

HANIFIYYA AND KA'BA

An inquiry into the Arabian pre-Islamic background of *din Ibrāhīm*

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Modern scholars usually treat Muslim reports concerning the pre-Islamic *hunaḥā'* (sing. *hanīḥ*), who allegedly followed the monotheistic religion known as *din Ibrāhīm*, with a great deal of scepticism. W.M. Watt, for instance, stresses the apologetic nature of these reports, suggesting that the term *hanīḥ* in its monotheistic sense was never actually used before the Quran. This means that traditions about pre-Islamic monotheistic *hunaḥā'* are merely the result of an apologetic projection of Quranic concepts.¹ Casual examination of the Muslim sources seems at first to justify this sceptical approach. There is, for instance, a whole series of traditions presenting Muhammad's genealogical ancestors (e.g., Ma'add, Mudar, al-Ya's, Asad b. Khuzayma), as following the *hanifiyya* of Abraham; in these traditions Muslims are requested not to curse these persons.² The apologetic nature of these traditions is obvious, their chief aim being to present the prophet as descended from noble monotheistic ancestors who allegedly never practiced idolatry. In other cases, however, the apologetic motive is not quite self-evident. Some western scholars have already noted that among those persons whom Muslim sources describe as *hunaḥā'* are some bitter opponents of Muhammad. The reports concerning these persons must be taken as authentic, because, as

¹ *Et*² s. v. "Hanīf". See also *Hagarism*, 13-14. And see Wansbrough, *Milieu*, 6, where the stories about the *hanīḥ*s and other seekers of the true faith are labelled as *praeparatio evangelica*, and p. 7, where they are said to represent "a myth devised to interpret the spiritual, intellectual, and social transformation brought about by the mission of an Arabian prophet."

² Abū l-Baqā', 48, 55-56, 59; Ḥalabī, I, 17; Kalā'ī, I, 68; *Munammaq*, 4. See also Rubin, "Nūr", 77.

already noted by Fueck, no Muslim could have had any interest in characterizing these opponents of the prophet as *hunaḥā*? In the following pages an attempt is made at elucidating the basic elements of the *hanīfiyya* professed by these opponents of Muhammad and the reasons for their strife with the prophet. This may give us a better insight into the Arabian background of the *hanīfiyya* and *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

1. The *hanīfiyya* of Muhammad's enemies

Some reports deal with Abū 'Amir 'Abd 'Amr b. Ṣayfī,⁴ who was one of the prominent leaders of the Aws in Medina and an implacable enemy of Muhammad. Shortly after the latter's arrival in Medina, Abū 'Amir reportedly set out to Mecca with fifty or fifteen people of the Aws, all refusing to embrace Islam. Abū 'Amir is said to have taken an active part on the Meccan side in the battle of Uhud. In fact, he is said to have been the first to attack the Muslims along with the Ahābiš of Quraysh.⁵ Following the expulsion of Banū al-Naḍir to Khaybar (3H/625), Abū 'Amir is again said to have gone to Mecca along with some Jews and certain people of Aws. They reportedly urged Quraysh to attack Muhammad, and made an alliance with the Quraysh in order to fight the prophet and destroy him.⁶ After the conquest of Mecca (8H/630), Abū 'Amir is said to have fled to Ṭā'if, and when Ṭā'if surrendered to Muhammad (9H), Abū 'Amir went off to Syria, where he eventually died.⁷

The name of Abū 'Amir is connected with the affair of the building of the mosque known as *masjid al-shiqāq*,⁸ or *masjid al-dīrār*.⁹ It is related that on the eve of Muhammad's raid on Tabūk (9H/630), some people built a mosque in Medina and asked

Muhammad to pray with them in it. At first the prophet intended to oblige, but eventually found out that the people had mischievous intentions, the nature of which is not disclosed in the sources. Whatever their motives, it is stressed that they had contacts with Abū 'Amir who was at the time in Syria. They reportedly prepared the mosque as headquarters for Abū 'Amir's supporters who expected his return. When their plans were exposed the prophet ordered that the mosque be torn down and set on fire.¹⁰ Some reports say that Abū 'Amir himself ordered his supporters to build that mosque and collect weapons in it, telling them that he was about to bring Byzantine troops who would expel Muhammad and his Muslims from Medina.¹¹

The sources contain important details concerning the spiritual orientation of this enemy of Muhammad. Ibn Ishāq (d. 150H/767) says about him:¹²

wa-kāna qad tarahhaba fī l-jāhiliyya wa-tabi'a l-musūha wa-kāna yuqālu lahu l-rāhibu

He used to practice *tarahhub* and wore hair mantles and was called "al-rāhib"

A good insight into the meaning of this report may be gained from a verse by Ḥassān b. Thābit, Muhammad's poet, who, mourning the death of the prophet, describes his sorrowful wives "like nuns putting on hair mantles" (*mithla l-rawāhibi yabasna l-musūha*).¹³ From Ḥassān's description it may be inferred that Abū 'Amir was known as "al-rāhib" mainly because of his hair mantle which, like those of Muhammad's mourning wives, resembled the garments of the *rāhibs*, i.e., the Christian monks. In other words, Abū 'Amir's *tarahhub* was not necessarily a Christian practice as suggested by Wellhausen,¹⁴ but merely a kind of ascetic conduct resembling Christian manners only in its outer manifestations.

3 Fueck, 98 n. II, concerning Abū I-Qays b. al-Aslat.

4 See about him Gil, 87 ff.

5 Ibn Hishām, III, 71. See also Wāqidī, I, 205-206; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 313; Ḥalabī, II, 240. It is related that the prophet fell into one of the ditches which were dug by Abū 'Amir. See Ḥalabī, II, 232, 240.

6 Wāqidī, II, 441-442.

7 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282 (from al-Wāqidī); 'Uyūn al-ahbar, I, 222.

8 Cf. Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 146.

9 Cf. Qur'an IX/107 ff. See Gil, 70 ff.

10 Wāqidī, III, 1046; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282, 283; *Biḍāya*, V, 21ff.

11 Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 276; *Qisas*, 212; 'Adawī, 253^a.

12 Ibn Hishām, II, 234. See also 'Uyūn al-ahbar, I, 221; Ibn Sa'd, II, 37; *Istī'āb*, I, 380; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 281; Wāqidī, II, 441; Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 276; Ḥalabī, II, 240; *Murūj*, I, 74.

13 Ibn Sa'd, II, 321. Cf. Ibn Hishām, IV, 322.

14 *Reste*, 239. Cf. Gil, p. 91, note 60.

Al-Balādhurī (d. 279H/892) reports that Abū 'Āmir wished to present himself as a prophet,¹⁵ which seems to indicate that he probably used to recite certain prophetic utterances. The content of his utterances may be deduced from the report of Ibn Hajar to the effect that Abū 'Āmir used to speak about the resurrection and the *hanīfiyya*.¹⁶ There seems to be no reason to suspect this report. Themes dealt with in the prophetic utterance of Muhammad could very well be included in the preachings of other contemporaries having similar prophetic claims.

The relation of Abū 'Āmir to the *hanīfiyya* is indicated in a report of al-Wāqidī (d. 207H/823) concerning a conversation between the Jews of Medina and Muhammad b. Maslama of the Aws,¹⁷ which took place before Muhammad's arrival in Medina. The Jews told Ibn Maslama that nothing seemed to prevent him from embracing their religion, except for the fact that it was the religion of the Jews. They claimed that he probably preferred the *hanīfiyya* about which he had heard, but, they stressed, Abū 'Āmir had already abandoned it.¹⁸ This report implies that both Muhammad b. Maslama and Abū 'Āmir, who were fellow tribesmen, used to adhere to a kind of monotheistic *hanīfiyya*, not too far removed from the Jewish religion, and that Abū 'Āmir eventually abandoned it, unlike Ibn Maslama who stuck to it. From the general context of this conversation it is clear that the Jews actually alluded to Muhammad's message, which, in their view at least, was based on that *hanīfiyya* which was eventually rejected by Abū 'Āmir, but supported by Ibn Maslama.

Abū 'Āmir's rejection of the kind of *hanīfiyya* which Muhammad adopted as "Islam" is also indicated in a direct confrontation between him and the prophet. Gil describes it quite rightly as an "encounter between two *hanīfs* of different

persuasions."¹⁹ Ibn Ishāq reports that Abū 'Āmir came to Muhammad when the latter arrived in Medina, and asked him what was the religion he had brought. Muhammad said: "I have brought the *hanīfiyya*, the *dīn* of Abraham." Abū 'Āmir said: "That is what I follow." Muhammad said: "You do not." Abū 'Āmir said: "Yes, I do," and added that Muhammad had introduced in the *hanīfiyya* things which did not belong to it (*innaka aakhalta, ya Muhammad, fi l-hanīfiyya ma laysa minhā*). Muhammad said: "I have not. I have brought it pure and white."²⁰ The break between these two *hanīfs* was never bridged, and it is reported that Muhammad changed Abū 'Āmir's appellation from "*al-rāhib*" to "*al-fāsiq*."²¹

What was the origin of the dispute between Muhammad and Abū 'Āmir? The sources examined thus far do not allow a clear-cut answer. Gil's conclusion, following a thorough examination of a wide range of source material, is that Abū 'Āmir was a leader of a group of dissenters with "a kind of pacifistic orientation", who were also opposed to "the new system of justice personified by Muhammad", and hence "to the very essence and foundations of the Muslim *umma*."²² It seems, however, that the roots of the conflict must be looked for within the *hanīfiyya* which occurs in the above-cited dialogue as the main issue disputed by Abū 'Āmir and Muhammad. In order to elucidate the origin of this "inter-*hanīfī*" conflict, one has to study the reports concerning other rivals of Muhammad who are likewise presented as monotheistic *hanafā*.

The poet Abū Qays b. al-Aslaṭ²³ was the leader of the Median tribe Aws Allāh of the Aws, i.e., Abū 'Āmir's tribe. Ibn Ishāq reports that he kept his people back from Islam until after the battle of the Khandaq (SH/627). This was the only section of

15 Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 282.

16 *Isāba*, II, 137; *wa-kāna yadhkuru l-ba'īha wa-dīna l-hanīfiyya*.

17 See about him *Isāba*, VI, 33ff.

18 *ka-annaka turīdu l-hanīfiyya ilai samī'a bihā. ammā inna Abū 'Āmir qad saḥīḥahā wa-laysa alayhā* (Wāqidī, I, 367).

19 Gil, 90.

20 Ibn Hishām, II, 235. See also '*Uyūn al-ahbar*, I, 222; *Qisas*, 212.

21 Ibn Hishām, II, 235, III, 7f; Ibn Sa'd, II, 37; '*Uyūn al-ahbar*, I, 222; *Qisas*, 212.

22 Gil, 91.

23 See about him Sezgin, *GA5*, II, 287.

the Ansār in which there were no Muslims at all.²⁴ According to another report, Abū Qays fled to Mecca and stayed there with Quraysh until the submission of Mecca.²⁵

This opponent of Muḥammad is said to have been known in Yathrib as "*al-ḥanīf*."²⁶ Ibn Sa'd (d. 230H/845) stresses that he was more eager in observing the *ḥanīfiyya* than anyone else in Medina. He allegedly used to say: "I adhere to the religion of Abraham, and will not cease till I die."²⁷ The *ḥanīfiyya* of Abū Qays, like that of Abū 'Amir, seems to have been at variance with the *ḥanīfiyya* of Muḥammad, although they had a lot in common. Ibn Sa'd reports that Abū Qays "almost" embraced Islam, and used to refer to the *ḥanīfiyya* in his poems and to describe the prophet who was about to appear in Mecca.²⁸ The circumstances which hindered Abū Qays from embracing Islam are elucidated in a report recorded by Muḥulāy.²⁹ It says that Abū Qays resembled Qays b. al-Khaṭīm in poetic vigour and courage; he was God-fearing, a follower of the *ḥanīfiyya* and urged Quraysh and the Aws to follow the prophet, 'Abdallāh b. Ubayy (the leader of the Munāfiqūn in Medina and a relative of Abū 'Amir) heard about it and said to Abū Qays: "You have abandoned our party (*luḥta min hizbina kulla malāḥn*). Once you seek alliance with Quraysh and once you wish to follow Muḥammad." (*narratan talubu l-hiṭfa fī Quraysh wa-narratan bi-inibāi Muḥammad*). Abū Qays became angry and swore that he would not embrace Islam for a whole year. He died before the end of that year. Some say that before his death he was heard uttering the *shahāda*. This report indicates that Abū Qays was wavering between attraction to Muḥammad and loyalty to Quraysh. His faithfulness to Quraysh and, in fact, his devotion to Mecca, is clearly indicated in some poetic verses recorded on his authority,

24 Ibn Hishām, II, 80. See also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 384; Sam'ānī, 345.

25 *Isṭi'āb*, IV, 1734; *Isāba*, VII, 335.

26 Ibn Sa'd, IV, 383, 384.

27 *Ibid.*, IV, 384.

28 *Loc. cit.* See also *Isāba*, VII, 334.

29 Muḥulāy, 32^a-32^b. Cf. also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 385; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 274; *Isāba*, VII, 334.

where the basic tenets of his *ḥanīfiyya* are set out. The verses have already been noted by Wellhausen³⁰ and others,³¹ but no attention has been drawn to their special significance. Though Wellhausen cavils at the authenticity of these verses, his doubt does not seem justified. As pointed out above, themes like *ḥanīfiyya* and monotheism in general, which are treated at length in the Quran, may very well occur independently in the poetic utterances of other contemporaries of Muḥammad. The verses to which we refer are recorded by Ibn Ishāq.³² The first four run as follows (tr. Guillaume, 201):

1. Lord of mankind, serious things have happened /
the difficult and the simple are involved.
2. Lord of mankind, if we have erred /
guide us to the good path.
3. Were it not for our Lord we should be Jews /
and the religion of the Jews is not convenient.³³
4. Were it not for our Lord we should be Christians /
along with the monks on Mount Jailū.

The final two verses read [tr. U. R.]:

5. *wa-tākinā khuliqnā idh khuliqnā /*
ḥanīfan dīmunā 'an kullī jīl
6. *nasiqū l-hadya tarsufu mudhīnāin /*
mukashshafata l-manākibi fī-l-julūi
5. But when we were created, we were created /
with our religion distinct from (that of) any other generation
6. We lead the sacrificial animals walking obediently in iron /
their shoulders bare under the clothes.

The fifth verse suggests that the *ḥanīfiyya* is a primordial, natural religion preserving the basic monotheism inherent in man since

30 *Revue*, 238, note 1.

31 Eg., Buhl-Schneider, 69.

32 Ibn Hishām, II, 80. See also Ibn Sa'd, IV, 384-385.

33 Better: has no counterparts.

creation, and is thus distinct from any other acquired religion. The sixth line sheds light on the ritual practices of the *hanifs*. They lead sacrificial animals which are called *hady*. This term, which occurs also in the Quran (e.g. V/2, 95, 97), stands for sacrificial animals consecrated to the Ka'ba. They were usually slaughtered near the Ka'ba, especially during the 'Umra. In the above verse, the animals are described as *tarsuṭu muthinnāin*. *Rasafa* means to walk heavily with iron fetters and the like.³⁴ It seems that an allusion is here being made to a special feature of the sacrificial animals which used to be brought to Mecca. The Arabs used to hang on each animal a pair of iron horse-shoes, an act referred to in Muslim sources as *taqlīd al-na'*.³⁵ Muslim scholars explain that the horse-shoes symbolized travels.³⁶ In the same verse the sacrificial animals are also described as being covered with clothes named *jūlūl* through which their shoulders are seen. This again is characteristic of animals led to the Ka'ba during the pilgrimages. The act of covering the animals with these clothes is named *tajiṭil al-hady*.³⁷ The pilgrims sometimes used to make holes in the clothes so that the special scars made on the skin of the animal remained visible. The scars signified that the animal was consecrated to Allāh.³⁸

The verses of Abū Qays indicate that the ritual practices observed by *hanifs* like Abū Qays were focused on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and on the veneration of the Ka'ba.³⁹ In some further verses of Abū Qays recorded by Ibn Ishāq,⁴⁰ the attitude of the

34 E.g., Ibn Hisham, III, 332: ...*idh jā'a Abū Jandal b. Suhayl b. 'Amr yarsuṭu fi l-hadīd*.

35 E.g., *Qirā'*, 566.

36 *Faḥ al-bārī*, III, 438.

37 E.g., *Qirā'*, 569.

38 *Faḥ al-bārī*, III, 438-439.

39 Buhl-Schaeder (p. 69-70) contend that these verses were composed by a follower of Muhammad who wished to glorify the religion of Abraham as having the pilgrimage at its centre. But even so, this does not necessarily mean that the pilgrimage was not really a central element in *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

40 Ibn Hishām, I, 302 ff.

former towards the Ka'ba, as well as towards Quraysh, is stated very clearly. Introducing these verses Ibn Ishāq says that Abū Qays used to love Quraysh, being their relative by his wife, Arnab bint Asad. Ibn Ishāq adds that in this *qasīda* the poet magnifies the sanctity of Mecca. A few verses addressed to Quraysh may illustrate the attitude of Abū Qays: ⁴¹

aqīmū lanā dīnan hanīfan fa-annumū /
lanā ghāyatan qad yuhādā bi-t-dhawātibī
 Raise up for us a *hanīfī* religion /
 you are our object; one is guided in travel by heights
fa-qīmū fa-sallū rabbakum wa-tamassahū /
bi-arkāni hādihā l-bayyi bayna l-akhāshibī
 Rise and pray to your Lord and rub yourselves /
 against the corners of this house between the mountains
fa-in tahlūkū nahlik wa-tahlūk mawāsinū /
yūāsū bihā, qawlu mri'in ghayri kādhībī
 If you perish we shall perish, and the fairs by which men live / these are
 the words of a truthful man.

In these verses the people of Quraysh feature as representing the *hanīfiyya*; they are urged by the poet to go on observing it, while they are also requested to worship their Lord, i.e. Allāh, and to venerate the Ka'ba which functioned as His sanctuary, and was usually known as "*baytu llāhi l-haram*". The poet states that the existence of Quraysh is vital for the survival of the entire Meccan ritual system; this means that *hanifs* like Abū Qays regarded Quraysh as the legitimate custodians of the main centre of *hanīfī* worship.

At this point one may cast another look at the material concerning Abū 'Āmir. It seems that his *hanīfiyya* too was based on the veneration of the sanctity of Mecca and the Ka'ba, as well as on loyalty to Quraysh. Apart from his personal relations with Meccan leaders like Abū Sufyān,⁴² Abū 'Āmir greatly admired the

41 Tr. Guillaume, 128 ff.

42 Abū 'Āmir once presented Abū Sufyān with a *mawla* of his. See Ibn Sa'd V, 311.

ritual position of Quraysh. Al-Wāqidī reports that when Abū 'Āmir left for Mecca with fifty people of Aws Allāh, following Muḥammad's *hijra* to Medina, he said to Quraysh that their ritual conduct was right, whereas what Muḥammad had brought was wrong.⁴³ Furthermore, after the expulsion of the Jews of al-Nadīr to Khaybar, some of their leaders came to Mecca along with Abū 'Āmir and asked Quraysh to conclude a treaty against Muḥammad (see p. 86 above). The way in which the oath of this alliance was taken is most instructive. All parties reportedly entered behind the hangings of the Ka'ba and pressed their bodies against its walls.⁴⁴ This ceremony could not have taken place were it not for the deep devotion to the sanctity of the Ka'ba on the part of Abū 'Āmir as well as on the part of the Jewish leaders.⁴⁵

Another rival of Muḥammad known as a *hanīf* was the poet Umayya b. Abī l-Ṣalt from Ṭā'if.⁴⁶ His monotheistic orientation is indicated, to begin with, in the fact that some considered him a Jew.⁴⁷ But it seems that he was closer to people of the sort of Abū 'Āmir. This is implied by the fact that his name occurs alongside that of Abū 'Āmir in the commentaries on Qur'an VII/175 which deals with "him to whom we gave Our signs, but he cast them off and Satan followed after him..." (tr. Arberry). According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Ansār claimed that the verse referred to the *rāhib* for whom *masjid al-shiqāq* was built (i.e., Abū 'Āmir), whereas Thaqīf claimed that the verse dealt with Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt.⁴⁸ According to another tradition, the persons meant by this verse were people from among the Jews, the Christians and the *hunaḥā'*.⁴⁹

43 Wāqidī, I, 205-206.

44 Ibid, II, 442.

45 On the attitude of the Jews of Arabia towards the Ka'ba see more below.

46 See about him Buhl-Schaeder, 97 ff; Sezgin, GAS, II, 298 ff. For the traditions concerning him see already Sprenger, I, 110 ff.

47 *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

48 Suyūfī, *Durr*, III, 146. See also *Isāba*, I, 250; *Aghānī*, III, 187; *Bidāya*, II,

221; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

49 Suyūfī, loc. cit.

It is noteworthy that the *hunaḥā'* are mentioned in this interpretation alongside other monotheistic groups who "cast off" the "signs" of Allāh, i.e., rejected Muḥammad.

Like Abū 'Āmir, Umayya, too, used to wear rough hair clothes (*musūh*). Al-Zubayr b. Bakār (d. 256H/870) reports that Umayya was well versed in holy books, wore *musūh*, was God fearing and used to mention Abraham and Ishmael and the *hanīfiyya* in his poems. He prohibited wine-drinking and did not believe in the idols. He was a seeker looking for the true religion.⁵⁰

The nature of the poetry of Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt may be deduced from the fact that Muḥammad reportedly stated that Umayya "almost" embraced Islam in his poetry.⁵¹ The most characteristic verse recorded on his authority is perhaps the following⁵² (tr. Guillaume p. 30):

kullu dīnin yawma l-qiyāmati 'inda l- /

-lāhi illa dīna l-hanīfai būri

In God's sight at the resurrection every religion /
but that of the *hanīf* is doomed to perdition.

The authenticity of the verses attributed to Umayya has been doubted more than once.⁵³ The above quoted verse is described by Watt as "presumably of Islamic inspiration."⁵⁴ Against this supposition it may again be pointed out that the same themes may have been treated independently by the prophet as well as by various contemporary poets with a similar monotheistic orientation. As a rule, if one does not suspect the authenticity of the Qur'an one does not have any immediate reason for rejecting the authenticity

50 *Aghānī*, III, 187. Cf. also *Isāba*, I, 250; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116; Ibn Qurayba, *Ma'ārif*, 28.

51 Muslim, VII, 48-49; Bukhārī, V, 53; *Isāba*, I, 249; *Bidāya*, II, 228.

52 Ibn Hishām, I, 62. See also *Isāba*, I, 251; *Aghānī*, III, 187.

53 See for details Buhl-Schaeder 70; Sezgin, GAS, II, 299.

54 Watt, "Hanīf", *ET*?

of other utterances containing a similar religious or ethical message.⁵⁵

Umayya b. Abī al-Salt apparently never embraced Islam. There is a tradition recorded by Ibn 'Asākir on the authority of al-Zuhri (d. 124H/742) to the effect that Umayya met Muhammad in Mecca before the *hijra* and being deeply impressed by his preachings decided to embrace Islam. But in the meantime the battle of Badr took place, in which many Meccan leaders, including some of Umayya's relatives, were killed. He thereupon abandoned his former intention to embrace Islam and returned to Tā'if.⁵⁶ He also composed a special *qasida* lamenting the death of the Meccans at Badr,⁵⁷ and Muhammad reportedly forbade its recitation.⁵⁸ From that time on, Umayya used to stir up Quraysh against Muhammad.⁵⁹

Umayya, like the former *hanīfs*, doubted whether Muhammad represented the true *hanīfiyya*. On his death-bed he reportedly said: "I know that the *hanīfiyya* is true, but I have my doubts concerning Muhammad" (*...wa-anā alāmu anna l-hanīfiyya haqqun wa-lākinna l-shakka yudākhiluni fī Muhammad*).⁶⁰ Muhammad, on his part, said about him: "*āmana shi'ruhu wa-kafara qalbulu*."⁶¹ To this must be added the personal rivalry between them. Umayya, like Muhammad, tended to consider himself a prophet, and was jealous of Muhammad's prophetic success.⁶²

55 Not even *Hagarism* seems to produce conclusive evidence that the Quran is not authentic, i.e., did not come into existence in Arabia in Muhammad's days.

56 *Bidāya*, II, 226. See also Suyūti, *Durr*, III, 146; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116-117; *Isāba*, I, 250.

57 Ibn Hishām, III, 31 ff.; Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, I, 306ff.

58 *Aghānī*, III, 187.

59 *Loc. cit.*

60 *Ibid.*, III, 191; *Isāba*, I, 252; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

61 *Aghānī*, III, 191; Ibn Qutayba, *Mā'arif*, 28; *Isāba*, I, 251; *Bidāya*, II, 228; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 116.

62 Ibn Qutayba, *Mā'arif*, 28; *Aghānī*, III, 187; *Isāba*, I, 250; *Murūj*, I, 70-71. Cf. Suyūti, *Khasā'is*, I, 60. Umayya, like Muhammad, features in the sources as being subjected to a miraculous opening of his breast. See e.g., *Bidāya*, II, 224 ff.; *Aghānī*, III, 188 ff.; *Isāba*, I, 252.

The reports concerning the above mentioned *hunafā'* lead to the conclusion that their *hanīfiyya* consisted mainly of: (i) adherence to what they used to call "the religion of Abraham" (Abū Qays, Umayya); (ii) close contacts with Mecca and Quraysh, and devotion to the sanctity of the Ka'ba (Abū 'Āmir and Abū Qays). The link between these two elements seems to have been the conviction that Mecca was an Abrahamic *haram*, and that the Ka'ba was the House of Abraham. This idea was shared by Muhammad, as is attested in the numerous Quranic passages stressing the relation of Mecca and the Ka'ba to Abraham and Ishmael (e.g. II/125, 126, 127; XIV/35).

The break of these *hanīfs* with Muhammad seems to have been the result of a change in Muhammad's practical attitude towards Quraysh and Mecca, following the *hijra*. The act of the *hijra* from Mecca to Medina came after Muhammad had lost his last hope of establishing monotheism in Mecca through peaceful preaching to Quraysh. When the opposition of Quraysh became unbearable, for reasons which cannot be treated here, the prophet not only left Mecca, but started launching military attacks on Meccan caravans. Thus he violated the pre-Islamic sacredness of Quraysh as *ahlu llāh* which he had previously recognized.⁶³ For him Quraysh were no longer under God's protection, nor were they the legitimate agents of the Abrahamic sacredness of Mecca and the Ka'ba. Moreover, shortly before leaving Mecca, Muhammad stopped praying towards the Ka'ba and appointed Jerusalem as *qibla* instead, but only for a limited time. Soon afterwards he resumed the *qibla* of the Ka'ba, and from then on, his prophetic message was directed not only against *shirk*, but also and foremost against the *mushrikīn* themselves, i.e., Quraysh. In Muhammad's perception, they deviated from the true Abrahamic ideals, or, from the original *hanīfiyya*, which he had set out to restore.

At this stage, Arabian *hanīfs* had to decide with which side they should throw in their lots. Upholding Muhammad would have meant supporting the struggle against *shirk*, but it would also have

63 This is seen in *Sūrat Quraysh*. See Rubin, "IIA".

meant admitting that Quraysh had no longer any Abrahamic sacredness, and no longer deserved to be the custodians of the House of Allāh. In practical terms, it would have forced them to sever their connections with the central *hanīfī* sanctuary in Mecca. Those *hanīfs* whose personal ties with Quraysh were strong and whose devotion to the Pre-Islamic sacredness of Quraysh and the Ka'ba was great could not choose Muḥammad's side. So they became his enemies, and accused him of distorting the basic principles of the true *hanīfiyya*. They were persons of the sort of Abū 'Āmir, Abū Qays and Umayya b. Abī al-Ṣalt.

But there were also some other *hanīfs* who eventually did embrace Islam. One of them was the poet Abū Qays Ṣirma b. Abī Anas of Banū 'Adiyy b. al-Najjā.⁶⁴ His ascetic conduct resembled that of Abū 'Āmir. Ibn Ishāq reports that Ṣirma used to practice *tarahub* in the Jāhiliyya, and to wear *muṣūh*. He abandoned the idols, purified himself with water, and avoided menstruating women. He once contemplated becoming a Christian, but gave it up. He set up a private sanctuary of his own, into which impure people were not allowed. He used to say: "I worship the Lord of Abraham." When Muḥammad came to Medina, Ṣirma embraced Islam at a very advanced age.⁶⁵ His attachment to Muḥammad is demonstrated in a special *qasīda* he composed in praise of the prophet.⁶⁶ Ṣirma's relations with Quraysh and Mecca seem to have been less predominant than his wish to support a leader who, in his view, had good chances to succeed as a *hanīfī* prophet preaching the religion of Abraham in Medina. Or, one may suppose that the stress laid on the fact that when he became a Muslim he was already a very old man, indicates an apologetic elaboration typical of *akhbār* relating to several pre-Islamic poets who actually passed away before they had any real chance to embrace Islam.

64 See about him Buhl-Schaeder, 98; Sezgin, GAS, II, 294.

65 Ibn Hishām, II, 156. See also Ibn Qutayba, *Mā'arif*, 28; *Isī'āb*, IV, 1735, II, 737; *Isāba*, III, 422-423; *Muwā'ij*, I, 74.

66 Ibn Hishām, II, 157 ff.; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 268; Ibn Qutayba *Mā'arif*, 28; *Isī'āb*, II, 738.

Other names of pro-Muḥammadan *hunaḥā'* are mentioned by al-Tha'labī in his commentary on Quran III/113. This verse deals with members of *ahl al-kiyāb* who were "a nation upstanding" (*umma qā'ima*). Al-Tha'labī quotes a report to the effect that before Muḥammad came to Medina, there were there people like Aṣ'ad b. Zurā'a, al-Barrā b. Ma'rūr, Muḥammad b. Maslama and Abū Qays Ṣirma b. al-Aslat(ī), monotheists practicing ablution and the *sharā'i* of the *hanīfiyya*. When Muḥammad arrived, they believed in him and rallied round him.⁶⁷

2. Hanīfiyya in pre-hijra Mecca

Muḥammad's attachment to the idea of *dīn Ibrāhīm* started already before the *hijra*, while he was still at Mecca.⁶⁸ Here there were some older *hunaḥā'* who probably introduced this idea to the young Muḥammad. The most notable of them was Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl.⁶⁹ The name of this *hanīf* appears, to begin with, in a report recorded by Ibn Ishāq and others, mentioning four persons

67 Al-Tha'labī, *al-Kaṣṣa wa-l-bayān*, MS Tel Aviv University, 508750, p. 148.

68 Since the days of Snouck Hurgronje western scholars believed that the idea connecting the history of Mecca and the Ka'ba with Abraham appears only in verses labelled *Medinan*. But later on, scholars like E. Beck and others showed that the idea appears already in Meccan verses (for details see R. Paré, "Ibrāhīm", *ET*). In fact, there is striking evidence for the early possible date of the introduction of *dīn Ibrāhīm* in Arabia. Sozomenos (fifth century A.D.) who was born near Gaza and had a good knowledge of the Arabs, describes them as descendants of Ishmael who, due to the influence of their pagan neighbours, had corrupted the old "discipline" of their ancestor, according to which the old Hebrews used to live prior to Moses. Sozomenos even knows of a certain group among the Arab descendants of Ishmael who eventually came in contact with the Hebrews, and by learning from them resumed their original conduct. See *Sozomeni historia ecclesiastica* Lib. VI, 38, in *Parrologia Graecia* Vol. LXVI, 1411-1412. This reference was given to me by my student G. Algazi, who also translated the relevant passages. And see also a reference to the same source in M. Cook, *Muḥammad*, Oxford, 1983, 81, 92. And cf. the (unjustified) criticism of H. T. Norris in *BSOAS*, XLVIII 1985, p. 131.

69 Most of the traditions concerning this person were already gathered and translated by Sprenger (I, 119, ff.).

including Zayd, who decided to abandon the idolatry of Quraysh and left Mecca in search of the true religion. Zayd b. 'Amr is said to have been the only one who did not adopt Judaism or Christianity but rather insisted that he worshipped the Lord of Abraham.⁷⁰ The monotheistic attitude of Zayd is implied in some poetic verses attributed to him in which he voices his aversion to the worship of the Daughters of Allāh and other deities.⁷¹ In other verses he professes his exclusive devotion to Allāh.⁷² A purely monotheistic *talbiya* which he is said to have uttered during the *hajj* is also attributed to him.⁷³ Some reports describe a strife between Zayd and his fellow tribesmen. His paternal uncle, al-Khattāb (father of 'Umar) is said to have forced him out of Mecca so that he had to remain on Mount Hirā', being able to enter Mecca only secretly. Al-Khattāb reportedly feared lest other Meccans should follow Zayd in abandoning the old *din* of Quraysh.⁷⁴

Tradition lays special emphasis on Zayd's attachment to *dīn Ibrāhīm*. Asmā' bint Abī Bakr reportedly said that she had seen Zayd leaning his back against the Ka'ba saying: "Oh Quraysh, by Him in whose hand is the soul of Zayd, not one of you follows the religion of Abraham but I!"⁷⁵

70 See Ibn Hishām, I, 237 ff.; *Mukhabbar*, 171-172; *Munammag*, 175 ff.; *Bidāya*, II, 237 ff.

71 Ibn Hishām, I, 241; *Bidāya*, II, 242; *Aghānī*, III, 15-16; Zubayr b. Bakkar, I, 416-417.

72 Ibn Hishām, I, 246; *wa-aslamtu wajihī li-man aslamat / lahu l-ardu tahmilu sahran thiqāla*. See also Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 27; *Aghānī*, III, 17; Zubayr b. Bakkar, fol. 167^b; *Bidāya*, II, 242; Bayhāqī, *Da'ā'ir*, I, 400.

73 Ibn Sa'd, III, 380; Bayhaqī, *Da'ā'ir*, I, 384; *Bidāya*, II, 240; Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, I, 117.

74 Ibn Hishām, I, 246; *Aghānī*, III, 15; Zubayr b. Bakkar, fol. 166^b; *Murūj*, I, 70; *Bidāya*, II, 238.

75 Ibn Hishām, I, 240; *ma' asbaha minikum ahadun 'ala dīni Ibrāhīma ghayrī*. See also Ibn Sa'd, III, 381; *Isāba*, II, 614; Bukhārī, V, 51; *Aghānī*, III, 15, 16; *Mughniyā*, 107^a; Zubayr b. Bakkar, fol. 166^b-167^a; Khargushī, Brit. Lib., 29^a; *Bidāya*, II, 237; Suhaylī, I, 256.

Of special interest are the traditions recounting the meeting between Zayd b. 'Amr and the young Muhammad, which took place shortly before the latter's first revelation.⁷⁶ In the earliest versions of these traditions Muhammad presents Zayd with a bag of meat which he, Muhammad, had sacrificed to the idols. Zayd refuses to partake of it explaining to him that he does not eat what has been offered to idols. He also explains that he has searched for the true religion and is now a follower of the religion of Abraham.⁷⁷ The immediate motivation for the circulation of such a tradition was to highlight the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of Zayd as Muhammad's mentor. On the other hand, however, one must remember that even *faḍā'il* traditions may more often than not contain a grain of authenticity. This seems to be the case with the tradition about Zayd which implies that he was a monotheistic adherent of *dīn Ibrāhīm*, while Muhammad was still an idolater. Such a tradition could never have been invented, not even for the mere purpose of glorifying Zayd. From this tradition, which Muslim scholars indeed tried to reshape, one must, therefore, conclude that Zayd was indeed a *hanif* who introduced to Muhammad the monotheistic idea of *dīn Ibrāhīm*.

The Abrahamic *hani'iyya* of Zayd is described in the sources as being focused on the veneration of the Ka'ba. Many traditions assert that the Ka'ba served as Zayd's *qibla*. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230H/845) has recorded a tradition relating that Zayd used to pray facing the Ka'ba, saying: "This is the *qibla* of Abraham and Ishmael. I do not worship stones and do not pray towards them and do not sacrifice to them, and do not eat that which was sacrificed to them and do not draw lots with arrows. I will not pray towards anything but this House till I die."⁷⁸ According to another tradition Zayd used to say: "I follow the religion of Abraham and I prostrate

76 See a thorough examination of these traditions, Kister, "A bag of meat", *passim*.

77 E.g., Khargushī, Brit. Lib. 27^b-28^a; Kister, "A bag of meat", 270, with further references.

78 Ibn Sa'd, III, 380. See also *Bidāya*, II, 240; Zurgānī, VII, 27.

myself towards the Ka'ba which Abraham built." So he used to prostrate himself towards the Ka'ba in the Jāhiliyya.⁷⁹ A similar tradition recorded by al-Khargūshī (d. 406H/1015) relates that Zayd b. 'Amr used to pray towards the Ka'ba saying: "my Lord is the Lord of Abraham and my *dīn* is the *dīn* of Abraham." Waraqa b. Nawfal also used to pray towards the Ka'ba saying: "My *dīn* is the *dīn* of Zayd and my Lord is the Lord of Zayd."⁸⁰ People like Zayd believed that already Abraham himself used to pray towards the Ka'ba. The following *raja'az* verse is reported to have been uttered by Zayd when praying towards the Ka'ba:⁸¹

'*uḥnu bi-mā 'āḥa bihi Ibrāhīm /*

muṣtaqbilā l-qiblati wa-ḥuwa qā'im

I seek refuge in what Abraham sought refuge /

when he was facing the qibla while standing (in prayer).⁸²

Muhammad himself used the Ka'ba as *qibla* during the first years of his prophetic activity in Mecca, before adopting, for a limited time, the *qibla* of Jerusalem. The prophet is said to have prayed towards the Ka'ba in general,⁸³ or towards the Black Stone in particular,⁸⁴ or towards Maqām Ibrāhīm.⁸⁵

The authenticity of all these traditions which imply that the Ka'ba functioned as a *hanīfi* and Islamic *qibla* ever before Jerusalem replaced it, is self-evident in view of the fact that no one in early Islam was interested in fabricating traditions implying that the *qibla* of the Ka'ba could ever be replaced in favour of another *qibla*, be it only for a short time. Muslim theologians tried

rather to tone down these traditions, labelling them as *da'if*.⁸⁶ They gave predominance as *ṣahih* to other traditions stating that Muhammad, while at Mecca, never used the Ka'ba as *qibla*, but prayed always towards Jerusalem.⁸⁷ In this manner, the Ka'ba could never have been abrogated by the *qibla* of Jerusalem; there was only one abrogation, which occurred after the *hijra*, when the Ka'ba replaced Jerusalem forever.⁸⁸

3. The Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba and Quraysh

The observation that the *hanīfiyya* at both post-*hijra* Medina and pre-*hijra* Mecca was focused on the veneration of the Ka'ba, entails the conclusion that the Abrahamic sacredness of the Ka'ba is pre-Islamic by origin. This may be confirmed through some further reports concerning this sanctuary.

The pre-Islamic deity of the Ka'ba was Hubal. His was the one and only statue situated inside the Ka'ba. The rituals performed in front of this statue contained typical Abrahamic elements, circumcision in particular. Ibn Ishāq reports that when the Arabs wanted to circumcise a boy, or to marry someone, or

⁸⁶ See for instance, *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, I, 88: *wa-qāla ākharūna: kāna yuṣallī ilā l-Ka'ba fa-lammā tahawwala ilā l-Madīna istaqbala Bayta l-Maqdis. wa-hāhā dā'if wa-yalzamu minhu dawā l-naskhi marratayni.*

⁸⁷ E.g. *ihāf al-akhṣā'*, I, 183: *wa-l-ṣahih alladhī atbaqa 'alayhi l-akharūna annahu lam yuṣalli bi-Makkata illā ilā Bayt al-Maqdis.*

⁸⁸ For these matters see further Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, II, 287 ff.; *Bidāya*, III, 252 ff.; Zurgānī, I, 399 ff.; *Uns*, I, 193-194; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is*, I, 486; Rubin, "Ka'ba", note 29. A reference to the history of the *qibla* is made in *Hagarism*, 23-24, with the attempt to prove that originally the *qibla* was located not in Mecca but rather "somewhere in north-west Arabia". But the adduced archeological and literary evidence seems to prove nothing of the sort. It shows merely that in many cases, *qiblas* of certain mosques were not built in the mathematically exact direction of the Ka'ba but rather faced the general direction of Arabia. In Iraq it was, of course, west, whereas in Egypt it was east. In Judaism as well, it is not obligatory to search the exact direction of Jerusalem, the general direction of the "mizraḥ" (east) being perfectly sufficient.

⁷⁹ Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 400.

⁸⁰ Khargūshī, *Brit Lib.* 28^b. See also *Bidāya*, II, 237, 241.

⁸¹ Ibn Hishām, I, 245; *Aghānī*, III, 15; Balādhurī, *Anṣāb*, I, 117; Zubayr b. Bakkar, fol. 166^b.

⁸² For Abraham's prayer towards the Ka'ba see also Ibn Sa'd, I, 162, III, 379; *Isāba*, II, 616; *Bidāya*, II, 239; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 108.

⁸³ Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 401; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is*, I, 233-234; Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, II, 4.

⁸⁴ Halabī, I, 264.

⁸⁵ Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXX, 164, 165; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, VI, 369; Muqāṭil, II, fol. 26^b.

bury a body, or when they doubted someone's descent, they would take the person to Hubal with a hundred dirhams and a sacrificial animal and would cast the arrows of Hubal and thus know what their conduct should be.⁸⁹ That circumcision was common among the Arabs since pre-Islamic times is a well-established fact.⁹⁰ Muslim tradition, like the Jewish one, connects it with Abraham who was the first to be circumcised.⁹¹ The link between circumcision in Arabia and Abraham dates back to the pre-Islamic times. This link was already known to Josephus Flavius who says in his *Antiquities* that the Arabs "circumcise after the thirteenth year, because Ishmael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham of the concubine, was circumcised at that age."⁹²

The ritual of casting arrows in front of Hubal was in itself Abrahamic. The image of Abraham holding these arrows was actually painted inside the Ka'ba, and when Mecca was conquered by the Muslims, Muḥammad ordered it to be erased.⁹³

The Ka'ba was the site where the offering of Abraham's son was believed to have taken place. This is indicated, to begin with, in the reports about an ancient, dried up, pair of horns of the ram (*ka'bash*) which Abraham had allegedly hung on the spout of the Ka'ba till the days of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr when they disintegrated.⁹⁴ A similar pair of horns, claimed to be of the same significance, was hung in the Dome of the Rock since the days of 'Abd al-Malik, which reflects, of course, the view locating the Abrahamic sanctuary in Jerusalem. The 'Abbāsids, however, are said to have transferred these horns to the Ka'ba.⁹⁵ That the motive of the offering of Abraham's son was well-known already

in pre-*hijra* Mecca is indicated by the fact that it occurs in a Meccan sūra (XXXVII/102-111). It is also dealt with in poetic verses of Umayya b. Abī l-Salt, which appear to be entirely independent of the Quran.⁹⁶ Muslim tradition is not unanimous concerning the exact place of the sacrifice. One tradition states that Abraham slaughtered the ram "at the *Maqām*,"⁹⁷ but most traditions locate the whole scene in Minā, the most notable Arabian slaughter area near Mecca, where sacrificial rites were performed on each pilgrimage since pre-Islamic times.⁹⁸ As is to be expected, another set of traditions locates this crucial Abrahamic episode in *Bayt al-Maqdis*.⁹⁹

96 Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 195; *Qisas*, 83.

97 Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 55.

98 Some traditions mention specific sites at Minā, e.g., Mount Thabīr, the *Jamarāt*, etc. For these traditions see the commentaries on Quran XXXVII/107, and especially Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 51 ff.; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, V, 280 ff. See also Fākihī, 515^b; Azraqī, 401; *Qirā*, 540, 665 (where Masjīd al-Ka'bash in Minā is mentioned). The prophet is said to have slaughtered in Minā in the slaughter place of Abraham. See *Qirā*, 448. Some of the traditions do not specify the name of Abraham's son, whereas others say it was Isaac, in contrast to traditions naming Ishmael. For traditions naming Isaac see also Zurqānī, I, 98; Azraqī, 401; Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 192^a; *Qirā*, 448. For traditions naming Ishmael see also *Mustadrak*, II, 556; *Qisas*, 82, 83; Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 74^a. The view identifying Abraham's son with Ishmael was the origin of Muḥammad's epithet: *Ibn al-Dhabiḥayni* (son of the two offered persons, namely Ishmael and 'Abdallāh). See e.g., Khargūshī, Brit. Lib. 74^a; idem, Tübingen, 70^a; 'Ajūnī, *Kashf*, I, 199; Ḥalabī, I, 37; Zurqānī, I, 97-98; Rāzī, XXVI, 153; *Mustadrak*, II, 554; *Qisas*, 81; *Uns*, 41; Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is*, I, 112-113.

99 E.g., Muqāṭil, II, 112^b; Rāzī, XXVI, 155. Cf. Zurqānī, I, 98. Partisans of this view would, of course, name Isaac as the offered son, claiming that he was never in Arabia. For the discussion of these matters see Rāzī, XXVI, 153; Zurqānī, I, 98; *Mustadrak*, II, 555; *Uns*, I, 41.

89 Ibn Hishām, I, 160-161. See also Azraqī, 73; 'Adawī, 41^a.

90 E.g., Wellhausen, *Reste*, 174 ff.

91 E.g., Ibn Sa'd, I, 47, 51; 'Abd al-Razzāq, XI, 175. Cf. also *Faiḥ al-bārī*, XI, 74 ff.; Bukhārī, VIII, 81; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, I, 114 ff.; Tabarī, *Tafsīr*, I, 416.

92 Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book I, chap. XII/2.

93 Ibn Hishām, IV, 55; Azraqī, III, 113; Wāqidī, II, 834.

94 E.g., Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 189, 194; idem, *Tafsīr*, XXIII, 53; 'Adawī, 60^b; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, V, 284; *Qisas*, 80, 82; Rubin, "Ka'ba", note 142.

95 Wāsiṭī, 75-76; *Ithāf al-akhṣā*, I, 225, 244; *Uns*, I, 275.

The pre-Islamic Abrahamitic sacredness of the Ka'ba is clearly demonstrated in the belief that Abraham's footprints could be seen on one of its sacred stones. This belief is reflected in the very early verses attributed to Abū Ṭālib in which numerous pre-Islamic places of worship are described in a manner which is totally independent of the phraseology of later Islamic sources. The verse referring to Abraham's footprints reads:¹⁰⁰

wa-mawṭi'ī Ibrāhīma fī l-sakhi rabaṭan /
'alā qadamayhi kāfiyan ghayra nāṭi'
By Abraham's footprint in the rock still fresh /
with both feet bare, without sandals

Later on, Muslim tradition applied to the stone bearing Abraham's footprints the Quranic epithet "*Maqām Ibrāhīm*."¹⁰¹

Even the view that the *haram*, i.e., the sacred territory of Mecca, was founded by Abraham may be regarded as pre-Islamic in origin. Muhammad b. Ḥabīb (d. 245H/859) has recorded in his *Munammaq* a remarkable report saying that Quraysh once asked Thaqif to become their partners in the Meccan *haram*, in return for equal partnership of Quraysh in the territory of Wajj which was owned by Thaqif. Thaqif refused saying: "How can you be partners in a land in which our father settled, and dug it out of the rocks with his bare hands, without iron tools. And you have not founded the *haram* by yourselves. It was Abraham who founded it."¹⁰² In other words, Thaqif maintained that Quraysh had no right to make transactions with the Meccan land due to its Abrahamitic sacredness. Later on, Muḥammad established the *haram* of Medina on the model of the Abrahamitic *haram* of Mecca.¹⁰³

100 Ibn Hishām, I, 292. Tr. Guillaume, 123.

101 For the Islamic legends explaining the circumstances of these footprints see *Et*, sv. "Makām Ibrāhīm" (M.J. Kister).

102 *Munammaq*, 280: ...*kayfa nushrikukum fī wādin nazalahu abūnā wa-hafarahu bi-yadayhi fī l-sakhi lam yakhfiru bi-l-hadīd-wa-antum lam tajalū l-harama innamā jatalahu Ibrāhīm*...
103 *Eg*, Wāqidī, I, 22, before Badr.

The pre-Islamic sacred position of Quraysh as *ahlu l-lāh* (above, note 63) was also based on Abrahamitic elements. Some early verses ascribed to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib deal with the divine protection under which Mecca, the Ka'ba and Quraysh were put. One of these verses reads:¹⁰⁴

nahnu ahlu llāhi fī baldatinī /
lam yazaḥ dhāka 'alā 'ahdi l'Abraham
We are the people of Allāh in His town /
this has always been according to Abraham's covenant.

Generally speaking, the pre-Islamic Arabs seem to have been well aware of their genealogical descent from Abraham and Ishmael, and, in fact, the authority of Quraysh among the rest of the Arab tribes was based on this descent. Ibn Ḥabīb, for instance, reports that the people of Muḍar used to say: "Quraysh carried out for us the obligation of the *dīn* which Ishmael bequeathed us" (*qadar 'annā Quraysh madhammata mā awraṭhanā Ismā'il mina l-dīn*).¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Ibn Ishāq reports that the Arabs recognized that Quraysh were their leaders and that they were the noblest descendants of Ishmael (*sariḥ wuld Ismā'il*).¹⁰⁶ The immediate motivation for the circulation of such reports may have been the apologetic wish to stress the *faḍīl* of Quraysh, but it may again be stressed that even *faḍīl* material does not have to consist only of lies. In view of the rest of the material adduced in this paper there does not seem to be any serious reason for doubting the authenticity of the reports about the pre-Islamic Abrahamitic sacredness of the Ka'ba and Quraysh.

4. The origin of the idea of the "House of Abraham"
The view that the Ka'ba was the sacred "House of Abraham" is indeed very early. Its origins may be traced back to the *Book of*

104 Ya'qūbī, I, 253. See also Azraqī, 96; Fākihī, 416^a; 'Adawī, 52^a. Cf. Balādhurī, *Anṣab*, I, 69.

105 *Muḥabbar*, 264; Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm", 128.

106 Ibn Hishām, IV, 205.

