

# IZNOGOUD

*A comedy by Patrick Braoudé*  
English subtitles



Opened in France on **February 9 2005**  
French feature film. Comedy  
Running time: 95min

## Synopsis

In the storybook caliphate of La Magnifique long ago, in the time of the barbarians, kind and childish Haroun El Poussah (Villeret) rules over his adoring subjects with glee and compassion. Only nasty note in the harmonious realm is covetous Iznogoud (Michael Youn) who spends every waking moment -- and some sleeping ones, too, as conveyed in an elaborate dream sequence -- plotting ways to kill the benevolent leader and take his place.

The Caliph has yet to show more than friendly interest in his 249-wife harem, and head eunuch (Magloire) and the ruler's closet advisors (Franck Dubosc, Rufus) despair of what will happen if an heir is not produced.

Elsewhere in the desert (location work in Morocco has the desired visual sweep) barbarian sultan Pullmankar the Bloodthirsty (Bernard Farcy) has decided to marry off his only daughter, fearful for her virtue. Any prince could tell you her virtue is no longer an issue, but dad doesn't know that and ferocious retribution seems to be in order when the princess and her lady-in-waiting are ambushed by bandits.

Youn, (...) makes a perfectly hissable villain. Spanish knockout Elsa Pataky is just right as Prehti-Ouhman (read aloud for full effect), a feisty damsel in a modicum of distress. Popular funnymen Kad (painted purple) and Olivier (painted green) score as contentious genies who weigh the legality of every wish.

Musical numbers sport clever lyrics and decent choreography. Production design is pleasing to the eye and tickling to the funny bone. Lisa Nesselson

<http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117926264?refcatid=31>

## Reviews

Seasoned actor-writer-producer-director Patrick Braoudé helms a wonderful cast including Michaël Youn as the **deliciously wicked Iznogoud**, and the **late Jacques Villeret as the lovable Caliph Haroun El Poussah**. The absurdity of this rollicking adventure includes (but is not limited to) flying carpets, kissing toads, men in eyeliner, spontaneous singing and dancing, **fabulously loud costumes** to rival Bollywood, supercamp overacting, and a genie named Ouzmoutousouloubouloubombê. **A production of fabulous comedy and creative extravagance, *Iznogoud* is an outrageously good time.**

<http://www.worldmovies.net/?page=movie&movie=1819>

Lavishly silly "Iznogoud" blends camels, genies, flying carpets, gorgeous babes and venal plotters with peppy musical numbers and deliciously awful puns and innuendoes that would make Mel Brooks blush -- with pleasure. Easily riled Grand Vizier Iznogoud's goal is to usurp the Caliph's throne. He'll stop at nothing, and his efforts are non-stop fun, reflecting pic's comicbook roots with genuine cinematic flair. Local response for Feb. 9 release, which features recently deceased thesp Jacques Villeret in a sweetly ideal role as the cuddly Caliph, has been warm.

Well-cast special-effects-laden romp written and directed by "9 Months" helmer Patrick Braoude may translate better to international markets than the Asterix franchise did, thanks to its Arabian Nights setting. (Lisa Nesselson from Variety.com)

## Description

### Language

The language in the film is relatively neutral.

Some of the vocabulary and expressions refer to:

- The vizier's cruelty when he says many times to whomever he suspects to want to rob him: "***I'll impale you***". Unfortunately it reflects ancient barbaric practices as well as it depicts the character's wickedness.
- Sultan Pullmanker named "The Bloodthirsty Sultan" for his brutality. He utters expressions such as "***I will make you eat salt and drown you in your own saliva***". Pullmanker refers to the Caliph as "salopard" in French which is not as strong as **bastard** in English.
- Sexual innuendos are scattered throughout the film and may not have been translated properly because of the puns in the French language. For instance, a character speaks of having **screwed** a woman (*Je me suis tapé* une femme, very familiar French expression) and another wicked wish that Iznogoud utters twice: **Take his balls and stuff them in his nose**. In French, the word "balls" is mild "**Les boulettes**" which leads to an **over the top translation**. The Sultan condemns the act as being **too vulgar for him**.
- **To be pissed off** comes back about 3 times for *être énérvé* which again is too familiar in English as compared to the French words.

### ■ Conclusion on the language:

On the whole, the language reflects an everyday way of speaking in French with some sexual allusions in words and some expressions reinforcing the cruel personality of the characters such as Iznogoud and Sultan Pullmanker.

As for the Caliph, he is pictured as a big baby with the appropriate vocabulary in French. He says "bobo à la tête" (a headache in baby language) or "gros dodo" (a big sleep in child's lingo).

Not to forget that this film is an adaptation of a **cartoon** series by the name of Iznogoud which reflects the **farical** side of the comedy and its humour.

### Violence

In the context of this comedy, the violence is close to that of an animation or of a slapstick comedy.

- Iznogoud's loyal servant, Dilat Larath, is slapped by the big genie that comes out of the lamp. We hear the blow but only see the character touch his face. A reddish mark is seen when the vizier talks to him.

- Mocking a famous scene from *Indiana Jones* the vizier shoots at the man who threatens him with his saber. No graphic detail. Smoke is seen.
- The vizier is captured by the Sultan's soldiers: he is seen with his hands tied walking briskly in front of the camel to get to the Sultan faster. Dilat Larath follows the camel with his hands tied.

When the vizier announces that Plassahsiz is marrying the Caliph, he is freed but Dilat is shown on his fours with chains on the floor. He does not look like he is in pain.

- Out of frustration, Iznogoud bangs his turban-wrapped head onto a post which is very funny because his turban is enormous and protects his head.
- The Princess is kidnapped which happens without violence as she is hoisted on the camel by a man.

Towards the end, the Princess is seen with the bag on her head and her hands tied. As the bag is lifted Plassahsiz has a gag around her mouth and speaks about the cruel treatment imposed by the vizier. Her explanation is **incomprehensible** hence funny.

- The presence of armed men in the film suggests ideas of war and invasion but apart from seeing people running around, some being pushed away, there is no war scene only costume paraphernalia.
- Violence and the animals in the film:

The frog is eaten by Iznogoud (allusion to the frog legs so well liked by the French). It is vowed to execution (not seen graphically). It eats the beautiful butterfly that Caliph El Poussah noticed on the décolletage of the dancer. And it is rude as it burps after swallowing the butterfly.

The donkey is made to go faster by the vizier as he hits him the stick

The scorpion is split in two by the vizier who is trying to taste it.

The camel: Iznogoud lands into his butt.

### ■ **Conclusion on the violence in the film:**

As for the language, the violence here is comedic: it is in keeping with the middle eastern background of its story and the practices belonging to ancient times. In all the film the violence is restrained, limited and non graphic with a cartoonish sense of humour.

### Nudity

- When Dilat Larath re-appears in the rose pool of the harem, a young woman is seen in a partial frontal nudity (bare breasts) in a non sexual context. The image is very brief and distant.
- When the Sultan's army invades the Caliph's grounds, one of El Poussah's guards loses his clothes through the wave of soldiers going passed him. He is seen in a partial frontal nudity (his hands covering his organs). When he turns around, he is seen in full rear nudity.
- When he comes back to announce the invasion, large palm tree leaves cover his nudity as we guess he still has no clothes.

### ■ **Conclusion for the nudity**

Nudity in the two cases is brief and non sexual. It is done to underline the cartoonish humour of the film.

## Sexual Activity

- Sexual innuendo: the princess's virtue  
When Sultan Pullmanker searches for his kidnapped daughter, he visits all the princes. Each prince is found in bed with a woman hence the innuendo that the princess is not that virtuous and that princes spend their time seducing women.
- The prolonged amorous kiss between the Caliph and the Princess.  
This is a good ending that will insure an heir to the Caliph who has 249 wives.

### ■ Conclusion for the sexual activity in the film:

There is none to speak of apart from the fact there are allusions in the language and in the innuendos of the search of the Princess in the princes' beds.

## Psychological impact

- The special effects
  - ⊕ The sudden popping up of the genies out the Aladdin-like lamp may take people by surprise
  - ⊕ The trip on the magic carpet with the uncertain steering in the middle of the ravines and mountains is very exciting for the teenagers,
  - ⊕ Similarly to cartoons, the vizier's neck gets longer which adds more character to Iznogoud's bad personality.
- The slave market  
Although a few centuries ago the selling of slaves in a market this was ordinary in the Middle Eastern and African countries, it is important that adults emphasize the amoral aspect of that practice.  
The scene is however hilarious as the auction takes a crazy turn with the auctioneer.
- The vizier's unkindness  
As the character is cartoonish, the scriptwriter piles up all actions that keep us entertained and surprised like the scene when Iznogoud takes the money from the hands of the beggars or the scene when he steals the money from a soldier he just hit. He is selfish and walks on the fresh eggs of a merchant without any care. He shows no gratitude or loyalty to anybody because he uses everybody for his own purposes.  
At the final, the unkind buffoon is being punished for his actions which is a moral ending.



# IZNOGOURD

*Pictures*



Iznogoud and Caliph Haroun El Foussah



The genis Ouzmoutousouloubombê and Ouz



Iznogoud and his loyal servant Dilat Larath



Plasshasiz and Prehti Ouhman



Caliph El Poussah and his advisers



Iznogoud and Sultan Pullmanker