAbd Allāh told him to cut off the locks he had hanging from his head. Then he should sacrifice an animal. An Iraqi woman then asked what sort of animal he was supposed to sacrifice. ʿAbd Allāh stated that a sheep (*shāʿtun*) was the preferred animal for sacrifice (*adhbaha*) and, further, that he preferred the performance of a sacrifice to fasting. This was accepted.⁸² Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) who was himself a Mālikī jurist, mentions that the ram of Ibrāhīm was the model for the sacrificial animal in Mecca during the pilgrimage, and quotes Q 37:107–108. Hence, the sheep or ram was the preferred victim with greater merit for the performers than the camel was.⁸³ Ibn Rushd makes here an important thematic connection between the ram and the camel, and therefore, between the roles of Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad.

Considering the long argumentation presented by Mālik and Ibn Rushd’s much later comments, we can safely assume that there *were* controversies about what animals were considered as suitable for sacrifice or as offerings in compensation for wrongful killings while in *iḥrām*. “Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik that he had heard that ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās used to say, ‘the most

80 Mālik 1982: 20, 51, 168 [Arabic 158–159].

81 Mālik 1982: 20, 51, 169 [Arabic 159].

82 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 171 [Arabic 162].

83 Ibn Rushd 1994. vol. 1: 518 [the Book of *ḍaḥāyā*]. Cf. al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 294 [I: 123]).

acceptable as a sacrificial animal is the sheep.”” Mālik continued and answered, “That is what I like most out of what I have heard about the matter, because Allāh says in his book, ‘O you who trust, do not kill game (*al-ṣayd*) while you are in *iḥrām*. Whoever of you kills intentionally, there shall be repayment (*jazāʿun*).” Then the payment are mentioned, for instance, animals “from livestock” and sacrificial animal (*hady*) “which will reach the Kaʿba or food for poor people (*aw kaffāratun ṭaʿāmu masākīn*), or the equivalent of that in fasting,⁸⁴ and a sheep is one of the animals which is judged to be acceptable as a sacrifice (*fī-l-hady shāʿtun*)”.”⁸⁵ Then, Mālik writes a noteworthy passage:

Allāh has called it a sacrificial animal (*sammāhā Allāhu hadyan*),⁸⁶ and there is no dispute among us in this matter (*wa-dhālika alladhī lā ikhtilāfa fīhi*). How, indeed, could anyone be in doubt about the matter? A sheep is the *kaffāra* for anything which does not reach the extent of something for which a camel (*fīhi yaʿīrin*) or a cow (*baqaratin*) would be the *kaffāra*, and the *kaffāra* for something which does not reach the extent of something for which a sheep (*bi-shāʿtin*) would be the *kaffāra* is fasting (*kaffāratun min ṣīyām*), or feeding the poor people (*aw aṭʿām masākīn*).⁸⁷

These sentences are likely to be echoes of a certain, possibly strong, disagreement about what animals are valid for sacrifice. That Allāh has called it a sacrificial animal is a strong expression that no one can oppose, or were there some who disputed this reference to Allāh’s endorsement? The next sentences are complicated, and the question about the validity of sheep compared to camels and cows as sacrificial animals for *kaffāra* does not seem to be clarified in a satisfactory way. Some four hundred years later, Ibn Rushd comments on this matter, saying, “Mālik’s school differed over whether the command is for eating and giving of charity together or whether the person has a choice to do one of these things, that is, to eat all of it or to give it all away.”⁸⁸

Elsewhere Mālik remarks that the utmost quality of an animal, in this case a camel, is shown in the remarkable passage from the Qurʾān 5:95 where it says that Allāh deserves to receive the very best in sacrifice. This is brought out in a daring comparison of Allāh to a noble woman, a *karīma*.

Yaḥyā related to me from Mālik from Ḥishām ibn ʿUrwa that his father used to say to his sons, “My sons, let no one of you sacrifice (*lā yuhdiyannā aḥadukum*) any

84 This *sūra* is also mentioned in Mālik 1982: 20, 76, 240 where he answers a question concerning an accidentally killed gazelle, for which a goat must be offered in compensation (*fidya*). But the reason for mentioning Q 5:95 here seems to be that it prescribes the use of *two* judges in difficult matters. Cf. Mālik 1982: 20, 27, 88a.

85 All quotations in this paragraph are taken from Mālik 1982: 20, 51, 168 [Arabic 159].

86 This is the second time that Mālik refers to Allāh as his source authority.

87 Mālik 1982: 20, 51, 168 [Arabic 159].

88 Ibn Rushd 1994. vol. 1: 528 [the Book of *ḍaḥāyā*].

animal (*min al-budni*) which he would be ashamed to sacrifice (*yuhdiyyahi*) for a noble woman (*li-karimihi*), for surely Allāh is the noblest of noble ones, and the most deserving of those for whom things are chosen.”⁸⁹

Mālik says that the sacrifice (*hady*) is for Allāh who is worthy of the most outstanding sacrifice. However, the age of the animal does not seem important in this context. A certain Abū Burda ibn Niyār “sacrificed (*dhabaḥa*) an animal (*ḍaḥiyya*) before the Messenger of Allāh sacrificed (*qabla an yadhbaḥa rasūlu Allāhu*)”. This is said to happen “on the Day of Sacrifice (*yawm al-aḍḥā*)” as if this term is already established in Mālik’s writings. Further, terms, like “the day of slaughtering” (*yawm al-naḥari*)⁹⁰, and “the morning of sacrifice” (*ghadāt al-naḥri*)⁹¹ are found. Abū Burda ibn Niyār asserted “that the Messenger of Allāh, ordered him to sacrifice another animal (*ḍaḥiyya ukhrā*)”.⁹² The Prophet said that if someone does not find a sacrificial animal which is older than one year, he might sacrifice (*adhbaḥ*) a younger animal (*jadhaʿ*). However, in one case notes are given about the preferred age of the animals: camels should be six years old, cows and sheep three years or older.⁹³

8.5 The division and storage of meat

Mālik describes how boasting about nice animals has become a problem. “We used to sacrifice (*kunnā nudaḥḥī*) one sheep, and a man sacrificed for himself and his family. Then later on people began to compete with each other and it became boasting.”⁹⁴ He goes on to say,

The best that I have heard about a single camel, cow or sheep, is that a man should sacrifice a camel for himself and his family (*yanḥaru ʿanhu wa-can ahli l-baytihi al-badana*). He sacrifices a cow or sheep which he owns for his family, and shares in it (*yashraku fihā*). It is not approved for a group of people (*al-nafar*) to buy a camel, cow or sheep, to share for the ritual (*al-nusuk*) and sacrifices (*al-ḍaḥiyya*), each man giving a share of its price, and taking a share of its meat. We have heard the tradition

89 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 153 [Arabic 147].

90 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 191 [Arabic 182].

91 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 146 [Arabic: 145].

92 All quotations in this paragraph are taken from Mālik 1982: 23, 3, 4. *Jadhaʿan* means ‘a beast that is around one year old, when it may for the first time be ridden and used’. The term is used variously depending on the animal in question (Lane 1865: 396).

93 Mālik 1982: 20, 46, 151 [Arabic 147]. The age of the animal is not mentioned in all texts, and not in my main edition. According to Lane (1865: 396), this is the approved age for the different animals, also when they are called *jadhaʿan*, but he also adds that neither a two year old goat, a bull, nor a five year old camel, known as a *jadhaʿ*, is “a satisfactory victim for sacrifice”.

94 Mālik 1982: 23, 5, 10.

that people do not share in the ritual (*sami'nā al-ḥadītha innahu lā yushtaraku fī l-nusuki*). However, it may be that the people of one household can share (*ʿan ʾahli l-baytihi l-waḥid*).⁹⁵

This text is interesting for its information about how the meat should be shared, but it also contains a small philological treasure. In it three different roots are used for sacrifice, first, *ḍ-ḥḥ-y* (*nuḍaḥḥī*, verbal and *al-ḍaḥḥāyan*, noun),⁹⁶ second, *n-ḥ-r* (*yanḥaru*), and, third, *dh-b-h* (*yadhbahu*). Indeed there is even a fourth root, *n-s-k*, if one regards *al-nusuk* as ‘the sacrifices’, here translated ‘rituals’. What is missing is the root *h-d-y*, which Mālik uses on several other occasions. Neither do we find *f-d-y* or *k-f-r*. This text uses no extraordinary words for the sacrificial animals, camels, cows and sheep, but interestingly it applies the noun *ḍaḥiyya*.

Although the sacrificial animals may vary, Mālik sees male and female pilgrims as equal in status when using sacrificial animals. In another context, Mālik writes, “A man and wife should not share (*lā yashtariku*) in one sacrificial animal. Each should sacrifice (*li-yuhdi*) an animal separately.”⁹⁷ Nonetheless, on the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥar*), Muḥammad sacrificed for his wives (*naḥara rasūlu Allāhi ʿan azwājīhi*) and sent the meat of a cow (*laḥma baqarin*) to ʿĀʾisha, even though she also attended the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁹⁸ An even more delicate question, whether it is possible to make the *ḥājj* on behalf of someone else, is mentioned in Q 3:97. The *ḥājj* is regarded as an obligation only for those who are able to do it. Mālik called this a “bodily (*badanī*) obligation” that could “never be devolved onto anyone else”.⁹⁹

After the slaughtering of a camel or a cow, one common way of sharing the meat was to divide it between seven persons.¹⁰⁰ This does not seem to have been a serious problem for the pilgrims. However, the storing of the slaughtered meat must have posed an immense challenge. “Yaḥyā related to me that the Messenger of Allāh forbade that the meat of sacrificial animals (*al-ḍaḥiyya*) be eaten after three days.”¹⁰¹ Later he said, ‘Eat, give *ṣadaqa*, provide for yourselves and store up!’”¹⁰²

95 Mālik 1982: 23, 5, 10.

96 Only used here as far as I have seen; the same root as in *al-aḥḥā*.

97 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 173 [Arabic 164].

98 Mālik 1982: 20, 56, 188 [Arabic 179].

99 Dutton 1999: 47.

100 Mālik 1982: 23, 5, 9.

101 Mālik 1982: 23, 4, 6 and 7.

102 Mālik 1982: 23, 4, 6.

8.6 The proper place for sacrifice

We saw above that the sacrificer might sacrifice wherever he wishes.¹⁰³ But still, there seem to have been certain places and areas specifically designated for this purpose, and these were not to be changed. Shortly before this passage, we read that the Prophet said when he was in Mina, “This place and the whole of Mina is a place of sacrifice (*hādhā al-manḥar wa-kullu Minā manḥarun*).” Once during *‘umra*, he said, “This place of sacrifice (*hādhā al-manḥar*)”, meaning Marwa, “and all the pathways of Mecca and its roads are a place of sacrifice (*wa-kullu fījāji Makka wa-ṭuruqihā manḥar*)”.¹⁰⁴ The same word is used for both Mecca and Mina (and the pathways and roads), *manḥar*. *Maḥill* is not used here, but it appears in the next section in the phrase “[n]o places other than these are correct (*laysa lahā maḥillun dūna dhālika*)”.¹⁰⁵ Other passages suggest a different answer to the question about *where* the sacrifice should take place. “Mālik said, ‘If it is a *hady* that has to be slaughtered it may only be done in Mecca, but if it is a *sacrifice* (*nusuk*), it may be slaughtered wherever the one who owes the sacrifice (*al-nusuk*) prefers.’”¹⁰⁶ Thus, a *hady* is supposed to be slaughtered in Mecca, whereas the *nusuk* may be slaughtered wherever the owner of the sacrifice wishes. In other words, the actual sacrificer does *not* have the authority to decide the place of sacrifice.

As commented earlier, there is a certain ambivalence with regard to the places that are considered as proper for the sacrificial rituals. Hence, Mālik writes, “If it is judged that someone must offer an animal (*al-hady*) for having killed game (*al-ṣayd*), or for another reason, this animal can only be sacrificed at Mecca, since Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, says, ‘a sacrificial animal (*hady*) will reach the Ka‘ba’.”¹⁰⁷ In this situation a rule that applies in the *ḥaram* context has been violated. The strictly forbidden killing of game must be punished, and the punishment is likely to relate in some way to the actual place. “The fasting or *ṣadaqa*” that is considered “equivalent” to “offering a sacrifice (*al-hady*)”, can be performed outside Mecca and the person who fasts can do so wherever he likes”.¹⁰⁸ A sacrifice should be offered when a *muḥrim* has killed game during *iḥrām*; it should be performed in Mecca, but neither *ṣadaqa* nor any fasting is allowed during *iḥrām*.¹⁰⁹ Fasting is strictly forbidden during the

103 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 191 [Arabic 182].

104 Mālik 1982: 20, 58, 187 [Arabic 178].

105 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 191 [Arabic 182].

106 Mālik 1982: 20, 79, 249 [Arabic 240].

107 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 173 [Arabic 164].

108 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 173 [Arabic 164].

109 Mālik 1982: 20, 50, 173.

days of Mina.¹¹⁰ The days of *ʿīd al-ḥajj*, *ʿīd al-adḥā*, and of *tashrīq* are all days of no fasting.¹¹¹ “Those days were for the eating and the drinking and remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr Allāh*).”¹¹² The days of *tashrīq* are also the days of saying the *takbīr*, which should be uttered by men and women after each prayer.¹¹³ One question raised was whether a Muslim should say the *takbīr* also when he or she was *not* in Mecca during the days of *tashrīq*.¹¹⁴ The text simply states the fact that the people in Medina celebrated the *ʿīd al-adḥā* even if they were *not* in Mecca or Mina. The assertion is neither questioned nor commented upon.

During the celebration of the festival in Medina and in Mecca, clear rules apply concerning the words that must be used to start the different parts of the pilgrimage ritual. Hence, Mālik emphasises the utterance of the *talbiya*. The question leading to this recitation is whether the *person* sending an animal to Mecca is in the state of *iḥrām* or not. Here, Mālik answers that this is not the case. According to Mālik, ‘Ā’isha has said, “It is only someone who goes into *iḥrām* for *ḥājj* and begins saying the *talbiya* for whom things are *ḥaram*.”¹¹⁵ The person who does not go to Mecca is forbidden to enter a sacred space before he or she has recited the *labbayka*. In other words, according to Mālik ibn Anas the pilgrimage and the sacrificial ritual *begin* with the *talbiya*.

8.7 The pilgrim and the pilgrimage

8.7.1 Limitations, and a substitute for transgressions while in *iḥrām*

One way to approach the question of sacred limitations grounded in sanctity is to point out that menstruating women (*al-marʿa al-ḥāḍid*) were prohibited from making the *tawāf* around the Kaʿba, from running between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa and from coming near the mosque (*al-masjid*) until they again were pure (*ḥattā*

110 Mālik 1982: 20, 44, 135 [Arabic 134].

111 Mālik 1982: 20, 44, 137 and 138 [Arabic 136 and 137].

112 Mālik 1982: 20, 44, 136 [Arabic 135]; see 20, 44, 138 [Arabic 137].

113 Mālik 1982: 20, 68, 214 [Arabic 205]. It seems that the prayer at Mina did not exceed more than two *rakas* (20, 66, 209 and 210 [Arabic 201 and 202]). It is not allowed to spend more nights at Mina than were spent beyond al-Aqaba, neither should one spend so many nights at Mecca (20, 70, 218 and 219 [Arabic 209 and 210]). Only the camel-herders were allowed to sleep outside Mina (20, 72, 227 [Arabic 218]). They were also allowed to stone at night (20, 72, 228 [Arabic 219]).

114 Mālik 1982: 20, 68, 214 [Arabic 205].

115 Mālik 1982: 20, 15, 53 [Arabic 52].

tathura).¹¹⁶ Sacrifice of an animal should be made after sexual intercourse with one's wife or husband only when having achieved again the state of *iḥrām* during *ʿumra*. This restores the person to the state of *iḥrām* which he or she forfeited as a result of sexual intercourse. There are further requirements that have to be met before one can enter the state of *iḥrām*, such as *ghusl*, *wuḍūʿ* or an extra *ṭawāf* around the Kaʿba. The same rule applies for both men and women.¹¹⁷ For the *muḥrim* who offends against the requirements of ritual in any of these ways, sacrifice constitutes one of the most important modes of compensations. Mālik tells about a couple that had intercourse while in *iḥrām* during *ḥājj*. They were required to complete this *ḥājj*, but additionally “to perform *ḥājj* another year and to sacrifice an animal (*thumma ʿalayhimā ḥājj qābil wa-l-hady*)”.¹¹⁸ Kissing or other bodily contact between husband and wife while in *iḥrām* was also to be compensated for by a sacrifice and a new *ḥājj*.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, if a couple had intercourse after the ritual stoning of the devil, *jumra*, the husband was required to perform an *ʿumra* and to sacrifice an animal, but it was *not* necessary to undertake another *ḥājj* the following year.¹²⁰ If a man had a sexual relationship with a woman after an interrupted *ḥājj*, he was to repeat this *ṭawāf* plus the *ʿumra* and to sacrifice an animal. When Mālik was asked about a man who forgot the *ṭawāf al-ifāda* until he had left Mecca and returned to his community, he said,

then he should not only return and do the *ṭawāf al-ifāda*, but he should also perform an *ʿumra* and sacrifice an animal (*yuhdi*). He should not buy the animal in Mecca and sacrifice it there (*wa-yanḥarahu bihā*), but if he has not brought one with him from wherever it was he set out to do *ʿumra*, he should buy one in Mecca and then take it outside the limits of the *ḥaram* and drive it from there to Mecca and sacrifice it there (*yanḥaruhu bihā*).¹²¹

Mālik compares intercourse during *iḥram* to a sacrifice made to idols and quotes Q 2:197¹²² by saying, “*Rafath* means sexual intercourse (*iṣābat al-nisāʾ*), and Allāh knows best. He says, ‘Intercourse with your wives is permitted for you on the night of the fast; and *fusūq* means sacrifices made to the idols (*al-dhabḥ li-l-*

116 Mālik 1982: 20, 16, 55 [Arabic 54]. He gives many more detailed rules for women's participation.

117 Mālik 1982: 20, 21, 69 [Arabic 68].

118 Mālik 1982: 20, 48, 160 and 161 [Arabic 151 and 152].

119 Mālik 1982: 20, 48, 161 [152].

120 Mālik 1982: 20, 48, 161 [152].

121 Mālik 1982: 20, 50, 166 [Arabic 157].

122 “Let there be no *rafath* nor *fusūq* [iniquity, sinfulness] nor argument during the *ḥājj*”.

anṣāb)’.”¹²³ Mālik continues by saying that this prohibition refers to when the Quraysh used to stand near the *mash‘ar al-ḥaram* at Quza in Muzdalifa, while the Arabs and others would stand at ‘Arafa, and they would argue about who was the more correct. Then Mālik continues and refers to Q 22:67, “Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, says, ‘And we appointed a method of sacrifice for every nation (*li-kulli ummatin ja‘alnā mansakahum nāsikūhu*), which they followed, so let them not dispute with you about the matter, and call to your Lord. Surely you are on a straight guidance’.”¹²⁴

Interestingly, it is said here that intercourse during *iḥram* and sacrifice to idols other than Allāh is strictly forbidden during *ḥājj*. The implication is that sacrifices offered during the pilgrimage are for *Allāh*. Further, there is a particular ‘sacrifice’, or ‘ritual’, as Dawood translates it, that is meant to be for every nation. It is not clear what sort of *umma* Mālik implies here. The term *umma* might indicate religious communities as well as tribal groups with one common belief. Later, the term predominantly referred to the Islamic community.¹²⁵

8.7.2 Prevention from fulfilling the *ḥājj* (*iḥṣār*)

Mālik tells that Muḥammad, after he had managed to advance and reach the Ka‘ba without being stopped, performed one set of *tawāf*, “which he considered to be enough for himself, and he sacrificed an animal”.¹²⁶ This is said to be connected to the Ḥudaybiya incident when the Prophet and his men were prevented from doing the *‘umra*.¹²⁷ Whenever someone is restrained from performing the rituals, Mālik is less restrictive than al-Shāfi‘ī and Abū Ḥanīfa with regard to the compensation that is to be made.¹²⁸ Mālik’s position in this respect is explained by the *‘amal* of people in Medina (the city where he used to live), which defined the practices common in his own time. Mālik and the Medinan made a distinction between those who were prevented from doing *ḥājj*

123 Mālik 1982: 20, 53, 176 [Arabic 167]. See Q 6:145; cf. Dutton 1999: 97 and 211, footnotes 125 and 126.

124 Mālik 1982: 20, 53, 176 [Arabic 167]. Dawood (1994: 239) translates Q 22:67 in a more neutral way than Mālik’s translator does, “For every community We have ordained a ritual which they observe.”

125 Denny 2000: 862–863. The term *umma* occurs more than 60 times in the Qurʾān.

126 Mālik 1982: 20, 31, 100 [Arabic 99].

127 Mālik 1982: 20, 31, 100 [Arabic 99].

128 Dutton 1999: 95–96.

(*iḥsār*) by an enemy or by some other cause.¹²⁹ If a Muslim was brought out of *iḥrām* by force, he was supposed to sacrifice a *hady*, whereas if he was prevented in his duties because of illness, he was required to sacrifice a *hady* (action a) and then to perform the *ʿumra* again or the *ḥājj* later (action b). Abū Ḥanīfa, however, did not accept any distinctions depending on what had hindered somebody from doing the *ḥājj* (*iḥsār*); in any case both actions (a and b) had to be undertaken.¹³⁰

A sacrifice is an effective remedy not only for failings during the pilgrimage, but it also gives health and cures illnesses. A man who was regarded as sick because he was bleeding, was to stone the *jamras* (either himself or by a proxy) and later, when healed, to sacrifice an animal (*ahdā*). This is a sacrifice of gratitude. Someone who forgot to stone the *jamras* in Mina before going to Mecca, should sacrifice an animal,¹³¹ or, alternatively, he must fast for three days during *ḥājj* and seven days after coming home.¹³² These are sacrifices of

In Mālik's opinion, sacrifice is a necessary part of the *ḥājj*. If sickness prevents someone from completing the *ḥājj*, the *ḥājj* is not valid and should be undertaken again at a later date; "he should perform *ʿumra* and come out of his *iḥrām*, after which he had to perform *ḥājj* another year and to offer whatever sacrificial animal he was able to in the future".¹³³ "Mālik said, 'Someone who intends to do *ḥājj* and *ʿumra* together and then misses the *ḥājj* must do the *ḥājj* again another year, doing *ḥājj* with *ʿumra*, and offer two sacrificial animals (*anḥarū hadyan*), one for doing the *ḥājj* with *ʿumra*, and one for the *ḥājj* that he has missed.'"¹³⁴ A person who failed to sacrifice an animal during *ḥājj* must sacrifice two animals on his next *ḥājj*.¹³⁵ How many sacrificial animals will a Muslim end up offering? Probably Mālik will say that there is a *hady* to be sacrificed in Mecca and a *kaffara* to be offered when rituals are not correctly performed.

129 *Iḥsār* signifies someone who is prevented from attending the religious rites and ceremonies of the pilgrimage because of disease or the like. Lane (1863: 582) refers to Ibn al-Athīr's *Nihaya*, but does not give any further details. See Q 2:196 and Dutton 1999: 92–94.

130 Mālik 1982: 20, 71, 225 [Arabic 216]. See Dutton 1999: 92.

131 Mālik 1982: 20, 72, 229 [Arabic 220].

132 Mālik 1982: 20, 49, 163 [Arabic 154]. This is repeated by al-Ghazzālī ([d. 505/1111] 1982, vol. 1: 239). But here it would appear that this is compulsory only in the context of the *ḥājj al-tamattuʿ* ritual.

133 Mālik 1982: 20, 32, 104 [Arabic 103].

134 Mālik 1982: 20, 49, 163 [Arabic 154].

135 Mālik 1982: 20, 49, 163 [Arabic 154].

Some *aḥādīth* permit variation in the order of their rituals. When some people ask whether their failings during the *ḥājj* (shaving before sacrificing instead of the opposite sequence, etc.) may be accepted or whether they require compensation, Muḥammad answers, “Do it, and do not worry!”¹³⁶ Hence, somewhat paradoxically, we observe a juxtaposition of a strict order, on the one hand, and at the same time a tolerance of minor divergences, on the other hand, expressed in the slogan, “do it whenever and wherever you wish!”

8.8 Vows and substitutes

Several situations have been mentioned in texts above, written by among others, Ibn Ishāq, al-Kalbī, al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāqidi, and now Mālik, where vows are taken.¹³⁷ A vow (*nadhār* singular, *nudhūr* plural) is seen as a strong resolution to fulfil a promise that the Muslim might have made even at a very young age. The fulfilment (*yaḥlifū bi-nudhūr*) may be undertaken by the person himself¹³⁸ or by someone else on his behalf.¹³⁹ However, according to Mālik there are also cases where an unfulfilled vow of a deceased person does not put any obligation on his or her descendants: “No one walks for anyone else (*lā yamshī aḥadun ‘an aḥadin*).”¹⁴⁰ This “walk” is always “the walk to the house of Allāh”.¹⁴¹ When this vow is not fulfilled at all, the question of making a sacrifice arises.¹⁴² “If he cannot walk, he should do what he can and then ride, and he must sacrifice a camel (*badana*), a cow (*baqara*), or a sheep (*shā’*), if that is all that he can find.”¹⁴³ In extreme cases, it was even possible for someone to sacrifice his or her son in fulfilment of a vow.

A woman came to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās and said, “I have vowed to sacrifice my son (*innī nadhartu an anḥara ibnī*).” Ibn ‘Abbās said, “Do not sacrifice your son (*lā tanḥarī ibnaki*). Do *kaffāra* for your oath (*kaffirī ‘an yaminiki*).” An old man with Ibn ‘Abbās said, “What *kaffāra* is there for this?” Ibn ‘Abbās said, “Allāh the

136 Mālik 1982: 20, 81, 251 [Arabic 242]. Cf. In most of the *aḥādīth* it is emphasised that the sequence of the ritual events is important for the whole ceremony to be correctly performed and for the benefits or blessings, which are never spoken of explicitly, that can be derived from the rituals.

137 Mālik 1982: 20, 59, 191 [Arabic 182].

138 Mālik 1982: 22, 1, 3.

139 Mālik 1982: 22, 1, 1.

140 Mālik 1982: 22, 1, 2.

141 Mālik 1982: 22, 2, 5b.

142 Mālik 1982: 22, 2, 4 and 5.

143 Mālik 1982: 22, 2, 5b.

Exalted said, ‘Those of you who say, regarding their wives, Be as my mother’s back.’¹⁴⁴ And then He went on to oblige the *kaffāra* for it as you have seen.”¹⁴⁵

Wisely, Ibn ‘Abbās orders the woman, in accordance with Q 17:28,¹⁴⁶ *not* to sacrifice her son. However, the vow has to be kept. Possibly, Q 2:196 also influences the answer he gives about finding a substitute.¹⁴⁷ *Kaffārat al-yamīn* means a *kaffāra* for a broken oath. Mālik takes the *kaffāra* for an oath directly from Q 58:3–4 without any further comment.¹⁴⁸ *Kaffāra* “has two meanings, ‘to nullify e.g. a sin’, and secondly, ‘to cover’.”¹⁴⁹ Chelhod apparently supports this view and mentions that *kaffāra* is “an expiatory and propitiatory act which grants remission for faults of some gravity”, and it serves “to cover wicked deeds with a veil so that they are concealed”.¹⁵⁰ The Arabic words *ghafara*, ‘*afā* and *ṣafaha* (Q 24:22) also have the sense ‘to cover, to efface, to smooth away’.¹⁵¹

In addition to the possibilities of being ignorant about one’s duties, or of having committed a sin, a *muḥrim* may also be forgetful. Mālik says, “To my liking an animal should be sacrificed in a case such as this, because ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘Whoever forgets any of his rites on *ḥājj* (*nusuk*) should shed blood [sacrifice an animal] (*yuhriq daman*).’”¹⁵²

When during pilgrimage the sequence of rites is changed without permission, there is often an explanation and a way out of the trespass. One example is provided by the rules for performing ‘*umra* and *ḥājj* together (*ḥājj al-qiran*); this determines that a sacrificial animal is to be entrusted to a man and brought for ‘*umra*, but it should be sacrificed during *ḥājj* instead.¹⁵³ This one should “not remove any of his hair, nor should he come out of *iḥrām* in any way until he has sacrificed an animal (*yanḥura hadyan*), if he has one.” Further, “he

144 This was a pre-Islamic way for a husband to say that he wanted to divorce his wife. Cf. Q 58:2.

145 Mālik 1982: 22, 4, 7. See also 20, 80, 250 [Arabic 241]; 20, 73, 250 [Arabic 241] and 20, 51, 168 [Arabic 159]. There is no reason why the text says, “he went” and not she.

146 Q 17:28 (31): “You shall not kill your children for fear of want! We will provide for them and for you. To kill them is a great sin” (Dawood 1994: 199).

147 So Dutton 1999: 203, footnote 11.

148 Dutton 1999: 64.

149 Lane 1885: 2621. See Janowski ([1982] 2000: 89, 93), where he refers to Paret’s translation of the verb, “to delete evil doings” (German: “schlechte Taten tilgen”), and thus regards the two different Arabic words not only as *homonymous*, but also as converging towards a single meaning.

150 Chelhod 1978: 406–407. Cf. Horovitz 1926: 59.

151 Janowski (1982) 2000: 94.

152 Mālik 1982: 20, 61, 197 [Arabic 188]. Cf. Lane 1867: 1026.

153 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 173 [Arabic 164].

should come out of *iḥrām* at Mina, on the Day of Sacrifice”.¹⁵⁴ The Day of Sacrifice, *yawm l-naḥr*, seems here to have become a well-known term for this important part of the *ḥajj*.

8.9 Time and order

When it is so important *where* the different sacrifices are prepared, the *time* is also likely to be an important aspect of the rituals. It is interesting to see that Mālik sets a *time* for the sacrifice in book 23. “The sacrifice can be done up to two days after the Day of Sacrifice.”¹⁵⁵ The rest of the chronological prescriptions are laid out in the book of pilgrimage, *kitāb al-ḥājj*, and their order is important.

Yaḥya related to me from Mālik from Ḥishām ibn ‘Urwa that his father used to kill his sacrificial animals while they were standing (*yanḥaru budnahu qiyāman*). Mālik said, “No one is permitted to shave his head (*lā yajūzu li-aḥadin an yaḥliqa ra’sahu*) until he has killed his sacrificial animal (*hadyahu*), and no one must sacrifice before dawn on the day of sacrifice (*yanḥura qabla al-fajri yawm l-naḥr*). The things that should be done on the day of sacrifice are slaughtering (*al-dhibḥ*), donning clothes (*wa-lubs l-thiyāb*), grooming the body generally and shaving the head (*wa-ḥilāq*), and none of this may be done before the day of sacrifice.”¹⁵⁶

What would happen if the sacrifice was performed *before* dawn of the day of sacrifice, is not explained. However, restrictions are to be observed and compensation has to be offered if the shaving is incorrect. “Shaving the head is *not* obligatory for someone who sacrifices an animal (*laysa ḥilāqu l-rā’si bi-wājibin ‘alā man daḥḥā*),”¹⁵⁷ is one prescription that is uttered to a man who was sick and wished to sacrifice without being able to go to Mecca on the Day of Sacrifice (*yawm al-aḍḥā*). Cutting off the hair is also questioned when a woman in *iḥrām* is supposed *not* to cut off more than a few tresses of her hair *before* she has sacrificed the animal she is bringing.¹⁵⁸ Shaving must take place before the *tawāf al-ziyāra*,¹⁵⁹ and then preferably at Mina.¹⁶⁰ The connection between sacrifice and the shaving of the head is also apparent from the fact that the Prophet and his companions came out of *iḥrām* at al-Hudaybiya and then “sacrificed their sacrificial animals and shaved their heads, and were freed from

154 Mālik 1982: 20, 12, 40; the two last quotations.

155 Mālik 1982: 23, 6, 12.

156 Mālik 1982: 20, 59 192 [Arabic 183].

157 Mālik 1982: 23, 2, 3.

158 Mālik 1982: 20, 52, 172 [Arabic 163].

159 Mālik 1982: 20, 60, 193 [Arabic 184].

160 Mālik 1982: 20, 60, 194 [Arabic 185].

all the restrictions of *iḥrām* without having done *ṭawāf* of the House and without their sacrificial animals reaching the Kaʿba”.¹⁶¹

Chelhod claims that Islamic jurisprudence refers to the sacrifice sometimes as *hady*, sometimes as *ḍaḥīyya*,¹⁶² and that the term *hady* was later replaced by *ḍaḥīyya*.¹⁶³

What essentially characterizes the *hady* and distinguishes it from other blood sacrifices is that this is a question of a sacrifice in a fixed place, in that the sacrifice, except when performed under compulsion, must necessarily take place in Mecca. [...] the beast must be slain towards the end of the pilgrimage, more precisely on 10 Dhū al-ḥijja.¹⁶⁴

Remarkably, Mālik notes that “Allāh has called it a sacrificial animal (*sammāhā Allāhu hady*)”, and “there is no dispute about this matter among us”.¹⁶⁵ The rhetorical question is then *why* people should doubt it at all. Our subsequent question will then be: Did everyone in Mālik’s day really agree on this matter as readily as we are given the impression here? We have already seen that Ibn Rushd refers to some debate about Mālik and others in the matter of what animals were the preferred slaughter.¹⁶⁶

161 Mālik 1982: 20, 31, 99 [Arabic 98]. Cf. Wheeler 2010: 341, 355.

162 Chelhod 1952: 207. Al-Ghazzālī (1996. vol. 1: 268) does not seem to distinguish between the two. Mālik (1982: 20, 52, 171 [Arabic 162]) maintains a difference between these two terms for sacrifices, and he considers the ram superior to the cow or the camel.

163 Chelhod 1955: 209. Also in Chelhod 1971a: 54.

164 Chelhod 1971a: 54.

165 Mālik 1982: 20, 51, 168 [Arabic 159]. According to Brooke (1987: 70) today’s sacrificial animal must be unblemished – it cannot be blind or lame or “so lean as to have no marrow in its bones. Sheep and goats must be at least one year old; cattle two years; camels five years. Castrated animals may be sacrificed, but mainly non-castrated males are sacrificed in Mina.”

166 Ibn Rushd 1994. vol. 1: 518 [the Book of *ḍaḥāyā*].

Chapter 9

Islamic Sacrifice and Ultimate Sacred Postulates

9.1 Islamic sacrifice and ritual orders, self-referential and canonical messages

In describing the contemporary Islamic sacrifice, Clarke Brooke says,

In Islam the ritual slaughter of the *Hajj* and *Id al-Adha* is not propitiatory by nature, nor by the sharing of the meat is charity the main purpose. The true meaning of the sacrifice is that in taking the life of an animal in God's name, the sacrificer gives testimony to his submission to God and to His power of life or death over all creatures. The Muslim recognizes that the only sacrifice which Allāh demands of him is the submission of his will and purpose to that of God.¹

Even if this passage sums up the main ideas behind the pilgrimage sacrifice as described in my material, especially with regard to the sacrifice as a token of submission to Allāh, my selection of material requires some finer or more nuanced distinctions. For instance, Brooke's summary does not cover *every* sacrifice I have analysed above. When Q 108 states that Allāh has given Muḥammad "abundance", the Prophet – and, by implication, every Muslim – is at the same time ordered, "to pray to Allāh and sacrifice (*wa-nḥur*)".² These phrases express two of the five pillars of Islam (*arkān*), prayer and sacrifice, considered as part of the *ḥajj*. These two rituals are linked to the negative consequence for him who hates "you" (probably Allāh) to "remain childless (*al-abtar*)".³ The sacrifice alluded to here is therefore a *thanksgiving* sacrifice, because it is offered to God as an expression of gratitude for His rich compensation to his followers. Accordingly, the ritual order finds its focus in prayer *and* sacrifice. In the approach of the pious *muhrim* these two rituals are combined in one *single* attitude. The canonical message of Q 112, emphasising the unity of Allāh, is the basis for this kind of sacrifice. Hence, there is no contradiction between Allāh's unity and the ritual of sacrifice.

In all Islamic versions of the Ismāʿīl / Ishāq narrative, the other son is absent when the first is about to be sacrificed. His presence is of no use for the

1 Brooke 1987: 70.

2 Dawood 1994: 433.

3 Dawood 1994: 433; Birkeland 1956: 56.

continuity of descendants. The person who sacrifices his only son will have no descendants. With ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib it is different. He had many sons who would give him grandchildren, but ‘Abd Allāh was the dearest, and therefore, the greatest possible loss. The sacrifice offered by Muḥammad at his Farewell Pilgrimage, however, does not relate to human heirs, but rather to ideological and canonical messages that were to be transmitted to his spiritual descendants.

One of J.H.M. Beattie’s four classes or categories of sacrifice is sacrifice intended to obtain or maintain closer contact with God.⁴ The principal meaning of the Arabic terms *qarraba* and *qurbān* is ‘to come near, to approach’.⁵ In her review of the Islamic exegesis of Q 5:30, Waltraud Bork-Qaysieh points to al-Ṭabarī who in his *tafsīr* underlines that it was *God*, not Adam, who commanded the sacrifice of Ḥābil to be made.⁶ In Q 3:183 we see that the *qurbān* is associated with the sending of an apostle (*rasūl*). This apostle is not trustworthy unless he brings a sacrifice that should be consumed or eaten by fire (*al-nār*). In this text the slaughtering is not mentioned. Al-Jāḥiẓ says of the children of Israel that “in their devotion, they brought sacrifices (*yataqarrabūna bi-l-qurbān*)” and “to those who were sincere, fire came down from heaven”.⁷

I have shown that the desire to come closer to Allāh must not be excluded from the total concept of Islamic sacrifice (Q 9:99). When al-Shahrastānī, for instance, describes the pre-Islamic sacrifices, he says that the sacrificers “slit the throats of the victims, and they sacrificed to them [the idols] (*wa-taqarrabū ilayhā*) with offerings and rituals (*bi-l-manāsik wa-l-mashāʿir*), they were

4 Beattie 1980: 38–39.

5 Lane (1885: 2504–2505) also gives examples where the word is used in connection with camels coming to their waterholes. The second derivation with the intensified middle radical, *qarraba*, has the meaning of ‘presenting’ or ‘offering’, and some examples are connected to another word with the same radicals, *qurbān*, meaning ‘a gift’ or ‘a sacrifice’. See also Q 46:28.

6 Bork-Qaysieh (1993: 29–32; esp. 30 and 32) refers to parts of the *tafsīr* discussion about *what* the sacrifice consisted of, namely, Ḥābil’s best sheep (or in some cases a fat camel and/or a cow or the firstborn animal). God received it as a sacrifice, and after that it grazed in Paradise until it became the sacrificial lamb of Ibrāhīm. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 10: 202; 207–208. See also al-Ṭabarī (1987. vol. 2: 308 [I: 138]): “A fire came down from heaven. It consumed Abel’s offering and left that of Cain. Whereupon Cain got angry and said: ‘God accepts only from those who fear Him. If you stretch out your hand to kill me, I shall not stretch out my hand to kill you to.’ And his soul suggested to him that he kill his brother.” Bork-Qaysieh (1993: 32, n. 73) also mentions Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), who writes that Ḥābil’s sacrifice was attacked by fire and driven from the place.

7 Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 254/868) 1966. vol. 4: 461.

sacralized and de-sacralized”.⁸ Here, the word *taqarrabū* is combined with terms for three dimensions of the total structure, sacrifice – offering – rituals, and the fourth dimension called ‘sacralization’.

Viewed in light of Roy A. Rappaport’s ideas about hierarchy,⁹ these Arabic terms allude to many dimensions of rituals in which the sacrificer utters words and thereby encounters the deity. Widengren’s definition of sacrifice emphasises the perspective of sacrifice as establishing “a connection between this deity and the person who performs the ritual. It is thereby assumed that the ritual is able to influence the deity in a way hoped for by the sacrificer.”¹⁰ I consider this to be an important and valid aspect and, consequently, want to stress that such a connection can be called a “communicative act” that cannot be excluded from Islamic sacrificial rituals. This has to be said even if Q 22:37 states, “Their flesh and blood does not reach Allāh; it is your piety that reaches him.” Hence, I disagree with Hava Lazarus-Yafeh’s radical comment on this verse, in which she maintains that the sole reason why Islam upholds sacrificial rituals is the stream of mythical and magical ideas.¹¹ She seems hardly aware of the transformative part of the Islamic communal sacrifice and the following meal. Further, I want to underline that the Islamic God is in general One to be “communicated with” through prayer *and* sacrifice. This sacrifice is not to be characterised as a gift-exchange sacrifice, but as one of communion and thanksgiving. In other words, it is not *only* inter-human communication that takes place in the Meccan context but also a communication between God and the believer(s) who praise and long for their Creator.

Q 50:16 states the intimate closeness between God and man: “*We* created man. We know the promptings of his soul, and are closer to him than his jugular

8 Al-Shahrastānī, Jolivet and Monnot 1993, vol. 2: 498; cf. Fahd 1968: 238–239.

9 Rappaport 1999: 272.

10 Widengren 1969: 280.

11 Lazarus-Yafeh 1981a: 26–27: “It does not reject sacrifices as such, but only the underlying mythological conviction that they are valid in their own right and can induce the deity to do certain things at the request, and in favour, of the sacrifice. The Israelite monotheistic conception, which found its expression in the words of the prophets, argues that God does not need sacrifices and even does not wish for them. Sacrifices are but symbols, remembrances of the covenant God made with man, and expressions of certain moral, inner values. When these values are tainted or non-existent the sacrifice is useless and worthless. [...] The words of the Qur’ān doubtless echo the harsh rebuke of the prophets, in distinct contrast to numerous later Muslim writings wherein the attitude adopted towards the Ka’ba and its concomitant ceremonies once again comes very close to a magical-mythological view.” Lazarus-Yafeh (1978: 56) also writes, “As a matter of fact Islam does not really know of sacrificial rites and the sacrifice is more of a family meal.”

vein.”¹² Furthermore, there are examples from *al-Ahādīth al-qudsiyya*, in which God communicates with the Prophet without the intermediation of Gabriel. In one case, the Prophet narrates, that God each night descends to the lowest heaven where He sits down and begins calling out for people to come and ask Him for things so that He may grant them their wishes. In particular, He promises that every move on their part will be not only reciprocated, but even granted by God; hence, if the believer turns towards God, God will run towards the believer.¹³

Regarding Beattie’s second sacrificial group, “to sacrifice in order to achieve some degree of separation from gods or spirits”,¹⁴ I will mention the change in sacred condition associated with entering into and with leaving the state of *iḥrām*, a change that amounts to the difference between being or not being a *muḥrim*. This sanctified frame of mind is essential to the Mina sacrifices, but it does not seem necessary for the other Islamic sacrifices, for which words, intentions, and sometimes places are considered more important. This may well be due to the fact that these sacrifices are not one and the same sacrifice, and they do not *need* the same framework to be fulfilled and to be efficient.

Beattie’s third dimension indicates that sacrifice is performed “to acquire for the sacrificer an increase, or input, of non-personalized ‘power’”.¹⁵ This aspect points to the intense wish and inner preparation involved in pilgrimage behaviour. It is a once-in-a-life experience associated with the five *arkān* of Islam. Even Muḥammad performed the full sacrifice of *al-aḡḡā* only once. Hence, Muslims are required to fulfil their religious obligations once in their lifetime if possible. According to recent practices, many wealthy Muslims undertake several pilgrimages during a lifetime, and also on behalf of either sick or deceased relatives.

The fourth category is such that, “sacrifice achieves separation from, or the removal of, such diffuse force or power”.¹⁶ These elements or categories are, according to Beattie, not mutually exclusive, but might be manifested in the same sacrificial complex.¹⁷ The pre-Islamic sacrifices do not become non-Islamic in virtue of being described in the terms used for the newer Islamic

12 Dawood 1994: 366.

13 *Al-Ahādīth al-qudsiyya*, 1–4, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 72–80. Thanks to Ulrika Mårtensson, Bernd Radtke and Richard Johan Natvig who wrote approximately this text in the committee report responding to my doctoral thesis (Ådna 2007).

14 Beattie 1980: 38.

15 Beattie 1980: 38.

16 Beattie 1980: 39.

17 Beattie 1980: 39.

rituals. Examples in the texts of Ibn al-Kalbī¹⁸ make use of words with Islamic connotations, such as *ḥajj*, *ʿumra*, *manāsik*, *tawāf*, *wuqūf*, *ihlāl*, and *talbiya*, in connection with the pre-Islamic sacrificial rituals. The Kaʿba is described as the centre of everything.¹⁹ According to Ibn al-Kalbī, even the ritual performed outside Mecca by persons who no longer lived there is “an imitation (*iqtidāʾ*)” of the Kaʿba rituals that must have been performed as late as in Muḥammad’s early manhood.²⁰

9.2 Sacrifice, ritual and efficacy in communication

Rituals change the reality of those who take part in them. These changes are not merely symbolic, but include real changes in certain ways. Rappaport emphasises the close link to the performance, showing a possible, but not a necessary, physical transformation.²¹ The sacrificial *practices* in an early (pre-) Islamic setting transformed those who performed the sacrifice. For instance, the gods and idols were satisfied without us knowing what had happened if the sacrifices were abrupted or even failed (Ibn al-Kalbī). Adam’s two sons offered sacrifices, one was accepted by fire (hence, by God), the other sacrifice was not acknowledged. The life of Ibrāhīm’s son was not taken and he became the originator of the monotheistic religion including Islam. The father of the Prophet survived his father’s initial intention of sacrificing his dearest son. Therefore, the Prophet was born and was chosen to set the Islamic religion going. The Prophet (and before him Abū Bakr) initiated the religious sacrificial rites in Mecca and therefore transformed a whole set of Islamic practices connected to the *ḥajj* and the *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, just to mention but a few examples from this study.

Referring to the efficacy of sacrifice,²² I will also mention the *performer* of the Islamic sacrifices who achieves *baraka*, ‘blessing’, *or* who fulfils a *nadhr*, ‘vow’, *or* who joins the community in a collective communion, *or* who fulfils his or her ritual duties by offering a sacrifice, and solemnly goes to the sacrificial place with his or her son, *or* sacrifices (*kaffara*) because of a failure in the prescribed pilgrimage ritual, *or* who sacrifices on behalf of his women or some other group of persons.

A pious Muslim can be an effective representative of many. More than *one* person can be blessed and ritually profit from one believer’s promise. The hair-

18 For example (Ibn al-Kalbī) Faris 1952: 4–5; cf. Atallah 1969: 3–4.

19 Wensinck (1916) emphasises this aspect in several ways in his interesting study of early Islamic texts on Mecca as the navel of the earth; cf. Wheeler 2010.

20 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 33–34. Cf. Chapter 4.

21 Rappaport 1999: 112–114.

22 Cavallin 2003. See also Pagolu 1998: 33ff.

and nailofferings that were made from Muḥammad's body show this to an infinite extent.²³ For instance, when being tested by Allāh, Ibrāhīm was answered with the magnificent and oft-repeated phrase, "Thus do we reward the good." The dutiful one had kept his word, almost comparable with how Allāh had kept his word. Therefore, the price imposed from above was a ransom, "a tremendous victim".²⁴ Obedience is thus placed at the forefront of commendable Islamic behaviour. According to Rappaport, this *doing* represents one part of the double flow of messages in all rituals, namely the *self-referential*, while the things that are *said* in connection with these actions constitute the *canonical* messages. The self-referential messages are shown through actions, while the canonical messages are realised through utterances.²⁵

The *efficacy* of the ritual is also closely associated with the *complexity* of the sacrificial process at all stages. The Islamic sacrifices are all bound up with their context. However, these contexts are *not* one and the same; nor is the place where Ibrāhīm was about to sacrifice his son necessarily located in Mecca or Mina, although some versions of this narrative place the incident in one of these locations. Q 108, which contains the order to *sacrifice*, makes no mention of where the sacrifice should take place. There is no implication that it has to be Mecca or Mina.

When William Graham writes that "we must take seriously the unity of faith and action, 'beliefs' and 'practices,' in Islam in a way that scholars before and especially since Robertson Smith have not been much inclined to"²⁶, I support his view, arguing that Rappaport strongly combines these two aspects, belief and practices, faith and rituals. Graham continues,

[S]uch ritual practice is a valid self-expression of Islam, a symbolic articulation of Muslim ideals and values, a kind of 'discourse' in which it should be possible to 'hear' the ways in which Islam as a way of living 'speaks' intelligibly and presumably eloquently to the Muslim.²⁷

To express this totality of a ritual life, Graham writes, "From the standpoint of penetration of all sectors of life by ritual or ritualized practices, Islam is arguably the most ritualistic of all traditions [...] in its vision of individual and

23 Cf. Wheeler 2010; and Meri 2010: 104.

24 Q 37:107a; al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 94 [I: 305–306].

25 Rappaport 1999: *inter alia* 52, 107, 328.

26 Graham (1983) 2010: (59) 355.

27 Graham (1983) 2010: (59) 355.

collective life as perpetual ‘ibāda.”²⁸ In the ‘*ibāda*, the Islamic ritual, the believer aims at communication with God, as addressed above.²⁹

Josef Drexler also emphasises the performer and characterises the actors in sacrificial rituals as “senders” and “receivers”.³⁰ These are terms taken from communication theory. Using his ideas, an observer – here, the researcher – has to trust the performer of the ritual, as to whether or not it is a *total* communication that influences the totality of senses and objects.³¹ In the context of this study, the researcher completely depends on and has no alternative to trusting the written sources and thus the integrated and sometimes personal reports by observers of different rituals. The authors of the written sources had, in their time, to trust oral testimonies and narratives. This chain has many weak links, but that does not change the fact that this is all we have.³² Hence, these authors as well as I myself have to show a basic attitude of *trust* in order to make interpretations of belief and of rituals *at that time*. Nobody can tell what would be the case if these sources were not what they have become. Communication over time involves interpretation, and analysis and communication about sacrifice is no exception in this respect.

In my material I have come across some situations where the intended sacrificial ritual did not unfold as intended. Ibrāhīm’s plan to sacrifice his son was not successful, neither was the sacrifice planned by ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. In spite of these “failures”, both narratives communicate the same message: obedience to Allāh is religiously praiseworthy, and willingness to perform such a hideous act is desired but stopped at the right point in time.

In the case of Muḥammad, there are no examples of failed sacrifices, but his wish to make the pilgrimage to Mecca before he actually did so in 10 AH resonates beneath the surface of the narratives that describe this episode. His former so-called smaller pilgrimages, ‘*umrāt*, do not amount to complete performances of the desired *ḥajj*, which includes killing of the *hady*. Of course, his other rituals at the Farewell Pilgrimage are evaluated as complete and acceptable, as were the rituals undertaken by Abū Bakr one year earlier, and

28 Graham (1983) 2010: (59) 355.

29 Marion Katz (2004) discusses extensively with Lazarus-Yafeh (1981b), Graham (1983) and Campo (1991) regarding ritual perspectives on the Islamic pilgrimage. She throws new light on historical and contemporary practices, especially on how rituals and some materials (f.ex. the Black Stone) have been interpreted in a symbolic way.

30 Drexler 1993: 168.

31 Drexler 1993: 171.

32 Hervieu-Léger ([1993] 2000) offers an interesting comment on the interruption or remaking of the chain of memory in European societies, especially France.

Muḥammad does not need to sacrifice any *kaffara* due to disorder or disruption of rituals.

In the words of Victor W. Turner, the Islamic state of *muḥrim* may be described as “betwixt and between”;³³ it is a liminal period after taking the *iḥrām* and before shaving or making the final circumambulation. The sacrifice during *hajj* is a part of that “betwixt and between”, but it does not represent a totality of its own and cannot operate in isolation; it needs its context and its practitioners.

In the Qur’ānic references to sacrifices there is a major ambiguity. In Q 108 we find the concise imperatives “pray” and “sacrifice!”, but, on the other hand, Q 22:36–37 leaves no doubt that piety (*taqwa*) is more desirable than any sacrifice and concludes that “their [the camels’] flesh and blood does not reach God”. When this is combined with the sentence, “Allāh does not love the treacherous and the thankless”, it should be obvious to the reader that sacrifice is hardly a satisfactory ritual for coming any closer to the transcendent One. Even so, in al-Ṭabarī’s versions of Ibrāhīm’s near-sacrifice, the latter is both pious and ready to sacrifice.³⁴ Allāh, the receiver of all rituals, is portrayed as highly sensitive concerning the manner in which these sacrifices are performed. Few if any failures are accepted without some sort of penalty and, subsequently, new sacrifices, the *kaffara*.³⁵

In al-Ṭabarī’s text there is an allegory in Sara’s words to the angel Jibrīl. “What is the sign of this matter?”, she asks. “Jibrīl then takes a piece of dry wood in his hand and bends it between his fingers, whereupon it quivers and turns green”,³⁶ as a sign of hope and of heirs even for the old lady Sara. Ibrāhīm’s answer is more difficult to grasp even if the reader has noticed the end of the story: “He is therefore a sacrifice to God.”³⁷ In the narrative about Ibrāhīm’s son, the father is the main actor but Sara is not at all peripheral. The narrative shows that the whole family or clan are influenced by such an action; the sacrificer (here, Sara) and sacrificer (here, Ibrāhīm) are linked together.

9.3 The sacrificer and the sacrificer

According to Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss,³⁸ the sacrificer, who gives away the sacrificial victim, and the sacrificer, who actually kills the victim, need to be

33 Turner (1964) 1979.

34 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 96–97 [I: 308–309].

35 Especially Mālik’s legalistic views are good examples of such an attitude in practice.

36 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 91–93 [I: 302–305].

37 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 91 [I: 302].

38 Hubert and Mauss (1898; 1964) 1981: 9–28.

distinguished in terms of role and status. John R. Bowen has shown this clearly in the context of the Muslim Gayo people at Sumatra.³⁹ In this Indonesian region, the sacrificer may well be a woman, but the sacrificer is mostly a male person except when she is allowed to slaughter the animal by a stone. Things were handled in this way also in the early Islamic context,⁴⁰ when the slaughter was not regarded to be a *ritual* one. Muḥammad, arranging the *ʿumra*, sacrificed on behalf of his women, he was the sacrificer; they were the sacrificers.

In the narratives that I have analysed the sacrificer is often the same as the sacrificer. And he is always a man – either Qābil or Ḥābil, Ibrāhīm, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Abū Bakr or Muḥammad. In those situations where the sacrificer is *not* the same person as the sacrificer, the sacrificer may be a woman. This is the case in the sacrifices mentioned by Mālik which must be undertaken in Mecca, either connected to the political treaties like Huḍaibiya, or as expiation after a ritual mistake (Q 2:196). In the case of pre-Islamic sacrifices, the person who performs the sacrifice is not presented as an individual, but only referred to according to the tribe.⁴¹ Alternatively, the texts operate with an anonymous plural subject, “they”, or let “all Arabs”⁴² or the inhabitants of Medina and Mecca appear as the sacrificers.⁴³ Al-Lāt, standing in the Thaqīf, was for instance worshipped by “the Quraysh and all the Arabs”, who named their children after her.⁴⁴ According to Ibn al-Kalbī, all the Quraysh served al-ʿUzzā through sacrifices⁴⁵ and pilgrimages, and there was an annual feast in her honour.⁴⁶ Even the Apostle of God “had offered a dust-coloured sheep to al-ʿUzzā”,⁴⁷ because during that period he was “a follower of the religion of the people”.⁴⁸ In some cases, the impersonal passive is used for the sacrificer.

The pilgrim, who is performing the *ḥajj*, is a *muḥrim*, and in this sacred state while sacrificing he is the sacrificer. He who offers the sacrifice should himself perform the deed, provided that he is familiar with the proper technique. Today it is considered acceptable if he is assisted by someone as long as he is present during the rite as in the case of Muḥammad at his last and only *ḥajj*. It is mostly improper, but “lawful if a Christian or a Jew slays the animal, but only by order

39 Bowen 1993: 273–288, 275.

40 Al-Bukhārī n.d. vol. 7: Book 67, 412. Narrated Kaʿb ibn Mālik.

41 (Ibn al-Kalbī) Faris 1952: 10–11, 14, 16, 23; Zakī 1924: 11–13, 16, 18, 27.

42 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13.

43 Faris 1952: 12; cf. Zakī 1924: 13.

44 Faris 1952: 14; cf. Zakī 1924: 16.

45 Faris 1952: 23; cf. Zakī 1924: 27.

46 Wellhausen 1897: 35.

47 Faris 1952: 17; cf. Zakī 1924: 19.

48 Faris 1952: 16–17; cf. Zakī 1924: 19.

of the sacrificer”.⁴⁹ Regarding the share of the sacrificial animals during *ḥajj*, it is comprehensible that a group of seven persons mostly constitute a unit.⁵⁰ As mentioned above, the sacrificer and the sacrificer are often one and the same person. They will, however, predominantly be representatives of a larger community.

9.4 Sanctified expressions

I will now address the field that I, in accordance with Roy A. Rappaport, have called “sanctified expressions”.⁵¹ Hence, my question is: Are vows and promises similar to for instance the prescribed prayer *labbayka* that is uttered in the beginning of the *ḥajj*? In what ways do the *labbayka* and the initial attitude *ihlāl* constitute the *ḥajj* ritual, in general, and the sacrificial part of it in Mina, in particular? It seems that the *labbayka* and the *ihlāl* are predecessors of the later *niyya* that is regarded as absolutely constitutive for the *ḥajj*.

Rappaport maintains that the performers are actually *performing* their rituals with their body and mind, not merely expressing their belief through words, but emphasising them through vows and promises in a clear bodily frame.⁵² These general observations are clearly applicable to the Islamic way of performing and expressing, for instance, *ṣalat*, the prayer, with body and soul. Hence, sanctified expressions are central in Islam, but intentionality and bodily activity that “surround” these expressions, are also important.

Rappaport has systematised the sanctified expressions in fourteen different groups.⁵³ These expressions are not only short confessional sayings or dogmatic statements, but they include also narratives and cosmological myths. I find Rappaport’s categories of sanctified expressions a helpful tool in the analysis of the system of (early) Islamic terms, narratives and human attitude(s), and in the following table I will try to relate pertinent examples from early Islam to each of the groups in Rappaport’s system of sanctified expressions.

49 Brooke 1987: 70; cf. Siddiqui 2012: 73–82.

50 Mālik 1982: 23, 5, 9.

51 See Lundager Jensen (2003: 71–77, 72) who presents the main topics in Rappaport’s work from 1999, and underlines that Rappaport builds on Robertson Smith’s observations that the rituals within a religion are quite stable whereas the *interpretation* done by the performers differs extensively.

52 Rappaport 1999: 146–147; Lundager Jensen 2003: 73, 75–76.

53 Rappaport 1999: 320–321.

Rappaport's fourteen groups of sanctified expressions ⁵⁴	Examples from early Islam
1. Myths (which may be highly sanctified, if not ultimately sacred)	The narratives about ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Ibrāhīm and their respective sons belong here.
2. Cosmological axioms (which may be implicit in myth or ritual)	Mecca as well as Adam and Hava were from the beginning; they constitute the cosmological centre of the Islamic world, and, thus, the centre and its religious validity is emphasised.
3. Rules ordaining ritual performances and constituting taboos	The Islamic narratives say that the rules for the <i>ḥajj</i> are uttered in the Farewell Pilgrimage. ⁵⁵ The taboos connected to the status of <i>iḥrām</i> are related to ritual purity. ⁵⁶
4. Socially transforming factive acts and utterances (e.g. rites of passage)	These are rituals and sayings that change the social status of the performer. The pilgrimage ritual as a whole transforms and changes a person's status; he and she become a <i>ḥajji</i> , respectively a <i>ḥajja</i> . Sacrifices other than those connected to <i>ḥajj</i> and the connecting narratives show a closer connection to change. ⁵⁷
5. Privileged exegeses	Islamic theologians and lawyers have defined the Islamic teaching throughout all times. For example, the biographer al-Wāqidi seems to have an agenda of verifying and explaining Muḥammad's life and mission, <i>al-maghāzī</i> .
6. Prophecies, auguries, divinations and	ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib's oracle and the

54 Rappaport 1999: 320–321. The complete text in the left column is taken directly from Rappaport.

55 These written utterances are most probably of later origin; see Ādna 2001, and also al-Ṭabarī's utterances about the not-yet-finished *ḥajj*-regulations.

56 See Douglas 1966.

57 See Bonte (1999: 125–195, especially 179–181) who shows that “[é]léments du système sacrificiel traditionnel en Kabylie”, to which belong nature, agriculture, the Muslim calendar, the cycle of life and other sacrificial occasions, are presented within the frame of rites of passage theory in the tradition after Turner and van Gennep.

oracles	complete narrative, as well as the narrative about Ibrāhīm and the near-sacrifice of his son where a dream or a vision underlines his prophetic call.
7. Acts and utterances mobilizing occult efficacy to achieve physical effects	The idea of <i>baraka</i> and similar mental impressions, which are close to the efficacy of (occult) experiences, are found also in early Islamic sayings (cf. Q 113). The sayings of <i>labbayka</i> and <i>iḥlāl</i> may fit into these effective elements of sacrifice in the context of <i>ḥajj</i> .
8. Social directives (including commandments, rules, homilies, proverbs and perhaps other forms)	The idea of dividing the sacrificial meat into three portions must be one of the essential ideas. <i>ʿĪd al-fitr</i> and <i>ʿīd al-aḍḥā</i> show social concern for the poor and the needy, an idea already clearly documented in pre-Islamic heritage according to Ibn al-Kalbī's text.
9. Taxonomies and other forms which, although not cast in the imperative mood, may define rank and organize thought, and thus may direct action	The aspect of ethical directives is essential for Islam. The idea of <i>iḥrām</i> is likely to be the primary religious idea by showing that all Muslims are in the same position regarding the relation to Allāh. Nevertheless, the texts (especially those by al-Wāqidī and al-Ṭabarī) show that there is a human hierarchy ranging.
10. Expressions establishing authorities	In Islam the authoritative and ideological voice are the expressions from Muḥammad's Farewell <i>ḥajj</i> . The guidelines given by the transmitters of <i>ḥadīth</i> (Mālik ibn Anas and others), and found in the <i>manāsik</i> , are important. Hence, the Prophet's <i>sunna</i> developed correspondingly.
11. The directives of sanctified authorities	This includes not only the regulations (<i>manāsik</i>) about <i>ḥajj</i> and sacrifice, but also the directives formulated in early

	narratives. Today, there are many guidelines, written and oral, conducting the pilgrims' practice and experiences in the holy places.
12. Testimony	The testimony that the pilgrims utter at their return home after the <i>ḥajj</i> must be mentioned here. To consider <i>labbayka</i> as a testimony of commitment in the ritual itself is even more appropriate. Additionally, there is an obvious way of witnessing when someone wears the <i>iḥrām</i> clothing. "The whole world" sees the unity of the <i>umma</i> , according to the Islamic self-testimony.
13. Commissives	These are utterances that give someone a special task. In my selection of texts, there are several transmissions of certain materials to people, which obviously are understood as possible chains of sayings and rituals. We may add that anthropological and religious studies like those of Lazarus-Yafeh (1978 and 1981a and b), Graham (1983), Combs-Schilling (1989), Rashed (1998), Bonte (1999) and Katz (2004) show that the transmissive and changing elements with regard to sacrificial rituals linked to the <i>ʿīd al-adḥā</i> have not decreased today.
14. Ritually transmitted self-referential information (which may also be indexically signalled)	This issue is especially important for contemporary anthropological studies. Still, one of many aims within <i>this</i> text study, has been to throw light on the variety of written and orally transmitted <i>manāsik</i> and <i>ʿibadāt</i> for the rituals. Whether obligatory or not, the texts presented here, are examples of this diversity that guide Muslims until today.

9.5 Ultimate Sacred Concern and Postulates

The Islamic sacrifice is a fulfilment of the order given by Allāh's prophets Adam (and his sons) and his descendants Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad. The latter two are separated from each other by the threatening symbol of the near-sacrifice of Ibrāhīm's son and of the man who would become Muḥammad's father, ʿAbd Allāh. All these persons take important positions in the divine chain from Adam to Muḥammad. The sacrifice was to be the everlasting symbol of obedience and willingness for the sake of the whole community and the chosen people, and especially the chosen prophet, Muḥammad. The latter's tribe, the Quraysh, were included in this context; Muḥammad and later Muslims were seen as a single community, namely the *umma*. Consequently, the chosen city of Mecca with its suburb of Mina and their holy sites are included in the sacred area, with some exceptions explained above.

The cosmological structures (axioms) of Islam are found in the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*, and expressed in depth in other literary works of early Islam. These words and sayings are of divine origin and are hardly questioned by Muslims. The main Ultimate Sacred Postulate of Islam is the universally spoken creed that Allāh is One (*tawḥīd*). Allāh is different from all human beings and from all created and non-created material, but at the same time not remote from any of them. The Qurʾān (50:16) states, "We have indeed created man, and We know what his soul insinuates to him, for We are closer to him than his jugular vein."

By performing the *ḥajj* rituals Muslims encounter the divine will as manifested in the cosmological systems and by the divine *being*, whose secrets are partly known to His followers through the certainty they have got from and through the Ultimate Sacred Postulates (by means of the rituals). The bodily and spiritual rituals materialise the divine's purpose to its followers. From here follows the idea that divine and mundane time are interwoven and that earthly and heavenly space merge in the place where the rituals are celebrated.⁵⁸ The distinction between mundane time and sacred time is, consequently, of great importance in Islam. These temporal aspects are not necessarily defined as separate, but as complementary parts that strongly influence each other.

Rappaport has defined ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers".⁵⁹ This rather open definition leaves a complex task to the performer, namely, to discover the depths of his or her ritual. The possibility of

58 The idea found in al-Ṭabarī and the *Qissa al-anbiya*², that Mecca, ʿArafāt and Mina have existed throughout eternity, is essential to many of the *ḥajj* rituals. Cf. Wheeler 2006.

59 Rappaport 1999: 24; also 169.

a content within the participants' acts that is initially undiscovered by the participant, or at least not consciously present to him or her, is of great interest in the context of Islamic rituals and sacrifice. One may ask whether everything is not already known to the Muslim participants of the *hajj*. The answer to this question would be a negation on the basis of Rappaport's ideas; there is more to be discovered, not only for the academics who research early Islam but also for the pilgrims themselves.

9.6 Community and communion

Reuven Firestone wants to throw light on the meaning of Q 22:37, and explains why there was a change from pre-Islamic to Islamic ritual practices regarding the communal meal after the sacrifice. He states that "because this ritual act of eating a communal meal represented a change from a system in which sacrificial offerings were left for the gods, the section concludes with the statement (Q 22:37): 'Neither their flesh nor their blood will reach God, but your religious devotion will reach him.'"⁶⁰ Firestone might have detected a certain change, but the existence of a notion of communal sharing and eating after sacrifice also in the pre-Islamic era points to a continuity of the sacrificial meal, even if the meat was no longer given to the idols but only for human consumption. Ibn al-Kalbī deals with the subject of "sacrificial meat" twice. First, he writes, "It was customary to divide the flesh of the sacrifice among those who had offered it and among those present",⁶¹ and, second, he quotes from a poem, "And they divided its sacrificial meat among those who were present",⁶² using the same terms as in the first example. This may well be coloured by later Islamic ideas, but, nevertheless, this is what we have to relate to.

Influenced by William Robertson Smith (1885), Émile Durkheim (1912), who wrote about the so-called "positive cult" and its sacrificial rituals confirming religious fellowship, emphasises the idea of community and sacrifice.⁶³ Further, Bruce Chilton writes, "Sacrifice is a feast with the gods, in which life as it should be—chosen and prepared correctly—is taken in order to produce life as it ought to be."⁶⁴ Hence, the only communal and sacrificial meal

60 Firestone 2004: 517.

61 Faris 1952: 18; cf. Zakī 1924: 20.

62 My translation, which is closer to that of Atallah. Faris' translation includes many alterations that I shall not comment on here (see Faris 1952: 18; cf. Zakī 1924: 20; Atallah 1969: 15). Faris finishes his translation with "because his portion was foul", for which I can find no support in the original.

63 Durkheim (1912) 1995: 330–354 (the whole chapter) and especially 341 and 347.

64 Chilton 1992: 41.

is concentrated around animal meat that is divided and shared with the “poor” as a righteous ethical gesture in response to divine command.

9.7 Hierarchy, simultaneity and Muḥammad’s role

Muḥammad sanctified the sacrificial animals “with his own hands” and put his identifying symbol on them. They were “sanctified” by him, or were they not? At least, in the minds of the readers and on-lookers he was regarded as the one who confirmed the validity of the whole ritual. The animals that soon were to be sacrificed at the pilgrimage, and the human beings who were in and without *iḥrām*, were sanctified through the fixed rituals and *not* by Muḥammad himself.

Arnold van Gennep has shown that the order of the ritual is important. This leads to transformations in the actor’s social relations, he maintains.⁶⁵ Rappaport emphasises even stronger than van Gennep “the construction of time” and aspects regarding space (“spatial time”). It is obvious that those aspects of rituals and time connected to Muḥammad’s first and last *ḥajj* “can and do organize, or even construct socially the temporal orders of [...] societies”.⁶⁶ This very ritual makes “a place for eternity as well for mundane time”.⁶⁷

As stated above, in Rappaport’s terminology “liturgical order” does not refer to individual rituals only, but to “the more or less invariant sequences of rituals that make up cycles and other series as well”.⁶⁸ Hence, the idea of simultaneity captures aspects that are different from those revealed by hierarchies.⁶⁹ In attempting to interpret the Islamic rituals and sacrifices (*ʿibadāt* and *manāsik*) in terms of the system underlying its liturgical order, it should be noted that this system includes the aspects of time, the month of *dhū l-ḥijja*, and place, Mecca and all the places where Muslims sacrifice and commemorate. I would even maintain that the pre-Islamic narratives about rituals like sacrifices and pilgrimages have created the basis for the liturgical order that has been developed in Islam itself. They occurred *before* the Prophet’s coming but they are integrated *into* his biography and re-interpreted into the Islamic structure of life, *in* his commitment and heritage to his followers.

This means that the celebration in Cairo is no less important for the participants than it is in Mecca. We do not know, however, how long this celebration has been going on, for instance in Cairo. In his research on the

65 Van Gennep 1909; 1960.

66 Rappaport 1999: 175.

67 Rappaport 1999: 175.

68 Rappaport 1999: 169. This opinion is opposed to van Gennep, who uses this term of liturgical order more individually. See van Gennep (1909) 1960.

69 Cf. Rappaport 1999: 263–265.

development of Egyptian *ʿīd al-aḏḥā*, Mohammed Rashed notes that early textual witnesses about the celebrations have not been found, probably due to the fact that the rituals of *ʿīd al-aḏḥā* and *ʿīd al-ḥajj* originated with the Prophet and were not to be questioned.⁷⁰ Interestingly, Rashed maintains that these celebrations were not inaugurated based on divine revelation, but were a product of the second year AH and are possibly rooted in pre-Islamic ideas among the Arabs. “They were evaluated as *sunna* by the Prophet, hence, their legitimation.”⁷¹ Rashed, however, considers that *ahādīth* by Ibn al-Ḥanbal and al-Nasāʿī understand the Prophet to have replaced two (ordinary) festival days with these two special days of celebration.⁷² One interesting point made by Rashed, that deserves to be taken into account although it is not found in my material, is that the *ʿīd al-aḏḥā* may have a root in a certain Jewish commemoration of Ibrāhīm and his willingness to sacrifice his son.⁷³ Muḥammad may have combined this celebration with the pre-Islamic Meccan feast after the Arabic and pre-Islamic *ḥajj*.

When it comes to the hierarchy of meanings, rituals are predictable.⁷⁴ What does this mean for the *muḥrim*? It is possible for him to change a bad fate into a better one by performing *ḥajj*, either for himself or his close relatives.⁷⁵ Mundane understanding must be left behind, since the Ultimate Sacred Postulates concerning Mecca cannot be grasped in all their complexity by the human mind. Questions are seldom uttered, if ever.⁷⁶ By reciting the Ultimate Sacred Postulates and acting accordingly, one shows that one belongs to a certain group. The most explicit result of the pilgrimage rituals and their hierarchies is that they separate *cosmos* from *chaos*. They represent conformity and impose directives and fixed sequences. The form of the fixed ritual is the right canon; and the orthodox creed that there is only one God is the idea of *cosmos* in Islam. The alternatives represent chaos, for instance *shirk* or *kufr* (‘infidelity’). The rituals create cosmos, and ritual participation will thus recreate it.⁷⁷ Rappaport maintains “that space is more capacious than any one

70 Rashed (1998: 19) refers to a study made in 1991 by Laila Nabhan.

71 Rashed 1998: 20; *my translation*.

72 Rashed 1998: 20, 22.

73 Rashed 1998: 24; Wellhausen 1897: 98f.

74 Rappaport 1999: 286–287; Wallace 1966: 238.

75 An increasingly common practice. Thus, many rich Egyptians and Europeans, for instance, perform *ḥajj* many times; other poorer people with less initiative are never admitted.

76 As mentioned by Rappaport (1999: 288), who gives examples from different religions and cultures.

77 Cf. Rappaport 1999: 154.

person's mind".⁷⁸ The ritual reduces the distance between the mundane and the sacred world. The utterances, the prayers, the dreams and expectations all build a bridge from one side to the other, also from Cairo to Mecca and back again.

9.8 Rituals make the human being human; the ritual of *hajj*, including sacrifice, confirms the Muslim as a Muslim

The performer of rituals becomes more "natural" through his rituals according to Rappaport.⁷⁹ This is very true regarding Islam.⁸⁰ One could also say, he or she becomes more human and their intentions and practices more ethically accountable. One of the most important goals of sacrificial activity, a pious attitude, is mentioned in Q 22:35: those who surrender are described as those "whose hearts are filled with awe at the mention of God; who endure adversity with fortitude, attend to their prayers, and bestow in charity (*yunfiqūna*) of that which We have given them".⁸¹

The celebrations of the Islamic *hajj* through the ages have included ethical regulations of many kinds. At all places people meet face to face and are challenged by the regulations ordered in the written and the oral law. Traditions and unspoken expectations are also an important part of the less central rituals and sacrifices.⁸² Taboos are defined as "sanctified proscriptions of physically feasible activity".⁸³ What taboos exist for the pilgrims and the performers at the sacrificial feast? Some are mentioned in Mālik's texts and have to do with gender and the health of the sacrificial animals.⁸⁴ Other taboos and/or blessings have been connected to hair- and nail-sacrifices.⁸⁵ The above remarks are illustrated in the following order of goals:

78 Rappaport 1999: 214–215.

79 Rappaport 1999: 405.

80 Al-Faruqi 1998: 138.

81 Dawood 1994: 237. Cf. *yunfiqūna* from the root *n-f-q*, fourth derivation, which means 'to support' and is used for the Islamic offering of a charitable gift (*nafaqa*).

82 For instance, blood and finger paintings in blood on the walls after the slaughtering. This represents the *baraka*, that is, the blessings for the old, the children and the sick.

83 Rappaport 1999: 208.

84 Mālik 1982: *inter alia* 24, 3, 7.

85 Cf. Wheeler (2006 and 2010) and Meri (2010) who are both occupied with the role of the Prophet's body and clothings. See also Lybarger (2008) who convincingly shows how Adam became of explanatory and didactic importance for Islamic rituals. However, no direct adoration of Adam's relics seems to have taken place, even if his burial place under the Ka'ba is often mentioned by those who wrote the *Stories of the*

Rappaport's order of goals	Rappaport's ordering system applied to the Islamic <i>hajj</i> and some other sacrifices
1. Ultimate goal	Acknowledging the one and only Allāh (<i>shahāda</i>).
2. Specific goal(s)	Following one of the five <i>rukṇ</i> , the <i>hajj</i> , commanded by the <i>sunna</i> .
3. Instrumental and purposeful formal action	State of <i>ihrām</i> ; the utterance of <i>labbayka</i> , <i>takbīr</i> and <i>bismillāh</i> .
4. Stimuli to action	Walking, standing, running, praying, "fellowshipping", sacrificing, eating, shaving, returning home as the <i>hajji</i> or the <i>hajja</i> .

Rappaport says that "liturgies also import understandings of the external world in the form of formal indices of prevailing conditions". This means that "these importations form a fourth level in 'hierarchies of understandings'",⁸⁶ thus forming a bridge between the liturgy and the intellectual understanding of it, which might be used to enlighten the Islamic emphasis on holding to orthopraxy regardless of possible changes and altered conditions.

There is a certain hierarchy of persons⁸⁷ in the Islamic order of sacrifice. But is it possible to say who represents or constitutes the senior authority in the Islamic sacrificial rituals? In all sacrificial contexts, Allāh is first instance of authority, and the *sunna* of Muḥammad seems to be second. The sacrificial ritual itself is not performed by any "priest" or ritually selected person, although Ibrāhīm in this sense is a chosen prophet and different from most other people. Muḥammad's grandfather was a "common" man but became the father of the "chosen" prophet. The performers are mostly "common" people but in a sanctified status as *muḥrim*. The slaughterer is a male in all the reports. In Mecca the sacrificer is the father or some other responsible person from any particular group of pilgrims. Simultaneously, the way *ʿid al-aḍḥā* is performed outside the Arabian peninsula, the slaughtering takes place in homes, most often performed by the father or the oldest son, although he is not like a *muḥrim* in

Prophets, and Adam's beard and hair were characterised as especially beautiful. Cf. Kister (1993: 139) referred in Lybarger (2008: 528).

86 Rappaport 1999: 266.

87 See Bashear (1997: 7–23) on Bedouins and Non-Arabs; and (1997: 67) quoting and agreeing with Goldzieher: "The Muslim teaching of the equality of all men in Islam remained a dead letter for a long time, never realised in the consciousness of Arabs and roundly denied in their day-to-day behaviour."

ihrām. Most common, nowadays, are however, the professional slaughterers from the slaughterhouses.⁸⁸

9.9 The sacred place

Mircea Eliade, who was one of the leading scholars to emphasise the “sacred place” and its role for pilgrimages and sanctified visitations,⁸⁹ has reminded us of the term “the navel of the earth”, the *axis mundi*. This term perfectly enables to express the notion of Mecca as this very place in the midst of the world, according to early Islamic texts.⁹⁰ Rappaport, however, comments that Eliade in general “overemphasized the significance of centers”,⁹¹ and in particular he questions Eliade’s underlining of space in the religious experience.⁹² Hence, Eliade’s parallel idea about the temple as *imago mundi*⁹³ does not accord as closely with the corresponding Islamic idea of the building and history of the Ka’ba as his idea of the “sacred place” was consistent with the notion of Mecca in Islam. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that the notion of centrality is transmitted in the narratives about Adam and Hava, about Ibrāhīm and the pre-Islamic tribes coming to Mecca, and about ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Muḥammad performing their rituals within the borders of Mecca. Especially the narrative about Ibrāhīm communicates to the reader and listener the understanding that not only the place, but also the rituals presented in the narrative are essential and formative to the rituals of the Islamic *ḥajj*. Hence, Eliade’s words could be applied to the Islamic sacrifice, when he states that “[e]very creation repeats the

88 See Benkheira (2000) for updated practices on animal slaughter.

89 Eliade (1949, 1959) 1996.

90 Already in 1916, A.J. Wensinck wrote an interesting thesis entitled *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth*. He analyses texts from the Jewish and Muslim traditions about Jerusalem and Mecca emphasising the similarity between the two but also different developments regarding “The Navel and Mountains”, “The Navel and the Sanctuary”, “The Navel and the Universe”, “The Navel and the Earth”, “The Navel and Heaven”, “The Navel of Heaven”, “The Navel and the Universe” “The Navel and the Throne”, “The Navel and the Nether World”, and “The Navel and the Serpent” (these are the chapters in his book). Nowhere Wensinck combines these metaphors with the pre-Islamic or Islamic sacrifices in Mecca. Twice however (1916: 34 and 46–47), he mentions Rgvedian notions of sacrifice and their altars, i.e. “The ‘womb of cosmic order’ is used as a synonymous expression to the ‘place of sacrifice’, [...] often called ‘the navel of the earth’” (34). In other words, Wensinck’s views support my general point of view. Cf. Wheeler’s study from 2006.

91 Rappaport 1995: 210.

92 Rappaport 1995: 209–210.

93 Eliade ([1949] 1959) 1996: 196.

pre-eminent cosmogonic act, the Creation of the world”.⁹⁴ In the Islamic example, it is not the creation of the *world*, but the ever on-going re-creation of the annual *pilgrimage* to this centre that is repeated, and it may perhaps be described as “a re-enactment of the primordial covenant”.⁹⁵ We remember that Ibn al-Kalbī wrote that the pre-Islamic rituals were “an imitation (*al-iqtidāʿ*) of what they did at the Kaʿba”,⁹⁶ and thus of the rituals in Mecca. Likewise, Ibrāhīm is only imitating the rituals of the angels.⁹⁷ The model of the Islamic rituals, which Eliade refers to,⁹⁸ is according to the *ḥadīth* tradition the rituals of the heavenly beings.

9.10 Partial or complete sanctification?

According to Rappaport, the self-referential messages express something about the participants. The messages consist of three levels, which are characterised as orders of meaning that are “low” (referring to distinction), “middle” (referring to similarities) and “high” (referring to identity).⁹⁹ These orders can be distinguished but not separated.¹⁰⁰ Possibly, one could call these messages “sanctified”.

Like Rappaport, M. Elaine Combs-Schilling takes different levels corresponding to distinctions, similarities and identity into consideration in the explanation of the content of contemporary Moroccan sacrificial and dramatic rituals connected with *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*. She maintains that “sacrifice is much more physically active than is gift giving and [...] an active attempt at intercourse with the sacred”.¹⁰¹ Further, she concludes that the purpose “is to secure enduring connection” to the sacred, and “if possible to secure birth into it”. Applying anthropological terms, she continues:

94 Eliade ([1949] 1959) 1996: 197. Cf. Wensinck (1916: 54–58) who presents many early Islamic references to the issue of “throne in the sanctuary” as “the image of the divine throne” (55); “the worship of the angels around the throne is the prototype of the worship of man around the navel” (57); and “the throne is the pole of the universe, the highest situated of several navels. [...] the throne is the image of the universe” (57).

95 Mårtensson 2005: 313, footnote 98.

96 Faris 1952: 29; cf. Zakī 1924: 33–34. Eliade (1949, 1959) 1996: 195.

97 Al-Ṭabarī 1989, vol. 1: 294–295 [I: 123–124]. The angels performed these rituals even 2000 years before Adam was born; cf. al-Yaʿqūbī 1960, vol. 1: 3.

98 Eliade ([1949] 1959) 1996: 198.

99 Rappaport 1999: 73.

100 Rappaport 1999: 73.

101 Combs-Schilling 1989: 242–243.

Sacrifice not only mimics male-female intercourse, it also mimics female birthgiving, the dramatic and forceful action involving high drama and pain in which new life emerges. The resultant beings themselves are similar. The bleeding ram and the newborn infant are both covered in white—white tufts of wool on the ram, curdlike white vernix on the infant. Both lie in fetal positions and quiver in pools of blood.¹⁰²

To compare the near-sacrifices of Ibrāhīm and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭallib with the practices in today’s Morocco might be risky, but Combs-Schilling’s notion of symbols and words fits well with the examples discussed in Q 37:99–113 and 108, where the blessings of a sacrifice are connected to a fear of loss or to an expectation for future children *and* pious believers. “Both represent hope, the ram representing hope beyond the limits of this world, the infant representing hope within it. In both cases the most lasting kind of hope is male—the male ram, the male child.”¹⁰³

Sacrifice as “gift”, “communion”, and “communication” was discussed to some extent in Chapter 2, but I find it difficult to give priority to one interpretation at the expense of the others with regard to Islamic sacrifices. Like Combs-Schilling and Rappaport I would rather point to the *hierarchy of subjectivity* but also to that of *integration*. Because the ranges of self-referential messages are transmitted through participation,¹⁰⁴ and “self-referential messages are sanctified, which is to say certified, through their association with the highly invariant canonical stream”,¹⁰⁵ the Islamic sacrifice is both a gift, a communal meal and to some extent a way of saying, “I am sorry for my inadequate or failed ritual, and I slaughter a ram instead.” Hubert and Mauss explicitly talk of *sacrifice* as “destroyed” victims and rituals “where blood is shed”,¹⁰⁶ and this is the essence of Islamic sacrifice.

All kinds of sacrifice take place in a communal context. The individual attitude is important but the total fellowship – while sacrificing and, in some cases, with the spiritual heirs or physical children surrounding the individual – is essential. Therefore, the Islamic sacrifice is understood as a bodily activity performed in a ritual way, expressing obedience towards the transcendent being called Allāh, who is not to be discussed or doubted by his followers.

The emphasis on signing the animals has, however, been pointed out earlier. Muḥammad marked as many as one hundred animals with his own hands during

102 Combs-Schilling 1989: 243.

103 Combs-Schilling 1989: 243.

104 Rappaport 1999: 83.

105 Rappaport 1999: 329. See later the status of *iḥrām* and the clothes that are significant as part of this behaviour.

106 Hubert and Mauss (1898) 1964: 12.

his *hajj* to Mecca.¹⁰⁷ The signed and garlanded camel is more valuable than a non-decorated camel. When decorated it becomes the *intended* sacrificial animal; it is efficient for sacrificial use; it is sanctified.

Furthermore, the persons who send the animals away (the *sacrifiers*, according to Hubert and Mauss)¹⁰⁸ are sanctified through the animals' new status and by their own decision and through their vow. I have shown that the animal garlands are comparable to sacred bonds between the man who intends to sacrifice an animal and the sacred place, Mecca. It gives the impression of garlands extending the grounds of *iḥrām*. These signs, *shī'ār al-ḥajj*, include all "the religious rites and ceremonies of the pilgrimage".¹⁰⁹ Thus, the term *shī'ār al-ḥajj* may indicate the different practices of the pilgrimage and whatever is appointed as a sign of obedience to Allāh and the military signs that al-Wāqidi has in mind when he categorises the *hajj* as *al-maghāzī*.¹¹⁰ These signs are supported by the cries *taḥlīl*¹¹¹ and *talbiya*, and form a highly important part of the "double messages" that join the rituals themselves.

9.11 The obedient believer

Is joining the prescribed rituals in a Muslim context necessarily *a belief*? Simply by being present in Mecca (where non-Muslims are not accepted), the pilgrim makes a public statement not only to himself and to his fellow believers, who are pilgrims as well, but also to those engaged in all kinds of service institutions, like hostels, restaurants and guide groups. Further, the pilgrim figures in annual reports, which subsequently become known to the wider world, showing the exact numbers of citizens of different countries present.

Rappaport has presented the idea of placing "ritual over belief, form over content",¹¹² saying that "liturgical orders, even those performed in solitude, are *public* orders and participation in them constitutes an acceptance of a public order *regardless* of the private state of the belief of the performer".¹¹³ Applied to the Islamic rituals of sacrifice, this implies that they are all public, even if some parts of them seem to be more intentional in kind, such as the decision to leave for *hajj* or making a *kaffara* to compensate for an (invisible) error.

107 Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) 2000. vol. 4: 161–162.

108 Hubert and Mauss (1898; 1964) 1981: ix and 20.

109 Fahd 1997: 424.

110 Wehr 1980: 673.

111 Fahd 1997: 424.

112 Lambek 2001: 248.

113 Rappaport 1999: 121.

All *fiqh* books start with “the presentation of the norms of liturgical duties (*ʿibadāt*).”¹¹⁴ But according to Baber Johansen, none of them includes a discussion of the “testimony of belief” (*shahāda*). Although I have not analysed *fiqh* books, I find the following exposition, taken from Johansen, enlightening for my material:

Though one could argue that a declaration of belief is an observable act and, for that reason, subject to the legal and ethical norms of *fiqh*, the *fuqahāʾ* obviously do not share this reasoning. They do not treat the “testimony of belief” (*shahāda*) as an object of legal norms. It stands to reason that they exclude it from the realm of *fiqh* because it refers to the intellectual and psychological acts of belief, which form part of the “interior” (*bāṭin*) aspects of the human being and are not accessible through the control of the “exterior” behaviour (*ẓāhir*). The norms of the *fiqh* serve exclusively to regulate the exterior aspects of the human acts. The *fiqh* is a religious discipline: it claims to derive its norms from the texts of the revelation but its legal norms apply to the liturgical acts only insofar as observable acts and enunciations are concerned. The *fiqh* punishes by death or other penalties those individuals who do not perform their liturgical acts or refuse to recognize them as obligatory but it does not inquire into their belief.¹¹⁵

Hence, it is clear that Johansen has found a separation between belief, as *internal*, and ritual, as *external*, in his material. Rappaport, however, maintains that despite the apparently superficial division between ritual and belief, the believer nevertheless constantly gives expression to both, performing ritual and manifesting belief while confessing it. Therefore, I will add that my material, from the Qurʾān to al-Ṭabarī, shows that intentions (but not yet called *niyya* as in later texts) seem to be central to the understanding of different levels of the actual sacrificial ritual. These intentions are not to be separated from the ritual itself.

My material does not present any particular emphasis on psychological issues. Further, one might argue that Rappaport’s ritual theories originated in an anthropological context and that they for this reason are less applicable to early Islamic texts. Without knowing anything *more* than what the texts tell us, it is possible and even interesting to identify theological tensions, great diversity and occasionally diverting ritual practices in the light of Rappaport’s and, for instance, Combs-Schilling’s ideas. These different angles may at least throw light on possibly new interpretations and produce some surprising results.

114 Johansen 1999: 35.

115 Johansen 1999: 35.

9.12 Muḥammad's authority and example; he is the son of the two sacrifices

The early Muslim authors confirm that Muḥammad was elected by Allāh to be a prophet. He was provided with an appropriate sacred biography, even if the Qur'ān emphasises his status as an ordinary human being. The concept of purity and sinlessness called *ʿiṣma*¹¹⁶ became a key element in the different genres of Islamic literature that openly object to the Qur'ānic portrayal of Muḥammad as a person who developed an increasingly important role by obeying God's call (Q 94:1–8). In Q 93:7 and 94:2 it is written that Muḥammad was guided (in the way of righteousness),¹¹⁷ but this was rejected by later compilers, by canonical *ḥadīth* and later *tafsīr*. Uri Rubin maintains that, regarding the sacrificial rituals in *jāhiliyya*, Muḥammad's status is unclear and that the descriptions of him in the early literature show great variations. These rituals were evaluated as belonging to the ungodly pre-Islamic period and were consequently often ignored by the authors of his biographies.

According to my own findings, and to a certain extent in disagreement with Rubin's critical position, some early Islamic authors did in fact mention these stories, which were passed down from al-Wāqidi.¹¹⁸ I have also found such reports in Ibn al-Kalbī: "The Apostle of God says that he had offered 'a dust-coloured sheep to al-ʿUzzā'."¹¹⁹ Ibn al-Kalbī answers the imaginative reader who might feel provoked by this information, that during that period the prophet was "a follower of the religion of the people (*ʿalā dīn qawmī*)".¹²⁰ Implicitly, the author transmits the notion that Muḥammad had *not always* been a follower of Islam.

Some reports state that Muḥammad stopped sacrificing to the pre-Islamic idols in Mecca; he changed his habits according to the new teaching. Especially Ibn Saʿd transmits narratives about Muḥammad and his Quraysh people sacrificing to idols in Mecca and continuing their rituals day and night. He said that Abd al-Muṭṭalib was present at the festivals for his people (*al-ʿīd maʿa qawmihi*), but that Muḥammad refused to take part. Even although his grandfather became angry with him, Muḥammad remained steadfast and

116 Cf. Brown (1996: 60–61), who shows that the sinlessness of the prophet makes more sense in a *Shiʿite* than in a *Sunnī* context because they [the *Shiʿites*] developed ideas about a "charismatic human authority". See also Rubin 1995: 95–96 and Wheeler 2010.

117 Cf. Rubin 1995: 76; 95–96.

118 Rubin 1995: 85–89.

119 Faris 1952: 17; Zakī 1924: 19.

120 Faris 1952: 16–17; Zakī 1924: 19.

withdrew from the idols. According to Ibn Saʿd, the weakness of the idol was that it was formed like a human being; “it was white and tall”.¹²¹ Muḥammad also learnt from Zayd ibn ʿAmr that sacrificing to the idols was forbidden.¹²² Ibn Saʿd reports that the prophet said, “I do not serve stones and I do not pray to them and do not sacrifice to them (*wa-lā adhbaḥu lahu*) and do not eat from that which was sacrificed to them (*wa-lā ākalu mā dhubiḥa lahu*), and I do not seek any oracle from the idols and I only pray to this house till I die.”¹²³

According to a *ḥadīth* by al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad himself claimed to have converted from polytheism to monotheism, and the *isnād* underlines that he said this, as is evinced by the numerous popular records of his early biographers.¹²⁴ In my opinion it seems that al-Bukhārī tries to explain that sacrificing to stones and to the idols associated with them, conversion from Islam to some other religion (Christianity or Judaism), and acting in front of the House without decent clothing, are all regrettable remnants from pre-Islamic practices. Even if Muḥammad, the Prophet, has a role in two of these stories, his purity is not regarded as thereby compromised. He clearly rejects all that is evil and is thus seen as belonging to the flock of true believers.

Thus, the aspects of Muḥammad’s monotheistic mission and task in life seem to have influenced how the pre-Islamic narratives have been transmitted. The new Islamic pattern throws its light upon and applies its terms to the pre-Islamic rituals, cleansing them of their impurity. The vocabulary used to describe the pre-Islamic rituals is evidently similar or identical to terms (later) used in connection with the Islamic pilgrimage. Examples are *ḥajj*, *ʿumra*, *manāsik*, *tawāf*, *wuqūf*, *iḥlāl*, *talbiya*, and many other words. The Kaʿba is described as the centre of all. Even the ritual performed outside Mecca by persons who no longer lived there, is, according to Ibn al-Kalbī, “an imitation” (*iqtidāʾ*) of the Kaʿba’n rituals.¹²⁵

In connection with my selection of texts from Muḥammad’s last years I have also pointed out that it was not Muḥammad himself who reintroduced the rituals of the pilgrimage and hence the sacrificial rituals. His friend and companion

121 Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) vol. 1: 158.

122 See Rubin (1995: 78) He states that the emphasis on Zayd ibn Amr’s role as *ḥanīf* and thus not adoring the pre-Islamic idols was of great importance to his descendants, who made no comment on the fact that Muḥammad was guided from polytheism to monotheism in this record. The prophet was portrayed as fully innocent even if he sacrificed an ewe to the stones outside the Kaʿba. Neither does it seem to have been important for Zayd’s descendants to say anything about the prophet’s background.

123 Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) vol. 3: 380.

124 Rubin (1995: 79) refers to al-Bukhārī vol. 5: 50, 106.

125 Faris 1952: 4, 29.

Abū Bakr, who according to some biographical texts is present in the cave when the Prophet receives the sacred messages from Allāh,¹²⁶ is actually the one who introduced the holy rituals.¹²⁷ I will call him a delegate entrusted or authorised to represent Muḥammad and maybe act on his behalf in the specific pilgrimage ritual. The ceremony described by Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidi from year 9/631 seems to be identical with the ritual described by the same authors for the next year's *hajj*, undertaken by Muḥammad. In the first narrative version, however, Muḥammad signed the sacrificial animals in Medina before Abū Bakr left for the pilgrimage.¹²⁸ Presumably, the Prophet was the only one who *could* sanctify them, and thus the only one who could confirm Abū Bakr's pilgrimage as complete and, consequently, make it to an authoritative pattern. But in spite of Muḥammad's sacred act of handing authority to Abū Bakr, these two friends were *not* identical.

Relevant to the Islamic sacrifice are Rappaport's words that "liturgical orders can and do organize, or even construct socially, the temporal orders of at least some societies, and that 'temporal' orders, when organized by ritual, make a place for eternity as well as for mundane time".¹²⁹ Muḥammad's ritual of the victims *does* effect a shift from profane to sacred status. It also achieves sanctification of the time during which this change takes place and during which the person journeys to Mecca on Muḥammad's behalf.

Regarding Muḥammad's status and position in the hierarchy of Islamic sacrifice, the characterisation of the Prophet by an anonymous visitor, transmitted by al-Ṭabarī, "O son of the two sacrifices",¹³⁰ has to be categorised among what Rappaport calls "self-referential messages".¹³¹ Muḥammad answers that the two intended victims are his father, ʿAbd Allāh, and Ismāʿīl. This description is repeated in a later text by al-Shahrastānī: "[T]he Prophet said: 'I am the son of the two sacrifices'."¹³² This author agrees with regard to the

126 Rubin 2003: 47–48.

127 I do not address here the question of whether ʿĀʾisha, Abū Bakr's daughter and Muḥammad's wife, could have influenced this primary position of her father. See Rubin 2003: 48. Cf. Lybarger (2008) who shows from the *Histories of the Prophets* that *Adam* was regarded as the originator of the Islamic rituals and as a primary example of performing them. Lybarger does not refer to Katz (2004: 110–112), but they seem to be in agreement; Adam has been neglected in the scholarly interpretations of the Islamic pilgrimage.

128 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1077.

129 Rappaport 1999: 175.

130 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 83 [I: 291].

131 Rappaport 1999: *inter alia* 52, 107–109, 328.

132 Al-Shahrastānī, Jolivet and Monnot 1993. vol. 2: 506; cf. Badrān Arabic: 1240; Kaylānī: 239.

identity of the two victims. There is a development, however, from the second person vocative, “O son”, in al-Ṭabarī’s report, to Muḥammad’s use of the first person, “I am the son”, in al-Shahrastānī’s narrative. In both cases, the Prophet identifies with the epithet. As mentioned above, this leads us to use Rappaport’s terminology of a “double stream of messages”. He uses the terms *self-referential* and *canonical* messages,¹³³ comparing the two with the relationship between *doing* and *saying*. In calling himself the “son of the two sacrifices”, Muḥammad integrates *doing* and *saying* with *being*. His very existence combined with his words and acts is the answer to the rituals performed by his ancestors Ibrāhīm and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and by himself.¹³⁴ “[The] self-referential messages are sanctified, which is to say certified, through their association with the highly invariant canonical stream.”¹³⁵ Even if the two forefathers were not identical as proponents and followers of monotheism (Ibrāhīm was a *ḥanīf* whereas ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib sought help from a sourceress [*‘arrāfatun*]), still they obeyed the call from the Highest One, thus providing an example for Muḥammad to follow.

Another of Rappaport’s ideas that applies to the structure of Islamic sacrifice is this: “Without canon, self-referential messages would be meaningless or even non-existent as such.”¹³⁶ It becomes “meaningless” to speak about sacrifice in Islam without knowledge of Muḥammad’s autobiographic utterances. The canon that lies behind the ritual and the words actually spoken are intertwined, and the “‘magical power of words’ may be related to their illocutionary force or performativeness”.¹³⁷ Hence, the ritual of sacrifice has been repeated annually ever since, and will not be replaced by something else.

9.13 When is the proper time for Islamic rituals?

The question about the proper time for the rituals, varying from once in a lifetime to annual performance, is an important issue, which has been touched on throughout the texts that we have encountered. On several occasions, the Prophet was asked whether he accepted a sacrifice that had taken place before or after the *ḥajj* prayer. According to al-Bukhārī, the slaughtering of an animal

133 Rappaport 1999: *inter alia* 52, 107–109, 328.

134 Reynolds (2011b: 188) discusses the role of the Prophet as foreseen by his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who, hence, predicted his grandson’s future: “I desired for him to be praised (*maḥmūd*) by God in heaven and by God’s people on earth” (Riḍā 1972: 242). See also Rubin 1995: 44.

135 Rappaport 1999: 329.

136 Rappaport 1999: 106.

137 Rappaport 1999: 117.

should take place before or after the *ḥajj* prayer,¹³⁸ but a *ḥadīth* narrated by Mālik ibn Anas, collected by al-Bukhārī, says explicitly, “The Prophet said, ‘Whoever slaughtered the sacrifice before the prayer, he just slaughtered it for himself, and whoever slaughtered it after prayer, he slaughtered it at the right time and followed the tradition of the Muslims.’”¹³⁹

There are, however, also indications of the importance of time for ritual life in other parts of the selected texts. In Q 5:96b it is written, “God has made the Ka‘ba, the Sacred House, the sacred month (*al-shahr al-ḥarām*), and the sacrificial offerings with their ornaments, eternal values (*qīman*) for mankind.”¹⁴⁰ Here, there are two matters considering time, the sacred month and what is valuable for the human being, also in a longer perspective. Actually, there was not only one sacred month, but there were four, *al-Muḥarram*,¹⁴¹ *Rajab*, *Dhū l-Qa‘da*,¹⁴² and *Dhū l-ḥijja*.¹⁴³ In Q 3:183 it is written, “Other apostles before me have come to you with veritable signs and worked the miracle you asked for.”¹⁴⁴ This implies that Muḥammad stands firmly in the line of former messengers.

Slaughtering is obviously performed in the belief in the eternal God. According to al-Ṭabarī, “the practice of slaughtering animals (*l-dhibḥ*) [is done] according to His religion (*alā dīnihi*), for that is the *sunna* until the Day of Resurrection (*yawm l-qiyāma*)”.¹⁴⁵ Al-Ṭabarī also underlines that Adam, the first man, slaughtered a ram.¹⁴⁶ Hence, the action of killing an animal is seen as important from the beginning until the end of the world. In correspondence with the Prophet himself, al-Ṭabarī emphasises the validity of the messages of all the prophets; some of them – i.e. Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad – performed sacrifices in due time. “Dates and times are fixed as to their (precise) moments by the

138 Cf. al-Bukhārī. n.d. vol. 7: book 67, 408.

139 Cf. al-Bukhārī vol. 7: book 68, 453 and 454.

140 Dawood (1994: 90) translates “eternal values”, and even if the word “eternal” is not mentioned in the Arabic text, it sums up the meaning of *qīman* in a good way.

141 Plessner 1995. For an extensive article on calendar and time, see van Dalen et al 2000: 258–301. Concerning the month of *sha‘bān*, see Wensinck 1997: 154. If *al-Muḥarram* was declared free (for non-sacred activities like war etc.), the month *Ṣafar* was declared sacred instead. This was done in order “to balance the calendar” (Guillaume 1955: 21–22). See also Plessner 1993.

142 Shahīd (2000: 789) describes how this month was central for one of the biggest annual markets, *al-‘ukāz*. Hence, it took place just before the pre-Islamic *ḥajj* to Mecca, especially in the 6th century AD.

143 Paret 1986: 202. Cf. Q 9:36–37.

144 Dawood 1994: 58.

145 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 96 [I: 308].

146 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 294 [I: 123]. Cf. Katz 2004 and Lybarger 2008.

measurements of the hours indicated by the sun and the moon running in their spheres, as we have mentioned in the reports transmitted by us on the authority of the Messenger of God.”¹⁴⁷

Al-Wāqidī, for his part, explicitly declares a month (*shahrūn ḥarāmūn*), a land (*baladun ḥarāmūn*), and a day (*yawmun ḥarāmūn*) as sacred.¹⁴⁸ The context in which this is said, is Mecca, of course. Allāh sanctifies (*ḥarrama*) all elements; also “your blood, your goods, and your honour”.¹⁴⁹ This is opposed to “the time of *jāhiliyya*” that “shall be waived, and all the blood from the time of ignorance shall be laid down”.¹⁵⁰

We observe that around two hundred years after Muḥammad’s death it came to a definite break between Islam and pre-Islam. By this time, pre-Islam is seen as representing ignorance and Islam as representing knowledge. But at the same time as Islam delimits itself from the earlier period, it also tries to integrate certain elements and, hence, in a certain way Islam redefines the pre-Islamic time into an era of continuous knowledge, as we for instance have seen in the usage of Ibrāhīm’s sacred transmission. He and his two sons are conceived as Muslims (*inter alia* Q 37:104; 2:127f; 19:54). There seem to be no intervals in this chronology. In the double operation of both opposing and integrating pre-Islamic elements, Muḥammad, too, like Ibrāhīm and his sons, is seen as a Muslim. Even the first man, Adam is blended in the universal history of Islamic rituals. From the morning of creation the angels said, “Adam, we have performed the pilgrimage to this House two thousand years before you were created.”¹⁵¹ However, according to Firestone, “the pre-Islamic Arab custom became increasingly irrelevant”¹⁵² because the Muslims became confident in their God-given duties.¹⁵³

147 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 248 [I: 77]; cf. al-Ṭabarī 1990. vol. 9: 113 [I: 1754], where he says, “Time has completed its cycle [and is] as it was on the day that God created the heavens and the earth. The number of months with God is twelve: [they were] in the Book of God on the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred, the three consecutive [months] and the Rajab, [which is called the month of] Muḍar, which is between Jumādā [II] and Shaʿbān.”

148 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1111. Cf. Wellhausen 1897: 430–431.

149 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1111. Cf. Wellhausen 1897: 430–431.

150 Al-Wāqidī 1966: 1111. Cf. Wellhausen 1897: 430–431.

151 Al-Ṭabarī 1989. vol. 1: 295 [I: 124]; cf. al-Yaʿqūbī 1960. vol. 1: 3. Cf. Katz 2004 and Lybarger 2008.

152 Firestone 1990: 10.

153 However, the continuity between the two eras, of pre-Islam and of the Prophet, can be combined with the idea of “testament” or “covenant”, according to Ulrika Mårtensson (2005: 313, 317–318). She writes that al-Ṭabarī uses the terms *mithāq* and *ʿahd* to express God’s covenant with Moses and other prophets, and describes it as the “old or

Rappaport states that there is no real “punctual time”, because time does not consist of one single moment without duration, but of periods of various length.¹⁵⁴ However, there are two temporal conditions, mundane respectively profane time, and extraordinary respectively sacred time. Rappaport continues: “‘Liturgical time,’ ‘sacred time,’ ‘extraordinary time,’ is literally time out of ordinary social time, for the temporal region characteristic of mundane social interaction is vacated.”¹⁵⁵ Regarding the *ʿīd al-aḏḩā*, these divisions into different categories of time help to exemplify the notion of Islam’s festival calendar. The feast is a place or point in Islam where profane *and* sacred time coincide and unite. The seasons of the year and the festival calendar, even if based on the former seasonal festivals, tell the ritual performer that these rituals are utterly important. All time is divided in sacred and profane time. Within Mecca the digital time becomes sacred time.

We may also talk about *cyclical* or *progressive* (continuous) time, in order to express time that is completely continuous.¹⁵⁶ There are many examples in my material, for instance Ibrāhīm’s construction of the Ka’ba, and the role Adam and Hava play in establishing the sacredness of the building and the city, and how this influences the later performances of sacrifice connected to these places (Q 22:32f). Actions of the past influence and determine the present. The distance between past and present is diminished. The past’s sacredness has moved into the contemporary sphere.

Is this what happens in the sacrificial ritual? Does the ritual lift out of and transcend the mundane time due to a never-changing canonical order instituted by Allāh? Islam is a religion that, in the words of al-Ṭabarī, practises “slaughtering [of] animals according to His religion (*dīnihi*)”, because “that is the *sunna* until the Day of Resurrection”.¹⁵⁷ Allāh has installed his rituals in the world and they are conducted by Him to the benefit of human beings. In the rituals, simple followers and specialists (for instance guides of the pilgrimage) participate. Because of their considerable duration the annual rituals of *ḥajj* have

first testament”. The time from Jesus (Isa) is called the “new or second testament”, and the time from the Prophet onwards, is interpreted as “the *third* testament”. This hermeneutical perspective may be appropriate and adequate for an analysis of how al-Ṭabarī (especially in his *Tafsīr*) understands the Qur’ān and the history. Mårtensson calls the *ḥajj* “the central ritual of covenant renewal”, but for my selection of texts that includes many other authors in addition to al-Ṭabarī, this idea seems too vague to be operative as an analytical instrument.

154 Rappaport 1999: 181.

155 Rappaport 1999: 225.

156 Rappaport 1999: 183.

157 Al-Ṭabarī 1987. vol. 2: 96 [I: 308].

a profound transformative impact on the minds and attitudes of the performers.¹⁵⁸ The prayers (*ṣalāt*) performed five times a day (though not directly mentioned in my texts) change the performer's ethical and cognitive attitude, comparable with the effect of a Jew's confession of the *Shema* three times a day and the weekly celebration of the Sabbath. This frequency brings the sacred time into the mundane world, and, hence, the daily prayers take care of an essential time aspect that almost appears as opposite to the role of the pilgrimage. Whereas many Muslims undertake the pilgrimage only once during their lives and many others even never go on pilgrimage, the prayers are a daily religious element in the lives of all Muslims. With regard to the Islamic notion of sacred time both the daily prayers and the once upon a lifetime performed pilgrimage are essential, representing mutually supplementary aspects.

9.14 Substance of sacrifice in Islam – a critical assessment

This analysis has emphasised that there is not only one sacrifice in Islam, but there are many. These sacrifices are interlinked in terms of their elements of terminology and content, but they are not identical. When Q 108 orders, "Sacrifice (*inḥar*)!", we do not know whether the *ʿid al-aḍḥā* victim or the optional sacrifice, *kaffāra*, after a failed ritual of *ḥajj*, is meant. There is, however, evidence of a link between the sacrifices of Ibrāhīm, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and later Muḥammad in many texts, insofar as the latter is clearly referred to as the "Son of the Two Sacrifices". Q 108, Q 9:99 and also other texts indicate a longing for "coming close" to Allāh through sacrifice. In some texts, it is implied that the sacrificer hopes for good-will, to become rich, or even for success in procreating children and performing moral deeds.

The sacrifice associated with Mecca and Mina, which manifests continuity of form from the time of *Jāhiliya* through early Islam, always involves an element of strong inner fellowship and loyalty, primarily towards the supreme deity, Allāh, and his messenger, but also towards the community, *al-umma*. Within this inner circle, which is characterised by an attitude of respect, the believers mature, develop their perspectives and gain spiritual depths in the sanctified surrounding of Mecca. In the middle of the collective ritual of *ḥajj* the believers reach a charitable attitude not only by sharing certain parts of the animal but also by participating in a state of common emotion and obedience.

The animals slaughtered are *sacrificial* animals. They are signed, decorated, lined up and led along a marked route towards their goal, death in Allāh's name.

158 Rappaport (1999: 200–201 and 208) discusses this aspect.

There is no need for an altar, since “the whole of Mina” is a sacred place. The animal’s blood is a required part of the sacred path established by Abū Bakr and Muḥammad in the years 631 and 632. The blood was, and is, not avoided but rather required as a fulfilling sign of moral obedience, as was shown most clearly by the message of Allāh’s unity (*tawḥīd*) and greatness (*takbīr*).¹⁵⁹ Angelika Neuwirth has examined the role of blood in Islamic cultural history.¹⁵⁹ She maintains that blood has run in many Islamic rituals but has been a less important issue in Islamic theology and law (*fiqh*).¹⁶⁰ Further, Neuwirth notes that Islamic customs concerning blood is different from Jewish traditions (see e.g. Exodus 24:8). Islam considers blood as impure, but in Jewish theology blood has a cleansing effect.¹⁶¹ Islam, she writes, does not take over Jewish patterns for sacrifice but transmits old Semitic sacrificial practices in its pilgrimage in Mecca.¹⁶² Neuwirth emphasises that *ḥajj* and *ʿid al-adḥa* represent a ritual that expresses a mimesis of Abraham. Hence, the sacrifice is not any more a vicarious, substitutionary and expiatory sacrifice with a collectively aggressive character but a “pietätvolle Nachahmung eines Patriarchenvorbildes”.¹⁶³

Such an attitude is required of the follower, and is facilitated through the emphasis on the rituals (*ʿibādāt*). This attitude does *not* at this stage embrace the ideas that we find in later Islamic theological literature, such as the writings of al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), regarding spiritual self-sacrifice, merits on the day of resurrection, and purification.¹⁶⁴ Al-Ghazzālī also identifies the sacrificial ritual and terms like *naḥr*, *uḍḥīya*, and *dhibḥ* with *khalīl Ibrāhīm*, who is Allāh’s friend,¹⁶⁵ and underlines that sacrifice means that the believer comes close to Allāh. If it were not possible to come closer to God, the *Ṣūfī* spirituality of the past would have been a failure of belief and practice. What we see today is a development of different *Ṣūfī* practices within and outside official *ṭarīqa* communities that accentuate human beings’ search for *fanāʾ*, for annihilation of the self and union with God, *baqāʾ*.¹⁶⁶

Ibn Rushd describes ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s sacrifice of one hundred camels as “[giving] his entire wealth in the way of Allāh”.¹⁶⁷ He demonstrates how ‘Abd

159 Neuwirth 2007a: 62–90.

160 Neuwirth 2007a: 63.

161 Neuwirth 2007a: 64.

162 Neuwirth 2007a: 64.

163 Neuwirth 2007a: 64.

164 Al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) 1982: 250–251.

165 Al-Ghazzālī 1996. vol. 1: 372.

166 Ernst 1997: 60.

167 Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) (1994) 2000. vol. 1: 513.

al-Muṭṭalib submits his destiny to the Transcendent One. I have found two direct linkages between the Day of Sacrifice and Ibrāhīm in the earlier texts analysed above, the epithet given to Muḥammad, “O son of the two sacrifices”, and the notice by al-Wāqidi that the people in *iḥram* are “the heirs of that which Ibrāhīm has left (*innakum ‘alā irṭhin min irṭhi Ibrāhīm*)”.¹⁶⁸

Strangely, none of the texts in my selection attempts to explain why *any* ritually clean animal with the correct health and exterior is a *valid* victim in the feast’s sacrificial ritual when Allāh chose a *ram* for Ibrāhīm’s son. It seems that a discussion whether the sacrificial animal should be restricted to a sheep or a ram only comes up as late as in Ibn Rushd’s time (12th century AD). A contemporary discussion asks whether money may substitute for the sacrifice at the feast, but this is not an issue for this study.¹⁶⁹

In Chapter 1 I asked why a sacrifice is *required* in the Islamic ritual when it is understood that no human action, and especially not the offering of a bloody sacrifice, is capable of influencing Allāh. My analysis does not show that the bloody sacrifice changes Allāh’s actions, but it changes his *followers’* behaviour and conduct and the relationship *between* the two entities, despite their differences in kind and ontological nature: Allāh is not a human being and human beings are not divine; the former is the Ultimate Sacred. His people are obedient in order to fulfil their prescribed obligations, and they are not free to do whatever they want. *If* they want to live in accordance with the divine law, they must follow Muḥammad’s rituals, including the sacrifice of one or more animals in the context of Mecca. The sacrifice is *not* an empty ritual but is fulfilled when the believers empty themselves in obedience to Allāh. Early Islam sees the sacrifice as something *more* than an *isolated ritual slaughtering*. At the same time every animal slaughtering is a *religious* killing because it is performed in the name of Allāh. Hence, all *Islamic* sacrifices and slaughterings are different from the pre-Islamic ritual slaughterings that were performed in Mecca and its surroundings, but they have the obedient and pious attitude in common with the pre-Islamic performers of sacrifices (now perceived as Islamic), Adam’s son Hābil, Ibrāhīm and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.

The sacrificial animal becomes the carrier of the heavenly signs, originally brought to the very centre of the Islamic Mecca through Muḥammad’s actions of marking the sacrificial animals with his own hands, and then slaughtering them himself. The direct linkage between the offerings of Adam and his son, the near-

168 Al-Wāqidi 1966: 1104 and Wellhausen (1887) 1897: 427 (my translation). Faizer, Ismail and Tayob (2011: 540) translate “Keep to the ritual practices. Indeed your inheritance is according to the rituals of Abraham.”

169 Lazarus-Yafeh 1978: 56.

sacrifices of Ibrāhīm and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad’s sacrifice at his Farwell *ḥajj*, and, later, the sacrifice offered at the festival of ‘īd al-aḍḥā, is not explicitly made in my selection of texts, but my analysis indicates some fundamental connections on the basis of terminology, topics and influences.

The regulations (*manāsik*) are the new signs of total obedience. Although the efficacy and value of the sacrifices are not measured by degree, the prescribed rituals are expected to lead to wholeness and fruitfulness, even to the source of life, the *kawthar* (Q 108), a term that expresses the paradisiacal goal for all Muslims. Muḥammad’s role in this sacrificial system is to be understood as the model for all sacrificers and all sacrificial rituals connected with Mecca and Mina. Muḥammad is the continuity of Ibrāhīm’s life, *he is his son*. The message in the texts and narratives is developed through the prescribed rituals (*‘ibādāt*) and through the regulations (*manāsik*) for the pilgrimage and the sacrificial rituals in Mecca and Mina, but also more and more in connection with the rituals of ‘īd al-aḍḥā all over the Muslim world.

The Islamic offering contains a *sacrifice* in the sense in which this term is usually understood in the history of religions. In defining *sacrifice* Widengren says:¹⁷⁰ there is a “consecration of a living creature [...] to a deity”, “with [...] killing”; and there is a slaughtering that “establishes a connection between this deity and the person who performs the ritual”. The question of whether “the ritual is able to influence the deity in a way hoped for by the sacrificer” is not as obvious as the other criteria, but as I have shown in my foregoing discussions, I see Islamic sacrifice as a ritual of “coming close” to Allāh and of being obedient to Him and his former servants.

In sum, the sacrifice is evidently one of the important Islamic symbols of divine election, and, simultaneously, it gives meaning to the ritual participants’ self-understanding and self-esteem. Also those Muslims who are not present in Mecca and Mina, but know about and follow what takes place in the sacred city are participants within the broader community. We do not know whether this feeling of closeness was the same in earlier times. In recent years it has changed immensely due to television. Obviously, the Meccan rites influence those who participate directly in the sacrificial act and follow the liturgical order during the three days of ‘īd al-aḍḥā. Hence, sacrifice has to be placed simultaneously in the hierarchy of *ḥajj* rituals and the specific rituals of the ‘īd al-aḍḥā festivals and, additionally, in the hierarchy of sanctified symbols (including persons) that surpass mundane space and time. Furthermore, the *ḥajj* rituals are meant to communicate *something* (for instance unity, power, harmony, agreement, approval or enthusiasm) to onlookers (for instance to non-pious Muslims and

170 Widengren 1969: 280. Cf. chapter 1, with footnote 1, for Widengren’s complete text.

non-Muslims). The content and message(s) of these rituals are carried by a canon and the Ultimate Sacred Postulates, which, at least, are subjected to interpretation by outsiders or those who are not regarded as “Muslims” and, consequently, for the most part do not adhere to these rituals. The ‘*aqīqa*’ sacrifice is minor compared to the major Mecca sacrifices, but for most Muslims the ‘*aqīqa*’ can be understood as the symbol of the child’s belonging to the *umma*, the Islamic community.

The answer to the question concerning the canonical message of the Islamic sacrificial rituals is to be found in the role of Muḥammad. Although Muḥammad is not divine in himself (according to official Islamic belief), he is sanctified and capable of sanctifying for instance sacrificial animals in virtue of the concern and commitment that he demonstrated during the *ḥajj* of Abū Bakr and the pilgrimage of the following year. In the sacrificial *rite* he is made *the* chosen one. His honoured status is reaffirmed annually during *ḥajj* and becomes a reminder of all the sanctified narratives connected with the pilgrimage.¹⁷¹

In seeking to analyse the Islamic pilgrimage rituals – and especially the sacrificial elements – in the light of Rappaport’s ideas of continuity and process, of analogue and digital time, it was clear to me that time – and the lunar calendar – is of extreme importance in Islam. Time in Mecca and Mina is continuous, but can be represented digitally by the rituals that establish sharp boundaries between beginnings and ends. Rappaport says that there are digital aspects in ritual communication, although ritual communication is not *exclusively* digital.¹⁷² This world’s “changeability” is compared to the condition of the sacred world, which is “unchanging [...] neither coming nor passing away”,¹⁷³ and we may compare al-Ṭabarī’s idea of time in the first chapter of his universal history, *Ta’rīkh*. Perhaps al-Ṭabarī had in mind an explanation like the one given later by Rappaport. Irrespective of the fact that one of al-Ṭabarī’s sources, an ‘Irāqī man, *questions* the rituals of the *ḥajj*, I consider it as appropriate and well-founded to conclude this project by summarising a number of common threads running through the narratives and the other sources that I have analysed:

1) The narratives about different Islamic sacrifices are used to tell believers about one or more signs in the series of sacred symbols.

2) Allāh must be satisfied by means of sacrifices because he deserves obedience. ‘Abd Allāh, Muḥammad’s father, represents through his name the

171 Cf. Rappaport 1999: 329.

172 Rappaport 1999: 89.

173 Rappaport 1999: 176.

sacred link between ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the obedient grandfather, and the chosen slave and apostle, Muḥammad. In a similar way, Ibrāhīm was obedient to God and provided one of the most important examples for Muḥammad as a guide to the right Islamic conduct and way of living. The opposite in both cases is disobedience towards Allāh, punished by a fruitless life (Q 108).

3) Even so, only a specified sacrifice satisfies Allāh: important are the kind of animal(s) and their number (maximum one hundred camels). For the *‘aqīqa* for a child either one or two sheep are prescribed.

4) Many different and complex terms are applied to describe the Islamic sacrifices. Some of them seem to be interchangeable; others are specific terms. In certain ways they influence the content of the sacrificial rituals.

5) Different channels of mediating the sacrificial message are used. We can refer to the following examples: a female *sorceress* is a tool to foresee the sacrificial process; Ibrāhīm has a *dream* informing him what to do (Q 37); Muḥammad asks his friends to sign and slaughter the animals which he does not sign and kill himself before the *ḥajj*; and in Q 108 the *text* prescribes the believers to sacrifice.

6) Both non-Muslim and Muslim tools are used to decide the future of the prophet. The pre-Islamic tools are sanctified and become reliable Islamic symbols.

7) The Muslim believers, especially the *muḥrim*, are the heirs of Abraham.

8) An animal that is sanctified and garlanded is a satisfactory sacrifice.

9) The sacrificial victims are slaughtered, divided and eaten by human beings. In my material non-bloody sacrifices are invalid. Still, later and contemporary practices show that money or gifts in combination with the right intention can act vicariously for the *hady*.

10) The question regarding which son Ibrāhīm was about to sacrifice, Ismā‘īl or Ishāq, is considered important for the understanding of this specific narrative and for the status of Muḥammad (especially in the dialogue or debate with Jews and Christians), but it is *not* essential in the total perspective of Islamic sacrificial rituals.

11) The sacrificial place is a complex place; only the extended *ḥaram* area in Mecca was sanctified. However, “the whole of Mina is a sacrificial place (*manḥar*)”, and it is not limited to an altar. Other places are used for sacrifices, as well, but believers do not necessarily regard these *places* as sanctified.

12) No slaughterings in Allāh’s name are completely profane. When contemporary Muslims slaughter their animals directed towards the *qibla*, uttering the *bismillāh*, they are obedient heirs of Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad.

The sacrifice follows a model created by Abū Bakr and Muḥammad. The model has three levels. The first can be called the “fundamental level”, which means that the Muslim shall be obedient to Allāh. The second level relates to the Prophet Muḥammad as the Chosen One. The sacrifice is a sign of his ritual primacy and of Allāh’s monotheistic supremacy. All sacrificers, including Muḥammad himself, are *sanctified* through these rituals. The third level is the platform that Muḥammad has laid (the *sunna*) for the pious. In communication with the Transcendent One and with each other they constitute a community. Whether in Mecca or in Cairo, London or any other place, Islamic ritual time is constructed and the elements of the *ḥajj* constitute a complete liturgy with essential religious signs. Hence, the sacrificial rituals are self-referential messages that are transmitted through participation by the Muslim believers.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, they are sanctified and certified. They are in the middle of what Rappaport calls, “the highly invariant canonical stream”.¹⁷⁵

174 Cf. Rappaport 1999: 83.

175 Rappaport 1999: 329.

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