

Common Wisdom:

Luqmān the Wise in a Collection of Coptic Orthodox Homilies

(*Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*)¹

Introduction

In the summer of 2004 I was invited by the organizers of a conference on *The Life and Times of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite*² to investigate collections of Arabic homilies attributed to the great monastic leader, for many years (c. 385-465)³ the spiritual head of the White Monastery federation at Atripe, across the Nile from the ancient city of Akhmīm (= Shmin, Panopolis). The first collection to which I turned my attention consisted in nine homilies for the seven Sundays of Lent (concluding with Palm Sunday),⁴ preserved in a seventeenth-century manuscript that had once been in the library of the White Monastery but that is now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris as ms. *arabe 4761*.⁵ It quickly became clear to me that the homilies preserved in this manuscript were *not* translations from Coptic originals, as one would expect were the

¹ This essay was originally published in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33.3 (June 2006): 247-52; the issue was in honor of the Rev. Dr. Harold Vogelaaar, a pioneer of Christian-Muslim studies at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. I am grateful to the editors of *Currents* for gracious permission to republish the essay. Occasional changes or additions to the footnotes are enclosed in square brackets.

² Sponsored by the Saint Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society and held at the University of California at Los Angeles, August 13-14, 2004; the proceedings were published in *Coptica* 4 (2005). I am grateful to the society's president, Mr. Hany Takla, for the invitation to participate and for providing me with copies of the relevant manuscripts.

³ All dates in this paper will be given in the Common Era.

⁴ The manuscript gives two homilies for each of the first two Sundays of Lent, for a total of nine homilies.

⁵ For details about the manuscript and its contents, see my contribution to the conference: Mark N. Swanson, "St. Shenoute in Seventeenth-Century Dress: Arabic Christian Preaching in *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*," *Coptica* 4 (2005): 27-42.

attribution to St. Shenoute⁶ correct, but original Arabic-language compositions. I was not particularly surprised by this result, but I *was* surprised to discover that the homilies were not merely exercises in biblical exegesis (although biblical quotations and allusions abound) or in the use of the “language of Zion” (that is, specifically churchly discourse). Rather, the preacher, a Copt probably active sometime between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries, drew from a store of edifying tales and wisdom literature that was *shared* by Christians and Muslims. The present communication will highlight one element of the “common wisdom” that makes an appearance in the homilies of *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*: the wisdom tradition associated with Luqmān the Wise. I offer this as a very modest tribute to my friend and teacher Harold Vogelaar, who, throughout his career, has sought out Christian-Muslim “common wisdom” and has fashioned his life and ministry according to it.

Luqmān the Wise in *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*

Luqmān the Wise makes two appearances in the homilies of *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*. The first is in the second of two homilies appointed to be read after the Gospel on the Second Sunday of Lent.⁷ Throughout this sermon, as throughout the entire collection, the preacher commends the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and good works – and stresses the need to repent in this life *before* death, since death closes the door to the possibility of repentance and forgiveness. The problem, however, is that human beings are heedless and negligent. They require the ministry of scholars (“guides to God”), ascetics (“the way to God”), merchants (“God’s faithful on his earth”) and kings

⁶ Note that the saint’s name takes various forms; “Shenoute” is transliterated from Sahidic Coptic while “Shendouda” reproduces the Arabic pronunciation.

⁷ *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*, ff. 20v-28v.

(“shepherds of the religion of God”). Unfortunately, the preacher explains, many hardships and misfortunes have come upon the people because these leaders have neglected their responsibilities: scholars have abandoned their pupils, ascetics have desired the world, merchants have not been good stewards, and kings have oppressed their subjects and have not feared God!⁸ The preacher comments:

How can these unseemly matters be, and how can *we* be negligent about things pleasing to God our Creator, and about mentioning him constantly in prayer?

Luqmān the Wise says:

“O my son, don’t let the rooster be better than you!
For it, when the night is half spent, beats its wings
and cries out to God in praise.”

So if a lowly bird that has no value praises God, how can it be that a noble human being, whom God has set above all the creatures, does not praise God and ascribe him holiness at all times?⁹

This is followed by other quotations, but from better-known authorities: St. John Chrysostom, Solomon the Wise, and Our Lord [Jesus Christ].

Another quotation from Luqmān the Wise is found in the following homily, for the Third Sunday of Lent.¹⁰ Surprisingly, the homily is not centered on a biblical passage

⁸ Ibid., ff. 20v-23r.

⁹ Ibid., f. 23rv.

¹⁰ Ibid., ff. 29r-36v. Edition and French translation: Victor Ghica, “Sermon arabe pour le troisième dimanche du Carême, attribué à Chenouté (ms. *Par. ar.* 4761),” *Annales Islamologiques* 35 (2001): 143-61. [And add: Mark N. Swanson, “The Church and the Mosque in Wisdom’s Shade: on the Story of ‘Alexander and the Hermit Prince’,” in *Heirs of the Apostles: Studies on Arabic Christianity in Honor of Sidney H. Griffith*, ed. David Bertaina et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 284-309.]

or on the life of a Christian saint, but rather on a story about Alexander the Great! The great conqueror, the preacher relates, once discovered a country ruled by a woman. Taken aback by (what the reader is to understand as) this surprising state of affairs, Alexander made inquiries and learned that there was a male heir to the throne, but that he had refused the kingdom and gone off to live by himself among the tombs. Alexander sought him out and attempted to persuade him to return to his city, be crowned as king, and serve as Alexander's loyal vassal. The hermit prince agreed, but on the condition that Alexander grant him four things: youth without aging, eternal happiness without grief, bodily health without illness, and life without death! Alexander, astonished at this request, replied that these four are impossible for human beings; to which the hermit prince responded that it was then better for him to attend to the demands of God rather than to the affairs of kingship in this passing world. Alexander, stricken by the prince's words and conscious of his own thorough-going enmeshment in worldly affairs, departed in sorrow and with a request for prayers.¹¹

In his response to the hermit prince's surprising request, Alexander quoted or alluded to scripture in order to prove: the inevitability of suffering, as affirmed by Psalm 34:19 ("Many are the afflictions of the righteous") and illustrated by the careers of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the reality of illness, such as that of Job; and humanity's

¹¹ Ghica was unable to locate this story among the many recensions of the Alexander Romance and related materials; Ghica, "Sermon," 147-50. The story does, however, bear some resemblance to the stories about Alexander's visit to the Brahmins or *gymnosophistoi* – the "naked philosophers" – of India, and their King Dandamis. In contemporary English translations, see Richard Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 131-33 [from the β -recension]; idem, *Legends of Alexander the Great* (London and Vermont: Everyman, 1994), 34-56 [Palladius, *On the Life of the Brahmins*]. For background to the Alexander Romance in Arabic Christian literature, see Samir Khalil, "Les versions arabes chrétiennes du Roman d'Alexandre," in *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Il "Romanzo di Alessandro" e altri scritti. Atti del Seminario internazionale di studio (Roma – Napoli, 25-27 settembre 1997)*, ed. R.B. Finazzi and A. Valvo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998), 227-47. [See now Swanson, "The Church and the Mosque in Wisdom's Shade," esp. 287-89, 304-7, and the literature cited there.]

mortality in Adam (“You are dust, and to dust you shall return,” Genesis 3:19).

Alexander then concluded his speech about the inescapability of suffering and death with a quotation that does *not* come from the Bible:

Also, Luqmān the Wise says:

“God has humbled the people of the world with two traits:

death and poverty.

Were it not for death, no stubborn tyrant would submit.

Were it not for poverty, no free people would serve slaves.”¹²

In both instances in which Luqmān appears in the Christian homilies of *Paris*, *B.N. ar. 4761*, he is quoted as a figure of authority. His maxims take their place alongside verses from the Bible and a saying from St. John Chrysostom. And so we ask: who is this Luqmān, and how did he become an authority for an Egyptian Christian preacher and his audience?

The development of the Luqmān tradition

For most contemporary readers of these homilies, Luqmān the Wise is best known as the sage for whom the thirty-first sūrah of the Qur’ān is named.¹³ There he is mentioned (v. 12) as one to whom God gave *al-ḥikmah*: wisdom, or even a Book of Maxims.¹⁴ Several of his sayings are then presented in the form of admonitions to his son (introduced with the words “O my son,” in vv. 13, 16 and 17), which is reminiscent of

¹² *Paris*, *B.N. ar. 4761*, f. 34v; Ghica, “Sermon,” 156, no. 79-80.

¹³ Helpful encyclopedia articles on Luqmān include: B. Heller and N.A. Stillman, “Luḳman,” *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edition), V:811-13; A.H.M. Zahniser, “Luqmān,” in Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001-2006), III:242-43; and Dmitri Gutas, “Luqmān: a Legendary Hero,” in N.K. Singh and A.R. Agwan, eds., *Encyclopaedia of the Holy Qur’ān*, 5 vols. (Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2000), III:724-27.

¹⁴ Dmitri Gutas makes an argument for *ḥikmah* being understood here as a *book* of maxims in “Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981): 49-86, here pp. 50-51. He summarizes the evidence for the existence of written wisdom collections in pre- and early Islamic times at pp. 55-57.

chapters 1-7 of the biblical book of *Proverbs* as well as other Near Eastern wisdom collections, for example, the aphorisms of Aḥiqar the Wise.¹⁵ Of the six verses of the *sūrah* that have the form of Luqmān's admonitions, the first four (vv. 12-13, 16-17) enjoin right piety: gratitude to and exclusive worship of the One God, prayer, "bidding to honor and forbidding dishonor," and patience; these are of a piece with prophetic teaching throughout the Qur'ān. The next two admonitions (vv. 18-19), however, are strongly reminiscent of ancient wisdom traditions. In the rendering of Abdel Haleem:

Do not turn your nose up at people,
nor walk about the place arrogantly,
for God does not love arrogant or boastful people.
Go at a moderate pace
and lower your voice,
for the ugliest of all voices is the braying of asses.¹⁶

There is no mention of Luqmān in the Qur'ān outside of the thirty-first *surah*, but his mention there was sufficient to make him *the* great sage of Islamic tradition, one who could be safely admired by Muslims: his wisdom was given by God and sanctioned by the Qur'ān, and therefore not in any way in competition with the revelation vouchsafed to Muhammad. As a result, Luqmān was of great interest to later scholars and became a magnet for wisdom literature of all kinds. In a first stage of development,¹⁷ a major

¹⁵ Aḥiqar was said to be the wise counselor of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esar-haddon (7th c. BC). An Arabic recension of his life and teaching was published with a French translation in L. Leroy, "Histoire d'Haikar le sage," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 13 (1908): 367-88; 14 (1909): 50-70, 143-54.

¹⁶ M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 262. Rendel Harris once pointed out a parallel to v. 19 in the aphorisms of Aḥiqar the Wise: see Leroy, "Histoire," 13 (1908): 371 (no. 8); English translation in Gutas, "Luqmān: a Legendary Hero," 725.

¹⁷ According to Gutas, who very helpfully summarizes the history of the Luqmān tradition in Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature," 57-58, which is the principal source for this entire paragraph.

written collection of Luqmān material came into existence; the convert to Islam from Judaism and transmitter of pre-Islamic materials Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. c. 730) is the critical figure here. He is said to have read ten thousand *bābs* – chapters? headings? – of Luqmān’s *ḥikmah*.¹⁸ In a second stage coinciding with the great age of translation into Arabic, Christians as well as Muslims played a role in shaping the expanding Luqmān corpus. One of the greatest of the translators, the renowned “Nestorian” Christian scholar Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, included Luqmān material in his *Nawādir al-falāsifah* (*The Rarities of the Philosophers*);¹⁹ furthermore, it was probably through Christians that Arabic versions of Aesop’s fables were made and attributed to the new “ecumenical” Luqmān.²⁰ This second period culminates, however, with a collection by a Muslim scholar with strong ties to the Fatimid court in Cairo: *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim* (*The Choicest Maxims and Most Beautiful Words*) of Abū l-Wafā’ al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, composed in 1048-1049.²¹ While al-Mubashshir’s work includes wisdom material from many sources, the section on Luqmān is sizeable; it occupies 17 pages in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī’s edition of 1958.²²

Al-Mubashshir’s *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* is a work of extraordinary importance in the history of books and their transmission. It was translated into Spanish (as *Bocados de*

¹⁸ Ibid., reproducing the report from Ibn Qutaybah’s *Kitāb al-Ma’ārif*.

¹⁹ [*Kitāb Ādāb al-falāsifah*, long attributed to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, has been shown to be the work of an otherwise unknown Muslim compiler, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī; see Mohsen Zakeri, “*Ādāb al-falāsifa*: The Persian Content of an Arabic Collection of Aphorisms,” *Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 173-90.]

²⁰ A collection of 41 fables of Luqmān, copied by a Coptic Orthodox scribe in AD 1299, is found in *Paris, B.N. ar. 175*. This collection was published, with a French translation in 1850: J. Derenbourg, *Fables de Loqman le Sage* (Berlin and London: A. Asher & Co., 1850). [For an Italian translation, see Valentina Giarratano, *Luqmān, l’Esopo arabo: La favola di animali dalla Grecia al Medio Oriente*, Al-Qantara 2 (San Demetrio Corone: Irfan Edizioni, 2011).]

²¹ For biographical information on al-Mubashshir, see Franz Rosenthal, “Al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik: Prolegomena to an Abortive Edition,” *Oriens* 13-14 (1961): 132-58, here pp. 136-38.

²² So Gutas, “Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature,” 58. [In 2006 I had not yet seen the edition: Abū l-Wafā’ al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, *Los Bocados de oro (Mujtār al-ḥikam)*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1958).]

oro) before 1257, and translations were printed in France, England and Spain before 1500.²³ For the purposes of *this* communication, however, it is important to note that extracts from al-Mubashshir's work were being copied by Egyptian Christians at least as early as the fifteenth century, as we know from the manuscripts *Paris, B.N. ar. 49* and *309*.²⁴ Other manuscripts bear witness to the material's continuing interest to Egyptian Christians²⁵ as well as to the use of Luqmān material among the Melkite Christians of Syria.²⁶

Luqmān among Christians and Muslims

The Luqmān materials in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309* (15th c.) were published, with a French translation, by Leroy in 1909, providing us with a convenient collection of Luqmān sayings as they may have been known to a late medieval Coptic Orthodox preacher.²⁷ The first section, *The History of Luqmān the Wise (Akhhbār Luqmān al-ḥakīm)*,²⁸ presents several reports about his origins. While these differ in detail, they tend to make him of African origin and a slave (as was Aesop!) and a contemporary of King David.

It is said that one day King David summoned [Luqmān] and told him that he would be made *qāḍī*, to exercise judicial authority among the people.

²³ Rosenthal, "Al-Mubashshir ibn Fâtik," 133-34, 149-55.

²⁴ See Gérard Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1972), 34-35, 270-71. Gutas mentions the possibility that the manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale could represent extracts from one of al-Mubashshir's *sources* rather than from *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* itself; "Arabic Wisdom Literature," 58. The matter awaits investigation.

²⁵ E.g. *Paris, B.N. 310* (17th c.) and *4898* (18th c.); *Cairo, Coptic Museum supp. Hist. 6* [new register no. 515] (AD 1739); *Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate Bibl. 58* [Simaika 120] (AD 1788).

²⁶ E.g., *Paris, B.N. 28* (AD 1539), and *Vatican City, B.A.V. ar. 286* (17th c.).

²⁷ L. Leroy, "Vie, préceptes et testament de Lokman (texte arabe, traduction française)," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 14 (1909): 225-55.

²⁸ *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*, ff. 38v-41r; Leroy, "Vie, préceptes et testament de Lokman," 226-28 (Arabic text), 241-43 (French translation).

He, however, refused. So [the king] said: “What is your problem with this, that you be a wise man truthfully pronouncing judgment among the people?” [Luqmān] said: “I do not wish to be exalted in this world, or strong and powerful, but tormented and debased in the world to come! Whoever sells the hereafter for the sake of this world will lose them both!”

[The narrator of this report] said: God (glory be to him!) was pleased with this speech, and sent him an angel to help him in [the acquisition of] wisdom; and he became the wisest of the people of earth. David used to spread the news of his wisdom and say to him: “Congratulations, O Luqmān! You have been granted your full share of sagacity.”

David’s vocation²⁹ had been offered Luqmān, but he refused to accept it.³⁰

The report echoes the majority opinion among Muslim scholars that Luqmān was *not* a prophet (as was David), but a man on whom exceptional wisdom had been bestowed.³¹ It also establishes the asceticism that is at the heart of Luqmān’s wisdom. The saying, “Whoever sells the hereafter for the sake of this world will lose them both” could well summarize the point of view of the hermit prince who refused Alexander’s offer of kingship!

After a few more “historical” anecdotes about Luqmān, the text in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309* turns to *The Rules of Conduct of Luqmān the Wise (Ādāb Luqmān al-ḥakīm)*, a long set of admonitions to his son, each beginning “O my son” (*yā bunayya*). Among them is the saying about the rooster, with wording practically identical to that found in the

²⁹ Lit. “the matter which David was in.”

³⁰ Paris, B.N. ar. 309, f. 40r; Leroy, “Vie, préceptes et testament de Lokman,” 227 (Arabic text); 242 (French translation).

³¹ Modern discussions of this point may be found in ‘Abd Allāh Kannūn al-Ḥasanī [= Abdallah Guennoun], *Luqmān al-ḥakīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1969), 22-24; or Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf, *Luqmān al-ḥakīm wa-ḥikamuhu* (Damascus: Dār al-Mushāf, 1984), 106-9. Both allow for uncertainty on this point, and the discussion in the latter volume concludes: *wa-llāhu ā‘lam*, “God is the greater knower!”

homily for the Second Sunday of Lent and reproduced above.³² This set of admonitions is followed in the manuscript by *The Testament of Luqmān to his Son before His Death* (*Waṣiyyat Luqmān al-ḥakīm qabla waḥātihī*), and here we find the saying about death and poverty, with wording practically identical to that found in the homily for the Third Sunday of Lent.³³ It is not far-fetched to think that the preacher of the “Shenoutian” homilies in *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761* was familiar with a work such as that preserved in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*.

Muslims, too, were familiar with Luqmān material of the sort preserved in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*, and edifying maxims of Luqmān may be found in a wide range of sources. To illustrate, I shall conclude this paper with three instances of the saying about the rooster.

(1) The lexicon *Thimār al-qulūb* (*Fruit of the Hearts*) by ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī (961-1038) devotes an entry to “the wisdom of Luqmān,”³⁴ identified as an Abyssinian slave of an Israelite at the time of King David. Al-Tha‘ālibī gives a sampling of Luqmān’s “most beautiful exhortations to his son,” beginning with:

O my son, sell this world for the sake of the hereafter,
and you will gain them both!³⁵
O my son, beware of an evil companion, for he is like a sword:
its appearance is beautiful, but its trace is ugly!
O my son, don’t let the ant be more clever than you,
for it gathers during the summer [in preparation] for the winter!

³² Leroy, “Vie, Préceptes et testament de Lokman,” 230, lines 1-3 (Arabic text); 244 (French translation).

³³ Ibid., 238, lines 2-4 (Arabic text); 252 (French translation).

³⁴ Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Tha‘ālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Damascus: Dār al-Bashā’ir, 1994), I:228-30.

³⁵ We note that this is a precise complement to the saying found in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*: “Whoever sells the hereafter for the sake of this world will lose them both!”

O my son, don't let the rooster be more clever than you,
for it cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping! ...³⁶

Al-Tha'ālibī's sampling of Luqmān sayings is just that, a sampling, and so it is difficult to interpret the saying about the rooster. Should it be taken with the saying about the ant, and interpreted simply as an exhortation to early rising and hard work? Or should it be taken with the exhortation to "sell this world for the sake of the hereafter," in which case it could be interpreted as an exhortation to wake from spiritual slumber, and to devote oneself to ascetic endeavor?

(2) There is no question about the force of the saying about the rooster in a classic of the Islamic spiritual tradition, *Ayyuhā l-walad* (*Letter to a Disciple*) by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). The saying appears in the same form as in *Thimār al-qulūb*, but in the context of an exhortation to keep vigil by night and to pray:

[Sufyān al-Thawrī] said:

In the first part of the night, a Caller from beneath the Throne calls out:

"Let the worshippers [*al-ʿābidūn*] arise!"

And they arise and pray as God wills.

At midnight, the Caller calls out:

"Let the pious [*al-qānitūn*] arise!"

And they arise and pray until the latter part of the night.

And at the latter part of the night, the Caller calls out:

"Let those who seek forgiveness [*al-mustaghfirūn*] arise!"

And they arise and seek forgiveness.

And when dawn breaks, the Caller calls out:

³⁶ Ibid., 230. I was alerted to the presence of this material in *Thimār al-qulūb* by ʿAbd Allāh Kannūn al-Ḥasanī, *Luqmān al-ḥakīm*, pp. 74-75.

“Let the heedless [*al-ghāfilūn*] arise!”

And they arise from their beds

as the dead shall be raised from their graves.

O my child ...

It is narrated in *The Counsels of Luqmān the Wise to His Son* that he said:

O my son, don't let the rooster be cleverer than you,
for it cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping!

The one who said this in verse did well:

In the dark of night, a dove called out
from a branch, after midnight – while I was sleeping.

By the House of God, I am a liar! Where I truly a Lover,
doves would not have outdone me in weeping.

I claim to be in love, fervently longing
for my Lord – but I weep not, while the beasts are weeping.³⁷

(3) A more recent example comes from the super commentary of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī (d. 1825/6) on the well-known *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.³⁸ In his comment on *Sūrat Luqmān*, al-Ṣāwī reproduces a number sayings attributed to Luqmān, beginning as follows:

O my son, take the fear of the Lord as commerce,
and gain will come to you without merchandise!

O my son, attend funerals,
but do not attend weddings;
for funerals will remind you of the hereafter,

³⁷ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā l-walad*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad Abū Zīnah (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1975), 43-46. [See now the bilingual edition: al-Ghazali, *Letter to a Disciple = Ayyuha l-walad*, trans. Tobias Mayer (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2005).]

³⁸ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Ṣāwī ‘alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, 4 parts (Mumbai: Molvi Mohammad bin Gulamrasul Surtis Sons, 1981). Again, I was directed to this reference by ‘Abd Allāh Kannūn al-Ḥasanī, *Luqmān al-ḥakīm*, pp. 70-73.

while weddings will arouse your desire for this world!
O my son, do not be weaker than this rooster
who cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping in your bed!
O my son, do not put off repentance,
for truly death comes suddenly! ...³⁹

Although we once again simply have a sampling of the sayings of Luqmān, those reproduced here have a consistent message: live this life in watchfulness, repentance and the fear of the Lord, in preparation for Judgment and the world to come. With the saying, “Do not put off repentance, for truly death comes suddenly,” we have returned to the major theme of the Lenten homilies of *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*.

Whether in the Christian or the Islamic texts sampled here, Luqmān’s saying about the rooster is used to exhort believers to prayer and to rouse them from heedlessness and negligence. Reading the Christian and the Islamic texts together, we become aware of realms of common wisdom and common piety shared by Christians and Muslims in the medieval Middle East. Luqmān the Wise was a teacher for them all.

³⁹ *Ḥāshiyat al-Ṣāwī*, III:239.