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# Ibn Ṣayyād as an Islamic “Antichrist”.

## A Reappraisal of the Texts<sup>1</sup>

Wim Raven

The Koran remains silent about the antichrist. But the appearance of antichrist-like figures is predicted in the so-called “Traditions of the Prophet” (Arabic: *ḥadīth*). A Tradition – here written with a capital T – is a report that is traced back to the Prophet Muḥammad by means of a chain of transmitters (*isnād*).<sup>2</sup> Accepting that such reports really go back to the Prophet is an act of faith; orientalist tend to date the bulk of them roughly a century after his death or later.

The Arabic word for antichrist is *al-dajjāl*, which goes back to the Syriac New Testament, *mʿshīhē daggālē*, “false messiahs” (Matthew 24:24). This collocation is, in the singular, also frequent in the Tradition literature: *al-masīḥ al-dajjāl*, as an alternative for simply *al-dajjāl*.<sup>3</sup> Further on we will use the word *dajjāl*.

The Islamic *dajjāl* will establish a tyrannical rule on earth during 40 days (or 40 years). He is fat, has a reddish face and fuzzy hair, and is blind on his right eye that looks like a swollen grape. On his forehead is written *KFR*, “unbeliever”. He misguides the people with false prophecies and miracles; sinners, hypocrites and Jews will follow him. His rule is not absolute: he cannot enter Mecca and Medina, the towns of the Prophet. When his time is up, Jesus will fight and defeat him.<sup>4</sup>

David Cook distinguishes various types of *dajjāl*.<sup>5</sup> One of them is a person named Ibn Ṣayyād, who was a little boy during the lifetime of the Prophet

1 There are three recent studies on Ibn Ṣayyād: David J. Halperin, “The Ibn Ṣayyād traditions and the legend of al-Dajjāl,” in *JAOS* 96 (1976), p. 213–225; Alfred Morabia, “L’Antéchrist (*ad-daǧǧāl*) s’est il manifesté du vivant de l’Envoyé d’Allāh?,” in *JA* 267 (1979), p. 81–99, and David Cook, chapter “The Jewish Dajjāl: Ibn Ṣayyād,” in his *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, Princeton 2002, p. 110–117. An older book that is still useful for this subject matter is D. S. Attema, *De Mohammedaansche opvattingen omtrent het tijdstip van den jongsten dag en zijn voorteekenen*, Amsterdam 1942.

2 An introductory article on this early Arabic genre is G. H. A. Juynboll, “Hadīth,” in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*.

3 E.g. T16 in the corpus of texts here below. “T1, T2” etc. refer to the corpus of texts here below.

4 A. Abel, “Dadjdjal,” in *EP*.

5 Cook, *Studies* (cf. fn. 1), p. 92–120.

Muḥammad and suspected to be the *dajjāl*; it is even told that the Prophet was curious and went to see him to establish his true nature. The boy had visions, had some supernatural knowledge and behaved like a pre-Islamic diviner and/or a prophet. The question whether he was the *dajjāl* or not was left undecided. Some of the Prophet's companions met Ibn Ṣayyād in later years and also wondered about him. Both Halperin and Cook call him the Jewish *dajjāl*, and Cook calls him a puzzle at that. Whether he was that Jewish remains to be seen, but a puzzle he is! I cannot solve the whole puzzle, but at least some parts of it.

There are some thirty Traditions about Ibn Ṣayyād, which will be presented in translation at the end of this article.

### *Splinters of "biography"*

Ibn Ṣayyād exists almost exclusively in the said Traditions and has not much of a life.

Even his name is uncertain: Ibn Ṣayyād or Ibn Ṣā'id. Both mean "son of the hunter". His given name is sometimes Ṣāfi; elsewhere it is 'Abdallāh, which is no more than a stopgap. He has no genealogy or tribal affiliation.<sup>6</sup>

He is said to have been instrumental in the Muslim conquest of the Persian city of Sūs by his mere presence, because the monks and priests on the walls claimed that no army could enter unless the *dajjāl* was in it (T27). That conquest took place in 639 CE.

Allegedly, he was welcomed by the Jews of Iṣfahān during its conquest by the Muslims in 642 CE.<sup>7</sup>

He claims to have had much trouble on account of his reputation of being the *dajjāl*, – but he does so in a prophetic Tradition, which is hardly a historical source (T19–21).

The poet al-Farazdaq<sup>8</sup> is said to have come out of Ibn Ṣayyād's house in Medina (T28). To fit in with the poet's biography, this should have happened after 675. Since Medina was believed to be out of bounds for the *dajjāl*, this would exonerate him – but apparently the text merely aims at emphasising the poet's bad company.

He was reported missing at the battle of al-Ḥarra in 683 (T29). However, the source is a Tradition again, and that battle is very "apocalyptic" and therefore suspect.<sup>9</sup>

6 Is his patronymic a remote reminder of Namrūd (Nimrod), the hunter, who was taught sorcery and divination by the Devil (al-Kisā'i, *Vita prophetarum*, ed. I. Eisenberg, Leiden 1923, p. 125, l. 2)? As for his improbable name Ṣāfi, mentioned in T2, T3, it means "pure".

7 Cook, *Studies* (cf. fn. 1), p. 115. The original Arabic texts are not available to me.

8 Well-known Arabic poet (d. ± 730), see R. Blachère, "al-Farazdaq", in *EF*<sup>2</sup>.

9 L. Veccia Vaglieri, "al-Ḥarra," in *EF*<sup>2</sup>; Cook, *Studies* (cf. fn. 1), p. 115 and General Index.

Traditions of the Prophet are of no use for historiography, and the few other fragments are all suspicious.

*The Jewish dajjāl*

Some of his attributes are indeed Jewish:

In T5, a *dajjāl* is born from a Jewish family, although the identification with Ibn Ṣayyād is only made outside the Tradition, in a short comment by the transmitter. In T10, his mother is Jewish.

In T4a, 4b Ibn Ṣayyād is not Jewish; only in the version T4c he is "a Jewish boy (*ghulām*) with a dangling lock of hair".<sup>10</sup>

The Jews of Iṣfahān welcome him (see above).

When the Prophet asks Ibn Ṣayyād, "Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?" he answers, "I testify that you are the apostle of the gentiles," and insolently asks whether the Prophet testifies that *he*, Ibn Ṣayyād, is the apostle of God (T1, T3). Wherever is spoken of gentiles, the opposite is Jews. When Muḥammad is the apostle of the gentiles, Ibn Ṣayyād must be the apostle of the Jews – the true prophet from his perverted point of view, but of course a horror in the eyes of Muslims. Another *dajjāl*, the one who lived on an island, in the story of the Jassāsa, also referred to Muḥammad as "the prophet of the gentiles," there apparently with no degrading intention.<sup>11</sup> The rest remains a puzzle.

Muḥammad subjects Ibn Ṣayyād to tests, one of which reminds us of his dealing with Jews. He asks him about the soil of paradise and, as the Prophet has to admit, Ibn Ṣayyād gives the right answer, "White flour, pure musk" (T13).<sup>12</sup> The Prophet himself knows the right answer, since he saw paradise during his ascension, but how could Ibn Ṣayyād obtain such knowledge? In another Tradition Muḥammad asks "the Jews" what is the soil of paradise. Their answer is half-baked, for they say, "dough," whereas it should have been "white flour", as in T13. The Prophet comments, "Dough comes from flour,"<sup>13</sup> thereby more or less honouring their attempt. In disputes with Jews, their answers are always incorrect, but often suggest that they do have some knowledge. Either they

10 The lock is not a Jewish characteristic. In pre-Islamic time, young boys (*ṣibyān*) wore forehead-locks; their heads were shaven with the exception of one lock. Hence, the lock made Ibn Ṣayyād a young boy, although he is called a *ghulām* here, a somewhat older boy (see below under "Precocity"), and also repulsive, since the Prophet disliked or even forbade this haircut (A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, Leiden 1938–1988, s.v. *dhu'aba* and *qaza'*).

11 Muslim, *Fitan* 119. About this *dajjāl* see Cook, *Studies* (cf. fn. 1), p. 117–120.

12 The reversal in T13 f seems secondary. The narrator must have thought of the creed-episode, where it is also Ibn Ṣayyād who interrogates the Prophet.

13 Tirmidhī, *Tafsīr sūra 74*, 3; shorter text in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 361.

know the right answer only approximately, or they deliberately falsify it.<sup>14</sup> The frightening thing here is that Ibn Ṣayyād has exactly the right answer to the question. In this respect, he is as good as the prophet himself, and therefore far more dangerous than the average Jew; that seems to be the point of this Tradition. Someone may have isolated this motif from the narratively richer *kāhin*-context (see below) and applied it in a way that reminded of Jews.

Since other Traditions predicted that the *dajjāl* would have followers among the Jews,<sup>15</sup> it is no wonder that Ibn Ṣayyād was given Jewish characteristics. The empty shell of his name was filled up with anything unpleasant, threatening or creepy, and to those who proliferated the Traditions, being Jewish was such a thing. But Ibn Ṣayyād's being a Jew occurs only occasionally. The Jewish characteristics are secondary and not omnipresent enough to call him "a Jewish *dajjāl*".

In T21, Ibn Ṣayyād complains about the way people treat him and argues he is *not* the *dajjāl*, since he is *not* Jewish.

In T26, Ibn Ṣayyād himself is not Jewish, but he has a Jewish man accompanying him, which is enough to make him suspect.

#### *Ibn Ṣayyād the kāhin.*

Ibn Ṣayyād has some characteristics of a *kāhin*, a pre-Islamic diviner.<sup>16</sup>

The hairy cloak and murmuring sound are typical. The young Ibn Ṣayyād was lying on his mattress in a hairy cloak of his, from which a murmuring or a low, distant sound was audible (T2, T3, T5, T10).

The Prophet put Ibn Ṣayyād's faculties as a *kāhin* to the test, as people used to do in pre-Islamic times,<sup>17</sup> by concealing something in his mind that the boy had to guess. It was the word *dukhān*, "smoke", or more fully, a koranic verse in which this word occurs, "A day when heaven shall bring a manifest smoke" (Q 44:10). Ibn Ṣayyād only managed to give "*dukh*" for an answer (T1, T3, T6, T7–8, T10, T15, T18).

Attempts to explain *dukh* by a speech defect of Ibn Ṣayyād (T18) or as a dialectal variant of *dukhān*,<sup>18</sup> only distract from the tenor of this Tradition,

14 The Jews are supposed to confuse the true with the false and to hide the truth knowingly (Koran 3:71). Cf. Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, p. 382, 295; Muslim, *Hudūd* 26.

15 E.g. Muslim, *Fitan* 124.

16 T. Fahd, "Kāhin," in *EF*; idem, *La divination arabe*, Leiden 1966, p. 92–104 *et passim*.

17 Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 24 vols. Cairo 1927–1974, ix, p. 54, quoted by Halperin, *Ibn Ṣayyād Traditions* 219a: a man concealed a grain of wheat in his horse's penis and said to the *kāhin*: "I have concealed something for you that I may test you; see what it is." The *kāhin* knew where to find it.

18 Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī discusses and rejects such attempts in a footnote to his edition of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1955 (at *Fitan* 86=T6a).

which amounts to showing the inadequacy of *kāhin*-knowledge: the boy comes near to the right answer, but fails to produce it in full.

The koranic verse Q 44:10 itself is often apocalyptically explained. There is no unanimity among the exegetes about what the smoke exactly is, but it is counted among the "portents of the Hour that have already passed"<sup>19</sup> – as Ibn Ṣayyād was one himself, if he were the *dajjāl*.

Very secondary is the application of the *dukhān*-motif in a Tradition that deals with the difference of opinion among Muslims: textual variants of Ibn Ṣayyād's answer (*zuh*, *zukh*, *dīkh*, *dakh*; obviously all misreadings or misspellings of the original *dukh*) are a motive for the Prophet to reprehend Muslims for having difference of opinion (T15).

The Prophet asks Ibn Ṣayyād what he sees. He answers, "I see a throne upon the sea (or: the water), with snakes around it." Then the Prophet comments, "That is the throne of the Devil" (T4, T10, T12).

"What do you see?" is a normal question to ask a *kāhin*,<sup>20</sup> but here the answer is outright diabolical. Primarily, it was *God's* throne that was upon the water while He created the heavens and the earth in six days.<sup>21</sup> But the Devil will put his throne on the water as well, as we read in a Tradition:

The throne of the Devil is on the sea (or: the water). (Then) he shall send out his hosts, and the people shall be tempted, and the highest (in rank) with him is the greatest seducer [...].<sup>22</sup>

This counter-throne is presented as one of the portents of the Last Hour. No wonder that Ibn Ṣayyād can see it, for he has knowledge of these portents – being one himself! – and is closely connected to the Devil. God's throne cannot be seen by ordinary mortals, let alone by a shady diviner.

#### *Ibn Ṣayyād the pseudo-prophet*

It is no wonder that Ibn Ṣayyād acts as a prophet, for a Tradition predicts that the Last Hour will not come "before thirty *dajjāls* have gone out, each of them alleging that he is the apostle of God".<sup>23</sup>

There is a certain overlap between diviner and prophet. That Muḥammad used a hairy cloak himself while receiving revelations could hardly be denied, since the Koran alludes to it.<sup>24</sup> But the diviner's typical murmuring sound was explicitly said *not* to be produced by the Prophet.<sup>25</sup>

19 Attema, *Mohammedaansche opvattingen* (cf. fn. 1), p. 29–35.

20 Already the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28:13 was asked this question.

21 Koran 11:7.

22 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 332, 366, 384; slightly different *ibid.* iii, 314, 354; Muslim, *Ṣifāt al-munāfiqīn* 66, 67.

23 E.g. Abū Dāwūd, *Malāḥim* 16/4333.

24 Koran 73:1; 74:1.

Ibn Ṣayyād's claim to prophecy is most manifest in the "creed"-unit (T1, T-4, T8-10). When asked, he recognises Muḥammad only as the apostle of the gentiles; or he does not even answer, but wants to be recognised as the true apostle himself. But Ibn Ṣayyād has many more prophetic characteristics:

"He alleges that there is nothing he meets on his way that does not speak to him" (T14). Muḥammad was spoken to by trees and stones before the first revelation.<sup>26</sup> Ibn Ṣayyād claims the same for himself, thereby implying that he is a prophet.

"My eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep," says Ibn Ṣayyād in T5. Muḥammad said the same about himself, but it holds true for all prophets in general, "The eyes of prophets sleep, while their hearts are awake".<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Ṣayyād is an exceptional child. Whereas Muḥammad's parents were of outstanding nobility and distinction, the parents of Ibn Ṣayyād are most peculiar, if not creepy (T5). His mother did not give birth for thirty years and then was pregnant with him for twelve months (T18). The pregnancy of Muḥammad's mother did not last that long, but was very special as well, she saw a light coming out of herself, by which she could see the castles of Buṣrā in Syria.<sup>28</sup> Ibn Ṣayyād was born circumcised and with his navel-string cut (T11), just like Muḥammad.<sup>29</sup>

Ibn Ṣayyād's precocity is another attempt to make him resemble a prophet, for prophets are precocious. When Muḥammad was with his wet-nurse, "he grew up like no other boy and before he was two years old, he could eat solid food."<sup>30</sup> Or even stronger, "He grew in one day as much as [another] child in a month, and when he was six months old, he could eat solid food".<sup>31</sup> Jesus was twelve years old when they found him "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions",<sup>32</sup> and the Gospels of the Infancy

25 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* (= 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām, *Das Leben Muḥammads nach Muhammed ibn Ishāq*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, 2 vols., Göttingen 1858-60), p. 171; translation by A. Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad. A translation of Ishāq's* (sic!) *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Oxford 1955. References are here to the pages of the Arabic original only, which are also printed in the margins of the translation; Fahd, *Divination* (cf. fn. 16), p. 173.

26 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* 151; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wal-mulūk (Annales)*, ed. M.J. de Goeje *et al.*, 16 vols., Leiden 1879-1901, i, p. 1143.

27 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* 266, 375; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* I, i, p. 113; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* i, p. 274; Bukhārī, *Manāqib* 24. The wording goes back to Song of Songs 5:2.

28 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* p. 102.

29 M. J. Kister, "... and he was born circumcised ... . Some notes on circumcision in Ḥadīth," *Oriens* 34 (1994), p.10-30, esp. p. 12.

30 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* p. 105.

31 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wal-athar*, 5 vols., Beirut (Dār al-Fikr) n.d., i, p. 277.

32 Luke 2:46.

abound in examples of his precocity. In his role as a prophet, Ibn Ṣayyād had to follow suit. As a newly born baby he screamed like a boy of one month or even two months old (T18). He was already acting like a *kāhin* while he was still a child and living with his mother (T2, T3, T5, T10). In another story he was "playing with the boys, being a boy himself" when Muḥammad came to see him (T1, T3, T8, T9). Muḥammad himself once was approached and hit by an invisible person when he was playing with the boys of Quraysh. That person – was it an angel? – came to warn him and gave him a painful punch, because he had uncovered himself during his play, which does not suit a prophet.<sup>33</sup> In another text Gabriel approached him "while he was playing with the boys" in order to open his breast and to purify his heart.<sup>34</sup>

Several Traditions reveal some editing efforts with reference to Ibn Ṣayyād's age. The phrase "being a boy himself" in T1 seems tautologous. The word *ghulām* (pl. *ghilmān*) that is used here means either "boy" in general, or "adolescent boy". T3b–e add that he "had approached puberty", i.e. not yet reached it, which makes him a little boy. A number of texts prefer the word *ṣibyān*, "little boys" (T3d–e, T9b–c). In T4c Ibn Ṣayyād is called a *ghulām*, but the fact that he is wearing a forehead-lock makes him a little boy.<sup>35</sup> Why was it so important to make him a little boy? One may assume that sexual maturity is a prerequisite for being a prophet. In the case of Muḥammad, boyhood stands for purity and freedom from sin. From the sins he might have committed as an adult, he was specially protected by God. With Ibn Ṣayyād this is different. He was already associated with evil as a little boy; he was just an evil prodigy.

Two beings (angels, men or birds) come to check on Ibn Ṣayyād. The Prophet's question, "What is it that comes to you?" he answers by saying, "A truth-teller and a liar come to me" (T1). In another story the question is, "What do you see?" and the answer, "I see two truth-tellers and a liar, or: two liars and a truth-teller" (T4).

To begin with, this is reminiscent of the fantastic story about the two angels that will accompany the *dajjāl*:

[...] with him [sc. the *dajjāl*] will be two angels, [...] one on his right side and the other one on his left side, and that is a temptation. The *dajjāl* will say: "Am I not your Lord? Do not I give life and do I not make to die?"<sup>36</sup> Then one of the two angels will say to him: "You lie," which no man will hear; only the other one, who will say to him: "You tell the truth," which will be heard by men, so that they think that he declares the *dajjāl* tells the truth, and that is a temptation [...].<sup>37</sup>

33 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* p. 117.

34 E.g. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, 5 vols, Cairo 1955–56, *Imān* 261.

35 Cf. fn. 10.

36 God says this of himself in Koran 7:172 and 2:258; cf. 44:8.

37 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* v. 221–222.



This sounds interesting enough as it stands, but the clue to this story lies in an episode in Muḥammad's life: the splitting of the belly. In its most archaic version, the Prophet is approached by two mysterious persons. "Two men in white raiment came and threw me down and opened up my belly and searched therein for I know not what."<sup>38</sup> This episode is placed in Muḥammad's early childhood, when he is still with his wet-nurse. In a later version the two men are not searching for something, but have come to purify his heart.<sup>39</sup> In a variant, the two men are two angels: Gabriel descends to earth, whereas Michael remains between heaven and earth.<sup>40</sup>

In yet another text, two "white birds like eagles" come to Muḥammad when he is still with his foster mother. The one bird says to his fellow, "Is it he?" The latter answers, "Yes" (follow the splitting and purifying of the belly).<sup>41</sup>

Umayya ibn abī al-Ṣalt, the poet who "aspired to prophecy," "hoped that it would be he" and "had nearly become the prophet of the Arabs",<sup>42</sup> had a similar experience:

[...] When he was sleeping, two birds came. One of them alighted at the door of his house and the other one entered and split [up his breast so that he reached] his heart. Then the bird put it back and the other one asked,  
 "Is he aware?"  
 "Yes."  
 "Is he pure?"  
 "He refused."<sup>43</sup>

The motif seems to be wide-spread: two beings (birds, men or angels), come to prospective prophets in order to check up on them. Ibn Ṣayyād's having such visitors suggests that he might be a prophet. Of course in his case there is something suspicious about the visitors, which shows that he is substandard as a prophet: one of them is a liar. In a later stage of the text, however, the phrase could also be taken in its plainest sense: the liar and the truth-teller are his two

38 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* p. 105.

39 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* p. 106.

40 Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, no. 1539. Here Muḥammad is not tested, but purified; after the purification, the seal of prophethood is put on Muḥammad's back. On the story about the splitting of the belly, see Harris Birkeland, *The legend of the opening of Muhammed's breast*, Avhandling utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, ii. Hist.-Filos. Klasse, no. 3, Oslo 1955, and Uri Rubin, *The eye of the beholder. The life of Muḥammad as viewed by the early Muslims*, Princeton 1995, p. 59–75.

41 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iv, 184–85; al-Dārimī, *Muqaddima* 3.

42 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī* (cf. fn. 17) iv, p. 122, 124. On this poet in general, see J. E. Montgomery, "Umayya ibn abī 'l-Ṣalt" in *EF*.

43 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī* (cf. fn. 17) iv, p. 125, cf. p. 127; al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr, Cairo 1974, p. 265–266. This and another version in: J. Horovitz, "Muhammeds Himmelfahrt," in *Der Islam* 9 (1919), p. 159–183, esp. 171 ff.

visitors, Muḥammad and ʿUmar. In a still later development the three visitors are the Prophet, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (T4a–b). Who would then be the liar(s), and why? This remains unclear.

Ibn Ṣayyād was not the only pseudo-prophet contemporary to Muḥammad. In the East of the Arabian Peninsula, a certain Musaylima had claimed to be a prophet of the same rank as Muḥammad and proposing to the latter to share power. Ibn Ṣayyād and Musaylima have much in common; both behaved like *kāhins*, each of them claimed to be a prophet. A visitor asked Musaylima once, referring to the source of his "revelations", "Who comes to you?" His answer was, "Raḥmān", the same deity that Ibn Ṣayyād swears by in T26.<sup>44</sup>

### *Demonic features*

As an antichrist, Ibn Ṣayyād obviously has something to do with the Devil. In his visions he can see the Devil's throne (T4, T10, T12). The Prophet exorcises him as a devil by using the word *ikhsa'*, "begone!" (T1, T3, T6–8, T10, T15, T18), which reminds of what Jesus had said to the Devil.<sup>45</sup> ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿUmar was to use the same word in T22, T26.

But Ibn Ṣayyād has also features of a *ghūl*,<sup>46</sup> a desert demon that is known for its capability to change its appearance (T25, T26) and its habit to stand in someone's way (T22–24, T26). Of course a *dajjāl* is stronger than a *ghūl*. ʿUmar, who was always ready to deliver blows, was known for having killed a *ghūl* in pre-Islamic times,<sup>47</sup> which is quite an achievement; but as the Prophet told him, Ibn Ṣayyād would be no match for him (T1, T3, T6, T10). As ʿUmar's son ʿAbdallāh was confronted with Ibn Ṣayyād, who blocked his way by inflating himself, he hit him repeatedly with his stick, but of course in vain.

### *Is it he?*

How should one know that Ibn Ṣayyād was the – or at least *a* – *dajjāl*? The word occurs in direct connection with his name in surprisingly few of the texts. The question, "Is it he?" is in the air often, and the answer mostly remains vague or is left to the audience. Only in a few cases a personage in a Tradition comments that Ibn Ṣayyād was "it"; in others, a transmitter does so, but outside the text of the *ḥadīth*.

44 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* i, p. 1937. Note that the adjective *al-rahmān*, "the Merciful", is also an attribute of Allāh.

45 Ὑπαγε σατανᾶ, "Begone, Satan!" (Matthew 4:10).

46 See D. B. Macdonald and Ch. Pellat, "Ghūl," in *EF*.

47 Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wâ-maʿādin al-jawhar*, ed. Ch. Pellat, 7 vols., Beirut 1966–79, ii, p. 290: *darabahā bi-sayfihī*, "he struck it with his sword." Killing a *ghūl* should be done with one blow; a second blow would bring it back to life.

As we have seen above, angels, men or birds may come to any prospective prophet to see “whether it is he”.

The Prophet and his companions come to see Ibn Ṣayyād to answer the same question. Even the Prophet cannot answer it. His interrogation does not bring him certainty (“If it is he...”; T1, T3, T6, T9–10); in another text he is frustrated in his attempt to listen in on the boy’s murmurings (T2–3, T10).

T4 ends with the Prophet’s judgment that Ibn Ṣayyād is muddled, which sounds like a benign simpleton rather than a *dajjāl*. But maybe the story is incomplete. Other stories that call him muddled or confused (T1, T3, T10) are longer and end in a more menacing tone.

T5 leaves the question unasked and unanswered, although it is highly suggestive. The identification of the boy as Ibn Ṣayyād is only done by the transmitter, outside the text proper.

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, who travels with the then grown-up Ibn Ṣayyād, feels a strong repulsion when he comes too close. Ibn Ṣayyād is aware of that, complains that his reputation has made his life difficult, and argues that he is not the *dajjāl*. Abū Saʿīd – and the modern reader – would almost believe him and feel sympathy. Yet, his last sentence ruins the good impression and makes him more suspect than ever (T19–21).

A positive statement about Ibn Ṣayyād being the *dajjāl* is given by various companions of the Prophet (T16–18), who even swear to it, or consider swearing to it. ‘Umar’s daughter Ḥafṣa knows it for certain as well. She recognises the *dajjāl* from a Tradition, which matched the report of her brother ‘Abdallāh, who had witnessed a fit of rage of Ibn Ṣayyād (T24–26). She advises her brother to stay away from him; she does not say why, but the suggestion is: since he is no match for the *dajjāl*.

#### *Establishing the date of Traditions: evidence from the isnāds?*

When we start from the assumption that most chains of transmission (*isnāds*) of the Traditions are fabrications (especially for the oldest two or three generations) and that the Traditions do not go back to the Prophet, where do they come from? G. H. A. Juynboll proposed to ask three questions: where and in what time did a certain *ḥadīth* originate, and who may be held responsible for bringing it into circulation?<sup>48</sup> When the contents of a Tradition do not give any clue, these questions can be answered sometimes by studying the chains of transmission (*isnāds*).

To give an impression, I have isolated the *isnāds* of one Tradition, the one about the soil of paradise:

48 G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in chronology, provenance and authorship of early ḥadīth*, Cambridge 1983, p. 7.

- T13a Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – Rawh [ibn 'Ubāda al-Baṣrī] – Ḥammād – Sa'īd al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī  
 T13b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – Yūnus ibn Muḥammad – Ḥammād – Sa'īd al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī  
 T13c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – Yūnus ibn Muḥammad – Ḥammād ibn Salama – Sa'īd al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī  
 T13d Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – 'Affān [ibn Muslim] – Ḥammād ibn Salama – Sa'īd al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī  
 T13e Muslim – Naṣr ibn 'Alī al-Jahḍamī – Bishr ibn Mufaddal – Abū Maslama [Sa'īd ibn Yazīd al-Baṣrī] – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī  
 T13f Muslim – Ibn abī Shayba – Abū Usāma [Ḥammād ibn Usāma] – al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī

The first name always is the compiler of a collection of Traditions, hence a written source, mostly from the ninth century; the last name refers to a "companion", i.e. a Muslim who had known or seen the Prophet during his lifetime. The companion is always the one who is believed to have reported the events described and the prophetic words he heard. The transmission was – theoretically – always oral.

Where was the Tradition put into circulation? This is a relatively easy question. The transmitters can be identified in biographical dictionaries, for instance in that of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (1372–1449 CE).<sup>49</sup> We see then that most persons in the above *isnād* except the oldest and the youngest ones originate from Baṣra in Iraq.

When and by whom was it put into circulation? A method of dating which is often applied is the so-called "common link method".<sup>50</sup> Sometimes, a number of transmitters are common to all variants of a Tradition. One can make a survey or a "tree" of all the chains. The youngest person that is common to all chains is supposed to have put the Tradition into circulation, for how would one otherwise explain that the part of the chain that mentions the oldest transmitters is always the same? In T13, the common part of the *isnād* is: Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī. Abū Naḍra would be the common link then. What can we know about this man, his beliefs, his interests? Unfortunately, the biographical lexica are disappointing. He died around 730 CE in Baṣra; for the rest, we read only trivialities about him.<sup>51</sup> The man just was not important enough.

49 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, 12 vols., Hyderabad/Deccan 1325–27.

50 This rather complicated method is explained by G. H. A. Juynboll, "Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān," in J. D. McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Leiden 2002–2005 and other articles by Juynboll, as e.g.: "Some *isnād*-analytical methods illustrated on the basis of several woman-demeaning sayings from *ḥadīth* literature," in *Qantara* 10 (1989), pp. 343–83.

51 Abū Naḍra al-Mundhir ibn Mālik ibn Quṭa'a, died about 730 CE. He took his wife on an expedition to Khurāsān, he wore a black turban and (sometimes) dyed his beard yellow (Ibn Sa'īd, *Ṭabaqāt* VII, i, p. 151; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* x, 302/527).

But was he really the common link? Should we perhaps exclude T13e from our considerations? That text has different wordings and may be therefore considered a different Tradition. In that case, the common link of the remaining five variants turns out to be Sa'īd al-Jurayrī.

Al-Jurayrī died about 760 CE in Baṣra. He was said to be confused in his old age, and therefore not a reliable transmitter.<sup>52</sup> For the rest we do not hear much about him.

Or would the person named Ḥammād be the common link? In T13a–b, the person who transmitted from al-Jurayrī is just called Ḥammād. In T13c–d he is called Ḥammād ibn Salama, in T13f he is called Abū Usāma, otherwise known as Ḥammād ibn Usāma. Ḥammād ibn Salama was a very famous transmitter of Traditions in Baṣra (d. 784).<sup>53</sup> Celebrities often figure as common links, but their (first) names were also often borrowed by people who wanted to embellish or forge an *isnād*, and there is an almost inevitable, sometimes deliberate chaos about their true identity.<sup>54</sup> Abū Usāma Ḥammād ibn Usāma does not fit in too well, since he was from Kūfa, whereas the other transmitters in the *isnād* are from Baṣra.

Whereas Abū Naḍra and al-Jurayrī were not famous enough, Ḥammād is too famous and therefore suspect. The situation is not at all clear then. We obtain the impression that our Tradition was proliferated in Baṣra around the period 730–760 CE or perhaps later; but why and by whom exactly remains unclear. In fact, the number of variant texts is too small in this case to make the common link-method convincingly usable.

T4b–c and T20a–b have a conspicuous part of the *isnād* in common with our T13: al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī. The mere Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī-part occurs even more often: also in T12a–d, T19, T20c. Hence, also for these Traditions the traces seem to lead to mid eighth-century Baṣra, but to go beyond this vague insight remains impossible.

A more promising case is T1. Five occurrences of exactly the same Tradition have a considerable part of their *isnād* in common: 'Abd al-Razzāq – Ma'mar – al-Zuhri – Sālim ibn 'Abdallāh – 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (744–827)<sup>55</sup> is the common link. He is also the compiler of a well-known collection of Traditions, the *Muṣannaf*, which indeed contains our T1. The somewhat later 'canonical' compilers are known to have drawn upon his stock. We therefore can safely assume that this Yemenite scholar proliferated the

52 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* VII, ii, p. 24; TT iv, 5/8.

53 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* VII, ii, p. 39; TT iii, 11/14.

54 Juynboll, *Muslim tradition* (cf. fn. 49), p. 145

55 See on him H. Motzki, "al-Ṣan'ānī" in *EF*<sup>2</sup>, and idem, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz. Ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1991, esp. p. 56–59.

Tradition. But this does not mean that T1 must be originally from the Yemen, or is to be dated within the lifetime of the compiler. It is included in a whole package of Traditions (entitled the *Kitāb al-Jāmi'*), which, according to Motzki, 'Abd al-Razzāq took over from his teacher Ma'mar ibn Rāshid. This scholar was born in Baṣra in 714 and settled in the Yemen, where he died in 770.<sup>56</sup> Yet, it is obvious that 'Abd al-Razzāq represents an important stage in the proliferation of this Tradition, which he may have edited as well.

### Conclusion

Ibn Ṣayyād, then, is not much more than a name, which could be filled up with negative attributes to taste. Maybe he was not invented completely from scratch. Was there once a man whom his fellow soldiers nicknamed *al-dajjāl* because he had only one eye? Keeping up the suspense about Ibn Ṣayyād's identity seems to be the main objective of many texts concerning him. The suggestion that the *dajjāl* may be, or may have been, already among us implies that the End is very near. That should suffice to make the flesh creep. Where and when the Ibn Ṣayyād stories came into being remains unknown.

### Corpus of texts

#### Introduction

This corpus of texts draws only on the earliest collections of Traditions, since the later collections often offer degenerated or mixed text forms and lack chains of transmission. The so-called "canonical" collections are quoted according to the system designed and explained by Wensinck.<sup>57</sup> The oldest non-"canonical" collections that were also put to use are those by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (744–827), Ibn abī Shayba (775–849), and Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād al-Marwazī (d. 844).<sup>58</sup> Al-Ṭabarānī (873–971)<sup>59</sup> is quoted only in so far as his texts are also

56 Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 10 vols., Leiden/Frankfurt 1967–2000, ii, p. 290–291.

57 A. J. Wensinck, *A handbook of early Muhammadan tradition, alphabetically arranged*, Leiden 1927; A. J. Wensinck et al., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, 8 vols., Leiden 1936–88.

58 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *Muṣannaf*, 11 vols., Beirut 1983<sup>2</sup>; Ibn abī Shayba, *al-Kitāb al-Muṣannaf fi l-ahādīth wa-l-āthār*, ed. 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Afghānī, 15 vols., Hyderabad/Bombay 1979–83; Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, Beirut 2003.

59 Abū al-Qāsim Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī 'Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī, 25 vols., Cairo n.d. Not included are his nos. 10119, 13146, 13148, 23/373.

found in older sources. In general, his texts are too far away from the oldest versions to be of interest here.

All texts are given with their chains of transmission (*isnāds*). The reader may find the long enumerations of transmitters cumbersome, but they are of vital importance for further research that may once be undertaken on the basis of this corpus. To facilitate such research, a number of persons are identified by references to Ibn Hajar's *Tahdhīb* (abridged: TT).<sup>60</sup>

In the headings of the texts I refer in one or two words to their subject matter. A number of texts combine several narrative units. It cannot be assumed that monothematic texts are older than the compound Traditions, or the other way round. A compound Tradition like T2 has the ring of an original narration, whereas the author of T10 apparently merely intended to place all narrative unities he knew in various versions after each other. In T1, the liar/truth-teller motive is so succinct and incomprehensible, that it cannot be the original version, whereas the guessing-game motive is expanded upon to elucidate it. None of our texts is the version in which the narratives were told for the first time. It is not possible to put the Traditions in a chronological order.

Explanation of the brackets:

(...) or (v.: ...): a textual variant between the Traditions.

(or: ...): a textual variant that was already mentioned in a Tradition.

(...): an Arabic word or name in transcription

[...]: addition of something that is not in any original text.

A compound Tradition attributed to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī

T1 *Prophet and companions pass by Ibn Ṣayyād. Boys playing. Creed. Liar/truth-teller. Guessing-game. Killing impossible.*

T1a 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* x, nr. 20817:

T1b Muslim, *Fitan* 97: 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd (TT vi, 455/940) and Salama ibn Shabīb (TT iv, 146/252)

T1c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* ii, 148/6368:

T1d Abū Dawūd, *Malāḥim* 16/4329: Abū 'Āṣim Khushaysh ibn Aṣram (TT iii, 142/272)

T1e al-Tirmidhī, *Fitan* 63d/2415: 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd

Common part of the *isnād*: 'Abd al-Razzāq – Ma'mar – al-Zuhrī – Sālīm ibn 'Abdallāh – 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar:

The Prophet passed by Ibn Ṣayyād (v.: Ṣā'id) with a party of his companions, among whom 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, when Ibn Ṣayyād was playing with the

60 Cf. fn. 50.

boys (*ghilmān*), near the fort of the Banū Maghāla, being a boy himself. He did not notice the Prophet until the latter struck his back with his hand and asked,

"Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

Ibn Ṣayyād looked at him and said, "I testify that you are the apostle of the gentiles."

Then Ibn Ṣayyād asked the Prophet, "Do you testify that *I* am the apostle of God?" The Prophet answered, "I believe in God and His apostles."

Then the Prophet asked, "What is it that comes to you?"

Ibn Ṣayyād answered, "A truth-teller and a liar come to me."

The Prophet said, "You are confused."

Then the Prophet said, "I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess." He had in his mind, "A day when heaven shall bring a manifest smoke (*dukhān*)."<sup>61</sup> Ibn Ṣayyād said, "It is smo" (*al-dukh*). The Prophet said, "Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits."

Umar said, "Prophet, allow me to strike off his head!" The Prophet said, "If it is he, you will not be given power over him, and if it is not he, there is no advantage (v.: for you) in killing him."

T2 Prophet goes to Ibn Ṣayyād. Palm-grove. Hairy cloak. Investigation frustrated.

T2a 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 20819: – Ma'mar

T2b Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* ii, 149/6371: – 'Abd al-Razzāq – Ma'mar

T2c Bukhārī, *Shahādāt* 3: – Abū al-Yamān – Shu'ayb

T2d Bukhārī, *Jihād* 160: – al-Layth – 'Uqayl

Common part of the *isnād*: al-Zuhrī – Sālim ibn 'Abdallāh – (several others) – 'Abdallāh ibn Umar:

The Prophet and Ubayy ibn Ka'b al-Anṣārī set out for the palm-grove in which Ibn Ṣayyād was (v.: to Ibn Ṣayyād, who they were told was in a palm-grove). When they (v.: the Prophet) had entered the palm-grove he began to hide among the trunks of the palm-trees, to secretly overhear something from Ibn Ṣayyād, before [the latter] could see him. Ibn Ṣayyād was lying on his mattress in a hairy cloak (*qatīfā*) of his, from which a low, distant sound (*zamzama*, v.: *ramrama*) was audible. His (v.: Ibn Ṣayyād's) mother saw the Prophet (as he was hiding among the trunks of the palm-trees,) and said (v.: to Ibn Ṣayyād): "Ṣāfi, ("–that was his name–") here is Muḥammad." Then he was roused (v.: he stopped; v.: he started to his feet). The Prophet said, "If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!"

T3 Composition of T1, T2 and a piece that is not related to Ibn Ṣayyād.

T3a Nu'aym ibn Hammād, *al-Fitan* 334a:

T3b Bukhārī, *Jihād* 178: 'Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad – Hishām – Ma'mar

61 Koran 44:10.



T3c Bukhārī, *Adab* 97b: Abū al-Yamān – Shu‘ayb

T3d Bukhārī, *Janā‘iz* 80b: ‘Abdān – ‘Abdallāh – Yūnus

T3e Muslim, *Fitan* 95/2930–2931: – Ḥarmala ibn Yahyā ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Ḥarmala ibn ‘Imrān al-Tujībī (TT ii, 229/426) – Ibn Wahb – Yūnus

T3f Muslim, *Fitan* 96/2930: – al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī al-Hulwānī (TT ii, 302/530) and ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd – Ya‘qūb ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d (TT xi, 380/741) – my father [Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d] (TT i, 121/216) – Ṣālih [ibn Kaysān] (TT iv, 399/682)

T3g Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* ii, 148–49/6369 and 6370: – Ya‘qūb – my father – Ṣālih

Common part of the *isnād*: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī – Sālim ibn ‘Abdallāh – ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar:

T3a The Prophet passed by Ibn Ṣayyād with a party of his companions, among whom ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, when he was playing with the boys (*ghilmān*), at the fort of the Banū Maghāla, being a boy himself. He did not notice it until the Prophet struck his back with his hand and asked,

“Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?”

Ibn Ṣayyād looked at him and said, “I testify that you are the apostle of the gentiles.”

Then Ibn Ṣayyād asked the Prophet, “Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?” The Prophet answered, “I believe in God and His apostles.”

Then the Prophet asked, “What is it that comes to you?”

Ibn Ṣayyād answered, “A truth-teller and a liar come to me.”

The Prophet said, “You are confused.”

Then the Prophet said, “I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess.” He had in his mind, “A day when heaven shall bring a manifest smoke (*dukhān*)”. Ibn Ṣayyād said, “It is smo” (*al-dukh*). The Prophet said, “Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits.”

‘Umar said, “Prophet, allow me to strike off his head!” The Prophet said, “If it is he, you will not be given power over him, and if it is not he, there is no advantage for you in killing him.”

Ibn ‘Umar said, The Prophet and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b set out for the palm-grove in which Ibn Ṣayyād was. When they had entered the palm-grove the Prophet began to hide among the trunks of the palm-trees, to secretly overhear something from Ibn Ṣayyād, before the latter could see him. Ibn Ṣayyād was lying on a mattress in a hairy cloak of his, in which a low, distant sound (*zamzama*) [was audible].

Ibn Ṣayyād’s mother saw the Prophet as he was hiding among the trunks of the palm-trees, and said to Ibn Ṣayyād, “Ṣāfi,”—that was his name—“here is Muḥammad.” The Prophet said, “If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!”

T3b–T3e ‘Umar set out for Ibn Ṣayyād (v.: with a party of companions of the Prophet; v.: with the Prophet and a group (of his companions)), until he (they)

found him playing with the boys (*ghilmān*; v.: little boys, *ṣibyān*), at the fort of the Banū Maghāla. Ibn Ṣayyād had approached puberty (v.: having wet dreams) by then. He did not notice (anything) until the Prophet struck his back with his hand and asked,

"Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

Ibn Ṣayyād looked at him and said, "I testify that you are the apostle of the gentiles."

Then Ibn Ṣayyād asked the Prophet, "Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?" The Prophet answered, "I believe in God and His apostles."

Then the Prophet asked, "What is it that comes to you?"

Ibn Ṣayyād answered, "A truth-teller and a liar come to me."

The Prophet said, "You are confused."

Then the Prophet said, "I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess." Ibn Ṣayyād said, "It is *smo*" (*al-dukh*). The Prophet said, "Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits."

ʿUmar said, "Prophet, allow (v.: let; v.: do you allow) me to strike off his head!" The Prophet said, "If it is he, you will not be given power over him, and if it is not he, there is no advantage for you in killing him."

(Sālim said,) I heard Ibn ʿUmar say,

(After that) the Prophet and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb (*al-Anṣārī*) set out for the palm-grove in which Ibn Ṣayyād was. When the Prophet had entered the palm-grove he began to hide among the trunks of the palm-trees, to secretly overhear something from Ibn Ṣayyād, before [the latter] could see him. (The Prophet saw) Ibn Ṣayyād (while he was) lying on his mattress in a hairy cloak of his, from which a low, distant sound (*zamzama*, v.: *ramrama*, v.: *ramza*, v.: *zamra*) [was audible].

Ibn Ṣayyād's mother saw the Prophet as he was hiding among the trunks of the palm-trees, and said to Ibn Ṣayyād), "Ṣāfi, (" – that was his name (v.: the name of Ibn Ṣayyād) – ")here is Muḥammad." Then he (v.: Ibn Ṣayyād) was roused (v.: he stopped; v.: he started to his feet). The Prophet said, "If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!"

(lacking in Bukhārī, *Janāʿiz* 80 and Muslim, *Fitan* 95) Ibn ʿUmar said, Then the Prophet stood up among the people and gave God his due praise. Then he mentioned the *dajjāl* and said, "I do warn you of him; there is no prophet who did not warn his people. Nūh (= Noah) warned his people, but I will say something about him to you that no prophet said to his people. You should know that he is one-eyed, and that God is not one-eyed."

T3f, T3g

The Prophet set out (to Ibn Ṣayyād) with a party of his companions, among whom ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, until he found Ibn Ṣayyād, as a boy who had

reached puberty, playing with the boys at the fort of the Banū Mu‘āwiya [rest of the Tradition not quoted].

#### Various other compound Traditions

T4 *The Prophet and two companions visit Ibn Ṣayyād. Creed. Throne. Liar(s)/ truth-teller(s)*

T4a Ibn abī Shayba, *Musannaf* xv, 19355: Yazīd ibn Hārūn – Sulaymān[ibn Bilāl] al-Taymī (TT iv, 175/304) – Abū Naḍra (TT x, 302/527) – Jābir ibn ‘Adallāh

T4b Muslim, *Ḥiṣṣat* 87: Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā – Sālim ibn Nūḥ (TT iv, 443/817) – al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa‘īd

T4c al-Tirmidhī, *Ḥiṣṣat* 63b/2413: Sufyān ibn Wakī‘ – ‘Abd al-A‘lā – al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa‘īd:

The Prophet met Ibn Ṣayyād, while Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (or: two men) were with him. The Prophet asked him, “Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?”

Then Ibn Ṣayyād asked him, “Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?” The Prophet answered, “I believe in God and His Apostle.<sup>62</sup> What do you see?”

Ibn Ṣayyād answered, “I see a throne upon the water.”

The Prophet said, “You see the throne of Iblīs upon the sea. What do you see?”

“I see two truth-tellers or two liars.”

The Prophet said, “He is muddled; leave him alone.”

T4b The Prophet, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar met him in one of the streets of Medina. The Prophet asked him, “Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?”

[But] he asked him, “Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?” The Prophet answered, “I believe in God, His angels and His books.<sup>63</sup> What do you see?”

He answered, “I see a throne upon the water.”

The Prophet said, “You see the throne of Iblīs upon the sea. What do you see?”

“I see two truth-tellers and a liar, (or: two liars and a truth-teller).”

The Prophet said, “He is muddled; leave him alone.”

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Koran 4:136.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Koran 4:136; 2:285.

T4c The Prophet met Ibn Ṣā'id in one of the streets of Medina and stopped him, a Jewish boy (*ghulām*) with a dangling lock of hair, and with him were Abū Bakr and 'Umar.

The Prophet asked him, "Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

Then he [sc. Ibn Ṣayyād] asked him, "Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?" The Prophet answered, "I believe in God, His angels and His books, His apostles and the Last Day.<sup>64</sup> What do you see?"

He answered, "I see a throne above the water."

The Prophet said, "You see the throne of Iblīs above the sea. What do you see?"

"I see a truth-teller and two liars (or: two truth-tellers and a liar)."

The Prophet said, "He is muddled; leave him alone."

T5 *The Prophet predicts the dajjāl. Old, peculiar, Jewish parents. One-eyed, harmful boy. Hairy cloak. Heart is awake.*

T5a Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad* no. 865

T5b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (v, 49–50/20525: – 'Affān

T5c Al-Tirmidhī, *Fitan* 63c/2414: 'Abdallāh ibn Mu'āwiya al-Jumāḥī

T5d Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* v, 40/20440 (different order of the elements): Zayd – Common part of the *isnād*: Ḥammād ibn Salama – 'Alī ibn Zayd – 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn abī Bakra – his father [Abū Bakra]:

The Prophet had said, "The parents of the *dajjāl* remain childless for thirty years. Then a son will be born to them, a one-eyed boy (*ghulām*), the most harmful and least useful of creatures, whose eyes (*sic!*) sleep while his heart is awake." The Prophet had described his father as follows, "His father is a very tall man, lean of flesh, whose nose is (v.: with a long nose) like a beak. His mother is a corpulent woman with enormous breasts."

Abū Bakra said, Then we heard that a boy had been born among the Jews of Medina. Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām and I went to see his parents and lo, they were as the Prophet had described. So we asked, "Do you have a child?" They answered, "We remained childless for thirty years. Then (a child) was born to us, a one-eyed boy (*ghulām*) (v.: this one), the most harmful and least useful of creatures, whose eyes sleep while his heart is awake." We left them, and there was the boy (*ghulām*), cast down on the ground in a hairy cloak, in the sun, making a murmuring sound (*hamhama*). He (v.: We) uncovered his head, and he asked, "What did you say?" We said, "Did you hear (v.: what we said)?" He answered, "(v.: Yes) my eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep."

Ḥammād said, "That was Ibn Ṣayyād."

64 Cf. Koran 4:136.

T6 *Guessing-game. Begone. Killing impossible.*

T6a Muslim, *Fitan* 86: – Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Numayr and Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū Kurayb; the wordings are from Abū Kurayb

T6b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* i, 380/3610)

Common part of the *isnād*: Abū Mu‘āwiya – [Sulaymān ibn Mihrān] al-A‘mash (TT iv, 222/376) – Shaqīq (TT iv, 361/609) – ‘Abdallāh [ibn Mas‘ūd]:

We went with the Prophet and he passed by Ibn Ṣayyād. The Prophet said to him, “I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess.” He (v.: Ibn Ṣayyād) said, “Smo” (*dukh*). The Prophet said, “Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits.”

‘Umar said, “Prophet, let me strike off his head! The Prophet said, “Leave him alone; if it is he whom you fear, you will not be able to kill him.”

T6c Bukhārī, (Qadar 14): – ‘Alī ibn Ḥafs and Bishr ibn Muḥammad – ‘Abdallāh – Ma‘mar – al-Zuhri – Sālim – Ibn ‘Umar:

The Prophet said to Ibn Ṣayyād, “I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess.” He said, “Smo” (*al-dukh*). He said, “Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits.”

‘Umar said, “Allow me to strike off his head!” He answered, “Let him be; if it is he, you cannot, and if it is not he, there is no advantage for you in killing him.”

T7 *Guessing-game. Begone*

T7a Bukhārī, (*Adab* 97a): – Abū al-Walīd

T7b Ṭabarānī (*Kabīr* 12763) Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Sawra al-Baghdādī and Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Bukayr al-Ṭayālīsī

Common part of the *isnād*: Salm ibn Zarīr (TT iv, 130/220) – Abū Rajā’ [Imrān ibn Miḥān al-‘Uṭaridī] (TT viii, 140/243) – Ibn ‘Abbās:

The Prophet said to Ibn Ṣayyād (v.: Ṣā‘id), “I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess; (v.: what is it?).” He said, “Smo” (*dukh*). The Prophet said, “Begone!”

T8 *Boys playing. Creed. Guessing-game. Begone.*

T8 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (*Musnad* iii, 82/11776): – Abū Nu‘aym – al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Jamī – Abū Salama – Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī

The Prophet came to Ibn Ṣayyād while he was playing with the boys (*ghilmān*). He said, “Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?” He said, “Do you testify that I am the apostle of God?”

The Prophet said, “I have concealed something [in my mind] for you to guess.” He said, “Smo” (*dukh*). The Prophet said, “Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits.”

T9 *Little boys playing. Creed. Killing impossible*

T9a Ibn abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* xv, 19376: 'Ubaydallāh ibn Mūsā – Shaybān – al-A'mash – Shaqīq – 'Abdallāh

T9b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* i, 457/4371: Yūnus – al-Mu'tamir – his father

T9c Muslim, *Fitan* 85/2924: 'Uthmān ibn abī Shayba and Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm – Jarīr: Common part of the *isnād*: Sulaymān al-A'mash (TT iv, 222/376) – Abū Wā'il Shaqīq ibn Salama (TT iv, 361/609) – 'Abdallāh ibn Mas'ūd:

We were (walking) with the Prophet and passed some little boys (*ṣibyān*) (at play), among whom was Ibn Ṣayyād. (When the boys saw the Prophet they dispersed; v.: The boys fled), but Ibn Ṣayyād sat down.) (The Prophet seemed to become angry (v.: dislike that) and said,

"What is it with you? (May your hands cleave to the dust!) Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

He said, "(No, but) do you testify that *I* am the apostle of God?"

'Umar said, "Prophet, let me kill this evil one (v.: him) (v.: to strike off his head)!"

But he answered, (Let him;) if it is he whom you fear (v.: think) he is, you will not be able to kill him (v.: to do it)."

T10 *A secondary, repetitive composition.*

T10 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 368/14960: – Muḥammad ibn Sābiq – Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭahmān (TT I, 129/231): Abū al-Zubayr [Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Makki] (TT ix, 440/727) – Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh:

A woman from the Jews of Medina gave birth to a boy who missed one eye and whose other eye was protuberant. The Prophet was afraid it would be the *dajjāl*. He found him under a hairy cloak of his, making a murmuring sound (*hamhama*). His mother let him know and said, 'Abdallāh, here is Abū al-Qāsim [=Muḥammad], so come out to see him. He came out of the cloak. The Prophet said, "Why did that woman do that, God fight her!? If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!"

Then he said, "Ibn Sā'id, What do you see?" He answered, "I see something true and I see a something false, and I see throne upon the water." The [prophet] said, "He is muddled."

Then [the Prophet] asked, "Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

He answered, "Do you testify that *I* am the apostle of God?"

The Prophet answered, "I believe in God and His apostles."

Then he went away and left him alone. But he visited him another time and found him in a palm grove [in a hairy cloak] of his, making a murmuring sound (*hamhama*). His mother let him know and said, 'Abdallāh, here is Abū al-Qāsim [=Muḥammad]. The Prophet said, "Why did that woman do that, God fight

her!? If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!" He had hoped to hear some of his words, in order to know whether it was he or not.

He said, "Ibn Ṣā'id, what do you see?" He answered, "I see something true and I see something false, and I see throne upon the water."

Then [the Prophet] asked, "Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

He answered, "Do you testify that *I* am the apostle of God?"

The Prophet answered, "I believe in God and His apostles."

So he was muddled. Then [the Prophet] went away and left him alone.

He visited him for a third or a fourth time, with Abū Bakr and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb accompanying him, in a group of Emigrants and Helpers, and I was also with him. The Prophet hastened ahead of us, hoping to hear some of his words. But his mother reached him faster and said, "Abdallāh, here is Abū al-Qāsim [=Muḥammad]." The Prophet said, "Why did that woman do that, may God fight her!? If only she had left him alone, he would have clarified (*bayyana*)!"

He said, "Ibn Ṣā'id, what do you see?" He answered, "I see something true and I see something untrue, and I see a throne upon the water."

Then [the Prophet] asked, "Do you testify that I am the Apostle of God?"

He answered, "Do you testify that *I* am the apostle of God?"

The Prophet answered, "I believe in God and His apostles."

So he was muddled.

Then the Prophet said, "Ibn Ṣā'id, we have concealed something for you; what is it?" He answered, "Smo, smo". The Prophet said, "Begone! Begone!"

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, "Prophet, allow me to kill him!" The Prophet said, "If he is the one, you are not the person to do it, for that will be 'Īsā ibn Maryam (= Jesus, son of Mary); and if he is not, you are not entitled to kill a man from the People of the Scripture."

The Prophet continued to be worried that he would be the *dajjāl*.

### Some monotheistic Traditions

T11 *Born one-eyed, circumcised, his navel-string cut.*

T11a 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 20831 – Ma'mar – Hishām ibn 'Urwa – his father ['Urwa ibn al-Zubayr]:

Ibn Ṣayyād was born blind in one eye and circumcised.

T11b Ibn abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* xv, 19374 – al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn – Sufyān – 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Umayr – Abū Salama – Umm Salama:

His mother bore him with his navel-string cut and circumcised (she meant Ibn Ṣayyād).

T12 *The throne on the sea*

T12a Ibn abī Shayba, *Musannaf* xv, 19378: 'Affān

T12b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 97/11926: 'Affān

T12c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 66/11629: Yūnus [ibn Muḥammad] (TT xi, 447/863)

T12d Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 388/15167: Mu'ammil [ibn Ismā'īl] (TT x, 380/682)

Common part of the *isnād*: Ḥammād ibn Salama – 'Alī ibn Zayd – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

The Prophet asked Ibn Ṣā'id (v.: Ṣayyād), "What do you see?" He answered, "I see a throne upon the sea, with (v.: the) snakes around it." The Prophet said, "That is the throne of the Devil (*iblis*)."

T13 *The soil of paradise*

T13a Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 4/11002) – Rawḥ [ibn 'Ubāda al-Basrī] (TT iii, 293/549) – Ḥammād

T13b Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 24/11193 – Yūnus ibn Muḥammad (TT xi, 447/863) – Ḥammād

T13c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 24/11194 – Yūnus ibn Muḥammad (TT xi, 447/863) – Ḥammād ibn Salama (TT iii, 11/14)

T13d Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 43/11389 – 'Affān [ibn Muslim] (TT vii, 230/423) – Ḥammād ibn Salama

Common part of the *isnād*: – Sa'īd [ibn Iyās] al-Jurayrī (TT iv, 5/8) – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

The Prophet asked Ibn Ṣā'id about the soil of paradise. He answered, "White flour, musk (v.: pure musk)." The Prophet said, "He is right".

T13e Muslim, *Fitan* 92/2928: – Naṣr ibn 'Alī al-Jahdamī – Bishr ibn Mufaḍḍal – Abū Maslama [Sa'īd ibn Yazīd al-Basrī] (TT iv, 100/168) – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

The Prophet asked Ibn Ṣā'id, "What is the soil of paradise?" He answered, "White flour, musk, Abū al-Qāsim." He said, "You are right".

T13f Muslim, *Fitan* 93: – Ibn abī Shayba – Abū Usāma [Ḥammād ibn Usāma] (TT iii, 2/1) – al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

Ibn Ṣā'id asked the Prophet (*sic!*) about the soil of paradise. He answered, "White flour, pure musk."

T14 *Ibn Ṣayyād hearing voices*

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 79b/11753 – 'Abd al-Muta'ālī – Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Umawī – Mujālid – Ibn Waddāk – Abū Sa'īd:

When Ibn Ṣayyād once was mentioned in the presence of the Prophet, 'Umar said, "He alleges that there is nothing he meets on his way that does not speak to him."



T15 *Difference of opinion among Muslims reprehended*T15a 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 20818: Ma'marT15b Ṭabarānī, *Kabīr* 2909: Muṭṭalib ibn Shu'ayb al-Azdī – 'Abdallāh ibn Ṣālih – al-Layth – 'UqaylT15c Ṭabarānī, *Kabīr* 2908: Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Dubrī – 'Abd al-Razzāq – Ma'marT15d Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan* 334bCommon part of the *isnād*: al-Zuhri (v.: Ibn Shihāb) – Sinān ibn abī Sinān – Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī:

(v.: When) the Prophet concealed “smoke” (*dukhān*) in his mind for Ibn Ṣayyād (v.: Ṣā'id) and asked him what he had in his mind, he answered, “Smo (*dukh*)”. (The Prophet said,) “Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits (v.: your day of death).”

When he left, the Prophet (v.: the people) asked, “What did he say?” Some people said, “*dukh*,” others said, “No, he said *zuh* (v.: *zukh*, *dīkh*, *dakh*).” The Prophet said, “You differ of opinion while I am still among you; after I will be gone, you will differ more strongly!”

Is Ibn Sayyād the *dajjāl*?T16 *No doubt that Ibn Ṣayyād is the dajjāl*T16 Abū Dāwūd, *Malāhim* 16/4330: Qutayba ibn Sa'īd – Ya'qūb ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān – Mūsā ibn 'Uqba – Nāfi':

Ibn 'Umar used to say, “By God, I do not doubt that the false Messiah (*al-masīh al-dajjāl*) is Ibn Ṣayyād.”

T17 *Swearing that Ibn Ṣayyād is the dajjāl*T17b Muslim, *Fitan* 94/2929:T17c Bukhārī, *Ṭisām* 23: – Ḥammād ibn ḤumaydT17d Abū Dāwūd, *Malāhim* 16/4330Common part of the *isnād*: 'Ubaydallāh ibn Mu'adh al-'Anbarī – his father – Shu'ba – Sa'd ibn Ibrāhīm – Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir:

I saw Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh swear by God that Ibn Ṣayyād (v.: Ṣā'id) was the *dajjāl*.

I asked, “Do you swear by God?”

“Yes,” he said, “I heard 'Umar swear to that in the presence of the Prophet, and the Prophet did not disapprove of it.”

T18 *Swearing that Ibn Ṣayyād is the dajjāl. Arguments: long pregnancy, precocity, guessing-game.*T18a Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* v, 148/21377: 'AffānT18b Ibn abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* xv, 19331: al-Mu'allā ibn Maṣṣūr (TT x, 238/436) –

Common part of the *isnād*: 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Ziyād – al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīra (TT ii, 140/236) – Zayd ibn Wahb – Abū Dharr [al-Ghifārī]:

T18a Swearing ten times that Ibn Ṣā'id is the *dajjāl* I find preferable to swearing once that he is not, (v.: and that because of something I heard from the Prophet). The Prophet sent me to his mother and said, "Ask her for how long she was pregnant with him." I came to her and asked her and she said, "I was pregnant with him for twelve months."

Then he sent me to her and said, "Ask her how he screamed (*ṣīḥa*) when he was born". So I went back to her and asked her. She said, "He screamed like a one month old boy."

The Prophet said to him, "I have concealed something for you [in my mind]." He said, "I had concealed the muzzle of a grey-white sheep, and "smoke" (*dukhān*)." He wanted to say "smoke" (*dukhān*), but he could not and said "smo, smo" (*dukh, dukh*). The Prophet said, "Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits."

T18b Swearing ten times that Ibn Ṣayyād is the *dajjāl* I find preferable to swearing once that he is not, and that because of something I heard from the Prophet. The Prophet sent me to Ibn Ṣayyād's mother and said, "Ask her for how long she was pregnant with him." She said, "I was pregnant with him for twelve months." (I came to him to report it.)

Then he said, "Ask her how he screamed (*ṣīḥa*) when he was born". So I went back to her and asked her. She said, "He screamed like a two months old boy."

Or the Prophet said to him, "I have concealed something for you [in my mind]." He said, "I had concealed the bone of a grey-white sheep". He wanted to say "smoke" (*al-dukhān*). The Prophet said, "Begone! You cannot anticipate the Decree (*qadar*)."

Ibn Ṣayyād argues that he is not the *dajjāl*.

T19 *Ibn Ṣayyād's isolation. His arguments. His knowledge of the dajjāl.*

T19a Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii, 26/11209: Yahyā – al-Taymī

T19b Muslim, *Fitan* 89/2927: 'Ubaydallāh ibn 'Umar al-Qawārīrī and Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā – 'Abd al-A'lā – Dāwūd

Common part of the *isnād*: Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

I accompanied Ibn Ṣā'id to Mecca. He said to me, "I have suffered under people who allege that I am the *dajjāl*. But did you not hear the Prophet say, "He will remain childless?""

"Yes," I said.

“Well, I have offspring. And did you not hear the Prophet say, “He will not enter Medina or Mecca?”

“Yes,” I said.

“I was born in Medina and now I am on my way to Mecca.”

Finally he said, “By God, but I do know where he is born and where he stays and where he is now.” And so he confused me.

T20 *Ibn Ṣayyād's isolation. His arguments. His knowledge of the dajjāl.*

T20a Muslim, *Fitan* 91: Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā – Sālim ibn Nūh

T20b al-Tirmidhī, *Fitan* 63a/2412: Sufyān ibn al-Wakī – ‘Abd al-A‘lā ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā  
Common part of the *isnād*: al-Jurayrī – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī:

T20a We went on a pilgrimage (or: a lesser pilgrimage), while Ibn Ṣā‘id was with us. We took up quarters, the people dispersed and only he and I were left behind. I felt very strongly repelled by him, because of what people said about him.

He brought his luggage and placed it next to mine. I said, “It is very hot today; would you mind putting it under that tree?” and so he did. Then a flock of sheep rose into view; he ran away and came back with a bowl and said, “Drink, Abū Sa‘īd!” I answered, “It is very hot and the milk is too hot as well,” but I had only an aversion to drinking, or: taking it from his hands.

He said, “Abū Sa‘īd, I have been thinking about taking a rope, hanging it on that tree and then hang my self to death, because of what people say about me. Abū Sa‘īd, to whomever the Traditions of the Prophet may have remained hidden, they are not hidden to you, the group of Helpers. And are you not one of the greatest experts in them? Did the Prophet not say, “He is an unbeliever?” Well, I am a believer. And did he not say, “He is infertile and wil have no offspring?” As for me, I left my son in Medina. And did he not say, “He will enter neither Medina nor Mecca?” I came from Medina and I am heading for Mecca.”

Abū Sa‘īd said, “I had almost absolved him, but then he said, “By God, I know him, I know his place of birth and I know where he is now.”“

Then I went on saying to him, “Cursed are you!” for the rest of the day.

T20b Ibn Ṣā‘id accompanied me while we went on a pilgrimage (or: a lesser pilgrimage). The people left and only he and I were staying behind. When I was alone with him, I felt very strongly repelled by him, because of what people said about him.

When I dismounted, I said to him, “Put your luggage under that tree!” He caught sight of a flock of sheep; he took a bowl and milked. He came to me with some milk and said, “Drink, Abū Sa‘īd!” But I had an aversion of accepting a drink from his hand, because of what people said about him, and said, “It is a

hot day; in this heat I do not like milk." But I had only an aversion to drinking (or: taking) it from his hands.

He said, "Abū Sa'īd, I have been thinking about taking a rope, fixing it on a tree and hanging my self, because of what people say to me and about me. To whomever the Traditions about me may have remained hidden, are you, the group of Helpers, not the greatest experts about them? Did the Prophet not say, "He is an unbeliever?" Well, I am a Muslim. And did he not say, "He is infertile and will have no offspring?" As for me, I left my son in Medina. And did he not say, "He will enter, or: settle in, neither Medina nor Mecca?" I live in Medina and right now I am travelling to Mecca with you."

By God, he continued talking like that, so that I thought, maybe they tell lies about him, but then he said, "Abū Sa'īd, I will give you true information. By God, I know him, I know his father and I know where on earth he is now."

Then I went on saying, "Cursed are you!" for the rest of the day.

T20c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* iii,79a/11749: Muḥammad ibn Ja'far – 'Awf – Abū Naḍra – Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī:

T20c We went with an army from Medina to the east, and in the army was 'Abdallāh ibn Ṣayyād. Nobody wanted to travel with him or keep him company, or to eat and drink, and they called him the *dajjāl*. When I dismounted one day at a halting place, 'Abdallāh ibn Ṣayyād saw me sitting, he came nearer and sat down next to me. "Abū Sa'īd," he said, "do you not see what people do to me? Nobody wants to travel with me or keep me company, or to eat and drink, and they call me the *dajjāl*. And you know, Abū Sa'īd, that the Prophet has said that the *dajjāl* will not enter Medina, and I was born in Medina! And you heard the Prophet say, "The *dajjāl* will have no offspring," whereas I have offspring. By God, because what these people are doing to me I have been thinking about taking a rope, withdrawing, putting it around my neck and hanging myself, to be delivered from these people. By God, I am not the *dajjāl*, but by God, if you wished, I would tell you his name and the name of his father and mother, and the name of the village he will go out from."

T21 *Ibn Ṣayyād's arguments. His knowledge of the dajjāl. He would not mind to be the dajjāl.*

Muslim, *Fitān* 90: Yaḥyā ibn Ḥubayb and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-A'lā – Mu'tamir (TT x, 227/415) – my father [Sulaymān ibn Ṭarkhān al-Taymī] (TT iv, 201/341):

Ibn Ṣā'id said something to me I felt ashamed of, "I absolved the people. What do I have to do with you, companions of Muḥammad? Did the Prophet of God not say that I would be a Jew? But I have become a Muslim. And he said I would have no offspring, but I do have offspring. And he also said, "God made Mecca out of bounds for him," but I made the pilgrimage."

He went on like that until his words almost got a hold on me. But then he said, "By God, I know where he is now, and I know his father and his mother."

Someone asked him, "Would it please you to be that man?" He answered, "If it were proposed to me, I would have nothing against it."

#### Ibn 'Umar meets Ibn Şayyād.

##### T22 *Ibn Şayyād inflates himself and fills the earth. Begone.*

Ibn abī Shayba, *Muşannaḥ* xv, 19375: 'Abdallāh ibn Idrīs (TT v, 144/248) – his father [Idrīs ibn Yazīd] (TT I, 195/366) – his grandfather [Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān] (TT xi, 345/661):

Ibn 'Umar said, I met Ibn Şayyād in one of the roads of Medina. He inflated himself until he filled the earth. I said, "Begone, for you cannot go beyond your limits. Then he contracted and I could pass."

##### T23 *Ibn Şayyād inflates himself and fills the earth. Ḥaḥṣa-episode*

Muslim, *Fitan* 98/2932: 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd (TT vi, 455/940) – Rawḥ ibn 'Ubāda (TT iii, 293/549) – Hishām [ibn abī 'Abdallāh al-Başrī] (TT xi, 43/85) – Ayyūb [ibn abī Tamīma] (TT I, 397/733) – Nāfi':

Ibn 'Umar met Ibn Şayyād in one of the roads of Medina and said something to him that made him angry. He inflated himself until he filled the earth.

Then Ibn 'Umar visited Ḥaḥṣa and told her about it. She said, "God have mercy on you; what did you want from Ibn Şā'id? Did you not know that the Prophet said, 'He will go out on account of a fit of anger that befalls him?'"

##### T24 *Ibn Şayyād inflates himself and blocks the streets. Ḥaḥṣa-episode*

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vi, 283/26487: Surayj [ibn al-Nu'mān] (TT iii, 457/856) and 'Affān [ibn Muslim] (TT vii, 230/423) and Yūnus [ibn Muḥammad] (TT xi, 447/863) – Ḥammād ibn Salama [TT iii, 11/14] – Ayyūb [ibn abī Tamīma] and 'Ubaydallāh – Nāfi':

Ibn 'Umar saw Ibn Şā'id in one of the streets of Medina and cursed him. He attacked him and he inflated himself until he blocked the street. Ibn 'Umar struck him with a stick he had with him until he broke it on him.

Ḥaḥṣa said to him, "What business of yours is he? What makes you so angry with him? Did you not hear the Prophet saying, 'He will go out on account of a fit of anger that befalls him?'"

##### T25 *Ibn 'Umar meets Ibn Şayyād twice. His change of appearance. Ibn 'Umar beats him. Ḥaḥṣa-episode.*

T25a Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vi, 284a/26488: Rawḥ ibn 'Ubāda

T25b Muslim, *Fitan* 99: Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā – Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan ibn Yasār  
 T25c Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vi, 284b/26489: 'Abd al-Wahhāb [ibn 'Aṭā] al-Khaffāf (TT vi, 450/935)  
 T25d Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vi, 284c/26490  
 Common part of the *isnād*: Ibn 'Awn – Nāfi:

Ibn 'Umar said, I met Ibn Ṣā'id twice. (Once) I met him (when some of his companions were with him) and I said to some of them, ("I beseech you by God, when I ask you about something, that you tell me the truth." "Yes," they said. I said,) "Will you tell me that it is he?" They said, "No(, by God)!" and I said, "You lied! By God, one of yours told me (, at a moment when he had less fortune and less children than you,) that he would not die until he had more fortune and more children than you (, which is the case now)." (Then I left him.)

Then I met him a second time, when his eye had changed (v.: protruded). I asked him:

"When did that happen to your eye?"

"I do not know," he said.

"You do not know, although it is in your head?"

"What do you want from me, Ibn 'Umar? If God wants to create it from that stick of yours, he does so (v.: he creates it from that stick of yours)."

He snorted as loud as I ever had heard a donkey snorting. Some of my companions allege that I struck him with a stick that I had with me until it broke, but I was not aware of that.

He went to visit his sister Ḥafṣa (, the mother of the believers,) and told her about it. She said, "What did you want from him? Did you not know that he (–she meant the Prophet–) said, 'His first going out among mankind will be on account of (v.: The first which sends him out among mankind will be) a fit of anger that befalls him?'"

T25c, T25d Ibn 'Umar said, I met Ibn Ṣā'id twice. (Once I met him while his companions were with him) [central part of the text not quoted]. (He snorted as loud as I ever had heard a donkey snorting. My companions allege that I struck him with a stick that I had with me until it broke, but I was not aware of that.)

Then I visited (my sister) Ḥafṣa, the mother of the believers, and told her about it. She said, "What did you want from him? Did you not hear that he [= the Prophet] said, 'His first going out among mankind will be on account of a fit of anger that befalls him?'"

T26 *Ibn 'Umar meets Ibn Ṣayyād and a Jew. Change of appearance. Begone. Ḥafṣa-episode.*

'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf* 20832: Ma'mar – al-Zuhrī – Sālīm – Ibn 'Umar:

One day I met Ibn Ṣayyād when he had a Jewish man with him. His eye protruded. His eye stuck out like the eye of a camel. When I saw it, I asked, "Ibn Ṣayyād, I beseech you by God: when did your eye protrude like that?" – or something in that vein.

"I do not know, by al-Raḥmān," he said.

"You lie! You do not know, although it is in your head?"

Then he rubbed it and he snorted three times. The Jewish man alleged that I struck his chest with my hand, but to my knowledge I did not do that.

"Begone! You cannot go beyond your limits."

"Indeed, by my life, I will not go beyond my limits."

I told this to Ḥafṣa, and she said, "Avoid that man, for we hand down the Tradition, 'The *dajjāl* will go out on account of a fit of anger that befalls him'."

#### "Biographical" texts

##### T27 *Ibn Ṣayyād's assistance at the conquest of Sūs.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* i, 2564–65: Then the monks and the clerics returned [to the battlements] and looked down upon the Muslims, shouting, "Hey you Arabs, do not bother, for no one will conquer this fortress but the Antichrist, or forces that have the Antichrist in their midst." Thus they shouted at the Muslims, greatly enraging them. [At the time] Ṣafī ibn Ṣayyād was with al-Nu'mān among his cavalry. The Muslims attacked the enemy with all their forces, saying, "We will fight them before we withdraw." For Abū Mūsā had not yet pulled out. Then Ṣafī, furious as he was, strode to the gate of al-Sūs and, kicking it with his foot, shouted, "Open up!" And then it blew open. The chains snapped, the locks broke and the other gates were opened too.<sup>65</sup>

##### T28 *Ibn Ṣayyād and al-Farazdaq.*

"When Ziyād had expelled me, I came to Medina, which was then governed by Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam. He was informed that I came out of the house of Ibn Ṣayyād, a man about whom the inhabitants of Medina alleged that he was the *dajjāl*, and whom nobody wanted to talk to or to sit in his company, but I was not informed about that."<sup>66</sup>

##### T29 *Ibn Ṣayyād's disappearance.*

T29a Ibn abī Shayba, *Musannaf* xv, 19377

65 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* i, p. 2564–65, transl. G. H. A. Juynboll in Ehsan Yar Shater (ed.), *Bibliotheca Persica, The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. xiii. *The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt*, New York 1989.

66 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī* (cf. fn. 17), xxi, p. 338.

T29b Abū Dāwūd, *Malāḥim* 16/4332

Common part of the *isnād*: 'Ubaydallāh ibn Mūsā – Shaybān – al-A'mash – Salim [ibn abī al-Ja'd] (TT iii, 432/799) – Jābir ibn 'Abdallāh:

We lost Ibn Ṣayyād at the battle of al-Ḥarra.<sup>67</sup>

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67 Abbreviations:

T1, T2 etc. refer to the Traditions and other texts in my corpus of texts.

TT = Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, cf. fn. 50.