Socio-Historical Analysis of Islamic Sermon: The Genesis of ḫuṭbat Al-Ǧumu'ah (Friday's Sermon)

By Youssef Sbai

Abstract- In this article we will try to show the process of transformation that underwent the Arab oratory, the *ḫaṭâbah*, from its genesis up to the construction of the cultual model of *ḫuṭbat ṣalât al-ǧumu'ah* (sermon of Friday's canonical prayer) spread today among Muslims. Our brief socio-historical analysis of *ḫuṭbah* goes from the period called Ǧâhilliyyah (pre-Islamic, up to 610 AD) to the dominion of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258 AD). We will see how the *ḫuṭbah* in Ǧâhilliyyah was situated in a precise space-time framework and had specific socio-cultural functions, how its producers had definite roles and its development possessed well-known characteristics. The arrival of Islam sacralized this social practice, turning it into a religious rite, and so the *ḫuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah* was born. The death of the prophet of Islam in 632 AD caused a charismatic emptiness that generated a conflict of a symbolic order (Pace, 20042). The protagonists of the discord used the *ḫuṭbah* as a communicative tool to launch their own theological-political invectives. With the Umayyad hegemony (from 661 AD to 750 AD), this practice entered a period of great transformations.

Keywords: khutba, sociology of religions, discourse analysis, sociology of communication, symbolic interaction.

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Youssef Sbai

*"Without the use of history and without a historical sense of psychological issues, the social scientist can not adequately formulate those kinds of problems that should today be the orientation points of his studies" (*Mills, 2014, page 153)[1].

Abstract- In this article we will try to show the process of transformation that underwent the Arab oratory, the *ḫaṭâbah*, from its genesis up to the construction of the cultual model of *ḫuṭbat ṣalât al-ǧumu'ah* (sermon of Friday's canonical prayer) spread today among Muslims. Our brief socio-historical analysis of *ḫuṭbah* goes from the period called Ǧâhilliyyah (pre-Islamic, up to 610 AD) to the dominion of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258 AD). We will see how the *ḫuṭbah* in Ǧâhilliyyah was situated in a precise space-time framework and had specific socio-cultural functions, how its producers had definite roles and its development possessed well-known characteristics. The arrival of Islam sacralized this social practice, turning it into a religious rite, and so the *ḫuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah* was born. The death of the prophet of Islam in 632 AD caused a charismatic emptiness that generated a conflict of a symbolic order (Pace, 2004[2]). The protagonists of the discord used the *ḫuṭbah* as a communicative tool to launch their own theological-political invectives. With the Umayyad hegemony (from 661 AD to 750 AD), this practice entered a period of great transformations. It became the most remarkable communication tool used by antagonistic groups with the aim of convincing, dominating and discrediting rivals. Subsequently, during the period of the *ad-dawlah al-'abbâsiyyah* (Abbasid dynasty) from 750 AD to 1258 AD, great socio-cultural transformations took place: firstly because of the encounter of Arab-Muslim civilization with other civilizations, such as the Persian civilization and the Greek one, from which a great movement of translation of philosophical works, in particular Greek, was born. Secondly, new non-Arabian peoples entered the *dâr al-'islâm,* bringing their symbolic patrimony: new adaptations of the *ḫuṭbah* were necessary, mainly due to the contamination of new cultures.

Keywords: khutba, sociology of religions, discourse analysis, sociology of communication, symbolic interaction.

I. Al- ḫaṭābah in Ǧâhilliyyah (Pre-Islamic Period)

Wе should initially specify the synonyms of the keywords we will use in our search. This is certainly not the place to deepen the reflection on the difficulties of translation and interpretation of Arabic terms into English and the problematic of finding

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[1] Our traductionfron Italian language

precise synonyms. We will therefore choose the English terms that we consider more semantically effective to transmit the concepts we investigated.

We have chosen the word 'prayer', for example, to translate the term *ḫuṭbah,* knowing that it is a term that indicates a solemn and canonical discourse, aware that the word *ḫuṭbah* would have many more meanings and that it is also used to indicate other discursive genres. This choice is due to the diffusion of the common sense among Muslims to indicate with the term *ḫuṭbah* the speech that the imam pronounces at noon in the mosque during the Friday worship and which takes the official name of *ḫuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah.* Based on the above, we propose below a list of English words that we consider most appropriate to translate the Arabic terms:

fann al-ḫaṭâbah: rhetoric (mastery)

ḫuṭbah: sermon (practice)

ḫaṭâbah: oratory

ḫiṭâb: speech

ḫaṭîb: orator; preacher

maw'iẓah: preach

dars: catechism

With regard to the birth of rhetoric and prayer it is possible to provide precise geographical and chronological indications. From the geographical point of view, we refer to the vast territory occupied by the Arab tribes which constitutes the Arabian Peninsula (Figure 18). On the chronological axis, however, we refer to the era called Ǧâhilliyyah*,* which began about one hundred and fifty years before the birth of Islam and ended at the beginning of the seventh century AD.

La *ḫaṭâba* had deep roots in the history of Arab civilization, as a social practice, and was considered, together with poetry, one of the most effective and one of the most influential means of mass communication in the society of that time. (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998).

Before taking up the study of this social practice it is necessary to take a look at the socio-cultural dynamics that influenced its development and its diffusion. The first factor was the tribal socio-political system (al-Hachimi, 1969), within which relations were regulated. Each tribe had its own well-defined territory (Fig. 19) and its own social structure within which the life of its members took place.

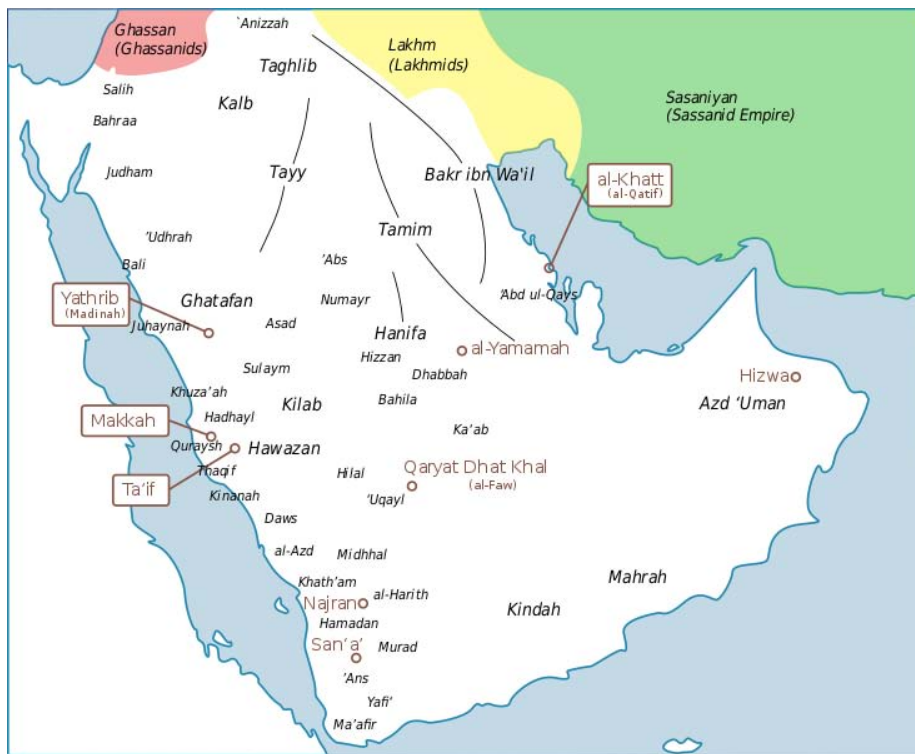Fig. 1: The position of the Arabian Peninsula[2]

Fig. 2: The map of the Arab tribes of the Arabian peninsula before the birth of Islam [3]

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[2] From WikimediaCommons, file "ArabianPeninsula (orthographicprojection) .png", author Afrogindahood, published under license Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arabian_Peninsula_ (orthographic_projection).png).

[3] Da Wikimedia Commons, file "Map of Arabia 600 AD.svg", autore murraytheb موريى, pubblicodominio (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/ File:Map_of_Arabia_600_AD.svg).

a) Ar-râwî, the bearer-transmitter of collective memory

During the period of *Ǧâhilliyyah*, Arabic literary transmission was oral: it relied on memory and not on writing (al-Bustani, 2014, p.29). This aspect gave birth to a very particular figure called *ar-râwî* (the narrator and conservator of collective memory) (Daif, 200812). This sort of actor had a specific field of action, his own status and a respective role within and outside the tribe. The *ruwât*[4] were divided into three categories: the narrator poets, the narrators of the poets and *ḫuṭabâ* ' and the narrators of the tribe (al-Asad, 1962). The first category contained the highest class of intellectuals, called masters: they were literary producers, and at the same time they narrated both their own poems and those of others. The second category are the *ruwâ t*of literary producers. They could be narrators of a specific *ḫaṭîb* or poet, or narrators of several authors; they were practically disciples of the masters and knew their production by hear and could then transmit it to the inside and outside of the tribe (ibidem). The third category, on the other hand, was composed of the *ruwât* of the tribe, who were the keppers of its collective memory, as well as being profound connoisseurs of its poems and its *ḫuṭab*. From the point of view of mass communication, both poetry and *ḫaṭäbah* were the most widespread media: they contained the history, events, glories, conquests and genealogies of the tribes. The *ruwât* of the tribe were, de facto, a polyvalent container, because they preserved the patrimony, poetic-literary and historical heritage of the tribes.

Each tribe had one *šâ'ir* (poet) and one *ḫaṭîb* (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998; vol. 1, p. 241). In several cases the *šâ'ir* could be *ḫaṭîb* and viceversa, but generally who produced more poems was named *šâ'ir*, and who concentrated his intellectual activity on *ḫuṭbah* was appointed *ḫaṭîb*. We consider it important that the *ḫaṭîb* often also held other positions: the tribe leader or the prince, the judge or the military leader (al-Bustâni, 2014, p.29), but rarely the poet. This fact alludes to the use of the *ḫuṭbah* by these categories of social actors to transmit their ideas and to convince their listeners. The poet and the orator, in fact, were the spokesmen of the tribe, the transmitters of its culture, of its traditions, its social norms and above all of its collective pride and glories. Therefore, this actor was the protagonist of social episodes such as quarrels between tribes, glorifications (al-Asfahâni, 1905, volume 15, page 51), councils, guides (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998; vol. 1, p. 401), the incitement of the warriors before the battles (al-Qâli, 1926, volume 1, page 92), the invitation to peace and truces (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998, volume 1, page 384). Furthermore, the *ḫaṭîb* was the essential protagonist in various social events such as marriages, funerals, the celebration of alliances, the advent of the delegations, the visit to royal families or princes, ceremonies and especially in the 'aswâq.[5] From another perspective, the very prestige of the tribe depended on them: having an excellent poet and an excellent *ḫaṭîb* meant having an authoritative spokesman and an excellent transmitter of the values of the tribe. As Muhammad Kurd Ali wrote (2012): "*Sometimes two or three generations passed without the tribe had a good poet and an influential ḫaṭîb; in this case the tribe lost its position of prestige among the tribes* ".

b) The ḫaṭîb role

In all the aforementioned moments, the success or failure of the tribe depended on the eloquence of the *ḫaṭîb*. He had to emphasize and transmit the prestige of his tribe, be convincing through rhetoric and its registers, exalt the *faḫr* (the deeds of his heroes), remember the *nasab* (genealogy), practice the *hiǧâ* '(swearing against the opponents in war) and perform *riṭâ* ' (mourning the fallen).

c) The social position of ḫaṭîb

The literary production focused on the exaltation of the deeds and courage of their heroes (*faḫr*), and on the generosity of their own tribe. At the same time, it focused also on the denigration of the enemies, for whom the literary genre of the *hiǧâ* ' was used insisting above all on two defects considered by the Arab symbols of meanness: avarice and cowardice. The *šâ'ir* and *ḫaṭîb* were considered means of communication to flatter the tribe, but above all to flatter the chiefs. At the same time, they were as feared as they were requested: it was enough actually not to reward well a speaker, or a poet and his tongue could become more dangerous than a sharp sword. As a result, these two actors were well rewarded and enjoyed a very prestigious social position. They were often close friends of the caliphs, governors and tribal chiefs. They were much more important than the warriors themselves (Zaydan, 1902, Volume 3, page 27). Both poetry and *ḫaṭâbah* had great influence on the society of the time, like our contemporary media. It is said of many wars and battles arisen from a *ḫuṭbah* or a poem, such as the battles of war named *Ḥarb al-Fiǧâr* (War of the Sacrilege) (580-590 AD).

d) The social ground of the ḫuṭbah

The moment of the enunciation of the *ḫuṭbah* was a social moment with precise conventions, oratory and representation rules (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998).

The *ḫuṭabâ* ' had the habit of enunciating their *ḫuṭbah* riding a horse during solemn ceremonies; it was also obligatory to wear a turban and make conventional gestures using a stick. Instead, there were a series of behaviors that discredited the authority of *ḫaṭîb*, such as

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[4] Plural of râwî, the narrators.

[5] They were fairs that lasted several days and had different functions; later in this chapter we will dedicate a specific study to them.

shaking, stuttering, showing fatigue and having a trembling voice. It was instead strongly advised not to touch the mustache, the chin or the lower part of the clothes. Among the virtuous behaviors, the appreciated *ḫaṭîb* had a strong tone of voice, a correct pronunciation, a great persuasive capacity, self-control, vitality and ability to fight tiredness (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998). The physical position of *ḫaṭîb* had a symbolic meaning that conveyed the nature of the event: in marriages *ḫaṭîb* enunciated the *ḫuṭab* sitted, on the contrary, he stood up during the *ḫuṭab* of the truces, and rode his animal when it came to utter *ḫuṭab* in exceptional events, such as during *aswâq* (literary markets) (al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998, vol.3, p.6). Moreover, as al-Ǧâḥiẓ wrote, the *ḫuṭabâ'* of this period did not prepare their *ḫuṭbah*, but they improvised it.

e) The audience

The habit of gathering on certain occasions around a *ḫaṭîb*, to listen to his discourse concerns the social and communicative aspect that the *ḫuṭbah* and *ḫaṭîb* played in Arab civilization in this remote epoch.

f) The skills of ḫaṭîb

To be successful, personal preparation and gifts were necessary for the speaker to succeed: a beautiful presence, a loud voice, a good pronunciation, self-control, a fluent speech and a persuasiveness such as to convince anyone of his own reasons, regardless of the subject matter.

g) Considerations on the social position of the poet and of the ḫaṭîb

As for the social position of *ḫaṭîb* with respect to the poet, Shawqi Daif wrote that the field of action of *ḫaṭîb* was larger than that of the poet. They shared the same position during the quarrels and glorifications or in the incitements during the battles. However, during special ceremonies, such as the reception of the royals, the *ḫaṭîb* was the undisputed protagonist, as indeed when he welcomed princes or delegations, in marriage ceremonies or engagements, but above all in the pacification ceremonies between tribes in war (Daif, 1943). Nevertheless, the historical-literary narrative has preserved a number of poetic works much more considerable than the number of prose texts, and this is an explanation of why abu al-'Abbâs al-Qalaqšandi (756-821) wrote these words in his work *Subḥ al-A'šâ* (The morning of al-A'ša):

"*And know that the Arabs were very concerned with prose and poetry and they produced more prose than poetry, but the fact is that more poetry was preserved [...] because the* ḫaṭîb *gave its speech to the Kings, to the governors, during the campaigns, to reconcile the tribes or during the marriage ceremonies. At the end of such occasions, only people with a good memory remembered the* ḫuṭab*, unlike the poetry that was*

transmitted and preserved "(al-Qalaqšandi, 1922, vol.1, pp. 253-254).

h) Al-'aswâq al-'adabiyyah (the literature markets)

As previously mentioned, different circumstances offered the ideal socio-cultural context for the *ḫuṭbah*, but the *al-'aswâq al-'adabiyyah,* literally translated with "literary markets", was the place where they spread.

As-sûq (the plural is' *aswâq*), in addition to the socio-economic function, had a significant socio-cultural dimension. These were markets or fairs during which merchants exposed their different consumer goods: food, livestock, clothing, etc. Immersed in this context, the poets and *ḫuṭabâ'* presented their own intellectual production in front of the public. Due to this, it emerges that *al-'aswâq al-'adabiyyah* were the most important opportunities to reach the general public and constituted an unparalleled fly-wheel. The audience in places was not composed, therefore, only by the merchants and their clients, but also by the elite and the intellectuals of the society of those times, or by the tribal chiefs, the sages, the poets, the *ḥakawâti* (storytellers), *ḫuṭabâ'*, the rich etc. Consequently, the success of a *ḫaṭîb* depended on the outcome of his performance in this space, which we can consider as a 'theater of competitions' for the *ḫuṭabâ'*.

i) Sûq 'Ukâẓ[6]

The most famous literary market in the period of Ǧâhilliyyah was without doubt the Sûq 'Ukâẓ. It was an annual event that lasted twenty days and that the Arabs organized in the south of Mecca, at the beginning of the month *Ḏu-al-Qi'dah*, the eleventh month of the Arabic calendar (lunar calendar, which was adopted at the arrival of Islam and became the Islamic calendar). During Sûq 'Ukâẓ, consumer goods such as honey, wine, clothing, dates and animals were traded. It was also an opportunity to find a bride or a groom, but it was above all an opportunity for poets and *ḫuṭabâ'* to spread their literary productions (ar-Rashid, 1977) in front of the best poets and *ḫuṭabâ'* of the time. Below is reported what it says al-Ḥûfî about the importance of this *sûq*:

"*The poet sang his poetry from the confines of the world and no one noticed it or gave it importance until it was enunciated to the experts of the Quraiš, in the sûq of Mecca. If they liked them, he would have been cited and sung anywhere from then on and would have been written and attached on the walls of the* ka'bah[7] *becoming a source of pride and honor for the poet*

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[6] The literal translation is 'the market', but as we can read in the paragraph it is rather a fair during which various commercial, social and literary activities were organized.

[7] It is an ancient building that is located inside the Masǧid al-Ḥarâm Sacred Mosque, in the center of Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, and which is the most sacred place in Islam.

and his tribe. And if they had not liked it, he would have been forgotten "(al-Ḫûfî, 19522, p 129).

This attitude was not reserved only for poets, but also for ḫuṭabâ'.

The Quraiš, actually, developed a well-determined strategy to maintain supremacy over the Arab tribes, maintaining the monopoly of the religious management of Mecca on the one hand and sponsoring *al-ʿaswâq al-ʿadabiyyah* (literary markets) on the other (al-Wardi, 2013). Thanks to the ḫuṭbah and poetry, this event boosted the diffusion of the eloquence of the Quraiš and the socio-cultural contamination between the different tribes (al-Afghani, 19742).

As already mentioned, this sûq lasted twenty days, after which the Arabs moved to another location called Sûq al-Miǧannah, where they spent another ten days. Then they moved towards Sûq Ḏû-al-Maǧâz, where they spent eight days, and soon after the period of ḥaǧǧ (the pilgrimage[8]) began.

j)   The most famous ḫuṭabâ' of Ǧâhilliyyah

ShawqiDaif (200812) lists the excellent names of the speakers of the Ǧâhilliyyah, Below some:

– QussibnSaʿidah al-Iyâdi;
– QaisibnḪariǧahibnSanânah;
– ʿUtbahibnRabîʿah;
– Suhailibn ʿamr al-Aʿlam;
– Nufailibnu ʿabdi al-ʿUzzah;
– abû ʿAmmâraṭ-Ṭâʾî;
– HânîibnuQubaisah;
– Saʿdibnuar-Rabî.

k)   Development factors of the ḫuṭbah

The ḫuṭbah developed thanks to the following factors: freedom of expression, contexts of conflict and truce, places of confrontation such as literary markets and social events like as weddings and funerals.

l)   Types of ḫuṭbah in the Ǧâhilliyyah

We can say that the ḫuṭbah of Ǧâhilliyyah was a practice much more widespread than poetry and that it was used in well-defined social circumstances; the scholars established different types of ḫuṭab (al-Qalaqšandi, 1922): ḫuṭab al-wafadât (orations of ceremonies), ḫuṭab al-ḥarbiyyah (speeches of war), ḫuṭbah iṣlâḥ ḏât al-bayn (discourse of reconciliation) and other types, like the ḫuṭabs of funerals and marriages. The literary markets were an annual occasion to expose their production to the criticism of the experts, and the influence of the ḫaṭâbah was evident to the point that it triggered wars and allowed reconciliations. All this leads us to think that the ḫaṭâbah was a widespread social practice and that its producers were influential people on the one hand, and they enjoyed great respect on the other.

m)   The turn of ḫuṭbah in the Ǧâhilliyyah

The available literary heritage teaches that in the sixth century after Christ, more precisely in the period close to the birth of Islam, a great social change emerged in the Arabian Peninsula (Said, 2012). Several tribes began to move from nomadism to a sedentary lifestyle. In this way many populations of Yemen moved north, particularly to the actual Iraq and aš-Šam (the Levant: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine). These Arab tribes settled on the borders with the Byzantine and Persian empires, with which they sometimes established loyalties or distrust. This transformation had a relapse on society providing an incentive for the formation of a system of individuals, instead of a tribal and patriarchal society (Abdesselem, 1977). In the ancient period of Ǧâhilliyyah, in the fourth and fifth centuries, collective values, such as pride, were reflected in the culture of patriarchal society; however, in the second half of the sixth century, the society began to address issues related to the importance of the individual in social life and its role as a citizen (ibidem). These social dynamics were influenced the literary production of that time, especially the ḫaṭâbah (Said, 2004). We have elements to suppose that at the end of the sixth century AD, a type of ḫuṭbah was born. It was different from tthe one diffused in the Arab society of the fourth and fifth centuries, and it will prepare the ground for the ḫuṭbah of the era of Islam. To deepen this concept, we will examine a model of ḫaṭîb represented by Quss ibn Saʿidah al-Iyâdi (about 500-600 AD), that was ḫaṭîb of the Iyâd tribe (Said, 2012). Quss was a poet and a ḫaṭîb with admirable eloquence, but he is considered by all the classics[9] of Arabic literature, one of the most illustrious ḫuṭabâ' of Ǧâhilliyyah, since he produced more ḫuṭab than poems. The most significant datum of his khatabitic production is the total lack of any indicator of his tribal belonging, Iyad: this new practice consecrates him as a pioneer in breaking the custom of the ḫuṭabâ'. His tribal membership was only part of his name and a fact for tribal genealogy experts. This behavior was a sign of a new, gradual direction of belonging to wider circle not mentioned in classical literature which Mohammed Said (2004) called "social integration". One could therefore assert that the sixth century has seen a socio-cultural wind of change, which we will call "culture of change". The ḫuṭab of Quss indeed shows that a new culture was born, different from that of the traditional tribe. Quss did not stop announcing a political-social project that would allow people to live as individuals and not as singles belonging to a tribe. The pathos of his oratory aimed to

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[8] The pilgrimage was a pre-Islamic religious practice that was confirmed by Islam with variations in rituals.

[9] al-Asfahâni, al-Ǧâḥiẓ, abuHilâl al-ʿAskarî, al-Qalaqšandi, ibnQutaibah, ibnSaʿidal-Andalusî, al-Masʿûdî and many others.

empower the individual, beyond his tribal belonging, and to remind him of his end, death, using different forms of rhetoric. His statements were full of metaphors related to the end, the departure, the afterlife where the ancestors were. Furthermore, the new rhetoric in Quss production aimed the objective of drawing the attention of the listeners to the natural phenomena that surrounded them.

These data place us in front of a new type of ḫuṭbah that shows very specific characteristics. Firstly, death was no longer the symbol of courage and loyalty to the tribe or symbol of the sacrifice for the pride of the group to which he belongs, but Quss recalled death in its spiritual dimension. To emphasize this concept, he referred to past generations, the passing of time, to the fact that those who die do not return. All these references were new to the Arab culture of that time and were not present in the ḫuṭab of earlier times. Secondly, he used the elements of nature, to emphasize the splendor of its phenomena: the sky, the stars, the moon, the sun, the rain, the light, the darkness, the animals, etc., their beauty, their greatness, their splendor; all this was part of his language in order to convince the participants. The same communication strategy was adopted by one of his contemporaries called al-Ma'mûr al-Ḥârîṯî (Ṣafwat, s.d.). Finally, Quss ḫuṭab contained new rules of social justice beyond tribal membership, without forgetting that he was also a judge to whom different tribes referred (ibn Ḥabîb, 2009). This invitation to social justice out of the context of the tribe was a new fact in the Arab political culture of the time. From another perspective, the religious dimension in Quss literary production acquired a new element: the appearance of monotheism in the khatabic discourse, a simple monotheism. In this perspective we cannot but focus on the presence of monotheistic religions in the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. Many scholars (Beaucamp& Robin, 1999-2000; Fisher, 2011; and others) agree on the presence of Christianity in the following territories: in the archipelago of Bahrain, in Palestine, in Syria, in Mesopotamia, in southern Arabia, especially in Najran, and in Hegiaz, while the presence of Judaism was more significant in Yaṯrib (later Medina). It is interesting to note that Christians and Jews usually appeared in Mecca as individuals, so it seems that a Christian or Jewish community in Mecca has never existed. However, Jews in pre-Islamic Arabia were long considered as a minority group, because of their distinct Jewish habits and customs with respect to local Arab culture. Through close contacts with the Jews some Arabs became familiar with Jewish religious customs, ideas, ethical concepts and homiletic tradition, and some Hebrew and Aramaic terms were learned by those Arabs (Wang, 2016). As a result, some scholars consider our ḫatîb Quss a Christian religious (Cheikho, 1888). Other scholars, however, consider him a ḥanafî, a traditional monotheist (al-Mas'ûdî, 2012), given the lack

of rhetoric and Christian indicators in his ḫuṭab on one side, and given the spread of Hanafism among many Arabs of the time on the other.

On the other hand, Quss was a traveler ḫaṭîb: his travels included Šam, 'Ukâẓ (suburb of Mecca) and Najran (southern Arabia). Therefore, his continuous movement was a habit that allowed him to meet different tribes and populations and visit different places, but above all to participate in literary markets. If we add this to the lack of feeling of belonging to one's own tribe, it becomes legitimate to raise questions about the social status of Quss: was he a religious, a rebel, or an intellectual who preched a change? Or was he all these things together? Surely it was not the ideal type of ḫaṭîb of the tribe in the traditional sense of the Ǧâhilliyyah but became the ḫaṭîb of a cause.

In our opinion, this type of ḫaṭîb did not belong to any specific religious circle: his ḫuṭab emphasize many aspects of monotheism, such as death and life in the afterlife, but at the same time they transmit unanswered questions that allude to a state of mind in constant search for an exhaustive answer. For the first time the ḫuṭbah was used to get the crowd reflect on death through a spiritual approach, to look at nature through meditation, to face the cycles of human life, to think of a life of different dimension, without giving directives or rules though. The news brought by ḫuṭbah also concerned the discursive practice. It was Quss who used for the first time in Arab history a stick in his oratory performances, in order to extend the gestures that accompanied the enunciation. Another primacy of Quss was the formulation of the famous expression 'ammâ ba'd, literally "after all" (al-'Askarî, 1987) which will become a rhetoric of all ḫuṭab until today. All these features were not exclusive of Quss. On the contrary, this model has become an oratory style of many ḫuṭabâ' of the last decades of the sixth century, especially those coming from the Yemeni tribes who emigrated to the north, i.e Waki ibn Salâmah, Ri'ab ibn al-Barâ Ašanni and Baḫîrâ Rahib. These data allow us to say that the ḫuṭbah had an impressive effect that allowed it to broaden its argumentative boundaries and its socio-cultural and political functions. These expansions were connected to a new vision of the individual's position within the group and his responsibilities towards himself. This new vision was a point of contact among these populations, the Byzantines and the Persians in the Šam, in Iraq. Quss and his fellows were interpreters of this transformation and were mediators who belonged to a multi-culture. This is not a religious discourse framed within a system of beliefs, but rather the picture of the "messianic discourse" similar to that born in the Middle East before the arrival of Christianity, as described by Albert Soued (2000). We can consider these ḫuṭabâ' as intellectuals who, concerned themselves with the interests of society, its culture and the reproduction of its knowledge. At the same time, they represented the

projection of the sociocultural needs of their society: both they and the poets turned their journeys and the spread of the word into tools to transmit a new culture and they played the role of promoters of change.

Quss lived a very long life and in spite of his advanced age, he continued to move from one side of the Arab world to another. Arabic literature (ibn Katîr, 2010; vol.2, al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998) reports an episode of great importance in which a young Mecca citizen (he must have been between 10 and 20 years)[10] describes Quss riding his camel *Awrak* while inflames the crowd with his *ḫuṭbah* in the annual literary market of 'Ukâẓ on the outskirts of Mecca. In 610 AD this boy will become Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam. At this point, the *ḫuṭbah* already had a form, a rhetoric and rules and will be handed down in this way during the period of Islam.

n)   Consideration

So far, we can say that the *ḫuṭbah* of Ǧâhilliyyah went through two precise periods. The first lasted for a hundred and fifty years before the arrival of Islam until fifty years later (from 400 to 550 AD approximately). In this period the *ḫaṭabah* had characteristics related to the glory of one's tribe and one's own people. In the second period (from about 550 to 610), however, the *ḫaṭabah* entered a new dimension related to the person as an individual. This transformation occurred in those places where several Arab tribes settled down, and between groups of people who abandoned nomadism and settled permanently. This new life allowed them to have very intense relations with local people who belonged to different cultures and religions, especially Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism (Hoyland, 1997).

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[10] In one *ḥadîṯ* reported by ibnKatîr, Muḥammad said:

لما قدم وفد إياد على النبي قال: «يا معشر وفد إياد ما فعل قس بن ساعدة الإيادي».

قالوا: هلك يا رسول الله.

قال: لقد شهدته يوما بسوق عكاظ على جمل أحمر يتكلم بكلام معجب مونق لا أجدني أحفظه.

فقام إليه أعرابي من أقاصي القوم فقال: أنا أحفظه يا رسول الله.

قال: فسر النبي بذلك قال: فكان بسوق عكاظ على جمل أحمر وهو يقول:

يا معشر الناس اجتمعوا فكل من فات فات، وكل شيء آت آت، ليل داج، وسماء ذات أبراج، وبحر عجاج، نجوم تزهر، وجبال مرسية، وأنهار مجرية، إن في السماء لخبرا، وإن في الأرض لعبرا، ما لي أرى الناس يذهبون فلا يرجعون، أرضوا بالإقامة فأقاموا، أم تركوا فناموا، أقسم قس بالله قسما لا ريب فيه إن لله دينا هو أرضى من دينكم هذا.

"When the Iyad delegation arrived in Medina, the prophet asked them, 'What did Quss do?' And they said he was dead. Then he said: 'I saw him one day in the market of' Ukâẓ on a red camel, he said a speech, extraordinary and precise, but I did not remember it '. Then a member of the delegation said, 'I remember him'. The prophet was so pleased to hear the reply of that *ḫuṭbah*: 'O people, come and know that who dies disappears, and what is to come will come, the night passes, the sky is illuminated, the sea is immense, the stars bright , the balanced mountains, the running rivers. Do you know that a story is in heaven, and experiences are on earth, because those who leave do not return? Are they pleased about the afterlife or have they been ignored and sleepy? I swear an oath that will be respected ".

II.   The Sacralization of *ḫuṭbah* and the Genesis of *ḫuṭbat Al-Ǧumuʿah*

a)   Muḥammad's background

Going through the theme of the biography of Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam, we face with the scarcity of information related to his earthly life. There is a biography of him, *Sîrah*, written by ibn Hišâm in the ninth century, more than two hundred years later the time of Muḥammad, which referred to a first draft carried out more than one hundred years earlier by ibn Isḥâq, the first official biographer of the prophet, whose text, however, has not survived (Pace, 20042). To derive useful information necessary for the reconstruction of the figure of the prophet, we must rely on other sources (Lo Jacono, 1995): the Koran, the sayings and facts of the prophet (*ḥadîṯ*) and the texts after his death that describe, sometimes with aimpressive realism, the concrete human dimension of Muḥammad. The most important dimension for our research is the religious background in which is found the biography of Muḥammad, given the connection of *ḫuṭbah* with religion in general. Thus, these narratives tell us that Muḥammad became aware of his prophetic mission in adulthood (40 years). Furthermore, he became aware of the status of prophet gradually - not without uncertainty at the beginning - after an intense experience of meditation in solitude and in the silence of the desert (Pace, 2004, p.26). From that moment, he began his prophetic journey, announcing to have met God, and invited others to believe in what he himself had lived. From the first moment of the new experience, the prophet of Islam used *ḫuṭbah* to communicate his message to his fellow citizens. It is the same social practice of Ǧâhilliyyah in all its details: the use of the stick, addressing all the fellow citizens, etc. During all this period and up to 622 AD the *ḫuṭbah* had these characteristics. The most famous example is the one reported by ibn al-'Atîr in his encyclopedia, *Ǧâmi 'al-'usûl minaḥadîṯar-rasûl* (The collector of the foundations of the prophet's sayings), where he reports a *ḫuṭbah* that Muḥammad told above the "hill" as-Ṣafâ (Mecca), which begins with a reference to the representatives of the tribes gathered there, saying the proper name of the tribes: 'abdManâf,' abdŠams, 'abd ad-Dâr, etc. Everyone came with great curiosity to see why they were called. When Muḥammad took the floor, he began his speech by asking the following question: "*If I had told you that there is an army behind this hill that would conquer you, would you have believed me?*". After obtaining their consent he said: "*I am sent by God to warn you of great torment*". [11]During those years the Muslims represented, to use sociological terms, a counter-culture, or were even

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[11] The *Ṣaḥîḥ* of Muslin, *ḥadîṯ* number 339.

considered a sect by the Arabs of that time (Peace, 2004).

b) The sacralization of ḥuṭbah

In 622 AD, before the hostility of the Quraiš tribes, Muḥammad organized the emigration to the city-oasis of Yaṯrib, later named Medina, a decision also due to the fact that the tribes of the oasis had proposed him to assume the *super partes* role of *hakam* (referee) (Lo Jacono, 2011). There is no doubt about the importance of this event in the story of the Prophet Muhammad and his first disciples, an importance manifested in considering it a significant turning point: so, 622 AD becomes the first year of the Islamic religious calendar. Therefore, in Yaṯrib the fracture with the social environment of origin - Mecca - took on a social and religious significance in different senses. One of these is the conception of the city-community of believers ('*ummah*) in the vision of a universal ethic against the principle of particularistic ethnic identification. In this new environment the prophet rewrote the rules of "social play" starting from an ethical-religious order founded on the extra-ordinary (the divine law) and guaranteed by the charismatic gift the prophet received (Pace, 2004). Unfortunately, we do not have certain information on how to insert the Friday rite into the new Islamic socio-religious order. In a narration by Murtadâaz-Zubaidî in his encyclopedia *Tâğ al-'arûs* (The Crown of the Bride), he states that the Arabs of Quraiš, in the pre-Islamic period, honored the day of Friday, which was called *Yawm al-'Urûbah* (The day of Arabism), and during that day they gathered around Ka'b ibn Lu'ayi to hear one of his *ḥuṭbah,* he is told to have changed the name of this day to *ğumu'ah (*Friday) (al-Alûsî al-Baġdâdî, sd: vol. 1, p. 273). Another naration, instead, reports that the first Muslims ofYaṯrib, even before emigration, changed the name of this day. Observing that the Jews celebrated the Sabbath and the Christians on Sunday, they asked their leader, Sa'dibnuZurârah, to make a speech after the Friday prayer.

At this point, it is worthlike to analyze the transformation of the *ḥuṭbah*from social practice to the sacred rite of the Islamic religion in the light of the interpretative tools of the social sciences. The new rules related to worship can be summarized in this order:

– The recommendation to emphasize the importance of participation in the rite of *ṣalât al-ğumu'ah* in Sacred Scripture[12] as a symbol of belonging to the '*ummah*: a worshipper whod abstains for three Fridays without a legitimate reason is a *munâfîq* (hypocrite);

– Insert the ritual in a relevant space-time frame: the noon prayer and the Friday prayer in a sacred place, that is in the mosque;

– Define the normative framework of this rite and above all the value of silence - which is a duty during the *ḥuṭbah* - and of the purification in order to participate (*al-ġusl*);

There are other norms of minor importance and object of discord among the juridical-religious schools. Friday worship in practice is one of the socio-religious consequences of *hiğrah* (emigration) from Mecca to Medina.

Despite the enormous religious importance of this cult, the historical-religious narrative has not transmitted to us the *ḥuṭab al-ğumu'ah* of the prophet, which should be more than five hundred pieces. Within the large Muslim family there is in fact a very heated debate on why these homiletic productions have not been preserved, as on the contrary tens of thousands of *ḥadîṯ* (sayings of prophet) the have been preserved. We have generic*ḥuṭabs* such as the famous "*ḥuṭbah* of the farewell pilgrimage", called *ḥuṭbat ḥağğat al-wadâ '*, but not those of Friday. This fact requires a deepening, but we do not consider this the place to do it. We limit ourselves to reporting a narrative considered doubtful (*ḥadîṯ marfû '*) which tells that in the first *ḥuṭbah* on Friday, Muḥammad said (al-Baihaqî, 2010; ḥadîṯ nº 809):

كانت أول خطبة خطبها رسول الله (ص) بالمدينة أنه قام فيهم، فحمد الله وأثنى عليه بما هو أهله ثم قال: «أما بعد أيها الناس فقدموا لأنفسكم، تعلمن والله ليصعقن أحدكم، ثم ليدعن غنمه ليس لها راع، ثم ليقولن له ربه، وليس له ترجمان ولا حاجب يحجبه دونه: ألم يأتك رسولي فبلغك وآتيتك مالا، وأفضلت عليك، فما قدمت لنفسك؟ فلينظرن يمينا وشمالا فلا يرى شيئا...

"*Oh, people, give priority to benevolence and know that death does not warn and separate the person from his flock that remains without the shepherd, to whom the Lord will ask, without the need for interpreter: 'Have we not sent you a messenger who has transmitted our word and have not we given you our gifts? What have you prepared for this day [of the judgment, n.d.r.]? '. The person will look to the right and left and will not find anything ... ".*

The first observation we can make is that the speech is addressed to all people and no longer addressed the tribes. This alludes to the new sense of the Islamic message, which becomes a universal message. Another important fact is the reconfirmation and strengthening of the conception, already internalized earlier in Mecca, which concerns the monotheistic creed and the trust in the prophecy of Muḥammad.

c) The ḥaṭâbah after the death of Muḥammad

The Umayyad dynasty seized power after a long conflict between 'Ali ibn Ṭâlib, son-in-law of the prophet, and Mu'awiyyah ibn abûSufiân, head of the Banî 'Umayyah clan. The latter, after the assassination of 'Ali, proclaimed himself caliph in 661 AD and moved the capital to Damascus. Despite the hegemony of the Umayyad dynasty, there were territories controlled by

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[12] Quran, sûrah LXII, verse 9 (Ventura, 2010, p.351).

sympathizers of rival groups. The antagonistic groups, on the other hand, were very active with multiple instruments. One of these was the *ḥaṭabah*. Both the Shiites and the Ḥawâriǧ (separatists) and the Umayyads engaged their best *ḥuṭabâ* ' to persuade the populations of their right to govern and to respond to the opponents. This fact gave a very strong push to perfecting the eloquence of the *ḥuṭbah*. Moreover, the enunciation of the homiletic product was performed by the caliph himself in the mosque of the capital or by his governors in other cities; consequently, we assume that the population was very interested in participating not only in professing the cult, but also because it was the only means of weekly communication between the caliph and the population.

Returning to the ritual of worship on Friday, it is very important to know that the arrival of Islam in the new territories - Syria, Iraq and Egypt - brought with it the cult of Friday with the ritual frame that had emerged in the Arabian peninsula: above all the continuous placement of the ritual in a habitual space-time frame, the use of the *minbar*, the use of a stick by the preacher, the beginning of the sermon with precise religious formulas, dressing in a certain way, etc. The respect for these consensual norms provided and preserved the model of worship, but the *ḥuṭbah* as a religious product went through transformations in its social dimensions. These transformations become evident when we analyze the homiletical production of the *ḥuṭabâ* 'of the three antagonistic groups.

d) The Umayyad ḥuṭbah: the genesis of the ḥuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah of the State

The first difficulty faced by the researcher in this matter is the abundance of *ḥuṭab* enunciated above the minbar, but the classics of Arabic literature that transmitted them did not specify if they were *ḥuṭab al-ǧumu'ah* (Friday sermon) or *ḥuṭab* related to other occasions. Instead, the historian of Arabic literature Shawqi Daif, addressing this problem wrote: "*The Umayyad* ḥuṭabâ' *announced sermons on Friday and in the two annual festivals, such as the* ḥuṭab *of Ziyâd and* al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ [governor and military leader. *We also note that most of the caliphs were* ḥuṭabâ "(Daif, 1943). Let us now see examples of the Umayyad *ḥuṭab*, announced by the minbar, to realize how these political actors transformed a religious practice into a means of communication to convince the population to submit to the caliph, and how they religiously legitimized their power.

Ziyad ibn Abîh, governor of Basra on behalf of the caliph Mu'awiyyah ibn abûSufiân, enunciated a *ḥuṭbah* from above the minbar, beginning his sermon without *ḥamdalah* (religious formula introducing *ḥuṭbah*), so critics called it *al-ḥuṭbah al-baṭrâ* ', literally "the maimed *ḥuṭbah*". This critique indicates that *al-ḥamdalah* was considered an essential part of *ḥuṭbah*.

The context of this prayer was characterized by strong rebellions in Iraq, both by the Shiites and the Ḥawâriǧ. The governor treated his homiletic speech very well and began to describe the behavior of the citizens of Basra, which was a behavior "*deviating from what Allah recommended*":

أما بعد، فإن الجهالة الجهلاء، والضلالة العمياء، والغي الموفي بأهله على النار ما فيه سفهاؤكم، ويشتمل عليه حلماؤكم من الأمور العظام ينبت فيها الصغير، ولا يتحاشى عنها الكبير كأنكم لم تقرؤوا كتاب الله ولم تسمعوا ما أعد الله من الثواب الكبير لأهل طاعته، والعذاب الأليم لأهل معصيته في الزمن السرمدي الذي لا يزول.

"*And therefore, the deepest ignorance, the blind deviance, the injustice that carries its executor to Hell, correspond in truth to what the licentious among us do, and also your sages are not immune. You behave as if you had not read the book of Allah [the Qur'an, n.dr.] and did not know the eternal reward that Allah has prepared for those who obey him and the eternal punishment for those who disobey his commandments.* "

It is significant to underline the absence of an introduction: this immediately attracted the attention of the worshippers and was an indicator of the importance of the message conveyed on the gravity of the situation and about how the governor was angry with the citizens of Basra. Of great impact was certainly the choice to use the rhetoric of heaven and hell as consequences of obedience and disobedience to Allah. It is very interesting to use the terms "obey" and "disobey" against Allah, to deserve His "paradise" or His "hell". The governor did not deal with a religious issue and did not criticize religious ethics, but he faced unacceptable actions against the Caliph: his goal was to convince the worshippers to end their hostility and their rebellion against the Caliph. With great skill Ziyad said:

أيها الناس، إنا أصبحنا لكم ساسة، وعنكم ذادة، نسوسكم بسلطان الله الذي أعطانا.

"*People, we have become your governors and we govern you with the power Allah has given us*". To govern the citizens, for Ziyad, is not an administrative or political fact but rather religious in the name of Allah. Therefore, it is as if he had said: "Whoever obeys us in truth obeys God and deserves heaven, and whoever disobeys us has disobeyed Allah and deserves the punishment of hell". Consequently, the 'citizens-faithful' had a moral obligation to respect this pact, imposed demagogically.

It was the first time in the history of Islam, in our opinion, that the ruler proclaimed himself a delegate of Allah and superimposed the religious sphere on the political sphere openly. This message was transmitted to the faithful in the mosque by the minbar. The *ḥuṭbah* became the instrument of the transmission of official Islam, the Islam of the state.

Shawqi Daif in his encyclopedia "*The art and its tendencies in Arab prose*" (1943) wrote that this *ḥuṭbah* of Ziyâd alludes to the cultural contamination that the

Arab environment underwent with the encounter with the Persian civilization, which became explicit with the transformation of the religious language that led Ziyad to the concept of "delegated ruler" by Allah.

Another example of Umayyad ḫuṭbah is represented by the ḫuṭbah of al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ,[13] pronounced from the minbar of the mosque of Kufa during the caliphate of 'abd al-Mâlik. His famous ḫuṭbah was enunciated on his first entry as governor in the city of Kufa. It is a settlement ḫuṭbah, in which it presents and clarifies his politics to the citizens. In this period Kufa was the head quarters of supporters of the murdered caliph 'Ali ibn Ṭâlib (later to be called Shiites), but the most respected charismatic figure was Hussain, 'Ali ibn Ṭâlib son, who was killed by the Umayyads in a place called Karbalâ ', later became a sacred place for the Shiites. The arrival of al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ, therefore, took place in a period of conflict and rebellion of the Shiites against the Umayyads. The new governor, as soon as he reached the gates of Kufa with his thousands of warriors, he ordered them to camp and decided to enter the city alone. But before leaving, he devised a very specific strategy to realize his goal: to scare the citizens of Kufa and convince them to submit to the Umayyads. When al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ went to play his part in the mosque of Kufa, implicitly asked the citizens to take seriously what they would see happen before their eyes and how they would hear with their ears (Goffman, 1997). First, al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ decided to wear Bedouin clothes, to put a turban covering his face, and to ride his bareback camel (ibn Qutaibah, 1925, vol.2, p.224; al-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998, Volume 2, page 308). In addition to the this, the language he used in his ḫuṭbah was also typical of the Bedouin: he cited many poems composed by Bedouins and unknown to the citizens of Kufa (Daif, 1943). Also the way of speaking and gestures during the performance were consistent with the role played: "*When he climbed on the minbar he talked softly, almost you could not hear his voice, then he raised his voice and drew his hand from the long sleeve and pointed with his hand and shouting out loud, until he frightened those who sat at the back of the mosque*" (Mubarrad, 1999, p.173). All the elements, of the "representation", using a Goffmanian word, were coherent, from the "facade" to the "setting" up to the "manner" (Goffman, 1997), to perfect his discursive production in order to frighten and convince his public. Al-Ǧâḥiẓ reports the commentary of

a great mystic, Mâlik ibn Dinâr, a contemporary of al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ, who said: "*I was hearing al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ preach and tell what Iraqis suffered and it occurred to me that he was the righteous and they were the transgressors, and this is due to his eloquence and his marvelous rhetoric*" (*a*l-Ǧâḥiẓ, 1998, Volume 1, page 394).

All these background details provided the scenario and improvisation desired by the new governor during his settlement to intrigue citizens, but above all to scare them. The inhabitants of Kufa, in fact, were civil persons and enjoyed great wealth: the literary narrative informs us that every inhabitant traveled around the city with many servants and relatives, in some cases up to thirty and more. The presence of an unknown Bedouin was a frightful and unusual fact. With this 'equipment' al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ entered the mosque and climbed the *minbar*. Then he remained, for a long time, sitting without saying anything in front of the curiosity and the fear of the faithful who were entering. The scenario did not comply with the rules: the lack of an indicator of the charge of this actor, the Bedouin clothing, the turban covering the face, and then the long silence, were unusual practices. One of the faithful tried to throw stones at him, but he was stopped by his relatives, as al-Gharavi says (2008; vol.6) in his encyclopedia. Only once the mosque was crowded, he stood up and said:

<div dir="rtl">أنا ابن جلا، وطلاّعُ الثنايا متى أضع العِمامة تعرفوني.</div>

"*I am the son of transparency and the climber of the mountains, once I remove the turban you will recognize me*".

Once again, the new governor did not respect the norms: he began his elaboration without *muqaddimah* and without any religious expression. He also used two metaphors in the same sentence: son of transparency, in the sense that he was not afraid to identify himself or even to remain hidden; climber of the mountains, alluding to a strong and courageous person who, besides possessing great physical strength, also possesses great courage. The impression he conveyed, in the mosque from the top of the minbar, was that of a man of transparency, strength and courage. Surely not of a man of faith or religion.

In his speech, he immediately went straight to the point using again a series of metaphors to help the faithful's understandig and above all to specify the desired senses:

<div dir="rtl">إنّي والله لأرى أبصارا طامحة وأعناقا متطاولة، ورؤوسا قد أينعت وحان قِطافها! وإنّي صاحبها</div>

"*I swear to you that I am seeing envious looks, long necks, mature heads ready to be collected, and I will be the collector*".

Let's analyze the three al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ metaphors. The envious eyes could have two meanings: the first could be the curiosity of the participants in seeing the

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[13] *al-Hajjâjibn Yusuf* (661 - 714) was an Arab general, the most important general at the service of the first caliphs of the first Umayyad period, for whom he led various war operations against ' Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and eventually defeated him. Later he was sent by the Umayyads to pacify Iraq, of which he was governor for twenty years. A skilled strategist and administrator at the same time, he managed to expand the territory of Islam in India and Central Asia, but he gained a bad reputation due to his the cruelty and numerous brutalities he was capable of "(Wikipedia, entry" Al-Hajjajibn Yusuf ", Https: //it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Hajjaj_ibn_Yusuf, consulted on December 8th, 2017 at 4:50 pm).

governor, and the second could refer to people who aspire to leadership. The second metaphor reinforces the first: the necks are stretched so as to raise the heads and the gaze to see and discover the speaker. The third metaphor considers the heads of the participants as the ripe fruits that have arrived at the time of being harvested and the governor does not hide (son of transparency) he will gather the heads. The Arabic version of the text is much more violent than the English translation, in which the true intention of al-Ḫaǧǧâǧ does not transpire: he was ready to cut the envious heads that rise from that crowd. Al-Ḫaǧǧâǧ considered the refined citizens of Kufa eager to know him, but at the same time deserving the highest possible punishment for their rebellion. In this picture of psycho-affective tension, his goal was to convince them to submit to the caliph.

Analyzing the enunciation from the point of view of meaning, we can say that the functions of the ḫuṭbah widen and take on new symbolic meanings. For the first time the ḫaṭîb begged God during the enunciation, asking to protect the caliph. At the same time, he tried to brainwash the listeners to push them into submission to the caliph's regime. In the enunciation scheme the symbolic meaning of the spplication to God on behalf of the caliph has a very important relapse on the political level: the power of ḫuṭbah marks the political loyalty of the territory to the caliph's regime. We could say with other words that when a ḫaṭîb pronounces an supplication in favor of a caliph, that territory is automatically subdued. In this way a new practice was born which consolidated itself in history and still persists today. Instead, analyzing the ḫuṭbah from the point of view of the impact on the social-political framework gives us an explanation of the custom of cursing 'Ali ibn Ṭâlib.[14] This fact has a significant symbolic meaning: it clarifies that the ḫaṭîb and the faithful are not only allies of the Umayyads, but also enemies of 'Ali.

e) The Ḫuṭbah of Ḫawâriǧ

The kharigite opposition also had excellent ḫuṭabâ'who dedicated careful preparation to the production of their ḫuṭab (Daif, 1943). The governor of Iraq, on behalf of the second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, Yazîd ibn Abîh, said of them: "*Their speech is faster to the hearts than the straw fire*" (ibidem). The Kharigiteḫuṭabâ' were writers as well as preachers. One of the differences between their homiletic production and that of the Umayyads consists in the fact that their ḫuṭab, in addition to the political dimension that they transmitted, dedicate much space to the religious senses. Actually, they invited the faithful to asceticism, to the renunciation of wealth, to dedicate themselves to

spiritual life and to thinking about the afterlife. Moreover, they asserted that they possessed the truth and that all other Muslims were diverted from the prophet's message.[15] The best example of their ḫuṭab is the one pronounced in Mecca by Ḥamza al-Ḫârigî, in which he described the followers of the Kharigite movement as follows:

شباب والله مكتهلون في شبابهم غضيضة عن الشر أعينهم، ثقيلة عن الباطل أرجلهم، أنضاء عبادة وأطلاح سهر، ينظر الله إليهم في جوف الليل منحنية أصلابهم على أجزاء القرآن، كلما مر أحدهم بآية من ذكر الجنة بكى شوقا إليها، وإذا مر بآية من ذكر النار شهق شهقة كأن زفير جهنم في أذنيه، موصول كلالهم بكلالهم: كلال الليل بكلال النهار .. حتى إذ رأوا السهام قد وقت، والرماح قد أشرعت والسيوف قد انتضيت، ووعدت الكتيبة بصواعق الموت، وبرقت استخفوا بوعيد الكتيبة لوعد الله، ومضى الشاب منهم قدما حتى اختلفت رجلاه على عنق فرسه، وتخضبت بالدماء محاسن وجهه، فأسرعت إليه سباع الأرض، وانحطت عليه طير السماء، فكم من عين في منقار طائر طالما بكى صاحبها في جوف الليل من خوف الله، وكم من كف زالت عن معصمها طالما اعتمد عليها صاحبها في جوف الليل بالسجود لله.

"*I swear to Allah that they are young sages as the elders, their gaze is far from evil, they do not engage in futile things, their bodies are consumed by a constant religious practice, they are tired of their long vigils. Allah looks at them at night as they bend over the Quranic readingsw, whenever one of them reads a verse describing heaven cries with a strong desire to enter, and whenever one of them reads a verse describing hell cries as if he hears the screams of punishment, this is their state both day and night ... until they see the arrows thrown, the spears flying and the swords out of the scabbard. At that moment the battalion goes to the promise of Allah and the young man performs his duty until his legs turn around the neck of his horse,[16] until the blood paints his face and the wild beasts do not eat his body, and until the birds rest on his remains: the same eyes that cried during the long prayer vigils the are now in the beak of a bird and the same arms that have supported the bodies in prostrations to Allah at night are now amputated "(*al-Asfahani, 1905).

As we can see, theḫuṭbahemphasizes the religious dimension in a transgressive way. The model of the young ogḪawâriǧ is well defined in this construction as a warrior monk, and whoever wants to be on the right path must follow this pattern. It is an invitation to a series of religious actions of great spirituality on the one hand and emphasizes the sacrifice on the other. The ḫaṭîb describes the young kharigite who goes towards fearless death as an act of benevolence, and he transports the listeners from spiritual religious practice to a religious practice in which the young person is submerged by the blood of his sacrifice.

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[14] Among the historians who reported this fact: 'Ali ibnHazm al-'Andalusî in the *Al-muhallâfîšarḥ al-muǧalla bi al-'iḫtisâr*; al-Qurtubi in the *Al-mufhim limâ uškila min talḫis kitâb muslim*, Yaqût al-Ḥamawî in *Mu'ǧam al-buldân* and many others.

[15] During this time many disciples of the prophet were still alive. Many were considered diverted by the Ḫawâriǧ

[16] It is an Arab saying that indicates the inability to stay on the horse due to tiredness.

In this period al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ was governor in Kufa on behalf of the Umayyad caliph and hisarchenemy was Šabîb ibn Zayd, head of the Khawarigites, who entered the city with a thousand warriors together with his wife Ġazâlah, who headed two hundred women warriors. The Kharigite warriors entered the mosque of Kufa and Šabîb brought up Ġazâlah on the *minbar*, from which he enunciated a *ḫuṭbah* (Kahhala 19845, pp. 7-8). The Kharigite women were warriors, intellectuals and activists. In other words, they shared all the areas with men. The ascent of this woman warrior on the *minbar* of the mosque of Kufa was a great affront and at the same time a message of superiority of the kawarigites: one of their women dared to preach from the *minbar* defying al-Ḥaǧǧâǧ in 'his' city, in 'his' mosque, and above all she enunciated a *ḫuṭbah* from the top of his *minbar*.

This episode leads us to reflect on the existence of women *ḫuṭabâ* 'in the history of Islamic civilization. The information on this topic is scattered in the classics and represents an object of research of enormous importance along with another theme: women caliph in the history of the Islamic world.

f)   The Shiite ḫuṭbah in the Umayyad period

The classics of Arabic literature do not give much importance to the Shiite literary production of the Umayyad period, and consequently the khatabitic productions of this group are rare. Another reason for this scarcity could be the fierce repression they suffered by the Umayyads and the effects on their activities, which became increasingly secret and far from public space.[17]

We limit our research, therefore, to the description of the *ḫuṭbah* of Hussain ibn 'Ali, nephew of the prophet. It is a *ḫuṭbah* that Hussain announced on the day of his assassination and that became a model of *ḫuṭbah* for the Shiite *ḫuṭabâ* '. The *ḫuṭbah* begins with a *muqaddimah* in which the *ḫaṭîb* praises Allah and prays for Muḥammad citing verses from the Qur'an and *ḥadît* of the prophet. He then asks his opponents to listen to him and let him speak. Then he uses a series of blood descendants from the prophet: "descendant of the prophet", "nephew of the prophet", "nephew of Ḥamza" (uncle of Muḥammad) and "son of the prophet's daughter". The goal of using these indicators was to emphasize two factors: the first was to convince them of the immense importance of being the prophet's nephew, so he did not hesitate to mention a *ḥadît* which tells about himself and his brother Hussain who are the best

among the young people of paradise;[18] the second concerned Hussain's right to rule on the basis of the request of Kufa citizens, who had given him their written *bay'ah*(solemn act of recognition of the status of Caliph).

The other Shiite *ḫuṭabâ* ', on the other hand, used their explanations to spread their criticism to the "deviated" works from the Islam of the Umayyads, who subtracted *ḫilâfah* (the caliphate) from the hands of its legitimate owner 'Ali ibn Ṭâlib, heir of the prophet and bearer of the sacred guided message, and of the hidden imams (aṭ-Ṭabarî, 1967, vol 2, p.1961).

g)   Considerations on ḫuṭbah in the Umayyad period

To conclude our brief analysis of the *ḫuṭab* of this time frame we can list its most important transformations as follows:

– The *ḫuṭbah* is done in the name of the caliph;
– The *ḫuṭbah* contains the pleading of the caliph and the curse of the rivals;
– The *ḫuṭbah* becomes a means of spreading official Islam;
– The *ḫuṭbah* becomes a means of communication between the caliph and the people;
– The *ḫuṭbah* is a tool to spread the reasons for the rebellions;
– Practice the *ḫuṭbah* in a mosque has the symbolic meaning of local political authority.

On the other hand, the homiletical production of the three groups is characterized by distinct and well-evident rhetorical forms:

– *Umayyad ḫuṭbah:* Obeying the caliph is part of obedience to Allah; the rebellion against the caliph is a disobedience to Allah; the Umayyads govern thanks to the power that Allah has given them; the communication strategy is based on political pragmatism with the use of the stick and the carrot;

– *Shiite ḫuṭbah:* The ruling is legitimized by the blood lineage of the prophet; the Umayyads have stolen what does not belong to them. The communication strategy is based on belonging to the descendants of the prophet;

– *Kharigite ḫuṭbah:* The Umayyads and Shiites have deviated from true Islam, therefore they are apostates and the only ruler is Allah. The communication strategy is based on the emphasis on the 'warrior monk' and on distinct and well-evident rhetoric.

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[17] To find *ḫuṭab* of the Shiites we had to look in the books of this current. Even ShawqiDaif when he addresses the *ḫuṭab* of the Umayyad period in his encyclopedia he cites the names of the Shi'a ṭuṭabâ and the characteristics of their *ḫuṭab* but in a few lines and without giving examples as, on the contrary, he does with the *ḫuṭabs* of the Ḫawâriǧ or the Umayyads;

[18] This *ḥadît* is cited in many encyclopaedias of the collection of the sayings of Muḥammad: *Sunanat-Tirmidî* n° 3781; Musnad imâm Aḥmad 5/391; *Ṣaḥîḥ ibn Ḥibbân* 15/413; *al-Mu'ğam al-Kabîr Liṭṭabarânî* 3/37, and many others. *Tirmidî* classifies this saying as *ṣaḥîḥ*, ie authentic.

h) The school of ḫaṭâbah

In the Umayyad period the teaching of ḫaṭābah was born. The most evident example is the activity of Hasan al-Baṣrî, who taught various subjects, including ḫaṭābah. One of the teaching methods he developed consisted of asking a disciple to preach on a subject and then asking others to answer him, as he did with Wâṣil ibn 'Atâ' and 'Amr ibn' Ubaid when he asked them to make a ḫuṭbah to describe the one who performs a bad action (murtakib al-kabîrah) (Daif, 1943). When the disciples showed deficiencies, the teacher showed them the gaps and how to overcome them, as did Šabîb ibn Šaibah when he said to his students: "*People wonder about the introductions, but I am surprised at the conclusions, if the* ḫaṭîb *addresses an argument that lengthens the sermon he should not prolong to the point of confusing listeners* "(al-Ǧâḫiẓ, 1998, volume 1, page 112). Another teacher, Ḫâlid ibn Safwân, told his followers: "*Know that Allah blesses you, eloquence is not the speed of language and the abundance of information, but it is reaching meaning and focusing the demonstration*" (ibn 'abd Rabbuh, 1953). As you can see, the masters ḫuṭabâ' aimed to convey to their students the communication strategies to be clear, concise and above all convincing.

This social practice of the ḫaṭābah, reached an importance that it had never had before during the Umayyad dynasty. This was due to the widespread political-religious conflict throughout the region. The actors of this scene did not rely only on their swords to subjugate, convince and delegitimize the enemies, but relied on the ḫuṭabâ 'and the spread of their ḫuṭab. This intellectual production arrived where the weapons did not and produced what the sword could not do, to the point that the Arabs used this metaphor to indicate the skill of a speaker: "*his tongue is sharper than a sword*".

i) The ḫuṭbah in the Abbasid period (750-1258 AD)

The ḫaṭābah has experienced great success and development in the early part of the Abbasid dynasty, from about 750 to about 940, and then began its decline until the fall of the dynasty in 1258.

The ḫaṭābah was considered the effective weapon, along with the sword, to stabilize the kingdom and convince people of "good rights", to rule the 'ummah, as they descended from Muḥammad (Ali Mohammad, 2016). The day of the proclamation of the first caliph, abû l-'Abbâs, called as-Saffâḫ (the Bloodthirsty),[19] he pronounced a discourse that became famous in history because its hardness and oratory art. In fact, the first Abbasid caliphs were famous speakers as well as being brave fighters. The most famous were abû l-'Abbâs (al-Humaymah, 722 - al-Anbar, 754), abûǦa'far 'abdAllāh ibn Muḥammad al-Manṣûr (al-Humaymah, 712 approximately - Baghdad, 775) and Hârûnar -Rašîd (Al Raay, 766 - Tus, 809). The ḫaṭābah reached its peak in this period, and as Hussein Ali al-Hindaoui wrote: "*At the beginning of their dynasty Abbasids like the Umayyads gave a great importance to the* ḫaṭābah *and put it in the forefront of the defense of their kingdom*".[20] We can summarize the oratory characteristics of the homiletic productions of the first Abbasid caliphs in these points:

- The beginning of the discourse with divine praise, the witness of faith and the greeting to the prophet;
- An invitation to the faithful to fear Allah and to perform pious actions to gain the divine reward and to avoid his punishment;
- The memory that death could strike the faithful at any moment and that we must prepare ourselves for the afterlife;
- Warning people not to take care of the richness of terrestrial life because it does not last
- The warning to people not to listen to the whispers of Satan and the devil that embellish evil and wickedness and delay repentance until death does not surprise the faithful;
- The seduction of the faithful with what awaits them in paradise;
- The imploring to God for the preacher and for the faithful and for the perseverance of his gifts.

These characteristics, in the absence of sociological studies on this subject, could allude to the communication strategies and rhetoric adopted by the Abbasid caliphs to convince people to respect a code of behavior desired by governors: people should not deal with collecting the wealth, the population had to be convinced of the correctness of the Abbasids and above all no rebellions were triggered. To describe the splendor of the khatabitic art of this period we hear what a great expert of the subject told us:

[19] "*His hardness was shown shortly thereafter. As the last desperate resistances in Egypt of the last Umayyad caliph were bent, the brave Marwān II, the neo-caliph, gathered at Nahr Abī Fuṭrus (the Yarkon River, near the present Jaffa) the members of the large Umayyad family, for a "reconciliation" banquet. The historians say that he instead suppressed the guests while feasting merrily with his faithful friends. Then he sent his emissaries to all the burial places of the dead Umayyad caliphs with the task of unearthing the corpses - with the only one exception of the "pious" 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz - to mercilessly*

insult the remains. Perhaps from all this derives the erroneous translation of his laqab, still frequently rendered as "the Bloodthirsty", where the term actually means "bloody" but in the sense of the sacrificer who kills with his own hand the victims designated for a sacrifice to Allah , to then dissect the parts and distribute them to the participants to the rite. The fact of being inevitably "bloody" therefore has the precise meaning of "generous": this is more if we take in to account that all the laqabs of the Abbasid caliphs have a laudatory and positive meaning and never grim or negative "(Wikipedia, entry) Abu l-Abbas al-Saffah ", https: // it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_l-Abbas_al-Saffah, consulted on January 14th 2018 at 11:09).

[20] Intervention on the *Multaqa Rabitat al-Waha aṭ-Ṯaqâfiyyah* website of 11 July 2016 (http://www.rabitat-alwaha.net/moltaqa/showthread.php? ﻲﻠﻋ-ﻦﻴﺴﺣ-ﻱﻭﺍﺪﺒﻟﺍ-ﺮﺷﺎﻨﻟﺍ-ﻲﻤﺘﺴﻤﻟﺍ-ﻲﺳﺎﺒﻌﻟﺍ-ﺮﺼﻌﻟﺍ-ﻲﻓ-ﺔﺑﺎﻄﺨﻟﺍ-ﻦ 84700 ﻱﻭﺍﺪﻨﻟﺍ, consulted on August 29th 2018 at 18:23).

"*Those who elaborated it [the* ḫuṭbah*] and climbed above the* minbar*, and turned their mill among the population, were mostly the great men of letters, the masters of the word, because they were caliphs, princes, ministers, kings of knowledge, ethics,* fiqh *[religious jurisprudence], masters of linguistic purity, and eloquence, and in parallel were Arabs of language, rhetoric, goals, trends. And there are no characteristics that can characterize the* ḫaṭābah *and give it more life and strength than these characteristics of original Arab nobility*"(al-Khashab, s.d, p.560).

In this period, the Abbasids adopted the strategy of appointing ḫuṭabâ ' paid by the caliphate and the preacher of the army: his role was to encourage the soldiers to fight courageously for God's glory, as the case of ḫaṭîb abû al-ʿAbbâs aṭ-Ṭabarî. In practice two types of ḫuṭabâ' saw the light: the ḫaṭîb of the army and the fixed ḫaṭîb of the mosque.

The second part of the Abbasid dynasty saw a slow decline to slowly reach a total stagnation. From 850 AD the influence of non-Arabs began to manifest itself in both the army and government buildings, and so the Persians (the Seljuks) and the Turks became the new rulers in the vast territories of the Abbasid empire. Their influence entered the palace of the Abbasid caliphs and consequently in the management of religion and homiletic production.

j) ar-Râḍî bi-llâh, last ḫaṭîb chaliph of ṣalât al-ǧumuʿah

The first effect of these changes was the withdrawal of the caliph from the ḫaṭābah in the great mosque. The last caliph who made the ḫuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah was ar-Râḍî bi-llâh (907AD- 940AD) but was in fact only an instrument in the hands of his *vizirs* and his courtiers. His effective power was barely reduced to Baghdad and the surrounding regions. Because of the scarce resources available to him, the caliph fell into the hands of a cruel but skillful and efficient vizir, ibn Râ'iq, for whom the caliph created the title of *amîr al-umarâ* '(commander of the commanders). He de facto held the power, so much that his name was made in ḫuṭab al-ǧumu'ah, along with that of the caliph (Lo Jacono, 2003, p.259). In this way, the direct relations that the caliph and the governors had with the people were interrupted due toto the enunciation of the ḫuṭbah; this weakened the influence of ḫuṭbah (al-Hindaoui, 2016). A second significant fact was the appointment of ḫuṭabâ ' and non-Arab imams who, in the absence of a profound knowledge of language and knowledge, began to copy ḫuṭab of great masters and repeat them every Friday from the *minbar*. This phenomenon spread for centuries, until the beginning of the nineteenth century (Ali Mohammad, 2016). As a result, the ḫaṭâbah weakened, and so the status and role of ḫaṭîb. Many of them read their ḫuṭabs from written papers, in some cases elaborated by oratories. This trend already began with Hârûnar-Rašîd, when he asked al-'Aṣma'î to make a

ḫuṭbat al-ǧumu'ah for his son al-'Amîn[21](al-Hindaoui, 2016), but spread largely after 940 AD. On the other hand, many ḫuṭabâ 'no longer struggled to prepare their elaborations, for example the ḫaṭîb of Bassora Muḥammad ibn Sulaimân al-ʿAbbâsi had a short ḫuṭbah that repeated every Friday (al-Ǧâḫiẓ, 1998). On the other hand, the *taṣawuf* movement (mysticism) found more scope and many mystics introduced a mystical rhetoric in their speech, both in the one addressed to the rulers and in that addressed to the common people. These new figures were designated by the caliphs themselves and had the role of reminding the caliph of his religious and social responsibilities. The narrative of the literary heritage offers mention of many episodes during which these religious actors would have made the caliphs cry with their sermons, as they tried to do the following ḫuṭabâ ':' Amr ibn 'Ubaid al-Mu'tazili, Ṣâlih ibn 'abd al-Ǧalîl and ibn as-Sammâq (ibidem). During the long period of the Abbasid dynasty, from 750 to 1258, the ḫuṭbah standardizes itself in different forms and styles still used today. These are multifunctional ḫuṭabs, pronounced by the paid religious personnel and designated by the governor and enunciated in his honor. The goal of the ruler becomes to project the official Islam of the state through the ḫuṭbah. From the sociolinguistic point of view the new standard of ḫuṭbah is influenced by the diatopic variations of the local dialects. In this period a figure is born that today we would call ghost writer: the professionals of the oratory who prepare the ḫuṭab on mandate. Today, however, this role is no longer covered by a person, but there are websites that offer a permanent archive to draw on.

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[21] This fact reminds us of the Greek practice, when ordinary people relied on judicial oratory professionals to prepare their hearings. It is important to add that during the Abbasid dynasty the translation of the works of Greek philosophers came to its peak; because of lack of specific studies we can not know, for the moment, if the figure of the professional speaker who writes the ḫuṭbah for the imams has been influenced by the Greek civilization.

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