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Yours Are Praise, Blessings and Sovereignty

لك الحمد والنعماء والملك ربنا

Religious ode attributed to Umayya ibn Abī l-Ṣalt · Damascus, 3764



Al-Wāsiṭī · Maqāmāt · BnF, Arabe 5847, f. 5v

English · Arabic text · Notes and sources

VOLUME XXI

Reading guide

The English text, commentary and sources are brought together in the first part. Documentary reproductions appear at the end of the volume. Historical illustrations accompany the text.

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Arabic quotations needed for the commentary remain beside their explanations. The continuous Arabic transcription follows in a separate part.

References to editions and manuscripts have been retained. Contents-page references and internal links point to the new pagination.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

About the work

Dating

Umayya ibn Abī l-Ṣalt lived in Muḥammad's time. Transmitters place the ode at the beginning of the prophetic mission, but neither its attribution nor its date of composition is certain. The Damascus copy is medieval.

Origin and preservation

Tradition associates the ode with the poet of Ṭā'if. The al-Ẓāhiriyya Library in Damascus preserves it in miscellany 3764, item 6.

Summary

The ode opens with praise of the King and a vision of the angels surrounding the Throne. Its fifty-six verses move from heaven to human consciousness and the passage of time. The refusal to prostrate before Adam leads to the final scene: the adversary consigned to the Fire.

Detailed account and sources · p. 12

CONTENTS OF THE VOLUME

Reading guide

The complete ode in 56 verses, from the opening verse of praise to the final question about the adversary and the Fire. The translation follows the text of the poetry edition published by Umm al-Qurā University. The Damascus manuscript confirms the opening, sequence of themes and ending, with variants. It gives the booklet's title in image 59, the chain of transmission and first eleven verses in image 60, verses 12-37 in image 61, and the ending in image 62.

Passage	Arabic	English	Meaning
Verses 1-11 · The king, the throne and its guards	14	5	10
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PART ONE

English translation

الترجمة الإنجليزية

01 · Verses 1-11 · The king, the throne and its guards

1. Yours are praise, blessings and sovereignty, our Lord. Nothing surpasses You in greatness or glory.
2. A King who watches over heaven's throne: before His might, faces bow and fall in prostration.
3. A veil of light covers Him. Light surrounds Him, and rivers of light blaze around Him.
4. No gaze rises high enough to reach Him. On this side of the veil of light stands a mighty creation.
5. Angels have their feet beneath His earth and stretch their necks higher than the heavens.
6. One of them holds a leg of His throne in both hands. Without God, they would falter and be left powerless.
7. Standing on their feet, submissive beneath the throne, they tremble through their whole bodies, so intense is their fear.
8. A multitude in ranks awaits His decree. They listen intently for revelation and remain motionless.
9. Among them are Gabriel, entrusted with the holy revelation, and Michael, the spirit-being, strong and rightly guided.
10. Nearer still, the guards of heaven's gates stand at their posts, keys in hand, keeping watch.
11. What servants are these elect ones chosen for His command! Behind them gathers an unnumbered army.

02 · Verses 12-21 · Those who prostrate

12. Angels never tire of worshipping Him. Among them the cherubim bow or prostrate.

13. The one who prostrates never raises his head. He exalts and glorifies the Lord above him.

14. The one who bows bends his back before Him in humility. He recalls God's blessings and praises Him.

15. Another wraps his head in his two wings. At the remembrance of his Lord, he is close to streaming

16. with fear. He feels no weariness in worshipping Him, and worship's long duration does not exhaust him.

17. One dwells at the farthest reaches of the heights. The one appointed over rain and winds, like the others, serves God.

18. Below the mass of waters, deep in the air, angels descend and ascend again.

19. Between the layers of the earth, beneath its depths, angels come and go at His command.

20. Glory to Him whose greatness no creature can measure, to Him who is above the throne, alone and unique.

21. No creature contests His sovereignty. Even if His servants are slow to acknowledge His oneness, One He remains.

03 · Verses 22-32 · The Creator and voices glorifying Him

22. King of the mightily built heavens and of their earth, nothing can escape His decree.

23. Glory to my Lord, creator of light. He has not begotten and has not been begotten. I bear witness to this.

24. Glory to Him, above every lie and falsehood. The Master of the throne has not begotten. How could He be begotten?

25. He is God who brings creatures forth. All belong to Him of their own free will, female and male servants alike.

26. He is the Absolute Refuge, God. No creature is His equal; no rival can measure itself against Him.

27. How could creation resemble the Creator, who endures and remains while it wears away?

28. No creature can remain new as time passes. Who, amid the course of events, endures for ever?

29. Everything perishes. Only the One who rules remains, ceaselessly bringing death and giving life, never Himself fading away.

30. The birds glorify Him when their wings fold in shelter and when they rise into the expanse of the sky.

31. For fear of my Lord, the thunder above us glorifies Him. The trees and wild beasts glorify Him too.

32. The fish glorify Him, and the swelling sea, and everything it contains, and everything it bears.

04 · Verses 33-45 · The heart and passing time

33. O heart lingering in desire, how long will you turn away like this

34. from truth, like a blind man straying from the path, when the valiant prophet Muḥammad has come to you

35. with light upon light, manifest truth, a guide along the paths of right guidance, a flame that never dies?

36. There you see accounts of vanished generations and tidings of hidden things concerning the Rising,

37. and the vicissitudes of a world that does not last for those who inhabit it. Death prowls; its blows come and go.

38. This world offers the means to reach an appointed end, to subsist for a time. While a man inspires fear here and is raised to the foremost rank,

39. suddenly the world turns away from him. His comfort departs, and the earth of graves becomes his pillow.

40. He has parted from the breath that dwelt in his chest; his neighbours are the dead, who will scatter no more.

41. What man before me have you seen endure for ever, for whom the long passage of days preserves what he cherishes?

42. The one whom time tests by making him stumble will fall beneath the blow, and calamities will return.

43. The world will not remain unscathed, though its inhabitants think it in perfect health. Time can shed its appearances.

44. Is there no lesson in what passed before you? Stop, O heart! Do not be the blind man turning his head from side to side.

45. Guidance has come to you, beyond doubt. Only a man whose judgement has gone astray rejects the truth.

05 · Verses 46-56 · Adam, the adversary and fire

46. Fear death and, after it, the rising. Do not be among those deceived by today and tomorrow.

47. You are in a world that deceives its inhabitants. An enemy whose heart is full of rancour fans

48. with his hatred the fires of enmity among us, because my Lord said to the angels, “Prostrate

49. before Adam!” When God had finished creating him, they fell before him, prostrating willingly and with firm resolve.

50. But God's enemy said in his pride and distress, “Should clay rule over the fire of the scorching wind?”

51. Disobedience drove him from the best of dwellings. He is the one who, from earliest times, has borne a grudge

52. against us. He spares no wrongdoing or deceit to lead us to a fire to which he himself will be led:

53. a furnace blazing without a moment's respite, whose heat will not cool even at the end of time.

54. What comfort would you find beside Satan in the Fire? If you burn in the flames, you are farther away still.

55. He is the guide who calls to the Fire and exerts himself to lead us to the place where he himself will end.

56. What excuse would you have for obeying a rebel? What could your hands do in a fire where you were burning?

NOTES AND SOURCES

Translation nuances
وجوه المعنى

01 · Verses 1-11 · The king, the throne and its guards

تعنو

Faces bow and submit.

المقاليد

The keys. The image gives heaven's gates a visible guard.

Arabic text · Translation

02 · Verses 12-21 · Those who prostrate

كروبية

The cherubim, a category of angels.

الأرواح

In the context of rain, the plural may denote the winds.

Arabic text · Translation

03 · Verses 22-32 · The Creator and voices glorifying Him

الصمد

A divine name in Surah 112, understood here as the One to whom all turn in need.

النينان

Fish: the plural of نون.

Arabic text · Translation

04 · Verses 33-45 · The heart and passing time

النجد

A valiant man or a helper. The verse describes Muḥammad.

المنون

Death as the power that carries people away.

يوسّد

To rest someone's head on a cushion, here on the earth of the grave.

Arabic text · Translation

05 · Verses 46-56 · Adam, the adversary and fire

كاشح

An enemy who nurtures and conceals his hatred.

السموم

The scorching wind that penetrates the body. The adversary's words contrast the fire from which he claims to originate with Adam's clay.

Arabic text · Translation

DOCUMENTATION

Introduction and sources

The rubric in the Damascus copy announces a poem by Umayya ibn Abī l-Ṣalt on Islam and Muḥammad's mission, followed by other accounts. The formula آخر القصيدة, “end of the poem”, marks the work's limit. The records of audition and the transmitter's prose framing it belong to the booklet's transmission.

Umayya is a poet of Ṭā’if contemporary with Muḥammad. At the head of the text, transmitters place the poem at the beginning of the prophetic mission. This assertion was recorded much later. The university's poetry collection places the piece under the heading “attributed to Umayya”. The 56 verses cannot be dated with certainty to the poet's lifetime. The physical copy is medieval.

Verses 23-26 contain particularly close echoes of Surah 112. Verses 47-52 retell the refusal to prostrate before Adam, also found, notably, in Quran 7:11-13 and 38:71-76. These parallels illuminate the transmitted text without determining its origin.

In verse 1, the edition gives جِدًّا, while other readings have مَجْدًا, “in glory”. In verse 9, the edition has أمين لوحي القدس, “custodian of the holy revelation”. Other copies give أمیناه روح القدس, “His two custodians, the Holy Spirit…”. In verse 56, the Damascus copy and the edition use different expressions for the helplessness of the person burning. The French follows the edition in all three passages.

Several printed texts of the ode exist, and verses circulated in historical works. The Damascus manuscript is valuable for its separate transmission of the piece, with its opening and closing clearly visible.

Textual sources

Damascus 3764, PDF images 59-62. The end of the poem is marked on the left of image 62

Umm al-Qurā University, base text in 56 verses, no. 121 in the collection, p. 673

Ibn al-Jawzī's Muntaẓam, another transmission of the same piece, with its variants

Nicolai Sinai, study of the corpus's authenticity and of another poem, on Thamūd

Image provenance

Damascus, al-Ẓāhiriyya, miscellany 3764, item 6, image 60.

Return to the first passage

PART TWO

Original Arabic text
النص العربي

01 · Verses 1-11 · The king, the throne and its guards

1. لك الحمد والنعماء والملك ربنا ۞ فلا شيء أعلى منك جدا وأمجد

2. مليك على عرش السماء مهيمن ۞ لعزته تعنو الوجوه وتسجد

3. عليه حجاب النور والنور حوله ۞ وأنهار نور حوله تتوقد

4. فلا بصر يسمو إليه بطرفه ۞ ودون حجاب النور خلق مؤيد

5. ملائكة أقدامهم تحت أرضه ۞ وأعناقهم فوق السماوات صعد

6. فمن حامل إحدى قوائم عرشه ۞ بكفيه لولا الله كلوا وبلدوا

7. قيام على الأقدام عانين تحته ۞ فرائصهم من شدة الخوف ترعد

8. وسبط صفوف ينظرون قضاءه ۞ مصيخون بالأسماع للوحي ركد

9. أمين لوحي القدس جبريل فيهم ۞ وميكال ذو الروح القوي المسدد

10. وحراس أبواب السماوات دونهم ۞ قيام عليها بالمقاليد رصد

11. فنعم العباد المصطفون لأمره ۞ ومن دونهم جند كثيف مجند

02 · Verses 12-21 · Those who prostrate

12. ملائكة لا يفترون عبادة ۞ كروبية منهم ركوع وسجد

13. فساجدهم لا يرفع الدهر رأسه ۞ يعظم ربا فوقه ويمجد

14. وراكعهم يحنو له الظهر خاشعا ۞ يردد آلاء الإله ويحمد

15. ومنهم ملف في جناحيه رأسه ۞ يكاد لذكرى ربه يتفصد

16. من الخوف لا ذو سأمة من عبادة ۞ ولا هو من طول التعبد يجهد

17. وساكن أقطار بأرجاء مصعد ۞ وذو الغيث والأرواح كل معبد

18. ودون كثيف الماء في غامض الهوى ۞ ملائكة تنحط فيه وتصعد

19. وبين طباق الأرض تحت بطونها ۞ ملائكة بالأمر فيها تردد

20. فسبحان من لا يقدر الخلق قدره ۞ ومن هو فوق العرش فرد موحد

21. ومن لم تنازعه الخلائق ملكه ۞ وإن لم تفرده العباد فمفرد

03 · Verses 22-32 · The Creator and voices glorifying Him

22. مليك السموات الشداد وأرضها ۞ وليس لشيء عن قضاه تأود

23. وسبحان ربي خالق النور لم يلد ۞ ولم يك مولودا بذلك أشهد

24. وسبحانه من كل إفك وباطل ۞ ولما يلد ذو العرش أم كيف يولد

25. هو الله باري الخلق والخلق كلهم ۞ إماء له طوعا جميعا وأعبد

26. هو الصمد الله الذي لم يكن له ۞ من الخلق كفء قد يضاهيه مضدد

27. وأنى يكون الخلق كالخالق الذي ۞ يدوم ويبقى والخليقة تنفد

28. وليس لمخلوق من الدهر جدة ۞ ومن ذا على مر الحوادث يخلد

29. ويفنى ولا يبقى سوى القاهر الذي ۞ يميت ويحيي دائبا ليس يهمد

30. تسبحه الطير الجوانح في الخفا ۞ وإذ هي في جو السماء تصعد

31. ومن خوف ربي سبح الرعد فوقنا ۞ وسبحه الأشجار والوحش أبد

32. وسبحه النينان والبحر زاخرا ۞ وما ضم من شيء وما هو مقلد

04 · Verses 33-45 · The heart and passing time

33. ألا أيها القلب المقيم على الهوى ۞ إلى أي حين منك هذا التصدد

34. عن الحق كالأعمى المميط عن الهدى ۞ وقد جاءك النجد النبي محمد

35. بنور على نور من الحق واضح ۞ دليل على طرق الهدى ليس يخمد

36. ترى فيه أنباء القرون التي خلت ۞ وأخبار غيب في القيامة تنجد

37. وحالات دنيا لا تدوم لأهلها ۞ وفيها منون ريبها متردد

38. ألا إنما الدنيا بلاغ وبلغة ۞ وبينا الفتى فيها مهيب مسود

39. إذ انقلبت عنه وزال نعيمها ۞ وأصبح من ترب القبور يوسد

40. وفارق روحا كان بين جنانه ۞ وجاور موتى ما لهم متبدد

41. فأي فتى قبلي رأيت مخلدا ۞ له في قديم الدهر ما يتودد

42. ومن يبتليه الدهر منه بعثرة ۞ سيكبو لها والنائبات تردد

43. فلن تسلم الدنيا وإن ظن أهلها ۞ بصحتها والدهر قد يتجر د

44. ألست ترى فيما مضى لك عبرة ۞ فمه لا تكن يا قلب أعمى تلد د

45. وقد جاء ما لا شك فيه من الهدى ۞ وليس يرد الحق إلا مفند

05 · Verses 46-56 · Adam, the adversary and fire

46. فكن خائفا للموت والبعث بعده ۞ ولا تك ممن غره اليوم والغد

47. فإنك في دنيا غرور لأهلها ۞ وفيها عدو كاشح الصدر يوقد

48. من الحقد نيران العداوة بيننا ۞ لأن قال ربي للملائكة اسجدوا

49. لآدم لما أكمل الله خلقه ۞ فخروا له طوعا سجودا ووكدوا

50. فقال عدو الله للكبر والشقا ۞ أطين على نار السموم يسود

51. فأخرجه العصيان من خير منزل ۞ فذاك الذي في سالف الدهر يحقد

52. علينا ولا يألو خبالا وحيلة ۞ ليوردنا نارا عليها سيورد

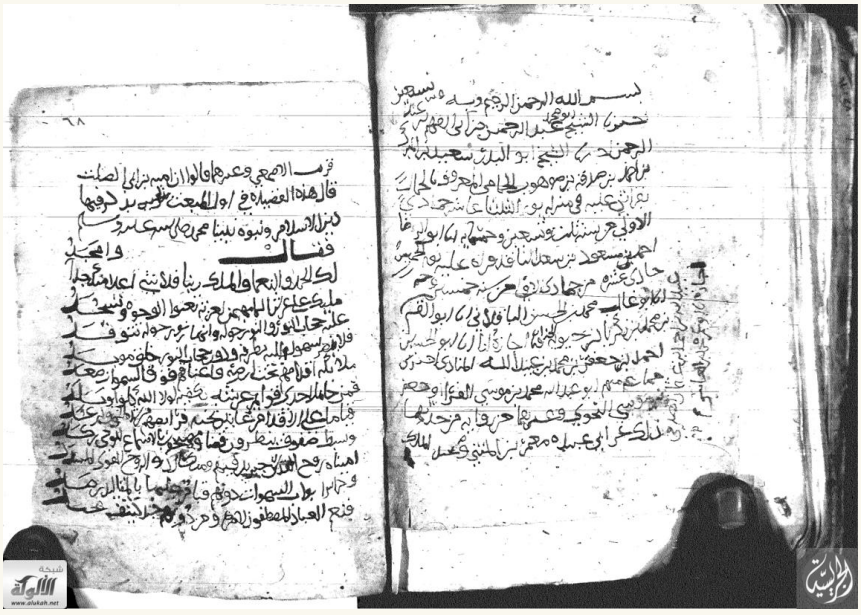
53. جحيما تلظى لا تفتر ساعة ۞ ولا الحر منها آخر الدهر يبرد

54. فما لك والشيطان في النار أسوة ۞ إذا ما صليت النار بل أنت أبعد

55. هو القائد الداعي إلى النار جاهدا ۞ ليوردنا منها الذي يتورد

56. فما لك من عذر بطاعة فاسق ۞ وما لك في نار صليت بها يد

Yours Are Praise, Blessings and Sovereignty



The poem in the Damascus miscellany. The manuscript also preserves the closing formula and records of audition. Damascus, al-Ẓāhiriyya, miscellany 3764, item 6, image 60.