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**THE POOL OF THE PROPHET (*ḤAWḌ*):
ḤADĪTH AND ESCHATOLOGY IN EARLY ISLAM**

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THE POOL OF THE PROPHET (ḤAWḌ): ḤADĪTH AND ESCHATOLOGY IN EARLY ISLAM

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Abstract Islamic eschatological reports and literature include descriptions and details regarding a Pool (*ḥawḍ*) at which men will gather before entering Paradise. Although never mentioned in the Qur'ān, and very little investigated in Islamic studies, this Pool often appears in Islamic *ḥadīth* and traditions. The Pool becomes emblematic of man's final destiny and is described with all kinds of details about its dimensions, its prerogatives and how the Muslims will join the Prophet there before entering Paradise. The combination of these traditions and the many others adding further descriptions highlights the centrality of a concept whose origin is difficult to trace, but which, at the same time, constitutes one of the most significant and original elements of Islamic eschatology.

Keywords Islam, eschatology, Day of Judgement, resurrection, Paradise

1. Introduction

Eschatology is one of the most significant and recurrent topics of the Qur'ān; references to the Day of Resurrection and descriptions of Paradise and Hell permeate the book. Vivid descriptions of the eschaton are found in many Qur'ānic passages. Despite this fact, it is the *ḥadīths* that offer ample details on what will happen on Doomsday and how humans will be directed to their final abodes. It is in the post-Qur'ānic traditions that we find most details about the various matters regarding the end of days: individual and collective eschatology, life after death, the destiny in the tomb, the events on the Day of Resurrection, the Judgement and the conditions that men will encounter in Paradise and Hell.

Regarding the path of women and men from the place of Judgement to their final abodes, there is a substantial number of motifs of great interest.

The traditions state that men, including Muslims, will gather, waiting for the final Judgement. They will be judged according to their actions. Their actions, as written down by angels during their lifetime, will be weighed on the Balance (*mīzān*). Following this, they will cross a Bridge (*ṣirāt*) raised above Hell. The devotees will cross it as safely as if it were a wide road, while the damned, finding it narrow, will fall to their doom. After the intercession of Muḥammad, those destined for Paradise will find their way to a Pool (*ḥawḍ*) where they will gather, and later enter Paradise. This path to Paradise or Hell is particularly interesting, because most of it is not Qurʾānic. The Balance is a Qurʾānic concept, the Bridge and the Pool are not. This is not an isolated case; other major beliefs, most of them discussed in theological speculations (such as the Punishment of the Grave), are not Qurʾānic and are dealt with at length only in later traditions.

However, one of these beliefs stands out for many reasons. This is the Pool of the Prophet. It stands out because of the considerable number of *ḥadīths* mentioning it; it surpasses by far many other eschatological beliefs. The large number of these references is particularly striking when compared with the relatively small significance of the Pool in the events of the Day of Judgement. The Balance and the Bridge, for instance, explain Qurʾānic concepts or depict the path traversed by men on that Day. We could say that they are key elements which reflect theological concerns, and have parallels in other religious cultures, attesting to a common lore and belief. This is not the case with the Pool. One wonders why it was deemed necessary to insert a temporary stop before Paradise which is in itself full of water and delights. The reports praising the water of the Pool of Muḥammad and the necessity to gather there before reaching the final destination make little sense. Crossing the bridge takes time, some traditionists therefore maintain that the Pool is there to allow those who reach it first to wait for those who come later. But this could have been done in Paradise itself. To wait at the Pool instead of entering as soon as possible the wonderful pleasures of Paradise does not seem logical. There are also theological issues that the belief raises, such as the question of eschatological time and the actual location of this Pool; does one come there before or after the Judgement?

Previous studies do not help in this regard. First of all, it must be noted that the topic has received little attention from scholars of Islamic

eschatology. For instance, less than one page is dedicated to it in the work of Louis Gardet.¹ He summarized some of the features of the Pool according to the traditions and defined it as a pleasure offered by God to his devotees in their anticipation of the pleasures of Paradise. A few recent studies have dealt with the Pool, but added only a small number of considerations on the topic. One relevant discussion on it appears in the encyclopaedic work which Werner Diem and Marco Schöller wrote on life and death in the epigraphic sources.² In the first volume dedicated to textual references, W. Diem devoted some attention to the Pool.³ This Pool is in Paradise or on its border, belongs to the Prophet, and Muslims will reach it after the Last Judgement. Diem added that some felt uneasy about believing in the Pool and this uneasiness is attested in traditions.⁴ Giving a summary of the main details found in the *ḥadīths*, Diem stated that in epitaph formulae we find an important tradition which mentions the Pool in connection with the river Kawthar. It is also mentioned in prayers expressing the desire to reach the Pool. However, the most relevant part of this discussion is when Diem mentions the parallel belief in the Pool of Death in pre-Islamic poetry, observing that the desirable Pool of the Prophet could be the result of Islamization of that negative pagan concept.⁵

In his *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Gautier H. A. Juynboll extensively dealt with the Pool.⁶ The overall concern of Juynboll is that, in view of the *isnāds* of the various reports, it is impossible to determine the originator of the early reports; the first attestations should probably be dated

¹ Gardet, *Dieu et la destinée de l'homme*, pp. 321-322.

² Diem and Schöller, *The living and the dead*.

³ Diem and Schöller, *The living and the dead*, vol. 1, pp. 168-172.

⁴ Diem and Schöller, *The Living and the Dead*, vol. 1, pp. 168 (quoting Aḥmad b. Hanbal's *Musnad*, no. 18465).

⁵ Pp. 171-172 (from Abdesselem, *Le thème de la mort*, p. 304). Diem then quotes some letters of condolence from Islamic times where this conception of a Pool of fate which awaits everybody is mentioned. This would indicate the survival of the old pagan beliefs along with the new Muslim concept of the Pool.

⁶ Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, pp. 473-474. A general outline of the topic has recently been provided by A. Rippin in "Ḥawḍ". The Shī'ī traditions were touched on by Ayoub, *Redemptive suffering*, pp. 197-230, in a chapter titled "At the pool of al-Kawthar — 'alā-ḥawḍ al-kawthar" where some reports relating to the ḥawḍ in Shī'ī imagery are discussed at the beginning; the chapter as a whole is dedicated to Shī'ī traditions and beliefs regarding the end of times.

back to the beginning of the 2nd/8th century. Juynboll considers those eschatological details which are not included in the Qurʾān as being of rather late origin. He then goes on to consider some details on the Pool, noting that there is some confusion about its significance and location. On the one hand, it is identified as a meeting point on the Day of Resurrection at one of the stages of the believers' journey. On the other hand, there is also a Pool in Paradise. This latter one is usually identified as such in *tafsīr* traditions. Some commentaries tend to identify the Pool with the Kawthar mentioned in Qurʾān 108:1. Following this identification, we find in some Qurʾānic commentaries various paradisiacal details on the Pool, on its waters, its dimensions and its benefits. According to Juynboll, a proliferation of reports describing its characteristics served to maintain belief in it and oppose contrasting views.⁷

No other major study dealing with eschatology has added anything else in this regard. As to its possible parallels in other religious cultures, we are left only with one suggestion included by Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala in a footnote to his Spanish translation of Ibn Ḥabīb's *Kitāb waṣf al-firdaws*. Monferrer Sala refers to the main sources of belief in a Pool of water and indicates some possible parallels in apocryphal literature such as the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* or the *Sibylline Oracles*.⁸ This is a significant suggestion which has so far gone almost unnoticed, though it must be added that these passages mention lakes and waters for the immortals, supposedly within a paradisiacal setting. Brannon Wheeler has suggested that some relation between the Pool of Muḥammad and traditions on the water of life from Biblical and Jewish literature and lore is possible, mainly connected to those paradisiacal features attested in certain traditions about the Pool.⁹ There is certainly some relation between these beliefs and some reports about the Pool, though the most specific feature of the Pool of Muḥammad is its location outside of Paradise: one reaches it before the Judgement takes place, or just before entering Paradise after crossing the Bridge. As far as I know, this is a significant feature of the Pool of the Prophet which has no direct parallel with other eschatological concepts in other cultures.

⁷ Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, p. 474.

⁸ Monferrer Sala in 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb waṣf al-firdaws*, p. 72 n. 214.

⁹ Wheeler, *Moses in the Qurʾān*, pp. 121-122. Cf. also Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, pp. 231-232.

I shall try to answer some of these questions in this paper.¹⁰ The reader will find an overview of the Islamic traditions about the Pool of the Prophet. The review will include the main relevant details and topics, the contrasting views adopted by some versions, as well as the uses of this belief in other reports. Whenever possible, I shall also recall the Shīʿī traditions on the Pool, showing that the factions did not take different paths nor developed conflicting interpretations of all meanings attributed to this eschatological element. Unlike other points of faith, the Pool of Muḥammad finds Sunnīs and Shīʿīs on the same side, collecting the same or similar reports and contributing together to the affirmation of its significance. Consequently, the final aim of this is to try to make sense of these reports as a first general outline of what is the Pool of Muḥammad in Islamic literature. We shall also indicate further lines of inquiry on some specific points.

2. The Pool of the Prophet Muḥammad: its reality, meaning and symbolic use

The *ḥadīths* and reports on the Pool are numerous and appear in all sources used for the preparation of this article. Before describing in detail what is most significant in these reports, some general lines of inquiry are needed to characterise the literary material which describes the Pool. These traditions are meant to convey some specific meanings and use certain images to this end.

The first question to raise is that in most cases the Pool is connected with the meaning of “reaching the Day of Resurrection and gaining eternal salvation”. Muslims who are destined for Paradise will reach the Pool. “Reaching the Pool” is thus not different from “Crossing the Bridge”, but it is an image used much more frequently to affirm salvation. The numerous reports in which Muḥammad mentioned the Pool convey precisely this meaning, and they could have been replaced by saying that those who reach the Pool are destined to enter Paradise. Most of the reports discussed in the

¹⁰ The question of possible parallels from other cultures calls for further enquiry. I am referring to the earliest and most significant sources in the footnotes without listing all the occurrences. This would take too much space and add nothing substantial.

following pages are to be read along these lines. Some reports specify this meaning further, and the connection to resurrection has been attested in the earliest literary works. For instance, Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) mentions that Abū Bakr will reach him (i.e. Muḥammad) at the Pool on that day.¹¹ The connection appears clearer in the traditions underlining a moral concern about what can assure the “reaching of the Pool”. A later exegete, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), has a special chapter on the acts which men should perform in order to be permitted to reach the Pool and thus gain eternal salvation.¹² On the other hand, those who commit sinful acts will be driven away from the Pool.¹³ In general, those who fail to do what is required of them or act wrongfully will not reach the Pool, and will not enter Paradise. Shīʿī reports share the same concept.¹⁴ The Pool is not the only eschatological element to play this role, and a saying attributed to the Prophet adduces additional details. In connection with intercession, Muḥammad asks his companions to look for him on the Day of Resurrection. When they ask him where he will be, he replies that they should look for him first at the Bridge, then at the Balance and then at the Pool; he will not miss any of these three places on that day.¹⁵ Thus the Pool is a real, physical place on the Day of Resurrection, but also serves as one of the main symbols of it.

¹¹ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 155.

¹² Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, pp. 177-179.

¹³ Those who despise or envy will be chased away from the Pool with lashes of fire: see al-Haythamī, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʿid*, vol. 9, p. 172 no. 15008 from al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*. Other statements use the Pool just as a synonym for entering Paradise and condemning certain actions. For instance, the Prophet Muḥammad states that whoever does not accept a repentance by someone (*al-mutanaṣṣil*), whether he is sincere or not, will not reach the Pool of the Prophet: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 23, p. 352.

¹⁴ See Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2, p. 545; Ibn Khālid al-Barqī, *al-Mahāsin*, vol. 1, p. 79; al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim al-islām*, vol. 2, p. 351; cf. also al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 3, p. 269, vol. 6, pp. 400, 401; al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim al-islām*, vol. 2, p. 132; Ibn Bābawayh, *Fiḥ al-Riḍā*, p. 101; idem, *al-Muqniʿ*, p. 73; and idem, *ʿIḥṣān al-sharāʾiʿ*, p. 356. These actions include taking prayer lightly or drinking intoxicating beverages. See also Ibn Qawlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, p. 438; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 157. People will reach the Pool on *yawm al-maʿād*, or, according to other Shīʿī versions, on a future day (*ghadan*). See e.g. al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-ṣāghāniyya*, p. 53; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 66.

¹⁵ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 20, p. 210 no. 12825. Various other versions indicate these three places. Some Shīʿī reports include the same motif: ‘I shall be in one of the three places, one of which is the Pool’: al-Rāwandī, *al-Daʿawāt*, p. 249.

Along with this meaning and the strong connection between the concept of the Pool and the Day of Resurrection, the reports on the Pool share some literary features. In particular, they tend to favour a vocabulary which recalls the function of the Pool in Arab life and lore. In the particular climate of the peninsula, the pools and their waters were of great importance for supporting human and animal life, along with wells and springs. Thus, many reports, as is usual in numerous *ḥadīths* and typical not only of the traditions regarding the Pool, provide specific details. Characteristic of this tendency are reports citing Muḥammad's declaration that he will be the precursor of the believers at the Pool or that people not deserving to reach it will be driven away, just as stray camels are driven away from private pools.¹⁶ These are the most frequent images, and I shall discuss them in detail below. The texts may include statements on drinking from the Pool, though this is less common than the image of reaching it.¹⁷

If the Pool has the function to satisfy the thirst of the believers, they must first of all "reach" (*warada*) it; consequently, the use of the verb *warada* is ubiquitous in these traditions. Although quoted not only in reference to the Day of Resurrection, in some reports the Prophet himself uses the words "reach me/come to me at the (at my) Pool" (e.g., *warada ʿalayya al-ḥawḍ/ḥawḍī*). Here it is clearly synonymous with entering Paradise or gaining salvation.¹⁸ The converse is conveyed with similar words: those who do not believe in the existence of the Pool, will not meet the Prophet there on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁹

In this line of thought, *al-ḥawḍ al-mawrūd* ("the reached Pool") is one of the common expressions used to describe it. The connection between *warada* and *ḥawḍ* is very common in the reports mentioning the Pool. A few examples will suffice. The supplication to God to bring someone to the Pool of the Prophet (*wa-awridhu ḥawḍ rasūl Allāh*) was included in the funeral

¹⁶ See below nn. 30-33.

¹⁷ Cf. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-sajjādiyya*, p. 68, and see also p. 572.

¹⁸ ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, 345 no. 20719 (from the *Jāmiʿ* by Maʿmar); but also without *warada*: al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim al-islām*, vol. 1, p. 269. From ʿĀʾisha: Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31670; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1794, also including another version from Asmāʾ; Ibn Abi ʿĀṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 518; Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, p. 122.

¹⁹ See below, n. 146.

prayer which Ibn ʿUmar used to pronounce.²⁰ After the death of the Prophet, Salmān al-Fārisī is comforted by Saʿd who tells him that he will meet the Prophet at the Pool.²¹ In response to reports attributed to Anas b. Mālik which doubted traditions related to the Pool, the Prophet said that he left behind numerous old women who used always to finish their prayer adding the wish that God would enable them to reach Muḥammad’s Pool.²² The connection between the Pool and the meaning of “reaching it” and coming to it is attested in the same vein in Shīʿī reports.²³

The same tendency to supply factual, concrete details appears in reports which indicate where the Prophet will be in relation to the Pool, while waiting for the believers. Most frequent is the statement of Muḥammad that he will be in the inner part of it (*ʿinda ʿuqr ḥawḍī*).²⁴ This image is associated not only with the Prophet. Muḥammad himself stated that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib will be allowed to be with him *ʿalā ʿuqr* of his Pool.²⁵ This will be one of five special favours granted to him. Some sources seek to explain that the place of drinking is the edge of the pool.²⁶ Along with these favoured expressions, other reports add similar details indicating where the Prophet will wait for his followers.²⁷

²⁰ ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 3, p. 487 no. 6423; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 99 no. 29787; Bukhārī, *al-Taʾrīkh al-kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 70.

²¹ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 306 no. 460; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 7, p. 76 no. 34312.

²² Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 112 no. 29889.

²³ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 429-430; Ibn Bābawayh, *Kamāl al-dīn wa-tamām al-niʿma*, p. 250: those who do not love the Prophet and his family do not drink from it. Cf. a report in Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 350, which mentions the Pool along with other places where the Prophet says to Fāṭima that she will meet him on the day mankind will stand (*yawm al-mawqif*) on the Day of Judgement.

²⁴ ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 286; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *al-Āḥād wa-l-mathānī*, vol. 4, p. 264 no. 2279; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ*, p. 90; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 480; Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, pp. 117-118 nos. 131-132; most of the versions add that Muḥammad will be at the *ʿuqr* of his Pool.

²⁵ Al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn*, vol. 2, p. 559.

²⁶ Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Iṣlāḥ al-mantiq*, p. 101. Other works explain that it is the *muʾakhhār* of the Pool: al-Khaṭṭābī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 91.

²⁷ The Prophet said that his feet (will be) in one of its openings (*turʿa min turaʿ*): see e.g. Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 6, or that he will be at the shore (*shāṭiʿ*) of the Pool letting people drink with vessels (*āniya*) and with the palms of their hands: ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Qāḍī, *Daqāʿiq al-akhbār*, p. 53.

3. “I shall be your precursor at the Pool”

The use of factual terminology is common to most of the numerous traditions mentioning the eschatological Pool of the Prophet Muḥammad – evidently a recurrent feature indicating the function discussed above. However, along with this function, the terminology is used with the aim to convey to believers various concepts. Later commentators mention more than fifty companions of Muḥammad who transmitted *ḥadīths* on the Pool, and this gives an idea of the many reports with different contents which are attested in Islamic literature on this eschatological element.

Considerations of the origin and history of the various versions should take into account the numerous variants and a combined inquiry into contents (*matn*) and transmission chains (*isnād*). But this would be a painstaking labour, far beyond the scope of this article. Recent studies aiming to give analyses using the *isnād-cum-matn* system and dealing with traditions of juridical or historical content have resulted in lengthy volumes.²⁸ In what follows, I shall provide only a general introduction to the themes and motifs connected to the Pool in Sunnī and Shīʿī traditions.

The most significant and widely attested statement attributed to the Prophet in different Sunnī versions, and quoted extensively in Shīʿī ones, maintains that he will be the precursor of the believers at the Pool. The Prophet states: “I am your precursor at my Pool” (*anā faratukum ʿalā ḥawḍi*) or closely related variants such as *anā faratun la-kum* or *ʿalā al-ḥawḍ*.²⁹ Thus, Muḥammad will wait for the believers at the Pool. The concept indicates the primary role played by the Prophet Muḥammad on the Day of Resurrection. From the theological point of view, it is connected with intercession, but it is repeated also in relation to the other moments and places on the Day of Resurrection.

The idea expressed by this statement appears in many variants; some of them are short while others give many details. The most common

²⁸ See the works of of Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya* and of Pavlovich, *Formation of the Islamic understanding of kalāla*.

²⁹ I intend to analyze the various versions of this tradition in a specific study with *isnad-cum-matn* methodology.

version included mainly in *ḥadīth* collections and attributed to many companions through different *isnāds*, is the simple formula “I am your precursor at my Pool/the Pool”.³⁰ Some versions add that this will happen on the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*).³¹ This simple expression is mentioned with additional details in Shīʿī reports.³² It is less frequent than in Sunnī literature, but Shīʿī traditions sometimes include both the short statement and some longer reports. The significance of the simple formula is further underlined by its occurrences in other Sunnī literary genres, such as historical works.³³ This is the *ḥadīth* most often quoted by lexicographical works in relation to the Pool or to the meaning of *farāṭ*. It also comes up in exegetical works in order to explain the meaning of the term *mufraṭūna* (“hastened in (the Fire)”) in Qurʾān 16:62 or *yafraṭa* (he (may) exceed) in Qurʾān 20:45.³⁴

The many occurrences of the simple formula indicate that Muḥammad will be the first to reach the Pool. The expression is to some extent emblematic and very typical in the Sunnī tradition. Consequently, some versions add just a few words to qualify not only the role of Muḥammad

³⁰ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 305 nos. 31657-58, 31660 (no. 31658 from al-Ṣunābiḥī), p. 306 nos. 31663, 31667; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 31, p. 108 nos. 18809-10, 18813 (nos. 18810 and 18813 include an explanation of the meaning of *farāṭ*), vol. 34, p. 64 no. 20421; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 119 no. 6575, p. 121 no. 6589; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 1453, vol. 4, pp. 1792, 1802. Cf. also the many versions in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, vol. 2, pp. 198-199; Ibn Sallām, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 44; Baqī b. Makhhlad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, pp. 93-94, 96; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim has a chapter dedicated to these reports: Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 499-503, in which only one version adds *yawm al-qiyāma*; Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, pp. 125-126.

³¹ Cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 168 (from Bukhārī).

³² Al-Thaqafī, *al-Ghārāt*, vol. 2, p. 911-912; Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī, *al-Sarāʾir*, vol. 1, pp. 359-360; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. 2, p. 31, vol. 7, p. 240. See also longer reports in Ibn Shādhān, *al-Īdāh*, p. 232; al-Khazzāz al-Qummī, *Kifāyat al-athar*, pp. 128-129; Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. 23, p. 10. See also a report describing the people coming to the Pool and mentioning their names: al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, pp. 483-484; also ʿAlī will say something similar invoking God, see ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Nahj al-balāgha*, vol. 1, p. 43. Some Shīʿī versions add this formula to the main tradition cited in this connection in Shīʿī literature, i.e. the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn* (on which see below, n. 71. See e.g. al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, p. 481).

³³ See, for instance, Abū Yūsuf, *al-Maʿrifā wa-l-taʾrīkh*, vol. 2, p. 219, 329, 660. The short *farāṭ* expression is for instance cited as appearing “in many reports” by al-Ashʿarī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 246.

³⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 17, p. 234; al-Zajjāj, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, vol. 3, p. 358; al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*, vol. 7, p. 284; al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, Beirut 1993, vol. 2, p. 401; al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-ʿuyūn*, vol. 3, p. 196.

as a precursor, but the question of the believers who deserve to join him at the Pool. With regard to the eschatological condition of the thirsting people, some versions add to the formula that whoever comes to the Pool and drinks, will never thirst again.³⁵ However, these extended versions reflect two distinct ways in the use of the formula which answer two different questions. One is to state that not all believers in the community will be accepted; the second, that those reaching the Pool will be so many that Muḥammad will be the prophet with most followers on that day.

Thus, Muḥammad will be the precursor, but not all of his followers will be permitted to reach the Pool and drink from it. According to some reports which include the *farāṭ* formula, the Prophet will ask God why some of his community are not permitted to join him; God will answer that he (i.e. Muḥammad) cannot know what sins they committed after his lifetime. In other traditions Muḥammad advises them to be patient and wait, since some of them will be given preference to others.³⁶ Another report explains why not all of his community will reach him at the Pool: this is because some of them introduced blameworthy innovations. This is the reason why not all members of the community will join Muḥammad at the Pool.³⁷ Muḥammad, other reports state, does not know what they did after he passed away.³⁸ In a

³⁵ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31668; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 120 no. 6583; Ibn Abī Ḍāʿim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 520.

³⁶ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 400 nos. 32368; 32369; a longer version mentioning the *anṣār* (see below), vol. 7, p. 476 no. 37355; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 406 no. 930; Ibn Abī Ḍāʿim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 508; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, p. 805 no. 1449, p. 808 no. 1458; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 18, p. 105 no. 11547, vol. 21, p. 59 no. 13347 from Anas, *passim*. According to some versions, this was uttered after the division of the booty of Ḥunayn, without quoting Abū Bakr: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 20, p. 122 no. 12696, vol. 26, p. 393 no. 16470. See longer versions in Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 158 no. 4331. An implicit reference to this episode is given in versions mentioning the *anṣār*: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 30, p. 545-546 no. 18582, vol. 31, p. 438 no. 19092, p. 441 no. 19094; see also Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 98 no. 3163, vol. 5, p. 33 no. 3792 (in a chapter on this tradition), *passim*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, pp. 733, 738 (long versions), vol. 3, p. 1474; Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 473 no. 2081.

³⁷ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 7, p. 455 no. 37177; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 148 no. 3639, p. 362 no. 3812, p. 400 no. 3850, p. 402 no. 3866, vol. 7, p. 136 no. 4042, p. 239 no. 4180, p. 352, no. 4332, vol. 38, p. 363 no. 23337; cf. also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 7, p. 366 no. 4351; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 119 no. 6576; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, 1796.

³⁸ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 37, p. 478 no. 22822, p. 514 no. 22873; see also the version in Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3 p. 1793.

khuṭba adduced in many versions, the Prophet considers the question if the relationship to him will benefit the people. He states that he will be their *farāṭ* at the Pool, but he will determine that some of the people who reach him apostatized after his death and will not be allowed to stay there.³⁹

The *farāṭ* formula is also used in reports stressing a contrary idea. It is said that the believers listening to Muḥammad uttering these words are a small part of those permitted to reach him at the Pool on the Day of Resurrection. Muḥammad tells his followers that they constitute a very small part of those coming to him at the Pool; the report adds that they were at that time eight or nine hundred.⁴⁰ The same concept emerges in another cluster of traditions going back al-Ṣanābiḥī in which the expression is followed by the statement “with you I will outnumber (*mukāthir*) the other communities”.⁴¹

The number of believers present to hear this declaration in some versions indicates another specific feature of the *farāṭ* traditions: they usually indicate the post-*hijra* Islamic community in Medina as the place where the reports concerning the Pool came into being. For instance, an early attestation (al-Zuhrī > Anas) dates these words after the battle of Ḥunayn, when Muḥammad granted the booty gained from the Hawāzin to the recently converted Quraysh, arousing the resentment of Muslims converted earlier and of the *Anṣār*. Muḥammad tells them that they will be greatly favoured after his death, and calls upon them to be patient until they

³⁹ Al-Tayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 669 no. 2335; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 17, p. 220 no. 11138; a short version in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 18, p. 136 no. 11591. Cf. also the short version in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 168 no. 2327.

⁴⁰ Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 61 no. 712; Abū al-Ja‘d, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 29 no. 85; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 32, p. 72 no. 19321; they numbered 600 or 700: Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 310 no. 31687; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 32, p. 17 no. 19268; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 497; they numbered 700 or 800: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 32, p. 47 no. 19291, p. 62 no. 19309. Various versions are collected in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, vol. 5, pp. 175-176; Baqī b. Makhhlad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 89.

⁴¹ Al-Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, vol. 2, p. 35 no. 798; Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *al-Fitan*, p. 162 no. 416; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 7, p. 454 no. 37172, p. 455 no. 37180; adding *fa-lā tusawwidū wajhī*; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 31, p. 419 no. 19069, p. 433 nos. 19033-4; cf. Ibn Bashkuwāl, *al-Dhayl ‘alā juz’ Baqī b. Makhhlad*, pp. 112-113; cf. a long version: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 38, p. 482 no. 23497; there is also a Shī‘ī version: al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 1, p. 228, vol. 2, p. 277.

meet God and their Prophet, stating “I am your *faraṭ* at the Pool”.⁴² In another case, Muḥammad prayed for the martyrs of Uḥūd eight years later (and thus just before his death – RT), stating that he is a *faraṭ* before them, and he will meet them at the Pool (*wa-inna maw'idakum al-ḥawḍ*).⁴³ According to other reports, the Prophet says: “I am their *faraṭ* at the Pool” when visiting their graveyard with his companions. He also indicates how he will be able to recognize these martyrs on the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁴

These chronological indications are significant. They indicate that Muḥammad made reference to the image of the Pool and described himself as the precursor there in the last years of his life. As we shall see later, when a temporal indication is given,⁴⁵ it usually refers to the final period of Muḥammad's life. This is also the case with the occurrences of a similar formula according to which the Prophet states that the meeting with the believers (*maw'idukum*) is at (his) Pool.⁴⁶

The expression occurs in many other versions relating to topics to be dealt with later.⁴⁷ The general impression, before coming to further analysis which can help understand which versions emerged first and how they developed in the first two centuries of Islam, is that this statement is

⁴² 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, p. 59 no. 19908 (from the *Jāmi'* of Ma'amar); see also Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 158 no. 4331; version without *faraṭ* on the same concept: Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 7, 420 no. 37001; see also above, n. 39.

⁴³ Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, p. 174 no. 504; cf. a variant in Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 368 no. 32086, vol. 7, p. 410 no. 36953; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 28, p. 621 no. 17402. Without *maw'idukum*, but *anzuru ilā al-ḥawḍ*: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 28, p. 578 no. 17344, p. 619 no. 17397; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 94 no. 4042, p. 103 no. 4085; cf. also idem, vol. 5, p. 157 no. 4331; and Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 487.

⁴⁴ Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, vol. 2, p. 38 no. 82; al-Madanī, *Ḥadīth 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-Sa'dī*, p. 326 no. 261; al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Ṭuhūr*, vol. 1, p. 121 no. 33; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, p. 218.

⁴⁵ On the question when Muḥammad talked about the Pool, see below, nn. 159–165.

⁴⁶ Some of the Sunnī reports cited above mention the concept of the “meeting appointment” (*maw'idukum*); see references in n. 43; and cf., e.g., the short version in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 20, p. 158 no. 12749. As regards Shī'ī sources, see Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, p. 359: telling to 'Alī that they are his party and his *anṣār*; see also another wording in al-Kūfī, *Manāqib*, vol. 1, p. 488. Cf. also in al-Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, vol. 3, p. 958: in relation to the division of spoils in al-Jī'rāna after the campaign of Ḥunayn; cf. also the versions using the term *mī'ād*: al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'a*, Beirut n.d., vol. 11, p. 444.

⁴⁷ For instance, when describing its dimensions as the distance between Ṣan'ā' and Buṣrā: Baqī b. Makhlad, *Mā ruwīya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 88; cf. also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1801. See also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 23, p. 62 no. 14719.

central to Sunnī reports but is also present and quoted in Shīʿī ones: its purpose is to stress the essential role of the Prophet on the Day of Resurrection in relation to the Pool. Other relevant details are added with the implicit purpose of enhancing the significance of this statement.

4. The Shīʿī Pool: shared traditions and motifs

The various additions to the simple description of Muḥammad as the believers' precursor at the Pool reveal a common element in the spread of traditions; they are used to promote views and visions with theological and political countervisions. This is evident within the Sunnī and Shīʿī literatures, but also in the relations between the two branches of Islam. In the case of the Pool, the imagery is similar despite differences in content and tone which in some cases deal with the divisions between the Sunna and the Shīʿa as much as they reflect the internal debates inside the two groups.

The image of the eschatological Pool is, for instance, used in relation to the debate on the prominence to be accorded to Abū Bakr or ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. The connection between the Pool and Abū Bakr goes back to the commentary of Muqātil. During the pilgrimage in 9 AH, Muḥammad stayed in Medina and appointed Abū Bakr and then also ʿAlī to lead the pilgrimage to Mecca. Abū Bakr, when back in Medina, asked the Prophet if anything had been revealed about himself and asked why he had also appointed ʿAlī (thus apparently diminishing his role). Muḥammad answered that there was nothing bad about him, and told him to be as happy as “my companion (*ṣāḥibī*) in the cave (when escaping from Mecca - RT), my brother in Islam; you will reach me at the Pool on the Day of Resurrection”.⁴⁸ Other versions, putting this exchange in a report mentioning ʿAlī, have the Prophet assure Abū Bakr saying that he is his companion in the cave and at the Pool with no mention of the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁹ The question is touched upon in other traditions. On the Day of Resurrection, Abū Bakr will be one of the pillars of the Pool, but this is shared by the three other *rāshidūn* caliphs in a typical

⁴⁸ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 155; al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*, vol. 5, p. 284; al-Baghawī, *Maʿālim al-tanzil*, vol. 2, p. 316.

⁴⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 14, pp. 107, 109. Abū Bakr is satisfied with this answer, see e.g.: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣāḥāba*, vol. 1, p. 175.

report defending the Sunnī view of the succession to the Prophet: the Pool is said to have four pillars (*arkān*), each one in the hand of one caliph. If a Muslim believer hates one and loves one, the loved one will not allow him to drink.⁵⁰

The Sunnī reports ascribe to Abū Bakr that he will be the Prophet's Companion at the Pool. This is contradicted by some Shī'ī reports which state that 'Alī will be the first to reach the Pool after Muḥammad, who will of course precede everybody. Even Sunnī traditions include among the five privileges granted to 'Alī his presence at the Pool, giving drink to those he knows of his community.⁵¹ The Prophet says: "‘Alī will have my banner, will be my trustee (*amīn*) at my Pool (...)", etc.⁵² One of the five qualities bestowed upon 'Alī was, according to Sunnī sources, that he will be the one driving away (*dhā'id*) from the Pool those who do not deserve to reach it. 'Alī is the *dhā'id* of the hypocrites from the Pool.⁵³ For this purpose, 'Alī will hold a rod from the tree of Paradise and will be ordered to drive people away from the Pool.⁵⁴ Loving 'Alī means reaching the Pool (and thus gaining Paradise); according to a report attested in Sunnī literature, the Prophet said: "Whoever loves you, loves me and will reach the Pool".⁵⁵ Slightly different is the Shī'ī version, according to which Muḥammad stated: "You (i.e. 'Alī) and

⁵⁰ Al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 10, p. 309; cf. Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *Ma'rifat al-tadhkira*, vol. 1, p. 93 no. 70: on the day of Resurrection. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. 5, p. 273: in Abū Bakr's hand will be the first of the four pillars

⁵¹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, p. 661 no. 1127.

⁵² Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. 7, p. 475.

⁵³ Al-'Uqaylī, *Kitāb al-Du'afā' al-kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 22; al-Khuṣaybī, *al-Hidāya al-kubrā*, p. 93: it is like his epithet; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, p. 201; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. 3, p. 240; on the *dhā'id* and the *wālī*, see al-Marzubānī al-Khurāsānī, *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, p. 172. 'Alī is reported as having stated that with his hands he will push away from Muḥammad's Pool the banners of the *kuffār* and of hypocrites, see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, p. 677 no. 1157.

⁵⁴ Al-Bazzāz, *Kitāb al-fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 107 no. 64, 109 no. 65, but in p. 110 no. 66 it is 'Uthmān who does this; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-mu'minīn*, vol. 2, pp. 92, 462.

⁵⁵ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 514; and cf. al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awā'il*, p. 66 no. 38: the first to reach me at the Pool will be my family (*ahl baytī*) and those who love my community, then followed by a chapter stating who will come next after this category, and then mentioning the poor amongst the *muhājirūn*; see also Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 505-506; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 165.

your party (*shī'a*) will be at the Pool and will allow those who loved you to drink, and deny drinking to those who hated you".⁵⁶

There is a general agreement among many reports enhancing the status of 'Alī in Shī'ī sources which are also found in Sunnī literature. The most widely attested statement mentioned by Shī'ī sources affirms that the first convert to Islam and the first to reach the Pool is 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, usually with no explicit indication of the Day of Resurrection.⁵⁷ This is shared even by some Sunnī reports.⁵⁸ Further, other Shī'ī and Sunnī reports add qualifications in regard to 'Alī and the Pool, and enhance the privileged connection between the two, which is thus endorsed by the two sides. Muḥammad states that 'Alī will be at the 'uqr of the Pool and will be "my helper".⁵⁹ 'Alī is also defined as the *ṣāhib* of the Pool of Muḥammad,⁶⁰ or it is stated that he will be his trustee (*amīn*),⁶¹ the cup bearer (*al-sāqī*) on Muḥammad's behalf at the Pool,⁶² or will be his *wālī* or even his *khalīfa* at the Pool on the Day of Resurrection.⁶³

⁵⁶ Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 657; Idem, *Faḍā'il al-shī'a*, p. 16; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, p. 412. The significance of the reports connecting 'Alī and the Pool is underlined by Ibn al-Jawzī, who mentions in his collection of forged reports (*Kitāb al-mawḍū'āt*) various traditions regarding 'Alī and the Pool.

⁵⁷ Ibn Bābawayh, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 272; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-mu'minīn*, vol. 1, pp. 280, 285; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 1, p. 451; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra*, Beirut 1993, pp. 262, 278; Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, p. 186; Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Mustarshid*, p. 354.

⁵⁸ Ibn Abī Usāma, *Bughyat al-bāhith*, vol. 2, p. 901 no. 980; Ibn al-A'rābī, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 625 no. 1298; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 170; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *al-Dhayl 'alā juz' Baqī b. Makhlad*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Ḥarb al-Kirmānī, *Masā'il*, vol. 3, p. 1195; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 295; from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; Idem, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 33: one of the five privileges accorded to 'Alī will be to let his (i.e. the Prophet's) community drink from the Prophet's Pool; al-Khallāl, *al-Sunna*, vol. 2, p. 349 no. 464. Cf. also Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 28, p. 71.

⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 67 no. 188: on the Day of Resurrection; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, pp. 116, 175, 278, 383, and cf. p. 411 (*ṣāhibi 'alā ḥawḍī*); idem, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 264; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 1, p. 206, vol. 2, p. 464: on the Day of Resurrection.

⁶¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-mizān*, vol. 6, p. 237.

⁶² 'Alī is the (my, i.e. Muḥammad's) *sāqī*: Abū al-Ṣalāh al-Ḥalabī, *Taqrib al-ma'arīf*, p. 183.

⁶³ The *wālī* of the Pool on the Day of Resurrection: Ibn Bābawayh, *al-I'tiqādāt*, p. 65. The Prophet states that Alī will be with him at the Pool on the Day of Resurrection: al-Mufīd, *Tafḍīl amīr al-mu'minīn*, p. 29. Muḥammad states that 'Alī "will be my *khalīfa* one day at the Pool": Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 156; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-mu'minīn*, vol. 1, p. 250; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, p. 381; Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Mustarshid*, p. 634.

Along this shared material, some reports are more characteristic of the Shīʿī side. It is said, for instance, that love for the family of ʿAlī will be useful in seven places on the Day of Resurrection, and one of these places is the Pool.⁶⁴ The party of ʿAlī and his supporters seek to give their specific interpretation to the image: “We shall be resurrected and we and those who love us will reach the Prophet at the Pool”.⁶⁵ The Prophet Muḥammad granted to the supporters the rights of ʿAlī: “You and your party will allow those whom you like to drink at the Pool”.⁶⁶ ʿAlī states directly that the people at the Pool will be “I and my party”.⁶⁷

His role as *dhāʿid* is alluded to in an early report in which Muḥammad states: “It is as if I see you in your place at my Pool with a rod (ʿaṣā)”.⁶⁸ Further, the first to enter Paradise and join Muḥammad at the Pool is *al-maʿrūf* (ʿAlī) together with his *ahl*.⁶⁹ Though some of the prerogatives ascribed to ʿAlī are the same as those attributed to him by Sunnī and Shīʿī sources, the Shīʿī sources tend to attribute more authority to ʿAlī at the Pool. In some cases ʿAlī acts as a substitute for Muḥammad, with his permission. This reflects a characteristic tendency in Shīʿī traditions and it is not surprising to find it here.

However, the Pool motif shared by Sunnīs and Shīʿīs is better exemplified by a cluster of reports which appear on both sides but came to constitute the main report on the Pool in Shīʿī literature. This is a *ḥadīth* which in Shīʿī traditional literature has a similar position to the *farāḥ* reports in its Sunnī counterpart. Many versions of it appear also in Sunnī literature. Muḥammad, for instance, states that he left to his community two successors (*khalīfatāni*), that is the Qurʾān and his progeny (*itrati, ahl bayti*), who will not separate from each other until they reach him at the Pool.⁷⁰ Other Sunnī

⁶⁴ Ibn Khālid al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsīn*, vol. 1, p. 152.

⁶⁵ Ibn ʿUqda Al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn*, vol. 2, pp. 284, 293.

⁶⁶ Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 2, p. 397.

⁶⁷ Ibn ʿUqda al-Kūfī, *Faḍāʾil amīr al-muʾminīn*, p. 100.

⁶⁸ Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, p. 400.

⁶⁹ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 4, p. 28; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, vol. 2, pp. 54-55. In a report describing a dream there is a vision of the Prophet at the Pool with Ḥasan and Ḥusayn giving water to the community: Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *al-Kharāʾij wa-l-jarāʾih*, vol. 1, p. 223.

⁷⁰ Al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 3, p. 163; a shorter version: Ibn Abi ʿĀṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 509; Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 108 no. 135; Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Muṣannaʿ*, vol. 6, p. 309 no. 31679; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, p. 603 no. 1032, p. 786 no. 1403; but stating

versions mention the two weighty things (*al-thaqalāni*), stating that the two will not separate from each other (i.e. and stay together) until they reach Muḥammad at the Pool. These versions affirm the same content, though not always with the same words: Muḥammad left to his community the Qurʾān and his ʿitra, sometimes glossed as *ahl baytī*; these two will not part from each other until they reach him at the Pool.⁷¹ An earlier tradition reflects the same idea: Muḥammad says that the Qurʾān, ʿAlī and his *awṣiyāʾ* will not separate until they reach Muḥammad at the Pool.⁷² This interpretation is repeated by Sunnīs and Shiʿīs, but using the expression “my (e.g. of the Prophet) *sunna*” (*sunnatī*).⁷³

simply that the two will reach him at the Pool. According to other versions, people reaching the Pool will be tested by the Prophet who will question them about the Qurʾān and the ʿitra: al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 165. One of the two versions is said to be superior to the other: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 17, p. 169 no. 11104; al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 3, p. 163.

⁷¹ Using *thaqalayn*: al-Ghāzī, *Musnad al-Riḍā*, p. 206; al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 28; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 616; Furāt al-Kūfī, *Tafsīr*, p. 17; Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *al-Mustarshid*, p. 559; Ibn Bābawayh, *Kamāl al-dīn*, p. 94, *passim*; Idem, *Maʿānī al-akhbār*, p. 90, *passim*. And cf. other versions in Ibn Shādhān, *al-Īḍāh*, p. 334; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Intiṣār*, p. 80; Abū al-Ṣalāh al-Ḥillī, *al-Kāfi*, p. 97; al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Khilāf*, vol. 1, p. 27; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn*, vol. 2, pp. 98, 105, *passim*; Ibn ʿUqda al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-wilāya*, pp. 159, 175, *passim*; al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Masāʾil al-jārūdiyya*, pp. 39–40; Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, p. 300; al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, I, pp. 172–173; see also all the versions collected by al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. 23, p. 106f.; Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 40; al-Ghāzī, *Musnad al-Riḍā*, pp. 204–206, 208; al-Khazzāz al-Qummī, *Kifāyat al-athar*, pp. 128–129; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 287, vol. 2, p. 415; cf. vol. 1, p. 294: these two things are defined *amrāni*; cf. Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 150: ʿAlī and *al-ḥaqq*; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-ʿItiqādāt*, pp. 121–122: the Qurʾān and the *awṣiyāʾ*; al-Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 65: *amrāni*, one longer than the other; Ibn ʿUqda al-Kūfī, *Faḍāʾil Amīr al-muʾminīn*, p. 37: ʿAlī and truth (*al-ḥaqq*); al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-yaqīn*, pp. 234–235: traced back to ʿĀʾisha. Some versions include the details of the two fingers shown by Muḥammad when uttering these words. The flag of ʿAlī is mentioned with the *thaqalāni* in one version of this story in Ibn Abī al-Fattāḥ al-Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghumma*, vol. 1, p. 137.

⁷² Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, pp. 169–170; 177–178: two versions with differing details, and cf. the versions on pp. 199–202, 208, 212, 236, 298–299, 380, 406, 426; al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, p. 69; cf. Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Imāma wa-l-taḥṣira*, pp. 43–44; cf. also idem, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 67: ʿAlī is defined *ḥalīf* of the Qurʾān and his family; Idem, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 60: ʿAlī explains it saying that he, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, as well as the nine imams descendant from Ḥusayn, and the book, will not be separated.

⁷³ Zayd b. ʿAlī, *Musnad*, p. 404; Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, p. 406: the *sunna* is mentioned in a passage where it is said that the Book and the guides of the community (i.e. the imams) will never be separated; but cf. al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn*, vol. 1, p. 493, vol. 2, p. 474: ʿAlī will fight for my *sunna* and will be my *khalīfa* at the Pool.

The reports mentioning the Pool in Sunnī and Shīʿī traditions bear out the point made regarding the *farāṭ* traditions. Rather than producing conflicting imagery, both sides shared reports, placing emphasis on details which were supportive of their particular tenets. It is not surprising that a tradition mentioning the Qurʾān and the family of Muḥammad as the main conditions for reaching the Pool became the most common one in Shīʿī literature. Its contents perfectly fit Shīʿī beliefs.

5. Competing Sunnī views

The concept of the Pool and the frequent references to it in Islamic literature was also significant in expressing competing Sunnī ideas. In this case, the question is the significance of the Pool as a symbol of final salvation and destination to Paradise. As in other traditions, the Pool is mentioned as a direct indication of those deserving final salvation in contrast with those who cannot attain it. Along with this, some reports bear signs of specific political and moral commitments which appear clearly influenced by theological discussions and rivalries.

References to the Pool entered into debates regarding the succession to Muḥammad, which was a highly sensitive point. We have already mentioned the *ḥadīth* according to which the Pool has four pillars (*arkān*), each held by one caliph.⁷⁴ Other reports focus on the controversial caliphate of ʿUthmān. For instance, Muḥammad tells ʿUthmān not to deviate from his *sunna*, since whoever does so and dies before repenting will have his face driven away from the Pool by angels on the Day of Resurrection.⁷⁵ A contrasting story appears in a report mentioning another dialogue between Muḥammad and ʿUthmān; here Muḥammad assures him that he will be among those reaching the Prophet at the Pool.⁷⁶

Political concerns are reflected in other versions. In one anti-quietistic report, Muḥammad states that after him there will be commanders and leaders (*umarāʾ*) who behave badly and those who follow them will not

⁷⁴ Al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 10, p. 309.

⁷⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 172; Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, vol. 3, p. 712.

⁷⁶ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 1, p. 525 no. 871.

reach the Pool, while those who oppose them will.⁷⁷ The opposition to the powerful is confirmed by another widespread *ḥadīth*, according to which Muḥammad declared that the first to reach it will be the poor of the community.⁷⁸ Other sources specify that these are the poor of the *muhājirūn*, most of whom reached Medina devoid of any possessions. Other reports explain how Muḥammad will recognize those deserving to reach the Pool: he states that he will recognize them just as the best horses with the *ghurra* (a white spot on the forehead) are distinguished from the others.⁷⁹ The Prophet will stand at the Pool rejecting the unbelievers (*kuffār*) just as the shepherd drives away the camels of others until “my community comes and will be recognized by the signs caused by the ablution. They will drink from that Pool and whoever drinks from it will never thirst again”.⁸⁰

Regional and tribal concerns are reflected in a widespread report stating that the Prophet will drive people away (*adhūdu*) from the Pool to make room for the people of Yemen (*ahl al-Yaman*). He beats the non-Yemenis with his rod (‘*aṣā*) until they disperse.⁸¹ The report is intended to maintain the higher status of Yemenite people, but only an in-depth analysis

⁷⁷ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 345 no. 508; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 310 no. 31682; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 8, p. 514 no. 5702, a longer version: vol. 22, p. 332 no. 14441, vol. 23, p. 425 no. 15284, *passim*; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 511–513. Cf. also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 34, p. 401 no. 20805: about twelve Qurashī caliphs.

⁷⁸ Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 2, 335 no. 1088: *fuqarā’ ummatī*. See, by contrast, *fuqarā’ al-muhājirīn*: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 37, p. 50 no. 22367; Baqī b. Makhhlad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 91; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 505.

⁷⁹ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, p. 217, two versions; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 1438 no. 4302; Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥsān*, vol. 16, p. 225 no. 7241. Only a few reports mention some specific persons: a late tradition in *awā’il* style states that Muḥammad said that the first to drink from his Pool will be Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī etc.: al-Suyūṭī, *Jāmi‘ al-aḥādīth*, vol. 10, p. 310 no. 9684 from Daylamī; see *al-Firdaws bi-ma’thūr al-khiṭāb*, vol. 1, p. 34 no. 57. According to other versions, the first to reach the Pool will be Ṣuhayb b. Sinān and al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad among the *mujtahidūn* and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir among the *ṣiddīqūn*: see, from an earlier source, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn, *Tahdhīb al-furūq*, vol. 2, p. 160.

⁸⁰ Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 55; see also Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatṭa’*, vol. 2, p. 38 no. 82, and al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Ṭuhūr*, vol. 1, p. 121 no. 33; see also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 15, pp. 167–168 no. 9292. The expression is used in short form in other reports: al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Ṭuhūr*, p. 120 no. 30, from Abū Hurayra.

⁸¹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, 286 from Qatāda; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 11, p. 406 no. 20853 (from the *Jāmi‘* by Ma‘mar); Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31672; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 37, p. 92 no. 22409, p. 104 no. 22426, p. 106 no. 22430/b, *passim*.

of traditionists and contents can bring about a better understanding of the origin and diffusion of this tradition. Further, the image of Muḥammad driving men away from the Pool, parallel to the name *al-dhāʿid* given to ʿAlī by Shīʿī sources, frequently appears in Sunnī reports.⁸² Other reports provide a narrative setting for the idea that some Muslims will be driven away from the Pool because of their behavior. As we have already said,⁸³ not all of the Prophet’s companions will be saved because of their bad behavior after his death. According to a dramatic short *ḥadīth* dating back to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, Muḥammad says that some of his companions will reach him, and these companions will see each other, but they will be driven away; as for the objection raised by Muḥammad (“O Lord, my companions, my companions”), the answer is that he has no knowledge of what they did after his death to be rejected.⁸⁴ This drama is caused by the fact that after Muḥammad’s death they introduced something blameworthy (*aḥdathū*) in their religion, or did something wrong.⁸⁵ Another version reflects the same idea using different words (such as *baddalū*). Those who deviated from the teaching of the Prophet will be driven away like stray camels, or whoever deviates (*ghariba ʿan*) from his *sunna*, and does not repent will have his face turned away from his Pool on the Day of Resurrection.⁸⁶ The idea is repeated by combining the

⁸² Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 175 no. 1123; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 15, p. 531 no. 9856, vol. 16, p. 77 no. 10030; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 112 no. 2367; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1800, *passim*.

⁸³ See nn. 37-39.

⁸⁴ ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 287; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, p. 406 no. 20854 (from the *Jāmiʿ* by Maʿmar); al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-ʿl-bayān*, vol. 3, p. 126; a shortened version in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 168 no. 2327; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 120 nos. 6585, 6586; cf. the version in Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 9, p. 46 no. 7048. Other sources mention slightly different versions of this story: Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *al-Fitan*, p. 87 no. 200, p. 174 no. 460 (two differing versions, the first from Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, the second from Abū Hurayra); al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 7, p. 94; cf. also the version in Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 163 no. 235 (with *farāṭ*).

⁸⁵ Along with some of the versions cited above, *aḥdathū* is used in the following reports: Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 307 no. 31673; cf. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 21, p. 406 no. 13991, vol. 38, p. 326 no. 23290, p. 403 no. 23393; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 120 no. 6582; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, p. 217; see also in al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Iqtisād*, p. 213. ʿAmilū is used in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 41, p. 338 no. 24901.

⁸⁶ Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭaʿ*, vol. 2, p. 38 no. 82 (= Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭaʿ*, *riwāyat* Abū Muṣʿab, vol. 1, p. 32 no. 72); al-Madanī, *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥajar*, p. 326 no. 261; al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *al-Ṭuhūr*, vol. 1, p. 121 no. 33; see also another version in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, vol. 23, p. 413 no. 997; a version with *baddalū* and *suḥuqan* also in Shīʿī literature: al-Karājīkī, *al-Taʿajjub*, p. 89. Cf. also,

various elements and other generic statements recalling obedience to the Prophet.⁸⁷

It is significant that these traditions are completely compatible with Shī'ī beliefs. The Shī'ī vision of history maintains that some companions sinned after the Prophet's death. The Sunnī statements appear to be of a general, moral nature, and do not reflect particular concerns. Only a few defend appropriateness of the early succession to Muḥammad; the Shī'ī reports, on the other hand, include well established traditions of companions denying the rights of 'Alī, such as the three *rāshidūn*. Apart from the differences in detail and the different use of such statements, for instance, in relation to the role of Abū Bakr, the Sunnī reports share the same imagery with the Imāmī Shī'ī versions, and thus it does not seem strange to find this argument in their reports and discussion on the belief in the Pool.⁸⁸

6. The factual dimensions of the Pool

The significance of the Pool is stressed further by reports describing its huge dimensions. The huge dimensions of the Pool are relevant to the eschatological narrative describing the great events taking place on the Day of Resurrection. They are also necessary to enable many people to drink from it. If people are thirsty and the Pool is there so that everybody can drink without waiting, it must be big enough to accommodate all deserving people. This is a vast number even if many will be driven away.

Both Sunnī and Shī'ī reports describe the dimensions of the Pool as the distance between “Ṣan'ā' and Medina or Medina and 'Ammān”.⁸⁹ But

combining various elements: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 13, p. 373 no. 7993, vol. 15, pp. 167-168 no. 9292; al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-'ulūm*, vol. 1, p. 414.

⁸⁷ One version follows a slightly different line: I am your *faraṭ* and whoever reaches me drinks, whoever drinks will no longer thirst, and I shall take care not to be separated from those who know me and whom I know: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 86 no. 97, Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 94 no. 110. Those of my companions who exactly preserve my memory (*man ḥafiẓanī*) will reach me at the Pool, while the others will see me from far away, states Muḥammad: al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 305 no. 1025: cf. also p. 306 no. 1029; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, vol. 12, p. 283 no. 13125.

⁸⁸ See e.g. Ibn Bābawayh, *al-'Itiqādāt*, p. 65; Idem, *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 93.

⁸⁹ Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 489 no. 2105, vol. 19, p. 362 no. 12362; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 20, p. 460 no. 13261, vol. 21, p. 20 no. 13294; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 1438 no. 4304; al-

many other places are mentioned in reports describing the dimensions of the Pool. Other frequently mentioned places are Jarbā³ and Adhruh,⁹⁰ as well as Ayla and Mecca.⁹¹ In Shī'ī literature we read that the Pool is as large as or larger than the distance from Buṣrā to Ṣan'ā',⁹² or from Ṣan'ā' to Ayla.⁹³

Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba'th wa-l-nushūr*, p. 113 no. 120; and cf. Idem, pp. 120-121. Medina – 'Ammān: Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1801; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 505.

⁹⁰ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ fi al-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31664; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 8, p. 347 no. 4723, vol. 10, p. 254 no. 6079, vol. 10, p. 324 no. 6181 (adding cups like stars, and other details); al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 119 no. 6577; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, pp. 1797-1798 (three versions); Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 83-4; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 491-492. See al-Lālikā'ī, *Sharḥ uṣūl i'tiqād al-sunna*, p. 1189; they are two villages in Syria, three days distant from one another.

⁹¹ See e.g. Ayla – Miṣr: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 38, pp. 344-345 nos. 23317-18, p. 370 no. 23346; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 491. Kūfa – The Black Stone: Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi'*, vol. 4, p. 210 no. 2445. Al-Jābiya – Ṣan'ā': al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 67 no. 188. Ayla – Mecca/al-Ka'ba: Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 518; Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba'th wa-l-nushūr*, pp. 127-128 no. 155; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-shāmiyīn*, vol. 4, p. 293 no. 3342. Ayla – Na'mān: al-'Askarī, *Taḥfīfāt al-muḥaddithīn*, vol. 1, p. 254. Ayla – Juḥfa: Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba'th wa-l-nushūr*, p. 126; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 85; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1796. Al-Bayḍā' – Buṣrā in the ḥadīth on the Bedouin visiting Muhammad: Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 86; al-Būṣīrī, *Ithāf al-khiyara al-mahara*, vol. 8, p. 250 no. 7893; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 484; see also these other versions on the description of the Pool given to this Bedouin: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 29, p. 191 no. 17642. 'Adan – Ayla: Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 91; Mecca – Ṣan'ā': Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 494; Ṣan'ā' – al-Urdunn: 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb waṣf al-firdaws*, p. 224 n. 67. Ṣan'ā' – Medina: Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1797. Jābiya (a village close to Damascus) and Ṣan'ā': Abū 'Awāna, *al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 18, p. 109 no. 10145. 'Ammān – Ayla: Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31671, vol. 7, p. 45 no. 34102; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, 1798; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fi al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 95; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 488-489. As long as Jerusalem – Ṣan'ā' and as wide as 'Adan – Yathrib: (Ps.)-al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, p. 71. Jericho is also mentioned in the “ḥadīth of the Pool”: Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, vol. 1, p. 43.

⁹² Al-Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr*, Tehran n.d., vol. 1, p. 4; al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 3; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 374; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Khiṣāl*, p. 66; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-mu'minīn*, vol. 2, p. 375; al-Nu'mānī, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, p. 50. Cf. the Sunnī versions in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. 4, p. 171 no. 3891; Idem, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, vol. 3, p. 67 no. 2683.

⁹³ Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Imāma wa-l-taṣīra*, p. 44; Idem, *al-I'tiqādāt fi dīn al-imāmiyya*, p. 65; Idem, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, pp. 291-292; al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-mu'minīn*, vol. 1, p. 404; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akḥbār*, vol. 2, p. 468; al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 64. Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 481-483, 488, 489, 507; al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba'th wa-l-nushūr*, p. 113 no. 121, p. 128 no. 156. But see also Buṣrā – al-'Adan (Aden): al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Iqtisād*, p. 213; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 310 no. 31688; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 119 no. 6580; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1800; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 493.

The spread of so many versions to define the huge dimensions of the Pool constituted a problem for Muslim scholars. What exactly did the Prophet say? For this reason some versions preferred to leave this point unspecified; some stated, for instance, that the Pool is as big as “from here to there” (*kadhā ilā kadhā*). Or, in another case, we find the Prophet saying that the distance is like that between the place where he is (*maqāmi*) and ‘Ammān.⁹⁴ A different way can be found in a Shi‘ī report according to which God told Jesus that Muḥammad has a Pool whose extension is greater than the distance from Mecca to the place where the sun rises.⁹⁵ Another well-known report maintains that the Prophet said: “What is between my house and my *minbar* is a garden of Paradise and my *minbar* is near my Pool.”⁹⁶ This should be read in conjunction with a similar report according to which the *minbar* of the Prophet stands on one of the channels (*tura‘*) of Paradise.⁹⁷ Other versions settle the question with the general statement that the distance is one month’s walk.⁹⁸

Descriptions of the dimensions of the Pool are enriched in many versions by references to the drinking vessels and the quality of the water. In some early reports these dimensions are not ascribed to the Pool in general, but rather to the two conduits (*math‘abān*), one of gold and one of

⁹⁴ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1799; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*, vol. 3, p. 304; al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 596 no. 2249. See also the sources quoted below, n. 99.

⁹⁵ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 139; Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Amālī*, p. 612.

⁹⁶ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 3, p. 182 no. 5243 (from Abū Hurayra); Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta‘a*, vol. 2, p. 275 n. 671, from Abū Hurayra (= Mālik, *Muwatta‘a*, *riwāyat* Abū Muṣ‘ab, vol. 1, p. 202 no. 518); Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 495; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 305 no. 31659; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 12, p. 159 no. 7223, vol. 14, p. 467 no. 8885, vol. 15, p. 78 no. 9153 (a longer version with some words on the value of prayer, see also vol. 16, p. 488 no. 10837), p. 117 no. 9214, *passim*; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 61 no. 1196, vol. 3, p. 23 no. 1888; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 1011; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 253; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwīya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 83; see also the Shi‘ī Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2, p. 546. This affirmation prompted al-Qaṣṭallānī to state that this is not the *ḥawḍ* located outside paradise but rather means the Kawthar: al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād al-sārī*, vol. 10, p. 336. This tradition stresses the connection between the main Medinan places and the mosque with the next world. See Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic traditions*, p. 250.

⁹⁷ See e.g. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 15, p. 117-118 no. 9215. See also al-Ḥarbī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 203: my *minbar* is at one of the *tura‘* (the channels or the openings to access the water) of my Pool.

⁹⁸ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 11, p. 64 no. 6514; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 119 no. 6579; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1793; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31672, vol. 7, p. 46 no. 34103.

silver, which supply it with water: they are as long as the distance between Buṣrā and Ṣan‘ā’, or Ayla and Mecca, “or from the place where I am (*maqāmi*) to ‘Ammān”.⁹⁹ The report attesting the doubts by ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād¹⁰⁰ adds a fantastic description of the drinking jugs which are like stars, the water is whiter than milk, sweeter than milk, and whoever drinks from it will never thirst again.¹⁰¹ The vessels and cups are as big and numerous as the stars in the sky. One report even states that men and women reaching the Pool will bring with them vessels and waterskins.¹⁰² Another version of the tradition gives details of the two gold and silver conduits and describes the excellent qualities of the water.¹⁰³

The wide range of names of places and references constituted a question calling for explanations by exegetes and scholars about what exactly the Prophet said. The many variant reports comply with the well known tendency to add specific particulars and names to the things mentioned, but the Muslim exegetes had to face the fact that most of these different attestations are given in canonical *ḥadīths*. In this regard there is a significant explanation given by al-Qurṭubī, who states that some think that in the *ḥadīths* on the Pool there are contradictions, but this is not the case, since, for instance, regarding the dimensions, Muḥammad chose to mention different places to people of different places so that they could better

⁹⁹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 286; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, p. 406 no. 20853 (from the *Jāmi‘* by Ma‘mar); *maqāmi* - ‘Ammān and other versions: in some versions the two *mizābs* are mentioned along with the dimensions of the Pool in general, see e.g. Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba‘th wa-l-nushūr*, p. 117 no. 131; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 90; cf. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 480: two *mizābs*. Ayla - Ṣan‘ā’: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 33 p. 41 no. 19804.

¹⁰⁰ Nn. 148f.

¹⁰¹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, p. 404 no. 20852 (from the *Jāmi‘* by Ma‘mar); cf. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 486-487; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 1801.

¹⁰² Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-awsaṭ*, vol. 1, p. 228 no. 749. In a report going back to Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, its water is white like milk, and its vessels are like stars, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 309 no. 31681, vol. 7, p. 46 no. 34104; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 1438 no. 4301; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 81; Hannād b. al-Sārī, *al-Zuhd*, vol. 1, p. 110 no. 135; Medina-Ayla or Medina-Jerusalem; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 490. On the vessels only see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 35, p. 254 no. 21327.

¹⁰³ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 36, p. 479 no. 22156; Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, pp. 79-80, see also the versions in Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba‘th wa-l-nushūr*, pp. 118-119.

understand it.¹⁰⁴ This solved the problem of the many versions of this aspect of the Pool, which, once again, are attested on both the Sunnī and Shī‘ī sides using similar images and details.

7. Theological and exegetical doubts and discussions

The tension between the contents of the description of the Pool and the subsequent theological or even logical problems that appear in some of the *ḥadīths* also emerge in a large part of the other traditions attested in Islamic literature. Regarding theological issues, it seems that the belief in the existence of the Pool was considered central and significant, and, consequently, early Sunnī creeds included it. The statement that the “Pool of the Prophet” (*ḥawḍ al-nabī*) is truth (*ḥaqq*) is made after statements regarding the intercession of the prophets, the intercession of the prophet Muḥammad on behalf of sinful believers, and the weighing of actions on the Balance on the Day of Resurrection in the *Fiqh al-akbar* attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767) and in later creeds.¹⁰⁵ According to these creeds, the Pool can hardly be considered separately. It is integrated with other eschatological beliefs which were staunchly supported by the *ahl al-sunna*. The adversaries of this belief were also opposed to other eschatological beliefs: the visit by the angels in the Grave, the intercession of the Prophet, the existence of the Balance, the Bridge and even the belief in the Dajjāl, Resurrection and Judgement. All these credal details are defended along with the Pool by Sunnī theologians.¹⁰⁶ Theologians sometimes specify who the adversaries are: the

¹⁰⁴ Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, p. 706.

¹⁰⁵ Abū Ḥanīfa, *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, p. 61. See also al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Takhrīj al-‘aqida al-ṭaḥāwiyya*, p. 45 no. 40: the Pool which was granted by God to Muḥammad as an aid to his community (*ghiyāthan li-ummatihī*) is truth. This is inserted in other Sunnī creeds, stating that the Messenger Muḥammad has/will have a Pool on the Day of Resurrection; see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Uṣūl al-sunna*, p. 29 n. 7. See also Brown, *Hadith. Muhammad’s legacy*, p. 175; Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*, p. 182 and Wiegiers, *Islamic literature in Spanish and Aljamiado*, pp. 95-97: the Pool is in the creed by Yça de Segovia.

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ībāna*, p. 27; cf. also Idem, *Risāla ilā ahl al-thughar*, p. 59; Idem, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, p. 293; Ibn Abī Zamanīn, *Uṣūl al-sunna*, pp. 158, 190; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-firaq*, pp. 20, 314; and then in the works of Ibn Ḥazm, al-Juwaynī and many later authors.

Khārijis,¹⁰⁷ the Mu‘tazilis,¹⁰⁸ or the Jahmiyya.¹⁰⁹ This opposition is expressed in many traditions which emphasize the significance of belief in the existence of the Pool. A report attributed by Ma‘mar through Ibn ‘Abbās to the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb states that there will be people denying the truth of the Pool as well as the Dajjāl or the punishment in the grave.¹¹⁰ The Pool is reality, it is *ḥaqq*.¹¹¹

One way to support the belief in the existence of the Pool is to include it in Qur’ānic exegesis. This is usually made in Qur’ān 108:1 where the controversial and enigmatic term *kawthar* appears.¹¹² It is noteworthy, however, that this occurs only in some later Qur’ānic commentaries, and not in the early ones. Further, the connection of the Pool with the Kawthar is only one of the many interpretations in some commentaries – and it is sometimes problematic. For instance, interpretations differ on the question whether the Pool and the Kawthar are the same thing, or the Kawthar is a river connected to the Pool. This brings us back to the question whether the Pool is just before entering Paradise or before the Judgment, in the *mawqif* (station) of people awaiting their final destiny.

However, as already mentioned, the Qur’ānic commentaries were not immediately receptive of this identification. The early commentaries do not mention it at all. As far as I have been able to verify, the first commentator to mention it was al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), who stated in the commentary of Qur. 108:1 that it is the *ḥawḍ*; people will drink from it only

¹⁰⁷ Ḥarb al-Kirmānī, *Masā’il*, vol. 3, p. 982.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 245; Ibn Shāhīn, *Sharḥ madhāhib ahl al-sunna*, p. 34 no. 36: statement attributed to Sufyān al-Thawrī; Ḥarb al-Kirmānī, *Masā’il*, vol. 3, p. 979. On Mu‘tazilī attitudes, see Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Barbahārī, *Sharḥ al-Sunna*, p. 97. See also, in this regard, an invented saying attributed to the Prophet which states directly that the Qadariyya and the Murji‘a, who deny the reality of eschatological elements, will neither reach him (i.e. the Prophet) at the Pool nor enter into Paradise, see Ibn al-Wazīr, *al-‘Awāšim wa-l-qawāšim*, vol. 6, p. 304, quoting from al-Haythamī; cf. al-Bayhaqī, *al-Qaḍā’ wa-l-qadar*, p. 286 no. 426, stating that Qadariyya and Murji‘a will not reach him at the Pool.

¹¹⁰ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 3, p. 587 no. 6751, vol. 11, p. 412 no. 20860 (from the *Jāmi‘* by Ma‘mar), this was uttered on a *minbar* during a *khuṭba*: vol. 7, p. 330 no. 13364.

¹¹¹ Ḥarb al-Kirmānī, *Masā’il*, vol. 3, p. 971.

¹¹² For exegetical discussions about the meaning of Kawthar, see Gilliot, “L’embarras d’un exégète musulman”.

by the Prophet's permission.¹¹³ Sometimes the connection with the Kawthar is made explicit: in the Pool there is abundant good (*khayr kathīr*), and the people will be numerous (*yakthuru*) around it on the Day of Resurrection. This suggests a linguistic connection (*kathura / Kawthar*).¹¹⁴

The attestations outside the exegetical literature are even more confusing. According to some reports Kawthar is the name of the Pool of the Prophet.¹¹⁵ Less explicit is the expression "the Pool of the Kawthar" (*ḥawḍ al-kawthar*): Kawthar may be the name of the Pool but it may also mean that Kawthar has a pool.¹¹⁶ Some reports seek a compromise and maintain the existence of both. It is consequently explained that the Kawthar is a river that has a Pool which the Muslim community will reach on the Day of Resurrection.¹¹⁷ It is also stated that the Kawthar is a river that flows into the Pool.¹¹⁸ The actual meaning is clear in the reports which say that the Kawthar is a river on which (*alayhi*) there is the Pool.¹¹⁹

Some reports, on the other hand, make a clear distinction between the two, to avoid confusion. This concern is shown by the traditions maintaining that there is a river connecting the Pool to the Kawthar.¹²⁰ Thus the Kawthar is a river which has a Pool that will be reached by the

¹¹³ Al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr*, p. 207.

¹¹⁴ Ibn Fūrak, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 283; al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 10, pp. 308-310, collecting more reports on this; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr*, vol. 4, p. 497; for Shiʿī literature, see al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 8, p. 16.

¹¹⁵ Al-Maqdisī, *al-Badʿ wa-l-taʿrīkh*, vol. 1, p. 208.

¹¹⁶ Al-Isfarāʾīnī, *al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn*, p. 66. See also al-Muḥirī, *al-Mafātīh*, vol. 2, p. 63: he will reach me at the Pool of the Kawthar (but also referring to it as *ḥawḍī* (i.e. "my Pool")); and al-Qaṣṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya*, vol. 2, p. 489.

¹¹⁷ Al-Isfarāʾīnī, *al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn*, p. 175; cf. also al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-uyūn*, vol. 6, p. 354: the two interpretations are that the Kawthar is a river or the Pool, cf. also al-Mustaghfirī, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2, p. 684 no. 1017: it is a river or a Pool; and Baqī b. Makhḥad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 98. See instead al-Samʿānī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 6, p. 290: it is a river and the Pool, see also al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, p. 110 no. 113.

¹¹⁸ Al-Ishbīlī, *al-ʿĀqība*, vol. 1, p. 325; Ps.-al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, pp. 70-71: the same water; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 38, p. 362 no. 23336.

¹¹⁹ Cf. also Hammād b. al-Sārī, *al-Zuhd*, vol. 1, p. 108 no. 133; al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, p. 111 no. 114; al-Ghazālī, *The Remembrance of Death and Afterlife*, p. 217: from Anas. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, p. 300: *alayhi khayr, wa-huwa al-ḥawḍ*; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 4, p. 237 no. 4747.

¹²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 17, p. 530; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 6, pp. 329-330 no. 3787.

community of Muḥammad on the Day of Resurrection.¹²¹ Other reports have different concerns. Some try to reinforce the connection of the Pool with Paradise, bringing the two as close as possible to each other. Some exegetical passages specify that Kawthar is the Pool situated in Paradise (*fi al-janna*).¹²² In other traditions there are two conduits (*mizāb*) connecting the Kawthar to the Pool and pouring (water) into it from the Kawthar.¹²³ The water itself comes from Paradise.¹²⁴

Most of the later commentaries do not follow this line of interpretation. This is probably caused by the weak linguistic connection between the two concepts, as well as the problems that this identification creates. If we do not know where the Pool is located, it is difficult to connect it with a paradisiacal river. It also appears that *ḥadīth* transmitters were much more interested in the Pool than the Qurʾānic commentators. In fact, a comprehensive reference to the *ḥadīths* dealing with the Pool is not frequent in Qurʾānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), notwithstanding the differing attitudes by the various authors who in any case quote individual reports in some passages.¹²⁵ However, we should not underestimate the point that, apart from the direct connection in some traditions or exegetical interpretations, some works collecting *ḥadīths* and reports seem to be more in line with identification or close connection between the two concepts. This is evident in the works which, in chapters on the Pool, include many reports on the Kawthar or vice versa.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 10, pp. 308-309; cf. also Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 305 no. 31655; vol. 7, p. 45 no. 34097, p. 455 no. 37178. These traditions state that it is a river in which (*ʿalayhi*) there is abundant good (*khayr kathīr*), see above, n. 114.

¹²² Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Juzʾ fihi tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, p. 106; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 24, p. 648; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 8, p. 475; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 326 no. 31795. Ibn al-Mubārak, *Zuhd*, p. 561 no. 1611: commenting on Qurʾān 108:1, it is stated that it is *ḥawḍ rasūl Allāh (s) fi al-janna*. A Shīʿī source reports that under the Throne of God there are pools (*hiyāḍ*): al-Mirzā al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-wasāʾil*, vol. 2, p. 402.

¹²³ Al-Ghazālī, *Qawāʿid al-ʿaqāʿid*, p. 67.

¹²⁴ The same water: Ps.-al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, pp. 70-71.

¹²⁵ On the use of *ḥadīths* in exegetical literature, see Geissinger, *Gender and Muslim constructions of exegetical authority*; Bauer, *Gender hierarchy in the Qurʾān*.

¹²⁶ See, e.g., al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-baʿth wa-l-nushūr*, with a chapter entitled *Bāb mā jāʾa fi al-ḥawḍ* (pp. 110-130). Here we have more reports on the Kawthar than on the Pool. The title of the chapter specifically on the Kawthar in the *Sharḥ al-Sunna* by the same al-Bayhaqī is even clearer: *Bāb al-ḥawḍ wa-huwa al-Kawthar*. Qurtūbī (*al-Tadhkira*, pp. 713-4) does not connect the few

8. Where is the eschatological Pool?

One of the main problems regarding the Pool is its location. Numerous reports do not say anything about it, while others adduce contrasting views, and several considerations contributed to the different locations of the Pool. If unbelievers are driven away from it, it means that it was a place to which they had access; this must be before the Bridge and before the Balance during the *mawqif*.¹²⁷ If it is in the *mawqif*, the Pool appears less “paradisiacal” and more related to earthly dynamics and to the questions prompted by the need to distinguish between believers and unbelievers. However, other reports discuss paradisiacal privileges which indicate that the Pool may be reached only by those destined for Paradise.

In view of all this, it is hardly surprising to find that traditions vary, indicating different and even contradictory locations for the Pool. The question is usually raised as to whether the Pool is before or after the Bridge, i.e. after the Judgement.¹²⁸ In this regard we need first of all to mention the reports which place the Pool within Paradise. For instance, a Shī‘ī report explains what a *ḥawḍ al-quḍs* (Pool of Sanctity) is and states that God gives the believer a *bayt* in Paradise and lets him reach a Pool where there are drinking vessels. This may suggest that the *ḥawḍ al-quḍs* is specifically for Muḥammad, and that this Pool could be in Paradise.¹²⁹ These contradictory traditions are harmonised saying that Muḥammad has two Pools; both are named Kawthar, one in the *mawqif* and the other in Paradise.¹³⁰ Qurtubī mentions this interpretation attributing it to the author of *al-Qūt*, though the editions we have of the *Qūt al-qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) do not include it. Qurtubī also maintains that the Pool is before the Balance and the

traditions on the Kawthar to the Pool, but, in explaining where this Pool is, states that there are actually two pools and they are also named Kawthar (see below, n. 130).

¹²⁷ Ibn Abī al-‘Izz, *Sharḥ al-‘aqida al-ṭahāwīyya*, pp. 227-229, 420. This opinion is ascribed here to al-Qurtubī and others.

¹²⁸ See for instance the discussion in al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, pp. 178-179. Ghazālī points out that the *ḥawḍ* is encountered after the *ṣīrāt*: al-Ghazālī, *Qawā‘id al-‘aqā‘id*, p. 67. See also the long discussion in Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhīd*, vol. 2, pp. 285-309.

¹²⁹ Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-‘amāl*, pp. 291-292.

¹³⁰ Al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, vol. 5, p. 67; al-Amīr al-Kaḥlānī, *al-Tanwīr sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaghīr*, vol. 8, p. 268 no. 6449.

Bridge, e.g. in the *mawqif*.¹³¹ Another way to solve this is the notion that the Pool is very large and is traversed in the middle by the Bridge.¹³²

Other traditions adduce further considerations on the question of the Pool. Its location before the Bridge is connected to the belief that before the final judgement, the waiting people will suffer hunger as well as thirst.¹³³ The Day of Resurrection is described as an extremely hot day, and the people who rose from their graves will suffer thirst.¹³⁴ The Pool is therefore called the *yawm al-ʿaṭash* (the Day of Thirst) in some works.¹³⁵ The dead will be resurrected thirsting and will come to the Pool in this condition; but once they drink from it, they will never thirst again.¹³⁶

The reports also raise the question how long will humanity wait for the Judgement. Some traditions try to determine the waiting time in the *mawqif*, setting it at seventy years, or even fifty thousand years.¹³⁷ Thirst afflicts them all. There is, however, one possibility for a dying person on earth to avoid this terrible eschatological thirst: to recite *Sūrat Yā-sīn* in front of such a dying person. If this is done, the Angel of Death does not take the soul of this person but the guardian angel of Heaven, named *Riḍwān*, comes and gives him a drink from Paradise. He drinks it and dies. The Angel of Death takes his soul while sated with drink (*rayyān*). He is buried and remains in the grave until his turn to be judged. Since he was buried sated with drink, he has no need of the pools of the prophets until he enters Paradise.¹³⁸

¹³¹ Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, pp. 702-703. Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī, in his *Risālat al-ghufrān*, also places it in the *mawqif*.

¹³² Al-Shawkānī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 64. Another possibility is that there are many pools before reaching the largest one at the end, before Paradise, to help those who thirst.

¹³³ See Ps.-al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, p. 70.

¹³⁴ ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Qāḍī, *Daqāʾiq al-akhbār*, pp. 50-54.

¹³⁵ Al-ʿImrānī, *al-Intiṣār fī al-radd ʿalā al-muʿtazila*, vol. 3, p. 727; *yawm al-ʿaṭash al-akbar*; see also in Shiʿī sources: al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 4, p. 583; Ibn Qawlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, p. 229; Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, p. 95; see also Furāt al-Kūfi, *Tafsīr*, p. 172 in a long *hadīth* on Fāṭima and her offspring.

¹³⁶ ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb waṣf al-firdaws*, p. 106 n. 259. Everyone reaching resurrection will be thirsting; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 177. Here we also have a tradition which maintains that anyone who drank wine during his lifetime will be thirsty on the Day of Resurrection; cf. al-Ishbilī, *al-ʿĀqiba*, p. 193.

¹³⁷ See e.g. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Kitāb al-ahwāl*, p. 201.

¹³⁸ Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, vol. 3, p. 134; al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 8, p. 119; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, p. 32. For Shiʿī versions, see in Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*,

The question of the Pool's location is further complicated by the traditions mentioning more than one pool on the Day of Resurrection. The number of pools is connected to their physical location, whether in the *mawqif* or just before Paradise. There are, for instance, reports stating that all prophets have pools, not only Muḥammad.¹³⁹ Furthermore, every prophet has a rod at his Pool.¹⁴⁰ he needs it to drive away those not entitled to reach the Pool.¹⁴¹ The motif of the pools of the prophets is well attested and included in some reports, adding other significant details. One rather significant report states that on Doomsday, when people will gather almost dying of thirst, Ibrāhīm will be the first to be clothed with two white garments and then be close to the Throne when a channel is made between Paradise and the Pool.¹⁴² A report, in a text of an invocation, mentions the saints (*awliyāʿ*) and their pools, which suggests a pool or pools for the *awliyāʿ* as well.¹⁴³

p. 57; and idem, *al-Amālī*, p. 631; al-Safārīnī, *Lawāmiʿ*, vol. 2, 195. This also appears in al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir*, vol. 3, p. 237.

¹³⁹ Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, vol. 3, p. 134; al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 8, 119.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, vol. 2, p. 516.

¹⁴¹ Al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād al-sārī*, vol. 9, p. 336 from al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and al-Ṭabarānī; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, pp. 703-704. The Prophet Muḥammad's Pool is the one with most followers on the Day of Resurrection, see al-ʿImrānī, *al-Intiṣār fi al-radd ʿalā al-muʿtazila*, vol. 3, p. 726; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 554: Muḥammad's Pool is the largest, and the one at which the most people arrive. According to other reports Muḥammad only hopes to be at the Pool with most followers, see Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 4, p. 628 no. 2443; Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 497; and the Prophet himself states that his is the greatest of the Pools, see Ibn Wahb, *al-Taḥṣīn min al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 3, p. 6: it is among the greatest pools on the Day of Resurrection. Among the prophets, the only exception is the Prophet Ṣāliḥ whose pool is the udder of his she-camel: al-Barbahārī, *Sharḥ al-Sunna*, p. 44; and cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-mawḍūʿāt*, vol. 3, p. 244: I and the prophets (Muḥammad speaking) shall drink from my Pool while the she-camel of the Thamūd and Ṣāliḥ will be raised.

¹⁴² Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Taʾrīkh Dimashq*, vol. 17, p. 383. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-mawḍūʿāt*, vol. 1, p. 309, on pools for Adam and Moses. The question of the prophets' pools is less significant in Shīʿī reports. Some Shīʿī reports dealing with what will take place on the Day of Resurrection connect the eschatological Pool with the Imām; they state that the *Amīr al-muʾminīn* will provide water to the thirsty believers from the Pool; see al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Rasāʾil al-ʿashr*, p. 99; Ibn al-Barrāj, *Jawāhir al-fiqh*, p. 251.

¹⁴³ Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-sajjādiyya*, p. 346. They are also mentioned in a report stating that God sends seventy thousand angels with rods to drive away the unbelievers from the pools of the prophets, see Qurṭubī, *al-Tadhkira*, pp. 703-704; Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyat al-bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, pp. 249, 262.

The Muslim authors were well aware of the problems arising from the contradictory reports about multiple pools and those stressing the unique nature of Muḥammad's Pool and stating that Muḥammad said that the Pool was granted to him to distinguish him from other prophets.¹⁴⁴ This contradiction is mentioned in al-Ghazālī who described it as a "great dignity which God has conferred solely upon our Prophet", but also included in the same work the report affirming that every prophet has a pool and all of them will boast to each other about the number of people reaching their respective pools.¹⁴⁵ The descriptions of numerous pools raise also the question how many people will be at each one. There is the clear tendency to reduce the following of the other prophets and increase the number of people at Muḥammad's Pool. These traditions are not compatible with reports which affirm that only a limited number of the community will reach the Prophet's Pool.

9. Opposition to the Pool and doubts about it

As we have seen, the Muslim traditions regarding the Pool include a number of contrasting visions. They also indicate that some Companions raised serious doubts about the authenticity of *aḥādīth* mentioning it. Muslim traditions even include reports which contradict each other. There is one particular cluster of *ḥadīths* according to which one Companion firmly rejected the possibility that Muḥammad ever mentioned a pool, and tried to solicit evidence from those who had occasion to hear the Prophet describe this Pool. This companion was ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d. 67/687) who doubted the traditions about it.

In these reports ʿUbayd Allāh summons or visits a number of companions who, opposing him and his convictions confirm that the Prophet mentioned the Pool adding that whoever dies rejecting belief in its existence will not drink from it. Such reports have the double function to attest that someone denied the Pool but, at the same time, most companions heard Muḥammad mentioning it. ʿAbd al-Razzāq had already included a long version of the account, concluding with a letter he received with a

¹⁴⁴ Al-Kūfī, *Manāqib al-imām amīr al-muʾminīn*, vol. 1, p. 404.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Ghazālī, *The remembrance of Death and Afterlife*, pp. 217, 219.

description of the dimensions of the Pool.¹⁴⁶ Ibn Ziyād was somewhat vehement, according to other versions, in strongly denying the possibility that Muḥammad uttered anything about this, but Abū Ḥamza confirmed it, and said that he heard Muḥammad mention it, concluding that every time the old women in Medina pray to God they also ask Him to permit them to reach the Pool.¹⁴⁷ In another report Ibn Ziyād asks Zayd b. Arqam directly if he has heard anything about the Pool from the Prophet, and Ibn Ziyād, after his positive answer, is not satisfied and even accuses him of being a liar.¹⁴⁸ The reports emphasise Ibn Ziyād's obstinacy: he would deny it even after other companions had told him about it, including Abū Baraza, al-Barā' b. 'Āzib, 'Ā'idh b. 'Umar and an unspecified fourth one.¹⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, in one version Zayd b. Arqam tells him that he had not heard the Prophet speaking about the Pool directly, but his brother reported it to him.¹⁵⁰ In one of the versions ascribed to Anas, it is Anas himself who hears that Ibn Ziyād has doubts and Anas goes to visit him. Ibn Ziyād asks him about the Pool and Anas describes it, including the details of its dimensions (such as the distance between Ayla and Mecca or Ṣan'ā' and Mecca) and its prodigious cups.¹⁵¹ Further, according to other versions, Anas joins a group where 'Abd Allāh was present while they were discussing the Pool amongst themselves; Anas ends his testimony commenting that he would not have imagined being alive at a time when people doubted the existence of the Pool, going on to add the detail of the old women praying and asking God to be admitted to the Pool.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 11, p. 404 no. 20852 (from the *Jāmi'* by Ma'amar); cf. also shorter versions in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 33, p. 9 no. 19763, p. 23 no. 19779; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 474-475. Whoever denies its existence will not drink from it on that Day: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 33, p. 43 no. 19807, p. 48 no. 19814.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 473.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 353 no. 517; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 32, p. 13 no. 19266; without the accusation: Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 474.

¹⁴⁹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 11, pp. 63-64 no. 6514, pp. 458-459 no. 6872 (plus Ṣan'ā' - Medina); Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, pp. 476-477.

¹⁵⁰ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 32, p. 87 no. 19340; Baqī b. Makhlad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, pp. 104-105; Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, *Kitāb al-sunna*, p. 475.

¹⁵¹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 21, p. 96 no. 13405; al-Bazzār, *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār*, vol. 13, p. 196 no. 6655; another report by Anas and Abū Ḥamza about the people of *kufr* denying the existence of the Pool in Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyat al-bidāya*, pp. 238-239.

¹⁵² Al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 1, p. 160 no. 260; Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-ba'ṭh wa-l-nushūr*, p. 129 no. 158; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 166.

In the doubts entertained by Ibn Ziyād we can see the occurrence of different details about the Pool which had already been mentioned in other reports. A comprehensive analysis of the chains of transmission could help to better understand the later developments.

Some reports are less explicit but seem to reflect the same doubts. They indicate that some companions had never heard of the Pool, despite the many traditions that mention it. Khawla bint Ḥakīm had a simple question: she asked the Prophet if he had a Pool. He answered that he had and added that “of those who reach the Pool, I love your people most” (*aḥabbu man waradahu ilayya qawmuki*).¹⁵³ Abū Lubāba asks the Prophet what is the Pool, and he briefly describes it.¹⁵⁴ Ḥamza asks the Prophet directly, seemingly to remove his doubts, if it is true that he will have a Pool on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet answers that he will be glad if his people come to meet him there.¹⁵⁵ Other reports appear to reflect the same doubts when some companions ask the Prophet what the Pool is, and Muḥammad explains its features.¹⁵⁶ There were also companions or successors – not only late Mu‘tazilis – ascribing these doubts to other companions. It thus became necessary to state firmly that denying the reality of the Pool is the worst act that can be committed by the worst people.¹⁵⁷

Some doubts concerning the Pool may have arisen because a few reports indicate that Muḥammad talked about it mainly in the last years of his life. It seems that the concept of the Pool where the Prophet will wait for his community is mentioned mainly in the last years of his life. The Muslim community experienced in these years substantial growth and it is possible that some of the new converts were not aware of the traditions concerning the Pool.

Few traditions allow us to date them or to relate them to a specific event or location. We have already discussed a few of them with reference to the last years of Muḥammad’s life, and we shall now discuss some others.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol. 6, p. 305 no. 31656; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 45, p. 294. no. 27315.

¹⁵⁴ al-Samarqandī, *Tanbih al-ghāfilīn*, p. 612.

¹⁵⁵ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 45, p. 296 no. 27316.

¹⁵⁶ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira*, p. 165.

¹⁵⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Nihāya*, I, p. 379.

¹⁵⁸ See above, nn. 42-44.

In general, it appears that references to the Pool multiplied just before Muḥammad's death. For instance, he mentioned the Pool during the battle of Ḥunayn, after the conquest of Mecca.¹⁵⁹ Some reports say that the Prophet mentioned the Pool in prayers for the dead or in the graveyard.¹⁶⁰ A report mentions that the term *maw'idukum*, also cited in connection with the siege of al-Ṭā'if, was also uttered by Muḥammad in his last *khuṭba*: Muḥammad, in his illness, added that he was going to precede them there.¹⁶¹ One of the last years seems to be indicated by the reference to mention of the Pool while in 'Arafāt (i.e. during the pilgrimage) on which we have traditions saying that Muḥammad will be the precursor (*farat*) at the Pool.¹⁶² This is related about the farewell pilgrimage in the mosque of al-Khayf.¹⁶³ Muḥammad mentioned the Pool also when ill, just before dying. He uttered the simple affirmation "I will be standing (*qā'im*) by the Pool at the Hour" when joining Abū Bakr and the others for prayer before his death.¹⁶⁴ This is confirmed by a Shī'ī report mentioning the Pool in relation to drinking and shortening prayer, adding that Muḥammad said this when he was close to his death.¹⁶⁵

The contents of these traditions are significant not only because they can explain why some companions had heard nothing about the Pool, but also because they account for the tone of some of these reports. The significance of this eschatological Pool appears in an image evoked by Muḥammad as a vision of his death. He stated this when he was ill and thus prefiguring the wish to reach and be reached at one pool as the best way to bring his followers together after death.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, p. 94 no. 3147.

¹⁶⁰ Abū Ya'ālā, *Musnad*, vol. 8, p. 228 no. 4797. 'Umar used to mention the Pool to be reached when praying for a (dead) little child: al-Bazzāz, *Kitāb al-fawā'id*, vol. 1, 385 no. 419.

¹⁶¹ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 2, p. 230; al-Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā*, vol. 3, p. 130; Ibn Mardawayh, *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, p. 255.

¹⁶² Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 1016 no. 3057.

¹⁶³ Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 399; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6, p. 306 no. 31665, vol. 7, p. 429 no. 37037; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 18, p. 369 no. 11863; Baqī b. Makhlad, *Mā ruwiya fī al-ḥawḍ wa-l-kawthar*, p. 81 no. 6; When he was ill, the Sūra al-Kawthar (no. 108) was also revealed to him and he talked about it, see Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *al-Ba'ith*, pp. 41-42 no. 40.

¹⁶⁵ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 269.

10. The terrestrial Pool of the Prophet

The question of the Pool's location is further complicated by references to a Pool which the Prophet had on earth. This Pool is described as "the Pool of the Messenger of God/of the Prophet". This earthly Pool is also called *ḥawḍ*, the same expression which is cited for the eschatological one. One pool is mentioned in connection with the well of Zamzam and we also find references to pools in connection with pollution of water used for ritual ablution by animals drinking from them. However, the most significant attestation describes a pool (*ḥawḍ*) which the Prophet Muḥammad ordered to be dug during the battle of Badr. The significance of Badr and the decisive role played by the Prophet's tactics in the battle transform this pool into a significant detail in the consolidation of the early Muslim community. This pool – built after other wells were ruined – is sometimes called "the Pool of the Messenger of God".¹⁶⁶ This indicates that Muḥammad's Pool is not only the eschatological one, but also the one built during the battle of Badr.

This was an important episode in the preparation for the battle. The Muslims chose to fill in all wells and to prepare one pool using water from one well so that they would be the only ones with access to water. The early reports start by describing how the idea to dig a pool arose and how Muḥammad directed the Muslims to a place with a well (*qalīb*) and how he told his companions to dig there a pool for the water.¹⁶⁷ The most widely quoted version states that it was al-Ḥubāb b. al-Mundhir who suggested to Muḥammad where the best place to dig a pool was, after Muḥammad had decided on another place. According to some sources, Gabriel then gave his approval for this place.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, vol. 2, p. 441; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 1, p. 163; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, vol. 3, p. 66; al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī*, vol. 16, p. 60; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, vol. 19, p. 653; al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, vol. 5, p. 99; al-Rabaʿī, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 294; al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā*, vol. 4, p. 31; al-Kalāʿī, *al-Iktifāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 334.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, vol. 1, p. 53, cf. also p. 94. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 620; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 167; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, vol. 2, p. 440; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 3, p. 567; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 1, p. 162; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 332.

¹⁶⁸ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 2, p. 15; al-ʿAskarī, *Taḥṣīfāt al-muḥaddithīn*, vol. 2, p. 406; see also al-Kalāʿī al-Andalusī, *al-Iktifāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 331, and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar*, p. 105. This pool is cited in the reports describing a few events of the battle. It is stated that the pool had already

When the two sides approached each other, the Pool appears to be between them. The Qurashī al-Aswad b. ‘Abd al-Asad swears that he will reach this Pool, drink from it and destroy it. Ḥamza b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib confronts al-Aswad, pushes him into the Pool and then al-Aswad damages the Pool and drinks from it; then Ḥamza comes to him and kills him.¹⁶⁹ The pool was not particularly large, and its significance is to underline Muḥammad’s tactical ability. Finally, that the competition around the Pool must have been intense is well explained by other reports. Among the companions, for instance, Ḥāritha b. Surāqa was killed while drinking at the pool.¹⁷⁰ In this connection it is worth noting that the image of “reaching the Prophet at the Pool” with no other qualification is mentioned on the deathbed of one of the *muhājirūn* fighting there with the Prophet, namely Khabbāb. Visitors come to him, and they are the remainders (*baqāyā*) of the companions of the Prophet, announcing to him that he will join his brothers at the Pool.¹⁷¹

been filled with water and they already drank from it when the Quraysh appeared, see al-Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, vol. 1, p. 56. The Prophet told his companions to allow the Quraysh to drink from it, see al-Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, vol. 1, p. 61; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 622; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 168; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, vol. 2, p. 441; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 1, p. 163; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, pp. 333; al-Kalāʾī al-Andalusī, *al-Iktifāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 333.

¹⁶⁹ Also early attestations mention that Ḥamza b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib killed al-Aswad b. ‘Abd al-Asad al-Makhzūmī by this Pool: Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 44, vol. 4, p. 423; see, for longer reports, al-Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, vol. 1, 68; a version with more details is given by Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 624-625; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 170-171; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 335; al-Kalāʾī al-Andalusī, *al-Iktifāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 333; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 1, p. 166; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, vol. 2, p. 445; Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, vol. 3, p. 67: he was the first one killed; the killing of al-Aswad would be alluded to in the Qurʾān, see Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 3, p. 44 at Qur. 20:123, see also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 4, p. 24.

¹⁷⁰ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 627; al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, vol. 5, p. 105; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, vol. 2, p. 448; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 338; Khalifa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh*, p. 61.

¹⁷¹ al-Ḥumaydi, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 239 no. 158, and cf. vol. 1, p. 237 no. 151; see also Ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad*, vol. 1, p. 317 no. 475; and the version in Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 7, p. 76 no. 34309. Other passages or reports mentioning the Pool of the Prophet refer to places in the surroundings of Medina: a *masjid* is described close to the *ḥawḍ al-nabī*: al-Qazwīnī, *al-Tadwīn fī akhbār Qazwīn*, vol. 1, pp. 55, 57; Maqrīzī mentions a pool called the Pool of the Prophet; see al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʾiz wa-l-ītibār*, vol. 2, p. 231. In Medina a Ḥarra is called *Ḥarrat al-ḥawḍ*, and it is,

Evidence regarding a pool of the Prophet in Badr and the theological disputations about the reality of the eschatological pool opened the way for the idea that the eschatological Pool was on earth. It is noteworthy that these are significant but less numerous than traditions affirming the existence of the eschatological Pool.

A significant discussion of the earthly Pool is included in the early Shiʿī work by Sulaym b. Qays. Although Sulaym includes in his book many versions of the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn* which mention the eschatological Pool in Paradise, he also mentions a report stating that Abū Ṭufayl b. Abī Ṭālib asked the Prophet about his Pool: is it in this world (*dunyā*) or in the next (*ākhirā*)? ʿAlī answered that it was in this world. Then it is said that ʿAlī will be its protector, driving away (*al-dhāʿid*) the enemies.¹⁷² Another Shiʿī report hints at some other opposition to the Pool, but with an interesting detail about whoever denies it: if he hates Alī and reaches him before dying at the Pool, he will die thirsting. What is worth noting here is that the mention of death seems to evoke a pool reached when he is alive, and thus on earth, and not on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁷³

Information about this possibility appears in the Sunnī tradition as well. Some reports mention the Prophet's pools using terminology recalling the eschatological Pool, but no great importance should be attributed to them; they do not constitute sufficient evidence for the belief in an alternative, earthly Pool.¹⁷⁴ The Umayyad poet al-Ṭirimmaḥ mentions a Pool

according to some of the sources, between Medina and al-ʿAqīq; see Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Tawdīh*, vol. 15, p. 346; al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam mā ʿstaʿjam*, vol. 2, p. 436.

¹⁷² Sulaym b. Qays, *Kitāb*, pp. 129-130: see the explanation by the modern editor, who interprets this as meaning that the origin (*aṣl*) of the Pool is on earth, and it can be reached through the love for Muḥammad and his family; Al-Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Ḥillī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 40.

¹⁷³ Al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, vol. 1, p. 90; Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, p. 209. Cf. also al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, p. 423: on a pool stretching from Buṣrā to Ṣanʿāʾ: the Imam al-Husayn asks ʿAbd Allāh b. Sinān if he wants to see it; he takes him by the hand and leads him to the upper part of Medina, stamps on the ground with his foot and a river springs out with prodigious waters, etc. This means that a large Pool is located on earth.

¹⁷⁴ That it could be on earth is discussed in al-ʿAdawī, *Ḥāshiyat al-ʿAdawī*, vol. 1, pp. 99. See also Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 24, p. 215 no. 15471: the Prophet Muḥammad set out on a journey on the road to Mecca and he asked who preceded him in al-Uthāya where a Pool was. The terminology and the concepts recall the eschatological traditions. Cf. also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrikh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 32, pp. 243-244; Abū ʿAwāna, *al-Musnad*, vol. 18, p. 131 no. 10172: after a version of the *ḥadīth* describing the dimensions of the Pool as the distance between Jarbāʾ and

of the Messenger in the territory of the Azd tribe. In this case it is clearly located on earth.¹⁷⁵ Some confusion is created by traditions mentioning the expression *ḥawḍ al-quḍs* (Pool of Sanctity). When the Prophet was asked what is the Pool of Sanctity, he answered: “It is my Pool, my Pool, my Pool (*ḥawḍī, ḥawḍī, ḥawḍī*)”.¹⁷⁶ There is no reason to suggest that this pool is other than the eschatological Pool. However, other reports do not concur. Another report in Shī‘ī literature mentions the *ḥiyāḍ al-quḍs* (The Pools of Sanctity), saying that those who fast eight days in the month of Sha‘bān will be allowed to drink from them before leaving this world.¹⁷⁷ So they are pools of this world, on earth.

A few traditions mention that a Pool of the Prophet was indeed on earth. These are minority statements when compared to the mass of other reports discussing the eschatological Pool. Further, Islamic historical reports show knowledge of another pool, also called the Pool of the Prophet, which dates back to the battle of Badr. Despite its significance in the battle, and attesting to the military skill of the Prophet Muḥammad, the motif of the construction and use of this pool is not developed in the narrations on the battle and nothing more than the simple story early quoted by Ibn Hishām is cited by all the sources.

11. Conclusion

Many *ḥadīths* and traditions describe the Pool of the Prophet Muḥammad awaiting the pious believers on the Day of Resurrection. The general concept conveyed by these reports is that the Pool is a major element in the dynamics of the Day of Judgement such as the Gathering, the Station, the Judgement, the Balance weighing sins and good deeds, and the Bridge. The sheer number

Adhruḥ, Ibn ‘Umar asks Nāfi‘ what this pool is, and the answer is that it is the Pool of the Prophet; cf. al-‘Abī, *Nathr al-durr*, vol. 7, p. 181: the Pool of Resurrection.

¹⁷⁵ Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, vol. 6, p. 152; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *al-Tadhkira al-ḥamdūniyya*, vol. 5, p. 120.

¹⁷⁶ Ibn Abī Usāma, *Bughyat al-bāḥiṭh*, vol. 1, p. 309 no. 205; al-Būṣīrī, *Itḥāf al-khiyara*, vol. 2, 304; Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-a‘māl*, pp. 291-292.

¹⁷⁷ Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-a‘māl*, p. 62; cf. Idem, *Faḍā’il al-ashhur al-thalātha*, p. 47; see also Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, vol. 7, p. 311, who mentions these *ḥiyāḍ al-quḍs* but refers them to the Day of Resurrection.

of traditions regarding the Pool attests to the fact that this was a sensitive question and a disputed belief. A major point emerging from our review of the relevant material is that the Sunnī and Imāmī Shīʿī literatures generally concur on this topic and do not contradict each other. Each tradition emphasized certain elements, but both elaborated the same material to maintain the belief in an eschatological Pool. It is also significant to say that they entertained the same doubts and engaged in similar discussions.

The study of the relevant traditions raises a number of questions. The Pool is not Qurʾānic and the exegetical connection to Qurʾān 108 is weak. The connection of the Pool with the Kawthar appears late and is not mentioned by some major commentators. The connection with the Kawthar in *ḥadīth* collections is maintained, but is not corroborated by any evidence or further exegetical efforts. The Pool, like many other eschatological beliefs, was criticized and denied by the rationalist Muʿtazilīs, who solicited answers from the people of *ḥadīth*. These contrasting attitudes left a clear mark on the traditions both in the details and in the general consistency of the material.

One major problem discussed is the exact location of this Pool of Muḥammad on the eschatological scene. There are two interpretations: the Pool is in the *mawqif* and before the Judgment, or just before entering Paradise after crossing the Bridge. In the first case, the significance of the Pool is reduced and reaching it is less significant because all people can reach it. The other location makes little sense: why place a Pool just before entering Paradise? It was indeed much more necessary while people awaiting the Judgment were thirsting. The doubts concerning the Pool are increased by reports according to which some companions had not even heard of this Pool, and went as far as asserting that the Prophet Muḥammad had never mentioned it. Some reports seem to explain this by arguing that Muḥammad mentioned the Pool in the last period of his life and not all believers had a chance to hear him. Other doubts arose because of traditions which assert that the Pool was on earth and is not an eschatological element. Some historiographical traditions mention an actual pool which the Prophet built for the battle of Badr.

To combine all this is not an easy task for a scholar and was not easy for Muslim exegetes and experts in traditions either. Historiography

evidently downplays the story of the pool in Badr and no legendary detail is added to an episode which helped the Muslims. The *ḥadīth* literature lends support to the eschatological Pool, though it also includes some indication that a Pool of the Prophet, possibly having eschatological features, was also located on earth and had nothing to do with eschatology. We would indeed be tempted to connect the eschatological Pool with the memory of the pool in Badr as an idealized image reflecting the factual pool in the first battle against Meccans, but no textual evidence corroborates this so far.

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