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Towards a New Hermeneutic Approach

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HOSTILE BROTHERS IN TRANSFORMATION

An Archetypal Conflict Figuring in Classical and Modern Arabic Literature[*]

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Myths, on many occasions, carry us back to the beginning of time. As an *histoire sacrée*, a superhuman disclosure - if one agrees with M. Eliade[1] - is narrated, a myth reveals an absolute truth. Through its repeated narration, it crosses from the holy to the real. In so far, a myth is a true story, which may have happened in the days of mankind's childhood, and which now serves as a pattern for human action and an explanation for human behavior. The myth becomes repeatable, i.e. a myth model. By imitating the exemplary deeds of a God or of a mythical hero (or, only even in recalling their tales and adventures by narrating and transmitting them), the man of the archaic society releases himself from his profane sphere, betakes himself to the 'holy time' and shares in its greatness.[2] However, the

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1 Mircea Eliade: *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries. The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*. London: Harvill Press 1960, 23. Id.: *Aspects du mythe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1963, esp. 13 and the "Essai d'une définition du mythe", 14-18. See furthermore André Jolles: *Einfache Formen. Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz*. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1930, 91-125.

2 In the context of Islam, we must bear in mind that 'remembrance' as a philosophical-psychological phenomenon had found an intellectual place and taken root already at the end of the 3rd/9th century when, among others, the *Brethren of Purity* with their *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* ('composed' between 260/873 and 297/909 in *majālis*, i.e. 'sessions' or units of teaching and scholarly debates), adapted the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence of the soul to Islamic philosophical and educational thought. According to this idea, the soul of a human being came to be attached to his body through emanation by stages from God. Hence the soul should be potentially learned and vested with a constant knowledge; it only needs 'reminding' in order to become so in reality. See Abbas Hamdani: "An early Faṭimid source on the time and authorship of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* ", in: *Arabica* 26 (1979), 62-67;

contrary also proves right, as the archaic structures of human society in their turn are reproduced in myths, legends and narratives. And the problems of human life become reflected in the rich treasure of poetic pictures of such ancient myths.

In this regard, family and family members are especially important because they play a central role in a traditional society. No wonder that in many literary texts from different times and cultures we come across conflicts between siblings in general or, in particular, between unequal and even hostile brothers. As far as the myth of 'hostile brothers' is concerned, it finds its way into literary expression as a motif in itself, which transforms this myth into a given cultural or religious context. Hostile brothers are important not only in terms of content but also as frames and pillars of the narrative structure of these texts. As one may expect, the stress is on brothers, but there are, although to a much lesser extent, also quarreling sisters. As far as the narrative structure is concerned, we have to distinguish between texts involving two, three, eight (i.e. seven plus one) or twelve brothers. In fairy-tales, mostly the younger or youngest brother plays an especially active role, or represents the 'principle of good'.[3]

According to S. Freud's psychoanalysis, sibling rivalry derives from an infantile relationship to one's parents.[4] Hence the relationship between siblings might simply be a less pronounced but virtually "unaltered version of a biogenetic early attitude to the parents."[5] The murder of one's father (or a similar intention with regard to another authority, a God, for example) boils down to murder of one's brother.

C.G. Jung, however, argues that sibling rivalry should be related to a process within the human soul, whereby often the younger brother represents the neglected soul-function: here, rival figures are two conflicting parts of one and the same person. Thereby, the family represents a metaphoric cipher-code of the entire human personality; the brother-scheme is only a particularly obvious object of interpretation.[6]

In this article, we will firstly refer to a few examples of the hostile brothers' scheme in pre- and non-Islamic cultures. This provides evidence that brotherly rivalry *is* an 'archetypal conflict' and illustrates *how* it has been elaborated as a 'motif' in ancient and in Medieval European literatures. Secondly, we will introduce the motif apparent in Arabic literature. This shows that the myth is evident in both classical and modern Arabic literature, and that it is extant throughout various epochs and genres. Thirdly, attention will be paid to how modern Arabic fiction and dramatic performance have adapted the motif. This leads us to conclusions concerning the prominent place of this myth in Arabic writing.

In analyzing the material exemplified here, fourthly, the reader of this article is invited to try with us not only to look *at* the relevant texts and material but *through* them, i.e. to regard them objectively and simply as a sequence of symbols, and to explore the pattern and system underlying their superficial form of content and language use.[7] This will bring us closer to an understanding of how this ancient myth has been transformed in quite different Arabic texts, and show that this archetypal[8] conflict activates and controls a certain 'code', which is suitable for conveying an individual author's message by combining the reader's intuition[9] with the author's intention.

Ian Richard Netton: *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982, esp. 3-4.

3 *Enzyklopädie des Märchens (EdMär).* Ed. by Kurt Ranke. 12 Vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, Vol. II (1977-79), 844-887 (art. "Bruder, Brüder"), esp. 846.

4 Sigmund Freud: *Gesammelte Werke. Chronologisch geordnet.* Ed. by Anna Freud et al., Frankfurt / M.: S. Fischer, 6th ed. 1991, esp. Vols. II/III: 460-461; IX: 174-194; XI: 346; XII: 18-19.

5 "Man kann die Bedeutung des Geschwisterkomplexes nur auf Grund des primären Elternkomplexes richtig würdigen und verstehen, da sich die Beziehung in der Regel als eine zweite, in der Form gemilderte, ihrem wesentlichen Inhalt nach jedoch unveränderte Auflage der entwicklungsmäßig frühen Einstellung zu den Eltern erweist"; cf. Otto Rank: *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage.* Leipzig / Wien: Franz Deuticke, 1912, 443. Concerning the incestuous roots of the Cain-and-Abel-story, see 450-451.

6 Carl Gustav Jung: *Grundwerk in neun Bänden.* Ed. by Helmut Barz et al., Olten / Freiburg i.Br.: Walter, 1987, esp. Vol. IV: 233, 240; Vol. III: 172-173.

7 Geoffrey N. Leech and Michael H. Short: *Style in fiction. A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose.* (English Language Series; 13). London / New York: Longman, 10th ed. 1992, 5; see also S. Freud: *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistischen Religionen.* Frankfurt / M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994, 129-130.

8 "Die Archetypen sind, wie es scheint, nicht nur Einprägungen immer wiederholter typischer Erfahrungen, sondern zugleich auch verhalten sie sich empirisch wie *Kräfte* oder *Tendenzen* zur Wiederholung derselben Erfahrungen. Immer nämlich, wenn ein Archetypus im Traum, in der Phantasie oder im Leben erscheint, bringt er einen besonderen 'Einfluß' oder eine Kraft mit sich, vermöge welcher er *numinos*, resp. faszinierend oder zum Handeln antreibend wirkt." (C.G. Jung); see art. "Archetypus", in: *Lexikon Jungscher Grundbegriffe. Mit Originaltexten von C.G. Jung.* Ed. by Helmut Hark. Olten / Freiburg i.Br.: Walter, 2nd ed. 1990, esp. 28-29.

9 It means that the reader of a relevant work has, consciously or not, the 'basic structure' of a myth (i.e. its common and genuine patterns, meanings and psychological shapes) in mind. Consequently, this thesis goes, in part, beyond an attempt to detect a possible (older) 'subtext', as discussed at the colloquium in June 1996 in Beirut especially with regard to modern Arabic fictional prose.

Cultural Examples of Hostile Brothers

The motif of the hostile brothers is as old as mankind itself. It has been the subject of myths, sagas and legends, fairy-tales, ballads and stories of different peoples and cultures.[10] Its earliest literary adaptations are concentrated on two topics, the 'sacrifice' and the 'assassination' of the brother. Whereas religious literature emphasizes the motif of sacrifice to God, world-minded fiction gives prominence to the assassination of the brother, i.e. the shameful betrayal of a fellow-being.

In the Old Testament the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, unfolds around which of the two brothers would offer the best sacrifice to God. Whereas the older brother Cain offers fruits from his field, the younger brother Abel chooses the firstlings of his flock of lamb. Angry at God's refusal of his offering, Cain slays his brother. For his punishment, God condemns Cain to be a fugitive on earth and a vagabond.[11] This first social crime, recorded in the Bible, reflects not only the

10 Rank: *Das Inzest-Motiv*, 556-561 (chapter "Biblische Inzeststoffe in der dramatischen Dichtung"); Hans Dürrschmidt: *Die Sage von Kain und Abel in der mittelalterlichen Literatur Englands*. (Diss.) München 1918; Jacob Rothschild: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*. (Diss. Frankfurt) Würzburg: Handelsdruckerei, 1933; Auguste Brieger: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Dichtung*. (Stoff und Motivgeschichte der deutschen Literatur; 14). Berlin / Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1934; Renate Döhler: *Das Motiv der feindlichen Brüder im Sturm und Drang*. Leipzig (Staatsexamensarbeit, University of Leipzig, unpubl.) 1956; Claus Westermann: *Genesis 1-11* (Teil 2). (Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament; I/1). Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1985, 381-435; Heinz Schulte-Herbrüggen: "Wo ist Dein Bruder Abel? Brudermord: Ein biblischer Motivtypus und seine Variationen in der englischen Literatur", in: *Paradeigmata: literarische Typologie des Alten Testaments*. 2 Vols. Ed. by Franz Link. (Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft; V.1-2). Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989; Vol. I: *Von den Anfängen bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, 181-202; Günther Blaicher: "Byrons *Cain*: Vom 'negativen' Typus zum Prototyp der Moderne", in: *Paradeigmata* 1, 375-391; Dieter Janik: "Das Kains-Motiv in spanisch-amerikanischen Romanen des 20. Jahrhunderts", in: *Paradeigmata* 2: *20. Jahrhundert*, 577-589; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, n.d. [henceforth: *EJud*], V, 20-25 (art. "Cain"); I, 58-59 (art. "Abel"); *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Leiden 1954- (*EI*^{2}), III, 13-14 (art. "Hābīl wa-Ḳābīl"); *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*. New York / London, III (1987), 2-3 (art. "Cain and Abel"); Elisabeth Frenzel: *Motive der Weltliteratur. Ein Lexikon dichtungsgeschichtlicher Längsschnitte*. 2nd revised and enlarged edition. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1980, 80-94 (art. "Brüder, Die verfeindeten"); Elisabeth Frenzel: *Stoffe der Weltliteratur. Ein Lexikon dichtungsgeschichtlicher Längs-schnitte*. 8th, revised and enlarged ed., Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1992, 411-415 (art. "Kain und Abel").

11 Genesis 4, 1-16.

oldest literary motif of controversy between farmers and herdsmen, i.e. between, on the one hand, the ancestors of technology and culture[12] and, on the other hand, the nomads. This fraternal pair represents, as I. Goldziher calls it with reference to natural and Semitic myths, the 'solar' (Cain) and the 'dark night' (Abel) principle.[13] Moreover, it exemplifies contrasting psychological and cultural types.

The sons of the biblical Isaac, the twins Esau and Jacob, quarrel already in their mother's womb and hate each other.[14] This story is a good illustration of Jung's explanation of brotherly rivalry, according to which the womb represents the entire personality, while the twins are the latter's two opposite components.

The sons of the Israelite King David (ruled 1004-965 BC), the older Amnon and the younger Abshalom, fight because of Amnon's love of Tamar, Abshalom's sister. The dissension ends in Abshalom, accompanied and assisted by the other sons of the king, killing his brother Amnon.[15] For the first time, the woman appears to be the 'point of controversy' of the brothers, a factor that in later literary applications of conflicts quite often appears as a central motif.

Joram, King of Juda (851-845 BC), kills his six brothers, presumably to prevent a palace revolution.[16] King David, in his turn, is at loggerheads with his son Abshalom, after Abshalom killed his brother.[17] This makes it evident that also the conflict with one's father in the context of the rivalry of brothers is already described in the Bible.

In many other mythologies the motif is part of genuine good as well. In Egyptian mythology, for example, Osiris is killed by his brother Seth, who envies his power. Seth puts him into a crate and throws Osiris into the

12 If one bears in mind that in Hebrew Cain means "smith", he seems to be the progenitor of several biblical culture heroes.

13 Ignaz Goldziher: *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern und seine geschichtliche Entwicklung. Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionswissenschaft*. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1876 (ZA-Reprint, Leipzig 1987), esp. 129-133, 232, 259-260, 263-264.

14 Jacob, a well-mannered man, representing the domiciled culture, buys the first-born child of his brother Esau, the rough hunter. Later he obtains by subterfuge the blessing of his father for his eldest son. However, the hatred does not result in the murder of the brother but their reconciliation; see: Genesis 4; 25, 27-28, 33.

15 2. Samuel 13.

16 2. Chronicle 21.

17 2. Samuel 15-18. On the other hand, the Assyrian King Sanherib (705-681 BC) is slain by his sons Adrammelekh and Sarezer; see 2. Chronicles 32 (21); Jesaja 37 (38).

Nile.[18] In ancient Greek mythology, the descendants of the accused ancestor of Tantalus, Atreus and Thyestes murder each other. Because Thyestes has seduced his brother's wife, Atreus kills the sons of the former and, mixing their blood with wine, offers them to his brother to feast upon.[19] But Greek tragedians obtain material also from the myth of Oedipus' sons, Polynices and Eteokles, who, in a quarrel, kill each other.[20] The Tragedian Aeshylos (d. 456/5 BC) adapts this motif in his tragedy "The Seven [Commanders] Against Thebe" (467 BC), where the two brothers stab each other in a fight over the power promised by their father.[21] In the Roman saga, Remus and Romulus fall out over who has the right to give his name to the newly-founded town on the Tiber. A contest decides the question in favor of Romulus who kills his brother when crossing the prohibited borderline.

In the Icelandic *Edda*-Saga, 'good' Balder is shot dead by his blind brother Hoed(er) with a mistletoe bough, as both of them court the same

18 *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Ed. by Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf: Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Vol. IV (1982), 623-633; Vol. V (1984), 907-911.

19 Thyestes discovers the atrocity and flees to Sikyon to interrogate the oracle. Atreus later dies by the sword of Thyestes' son. The oracle promised Thyestes that his son Aegisthos will seek revenge on him, whom he shall beget with his daughter. At the same time, it ordered Atreus to fetch home his brother if the drought and infertility of his land should be eliminated. This happens, and Atreus, ignorant of her real origin, marries Pelopeia, who was made pregnant by Thyestes. Her child, Aegisthos, who is raised by Atreus, is to assassinate Thyestes after another quarrel between the brothers. But his father recognizes him turning his sword against Atreus at a festive meal after Pelopeia kills herself with the same sword out of shame over the incest. Aigisthos becomes ruler over Mykenae together with Thyestes; cf. *Lexikon der Antike*. Ed. by Johannes Irmscher and Renate Johne. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 2nd ed.1977, 71 (art. "Atreus").

20 The historical background is formed by the emergence of a new state-form of the Polis in contrast to the traditional feudal constitution. The sons' quarrel is even exacerbated by a curse from their father that one son should be killed at the hand of the other because both of them had cheated him out of the legitimate complimentary gift.

21 Aeshylos: *Septem contra Thebas*. Edition with introduction and commentary by G. O. Hutchinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. In Euripides' (d. 406 BC), the youngest of the three classical Greek tragedians', work *Phoenissae* (ca. 410 BC), the mother's attempt to reconcile the brothers fails; they, too, kill each other; see Euripides: *Phoenissae*. Edition with an introduction and commentary by Donald J. Mastronarde. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1994 (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries; 29).

girl.[22] In the version by S. Grammaticus the fight for the power in the kingdom is mentioned as a reason for their hostility.[23] The Irocesian myth[24] and the Old-Iranian saga[25] recount that masculine twins already quarrel in the womb (see Jung's theory). And according to an idea prevalent in Iranian spiritual thinking, these wide-spread myths of twins is accompanied by the old motif of the brothers' assassination as a result of quarreling about the division of the world. Zarathustra's (6th cent. BC) dualistic doctrine says that "in the beginning there were two spirits, twins, who were according to the dream revelation called Good and Evil, in thought and word and deed. (...) And when these two spirits met, for the first time, they established life and death (...)".[26]

The Indian "Great Epos [of the Battle]", the *Mahābhārata*, a story dating back to 500 BC, narrates a series of murders of family members in the shape of the 'evil' Kawravas and the 'virtoupus' Pāndavas, sons of the blind Kuru (Dhritarāshtra) and his brother Pāndu. They, too, fight against each other for power in the kingdom.[27]

'Historical' hostile brothers appear several times in Ottoman history: on the occasion of the deposition of Sultan ʿAbdül Ḥamīd in the spring of 1909, newspapers carried reports of fratricide being not only a traditional but even a legal institution in the house of the Ottomans.[28] This can be observed from as early as the end of the 14th century, reaching its peak in the rule of Meḥemmed III (reigned 1003–1012/1595–1603), who let his nineteen half-brothers be strangled on the death of his father.[29]

22 Snorri Sturluson: *Prosa-Edda. Altisländische Göttergeschichten.* Aus dem Altisländischen übertragen, mit Anmerkungen und einem Nachwort versehen von Arthur Häny. Zürich: Manesse, 1990, 51 and 58, fn. 43.

23 Paul Herrmann: *Die Heldensagen des Saxo Grammaticus*. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1922, esp. 201-204, 228.

24 See the "Tale of the hostile brothers", in Walter Krickeberg: *Indianermärchen aus Nordamerika.* (*Die Märchen der Weltliteratur.* Ed. by Friedrich von der Leyen and Paul Zaunert. Series II; Vol. X). Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924, 92-120, esp. 104-106.

25 Rank: *Das Inzest-Motiv*, 448-449; Döhler: *Das Motiv der feindlichen Brüder*, 4.

26 Jan Rypka: *History of Iranian Literature*. Leiden: D. Reidel Publ., 1968, 6.

27 *Lexikon der östlichen Weisheitslehren. Buddhismus - Hinduismus - Taoismus - Zen.* Ed. by Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber et al., Bern et al.: Scherz, 2nd ed. 1986; 95 (art. "Dhritarāshtra").

28 Rank: *Das Inzest-Motiv*, 454.

29 *EI*² VI, 981; Meḥemmed IV (reigned 1058-1099/1648-1687) is said to have tried to stab his brothers with his own hands, but his mother prevented him from doing this; see *EI*², VI, 982f.; and Rank: *Das Inzest-Motiv*, 454.

In a modern Hebrew poem by Dan Pagis (1970), fratricide serves as metaphor to bring the seemingly-unending, maddening circle of murder of one human being by another, his 'brother', during the Holocaust to mind.[30] And in modern Persian literature the biblical conflict of Cain and Abel is recounted in the dramatic novel *Ṣamfōni-ye mordegān (The Symphony of the Dead*, 1989) by ʿAbbās-e Maʿrūfī.[31]

Nevertheless, the story of Cain and Abel is the oldest and most striking pattern of fraternal quarrel in literature, which took on both allegorical meaning and archetypal significance. Jewish-Hellenistic exegetes, such as Philo Judaeus (d. ca. 50 BC)[32] and Josephus Flavius (d. after 100 AD),[33] as well as Patristic exegetes[34] explained it in more detail. They already characterized the hostile brothers as the original antipodes of 'good' and 'evil'. God's rejection of Cain's offering is commented on with Cain had offered only minor fruits. The Christian Exegesis and legends added to this idea the meaning of Abel's assassination as the prefiguration of Jesus Christ's expiatory death,[35] an idea which is established in "The Epistle to the Hebrews".[36] Cain becomes the incarnation of 'evil', even Satan himself. In Medieval Western literature, this opinion has been the accepted formula of this motif's elaboration for a long time.[37] Thereby German elaborations were based almost exclusively on the *Genesis*, whereas in French and English mysteries, on the contrary, one can note quite a realistic and detailed evaluation of the subject.[38]

In the period of Humanism and the Reformation, ideas of this time influenced the textual shape of the motif: on the one hand, in a polemic manner, set against Catholicism, and, on the other hand, in a moralistic-theological and pedagogical manner, aiming at teaching people their religious and moral duties.[39] But in all these adaptations, Abel, again, personifies 'good', while Cain represents pure 'evil', in which there is no mention of greatness.[40]

The Motif in Classical Arabic Literature

The elaboration of the hostile brothers' (*al-ikhwa al-aʿdāʾ*) theme in Arabic literature and within the context of Islam has not been thoroughly investigated yet.[41] But amazingly we come across the motif in its basic structure in Arabic texts, as early as pre-Islamic times.

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30 *Kātūv bᵉ -ʾippārōn ba-qqārōn he-khātūm: Kā(ʾ)n ba-mmishlōᵃḥ hāzeh — anī Ḥavvāh — ʿim Hevel bᵉnī — ʾim tirʾū et-bᵉnī ha-ggādōl — Qayin ben ʾĀdām — taggīdū lō she-anī (Kā(ʾ)n ba-mmishlōᵃḥ)*, see Dan Pagis: *Erdichteter Mensch. Gedichte. Hebräisch-Deutsch.* Transl. from Hebrew by Tuvi Rübner. Frankfurt / M. Jüdischer Verlag, 1993, 78-79. I thank E. Goodman-Thau (Halle) for drawing my attention to this text.

31 Abbas Maarufi: *Symphonie der Toten.* Aus dem Persischen übersetzt von Anneliese Ghahraman-Beck. Frankfurt / M., Leipzig: Insel, 1996. Rev. by Wolfgang Günter Lerch: "Der Abel von Ardebil", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3.12.1996.

32 Vigdor A. Aptowitzer: *Kain und Abel in der Agada, den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhammedanischen Literatur.* Wien / Leipzig: R. Löwit, 1922, 16-17; Edmund Stein: *Die allegorische Exegese des Philon von Alexandrien.* Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1929, esp. 15, 30, 44-45, 49, 57; *EJud* XIII, 409-415.

33 Aptowitzer: *Kain und Abel*, 14; *EJud* X, 251-265.

34 Rothschild: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*, 8; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 433-435; Frenzel: *Stoffe*, 411.

35 Brieger: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Dichtung*, 13; Rothschild: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*, 8-9.

36 *New Testament. The Epistle (of Paul the Apostle) to the Hebrews:* 11 (4): "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it being dead yet speaketh". - 12 (24): "(...) and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel". See also *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* 23 (35): "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachary (...)"; see also *Luke* 11 (51-52).

37 The synopsis of the Cain-and-Abel-topic by Petrus Comestor in his *Historia scholastica* (1172/73) has a specially far-reaching influence on the later epic and dramatic adaptation of the motif in Medieval Europe; see Frenzel: *Stoffe*, 412.

38 Here also the psychology of Cain is further elaborated, see the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis and Exodus*; furthermore Rothschild: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*, 10-12; and Frenzel: *Stoffe*, 412.

39 Döhler: *Das Motiv der feindlichen Brüder*, 4.

40 Sometimes, the motif of fraternal murder is connected with other sujets and genres. This sometimes leads to even comical outlines; see, for example, H. Sachs' "Comedia: Die ungleichen Kinder Evä" (*Comedy of Eve's Unequal Children*, 1553)", in: Hans Sachs: *Sehr Herzlich Schöne und wahrhaffte Gedicht, Geistlich und Weltlich allerley Art* (...). *Das erste Buch.* Nürnberg: Leonhardum Heußler, 1893, 7-14; Rothschild: *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*, 33-37. Corresponding to Martin Luther's ethics, in the literature of that time, Cain's offering as such is rejected, because it comes from an 'unbeliever'.

41 A first attempt has been made in the dissertation by Waltraud Bork-Qaysieh: *Die Geschichte von Kain und Abel (Hābīl wa-Qābīl) in der sunnitsch-islamischen Überlieferung. Untersuchung von Beispielen aus verschiedenen Literaturwerken unter Berücksichtigung ihres Einflusses auf den Volksglauben*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1993 (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen; 169). This study concentrates on the literary-historical development and some theological interpretations of the Cain-Abel-episode in Sunnite transmission. The brotherly rivalry as archetypal pattern of human action is only dealt with as a digression. I mention here those

The *ayyām al-ʿarab*, given the fine, sometimes almost brittle words, characteristic of this literature, recount the legend of the pair of brothers Shuraḥbīl and Salamah, the sons of the governor of al-Ḥīrah, al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAmr al-Maqṣūr.[42] Within the context of "The First Battle at the Kulāb"[43], we are told that after al-Ḥarīth's[44] death on a hunting trip a strong quarrel breaks out among his sons. The enmity[45] is exacerbated especially between Shuraḥbīl and Salamah. Finally, when the brothers, together with their warriors, line up against each other, Shuraḥbīl is said to have offered a sum of one hundred camels as a prize for anybody who would bring him his brother's head. The same offer is announced simultaneously by Salamah. Now the warriors on both sides start to fight. However, Salamah wins. Shuraḥbīl flees, pursued by one of Salamah's warriors. In combat Shuraḥbīl mortally wounds his pursuer, whereupon the brother of the deceased, in his turn, attacks Shuraḥbīl demanding the blood money (*diya*). As Shuraḥbīl derides him, he pushes Shuraḥbīl from his horse, kills him and sends his severed head to Salamah. At the sight of his brother's terrible fate, Salamah feels deep repentance and tearfully recites a mourning ode to his murdered brother.

sources, which are not referred to in that study, or which seem to me to be of special importance with regard to the literary-historical elaboration of this motif. See Bork-Qaysieh 59-68, 131-134; and the review by Christina Schöck, in: *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 90 (1995) 1, 65-69.

42 Abū ʿUbaydah Maʿmar ibn al-Muthannā al-Taymī: *Ayyām al-ʿArab qabla l-islām*. Ed. by ʿĀdil Jāsim al-Bayātī. (Two parts in one volume) Beirut: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1987, II, 45-65; Muḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Mawlā, ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Eds.): *Ayyām al-ʿArab fī l-jāhiliyyah*. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1988, 46-50; this legend is part of the *ayyām al-Qaḥṭāniyyah*.

43 This is a water hole between Kufa and Basra. The Kulāb-story is narrated in a *qaṣīdah* by Imruʾ l-Qays; see *Dīwān Imriʾ l-Qays*. Ed. by Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Dhakhāʾir al-Arab; 24). Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1958, 130-131. According to the information in Jād al-Mawlā (see fn. 42), 46 and 115, the genealogical data of Shuraḥbīl given in the *Dīwān* are incomplete.

44 According to the sources (see fn. 42), the Sassanian king Kavād I. (arab. Qubādh; reigned 489-427/8) appointed al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAmr (al-Kindī) as governor of Ḥīrah, after the latter let himself convert to the Mazdakiyyah. Al-Ḥārith's predecessor in this position, al-Mundhir ibn Māʾ al-Samāʾ, seems to have rejected a corresponding demand of the King, and therefore was expelled from al-Ḥīrah. Al-Ḥārith later stopped the combats of the Bedouin tribes and established peace between them by appointing his four sons as rulers over certain tribes. See also: *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Ed. by Ehsan Yarshater. 7 Vols. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 3/I, 150 and 601-602.

45 This happened due to the fact that the former governor, al-Mundhir, came back to Ḥīrah after the death of the Persian King, and fuelled the brothers' rivalry.

It is worth noting that this episode highlights the political aspect of the hostility of brothers. The rivalry between Salamah and Shuraḥbīl is based on them succeeding their father. Both brothers know that only one of them will be entitled to the status of ruler. Their rivalry is alive only when they compete for power. When one of the brothers dies, leaving political power to the survivor, there is no longer any real reason for rivalry, and brotherly love re-emerges through Salamah's ode.

Another bloody fight from pre-Islamic times became an almost legendary image. It is that between the two clans ʿAbs and Dhubyān, the 'sons' of the common ancestor Ghaṭafān [ibn Saʿd ibn ʿAylān], narrated in the context of "The Battles of the Qays ʿAylān". After the Banū ʿAbs rose to prominence in ca. 550 AD and gained power over almost all Ghaṭafāns in Ḥijāz, fights broke out especially between the ʿAbs and the Dhubyān with alternating success stories on both sides. The quarrel of their leaders led to the "War of Dāḥis [and al-Ghubarāʾ]", as a result of which, the ʿAbs were forced to leave their pasture grounds. After 30 years of wandering, the ʿAbs defeated a coalition of Dhubyān and other tribes, and later on peace was restored between the two 'brother'-tribes.[46]

The Qurʾānic Version of the Cain-and-Abel-Conflict

The Qurʾānic version of the Cain-and-Abel-conflict (Q 5:27-32) is shorter and slightly different from the biblical one. It is worth noting that the brothers are not mentioned in the Qurʾān by name – *Hābīl wa-Qābīl*, Abel and Cain – but only as the two sons of Adam, *ibnay Ādam*. However, the story is almost the same,[47] with the exception that the brother, who is identified as Abel, does not move to defend himself, or to attack the aggressor. Abel desists, because his soul prompts him to be righteous and to fear God. Cain's soul, on the contrary, prompts him to commit murder.

In contrast to the biblical text, the action is transferred into a brotherly dialogue. So, the Qurʾānic Abel puts a curse on Cain, telling him that he should "be laden with (and doomed to hell-fire for) my sin and thy sin" (Q

46 See Abū ʿUbaydah (fn. 42) II:177 and the literature given there; Jād al-Mawlā (fn. 42) 246-277 and 349-364 ("Battle of Shiʿb Jabalah"); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī al-Andalusī: *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*. Ed. by ʿAlī Shīrī. 7 Vols., Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-ʿArabī, 1989-1990, III, 316; *EI*^{2} II, 1023-1024 (art. "Ghaṭafān").

47 Johann-Dietrich Thyen: *Bibel und Koran. Ein Synopse gemeinsamer Überlieferungen*. Köln et al.: Böhlau, 2nd ed. 1993 (Kölner Veröffentlichungen zur Religionsgeschichte; 19).

5:29).[48] Also the dramatic style of the biblical version is not present in the Qur'ān:

Q 5:8[49] *O believers,* [*when you bear evidence*] *be you securers of justice, witnesses for God* (...).
Q 5:11 *O believers, remember God's blessing*
upon you, when a certain people purposed
to stretch against you their hands, and He
restrained their hands from you; (...)
Q 5:12 (...) *So whosoever of you thereafter*
disbelieves [*again*], *surely he has gone astray*
from the direct way. (...)
Q 5:15 *People of the Book,* (...)
Q 5:16 *God guides* [*with the Revelation*] *whosoever follows*
His good pleasure in the way of peace,
and brings them forth from the shadows into
the light by His leave; and He guides them
to a straight path.
Q 5:20 [*Recall:*] *And when Moses said to his people*
'O my people, remember God's blessing
upon you, (...)'

But the outragers, as the Qur'ān tells us, do not follow Moses' call to enter the Holy Land. God - invoked by Moses to decide between him together with his brother Aaron on the one hand, and the sinners and outragers on the other hand - damns the latter ones to "wandering in the earth" for forty years (Q 5:27). However, the central theme of 'teaching by exemplification', directly leads to the next 'lesson', the Cain and Abel story:

Q 5:27 *And recite thou to them the story*
of the two sons of Adam truthfully,
when they offered a sacrifice, and it was
accepted of one of them, and not accepted

48 This results from the difficulties in understanding Abel's reference to himself as a "sinner". Some commentators interpret the words "my sin" as meaning "your sin against me"; see Faruq Sherif: *A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'ān*. London: Ithaca Press, 1985, 47-48.

49 The numbering of the verses is that of the official Cairo edition of the Qur'ān. The English translation is given according to Arthur J. Arberry: *The Koran Interpreted*. Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 1964. See also *Der Koran*. Übersetzung von Rudi Paret. Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer, 1962, 90-91; Rudi Paret: *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*. Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer, 1971, 119. Heinrich Speyer: *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961, 84.

of the other. 'I will surely slay thee,'
said one. 'God accepts only of the godfearing,'
said the other.

Insight can be gained from both the location and sequence of the Qur'ānic version of Abel and Cain.

It is interesting to note the particular way this motif, thematically speaking, forms a bridge with the previous and following verses. This is, given the structure and language of the Qur'ān, not a typical matter. In addition, it is the manner in which the Cain-Abel-episode seems to indirectly interact with previously mentioned and subsequent teachings, statements of religious and profane relevance, or admonitions - by contrasting them, it emphasizes them. One even gets the impression that the order of subjects in this paragraph almost leads to the story of Adam's sons as a narrative focal point, and thus, additionally highlights its moralistic message.

However, in the Qur'ān the notion of moral conduct is given priority: '*God accepts only of the godfearing*' (Q 5:27). Secondly, the repentance after murder is stressed. In accordance with the divine obligation to respect human life, Cain repents his crime. The story is presented as an example for both godfearing people and the obligation of believers to live in accordance with His commandments. Abel says:

Q 5:28 *'Yet if thou stretchest out thy hand against*
me, to slay me, I will not stretch out my hand
against thee, to slay thee; I [*in my turn*] *fear God,*
the Lord of all Being.
Q 5:29 *I desire that thou* [*even though thou kill me*] *shouldest be laden*
with my sin and thy sin, and so become
an inhabitant of the [*Hell-*] *Fire; that is the recompense of*
the evildoers.'
Q 5:30 *Then his* [i.e. Cain's] *soul prompted him to slay*
his brother, and he slew him, and [i.e. in consequence of this crime] *became*
one of the losers. (...)
Q 5:31 *And he* [i.e. Cain] *became one of the remorseful.*
Q 5:32 *Therefore* [i.e. the murder of a brother] *We prescribed* [*as a law*] *for the Children of Israel*
that whoso slays a soul [i.e. a person] *not to retaliate*
for [*another*] *soul slain, nor for corruption*
done in the land, shall be as if he had
slain mankind altogether; and whoso

gives life to a soul, shall be as if he had
given life to mankind altogether.[50]

According to old Arabic principles, the family and close blood relations held an especially high position in tribal, pre-Islamic and in early Islamic society.[51] Murder of a brother was considered one of the most abominable actions ever, even if it were not punishable by death. That a son of Adam, who is considered in Islam as a Prophet, should have committed such a crime (the Qur'ānic statements in this regard are unequivocal) may be hard to conceive. Perhaps this is why, in the Qur'ān, the conflict is described in a somewhat less brutal way than in older texts. However, the socio-cultural context of the revelation of the Qur'ān may contribute to explaining the predominance of the contrastive-exemplary and instructional aspects inherent in the motif. Nevertheless, they are designed to fit it into the general conception of Islam.

Post-Qur'ānic Classical Sources

Among post-Qur'ānic classical sources, recounting the Cain and Abel legend, there are works of different genres, such as the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1036)[52] or al-Kisā'ī (ca. 4th-6th cent. H),[53] and historiographical works, especially those by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833),[54] who transmits it, almost exclusively, on the authority of Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110/728), but also the works by al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 284/897),[55] al-Ṭabarī (d.

50 Abraham Geiger: *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen*? Bonn: F. Baaden, 1833, 103-104, draws attention to the corresponding passage in *Mishna.* Sanhedrin IV, 5 (Rodwell).

51 Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī (Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-): *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*. 4 Vols., Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1961, 358: "*al-ab rabb, wa-l-ʿamm ghamm, wa-l-akh fakhkh*" under the heading *Tafḍīl baʿḍ al-aqārib ʿalā baʿḍ*.

52 Thaʿlabī (Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī, al-): *K. Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' al-musammā ʿarā'is al-majālis*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1405/1985, 43-47.

53 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Kisā'ī: *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. Ed. by Isaac S. Eisenberg. Leiden: Brill, 1922, 72-73.

54 Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdalmalik Ibn Hishām: *K. al-Tījān fī mulūk al-Ḥimyar*. Hyderabad: Majlis Dā'irat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1347/1928, 15-18, 20.

55 Yaʿqūbī (Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb ibn Jaʿfar ibn Wahb, al-): *Ta'rīkh*. Ed. by M.J. de Goeje and W. Wright. 2 Vols., Leiden: Brill, 1883, Vol. I: 3-4.

310/923)[56] and al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956),[57] as well as Ibn Qutaybah's (d. 276/889)[58] *K. al-Maʿārif*, which is an *adab* rather than a historiographical book.

Most of these authors favor a somewhat fabulous account of the story, which is comparable to the version given in the Jewish *Aggadah*[59] and some Christian Syrian sources.[60] The Muslim authors (in this case presumably based upon Syrian sources) recount that twin sisters have been born to Cain and Abel, and that each of them should have married the sister of the other. Because Cain claimed his own sister, the more beautiful one, a quarrel breaks out between the brothers, which is said to have been sparked off by a sacrifice and by God's acceptance of the offering of one of them. Again, the myth of 'the women as subject of the quarrel' (or, according to Freud, the sexual aspect as a main motive of human action) is moved into the foreground here.[61]

The hostility of brothers plays a different role within the narrative structure of works of the Genre of Recompense. This kind of *adab*-book relates exemplary stories about God's recompense for good or evil action by human beings.[62] Such books are sometimes entitled *al-Mukāfa'ah*

56 Ṭabarī (Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, al-): *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari* (*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*). Vols. I/1-III/4. Ed. by M.J. de Goeje. Leiden: Brill, 1879-1890; see Vol. I, 137-142.

57 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī: *Akhbār al-zamān*. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat ʿAbdalḥamīd Aḥmad Ḥanafī, 1357/1938, 51-53.

58 Ibn Qutaybah: *Ibn Coteiba's Handbuch der Geschichte*. [*K. al-Maʿārif*] Ed. by Ferdinand Wüstenfeld. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1850, 9-10.

59 Or, *Haggadah*, narrative, i.e. that portion of Rabbinical teachings, which is not concerned with religious laws and regulations but those parts of the Bible, which include narrative history, ethical maxims, and reproofs and consolations of the prophets; see *EJud* II, 354-366.

60 Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*, 10-55; Speyer, *Die Biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 85; for Christian influences, see *Die Schatzhöhle*. [Syrian and German]. Ed. by Karl Bezold. 2 Vols., Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1883-88; esp. II, 34-39 [Syrian and Arabic].

61 The nine canonical *ḥadīth* compendia (*al-kutub al-tisʿah*) do not mention Hābīl wa-Qābīl.

62 These books are of a historical and moral-ethical nature, drawing in a special way "life pictures which are not without sympathetic insights and do not spurn popular legends" but managing nevertheless to remain sober and realistic; see S.M. Ayyad: "Narrative Prose from the Tulunids to the Fatimids", in: *ʿAbbasid Belles Lettres*. Ed. by Julia Ashtiany et al. [The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature]. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 425.

("Just Deserts"), or *al-Faraj baʿda l-shiddah* ("Deliverance after Distress").[63]

Within the 71 tales (*qiṣaṣ*) of the *Mukāfaʾah*-book by Aḥmad Ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Dāyah,[64] an exponent of this genre, fraternal hostility crops up twice. Even if the motif is not expanded upon in the relevant passages, it is used by the author as a narrative starting-point for an exemplary episode of God's recompense.

One episode[65] is to be found in the chapter, whose title *Ḥusn al-ʿuqbā* one may translate as "All's well that ends well". There, the hostility (*ʿadāwah*) of al-Mahdī and his brother Jaʿfar,[66] the sons the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr, is mentioned.[67]

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63 Such as the short books by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (d. 234/849), Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), al-Tanūkhī (d. 384/994) and others; see Alfred Wiener: "Die *Farağ baʿd aš-Šidda*-Literatur", in: *Der Islam* 3 (1913), 270-298 and 387-420.

64 Such as by Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Dāyah (Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī b. al-Dāyah) al-Kātib (d. 340/951): *al-Mukāfaʾah*. Ed. by Aḥmad Amīn Bek. Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Amīriyyah, 1941, esp. 98-110, 180-181.

65 The story goes as follows: a certain Maṣqalah is going to tell us his fabulous experience. We learn that in the caliph al-Manṣūr's time he was a real confidant of the young deceased prince Jaʿfar in the latter's fights against his brother al-Mahdī. After al-Mahdī became the new caliph, Maṣqalah was caught by one of his police-troops (*shurṭah*). Faced with death, Maṣqalah called Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah, a friend who happened to be passing by and who was in a high military position of al-Mahdī's army, to help him. Maʿn b. Zāʾidah was able to order the police to let Maṣqalah go home with him. Later the caliph ordered both to appear before him, asking Maʿn how he could take the prisoner with him. Referring to his devoted services to the caliph (by reminding him that he had killed 30.000 enemies for al-Mahdī without asking for a favor), Maʿn b. Zāʾidah is able not only to save Maṣqalah's life but to ask the caliph to reward Maṣqalah generously by guaranteeing him a carefree life. So the caliph ordered Maṣqalah to be paid one thousand Dinars. But Maʿn added that the prize (*jāʾizah*) of a caliph may not be on the same level with that of his serf, meaning himself. So the caliph paid another one thousand Dinars (surprisingly) to Maṣqalahs neighbor. At the end of the story, Maṣqalah tells us: "so I took three thousand Dinars home with me and was secure for the rest of my life", what is, as one may say, indeed an unexpected turn but an expression of God's unfailing mercy towards one who had formerly rendered assistance to the weaker prince Jaʿfar against his brother. It might be the right "recompense" for good behavior in a human being's life.

66 I.e. Jaʿfar ibn Jaʿfar; he died already in the life-time of his father, the caliph al-Manṣūr; see Ibn al-Dāyah (fn. 64), 180.

67 Concerning the other episode mentioned, see Ibn al-Dāyah (fn. 64) 98-100; there the hostility of al-Mahdī's two sons from his favorite wife Khayzurān, al-Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd, is the subject of the story. Fearing the strength and an attack by his brother al-Hādī (*akhāfu īqāʾahū bī*), Hārūn appoints a certain Masrūr as chamberlain of caliph al-Hādī's private rooms (*sitr bayt khalwatihī*). This one informs Hārūn about how he heard Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb (the *qāḍī* of both al-Hādī and later Hārūn) advise the caliph al-Hādī, not to interrupt the relation to his kinship (*raḥim*) and not to break his oath (*ʿalā ḥinth*), i.e. concerning the appointment of Hārūn as the next caliph. After the sudden death of al-Hādī in 786 A.D., Hārūn surprises Abū Yūsuf al-Qāḍī with his knowledge of the latter's wise and statesman-like advice to his formerly hostile brother. Now, Abū Yūsuf's good behavior is rewarded with his appointment as judge of Hārūn.

In another context, issues of the hostility of 'brothers' are dealt with in certain *adab*-compilations. Here the theme is not about natural brothers but spiritual or religious ones. We may briefly refer, for example, to Ibn Qutaybah's didactic *adab*-encyclopaedia *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* ("The Choice of Transmitted Information"), which has a whole and enlightening chapter on *ikhwān*. The paragraph on *ʿAtb al-ikhwān wa-l-tabāghuḍ wa-l-ʿadāwah* ("The blame of brothers, the hate and hostility towards each other") included therein might be of interest in a wider context.[68]

The Fraternal War between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn

For the classical period of Islam there is a fraternal war, which has taken on almost legendary importance: it is the quarrel between two sons of the famous ʿAbbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, i.e. between al-Amīn, who was a rather practical person, and his well-mannered and highly intellectual brother al-Maʾmūn. These 'unequal' brothers almost figure as 'historic prototypes' of the hostile brother pair in Islam.[69] The memory of their enmity is preserved in the well-known historiographical compilations by al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Dīnawarī.

The story is that al-Amīn was given priority by al-Rashīd in the order of succession over his half-brother al-Maʾmūn (who was his elder by six month and the son of a slave mother). During al-Amīn's reign the 'cold war' between these brothers escalated and turned into a 'hot war'. When al-Amīn was put to death in 198/813, obviously without his brother being directly responsible for his murder, the latter was able to take over the empire. However, this hostility may have been influenced in addition, and even forced by, the rivalry between, on the one hand, Iraq with al-Amīn's capital Baghdad, and, on the other hand, the province Khorasan and Persia,

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68 Ibn Qutaybah: *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*. 4 Vols., Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1925-1930; see the *ikhwān* chapter in III: 1-117, and the paragraph on *ʿAtb al-ikhwān* in III: 107-114.

69 Ṭabarī III: 603-974; *EI*² I: 437-438 (art. "al-Amīn" by F. Gabrieli); F. Gabrieli: "La successione di Hārūn al-Rašīd e la guerra fra al-Amīn e al-Maʾmūn", in: *Rivista degli studi orientali* (1928), 341-397.

which were al-Ma'mūn's strongholds. Consequently, the personal quarrel of these brothers has additionally come to be considered an expression of the general conflict between Arabism and Iranism in early ʿAbbāsid history, even though there was certainly no ethnic difference between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn.

The Hostile Brothers in Arabic Fairy Tales

On many occasions one comes across the motif in Arabic fairy-tales, for example in those from the Maghreb and Syria, even if it is here, in part, structured differently. Customarily the story of a king's or a tradesman's three, six or seven sons is narrated. And the older brothers aim to kill the youngest, who is distinctive in a certain sense.[70]

This literary subject lives on in Bedouin stories,[71] too, originating from Palestine. E. Littmann[72] has briefly noted that the ancient motif of Joseph,[73] which is a favorite in Oriental fairy tales,[74] is adapted here. In the tale about the sons of *amīr* Muḥammad ibn Ajwad,[75] for example, the brothers plan to kill the hero, i.e. their highly esteemed half-brother, who seems to them to have become too dangerous because of the prestige he has gained. Stricken with a bad conscience, the youngest brother begs the others to throw him into a well instead, where he - like Joseph - is rescued by chance.[76]

70 Ursula Nowak: *Beiträge zur Typologie des arabischen Volksmärchens.* (Diss.) Freiburg i.Br. 1969, 158 (motif-type 148), 176 (motif-type 171), 180, 184-185, 199 (motif-type 197), and the literature quoted there. This work, however, lacks the firmly outlined hostile-brothers-motif, although it can be found in many Arabic fairy-tales.

71 I.e. made-up stories, which have nothing in common with classical *ayyām al-ʿarab* literature.

72 At the end of the last century Enno Littmann collected and published some of them; see his *Arabische Beduinenerzählungen.* I: *Arabischer Text*; II: *Übersetzung.* Straßburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1908 (Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Straßburg 2 und 3).

73 Genesis 37; Erika Glassen: "Die Josephgeschichte im Koran und in der persischen und türkischen Literatur", in: *Paradeigmata* (fn. 10) 1, 169-179.

74 Joseph Meyouhas: *Bible Tales in Arab Folklore.* Transl. from the Hebrew by Victor N. Levi. London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928, esp. 78-85 ("The meeting of Yusef with his Brethren").

75 Littmann, *Arabische Beduinenerzählungen*, II, 15-29; Nowak, *Beiträge*, 180.

76 Because fairy-tales (such as in the collection of *Alf laylah wa-laylah* and *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*) are polygenetic to a certain extent, and stories of diverse peoples and cultures are heavily interwoven (see *EdMär* II (fn. 3), 844-919, art. "Bruder, Brüder"), we will not look at this genre in more details.

Alternative Ways of Adapting the Motif in Modern Arabic Literature

In an extremely interesting manner, the archetypal quarrel is adapted in some works of modern Arabic literature. First of all, there is the fascinating novel *Awlād ḥāratinā* (*The Children of our Quarter*, or, as the book is entitled in its English translation, *The Children of Gebelawi*, 1959) by Najīb Maḥfūẓ.[77] Here the fight between brothers is even dealt with twice, namely in the form of the brothers Idrīs and Adham, and, furthermore, in Adham's sons, the twins Qadrī and Humām.

As this novel was commissioned by the renowned Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahrām*, where it should have been published as a series before it was suppressed in Egypt, Maḥfūẓ was aware that he was writing for a wide range of readers. Borrowing from mankind's history but using the freedom available to him as a writer, he draws up a plot that is exciting and comprehensible to a large readership. To make his message clear - a critique of social grievances of the Egyptian society of that time - he transposed the plot into the Quarter, a microcosm reflecting everyday problems of the people. People of almost any Cairene quarter may recognize themselves therein. He applies metaphors which he assumes are commonly-known and deeply-rooted in his Arab readership. And it is more than obvious from diverse passages of the book that the author makes such references quite concisely.

So, we are told about the forefather of the Quarter, Gabalāwī, and his unequal sons: Adham, a positive hero, and his brother Idrīs. The structure of their quarrel staged by Maḥfūẓ is principally based on that of ancient Abel and Cain, even if Adham does not completely meet the fate of his prototype. Maḥfūẓ utilizes the mythical subject for his main plot. But he structures the brothers' psychological interaction in an even more sophisticated way, in which different archetypes and motifs overlap.

Adham is not only Abel who represents the goodness, purity, uprightness, the ideal typos of a human being. He has, in addition, characteristics of Adam: his name and certain features of his character but also details of the plot conjure up this point in our minds. Adham meets, for example, his future wife when she suddenly appears to him in 'the Paradise' of

77 Najīb Maḥfūẓ: *Awlād ḥāratinā.* Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 1967 (Repr. of the first edition of 1959; henceforth: *Awlād*); Naguib Mahfouz: *Children of Gebelawi.* Transl. by Philip Stewart. London: Heinemann, 1981 (henceforth: *Children*); Nagib Machfus: *Die Kinder unseres Viertels.* Transl. by Doris Erpenbeck. Zürich: Unionsverlag, 1995.

Gabalāwī's Big House's garden. Her shadow reflects upon the earth in such a way that it seems to have arisen from one of Adham's ribs.[78] Also, it is Adham who is the 'first parent' incarnate of the Quarter's children.

It is he who is seduced by Idrīs to act against Gabalāwī. Later he is persuaded by his pregnant wife to have a look at Gabalāwī's forbidden book (which contains the mysterious Ten Commandments), in order to gain 'knowledge' about the future. He is the one who is finally banished, together with his wife, from the Big House and the 'paradise' of its garden that he loves above everything, and his growing family is forced to scrape a living from the desert and the little he earns from his work.

Idrīs, previously expelled by Gabalāwī from the Big House for a serious misdeed, becomes Adham's strong opponent. However, his name, Idrīs, not only means in Classical Arabic "seeker (of knowledge)"[79] but also associates him with Iblīs, i.e. Satan or Mephistopheles.

Idrīs develops step by step into the blatant incarnation of 'evil'. He represents the one who hates his brother and who constantly contradicts his deeds. He destroys his brother's life, even if he does not kill him physically. Idrīs *is* - as the book tells us - "the incarnation of evil,"[80] who brings only harm and trouble, and who preys upon others.[81] Adham says once to Idrīs: "Bloody, lousy, mean - these are the characteristics of the twisters and liars [like you]",[82] and, in a soliloquy "Whenever I am in the dark by myself that devil (*shayṭān*) goes and lights his fire[83] and gets rowdy and spoils my solitude."[84]

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78 *Badā al-muẓill al-jadīd ka-annamā yakhruju min mawḍiʿ ḍulūʿihī. Wa-ltafata warā'ahū fa-ra'ā fatāt samrā'*; see: *Awlād*, 18.

79 According to Qur'ān 19:56 and 21:85, Idrīs is one of the early men of God in a line with Noah, David, Salomon, Hiob, Ismael, (Idrīs,) Dhū l-Kifl and Jonas. The exegete Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Farrā' (d. 512/1122 in Merw) explains his name as follows: "*summiya Idrīs li-kathrati darsihī l-kutub* (...) *wa-huwa* (...) *awwal man khaṭṭa bi-l-qalam* (...) *wa-awwal man naẓara fī ʿilm al-nujūm wa-l-ḥisāb*"; see: *Tafsīr al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr wa-yalīhi* "Maʿālim li-tanzīl tafsīr al-Baghawī". Vol. V, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1346 (1927-1928), 376. Geiger's reference (fn. 50), 106, to a certain Elpherar is to al-Farrā' (see *Maʿālim al-tanzīl*. Ms. ar. Gotha, Pertsch 524, on Q 19:57); see also *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. By Edward William Lane. In Eight Parts. (Repr.) Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980, III, 870-871.

80 *Wa-hādhā huwa Idrīs alladhī 'staḥāla sharran mujassadan*, see: *Awlād*, 50.

81 *Awlād*, 60-61.

82 *Awlād*, 50; *Children*, 31.

83 From which the devil, Iblīs, cf. Q 7,12.

84 *Awlād*, 60; *Children*, 37.

With the figure of a Cain/Iblīs-Idrīs, Maḥfūẓ further develops a literary idea which has a very long tradition in world literature. So, Idrīs also symbolizes an arrogant strength, respecting nothing.[85] He represents the restless antithesis and the critic. For example, Idrīs says to Adham: "You hate me, Adham, but not because I was the cause of your being thrown out, but because I remind you [constantly] of your weakness."[86] This self-characterization makes it ultimately clear that Idrīs is not simply the personification of 'evil' but relates to Mephistopheles in the sense of J.W. Goethe's *Faust*, i.e. to that "spirit who always denies", "who always intends evil but always creates good".[87] Idrīs impersonates the trouble and the difficulties of human life that can be overcome once they are recognized. He presents the energy with which humans gain maturity and develop. On the other hand, it seems that categories, such as good and evil, as is to be noted in *Faust II*, will be substituted diametrically by 'absolute effort' of an Idrīs and 'imperturbable quiescence by all means' of an Adham.

The motif of Hābīl wa-Qābīl also re-appears in Adham's sons, Humām and Qadrī. Here the belligerent Qadrī says that it is he who resembles his uncle Idrīs even more than his father. Almost more obvious than in the figure of Idrīs, Qadrī represents the 'rebel'. He is the person who publicly calls the ordinance of the Quarter into question.

On the one hand, Qadrī is full of enthusiastic admiration for his powerful grandfather,[88] on the other hand, he is the vituperative critic. Facing brutal force, misery and oppression predominant in the Quarter with no way out, he not only doubts the power ascribed to Gabalāwī and his justice - so much praised by the people - but calls him a "tyrant". On the other hand, he is fascinated by the continuing activity, the powerful energy

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85 *Awlād*, 56-57.

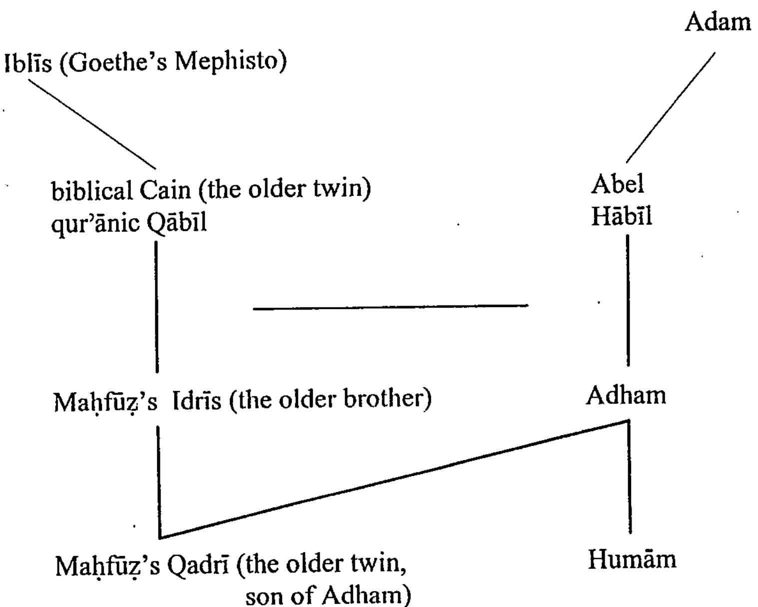
86 *Awlād*, 66; *Children*, 41.

87 Mephistopheles is "Ein Teil von jener Kraft - Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft. (...) Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!", see Johann Wolfgang Goethe: *Faust. Texte*. Ed. by Albrecht Schöne. Frankfurt / M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994, 64-65 (Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker; 114).

88 The Arabic root **j-b-l* means 'to create', 'to form'. The ending -āwī is used in colloquial Egyptian Arabic for the partic. active, 3. masc. sing. Even if Gabalāwī is of a super-human nature and is somewhat God-like, he is not the Almighty, he is not God, Allāh. This is clear in the novel from its very beginnings. Only Allāh is the one to whom the characters of the novel pray and take refuge. He is the ultimate contingency.

of Idrīs.[89] This rebellious power continues to live on in Qadrī, who stands for all human passions and imperfections.

In contrast, one finds the characteristics of Adham (and thus those of ancient Abel), embodied in the sensitive and God-fearing Humām.[90] Humām has no feeling for worldly life. He is exclusively inspired by the wish to see his grandfather, Gabalāwī.[91] The latter is the sole of his life. He holds Gabalāwī in fearful awe and has an unshakable confidence in him. No wonder that it is Humām, who is chosen by Gabalāwī to be the only one of Adham's family who is allowed to return into the paradise of the Big House. Qadrī, excluded from this favor, slays his brother in a quarrel. Then he hides the corpse in the desert, frightened by his own deed, but not without strong feelings of repentance.[92]



89 *Awlād*, 72.

90 *Awlād*, chapter 13.

91 *Awlād*, 71.

92 *Awlād*, 95.

On the one hand, Maḥfūẓ returns with these characters to a legend that is, as we have seen, part of Islamic heritage, particularly concentrating on the religious moralistic content inherent in the Qur'ān. On the other hand, the novelist continues a literary development of the Cain-and-Abel-motif, which started in European literary history with the fiction of the *Baroque* period, and which came to fruition in the *Age of Enlightenment* and, above all, in the period of *Sturm und Drang*.

Consequently neither Humām nor Qadrī are merely representatives of good and evil. Of course, Qadrī / Cain is proud and irascible. And Humām / Abel is humble and dreamy. But in the case of Maḥfūẓ's book, an element supervenes that takes the soul-conflicts of the brothers as the main subject. So, Qadrī is no longer (as in the literature of the *Age of Enlightenment*) a man worthy of pure condemnation. His pangs of conscience and his psychological distraction are quite obviously emphasized. The author even grants Qadrī repentance[93] or depicts him (as M. Klopstock has already done with the figure of Cain in his *Der Tod des Abel*, 1759) partly as an introvert, full of inner restlessness and weariness.[94] Maḥfūẓ, too, is able to arouse in the reader an even greater interest in the mental attitude of the 'murder', Qadrī, than in the 'pious' Humām.[95] It is Qadrī's strength and the towering fire of his temperament - not only concerning his relation to the maid Hind, whom he loves - that surfaces throughout. One therefore may be reminded of Lord Byron's famous romantic-epic poem *Cain* (1821), where Cain conclusively is re-shaped into the Prometheic fighter against falsehoods and oppression, to a Faustian seeker of truth. This elaboration of the character of Cain, by the way, caused Byron in his day to be labeled as blasphemous, and led to a sweeping condemnation of the work by Christian bigots.[96] As is known, Maḥfūẓ has been, even from another angle, constantly exposed to the same reproach.

93 It is interesting to note that Geßner's Abel is a gentle adolescent, but Cain, on the other hand, is the one full of resentment and indignation who hates Abel's tenderness; see Salamon Geßner: *Der Tod Abels*. Leipzig: Johann Georg Löwen, 1764, esp. 31-34, 36, 91-92, 119-120, 139.

94 Margareta Klopstock: *Der Tod Abels. Ein Trauerspiel.* In: *F.G. Klopstocks sämmtliche Werke.* Carlsruhe: Büreau der deutschen Classiker, 1821, part I, 129-155, esp. 153-154.

95 This, too, has its parallel in works of the *Sturm und Drang*.

96 Truman Guy Stefan: *Lord Byron's Cain. Twelve Essays and a Text with variants and Annotations.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968, esp. the chapter "An apology for revolt", 35; see also the survey of "Cain Criticism", 309; Bernard Blackstone: "Byron and Islam", in: *Journal of European Studies* 4 (1974), 325-363; *EJud* V: 24; Blaicher: "Byrons *Cain*", esp. 376, 378-379, 281, 384 (Cain's scepticism

It is Maḥfūẓ' contrasting aesthetics, which determine the figures and the structure of his heroes' actions. It becomes clear that this impressively sets a spotlight on essential questions of everyday life. Nevertheless, even through the author's artificial figurative language, his intention remains, at all times, clear and understandable. This makes it possible for him to establish a dialogue with the public (*jumhūr*). Though he deals in a metaphorical, highly artificial and even entertaining manner with serious social problems of our days, he is able to put these issues into proper focus, sharpening the public's awareness of them.

Finally, attention should be drawn to Saʿdallāh Wannūs'[97] last theatrical play *Malḥamat al-sarāb* (*The Epic of the Mirage*)[98] which provides a brief example of the hostile brothers' motif with the brothers Marwān and Amīn.

The main plot is the story of ʿAbbūd al-Ghāwī, the unscrupulous Master greedy for profit, and his diabolical Servant (*khādim*). With a dubious project concerned with establishing a new tourist centre, the Master and his Servant uproot the inhabitants of a small village. The result is disastrous because it destroys the village community. The Master and his Servant embark on fraudulent machinations to deprive the credulous villagers of their lands. They rob them of their material existence and their ancestral traditions. The fate of the village is sealed: in the end, the villagers are financially destitute, and physically or psychologically broken. Even those who have been bought by the Master, and were able to enjoy some short term benefits, suffer a similar fate.

In order to gain the Servant's support in accomplishing his plans, ʿAbbūd has to sign a blood contract with his Servant, who possesses evil abilities. The contract actually means that Master ʿAbbūd sells his soul to the Servant to revitalize his own blood and, thus, to be rejuvenated. It is obvious that, with these two figures, Wannūs is referring to Faust and Mephistopheles. But even if Wannūs borrows from the two universally known archetypes of literature, there are essential differences between, on

and questioning, his brotherly love of Abel, his love of Ada, his love of animals, his will to defend the suffering Creation).

97 S. Wannūs was born in 1941 in a village of the Syrian governorate of Tartus. He died after a serious illness May 15th, 1997. For further information on his life and work, see Wiebke Walther: "Machtspiele: Von der Humoreske zum Masraḥ at-Tasyīs", in: *Gesellschaftlicher Umbruch und Historie im zeitgenössischen Drama der islamischen Welt*. Ed. by Johann Christoph Bürgel and Stephan Guth. Beirut / Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995 (Beiruter Texte und Studien; 60), 283-295.

98 Saʿdallāh Wannūs: *Malḥamat al-sarāb*. Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 1996.

the one hand, Master ʿAbbūd and his Servant, and, on the other hand, their literary prototypes. Firstly, ʿAbbūd does not make use of diabolic means to gain knowledge, as Faust did. He only craves for profit and power in the human world. Secondly, his Servant does not have the refractory character and the energy of a Mephistopheles.

The village atmosphere is reproduced on stage through the multifarious plots of the play and the large number of characters and levels of action. It is in this framework that the conflict of the hostile brothers, Marwān and Amīn, develops. Their quarrel, in general, has a lot in common with the biblical Cain and Abel. But in addition to that, their names remind us of the legendary hostile pair of brothers, the caliphs al-Ma'mūn and al-Amīn.

The fight between Marwān and Amīn is inflamed by Marwān's greed. He wants to sell off his family's ancestral land to Master ʿAbbūd just to have a more convenient life in the town. For Marwān, the land does not have any value and exists only in songs and the old *qaṣīdahs*, whereas Amīn, on the contrary, renounces his own education in favor of his younger brother's, hoping in later times to be able to cultivate the fields together with him. The land is the basis of his life and all he loves most. When Amīn persistently rejects the sale of the land, Marwān slays him with a stick. Shocked by his action, Marwān flees the house. The curtain drops on this act (*mashhad*), and this episode comes to an end. Finally, one only sees Marwān and Amīn's mother bent in despair over her son's dead body.

The fictional elements in the plot of *Malḥamat al-sarāb* and the repeated reference to old myths enable the Syrian Wannūs to deal on stage in a concrete manner with highly sensitive problems of today's world. Wannūs utilizes commonly-known figures[99] to present his message clearly for a wider public. The objectives of the Master and his Servant are parts of modern society dominated by money. Their greed results in the socio-psychological destruction of a traditional village. Only a few of its inhabitants are able to escape the village's terrible fate. Villagers are overwhelmed by the opaque mechanisms of this 'new' society totally inconceivable to them. As this play shows, the author sees "little hope in a long

99 Another figure, for example, known from Arabian heritage, is Zarqā' al-Yamāmah, the Cassandra of Greek mythology. She is brought back to literary life in this play in the form of the sympathetic Maryam. No wonder that it is Maryam, too, who predicts the fatal end of the village, and is therefore probably killed.

Arabian night", as the newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* subtitled its review of the play.[100]

Although apparently pessimistic, stating that money, destructive power and intrigue win over weak individuals, the play provides a powerful message, criticizing the erroneous development of a purely money-orientated society. In fact, it is 'the concept of such a kind of modern society' which is on trial. This message forces a public awakening. It almost cries out for more justice and awareness concerning social and economic grievances of our time. Even though the milieu of the village is Arab, the problems, presented by the author, are universal. They directly apply, as one knows, to other cultural or human experiences. Insofar, the hostile brothers' motif is, in fact, both a proper and universally understandable means of transmitting a message to the public.[101]

Conclusions

Research into selected Arabic texts draws attention to the fact that the ancient myth of 'hostile brothers' is evident in Islam. Here, too, this myth has been worked into the frame of a literary motif. This has been proved concerning the two mythical figures of Cain and Abel but also with regard to fraternal rivalry as a general pattern of human behavior. In Arabic literature the motif appears sporadically rather than continuously, however, it is to be detected in pre-Islamic narrative literature and legends, in classical poetry, in the Qur'ān, in Arabic proverbs, in *adab* and legendary works from Medieval times and in modern Arabic prose and dramatic performance.

1. In the texts under consideration, the quarrel between brothers is, in most cases, for obvious 'personal, human' reasons. One can note in this regard the fight for power, or for a women, or just for acknowledgment by an authority, i.e. the father, a ruler, or a God. This is exemplified by the legendary pre-Islamic Salamah and Shuraḥbīl, Hābīl wa-Qābīl in Qur'ānic and in post-Qur'ānic texts, but also the caliphs al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn.

2. Furthermore, individual fights between brothers recounted in narrative literature, often seem to be overlapped by far-reaching social, cultural

[100] ʿAbduh Wāzin: "Saʿdallāh Wannūs: Malḥamat al-sarāb. Jadīd qalīl min al-amal fī layl ʿarabī ṭawīl", in: *al-Ḥayāt* (Beirut), 25.3.1996.

[101] This may also be noted with regard to the fact that with *Malḥamat al-sarāb* Wannūs makes another contribution to a conception already practiced earlier: the so-called *masraḥ al-tasyīs*, i.e. mass oriented political Arabic theatre in the sense of Bertold Brecht.

or religious antagonisms in terms of their historic or legendary background. The personal conflict of the brothers, being the perceptible subject or motif within a given literary framework, can become the internal literary means for stressing general - and only seemingly secondary - antagonisms. This becomes clear both in the rivalry of brother-tribes (as dealt with in *ayyām al-ʿarab* literature) and in the conflict of Arabism vs. Iranism (in relation to the brothers al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn as the representatives of rivaling regions or ethnically-cultural communities).

3. But, above all, this motif is a mirror of the personified moral-ethical competition between 'good' and 'evil' in the human world. It is, in other words, the literary expression of divergent individual mental attitudes. There is, on the one hand, idealized stability, awareness of tradition, respect of given norms and authority, God-fearing, but even a kind of stagnation and incapacity of life (as exemplified in figures of the Qur'ānic Hābīl and Maḥfūẓ's Adham and Humām). On the other hand, there are the antagonists of these heroes, who represent crime and irreverence but, at the same time, a form of protest against established norms and snapping at authority, which might even mean, in a certain sense, movement, fresh development for the maturing and cognitive progress of the human being.

4. Modern Arabic literature makes it clear that both the archetype as well as the motif of hostile brothers are superimposed somewhat, or enriched, by other common myths and motifs, originating either from a 'genuine' Islamic conception of ideas, or being adaptations from older cultures and religions, or, generally speaking, from outside Islam. This can be exemplified with the figures such as the ideal forefather Adam, the human antithesis, Iblīs and Mephistopheles, or, with Faust, the prototype of an uncompromising seeker of knowledge. When this is the case, the motif takes on added tension and develops into a suitable means of the author for dealing with the problems of human society and, in his active role as admonisher of society, for expressing his individual opinion and for communicating with his social surroundings.

5. In pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabic literature in general, the aspect of repentance following the committing a murder plays a central role. Accompanied by the subtle but tangible moralistic message of the Abel-and-Cain-story in the Qur'ān, in Islam the motif seems to have developed into a popular measure of 'ethically-moral instruction by using examples'. Because the pattern of the conflict might be commonly known to a wide public, it functions in some works as a basic constituent of the narrative structure, extensively and intensively speaking, and, in terms of the plot, as both the starting point of the tale or within its frame (see, e.g., the

mukāfa'ah-stories but also the examples from fairy-tales and modern literature).

In Arabic literature, too, the brother-scheme is primarily characterized by its religiously and culturally independent but characteristic and repetitious form. This is the case throughout all the diverse narrative genres, concerning subject-matter and form, respectively.

6. While classical Arabic literature predominantly uses the hostile brothers' motif as a means of communicating a religious or moral-oriented message, modern Arab authors adapt the motif to denounce socio-economic injustice in its different forms. It is quite striking that especially in works by renowned authors such as N. Maḥfūẓ and S. Wannūs, this ancient motif of world literature is revived in its whole wealth and artistic diversity. The hostile brothers' motif does not only continue to be purely applied or adapted here, but it is transformed and developed further in a fascinating and quite alternative manner. By connecting their literary heroes with figures of ancient myths, these authors show the reader that they have understood the 'essence of the world' not only for themselves. On the contrary, they call it to the attention of the public - an observation which proves to be an example of interdependence of cultures and literatures crossing all artificially drawn borders. It may also be instrumental in providing general evidence of the enormous value and the lively contribution made by Arabic literature in our 'one-world-culture'.