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Eschatology of Yezidism

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## **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů, literatury a dalších odborných zdrojů.

V Praze dne 31.července 2009

Petr Kubálek

## Anotace a klíčová slova / Annotation and Keywords

### Anotace:

Tématem práce je jezídismus, náboženství v kurdsky mluvících oblastech Blízkého východu. Zabývá se jezídskou eschatologií se zaměřením na představy o konci světa a času. Práce shrnuje a interpretuje jezídské textové verze o konci světa a času. Představuje postavy vystupující v textech, zejména jeden z jezídských projevů božství – Ězího (souvisejícího s historickým muslimským chalífou JAZÍDEM I. IBN MU<sup>Ā</sup>WIJA). Rovněž se zabývá jezídskými koncepcemi času a moci, jezídským uspořádáním společnosti a historií, a navrhuje typologii textové tradice v jezídismu. Práce zahrnuje expozé o popisech jezídů jako „uctívačů ďábla“ a padělaných rukopisech dlouho považovaných za jezídská „svatá písma“.

### Annotation:

The subject of the thesis is Yezidism, a religion in the Kurdish speaking areas of the Middle East. It deals with the Yezidi eschatology with a focus on ideas of the End of Time. The thesis summarises and interprets the Yezidi textual versions on the End of Time. It presents the characters featured in the texts, especially one of the Yezidi manifestations of deity – Ēzī (related to the historical Muslim Caliph YAZĪD I IBN MU<sup>Ā</sup>WIYA). It also deals with the Yezidi concepts of time and power, the Yezidi social order and history, and proposes a typology of the textual tradition in Yezidism. The thesis includes expositions on the description of the Yezidis as “devil worshippers” and the fake manuscripts long thought to be the Yezidi “sacred books”.

### Klíčová slova:

- jazídi, jazídský
- jezídi, jezídský
- jezídismus
- Kurdové
- Blízký východ
- náboženství
- eschatologie
- konec světa a času
- ústní tradice
- kasty
- Satan
- ďábel
- HALLÁDŽ

### Keywords:

- Yazidi
- Yezidi
- Yezidism
- Kurds
- Middle East
- religion
- eschatology
- End of Time
- oral tradition
- castes
- Satan
- devil
- AL-HALLADJ

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## Note on Transliteration and Terminology

The present thesis uses the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* standard as the transliteration norm. In line with the prevalent Kurdish writing usage, the thesis disregards some Kurdish consonants: the thrilled *r* (in some sources marked as *ř* or similar; here written indiscriminately as *r*) and the aspirated *č*, *k*, *p*, *t* (in some sources marked as *č'*, *k'*, *p'*, *t'*; here written indiscriminately as *č*, *k*, *p*, *t*). Also with respect to the more frequent Kurdish usage, double consonants have been omitted here in Kurdish words even if their Arabic counterparts have such (hence e.g. a Yezidi term in Kurdish is written here as “Sunat” although it is derived from the Arabic *sunna*). The transliteration is specified in Subchapters 3.1 and 3.2 below.

The *Encyclopaedia of Islam* standard has been adopted in the thesis for all non-Romanised languages. For Turkish, both this writing and the modern Turkish spelling are used. It is also used by default in translations from other languages than English. In quotations of English texts with a different transcription of Kurdish, the “transcription adjusted” note is added. Other adjusted elements in quotations from various sources might be translation (though rarely and with restraint), terminology (e.g. change from Yazidi to Yezidi), typography (including punctuation), and wording (including word order). It is always indicated when these changes have been applied.

The terms “Yezidism” and “Yezidi” are preferred here to “Yazidism” and “Yazidi” as the former seem prevalent in the present-day academic literature on the subject and, last but not least, are a little more easily acceptable for the Yezidis themselves (on which see Section 1.1.1 below).

Capital letters have been used in some eschatological terms in the thesis (e.g. End of Time, Day of Resurrection, Last Judgment, Satan; but: hereafter, paradise, heaven, hell, hellfire, devil). Some other words have been capitalised (Creation, Ocean, Cup) when they denote some primordial concepts in Yezidism.

In general descriptions of urban units, either “city” or “settlement” is used (due to the ambiguity of the Middle Eastern “village” that can have many thousands of inhabitants). Some standard spellings of generally known regions and cities have been preferred to exact transliterations that are strictly used in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; therefore, it is written in the thesis Iraq (not ʿIrāk) or Baghdad (not Baghdād). Similarly, the name of the region Sinḍjār has been chosen due to its familiarity in the literature although the local Kurdish-speaking population call it *Shingāl*. Beyond geography, the Islamic terms “Sunni” and “Shīʿī” have been replaced by their common English adoptions “Sunnite” and “Shiite”, respectively.

When film materials are quoted as source, it is always specified whether the reference is to images (film shots) or a person interviewed. The film commentary has not been referred to.

## **Preface**

### **Goals of the Thesis**

This thesis submitted at a Czech university deals with the religion and culture known as Yezidism – a Kurdish-speaking community whose members have traditionally lived in some regions of the Middle East and the Transcaucasia. As the studies of the Yezidi religion are still sporadic and the specialists scattered throughout the world, this thesis has been written in English.

The main subject of the thesis is the eschatology of Yezidism, specifically its accounts and ideas of the End of Time. The primary goals of the thesis are:

- 1) a summary and interpretation of the Yezidi texts on the End of Time that can be found in the available academic literature;
- 2) a description of the characters featured in the Yezidi accounts on the End of Time and an explanation of their overall position in Yezidism;
- 3) an introduction of other Yezidi holy beings related to the characters that are featured in the accounts on the End of Time;
- 4) an examination of broader issues related to Yezidi ideas of the End of Time, especially the perceptions of time, history, and power in Yezidism;



5) a focus on other sections of the Yezidi eschatology (such as the resurrection of the dead or metempsychosis) wherever they seem relevant to the main topic of the thesis.

A large portion of writing is dedicated to introductory and explanatory parts. On this plan, the secondary goals of the thesis are:

6) a consideration of what the fundamental essence of the Yezidi religion is;

7) a summary of the history of the Yezidi community;

8) pointing out at the specifics of Yezidism as a non-literary religion, and proposing a typology of its oral textual tradition;

9) expositions on rather controversial issues in the literature on Yezidism, such as the description of the religion as “devil worship”, the manuscripts long thought to be its “sacred books”, and the relation of the community or one of its theophanies to the historical Muslim ruler YAZĪD I IBN MU‘ĀWIYA.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis formally consists of four chapters. Its main topic can be found in Chapter Two. After an introduction of the source texts and their summary (2.1-2.2), the characters featured in the texts are introduced (2.3-2.6). Special attention is paid to Ēzī and Sharfadīn who seem to fulfil “messianic” roles (2.4-2.5). A following subchapter (2.7) includes general remarks and analyses on the Yezidi perceptions of time and the political power, and their relation to the idea of an End of Time in Yezidism.

Chapters One and Three are dedicated to general issues: while Chapter One is an introduction to the Yezidi religious identity (1.1), history (1.2), and textual tradition (1.3), Chapter Three is an appendix of tables and reference overviews that should provide further details on the topics treated in the previous chapters.

For instance, the Yezidi theophany Ēzī who occurs in eschatology is introduced in detail in the main chapter of the thesis (2.4). But additional information on Ēzī’s links to other Yezidi holy beings can be found in one of the tables and overviews of Chapter Three (3.6), and Ēzī’s position in the Yezidi identity is also mentioned within Chapter One (1.1.1). Similarly, the history of Yezidism is summarised and periodised in Section 1.2.1 but a detailed chronological overview is available in Subchapter 3.7.

Some general issues of Yezidism have been included as a by-product of the main writing. These concern the widespread description of the Yezidis as devil worshippers (treated in Section 2.6.4, primarily dealing with a character that occurs in an eschatological account but also can provide clues on the “Satan worship” issue) and problems of academic

studies of Yezidism (mainly in Section 1.2.2 but also mentioned within the context of Sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, and 1.3.1).

An integrated list of sources (including bibliography) is put at the end of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four is represented by conclusions, a summary of original contributions of the thesis, and final remarks.

## Chapter One: Introduction to Yezidism

### 1.1 Essence of the Yezidi Religion

#### 1.1.1 What Is in a Name: How to Call the Religion and Its Adherents

It seems that the term “Yezidism” has recently been established in academic literature<sup>1</sup> as the standard English name for the religion described here, with “Yezidis” being the name of its followers.<sup>2</sup> Another adjective, Yazidi (or, with the appropriate transliteration marks, Yazīdī), is still being frequently used, mostly by writers who rely on Arabic sources or terminology models.<sup>3</sup> Yet the correctness and accuracy of either of these names can hardly be taken for granted. Throughout the history of publications on this Middle Eastern and Transcaucasian sect, the basic name for its members has appeared in at least thirteen variants in English, eight in French, and again thirteen in German.<sup>4</sup> The abundance of names may symbolise the long-lasting bewilderment of academics, desperately looking for the true approach to the Yezidi religion itself.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary Yezidis have been equally concerned with the problem of their religion's name and its secondary dimensions. The majority of Yezidis speak Kurdish as their mother tongue. In this language, a single member of the Yezidi community is an Êzdî, Êzidî or Êzîdî,<sup>6</sup> while the religion as a whole is called Êzdiyātî, Êzidiyātî<sup>7</sup> or Êzidyātî.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. the titles of the following books: ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds* (subtitle: *A History of the Yezidis*); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect* (subtitle: *Sacred Poems and Religious Narratives from the Yezidi Tradition*); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*.

<sup>2</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 282 understands under Yezidism “both Yezidi religion and other aspects of culture, which are closely intertwined in traditional communities”.

<sup>3</sup> Especially the entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, a reference work written in English but intentionally based on “Islamic” terminology: KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyā* (EI). For the use of this form elsewhere, see e.g. McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 277-304.

<sup>5</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. vii-viii, 3-5, 16-20.

<sup>6</sup> CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 188; KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyā* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>7</sup> The latter seems to be the practice in the Yezidi journal *Roj* [Rōž – “Sun”] currently published in Germany.

<sup>8</sup> This has been used as a parallel Romanised title of the Yezidi textbooks published in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region, e.g. CINDI et al., *Êzidyatî* [Êzidyātî – “Yezidism”].

According to a folk etymology widespread among the Yezidis, the name of a single adherent of the faith comes from the Kurdish sentence *az Khwadē dām* (“I was created by God,”<sup>9</sup> or, literally, “given by God”). Others have referred to the alleged God’s utterance *az dā* (“I [have] created”,<sup>10</sup> literally “I have given”).

Those Yezidis who speak and write in Arabic seem to be unanimous nowadays in favouring the “Kurdicised” terms *al-Ēzīdiyya* (pronounced in this way but written as *al-Īzīdiyya*, for “Yezidism” but frequently also “the Yezidis” as a collective form) and *Ēzīdī* (written as *Īzīdī*) for “Yezidi”<sup>11</sup> instead of the formerly common Arabic denotations *al-Yazīdiyya* and *Yazīdī*,<sup>12</sup> respectively. These scruples go far beyond a philological caprice: their proponents try to show that the Yezidis are anchored in a non-Arab linguistic and cultural milieu. Moreover, many educated (though not necessarily the best informed) Yezidis particularly stress their rejection of the existence of any Yezidi link to Caliph *Yazīd I ibn Mu‘āwiya* who ruled over the Muslim empire of the Umayyad dynasty in 680-683 (lived ca. 643-683)<sup>13</sup> and has gained dubious reputation among the Muslims: he is traditionally remembered as an ungodly profligate by the Sunnis<sup>14</sup> and hated by the Shiites.<sup>15</sup> No wonder that the Arabic-speaking Muslims used to maintain that someone who is called *Yazīdī* (i.e. Yezidi) must be a descendant of one-time followers of the unloved Caliph *Yazīd*,<sup>16</sup> and some European researchers in the 1930’s “postulated an ‘ultra-Sunni’ origin of the sect”.<sup>17</sup>

Parallel to the Arabic and Islamic term *sunna*, the Kurdish expression *Sunat*<sup>18</sup> or *Sinat*<sup>19</sup> (translatable as “the Tradition”)<sup>20</sup> can be found in Yezidi sacred texts<sup>21</sup> as a reference to the Yezidi community itself.<sup>22</sup> One can assume that it is one of the numerous Yezidi adoptions of Islamic terminology,<sup>23</sup> possibly close to its original meaning: a community in which the true religion has been preserved.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>9</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>11</sup> Both used e.g. in the journal *Roj* [Rōž – “Sun”] published by Yezidi academics and intellectuals in Germany. For the usage elsewhere, see e.g. ‘ABBŪD, *Al-Īzīdiyya* [Yezidism].

<sup>12</sup> Preserved, for instance, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

<sup>13</sup> HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Mu‘āwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 309.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> GRÜNEBAUM, *Muhammadan Festivals*, p. 90.

<sup>16</sup> KLIPPEL, *Unter Senūsy-Brüdern, Drusen und Teufelsanbetern*, p. 171.

<sup>17</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>20</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 172; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 171, 179, 227, 229.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. The Declaration of Faith in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 226-227; The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 85; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-173; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 58-60; The Morning Prayer in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>22</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 27, 28, 34-35.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 31.

Earlier Western researchers perceived Yezidism as an offshoot of Islam but with the same eagerness looked for some ancient traces, later confirmed as elements of “an ancient Iranian faith”.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, assumptions have been made that the name of Yezidism originates in *yazata*, a term denoting a divine aspect in the holy texts of Zoroastrianism.<sup>26</sup> Later transformed in the Middle Persian into *yazd* or *yazad* for “a divine being”,<sup>27</sup> the word is derived from an Iranic root for “veneration” or “sacrifice”<sup>28</sup> and resonates in some Modern Persian expressions for God (Īzad<sup>29</sup> and Yazdān<sup>30</sup>). The Kurdish word Êzdān, meaning “God” in some Yezidi sacred texts<sup>31</sup> and in common Yezidi discourse,<sup>32</sup> is probably related to the same Iranic stem.<sup>33</sup>

While the Iranic language hypothesis outlined above “is still preferred by many” Yezidis<sup>34</sup> and some others have even turned to ancient Mesopotamia in search for the roots of their name,<sup>35</sup> “most Western scholars now”<sup>36</sup> have restored a previous assumption that the words Yezidi and Yezidism indeed derive “from the name of YAZĪD”.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, the historical image of YAZĪD has been in the Yezidi context largely mythologised and transformed into a character called Êzî, possibly an eponym of the Yezidi community.<sup>38</sup>

### 1.1.2 Yezidism as a Social Orthopraxy

It is suggested in the present thesis that the essence of Yezidism is its social and collective dimension, or one may say, its genetic basis. Similarly to Judaism and Hinduism, a Yezidi is someone born into a Yezidi family. Being Yezidi by birth and origin is the initial point for preserving the identity.<sup>39</sup> Conversion to the Yezidi religion is currently impossible<sup>40</sup> although the early Yezidi community was undoubtedly constituted

<sup>25</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>27</sup> GNOLI, *Yazatas*, p. 503; KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>28</sup> GNOLI, *Yazatas*, p. 503.

<sup>29</sup> MILLER, *Persidsko-russkiy slovar'* [Persian-Russian Dictionary], p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 182-185, 220-221.

<sup>32</sup> JUMA (interview).

<sup>33</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>34</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>35</sup> BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 4-8 (www); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 3 (quoting the Yezidi *faḳīr* KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO). – Cf. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95. – Among the few modern Yezidi writers who admit the position of YAZĪD in the Yezidi tradition is OTMAN, *Die Beziehungen des Sufismus zum Yezidentum*, p. 6 (www), and the same author quoted in ISSA, *Yezid Ibn Mu'awiya und die Yeziden*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>39</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 44; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 62-63, 75-76, 77, 96-97. – Cf. BRUINEN, *Kurdish society, ethnicity, nationalism and refugee problems*, p. 34; The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 171; The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes *ibid.*, p. 393; The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi

by converts: Nestorian Christians of the Sinḡjār region (now in Iraq) embraced Yezidism in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup>

For preserving the Yezidi identity, the main task of an individual is to enter into a legitimate marriage and consequently give birth to Yezidi children. However banal this may sound, it is the main requirement for preserving the very physical continuity of Yezidism. Among the strongest distinctive features of the Yezidi community is its internal division into three hereditary castes that are internally endogamous.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, some branches of the Yezidi castes follow more specific endogamy rules and their choice of spouses is even further limited.<sup>43</sup> No restrictions are imposed on the everyday contact between members of the different castes but closing a marriage across the forbidden borders is generally perceived as an unacceptable act, at times punished by “expulsion from the community or even death”.<sup>44</sup>

A researcher has remarked that “the caste system at present seems to be the most stubborn feature of Yezidi culture”, even among the numerous Yezidi diaspora in Germany where elders may be “more likely to put up... with the marriage of a Yezidi youngster to a non-Yezidi than a marriage between different castes”.<sup>45</sup> Strictly said, marrying outside the Yezidi community is not admissible either.<sup>46</sup> But as the Yezidi community shares the common Middle Eastern (and Transcaucasian) patriarchal outlooks, individual cases have been tolerated when a Yezidi man married a non-Yezidi woman (or, in present-day Europe, shared with her a common household without marriage) – but never vice versa. To be more exact, the non-Yezidi wives of Yezidi men were always Christian and it seems that children of those couples would be brought up as Yezidis.<sup>47</sup> Examples have been reported from earlier times in the Transcaucasia and what is now Turkey.<sup>48</sup> Some similar families (or shared households) can be found in Europe today<sup>49</sup> but the community status of their children is still unclear. In Iraq where the spiritual and organizational centres of Yezidism are located, marrying out is much rarer and always based on special dispensation from “senior Yezidi authorities”.<sup>50</sup>

The Yezidi community in its traditional domicile has always been in the position of a somehow curious group – of “the pariahs of Kurdish society”.<sup>51</sup> They have repeatedly

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ibid., pp. 141-142, 155-156.

<sup>41</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 52, 150, 239, 260.

<sup>42</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>43</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznikh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 262-263.

<sup>47</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 282.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 27, 282; MEISELAS, *Kurdistan*, p. 36.

<sup>49</sup> ALO (interview), HOUSEIN (interview).

<sup>50</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 282.

<sup>51</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 25.

found themselves at odds with the Muslim political power since the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>52</sup> and were not far from physical perdition in what is now Iraq in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> This has strengthened the Yezidis' strong feeling that they are a community living under permanent threat, and the symbolic “seventy-two *firmāns*” (a word meaning “order” or “decree”, but in this context not far from “pogrom”)<sup>54</sup> have remained a vivid part of the Yezidi collective memory.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, endogamy may have been seen as a tool to preserve the Yezidi identity.

Anyhow, Yezidis would hardly be content with a technicist sociological explanation of their caste order. According to what can be called Yezidi mythology, the Yezidis are descendants of Adam only – not of Adam and Eve like the rest of humankind.<sup>56</sup> That provides an aetiology for the intermarriage ban: as the Yezidis believe to be essentially different from other people, they should not mix and intermarry with them because this would endanger the purity of Yezidism.<sup>57</sup>

A Yezidi eschatological concept<sup>58</sup> implies that the righteous Yezidi must not violate the endogamy norms or become a follower of another faith. This was particularly sensitive throughout the history when Yezidis were exposed to the occasionally intense pressure of local Muslim authorities and the interest of Christian missionaries.<sup>59</sup> When it came to conversions outside Yezidism, collective steps would be the rule and a whole Yezidi tribe would embrace Islam en bloc rather than individually.<sup>60</sup>

The Yezidis have kept a feeling of special solidarity with their Christian neighbours,<sup>61</sup> and the Syrian Orthodox Church sometimes became their refuge from hardships.<sup>62</sup> A researcher<sup>63</sup> has encountered a man in Turkey who had been a Yezidi, later became a Syriac (i.e. Syrian Orthodox) Christian, and in the end converted to Islam. All these steps were taken so as “to escape religious oppression”,<sup>64</sup> probably multiplied by low socio-economic status of the Yezidis. Symptomatically, a Kurdish proverb recorded in the

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<sup>52</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>53</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 68, 134-143.

<sup>54</sup> BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 1-2 (www); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 26.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 1-2 (www); CINDI et al., *Êzidyatî* [Êzidyātî – “Yezidism”], p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> Yezidi informants from Armenia quoted in ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznikh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 262-263, 269.

<sup>59</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, passim; ZENDA (org.), *The Satan Worshipers of Northern Bet-Nahrain*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>60</sup> BIDLISTI in his chronicle known as *Sharaf-nāme* (“The Book of SHARAF”) of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century claimed that seven major Kurdish tribes had once been Yezidis (SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19).

<sup>61</sup> BIDLISTI quoted in ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 33; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> BRUINSEN, *Kurdish society, ethnicity, nationalism and refugee problems*, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Transcaucasia says: “Religion and faith are bread – when there is no bread, one is a Yezidi today but will be a Muslim tomorrow.”<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned above, the Yezidi collective identity has been shaped by at least three concepts of difference from other people: in terms of mythology, Yezidis believe to have been created in a different way than the rest of humankind;<sup>66</sup> in terms of social order, they are obliged to preserve endogamy<sup>67</sup> (regardless of marginal exceptions);<sup>68</sup> in terms of collective memory and communal solidarity, memories of past oppressions<sup>69</sup> make reservations and distrust toward Islam and Muslim political power<sup>70</sup> prevail (not necessarily toward individual Muslims as friendships<sup>71</sup> and formalised relations<sup>72</sup> do exist). Thus the Yezidi mindset is close to one of a chosen nation, with the Yezidi identity defined negatively (i.e. in categories of difference from other humans). The distance has further been strengthened by the inferior social status of Yezidis amidst the predominantly Muslim society<sup>73</sup> and supported by some prescriptions of ritual purity.<sup>74</sup> Yet these seem to be much less relevant: although Yezidism has sometimes been described as “orthopraxy”,<sup>75</sup> any visible expressions of the faith are mostly limited to a mere attendance of festivals<sup>76</sup> and local shrines.<sup>77</sup>

Yezidism includes a number of taboos, which again negatively (i.e. in categories of forbidden actions) define Yezidism – but a great deal of them has been limited to a certain space<sup>78</sup> or social group,<sup>79</sup> and many of the prohibitions that were formerly recognised as generally valid are no longer strictly preserved.<sup>80</sup> It seems that the Yezidi religious observances are rather more liable to change<sup>81</sup> than the stable social order.

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<sup>65</sup> CELİL + CELİL, *Kurdskîe poslovitsi i pogovorki* [Kurdish Proverbs and Sayings], p. 101.

<sup>66</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 37; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 18.

<sup>67</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazîdî, Yazîdiyya* (EI), p. 313; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>68</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 27, 282.

<sup>69</sup> BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 1-2 (www); CINDI et al., *Êzidyatî* [Êzidyātī – “Yezidism”], p. 9; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 26.

<sup>70</sup> IWPR (org.), “Devil-worshippers” Fear Renewed Persecution, p. 3 (www); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 30, 65-66.

<sup>72</sup> <sup>°</sup>A BB ÜD, *Al-Īzīdiyya* [Yezidism], p. 86; CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 324; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 45; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 136-137; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>74</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 43.

<sup>75</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>78</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 148.

<sup>79</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 192.

<sup>80</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazîdî, Yazîdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 283; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 37.

The Yezidi society consists of two formally priestly castes and one caste of laypeople.<sup>82</sup> Each branch of the priestly castes represents its eponym – always believed to have been a notable personality in the formative epoch of the community<sup>83</sup> whose descendants seem to represent the saint as living hierophanies.<sup>84</sup> In this way, the caste order embodies the physical and historical continuity of Yezidism and holds a sacred collective quality. Although this concept may not be explicitly mentioned in the Yezidi texts, the feeling of the crucial importance of the community seems to be dominant even among the Yezidis with quite secular outlooks.<sup>85</sup> It may resemble the concepts of the Church in Christianity or the community of believers (*umma*) in Sunnite Islam<sup>86</sup> as entities believing to be always guided and protected by God.

When Muslim and non-Muslim authors alike think of the quintessence of the Islamic religion, they usually quote a conventional list of obligations known as Pillars of the Religion (Arkān al-Dīn) based on an alleged statement of Prophet MUḤAMMAD.<sup>87</sup> They consist of five items, four of which belong to the spheres of orthopraxy: prayer, almsgiving, pilgrimage, and fasting (the fifth being the credo). In what seems to be an analogy of these “five pillars” of Islam, Yezidis occasionally mention the Five Obligations of Truth (Pēndj farzēn Ḥaḳīkatē).<sup>88</sup> Mentioned in some Yezidi texts,<sup>89</sup> the term refers to an obligation of setting up institutionalised social bonds of spiritual patronage.<sup>90</sup> Again, where Islam places observance, Yezidism stresses the central position of relations binding the community together. It may therefore be proposed to call Yezidism not just orthopraxy<sup>91</sup> but rather social orthopraxy.

Individual demonstrations of piety are random and rare among the Yezidis, and so is the case of

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>83</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 32, 34-35; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 130-132; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 179; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 130.

<sup>85</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 30-32.

<sup>86</sup> The latter is meant in the sense of the the statement attributed to Prophet MUḤAMMAD: “Truly my *umma* will never agree together on an error” (DENNY, *Umma* – EI, vol. X, p. 862).

<sup>87</sup> AHMADIYYA (org.), *Ausgewählte Hadith*, p. 26. – Cf. ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM (org.), *Rukn* (EI), vol. VIII, p. 597.

<sup>88</sup> TOLAN, *Was sind die „fünf Grundpflichten“ (Pēnc ferzēn Heqīqetē)?*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>89</sup> The Evening Prayer in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 222-223; The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 371; The Hymn of the Mirids *ibid.*, p. 295; – Cf. Diroze *ibid.*, p. 286; Sermon and Exhortation *ibid.*, pp. 290-291; The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir *ibid.*, p. 178; The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems *ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>90</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 6, 37; TOLAN, *Was sind die „fünf Grundpflichten“ (Pēnc ferzēn Heqīqetē)?*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>91</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 50; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33 – Cf. EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 79 who remarks: “Actual worship entirely consists of the hymns sung by the *ḳawāls* and the religious rites practised by pilgrims at festivals.” As the book was published in 1928, this remark is very ahead of its time.



a Yezidi's complex knowledge of his religion.<sup>92</sup> Individual prayers do exist in Yezidism but these are in no way considered obligatory, so their texts are consequently “recited or indeed known by very few,”<sup>93</sup> and reports from earlier times suggest that “this has always been so”.<sup>94</sup> Very similar is the case of fasting in Yezidism<sup>95</sup> and other observances. Most ordinary Yezidis do not get actively involved in religious matters<sup>96</sup> beyond the scope of marriage, obligatory patronage bonds, and social events related to religion. Yezidi rituals and religious texts are expected to be the domain of people specialising in community administration and the cult.<sup>97</sup>

## 1.2 History of Yezidism

### 1.2.1 A Periodisation Proposed

The British researcher CHRISTINE ALLISON has described the traditional oral Yezidi accounts of legendary history and collective memory as “telescoped”: there is “a large number of traditions current about the beginnings of Yezidism and also about its recent past, with very little in between”.<sup>98</sup> The same can be said about academic studies of the history of Yezidism, the events of which are somewhat nebulous in most of the period between the late 13<sup>th</sup> and the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It must have been sometime within this time span that Yezidism has constituted itself as a full-fledged independent religion. The periodisation attempted below is a by-product of summarising the history of Yezidism.

#### 1) Prehistoric Period (before 1111)

The essential question without a reply ever available is: when does the Yezidi history actually begin? The crucial personality of its beginnings is the Sufi teacher (*shaykh*) ʿADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR (born between 1073 and 1078<sup>99</sup> in what is now eastern Lebanon;<sup>100</sup> died 1160, 1162, or 1163<sup>101</sup> in present-day Iraq) who gathered a circle of disciples near Mosul city. This happened in 1111 at latest.<sup>102</sup> Among the later Yezidis, the appellation of Shaykh ʿADĪ became transformed into *Shīkhādī*. The character is revered in Yezidism as an incarnation of deity.<sup>103</sup> The identity of *Shīkhādī* with the historical ʿADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR was

<sup>92</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 167-168; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 6-7; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 49.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 167, 168; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 57.

<sup>99</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28.

<sup>100</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> TRITTON, *ʿAdī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* (EI), vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>102</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28; TRITTON, *ʿAdī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* (EI), vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>103</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 96-97.

proved for the first time in 1885 by the French researcher of Middle Eastern origin NICOLAS SIOUFFI.<sup>104</sup>

Most present-day Yezidis (including religious authorities)<sup>105</sup> seem to contend that their religion dates back to times long before ʿADĪ, or that it is even the oldest religion on earth.<sup>106</sup> Non-Yezidi Kurdish writers and politicians have contributed to the conviction by portraying Yezidism as “the original Kurdish religion”.<sup>107</sup> A compromise stance has been offered by ALLISON: she points out that whilst ʿADĪ “can be said to have founded the sect, the people who became known as ‘Yezidis’ retained many of their pre-Islamic beliefs and practices”.<sup>108</sup>

## 2) Formative Period (1111-1254)

Sufi followership was established around the personality of ʿADĪ and his successors. ʿADĪ’s contemporary biographer ABŪ ṢAʿD AL-SAMʿĀNĪ (1113-1166) already called the brotherhood al-Yazīdiyya,<sup>109</sup> which is the Arabic name used later for the Yezidis. But the prevalent name for the community was al-ʿAdawīyya (which means “the followers of ʿADĪ”) or, sometimes, al-Ṣuḥbatīyya (“those who claim discipleship”).<sup>110</sup>

The period ends in 1254 when the first major clash occurred between al-ʿAdawīyya and the political power: the brotherhood leader ḤASAN was killed, some 200 of his followers executed, and ʿADĪ’s bodily remnants taken out from the grave in Lālīsh (centre of the community, some fifty kilometres north-northeast of Mosul)<sup>111</sup> and burnt.<sup>112</sup>

## 3) Military Period (1254-1281)

Al-ʿAdawīyya became involved in military activities, a process that probably began before the attack of 1254<sup>113</sup> but might have been fostered by the blow as well as by the instability following the Mongol invasion of the region.<sup>114</sup> Leading personalities of the brotherhood pursued mercenary or quasi-political carriers, often far away from Lālīsh.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 40.

<sup>105</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 3 (quoting the Yezidi *faḳīr* KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO); SHAMŌ (interview with Chief *Faḳīr* ḤADĪ SHAMŌ).

<sup>106</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, s. 31.

<sup>107</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 38, 284; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 27.

<sup>108</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 284. – Cf. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 39 (writing that ʿADĪ “profoundly influenced and reformed” the already existing religion, which may rather be true of some of ʿADĪ’s successors than himself).

<sup>109</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34. – The Arabic expression *ṣuḥba* for “company” (Persianised form *ṣuḥbat*) became a Sufi term (SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 102), also meaning an intimate spiritual “conversation between master and disciple” (*ibid.*, pp. 366, 504).

<sup>111</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4 (speaking of a distance of “thirty miles”).

<sup>112</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21, 234 (quoting Baghdad-based chronicler KAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN AL-FUWAṬĪ who lived 1244-1323); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31; RASHOW (interview).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 19-21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>114</sup> GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 194-210.

<sup>115</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 24-25, 26, 33; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 33-34, 42, 103; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p.

Their names acquired the form of honorary titles that included the word *dīn* (“religion”), a formula more typical for statesmen and army commanders of those times.<sup>116</sup> Internal disputes and splits occurred in the leadership of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya.<sup>117</sup> The lineage of successive al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya presbyters as recorded by the Syriac bishop BAR HEBRAEUS (1226-1286)<sup>118</sup> ended in 1281.<sup>119</sup>

#### 4) Obscure Period (1281-1415)

Al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya brotherhood probably continued to exist but the reports on it are fragmentary and unclear. Even detailed histories of the Mosul region in the 14<sup>th</sup> century do not mention its centre Lālīsh.<sup>120</sup> Despite that, according to some researchers the brotherhood was influential at that time among a number of Kurdish tribes<sup>121</sup> as well as in the surroundings of the cities of Antioch (Antakya, Turkey)<sup>122</sup> and D̲j̲az̲ī̲rat Ibn ʿUmar (Cizre, Turkey; in Kurdish D̲j̲iz̲ī̲r).<sup>123</sup> The community in Lālīsh stepped out of the shadow of history in 1415<sup>124</sup> when four princes of the region<sup>125</sup> stormed and burnt Lālīsh and killed many of its residents<sup>126</sup> due to accusations of obscenity.<sup>127</sup>

#### 5) Transitional Period (1415-1660)

The community in Lālīsh recovered from the attack of 1415<sup>128</sup> but its isolation deepened and its members seem to have adopted explicit hostility toward representatives of Islamic orthodoxy.<sup>129</sup> But it is not clear when they fully and consciously ceased to identify themselves as Muslims – a step that would mean the emergence of Yezidism as an independent religion. The Kurdish Muslim chronicler SHARAF KHĀN BIDLISĪ (1543-1599)

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4, 27, 219, 221; NAU + TFINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 64.

<sup>116</sup> ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM (org.), *Ism* (EI), vol. IV, p. 180. – Cf. GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 12.

<sup>117</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 24-25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 33-34, 42; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 4; NAU + TFINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 64.

<sup>118</sup> Also known as BAR ʿEBHRĀYĀ or IBN AL-ʿIBRĪ (SEGAL, *Ibn al-ʿIbrī* – EI, vol. III, pp. 804-805).

<sup>119</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>121</sup> IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19.

<sup>122</sup> IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157.

<sup>123</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19. – Cf. GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 45; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157.

<sup>124</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 27; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>125</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 27, 45; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 34-35; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19.

<sup>126</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 27; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 34-35 (quoting the Egyptian historian TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-MAKRĪZĪ who lived 1364-1442).

<sup>127</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 16; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 27, 28, 35, 40. – A number of heterodox minorities in the Middle East had to face accusations of obscene behaviour. It has concerned communities that practise the common participation of men and women in rituals performed under some degree of secrecy (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Traditions in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 37, 284; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 141). This rumour continues to circulate in Iraq about the Yezidis (ʿABBŪD, *Al-ʿIzīdiyya* [Yezidism], pp. 10-11; ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Traditions in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 37).

<sup>128</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 35 (quoting AL-MAKRĪZĪ).

<sup>129</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 44; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 35 (quoting AL-MAKRĪZĪ).

criticised the “aberrant” practices<sup>130</sup> of the community that he was already calling Yezidis.<sup>131</sup> He wrote that the Yezidis had escalated the cult of the personality of their master (by itself nothing unusual in Kurdish Sufism)<sup>132</sup> until the conviction that ʿADĪ “has taken upon himself their duties to fast and to pray, and that on the Day of Resurrection they will be carried to heaven without being exposed to any punishment or any reproach”.<sup>133</sup> If the information is correct (which cannot be guaranteed due to BIDLIŠI’s anti-Yezidi bias obvious elsewhere),<sup>134</sup> it could mean that a large part of al-ʿAdawiyya brotherhood continued to think in terms of Islamic doctrine (duties of ritual orthopraxy, postmortal life with eternal punishment or reward) while critically reformulating them. Yezidism definitely became an outwardly independent entity in about 1650-1660 when the Christians in the Sinđjār region (now in Iraq) converted to Yezidism<sup>135</sup> while the Yezidis near Ḥalab (Aleppo, Syria) showed interest in a conversion to Christianity.<sup>136</sup>

### 6) Early Historical Period (1660-1832)

Yezidism was clearly known as a separate religious community. Some of its members were influential in local power<sup>137</sup> and economy<sup>138</sup> structures. But they came to lose this ground, probably in connection with the Ottoman administrative reforms that aimed at diminishing the autonomy of traditional local authorities.<sup>139</sup> The pressure on the Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire<sup>140</sup> led to the emmigration of some of them to Russia’s Transcaucasia.<sup>141</sup>

### 7) Remembered Period (1832-1978)

The furthest point of Yezidis’ remembered history and still a vivid part of their collective memory in Iraq<sup>142</sup> is the massacres they suffered near Mosul in 1832 on the hands of a Muslim Kurdish prince known as Mīrē Kōr (the “Blind Prince”).<sup>143</sup> The assault was meant as a collective revenge for an earlier killing of the prince’s ally ʿALĪ ĀGHĀ by the Yezidi Prince (Mīr) ʿALĪ BEG.<sup>144</sup> In 1849, the Yezidis south of Van (now in Turkey) were

<sup>130</sup> BIDLIŠI, *Šaraf-nāme*, vol. 1, pp. 83-84 (a Russian translation).

<sup>131</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 33.

<sup>132</sup> BRUINESSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 276-340.

<sup>133</sup> BIDLIŠI quoted in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 44. Typography adjusted.

<sup>134</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 33.

<sup>135</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 52, 150, 239, 260.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>137</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds.*, pp. 59-60, 68-69; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 36; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 42.

<sup>138</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 59, 241, 281, 288.

<sup>139</sup> The last Kurdish vassal principalities in the Ottoman Empire were abolished in 1847-1848. The same happened in Persia in 1867 (BRUINESSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, p. 237; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 56).

<sup>140</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 60-69, 193.

<sup>141</sup> ČATOEV, *Iz istorii russko-kurdsikh svyazey* [Toward the History of Russian-Kurdish Relations], pp. 87-88; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 193-194; HERMES + GEISMAR, *Die Yezidi*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>142</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 57.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 68-69; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 36; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 42.

attacked by a local chieftain on similar grounds.<sup>145</sup> It seems the Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire also had to face an increasing Muslim grudge against religious minorities due to Russia's military achievements, the rise of Armenian nationalism in the areas shared with the Kurds, and the activity of Christian missionaries.<sup>146</sup>

At the same time, European and American missionaries, diplomats, researchers, and travellers provided written and photographed reports on the Yezidis.<sup>147</sup> The first descriptions of Yezidi religious symbols (e.g. the brass Peacock Standards) and rituals (e.g. the autumn Assembly Feast in Lālīsh) come from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>148</sup> The academic studies of Yezidism focused on hypotheses about an ancient origin of Yezidism<sup>149</sup> and the Yezidi “holy scriptures” (fake manuscripts “discovered” in 1889<sup>150</sup> and onwards<sup>151</sup>).

In 1849, the Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire received the status of a recognised religious community (*millet*).<sup>152</sup> Even that could not protect them from persecution: one zealous Ottoman commander (though acting without a superior's approval) almost managed in 1892 to exterminate the Yezidis in their spiritual centres outside Mosul.<sup>153</sup> Like the massacres of 1832, this campaign too is still remembered by the Yezidis and nurtures their defensive stance toward Islam, especially when it is bound to political and military power.<sup>154</sup>

The formal legal emancipation of the Yezidis also brought about the obligation of compulsory military service. Yezidi dignitaries tried to negotiate an exemption on the grounds of specific Yezidi taboos in verbal expression, food, clothing, and hygiene. These endeavours resulted in the first breakthrough attempts of the Yezidis to define the tenets of their religion.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>144</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 68-69; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 36; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 42.

<sup>145</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 118; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 106; VERHEIJ, “*Les frères de terre et d'eau*”, pp. 231-238.

<sup>147</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 76-218.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100 (the first description of the Assembly Feast in 1846), 111-112 (probably the first non-Yezidi encounter with a Peacock Standard in 1850).

<sup>149</sup> AL-JADA'AN, *The Origin of Yazidis*, pp. 8-21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, ss. 1-5.

<sup>150</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 147.

<sup>151</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 47; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 146-163; KREYENBROEK, *Yazîdî, Yazîdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 10-16; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. xiii., 40-42 – Despite that, the texts can be used as a source for studying a part of the Yezidi religious textual tradition (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 47 writes on the manuscripts that their origins “may well be authentic, though they themselves are almost certainly forgeries”).

<sup>152</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 104.

<sup>153</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 60; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 134-144, 174.

<sup>154</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 43-46, 57-60; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 26-31.

<sup>155</sup> They are mainly the petitions of 1872 to the Ottoman authorities (JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 77-82 – WWW, KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 6-7) and of 1936 to the Iraqi authorities (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 43), respectively. Similar texts that were composed on different grounds are a “pastoral

## 8) Current Transformation Period (since 1978)

A symbolic watershed in the latest history of Yezidism can be the year 1978 when selected Yezidi oral sacred texts were published in writing for the first time.<sup>156</sup> This inspired Yezidis' interest in their heritage. The literal fixing<sup>157</sup> and a spontaneous canonisation<sup>158</sup> of the texts have been followed by attempts of their systemisation and interpretation<sup>159</sup> and an establishment of modernistic theology.<sup>160</sup>

Knowledge of Yezidism was made accessible to unprecedented numbers of its adherents through education curricula and Yezidi institutions in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region.<sup>161</sup> The continuing Yezidi migration to Germany<sup>162</sup> (where the number of Yezidis has reached at least 40,000)<sup>163</sup> has made the Yezidis cope with a different type of society.<sup>164</sup> Traditional social relations get adjusted to new needs.<sup>165</sup> The Yezidis newly reflect on and formulate the core of their religion and identity,<sup>166</sup> a process already initiated by information requests on the part of German asylum authorities.<sup>167</sup> Yezidism slowly switches from orthopraxy to orthodoxy,<sup>168</sup> with the knowledge and comprehension of religious texts and ideas gaining importance.

The life of the Yezidis has changed in their old homelands as well. In the countries where the conditions allow it (Armenia and Iraq's Kurdistan Region since the 1990's, the whole of Iraq since 2003), they get involved in politics<sup>169</sup> and with confidence urge public

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epistle" of 1908 (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 168-169; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 8-10) and the Shēkhān Memorial of 1931 (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 25-27; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 186-187; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 186-187).

<sup>156</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. ix; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>157</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. x.

<sup>158</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>160</sup> This development was foreseen in 1984 by German researcher GERNOT WIESSNER quoted in ISSA, *Das Dogma Tausi-Melek in der Literatur*, p. 4 (www) and YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 49.

<sup>161</sup> ROJ (org.), *Madrasat Malak Fakhradīn fī Ba<sup>c</sup>shīka wa Bahzānē* [The Angel Fakhradīn School in Ba<sup>c</sup>shīka and Bahzānē], p. 130; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 21, 38.

<sup>162</sup> HERMES, *Religiöse Verfolgung bis zur Vertreibung*, p. 5 (www); TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg.*, p. 2 (www – quoting the Yezidi Mīr TAHSĪN BEG).

<sup>163</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 164.

<sup>164</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 49-50, 52; ALO (interview); RASHOW (interview); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 40-41, 45-47, 88.

<sup>165</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 27, 70-71.

<sup>166</sup> BENNINGHAUS, *Friedhöfe als Quellen für Fragen des Kulturwandels*, p. 261.

<sup>167</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 47, 57.

<sup>168</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 50.

<sup>169</sup> ABRAMIAN, *The Yezidi Movement in Armenia*, p. 3 (www); CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS (org.), *Iraq's Yezidis*, p. 3 (www); IWPR (org.), "Devil-worshippers" Fear Renewed Persecution, p. 4 (www); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 46.

respect for their religious tenets<sup>170</sup> although these have been challenged at the same time by modernisation of lifestyle and mass pop-culture.<sup>171</sup>

### 1.2.2 Problems of Study

More than is the case in many other religions, the study of Yezidism from a historical perspective gets blurred by several specific issues.

#### Oral Tradition and History

The Yezidi religion is based on oral tradition, the contents of which is set beyond the categories of linear time and causal logic.<sup>172</sup> The oral tradition is pluralistic and unsystemised. It does process some historical topics but reinterprets them and sets them into mythological timelessness.<sup>173</sup> The most illustrious example are biographies where (due to mythologisation and the belief in soul transmigration)<sup>174</sup> various historical figures separated by centuries are identified as reincarnations of the same essence.<sup>175</sup> This perception of history (where chronological relations are irrelevant) is not limited to religion among the common Yezidis: conversations have shown that many of them take this perspective when reflecting recent historical realities.<sup>176</sup>

#### Syncretism and Changeability

The religion based on oral tradition represents an open and internally flexible system<sup>177</sup> that facilitates a gradual absorption of external elements and integrates them into the new complex of a syncretic religion.<sup>178</sup> It is thus almost impossible to trace back any real historical development of the Yezidi religion – even more so when the Yezidi religious identity and historical continuity are based on social structures (especially endogamy)<sup>179</sup> and festivities<sup>180</sup> rather than a conserved ideology. Although Yezidism has been described as a religion of orthopraxy,<sup>181</sup> it has been documented that its elements can change within a

<sup>170</sup> AFP (org.), *The Devil looks in on Iraq's parliament*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>171</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 40-41, 47.

<sup>172</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 174-175; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 19-20; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 22.

<sup>173</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 19.

<sup>174</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>175</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 6; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 19-20, 36-37. – Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 21.

<sup>176</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 40-46, 59-60.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>178</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 168.

<sup>179</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 42. – Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 27, 282; ASATRIAN, *O "brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni" v religioznikh verovanijakh ezidov* [On the "Brother and Sister of the Hereafter" in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 262-263; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18; MEISELAS, *Kurdistan*, p. 36. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 18, 44-45, 47.

<sup>180</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 79 (repeated by TEMPLE *ibid.*, p. 217); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 49; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 36. – Cf. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 49, 68.

<sup>181</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 18; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

short span of time, such as the observation of some taboos<sup>182</sup> or celibacy,<sup>183</sup> or the colour of some ritual garments.<sup>184</sup>

### Scarce Sources and the Muslims

Studies in the Yezidi history are complicated by the lack of sources. These are actually non-existent for most periods apart from the most recent ones. As for earlier history, much information is provided by Muslim historians or even heresiographers who can barely guarantee objectivity on Yezidism.<sup>185</sup>

Up to now, the collective consciousness of the Yezidis has largely been shaped by uneasy relations between them and Muslims as the majority religion that surrounds Yezidi enclaves and perceives them as suspicious heretics.<sup>186</sup>

The defensiveness toward Islam and the state power (often intertwined) is a strong factor not only in shaping the Yezidi identity<sup>187</sup> but also in the ways the Yezidis present their religion and history to outsiders.<sup>188</sup> Non-Yezidis interested in Yezidism may find out that the Yezidis provide them with information pragmatically and selectively,<sup>189</sup> depending on the outsider's assumed position toward Islam or the political establishment of the particular country.

## 1.3 Literacy, Orality, and the Yezidi Religious Texts

### 1.3.1 Misled by the “Sacred Books”

Academic studies of Yezidism concentrated for a considerable time on manuscripts of two texts called in Kurdish<sup>190</sup> *Kitēbā D̄jilwa* (Book of Unveiling) and *Mashafā Rash* (Black Scripture), both erroneously thought to be the “holy scriptures” of Yezidism.<sup>191</sup> The first manuscript was discovered in an Arabic version<sup>192</sup> in 1889.<sup>193</sup> Kurdish versions

<sup>182</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazidī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 314.

<sup>183</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 283.

<sup>184</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 37.

<sup>185</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 175; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>186</sup> ʿABBŪD, *Al-Īzīdiyya* [Yezidism], pp. 10-11, 133-134; ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Traditions in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 37.

<sup>187</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 43-46

<sup>188</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 26, 28, 30.

<sup>189</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 51; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>190</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 55, 311.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 146-163; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 30-49 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, vii-ix, pp. 10-16; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. xiii., 40-42 – Despite that, the texts can be used as a source for studying a part of the Yezidi religious oral tradition (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 47 writes on the manuscripts that their origins “may well be authentic, though they themselves are almost certainly forgeries”).

<sup>192</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 42.

<sup>193</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 147.



emerged in 1911<sup>194</sup> but proved to have been derived from the Arabic ones.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, the Kurdish texts were written in a vernacular not spoken by the Yezidis<sup>196</sup> and in an unknown script based on transposition of Arabic letters.<sup>197</sup> Although the formal authenticity of these manuscripts was strongly challenged in 1916,<sup>198</sup> they can still be used as an auxiliary source in Yezidi studies – their contents is not a mere fabrication but was undoubtedly written or compiled by a person familiar with genuine Yezidi storylines.<sup>199</sup>

The *Encyclopaedia of Islam* volume of 1986 continued to classify the texts as the “sacred books of the Yezidis”.<sup>200</sup> The conviction obviously long outlasted the author of the article, the German researcher THEODOR MENZEL (1878-1939). More serious were the consequences of the assumption that Yezidism is one of the literary religions<sup>201</sup> with “scholastic doctrinal systems of the kind that presupposes a sophisticated written tradition and an acceptance of Aristotelian logic”.<sup>202</sup> Discrepancies were explained “by means of the mysterious”,<sup>203</sup> overstressing the Yezidis' secretiveness toward outsiders.<sup>204</sup> And the discrepancies were not little: the French researcher ROGER LESCOT who had lived among the Yezidis in the 1930's complained that they, “being of unbelievable slowness of mind, ...do not properly understand the questions one asks them and answer without exactitude or precision. Moreover, they have a very imperfect knowledge of their own religion.”<sup>205</sup>

The introduction of some versions of *Kitēbā Djilwa* (Book of Unveiling) states that the Yezidis have acquired their religion “first of all by means of oral tradition, and afterward by means of this book”.<sup>206</sup> At least two Brittons in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century came to feel that Yezidism is a religion rather based on orally transmitted texts and beliefs.<sup>207</sup> One of the researchers

<sup>194</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 87.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 42.

<sup>197</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 88; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 42.

<sup>198</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 147, 161; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>199</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 88; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 162 (quoting the British researcher of Middle Eastern origin ALPHONSE MINGANA who challenged the originality of the manuscripts in 1916); KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 42.

<sup>200</sup> MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 209. Transcription adjusted. – *Kitāb al-Djilwa* is the Arabic original name from which the “Kurdicised” *Kitēbā Djilwa* has been derived.

<sup>201</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 168, 174-175.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. ix.

<sup>205</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 6-7 (quoted from KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 17).

<sup>206</sup> JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 30 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 13, 23. – The translation quoted here is JOSEPH'S.

<sup>207</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 4 (www); EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, pp. 7, 23, 34. – The former book is praised in ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 283 as being “ahead of its time in the emphasis it places on the Yezidis' own accounts”. Similar accents (though not

described the Yezidi faith as “instinctive and... ingrained” in its followers, and preserved “rather by word of mouth than by any definite writing and teaching”.<sup>208</sup> The other recognised the importance of the Kurdish language for a good knowledge of Yezidism, especially “to understand chants sung by the *ḳawāls*”<sup>209</sup> – an “order” primarily specialising in the transmission of oral texts.<sup>210</sup>

Due to the oral preservation of the Yezidi texts and beliefs and the absence of writing in the process, no formal Yezidi theology has developed.<sup>211</sup> Although one could speak of a Yezidi “canon” as a basic sum of storylines and themes familiar in general to most Yezidis<sup>212</sup> and understood in depth by professional guardians of the tradition,<sup>213</sup> it has never been formally demarcated<sup>214</sup> and systemised. It can include and hold for valid “mutually exclusive beliefs”,<sup>215</sup> either representing different phases of the development of the religion<sup>216</sup> or different contexts. The plots of storylines may go counter to linear time and causal logic.<sup>217</sup>

The claim that the character of Yezidism is peculiar to an “essentially non-literate religion”<sup>218</sup> may also be taken from the opposite perspective: any writing on Yezidism, whether by Yezidis or non-Yezidis, means an inherent attempt of interpretation and systemisation. Gradually, these efforts have become intentional among the educated Yezidis. Spontaneous literary fixation of the tradition has been going on<sup>219</sup> but the process is not free of risks of distortion.<sup>220</sup>

### 1.3.2 The Yezidis and Literacy

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explicitly stated) may be noticed in EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*.

<sup>208</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 23.

<sup>209</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 4 (www). Transcription adjusted.

<sup>210</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 39; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 15 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 132, 141; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 7; ZRNO, *Význavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 39:53 (documentary film – quoting the Chief *ḳawāl* SILEMĀN SAVŌ).

<sup>211</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 19.

<sup>212</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 24. – The vague “canon” exists not only in the religious oral tradition but also in its secular counterpart (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 201-202).

<sup>213</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 168; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 45, 47, 49.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>215</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 19.

<sup>216</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview).

<sup>217</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 174-175; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 19-20; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 22.

<sup>218</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. ix.

<sup>219</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 7.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 38-39.

When the current “Yezidi Pope”<sup>221</sup> – the Prince (Mîr) TAHSÎN BEG – had effectively assumed office in 1951, he tried to bring his flock closer to formal education.<sup>222</sup> Although the first schools were built in Yezidi areas in the 1930’s,<sup>223</sup> the Yezidis had traditionally been “not only illiterate but antilliterate”.<sup>224</sup>

Publications on Yezidism mention literacy ban among taboos,<sup>225</sup> with certain “men of religion”<sup>226</sup> being exempted.<sup>227</sup> No reasoning for the taboo has ever been given by any Yezidi authority<sup>228</sup> but the Yezidis obviously perceived education as a means of influence of two hostile elements: Islam and the government.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, the concept of writing and scripture is connected in Yezidism with magic and divination.<sup>230</sup>

### 1.3.3 The Yezidi Tradition, the Oral Tradition, and the Textual Tradition

The “Yezidi tradition”<sup>231</sup> is the contents represented by a general summary of Yezidi texts, ideas, and beliefs. The “knowledge of Yezidism” (*ilmē Êzidiyā*)<sup>232</sup> may be the expression that the Yezidis would choose to describe the “Yezidi tradition”.

The “oral tradition” seems to be called in Yezidism the “knowledge of heart” (*ilmē sadr*).<sup>233</sup> The term probably corresponds with the “Yezidi tradition” but stresses the form of preserving and transmitting information related to religion.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>222</sup> The Yezidi Mîr TAHSÎN BEG quoted in TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>223</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 183; SPÂT, *The Yezidis*, p. 21.

<sup>224</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 46.

<sup>225</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 12 (www); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. xiv, 40; SPÂT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

<sup>226</sup> The term is used in KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 167 to denote “all those... who play a more specific role in the religion than the average layman”.

<sup>227</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 46; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 1, 14, 18, 140 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 141; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 40; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr*, p. 88.

<sup>228</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 47.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., pp. 43-46. – Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 39; The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir *ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>230</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 48, 281; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 12 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 24; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 38. – Cf. DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 12 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 49-50; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 29, 199; The *Beyt of Nightingales* *ibid.*, p. 257; The Hymn of Moses *ibid.*, p. 360; The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir *ibid.*, p. 175; *Xizêmok*, Version 2 *ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>231</sup> Used e.g. in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 40-46, and in the subtitle of the book (*Sacred Poems and Religious Narratives from the Yezidi Tradition*). But it seems to be meant here as a synonym for what can be called “textual tradition”.

<sup>232</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour [an original ad hoc introduction] in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364. – On the term *ilm* for “religious knowledge”, cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>233</sup> ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 54:17 (documentary film – quoting a Yezidi *shēkh* in Syria). – The expression literally means “knowledge of chest” (from the Arabic *ilm al-ṣadr*).

The “textual tradition”<sup>234</sup> (which could also be termed “oral literature”) may be distinguished from the broader “Yezidi tradition” as its part represented by orally transmitted literary texts. These can be religious as well as secular, for the term “Yezidism” includes “both Yezidi religion and other aspects of culture, which are closely intertwined in traditional communities”.<sup>235</sup> There seems to be no single Yezidi equivalent to describe the “textual tradition” except the traditional names of its particular genres. All texts are composed in the Kurdish language of the Kurmāndjī branch of dialects spoken by most Yezidis,<sup>236</sup> and are a part of the broader Kurdish literature.<sup>237</sup>

Whether religious or secular, the texts are learnt by an oral one-to-one instruction. An isolated case has been mentioned of a man who acquired the knowledge of secular texts as an autodidact, just from listening.<sup>238</sup> But typically, the transmitters of texts have their teachers,<sup>239</sup> or at least used to have before the current process of literal fixation.<sup>240</sup> At the end of the recitation of a Yezidi hymn (*ḳawl*), the performer may include in a conclusive formula a request for “mercy on the one whom I asked to teach me this *ḳawl*”.<sup>241</sup>

The process of instruction in the textual tradition<sup>242</sup> has been described by a Yezidi *faḳīr* – member of a hereditary “order” that takes an active part in religious life.<sup>243</sup> The *faḳīr* says he was systemically taught by his father: “I would learn every hymn (*ḳawl*) in four to five days. My brother learnt too... My father had a lot of patience with us. He even would reward us with money or other things so as to motivate us to learn quickly. By the age of about twenty years, I had known all hymns by heart and could recite them without problems.”<sup>244</sup>

According to the rigidity of transmission, the texts can be divided into “fixed” and “free”.<sup>245</sup> These non-Yezidi academic terms mean either learning the text verbatim and getting examined by the teacher (which is the fixed transmission) or getting familiar with the basic storyline and retelling it in an individual manner (which is the free

<sup>234</sup> Used e.g. in KREYENBROEK, *Yazidī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism* as a part of the subtitle (*Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition*).

<sup>235</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 27, 282.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 293; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 46 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. ix, xi; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 301.

<sup>238</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 293.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, 202-203; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 132; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 44.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>241</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names *ibid.*, p. 82. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>242</sup> The terms related to tradition will henceforth be used without quotation marks.

<sup>243</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 15, 180 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 7, 16; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 133-134; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 18.

<sup>244</sup> KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*, p. 139. Transcription, terminology, and wording adjusted.

<sup>245</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 44.

transmission).<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, even a text with fixed transmission can exist in various versions.<sup>247</sup> The fixed and free transmission texts seem to roughly correspond with poetry and prose, respectively.

The texts with fixed transmission can be linked to – and probably based on – counterparts with free transmission.<sup>248</sup> The former are often allusive and unintelligible without knowing the latter.<sup>249</sup> Therefore, the performance of texts with fixed transmission can be preceded by an introduction summarising the contents.<sup>250</sup> Fixed transmission seems to be the domain of texts with higher prestige and a special function: ritual (for religious texts)<sup>251</sup> or purely aesthetic (i.e. without much comprehension of the contents – for secular texts).<sup>252</sup>

### 1.3.4 Types of the Textual Tradition

The British researcher CHRISTINE ALLISON has distinguished between “religious and folkloric”<sup>253</sup> (i.e. secular or non-religious) Yezidi oral texts. It will be proposed henceforth that the religious textual tradition may further be divided into three types – sacred, learned, and popular. Their names are based on terms referred to by the Dutch researcher PHILIP KREYENBROEK<sup>254</sup> although his usage seems to be sporadic and not intended as a strict classification.

The sacred tradition can be thought of as the top of the pyramid of Yezidi religious texts while the popular tradition is its bottom. The learned tradition mediates the contents of the sacred tradition to the broader Yezidi public and secures the coherence of the Yezidi religion in terms of ideas and beliefs.

The transmission of texts in the sacred tradition is fixed; the learned tradition is based on free transmission (i.e. not verbatim texts but storylines and concepts).<sup>255</sup> The transmission

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. – Yezidi religious texts with fixed transmission published in more than one version are e.g. The Hymn of the Faith (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 194-201; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 83-89) and The Hymn of the Weak Broken One (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 171-181; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 57-65).

<sup>248</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55, 204; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 50.

<sup>249</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 208; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 50.

<sup>250</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 113; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 47.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., pp. 47, 49.

<sup>252</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 208.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., p. 293. – Cf. the term “religious tradition” (as opposed to “popular songs”) in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 51.

<sup>254</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK, *Yazidī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 44.

of the popular tradition does not seem to be formalised – its storylines spontaneously circulate among the Yezidi people.

Due to the ritual role of its texts<sup>256</sup> and their fixed transmission, the sacred tradition has conserved ideas particular to older phases of the development of Yezidism: with a large portion of pre-Islamic elements<sup>257</sup> but also Sufi mindset, imagery, and terminology.<sup>258</sup> On the other hand, the popular tradition (as well as the learned tradition to a certain extent)<sup>259</sup> is the buffer zone through which the syncretic Yezidi religion has absorbed outer influences. Probably as the Yezidis were trying to cope with the Muslim majority in their homelands, the Yezidi popular tradition increasingly featured Islamic or quasi-Islamic elements: “a process of cultural Islamisation continued while Yezidism developed”.<sup>260</sup>

### 1.3.5 Sacred Religious Textual Tradition

The genres of the sacred tradition are texts with ritual connotations (*ḳawl*, *bayt*, *ḳasīda*) and prayer texts (*duʿā*, *dīrōza*).

The texts are divided in stanzas (called *sabaḳa*), each usually of three or four lines.<sup>261</sup> The longest composition known is *Ḳawlē Mazin* (Great Hymn)<sup>262</sup> with 117 stanzas; prayers tend to be shorter.<sup>263</sup> The verses of each stanza end with rhyme<sup>264</sup> or assonance.<sup>265</sup> The texts are recited in a rough metre or cadence pattern,<sup>266</sup> each piece being performed in a particular melody (*kubrī*) of voice.<sup>267</sup>

#### Hymns (*ḳawl*)

*Ḳawl* is typically translated as “hymn”<sup>268</sup> or possibly “sacred poem”.<sup>269</sup> It is the most esteemed type of a religious text in Yezidism<sup>270</sup> (the prestige being measured by the usual

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid., pp. 47, 49.

<sup>257</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK (interview) where he attributes this to the learned tradition (which is within the typology proposed here tight to the sacred tradition).

<sup>258</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 35-36, 49.

<sup>260</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview).

<sup>261</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 52.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-172.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> Assonances (i.e. not really rhymes) occur e.g. in The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 94-99.

<sup>266</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 53.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>268</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-326; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>269</sup> Used *ibid.* as the subtitle of the book (*Sacred Poems and Religious Narratives from the Yezidi Tradition*).

<sup>270</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 49.

occassion of recitation).<sup>271</sup> The hymns are performed on special occasions:<sup>272</sup> festive<sup>273</sup> and mourning (funerals).<sup>274</sup> The festive occasions are the *samā*<sup>c</sup> ritual procession<sup>275</sup> and festivals in Lālīsh, local festivals (*tiwāf*),<sup>276</sup> the Peacock Standard Parade (Tāwūs-Gērān) touring Yezidi settlements, and the consecration of shrine spires.<sup>277</sup>

Members of the *ḳawāl* “order” (who are the primary holders of the Yezidi tradition)<sup>278</sup> actually sing the hymns to the music of the *daf* tambourine and the *shibāb* flute,<sup>279</sup> both regarded as sacred instruments in Yezidism.<sup>280</sup> But it seems that the hymns can be performed without musical accompaniment too.

The Yezidis perceive the hymns as a concentrated form of religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) and take their performance as a “connection with a higher sphere of reality”.<sup>281</sup> At the same time, ordinary Yezidis do not listen to hymn recitation in order to understand, as the texts are allusive and hardly comprehensible without explication.<sup>282</sup> Therefore, the recitation of hymns is not only a part of Yezidi rituals but presumably is itself perceived in the Yezidi tradition as a ritual too.

The total number of hymns has been identified by researchers at 113 so far.<sup>283</sup> Some of them exist in more textual versions.<sup>284</sup> The person “reputed to know all the *ḳawls* by heart and... able to explain their meaning”<sup>285</sup> is called *sandjākbeḡ* (if being a member of the *ḳawāl* “order”) or *‘alimdār* (for non-*ḳawāls*).<sup>286</sup>

Most texts of the sacred tradition are anonymous; only some texts incorporate the names of their presumed authors but most of those are unknown figures.<sup>287</sup> One text attributes all

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., pp. 10, 48.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>278</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 39; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 4, 15 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 132, 141; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 7; ZRNO, *Ižznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 39:53 (documentary film – quoting the Chief *Ḳawāl* SILEMĀN SAVÖ).

<sup>279</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 47.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., p. 28. – Cf. HAMZEH'EE, *The Yaresan*, pp. 74, 161.

<sup>281</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 50.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>284</sup> E.g. The Hymn of the Faith (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 194-201; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 83-89) and The Hymn of the Weak Broken One (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 171-181; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 57-65).

<sup>285</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 7. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. – These are obviously analogies of the Islamic term *ḥāfiẓ*, i.e. one who has memorised the Koran.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

hymns to Shīkhādī, both as the person who “revealed” them<sup>288</sup> and in general by saying: “Wherever they recite the *ḳawls* [i.e. hymns] and *ḳasīdas* [i.e. eulogies] of Shīkhādī, there paradise is present.”<sup>289</sup> The name of Shīkhādī is also mentioned in some perfection disclaimer formulas that conclude the recitation of a hymn, e.g.: “We are deficient, Shīkhādī is perfect.”<sup>290</sup> According to the Yezidi tradition, the hymns were composed at the “time of Shīkhādī”<sup>291</sup> i.e. when he and his holy companions walked on earth.

It may be assumed that the relation of the hymns to Shīkhādī indicates their “essential sanctity”<sup>292</sup> and possibly pre-existence, or at least the idea that the hymns as recited on earth are only imperfect (but still holy) reflections of their perfect and full heavenly prototypes (in the same sense that Lālīsh as the holiest place on earth has its heavenly counterpart,<sup>293</sup> and the Tradition – a synonym for Yezidism – had a material form suspended in the air at the time of Creation<sup>294</sup>). The idea of hymn prototypes may also be suggested by the last verses of some hymn: “The perfect form of this *ḳawl* is with Shīkhādī and God”<sup>295</sup> or: “The full text of this *ḳawl* is with the Angel of Death and [a holy personage called] Gāvā Zarzān.”<sup>296</sup> Similarly the perfection disclaimer formulas (such as “God and Shīkhādī are perfect”)<sup>297</sup> may mean that only God and Shīkhādī (and possibly other holy beings) possess the complete knowledge of the hymns, or guard their heavenly prototypes that will only be revealed to all in an eschatological context – either at the End of Time, or in postmortal existence. The same message is probably contained in some hymn verses: “all people will become literate”<sup>298</sup> on the Day of Resurrection, and “they will pronounce *ḳawls* [i.e. hymns] and *ḳasīdas* [i.e. eulogies] for the laymen (*mirīd*)” when “the times and cycles... come”<sup>299</sup> (i.e. at the End of Time). The editors of the text explain the latter verse as a revelation of “the secret or mystical contents of all

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 38; The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes *ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>289</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes *ibid.*, p. 395. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>290</sup> E.g. The Hymn of the Lights in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 93. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>291</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 21, 30; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 172-173, 174-175; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 59-60, 62; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 40.

<sup>294</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 172-173; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 60. – Cf. The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes *ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>295</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 172. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>296</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 103. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>297</sup> E.g. The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 375. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>298</sup> The Hymn of the Resurrection in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 302-303.

<sup>299</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 397. Transcription adjusted.



religious texts... to all”.<sup>300</sup> But it may possibly mean the unveiling of the heavenly prototypes of the texts that are synonymous to concentrated holiness and mercy. By that time, the Yezidis can only encounter glimpses of that holiness when the hymns in their known forms are performed. The verse “wherever they recite the *ḳawls* [i.e. hymns] and *ḳasīdas* [i.e. eulogies] of *Shīkhādī*, there paradise is present”<sup>301</sup> may then mean that the sacred texts temporarily materialise paradise on earth, reminiscent of the Christian concept of the Church as God's kingdom on earth.

### **Eulogies (*ḳasīda*)**

The word *ḳasīda* is a common Arabic expression for “poem”. In the Kurdish of Yezidism, the genre of *ḳasīda* typically denotes “short and relatively simple laudatory poems addressed to holy men”.<sup>302</sup> Based on this definition, “eulogy” may be proposed as an equivalent. Some eulogies are performed at the *samāʿ* ritual procession<sup>303</sup> in *Lālish*.<sup>304</sup> A hymn mentions eulogies as second to hymns in two instances within an eschatological context,<sup>305</sup> which indicates that the former genre too bears some degree of holiness.

### **Admonitions (*bayt*)**

The name of the *bayt* genre (also called *bēt*)<sup>306</sup> has been translated as “song”<sup>307</sup> or left untranslated.<sup>308</sup> Due to the explanation of a Yezidi authority that *bayt* primarily addresses “the duties of the community”,<sup>309</sup> the translation “admonition” is proposed here (another possible equivalent, “exhortation” has been used by KREYENBROEK for *shīrat*<sup>310</sup> as a genre of the learned tradition). But this focus may not be obvious in all texts called admonitions – the differentiation of genres is inherited, i.e. the Yezidis classify a text as hymn, eulogy or admonition mainly because they have been taught so.<sup>311</sup> Despite that, the holiness and esteem of the hymns is not attributed to the admonitions<sup>312</sup> although some three admonitions are used in rituals<sup>313</sup> (it is not clear whether musical accompaniment is provided).<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 397. – Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24, 33.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33; The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes *ibid.*, p. 395. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>302</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 51.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 48.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>305</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 395, 397.

<sup>306</sup> This spelling has been taken over from the original in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 216.

<sup>307</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 230-231, 241; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 51.

<sup>308</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 51, 210, 216, 256, 301, 317, 324, 337.

<sup>309</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 241. – Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 48 (the *bays* “typically deal with social or moral questions”).

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

The genre has probably been secondarily integrated from the secular into the religious textual tradition.<sup>315</sup> In secular texts, the term *bayt* denotes “heroic and usually long narrative songs, often with some prose sections, performed without musical accompaniment”.<sup>316</sup>

### Prayers (*du‘ā, dīrōza*)

Yezidi prayer texts exist, although the act of prayer is not considered a religious obligation in Yezidism:<sup>317</sup> dignitaries and members of the *kōčak* fellowship (whose domain is piety and paranormal phenomena)<sup>318</sup> pray regularly; others only optionally, out of their internal feeling.<sup>319</sup> Individual prayer is called *du‘ā*<sup>320</sup> (also written *dū‘ā*).<sup>321</sup> The term *dīrōza* designates the text of a public prayer,<sup>322</sup> a practice that has been observed among the Yezidis<sup>323</sup> but seems to be rare.

### 1.3.6 Learned Religious Textual Tradition

The genres of the learned textual tradition are narrative (*čīrōk, dāstān*) and rhetorical (*mishābat, shīrat*).

### Stories (*čīrōk*)

<sup>314</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 66 (characterises the secular genre called *bayt* as “performed without musical accompaniment” but the religious *bayt* seems to be a different type of text).

<sup>315</sup> Cf. *ibid.*; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>316</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 66.

<sup>317</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 41, 92, 100, 169 (www); JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 181 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 70, 85; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 35; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 35. – Cf. ARISTOVA, *Kurđi Zakavkaz’ya* [Kurds of the Transcaucasia], p. 170; ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 04:35, 04:48, 05:20, 05:50, 24:16, 47:28, 52:55 (documentary film – images).

<sup>318</sup> BOIS, *Les yézidis et leur culte des morts*, pp. 56-57; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 117, 122, 145, 165, 210 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 14, 26; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 227 (quoting Chief Kawāl SILEMĀN SAVŌ); KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*, pp. 112-113; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 126, 134, 135; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 8, 11; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 97; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 48.

<sup>319</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 51. – Cf. DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 56, 167, 170 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 130.

<sup>320</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 51.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 106, 109.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>323</sup> BULUT, *Yezidiler* [Yezidis], p. 38 (images from Turkey); DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 118-119 (www – description of a rite near Ba‘shīka, Iraq); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 157 (description of another rite in Lālīsh, Iraq); ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 23:50 (documentary film – images from Syria).

*Ārōk* can be translated most generally as “story”.<sup>324</sup> It can equally mean a “tale”<sup>325</sup> as well as a “religious narrative”,<sup>326</sup> “legend” or “myth”.<sup>327</sup> The term denotes not only a single text but also a “storyline” or theme (embodied in a number of stories).<sup>328</sup>

Story is “perhaps the most essential constituent element of the Yezidi religious tradition”.<sup>329</sup> Many stories are intertwined with hymns: while the hymn would be unintelligible without its respective story, the verbatim memorisation of the hymn helps in preserving the story too.<sup>330</sup> A story usually includes quotations from (or paraphrases of) verses of the related hymn.<sup>331</sup>

Yezidi story best illustrates the syncretism of Yezidism: the genre is “clearly heterogeneous, reflecting the ‘inclusive’ character of the tradition”.<sup>332</sup> The Yezidi story on Abraham (Birāhīm) includes features of the prophet's life as described in the Bible and the Koran<sup>333</sup> but also elements known elsewhere from stories on Moses (child abandoned on water),<sup>334</sup> Oedipus (killing his own father, then marrying own mother),<sup>335</sup> Herod and Jesus (killing babies upon a bodement),<sup>336</sup> children bred up by animals (the Yezidi Abraham was nurtured by a gazelle),<sup>337</sup> the fiery furnace<sup>338</sup> (a haughty ruler wants to burn to death a monotheist who has defied the order to adore him),<sup>339</sup> and a holy man's visit to paradise during his lifetime<sup>340</sup> (familiar at least in Zoroastrianism and Islam).<sup>341</sup>

<sup>324</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 71; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. p. 225.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. as a part of the subtitle of the book (*Sacred Poems and Religious Narratives from the Yezidi Tradition*).

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>331</sup> E.g. The Story of the Zangid Sultan... (ibid., pp. 112-126) with intertextual references to The Hymn of Pir Dawud (ibid., pp. 127-130), or The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi (ibid., pp. 131-156) with intertextual references to The Great Hymn (ibid., pp. 157-172).

<sup>332</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 35-36, 49.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., p. 36; The Tale of Ibrahim... ibid., pp. 239-240.

<sup>335</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36; The Tale of Ibrahim... ibid., p. 240.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., pp. 241-242. – Details of this part of the story (involvement of a gazelle, independent discovering of the world including the quest for God) are most reminiscent of the Arabic philosophical allegory *Alive, Son of Awake* by ABŪ BAKR IBN ṬUFAYL who lived 1105-1185; GOICHON, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* – EI, vol. III, pp. 331-335).

<sup>338</sup> Daniel 3:1-30.

<sup>339</sup> The Tale of Ibrahim... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., pp. 245, 246.

<sup>341</sup> In Zoroastrianism, it is performed by a character called Artā Virāz (or Ardā Virāf); in Islam, it is Prophet MUḤAMMAD himself who is believed to have ascended to heaven while asleep (the ascension

### Tales (*dāstān*)

Translated as “tale”,<sup>342</sup> *dāstān* (also pronounced *dastān*)<sup>343</sup> seems to be perceived in the Yezidi tradition as a fictional narrative with a religious message,<sup>344</sup> i.e. in a sense not as true as a story (*čīrōk*).

Curiously, a researcher of the secular textual tradition (where both genres exist too) has put it vice versa: a secular story (*čīrōk*) is a pure fiction or phantasy, as opposed to any “historical account”.<sup>345</sup> A *dāstān* (or *dastān*) in the secular context “means ‘legend’ in the widest sense”,<sup>346</sup> which is not necessarily perceived as untrue: one of the researcher’s Yezidi informants “told a legend of Solomon the prophet but did not call it a *čīrōk* because he believed it to be true”.<sup>347</sup> A story (*čīrōk*) was for the Yezidis dealing with secular accounts any storyline they did not consider real.<sup>348</sup> Of course, Solomon the prophet could easily be featured in a Yezidi religious *čīrōk*, and the audience would not perceive the text as unreal.

It seems that the same genre name may denote a different type of texts in the secular and religious traditions, respectively, and the difference concerns not only the genres called *čīrōk* and *dāstān*. It is also the case of *bayt*: while the religious *bayt* (translated here as “admonition”) is a poem on “the duties of the community”,<sup>349</sup> the secular *bayt* is largely interchangeable with the secular *dāstān* – both latter terms denoting “heroic and usually long narrative songs, often with some prose sections, performed without musical accompaniment”.<sup>350</sup>

The only tale (*dāstān*) among the religious texts edited and translated by KREYENBROEK and RASHOW is paired with a *bayt*, typically a religious “admonition” but reminiscent here of the interconnection between *dāstān* and *bayt* in the secular tradition.<sup>351</sup> The text deals with quest for immortality undertaken by the fictional ruler Mīr Mih<sup>352</sup> and is divided in two parts: Mīr Mih’s first experience with death and his search for “a place where death does not exist”.<sup>353</sup> Each part consists of a prose narrative (obviously the *dāstān*) with a

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being known as *mīrādī*).

<sup>342</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317.

<sup>343</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>344</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317. – Ibid., p. 225 has a *čīrōk* translated as “tale” but the English equivalent is preferred here for *dāstān*, also due to its definition (ibid., p. 317: “it is perceived as a fairly tale”).

<sup>345</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 72.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., p. 71. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 241. – Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 48 (the *bays* “typically deal with social or moral questions”).

<sup>350</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 66.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 317-341.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., p. 330.

conclusion in verse (the *bayt*) that seems to represent a summary as well as an emotional climax of the respective part.

### **Sermons (*mishābat*)**

*Mishābat* is a “sermon”<sup>354</sup> mostly preceding the performance of hymns and usually delivered by a member of the *ḳawāl* “order”.<sup>355</sup> Only some *ḳawāls* were traditionally trained to become “preachers”.<sup>356</sup>

Sermon is often based on a story (*čīrōk*) and the related hymn (*ḳawl*); its function is exegetic and didactic.<sup>357</sup> It may be difficult to distinguish between such a sermon and story – it seems that sermon allows the speaker a more individual approach in the selection of themes from a story and a hymn and the inclusion of explanatory interjections.<sup>358</sup>

While common Yezidis do not understand the contents of a hymn performance,<sup>359</sup> sermon is the genre intended for broader audience.<sup>360</sup> The “preachers” are expected to impress the public rather than reach intellectual sophistication.<sup>361</sup>

### **Exhortations (*shīrat*)**

Translated as “exhortation”, *shīrat* is represented in the collection of texts edited and translated by KREYENBROEK and RASHOW by one specimen only. The single text called “Sermon and Exhortation” (*Mishābat ū Shīrat*)<sup>362</sup> does not provide clues for making a distinction between the two genres referred to in its title. Although the text should not be based on a story (*čīrōk*)<sup>363</sup> or a hymn (*ḳawl*), it does include parts or quotations in verse. Its composition is looser than that of a sermon: the text is a pressing speech on ethics and salvation; the parts in verse may be quotations from (or paraphrases of) various other texts aimed at supporting the message.

## **1.3.7 Popular Religious Textual Tradition**

Apart from story (*čīrōk*) as a genre of the learned tradition, “shorter and simpler popular versions may also exist”.<sup>364</sup> These can be thought of as the popular tradition.<sup>365</sup> They were

<sup>354</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 47, 288.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 47; *Mishabet: The dervish of the city of Basra* *ibid.*, pp. 262-279.

<sup>359</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 45. – Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55.

<sup>360</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 45.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>362</sup> Sermon and Exhortation *ibid.*, pp. 288-292.

<sup>363</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 288.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>365</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK (interview).

obviously the main source of information for early “foreign travellers and researchers” writing on Yezidism.<sup>366</sup> The popular tradition also seems to be represented in the manuscripts that were long thought to be the Scriptures of Yezidism<sup>367</sup> after the first of them had become known in 1889.<sup>368</sup>

Stories of the popular tradition have at least three distinctive features:

1) Progression of the influence of “stories with obvious Islamic connections”:<sup>369</sup>

E.g. in cosmogony, the pre-Islamic theme of primordial Pearl “has become marginal at best” as opposed to its prominence in hymns.<sup>370</sup>

2) Explicit mentions of the central Yezidi theophany Tāwsī Malak by name.<sup>371</sup>

These are avoided in texts of the sacred and learned traditions<sup>372</sup> but prolific in the popular tradition<sup>373</sup> and common Yezidi discourse.<sup>374</sup>

3) Explicit intimate details that would probably be seen as inappropriate in the official religious discourse:

An obviously popular story on the theophany of Ēzī son of Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī (a reflection of the historical Caliph YAZĪD I son of MU<sup>c</sup>ĀWIYA)<sup>375</sup> states that Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī could only be healed by sexual intercourse when stung by a scorpion.<sup>376</sup> In texts of the sacred and learned traditions, this connection is merely hinted at<sup>377</sup> or omitted.<sup>378</sup> – Another instance is an anthropogonical theme known from the alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism.<sup>379</sup> after Adam ate wheat that had been forbidden to him, his belly became inflated because he had had no anal orifice; consequently God sent a bird to make an outlet in Adam's body.<sup>380</sup> No such story is known in the sacred and learned traditions.<sup>381</sup>

### 1.3.8 Secular Textual Tradition

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<sup>366</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>367</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 47, 55, 311; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, vii-ix, pp. 10-16; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. xiii., 40-42

<sup>368</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 147.

<sup>369</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview).

<sup>370</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 94-95; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> ALO (interview).

<sup>375</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 313; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>376</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 48.

<sup>377</sup> The Hymn of the Mill of Love in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 383; The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi *ibid.*, pp. 131, 143.

<sup>378</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 157-172.

<sup>379</sup> MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 209.

<sup>380</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 699, 703; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 211; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 38-39 (www).

<sup>381</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview).

Yezidis of all generations see their secular oral texts as a part of their identity.<sup>382</sup> Traditionally, oral literature would embody their cultural preferences and collective memory.<sup>383</sup> As the British researcher CHRISTINE ALLISON has put it, many texts “fulfil the functions of both ‘literature’ and ‘history’ in the community”.<sup>384</sup>

The main themes of the secular textual tradition are armed fight, love, and death.<sup>385</sup> The latter section – women's lamentation over the deceased – is the most vivid part of the Yezidi oral literature as the social demand for its performance has not been changed in modern times.<sup>386</sup> The lament is a genre clearly defined by the context of performance, and is variously called *shīn*, *strānēd shīnē*, *kilāmēd shīnē* (both latter meaning “songs of sorrow”), *dīrōk*, *dīlōk*, *dilōk*, or *strānēd gharībī* (“songs of estrangedness”).<sup>387</sup>

The genres bound to other than mourning occasions are often difficult to determine.<sup>388</sup> They can vary between *strān* (“song”; mostly lyrical, accompanied with music) and *dāstān*<sup>389</sup> (or *dastān*<sup>390</sup> – “tale”<sup>391</sup> or “epic”,<sup>392</sup> a narrative genre, purely vocal).<sup>393</sup> The term *kassa* (“narration”) seems to generally denote prose genres including *dāstān*.<sup>394</sup>

The secular tradition overlaps in some cases with the religious tradition: performances of secular texts can take place in a religious context (at the Assembly Feast in Lālīsh)<sup>395</sup> and there are genres that can either belong to both parts of the textual tradition (*čīrōk* – “story”,<sup>396</sup> *dāstān* – “tale”<sup>397</sup>) or have secondarily been integrated into the religious tradition due to the use of religious imagery<sup>398</sup> (*bayt* – “admonition”; *khizēmōk*, *pāyīzōk*, *rōbārīn* – “poems with religious motives”).<sup>399</sup> The main themes of the latter genres are non-religious: they are concerned with the nose-ring (*khizēm*) of

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<sup>382</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 85.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65, 75, 175-176, 286-287.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>389</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317.

<sup>390</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>391</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317.

<sup>392</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 67.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 205, 286.

<sup>395</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 59.

<sup>396</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 71; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>397</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 66-67; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317.

<sup>398</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

a beloved woman, the autumnal (*pāyīz*) migration to winter pastures, and the beauty of rivers (*rōbār*), respectively.<sup>400</sup>

## Chapter Two: End of Time in Yezidism

### 2.1 Textual Sources on the Linear End of Time

The Yezidi sacred oral tradition includes descriptions of an End of Time (*Ākhir Zamān*),<sup>401</sup> characterised in one of the texts as a state of ecological and moral decay of the world (the characters of Gog and Magog “will cause the water of the oceans to dry up” and “brothers will rob their brothers”).<sup>402</sup>

Other themes connected with the End of Time are a final battle where the Yezidis seem to expect their triumph over “the Sharī‘a” (*Shir‘at*),<sup>403</sup> i.e. Islam, the establishment of an ideal world (“the sheep will not fear the wolf”),<sup>404</sup> and an end to people's sufferings (God will “come to the face of the earths” and “heal the hearts full of wounds and pain”).<sup>405</sup> The End of Time will be followed by the Last Judgment<sup>406</sup> (usually called *Rōžā Ākhiratē*).<sup>407</sup>

The crucial hymns that are predominantly dedicated to the End of Time are (in alphabetic order): *Ḳawlē Sharfadīn* (Hymn of *Sharfadīn*)<sup>408</sup> and *Ḳawlē Tarđjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour).<sup>409</sup> Other sacred texts that include references to the concept are mainly: *Ḳasīdā Sharfadīn* (Eulogy on *Sharfadīn*),<sup>410</sup> *Ḳawlē Bābaka Ōmarā* (Hymn of *Bābaka Ōmarā*),<sup>411</sup> *Ḳawlē Īmānē* (Hymn of the Faith),<sup>412</sup> *Ḳawlē Ḳandīlā* (Hymn of the Lights),<sup>413</sup> *Ḳawlē Kaniyā Mārā* (Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes),<sup>414</sup> and *Ḳawlē Ḳara Farḳān* (approximately Hymn of the Black Book of Separation).<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372.  
Transcription adjusted.

<sup>404</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>405</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 103.

<sup>406</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 34; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>407</sup> The Tale of Ibrahim... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 229, 243. – The term literally means “Day of the Hereafter”; its Arabic equivalent would be *Yawm al-Ākhira*.

<sup>408</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 368-375.

<sup>409</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-368.

<sup>410</sup> The *Qesīde* of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>411</sup> The Hymn of Babeke Omera in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 376-379.

<sup>412</sup> The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 83-89.

<sup>413</sup> The Hymn of the Lights in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 90-93.

<sup>414</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 391-398.



Ḳawlē *Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour) is in the available edition preceded by an original explanatory ad hoc introduction that was provided by the reciter<sup>416</sup> but is not a part of the proper text.<sup>417</sup>

The both Yezidi hymns on the End of Time belong to the few where authorship is indicated in the text: Ḳawlē *Sharfadīn* (Hymn of *Sharfadīn*) is ascribed to *pīr Rashē Ḥayrān*<sup>418</sup> while Ḳawlē *Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour) is assumed to have been composed by a certain *Sharaf* the son of *Dāwūd*.<sup>419</sup>

Another Yezidi text on legendary history and the End of Time was recorded by French researcher ROGER LESCOT from one *shēkh DJINĒT*<sup>420</sup> in Syria<sup>421</sup> in the 1930's.<sup>422</sup> It may belong to what can be called the learned or the popular tradition,<sup>423</sup> and partially corresponds with Ḳawlē *Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour).<sup>424</sup> The text from Syria may also be the same hymn (i.e. a part of what can be called sacred tradition) in an alternative textual version.

It should be noted that LESCOT's version is incomplete, as his informant “obstinately refused to continue” and it was “impossible... to find somebody who would agree to complete the account”.<sup>425</sup> Similar anxiety has been noticed in other cases whenever Yezidi informants were providing information that could be in their view sensitive toward Islam and the Muslims.<sup>426</sup> It can be assumed that the original account would have ended by some form of the defeat of Islam,<sup>427</sup> which is at least implied in the two Yezidi hymns on the End of Time.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 94-103. – On the term *furqan* (*furqān*) used in the edition and its connotations in Islam (where it can be used as a synonym for the Koran), cf. PARET, *Furqān* (EI), vol. II, pp. 949-950.

<sup>416</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour [an original ad hoc introduction] in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364.

<sup>417</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 365-368.

<sup>418</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 375.

<sup>419</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365.

<sup>420</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 64, 66. – The spelling of the name as *Shēkh DJINAT* (ibid., p. 65) seems to be a typo. Nevertheless, the name could rather be *Djinēd* (i.e. actually a different pronunciation of *DJUNAYD*, historically a Sufi known in the Yezidi tradition too – KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 102).

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., p. 64 mentions *Djabal Sim'ān*, which is a region north of Aleppo (Ḥalab).

<sup>422</sup> Originally published ibid., pp. 65-66. Summarised in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>423</sup> On terminology, cf. KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>425</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 51.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. the Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK – RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

<sup>428</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372; The Hymn of the False Saviour ibid., p. 368.

Altogether three known Yezidi texts dedicated to the End of Time (i.e. two hymns and LESCOT's account) in addition to references in other texts show that the concept of a linear historical eschaton is anchored in the Yezidi tradition. Its importance in the Yezidi consciousness became apparent in 1892 when a Yezidi visionary known as *kōçak Mîrzā* in the *Sindjār* region, Iraq predicted an imminent fall of Islam and triumph of Yezidism.<sup>429</sup> Set in an atmosphere of unprecedented violence committed on Yezidis by a Muslim army,<sup>430</sup> his declarations contributed to unrest within the community.<sup>431</sup> Memories of the movement have been preserved in the Yezidi secular oral tradition.<sup>432</sup>

## 2.2 Synchronisation of Storylines on the End of Time

Below follows a combination of Yezidi storylines on the End of Time based on three texts: *Ḳawlē Sharfadīn* (Hymn of *Sharfadīn*),<sup>433</sup> *Ḳawlē Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour),<sup>434</sup> and the version collected by French researcher ROGER LESCOT in the 1930's in Syria.<sup>435</sup>

LESCOT's version probably belongs to the popular segment of the Yezidi religious oral tradition<sup>436</sup> and its elements can also be found in *Ḳawlē Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour).<sup>437</sup> Both texts provide a complementary account of the succession of events related to the End of Time, hence largely represent the same storyline.

*Ḳawlē Sharfadīn* (Hymn of *Sharfadīn*) is different than the other two texts: it is dedicated to the Yezidi Armageddon, a battle led by *Sharfadīn* that is not specifically mentioned in the other texts. With relation to events described in those texts, it remains unclear when the battle should take place – although such a consideration may not be relevant in Yezidism.

*Ḳawlē Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour) mentions that Jesus – not *Sharfadīn* – will kill *Tardjāl*,<sup>438</sup> and neither this hymn nor LESCOT's version include any hint of the final battle against evil. Therefore, it seems that these two texts on one hand and *Ḳawlē Sharfadīn*

<sup>429</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 88.

<sup>430</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>431</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 88.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>433</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 368-375.

<sup>434</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-368.

<sup>435</sup> Originally published in LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 65-66. Summarised in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>436</sup> On the term “popular tradition”, cf. KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>437</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-368.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 366.

(Hymn of Sharfadīn) on the other represent two parallel Yezidi storylines on the End of Time that do not depend on or refer to each other.

The initial point is Ēzī's conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul).<sup>439</sup> The local ruler Constantin had stepped down from the throne in favour of Ēzī<sup>440</sup> who then ruled (over the whole world, it seems)<sup>441</sup> for 72 years.<sup>442</sup> Ēzī then passed the rule to Ōsmān (personifying the Ottoman dynasty)<sup>443</sup> who would be ruling for 2,000 years.<sup>444</sup> He had to assure Ēzī that he would never oppress his people (i.e. the Yezidis).<sup>445</sup> But Ēzī also predicted that Ōsmān would break the promise<sup>446</sup> and revealed that he would therefore ruin his power through a barbarous people called Lōlō,<sup>447</sup> joined by “all outcasts of the creation”.<sup>448</sup>

The Lōlō and similar negative powers may vaguely correspond with Tardjāl (the False Saviour),<sup>449</sup>

a personage who will be sent by God<sup>450</sup> to seduce people by promises of wealth and happiness<sup>451</sup> and spoil Islam.<sup>452</sup> A massive army<sup>453</sup> will precede him to Syria (Shām),<sup>454</sup> where he will “make Islam imperfect” and “prepare the Day of Resurrection”<sup>455</sup> for Muslims.<sup>456</sup> It seems he will be killed by Jesus.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 61-64 (quoting ISMĀ'IL BEG, an activist member of the Yezidi princely family).

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> This becomes obvious from the continuation of the story: when Jesus rules, “the throne will be in Egypt” (LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66). – Cf. the summary of the same story in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364. – Also, cf. a hymn where occupying the “Seat of the Ruler” seems to be a synonym for conquering the world (The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 374).

<sup>442</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

<sup>443</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>449</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 364.

<sup>450</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>451</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour [an original ad hoc introduction] in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid. – The aspect of a distorted religious teaching proclaimed by Tardjāl is probably also meant in another verse of the hymn: “He told little about the Highest” (i.e. God; *ibid.*).

<sup>453</sup> Ibid., p. 366.

<sup>454</sup> The territory may vary between Damascus city (*ibid.*, p. 367) and the region of Syria (*ibid.*, p. 366) or the Levant.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid. – The aspect of a distorted religious teaching proclaimed by Tardjāl is probably also meant in another verse of the hymn: “He told little about the Highest” (i.e. God; *ibid.*).

<sup>456</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 366.

After the fall of Ōsmān, Ēzī will grant the rule to Jesus who will reign from Egypt for forty years.<sup>458</sup> Sharfadīn will either reign after Jesus for forty years too,<sup>459</sup> or will act together with the latter<sup>460</sup> (“Jesus will be the Sultan and Sharfadīn will be the Mahdī”).<sup>461</sup> Under Sharfadīn (or possibly under Jesus as well), the ideal world will be established (“the sheep will not fear the wolf”).<sup>462</sup> Jesus will cede the rule and go with Sharfadīn to die at Mount Kāf (a mythical analogy of the world's boundaries).<sup>463</sup>

Gog will come from beyond Mount Kāf and rule the world for seven years.<sup>464</sup> He will be then killed by Magog who will rule for forty years.<sup>465</sup> (In another text, “Gog and Magog appear” and act together.)<sup>466</sup> Under their force, the world will undergo an ecological and moral decay – the End of Time.<sup>467</sup> Ḥalādī (i.e. the Sufi ḤUSAYN IBN MANṢŪR AL-ḤALLĀDĪ; 857-922)<sup>468</sup> will then come to “purify the world”.<sup>469</sup>

The final battle of the righteous Yezidis<sup>470</sup> against evil<sup>471</sup> (more or less clearly identified with Islam)<sup>472</sup> may be launched at various points. It is connected with the personages of Tardjāl (who will be killed by Jesus)<sup>473</sup> versus Sharfadīn (who will lead the army and

<sup>458</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>459</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>460</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>463</sup> This is the case in the cosmologies of the Muslim Middle East (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 175; STRECK + MIQUEL, *Kāf – EI*, vol. IV, pp. 400-402) and the Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ (HAMZEH'EE, *The Yaresan*, p. 72).

<sup>464</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>465</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>466</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 119.

<sup>469</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 146-147; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365.

<sup>470</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369. – Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>471</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 370.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372; The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368. – Cf. the refusal of LESCOT's informant to complete his eschatological story (LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66), which very probably had something to do with sensitivities toward the Muslim environment (cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 51; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64).

<sup>473</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 366.

“conquer the world”<sup>474</sup> and Ēzī (the commander-in-chief<sup>475</sup> in whose name victory will be achieved<sup>476</sup>).

The Resurrection of Muslims will be prepared by Tardjāl.<sup>477</sup> The Last Judgment will take place after Magog's rule. The judge will be God<sup>478</sup> or one of his theophanies, possibly Ēzī.<sup>479</sup> It seems that the Yezidis will be resurrected later – before the final battle<sup>480</sup> or after it, when they<sup>481</sup> will go from Damascus to Jerusalem<sup>482</sup> and proclaim there the triumph of Yezidism.<sup>483</sup> It is also possible that the Yezidis are not subject to the Judgment, i.e. all of them directly reach salvation.<sup>484</sup>

A part of the pristine state of the world after the destruction of evil<sup>485</sup> is an everlasting Yezidi worship (“our place of pilgrimage will be the Zimzim [spring in Lālīsh], our direction of prayer the White Spring [in the same place]”<sup>486</sup> and full revelation of the truth (“all people will become literate”<sup>487</sup> and “they will pronounce *ḳawls* [i.e. hymns] and

<sup>474</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374.

<sup>475</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>476</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, pp. 371, 373, 374. – Cf. The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 368 (the “lion-like rider” due to emerge is probably Ēzī).

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>479</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372. – Cf. ASATRIAN,

*O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznikh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], p. 262; The Hymn of the Moment of Death in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 322-323; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 349.

<sup>480</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 369. – Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>481</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367 (those resurrected with “joy and gladness in their hearts”).

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368 (“they will bring the name and remembrance of Ēzī there”, i.e. probably to Jerusalem, and “shout it from the minarets”; transcription adjusted).

<sup>484</sup> This seems to be the indication *ibid.*, pp. 366-368 (first comes the mention of a preparation of the Resurrection for Muslims, then the Judgment and punishment of sinners, then again the Resurrection of people who joyfully demonstrate the victory of Ēzī). – Similar notions can be found in the Yezidi tradition and especially earlier writings about Yezidism, i.e. of the non-existence of hell in Yezidism or its irrelevance for the Yezidis due to their direct salvation (e.g. EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 109; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 155-157; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 11, 33, 60, 65, 111, 113 – WWW, KLIPPEL, *Unter Senûsy-Brüdern, Drusen und Teufelsanbetern*, pp. 179-180; KREYENBROEK – interview; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 29; *Robarîn* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 411; The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir *ibid.*, p. 176).

<sup>485</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>486</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, pp. 374-375. Transcription adjusted. – The “direction of prayer” (in the Yezidi text *ḳublat*) is an Islamic term that also acquires a figurative meaning in the Middle Eastern poetry. According to a Yezidi cosmogonic text, “Ēzī made the White Spring the direction of prayer” (The Hymn of the Faith *ibid.*, p. 83).

<sup>487</sup> The Hymn of the Resurrection in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 302-303.

kasīdas [i.e. eulogies] for the laymen”,<sup>488</sup> i.e. the Yezidi laity will acquire comprehension of otherwise enigmatic religious texts<sup>489</sup>).

## 2.3 Negative Characters

### 2.3.1 Gog and Magog

Gog (Hād̲jūd̲j) with Magog (Mād̲jūd̲j) are characters connected with the very term End of Time (Ākhir Zamān):<sup>490</sup> it denotes cosmic and socio-ethical cataclysms<sup>491</sup> that will occur with them (“brothers will rob their brothers...; surely the End of Time has come to us!”).<sup>492</sup> A hymn says: “Gog and Magog... will cause the water of the oceans to dry up...; they will diminish the blessings on earth.”<sup>493</sup> This may highlight that it is directly their acts that will lead the world to decay.

Gog and Magog will “appear”<sup>494</sup> after the rule of Sharfadīn. In the words of the Yezidi text, “this world will pass away entirely” at the end of Sharfadīn's rule,<sup>495</sup> which indicates a sharp qualitative change with the advent of Gog and Magog – the ideal world under Sharfadīn,<sup>496</sup> a complex decline under Gog and Magog.<sup>497</sup>

The same storyline should include the killing of Sharfadīn by Gog and Magog<sup>498</sup> but that is not clear enough from the reference text.<sup>499</sup> According to another version on the End of Time (possibly belonging to the popular tradition), Sharfadīn will depart at the end of his rule with Jesus to Mount Kāf – a mythical analogy of the world's end or boundaries<sup>500</sup> – and die there.<sup>501</sup> Afterwards, God will order archangel Gabriel (Djibrāyīl) to open the gates of that mountain, which will enable Gog to come out and rule the world for seven years. He will be then killed by Magog who will rule afterwards for forty years. The story

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<sup>488</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 397. – Cf. *ibid.*, p. 395 (“wherever they recite the *ḳawls* and *ḳasīdas* of *Shīkhādī*, there paradise is present”; transcription adjusted).

<sup>489</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 24, 33.

<sup>490</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>491</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 34;

<sup>492</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>498</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 34.

<sup>499</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>500</sup> This is the case in the cosmologies of the Muslim Middle East (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 175; STRECK + MIQUEL, *Ḳāf – EI*, vol. IV, pp. 400-402) and the Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ (HAMZEH'EE, *The Yaresan*, p. 72).

<sup>501</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

implies that Magog's rule will be terminated by Ḥalādī,<sup>502</sup> i.e. a Yezidi image of the Sufi ḤUSAYN IBN MANṢŪR AL-ḤALLĀDĪ (857-922).<sup>503</sup>

There is no indication that Gog and Magog in Yezidism should represent apocalyptic peoples as is the case in the Islamic tradition.<sup>504</sup> They seem to be meant clearly as individuals.

### 2.3.2 Lōlō

If the Yezidi tradition contains the concept of a group of people (or a “nation”) who will play a negative role in the cataclysms of the End of Time, then it is the Lōlō. The name is mentioned in the eschatological text recorded by French researcher ROGER LESCOT in Syria in the 1930's.<sup>505</sup>

In the text, the Lōlō will be set by the Yezidi theophany Ēzī against Ōsmān<sup>506</sup> (personifying the Ottoman Empire)<sup>507</sup> and will be instrumental in the overthrow of the latter's rule. According to LESCOT's source (the Yezidi *shēkh DJINĒT*),<sup>508</sup> the Lōlō can be explained as “Jews, barbarians”.<sup>509</sup> Ēzī says about Ōsmān in the text: “I will set onto him the Lōlō and all outcasts of the creation.”<sup>510</sup>

According to the Russian-French researcher BASILE NIKITINE (originally, VASILYI PETROVIČ NIKITIN) quoted by LESCOT, the name may either be derived from an ancient people living in the south-east of the present-day Kurdish areas or from a gypsy<sup>511</sup> group called Lūlī.<sup>512</sup>

<sup>502</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>503</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 119.

<sup>504</sup> DONZEL + OTT, *Yādījūdī wa Mādījūdī* (EI), vol. XI, p. 231. – Gog's Arabic name differs from its form used in the Yezidi tradition although it varies between Yādījūdī, Ya'dījūdī, and Ādījūdī (ibid., pp. 231-232).

<sup>505</sup> Originally published in LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 65-66. Summarised in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>506</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

<sup>507</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>508</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 64, 65, 66.

<sup>509</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65. – Negative images of the Jews can be found in some Yezidi texts (*Mishabet*: The dervish of the city of Basra in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 274-275; The Hymn of Sheykh Shems of Tabriz in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 258-259, 262; the same text in a different version translated as The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 205).

<sup>510</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>511</sup> On the “gypsy-like groups” within the Kurdish society, see BRUINSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>512</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

Another clue is offered by the Yezidi tradition itself: Lōlō in Yezidism mostly refers to the personage of Badradīn Lōlō<sup>513</sup> (historically, Mosul governor BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU') who had had the Yezidi saint Shēkh Ḥasan (also called Shēkh Sin;<sup>514</sup> historically, al-°Adawiyya community leader ḤASAN) captured and tortured<sup>515</sup> but later was killed by the latter's companions.<sup>516</sup> In history, ḤASAN was not only jailed and tortured but also killed upon the orders from BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU'<sup>517</sup> who in addition executed some 200 of al-°Adawiyya followers and violated their headquarters in Lālīsh.<sup>518</sup> Nothing is known about a revenge from al-°Adawiyya. It can be assumed that Badradīn Lōlō had once belonged to the negative eschatological personages in Yezidism and the latter part of his name was later attached to an apocalyptic destructive mass of people.

### 2.3.3 Ōsmān

Ōsmān, also called Ōsmān D̄jīk<sup>519</sup> (“Little Osman”),<sup>520</sup> is a personification of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>521</sup> He is mentioned in LESCOT’s version collected in Syria in the 1930's as “a pious man coming from the family of Prophet Abraham” who “has gone to the paradise seven times”.<sup>522</sup> Ēzī has passed to him the rule over Constantinople (and, figuratively, the world)<sup>523</sup> “by the order of God”<sup>524</sup> and due to a pledge given earlier by Ēzī.<sup>525</sup> In exchange, Ōsmān had to pay an annual tribute to Ēzī and promise to him that he would never lead massacres (*fīrmān*)<sup>526</sup> against his people,<sup>527</sup> i.e. Yezidis. If Ōsmān breaks that promise, Ēzī “will send the End of Time”,<sup>528</sup> ruin Ōsmān's power<sup>529</sup> through the people called Lōlō,<sup>530</sup>

<sup>513</sup> RASHOW (interview).

<sup>514</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 105-106; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 4, 219.

<sup>515</sup> The Story of the Zangid Sultan... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 124.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>517</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>518</sup> Baghdad-based chronicler KAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN AL-FUWAṬĪ (1244-1323) summarised in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21, 234.

<sup>519</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>520</sup> The form *Osmandjīk* (Osmancık) is a diminutive in Turkish but the story presents the suffix as a second name or attribute.

<sup>521</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>523</sup> This becomes obvious from the continuation of the story: when Jesus rules, “the throne will be in Egypt” (ibid., p. 66).

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>526</sup> Cf. CINDĪ et al., *Ēzidyatī* [Ēzidyātī – “Yezidism”], p. 9; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 26.

<sup>527</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.



and pass the rule to Jesus.<sup>531</sup> Ēzī actually predicted that Ōsmān would commit the massacres before his rule would have lasted for 2,000 years.<sup>532</sup>

The story implies that an escalation of violence against Yezidis is due to be followed by the fall of Muslim (or Ottoman) power. When the massacres and persecutions of the Yezidis in what is now Iraq reached their peak in 1892,<sup>533</sup> *kōčak* MİRZĀ in Sindjār predicted an imminent fall of Islam and triumph of Yezidism.<sup>534</sup>

MİRZĀ's movement may have been related to the tradition mentioned above or similar, as well as to some millenaristic echoes (the date was 1892 of the Christian era, i.e. shortly before the century's turn, and 1309-1310 of the Islamic era, i.e. shortly after the century's turn). One may not exclude that the Yezidi tradition linking Muslim persecutions of the Yezidis with the decline of Muslim power was later strengthened by the factual historical experience of the Yezidis, i.e. massive oppression of Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire (1892) was soon followed by its fall (1918).

### 2.3.4 Tardjāl

While Gog and Magog will bring about the End of Time as such, Tardjāl will initiate the events leading to it. The name (or possibly title) is obviously derived from the Arabic al-Dadjdjal,<sup>535</sup> in Islam understood as a “deceiver” who will rule the world before its end.<sup>536</sup>

According to a Yezidi eschatological hymn, Tardjāl will be sent by God<sup>537</sup> as an imperfect counterpart<sup>538</sup> and, actually, the forerunner of the Mahdī who will later install the ideal world. The Yezidi tradition adds that Tardjāl will seduce a large portion of humankind by promises of wealth and happiness.<sup>539</sup> He will be preceded by a great army<sup>540</sup> (presumably under his command) and go to Syria (Shām),<sup>541</sup> where he will “make Islam imperfect” and “prepare the Day of Resurrection”.<sup>542</sup> It seems that this resurrection will only concern Muslims.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>533</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>534</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 88.

<sup>535</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 364.

<sup>536</sup> ABEL, *al-Dadjdjal* (EI), vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>537</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>538</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>539</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour [an original ad hoc introduction] in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364.

<sup>540</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>541</sup> The territory may vary between Damascus city (*ibid.*, p. 367) and the region of Syria (*ibid.*, p. 366) or possibly the Levant.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.* – The aspect of a distorted religious teaching proclaimed by Tardjāl is probably also meant in another verse of the hymn: “He told little about the Highest” (i.e. God; *ibid.*).

<sup>543</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33-34.

Implicitly, Tardjāl will rule the world. His reign will be terminated and followed by Jesus who will kill “that blind pale one, ...that blind miserable one”,<sup>544</sup> which probably refers to Tardjāl.<sup>545</sup>

Another hymn seems to mean Tardjāl too when mentioning the “Lord of Infidelity” (Mīrē Kifrē) who is taken “away from this world” by the “red killing sword” of angel Sidjādīn.<sup>546</sup> Otherwise, the colour red is a typical attribute of Ēzī.<sup>547</sup>

## 2.4 Positive Characters: Ēzī

### 2.4.1 Ēzī as a Deity

Wherever the concept of divine trinity is mentioned in Yezidism (an idea that however may not be universally widespread), Ēzī is named as one of its members along with Tāwsī Malak and Shīkhādī.<sup>548</sup> Separate mentions testify that Yezidis identify him with Tāwsī Malak<sup>549</sup> and “presumably in a sense” with Shīkhādī.<sup>550</sup>

According to a researcher from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Yezidis perceive Ēzī “as half angel and half man”.<sup>551</sup>

The Yezidi tradition gives a general impression that Tāwsī Malak is more strongly related to divine majesty, heaven, hell, and judgment upon destinies, while Ēzī is more universal and has more unjudging mercy. The descriptions of Ēzī in Yezidi texts are more emotional and joyful (even reminiscent of a trickster) while the other human Shīkhādī represents strictness, institutional order, and religious texts. Tāwsī Malak represents a cosmic aspect of sustenance; Shīkhādī stands for a human aspect of teaching and discipline; and Ēzī embodies a binding aspect of collective endurance. The three personages almost seem to be close to various concepts of divinity – deism, theism, and pantheism, respectively.

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<sup>544</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>545</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>546</sup> The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems *ibid.*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>547</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 147, 156; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>548</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznīkh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 269-270; JUMA (interview). – Cf. The Hymn of Babeke Omera in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 378.

<sup>549</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 47.

<sup>550</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 191; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 68.

<sup>551</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 47.

According to various overviews of the reincarnations of theophanies,<sup>552</sup> one of Ēzī's incarnation counterparts is Tāwsī Malak. Others are archangel Azrael (Azrāyīl), Khidrilyās (Elias), Bahlūl (he and Ēzī bear characteristics of a trickster), and Bakhtēnasr (Nebuchadnezzar). Ēzī also has common imagery elements with Moses (Mūsā)<sup>553</sup> and angels Shēkh Ḥasan<sup>554</sup> and Sidjādīn.<sup>555</sup>

In Yezidi hymns, Ēzī is omniscient (knows God's plans),<sup>556</sup> omnipotent (“holds the Pen of Power” – *Ḳalamā Ḳudratē*),<sup>557</sup> and symbolises the superiority of Yezidism (“has power over so many religious schools, so many faiths, so many sects”).<sup>558</sup> He seems to be the executor of God's will – a hymn describes that God “is the mystery in heaven” but “this moment, this hour is in the hands” of Ēzī.<sup>559</sup>

Ēzī took part in determining the destinies of the world at Creation (when he “drew up detailed schemes”).<sup>560</sup> In the same sense, it seems Ēzī was present at the primordial “assembly” (*madjlis*) of God and the seven archangels.<sup>561</sup> In the sense of his identity with Tāwsī Malak, leadership of the archangels is attributed to him.<sup>562</sup> A hymn says he “entrusts this world to the hands of” angels Shēshims and Fakhradīn<sup>563</sup> (portrayed as brothers<sup>564</sup> and sometimes symbolising sun and moon,<sup>565</sup> respectively).

<sup>552</sup> DILKÖVĀN, *Khāliq al-kawn wa 'l-takwīn wa khalk al-malā'ika wa nazariyyat al-fayḍ fi 'l-nuṣūṣ al-muḳaddasa* [Creator of the Cosmos, Genesis, Creation of Angels, and Emanation Theory in Sacred Texts], p. 37; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 46-49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 91-124; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, pp. 209-210.

<sup>553</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 96, 106.

<sup>554</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 96, 106; The Hymn of Sheikh Hesên the Sultan in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 357.

<sup>555</sup> The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>556</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95; The Hymn of Sheykh Obekr *ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>557</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 95-96; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One *ibid.*, pp. 170-171; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 58.

<sup>558</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95; The Hymn of Sheykh Erebeg Entûsh *ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

<sup>559</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95; The Hymn of Sheykh Obekr *ibid.*, pp. 210-211. Typography and wording adjusted. – Cf. The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 78.

<sup>560</sup> The Prayer of Wishes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 281.

<sup>561</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79.

<sup>562</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96; The Hymn of Sheykh Obekir *ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>563</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79.

<sup>564</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4.

<sup>565</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27.

Heroes of Yezidi battle songs of the secular oral literature appeal to Ēzī for help<sup>566</sup> and ask for his<sup>567</sup> (or God's and his)<sup>568</sup> permission. He is portrayed as a ruler. The title King (Padshā) in Yezidi sacred texts can mean God but also Shīkhādī or Ēzī.<sup>569</sup> Texts say specifically on Ēzī that he is the “King in this world and the Hereafter”.<sup>570</sup> The title that routinely precedes Ēzī's name in common Yezidi discourse is Sultan (pronounced Siltān or Sultān),<sup>571</sup> otherwise also attributed to Shīkhādī.<sup>572</sup>

A religious text suggests that Shīkhādī “was that holy man to whom Sultan Ēzī revealed the profound meanings”.<sup>573</sup> Ēzī is indicated as superior to other prophets<sup>574</sup> and holy personages in general.<sup>575</sup> Elsewhere, both Ēzī and Shīkhādī are named as implicitly superior over all prophetic figures.<sup>576</sup>

The festival of the birth of Ēzī is marked in December and is preceded by three days of fasting,<sup>577</sup> the atmosphere of which “closely resembles the great Ramaḍān fast of Muslims”.<sup>578</sup> In official contact, Yezidis in Iraq have repeatedly quoted the festival among four most important Yezidi feasts.<sup>579</sup>

The only known shrine attributed to Ēzī (albeit only partially, in the sense of his identity with Tāwsī Malak)<sup>580</sup> can be found in Lālīsh, the holiest place of Yezidism. Another, believed to be Ēzī's grave, had apparently existed in Shēkh Sibātī (?) near Mosul until it was drowned by a dam<sup>581</sup> in 1984. Local festivals used to take place there twice a year.<sup>582</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Ēzī as an Eponym of Yezidism

<sup>566</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 90.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 97, 215-218.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>569</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 93. – Cf. SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 61 for the title Khōdān (or rather Khudān – “Master”; CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 667).

<sup>570</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 139, 152; The Great Hymn ibid., p. 166. Translation and transcription adjusted: *dinē* should mean “of this world, in this world”, not “of the religion” (ibid., pp. 152, 166), which would rather be *dīnē*.

<sup>571</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 94.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>573</sup> *Xizēmok*, Version 1 in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 401. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>574</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79.

<sup>575</sup> The Prayer of Pilgrimage in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 108.

<sup>576</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 65.

<sup>577</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 156; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 17; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 61. – The latter source claims a total of nine days of fasting distributed in three consecutive weeks.

<sup>578</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 61. Transcription and wording adjusted.

<sup>579</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 42, 43, 48-49.

<sup>580</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 94.

<sup>581</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, p. 507.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

Ēzī may be seen as an eponym of Yezidism; “he seems... to represent the Yezidi faith as such”.<sup>583</sup>

A prayer text says that Yezidis are “followers of the name of” Sultan Ēzī.<sup>584</sup> Hymns encourage the invocation of his name.<sup>585</sup> Some contemporary Yezidis call his name when sitting down.<sup>586</sup>

The Evening Prayer mentions among the phenomena that Yezidis should remind themselves of “the mystery of Ēzī” (*surā Ēzī*),<sup>587</sup> i.e. of his theophany.<sup>588</sup>

The figurative term “lamb of Sultan Ēzī” (*barkhē Siltān Ēzīd*)<sup>589</sup> is used for a faithful follower of Yezidism in formulas related to passage rites: boys' first hair-cutting,<sup>590</sup> baptism,<sup>591</sup> and washing the corpse before funeral.<sup>592</sup> Yezidis in the Transcaucasia also quote it as a part of a postmortal interrogation of soul.<sup>593</sup>

### 2.4.3 Attributes of Ēzī

#### Light

A story (*čīrōk*) from the learned tradition says that Ēzī's “essence is light”.<sup>594</sup> According to a hymn on the Creation, Ēzī “was light, he was adorned with light”.<sup>595</sup>

#### Colours

<sup>583</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid., p. 96; The Declaration of Faith *ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>585</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96; The Hymn of the Faith *ibid.*, pp. 194-195; The Hymn of the Oceans *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>586</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96.

<sup>587</sup> The Evening Prayer in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>588</sup> On the term *sur* (from the Arabic *sirr* – “mystery”) for supreme holy beings, see KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 12-13, 21, 22.

<sup>589</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznīkh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 262-263. – The name Ēzī can also change to Ēzīd, Ēzīdī (which otherwise means a “Yezidi”) or even Ēzīdīd (The Hymn of the Creation of the World in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 184-185; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 68; The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 194-199; The Hymn of the Oceans *ibid.*, pp. 204-205).

<sup>590</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznīkh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], p. 265.

<sup>591</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 159. – Cf. JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 178 (www).

<sup>592</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznīkh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 263-264.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid., pp. 262-263.

<sup>594</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 149.

<sup>595</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 65.

Ēzī is connected with multiplicity and diversity of colours.<sup>596</sup> In a hymn, he is said to have created the multitude of colours.<sup>597</sup> He is characterised with colourfulness<sup>598</sup> dominated by red,<sup>599</sup> which has become his standard attribute – he is often called “Red Ēzī” (Ēzīdē Sōr).<sup>600</sup>

### **Multiplicity, Complexity**

Ēzī is connected with multiplicity and diversity of colours, his demonstrations, or people he accompanies.<sup>601</sup> Ēzī has “counted every one” of the numerous prophets;<sup>602</sup> i.e. he has knowledge about each of them.

Ēzī “is described as being omnipresent, and as transcending all apparent contradictions of the exoteric world”.<sup>603</sup> He demonstrates all-embracing mercy even to sinners.<sup>604</sup>

One of Ēzī’s miracles was making the girls with whom he was dancing at his “assembly” to be seen as present in their homes at the same moment.<sup>605</sup> This distantly resembles the story of Krishna and dancing female shepherds (*gōpī*) in Hinduism.

### **Joy**

Ēzī’s demonstration of the Truth through joy appears in his hagiography on at least two occasions: when he dances with a crowd of girls,<sup>606</sup> and when musicians and singers<sup>607</sup> gather in his tent “in the middle of the ocean”<sup>608</sup> singing “in the name and in honour of

<sup>596</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 79-80, 82.

<sup>597</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 32; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One *ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>598</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 149, 151.

<sup>599</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 147, 156; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>600</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96; The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 85, 86, 87.

<sup>601</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 79-80, 82.

<sup>602</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 65.

<sup>603</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 74.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. the Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 80, 81, 82.

<sup>605</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>606</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>607</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 170.

<sup>608</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 154.

Sultan Ēzī”.<sup>609</sup> Both images seem to be used as a challenge to Sharī'a or the legalistic Islam: the dance with girls stirs up a scandal and only Ēzī's miracle saves them from punishment;<sup>610</sup> the musical session honouring Ēzī is visited by a Muslim judge who earlier attempted Ēzī's life but in the end accepts his Truth (by tasting wine and declaring it licit,<sup>611</sup> which is a metaphor<sup>612</sup> obviously based on the Sufi imagery of wine).

### Cup

A Cup that “belongs to Sultan Ēzī” is listed in a hymn along with “love and wine” among things “more pleasant than heaven” (*bahisht*).<sup>613</sup> These symbols are prolific in Sufism.<sup>614</sup> The Cup in Yezidi hymns represents life, a reservoir of phenomena,<sup>615</sup> materialisation of esoteric realities in the exoteric sphere,<sup>616</sup> and spiritual leadership<sup>617</sup> and rule.<sup>618</sup>

When a hymn-chanter (*ḳawāl*)<sup>619</sup> sprinkles the Yezidis with water from the sacred White Spring after ceremony of paying homage to a Peacock Standard (*Sindjak*), he calls the water “the Cup of Ēzī”.<sup>620</sup>

### Pen, Tablet, Ring, Crown

Yezidi hymns on the Creation name among Ēzī's attributes the “Pen of Power” (*Ḳalamā Ḳudratē*)<sup>621</sup> that is associated with Divine Laws. So is the case of the “Ring of Power” (*Gustilā Ḳudratē*)<sup>622</sup> and the “Crown of Sovereignty” (*Tādjā Dawlatē*).<sup>623</sup> All these are mentioned in the context of allegiance to the Tradition (*Sunat*),<sup>624</sup> i.e. Yezidism.

<sup>609</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 170. Transcription and typography adjusted.

<sup>610</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>611</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 171.

<sup>612</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 35.

<sup>613</sup> The Hymn of Babeke Omera in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 378.

<sup>614</sup> Cf. SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 498, 506.

<sup>615</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 31, 72.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>619</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 39.

<sup>620</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 16. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>621</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 29; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-171. Typography adjusted – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106.

<sup>622</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 29, 58; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One *ibid.*, p. 58; the same text in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-171. Typography adjusted.

<sup>623</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-171; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 58. Typography adjusted.

<sup>624</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 170-171; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 58.

At least the Pen and the Ring belong in the Yezidi tradition to phenomena linking God and spiritual powers to the world.<sup>625</sup> These symbols appear in the role of creative principles or forces as well as God's powers or attributes mediating his will in the world. Among them is e.g. the Cup,<sup>626</sup> again attributed to Ēzī.<sup>627</sup>

As for the Crown, it symbolises community leadership.<sup>628</sup> Hymns also associate it with Shīkhādī.<sup>629</sup> It is materialised in a Yezidi ritual garment.<sup>630</sup> a complete ritual outfit is known in the Yezidi texts and tradition as “the Crown and the Robe” (Tāndj ū Ĥil – referred to as put on by Fakhradīn and Ēzī)<sup>631</sup> or “the Crown and the Mantle” (Tādj ū Čil – referred to as made by Shīkhādī with a contribution from Ēzī, then adorned by the former).<sup>632</sup>

### **Kharkā**

The *kharkā* is known from Sufism (the name in Arabic being rather spelled *khirka*) as a “patched frock”<sup>633</sup> that could be worn by adepts of mysticism after three years of service.<sup>634</sup> It turned to a spiritual symbol<sup>635</sup> and many Sufis warned from its exaggerated adoration.<sup>636</sup>

In Yezidism, *kharkā* is a garment worn in rituals by the *faḳīrs*, a hereditary group of Yezidi men actively involved in religion.<sup>637</sup> They have been described as an “ascetic order, admission to which is by initiation”.<sup>638</sup>

The *kharkā* is a part of a ritual outfit<sup>639</sup> most often called “the Crown and the Robe” (Tāndj ū Ĥil).<sup>640</sup> It is woven of wool dyed black<sup>641</sup> (a colour often connected in Yezidism

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<sup>625</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

<sup>627</sup> The Hymn of Babeke Omera in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 378.

<sup>628</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 37.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid.

<sup>630</sup> ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 34:01 (documentary film – images).

<sup>631</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 96. – The form *tāndj* is a nasalisation of *tādj*.

<sup>632</sup> The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 85. Typography adjusted.

<sup>633</sup> SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 102.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103.

<sup>637</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 15 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 133.

<sup>638</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 16.

<sup>639</sup> RASHOW (interview).

<sup>640</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 96; RASHOW (interview).

<sup>641</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 134; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 8, 27, 36; ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 31:25 (documentary film – images).



with holiness)<sup>642</sup> with shrub from a sacred tree called Zargūz<sup>643</sup> that grows near the Pirā Silāt bridge in the holiest place Lālīsh.<sup>644</sup>

In the Yezidi tradition, the *kharkā* belongs to the phenomena that existed since the beginning of the world.<sup>645</sup> It is called a “mystery” and represents a pre-existent spiritual authority.<sup>646</sup> Its material form on earth enjoys special veneration, which is also reflected in religious texts.<sup>647</sup> A hymn defines the Yezidis as “the nation that reveres the *kharkā*” (*milatē kharkā-pārist*).<sup>648</sup>

Textual tradition relates Ēzī to the *kharkā*. A hymn characterises the *kharkā* as the “garment of my Ēzī the Red” (Ēzīdē minī Sōr)<sup>649</sup> and of the *faḳīrs*<sup>650</sup> and says that the *kharkā* was made by Shīkhādī with a contribution from Ēzī.<sup>651</sup> Another hymn mentions that it had been made “with the help of” Ēzī<sup>652</sup> who also was instrumental in investing dignitaries with the *kharkā*.<sup>653</sup> He is called the “Pīr of the *Kharkā*” (Pīrē *Kharkē*).<sup>654</sup>

### **Lālīsh**

Lālīsh is the holiest place of Yezidism and one of the pre-existent phenomena that came down to earth directly from heaven.<sup>655</sup> The “finding” of Lālīsh in primordial times seems to be attributed to Ēzī.<sup>656</sup> He made the White Spring in Lālīsh the “direction of prayer” (*ḳublat*)<sup>657</sup> – though this expression may be figurative, in the same hyperbolic sense as it appears in the Middle Eastern poetry.<sup>658</sup>

### **Ocean**

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<sup>642</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. – Zargūz literally means “golden chestnut”.

<sup>644</sup> JUMA (interview).

<sup>645</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 27.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>648</sup> The Hymn of Sheykh Erebeg Entūsh in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 278-279. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>649</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96; The Hymn of the Faith *ibid.*, pp. 198-199; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 88. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>650</sup> The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 88.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>652</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 97.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.* Transcription and typography adjusted. – *Pīr* is one of the designations for spiritual tutor in Sufism. The word in the Yezidi context commonly denotes one of the three castes (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 6-7).

<sup>655</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68. – Cf. The Hymn of the Creation of the World in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 182-183; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 68.

<sup>657</sup> Cf. the Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>658</sup> Cf. SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 299.

At the Creation, Ēzī led the Ark (Safīna) roaming over the primordial Ocean (Baḥr).<sup>659</sup> In this context, he is called a “good guide”.<sup>660</sup>

In a story (*čīrōk*) from the learned textual tradition, Ēzī calls an assembly to a tent “in the middle of the ocean”.<sup>661</sup> This appears as a miracle when Ēzī faces death threats from Muslim clerics. A related hymn elaborates that the tent was set up in a fortress called Dingiz, again situated “in the middle of the ocean”.<sup>662</sup> Elsewhere, tent is an image connected with the character of Sharfadīn who waits inside for the End of Time.<sup>663</sup>

An eschatological hymn says that Ēzī “brings forth springs and streams... from the oceans”,<sup>664</sup> which may allude to the motive of Ēzī's tent “in the middle of the ocean”<sup>665</sup> as well as to the ocean as a standard Yezidi symbol of mystical knowledge<sup>666</sup> or transcendency.<sup>667</sup>

### Rider

The reference of a hymn to a “lion-like rider” probably concerns Ēzī.<sup>668</sup> It may distantly associate eschatology where an army will be assembled for the final battle in the name of Ēzī.<sup>669</sup>

### Sword

According to a hymn, Ēzī separated Hāshim and Ḳuraysh (eponyms of Prophet Muḥammad's lineage and tribe, respectively) “from the Truth with his sword”.<sup>670</sup> This may hint both at Ēzī's hagiography (his clash with representatives of Sharī'a or the legalistic Islam) and his involvement in cosmogony (as Sharī'a was separated from Ḥaḳīka – the Truth – already at the Creation).<sup>671</sup> It may also allude to eschatology where Islam will be defeated in a battle.<sup>672</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 96; The Hymn of the Creation of the World *ibid.*, pp. 184-185; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 68.

<sup>660</sup> The Hymn of the Creation of the World in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 182-183; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 66.

<sup>661</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 154.

<sup>662</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 170.

<sup>663</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368. Wording adjusted.

<sup>665</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 154.

<sup>666</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 169.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>668</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>669</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>670</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>671</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 34.

<sup>672</sup> Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 372.

#### 2.4.4 Synchronisation of Storylines on the Life of Ēzī

The hagiography of Ēzī mainly appears in *Ĉirōkā Pēdābūnā Surā Ēzī* (Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ēzī)<sup>673</sup> and *Ḳawlē Mazin* (Great Hymn).<sup>674</sup> It seems it has also existed within the popular tradition.<sup>675</sup> It includes elements of ancient tragedy, where a human (Ēzī's father Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī) defies destiny foretold by an oracle but cannot escape it. A motive reminiscent of Oedipus is that Ēzī grows up far from his father but later finds him and defeats him.<sup>676</sup> The story “symbolically explains the connections between Islam and Yezidism, while at the same time stressing the independent and superior status of the latter.”<sup>677</sup>

The story can be summarised as follows: Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam, predicted that if Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī (the historical Caliph MU<sup>c</sup>ĀWIYA IBN ABĪ SUFYĀN) marries and has a son, that son would destroy Islam.<sup>678</sup> Therefore Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī, the ruler of Damascus,<sup>679</sup> swore he would never marry.<sup>680</sup> Later on, he was stuck by a scorpion and magicians advised him that the only remedy from instant pain would be sexual intercourse.<sup>681</sup> To avoid the oracle, Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī married an old woman who could not bear children.<sup>682</sup> But she was miraculously turned into a young woman and conceived.<sup>683</sup> Fearing the prediction, Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī wanted to get rid of her by sending her far away, to Basra. Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī's servants had attempted to leave his wife amidst the desert but despite that she reached Basra.<sup>684</sup> Miracles accompanied her arrival to the city<sup>685</sup> while curses and moral decline befell upon Damascus.<sup>686</sup> Pious woman

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<sup>673</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 131-156.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-172.

<sup>675</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 510-511; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>676</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 32.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>678</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 143; The Hymn of the Mill of Love *ibid.*, p. 383.

<sup>679</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 144-146.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>681</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 48. – Cf. The Hymn of the Mill of Love in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 383.

<sup>682</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 143.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.* – The move may also be understood as taking distance from the centre of Islamic orthodoxy (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 157) and Muslim power to the domicile of Sufis also venerated in the Yezidi tradition, namely ḤASAN AL-BASRĪ (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209; cf. *Mishabet*: The dervish of the city of Basra in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 262-279) and RĀBĪʿA AL-ʿADAWIYYA (The Hymn of Rabiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya *ibid.*, pp. 196-201).

Rābī<sup>c</sup>a (historically, the Sufi RĀBĪ<sup>c</sup>A AL-<sup>c</sup>ADAWIYYA) in Basra recognised the magnificence of the infant Ēzī.<sup>687</sup>

When Ēzī knew about his origin, he travelled to Damascus.<sup>688</sup> Mi<sup>c</sup>āwī was aware of a prophesy: “An immaculate (*bukir*) Sultan is about to appear; his name will be remembered in this world...”<sup>689</sup> Muslim scholars in Damascus started to teach Ēzī Islamic law.<sup>690</sup> He embraced all knowledge enormously quickly<sup>691</sup> and surpassed that of Muslim clerics.<sup>692</sup>

Ēzī declared wine for licit.<sup>693</sup> He had gone to live in a dyer's house where he manifested his deity.<sup>694</sup> He worked miracles at various places in Damascus,<sup>695</sup> crowned by the turning of river water into wine.<sup>696</sup> He danced at “the assembly of Sultan Ēzī” (*dīwānā Siltān Ēzī*)<sup>697</sup> with a crowd of girls but at the same time made them visible in their homes so as

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<sup>685</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., pp. 146-147.

<sup>687</sup> The Hymn of Rabi<sup>c</sup>a al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 197.

<sup>688</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 147.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., p. 148; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>690</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 150.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>692</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 164. – The theme reminds of the Boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:39-52).

<sup>693</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 150; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 164. – Wine is mentioned in Yezidi sacred texts rather figuratively, in line with Sufi symbolism of elation with mystical love (cf. SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 506) and, moreover, as an image of rejecting the tenets of Islam (cf. The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 174-175). Drinking alcohol is in Yezidism neither forbidden nor encouraged.

<sup>694</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 151-152. – The dyer's friendship was “disapproved of by the establishment” (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 157), probably because dyers traditionally occupied a low social status in the Middle East “due to the foul odour associated with their work” (BEG, *Ṣabbāgh* – EI, vol. VIII, p. 672).

<sup>695</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 148, 151; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>696</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>697</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*,

to save them from scandal and punishment.<sup>698</sup> Ēzī's repeated challenge to Islam had caused uproar among Muslim judges who conspired to kill him.<sup>699</sup>

Ēzī persuaded the chief conspirator by miraculously enabling him to walk on the sea as whales (or fish) formed a pontoon upon the invocation of Ēzī's name.<sup>700</sup> The Muslim judge tasted wine and declared it for licit.<sup>701</sup> Mi'āwī capitulated and entrusted the rule over Damascus to his son Ēzī.<sup>702</sup> Ēzī became a king of the Yezidis and led vast conquests,<sup>703</sup> among them one of Constantinople.<sup>704</sup>

#### 2.4.5 Relation of Ēzī to the Historical YAZĪD IBN MU'ĀWIYA

While “most Western scholars” nowadays<sup>705</sup> have little doubt that the name “Yezidi” is derived from the historical Muslim Caliph YAZĪD I IBN MU'ĀWIYA (lived ca. 643-683; ruled 680-683),<sup>706</sup> many contemporary Yezidis reject that.<sup>707</sup> Similarly, Western research has identified the Yezidi character Ēzī with Caliph YAZĪD I IBN MU'ĀWIYA<sup>708</sup> while a substantial number of Yezidis reject any such identity and even deny that any such personage could be found in the Yezidi textual tradition<sup>709</sup> (the claim is that if the name ever occurs in Yezidi religious texts, then as a synonym for the Creator).<sup>710</sup>

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p. 153; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 168. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>698</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155. – Details of the passage differ in a related hymn (The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 170-171): the Muslim cleric wanted to dispute with Ēzī, not kill him. There was no walking on the sea but the cleric's conversion to Ēzī's truth happened below the sea level.

<sup>701</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 155.

<sup>702</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 156; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>703</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49.

<sup>704</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 61-64 (quoting ISMĀ'ĪL BEG, an activist member of the Yezidi princely family). – According to the same story, Ēzī was helped in the conquest by Constantin's daughter called Ḥaḍjiyya Sōfiyya (LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 63, 64), obviously a derivative of Hagia Sophia (St. Sophia – *ibid.*, p. 64). The adapted name is a curious folk etymology made up of two Kurdish words of Arabic origin, with feminine endings added – ḥaḍjī (originally a “pilgrim”, figuratively a pious or venerable person) and sōfī (a Sufi, i.e. Islamic mystic).

<sup>705</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 313. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95.

<sup>706</sup> HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Mu'āwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 309.

<sup>707</sup> E.g. BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, p. 27 (www).

<sup>708</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 32.

<sup>709</sup> E.g. BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 36-37 (www).

<sup>710</sup> BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, p. 37 (www).

The personality of YAZĪD is perceived in Shiite Islam as a treacherous helper to murderers of venerated members of Prophet MUḤAMMAD's family<sup>711</sup> (thus resembling the role of Judas in Christianity).<sup>712</sup> A negative image of YAZĪD prevails in the Sunni historiographic tradition as well but that can rather be attributed to the circumstances of his rule, with an escalating strife within the Muslim community<sup>713</sup> and as a part of the period when the ideal of an egalitarian caliphate was giving way to monarchy.<sup>714</sup> Although typically described as a “not conspicuously religious”<sup>715</sup> and a “frivolous libertine”,<sup>716</sup> YAZĪD is also known to have led the pilgrimage to Mecca (*ḥajj*) several times.<sup>717</sup> Favourable accounts of his personality (including apocalyptic versions that positively feature his father MUḤĀWIYA and himself) have existed too.<sup>718</sup>

An American traveller in what is now Iraq in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century recorded that the Yezidis already then felt uncomfortable with their common “appellation, as a mark of reproach”.<sup>719</sup> The conviction that the Kurdish-speaking Yezidis are somehow related to the Arab Umayyad dynasty has apparently been widespread among their Muslim neighbours<sup>720</sup> and was misused by the governments of Iraq and Syria in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>721</sup>

Despite that, speculations exist that YAZĪD I may have enjoyed political popularity among the Kurds in his lifetime<sup>722</sup> and some historical sources seem to suggest that the Kurds favoured his Umayyad dynasty even after it had been overthrown in 750.<sup>723</sup> Moreover, a Sufi of allegedly Umayyad origin had lived in the Kurdish areas near Mosul shortly before they became the new domicile of Shaykh ʿADĪ (the later Shīkhādī of the Yezidis), himself a descendant of the last Umayyad Caliph MARWĀN II (lived ca. 692-750, ruled 744-750)<sup>724</sup> in the paternal line.<sup>725</sup>

The Yezidi sacred texts on ĒZĪ undoubtedly include elements of the biography of Caliph YAZĪD I IBN MUḤĀWIYA. Besides the factual identity of names (YAZĪD is in the Yezidi texts called ĒZĪ and his historical father MUḤĀWIYA is called Miḥāwī), the family were rulers of Damascus.<sup>726</sup> Just like the historical YAZĪD, so did the Yezidi ĒZĪ live close to common

<sup>711</sup> GRUNEBBAUM, *Muhammadan Festivals*, p. 90.

<sup>712</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, p. 508.

<sup>713</sup> HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Muḥāwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 310.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>715</sup> GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 75.

<sup>716</sup> HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Muḥāwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 310.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>719</sup> FLETCHER, *Notes from Nineveh, and Travels in Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Syria*, p. 53.

<sup>720</sup> KLIPPPEL, *Unter Senūsy-Brüedern, Drusen und Teufelsanbetern*, p. 171.

<sup>721</sup> BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 28-29 (www); IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157.

<sup>722</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 507-508.

<sup>723</sup> GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 93; KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 172; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 29-28. – *Ibid.*, p. 40 refers to the works of MICHELE GUIDI and ROGER LESCOT from the 1930's.

<sup>724</sup> HAWTING, *Marwān II* (EI), vol. VI, p. 623.

<sup>725</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 15; LESCOT quoted in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 28, 40.

people,<sup>727</sup> enjoy worldly pleasures,<sup>728</sup> displease conservative Muslim circles,<sup>729</sup> and cause the fall of Islam<sup>730</sup> (in YAZĪD's life, that means his rule witnessed a decline of the Umayyad power and the definitive split within the Muslim community accompanied with an armed fight in the holiest places of Islam).<sup>731</sup> The mythical Ēzī conquered Constantinople<sup>732</sup> while the historical YAZĪD (before becoming caliph) was involved in a military campaign against the Byzantine capital.<sup>733</sup>

The Yezidi discourse seems to recognise the historical aspect of Ēzī (YAZĪD) in the sense that he lived long before Shīkhādī (ʿADĪ).<sup>734</sup> Ēzī's image in Yezidism is somehow more cosmic and less personal than Shīkhādī's,<sup>735</sup> Ēzī partially embodies ecstasy and trickstery while Shīkhādī rather stands for institutions and discipline. Otherwise, they are linked to each other by their founder status<sup>736</sup> and relation to Yezidi sacred garments.<sup>737</sup> In biographical terms, they both came from the Levant<sup>738</sup> and were Arabs and Muslims (which the Yezidi tradition specifically admits on Shīkhādī).<sup>739</sup> All this makes them largely identical in the general Yezidi perception.<sup>740</sup> As an example, Bayt Fār is

<sup>726</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 144-146.

<sup>727</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-152.

<sup>728</sup> Ibid., pp. 150, 153; The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 164.

<sup>729</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153.

<sup>730</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368; The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 156; The Great Hymn ibid., p. 172.

<sup>731</sup> GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 75-77; HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Mu'āwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 310.

<sup>732</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 61-64 (quoting ISMĀ'ĪL BEG, an activist member of the Yezidi princely family).

<sup>733</sup> HAWTING, *Yazīd (I) b. Mu'āwiya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 309 (mentions that YAZĪD “commanded expeditions... against the Byzantines and participated in an attack upon Constantinople” in 669 or 670). – LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 61 (speaks on “a Muslim expedition led by” YAZĪD upon Constantinople in 668-669). GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 82 gives the date 670-677 for the whole extent of the first Muslim siege of Constantinople.

<sup>734</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 31.

<sup>735</sup> Cf. The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 65.

<sup>736</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 31.

<sup>737</sup> The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 85, 88.

<sup>738</sup> The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 176; The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes ibid., p. 397.

<sup>739</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 169; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 113; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 31; The Hymn of Sheikh Hesên the Sultan ibid., p. 359; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 50.

<sup>740</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 31.

recognised in the Yezidi discourse as the historical birthplace of ʿAdī<sup>741</sup> but one hymn connects it with the origin of Ēzī.<sup>742</sup>

#### 2.4.6 Ēzī in Eschatology

Ēzī plays some role in the individual eschatology and hope in postmortal life. Religious texts call him the “King in this world and the Hereafter”.<sup>743</sup> He “made the Hereafter the capital of (good) men”.<sup>744</sup> A religious story (*čirōk*) indicates that Ēzī remains a mystery (*sur*) “until the hour when you surrender your soul” (*riḥ*),<sup>745</sup> i.e. his full reality will be revealed to the people after death. An eschatological hymn describes Ēzī as standing at the Silāt Bridge<sup>746</sup> in Lālish, which (or rather its heavenly counterpart)<sup>747</sup> is often connected with judgment of soul's postmortal destiny,<sup>748</sup> adding that Ēzī “will answer our calls” for intercession (*mahdar*).<sup>749</sup>

But the domain of Ēzī in the Yezidi tradition is the End of Time. The storyline on his life may be perceived from the perspectives of both legendary history and eschatology: Ēzī has triumphed over Islam<sup>750</sup> as an excentric and miraculous ruler and will triumph again at the End of Time.<sup>751</sup> The oracle quoted in the storyline on his life says that Ēzī will mean the end of Islam,<sup>752</sup> which comes true both in the legendary history of his life and the collective eschatology.

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<sup>741</sup> Ibid., p. 36; The Hymn of Sheikh Adi and the Holy Men, p. 178.

<sup>742</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36; The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir *ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>743</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*,

pp. 139, 152; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 166. Translation and typography adjusted: *dinē* should mean “of this world, in this world”, not “of the religion” (*ibid.*, pp. 152, 166), which would rather be *dīnē*.

<sup>744</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79. Transcription adjusted. – Editors of the text explain that the “capital” means here “good deeds”, i.e. people's moral assets for salvation.

<sup>745</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 138, 151.

<sup>746</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372.

<sup>747</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372.

<sup>748</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznikh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], p. 262; The Hymn of the Moment of Death in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 322-323; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 349.

<sup>749</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 373.

<sup>750</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 156; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>751</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372; The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

<sup>752</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 143; The Hymn of the Mill of Love *ibid.*, p. 383.



An eschatological story collected in Syria in the 1930's tells how Ēzī conquered Constantinople (Istanbul).<sup>753</sup> The ruler Constantin gave up the throne “upon the order of the Lord”.<sup>754</sup> Ēzī then ruled for 72 years.<sup>755</sup> The rule seems to represent authority over the whole world,<sup>756</sup> and its transition from Constantin to Ēzī may symbolise a handover of spiritual supremacy from Christianity to Yezidism. Ēzī passed the rule to Ōsmān (a personification of the Ottoman dynasty),<sup>757</sup> again “upon the order from God”.<sup>758</sup> Moreover, Ēzī had apparently promised to Ōsmān that he would resign in his favour.<sup>759</sup> In exchange, Ōsmān had to pay an annual tribute to Ēzī and promise to him that he would never lead massacres (*firmān*)<sup>760</sup> against his people,<sup>761</sup> i.e. Yezidis. If Ōsmān breaks that promise, Ēzī “will send the End of Time”,<sup>762</sup> ruin Ōsmān's power<sup>763</sup> through the people called Lōlō,<sup>764</sup> and pass the rule to Jesus.<sup>765</sup> Ēzī had actually predicted that Ōsmān would commit the massacres before his rule would have lasted 2,000 years.<sup>766</sup>

Similarly to handing over his rule to Ōsmān, Ēzī would later entrust the authority to Jesus<sup>767</sup> and possibly all other rulers to follow. This idea may be a transformation of the concept of *deus otiosus*.

In other texts, the character Sharfadīn will emerge from a cavern upon a call from Ēzī,<sup>768</sup> who will bestow on him the title Mahdī.<sup>769</sup> Sharfadīn will assemble an army for the eschatological battle in the name of Ēzī.<sup>770</sup> The fight will be led by Sharfadīn at the

<sup>753</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 61-64 (quoting ISMĀ‘ĪL BEG, an activist member of the Yezidi princely family).

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>756</sup> The same story says that when Jesus rules, “the throne will be in Egypt” (ibid., p. 66).

<sup>757</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>758</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 64.

<sup>759</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>760</sup> Cf. CINDĪ et al., *Ēzidyatī* [Ēzidyātī – “Yezidism”], p. 9; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 26.

<sup>761</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

<sup>762</sup> Ibid.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>765</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>767</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid.; The Hymn of Sherfedin ibid., p. 371.

<sup>769</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedin ibid., p. 371.

<sup>770</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedin ibid., pp. 373, 374.

command of Ēzī.<sup>771</sup> Ēzī will “call out” to encourage the combatants<sup>772</sup> so as not to abandon them “into the hands of the Sharīʿa”, i.e. Islam.<sup>773</sup>

In the context of the final battle, an “assembly” (*dīwān*) in Sharfādīn's presence is mentioned where “all pay homage to the fame and memory of Sultan Ēzī”.<sup>774</sup> As the hymn suggest, this “assembly” is a gathering of fighters of the eschatological “army of Sultan Ēzī”<sup>775</sup> that is due to “conquer the world”.<sup>776</sup> Yezidi texts mention the “assembly of Sultan Ēzī” (*dīwānā Siltān Ēzī*) in the storyline on his life<sup>777</sup> (situated in a tent “in the middle of the ocean”,<sup>778</sup> full of music,<sup>779</sup> dance,<sup>780</sup> and singing “in the name and in honour of Sultan Ēzī”<sup>781</sup>) and in another hymn where God speaks to “holy men” (*khās*) about sacred realities,<sup>782</sup> assuring them that “one day, belief in the name of Sultan Ēzī will come”,<sup>783</sup> i.e. that the truth of Yezidism will prevail at the End of Time. The image of the “assembly of Sultan Ēzī” may reflect both the “assembly” (*dīwān*) as a term used in the Kurdish society for a gathering of respected men within a community,<sup>784</sup> any other gathering of holy beings or religious dignitaries,<sup>785</sup> or the primordial session (*maḍjilis*) of God and the seven archangels (a hymn suggests that Ēzī was present there too)<sup>786</sup> that is believed to re-convene annually at the time of the main Yezidi festival – the Assembly Feast.<sup>787</sup>

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<sup>771</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>772</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.* – Similarly, the heroes of Yezidi secular battle songs ask for Ēzī's help and support (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 90, 95, 97, 215-218, 220).

<sup>773</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372. Transcription adjusted. – The appeal may not necessarily concern the eschatological battle but may concern a common protection of ordinary Yezidis.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>777</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>778</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 154.

<sup>779</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 170.

<sup>780</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezi in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 153; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>781</sup> The Great Hymn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 170. Transcription and typography adjusted.

<sup>782</sup> The Hymn of the Black *Furqan* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 102.

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>784</sup> BRUINSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 102-106; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36.

<sup>785</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 40.

<sup>786</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79; The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names *ibid.*

According to an eschatological hymn, Ēzī's name will be remembered “from the minarets”<sup>788</sup> (which implies the triumph over Islam)<sup>789</sup> and he “will unite this world under a single religion” (*masab*)<sup>790</sup> after the Resurrection.<sup>791</sup> Another hymn on the End of Time says the victory of the “army of Sultan Ēzī”<sup>792</sup> will be followed by the tranquility of Yezidi worship: “our belief will be (in) Sultan Ēzī”,<sup>793</sup> “we shall declare our allegiance to *Shīkhādī*”,<sup>794</sup> and the Zimzim well and the White Spring in *Lālīsh* will be the spiritual focuses of life.<sup>795</sup> Although the two Yezidi hymns represent different accounts of the End of Time, both mention Ēzī when describing the victorious end of history.<sup>796</sup> This shows the universal importance of his personage in the Yezidi eschatology. Ēzī as an eponym of Yezidism<sup>797</sup> seems to become here the eponym of the final Yezidi victory, relief, and collective salvation.

## 2.5 Positive Characters: *Sharfadīn*

### 2.5.1 *Sharfadīn* in History

The historical counterpart of the Yezidi mythical character *Sharfadīn*<sup>798</sup> was *SHARAF AL-DĪN MUHAMMAD* who probably<sup>799</sup> assumed the leadership of the mystical community of al-*ʿAdawiyya* around 1254<sup>800</sup> in *Lālīsh*<sup>801</sup> when his father *ḤASAN* had been killed upon the orders from *BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU'*,<sup>802</sup> the governor of Mosul collaborating with the Mongols.<sup>803</sup> (An older hypothesis suggesting that *SHARAF AL-DĪN* was *ḤASAN*'s brother<sup>804</sup> has been found implausible.<sup>805</sup>)

<sup>787</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 36; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 40.

<sup>788</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

<sup>789</sup> Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 372-373.

<sup>790</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>792</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374.

Transcription adjusted.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.* Transcription adjusted.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.* Transcription adjusted.

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 374-375.

<sup>796</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour, p. 368; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>797</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 95, 96; The Declaration of Faith *ibid.*, pp. 226-227; The Hymn of the Faith *ibid.*, pp. 194-195; The Hymn of the Oceans *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>798</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>799</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>800</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>801</sup> By this time, the centre of al-*ʿAdawiyya* definitely had been *Lālīsh* (cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 31, 41).

<sup>802</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>803</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21.

<sup>804</sup> E.g. the Syriac chronicle of 1451 by RAMISHŌ<sup>c</sup> (NAU + TFINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*,

p. 56) quoted *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>805</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 42.

In connection with killing of ḤASAN, BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU' also sent a punitive expedition against al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya in 1254. About 200 members of the community were executed, and the bones of their patron <sup>c</sup>ADĪ taken out from grave and burnt.<sup>806</sup> It seems to have been related to this event that SHARAF AL-DĪN operated outside Lālīsh: he became the military governor of Kharpūt (Khartpert; in modern Turkish spelling Harput,<sup>807</sup> nowadays a part of Elâzığ city, Turkey).

A Yezidi eulogy (*kasīda*) dedicated to Sharfadīn mentions the city of Kharpūt (in Kurdish of the text Haypōr),<sup>808</sup> thus recognising a link to the historical SHARAF AL-DĪN. Moreover, a Yezidi ballad about Sharfadīn<sup>809</sup> says he escaped to Sindjār (a region widely connected with Sharfadīn in the Yezidi tradition)<sup>810</sup> after the killing of ḤASAN.<sup>811</sup> This means that the Yezidi tradition recognises SHARAF AL-DĪN's engagement out of Lālīsh although his links to Sindjār do not seem to be confirmed historically.

In his position in Kharpūt, SHARAF AL-DĪN acted in the services of the Saldjūkid prince <sup>c</sup>IZZ AL-DĪN KAYKĀWŪS II (in modern Turkish İZZETTİN KEYKAVUS II) whose brother RUKN AL-DĪN ḲĪLĪDJ ARSLAN IV (RUKNETTİN KILIÇARSLAN IV) had been trying to seize power with a help from the Mongols.<sup>812</sup> SHARAF AL-DĪN then died in a battle against the Mongols in 1257 or 1258<sup>813</sup> at Kemākh (Kemah) near Erzindjan (Erzincan), Turkey.<sup>814</sup> Ironically, a peace deal was reached and the rule divided between the two brothers after the Kemākh battle.<sup>815</sup>

It can be supposed that more members of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya community accompanied SHARAF AL-DĪN in his military mission in Anatolia, especially as they had a cause against the Mongols (who had executed SHARAF AL-DĪN's grandfather <sup>c</sup>ADĪ IBN ABĪ 'L-BARAKĀT, in the literature also called <sup>c</sup>ADĪ II, in 1221 or 1223,<sup>816</sup> and their ally in Mosul killed SHARAF AL-DĪN's father ḤASAN probably in 1254<sup>817</sup>).

<sup>806</sup> Baghdad-based chronicler KAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN AL-FUWAṬĪ (1244-1323) summarised in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21, 234. – On the same writer, cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 31, 41; ROSENTHAL, *Ibn al-Fuwaṭī* (EI), vol. III, pp. 769-770.

<sup>807</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>808</sup> The *Qesīde* of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>809</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106.

<sup>810</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 511-512; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 6; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 38, 221.

<sup>811</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 43.

<sup>812</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21-22; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 33.

<sup>813</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>814</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 22.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid.

<sup>816</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 30-31; the Syriac chronicle of 1451 by RAMĪSHŌ<sup>c</sup> (NAU + TFINKDJĪ, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 56) quoted *ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>817</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 19-23; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

SHARAF AL-DĪN'S SON ZAYN AL-DĪN YŪSUF passed his right of succession in al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya leadership on FAKHR AL-DĪN, a brother of the slain ḤASAN.<sup>818</sup> ZAYN AL-DĪN later established himself successfully as a Sufi master in Damascus, <sup>c</sup>ADĪ's native place Bayt Fār,<sup>819</sup> and finally Cairo where he died in 1297.<sup>820</sup> His son <sup>c</sup>IZZ AL-DĪN died in imprisonment in 1330-1331 as the local Mamlūk dynasty had suspected him of preparing a coup.<sup>821</sup>

## 2.5.2 Sharfadīn in Yezidi Beliefs and Cult

The character Sharfadīn is known in the Yezidi society as an eponym of a lineage belonging to the Ādānī branch of the *shēkhs* caste.<sup>822</sup>

According to the Yezidi tradition, he was born through an immaculate conception from Shēkh Ḥasan<sup>823</sup> (similarly to another offspring of Ḥasan's – Birāhīm Khatnī)<sup>824</sup> in the following manner: a flower grew from Ḥasan's hand; when Ḥasan had poured into the flower a drop of water from the primordial Ocean, Sharfadīn was born.<sup>825</sup> Due to this, a eulogy (*kasīda*) calls him “a flower's seed”.<sup>826</sup>

The Yezidi tradition has it that Sharfadīn refused to marry<sup>827</sup> (although not commonly practised, celibacy is valued in Yezidism as a demonstration of sainthood)<sup>828</sup> but also speaks about his descendants: the mythological brothers Shēshims and Fakhradīn are believed to have been his grandsons (through his son Ēzdīnā Mīr),<sup>829</sup> a relation that may indicate Sharfadīn's superior status due to his special eschatological role.<sup>830</sup> Historically, SHAMS AL-DĪN (the real model for Shēshims) and FAKHR AL-DĪN (Fakhradīn) were brothers<sup>831</sup> but SHARAF AL-DĪN (Sharfadīn) was their nephew (son of their slain brother ḤASAN).<sup>832</sup>

<sup>818</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>819</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34

<sup>820</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34

<sup>821</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 26; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34

<sup>822</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>823</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>824</sup> Ibid. – The personage of Birāhīm Khatnī is the eponym of another lineage of Ādānī *shēkhs* (the others being Sharfadīn and Mūsā Sōr – *ibid.*, p. 106). Hence he seems to be a brother of Sharfadīn's (*ibid.*, p. 107).

<sup>825</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>826</sup> The *Qesīde* of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>827</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 107.

<sup>828</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 37 (www). Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 283; EDMONDS,

*A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 37; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 129, 139.

<sup>829</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 20; The *Qesīde* of Sheikh Shems and Melik Fekhedrin *ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>830</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 20.

<sup>831</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34.

<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 42.

Yezidism has also retained the memory of FAKHR AL-DĪN's historical son ZAYN AL-DĪN, called in the religious context Zīndīn or Zandīn.<sup>833</sup> The tradition connects him with Egypt and imprisonment there<sup>834</sup> (which historically happened to his son ʿIZZ AL-DĪN).<sup>835</sup> He has two shrines near Baḥzānē, Iraq and is believed to be buried at the same place.<sup>836</sup>

Sharfadīn enjoys special veneration in the Sindjār region,<sup>837</sup> Iraq where his status is comparable to that of Shīkhādī.<sup>838</sup> There may be traces of history in his link to the region: he is believed to have spread Yezidism there,<sup>839</sup> at least among its sedentary peasant tribes known as Djiwāna.<sup>840</sup> Thus the Yezidi tradition implies awareness of the formerly open possibility of conversions to Yezidism, which currently does not exist.<sup>841</sup> Historically, it seems that Nestorian Christians in Sindjār converted to Yezidism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>842</sup>

A Yezidi ballad about Sharfadīn (“one of the best-known Yezidi songs”)<sup>843</sup> portrays him as a deputy of the community leader Shēkh Ḥasan.<sup>844</sup> When the latter had been killed, Sharfadīn escaped to Sindjār and sent a message to the Lālīsh community that remained without any leaders present.<sup>845</sup> While still out of Lālīsh, Sharfadīn organised its defense.<sup>846</sup>

Plaits that traditional men in Sindjār have grown are believed by the locals to be a part of Sharfadīn's legacy.<sup>847</sup> A piece of the religious oral tradition describes Sharfadīn as having long golden plaits.<sup>848</sup> The plaits seem to be a specific of Sindjār and their evaluation in Yezidi texts is ambiguous: while a poem with religious motives belauds Fakhradīn's “dear, beloved plaits” (*gul*),<sup>849</sup> the same Fakhradīn says in a moralistic text: “Don't let me see a man with plaits” (*kaz*).<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>833</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>834</sup> Ibid.

<sup>835</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 26; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34

<sup>836</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>837</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 6; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>838</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106.

<sup>839</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 511-512.

<sup>840</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106. – The Djiwāna are a rather socioeconomic than genealogical group (FUCCARO, *The Other Kurds*, p. 59).

<sup>841</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 44; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>842</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 50; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 25.

<sup>843</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>844</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>845</sup> Ibid.

<sup>846</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>847</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 6; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221. – People in Sindjār directly call it “Sharfadīn's plaits” (*gulyēd Sharfadīn*). Information based on personal encounter.

<sup>848</sup> *Diroze ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>849</sup> *Xizēmok*, Version 1 in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 398.

<sup>850</sup> The Hymn of Proper Conduct in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 299.

At least four shrines dedicated to Sharfadīn are known. The main one is situated near the probably desolate settlement called Rāshid in the northern part of Sindjār.<sup>851</sup> A religious story says that Yezidis only make pilgrimage to Lālish and “the seat of Mīr Sharfadīn”,<sup>852</sup> the latter being a reference to the shrine in question.<sup>853</sup> The other Sharfadīn shrines can be found in the holiest Yezidi place Lālish, on the Čilmērān mountain (the highest peak of the Sindjār range),<sup>854</sup> and in the settlement of Bēt Nār<sup>855</sup> (the location of which is unclear).

As to every Yezidi saint, Yezidis ascribe curative powers to Sharfadīn, generally concerning skin diseases.<sup>856</sup> He also may have been believed to possess a special relation to weather.<sup>857</sup>

### 2.5.3 Sharfadīn and the Forty Holy Beings (Čilmērān)

Sharfadīn is connected with the Čilmērān,<sup>858</sup> translatable as the “Forty Holy Beings”,<sup>859</sup> reminiscent of the “forty saints” archetype known from popular Islam.<sup>860</sup> The Kurdish *čil* means “forty” while *mēr* stands for the “true man” or “he-man”,<sup>861</sup> but in Yezidism “saint” or “holy being”<sup>862</sup> (i.e. a man with special powers).<sup>863</sup> A British researcher mentions them as “forty companions” of Shīkhādī (not of Sharfadīn), and it is not clear whether Sharfadīn is counted in this case as one of them or not.<sup>864</sup>

In Yezidism, the Čilmērān are sometimes thought of as a single person,<sup>865</sup> often identified with Sharfadīn himself.<sup>866</sup> The short form Čilmēr<sup>867</sup> would then become a mere attribute of Sharfadīn<sup>868</sup> (meaning “a man worth of forty others”).

<sup>851</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 6. – The only houses currently visible in the vicinity of the shrine are inhabited by the shrine custodians, the Baḥrī family of the Mālā Khālītī tribal group (information based on personal encounter); cf. ZRNO, *Ÿznavači Andĕla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 43:03, 45:10 (documentary film – images). On genealogy, cf. EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 83; FUCCARO, *The Other Kurds*, p. 55.

<sup>852</sup> The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 338. – Mīr means Prince.

<sup>853</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 338.

<sup>854</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 101.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>857</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>858</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11.

<sup>859</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>860</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>861</sup> Cf. BRUINSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 462-463.

<sup>862</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 339.

<sup>863</sup> Cf. the Yezidi synonym for *mēr*, which is *khās* (“special one”, from the Arabic *khāṣṣ* – KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 12).

<sup>864</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11.

<sup>865</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 107.

<sup>867</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11.

<sup>868</sup> *Ibid.*

When the Čilmērān are perceived as a group of forty different personages, the Yezidi tradition offers at least three various names as to who is their leader (none of them being Sharfadīn).<sup>869</sup> Čilmērān is also the name of the highest peak of the Sindjār range.<sup>870</sup> The shrine on its top is in a sense dedicated to both Sharfadīn<sup>871</sup> and the Čilmērān.

The festive or sacrificial meal (generally called *simāt*) that is distributed to selected dignitaries on the sixth day of the Assembly Feast (the central religious festival of Yezidism) in Lālish bears the name of Čilmērān.<sup>872</sup>

A large stone related to the Čilmērān is shown in Lālish.<sup>873</sup> Etymological speculations (popular among the Yezidis for explaining the origin of various phenomena or names by a folk Kurdish etymology)<sup>874</sup> have developed around the stone: the name Čilmērān in relation to the stone may mean that the “forty companions” of Shīkhādī “had failed to move” the stone but Sharfadīn lifted it easily. At the same time, the word *čilmēra* or *čilmērda* is “the ordinary Kurdish for ‘lever’”,<sup>875</sup> hence Sharfadīn's nickname would also mean “as strong as a lever”.<sup>876</sup>

#### 2.5.4 Sharfadīn in Eschatology

Sharfadīn is believed to emerge at the End of Time as the Mahdī,<sup>877</sup> a term known from both Shiite and popular Sunni Islam for a personage with whom messianic expectations are connected.<sup>878</sup>

Until the End of Time, Sharfadīn dwells in occultation<sup>879</sup> in a place described as a cavern (or cave)<sup>880</sup> or a tent.<sup>881</sup> It is possible that tent is used as a figurative expression for the cavern.<sup>882</sup> In the hymn specifically dedicated to Sharfadīn, only the Cavern<sup>883</sup> and the

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<sup>869</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 101.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid.

<sup>871</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>872</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 154.

<sup>873</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>874</sup> Cf. EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 32; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 61-62; The Tale of Ibrahim... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 241; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 74.

<sup>875</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11.

<sup>876</sup> Ibid. has “Mr Lever”.

<sup>877</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 368, 369; The Hymn of the Lights *ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>878</sup> Cf. MADELUNG, *al-Mahdī* (EI), vol. V, pp. 1230-1238.

<sup>879</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid.*; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, pp. 371, 373-374.

<sup>881</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 32, 33, 39; The Hymn of the Faith *ibid.*, p. 84; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 364; The *Qeside* of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>882</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>883</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 371.



Cave<sup>884</sup> (in the original both Mighāra) are mentioned. While dwelling there, Sharfadīn is always ready for the fight.<sup>885</sup>

Sharfadīn's historical counterpart SHARAF AL-DĪN operated in a military mission far away from his religious fellows of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya community.<sup>886</sup> This may have contributed to his image of fighter and battle leader in Yezidism. Indeed, a religious story (*ĉīrōk*) shows Sharfadīn as a resilient fighter, and the only one organising resistance after Shēkh ḤASAN (historically, his father ḤASAN)<sup>887</sup> was captured.<sup>888</sup>

The same storyline on Shēkh ḤASAN does not mention his killing but (contrary to the history) describes his escape<sup>889</sup> and the liquidation of Badradīn<sup>890</sup> (historically, Mosul governor BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU' who had had ḤASAN seized and slain but was never killed by ḤASAN'S followers).<sup>891</sup> Shēkh ḤASAN then stayed alive in the legend. Moreover, it is supposed that al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya community believed in an eschatological advent of ḤASAN after he had been killed in 1254, and the same expectations may have been transferred to his son SHARAF AL-DĪN.<sup>892</sup>

Sharfadīn's role of the Mahdī either consists in bringing about the ideal world<sup>893</sup> and relief to the Yezidis<sup>894</sup> or leading the final battle against evil<sup>895</sup> (or both).<sup>896</sup> Sharfadīn will launch the battle<sup>897</sup> at the command of Ēzī<sup>898</sup> and “conquer the world”.<sup>899</sup>

An eschatological version from Syria connects Sharfadīn's performance at the End of Time with Jesus. During the latter's rule in Egypt (and, implicitly, over the world),

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<sup>884</sup> Ibid., pp. 373-374.

<sup>885</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>886</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21-22; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 33; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221; The *Qesīde* of Sherfedīn *ibid.*

<sup>887</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 31, 42.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107; The Story of the Zangid Sultan... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 125.

<sup>889</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>890</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>891</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>892</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 20.

<sup>893</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-34; The Hymn of Sherfedīn *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>894</sup> The *Qesīde* of Sherfedīn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221. – The text says that Sharfadīn “will adorn this Tradition whose heart is sad”, which probably means he will bring triumph to the now suffering Yezidis (the “Tradition”) at the End of Time. – Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedīn *ibid.*, p. 369 (where Yezidis are characterised as “comfortable” before the battle).

<sup>895</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33. – Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedīn *ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

<sup>896</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>897</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedīn in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374.

<sup>898</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of Sherfedīn *ibid.*, pp. 370, 374.

<sup>899</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

Sharfadīn will be the Mahdī.<sup>900</sup> That seems to mean that he will install the ideal world. This aspect is directly mentioned in an eschatological hymn,<sup>901</sup> which however says that Sharfadīn will rule separately after Jesus for forty years.<sup>902</sup>

According to the storyline of Syria, the common reign of Jesus and Sharfadīn will last for forty years. At its end, they will go to Mount Ḳāf and die there.<sup>903</sup> Mount Ḳāf in traditional Middle Eastern cosmology symbolises the world's end or boundaries<sup>904</sup> but also may be representing transcendence or even immortality.<sup>905</sup> According to one of the eschatological versions, Gog too will come to the scene from beyond Mount Ḳāf after Sharfadīn's withdrawal.<sup>906</sup> Hypothetically, Sharfadīn's departure after his ideal rule may only mean another occultation until he returns again to defeat evil.

The tradition of Sharfadīn's leadership in the final eschatological battle belongs to a different storyline than that one mentioning Gog and Magog. The hymn in question indicates Sharfadīn's leading role by saying that he will “conquer the world”,<sup>907</sup> or similarly: “One day I will go; I will take the army of Sultan Ēzī with me; I will shatter this transitory world.”<sup>908</sup> Sharfadīn “will be worshipped by the Tradition” (i.e. Yezidis) because he is “not weak in battle”.<sup>909</sup> Another formulation probably referring to the leadership in battle is: “One day... Sharfadīn will ordain what we long for.”<sup>910</sup> Before the battle, Sharfadīn will invest those whom he “shows his mercy and benevolence” (i.e. probably the righteous Yezidis) with “spiritual clothes”,<sup>911</sup> which may also refer to the Resurrection.<sup>912</sup>

### 2.5.5 Sharfadīn and Ēzī in Eschatology

Sharfadīn's role in eschatology is connected with the character of Ēzī in various ways.

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<sup>900</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>901</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>903</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>904</sup> This is the case in the Muslim culture (STRECK + MIQUEL, *Ḳāf* – EI, vol. IV, pp. 400-402) and among the Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ (HAMZEH'EE, *The Yaresan*, p. 72).

<sup>905</sup> Cf. The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 331-332, where the travelling hero reaches the realm of immortality represented by the “Vault of Fate” and the “Hill of Exiles”.

<sup>906</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>907</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374.

<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.* Transcription adjusted.

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372. Wording adjusted.

<sup>910</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>912</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

In LESCOT's version from Syria, it seems that Ēzī approves all rulers alternating before the End of Time,<sup>913</sup> hence among them Sharfadīn as well.

In the context of the final battle against evil, Sharfadīn is ready for fight while waiting in occultation in the Cave.<sup>914</sup> Ēzī is expected to “raise” him from there,<sup>915</sup> bestow on Sharfadīn the title Mahdī,<sup>916</sup> and give the “command” (*dastūr*)<sup>917</sup> before or in the battle. Sharfadīn then assembles the fighters<sup>918</sup> while “all pay homage to the fame and memory of Sultan Ēzī”.<sup>919</sup> The troops led by Sharfadīn<sup>920</sup> are called the “legion of Sultan Ēzī”<sup>921</sup> or the “army of Sultan Ēzī”<sup>922</sup> (in the original indiscriminately *djēshē Siltān Ēzī*).

Sharfadīn seems to be an eponym of Yezidism, along with Ēzī.<sup>923</sup> The name of both is namely included in a credo-like formula that can be found in some hymns: “Our religion is Sharfadīn and our belief is (in) Ēzī” (*Ma dīn Sharfadīna ū Ēzī ātqāta*).<sup>924</sup> Its exact meaning is, however, nebulous to Yezidis.<sup>925</sup>

## 2.6 Positive Characters: Others

### 2.6.1 Mahdī

The character Sharfadīn is called in Yezidi hymns “Sharfadīn the Mahdī” (in the Kurdish original “Mahdī Sharfadīn”<sup>926</sup> or “Sharfadīn il-Mahdī”<sup>927</sup>).

In Arabic literally meaning the “rightly guided one” (by God), the concept of Mahdī exists in both Shiite and popular Sunni Islam as the title of a person who is expected to “rule before the end of the world” and restore the true religion and justice.<sup>928</sup> It came to be used among the Muslims after the death of Caliph MU‘ĀWIYA IBN ABI SUFYĀN (lived ca. 603-680; ruled 661-680) in instant political claims as well as prophesies of a generous or righteous ruler to come, the authorship of which was initially attributed to Prophet

<sup>913</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>914</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374; The Hymn of Sherfedin ibid.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>916</sup> Ibid.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>918</sup> Ibid., pp. 371-373.

<sup>919</sup> Ibid., p. 373. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>921</sup> Ibid., p. 370. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>922</sup> Ibid., p. 374. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>923</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 95.

<sup>924</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 373. Transcription adjusted. – For slight variations, see The Hymn of the Lights ibid., p. 93; The Hymn of the Mill of Love, p. 385; The Hymn of the Mirids ibid., p. 296.

<sup>925</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 93.

<sup>926</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin ibid., p. 368. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>927</sup> The Hymn of the Lights in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 93. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>928</sup> MADELUNG, *al-Mahdī* (EI), vol. V, pp. 1230-1231.

MUHAMMAD and the second Caliph, ʿUMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB (lived ca. 592-644, ruled 634-644).<sup>929</sup> An indispensable condition for Mahdī was his origin from among MUHAMMAD's next of kin. Local versions developed as to the Mahdī's exact family tree and circumstances of his emergence.<sup>930</sup> Not all of these traditions were related to the End of Time.<sup>931</sup>

But a number of them involved Jesus,<sup>932</sup> and some counted on a “second Mahdī” who would conquer Constantinople and surrender the rule over it to Jesus.<sup>933</sup> The Mahdī (or Jesus) is also due to defeat or kill the great “deceiver” – Dadjdjāl<sup>934</sup> (in Yezidism called Tardjāl, indicated in one text as due to be killed by Jesus).<sup>935</sup>

The belief in Mahdī became a crucial doctrine in Shiite Islam. Its Shiite specific is the occultation or temporary absence (*ghayba*) of the Mahdī who would then come out in glory.<sup>936</sup>

Yezidi versions on the End of Time include similar themes: Sharfadīn the Mahdī dwells in occultation,<sup>937</sup> Jesus rules before<sup>938</sup> or together<sup>939</sup> with him, and Ēzī conquers Constantinople at the beginning of a story that continues toward the End of Time.<sup>940</sup>

In the Yezidi usage, the Mahdī denotes a title or function that will be entrusted to Sharfadīn by Ēzī.<sup>941</sup> Dutch researcher PHILIP KREYENBROEK interprets the idea of the Mahdī in Yezidism as one “who is expected to return to the world at the End of Time in order to bring about an ideal state of existence”.<sup>942</sup> The Mahdī is probably believed to provide the

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<sup>929</sup> Ibid., p. 1231.

<sup>930</sup> Ibid., pp. 1231-1232.

<sup>931</sup> Ibid., p. 1234.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid., pp. 1232, 1234, 1235, 1236.

<sup>933</sup> Ibid., p. 1234.

<sup>934</sup> ABEL, *al-Dadjdjāl* (EI), vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>935</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; *The Hymn of the False Saviour* *ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>936</sup> MADELUNG, *al-Mahdī* (EI), vol. V, p. 1236.

<sup>937</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 374; *The Hymn of Sherfedin* *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>938</sup> *The Hymn of the False Saviour* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>939</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>940</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 61-64 (quoting ISMĀʿĪL BEG, an activist member of the Yezidi princely family).

<sup>941</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 368; *The Hymn of Sherfedin* *ibid.*, p. 371.

<sup>942</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

patronage over the ideal world,<sup>943</sup> prosperity and relief to the Yezidis,<sup>944</sup> leadership in the final battle against evil,<sup>945</sup> or all of this.<sup>946</sup>

The concept must have been clear in the Yezidi culture as it is used in the texts without explanation. The texts simply state: “Jesus will be the Sultan and Sharfadīn will be the Mahdī”,<sup>947</sup> or: “When the Mahdī arises, neither lords nor judges will remain.”<sup>948</sup>

A petition composed by Yezidi dignitaries in 1872 uses the description “servant of the Mahdī”<sup>949</sup> for the Hereafter Brother,<sup>950</sup> one of the Yezidi formalised spiritual patronage bonds.<sup>951</sup> The Hereafter Brother (women usually have a Hereafter Sister)<sup>952</sup> has duties toward his client in passage rites as well as common life situations, and is believed to be a witness for the latter's deeds in the afterlife.<sup>953</sup>

Yezidi texts express expectations of the Mahdī: his advent is awaited when “the epochs (*badīl*) change”,<sup>954</sup> and the Yezidis pray<sup>955</sup> that Ēzī “make... Sharfadīn the Mahdī for us”.<sup>956</sup>

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<sup>943</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-34; The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>944</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369; The *Qeside* of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>945</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33. – Cf. The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

<sup>946</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33.

<sup>947</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364.

<sup>948</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 368. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>949</sup> JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 78 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 6. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>950</sup> ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznikh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis], pp. 262-271; BOIS, *Les yezidis et leur culte des morts*, p. 54; DİROZE [Prayer] in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 286; DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 420-421; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 40-41; EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 96; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 220 (quoting the Yezidi Chief *Ḳawāl SİLĒMĀN SAVŌ*); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 12, 295.

<sup>951</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 6, 37; The Evening Prayer in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 222-223; The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 371; The Hymn of the Mirids *ibid.*, p. 295; TOLAN, *Was sind die „fünf Grundpflichten“ (Pênc ferzên Heqîqetê)?*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>952</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 20-21 (www); DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, p. 420; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 40-41; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 136; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>953</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, p. 421.

<sup>954</sup> The Hymn of the Lights in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 93. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>955</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 373.

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371. Transcription adjusted.

A British researcher in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thought that Yezidis “are still waiting for the prophet to come and believe him to be a Persian”.<sup>957</sup> The reference is clearly to the Mahdī but the claim as to his Persian identity is odd. It might be due to the proliferation of the term Mahdī in Shiite Islam that is closely connected with Iran, or that the names of the crucial characters of Yezidi eschatology (Ēzī or Sharfadīn) may have sounded “Persian” to the author. Similarly, a colleague of his wrote that the Yezidis expect the advent of Jesus as well as “that of the twelfth Imam of the Shiites – the Mahdī, whom they call Shēkh Mēdī”.<sup>958</sup>

## 2.6.2 Shēshims

Shēshims (a Kurdish contraction of Shaykh Shams) is mentioned in the hymn on Sharfadīn as one who “removes the curtain from the Cave” where Sharfadīn has waited in occultation for the final eschatological battle.<sup>959</sup>

Shēshims' model in the history of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya community was SHAMS AL-DĪN, a brother of HASAN (Shēkh Hasan or Shēkh Sin of the Yezidi texts)<sup>960</sup> and FAKHR AL-DĪN (Fakhradīn, Farkhadīn, or just Fakhr).<sup>961</sup> The community was headed by HASAN, succeeded after his death in about 1254 by his son SHARAF AL-DĪN (Sharfadīn).<sup>962</sup> When the latter died in 1257 or 1258,<sup>963</sup> FAKHR AL-DĪN assumed the leadership. Disputes broke out between him and SHAMS AL-DĪN, at least in part concerning the attitude toward the Mongol power. It seems that SHAMS AL-DĪN moved to Egypt in 1276 and his further destiny is unknown while FAKHR AL-DĪN had spent some time (1275-1281) in Syria and after his return to the Mosul environs was executed by the Mongols in 1281.<sup>964</sup> He was the last known leader of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya.<sup>965</sup>

The Yezidi mythology continues to perceive Shēshims and Fakhradīn as brothers<sup>966</sup> but does not recognise the historical conflict between them – on the contrary, they are closely connected to each other<sup>967</sup> (e.g. in one hymn, Ēzī “entrusts this world to the hands of”

<sup>957</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 37.

<sup>958</sup> TEMPLE in EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 200. Transcription and terminology adjusted.

<sup>959</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 368.

<sup>960</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 105-106; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 4, 219.

<sup>961</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 42, 103; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27; The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names *ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>962</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>963</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 22; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 221.

<sup>964</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 24-25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 33-34, 42; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 4; NAU + FINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 64.

<sup>965</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25.

<sup>966</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 31; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 9, 13.

<sup>967</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 103; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 19.

Shēshims and Fakhradīn).<sup>968</sup> They are also linked by the symbolism of sun and moon, respectively.<sup>969</sup> Shēshims has this aspect indicated by his name – *shams* in Arabic means the “sun”.

The solar symbolism may play a role in the image from the eschatological hymn where Shēshims “removes the curtain from the Cave” of Sharfadīn's occultation.<sup>970</sup>

On the social level, Shēshims represents a branch of the *shēkh* caste and one of its four subdivisions (lineages) at the same time. Fakhradīn is the patron of another lineage of the same branch.<sup>971</sup> This division indicates Shēshims' superior status to Fakhradīn.

Among Shēshims' incarnation counterparts in Yezidism are Jesus (°Īsā),<sup>972</sup> archangel Isrāfil,<sup>973</sup> and SHAMS AL-DĪN AL-TABRĪZĪ (an enigmatic companion of Sufi DJALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ, the latter of whom lived in 1207-1273; in Yezidi texts called Shēshimsē Tawrēzī<sup>974</sup> or Shēshimsē Tatar,<sup>975</sup> i.e. “Tartar”), the first of whom is prominent in Yezidi accounts on the End of Time.<sup>976</sup>

### 2.6.3 Jesus

Jesus (in Yezidi texts Isā,<sup>977</sup> °Isā<sup>978</sup> or °Īsā<sup>979</sup>) acts in one of the two Yezidi storylines on the End of Time as the character who seems to kill Tardjāl<sup>980</sup> (the same role is ascribed to

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<sup>968</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 79.

<sup>969</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 97, 103; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 22, 27.

<sup>970</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin *ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>971</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lālish*, p. 31.

<sup>972</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 119.

<sup>973</sup> MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, pp. 209-210.

<sup>974</sup> The Hymn of Sheykh Shems of Tabriz in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>975</sup> The Hymn of Sheikh Hesen the Sultan in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 358; The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 196-197; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 87. – Conventionally, the attribute is explained by the Sufi's relation to Tabriz city in northwestern Iran with Turkic-speaking population (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 199). But, it should not be forgotten that Shēshims' main historical model, SHAMS AL-DĪN of al-°Adawiyya brotherhood, probably had a Mongol (i.e. “Tartar”) wife (cf. GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 24-25).

<sup>976</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33-34, 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66; The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>977</sup> The Hymn of the Faith in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 83; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>978</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 178.

<sup>979</sup> The Hymn of the Sultan's Skull in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 350-354.

<sup>980</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 366.

Jesus by Muslim eschatologies)<sup>981</sup> and rules before Sharfadīn,<sup>982</sup> or who will administer the world from Egypt for forty years together with Sharfadīn the Mahdī.<sup>983</sup> In the latter case, the rule should be passed to Jesus by Ēzī whose vassal Ōsmān<sup>984</sup> has lost the right for it by oppressing the Yezidis.<sup>985</sup> When the forty years of Jesus' reign will have passed, he will step down from the throne and go with Sharfadīn to die at Mount Kāf – traditionally identified with the world's boundaries but possibly also symbolising immortality or an earthly zone beyond the common time and space.<sup>986</sup>

Although connected with Sharfadīn in the storyline outlined above, the character of Jesus does not occur in the other storyline on the End of Time represented by the hymn of Sharfadīn.<sup>987</sup>

Jesus is mentioned in a hymn as one of the prophets (*nabī*) who alternate in holding the Cup (Kās), a sign of the spiritual patronage over each one's respective period (*badīl*).<sup>988</sup> He also appears as a co-narrator in a hymn on Sultan Djimdjim (Djimdjimē Siltān<sup>989</sup> or Djumdjumī Siltān<sup>990</sup>), translatable both as “Sultan's Skull” and “Sultan the Skull”. The hero of the story was released from hell.<sup>991</sup>

The Yezidi tradition seems to believe in the crucifixion of Jesus, adding that the consequent resurrection was implemented by the prime Yezidi theophany – Tāwsī Malak.<sup>992</sup>

#### 2.6.4 Ḥalādī (with an Exposition on the “Devil Worship” Allegation of the Yezidis)

LESCOT's eschatological account from Syria of the 1930's says at its conclusion: “Māsūrē Ḥalādī (MANṢŪR AL-ḤALLĀDĪ) will come. He will purify the world and entirely level [its ground], after which a strong wind will blow from Syria and make the [surface of the]

<sup>981</sup> ABEL, *al-Daḍḍjāl* (EI), vol. II, p. 76. – Cf. MADELUNG, *al-Mahdī* (EI), vol. V, pp. 1232, 1234, 1235, 1236.

<sup>982</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>983</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 33, 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>984</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364.

<sup>985</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 65.

<sup>986</sup> Cf. The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 331-332, where the travelling hero reaches the realm of immortality represented by the “Vault of Fate” and the “Hill of Exiles”.

<sup>987</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 368-375.

<sup>988</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 26, 31, 72; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 176-179; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>989</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 275.

<sup>990</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 350.

<sup>991</sup> The Hymn of the Sultan's Skull *ibid.*, pp. 350-354.

<sup>992</sup> JUMA (interview).



world smooth like an egg. One will be able to see in front of oneself until the distance of three days' walk.<sup>993</sup>

The Baghdad-based Sufi ḤUSAYN IBN MAṢṢŪR AL-ḤALLĀDJ (857-922) is called in the Yezidi tradition Māsūrē Ḥalādj,<sup>994</sup> Mansūrī Ḥalādj,<sup>995</sup> Bin Mansūr,<sup>996</sup> Ḥisēnē Ḥalādj,<sup>997</sup> Ḥisēnī Ḥalādj,<sup>998</sup> or just Ḥalādj.<sup>999</sup>

A Yezidi version on Ḥalādj's execution says that a blood stream from his decapitated body formed the Arabic inscription “God is Tāwsī Malak”,<sup>1000</sup> in reference to the prominent theophany of Yezidism. Historically, the “martyr of mystical love”<sup>1001</sup> AL-ḤALLĀDJ was indeed beheaded.<sup>1002</sup> But in another Yezidi tradition, Ḥalādj was crushed to death by a falling wall.<sup>1003</sup>

AL-ḤALLĀDJ allegedly declared before the execution that he would return in thirty years,<sup>1004</sup> and expectations of his second coming were reported around the year 1000.<sup>1005</sup> This may resonate with his eschatological status in Yezidism.

A part of AL-ḤALLĀDJ's ideas focused on death as the beginning of a new life.<sup>1006</sup> Similarly in the Yezidi tradition, a storyline on Ḥalādj combines soul transmigration with miraculous conception: a daughter of Djunayd (historically, the Sufi master ABŪ 'L-ḲĀSIM AL-DJUNAYD; died 910)<sup>1007</sup> became pregnant when she had drunk water mixed with Ḥalādj's blood.<sup>1008</sup> (In another version, Ḥalādj's soul had entered a jar from which his sister drank and conceived.)<sup>1009</sup> She then gave birth to the Yezidi saint ʿAbdilḳādir Gīlānī<sup>1010</sup> or ʿAbdilḳādir Raḥmānī.<sup>1011</sup> Both personages seem to be derived from the Islamic preacher, teacher, and philanthropist<sup>1012</sup>

<sup>993</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364. – The idea that the earth surface will become smooth at the End of Time is known in Zoroastrianism (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146).

<sup>994</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66.

<sup>995</sup> The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 177

<sup>996</sup> The Hymn of the Thousand and One Names in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 77

<sup>997</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 119.

<sup>998</sup> The Hymn of Mullah Abu Bekir in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 177

<sup>999</sup> JUMA (interview).

<sup>1000</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1001</sup> SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 62.

<sup>1002</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>1003</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 72.

<sup>1004</sup> HAMZEH'EE, *The Yaresan*, p. 96.

<sup>1005</sup> SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 73.

<sup>1006</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>1007</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-59.

<sup>1008</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 72; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 102, 119.

<sup>1009</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>1010</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 72.

<sup>1011</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 119.

<sup>1012</sup> BRAUNE, *ʿAbd al-Ḳādir al-Djīlānī* (EI), vol. I, p. 69; BRUINEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>c</sup>ABD AL-KĀDIR AL-GAYLĀNĪ, also spelled AL-DJĪLĀNĪ or AL-DJĪLĪ (1077 or 1088-1166).<sup>1013</sup> He was a friend of <sup>c</sup>ADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR<sup>1014</sup> (Shīkhādī of Yezidism) and became posthumously popular in Sufism among the Kurds.<sup>1015</sup>

### **AL-ḤALLĀDJ'S Satanology and Yezidism**

AL-ḤALLĀDJ'S utterance *anā 'l-Ḥaqq*, translated as “I am the Absolute Truth”<sup>1016</sup> and contributing to his accusation of blasphemy,<sup>1017</sup> has a parallel in one of the Arabic poems attributed to <sup>c</sup>ADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR where he says: “There is no God but I.”<sup>1018</sup>

Finally, AL-ḤALLĀDJ'S reinterpretation of Satan as the “true monotheist” (who refused to prostrate before Adam out of awareness that only God can be worshipped)<sup>1019</sup> resembles the Yezidi philosophy of Tāwsī Malak (Peacock Angel) – the main Yezidi manifestation of God who acted in the same way as Satan of the Koran.<sup>1020</sup> Only the Yezidi interpretation says that God's call upon the archangels to bow before Adam was a test of loyalty.<sup>1021</sup> At the same time, the Yezidis have been best known among their neighbours and Western travellers<sup>1022</sup> for their taboo on pronouncing or even hearing “Satan” (Kurdish “*Shaytān*”, Arabic “*Shaytān*”) and some other words sounding similar.<sup>1023</sup> In the Yezidi aetiology, the word was used by Adam as an insult against Tāwsī Malak when the latter had expelled him from paradise<sup>1024</sup> (an act viewed by itself positively in Yezidism).<sup>1025</sup>

In relation to the verbal taboo, some Yezidis recognise a link between their Tāwsī Malak and the devil of other religions – a Yezidi dignitary says: “We recognise his real name, not this ugly one.”<sup>1026</sup> The Yezidis do not think either that Tāwsī Malak is evil<sup>1027</sup> and do not believe in ontological evil – in the words of another dignitary, “the evil in men's

<sup>1013</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>1014</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 17; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 29.

<sup>1015</sup> BRUINEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 282-294.

<sup>1016</sup> SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 66.

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>1018</sup> <sup>c</sup>ABBŪD, *Al-Ēzīdiyya* [Yezidism], p. 70; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 71 (www).

<sup>1019</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 46; SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 194.

<sup>1020</sup> Koran 7:12 (<sup>c</sup>ALĪ, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, p. 347): “I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.”

<sup>1021</sup> ZRNO, *Význavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 37:13 (documentary film – Chief Faḳīr ḤADJĪ SHAMŌ speaking).

<sup>1022</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. xiii, 4.

<sup>1023</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 39; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 75, 154 (www); EDMONDS,

*A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 43; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 43 (www); KLIPPEL, *Unter Senüsy-Brüdern, Drusen und Teufelsanbetern*, p. 219; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 31.

<sup>1024</sup> ZRNO, *Význavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 38:03 (documentary film – Faḳīr KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO's translator speaking); YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 32.

<sup>1025</sup> ZRNO, *Význavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 37:44 (documentary film – Faḳīr KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO's translator speaking).

<sup>1026</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 226 (quoting Chief Kawāl SİLĒMĀN SAVŌ).

<sup>1027</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 92 (www).

hearts is not from him, but from themselves”.<sup>1028</sup> This is in line with AL-ḤALLĀDĪ's opinion that God himself brings about contrasting phenomena<sup>1029</sup> but everything in the world definitely happens for a good end.<sup>1030</sup>

The identity of the Peacock Angel in Yezidism can be related to Sufism (AL-ḤALLĀDĪ's rehabilitation of Satan was still alive among some Sufis in the 12<sup>th</sup> century at the time of ʿADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR,<sup>1031</sup> the predecessor of what later became organised Yezidism) but even more so to the Indo-Iranian religious background in the area. According to Dutch researcher PHILIP KREYENBROEK, the ambiguous relation of Yezidism to the concepts of the devil and evil “can best be explained as resulting from a clash between Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian ideas”,<sup>1032</sup> i.e. local survival of old Indo-Iranian concepts along with awareness of their reinterpretation as evil in Zoroastrianism.

### 2.6.5 Gabriel

Archangel Gabriel occurs in LESCOT's eschatological account collected in Syria in the 1930's at the moment when Jesus and Sharfadīn went to die at Mount Kāf. LESCOT's text says: “God will (then) order Gabriel: ‘Go and open the door of Mount Kāf and let Hād̲jūd̲j [Gog] go out!’”<sup>1033</sup>

Gabriel (in the Kurdish of Yezidism called *Djabrāyil*,<sup>1034</sup> *Djabrāyīl*<sup>1035</sup> or *Djibrāyīl*<sup>1036</sup>) is a member of the Yezidi archangelic Heptad.<sup>1037</sup> His name is also connected with the epithets “the Loyal” (Amīn *Djabrāyīl*, Amīn *Djibrāyīl* or *Djibrāyīlē Amīn*),<sup>1038</sup> “the Brother” (*Djibrāyīlē Ākhī*),<sup>1039</sup> and the “Messenger of God” (*Ḳāsīdē Khudē*).<sup>1040</sup>

<sup>1028</sup> Ibid. (www – quoting Chief *Ḳawāl Savō*, apparently the father of the present-day holder of this office, SILĒMĀN SAVŌ). – Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 31 (www); KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 180; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 32-33, 34.

<sup>1029</sup> SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 198.

<sup>1030</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 180.

<sup>1031</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Das Wesen von Tausi-Melek und sein theologischer Ursprung*, p.1 (www).

<sup>1032</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 60.

<sup>1033</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66. – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 365.

<sup>1034</sup> The Tale of Ibrahim... in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 231.

<sup>1035</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1036</sup> The Hymn of Moses in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 360-361; The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems *ibid.*, p. 206; The Prayer of Pilgrimage *ibid.*, p. 107; The Tale of Ibrahim... *ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>1037</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 210.

<sup>1038</sup> The Hymn of Moses in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 360-361; The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih *ibid.*, pp. 324, 336-337; The Tale of Ibrahim... *ibid.*, pp. 231, 246.

<sup>1039</sup> The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 206.

<sup>1040</sup> The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 317, 328.

In Islam, Gabriel (in Arabic called Djabrāʿīl or Djibrīl) is one of the four archangels and the angel of the revelation of the Koran, the counsellor and helper of Prophet MUḤAMMAD.<sup>1041</sup>

Some Yezidi versions mention Gabriel's presence at Creation in the form of a bird<sup>1042</sup> (as God's counterpart),<sup>1043</sup> as Adam's companion to paradise,<sup>1044</sup> or the creator of Eve.<sup>1045</sup> He forms a pair with archangel Azrael (ʿAzrāyīl), where each seems to represent the enchanting and the scary aspects of the divine, respectively.<sup>1046</sup> In popular piety, Gabriel used to be believed to cure mental diseases.<sup>1047</sup> Among his incarnation identities are ʿAlī<sup>1048</sup> (i.e. ʿALĪ IBN ABĪ ṬĀLIB, the fourth Caliph of Islam) and angels Sidjādīn or Shēkh Ōbāk.<sup>1049</sup>

In Yezidi texts, Gabriel is portrayed as an intercessor after death<sup>1050</sup> and a psychopomp – one who delivers souls of the deceased to the underworld.<sup>1051</sup> He appears in the latter role together<sup>1052</sup> or alternatively<sup>1053</sup> with Azrael. The same function is elsewhere attributed to angel Sidjādīn<sup>1054</sup> who is an incarnation of Gabriel or Azrael.<sup>1055</sup>

In religious narratives, Gabriel takes Abraham to show him paradise<sup>1056</sup> and by using tricks deprives a narrative hero of reaching immortality so that the latter does not become like angels.<sup>1057</sup>

In what seems to hint at the End of Time, a religious text mentions Gabriel with angel Nāsirdīn (otherwise known as a horrific angel of death)<sup>1058</sup> as “they lead the armies of the Prophet” while angel Sidjādīn “takes the Lord of Infidelity (Mīrē Kifrē) away from the world” with “the red killing sword”.<sup>1059</sup> The Lord of Infidelity seems to be Tardjāl (the

<sup>1041</sup> PEDERSEN, *Djabrāʿīl* (EI), vol. II, pp. 362-364.

<sup>1042</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100. – Cf. JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 37 (www).

<sup>1043</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 54, 56.

<sup>1044</sup> JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 38 (www).

<sup>1045</sup> DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, p. 699; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 210.

<sup>1046</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100. – In the Islamic tradition, Gabriel is intertwined with archangel Michael (WENSINCK, *Mikāl* – EI, vol. VII, pp. 25-26).

<sup>1047</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>1048</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 117; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 210.

<sup>1049</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 210.

<sup>1050</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 107; *The Prayer of Pilgrimage* ibid.

<sup>1051</sup> *The Hymn of Moses* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 360-361; *The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih* ibid., pp. 317, 328.

<sup>1052</sup> *The Hymn of Moses* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 360-361.

<sup>1053</sup> *The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 317.

<sup>1054</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 104.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 104.

<sup>1056</sup> *The Tale of Ibrahim...* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 246.

<sup>1057</sup> *The Tale and Beyt of Mir Mih* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 335.

<sup>1058</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 105.

<sup>1059</sup> *The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 206-207. Transcription adjusted.

False Saviour)<sup>1060</sup> and the colour red is a typical attribute of Ēzī.<sup>1061</sup> As for the sword, the text mentions in direct connection with Sidjādīn the sword Zilfikār<sup>1062</sup> (in Arabic *Dhu 'l-Fikār* or *Dhu 'l-Fakār*, approximately the “Jagged-edged One”), the legendary weapon of ‘Alī<sup>1063</sup> who is an incarnation counterpart of Gabriel and Sidjādīn.<sup>1064</sup>

## 2.6.6 *Fak̄irs, Djindīs, Holy Men*

The Yezidi storyline on the final eschatological battle lists those who are expected to fight in the victorious Yezidi army. They are mentioned in various verses of the hymn on Sharfadīn e.g. as an “assembly of *shēkhs*, *pīrs*, *mirīds*, and *fak̄irs*”,<sup>1065</sup> “all who come hurrying to the Tradition (Sunat) [i.e. Yezidism]... together with those commoners” (*djindī*),<sup>1066</sup> and “riders of the gorge”.<sup>1067</sup> It also seems that other Yezidi texts may be indirectly referring to the Armageddon when generally speaking about a struggle or war.

### The Yezidi Community

In a verse, it is obviously Sharfadīn who says: “I would convene an assembly (*djimā*) of *shēkhs*, *pīrs*, *mirīds*, and *fak̄irs*; I would conquer the world with it.”<sup>1068</sup> The formulation shows the complex Yezidi participation in the battle – *shēkhs*, *pīrs*, and *mirīds* are the three endogamous castes of Yezidism (the latter of them lay, the former two formally priestly).<sup>1069</sup>

### The *Fak̄ir* “Order”

<sup>1060</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 33; The Hymn of the False Saviour [an original ad hoc introduction] *ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>1061</sup> The Story of the Appearance of the Mystery of Ezī in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 147, 156; The Great Hymn *ibid.*, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>1062</sup> The Prayer and Hymn to Sheikh Shems in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 207.

<sup>1063</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 207.

<sup>1064</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 99, 117; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, p. 210.

<sup>1065</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1066</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1067</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>1068</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1069</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 139-140; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 14-15 (www); KHALIL, *Bräuche und Traditionen bei den Yeziden*, p. 2 (www); KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 167-168; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 44, 130; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 9; Sermon and Exhortation *ibid.*, pp. 290-291; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 42.

The *faḳīrs* (often described in the literature as an “order”)<sup>1070</sup> are a group of Yezidi families from all castes whose male members can devote themselves to asceticism<sup>1071</sup> and memorising religious texts.<sup>1072</sup> As they wear the sacred garment *kharkā*, causing any physical or verbal offense to a *faḳīr* is a taboo called *dirbā kharkē*, i.e. “hitting the *kharkā*”.<sup>1073</sup> At the same time, the *faḳīrs* are themselves obliged with a code of non-violent behaviour.<sup>1074</sup> Due to these regulations, the *faḳīrs* can act as peacemakers.<sup>1075</sup>

It may therefore seem a paradox that the *faḳīrs* are expected to take a prominent part in the eschatological battle. The hymn on *Sharfadīn* mentions the *faḳīrs* repeatedly: they “will abolish laments (*ḥayf*) and injustice (*djīr*) from this world”;<sup>1076</sup> they are prepared “for ordeals and bitter experiences”;<sup>1077</sup> they “will don armour and shield”;<sup>1078</sup> they “will be decked out in armour and silk”;<sup>1079</sup> and, they “will come to us seeking distinction”.<sup>1080</sup> A reference to this engagement of the *faḳīrs* seems to occur in another hymn where “dervishes” (*darwēsh*) – an approximate synonym for the *faḳīrs* – are called “the soldiers (*djindār*) of the Master” (Mawlā).<sup>1081</sup> Presumably, it is the spiritual strength of the *faḳīrs* that will get transformed into a combat capacity in the final battle between good and evil.

### Commoners (*Djindī*)

An image in the hymn on *Sharfadīn* introduces other sections of the Yezidi eschatological army: “All who come hurrying to the Tradition (Sunat) [i.e. Yezidism] mount swift horses, together with those commoners (*djindī*) they will go to war.”<sup>1082</sup> It is not clear whether a specific identity is attached to those “who come hurrying to the Tradition”; one may speculate that some non-Yezidis will join the fight on the side of good but evidence for this assumption is lacking.<sup>1083</sup> As for the term “commoners”, its Kurdish form (*djindī*) “basically means ‘soldier’” but “in Yezidi religious poetry the word is used for god-

<sup>1070</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 15 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 16; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 133.

<sup>1071</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 180 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 16; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>1072</sup> KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*, p. 139.

<sup>1073</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 18. – Cf. DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 180 (www).

<sup>1074</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 133.

<sup>1075</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 7.

<sup>1076</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 370. Transcription adjusted. – The expression *ḥayf*, translated here as “laments”, can in various contexts also mean “vengeance” (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 179, 181, 244), “condolences” (ibid., p. 276), “pity” or “grief” (ibid., pp. 185, 277).

<sup>1077</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 370.

<sup>1078</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>1079</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>1080</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>1081</sup> The Hymn of the Mill of Love in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 381. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1082</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1083</sup> Cf. RASHOW (interview) who believes that Yezidism admits the salvation of non-Yezidis.

fearing men, with connotations of poverty, discipline and simplicity”.<sup>1084</sup> It denotes “ordinary, hard-working people of no particular distinction”,<sup>1085</sup> a figurative infantry of the Yezidi society.

The “military” metaphors are used in some Yezidi texts to describe piety: “war” (*djang*) can mean the pilgrimage to Lālish<sup>1086</sup> or “active duty”.<sup>1087</sup> But the latter case is more complex: the text says that sleeping late leads to “severe punishment (*‘adāb*) and hell (*dōž*)”,<sup>1088</sup> adding that “all who are awake are preparing themselves for war”.<sup>1089</sup> Although too much sleep is criticised in a Yezidi moralistic hymn,<sup>1090</sup> the imagery here may concern religious vigilance as well as expectations of the eschatological fight.

A hymn offers an image clearly connecting the word “commoner” (*djindī*), hence presumably with the Armageddon: “Two commoners (*djindī*) whirled a spear. Those commoners whirled their spears. You be witnesses for the love of God.”<sup>1091</sup> The last verse (sentence) seems to address the commoners with a promise of salvation. As is the case with the *faḳīrs*, the pious life of common Yezidis may either be understood as an analogy of their collective struggle against evil or directly as a base of spiritual credits that are due to be transformed into an eschatological combat power.

### “Good Men” of the “Gorge”

A complex eschatological image is the “riders of the gorge”.<sup>1092</sup> It refers most probably to “those who are eminently righteous, possibly *faḳīrs*”.<sup>1093</sup> According to the hymn on Sharfadīn in a passage apparently addressing the commoners (*djindī*), the “riders of the gorge” will “open the boxes for you so as to adorn you like brides”.<sup>1094</sup> The next stanza of the same hymn indicates that the clothes obviously are “black *kharkas*”,<sup>1095</sup> i.e. ritual garments normally worn only by *faḳīrs*.<sup>1096</sup> This should symbolise the elevation of Yezidi commoners (*djindī*) to a status comparable or equal to the *faḳīrs*’.

In the same text, the “gorge of the good men” (*mēr*)<sup>1097</sup> is the assembly area of the Yezidi commoners (*djindī*). “Happy about” the emergence of Sharfadīn from occultation, they

<sup>1084</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1085</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 241.

<sup>1086</sup> The Prayer of Pilgrimage in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 107.

<sup>1087</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 241; The Song of the Commoner *ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>1088</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1089</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>1090</sup> The Hymn of Proper Conduct in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 299. – Generally in the Middle Eastern cultures, sleeping long may be looked askance at as a symptom of weak personality.

<sup>1091</sup> The Hymn of the Oceans in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>1092</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1093</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1094</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1095</sup> *Ibid.* Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1096</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 134.

<sup>1097</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

will “stand in the gorge of the good men; they will require the lances...”<sup>1098</sup> The gorge (*gēdūk*) evokes a typical battle scene in the Yezidi oral literature.<sup>1099</sup> At the same time, it associates some images related to hell. A hymn says on “hell (*dōž*) and the inferno” (*djahanim*): “They are deep valleys (*galī*); from it come the merciful holy beings (*khās*).”<sup>1100</sup> The same hymn reads further on: “On that day in the narrow valley, the holy men (*mēr*) will quarrel and fight about us.”<sup>1101</sup> This formulation should concern the postmortal judgment of soul as the editors suggest<sup>1102</sup> but also may revoke the “good men” (*mēr*) prepared in their “gorge” for the last battle against evil.<sup>1103</sup> (*Mēr* means both a “true man”<sup>1104</sup> and a Yezidi “saint”, in the latter meaning being synonymous to *khās*.<sup>1105</sup>) It seems that the Yezidi texts loosely combine the symbolism of the Armageddon, the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment. After all, one hymn on the End of Time includes passages on the Judgment<sup>1106</sup> while the other (dealing primarily with the battle against evil) hints at the Resurrection.<sup>1107</sup>

### The Forty Holy Beings (Čilmērān)

Although not explicitly mentioned in the available texts on the End of Time, it can be assumed that the “Forty Holy Beings” (Čilmērān)<sup>1108</sup> are implicitly connected in the Yezidi tradition with the final defeat of evil due to their link to Sharfadīn,<sup>1109</sup> the leader of the fight.<sup>1110</sup> They may associate the “good men” (*mēr*)<sup>1111</sup> assembled before the Armageddon or the “holy men (*mēr*) [who] will quarrel and fight about us”<sup>1112</sup> in an eschatological context.<sup>1113</sup>

### The Eleven (Pairs)

A hymn says that God “is the Lord of the eleven pairs that are ready for battle; thus the numbers [of souls] of that large army departed”.<sup>1114</sup> The text elaborates: “Four lamps with

<sup>1098</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1099</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 216-230 (where the places of fighting are called in traditional battle songs *gēdūk* – “pass”, *galī* – “valley”, *kūrān* – “valley”, *gir* – “hill”, or *bān* – “high place”).

<sup>1100</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 397. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid., p. 398. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1102</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 398.

<sup>1103</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. BRUINSEN, *Agha, Scheich und Staat*, pp. 462-463.

<sup>1105</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 339; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 12.

<sup>1106</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>1107</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1108</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>1109</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 11; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100.

<sup>1110</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 374.

<sup>1111</sup> Ibid., p. 369.

<sup>1112</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 398. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1113</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 398.

<sup>1114</sup> The Hymn of the Oceans in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 202-203, 207.



one wick! There are seven doorways for the one Word. Eleven are a deep ditch (*khandaka*): seven are dark, four are luminous.”<sup>1115</sup>

The passages are obscure<sup>1116</sup> although they provide references to supranatural beings involved in a (possibly eschatological) fight, an opposition between representations of light and darkness, and a “ditch” that may remind of the “gorge” in the symbolism of the last battle<sup>1117</sup> and hell.<sup>1118</sup>

It has been assumed that the Eleven (however not pairs) may mean the children of Ēzdīnā Mīr,<sup>1119</sup> a son of the last battle leader Sharfadīn and an important personage of sacred genealogies.<sup>1120</sup> Ēzdīnā Mīr had seven daughters and four sons,<sup>1121</sup> the latter being separately called the Four (Angels or Mysteries).<sup>1122</sup> They are the “four lamps with one wick” of the text.<sup>1123</sup> Members of the Four are angels Shēshims, Fakhradīn, Sidjādīn, and Nāsirdīn,<sup>1124</sup> the latter two of whom are believed to take the souls of the deceased.<sup>1125</sup>

As for the Seven, the term in Yezidism typically denotes the archangelic Heptad headed by Tāwsī Malak.<sup>1126</sup> Both the Seven and the Four were evoked by God at Creation.<sup>1127</sup> But regarding the text, it is hardly admissible that the Seven would be set in opposition against the Four and called “dark” (although a Creation hymn says that God placed “in their hands... hell and heaven”),<sup>1128</sup> which is equally improbable with the daughters of Ēzdīnā Mīr. Yezidism, however, does have a heptad that can be called dark: it is the *zabēnī*, the “guardians of the hereafter who punish sinners and prevent them from entering paradise”.<sup>1129</sup> A text describes them as “seven brothers; the greatest of them is

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<sup>1115</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100; The Hymn of the Oceans *ibid.*, pp. 204-205. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1116</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 100, 207.

<sup>1117</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 369.

<sup>1118</sup> The Hymn of the Laughter of Snakes in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 397. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1119</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 100, 207.

<sup>1120</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 20; The *Qeside* of Sheikh Shems and Melik Fekhrudin *ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>1121</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 100, 207.

<sup>1122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 13.

<sup>1123</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 100, 207; The Hymn of the Oceans *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>1124</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 13.

<sup>1125</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>1126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>1127</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 13.

<sup>1128</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 62.

<sup>1129</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 291. Typography adjusted. – Cf. The Hymn of the Moment of Death in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 322-323; the same text in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 349.

Shēkh Shaylī”.<sup>1130</sup> The term *zabēnī* is obviously related to the Arabic *zabāniya*, translated as the “angels of punishment”.<sup>1131</sup>

## 2.7 Aspects of Time and Power in the Yezidi Discourse

### 2.7.1 Notions of Cyclical Time

Researchers have found indications that the Yezidi concept of history is implicitly cyclical,<sup>1132</sup> or at least contains notions of cyclical history.<sup>1133</sup>

Most typically, this idea in the Yezidi tradition means a consequence of ages, epochs or periods (called *badīl*), each being under the spiritual patronage of a different prophetic character.<sup>1134</sup> Every epoch “essentially progresses according to the same pattern, and to some extent repeats the events of the Time of Creation”.<sup>1135</sup> Although this pattern is incorporated in a linear concept of history, the crucial events of history are emergences of theophanies that are outwardly different but their essence is always identical with some of the previous manifestations of deity. What matters is the divine identity, not the historical circumstances.<sup>1136</sup> Reverred in Yezidism as *Shīkhādī*, the historical person ‘ADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR (born 1073-1078,<sup>1137</sup> died 1160-1163<sup>1138</sup>) “happened to be a Muslim in this life” but “his essence is clearly non-Islamic” for the Yezidis.<sup>1139</sup> And, due to the belief in metempsychosis, not only divine beings but also “humans can be expected to return to earth” regularly.<sup>1140</sup>

A Creation hymn that uses the term *badīl* explicitly mentions six leaders of their respective epochs: Adam (Ādam),<sup>1141</sup> Noah (Nūḥ),<sup>1142</sup> Abraham (Birāhīm),<sup>1143</sup> Moses (Mūsā),<sup>1144</sup> Jesus (Isā),<sup>1145</sup> and Muhammad (Muḥam),<sup>1146</sup> but concludes that the total

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<sup>1130</sup> Sermon and Exhortation in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 292.

<sup>1131</sup> Koran 96:18 (‘ALĪ, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān*, p. 1674).

<sup>1132</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 31.

<sup>1133</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55.

<sup>1134</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 31; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One  
One  
pp. 63-65. ibid.,

<sup>1135</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 21.

<sup>1136</sup> Cf. EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 6, 49.

<sup>1137</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 15; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28.

<sup>1138</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28; TRITTON, ‘*Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* (EI), vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>1139</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview). – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 169 (quoting the Yezidi researcher KHALIL JINDY RASHOW.)

<sup>1140</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview).

<sup>1141</sup> The Hymn of the Weak Broken One in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 63.

<sup>1142</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>1143</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65.

<sup>1144</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>1145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1146</sup> Ibid.

number of prophets (*nabī*) is 124,000,<sup>1147</sup> which may suggest that each of the prophets has had his own epoch. It is at least supposed that to those mentioned above should implicitly be added *Shīkhādī*<sup>1148</sup> and possibly some of the crucial characters at the End of Time, which substantially differs from all previous epochs.<sup>1149</sup>

The idea of a series of epochs with alternating spiritual patrons obviously exists in the Yezidi popular tradition as well. Research from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (that was obviously based on the popular tradition)<sup>1150</sup> mentions Yezidi stories of a consequence of epochs, each of which is ruled by one of the seven archangels, the current epoch being headed by Tāwsī Malak.<sup>1151</sup> Some versions elaborate that an archangel (or possibly *Shīkhādī*) comes down to earth every 1,000 years in order to reinstall the order of the world<sup>1152</sup> or re-confirm the rules and beliefs.<sup>1153</sup>

According to another similar version, the ages of 1,000 years each are three and their prophetic leaders are called Yazīd bin Ēzidiyān (literally “Yazīd the son of Yezidis”, i.e. obviously Ēzī of the Yezidi hymns and prayer formulas), Zardašt (i.e. Zarathustra), and *Shīkhādī*.<sup>1154</sup> The inclusion of Zarathustra suggests that the version is a recent variation influenced by Kurdish nationalists, many of whom link Yezidism to Zoroastrianism and see the latter as an idealised original religion of the Kurds.<sup>1155</sup>

Yet another version claims that each of the seven archangels administers the world not for 1,000 but 10,000 years.<sup>1156</sup>

There is also a version on 72 Adams, each of whom stood at the beginning of an epoch 10,000 years long. The Yezidis are descendants of the “last Adam”,<sup>1157</sup> which would in terms of linear time suggest that they live in the last epoch of history. This version may also be the closest to a cyclical concept as it suggests that the periods are repeated, each of them being initiated by a character of the same name or identity.

## 2.7.2 Aspects of Time in the Yezidi Accounts on the End of Time

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<sup>1147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1148</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 31.

<sup>1149</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 25, 33-34. – The eschatological character *Sharfadīn* is expected to appear from his occultation as “the epochs (*badīl*) change” (The Hymn of the Lights *ibid.*, p. 93 – transcription and wording adjusted).

<sup>1150</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>1151</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 63; TEMPLE in EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 198; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 39.

<sup>1152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1153</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 43.

<sup>1154</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 74.

<sup>1155</sup> E.g. *ibid.*, pp. 58-59 (quoting a pamphlet by ABDULLAH ÖCALAN, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party – PKK). – Cf. IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 136; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 74, 75, 86, 88, 91.

<sup>1156</sup> JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 67-68 (www).

<sup>1157</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 195 (the commentary by RICHARD CARNAC TEMPLE).

The Yezidi eschatological storyline represented by *Ḳawlē Tardjāl* (Hymn of the False Saviour)<sup>1158</sup> and the largely similar<sup>1159</sup> ROGER LESCOT's version from Syria<sup>1160</sup> concentrates on the fast succession of contrasting epochs embodied by rulers (or spiritual patrons) before the End of Time: after Ōsmān and his oppression of the Yezidis,<sup>1161</sup> there comes tranquility under Jesus and Sharfadīn,<sup>1162</sup> followed again by the peak of cataclysms under Gog and Magog.<sup>1163</sup> Although these clearly defined periods are not explicitly called by the name “epoch” (*badīl*)<sup>1164</sup> that is used in the general Yezidi concept of history, the idea may be the same here with some eschatological specifics added: among the signs of the imminent End of Time in Yezidism may be political instability and escalation of extremes (i.e. quickly changing rulers under whom the quality of life substantially differs). Moreover, the unprecedented ephemerality of the “epochs” before the End of Time (the common rule of Jesus and Sharfadīn should last for forty years, Gog's rule for seven years, and Magog's again for forty years)<sup>1165</sup> may symbolise depreciation and weariness of time.

If the Yezidi perception of history is implicitly cyclical,<sup>1166</sup> then the End of Time may either represent a turbulent interface between two cycles<sup>1167</sup> or a shorter but concentrated sub-cycle that is qualitatively different from the regular course of time.

### 2.7.3 Perceptions of the Political Rule and the End of Time

One of the Yezidi storylines on the End of Time focuses on a quick succession of rulers who represent the character of their short-lived epochs. A bad person in power seems to mean an ecological and ethical crisis<sup>1168</sup> and oppression of the Yezidis.<sup>1169</sup> On the other

<sup>1158</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-368.

<sup>1159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

<sup>1160</sup> Originally published in LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 65-66. Summarised in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>1161</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>1162</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 364; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66; The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 366-367.

<sup>1163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>1164</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 31; The Hymn of the Lights *ibid.*, p. 93; The Hymn of the Weak Broken One *ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>1165</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66; The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366 (where Sharfadīn will rule for forty years after Jesus).

<sup>1166</sup> KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 21, 31. – Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55.

<sup>1167</sup> According to a hymn, the eschatological character Sharfadīn will emerge as “the epochs (*badīl*) change” (The Hymn of the Lights in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 93 – transcription and wording adjusted).

<sup>1168</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 367.

<sup>1169</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 64-65.

hand, the good rule is demonstrated by harmony in nature<sup>1170</sup> and prosperity of the Yezidis. Actually connected exclusively with the eschaton,<sup>1171</sup> the good rule seems to be “apolitical” in the sense of nullifying any worldly political power. In the words of a Yezidi hymn, “when the Mahdī arises, neither lords nor judges will remain.”<sup>1172</sup>

The eschatological portrayals of political power reflect the long predominant Yezidi views upon it. In Iraq where the majority of the Yezidis live, a British researcher noticed in the 1990's that the Yezidis perceived the behaviour of government structures as capricious and disturbing.<sup>1173</sup> Obviously nothing has changed since the Second World War when another British researcher in Iraq remarked: “The Yezidis have got the habit of thinking all ‘Governments’ their natural oppressors, and accept them like the drought or the storm.”<sup>1174</sup> The “government” (*hikūmat* or *hukūmat*) acts as a vague negative entity in the Yezidi<sup>1175</sup> but also generally Kurdish<sup>1176</sup> secular oral literatures.

The furthest point of the Yezidi collective memory in Iraq<sup>1177</sup> is the massacres of Yezidis near Mosul in 1832 by a Muslim Kurdish prince known as Mīrē Kōr (the “Blind Prince”).<sup>1178</sup> At that time, the Yezidis had come to lose the political and military background they had acquired in some local Kurdish principalities<sup>1179</sup> and tribes.<sup>1180</sup> Further killings of the Yezidis followed in what is now Iraq and Turkey<sup>1181</sup> in addition to interference of government authorities in community affairs.<sup>1182</sup> All this strengthened the Yezidis' often defensive and suspicious stance toward the political power.

#### 2.7.4 Perceptions of History

When it comes to the context of religious speech and its validity, even the Yezidi learned tradition is aware of the duality of the “historical” (*li tārīkhē*) and “esoteric” (*li surē*)

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<sup>1170</sup> The Hymn of the False Saviour in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 366.

<sup>1171</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*., pp. 374-375; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

<sup>1172</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*., p. 368. Transcription adjusted.

<sup>1173</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 46 (“a distant but oppressive entity, whose reasoning is not easy to understand”).

<sup>1174</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 53 (www). Terminology adjusted.

<sup>1175</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 87, 92, 97, 101.

<sup>1176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>1177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>1178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 68-69; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 36; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 42.

<sup>1179</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 49, 59-60.

<sup>1180</sup> BIDLISI, *Sharaf-nāme*, pp. 83-84 (a Russian translation); GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 45; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19.

<sup>1181</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 102-103, 118, 134-141; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>1182</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 116.

modes of existence.<sup>1183</sup> On the other hand, “the storylines of the religious tradition are... set in a remote, largely undifferentiated past”<sup>1184</sup> where “linear time... is irrelevant”.<sup>1185</sup> A Turkish-German researcher has stated that common Yezidis have “neither a historical consciousness nor a historical mindset in the Western sense”,<sup>1186</sup> and what Yezidis traditionally perceive as history is a cycle of transformations<sup>1187</sup> of the same phenomena and beings. Their traditional concept of time was circular and ahistorical but those settled in the Western diaspora have come to adopt patterns of linear history.<sup>1188</sup>

A British researcher has reached more complex findings: although the Yezidi secular oral tradition mostly disregards chronology,<sup>1189</sup> it may grant some attention to it only in events of the recent past, which approximately means the last 150 years<sup>1190</sup> or a “remembered” history – as opposed to the “remote” history<sup>1191</sup> that tends to get dissolved in mythology. When speaking of the still “remembered” past or collective memory, it has been observed that the Yezidis in Iraq may refer to the “epoch of emirs” (i.e. existence of local Kurdish vassal principalities up to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) or the “epoch of the British” (i.e. the mandate rule over Iraq after the First World War)<sup>1192</sup> – just like there are “epochs” in the legendary history with prophets or theophanies as patrons.

### 2.7.5 Questions of Relevance of the End of Time

An important question concerning the Yezidi eschatology is whether or how it reconciles the cyclical concept of metempsychosis with the linear concepts of the End of Time, the Last Judgment, and heaven and hell.

The Dutch researcher PHILIP KREYENBROEK points out that “some Yezidis seem capable of holding mutually exclusive beliefs at the same time, while not paying much attention to the implications of either”,<sup>1193</sup> and the Yezidi “popular belief... admits at the same time the metempsychosis and the existence of paradise and hell”.<sup>1194</sup> In the same manner, many Yezidis may equally believe that there will be such a thing as the End of Time (primarily connected with the fall of Muslim power)<sup>1195</sup> while predominantly thinking in terms of circular time.<sup>1196</sup>

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<sup>1183</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 73.

<sup>1184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>1185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>1186</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 37.

<sup>1187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>1189</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 57.

<sup>1190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>1191</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 19.

<sup>1192</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55.

<sup>1193</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 19.

<sup>1194</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 68.

<sup>1195</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372. – Cf. The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

<sup>1196</sup> Cf. YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 39, 42.

But it is possible that the belief in metempsychosis widely takes prominence over other eschatological concepts among the Yezidis. Metempsychosis has been referred to as “one of the basic tenets of the Yezidi religion”<sup>1197</sup> and “perhaps the only positive form of belief which a Yezidi holds.”<sup>1198</sup>

Among the published Yezidi texts on the End of Time, two belong to the sacred tradition;<sup>1199</sup> another may be a part of the learned or the popular tradition<sup>1200</sup> but seems to be perceived as exclusive and not intended for broader audience.<sup>1201</sup> Similar reluctance to provide information on eschatology was shown by a Yezidi *shēkh* who told a British researcher in Iraq during the Second World War: “We say... that such things are in the hand of God, and that, being men, we cannot know.”<sup>1202</sup> The restraint in speech may have been motivated by awareness that Yezidi traditions on the End of Time do exist but their presentation could be seen as a risky challenge to the predominantly Muslim society.<sup>1203</sup>

According to a Turkish-German researcher whose Yezidi informants in the 1980's and 1990's

(a majority of them Yezidis who had migrated from Turkey to Germany)<sup>1204</sup> were mostly convinced that “there is no end of the world”<sup>1205</sup> and actually no collective eschatology.<sup>1206</sup> These findings may be explained by at least three hypotheses:

1) Exclusivity of the Yezidi accounts on the End of Time:

Out of the three known Yezidi texts on the End of Time, two are hymns (*ḳawl*) – a genre of the sacred texts that a common Yezidi usually does not understand<sup>1207</sup> or indeed know. The third text collected by the French researcher ROGER LESCOT in the 1930's<sup>1208</sup> might be a part of the learned tradition, which may not be necessarily known to the broader Yezidi public either.<sup>1209</sup> Moreover, both hymns and most probably LESCOT's version as well<sup>1210</sup>

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<sup>1197</sup> REŞİD (interview).

<sup>1198</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 23 (www). Terminology and typography adjusted.

<sup>1199</sup> The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 368-375; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, pp. 364-368.

<sup>1200</sup> On terminology, cf. KREYENBROEK (interview); KREYENBROEK, *Yazîdî, Yazîdiyya* (EI), vol. XI, p. 315; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 49.

<sup>1201</sup> Cf. LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr*, p. 66.

<sup>1202</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 179 (www).

<sup>1203</sup> Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 51; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr*, p. 66; The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>1204</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 29-30, 32, 35, 72, 74.

<sup>1205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>1206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 42.

<sup>1207</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 45. – Cf. ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 55.

<sup>1208</sup> Originally published in LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr*, pp. 65-66. Summarised in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 146; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 364-365.

include notions of an eschatological defeat of Islam,<sup>1211</sup> a sensitive topic that might further limit the general knowledge of the storylines among the Yezidis.

## 2) Regional difference:

The primary holders of the sacred and learned textual traditions are the members of the *ḳawāl* “order”<sup>1212</sup> who only live in Ba<sup>ʿ</sup>*shīḳa* and Baḥzānē, forming a twin settlement in the *Shēḳhān* region east of Mosul, Iraq.<sup>1213</sup> The region (that also includes the holiest Yezidi place *Lālīsh*) is thus the centre of the Yezidi tradition;<sup>1214</sup> the more distant or isolated is a place from *Shēḳhān*, the more likely are the local Yezidi beliefs to differ from the mainstream Yezidi tradition.

## 3) Current developments of Yezidism:

The Yezidis in Germany and Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region have been rethinking the essence of their religion.<sup>1215</sup> Many of them portray Yezidism as an original religion with ancient roots<sup>1216</sup> while trying “to weed out Islamic elements as far as possible”.<sup>1217</sup> This may result in stressing the role of metempsychosis, which is probably viewed as more particular to Yezidism than the linear eschatological concepts.

# 3 Chapter Three: Tables and Overviews

## 3.1 Transliteration of Vowels

Encyclopaedia of Islam	Other transcriptions	Kurdish	Czech
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<sup>1209</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, pp. 167-168; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, pp. 6-7; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 33.

<sup>1210</sup> At one point of the account, his Yezidi informant “obstinately refused to continue” (LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66), which may be explained by feeling of sensitivity of the contents towards Islam (cf. a similar case in ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 51).

<sup>1211</sup> LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 66; The Hymn of Sherfedin in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 372; The Hymn of the False Saviour *ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>1212</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 39; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 15 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 132, 141; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 7, 45; ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 39:53 (documentary film – quoting the Chief *ḳawāl* SILEMĀN SAVŌ).

<sup>1213</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 35; KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*, p. 112; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 47.

<sup>1214</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 50.

<sup>1215</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 50; BENNINGHAUS, *Friedhöfe als Quellen für Fragen des Kulturwandels*, p. 261; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 38-40; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, pp. 47, 57.

<sup>1216</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 3 (quoting the Yezidi *faḳīr* KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO); SHAMŌ (interview with Chief *Faḳīr* HADJĪ SHAMŌ); SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 40.

<sup>1217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.



a	ä	e	a
ā	â	a	á
e	e	–	e
ē	ê	ê	é
i	i / ə	i	i / e
ī	î	î	í
ï (Russian)	y	–	y
ï (Turkic)	ı	–	i, ı
o	o	–	o
ō	ô	o	ó
u	u	u	u
ū	û	û	ú
-iyya	-īya, -īyah	-îye	-íja

### 3.2 Transliteration of Consonants

Encyclopaedia of Islam	Other transcriptions	Kurdish	Czech
' (glottal stop)	ʾ, ʔ	–	–, ' , ʾ
ˤ (pharyngeal)	ع	‘	–, ' , ˤ, ‘
č	ch	ç	č
ḍ	ḍ	z, d	d
<u>dh</u>	<u>d</u>	z	z, dh
<u>dj</u>	ğ, j	c	dž
<u>gh</u>	ğ, γ	x <sup>ˆ</sup>	gh
ḥ	ḥ	h <sup>ˆ</sup>	h
ḵ	q	q	k, q
<u>kh</u>	ḫ, x	x	ch
ş	ş	s	s
<u>sh</u>	š	ş	š

ṭ	ṭ	t	t
th	t	s	s, th
y	ĭ, j	y	j
z	z	z	z
ž	zh	j	ž

### 3.3 Variety of Appellations of the Adherents of Yezidism

Language	Standard (or the most common) name	Names used marginally
English	Yazidis <sup>1</sup> / Yezidis <sup>2</sup>	Ezidi(s), <sup>3</sup> Ezidian(s), <sup>4</sup> Izedis, <sup>5</sup> Izidians, <sup>6</sup> Izydians, <sup>7</sup> Yezeedees, <sup>8</sup> Yezidees, <sup>9</sup> Yezidians, <sup>10</sup> Yezidies, <sup>11</sup> Yezidiz, <sup>12</sup> Yezids <sup>13</sup>
French	Yezidis <sup>14</sup> / Yézidis <sup>15</sup>	Iasidies, <sup>16</sup> Iésides, <sup>17</sup> Yésidi, <sup>18</sup> Yezidi, <sup>19</sup> Yézidiz <sup>20</sup>
German	Yeziden <sup>21</sup>	Êzîden, <sup>22</sup> Jesiden, <sup>23</sup> Jessiden, <sup>24</sup> Jezidäer, <sup>25</sup> Jeziden, <sup>26</sup> Jezidi, <sup>27</sup> Jezidis, <sup>28</sup> Jeziditen, <sup>29</sup> Yazidi, <sup>30</sup> Yesidi, <sup>31</sup> Yesidis, <sup>32</sup> Yezidi <sup>33</sup>
Italian	Yazidi <sup>34</sup> / Yezidi <sup>35</sup>	Jazidj <sup>36</sup>
Russian	ezidy <sup>37</sup>	-----

- 1 A publication from 1975 listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 284, and elsewhere in Western writings clearly marked by the usage of Arabic, which is most prominently the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (its article on Yezidism is quoted here as KREYENBROEK, *Yazîdî, Yazîdiyya* - EI).
- 2 As early as 1904 in an article listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 278, and henceforth slowly accepted as the English standard.
- 3 Used in the name of an Arabic-language website (<<http://www.ezidi-affairs.com>>) run in Iraq by a certain Maktab al-Shu'un al-Ēzîdiyya [Yezidi Affairs Bureau], obviously a platform of Yezidi writers and activists from Bahzānē and the Sindjār region.
- 4 Another solitary term used on the title page of the Yezidi journal *Roj* [Rōž – “Sun”], No. 1, published in 1996, and clearly hinting at the political correctness of proponenting a term that is as close as possible to the Kurdish original.
- 5 Articles from the 1850's and 1860's listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 277.
- 6 In the title (not the text) of the article quoted here as BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion* (www).
- 7 Passim in the text of the article mentioned above (Footnote 6).
- 8 Book published in 1850 and quoted here as FLETCHER, *Notes from Nineveh, and Travels in Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Syria*.
- 9 Articles from the 1890's listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 278.
- 10 Title page of the Yezidi journal *Roj* [Rōž – “Sun”], No. 10, published in 2001, and some internet publications, e.g. ZINDA MAGAZINE (org.), *Assyrians in Sweden Host Lectures by Yezidian Leader* (www).
- 11 An article from 1842 listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 288.
- 12 Only in the subtitle (*The Sacred Books and Traditions of the Yezidiz*) of the book published in 1919 and quoted here by its main title: JOSEPH, *Devil Worship* (www). Curiously, the form “Yezidis” has been used throughout the text of the book.
- 13 An article from 1898 listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 283.
- 14 An article from as early as 1932 listed *ibid.*, p. 289.
- 15 An article from as early as 1896 listed *ibid.*, p. 281.
- 16 A treatise from about 1700 listed *ibid.*, p. 278.
- 17 An article from 1890 listed *ibid.*, p. 289.
- 18 An article from 1895 listed in *ibid.*, p. 281.

- 19 An article from 1899 listed *ibid.*, p. 298.
- 20 An article from 1892 listed *ibid.*, p. 292. – Cf. the subtitle of the English-language book quoted here as JOSEPH, *Devil Worship* (ww) and mentioned in Footnote 12 above.
- 21 Recent German-language publications such as DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*; GUNDLACH, *Yeziden*; KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*; but, also an article from as early as 1851 listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 293.
- 22 Usually Kurdish sources writing in German, e.g. the *Yeziden-Colloquium* website (<<http://www.yeziden-colloquium.de/>>). On a similar term in English and its apparent motives of “political correctness”, see Footnotes 3 and 4 above.
- 23 Articles from 1897 and 1898 listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 291 and 286, respectively.
- 24 An article from 1927 listed *ibid.*, p. 293.
- 25 An article from 1853 listed *ibid.*, p. 284.
- 26 Something from the classics of Yezidi studies – an edition and translation of the alleged Yezidi “sacred books”, published in an article in 1913 and listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 280.
- 27 An article from 1918 listed *ibid.*, p. 288.
- 28 Articles from 1908 and 1911 listed *ibid.*, pp. 288 and 285, respectively.
- 29 An article from 1904 listed *ibid.*, p. 285.
- 30 An article from 1954 listed *ibid.*, p. 292.
- 31 An article from 1959 listed *ibid.*, p. 289.
- 32 An article from 1890 listed *ibid.*, p. 281.
- 33 A publication from 1984 listed *ibid.*, p. 297.
- 34 A national encyclopaedia entry from 1937 listed *ibid.*, p. 287.
- 35 An article from the 1930's listed *ibid.*, pp. 285-286.
- 36 An article from 1807 listed *ibid.*, p. 286.
- 37 E.g. the article quoted here as ASATRIAN, *O “brate i sestre zagrobnoy žizni” v religioznīkh verovaniyakh ezidov* [On the “Brother and Sister of the Hereafter” in the Religious Beliefs of the Yezidis] and the Russian-language publications from various periods listed in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 283, 284, 296.

### 3.4 Etymologies of the Names of the Yezidis and Yezidism

Supposed original word	Who believes in this origin
YAZĪD (IBN MU <sup>c</sup> AWIYA) – name of a historical Islamic ruler, partially identified with the Yezidi theophany ĒZĪ <sup>1218</sup>	“most Western scholars” at present; <sup>1219</sup> strongly rejected by a large part of contemporary Yezidis <sup>1220</sup>
Iranic word root for “venerating” or “sacrificing”, <sup>1221</sup> identified in Zoroastrian <sup>1222</sup> and Modern Persian terms and probably retained in the Kurdish Ēzdān (used by Yezidis for “God”) <sup>1223</sup>	earlier Western researchers, and still many Yezidis <sup>1224</sup>
religious terms of ancient Mesopotamia, especially Ezida – name of the temple of god Nabu <sup>1225</sup>	a part of contemporary Yezidis, including religious dignitaries <sup>1226</sup> and “theologians”, <sup>1227</sup> some attempts in this direction have been undertaken by Western scholars, too <sup>1228</sup>
Kurdish folk etymology – either based on the Yezidi's assertion <i>az Khwadē dām</i> (“I was created by God”) <sup>1229</sup> or on God's declaration <i>az dā</i> (“I [have] created”) <sup>1230</sup>	apparently many Yezidis today <sup>1231</sup>

<sup>1218</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 48-49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 27-28, 37, 50, 95-96; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 32.

<sup>1219</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>1220</sup> E.g. BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, p. 27 (www).

<sup>1221</sup> GNOLI, *Yazatas* (ER), p. 503.

<sup>1222</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>1223</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>1224</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>1225</sup> Cf. BAHZANI, *Izidian Religion*, pp. 4-8 (www).

<sup>1226</sup> KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 3 (quoting the Yezidi *faḳīr* KHIDIR BEREKAT KASO).

<sup>1227</sup> RASHOW in his article written as DJINDĪ, *Lamahāt min al-ustūra wa 'l-takwīn wa sirr a'yād al-Īzīdiyya* [Mythology, Genesis, and the Mystery of the Festivals of Yezidism in a Glance], passim.

<sup>1228</sup> The hypothesis that the central Yezidi theophany Tāwsī Malak could be identical with the ancient deity Tammūz was discussed by European academics in 1897-1930 (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 5, 22).

<sup>1229</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 32.

<sup>1230</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* (EI), p. 313.

<sup>1231</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 32.

### 3.5 Leaders of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya Community in Lālīsh

Name	Relation to His Predecessor	Leadership Period	Place and Manner of Death
<sup>c</sup> ADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR <sup>1</sup>	founder, master, and eponym of al- <sup>c</sup> Adawiyya order	circa 1111 <sup>2</sup> - -circa 1163 <sup>3</sup>	most probably Lālīsh; <sup>4</sup> presumably natural death <sup>5</sup> (his tomb in Lālīsh was sacked and bones burnt in 1254 <sup>6</sup> or 1415 <sup>7</sup> , or both)
'ABU 'L-BARAKĀT <sup>8</sup> IBN ṢAKHR IBN MUSĀFĪR <sup>9</sup>	nephew <sup>10</sup> (son of <sup>c</sup> ADĪ's brother ṢAKHR) <sup>11</sup>	circa 1163- -circa 1190 <sup>12</sup>	most probably Lālīsh; presumably natural death <sup>13</sup>
<sup>c</sup> ADĪ IBN 'ABI 'L-BARAKĀT <sup>14</sup>	son	circa 1190 <sup>15</sup> - -1221 or 1223	Marāgha (now in Iran); executed by the Mongols <sup>16</sup>
ḤASAN IBN <sup>c</sup> ADĪ IBN 'ABI 'L-BARAKĀT	son	1221 or 1223 <sup>17</sup> - 1246 or 1254	Mosul; executed or killed in jail by an ally of the Mongols <sup>18</sup>
SHARAF AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD IBN ḤASAN	son <sup>19</sup>	1254-1257 or 1258 <sup>20</sup>	Kemākh (Kemah, Turkey); <sup>21</sup> battle against the Mongols <sup>22</sup>
FAKHR AL-DĪN IBN <sup>c</sup> ADĪ IBN 'ABI 'L-BARAKĀT	uncle (a brother of ḤASAN) <sup>23</sup>	1257 or 1258- -1276 <sup>24</sup> / 1281 <sup>25</sup>	probably Egypt; unknown <sup>26</sup> / probably Mosul or Lālīsh; executed by the Mongols <sup>27</sup>

1 The original Arab name of the Yezidi theophany *Shīkhādī*.

2 The latest possible date of <sup>c</sup>ADĪ's moving to the Kurdish mountains (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28; TRITTON, *Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* – EI, vol. I, p. 195).

3 The farthest possible date of <sup>c</sup>ADĪ's death (ibid.).

4 A hypothesis (based on Christian sources quoted in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31) suggests that it was only the second successor of <sup>c</sup>ADĪ's, and coincidentally his namesake, who has moved the community seat to the Lālīsh valley. – Cf. Footnote 14 below.

5 Supposing it can be taken literally that he had enough time to utter a “deathbed wish” (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 18).

6 KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31. – See also Footnote 18 below.

7 The Egyptian historian TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-MAKRĪZĪ (1364-1442) quoted ibid., p. 35. – See also Footnote 18 below.

8 This is most probably a nickname standing in Arabic for “the holder of blessings” (i.e. of spiritual powers). On the meaning of *baraka* (pl. *barakāt*), see COLIN, *Baraka* (EI), vol. I, p. 1032; SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 82.

9 His position in the family tree of <sup>c</sup>ADĪ's becomes clearer through the full name of ḤASAN (i.e. within a chain of his ancestors) as given in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 31, 41.

- 10 <sup>°</sup>ADĪ was childless but his nephew came from their common native place and joined his uncle in the Kurdish mountains (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 30). He was elected to lead the community upon <sup>°</sup>ADĪ's "deathbed wish" (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 18). Little details are known about the life of <sup>°</sup>ADĪ's nephew among his uncle's disciples (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 30) but it seems that "the order... attracted new disciples" (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 18-19) under this "pious Muslim, opposed to innovations and excesses" (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 30).
- 11 See Footnote 9 above.
- 12 While the former date is based on the information available on <sup>°</sup>ADĪ's death (TRITTON, *°Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* – EI, vol. I, p. 195), the latter is a mere guess I have dared to undertake for orientation purposes. It is based on the following references: ABU 'L-BARAKĀT "had come to Lālīsh many years" before <sup>°</sup>ADĪ passed away (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 18, transcription adjusted) but he too reached longevity (ibid., p. 19); it is known at the same time that ABU 'L-BARAKĀT's grandson ḤASAN was born in 1195 (ibid.), which suggests that the latter's father, i.e. ABU 'L-BARAKĀT's son and successor, must have been considered of a socially mature age by the early 1190's.
- 13 This can be understood from the reference that "he died at an advanced age and was buried near... <sup>°</sup>ADĪ's tomb" (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 19; transcription adjusted).
- 14 In academic literature sometimes called <sup>°</sup>ADĪ II (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 30) and probably known as <sup>°</sup>ADĪ AL-KURDĪ (i.e. "°ADĪ the Kurd") within the community itself, as he was its first leader born among the Kurds (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 19). Although some Christian sources from the 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries imply that it was <sup>°</sup>ADĪ II, not <sup>°</sup>ADĪ IBN MUSĀFĪR, to have established the community centre in *Laliş* (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31), the overall evidence for this claim seems to be insufficient (ibid., pp. 31, 41).
- 15 See Footnote 12 above.
- 16 <sup>°</sup>ADĪ II was brought to Marāgha (currently a city in western Iran) for the investigation of allegations that he had incited an attack against a monastery (NAU + TFINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, pp. 61-62) identified by some Christian authors with the shrine in Lālīsh (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 30; cf. Footnote 14 above). <sup>°</sup>ADĪ II had pleaded he was innocent (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 30-31) but was executed upon by order of the Mongol ruler HÜLEGÜ. Pointing at discrepancies in historical records, NAU and TFINKDJI (*Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 62) assume it was the latter date.
- 17 Among al-<sup>°</sup>Adawiyya presbyters, ḤASAN is a rare instance where also the year of birth is known: 1195 (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 18; cf. Footnote 12 above). – On the disputable date when he assumed leadership, see Footnote 16 above.
- 18 The local ruler of Mosul BADR AL-DĪN LU'LU' (in Kurdish Badradīn Lōlō; ruled 1211-1259) obviously perceived the Lālīsh community as a threat to his own power ambitions (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 19-23) and to his collaboration with the Mongols (ibid., p. 21). Therefore, he had seized ḤASAN and brought him to Mosul for execution in 1254, at least "according to most sources" (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31). But some accounts have it that ḤASAN had imprisoned in the citadel of Mosul already in 1246 (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 21) and strangled. But it seems quite definite that 1254 witnessed a punitive expedition sent by BADR AL-DĪN to Lālīsh. Some 200 members of al-<sup>°</sup>Adawiyya order were killed and the bones of their patron <sup>°</sup>ADĪ apparently taken out from his grave and burnt (quotations of Baghdad-based chronicler KAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN AL-FUWAṬĪ who lived 1244-1323 summarised in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21, 234; on the same Arab writer, cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 31, 41; ROSENTHAL, *Ibn al-Fuwaṭī* – EI, vol. III, pp. 769-770). But according to the Egyptian historian TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-MAKRĪZĪ (1364-1442; quoted ibid., pp. 34-35), the desecration of <sup>°</sup>ADĪ's earthly remains took place during another raid on Lālīsh in 1414-1415 (ibid.; TRITTON, *°Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* – EI, vol. I, p. 195).
- 19 An older hypothesis suggesting that SHARAF AL-DĪN was ḤASAN's brother (e.g. NAU + TFINKDJI, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 62) has been found implausible (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 42).
- 20 GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 22; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 33.
- 21 The Syriac bishop BAR HEBRAEUS (1225 or 1226-1286; also known as BAR <sup>°</sup>EBHRĀYĀ or IBN AL-<sup>°</sup>IBRĪ; see SEGAL, *Ibn al-<sup>°</sup>Ibrī* – EI, vol. III, pp. 804-805) quoted in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 22, 235. GUEST, ibid., p. 22 identifies the place as a gorge 33 miles (i.e. some 53 kilometres) down the stream of

the Euphrates river from the city of Erziñdjan (Erzincan). At present, it is a town in eastern Turkey, and it used to be an Arab-Byzantine frontier fortress also known as Kamakh or Kemakh (IMBER, *Kemakh* – EI, vol. IV, pp. 870-871).

- 22 SHARAF AL-DIN offered his services to the alliance of the Saldjūkid sultan of Konya, KAYKĀ'US (also known as 'IZZ AL-DIN KAYKĀWUS II), trying to stop the Mongol invasion to Anatolia (ibid., pp. 21-22; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 33) and to deprive the sultan's pro-Mongol brother RUKN AL-DIN KILIDI ARSLAN IV of influence (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 21-22). It is a bitter irony that the sides of dispute reached a deal after the Kemakh battle (ibid.). One can expect that SHARAF AL-DIN brought some troops from among al-ʿAdawiyya members, and it may be open to speculation whether his (and their, respectively) battle fervour was driven by a private cause of revenge against the Mongols after they had executed SHARAF AL-DIN's grandfather and their Mosul-based ally BADR AL-DIN LU'LU', eventually killed the father of SHARAF AL-DIN (see Footnotes 16 and 18 above).
- 23 SHARAF AL-DIN had a son named ZAYN AL-DIN YUSUF who passed his right of succession on FAKHR AL-DIN, a brother of the slain HASAN (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 33), i.e. his own great-uncle. On an unknown date, ZAYN AL-DIN departed from Mesopotamia to Damascus and then ʿAdi's native place Bayt Fār. Supporters had apparently flocked behind him in the both places because their generous donations allowed him to live a luxury (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34). He settled later in Cairo and died there in 1297, buried in a mausoleum (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25, Plate 36; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34). Sufi centres were left behind in the three places of his stay (ibid.). In 1330-1331, in Cairo again, his son 'IZZ AL-DIN was arrested and later died in prison as his armed followers had been investigated by the Mamlūks for suspicions of preparing a coup (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 26; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34).
- 24 The date is an estimate based on the reference in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34 that, in 1275, FAKHR AL-DIN “had to face a rebellion by his brother SHAMS AL-DIN, whom he forced to flee in Syria” but “for unknown reasons”, FAKHR AL-DIN himself escaped to Egypt “a year later” (i.e. presumably 1276; of course, determining the year with certainty would depend on the calendar used by the Christian author BAR HEBRAEUS who is the source of this information).
- 25 According to KREYENBROEK's interpretation of reports by BAR HEBRAEUS (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 33-34, 42), FAKHR AL-DIN had tried to be on good terms with the Mongols and even married a Mongol woman. One of the brothers (implied by KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 42 to have been SHAMS AL-DIN) came back from his exile and was executed. –
- However, BAR HEBRAEUS' account as presented by GUEST (*Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 24-25) shows that the “younger brother” (whereby names are not mentioned in the chronicle of BAR HEBRAEUS – cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 42) had a Mongol wife, which resulted in a dispute with his “elder brother” (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 24). The “elder brother” then moved to Syria with four hundred of his followers (ibid.). As the territory of the Levant underlied to the rule of the Egyptian Mamlūks, the Mongols' only serious military contenders (GLUBB, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 208-210), the latter can have thought that the loyalty of the “elder brother” was at stake (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 25). He returned repentant in 1281, but as the Mongols were in a new war against the Mamlūks, they put him to death (ibid.). –
  - According to the version given in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 24, “the younger brother”, i.e. that one who had married the Mongol woman, fled with her to Egypt a year after his elder brother's transfer to Syria. –
  - KREYENBROEK (*Yezidism*, p. 42) assumes that the “elder brother” mentioned by BAR HEBRAEUS was FAKHR AL-DIN because his was the more natural right to leadership, simply by the virtue of age. –
  - In a different arrangement of the premises mentioned above, NAU and TFINKDJI (*Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 64) claim that SHAMS AL-DIN was the brother who had married a Mongol woman and, at the same time, that one who fled to Syria. –
  - Unless the original account by BAR HEBRAEUS or its adequate translation are inspected in detail, the variations and discrepancies found in the literature can hardly be settled. For the time being, an alternative interpretation of the information obtained from secondary sources can be summed up in the following points:

1. FAKHR AL-DĪN and SHAMS AL-DĪN were brothers of ḤASAN, the late head of al-°Adawiyya community. Both thus were uncles of SHARAF AL-DĪN, the son of ḤASAN who was entrusted with the leadership position after his father's death and the Lālīsh massacre in 1254 (see Footnote 18 above).
  2. When SHARAF AL-DĪN had died in 1257-1258, FAKHR AL-DĪN was chosen to succeed him, partly due to being older than his brother SHAMS AL-DĪN.
  3. As his immediate predecessors had died at the hands of the Mongols or their allies, FAKHR AL-DĪN chose to appease the Mongol rulers for the sake of al-°Adawiyya community survival (cf. KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 4: FAKHR AL-DĪN “was on good terms with the Mongols”).
  4. FAKHR AL-DĪN would, however, take it as fully sufficient to claim a formal political allegiance to the Mongols and otherwise keep a low profile. Therefore, he was displeased with his younger brother SHAMS AL-DĪN's marriage with a Mongol woman, which probably in his opinion went too far and, moreover, may have been seen as an outrage to the memory of the slain relatives (see Point 3 above). However, it is known that SHARAF AL-DĪN and SHAMS AL-DĪN earlier cooperated with the Mongol commander TUMAN, nephew of ČINGIZ-KHĀN himself although the former had been indirectly responsible for the execution of °ADĪ II in 1281 (NAU + FINKDJĪ, *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, pp. 61-64 – cf. Footnotes 14 and 16 above).
  5. The Mongol marriage issue grew beyond the scope of a simple family quarrel, and possibly led to a rift within the ranks of al-°Adawiyya.
  6. FAKHR AL-DĪN took a large number of his followers in 1275 and passed with them to Syria, ruled by enemies of the Mongols. (Of course, it is a question of its own why he did that: maybe the developments in Lālīsh did not go in his favour; maybe the danger appeared that his brother SHAMS AL-DĪN could use some Mongol support for taking action against him; maybe he wanted to get rid of the Mongol yoke once for all; finally, he may have planned to join his great-nephew ZAYN AL-DĪN YŪSUF who had successfully set up Sufi centres in Damascus and Bayt Fār – see Footnote 23 above.)
  7. SHAMS AL-DĪN stayed close to the remnants of the community in Lālīsh but, for some reason, found his position untenable. Therefore, he took only his wife (or possibly a circle of his closest) and escaped to Egypt in 1276 – far enough from the Mongol influence and from his brother. No news was further available on him. (It should be recalled that his great-nephew ZAYN AL-DĪN YŪSUF moved to Cairo after a stay in the Levant – see Footnote 23 above.)
  8. FAKHR AL-DĪN decided to go back to Mesopotamia. (Again, his motives are not clear: maybe he found it difficult to establish himself with his numerous company in the new environment; maybe they faced suspicions on the part of local authorities as an alien and undoubtedly armed force; maybe FAKHR AL-DĪN learned that his brother had been away and felt the opportunity to resume his leadership over the orphaned *Laliş* community; finally, some dealings with ZAYN AL-DĪN YŪSUF or his new Levantine followers, whether with a positive or a negative outcome, may have been a factor – see Footnote 23 above.)
  9. Upon his arrival in 1281, FAKHR AL-DĪN failed to persuade the Mongols in Mesopotamia that his six-year-long absence was an internal matter of his family and mystical circle, not a step directed against the Mongols' sovereignty over these people. The Mongols, on their part, saw FAKHR AL-DĪN's leave as an act of disobedience and possibly suspected him of collaboration with the Mamlūks, and had him executed.
- 26 This is valid if the quotes in Footnote 24 above are true. But cf. Footnote 25 above, casting considerable doubt on the information quoted in Footnote 24.
- 27 This seems much more admissible than the “Egyptian” hypothesis, considering the accounts summarised in Footnote 25 above. The location of FAKHR AL-DĪN's death is an assumption based on the same premises as those mentioned in Footnote 16 above.

### 3.6 Interlinked Theophany Identities in Yezidi Legendary History



Yezidi (archangel) <sup>2</sup>	Yezidi (angel) <sup>10</sup>	Islamic <sup>18</sup>	Biblical / Christian / Ancient <sup>27</sup>	Legendary / Folklore
°Azrāyīl <sup>3</sup> (Azrael)	<b>Tāwsī Malak</b> <sup>11</sup>	ĒZĪ / YAẒĪD <sup>19</sup> (sixth Muslim caliph)	<i>Bextēnesr</i> <sup>28</sup> (NEBUCHADNEZZAR)	<b>Khidrilyās</b> <sup>35</sup> / <b>Bahlūl</b> <sup>36</sup>
Dardāyīl <sup>4</sup>	<b>Shēkh Hasan / Shēkh Sin</b> (ḤASAN) <sup>12</sup>	MUḤAMMAD <sup>20</sup> (the Prophet of Islam) / ḤASAN AL-BAŞRĪ <sup>21</sup> (Sufi)	-----	-----
Isrāfīl <sup>5</sup>	<b>Shēshims</b> (SHAMS AL-DĪN) <sup>13</sup>	SHAMS AL-DĪN AL-TABRĪZĪ <sup>22</sup> (Sufi)	°Īsā <sup>29</sup> (Jesus) / Artēmūs <sup>30</sup> (Artemis)	-----
Mīkāyīl <sup>6</sup> (Michael)	<b>Shēkh Ōbakir</b> (ABŪ BAKR) <sup>14</sup>	'ABŪ BAKR <sup>23</sup> (first caliph) / °ABD AL-ĶĀDIR AL-DĶĪLĀNĪ <sup>24</sup> (Islamic scholar)	-----	-----
Djibrāyīl <sup>7</sup> (Gabriel)	<b>Sidjādīn</b> (SADJĶĶĶĶĶĶ AL-DĶĶĶĶ) <sup>15</sup>	°ALĶĶ <sup>25</sup> (fourth caliph)	-----	-----
Shamnāyīl <sup>8</sup>	<b>Nāsirdīn</b> (NĀŞĶĶ AL-DĶĶĶĶ) <sup>16</sup>	°UMAR <sup>26</sup> (second caliph)	Nasrūkh <sup>31</sup> (Nisroch)	-----
Nūrāyīl <sup>9</sup>	<b>Fakhradīn</b> (FAKḤR AL-DĶĶĶĶ) <sup>17</sup>	-----	Kāmūsh <sup>32</sup> (Kamos) / Mūsā <sup>33</sup> (Moses) / Saint Hormizd <sup>34</sup>	-----

1 The table is based on overviews provided by the following authors: DILKÖVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn wa 'l-takwīn wa khalk al-malā'ika wa nazariyyat al-fayḍ fi 'l-nuṣūṣ al-muḳaddasa* [Creator of the Cosmos, Genesis, Creation of Angels, and Emanation Theory in Sacred Texts], p. 37; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 46-49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 91-124; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* (EI), vol. V, pp. 209-210.

2 The column introduces the Seven Angels, sometimes called the Heptad, the Seven Great Angels or Seven Mysteries (Haft Sur – the term can be found in KREYENBROEK, *Yazīdī, Yazīdiyya* – EI, p. 314; see also KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 169; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99). They are the core of Yezidi mythology. In modern Yezidi interpretations, they can be understood as emanations of the divine essence (DILKÖVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37). –

– The selection introduced in the respective column of this table represents only some versions and sources, and is mainly based on DILKÖVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37. The accounts of the Heptad members frequently differ (ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 34, 283). Some Yezidi texts thus include names that cannot be found in the table here, such as *Shifkayīl* (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99), or what seems to be linguistic variants of the names here (see Notes 3, 5, 8, 9 below). Elsewhere, the first member of the Heptad is implicitly God the Creator, or *Khudāwand* in Kurdish (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 92, 99). –

– In many cases of the names of archangels (Footnotes 3-9 below), their Kurdicised forms published here are secondarily derived from Arabic-based transcriptions, used by the secondary sources (especially in MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, pp. 209-210). However odd this approach may seem, it is applied here for the sake of consistency of name forms.

- 3 Also °Azāzīl (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99) or Zazāyīl (MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209). In some Yezidi versions, both °Azrāyīl and °Azāzīl appear together (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99). In the Islamic tradition, °Azāzīl is a fallen angel, or rather an alternative name for the devil (VAJDA, °Azāzīl – EI, vol. I, pp. 811-812; WENSINCK + GARDET, *Iblīs* – EI, vol. III, p. 669), whereby some relation is assumed to Biblical °Azāzēl, probably a desert demon (VAJDA, °Azāzīl – EI, vol. I, p. 811). These facts, be they merely linguistic, may have some significance for the study of the role that the conventional symbols and designations of “evil” may have played in the constitution of Yezidism.
- In Islam, °Azrā’īl (or °Izrā’īl) is one of the four archangels and the angel of death (WENSINCK, °Izrā’īl – EI, vol. IV, p. 293), and occupies the latter position in Yezidism, too (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99). Sporadically, this angel has been identified in Yezidism with the character of Sidjādīn (ibid., p. 100; see Note 15 below) whose reference archangel is Djibrāyīl. Otherwise, °Azrāyīl in Yezidism forms a pair with Djibrāyīl (see Note 7 below). The pair of archangels thus represents the complexity of God’s powers (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 100), where °Azrāyīl would embody the “mysterium tremendum” (i.e. frightening aspects of the sacred).
- 4 Also Dirdāyīl (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99). This angelic character seems to be specific to Yezidism. The word *dard* in Kurdish (as well as its homophone in Persian) means “pain” (CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 133; MILLER, *Persidsko-russkii slovar’* [Persian-Russian Dictionary], p. 213).
- 5 Also Isrāfāyīl (MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209). In Islam, one of the four archangels who is related to the initiation to prophetic mission, the Resurrection, and Paradise (WENSINCK, *Isrāfīl* – EI, vol. IV, p. 211).
- 6 In Islam, one of the four archangels. In the text of the Koran, he is called Mīkāl, and several other names appear in the Arabo-Islamic usage (WENSINCK, *Mīkāl* – EI, vol. VII, p. 25). According to the Islamic tradition, this angel played a special role in the religious disputes of the early Islamic community with the Jews (ibid.), and a Muslim legend says that Michael and Gabriel (see Note 7 below) were the first to bow before Adam when he had been created (WENSINCK, *Mīkāl* – EI, vol. VII, p. 25). This reference can be important for a comparative study on the symbols and designations of “evil” and their role in the constitution of Yezidism. –
- KREYENBROEK (*Yezidism*, p. 101) points out that a version of *Mashafā Rash* (“Black Scripture”, one of the two alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism) identifies this angel with Shīkhādī (i.e. the historical °Adī) while an alternative version of *Mashafā Rash* relates Shīkhādī to archangel Gabriel (on whom see Note 7 below). In the Islamic tradition again, it seems that Michael and Gabriel are somehow intertwined (WENSINCK, *Mīkāl* – EI, vol. VII, pp. 25-26), on which cf. the above-mentioned legend on their bowing to Adam. But precisely this act of archangels is seen as negative in Yezidi interpretations of the creation of Adam and actually plays against the identification of Shīkhādī with any archangel but the first of the Heptad (cf. Note 11 below).
- 7 In Islam (called in Arabic Djabrā’īl or Djibrīl), he is one of the four archangels and the angel of the revelation of the Koran (PEDERSEN, *Djabrā’īl* – EI, vol. II, p. 362). In Yezidism, he is also seen as a member of the pair formed with °Azrāyīl (see Note 3 above), apparently standing there for the “mysterium fascinans” (i.e. enchanting aspects of the sacred). –
- On the identification of this angel with the character of Shīkhādī, see Note 6 above
- 8 Also Shatmāyīl and Samansāyīl (MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 210). This archangelic character seems to be specific to Yezidism. Insofar as possible etymologies of the names are unclear, the following remarks can be made:
1. If seen from the perspective of Arabic, the name Shatmāyīl is based on the root *sh-t-m* that stands for “vituperation”, a rather undesirable behaviour in Yezidism because (besides its ethical implications) it may clash with some verbal taboos.
  2. The name Samansāyīl can be reminiscent of the Arabic *samā’* (meaning “sky”). Concerning the -n- that appears in the middle of the word, the strong nasalisation of the Yezidi-spoken Kurdish should be taken into account – cf. the Yezidi terms Anzal derived from *azal* and *tāndj* from *tādj* (on these words, see IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 154; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 37, RASHOW – interview; WAHBY + EDMONDS, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, pp. 45, 47)

3. The beginning of the name Samansāyīl is also similar to the Kurdish *samā*<sup>c</sup> (the word in Arabic means “hearing”), denoting a session where Yezidi hymns (*ḳawl*) are performed with musical accompaniment (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 76, 152-153).
- 9 Also Tūrāyīl (Tūrā’īl – *ibid.*). The archangel seems to be specific to Yezidism. In its variant Nūrāyīl, the name may be derived from the *nūr*, meaning “(source of) light” in Arabic and a number of other Middle Eastern languages including Kurdish (CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 424). –  
 – As for Tūrā’īl, it resembles the word *tūr*, which in the Koran means “mountain” and always designates Mount Sinai (Koran 19:52; 95:2 in <sup>c</sup>ALI, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān*, pp. 755, 1669) where Moses was, in a sense, enlightened (see above for *nūr* – “light”). Of course, no connection has been confirmed between these lexicographic facts and the Yezidi angel – but, peculiarly, one of the incarnations of this Yezidi archangel is precisely Moses (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49; see Note 33 below).
- 10 Some of the personages in the column bear names of historical leaders or members of al-<sup>c</sup>Adawiyya community while the identity of others is clearly angelic or possibly mixed (both historical and angelic). Their identifications with members of the Heptad may differ (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99; cf. Note 3 above). The variant brought here has been initially taken from the modern Yezidi author DILKÖVĀN (*Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37) and apparently corresponds with one of the known versions of *Mashāfā Rash* (“Black Scripture”, one of the two alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism) as confirmed in KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 99.
- 11 This is the “Peacock Angel”, the central object of Yezidi symbolism and worship. –  
 – Modern Yezidi writer DILKÖVĀN (*Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of Cosmos...], p. 37) reserves this place for “planet Mercury” (which is not fully clear) and places Tāwsī Malak among the archangels in the place of <sup>c</sup>Azrāyīl (cf. Note 3 above), which has also been confirmed elsewhere (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 89). –  
 – One may be willing to assume that *Shīkhādī* would be the “right” incarnation of the prime angel; yet no sufficient evidence has been found to support this expectation. Moreover, *Shīkhādī* has occasionally been identified with other Yezidi angels (see Notes 6 and 7 above).
- 12 The Yezidis call this personage interchangeably *Shēkh Ḥasan* (e.g. HEĆI, *Bawerī û Mîtologiya Êzidîyan* [Bāwarī û Mîtologiyā Êzidîyān – “Faith and Mythology of the Yezidis”], p. 320) or *Shēkh Sin* (e.g. *Ibid.*, p. 159; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 219). The latter form seems to be more frequent in Yezidi sacred texts. EDMONDS who became acquainted with Iraq’s Yezidis in the 1930’s-1940’s heard the name as *Shēkh Asin* (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4), and a similar form is mentioned by MENZEL (*Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209). –  
 – He has been referred to as a “brother” of *Shīkhādī* (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 105) although it is not certain whether this can be understood in the sense of a legendary genealogy. –  
 – In Yezidi cosmology, *Shēkh Ḥasan* is connected with “the Tablet and the Pen” (DILKÖVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37, KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 105-106), indicating the power over word, speech, and thought (cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 105-106). These competences are also ascribed to *Ēzī* (*ibid.*, pp. 95-96) and, to a certain extent, to *Fakhradīn* (see Note 17 below). Besides all that, *Shēkh Ḥasan* is also believed to hold certain curative powers (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 105-106).
- 13 The shortened Arabic title of (al-)Shaykh SHĀMS AL-DĪN is *Shaykh SHĀMS*. Just like the form *Shaykh* <sup>c</sup>ADĪ has been contracted in Yezidi Kurdish into *Shīkhādī*, so is *Shaykh SHĀMS* in the same manner called *Shēshamis* (as one of the pronunciation variants that seem to be heard among the Yezidis) or *Shēshims* (used henceforth in accordance with the Yezidi texts recorded in Romanised Kurdish, e.g. HEĆI, *Bawerī û Mîtologiya Êzidîyan* [Bāwarī û Mîtologiyā Êzidîyān – “Faith and Mythology of the Yezidis”], p. 157; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 219). –  
 – On the historical SHĀMS AL-DĪN (a brother of both ḤASAN and FAKHR AL-DĪN), see Note 12 above and Note 17 below. In Yezidi legendary genealogies, *Shēshims* is a full brother of *Fakhradīn* (see Note 17 below) and a half-brother of *Sidjādīn* and *Nāsirdīn* (see Notes 15 and 16), and the common father of all of

- them is one Ēzdīnā Mīr (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 9). –
- The word *shams* stands for “sun” in Arabic. The tomb of *Shēshims* marks the western end of the valley of *Lālīsh*, which means that the spire of the tomb is the first spot in *Lālīsh* touched by light at sunrise. In Yezidi mythology, *Shēshims* is indeed identified with the sun and his brother *Fakhradīn* with the moon (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27). The text of The Morning Prayer speaks of Yezidis’ “hopes” in *Shēshims* (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 216-219).
- 14** GUEST (*Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 49) mentions ABŪ BAKR as a cousin of °ADĪ and the ancestor of the Čöl dynasty of the current “Yezidi Popes” (SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19). KREYENBROEK (*Yezidism*, p. 101) thinks that Ōbakir may have “played an important role in the history of the faith” because the Yezidi tradition connects him with *kharkā*, a sacramental garment worn by members of the *faḳīr* “order”. –
- In terms of cosmology, Ōbakir has some relation to the astral sphere – “stars, celestial vault, and planets” (DILKŌVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37).
- 15** Also Sidjādīn (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 210). Historically, nothing is known about him. MENZEL (*Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209) gives the name SADJĪDĪD AL-DĪN as an attribute of *Shēkh* Ḥasan (see Note 12 above). In the sphere of Muslim piety, *sadjīdīd* (“prostrator”) has been the epithet of ZAYN AL-°ĀBĪDĪN (658-712 or 713), the Fourth Imam of Shi<sup>ite</sup> Islam, attached to him because of “the numerous times that he prostrated himself before God”; it was “said that the resulting calluses on his forehead needed to be shaved down twice a year” (MOMEN, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, p. 36). By analogy, the same adjective may be connected with any Muslim demonstrating a pious life. –
- In Yezidi legendary genealogies, Sidjādīn is a full brother of Nāsirdīn (see Note 16 below) and a half-brother of *Shēshims* and *Fakhradīn*, the common father of all of them being a certian Ēzdīnā Mīr (see Note 13 above). –
- In Yezidi cosmology, Sidjādīn is related to the vegetative sphere – “herbs and fruits” (DILKŌVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37). –
- In Yezidi imagery, Sidjādīn is a psychopomp (i.e. one who delivers souls of the deceased to the underworld) while his brother Nāsirdīn is the angel of death (see Note 16 below).
- 16** Historical identity unclear. Presumably, one NĀṢĪR AL-DĪN was an executioner in the services of °ADĪ, and Nāsirdīn is thus the angel of death (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 105). A cistern named after him (Hawzē Nāsirdīn) is situated inside the main *Lālīsh* shrine (ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 14:40 – documentary film – images), and a Yezidi legend says that Nāsirdīn washes his knife in it whenever a person dies (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 82). On his link to Sidjādīn (who is a psychopomp) and other personages, see Note 15 above.
- 17** In Kurdish often pronounced with metathesis as *Farkhadīn* (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 42). The angel is related to the moon (KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 27; cf. Note 13 above) and the “sublunary world” (DILKŌVĀN, *Khālīk al-kawn...* [Creator of the Cosmos...], p. 37). He seems to be a beneficent character, connected with healing (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 103) and probably also religious knowledge: in a Yezidi sacred text, his permission is sought for the recitation of hymns (*ḳawl* – *ibid.*), and the first Yezidi “Sunday school” of its kind in Iraq (SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 21) has been named after him (ŘOJ – org., *Madrasat Malak Fakhr al-Dīn fī Ba°shīḳa wa Bahzānē* [The Angel *Fakhradīn* School in Ba°shīḳa and Bahzānē], p. 130).
- 18** Most of the information presented in this column is based on EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 48-49.
- 19** One of the central Yezidi characters, possibly the eponym of the faith itself (cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 95-96) and the source of self-reflection and identity controversies among the modern Yezidis. Historically, YAZĪD IBN MU°ĀWIYA ruled over the Muslim community and state in 680-683, succeeding his father MU°ĀWIYA IBN ABĪ SUFYĀN (who had reigned in 661-680).
- 20** Historically, MUḤAMMAD IBN °ABD ALLĀH lived in ca. 570-632.
- 21** ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ (642-728 or 737) was one of the early Islamic mystics. Yezidis identify him with *Shēkh* Ḥasan (MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209). EDMONDS who had got familiar with the Yezidis of Iraq in the 1930's and 1940's believed that they only use this identification “in conversation with

- strangers” (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 4). However, his memory is honoured in some Yezidi texts that are, by their very nature, clearly meant for an internal Yezidi audience (cf. *Mishabet: The dervish of the city of Basra* in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, pp. 262-279).
- 22 SHAMS AL-DIN AL-TABRIZI (also known as SHAMS-I TABRIZ, or the “Sun of Tabriz”) is a notable personality of the later development stages of Sufism, and has entered history as the spiritual companion and inspirer of the famed mystical poet DJALAL AL-DIN RUMI (1207-1273; see SCHIMMEL, *Shams-i Tabriz(i)* – EI, vol. IX, p. 298).
- 23 Historically, ABU BAKR IBN ABI KUHĀFA ruled over the Muslim community and state in 632-634.
- 24 ʿABD AL-ḲĀDIR AL-DJILĀNĪ (1077 or 1088-1166) revered in Sufism is also present among the personages of Yezidi legendary history (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 72). A shrine in the Yezidi village of Madjnūniyya in the Sinjār region, Iraq is dedicated to ʿABD AL-ḲĀDIR, and the local people believe that his true grave is exactly there, not in Baghdad as has been “officially” recognised by Muslims (ibid.). At the same time, he is identified with one ʿAbdilkādir Raḥmānī (ʿABD AL-ḲĀDIR AL-RAḤMĀNĪ – see ibid., p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 101-102), an eponym of a subdivision of the *shēkh* caste (ibid., p. 31).
- 25 Historically, ʿALĪ IBN ABĪ ṬĀLIB ruled over the Muslim community and state in 656-661. He is the central character of Shiite Islam. He is mentioned in at least two Yezidi sacred texts: once along with another Muslim caliph, ʿUMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 101-102, 236-237), on whom see Note 26 below.
- 26 Historically, ʿUMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB governed the issues of Muslims in 634-644. On his mention in a Yezidi hymn, see Note 25 above.
- 27 What follows below in the table is the most problematic column, where many identifications are unclear or unconfirmed by academic authorities on Yezidism (such as KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*).
- 28 The source here is EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 46-47, retelling a tradition on Yezidi legendary history. Bakhtēnās is identified there with the ancient Babylonian king NEBUCHADNEZZAR also known from the Bible. In the Yezidi version, a boy from a tribe that had represented direct predecessors of the Yezidis was visited by angel Gabriel (see Note 7 above). Gabriel told the boy that he would become famous under the name Bakhtēnās because he had been chosen to conquer Jerusalem. Upon instructions from the angel, this eventually materialised while Bakhtēnās had still been a child (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 47). –
- In the account summarised above, it seems Bakhtēnās was meant as a honorific title, and the word itself can thus be based on a popular etymology (as it approximately means the “Fortune of Victory” or the one “Gifted with Victory”; cf. CHYET, *Kurdish-English Dictionary*, p. 48 on the word *bakht* for “luck, fortune”; the lexeme *naṣr* for “victory” is essentially Arabic). In a version of *Mashafā Rash* (“Black Scripture”, one of the two alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism; see Note 6 above), Bakhtēnās is called Bukhtnaṣar (MENZEL, *Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 211) and referred to as “a king in Babel” who had been a Yezidi (the text of *Mashafā Rash* in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 212). –
- Nevertheless, present-day Yezidi authorities (such as the *faḳīr* XIDIR BEREKAT KASO quoted in KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 3) hold by the view that “Nebuchadnezzar had played an important role in the early history of the Yezidis” (ibid.). The Yezidi quest for origins in the heritage of ancient Mesopotamia is also reflected in discussions on the etymology of the very name “Yezidi”.
- 29 The identification is confirmed by KREYENBROEK (*Yezidism*, p. 119). ʿĪsā is the “Islamic” name of Jesus but it is also used as a surname by a number of Christians and obviously also Yezidis in Syria. According to a Yezidi religion teacher (JUMA – interview), the resurrection of Jesus was implemented by Tāwsī Malak. This would suggest that Yezidism may contain traditions on Jesus that are closer to Christianity rather than Islam (as the latter rejects the crucifixion of Jesus and consequently also his resurrection).
- 30 MENZEL, (*Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209) gives the alternative name Artēmūsh identified with Artemis (Greek goddess). With a varying vocalisation, the name can be found in *Mashafā Rash* (“Black Scripture”, one of the two alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism; see Note 6 above), which only states that “Artēmūs is King SHAMS AL-DIN” and one of “the kings of the ancient Assyrians” (see Note 13 above; for the locus itself, see the text of *Mashafā Rash* e.g. in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 211 – transcription adjusted). The passage deals with Yezidi legendary history. –

- It is obvious that a name resembling Artemis, and probably indeed derived from her name, might have circulated somewhere in the Yezidi tradition, which does not necessarily mean any Yezidi worship or awareness of this ancient deity.
- 31** Nasrūkh is mentioned by KREYENBROEK (*Yezidism*, p. 105) but without any details. MENZEL (*Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209) gives the alternative name Nashrūh and the identifications with Nisroch (an Assyrian deity) and Assyr (unclear). Again, the primary source is *Mashafā Rash* (“Black Scripture”, one of the two alleged “sacred books” of Yezidism; see Note 6 above), according to which Nasrūkh “is NAŠIR AL-DĪN”, among “the kings of the ancient Assyrians” (cf. Note 16 above; for the text, see GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 211 – transcription adjusted). Any statement beyond that should be brought forward with extreme carefulness, on which see Note 30 above.
- 32** As in the cases outlined above (Notes 30 and 31), here too is the only source *Mashafā Rash* (“Black Scripture”; see Notes 6 and 31 above), declaring that Kāmūsh “is King FAKHR AL-DĪN”, one of “the kings of the ancient Assyrians” (see Note 17 above; text available in GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 211 – transcription adjusted). The identification with Kamus, without elaboration, is given by MENZEL (*Kitāb al-Djilwa* – EI, vol. V, p. 209). For commentaries on the ambiguous identities of the quasi-ancient personages in Yezidi sacred history, see Notes 30 and 31 above.
- 33** Mūsā, the Koranic name for Moses, is mentioned in at least one Yezidi sacred text (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 116) in the framework of legendary history (ibid., pp. 178-179). He may be linked to a personage called Shēkh Mūsā Sōr (“Shaykh Red Moses”), or just Shēkhmūs, who is a popular Yezidi saint revered for curative powers (ibid., p. 106) and an eponym of a branch of the *shēkh* caste (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 31-32; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 106).
- 34** The link between Fakhradīn and Rabbān (i.e. Saint) Hormizd is mentioned in EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 47. The man also known as Hurmuzd or Hormuzd is a saint of the Nestorian and Chaldean churches. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century he established a monastery near Alkōsh, not far from Lālīsh (GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 10, 63-64, 313).
- 35** Khidrilyās is a character that integrates the image of two prophets mentioned in the Koran: al-Khiḍr and Ilyās (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 116), the latter known also from the Bible as Elijah. He has gained popularity in folk religiosity throughout the Middle East (SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, p. 63). According to EDMONDS (*A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49), Khidrilyās can be identified with Shīkhādī. A Yezidi hymn declares that Khidrilyās is just one of the names of Tāwsī Malak (DJINDĪ, *Lamahāt min al-ustūra wa ‘l-takwīn wa sirr a‘yād al-‘Izīdiyya* [Mythology, Genesis, and the Mystery of the Festivals of Yezidism in a Glance], p. 36). He seems to be a teacher of esoteric wisdom (ibid., p. 13) and a spirit of nature (ibid., p. 36).
- 36** Known among the Kurds as Bahlūl Dīwāna or Bahlūl Dīn (both meaning “Bahlūl the Mad” – KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 117) and having lived historically at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 19), this character has received acceptance in Sufism and folklore (including the Kurdish oral literature – ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 71) as “the righteous madman” (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 117) or the “wise idiot” (SCHIMMEL, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 19). In Yezidism, he represents an epoch of legendary history (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 33), and so is the case among the Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ who perceive him as a legendary leader of the community. Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ texts situate Bahlūl to Baghdad of the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries where he played the role of a “wise fool” in encounters with the ruler HĀRŪN AL-RASHĪD (HAMZEH’EE, *The Yaresan*, pp. 42-44). Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ also attach to him the attribute Māhī, which is thought to be derived from the name of the region of Media (Māh; ibid., pp. 43, 47-48). A character called Bahlūl is also known in Shiite Islam (ibid., p. 42). –
- In Yezidism, Bahlūl is identified with YAẒĪD (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 49; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 117; see Footnote 19 above) or actually ĒZĪ (KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 96, 117).

### 3.6 Chronology of al-‘Adawiyya and Yezidism

### 11<sup>th</sup> century

**1073-1078:** °ADĪ (later reverred in Yezidism as Shīkhādī) born in Bayt Fār (now in Lebanon).<sup>1232</sup>

### 12<sup>th</sup> century

**1111:** °ADĪ gathers disciples in the Kurdish mountains,<sup>1233</sup> presumably in Lālīsh northeast of Mosul (now in Iraq).

**1160-1163:** °ADĪ dies; buried in Lālīsh.<sup>1234</sup>

**1163-1281:** Al-°Adawiyya community headed by °ADĪ's nephew ABU 'L-BARAKĀT IBN ŞAKHR and his offsprings. (Details in Subchapter 3.5 above.)

### 13<sup>th</sup> century

**1223-1281:** Four successive leaders of al-°Adawiyya community die by the sword. (Details in Subchapter 3.5 above.)

**1254:** Lālīsh sacked and °ADĪ's bones burnt.<sup>1235</sup>

**1275-1331:** Al-°Adawiyya leading lineage members active in the Levant and Egypt.<sup>1236</sup>

### 14<sup>th</sup> century

**1331:** Descendant of Lālīsh community leaders dies in Cairene prison after suspicions of armed conspiracy.<sup>1237</sup>

### 15<sup>th</sup> century

**1414 or 1415:** Lālīsh sacked and °ADĪ's bones burnt<sup>1238</sup> (like already before in 1254).<sup>1239</sup>

### 16<sup>th</sup> century

**1510's:** ḤUSAYN BEG, Yezidi leader of the Dāsīnī tribe, appointed the Ottoman governor of Arbīl (Hawlēr) and Rawāndūz (Rawāndiz; both places being currently in Iraq).<sup>1240</sup>

**Middle of the century:** Persian monarch confirms the title of Yezidis' Dunbalī tribe to the lands around Khōy (now in northwestern Iran). Most of them later convert to Islam.<sup>1241</sup>

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<sup>1232</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 15; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28.

<sup>1233</sup> KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 28; TRITTON, °*Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* (EI), vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>1234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1235</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 18, 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>1236</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 25-26; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34.

<sup>1237</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 26; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 34.

<sup>1238</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 27; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 34-35; TRITTON, °*Adī b. Musāfir al-Hakkārī* (EI), vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>1239</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 18, 21; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 31.

<sup>1240</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 48; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 48.

<sup>1241</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 199.

**1596:** The *Sharaf-nāma* chronicle records a strong Yezidi presence among several Kurdish tribes<sup>1242</sup> as well as around *Djazīrat Ibn ʿUmar* (*Djizīr*, Cizre), *Diyār Bakr* (Diyarbakır; both in Turkey at present), and *Ḥalab* (Aleppo; now in Syria).<sup>1243</sup>

**End of the century:** Growing Yezidi presence in the *Sindjār* (*Shingāl*) mountains (now in Iraq).<sup>1244</sup>

## 17<sup>th</sup> century

**Beginning of the century:** According to the *Sharaf-nāma* chronicle,<sup>1245</sup> a chieftain from the surroundings of *Arbīl* (*Hawlēr*) grabs the rule over the *Dāsinī* tribe. Known as *MUḤAMMAD AL-KURDĪ* (“the Kurd”), *AL-ARBĪLĪ* (“that one from *Arbīl*”), and *AL-BĀTINĪ* (“the esoteric”),<sup>1246</sup> and relating his family tree back to the Yezidi holy personage *Ōbakir* (see Subchapter 3.5. above), he sets a violent end to the tribe's ruling dynasty whose members claimed to be descendants of *ḤASAN* (see Subchapters 3.5 and 3.6 above). Believed to be of supranatural origin<sup>1247</sup> and further known as the house of *Čöl*, the dynasty has won the rule over the Yezidis in the *Shēkhān* region northeast of *Mosul* (including *Lālīsh*). Each of its rulers is recognised as the only Prince (*Mīr*) of the Yezidis,<sup>1248</sup> claiming supremacy over Yezidis worldwide<sup>1249</sup> as a kind of “Yezidi Pope”.<sup>1250</sup>

**1638:** Yezidi contingent led by *MĪRZĀ BEG* helps the Ottomans re-conquer *Baghdad* from the Persians.<sup>1251</sup> (The help to the Ottoman Sultan *MURĀD IV* was still remembered by Yezidi community leaders in 1849 when they mentioned it in a letter of thanks to the then Ottoman Grand Vizier.)<sup>1252</sup>

**1641:** *MĪRZĀ BEG* appointed the Ottoman governor of *Mosul*.<sup>1253</sup>

**Middle of the century:** Nestorian Christians of the *Sindjār* region (now in Iraq) become Yezidis.<sup>1254</sup> Even before in the same region, the already present Yezidi community was known as especially close to Christians.<sup>1255</sup>

**1650:** French Jesuits in *Ḥalab* (Aleppo, Syria) try to launch missionary efforts among the Yezidis around the city.<sup>1256</sup>

**1660's:** Two Yezidi leaders assure an English Protestant chaplain in *Ḥalab* that their people are ready to adopt Christianity.<sup>1257</sup>

**1668:** French Capuchins continue the mission among Yezidis north of *Ḥalab*; dozens baptised.<sup>1258</sup>

<sup>1242</sup> BIDLISĪ, *Sharaf-nāma*, vol. 1, pp. 83-84 (a Russian translation). – Cf. IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 157; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19.

<sup>1243</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 45.

<sup>1244</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 33 (quoting BIDLISĪ's *Sharaf-nāma* chronicle).

<sup>1245</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 49.

<sup>1246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>1247</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 9, 25; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 126.

<sup>1248</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 34, 305; IZADY, *The Kurds*, p. 156.

<sup>1249</sup> TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>1250</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 19.

<sup>1251</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 49.

<sup>1252</sup> The letter quoted *ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>1253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1254</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 150, 239, 260.

<sup>1255</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 33 (quoting BIDLISĪ's *Sharaf-nāma* chronicle).

<sup>1256</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 55, 239.

<sup>1257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>1258</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.



## 18<sup>th</sup> century

**1715:** First Ottoman punitive expedition against the Yezidis of Sindjār, robbing the caravans on the Mosul-Halab road.<sup>1259</sup>

**1743:** Ās, the Yezidi chieftain of Kōya (Kōysandjak, now in Iraq), subdued by Persia's ruler NĀDIR ŠHĀH.<sup>1260</sup>

**Third quarter of the century:** Kurdish prince of Āmēdī (al-<sup>c</sup>Amādiya, now in Iraq) reported to appoint Yezidis routinely to the post of executioner.<sup>1261</sup>

**Circa 1773-1827:** Yezidis operate the ferry service across the Great Zab river (in Arabic: al-Zāb al-Kabīr; in Kurdish: Zēwī Gawra) in the place known today as Eskī Kalak (southeast of Mosul).<sup>1262</sup>

**1767-1809:** At least eight Ottoman strikes against the Yezidi caravan-looters in Sindjār.<sup>1263</sup>

**1785:** The Ottoman governor of Mosul, <sup>c</sup>ABD AL-BĀKĪ PĀSHĀ, and his brother killed while leading

a raid on Yezidi villages.<sup>1264</sup>

## 19<sup>th</sup> century – first half

**1829:** Yezidis' Ḥasanlī tribe permitted to move from the Ottoman empire to the Transcaucasia ruled by Russia.<sup>1265</sup>

**1830's-1918:** More Yezidis escape from under the Ottoman rule to Russia.<sup>1266</sup>

**1832:** Massacres of Yezidis around Mosul at the hands of the half-independent Muslim Kurdish ruler of Rawāndūz (Rawāndiz; now in Iraq) known as Mīrē Kōr (the “Blind Prince”) after his ally <sup>c</sup>ALĪ ĀGHĀ was killed by the Yezidi Prince (*Mīr*) <sup>c</sup>ALĪ BEG.<sup>1267</sup>

**1846:** Yezidis in Sindjār demand an abatement of taxes. Negotiations led by the Ottoman governor of Mosul ṬAYYĀR PĀSHĀ turn into an armed confrontation.<sup>1268</sup>

**1849:** MAḤMŪD KHĀN, a local chieftain in the area south of Wān (Van; now in Turkey), attacks Yezidi tribesmen for their previous help to his rival BADIR KHĀN.<sup>1269</sup>

**1849:** Yezidis obtain the status of a recognised religious community (*millet*) in the Ottoman empire,<sup>1270</sup> in the effect of which each Yezidi individual – including children<sup>1271</sup>

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<sup>1259</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>1260</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>1261</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>1262</sup> Ibid., pp. 59, 241, 281, 288. – The time span has been set here by the dates of publication of two British travelogue accounts reporting this fact, quoted *ibid.*

<sup>1263</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 60, 63.

<sup>1264</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>1265</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>1266</sup> Ibid., pp. 193-194; HERMES + GEISMAR, *Die Yezidi*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>1267</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 45; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 68-69; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 36; McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 42.

<sup>1268</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>1269</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>1270</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 44; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 104, 108.

<sup>1271</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 217.

– should henceforth be entitled to the previously unavailable legal protection.<sup>1272</sup> Encouraged by their British friend, archaeologist AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD<sup>1273</sup> (1817-1894), leading Yezidi dignitaries then compose a letter of appreciation to Sir STRATFORD CANNING (Viscount DE RADCLIFFE; 1786-1880), the British Ambassador in Istanbul, for his successful intervention on their behalf.<sup>1274</sup>

**1849:** Aware of the implications of their legal recognition, the same gathering of Yezidi dignitaries produces another letter, or rather a petition, to the Ottoman Grand Vizier (equivalent of Prime Minister) whom they ask for a five years' transitional period of general exemption<sup>1275</sup> in case they should be included in compulsory military service.<sup>1276</sup> Both texts, i.e. the 1849 Appreciation Letter and the 1849 Petition, are “the oldest official documents of the Yezidis known to exist”.<sup>1277</sup> Nonetheless, they do not provide any explicit information on their religion.<sup>1278</sup>

### **19<sup>th</sup> century – second half**

**1850's:** The Islamic mystical order of al-Nakshbandiyya is reported to be rapidly spreading in the Kurdish areas, with some of its seniors (*shaykh*) disseminating hatred against religious minorities.<sup>1279</sup>

**1853:** Yezidi Prince (Mīr) deposed by the Ottoman governor of Mosul HILMĪ PĀSHĀ.<sup>1280</sup>

**1854:** A local coup in Ottoman-governed Cizre, led by the Kurdish chieftain YAZDĀNŞĪR, is followed by his and his brother MANŞÜR's killing-spree campaign against Yezidis, based on religious motives.<sup>1281</sup>

**1855:** Yezidi horsemen participate in a punitive expedition against YAZDĀNŞĪR, led by the Ottoman governor of Mosul, HILMĪ PĀSHĀ.<sup>1282</sup>

**1872:** The Ottoman governor of Baghdad, MIDHAT PĀSHĀ, orders that Yezidis be recruited for compulsory military service; their dignitaries react with a petition, explaining religious hindrances.<sup>1283</sup>

**1875:** The Ottoman government confirms Yezidis' exemption from recruitment under commutation tax (though its range has not been settled).<sup>1284</sup>

**1885:** Yezidis' exemption from conscription duty cancelled by the Ottoman government.<sup>1285</sup>

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<sup>1272</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-106, 215-218.

<sup>1273</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>1274</sup> Ibid., p. 106. – Full English translation of the document is *ibid.*, pp. 215-217.

<sup>1275</sup> Ibid., p. 218: “...so that our conditions may improve and our community may multiply, which the previous Viziers used to oppress.”

<sup>1276</sup> Full English translation of the document is *ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

<sup>1277</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 116.

<sup>1278</sup> The full English translation, published *ibid.*, pp. 215-218, seems to have been done by CHRISTIAN RASSAM (1808-1872) himself, the British vice-consul in Mosul who was in charge of delivering the letters to their recipients (*ibid.*, p. 215).

<sup>1279</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 106.

<sup>1280</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 116.

<sup>1281</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>1282</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>1283</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>1284</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-123, 126.

<sup>1285</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

**1891:** Twenty-two Yezidis, including the Prince (Mīr), forcibly recruited.<sup>1286</sup>

**1892:** Systemic campaign launched against Yezidis by °UMAR WAHBĪ PĀSHĀ, the Ottoman interim administrator of Mosul,<sup>1287</sup> assisted by his son °ĀŞİM BEG (known henceforth among the Yezidis as Farīk Pāshā or Firīk).<sup>1288</sup>

– **July:** Villages in Shēkhān and Sindjār massacred.<sup>1289</sup>

– **August:** Some 30 Yezidi dignitaries, including the Prince (Mīr), yielded to pressure and converted to Islam<sup>1290</sup> (later, in 1894, allowed to revoke the step).<sup>1291</sup> A hundred of Yezidis contacted the French vice-consul in Mosul, NICOLAS SIOUFFI, to help them adopt Christianity.<sup>1292</sup>

– **September:** The central Yezidi sanctuary in Lālīsh looted, Yezidi relics seized<sup>1293</sup> (eventually returned in 1914),<sup>1294</sup> and local shrines destroyed.<sup>1295</sup>

– **November:** °ĀŞİM BEG's expedition defeated by the Yezidis in Sindjār.<sup>1296</sup>

– **December:** The Ottoman Sultan personally sacked °UMAR WAHBĪ PĀSHĀ and sent an investigation team to Mosul.<sup>1297</sup>

**1893-1904:** The Lālīsh sanctuary turned into mosque.<sup>1298</sup>

### **20<sup>th</sup> century – first half**

**1905:** Twenty-five Yezidi families reported by a Russian traveller to remain in a settlement in northwestern Persia, probably the last Yezidis in what is now Iran.<sup>1299</sup>

**1908:** The Hamidiye militias, protesting the Ottoman government's decision on their partial dissolution, stir up unrest and kill Yezidis around Mardin (now in Turkey).<sup>1300</sup>

**1908-1909:** In a first endeavour of its kind, ISMĀ°İL BEG of the Princely (Mīr) family inspects Yezidi communities in Russia's Transcaucasia.<sup>1301</sup>

**1913:** Yezidi leaders addressed by Kurdish nationalists to join a united front against the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti).<sup>1302</sup>

**1913:** Yezidi Prince (Mīr) °ALĪ murdered.<sup>1303</sup>

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<sup>1286</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>1287</sup> Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>1288</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 45; CINDİ et al., *Êzidyatî* [Êzidyātî – “Yezidism”];

p. 9; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>1289</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 135.

<sup>1290</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>1291</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-141.

<sup>1292</sup> Ibid., pp. 135-136.

<sup>1293</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137.

<sup>1294</sup> Ibid., pp. 171, 174.

<sup>1295</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>1296</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-139.

<sup>1297</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>1298</sup> Ibid., pp. 141, 144.

<sup>1299</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>1300</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-145.

<sup>1301</sup> Ibid., pp. 166-169.

<sup>1302</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 99.

<sup>1303</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 171-172.

**1913-1957:** The “Yezidi Queen Mother”<sup>1304</sup> Mayān Khātūn, who is the widow surviving Prince (Mīr) ʿALĪ, effectively rules over the subsequent Princes – her son SAʿĪD (until 1944) and her grandson TAḤSĪN<sup>1305</sup> – until her death in 1957.<sup>1306</sup>

**1914:** Seven Yezidi *ḳawāls* from Iraq get stuck while fulfilling community duties in Transcaucasia and cannot get back home until 1929.<sup>1307</sup>

**1915:** Yezidis in Sindjār shelter Armenians fleeing from massacres in Anatolia.<sup>1308</sup>

**1918:** Sindjār faces Ottoman attacks.<sup>1309</sup>

**1918:** As the First World War is over and the Ottoman empire due to be divided, petition signed by Yezidi dignitaries calls for a British government in Iraq.<sup>1310</sup>

**1919:** First Yezidi ever becomes a parliament member. It is YŪSUF BEG TIMURIAN from Surmalu, elected as legislator in the then independent Armenia.<sup>1311</sup>

**1920:** The former Ottoman-ruled territories inhabited by the Yezidis are divided between three new states – Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.<sup>1312</sup>

**1924:** ISMĀʿĪL BEG of the Princely (Mīr) family leads 200 Yezidis joining the Iraq Levies, ethnic militias set up by the British.<sup>1313</sup>

**1931:** Yezidis complain about misappropriation of their alms by Prince (Mīr) SAʿĪD. Upon request from the administration of Iraq, community leaders compose a manifest known as the Shēkhān Memorial, specifying the competences of Yezidi dignitaries<sup>1314</sup> and stating that the Prince (Mīr) can never be deposed by a worldly intervention.<sup>1315</sup>

**1932:** ḤAMŌ SHĒRŌ, the official representative of Yezidis in Sindjār, keeps demanding that Prince (Mīr) SAʿĪD be removed, the latter's cousin ḤUSAYN (ḤISEN) be appointed instead,<sup>1316</sup> and his seat move to the Djadāla settlement in Sindjār.<sup>1317</sup>

**1932:** Yezidi school opened in Balad Sindjār, the administrative centre of the Sindjār region (but closed soon after).<sup>1318</sup> Another school for Yezidi children established in Baʿshīḳa east of Mosul about at the same time.<sup>1319</sup>

<sup>1304</sup> Term used by SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 21.

<sup>1305</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 185-186, 191-192.

<sup>1306</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>1307</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>1308</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>1309</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 180.

<sup>1310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181. – Cf. McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 145.

<sup>1311</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 197.

<sup>1312</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 115-150.

<sup>1313</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>1314</sup> Full official English translation of the Arabic original was published in EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 25-27. See also GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, pp. 186-187; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 186-187

<sup>1315</sup> A striking phrase in the Memorial is the statement that the Prince (*Mīr*) “cannot be dismissed or removed except by natural death or by assassination (which God forbid)” (EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 25).

<sup>1316</sup> FUCCARO, *The Other Kurds*, p. 142.

<sup>1317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1318</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 183.

<sup>1319</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 21.

**1932:** Iraq acquires full independence and plans to introduce indiscriminate military service.<sup>1320</sup>

**1934:** Uprising in Sindjār against the Iraqi government's plans on compulsory conscription.<sup>1321</sup>

**1936:** With the implementation of general conscription pending in Iraq, Yezidi representatives submit a list of exceptions their co-religionists should be granted while in arms.<sup>1322</sup>

**1937:** Communist author <sup>c</sup>ARAB SHAMŌ (also known as ARAB SHAMILOV; 1898-1978), a prominent Yezidi in Armenia, spends the next two decades in the Soviet penal camps of Siberia.<sup>1323</sup> Similar was the destiny of reportedly most Soviet Yezidis active in religious matters.<sup>1324</sup>

**1940:** All Yezidi peasants in Soviet-ruled Transcaucasia enrolled in collective farms (*kolkhoz*).<sup>1325</sup>

**1944:** Kurdish nationalists in Iraq contact the young Prince (Mīr) TAḤSĪN.<sup>1326</sup>

**1945:** Several Yezidis in the Red Army uniforms take part in the capture of Berlin.<sup>1327</sup> The Yezidis worldwide remain intact by the Second World War.<sup>1328</sup>

## 20<sup>th</sup> century – second half

**1951:** Prince (Mīr) TAḤSĪN visits the Yezidis in Syria.<sup>1329</sup>

**1970's-1980's:** In the framework of Iraqi government's actions against the Kurds, many Yezidis are forcibly moved to resettlement complexes (*mudjamma*<sup>c</sup>) and their former lands either declared forbidden territory or distributed among Arab settlers.<sup>1330</sup> A number of Yezidis actively or morally support the Kurdish movement for self-determination,<sup>1331</sup> and both major Kurdish parties in Iraq have Yezidi “martyrs” of the national resistance.<sup>1332</sup>

**1975:** Prince (Mīr) TAḤSĪN visits Yezidis in Germany.<sup>1333</sup>

**1975-1981:** Prince (Mīr) TAḤSĪN lives in exile in London.<sup>1334</sup>

**1986-1989:** Yezidi villages are among those hit in the strikes with chemical weapons, used by the then Iraqi regime against Kurdish civilians.<sup>1335</sup>

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<sup>1320</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 200.

<sup>1321</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 63-67.

<sup>1322</sup> Points of the petition summarised in EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 43.

<sup>1323</sup> MEISELAS, *Kurdistan*, pp. 220, 380; VANLY, *The Kurds in the Soviet Union*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>1324</sup> KRIKORIAN, *Interview with Garnik Asatrian*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>1325</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 200.

<sup>1326</sup> EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, p. 67.

<sup>1327</sup> GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 201.

<sup>1328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>1329</sup> TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>1330</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 339; SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>1331</sup> SPÄT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 18, 30.

<sup>1332</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 37.

<sup>1333</sup> TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>1334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1335</sup> HERMES + GEISMAR, *Die Yezidi*, p. 2 (www). – But HERMES, *Religiöse Verfolgung bis zur Vertreibung*, p. 5 (www) indicates that the decisions were only valid for Germany's federal states of North Rhine-Westfalia (in December 1989) and Lower Saxony (October 1990), respectively.

**1989:** A decision issued by the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany (re-issued in 1991) grants the right of stay in Germany to all Yezidi asylum seekers on the grounds of religious discrimination in their homelands.<sup>1336</sup> The number of Yezidis in Germany grows from a hundred of families in 1975<sup>1337</sup> to some 40,000 individuals in the late 1990's.<sup>1338</sup>

**Early 1990's:** Yezidi activist *shēkh* ḤASAN ḤASANIAN (HASAN HASANIYĀN) serves as member of the Armenian parliament.<sup>1339</sup> He promotes the idea of a Yezidi identity separate from Kurdish identity.<sup>1340</sup> Yezidi intellectuals who openly favour the idea of Kurdish identity complain of intimidation on the part of the “Yezidi movement” supporters.<sup>1341</sup> Armenian government seems to give priority to the funding of media and education projects affiliated with the “Yezidi movement”, at the expense of other Kurdish-language institutions.<sup>1342</sup>

**1990's:** The “village guards” (*köy korucuları*), government-sanctioned militias in Turkey, expel Yezidis from their lands near Mardin.<sup>1343</sup>

**1992-2003:** Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region is de facto detached off the territory controlled by the central Iraqi government in Baghdad. The vast majority of the Yezidis in Iraq lives under Baghdad's authority while the sanctuary in Lālīsh is held by the Kurdistan Region.<sup>1344</sup> The autonomous parliament of the Kurdistan Region has two Yezidi deputies.<sup>1345</sup>

**1992:** The first Yezidi “Sunday school”<sup>1346</sup> established semi-clandestinely in Ba<sup>°</sup>shīka, in the Baghdad-ruled part of Iraq.<sup>1347</sup>

**1992:** Kurdistan Democratic Party president (and nowadays' official Kurdistan Region president) MAS<sup>°</sup>UD BĀRZĀNĪ pays visit to Lālīsh.<sup>1348</sup>

**1993:** Lalish Cultural and Social Center<sup>1349</sup> (in Kurdish: Bingahā Lālīsh yā Rawshānbīrī ū Kōmalāyatī; in Arabic: Markaz Lālīsh al-*thaqāfī* wa 'l-*idjtimā'ī*) established in Dihōk, Iraq's Kurdistan Region. Supported by the Kurdistan Democratic Party,<sup>1350</sup> it co-organises

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<sup>1336</sup> Ibid., p. 3 (www).

<sup>1337</sup> TOLAN + TOLAN, *Interview mit dem Oberhaupt der Yeziden – Mir Tahsin Saied Beg*, p. 2 (www – an estimate by the Yezidi Prince TAHSIN BEG).

<sup>1338</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan*, p. 164.

<sup>1339</sup> ABRAMIAN, *The Yezidi Movement in Armenia*, p. 3 (www).

<sup>1340</sup> COMMISSION DES RECOURS DES RÉFUGIÉS (org.), *Les Kurdes yézidis en Arménie*, p. 6 (www).

<sup>1341</sup> ABRAMIAN, *The Yezidi Movement in Armenia*, p. 3 (www).

<sup>1342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1343</sup> McDOWALL, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 422.

<sup>1344</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 18, 23, 24.

<sup>1345</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>1346</sup> Term used in SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 21.

<sup>1347</sup> ROJ (org.), *Madrasat Malak Fakhradīn fī Ba<sup>°</sup>shīka wa Baḥzānē* [The Angel Fakhradīn School in Ba<sup>°</sup>shīka and Baḥzānē], p. 130.

<sup>1348</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, p. 38.

<sup>1349</sup> Other translations, such as the Lalish Cultural Centre (SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 83), have been used in the literature but the above-quoted form is based on the website of this institution (<<http://www.eduhok.net/lalish/index.htm>>).

<sup>1350</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 83.

Yezidis' religious and social life, issues publications, holds lectures on current issues,<sup>1351</sup> and fosters the official image of the Yezidis as the “original Kurds”<sup>1352</sup>.

**1993:** Yezidis in Oldenburg, Germany establish the Yezidi Forum (Yezidisches Forum).<sup>1353</sup>

**1997:** National Union of Yezidis in Armenia officially registered.<sup>1354</sup>

**1998:** Armenian press quotes AZIZ TAMOYAN (“AZİZ TAMÖYĀN”), president of the National Union of Yezidis in Armenia, as saying that most of Armenia's Yezidis (their numbers originally estimated at 65,000)<sup>1355</sup> have left the country “for socio-economic reasons”.<sup>1356</sup>

**1999:** Turkey-born and Germany-based FELEKNAS UCA (FALAKNĀZ UDJĀ) elected a member of the European Parliament, becoming the world's first female Yezidi parliamentarian.<sup>1357</sup>

## 21<sup>st</sup> century

**2003:** After the regime change in Iraq, Prince (Mīr) TAḤSĪN encourages the formerly displaced Yezidis to claim their confiscated lands and property back.<sup>1358</sup> In September, he escapes an assassination attempt; he subsequently cancels the Yezidis' main religious festival<sup>1359</sup> and, later, discourages Yezidis from holding any public gatherings<sup>1360</sup> due to fear of terror attacks.

**2003-2004:** Administration of Iraq's Kurdistan Region allocates state salaries for Yezidi religious dignitaries, due to be distributed through the Lalish Cultural and Social Center. A top dignitary (Bābā Shēkh) fears, however, that the plan may threaten and politicise traditional Yezidi structures.<sup>1361</sup>

**2004:** Six Yezidi organizations in Germany set up a joint platform, the Alliance of Yezidi Associations in Germany (in German: Allianz der yezidischen Vereine in Deutschland; in Kurdish: Hevkariya Komelên Êzîdiyan li Elmanya [Havkariyā Kōmalēn Êzîdiyān li Almānyā]).<sup>1362</sup>

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<sup>1351</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>1352</sup> ALLISON, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan*, pp. 38, 284; SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>1353</sup> ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 02:38 (documentary film – president of the Forum TELIM TOLAN speaking).

<sup>1354</sup> COMMISSION DES RECOURS DES RÉFUGIÉS, *Les Kurdes yezidis en Arménie*, p. 3 (www).

<sup>1355</sup> Ibid., p. 1. – Cf. ibid., pp. 6-7 (where precisely TAMOYAN gives the numbers variably between 60,000 and 70,000).

<sup>1356</sup> Ibid., p. 6 (www).

<sup>1357</sup> Her official website is <<http://www.feleknauca.de>>.

<sup>1358</sup> ZRNO, *Jak jezidi žijí* [How the Yezidis Live] (television report – the Yezidi Prince TAḤSĪN BEG speaking).

<sup>1359</sup> ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 07:30 (documentary film – the Yezidi Prince TAḤSĪN BEG speaking).

<sup>1360</sup> SPĀT, *The Yezidis*, p. 87.

<sup>1361</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>1362</sup> BENNINGHAUS, *Friedhöfe als Quellen für Fragen des Kulturwandels*, p. 4 (www). – A relevant Yezidi source on the internet (YEZIDISCHES FORUM – org., *Allianz der yezidischen Vereine* – www) seems to indicate that the unification did not take effect until 2006.

**2004:** Some Yezidis claim that public opinion in Mosul is being incited against them,<sup>1363</sup> and suspect that the dysentery outbreak in the Yezidi resettlement complex Khānik was a deliberate terror act by poisoning water resources.<sup>1364</sup>

**2004-2005:** The Yezidi expatriate intellectual MAMU FARHAM OTHMAN PIRALI (MAMŌ FARHAM ŌSMĀN PĪRĀLĪ) serves as minister without portfolio in the U.S.-named interim Iraqi cabinet, thus becoming the world's first Yezidi member of a sovereign country's administration.

**2005:** The Union of Armenian Aryans, a small ultra-nationalist group in Armenia, is reported to call for the country to be “purified” of Jews and Yezidis.<sup>1365</sup>

**2005-2006:** Coming out from free general election, the interim Iraqi parliament includes Yezidi deputies (reportedly three)<sup>1366</sup> within the ranks of the Kurdistan Coalition. In the same election, however, a considerable number of people in largely Yezidi areas complained they could not vote as ballot boxes had not reached the polling stations, and some suspected a deliberate complot.<sup>1367</sup> At the same time, there were two Yezidi members in the autonomous parliament of Iraq's Kurdistan Region.<sup>1368</sup>

**August 2006:** In the Iraqi parliament, Yezidi member KAMERAN KHAIRI SAID (KĀMIRĀN KHAYRĪ SA'ĪD) protests against the use of Islamic formulae containing the word “Satan” (strictly forbidden to Yezidis) in a speech delivered by the then Iraqi prime minister IBRAHIM AL-JAAFARI (IBRĀHĪM AL-DJĀFĀRĪ).<sup>1369</sup>

**2006:** As Iraqis chose their deputies for a new four-year-term parliament, Yezidis (reportedly three again)<sup>1370</sup> also gain seats in the legislative body. A new force, winning one mandate in the parliament, is the Yezidi Movement for Reform and Progress (in Arabic: al-Ḥaraka al-Īzīdiyya min aḍīl al-iṣlāh wa 'l-taḡaddum), representing mainly those Yezidis in Sinḡār who foster the idea of a distinct non-Kurdish identity.<sup>1371</sup>

### 3.8 Structure of the Yezidi Society

Type of group	Name of group	Characteristics
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<sup>1363</sup> IWPR (org.), “Devil-worshippers” Fear Renewed Persecution, p. 2 (www).

<sup>1364</sup> Ibid., p. 3 (www).

<sup>1365</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (org.), *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2005: Armenia*, p. 9 (www).

<sup>1366</sup> AFP (org.), *The Devil looks in on Iraq's parliament*, p. 1 (www); YAHYA (interview).

<sup>1367</sup> IDHĀ'AT AL-IRĀK AL-ḤURR (org.), radio report from Dihōk, Iraq on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005.

<sup>1368</sup> AFP (org.), *The Devil looks in on Iraq's parliament*, p. 1 (www).

<sup>1369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1370</sup> YAHYA (interview).

<sup>1371</sup> CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS (org.), *Iraq's Yezidis*, p. 3 (www); YAHYA (interview). – Cf. IWPR (org.), “Devil-worshippers” Fear Renewed Persecution, p. 4 (www).



Caste	<i>shēkh</i>	priestly, superior to <i>pîr</i> (top dignitaries recruited from their ranks, and the alms they get from <i>mirîd</i> is double the amount obtained by <i>pîr</i> ); presumably, descendants of °Adî's Arab relatives; closed internal endogamy (within subdivisions); represent <i>mirîd</i> in rites of passage; believed to possess curative or other special powers inherited from the eponym of their lineage; can regulate taboos
	<i>pîr</i>	priestly, subordinate to <i>shēkh</i> (their alms from the <i>mirîds</i> are half the amount paid to the <i>shēkhs</i> ); presumably, descendants of °Adî's Kurdish disciples; half-closed internal endogamy (imposed on some subdivisions only); represent <i>mirîd</i> in passage rites
	<i>mirîd</i>	lay; open internal endogamy (can marry any <i>mirîd</i> )
Order	<i>ḳawāl</i>	religious texts; religious music; explanation of the faith in sermons; sacraments; communication between community members; collecting alms for the Yezidi Prince (Mîr)
	<i>faḳîr</i>	worldly asceticism; sacraments; rituals; religious texts; peace mediation (due to absolute immunity)
Fellowship	<i>kōçak</i>	traditionally: divination, healing, mysticism; at present: in Syria and Germany, <i>kōçak</i> assumes priestly and/or leadership functions
	<i>ḳhizmatkār</i>	volunteer in maintenance and other labour in Lālish
Patronage bond	<i>hōsta</i>	not clear (probably a religious tutor, like <i>mirabî</i> ; yet some believe that the word <i>Hōsta</i> denotes God himself)
	<i>mirabî</i>	religious tutor
	Hereafter Brother / Sister ( <i>birāyē</i> / <i>ḳhushkā āḳhiratē</i> )	guide and patron in the rites of passage; believed to testify at the Last Judgment; must be from the <i>shēkh</i> caste
	<i>kirîv</i>	sponsor of boys' circumcision; imaginary blood relationship; often a non-Yezidi

### 3.9 Interview: Prominent Researcher Explains Selected Issues of Eschatology and the Oral Tradition in Yezidism

Following is an edited transcript of e-mail communication conducted in August 2006 with PHILIP KREYENBROEK, Professor of Iranian Studies at Georg-August University in Göttingen, Germany and the world's most prominent academic author on Yezidism.

The interview was primarily aimed at clarification of parts of the Yezidi eschatology that are not the topic of this thesis but the variety of information on them may need an erudite commentary. In his explanations, KREYENBROEK also provides valuable remarks on the oral tradition of Yezidism. Transcription and terminology have been adjusted to the rules applied in the thesis.

**Question:** While the belief in metempsychosis is one of the basics of Yezidism,<sup>1372</sup> it has also been observed that the Yezidis normally do not worry about their post-mortal destiny and future incarnations.<sup>1373</sup> But, how to understand the frequent mentions in the literature that the Yezidi [charismatics known as] *kōčaks* used to prophesy the reincarnation of a deceased person?<sup>1374</sup>

**Answer:** Both Yezidis and [the related quasi-Islamic sect known as] Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ generally claim to believe in reincarnation but, as you say, show no signs whatever of worrying about the implication. Nor does one find any direct references to such beliefs (i.e. reincarnation of ordinary people) in the [Yezidi religious hymns known as] *ḳawls*. On the other hand, the Ahl-i Ḥaḳḳ version of history claims explicitly, and the Yezidi one implicitly, that history is cyclical, so both divine beings and humans can be expected to return to earth during each cycle. One explanation for *Shīkhādī*'s unwelcome status as a Muslim is that, although he happened to be a Muslim in this life, his essence is clearly non-Islamic, so it does not matter. A long time ago the *kōčaks* clearly made money by first prophesying a dire future as a pig or cockroach for the recently dead, which was revised when suitable payment had been made. None of this exists now as far as I know.

**Question:** Similarly, what is the context of the occasionally quoted Yezidi beliefs in the extinction of hellfire, which should have been quenched either by the unclear character called *Ibrīk*<sup>1375</sup> (or a similar name)<sup>1376</sup> or even by *Tāwsī Malak*<sup>1377</sup> (the central Yezidi incarnation of deity) himself?

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<sup>1372</sup> DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 23 (www); EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 6, 49; REŞİD (interview).

<sup>1373</sup> KREYENBROEK, *On the Study of Some Heterodox Sects in Kurdistan.*, p. 178; LESCOT, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār*, p. 7; YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 34.

<sup>1374</sup> BOIS, *Les yézidis et leur culte des morts*, pp. 56-57; DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, p. 32 (www); EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, pp. 63-64 (repeated by RICHARD CARNAC TEMPLE *ibid.*, p. 213); JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, pp. 54, 193 (www); KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 134, 161; NAU + TFINKDJI, *Receuil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, p. 97.

<sup>1375</sup> JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 55 (www). – Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 147.

<sup>1376</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>1377</sup> YALKUT-BREDDERMANN, *Das Volk des Engel Pfau*, p. 30.

**Answer:** The legends about the extinction of hellfire could derive from the fact that the early Yezidis do not seem to have believed much in an opposition between good and evil. Just as Tāwsī Malak is not at all an evil being, although some connection with the devil of other religions is recognised (explained by reference to the Lucifer myth), so they evidently did not believe that there was such a thing as Hell. Or, if there was, then it lost its original character when its fire was extinguished, just as Tāwsī Malak stopped being evil when he was forgiven by God. (Originally, these ideas probably have older roots, of course.)<sup>1378</sup>

**Question:** Regarding the references to Tāwsī Malak having quenched the hellfire in an act of repentance, can they be found anywhere in the Yezidi hymns (*ḳawls*)? Although one encounters them in the literature,<sup>1379</sup> I have not managed to trace any original source of these versions.

In a Czech documentary film, a Yezidi dignitary (Chief *Faḳīr*<sup>1380</sup> ḤADJĪ SHAMŌ) explains the myth in question as follows: by calling on the angels to bow before Adam, God only intended to examine their loyalty; and, as Tāwsī Malak was the angel who refused to pay homage to Adam, he also was the only member of the Heptad to pass the exam and gained the right to be the leading angel (and, presumably, the governor of the world).

A more “Islamic” version would suggest that Tāwsī Malak was expected to repent. But the version presented by Chief *Faḳīr* ḤADJĪ SHAMŌ interprets the same mythological events from a reversed perspective. Otherwise, the wording is nearly the same as in the Koran. In the holy scripture of Islam, the devil says about Adam: “I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.”<sup>1381</sup> In Yezidism, Chief *Faḳīr* ḤADJĪ SHAMŌ paraphrases the words of Tāwsī Malak: “I have not bowed before Adam: Thou didst create me from light and pearl, while Adam didst Thou create from mud, water, and air.”<sup>1382</sup>

**Answer:** That is where it gets more complicated. Certainly there is nothing about Tāwsī Malak being forgiven in the Yezidi hymns (*ḳawls*), just as there is nothing about him creating a back passage for Adam,<sup>1383</sup> etc. All these stories with obvious Islamic connections belong to what I think of as the “popular” tradition. The “learned” tradition

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<sup>1378</sup> Cf. KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, p. 60: “a clash between Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian ideas”.

<sup>1379</sup> EMPSON, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, p. 81. – For later publications repeating this claim, see e.g. GUNDLACH, *Yeziden*, p. 2 (www).

<sup>1380</sup> The *faḳīrs* are a basically hereditary Yezidi “order” dedicated to active participation in religious life (DROWER, *Peacock Angel*, pp. 15, 180 – www; EDMONDS, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*, pp. 7, 16; KIZILHAN, *Die Yeziden*, p. 139; KREYENBROEK, *Yezidism*, pp. 133-134; KREYENBROEK + RASHOW, *God and Sheikh Adi are Perfect*, p. 18).

<sup>1381</sup> Koran 7:12 (‘ALI, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān*, p. 347).

<sup>1382</sup> ZRNO, *Vyznavači Anděla Páva* [Worshippers of the Angel-Peacock], 37:13 (documentary film).

<sup>1383</sup> Reference to a theme of Yezidi anthropogony widely quoted in the literature on Yezidism as it can be found in the manuscripts that were long thought to be the Yezidi “sacred books” (DÜCHTING, *Die Kinder des Engel Pfau*, pp. 699, 703; GUEST, *Survival Among the Kurds*, p. 211; JOSEPH, *Devil Worship*, p. 39 – www).

has more pre-Islamic elements in it. In the pre-Islamic predecessor of Yezidism, the question of evil did not play a major role, so that the question of heaven and hell was irrelevant (also there was the belief in reincarnation), and these attitudes appear to be mirrored largely in the *ḳawls*. In my view this is because, in spite of the social and religious rift between the *Lālish* community and Islam, a process of cultural Islamisation continued while Yezidism developed. Because of the conservative function of the *ḳawls*, older layers of the tradition were preserved, but popularly Islamic symbolism became increasingly influential.

### 3.10 Sources (Bibliography, Consultants, Secondary Quotations)

#### 3.10.1 Explanations

Below follows an integrated list of sources used in the thesis. It includes bibliography as such in addition to interviews with consultants and informants (marked as “interview”) and quotations from other sources than the original (marked as “secondary quotation”).

Wherever references to a single author are listed, preference is given to interview, followed by secondary quotation and bibliography, respectively. The interview and secondary quotation entries provide some biographical background and time context.

The spelling of names in non-Romanised languages takes into account whether a unified or preferred Romanised form of the particular person's name exists, albeit different from any academic transcription standard. If so, the name is primarily given in that spelling (e.g. RASHOW), with transliteration according to the standards of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* following in brackets (e.g. RASHŌ for the case quoted above). If no such form is available, then the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* transliteration is used by default.

For audiovisual items, the total length in minutes and seconds (the two numbers separated by a double point) is given if known.

If the authorship of a bibliographical entry is attributed to an organisation or institution instead of a person, it is indicated by the abbreviation “org.” in brackets.

A large portion of entries in the list is represented by articles from the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. These are marked by the abbreviation “EI”. The *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is given instead of author's name if the particular article has been attributed to the whole editorial board. With each entry, the year of publication of the volume is given. The bibliographic

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## Chapter Four: Conclusions

### 4.1 General Conclusions

The main part of the present thesis deals with accounts of the End of Time in Yezidism and the characters featured in the texts. It also considers the relevance of the End of Time

concept within the Yezidi tradition. The general parts of the thesis are mainly dedicated to the distinctive features of Yezidism, its history, and a typology of its textual tradition.

With respect to the goals of the thesis as set in the preface, the main part of the thesis can be summarised as follows:

1) The primary sources are basically three available Yezidi texts on the End of Time that represent two storylines: one concentrates on a final victorious battle against evil while the other describes a succession of rulers (or spiritual patrons) of the world with sharply contrasting quality of life: turbulences will be followed by the ideal world, then a complex decay, and finally the return to a pristine state of existence. Due to the nature of the Yezidi tradition, neither of the versions can claim exclusive validity.

Some Yezidi texts that are not primarily concerned with the End of Time seem to refer to the concept. As one of the instances, the Yezidi term *djindī* is usually interpreted as “commoner” but some texts indicate that it may also retain its original linguistic meaning “soldier” due its usage in an eschatological text but also notions of fight, readiness, vigilance etc. in non-eschatological texts.

2-3) Some characters occur in the both known Yezidi storylines on the End of Time, others only in one version. Special attention is paid to two “messianic” personages: Ēzī (whose historical model is most probably the Muslim ruler YAZĪD I IBN MUĀWIYA, with elements of a trickster and a *deus otiosus*) and Sharfadīn (whose historical model is an early community leader, warrior SHARAF AL-DIN, and is believed to wait in occultation for the Armageddon). One of the primary source texts attributes a “messianic” role to Ḥalādj (i.e. the Sufi AL-ḤALLĀDJ).

While some characters featured in the Yezidi texts on the End of Time are known from other religious traditions (Jesus, Gabriel, Mahdī – identified with Sharfadīn, Gog and Magog, Tardjāl – the “deceiver” known in Islam as al-Dadjdjāl), others are inspired by historical personalities (Ōsmān, Lōlō), and yet others are particular to Yezidism (Shēshims, Yezidi *faḳīrs* and “holy men”).

Many of those personages are in Yezidism perceived at the same time as manifestations of deity specifically linked to other such manifestations. Some of these identities (e.g. angel Sidjādīn who is one of the possible incarnations of archangel Gabriel) are mentioned in some Yezidi texts in a context that seems to be related to the End of Time too.

4) The Yezidi legendary history is often expressed in an idea of succession of epochs, each under the patronage of a prophetic or angelic character. The same model is employed in the versions on the End of Time, with the ephemerality of epochs probably



symbolising depreciation and weariness of time. The very concept of the End of Time reflects the prevalent historical experience of the Yezidis with the Muslim political power – both storylines imply an eschatological fall of Islam and triumph of Yezidism.

5) The idea of an End of Time is not exclusive in Yezidism where cyclical eschatological concepts (metempsychosis) coexist with linear models (Last Judgment, heaven and hell). Metempsychosis seems to take prominence in the common Yezidi discourse as well as recent “theological” endeavours of modern educated Yezidis. Moreover, the circulation of the existing versions on the End of Time might always have been geographically and socially limited.

The general parts of the thesis have brought about the following conclusions:

6) Traditional Yezidism can be described as social orthopraxy although elements of orthodoxy have been recently gaining strength. The essence of Yezidism and its constants are social order in addition to oral tradition, the basics of some festivities, and some sacraments. Most other elements of the religion could be subject to syncretic changes; hence any precise reconstruction of the ideological development of Yezidism is impossible.

7) The history of Yezidism can be divided into eight stages. It includes the existence of a vivid pre-Islamic Iranian religious background in the region where the Sufi brotherhood al-<sup>ḥ</sup>Adawiyya occurred in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Yezidism basically came out of these two foundations. It is assumed in the thesis that the emergence of Yezidism as an independent religion can be dated to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century at latest.

8) The specific situation of the Yezidi tradition is that it is based on oral transmission but in an environment with predominant literary monotheisms; therefore, the traditional Yezidi position toward literacy was ambiguous, aware of its prestige but also cautious about its use as a power tool of Islam and government structures.

Mostly based on the already existing terms for the Yezidi textual tradition, its division has been proposed in the present thesis into a secular and a religious tradition, the latter part being further divided into sacred, learned, and popular. The sacred religious tradition plays a conservative role as its texts reflect an earlier stage of the development of Yezidism; the popular tradition is a dynamic buffer zone that syncretically absorbs outer influences; the learned tradition interprets the sacred tradition and spreads its knowledge, thus also preserving a basic ideological unity of Yezidism.

9) The literature on Yezidism has long been preoccupied with three issues that are not free of controversies: descriptions of the Yezidis as “devil worshippers”, study of manuscripts of two texts believed to be the “sacred books” of Yezidism, and a possible relation of the community (or one of its theophanies) to the Muslim Caliph YAẒĪD I IBN MU<sup>ḥ</sup>AWIYYA.

The peculiar relation of the prime Yezidi theophany, Tāwsī Malak (Peacock Angel), to the devil of other religions resulted from some specifics of the two basic foundations of Yezidism: pre-Islamic Iranian ideas (including ancient concepts that had been reinterpreted as “evil” in Zoroastrianism) and Sufism (with an alternative interpretation of Satan fostered especially by AL-ḤALLĀDĪ).

The focus on the alleged “sacred books” blocked for a long time an academic recognition that Yezidism is a non-literary religion based on oral tradition. But although the manuscripts turned out to be forgeries, they had been written by someone familiar with the Yezidi popular religious textual tradition, and can thus be used as auxiliary sources for its study.

The Yezidi theophany Ēzī seems to have much in common with the historical Caliph YAZĪD I IBN MU<sup>ʿ</sup>ĀWIYA in terms of name and biographical elements included in the Yezidi storyline on Ēzī's life. But in the common Yezidi discourse, this has recently become a thorny issue seen as diminishing the originality of Yezidism and subordinating it to Islamic and Arab influences. These thoughts might have been strengthened by the fact that Ēzī's position in the Yezidi tradition seems to be important but not dominant, and his imagery (except in the storyline on his life) tends to be vague.

## 4.2 Subsidiary Achievements

The passages on the End of Time in Yezidism have brought about some partial hypotheses, remarks, and original contributions:

- an eschatological hymn suggests that the Yezidi dead (possibly only the righteous among them) will be resurrected before the final battle in which they will defeat evil; they may exempted from the Last Judgment, an idea that would be in line with similar notions elsewhere in the Yezidi tradition (Subchapter 2.2.);
- a part of the primordial state of the world restored after the End of Time will be an eternal Yezidi worship, a single harmonic ritual (Subchapter 2.2.);
- the name of the apocalyptic people Lōlō mentioned in an account on the End of Time may be adopted from the name of Badradīn Lōlō (historically, BADR AL-DĪN LU<sup>ʿ</sup>LU<sup>ʿ</sup>), a negative character of the early history of the Yezidi community (Section 2.3.2);
- the apocalyptic movement of *kōčak* MĪRZĀ in the Sindjār region, Iraq in 1892 might have been inspired by chiliastic speculations (Section 2.3.3);
- the character called “Lord of Infidelity” in a text of the Yezidi sacred tradition may be identified with the character called in eschatological texts Tardjāl (Sections 2.3.4, 2.6.5);
- based on various sources, the main attributes of the theophany Ēzī have been identified, the storylines on his life summed up, and some common features with the life of his most likely historical model YAZĪD I IBN MU<sup>ʿ</sup>ĀWIYA identified (Sections 2.4.3-2.4.5);

- the concept of the Maḥdī in Yezidi texts seems to mean an installation of and the patronage over the ideal world (Section 2.5.4);
- the cosmological image of Mount Ḳāf may not only symbolise the world's boundaries but also a realm of immortality or an earthly zone beyond the common time (Sections 2.5.4., 2.6.3)
- the formulation in an eschatological hymn saying that Shēshims “removes the curtain from the Cave” of Sharfadīn's occultation may hint at solar symbolism of the former character (Section 2.6.2);
- interpretation of a passage in a hymn (*ḳawl*) otherwise not dealing with eschatology as a reference to the “order” of the *faḳīrs* and their expected role in the final battle against evil (Section 2.6.6);
- the eschatological combat capacity of the *faḳīr* “order” is assumed to be transformed from their spiritual strength in the present mode of existence (Section 2.6.6);
- the mention of a “gorge” in a hymn on the End of Time has parallels in descriptions of hell (Section 2.6.6);
- the “good men” mentioned in a hymn on the End of Time may denote the Forty Holy Beings (Čilmērān) related to the prominent eschatological character Sharfadīn (Section 2.6.6);
- interpretation of “the eleven pairs... ready for battle” in a text of the sacred tradition as the hereafter guard known as the *zabēnī* and the angels known as Four Mysteries (Section 2.6.6);
- the Yezidis had lost their positions in the power and economic establishments of their homelands by the 19<sup>th</sup> century and acquired a largely negative stance toward the political and military powers; this may also have influenced their beliefs, including those on the End of Time (Sections 1.2.1, 2.7.4).

Some hypotheses, remarks, and original contributions resulting from the general parts of the thesis are the following:

- the choice of the names currently used for Yezidism by the Yezidis in Arabic and other languages than their (in most of the cases) native Kurdish expresses their widespread identity preferences and aims at stressing the independence of Yezidism from Islamic and Arab influences (Section 1.1.1);
- a reconstruction of the conflict between early community leaders FAḲHR AL-DĪN and SHAMS AL-DĪN has been proposed (Subchapter 3.5);
- in the sacred textual tradition, some compositions in verse are not rhymed but only use assonance (Section 1.3.5);
- the Yezidi tradition seems to suggest that hymns (*ḳawl*) have material pre-existent counterparts that will become apparent to the righteous in an eschatological mode of existence (Section 1.3.5);
- performance of the hymns (*ḳawl*) is not only a part of Yezidi rituals but is also perceived as

- a ritual per se and a partial temporary mediation of a transcendental reality (Section 1.3.5);
- the same genre terms may denote different types of texts in the secular and religious tradition (Sections 1.3.5, 1.3.6, 1.3.8);
  - standing as an example of syncretism, the story on Abraham from the learned textual tradition includes at least six stock elements known from other religious traditions that have not been mentioned in the literature (Section 1.3.6);
  - within the learned textual tradition, a separate genre called “exhortation” (*shīrat*) is attempted to be distinguished from “sermon” (*mishābat*; Section 1.3.6);
  - some distinctive features of the popular textual tradition have been identified (Section 1.3.7);
  - links between important Yezidi theophanies and personages of legendary history have been synchronised from various sources (Subchapter 3.6).

### 4.3 Final Remarks

The importance of oral tradition in Yezidism had been recognised at a time when the Yezidi textual heritage faces two dangers: oblivion and a selective “modernistic” reinterpretation. The main requirement in which non-Yezidi academics may be instrumental is the recording and preservation of the oral lore.

As the present thesis deals with Yezidi ideas on the End of Time, more complex studies should be undertaken on the Yezidi concepts of time and on the Yezidi eschatology in general.