

IBN TAYMIYYA ON ASTROLOGY ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THREE FATWAS*

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Lā uḥibbu l-aḥfilā ...
(Qur'ān, 6.76)

INTRODUCTION

According to Avicenna, the famous Abū l-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī¹ ‘was, in his time, the smartest man as far as swindling (*zarq*) is concerned. He wrote a book in which he provided instruction in swindling to every group of those [...] who held seances on the thoroughfares. He therefore also dealt with the astrologers, enumerating [for them] the various classes of people—men, women, children, the young and old, servants and others—and mentioning things appropriate for each. [The astrologers] memorized that book and, when they saw somebody, recited to him what they had memorized. Of course, the circumstances of the person [listening] were inevitably alluded to by some of what that fraudster (*mumakbriq*) mentioned and others were amazed by his statements, as we have mentioned. Such is also the case of those swindlers (*zarrāq*) who run about in places and roadways and dupe (*makbraqa*) women and children by telling them things of that sort. The veracity of such a fraudster is, however, greater than the veracity of one who pretends to possess the science of astrology (*ʿilm al-ḥkām al-nujūm*).’²

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¹ Humorist and astrologer admitted to the court of the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (Saymara, near Basra, 213/828 – Baghdad, 275/888). See C. Pellat, *Et*², Suppl., ‘Abu l-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī’.

² Ibn Sinā, *Nujūm*, ms. Leiden, f. 96r. H. Z. Ülken’s edition of Avicenna’s refutation of astrology (*Opuscles*, 49–67) is generally very bad. M. A. F. Mehren’s

During this same third/ninth century when al-Ṣaymarī taught astrology as a useful technique for charlatans, Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī (Balkh, c. 170/786–Wāsiṭ, 272/886),³ the greatest medieval astrologer, advocated its scientific character in terms of a late Neo-Platonic interpretation of Aristotle's natural philosophy.⁴ Despite its very uncertain nature, astrology never ceased to be widely practised in classical Islam, either in relation to magic, occultism and charlatanry,⁵ or in relation to cosmography, astronomy and *falsafa*. Of course, astrologers became the target of regular attacks and numerous condemnations, not only by theologians or jurists, but also by philosophers, mathematicians or astronomers, themselves threatened by association with astrology.⁶ However demand for the astrologers' services never dried up, in palaces and among the élites or in shops, markets and streets, among the lowest social classes.⁷ As G. Saliba, in his excellent investigation of the social status of astrologers in medieval Islamic society, rightly concludes: 'while trading in a craft which was both religiously and legally frowned upon, they still managed to carve a niche for themselves which was not too different from that occupied by other professional classes in that society.'⁸

French version (*Vues*) is not a scholarly translation but what he himself calls a 'compte-rendu'. It also contains several mistakes. For example, in the passage here translated, Mehren reads *rizq* instead of *zarq*, although the latter is clearly the reading in the Leiden manuscript. (On the confusion in the sources between *zarq* and *rizq*, see C. A. Nallino, *Zarq*, and C. E. Bosworth, *Underworld*, ii, 257–8. Avicenna's exposition of Abū l-'Anbas' book and the evidence of the *lectio difficilior* of the Leiden manuscript lead me to prefer *zarq* to *rizq*, in opposition to Nallino's and C. E. Bosworth's opinions.)

³ See R. Lemay, *Abū Ma'shar*, i, 2–49.

⁴ As pertinently argued by J. Lemay (*Islam*, 28–9), Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī's *K. al-Mudkhal al-kabīr*, in its version of 262/876, showed a serious and worthy effort to synthesize the astrological heritage of the Middle East (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran and India) and the Greek *falsafa*, recently brought into vogue in Baghdad under the patronage of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn; with the consequence that the book is visibly inspired by Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* as well as by the adaptation of Peripatetic naturalism to astrology accomplished by Ptolemy. It is indeed Aristotle himself who provided the theoretical framework on the basis of which astrologers were able to build their doctrines. In more than one text, he clearly affirmed the responsibility of the sun, the planetary spheres or the planets and their movements, in all processes of generation and corruption, including animal generation. (See the references given by G. Saliba, *Role*, 45; D. Pingree, *Astrology*, 297–8.)

⁵ See for example Abū Dulaf (4th/10th c.), *Qasida*, trans. Bosworth, *Underworld*, ii, 204, verses 88–9.

⁶ See G. Saliba, *Role*, 46–7. See also *History*, 55–61.

⁷ Ibn Khaldūn offers a psychological explanation for the phenomenon and shows its importance in the various social classes. See his *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, 19–38.

⁸ See G. Saliba, *Role*, 66.

Around 700/1300, ideas and debate reached an unprecedented level of sophistication and interdisciplinarity in the Mamluk sultanate. Philosophy, theology (*kalām*), sciences and even Sufism interacted on each other as if all the resources available had to be dialectically explored in order to find an exit from the cul-de-sac into which Peripatetic rationalism and Ptolemaic cosmography appeared to have led most Muslim intellectuals.⁹ Though perhaps inspired by despair, various disciplines relating to the sciences and wisdom (*ḥikma*) indeed appear to have experienced at that time some sort of 'Golden Age'.¹⁰ It is undoubtedly the case with mathematics and astronomy, the latter having then become, in D. King's phrase,¹¹ an 'astronomy in the service of Islam', i.e. clearly distinguished from astrology and therefore Islamically acceptable by the community of believers, increasingly dependent on the patronage of religious institutions, and dedicated to the lunar calendar, the times of prayer, *qibla* computations, etc., as well as to questions like the necessary reform of the Ptolemaic geocentric planetary model, all of which required high standards of mathematical sophistication.

Mamluk astronomers employed by mosques no longer needed to practise astrology to earn a living. The majority were able to concentrate on purely astronomical research, theoretical and practical. D. King, who catalogued 2,500 scientific manuscripts in Cairo's Dār al-Kutub, affirms: 'There is in fact remarkably little astrology in the [...] Mamluk scientific treatises known to me.'¹² Astrology nevertheless persisted. Though Mamluk society as a whole had become antipathetic to their functions, astrologers retained many of their clients, not only in the streets but also, sometimes, in the citadels of the ruling military class. However as their craft, definitely repudiated by astronomers, could no longer depend on them for precise celestial and mathematical data, it inevitably became more of an occult practice, closer than ever to magic, divination and charlatanry, getting its inspiration from the sorcerer's manual *The Goal of the Sage* (*Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*) of the pseudo-Majrītī or from al-Būnī's *Summa magica*, *The Sun of Supreme Knowledge* (*Shams al-ma'ārif al-kubrā*),¹³ rather than from Abū Ma'shar's *Great Introduction to*

⁹ See Y. J. Michot, *Vanités*.

¹⁰ See G. Saliba, *History*, 65; D. Gutas, *Thought*, 172.

¹¹ D. King, *Muwaqqit*, 155; *Astronomy*, 534–5.

¹² D. King, *Muwaqqit*, 155; *Astronomy*, 550.

¹³ See A. Abel, *Place*, 301–4; E. Savage-Smith, *Science*, i, 59–71: 'Magic and Islam'. It is the kind of astrology described in *The 1001 Nights*; see R. Irwin, *Nights*, ch. 8: 'The Universe of Marvels', especially 190–1, 202.

the *Science of Judicial Astrology* and, a fortiori, Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Tetrabiblos*.¹⁴

It is not surprising that such astrologers attracted the particular attention of jurists preoccupied with market inspection and the enforcement of public moral behaviour. At the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, Ibn al-Ukhuwwa deals directly with astrology in his famous treatise on *ḥisba*: astrologers, whose art is forbidden anyway, must practice on main streets, not inside shops or in byways.¹⁵ Similarly, 'Umar al-Sunāmī forbids the study of the stars 'except to determine the direction of the *qibla* and the going down of the sun'.¹⁶ As for Ibn Taymiyya (Harrān, 661/1263–Damascus, 728/1318), the most famous muftī and theologian of the Mamluk period, whose writings remain particularly influential in modern Islam, he does not speak of astrology in his own *Ḥisba*.¹⁷ As with many other topics, he nevertheless examines the question in several writings,¹⁸ in which he does not hesitate to repeat his analyses and condemnations. We can also be sure that, on some occasions, he provoked astrologers and attacked them publicly. He himself reports one such confrontation in Damascus, without unfortunately giving any date.¹⁹ He was also consulted in his capacity as a religious authority, and delivered at least three fatwas on the subject.

It is these three fatwas that are translated here, in the order in which they are published in volume XXXV of the collection of the Shaykh al-Islām's fatwas. Neither their context nor date of composition is known. They are very dissimilar in length, the first being twenty-five pages long, the second six, the last only a few lines—a fact of interest in that it reveals the latitude enjoyed by a muftī in his explanations of the religious Law. However, because they share the same character of juridical responsa intended to provide decisive guidance to the community, these three fatwas form a more homogeneous set of texts than pages that might have been selected from works of different kinds. Also, even if they do not constitute an exhaustive presentation of Ibn Taymiyya's doctrinal positions on astrology, they shed very useful light on the diverse elements of the debate

¹⁴ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) considers astrology as dead in his time and its practitioners as simply rehearsing (*taqlīd*) the sayings and errors of the astrologers of the past, without always understanding them (*Miftāḥ*, ii, 148).

¹⁵ See Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Ma'ālīm*, 67–8, 182–4; G. Saliba, *Role*, 49, 61.

¹⁶ See M. Izzi Dien, *Theory*, 128.

¹⁷ He only refers to 'the performance of magical tricks and natural sleight-of-hand and other ways of counterfeiting the miracles and signs of grace peculiar to the Prophets and Saints.' (Ibn Taymiyya, *Ḥisba*, trans. Holland, 59.)

¹⁸ See for example Ibn Taymiyya, *Radd*, 286–9; *MF*, xxv, 198–201; *FK*, v, 73–4.

¹⁹ See below, p. 161.

concerning this and other divinatory and magical arts within the Mamluk society of his time.

The reader will surely share my view that these fatwas entitle their author to full membership in the club of classical Muslim writers who attacked astrology. Yet, the Damascene Shaykh al-Islām has been, to date, almost completely ignored in the history of anti-astrology literature in Islam. During the last century, the list of representatives of this literature studied by Western islamologists has grown longer. In 1908 for example, C. A. Nallino quoted the names of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950?), Abū l-Qāsim ‘Īsā b. ‘Alī (d. 391/1001), Avicenna (d. 428/1037), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Averroes (d. 595/1198) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350).²⁰ Later on, I. Goldziher mentioned al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820), the Shī‘ī Mu‘tazilī theologian Hasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. c. 310/920), the theologian Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/935), al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) and Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567).²¹ During the last decade, G. Saliba added the names of the grammarian al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. c. 170/786), the poet Abū Tammām (d. c. 231/845), the mathematician, philosopher and astronomer Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/901), the mathematician Uqlidīsī (mid 4th/10th c.), the Ash‘arī theologian al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), the philosopher and man of letters Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023?), the astronomer and specialist in optics Ibn al-Haytham (d. 430/1039), the astronomer al-Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050), the algebraist al-Samaw‘al al-Maghribī (6th/12th c.), the philosopher Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. after 560/1164), the biographer Khalīl al-Safadī (d. 764/1363), the astronomer Ibn al-Shāṭir al-Dimashqī (d. 777/1375), the encyclopaedist Muḥammad al-Damirī (d. 808/1405) and the historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406).²² From G. Saliba’s lists, as in Nallino’s, Ibn Taymiyya’s name is omitted. In 1908, in a brief footnote reference to the longest of the three fatwas here presented, Nallino had observed that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s master, ‘il famoso ḥanbalita Ibn Taymiyyah’ had also fought against astrology.²³ In 1992, G. Saliba failed to pick up on this observation. I hope that the present work will go some way towards admitting Ibn Taymiyya to the history of anti-astrological polemic in classical Islam.

²⁰ See C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 19–38.

²¹ See I. Goldziher, *Attitude*, 196–8.

²² See G. Saliba, *Role*, 46–7; *History*, 55–61, 63–4.

²³ See C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 33, n. 3. Ibn Taymiyya is also absent from M. Ullman, *Natur*.

To be sure, Ibn Taymiyya's three fatwas will never supplant the long refutation developed by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in *The Key to the House of Happiness* (*Miftāḥ dār al-sa'āda*), which Nallino compared to Pico della Mirandola's *Adversus astrologiam*,²⁴ and G. Saliba called 'the most elaborate and comprehensive attack on astrology'²⁵ or the 'culminating'²⁶ point in the history of systematic religious attacks on astrology in Islam.²⁷ The examination of the positions of the master should, however, contribute to a better appreciation of the views of his famous disciple.²⁸

That said, one should not expect to find, in Ibn Taymiyya's three fatwas, well-structured and systematic refutations of astrology. The form and content of a fatwa are very much dependent on the nature and detail of the questions submitted to the mufti. Anyone acquainted with the Shaykh al-Islām's style knows, moreover, how prone he is to digression. In the first fatwa, after an introductory general condemnation of astrology and magic, he does address the particular questions that were put to him: What about astral determinism? Can God's oaths by the stars in the Qur'ān be used as arguments in favour of astrology? Can astrology be related to Idrīs? What about the tutelary star of the Prophet? He nevertheless indulges in digressions about eclipses, the phenomenon of historical forgeries and pseudographic writings, or Islam's grandeur... . The second fatwa is, also, mainly structured in relation to the various aspects of the question it answers, and this time without digressiveness: Is astrology forbidden, and by virtue of which *ḥadīths*? What are the practical measures to be taken by authorities and individuals alike to ban the practice of astrology from the public and private spheres? What personal position should one adopt vis-à-vis the phenomenon? As for the third fatwa, it is a short, direct and clear answer to the question raised.

As usual with him and typical of many debates around 700/1300, Ibn Taymiyya's interests and knowledge prove very wide. His fatwas are not only informed by the religious disciplines of Islam but also by his reading of the works of philosophers like al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Avicenna, or philosophizing theologians like al-Ghazālī and

²⁴ See C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 33.

²⁵ G. Saliba, *History*, 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 56.

²⁷ See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ*, ii, 125–233. This work has been analyzed in C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 33–7, and, more recently, by J. W. Livingston in *Ibn Qayyim and Science*.

²⁸ It is particularly disappointing that J. W. Livingston, who knows Ibn Taymiyya's longest fatwa against astrology, does not exploit it more in his analysis of Ibn Qayyim's *Miftāḥ*.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, as well as by an impressive familiarity with the exact sciences, history, occultism and comparative religion. Religiously speaking, he remains the doctor of strict obedience we know from other texts, opposed to any deviation from the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet, whether among scholars or the common people, in the form of doctrinal aberrations, pseudo-scientific mystifications or popular superstitions. That is precisely why, for example, he refuses to assimilate astrology to astronomy and, as a Peripatetic philosopher would also do for eclipses, defends the efficacy of secondary causes against Ash'ari occasionalism, speaks of the timing of God's action and, among other and more important determinisms, acknowledges some tiny celestial influence on newborns. Being a realist and a rationalist, the great Damascene Shaykh al-Islām does also remain, essentially, a medieval thinker. How else can one explain why, in the polemical controversy on the identity of the tutelary planet of Islam, he prefers Jupiter to Venus, instead of denouncing the whole debate as nonsense?

To the best of my knowledge there is no complete translation of Ibn Taymiyya's three fatwas against astrology into any European language.²⁹ The present translation is based on the texts published by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim in vol. XXXV of the *Majmū' al-fatāwā*, Rabat, 1401/1981 (hereafter, *F*).³⁰

I have compared the first fatwa in *F* to the texts of two other editions:

- the edition of Faraj Allāh Zakī l-Kurdī l-Azhārī in the first volume of *K. Majmū'a fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Taqī l-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya*, Cairo, 1326/1908 (hereafter, *M*).³¹
- the edition of Muḥammad and Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā' in the first volume of *al-Fatāwā al-kubrā*, Beirut, 1407/1987 (hereafter, *K*).³²

Apart from a few corrections and misreadings, *K* is a mere re-edition of *M*. It varies mostly in matters of layout and punctuation, but is of interest in that it identifies the Qur'ānic verses and the Prophetic traditions cited in the text.

The differences between *F* and *MK* are quite numerous and *MK* often present the better readings. In the *apparatus criticus* following the translation, I have not reported all these differences, but only the

²⁹ A few lines of the longest fatwa (I) are translated in a footnote by J. W. Livingston, *Ibn Qayyim*, 102, n. 39.

³⁰ *MF*, xxxv, 166–90, 191–7, 197.

³¹ *KMF*, i, 323–36.

³² *FK*, i, 57–75.

corrections I have adopted and the most significant variants. These are signalled in the translation by superscripted characters (^A, ^B, etc.). I have supplied section headings in order to make the divisions in the text more intelligible. The pagination of *F* is indicated in square brackets and used with the references in the *apparatus criticus*. References to the Qur'ān are indicated by a *Q* followed by sūra and verse numbers.

FATWA I

QUESTION

[166,7] concerning the person^A who believes that the planets have an influence on existence, or says that he has a star in the heaven thanks to whose fortunate character he is happy and because of whose unfortunate character he is unhappy, advances as an argument the words of God, Exalted is He: 'The ones administering an affair' (*Q.* 79.5) as well as His words: 'I swear by the locations of the stars!' (*Q.* 56.75) and says that these [things] are 'the art of Idris', peace be upon him. [This person] also says^B, about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that his star was dependent on Scorpio and Mars. Is this part of the religion of Islam or not? If it^C is not part of the religion, what must be done with one who says these things? Are those who rebuke such persons among the people who command what is to be acknowledged and prohibit what is to be condemned, or not?

ANSWER^D

INTRODUCTION

The stars as signs of God and means of His action

'The praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds'^E (*Q.* 1.1)

The stars are among the signs of God that demonstrate Him, praise Him and prostrate before Him, as God the Exalted said: 'Do you not see that to God prostrates whoever is in the heavens and on the earth, [167,1] the sun, the moon and the stars, the mountains and the trees, the beasts and many of mankind?' Thereupon He said: 'And many deserve the torment' (*Q.* 22.18). The distinction here makes it obvious that He did not refer to the prostration simply for reason of its encompassing demonstration of His lordship^A, as certain groups of

people say. All creatures indeed have in common to provide such a demonstration, and such is provided by mankind as a whole. He made a distinction and [therein] taught us that this is an added value^B of the kind special to the believer and by which [the believer] is distinguished from the unbeliever, who deserves the torment.³³

Moreover, [God] has set in the [stars] uses for His servants and has subjected them to the latter, as He has said, Exalted is He: 'He subjected to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses, and He subjected to you the night and the day' (Q. 14.33). He also said: 'The sun, the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command ...' (Q. 7.45). And He said: 'He subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all of it, as deriving from Him' (Q. 45.13). Among their apparent useful effects is what He sets up, Praised is He, by the sun: heat and cold, night and day, the maturation^C of fruits, the creation of animals, plants and minerals. The same for what He also sets up by it, for them^D, such as moistening, drying and other observed^E affairs. He sets likewise radiance and burning in the fire, purification and irrigation in the water, and the other similar blessings that He mentions in His Book, as He has said, Exalted is He: 'We sent down pure water from the sky, that We may thereby revive a dead land, and give to drink thereof to many of the [beings] We have created, cattle and men' (Q. 25.48–9).

God has informed [us] in various places that He sets up^F the life of some of His creatures by others. Thus said He, the Exalted: '... that We may *thereby* revive a dead land' (Q. 25.49). Also: 'And He is Who sends the winds as a glad tiding heralding His mercy—so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land, then We send down the water *thereby*, and *thereby* do We bring forth [168,1] fruits of every kind' (Q. 7.57). And likewise: '... the water which God sends down from the sky^A and *thereby* revives the earth after its death, and disperses therein all kinds of beasts' (Q. 2.164).

Whoever among the theologians of the *Kalām* says that God does these affairs *with* ('*inda*') them, not *by* ('*bi-*') them,³⁴ his expression is in conflict with the Book of the Exalted God and with the observed^B

³³ Creatures, good or bad, by the mere fact of being creatures and totally submitted to the ontological will of God, demonstrate His absolute lordship (*rubūbiyya*). In Ibn Taymiyya's opinion, the prostration referred to in Q. 22.18 is not an aspect of this ontological dependence of all creatures on their Lord but a religious act, which must be understood in relation to God's godhead (*ilāhiyya*), i.e. His right to be loved, feared and worshipped, and which, distinguishing faith and unbelief, is therefore not universal. See the pages of *MF* translated in Michot, *Textes spirituels II, III, IV*.

³⁴ 'There are people who reject the forces and the natures, as is the case with Abū l-Iḥāsān [al-Ash'arī] and those who followed him, among the companions of Mālik,

affairs. Likewise, whoever pretends that [these things] are acting independently is an associationist^C in conflict with reason and religion. Concerning the uses of the stars, He has also informed [us], Praised is He, in His Book [that men] are guided 'by them in the darkensses of the land and the sea' (see *Q.* 6.97). He has informed [us] that they are the adornment of the lowest heaven (see *Q.* 37.6, 67.5), and He has informed [us] that the Satans are stoned by the stars (see *Q.* 57.5). However, the stars by which the Satans are stoned are of another species, different from the stars fixed in the heaven by which men are guided. Indeed, these do not leave their location, contrary to the former. And these have a reality which differs from those, although the noun 'stars'^D brings them together as the nouns 'beast' and 'animal' bring together the angel, the Adamic [beings], the brutes, the flies and the mosquitos.

The function and wisdom of eclipses

It is established about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, by the valid information about which the savants are in agreement, that he commanded prayer in the event of an eclipse of the sun and of the moon, and commanded invoking [God at that time] and asking [His] forgiveness, giving alms and freeing slaves. 'The sun and the moon, he said, are two of the signs of God. They do not become eclipsed for the death of anybody nor for his birth.'³⁵ And in [another] report: '... two of the signs of God by which He frightens His servants.'³⁶ He said this to refute what some ignorant people were saying, i.e. that the sun had become eclipsed because of the death of Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace. The sun indeed became eclipsed on the day of his death³⁷ and, when it became eclipsed, some people offered the opinion that its eclipse was due to his death and that his death was [169,1] the cause of its eclipse,

al-Shāfi'i, Ahmad [b. Hanbal] and others. Those who reject the forces and the natures also reject the causes and say that God acts *with* ('*inda*) them, not *by* (*bi-*) them. "God", they say, "does not satiate *by* the bread, nor irrigates *by* the water, nor makes the seed grow *by* the water but acts *with* that, not *by* that." These people are not only in conflict with the Book, the Tradition and the consensus of the Ancients but, also, with clear reason and sense perception.' (*MF*, ix, 287-8.)

³⁵ See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kusūf*, iii, 27 ('Ālam. 1499); Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, *Kuḥfīyyūn*, iv, 245 ('Ālam. 17472); Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, i 1, 91.

³⁶ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Jum'ā*, ii, 36 ('Ālam. 990); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kusūf*, iii, 29 ('Ālam. 1504).

³⁷ Ibrāhīm (8-10/630-631-2; see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, i 1, 86-93), the son of Prophet Muḥammad and Mārya the Copt died a few months before the Prophet on a date which has been much debated although it should be easy to specify as a solar eclipse happened on that day.

just as disasters happen^A among people as a result of the death of some great men. The Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, therefore made it obvious that the eclipses of the sun and of the moon do not result from the death of anybody among the inhabitants of the earth nor from his birth. He denied^B death and life having any influence^C on an eclipse of the sun and of the moon and informed [us] that both are among the signs of God and that He frightens His servants [thereby].

He reminded [us] that the wisdom of such [events] consists in frightening the servants [of God], just as frightening them is [what happens] in the case of other signs like strong winds and earthquakes, droughts, uninterrupted rains and similar phenomena that can be a torment. God tormented likewise [various] communities by the wind, the roaring blast and the deluge. The Exalted said: 'Each one We seized for his sin; of them was he on whom We sent a tornado, and of them was he who was caught by the roaring blast, and of them was he whom We caused the earth to swallow, and of them was he whom We drowned' (Q. 29.40). He also said: 'We gave Thamūd the she-camel as a clear portent, but they treated her unjustly. We do not send [Our] signs but to frighten [them]' (Q. 17.59).

Celestial influences, their limits and how to protect oneself against some of them

The fact that [the Prophet] informs [us] that God^D frightens His servants by such a [phenomenon] clearly establishes that it may be a cause of some torment that He sends down [onto us], similarly to

According to Ibn Taymiyya, al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822) reports that Ibrāhīm's death and the solar eclipse associated with it happened on the tenth day of some lunar month. The Shaykh al-Islām considers this to be an error, because solar eclipses only happen at the end of a lunar month: 'It is known that this [affirmation by al-Wāqidi] is a mistake. Whoever allows this forecasts something of which he has no knowledge, and whoever argues about that argues about something of which he has no knowledge.' (FK, iv, 426).

Ibn Sa'd (*Tabaqāt*, i 1, 92) also dates the two events on the tenth day of a lunar month: Tuesday 10 Rabi' I, 10. Although pretending to follow him, L. Caetani (*Chronographia*, i, 99) speaks of the Sunday 16 June 631, with the solar eclipse happening on the 28 or 29 Rabi' I, 10 (4 or 5 July 631), thus not on the same day!

M. Gaudetroy-Demombynes (*Mahomet*, 252) proposes the date 17 Jan. 632 (19 Shawwāl, 10).

In my opinion, the 28 Shawwāl, 10 (Sunday 26 Jan. 632) could be more correct; see the horoscope provided by the astronomer and astrologer Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jalil al-Sijzi (Shirāz, 4th/10th c.) in his *Book of Conjunctions*, as studied by D. Pingree, *Thousands*, 118–19, iv 9 (the solar eclipse in question is wrongly presented as 'indicating the death of the Prophet and the accession of Abū Bakr').

strong stormwinds. And that only happens because God made it a cause of what He sends down^E to the earth. Whoever means, by saying that [the stars] have an influence, that which is known by the senses and by these other affairs, this is true. God has however commanded the [various] acts of worship that repel from us whatever evil is sent by this. The Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, has likewise commanded, at the moment of a lunar eclipse, prayer and giving alms, invoking [Him], asking [His] forgiveness and freeing slaves. When the wind blew, the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, would also pace to and fro, [his face] changing. And while it was blowing, he commanded [us] to say: 'My God, we ask^F of You the good of this wind and the good that [170,1] You have sent by it; and we take refuge with You from the evil of this wind and the evil of what You have sent by it.'³⁸

He also said: 'The wind participates of the spirit of God. It brings mercy and it brings torment. So, do not curse it but ask of God the good of it and take refuge with God from its evil!'³⁹ He thus informed [us] that [the wind] brings mercy and brings torment, and commanded us to ask of God the good of it and to take refuge with God from its evil.

The prohibition, and failure, of magic

Concerning the causes of the good and the evil, this is the tradition [to follow] (*al-sunna*): in the case of the apparent causes of the good, the servant accomplishes some^A of the righteous actions because of which God brings about the good and, in the case of the apparent causes of the evil, some of the acts of worship because of which God repels from him the evil. As for what is hidden of the causes, the servant is not commanded to take upon himself to know that. Yet, when he does what he is commanded and renounces what he is prohibited, God spares him the burden of the evil and facilitates for him the causes of the good. 'And whoever fears^B God, He appoints a way out for him and provides for him from whence he does not reckon. And whoever trusts in God, He suffices him. Lo! God brings His command to pass. God has appointed a measure for everything' (*Q.* 65.2–4).

Concerning those who are engaged in magic in order to grasp the uses of this world, He has said, Exalted is He: 'They have followed what the devils were reciting over Solomon's reign. Solomon did not

³⁸ See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Istisqā'*, iii, 26 ('Ālam. 1496).

³⁹ See Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan, Adab*, iv, 326, 5097 ('Ālam. 4433); Ibn Māja, *Sunan, Adab*, ii, 1228, 3727 ('Ālam. 3717).

unbelieve but the devils unbelieved: they were teaching men magic. [They also have followed] that which had come down on the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt,⁴⁰ although these two taught no one till they had said: "We are but a trial; therefore do not unbelieve!" So people learn, from these two, things by which they bring division between a man and his wife. They are however injuring no one thereby, except by God's permission. They are thus learning things that harm them and do not profit them! And surely they do know that he who trafficks therein, for him there is no share [of happiness] in the Hereafter. And evil indeed is that for which they have sold their souls! Had they but known! If they had believed and feared [God], a reward from God would indeed have been better! Had they but known!' (Q. 2.102–3).^C He has informed [us], Praised is He, that whoever takes that as a substitute [for the proper way of life] knows that for him there is no share [of happiness] in the Hereafter. He only hopes, as he claims, to profit himself in^D this world; just as [some] hope, by that which they practice of the magic attached to the planets, etc., for things like leadership and wealth. He said furthermore: 'If they had believed and feared [God], a reward from God [171,1] would indeed have been better! Had they but known!' (Q. 2.103). He thus made it obvious that to believe and to fear [God] would have been better for them^A in this world and in the Hereafter.

He has said, Exalted is He: 'Surely the friends of God, no fear on them, neither shall they sorrow. They who believe and are Godfearing, for them there is the glad tiding in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. There is no changing the words of God; that is the great triumph' (Q. 10.62–4).^B He also said, Exalted is He, in the story of Joseph: 'So We established Joseph firmly in the land, dwelling therein wherever he willed. We bestow Our mercy on whomsoever We will, and We do not waste the wage of the good-doers. Yet is the wage of the Hereafter better for those who believe and are Godfearing' (Q. 12.56–7). So has He informed [us] that the wage of the Hereafter is better for the Godfearing believers than what they are given of the royalty and wealth in this world, just as Joseph was given.

In several verses, He also informed [us], Praised is He, about the bad outcome, in this world and in the Hereafter, of whoever gives up believing and Godfearing. This is why He said, Exalted is He: 'The magician thrives not, wherever he comes' (Q. 20.69). The thriving one is he who attains what must be sought after and saves himself from what must be feared. Now, for the magician, that does

not happen. In Abū Dā'ūd's *Ṣunan* it is reported of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'Whoever seeks to learn anything from the stars, seeks to learn something from magic.'⁴¹

REFUTATION OF ASTROLOGY

The two species of magic astrology

Magic is forbidden by the Book^C, the Tradition and the consensus. The [science of the] stars (*nujūm*) which pertains to magic is indeed of two species.

One is 'scientific' (*'ilmī*) and consists in inferring indications as to events from the movements of the stars. [It is of the same] genus [of practice] as seeking to cast lots by arrows. (See *Q.* 5.3.)

The second is practical (*'amalī*). It refers to their saying that the celestial forces depend on the passive terrestrial forces like talismans⁴² and other such. This is among the highest species of magic. Nevertheless, all that God and His Messenger have forbidden, its harmfulness is greater than its usefulness.⁴³

The lies of the astrologers

[172,1] If somebody deems that, in the second [species of astrology], there is foreknowledge of events and that this is useful, [his] ignorance concerning that is double and the harmfulness of that is greater than its usefulness. This is why the élite and the common people know, by experience and through recurrent reports, that in the [predictive] judgments (*ahkām*) that the astrologers pronounce there is far more of lying than of telling the truth and that, in this respect, they belong to the various species^A of diviners. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is established about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that it was said to him: 'There are, among us, people who frequent the diviners.'—'They are nothing!'—'O Messenger of God, they sometimes tell us something and it comes true!' The Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, then said: 'This utterance of the truth, it is the jinni who hears it and^B he puts it in the ear of his friend.'⁴⁴

⁴¹ See Abū Dā'ūd, *Ṣunan*, *Tibb*, iv, 16 ('Ālam. 3406).

⁴² On the 'science' of talismans, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, iii, 166–7, 174–5, 178, and al-Majritī, *Ghāya*, trans. Ritter-Plessner, *Picatrix*.

⁴³ See MF, trans. Michot, *Musique*, 98.

⁴⁴ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tawḥīd*, ix, 162 ('Ālam. 7006); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Salām*, vii, 36 ('Ālam. 4135).

He has also informed [us] that when God decides an affair, the angels beat their wings in submission to His word, as if it was a chain on some rocks, 'so that when fright is lifted from their hearts, they say: "What did your Lord say?"—"The truth!" they say' (Q. 34.23). And all the inhabitants of one heaven^C inform the inhabitants of the heaven who follow them, so that the information gets ultimately to the lowest heaven^D. But [devils] are there, sharp of hearing, the ones above the others, and they sometimes hear a word⁴⁵ before the shooting stars catch them or, at other times, the shooting stars catch them after He pronounces that word^E. He has said, God bless him and grant him peace: 'If they only said the affair as it is! But to a single word, they add one hundred lies!'

Such is also the case with the astrologers. It gets to the point that, when^F I addressed them in Damascus, their leaders being present with me, and exposed the corrupt nature of their art by means of the rational proofs whose validity they recognized, a leader of theirs said to me^G: 'By God, we lie one hundred times in order to say the truth in one word.'

A pseudo-science

[173,1] That is because the edifice of their science is based on [the premise] that the superior movements are the cause of events [in this world] and that knowing the cause necessarily yields the knowledge of what is caused (*musabbab*). But this only happens when one knows the complete cause, whose rule does not fail to be implemented. The most those know, however, is that they know [only] a tiny part of the sum of the many causes and do not know the rest of the causes, nor their conditions, nor the things hindering them.⁴⁶ It is for example like somebody who knows that the sun in summer rises high above his head, so that the heat becomes intense, and wants for example to know thereby if, at that moment, the grapes that are on such and such ground become sultanas Although there are grapes there, although they ripen and although their owner spreads them in the sun when it is hot so that they become sultanas, despite all this and even if it happens often, to infer

⁴⁵ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Bad' al-khalq*, iv, 111 ('Ālam. 2971; trans. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, iv, 291–2, 432); Narrated 'Ā'isha: 'I heard the Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, saying: "The angels come down in the clouds and mention this or that affair decided in the heaven. So the devils sharpen their hearing, hear it and reveal it to the diviners. The latter nevertheless add to it one hundred lies of their own."' See also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Salām*, vii, 36–7 ('Ālam. 4134, 4136).

⁴⁶ Compare Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt*, Bk x, ch. i, 440, trans. Avicenna Latinus, *Philosophia*, 529–30.

that from only the heat of the sun is severe ignorance. Indeed, there might be grapes and there might not, that vine might bear fruit if cared for and it might not, [some of] the grapes might be eaten or might be pressed out, they might be stolen, they might be dried into sultanas and similar things ...

The proofs^A proving the corrupt nature of this art and its forbidden character are many and this is not the place for [mentioning] them. In Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is established of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'Whoever frequents a soothsayer ('*arrāf*) and asks him a question about anything, no prayer is accepted^B from him for forty days.'⁴⁷ It has been said that 'soothsayer' ('*arrāf*) is a general name for the diviner (*kāhin*), the astrologer (*munaḥḥim*), the geomancer (*rammāl*) and their like: whoever speaks of foreknowledge^C by these methods. If it is said that, in the [Arabic] language, it is [only] a name for some of these species, the rest of them are encompassed in it by way of generalization of [its] meaning, as it has been said of wine, gambling and their like. (See *Q.* 5.90.) [174,1]

CELESTIAL PHENOMENA, CAUSALITY AND TIME

The real cause of eclipses and shooting stars

As for the denial, by some people, that any of the movements of the planets or of other things may be among the causes, this is also speaking without knowledge. They have no proof for that, neither Legal proofs nor others. Or, rather^A, the texts prove the contrary of that, as in the *ḥadīth* which is [reported] in the *Sunan*⁴⁸ from 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her: the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, looked to the moon and said: 'O 'Ā'isha, take refuge with God from the evil of this, as this is [that which is alluded to by] "the darkness when it gathers"'.⁴⁹ [This was also the case], earlier, in the

⁴⁷ See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalām*, vii, 37 ('Ālam. 4137).

⁴⁸ See al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *Tafsīr sūra* 94, v, 452, 3366 ('Ālam. 3288); Ibn Iḥanbal, *Musnad*, vi, 215 ('Ālam. 24619).

⁴⁹ See *Q.* 113.3: 'From the evil of the darkness when it gathers' (*min sharri ḡbāsiqin idbā waqaba*). This conventional translation of *Q.* 113.3 is not very helpful in understanding the *ḥadīth* just quoted. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (*Tafsīr*, xxxii, 195) provides a more interesting interpretation: 'The *ḡbāsiq idbā waqaba* is the moon. "The *ḡbāsiq*", Ibn Qutayba [d. 276/889] said, "is the moon. It was called like this because it gets eclipsed and darkens (*ḡbasaga*), i.e. its light fades away and it blackens. The fact that it *waqaba* is its entering in that blackening process." Abū Salma reported about

ḥadīth about the eclipse, wherein he informed [us] that God frightens His servants by the two of them.⁵⁰

It is also obvious that the meaning of the saying of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, 'They do not become eclipsed for the death of anybody nor for his birth', i.e. the eclipse is not caused by [any] death, is to deny an active cause. It is like for the other *ḥadīth* which is in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, from Ibn 'Abbās,⁵¹ about some men of the Helpers (*anṣār*): they were with the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, when a shooting star was cast and it lit up. He said: 'What did you use to say about this during the Age of Ignorance (*jāhiliyya*)?' They said: 'We use to say: "Tonight, somebody important was born" or "Somebody important died".' He then said: 'These are not cast for the death of anybody, nor for his birth. However, when God decides an affair, the carriers of the Throne praise [Him].'⁵² [The Prophet] also mentioned the *ḥadīth* concerning the [devils] sharpening their hearing.⁵³ The Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, has thus denied that the casting [of the shooting stars] is due to the fact that an important one has been born or died; rather, it happens because of the devils sharpening their hearing.

In each of the two *ḥadīths*^C, it is [stated] that neither the death of some^D people nor their birth is a cause of eclipse of sun and moon, nor [a cause] for the casting^E of the shooting stars;⁵⁴ and [this] even if the death of some men implicates the advent of something in the heavens, as it is established in the [various] *Ṣaḥīḥs*: 'The Throne—the Throne of the Compassionate—shook because of the death of Sa'd [175,1] Ibn Mu'adh.'⁵⁵ As for the fact that an eclipse or other things can be a cause of an event on earth—a torment that entails

'Ā'isha that the Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, took her hand and, pointing to the moon, said: "Take refuge with God from the evil of this, as it is the *ghāsiq idhā waqaba*". "The meaning of his words", Ibn Qutayba said, "is: take refuge with God from its evil when it *waqaba*, i.e. when it enters into an eclipse". On the possible astrological meaning of this and the following verse, see also the remarks of W. Hartner in A. Abel, *Place*, 312–3.

⁵⁰ i.e. the lunar and solar eclipses. See above, p. 156 and n. 36.

⁵¹ Great scholar of the first generation (d. 68/686–8); see L. Veccia Vaglieri, *EL*², "Abd Allah b. al-'Abbās'.

⁵² See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalām*, iv, 36 ('Ālam. 4136); al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *Tafsīr sūra* 35, v, 362, 3224 ('Ālam. 3148); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, i, 218 ('Ālam. 1785).

⁵³ See the *ḥadīth*, p. 161 above and n. 45, which is indeed repeated in the last part of this one, after the evocation of the carriers of the Throne.

⁵⁴ Al-Fārābī has a similar opinion; see his *Maqāla*, 60–1.

⁵⁵ Anṣārī Companion of the Aws tribe (d. 5/627). See W. Montgomery Watt, *EL*², 'Sa'd b. Mu'adh'; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Manāqib al-anṣār*, v, 35 ('Ālam. 3519); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, vii, 150 ('Ālam. 3512).

a death or some other thing—this has been established by the *ḥadīth* itself.

The precise timing of God's actions

What the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, has informed us about does not contradict the fact that an eclipse has a delimited time in which to occur, so that there is no solar eclipse but at the end of the month, on the night[s] of concealment of the moon, and there is no lunar eclipse but in the middle of the month, on the nights of full moon. Whoever pretends the contrary, among *fiqh* scholars or the common people, does so for want of knowledge of computation. It is thanks to computation that it is possible to know of the eclipses that occurred in the past and those that are to occur in the future, as it is possible to know the crescents [of the new moon] that occurred in the past and those to occur in the future. All that is indeed owed to computation, as the Exalted said: 'He made the night [to be a source of] stillness, and the sun and the moon [to be according to some] computation' (Q. 6.96). He also said, Exalted is He: 'The sun^a and the moon follow a computation' (Q. 55.5); 'He is Who made the sun brightness and the moon light, and measured for it phases, that you might know the number of years and computation' (Q. 10.5); 'They^b ask you about the crescents. Say: "They are fixed marks of time, for mankind and for the pilgrimage".' (Q. 2.189).

So, when some of the common people saw the astrologer hit the truth with information he was giving out about a future eclipse, they came to hold the opinion that the information he was giving out about events [generally] was of the same kind. Such is ignorance!⁵⁶ The first is indeed the same type [of information] as his telling us that the crescent rises either on the night of the thirtieth or thirty-first [of the month] and that is a [routine] matter in accordance with

⁵⁶ Avicenna has a similar analysis: 'If [the astrologers] say—"We inform of the [future] occurrence of an eclipse and it will prove true. Similarly for other things."—we will say: "You do not know when the eclipse will be because of your character as astrologers (*ashāb al-abkām*)."' Whoever knows that only knows it by computation (*ḥisāb*) and solving a *zīj* table. Yet, the astrologer is far from grasping anything like a *zīj* table. The construction of the *zīj* is based on a valid and demonstrated principle, as the *zīj* is a summary of the book of the *Almagest*. The book of the *Almagest* and that which it contains is indeed known through observation (*mushāhada*), i.e. astronomical observation (*raṣād*), and geometrical demonstration (*al-burhān al-bandasī*) establishes the validity of such [a process]. [Fore]knowing an eclipse and judging that it will truly happen is therefore not like the [astrologers'] saying that if the Moon is in Scorpio, it will necessarily rain. The first [affirmation] is indeed demonstrated, while the second is not so.' (Ibn Sīnā, *Nujūm*, ms. Leiden, f. 95v.)

which God has caused what is customary to happen and which never gets disturbed. It is the same type [of information] as [the astrologer] telling us that the sun sets at the end of the day, etc. Whoever knows the position of the sun and of the moon, as well as their courses, knows that, even if it is a science of little usefulness.⁵⁷

[176,1] Even if, for an eclipse, there is a determined moment, that does not exclude God making [this eclipse], at that moment, a cause of something He decides—a torment, etc.—for whoever God is tormenting at that moment or for some other among those on whom God sends that down. In the same way, God’s tormenting the people He was tormenting by a strong cold wind—such as the people of ‘Ād—would happen at the moment convenient [for it], namely at the end of winter—as mentioned by the exegetes and in the stories about the Prophets.

When the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, saw a *makhila*, i.e. a cloud imagined to hold rain, he would pace to and fro, his face changing. ‘A’isha said to him: ‘When people see such a cloud, they rejoice.’ He said: ‘O ‘A’isha, what guarantees my safety? The people of ‘Ād saw the torment heading for their valleys and said: “This is coming to bring us rain.”’⁵⁸ God said: “No! rather is it what you sought to hasten: a wind wherein is a painful torment”’ (Q. 46.24).

Similarly, the times during which^A God sends down [His] mercy, like the ten last days of Ramaḍān and the first^B [days] of Dhū l-Hijja, as well as like the middle of the night, etc., are delimited times, neither to be brought forward nor put back, during which something comes down, of His mercy, that does not come down at other times.

⁵⁷ ‘For the sun and the moon, there are nights marked by certain regular phenomena. Whoever knows these knows the solar and lunar eclipses, just as whoever knows how many [days] of the month have passed knows that the crescent [of the new moon] will rise during that particular night or during the one preceding it. The knowledge of that which is regular concerning the crescent is, however, general knowledge that all men share, while the knowledge of that which is regular concerning the solar and lunar eclipses is only possessed by the people who know the computation of their two courses. The information given about that by the calculator does not belong to the science of the unknown, nor does it belong to the kind of information he gives through [astrological] judgements (*ahkām*), in which he tells more lies than truths. That is indeed speaking without a firm science, and it is built on something else than a valid foundation [...] The diviners have more science in that which they say than the astrologers in [their] judgements. And in spite of this, it is validly reported, about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he forbade to frequent them and to consult them. How then, [a *fortiori*], for the astrologer?’ (FK, iv, 425–6).

⁵⁸ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tafsīr*, vi, 134 (‘Ālam. 4454); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Istisqā’*, iii, 26 (‘Ālam. 1497).

Eclipses and God's manifestation

In some of the versions of the *ḥadīths* about the eclipse, there appears this report by Ibn Māja and others of a saying^C of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace: 'They do not become eclipsed for the death of anybody nor for his birth. But when God manifests Himself (*tajallā*) to something of His creation, it submits to Him.'⁵⁹

Abū Hāmid [al-Ghazālī] and his like have contested this *ḥadīth* and refuted that [whole idea]. Not from the point of view of the science of *ḥadīth* however—they indeed had little^D knowledge of it, Abū Hāmid saying for example about himself: 'I myself have an insufficient stock in the science of *ḥadīth*'⁶⁰—[177,1] but because they believed that, if the cause of an eclipse of the sun was, for example, that its light was prevented from reaching the earth when the moon was opposite it, [God's] manifestation could not be given as the cause thereof.

Still, the mentioned manifestation [of God] does not contradict the mentioned cause. The submission of the sun and of the moon to God at that moment, when to its light happens the interruption that [then] happens, removes its influence from the earth and sets a bar between it and between the place of its authority, the site of its diffusion and influence. The king freely acting in a far place, if prevented from doing so, is humiliated because of that.⁶¹

GOD'S OATHS BY THE STARS

As for these words of God, Exalted is He: 'The ones administering an affair' (Q. 79.5), the 'administering ones' are the angels.

As for the fact that God swears by the stars—He has done so for example when saying: 'Nay, but I swear by the revolving stars, that run and hide' (Q. 81.15)—it is like His swearing by others of the things created by Him—He has, for example, sworn by the night and

⁵⁹ See Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *Iqāma*, i, 401, 1262 ('Ālam. 1252); al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, *Kasūf*, 16, iii, 145, 1487 ('Ālam. 1468).

⁶⁰ Al-Ghazālī did not write any book on the science of *ḥadīth* and his knowledge of it was indeed very deficient. The fact was pointed out by several authors, for example Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Subkī; see G. Makdisi, *al-Ghazālī*, 52. It is therefore with some satisfaction that Ibn Taymiyya writes that al-Ghazālī, after his Sufi period, at the end of his life, adopted the way of *ḥadīth* scholarship and died while studying al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see *Dar'*, i, 162, trans. Michot, *Vanités* (forthcoming).

⁶¹ See also the refutation of al-Ghazālī's objection proposed by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ*, ii, 213–14.

the day, the sun, the moon, etc. This^A implies an amplification of the value of that by which He is swearing and a notification about what it contains of signs, lesson, usefulness for mankind, blessing bestowed upon them, etc. That does not make it obligatory that the hearts should become attached thereto, or that one should hold the opinion that it is what gives happiness and misfortune, just as nobody would hold any such opinion^B about 'the night, when it covers up' (Q. 92.1) and 'the day, when it manifests itself' (Q. 92.1), 'the dust-scatterers' (Q. 51.1) and 'the load-bearers' (Q. 51.2), 'the Mount' (Q. 52.1), 'a Book inscribed' (Q. 52.2–3), and other such.⁶²

FAITH IN ASTRAL DETERMINISM AND UNBELIEF

The belief that one of the seven stars is in charge of one's good fortune or misfortune is a corrupt belief^C. And if somebody believes^D that this [planet] is what administers (*mudabbir*) him, he is an unbeliever.⁶³ Similarly if, in addition^E to that, he invokes it and seeks its aid,⁶⁴ it is pure unbelief and associationism.

⁶² This discussion about God's oaths by the stars in some Qur'anic verses may have been directed against Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who appears to have based an argument for the lawful character of astrology on such verses. See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ*, ii, 189; C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 35–6.

⁶³ 'The planets are rational spiritual beings capable of intelligence and speech, and [themselves] cause and administer [*mudabbir*] everything in this world by the order of the Prime Creator who controls all.' Al-Kindī, quoted by G. Saliba (*History*, 55) who comments: 'In spite of the fact that the ultimate control of human destiny remains in the hands of God, it is not hard to see why such a doctrine smacks of polytheism, if not outright atheism. There is no doubt that it was perceived as such by Kindī's contemporaries and by the following generations of believers.'

⁶⁴ There is no lack of basic information on cultic devotion to the planets in medieval Islam, although most often relating to the self-styled Ṣābiāns of Harrān (see note 68 below) and their like. See for example the *Liber de locutione cum spiritibus planetarum* of Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. al-Farrukhān al-Ṭabarī (fl. 145–197/762–812), ed. D. Pingree (*Tabarī*, 112–16), the three treatises on the pneumas of the planets attributed to al-Kindī (trans. Vecchia Vaglieri and Celentano, *Épîtres*), or the famous *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, Disc. iii, ch. 7, in which parts of al-Ṭabarī's *Liber de locutione* are embedded (al-Majrīṭī, *Ghāya*, 195–228; trans. Ritter and Plessner, *Picatrix*, 206–41). See also Ş. Gündüz, *Knowledge*, 164–84.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who sometimes defended astrology, got himself interested in such astral rituals and for example describes the suffumigants that, according to Hermes, must be used for each of the seven planets. See the page of his *Book of the hidden secret, as far as addressing oneself to the stars is concerned* (K. *al-Sirr al-maktūm fī mukhāṭabāt al-nujūm*), trans. Pingree, *Tabarī*, 116–17. (On this book, see also Ibn Taymiyya, *Radd*, 286.)

Genethliology and obscurantism

The very furthest [178,1] anyone who says such [things] can go is to build his [theory] on the fact that^A this new-born, when he was born, had such an ascendant (*tālī'*).⁶⁵ However, it is impossible that such a fate^B alone could be what influences the [future] circumstances of this new-born. Rather, it might, at very most, constitute a tiny fraction of the sum of the causes. Such a fate does not necessarily imply what has been mentioned.⁶⁶ Rather, the things known to have real influence on a [new-born] are things such as the circumstances of the parents and of the country in which he lives. That indeed constitutes a tangible cause, regarding the [future] circumstances of the new-born. It is not, however, something independent.⁶⁷

It has been said that the earliest of those associationist Ṣābian⁶⁸ astrologers and their followers, when a baby was born to them, used to take note of the ascendant of this new-born and give him a name indicating it.⁶⁹ Then, when grown up he was asked his name, his questioner would take into consideration the situation of [the] ascendant. The adherents of such ways would thus start asking people their names and the names of their mothers, and pretend to be drawing from that an indication as to their circumstances. Such things are darkneses piled on top of each other and contradict reason as well as religion.

⁶⁵ According to al-Bīrūnī (*Taḥfīm*, trans. Wright, *Elements*, 149, 245), 'that portion of the zodiac which arises on the eastern horizon at any particular time is called the sign of the ascendant (*tālī'*) or horoscope'.

⁶⁶ Namely, that the new-born's life should be completely predetermined by the stars.

⁶⁷ i.e. the circumstances of the parents, the state of the country and so on, are themselves dependent on causes of a higher level.

⁶⁸ The Ṣābians of Harrān were able to maintain an ancient planet cult long after the spread of Islam to their region. They are to be distinguished from the Ṣābians referred to in the Qur'ān (2.62, 5.69, 22.17), whose identity they most probably usurped at the end of al-Ma'mūn's reign (218/833) to preserve the existence of their pagan community. Mixing Assyro-Babylonian, Greek and monotheistic elements, their system of belief eventually combined astrolatry and idolatry with worship of a transcendent deity considered as a first cause. Astrology, magic and mystery played an important role in their religion. See the synthesis of Š. Gündüz, *Knowledge*, especially chapters ii and vi; see also C. Genequand, *Idolâtrie*. For Ibn Taymiyya's conception of the Ṣābians as adherents of a 'rational religion', see MF, xx, 64, 71, trans. Michot, *Textes spirituels* XIV, 25, 28; see also Radd, 284. Like other late Muslim scholars, Ibn Taymiyya often uses the term *Ṣābian* for any idol- and star-worshippers, ancient or otherwise, from Greece to China.

⁶⁹ In other words, they used to cast the baby's horoscope and give him a name whose letters transcribed the figures composing his horoscope. A story told by al-Jawbarī provides an excellent illustration of the procedure described by Ibn Taymiyya. See his *Kashf*, trans. Khawam, *Voile*, i, 278–9.

‘Alī and hemerology

As for their elections,⁷⁰ i.e. the fact that they take into consideration the ascendant⁷¹ for whatever action they perform—they for example choose, [as favourable] for travelling, the moon’s being in its exaltation^C, i.e. Cancer,⁷² and not in its dejection, i.e. Scorpio⁷³—it belongs to this blameworthy category [of beliefs].

When ‘Alī, son of Abū Tālib, wanted to travel to fight the Khārījīs, an astrologer blocked his path and said: ‘O commander of the believers! Do not travel! The moon is indeed in Scorpio and, if you travel [179,1] while the moon is in Scorpio, your companions will be defeated’—or as he said. ‘On the contrary, said ‘Alī, I will travel^A, trusting in God, relying on God, and calling you a liar!’⁷⁴ So he travelled and was blessed in that journey to the point of *en masse* killing of the Khārījīs, which was one of his greatest

⁷⁰ *Ikhtiyārāt*, ‘choices’, ‘elections’ (also *ibtidā’āt*, Greek *katarchai*, Latin *electiones*), hemerology or catarchic astrology, is one of the main parts of judicial astrology as it was practised in Islam, the others being *mawālīd*, ‘nativities’ (Latin *nativitates*), or genethliology, *tahwīl al-sinn*, ‘revolutions of the years’ or astrological history, and *masā’il*, ‘interrogations’ (Latin *interrogationes*). Hemerology is concerned with determining, in relation to the position of the stars, the auspicious and inauspicious times for initiating ventures. While genethliology can in some way be considered as the *nec plus ultra* of astrology, hemerology is more expeditious as it informs somebody without drawing his horoscope. *Masā’il* deal with responses to queries. See T. Fahd, *EP*², ‘*Ikhtiyārāt*’; Abū Ma’shar, *Mudkhal*, Disc. viii, ch. 2, 615; D. Pingree, *Astrology*, 290–1; G. Saliba, *Astrology*, 70–2; J.-C. Vadet, *Aphorismes*, 32–43: *L’astrologie des ‘elections’ du point de vue historique et philosophique*. See also Avicenna, *Aqṣām*, 110, trans. Michot, *Sciences*, 67, where ‘... sera: les états ... les problèmes’ (lines 7–9) must be corrected to ‘... sera. Il s’agit des états [divers] des cycles du monde et de la royauté, des royaumes et des pays. [Il s’agit aussi] des *nativitates* et des *revolutiones*; des prédictions calculées sur la base de trajectoires astrales artificielles [*tasyīr*; see O. Schirmer, *EP*², ‘*Tasyīr*’; and G. Saliba, *Astrologie*, 72], des *electiones* et des *interrogationes*.’

⁷¹ i.e. the fact that they cast a horoscope for whatever action they perform.

⁷² According to astrology, it is not in Cancer but in Taurus (3°) that the moon attains its maximum influence or ‘exaltation’ (*sharaf*). Ibn Taymiyya in fact confounds the moon’s exaltation sign and its domicile (*bayt*). The moon is indeed the lord of Cancer as its domicile; when the moon stands in it, its influence is also particularly great. On the contrary, when the moon stands in the sign diametrically opposite to Taurus, i.e. Scorpio, it is said to stand in its dejection, or ‘depression’ (*hubūt*), and its influence becomes negligible. See W. Hartner, *Vaso*, 104–5.

⁷³ See Almansor’s aphorism 47: ‘Pour les voyages ... les signes mobiles (*Bélier*, *Cancer*, *Balance*, *Capricorne*) sont recommandés’ (trans. J.-C. Vadet, *Aphorismes*, 77). See also the explanations given by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ*, ii, 215–16.

⁷⁴ See J. Livingston, *Ibn Qayyim*, 101.

contentments, as he had been fighting them on the command of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace!

As for what some people say, i.e. that the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, would have said: 'Do not travel while the moon is in Scorpio!', it is a fabricated lie, according to the unanimous agreement of the *ḥadīth* scholars.

THE SO-CALLED 'ART OF IDRĪS'

Four arguments against relating the origin of astrology to Idrīs

Idrīs and Hermes

As for the affirmation of one who says that this is 'the art of Idrīs', it will be said, firstly, that this is talking without knowledge.⁷⁵ Such a thing could by no means be known except through an authentically transmitted tradition; yet, for the [person] saying this, there is no

⁷⁵ The Prophet Idrīs' identity is not clearly known though he is twice mentioned in the Qur'ān (19.56, 21.85). Sunni tradition places him between Adam and Noah. Muslim sources also identify him, frequently, with Enoch (*Akhnūkh*), Elijah (*Ilyās*) or al-Khidr, while some orientalist connect him with Ezra, the apostle Andrew, or the cook of Alexander the Great. In addition, just as happened with the Ṣabians of the Qur'ān, Idrīs' personality was usurped by some syncretist thinkers (for example Abū Ma'shar) or groups who identified him with Hermes and credited him with a number of more or less occult writings and inventions. This confusion of identities was already known to al-Jāhiz around 229–232/842–845 (see his *Tarbi'*, 26, §40, trans. Adad, *Tarbi'*, 33–4). See G. Vajda, *EF*², 'Idrīs'.

The claim that astrology goes back to Idrīs had already been refuted by Avicenna: 'If [the astrologers] say: "What we say was revealed by God, Exalted is He, to Idrīs, peace be upon him, and what a Messenger of God says is true and incontestable", we will say: "These are not the sayings of Idrīs but something of your invention that you attribute to him." The proof of the truth of what I say is that it is not permitted [for the sayings of one Prophet] to contradict the sayings of another Prophet in matters to do with the principles. Do you not see that it is not permitted for one Prophet to say that God, Exalted is He, is one and for another Prophet to say that God is two? Yet, to wonder if man does, or does not, perceive that which is hidden (*al-ghayb*) belongs to the principles. And the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, denied such a perception. In the Book of God, Exalted is He, it is mentioned that none knows that which is hidden but God [see for example *Q.* 27.65] and the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The things that I fear the most for my community are two: belief in the stars and unbelief in [God's] Decree." One knows, because of this, that Idrīs, peace be upon him, is innocent of things such as those that the [astrologers] say' (Ibn Sīnā, *Nujūm*, ms. Leiden, f. 95v.). See also al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, i, trans. Faris, *Knowledge*, 75; C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 29, 33.

According to al-Jawbarī, it is geomancy which is Idrīs' art. It was revealed to him by Gabriel and he himself taught it to the Hermes, forty disciples whom he had chosen among the heads of his people's tribes. See his *Kashf*, trans. Khawam, *Voile*, i, 281–6.

way leading to that! Sure, in the books of those, reference is made to the Hermes of the Hermes^B (*hirmis al-harāmisa*)⁷⁶ and they pretend that it is Idris! ‘The Hermes’ is, among them, a generic name and this is why they say ‘The Hermes of the Hermes’. The believer definitely knows that the volume of things that they mention about their Hermes is not properly taken from any of the Prophets, on account of the lies and vain elements that it contains.

Prophetic science versus experience and analogy

Secondly, it will be said that if the basis of^C [astrology] is taken from Idris, it was, for him, a miracle and a science that God had given him. It is thus among the Prophetic sciences. Yet, those only advance as arguments^D experience and analogical reasoning, not information [coming] from the Prophets, blessing and peace be upon them!

A ‘Prophetic message’ more corrupt than the sciences of the People of the Book

[180,1] Thirdly, it will be said that even if some part of this [so-called ‘art of Idris’] is taken from a Prophet, it is definitely known that it contains far more lies and vain elements than things taken from that Prophet. It is also definitely known that the lies and the vain elements that it contains are far more numerous than the lies and the

⁷⁶ During the first centuries AD, an extensive literature of a syncretist character, mainly concerned with philosophy, sciences, magic, astrology and other occult disciplines, developed in Greek under the name of Hermes, the Thrice-Great, ‘Trismégistos’. According to these writings, Hermes was both the divine messenger and revealer of the gods and the teacher of wisdom. Hermetic literature exerted a great influence on the development of occultism and gnosticism among Muslims, Hermes becoming the alleged author of numerous astrological treatises. Presumably thinking of the epithet ‘Thrice-Great,’ the astrologer Abū Ma’shar hypothesized three different Hermes, whose respective mythical biographies were developed by several posterior Muslim authors (see D. Pingree, *Thousands*, 14–19). According to al-Shahrastāni, the pagans of Harrān adopted Hermes as one of their two principal divine masters, the other being Agathodaimon, also a famous Greek mythological figure. Acting as intermediaries to the superior beings and interceders with the supreme God, Hermes and Agathodaimon were supposed to have taught the Harrānians the true way and to have given them their Laws. See M. Plessner, *FI²*, ‘Hirmis’; M. Ullmann, *Natur* (index); Ş. Gündüz, *Knowledge*, 157–8, 208–11; D. Pingree, *Astrology*, 292.

Hirmis al-harāmisa is one of the various forms of his name by which Hermes Trismegistus was known to Muslim authors. In Ibn Taymiyya’s time, it is also found in the geographer al-Dimashqī (654–727/1256–1326; see Sh. D. al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat*, 44, trans. Mehren, *Manuel*, 47; Ş. Gündüz, *Knowledge*, 157). While Ibn Taymiyya regards *hirmis* as a generic name (*ism jins*), Ibn Juljul (Cordoba, 332/944 – after 384/994) writes that ‘the name Hermes is a title (*laqab*), like Caesar or Khusrau’ (cited in D. Pingree, *Thousands*, 14).

vain elements that [one finds] among the Jews and the Nazarenes, as far as the things that they report about^A the Prophets are concerned. Of the Jews and the Nazarenes, we are definitely certain that the basis of their religion is taken from the Envoys and that God sent down the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalms as He sent down the Qur'ān. And indeed, God has made it compulsory for us to believe in what He sent down onto us and in what He sent down onto the people who lived before us, as He has said, Exalted is He: 'Say: "We believe in God, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which has been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given and that which the Prophets were given from their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them and to Him we are submitting."' (Q. 2.136).

Thereupon, and in spite of that, God has informed us that the People of the Book have distorted and replaced [some of its content], lied and concealed [things]. Such, then, is the situation of a certified Revelation and of Books that have certainly been sent down, although they belong to an age closer to us than Idrīs and although their transmitters were greater than the transmitters of [the science of] the stars (*nujūm*), further from any deliberate invention of lies and vain things and further from unbelief in God, His Messenger and the Last Day. So, *a fortiori*, what opinion [must] one hold about this amount [of astrological material] if it contains something that is transmitted from Idrīs? We indeed know that it contains more important lies, vain elements and distortion than that which [can be found] in the sciences of the People of the Book.

In al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is established about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'When the People of the Book talk to you, do not consider them as veracious nor as lying! Say instead [181,1]: "We believe in God and in that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to you. Our God and your God are one and to him we are submitting."' ⁷⁷ As we are commanded, concerning that which the People of the Book tell us, to consider as veracious nothing but that which we know to be true, nor to consider anything as a lie but that which we know to be vain, how could one consider these [astrologers] as veracious concerning that which they pretend to be transmitted from Idrīs, peace upon him, when they are, in this matter, further from knowing something reliable^A than [even] the People of the Book?

⁷⁷ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *I'tisām*, ix, 111 ('Ālam. 6814), quoting Q. 29.46.

*The science of astronomy versus the magic of
judicial astrology*

Fourthly, it will be said that there is no doubt that the [science of the] stars (*al-nujūm*) is of two species: computation (*ḥisāb*) and judgements (*ahkām*).⁷⁸

As for computation, it consists in the knowledge of the sizes of the spheres and of the planets, their attributes, the measures of their movements and what follows from that. This is, fundamentally, a valid science, about which there is no suspicion, just as is the knowledge of the earth, its description, etc. The mass of its details,^B however, requires much toil and is of little interest, as is the case with one knowing for example the measures of the minutes, the seconds and the thirds in the movements of the seven planets, 'the revolving stars that run and hide' (Q. 81.15). If the basis of this is taken from Idris, this is possible and God knows better the truth of that. It is similar to people saying that the basis of medicine is taken from one of the Prophets.

Regarding, on the other hand, the judgements (*ahkām*) that belong to the genus of magic, it is impossible that any one of the Prophets could have been a magician. Yet, these people mention several species of [things] belonging to magic and say: 'This is good for implementing the *nómoi* (*nawāmis*)', i.e. the Laws (*sharā'i*) and the Traditions (*sunan*). Some of these things consist in invoking^C the planets and in worshipping them, as well as in several species of associationism that whoever believes in God and in His Messenger^D obligatorily knows none of the Prophets ever^E commanded [182,1], nor had knowledge of. To attribute that to some of the Prophets is to act like those who attribute similar things to Solomon, peace be upon him: as God had made jinn, mankind and birds subservient to him, some people pretended that that had been done by means of several species of

⁷⁸ For Ibn Taymiyya, *al-nujūm*, 'the stars', to be understood as '*ilm al-nujūm*, 'the science of the stars', encompasses both astronomy and astrology. Hence the need to introduce some complementary parameter to differentiate the two. 'Computation' (*ḥisāb*) refers to astronomy, which is indeed a part of mathematics. 'Judgements' (*ahkām*) refers to astrology or, more particularly, to what is traditionally understood as the second of its two main parts, judicial astrology, the first part being natural astrology. While natural astrology consists in the observation of the influences of the stars on the natural elements, the purpose of judicial astrology is to know their influences on human destiny. Ibn Taymiyya alluded to the heavenly influences studied in natural astrology at the beginning of his fatwa (see above, p. 155). He also explained earlier how he divides judicial astrology into a 'scientific' and a 'practical' disciplines (see above, p. 160). On the ambiguity of the Arabic vocabulary for astrology and the place of the latter in Muslim classifications of sciences, see C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 1–4; S. Pines, *Distinction*; T.-A. Druart, *Astronomie*.

magic. Certain groups of Jews and Nazarenes even do not consider him as a Prophet but^A as a sage.⁷⁹ God has however exonerated him from that. He said, Exalted is He: ‘They have followed what the devils used to recite over Solomon’s reign. Solomon did not unbelieve but the devils unbelieved: they were teaching men magic. [They have also followed] that which had come down on the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt ...’ to the end of the verse^B (Q. 2.102–3).⁸⁰

In a similar way, drawing indications as to events from the things from which they draw them from—[i.e.] the superior movements—or choosing [in relation thereto] the actions to perform, it is definitely known that none of the Prophets ever commanded that. Indeed, it contains lies and vain elements from which the intelligent are already exonerated, who are far below the Prophets! As for what [little] it contains of the truth, the case is similar to what the imām of these and their ‘second teacher’, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī,⁸¹ has said when saying something whose content is: ‘If you reversed the inventions of the astrologers and substituted misfortune in place of good fortune and good fortune instead of misfortune, or cold instead of hot and hot instead of cold, or female instead of male and male instead of female, and then judged, your judgement would be of the same kind as their judgements: at times it would be correct and, at other times, it would be wrong.’⁸²

⁷⁹ See for example Ibn Ishāq, *Strā*, ii, 138; trans. Guillaume, 255: ‘One of the rabbis said: “Don’t you wonder at Muhammad? He alleges that Solomon was a Prophet, and by God he was nothing but a sorcerer (*sāḥir*).” So God sent down concerning that: “Solomon did not disbelieve ...”’

⁸⁰ See above, p. 158–9, n. 40.

⁸¹ Al-Fārābī is known as the ‘second teacher’, the first being Aristotle, because of his vast knowledge of Greek thought and the importance of his own philosophical production, especially in logic. See R. Walzer, *EF*², ‘al-Fārābī’.

⁸² Ibn Taymiyya refers to, and adequately paraphrases, the following passage of al-Fārābī’s *Notes concerning that which, among the astrological judgements, is valid and that which is not valid*: ‘Whoever is of the opinion that it is after experiences* with them that such [things] have been found to be indications and testimonies of these stars, let him apply himself to the rest of what was invented [by the astrologers], take the opposite of each element and judge on the basis of that, reversed as it then is, concerning the nativities (*mawālīd*), the interrogations (*masā’il*) and the revolutions [of the years] (*tabāwīl*)! If he then finds that some of these things are valid while others are not, just as was the case with what had [first] been invented, the way it had been invented, he will surely know that [the whole of] that is [mere] opinion and conjecture, interest and illusion.’ (*Maqāla*, 64, 30) [*bi-tajārib *ap. cr.*: tajārib.]

A similar argument can also be found in Avicenna’s refutation of astrology: ‘For none of the things that [the astrologers] mention is there either an argument or a proof, and the statements of whoever would say the contrary of what [they say] could not be rejected. If somebody came and reversed all their principles, each for each, these and their contraries, composed a book in conformity with what we said and then judged

From [errors and lies] of that kind they exonerate Hippocrates,⁸³ Plato, Aristotle and his companions, the Peripatetic philosophers, in whose discourses one finds graver^C vain things and elements of error than are found in the discourses of the Jews and of the Nazarenes. So, if they do not^D exonerate from this those Šabians and their prophets who have a lesser rank^E and are further from knowing the reality than the Jews and the Nazarenes, how would it be permitted to ascribe it to a noble Prophet?

A common feature through history: the invention of lies and pseudepigraphs

Ja'far al-Šādiq

[183,1] We know ourselves, from the history of our imāms^A, that to Ja'far al-Šādiq,⁸⁴ who was not even one of the Prophets, things have been attributed that belong to this genus of affairs and are lies told about him, anybody knowing the situation of Ja'far, may God be pleased with him, knows that. The lies told about him are indeed among the gravest. Judgements have even been ascribed to him concerning the inferior movements such as the shaking of the limbs and atmospheric events^B—thunder and lightning, the halo, the rainbow (*qaws Allāh*, 'God's bow'), which is called 'Quzah's bow' (*qaws Quzah*), etc.⁸⁵ Yet the scholars know that [Ja'far al-Šādiq] is innocent of all that. Similarly ascribed to him is the table (*jadwal*)⁸⁶ on which

according to their method on the basis of that book, he would inevitably hit the truth in some [of his judgements] and lie in others, and the veracity of his statements would probably be even greater. It is therefore true that the principles [of the astrologers] are not to be trusted.' (Ibn Sīnā, *Nuḥūm*, ms. Leiden, f. 95r.)

⁸³ The greatest Greek physician (Cos, c. 460 BC–Larissa, c. 375), well-known to the Arabs not only as the type of 'the true physician' but as a master of alchemy, astrology and magic. See A. Dietrich, *FI*², Suppl., 'Bukrāt'.

⁸⁴ Ja'far al-Šādiq, 'the veracious' (Madina, c. 83–148/703–765), the sixth imām of the Twelver Shi'is (the fifth of the Ismā'īlis). While regarded by the Twelvers as their greatest teacher of *fiqh*, he is respected by the Sunnis themselves as an authority in several fields: Tradition, Law, theology, Sufism He is also the supposed author of numerous works dealing with occult sciences. See M. G. S. Hodgson, *FI*², 'Ja'far al-Šādiq'.

⁸⁵ *Quzah* is the plural of *quzha*, which means 'a coloured band of yellow, red and green'. It also designates a god of the pre-Islamic Arabian pantheon. 'Quzah's bow' is still one of the most common expressions used in Arabic to denote the rainbow, in spite of this saying attributed to the Prophet: 'Do not say *qaws Quzah*, because Quzah is the name of a demon, but say *qaws Allāh*!' See T. Fahd, E. Wiedemann, *FI*², 'Kaws Kuzah'.

⁸⁶ In sorcery, *jadwal*, 'table', 'plan', 'chart', means geometrical figures into which names and signs supposedly possessing magic powers are inserted. See the examples

a group of the Rāfidīs⁸⁷ built up their error, although it is a lie fabricated about him. It was fabricated about him by ‘Abd Allāh, son of Mu‘āwiya,⁸⁸ one of the persons famous for lying in spite of his position of leader and his importance for his followers. Likewise have been attributed to him the *Book of the Lamb (al-Jafr)*,⁸⁹ *The Card (al-Bitāqa)*,⁹⁰ and *The Seven (al-Haft)*,⁹¹ but all this is lies told about him: the people who have knowledge about him are in agreement on that. To him have even been attributed the *Epistles* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā,⁹² and this is the utmost of ignorance. In fact, the *Epistles* were only composed over two hundred years after his death. He passed away in the year 148 [765] whereas these *Epistles* were composed

given by al-Būnī, *Shams*, 319, 344; E. Graefe, D. B. Macdonald, M. Plessner, *El²*, ‘Djadwal’.

⁸⁷ Pejorative appellation for the Shī‘is, who ‘refuse’ (*rafada*) the three first caliphs. See MF, trans. Michot, *Textes spirituels* XII, 30 and XIII, 25.

⁸⁸ A great-grandson of ‘Alī’s brother, Ja‘far, who revolted in Kūfa in 127/744. Having proclaimed both his divinity and his prophetic character, he was joined by many followers. He gained control over large regions of Iran but, in 129/747, was eventually executed by the ‘Abbasid Abū Muslim. While some of his followers pretended that he had not died, others believed in his reincarnation. See K. V. Zetterstéen, *El²*, ‘‘Abd Allāh b. Mu‘āwiya’.

⁸⁹ *Al-Jafr* is the generic name of an esoteric—and sometimes apocalyptic—literature concerned with the fate of the world and proposing various divinatory methods to acquire knowledge of it: speculations on the numerical value of the letters of the alphabet (*ḥisāb al-jummal*; see further, n. 125 below, p. 186), astrological predictions, mystical interpretation of the Qur‘ān, etc. Such an esoteric exegesis characterizes the *K. al-Jafr* which circulated under Ja‘far’s name and about which al-Būnī and Ibn Khaldūn give long reports (see *Shams*, 342–4 and *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 209–10). Ibn Khaldūn also speaks of another *K. al-Jafr*, supposedly composed by al-Kindī on the conjunctions affecting Islam (ibid. 218–19).

⁹⁰ I was unable to identify this work. Could *al-Bitāqa* be a scribal error for *al-Filāḥa*, i.e. the famous *al-Filāḥat al-Nabaṭiyya* (*Nabatean Agriculture*) attributed to Ibn Wahshiyya (d. 291/903)?

⁹¹ *The Book of the Seven and the Shadows (K. al-Haft wa l-aẓilla)*, attributed to al-Mufaddal b. ‘Umar al-Ju‘fī, a disciple of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. In order to answer the questions of his disciple, Ja‘far develops, in relation to Qur‘ānic verses, esoteric doctrines concerning the creation and the disobedience of the creatures, the sending of the Prophets, the devils, cycles and metempsychosis, faith and unbelief, the different situations of the believers and the unbelievers in this world and their hostile relations, sexes, eschatology, imāmology, brotherhood, etc. According to the editor of the book, A. Tamer, this work has clear Nuṣayrī characters and is most probably pseudepigraphic. *Haft* must be understood as the Persian number ‘seven’, in relation to the seven heavens, and not as the Arabic ‘fall’ or ‘peaceful earth’ as suggested by A. Tamer; see his introduction to al-Mufaddal al-Ju‘fī, *Haft*, 18–19.

⁹² Gnostic philosophical society of the 4th/10th c. See Y. Marquet, *El²*, ‘Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’.

under the dynasty of the Būyids,⁹³ during the fourth [tenth] century, at the beginning of the dynasty of the ‘Ubaydids who built Cairo.⁹⁴ A group of people composed them, and pretended that they had thereby made a synthesis between the Law and philosophy. They strayed and led astray!

The companions of Ja‘far al-Sādiq who acquired knowledge from him, such as Mālik b. Anas,⁹⁵ Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna⁹⁶ and their like among the imāms—Islam’s imāms—are innocent of these lies. [184,1] Similarly, a lot of what the shaykh Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī⁹⁷ mentions about Ja‘far in the book *The Realities of Exegesis (Ḥaqā’iq al-tafsīr)* is made up of lies about whose mendacious nature nobody among the people who have knowledge thereof has any doubts. Such is also the case of a lot of the vain doctrines that the Rāfiḍīs report about him: they are among the most obvious lies told about him.

‘Abd Allāh Ibn Saba’ and Paul of Tarsus

Amongst the various sects of the community, none has been more lying and fabricating^a than the Rāfiḍīs since they appeared^b. The first to have started the *rafḍ* innovation^c was a hypocrite, a free-thinker (*zindīq*) called ‘Abd Allāh b. Saba’.⁹⁸ In doing so, he wanted to corrupt the religion of the Muslims as Paul, the author of the *Epistles* that are in the hands of the Nazarenes, had done in starting for them some innovations by means of which he corrupted their religion.

⁹³ The Twelver Shi‘i Iranian dynasty of the Būyids controlled the ‘Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad from 334/945 until 447/1055. See C. Cahen, *ET*², ‘Buwayhids’.

⁹⁴ The Fātimid dynasty, founded in 297/909 by the Ismā‘īlī ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī in North Africa. Jawhar, general of the fourth Fātimid caliph, al-Mu‘izz, conquered Egypt and begun building Cairo in 358–359/969–970. See M. Canard, *ET*², ‘Fātimids’.

⁹⁵ Theologian and jurist, after whom one of the four schools of Sunnī Law is named (d. Madina, 179/796); see J. Schacht, *ET*², ‘Mālik b. Anas’.

⁹⁶ Traditionnist and Qur’ān commentator (Kūfa, 107/725–Makka, 196/811). See S. A. Spectorsky, *ET*², ‘Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna’.

⁹⁷ Important Qur’ān commentator, hagiographer and theoretician of Sufism (Nishāpūr, c. 330–412 / c. 940–1021). *Ḥaqā’iq al-tafsīr*, his principal commentary on the Qur’ān, was probably finished in 370/980. Some extracts only have been published and studied. See G. Bowering, *ET*², ‘al-Sulamī’.

⁹⁸ A Yemeni Jew considered as the founder of the most extreme wing of the Shi‘a. He is said to have proclaimed ‘Alī’s divinity or, at least, denied his death and taught that he would in the end come again from the clouds. Sunnī sources also make him the instigator of the first dissensions among the Prophet’s Companions and accuse him of having roused the opposition against ‘Uthmān on the ground of ‘Alī’s special rights. He is already compared with Paul of Tarsus by Sayf b. ‘Umar (d. after 193/809) in his *K. al-Ridda wa l-futūḥ—Book of the Apostasy and the Conquests* (see *Ridda*, 132–8). See also M. G. S. Hodgson, *ET*², ‘‘Abd Allāh b. Saba’.

He was a Jew and he apparently adopted Nazarenism, hypocritically, with the purpose^D of corrupting it. Similarly, Ibn Saba' was also a Jew. He also had that purpose^E and he endeavoured to create dissension, with the purpose of corrupting the [Muslim] faith (*milla*). Although he was unable to do so, discord and dissension did arise among the believers, during which 'Uthmān was killed, may God be pleased with him, and thus happened what happened, in the matter of dissension. However, God did not make this community reach a consensus, praise be to Him, on an error. Rather, a group did not cease existing in it who will stand up for the Truth, without being harmed by those opposed to them nor by those abandoning them, till the Hour rises—thereof witness the superabundant texts that are [collected] in the *Ṣaḥīḥs*⁹⁹ about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace.

'Alī and the Shī'ī innovations

When the Shī'ī innovations were made to occur, during the caliphate of the commander of the believers 'Alī, son of Abū Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, he rejected them. There were three groups: exaggerators (*ghāliya*), insulters (*sabbāba*) and those who preferred [somebody to others] (*muḥaḍḍila*).

[185,1] The exaggerators, he burnt them with fire. As, one day, he was going out from the Kindah gate, people prostrated themselves before him. He said: 'What is that?'—'You are God!' they said. Three times he called on them to repent but they did not come back [to the sound religion]. The third time^A, he commanded trenches. They were dug and set on fire. Then he threw them in it and said:

When I saw the matter to be a reprehensible one,
I lit my fire and called Qanbar.¹⁰⁰

[One reads] in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* that their free-thinkers (*zindīq*) were brought to 'Alī and that he burnt them. That news reached Ibn 'Abbās, 'who said: "Myself, if it had been me, I would not have burnt them, since the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, prohibited tormenting [people] the way God torments [them]. I would rather have beheaded them as the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whoever replaces his religion [by something else], kill him!"'¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Among other traditions, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *I'tisām*; *Tawḥīd*, ix, 101, 136 ('Ālam. 6767, 6906); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Imāra*, vi, 52–3 ('Ālam. 3544, 3547, 3548); Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, v, 34, 269, 278, 279 ('Ālam. 16276, 21286, 21369).

¹⁰⁰ A freedman of 'Alī.

¹⁰¹ Among other traditions, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Jihād*, iv, 61–2 ('Ālam. 2794).

As for the insulters, when the news reached him that Ibn Saba^B insulted Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, he tried to kill him. He escaped to Qarqisiyā¹⁰² and hid^C there while ‘Alī treated gently his emirs, as he had no firm power and they did not obey him in everything that he commanded them.

As for those who preferred [him to others, ‘Alī] said: ‘I will not have somebody who prefers me to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar brought to me without whipping him the way slanderers are [Legally] sanctioned!’ It is also reported about him, from more than eighty sources, that he said: ‘The best [person] of this community, after its Prophet, is Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar.’

[One reads] in al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*,¹⁰³ about Muḥammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya^D,¹⁰⁴ that he said to his father:

- O father, after the Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, who is the best of the humans? [186,1]
- O my son, don’t you know?
- No.
- Abū Bakr.
- And then, who?
- ‘Umar.

In al-Tirmidhī¹⁰⁵ and others, [one reads] that ‘Alī reported this order of preference on the authority of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace.

The point here is that various species of lies have been told about ‘Alī, the son of Abū Talīb, such as^A could not be ascribed to the least of the believers. The Qarmatīs,¹⁰⁶ the Bātinīs,¹⁰⁷ the Khurramīs,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² A town in al-Jazīra, on the left bank of the Euphrates, close to the confluence of the Khābūr, on the site of the important Roman fortress of Circesium, corresponding to the modern Syrian Busayra. See M. Streck, *FI*², ‘Karkisiyā’.

¹⁰³ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Faḍā’il al-aṣḥāb*, v, 7 (‘Ālam. 3395).

¹⁰⁴ A son of ‘Alī and Khawla, a woman of the tribe of the Banū Hanīfa who had come into his possession as a prisoner of war (Madina, 16–81/637–700). See Fr. Buhl, *FI*², ‘Muḥammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya’.

¹⁰⁵ Author of *al-Sunan*, one of the most important *ḥadīth* collections (d. c. 275/888); see A. J. Wensinck, *El*¹, ‘al-Tirmidhī’.

¹⁰⁶ One of the Isma‘īlī sects; see W. Madelung, *El*², ‘Karmatī’.

¹⁰⁷ To Ibn Taymiyya, all those who, Shī‘īs, Sufīs or philosophers, reject the manifest meaning of the Scripture in favour of an esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*); see M. G. S. Hodgson, *El*², ‘Bāṭiniyya’.

¹⁰⁸ *Khurramiyya*, or *Khurramdiniyya* (from the Persian *khurram-dīn*, ‘joyous, agreeable religion’), originally meant the religious movement of Mazdak in general. Later it became used for several Iranian, anti-Arab and frequently rebellious, sects influenced by Mazdakī and Manichaean beliefs as well as by extremist Shī‘ī doctrines.

the Mazdakīs,¹⁰⁹ the Ismā'īlīs and the Nuṣayrīs¹¹⁰ have even attributed to him their doctrines, which are among the most corrupt doctrines of the worlds, pretending that these were sciences inherited from him.

Avicenna and the free-thinkers

All these things, it is only the hypocrites who brought them about, the free-thinkers (*zindīq*) who aimed to appear to adopt what the believers believed in, while inwardly hiding the opposite. They were urging [people] to follow the groups who were backing out of the Legal prescriptions. They had dynasties [who supported them] and, because of them, [several] ordeals swept down upon the believers. Avicenna even said: 'I only occupied myself with the sciences of the philosophers because my father was an adherent of the missionary movement (*da'wa*) of the Egyptians,¹¹¹ that is of the Rāfīdī and Qarmatī 'Ubaydids. They had religiously embraced these philosophical sciences and this is why you find between those, the Rāfīdīs and their like, in respect of being far from knowing the prophethood (*nubuwwāt*), a connection and an affiliation^B. They are united in this matter by their genuine ignorance of the straight path, the path of those to whom God has been gracious—the Prophets, the veracious, the martyrs and the righteous.

Khurramiyya were often identified with the Muslimiyya, partisans of the anti-Umayyad leader Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), who regarded the latter as their imām, prophet or incarnation of the divine spirit. See W. Madelung, *ET*², 'Khurramiyya'.

¹⁰⁹ Dualist sectarian movement named after Mazdak, the leader of an egalitarian, hedonist and gnostic revolutionary religious movement in Mazdaean Sasanid Iran at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century AD. After the spread of Islam in Iran, 'Neo-Mazdaki' sects appeared in association with various *ghulāt* Shi'i groups. They tend to be credited with a special interest in number and letter mysticism. See M. Guidi, M. Morony, *ET*², 'Mazdak'.

¹¹⁰ Extremist Shi'i sect named after Muhammad b. Nuṣayr al-Fihri l-Numayrī, a disciple of the tenth or eleventh Twelver Shi'i imām, still existing today ('Alawīs of Syria); see H. Halm, *ET*², 'Nuṣayriyya'. Ibn Taymiyya refutes their doctrines in a famous fatwa in which he denounces their alliance with the Crusaders and the Tatars. 'Les Nosairis ont plusieurs noms en vogue parmi les Musulmans. Tantôt on les appelle Molāhidah (hérétiques), tantôt Ismaélis, tantôt Karmathes, tantôt Bāṭinis, tantôt Nosairis, tantôt Khorramis, tantôt enfin Mohammars [...] Leur religion a les dehors du Rafédhisme, et au fond c'est l'incrédulité pure et simple' (*Nuṣayriyya*, trans. Guyard, *Fetwa*, 189).

¹¹¹ See Avicenna's autobiography, trans. W. E. Gohlman, *Life*, 19: 'My father was one of those who responded to the propaganda of the Egyptians and was reckoned among the Ismā'īliyya ...' According to D. Gutas (*Avicenna*, 333), Avicenna was in reality a Hanafi Sunni.

Idris' innocence

Over this period close to us^C, which is shorter than 700 years, such lies were thus told about the [Prophet's] family, his Companions and others. Elements of the doctrines of the philosophers and the astrologers were attributed to them of which [187,1], every intelligent person knows, they are innocent. And this sold well among many groups belonging to this faith (*milla*), despite the existence of people who expounded their fallaciousness, prohibited that and defended the faith (*milla*) with their heart, their body and their tongue. So, *a fortiori*, what must one's opinion be concerning matters, related to [the science of] the stars and to philosophy, that are attributed to Idris or to other Prophets—to say nothing of the length of the time passed, the diversity of the traditions, the differentiation of^A the faiths (*milla*) and the religions, the absence of people who might have expounded the reality of the matter by means of arguments and demonstrations, and the fact that it includes countless lies and slanders—?

ISLAM'S PLANET: VENUS OR JUPITER?

Such is also the case of the allegation of whoever alleges that the star of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, was dependent on Scorpio and Mars, [that] of his community on Venus, and similar things ...¹¹² This is among the clearest insanities as the

¹¹² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 213–16: 'Jirāsh b. Ahmad al-Hāṣib said in the book that he composed for Nizām al-Mulk: "The return of Mars to Scorpio has an important influence upon the Muslim religious group, because it is its significator. The birth of the Prophet took place when the two superior planets were in conjunction in the sign of Scorpio" [...] Jirāsh said: "I have seen in the books of the ancients that the astrologers informed Khosraw that the Arabs would gain royal authority and the prophecy (of Muhammad) would appear among them. The significator of the Arabs is Venus, which was then in its exaltation" [...] Abū Ma'shar said in the *Book of Conjunctions*: "When the section reaches the twenty-seventh (degree) of Pisces, in which Venus has its exaltation, and when, at the same time, the conjunction occurs in Scorpio, which is the significator of the Arabs, then the Arab dynasty will make its appearance, and there will be a Prophet among them. The power and duration of his rule will correspond to the remaining degrees of the exaltation of Venus".'

The following authors link the Arabs and/or the Muslims to Venus: Abū Ma'shar (*Coniunctionibus*, in Loth, *Astrolog*, 280), al-Kindī (*Mulk*, ed. Loth, *Astrolog*, 273), al-Mas'ūdī (*Murūj*, trans. Pellat, *Prairies*, i, 76), al-Birūnī (*Taḥḥim*, 253), al-Majritī (see G. Rotter, *Veneris dies*, 129–30), Ibn Abī l-Rijāl (see Loth, *Astrolog*, 288), Yāqūt (*Mu'jam*, i, 43), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (*Sirr*, ms. Oxford, f. 54r). Among these authors, al-Birūnī (*Taḥḥim*, 253) and, perhaps, al-Kindī (see *Secrets*, trans. Vecchia Vaglieri and Celentano, 540) are the only ones who explicitly

circumstances of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, and of his community were different^B from what they allege, with respect to these judgements. Amongst the clearest lies is indeed their affirmation that the star of the Muslims is dependent on Venus while the star of the Nazarenes is dependent on Jupiter, adding that Jupiter demands science and religion while Venus demands entertainment and play. Every intelligent person indeed knows that the Nazarenes are, among the religions (*milla*), the most ignorant and the most erring, the furthest^C from the knowledge of reason and tradition, the most preoccupied with entertainments, and the ones who worship the most by means of the latter.

The greatest nómos, according to the philosophers

The philosophers all agree on the fact that no greater *nómos*¹¹³ reached the world than the *nómos* that Muhammad brought, God bless him and grant him peace.¹¹⁴ His community is also the most

link Jupiter to Christianity. The debate concerning the identity of the tutelary planets of Islam and Christianity passed to the Latin Middle Ages. In Oxford, Roger Bacon linked Venus to the law of Islam, which he considered as *tota voluptea et venerea* but refused Jupiter's patronage for Christianity. For the latter, he preferred Mercury as the complexity of the Ptolemaic theory of the motion of the planet Mercury, being more difficult to understand for the human intellect, was in his opinion a sound analogical representation of the Christian dogmas and mysteries (see J. North, *Astrology*, 68). In the Islamic world, Jesus was linked to Mercury by Ibn 'Arabī (see *Kimīyā'*, trans. Ruspoli, *Alchimie*, 63–72; T. Burckhardt, *Astrology*, 31–3) and al-Būnī (*Shams*, 336), and, as proposed by Ibn Taymiyya, to Venus by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who reserve Jupiter for Abraham and link the Prophet Muhammad to Mercury (*Rasā'il*, trans. Michot, *Résurrection*, 140–1).

¹¹³ In this passage, Ibn Taymiyya clearly uses *Nāmūs*, the Arabic transliteration for the Greek *nómos*, in the sense of *sharī'a* (see M. Plessner, *FL²*, 'Nāmūs'). It is of interest to note that such a usage, far from being exclusive to philosophers—the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', Avicenna *et alii* (see Y. J. Michot, *Destinée*, 39, n. 57; see also above, p. 173)—is also accepted by a religious scholar like the Shaykh al-Islām. Such an explicit assimilation of the *Sharī'a* to the Greek law offers a good illustration of the extent of the continuity between the classical Greek and Islamic *weltanschauungs*, as analyzed by L. Strauss (see R. Brague, *Athènes*, 330).

¹¹⁴ This rather extreme, yet very interesting, statement has to be understood in relation to Avicenna's philosophy of religion, something that Ibn Taymiyya knows well. Avicenna indeed states explicitly, in his *Adhawiyya* (85), that the Law (*sharī'a*) brought by Muhammad is the most eminent and the most perfect, which justifies his quality of Seal of the Messengers. Avicenna's prophetology is one of the reasons why Ibn Taymiyya considers him far superior to Aristotle. In addition, when the Shaykh al-Islām affirms the philosophers to be unanimously favourable to this religion, it is most probably because he cannot imagine them not sharing the prophetology developed by the *ṣaylasūf* who, in his judgement as in that of their great majority, is really the best: *al-shaykh al-ra'is*. This apologetic approach to Islam by Ibn Taymiyya is also found in *Qubrus*, trans. Michot, *Roi croisé*, 190 (with the trans. of an excerpt from Avicenna's *Adhawiyya*).

perfect in rationality, religion and science, according to the unanimous agreement of the philosophers, even the philosophers of the Jews and of the Nazarenes. They indeed do not doubt the fact that the Muslims are the most eminent in rationality and religion¹¹⁵ [188,1] and each of them only holds on to his religion either because he follows his caprice and allegedly preserves his interest in this world,¹¹⁶ or because he is of the opinion that it is permissible to adhere to whatever religion (*milla*) it may be and that the religions (*milla*) are similar to the Islamic *madbhabs*.¹¹⁷ The masse of the philosophers—the astrologers and their like—say this, and they treat the religions (*milla*) as if equivalent to righteous nations (*dawla*) of which some might, at most, be more eminent than others.¹¹⁸

God accepts no other religion than Islam

As for the heavenly Books successively transmitted on the authority of the Prophets, blessing and peace be upon them, they explicitly say that God does not accept, from anybody, any religion but Hanifism,¹¹⁹ i.e. the general Islam: worshipping God alone, without associates, and believing in His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, as He said, Exalted is He: 'Surely those who believe and those who are Jews, the Nazarenes and the Šabians—those who believe in God, in the Last Day and act righteously—shall have their reward with their Lord. No fear on them, neither shall they sorrow' (Q. 2.62).

In his *Jawāb*, Ibn Taymiyya also explains how the Muslims are preferred to the Christians by the Jews and to the Jews by the Christians; see A. Morabia, *Ibn Taymiyya II*, 104.

¹¹⁵ On Islam's rationality according to Ibn Taymiyya, see his *Letter to Abū l-Fidā'*, trans. Michot, *Lettre*, and MF, xx, 62–73, trans. Michot, *Textes spirituels XIV*.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Taymiyya is convinced that a lot of ecclesiastics no longer believe in Christianity but keep up appearances in order to preserve their wealth and power. See *Qubrus*, trans. Michot, *Roi croisé*, 145–6.

¹¹⁷ To consider the various religions as equivalent is, in Ibn Taymiyya's mind as well as for other authors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for example 'Ala' al-Dīn al-Juwaynī, typical of the Mongols. To assimilate the religions to the Muslim *madbhabs* is an accusation that Ibn Taymiyya raises in particular against the Ilkhānid vizier Rashid al-Dīn, whom he calls a 'philosophizing Jew'. See MF, xxviii, 523–4, trans. Michot, *Textes spirituels XII*, 26–7. That said, he himself sometimes assimilates, 'from some viewpoints', the multiplicity of *madbhabs* in Islam to the multiplicity of the prophetic ways (*minhāj*) (MF, trans. Michot, *Unité*, 27).

¹¹⁸ The obvious allusion is to al-Farabī's political philosophy of religion. See his *Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Eminent City (Ārā')*, in R. Walzer, *State*.

¹¹⁹ In the Qur'ān, the true, primordial, Abrahamic monotheism; see W. Montgomery Watt, *EP*², 'Hanif'. For Ibn Taymiyya's definition, see MF, trans. Michot, *Musique*, 80, n. 2, and *Textes spirituels XVI*, 23.

We have also been informed about that concerning the earlier Prophets and their communities. Noah said: 'If you turn away ..., I have not asked you for any wage. My wage does not fall on anyone but God, and I have been commanded to be amongst those who submit (*muslim*)' (Q. 10.72). He said about Abraham^A: 'And who would forsake the religion (*milla*) of Abraham but one who makes a fool of himself? Indeed, we elected him in this world and in^B the hereafter he shall be among^C the righteous. When his Lord said to him: "Submit!", he said: "I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds!" And Abraham recommended that to his sons, and Jacob also: "O my sons, God elected for you [this] religion. So, do not die but submitting [to Him] (*muslim*)" (Q. 2.130-2). He also said^D: 'And Moses said: "O my people, if you believe in God, in Him put your trust, if you are submitting [to Him] (*muslim*)"' (Q. 10.84). 'Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein are guidance and light. Thereby the Prophets who had submitted (*aslama*) judged for those who were Jews' (Q. 5.44). Balqis said: 'My Lord, I wronged myself and I submit with Solomon to God, the Lord of the worlds' (Q. 27.44). He said about [189,1] the apostles^A: "'Believe in Me and in My Messenger!" They said: "We believe. Bear witness that we^B are submitting"' (Q. 5.111). He indeed said, in an absolute manner: 'God bears witness that there is no God but He—and so do the angels and those possessing the science—upholding justice. There is no God but He, the Mighty, the Wise. The religion is indeed, with God, the submission [of oneself] (*al-islām*)' (Q. 3.18). He also said: 'Say: "We believe in God, and that which has been sent down to us^C, and that which has been sent down to^D Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given and that which the Prophets were given^E from their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them and to Him we are submitting"' (Q. 2.136). [And:] 'Whoever seeks something else than submission (*islām*) as religion, it will not be accepted from him and he will be, in the hereafter, amongst the losers' (Q. 3.85).

Since the Muslims are, as all those who have intelligence unanimously agree, the adherents to a religion (*milla*) who are the most involved in science and rationality, justice and similar things that, in their view, correspond to the influences of Jupiter, whereas the Nazarenes are further from that and more involved in entertainment, in play and in things that correspond, in their view, to the influences of Venus, what [some people] have mentioned¹²⁰ is of a manifestly corrupt nature.

Al-Kindī's prognostication of Islam's duration

This is why their judgements do not cease to lie and to rebut each other. The great philosopher whom they call 'the philosopher of Islām', Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī,¹²¹ even made a forecast (*tasyīr*)¹²² for this religion (*milla*), claiming that it would come to an end in the year 693 [1294].¹²³ That was adopted, after him, by somebody who produced the product of the deduction from the letters of a discourse which had appeared, during unveiling (*kashf*), to someone whom he was rehabilitating.¹²⁴ And with them agreed, about that, somebody who^F claimed that he had deduced the remaining duration of this

¹²¹ The 'Philosopher of the Arabs' (c. 185–252? / c. 801–866?). See J. Jolivet, R. Rashed, *El²*, 'al-Kindī'.

¹²² On *tasyīr*, see n. 70, p. 169.

¹²³ By means of universal apotelesmatic (*apotelesmatikè katholikè*), the astrologer tries to predict the future of entire peoples, regions, cities, dynasties and thus, also, wars, epidemics, floods, etc. While Ptolemy founded such predictions on solar and lunar eclipses only, the majority of Arab astrologers, probably influenced by Sasanid astrology, preferred to base their calculations on conjunctions of the superior planets: Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. (See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 211–31; D. Pingree, *Astrology*, 294.) Some of these universal apotelesmatic prognostications could have a great ideological or political impact. For example when astrologers were asked to present the new 'Abbasid regime as ordained by the stars and, hence, ultimately, by God (see D. Gutas, *Thought*, 45–52). Or when they claimed to know the exact date when the rule of the Arabs, or of Islam, would end. The most famous prediction of this kind is the one to which Ibn Taymiyya refers here. It was formulated by al-Kindī in a *Letter on the rule of the Arabs and its length* (*Risāla fī mulk al-'Arab wa kammiyyati-hi*) written at the request of an 'Abbasid caliph, probably al-Mu'tazz (reigned 252–255/866–869). Al-Kindī's letter was long thought to have been plagiarized by the greatest Muslim astrologer, Abū Ma'shar (d. 272/886), in his *Book of the Great Conjunctions*, Disc. ii, ch. 8. R. Lemay has demonstrated (convincingly, in my opinion) that it was in fact Abū Ma'shar's *Great Conjunctions*, most probably written between 247/861 and 251/865, that influenced al-Kindī in this matter. See al-Kindī, *Mulk*, ed. Loth, *Astrolog*, 274–5; Abū Ma'shar, *Coniunctionibus*, (ii, 8, Latin trans. in Loth, *Astrolog*, 281); on the anti-Iranian *shu'ūbiyya* cultural and political circumstances in which al-Kindī wrote his *Risāla* and on the controversy surrounding its relation to Abū Ma'shar's *Great Conjunctions*, see R. Lemay, *Abū Ma'shar*, i, 211–35; *Islam*, 21.

Al-Kindī announced the end of the Arab empire for 693/1294 in relation to the 11°33' = 693' through which Venus had to travel from the moment of a conjunction of Saturn and Mars in Cancer on Sunday 21 March 622, the spring equinox closest to the date of the Hijra, until it left the zodiacal sign of Pisces—the sign of its exaltation—in which it was. See also O. Loth, *Astrolog*, 294–7; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 215; C. A. Nallino, *Astrologia*, 15–16; D. Pingree, *Thousands*, 80, horoscope i, 3; C. Burnett, *Astrology*, 98–9.

Bacon, who knew of this forecast, suggested that it agreed with the Number of the Beast in *Apocalypse* xii, namely 663, 'less than the aforesaid by 30 years' (see J. North, *Astrology*, 68).

¹²⁴ *Ba'd man a'āda-hu*. I found the sense uncertain here.

religion (*milla*) from the reckoning [addition] of the numerical values (*hisāb al-jummal*)¹²⁵ that are those of the letters that are at [190,1] the beginnings of the sūras [of the Qur'ān]: when discounting the repetitions, there are 14 such letters¹²⁶ and their reckoning, in the great calculation^A, amounts to 693. Related to this is also the [following story], mentioned in [Qur'ān] exegesis: when God sent down 'Alif. Lām. Mīm', some Jews said: 'The duration of this religion

¹²⁵ *Hisāb al-jummal*, literally 'computation by means of a rope', is the technical term for calculation by means of the numerical values of alphabetical letters, writing figures instead of letters or, conversely, writing numbers (for example, dates) by means of letters and other procedures reminiscent of the cabbala. *Hisāb al-jummal* in the first sense, applied on the letters composing the most beautiful names of God, the seven letters not found in the *Fātiha*, the 'mysterious letters' of the Qur'ān here mentioned by Ibn Taymiyya, etc., played an important role in Muslim mysticism, esotericism and divinatory arts. See G. S. Colin, *EL*², 'Hisāb al-djummal'; T. Fahd, *EL*², 'Djafir'.

¹²⁶ On the 'mysterious' letters opening 29 of the Qur'ānic sūras (2–3, 7, 10–15, 19–20, 26–32, 36, 38, 40–46, 50, 68), see A. T. Welch, *EL*², 'al-Kur'ān': 4.d. 'The mysterious letters'.

These letters, 78 in all, can in fact be reduced to 14 representing the various basic consonantal forms of written Arabic, hence of the whole Arabic alphabet: *k* and *n*, that both appear only once, alone, and ' , *b*, *r*, *s*, *ṣ*, *t*, ' , *q*, *l*, *m*, *h* and *y*, that appear more than once, singly or in combination with one or more other letters.

Like every letter of the Arabic alphabet, these 14 letters were designated as a numerical value, sometimes different in the Eastern and in the Western Arabic worlds. According to the Eastern *Abjad* system, as for example explained by the Ikhwān al-Safā' (*Rasā'il*, I: 'On Numbers', i, 26–7; trans. Goldstein, *Number*, 138; see also G. Weil and G. S. Colin, *EL*², 'Abjad') and effectively referred to here by Ibn Taymiyya, the values of these 14 letters are the following:

<i>hamza</i>	1	<i>sin</i>	60	' <i>ayn</i>	70	<i>lām</i>	30	<i>bā'</i>	5
<i>hā'</i>	8	<i>ṣād</i>	90	<i>qāf</i>	100	<i>mīm</i>	40	<i>yā'</i>	10
<i>rā'</i>	200	<i>ṭā'</i>	9	<i>kāf</i>	20	<i>nūn</i>	50		

As noted by Ibn Taymiyya, the total of these values is 693 'in the great calculation', i.e. when the letters representing tens and hundreds are given their full numerical value, without reduction of the tens to units. See al-Kindī, *Mulk*, ed. Loth, *Astrolog*, 275–6, 297–9; see also Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 215, regarding al-Kindī's astrological forecasting of the 693 years long duration of Islam: 'He said (further): "This is the duration of Islam as generally agreed upon by the philosophers. The figure is supported by the letters that occur at the beginning of certain *sūrah*s, if one omits the repetitions and counts the numerical value of the letters." I say: This is what was mentioned by as-Suhaylī. The most likely assumption is that al-Kindī was as-Suhaylī's source.'

Ibn Taymiyya must have particularly enjoyed denouncing the double failure of the astrological and numerological forecast of the end of the Muslim empire for 693/1294 as, in his opinion, Islam was then going through a phase of renaissance, particularly thanks to the Mamluks (see MF, trans. Michot, *Textes spirituels XIII*, 26–27; *Qubrus*, trans. Michot, *Roi croisé*, 180). It is true that the Crusaders had just been definitively ousted from Palestine in 690/1291 and that the Mongol efforts to invade Syria, at the turn of the century, would all fail.

(*milla*) will be 71^B years';¹²⁷ when, afterwards, He sent down 'Alif. Lām. Rā',¹²⁸ and 'Alif. Lām. Mīm. Rā',¹²⁹ they said: 'He has us confused'.¹³⁰

PROHIBITION OF ASTROLOGY IS OBLIGATORY

These affairs that exist in the errors of the Jews and of the Nazarenes, as well as in the errors of the associationists and of the Sabians—people who philosophize and astrologers—include vain things of this kind that no one would know but God, the Exalted. These affairs and their like are outside the religion of Islam and forbidden in it. It is thus incumbent [upon us] to condemn them. To prohibit them is incumbent on the Muslims—on everyone who has the capacity [to do so] by means of [his] science and of clear explanation, with his hand and with his tongue. This is indeed among the most important things that God has made incumbent, as far as commanding what is to be acknowledged and prohibiting what is to be condemned are concerned. Those people and their like are the enemies of the Messengers and the vermin of the religions (*milla*).

That which is vain, regarding existence, does not sell well but blended^D with some element of the truth. Similarly, the People of the Book clothed the truth in vain things. Because of^E the slight truth they have with them, they lead many creatures astray from the truth in which it is incumbent to believe and invite them to adopt the numerous vain things to which they adhere. And how frequent it is that against them stand, among the adherents of Islam, people who do not distinguish well between the truth and that which is vain, do not provide the argument which would refute their vain claims nor expounds the argument of God, which He has provided by means of His Messengers—and that is why dissension arises. We have spoken extensively about those vain things^F, etc., elsewhere. And God knows better^G!

¹²⁷ The great calculation total of the Eastern numerical values of *hamza* (1), *lām* (30) and *mīm* (40) is 71. See also al-Kindī, *Mulk*, ed. Loth, *Astrolog*, 276.

¹²⁸ The great calculation total of the Eastern numerical values of *hamza* (1), *lām* (30) and *rā'* (200) is 231.

¹²⁹ The great calculation total of the Eastern numerical values of *hamza* (1), *lām* (30), *mīm* (40) and *rā'* (200) is 271.

¹³⁰ See Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra*, ii, 139–40; trans. Guillaume, *Life*, 256–7. Also in al-Kindī, *Mulk*, ed. Loth, *Astrolog*, 275; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Rosenthal, *Introduction*, ii, 204–7; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, ii, 10.

FATWA II

[191,1] HE WAS ASKED, may the Exalted
God have mercy upon him:

What do the masters, the legists, the imāms of the religion, may God be pleased with them all, say about those astrologers who hold seances on the thoroughfares,¹³¹ in shops and elsewhere, and with whom women sit, as well as the perverts, because of the women? These astrologers claim to give information about the hidden affairs, relying in this matter on the art of astrology (*ṣimā'at al-tanjīm*). They write out magic squares (*wifq*), practice magic, write talismans (*ṭilasm*), and teach magic to women, for [use upon] their husbands and others. Because of that, women, and men, assemble at the doors of their shops. The situation may even lead, sometimes, to other kinds of deeds that women commit against their husbands¹³² and to the corruption of the people's beliefs, to their voracious attachment to magic and to the planets, to their turning away from God, Powerful is He and Majestic, and from trusting in Him concerning events and accidents. Is that licit or not?

Is the art of astrology forbidden or not? Is it permitted to get a wage for it? And to offer [such a wage], is that forbidden or not? Is it permitted to whoever is [in some way] attached to a shop—as

¹³¹ Cairo, Damascus and the other main cities of the Mamluk sultanate had a very animated street life into which the *Nights* and other sources offer many insights. Apart from the astrologers, there were innumerable entertainers of all kinds soliciting the attention and the money of the common people; see R. Irwin, *Nights*, ch. 5: 'Street Entertainments', 120–39.

¹³² See the 'Tale of Qamar al-Zamān' in the *Nights* (R. Irwin, *Nights*, 190) or the contemporary first-hand testimony produced by Safi al-Dīn al-Hillī (*Qasida*, trans. Bosworth, *Underworld*, ii, 297–8, verses 33, 42–3, 45):

'And how often have I posed as an astrologer (*kassāb*) and composed a magic circle (*mandal*), by means of which I have demonstrated that the Jinn are my brethren [...]

And how often have I stood up in the circle of onlookers, speaking out with great eloquence, and how often have I sold favourable horoscopes and auguries to people (*muḥawwil*), writing out my formulae of trickery by using alum and onion juice as invisible inks! [On the use of onion juice as invisible ink, see al-Jawbarī, *Kashf*, trans. Khawam, *Voile*, i, 272.]

And on how many a day have I wandered round the houses, encouraging people to have their horoscopes cast and their fortunes told, with my staff, my two rolls of cloth embroidered with magical patterns, and my beggar's garments! [...]

And I have come to know the stories and conversations of women, being able to interpret what they say by means of speech which has come to me directly from their mouths.'

As attested by the text translated above, p. 147, Avicenna had already underlined, three centuries earlier, the importance of women among the astrologers' clientèle.

inspector, owner, trustee—to let it for rent for that purpose, or not? And is the rent [itself] of a forbidden nature, or not? On the authorities, and on every Muslim able to do so, is it incumbent to put an end to it, or not? [192,1] And when the authority does not act to condemn the [astrologers], does the matter fall within the compass of the threat of the authentic *ḥadīth* reported on the authority of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, namely this saying: ‘There is no authority with whom God entrusts a flock, who makes no effort on their behalf, nor gives them advice, but will not enter the Garden with them.’¹³³ When, [on the contrary], an authority condemns this reprehensible phenomenon, does it come under His words, Exalted is He: ‘And there may be from you a community who invite to the good, command what is to be acknowledged and prohibit what is to be condemned. These are the successful’ (Q. 3.104). And, when [an authority] condemns that, will it be plentifully rewarded for doing so or not?

Would they also mention, if they thought [it appropriate], the threatening *ḥadīths* that were present in their mind about that matter. Rewarded would they then be, the Exalted God willing!

HE ANSWERED:

THE BOOK, THE TRADITION AND THE CONSENSUS FORBID ASTROLOGY

‘The praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!’ (Q. 1.1)

None of those things is licit. The art of astrology, whose purport is judgements and influence—i.e. drawing indications from the states of the celestial spheres as to terrestrial events, and combining the forces of the celestial spheres with terrestrial receptacles—is an art forbidden by the Book, by the Tradition and by the consensus of the community. Moreover, it was forbidden by the tongue of all the Messengers, in all the faiths (*milla*). God said, Exalted is He: ‘The magician thrives not, wherever he comes’ (Q. 20.69). He also said: ‘Have you not regarded those who were given a share of the Book? They believe in sorcery (*al-jibt*) and the devil (*al-ṭaghūt*)’ (Q. 4.51). ‘Umar and others said: ‘*Al-jibt* means magic.’

In his *Sunan*, Abū Dā’ūd has reported with a good chain of transmitters from Qabiṣa b. Mukhāriq,¹³⁴ about the Prophet,

¹³³ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Aḥkām* 8, ix, 64 (‘Ālam. 6617); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Imān*, i, 88 (‘Ālam. 205).

¹³⁴ A Companion who lived in Baṣra; see Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, iv, 192–3.

God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'Mantic interpretation of the flight and the cries of birds (*'iyāfa*),¹³⁵ of lines that one traces (*ṭarq*),¹³⁶ and of fortuitous events considered as negative (*tīra*)¹³⁷ pertains to sorcery (*jibt*).'¹³⁸ 'Awf,¹³⁹ [193,1] the reporter of the *ḥadīth*, said: '*Al-'iyāfa*, i.e. to cause a bird to take flight (*zajr al-ṭayr*).'¹⁴⁰ *Al-ṭarq*, i.e. the line which is traced on the earth.'¹⁴¹ The contrary has also been said.¹⁴² If tracing lines and the like belonging to the [various] branches of astrology (*najāma*) pertain to sorcery, how [must] things be, *a fortiori*, for astrology (*najāma*) [itself]? The fact is indeed that they generate figures on the earth

¹³⁵ In the strict sense, *'iyāfa* means ornithomancy, i.e. the art of divining omens from the flight of birds, their cries, their posture or even their name. See T. Fahd, *EP*², 'Iyāfa'.

¹³⁶ In the absolute, *ṭarq* designates three divinatory methods of cleromantic nature: throwing pebbles and observing how they scatter on the ground (*al-ṭarq bi-l-ḥasā*), tracing lines in sand or dust (*al-khatt bi-l-raml*), and mixing cotton with wool (*khalt al-qun bi-l-ṣūf*).

The second method, which is the one Ibn Taymiyya refers to, as will become evident in the following lines, developed into geomancy and enjoyed prodigious popularity in Muslim countries. At its most elementary level, it consisted of guessing the future from the figure or pattern supposedly drawn by random marks traced in dust or sand. In more sophisticated forms of the art, combination of random lines of dots would be used to generate one of the sixteen geomantic figures, or random markings would be interpreted in relation to the horoscope of the enquirer and other astrological considerations; or, as explained here by Ibn Taymiyya, in correlation with 'the configurations of the celestial sphere'. See T. Fahd, *Divination*, 195–204; E. Savage-Smith, *Science*, i, 148–51; R. Irwin, *Nights*, 190–1.

¹³⁷ Etymologically, *tīra* refers to the observation and mantic interpretation of the spontaneous flight of birds, as practised in pre-Islamic Arabia. This was progressively extended and *tīra* assumed the wider significance of divining omens, good or ill, in all kinds of manifestations of animate or inanimate beings, especially in the sphere of domestic life. As a method for divining ill omens, *tīra* was condemned by Islam as pagan. The new religion did, however, accept comparable techniques for divining favourable omens, under the name of *fa'l*. See T. Fahd, *EP*², 'Iyāfa'; *Divination*, 436–8, 450–2.

¹³⁸ On this *ḥadīth*, see Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, *Tibb*, iv, 16, 3907 ('Ālam. 3408). See also T. Fahd, *Divination*, 195.

¹³⁹ 'Awf b. Abī Jamīla Abū Sahl al-A'rabī (d. 146/763).

¹⁴⁰ *Zajr* originally consisted in causing a bird to fly away by shouting or throwing a stone at it, in order to be able to give a mantic interpretation of its flight. Like *tīra*, it was thus a technique of *'iyāfa*. The term progressively received a broader sense and eventually referred, not only to ornithomancy in general, but to all kinds of omens divined in animate or inanimate beings. See T. Fahd, *EP*², 'Iyāfa'; *Divination*, 438–50.

¹⁴¹ See Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, *Tibb*, iv, 16, 3908 ('Ālam. 3409).

¹⁴² Ibid. 3907 ('Ālam. 3408; trans. Hasan, *Sunan*, iii, 1096, ch. 1481, 3898: '*Ṭarq*: It is used in the sense of divination in which women threw stones. '*Iyāfab*: It means geomancy by drawing lines').

on the [claim] that those are engendered by the configurations of the celestial sphere.

Ahmad [Ibn Hanbal], Abū Dā'ūd, Ibn Māja and others have reported from Ibn 'Abbās, with a sound chain of transmitters, that he said: 'The Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whoever seeks to learn anything from the stars seeks to learn something from magic, and the more he seeks it the more he does."' ¹⁴³ The Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, has clearly declared that astrology (*'ilm al-nujūm*) pertains to magic. And God said, Exalted is He: 'The magician thrives not, wherever he comes' (Q. 20.69). And so does it happen: induction proves that the people who deal in astrology (*ahl al-nujūm*) do not thrive, neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

Ahmad [Ibn Hanbal] and Muslim, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, have reported from Sāfiyya, ¹⁴⁴ daughter of [Abū] 'Ubayd, from some of the wives of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'Whoever frequents a soothsayer (*'arrāf*) and asks him a question about anything, no prayer is accepted from him for forty days.' ¹⁴⁵ Yet, the astrologer comes under the term 'soothsayer', according to some scholars while, according to others, it has the same meaning. That being the situation of the person who puts the question, how then, *a fortiori*, [must] things be for the one questioned?

[Muslim] also reported in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, from Mu'āwiya b. al-Ḥakam al-Sulamī, ¹⁴⁶ that he said: "'O Messenger of God," I said, "there are people, among us, who frequent diviners." He said: "Do not frequent them!"' ¹⁴⁷ The Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, thus prohibited the frequentation of diviners. Yet, the astrologer comes under the term 'diviner' according to al-Khaṭṭābī ¹⁴⁸ [194,1] and other scholars, this [assimilation] being related from the Arabs. According to others, [the astrologer] belongs to the genus of the diviner and is in a worse situation than him. Thus, from the viewpoint of [its] meaning, ['astrologer'] comes after ['diviner'].

¹⁴³ See Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, i, 227 ('Ālam. 2697); Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, *Tibb*, iv, 15–16, 3905 ('Ālam. 3406); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *Adab*, ii, 1228, 3726 ('Ālam. 3716).

¹⁴⁴ Daughter of one of the great Followers, who lived in Madina; see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, trans. Bewley, *Women*, 305.

¹⁴⁵ See Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, iv, 68; v, 380 ('Ālam. 16041, 22138); for Muslim, see p. 162, n. 47.

¹⁴⁶ A Companion, who lived in Madina; see Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, iv, 384–5.

¹⁴⁷ See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Masājid*, ii, 70 ('Ālam. 836).

¹⁴⁸ A traditionist who, *inter alia*, authored a *Book of the Strange Traditions—K. Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Bust, 319–388? / 931–998?). See *ET*, 'al-Khaṭṭābī'.

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is also reported about him, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: ‘The price given for a dog is disgusting, the “dower” of a prostitute is disgusting and the “tip” (*ḥulwān*) of a diviner is disgusting.’¹⁴⁹ His ‘tip’ is what the common people call his ‘sweetener’ (*ḥalāwa*). In what is meant by this is also included that which is given to the astrologer, to the [soothsayer] using devices¹⁵⁰ by means of which he casts lots (for example a wooden piece on which A, B, J, D are inscribed),¹⁵¹ to the [fortune-teller] throwing pebbles¹⁵² and to their like. What is given to those is of a forbidden nature. More than one of the ‘ulamā’, like al-Baghawī,¹⁵³ al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād¹⁵⁴ and others, have spoken of a consensus as far as forbidding it is concerned.

In the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, it is [reported] from Zayd b. Khālīd¹⁵⁵ that he said: ‘The Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, spoke to us at al-Ḥudaybiyya, after a rainy night. “Do you know,” he said, “what your Lord has said this night?” We said: “God and His Messenger know better!” He said: “Some of My servants entered this morning believing in Me and, some, disbelieving in Me. He who said: ‘We have had a rainfall due to God’s

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Taymiyya in fact mixes the two following *ḥadīths* reported by Muslim: ‘[The Prophet] prohibited giving a price for a dog, a “dowry” to a prostitute and a “tip” to a diviner’ (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Buyūʾ*, v, 35; ‘Ālam. 2930). ‘[The Prophet] said: “The price given for a dog is disgusting, the ‘dower’ of a prostitute is disgusting and the earning of a cupper is disgusting.”’ (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Buyūʾ*, v, 35; ‘Ālam. 2932; trans. Ṣiddīqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, iii, 825, 3806. On this last kind of earning, see R. Brunschvig, *Métiers*, 47–50.)

¹⁵⁰ *Ṣaḥīb al-aẓlām*, i.e., literally, ‘the [soothsayer] using arrows’. This expression, which refers to a divinatory technique condemned in the Qurʾān (see 5.3, 5.90), eventually designated all kinds of lot-casting procedures, in which the forbidden arrows were replaced by other things, for example the alphabet letters here mentioned by Ibn Taymiyya. See T. Fahd, *Divination*, 181–8.

¹⁵¹ See the two lot-casting pieces, made of solid brass and bearing letters and cryptic symbols on their four faces, reproduced in E. Savage-Smith, *Science*, i, 159, no. 111.

¹⁵² On the popularity of lot-casting, particularly that employing dice, in medieval Islamic society, see *ibid.* 151.

¹⁵³ Ibn al-Farrāʾ (Bagh, near Harāt, c. 432/1040 – Marw al-Rūdh, 516/1122?), Shāfiʿī doctor, traditionist and commentator of the Qurʾān, whose *The Lamps of the Sunna* (*Maṣābiḥ al-Sunna*), a collection of traditions arranged according to their subject-matter, still enjoys a certain popularity. See J. Robson, *EL*², ‘al-Baghawī’.

¹⁵⁴ The famous and strictly orthodox Mālikī traditionist and *faqīh* of the Almoravid period (Ceuta, 476/1088 – Marrakesh, 544/1149). See M. Talbi, *EL*², ‘Iyād b. Mūsā’.

¹⁵⁵ A Companion (d. 78/697?); see Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, ii, 228.

favour and His mercy' is believing in Me and disbelieving in the planets."¹⁵⁶

In Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is [reported] from Abū Hurayra,¹⁵⁷ about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'God does not send down any blessing from the sky but a group of people enter the morning disbelieving in it. God sends down abundant rain and they say: "It is due to such a planet, or to such a one!"'¹⁵⁸

In Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is also [reported] from him, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: 'There are, in my community, four things that belong to the Age of Ignorance (*jāhiliyya*): boasting of noble pedigrees, reviling [others'] lineages, wailing and asking the stars for rain.'¹⁵⁹

In it is also reported from Ibn 'Abbās, about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: "'And do you make it your livelihood to denounce it as lies?"' (Q. 56.82): this [verse] refers to asking the stars for rain.'¹⁶⁰ Or as he said.¹⁶¹

THE PRACTICAL MEASURES TO TAKE AGAINST ASTROLOGERS

[195,1] The texts reported on the authority of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, his Companions and the rest of the imāms, that prohibit [astrology] are too numerous for us to be able to mention them in this place. Yet it is already obvious, by virtue of what we have mentioned, that the wage got for such an [activity], any gift or [act of] generosity [related to it], are of a forbidden nature, for the payer as well as for the payee. For owners, inspectors and

¹⁵⁶ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ādhān*, i, 169 ('Ālam. 801); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Imān*, i, 59 ('Ālam. 104).

¹⁵⁷ A Companion (d. c. 58/678). See J. Robson, *ET*², 'Abū Hurayra'.

¹⁵⁸ See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Imān*, i, 59 ('Ālam. 106).

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid.* *Jana'iz*, iii, 45 ('Ālam. 1550).

¹⁶⁰ See *ibid.* *Imān*, i, 60 ('Ālam. 107; trans. Siddiqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, i, 45, 135): 'Ibn 'Abbās told me this. [Once], at the time of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, people were showered with rain. The Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, then said: "Some people have entered the morning thanking [God] and others as unbelievers. These indeed said: 'This is God's mercy', while the others said: 'Such and such stars were veracious.'" The following verses, he said, then came down: "I swear by the locations of the stars. And this is indeed a mighty oath, if you but knew! It is indeed a noble Qur'an, in a hidden Book. None shall touch it but the purified. A sending-down from the Lord of the worlds! Is it such a discourse that you would scorn? And do you make it your livelihood to denounce it as lies?"' (Q. 56.75–82).

¹⁶¹ This formula is used when one reports faithfully the meaning of some saying but is uncertain of the exact wording.

trustees, it is also forbidden to let to these unbelievers and perverts, for such a use, shops owned [by them] or established as *waqfs*, etc., if in their opinion the [feeling] prevails that they will practice therein this damned sorcery.

It is also incumbent, on the authorities and on every [Muslim] able to do so, to endeavour to put an end to it and to prevent them from holding seances in shops or on the thoroughfares, or from coming into people's houses, in their homes, for such a purpose. If one does not do that, let these words of the Exalted suffice for him: 'Nor did they prohibit one another from the condemned actions which they committed' (Q. 5.79), as well as these words, Praised and Exalted is He: 'Why do not the rabbis and the doctors prohibit them from saying sinful things and devouring unlawful gains?' (Q. 5.63). Those damned people do indeed, according to the consensus of the Muslims, say sinful things and devour unlawful gains. It is also established about the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace, following a report related about him by the Truthful [Abū Bakr] that he said: 'When people see something condemnable and do not change it, God is about to extend over them all a chastisement of His.'¹⁶² And what condemnable thing could be more so than the actions of those disgusting people, the vermin of the religions^A (*milla*), the enemies of the Messengers and the offshoots of the Šabians, the planet-worshippers? Was not the mission of [Abraham] the Friend [of the Merciful], God's blessing and His peace be upon him, the imām of the true monotheists (*ḥanif*), directed but against the ancestors of those [planet-worshippers]? Nimrod,¹⁶³ Kana'an's son, was indeed their king, and the doctors of the Šabians are indeed the astrologers and their like. And the idols, were they not worshipped, most of the time, but because of the views of this disgusting species of individuals, who devour people's wealth by vain procedures and divert from the way of God?¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² See Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, *al-'Ashra*, i, 2 ('Ālam. 16); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *Fitan*, ii, 1327, 4005 ('Ālam. 3995).

¹⁶³ The Nimrod of the Bible who, without being named, is alluded to in the Qur'an (2.258, 29.24) in relation to the story of Abraham. Many legends developed about him in Islam, borrowing not only from the Bible but from the Jewish Haggada and Persian epic. See B. Heller, *EP*², 'Namrūd'. See also the text translated in the following note, where Ibn Taymiyya seems in some way to assimilate Nimrod to the Buddha.

¹⁶⁴ For Ibn Taymiyya, idolatry most often derives from astrolatry. 'The Greeks and the Romans were associators, as mentioned earlier. They worshipped the sun, the moon and the planets. They built temples for them on the earth and represented them in the form of idols, that they considered as talismans of them. It was an associationism of the [same] kind as [that practised by] Nimrod, Kana'an's son, and his people, to whom Abraham, the Friend of God, God's blessings and peace be upon him, was sent.

THE PERSONAL POSITION TO ADOPT
VIS-À-VIS ASTROLOGY

[196,1] For whoever, among those people who claim some connection with practising the religion of a Book, seeks strength from [such condemnable practices] it would be appropriate to make their own this part of the words of [God]: ‘And when a Messenger from God came to them, confirming what was with them, a group of those who had been given the Book cast the Book of God behind their backs, as if they did not know. They followed what the devils were reciting over Solomon’s reign. Solomon did not unbelieve but the devils unbelieved: they were teaching men magic. [They also followed] that which had come down on the two angels in Babylon, Harūt and Mārūt, although these two taught no one till they had said: “We are but a trial; therefore do not unbelieve!” So people learn, from these two, things by which they bring division between a man and his wife. They are however injuring no one thereby, except by God’s permission. They are thus learning things that harm them and do not profit them! And surely they do know that he who trafficks therein, for him there is no share [of happiness] in the Hereafter. And evil indeed is that for which they have sold their souls! Had they but known! If they had believed and feared [God], a reward from God would indeed have been better! Had they but known!’ (Q. 2.101–3)

Likewise, the leaders of the astrologers, ancients and moderns, have in fact recognized that those who have faith, accomplish the acts of worship and invoke [the Lord], God relieves them by virtue of the blessing of their acts of worship, their invocations and their trust in Him, from things that the astrologers claim to be necessarily implied by the celestial spheres. They also recognize that the people accomplishing the acts of worship, invoking God and having trust in Him are given, as far as the reward of this world and of the hereafter are concerned, something the getting of which is not in the power of the celestial spheres.

The praise, then, be to the God Who has put the best [thing] of this world and of the hereafter in following the Messengers and Who has made the best community those who command what is to be acknowledged and prohibit what is to be condemned. (See Q. 3.110.) He said, Exalted is He: ‘God will bring people whom He will love

There are remains of such an associationism in the countries of the Orient—the countries of the Khitā [China] and the Turks. They make idols that have the form of Nimrod. These idols are very big, and they attach rosaries to their necks. They praise the name of Nimrod and insult Abraham, the Friend of God.’ (*Radd*, 283–4.)

and who will love Him, lowly with the believers, mighty against the unbelievers. They will fight in the way of God and will not fear the blame of any blamer. That [197,1] is God's favour. He gives it unto whom He will. And God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.' (Q. 5.54).

God supports and helps [one] to be religious and to follow the way of the believers. And God, Praised and Exalted is He, knows better and is Wiser.

FATWA III

[197,3] HE WAS ASKED, may the Exalted
God have mercy upon him:

about the art of astrology and the drawing of indications from the [stars] as to the events. Is it licit or forbidden? Is it licit to get a wage [for it], and to offer the same, or not? And is it incumbent, on the authority (*wali l-amr*), to prevent the [astrologers from practising] and to make them cease holding seances in [their] stalls?

HE ANSWERED:

Of course, this is forbidden by the consensus of the Muslims, as is getting a wage for it. To prevent^A [the astrologers] from holding seances in [their] shops and on the thoroughfares, to prevent people from engaging them and to oppose that has a share in the most eminent striving (*jihād*) in the way of God. And God knows better!

APPARATUS CRITICUS

- P. 166. ^Amas'ala fi-man MK: wa su'ila raḥima-hu Llāh 'an-man F
He was also asked, may God have mercy upon him, about the person... ^Byaqūlu F: yaqūlūna MK *They also say*, ^Cmatā MK: ḥattā law F *And even if it...* ^Dal-jawāb MK: fa-ajāba F *He answered:* ^Erabb al-'ālamīn + MK: li-Llāh F
- P. 167. ^Arubūbiyyati-hi MK: rubūyyati-hi F ^Bqadr MK: qawl F ... *is something said in addition, of...* ^Cindāj MK: nidāj F ^Dla-hum F: – MK ... *by it such...* ^Emashhūda F: mashhūra MK *well known* ^Fḥayāt F: – MK ... *up some...*
- P. 168. ^Amā anzala Llāh min al-samā' min K (Q. 2.164): anzala min al-samā' F *And He sends down water from the sky...* anzal-nā min

- al-samā' M *And We send down water from the sky...* ^Bmashhūda F: mashhūra MK *well known* ^Cmushrik F: shirk MK ... *independently, this is associationism conflicting with...* ^Dal-nujūm F: al-najm MK *'star'*
- P. 169. ^Aka-mā F: qad + MK ... *may happen...* ^Bnafā F: nahā MK *He refused death...* ^Cathar MK: atharan F ^Dbi-ann Allāh MK: bi-anna-hu F ^Eyunzilu-hu MK: yanzilu F ^Fmin + MK: nas'alu-ka F
- P. 170. ^Amin MK: wa F ^Byattaqi MK (Q. 65.2): yattaqi F ^CF only quotes the beginning and the end of this passage of the Qur'an ^D – MK: fi F
- P. 171. ^Ala-hum MK: la-humā F ^BF only quotes the beginning of this verse ^Cbi-l-kitāb F: fi l-kitāb MK ... *in the Book*,
- P. 172. ^Aanwā' F: naw' MK ... *the species of...* ^Bfa-yuqirru-hā MK: yuqirru-hā F ^Csamā' MK: al-samā' F ... *of the heaven* ^Dal-samā' F: samā' MK ... *to this world's heaven* ^Ewa rubba-mā adraka-hu l-shihāb F: – MK ... *them, after He pronounces that word. He has...* ^Finnī lammā M: innī F atā (?) lammā K ^Gli + MK: qāla F
- P. 173. ^Aal-adilla MK: al-dalāla F ^Btuqbal F: yaqbal Allāh MK, *God does not accept from him any prayer for...* ^Ctaqdima MK: taqaddum F
- P. 174. ^Abal MK: fa-inna F *The texts indeed prove...* ^Bmustariqq MK: mustariqq F ^C – MK: min F ^Dba'd + MK: mawt F ... *of people...* ^Eli-l-ramy bi-l-nujūm MK: al-ramy bi-l-najm F
- P. 175. ^A – MK (Q. 55.5): wa F ^B – MK (Q. 2.189): wa F
- P. 176. ^Aallatī MK: alladhī F ^Bwa l-uwlā MK: wa l-awwal F *the first* ^Cmin qawl al-nabī MK: fi qawli-hi F ^Dqalilū K: qalilū' FM
- P. 177. ^Awa dhālika + MK: dhālika F ^Bmithl + MK: yazunnu F ... *hold that opinion about...* ^Ci'tiqād MK: i'tiqādu-hu F ^Di'taqada MK: al-mu'taqid F ^Eindamma MK: anzama F
- P. 178. ^Aanna hādihā: hādihā MK anna hunā F ^Bal-qadar MK: al-qadīr F ^Csharafi-hi F: shurūqi-hi K ... *rise*, shurūfi-hi M
- P. 179. ^Ausāfiru F: nusāfiru MK ^Bal-harāmisa F: – MK ... *to Hermes and...* ^Caşlu-hu F: – MK ... *if this...* ^Dinna-mā yahtajjūna F: mā yahtajjūna *'alay-hi* MK *Yet, what those argue for depends on experience and analogical reasoning, not on information...* (?)
- P. 180. ^Aalā F: 'an MK *from*
- P. 181. ^Ailmi-him al-musaddaq F: 'ilm al-şidq MK ... *knowing the truth than...* ^Bal-daḡīq MK: al-tadqīq F ^Cdu'a' M: di'āya F du'āh K ^Drasūli-hi F: rusuli-hi MK *Messengers* ^Elam MK: lā F
- P. 182. ^Abal + MK: nabiyyan F ... *Prophet and a sage* ^BF only gives the beginning of the verse ^Ca'zam mim-mā MK: nazīr mā F ... *finds vain things and elements of error similar to what is found...* ^Dlā +: kānū MFK ... *they exonerate...* ^Emartaba MK: nisba F

- P. 183. ^Aa'immati-nā F: ummati-nā MK *community* ^Bhawādith F: jawādhib MK ... *and the attraction forces of the atmosphere(?)*
- P. 184. ^Aikhtilāqan MK: ikhtilāfan F ... *and differing in opinion than...*
^Bnabaghū fa-awwal F: taba'ū ilā awwal K ... *since they followed the first who had started the rafḍ innovation. He was...* tabaghghaw (?)
 ilā awwal M ^Cibtada'a MK: itbada'a F ^Dli-qasḍ MK: fa-qasada F ^Efa-qasada F: fa-fasada MK ... *also corrupted that [religion] and...*
- P. 185. ^Afi F: al-yawm + MK *The third day*, ^Banna Ibn Saba' yasubbu MK: man sabba F ^Ckatama: kallama FMK ... *and spoke about him, while...* ^Dal-Ḥanafīyya MK: al-Ḥanīfa F
- P. 186. ^Allatī MK: alladhī F ^Bittiṣālan wa indimāman MK: ittiṣāl wa indimāmāt F ^Chādhā l-zamān al-qarīb MK: al-zamān F *Over a period which...*
- P. 187. ^A – MK: al-mulk wa F ... *of the royal rules, the faiths...* ^Bli-mubāyanat aḥwāl al-nabī ṣallā Llāh 'alay-hi wa sallama wa ummati-hi MK: al-mubāyina li-aḥwāl al-nabī ṣallā Llāh 'alay-hi wa sallama F ^Cab'adu-hā MK: ab'adu-hum F
- P. 188. ^Afi F: al + MK ... *about Abraham's family*: ^Bfi + MK (Q. 2.130): inna-hu F ^Cla-min MK (Q. 2.130): 'an F ^Dwa qāla + MK: muslimūna F
- P. 189. ^Aal-hawāriyyīna MK: al-hawārīna F ^Bbi-anna-nā K (Q. 5.111): bi-annā FM ^Cilay-nā MK (Q. 2.136): 'alay-nā F ^Dilā MK (Q. 2.136): 'alā F ^Emā ūtiya + MK (Q. 2.136): wa F ^F – MK: man F
- P. 190. ^Aal-jummal al-kabīr MK: al-jumlat al-kathīr F ^Bsab'ūna: thalāthūna FKM ... *be 31 years*. ^Calmr (sec Q. 13.1): alm FKM ^Dbi-shawb FM: yathūbu K (bi-thawb? ... *but in the garb of some element...* ?) ^Efa-bi-sabab MK: bi-sabab F ^Fal-bāṭil F: al-bāb MK ... *about this topic*, ^Ga'lamu F: wa l-hamdu li-Llāhī rabbi l-'ālamīna wa ṣalawātu-hu wa salāmu-hu 'alā Muḥammad wa āli-hi ajma'ina + MK... *better! The praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds! His blessing and His peace be on Muḥammad and on all his family!*
- P. 195. ^Aal-milal: al-mulk F
- P. 197. ^Aman': min F

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ADDENDUM

I had already corrected the first proofs of this article when K. Yamamoto and C. Burnett published their edition and translation of *Abū Ma'shar. On Historical Astrology. The Book of Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*. i: The Arabic Original; ii: The Latin Versions (Leiden: Brill, 'Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, xxxiii', 2000). This magisterial work is a very important contribution to the study of astrology in Islam and, had it been available earlier, I would certainly have had frequent recourse to it. Here, I cannot do more than indicate passages that are particularly worth consulting in relation to the following notes to my translation.

- n. 4 (p. 148): on Abū Ma'shar's interest in Aristotelian natural philosophy, see i. 607–9.
- n. 112 (p. 181): on Abū Ma'shar's linking of the Arabs to Venus, see i. 66–7, 126–7, 606, ii. xii.
- n. 123 (p. 185): on Abū Ma'shar and al-Kindī's prognostications of the date when the rule of Islam would end, see i. 126–7 (Abū Ma'shar's Arabic text, with English transl.), ii. 83 (Abū Ma'shar's Latin text) and i. 532–3 (al-Kindī's Arabic text, with English transl.). For the authors (i. 525–6, 606, 613), neither of al-Kindī and Abū Ma'shar can have copied from the other on this matter and it is 'highly probable' that both were drawing from a third source, perhaps Māshā'Allāh.
- n. 126 (p. 186): on the calculation of Islam's duration by means of the numerical values of the 'mysterious' letters of the Qur'ān, see i. 534–7 (al-Kindī's Arabic text, with English transl.).