

# 'A BAG OF MEAT': A STUDY OF AN EARLY ḤADĪTH

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The manuscript Qarawīyūn 727 in Fez contains on folios 37b–38a a tradition reported by Yūnus b. Bukayr on the authority of Ibn Ishāq. The tradition tells of a meeting between the Prophet and Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, one of the *ḥunafā'* in Mecca. During the meeting Zayd b. 'Amr was offered meat which he, however, refused to eat, arguing that he never ate meat sacrificed before idols.

This tradition was published and translated by A. Guillaume in his *New light on the life of Muhammad*.<sup>1</sup> It runs in his translation as follows:

'I was told that the apostle of God while speaking of Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl said, "He was the first to blame me for worshipping idols and forbade me to do so. I had come from al-Ṭā'if with Zayd ibn Ḥāritha when I passed by Zayd ibn 'Amr on the high ground above Mecca, for Quraysh had made a public example of him (*shaharathu*) for abandoning their religion, so that he went forth from among them and (stayed) in the high ground of Mecca. I went and sat with him. I had with me a bag of meat from our sacrifices to our idols which Zayd ibn Ḥāritha was carrying, and I offered it to him. I was a young lad at the time. I said 'Eat some of this food, O my uncle'. He replied 'Nephew, it is a part of those sacrifices of yours which you offer to your idols, isn't it?' When I answered that it was he said 'If you were to ask the daughters of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib they would tell you that I never eat of these sacrifices and I want nothing to do with them'. Then he blamed me and those who worship idols and sacrifice to them saying 'They are futile: they can do neither good nor harm', or words to that effect." The apostle added "After that with that knowledge I never stroked an idol of theirs nor did I sacrifice to them until God honoured me with His apostleship".'

Guillaume considers this report as 'a tradition of outstanding importance'. 'It is the only extant evidence', he says, 'of the influence of a monotheist on Muhammad by way of admonition.'<sup>2</sup>

Guillaume remarks that 'this tradition has been expunged from Ibn Hishām's recension altogether, but there are traces of it in S. [al-Suhaylī's *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*] (p. 146) and Bukhārī (K. p. 63, bāb 24) where there is an imposing *isnād* going back to 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar to the effect that the Prophet met Zayd in the lower part of Balḍaḥ before his apostleship. "A bag was brought to the prophet or the prophet brought it to him and he refused to eat of it saying 'I never eat what you sacrifice before your idols. I eat only that over which the name of God has been mentioned'. He blamed Quraysh for their sacrifices"'

<sup>1</sup> (*Journal of Semitic Studies*. Monograph No. 1), Manchester University Press, [1960], 27–8; Ar. text, 59.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 27; see L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, Milano, 1905, I, 190, § 186: 'Se la tradizione è vera dovremmo ritenere che egli conoscesse Maometto prima dell'inizio della missione, e la condotta di questo originale e i discorsi del medesimo possono forse aver influito sull'animo di Maometto'; T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, bearbeitet von F. Schwally, Leipzig, 1909, I, 18.

Guillaume surveys the discussion of the tradition in Suhaylī's *Rawḍ* and remarks that Ibn Kathīr (p. 239) also retains part of the original tradition which our MS contains. He says: "Zayd ibn 'Amr came to the apostle who was with Zayd ibn Ḥāritha as they were eating from a bag they had with them. When they invited him to eat with them he said, 'O nephew, I never eat from what has been offered to idols'"'.<sup>3</sup>

The different versions of the tradition concerning the meeting of the Prophet with Zayd b. 'Amr deserve to be surveyed. The tradition of al-Bukhārī<sup>4</sup> (with the *isnād* Mūsā (b. 'Uqba) > Sālim b. 'Abdallāh > 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar) is recorded by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr,<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sa'd,<sup>6</sup> al-Bakrī,<sup>7</sup> Ibn Kathīr,<sup>8</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,<sup>9</sup> Ibn 'Asākir,<sup>10</sup> al-Dhahabī,<sup>11</sup> and al-Ḥalabī.<sup>12</sup> A tradition recorded by Ibn Durayd<sup>13</sup> has a quite different setting: the Prophet was made to cherish solitude before he received the revelation and he sojourned in the folds of the mountains of Mecca. He said (i.e. the Prophet): 'I saw Zayd b. 'Amr in one of the folds when he too secluded himself from the world. I sat down in his company and I offered him a meal containing meat. He then said "O nephew, I do not eat from these sacrifices (*innī lā ākulu min hādhihi 'l-dhabā'ihī*)"''. In this tradition the Prophet was alone; Zayd b. Ḥāritha is not mentioned. One may only deduce from the expression *hādhihi 'l-dhabā'ihī* that meat of sacrifices slaughtered before idols is intended.

A similar tradition is recorded by al-Khargūshī.<sup>14</sup> The Prophet said 'Zayd b. 'Amr came to me when I was pasturing; with me was cooked meat. I invited him to (eat) it and adjured him to do it (i.e. to eat). He answered "O nephew, if you were to ask your aunts they would tell you that I do not eat meat offered to any god other than God, who is Exalted"''. The difference between the tradition recorded by Ibn Durayd and the tradition of al-Khargūshī is noteworthy: the tradition of Ibn Durayd refers to the story of the solitude of the Prophet before he received the apostleship; the tradition of al-Khargūshī refers to the story that the Prophet pastured the cattle of some people of Mecca.

<sup>3</sup> op. cit., 28.

<sup>4</sup> With the version *fa-quddimat ilā 'l-nabiyyi sufratun*, v, 50, Cairo, n. d. (Muḥ. 'Alī Ṣubayḥ and Sons printers).

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Isṭī'āb*, ed. 'Alī Muḥ. al-Bijāwī, Cairo, 1960, 617, with the version: *fa-quddama ilayhi rasūlu 'l-āhī ṣallā 'lāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama sufratan fihā laḥmun*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ṭabaqāt*, Beirut, 1957, III, 380.

<sup>7</sup> *Mu'jam mā sta'jam*, ed. al-Saqā, Cairo, 1945, I, 273.

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Bidāya wa 'l-nihāya*, Beirut and al-Riyāḍ, 1966, II, 240 (quoted from al-Bukhārī).

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Musnad*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Cairo, 1949, VII, 225-6, no. 5369.

<sup>10</sup> *Tahdhīb ta'rīkh Dimashq*, VI, 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, Cairo, 1367/1947-8, I, 52; *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, Cairo, 1956, I, 90; and see A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, zweite Auflage, Berlin, 1869, I, 119.

<sup>12</sup> 'Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-'uyūn fī sirat al-amīn al-ma'mūn = al-Sira al-halabiyya*, Cairo, 1932, I, 147.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Ishīqāq*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo, 1958, 134.

<sup>14</sup> *Sharaf al-Mustafā*, BM MS Or. 3014, fol. 28a.

Significant is the phrase 'if you were to ask your aunts . . .' which is almost identical with that in the tradition of Yūnus b. Bukayr.

A certain divergence is seen in a tradition recorded on the authority of 'Ā'isha (with an *isnād*: Hishām b. 'Urwa > 'Urwa > 'Ā'isha) who heard the Prophet say 'I heard Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl condemning the eating of meat of sacrifices offered to someone other than God. So I did not taste anything (slaughtered) on the *nuṣub*<sup>15</sup> until God honoured me by the Call'.<sup>16</sup> In this tradition there is no mention of a bag of meat, nor that the Prophet invited Zayd b. 'Amr to eat meat. The Prophet merely heard Zayd b. 'Amr condemn the eating of such meat.

The person of Zayd b. Ḥāritha is mentioned in a tradition recorded by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal<sup>17</sup> with the following *isnād*: Yazīd > al-Mas'ūdī > Nufayl b. Hishām b. Sa'īd b. Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl > Hishām b. Sa'īd > Sa'īd b. Zayd.<sup>18</sup> 'When the Prophet and Zayd b. Ḥāritha', says the tradition, 'stayed in Mecca, Zayd b. 'Amr passed by. They invited him to (share) a bag of theirs. Zayd b. 'Amr answered "O nephew, I do not eat what has been sacrificed on the *nuṣub*".' The transmitter (i.e. Sa'īd b. Zayd b. 'Amr) said: 'the Prophet was after this never seen eating something sacrificed on the *nuṣub*'.

This tradition with the same *isnād* is recorded by al-Ṭayālīsī.<sup>19</sup> It contains, however, a slight variant. Zayd b. 'Amr passed by the Prophet who was in the company of Zayd b. Ḥāritha; they both (i.e. the Prophet and Zayd b. Ḥāritha) ate from a bag of theirs. They invited him, etc. . . . This is, of course, the source of the tradition of Ibn Kathīr (II, 239) mentioned above.

An almost identical tradition is recorded by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr.<sup>20</sup> It is in fact a combined tradition containing details about the search for a true religion by Zayd b. 'Amr and Waraqa b. Naufal; the report concerning the invitation to Zayd b. 'Amr to eat meat from a bag is only a part of the tradition. The important difference is that the Prophet was in the company of Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith<sup>21</sup> (not Zayd b. Ḥāritha).

The tradition recorded in MS Fez, Qarawiyūn 727, and translated by Guillaume, is not an isolated one. The tradition is recorded in the *Musnad* of al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb<sup>22</sup> on the authority of Abū 'Ubayda. The variants are few:

<sup>15</sup> For the explanation of the word see al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Maḥmūd and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Cairo, 1957, IX, 508-9.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Khargūshī, op. cit., fol. 27b; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-kubrā*, Hyderabad, 1319/1901-2, I, 89; 'Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, op. cit., I, 146; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, Hyderabad, 1965, XIII, 68, no. 387.

<sup>17</sup> *Al-Musnad*, III, 116-17, no. 1648; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, II, 239; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, Cairo, 1325/1907-8, VII, 98; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, I, 87 (on the authority of Yūnus b. Bukayr).

<sup>18</sup> See the editor's remarks on the men of the *isnād*, *al-Musnad*, loc. cit., III, 116-17, no. 1648.

<sup>19</sup> Abu Dā'ūd al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, Hyderabad, 1311/1898-4, p. 32, no. 234.

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Istī'āb*, 616; al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāq al-naḍīra fī manāqib al-'ashara*, Cairo, 1953, II, 405.

<sup>21</sup> See on him Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba*, Cairo, 1907, VII, 86, no. 535; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, op. cit., p. 1673, no. 3002.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, *Musnad al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb b. 'Umar al-Azdī al-Baṣrī*, 'alā tartīb al-shaykh Abī Ya'qūb Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm al-Wārjilānī, Cairo, 1349/1930-1, I, 18.

the phrase 'if you were to ask the daughters of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib they would tell you that I never eat of these sacrifices . . .' is missing. The question of Zayd b. 'Amr here was quite frank: 'O nephew, do you indeed sacrifice before these idols of yours? (*yā bna akhī antum tadhbahūna 'alā aṣnāmikum hādhihi?*)'. The Prophet answered 'Yes'. Then Zayd b. 'Amr said 'I shall not eat it (i.e. the meat from the bag)'. He condemned the idols (*thumma 'āba 'l-aṣnāma wa 'l-awthāna*) and those who fed and approached them with reverence. The Prophet said 'By God, I did not draw near the idols at all until God granted me prophethood'.

A significant tradition, lengthy and detailed, is recorded by al-Khargūshī.<sup>23</sup> It is reported by Usāma b. Zayd on the authority of his father Zayd b. Ḥāritha. 'The Prophet', says the report, 'slaughtered a ewe for a *nuṣub* of the *anṣūb* (*dhabāha rasūlu 'llāhi ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama shātan li-nuṣubin min al-anṣābi*); then he roasted it and carried it with him (*qāla: thumma shawāhā fa-ḥtamalahā ma'ahu*). Then Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl met us in the upper part of the valley; (it was) on one of the hot days of Mecca. When we met, we greeted each other with the greeting of the Jāhiliyya, *in'am ṣabāhan*. The Prophet said "Why do I see you, O son of 'Amr, hated by your people?"<sup>24</sup> He said "This (happened) without me being the cause of their hatred (*qāla: dhāka li-ghayri thā'iratin kānat minnī fihim*)"<sup>25</sup>; but I found them associating divinities with God and I was reluctant to do the same. I wanted (to worship God according to) the religion of Ibrāhīm. I came to the learned men (*aḥbār*) of Yathrib and I found them worshipping God, but associating other divinities with Him. Then I said (in my soul): this is not the religion that I seek and I travelled till I came to the learned men of the Jews in Syria. Then a man from among them said 'You are asking about a religion which no one we know of follows, except an old man in the Jazīra'. I came to him and he asked me 'Which people do you belong to?' I said 'I am from the people of thorns and acacia trees (*al-shauk wa 'l-qaraḥ*),<sup>26</sup> from the people of the *Haram* of God'. He told me 'Return, as God who is blessed and exalted caused to rise the star of a prophet who has already appeared, or is about to appear; follow him, because he will worship God according to the religion about which you are inquiring'." He (i.e. Zayd b. 'Amr) said "So I came, but—by God—I do not notice<sup>27</sup> anything". The Prophet said "Would you like some food?" He (i.e. Zayd b. 'Amr) said "Yes". Then he (i.e. the Prophet) put before him the (meat of the) ewe. He said (i.e. Zayd b. 'Amr) "What did you sacrifice it to, O Muḥammad (*li-ayyi*

<sup>23</sup> *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*, fols. 27b–28a.

<sup>24</sup> In MS, *shagaqaka*; in other parallels *shaniḥū laka*; and see *Lisān*, s.v., *sh n f: wa-fī ḥadūthi Zaydi bni 'Amri bni Nufaylin: qāla li-rasūli 'llāhi ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama: mā li arā qaumaka qad shaniḥūka*. In our MS, correctly: *qāla lahu 'l-nabiyyu ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama: mā li arāka yā bna 'Amrin . . . etc.*

<sup>25</sup> In MS, *thā'iratin*; other parallels: *nā'ilatin* and *nā'iratin*.

<sup>26</sup> In MS, *min ahlī bayti 'l-shirki wa 'l-qarazi*; in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā*, I, 161, *min ahlī bayti 'llāhi*; in *Majma' al-zawā'id*, IX, 418, *ahl al-shauk wa 'l-qaraḥ*.

<sup>27</sup> In MS, *uḥsinu*; in *Siyar a'lām*, correctly *uḥissu*; *al-Mustadrak*, like our MS, *uḥsinu*.

*shay' in dhabahta yā Muḥammadu* ? ” He (i.e. the Prophet) said “ To one of the *anṣāb* (*qāla* : *li-nuṣubin min al-anṣābi*) ”. He (i.e. Zayd b. ‘Amr) said “ I am not the one to eat anything slaughtered for a divinity other than God ”. The Prophet went on his way and after a short time he was given the prophethood. He (i.e. Zayd b. Ḥāritha) said “ Zayd b. ‘Amr was mentioned to the Prophet and he (i.e. the Prophet) said ‘ He (i.e. Zayd b. ‘Amr) will rise in the Resurrection as a people by himself ’ ”. <sup>28</sup>

This tradition with slight variants is recorded in al-Ḥākim’s *Mustadrak*,<sup>29</sup> in al-Haythamī’s *Zawā’id*,<sup>30</sup> and in al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar*<sup>31</sup> and his *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*.<sup>32</sup> In the *Mustadrak*, *Siyar*, and *Ta’rīkh* the tradition is traced back to Usāma b. Zayd, told on the authority of his father, Zayd b. Ḥāritha and is followed by an appended tradition that the Prophet went afterwards to the Ka’ba and performed the circumambulation accompanied by Zayd b. Ḥāritha. He forbade Zayd b. Ḥāritha to stroke the idols of Isāf and Nā’ila.<sup>33</sup> The slight variants may be of some importance. In some of the sources, instead of the learned men of Yathrib (*aḥbār*) the scholars of Fadak are mentioned. In some sources, the scholars of Khaybar are mentioned ; others mention the scholars of Ayla. All the sources, except al-Khargūshī, tell the tradition in the first person plural : ‘ and we slaughtered a ewe . . . and he (i.e. Zayd b. ‘Amr) asked “ What is it ? ” We said “ It is a ewe which we slaughtered for this *nuṣub* ”. . . ’<sup>34</sup>

By examining these traditions, one can discern the diverging details. Some of the traditions report that the Prophet heard from Zayd and refrained from eating meat offered to the *nuṣub*, other traditions state that the Prophet met Zayd and offered him the meat ; some traditions state that the Prophet was alone ; other traditions report that he was in the company of Zayd b. Ḥāritha or in the company of Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥārith. Some of the traditions state that Zayd b. Ḥāritha slaughtered the animal, others claim that both he and the Prophet slaughtered it. The only tradition stating frankly that the Prophet himself offered the ewe to a *nuṣub* is the tradition of al-Khargūshī.

The slight variants of the traditions were closely examined by Muslim scholars. Guillaume quotes al-Suhaylī discussing the question as to ‘ how it could be thought that God allowed Zayd to give up meat offered to idols when the apostle had the better right to such a privilege. He says that the *ḥadīth* does not say that the apostle actually ate of it ; merely that Zayd refused to do so.

<sup>28</sup> For the expression *ummatan wāḥidatan* and *ummatan waḥdahū* see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, op. cit., III, 117, no. 1648, note ; *Lisān*, s.v. *umm* ; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., II, 241 ; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām*, I, 88 ; and see al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, op. cit., XIII, 67–8, nos. 384–6.

<sup>29</sup> Hyderabad, 1334/1915–16—1342/1923–4, III, 216–17.

<sup>30</sup> *Majma’ al-zawā’id wa-manba’ al-fawā’id*, Cairo, 1353/1934–5, IX, 417–18.

<sup>31</sup> I, 90–1, 160–1.

<sup>32</sup> I, 53.

<sup>33</sup> This tradition is recorded as an independent report in al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Khaṣā’iṣ al-kubrā*, I, 89.

<sup>34</sup> In al-Dhahabī’s *Ta’rīkh* : *shātun dhubīhat li ‘l-nuṣubi* against *thumma qaddamna ilayhi ‘l-sufrata* in *al-Mustadrak* ; al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar a’lām*, I, 161, has *fa-qarraba ilayhi ‘l-sufrata* (i.e. Muḥammad).

Secondly Zayd was simply following his own opinion, and not obeying an earlier law, for the law of Abraham forbade the eating of the flesh of animals that had died, not the flesh of animals that had been sacrificed to idols. Before Islam came to forbid the practice there was nothing against it, so that if the apostle did eat of such meat he did what was permissible, and if he did not, there is no difficulty. The truth is that it was neither expressly permitted nor forbidden'.<sup>35</sup>

The arguments of Suhaylī were not unanimously accepted by the scholars. The opinion that 'the law of Abraham (*shar'u Ibrāhīm*) forbade the eating of the flesh of animals that had died, not the flesh of animals that had been sacrificed to idols' was refuted by some scholars, who argued that the law of Abraham forbade the eating of the flesh of animals sacrificed to a divinity other than God (i.e. to the idols) as he was an enemy of the idols.<sup>36</sup>

Three hundred years before al-Suhaylī (d. 581/1285) the tradition was discussed by Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898)<sup>37</sup> as reported by al-Dhahabī.<sup>38</sup> The expression discussed is 'and we slaughtered for him' (*fa-dhabahñā lahu*) in the first person plural. Al-Ḥarbī argues: 'in the slaughter (of the ewe) on the *nuṣub* there are two possibilities: (1) either Zayd (b. Ḥāritha) performed it (i.e. the slaughter) without being ordered by the Prophet, but as he was in his company the deed (of slaughter) was attributed to him (which is indicated by the usage of the plural first person—*dhabahñā*); Zayd (b. Ḥāritha) had not the immunity from sin (*'iṣma*) and God's guidance (*taufīq*), granted to the Prophet by God. How would it be possible (to think that the Prophet ordered him to do so) as the Prophet forbade Zayd to touch an idol and (indeed) he (i.e. the Prophet) did not touch it before he received prophethood? So how could he acquiesce in the thought that he may slaughter for an idol? That is impossible. (2) (It may be that) he slaughtered for God and it happened that it was done in front of an idol before which they (i.e. Quraysh) used to slaughter'.

Ibn Manẓūr records the opinion of Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī<sup>39</sup> as quoted by Ibn al-Athīr; in this record the second possibility is more plainly discussed: he (i.e. Zayd b. Ḥāritha) slaughtered the ewe in front of an idol (at a spot) at which they (i.e. Quraysh) used to slaughter; but he did not slaughter for the idol. This is the explanation of the phrase, if *nuṣub* denotes an idol. If, however, *nuṣub* denotes a stone, there was a semantic misunderstanding: when the Prophet was asked by Zayd b. 'Amr about the bag of meat he answered that the ewe was slaughtered on a *nuṣub*, on a stone, but Zayd b. 'Amr understood that it had been slaughtered for a *nuṣub*, an idol, and refused to eat it, remarking that he did not eat the meat of animals slaughtered for idols.

It is evident that we face here attempts of the commentators to interpret

<sup>35</sup> Guillaume, op. cit., 27-8; 'Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn, op. cit., I, 147 (quoting al-Suhaylī).

<sup>36</sup> Al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād al-sārī*, Cairo, 1326/1908, VII, 427.

<sup>37</sup> On whom, see al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, Hyderabad, 1956, II, 584, no. 609; al-Khatīb al-Baghḍādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, Cairo, 1931, VI, 27; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, ed. al-Ḥilw and al-Ṭanāḥī, Cairo, 1964, II, 256 (see the additional references supplied by the editors, ibid.).

<sup>38</sup> *Siyar a'lām*, I, 91.

<sup>39</sup> *Lisān*, s.v. n ṣ b; and see ibid., s.v. s f r.

these *ḥadīths* in a way showing that the Prophet did not slaughter for idols, nor did he eat meat slaughtered for idols.

This path is followed by al-Dhahabī who endeavours to interpret the opening phrases of this tradition.<sup>40</sup> 'Zayd b. Ḥāritha said "I went out with the Prophet, mounted behind him (on the riding beast) to one of the *anṣāb* and we slaughtered for him a ewe"' (*kharajtu ma'a rasūli 'llāhi ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama, wa-huwa murdifī, ilā nuṣubin min al-anṣābi fa-dhabahnā lahu shātan*). The crucial problem is, of course, the slaughter. The key for the interpretation of the sentence is the suffixed pronoun *hu* in *lahu*. If *lahu* is referred to *nuṣub* it would mean that the Prophet and Zayd b. Ḥāritha offered the ewe to the idol. This is evaded by the attribution of the suffixed pronoun to the Prophet. 'The suffixed pronoun in *lahu* refers to the Prophet', says al-Dhahabī (*damāru lahu rāji'un ilā rasūli 'llāhi ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama*). Zayd used the first person plural, 'we slaughtered for him (i.e. for the Prophet) a ewe', but it was Zayd who slaughtered it. Consequently when Zayd b. 'Amr asks during the conversation about the contents of the bag, 'What is it?', the phrase *qulnā shāṭun dhabahnāhā li 'l-nuṣubi kadhā* 'we said "A ewe which we slaughtered for a certain *nuṣub*"' may form the answer of Zayd b. Ḥāritha or the answer of the Prophet on behalf of Zayd b. Ḥāritha who actually slaughtered the ewe, not being guided by God to refrain from sacrificing before the *nuṣub*.

The reading *quddimat lahu sufratun* (another version: *fa-quddimat ilā 'l-nabiyyi ṣallā 'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama sufratun*) in the tradition of al-Bukhārī gave the opportunity for a peculiar interpretation recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī.<sup>41</sup> Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 449/1057) said that the bag was offered (*quddimat*) to the Prophet by Quraysh but he refused to eat it and offered it to Zayd b. 'Amr, who refused to eat it too. Ibn Ḥajar remarks: 'That is possible, but I do not know whence he could determine it, because I did not find it (i.e. this form of the tradition) in the transmission of anyone'.

Ibn Ḥajar prefers<sup>42</sup> the explanation given by al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998): 'the Prophet did not eat meat of sacrifices slaughtered on the *nuṣub* for the idols, but he ate everything else, even if the name of God was not mentioned (during the slaughter), because the law had not been revealed then. The law prohibiting consumption of the meat of animals (over which during the slaughter the name of God was not mentioned) was not revealed until a long time after the Call'.

Ibn Ḥajar interprets *nuṣub* as 'stone' and concludes that Zayd b. Ḥāritha slaughtered the ewe on a stone, not intending to sacrifice for an idol. He accepts further the opinion of Suhaylī that Zayd b. 'Amr was 'following his own opinion' and refutes the assumption that he adopted the opinion of the *Ahl al-Kitāb*.

Of some interest is the interpretation of the expression about the bag in the

<sup>40</sup> *Sīyar a'lām*, I, 90.

<sup>41</sup> *Fath al-bārī*, VII, 98; al-Qastallānī, op. cit., VII, 427; al-'Aynī, 'Umdat al-qārī', VIII, 36.

<sup>42</sup> *Fath al-bārī*, VII, 98; al-'Aynī, op. cit., VIII, 36.

tradition of al-Bukhārī given by al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384). The fact that the meat was in the bag does not indicate that the Prophet did eat of it, argues al-Kirmānī. In many cases food from a traveller's bag is not consumed by the traveller but by his companions. The Prophet did not forbid the persons in his company to consume it because he had not received the revelation at that time and had not been told to make known anything of order or prohibition.<sup>43</sup>

Shī'ī scholars strongly rejected the tradition of the bag of meat. Ibn Ṭāwūs in his *Ṭarā'if 'Abd al-Maḥmūd*<sup>44</sup> says: 'O you, may God have mercy upon you, look at this story the validity of which they attested, (alleging) that their Prophet was among those who slaughtered on the *ansāb* and ate (the meat) and at the same time recording in their books that God undertook to educate and instruct him and Jibrīl undertook to see to his formation<sup>45</sup> (and stating further) that he did not follow (the customs of) the Jāhiliyya and did not accept anything of their manners. How did they bespeak themselves in this matter and in (the records of) the praise of God and their praise for His First and His Last, His Inward and His Outward, and with all this they attest that Zayd b. 'Amr knew God more than he and was more strict in keeping the observances of God (*kāna a'rafa bi-'llāhi minhu wa-atamma hiḥḥan li-jānibi 'llāhi*). How can I and others among the wise imitate people who record things like this and consider them sound? I asked scholars of the family of the Prophet (*'ulamā'a ahli 'l-'itrati*) about it, from their Shī'a, and they totally refused to accept the soundness of the tradition'.

The same arguments are put forth against this tradition by al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥilli in his *Nahj al-ḥaqq wa-kashf al-ṣidq*.<sup>46</sup> Al-Faḍl b. Rūzbahān in a polemic against al-Ḥilli in his *Nahj al-ta'ṭīl* claims that al-Ḥilli deleted the final part of the saying of the Prophet (as recorded by al-Bukhārī). 'When Zayd (b. 'Amr) said "I do not eat from the meat of the sacrifices offered to the idols", the Prophet said "I also do not eat from their sacrifices nor from that upon which God's name was not mentioned". So they both ate (sc. the meat).' Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar denies the claim of al-Faḍl b. Rūzbahān and states that this addition (recorded by al-Faḍl) could not be found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, it may be said that the discussion in connexion with the tradition concerning the conversation of the Prophet with Zayd b. 'Amr and the offer of the bag of meat was concerned with the essential problem of the *'isma* of the Prophet before he was granted prophethood. The main effort of the Muslim scholars was to prove that the Prophet did not eat meat slaughtered for

<sup>43</sup> Al-'Aynī, op. cit., VIII, 36.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Ṭarā'if 'Abd al-Maḥmūd*, Tehran, n. d., 110.

<sup>45</sup> *Tahdhībahu* glossed in the text by *khiḍmatahu*.

<sup>46</sup> Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar, *Dalā'il al-ṣidq*, no place of publication given, 1389/1969(?), I, 409.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

idols, nor did he slaughter it, as he was granted immunity from sin before he received prophethood.

The tradition of Ibn Ishāq in the recension of Yūnus b. Bukayr discussed by Guillaume 'is given us', as stated by Guillaume, 'in what must have been its original form'.<sup>48</sup> It is not a unique tradition, but it is undoubtedly an early one.

The lengthy tradition recorded by al-Khargūshī belongs to the same category: it plainly states that the Prophet offered the ewe to the idol and he admitted it in his talk with Zayd b. 'Amr. The phrases mentioning that the Prophet and Zayd greeted each other with the greeting of the Jāhiliyya<sup>49</sup> are significant. The tradition explicitly points to the fact that the Prophet followed, before his prophethood, the practices of his people and corroborates the tradition of Ibn al-Kalbī that the Prophet 'offered a white ewe to al-'Uzzā following the religious practices of his people' (*laqad aḥdaytu li 'l-'uzzā shātan 'afra' a wa-anā 'alā dīni qawmī*).<sup>50</sup>

The tradition of al-Khargūshī based on the idea that the Prophet had no 'iṣma<sup>51</sup> before his Call belongs to the earliest layer of ḥadīth—traditions which fell later into oblivion or were re-shaped or expunged.

<sup>48</sup> *New light on the life of Muhammad*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> See I. Goldziher, *Muslim studies*, ed. S. M. Stern, London, 1967, 239.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Pasha, Cairo, 1914, 19; J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, Berlin, 1887, 30.

<sup>51</sup> See Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, Cairo, 1964, II, 308, 311; H. Birkeland, *The Lord guideth*, Oslo, 1956, 40-1.