

**A comparison and contrast of the treatment of the star Sirius by three authors: Claudius Ptolemy in *Tetrabiblos*, ibn-Qutaība Dīnawarī in *Al-Anwā' fi Mawāsim al-'Arab*, and Bernadette Brady in *Brady's Book of Fixed Stars*.**

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Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'ān describe celestial phenomena such as the luminaries, planets, zodiacal signs, constellations, stars and comets. However, in a *sūrah* (chapter) titled *an-Najm* (the Star), what was believed by many Qur'ān commentators to be al-Shi'rā or Sirius was singularly mentioned, thus suggesting its possible importance to pagan Arabia. Therefore, this paper explores the theological and mythological significance of Sirius through a critical comparative study of three primary sources belonging to different cultures and historical eras, namely the works of Claudius Ptolemy (96-168 CE), ibn-Qutaība al-Dīnawarī 's (828-889 CE) and Bernadette Brady. While the mystical significance of al-Shi'rā to pagan Arabs was explored by al-Dīnawarī, Brady examined how certain astronomical phenomena were reflected in 'Sirius-based' theology and calendars. In contrast, the religious and magical elements of Sirius seem to have been deliberately expelled from Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in his attempt to 'secularise' astrology.

The aim of this paper is to explore the names and characteristics attributed to Sirius, focusing on its theological and mythological significance, comparing and contrasting three texts; Claudius Ptolemy's (96-168 CE) *Tetrabiblos*, ibn-Qutaība al-Dīnawarī 's (828-889 CE) *Al-Anwā' fi Mawāsim al-'Arab* or *On Astro-Meteorology of the Arabs* , and *Brady's Book of Fixed Stars* by Bernadette Brady.<sup>1</sup> Noted Qur'ān commentators agreed that Sirius is the star referred to in *Sūrat an-*

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<sup>1</sup> Claudius Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, Or Quadripartite*, trans. by JM Ashmand (Paris: Davis and Dikson, 1822), [hereafter Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Ashmand]; Claudius Ptolomaeus, *The Tetrabiblos; Or, Quadripartite of Ptolemy, Tr., with Notes, by J. Wilson*, trans. by James Wilson (London: William Hughes, 1828), [hereafter Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Wilson];

Abū Muhammad 'Abdulla ibn Muslim ibn Qutaība al-Dīnawarī, *On Astro-Meteorology of the Arabs* (Baghdad: Dar al-Sho'ūn al-Thaqāfiya al-'Amah, 1988), [hereafter al-Dīnawarī]; Bernadette Brady, *Brady's Book of Fixed Stars* (Maine: Weiser Books, 1998), [hereafter Brady].

*Najm*, or the chapter of ‘The Star,’ thus indicating its importance in pagan Arabia.<sup>2</sup> While earlier Qur’ān commentators such as al-Tabarī (d.922 CE) and ibn-Kathīr (d.1372 CE) suggested that *al-Thurayyā* or Pleiades could also have been the aforementioned ‘star,’ the 19<sup>th</sup> century commentator Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī (d. 1854 CE) stressed that the first verse of this chapter; ‘By the star when it descends,’ particularly described the morning setting of the star Sirius, for it was later mentioned by name in the same chapter; ‘And that is He who is the Lord of Sirius.’<sup>3</sup>

Before proceeding further, it is important to point out that stellar lore was transferred by Arabs through word of mouth in the form of poetry and rhymed prose, and was thus documented by linguists and philologists, as al-Bīrūnī (973-1048 CE) recorded in his *Chronology*.<sup>4</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco wrote about the same tradition adding that pre-Islamic information about *anwā’*, or stellar rain markers, came mostly via ‘rhymed sayings compiled for each of the twenty-eight stations, as well as a few important stars such as Sirius and Canopus.’<sup>5</sup> Hence, although al-Dīnawarī was a medieval philologist, he quoted directly from the poetry and rhymed prose of pagan Arabs. Yet, whatever survives of this oral tradition remains fragmented and incomplete, for as Varisco noted, what was preserved is ‘the history of what learned men have recorded.’<sup>6</sup>

Both translations of J. M. Ashmand and James Wilson of the *Tetrabiblos*, published in 1822 and 1828 respectively, indicated that Ptolemy described Sirius as a bright star in the mouth of; the constellation of ‘Canis’ according to the

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<sup>2</sup> Abū Ja’far al-Tabarī, *Al-Tabarī Qur’ān Commentary: The Complete Elucidation about the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur’ān*, vol.22, (Cairo: Dār Hajr I’ al-Tibā’a wa’l-Nahsr wa’l-Tawzī’, 2001), [hereafter al-Tabarī]: p.85; Abu al-Fida’ Isma’īl ibn ‘Omar ibn-Kathīr, *Commentary on the Great Qur’ān*, vol.7, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 1998), [hereafter ibn-Kathīr]: p.433; Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmūd ibn ‘Abullah al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur’ān and the Seven Holy Verses being Sūrat al-Fātiha*, vol.14, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 1995), [hereafter al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur’ān and the Seven Holy Verses being Surat al-Fātiha*]: p.68.; al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur’ān and the Seven Holy Verses of Surat al-Fātiha*, p.68.

<sup>3</sup> al-Tabarī, p.5; ibn-Kathīr, p.410; *The Qur’ān*, trans. by Saheeh International (Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 2010), [hereafter *The Qur’ān*]: 53:1; 53:49; al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur’ān and the Seven Holy Verses being Surat al-Fātiha*, p.44.

<sup>4</sup> Abū Rayhān Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Bīrūnī, *The Chronology*, (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1879), [hereafter al-Bīrūnī]: p.227.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco, “The Origin of the *anwā’* in Arab Tradition,” *Studia Islamica*, no.74 (1991), [hereafter Varisco]: p.13.

<sup>6</sup> Varisco, p.25.

former translation, or ‘the Stars in the Dog,’ according to the latter.<sup>7</sup> Allen Richard Hinckley (1838-1908) believed that while the mention of Ptolemy’s ‘Dog-Star’ dates back to Homer (c. 850 BCE), the name Σειριος or Sirius was never used by Ptolemy.<sup>8</sup> However, in the Heinrich, Peters and Knobel version of *Almagest*; Ptolemy’s star catalogue; the first star in the constellation of Canis Major, is described in Latin as ‘that which is brightly shining in the mouth (or the face) and is called Sirius, and is somewhat red.’<sup>9</sup> Hence, although *Almagest* suggests that Σειριος could have been known and used by Ptolemy, it could still be a later addition by translators and commentators. Discrepancies in historical translation is thus evident, a problem Richard Evans pointed to while asking ‘how do we know which translation is “correct”?’<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, according to al-Dīnawarī, *al-Shi’rā*, which is mentioned by name in verse forty-nine of *Sūrat an-Najm*, refers in particular to *al-Shi’rā al-‘Ubūr*, namely Sirius; not *al-Shi’rā al-Ghumaiṣā’* which corresponds to Procyon.<sup>11</sup> *Al-Shi’rā al-‘Ubūr*, al-Dīnawarī continued, is located in the constellation of Orion, known as *al-Jabbār* and *al-Jawzā’*.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, al-Jawzā’ was equally used to refer to the zodiacal sign Gemini, for al-Bīrūnī mentioned that Arabs inaccurately regarded Orion, or *al-Jawzā’*, as the sign Gemini which he believed should be correctly called *al-Taw’amān* or the ‘Twins’.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, noted astronomer al-Sūfī (903-986 AD) believed that Sirius was the ‘great luminary’ in the mouth of Canis Major; the dog of *al-Jabbār* (FIG. 1.); calling it *al-Shi’rā al-Yamānīah* and *al-‘Ubūr*, which Hinckley inaccurately translated as ‘the Brightly Shining Star of the Passage of Yemen’.<sup>14</sup> The words *Yammanīah* and *Shammīah* were clearly used by al-Sūfī and al-Bīrūnī as geographical adjectives to describe the southern or northern declination of any star respectively; for Yemen is located to the south of the

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<sup>7</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Wilson, I.XI; Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Ashmand, I.XI.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star-Names and their Meanings* (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1899), [hereafter Hinckley]: pp.117-118.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Quæ in ore fulgentissima est, et vocatur Sirius, et est subrufa.’

Christian Peters, Friedrich Heinrich and Edward Ball Knobel, *Ptolemy’s Catalogue of Stars: A Revision of the Almagest* (Washington: Press of Gibson Brothers, 1915), [hereafter Ptolemy, *Almagest*]: p.46.

<sup>10</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), [hereafter Evans]: p.78.

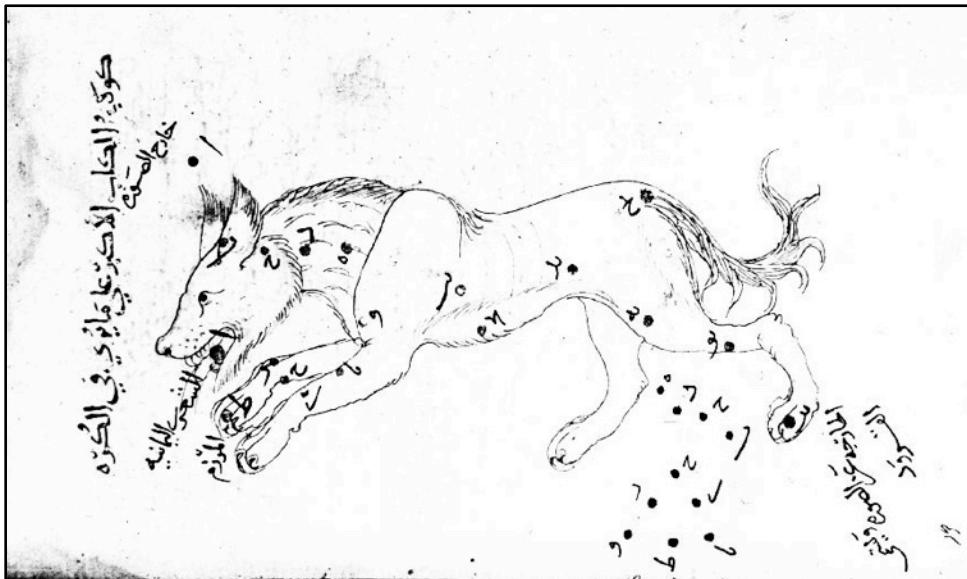
<sup>11</sup> al-Dīnawarī, pp.50-51

<sup>12</sup> al-Dīnawarī, p.49.

<sup>13</sup> al-Bīrūnī, *The Chronology*, p.226; Abū Rayhān Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Bīrūnī, *Chronologie Orientalischer Völker Von Albêruni*, ed. by Carl Eduard Sachau (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 18780, [hereafter al-Bīrūnī, *Chronologie Orientalischer Völker Von Albêruni*]: p.226.

<sup>14</sup> Abd al-Rahmān bin ‘Omar al-Sūfī, *Book of Fixed Stars* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1981), [hereafter al-Sūfī]: p.285; 290; Hinckley, p.119.

Arabian Peninsula, and conversely *al-Shām*, or Syria, is located to the north.<sup>15</sup> Apparently, Hinckley was uncertain whether *Yammānīah* referred to ‘the myth of Canopus’ flight to the South; and the adjective to the same, or perhaps to the southerly position of the star towards Yemen.’<sup>16</sup> Thus, ‘arbitrary’ meanings of some words, as noted by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and cited by Evans, appear to be another challenge to conveying historical meaning.<sup>17</sup>



**FIG. 1.** *al-Shi'rā al-Yammānīa* depicted as the alpha star in the constellation of *al-Kalb al-Akbar* or *Canis Major*. ‘Abd al-Rahmān bin ‘Omar al-Sūfī, ‘Book of Fixed Stars’, Manuscript (Istanbul, 1130), 3493, fol.124v, Topkapi Sarayi Müzesi.

Like Ptolemy, Brady classified Sirius as the alpha star of the Canis Major which is ‘one of Orion’s hunting dogs’; not a star in Orion or *al-Jabbar*, as stated by al-Dīnawarī.<sup>18</sup> According to Brady, Egyptians called it the ‘Shining One’ and the ‘Scorcher’, and other civilizations called it ‘The Dog of the Sun;’ its unmatched radiance capturing the imagination of ancients.<sup>19</sup> Hence, it could be assumed that the Greek adjective *Σειριος*, which translates to ‘scorcher,’ was either of Greco-

<sup>15</sup> al-Sūfī, p.285; al-Bīrūnī, *Chronologie Orientalischer Völker Von Albêrūnî*, p.343.

<sup>16</sup> Hinckley, p.121.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, p.81.

<sup>18</sup> Brady, pp.80-81.

<sup>19</sup> Brady, pp.81; 83.

Egyptian origin or a Greek adaptation of the Egyptian name.<sup>20</sup> Sirius' particular importance to the Egyptians is further revealed by the other names given to it as mentioned by Brady; 'The Nile Star' and 'Sirius Isis'; the former linking it to the annual flooding of the Nile, and the latter to what Nicholas Campion described as the 'archetypal queen' Isis.<sup>21</sup>

Due to Ptolemy's attempt to 'secularise' and provide astrology with a 'scientific' basis through Aristotelian naturalism as Campion proposed, one can see no mention of ancient religious beliefs associated with Sirius, albeit very briefly about its connection to the summer solstice and inundation of the Nile in Egypt.<sup>22</sup> To Ptolemy, Sirius was plainly 'like Jupiter, and partly like Mars.'<sup>23</sup> Further investigation of the indications of the two planets only reveals that Jupiter 'promotes both warmth and moisture' and Mars 'chiefly causes dryness, and is also strongly heating'.<sup>24</sup> Evidently, as Campion pointed out relying on Anthony Long, Ptolemy was in actuality responding to hostile critics and trying to vindicate astrology through providing it with a rational and naturalistic framework.<sup>25</sup>

Alternatively, al-Dīnawarī confidently delved into pagan beliefs associated with *al-Shi'rā al-'Ubūr*, for its mention in the Qur'ān reveals a history of star worship among pagan Arabs; a view unanimously shared by al-Tabarī, ibn-Kathīr and al-Alūsī.<sup>26</sup> While Al-Alūsī specified two particular tribes that worshipped Sirius; Himīar and Khuzā'a; historian Mahmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī (1856-1924) thought that they were Lakhm, Khuzā'a and Quraish, the latter being the tribe of

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<sup>20</sup> H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2013): p.725.

<sup>21</sup> Brady, p.83; Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), [hereafter Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions*]: pp.84; 87.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Ancient and Classical Worlds*, vol.1, (New York: Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008), [hereafter Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Ancient and Classical Worlds*]: pp.208-211; Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Ashmand, I.XI.

<sup>23</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Ashmand, I.XI.

<sup>24</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Ashmand, I.IV.

<sup>25</sup> Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Ancient and Classical Worlds*, p.209; Anthony Long, 'Astrology: arguments pro and contra', *Science and Speculation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 165-92.

<sup>26</sup> al-Dīnawarī, p.50; *The Qur'ān*, 53:49; al-Tabarī, p.85; ibn-Kathīr, p.433; al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur'ān and the Seven Holy Verses being Surat al-Fātiha*, p.68.

prophet Mohammad.<sup>27</sup> The Qur'ān commentator al-Zakhamsharī (1074-1143 CE) added that Manāt, a pagan goddess mentioned in verse twenty of *Sūrat an-Najm*, was worshipped because it was thought to be connected to stellar *anwā'*.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the phrase 'And that is He who is the Lord of Sirius' was meant to refute stellar-religions and replace them with monotheism; only Allah is worthy of worship, for he is the Creator God of stars; Sirius the brightly shining star included.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, the adamant preservation of the calendar of Sirius for millennia reflected the supreme status of the star in Ancient Egypt. According to Richard A. Parker and Campion, Egyptians occasionally added an intercalary month to their 'luni-stellar' year to ensure that the heliacal rising of Sirius; which represented the goddess Sothis according to Parker; was synchronized to the annual flooding of the Nile; a topic also explored by Brady.<sup>30</sup> Since heliacal rising was perceived as an expression of Horus, Brady elaborated, great temples were built in alignment to the heliacal rising of important stars.<sup>31</sup> A similar modern view; which may lack accuracy; is mentioned by Hinckley who added that astronomer and archaeologist Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer (1836-1920) may have found seven temples in Egypt possibly aligned to the heliacal rising of Sirius.<sup>32</sup> Thus, preserving the 'Sirius-based calendar' was crucial to maintain the immortality of Isis as Brady believed; and to protect Ma'at, cosmic order personified as Campion opined.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, Sirius had a significance role in the Arabic calendar and seasonal changes of Arabia. According to Andalusian lexicographer and philologist ibn Sīdah (c.1007-1066 CE), as quoted by al-Dīnwarī, Arabs said, 'when *al-Shi'rā* rises, the sand becomes dry, the water becomes stagnant, and date palms bear fruit.'<sup>34</sup> Al-Dīnwarī elaborated writing that Arabs linked the heliacal rising of stars,

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<sup>27</sup> Mahmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī, *The Fulfillment of Desire on Knowledge of the Affairs of Pagan Arabs*, ed. by Muhammad Bahgat al-Atharī, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1992), [hereafter al-Alūsī, *The Fulfillment of Desire on Knowledge of the Affairs of Pagan Arabs*]: p.239.

<sup>28</sup> Abū'l-Qāssim Mahmūd ibn 'Amr ibn 'Ahmad al-Zakhamsharī Jār Allah, *Explaining the Mysteries of the Revealed Verses of Qur'ān and its Interpretation*, Vol. 4 (Beirut: al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1407 Hijri): pp.422-423; The Qur'ān, 53:20.

<sup>29</sup> *The Qur'ān*, 53:49; al-Tabarī, p.85; al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur'ān and the Seven Holy Verses being Surat al-Fātiha*, p.68.

<sup>30</sup> Richard A. Parker, 'Ancient Egyptian Astronomy', *Philosophical Transactions for the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences*, (1974), pp.52-53; Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions*, p.87; Brady, pp.83-84.

<sup>31</sup> Brady, p.333.

<sup>32</sup> Hinckley, p.123.

<sup>33</sup> Brady, p.84; Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions*, pp.86-88.

<sup>34</sup> Abū-l-Hassan Alī ibn Ismā'īl Ibn Sīdah, *Al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ on Arabic Philology*, Vol. 9 (Bulaq: al-Maktaba'ah al-Kobrā al-Amrīa, 1319 Hijri): p.15 as cited in al-Dīnwarī, p.56.

especially those of *al-Jawzā'* and the two *Shi'rās*; Orion, Sirius and Procyon; to the latter part of the summer season called *al-Qaiḏ* which began in July, and *al-Bawāreḥ* northern winds that brought dust and intensified the summer's heat.<sup>35</sup> Alternatively, the morning setting of stars which was known to Arabs as *anwa'*, al-Dīnawarī continued, was linked to rains and the commencement of the spring season which coincided with the last week of September.<sup>36</sup>

While Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* was devoid of any mythology connected to Sirius, al-Dīnawarī described in detail how pagan Arabs worshipped *al-'Ubur* because they 'falsely' believed in the myth of the crossing of the Milky Way.<sup>37</sup> According to this myth, al-Dīnawarī elucidated, Canopus and the two *Shi'rās*; Sirius and Procyon; lived together, yet Canopus fled towards the south and Sirius followed him, crossing the Milky Way, and was therefore called, al-Dīnawarī added, *al-'Ubur* or the 'One that Crossed'. Procyon, abandoned by both stars was so devastated weeping till its eyes got affected by rheum; hence was given the name *al-Ghumāīsā'* which literally translates to the 'Eye Affected by Rheum;' and so became less brilliant than Sirius.<sup>38</sup> Al-Sūfī added an interesting twist to the myth stating that Canopus went to marry *al-Jauzā'*; the constellation of Orion; leaving his sisters the two *Shi'rās*'s behind. The matrimony however was unfortunate, for while Canopus was lying atop of *al-Jauzā'*; possibly implying that they were copulating; the former broke the back of the latter and fled towards the south in fear of revenge. Whilst his sister Sirius was able to follow him, Procyon wept till she lost her radiance.<sup>39</sup> Al-Alūsī explained that since *al-'Ubur* was perceived as the only star that crossed the sky horizontally; north to south as opposed to the east to west diurnal motion of stars; it was thus revered and worshipped by pagan Arabs.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, according to Qur'ān commentator al-Alūsī, the practice of stellar-based divination was quite common and particularly when *al-'Ubur* rose.<sup>41</sup>

The connection of Sirius to the canine archetype Canis Major is nevertheless evident in the mythology of pagan Arabia, for al-Dīnawarī wrote that it was also called the dog of *al-Jabbar*; the male expression of Orion as opposed to *al-Jauzā'* its female expression; and was believed to cause canine madness.<sup>42</sup> A remarkable

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<sup>35</sup> al-Dīnawarī, p.92; 95; pp.107-108.

<sup>36</sup> al-Dīnawarī, p.92; pp.107-108.

<sup>37</sup> al-Dīnawarī, pp.50-51.

<sup>38</sup> al-Dīnawarī, pp.50-51.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Sūfī, pp.288-289.

<sup>40</sup> al-Alūsī, *The Fulfillment of Desire on Knowledge of the Affairs of Pagan Arabs*, Vol. 3, p.222.

<sup>41</sup> al-Alūsī, *The Essence of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Great Qur'an and the Seven Holy Verses being Surat al-Fātiḥa*, p.68.

<sup>42</sup> al-Dīnawarī, p.52.

story is mentioned by al-Tabarī in his interpretation of *Sūrat an-Najm*, for according to him, when this verse was revealed, a man called 'Utbaḥ ibn abī-Lahab boldly announced that he disbelieved in the 'God of the Star,' so the prophet Mohammad replied, 'beware lest the Dog of God eats you.'<sup>43</sup> Later, while on a trade trip to Yemen, a lion snatched 'Utbaḥ from amongst his friends while they were asleep and killed him.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast, Brady cited De Santilla and von Dechend who believed that ancient laments to Gods actually mirrored the astronomical phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes which 'swallowed' up gods and goddesses.<sup>45</sup> Due to this phenomenon, the dates of the heliacal rising of revered stars, such as Sirius, gradually shifted backwards in the calendar losing its synchronicity with seasons and festivals. Therefore, when the calendar of Sirius was abandoned in favor of the Alexandrine calendar, Brady continued, Sirius did not rise on the anticipated day indicating that Isis, who seemed perpetual for millennia, was suddenly 'swallowed by precession into the whirlpool'.<sup>46</sup> Brady further explored the significance of the mythology of Sirius Isis writing that:

The Isis/Sirius mythology includes one of the earliest episodes of a woman building a fire which will burn away mortal flesh, which is echoed by the Greek story of Thetis and Achilles, as well as in its darker expression in the story of Althea and Meleager, where Althea kills her son by burning a stick which fate has decreed indicates his length of life. Sirius can bring immortality to its bearer, but the price may be the burning away of the mortal flesh.<sup>47</sup>

Brady thus suggested that a person with a prominent Sirius in his or her horoscope may attain great success and recognition, yet the brilliance of Sirius the 'Scorcher,' she added, could be hard to handle and the experience of the archetype hard to endure. Evidently, Brady thought that the 'fundamental symbol' of Isis, Thetis or Achilles may repeatedly manifest regardless of culture or time; a theory of archetypes first proposed by psychotherapist Carl Jung (1875-1961) and cited by Campion.<sup>48</sup> According to Jung, an archetype is comparable to 'an old water course along which the water of life has flowed for centuries, digging a deep

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<sup>43</sup> al-Tabarī, pp.6-7.

<sup>44</sup> al-Tabarī, p.6.

<sup>45</sup> Brady, p.84.

<sup>46</sup> Brady, p.84.

<sup>47</sup> Brady, p.85.

<sup>48</sup> Nicholas Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Medieval and Modern Worlds*, Vol. 2 (New York: Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008), [hereafter Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Medieval and Modern Worlds*]: p.253.

channel for itself,' as Campion quoted.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Brady believed that Sirius activated in a horoscope triggers the manifestation of the 'universal theme' of Isis in the individual's life.<sup>50</sup> A comparable approach is seen in earlier modern astrology literature, such as Vivian Robson's (1890-1942) *The Fixed Stars and Constellations*, for Robson wrote that a prominent Sirius in a person's horoscope indicates both 'great profit and reputation,' and 'death by fiery cutting weapons or from beasts,' thus indirectly echoing the dramatic theme of the star.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, al-Dīnawarī, who was also a respected scholar of *Hadīth*; the study of the prophet's deeds and sayings; opposed the belief of pagan mythology citing prophet Mohammad who said, 'Among my people there are four characteristics belonging to paganism which they do not abandon; boasting of high rank, reviling other peoples' genealogies, seeking rain by stars, and wailing.'<sup>52</sup> Hence, al-Dīnawarī concluded that while it was theologically acceptable to anticipate rainfall and other weather patterns in accordance to the morning setting of stars, the pious Muslim should avoid believing in stellar pagan mythology or attributing any influential power to star and planets, for that would be blasphemous.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Al-Alūsī added that belief in *anwa'* was a trait of pre-Islamic Arabic Sabaean tribes who did not 'travel or inhabit a land without looking at the morning setting of stars.'<sup>54</sup>

In conclusion, the evidence presented in this essay has suggested that while the religious, magical and mythological elements of Sirius were deliberately expelled from Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, they were richly present in the work of al-Dīnawarī and Brady. Al-Dīnawarī investigated the significance of *al-Shi'rā al-'Ubūr* in pagan Arabia and its relationship to seasonal changes in the Arabian Peninsula, exposing a lore of stellar worship and divination that was deep-rooted in the Arabian Peninsula, and not neglecting to demonstrate his strong disapproval of such practices being a scholar of *Hadīth*. Brady in contrast examined 'Sirius-based' theology, mythology and calendars, revealing how these reflected astronomical phenomena, particularly the precession of the equinoxes

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<sup>49</sup> C.G. Jung, 'Wotan' in *Civilisation in Transition*, Collected Works, Vol. 10, para 395 as cited in Campion, *History of Western Astrology: The Medieval and Modern Worlds*, p.253.

<sup>50</sup> Brady, pp.85-86.

<sup>51</sup> V. E. Robson, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology* (Maryland: Astrology Classics, 2005): pp.208-9.

<sup>52</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qushairī al-Nāṣībūrī, *Sahīh Muslim*, Mohammad Fo'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī ed., vol.2, book 11 of *Funerals* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1955), hadith no. 934 as cited in al-Dīnawarī, p.18.

<sup>53</sup> al-Dīnawarī, pp.17-18.

<sup>54</sup> al-Alūsī, *The Fulfillment of Desire on Knowledge of the Affairs of Pagan Arabs*, Vol. 2, p.223.

and heliacal risings of stars. Furthermore, Brady emphasized the impact of the mythological archetype of Sirius/Isis on the individual. Moreover, translation problems of Greek and Arabic primary texts was noticed especially in relation to conveying historical meaning to the modern or foreign reader; a point which concerned Evans.<sup>55</sup> It is also important to point out that whatever had survived of the pagan oral tradition of *anwā'* had undergone a historical selective process, for as Varisco pointed out, what we have is 'what compilers have chosen to preserve.'<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Evans, p.78.

<sup>56</sup> Varisco, p.25.

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