An Early Christian Arabic Account of the Creation of the World

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Introduction

More than most phenomena of Late Antique religious culture, the frequent reshapings of the myth of creation reveal how strongly this era was affected by interreligious relationships. As a result, its textual manifestations are extremely multifaceted, crossing the borders of different religious systems. Going back to ancient oriental patterns, the Biblical account of the creation of the world goes through a long history of its reception as a constituent of both Jewish and Christian traditions until it finally finds its way to Islamic culture. Formal similarities between the Qur'anic creation theology and certain Jewish or Christian sources respectively should not therefore be viewed as corruption of an 'original' motif, but rather as evidence of the common Late Antique cultural heritage that is adopted and modified in the Qur'an. This paper's focus of study, a poem of ᶜAdī b. Zayd al-ᶜIbādi (d. ca. 600) about the creation of the world and the fall of man, serves as an example of a text related to the literary milieu of the Qur'an and helps to place the latter in the context of the culture and era in which it emerged.

The main problem that besets the study of early Arabic culture, especially with concern to its religious aspects, is the problem of the authenticity of sources. This holds particularly true with respect to early Arabic poetry. The subject of this paper is a poetic work the written form of which can be traced back to a time no less than two hundred and fifty years after its supposed composition at the end of the fifth century CE. How justified can the usage of such a late document be for the study of the literary background of the Qur'an? This question has both a historical and a hermeneutical implication. Historically, one should proceed from the fact that the tradition of Arabic poetry has its roots in the pre-Islamic epoch and, despite a long process of transmission in mainly oral form, is more or less authentically preserved in the written sources currently available to us.[1] In a recent study on Arabic tribal poetry as an ethnographic source that exhibits an uninterrupted continuity from pre-Islamic times through to the present day, Maxim Vasilenko stresses the multi-functionality and deep social integration of Arabic verse.[2] This can still be observed and documented.[3] Thus, research in contemporary Arabic tribal poetry shows that at all points in its history, this poetry

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[1] Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 12–29.

[2] Vasilenko, *Plemennaya poeziya*, 9.

[3] A recent publication on this subject is Suvorov, *Al-ᶜUrr i Samar.*

has been inseparably linked with the social life and ceremonial practices of Arabic tribal society. As such, it has a clearly evident historical dimension.

The range of accuracy in the transmission of early works of Arabic poetry requires individual investigation of each particular case. Comparing existing studies on the poetry of Umayya b. abī aṣ-Ṣalt, Tilman Seidensticker came to the conclusion that it should be possible to arrive at objective criteria for determining the authenticity of early Arabic poems.[4] As has been noted by Gustav von Grünebaum,[5] along with the analysis of the vocabulary and content of texts, an investigation of the development of literary forms and schools of early Arabic poetry is also apt to provide essential criteria. Furthermore, much closer attention than has been customary should be paid to the history of the transmission of the texts and the evidence it provides with regard to their later reception.[6] This can be achieved only through an extensive analysis of a wide range of textual materials. Unfortunately, publications offering reliable analytical material, like Marek Dziekan's book on the poetry of Quss b. Sāʿida al-Iyādī,[7] or Vladimir Polosin's vocabulary of ʿAbsite poets,[8] remain relatively rare.

Literary criticism of ʿAdī b. Zayd's poetic works also requires further study. This is however beyond the scope of the present paper, which will focus on one particular poem and the analysis of its lexical and thematic composition. Combined with the historical investigation of the poem's probable origin in the Nestorian milieu of al-Ḥīra provided by Isabel Toral-Niehoff,[9] textual criticism can make a substantial contribution to the text's interpretation. Although these approaches bring to light important evidence for the poem's authenticity, they cannot yield an irrefutable solution of the question of authenticity. Yet the issue of where the text is to be historically located should not prevent a broader hermeneutical discourse. Thomas Bauer accurately points

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[4]   Seidensticker, "Authenticity."

[5]   Grünebaum, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," Grünebaum, "Zur Chronologie."

[6]   The analysis of the textual evidences of the poem presented indicates a constant process of transmission of a common source. The character of several reading variants shows very clearly that these occurred as a result of the text's reinterpretation in the environment of its later transmission. These changes, however, only occur within the framework provided by the original text and can in no way be described as systematic forgery. For further details on the textual transmission of the poem, the reader is referred to the appendix.

[7]   Textual and literary analysis brought Dziekan to the conclusion that 36 out of the 66 works attributed to Quss b. Sāʿida can be regarded as pre-Islamic, see Dziekan, *Quss Ibn Sāʿida,* 229.

[8]   Polosin, *Slovar.*

[9]   Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls."

to the unjustified neglect of early Arabic literature as a source for the contextual study of the Qur'an, which he views as resulting mainly from an incorrect methodological approach towards pre-Islamic poetry.[10] Following his argument that poetry is an indispensable source for any study of early Arabic culture, this current paper presents a poetic work, which is directly linked thematically to the issue of the Qur'an in context.

The poet: ʿAdī Ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādi

The biographical information available on ʿAdī b. Zayd has been recently summarized by Isabel Toral-Niehoff and Theresia Hainthaler.[11] Here, it is sufficient to mention that ʿAdī's life was intimately connected with the city of al-Ḥīra, where he was born in the Middle of the sixth century and was executed around the year 600. Al-Ḥīra was located in South Mesopotamia, in the area where later the town of Kufa was founded. Beginning in the mid-fifth century, al-Ḥīra became one of the largest and most important Arab cities.[12] Its active relationships with Persia, Byzantium and Arabia played a significant role in both political and cultural development. Al-Ḥīra's significance within the cultural history of the Arabs derives not only from the fact that it cultivated an urban lifestyle that differed from the traditional Bedouin way of life, but more importantly from the fact that it served as a center of cross-cultural exchange where Arabs had direct access to the Late Antique heritage.[13] Due to this symbiosis, Arabic culture received a significant impetus from al-Ḥīra. According to Islamic historians, even the Arabic script may have been invented in al-Ḥīra, a view that in Gerhard Endress' opinion reflects the position of al-Ḥīra as a central "connecting point of Aramaic-Hellenistic culture and the pre-Islamic Arabic world."[14]

The topic of the development of Arabic literacy also represents a remarkable aspect in the biography of ʿAdī b. Zayd, who is perhaps the most prominent Christian Arabic poet of al-Ḥīra.[15] After all, he is credited with the official introduction of Arabic

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[10]   See Bauer's contribution to this volume.

[11]   Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls," 239–240; Hainthaler, "ʿAdī ibn Zayd," 158–163.

[12]   Shahid, "Al-Ḥīra." According to Ugo Monneret de Villard, al-Ḥīra "had to be a great city, with intense commercial traffic, so much that arrival was from the Euphrates and the Canals, as well as vessels from India and China,"—see Monneret de Villard, *Le chiese,* 32; quoted upon: Comneno, "Nestorianism," 44.

[13]   Shahid, "Al-Ḥīra," 462.

[14]   Endress, "Arabische Schrift," 170.

[15]   For bibliographical references on the history of Christianity in al-Ḥīra refer to Hainthaler, "ʿAdī ibn Zayd," 164–165; see also Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls," 252.

script to the Persian court at Ctesiphon.[16] ʿAdī b. Zayd must have known and used the Arabic script in his work as a royal secretary, and he might therefore have applied his linguistic skills to his poetical work as well. This assumption appears particularly plausible if one takes into consideration that his poems were composed primarily in a solitary cell[17] from which ʿAdī b. Zayd is reported to have continued writing until the tragic end of his life.[18] Even if manifestations of literacy in pre-Islamic Arabia are limited to "documents of an 'archival' character," as Alfred Beeston claims,[19] in the case of ʿAdī b. Zayd, who was both a poet and an official, the possibility that he documented his verses in writing is quite high. The question of transmission, however, remains open, and is only hypothetically illuminated by this assumption.

Further details can be provided by the later history of transmission. The collection of ʿAdī b. Zayd's poetic works was carried out by Hishām b. al-Kalbī (d. ca. 206/821), and his *Kitāb ʿAdī b. Zayd* was used by both al-Iṣfahānī (285/897–356/967) and aṭ-Ṭabarī (615/1218–694/1295). Tradition portrays Ibn al-Kalbī as an expert of Arabic genealogy and pre-Islamic Arabic history. Ibn al-Kalbī's lost work on the churches and monasteries of al-Ḥīra was most likely based on his studies of the archives of al-Ḥīra's Christian communities.[20] In view of the fact that Ibn al-Kalbī even consulted Palmyrenic texts and was informed of findings from Yemen,[21] it stands to reason that he would certainly have made use of the material available to him at al-Ḥīra, as it bordered directly on his hometown of Kufa.[22] It thus appears probable that the later transmission of the works of ʿAdī b. Zayd may go back to a reliable source. Even though the origins of this transmission process remain undocumented, its later manifestations deserve close attention, since the history of any text is always a history of its reception as well.

Among the preserved works of ʿAdī b. Zayd is a poem concerning the creation of the world, the creation of man, and the latter's fall. This poem has already been the

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[16]   *Aghānī*, vol. 2, 102; see also Horovitz, "ʿAdī ibn Zeyd," 38.

[17]   *Aghānī*, vol. 2, 110.

[18]   Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1020–1021, 1023, *Aghānī*, vol. 2, 110–115.

[19]   Beeston, "Antecedents," 235.

[20]   Attalah, "Al-Kalbī," 494.

[21]   Attalah, "Al-Kalbī," 494.

[22]   The urban landscape of al-Ḥīra shifted already in pre-Islamic time "northwards, till it reached the area occupied by present-day Kufa," (see Talbot Rice, "Hira," 261); and in the ninth century al-Ḥīra and Kufa were considered to be two names of one and the same city, see Hainthaler, "ʿAdī ibn Zayd," 165.

subject of critical analysis.[23] However, this work cannot be viewed as complete. The text of the poem has not yet been published as a single, complete entity, but rather in several fragments.[24] For this reason, a new attempt to compile the text of the poem[25] and to analyze it in relation to its literary context is necessary.

Introduction (vv. 1–2)

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إِسْمَعْ حَدِيثاً كَمَا يَوْماً تُحَدِّثَهُ   عَنْ ظَهْرِ غَيْبٍ إِذا ما سائِلٌ سَأَلا   1

أَن كيفَ أَبْدَى إِلَهُ الخَلْقِ نِعْمَتَهُ   فِينَا وعَرَّفَنَا آياتِه الأُوَلا   2

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Listen to a story, so that one day you may retell it
from memory, if a questioner asks (you)!

How the God of creation let appear his grace
to us and taught us his first signs.

The words *isma* ḥadīthan, "listen to a story," set the mood of the poem right from its beginning. The introductory phrase echoes Jewish and Christian liturgy and their typical requests for the community to listen, especially before the recitation of scripture. The call "listen!" is also distinctive of Syrian homiletic literature.[26] An echo of this Jewish and Christian liturgical practice of announcing the recitation of scripture can also be found in the Qur'an. The word *ḥadīth* often precedes the Qur'anic narrations of Biblical stories, for instance in Q 20:9: وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى "Hast thou received the story of Moses?"[27]

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[23] Hirschberg, *Lehren*, 82–84, 105–108; Gabrieli, "ʿAdī b. Zaid," 85–86; Wagner, *Grundzüge*, 167; Rezvan, *Koran*, 64, 84–85; Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls."

[24] The edition of al-Muʾaybid (*Dīwān ʿAdī b. Zayd*, 158–160) also does not include all textual material.

[25] See the appendix.

[26] See *The Homilies of Aphraates*, 239, as an example.

[27] Translations of the Qur'an follow Arberry, *The Koran*. As remarked in the introduction, general lowercasing and other minor modifications have been adopted.

The introductory lines also imply a dialogical setting, serving the purposes of both preaching and instruction—a motif to be found in both Jewish and Christian tradition that ultimately goes back to Biblical precedents (Exod. 12:26–27, Deut. 6:20–21, 1 Pet. 3:15). The use of dialogue is a characteristic feature of Late Antique poetry and homiletic prose in both Greek and Syriac.[28] Dialogical and homiletic characters are crucial attributes of the most important forms of early Syriac poetry—*madrāshā, sogītā* and *mēmrā,*[29] as well as the *kontakion,* a form of Byzantine liturgical poetry found in the sixth century that was significantly influenced by Syriac hymnography.[30] The Qur'an also includes homiletic reminiscences, as for example in Q 93:11: وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ "And as for thy Lord's blessing, declare it."

Close attention ought to be paid to the expression, *abdā niʿmatahū,* "He let his grace appear," in the second line of this poem. The word, *niʿmatun,* "grace," is used several times in the Qur'an, as in Q 35:3: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ "O men, remember God's blessing upon you."[31] The concept can also be found frequently in the Bible,[32] where it is explicitly mentioned that God's grace *appears:* Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all."[33] The verb *abdā,* "to let appear," together with the following verb, *ʿarrafa,* "to let someone know" or "to teach," emphasize the hermeneutical aspect of the poem. This is evident from the text's first lines, which define the perspective from which the creation story will be viewed throughout the poem. The quasi-historical report of Genesis is placed in a hermeneutical light where the recognition of God's signs forms the basis for proclaiming his glory. As in later Biblical accounts, especially those of the Psalms and the story of Job, the hermeneutical perspective is central to Qur'anic creation theology. It seems, therefore, that it is not due to coincidence that on the lexical level the verb *ʿarrafa* also parallels the Qur'an. No other evidence for *ʿarrafa* in the second stem or, according to two recensions of the poem, *ʿallama,*[34] can be found in pre-Islamic poetry.

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[28] Brock, "From Ephrem to Romanos," 141.

[29] See Brock, "From Ephrem to Romanos," Brock, "Syriac Dispute Poems."

[30] Asmus, "Tworchestwo," 192.

[31] Further references Q 2:211.231, 3:103, 5:11.7.20, 8:53, 14:16.28.34, 16:18.53.83.114, 26:22, 33:9, 37:57, 39:8.49, 43:13, 68:49, 92:19.

[32] At least 348 references.

[33] Translations of the Bible, if not indicated otherwise, are given according to the New Revised Standard Version.

[34] See appendix.

In the Qur'an, *ʿarrafa* is used twice, in Q 47:5–6 and in 66:3. *ʿAllama* appears several times, as in Q 2:31: وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا "And He taught Adam the names, all of them." However, what matters is not this formal lexical correspondence but rather the semantics of the word *āya* (pl. *āyāt*) meaning "sign," which has evident hermeneutical implications in the poem as well as in the Qur'an. The usage of *ʿarrafa/ʿallama* in connection with *āyāt* has clear parallels in the Qur'an, where signs are portrayed as a crucial means of communication between God and man. The Qur'an describes this process with the verbs "to bring" (*atā, jāʾa*, Q 2:106, 211, 43:47), "to bring down," "to reveal" (*nazzala, anzala*, Q 6:37, 10:20), "to send" (*baʿatha*, Q 10:75), but also "to explain," "to make clear" (Q 5:75, 6:46, 7:174, 9:11), "to tell," and "to recite" (*dhakkara, qaṣṣa*, Q 6:130, 8:31, 10:71).[35] The Arabic *āya* is related to the Hebrew *ōth*, meaning in biblical and rabbinical usage "sign" or "miracle." However, in contrast to the latter, *āya* in the Qur'an refers to both non-linguistic as well as linguistic communication.[36] As such, it refers to God's revelation in general. A similar tendency towards the extension of the semantic field of the concept of "sign" is found in Syriac literature prior to the Qur'an. Here, the word *āthā*, "while being used precisely as the Heb אות, and translating σημεῖον both in the LXX and N.T., is also used in the sense of *argumentum, documentum* (*PSm*, 413),[37] and thus approaches even more closely than אות the Qurʾānic use of the word."[38] In the Syriac translation of the Gospel according to John, *āthā* refers to signs by which Jesus manifested himself as the Lord.[39]

The expression, *fa-ʿarrafanā āyātihī l-uwalā*, in the second line of the poem represents early evidence for the hermeneutic meaning of the word *āya* in Arabic, which probably developed in correspondence with the Syriac *āthā* and is significant for the Qur'anic concept of signs. Against the background of the Christian idea of the *logos creator*[40] (John 1:1.14), the description of the creation of the world as "first signs" does not appear surprising. Creation is the manifestation of the divine Word (λόγος)[41] and as

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[35]   Abrahamov, "Signs," 8.

[36]   Abrahamov, "Signs," 6–7.

[37]   Jeffery here refers to Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, vol. 1, 413 (K. D.).

[38]   Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary*, 73.

[39]   Payne Smith, *Syriac Dictionary*, 31. See John 2:11 as an example. For the New Testament is a disassociation from the legitimization of the religious authority through signs as means of non-linguistic communication characteristic (Mat 16:4, 24:3ff, 24:24, Mar 8:11–12, Luk 11:16 etc.).

[40]   Compare Ps. 33:6, 9, and also Q 2:117, 3:47, 3:59, 6:73, 16:40, 19:35, 36:82, 40:68, 50:38.

[41]   In Greek λόγος means not just "word," but also "language," "speech," "proof," "doctrine," and "reason."

such has to be understood as the first act of revelation. Even if *āya* in pre-Islamic poetry indicates only "signs," "road-signs,"[42] it is likely that the Arabic word's semantic field was extended and interpreted hermeneutically among Arabic Christians who were familiar with Syriac tradition. The poem's use of the word *āya* thus ought to be explained in terms of a shared linguistic and theological context rather then in terms of the poem's textual dependence on the Qur'an.

The creation of the world (vv. 3–7)

وَظُلْمَةً لَمْ يَدَعْ فَتْقًا ولا خَلَلا   كَانَتْ رِياحًا ومآءًا ذا عُرَانِيَةٍ   3

They were winds, raging water
and darkness. He left neither rent nor gap.

No parallel for the mention of winds can be found in either the Qur'an or the Bible. In several Late Antique works, wind or air are often mentioned among the original elements such as water, fire and earth.[43] However, it is unlikely that verse 3a does in fact allude to classical cosmology. It is much more probable that the terms "winds and ranging water" are meant to describe original chaos, as known from Gen. 1:2 as *tohū wa-bohū*: "the earth was a formless void" וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ. In addition, the use of the word "wind" in its plural form stresses the descriptive meaning of the passage. This discourages allegorical interpretation of the kind found in the Babylonian Talmud and other writings, where the wind is identified as one of the cosmogonic elements.[44]

 The reference to darkness and a primordial unity of the whole of creation are also analogous to Biblical accounts: וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם "And darkness covered the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). By contrast, the Qur'an employs the word *ẓulmatun* only in its plural form, *ẓulumāt*, which only once appears in the context of the creation of the world: Q 6:1 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ "Praise belongs to God, who created the heavens and the earth and appointed the shadows and light." This verse, however, should not be read as referring to original darkness, but rather to night and day and the succession of one following the other (cf. Q 3:190). Water, too, is

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[42] Imrū' al-Qays, LXV:1, see Ahlwardt, *The Divans*, 160; compare also Q 26:128.

[43] Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen*, 15; see also Toepel, *Legenden*, 25–36.

[44] Toepel, *Legenden*, 35–36.

mentioned only once in the Qur'an in the context of creation, namely, in Q 11:7. There its connotation differs significantly from the way in which water appears in the poem: وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لسَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاء "And it is he who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and his throne was upon the waters."[45] According to the Qur'an, then, water existed prior to the creation of the world. The Qur'an, therefore, does not appear to subscribe to the idea of a *creatio ex nihilo*.[46] Although this concept is of course not explicitly mentioned in the Bible either, it is generally assumed in later Christian theology. The wording of line 3 also does not explicitly exclude the possibility that matter might have been preexistent. However, one should not overlook the fact that the linguistic construction of *kāna* + accusative syntactically subordinates the words "winds" and "water" as compound predicates to the word "signs" in the preceding line as its subject. Thus, these elements are seen as part of the divine work of creation.

فَأَمَرَ الظُّلْمَةَ السَّوْداءَ فَانكَشَفَتْ   وعَزَلَ المَآءَ عَمَّا كانَ قَدْ شَغَلا   4

وبَسَطَ الأَرْضَ بَسْطًا ثُمَّ قَدَّرَها   تَحْتَ السَّمَآءِ سَوآءًا مِثْلَ ما فَعَلا   5

Then he commanded the black darkness and it became disclosed,
and he separated the water from what was occupying him (before).

And he spread the earth out, then he determined it
under the sky, adjusted (to it) as he made (it).

Lines 4–5 recall in a shorter form the events of the second and third days of the creation of Genesis. Biblical images are evoked such as the partition between light and darkness (Gen. 1:4), the separation between the water under and above the firmament (Gen. 1:6–7) and the formation of dry land (Gen. 1:9–10). The poem essentially follows the chronology of the Biblical account of creation. The wording of the lines, however, exhibits no clear similarities to the text of Genesis.

Basaṭa l-arḍa basṭan is a *figura etymologica*, meaning literally "he spread the earth out by spreading." One version replaces *basṭan* with *bisāṭan* (TA, LA). The

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[45] Compare Gen. 1:2: וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (King James).

[46] O'Saughnessy, "Creation from Nothing."

translation would then be "he spread out the earth like a carpet." This seems, however, to be a later reading. The primary meaning of the root *b-s-ṭ* is "to spread out," "to stretch out." The idea that God spread out the earth is reflected in the Bible, cf. Isa. 42:5: "Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it."[47]

    The Qur'an also discusses the spreading of earth in Q 2:22: الّذي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً "(Serve your Lord,) who assigned to you the earth for a couch, and heaven for an edifice." The word *firāshun*, which Arberry translates here as "couch," has as its primary meaning "plain," "plain land." The verb *farasha* means "to level," "to make plain," as well as "to make something a bed." This meaning is clearly attested in Q 51:48: وَالأرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ "And the earth—we spread it forth; O excellent smoothers!" Along with *farasha*, the spreading of earth is described in the Qur'an with the verbs *madda* (13:3, 15:19, 50:7, 84:3), *saṭaḥa* (88:20) and *ṭaḥā* (91:6). *Basaṭa* is not used in the Qur'an in this context.[48]

6	وجاعَلَ الشَّمْسَ مِصرًا لا خَفَاءَ به	بَيْنَ النَّهارِ وبَيْنَ اللَّيْلِ قَدْ فَصَلا
7	وفي السَّمَاءِ مَصابِيحٌ تَضِيءُ لَنا	ما إنْ تُكَلِّفُنا زَيْتاً ولا فُتُلاَ

And he made the sun a limit that has no veil,
it separates the day from the night.

And lights shine for us in the sky,
without burdening us with oil or wick.

In pre-Islamic poetry, the word *miṣrun* has the primary meaning of "limit," "age-limit." Therefore, the fist words of line 6 express the notion that the sun serves to mark the passage of time. The same function of the sun is depicted in Gen. 1:14. A parallel can also be found in Q 6:96: وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا "And he has made the night for a repose, and the sun and moon for a reckoning." This similarity, however, is only one of content. There is nothing in lines 6 and 7 of the poem that is immediately recognizable as having been borrowed from either the Bible or the Qur'an. The

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[47] כֹּה־אָמַר הָאֵל ׀ יְהוָה בּוֹרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנוֹטֵיהֶם רֹקַע הָאָרֶץ וְצֶאֱצָאֶיהָ

[48] *Basaṭa* is used in the Qur'an with the meaning "to spread out the hand" (Q 13:26, 17:30, 28:82, 29:62, 30:37, 34:36, 34:39, 39:52, 42:12).

statement concerning the absence of a veil remains unclear. One possible interpretation is that this may refer to the notion that the transition from day to night and the course of time occur smoothly, without a noticeable separation.

The idea that the sun is put into service for man is resumed in line 7. This seems to be an independent poetic idea without direct sources in canonical religious texts.[49] It does, however, possess a rhetorical function. The reference to the listeners ("lights shine *for us*") recalls the dialogical framework and the didactic character of the poem.

Creation of man, paradise, and woman (vv. 8–11)

وكانَ آخِرَها أَنْ صَوَّرَ الرَّجُلا قَضَى لِسِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ خَلِيقَتَهُ	8
حتَّى إذا ما رآه تَمَّ واعتَدَلاَ فأَخَذَ اللهُ من طينٍ فصوَّره	9
بنَفْخَةِ الرُّوحِ في الجِسْمِ الَّذي جَبَلا دَعَاهُ آدَم صَوْتاً فاستَجابَ لَهُ	10
وزَوْجَهُ صُنْعَةً مِنْ ضِلْعِه جَعَلا ثُمَّتَ أَوْرَثَهُ الفِرْدَوْسَ يَعْمُرُها	11

He fulfilled his creation in six days
and it was its last part, that he shaped man.

God took clay and shaped him
until he saw him to be perfect and standing upright.

He called him with a (raised) voice "Adam!," and the latter answered him
thanks to the blowing of the spirit into the body that he formed.

After that he bequeathed to him paradise, so that he might inhabit it,
and he made his wife, built out of his rib.

The number of days of creation is defined as six in the Bible (Gen. 2:2, Exod. 20:11, 31:17). This number is also frequently reported in the Qur'an (7:54, 10:3, 11:7).[50] Both sources also imply that the creation of man was the final act of creation. Its depiction in the lines 8 through 11 is close to the so-called "second creation story" of Genesis (2:4–

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[49]   A remote parallel can be found in the parable on the carelessness of the birds in Matt. 6:26.

[50]   Further references Q 25:59, 32:4, 50:38, 57:4.

25). The Biblical origin of lines 8 and 9 can be seen by the use of the verb *ṣawwara*. The root *ṣ-w-r* contains the meaning "image," "form"; *ṣawwara* thus means "to shape," "to form." In the present context, it indicates that the poet was aware of the Biblical concept of man's creation in the image of God. Gen. 1:26 reads: "Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."[51] Here the Hebrew text uses the verb *āśa* to mean "make." In the Syriac version, the term used is *ᵉbad*. Parallel to this, Gen. 2:7 uses Hebr. *yāṣar*, Gr. πλάσσω, "to shape," "to form'" and Syr. *gᵉbal*, "to form," "to knead": וַיִּיצֶר ֿיְהוָה ֿ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָֽאָדָם, καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ܘܓܒܠ ܡܪܝܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܐܕܡ "Then the Lord God formed man."

The creation of humans in the image of God has an essential Christological dimension that is related to the ideas of incarnation and Christ as the second Adam.[52] Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306–373), an outstanding representative of early Syriac Christianity, understands the creation of Adam as a revelation of Christ:

ܓܠܐ ܘܚܘܝ ܠܒܘܟܪܐ	He revealed and showed the first-born,
ܟܕ ܒܪܐ ܠܗ ܠܐܕܡ	when he created Adam:
ܢܥܒܕ ܐܢܫ ܒܨܠܡܢ	"Let us make a man
ܘܒܕܡܘܬܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܠܢ	in our image, in our shape."[53]

This parallel of Jesus and Adam also makes its appearance in the Qur'an. However, in this case, it is used in an inverse fashion to disprove man's likeness with God and, as such, to disprove the divinity of Jesus: Q 3:59 إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِندَ اللَّه كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ "Truly, the likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness; he created him of dust, then said he unto him, 'Be,' and he was." The Qur'an very firmly contradicts the concept that humanity was created in God's image. This is also exhibited through various linguistic means. The Qur'an consistently describes the creation of the first human being by employing the verb *khalaqa*. *Ṣawwara*, on the other hand, is only used in the Qur'an to refer to subsequent work of God on humans. According to the Qur'an, people were first crated, and thereafter shaped. Q 7:11 reads: وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ "We created you, then we shaped you."[54] The Qur'anic distinction between the

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[51] וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ

The Septuagint renders Hebrew *ṣelem,* "image," with εἰκόνα, and the Peshitta with ܨܠܡܐ (*ṣalmo*).

[52] Rom. 15:14f., 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45–47.

[53] *De Fide* VI:7, see Beck, *Hymnen*, 26–27.

[54] Compare Q 38:71–72.

creation and formation of man is also clearly displayed in Q 32: 7–9: وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِن طِينٍ "And he originated the creation of man out of clay, ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ then he fashioned his progeny of an extraction of mean water, then he shaped him," and هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاء "It is he who forms you in the womb as he will." Q 3:6

There is an important semantic difference in the usage of the verb *ṣawwara* in the Qur'an and its equivalents in Biblical account of creation. The Qur'anic *ṣawwara* is limited exclusively to the physiological shaping of the human (Q 40:64 and 64:3: صَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ "And he shaped you, and shaped you well"). The book of Genesis, however, implies a shaping *in the image of God*. The context of the poem makes it obvious that the verb *ṣawwara* in line 8 conveys the Biblical concept.

What is also remarkable is the statement that the first human was shaped from *ṭīn*, "clay." The notion of the usage of clay in the creation of man can be found in early Semitic literature, both from Mesopotamia and Ugarit.[55] The idea of man as clay and the creator as a kind of potter is also a Biblical motif[56] (Isa. 64:7, Job 10:9). Job 33:6 reads:

הֵן־אֲנִי כְפִיךָ לָאֵל מֵחֹמֶר קֹרַצְתִּי גַם־אָנִי׃

ܐܠܗܐ ܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܦܘܡܟ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܡܢ ܛܝܢܐ ܐܬܓܒܠܬ

See, before God I am as you are; I too was formed from a piece of clay.

In the Qur'an the description of man as created from *ṭīn* occurs eight times. An example can be found in Q 6:2: هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن طِينٍ "It is he who created you of clay."[57] This is in fact a distinctive feature of Qur'anic language, since in early Arabic texts the word *ṭīn* is used quite seldomly. Only one reference to this can be found in pre-Islamic poetry, in the *dīwān* of the Jewish poet as-Samaw'al b. ʿĀdiyā' (born ca. 560), VI:6: وَبَيْتٍ قَد بَنَيْتُ بِغَيْرِ طِينٍ وَلَا خَشَبٍ وَمَجدٍ قَد أَتَيْتُ "Quite a few houses have I build without clay and without wood, and I have won fame."[58]

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[55]   Greenstein, "God's Golem," 222.

[56]   The creation story of Genesis, however, does not speak of "clay" (Hebr. *khomer*, Syr. *ṭīnā*), but of *ʿafar,* "earth," "dust." The Septuagint has γῆ, the Peshitta ܥܦܪܐ.

[57]   Further references Q 7:12; 17:61; 23:12; 32:7; 37:11; 38:71, 76.

[58]   Hirschberg, *Der Dīwān des as-Samau'al*, 27.

    Some few references from the early Islamic time can be found in the *mukhaḍramūn* poets. In the following two examples the word *ṭīn* is used in the same anthropological context:

    Umayya b. abī aṣ-Ṣalt (d. ca. 631) (cf. as-Saṭlī, ʿ*Umayya,* 394):

The infrequency with which the word *ṭīn* can be found in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry must be viewed in relation to its non-Arabic origin. *Ṭīn* most likely came into Arabic as a loan-word from a North-Semitic language. Arthur Jeffery comments on the word *ṭīnā*, "clay," in Judaic-Aramaic and Syriac: "From the some source in the Mesopotamian area the word passed into Iranian, [...] and it was probably from the same source that it came as an early borrowing into Arabic."[59] One can thus assume with a high degree of certainty that an author like ʿAdī b. Zayd, living in Mesopotamia, educated in Arabic and Persian, and exposed to the Syriac Christian tradition, would most likely have known the word *ṭīn*. Again, the poem's similarity with the Qurʾanic wording is evidence of the poem's milieu of origin rather than of textual dependency on the Qurʾan.

Also meaningful is the context in which the word *ṭīn* is used in line 9a. The following expression "perfect and standing upright" (9b) evokes the uniqueness of man among other creatures, the exceptional features that bear witness to his likeness to God. This is most probably also the content of the preceding passage, which utilizes the verb *ṣawwara*. Jewish tradition interprets the straightening of Adam as a consequence of the inspiration of his earlier body,[60] and explicitly considers his ability to stand upright as evidence of his likeness to God: עמד על רגליו והיה מתואר בדמות אלהים "he stand on his feet and was adorned with the shape of God."[61] The Qurʾan does not talk about Adam's standing upright, and in only two places does the Qurʾanic description of man's creation from clay (*ṭīn*) continue with God blowing his spirit into him (Q 32:7–9, 38:71–72), and

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كَيفَ الجُحودُ وإنَّما خُلِقَ الفَتَى   مِن طِينِ صَلصالٍ لَهُ فَخّارُ

"How could someone deny? Verily man was created
of clay (like) clay, of which baked pottery (is made)."

ʿAlī b. abī Ṭālib (600–660), quoted upon *al-Mawsūʿa aš-šiʿriyya*.

ما أَحسَنَ الجُود في الدُنيا وَفي الدينِ   وَأَقبَح البُخل فيمَن صِيغَ مِن طِينِ

"Nothing is better than generosity in this world and in faith,
and nothing is more abominable than stinginess in someone who is made out of clay."

[59] Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary*, 208.

[60] Toepel, *Legenden*, 76.

[61] Text see *Sefer Pirqe ḏ Rabbi Eliezer*, פרק אחד עשר, section יד line 2 from below; quoted upon Toepel, *Legenden*, 63. The later Christian tradition refers to the rising up of Adam in a soteriological context. See for example the account of *The Cave of Treasures* (2:15–16): "When he rose in full length and stood upright in the center of the earth, he planted his two feet on that spot whereon was set up the Cross of out Redeemer," see *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 53.

here, too, the motif is not elaborated any further. Even Iblīs' argument that man was created of as lowly a substance as clay is not refuted by appeal to God's creative breath (Q 38:76). The blowing of God's spirit into the first human is of course an echo of the Biblical tradition (Gen. 2:7, Job 33:4, cf. Rev. 11:11, John 20:22). In the framework of Islamic anthropology, however, it has significantly less ontological weight than it carries in the Jewish-Christian concept of the image of God. The expression وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُوحِي "And I breathed my spirit in him" in Q 15:29 and 38:72 is paralleled by the Syriac theologian Aphraat (290–370) ܘܢܦܚ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܪܘܚܗ "et insufflavit ei de spiritu suo."[62] Hence, the corresponding nominal construction *nafkhatu r-rūḥ* in line 10b of the poem must not necessarily be attributed to an Islamic source.

    The fact that the poem is to be traced back, not to the Qur'an, but to a shared cultural milieu, is also indicated by the last word of the line 10, *jabila*, which does not appear in the Qur'an. Only in two Qur'anic passages can derivations from the root *j-b-l* be found (*jubillatun* and *jibillun*). These terms, however, do not seem to be used in pre-Islamic or in early Islamic poetry.[63] At the same time, their meaning in the Qur'an is not absolutely unequivocal: Q 26:184 وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الْأَوَّلِينَ "Fear him who created you, and the generation of the ancients," and Q 36:62 وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا "He led astray many a throng of you." Both passages, as Efim Rezvan points out based on their contexts,[64] deal with legendary ancient nations, and both must be viewed in relation to the fact that the term *jbl* is found in inscriptions from Palmyra[65] and Lihyan,[66] where it signifies a "public meeting." The term *jbl* hence belongs to the linguistic field of North-Arabic nations. Its North-Semitic origin is also evident in Syriac, where words with this root are common: the verb *gᵉbal*, for example, is used in the Syriac version of the previously quoted verse, Gen. 2:7: ܘܓܒܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܕܡ . In other works of Syriac literature, too, the creation of man is generally described by *gᵉbal*.[67] The use of the verb *jabila* in the text of the poem reveals the familiarity of its author with the

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[62]   *Aphraatis sapientis*, 800:4.

[63]   See also Rezvan, *Koran*, 64.

[64]   Rezvan, *Koran*, 65.

[65]   Starcky, *Palmyre*, 36.

[66]   Caskel, *Lihyan*, no. 71:5, 77:6–7, 87:3, 91:8, compare also no. 52.

[67]   References are numerous, compare for example the Syriac version of Clement of Rome's *Epistle to Vergins*: ܕܓܒܠ ܐܢܫܐ ܗܘ "man whom he had formed," see *Clementis Romani Epistolae*, 71:20, and also the sixth hymn of Ephrem the Syrian: ܗܘ ܓܒܠܗ ܒܪܫܝܬ "he formed him at the beginning" (see Beck, *Hymnen*, 27).

North-Arabic, especially the Syriac, linguistic milieu. This is also reflected in the Qur'anic terms *jibillatun* and *jibillun*.

A similar point applies to the description of paradise as *al-firdaus* in line 11. This is of course analogous to the Syriac *fardayso*. The Syriac version of the Bible uses *fardayso* quite often, whereas in the Qur'an, the word used to refer to paradise as it was inhabited by Adam is always *al-janna*. The word *al-firdaus* is used in the Qur'an only twice. In both cases, it refers to the paradise to be inherited by the believers, e. g. in Q 18:107: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلاً "But those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness—the gardens of paradise shall be their hospitality." *Al-firdaus* occurs in the same context in Q 23:11, a verse that, like the text of the poem, also includes the verb *waritha,* "to inherit":[68] الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ "who shall inherit paradise." Despite this similarity, one can also observe differences between the two texts. The verb *waritha* is used in Q 23:11 in the first and not in fourth stem. Also, the Qur'anic passage discusses eschatology and not the creation of the world. The same notion that the believers will inherit eternal life in heaven is also an essential feature of the theology of the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount, which is not only a theological, but also a central liturgical text, it is written: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5). Its Syriac version employs the verb *ireth*, which corresponds to the Arabic *waritha,*— ܬܝܪܬ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܢܐܪܬܘܢ.

The second half of line 11 displays further similarities with the Biblical account of creation. Firstly, there is a similar succession of events: first man is created (Gen. 2:7), then he is brought to paradise (Gen. 2:8.15), and finally his wife is created (Gen. 2:22). Secondly, the creation of woman from Adam's rib (Gen. 2:22) takes place. The Qur'an does not specify when the fist woman was created, and it merely reports that God ordered both humans to inhabit paradise (Q 2:35): وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ "And we said, 'Adam, dwell thou, and thy wife, in the Garden.'"[69] Arabic *ḍilʿun*, "rib," is exhibited in pre-Islamic poetry, but not in the Qur'an. The Qur'an can be read as implying that the first women was created from Adam; however, it does not mention Adam's rib or any other part of his anatomy, cf. Q 4:1: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا "Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate." In contrast to this, Gen. 2:22 clearly states that Adam's wife

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[68] Cf. Q 21:105, and see Baumstark, "Arabische Übersetzung," 184.

[69] See also Q 7:19.

was created of his rib: "And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."[70]

One should also notice that the creation of women is described in the poem with the word *ṣunʿatun* rather than with the Qurʾanic *khalaqa*. The root *ṣ-n-ʿ* means "to make" in Arabic. This corresponds to Hebr. *bāna* and Syr. *taqen* of the Biblical text. Both verbs mean "to construct," "to form."

The first commandment (v. 12)

<div dir="rtl">

12 لَمْ يَنْهَهُ رَبُّهُ عَنْ غَيْرِ واحِدَةٍ مِنْ شَجَرٍ طَيِّبٍ أَنْ شَمَّ أَوْ أَكَلا

</div>

His Lord did not forbade him—with a single exception—
to smell or to eat from good trees.

The prohibition to eat from the tree of knowledge is mentioned both in Genesis (2:16–17) and in the Qurʾan (2:35, 7:19). According to both accounts, the receiver of the commandment is Adam. The essential difference, however, lies in the fact that in the Qurʾan the prohibition refers explicitly to Adam and his wife, whereas in the Bible the commandment is given to Adam alone before the creation of Eve. In the verse 12 of the poem, Adam is the only human addressed. Despite the fact that the creation of women has been mentioned in the previous line, one cannot be sure whether it preceded the commandment, as lines 11 and 12 are syntactically not connected to one another.

The serpent and the fall of man (vv. 13–18)

<div dir="rtl">

13 فَكانَتِ الْحَيَّةُ الرَّقْشاءُ إِذْ خُلِقَتْ كما تَرَى ناقَةً في الْخَلْقِ أو جَمَلا

</div>

The serpent with black and white spots was, when it was created,
as you see a she-camel in the shape or a he-camel.

The motif of the serpent displays another correspondence to the book of Genesis. The Qurʾan attributes the seduction of the first human couple exclusively to the devil.[71]

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[70] <div dir="rtl">וַיִּבֶן יְהוָֹה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם׃</div>

Absence of an explicit relation between the serpent and the devil in the poem is for Isabel Toral-Niehoff an important indicator that it is independent from the Qur'an.[72]

The development of the motif of the fall of humanity in Jewish and Christian transmission exhibits a gradual replacement of the serpent's figure by that of the devil. This transformation is completed in the Qur'an.[73] It is interesting to note that in three Qur'anic stories of paradise, preceded by an Iblīs passage (2:34–36, 7:11.20, 20:116–120), the seducer of man is referred to not by his Qur'anic name of Iblīs, but by the term *ash-shayṭān*. This reference to the devil as *ash-shayṭān* in the Qur'anic paradise story could be related to the fact that the Qur'anic *shayṭān*, being a loan-word from Ephiopic with the meaning "devil," was assimilated with the authentic Arabic word *shayṭān*,[74] which was known already in pre-Islamic Arabic culture as a metaphorical name for a serpent as well as a personal name.[75] Although one should not ignore this reverberation of Biblical tradition, it should be noticed that the figure of the serpent from the garden of Eden, even if it is implied by the word *ash-shayṭān*, is not actually found in the Qur'an. The serpent is here totally dissolved into the devil, because the Qur'anic testing story is deprived of any attracting motivations.[76] Their representation, however, is the main function of the serpent motif in several works of post-Biblical literature. For example, *The Cave of Treasures* explains the devil's reason for using the serpent as an attempt to hide his ugliness (4:6–12). The Arabic version of this book portrays the serpent as: وكانت اجمل الحيوان "And it was the most beautiful of the animals."[77] The depiction of the serpent in the poem has to be seen in the context of this tradition.

Line 13 describes the serpent as "speckled," Arabic *raqshāʾ*. In the Hebrew and Syriac texts of the Bible, the words *ʿārūm* and *ʿarim* are used, respectively, meaning "crafty," "smart" (Gen. 3:1):

וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

ܘܚܘܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܚܟܝܡ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܚܝܘܬܐ

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other

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[71]   The serpent can be found in the Qur'an only in the story of Moses and the Pharaoh. In two cases (7:107 and 26:32), the word *thuʿbānun* is used, and only once—*ḥayyatun* (Q 20:20).

[72]   Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls," 249–251,

[73]   Martinek, *Schlange*.

[74]   Lane, *Lexicon*, 1552; compare Q 37:65 and see Renz, *Schlangendrache*, 96.

[75]   Kropp, "Der äthiopische Satan," 99–101.

[76]   On the demythologization of the creation account in the Qur'an and its theological meaning, see Neuwirth, "Negotiating Justice."

[77]   Toepel, *Legenden*, 143, 146, footnote 4.

wild animal that the Lord God had made.

From the same root, *ᶜ-r-m*, the Hebrew word עָרוֹם *ᶜārom* is derived. It is differentiated in spelling from ערום by a single dot over the ו. *ᶜĀrom* in Hebrew means "completely or partly naked." Here, one can see a remote parallel to the meaning of the root *ᶜ-r-m* in Arabic, which designates the quality of possessing two colors; this is why Arabic *aᶜramu* means "speckled." In pre-Islamic poetry, this term is used specifically in reference to serpents.[78] At the same time, the Arabic verb *ᶜarama* means "to be evil in disposition," "to be illnatured."[79] It might therefore be suggested that *raqshāʾ*is used in the poem as a synonym for *aᶜramu*.[80] This would provide further evidence for a Biblical background with which ᶜAdī b. Zayd should have been familiar through Syriac[81] tradition.

The semantics of the root *r-q-sh* in Arabic also warrant another observation. The description of the serpent as *raqshāʾ* is common in pre-Islamic poetry,[82] and in applying this label the poet follows conventional usage. In addition to the meaning of "black and white," the semantic field of the root *r-q-sh* also includes the notion "beautiful." *Raqshun* is "good," "beautiful," the verb *raqasha* means "to color with two colors," and also "to decorate," "to embellish," and *raqqasha* is "to embellish speech with lies."[83] Therefore, *raqshāʾ* conveyed not only a zoological feature, the shape of serpents, but also their beauty or ability to attract. The reading variant recorded in M^P10 and M^V (see the appendix), which give الرشقا "elegant," "slender," supports this assumption. Also in another poem attributed to ᶜAdī b. Zayd the serpent of the paradise is described as both raqṭāʾ "spreckled" and ḥasnāʾ "beautiful".[84] The comparison between the serpent and the shape of a camel in line 13a is probably meant to be understood within this context.

The comparison with a camel can be interpreted in a literal as well as in a figurative sense. Literal similarity to a camel would imply the existence of legs, which are an attribute of archaic depictions of dragons. Serpentine dragons with legs are

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[78]　Lewin, *Vocabulary*, 284.

[79]　Lane, *Lexicon*, 2024.

[80]　Compare Rezvan, *Koran*, 84–85.

[81]　Rezvan assumes direct use of a Hebrew source (see Rezvan, *Koran*, 85).

[82]　*Raqāshun* means "serpent," "a serpent speckled with black and white," see Lane, *Lexicon*, 1135.

[83]　Lane, *Lexicon*, 1135.

[84]　See Cheikho, „Al-Iḥdāth," 536.

commonly found in ancient Near Eastern art.[85] In the Bible, too, the serpent of paradise is identified both as a dragon and the devil (Rev. 12:9):

καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν "The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."[86]

The notion that the serpent stood upright and had legs, found neither in the Bible nor in the Qur'an, is reflected in later exegetical tradition.[87] The poet was most likely aware of this legendary material. However, the true meaning of the comparison with the camel could possibly reach beyond simple borrowing. In fact, line 13 does not say that the serpent was really (like) a camel, but just that it appeared or, more precisely, was seen in a shape similar to that of a camel.[88] This nuance is also indicated through the double reference to a she-camel as well as a he-camel. Camels are often presented in pre-Islamic poetry as objects of prestige, whose appearance is considered to be beautiful and splendid. Hence, comparing the serpent to the shape of a camel could also metaphorically point to the beauty of the serpent.[89]

In any case, the text of the poem focuses only on the outward appearance of the serpent. Yet there is a change of perspective here, which can be observed also in other works of post-Biblical literature, where the cleverness of the serpent is replaced by its beauty. The depiction of the serpent does not just introduce a mythological creature, but serves as an illustration for the disposition of the human nature towards temptation.

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[85] See depictions of the Marduc dragons on the Ishtar Gate. The mythological serpent-dragon came out of the symbiosis of serpent and other animals, originally opposed to it, like birds and horses in mythologies of the post-Paleolithic era, see Ivanov, "Zmey," 468–469. For more details on the subject of the serpent of paradise, see Renz, *Schlangendrache*.

[86] See also Rev. 20:2; in both passages, like in Gen. 3:1, the word for serpent is ὄφις.

[87] Already the Ethiopian *Book of Enoch* (10:9) attributes to the descendants of the fallen angels among other features also the shape of camels, see Toepel, *Legenden*, 146. For further parallels refer to Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls," 244–246, and Hirschberg, *Lehren*, 107.

[88] The primary meaning of *khalqun* in pre-Islamic poetry is "appearance," "shape," "form," see Polosin, *Slovar*, 150; compare also Efim Rezvan's translation of this line in Rezvan, *Koran*, 84.

[89] Later Islamic tradition includes references to both aspects in the depiction of the serpent of paradise, the beauty as well as the anatomy: "The snake had four feet as if it were a Bactrian camel and was one of the most beautiful animals created by God" (see *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, 227).

The story thus becomes a sermon, interpreting the narrative according to its moralizing intentions. This also appears clearly in the next line.

<div dir="rtl">

فَعَمَدا لِلَّتِي عَنْ أَكْلِها نُهِيا   بِأَمْرِ حَوَّاءَ لَمْ تَأْخُذْ لَهُ الدَّغَلا   14

</div>

> They turned to that from which they had been forbidden to eat
> on the order of Eve, who did not consider the evil[90] in it.

The first hemistich, 14a, talks about the human couple and not about Adam and Eve individually. This directly echoes the Qur'an in 7:22: فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ "So he [*ash-shayṭān*] led them on by delusion; and when they tasted the tree [...]" In the second part of line 14, however, emphasis shifts to Eve. This corresponds to the account in the book of Genesis as well as to the depiction of the fall of man in several Jewish and Christian works of Late Antiquity, where Adam's responsibility for the fall is systematically de-emphasized.[91] The sharpness of the expression *bi-amri Ḥawwāʾa,* "on the order of Eve," stresses her role as the protagonist of the fall and makes her appear as its actual instigator rather than the serpent or devil.[92] The gender-related implication of this aspect is secondary, however, to its allegorical connotation. The latter is probably to be considered the passage's true meaning and must be viewed in the context of an ethical-allegorical interpretation of the story of the fall that is especially dominant in the Christian tradition. The serpent becomes Eve because Eve represents the principle of human sinfulness as such.[93] The opening passage of the *Great Canon*[94] of Andrew of Crete (660–740), for example, includes the following lines:

> My mind's Eve took the place of the bodily Eve
> for me—the passionate thought that was in my flesh.

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[90] The word *daghalun,* "rancour," "evil," "deceit" is attested in pre-Islamic poetry, but is not used in the Qur'an; see Polosin, *Slovar,* 163, and Lewin, *Vocabulary,* 130.

[91] Toepel, *Legenden,* 155–158.

[92] The identification of Eve with the serpent was rhetorically supported by pointing to the similarity of the Aramaic words חיויא *ḥiwyā,* "serpent" and חוה *Ḥawwā,* "Eve." Syriac literature also emphasizes a special relationship between Eve (Syr. ܚܘܐ) and the serpent (Syr. ܚܘܝܐ), see *The Cave of Treasures* 4:13: "she [Eve] saw her own form [reflected] in it [the serpent]" ܚܙܬ ܒܗ ܕܡܘܬܗ, see Toepel, *Legenden,* 143, 150–151, 157.

[93] Averinzev, "Poryadok," 509.

[94] I:5, quoted in Amis, *A Different Christianity,* 43.

> Showing me the sweets
> and gorging me ever on the poisonous food.

Andrew of Crete was originally from Damascus, and his liturgical poetry marks the final establishment of allegorical interpretation of Biblical history in Christian hymnography.[95] He is preceded in this by earlier Christian homiletic literature,[96] all of which had a clearly moralistic approach. Especially the Late Antique Syrian and Palestinian homiletic traditions were intimately linked with liturgical poetry. As Sebastian Brock points out, in the works of Ephrem the Syrian the understanding of the Biblical narrative is characterized by the author's ability "to move rapidly to and fro between the individual and the collective, between Adam and humanity as a whole."[97] Thus, the homiletic character of the poem, as well as some allegorical allusions in it, provide strong evidence for the argument that it originally belonged in the literary context of Late Antique Christian tradition.

At the same time, one should note that the connection between the depiction of women and the serpent motif is also found in early Islamic Arabic poetry, as was noted by Renate Jacobi in her analysis of a poem belonging to ᶜUmar b. abī Rabīᶜa (d. 93/712 or 103/721).[98] The poet here describes his relationship with a women using the image of a serpent: أَظَلُّ إذا أُكَلِّمُها كَأَنِّي ⁣ ⁣ ⁣ أُكَلِّمُ حَيَّةً غَلَبَت رُقاها "It occurs to me, when I talk to her, as if I would talk to a serpent, whose charm is defeating."[99] The line obviously refers to the motifs of the paradise story. An allusion to this story in so profane a context and by a poet like ᶜUmar b. abī Rabīᶜa shows that the Eve/serpent motif and its allegorical interpretation was known in Mecca and Medina[100] at least in the second half of the seventh century.

This ethical-allegorical aspect, reflected in the fusion of the motifs of the serpent and that of woman in Late Antique literature, is also dominant in the Qur'anic representation of the fall story: Q 7:27 يَا بَنِي آدَمَ ، لاَ يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَاتِهِمَا "Children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you as he brought your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their garments to show them their

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[95] Averinzev, "Poryadok," 509–510.

[96] See Brock, "From Ephrem to Romanos," 146–151.

[97] Brock, *Hymns on Paradise*, 70.

[98] Jacobi, "Die Sonne auf dem Maultier."

[99] Schwarz, *Diwan*, CCCVIII:8 (p. 225).

[100] This is where ᶜUmar b. abī Rabīᶜa appears to have spent most of his life, see Montgomery, "ᶜUmar b. Abī Rabīᶜa," 822.

shameful parts." The Qur'an adopts the moralistic perspective that was current in its Late Antique milieu, and replaces the symbolic aspect of Biblical mythology with the allegorical reflectiveness of a sermon. However, the Qur'an is unprecedented in the strict logicality of its allegorical approach, a feature resulting from its different theological agenda. The Qur'anic cosmogonic accounts are not presented as mythological history but as "the never-changing pattern of divine-human interaction," because their main focus is not "the memory of primordial creation of man, but the awareness of participation in a covenant concluded with Adam's offspring."[101] The Qur'anic story of the fall is a moral story integrated into the broader context of the Qur'an's theology of covenant. The Qur'an deprives the narrative of several details that are irrelevant for its basic ethical meaning. The addressees of the Qur'anic message are the "children of Adam"; in the timelessness of the allegory, they become its true subject.

The text of the poem does not greatly elaborate on this allegorical aspect. As a whole, the poem's description of the fall preserves the concreteness of its figures and is inclined towards an almost apocryphal illustrativeness. At the same time, this tendency is integrated into the homiletic framework of the poem and is accordingly colored by allegory. This unity of the literal and the allegorical is also clearly shown in the next line.

15   كِلَاهُمَا خَاطَ إِذْ بُزَّا لَبُوسَهُمَا   مِنْ وَرَقِ التِّينِ ثَوْباً لَمْ يَكُنْ غُزِلا

They both sewed, as their garments had been stripped off,
clothing from fig leaves, which was not spun.

The notion that Adam and Eve were clothed with fig leaves after the fall is of Biblical origin. While the Qur'an only vaguely refers to "the leaves of the garden," *waraqu l-jannati* (Q 7:22), Gen. 3:7 clearly identifies the kind of leaf: "and they sewed fig leaves together," וַיִּתְפְּרוּ עֲלֵה תְאֵנָה, ܘܚܛܘ ܛܖܦܐ ܕܬܬܐ . The poem adopts this image, but adds something new to it as well. In describing the clothing material in such a graphic way, the line creates an implicit contrast to the original garments of mankind. In opposition to the evidence of Gen. 2:25 ("And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed," וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבֹּשָׁשׁוּ), the text of the poem, as well as that of the Qur'an (7:27), implies that Adam and Eve were dressed prior to the fall. The nature of their garments, however, is not explained. Yet the idea that man was clothed in paradise even before the fall is reflected in earlier traditions in which

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[101] Neuwirth, "Negotiating Justice," 16.

these clothes are described as light and glory and by similar metaphors. In Syriac literature, the motif of clothes of light is attested since the time of Ephrem.[102] It is therefore likely that *labūsun* in line 15 is figurative in meaning. The Qur'an also speaks of the clothes of man (7:26)[103] and extends their moralistic function to bodily clothes, which, as "one of God's signs," are to remind man to dress himself with the "garments of the God-fearing."

16	فَلاطَها اللهُ إِذْ أَغْوَتْ خَلِيقَتَهُ طُولَ اللَّيَالِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَها أَجَلا
17	تَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِها فِي الدَّهْرِ ما عَمَرَتْ والتُّرْبُ تَأْكُلُهُ حَزْنًا وإِنْ سَهُلا

God cursed it because it has seduced his creation,
for all times and he did not set a term for it.

It goes on its belly (all) time as long as it lives,
and dust—it eats it as hard ground even when it is soft.

A Biblical parallel to the punishment of the serpent can be found in Gen. 3:14–15.[104] The notion of God setting a term, however, is a motif that unfolds only in post-Biblical literature. Both *The Testament of Adam*[105] and *The Cave of Treasures*,[106] among other texts, mention a temporal limitation placed on humanity's exile on earth and the time remaining until salvation. God's setting of a limit here is a motif of consolation. It might be added that, according to the Qur'an, God sent people down to earth "only for a time" (Q 2:36). The concept of salvation does not appear in the Qur'an, as it does not subscribe to the idea of original sin. Qur'anic eschatology, however, is closely related to the expediency of creation and divine predetermination. The word *ajalun*, "deadline," "time limit," is employed frequently, and is also used to refer to the end of time (29:53).[107] What is remarkable is the universal character of the Qur'anic idea of this time

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[102] On this motif in *The Caves of Treasures*, see Toepel, *Legenden*, 159.

[103] See Neuwirth, "Qurʾān, Crisis and Memory," 142.

[104] The verb *mashaya,* "to go," in line 17a corresponds exactly with the wording of Gen. 3:14, both in Hebrew and Syriac.

[105] Robinson, *The Testament*, 58–63.

[106] Toepel, *Legenden*, 144, 164–166.

[107] On *ajalun* in the Qur'an, see Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen*, 3. The noun *ajalun*, as well as other derivations of the root *a-j-l*, are found in several pre-Islamic sources, see Polosin, *Slovar*, 29, and

limit. Nothing will remain on earth beyond this point. Even the Devil is damned until the Day of Doom and is "among the ones that are respited unto the day of a known time" (Q 15:35–38). By contrast, according to the poem the fate of the serpent is sealed by the denial of any such term, which implies an immediate and irrevocable judgement. The shift from the setting of a time limit to its explicit rejection can also be traced in Jewish sources.[108] The Syriac theological tradition of Aphraat and Ephrem endores the view that only common sinners will attend the Last Judgment, whereas great sinners will be banished right after the resurrection into the hell.[109] Also, the meaning of the Hebrew verb *qūm* and Syriac *qom,* "to rise," "to arise," and even more of the Greek ἀνίστημι and Latin *resurgo* in Ps. 1:5[110] express the notion that the wicked will not rise for judgment. Psalm 1, one of the central texts of Christian liturgy that was also prominent in the Syriac tradition, thus ought to be considered as one of the poem's intertexts. Syriac background can also be seen in the next line.

فَأَتْعَبَا أَبَوانا فِي حَيَاتِهِما   وَأَوْجَدا الجُوْعَ والأَوْصابَ والعِلَّا   18

> Our parents became tired in their life
> and they caused hunger, continual pains and vices.

The description of the punishment is reminiscent of the Biblical account. According to Gen. 3:14–19, only the serpent and the earth were directly cursed by God, whereas Adam and Eve were only punished with hardship.[111] The poem adopts the same

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Lane, *Lexicon*, 24f. In their original semantics, they evoke the liquidation of debts. This meaning is also evident in Q 2:282, where *ajalun* expresses a certain time limit for a debt contract. Also, the idea of determination of a lifetime probably already existed in pre-Islamic Arabic culture (see Montgomery Watt, "Adjal"), which was characterized by a strongly fatalistic perception of fate (see Caskel, *Das Schicksal*). This may have been adopted and reinterpreted in early Islam, see Dmitriev, *Abū Ṣaḫr al-Huḏalī*, 105-128.

[108] *Genesis Rabbah* 20:5; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:10; cf. Hirschberg, *Lehren,* 108.

[109] Frolovskiy, *Wostochniye otzy*, 225, 232.

[110] עַל־כֵּן לֹא־יָקֻמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט / ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܐ ܢܩܘܡܘܢ ܥܘ̈ܠܐ ܒܕܝܢܐ / διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀναστήσονται ἀσεβεῖς ἐν κρίσει / ideo non resurgent impii in iudicio.

[111] Compare *The Cave of Treasures* 5:2–4: „God spake unto Adam, and heartened him, and said unto him, 'Be not sorrowful, O Adam, for I will restore unto thee thine inheritance. Behold, see how greatly I have loved thee, for though I have cursed the earth for thy sake, yet have I withdrawn thee

differentiation and further de-emphasizes the damnation of man in relation to God's role as punisher as well as the measure of man's penalty. Along with pointing to the difficult conditions of earthly life, the book of Genesis clearly indicates the perspective of death (Gen. 3:19). This is not explicitly expressed in the verse above. To be sure, hunger, pains, and vices are symbols of death, yet death itself is not mentioned. Moreover, the punishment is neither declared by God nor does it immediately befall mankind. Instead, "our parents" are represented as carrying out their sentence by themselves. Both verbs, *atʿaba*, "to become tired," and *awjada*, "to cause," "to bring into being," are used actively. Thus, the responsibility for the men's suffering, and with it for the evil in general, is completely removed from God. This is also indicated by the character of the punishment. All three words—*jūʿun*, "hunger," *awṣābun*, "continuous pains,"[112] and *ʿilalun*, "defects,"[113]—express continuing states rather than a punctual event of punishment. Adam and Eve appear as the cause of punishment because they negatively changed their mode of living, and thus burdened their lives with "toil" for as long as it lasts (Gen. 3:17). This serves, however, not just to defend the divine attribute of goodness, but also to show the relationship between God and humans in a positive light. The poem does not go so far as to narrate God's consolation of Adam that can be found in the Qur'an (2:37–38). However, the poem clearly downplays the irrevocability of the expulsion from paradise that is implied in Gen. 3:22–23 and leaves open the possibility of salvation. This transformation of the punishment is characteristic of the Christian post-Biblical tradition and is documented, for example, by the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (5:3).[114] The parallel becomes obvious in the following lines.

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from the operation of the curse.'" See *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 67, and Toepel, *Legenden*, 144.

[112] Continual, or constant pain, or emaciation of the body by reason of fatigue or disease or excessive fatigue, see Lane, *Lexicon*, 2944–2945.

[113] According to Lane, *Lexicon*, 2124 *ʿillatun*, pl. *ʿilalun* means: "An accident that befalls an object and causes its state, or condition, to become altered. [...] a disease that diverts [from the ordinary occupations; [...] An accident, or event, that diverts the person to whom it occurs from his course."

[114] Its comparison with the Qur'anic account of Adam's consolation see Toepel, *Legenden*, 168–169.

Epilog (vv. 19–20)

19   وَأُوتِيا المُلْكَ والإِنْجيلَ نَقْرَؤُهُ   نَشْفِى بِحِكْمَتِه أَحْلامَنا عِلَلا

20   مِنْ غَيْرِ ما حاجَةٍ إِلاَّ لِيَجْعَلَنا   فَوْقَ البَرِيَّة أَرْباباً كما فَعَلا

They were given the kingdom and the Gospel that we read.
We cure with its wisdom our mental powers and vices,

Without him having any need except for making us
lords over his creation as he made (it).

The dialogical framework of the poem becomes evident once again in the closing passage, which from the first to the last line sets up a rhetorical curve of suspense. The question implied refers to whether creation, especially the creation of man, was after all an advisable thing to do. The answer given in the poem is based on fundamental concepts of Christian anthropology, such as the sinful nature of man and the necessity of salvation. In Christian theology, these two concepts are inseparable linked. Again, the allegorical parallelism of creation and salvation comes to light. According to the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, not only was Adam granted after his creation "the power over everything which I [God] created" (2:19),[115] but after the Fall "God revealed unto Adam everything which the Son would suffer on behalf of him" (5:13).[116] Adam's power realizes itself only through the Gospel,[117] and the purpose of creation is fulfilled only in the Gospel—a perspective of salvation in which death is already overcome, and which could only be thus expressed by a Christian author.

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[115] *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 53; see also Toepel, *Legenden*, 57.

[116] *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 67; see also Toepel, *Legenden*, 144.

[117] Horovitz considers the word *injīlun* an indication that the line is a later forgery, since according to him *injīlun* is a loan-word form Ethiopic unlikely to have been used in Mesopotamia at such an early time (see Horovitz, *Untersuchungen*, 71, and also Toral-Niehoff, "Gestaltung des Sündenfalls," 248–249). However, the early borrowing of such a central theological term as "Gospel" appears plausible if one takes into consideration that Arabic had been a vehicle for Christian thought probably from as early as the fourth century CE (see Shahid, *Byzantium*, 744). Also, as pointed out by Meir Kister, relations between al-Ḥīra and the Arabian Peninsula in pre-Islamic times were much more vigorous than has previously been assumed (see Kister, "Al-Ḥīra"). Thus, an early transmission of the word *injīlun* into Mesopotamia is quite possible.

Conclusion

Textual and literary analysis lead to the conclusion that the present poem was originally composed in a Christian milieu. Neither the literary nor the historical/theological context supports arguments against the early origin of the text and its composition by a Christian author like ͨAdī b. Zayd. In only a very few cases do Islamic connotations allow for the assumption of direct dependence on Islamic sources. As can be seen by the use of the word *khalīfatun* in a version of line 16, this occurred due to the poem's later transmission. Similarities with Qur'anic accounts of the story of creation and the fall are due to a shared thematic basis, as well as to a shared tendency to interpret it allegorically within a broadly homiletic framework. On the other hand, the evident differences on the theological level clearly show that the text of the poem cannot be viewed as dependent on the Qur'an. This, however, does not make it less relevant. The Qur'an is very selective in its adoption of Biblical tradition, and the reconstruction of this tradition in its pre-Islamic environment can significantly contribute to our understanding of the logic of its transformation in the Qur'an. In contrast to the Bible, the Qur'anic stories of creation and paradise are not comprehensive chronological reports, but are evoked in a number of separate passages with clear hermeneutical implications. The admonitory intention of the relevant Qur'anic texts is striking. The Qur'an is less concerned with the narration of history than with presenting its ethically relevant message. It does not explain something absolutely new to its audience, but tries instead to draw out the moral of something already known. Thus, the Qur'anic message does not unfold in a silent vacuum, but rather in communicative reference to its rich and diverse background. From this point of view, texts like the poem presented, which might provide an insight into the religious background of the Arabs prior to the rise of Islam, are indispensable for the historical-critical study of the Qur'an.

Appendix 1: Sources

The main sources that transmit longer passages of the poem in coherent form are (in chronological order):

Ḥ   Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, vol. 4, 65–66 (ninth century).
Eleven lines from the second part of the poem, corresponding to line 8 and lines 10 through 20 of the compiled text. This work can be found below.

Mq   Al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʾ wa-t-taʾrīkh*, vol. 1, 151 (tenth century).
Contains seven lines from the poem's first section, lines 1 through 6 and line 8.

AM   Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, *Risāla*, 264–265 (eleventh century).
Quotes thirteen lines, equivalent to lines 1 through 4, 6 through 10, 12 to 13 and lines 16 and 17.

M   Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-mawāʿiẓ*, vol. 1, 86–87 (fifteenth century).
Fifteen lines, consisting of lines 1 through 13 and 16 to 17.

The attestation of individual lines in these main sources can be represented as follows:

Line	Source			
1		Mq	AM	M
2		Mq	AM	M
3		Mq	AM	M
4		Mq	AM	M
5		Mq		M
6		Mq	AM	M
7			AM	M
8	Ḥ	Mq	AM	M
9			AM	M
10	Ḥ		AM	M
11	Ḥ			M
12	Ḥ		AM	M
13	Ḥ		AM	M
14	Ḥ			
15	Ḥ			
16	Ḥ		AM	M
17	Ḥ		AM	M
18	Ḥ			
19	Ḥ			
20	Ḥ			

Lines 1, 5 and 6 are transmitted in isolation in the following sources:

Line 1   T   Tha‘lab, *Kitāb al-Majālis*, vol. 1, 127.

               Az   Al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lugha*, vol. 10, 412.

               An   An-Anbārī, *Al-inṣāf*, 244.

               B   ‘Abd al-Qādir b. ‘Umar al-Baghdādī, *Khizāna*, vol. 10, 224.

               LA   *Lisān*, vol. 15, 233, 236.

Line 5   TA   *Tāj*, vol. 3, 542, LA (*mṣr*)

Line 6   F   Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-lugha*, vol. 5, 330.

               RI   Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-mufradāt*, 469.

               Z   Az-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balagha*, vol. 2, 389.

               Bd   Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 57.

               Y   Yāqūt, Mu‘jam al-buldān, vol. 1, 42.

               TA and LA (*mṣr*)

References in the main sources display vast differences in scope. However, they overlap at several points and exhibit a stable sequence of verses within each quoted passage. This indicates the constant transmission of a common source and allows us to arrange the individual passages into a whole.

Appendix 2: Text

<div dir="rtl">

Basīṭ

1   إِسْمَعْ حَدِيثاً كَمَا يَوْماً تُحَدِّثُهُ   عَنْ ظَهْرِ غَيْبٍ إِذَا مَا سَائِلٌ سَأَلَا

2   أَن كِيفَ أَبْدَى إِلَهُ الْخَلْقِ نِعْمَتَهُ   فِينَا وَعَرَّفَنَا آيَاتِهِ الْأُوَلَا

</div>

1. Az, AM, An, M[118]

<div dir="rtl">

a يُحَدِّثُهُ] T, Az, AM تُحَدِّثُهُ, B, LA تُحدِّثه, M^{V Cl}[119] يحدثه.

كَمَا يوماً تُحَدِّثُهُ [Mq لكى يوما تحاوبه

</div>

Al-Maqrīzī (M) attributes the line also to Umayya b. abī aṣ-Ṣalt.

2. Mq

<div dir="rtl">

a ان كيف أبدى إله الخلق [AM M كيف بدا ثُمَّ رَبَّ الله

M] M^{P14} بداسم, M^{P18} يدايم, M^{BM1} y*d'y*m (rasm), M^V bd'y*m (rasm) M^{C2} بدايم بدا ثُمَّ

M] M^{P14} رد, M^{L1} ربى رَبَّ

b وعرفنا [AM M وعَلَّمنا

</div>

---

[118] The first line of the poem is the one that is most amply documented. The reason for this is the special usage of the conjunction *ka-mā* found here. Here it has the meaning "so that" and is equivalent to the common conjunction *kaymā* (see *WKAS*, vol. 1, 9). This is specific to the Kufic grammatical school, and the line is often quoted by Arabic philologists as a reference for it (T, Az, An, B, LA). This linguistic peculiarity also indicates that the line was originally composed in the region of Kufa, to which al-Ḥīra belonged. In *Kitāb al-bad' wa-t-ta'rīkh* (Mq) كما *ka-mā* is replaced with لكى *li-kay*, which more unequivocally introduces a final clause. The first part of the poem is cited by al-Maqdisī in a long chapter on the creation of the world, where the focus is on the poem's content rather than its linguistic features. It should also be borne in mind that Mq was written in Afghanistan (ca. 355/966). This makes the replacement of a specifically Kufic form with a commonly valid and unmistakable reading quite plausible. The version with لكى *li-kay* should therefore not be considered as an inaccurate reproduction of the original, but rather as indirect evidence for the fact that the poem was known in wider circles than simply among philologists. On the other hand, the frequent citation of this line in an exclusively linguistic context does not betray any motivation for forgery, and therefore supports its authenticity.

[119] Superscripts following the symbol M correspond to the manuscripts used in the edition of Gaston Wiet (see al-Maqrīzī, *Al-mawāʿiẓ*).

<div dir="rtl">

3   كَانَتْ رِياحًا ومآءًا ذا عُرَانِيَةٍ   وَظُلْمَةً لَمْ يَدَعْ فَتْقًا ولا خَلَلا

4   فَأَمَرَ الظُّلْمَةَ السَّوْداءَ فَانكَشَفَتْ   وعَزَلَ المآءَ عَمَّا كانَ قَدْ شَغَلا

5   وبَسَطَ الأرْضَ بَسْطًا ثُمَّ قَدَّرَها   تَحْتَ السَّمآءِ سَوآءًا مِثْلَ ما فَعَلا

6   وجاعَلَ الشَّمْسَ مِصْرًا لا خَفَاءَ به   بَيْنَ النَّهارِ وبَيْنَ اللَّيْلِ قَدْ فَصَلا

</div>

3. Mq

a رياحا ومآءا ذا عرانية [M AM رياحٌ وسيلٌ ذو عُرانية

عرانية [M AM Mq] M^Ms اكرنيهٌ, M^BM1 krʾny*t (rasm), M^BM2 M^C2 كرانية, M^L1 كرًا نبه, M^V krʾn*y*t* (rasm)

b لم يدع [AM لم تَدَعْ

4. Mq, M

a الظلمة السوداء [M^C2 الظلم السواد

b وعزل [AM وسَيَّرَ

5. Mq

a وبسط الأرض بسطا [TA LA وَالأرضَ سَوّى بِساطاً

b السمآء [M^P10 M^V السوا

سوآءا [M, M^P9 سوآءً] M سوى

مثل [M^P9 M^C2 ميل

فعلا [M TA LA, نقلا] M ثقلا

6. F, Y

a جعلك M^P14 ,جعل Bd M^L1 صَيَّرَ, Mq AM M TA LA] RI Z M^P13 جاعل

الشمس [M^P14 cons. النمس

مصرا [Bd AM RI Z M TA LA] Mq مصيرا

b بين النهار وبين الليل [M^P14 cons. من النهار ومنه الليل

قد [M^P14 B2 cons. مذ

فصلا [Bd AM RI Z TA LA] Mq فضلا

RI quotes the line anonymously; TA and LA attribute lines 5 and 6 to Umayya b. abī aṣ-Ṣalt; note, however, that according to Ibn Barrī, these lines are composed by ʿAdī b. Zayd. M mentions that line 6 is written by ʿAdī b. Zayd, but has also been attributed to Umayya b. abī aṣ-Ṣalt.

ما إنْ تُكَلِّفُنا زَيْتاً ولا فُتُلاَ	وفي السَّمَاء مَصابيحٌ تَضيءُ لَنا	7
وكانَ آخِرَها أَنْ صَوَّرَ الرَّجُلا	قَضَى لِسِتَّة أَيَّام خَليقَتَهُ	8
حتى إذا ما رآه تَمَّ واعتدَلاَ	فأَخَذَ الله من طين فَصوَّره	9
بنَفْخَة الرُّوح في الجِسْمِ الَّذي جَبلا	دَعاهُ آدَمَ صَوْتاً فاستَجابَ لَهُ	10
وزَوْجَهُ صُنْعَةً مِنْ ضِلْعِه جَعَلا	ثُمَّتَ أَوْرَثَهُ الفِرْدَوْسَ يَعْمُرُها	11
مِنْ شَجَرٍ طَيِّبٍ أَنْ شَمَّ أوْ أَكَلا	لَمْ يَنْهَهُ رَبُّهُ عَنْ غَيْرِ واحِدَةٍ	12

7 AM

a السماء [M^{Ms} المسا

تَضِيءُ [M تُضِيءُ

b إنْ (the nagative *in,* see Wright, *Grammar*, vol. 2, §158, 301)] M أن

8. Ḥ

a خليقته [Ḥ AM M] Mq خلائقه

b أخرها [Mq AM M] أن آخر شيء

9. AM

a فأَخَذَ الله من طين فَصوَّره [AM M] M^{L1} فاخبر انه من طين صوره

b حتى إذا ما رآه [AM] M لمّا رأى أنه قد

تَمَّ [AM] M^{P14} سم

10. Ḥ

b بنفخة الروح [AM ونفَخَ الروحَ, M فنفخ الروح

11. Ḥ

a ثمّت M] M^{BM1} y*mt (rasm), M^{C2} ثمة

أورثه M] M^{BM2} اورثه, M^{BM1} أورثه

يعمرها [M يسكنه

b وزَوْجَهُ] Ḥ (MS Vienna ff 213ʳ, see Cheikho, "Al-Iḥdāth," 536) وزوجة

صنعةً من ضلعه [M ضلعة من جنبة

جعلا M] M^{L3} فعلا

12. Ḥ M

b أنْ [AM أن

13 فكَانَتِ الْحَيَّةُ الرَّقْشَاءُ إِذْ خُلِقَتْ   كما تَرَى ناقَةً في الْخَلْقِ أو جَمَلا

14 فَعَمَدا لَلَّتي عَنْ أَكْلِها نُهِيا   بِأَمْرِ حَوَّاءَ لَمْ تَأْخُذْ لَهُ الدَّغَلا

15 كِلَاهُمَا خاطَ إِذْ بُرًّا لَبُوسَهُمَا   مِنْ وَرَقِ التِّينِ ثَوْباً لَمْ يَكُنْ غُزِلا

16   فَلاطَها الله إِذْ أَغْوَتْ خَلِيقَتَهُ   طُولَ اللَّيَالي ولَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَها أَجَلا

17 تَمْشي عَلَى بَطْنِها في الدَّهْرِ ما عَمَرَتْ   والتُّرْبُ تَأْكُلُهُ حَزْنًا وإِنْ سَهُلا

18   فَأَتْعَبا أَبَوانا في حَيَاتِهما   وأَوْجَدا الجُوعَ والأَوْصابَ والعِلَلا

19 وأُوتِيا المُلْكَ والإِنْجِيلَ نَقْرَؤُهُ   نَشْفى بِحِكْمَتِه أَحْلامَنا عِلَلا

20 مِنْ غَيْرِ ما حاجَةٍ إلاَّ لِيَجْعَلَنا   فَوْقَ البَرِيَّةِ أَرْباباً كما فَعَلا

13. Ḥ, AM, M

a الحية [M^P9 الجنة, MV M^C2

b الرقشاء[M^P10 M^V الرشقا, M^C1 الرفسا

14. Ḥ

a فَعَمَدا لَلَّتي عَنْ [Ḥ (MS Vienna ff 213^r, see Cheikho, "Al-Iḥdāth," 536) تعمَّدا للني من

15. Ḥ

16. Ḥ

a أغوت [AM M أَطْغَتْ, M^P10 طاعت, M^P18 M^C2 طغت , M^L2 طعت, M^V ṭʿt* (rasm)

خليقته Ḥ AM M] M^Ms M^BM1 M^C2 خليفته, M^BM2 khlyf*th (rasm), M^V حليته

17. Ḥ

a في الدهر [AM M في الأرض

18. Ḥ

b وأَوْجَدا [Ḥ (MS Vienna ff 213^r, see Cheikho, "Al-Iḥdāth," 536) ووجدا

19. Ḥ

20. Ḥ

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