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ŞAHİN Zekeriya: "Tevrat İncil ve Kuran'da Irk Kavramı"

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*Bibliography:* B. Farès, *L'honneur chez les Arabes avant l'Islam*, Paris 1932, where the subject is fully treated; see also SHARAF. (B. FARÈS\*)

TAL-‘IRDJĀNĪ, ABŪ YAḤYĀ ZAKARIYYĀ<sup>2</sup>, chief of the Berber tribe of Nafūsa and last Ibādī-Wahbī *imām* in North Africa. He is probably the same person as R. Basset refers to in error as Abū Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> Yaḥyā al-‘Irdjānī, confusing him with his son, Abū Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> b. Abī Yaḥyā al-‘Irdjānī, who also was chief (*hākīm*) of the *Djabal Nafūsa*. According to the Ibādī document known under the name of *Tasmiyat shuyūkh Djabal Nafūsa wa-ḥur-āhum* (6th/12th century), Abū Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> (error for Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup>) of Irkān (‘Irdjān) was elected *imām* after Abū Ḥātim (that is Abū Ḥātim Yūsuf b. Abī ‘I-Yaḥzān Muḥammad b. Aflāḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam). As the latter was in office until 294/906-7, the election of Abū Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> Yaḥyā al-‘Irdjānī cannot have taken place until after that date, perhaps not until after the fall of the Rustamid imāmate of Tāhert in 296/909. In a passage in his *Kitāb al-Siyar* (also entitled: *Kitāb Siyar mashāyikh Nafūsa*), quoted by al-Shammākhī, Maḥrīn b. Muḥammad al-Buḥṭūrī refers to Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> al-‘Irdjānī as *hākīm* or *imām mudāfi*, “the *imām* of defence”. In another passage in al-Shammākhī’s work, Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> is given the title of *al-ḥādī al-‘ādīl al-‘ālim al-kāmil al-imām al-fādīl*. He was thus *imām* and judge at the same time. He lived at ‘Irdjān or Ardjān (also Irkān or Arkān), a village in the eastern region of the *Djabal Nafūsa* (today the ruins of *Khīrbat Ardjān* near Mezzu, in the region of Fossoṭo), whence he travelled each day to the town of *Djadū*, at that time the political and administrative centre of this region and perhaps of the whole of the *Djabal Nafūsa*.

The rule of Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> al-‘Irdjānī, which lasted for about fifteen years and which extended over the whole of the *Djabal Nafūsa*, was disturbed by civil wars which took place between two Ibādī-Wahbī factions of the region—the Banū Zammūr and the people of Ṭermīsa. It was in the middle of these civil wars, which ravaged all the eastern part of the *Djabal Nafūsa* and in which the family of Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> al-‘Irdjānī could not avoid becoming involved, that, in 310/922-3, there occurred the invasion of the *Djabal Nafūsa* by Fāṭimid troops. According to Ibn ‘Idhārī, these troops were under the command of the general ‘Alī b. Salmān al-Dā‘ī, and, according to the Ibādī chronicles, they consisted of Kutāma warriors, the bravest and most loyal supporters of the Fāṭimid dynasty. The Fāṭimid troops attacked al-Djazira, the main stronghold of the *Djabal Nafūsa*, but they were defeated by the Ibādīs. In the course of a second battle between the Nafūsa and the troops of ‘Alī b. Salmān, which took place near Tirakt (apparently on the territory which is now al-Rudjebān in the east of the *Djabal Nafūsa*), Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> was killed by an Ibādī soldier in vengeance for some act of injustice.

In Ibn ‘Idhārī, the chief of the Nafūsa who fought against ‘Alī b. Salmān al-Dā‘ī is called Abū Baṭṭa. There is no doubt that this was one of the by-names of Abū Yaḥyā<sup>2</sup> Zakariyyā<sup>2</sup> al-‘Irdjānī.

*Bibliography:* R. Basset, *Les sanctuaires du Djebel Nefousa*, in *JA*, May-June 1889, 433, 454; Fournel, *Berbers*, ii, 144; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, i, 187; T. Lewicki, *Études ibādites nord-africaines*, Part 1, *Tasmiya shuyūkh Ḡabal Nafūsa wa-qurāhum*, Warsaw 1955, 97-8; idem, *Ibādītica*, 2: *Les*

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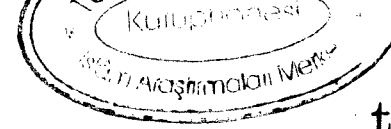
(T. LEWICKI)

✕ ‘IRK, an Arabic word which, etymologically, has the basic meaning of “root”, but other acceptations have been grafted on to this original meaning so that it eventually approximates to the idea of race. It is clear, as far as can be judged from the rare documents which can be collected, that such a concept is nowhere clearly attested, and it would be more correct, in this respect, to speak of a stock: “I trace my origins (*‘urūkh*) to the root (*‘irk*) of the land” said Imru<sup>2</sup> ‘I-Ḳays (*LA* s.v. *‘rk*). But the idea of race seems to be present in outline behind this substantive which also designates blood, understood as a factor of heredity.

‘*Irkh* is nowhere used in the *Qur’ān*. In *ḥadīth* it is not unknown but is only used sporadically. There, first of all, the general sense of root is to be noted: “whoever brings back to life uncultivated land becomes the owner of it; but a root which unjustly grows there does not give any right to this land” (al-Bukhārī, *K. al-Wakāla*, Cairo 1376, iii, 93). Besides the idea of a nerve which strikes man in his head, there is also to be found in *ḥadīth* the indiscriminate sense of artery and vein: “When he finished massacring them, his “artery” burst and he died” (see Wensinck, *Concordance*). It also designates the blood: “his soul left with the *‘urūkh*” (see Wensinck), alluding to the liquid soul, *al-nafs al-sā‘ila*; regarding a woman whose period is unusually long, it is said: “it is not a question of menses, but of blood (*‘irkh*)” (Bukhārī, vii, 46). Finally, and it is this acceptance which especially interests us here, an *‘irkh*, the function of which is imprecise, seems to be at the origin of certain anomalies of birth. A man came to the Prophet and said to him “Oh Messenger of God, I have had a black child”.—“Do you have any dromedaries?”, Muḥammad asked him. “Yes.”—“What colour are they?”—“Red.”—“Are there no grey ones among them?”—“Indeed yes.”—“How did that happen?”—“Perhaps an *‘irkh* attracted it towards him.”—“Then for your son too, perhaps an *‘irkh* attracted him.” (Bukhārī, vii, 46). Thus the concept is made to relate to descent and birth. The *ḥadīth* in question would seem to go even further since it seems to invoke, in order to explain an irregularity, a factor as uncontrollable as heredity. According to this hypothesis, *‘irkh* would here, too, be a synonym for blood. It is exactly this idea which modern bedouins express when they announce: *‘irkh al-khāl lā yanām* (the blood of the maternal uncle does not lie dormant). Classical Arabic also seems to confirm this interpretation when it says: *fī fulān ‘irkh min al-‘ubūdiyya* (so and so has some slave blood). In the final analysis, then, we are faced with a notion which, in spite of its ambiguity, seems related to the concept of race, since it appeals to the purity of blood.

It is well known that the ancient Arabs made much of the purity of their genealogy [see *NASAB*], to the extent that they only grudgingly recognized a child born of a slave woman. The purer their blood, the greater the esteem they enjoyed. The social inferiority of those who could not boast of a noble extraction, who were neither *ṣarīḥ* nor *maḥq*, was in direct relation to the dubiousness and obscurity of their origins. The *Qur’ān* attempted, not unsuccessfully, to substitute religious ties for tribal and to affirm the supremacy of Islamic values in everything. In advising his followers to marry a believing slave rather than a woman of the polytheists (II,

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