Was Arabian Idol Worship Declining on the Eve of Islam?*

The role of idol worship is of crucial importance for the study of Arabia on the eve of Islam. The very existence of the Arabian idols has recently been questioned, but the thorough investigation of the primary sources undertaken here suggests that their existence is beyond doubt. A great many idols of various kinds must have been known all over Arabia. Idolatry was perhaps in retreat in other places, but in Arabia it showed no signs of weakening. It may well be impossible to gauge the Arabs’ devotion to their idols, but it stands to reason that their worship formed a major obstacle for Muhammad both in Mecca and in Medina.

The rejection of idol worship is a permanent element in the accounts of the pre-Islamic *hanifs*. Idols also appear in legendary and stereotypical conversion stories of the Prophet’s Companions who lived in various parts of Arabia. I shall argue that the details regarding the idols are reliable since they belong to the background information on which the stories were based. More significantly, in Medina, where the spiritual influence of the dominant Jewish population was considerable, idol worship flourished on every level of tribal organization. If idol worship flourished in Medina, it flourished everywhere, or in any case in the Arabian settlements; there is no indication that the people of Medina were more devoted to their idols than the people of other places. Claims in the primary sources purporting to reflect indifference to idols among the Jāhili Arabs must be considered apologetic and tendentious.

It is widely assumed that on the eve of Islam idol worship in Arabia was in decline and hence did not form a major challenge for Muhammad. Nöldeke ascribed the ease with which the Arabs gave up idol worship to the spiritual progress that they had achieved before the rise of Islam. Wellhausen argued that the

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1G.R. Hawting (see Abbreviations) is of the opinion that the Qur’anic *mushrikūn* were not real idolaters but monotheists. See Y. Dutton’s review of Hawting’s recent book in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12,ii (2001), 177–179.

2“Die Araber hatten bis zum Anfang des 7. Jahrhunderts ausserordentliche geistige Fortschritte gemacht wie nicht leicht ein Volk in so ungünstigen Wohnsitzen. Sie waren ihrer alten Religion entwachsen und liessen diese daher fast ohne Widerstand fallen, als sich ihnen der
Meccans clung to idol worship mainly because they were concerned about their livelihood; conversion was a political rather than a religious matter, yet when a person converted, his pagan tribe stood by him when others fought against him. Goldziher approvingly quoted Dozy’s words that “religion, of whatever kind it may have been, generally had little place in the life of the Arabs, who were engrossed in worldly interests like fighting, wine, games and love”. Goldziher, basing himself on the testimony of Arabic poetry, had in mind the tribes of central Arabia whose religious concept he contrasted with the religious monuments of South Arabia. Nicholson argued: “Religion had so little influence on the lives of the Pre-islamic Arabs that we cannot expect to find much trace of it in their poetry . . . . Of real piety the ordinary Bedouin knew nothing. He felt no call to pray to his gods, although he often found them convenient to swear by. He might invoke Allah in the hour of need, as a drowning man will clutch at a straw; but his faith in superstitious ceremonies was stronger. He did not take his religion too seriously . . . .” However, Levi Della Vida correctly observed that the poetry and stories of battles from which we draw what we know of the life of the Arabs before Islam are not a true reflection of bedouin life and the verses which attribute religious indifference to the famous warriors should not be trusted.


3Reste, 220-21, and passim. Lammens agreed with Wellhausen regarding the weakness of religious feeling; l’Arabie occidentale, 139, 181. Buhl too mentioned in this context the indifference of the business-minded Meccans; Buhl, Leben, 93. Paret did not think that the idols and their indifferent followers who only wanted to cling to their fathers’ beliefs posed a serious challenge for Muhammad. He interpreted the passivity of the Arabs when their idols were destroyed at the time of Muhammad as follows: “Die altarabischen Glaubensvorstellungen waren schon lange verblaßt, bevor sie endgültig durch den Islam abgelöst wurden”; Paret, Mohammed und der Koran, 18. Paret was surprised that of all places Muhammad should have appeared among the businessmen of Mecca; ibid., 23. Stummer argued: “Ja, schon Muhammad traf auf ein Heidentum, dessen geistige Kraft bereits gebrochen und erlahmt war, denn offenbar waren die Einflüsse, die vom Judentum und Christentum auf das vorislamische Arabertum ausstrahlt, nicht unwirksam gewesen”; Stummer, “Bemerkungen zum Götzenbuch des Ibn al-Kalbi”, 393-94. Arafat remarks: “…[A]ny idea of religion as such was very vague, and the majority of the bedouins, as the Qur’ān testifies, were finding it difficult to acquire intelligent as well as deep faith. Possible direct benefit played a large part in their belief”; Arafat, “Fact and fiction”, 20.

4Muslim Studies, I, 12.
5Nicholson, Literary History, 135.
6Levi Della Vida, Les sémites et leur rôle dans l’histoire religieuse, 89-90. He is quoted by Henninger in connection with the common claim regarding the religious indifference of the Bedouins: pre-Islamic poetry is rigid, conventional and limited with regard to its choice of subjects; Henninger, “Pre-Islamic bedouin religion”, 7-8. See also Krone, Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lat, 176 (poetry fails to provide details on the religious life of the Bedouin because religious themes were not among the motives of the qasida). Still, while idols are rarely encountered in poetry, Allāh is mentioned very often, among others by poets who had no link
1 Conversion stories involving idols

Idols appear in many autobiographical accounts which are in fact conversion stories, describing the road of certain Companions of Muhammad to Islam. In general outline these accounts are often stereotypical and formulaic, but the evidence they contain regarding idols provides background information which by definition is more reliable than the rest of the account. Conversion stories are a fine source of evidence about idol worship because they do not belong to Ibn al-Kalbî's much quoted Kitâb al-ṣanām, nor are they part of Islamic heresiography. The stories were usually preserved by the Companions' descendants and were in fact family traditions. It would be unrealistic to anticipate that the ideological element would be lacking in them, but the details regarding the idol, above all the fact of its existence, form solid evidence and should not be doubted. At some stage the autobiographical accounts found their way into compilations that have a strong ideological framework, namely Dalâ'il al-nubuwwa or Proofs of Muhammad's Prophethood. But this secondary usage does not detract from their value for the study of Arabian society. Some of the stories about the conversion of pagan Arabs (for example, the accounts about the wufūd or the tribal delegations that visited Muhammad) do not contain references to idols. But this does not indicate that some tribes had idols while others did not, or that their idols are intentionally hidden from the reader. Simply, the tribal informants concentrated on other themes, or their original accounts were later curtailed by compilers who found them too long for their purposes. Clearly, the tribesmen conceived of Muhammad's message as an antithesis to idol worship.

In Islamic historiography the original sources of the reports are often missing because the compilers or copyists omitted them. Luckily, some sources meticulously record the earliest authorities, thereby showing that the reports originated with members of the tribes involved.

to Muhammad, either because they lived before his time or because they were not influenced by him. This would demonstrate not only that religious elements can be found in pre-Islamic poetry, but also the decline of idol worship; Krone, ibid., 183–86. However, Krone remarks, this “argument from silence” is not decisive: pre-Islamic poetry could easily be “Islamized” and manipulated. Krone realizes that the affair of the “Satanic verses” contradicts the assumption that idol worship at the time of Muhammad was in decline (“stark im Niedergang”), and hence unconvincingly interprets it as a political rather than a religious affair; 204–207. Andrae, however, found in Arabia “an undeveloped polytheism, in which a development had just barely begun which would have gradually produced a pantheon consisting of a hierarchy of gods, formed by associating together a number of independent individual divinities”; Andrae, Mohammed, 16–17.

7The delegation of the Nahd declared: barī‘nā ilayka yā rasūla llâh mina l-wathan wa-l-‘athan; Usd al-ghâba, III, 66 (printed: wa-l’anan). ‘Athan is interpreted as a small idol (al-ṣanam), while wathan means a big one; Lisân al-‘arab, s.v. The Khawlân delegation promised Muhammad that upon returning home, they would destroy their idol ‘Umayânis; Goldfeld, “‘Umayânis the idol of Khawlân”, 110–11.
1.1 Conversion stories of Qurashīs from Mecca

Conversion stories concerning Medina will be discussed in the latter part of the study. Let us first turn to Mecca. The conversion stories that demonstrate the multitude of household idols in Mecca are invariably associated with Muḥammad’s conquest of his hometown. The ideological dimension is not absent: Muhammad purified Mecca of the polytheistic cult, precisely as his ancestor Quṣayy ibn Kilāb had done five generations earlier, when he drove out the corrupt Khuzā’a. But without the factual underpinning, the ideological claim would have collapsed.

Wāqidī adduces several reports about the destruction of household idols. They are no doubt invented and aim at providing their protagonists with Islamic credentials; but the background details figuring in them are trustworthy.

One report (< Saʿīd ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhali) begins with a general statement and provides a specific example. After the conquest of Mecca, Muḥammad’s announcer proclaimed that those who believed in Allāh and his messenger had to break up every idol (ṣanām) in their houses. The Muslims started to break them. Now whenever ‘Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl (of the Makhzūm) heard of an idol in one of the houses of Quraysh, he went there in order to break it up. In the Jāhiliyya, the report goes on, Abū Tijrāt (below, 37) used to make and sell them. At this point Saʿīd (printed: Saʿd) ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhali adds that his informant told him that he had seen Abū Tijrāt manufacturing and selling them. Every Qurashī in Mecca had an idol in his house (wa-lam yakun rajul min Quraysh bi-Makka illā wa-fī bāytihi ṣanām).

According to the following report in Wāqidī (< Jubayr ibn Muṭʿīm), the announcer proclaimed that every idol had to be broken up or burnt and that it was forbidden to sell it (wa-thamanhu ḥarām, i.e. to be used as firewood). Jubayr himself had seen the idols being carried around Mecca (i.e., by peddlers); the Bedouin would buy them and take them to their tents (wa-qad kuntu arā qabla dhālika l-ṣanām yuṭafu bihā [bi-]Makka fa-yashtarīḥa ahlu l-badw fa-yakhrujūna bihā lā buqāṭihim). Every Qurashī had an idol at home. He stroked it when he entered and when he left, to draw a blessing from it.8

Wāqidī presents a report (< ‘Abd al-Majīd ibn Suhayl) according to which when Hind bint ‘Utba embraced Islam, she started striking an idol in her house with an adze (gāḏūm), cutting oblong pieces from it (fīḷdha fīḷdha). As she was doing this, she kept saying: “We have been deceived by you” (kunnā minka fī ḍhurūr).9 Hind’s idol was no doubt made of wood, and she was probably us-

8See also Yaʿqūbī, Taʾrīkh, II, 61 (wa-nāḏā munāḏī rasūli llāh man kāna fī bāytihi ṣanām fa-l-yakṣiruhu fa-kāsarū l-ṣanām).

ing the tool with which it had been carved. The inventors of the reports about ʿIkrima and Hind wished to emphasize the zeal of the new converts. Hind was Abū Sufyān’s wife and Muʿāwiya’s mother, and hence the Umayyad court attempted to elevate her image. A (pseudo-)autobiographical report with a distinctly Umayyad chain of transmitters including the caliphs ʿUmar II, Marwān I and Muʿāwiya — quoting his mother — elaborates on Hind’s road from idol worship to Islam. The centerpiece of this report is a dream which continues for three nights. On the first night she was in pitch darkness when the Prophet appeared to her in a beam of light. On the second night she was on the road, with the idols Hubal and Isāf calling her on both sides and the Prophet in front of her, showing her the right path. On the third night she found herself on the brink of Gehenna. Hubal called on her to enter while the Prophet seized her by the clothes from behind. In the morning she went to an idol in her house. As she struck it she said: “You have misled me for a long time”! Then she converted to Islam at the Prophet’s hands and pledged her allegiance to him.10

It would be naive to see this as a precise account of historical fact; but we only need the background information which clearly supports the testimony of other reports on the popularity of small household idols in pre-Islamic Mecca. The informants did not invent the setting of these reports: idols were found in every Meccan household.11

1.2 More conversion stories

Kalb: ʿIṣām al-Kalbī, the custodian of ʿAmra ʿIṣām, a Kalbī of the ʿĀmir ibn ʿAwf subdivision, was the custodian of a tribal idol called ʿAmra (read: ʿAmr?). No further details are given about ʿIṣām, probably because the report was not preserved by one of his descendants but by members of another family. ʿAmr ibn Jabala ibn Wāʿila al-Kalbī reports that they had an idol (kāna lanā ṣanam — the wording suggests that it was a tribal idol) whose custodian (tawallā nuskahu) was called ʿIṣām. The existence of a custodian again indicates that this was a tribal idol, not a household one. One day they heard a voice from within the idol which announced that idol worship had come to an end, following which ʿAmr and ʿIṣām went to Muḥammad and embraced Islam.12 ʿAmr ibn Jabala is

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10 Ibn ʿAsākir, LXX, 177 (tālā mā kunta minkā ʾillā fi ghurūr). See also Ibn Saʿd, VIII, 237. Cf. the inferior reading in Iṣāba, VIII, 156 (kunnā maʾaka fī ghurūr). Hind and ʿIkrima’s wife appear at the beginning of the list of Qurashi women who after the conquest of Mecca swore allegiance to Muḥammad; Ibn ʿAsākir, LXX, 179.

11 Fahd wrongly assumed that the idols in question were made of stone and that ʿIkrima was their manufacturer; Fahd, Le panthéon, 26–27, 29–30. Cf. Höfinger, “Die vorislamischen Religionen Arabiens”, 359: “Die Idole als solche waren Steine” etc.

12 Iṣāba, IV, 501 (quoting Khargūšī’s Sharaf al-muṣṭafā). The entry is entitled “ʿIṣām ibn ʿĀmir al-Kalbī” although I could find no support for his father’s name. He was min Banī Fāris(?). ʿAmr’s son, ʿAbd, appears to have played some role here, otherwise there would have been no entry on him in the Iṣāba. According to the entry, Wāʿila’s father was called al-Julāh;
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listed by Ibn al-Kalbī and Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām among those who paid a formal visit to the Prophet (wafada).\(^\text{13}\) The listing was probably based on ‘Amr’s own report.

‘Amr was the grandfather of one of the most influential figures in Umayyad administration, namely Sa‘īd ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Amr al-Abrāsh al-Kalbī who was Hishām’s ḥājib.\(^\text{14}\) In another perhaps more trustworthy pedigree of al-Abrāsh his grandfather’s name is not ‘Amr but ‘Abd ‘Amr; this may suggest that the idol’s name was in fact ‘Amr rather than ‘Amra.\(^\text{15}\) A variant of the account on the idol gives the custodian no role. Rather, the voice from within the idol addresses Bakr/‘Abd ‘Amr himself.\(^\text{16}\) The report was recorded by Ibn al-Kalbī whose informants were al-Hārith ibn ‘Amr and others. If indeed al-Hārith ibn ‘Amr directly reported to Ibn al-Kalbī, he could not have been the protagonist’s son.\(^\text{17}\)

At all events, by tracing al-Abrāsh’s pedigree we can identify the ‘Āmir ibn ‘Awf among whom the idol ‘Amra (or ‘Amr) was found: ‘Āmir al-Al-Karbar ibn ‘Awf ibn Bakr ibn ‘Awf ibn ‘Udhra, more precisely ‘Āmir al-Julāh ibn ‘Awf ibn Bakr ibn ‘Awf ibn ‘Amir al-Al-Karbar.\(^\text{18}\) ‘Abd ‘Amr’s brother, al-Nu‘mān, who was a military commander of his tribe, is said to have come to the Prophet with his brother.\(^\text{19}\)

One cannot help suspecting that the influential Abrash strove to secure for his ancestor a place among the Prophet’s Companions. However, the evidence concerning the idol’s existence must be reliable.

\(^{13}\) Isāba, IV, 387 (printed here Wā’il instead of Wāila).

\(^{14}\) Isāba, IV, 613 (again, Wā’il instead of Wāila; Wā’il’s father was Qays ibn Bakr; see al-Abrash’s pedigree below, where these two appear together with al-Julāh). Abū ‘Ubayd may have been the compiler of a monograph on wufūd. For a possible quotation from this presumed monograph see Isāba, I, 456, s.v. Jabala ibn Thawr al-Hanafī.

\(^{15}\) Isāba, IV, 613 (the “ibn” between “Sa‘īd” and “al-Abrāsh” is superfluous).

\(^{16}\) Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab Ma‘add, II, 608 (printed Sa‘īd instead of Sa‘īd). A longer pedigree of al-Abrāsh makes him a great-great-grandson of ‘Abd ‘Amr rather than his grandson: Sa‘īd ibn Bakr ibn ‘Abd Qays ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd ‘Amr ibn Jabala ibn Wā’il ibn Qays ibn Bakr ibn al-Julāh (he is referred to as Hishām’s wazir); Ibn Hazm, Ansāb, 458. But the words “ibn Bakr ibn ‘Abd Qays” are superfluous; he could not have had a grandfather called ‘Abd Qays who lived in the Islamic period. See al-Abrash’s full pedigree in Ibn ‘Asākir, VII, 295.

\(^{17}\) This of course cannot be reconciled with the claim that it was Muḥammad who changed his name to Bakr.


\(^{19}\) Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab Ma‘add, II, 607–608; Caskel, I, no. 289.

\(^{20}\) Isāba, VI, 441 (where the nisba al-‘Udhra is misleading). For a reference to al-Nu‘mān as Ibn al-Julāh see Ibn Durayd, Ishtiqāq, 541.
Juhayna: the former custodian ʿAmr ibn Murra  
Under ṣafid Juhayna  
Ibn Saʿd quotes two reports, both from Ibn al-Kalbī. The former deals with two persons while the latter deals with one and refers to idol worship. Ibn al-Kalbī quotes Khālid ibn Saʿīd < an unspecified man from the Juhayna, more precisely the Duhmān < his father who was a Companion < ʿAmr ibn Murra: “We had an idol and we used to worship it (nuʿazzimuḥu). I was its custodian and when I heard about the Prophet I demolished it and set out for the Prophet in Medina”.  
20 The words “we had an idol” indicate that the idol in question belonged to a tribal group, which is also shown by the existence of a custodian. ʿAmr’s custodianship is not a matter of embarrassment for the tribal informant; on the contrary, it is a source of pride because the shift of the former functionary from idolatry to Islam involved a sacrifice on his part, unlike the conversion of rank and file idol worshippers.

ʿUdhra: Ziml ibn ʿAmr and Ḥumām  
The idol of the ʿUdhra, Ḥumām, is associated with the conversion to Islam of Ziml ibn ʿAmr al-ʿUdhri. Under ṣafid ʿUdhra  
Ibn Saʿd adduces two reports. The former deals with the ṣafid as a whole (it included twelve members, four of whom are specified), while the latter, quoted from Ibn al-Kalbī < Sharqī ibn al-Quṭāmī < Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml ibn ʿAmr, deals only with the informant’s grandfather, Ziml ibn ʿAmr. For part of the report Ibn al-Kalbī relied on another informant, namely Abū Zufar al-Kalbī (possibly quoting the same family ḥisnād). Ziml’s idol is not specified here. Ziml came to the Prophet and informed him about what he had heard from their idol. The Prophet replied: “This is a believer from among the jinn”.  
21 It was Ziml’s offspring who preserved the report on their ancestor’s idol. Elsewhere we find a report on this matter going back to Abū l-Ḥārith Muhammad ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hāniʾ ibn Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml ibn ʿAmr < his father < his (father’s) father < his (father’s) grandfather < Ziml ibn ʿAmr. From this account, which is more detailed, we learn that the idol belonged to the ʿUdhra (and not to Ziml alone) and that its name was Ḥumām. More specifically, the idol was among (i.e., belonged to) the Hind ibn Ḥarām ibn Ḥinna ibn ʿAbd ibn Kabīr ibn ʿUdhra. It had a custodian called Ṭaʾrīq and they used to sacrifice sheep (or goats, yaʾṭirūna) near it.  
22 Ziml himself and some of his offspring had a prominent place in the Umayyad
regime. Ziml received from Muʿāwiya a court (dār) in Damascus and for a certain period was in charge of Muʿāwiya’s shurṭa. He fought on his side in Siffin, reportedly carrying the banner with which the Prophet had given him authority over his tribe. He was also one of Muʿāwiya’s witnesses at the Arbitration and was killed at the Battle of Marj Rāhiṭ.23 Under Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya he had been in charge of the khātām.24

The preservation of Ziml’s story continued for generations among his offspring, regardless of its incorporation into the general literary tradition. Tammām ibn Muhammad added it in his Fawāʾid on the authority of Abū l-Ḥārith Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hānī’ ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hānī’ ibn Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml < his fathers. In Tammām’s book the idol is called Khumām.25 The family story which was probably written down at an early stage coexisted with the literary tradition. Thus Ziml’s grandson Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād transmitted his hadīth to his son, Hānī, and to two non-family members: Sharqī ibn al-Quṭāmī and Yazīd ibn Saʿīd al-ʿAbsī.26

Unlike Ziml’s banner which allegedly accompanied him from the time of Muhammad to his death at Marj Rāhiṭ, Ḥumām’s marginal role in the background of the report lends reliability to the fact of the idol’s existence.

**Hudhayl: Sāʿida al-Hudhalī and Suwā’** Ibn Saʿīd quotes the following from Wāqīdī < ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd (ibn Qaṭṭās) al-Hudhalī27 < ‘Abdallāh ibn Sāʿida al-Hudhalī < his father. Sāʿida reports on a voice which he heard from “their idol” Suwā’. Several Hudhalīs including himself were leading two hundred scabby sheep to the idol to ask for its blessing, but a voice calling from the idol’s belly (jawf al-ṣanām) announced that the deceit of the jinn was no longer effective: they were shot dead by falling stars because of a prophet called Ahmad.28 The idol or rather the jinn residing in it or associated with it had a healing power.29 A similar report is quoted by Wāqīdī from the same ‘Abdallāh ibn Yazīd al-Hudhalī < Saʿīd ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhalī < his father. ‘Amr slaughtered upon their

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23 Ibn ʿAsākir, XIX, 76–77.
24 Ibn ʿAsākir, XXI, 95. Mudlij ibn al-Miqdād ibn Ziml who was a sharīf in Syria was married to Amīna bint ‘Abdallāh al-Qasrī, Khālid’s sister; Ibn ʿAsākir, LVII, 189 (read al-Qasrī instead of al-Qushayrī); Isāba, II, 568.
26 Ibn ʿAsākir, LVII, 189.
27 Ibn ʿAdī, ʿAbdallāh ibn Qaṭṭās, IV, 1550.
29 A shayṭān called Misḥār that used to talk to the people through idols was killed by believing jinn, one of whom was Samḥaj; Abū Nuʿaym, Dalaʿīl, 109–10. The wording hādhā shayṭān yuqallimu l-nās fī l-aalmān may suggest that it was not associated with a specific idol.
idol Suwā‘ the first slaughter animal which was a fat cow, and then he and the others heard a voice from within it announcing the appearance of a prophet in Mecca. When the Hudhalīs inquired about it in Mecca, only Abū Bakr could confirm the Prophet’s appearance. The Hudhalīs refrained from embracing Islam there and then, which they later regretted.\(^{30}\)

The entry on ‘Amr ibn Sa‘īd al-Hudhalī in Ibn Ḥajar’s Companion dictionary refers to three sources which adduce this report: Abū Nu‘aym’s Companion dictionary, Abū Nu‘aym’s Dalā‘il al-nuṣūwā (where there is a long version) and al-Khargushi’s Sharaf al-muṣṭafa.\(^{31}\)

So instead of Sā‘īda al-Hudhalī it is ‘Amr (or ‘Amr ibn Sa‘īd) al-Hudhalī and instead of sheep a cow. Whatever the case Hudhayl’s association with Suwā‘ remains. Be it Sā‘īda or ‘Amr, we have here a family report mainly interested in establishing a Companion status for the protagonist; the idol belongs to the background.

Suwā‘ was in wadi Na‘mān and hence could not have been identical with the other Suwā‘ which was located in wadi Ruhāṭ. The latter was worshipped by the Sulaym and the Hudhayl and had a Sulamī custodian (below, 15).\(^{32}\) The former was worshipped by the Kināna, Hudhayl, Muzayna and ‘Amr ibn Qays ‘Aylān. Its custodians were the Şāḥila from the Hudhayl.\(^{33}\)

Sa‘d ibn Bakr: Ɗimām ibn Tha‘labā repudiates the idols Under wafīd Sa‘d ibn Bakr Ibn Sa‘d quotes from Wāqidī the story of Ɗimām ibn Tha‘labā who arrived in Rajab 5 A.H. He returned to his people as a Muslim, having repudiated the idols.\(^{34}\) Wāqidī is the source of the report according to which Ɗimām came in Rajab 5 A.H., forming the first Arab delegation that came to Muḥammad.\(^{35}\) While Wāqidī dated his arrival to 5 A.H., Ibn Hishām, quoting Abū ‘Ubayda,
dated it to 9 A.H. Ibn Ḥajar, probably correctly, preferred the later date.\(^{36}\)

Ḍimām began the report to his people on his visit to Muḥammad by cursing Allāt and al-ʿUzza, and his shocked audience warned him of leprosy, elephantiasis and madness.\(^{37}\) Indeed, these two idols, located in Ṭāʾif and Nakhla respectively, were not far from the territory of the Saʿd ibn Bakr.

Several versions of Ḍimām’s story enjoy a high profile in Islamic literature where it is used in connection with certain legal questions. Hence it is accompanied by respectable isnāds rather than obscure tribal authorities.

\section*{ʿUqayl: Abū Ḥarb ibn Khuwaylid al-ʿUqayli remains pagan}

Among the ʿUqaylis mentioned in Ibn Saʿd under the title wafd ʿUqayl ibn Kaʿb there was one who remained pagan, namely Abū Ḥarb ibn Khuwaylid ibn Ṭāḥifin ʿUqayl. He cast lots with arrows (wa-darraba bi-l-qidāh) in order to decide between Islam and his own religion (dīn), and after the arrow of disbelief had come up three times, he did not convert.\(^{38}\) Ibn Saʿd quotes the two reports on wafd ʿUqayl ibn Kaʿb including this one from Ibn al-Kalbī < a man of the ʿUqayl < their elders (ashyākh qawmihī). Abū Ḥarb’s attitude as described in this account would not make him eligible for Companion status; yet Ibn Ḥajar includes him in the first category of Companions, i.e. among those whose Companion status is mentioned in a hadīth of any level of reliability, or is proven otherwise.\(^{39}\)

This prominent warrior of the ʿUqayl is evidently mocked with regard to his misguided attempt at divination; but there can be no doubt that the religion he chose to cling to was idolatry.

\section*{Thaqīf and Allāt}

The idol Allāt was a central theme in the negotiations between Muḥammad and the Thaqīf delegation that came to Medina in Ramadān 9 A.H. Ibn Saʿd’s report on wafd Thaqīf contains only this laconic reference: “They asked to be exempted from having to demolish Allāt and al-ʿUzza [sic] by themselves, to which he [the Prophet] assented. Al-Mughīra ibn Shuʿba said: ‘And I was the one who demolished it’”.\(^{40}\) His comment refers to Allāt. Indeed

\(^{36}\)Īṣāba, III, 487. Note that in the report on Ḍimām in Ibn Hishām, IV, 219–21, there is no mention of Abū ʿUbayda or the date of Ḍimām’s arrival. Waqīḍi dated his arrival to the year of the Khandaq, after the departure of the abzāb; a third source dated his arrival to 7 A.H.; Qurṭubī, Tafsīr, IV, 144. Either Ḍimām or Bilāl ibn al-Ḥarīth al-Muzānī formed the first wafd that came to Muḥammad; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Tamhīd, XVI, 167.


\(^{38}\)Ibn Saʿd, I, 302. Contrast the famous story of Imruʿ al-Qays’s breaking of the arrows of Dhū l-Khalaṣa in Tabālā. His forceful action is thought to have put an end to the practice of istiqṣām there; e.g. Ibn ʿAsākir, IX, 239 (fa-lam yustaqsam ʿinda Dhī l-Khalaṣa ḫattā jāʾa llāh bi-l-islām).

\(^{39}\)Īṣāba, VII, 88; Ibn al-Kalbī, Jamharat al-nasab, 334. Abū Ḥarb demanded that his tribe be exempted from ʿushr and ḥashr; see on these terms Lecker, “Were customs dues levied at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad?”, 32–38 = no. VII in this volume.

\(^{40}\)Ibn Saʿd, I, 313.
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besides exemption from having to destroy their idols (plural) themselves they asked to keep Allāt for one year, but Muḥammad rejected the latter demand. Muḥammad’s reply mentions al-tāghiyā which is glossed as Allāt and al-ʿUzza;\(^{41}\) the mention of al-ʿUzza in this context is superfluous and wrong.\(^{42}\)

It is reported that after the conclusion of the treaty the Thaqīf asked to keep Allāt for three years, and they kept on haggling until they came down to a respite of one month after their return to Ṭā’if. But Muḥammad would not give them a postponement for a definite period.\(^{43}\)

The core report in the relatively long chapter on wafd Thaqīf in Ibn Shabba is from Mūsā ibn ʿUqba < Zuhrī. One assumes that Zuhrī based it on reports from Thaqafi informants. Thaqīf’s idol is called here al-Rabba. The Thaqīf feared that if it knew they were hastening to destroy it, it would kill their families. This fear was voiced by the delegation head, ʿAbd Yālīl, and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb replied that it was merely a stone which could not tell those who worshipped it from those who did not. When the delegation returned from Medina, its members visited Allāt before going to their homes. It was a sanctuary in the middle of Ṭā’if which was veiled and received gifts of slaughter camels. They (i.e., the Thaqīf) made it similar to the Kaʿba and worshipped it (bayt kāna bayna zahrāyi l-Ṭā’if yustaru wa-yuhd lahā [sic] l-hady, ḍāḥaw bihi bayta llāh wa-kānā ya’budūnahā). The Thaqafīs did not believe that Allāt could be demolished and Mughīrā ibn Shuʿba mocked them by pretending to have been struck by the idol upon his first blow. He then smashed the door and with the help of others levelled the sanctuary. Yet

\(^{41}\)Kister, “Some reports concerning al-Ṭāʾif”, 4=Baghawī, Ṭafsīr, IV, 140. Kister discussed the economic factor behind their demand, namely Thaqīf’s revenues from pilgrims; \textit{ibid.}, 4–5=Qurtūbi, Ṭafsīr, X, 299. Note however that the report speaks of idols (plural) and does not specifically mention Allāt (matti`nā bi-`ālihatinā sana ḥattā na`khudhā mà yuhdā slaghā fāʾidhā akhadvnā ḥakasarnāhā wa-`ašlāmnā). Muqātil ibn Sulaymān’s commentary, with regard to Qurʿān 17,73, also includes Allāt and al-ʿUzza in Thaqīf’s demand; however, when following the Prophet’s hesitation, they only cited Allāt (wa-an tumatti`unā bi-lāt wa-l-ʿUzza sana wa-lā naksirahā [sing.] bī-`aydīnā min ghyar an na`budahā li-ya`rifa l-nās karāmanata ʿalayka wa-`ašlāmnā ʿalayhim . . . fa-qūlū tumatti`unā bi-lāt lān). The cunning Thaqafīs advised Muhammad what he should tell the other Arabs should they reprove him with regard to Thaqīf’s prerogative (wa-in kāna bika malamata l-ʿarab fī kasr ṣnāmīhim wa-tart ṣnāmīnā fa-qul rahum inna rabbī amaranī an wūrra llāt bi-arjīhim sana); Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, Ṭafsīr, I, 217b–18a; Kister, “Some reports concerning al-Ṭāʾif”, 6–7. Muqātil does not mention his source for this report, but he could have taken it from his contemporary Kalbī; an abridged version of the same report in Ibn Shabba, II, 510–11, goes back to Kalbī. The wording of Thaqīf’s advice here is slightly different (tumatti`unā bi-lāt sana, fa-in khshitha lā-`imata l-ʿarab fa-qulū llāh || amaranī rabbī bi-dhālikā). Kalbī’s report as found in Ibn Shabba was transmitted by Ḥammād ibn Salama; cf. an isnād in which Ḥammād quotes Kalbī in Ṭabarānī, al-Mujjam al-kabīr, XXIII, 163. Since Kalbī’s report specifically refers to Qurʿān 17,73, it stands to reason that it is from Kalbī’s Ṭafsīr.

\(^{42}\)Cf. also Ibn Hishām, IV, 187: Abū Sufyān and al-Mughīrā ibn Shuʿba are sent ilā hadmi l-tāghiyā; in Isāba, V, 403, the name al-ʿUzza was erroneously added: li-hadmi l-ʿUzza l-tāghiya.

\(^{43}\)Ibn Hishām, IV, 184–85; Wāqidī, III, 968.
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the šāhib al-mafātīḥ (i.e., the custodian)\(^44\) thought that the foundation would be provoked and the aggressors would be swallowed up (la-yaghḍabanna l-asās wa-la-yukhsafanna bihim), so the foundation was dug up and the idol’s jewels and covers (ṭhiyāb) were taken out.\(^45\) These details about Allāt are taken from Zuhrī’s report.\(^46\)

The factual background of Mughīra’s mock death at the hands of Allāt is the shock and bewilderment among the superstitious Thaqīf. Most Thaqafīs, it is reported, did not believe that the idol was going to be demolished and considered it invulnerable.\(^47\) Beforehand, an old Thaqafī who still had a residue of idolatry in his heart declared the demolition of Allāt a touch-stone. A fellow Thaqafī, ‘Uthmān ibn Abī l-‘Āṣ, replied that just like Allāt, al-‘Uzza could not tell those who worshipped it from those who did not; Khalīd ibn al-Walīd destroyed it single-handedly. Also Isāf, Nā‘ila, Hubal, Manāt and Suwā‘ were each destroyed by one person.\(^48\)

Allāt’s treasury included funds (māl) in gold and onyx in addition to jewels.\(^49\) When the custodian expected the foundation to be provoked, Mughīra dug it up, reaching half a man’s height. He reached the Ghabghab which is Allāt’s treasury and they took out its jewels and cover, in addition to the perfume, gold or silver found there.\(^50\)

We have further evidence regarding the treasury. Muḥammad paid out from māl al-ṭāqīya or ḥuqayy l-Rabba a debt of two hundred mithqāl of gold left by the murdered ‘Urwa ibn Mas‘ūd al-Thaqafī. He did this at the request of ‘Urwa’s son, Abū Mulayh. He also paid a debt of the same amount left by the former’s brother, al-Aswād ibn Mas‘ūd, at the request of the latter’s son, Qārīb.\(^51\) There were also other unspecified beneficiaries; part of the treasure was spent on weapons for the Jihād.\(^52\)

The Ka‘ba too had a treasury (māl al-Ka‘ba), also referred to as khizānat al-Ka‘ba. The khizānat al-Ka‘ba was in the court (dār) of Shayba ibn ‘Uthmān, as

\(^{44}\)Wāqidī, III, 972, has sādin.


\(^{46}\)The custom of visiting the idol upon returning from a journey is also mentioned elsewhere. Having embraced Islam, ‘Urwa ibn Mas‘ūd returned home without first visiting al-Rabba, which the Thaqafīs found unusual; Wāqidī, III, 960. They became suspicious when he did not approach Allāt and did not shave his head near it; ibid., 961.

\(^{47}\)Lā tarā ‘annmat Thaqīf annahā mahdūma wa-yaẓunnūna annahā mumtani‘a; Ibn Shabba, II, 506.

\(^{48}\)Wāqidī, III, 970–71.

\(^{49}\)Ibn Hishām, IV, 186.

\(^{50}\)... Balagha nisf qāma wa-ntahā ilā l-Ghabghab khizānatiḥa wa-ntaṣa‘ū ḥilyataḥa wa-kuswatāḥa wa-ma fiḥa min ṣīḥ wa-min dhahab aw ḥijā‘a; Wāqidī, III, 972.

\(^{51}\)Ibn Hishām, IV, 187; Wāqidī, III, 971; Ibn Sa‘d, V, 504–505.

\(^{52}\)Wāqidī, III, 972 (wa-a‘tā ... Abā Mulaḥ wa-Qārīban wa-nāsan wa-ja‘ala fi sabilī ìlāh wa-fi l-sitāḥ minhā).
we learn for example from the evidence on Ibn al-Zubayr’s works in the Ka’ba.\(^{53}\) The Prophet is supposed to have found seventy thousand ounces of gold in the pit (\textit{jubb}) which was in the Ka’ba. Against ‘Ali’s advice to use this for his war expenses Muhammad decided not to touch it and Abū Bakr followed his example.\(^{54}\) Elsewhere there are conflicting reports about the fate of the treasure after Muhammad’s conquest of Mecca.\(^{55}\) Reportedly ‘Umar too did not touch it. The Ka’ba’s custodian at the time of Muhammad, Shayba ibn ‘Uthmān, who lived to the end of Mu‘āwiya’s caliphate, is quoted as protecting this institution. A man who donated money to the Ka’ba told him that had it been from his own money he would not have donated it. Shayba is supposed to have told him that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb took an oath to distribute the treasure, but changed his mind because Shayba convinced him not to do so. He told ‘Umar that the Prophet and Abū Bakr who were more in need of it than ‘Umar had not touched it.\(^{56}\) The Ka’ba’s treasury also served as a safe place for the storing of important documents. When caliph ‘Umar II turned a court he owned in Mecca into a charitable endowment for the housing of pilgrims, he deposited the document in the treasury and instructed the custodians to look after the court.\(^{57}\)

In short, the abolition of Allāt and the plundering of its treasury deprived the Thaqafīs of a central financial institution which may well have functioned as a bank, providing loans and guarantees. The Islamization of the Ka’ba made it possible for the Qurashīs in the rival town of Mecca to preserve their rival institution.

The tribal aspect is not absent from the reports about Allāt. The Thaqīf were divided into two rival subdivisions, the Aḥlāf or the allies, and the Mālik. In the battle of Ḥunayn and during the siege of Ṭā’īf by the Muslims, Qārīb ibn al-Aswad carried the banner of the Aḥlāf.\(^{58}\) There are two versions regarding the person who murdered ‘Urwa ibn Mas‘ūd: he was either of his own clan, the Aḥlāf, or of the Mālik; Wāqīḍī preferred the latter version.\(^{59}\) Mughīra belonged to the Aḥlāf: those members of the Thaqīf delegation that visited the Prophet who were of the Aḥlāf lodged with him.\(^{60}\) When Mughīra

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\(^{53}\) Azraqī, I, 207. See also \textit{ibid.}, II, 253 (Shayba’s court in which the Ka’ba’s treasury was located was near \textit{Dār al-Nudwa} and had a gate connecting it to the Ka’ba).

\(^{54}\) Azraqī, I, 246–47.

\(^{55}\) Ya’qūbī, \textit{Tā’rikh}, II, 61 (\textit{wa-rāwā ba’d-duhum anna rasūl-ullāh qasama mā kāna fi l-Ka’ba mina l-māl bayna l-muslimīn wa-qāla ākharīna aqāyyahu}).

\(^{56}\) Ibn ‘Asākir, XXIII, 259–60 (\textit{qad ra’aya makānahu fa-lam yuḥarrīkāhu wa-humā ahwaju ilā l-māl mina}); cf. Azraqī, I, 245–46. The Jurhum unjustly took from the money donated to the Ka’ba; Ṭabarī, I, 1131 (\textit{wa-akalū māla l-Ka’ba l-ladhi yuḥdū ilayhā}).

\(^{57}\) Azraqī, II, 241.

\(^{58}\) Isāba, V, 403.

\(^{59}\) Wāqīḍī, III, 961.

\(^{60}\) Ibn Sa’d, I, 313. Mughīra’s court in the Baqī’ was granted to him by the Prophet (\textit{khitṭa khaṭṭāba al-nabī s lahu}); Wāqīḍī, III, 965. The usage of the term \textit{khitṭa} with regard to Medina is unusual. Cf. \textit{EI}², s.v. \textit{Khitṭa}, where it is defined as a “piece of land marked out for building
demolished Allāt, he was sheltered by his clan, the Banū Mu‘attib. Mu‘attib was Mughīra’s great-great-grandfather, as can be seen from the latter’s pedigree: Mughīra ibn Shu‘ba ibn Abī ‘Āmīr ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Mu‘attib. Mu‘attib was also the great-grandfather of the three Aḥlāf representatives in the Thaqīf delegation, al-Ḥakām ibn ‘Amīr ibn Wahb ibn Mu‘attib and Shu‘rāḥbīl ibn Ghaylān ibn Salama ibn Mu‘attib. The delegation head, ‘Abd Yālīl, was from another branch of the Aḥlāf. Incidentally, the Prophet chose to appoint as the governor of Tā‘if the youngest member of the delegation, the above mentioned ‘Uthmān ibn Abī l-‘Āṣ who was of the Mālik. For good measure, Muḥammad’s tax collector was of the Aḥlāf. More precisely, he was yet another great-grandson of Mu‘attib, Sālīf ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmīr ibn Mu‘attib.

The custodians of Allāt were of the Aḥlāf. They were the Banū l-‘Ajlān ibn ‘Attāb ibn Mālik ibn Ka‘b; ‘Attāb may have been the first custodian. Another source takes us one or two generations later by reporting that the custodians were the Banū Shubayl ibn al-‘Ajlān. One of them is specified, namely Munabbih ibn Shubayl.

Surprisingly, there is yet another claim regarding the identity of the custodians. The family (al) of Abū l-‘Āṣ of the Mālik (more precisely the Yasr ibn Mālik) were reportedly Allāt’s custodians.

The rich evidence about the complicated negotiations with the Thaqīf delegation and the demolition of Allāt’s sanctuary point to the idol’s central role both economically and spiritually. Thaqīf’s request to be exempted from having to destroy it with their own hands can only be attributed to their deep emotional attachment to it, or at least to their superstitious belief in its power to cause mischief.

upon”, a term used of the lands allotted to tribal groups and individuals in the garrison cities founded by the Arabs at the time of the conquests. Also the cousins Abū Mulaḥḥ ibn ‘Urwa and Qārīb ibn al-Aswad lodged with him; Wāqīdī, III, 962.

61Ibn Hishām, IV, 186; Wāqīdī, III, 971–72.
62Ibn al-Kalbī, Jamharat al-nasab, 387. The Thaqafīs murdered by Mughīra before he embraced Islam were of the Mālik; Wāqīdī, III, 964–65.
64Wa-shāḥibuhā minhum ‘Attāb . . . thamma banāhu ba’dahu; Wāqīdī, III, 972. Wellhausen thought that Mu‘attib and ‘Attāb were the same, but this is not the case: Reste, 31; Caskel, I, no. 118. See also Krone, Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt, 427–29.
65Ibn al-Kalbī, Jamharat al-nasab, 388.
66Muḥabbar, 315. For Abū l-‘Āṣ’s pedigree see Ibn Hazm, Ansāb, 266. The family in question played a significant role in Islam. The above mentioned ‘Uthmān ibn Abī l-‘Āṣ was the son of an Umayyad woman and at one time had an Umayyad wife. After officiating as Muḥammad’s governor in Tā‘if, he had a prominent career. Muḥammad instructed him to locate the mosque of Tā‘if at the former place of the idols (haythu kānat tawāqihhum); Qurtubī, Tafsīr, VIII, 255. The left minaret of the Tā‘if mosque was later built on the site of Allāt; Qurtubī, Tafsīr, XVII, 99.
Sulaym: Rāshid ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi and Suwā’ Under wafd Sulaym Ibn Sa’d has three reports, the second of which deals with the former custodian of an idol belonging to the Sulaym, Rāshid ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi. His pagan name, Ghāwī ibn ‘Abd al-Uzza, was Islamized by the Prophet. Ṣāhid became convinced of the fallacy of idol worship when he saw two foxes urinating on the idol, following which he smashed it and came to the Prophet. The latter gave him a place called Ruhāt in which was a well called ‘Ayn al-Rasūl. Whether or not we accept the background to Ṣāhid’s conversion, it clearly meant the repudiation of idol worship, probably depriving him of his livelihood. Ibn Sa’d does not specify his source of information regarding Ṣāhid, but the style is reminiscent of other reports of the same type.

A family tradition which goes back to Ṣāhid (no doubt via his offspring) is preserved. It was paraphrased by Ṣamḥūdī, but even in the abridged form it provides illuminating evidence. Ṣāhid’s report twice includes the expression al-Ma’lāt min Ruhāt, or the upper part of wadi Ruhāt: it was the location of the idol Suwā’ worshipped by the Hudhayl and the Banū Zafar of Sulaym, and it defined the Prophet’s grant of land to Ṣāhid. In other words, Ṣāhid received the site of the idol. The spring miraculously created by the Prophet’s blessing is called here Ma’ al-Rasūl. Ṣāhid’s custodianship is only alluded to: he heard a mysterious voice (ḥātif) from Suwā’’s belly and from other idols announcing Muḥammad’s prophethood. He also saw two foxes licking the ground around the idol, eating the gifts brought to it and then urinating on it.

Ibn Ḥajar’s Companion dictionary has an entry on Ṣāhid which as usual includes passages from earlier Companion dictionaries, among them Abū Nu’aym’s. In his turn Abū Nu’aym quotes Ibn Zabāla’s lost book on the history of Medina which was one of Samḥūdī’s main sources. Ibn Zabāla has a quotation from none other than Ṣāhid’s grandson (or great-grandson), Ḥakīm ibn ‘Aṭā’ al-Sulami. He identified the idol as Suwā’ and gave its location as al-Ma’lāt. A slightly longer quotation from Abū Nuʿaym occurs elsewhere. In it we find that Suwā’ was bi-l-Ma’lāt min Ruhāt. The place name al-Ma’lāt links us directly to Ṣāhid’s paraphrased report in Samḥūdī, and hence we may conclude that Samḥūdī probably copied it from Ibn Zabāla’s book.

Another passage in Ibn Ḥajar is from Ibn Ḥibbān al-Busti’s Companion dictionary. According to this account, Ṣāhid’s former name — it is said here to have been Ghāwī ibn Zālim — was replaced by the Prophet with the name Ṣāhid ibn ‘Abdallāh. In this report, one of the foxes which approached the idol raised its leg and urinated on it. These differences are immaterial and what we have

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67 Ibn Sa’d, I, 307–308.
68 Samḥūdī, IV, 1225; Lecker, Sulaym, 52–59, with further discussion.
69 Abū Nuʿaym, Ṣahāba, only has the entries to, and including, the letter ṭā’.
70 Kāna l-ṣanāma ḫaḏhiyyu l-yuqulu lahu Suwā’ [printed: Suwa’] bi-l-Ma’lāt, fa-dhabara qisṣat ʾislāmihi wa-kasrihi iyāḥu; Ṣabāba, II, 434.
71 Suyūṭī, Khaṣaṣṭaṣ, II, 193.
here are versions of the story of Rāshid’s conversion.\textsuperscript{72}

Rāshid’s offspring transmitted yet another report about their father. The \textit{Manāṣik} has the following \textit{isnād}: Abū Muḥammad al-Warrāq, i.e., ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Sa’d al-Warrāq\textsuperscript{73} < Yahyā ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ismā‘īl al-Sulamī < Numayr ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uqayl al-Zafarī (the \textit{nisba} refers to the Zafar subdivision of Sulaym mentioned above among the worshippers of Suwā’i) < his grandfather (or great-grandfather), who informed him that their father Rāshid ibn Rāshid, formerly known as Zālim ibn Ghawī, was with the Prophet in a wadi called Ruhāṭ. The latter granted him a spring which he had miraculously created, together with the declivity in which it ran. When the report was recorded the place still belonged to Rāshid’s offspring.\textsuperscript{74} The spring mentioned above as ‘Ayn al-Rasūl and Mā’ al-Rasūl is evidently identical to ‘Ayn al-Nabī.\textsuperscript{75} While there is no mention of Rāshid’s former career, the mention of Ruhāṭ shows that Rāshid ibn Rāshid is in fact Rāshid the former custodian, and thus we have here other descendants who preserved a report about him. There is a certain discrepancy between the known pedigree of Rāshid and that of his offspring: the informant who was Rāshid’s descendant was of the Zafar ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Buhṭha ibn Sulaym, while Rāshid’s pedigree indicates that he was of the Ka‘b ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Buhṭha ibn Sulaym. But in another report Rāshid is referred to as “a man of the Zafar, of Sulaym”.\textsuperscript{76} It seems that at a certain point the distinction between the brother clans Zafar and Ka‘b disappeared, or a genealogical shift took place.\textsuperscript{77}

Five general remarks may be made here. First, Rāshid’s custodianship was not concealed and his offspring were not ashamed of it. On the contrary, the more Rāshid was implicated in idol worship, the greater his sacrifice. Second, the former territory of the idol became venerated family property. Third, it appears that Muḥammad merely recognized Rāshid’s right to the land rather than granted it to him. Perhaps custodians owned the grounds on which the idols stood; they may have even owned the idols themselves. Fourth, assuming that the place had had plenty of water even before it enjoyed the Prophet’s blessing, we have here an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} \textit{Iṣāba}, II, 434–35. Ibn Hibbān’s book quoted here is probably \textit{Asmā‘ al-sahāba}, on which see \textit{GAS}, I, 191. \textit{Istī‘āb}, II, 504, provides us with a \textit{kunya}: Rāshid ibn ‘Abdallāh Abū Uṯayla; his former name was Zālim or, according to another version Ghawī ibn Zālim, which the Prophet replaced with the name Rāshid ibn ‘Abdallāh. Ibn Hibbān, \textit{Ta’rīkh al-sahāba}, 100, calls him Rāshid ibn Ḥāṣ al-Sulamī Abū Uṯayla; he was of the people of Hijāz and the Prophet replaced his former name Zālim with the name Rāshid.
\item \textsuperscript{73} \textit{Manāṣik}, 124–25.
\item \textsuperscript{74} \textit{Manāṣik}, 350.
\item \textsuperscript{75} \textit{Manāṣik}, 349. The unspecified Zafarī mentioned here is no doubt Rāshid. He asked the Prophet \textit{an yasqiyahu bi-Ruhāṭ ‘ayyana}, i.e., that he grant him a spring in Ruhāṭ. This is parallel to Rāshid’s request that the Prophet grant him a \textit{qat갉}a in Ruhāṭ; Suyūṭī, \textit{Khaṣṣa‘īṣ}, II, 194.
\item \textsuperscript{76} \textit{Manāṣik}, 349.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Lecker, \textit{Sulaym}, 59. Zuhîr (< ‘Urwa < ‘A‘īṣha) reported that when the Prophet appointed Abū Sufyān as the governor of Najrān, he sent with him Rāshid ibn ‘Abdallāh; Dāraquṭnī, \textit{Sunan}, IV, 16.
\end{itemize}
association between idol worship and a source of water also known from elsewhere. 
Fifth, one does not have to accept the mysterious voice and the urinating foxes as historical facts in order to establish the idol’s existence.78

Hamdān: al-‘Awwām and Yaghūṯh Al-‘Awwām ibn Juhayl al-Hamdānī was the custodian of Yaghūṯh, as shown by the story of his conversion to Islam. The autobiographical story goes back to al-‘Awwām himself (kāna l-‘Awwām yuḥaddithu ba‘da islāmihi).79 He slept at the idol’s sanctuary (bayt al-šanam), and following a stormy night he heard a mysterious voice (ḥātif) announcing the end of idolatry. Al-‘Awwām set out for Medina and arrived on time to see the Hamdān delegation surrounding the Prophet.80

Sa’d al-‘Ashīra: Dhubāb and Farrāṣ An idol called Farrāṣ81 appears in the story of waqfd Sa’d al-‘Ashīra. Ibn al-Kalbī (< Abū Kubrān al-Murādī < Yahyā ibn Hānī) ibn ‘Urwa < ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abī Sabra al-Ju‘fī) quotes a report on the visit of Dhubāb, a man of the Anas Allāh ibn Sa’d al-‘Ashīra, to the Prophet. When Dhubāb and his fellow tribesmen heard about the appearance (khurūj) of the Prophet, Dhubāb came to him after having smashed the idol Farrāṣ.82 Ibn al-Kalbī’s immediate source was Abū Kubrān al-Hasan ibn ‘Uqba al-Murādī. A report on Farwa ibn Musayk al-Murādī’s visit to the Prophet is also accompanied by the isnād Ibn al-Kalbī < Abū Kubrān al-Murādī < Yahyā ibn Hānīβ al-Murādī.83 It was only natural that Murādīs should concern themselves with the history of fellow Murādīs, especially when it was associated with the first contact between the Prophet and one of themselves. Farwa and Yahyā were of the same subdivision of the Murād, namely the Ghuṭayf.84 Abū Kubrān was also one of Sayf ibn ‘Umar’s sources.85 As to ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abī Sabra al-Ju‘fī, one has to recall that Ju‘fī is a branch of the Sa’d al-‘Ashīra. Moreover, the Anas Allāh ibn Sa’d al-‘Ashīra were incorporated into Ju‘fī.86

A version of Ibn al-Kalbī’s report which is fuller than the one found in Ibn Sa’d appears in Ibn Shāhīn’s Companion dictionary. There Ibn al-Kalbī’s informant is

79Following the example of similar stories one assumes that the report was preserved by al-‘Awwām’s offspring.
81Reste, 67; Naṣr, Amkina, 118a.
82Ibn Sa’d, I, 342 (printed: Farrād).
83Iṣāba, VI, 713.
84Ibn Hazm, Ansāb, 406.
85Ibn ‘Asākir, LXIII, 246.
not Abū Kūbrān al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Uqba but, probably due to a misprint, al-Ḥasan ibn Kathīr. Sa’d al-‘Ashīrā’s idol is called Qarrāṣ (the fa‘ and the qaf being differentiated only by a diacritical point) and we have the custodian’s name: Ibn Waqsha. The custodian had a jinni that was visible to him (ra‘ī mina l-jinn) and used to inform him of what was to happen. One day the jinni came to Ibn Waqsha and told him something, then he turned to Dhubāb and informed him of Muḥammad’s appearance in Mecca (which places the event at the time when the Prophet was still in Mecca). So Dhubāb smashed the idol and came to Muḥammad. The report is also found in Ibn Manda’s Dalā’il al-nubuwwa (but not in his Companion dictionary), in Bayhaqī’s Dalā’il al-nubuwwa and in al-Mu‘āf al-‘Isā al-Madīnī al-Isfahānī, Ḍhayl ma‘rifat al-ṣāḥība, which includes corrections to Ibn Manda’s dictionary and additional materials. According to Usd al-ḥaba, I, 4, al-Madīnī’s book was shorter than Ibn Manda’s by one third. See an entry on Abū Mūsā in Nubalā‘, XXI, 152–59.

The existence of Farrāṣ, the idol of Sa’d al-‘Ashīrā, is arguably the only trustworthy detail in the tradition on Dhubāb’s conversion.

Ta‘ī: Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba and Bājīr The Prophet’s Companion Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba was of the Ta‘ī, more precisely of a group called Khīṭāma, hence the nisba al-Khīṭāmi. Khīṭāma was his great-great-grandfather.86 The full version of his story was preserved in Ṭabarānī’s al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr. Māzin was the custodian of an idol called Bājīr89 located in a village in ‘Umān called Samā‘īl (or Samā‘yīl; elsewhere we encounter the variants al-Simā‘, Samā‘yā and Sanā‘īl).90 According to Māzin’s statement, he was in charge of his people (fa-kuntu l-qayyim bi-umārīhim). One day, when he and others were sacrificing sheep (or goats, fa-atarnā . . . ‘atīra) to it, he heard a voice from inside it announcing the appearance of a prophet from Muḍjar and calling upon him to abandon his stone idol. A rider from the Hijaz confirmed the appearance of Ahmād, and Māzin broke the idol to pieces and travelled to the Prophet. The latter cured him of his excessive love for music, wine and women of ill repute, and his blessing gave the childless Māzin a boy called Hayyān. The isnād of this report goes back to ‘A‘lī ibn Ḥarb al-Mawṣili < Ibn al-Kalbī < his father < ‘Abdallāh al-‘Umānī < Māzin ibn


89Or Bājīr, or Nā‘īr; see below.

90See the last mentioned variant in Hīnyari, Rawd, 326, s.v. Sanā‘īl. Regarding the idol’s name cf. Asnām, 63, quoting Ibn Durayd: Bāj(a/i)r was worshipped by the Azd and their neighbours from the Ta‘ī and Qudā‘a; Ibn Durayd, Jamharat al-lughā, I, 267.
al-Ghaḍūba himself. 91 ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥayyān ibn Māzin ibn al-Ghaḍūba al-Ṭāṭī al-Mawsīlī (d. 265/878–79) was, as is shown by his pedigree, the great-great-grandson of Māzin’s only child, Ḥayyān. 92 Al-Kalbī’s source, ‘Abdallāh al-‘Umānī, was probably a member of Māzin’s family who transmitted Māzin’s story with all its embellishments and verse. Although ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb transmitted ḥadīth, among others, from his father, Ḥarb ibn Muḥammad, with whom he travelled to learn ḥadīth; and although the former was an expert on the history, genealogy and wars of the Arabs (wa-kāna ‘aliman bi-akhbārī l-‘arab wa-ansābihā wa-ayyāmihā), 93 he turned to Ibn al-Kalbī in order to learn or transmit his own family history. ‘Alī and other scholarly family members proudly carried the nisba al-Māzinī with reference to their famous ancestor, the former custodian Māzin. 94

Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) received ‘Alī ibn Ḥarb’s report through Mūsā ibn Jumhūr al-Tinnīsī al-Simsār. But Mūsā was not the only person who transmitted it from ‘Alī. ‘Alī also transmitted it to his great-grandson — in other words the family tradition was still preserved into the 4th/10th century — who in turn transmitted it in Baghdad in 338/949–50 to a muḥaddith called Muḥammad ibn al-Husayn al-Qaṭṭān. Al-Qaṭṭān transmitted it to Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) who included it in his Dalāʾīl al-nubuwwa. ‘Alī’s great-grandson inserted into the report taken from his great-grandfather’s written source (asl jaddī) 95 details received from a friend in ‘Umān who referred to a local tradition (‘an salafīhim). Following his conversion, Māzin became separated from his tribe 96 and established a mosque which had magical qualities: if someone who had been wronged prayed in it and cursed his oppressor, his prayer was accepted. An anonymous hand added on the margin of the manuscript (asl al-samā‘) that a leper was almost cured there, and hence the mosque to this day is called mubris (literally: “causing one to become leprous”). 97 In this version of the report ‘Alī describes his meeting with Ibn al-Kalbī in detail. When the latter found out that the former was a descendant of Khitāma, he asked: “From the custodian’s offspring?” Then he reported to him what he had heard from shuyukh Ṭay’ al-mutaqaddimīna, or the elders of the Ṭay’. The family’s attitude to Māzin’s custodianship was far from apologetic; it was its claim to fame. 98

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92Printed: Ḥarb.
93Mizzī, XX, 361–65.
94Mizzī, XX, 361, 363–64. ‘Alī’s father was a merchant; Nubalā‘, XII, 251. His entry is followed by entries on three of his brothers; ibid., 253–56.
95Sam’ānī, V, 165, who mentions a Māzinī called Salama ibn ‘Amr.
96Cf. Robinson, Empire and Elites, 132.
97The fact of the separation is mentioned in Ṭabarānī, al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr, XX, 339, where it is reported that he moved to the coast.
99In this version, Māzin was a custodian of several idols belonging to his family (wa-kāna
Ali ibn Ḥarb also transmitted the report to a muḥaddith called ‘Ābd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanẓali, whence it reached al-Ḥākim al-Nayṣābūrī (d. 405/1014–15; perhaps it is found in his Taʿrīkh Nayṣābūr) via another transmitter.100

The family was naturally interested in establishing Companion status for the former custodian on the basis of the above story. In this it was very successful, as shown by Māzin’s entries in the Companion dictionaries101 and by quotations in other types of literature. Tabarānī’s al-Muʿjam al-kabīr has already been quoted. The Dalāʾīl al-nubuwwa literature merits special mention here.102 Māzin’s story was made attractive for later compilers by its legendary elements and verse. Historians looking for solid facts may find this story worthless; but the existence of the specified village in Ḥumān and Māzin’s custodianship of an idol are unlikely to have been invented.

Another family tradition is interwoven with the one discussed above. An Arab mawla or manumitted slave of Māzin called Abū Kāthīr Ṣāliḥ (or Yāsār/Nashīt/Dīnār) ibn al-Mutawakkil is supposed to have been introduced by him to the Prophet as his slave (ghulām). Prompted by the Prophet, Māzin there and then manumitted the slave. It is not hard to find out who preserved this report, no doubt because he benefited from it: Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005) received the report about the mawla from none other than ‘Āli ibn Ḥarb. ‘Āli in turn transmitted it from a descendant of the manumitted slave, al-Ḥasan ibn Kāthīr ibn Yahiyya ibn Abī Kāthīr < his father < his grandfather. Ibn Manda reports that Ṣāliḥ and his master Māzin were killed in Bardha’a during ‘Uthmān’s caliphate.103

Ṣāliḥ played a useful role for Māzin’s descendants: he transmitted a hadīth which Māzin reported on the Prophet’s authority. The hadīth which is in favour of truthfulness is vague enough to be ascribed to anyone; this is yet another technique employed by Māzin’s offspring in order to secure Companion status for their ancestor.104

Bajīla: Jarīr ibn ’Abdallāh and Dhū l-Khaṭalās Under wafūd Bajīla Ibn Saʿd quotes a report from Wāqidī who in turn quotes a Medinan authority, ‘Abd

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100Bayhaqi, Dalāʾīl, II, 258 (the name of the village here is al-Sīmāl).
101Somewhat dissenting from the consensus was Ibn Hibbān (quoted in Isāba, V, 704: yuqūlu inna lahu ṣuḥba); see the same cautious remark in Ibn Hibbān, Thiqāt, III, 407.
102Abū Nuʿaym, Dalāʾīl, 114–17 (the beginning of the account is garbled; the name of the village was Samāyā; the idol’s name was Bājir); Bayhaqi, Dalāʾīl, II, 255–58; Suyūṭī, Khaṣaʾīṣ, I, 256–57.
103Quoted in Isāba, III, 403. For an entry on Yahiyya ibn Abī Kāthīr see Mizzi, XXXI, 504–11. He was tortured and flogged and had his beard removed for reviling the Umayyad rulers (mtuhina wa-durūba wa-hulīqa li-kawnihī ntaqasa Banni Umayya); Tadhkirat al-huffāz, I, 128.
104Isāba, V, 705, with reference to earlier Companion dictionaries and Wakiʾiʾs Nawadir al-akhbār (GAS, I, 376); Tabarānī, al-Muʿjam al-kabīr, XX, 337 (with some variants in the isnād).
al-Ḥamīd ibn Jaʿfar < his father. The story includes details about the destruction of Dhū l-Khalasa by Jarīr ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Bajalī.105 But a comparison with reports on the destruction in other sources points to Jarīr himself as the origin of the story. A good authority on this is al-Ṭabarānī’s al-Muʾjam al-kabīr where all the reports on this matter go back to Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, with two exceptions: one from Bayān ibn Bishr al-Bajalī < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, and another from Tāriq ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān < Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim.106

The Kūfān Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid al-Bajalī al-ʾAhmaṣī was a mawla of the Aḥmasī.107 Also the Kūfān faqīḥ Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim is referred to as al-Bajalī al-ʾAhmaṣī.108 The same is true of the Kūfān Bayān ibn Bishr who was al-Bajalī al-ʾAhmaṣī and of the Kūfān Tāriq ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Bajalī al-ʾAhmaṣī.110

The pattern is clear: only fellow Bajalīs were concerned with telling the story of Jarīr and Dhū l-Khalasa. Although they were all Aḥmaṣīs while Jarīr belonged to another branch of the Bajila, namely the Qasr,111 this is tribal history par excellence. The military power with which Jarīr set out to demolish Dhū l-Khalasa included Aḥmaṣīs, which made the expedition a matter of special interest for the Aḥmaṣī transmitters. Dhū l-Khalasa was at the background of their attempt to capture the glorious moments in the history of their tribe.

A brief comment associating Jarīr with idol worship is found in a long report about Jarīr’s visit to the Prophet quoted by Ibn Shabba from Ibn Zabāla. The isnād goes back to Zuhār < ‘Ubaydallāh ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Utba ibn Mas‘ūd < Ibn ‘Abbās (hence this is not a family tradition): the Prophet told Jarīr that he would not attain the sharīʿa or religious law of Islam until he abandoned idol worship.112

Some notes on the worship of Dhū l-Khalasa are in place here. As a rule the tribes who rebelled after the Prophet’s death did not threaten, nor did they intend, to return to idol worship. But at least in one case such a possibility is thought to have been taken into account. Abū Bakr ordered Jarīr ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Bajalī to fight the Khathāmāsī who had rebelled because of their anger on behalf of Dhū l-Khalasa, wanting to reinstate it.113

Dhū l-Khalasa was not just another tribal idol but rather a cultic centre. Under wafād Bajila Ibn Saʿd’s reports that when Jarīr came to the Prophet for the first time and reported that the tribes had destroyed their idols, the Prophet specifically inquired about Dhū l-Khalasa and found out that it was still intact. Jarīr

107Mızzi, III, 69–76.
108Mızzi, XXIV, 10–16; Ibn Ḥazm, Ansāb, 389.
109Mızzi, IV, 303–305.
111Ibn Ḥazm, Ansāb, 387.
112Ibn Shabba, II, 568.
113... Wa-amarahu an yaʾtiya Khathʿam fa-yuqūtīla man kharaja ḥadabān li-Dhū l-Khalasa wa-man arūda iʿādatahu; Ṭabarī, I, 1988.
was sent to destroy it and he took what was on it (i.e., jewellery or weapons) and set fire to it.\textsuperscript{114} In other words, Dhū l-Khalāṣa lasted longer than the other idols, at least in its vicinity. This is also reflected in the Prophet’s alleged statement that of the \textit{jawābih} of the Jāḥiliyya only the \textit{bayt} of Dhū l-Khalāṣa remained.\textsuperscript{115} It took a large military force to overcome the resistance of the Khath‘ām there.

Jarīr came to Muḥammad in Ramaḍān, 10 A.H.\textsuperscript{116} This means that news about the demolition of Dhū l-Khalāṣa reached Muḥammad shortly before his death. The demolition and the death of the Khath‘āms who defended it are in the background of the visit of \textit{wafd} Khath‘ām.\textsuperscript{117}

Dhū l-Khalāṣa possibly enjoyed a status similar to that of the Ka‘ba: it was called al-Ka‘ba al-Yamāniyya or the Yemenite Ka‘ba, while the Meccan Ka‘ba was al-Ka‘ba al-Shāmiyya.\textsuperscript{118} As was the case with the Ka‘ba (see below, 32n), Dhū l-Khalāṣa was probably a place where many idols — possibly tribal idols — were located.\textsuperscript{119} It stands to reason that tribes worshipping Dhū l-Khalāṣa were not among those associated with the cult of the Ka‘ba. This can be shown with regard to the Khath‘ām, the tribe most closely associated with Dhū l-Khalāṣa: the Ṭay‘, Khath‘ām and Qudā‘a did not respect the sanctity of Mecca’s \textit{haram} and that of the sacred months, while the other tribes performed the pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba and respected it.\textsuperscript{120} Ṭay‘ and Khath‘ām did not perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and were called \textit{al-affarānī}.\textsuperscript{121} One is not surprised to find Khath‘āmīs in Abraha’s army which attacked Mecca.\textsuperscript{122}

Among those who worshipped Dhū l-Khalāṣa were the Azd al-Sarāt.\textsuperscript{123} Now while the Khath‘ām delegation only came to the Prophet after the demolition of their idol, some seventy or eighty men from important families (\textit{ahl bayt}) of the

\textsuperscript{114}Ibn Sa‘d, I, 347–48.  
\textsuperscript{115}Tabarānī, \textit{al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr}, II, 312.  
\textsuperscript{116}\textit{Ansāb al-ashrāf}, I, 384.  
\textsuperscript{117}Ibn Sa‘d, I, 348. Under the title \textit{mawādi‘} al-‘ibāda or places of worship, Hamdānī (\textit{Ṣifa}, 240), lists the following: Mecca, Ḷilliyā, Allāt in the upper part (\textit{bi-a‘lā}) of Nakhl, Dhū l-Khalāṣa near (\textit{bi-nāḥiyat}) Tabāla, Ka‘bat Najrān, Riyām in the land of Hamdān and the church of al-Bāghūta in Ḥira. In fact Allāt was located in Ṭā‘if, while al-‘Uzzā was located in Nakhl.  
\textsuperscript{118}Yāqūt, s.v. al-Khalāṣa, 338b.  
\textsuperscript{119}Note the definition of al-Khalāṣa as \textit{bayt aṣnām}; \textit{ibid.}, 383a. The word \textit{al-zūn} is supposed to mean a place of this kind. It is interpreted as \textit{mawdi‘} tajma‘u fihi l-aṣnām wa-tuṣṣabū; also: \textit{al-zūn} baytu l-aṣnām ayy mawdi‘ kāna; Yāqūt, s.v. al-Zūn. See also \textit{Lisan al-arab}, the end of s.v. \textit{z.y.n}. (\textit{wu-l-zūn mawdi‘} tajma‘u fihi l-aṣnām wa-tuṣṣabū wa-tuẓayyānu).  
\textsuperscript{120}M.J. Kister, “Mecca and Tamīm”, 119. When Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdā (Quḍā‘a) refers to his pilgrimages before Islam, he does not have the Ka‘ba in his mind but probably Yaghūṭ: Ibn ‘Asākir, XXXV, 472 (\textit{aṣlāmu fi ḫayyāt rasālī llah s wa-gad ḫayyāt bi-Yaghūṭ} [\textit{read probably Yaghūṭa}] wa-kāna ṣanāman min raṣāṣ li-Quḍā‘a timthāla mra‘a wa-dawwartu l-adviru). The mention of the Khath‘ām among the tribes of the \textit{hums} is no doubt erroneous, while the reading Jusham is correct; Kister, “Mecca and Tamīm”, 132.  
\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Ibid.}, 134, n. 5.  
\textsuperscript{122}M.J. Kister, “Some reports concerning Mecca from Jāḥiliyya to Islam”, 69–70, 72.  
\textsuperscript{123}Aṣnām, 35; \textit{Ansāb al-ashrāf}, I, 384.
Arabian Idol Worship

Daws, a subdivision of the Azd, among them Abū Hurayra and ‘Abdallāh ibn Uzayhir, arrived some two years earlier, when the Prophet was in Khaybar. When the Daws linked themselves to Muḥammad, Dhū l-Khalāṣa lost many of its worshippers.

The Daws are singled out among former worshippers of Dhū l-Khalāṣa as the ones most prone to return to their pagan ways. The Daws’ arrival on the authority of Muḥammad: “Before the arrival of the Hour the buttocks of the women of Daws will move from side to side around Dhū l-Khalāṣa” (lā taqūmu l-sā‘a ḥattā tāḍtāriḥa alayāt nisā‘ Dawās ḥawla Ḩī l-khalāṣa). The Prophet’s alleged utterance no doubt reflects actual practice. In eschatological times the Ka‘ba would remain safe while the southern tribes’ yearning for idolatry would revive the cultic centre at Dhū l-Khalāṣa.

Let us sum up this section. Many conversion stories involving idols are recorded in the sources; their number could probably be multiplied. Other similar stories were not as successful and remained outside the literature. The stories were usually preserved by tribal authorities who were often the direct descendants of the persons involved. The identification of these authorities is not always possible because many of them were not involved in the transmission of “prestigious” ḥadīth, and hence were not of interest for the ḥālāt experts. The main concern of the tribal authorities was to establish their ancestors’ entitlement to Companion status. At a later stage the stories entered the general Islamic heritage through their inclusion in specialized types of literature. Most relevant are the Companion dictionaries and compilations regarding Dalā‘īl al-nubuwwa or “Proofs of Muḥammad’s Prophethood”, where the former functionaries of idolatry testify to the collapse of idol worship. Most of the conversion stories are not widely disseminated, but this does not weaken their relevance for the study of idol worship. After all, nobody in his right mind would assume that so many tribal informants

124Ibn Sa‘d, I, 353; Muntazām, III, 304. The arrival of the Daws may well have been part of the Ḥudaybihya agreement: ‘Abdallāh ibn Uzayhir was probably a relative of Abū Uzayhir since the name Uzayhir is fairly rare. I could find no entry on ‘Abdallāh in the Companion dictionaries. Abū Uzayhir was the ḥālīf or protected neighbour and father-in-law of Abū Sufyān; Ḥassān, Diwān, II, 258. The former was called by his daughter suyyid ahī al-Sarāt, 259. He entered Mecca under Abū Sufyān’s protection (wa-kāna yuḏkhulu Makka fi jiwrāt Abī Sufyān); Ibn ‘Asākir, XL, 273. After the Battle of Badr he was murdered by Hishām ibn al-Mughīra, and Quraysh sent a messenger to the Sarāt to warn the Qurashi traders there about a possible Dawsī reprisal; Aḥbāni, II, 243 (printed al-Sharāt). The Qurashi trade route to the Yemen of course passed through the Sarāt. In fact Abū Uzayhir was not of the Daws but of al-Ṣa‘b ibn Ḥumān. He was only called al-Dawsī because on the battlefield his tribe belonged to the military forces of the Daws (lianna ‘iḍādahu kānā fi Dawās); Ibn Hazm, Ansāb, 385–86.

125Muslim, IV, 2230 (Kitāb al-fitan wa-ashrāf al-sā‘a). The following eschatological ḥadīth speaks of a return to the worship of Allāt and al-‘Uzza. For variants on the topic of Dhū l-Khalāṣa see Fitān, 302 (idhā ‘ubidat Dhū l-Khalāṣa . . . kānā zuḥūru l-Rūm ‘alā l-Shām), 364 (Abū Hurayra: . . . ka‘-annī bi-alayāt nisā‘ Dawās qādi šṭafaqat ya‘budāna Dhā l-Khalāṣa); Hawting, The Idea of Idolatry, 124.
could plot together to invent idols which had not existed. The legendary elements in the conversion stories of pagan Arabs can be rejected, but the factual details about the idols remain intact. In short, unless the converts to Islam were Christians, Jews or Zoroastrians, conversion meant the abandonment of idolatry.

Two more observations may be added. Whether or not there was a “lapse of a long time” before the recording of these stories in a literary source is not a matter of crucial importance. In any case, since conversion stories involving idols go back to the early days of Islam, it would be mistaken to assume a large gap between the actual idol worship and the preservation of the evidence about it.

2 The system of idol worship in Medina

The second part of this study focuses on Medina. It is widely assumed that on the eve of the Hijra idol worship in Medina was declining, and hence Muhammad only had to deal it the final blow. Wellhausen argued that the Medinans were even more indifferent to their idols than were the Meccans. In his view the Jews and Christians brought monotheism to the Anṣār and prepared them for Islam. Islam spread among them very quickly, and even before the Prophet’s Hijra almost all the Anṣār were Muslims. To the extent that they resisted the Prophet, Wellhausen said, the background for this was political and not religious: they mourned yesterday’s freedom and not yesterday’s idols.

In fact, most of the Medinans did not convert to Islam before Muḥammad’s arrival. For several years after the Hijra a significant section of the population remained pagan. Only the downfall of the Jewish Qurayṣa on whom many Medinans were politically, economically and militarily dependent made them embrace Islam.

The actual number of members of the Aws and Khazraj who converted to Judaism was relatively small. It is true that in the crucial negotiations which led to the Hijra a significant role was played by Medinans who had learned to read in

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128Skizzen, IV, 15–16. Also Watt, Mecca, 23 (“... it is generally agreed that the archaic pagan religion was comparatively unimportant in Muhammad’s time”).
129Lecker, Muslims, Jews and Pagans, 19–49. Wensinck said about the inhabitants of Yathrib: “Their receptiveness for monotheism can only be explained by their long contact with the Jews”; Muhammad and the Jews of Medina, 4.
the Jewish *Bayt al-Midrās*;\(^{130}\) but most Medinans remained immersed in private and public idol worship. The latter was closely connected to the different levels of tribal organization.

It is impossible to measure the intensity of religious feeling among the Medinans,\(^{131}\) and hence it is best to stick to the evidence. This is undertaken in what follows.

### 2.1 Household idols

The existence of house or family idols has been known for many years but has not been given due weight.\(^{132}\) Acquaintance with the household idols is very significant for the evaluation of idol worship in Medina and elsewhere, since this form of private worship was the one most common among the settled people of Arabia. The Medinan household idols, exactly like the Meccan, were made of wood. In Mecca they used to stroke their idols (above, 4) and in Medina they did the same, as is shown by the story of Ka‘b ibn ‘Ujra.\(^ {133}\)

There is a relatively large number of conversion stories from Medina involving idols, but only a handful regarding Meccans. This may be accounted for by the different circumstances of conversion in these towns. When Mecca was conquered by Muḥammad in 8/630, its pagan inhabitants converted, or are supposed to have converted, immediately. In Medina conversion was a long process accompanied by internal strife. In addition, the people of Mecca probably displayed more internal cohesion in comparison with the Medinans, many of whom were prepared to defy the existing system of leadership and idol worship.

Many of the idols mentioned in the Medinan conversion stories were household idols. In every or almost every Medinan and Meccan house there was a small

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\(^{130}\) Lecker, “Zayd ibn Thābit”, 271; *idem*, “Idol worship”, 343.

\(^{131}\) Goldziher wrote: “At Yathrib the indigenous disposition of immigrant tribes from the south produced a mood more easily accessible to religious thought which was a great help to Muhammed’s success”; *Muslim Studies*, I, 13f. Goldziher had in mind the influence of Yemenite monotheism on the Arabs of Yathrib who were supposed to have been more religious than the other Arabs in central Arabia. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 25, remarks cautiously, without specifically referring to Goldziher: “A great scholar, indeed, from whom it is unsafe to differ, finds a difference between the central and the southern Arabians, and supposes the latter to have been earnest worshippers, while the former were indifferent”. According to Margoliouth, “the Arabs of Central Arabia were not wanting in piety”.

\(^{132}\) Wellhausen mentioned the *Hausgötze*. Lammens, *L’Arabie occidentale*, 139, correctly criticized Wellhausen for conflating the “dieux domestiques” with the idols held by the leaders (on which see below). Lammens (140) erroneously assumed that the pre-Islamic Arabs knew only of a public cult, such as was performed by the tribal group (“Inutile . . . de parler de culte privé, de dieux lares ou domestiques. L’Arabe de la prēhēgire n’a jamais entrevu que la culte public, celui pratiqué par le clan, dont les rares manifestations suffisaient à épuiser sa courte dévotion”).

carved wooden idol. In other words, in both towns there was an intensive religious life on the family level. Since Mecca and Medina differed from each other in many ways, one can expect this common denominator, namely household idolatry, to have been general in other Arabian settlements as well. The ubiquity of these idols among the settled population and the level of attachment to them speak against the assumption that idol worship was declining in the years preceding the advent of Islam.

A wooden idol presented an obstacle to Abū Talha of the Najjār (Khazraj) when he proposed to a Najjārī woman, Umm Sulaym bint Milhan (Anas ibn Malik’s mother). Abū Talha wanted to marry her after Anas’s father had died, but she refused because he was a polytheist (*mushrik*). She reproached him for worshipping a stone which did neither harm nor good and a piece of wood hewed for him by a carpenter (*khashaba ta’tī bihā l-najjār fa-yanjuruhā laka*), that similarly could not hurt nor benefit. He agreed to embrace Islam and she accepted his conversion as dowry.\(^{134}\)

Among the Ghanm ibn Malik ibn al-Najjār there was a man called ‘Amr ibn Qays known as *sāhib ālihatihim fi l-jāhiliyya*, “the person in charge of their gods (or idols) in the Jāhiliyya”. He was once expelled from the mosque of the Prophet together with other *munāfiqūn*. While he was being ejected, he complained about his forcible removal from the *mirbad*, or the drying floor for dates, of the Banū Tha’labā.\(^{135}\) Since we know that he was of the Ghanm ibn Malik ibn al-Najjār, we can easily identify the Tha’labā in question as the Tha’labā ibn Ghanm ibn Malik ibn al-Najjār.\(^{136}\)

In connection with Medinan idols we encounter the verb *lat.t.akhā*, “to defile, soil”. The source of what follows is supposed to be ‘Ali: during a funeral (i.e., a Muslim’s funeral outside Medina) Muhammad looked for one who would volunteer to break every idol (*wathan*) in Medina, level every tomb and defile or besmear with slime every statue or figure (*ṣūra*). An unidentified person who volunteered returned without carrying out this mission since he feared the people

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\(^{134}\) The report is autobiographical: it is reported on the authority of Ishāq ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Talha (d. 132/749-50 or 134/751–52) who quotes his grandmother, Umm Sulaym; Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 425–26. Abū Talha was of the Maghāla, or the Adī ibn Malik ibn al-Najjār; Ibn Qudāma, *Istibsār*, 49–50. Umm Sulaym was of the Harām ibn Jundab ibn ‘Amir ibn Ghanm ibn ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār; *ibid.*, 36–40. See an entry on Ishāq in Mizzi, II, 444–46. Other reports (*ibid.*, 427) more precisely reflect the material of which household idols were made: they refer to a wooden idol hewed by a slave who was a carpenter and to an Ethiopian slave: *inna ālihatakumu llatā’ bi budūna yan‘āthonah *‘abī dāl fulān al-najjār wa-‘innakum law sha’altum fihā näran la-‘htararqat; a-lasta ta’tam anna ilāhaka iladhi ta’budu innamā huwa shajara tanbūtina l-arqu wa-‘innamā najaruhu ḥabashi bani fulān? In itself the verb *nabata* is indifferent to the material used; when said of wood it is synonymous with *najara*; Lane, 2773b.

\(^{135}\) Ibn Hishām, II, 175; Lecker, “Idol worship”, 335. The identification put forward in *ibid.*, n. 25, is uncertain.

\(^{136}\) Cf. Ibn Qudāma, *Istibsār*, 56–64, especially 63–64 (regarding the two orphans who owned the *mirbad* on which the Prophet’s mosque was built).
of Medina, so ‘Ali had to do it. A variant of this hadith has it that the Prophet ordered a man of the Ansār to level every tomb and defile (yulaṭṭikha) every idol. The man protested against entering the houses of his people (buyiṭ qawmi), and hence ‘Ali was sent for. Regardless of its value as a historical source, the environment in which the hadith was created evidently included rampant idol worship.

In the Jāhilīyya Asʿad ibn Zurāra (Najjār) and Abū I-Haytham ibn al-Tayyiḥān (a Balāwī client of the ‘Abd al-Ashrāl or the Zaʿūrā) hated idols and were disgusted by them; both men were monotheists. As we shall see, the former was also involved in the actual destruction of idols.

There are several accounts of young Medinans who enthusiastically received Muḥammad and broke or smashed (kasara/kassara) the idols of their tribal groups. They are found among both the Aws and Khazraj, more specifically the Salima, Bayāda, Sāʿida, Mālik ibn al-Najjār and ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār of the Khazraj, and the ‘Abd al-Ashrāl, Hāritha, ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, Khaṭṭma and Wāqīf of the Aws.

The evidence regarding idol worship among the Khazraj subdivision called Salima is relatively abundant, probably not because idolatry was more widespread among them, but because they were more numerous than the other subdivisions, or because the Prophet had more supporters among them.

### 2.1.1 Idols in Medinan conversion stories

We now turn to the Aws. Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh and Usayd ibn Ḥudayr broke the idols of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal.\(^{145}\) Usayd belonged to ‘Abd al-Ashhal’s leading family: his father, Ḥudayr, was the ra‘īs or battlefield commander of the Aws at the Battle of Bu‘āth and was known, as was his son after him, as al-kämîl or “the highly accomplished one” since they were both literate and excelled in swimming and archery.\(^{146}\) Abū ‘Abs ibn Jabr and Abū Burda ibn Niyār (a Balawī client of the Ḥāritha) broke the idols of the Ḥāritha.\(^{147}\) One pedigree of Abū ‘Abs makes him a member of the Ḥāritha, but an alternative pedigree adds Majda‘a before the eponym Ḥāritha.\(^{148}\) This would make him one of the Majda‘a, whose most famous member was Muḥammad ibn Maslama. In any case, Abū ‘Abs’s mother and two of the three women to whom he was married at different times of his life were of the Majda‘a: one of them was Muḥammad ibn Maslama’s sister and the other was Muḥammad’s daughter.\(^ {149}\) Muḥammad was a client (ḫalîf) of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal,\(^ {150}\) and one assumes that Abū ‘Abs too was not a prominent figure in Medinan society before the advent of Islam. The same applies of course to the client Abū Burda.

‘Abdallāh ibn Jubayr and Sahl ibn Ḥunayf used to break up idols and bring the pieces to the Muslims who used them as firewood.\(^ {151}\) The two belonged to different subdivisions of the ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf: the former was of the Thalaba and the latter was of the Ḥanash,\(^ {152}\) and it is thus clear that the idols in question were those of the ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf. Khuzayma ibn Thābit and ‘Umayr ibn ‘Adī ibn Khārasha broke the idols of the Khatma.\(^ {153}\) Hilāl ibn Umayya broke the idols of the Waqif.\(^ {154}\)

Abū Ṭalḥa’s idol (above, 26) was made of wood, and this is of course true of the broken pieces used as firewood. Wood is also specifically mentioned in the case of another household idol. ‘Abdallāh ibn Rawāḥa rebuked its owner (who was perhaps Abū I-Dardā‘; see below) for worshipping a piece of wood which he had crafted with his own hand; the owner replied that he did not attack it because he feared for his young children.\(^ {155}\) In other words, the wooden household idol was perceived as a tutelary idol.

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\(^{145}\) Ibn Sa‘d, III, 421.

\(^{146}\) Ibn Sa‘d, III, 604; Lecker, “Zayd ibn Thābit”, 268, n. 64.

\(^{147}\) Ibn Sa‘d, III, 450–51.

\(^{148}\) Ḩāsba, VII, 266.

\(^{149}\) Ibn Sa‘d, III, 450.

\(^{150}\) Ibn Qudāma, Istibṣâr, 242.

\(^{151}\) Ansâb al- ashrâf, I, 265; Lecker, “Idol worship”, 333.

\(^{152}\) Ibn Qudâma, Istibṣâr, 320–23.

\(^{153}\) Ibn Sa‘d, IV, 378.

\(^{154}\) Tahdhīb al-asma‘, I,ii, 139; Usd al-ghâba, V, 66.

\(^{155}\) Lecker, “Idol worship”, 338.
Some further characteristics of the household idols should be added. Before ‘Abdallāh ibn Rawāḥa destroyed Abī l-Dardā’’s idol using an adze (qaddām; above, 4), he brought it down (fa-anzalahu). This probably indicates that the idol was placed in an elevated place, such as a shelf. In addition it is reported that Abū l-Dardā’ hung a veil over his idol (wa-qad wad`a` ‘alayhi mindīlan).\(^{156}\) In order to act against the household idol one had to enter the house.\(^{157}\) These characteristics were probably shared by household idols whether they were in Medina or elsewhere in Arabia.

Among the twenty-odd persons mentioned as acting against idols, only three could be considered prominent members of pre-Islamic Medinan society, namely Mu`ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ (see below) who belonged to a leading family of the Salima, Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda of the Sā`ida and the “highly accomplished man” Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal. Some correlation can be found between this list and the list of literate people: at least five of the idol breakers, Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda, al-Mundhir ibn ‘Amr, Mu`ādh ibn Jabal, Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr and Abū ‘Abs ibn Jabr were literate, which in the Medinan context meant that they were educated in the local Bayt al-Midrās.\(^{158}\) However, the typical idol destroyer belonged to the rank and file of his tribal group; two of the destroyers were clients.

The reports on idol breakers are not documentary or archival evidence and some of them may have been invented. But it is no coincidence that so many of them are found in Ibn Sa’d’s third volume which includes the biographies of the Prophet’s Companions who participated in the Battle of Badr. More precisely, they are in the latter part of the volume which is dedicated to the Badrīs among the Ānṣār. All of those involved were unmistakably among the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of Muḥammad in Medina. The accounts of their actions against the idols take for granted the existence of many such idols in Medina.

In Mecca and Medina household idols were the most popular form of idol worship, and hence the evidence about them is crucial for assessing the extent of this worship. In what follows other categories of Medinan idols are discussed.\(^{159}\) These can all be linked to the tribal organization and belong to the public sphere, as opposed to the private cult discussed above.

### 2.2 Idols of noblemen

In Ibn Shabba’s Akhbār Makka there are several passages containing rare testimony on idol worship in Medina. One passage speaks of idols held by every nobleman (rajul sharīf). ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ had Manāf, al-Barā` ibn Ma’rūr had

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\(^{156}\)Lecker, “Idol worship”, 340.

\(^{157}\)Hence the above mentioned reluctance of the Ānṣārī to enter the houses of his people (bayīt qawmī).


\(^{159}\)The discussion relies in part on Lecker, “Idol worship”. 
al-Dībāj and al-Jadd ibn Qays had Zabr. All three belonged to the Salima. To the characteristics of noblemen in Medina we can probably add ownership of a fortress, since at least two of the above mentioned noblemen who owned idols were owners of fortresses.\footnote{Lecker, “Idol worship”, 336–38. In Abū Nu‘aym, Dalā‘il, 310–12, read Manāf instead of Manāt (it was no doubt masculine); Ibn al-Jawzī, Šifat al-ṣafwa, I, 643–44; Nubalā‘, I, 253. Read Manāf instead of Manāt also in Krone, Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt, 537.} Although these are the only examples of idols owned by noblemen, there is no reason to assume that this type of idols was restricted to the Salima. That the three men belonged to leading families is also shown by Muhammad’s intervention with regard to the leadership of the Salima. In one version he is said to have replaced their sayyīd, al-Jadd ibn Qays, by ‘Amr ibn al-Jamīl, while according to another al-Jadd was replaced by al-Barā‘ ibn Ma‘rūr’s son, Bishr.\footnote{Lecker, “Idol worship”, 336–38.} The versions reflect rival traditions among the Salima, probably among the descendants of the leaders involved; al-Barā‘ was of the ‘Ubayd subdivision of the Salima, while ‘Amr was of the Ḥārām subdivision.

One report on the shift of leadership from al-Jadd to ‘Amr creates the mistaken impression that it was associated with idols. Al-Jadd was deposed and replaced by ‘Amr because of his (the former’s) stinginess. The report goes on to tell us about ‘Amr: wa-kāna ‘alā aṣnāmihim fi l-jāhiliyya wa-kāna yūlimu ‘alā rasūli llāh š idhā tazawwaja, “and he was responsible for their idols in the Jāhiliyya and used to give a feast for the Messenger of God whenever he got married”. The isnād goes back to Abū l-Zubayr < Jābir ibn ‘Abdallāh.\footnote{Lecker, “Idol worship”, 336–38.} Jābir was an obvious source in this case since he was ‘Amr’s second cousin.\footnote{Istī‘āb, III, 1170–71. See an entry on Abū l-Zubayr al-Makkī, Muhammad ibn Muslim (d. 126/743–44 or 128/745–46), in Mizzi, XXVI, 402–11.} It is tempting to link ‘Amr with the munāfīq regarding whom it was said that he was sāḥib ālihatihim (above, 26). But being put in charge of idols is not a direct response to stinginess and is inconsistent with giving the feasts for Muhammad. The correct reading is ‘alā adīfihim, “he was responsible for their guests in the Jāhiliyya”.\footnote{Ibn Qudāma, Istīḥār, 151–54.}

There is no unanimity regarding ‘Amr’s role before his conversion. An account by ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr on the activity of Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr (of the Qurashi clan ‘Abd al-Dār) in Medina before the Hijra includes details which do not appear in Ibn Hishām’s version of the report; perhaps they were also absent from Ibn Ishaq’s biography of Muhammad. Muṣ‘ab settled among the Ghanm ibn Mālik ibn al-Najjār with As‘ad ibn Zurāra. At a certain point, after the conversion to
Islam of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal, the Najjār drove Muṣ‘ab out and persecuted (wa-shtaddū ‘alā) their fellow tribesman As‘ad. Muṣ‘ab moved to Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh of the ‘Abd al-Ashhal where he continued his missionary work. Finally in every court (dār) of the Ḥāshimī there were Muslim men and women. Their noblemen embraced Islam, among them ‘Amr ibn al-Jamīḥ. Their idols were broken and the Muslims became the strongest people in Medina.165 Muṣ‘ab’s expulsion from the court of the Najjār and his shift to Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh, both probably historical facts, were left out of the sīra because they were considered embarrassing for the Najjār. The conversion of the noblemen, particularly that of ‘Amr, the only one to be specified, and the breaking up of the idols at this early stage (even before the second or major ‘Aqaba meeting), are an invention. ‘Urwa’s report is favourable to ‘Amr in that it dates his conversion to this early date.166 According to Ibn Ishāq, however, ‘Amr’s conversion took place shortly after the major ‘Aqaba meeting, following the repeated humiliation of his wooden idol, Manāf, at the hands of his own son, Mu‘ādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamīḥ, who cooperated with Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal and other young men of the Ṣalīmă.167 The source of Ibn Ishāq’s report is missing in Ibn Hishām. However, ‘Aṣīm ibn ‘Umar ibn Qatāda who is often quoted by Ibn Ishāq specifically stated that ‘Amr’s conversion was delayed (ta‘akkhara).168 According to Ibn al-Kalbī, ‘Amr was the last Ḥāshimī to embrace Islam.169

Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal also figures in another report related to idols. Mu‘ādh, Tha‘labā ibn ‘Anāma al-Salāmī of the Ṣawād subdivision of Salīmă and ‘Abdallāh ibn Unays al-Juhandī, having converted to Islam, broke up the idols of the

165Tabarānī, al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr, XX, 362–64; Majma‘ al-zawā’id, VI, 40–42; Hīlya, I, 106–107. Wāqidī’s combined report in Ibn Sa‘d, III, 118, does not mention Muṣ‘ab’s shift from the Najjār to the ‘Abd al-Ashhal. This was probably one of the details omitted by Wāqidī in the process of creating the combined report. However, in the entry on Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh in Ibn Sa‘d, III, 420–21, it is reported that Sa‘d moved Muṣ‘ab and As‘ad to his court — Sa‘d and As‘ad were maternal cousins. The source of this report is Sa‘d’s grandson, Wāqid ibn ‘Amr.

166The same can probably be said of ‘Ikrima’s report on ‘Amr’s conversion which similarly links it to Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr; Nubalā‘, I, 253 (quoting ‘Ikrima). Initially ‘Amr apologized to Muṣ‘ab, arguing that he had to consult his people: inna lana ma‘umara fi qawmin, wa-kāna sayyid banī Salīmă (in fact he was one of their sayyids). But soon afterwards the humiliation of his idol made him realize how weak and defenceless it was. Some of the themes of this humiliation are known from Ibn Ishāq’s account of ‘Amr’s conversion.

167Ibn Hishām, II, 95–96 (erroneously printed Manāt). ‘Amr was one of the sayyids of the Salīmă and one of their noblemen (sayyidan min sādāt banī Salīmă wa-sharīfan min ashrafīm). In his house he had a wooden idol, as was common among noblemen. They would take for themselves an idol, honour and purify (i.e. consecrate) it (kamā kānati l-ashraf ya‘ṣna‘ina, tattakhidhahu alāhan tu‘azzimahu wa-tuṭahhirahu). The report on Mu‘ādhi’s idol in Bad‘ wa-ta‘rikh, V, 117–18, is erroneous: Mu‘ādhi should be replaced by Abī l-Dardā‘; Lecker, “Idol worship”, 339–40. On Mu‘ādhi ibn Jabal see now van Ess, “Die Pest von Emmaus”.

168See the paraphrased fragment quoted in Nubalā‘, I, 253–54. Note that a report on ‘Amr’s burial is quoted by Ibn Ishāq from his father < ashyākh of the Salīmă; Ibn Hishām, III, 104.

169Iṣāba, IV, 615.
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Salima. It is noteworthy that only one of these three was a full member of the Salima. Muʿādh ibn Jabal was not of the Salima, being descended from Udayy ibn Saʿd, the brother of Salima ibn Saʿd. ‘Abdallāh ibn Unays al-Juhaṇī was a client (ḥalīf) of the Salima. As has already been noted, Muʿādh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamīḥ belonged to a leading Salima family.

‘Amr ibn al-Jamīḥ’s idol and the idols belonging to other noblemen were one level above the household idols. They had names, which the latter did not, and the same is true of the idols of higher levels to be discussed below. Perhaps the noblemen’s idols were larger or more richly decorated than the household idols. They were probably anthropoid (or were interpreted anthropomorphically): the young attackers of ‘Amr ibn al-Jamīḥ’s idol threw it on its head; at some stage ‘Amr hung a sword on it and asked it to defend itself. ‘Amr’s idol had a sanctuary (bayt) of its own, and the same is probably the case with the idols of noblemen in general. With regard to this specific idol it is reported that whenever people wanted to talk to it (i.e., consult it), an old woman would stand behind it and answer on its behalf.

2.3 Idols belonging to baṭnūs

One level above the nobleman’s idol we find the idol of the baṭnū, which also had a name. Baṭnūs mentioned as owners of idols were the subdivisions of the Nabīt group (Aws), i.e., ‘Abd al-Ashḥal, Ḥāritha and Zafar; the Salima; and the Najjār subdivisions, ‘Adī ibn al-Najjār, Dīnār ibn al-Najjār and Mālik ibn al-Najjār (Khazraj). Many baṭnūs in Medina are not listed among the owners of idols, simply because the list is incomplete. The baṭnū’s idol was placed in a sanctuary (bayt) and belonged to the whole baṭnū (li-jamāʿat al-baṭnū). Sacrifices were offered to it. One expects the sanctuary to have been converted into a mosque. An association between baṭnūs and worship can also be found elsewhere: in Kūfah there were mosques belonging to baṭnūs of the Kinda.

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171 Decoration of idols in general is suggested by the saying aḥsan mina l-dumya wa-mina l-zūn wa-humā l-sānam; Maydānī, Amṭhal, I, 227.


173 Dakhalū bayt šānamihī; Nubalāʾ, I, 254. This is also suggested by the words wa-dakhala ʿala Manāf; ibid., 255.

174 Fa-ajābat ‘anhu; Abū Nuʿaym, Dalāʾil, 311 (called here Manāt, read: Manāf); Lecker, “Idol worship”, 337.


2.4 Huzam

One level above the baṭṉs in the tribal organization of Medina we find the major subdivisions of the Aws and Khazraj. For the time being I have been able to find only one idol in this category: the Ḥārith ibn al-Khazraj had an idol called Huzam, located in their majlīs, or place of assembly similarly called Huzam, in wadi Buṭḥān. One expects the other subdivisions of the Aws and Khazraj to have had similar idols. Unlike the baṭṉs idol which had a sanctuary, the idol of the major subdivision was located in the tribal place of assembly. There is no mention of sacrifices, but since sacrifices were offered to the idols of the baṭṉs, one would expect to find them in this category as well.

2.5 Al-Khamīs

One level above the major subdivisions of the Khazraj (and the Aws) we find the Khazraj themselves. There is evidence of an idol worshipped by the Khazraj, or indeed by the Khazraj and the Sulaym tribe whose territory was not far from Medina. The idol’s name was al-Khamīs and it appears in a verse attributed to the Prophet’s grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who swore by it.

2.6 Al-Sa‘īda

One level above the idol of the Khazraj we find al-Sa‘īda. Located on Mt. Uḥud near Medina, it was worshipped by the Azd and the whole of the Quḍā‘a (the Sa‘d Hudhaym are specifically mentioned), with the exception of the Banū Wabarā. On this level and the next one there is evidence of custodians and of a talbiya: the custodians of al-Sa‘īda were the Banū l-‘Ajlān. In the period immediately preceding the rise of Islam most of the Quḍā‘a did not live near Medina, although Medina had a significant population belonging to the Quḍā‘a branch of Bali. But we are mainly concerned here with the Azd, since the Aws and Khazraj who were of the Azd must have been among the worshippers of this idol. The Aws and Khazraj who were the more recent settlers in Medina joined the older population of the Bali in its worship of al-Sa‘īda. Unsurprisingly, the custodians belonged to the older population. The ‘Ajlān (a baṭṉ) had a client relationship (ḥalif) with

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177 Cf. the expression majālis al-anṣār; Ibn ‘Asākir, XLI, 56. There is no reason to assume that their majālis were abolished after the advent of Islam; the idols were of course removed from them.

178 Ablīgh bānī l-Najjārī in ji’tahum annī minhum wa’-bnhum wa-l-Khamīs; Ṭabārī, I, 1085; Ansāb al-ashrāf, I, 70; Munammaq, 85. Cf. Ṭabarī, trans., VI, 12 (“The meaning of wa-l-khamīs is somewhat obscure”). Elsewhere the verse is attributed to al-Muṭṭalib ibn ‘Abd Manāf; Ibn Sa‘d, I, 82–83; Lecker, Sulaym, 99 (pointing out the possibility that “Khazraj” refers to both the Khazraj and Aws; Aṣnām, 14; Fākīhī, IV, 236).

the ‘Amr ibn ‘Afw, more precisely the Banū Zayd ibn Mālik ibn ‘Afw ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Afw.\textsuperscript{180} The worshippers of al-Sa‘īda had a \textit{talbiya} of their own.\textsuperscript{181}

### 2.7 Manāt

After al-Khamīs which was worshipped by the Khazraj and al-Sa‘īda which was probably worshipped by both the Aws and Khazraj, we move one level higher to arrive at the most important idol of these two tribes, namely Manāt.\textsuperscript{182} It was located in Qudayd near al-Mushallal not far from the coast. According to some, it was a rock in Qudayd belonging to the Hudhayl, while others said that Manāt belonged to the Hudhayl and Khuzā‘a. But in several more reliable reports which are partly supported by coinciding evidence, the Azd and Qudā‘a are mentioned as its worshippers. It was worshipped by the Aws, the Azd, the Shāmīn and other Azdīs, among them the groups of Ghasān (who also belonged to the Azd).\textsuperscript{183} The Sa‘d Hudhaym of the Qudā‘a are again mentioned specifically among its worshippers. At the end of the pilgrimage, together with their followers from the Arabs of Yathrib and others, would not cut their hair with the other pilgrims, but would remain near Manāt (\textit{wa-aqānū ‘indaḥu}) and cut their hair there. They believed that the pilgrimage was not complete without this. Also the Quraysh and all the Arabs worshipped Manāt. On his way to conquer Mecca in 8/630 Muhammad sent ‘Ali to destroy Manāt. He brought back as part of the spoils two swords which the king of Ghasān al-Hārith ibn Abī Shamr had given the idol, Mikhdham and Rasūb. But elsewhere it is reported that ‘Ali found the swords at al-Fals, the idol of the Tay, when he destroyed it. The custodians of Manāt were the Ghatārif from the Azd.\textsuperscript{184} The Ghaṭārif are the family (\textit{āl}) of al-Hārith ibn ‘Ubaydallāh ibn ‘Amir

\textsuperscript{180}Ibn al-Kalbī, \textit{Nasab Ma‘add}, 711–12, listing no less than six members of the ‘Ajlān who were Muhammad’s Companions; Ibn Ḥazm, \textit{Ansāb}, 443; Lecker, \textit{Muslims, Jews and Pagans}, 135–37, and index. Serjeant (“Dawlah”), 143, n. 49) suggests that ‘Ajlān be identified with “Ajlān b. ʿAbdullāh of Rabī‘a” (he refers to Ibn Durayd, \textit{Ishtiqaq}, 296; read: 297); but this is not possible. Besides, Ibn Durayd speaks of the Qays ‘Ajlān, not of the Rabī‘a.\textsuperscript{181}Kister, “Labbayka”, 52 (read Sa‘īda instead of Sa‘īda). In the \textit{talbiya} the pilgrims declared that they did not come to the idol for (material) benefit nor for gain; cf. Tritton, “Notes on religion in early Arabia”, 194. This is confirmed by the fact that the Quḍā‘a and some tribes of the Azd were among the \textit{hilla} tribes that did not engage in trade during their pilgrimage; Yāqūbī, \textit{Ta’rīkh}, 1, 257. When they were on pilgrimage, they bought only meat; \textit{Mubāhbar}, 181. According to \textit{Mubāhbar}, 179, the \textit{hilla} included the Quḍā‘a (with the exception of ‘Ilāf and Janāb) and the Ansār. Wellhausen, \textit{Reste}, 65, argues, following the verse in Yāqūt, s.v. al-‘Uzza, 116b, that al-Sa‘īda was originally a nickname of al-ʿUzza. See also Asmā‘, 19. Another idol with the same name was located near Sindād or on the nearby bank of the Euphrates; Yāqūt, s.v. al-Sa‘īda.\textsuperscript{182}Kröne, \textit{Die altarabische Gottheit al-Lāt}, 521–39.\textsuperscript{183}Lecker, “The levying of taxes” = no. I in this volume.\textsuperscript{184}Yāqūt, s.v. Manāt; Asmā‘, 13–15; Mubāhbar, 316. Wellhausen (\textit{Reste}, 28) argues that two pilgrimages are incorrectly conflated here, one to Mecca and another to Manāt. Kröne, \textit{Die
al-Ghitīf,\textsuperscript{185} or Banū al-Hārith ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Yashkur ibn Mubashshir from the Azd. Their land was at the southernmost part of the Sarāt mountains,\textsuperscript{186} in an area called al-Ḥazz. The Ghaṭārīf conquered al-Ḥazz from the Amalekites, and hence the name al-Ghaṭārīf or the noble ones.\textsuperscript{187}

The custodians were probably a family of the Ghaṭārīf that emigrated to northern Arabia. While the reports on the location of Manāt are consistent, its worshippers are given as either the Hudhayl, the Hudhayl and Khuzā’ā or the Azd, including the Aws and Khazraj. The Hudhayl and Khuzā’ā might reflect an earlier stage in the worship of Manāt, before the arrival of the Azd from the Yemen. In any case, in the immediate pre-Islamic period Manāt was worshipped, among other Azdīs, by the Aws and Khazraj.

This is borne out by a report which originated with a great-grandson of Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa’d ibn Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda, in praise of his fathers. Sa’d’s grandfather Dūlāyīm used to donate ten slaughter camels to Manāt every year. Sa’d’s father, ‘Ubāda, followed suit and Sa’d himself did the same before his conversion to Islam. Sa’d’s son, Qays, used to donate the same number of camels to the Ka’ba.\textsuperscript{188} The report is not concerned with idol worship as such but with generosity and leadership. It is noteworthy that Sa’d ibn ‘Ubāda himself, before his conversion to Islam, used to donate camels to Manāt. In other words, the cult of Manāt was not a matter of remote history but continued to the very advent of Islam.

Manāt concludes the discussion of the idols worshipped by the people of Medina. A man of the Aws or Khazraj had a household idol at home; noblemen had idols which were probably more impressive than the household idols; the baṭn as a whole had an idol kept in a special sanctuary; the subdivision of Aws or Khazraj had an idol in its maylīs; the Khazraj as a whole worshipped a special idol (and the Aws presumably had an idol of their own); both the Aws and Khazraj worshipped al-Sa’dīda on Mt. Uḥud; and finally the Aws and Khazraj concluded their pilgrimage near their main idol, Manāt.

In all this there is no indication of the decline of idol worship on the eve of Islam. Quite to the contrary, it appears that the whole life cycle of a Medinan,
whether of the Khazraj or the Aws, was associated with idolatry. Ibn Ishāq’s opinion about the influence of monotheism on the Arabs on the eve of Islam was “that it was merely superficial; the Arabs were illiterate and what they heard from Jews and Christians had no effect on their lives”. Guillaume, adducing this view, was surprised: “It must be remembered that he was talking about Western Arabia, and one would have thought that the influence of the synagogue or synagogues in Medina and its suburbs would have been considerable, especially when one bears in mind the close agreement between the Koran and the Talmud in teaching and terminology”. But Ibn Ishāq accurately describes the situation in Medina on the eve of the Hijra.

The power of idol worship in Arabia must not be underestimated. The evidence adduced above shows that idol worship in Mecca, Medina and among the nomads prospered on the eve of Islam. The evidence for Medina is particularly rich and idols were found on all levels of tribal organization. This must have been the case in all parts of Arabia.

For ten frustrating years Muhammad attempted to convert his fellow Meccans to Islam. Their resistance was motivated not only by fear for their commercial interests. While the intensity of their spiritual attachment to the idols cannot be gauged, clearly idols played a major role in their lives.

The accounts of the demolition of idols often provide Islamic writers with

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189 Guillaume, New Light, 6–7. See also ibid., 21: “The Arabs were illiterate. They did not study writing. All that they knew of heaven and hell, the resurrection, the mission of prophets and so on was the little they had heard from Jews and Christians. This teaching had no effect on their lives”. In Ibn Hishām, I, 225 (< ‘Ašīm ibn ‘Umar ibn Qatāda), the Arabic text is as follows: inna mimnā da’ānā ilā l-islām ma’ā rahmati llāh wa-hudāhu lanā la-mā kunnā nasma’u min rijāl yahid, wa-kunnā ahl shirk as-h. ṣab awthān wa-kunnā ahl kitāb, ‘indahum ‘ilm laysa lanā . . . .

190 Serjeant, in his review of Guillaume’s New Life, in BSOAS 26 (1963), 427–28, remarks with regard to Ibn Ishāq’s view on the superficial influence of monotheism that it “strikes the reviewer as very likely to be near the truth, and the existence of synagogues in ancient west Arabia is no more likely to have influenced the religious attitudes of tribesfolk than those in the Yemen (which were numerous enough until some twelve years ago) influenced the dominant Muslim population’s outlook though relations were in other ways very close”.

191 Evidence of the persistence of idol worship after the advent of Islam is inconclusive. Ibn al-Jawzi (Talbis īblīs, 59) reports that at the time of the last Sassanian emperor, Yazdjid, idols were worshipped and some people apostatized (wa-raja’u man raja’a ‘āni l-islām). Elsewhere we find that three people found with idols in an underground place of passage (sarab) were brought before ‘Ali who ordered them burnt alive; Tabarī, Tahdhib al-athār (Musnad ‘Alī), 81. But there is no certainty that the three were Arabs. The next report in the same source speaks of people of the Zuṭṭ whom ‘Ali had burnt alive for the same offence, and it appears that the three mentioned earlier were also non-Arabs. Incidentally, Mu’āwiyah was accused of having exported anthropomorphic brass (or gold) “idols” to Hind and Sind (asnām min sufr tamāthīl al-rijāl). They were shipped down the Tigris and sold on his behalf; Ansāb al-arshāf, IV,i, 130. When Sicily was conquered at the time of Mu’āwiyah, “idols” of gold and silver adorned with jewels which had been taken as spoils were sent to the caliph who in turn sent them to Hind via al-Brūṣa to be sold there; Futūḥ, 235. These two reports are probably linked.
an opportunity to ridicule the polytheists and their cult. But the shock and fear attributed to the polytheists indicate their belief in the power of their idols. The acts of destruction were not always peaceful and custodians were sometimes prepared to sacrifice their lives rather than abandon their idols.

Appendix: The Meccan maker of household idols

Some details are available about a Meccan carpenter called Abū Tijrāt who carved wooden idols. He was a Christian (naṣrān). His father was called Yašār Abū Fukayha after a daughter of his named Fukayha. Abū Tijrāt was the son-in-law of a member of the Umayyad family, Muḥāwiya ibn al-Mughīra ibn Abī l-‘Ās; his Christian faith is mentioned to the detriment of this Umayyad family.

Regarding his activity as a manufacturer of idols we rely on Wāqīdī. On a closer inspection of this account one realizes that something is missing. Having reported on ʿIkrīma’s destruction of every idol he found out about (above, 4), Wāqīdī says: wa-kāna Abū Tijrāt yaʾmaluhā fī l-jāhiliyya wa-yabīʿuhā, qāla Saʿd [read: Saʿīd] ibn ʿAmr: akhbaranī [the word abī is missing] annahu kāna yarāhu yaʾmaluhā wa-yabīʿuhā. Wa-lam yakun rajul min Quraysh bi-Makka illā wa-fī baythi ṣanam. Wāqīdī’s source is ʿAbdallāh ibn Yazīd [al-Hudhalī] < Saʿīd ibn ʿAmr. Saʿīd ibn ʿAmr’s informant was probably his father. Elsewhere Wāqīdī quotes from ʿAbdallāh ibn Yazīd < Saʿīd ibn ʿAmr < his father, a report on the worship of Hudhayl’s idol, Suwā. As in the passage discussed here, the father’s testimony is an eye witness account: ḥadartu maʾa ṭarījā min qawmī ṣanamanā Suwā. The same is probably true of Saʿīd’s eye witness account concerning Abū Tijrāt’s manufacturing of idols: it was received from his father, ʿAmr.

\[\text{References:}\]

192 Wāqīdī/Wellhausen, 350, has erroneously Abū Bajrāt (“Abu Bajrāt machte und verkaufte sie; es wurde mit ihnen ein lebhafter Handel an die Beduinen getrieben”).

193 Ibn Saʿd, VIII, 246. In another version his father’s name was Aflah; Isāba, I, 100.

194 Wa-hum yaʾābūna bi-dhālika; Ansāb al-ashraf, IV.i, 479.

195 Wāqīdī, II, 869–870.

196 Ibn Saʿd, I, 167–68; above, 8.

197 Abū Nuʿaym’s Companion dictionary has it that ʿAmr’s father was called Saʿīd; Isāba, IV, 639.
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