

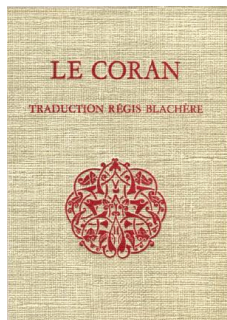
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References to Muḥammad in the Koran:  
Lost Years since 1949?  
History of a Research

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## References to Muḥammad in the Koran: Lost Years since 1949? History of a Research

In 1949, Régis Blachère published his annotated translation of the Koran in French. In particular, three passages and their respective notes opened prospects for renewed Islamic studies.



In Q. 61:6, he laid out in parallel the two versions of this curiously long verse:

- the one of the standard version that everyone knows and that makes Jesus announce an “apostle [*rasūl*, *messenger*] who shall come after me, whose name will be *Aḥmad*,”
- and the version according to Ubayy wherein Jesus announces: “a prophet [*nabiy*] whose community will be the last community and by whom Allah shall apply the seal to the prophets and apostles.” (Blachère p. 593)

In a footnote, he underlined the radical difference between the two versions but without offering any explanation. Logically, he could also have questioned the 4

other and equivalent references to “*muḥammad*” found in the Koranic text (Q. 3:144, 33:40, 47:2, 48:29). He did not do so but annotated two other passages: Q. 5:66b and Q. 6:91; both crucially significant in relation to the historical and textual framework.

Blachère did not leave any note or article comparing these three verses. This is what we will endeavor to do here, in this presentation, the outline of which is as follows:

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### 1- Necessary Preliminary Steps

In 1999, Antoine Moussali, a keen specialist of the Koran and the Arabic language<sup>1</sup>, gradually came to understand how and why ALL the references of *muḥammad* (4 + *aḥmad*) are de facto part of interpolations into the Koranic text. The subject was very sensitive; it still is.

However, such a matter could not be addressed without first establishing it within the general framework of a historical-critical approach to the real origins of Islam. Today, all serious scholars know that these origins are neither to be found in Mecca nor in *Hijāz*, and that the figure of

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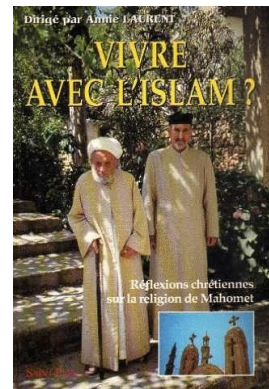
<sup>1</sup> Fr. Antoine Moussali (1920-2003), a Lebanese priest, had given Arabic lessons on Algerian television – at least for as long as his Christian status remained unknown – and to the monks of Tibhirine as well, before the dark years. These monks were murdered in 1996 during of the civil war that raged and devastated Algeria from 1990 to 2000. Fr. Antoine M. was able to flee to France in time.

the “Prophet of Islam” is but a sheer fabrication. These were prerequisite steps. For the first time in 2005, the five mentions of the name of the Prophet of Islam in the Koran were stated as interpolations within a 1,100-page synthesis spanning two volumes: *Le messie et son prophète*.

In the meantime, Father Antoine Moussali had passed away († 2003).

Among the prerequisites, it was also necessary to resolve the apparent contradiction between verses Q. 5:51 and Q. 5:82: the first (5:51) teaches the rejection of those referred to by the term *naṣāra* (“do not take the Jews and the *naṣāra* as allies”); while the second says that they are the closest to actual, true believers (they say: “We are *naṣāra*”). Antoine Moussali was able to do just that as far back as 1996,<sup>2</sup> demonstrating that this term did not originally refer to Christians. The contradiction then disappears.

Indeed, owing to an obvious rhythmic reason, which no expert’s ear could fail to pick up, the clause “and the Nazarenes” (*wa n-naṣāra*), which follows the reference to the “Jews” (*Yahūd*), betrays a dissonance: those rejected in 5:51 are only the *Yahūd*. The text becomes obvious again. And so he very quickly understood that **all** such mentions were also interpolations.<sup>3</sup>



### ● 1.1 THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE METHODS



However, the approach could not only be technical. For example, if we think that the origins of Islam can be traced back to Northern Arabia,<sup>4</sup> we still have to understand why they were displaced. And here, we come in contact with the *theo-logical* dimension of Islam and of the Koran, even if their *logic* is not obvious at first sight. Taking this dimension into account, or at least starting to do so, was part of the research prerequisites.

As early as the 1830s, the reforming rabbi Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) (*Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?*, 1833), and his Jewish successors in the 19th century, had brought to light undeniable theological connections between Judaism and Islam; but these connections could not yet be explained rationally as borrowings. How

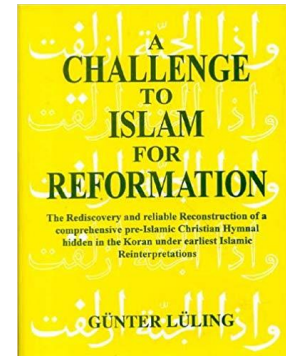
then?

<sup>2</sup> See Moussali Antoine, *Interrogations d’un ami des Musulmans*, in Coll. under the direction of Annie Laurent, *Vivre avec l’Islam? Réflexions chrétiennes sur la religion de Mahomet*, Paris, Ed. Saint-Paul, 1996 (1<sup>st</sup> edition), p. 228-256. The article can be found at <https://deliretotalenligne.wordpress.com/2017/06/15/livres-gratuits-ebooks-vivre-avec-lislam-reflexions-chretiennes-sur-la-religion-de-mahomet-en-ligne>; a study on the subject can be found at: [http://www.rootsofislamtruehistory.com/subpages/Ahl-al-Kitab\\_people-of-the-book.htm](http://www.rootsofislamtruehistory.com/subpages/Ahl-al-Kitab_people-of-the-book.htm).

<sup>3</sup> All the expressions “and / or [the] Nazarenes” (*wa / aw an-naṣāra*) are interpolations (often discernible from simply hearing) whose purpose is to give *naṣāra* the meaning of *Christians* (because after *yahūd*, the term can hardly mean anything else): Q. 2:111 (or n.); 2:113 (with the following: “and the n. say: *the Jews hold on nothing*”); 2:120 (and the n.); 2:135 (or n.); 2:140 (or n.); 5:18 (and the n.). In verse 2:135, the introduction of *aw an-naṣāra* after “be Jews” leads to read that the “sons of Abraham” (cf. 2:133) recommend being *Jews* (*hūd*, i.e. of Jewish ethnicity) or **Christians**. Without the addition, the verse reads: “They (the sons of Abraham) said: *Be Jewish, you will be on the right path. Say: No, [follow] Abraham’s religion (milla<sup>h</sup>), in Hanīf-s*” (2:135). He’s making sense again as a call to belief.

<sup>4</sup> See Excursus (title 8).

Inevitably, attempts to bring Islam closer to Christianity, or at least to a certain flavor of “Christianity,” have also been undertaken. Such was in particular the idea of Günter Lüling (1928-2014), starting from the 1970s onwards. Lüling was one of the first to venture considering the Koran from a critical standpoint of textual analysis, focusing particularly on its hymnic features (*Über den Ur-Qur’an. Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion vorislamischer christlicher Strophenlieder im Qur’an*, 1974; or, in English – re-edited in India, 2003).



Of course, applying a historical-critical method to the Koranic text was akin to the violation of a taboo, and Lüling’s academic career was subsequently hindered. Then, Christoph Luxenberg (pseud.) shed important clarifications on the Syriac-Aramaic substratum of the Koran, thereby opening up historical perspectives that would prove well-founded. These were helpful.

Up to then indeed, the hope of discovering an “original Christianity” (*Ur-Christentum*) through the study of the Koranic text obeyed a presumptive position, one which stemmed from the (still widespread) belief that Christianity was fictionalized at the Council of Nicaea (325). This gave rise to the belief in a “pre-Nicean Christianity” as opposed to a “post-Nicean Christianity.”

This preconceived projection on to the origins of Christianity (only seen as a Greek Christianity) sometimes traced it back earlier, namely to the Apostle Paul. Here, the attitude consists in opposing a fancied Christianity “before Paul” and a so-called “Pauline Christianity” supposed to differ from the Hebraic legacy of the Apostolic faith (and imagined to also have manufactured the divinity of Christ), even though Paul himself is no other than the son of a Pharisee! In any case, it is always a question of finding concepts that would make it possible to oppose “orthodox” Christianity to something supposedly prior and original –in order to explain the Koranic Christology.

Admittedly, the frequentation of the rabbinic world could suggest such an a priori: Rabbinism presents itself as “orthodox Judaism,” in contrast to other forms of Judaism considered “heterodox”; and since the former only really imposed itself on the whole religious Jewish world from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the historian must ask himself what was there before. Previously, there were simply various forms of Jewish groups united only through the Bible and some fundamental rites; and Rabbinism, as such, is but a heir of one of these groups, more precisely the Pharisaic movement – with certain distortions contemporary scholars sometimes conveniently avoid taking into account.

## ● 1.2 REDUCING VISIONS AND RECENT (RE)DISCOVERIES

Reductive schemes are used even more frequently to look at Christianity. No doubt it is not easy to grasp from the outside. But can we ignore the original diversity of its forms? For when we discover the existence of five or six forms of Christianity, each as original as the next, no reductionist schema can be applied. And this diversity comes from the apostolate of the Apostles and their disciples in regions as far apart as Spain on the one hand and China on the other, or the Caucasus in the North and Nubia in the South, without forgetting the diversity of nations and cultures situated between these extremes –and in particular the immense and heterogeneous Parthian Empire whose official language was precisely Aramaic, the language of the Jews and... of the Apostles.

The knowledge of this Aramaic civilization, central between the Greco-Roman world and China, sheds light on the beginnings of Christianity; without this light, quite substantial since recent archeological discoveries<sup>5</sup>, one quickly and erroneously comes to believe that Christianity is Greco-Latin (the vast

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ilaria Ramelli, Pierre Perrier, Jean Charbonnier et Coll., *L’apôtre Thomas et le christianisme en Asie*, Acts of the Symposium of Paris, éd. AED 2013 ; Pierre Perrier, *L’Apôtre Thomas et le Prince Ying*, éd. Jubilé, 2012 ; Marion Duvauchel, *La chrétienté disparue du Caucase, histoire eurasiatique du christianisme*, 2019 ; A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, India, 1905 ; Yevadian Maxime, *Mik'ayel Tch'amtch'ian, l'inventeur de la date de conversion de Tiridate III le Grand au Christianisme*, in *Jubilé de l'Ordre des Pères mékhitaristes*, Lyon, Sources d'Arménie, 2017, p. 105-110 ; Mani et L'Arménie, in *Haigazian Armenological Review*, 2011, vol. 31, p. 405-412 ; *Le Catholico arménien Sahak III*

majority of maps show that its religious influence actually stops at the borders of the Roman Empire!), and that the original Semitic “*Ur-Christentum*” could only disappear very quickly (in the confines of this Empire). Starting from this belief, one tends to imagine that Greco-Latin Christianity (manufactured at a later stage) is the supposed face of “orthodoxy” as opposed to “primitive Christianity,” imagined by modern scholarship to have seen in Jesus not God Himself but a mere (merely human) Messiah-Christ – this same conception is found in the Qur’an, where Jesus is said to be Messiah eleven times (four of which give the formula “the-Messiah-Jesus”).

We critically need to change our Eurocentered paradigm. Taking Syriac Christianity into account already represents an important step forward. But although the latter is authentically heir to the original forms of Christianity (a fact sometimes denied<sup>6</sup>), it also found itself as it were locked in the Roman Empire and subjected to intense Greek pressure.<sup>7</sup> In comparison to the many Aramaic communities comprised in the Eastern Church based in Seleucia-Ktesiphon, it represents but an outnumbered, minority group. The basic problem therefore consists in taking into account the multiple forms assumed by Apostolic Christianity, according to the regions of the world where the Apostles went – all these forms having in common a solid Hebrew-Aramaic foundation. It is this foundation that we must closely consider, without seeking to derive from it at all costs the more familiar Greek concepts as they will later be defined.

This foundation indeed enables us to discover an initial “orthodoxy” criterion, but this criterion is pre-conceptual: that of *salvation*. The Hebrew-Aramaic Christian believes that Jesus holds *within himself* the power to “save” (or “give life,” according to the Aramaic), and he differentiates himself very well from others who, being outside the movement of the Apostles, see Jesus as Messiah *by the power of Another* (or even as a model to follow). Some of Jesus’ disputes with people of the Temple already illustrate this cleavage, which is first of all a questioning (unless one considers the NT texts as late elaborations of Hellenistic communities, according to the vicious circle of biased Western German exegesis).

In his own way, Philo of Alexandria also testifies to this, in his *Legatio ad Caium* wherein he writes (after 41 A.D.): “God would rather change himself into man than man into God” – in reference to the shocking scene he had witnessed in Rome, when the emperor Caius Caligula had exhibited himself, disguised as Jupiter.<sup>8</sup> His remark also appears to echo in Alexandria<sup>9</sup> the questions raised by the

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*Dzoroporetsi et l’Église de Chine*, in Acts of the Symposium of Paris, December 30 and February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, éd. AED, Paris, 2013, p. 123-166 ; Johnson Thomaskutty, *Saint Thomas the Apostle: New Testament, Apocrypha, and Historical Traditions*, Bloomsbury, 2018 ; T. Zachariah Mani, *Charition Greek Drama and the Christians of Kerala*, Kochi, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Because of the lack of knowledge of the oriental forms of Christianity (and especially our knowledge of the Syrian-Aramaic New Testament), it has even been invented that the Syriac texts of the New Testament were translated from Greek by Rabulah, Bishop of Edessa (412-4135): so, the Aramaic-speaking Christians of Roman Syria and especially of the Great Church of the East (Parthian Empire and far beyond) previously should have had no gospel! Let us point to Eusebius’ remark about the historiographer Hegesippus writing around 150, who “makes some quotations from the Gospel according to the Hebrews and from the Syriac [Gospel]” (*Hist. Eccl.*, IV, 22).

Although there are very rare traces of Greek influence on the Pešittô, its conformity with the Pešitta of the Christians in the Persian Empire shows that this Syriac Pešittô owes nothing to the Greek texts of the New Testament, which are moreover divided into eight irreducible families of manuscripts; on the contrary, there exists only one family in Syrian-Aramaic (in which the Latin manuscript Brixianus is included): it makes very difficult the idea of Aramaic texts retranslated from Greek. On the web or elsewhere, there are still too few textual comparisons between the “Greek text” (harmonized by Nestlé-Alland and successors) and the Chaldean text printed in 1896 or the Syrian-Aramaic critical edition established in 1905 in England. Those who compare understand.

<sup>7</sup> Not only were Syriac priests obliged to celebrate in Greek, but the very name of their community was Hellenized: *kristyonē* instead of *mešihoyē* – cf. Jullien Christelle and Jullien Florence, *Aux frontières de l’iranité : « nasraye » et « kristyone » des inscriptions du mobad kirdir : enquête littéraire et historique*, in *Numen* vol. 49, Brill, 2002, pp. 282-335.

<sup>8</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Légation à Caius*, translation Delaunay, Paris, Didier, 1870, p. 310 (§ 118).

<sup>9</sup> If we believe the Book of Acts (18:24-25), a former disciple of John the Baptist, Apollos, originally from Alexandria, traveled around Asia Minor around 44 A.D. to speak about Christ – it was Paul, in Antioch, who spoke to him about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which he had not heard of (something one does not just come up with by way of making it

Apostles and their disciples, evoking “God’s visitation” in his Messiah, which had been announced and was taking place – but they rejected any idea of “divinization.” The idea of “divinization” (understood according to an ancient pagan model) is the opposite of that of “God’s visitation,” and was adhered to by opponents to Jesus as we can guess it in the Gospel (cf. John, chapter 6). And that idea is again promoted by European-centered exegesis, which looks at antiquity only through the eyes of the Greco-Latin world (with notable exceptions such as Professor Ohlig).

A lack of knowledge of the Semitic world is thus at the origin of confusions, especially when one describes as “heterodox Jews” para-Christian communities professing Jesus to be a “messiah” in whom God is present only as a driving force or inspiration. Sometimes these communities are also presented as forms of “primitive Christianity,” even though they are historically and logically *post*- and not *pre-Christian*.<sup>10</sup>

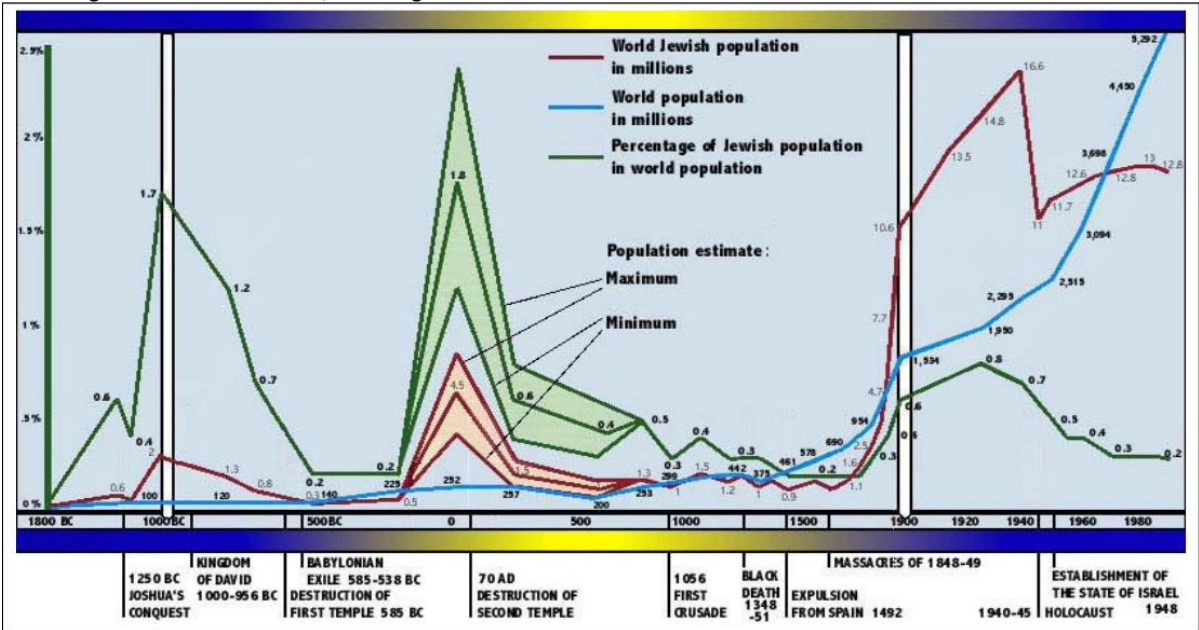
In fact, all these misconceptions have very ancient roots going back to the Byzantines. The Byzantines played a decisive role in imposing their ways of seeing and reasoning. They wanted to give conceptual definitions to the faith, giving rise to more problems than they claimed to solve. Was it worth arguing over words... or, much more often, over questions of power disguised as theological quarrels? Moreover, today the different Apostolic communities of the world fully and mutually recognize each other in their faith, expressed in various (often non-translatable) languages. The Aramaic term *qnoma*, for example, which is found several times in the New Testament and which was at the heart of some divergences, corresponds neither to the Greek concept of οὐσα (“nature”) nor to that of ὑποστασις (“hypostasis”); before excluding the so-called “pre-Chalcedonian” Apostolic Churches (which did not speak Greek), one should have been clear about what is being discussed, and returned to Aramaic texts...

Rather, the sources outside the world of the Greco-Latin Empire should be favored, especially the Hebraic-Aramaic sources of the Eastern Church,<sup>11</sup> even if they are less numerous than others due to

up). This Apollos had therefore not yet met any of the Apostles or any of their disciples. However, the text says that “he had been instructed in the way of the Lord.” What that in Alexandria?

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Volume I of *Le messie et son prophète*, Paris Editions, 2005, in particular the “Essene file.” (p. 39-307)

<sup>11</sup> As a reminder, Christians were overwhelmingly Jews. More: according to what can be inferred from this picture of Jewish and world populations over the centuries, produced under the authority of the Rabbinate of New York ([www.akadem.org/medias/documents/--evolutionfinal.pdf](http://www.akadem.org/medias/documents/--evolutionfinal.pdf)), more than half of those who are recognized as “Jews” by the Pharisaic-Rabbinic movement curiously disappeared in the 1st century – but surely not because the small number of deaths in the “first Jewish War” (66-70). Why then? Is this sudden decline connected with an adherence to the Apostles’ message on the part of the Hebrew communities, especially those which, for the most part, were widespread throughout the ancient world, including China?



systematic Islamic destruction – it is not only the great library of Alexandria that the Caliphs burned, but the much more important library of Celeucia Ktesiphon (which took them a whole week to burn down).<sup>12</sup> In doing so, it was the written testimonies of the Christians who remained connected to the Jewish heritage that went up in smoke – and they were even more numerous than the Christians of Europe, at least until the great massacres of Timurlang.

### ● 1.3 TOWARD A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE KORAN

The first step consisted in getting out of the Greek dogmatic formulas (conceptual and late); the second step, made possible then, will be to understand the way that the *para-/ post-Jewish-Christian* faith is in opposition to the Apostolic faith, especially in reference to eschatological questions. Finally the third step consists in highlighting the coherence between that *post-Jewish-Christian* faith and the *proto-Islamic* faith, as it emerges from the study of hundreds of *ḥadith-s* and also from the textual analysis of the Koran itself – Mohammad Amir-Moezzi brought to light this fundamental eschatological and apocalyptic dimension of the proto-Islam, when its promulgation was focused on the “imminent coming” of the Messiah Jesus “savior.”<sup>13</sup>

So, freed from its interpolations and other subsequent alterations or misunderstandings, the Koranic text can emerge in its original components and generally becomes very clear again. This perspective was the last prerequisite step to overcome.

As an aside, let us pay tribute here to the so valuable contribution of all those who have worked studying ancient Koranic manuscripts. This important work is ongoing, and it will continue for years to come.

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<sup>12</sup> It is the totality of the books in Aramaic, the official language of the Persian Empire, as well as the others, which were systematically destroyed:

“However, when the Muslims had conquered Persia and gotten hold of countless books and scientific writings, Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqās wrote to ‘Umar Ibn al- Ḥaṭṭāb asking him for orders about these books and their transfer to the Muslims. Umar replied, “Throw them into the water. If their contents indicate the good way, God has given us a better direction. If they indicate the way to misguidance, God has preserved us from it.” These books were therefore thrown into the water or into fire, and so the sciences of the Persians were lost and could not reach us.” (Ibn Khaldūn, *Le Livre des Exemples*, T. I, Muqaddima VI, Gallimard, nov. 2002, p. 944).

<sup>13</sup> Guillaume Dye and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi (dir.), *Le Coran des historiens*, Cerf, novembre 2019, 3408 pages. See also <https://youtu.be/HMzkt9nSgbc?t=3597>.

## 2- Original Strata: Q. 61:6 and Reading Lexicon

Taking up Blachère’s three keys of research, Antoine Moussali provided the necessary keys to draw up a small historical-critical “reading lexicon” of the Koran.

At first about verse Q. 6:61 – we have seen that two different versions are given, one from the standard text and the other according to Ubayy:

<b>6a</b> “When ‘Isā son of Mary said: <i>O sons of Israel,</i> <b>6b</b> <i>I am the Messenger (rasūl) of God to you,</i> <i>Standard version</i>		<i>Version according to Ubayy</i>
confirming what before me <sup>14</sup> of the Torah		a prophet whose community
and announcing <b>a messenger</b>		will be the <b>last community</b> and
to come after me,		by whom Allah shall apply the seal
whose name will be <i>Aḥmad</i> ,		to the prophets and apostles,
<b>6f</b> but when he came to them with clear signs		the sons of Israel [said:]
<b>6g</b> [they] said: <i>This is evident sorcery.</i> ”		

Moussali understood that neither version was actually original. In both cases, the center of the verse betrays a clear interpolation.<sup>15</sup> It is likely that they are two tampered accounts, concocted either without consultation or with the first replacing the second. In any case, the original text should simply read as follows:<sup>16</sup>

- V. 6a “And when ‘Isā-Jesus, son of Mary, said: *O sons of Israel,*
- V. 6b *I am the Messenger (rasūl) of God to you,*
- [v. 6f but when he came to them with clear signs]<sup>17</sup>
- V. 6g They said: *This is evident sorcery.*”

<sup>14</sup> Literally: *between my hands*, Arabic: *bayna yadayya*. Together with *bayna yadayhi* – *between his hands*, this simple Arabic expression is usually rendered by Islamic translators by, respectively, *before me* or *before him*. But Mondher SFAR demonstrated that “*mşddqñ l-mā byn ydy-*” could not be read as: “justifying what is before him,” but as “in accordance with [justified by] what is in his hands.”

It is not what follows that confirms what has come first, but the reverse. Put simply, the Prophet of Islam cannot be justified by what precedes him (nothing announces him). Hence in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, “*mşdqñ*” was vowelized to the active form (*muşaddiqan*) instead of the passive form (*muşaddaqan*): Muḥammad is accordingly said *to confirm* what has come before him.

But this sleight of hand does not work, for example, with verse 35,31: “What We reveal to you from the Book, that is the Truth, *confirmation of (muşaddiqan li)* that which was already *before this*” – the translator HAMIDULLAH explains in a footnote that “*before this* means *before the Koran*, i.e. the Bible” (*The Holy Koran*, p. 576). Would a revelation confirm its source? Mondher SFAR rightly translates: “is the truth according to what is in His possession [the heavenly Torah, which is *in the hands of God*]” (*Le Coran est-il authentique ?*, Paris, Sfar/ diff. Cerf, 2000, p. 19). Clearly, “*mşddqñ l-mā byn ydy-*” should be rendered as “*justified by virtue of (li) that which [is] in... hands,*” and not by “*confirming that which has come before...*” Cf. Gallez, *Le messie et son prophète*, Vol. II, p. 38, n. 928 ; p. 152, n. 1133 and annexe D3, p. 461-474.

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.rootsofislamtruehistory.com/subpages/Q61-6\\_Did\\_Jesus\\_announce\\_ahmad\\_in\\_the\\_Koran.htm](http://www.rootsofislamtruehistory.com/subpages/Q61-6_Did_Jesus_announce_ahmad_in_the_Koran.htm).

<sup>16</sup> Frank van der Velden objected that verse 6 would then be too short compared to verse 5, but verse 4 is just as short (van der VELDEN Frank, *Kotexte im Konvergenzstrang – die Bedeutung textkritischer Varianten und christlicher Bezugstexte für die Redaktion von Sure 61 und Sure 5:110-119*, in *Oriens Christianus*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, n° 92, year 2008, p.137-138).

Moreover, it must seriously be considered that verse 6 may have been amputated, and that the section removed bore on the (physical) return of the “Messiah Jesus” – the reason for this omission also applies to the original conclusion of Sura 4: it was to evoke the return of the Messiah just after treating of his rapture into Heaven (4:157), which all Muslim traditions have kept the memory of, but which may have upset the Omayyad power structure at some point. Thus, the original text of verse 6, hypothetically, might have been the following:

“When Jesus, the son of Mary, said: *Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of God to you, and I am justified* (verb in the passive, not active) *by virtue of the Torah [which is] in my hands [and] which announced me as Messiah by whom God will submit the Earth.* But some of them “*kafared*” when he came to them with clear signs, and said: *This is evident sorcery!*”

<sup>17</sup> It doesn’t matter whether 6f is part of the original verse or not; both opinions are possible.



This in fact does make a lot of sense: an old Rabbinical tradition refers to Jesus as a magician,<sup>18</sup> therefore accusing him of acting by the power of the devil, which is exactly the accusation laid out against him by some Pharisees according to the Gospels.<sup>19</sup>

Now the key question arises: if this verse consists in a reproach addressed to rabbinic Jews, **who** are those addressing it to them?

## ● 2.1 THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE PHRASE “PEOPLE OF THE BOOK”

Régis Blachère himself had put his finger on this key of understanding, by annotating the passage Q. 5:66b speaking of the “**people of the Book**” [*ahl al-Kitab*] (verse 65):

“**Among them** is a *moderate* community (*moderate or going without deflecting*), but **many of them**, how evil is what they do!” (5:66b)

The denotation “people of the Book” clearly is wider than that of “Jews” [*al-Yahūd*] (v.64). So, in a footnote, BLACHÈRE asks the crucial question – but without offering an answer –:

“Which Judeo-Christian or Christian sect is underscored here?” (p. 143)

Good question. It turns out that, as far as the primitive Koranic strata are concerned, the “people of the Book,” meaning those who legitimately lay claim to the “Book” (the Bible), are either rabbinic Jews (*al-Yahūd*) or the Jews designated in Blachère’s note. As for the Christians (Trinitarian), it appears that the Koranic text does not put them into the “people of the Book,” except in turn because of Muslim reading and of some interpolations intended to apply this designation to Muslims themselves (if the Muslims are “people of the Book,” Christians must also be so).

Finally, the third major key tumbled into by Blachère relates to his commentary on Q. 6:91, a verse recounting a polemic aimed at the *Yahūd* wherein the dispute bears on prophets and authentic revelations, including that of Jesus, while others consist of fabrications:

“You made it (Moses’ Scripture) into [*rolls of*] parchment disclosing [some of] it and concealing much [of it]. You have been taught that which you did not know, neither you nor your fathers.” (6:91c)

In a footnote, Blachère suggests the following, without explanation:

“The expression: *You have been taught... nor your ancestors* seems to allude to Talmudic teaching.” (p. 162)

Blachère evidently grasped the specific disapproving tone of this verse, within the framework of the general reproof made to the *Yahūd* for failing to recognize “the Messiah-Jesus” (according to the Koranic formula): to conceal (root *ḥ f w*, *to steal from the sight of*) Scripture... by *covering* it with interpretations in agreement with both Talmuds. What does that really mean? If we no longer read

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<sup>18</sup> The accusation of witchcraft is found in the *Tōldōt Yéšū* (a Jewish compilation dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century) or, more concisely, in the Talmud (*Birth*. 43a): “On the eve of the Passover, Jesus was hanged... He had practiced magic.”

Another Koranic passage echoes this accusation but in positive way: “When you kneaded a bird figure with clay! Then you blew into it; then, with My permission, it became a bird.” (Q. 5:110b)

it sets out four wonderful signs that Jesus would have operated, one of which (the birds made alive) can be found in two known apocrypha (*The Infancy Gospel* and *The Gospel of Thomas*). The source of these two apocrypha *could* be a Rabbinic text from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, which has just been found; this text is presented as the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, making use of anti-Christian clichés at that time. It reads: “He made simulacra of winged creatures appear to them and made them to fly.” (Genot-Bismuth Jacqueline Lise, *Israël, Edom, Ismaël. Les Craignant-Dieu*, St-Petersburg, Evropéiský Dom, 2004, p. 29)

<sup>19</sup> “But the Pharisees hearing it, said: *by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, does this man cast out devils.*” (Mt 12:24 || Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15).

Scripture for itself but only according to what the Talmudic comments say we should read,<sup>20</sup> we in effect cover it up (root *kfr*)<sup>21</sup>, *concealing* (and thus suppressing) its meaning<sup>22</sup>.

Irony of history: such an act of covering (*kufr*) the textual meaning under a mountain of commentaries is exactly what Muslims will do themselves – in addition to the alterations suffered in the first place by the text itself! And this is what contributes to making the Koran essentially unintelligible today.

## ● 2.2 A READING LEXICON

With these data at our disposal, especially data of a *theo-logical* nature, it becomes possible to draw up a **small historical-critical “reading lexicon” of the Koran**, without which the status of the five interpolations of “Muḥammad /Aḥmad” would remain unclear:

- *naṣāra*: – **Certainly** the group given as a model in the Koranic text: •it is Jewish, •it believes in “the Messiah-Jesus” (al-masīḥ ‘Isā) born of a virgin named Mary •and it is anti-Judaic

– **Certainly not** a “Christian” community since that is the meaning that can only be derived from interpolations (“al-yahūda wa/aw n- *naṣāra*,” the “Jews and/or the Christians” – see note 3);

→ They necessarily are *ex-Judeo-Christians* – i.e. real *Jews* but *ex- or para-Christians*, as Blachère was one of the first to see.

←– The interpolation “wa n-*naṣāra*” in Q. 5:51 could go back to the first Caliphs warning their followers against the influence of those *ex-Judeo-Christians* with whom they broke off: “Do not take the *Jews-yahūd* and the *naṣāra* as allies”; other similar interpolations could go back to that time. Some, finally, which are linked to the time when the false reading *naṣāra* = *Christians* was established, date from the Abbasid period in Persia and are the work of Persian “grammarians”. In Persia, in the first centuries, the primitive (and pejorative looking) name *naṣāra-nāṣrāyē* had already been used in anti-Christian Mazdean polemics to designate the *mšīḥayē* (= Christians – their real name in Aramaic).<sup>23</sup>

The purpose of the substitution of meaning (*naṣāra* now = *Christians*) was clearly to remove the memory of those former Judeo-Christians who had kept the primitive (Christian) naming of *naṣāra* while they were detached from the apostles’ movement (who, for their part, abandoned it early, cf. Acts 11:26). There is never a better way to conceal a human group than by depriving it of its name (henceforth designating others). Historians have generally heard of these Nazarenes but are not familiar with that file.

- *hūd*: ethnic Jewishness (Q. 2:135)

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<sup>20</sup> See also: “Among those who are practicing as Jews, [some] falsified the Word from its meaning.” (Q. 4:46)

“God will judge between them on the day of the Resurrection on what [in the Book] they have replaced.” (Q. 2:113)

“Then the prevaricators among them changed (*baddala*) what is said into something other than that which was said to them.” (Q. 7:162)

<sup>21</sup> The root *kfr* appears 491 times in the Koran, precisely to characterize the *Yahūd*. Indeed, the expression *al-kāfirūn*, the *coverers*, appears 159 times (including 5 in the singular) and is equivalent to *al-ladīna kafaru*, they who cover (299 times), i.e. those who perform acts of *kufr* (33 times). Total: 491!

The “sin” of *kufr* will earn them eternal Fire, cf. “Those who *kafar*... the fire will be their eternal abode.” (Q. 47:12)

“Those who *kafar* and avert from the way of God, and then die while *kafaring*, God will never forgive them.” (Q.47:34)  
See also 5:68 (*kufr*), etc.

<sup>22</sup> “O people of the Book, why do you *kafar* the signs of God when you are witnesses yourselves? O people of the Book, why do you mix the truth with the falsehood and conceal the truth when you know?” (Q.3:70-71)

<sup>23</sup> Christelle Jullien et Florence Jullien, op. cit.

- yahūda = al-kafirūn = alladīna kafaru: “Rabbinic Jews” (or “Judaic” but this adjective rather is an anachronism) – literally, the *coverers*, i.e. *those who cover* the reading or understanding of the Book (under the cover of Talmudic commentaries)<sup>24</sup>
- ahl al-Kitāb: “people of the Book” i.e. those who legitimately possess the Book, the Jews: Nazarene, Rabbinic and probably others like Samaritans and Sabeans (cf. Q.2:62; 5:69), but not the Christians (even born from a Jewish mother)<sup>25</sup>; if these *today* are said to be included among the “people of the Book”, it is only due to a logical implication since Islamic reading at first includes Muslims therein (and thus Christians also).
- mušrikūn / alladīna ašraku: the *associators*, i.e. the way in which *Christians* are referred to in Rabbinic circles and specifically here<sup>26</sup> in the sphere of influence of *Messianic ex-Judeo-Christians*. These people – the *našāra* – refuse to recognize Christians as *disciples of the Messiah* (insofar as they see themselves as the sole depositary of his *messiahship*), even though Christians are in fact so named: *masīhyūn* in Arabic, *mēšīahyé* in Aramaic (especially in the Persian Empire), *khristianoī-christiani* in Greek and Latin translations.

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Without this lexicon, many original Koranic passages seem incomprehensible, for example:

“Neither those who, among the *people of the Book* [= Jews in general], *cover*, nor the *associators-mušrikūn* like to see blessings coming down upon you from your Lord.” (2:105)

Why, if the associators were polytheists (miraculously survivors of past centuries), would they be concerned about “blessings coming down upon you from the Lord” on anyone?

On the other hand, this verse is highly significant if it opposes the authentic holders of Scripture on the one hand to the Jews-*Yahūd* (who are said to be *covering*) and on the other to the Christians (who are said to be *associating* to God) ... who are here clearly distinct from the “people of the Book”! And for good reason: in the eyes of the ex-Judeo-Christians that are the *našāra*, non-Jews cannot but be illegitimate holders of Scripture. The original meaning of this verse corresponds to the Nazarene dialectic consisting in self-justification by posing as a golden mean (synthesis) between two opposing deviants (thesis and antithesis):

- Christians believe in the Messiah Jesus but believe that God made Himself present to His people through and in him;
- Rabbinical Jews refuse to believe that Jesus is the Messiah;
- we, *našāra*, believe that Jesus is the Messiah but that God “manipulates” him without being present in him.

<sup>24</sup> The root *kfr* refers exclusively to *Yahūd*. However, it seems that in Q.5:17.73, it refers to Christians. If we hold these two verses to be authentic, one might think of reasons for irony on the basis of the meaning of the root *kfr* (to cover). But arguments exist to justify treating them as rough distortions intended to blur the reader’s references: instead of “*Laqad kafara l-ladīna*” (Truly they *cover* those who...),

it [v.73] should obviously be read as:

“*Laqad ašraka l-ladīna*” (Truly they *associate* those who say that Christ is God [v.17] / that God is the third of three.”

It is also conceivable that these passages are entire interpolations or part of them.

[This note is based on footnote 1278 in *Le messie et son prophète*, Volume II]

<sup>25</sup> According to the Rabbinic movement, Christians did not receive the Bible, but are rather to be seen as inheritance thieves, as stated in *Mišna* (Sanhedrin 57a): “Rabbi Yohanan said: An idolater who studies the Tōrah deserves death, as it is said: It is to us that Moses prescribed the Tōrah as an inheritance [Dt 33:4].” (French Rabbinat, *La guemara, Sanhedrin*, Keren Hasefer, 1974, p. 287)

<sup>26</sup> In contradistinction with note 13, the root *šrk* (associate) refers exclusively to Christians. However, it seems that in Q.6:136-137, it would refer to *Yahūd*, but those targeted here are their Hebrew ancestors from the time of the Judges and Kings who had behaved like idolaters, as the translator Hamidullah clearly saw – see paragraphs 3.1.3.6 in *Le messie et son prophète*, Vol. II.

As for the “you”, it appears that these people are Arabs whom the *naṣāra* are indoctrinating, passing on their faith in a “golden mean” – in a dialectical way that the Islamic narrative will take up and adapt (Muslims say they stand in a golden mean between Jews and Christians).

This lexicon will also be useful to understand, after that of “aḥmad” in 61:6, the four mentions of “muḥammad”: Q. 3:144, 33:40, 47:2, 48:29. All four are within more or less short interpolations, and all are fairly easy to detect. Let us begin with the most obvious and significant – and emblematic for the other three –: the mention in Q. 47:2.

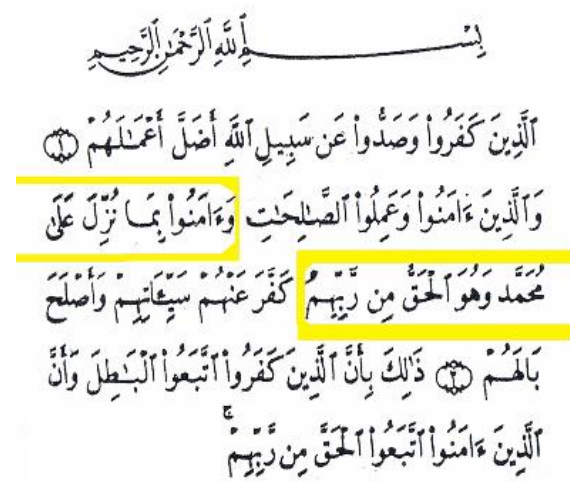
### 3- Q. 47:2 – Who Are the *Good* and the *Bad* “Jews”?

For a start, the title of Sura 47 is problematic, because of its twofold character: “al-Qitāl” (the fight to death) according to verse 22, or “Muḥammad” according to verse 2b.

After the Basmallah, the text reads as follows – we will stop at verse 3b:

- 1a. Those who cover [or have covered] and avert (people) from the way of God,  
 1b. He leads astray (*aqalla*) their actions.
- 2a. Those who •believe [or have believed] •and do righteous deeds (*ṣāliḥāt*)  
 2b. •and believe in what has been sent down upon Muḥammad  
 2c. and that is **the truth from their Lord**
- 2d. He covers [*intensive form* = forgives] their misdeeds and amends their being.
- 3a. Of course, those who cover follow falsehood,  
 3b. while those who believe follow **the truth from their Lord**.

#### ●3.1 A VERY PERSUASIVE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE



Preliminary remark: the verb *kafara* (to cover) is pejorative in the Islamic context (and, primarily, in the biblical one!<sup>27</sup>), but its intensive form, *kaffara*, is positive since it expresses an action performed by God Himself, namely that of “covering” in the sense of “concealing” (the sins) – which, in Christian language, is translated in the word *forgive*.

So a very structured interplay of words and meaning is seen here in verses 1-3a, and the message is strong and *theo-logically* powerful; it is intended for an Arab audience, to identify for them the good ones, those whom God will forgive, and, finally, the bad ones (the coverers), those whom God will lead astray. It is a well-crafted and persuasive speech:

- Those **who cover** (1a) / God leads them astray (1b)
- Those who believe (2a) / God **covers** them (2d)
- Those who **cover** (3a) / stand in **falsehood** (3a)
- Those who believe (3b) / stand in **the truth** (3b)

The sequence between 2a and 2d is a necessity, it is even expressly read in Sura 29: “Those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will cover their misdeeds” (Q. 29:7)!

<sup>27</sup> Before our era, in Aramaic, a second meaning to the basic root *kfr* had appeared: to *cover* a fact (or a word), i.e. to *keep silence*, but also to *deny* or even to *be ungrateful* (if it is a question of a *denied* benefit, in the emphatic form). This is expressed in the twenty-six or so occurrences of this root found in the Aramaic gospels; here are the main occurrences:

Lk 6:35: “For He is good, He, upon the wicked and the ungrateful (*kafūrē*).”  
 Lk 8:45: Jesus asked: “Who touched me?” As all *kfr* (denied), Peter said:…  
 Lk 22:57: [Peter] *kfr* (denied): “Woman,” said he, “I know him not.”  
 Mt 10:33: “Whoever has *kfr* (denied) me, I also will *kfr* (deny) before my Father in Heaven.”  
 Mt 16:24: “If any man would come after me, let him *kfr* (deny) his soul.”  
 Mt 26:34.75: “This very night, before the cock crows, you will have *kfr* (denied) me three times.”  
 Jn 1:20: “As all *kfr* (denied) him…”

### ●3.2 THE GOOD ONES AND THE BAD ONES

Everything is therefore clear, except that sub-verses 2b and 2c break the structure of the whole picture: “and have believed in what was been sent down upon Muḥammad, and this is the truth from their Lord.” Yet two anomalies directly jump at us:

- We read that the “good ones” deserve to be forgiven on account of THREE actions: *believing, doing well, and believing* in Muḥammad – which yields a **triune** enumeration. However, the Koran does not include any triune (or Trinitarian-like) speech format, as that would too explicitly suggest and resemble a fairly common *modus operandi* of Christian discourse. The very few exceptions to this rule always reveal an interpolation into the third term, such as the three instances wherein the word *koran* (or its equivalent) appears in the formula “Torah, and inḡīl, **and the Koran.**” (Q. 9:111, 5:66a.68) Thus, it appears that in the same way “believing in Muḥammad” (2b) has in fact been added.
- As for 2c, “it is the truth from their Lord,” we find the same formula in 3b. Which is copied from the other? Obviously, it is the one found in 2c, because without it, Muslims would not know that “the truth” is “what is sent down” upon the Prophet of Islam. In addition, this formula “what is sent down” often appears in interpolations (2:147, 6:115, 13:1, 18:29, etc.). So, it appears that this clarification (2c) has been added as well, perhaps at the same time as 2b.

It is therefore understood, **without the interpolations**, that the “good” and the “bad” are Jews according to whether they have true faith in what is revealed on the part of their Lord (the Torah **and inḡīl**) or according to whether they “cover” what is revealed; in the second case, it is the Jews of the rabbinic movement; while in the first case, it is the *naṣāra*, formerly Judeo-Christians (cf. lexicon): there can be no other coherent reading.

But **with the interpolations**, the “good” become those who believe in Muḥammad and the “bad,” those who do not believe in him, deserving accordingly to be punished by God. This had to be said in the Muslims’ Koran, and especially in this particular place.

For information, the following verses (3c-12) can be analyzed and interpolations likewise be detected in them (in some relation with what we have seen above).<sup>28</sup> But that is of secondary importance.

What was primarily important was to demonstrate here that the mention of “Muḥammad” in Q. 47:2 is part of an addition. And this has now been done.

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<sup>28</sup> Here is the continuation of the passage (Q. 47:3C-12) with its most probable interpolations – in italics and bold:

3c. This is how God strikes their examples to people.

4. So when you meet those who cover (*kfr*), hit them on the necks. Then, when you have dominated them, tighten the withers. Afterward, either free release or ransom, until the war lays its burdens.

***There you have it. For if God wanted, He would help Himself against them, but it is to test you by way of each other. And those who shall be killed (qutilū) [other version: qatalū, will have gone so far as to kill] in the way of God, He will not let their deeds go astray.***

5. He will guide them and amend their being,

6. and bring them into Paradise, which He has made known to them.

7. O ye who believe! If you help [= make triumph] God, He will help you and strengthen your steps.

8. And as for such who cover (*kfr*), perdition for them, and He will see to make their works go astray.

9. It is, in fact, that they loathe what God has sent down. He therefore renders their deeds vain.

***10. Do they not travel on earth to see what has become of those before them? God destroyed them. Such ends are in store for coverers (kfr).***

11. That because God is the Protector of those who believe, while for the coverers (*kfr*), no Protector.

***12. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, God will bring them into Gardens under which streams flow. And those who cover (kfr), they enjoy temporarily and eat as livestock; and the Fire will be their [place of] abode.***

## 4- Q. 3:144 – Closing of contestation and dreams

Is the mention of *Muḥammad* in Sura 3 *The Imrans* more authentic?

Let us read the beginning of verse 144 where it appears – Q.3:144a –:

“Muḥammad ----- is *inna-mā* a messenger; in the past, the messengers *ḥalat* ahead of him.”

Now, the text is **literally** found in Sura Al-Ma’idah – Q.5:75 –:

“The Messiah son of Mary is *inna-mā* a messenger; in the past, the messengers *ḥalat* ahead of him.”

Moreover in Sura 3, if one removes “Muḥammad is *inna-mā* a messenger, in the past, the messengers *ḥalat* ahead of him; if he died or was killed” (144a-b), then the text becomes crystal clear:

(v.142) “Do you intend to enter the Garden<sup>29</sup> without God having recognized among you those who fight and known those who endure?

(v.143) Of course, you wanted death before you met it; now that you have seen it, you are in expectation.<sup>30</sup>

[144a-b]

(v.144c) Will you return on your heels? Whoever returns on his two heels will not know how to do God the slightest wrong, while God will soon reward the grateful ones.

(v.145) It is not for anyone to die except with God’s permission, etc.”

Clearly, verses 142-145 are simply a long meditation on death in combat in the service of God. This argument is enough to conclusively answer the question: the beginning of 3:144 wherein the name of Muḥammad appears is an interpolation in the Koranic text.

We must mention here an hypothesis put forward by some researchers according to which the word “mḥmd” could have designated Jesus himself at the time of the proto-islam i.e. Q.3:144a = Q.5:75. This hypothesis leads to another: following the eschatological disappointment (the descent of Jesus-‘Isā did not take place), the qualification of *mḥdm* attributable to Jesus would have been taken up by proto-Islamic rulers (caliphs or others): we can find it (added) on various ex-Byzantine or ex-Persian coins (without the mention *rasūl Allah!*). What does it mean? Is this a way of appropriating the governance of Jesus-‘Isā who did not come down? At this stage of the research, many questions arise. This verse Q.3:144 with the mention of Muḥammad is present in the manuscript Wetzstein II 1913 which is relatively old, without any apparent trace of erasure or correction; but it is absent from manuscripts as Ṣan‘ā, Arabic 329 and Tübingen. The story of this verse 3:144a is obviously a complex one.

However, it seems probable that, because of the warlike context of verses 142-145, the beginning of verse 3:144 did not exist primitively. The name Muḥammad thus appears to be part of an interpolation in the Koranic text, possibly a very old one. If the reader wants to spare himself the analysis of the how and why of this interpolation, he can jump directly to chapter 5.

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For researchers, this interpolation betrays oddities, on three counts:

- What is said about Jesus (5:75) was interpolated and attributed to Muḥammad; but why?
- Muḥammad seems lessened if he is “*only* a messenger.” What else should he be? It is also said of Jesus, but Jesus is referred to eleven times as the *Messiah*. Where is the logic? Is it to say that *rusul*-messengers are *only* mortals?

<sup>29</sup> *Al-ḡanna*<sup>h</sup> (Hebrew *gan*): the *garden* is a Messianic and eschatological reference to the Holy Land:

“For YHWH will comfort Zion,...; He will make her wilderness like Eden and her wasteland like a garden (*gan*) of YHWH.” (Isaiah 51:3)

“People will say: ‘*This very land, which had been desolate, has become like the Garden Eden*’.” (Ezekiel 36:35)

<sup>30</sup> Translation based on the work of BLACHÈRE and HAMIDULLAH. The one given and justified by BONNET-EYMARD and HRUBY does not differ in its general meaning (*The Koran...*, t. II, p. 120).

- But precisely, *ḥalat* does not mean *they are dead*, as many commentators note (incidentally, the verb *māta*, *to die*, is found five words later), but would rather mean *to be outdated* – which has the advantage of being blurred (while suggesting the possible meaning of dying).<sup>31</sup>

What do these blurred and apparent inconsistencies really mean? Let us take up these points again, starting with the last one.

#### ●4.1 THE PRIMITIVE SENSE OF ḤALAT IN Q.5:75

The Hebraic root corresponding to the Arabic verb *ḥalā* is very enlightening, giving the sentence a whole new meaning: אלה, *fainting*<sup>32</sup> or, figuratively, *not fulfilling one's mission*. Now, in all the Koranic occurrences, this meaning is clearly more obvious than the blurred meaning of *to be outdated*<sup>33</sup> (except, precisely, in our passage of Q.3:144).

The verse Q.5:75 about Jesus is an illustration of this, which has to be understood from its anti-Christian polemical context (verses 72-76). As he often does, the Koranic preacher caricatures the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as Tritheism. At the beginning of the passage (v.72), Jesus-‘Isā is said to worship only God; at its end (v.76), the preacher mocks the fact of “worshipping apart from God that which holds neither harm nor benefit for you”. And in v.75, Jesus, though Messiah, is said to be “*inna-mā a rasūl* – in the past the *rusul* before him *have failed* – while his mother was a saint (*ṣaddīqa<sup>tu</sup>*)”. Everything becomes clear.

The reason for this failure was given in verse 70: the messengers sent by God fail in their mission because their mission is hindered: “To the Children of Israel,... we have *sent* many *rusul*. But every time a *rasūl* brings them what their soul does not desire, they call some liars and kill others.”<sup>34</sup> The apparent failure of the Messiah-Jesus is explainable, and it is important to say that he *failed* because, had he had in him the power of God Himself (according to the Christian faith but caricatured by way of the Koranic misunderstanding), he would have crushed everyone. He is therefore a *rasūl* who failed like his predecessors – but Messiah on top of that (and, as Messiah, he is to return, which makes all the difference).

Another verse explains: “*And those who cover* said to the *rusul* [who came] to them: *we will expel you from our Land, or else return to our conviction (milla<sup>h</sup>, religion)*”; these Old Testament messengers could not do very much (Q.14:13). Neither could Jesus, therefore, in the face of the bad

<sup>31</sup> In classical Arabic, *ḥalā* has taken on this meaning of *passing* and remains little used except in expressions such as: *ḥalā l-makān<sup>a</sup>*, *to clear the floor*, or *aḥlā l-makāna-hu*, *to leave one's place*, i.e. *to be dead* (Antoine MOUSSALI).

<sup>32</sup> The Arabic root *ḥ lw* corresponds very exactly to the Hebrew *ḥālā’* or *ḥālāh*, חלה or חלא, *to be or to fall ill or weak, to fail* (*w* stands for *’* or *h* or *y* and vice versa, according to classical consonantic transformations).

<sup>33</sup> The occurrences of the verb *ḥalā* in suras **2** (Q.2:134 || 141) and **3** are sufficient to show that its meaning is indeed that of “failing.” For example:

In Q.2:14b, it is but poetic to translate as: “when *they find themselves alone (ḥalaw)* with their devils.” However, it is less ludicrous to consult the Hebrew (*ṣāṭān* meaning primarily *foe*): “when they fail facing (*ilā*, *toward*) their foes (*ṣayāṭīn*).”

In Q.2:76, the translator HAMIDULLAH fantasizes: “once alone among themselves” wherein it is literally written: “when their party (*ba’du-hum*) *has failed (ḥalā)* facing (*ilā*) a[nother] party (*ba’ḏīn*).”

In Q.3:137, it is misleading to translate: “Before you, situations *passed away*,” which does not agree at all with what follows; it must be translated literally: “A tradition (*sunan<sup>un</sup>*) *failed* before you.” Etc.

<sup>34</sup> This is the language we find several times in the Gospel according to Mt: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you which kill the prophets and stone those who are sent unto you.” (Mt 23:37; see also 23:12.31)

Or again in the parable of the murderous winegrowers:

“[The master of the vineyard]... sent his servants... And the winegrowers laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the former; and they did to them in like manner. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying: *They will reverence my son*. But the winegrowers seeing the son, said among themselves: *This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance...*” (Mt 21:34-38)



faith of these *coverers*. Worse: they wanted to kill him, but he did not die since, fortunately, he was lifted up to Heaven (Q.4:157).

This point has been clarified. But can Jesus be said to **only** be a *rasūl*, even though he is *Messiah* (and, more to it still, **the** Messiah, *al-Masih*)?

#### ●4.2 *INNA-MA*: NOT A RESTRICTION BUT A CERTAINTY

In Aramaic, what corresponds to *inna-mā* is *ēn-mā*, which means *certainly, assuredly, or yet* (according to Christoph Luxenberg)<sup>35</sup> – with *mā* emphasizing *inna* (also in Arabic). But in the use of the Arabic language made up by commentators, *inna-mā* is understood to mean *only*, whereas examples abound in the Koran of passages where this meaning is not appropriate.

For example in Sura 2 *al-baqara*, none of the nine occurrences gives *inna-mā* the restrictive meaning of *only*, especially in 2:107 ([the angels of magic say:] “**That yes**, we are a temptation”), in 2:137 (“If they turn away, then **how much** they are in disharmony”), in 2:181 (“Thence, sin weighs **so much** on those who have changed it [the covenant]!”), or in 2:275 (“They say: *trade is in itself interest*”).

Or again:

“A man *inna-mā* teaches him” (16:103b):

does it say that **only** a mortal (i.e. not an *angel*) teaches him, or does it simply say that a man **certainly** teaches him?

“The believers are *inna-mā* brethren” (49:10a):

does it say that they are **only** brethren (what more could they be?) or does it say that they are **certainly** brethren?

In short, it is clear that *inna-mā* emphasizes and amplifies the meaning of the sentence, not the other way around. In order to give a restrictive meaning, it is necessary to have the presence of *’illā* (*if not, but*), which is indeed seen in these two verses where we find respectively *’inna* and *mā*:

“*Inna hu illā ’abd*”: Yes, he [the son of Mary, v.57] is *only* (*if not, but*) a servant.” (43:59)

“*Mā al-Masyh ibn Maryam illā rasūl*”: What is the Messiah son of Mary **if not** a messenger!” (5:75)

Verse 4:171 proves interesting since it highlights a real restrictive adverbial formula – *lā taqūlū ’alā Llah ’illā l-ḥaqq*: “**only speak but the truth about God.**” Next, we see the adverb *inna-mā*, understood by the commentators to also be a restriction: *’Isā only is but God’s messenger*. However, this is to insult the reader. Short of the mention of *’illā*, this sentence must necessarily be read as: “**That yes**, the Messiah-Jesus son of Mary is the messenger of God!”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, Jesus is *certainly* referred to as the Messiah in the Koran, and he is *certainly* also a messenger. This is very logical in the context of the anti-rabbinic polemic found in the Koran. In the interpolation

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<sup>35</sup> Personal correspondence. “In *inna-mā* (which should be read according to the Syriac *ēn-mā* and not *inna-mā*), the first particle *ēn*, meaning *yes, certainly*, is used to confirm a proposition. The second particle *mā* also has several nuances, including the reinforcement of the first, so that the double conjunction *ēn-mā* primarily means *assuredly, certainly*. This conjunctive locution in the Koran can also mean *however*.”

<sup>36</sup> Many other manipulations besmirch this verse 4:171 – its entire second part (b) is an interpolation designed to correct what is stated in 171a :

“O people of the Book, do not err in your judgment (Christoph Luxenberg, according to the Syrian-Aramaic). Speak only the truth about God. That yes, the Messiah-Jesus son of Mary is the messenger of God, His word which He sent upon Mary and a breath [of life come] from Him! Believe in God and His messengers – or: *in His Messiah!*” (4:171b-e).

Indeed, a Syriac translation certainly prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> century does not read “*God and his messengers*” but “*God and his Messiah*,” which is more coherent (cf. Mingana Alphonse, *An Ancient Syriac Translation of the Kur’ān Exhibiting New Verses and Variants*, Manchester / London, University Press / Longmans, Green & Co., 1925, p. 4.6.27.41).

This translation had no interest in misleading its Christian readers, on the contrary.

of 3:144, Muḥammad is *certainly* also referred to as a messenger: this is the role that will be assigned to him starting from ‘Abd Al-Malik.

But this begs the question: what was the problem about, whenever it arose? Or, should we consider the question differently: if verse 3:144a did not exist conveying this affirmative meaning (which appears elsewhere in the Koran), was it not fabricated so as to convey a different meaning?

#### ●4.3 MUḤAMMAD ASCENDED TO HEAVEN AT THE END OF HIS EARTHLY LIFE?

Indeed, it is very likely that:

- the insertion from Q.5:75 (“The Messiah son of Mary is *inna-mā* a messenger; in the past the messengers *ḥalat* before him”) at the beginning of Q.3:144 (with Muḥammad instead of Jesus) is related to the understanding of Q.5:75 as meaning “Jesus is only a mortal and dies like the other messengers”
- and that this misunderstanding of Arabic, certainly by Persians,<sup>37</sup> was used to get a message across in the Koran. The question is: what message?

Two converging late traditions, that of Suyūṭī and that of Ibn Sa’d [m. 845], suggest more than a little that 3:144a is not a word Muḥammad would have spoken about himself (sic), but that it was inserted late.

The second tradition, attributed to Abu Bakr, gives a reason for this; it had already been pointed out by Régis Blachère in a commentary at 3:144 (*The Koran*, 1948). Blachère based his argument on

“data provided by Ibn Sa’d; according to this data, when the Prophet died, some believers refused to believe that Muhammad had suffered the common fate of mankind; ‘Umar, in particular, went on to proclaim that **Muḥammad had been lifted up to Heaven like Jesus**, and threatened to kill anyone who claimed otherwise.<sup>38</sup>

To restore calm, Abu-Bakr recited the verse at hand [3:144]. *Is this in the Koran?* asked ‘Umar. Abu-Bakr having told him, ‘Umar also conceded to the fact of the biological death of the Prophet and everything returned to normal...

When Abu-Bakr had recited the verse, the people collected it so well from him that someone shouted: *By Allah! It certainly seems that **people do not know that this verse was revealed before Abu-Bakr recited it.***” (Régis Blachère, *Le Coran*, t.3..., pp.892-893 /note 138)

This account does not agree perfectly with the explanation that ‘Umar gives (according to Ibn Hišām) – “By Allah, I had firmly believed at that time that the Apostle of Allah will remain in his *Ummah* so that he will remain until the last of the acts (of the *Ummah*). That is what prompted me to say what I said.”<sup>39</sup> There is a difference though between *being raised to Heaven* and *remaining in one’s community*. But in both cases, we can see that, at the time these *memories* were pieced together, the memory of the character “muḥammad” is badly fuzzy. We probably do not even know where he was buried.

The story of this exaltation of Muḥammad is certainly to be compared with the one of his ascent to Heaven (*isra’*). We can even think, more accurately, that the story of the *isra’* was invented in particular **to compensate** for the abandonment of the idea of a Muḥammad ascended to Heaven like Jesus, and who would end up waiting there for better days to come back down (the other reason

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<sup>37</sup> In their defense, confusion is possible if they also happen to be unfamiliar with Hebrew. Indeed, different from *ḥalā* (חלן, root *ḥ/w*) only by way of the third consonant, we find the root *ḥālaf* (חלף) which precisely means *to go away, to pass*.

<sup>38</sup> This account of Muḥammad in read in Ibn Hišām’s *Sīra*<sup>h</sup> (cf. *The life of Muḥammad*, trans. Guillaume A., Karachi, Pakistan Branch of the Oxford University Press, [1958] 1965, p. 683).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Rabbath Edmond, *Muhammad. Prophet and Founder of State*, *Lebanese University Publications* n° 39, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Beirut, 1989, p. 230-231.

being to appeal to the reality of the *celestial Koran*, which is in Heaven): the “prophet” died, but during his life, he had ascended to Heaven (and during this ascent, he sees Jesus only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Heaven)!

The tradition passed on by Suyūṭī is the following:

“it is said that during the battle of Uḥud, when Mus‘ab Ibn ‘Umayr was wounded, he kept shouting: *Muḥammad is just a prophet coming after other Prophets. If he dies or is killed, will you turn back?* Then he died. **Then verse 3:144** reiterated the same words.”<sup>40</sup>

It states squarely that Q.3:144a was invented by a certain Mus‘ab Ibn ‘Umayr!

In short, the insertion of 3:144a is probably contemporaneous with the invention of the *isra’*, at a later stage and by commentators who knew little Arabic (and probably as little Aramaic).

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In summary, the mention of *Muḥammad* in 3:144 does not appear in the texts that will form the first compilations *called* Koran – not even yet in the time of ‘Abd Al-Malik.

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<sup>40</sup> *Le Coran est-il authentique?*, Paris, Sfar / diff. Cerf, 2000, p. 37.

## 5- Q. 33:40 – Against a Claim of Prophetism

In Sura 33, *The Confederate Tribes*, we find this curious verse:

“Muḥammad has been the father of none of your men; yet he is the messenger of God and the *seal of the Prophets* (*ḥātam an-nabiyyin*<sup>a</sup>); God has the knowledge of all things.” (Q.33:40)

### ●5.1 A PROBLEM OF SEX WITH THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW?

Alfred-Louis de Prémare sought a link with the preceding verses:

“The evocation of Mohammed as the ‘seal of the prophets’ appears only once in the official text, [and] what may add to our astonishment is that this affirmation comes in an immediate and unexpected context... [this] *timely revelation* cuts short the tame criticisms relative to his marriage to Zaynab.”<sup>41</sup>

Three verses up, we can read:

“But when Zaid had accomplished his want of her [his wife], We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when these have accomplished their want of them.”

Thus, wives could also serve their father-in-law. Some *ḥadīth*-s have been made to sanction such a practice taking place at the court of the Caliph. For Alfred-Louis de Prémare, Q.33:37b is one of the many *ḥadīth*-s that have been selected to be inserted in the Koran.<sup>42</sup>

But what is the logical connection with 33:40? Was it necessary for the Koran to certify that Zayd is not a son according to the flesh, otherwise Muḥammad would have been accused of a wrongful act? Did people not know that? And why would verse 40 respond to a late *ḥadīth* (verse 37b)?

Rather than looking for imaginary explanations from within the text (in the manner of Muslim commentators), it seems more reasonable to start from two unrelated assertions: “Muḥammad was the father of none of your men” and: “he is the messenger of God and the *seal of the Prophets*.” They are not related by meaning – the only meaning, but silly, would be that Muḥammad was anyway a messenger and a prophet even if he had no son, as if you had to be a father to be a messenger and/or a prophet. But the two statements seem to be *accidentally* (therefore intentionally) linked in the same verse 40, which does not relate to either the verses that precede it or those that follow it. This is not fortuitous: the place where they are found is strategic, almost in the middle of sura 33, which is itself made up of many pieces.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> PRÉMARE A.-L. de, *L’Islam comme Monoprophétisme*, in *Vivre avec l’Islam ? Réflexions chrétiennes sur la religion de Mahomet*, Ed. Saint-Paul, 1996, p. 155.

Note that, according to some *ḥadīth*-s (cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYoPQLHOa0A>), Zaynab would have been not only the name of “the wife of the Prophet” but also that of a wife of Marwan, father of ‘Abd al Malik; another wife of this Marwan would have been named Aisha, the name of another wife of Muḥammad; moreover, that Marwan would have had a mother named Amina, like “the Prophet”. This makes three similarities with what is said of the Muḥammad of Islam. Repeated coincidences?

<sup>42</sup> PRÉMARE A.-L. de, *Les fondations de l’Islam...*, p. 319.

<sup>43</sup> One can detect very different literary genres in sura 33: directive, enunciative, psalmodic, exhortative or legislative. Verse 40, which is found almost in the middle of Sura 33 (there are 39 verses before and 32 after), is preceded by verses 35-39 in the enunciative style and followed by the psalmodic style passage ranging from verses 41 to 44 – in the form of a psalm of praise. (Antoine Moussali).

## ●5.2 REPRISING THE INSERTION IN 61:6 ACCORDING TO ‘UBAYY

Indeed, the affirmation of Muḥammad as both a *messenger-rasūl* and a *prophet-nabī* is not only found in the middle of Sura 33, but also in the middle of many other mentions of *messenger-rasūl* (9 times prior, 3 times after) and *prophet-nabī* (8 times prior, including one instance in the plural form, 8 times after<sup>44</sup>). In order to affirm that Muḥammad is both one **and** the other, the place seems to be the best of the whole sura.

More precisely, this verse affirms that it is the seal of the *prophets-nabiyyūn* (*nebī'im* in Hebrew, those of the Old Testament). We have seen this in the version of Q.6:61 according to Ubayy, where ‘Isā-Jesus is said to announce, not *aḥmad* but:

“a *rasūl-messenger* whose *umma*<sup>h</sup> will be the last *umma*<sup>h</sup> and by whom God will put the seal (*ḥātam*) to the *nabiyyūn-prophets* and the *rusul-messengers*.”

Now, we know that the heart of the proto-Islamic message – confirmed by many *ḥadīth*-s – was the announcement of the imminent descent of the Messiah-Jesus. Here, the object of the announcement is to affirm that Islam is the new religion that comes to complete the two preceding revelations; such a theological object is much later creation. The word *ḥātam* is used in the sense of *completion* or *closure* (*closing hearts* or *ears*, or an amphora<sup>45</sup>). For Christianity, it is Jesus who *closes* the prophets. Wanting to transpose this attribute to Muḥammad comes from discussions clearly ulterior to the original strata of the Koranic text. **The most probable hypothesis is that, when the present insertion in Q.61:6 was substituted for that of Ubayy, the latter was transferred here.**<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, it is said that “Muḥammad was not (*mā-kāna*) the father of someone (*aḥad*) among your men.” This suggests another object of discussion, contemporaneous or not with the previous one, but in any event related to a question that will only be asked **after** the death of the character.

Perhaps this is why many commentators say nothing about verse 40 (or perhaps they are only talking about the closing of the succession of the prophets). *Tafsīr al-Ġalalayn* dares to explain that there can be no more prophets after Muḥammad, since he had no sons – but this interpretation reverses the sentence. This being the case, this comment does reflect a historical reality: there certainly have been heated discussions about the persistence of prophetism among (Shiite) descendants of Muḥammad.

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<sup>44</sup> Some *prophet-nabī* occurrences are doubtful, namely that of Q.33:38a and two of the three in verse 50 alone (three times in a row is really too much); they must probably be reduced to 7 before Q.33:40 and to 6 afterwards. The names of *rasūl-messenger* and *nabī-prophet*, that HAMIDULLAH distinguishes well, come up so often in this sura 33 that he once confuses one for the other: in Q.33:53, HAMIDULLAH renders *rasūl Allah* by *Prophet of God*, whereas everywhere else he translates the expression by *messenger of God*. This is misleading if one recognizes that sura 33 forms a whole and most of these occurrences refer to Muḥammad: why would he be called once *rasūl* and another time *nabī*, for no apparent reason?

<sup>45</sup> Q.2:7; 6:46; 45:23; 36:65; 42:24. In all these verses, God is said “to seal hearts” or “ears.” In Q.83:25-26, the verb *ḥatama* has this same meaning of *closing* (an amphora).

<sup>46</sup> Régis BLACHÈRE indicates: “This expression [seal of the prophets] is, in Islam, a theological axiom of primordial value. However, it is only stated here in the Koran [in 33:40]. See, however, 61:6 version B.” [i.e. the version according to Ubayy].

Some have said that the qualification of “seal of the prophets” would have been borrowed from Manichaeism. As Guy Stroumsa has shown (*‘Seal of the Prophets’: the nature of a Manichean Metaphor*, JSAI 7, 1986, pp. 61-74), no source indicates that Manī has ever used this title, except Yazdanbath, a Manichean author writing in the 2<sup>th</sup> century of Islam (i.e. too late to be credible). In fact, the title Manī gave himself was that of the Paraclete (Παρακλήτος /Paraqlita in Aramaic) according to Eusebius of Caesarea (Eccles. Hist. VII, 31,1), i.e. the title of the Holy Spirit in Jn 14.

Before Manī, Montan had already applied it to himself: after “the Montanist theories”, one should mention again the “Paulician theories relating to the incarnation of the Paraclete in Montan or in Sergios” and “bring together... certain titles of Mani and Mohammed”, indicates Henri-Charles Puech (*Le manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine*, Paris, Civilisations du Sud, 1949, note 250). “Seal of the Prophets” is a title given by the Fathers of the Church to John the Baptist – only Tertullian applies it to Jesus, with a nuance of term: John the Baptist is said to be *Clausula prophetarum* (*Patrol. Latina* 2, c.136), while Jesus is said to be *Signaculum omnium prophetarum* (*PL* 2, c.612.630).

Presumably, a first interpolation said: “Muḥammad is the messenger of God and the seal of the Prophets; God has the knowledge of all things” (33:40b-c) – to which was added: “was the father of none of your men.” (40a). Thus, in its final state, this verse came to opportunely say that, even if one could be a prophet from father to son, whatsoever the case, there is no more prophet after Muḥammad. The matter is settled.

All indications are that this verse 33:40 mentioning *Muḥammad* is entirely due to late interpolations.

## 6- Q. 48:29 – A Patchwork of Islamic Theology

The last (and long) verse of surah 48 *The Victory (al-fath)* starts with the following words: “Muḥammad is the messenger-*rasūl* of God” (Q.48:29). A sudden affirmation. Amazing, is it not?

In verse 26, we read:

- v. 26a: “When those who *covered (kafarū)* fostered in their hearts **zealotry** – the **zealotry** of *ḡāhiliyyah* [i.e. a *badal* or apposition, smuggling a new word meaning a “*state of ignorance*”]–
- v. 26b: then God sent down his *Sakīna* (Divine Presence, Hebrew *šəḵīnāh*) upon his Messenger (*rasūl*) and upon the believers [etc.]”

The word *ḡāhil-iyyah* is a concept derived from *ḡahl*, *ignorancy* – it should correspond to “*ignorant + eness*” in English. This abstract word appears here in a very dubious apposition which awkwardly repeats the word *zealotry*. The three other occurrences of *ḡāhiliyyah* in the Koran are suspect at the same highest level<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, all four are supposed to characterize the pre-Islamic Arabs who would have lived in a polytheistic *ignorance*: this assertion is typically an invention of a late *legendological*<sup>48</sup> development.

Now, the two apposed words (*hamiyyata l-ḡāhiliyyati*) are enough to change the meaning of the verse 26. Indeed, if we remove the *badal*, the verse no longer speaks of Arabs but of Jews, and the Messenger of the verse can no longer be Muḥammad: he is necessarily Moses or more probably Jesus.

On top of that, verse 29 comes into play to state that *rasūl Allah* is neither Jesus nor Moses, but Muḥammad ! Were the commentators afraid that many would not understand the *badal* with the abstract word *ḡāhiliyyah* in verse 26 – a word that definitely did not exist in the vocabulary of nomadic Arabs, a word that must remind one of Muḥammad because of the Meccan Arabic context of his legendology –? It’s even better when you say it in verse 29.

A *badal* + an assertion redirecting the meaning of the text = clear clues of manipulations. They show without any doubt that 48:29a with a mention of Muḥammad inside is an interpolation.

If the reader wishes to spare himself the analysis relative to the other interpolations of this verse 29, he can fast-forward directly to chapter 7.

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In fact, the entire final verse 29 is a (long) series of interpolations, beginning with 29b:

“Those who are with him [Muḥammad] are forceful against the *kafirvn*, merciful among themselves. You will see them **bowing and prostrating** (*rkʻ, sḡd*), seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces the trace of *prostration[s]* (*suḡūd*). That is their description **in the Torah**” (48:29b)

You cannot find the couple *rkʻ- sḡd* in the Torah, but another one in a near sense, namely *qdq-ḥw*, *to kneel-to prostrate oneself* (Gen 24:36.48; Ex 4:31; 12:27; 34:8). A Persian author could make this mistake, but not a Jew or an Aramaic Christian. One must look outside the Torah to find these roots.

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<sup>47</sup> Namely: 3:154, 5:50 and 33:33. The co-text of the term *ḡāhiliyyah* makes it eminently suspect every time:

“These thought of God the unbelievable – the thought of *ḡāhiliyyah-ignoranteness* –” (Q.3:154 – HAMIDULLAH and BLACHÈRE isolate this highly suspicious *badal* between dashes);

“Is it the *ḥukmah of the ḡāhiliyyah* they are looking for?” (Q.5:50): it is obviously the term *ḥikmah, wisdom* (the verse continues by talking about the *ḥkmh-wisdom* of God!), to which “*of the ḡāhiliyyah*” was added, changing a vowel in the process, to prevent saying that *ignoranteness* is wisdom! One more apposition inserted!

“Remain in your homes! [it is said to women]. Do not show yourselves – as was shown in the old *ḡāhiliyyah* –. And establish the Office and pay the tax...” (Q.33:33): what is between dashes is again an interpolation!

<sup>48</sup> We apologize for the neologism, but the word *legendology* (combining *legend* and *ideology*) stands as the best possible term in order to designate both the development of the Islamic theological beliefs and the use of legendary stories to smuggle them into “historical” narratives. That *legendo*-logic dictates that, if Islam is the third revelation that is not corrupt like the two preceding ones, those who receive it must have been preserved from these first two... and thus should be polytheists! See *Le Messie et son Prophète* (op. cit.), p. 179-265.

Two psalms (22:30 and 95:6) and the second book of Chronicles present the couple *kr'* (metathesis of *rk'*) and *ḥwh* (instead of *sġd*) – in this book there is an additional reference to the face touching the ground: “They saw... the Glory of YHWH... they bowed (*kr'*) with their **faces to the ground** upon the floor, and they prostrated themselves.” (2Ch 7:3) As for the root *sġd*, it is used by Isaiah, but to refer to prostration before an *idol* made with human hands, especially in this passage: “[...] who bow (*sāġad*) and even prostrate themselves (*ḥāwāh*)” (Is 46:6). In short, 48:29b is but the quick work of some distorter vaguely acquainted with the Bible.

Will the rest of the verse prove more reliable?

“And their description in the Gospel [*inġīl*] is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers” (48:29c)

This is also a very rough quote from the Gospel according to Mark 4:26-29.<sup>49</sup> It is supposed to prove that Muslims are announced in the *inġīl*, the gospel in the singular, but which of the four? Here it is obviously Mark, but everywhere else the allusions are in reference to Matthew. The previous remark obviously applies here just as well: 48:29c is also the quick work of some distorter vaguely acquainted with the Bible.

The end of the verse reads as follows:

“... so that Allah may enrage by them the *kafirūn*! Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great Reward.”

Its elements can be found spread across different sections of the Koran.

There are many other problems with this Sura, for example in verses 8-9a:

“We have sent **you** as a witness... that you may believe in God and *his rasūl*.” (Q.48:8-9a).

If Muḥammad is referred to as “*you*,” he cannot be God’s *rasūl* in this sentence – someone else is that *rasūl*! The problem is so real that HAMIDULLAH has put “*and his rasūl*” in square brackets, as if it were a possible addition!<sup>50</sup>

Verse 28 indicates that God has “*messengered (arsala) his rasūl with the way (hudā) and the judgment (dīn) of truth.*” But according to Q.5:46, this messenger-*rasūl* is ‘Isā-Jesus: “We have given him [to ‘Isā-Jesus the son of Mary] the *inġīl* where there is *way (hudā) and light.*”

In short, if the final verse of that Sura did not abruptly state “Muḥammad is the messenger of God,” there would be reason to truly believe that the *rasūl* of God is essentially Jesus (and possibly Moses in a few other places, or exceptionally yet another one).

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It appears that the original layer of sura 48 ended in verse 28: “God is sufficient as a witness” – or at least an old layer: absence of the block from 48:24 to 48:29 and from 49:1 to 49:12 in Ṣan‘ā Dam 16 suggests more writing steps. Further studies may clarify this point.

Anyway there is no original mention of the name *Muḥammad* in the Sura 48 *The Victory*.

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<sup>49</sup> “So is the kingdom of God: as if a man who casts seed into the earth. And to sleep he goes and rising, night and day, and the seed springs, and grows up whilst he knows it not. For the earth of itself brings forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.” (Mk 4:26-28)

<sup>50</sup> If one begins from the Islamic reading, which presents Muḥammad as the main *rasūl* of the text, one can only be astonished by this shift of grammatical persons (2nd / 3rd singular) occurring frequently in sura 48. A.-L. de Prémare noted: “At the stage of its final elaboration, the Koran was conceived and realized in such a way that it was read as a *Book / Scripture of God*, and never as *Mohammed’s Book*. This is the reason why a process of confusion between grammatical persons is cultivated in it, the result of which is to neutralize, in the reader or listener, the possibility of taking any distance from the text.” (*To the Origins of the Koran*, Téraèdre, 2004, p. 106)

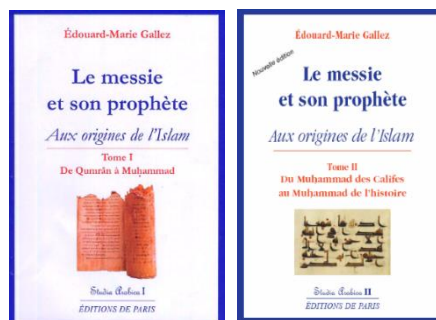


## 7- Conclusion: New Reading of the Koran and Obstacles to Overcome

More than sixty years have passed since the publication of *Le Coran* by Régis Blachère in 1949. Could the leads he opened have borne fruits earlier, namely in the Koranic exegesis and particularly about the mentions of the name of the “Prophet of Islam” in the text?

It is a possibility. But at least five obstacles impeded the advancement of research:

1. First, the weight of the past. We all know the dead-end track followed by dominant Islamology, walking in the footsteps of Theodor Nöldeke. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he was among those scholarly figures who endeavored to make the most rational presentation possible of traditional Islamic discourse on Muḥammad and the Koran, but without ever questioning the fundamental value of this discourse. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we know that this islamologically conformist attitude even led to the intentional concealment of microfilms of ancient Korans for more than forty years,<sup>51</sup> and this is still the case with some manuscripts.
2. The second obstacle to be overcome was the analysis of a phenomenon as complex as the emergence of Islam itself, over more than a century’s span. Multiple skills were needed, if only in Quranic exegesis, including geopolitics. Thus, it was necessary to see clearly amidst a multitude of fields, a task that is far from over, and to coordinate the results of these various studies. In addition to time, this work requires maintaining a great deal of communication between all serious scholars involved, as well as extension workers; all of this effort needs persistent structures of support. In these key respects, the difficulties have certainly proven enormous, and the fifth obstacle to be overcome is not unrelated to such a state of affairs.
3. But we must also point out a difficulty related to the personal bias of Islamologists, often marked by a confusion relative to Christianity consisting in the amalgamation of two conflicting religious orientations: it’s not the same on the one hand to wait and thereupon believe in the visit of God (as seen among the Jews before Jesus and then among Jewish-Christian believers who ultimately await the “Second Coming” –which Islam has retained), and on the other, to divinize a man (in the fashion of paganism). It is on the idea that Christianity “divinized” Jesus that the foundations of Islam were presumptively imagined. Islam is thus conceived to either be a response (given or not given by Muḥammad) to Christological discussions, or the continuation of a mysterious Arabic faith conjectured to have remained “pre-Nicean.” This misleading a priori has long prevented us from perceiving the coherent historical connection between the proto-Islam and the first Messianic deflection from Christianity, passed on by the Judeo-Nazarenes to 6<sup>th</sup> century Arabs (and already to others before them).
4. The consequences of this a priori were also felt in Koranic exegetical studies – this is the fourth difficulty. Even the *Coran des Historiens* (2019) does not dare to go beyond the framework of Islamic narratives (Arabic Islam, Mecca, role of Muḥammad, etc.), even when it questions it. In fact, since the synthesis of 2005 (see here on the righthand side), very few have dared to tackle the most “politically incorrect” Koranic verses, i.e. those mentioning the name of Muḥammad. One can only deplore the fact that the demonstrations



<sup>51</sup> By Anton Spitaler and his student and successor.

shedding light on these interpolations have been usually concealed.<sup>52</sup> Time is come to dare to go beyond this status quo.

5. The fifth obstacle is paramount: the opposition from various interests, which are sometimes directly involved in attempting to impose Sharia law on Western European jurisdictions. To prevent any research, the main pretexts invoked are the preservation of peace and the magic value ascribed to the “multicultural dialogue.” When in fact, the very opposite is true: research efficiently contributes to peace by disarming the justifications of most of the fanatics. Unfortunately, this false opposition has found support among Protestant or Catholic leaders. The situation is actually not new, it has been going on for a long time; but it is a key issue.

We must dare to claim that the islamological researches are essential for the future.

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<sup>52</sup> The 2005 synthesis, *Le Messie et son Prophète* (1100 pages, 1659 footnotes) has been mentioned often, but its content has still been little discussed. For example, in 2012, when Guillaume Dye (*Lieux saints communs, partagés ou confisqués : aux sources de quelques péripécies coraniques (Q 19 : 16-33)*), in Isabelle Depret & Guillaume Dye (eds), *Partage du sacré : transferts, dévotions mixtes, rivalités interconfessionnelles*, Bruxelles-Fernelmont, pp. 55-121) took up and deepened the Koranic question of the “Two Marys” (mother of Jesus / sister of Aaron), he used an earlier study from 2004, which was not as complete – cf. [https://www.academia.edu/41686296/Les\\_deux\\_Marie\\_du\\_Coran\\_G.\\_Dye\\_et\\_l'iconographie](https://www.academia.edu/41686296/Les_deux_Marie_du_Coran_G._Dye_et_l'iconographie). He questioned whether the typology identifying “Mariam in the Old and New Testaments,” as is expressed in the Koran, was really of Christian origin. However, he himself found a Christian text corroborating it. And iconographic tradition also confirms it (which was not known until after 2012). The introduction to *Le Messie et...*, which demonstrated this identification, is therefore substantiated, beyond the slightest doubt! Another example: in his contribution “*Les courants « judéo-chrétiens » et chrétiens orientaux de l'Antiquité tardive*” published in *Le Coran des historiens* (2019), Ian van Reeth claims that *The Messiah and...* relies only on the study of patristic and historical sources; yet dozens of pages are also devoted to Koranic exegesis, as hundreds of quoted or mentioned verses testify throughout the book; our article here only very partially reflects them.

## 8- Excursus

Following the systematic destruction-reconstruction of the center of Mecca – which curiously has revealed nothing prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, for a city supposed to date from Abraham or at least Muḥammad – no Saudi Arabian believes rationally that this city was the starting point of Islam. Moreover, researchers (who can speak freely) consider the pre-Islamic history of Mecca to be an invention from all points of view.

It is worth mentioning **Dan Gibson**'s research here (*Quranic Geography*, see [www.download-genius.com/download-k:Quranic+Geography+Dan+Gibson.pdf.html?aff.id=2338&aff.subid=77](http://www.download-genius.com/download-k:Quranic+Geography+Dan+Gibson.pdf.html?aff.id=2338&aff.subid=77)).

Noticing that the prayer directions (or *qibla*-s) of the old mosques only point to Mecca after 725 (and it is even necessary to wait until 822 to see all the new mosques point in this direction), Dan Gibson was interested in mosques prior to 725, many of which seem oriented towards... Petra in Jordan. Is that enough to conclude that Petra was the true capital of the emerging Islam? In fact, Gibson rather sheds light on the history of the anti-caliph Al-Zubayr, who opposed 'Abd-al-Malik: it is impossible that Mecca, a lost and arid place, served as his back base. But Petra! Petra's situation was ideal as an easily defensible place from which to attack Damascus. In the confusion associated with the abandonment of the first qibla to Jerusalem, it is conceivable that many Al-Zubayr supporters turned to their capital (Petra).

Let us also remember that, if some *qibla*-s point further north, we can also look there for candidates for possible temporary *qibla*, for example Mount *Abu Qobays*. The name of this mount was transferred to the edge of the Mecca basin, but it was first a mountain in Northern Syria whose summit had a sanctuary of Abraham (according to a Persian Islamic source<sup>53</sup>). Nearby is another mountain, *Abu Ka'ba* – a name that has actually nothing to do with the cube but with an old local name –: this is obviously the origin of the name of the cube of Mecca. Finally, it should be remembered that in this immediate environment there is a river and a caravanserai known as "Quraysh's".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. El-Hawary H. M. and Gaston Wiet, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, Arabia, t.1, Cairo-Paris, 1985, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> See in particular Volume II of the *Messiah and ...*, p. 272 ff – or *The Great Secret of Islam*, p. 31 ff.

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