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NOTES ON SOME ARABIC VERSES

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I. VERSES FROM WATHĪMA'S "KITĀB AL-RIDDA"

The fragments of Wathīma's "Kitāb al-Ridda", which were carefully collected (from Ibn Ḥajar's "al-Iṣāba"), edited and translated by W. Hoenerbach¹, contain many verses. Some words or expressions which were misread or misunderstood are here corrected and explained.

I. P. 7, l. 1 (Ar. Text) – p. 46 (transl.)

وَأَتَّبَعْتُمُوهَا بِالزَّكَاةِ وَقُلْتُمْ أَلَا لَا تُقَرِّوْا مِنْهُمَا بِقَتِيلٍ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

“Und ihr gabt zur *ṣalāh* noch die *zakāh* und spracht:
Möchtet ihr nicht vor beiden fliehen durch einen Erschlagenen.»

Hoenerbach suggests another reading: “bi-fatīlī”, “durch eine Kleinigkeit”. This, by itself, does not help to understand the verse. The correct reading is: لَا تُقَرِّوْا مِنْهُمَا بِقَتِيلٍ. The verse has to be translated:

“And you joined the *zakāt* to the *ṣalāt* and said:
Do not acknowledge of the two (i.e. the *zakāt* and *ṣalāt*)
the smallest thing.”

¹ Wilhelm Hoenerbach: Waṭīma's Kitāb ar-Ridda aus Ibn Ḥaǧar's Iṣāba. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951. Nr. 4, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz; and see the review of G. LEVI DELLA VIDA, in *ZDMG*, 1954 (CIV), pp. 24–28.

2. P. 8, l. 6 (Ar. Text) – p. 47 (transl.):

وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِالْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاسِبٌ طَاقَةٌ وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِالْمُسْلِمِينَ تَدَانٍ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

“Ihr habt in al-Baḥrain keinen, der etwas vermag, und ihr habt mit den Muslimen keine Nachbargemeinschaft!”

Hoenerbach records for “Tadānī” another version: “Yadānī”, but prefers “Tadānī”. The correct version is, however, يَدَانٍ. The reading “bi-l-Baḥrayni” does not, as remarked by Hoenerbach, suit the metre. The correction suggested is بِالْبَحْرِ. The verse may be rendered as follows:

“And you have no strength to resist the (force of the) sea and you have no power to stand up against the Muslims.”

3. P. 17 (Ar. text) – p. 58 (transl.)

إِنْ تَكُنْ مُنِيَّتِي عَلَى فِطْرَةٍ اللَّهُ حَنِيفًا فَإِنِّي لَا أَبَالِي

is translated by Hoenerbach:

“Wenn ich nur nach der Naturanlage von Gott. als *Ḥanīf* [zu leben] bestrebt bin, so Sorge ich mich nicht”!

The translation is based on the reading “Munyatī”, which seems to be an error. The correct reading seems to be: مِينَتِي. According to this correction the verse has to be translated as follows:

“If my death comes upon me when I am on the natural disposition (granted by, given) from Allah a *Ḥanīf* – then I do not care.”¹

¹ Comp. *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyat* 206, 10 (ed. Lyall), al-Shanfarā: إِذَا مَا أَتَنَّنِي مِينَتِي; and see Ibn Hishām: *Sīra*, III, 155 (ed. Saqqā, Abyārī, Shalabī, Cairo 1936); Ka'b b. Mālik:

إِنْ تَقْتُلُونَا فِدِينُ الْحَقِّ فِطْرَتُنَا وَالْقَتْلُ فِي الْحَقِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَفْضِيلٌ

and see ib., p. 186:

فَوَاللَّهِ مَا أَرْجُو إِذَا مِتُّ مُسْلِمًا عَلَى أَيِّ جَنْبٍ كَانَ فِي اللَّهِ مَضْرَعِي

The word *مَحَالٍ* in this fragment (p. 16, ult. – Ar. text) cannot be translated “listig”. It has to be vocalized *مِحَالٍ* and translated “power, force, might”¹. Accordingly the hemistich has to be rendered:

“and God is mighty with strength and power”.

4. P. 27, l. 8 (Ar. text) – p. 70 (transl.)

وَفَيْنَا وَفَيْنَا بِفَيْضِ الْوَفَاءِ وَفَيْنَا مَفْرَخٍ أَفْرَاخَهُ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

“Wir zahlten, zahlten unsre Schuldigkeit im Überfluss!
Wir gaben das Tier, das seine Jungen wirft!”

The reading *وَفَيْنَا مَفْرَخٍ أَفْرَاخَهُ* seems however to be impossible. The suggested reading is:

وَفَيْنَا يُفْرَخُ أَفْرَاخَهُ

and the verse has to be rendered as follows:

“We were faithful, we were faithful with abundant faithfulness and among us it (i.e. faithfulness) shoots forth its offshoots”

وَفَيْنَا لِعَمْرٍو in the third verse of the fragment (“Wir zinsten an ‘Amr”) has to be translated: “We were faithful to ‘Amr”.

5. P. 27, l. 12 (Ar. text) – p. 70 (transl.)

وَفَيْنَا لِعَمْرٍو يَوْمَ عَمْرٍو كَأَنَّهُ طَرِيدٌ بَغْتَهُ مَدْحُجٌ وَالسَّكَّاسِكُ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

“Wir blieben treu dem ‘Amr am Tage des ‘Amr, gleich als wär er ein Flüchtling, den die banū Madhij̄ und Sakāsik verfolgten.”

¹ Comp. IBN HISHĀM, *op. cit.*, I, 52:

لَا يَغْلِبَنَّ صَلِيْبُهُمْ وَمِحَالُهُمْ مِحَالَكَ

But the translation "am Tage des 'Amr" is not accurate. The verse has to be rendered:

"We remained faithful to 'Amr at the day when 'Amr was like a tracked (enemy), pursued by the Banū Madhḥij and Sakāsik".

The word هَالِكٌ in the third verse of the fragment has to be read حَالِكٌ. (Not "vernichtender Tag", but "a dark day").

6. P. 29 l. 2 (Ar. text) – p. 72 (transl.)

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ سِيرُوا لِقَتْلِهِ عَلَى خَيْرِ مَوْعُودٍ وَأَسْعَدِ أَسْعَدِ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

"Der Prophet Gottes sprach: "Eilet, ihn zu töten
Nach bestem Übereinkommen und Glücklichsten vom
Glücklichen!"

But مَوْعُودٌ does not denote here "Übereinkommen" and أَسْعَدِ أَسْعَدِ has to be corrected into أَسْعَدِ أَسْعَدِ. The verse has to be translated as follows:

"And the Messenger of God said: "Go in order to kill him
on (the path of) the best promise and the most lucky stars".

7. P. 29, l. 9 (Ar. text) – p. 72 (transl.)

غَدَاةَ جَدَعْنَا فِي عُنَيْسٍ بَضْرَبَةً أَبَانَ بِهَا الْمَكْشُوحُ رَأْسَ هُمَامِ

is rendered by Hoenerbach:

"am Morgen, da wir den "Unais" mit einem Schlag verstümmelten, mit dem al-Makšūḥ den Kopf eines Fürsten abtrennte!"

But عُنَيْسٍ is not a name of a person; it is in fact a diminutive of عُنَسٍ, the tribe of al-Aswad al-'Ansī; it is, evidently, used "li-l-taḥqīr". The verse has to be translated:

"In the morning when we severed (the limbs) among the 'Unays with a stroke with which al-Makshūḥ cut off the head of a hero".

8. P. 36, l. 14 (Ar. text) – p. 79 (transl.)

لَيْسَ الْبَسُوسُ عَلَى بَكْرٍ وَإِخْوَتِهِمْ أَشْأَمَ مِنْهَا وَرَبِّ الْحِلِّ وَالْحَرَمِ

Hoenerbach translates وَرَبِّ الْحِلِّ وَالْحَرَمِ: “beim Herrn des Erlaubten und Verbotenen!” The correct translation is: “by the Lord of the Ḥaram (of Mecca) and what is outside the Ḥaram”.¹

9. P. 37, l. 1 (Ar. text) – p. 79 (transl.)

أَعْبَدَ اللَّهُ قَدْ أَعْدَرْتِ فِينَا وَلَكِنَّا هَزَقْنَا بِالنَّصِيحِ

is translated by Hoenerbach:

“‘Abdallāh! Du hast uns aufgeschreckt! Doch wir verhöhn-
ten den guten Rat!”

But أَعْدَرْتِ is an error; the correct reading is أَعْدَرْتِ, “You made every effort”². أَعْبَدَ is not “der gute Rat” but “the sincere adviser”. The verse has thus to be rendered:

“‘Abdallah, you made every possible effort for us, but we scoffed at the sincere adviser”.

The word “عَلِيَاءَ” in the following verse cannot be translated “höhere Welt”; it has to be rendered: “noble, lofty, high (things)”.

10. P. 38, l. 2 (Ar. text) – p. 80 (transl.)

وَأَصْبَحْتُ أَبِي عَلَى هُلْدِهِمْ وَلَمْ أَكُ فِيْمَا أَتَوْهُ شَرِيكًا

¹ See: al-Kalā'i: *al-Iktifā'*, I, 272 (ed. Massé): كَمَا مِنَ الْحِلِّ كَمَا فَلَا تُعْظَمُوا شَيْئًا مِنَ الْحِلِّ كَمَا ; and see: al-Āmidi *al-Mu'talif*, p. 169 (ed. Krenkow):

وَالْبَيْتُ يَعْرِفُهُ وَالْحِلُّ وَالْحَرَمُ

² See 'Urwa b. al-Ward, *Diwān*, V, 4 and X, 3 (ed. M. b. Cheneb); and see *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, CVI, 4:

وَأَنْبَأْنُهُ أَنَّ الْفَرَارَ خَزَائِنُهُ عَلَى الْمَرْءِ مَا لَمْ يُبَلِّ جَهْدًا وَيُعْدِرِ

is translated by Hoenerbach:

“ Da begann ich, über ihr Verbrechen zu weinen; bei dem, wozu sie kamen, bin ich nicht Genosse !”.

But هُكْ is not “ Verbrechen ”, and فِيمَا أَتَوْهُ does not mean “ wozu sie kamen ”. The correct translation of the verse is as follows:

“ I started to bewail their doom while
I was not a partner in (the sins or crimes) which they committed ”.

II. TWO VERSES IN THE “MAQĀMA GHAYLĀNIYYA”.

Two verses at the end of Badī' al-Zamān's “ al-Maqāma al-Ghaylāniyya ” seem to be obscure. In the following lines an attempt is made to elucidate the meaning of these verses.

The two verses are put in the mouth of Dhū 'l-Rumma. Dhū 'l-Rumma reviles the clan of al-Farazdaq saying:

وَأَمَّا مُجَاشِعُ الْأَرْدَلِ وَ
نَ فَلَمْ يَسْقِ مِنْبَتَهُمْ رَاجِسُ
سَيَعْقِلُهُمْ عَن مَسَاعِي الْكِرَامِ
عِقَارٌ وَيَحْبِسُهُمْ حَابِسُ

Muḥammad 'Abduh explains in his commentary فَلَمْ يَسْقِ as a curse: “ may the rain not drop on their growing place, so that they may be afflicted by drought ” – says Muḥ. 'Abduh. رَاجِسُ is explained as “ thundering cloud ”.

عِقَالٌ in the second verse is explained by 'Abduh as “ shackle by which camels are bound ”. The mean character of Mujāshī' — states 'Abduh — is compared with a shackle. These features of mean character restrict and bind (tie) the Mujāshī' preventing them from making efforts at noble actions. In a lengthy passage 'Abduh argues that the prefixed “ sa ” (in “ sa—ya'qiluhum ”) does not denote real future; the Mujāshī' were and are prevented from noble deeds and so they will always be prevented, because of their mean character. (Badī' al-Zamān al-Hama-dhānī, “ Maqāmāt ”, ed. 1924, p. 47; p. 42 in ed. 1957).

* The metre in the first hemistich is not accurate. مجاشع has to be read مجاشع; واما مجاشع الارذلون.

R. Blachère and P. Masnou follow in the steps of Muḥ. 'Abduh in their translation (*Maqāmāt, la séance de Ghailān*, p. 67, ed. Paris 1957):

Les Mojâchi sont les gens les plus vils (qui soient). Fasse le ciel qu'aucune pluie abondante n'arose leurs champs. Des entraves les empêcheront toujours de tenter de nobles actions et des liens sans cesse les retiendront.

The commentary of 'Abduh and the rendering of Blachère – Masnou are not accurate. *لم يَسْقِ* refers to the past: The Mujāshi' are the meanest clan; no thundering cloud (bearing rain) has watered their growing places. "Iqāl" does not denote here a shackle, but is the name of the ancestor of al-Farazdaq: "Iqāl b. Muḥammed b. Sufyān b. Mujāshi'". Similarly "Ḥābis" is "Ḥābis b. 'Iqāl al-Mujāshi'i", the father of Laylā the grandmother of al-Farazdaq.

The two verses may thus be rendered as follows:

As to the Mujāshi', the meanest ones
 never did a thundering cloud water their growing places
 They will be restrained (bound, tied) from the efforts of
 the nobles
 by 'Iqāl and impeded by Ḥābis

This explanation of the two verses is confirmed by a verse of Jarīr in which he reviles the ancestors of al-Farazdaq. (*Dīwān*, p. 326, ed. al-Ṣāwī).

فَمَا زَالَ مَعْتُولًا عِقَانُ عَنِ الْعُلَى وَمَا زَالَ مَحْبُوسًا عَنِ الْمَجْدِ حَابِسُ

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