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khushub musannadah (Qurʾān 63. 4)
and Epigraphic South Arabian *ms³nd*

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Summary

This paper will enquire into the possibility of a relationship between *musannadah* in Qurʾān 63. 4 and *musnad* (Epigraphic South Arabian (ESA) *ms³nd*), which is used to denote Epigraphic Arabic scripts and inscriptions. The question to be dealt with here is whether and how different interpretations evolved. In addition, the paper considers whether *musannadah* can be interpreted in the light of Epigraphic South Arabian *ms³nd* — and, subsequently, Arabic *musnad* denoting Ancient Arabian scripts — or, more specifically, the Ancient South Arabian monumental script. This would constitute a new interpretation and show the hypocrites to be corroded by fear like carved or rotten timbers; therefore lexicographical and exegetical as well as relevant secondary literature will be surveyed diachronically. The discussion will include proposed etymologies for the term *musnad* and its description in early Arabic sources such as Hamdānī's *Iklīl*, the *Gharīb* literature, *Ḥadīth* collections, and historical works such as Jawād ʿAlī's *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām*.

Keywords: Qurʾān, *tafsīr*, lexicography, etymology, *musnad*

Text

The phrase *khushub musannadah* occurs in a simile for hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), who are referred to in Qurʾān 63. 4[1] (both terms are *hapax legomena* and are the only derivations of their roots in the Qurʾān):[2]

> 'When you see them [Prophet], their outward appearance pleases you; when they speak, you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up timbers — they think every cry they hear is against them — and they are the enemy. Beware of them. May God thwart them! How devious they are!' (Abdel Haleem 2010: 555).

The mainstream view on *khushub* (also *kh{a,u}shb* and *khashab*, see al-Khaṭīb 2002, ix: 469–470; cf. Vollers 1906: 99) *musannadah* is given in two sentences by Abdul-Raof (2004: 105): 'Culturally, the Arabs used to put planks of timber against the wall at the back of their houses when they were not needed, and as such the planks of wood were useless most of the time. This expression reflects a metonymy for the person who is useless and worthless in the community.' In Abdel Haleem's translation (2010: 555; cf. Bell 1937, ii: 581; 1991, ii: 386; Arberry 1964: 585; Bakhtiar 2009: 647; Paret 2001: 478; 2004: 395; Khoury 1990–2001, xii: 112) the phrase in question is rendered as 'propped-up timbers' (cf. Badawi & Abdel Haleem 2008: 459 *sub radice* (s.r.) *s-n-d*), while Watt (1967: 267) explained 'propped-up timbers' as 'also said to mean timbers whose centre is wasted or worm-eaten' — an interpretation held by Blachère (1980: 597) to be a 'très fantaisiste' stop-gap. He offers a new understanding as 'monts [solidement] appuyés' which, according to him, 'correspond à une comparaison fréquente en arabe', while Pickthall (1954: 400) translates *khushubun musannadah* as 'blocks of wood in striped cloaks (or propped-up blocks of wood)'. Atallah suggested a different interpretation based on the proposed equivalency of Arabic *khushub* and Greek *xóan-on*, 'qui désignait les statues en bois adorées comme idoles dans les religions grécoromaines' (Atallah 2008: 445) and arguably seeing Sindh in *musannadah* (cf.

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[1] The translation of the Qurʾān used in this paper is that of Abdel Haleem 2010. The Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (CSAI) was used to locate the inscriptions and the Dukhrana Analytical Lexicon of the Syriac New Testament to find Syriac terms.

[2] *Hapax legomena* clauses in the Qurʾān — except for enumerations — include: Qurʾān 9. 35 *fa-tukwā (bihā) jibāhuhum* '(it is) used to brand their foreheads'; Qurʾān 20. 12 *fa-khlaʿ naʿlayka* 'Take off your shoes'; Qurʾān 21. 30 *(kānatā) ratqan fa-fataqnāhumā* 'were (both) used to be joined together and we unstitched them both' [stitch — unstitch]; Qurʾān 22. 40 *la-huddimat ṣawāmiʿu* 'many monasteries … would have been destroyed'; Qurʾān 37. 103 *wa-tallahu li-l-jabīn* 'he had laid his son [him] down on the side of his face'; Qurʾān 49. 11 *(wa-lā) tanābazū bi-l-alqāb* 'do not use offensive nicknames for one another'; Qurʾān 53. 9 *(fa-kāna) qāba qawsayni* '(until he was) two bows-lengths (away)'; and Qurʾān 73. 14 *(wa-kānati l-jibālu) kaṯīban mahīlan* '(and the mountains become) a heap of loose sand' (see Elmaz 2008: 127–132).

ᶜarab > muᶜarrab, hind > muhannad) so that the phrase is understood as 'des statues de bois incrustées de pierres précieuses à la façon de l'Inde' (2008: 453).

South Arabian *ms³nd*

As to an Epigraphic South Arabian (ESA) connection with *musannadah* (cf. Zammit 2001: 228 s.r. *s-n-d*; see Ambros 2004 s.r. *ḥ–sh–b*, cf. Maraqten 1988: 292–295), the most similar Arabic word (without *shaddah*) — *musnad* — denotes ESA scripts in Arabic, which is obviously related to South Arabian *ms³nd* 'inscription, inscribed votive tablet' (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 138) or 'document' (Ghūl 1993: 134) and Qurᵓānic Arabic '*khaṭṭ, kitābah*' (ᶜAlī 1993, viii: 209). We can cite inscriptions in different Ancient South Arabian languages in which that word occurs: Sabaic,[3] Qatabanic,[4] Hadramitic,[5] and Minaic.[6] Proposed aetiological etymologies of the word given by Orientalists like Rödiger (1837: 340; 'aufstrebend, pfeilartig emporstehend; altherkömmlich'), who gives a review of previous works by de Sacy and Muslim scholars (1837: 337–338), Gesenius (1841: 11–12; 'gestützt > säulenartig, aufrechtstehend'), Turner (1845: 429–430; 'perpendicular'), or Lidzbarski (1902: 119, reads *masnad, misn{a,ā}d* 'Stützschrift') as well as the suggestion by Hommel (1927: 63) to vocalize *ms³nd* as (Qurᵓānic) *mus³annad* and to compare it to Babylonian *santakku* 'wedge', seem to be misguided (cf. ᶜAlī 1993, viii: 208–209) for a simple reason. In Sabaic there are no words relating to writing, but only to supporting or propping up (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 138; Biella 1982: 507), derived from this root. Hence, the term in question should be a qualitative description of what is to be done with the inscription and not of what it consists. On the other hand, a sound Arabic etymology for the word is lacking and it is taken to denote the script of a 'Himyarite'[7] inscription or a 'Himyarite' inscription only (al-Selwi 1987: 114).

musnad in historical works

The term is recorded as known in Arabic sources (cf. al-Selwi 1987: 114) at least from the ninth century on, viz. in Ibn Durayd's *Jamharah* (Ibn Durayd 1987: 649a) and, for example, in the account of Jesus' epitaph in al-Ṭabarī's *History* (al-Ṭabarī 1967, i: 603–604), although it was already used in the time of ᶜAbd al-Malik in a *ḥadīth* in which Ibn al-Athīr explains *musnad* as 'ancient inscription' (*kitābah qadīmah*) or 'script of the Ḥimyar' (*khaṭṭ ḥimyar*) (Ibn al-Athīr 1963, ii: 408). We think the latter explanation is the correct one, for the account reads *inna ḥajaran wujida ᶜalayhi kitābun bi-l-musnad*, and it is very unlikely and almost impossible for us to take the descriptive predicate of *kitāb*, i.e. *bi-l-musnad*, as a synonym for an adjective meaning 'old, ancient' (*qadīm*). We tend rather to see in *kitāb bi-* the Arabic equivalent of English 'writing/inscription in "script's or language's name"' in this context. For instance, Ibn al-Nadīm says *ḥimyar kānat taktub bi-l-musnad ᶜalā khilāf ashkāl alif wa-bāᵓ wa-tāᵓ*: 'the Himyar used to write in Musnad [script] in contrast to [our] Alif, Bāᵓ and Tāᵓ' (Ibn al-Nadīm 1971: 8). In Ibn Khaldūn's *History* we learn a little bit more about that script, for he states that the Himyaritic script was not a cursive (*ḥurūfuhā munfaṣilah*) (Ibn Khaldūn 2001, i: 526; Rosenthal 1980: 381) and that their script and language differ (*yukhālif*) from the later Muḍar-Arabs, but both (variants) are Arabs (Arabic) (*ᶜarabī*) (Ibn Khaldūn 2001, i: 730; Rosenthal 1980: 282).

ᶜAlī (1993, viii: 202–247) addressed that script in a whole chapter in his *Mufaṣṣal*, in which he says that *musnad* is the most ancient script (*aqdam al-aqlām*) attested in the Arabian Peninsula and that the Arabs used it outside their homeland as well (1993, viii: 202). The term itself, meaning 'nothing but the script of the Yemeni people' (*khaṭṭ ahl al-Yaman lā akthar wa-lā aqall*), eventually became used as the proper name for the Himyaritic script in medieval and early Muslim scholarship but this semantic restriction cannot be dated (1993, viii: 209). He goes on to describe the origins of the *musnad* script and discusses the Lihyanitic, Thamudic, and Safaitic scripts with a conclusion about the numbering system.

In al-Hamdānī's *Iklīl* (1987, x: 36–40, 107) *musnad* is (still) used as a proper noun denoting the '[ESA] inscription' (*fī musnadin, qaraᵓtu musnadan, qaraᵓtu fī musnadin, raᵓaytu fī musnadin*) with the plural *masānid* (1987, x: 37, 47, 108). Hence, the semantic development which *musnad* underwent is probably a restriction of dual synecdochical character: inscription to script, Yemenite

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[3] DAI–GDN 2002–20/31–33 (*w-k-kl tl/wn ms³nd-h/mw* 'and the whole completion of their inscription', see Nebes 2004: 2004: 224b and Ry 507/9 (*w-k-hsⁱ/ṭr ḏn msⁱndn qln S²rḥᵓl ḏ-Yzᵓn* 'This inscription has been written by the *qayl* S²rḥᵓl ḏ-Yzᵓn', note: s³ > sⁱ) .

[4] Ry 461/2–3 (*sⁱqny ᶜṭtr/ms³ndn* 'a dédié à ᶜAṭtar cette inscription') (Ryckmans 1951: 114 (22).

[5] Raybūn-Ḥaḍrān 213/1–3 (*sⁱ/qnyt ᶜṭtrm ḏt Ḥḏr(n)/\ ms³ndhn* 'dedicated to ᶜṭtrm ḏt Ḥḏrn the inscription') and Raybūn-Kafas/Naᶜmān 269/2–4 (*hqn-y ḏt Ḥmym/[m]ṭndhn* 'dedicated to ḏt Ḥmym the inscription', note: ṭ for s³).

[6] al-Jawf 04.37/22 (*b-ᵓhlm bn sⁱ/ṭr ms³nd rṭd Lḥyᶜṭt/mlk Ns²n* 'on the base of the inscription of the document that committed Lḥyᶜṭt king of Ns²n', here: *ms³nd* 'document').

[7] On the notion of 'Himyarite' and 'Himyaritic' in traditional Arabic scholarship, see Stein 2008.

to Himyar. We could compare this to the metonymical usage of *qalam* 'reed pen' for 'script' in this and similar contexts (ʿAlī 1993, viii: 154; Ibn al-Nadīm 1971: 8).

Parallels in the Qurʾān

If the simile is set up by two *hapax legomena*, we can only try to find similar structures, i.e. *ka-ᵓanna* followed by a descriptive nominal clause. We counted thirty-seven instances of *ka-ᵓanna* in the Qurʾānic text, eighteen of which are followed by a nominal group and seven introduced by *ka-ᵓannahum*: Qurʾān 52. 54 (*luᵓluᵓun maknūn*), Qurʾān 54. 7 (*jarādun muntashir*), Qurʾān 54. 20 (*aʿjāzu nakhlin munqaᶜir*), Qurʾān 61. 4 (*bunyānun marṣūṣ*), Qurʾān 63. 4 (*khushubun musannadah*), Qurʾān 69. 7 (*aʿjāzu nakhlin khāwiyah*), and Qurʾān 74. 50 (*ḥumurun mustanfirah*). Hence those instances most similar to our phrase in Qurʾān 63. 4 (*ḥ–sh–b* 'wood') are in Qurʾān 54. 20 and Qurʾān 69. 7, in which the devastated people of ʿĀd are compared to uprooted and hollow palm trunks, respectively. In a resolution guide for Ramaḍān circulating in many online forums, in the video the Egyptian cleric Ḥāzim Shūmān delights in opposing *ka-ᵓannahum bunyānun marṣūṣ* 'like a well-compacted wall' in Qurʾān 61. 4 to *ka-ᵓannahum khushubun musannadah* 'like propped-up timbers' in Qurʾān 63. 4, which characterize the believers and the hypocrites (Shūmān [2010], 31: 45–32: 00 [5: 33: 26–5: 33: 41] '*rabbanā lammā waṣaf il-muᵓminīn ᵓāl ᵓēh u-lammā waṣaf il-munāfiqīn ᵓāl ᵓēh? lammā waṣaf il-muᵓminīn ᵓāl: "ka-annahum bunyānun marṣūṣ" wa-lammā waṣaf il-munāfiqīn baᶜdāhā ᵓāl: "ka-annahum khushubun musannadah"'*). As to 'wood' in a negative context, one can also hint at Qurʾān 54. 31 (*ᵓinnā ᵓarsalnā ᶜalayhim ṣayḥatan wāḥidatan fa-kānū ka-hashīmi l-muḥtaẓir*), in which Thamūd is chastised: 'We released a single mighty blast against them and they ended up like a fence-maker's dry *sticks*' [my italics] (Abdel Haleem 2010: 531).

musnad and *musannad* in Arab lexicography

The word *musnad* is not recorded in al-Farāhīdī's *Kitāb al-ᶜAyn* (1980–1985, vii: 229–230) to denote anything else except 'basis, support' in terms of *aḥādīth* and '(concept of) time' (*dahr*), as every event is attributed to a specific point in time. The basic noun *sand* is given as a type of garment (others give *sind, sanad*), which we find to be a Yemenite dress in the explanation of a *ḥadīth* of ʿĀᵓishah (Ibn al-Athīr 1963, ii: 408).

Ibn Durayd (1987: 649) adds the 'Himyarite script'

(*khaṭṭ Ḥimyar*) as well as the relational adjective *musnadiyyah* 'a garment', and notes that *musnad* is also used as a category in syntax (*bāb min al-naḥw*). In al-Azharī's *Tahdhīb* we find the verb in the second form *sannada* to mean 'to put on the *sanad*' (*labis al-sanad*; al-Azharī 1964–1976, xii: 365a) in the account of Ibn al-ᶜArābī, and *musnad* as 'the language of Seth's descendants' (*kalām awlād Shīth*; 1964–1976, xii: 366a) in the account of Abū al-ᶜAbbās. Ibn ᶜAbbād ([2010], iii: 150) gives *musnad* as 'Himyaritic script' (*kitāb Ḥimyar*) and al-Fayrūzābādī (1301/1883, i: 301) as 'writ in Himyaritic' (*wa-l-musnad: ... wa-khaṭṭ bi-l-ḥimyarī*). Al-Jawharī (1990, ii: 489) is the only one to explain *musannad* as an intensified passive participle (*shuddid li-l-kathrah*) in which case we should deal with the verbal meaning as 'propped up' (*musnad*) that took the *shaddah* for the large number of its subjects (cf. Qurʾān 7. 38 *tufattaḥu lahum abwābu al-samāᵓi*; see Brockelmann 1908–1913, ii: 141–142 §71a 'in numerisch extensiver Bedeutung').

Al-Zamakhsharī (1998*a*, i: 477) gives a *musnad* inscription as (*raᵓaytu*) *maktūban bi-l-musnad*, which is also the form in al-Zabīdī's *Tāj* (1965–2001, viii: 217), for he gives *raᵓayt bi-l-musnad maktūban* 'I saw a Musnad-inscription', which strengthens our argument for *k-t-b bi-* as 'writing/inscription in "script's name"' against Ibn al-Athīr in our context. However, most information is to be gained from Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ᶜarab* (1981: 2115b), as he refers to the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* of ᶜAbd al-Malik and notes that the Himyaritic script was different 'from ours' (cf. al-Jawharī 1990, ii: 490), giving two more derivatives for the special garment: *misnadiyyah* and *musannadah* (cf. *mashrūb* 'a drink').

The lexicographical features thus provide the basis for an interpretation of *musannadah* as a passive participle of the verb *sanada* in an intense sense with the verb being either literal, 'to prop up, to support', or a denominative of a type of garment called *san(a)d* or *sind* as *sannada*, which thus yields 'clad with garments' (cf. Pickthall 1954: 400; Maulana 2002: 1095) 'pieces of wood, clad with garments'). Sindh and Sindhis are mentioned in Ibn Durayd's *Jamharah* (1987: 649) but *musannad* is not recorded as having been used as a denominative of a collective denoting a certain people like *ᶜarab > muᶜarrab* or *hind > muhannad*.[8] Nonetheless, the verb related to the garment is not attested earlier than al-Azharī, and today's province of Sindh not earlier than Ibn Durayd. The word for the specific garment seems to have varied

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[8] Rödiger (1837: 339) dismisses an etymology of the term *musnad* based on Sindh as 'indische (sindische) Schrift' (cf. 'Indian numerals').

and changed. We may list a basic noun (al-Farāhidī), a relational adjective based on the passive participle as *musnadiyyah* (Ibn Durayd), in this case perhaps the dialectal form (*u > i*) *misnadiyyah* (Ibn Manẓūr) — if it is not deemed to be an extended *nomen instrumenti* (*mifʿal + iyy-ah*) which is not given — and the passive participle of the denominative verb *sannada* (al-Azharī) yielding *musannad* (Ibn Manẓūr).

The early exegesis of Qurʾān 63. 4

Perhaps we should not attach too much importance to making a definite decision or try to fill any lacunae by mere speculation. Instead, we should go further and see how this phrase has been interpreted in exegetical and related literature up to the sixth century after the Hijrah. The first thing to be noted is that the notable exegetes Mujāhid (2005: 298), al-Ḍaḥḥāk (1999, ii: 867), al-Suddī (1993: 454), al-Ṯawrī (1983; only up to Qurʾān 52. 3), al-Kūfī ([2010]), al-Tustarī (2002: 168–169), al-Ḥibarī ([2010]), and al-Sulamī ([2010]) do not provide any answers to our question.

Zayd b. ʿAlī only paraphrases *khushub* as *jamāʿat khashab* ‘a bundle of wood’ (2001: 267; cf. Abū ʿUbaydah 1954: 259; al-Akhfash 1985, ii: 709; al-Farrāʾ 1983, iii: 158–159; Ibn Qutaybah 1978: 467; al-Sijistānī 1963: 87), while the explanation in al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* as *rijāl ajmal shayʾ* ‘most handsome men’ (al-Bukhārī 1422/2001, iii: 153 no. 4903; al-ʿAsqalānī 2005, x: 706; cf. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2006, ii: 1279–1280 no. 2772; Lāshīn 2002, x: 377, 382) refers to ‘their pleasant outward appearance’ (*wa-idhā raʾaytahum tuʿjibuka ʾajsāmuhum*) instead. Thus, one may finally surmise the implicitness of the meaning of *musannadah*, as not being related to ESA scripts at all and therefore not bearing a meaning that needs to be explained.

Wooden polemics

A sizeable number of explanations can be combined in one set, the shared feature being some elaboration on negative associations with ‘wood’ and ‘wooden’ as a human attribute. In English one can think of a clunky, clumsy, gawky, awkward, ungainly person lacking grace in movement or posture, while in German you would call a bonehead ‘Holzkopf’. Hence, the comparison of hypocrites to rigid, soulless wood should offer some interpretative possibilities. Al-Huwwārī regards them as no more than bodies unwilling to do good deeds (*hum ajsād laysat lahum niyyah wa-lā ḥisbah fī al-khayr*; 1990,

iv: 356) or having unbelieving hearts (*laysat lahum qulūb āmanū bihā*; 1990, iv: 356 n. 2), while al-Qummī ([2010]) says they cannot hear nor be reasonable (*lā yasmaʿūn wa-lā yaʿqilūn*). Al-Ṭabarī (2001, xxii: 653) goes further stating that ‘there is no good about them and they don’t have comprehension or knowledge; they are just figures without understanding and shapes without reason’ (*lā khayr ʿindahum wa-lā fiqh lahum wa-lā ʿilm, wa-innamā hum ṣuwar bi-lā aḥlām wa-ashbāḥ bi-lā ʿuqūl*). This is accepted by al-Qaysī (2008, xii: 7482); it was rendered as ‘figures without souls and bodies without understanding’ (*ashbāḥ bi-lā arwāḥ wa-ajsām bi-lā aḥlām*) by al-Thaʿlabī (2002, ix: 320) and as ‘figures and forms with no mind and maxims beyond’ (*ashbāḥ wa-qawālib wa-laysa warāʾahum albāb wa-ḥaqāʾiq*) by al-Qushayrī ([2010]), who adds that hollow nutshells can be decorated (*fa-l-jawz al-fārigh muzayyan ẓāhiruh*) but they are useful for children’s games only (*wa-lākinnah li-laʿb al-ṣubyān*).

Propped-up timbers

Muqātil ([2010]) explicates the Qurʾānic simile as *ka-anna ajsāmahum khushub baʿḍuhā ʿalā baʿḍ qiyāman* ‘as if their bodies were timbers — one above the other’ being the first to paraphrase *musannadah*. Al-Samarqandī (1993, iii: 365) adds to this that the timbers are leaned against the wall (*khashab usnida ilā al-ḥāʾiṭ*) but the reason for this remains unknown.

Why are timbers propped up?

It is al-Ṭabarānī ([2010]), who sheds light on this. He states:

> ‘they [i.e. the hypocrites] do not understand nor see — just like timbers which are *musannadah* to the wall, which are of no use other than to look at them. Timbers are soulless and cannot be reasonable and understand either; similarly the hypocrites do not hear belief or comprehend it; and *musannadah* means leaned against the wall’ (*fīhi bayān fī tark al-tafahhum wa-l-istibṣār bi-manzilat al-khushub al-musannadah ilā l-jidār; lā yantafiʿ illā bi-l-naẓar ilayhā, wa-l-khushub lā arwāḥ fīhā wa-lā taʿqil wa-lā tafham, wa-ka-dhālik al-munāfiqūn lā yasmaʿūn al-īmān wa-lā yaʿqilūnah; wa-l-musannadah: al-mumālah ilā l-jidār*; cf. al-Wāḥidī 1994, iv: 302–303).

Al-Ṭūsī ([2010]) asserts that the timbers are rotten and eaten away (Blachère 1980: 597; ‘très fantaisiste’) and hence of no use (*nakhirah mutaʾakkilah lā khayr fīhā*),

but as they are *musannadah*, one may think they are all right when looking at them (*yaḥsab man yarāhā annahā ṣaḥīḥah salīmah*). This is put somewhat more figuratively by al-Baghawī (1412/1991, viii: 130), who explains *musannadah* as 'leaned against the wall' (*mumālah ilā al-jidār*) being the intensified form for the multitude of subjects involved (*wa-l-tathqīl li-l-takthīr*, cf. al-Jawharī 1990, ii: 490). He states that the hypocrites are not compared to fruit-bearing trees (*ashjār tathmur*) but to (loose) timbers leaned against the wall (*wa-lākinnahā khushub musannadah ilā al-ḥāʾiṭ*).

Al-Māwardī (1992, vi: 15) gives a summary of three possible interpretations of the simile:

1. The hypocrites are compared to upright palm trees for their outward beauty (*bi-l-nakhl al-qiyām li-ḥusn manẓarihim*);
2. they are compared to rotten timbers (cf. al-Baghawī) for their bad attitude (*bi-l-khushub al-musannadah li-sūʾ makhbarihim*);
3. they are compared to *musannadah* timbers for they do not hear the guidance and do not accept it just as *musannadah* timbers do not hear (*lā yasmaʿūn al-hudā ka-mā lā tasmaʿuh al-khushub al-musannadah*); He said '*musannadah*' because they link themselves to belief (*yastanidūn ilā al-īmān li-ḥiqn dimāʾihim*).

Al-Ṭabarsī ([2010]) offers nothing new, except the ideas of al-Thaʿlabī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Qushayrī, and Ibn ʿAṭiyyah. The latter (Ibn ʿAṭiyyah 2001, v: 312) had added that they (are leaned against a wall because they) cannot stand on their own (*muʿtamidah ʿalā ghayrihā lā tathbut bi-anfusihā*). The same holds for Ibn al-Jawzī (1404/1984, viii: 275), who repeats what al-Wāḥidī and al-Baghawī had stated on this.

But al-Zamakhsharī (1998*b*, vi: 124) says their being leaned is compared to *musannadah* timbers against the wall for they are bodies devoid of belief and benevolence (*ʾajrām khāliyah ʿan al-īmān wa-l-khayr*), because if wood is useful, it will be (used) in the roof (*saqf*) or the wall (*jidār*) or wherever needed (*maẓānn al-intifāʿ*) and it would not be left uselessly leaning against the wall (*mā dāma matrūk fārigh ghayr muntafiʿ bihi usnid ilā al-ḥāʾiṭ*). An innovation (perhaps by al-Zamakhsharī himself) is the interpretation that *khushub* — because of their pleasant outward appearance (*ḥusn ṣuwarihim*) and their limited usefulness (*qillat jadwāhum*) — stands for carved idols (*aṣnām manḥūtah*) which are *musannadah* against the wall. This seems to have been taken up by the aforementioned Atallah who reinterpreted *musannadah*

as 'en relation avec le Sind' and consequently the passage as '[i]ls sont semblables à ces belles statues en bois du paganisme'. He is of the firm opinion that the term *sanad* is a type of garment: 'Il est tellement isolé et orphelin sous cette racine qu'on pourrait se demander si les lexicographes arabes, se donnant pour mission d'expliquer tous les termes du Coran, n'ont pas forgé le terme *sanad* (dans le sens d'étoffe) à partir de l'épithète coranique *musannada*, sans même en comprendre le sens' (Atallah 2008: 453).

This conviction reminds us of Saleh's discussion of the treatment of 'foreign words' in the Qurʾān in which he states that 'Having found the putative foreign origin of the Qurʾanic term, the modern scholar looks back on the Qurʾan to discover that the new meaning given to the word does not make sense there, hence Muhammad must have misunderstood the word and misused it.' (Saleh 2010: 654).

musannad = 'clad in garments'?

It is true that *sanad* is, in a way, isolated and at present we cannot point to any suitable cognate to this in any Ancient South Arabian language ('Yemeni dress', see above), but we can point to Gəʿəz *s{ə,a}nd{u,o}n*, which Leslau (1991: 506a) holds to be of Greek origin (*sindōn* 'linen sheet'). The Greek word occurs in the Septuagint six times (Matt. 27: 59; Mark 14: 51; 14: 52; 15: 46 (twice); Luke 23: 53) and is rendered in the 'Pshîṭtâ' as *kettānā* in Matt. 27: 59, Mark 15: 46, and Luke 23: 53 or *seddōnā* in Mark 14: 51 and 14: 52, and John 13: 4. Syriac *sdwnʾ* could be a borrowing of the Greek (cf. Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon [2010]: *sndwn*), but it could also be a development of Akkadian *s/shaddinnu* (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary [2010]: S I: 17a, 'a cloth and a garment') to which Greek *sindōn* is probably related (Kaufman 1974: 94–95 n. 324). Kaufman proposes 'a northern, possibly Anatolian origin' for this culture word based on the Akkadian ending *-innu*. Subsequently, Mankowski (2000: 109–110) points to the correspondence of Greek medial *-nd-* to Akkadian *-dd-*. Hence, the Greek form should have preserved the original pronunciation if the two forms can be traced to the same origin, or the Greek form is a loan (from Akkadian; cf. Yoder 2003: 436, n. 34; Williamson 2006: 283) through an Aramaic intermediary with secondary nasalization. Prior to this, Fraenkel (1886: 41) had proposed an Egyptian origin which he gave as '*schens, schenti*', while Jeffery (1938: 180) held that the Greek form originated from Akkadian '*sudinnu, sadinnu*'. We may conclude that Arabic *san(a)d, sind* is

obviously related to the Gəˁəz cognate — which probably made its way into Gəˁəz through the translation of the Greek Septuagint (cf. Kropp 2008) — morphologically, phonetically, and semantically. Unfortunately we cannot date the borrowing, but can only note that the garment was presumably known prior to the time of the Prophet's wife ˁĀʾishah. The first denominative derivations related to it can only be attested from the tenth century on (in the literature analysed).

Evidence from ancient poetry

By contrast, the form *musannad* is attested in its verbal sense in the pre-Qurʾānic *Muˁallaqah* of Ṭarafah b. al-ˁAbd (al-Zawzanī 1993: 53; Sells 1986: 25–26):

> *umirrat yadāhā fatla shazrin wa-ujniḥat/*
> *lahā ˁaḍudāhā fī saqīfin musannadi*

'That splay out wide from the body, she leans to the side, forearms like *wedged-in* roof beams'.

A second occurrence of *musannad* can be found in the Aṣmaˁiyyāt, in a poem by Mālik b. Nuwayrah, who lived to see the revelation of the Qurʾān. There it is used in a 'wood phrase': *kh{a,u}shb athlin musannad* 'propped-up tamarisk logs' (Ahlwardt 1902: 26 l. 20; Shākir & Hārūn 1976: 194 l. 20; cf. Nöldeke 1903: 210; 1963: 133 no. 22/2).

Conclusion

In this article we investigated the background of the term *musannadah* occurring in Qurʾān 63. 4 as a descriptive term of unspecified wood logs. The same usage can be attested in a poem by Mālik b. Nuwayrah and the term

is also found in the *muˁallaqah* of Ṭarafah b. al-ˁAbd. In lexicographical literature, we generally lack an exegetical commentary on Qurʾān 63. 4 and it is only al-Jawharī who notes that *musannad(ah)* is actually the intensified form of *musnad(ah)* which goes back to the verb *asnada*, the causative form of *sanada* 'to lean, to rest'; hence 'to make lean, rest' (cf. Lane 1893: 1442c). In the exegetical literature we mostly read — if any interpretation is provided — that this interpretation was often explicated by '(leaned) to the wall' from Mujāhid onwards. There is no exegetical evidence for the conception of *musannad* as 'clad in garments' or for *khushub musannadah* to be related to the ESA scripts denoted by *musnad*; this can be ruled out because the ESA (minuscule) script to be found on wooden sticks is called *zabūr*. Therefore, the well-to-do hypocrites are rendered worthless by comparing them to propped-up useless timbers (cf. al-Kirmānī 1981, xviii: 147–148 no. 4584). This should have made Shūmān grin in delight while preaching on how to prepare for Ramaḍān.

Sigla

DAI–GDN 2002–20	Nebes 2004: 221–225, figs 2a & 2b. (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI) Grosser Damm Nord (GDN).)
al-Jawf 04.37	Arbach & Schiettecatte 2006: 51–54
Raybūn-Ḥaḍrān 213	Frantsouzoff 2001: 187–189.
Raybūn-Kafas/Naˁmān 269	Frantsouzoff 2007: 273–274.
Ry 461	Ryckmans 1951: 114–116.
Ry 507	Beeston 1985: 46–50.

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