Early Muslim Historiography

NISAR AHMED FARUQI

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EARLY MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

A Study of Early Transmitters of Arab History from the Rise of Islam up to the end of Umayyad Period.
(612 — 750 A.D.)

by

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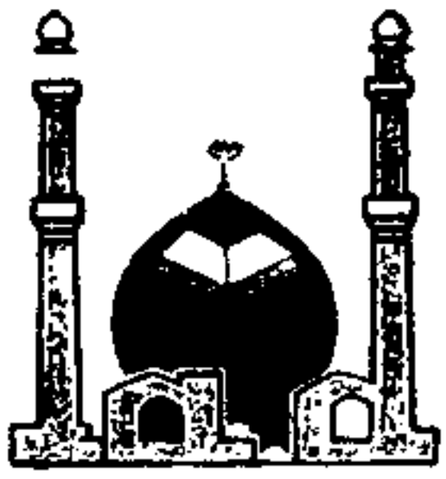

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Dedicated

to the loving memory of my

Mother

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Transliteration Chart

Th	ث
Ch	ج
Ḥ	ح
Kh	خ
Dh	ذ
Zh	ژ
Sh	ش
Ṣ	ص
Ḍ	ض
Ṭ	ط
Ẓ	ظ
‘A	ع
Gh	غ
Q	ق
ā	آ
î	ای
ū	او

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Preface

It is important for us to know about the history of our historiography and the development of Arab historical writings along with the trends which run concurrently. We do also need a critical study of Arab historiography, failing which we will not be able to examine our chronicles of the past on right methods. Sheer want of investigation into the sources of our history is the major handicap which we face in this field. We should, therefore, firstly, make a complete scrutiny of the chains of authorities occuring in historical narrations. Secondly, genuine and false traditions ought to be differentiated. We cannot distinguish between historical facts and tribal myths and legends until and unless we critically examine the early historians and their orally transmitted works in the broader perspective of the evaluation and development the Arab historiography has undergone through the ages. Lastly, we ought to know the reasons and motives that acted behind the formation of historical literature. Socio-political tendencies, national convictions and religious dogmas of the historians are equally important for study of the present subject. It should also be examined how much importance these early historians attached to historiography and in what respects they influenced their age and society. Another significant aspect of the study of Arab historiography is to find out the causes and incentives behind large-scale interpolations and travesties of facts. Political ideas of those days, factional feelings, impact of the story-tellers (*quṣṣāṣ*) and various religious sects, as well as the role of the *Shu 'ūbiyya*, are some other points to be taken into serious consideration. It would be rather impossible to know the

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real value of our historical records without going into all these details. Moreover, we cannot follow various interpretations of our historical material as laid down by the Western scholarship or the heterodox Muslim -sects from time to time, unless we have drawn out certain rules to discriminate between right and wrong. Equally desirable is the understanding of relationship between *ḥadīth* and history, both of which are founded on the principle of oral transmission and supported by authority chains.

For example, al-Ṭabarī is one of our important historians. But, if we examine his sources critically, we will find that in writing about the pre-Islamic age, he has relied on various sources which certainly include some non-historical ones. Among the narrators he has relied upon Abū Mikhnaf, Saif b. 'Umar, Ibn al-Kalbī, 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam, Naṣr b. al-Muzāḥim, 'Urwa b. al-Zubair and al-Zuhrī, as well as on Wahab b. Munabbih, K'ab al-Aḥbār Ibn Is'ḥāq, etc. All these transmitters vary in their political views, intellectual levels and personal qualities, as well as they differ in their methods of transmission and styles of narration. Early *rāwīs* should, therefore, be thoroughly studied and judged in the wider context of their respective socio-political milieu and religio-cultural background.

The *Sīrah* of Ibn Is'ḥāq is the oldest book on the subject of *Sīrah* which has come down to us and *Kitāb 'al-Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī is perhaps the only parallel to it. Investigations into his sources reveal that narratives and anecdotes which he has incorporated in his book, vary in regard to their significance and authenticity. Al-Zuhrī has given priority to serious historical elements in his works. Rest of the material in Ibn Is'ḥāq is derived from tribal fables dominated by the concept of piety or vainglorious tales of the exploits, supported by a considerable quantity of fabricated poetry. The third portion of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Is'ḥāq is derived from the Jewish sources. It comprises either of Israelite legends or Talmudic tales of Jewish character and forms what is called the 'Beginning of the *Sīrah*' or *al-Mubtadā*. After a careful and proper arrangement of *Sīrah*-literature and its various

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...ions, we will be able to understand their influence upon each other and this will also help us analyse the entire subject matter of the early Muslim historiography. Because an earnest empirical study of the *Sīrah*-literature is almost inconcieveable without keeping in mind of and doing justice to these persistently different ingradients which form a substantial unit of the early Muslim historical literature. Nevertheless, such a study would be most painstaking and hard, because of the non-availability of some important early documents of which only a few extracts and fragments are sporadically found in the histories of later authors. It will, therefore, be another useful task to gather and compile these scattered extracts from early sources. It will, in a way, help us understand an approximate frame of those books which are no more available in their originally planned form but have served as the first-hand sources of second and third century Muslim historiographers.

There are no doubt, such quotations of early authors which do not tell anything about their parent-sources and leave us for wild speculations. But, in spite of the aforesaid difficulties, reinterpretation of our historical literature is absolutely necessary. It is necessary to know the flux of Islamic civilization and to understand the root-causes of so many significant changes in the Islamic society.

Islam is the only major religion of the history of mankind which has born and flourished under the light of history, and Muslims are a people with a strong sense of history, yet, ironically enough, the Islamic history is perhaps the most confused, much-discussed and less-understood among the histories of world religious communities. Professor Wilfred Cantwel Smith has rightly remarked that 'less thought has been devoted to the significance of Islamic history, which is that community in motion.'

In the present book we have endeavoured to work out certain principles which might be of great help and utility in the critical valuation of early Muslim historiographers and their works. It would help us understand what kind of

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history was ours and what presently it is. Once having understood the methods of transmission, and mental environment of the transmitters, we might be able to descry the "panoramic view of a tendentially segmented society" from a closer corner. And the present book becomes an endeavour to bring the reader to a closer corner.

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Allah alone is besought for help and on Him alone we depend.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Historiography in Arabic is distinguished from that of other languages in more than one ways: first, the Arab historians compiled more historical works than were collectively compiled in any other language by that time. A survey of the historical works conducted by Wüstenfeld showed the number of works written during the first millenium as 590 books.[1] Secondly, these works are of various types. Some of them exclusively deal with a province or a city or a particular tribe, while others are about some sect, or describe singular events like the battle of 'Ṣiffîn' or that of 'the Camel'. Thirdly, Arab historians have the distinction of introducing the practice of date-mark and chronology in their historiography. From the very beginning they recorded historical anecdotes with particular emphasis on date and year—a practice quite unknown to other nations till that time. Fourthly, their early works give significant evidence of their historical consciousness as well as their awareness of scientific treatment so far as the arrangement of historical material is concerned. Lastly, the histories compiled by them are also unique in being authenticated by the 'law of witness' (*Isnād*) and are complemented by their classical poetry too.[2]

1. Margoliouth (D.S.) : *Lectures on Arabic Historians* (Calcutta, 1930) p. 1.
2. *Al-'Arabi* : No. 154 p. 34.

'Tārīkh' or History :

According to *Lisān al-'Arab* the word *'Tārīkh'*, so commonly used for 'history', is derived from the root *'arkh'* which means recording the time of an event; and *'Tārīkh'*[1] is actually the 'time' when a particular event took place. Thus, 'historiography is the science of committing anecdotes and their causes to writing with reference to the time of their occurrence'.

In pre-Islamic times, Arabs had no permanent calendar. They used to remember or record historical material according to important incidents of their age. For example, the tribes settled in Hijaz and nearby areas, remembered the date of an event from their famous battle-days (*ayyām*) like the battle of Basūs or Fijār etc., while the Yemenite tribes counted it by the reign of their rulers (*tubba'*); the people of Ghassān by the destruction of Mārib Dam, and people of Ṣan'ā by the invasion of their land by the Abyssinian colonialists. But the use of a permanent calendar was introduced during the rule of the Second Caliph 'Umar (d. 23 A. H.), when he appreciated a letter properly dated by his governor in Yemen Y'alā b. Umayya, who had apparently followed the practice of the Yemenites. 'Umar wanted to introduce a permanent Islamic calendar and after much deliberations adopted the Immigration (Hijra) of the Prophet to Medina, as a suitable starting point of such a calendar. So he advised the Muslims in general, and the state officials in particular, to use the Hijra era for recording the date and time.

What is History ?

According to the classical Arabic historiographers, it is 'knowledge pertaining to a country, customs and manners of a people, remains of the people of yore, as well as an account of the actions of those alive'. According to al-Kāfiji

1. Ibn Manẓūr : *Lisān al-'Arab* Vol. 3 p. 481 (Būlāq reprint) see also *Bulūgh al-Arab* Vol. III p. 214.
Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam, the University of the Panjab, Lahore (1959) Vol. IV Fascicule 1-2 pp. 36-76.

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(d. [illegible] A.H.) in his *al-Mukhtaṣar fī 'Ilm al-Tārīkh*, it is a branch of knowledge dealing with the chronology of events.[1]

Another famous scholar-historian 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī defines it as an art dealing with anecdotes according to the sequence of their chronology![2]

The present Western scholars define the history in a simple formula (man+time+space=History). Thus they consider it a study of 'living past, i.e. study and compilation of man's important works and ideas which leave their impact on posterity too'.[3]

Now, let us see the reasons why Arabs paid so much attention to historiography as a result of which about six hundred histories came into existence only during the first millenium of the Islamic era. An analytical study of their attitude and purpose leads us to the following conclusions :

First, their age-old customs and convictions, glorious achievements of their ancestors which they were proud of and which naturally created among them a tendency to recollect and preserve the works of their forefathers by the medium of oral transmission of their battle-day narratives. It was also but natural that a nation like the Arab, so proud of their blue-blood, should preserve their genealogical data as a proof of their nobility. Secondly, as we have pointed out elsewhere in this introductory chapter, the Qur'ān provided with an impetus to obtain more details regarding the communities long extinct, a reference to whom is found in the Qur'ān. Thirdly, the Prophet Moḥammad was a perfect ideal for the Muslims in every respect. So, even minute details describing his actions, sayings or character, were scrupulously preserved for those believers who lived in far off areas of the Muslim world, and which were subsequently transmitted for the benefit of posterity. Lastly,

1. *Al-'Arabi* op. cit.
2. Al-Sakhāwī : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubīkh li man Dhamma Ahl al-Taurīkh* pp. 27-30, Markazi Urdu Board, Lahore, 1968.
3. *Ibid.*

the Muslim rulers of early centuries had also developed their interest in learning the achievements and policies of powerful monarchs of the non-Arab countries in order to understand their strategies in subjugating the rebels or in making themselves popular among the vanquished and the ruled.

At first the Arabs were not aware of the art of historiography in its strict scientific sense. Such consciousness, as a matter of fact, was to have been developed during the third century. Instead, they took for historical material their folk-literature, poetry, tribal legends, Biblical myths and the like. Each Arabian tribe had its own history; its warp and woof was made of quasi-historical, semi-historical or even non-historical material. Such legends are also found among other nations like the Indians, Persians, Romans etc. These tribal tales of the Arab were called *Ayyām al-'Arab* (or the battle-days' narratives). They contained narrations of wars between rival tribes like the War of Basūs, Dāḥis, al-Ghabrā, *Dhī* Qār etc.[1] These narratives naturally contained descriptions of the heroes who fought in the battle, their chivalrous deeds and some of the details of their genealogy accentuating on the purity of their blood and magnanimity of their forefathers from whom they inherited noble qualities.

The distinctive feature between *Ayyām* and *Qiṣaṣ* was that narration of the former was also supported by poetical compositions. In fact, these narrations of the battle-days could be transmitted to posterity through these verses which always carried some description in prose of the incident which inspired the poet to recite extempore. When professional *Rāwîs* transmitted these verses they always narrated their background in order to make the context intelligible to their listeners. These prose descriptions and the main poetical composition actually complemented each other. As for their diction and style, they lack any systems of arrangement or cohesion as well as they lack any chronological

1. For details of these narratives see *'Ayyām al-'Arab fi al-Jāhiliyya'* by Moḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Maulā etc. (3rd ed.) Egypt, 1968, pp. 488 and *Ayyām al-'Arab fi al-Islām* by M. Abul Faḍl Ibrāhîm, Egypt, 1968.

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Moreover, they are not free from tribal prejudices, partiality and political partisanship.

The material of tribal tales continued to be transmitted by professional narrators orally. These tales were for long narrated in informal get-togethers or tribal assemblies until the Umayyad court engaged them as professional artistes. 'Abîd b. Sharya was one such narrator of tribal tales who did also compile a book entitled *Kitāb al-Mulūk wa Akhbār al-Mā'ḍīn*[1] for Mu'āwiya b. Abî Sufyān (40-60 A.H.) the founder of Umayyad caliphate, who, as *al-Mas'ūdī*[2] informs us, "after granting audience to his ministers and state officials, and after attending to reports reaching from various parts of the state, used to spend about one-third of the night in listening to the *Akhbār* of the Arabs, their battle-days' narratives, and stories of the non-Arab kings, their penal systems, and biographies of other monarchs, their wars, diplomacies, penal codes, etc. as well as other narrations of the bygone peoples. After this he had some refreshments. Now, registers were brought before him which contained written biographies of different rulers of the past, accounts of their expeditions, their judicial systems etc. All these were read out to him by young slaves especially trained for the purpose; they were appointed to learn these accounts by heart in order to render before the king in a perfect manner. Thus he spent a portion of night in keeping himself posted up with historical accounts".

(II)

Concept of History :

The early Muslim dogmatic view of the purpose of writing history was to 'obtain the pleasure of Allah'.[3] But, the Qur'ān stresses the need of historical knowledge as a moral exhortation to the faithful, when it says : "Have they

---

1. The book was available until the time of al-Mas'ūdî (vide *Murūj al-Dhahb* Vol. II p. 60). Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 132.
2. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahb*, Vol. III pp. 29-30.
3. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh li man Dhamma Ahl al-Taurîkh.* Urdu tr. by Dr. Moḥammed Yūsuf, Karachi, p. 109.

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not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequence for those who disbelieved before them ? They were mightier than these in power and (in the) traces (which they) left behind them in the earth. Yet, Allah seized them for their sins and they had no protector from Allah".[1] According to Muslim commentators, 'to travel on earth' was a substitute for a formal study of history, because historical accounts of the life of nations of yore were not recorded at that time and the only way to acquaint oneself with their history was to see their ruins and to hear legends about them.[2]

The Qur'ān, while referring to the bygone nations and extinct civilizations, has, in its own way, presented the idea that 'Nature', or in Islamic terminology '*the Will of Allah*', does not work blindly and arbitrarily; and there are certain historical reasons leading to every change or revolution which the Qur'ān calls the '*Sunna of Allah*'.[3] The Qur'ānic way of referring to ancient peoples, and their civilizations and of exhorting the faithful to learn a lesson from their history, clearly show that Islam is a religion essentially history-conscious.

Also, from the life of the Prophet we gather sufficient evidence that he was well-informed about the life and teachings of the prophets who preceded him. For instance, when he was distributing booty at Ḥunayn, one of the Anṣārs of Medina protested against the system of distribution adopted by him, the Prophet expressed his annoyance in these words : 'May Allah shower His mercy on Moses, he was pestered more than this'.[4]

During the first year after his migration to Medina, the Prophet had ordered his followers to make a census of the entire Muslim population of Medina, and the early

1. The *Qur'ān* LX : 21 cf. 'That is because Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people, until they first change that which is in their hearts'. (VIII : 53).
2. Siddîquî (M. Maẓhar-ud-Dîn) : *Islām Kā Naẓariyya-e-Tārīkh, Lahore* 1962, pp. 12-13.
3. The *Qur'ān* I : 134 see al-Ṭabarî, *Tafsīr* I : 563.
4. al-Bukhārî, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, vol. I, p. 481 (Cairo, 1378 H.)

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[illegible] inform us that this census record was preserved. According to al-Bukhārî, the Prophet commanded: 'Whosoever from among the citizens of Medina professes Islam orally, record his name in the census list. So, we listed about fifteen hundred names'.[1]

The institution of narrators (*akhbāriyūn*) was already flourishing in Arabia before Islam. Though, at first, the Muslim ecclesiastics did not approve of it, yet, their interest in history began to grow steadily mainly due to the historical references in the Qur'ān. Another factor was that the idea of the continuity of prophethood, as presented in the Qur'ān, had to be elaborated by the early commentators and *sīrah*-writers and it led to a realization of the importance of history in general. Thus, we find that, with the exception of a few lexicographers and grammarians, those who collected and compiled historical data during the early Islamic period, belonged to the religious elite i. e. jurists and *muḥaddithūn*.

Political factions and tribal divisions of the Arab society were, until the first century of Hijra, linked up with religious ideas and history was used as a weapon against political rivals and a medium of propagation of various religious ideologies. Consequently, it was but natural that a partisan or apologetic tone should permeate the narrations of early *akhbāriyūn* belonging to various groups, and, by the end of the first century of Hijra, it became evident that historiography was going to serve as the most powerful means of shaping Islamic society and developing its intellectual outlook.

History Consciousness of the Muslims:

That history-consciousness among the Muslims emerged as a part of their faith deriving inspiration from the Qur'ān and the *Sunna*, is also supported by the fact that Muslim

1. al-Bukhārî, *Ṣaḥîḥ*. (bāb kitabat al-imām li al-nās), *Muslim* (kitāb-al-îman).
Ṣubḥî Sālim : '*Ulūm al-Ḥadîth*, p. 34.
Ḥamîdullāh : '*Ṣaḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih*, p. 9.

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akhbār-narrators, from the very beginning, showed no interest in the *Jāhiliyya* (pre-Islamic) period of Arab history, or in the history of their immediate neighbours—the Byzantines and Persians. Their concern with history begins with the advent of Islam—more precisely speaking—with the later period of the Prophet's life, when he settled in Medina to translate Islamic social concepts into practice. That is why our early reporters provide us with very meagre knowledge of the Meccan period of the Prophet's life and whatever we can get, was collected during his life at Medina. Thus, we can safely assume that the history of Muslims began with the first Hijra year.

Arab historiography continued flourishing in its own native spirit and form, free from any foreign influence, until the end of second Hijra century. Although, Greek historiography at that time had reached a mature stage of development, yet no traces of the Arab narrators' being influenced by the Greek or Persian historiographical methods are to be found in the first two centuries of the Hijra. Hishām al-Kalbî was, perhaps, the first Muslim historiographer to have made use of Christian archives and some old inscriptions. But, it was motivated by the fact that his primary concern was with the Arab genealogies and some very useful information regarding them was preserved in the churches. Persian sources were also exploited by him in writing about the Arab-Persian relations.[1]

During the last days of Banū Umayya, the famous prose-writer Ibn al-Muqaffa' translated the Persian book '*Khudāi Nāma*' into Arabic.[2] This book, undoubtedly, had far-reaching effect on the development of Arab historiography, though not a beneficial one. Because, when Muslim

1. See for example al-Ṭabarî, '*Tārîkh al-Rusul wal-Mulūk*, I : 86 et. seq. for his works and notice see *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (*introduction*) ed. Ahmed Zaki Pacha. (for detailed discussion Supra : Chapter III).
2. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV : 180 and '*Majalla al-Majma'al-'Ilmî al-'Irāqî*, Vols. I-II (1950-51) article by Dr. Jawād 'Alî, on the Sources of the History of al-Ṭabarî.

came in touch with the Persian historiographical trends the semi-historical and mythological element again permeated their writings. *Khudāi Nāma* itself, in its opening chapters, was full of mythical legends and semi-historical matter, while its last chapters dealing with the Sāsānid dynasty were rhetorical in tone.

Methodical Treatment :

The internal socio-religious requirements of the Muslim state emphasized the need of developing methodical historiography which in turn led the state to patronize and encourage the preservation not only of the traditions of the Prophet but also historical anecdotes, biographies, genealogies and accounts of Muslim conquests. For this purpose, they worked out a general principle that events of the past come down to posterity through *khabar* which can only be authenticated by a 'chain of authority'. Thus the formula of *khabar* with '*isnād*' i.e. a report through an unbroken chain of transmitters, was first introduced by the Muslims. It was not in vogue prior to the advent of Islam. We do not find any evidence of this method being employed in preserving the historical data either among the pagan Arab or among the more civilized peoples of the neighbouring countries.

It has been said that the institution of '*isnād*' (authentication of *khabar*) was also practised by the early Jews but it is a mere assumption which is not supported by adequate evidence. As a matter of fact, the Jews had adopted '*isnād*' for their Talmud long after the Muslims invented it.

Whatever pains the Muslims took in evolving the formula of '*isnād*' for preservation of *khabar*, was not motivated by their concern with the art of history-writing per se, but was purely religious. That is what Abū Thufyān al-Thaurî (ob. 161 A.H.) meant when he said: 'When transmitters of *khabar* started indulging in false narrations we built up history to meet their challenge'.[1]

Muslims were primarily interested in the preservation

1. al-Sakhāwî, pp. 33-34.

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of the original wording of their Holy Scripture i.e. the Qur'ān, transmitted by those who received it directly from the Prophet, and the sense of the importance of accurate transmission of the revealed word induced them to insist on the accuracy of reporting in general.

Second to the Qur'ān was the place of *ḥadīth*—the word of the Prophet. So, every *ḥadīth* of the Prophet is traced to the first narrator that is some Companion of the Prophet. Similarly, the practice of the Prophet could only be authenticated by a *rāwī* or reporter who was blessed to witness it in his own person.

Although, the early history of the Arab does not exclude myths and legends, yet the principles of screening the available historical data evolved by the *Muḥaddithūn* (traditionists) paved the way for historical research and careful evaluation of sources. This helped in eliminating the mythical and pseudo-historical elements from the biography of the Prophet, thus exposing the early days of Islam to the full light of history, which was necessary from the juristic as well as scientific point of view. Since the words and deeds of the Prophet were an important source of Islamic *sharī'a* second only to the Qur'ān. Even minute details of the life and deeds of the Prophet were recorded on the authority of one or more unbroken chains of reliable reporters. Sometime, a single report has been transmitted through hundreds of such chains. This is a distinction which no other tradition or major religion of the world shares with Islam. Further, there are definite methods of evaluation of these chains in order to determine the accuracy and authenticity of any particular version. Early transmitters, sometime, report contradictory versions. But, historians are so scrupulously honest in giving all versions that every perceptive reader can examine them in the light of the accepted principles of scrutiny to decide for himself which of them was reliable.

It appears that Muslim historians of the early centuries were of the view that the institution of personal transmission of *khabar* is more reliable than other methods of collecting

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material. *Arāwī* or reporter was supposed to transmit a report as objectively as possible, without superimposing his own personal view. He was expected to collect all versions of *khabar* and pass them on refraining from interpreting them and drawing inferences from them. The historian could, however, make his assessment of the general moral character of the reporter thus indicating the degree of the reliability of his report. It was because of this principle, that all the versions, whether reliable or not, of the *akhbār* of early period could be transmitted to writers of regular history and served as the 'raw material' to be sifted and used by them in their historical works.

The attitude of the early Muslims to history is evident from what Taqîu'd-Dîn Maqrîzî (ob. 766-845) observes in his book entitled '*Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wal-I'tibār bi Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wal-Āthār*': 'Knowledge is of two categories—Ma'qūl (rational) and Manqūl (traditional). A man ought to acquire a fair amount of both of them; then he should devote his time exclusively to the study of history and should ponder over its exhortations... How shameful it would be if a man claims to have knowledge and wisdom but on being asked about those Prophets of Allah, faith in whom is obligatory, he should simply repeat their names without knowing details of their lives and personalities. Similarly, how disgraceful it is that one should teach in a *Madrasa* or issue religious decrees in settling legal disputes without knowing the sublime character of the Holy Prophet, his intrinsic qualities and virtues....'[1]

Aḥmad b. Fāris (ob. circa 390 H) says: "Miserable is the condition of a man who claims being a scholar without having any knowledge of those who migrated first (to Medina)" or who financed the Mecca expedition or sacrificed their lives in the cause, or were martyred after the Conquest of Mecca; a man who does not know anything about those Companions of Badr about whom it was said: 'Do whatever you desire since you have been granted salvation by Allah; who is ignorant even of the names of those

1. Ibid. p. 87.

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Companions of the Prophet who were present at the time of *bay'at al-Riḍwān'* and whom the hell-fire cannot touch; nor of those Anṣār about whom the Prophet commanded: 'Do good unto him from among them who doeth good unto you and forgive him who doeth ill unto you. Make their love a part of your faith'.[1]

This is sufficient to show that the main interest of Muslim scholars in historiography was in acquiring detailed and authentic knowledge of the events which were directly related with the *sīrah* of the Prophet, or with various personalities who played a significant role in those events. On the other hand, with the expansion of Islam, hundreds of new problems were faced by the jurists. Unprecedented legal cases were brought to the Qāḍī or the governor or the Muftī, who had to settle them either in the light of the Qur'ān, or in that of the tradition (*ḥadīth*). Where the case was to be decided in accordance with a *ḥadīth*, it was necessary to ascertain, as far as possible, its reliability. In order that a *ḥadīth* could be regarded a legal precedent, it had to be established that its first transmitter had lived in the city of Medina, was a Companion of the Prophet, had personally witnessed such case brought before the Prophet, and decided by him, and reported the case and the judgement with all essential details. As, from the judicial point of view, it was incompatible with the principles of the 'law of evidence' to judge a case in the light of a certain *ḥadīth* reported by a single narrator, whatever degree of honesty and reliability he might have been credited with. The Iraqi school of jurists (Abū Ḥanīfa being its main exponent) laid down the condition of 'continuity (*tawātur*) for such traditions as were to serve the basis of declaring something lawful or unlawful. Since a very small number of traditions fulfilled this rigorous qualification, the 'analogous deduction, (*qiyās*) was adopted as the guiding principle of legislation. But, to a section of orthodox Muslims, the idea could hardly be accepted that any other source except the Qur'ān, and the word and practice of the Prophet, should be used in the formulation

1. Ibid. pp. 86-87.

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shari'a. This particular school continued to search after more Traditions as well as to evolve more rigorous principles to judge their authenticity. Thus the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (Traditionists) rendered, indirectly, a great service to the cause of historiography. They not only adopted stricter principles for the scrutiny of *ḥadīth* material, but, also made a clear and precise distinction between *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* and *maghāzī*, which had, so far, been treated as an indiscriminate whole. In the course of time, the *Muḥaddith* acquired a higher religious status, while his counterpart the *akhbārī* was brought down to a lower level of a reporter of doubtful authenticity. Since the primary source of all these was one and the same i.e. *khabar*, the early historical literature, as well as the *ḥadīth* literature, was based on the same material of *khabar* with *isnād*. Gradually, the style, as well as the structure of both, underwent some changes. *akhbār* became, comparatively, secular in approach and wider in scope. When the source material became abundant, it was but natural that the question of method of its compilation and arrangement should arise. The best course which the historian could have adopted, and did actually adopt, was that of compilation in chronological order. While the *ḥadīth* literature was arranged subjectwise or according to the names of original *rāwīs*. Thus came parting of the ways between the *ḥadīth* and history.

In their treatment of history the early Muslim historiographers gradually advanced from a local outlook to a universal one. For instance, in the Medina school of historiography stress was at first laid on the *sīrah*, *maghāzī* and annals of the Caliphate; the Kūfa and Baṣra schools paid more attention to tribal characteristics, genealogy, grammar, rhetoric etc. (motivated by the notion that certain tribes were purer in their breed and hence more eloquent than others). With the expansion of Islam, the concept of tribe or group was broadened to that of 'nation' (*umma*), though not in the modern sense of the term. This concept of *umma*, later on, prevailed and contributed substantially to the growth and development of 'history-consciousness' among the Muslim society. Although, we find in early centuries a

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vast-pervasive tendency of local and tribal loyalties when we see people of a particular clan or area engaged in collecting data about a subject of limited scope and utility. Yet, when these transmitters of narrow outlook and interest were exploited by the later historians like al-Tabarî, in compiling more comprehensive histories of the early period of Islam, they constituted an organic whole of a 'universal' type of history, because of their richness in minute details regarding local or trivial events of their period.

During the first two centuries of Islam, Muslim historiography was constantly subject to social and political pressures. Banū Umayya, for example, tried to justify their assumption of power through propagating the idea of predestination, which, in the long run, exercized its influence on the outlook of writing of history. Similarly, regional and tribal prejudices influenced the historical literature of that period and their impact is clearly seen not only on history but even on books of genealogy and grammar written during that period. Every transmitter brings his own clannish outlook to bear on his account of historical events, and by the beginning of the third century of the Hijra two rival schools of Muslim historiography emerge confronting each other at every level and producing far-reaching effects. These are the Medina school and Iraqi school.[1]

1. al-Dūrî *Baḥth fi Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārîkh 'inda al-'Arab.* Catholic Press, Beirut, 1960, p. 48 et. seq.

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CHAPTER II

Historical Material in Pre-Islamic Arabia

History of the period of *Jāhiliyya* is the most neglected part of the Arab historiography. All that we come across regarding this period, is composed of myths, folk-lore and tribal legends, or the material borrowed from the Jewish and Christian sources. Even a portion of this has been fabricated by professional narrators of Islamic period under the influence of their timely political motives.

As late as the eighteenth century, these legends and myths were taken by the Muslim scholars for 'pre-Islamic history', without questioning their genuineness and for centuries together they remained as a prefix to the history of Islam. But, when the Orientalists made intensive studies of some of these reports, and subjected this material to deep analysis and critical examination in the light of modern scientific methods of historiography, they concluded that the major portion of what is called the 'pre-Islamic history', by the early Muslim scholars, had no historical foundation at all. These Orientalists, no doubt, opened new vistas of research in ancient Arab history through excavations, linguistic surveys and archaeological studies. With their intensive efforts new sources of historical knowledge were unearthed and fresh material was added to our stock of knowledge about the ancient history of the Arabian Peninsula.

First of all, they made studies of pre-Islamic inscriptions found in the Southern areas. Not only did they decipher the script which had since been forgotten totally, but they also compiled dictionaries and grammar of those dead languages like the Himyarite. These inscriptions, and compilation of their grammar and glosses opened new alleys of research in ancient Arab history.

The Orientalists, in search of these inscriptions made intensive and extensive journeys in various disguises into the most frightful deserts of the Empty Quarter and into the Yemenite territories, sometimes even at the cost of their lives.[1] Even during the most flourishing period of their academic activities, the Muslim scholars did not pay so much attention to the study of ancient monuments, the ruins and remains of the pre-Islamic past, and other such sources with a view to writing a more vivid account of the history of ancient Arabia. Because, as Prof. Margoliouth has rightly observed : 'what they record directly is not tribal or national history, but the service rendered by a fictitious deity, rewarded by a pagan rite. The very names of the deities could only occasion horror or ridicule : and the offering of images would evoke the same sentiments. If it be true that between the pagan and the Christian periods Judaism prevailed in South Arabia, the attitude of that religion toward both pagan deities and images of all sorts is not less hostile than that of early Islam : the population would have been taught to repudiate such monuments long before Islam became dominant'.[2]

Inscriptions and Epigraphs :

These inscriptions are the most reliable contemporary source of history coming down to us from that period directly. We may divide them into two sections : First, those non-Arab inscriptions which have no direct connexion with the Arab history but only record an information about

1. Margoliouth : *Lectures on Arabic Historians* p. 33.
   Nadvî : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān* pp. 28-42.
2. Margoliouth : op. cit. p. 33.

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[illegible] empirically. Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions [illegible] in this category. There are some other inscriptions recorded in a language or script foreign to Arabia. Such inscriptions have been unearthed in Egypt, South Arabia, Abyssinia and Greek Islands. Others have been found in various regions of the Arabian peninsula like Hijaz, Syria, Kuwait etc. All inscriptions falling in the last category, have been carved in a script which has been accepted as a premature form of the present Arabic script.[1] They throw abundant light on pre-Islamic life and conditions and some of the hitherto accepted facts are also borne out by them. A good example can be cited of the epigraph described to be on the grave of Imra al-Qais, the king of Ḥîra, which has been found in Ḥaurān.[2] Written in Nabatean script during the fourth century (about 328 A.D.) i.e. some three hundred years before the advent of Islam, it reads :

> "This is the grave of Imra al-Qais b. 'Amr, king of all the Arabs, who wore the crown and subjugated the two tribes of Asad and Nizār and their rulers, and defeated *Madh'ḥij* till this day, and commanded victory over Aswār of Najrān, the town of Shimār and subdued Ma'ād and appointed his sons as governors on the tribes and sent them as his viceroys to Rome and Persia, and no king was able to obtain his calibre till this day. He died in the year 223, on the 17th day of Alul (September) and his sons were favoured..."[3]

But, most of the inscriptions found so far record personal events and achievements of a tribal chief or a ruler and thus their historical value is minimized.[4] They hardly throw any light on the socio-political conditions of their time or on the religious, economic and cultural activities of the age to which they belong.

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1. Jawād 'Alî' : *Tārîkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 43-44.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. V p. 317.
3. Jurji Zaidān : *Tārîkh Ādāb al-Lugha al-'Arabia* vol. I p. 28 (ed. Shauqî Ḍaif).
   Jawād 'Alî : *op. cit.* vol. I p. 51.
4. Margoliouth : *Lectures on Arabic Historians* pp. 29-30.

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Similarly, the inscriptions found in South Arabia either record construction of a house, or a temple, or a fortification or the like.

Some of the old inscriptions, in Aramaic, Himyarite, Sabaean and Nabatean characters were found and deciphered during the Umayyd period. Some Muslim scholars of the time were able to decipher foreign languages and old characters (Infra : Wahb b. Munabbih) and we also learn about the famous saint of the second century Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣarî, that he was able to decipher the old Egyptian language.[1]

Al-Hamdānî[2] has enumerated the famous remains of Arabia. According to him the fort Nā'iṭ was built by the king of Yemen 1500 years before Islam. It contained an inscription which was later deciphered by Wahb b. Munabbih in these words :

"This edifice was erected at a time when we had our corns from Egypt."[3]

After calculation, Wahb tells, he found that the fort had been built exactly sixteen hundred years before.[4]

Similarly, during the reign of Mu'āwiya I (40-60 A.H.) 'Abd al Raḥmān, governor of Egypt, discovered an inscription in a ruined fort of Ḥaḍra maut,[5] named *Ḥiṣn-i-Ghurāb*. That inscription has been translated by J. Forster into English in these words :[6]

"And we hunted the game, by land, with ropes and reeds ;

And we drew forth the fishes from the depths of the sea.

Kings reigned over us, far removed from baseness,

1. Nadvî : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān* p. 24.
2. Hamdānî : *al-Iklīl* (ed. Muller D.H.).
3. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. V. p. 253.
4. J. Forster has copied the inscription from Masālik al-Abṣār of Nuwairî, but the version of Yāqūt reads : "when we started our journey to Egypt." (*vide* Nadvî op. cit. p. 25).
5. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. II pp. 269-271.
6. Forster(J) : *A Historical Geography of Arabia* vol. II pp. 90-93.

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vehement against the people of perfidy and fraud,

They sanctioned for us, from the religion of Hud (Heber) right laws,

And we believed in miracles, the resurrection, and the resurrection of the dead by breath of God.

When enemies descended upon our soil to invade us,

We went forth together, with straight and dusky spears."

Dam of Mārib :

The famous Mārib Dam so frequently mentioned in ancient Arabic poetry was constructed by the Sabaeans of the Southern Arabia with a view to storing water in a reservoir and utilizing it for irrigation. It was named after the city, Mārib.[1] On the South West of the town there are two mountains known as Ablaq having a gap between them, which is called the valley of Adhania. Water flowing from mountains and other places accumulates in that valley and develops into a lake. The Sabaeans constructed the Dam between these two mountains about 800 B.C. There was a wall 150 feet high and 50 feet wide. A great part of it has collapsed, but about one third of it still stands. The wall has some inscriptions which have been deciphered.[2]

The inscriptions on the extent portion of the wall contain the names of the founders also viz. Yatha'amar Bayyin (Distinguished) Samah'ali Yanuf (Exalted) Kariba'il Watar Yuhan'im (Great Beneficent) and Dhamar'ali Dhirrih (Glorious).

A perusal of these inscriptions shows that the construction of the Dam took a long time and covered the reigns of several kings of Yemen. The first builder was Yatha'amar (or Ith'amara) who flourished in the 8th century B.C. The wall of the Dam had a large number of upper and lower windows which could be opened or closed as needed. On

1. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. V pp. 34-38.
2. *Journal Asiatique* (7th Series, vol. III-1874).

either side of it there were two large doors, through which water, dividing itself, made its way in both directions. Muslim commentators' accounts of the Dam are mostly confirmed by Arnaud's description of the same :

> "Artemidorus of Ephesus, who wrote somewhat later than Agatharchides of cridus, represents the king of Sabaeans and his court as living in effeminate luxury at Mariaba, which lay on a wooded mountain. Owing to the abundance of fruit, the people were lazy and inactive, and reclined on the roots of the spice-trees. For fire-wood, they used cinnamon and cassia. The occupation of the people was partly agriculture and partly trade in spices, both native and imported from the opposite coast of Ethiopia, whither the Sabaeans passed over the inlet of the sea in boats of skins. The neighbouring tribes received the wares from the Sabaeans, and then passed them on to their neighbours, till they reached Syria and Mesopotamia".[1]

Some Assyrian inscriptions show that the Sabaean king Itha'amar, was defeated by the Assyrian in the 7th century B.C. It is admitted that the Assyrians never marched on Yemen, and so the Sabaeans themselves should have gone as far as Abyssinia—a view which is supported by the Old Testament.[2]

Other Old Monuments :

The Sabaeans were great builders. They constructed huge buildings, dams and roads, founded cities and luxurious gardens. Similarly, the 'Ād had a most developed taste for architecture so much so that the Qur'ān has conferred the title *Dhāt al-'Imād* on them.

On the destruction of Mārib Dam a large number of the population depending on the Dam for irrigation of their

1. *Islamic Review* : vol. XXIX No. 8 (Aug. 1941) article by S.M. Nadvi.
   Journal Asiatique (1874).
2. *The Bible :* (Job I : 15 and VI : 19).
   Islamic Review : vol. XXIX No. 8 (1941).

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migrated to the Northern regions. But the ruins and remains of these great edifices survived upto the advent of Islam and some of the Muslim historians have given an account of them in their books. Al-Hamdānî has devoted a chapter of his work *al-Iklîl* to the description of palaces and castles of the Sabaeans.

"Their inscriptions, so far available, are mostly the monumental tablets of their buildings. Nashwān b. Sa'îd, the Himyarite, has described nearly twentyfive royal edifices in his *Qaṣīda al-Ḥimyariyya* European travellers have also given an account of the ruins of their buildings. The relics of the Castle Silee are still visible."[1]

The Qur'ān also refers to their buildings, and gardens.[2] In spite of their limited scope and treatment, we have been able to know through these inscriptions names of the rulers of Yemen, their social and political activities (though very scanty and vague) and, of course, about some of the wars they fought. They also speak about mutual relations between the rulers of South Arabia, their laws, levies, works of public benefit etc. We also gather from these sources that they were inclined to lead a civilized urban life ; they were proficient in many arts like architecture, building of dams, irrigation system etc. Nevertheless, what we have in hand so far, does not provide clues to the type and nature of their mutual relations and their contacts with the outside world.

Although the South Arabian inscriptions vary in their size according to the requirement of the subject they deal with, yet they bear resemblance in their phraseology and style because of similarity of their purpose.[3] One such text is found in (No. C.I.H. 1450) written on the war between the tribes of Ḥashîd and Ḥimyar in the city of *Nā'iṭ*. Similarly, the text of an inscription dealing with the victory of Abraha

1. *Islamic Review* : vol. XXIX No. 8 (1941).
2. *al-Qur'ān* : XXXIV : 15-16.
3. Margoliouth : *Lectures on Arabic Historians* p. 29.
   al-Dūrî : *Baḥth fi Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārîkh 'ind al-'Arab* pp. 13-14.

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in Yemen, contains 136 lines and dates back to 658 Himyarite year, corresponding with 543 A.D., is inscribed in a very poor and spoiled Himyarite script.[1]

Such inscriptions, as may be regarded inscribed in any form of Arabic script or dialect, or those directly concerned with the Arabic language, are very few in number and do not go beyond describing names of some deities or those of extinct Arabian tribes.

Calendar Systems of the Ancient Arab :

Those inscriptions which carry a date are still fewer. We do not have sufficient proof to believe that pre-Islamic Arabs had any permanent calendar for recording chronology of events. Instead, they used various ways to denote the time of occurance of a particular incident, most common among them being the practice of referring to a ruler during whose reign a particular incident[2] took place. Similarly, they used the dates of their chiefs of tribes, a practice long in vogue among the Manians, Sabians and Qabatanians. Such inscriptions, though more useful then the undated ones, do not provide any substantial material of historical value as regards modern standards of historiography. Another difficulty is that the modern historian cannot determine their exact period of recording because he does not have any account of those rulers or chiefs whom these inscriptions so confidently refer to in dating an incident related to their period. Those who inscribed these tablets failed to realize the simple fact that the fame of those rulers would not last for ever and after some generations they were destined to be consigned to the limbs of oblivion.[3]

The Himyarites had, however, adopted a permanent calendar from 115 B.C. the year of the establishment of

1. Jawād 'Alī : *Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 46.
   al-Mas'ūdī : *al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf* p. 172.
2. al-Mas'ūdī : *al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf* pp. 167-183.
3. The year of Mabhud b. Abhad supposed to have begun from 115 B.C. was in vogue until the invasion of Abraha on the Ka'ba and also appears on an inscription related to that period. *Encyclopaedia of Islam I* : p. 377.

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kingdom, which they used subsequently as a starting point of their calendar.[1] For instance, one tablet records the Himyarite year 385 (that is according to those who regard the advent of Himyarites in 115 B.C.) corresponding to 27 A.D. It was inscribed by the king Yaser Yanhem, king of Saba[2] and *Dhū Raidān*. Another tablet showing the date 372 Himyarite year, records his title as king of Saba, *Dhū Raidān* Ḥaḍramaut and Yemen, which clearly indicates that the ruler had in the meantime expanded his territory to still farther extents.

The Himyarite king Shurḥabîl Y'a fūr b. Abî Kuraib, when ordered the building of a dam, a tablet was placed there to record the time of its construction. It carries the word '*Raḥmān*' which speaks about the monotheistic concepts of the ruler.[3]

Our early reporters also transmit such accounts which indicate that old ainscriptions were unearthed during the period of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān written in a language and script unknown to the scholars at Umayyad court. One such tablet was found at the time of digging out foundations for the Damascus Mosque. The Caliph ordered to despatch immediately a messenger to Wahb b. Munabbih, (*infra q.v.*) when all others failed to decipher it. The version of that tablet has also been cited by the historians[4] which also includes '*Basmala*' (invocation carrying the words *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm*) and records the time of inscription as, 'during the reign of Solomon son of David'. It means that Wahb b.Munabbih must have been conversant with the old Himyarite script and by that time it had not been forgotten completely.

Even if the early Muslim scholars were acquainted with, and able to decipher old inscriptions, our early reporters

1. Some scholars are of the view that the kingdom of Himyarites was established during the year 109 B.C., but the difference is not very significant. see Jawād 'Alî : *Tārîkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 48.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. III p. 181.
3. Jawād Alî : *Tārîkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 50.
4. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahb* vol. III p. 157.

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did not show much interest in transmitting from them about the pre-Islamic history of Arabia, either because of the fact that they did not realise their value as a basic source of historical knowledge, or as Margoliouth understands it, because they did not want to indulge themselves in 'non-Islamic' studies at all, since Islam had cancelled all that was before it.[1]

Calendar System of the Quraish :

At one time the tribe of Quraish used to count dates from the reconstruction of the Ka'ba. Then it was switched over to the expedition launched by Nebuchadnezzar I, and was called *'Ām al-Tafarruq* (i.e the year of perfidy). followed by the *'Ām al-Ghadr* (i.e. the year of departure). During the period immediately preceding the advent of Islam, the tribe of Quraish had adopted *'Ām al-Fīl* (i.e. the 'Year of the Elephant') as the starting point of their calendar to mark chronology of events. It referred to the invasion of Abraha, the Abyssinian Governor of Yemen, who had launched an expedition for the demolition of the sacred 'Home of Allah' in the year 570 A.D. The Qur'ānic Sūra entitled *'al-Fīl'* refers to the same episode.[2] During the same year, and after 55 nights of this invasion, Hazrat Moḥammad was born at Mecca.[3] This 'Year of the Elephant' was practised in Mecca until the introduction of the Hijra calendar. At the time of Prophet's migration, the people of Medina used the dates of the construction of their castles as their local calendar.[4]

Other Arabian tribes used their battle-days (*ayyām*) as their tribal calendar. Thus, we can easily conclude that the practice of using a calendar was, in one form or the other, prevalent among all nations around the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabs had also their own way of dating important

1. Margoliouth : *Lectures on Arabic Historians* p. 47.
2. *alur'ān* : 105 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* vol. XXX p.
   see also al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* vol. I p. 193.
3. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* vol.I p. 158 Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I p. 100.
4. al-Mas'ūdî : *al-Tanbîh wa al-Ishrāf* p. 206.

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[illegible]gh they did not have a commonly acceptable permanent calendar. The Second Caliph 'Umar introduced a calendar beginning from Hijra, and later on it helped our transmitters to point out the time and the date of such accounts as were transmitted by them orally.

The present Hijra calendar was adopted[1] in 17 or 18 A.H. Although the migration of the Prophet had taken place in the month of *Rabî'al-Awwal*, yet the first Hijra year was counted from Ist of Muḥarram i.e. about two months and a few days were added to it.[2]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal says that 'Umar got the idea from a letter he received from Ya'lā b. Umayya, governor of Yemen, bearing a date which he appreciated. But al-Suyūṭî quotes Ibn Ṣalāḥ and others who reported that the Prophet himself used the Hijra calendar when he dictated a letter to 'Alî, addressed to the Christians of Najrān, and he suggested that 5 A.H. be written at the end of it. Thus, 'Umar was only to follow the suit.[3]

Ibn 'Asākir, on the other hand, quotes al-Sha'bî that Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arî wrote to 'Umar that his letters which he received did not bear any date, and that they must be dated properly. 'Umar sought advice from his companions. Some one suggested that the calendar should start from the date the Prophet declared his mission (*al-mab'ath*) ; others suggested it should be counted from his death, but 'Umar gave his ruling that the Islamic calendar should start from the date of the migration of the Prophet, since it was the point of discrimination between truth and falsehood.[4] Accord-

1. It is interesting that Ibn Abî Khaithama with a chain of authority ending on Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî, writes in his history about the beginning of the Calendar that "when Adam descended on earth, and his sons spread over it they started counting dates from this event till God sent Noah as His Prophet" ... thus tracing the calendar upto the Islamic system. al-Suyūṭî : *al-Shamārîkh fi 'Ilm al-Tārîkh* (MS) Osmānia University Library, Hyderabad, A.P.
2. al-Suyūṭî *al-Shamārîkh* (MS.) f.1 b.
3. al-Suyūṭî : *al-Shamārîkh* (MS) f.2. a.
4. op. cit.

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ing to another version all of them unanimously adopted the Hijra as the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Ibn Khaithama gives credit to the people of Yemen in an indirect way and tells that a Muslim after visiting the Yemen came to see 'Umar and reported to him that he had seen there a system being practised which they called "*tārīkh*" and that they wrote in the year so and so, in the month so and so. 'Umar said : "It is very good indeed. We should also adopt it."[1] It was in accordance with the suggestion made by 'Uthmān that Muḥarram should be the first month of the calendar. Ibn 'Asākir says that the Ist of Muḥarram of the first Hijra year corresponded to Thursday and 933 (Alexanderian year).

II. The Jewish Sources of Pre-Islamic Arab History :

(*a*) *The Torah :*

The Jewish sources also served the purpose of filling the gaps in the pre-Islamic history of the Arab. As the chief theme of the Qur'ān and the Torah was the same, the Old Testament has many references showing relations between the Arab and the Hebrew and a large number of facts and events were common to both. Torah is the collection of various scriptures revealed to the Hebrew prophets and its major portion was recorded in Palestine while some of its books were written in the Valley of Euphrate during the time of the captivity of the Jews. As regards the time, the oldest among them is the 'Book of Amos' written in circa 750 B.C. while the 'Book of Daniel' is the latest as regards its compilation, as it was written during the second century A.D. Thus, references to the Arabs found in these scriptures date between 750 B.C. to the second century A.D.[2]

The Torah was revealed to Moses and is composed of the five books which are collectively known as :

I. **Pentateuch** :

(*i*) *Genesis* : which deals with the creation of the universe and also gives short notices of the early

1. op. cit.
2. Jawād 'Alī : *Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 54;

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prophets like Adam, Abraham, Joshua, Ishmael, Jacob and Joseph.

(*ii*) *Exodus* : contains the accounts of Moses and Pharaoh and exodus of the Jews from Egypt which is supposed to have taken place in 1491 B.C.

(*iii*) *Leviticus* : This book contains some of the Laws of Jewish *Sharî'at.*

(*iv*) *Numbers* : consists of number of the Israelites at the time of their exodus from Egypt. Some accounts of wars led by Moses, as well as some of the laws are also included in it.

(*v*) *Deuteronomy*: contains a repetition of the discourses of Moses and some of the laws given in Exodus.

II. **Nebhiim** : (the Prophets) This book is divided into two groups :

(a) The 'Former Prophets' such as Joshua, Samuel and others.

(b) The 'Latter Prophets' such as Isaiah, Ezekiel and others.

III. **Kethubim** (*Kutub* or Books) : consisting of Psalms, Proverbs, Songs of Solomon, Esther, Daniel etc.

IV. **Targhum** : The Aramaic translation and commentary of the *Torah* and *Nebhiim.*[1]

(*b*) *The Talmud* :

Talmud has also several references to Arabs. It is divided into two parts : (a) *Talmud Palestinian,* written and compiled in Jerusalem and the Jewish academies provided help in its

1. Nadvî : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān p. 19-20* (Calcutta 1936).

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compilation in synagogues.[1] The most renowned centre of Talmud studies was Teberias where Rabbi Jochanan, probably during the third century A.D., compiled the Talmud in its earliest form. Other Rabbis, afterwards, wrote commentaries on it, added new material to the original text and explained some of its versions, till a final text was adopted during the fourth century A.D.[2]

Talmud is, divided into two parts : *Mishnah* (knowledge) also called the second law, which is the 'text' and *Gemara* (completion) its exegesis.

Mishnah was collected by Judah Hanasi between circa 190-200 B.C. Gemara has also two parts : Palestinian and Babylonian. The former is supposed to have been collected in about 400 B.C. by the Jewish academies of Teberias[3] while the latter was compiled by the Jews of Babylonia circa 500 B.C. Thus the *Mishnah* with Gemara-Palestinian commentary is called Talmud Jerusalem and that with Babylonian Gemara 'Talmud-Babylonian'.

Mishnah is regarded as the oral law which the vested interest Rabbis made in accordance with their own desires and timely requirements, after the age of Christ.

Moses b. Maimonides says that from the time of the Prophet Moses until the age of Judah Hanasi the Jew scholars did not have consensus on any issue connected with dogmatic beliefs. Instead, every Rabbi imparted his own opinion to

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1. For further information about the Talmud reference may be made to :
   Yūsuf Naṣrullāh : (tr.) *al-Kanz al-Marṣūd fi Qawā'id al-Talmud* Cairo, 1899.
   Polano (H) : *The Talmud* (London) n.d.
   Robertson : *Lectures on the Religions of the Semites* (London, 1927).
   Browne (Lewis) : *The Wisdom of Israel* (London, 1948).
   Barclay : *The Talmud*, (John Murray, London, 1887).
   Fabian (A) : *The Babylonian Talmud*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1963.
   Ẓafar al-Islām : *al-Talmūd : its History and Teachings* (Beirut, 1971).
2. Jawād *'Alī : Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. 1 p. 55.
3. *Jewish Encyclopaedia :* vol X (1948) *'Talmud'*.

orally, as a result of which hundreds of books containing various legal interpretations came into existence.[1]

'Talmud' does also carry chains of authority, as practised by the Muslim transmitters, but these chains were undoubtedly invented after the advent of Islam. Following is an example of the style of Talmud :

"Lefi b. Chama narrated from Simon b. Lakish who told while commenting on the *Torah* : "We shall give the tablets, canon, and counsels which we have written so that ye may educate them." (Exodus 24:12) He said : 'tablets' are the Ten commandments, 'canon' is the written law, and counsels is *Mishnah*. 'We have written' means : what the Prophets have written from Holy Scriptures, 'so that ye may teach them' i.e. Gemara. All this means that Talmud was handed over to Moses on Sinai."[2]

It would yield interesting results if we compare the above version of Jewish commentary with the explanatory reports of say Ibn 'Abbās that occur in al-Ṭabarî's Commentary of the Qur'ān.

As we have pointed out earlier, chains of authority for transmission of *Mishnah* were fabricated years after the advent of Islam, yet the Jews assert that the *Mishnah* has been transmitted directly from Moses through forty receivers who transmitted it to posterity one after another.

Mishnah is composed of six parts :[3]

(i) *Sidarem* (orders) : Zeraim, (11 tractates) Moed (12 tractates)

(ii) *Nashim* (Laws regarding women) : 7 tractates

(iii) *Nezekin* (Social Laws) 10 tractates

(iv) *Kodashim* (Laws regarding Prayers) 11 tractates

1. Barclay (J) : *Hebrew Literature* pp. V, VI (New York, 1901). Strack (H.L) : *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Philadelphia 1945).
2. Barclay : *Hebrew Literature* : p. 3 (New York 1901).
3. Dauby (H) : *Mishnah* (Oxford, 1933). But now only four tractates are found in Tamud-Jerusalem. (*Hebrew Literature*. p. 4).

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(v) *Toharoth* (Laws regarding Purification) 12 tractates

Thus the total number of tractates becomes 63, which are collectively called *Shishah Sedorium* (Six Laws). Apart from these, seven Minor Tractates are also supposed to be the part of Talmud ; other books written by latter Rabbis after the completion of Talmud on the pattern of its tractates, containing ethical teachings, stories, laws etc. were also invented by the Jew ecclesiastics and they called it *Midrash.*

It is interesting for our purpose that the Gemara was completed by Jose in about 498 A.D. and those who follow his opinion are called '*Opinionist*' a word synonymous to *Aṣḥāb al-Rāi* among the commentators of the Qur'ān.

Talmud Palestinian was written originally in Hebrew or Western Aramaic language. It contained about 750,000 words of which about 15 per cent are *Haggadah* i.e. Jewish tales and legends ; and the same are the base of what is termed *Israeliyyāt* in the preface of *Sīrah* or in the early history of the Arab. Similarly, about one third of the Babylonian Talmud consists of *Haggadah.*

But the Babylonian Talmud was written by Rabbi Ashi (d.430 A.D.). His work was accomplished by other scholars posthumously. Its final version was adopted some time during the sixth century A.D. Each of the above-mentioned Talmud versions has its own characteristics. It portrays the country where it was compiled. So, the Palestinian Talmud follows the pattern of narration and transmission while the Babylonian version reflects liberality of attitude, profoundity, catholicity in legal matters and richness in contents. These qualities are not found in the Palestinian version of Talmud. "Both the Talmud and the Midrashim distinctly show traces of foreign influence in their Heggadic portions, i.e. in the myths, legends, tales and parables, often these influences are diametrically opposed to the spirit of Judaism, whilst on other occasions they are changed and adopted so as to suit the ethical exigencies of Judaism."[1]

1. Rappoport : *Early Literature and Tradition of the Jewish Nation* vol. I (introduction) p. XX.

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matter of fact, the Talmud is a complement to the Torah in the same way as the Ḥadîth literature complements the Holy Qur'ān. As for the period between the compilation of the Torah and that of the Talmud, we gather some scanty information from other Greek works of Jewish writers like Josephus Flavius (37-100 A.D.). The influence of Talmud on Islamic historical literature could be seen in such cases as we find in the biographical account of the Prophet Joseph that he possessed the nine-tenth of all the world's beauty; while the Qur'ān has no reference to his physical beauty. Even the story of Joseph that is found in the Qur'ān is at places quite different from what we see in the books containing the stories after prophets.

(c) Classical Greek Works:

Some classical works of Greek and Latin also contain valuable hints on the pre-Islamic Arab history because names of various extinct Arabian tribes occur therein. Authors of these works gathered their material from such persons who joined the Greek or Roman expeditions on the Arab territories, or from those travellers who met the Arab tribes and stayed with them for sometime during the course of their journeys. Most of these narrations were acquired by the Nabatean merchants and mariners who penetrated deep into the Arab territories for selling their chattel. In this respect Alexandria is regarded as the most important centre where narrations about the Arab, their customs and social conditions were gathered. Classical writers obtained their material from these commercial centres.

These classical works positively speak of existence of relations between the coastal Arab areas and the Greek and Roman territories. Some of these works also refer to the old Greek theory that some of the Arabian tribes and Greek races had a common ancestry.

The oldest Greek writer in whose works references to Arabs are found is Herodotus (480-425 B.C.).[1] He visited

1. *The History of Herodotus* translated in two volumes by George Rowlinson, London, 1920. Nadvî : A Historical Geography p. 20-21.

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Egypt and collected information by way of oral transmission as well as by his own observations. His is the first European book written in an ornate style and arranged into chapters. He has dealt with the account of war between Greece and Persia. But, it appears that he could not complete his history and some chapters of his book have been added to by latter writers. Herodotus is the first European writer who chose the topic of 'history of the past' and presented it with some amount of critical sensibility rare in his times. He has mentioned names of some deities of the Ka'ba. Another Greek writer Diodorus Siculus (circa 50 B.C.) does also refer to the great pilgrimage centre of Ka'ba.[1]

Of the classical travellers, Strabo[2] (64 B.C.-19 A.D.)[3] compiled a 17-volume book in the Greek language of which the 16th book contains a chapter on Arabs, their tribes, cities, their commercial and socio-economic activities and an account of the Roman invasion led by Aelius Gallus to conquer the Arab territory. Strabo himself joined the army which operated into Arabia so his description of the war is an eye-witness account, but no Arab version of this war is available. Strabo mentions the Nabateans, makes a passing reference to the cities of Negrana (Nejran) and Mariabe (Mārib). Pliny (23-79 A.D.) in his Natural History has also described the Eastern coasts of Arabia and also the expedition which the Romans led into Arabia with a view to making a discovery of the coasts of the East.

But these classical accounts of Greek and Latin were also unknown to our historiographers of early Islamic centuries. They mainly depended on such sources as were available to them and could not get rid of the Biblical concept by history.

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1. Muir (William) *Life of Mohammad* p. ciii
2. Strabo : *Geographia* edited by August Meineke in three volumes, Leipzig, 1907-1913.
3. Nadvî (p21) gives the dates as 63-24 B.C. which is perhaps an omission. We have opted the dates given by Jawād 'Alî in his *al-Mufaṣṣal* which is comparatively latest and exhaustive work.

Greece had never been directly connected with Arabia, but as the Arabs generally sided with the Persians in their wars with the Greeks the author thought it necessary to make mention of the Arabs also. His book has been translated into Arabic also. The knowledge, of Herodotus regarding Arabia was, however, very limited. He thought that Arabia was the last southern country beyond which their was no human habitation".[1]

A century after Herodotus, Alexander the Great, led an invasion into Egypt and Persia in 332-331 B.C., and his soldiers had an opportunity to know the Persian Gulf and the borders of Arabia. He had a craving to conquer the hitherto unconquered land of Arabia also, but his sudden death in 323 B.C., made a short work of it. Nevertheless, the Greek owing to their diplomatic relations with Egypt and Persia, frequently came in contact with the Arab merchants of Alexandria and the Persian gulf. Naturally, therefore, the Greek began to know more and more about the Arabs.[2]

Besides, the following Greek travellers have dealt with Arabia and the Arabs in their classical works:

1. *Eratosthenes*: (276-194 B.C.) He was Superintendent of Alexandria Library during the Greek period and compiled a general geography of the world. This book is now lost, but some portions of it were incorporated by Strabo (d. 24 B.C.) in his book. Fortunately, the chapter on Arabia is extant.

2. *Diodorus*: (born in Sicily in 80 B.C.) He wrote a book in which he gave an account of Arabia, the Nabataean empire and the Holy Ka'ba. But a great portion of the book is lost.

3. *Josephus Flavius*: The only ancient history writer of Jewish origin, lived at Alexandria during the

1. Nadvi : op. cit. p. 21.
2. Nadvi : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān* p. 21.

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first century A.D. His works on history are in Greek and Latin and have also been rendered into English. These works also contain valuable material on the ancient Biblical History and on the history of the Jewish war.[1]

(d) Christian Sources :

(*i*) *The New Testament :*

The New Testament is also regarded by the Muslims as a Holy Writ revealed by Allah, and the Qur'ān has also attested to it. But the scholars are of the view that the original text of the Holy Scripture revealed to Christ has been altered and interpolated by the later generations.

In their exegesis of the New Testament, Christians have also produced many tales and anecdotes which the Muslim commentators utilized in their interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses bearing upon Christianity and the prophets mentioned in the New Testament. Christianity had also found way among some of the Arabian tribes like Banū Taghlib and Nejrān.[2] Those converted from Christianity to Islam brought with them traditions and anecdotes which the Muslim reporters accepted for making their pre-Islamic history more rich in details and complemented by Christian sources as well. In the commentaries of the Qur'ān our early scholars have referred to the New Testament especially in their description of the Virgin Mary and Christ.[3] Among the reporters from the Christian sources we find Wahb b. Munabbih (q.v.),[4] Mohammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓî, (q.v.). Mohammed b. Is'ḥāq, etc. Among later transmitters Asbāṭ, Yaḥyā

1. Nadvi : op. cit p. 23.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. V p. 266 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* vol. I pp. 553, 573.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* vol. I pp. 405 et. seq.
   Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* vol. I pp: 31, 35, 232, 238, 541, 545.
4. Aḥmad Amîn : *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* vol. I pp. 339-340.
   For further examples of the New Testament quoted in the commentary of the Qur'ān see : al-Ṭabarî *Tafsîr* vols. XVI pp. 64-65 et. seq.

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and al-Kalbi are also known to have exploited the Christian sources in their reports.

Sirah-writers, particularly Ibn Is'ḥāq, have also obtained material from the New Testament and other Christian sources in their description of Christ and Mary or the Christianity in Nejrān. Later writers like al-Tha'ālibî (d.327 A.H.) who produced independent works on the subject of *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiā* (stories of the prophets) have exploited Christian sources without any restriction particularly in the descriptions of Yaḥya, Zacharia, Maryam and Masîḥ. Similarly, some of the fabricators of Ḥadîth had attributed words of the New Testament to our Prophet, Ahmad Amîn has given a few examples of such wrong attributions.[1]

Muslim historians also obtained material for their histories from the Christian traditions without exercising their critical sensibility in their valuation as a historical source or discriminating between mythical element and semi-historical anecdotes. In the works of early historians like al-Ṭabarî, al-Mas'udî, Ibn Qutaiba etc. details about the People of Cave, or Jurjis, have been definitely borrowed from the folk traditions of Christian origin.

Christianity had a stronghold in Syria during the first century of Islam. When the Umayyad rulers established their capital in Damascus, Muslim scholars, theologians, philosophers, Traditionists, as well as historiographers had more frequent chances of coming in contact with the Christian monks and scholars. As the Christian ecclesiastics were deeply steeped in futile hair-split discussions in their dogmatic interpretations, say, on the issue of anthropomorphization or de-anthropomorphism, Muslims also imbibed the influence of such discussions which later on resulted in polemics like the issue of the creation of the Qur'ān etc.

(ii) Other Christian Sources :

Other Christian sources, most of them in Greek or Syriac languages, also provide some information about the

1. Aḥmad Amîn : *Ḍūḥā-al-Islām* vol. I p. 340.

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ancient history of the Arab people and their relations with other neighbouring countries like Persia and Rome. Christian churches were particularly rich in records. Al-Hamdānī and al-Kalbî visited these churches in Ḥîra[1] and obtained material for their histories.

Some Roman and Syriac Christians during the period of the Umayyads and the Abbasids compiled general histories or ecclesiastical histories containing rich material about the Islamic as well as the pre-Islamic Arabia. These works are distinguished from other sources inasmuch as they contain accounts which we hardly come across in the works of Muslim historiographers, i.e. the diplomatic and political relations between the Arab and the Christian world before the advent of Islam.[2]

Ptolemy, though basically an astronomer and geographer of Alexandria, in the second century A.D., lived during a period when the Great Roman Empire was at the height of its glory. He prepared a map of the world and then compiled a geographical book in amplification of it. This book was first translated into Arabic by Ya'qūb al-Kindî[3] but as the translation was not sufficiently intelligible, Thābit b. Qurra produced a new translation of it in the ninth century A.D.[4] The original map of Ptolemy is lost but the book is extant.[5]

Ptolemy himself never visited Arabia, but he frequently met the Arab merchants at Alexandria and from them he acquired some information regarding that country.[6]

Ptolemy has given an elaborate description of all famous tribes, towns, villages mountains, coasts and commercial routes of Arabia. But their names have since changed so radically that it is well nigh impossible to locate most of them. The well-known author Bunbury has rejected this

1. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. II pp. 328-331.
2. JawādAlî : *Tārîkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* vol. I p. 65.
3. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 268, 600-608.
4. *al-Fihrist* pp. 625 et. seq.
5. Nadvi : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān* p. 22.
6. Nadvi : *A Historical Geography of the Qur'ān* pp. 22-23.

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books as based on imagination and fiction, but the German Orientalist Dr. Sprenger, whose book 'Ancient Geography of Arabia' was published in 1875, has scrutinized the information contained in Ptolemy's book and after verifying the works of the Arab geographers has characterized the same to be reliable.[1]

Classical books from Roman, Syriac, Greek and Latin languages, mostly on the subjects of Physics, Astronomy, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Logic, Alchemy and Medicine were translated by the Christian as well as some Muslim scholars during the first century of Islam. Although these works were not connected directly with the historical material, yet they must have helped Muslim historiographers in knowing about the contribution of the Greek and Roman people to social sciences, humanities and physical sciences.

(e) Pre-Islamic Historical Material of Arab Origin :

(*i*) *Battle-Day Narratives : (Ayyām al-Arab)*:

The historical literature which the pre-Islamic Arabs of Northern areas were in possession of, was the orally circulated narratives of the battle-days of Arabs, commonly known as *ayyām al-Arab*. These narratives mainly dealt with wars among various contending tribes, some of them based on the tales of their deities while others depicted, to some extent, aspects of their socio-cultural and religious activities. These narratives are often rich in genealogical information and also mirror the characteristic features of the tribes they were concerned with. Their social behaviour and religio-political outlook are also reflected in these narratives. According to these narratives, the most highly esteemed human quality unto them was *muruwwa* with a very vast meaning.[2] It is not only the chief quality of Bedouin character but also includes the sense of chivalry,[3] magnanimity, sublime ideas and phi-

1. Nadvi : op. cit. pp 22-23.
2. Goldziher : Muslim Studies vol. I pp. 11-14 (tr. S.M. Stern, London, 1967).
3. Jād al-Maulā (M.A.) : *Ayyām al-'Arab fi al-Jāhiliyya* pp. 34,87 *et. sequentes.*

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equally overrate the value of these narratives if we accord them the status of dependable 'historical material' with all implications of the term, since the legendary element has always dominated them. Those responsible for making out these narratives had no historical consciousness whatsoever, nor did they compose them with the purpose and intention of preserving historical knowledge. Moreover, these tales are generally one-sided; until and unless we have before us the narratives of both fighting tribes, it would not be possible to judge the extent of their trustworthiness in recording the details of a war and the actual role of those whom they adore as heroes. Further, they do not record any chronology and we cannot know with their help the exact or nearabout timing of the battles they describe. But, in spite of such lacunae, we can certainly obtain from this material much useful information, and their importance as a basic source of the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs cannot be denied.

Ayyām stories were also valued as social entertainment. They were considered as the collective property of the whole tribe. At first, these narratives were transmitted by the members of the tribe they described, but afterwards, professional *Rāwîs* (narrators of tribal tales) emerged, and it was during the Umayyad period that these tribal tales were committed to writing to be later on exploited by the historiographers and philologists.

Scholars of the first century A.H. have, without any reservations, utilized the *ayyām*-tales for historical purposes. We find in early traditions names of many persons who were regarded as scholars of *ayyām, ansāb* (genealogy) and *akhbār* of the *Jāhiliyya* period. It is a sufficient proof to believe that during the century immediately preceding Islam, knowledge of *ayyām* was a specialized field of study so much so that *maghāzî* and *ayyām* became the two branches of history. Ḥājî Khalîfa[1] remarks that 'knowledge of the battle-days of the Arab should be taken as a branch out of many branches of history'. According to him, Abū 'Ubaida had

1. Ḥājî Khalîfa : *Kashfal ẓunūn* pt. I p. 204.

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two books containing the *ayyām* tales. A small treatise on the subject had 75 narratives while the larger one consisted of about 1200 *ayyām*-tales. Both the works have been lost and we have only such narratives as are found *passim* in the books of literature and history like the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, *al-Naqā'iḍ*, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, and *Mu'jam mu' sta'jam* etc.

Style of the Ayyām Tales :

The diction and the style of the *ayyām*-narratives are quite lively, effective and self-explanatory. The warp and woof of these narratives is constituted of poetical compositions with added notes in prose complementing each other. The central theme of *ayyām* stories is an episode or incident or description of a certain war. The most significant and memorable incident also served the purpose of chronological demarcation. These *ayyām*-tales are characteristically Arabic having no signs of their being influenced by any external cultural traditions. The literature of *jāhiliyya* period is essentially folk-literature in its style and characteristics, and it resembles a historical version also.

Impact of Ayyām Tales on Futūḥ :

The institution of the *ayyām* narratives had a deep impact on the Arab tribal society which remained alive and intact till much after the advent of Islam. The *maghāzī* narratives clearly indicate the influence of the *ayyām* : firstly, in the use of poetry secondly, in their hyperbolic style and lastly, in the presentation of minute details of war. Although this style helped crystallize the background of the Islamic traditions, yet the *maghāzī* narratives distinctly differ from those of the *ayyām* in respect of the following characteristics :

(a) Transmitters of the *maghāzī* were the Companions of the Prophet, and the biographical accounts of the most of them are available to us while the transmitters of the *ayyām* tales are nonentities.

(b) The *maghāzī* narratives present a chronological

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sequence of expeditions launched by the Prophet while the *ayyām* absolutely lack in dates or chronology.

(c) As for the historical value of the *maghāzī* and the *ayyām* narratives, we can derive valuable hints of historical significance out of the *maghāzī* after eliminating the poetry and the exaggerative style. But, in the *ayyām* narratives there is very scant and undependable material from historiographical point of view.

(d) The *ayyām* tales have no authority-chains 'while the *maghāzī* narratives have been transmitted on the pattern of the *Ḥadīth* and are generally supported by chains of authority.

(e) The purpose behind the *ayyām* tales was to glorify the deeds of a tribe and to create a sense of pride among its members. This hardly requires any authentication or attestation. But, the *maghāzī* narratives, in addition to the above purpose and quality, also carried a sense of historical literature. Hence, the status of the *maghāzī*-reporter was more important than that of the *ayyām*-narrator or the mere story-teller.

(f) The *ayyām* narratives are the prejudicated versions which glorify only the tribe to which they belong. Hence their statements are not free from exaggeration, tribal partisanism and favouritism. This deeply influenced the history of the Iraqi School which seems to have greatly imbibed these characteristics in its *akhbār* and *futūḥ* narrations.

(ii) Arabic Poetry as a Source of Historical Material : Diwān al-Arab :

'Poetry is the Archives of the Arab'.[1] says an old dictum which is sometimes attributed to Ibn 'Abbās.[2] After the advent of Islam, when the philologists, transmitters of poetry and genealogists cooperated in accumulation of historical

1. al-*Muzhir* II : p. 235.
2. al-*'Iqd al-Farīd* : III p. 122.
   Fajr al-Islām : p. 57.

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material, poetry, too, gained a significant position in the field of historiography. Now poetry occupied the position of an important source of the cultural and intellectual activities of the Arab and became a subject of research with regard to its composers, persons referred to therein, strange words and idioms, dialects of various tribes and their regions etc. Naturally, the stories of *ayyām*-tales were also done alongwith it.

Such explanatory notes provided huge material of historical importance and the historians utilized it for their purpose. It was so inter-complementing that by the advent of the third century, it became quite difficult to distinguish between the narrators of *akhbār* and those of poetry. So much so that pre-eminent figures of this field like Abū 'Ubaida. (d.209 A.H.) al-Haitham b. 'Adî (d. 209 A.H.) al-Aṣma'î (d. 216) etc. are regarded as links between literature and history.[1]

Almost all Traditionists of early Islamic period held poetry as an essential part of history, because of the fact that *jāhiliyya* poetry mirrored the characteristic qualities and salient features of the Arab. These Traditionists had their upbringing in an atmosphere fully charged with taste for poetry and *ayyām*-tales. Even those early Traditionists and commentators who appear to have strictly observed the sanctity of *Ḥadîth* and *Tafsîr*, were inclined to recite poetical verses in their private and public assemblies. 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās, the renowned Traditionist, was so fond of poetry that after keeping himself absorbed in the commentary of the Holy Qur'ān or transmission of *Ḥadîth* for sometime, he used to say to those present : 'Now let us switch over to the recitations from poetry for recreation'.[2]

Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj was an eminent Traditionist deeply engrossed in the study of *Ḥadîth*, yet sometimes, for the sake of diversion he used to recite poems before his audience. On such an occasion, when he recited considerable number

1. Jawād Alî : *Majalla Majma' al-'Ilmî al-'Irāqî*. Vol. I (1950).
2. al Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh li man Dhamma Ahl al-Taurîkh*, p. 98.

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of poetical compositions, some one from amongst the listeners took an exception and said : 'We emaciate our mounts by reaching your assembly O Abu Busṭām, and you start reciting verses before us'. 'I know what is better for me!, retarded Shu'ba, 'By God recitation of poetry is safer for me than transmission of *Ḥadīth*'.[1]

Similarly, 'Imrān b. al-Ḥusayn the well-known companion of the Prophet, while settled in Basra, began to read out poems before his audience who came to listen to *Ḥadīth* transmissions from him so much so that people thought he had no Traditions to transmit.[2] 'By God', he exclaimed one day, 'I can transmit *Ḥadīths* for two consecutive days without break' (but I avoid it deliberately).

It was this commonly prevalent taste for *ayyām*-tales and poetry that the *maghāzī* and *futūḥ* literature, from the very beginning remained under the influence of *ayyām*. In spite of the fact that Ibn Hishām has made a compendium of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Is'ḥāq, casting aside less important details, more particularly from early chapters, the present *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām consists about one-fifth of its total volume, of poetical compositions attributed to various poets in different contexts. In order to understand the role of poetry in the early Islamic centuries and its deep impact on historical literature, we will study in some detail the contribution of a famous transmitter of *jāhiliyya* poetry who flourished during the Umayyad period and is one of those important transmitters who are regarded responsible for preservation of *jāhiliyya* poetry and for passing it on to the posterity.

Ḥammād al-Rāwiya : (75 A.H. - 156 A.H.)

During the *jāhiliyya* we notice the Arab tradition that every important poet had his own *Rāwī* who memorized his verses and transmitted them to others. But, by the advent of the first century of Islam, a class of narrators specialized

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* Vol. VII p. 2.
2. Ṣubḥī Sālim : *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* p. 417.

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transmission of *Jāhiliyya* poetry in general. The major portion of *Jāhiliyya* poetry had been lost because its *Rāwīs* were killed during the chains of wars that bound the post-Islamic decades.

When during the first century Muslims realized the need of the *Jāhiliyya* poetry regarding the exact meanings of the Qur'ānic verses, they rushed to collect the old Arab poetry, proverbs, dicta etc. without any reservation or discrimination. Afterwards, some of these collectors specialized in a particular branch like poetry or philology or syntactic precedences or proverbial usages. They penetrated deep into Arabian deserts to obtain knowledge from the members of Bedouin tribes.

Ḥammād al-Rāwiya,[1] a contemporary of 'Amr b. al-'Alā, was the first man who devoted himself to the collection of the *Jāhiliyya* poetry. Khalaf al-Aḥmar and al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbî followed suit.

Ḥammād b. Abū Laila Sābūr or Maisara b. al-Mubārak al-Dailamî was the *maulā* Banî Bakr b. Wā'il.[2] He was brought up in Kūfa. In his early days he was a burglar and had joined a group of professional robbers. It was strange that later on he turned into a popular transmitter of poetry. It has been said that once he broke into the house of some one and alongwith other valuables, an anthology containing

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1. For Ḥammād reference may be made to the following sources :
   Ibn Qutaiba : *al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'erā* (Cairo, 1932) p. 302 *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* pp. 169, 268.
   Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 91.
   al-Isbahānî : *al-Aghānî* vol. V : 164, 170.
   al-Jāḥiẓ : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* I : 257.
   al-Suyūṭī : *al-Muzhir* II p. 205.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt al-A'yān* vol. I, 164.
   Baghdādî : *Khizānat al-Adab* vol IV : p. 128.
   Ṭabaqāt al-Udabā vol. I p. 43.
   Ahmed Amîn : *Fajr al-Islām* pp. 50, 58.
   Ḍuḥā al-Islām vol. II p. 310.
2. Ibn Qutaiba regards him *maulā* of Mikhnaf b. Zaid al-Khail al-Ṭā'ī.

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verses of Anṣār poets also fell to his lot. When he went through that notebook he was very much pleased, and memorized the whole of it. Having been inspired by the *Jāhiliyya* poetry he spent most of his time in learning about it ; he also developed a taste for the *ayyām* and *akhbār* of the old Arab. Leaving aside his criminal activities, he began to transmit the poetry and the *akhbār*, and rose to the position of a most honoured reporter and an authority on the subject so much so that he is now known as Ḥammād *al-Rāwiya* (the great reporter).[1]

Ḥammād enjoyed the patronage of Yazîd b. 'Abd al-Malik; when Yazîd died and Hishām succeeded him, Ḥammād came from Syria to Iraq to pass his life in detachment and seclusion. But, after sometime Hishām summoned him[2] through the governor of Iraq. Ḥammād again reached the court and remained there fore quite sometime. During this period he used to attend the Umayyad court regularly and narrated before the Caliph tales of the kings, *akhbār* of the *Jāhiliyya* Arab and Islam.[3]

al-Suyūṭî and Ibn Khallikān differ in their versions : according to the former it was al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik who summoned Ḥammād to his court. Ibn Khallikān also expresses his doubts and says that Yūsuf b. 'Umar was not the governor of Iraq at the time mentioned in this report. It was Khālid b. 'Abdullah.

His was an exceptionally strong memory and among his contemporaries he was the most knowledgeable in the *ayyām* and the *akhbār*; but he specialized in the *Jāhiliyya* poets and their works. The Umayyad rulers patronized him and very often he received from them fabulous awards in cash and

1. There were three men of the same nomenclature in Kūfa living at the same time and all of them had a taste for poetry and philology too. They were : Ḥammād 'Ajrad, (d. 161) Ḥammād b. al-Zabraqān and Ḥammād al-Rāwiya. All of them were accused of heterodoxy *zandaqa* by the theologians of their age. (Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'arā* p. 302 *Ibn Khallikān* vol. I p. 166).
2. *Wafayāt* vol. I p. 164 cites text of the letter written by Hishām to Yūsuf b. 'Umar al Thaqāfî.
3. al-Suyūṭî : *Tuḥfat al-Majālis* p. 71 (Egypt 1908).

Umayyads called him to the court and asked him to obtain information on matters connected with the *Jāhiliyya* and sometimes queries were also directed to him for obtaining written answers. Once al-Walîd b. Yazîd asked him : 'Why are you called al-Rāwiya'?[1]

'Because, I can transmit, O Commander of the Faithful, compositions of every poet that you know, as well as of those whom you do not know nor have ever heard about them', Ḥammād replied. 'And nobody could recite before me a verse, old or new, but I am able to distinguish one from the other'.

'How many verses do you remember by heart' ? asked the Caliph.

'Plenty of them, he replied, 'but I can recite in your presence from the *Jāhiliyya* poets, apart from the compositions of the poets of Islamic period, hundred long odes ending on the same letter'. Ḥammād replied, 'short odes and pieces are in addition to them'.

'I shall put you to test', the Caliph said, and commanded him to recite. Ḥammād started reciting till the Caliph felt bored and rewarded him heavily. It is reported that in that sitting Ḥammād recited 2900 long odes of the *Jāhiliyya* poets alone and al-Walîd had awarded him one lakh *dirhams.*[2]

Ḥammād had been accused of *zandaqa*. When al-Manṣūr came to power Ḥammād had already reached the peak of his fame and popularity. Al-Manṣūr was grieved on the death of his brother Abū al-'Abbās. He tried hard to remember the elegy of Hafan b. Hammām mourning his father, but he

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1. al-Suyūṭî : *Tuḥfa* p. 72, *Ibn Khallikān* I : 164.
2. Ibn Qutaiba says : "Ḥammād b. Hurmuz, and Hurmuz, was the slave of Muknif b. Zaid al-Khail. He was a Dailamî and his *kunya* was Abū Laila. I was told by Abū Ḥāṭim on the authority of al-Aṣma'î that he said : I joined the company of Ḥammād and did not find with him even odes of three hundred (letters). His transmissions are not held high. (*Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 235) Cairo 1935. see also (*al-Fihrist* p. 224).

failed to recollect it. He sent for Ḥammād. When the latter called on him he was asked to recite the above elegy which was reproduced promptly. Al-Manṣūr wept bitterly when he heard it and said 'Yes, these were the qualities of my late brother'.[1]

Ḥammād lived till the reign of al-Mahdî (158 A.H. 169 A.H.) who used to invite him and his contemporary al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbî for listening to the old poetry of the Arab. According to some critics the latter was more trustworthy than Ḥammād in matters of transmission. It was commonly believed that Ḥammād used to interpolate and even at times fabricated the verses in the same stlye and dialectical characteristics as the poet in question demanded.[2]

According to Abū Ja'far b. al-Naḥḥās, Ḥammād compiled the famous Seven Odes of the *Jāhiliyya* poets.[3] He also collected the poetical compositions of many other Arab poets belonging to different tribes as well as compositions of the poets of the Umayyad times in a separate volume for each tribe or for each individual poet. He is said to have compiled an anthology of the poetry of the Quraish ; another of the poetry of Thaqîf and the like. But all these compilations are now extinct.

It appears that this Ḥammād also took interest in the *akhbār* of early Islamic period. Al Wāqidî has quoted from him on the authority of Sa'îd b. Jubair that the Prophet, in his Last Pilgrimage to Mecca, made rounds of Ṣafā and Marwa on his mount. Al Wāqidî prefers this report to other versions. This seems to have come from the same transmitter of the Arab lore.[4]

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1. Al-Isbahānî : *Kitāb al-Aghānî* vol. V p. 169 see also al-Suyūṭî : *Tuḥfa* p. 70.
2. Ibn Khallikān says that Ḥammād was not well-versed in his Arabic. He learnt the Qur'ān by heart and pronounced incorrectly at more than thirty places. *Wafayāt* I p. 165.
   For reports about Ḥammād's falsification and fabrications see *Ḍuḥa-al-Islām* II p. 310.
3. *Fajr-al Islām* p. 58, Yāqūt : *al-Irshad* IV : p. 140, Ibn Khallikān : Ḍuḥa al-Islām II p. 310.
   Wafayāt Vol. I. p. 164.
4. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* Vol. III p. 1099.

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CHAPTER III

Genealogy as a Source of Arab Historiography

The science of Genealogy has been approved by the Qur'ān as a source of knowledge when it says : "Verily We created you in tribes and clans so that you may recognize each other".[1]

The Prophet had also shown his interest in genealogical knowledge. According to Ibn Sa'd the Prophet once informed 'Uqba b. 'Āmir al-Juhanî of the latter's genealogy.[2]

The Arabs had an age-old practice of preserving their genealogical tables, and it was a special branch of knowledge among them. It was connected with their poetry too. Since the main topics of their poetry were pride on nobility and ancestral glory, they preserved chief prints of their family history in poetical compositions. As the honour of a family depended on the achievements of ancestors ; the battle-day narratives contained genealogical information simultaneously. Each tribe boasted of its noble origin and purity of blood. This tendency was temporarily curbed down when the Qur'ān declared in unequivocal terms : 'Verily the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious'.[3] The Prophet also pronounced in his

1. The Qur'ān: 49 : 13, al- Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* Vol. XXVI pp. 138-139.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV pp. 344, 347.
3. al-Qur'ān : 49 : 13.

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discourse delivered on the occasion of his Last Pilgrimage that, 'Henceforward no Arab would be regarded superior to a non-Arab only because of being an Arab. All of you are descendants of Adam, and Adam was created of clay and dust'.

But, the interest of the Arab in genealogical studies continued to grow. During the Caliphate period, Abū Bakr himself was regarded an expert in the genealogy of the Quraish,[1] the Muḍar and other outstanding tribes of Hijāz.[2] 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās, Jubair[3] b. Muṭ'im, Makhrama b. Naufal and 'Aqîl b. Abî Ṭālib were the other Companions of the Prophet who had specialized in the genealogical knowledge.[4]

'Abîd b. Sharya, about whom we shall speak in some detail in another chapter, was an expert in the genealogy of the Yemenite. During the Umayyad rule the tendency of pride and glory[5] was revived because of political motives and the Arab historians paid special attention to the compilation of the genealogical details of verious tribes. Most of the Umayyad and the Abbasid rulers provided state patronage to encourage researches in this branch of knowledge. One of the motives behind this encouragement was to prove their own blue blood and purity of race. The political factions during the Umayyad period and tribal prejudices assumed the shape of larger grouping like *Qaḥṭānī vs 'Adnānī* or *Anṣār vs. Muhājir* which later during the early Abbasid period was to have been developed into a still larger grouping of Arabs and the non Arab under the influence of the *Shu-'ūbiyya*.

Another incentive was the Arab penetration into the far flung areas of the vast and ever-expanding Islamic world.

1. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr : *al-'Iqd al-Farîd* vol. II. 51.
2. al-Baladhurî : *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* vol.I p. 416.
3. Jubair b. Muṭ'im had obtained the knowledge of genealogy from Abū Bakr, and from Jubair it was imparted to Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab (Jāḥiẓ : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* vol. I p. 244).
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 295.
5. Jawād 'Alî : *Majalla Majma' al-'Ilmî al-'Irāqî* vol. I (1950).

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their tribal centres, they felt the imperative need of preserving their family background and genealogical details lest they should disappear or be forgotten completely by their children to be brought up in a non-Arab environment.

At first, only scholars paid attention towards the preservation of the genealogical details of various tribes but, with the passage of time, it became a common practice, and the class of *Nassāba* (genealogist) emerged as a professional record-keeper of such details like the *Rāwî* or the *Akhbārî*.[1]

But, during the first century after the Hijra, this was practised only orally and it was not earlier than the period of the Umayyads that the genealogists compiled this data in book forms.

It appears that the idea of the compilation of genealogical data began when the Traditionists and *Sīrah*-writers felt the need of compiling the genealogical table of the Prophet himself. It was naturally extended to the accounts of the Prophet's tribe Quraish and then to other major tribes of Hijāz.

Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî (d. 149 A.H.) on whom the later historiographers heavily relied in matters of genealogy was one of the pioneers of this branch of knowledge during the first century of the post-Islamic era ; he also compiled books on this subject. We shall describe his contribution to the Arab history and historiography in detail at the end of this chapter.

Al-Hamdānî refers to such documents and state-records as were maintained during the rule of the Himyarite.[2] Besides, he informs us that registers containing the genealogical tables and *zuber* accounts were also maintained by some tribes of South Arabia. These records were later exploited by some of the Arab historiographers of the first and the second century. Al-Hamdānî writes about a Yemenite

1. al-Dūrî : *Baḥth fi Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārîkh* p. 40.
2. al-Hamdānî : *al-Iklîl* vol. I. p. 5 (ed. Lofgren,) Isbala, 1954.

scholar who possessed such documents as the Himyarite kings had preserved in their treasures.[1]

At another place he says that genealogical tables of the descendants of *al-Hamîsa'* were found in the *zuber* accounts of the Himyarites' State Archives. Similarly, the names of the rulers of the dynasty of 'Amr. b. Hamdān were also recorded there.[2] He came across at one place, al-Hamdānî says, the family tables of Banū La'wa in *zuber* records ascribed to Aḥmad b. Mūsa. He also compares the statement of Hishām b. Moḥammad al-Kalbî with such records of the Himyarite archives.[3]

Each Arabian tribe was responsible for the preservation of its genealogy. But, at a later stage, such scholars emerged who specialized in the knowledge about one tribe, its past history, genealogy, achievments, glories, *akhbār*, personal qualities of the chiefs, their biographical data etc. As we know about such persons who had a specialized knowledge of the Quraish or the Anṣār tribes of Madîna. Makhrama b. Naufal was conversant with the tribe of Quraish and also knew the history of the deities kept in the Ḥarem before the advent of Islam.[4] It was because of his being knowledgeable in matters of genealogy that 'Umar I introduced the institution of *Dīwān* in the light of suggestions made by him.[5]

The science of genealogy was at first under the impact of tendentious traditions of Qaḥṭānî and 'Adnānî prejudices and during the Caliphate genealogists tried to glorify their own regions. During the Umayyad rule, studies in genealogy were focussed to glorify the Arab traditions and the characteristic Arab qualities of the age of *Jāhiliyya*.

But, during the last days of the Umayyad rule, it assumed a new direction under the influence of the *Shu ūbiyya* move-

1. al-Hamdānî : *al-Iklil* vol. I p. 5.
2. Ibid. vol. X p. 30.
3. Ibid. vol. X pp. 119-120.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Dhail al-Mudhayyal* p. 2326.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. IV p. 209.

the Qaḥṭānî versus 'Adnānî or Banū Hāshim vs. Banū Umayya prejudices turned into Arab *versus* non-Arab feuds. The *Shu'ūbiyya* was not a politically organized movement; it was rather a tendency prevalent among the intellectuals, writers, and theologians of the non-Arab origin who had revolted against the discriminative treatment which they had been receiving from the Arab since long. The influence of *Shu'ūbiyya* was felt on all branches of literature and religious studies, but genealogy was the only subject which could serve their purpose.

An example would, perhaps, illustrate the *Shu'ūbiyya* influence on the historiography of the Arab. The Prophet is reported to have addressed the Muslims at the time of his Last Pilgrimage (*Ḥajjat al-Wadā'*) in these words :

> "No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor a black to a white except in matters of religiosity and piety. All of you descend from Adam and Adam was created of clay and dust. Verily the most honoured from amongst you in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious".

Ibn Is'ḥāq (a Medinite), Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarî, do not report these words in their versions of the said discourse of the Prophet. But al-Jāḥiẓ, a pronounced *Shu'ūbî*, has cited these words in his *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn*, which apparently means that these words have been included by the later transmitters of *Shu'ūbiyya* tendency, in order to support their stand.

'The genealogists of the old school, to quote Goldziher, 'were not only knowledgeable in matters of descent, nor were they mere collectors of nomenclatures. Continuing in this respect the activities of the old poet who in pre-Islamic days were the only organs of historical memory, they were also concerned...with the characterization and description of the qualities of tribes, and had the gift of summarizing these in short, sharply characteristic and apt sayings : they were also eloquent in giving personal descriptions of eminent men of the past. The genealogists were also the depositories of history and the traditions of the Arab tribes, of all that is

called *akhbār* i.e. accounts of the battle days of old Arabs (*ayyām al-Arab*) and the proverbs which could not be understood without knowledge of the ancient Arab history, to which they constantly referred. They were also concerned with archaeological questions and linked also this part of their information to the exegesis of ancient poetry'.[1]

In Medina, too, some people were in possession of records and tables containing information regarding various tribes. We learn from Ibn Sa'd that among the Medinite Muslims 'Abdullah b. Moḥammad b. 'Umāra al-Anṣārî was an expert in the genealogy of the Anṣār'.[2] Ibn Sa'd seems to have utilized his book on *Ansāb* in the descriptions of the Anṣār.

Daghfal al-Nassāba :

It was during the Umayyad period that due to discrepancies in the *Dīwān* and as a consequence of rivalries between various contending tribes genealogists created confusions in tables.[3] The most distinguished genealogist of that time was Daghfal b. Ḥanẓala al-Shebānî who had collected considerable material on this subject. He had specialized in *ansāb al-Arab* and was so confident of his knowledge of the subject that once he differed from Abū Bakr on some issue concerning the genealogy of a tribe. He went to the court of Mu'āwiya and narrated in his presence traditions regarding the Arab genealogy. The famous historian *al-Ṭabarî* has also obtained one report from him regarding the age of the Prophet.[4]

Ḥijr b. Ḥārith al-Kinānî, commonly known as Daghfal al-Dhuhalî or Daghfal b. Ḥanẓala al-Sadūsî had lived during the time of the Prophet but could not present himself before him.[5] He was summoned to the court of Mu'āwiya when he

1. Goldziher : *Muslim Studies* vol. I p. 170.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III pp. 442. 479, 513, 522, 548, 552, 575, 582, 625, 626.
3. For details see : Goldziher : Muslim Studies vol. I p. 164-190.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. III p. 216.
5. Ibn Qutaiba : *al-Ma'ārif* p. 232.

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[illegible] the reports about genealogies of the Arabian tribes. He had such an extra-ordinary command over the genealogical details of various Arab tribes that once Qudāma b. Jarād came to him; Daghfal asked him to which tribe he belonged. On hearing from him the name of the tribe he started pouring out details of its genealogy and on reaching the name of Qudāma he said : "He had two sons one a pious man, the other a poet. So who are you ?" He replied, "I am the same poet. All details that you have described about my family offshoots are absolutely correct. Now please tell me about the time of my death". "It is not within the limits of my knowledge", Daghfal replied.

He took part in wars against the Khārijites and was slain by the Azāriqa and did not leave any written work.[1]

Among his contemporary genealogists Suhar b. 'Abbās 'Abdî, a Khārijite was one of the supporters of 'Uthmān and hailed from the 'Abd al-Qais tribe. He had compiled a book entitled *Kitāb al-Amthāl.*[2]

al-Jāḥiẓ has enumerated the genealogists of the early century of Islam and says that they were four : Daghfal b. Ḥanẓala 'Umair b. Damdam, Ṣubḥ al-Ḥanafî and Ibn Kayyis al-Namirî.[3] Ibn Qutaiba adds to this list names of 'Abîd b. Sharya (q.v.) al-Bakrî, Waraqa b. al-Ash'ar and Ibn al-Kawwa al-Yashkurî.

Historians' View of Genealogy :

Concentrated studies in genealogy served the purpose of historiography both in providing early historians with rich contents and in leaving a deep impression on the style and diction of the early *akhbār* narratives.

Islam gave a new dimension to the study of genealogy, and the institution of the *Dīwān* created by the Second Caliph

1. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 219.
   Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥa al-Islām* vol. II p. 347.
2. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 221.
3. Al-Jāḥiẓ : *al-Bayān* vol. I p. 244, Ibn Qutaiba : *al-Ma'ārif* p. 233.

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'Umar,[1] added fresh zeal to it. We have already indicated that the Umayyads, for their political motives, pattonized this branch of Islamic knowledge. Ibn Nadim credits Mu'āwiya I, for showing interest in this subject.[2]

Walîd II had issued orders for the preparation of new registers containing genealogical details of the Arab tribes because the state needed such data for the re-organization of the *Dîwān* system, and for obtaining information about such bedouin tribes as had settled in new townships.[3]

Another incentive for genealogical studies came from the tribal conflicts and their affinities with political factions. Emergence of a new aristocracy in Islam during the Umayyad period and a new social stratification also contributed to the growing interest in this branch of knowledge.

At the end of the Umayyad rule the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement[4] also turned out to be a factor behind the growth of the *ansāb* studies, since the movement condemned the Arabs most vehemently and not only minimized their role and contribution to social sciences and humanities, but also challenged their purity of blood which Arabs had since long been accustomed to holding so high. For this purpose, both the parties, pro-Arab and anti-Arab, needed genealogical details: the Arabs to prove their glorious ancestry; the *Shu'ūbiyya* to condemn it. As a result, both sides of the medal came to the fore.

Ancient satirical poetry of the Arab, and afterwards, during the Umayyad period, the famous *Naqā'iḍ* of al-Farazdaq, Jarîr and al-Akhṭal etc. were also rich in genealogical details about the ancestors of contending parties. Moreover, it was also a practice of the age that significant

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 296 (on the authority of al-Zuhrî and Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab) the date of the establishment of *Dîwān* is given : Muharram 20 A.H. For *Dîwāns* of other provinces see *Ṭabaqāt* II p. 234.
2. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 91.
3. al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* pp. 40-41.
4. Goldziher (Ignaz) : *Muslim Studies* I p. 177 et. seq.

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[illegible]ditions of armymen were recorded in military registers.

The first group of professional genealogists appeared during the Umayyad period. Every reporter claimed to have specialized in a certain tribe or family. By the advent of the second century A.H. genealogists knowledgeable in affairs of more than one tribe began to emerge. It was at this juncture that the *akhbār* narrations were being committed to writing by the early historiographers. Mūsa b. 'Uqba had also dealt with genealogical details in his work which is now untraceable. Ibn Sa'd quotes him *at passim.*[1]

Abū al-Yaqẓān (d. 190 A H./805 A.D.)

His name was Suhaym and he was the first genealogist who compiled a book on the subject of *ansāb* like the genealogy of Tamîm and Khindif. His works are not available to us but extracts from them have been quoted by later historians[2] and they help us understand the nature and scope of his work.

Among other scholars of genealogy during the first century are Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab, the distinguished *Tābi'ī* ; al-Bakrî al-Nassāba was also renowned for his knowledge of the *ansāb*. He was a Christian by faith.[3]

The interest shown by the early reporters in genealogical data, eventually resulted in the compilation of several valuable monographs during later period like *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, *'Umda al-Ṭālib fī Āl Abī Ṭālib* and *Nasab al-Mahāliba* etc. These works exclusively deal with genealogy. Al-Zubair b. Bakkār b. 'Abdullah b. Muṣ'ab al-Zubairî prepared his work on the genealogy of the Quraish in two volumes. This is also prolific with valuable data on the tribe of Quraish, though a critic has remarked that the book deals with *'ajab* (curious information) rather than *nasab* of the Quraish, because it has highlighted the achievements and adventures of the Quraish very enthusiastically.[4]

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. II p. 405.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. VI p. 517, al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* p. 40.
3. Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥa al-Islām* vol. II p. 347.
4. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 237.

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Among other eminent genealogists of the early period was Mujālid b. Sa'īd b. 'Umair al-Hamdānī (d. 144 A.H.) from whom al-Haitham b. 'Adī has derived his knowledge. Mujālid's reporters were al-Sha'bī and Masrūq. His grandfather 'Umair Dhu Murrān al-Hamdānī had received a letter from the Prophet which was in possession of Mujālid.[1] One of his sons named Yazīd b. 'Umair was killed by al-Mukhtār at the battle field of *Jabbana al-Sabī'*.

The other distinguished genealogist 'Isā b. Yazīd b. Dā'b[2] of the tribe of Kināna, family of Banū Shidākh, was a poet and also a scholar of *ansāb*, *akhbār* and *ash'ār*.

Moḥammad b. 'Ubaidullah al-'Utbī was an *akhbārī* and most of his narratives are about the family of Banū Umayya to which he himself belonged.[3]

Moḥammad b. Al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī : (d. 146 A.H./763 A.D.)

Abū Naḍr[4] Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib b. Bishr al-Kalbī[5] is the symbol of genealogy, the *akhbār*, and the tribal tales of the Arab. He devoted himself to the study of *ansāb*, philology and history of the Arab. Besides accumulating detailed information about various major tribes of the Arab he made a fairly large collection of the Arab traditions and

1. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 234.
2. for his reports see : al-Ṭabarī : Tārīkh vol. I : p. 357, vol. III pp. 434, 593, vol. IV : pp. 213, 218, 225, vol. V pp. 359, 381, vol. VIII pp. 178, 202, 220, 223.
3. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 234.
4. For description of al-Kalbī see :
   Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* pp. 233-234.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. VI p. 249.
   Ibn Nadīm : *al-Fihrist* p. 140.
   Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. IX p. 180.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt al-A'yān* vol. I p. 493.
   Ibn Khaṭīb : *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. XIV p. 45.
   Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ vol. I p. 214.
   Brockleman : Supl. I p. 211.
   Aḥmed Amīn : *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* vol. II p. 347.
   al-Dūrī : *Bahth* pp. 40-41.
5. Al-Sā'ib and his two brothers 'Ubaid and 'Abd al-Raḥmān had participated in the battles of Jamel and Ṣiffīn on the side of 'Alī and the former was killed with Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair. (*Kitāb al-Ma''ārif* p. 233).

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the *akhbār*, which the later historians have thankfully exploited in writing their histories. In collecting genealogical information he contacted the most knowledgeable *nassāba* of each tribe. Hishām b. Moḥammad al-Kalbî reported that his father had informed him that he had obtained the genealogy of the tribe of Quraish from Abū Ṣāliḥ who had learnt it from 'Aqîl b. Abî Ṭālib.[1] Ibn Nadîm has also given the names of those from whom Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî obtained the genealogies of various tribes like Kinda, Ma'd b. 'Adnān, Najjār, Iyād, Rabî'ā etc. The old poetry also helped him in his genealogical conclusions and he did also infer from deep studies of *naqā'iḍ* of the poets of the Umayyad period.

The Traditionists (*Muḥaddithūn*) have however subjected him to severe criticism because of his being pronouncedly othodox Shî'a. But, even his critics admit that he had specialized in the study of the genealogy of the early Arabs. *Sīrah*-writers heavily depend on him in matters related to the genealogical details of the tribe of Quraish and in describing family relations of the Prophet.[2]

Al-Kalbî had joined hands with 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Moḥammad b. al-Ash'ath in his confrontation with al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafî. We also meet him at the site of Dair al-Jamājim (82 A.H./701 A.D.).[3]

Al-Kalbî was an anti-Umayyad in his political views. He had also compiled a commentary of the Holy Qur'ān, which according to Brockleman,[4] al-Tha'ālibî had utilized in his works. The description of Ibrahîm, the Prophet, in the history of Ibn 'Asākir is also, perhaps, taken from the same *Tafsîr* of al-Kalbî.[5] Ibn Qutaiba has mentioned him among the genealogists and reporters of the *akhbār* but also calls him *Ṣāḥib al-Tafsîr*.[6] His *Tafsīr* is mentioned by Ibn Nadîm too.[7]

1. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 231.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV p. 7.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tarîkh* vol. II p. 14, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 233.
4. Brockleman : *Arabic Literature* vol. III p. 30.
5. Ibn 'Asākir : *Tārîkh Dimashq* vol. II p. 138.
6. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 233.
7. Ibn Nadîm : al-*Fihrist* p. 84

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Sulaimān b. 'Alî, he says, brought Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib to Kūfa, arranged for him in his own house a suitable place for teaching and thus Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib started dictation of his commentary on the Qur'ān. When he reached a verse from the Sūra *Tauba* (chapter IX) his commentary was at variance with the common belief. People said : "We will not write it down." "By God, unless you write the commentary of this verse which is perfectly in accordance with the purport of the Qur'ān, I shall never proceed further." The matter was referred to Sulaimān b. 'Alî who said : "Note down what this man dictates and set aside all other commentaries".[1]

In his *Tafsîr* Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib had particularly emphasized on such minute details as who was the man who sold Joseph in the market of Egypt and who purchased him. According to one report, which Ibn Is'ḥāq has taken from al-Kalbî through the channel of Abū Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās, Mālik b. Da'r (*b. Yubab b. 'Afqān b. Midyān b. Ibrāhîm*) was responsible for selling out Joseph in the market.[2]

He gives the details of the periods of various Prophets : there were 1900 years between Moses and Christ, one thousand Prophets were sent by Allah during this period. During the period of Christ and Moḥammad are 443 years. From the creation of the Universe till the advent of the Prophet total years are 5,500, etc.[3] He has also counted the years of each Prophet and gaps between their appearance, details of which have been obtained from Jewish sources through 'Abdullah b. Abbās. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal says that the *Tafsîr* of al-Kalbî is a bundle of lies from its beginning to the end.[4]

In his genealogical reports, he tells us all links from Ma'd b. 'Adnān to Ibrāhîm.[5]

An Examination of his Reports :

The noted genealogist Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî

1. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 231.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 335.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. II pp. 236-238.
4. 'Alî Qārî : *Mauḍū'āt* p. 85 (vide Shibli :*Sîrah* vol. I p. 18).
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. II p. 272.

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referred to by al-Ṭabarî at 16 places in his general history. His first reference is found in the description of the family of Jacob. He tells us, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, as he received from Abū Ṣāliḥ that the man who purchased Joseph in the market of Egypt was named as Qiṭfîr.[1] But in the *Tafsîr* of al-Ṭabarî he reports the name of the customer of Joseph as Rā'il b. Ra'āil. The Old Testament records his name as Potiphar,[2] an officer of Pharaoh. Ibn 'Abbās who must have obtained this information from the Jew scholars, commented on the Qur'ānic verse thus : "And he of Egypt who purchased him, said unto his wife : Receive him honourably. Perchance, he may prove useful to us or we may adopt him as a son".[3] He also informs, on the same authority, that the age of this world from the descending of Adam until the advent of the Prophet was 5,500 years. Further, there were 1,200 years from Adam to the time of Noah, from Noah to Ibrahim 1 143 years, from Ibrahim to Moses 575 years, from Moses to David 197 years, from David to Christ 1053 years, and from Chirst to Moḥammad 500 years.[4] But the critics of authority chains say that the chain "al-Kalbî from Abū Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās" is the frailest of all his chains.[5]

Descending from the description of the early Prophets, he comes to tell about the genealogy of the ancient Arab tribes. Al-Ṭabarî discusses in detail the genealogy of 'Adnān and his descendants and cites the family table upto Ibrahim on the authority of Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî. But his son Hishām says that this table was transmitted to him by an 'informant' on the authority of his father, though he had not heard of it himself from him.[6] Ibn Sa'd also refers to al-Kalbî in matters concerning genealogy of the ancestors of the Prophet.[7] Ibn Nadîm says that al-Kalbî obtained the

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 335 Ibn al-Athîr : *al-Nihāya* vol. I p. 80 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* vol. XII p. 175.
2. The Bible : *Genesis* 39 : 1.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : XXII : 21 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XII p. 175.
4. al-Ṭabarî : Tārîkh vol. II pp. 237-238.
5. *Fajr al-Islam* p. 203.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 272, Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* 1 : 28-29.
7. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I.1 : 42-43, I.1 : 28-29.

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knowledge of the genealogy of 'Quraish from Abū Ṣāliḥ who had received it from 'Aqîl b. 'Abî Ṭālib. But, in al-Ṭabarî, we do not find any report from al-Kalbî reaching upto 'Aqîl b. Abî Ṭālib. Details about the family of 'Adnān he got from al-Najjār b. Aus al-Adwanî and of the tribe of Kinda from Abū al-Kannās al-Kindî.

The Prophet at Mecca :

Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî reports that the Quraishites assembled in the Council Hall in Ka'ba and discussed as to how they could get rid of Moḥammad. He gives the names of those eminent persons who were present in the assembly and there is also Satan in the disguise of a Sheikh from Najd. The proceedings of this meeting are quoted in some detail which also carry the dialogues exchanged between the members and the Sheikh of Najd.[1] These accounts are connected with the early life of the Prophet at Mecca and show that al-Sā'ib had also taken interest in this aspect of the *Sīrah*, apart from his specialization in the genealogical accounts. In the battle of Badr[2] some of the eminent persons from amongst the Meccans were captivated and the Prophet had asked them to pay their ransom. Al-'Abbās b. al-Muṭṭalib was also among those imprisoned at the field of Badr and, according to al-Sā'ib, the Prophet said to al-'Abbās that he should pay ransom for himself and his two nephews, and for 'Naufal b. al-Ḥārith etc., since he was a wealthy man. Al-'Abbās pleaded that he was a Muslim, though he did not declare his Islam fearing the resentment and retaliation of his familymen. The Prophet said : "God knows better about your being a Muslim. If it was true, then your reward is with Allah. But, our judgement would be *prima facie* and you would have to pay ransom for you and your relatives and your allies". The Prophet had borrowed from al-'Abbās (while at Mecca) 20 grams of silver. Al-'Abbās wanted that that should be taken as ransom but the Prophet said that that was not to be

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārīkh* II : 370-372, Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* I : 290-291.
2. Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* III p. 3 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzī* I : 130, 138.

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adjusted in this account. "Where is that wealth that you deposited with Umm al-Faḍl bint al-Ḥārith at the time of leaving Mecca when there was none except you both and you said unto her : 'In case I am killed in the compaign then the share of al-Faḍl in this wealth is this, and that of 'Abdullah this, and that of Qutham this, and that of 'Ubaidullah this." Al-'Abbās said : 'By Him Who hath sent you with truth, nobody knew this fact except myself and she. I attest to your being the Messenger of Allah.' Then al-'Abbās paid ransom for himself and his relatives and allies.[1]

Wives of the Prophet:

Al-Ṭabarî has given various narrations as to the number of wives the Prophet married. Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî reports that the Prophet had married Khaulā daughter of al-Hudhail b. Hubaira b. Qabîṣa b. al-Ḥārith and Lailā daughter of Khaṭîm b. 'Adî b. 'Amr b. Sawad.[2]

Riddah:

Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî is also quoted in the narration of the *Riddah* wars. He reports about the tribe of Banū Tamîm when Musailima declared himself as Prophet. When Musailima married Sajāḥ[3], bint al-Ḥārith b. Suwayd, al-Zibriqān b. Badr and 'Uṭārid b. Ḥājib from the tribe of Banū Tamîm, were her companions. Without specifying the name of his original source and refering only to "the distinguished persons of the tribe of Banū Tamîm told me". al-Kalbî states that the people of Banū Tamîm disapproved the practice of those who accompanied Sajāḥ to the place of Musailima, who had as dowry to Sajāḥ declared two prayers (morning and night prayers) as cancelled.[4] He also quotes some verse in this narration which some poet had

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 465-466, Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 79-80.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 168, Ibn Hishām does not mention their names.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 267, 269-275, 282 VI : 510.
4. al-Ṭabarî ; *Tārîkh* III : 274.

composed on the occasion. In his report we find that Ṭalḥa al-Numairî came to Yamāma and saw Musailima : "Where is Musailima ? " he asked. "Nay, you should say the Prophet of Allah ! " his followers took exception. "I will not say so until I meet him", was Ṭalḥa's reply. And when Musailima came, he asked : "Are you Musailima", "Yes, I am", he said. "Who comes to you (with revelation)". Ṭalḥā inquired. It is *Raḥmān* who comes to me,' Musailima said. "Does He come in light or in darkness ?" Ṭalḥā asked. "He comes in darkness", Musailima replied. "I testify that you are an impostor and that Moḥammad is truthful, but the impostor of the tribe of Rabî'a is dearer to us than the truthful of the tribe of Muḍar". Thus Ṭalḥa affiliated himself with Musailima bacause of tribal prejudice and was killed on the day of Aqraba.[1]

Abū Bakr's Biography :

Al-Kalbî must have collected reports about the biographical accounts of the Guided Caliphs. He informs us that during the period of *Jāhiliyya* Abū Bakr had married Qutaila,[2] daughter of 'Abd al-"Uzza b. 'Abd b. Asad who bore him 'Abdullah b. Abî Bakr and Asmā bint Abî Bakr. And he married Umm Rūmān, daughter of 'Āmir b. 'Umaira[3] b. Dhuhl b. Duhmān who bore him 'Abd al-Raḥmān and 'Ā'isha.[4]

Caliphate of 'Umar:

He is also found in the annals of 20 A.H. in the description of the conquest of Alexandria and says that Alexander and Farāma were two brothers ; two cities were founded by them. He narrates a story why Alexandria[5] is populous and beautiful and the city of Farāma is ruined[6] and

1. al-Isbahānî : *al-Aqhānî* XVIII : 165-166.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Ṭārîkh* III : 425, Ibn Qutaiba : *al-Ma'ārif* p. 75.
3. Ibn Qutaiba : op. cit. "Umm Rūmān bint al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥuwairith. from Banū Faras b. Ghanam b. Kinana".
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 426.
5. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam* I : 182, 183 et. seq.
6. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam* IV : p. 255-256.

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unquestioned.[1]

Murder of 'Uthmān :

Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî had collected and compiled information regarding the political stir that resulted in the murder of 'Uthmān. An extract from this work has been taken by al-Ṭabarî reporting that the delegation from Egypt which had come to see 'Uthmān and had left his house, came back when they found a lad mounted on a camel[2] and bearing a letter, written to the governor of Egypt, that such and such persons should be killed. The letter was properly sealed; 'Uthmān was aghast to see such a letter written under official stamp and despatched a letter to Mu'āwiya asking him to send the Syrian militia to fight the situation arising out of the revolt of the people of his secretariate. The text of 'Uthmān's letter to Mu'āwiya has been given by al-Ṭabarî.[3] The narrative also contains three verses composed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Udais al-Tujîbî leader of the delegation, at the time of the arrival of Egyptians in the court of 'Uthmān.

The Martyrdom of al-Husain :

Al-Qāsim b. al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāṭa said to al-Kalbî that someone, who was present at Karbalā in the camp of al-Ḥusain, had informed him that al-Ḥusain mounted his mule and intended to go to the Euphrate to fetch water when he felt that his army was dying of thirst. A man from Banū Abān b. Dārim cried : Woe to you ! intercept between him and the river, lest his followers should also come forward. He charged at his horse and others followed him till they intercepted between him and the Euphrate. The narrative is quite long ; what concerns us here is that al-Kalbî had collected reports about the episode of Karbalā and the report under study is an example of his work on the

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 108.
2. He was 'Uthmān's slave Warish, and the place where he was detected by the Egyptians called *Ḥismā*. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* vol. II p. 344.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 368.

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subject.[1]

Murder of al-Mukhtār :

In the annals of 67 A.H., al-Ṭabarî narrates the arrival of Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair and the murder of al-Mukhtār b. Abî 'Ubaid. Al-Sā'ib b. Mālik al-Ash'arî (father of Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib) had also come with Muṣ'ab and was killed in this compaign. Moḥammed b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî says that Waraqa al-Nakha'î had murdered him and he had also composed a few verses on his killing of al-Sā'ib b. Mālik.[2] We have noticed earlier that his grandfather Bishr was present at the Jamel and Ṣiffîn battles by the side of 'Alî.

Dair al-Jamājim :[3]

Moḥammed b. al-Sā'ib was present at the scene of Dair al-Jamājim with 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ash'ath[4] and he has in a report taken by al-Ṭabarî described the battle scene. He has also described the arrangement of troops on the side of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the Umayyad commander of forces. Al-Ash'ath had a group of *Qurrā* (Qur'ān-reciters) in his army who were actively engaged in the battle. We know from his report that 'Āmir al-Sha'bî, Sa'îd b. Jubair, Abū al-Bakhtarî and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abî Lailā were also among them.[5] Ibn al-Ash'ath had been defeated in this battle. Al-Ḥajjāj had taken severe action against those who had participated in the revolt and those who did not confess to the ghastly sin were declared as disbelievers, and hence put to death. Kumail b. Ziyād al-Nakha'î was also beheaded (83 A.H.) and al-Kalbî gives the account of his murder.[6] Al-Kalbî was a pronounced Shî'î and was one of the com-

1. al-Ṭabarî : Tārîkh V : 449-451.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* VI : 103.
3. al-Kalbî also narrates why the place was named as Dair al-Jamājim vide Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. II p. 503-504.
   al-Mas'ūdi :*Murūj* III : 132.
4. Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥa al-Islām* II p. 348.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I p. 494.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* VI : 350.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* VI : 364-365.

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parents of 'Abdullah b. Sabā. (Ibn Khallikān, vol. I p. 494).

Some interesting stories are also found in the early sources showing the extra-ordinary skill of al-Kalbî in genealogical matters. He narrated himself that once he entered upon Ḍarār b. 'Uṭarid, one of the decendants of Ḥājib b. Zurāra at Kūfa. A man was also present in his assembly and he looked like a large rat wrapped in silken clothes. Ḍarār squinted towards him and said : "Ask him about your genealogy" ! He said, "If you are a genealogist, tell me about my family ; I hail from Banū Tamîm". Al-Kalbî started narrating the descendants of Tamîm till he reached on Ghālib, and said : "Ghālib had a son Humām .." and the man stood up from his seat saying, "By God my parents did not call me 'Humām' except for only a brief period". 'And I am aware even of the day when your parents called you by the name al-Farazdaq.'[1] Another story is narrated by Ibn Khallikān which does also inform us about the vast knowledge of genealogy that al-Kalbî had.[2]

Although, Hishām al-Kalbî does not come directly within the range of the period of our present study, yet, since his works are chiefly based on the material collected by his learned father, we have dealt with him in some detail here in order to bring to light the contribution made by Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî towards the advancement of the Muslim historical literature.

Hishām b. Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî, (d. 204 A. H.):

Abū al-Mundhir Hishām b. Abū al-Naṣr Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbî[3] al-Kūfî had not confined himself to the

1. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 233, Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I p. 494.
2. Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I p. 494.
3. For description of Hishām b. Moḥammad see :
   Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 143 et. seq.
   Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Udabā* vol. VI p. 259.
   al-Dhahabi : *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* vol. I p. 313.
   al-Isbahānî : *Kitāb al-Aghānî* vol. IX p. 19.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* vol. II p. 195.
   Brockleman : *G.A.L.* I p. 139 *Supl.* I p. 211.

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study of Arab genealogy alone ; he had before him a comparatively vast canvas. His traditions cover the areas of the history of Prophethood, general history of the Arab, history of the pre-Islamic days, battle-day narratives of the old Arab, *Sîrah* and *Maghāzî*,[1] and of course, history of the Persian kings. He collected his material from various sources including the church records. Information about the Persian history was obtained from such books as were till then rendered into Arabic from Persian. He did also study folk literatures with a view to sifting historical knowledge out of them.

Some of his reports are quite sound and authentic from historiographical point of view. Among his chief sources are the books compiled by Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157 A.H.) and 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam (d. 147 A.H.). Christian churches at Ḥîra, as stated earlier, were quite rich depositories of historical material and Hishām seems to have exploited these sources too. His reports about the kings of Ḥîra throw light on their relations with the Sāsānid rulers. It had been possible because he consulted Persian records in this connexion, as he himself claims : "I used to take out the *akhbār* of the Arab, genealogy of Naṣr b. Rabî'a, and the periods of Persian kings (Kisras) who ruled over them, their chronologies from the churches of Ḥîra which contained such details about them".[2]

But, Goldziher rules out the possibility of such consultations and remarks : 'Whether we may believe such a notorious falsifier as Ibn al-Kalbî, when he claims

1. Goldziher : Muslim Studies vol. I pp. 171, 172, 173, 186, 188.
   Zaidān : *Tārikh* vol. II p. 149.
   Jawād 'Ali : *Majalla al-Majma' al-'Ilmî al-'Irāqî* vol. I (1950).
   al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* p. 41.
2. Hishām tried to get information through first hand sources. For instance, 'Abdullah b. Salama had witnessed the Badr and the Uḥud battles. Among his grandsons Moḥammad b. 'Abd-al Raḥmān was a contemporary of Hishām and the latter obtained from him some reports of *Maghāzî*. (Ibn S'ad : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 468). For his transmissions in *Tafsîr* see *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 574.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 37 (Ḥusainia Press ed.).

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derived material from the archives of churches in Ḥîra, I am inclined to doubt'.[1]

Abû al-Faraj al-Isbahānî has narrated the *akhbār* of Duraid b. al-Ṣimma from al-Kalbî; but even he is doubtful of their authenticity and has remarked :

> "These *akhbār* which I have obtained from Ibn al-Kalbî are all fake ; his fabrication in the *akhbār* and poetry is too evident. I have not found these verses in any collection of Duraid's poetry. This is an example of the false reporting of Ibn al-Kalbî. I have only mentioned it because a narrative commonly prevalent and generally transmitted should not be left out of this book".[2]

Al-Isbahānî has himself given examples how Ibn al-Kalbî fabricated genealogical links instantaneously. In the words of Goldziher :

> "Ibn al-Kalbî openly confesses—and this is typical of the ways of genealogical profession—My first lie in a genealogical matter was this : Khālid b. 'Abdullah asked me about his grandmother. Now I knew that Umm Kurayz was an ordinary prostitute of the tribe of Asad. But I said to Khālid : Zainab bint 'Arāra bint Jadhîma b. Naṣr b. Qu'ayn—she was your grandmother. He was glad and made me gifts".[3]

Nevertheless, it is evident that on the subject of history of Yemen he derived his material from the Yemenite folk-lore ; though in utilization of this material he has not been quite scrupulous and careful as regards the elimination of myth from history. Some mythological legends have also crept in his transmissions apparently because he has amalga-

1. Goldziher : *Muslim Studies*, vol. I p. 172.
   The early Traditionists have also been very critical of Hishām. They do not accept any *ḥadîth* from him at all. Aḥmed b. Ḥanbal regards him merely a genealogist and a story-teller. Khaṭîb : *Tārîkh Baghdād* : XIV p. 46.
2. al-Isbahānî : *al-Aghānî* IX : p. 19.
3. al-Isbahānî : *al-Aghānî* XIX : p. 58.
   Goldziher : *Muslim Studies* vol. I p. 188.

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mated faked *akhbār* of the *Jāhiliyya* without proper screening and critical examination.

Since sources like this were completely foreign to early Muslim historians, who were influenced by the Traditionists in regard to historiographical methods, Hishām had to be confronted with severe criticism from the side of the orthodox Traditionists and Fundamentalists.

Hishām was born at Kūfa and passed a considerable part of his early life in Baghdād,[1] where people obtained reports from him. He reached the court of al-Māmūn and was commissioned by him to compile the work entitled *al-Farīd* on the subject of genealogy. Similarly, he came in contact with Ja'far b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakî and compiled for him another book on the same subject.

His Disciples :

Among those who obtained knowledge from Hishām and transmitted it to posterity are : his son, al-'Abbās, Khalîfa b. Khayyāṭ, Ibn Sa'd, Moḥammad b. Abî al-Sarî etc. That Hishām had a sound memory is also attested to by Ibn Khallikān when he cites a story that Ibn Hishām had memorized the Qur'ān within three days.[2]

A Catalogue of his Works :[3]

Ibn Nadîm, who lived after some 150 years of Hishām al-Kalbî, has cited in his famous work '*al-Fihrist*', a comprehensive list of the works of Hishām. It also appears in *Kitāb al-Wāfî bi al-Wafayāt* by al-Ṣafadî, and includes the following titles :

I : Books on Treaties (Aḥlāf) :

1. *Kitāb Ḥilf 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib wa Khuzā'a**

1. Ibn Khaṭîb : *Tārîkh Baghdād* XIV p. 46.
2. Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* vol. II p. 195.
3. The above catalogue has been taken from the Introduction of Aḥmed Zekî Pāchā to the *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* by Hishām, notes have been added to it by the present writer.

*. Ibn Khallikān : Vol. II p. 195.

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2. *Kitāb Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl wa Qiṣṣat al-Ghazāl**
3. *Kitāb Ḥilf Kalb wa Tamîm**
4. *Kitāb al-Mughtarabāt* (according to Ibn Nadîm *al-Ma'rān*)
5. *Kitāb Ḥilf Aslam fî Qais* (according to Ibn Nadîm Quraish instead of Qais)

II : **Books on Monuments and Settlements :**

6. *Kitāb al-Munāfarāt**
7. *Kitāb Buyūtāt-e-Quraish**
8. *Kitāb Faḍā'il Qais 'Ailān**
9. Kitāb al-Mau'ūdāt (Ibn Khallikān II : 195 *Kitāb al-Mauridāt*)
10. *Kitāb Buyūtāt-e-Rabî'a**
11. *Kitāb al-Kunā**
12. *Kitāb Akhbār al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.*
13. *Kitāb Khuṭba 'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib*
14. *Kitāb Alqāb-e-Quraish**
15. *Kitāb Sharaf Quṣayy b. Kilāb wa Waladihî fî al-Jāhiliyya wa al-Islām**
16. *Kitāb Alqāb Banî Ṭābikha*
17. *Kitāb Alqāb Qais 'Ailān*
18. *Kitāb Alqāb Rabî'a*
19. *Kitāb Alqāb al-Yemen**
20. *Kitāb al-Mathālib* (only Ibn Nadîm mentions it)*
21. *Kitāb Nawāfil Quraish*[1]
22. *Kitāb Nawāfil Kināna* (Ibn Nadîm describes No. 21 & 22 as one book under the title '*Kitāb al-Nawāfil*')
23. *Kitāb Nawāfil Asad*
24. *Kitāb Nawāfil Tamîm*
25. *Kitāb Nawāfil Qais*
26. *Kitāb Nawāfil Iyād*
27. *Kitāb Nawāfil Rabī'ā*

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* Ibn Khallikān : Vol. II p. 195.

1. Ibn Khallikān : II : 195. *Nawāfil* means 'swearings'; these works deal with particular names and things which various old Arab tribes used while swearing.

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28. *Kitāb Tasmia man Nafala min 'Ād wa Thamūd wa al-'Amālīq wa Jurhum wa Banī Israel wa al-'Arab wa Qiṣṣatu Higris wa Asmā'u Qabā'ilihim.*
29. *Kitāb Nawāfil Quzā'a*
30. *Kitāb Nawāfil al-Yemen* (Ibn Nadîm alone mentions it)
31. *Kitāb Iddi'ā-e- Ziyād min Mu'āwiya*[1]
32. *Kitāb Akhbār Ziyād b. Abīh**
33. *Kitāb Ṣanāi' Quraish**
34. *Kitāb al-Musājarāt**
35. *Kitāb al-Munaqalāt*
36. *Kitāb al-Mu'ātabāt**
37. *Kitāb al-Mushaghabāt* (Ibn Khallikān II : 195 *Mushājarāt*)
38. *Kitāb Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if* *
39. *Kitāb Mulūk Kinda*[2]
40. *Kitāb Buyūtat al-Yemen*
41. *Kitāb Mulūk al-Yemen min al-Tabābi'ā*
42. *Kitāb Iftirāq Walad Nizār**
43. *Kitāb Tafarruqi al-Azd* (Ibn Khallikān II : 195 *Tafrīq*)
44. *Kitāb Ṭasm wa Jadīs**
45. *Kitāb man Qāla Baitan min al-Shi'r fa Nusiba Ilaihe*
46. *Kitāb al-Mu'riqāt min al-Nisā fi Quraish*

III. His Books on Ancient History :

47. *Kitāb Hadīth Adam wa Waladihī*
48. *Kitāb 'Ād al-Ulā wa al-Ukhrā*
49. *Kitāb Tafarruqi 'Ād*
50. *Kitāb Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*
51. *Kitāb Rafa' 'Isa 'Alaih al-Salām*
52. *Kitāb al-Musūkh min Banī Israel*
53. *Kitāb al-Awā'il*

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1. Ibn Khallikān : II : 195 "*Kitāb Iddi'ā-e- Mu'āwiya Ziyādan*".
* Ibn Khallikān : II : 195.
2. Ibn Khallikān : vol. II p. 195. Brockleman is of the view that the description of the battle-day of *al-Kilāb* found in *Sharḥ al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (p. 428) has been taken from this work of Hishām (*Arabic Literature* vol. III p. 31).

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*Kitāb Aqyāl Ḥimyar** (Ibn Nadîm mentions *Amthāl*, Aḥmed Zekî Pāchā suggests *aqyāl* which means 'princes.')

55. *Kitāb Khabar al-Daḥḥāk*
56. *Kitāb Manṭiq al-Ṭair*
57. *Kitāb Ghuzayya* (name of a tribe)
58. *Kitāb Lughāt al-Qur'ān*
59. *Kitāb al-Mu'ammarîn*
60. *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*
61. *Kitāb al-Qidāḥ*
62. *Kitāb Asnān al-Juzūr*
63. *Kitāb Adyān al-'Arab*
64. *Kitāb Aḥkām al-'Arab*
65. *Kitāb Waṣāyā al-'Arab*
66. *Kitāb al-Suyūf*
67. *Kitāb al-Khail*
68. *Kitāb al-Dafā'in*
69. *Kitāb Asmā Fuḥūl Khail al-'Arab*
70. *Kitāb al-Nudamā*
71. *Kitāb al-Lu'anā* (Ibn Nadîm does not mention it)
72. *Kitāb al-Kuhhān*
73. *Kitāb al-Jinn*
74. *Kitāb Akhdh Kisrā Rihn al-'Arab*
75. *Kitāb mā kāna al-Jāhiliyya Taf'aluhu wa Wāfaqa Ḥukm al-Islām* (Description of the *Jāhiliyya* practices endorsed by Islam also.)
76. *Kitāb Abî 'Attāb Ila Rabî' ḥîna Sa'alahū 'an al-'Awîṣ*
77. *Kitāb 'Adî b. Zaid al-'Ibādî*
78. *Kitāb Uzaihir al-'Dausî*
79. *Kitāb Ḥadîth Baihas wa Ikhwatuhū*
80. *Kitāb Marwān al-Qaraẓ*
81. *Kitāb al-Suyūf* (see also No. 66, it is perhaps a repetition).

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* It is perhaps from this work of Hishām that Ibn al-Jauzî has borrowed material on Jadhîma b. Mālik, the king of Ḥîra, in his book entitled *Kitāb al-Adhkiyā*. See al-Suyūṭî *Tuḥfa* : pp. 262-271.

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IV : Works dealing with the period of the Jāhiliyya on the eve of the advent of Islam :

82. *Kitāb al-Yemen wa Amr Saif b. Dhī Yazan*
83. *Kitāb Manākiḥ Azwāj al-'Arab*
84. *Kitāb al-Wufūd*
85. *Kitāb Azwāj al-Nabī*
86. *Kitāb Zaid b. Ḥāritha*
87. *Kitāb Tasmia man Qāla Baitan au Qila fīhi*
88. *Kitāb al-Dībāj fī Akhbār al-Shu'arā*
89. *Kitāb man Fakhara bi Akhwālihi min Quraish*
90. *Kitāb man Hājara wa Abūhu Ḥayy*
91. *Kitāb Akhbār al-Jinn wa Ash'āruhum*

V : His Works on the Anecdotes of the Islamic Period :

92. *Kitāb Akhbār 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a* (Ibn Nadîm alone mentions it)
93. *Kitāb Dukhūl Jarīr 'ala al-Ḥajjāj*
94. *Kitāb Akhbār 'Amr b. Ma'dikarib* (Ibn Nadîm alone mentions it)
95. *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* (Ibn Nadîm alone mentions it)
96. *Kitāb Tārīkh al-Khulafā* (Ibn Nadîm does not mention it)
97. *Kitāb Tārīkh Ajnād al-Khulafā* (Ibn Nadîm alone mentions it)
98. *Kitāb Ṣifāt al-Khulafā*
99. *Kitāb al-Muṣallīn*

VI : His Works on Cities :

100. *Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr*
101. *Kitāb al-Buldān al-Ṣaghīr*
102. *Kitāb Tasmiya man bi al-Ḥijāz min Aḥyā al-'Arab*
103. *Kitāb Tasmiyat al-Arḍain*
104. *Kitāb al-Anhār*
105. *Kitāb al-Ḥīra*
106. *Kitāb Manāzil al-Yemen*
107. *Kitāb al-'Ajā'ib al-Arba'a*
108. *Kitāb Aswāq al-'Arab*
109. *Kitāb al-Aqālīm*

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Kitāb Ishtiqāq Asmā al-Buldān (Ibn Nadîm does not mention it, but Yāqūt has referred to this work in his *Mu'jam al-Buldān*)

111. *Kitāb al-Ḥīra wa Tasmiyat al-Bai' wa al-Diyārāt wa Nasab al-Ibādi'īn* : (See also No. 77)

VIII : His Works on the Akhbār of Arab Poets and on Ayyām al-Arab :

112. *Kitāb Tasmiyat mā fī Shi'r Imra il-Qais min Asmā al-Rijāl wa al-Nisā wa Ansābihim wa Asmā al-Arḍain wa al-Jibāl wa al-Miyāh.*
113. *Kitāb man Qāla Shi'ran fa Nusiba Ilaihi* (see No. 45)
114. *Kitāb al-Mundhir Malik al-'Arab*
115. *Kitāb Dāḥis wa al-Ghabrā*
116. *Kitāb Ayyām Fazāra wa Waqāi' Banī Shaibān*
117. *Kitāb Waqā'i al-Dibab wa Fazāra*
118. *Kitāb Seef* (name of a place) Ibn Nadîm names it as *Kitāb Yaum Sunaiq* but according to Aḥmed Zekî Pāchā no such *yaum* is known in the history of the ancient Arab. Al-Ṣafadî clearly says that it is the proper name of a place and Yāqūt has described 3 places having this name.[1]
119. *Kitāb al-Kulāb wa huwa Yaum al-Nasnās*
120. *Kitāb Ayyām Banī Ḥanīfa*
121. *Kitāb Ayyām Qais b. Tha'laba*
122. *Kitāb al-Ayyām*
123. *Kitāb Musailima al-Kadhdhāb wa Sajāḥ*

VIII : His Works on Anecdotes and Tales :

124. *Kitāb al-Fityān al-Arba'a*
125. *Kitāb al-Samar*
126. *Kitāb al-Aḥādīth*

1. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. III p. 298.

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127. *Kitāb al-Muqaṭṭa'āt*
128. *Kitāb Ḥabīb al-'Aṭṭār*
129. *Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-Baḥr*
130. *Kitāb al-Nasab al-Kabīr*[1]

(Ibn al-Kalbî had named this book as *al-Jāmi'*, Moḥammad b. Ḥabîb al-Baghdādî revised it, added fresh information to it, and named it as *Jamhara fi al-Nasab.*[2] It contained genealogical tables of various Arab tribes. A manuscript of this work is preserved with the British Museum, London. Although, it does not mention the name of its author, yet F. Krenkow holds that the manuscript originally belongs to Hishām and was revised by al-Baghdādî.[3] In fact the work is an expansion of the book compiled by his father. It had brief notes on the subject of genealogy, as short biographical notices on distinguished men belonging to various walks of life. Later historians have used it as one of their important sources but al-Hamdānî complains that it was incomplete in regard to the genealogical data about the Yemenite tribes.

131. *Kitāb al-Kulāb al-Awwal and al-Kulāb al-Thānî*
132. *Kitāb Aulād al-Khulafā*
133. *Kitāb Ummahāt al-Nabî*
134. *Kitāb Ummahat al-Khulafā*
135. *Kitāb al-'Awātik*
136. *Kitāb Tasmiya Wuld 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib*
137. *Kitāb Kuna Ābāi Rasūlillah*
138. *Kitāb Jamhara al-Jamhara* (transmitted by Ibn Sa'd)[4]
139. *Kitāb al-Nawāfil wa al-Jīrān* (Ibn Nadîm does not mention it)
140. *Kitāb al-Farîd fi al-Nasab* (Ibn Nadîm does not

1. This is one of the best books on the subject (Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* II : 195).
2. Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* II : 195 "His works number more than 150 and best of them all and most useful is the famous work *al-Jamhara fi Ma'rifat al-Ansāb*, a book equal to it has never been written".
3. Krenkow (F) : Article in JRAS (1925).
4. Perhaps this is the work that is very often quoted by Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt* ; see vol. II : 391.

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mention it)[1]

141. *Kitāb al-Mulūkī fi al-Nasab* (Ibn Nadîm does not mention it)[2]

It is interesting to note that most of the works of Ibn al-Kalbî deal with the same subject as have been dealt with by Abū 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna, with the only difference that the latter is considered basically a lexicographer and a philologist while Hishām is reckoned among the genealogists.[3]

Genealogical data accumulated by the early genealogists helped the later historians verify the family affiliations and ancestry of a person. For example, Yezîd b. al-Mundhir was from among those 70 Anṣārs who were present at the time of the First 'Aqaba Allegiance. 'Abdullah b. Moḥammad b. 'Umara al-Anṣārî declared that Yezîd b. Mundhir had no offshoots, and those who trace their lineage upto him were falsifiers.[4] That later historians of the age of compilation utilized the preserved data on genealogy in writing their histories is also proved by such examples as are often cited by Ibn Sa'd, when he says that the offshoots of Sa'd b. Khaithama[5] were traceable till about 200 A.H , and after that his lineage was extinct. Similarly, the lineage of Abū Dā'ūd had been stopped during the period of Ibn Sa'd.[6] Ibn Sa'd remained in touch with the successors of eminent personalities of the early ages as we understand from some of his reports.[7]

1. He wrote this work for the Abbasid Caliph, al-Māmūn, *Ibn Khallikān* II : 195.
2. It was commissioned by Ja'far b. Yaḥya Barmakî, *Ibn Khallikān* II : 195.
3. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 84 (Ur. tr.) mentions a work of Hishām on the subject of *Tafsîr* under the title : *Kitāb Tafsîr al-Āya alladhî Nazala fi Aqwām bi A'yānihim.*
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 575.
5. Ibid. vol. III p. 481.
6. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III p. 518.
7. As he obtained information from the descendants of Abū Ṭalḥā (III p. 504); or when he mentions that the lineage of Khubaib has come to an end, and now there is nobody among his descendants (*Ṭabaqāt* Vol. III p. 535). For other examples see *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III pp. 452, 453, 481.

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CHAPTER IV

Philology as a Source of Historical Material

According to Arab standard differences in syntactic and philological rules can be decided only by the system of proper authentication by the proverbial usages of the bedouin tribes or by their poetry. A proverb or verse employed to show the usage must also be supported by proper chain of authority. Since the usage of *muwallad* poets (of later generation) was unacceptable for this purpose, the institution of transmission of the *jāhiliyya* poetry and proverbs attained popularity during the Umayyad period and flourished simultaneously with the growth and development of the *ḥadīth*, the *maghāzī* and the *akhbār* transmissions. It was also, as a natural course, impressed by the norms and standards of the *ḥadīth* transmission.[1] Some of the Orientalists are of the view that the transmission of the *ḥadīth* was influenced by the standards adopted for the transmission of the *jāhiliyya* poetry.

Although the Arab philologists were also careful in their transmission of poetry and philological precedents and observed, to a great extent, the same rules and standards as were followed by the *muḥaddith* scholars, yet, since they had obtained their material from those nomadic Arabs who neither found the time of *jāhiliyya* nor did they know that the poetry they were transmitting to philologists would be exploited as historical material by the historiographers, they

1. Ṣubḥī Sālim : *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* p. 413.

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did not exhibit much scrupulousness in preserving its chains of authentication. So, whenever the philologists used poetical compositions of the old Arabs for the purpose of philological precedence or in support of their historical or genealogical accounts, they used to fill the desideratum in authority chains by inserting names of other contemporary transmitters just to fill the gap.[1]

Because of this liberty in the transmission of poetry some philologists like *al-Aṣma'ī* did not indulge themselves in the study of the *ḥadīth* literature and remained content with their activities in the field of poetry and philology.

Philology and Ḥadīth :

Another significant point of note is the fact that in spite of being much scrupulously transmitted by the early transmitters belonging to various tribes of the Arabs, the *ḥadīth* literature was not used by the philologist for the purpose of authentication and citation of precedents. An obvious reason behind it seems that scholars of Arabic syntax and philology were inclined towards the *jāhiliyya* traditions and culture under the deep influence of their bedouin reporters and had lost their contacts with the *muḥaddith* class.[2] But their apologies for not exploiting the *ḥadīth* literature for philological and syntactic precedence are only lame excuses since these reasons also hold good in matters concerning authentication from Arabic poetry other than the *ḥadīth*. One of their major excuses is that they do not believe that all traditions attributed to the Prophet were genuine in their letter and purport. Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (d. 745 A.H.) has also pleaded that the reason why the philologists did not use the *ḥadīth* material for philological authentication was that they did not believe all the words used in *ḥadīth* were uttered verbatim by the Prophet himself. Had the early jurists believed them to be the real utterances of the Prophet they would have formulated rules of the *Sharī'a* strictly accordingly, as they derive injunctions out of the verses of the Qur'ān. According to Abū Ḥayyān various transmitters of

1. Ṣubḥī Sālim : *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* p. 418.
2. Sa'īd Afghānī : *Fī Usūl al-Naḥw* p. 41.

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ḥadīth report one and the same saying of the Prophet in quite different, if not contradictory, words, while the Prophet must have said it only in one of these versions. Some Traditionists only transmit the purport in their own words. Moreover, some of the reported versions of the *ḥadīth* are not free from grammatical errors as regards vowel points because their transmitters were non-Arabs by their origin; hence not conversant with the grammatical rules of the Arabic language.[1]

Abū 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna :

Among the chief exponents of the Arabic philology who served the Arabic historiography during the first century is Abū 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna[2] who compiled several works on the history of the Arabs in the first century of Islam. He represents the attitude of philologists in history-writing i.e. to collect narratives regarding a certain period or episode. His works include the subjects : the *mafākhir* (glorification), the *mathālib* (renunciation) and the *akhbār* (anecdotes) etc. In addition to it, he concerned himself with the biographical accounts of eminent historical figures, reports on the civil wars of the first century, political parties like the *Khārijites*, famous jurists, judges, *mawālī* and poets of the early century.

Abū 'Ubaida also paid attention to the study of the exegesis of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* literature. He was also an expert scholar of the battle-day narratives (*ayyām -al-'Arab).* Al-Mubarrad calls him "the most distinguished scholar of the *akhbār* and the *ayyām* during his age".[3] Ibn Qutaiba also endorses these remarks. The later historians

1. al-Suyūṭī : *al-Iqtirāḥ* p. 19.
   Ḥājī Khalīfa : *Kashf al-Zunūn* pp. 405-407.
   Ṣubḥī Sālim : *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* pp. 419-420.
2. For Abū 'Ubaida see : *Akbār al-Naḥwiyīn al-Baṣriyīn* p. 67 *Inbāh al-Ruwāt* vol. III p. 276, *Bughyat al-Wu'āt* p. 395, *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. XIII p. 252, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* vol. I p. 338, *Taqrīb al-Tehdhīb* vol. II p. 251, *Ṭabaqāt* (al-Zubaidī) 124 *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* vol. II, p. 24 *Mir'āt al-Jinān* vol. II p. 44 *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 236, *Mu'jam al-Udabā* vol. XIX p. 154 *al-Fihrist* p. 53 *Baḥth* 44-45.
3. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Udabā* vol. VI p. 165.

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are undoubtedly, very much indebted to him for the *ayyām* narratives he has left. He is quite scrupulous in reporting, and displays critical insight also. He always refers to those persons from whom he obtained an information and in case some contradictory reports regarding one and the same subject are found, he presents all of them simultaneously, leaving upto the reader to gauge their preference in regard to the amount of their reliability. Occasionally, he reports different versions complementing eachother or explaining obscure points of a certain version.

Abū 'Ubaida, a Jew by origin, was the disciple of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā[1] (d. 154 A.H.) and represents the trend of philologists in history-writing. Yūnus b. Ḥabîb is reckoned among his teachers but he acquired his knowledge of philology mostly from the Bedouin and accumulated narratives from nomadic tribes for the purpose of his philological studies. Later on, when certain tribes settled in the city of Baṣra (such as *Mirbad*), these narratives became very important in view of their containing the past history.

Abū 'Ubaida made very intensive study of the tribal stories connected with almost the entire northern region of the Arabian peninsula. According to Abū al-Faraj al-Isbahānî he was 'the most knowledgeable in the subjects of *ayyām*, *ansāb*, *akhbār*, poetry and philology of the Arab'. A-Jāḥiẓ regards him the most erudite scholar of his age, and Ibn Nadîm recognizes him as a scholar of both the periods—the *Jāhiliyya* and Islam.[2]

In the battle-day narratives transmitted by Abū 'Ubaida the bedouin spirit and literary style and characteristics of the Arab are preserved. He has apparently relied on his written notes and compilations, and not merely on his power of memory. In this particular respect he does also

1. For his notices see : Ibn Duraid : *Kitāb al-Ishtiqāq* 126.
   al-Jāḥiz : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* vol. I p. 320.
   al-Sîrāfî : *Akhbār al-Naḥwîyîn al-Baṣriyîn* p. 28.
   al-Zubai'di : *Ṭabaqāt al-Naḥwîyîn wa al-Lughāwîyîn* (al-Khānjî ed.) p. 28.
2. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 53.

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represent the developments in historiographical forms and methods during his age. He had such a vast and varied collection in his personal library that some of the early scholars remarked: 'Abū 'Ubaida is really a scholar provided he is left in his study'. According to another remark *Dīwān al-'Arab* was preserved in his home.

There is another important aspect of Abū 'Ubaida to be taken into consideration while we assess his works. He was a vocal supporter of the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement and his sympathies are clearly manifested in his two works namely *Kitāb al-Mawālī* (dealing with such prominent figures who belonged to the *Mawālī* class) and *Akhbār al-Furs* (a treatise on the history of Persia in a glorifying style).[1]

As for his status as an historiographer, no critic has accused him of falsification or fabrication though Abū 'Ubaida collected such *akhbār* which portray a very loathsome picture of the Arabs.

Qatāda b. Di'āma al-Sadusî (d. 117 A.H.):

Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Qatāda b. Di'āma al-Sadūsî[2] hailed from the centre of philological and historical activities of Baṣra. An erudite scholar of the Arab traditions, *ayyām*, *ansāb*, poetry etc., he enjoyed royal patronage of Umayyad rulers who very often referred to him whenever they needed information regarding some anecdote of the past, or genealogy of a tribe or the poetry of the *Jāhiliyya* period.

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1. For the role of *Shu'ūbiyya* and their influence on the development of Arabic literature during the second and third centuries, see Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥa al-Islām* pp. 49-78 and 'Social significance of the *Shu'ūbiyya*' in the *Studies on Islamic Civilization* by H.A.R. Gibb, (London). M. Nabîh Ḥijāb : *Mazāhir al-Shu'ūbiyya fî al-Adab al-'Arabî, 1961*, (*Cairo*).
2. For Qatāda reference may be made to the following sources :
   Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 203.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 2/II-7 Ibn al-Jazarî : *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā*.
   Ibn al-Athîr : *Kitāb al-Lubāb* vol. I p. 537 al-Yāfi'î : *Mirāt al-Jinān* vol. I p. 251, al-Qifṭi : *Inbāh al-Ruwāt* vol. III p. 35, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* vol. I p. 153, *Tehdhîb al-Tehdhîb* vol. VIII p. 351, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* vol. I p. 115, *Mu'jam al-Udabā* vol. XVII p. 9, *Wafayāt al-A'yān* vol. I p. 427. *al-Muzhir* vol. II p. 171.

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Besides his vast knowledge of these subjects, he is famous for his trustworthiness and accuracy in transmission. So much so that it was said about him that nothing about the Arabs had been transmitted more correctly than the reports by Qatāda. His narrations are found in later histories; but no compiled work or monograph is available to us. Abū Ḥātim transmitted from al-Aṣma'ī who was informed by Shu'ba : Whenever Qatāda transmitted some significant *ḥadīth* then went out for some need and came back, narrated it again, I used to run chasing him so that he may not forget the first version because he always memorized his knowledge and never wrote it down.[1]

His fame mainly rests upon the work he has done in *tafsīr* literature in which he specialized because of his vast knowledge of philology and *ayyām.*[2]

1. *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 204.
2. *Fajr al-Islām* p. 205.

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CHAPTER V

The Yemenite Element in Arab Historical Literature

The early Yemenite traditions found in the Arab history assume a legendary complexion.[1] Even such narrations as deal with the events of the sixth century A.D., are not free from non-historical elements. Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110 A.H./732 A.D.) and 'Abîd b. Sharya al-Jurhumî generally narrate fantastic tales heavily burdened with the Yemenite folk-literature[2] and traditions of the Jewish and Christian origin. One of the characteristics of the Yemenite scholars is that they claim to have known, not only the history of Yemen, but the history of all the extinct nations, revealed scriptures, inscriptions, classical languages and their scripts and genealogical details. Nevertheless, their narrations are devoid of any creative sensibility and sometime it appears that these narrators lacked even common sense, not to speak of their critical insight and power of discernment.[3] The object which the narrators of Yemenite origin never fail to stress is

1. Even early Muslim historians have criticized such historical material of mythological nature (see : al-Hamdānî : *al-Iklîl* vol. I p. 4).
2. *Kitāb al-Tijān fi Mulūk Ḥimyar* (Dāirat al-Ma'ārif, Hyderabad) pp. 35, 47, 48, 52, 53, 74, 86, 87, 110, 162.
   Krenkow : *Two Oldest Books of Arabic Folk-lore*, Islamic Culture, vol. II (1928).
   Jawād 'Alî : '*Majalla Majma' al-'Ilmî al'Irāqî* vol. I (1950).
   (for Urdu tr. by N.A. Fārūqî see '*Burhān*' Feb. 1968).
3. Jawād 'Alî : *Mawārid al-Tārîkh al-Ṭabarî* in the *Majalla Majma 'al-'Ilmî al-'Irāqî* vol. I (1950).

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superiority of the South Arabian people over the Northern Arabs not only in regard to their purity of race and blood, magnanimity, craftsmanship, war strategy, skill in architecture, literature, philology etc. but above them all, in their loyalty to their religion and faith.[1] Most of the North Arabian tribes, as we know, were bedouin who lived in deserts (with a few exceptions, of course, like the cities of Medîna, Macca, Ṭā'if etc.). They were a nomadic people and passed their life in an open and free atmosphere having no established culture and urbanized life. They were accustomed to wandering from one place to another in search of food and fodder for their only asset—their cattle. Contrary to this, the South Arabian people had seen the light of civilization much earlier than the advent of Islam. Theirs was an agrarian system of life and they were also deeply influenced by the cultural traditions of Persia, Abyssinia and the Hebrew colonialists in their land.

When the Southern tribes emigrated to Northern regions, they were far more civilized than the bedouin tribes living in the interior of the Northern desert with no cultural halo around them. This state of affairs created a sense of pride and superiority among them vis-a-vis the Northerners. It was a sense so ingrained that even after the advent of Islam, prejudices among the *Qaḥṭānî* and the *'Adnānî* i.e. people of Northern areas and Southern regions, could not wear out completely.

The Yemenite transmitters are also extremely inclined to embellish their narratives with poetical compositions without caring much for their authenticity. In *Kitāb al-Tījān*, attributed to Wahb b. Munabbih, we find that the first poem is claimed to have been composed by Adam, though it is written in a chaste Arabic style of the early Islamic century. It is said to have been recited by Adam while mourning the

1. "Many sayings show the Yemenites as representative of the spirit and religion in Islam". Goldziher : *Muslim Studies* I : 83.
The best representative of such tendentious writings in literature is *Kitāb al-Kāmil* of al-Mubarrad. Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* : I p. 315.

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murder of his son Abel. But, thank God, Wahb inserts the opinion of Jubair b. Muṭ'im casting doubts on its genuineness.[1]

Those who collected material for the Yemenite history like 'Abîd b. Sharya, Wahb b. Munabbih, Moḥammad b. K'ab al Quraẓî etc. were probably privileged to have access to some old books and the documents written in Ḥimyarite character which the Arab call *Khaṭṭ al-Musnad*, and which is empirically proved by some reports coming down to us from the early transmitters.

The Yemenite Jews converted to Islam like Wahb and Ka'b al-Aḥbār are mainly responsible for introducing many religious terms of Jewish origin to the Islamic literature.[2]

The institution of *Qaṣaṣ* (story-telling) also owes its richness and popularity to those converted from Judaism to Islam and more particularly to those of Yemenite origin. Tamîm al-Dārî was the first story-teller whom 'Umar I had permitted to address the congregation of Muslims on Fridays. 'Uthmān allowed him to address twice a week. Tamîm was a Christian prior to his conversion to Islam in 9 A.H. He had also narrated before the Prophet stories of *Jassāsa* and *Dajjāl*. Tamîm had also strong leaning towards asceticism and alienation which he must have inherited from Christianity.

The story-tellers used to sit in a mosque and narrated fantastic tales about the Genesis of the Universe, the ancient nations, as well as about the would-be proceedings of the Day of Judgement.

During the early Umayyad period, these story-tellers were encouraged for political motives.[3] They started their stories to arouse the popular sentiments for piety and fear of God, then praised the Prophet and his Companions, and at the end of their discourse prayed for the long life of the Caliph and for the stability of his rule. So much so that story-tellers were

1. Wahb b. Manabbih : *Kitāb al-Tîjān* pp. 17, 18.
   Krenkow (F) : *Ibid* p. 56.
2. Aḥmed Amîn : *Fajr al-Islām* p. 25.
3. *Fajr al-Islām* pp. 159-160.

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appointed and received stipends from the State exchequer.

'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib, during the period of his Caliphate, had prohibited the practice of story-telling and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî was the sole exception whom he allowed to address the congregations at Baṣra mosque since he did not narrate unfounded and fantastic stories of Jewish and Christian origin.

It was through these *Quṣṣāṣ* (story-tellers) that the material of Yemenite and Jewish origin commonly prevailed among the Muslims and became extremely popular.

'Abîd b. Sharya al-Jurhumî :

'Abîd b. Sharya al-Jurhumî was a contemporary of the Prophet but he could not find the honour of being present in his company. According to Ibn Hishām[1] he had participated in the battle of 'Dāḥis'.[2] A story about 'Abîd is also narrated by him in the *Kitāb al-Tîjān.* Mu'āwiya b. Abî Sufyān had summoned him from Ṣan'ā to the Capital and inquired from him the causes that led to linguistic variations, geographical divisions of different races and anecdotes of the Arab and the non-Arab kings. It means that during the period of Mu'āwiya, 'Abîd was regarded as an expert on the history of the world. Mu'āwiya was quite satisfied with his answers and commissioned him to write down these details which 'Abîd accordingly did.[3]

It is believed that 'Abîd lived uptil the age of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. Ibn Nadîm[4] has attributed two works to 'Abîd b. Sharya namely :

1. *Kitāb al-Amthāl*
2. *Kitāb al-Mulūk wa Akhbār al-Māḍīn*[5]

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1. Wahb b. Munabbih : *Kitāb al-Tîjān* pp. 66, 209-210.
2. Jād al-Maulā : *Ayyām al-'Arab fi al-Jāhiliyya* p. 249 et. seq.
3. Perhaps the same book which has now been published under the title "*Akhbār 'Abîd b. Sharya al Jurhumî fi Akhbār al-Yemen wa Ash'ārihā wa Ansābihā*", from Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, Hyderabad.
4. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 220.
5. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab.* II : 60, 62.

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These works were orally transmitted by Zaid b. Kayyis al-Nameri, 'Abd Wudd al-Jurhumi and 'Alaqa b. Karim al-Kilābi. The latter transmitter belonged to the clan of 'Āmir b. Kilāb. A contemporary of Yazid b. Mu'āwiya, he was well-informed with regard to the ancient Arabs, their *akhbār*, traditions and folk-lore. Ibn Nadim had also seen '*Kitāb al-Amthāl*' which according to him contained about 50 folios[1] and which is perhaps the same work which was transmitted to him from 'Abid b. Sharya.

The other title '*Akhbār al-Māḍīn*' was available till the age of al-Mas'ūdi and we find its reference in the *Murūj al-Dhahab*. Perhaps, it is the same work which has now been published by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Osmānia, Hyderabad, in 1347 A.H. But the title of this latter work is *Akhbār 'Abīd b. Sharya al-Jurhumi fi Akhbār al-Yemen wa Ash'ārihā wa Ansābihā*. Another exponent of the Southern Arab saga was Yazid b. al-Mufarrigh (d. 69 A.H.) who is held mainly responsible for the invention of the legends and poems attributed to the *Tubba'* princes from whom he also claimed his descent.[2]

It is, however, noteworthy that the name of 'Abid b. Sharya does not occur anywhere in the history of al-Ṭabari.

Ka'b al-Aḥbār : (d. 32 A.H.)

Abū Is'ḥāq Ka'b b. Māte', or Ka'b al-Aḥbār,[2] as he is popularly known, hailed from the tribe of Dhū Ru'ain of Ḥimyar. He passed his early life in Yemen and professed Islam during the period of Abū Bakr or 'Umar and came to settle in Medina.

A report cited by al-Wāqidi on the authority of Yūnus b. Maisara b. Hulais indicates that when 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib, visited Yemen, Ka'b came to his assembly to listen to his speech. According to another version of 'Amr b. 'Abdullah al-'Abasi, he requested the Caliph 'Ali to describe the features

1. Ibn Nadim : *al-Fihrist* p. 220.
2. al-Isbahāni : *Kitāb al-Aghāni* Vol. XVII p. 52.
3. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* pp. 189-190.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* Vol. II p. 262-263, *Kitāb al-Tijān* pp. 110-112.
   al-Shi'rāni : *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* vol. I p. 19.
   Aḥmed Amin : *Fajr al-Islām* p. 160, al-Dūri : *Baḥth* p. 112.

and characteristic qualities of the Prophet. On listening to 'Ali's description of the Prophet he exclaimed: 'It is just what we find in our scriptures. I attest to it and profess the religion of Islam'. Ka'b took out a book and said that his father had sealed it and advised him not to tamper with the seal until the Prophet appeared in Yethrib. I remained on the religion of Islam till the Prophet passed away, then Abū Bakr also died. I came out of Yemen during the period of 'Umar. If it were I would have hastened in emigration to Medîna (too see the Prophet alive)".[1]

Afterwards, he migrated to Syria and settled in Ḥims where he passed away in 32 A.H.

He is one of those scholars who introduced the Jewish tales to the early Islamic historical literature. 'Abdullah b. al-'Abbās and Abū Huraira have relied on his narrations about the pre-Islamic history. 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās has cited the versions of Ka'b in his commentary of the Qur'ān very frequently. An example of the reports of Ka'b al-Aḥbār will perhaps suffice to illustrate the nature and scope of the material provided by the Yemenite scholars of Jewish origin and how they enriched the Muslim historical writings during the early period with regard to pre-Islamic ages. "Wahb said : 'Abdullah b. al-'Abbās entered upon Mu'āwiya and 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ in Mecca after the death of 'Alî. Both of them were reciting the Holy Qur'ān. 'Amr read the *Sūra al-Kahf* and pronounced the following verse :

وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ *'Wajadahā taghribu fī 'Ainin Ḥami'atin'*. (al-Kahf : 86). But he as well as Mu'āwiya read the word *Ḥāmiya* حَامِيَةٍ i.e. raging fire; while Ibn Abbās recited it as '*Ḥami'atin*' حَمِئَةٍ i.e. muddy spring. On hearing Ibn 'Abbas' version, both Mu'āwiya and 'Amr asked him to explain why did he prefer his version. Ibn 'Abbās

1. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maqhāzî* III pp. 1082-1083 (It is noteworthy that Ibn Is'ḥāq has not obtained any reports from him).

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the case to Ka'b al-Aḥbār who perchance came on the scene. Ka'b's ruling was in favour of Ibn 'Abbās on the ground that in Torah it is quite the same. Now Mu'āwiya and 'Amr asked from Ibn Abbās a precedence from the ancient 'Arabic poetry for the usage of (*'Ḥami'atin*). Ibn 'Abbās came out in search of some one who could reproduce such a philological precedence. Nāfi' b. al-Azraq met him in the way and he narrated the story of Tubba' Taban Abî Karîb, when he launched an expedition on the cities of Mecca and Medîna to fight against the practice of *Jizya* which Banū Khunduf were compelled to pay to the tribes of Jurhum, Ṭasm and Jadîs etc. At that time Tubba' Abū Karib recited a long ode (51 verses) which Nāfi' quoted in support of his story and the ode contained a line showing the usage of *Ḥami'atin* too".[1] Thus we find that Ka'b al-Aḥbār was the pioneer of the class of story-tellers in Islam and later historians have attributed to him abundant curious information and interesting stories. He was supposed to have acquired scholarly knowledge of the ancient scriptures and religious traditions particularly of Torah and the Talmud. So, in matters of Biblical or Talmudic origin he was regarded the final authority by the Muslims and they referred to him issues for final judgement.[2] But, in the above story of Ibn 'Abbās and Mu'āwiya it has been stated that it happened after the death of 'Alî i.e. 40 A.H. Our reporters say that Ka'b died in 32 A.H. during the reign of 'Uthmān, but in our opinion Ka'b must have lived till the age of Mu'āwiya since in one of his reports he is found referring to the Khārijites.

That he was knowledgeable in all matters and claimed to have read about them in the Jewish sources is also proved by the curious fact that he had foretold 'Umar of his murder. "How did you know about it", asked 'Umar surprisingly. 'I find it written in our sources', was Ka'b's reply.[3] 'Is 'Umar

1. al-Qur'ān : XIX : 86 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XVI pp. 10-11 *Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 111.
2. Ka'b also taught the Torah to his Muslim colleagues as is evident from a report cited by Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* VII : p. 79.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : pp. 332, 340, 342.
   Fajr al-Islām : p. 161.

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[illegible] mentioned in the *Torah* ? 'Umar was still more surprised. 'No, but your features and qualities are there and from that description I infer that within three days you must die'.[1]

In other words, we can say that Ka'b was aware of the conspiracy of the murder of 'Umar which he disclosed in this way.[2]

As we have seen earlier, Ibn 'Abbās used to obtain reports from Jew scholars and similarly he had taken material for his *Tafsîr* from Ka'b al-Aḥbār which we find in the commentaries like the *Tafsîr* of al-Ṭabarî, very often quoted for explanation of the Qur'ānic verses. Among those who obtained from Ka'b is 'Aṭā b. Yasār (d. 103 A.H.) *maulā* Maimūna b. al-Ḥārith, wife of the Prophet.[3] Al-Ṭabarî has obtained only a few reports from Ka'b, while historians like Ibn Qutaiba and al-Nawavî do not quote him at all. But he is one of the major sources wherefrom al-Tha'ālibî and al-Kisā'î derive their information.

'Alî b. al-Ḥusain narrated that Ka'b al-Aḥbār caught hold of al-Mughîra b. Naufal's hand saying : 'Do remember to intercede for me on the Day of Judgement'. Al-Mughîra, pulling off his hand replied : "Who am I to intercede for anyone ? I am simply one of the many believers". Ka'b caught his hand again and pressing it forcefully, said : "There is no believer from amongst the family of Moḥammad, but he will intercede for others on the Day of Judgement. So please do remember me". Similar is the version of 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Mughîra b. Naufal regarding the same report.[4]

He is particularly quoted by the early historians in the description of mythological and curious information say about the inventions of various things.[5]

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III p. 354.
2. *Ṭabaqāt* : III p. 83, 332, 333, 334, 337, 340, 350, 356, 361.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V p. 173.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V p. 23 ; for his reports see also p. 131.
5. al-Jahashyārî : *Kitāb al-Wuzarā wa al-Kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā et. al. Cairo, 1938.

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Wahb b. Munabbih : (b. 34 A.H. d. 110-114 A.H./729-732 A.D.).

Wahb b. Munabbih,[1] a popular story-teller of Yemenite origin and at one stage of his life Qāḍi of Ṣan'ā, has influenced the Arab historiography in many ways. First, he is among those who introduced the Jewish material of Biblical and Talmudic origin to the Islamic history. Secondly, being a Yemenite of Persian race,[2] he was deeply steeped into legendary material of Yemenite folklore, which he transmit-

1. For Wahb reference may be made to the following sources :
   Wahb : *Kitāb al-Tijān fī Mulūk Ḥimyar* (Hyderabad, 1347 A.H.).
   Ibn Nadīm : *al-Fihrist* p. 138.
   Ibn Ḥajar : *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. V pp. 395-96.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. VI pp. 385-386.
   Abū Nu'aim : *Ḥilyat al-Auliā* I p. 24.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt al-A'yān* II p. 238.
   al-Yāfi'ī : *Mirāt al-Jinān* p. 25.
   Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhīb al-Tehdhīb* vol. XI : 168.
   Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Udabā* pp. VII 232, 272.
   Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 233.
   al-Sakhāwī : *al-E'lān bi al-Ṭaubīkh* p. 48.
   Bukhārī : *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* IV part 2 : 164.
   Ibn Kathīr : *al-Bidāya* IX : p. 393.
   Horovitz (J) : *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors.* Islamic Culture, vol. I (1927) 535-559 vol. II (1928) pp. 22-50, 164-182, 495-526.
   Fārūqī (N.A.) : *Sīrat Nabawī Kī Awwalīn Kitāben aur unke Mu'allifīn* pp. 36-44 (Urdu tr.) (Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli. 1974).
   Ḥusain Naṣṣār : *al-Maqhāzī al-'ūlā wa Mu'allifūhā.* (Ar. tr.) (Cairo, 1949).
   Jawād 'Alī : *Mawārid al-Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* in the *Majalla Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī* vol. I (1950).
   Krenkow (F) : *The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore* : Islamic Culture vol. III (1928).
   Aḥmed Amīn : *Fajr al-Islām* pp. 25, 63, 158, 160-162, 168, 169, 202, 205, 214.
   M. Ḥamīdullah : *Ṣaḥīfa Hammām b. Munabbih* (Hyderabad, 196)
   al-Dūrī : *Baḥth fī Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārīkh 'inda al-'Arab* pp. 103-114.
2. Kisrā the Persian monarch had deputed some persons to Yemen and Wahb's forefathers were from amongst them. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* : p. 202.

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ted to the commentators of the Qur'ān as well as to the *maghāzī*-writers. Thirdly, he was one of the pioneers of the Medīna School of historiography who compiled a book of *Maghāzī* in the first century A.H.[1] Professor C.H. Becker found a fragment of his collection of *Maghāzī* ; but the same does not indicate the scope or treatment of the subject carried out by Wahb, nor does it show the attitude of its compiler about the method of authentication. Abū Nu'aim has borrowed two pieces from the above book of Wahb which carry no chains of authority[2] and their style resembles the common style of folk-tales. These extracts reveal that Wahb had been inclined to glorify the Southern races and also accepted mythological elements as historical material. The style and diction of the *ayyām* tales also reflected in the extracts published by Professor Becker. But, the later *Sīrah*-writers do not refer to this work, nor any impact of this book is traceable on the *Sīrah* literature of the subsequent centuries, which means that since the very beginning the work had remained in obscurity.

It appears that the family of Wahb had a fine taste for dissemination of knowledge. Wahb's elder brother Hammām b. Munabbih and two younger brothers Ma'qil and 'Umar had also engaged themselves in the service of the Islamic lore.[3]

1. Ḥājī Khalīfa : *Kashf al-Zunūn* vol. II : 1747.
   Horouitz : *The Earliest Biographies of the the Prophet and their Authors* : Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, Vol. I-II (1927-28) for the Urdu translation see :
   Fārūqī (N.A.) : *Sīrat Nabavī kī Awwalīn Kitāben aur unke Mūallifīn* (Delhi, 1974).
2. Abū Nu'aim : *Ḥilyat al-Auliyā*, vol. II. pp. 73 and 79.
3. *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* : p. 202.

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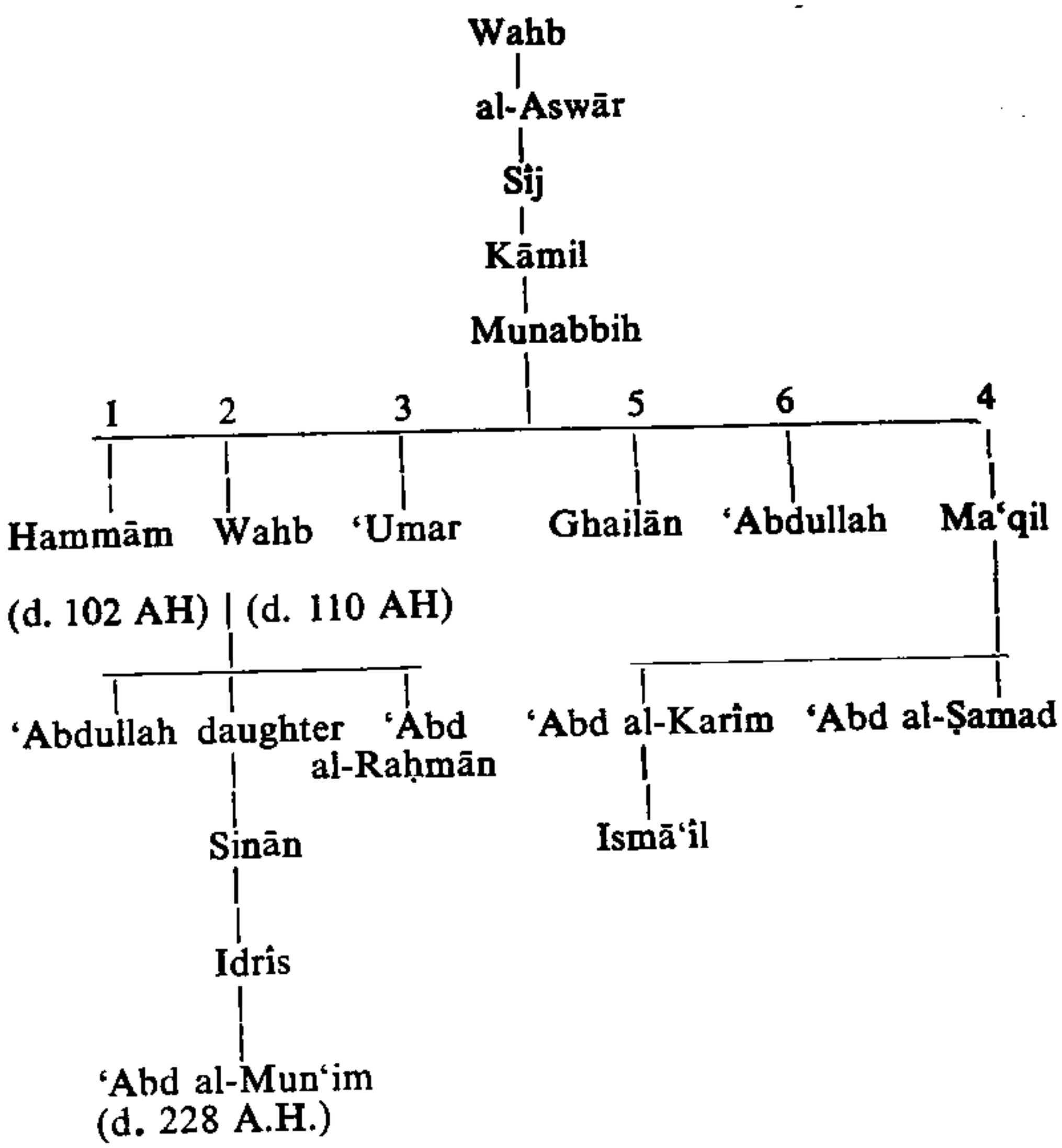
Genealogical Tree[1]



Hammām narrated traditions of the Prophet on the authority of Abū Huraira. He had also compiled a *Ṣaḥīfa*

1. Prepared with the help of :
Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* (vol. V) and compared with the genealogical tree al-Dūrī has reproduced (*Baḥth* p. 114) from :
(Chauvin, *La Recension Egiptienna de 1001 nuits*, Paris, 1899).

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[illegible] fragment has recently been published by Dr. M. Ḥamīdullāh.[1] Our reporters say that Hammām used to purchase books for his brother Wahb.

In paying more attention to the Biblical stories and the Jewish folk-lore, Wahb intended to explain some of the Qur'ānic verses which have a reference to the matters common to both Judaism and Islam. He did also collect such fables and folk-tales as were circulated among the Muslims, especially the (*Qiṣaṣ*) stories of Ka'b al Aḥbār (d. 32-34 A.H./652-654 A.D.) (q.v.) and 'Abdullah b. Salām (d. circa 40 A.H./660 A.D.) (q.v.) ; then he added to it what he knew by virtue of his being a convert from the 'people of the Book'[2] and also what he had studied from the Holy Scriptures or the Jewish traditions and Yemenite folk-lore.[3] Wahb tries to mention dates and chronological sequence of all events as about the Ark of Noah :

"The Ark anchored on 10th of Rajab after remaining afloat for 150 days, then it came on the Jūdi mountain. On earth the Ark rested on the 10th of Muḥarram".[4] The most widely accepted view that God sent down one lakh and twenty four thousand prophets is also reported by Wahb and accepted by our historians who dealt with the history of prophethood.

Wahb was born in the year 34 A.H. (654-655 A.D.), at *Dhimār* a small town near Ṣan'ā, in Yemen. For sometime he was the *Qāḍī* of Ṣan'ā, and in 100 A.H. we find him in Medina in the assemblies of various contemporary jurists and Traditionists of repute. Wahb had been imprisoned by the

1. *Ṣaḥīfa Hammām b. Munabbih* (ed. H. Ḥamīdullāh) : Islamic Publications, Hyderabad, 1956.
2. Horovitz does not accept the view that Wahb was a convert and professed the religion of Islam in 10 A.H. Wahb's father Munabbih, according to Horovitz, might have converted to Islam and Wahb, as it appears from a careful study of his chronology, was an inborn Muslim. *The Earliest Biographies* (*Islamic Culture* : vol. I. 1927.)
3. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 8 (Egypt, 1935).
   al-Sakhāwī : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubīkh.*
4. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 26.

governor of Yemen Yūsuf b. 'Umar al-Thaqafi[1] on some charges unknown to us. But it appears, that it was because of his dogmatic views that he had to remain behind the bar. The Governor had also flogged him for some charges until he was dead.[2] Some reporters say that Wahb died in 114 A.H., while al-Dhahabî, Yāqūt and others give the date of his death as 11th of Muḥarram 110 A.H. (832 A.D.).[3]

His Works :

Later authors have attributed a number of works, original as well as translations, to Wahb :

1. **Kitāb al-Qadar :** 'Amr b. Dînār says that he had seen a book on the subject of Free-will at the residence of Wahb in Ṣan'ā (Yemen).[4] During the early days of his life he had staunch belief in *Qadar* (Free-will), but according to some reporters had changed his ideas after having studied some more Scriptures revealed to the ancient Prophets.

2. **Kitāb al-Mulūk al-Mutawwaja min Himyar wa Akhbāruhum wa Qisauhum wa Quburuhum wa Ash'āruhum :** This book on the subject of the history of Yemen based on myths and folk-lore is also attributed to him. It was compiled on the pattern of the *ayyām*-tales and it appears that Wahb had not observed the rules of authentication in its narrations. It was, perhaps, on the basis of this work that 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām b. Ayyūb al-Ḥimyarî (d. 213 or 218 A.H.) prepared his work entitled *Kitāb al-Tījān fī Mulūk Ḥimar* which he orally received from Asad b. Mūsa on the authority of Abū Idrîs b. Sinān (Wahb's grandson).[5]

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1. Governor of Yemen from 106 A.H. to 120 A.H.
2. Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* vol. XI : 168.
3. al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* p. 103.
4. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Udabā* VII : p. 232, Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* XI : p. 168 *Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 235
5. *Kitāb al-Tîjān* pp. 108, 109 et. seq. The work has been published now by the Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Osmānia, Hyderabad, 1347 A.H. along with the book entitled "*Akhbār 'Abîd b. Sharya al-Jurhumî*". (see also Krenkow : *The Two Oldest Books of Arabic Folk-lore*, (*Islamic Culture*, 1928).

Apart from the material collected by Wahb, Ibn Hishām also added fresh information which he received from reporters like Moḥammad b. al-Sā'ib (q.v.) or Abū Mikhnaf (q.v.) or 'Abdullāh b. al-Ṭufail al-Bakkā'ī (d. 183 A.H.) the well-known transmitter of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Is'ḥāq.

3. **Kitāb Maghāzī Rasūlillāh** : As stated earlier, a book on the subject of *Maghāzī* is also attributed to Wahb.[1] Professor C.H. Becker discovered[2] a fragment scribed in 228 A.H. and transmitted by "Moḥammad b. Abī Bakr, from Abī Ṭalḥa, from 'Abd al-Mun'im,[3] from his father, from Abū Ilyās from Wahb", in Heidelburg (Germany) which is supposed to be a fragment of the work of Wahb on the subject of *Maghāzī*. This fragment does not contain proper chains of authority, a practice which Wahb often displayed in his reports. The above fragment contains some events of the Meccan life of the Prophet and some about the *Khath'am* expedition.

4. **Kitāb al-Mubtadā** : Similarly, Wahb did also compile a book on the subject of the Genesis which served the purpose of the later historiographers dealing with the Prophet's biography in writing the preface to the *Sīrah* i.e. the 'history of Prophethood'. Ibn Qutaiba,

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1. *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* No. 12464 Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* II : p. 382.
2. Becker (C.H.) : *Pepyri Schott - Reinhardt* : I Heidelburg, 1906.
   Ḍuḥā-al-Islām II : p. 323.
3. 'Abd al-Mun'im b. Idrīs (d. 228 A.H.) was a professional story-teller who not only transmitted such tales as he had inherited from his maternal grandfather Wahb b. Munabbih, but early critics also accuse him of fabrication of stories as and when circumstances demanded. In order to make his reports acceptable to the public as well as to historiographers, he had also invented such Traditions which portrayed Wahb as a pious and glorified personality. He used to forge Traditions and reports and attributed them either to Wahb or to his own father, Idris, or to the books purchased from professional scribes and posed himself as their author. Nevertheless, most of the transmissions of Wahb have come down to us through his channel. (*Lisān al-Mīzān* IV : p. 73).

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al-Ṭabarî and others have quoted from the work of Wahb on *al-Mubtadā*,[1] or *Kitāb al-Mubtadā*, and these extracts show that Wahb had started his work from the description of Genesis, then came to the graded history of Prophethood, descriptions of the early Prophets like Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Solomon, David etc. and some of the sages of yore like Luqmān and People of the Cave, or Dhū al-Qarnain.

5. **Translation of the Psalms** : It has also been said that Wahb rendered into Arabic the Psalms of David (Zabūr) under the title *'Kitāb al-Mazāmîr'*. It is the same work which is still found in libraries and supposed to be the translation of Zabūr by "Muslim scholars". Apart from the titles mentioned above, the following works are also attributed to Wahb.[2]

6. **Mawā'iz Wahb b. Munabbih** :

7. **Ḥikmat Wahb b. Munabbih**[3] : I am inclined to believe that this work is a translation of the wise sayings of Luqmān, which Wahb claims to have studied in detail.

8. **Ḥikmat Āle Dā'ūd** : Apparently a translation from Jewish religious sources.

9. **al-Israeliyyāt** :. Ḥājî Khalîfa[4] has also mentioned a work of Wahb on the subject of *Israeliyyāt*. Perhaps, it was the same work to which early reporters refer as *al-Mubtadā*.[5] Horovitz and Rosenthal have endorsed

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1. Al-Tha'ālibî has utilized the work in his book *'Arā'is al-Majālis* on the authority of 'Abd al-Mun'im (d. 228 A.H.). According to Ibn Nadîm 'Abd al-Mun'im lived for over a hundred years and the above book was his own compilation (*al-Fihrist* p. 229).
2. Brockleman : *G.A.L.* (*Supplement*) vol. I : p. 101.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Tabaqāt* vol. VII : p. 97.
4. *Kashf al-Zunūn* No. 9436.
5. V. Chauvin has tried to collect from the later histories and compile the matter transmitted by Wahb on the subject of *Israeliyyât*. It was published under the title : *La Recension Egiptienne de 1001 nuits*, (Paris, 1899).

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same view.[1]

10. **Futûḥ** : A work of the above title has been referred to by Ḥājī Khalîfa.[2] But no other historian seems to have come across it.

11. According to Ibn Sa'd,[3] Wahb had also compiled a book *Aḥādîth al-Anbiā wa al-'Ubbād wa Aḥādîth Banî Israel* dealing with the stories of pious men (*'Ubbād*) who did not attain the status of a prophet. The book entitled (*Qiṣaṣ al-Akhyār*) referred to by Ḥājī Khalîfa, says Joseph Horovitz, might have been the same book to which Ibn Sa'd has indicated.

Wahb on the History of Yemen :

His reports about the early history of Yemen are mostly mythological in character which he must have obtained from the ancient folk-lores and from the Jewish literature. Faked verses attributed to various prophets and sages also occur in his transmissions on the pattern of the *ayyām*-tales with the purpose of glorifying the Yemenites vis-a-vis the Northern Arabs.

Wahb does not appear to have a clear vision of historiographical methods. We notice that he was not very critical or scrupulous in accepting historical material from non-historical sources. He does not hesitate in accepting transmissions from mere story-tellers and professional falsifiers. According to al-Sakhāwî the material presented by Wahb is hardly acceptable to scrupulous historiographers.[4]

Wahb has presented quite a different, and assuredly weak, viewpoint of history as compared with the views of the orthodox Traditionists and historiographers of the Medîna School. Nonetheless, he is mainly responsible for providing

1. Horovitz J. : *The Earliest Biographies* (Islamic Culture Vol. I, 1927).
   Rosenthal : *History of Muslim Historiography* p. 265.
2. Ḥājī Khalîfa : *Kashf al-Zunūn* No. 8932.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* VII : 97.
   Horovitz J. : *The Earliest Biographies* (Islamic Culture Vol. I, 1927).
4. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bî al-Taubîkh li man Dhamma Ahl al-Taurîkh*, p. 49.

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material for the preface to the *Sīrah* which is called *al-Mubtadā* and deals with the early history of Prophethood to connect the prophethood of Moḥammad with the long and consecutive chain of prophets. For this, Wahb exploited Jewish sources, collected folk-tales, and prepared the way for writing general universal histories which appeared during the third century A.H.

Nature and Style of his Reports :

Wahb has also narrated some curious information about his contemporary prominent figures.[1]

'Ajūz al-Yemen 'the Old woman of Yemen',[2] Wahb b. Munabbih relates : 'Abdullah b. al-Zubair appointed one of our chiefs as governor over us. This man was extremely ugly and had been given the nickname "Old Woman of Yemen". I came to Ibn al-Zubair as a member of a delegation from Yemen, and found 'Abdullāh b. Khālid b. Usaid with him. This latter greeted me, "O Abū 'Abdullāh, how is the old woman of Yemen"? I disdained to reply, but he repeated the question several times insistently, so in the end I quoted, "I have submitted myself with Solomon, to God, the Lord of the worlds". (XXVII : 44-45), and then added "And how is the old woman of Quraish" ? He asked whom it was that I meant by this, and I told him, Umm Jamîl (Sc. the wife of Moḥammad's enemy in Mecca, Abū Lahab) the one who carries fire wood, with a rope of palm-fibre round her neck (Qur'ān CXI 4-5). Ibn al-Zubair burst out laughing, and he turned to Ibn Khālid saying, you asked a silly question, but he gave a good answer". (*Thimār al-Qulūb* p. 241).

Wahb b. Munabbih informs us about the obscure points of pre-Islamic history with the help of Jewish sources or Yemenite tales. For example, commentators of the Qur'ān wanted to know about the whereabouts of Luqmān, a reference to whom is found in the Qur'ān (XXXI : 12). Our sources do not reveal anything about his community or faith

1. al-Tha'ālibî : *Latā'if al 'Ma'ārif* p. 57 (tr. C.E. Bosworth), Edinburg 1968.
2. This is Bosworth's translation, in my view the word 'Ajūz' does not necessarily mean 'old woman', it stands for 'old man' equally.

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or [illegible] period when he lived. Some said he belonged to Aila; others described him as an Abyssinian. According to Wahb he was a Jew, a nephew of David.[1] Wahb claims to have utilized most of his sayings in his works. He studied about 10,000 wise sayings of Luqmān[2] and says that they were in proverbial usage among the Arab.

Most of his narrations are connected with Genesis (*Mubtadā al-Khalq*) a characteristically Jewish trend, or stories of early prophets and these are freely used in our history, *ḥadīth*, *Sīrah* and *tafsīr* literature. He claims to have read 27 scriptures revealed to various prophets.[3]

Wahb appears in *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām in the description of christianity in Nejrān.[4] Al-Mas'ūdī has mentioned his name in the list of the early historians of Islam and has obtained from him information about Dhū al-Qarnain that he lived during the interval between Christ and Moḥammad.[5]

Al-Mas'ūdī has referred to this work as "*Kitāb al-Mubtadā wa al-Siyar*" and has mentioned it in the description of Jurjis : "As is found in the *Akhbār* of the people of the Book converted to Islam and also in the work of Wahb b. Munabbih...". Again he refers to Wahb among those who deal in their works with the subject of Genesis like Wahb and takes from him the description of the creation of evil spirits (*Shayāṭīn*).[6]

An Examination of the Reports from Wahb b. Munabbih :

Age of the World :

Most of the later historians have relied on Wahb in writing about the Genesis of the world (*Mubtadā al-Khalq*) and the same material has been used by the majority of *Sīrah*-

1. *Sīrah* Ibn Hishām vol. I p. 265, *Fajr al-Islām* p. 63, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (*Ṭabariya*). Vol. IV pp. 17-19.
2. *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 25.
3. *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 202.
4. Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* I pp. 32-33.
5. al-Mas'ūdī : *Murūj* I pp. 21-79.
6. al-Mas'ūdī : *Murūj* II p. 138.

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writers.[1] He is also frequently quoted in matters that come within the range of the Jewish mythology or the Biblical legends. But strangely enough, al-Wāqidî does not obtain anything from Wahb. Al-Ṭabarî has referred to Wahb, along with a report from Ka'b on the same point, that the age of this world is sixty thousand years.[2] According to Wahb, Allah created 18000 worlds of which our world is just like a charlock grain on our palm. Again, he informs us that before the creation of the earth and the heavens '*Arsh* was on water and when Allah intended to create then He took out a handful of water which transformed into vapour and out of it seven skies came into existence within two days; then He created the earth in two days, and completed the process of all creation in seven days'.[3] In another report he tells us the location of the skies and the earth, their plan, and the oceans that surround the earth etc.[4] Wahb also discusses whether the number of days created by Allah is six or seven, and al-Ṭabarî also quotes him in this matter.[5]

Creation and Fall of Adam :

From the Genesis he enters into the details of the creation of Adam and Eve.[6] How they lived in Paradise and transgressed the command of Allah by eating from the forbidden tree as a consequence of which they were sent down on earth etc.[7] These details seem to have been borrowed from his work *Mubtadā al-Khalq* which the *Sîrah*-writers also utilize in writing about the history of prophethood.

Again, al-Ṭabarî quotes him in the description of the descendants of Adam,[8] their names, genealogy, offshoots,

1. For stories of the prophets narrated by Wahb see also al-Suyūṭî *Tuḥfat al-Majālis* pp. 13-33.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 10 *Tafsîr* XII : 4 *al-Ma'ārif* : pp. 8-9. al-Mas'ūdî : *Akhbār al-Zamān* p. 19 (Cairo, 1938).
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 39 *Kitāb al-Tîjān* pp. 1-6.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 41 *Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 7 et. seq.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I p. 43 *Tafsîr* VII : 106 VIII : 184-185.
6. & 7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I : 108 *Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 11 et. seq.
8. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 10.

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[illegible]ation on various parts of the earth etc. and here Wahb is quoted, for a legend, as al-Ṭabarî himself indicates, quite resembling the story of Jamshed though its historical versions are quite different in details.[1] It shows that Wahb had also taken interest in the history of the ancient kings. Wahb also informs us that Sam b. Noah was the ancestor of the Arab, the Persian and the Roman while Ham was the forefather of the Sudanese. From Jafeth he traces the origin of Turks and Gog and Magog.[2] Another report of his deals with the description of the people of *'Ād* and that how they were chastised by Allah.[3] This is a part of the ancient Yemenite history in which Wahb had specialized because of his being a Yemenite by origin. In the story of Lot he appears to comment on the verses of the Qur'ān[4] (*Hūd* : 80-81) which has also been adopted by other commentators of the Qur'ān. For the purpose of our present study it shows that Wahb had taken interest in the 'history of prophethood' and these reports must have been a part of his '*Kitāb al-Siyar wa al-Maghāzî*' as a preface to *Sîrah*. He tells us that Ayyūb was a Roman by origin, and gives his genealogy tracing his origin down from Isaac b. Abraham.[5] Al-Ṭabarî has apparently taken the story of Ayyūb from Wahb. Ibn Is'ḥāq has quoted the report of Wahb about *Khiḍr*, that he was the Companion of Moses and al-Ṭabarî cites other such reports which reveal that *Khiḍr* lived before the time of Moses and he is inclined to prefer these reports to the version of Wahb.[6]

Wahb, in the description of the Staff of Moses, occurs in al-Ṭabarî and this version has been accepted by Ibn Is'ḥāq as well as by other *Sîrah*-writers.[7] In the story of Moses and the Magician he is quoted to explain the verses of the Qur'ān

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 176-177, al-Suyūṭî : *Tuḥfat al-Majālis* p. 16.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 201.
3. Ibid : I : 226.
4. Ibid : I : 300, 304.
5. Ibid : I : 322.
6. Ibid : I : 366—*Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 93 et. seq.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 401 *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 20 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXVI : 107-108.

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bearing a reference to the event.[1] He also narrates the details about the death of Aaron.[2] In the chapter entitled 'The affairs of Banî Israel and their leaders after Yusha' b. Nūn and the events that took place during the period of Zaw and Kaiqubādh', Wahb narrates the history according to the Jewish belief and compares it with the saying of the Qur'ān[3] : 'Bethink thee (O Moḥammad,) of those of old, who went forth from their habitations in their thousands, fearing death, and Allah said unto them : 'Die, and then He brought them back to life. Lo ! Allah is a Lord of Kindness to mankind, but most of mankind give not thanks'. According to Wahb, Kālab b. Yufanna died after Yusha' and he left Ezekiel b. Budha as his successor and he is the man who prayed to Allah what is mentioned in the Qur'ān (*al-Baqara*: 243). Al-Ṭabarî has quoted these details from the Jewish literature in his Commentary of the Qur'ān also.[4]

After Ilyas, Ilisha' became the Prophet and remained their leader for sometime. The Jews, Wahb tells us, had a coffin which contained the holy remains of the Family of 'Imrān and Moses, and something else, which they called *Sakīna* ! This coffin had come down to them from their ancestors as a sacred heritage. Whenever they had to encounter an enemy, they took out the coffin in procession and offended their enemy keeping the coffin in the front line, till their enemy was defeated by Allah. According to Wahb, the *Sakîna* was a 'skull of a cat' and when it cried like a cat in the coffin, the Jews believed that the time of their victory had come.[5] This *Sakîna* is referred to in the

1. al-Qur'ān : *al-Qaṣaṣ* 29-30, *al-Namal* 8, *Ṭāhā* 17-20, *al-Namal* 10, *al-Shu'arā* 16, *Ghāfir* 28-29 etc. (see al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 401-407, *Tafsîr*. Vol. XVI, p. 156).
2. al-Ṭabarî, *Tārîkh* I : 433.
(Reference to Aaron is found in the Qur'ān : II : 248, IV : 163, VI : 85, VII : 122, X : 76, XIX : 53, XX : 90, XXI : 48, XXIII : 45, XXV : 35, XXVI : 13, XXVIII : 34, XXXVII : 114).
3. al-Qur'ān : *al-Baqara* : 243 (see al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 458, *Tafsîr* : V : 468).
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 460, Tafsîr V : 468, V : 268-270, 273.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 464.

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also.[1] Other narrations of Wahb concerning the history of prophethood in Jewish sources have been quoted by al-Ṭabarî in the chapter entitled 'Story of Samuel son of Bali son of 'Alqama etc'.[2]

Wahb has described the features of David,[3] story of Ṭālūt and Jālūt, and other details which the commentators of the Qur'ān have also utilized. Then he appears in the description of Solomon[4] and tells us the story of the Queen of Sheba,[5] and other myths around him. The picture of the tumultuous conditions that followed the death of Solomon has also been portrayed by Wahb.[6] Another monarch of the Jews namely Sha'yā is also described by him.[7] Similarly he is quoted in the story of Jermiah the Prophet, and the invasion of the Roman and captivity of the Jews *en masse*.[8]

From the ancient history of the Jewish prophets and kings Wahb comes to the description of Christ and Mary.[9] What he narrates about them has also been utilised in the commentary of the Qur'ān.[10] He tells us about the birth of Christ to be followed by his elevation to Heaven.

A cursory glance over these reports is sufficient to show that in the narrations of Wahb, related to the history of Israel, to their ancient prophets, their kings, the political upheavals they experienced and the detailed accounts of their society, as well as the minute descriptions of their prophets (which narrate their lives from their birth to the time of their death), have a continuity and coherence as their basic quality

1. al-Qur'ān : *al-Baqara* : 248 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 467-68, *Tafsîr* V : 319.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 469-472, *Tafsîr* V : 308-309.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 476-478, *Tafsîr* V : 366-367.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 486, (al-Qur'ān *al-Anbiā* 78-79, *Tafsîr* XVII : 38).
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 494, (al-Qur'ān : *al-Namal* : 38, *Kitāb al-Tijān* pp. 137-139, 149-162, et. seq.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 517.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 537.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 548.
9. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 592.
10. al-Qur'ān : *Maryam* 18-21, *Tafsîr* XVI : pp. 52, 53, 60, 61, 62 et. seq

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of report. It shows that Wahb must have prepared a history of the Jewish prophets in a systematic way. It may not be chronological in the modern sense of the term, but it certainly had a continuity according to the Biblical arrangement of the prophets. It also dealt with the history of the ancient Jews that appears in the Old Testament and other sources of the Jews. Since Wahb was of Persian origin, his ancestors had come from Hirāt (Khurāsān) to settle in Yemen, his reports on the non-Arab kings of old bear resemblance with the Persian myths, and al-Ṭabarî has also pointed out this influence at one place.

Wahb b. Munabbih has also provided material on the 'People of the Cave' which has been taken by al-Ṭabarî.[1] Similarly, he gives details of those three persons to whom the Qur'ān refers in these words :

> "Coin for them a similitude : The people of the city when those sent (from Allah) came unto them : when We sent unto them twain, and they denied them both. So We reinforced them with a third, and they said : Lo we have been sent unto you. . . . "[2]

Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb b. Munabbih have, with the help of their knowledge of the Jewish literature, tried to explain these three persons. Wahb gives their names as Ṣādiq, Ṣadūq and Shalūm.[3] He also transmitted reports about Shamsun, a person from a Roman village,[4] and Jurjis, a pious man from Palestine.[5] These names do not occur in the Qur'ān, but they are mythological figures and have direct connection with the history of prophethood in Arabia.

His reports connected with the ancient history of Yemen are also found in the history of al-Ṭabarî. First, he gives us

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 7.
2. al-Qur'ān : XXXVI : 13-14 (tr. Pickthal : 315).
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 19.
4. Ibid : I : 22.
5. Ibid : II : 24 (He was one of the Companions of Christ and an extract of his account from the book of Wahb is found in : al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* Vol. I, p. 79.

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information about the Christians of Nejrān[1] and the origin of their faith.

We have stated earlier that Wahb belonged to the Persian race. His forefathers were sent to Yemen by Kisra to expel the Abyssinians from the Persian colony and they ultimately settled in Yemen. They were called *Abnā-i-Fārs* (sons of Persia) and later on *Abnā*. Thus Wahb had his racial connections with Persia. Naturally, he must have shown keen interest in learning about the land of his ancestors with the same zeal and curiousity with which he learnt the history of ancient Yemen or the history of Judaism. His reports about the mythological history of Iran testify to it. Al-Ṭabarî has quoted him in the description of Kisra Parwîz.[2] This portion of his reports is the best example of his knowledge of the Persian history. Again, al-Ṭabarî refers to him in the description of Yezdajird b. Shahriyār but in quite a different context. He tells us about the age of this world which according to him was five and a half thousand years,[3] till the birth of Christ.

At this point Wahb leaves the scene. His next appearance in the history of al-Ṭabarî is where he describes the introduction of Islam to the people of Yemen. He informs us that the first man to go to Yemen with the mission of Islam was Wabur b. Yuhannas who brought the new religion among the *Abnā* of Yemen. He alighted at the house of the daughters of al-Nu'mān b. Buzurj and they all embraced Islam. Similarly, a mission was sent to Fairūz al-Dailamî and 'Aṭā son of Markbūd ; they also professed Islam. According to this report, Wahb b. Munabbih and 'Aṭā b. Markbūd were the first Yemenites to collect the Qur'ān in Yemen.[4] This is what al-Ṭabarî has obtained from Wahb b. Munabbih. An analytical study of these transmissions of Wahb proves beyond doubt that these details

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : p.p. 119-121, Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* I : p.p. 31-34.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 188.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 236.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 158 Ibn S'ad : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. V : 533, 544.

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were not simply orally transmitted and preserved accounts of the early history of Islam, but either Wahb had compiled them into book form or some of his disciples must have done so. Al-Mas'ūdî has compiled books on the subject of history and mentions the name of Wahb on the top of the list,[1] and quotes his version about the Alexander the Great called Dhū al-Qarnain, with the remark that 'this is what we find in the '*Kitāb al-Mubtadā wa al-Siyar*' by Wahb b. Munabbih'[2].

Wahb did not only associate himself with the Genesis of mankind and the Universe, but also dealt with the creation of *Ginnii* and evil spirits. One of the quotations cited by al-Mas'ūdî will show the nature of material Wahb might have collected on this aspect of the Genesis[3].

Sources of Wahb :

Wahb b. Munabbih does not necessarily quote his sources of information while furnishing details about the ancient history of Yemen, or the stories of the prophets etc. But, from a careful perusal of his reports we find that he had obtained the material for his reports from the following sources :

(a) *The Bible :* Most of his narratives are based on the material which he got from the *Torah* and the New Testament. He claims in various reports to have read from 30 to 93 Scriptures revealed to various prophets.[4] Then he tells us how many books were revealed to every prophet. Ages of various prophets are obviously borrowed from the Torah.[5]

His version of *al-Mubtadā* (Genesis) is based on the Torah and the Qur'ān to which he has added further details received from the *Talmud* or *Mishna* of the Jews. His reports mostly tally with the Hebrew text of

1. al-Mas'ūdi : *Murūj al-Dhahāb* vol. I : 21.
2. Ibid : I : 79.
3. al-Mas'ūdi : *Murūj al-Dhahāb* II : 138.
4. *Kitāb al-Tijān* p. 2 (In the original Mss. on which the printed text is based, the number of Scriptures studied by wahb is given as 163).
5. *Kitāb al-Tijān* p. 19.

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Torah or other Jewish sources though Ibn Qutaiba has pointed out some variations between his reports and the version of the Torah.[1]

(b) Mythological tales such as Adam, just after his creation, opened his eyes and saw that *Kalima* (*Lā Ilāha Illā Allāh Moḥammad Rasūlullāh*) was inscribed on the Throne, which he read out loudly[2]—have also been invented on the pattern of Jewish lore.

(c) He had obtained a great deal of his all-pervasive all-encompassing knowledge from his contemporary Jew scholars, but he does not mention their names and on such occasions gives only a vague reference : 'Someone from amongst the knowledgeable persons told me' or 'I was informed by a scholar, etc. But the details which he cites in his reports are characteristically of Jewish style and origin. Features of Eve, her complexion, how Cain killed Abel etc. are self-explanatory in regard to their parent sources.[3]

(d) Among the Muslim scholars from whom Wahb transmitted the material of history and *tafsīr* are 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās[4], Jubair b. Muṭ'im[5] Abū Huraira and Jābir b. 'Abdillāh.

(e) He did also receive aid from professional *Rāwīs* of the *ayyām*-tales and poets who manufactured for him verses to be placed in the mouth of Adam, Eve, Iblis etc.[6]

(f) As some reports tell us, he was versed in ancient languages like Aramaic, Syriac, or old scripts as *Khaṭṭ al-Musnad* etc. is not authenticated by other sources ; but some of his reports attest to them. For example, he tells us the meaning of a particular Syriac name or its Arabic or Hebrew synonym such as : "*Shīth* is an Hebrew word meaning in Arabic *Khalaf* i.e. successor"[7] or Anush in Hebrew means *Insān* (man)"[8] etc.

1. *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* pp. 8-12.
2. *Kitāb al-Tījān* p. 7.
3. *Kitāb al-Tījān* p. 7.
4. *Kitāb al-Tījān* pp. 14, 45 and 69.
5. Ibid : p. 16.
6. Ibid : p. 17.
7. Ibid : p. 19.
8. Ibid : p. 21 et. seq.

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(g) His reports about those who did a certain work at first is typically a Yemenite practice, supported by the Jewish traditions and folk-lore. It was also the way of North Arabian scholars to tell their curious inquirers about the inception of a certain thing or the first man who invented or undertook a particular work. As according to Wahb, Idrîs was the first man to write.[1] Ya'rub was the first man to compose a verse, etc.[2]

We have stated earlier that Wahb being a staunch Yemenite and having descended from a Jewish lineage, was quite knowledgeable in national traditions of the Yemenite. He was also aware of the history of Judaism and its creed. His interest in the ancient history of Persia is also evident from some of his narrations. He took keen interest in *ḥadīth* literature and transmitted the Jewish traditions for the use of the commentators and *Sîrah*-writers of the early period. Wahb, as stated by al-Ṭabarî, was among those early Yemenites who collected the Qur'ān in Yemen. The Jewish material which we now find in *tafsîrs*, must have been collected by him for the interpretation of such verses of the Qur'ān which require some background to the history of prophethood for their clear explanation and exegesis. On embracing the new faith he shifted to the city of Islamic knowledge and compiled his reports in the light of what he obtained in Medîna. What sources he utilized for the description of the *Israeliyyāt* in his *Kitāb al-Mubtadā* is still a subject of intensive study and research. But, apart from deriving information from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Talmud and Midrash, some works of old *rabbis* must have been within his reach which are not available now. That he had some knowledge of the old languages, Aramaic, Syriac or Hebrew, is evident from a story which al-Mas'ūdî has related in his book. According to al-Mas'ūdî,[3] in the year 87 A.H. al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik started the construction of the Great Mosque at Damascus and simultaneously reconstructed the Medîna Mosque under the able supervision of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz. 'Uthmān b. Murra al-Khaulānî

1. *Kitāb al-Tîjān* p. 22.
2. Ibid : p. 32.
3. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahāb* III : 157, 158.

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says that when the foundations of this mosque were being dug, a tablet of stone was excavated in the courtyard of the mosque inscribed in the Greek language. The tablet was shown to the 'people of Scriptures' to decipher, but nobody was able to read it. Al-Walîd sent the tablet away to Wahb for decipherment and he read it completely. It was mentioned at the end of the tablet that it was inscribed during the period of Solomon son of David.[1]

The Caliph ordered that its Arabic translation should be inscribed on a stone to be fixed in the central place of the mosque and it was at the same place till the time al-Mas'ūdî was writing *al-Murūj* (332 A.H.).

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1. Wahb deciphered it thus :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يا ابن آدم لو عاينت ما بقى من يسير أجلك لزهدت فيما بقى من طول أملك وقصرت عن رغبتك وحيلك وانما تلقى ندمك اذا زلت بك قدمك واسلمك أهلك وحشمك وانصرف عنك الحبيب وودعك القريب ثم صرت تدعى فلا تجيب فلا أنت الى أهلك عائد ولا فى عملك زائد فاغتنم الحياة قبل الموت والقوة قبل الفوت وقبل أن يؤخذ منك بالكظم ويحال بينك وبين العمل. وكتب زمن سليمان بن داود. (المسعودى: مروج الذهب ٣/١٥٧)

فامر الوليد أن يكتب بالذهب على للأزور فى حائط المسجد: ربنا الله. لا نعبد الا الله. امر ببناء هذا المسجد وهدم الكنيسة التى كانت فيه عبد الله الوليد أمير المؤمنين فى ذى الحجة سنة سبع وثمانين.

وهذا الكلام مكتوب بالذهب فى مسجد دمشق الى وقتنا هذا - وهو سنة إثنتين وثلاثين وثلاثمائة (٣٣٢هـ)

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CHAPTER VI

The Qur'ān as the Source of History

1. History of the Qur'ān :

The Qur'ān as an important source of the history of Arabs, brings to light the account of the ancient nations ; hence the history of pre-Islamic era is also its subject. The Qur'ān contains Islamic teachings and injunctions and also gives valuable hints about the Prophet's life at Mecca and Medina. On this account, even a writer of the earliest time of history cannot ignore it.

The concept that Bible is the source of the Qur'ān has been emphatically professed and propagated by some of the Orientalists. How far the Bible and the Qur'ān differ from eachother in their contents will be discussed later at a proper place. But, here it is necessary to mention that at the time of its revelation the majority of Arabs was illiterate. The Qur'ān itself states as follows :

> "He it is who hath raised up amidst the illiterate (Arabians) an apostle from among themselves."

Till then, the Heavenly Scriptures of Jews and Christians were in the Hebrew language ; and there is no evidence to believe that they had been rendered into Arabic. The Prophet himself was prefectly unlettered[1] and was also unacquainted

1. (Thou couldest not read any book before it ; neither couldest thou write it with thy right hand ; for then might those have doubted, who follow falsehood) *al-Qur'ān* : XXIX : 48, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* : XXI : 4.

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ting of Arabic. That, he was conversant with Hebrew is not proved by any evidence. There is also no clue furnished by any reliable source that he derived benefit from the Jewish and Christian scholars in a regular way. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to refute even by rational arguments, the claim of the Qur'ān that it has of itself descended from God through revelation.

The time of revelation of the Qur'ān is spread over a period of 23 years. The first verse of the chapter entitled *'Alaq* (Congealed Blood) was, according to Ibn Is'ḥāq, revealed on the 17th of Ramaḍān, 41 years after the birth of the Prophet. According to the Lunar year, the Prophet was at that time aged 40 years, 6 months and 8 days, and according to the Christian era, he was 39 years, 3 months and 8 days old. The Qu'rān was finally revealed on the Day of Last Pilgrimage, the 9th Dhul Ḥijja 10 A.H., 63 years after the birth of the Prophet. Thus, the period of revelation of the Qur'ān comes to 22 years, 2 months and 22 days.[1] Before he claimed to be the Apostle of Allah, he used to visit the cave of Ḥirā[2] (situated at a distance of three miles from Mecca). One day when he was sitting in the same cave, deep in contemplation and prayer, an angel appeared in his vision and he said to him :[3] "Read"! He replied, "I don't know how to read." The angel repeated the Command, "Read". He again gave the same answer : "I am quite unlettered." This time the angel hugged him tight and then released him saying : "(Read : in the name of thy Lord, Who hath created (all things) ; Who hath created man of congealed blood. Read : by thy most beneficent Lord ; Who teacheth the use of the pen ; Who teacheth man that which he knew not)."

1. Khuḍrî : *Tārīkh Tashrī' al-Islāmī* pp. 5-6.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. II pp. 233-234.
3. Qur'ān : XCVI : 1-5 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsīr* XXX : 250-253.
"Al-Zuhrî from 'Urwa from 'A'isha, she said : ... The Arch Angle appeared and said, O Moḥammad I am Gabriel and you are the Messenger of Allah. Then he said, 'Read'. I said : 'I do not know how to read'. Then the Angel hugged me thrice until I was completely exhausted, then he said : 'Read in the name of thy Lord' . . ." al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsīr* XXX : 251.

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When he returned home, he was shivering with fright. He said to his wife Khadîjā, "put the sheet on me." Consoling she said to him : "Don't be afraid you are a true worshipper, hospitable, honest and a cherisher of the poor, and God will not humiliate you." Then she went to her uncle's son named Waraqa *b. Naufal* who had turned a Christian and was versed in the knowledge of 'Divine Books'. Waraqa told her that it was the same angel, namely, *Nāmoos-i-Akbar* who used to come to Moses, and asked her to tell Moḥammed, that he would be gifted with prophethood and that he should remain firm. The Community would reject him as false and put him to the tortures and banish him, but in the long run his religion alone would prevail, he added. If he remained alive, he would support him, he concluded.[1]

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1. The Qur'ān itself has not fixed the period of its revelation. But it says, "Verily We sent down the Qur'ān on the Night of *al-Qadr*." Chapter XCVII (al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXX pp. 258-261). At another place it says : "The month of Ramaḍān shall ye fast, in which the Qur'ān was sent down from heaven." (al-*Qur'ān* II : 185 ; al-Ṭabarî: *Tafsîr* II : 144). (If ye believe in God, and that which We have sent down unto Our servant on the day of distinction, on the day whereon the two armies met.) (al-*Qur'ān* : VIII : 41, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* X : 1-2).

   How religio-political motives permeated the historical writings could be judged in the light of a report 'from al-Qāsim b. Faḍl from 'Īsā b.Māzin' commenting on the Qur'ānic verse :

   Lo ! We revealed it on the Night of Power.
   Ah, What will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is.
   The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.
   (XCVII :-3) 'Īsā b. Māzin said :

   I told al-Ḥasan b. 'Alî, O ye who hath blackened faces of (the true) believers, I visited that man and took oath of allegiance to him. (He meant Mu'āwiya b. Abî Sufyān). Al-Ḥasan said : The Prophet of Allah was shown in his vision that Banū Umayya would ascend his pulpit as Caliphs successively? It pained the Prophet very much. So, Allah revealed unto him : "We vouchsafed you *al-Kauthar*, and "We revealed it in the Night of Power . . ". Here Allah meant Banū Umayya. Al-Qāsim b. Faḍl, who transmitted this report from 'Īsā, said : "When we counted the period of Umayyad rule, it came upto 1000 months." (al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXX : 260).
   While the rule of the Umayyads, from 40 A.H. to 132 A.H., is spread over a period of about 1104 months. (*Continued*)

or the Occasion of Descent :

The context or the background of those verses of the Qur'ān that were sent down to reveal a divine command regarding a particular matter are termed as *Raison d'etre* or 'the occasion or cause of descent'. The commentators have discussed those incidents in detail. The Qur'ān was not necessarily sent down as and when a certain problem arose. There was no cause, place or time fixed for its descent. 'Ā'ishā says that at first only those chapters were sent down in which mention about 'Hell' and 'Heaven' had been made. When the number of 'believers' began to increase, the verses containing commands about what would or would not be done were sent down. But, the material obtained by the commentators regarding the occasion of descent constitutes one of the important sources of the Islamic history, and is thus indispensable to a historian writing about the Prophet's Meccan life that is called by the *Sīrah*-writers as *al-Mab'ath* (or the Mission).

There are three kinds of occasions of the Qur'ān :

One, a particular problem arose among the believers and they went to the Prophet to find the solution who gave the

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Continued from page 114 :

By 'the meeting of two armies' the commentators like Ibn al-'Abbās and 'Urwā mean the battle of Badr (Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* I:p. 357, Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* vol. I : 602, al-Ṭabarī : *Tafsīr* X : 8-9, al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* II : 421-479, al-Wāqidī : *Maghāzī* I:131 et. seq.) which took place on Friday, the 19th of Ramaḍān 2 A.H. and at which the believers fought against the infidels. The Qur'ān has mentioned it as 'the day of distinction' and thus the Qur'ān was first sent down on Friday the 17th of Ramaḍān, 41 years after the birth.

Both Ibn Is'ḥāq and al-Ṭabarī have given the same explanations. As regards the closing-date of the revelation, al-Ṭabarī while interpreting the verse *al yauma akmaltu lakum dīnakum* (This day have I perfected your religion for you) (V : 5) has narrated that when Ibn al-'Abbās recited this verse, a Jew was present there. He said that had such a verse descended on Jews they would have celebrated it. Ibn al-'Abbās said that this verse was sent down on two festive days combined, for on that day Friday and the 'Arfa (the day before 'Īd) had fallen together. This verse was sent down 81 days before the Prophet's expiry.

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command through revelation. For example, the Prophet once sent Marthad al-Ghanavî to Mecca so that he might take out the Muslims from there. There he fell for a pretty idolatress of Mecca, who was quite willing to marry him. On his return when he consulted the Prophet the following verse was revealed :

(Marry not women who are idolatresses, until they believe : verily a maid-servant who believeth, is better than an idolatress, although she pleases you more. And give not women who believe in marriage to the idolaters, until they believe : for verily a servant, who is a true believer, is better than an idolater, though he pleases you more).[1]

Second, that many believers and non-believers used to ask questions from the Prophet. Sometimes, the Prophet himself answered these questions which the Traditions include, and at times the answers were given through revelation. The verses relating to the 'Soul'[2] and the 'Last Day'[3] etc. come under this category.

Third, the verses sent down without any context are less in number than the above-mentioned two parts.

Conformities to the Companions :

There are some verses which are termed as '*Conformities to Companions*'. That is, an opinion expressed by the Companions before the Prophet, and supported by the divine revelation. Of these the Conformities to 'Umar are the largest in number. It was in support of 'Umar's opinion that the Holy Wives were ordained to veil.[4] Likewise, the command to take *Maqām-e-Ibrāhîm* (the Station of Abraham)[5] for a place of prayer was also revealed to support and testify to the suggestion of 'Umar. The verse forbidding wine does also affirm his stand.[6] Once the Prophet became dis-

1. *al-Qur'ān* : II : 221, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* II : 375.
2. *al-Qur'ān* : XVII : 85.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : VII : 187.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : XXXIII : 59.
5. *al-Qur'ān* : III : 97.
6. *al-Qur'ān* : V : 90-91.

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with his wives. 'Umar told the wives that if God had willed He would give His Apostle other wives better than they. The Qur'ān also did support him: ("If he divorces you, his Lord will give him in your stead wives better than you").[1]

The Qur'ān Revealed at Mecca :

The Qur'ānic verses have been divided into two parts : the verses revealed at Mecca[2] and those revealed at Medîna. But it does not mean that the verses revealed at Mecca were only sent down in Mecca, or the place of descent of the verses revealed at Medîna, was only Medîna. As a matter of fact, the Qur'ānic verses were sent down at other places also. To save inconvenience the commentators have named those verses which were revealed at Minā, Ḥudaibiyya, 'Arafāt and Ṭā'if as Meccan ; while the chapters revealed at Badr, Uḥud and Tabūk etc. do form the part of the Qur'ān termed as Medînan.

The verses revealed at Mecca form one-third part of the Qur'ān. All these verses were revealed before the emigration (Hijra). Thus, the Qur'ān of Mecca was revealed within a period of 12 years, 5 months and 21 days till the Prophet emigrated to Medîna. The rest, that is, 11/30 part (21 chapters), were revealed at Medîna within a period of ten years.

The verses revealed at Mecca, relate either the history of the preceding prophets or give an account of the ancient nations, telling instructive tales as to how they were chastised and destroyed. This very part of the Qur'ān includes teachings which give evidence of the existence and the unity of God as also of the Apostleship, the blessings of God, the purification of the self, penitance and repentance, and the punishment and reward in the world hereafter. By then the number of believers had not increased, therefore, the persons

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1. *al-Qur'ān* : LXVI : 5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr XXVIII* : 163-164.
2. After his setting up as a Prophet, from 19th of Ramaḍān 41 years after the birth upto Ist of Rabî' al-Awwal 54, he remained at Mecca for 12 years, 5 months and 13 days. The Qur'ān revealed within this period is called the "Meccan portion."

addressed by the Qur'ān were only infidels who were at loggerheads with the Prophet. It is because of this that a greater part of the Qur'ān of Mecca contains that which was sent down to warn, admonish and instruct them. Thus, the chapters revealed at Mecca have been generally addressed by the words: *yā ayyuha al-Nās* 'O men !', while those at Medina will be found to have been addressed by the words: *yā ayyuha al-ladhīna āmanū* 'O true believers' ! In the chapters revealed at Medina the word *yā ayyuhā al-Nās* 'O men !' has occurred only for 7 times. The verses of Mecca are generally brief and concise. From the chapters entitled *Al-Anfāl* (The Spoils) and *al-Shu'arā* (The Poets) one can guess that these chapters form nearly the half. But the first chapter containing 75 verses has been revealed at Medina and the second at Mecca which contains 227 verses.

The Qur'ān Revealed at Medina :

On the Ist of Rabî' I, 54 years after the birth of the Prophet, commences the first day of the year of emigration (Hijra). The Qur'ān revealed during a period commencing from this date till 9th of Dhul-Ḥijja 63 years after the birth of the Prophet, and 10 years after the emigration, belongs to Medina.[1] It forms the 11/30 part of the Qur'ān, the total number being 1456 verses. They are a little more than the one-fourth part of the verses revealed at Mecca. It also consists of those verses which were sent down at Badr, Uḥud or Tabūk. The Madanî Qur'ān mostly contains the positive and negative commands as well as those which can be of use to Islamic legislation. The following are the chapters revealed at Mecca :

(1) *al-Baqara* (The Cow)
(2) *al-Nisā* (The Women)
(3) *Āl-'Imrān* (The Family of 'Imrān)
(4) *al-Mā'ida* (The Table)
(5) *al-Anfāl* (The Spoils)
(6) *al-Tauba* (The Repentance)
(7) *al-Ḥajj* (The Pilgrimage)

1. Khuḍrî : *Tārīkh Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Egypt 1934 p. 9.

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...Nūr (The Light)
(9) *al-Aḥzāb* (The Confederates)
(10) *al-Qitāl* (The Battle)
(11) *al-Fatḥ* (The Victory)
(12) *al-Ḥujurāt* (The Private Apartments)
(13) *al-Ḥadīd* (The Iron)
(14) *al-Mujādila* (She that Disputeth)
(15) *al-Ḥashr* (The Assembly)
(16) *al-Mumtaḥana* (She Who is examined)
(17) *al-Ṣaff* (The Array)
(18) *al-Jum'a* (Friday)
(19) *alMunāfiqūn* (The Hypocrites)
(20) *al-Taghābun* (The Deceit)
(21) *al-Ṭalāq* (The Divorce)
(22) *al-Taḥrīm* (The Prohibition)
(23) *Idhā Jā'a Naṣrullāh* (When Allah's Succour Reacheth)

The Composition of the Qur'ān :

The Qur'ān is divided into 114 chapters. Each chapter is a division in itself. The Companions of the Prophet had divided the Qur'ān into seven stages (*manāzil*), so that it could be easily finished once in a week. After the Qur'ān was divided into 30 parts, it was al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafî who undertook the task of marking out the 'quarters' and the 'halves' of the Qur'ān. The '*Ḥuffāẓ*' (Preservers) of the later years have added the bowing marks (*Rukū'*) in order to facilitate its recitation in prayers. During the Prophet's time, the pause was observed only on the verses. The custom remained till Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā's time. Among the 'Seven Reciters', Nāfe' was the first person who thought it lawful to give a pause to the verses in the middle, provided due regard was paid to the meanings. That is, the pause should not be so out of place as to change the meaning of the verse.

The whole of the Qur'ān consists of 30 pieces which contain 114 chapters, 6,000 verses, 77934 words and 323015 letters in all.

Mostly, the chapters have been named after the first words e.g. *Qad Aflaḥa al Mu'minūn* (Now are the true believers happy) or *Yas'alūnaka 'an al-Anfāl* "(They will ask thee

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concerning the Spoils)" etc. But, there are at least 35 such chapters which do not get their name from the beginning of the text. e.g. *Al-Baqara* (The Cow) and *Āle-'Imrān* (The Family of 'Imrān) etc.

The Collection of the Qur'ān :

During the days of the Prophet, there were six persons who first collected the Qur'ān. First, and foremost among them was a person named Sa'd b. 'Ubaid b. Nu'mān. Abū al-Dardā, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, Abū Zaid, Thābit b. Zaid, Ubayy b. Ka'b and Zaid b. Thābit b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk come next.[2] 'Aṭā b. Markbudh was the first Yemenite who collected the Qur'ān during the Prophet's lifetime.[3]

The Prophet himself had learnt the Qur'ān by heart and he used to recite it in prayers. Most of the Companions of the Prophet had committed it to memory. The Muslim Scholars are of the belief that the arrangement of the Qur'ān as it exists is in perfect accordance with the will of the Prophet.[4] Since the chapter of the ('Repentance') was sent down during his last days and the Prophet had not directed where to insert it in the Qur'ān, and its subject-matter was in consonance with the chapter of 'Spoils', so it was appended to it at the end.

The Prophet is related by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal as saying :

"In lieu of the Old Testament I was gifted with 'Seven Long Chapters', *Ma'ein* (chapters containing 100 verses) instead of the Psalms of David, and *Mathānī* in place of the Bible". "And it rebounds to my credit that besides all these I have also been gifted with al-'*Mufaṣṣal*' or the 'Separated Chapters".

In the light of the above-mentioned statement the Qur'ān consists of the following four parts :

(1) *Sab' Ṭiwāl* : (The first seven long chapters)

1. *Ṭabaqāt* V : 558.
2. Moḥammad b. Ḥabīb : *al-Muḥabbar* p. 286.
3. *Ṭabaqāt* : I : 336 V : 533, 544.
4. See Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 510-511.

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in : (The chapters containing more or less 100 verses that is from the 'chapter of Jonas' to the 'chapter of the Creator or the Angel').

(3) *Mathānī* : (The chapters that are repeated over and over again) i.e. from the chapter of '*Yāsīn*' to that of '*Kāf*'.

(4) *Muffaṣṣal* : (The short chapters that separate soon) i.e. from the chapter of 'K' to that of 'Men'.

As some of the Traditions reveal, the copy of 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd and Ubayy b. Ka'b slightly differed from eachother in its composition and arrangement. But the orthodox Muslim scholars have not acknowledged such Traditions.

From the very beginning, the Qur'ān continues to be committed to memory and read excessively, and hence its present title. The Qur'ān itself has, at several places, mentioned its name as '*al-Kitāb*' (The Book), which shows that it has also continued to be written from the day of its advent.

Among the 'Select Devotees' or the 'Houseless' (*Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffā*), with the exception of those who wrote down the revelations, there were about 20 such persons who would commit the Qur'ān to memory and go to the lanes of Medîna to teach it. The Prophet himself had made 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd to learn the Qur'ān by heart, and Ibn Mas'ūd had written about 70 chapters and read out before the Prophet to get them verified. Hence, his insistence on his copy being the most accurate of all. During the days of the Prophet almost all of his associates had wholly or partly committed the Qur'ān to memory. Persons like Sālim *maulā* Abî Ḥudhaifā, 'Ubayy b. Ka'b and Mu'ādh b. Jabal had learnt the Qur'ān by heart. Among those who had emigrated (*Muhājir*), Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alî, Ṭalḥā, Sa'd b. al-Waqqāṣ, Abū Huraira, 'Abdullah b. Sā'ib, 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, 'Ā'isha Ḥafṣa, Umm Salama, and 'Ubaida b. al-Ṣāmit, Abū Ḥalîma, Mujāmi' b. Jāriya, Faḍāla b. 'Ubaid, Muslima b. Mukhla, Tamîm Dārî, 'Uqba b. 'Āmir and Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arî from among the Anṣār (Helpers), were preservers of the Qur'ān.

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It is generally known that once 'Umar happened to see in writing the chapter of Ṭāha[1] at his sister's house and was so impressed to read it that he put his faith in it. This incident proves that the Qur'ān has continued to be written from the very beginning.

At Mecca, Abū Bakr, 'Uthmān and 'Alî were the 'Scribers' of the Prophet'. And at Medîna, 'Āmir b. Fuhaira, Zubair b. al-'Awwām, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Ḥanẓala b. al-Rabî', Zaid bin Thābit, Ubayy b. Fāṭima, Mughîra b. Mushîr, al-'Alā b. al-Ḥaḍramî, Khālid b. al-Walîd, 'Abdullāh b. Arqam, Shurḥabîl b. Ḥasana, 'Abdullāh b. Rawāḥa, Mu'āwiya, Yazîd b. Abî Sufyān, Thābit b. Qais, Khālid b. Sa'îd and Abān b. Sa'îd were among those who wrote down the revelations. Various Traditions reveal some 26 scribes, while al-Ṭabarî puts the number at 42. Persons like Mu'ādh b. Jabal, Abū-al-Dardā, Abū Ayyūb Anṣārî, 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit, 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd and 'Abdullah b. 'Umar had committed the Qur'ān to writing of their own accord, and kept it with themselves.

It was with a view to committing the Qur'ān to writing that the Prophet had as their ransom fixed on the captives at the battle of Badr to teach at least 10 Muslims the art of writing.[2]

The Compilation of the Qur'ān :

Though the Qur'ān continued to be written from the very beginning, yet it was in a state of disorder. The chapters were scattered among so many people. For the first time, 700 Muslim Preservers (Ḥuffāẓ) were martyred at the Battle of Yamāma[3] while fighting with Banū Ḥanîfa. At this, 'Umar

1. *Tārîkh Tashrî' al-Islāmî* p. 13.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 22.
3. In the year 11 A.H., fighting against the *Riddah* (Apostasy) the Muslim forces were led by Khālid b. al-Walîd. For details see :
al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 162.
Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* IV : 244, 272.
Ibn Kathîr : *al-Nihāya* VI : 323.
Fāriq (K.A.) : *Tārîkh al-Riddah.*

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lest the Qur'ān should also perish with the Preservers. He expressed his apprehensions to Abū Bakr and advised that the Qur'ān be arranged and compiled. At first, he said why should he do a work which had not been done by the Prophet; but at last he realised its significance.

The Bukhārī reads as follows :

"Zaid b. Thābit said that after the Battle of Yamāma ,Abū Bakr called me out. When I presented myself, I saw that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was also sitting by him. Abū Bakr said to me, " '*Umar* says that a number of Preservers have been killed at the battle and that he is afraid lest the Qur'ān should also perish. Therefore, in his opinion, I should get it compiled". I replied, "why should I do a work which has not been done by the Prophet". 'Umar said, "It is better to get it compiled", and he insisted on it till I understood and my opinion fell in with his opinion. You are young and sensible. We trust you. It was you who used to pen down the revelations of the Prophet. Make endeavours to get the Qur'ān collected."

Zaid says, "God is a witness, had he ordered me to lift the mountain, it would have been much easier for me. But, I felt this burden much heavier. At last, I agreed with him and started collecting it from date-leaves, wooden tablets, and breasts of the people. Only the last two verses of the chapter entitled (The Repentance) were discovered from Abū Khaithama al-Anṣārī."

The Compilation Board :

The Prophet had made Zaid b. Thābit to commit the whole of the Qur'ān to memory, and he had in the last year of Prophet's life read out the Qur'ān twice during the month of Ramaḍān. It was, therefore, decided that this work be done under his supervision. 'Umar made an announcement that each one possessing whichever part of the Qur'ān in writing must hand in to him.

Having obtained all the complete and the incomplete editions of the Qur'ān, the task of preparing a *ne varietur text* was undertaken. Whatever was found in writing or recited

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orally was first attested by two witnesses. It was decided wherever there emerged any *variae lectiones* in the Qur'ān the Quraish dialect would be given preference because the Qur'ān had been sent down in the language of the Quraish. When the Book got prepared, 'Umar took it into his care and trust. After his death it remained with his daughter Ḥafṣa, who was conversant with reading and writing.[1]

By the time 'Uthmān became the Caliph, the rule of Islam had crossed the boundaries of Arabia and had reached the farthest regions of the non-Arab countries. Now, with the variations in elocution the very words of the Qur'ān began to be read quite differently due to the varied accents and modulations of the non-Arabs. In 23 A.H. 'Uthmān felt it necessary to send officially the *Textus receptus* of the Qur'ān for publicity in various provinces.[2]

The idea came to his mind[3] because of Ḥudhaifā b. al-Yamān, who had taken part in the battle of Armenia and Adharbaijan. He was worried to hear from the people of 'Iraq reading the Qur'ān in contradictory styles and incorrect accents. When he came to Medîna, he told 'Uthmān that he was afraid lest the Muslims should also garble the Qur'ān in the manner the Jews and the Christians had done in their Scriptures, and that it was never too late to mend, and advised him to hurry up and take care of it.

Having borrowed the original text from Ḥafṣa, 'Uthmān

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1. The copy was scribed by Rāfe' *maulā* 'Umar (Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 299).

2. Fāriq (K.A.) : *State Letters of the Caliph 'Uthmān* (Urdu) Delhi, 1957.

3. According to Ibn Sa'd it was Yezîd b. Abî Sufyān who wrote a letter to 'Umar I, from Damascus, inviting his attention to the fact that the population of Syrian cities had increased considerably and that arrangement for teaching them the Qur'ān was to be made without delay. 'Umar deputed three persons to Ḥimṣ and Damascus to educate people the Qur'ān and Islamic *Sharî'a*.
(Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 357).

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Zaid b. Thābit,[1] (d.45 A.H.) 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair, Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ and 'Abd-al Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām to make a copy of it. All the three members, Zaid b. Thābit excepted, belonged to the Quraish tribe. He gave them directions that whenever there arose any *variae lectiones* regarding a certain word between them, it would be decided in favour of the Quraish dialect.

Anas bin Mālik says :

"'Uthmān did not add anything to the original work. What he actually did was to ask the trustworthy Companions to make the copy of the Qur'ān collected by Abū Bakr in accordance with the modes of elocution approved by the Prophet. It was because the contradictions and incongruities in elocution of the Qur'ān had been on the increase. Thus, whenever in course of its copying there emerged any contradictions in elocution, those Companions who were supposed to have the correct knowledge of them were invited to settle them, no matter if they have to cover a three-day distance. The spaces were left blank for the words and verses in dispute. After the differences were settled and the elocution verified by the Prophet available through some reliable source, the empty spaces were filled up properly.

In this way, in the year 25 A.H. the edition of 'Uthmān was collected and compiled, which is now available 'bound within two boards'. 'Uthmān got several of its copies prepared and sent them to the Governors of the distant provinces together with a letter[2] directing them to destroy the text other than that one. He had also forwarded copies to the Governors and Executives of Egypt, Kūfa, Baṣrā, Mecca,

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 355-362, V : 233, 286.
   Zaid b. Thābit was also conversant in the Hebrew and Syriac languages. The Prophet received letters in these languages and he had asked Zaid to learn them, which he did within 17 days (Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 358). Earlier, he had been among those who had learnt writing from the Captives of Badr as their ransom fixed by the Prophet. (*Ṭabaqāt* II : 220).
2. Fāriq (K.A.) *State Letters of the Caliph 'Uthmān.*

Syria, Yemen and Baḥrain each. He himself had a copy with him at Medîna known as '*Imām*'.[1]

The original copy of the Book was lost by Marwān in 46 A.H. during a journey. The copies of the Book prepared by 'Uthmān are said to be existing in Mecca, Medîna, Damascus, Moscow, Iran and Turkey till now.

By then, the Qur'ān had been published in such a large number that when at the time of the 'Battle of Ṣiffîn' arbitration (*Taḥkîm*) between 'Alî and Mu'āwiya took place, no less than 500 copies of the Qur'ān were raised on the spears in Mu'āwiya's camp alone[2]. The largest in size was the 'Great *Muṣ'ḥaf* of Damascus which was supported by five spears.[3]

'Uthmān was martyred while reading the copy known as '*Imām*', and the verses he was reading were stained with the drops of his blood. William Muir says that this copy was preserved in the Mosque of Cardova. From there it was brought to the capital of Morroco. In the 8th century A.H., Ibn Baṭūṭa had seen it in a mosque at Baṣra.

It is said that this copy was among the books that were brought from Moscow to Bokhārā, and it still exists in the Leningrad Library.

Some of the leaves said to be in 'Alî's hand-writing are found in Meshhad (Iran). A few leaves said to have been written by the fourth Caliph 'Alî, are also found in the Shāhî Mosque of Lahore.

Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafî had madē Naṣr b. 'Āṣim put the dots and vowel-points in the Qur'ān. Originally, the Qur'ān was written in the Kufic character. The invention of *Naskh* character in which the first copy of the Qur'ān was written by Ibn Muqla at the beginning of the 4th century was an improvement on it. One of its copies is said to be found at Rampur.

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1. *Tārîkh al-Tashrî'al-Islāmî* p. 122.
2. al-Ṭabarî : Tārîkh vol. V : 50-51.
   al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* II : 390.
3. al-Dînawarî : *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl* p. 350

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in the Light of New Archaeological Excavations :

Efforts are still being made to collate the historical text of the Bible with the excavations of the ancient monuments and ruins that have been undertaken at Syria, Palestine and Iraq.

Prof. Garstong says that the period considered to be the 'time of Exodus' had come about in the year 1447 B.C. 200 years before this. Thus, the Commentators who had traced the Jewish tribes of 1220 B.C. in Canaan began to think that these tribes had never migrated towards Egypt.[1]

Garstong had done special work on the chronology of this period and found out many important dates connected with the events. More particularly, he had tried to establish the chronology of the post-exodus period. But, in spite of all this, his thesis that the Old Testament was written and collected by the contemporaries is still a weak one.

He is also of the opinion that the geographical background of the events mentioned in the Old Testament is absolutely correct. According to him, the land along the sea shore in Syria extending as far as 200 miles was inhabited by the Phoenicians, and the nautical activities of the Greek and other nations residing along the Roman Sea were solely due to the existence of these Phoenicians. To quote him :

"One of their proteges appear to have been the Philistines, or Pulasati, those armour-clad warriors that figure so prominently in the Book of Judges and Samuel, and whose penetration and power caused the land of Canaan to be called Palestine".

In the north of Syria was the region of Hittites, who had originally hailed from Europe. Together with them lived the

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1. *The New Commentary on Holy Scripture* : p. 177.
   See also : Wright (G. Earnest) : *Biblical Archaeology.*
   Pritchard : *Archaeology and the Old Testament.*
2. Charles (Marston) : *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament* : p. 19 *et. seq.*

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Mitanni. In the time of Joshua, they were subjected to and ruled by an Indo-European race. Their deities were Indra, Varuna and other Indian idols. It appears that these people must have belonged to the Aryan race of India and Europe in the ancient times.

In Cyprus on the seashore facing the Cape of Samarah such clay-made tablets have been unearthed with writings on them in the Cuneiform script which was the script of the Byblus language. Long before this, such tablets were discovered at a place called Tel el Amarna, and in 1906-07 Dr. Winckler had also discovered tablets belonging to Hittites at Boghaz-Kevi in the Asia Minor. The latter place is situated at a distance of about 150 miles from Sinope harbour in the Black Sea. Having studied these tablets, Dr. F. Horozny established that they belonged to the Indo-European language and contained material which supported the Biblical events.

The excavations undertaken at the Euphrate Valley have shown beyond all doubt that 5 or 6 thousand years before Christ there flourished a great civilisation in this area. New evidences regarding Noah and the Flood have also been found. One of the tablets bears the names of those Ten Patriarchs who ruled before the Deluge. Charles Marston in his book has given the facsimile of this tablet.[1]

These are the same Ten Patriarchs whose mention has been made in the Old Testament. In 1928, Dr. Lingdon found out the traces of monuments and material destroyed by the Deluge at a place called Kish. And Dr. Wooley found these remains at Ur of Chaldees which has been described in the Old Testament as the *Station of Abraham*. Going through the Persian Gulf *en route* to Baghdad, the place is situated just at half of the distance.

They also claim to have discovered the remnants of the Noah's ark.

The archaeologists think that the size of the Noah's ark has been too much exaggerated. It must have been of the size of an average ship, they argue.

1. *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament.*

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lets that have been dug up reveal, the Deluge must have taken place in 3200 B.C. The Jewish text of Genesis says that Abraham was born 292 years after the Deluge.[1] Taking this into account, the incident of the Deluge appears to have occurred in 2400 B.C. But the Septuagint Version of the Bible, which was translated from the Hebrew into the Greek language in the year 300 B.C., states that Abraham's birth took place 1072 years after the incident of the Deluge. Accordingly, the time of the Deluge must be fixed around 3200 B.C.

As regards the civilization that flourished in Abraham's time, the archaeologists maintain that the inhabitants of Ur of Chaldees lived in the houses whose basement was built with baked bricks and the upper part was constructed with unbaked ones. The walls were plastered and whitewashed. They used to be double-storeyed houses, and some of them consisted of 12 rooms each. In the middle of the house was the courtyard. The streets of the town were narrow. There were no openings in the walls towards the outside. These houses were very much like our present ones. Stairs were built with baked bricks to go on to the upper storey. Behind the stairs there used to be a lavatory. The house consisted of kitchen, a fire-place, a guest-room, a big gate, a verandah, a servant's hall and a chapel. To quote Charles Marston :

"Against the rear wall of the latter was a brick altar, with a shallow niche above, or at the side, or Teraphim, which may perhaps be compared with the Lares and Penates of the Romans. Under the floor of the Chapel was a vaulted tomb where members of the family were buried."[2]

What they actually learnt and were educated in can be determined by the study of the tablets that have been unearthed. Some of them reveal history, some are hymn-books and others deal with mathematics etc.

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1. The Bible : *Genesis* : 10.
2. *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament* p. 49.

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Regarding the situation that followed the Deluge, the Old Testament says :

'The whole earth was of one language and one speech.'[1] But this is also not correct. However, this much is known that the Cuneiform script had been in vogue long before Abraham's time.

The New Historical Knowledge and the Old Religious Concepts :

After studying the ancient remains, the Western scholars have come to certain other conclusions which pertain to religious concepts of the Phoenicians. Despite their polytheism *El* was their highest deity, who was worshipped both in Canaan and Phoenicia. This is the same *El* used as a suffix in Babel (Bab+*el*) and added to the end to form the names of the angels like Gabriel, Michael and so on. *Elioun* was another great deity of the Phoenicians. In the Qur'ān it has occurred as *'Illiyūn* (LXXXIII : 18) which is wonderfully nearer to *'Elioun'* in pronunciation :

> "Nay, but the record of the righteous is in 'Illiyîn
> And, what will convey unto thee what 'Illiyîn is,
> A written record."[2]

Dr. Langdon quotes the statement of Sanchuniathon, a Phoenician sage of about 1000 B.C., or later than the Ras Shamra tablets, transmitted through Greek sources, that the principal Deity of Gebal (Byblus) was *Elioun*, and that he was called Hypsistos—or Most High."[3]

In the Qur'ān the word *'Illiyūn* stands for loftiness or the Most High. It appears the concept of the *Elioun* was done

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1. The Bible : *Genesis* (XI : 1).
2. In the Traditions of the Prophet the word occurs for Paradise. As he is reported to have said on hearing the news of the murder of 'Amir b. Fuhaira : The angels have covered his corpse and he has been alighted in *'Illiyîn'*.
   (Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 52).
3. *The New Knowledge* about the old Testament p. 38.

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with by the time the commentaries on the Qur'ān came to be written. It was because of this that they were rather lost in the etymological and syntactical rules while interpreting the word *'Illiyūn* of the Qur'ān. At first, they said the *'Illiyūn* meant the highest of heavens. Then, considering the rule of the plural being peculiar to the rational beings, they said it was the plural form of *'Illiun* which rhymed with *'Biṭṭikh'* and meant the righteous. Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusî has written it down as a derivative of *'Ulū* and holds it to be a form of exaggeration. But some of the grammarians said that according to rule of syntax it must have been the plural form of the word *'Illiyatun.* Hence *'Illiya* which means the upper-storey. But substracting a letter (o) and adding up *ū* and *n* they have formed the plural. Al-Farrā, the celebrated grammarian, says it is a noun and rhymes with the plural form just like *Biṭṭikh* etc. After all this syntactical analysis, Abū Ḥayyān says :

"By the word *'Illiyun* we imply either the angels or the lofty places or the written record of the righteous, or the doubled and quadrupled height. Al-Zamakhsharî has also quoted these statements."[1]

But we think that compared with the *'Elioun'* it seems to have been used for the angels, as the concept of *Elioun* already existed among the Phoenicians from the olden times. The word has also occurred in the Old Testament.[2] There it is *El-Elyon,* which has been translated as 'God Most High' in the Authorised Version.

In the light of the ruins excavated at Kish, Dr. Langdon has made the following claim which is completely in consonance with the Qur'ānic statements :

"In my opinion, the history of the oldest religion of men is a rapid decline from monotheism to extreme polytheism

1. *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* vol. VII p. 442.
2. The Bible : *Genesis* XIV.

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and wide-spread belief in evil spirits. It is in a very true sense the history of the fall of man."[1]

These Phoenician communities also had the conception of the life hereafter. Therefore, the stand now taken by the commentators of the period is that both Mesopotamia and Phoenicia believed in monotheism, and their inhabitants were the descendants of Sam. The Egyptians had descended from Ham, while other nations worshipping the 'Heavenly Father' had Japeth as their ancestor.

History in the Qur'ān :

Apart from being a revealed book containing basic principles and injunctions of a great religion, the Qur'ān, from historical point of view, is the first, the most authentic and the oldest available source of the history of Islam, its advent, spread, descriptions of the Prophet, accounts of various battles fought by the Prophet, and telling us the circumstances in which certain commandments of Allah were revealed to the Prophet. Hence, while one embarks on the most rigorous and difficult task of critical valuation of the basic sources of the history of Islam, one must fully realize the historical significance of the Qur'ān in this particular respect.

The Qur'ān, as a historical source, has its peculiar qualities : First, it was revealed directly to the Prophet who stood for the foundation and propagation of Islam and was during his life-time committed to writing as well. It was revealed to the Prophet during a long span of time, in Mecca as well as in Medina, and hence it contains references to almost all major developments in the early period of Islam. Every verse of the Qur'ān has a particular reference, a context in which the revelation was made and which is called the *raison d'etre* of the Qur'ān. Secondly, the text of the Qur'ān was preserved from the very beginning and it was recited by the Prophet himself as well as by his followers five times a day in obligatory prayers. So,

1. *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament* p. 39.

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ferred to in the Qur'ān is also, historically, the most dependable version of the event concerned with the revelation of the verse. The pattern of *Sīrah* or other general histories of the Islamic times which is followed by our classical writers like Ibn Is'ḥāq or al-Ṭabarî, can be fully authenticated by the Qur'ān in almost all aspects. For example, the *Sīrah* begins with the description of Genesis, details of which our historians borrow from the Jewish traditions. The Qur'ān has also several references to the process of creation. Next, our historians describe the history of prophethood. The Qur'ān also mentions some of the important prophets prior to the advent of Islam. The *Sīrah*-writers begin the biography of the Prophet from the description of the family of Ibrāhîm; the Qur'ān also refers to him in considerable detail. Our historians portray the social conditions of Arabia at the time of the advent of Islam to show that the entire society was degenerated and demoralized. The Qur'ān also describes the social evils prevalent in the Arabian society at the time of the appearance of the 'promised rescuer'. The early life of the Prophet begins with the description of his spiritual experiences, beginning of revelation, his sermons to the people of Mecca, their reactions, ridicules and then banishment of the believers. References to all these events are to be found in the Qur'ān also.

The Prophet's migration (Hijra) to Medîna was the most significant event of his life. With his migration were opened up new vistas of the expansion of Islām. New possibilities, fresh strength, zeal and stemina, dash and pluck were added to the mission of Islam. With this period begins the chain of his expeditions and military dispatches to various regions, his conquests, expansion of Islam, financial betterment of his followers, and finally, the most important conquest of the city of Mecca and the direct control over the Sacred Home of Allah. The entire history of mankind is incapable of producing another example of such a conquest having so lasting, reverberating and ever-strengthening impact of a small (as compared with other major wars fought in the world, major in terms of man-power, geographical expansion or establishment of a kingdom to last for several years), com-

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paign which has left such significant impressions on the history of mankind in every respect.

After giving a description of the conquest of Mecca, our *Sîrah*-writers and historiographers also narrate other issues; the Last Pilgrimage of the Prophet, the year of Deputations that came to him, the Prophet's illness, and finally his death. These events are also supported by the Qur'ān as regards their historical value. Again, some of the historians have devoted their works to any single aspect of the life of the Prophet like his character, his moral concepts, his teachings with regard to the behaviour of a Muslim.

Creation of the Heavens and the Earth :

The Qur'ān has referred to the creation of the Universe in the following verses :

"And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne was upon the water—that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct."[1]

"Allah it is Who raised up the heavens without visible supports, then mounted the Throne, and compelled the sun and the moon to be of service, each runneth unto an appointed term."[2]

Creation of Man :

"O mankind ! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women."[3] "He it is Who created you from clay, and hath decreed a term for you." "And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels : Fall ye prostrate before Adam ! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblîs, who was not of

1. *al-Qur'ān* XI : 7 see also XXI : 47, XXXII : 5, LXX : 4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XII : 3.
2. *al-Qur'ān* : XXIII : 2, XXXII : 4, XLI : 9 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXI : 65.
3. *al-Qur'ān* IV : 1, VI : 2, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IV : 223-224.

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who make prostration."[1] "Verily We created man of potter's clay of black mud altered."[2] "He hath created man from a drop of fluid, yet behold ! he is an open opponent."[3] "O mankind ! if ye are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then lo ! We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed, then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh shapely and shapeless, that We may make it clear for you."[4]

Sîrah of the Prophet :

References to almost all important events of the history of Islam and the *Sîrah* of the Prophet are found in the Qur'ān. During the days of *Jāhiliyya*, the chief of a tribe used to obtain one fourth of the spoils of war which they termed as *mirba'*. But when 'Abdullāh b. Jaḥsh returned from his successful compaign of *Nakhla*, the Prophet distributed the booty among his Companions and reserved for himself one fifth of the total spoils. It was for the first time that *khums* was introduced in Islām. The Qur'ānic verse mentions it thus : "And know that whatever ye take as spoils of war, lo ! a fifth thereof is for Allah, and for the Messenger and for the kinsmen (who hath need) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if ye believe in Allah and that which We revealed unto Our slave on the Day of Discrimination, the day when the two armies met."[5]

"The day when the two armies met" is a reference, as we have discussed earlier, to the battle of Badr. The Prophet had retained the spoils of *Nakhla* for sometime and they were distributed alongwith the spoils of Badr."[6]

1. *al-Qur'ān* VII : 11 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* VIII : 126-127.
2. *al-Qur'ān* XV : 26 al Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XIV : 27-28.
3. *al-Qur'ān* XVI : 4 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XIV : 78.
4. *al-Qur'ān* XXII : 5 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XVII : 116-118. For further references regarding the Qur'ānic concept of the Genesis See : XXV : 57, XXXII : 7, XXXV : 11, XL : 67, LI : 56, LXXXVI : 6, XVI : 5, XXIV : 45
5. *al-Qur'ān* VIII : 41, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* X : 1-9.
6. *al-Ṭabarî* : *Tafsîr* X : 2, al Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* I : 18.

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The Qur'ānic verses II : 218, 191, VIII : 47, 9, 19, 47-48, 28, IV : 100, XXIX : 10, XVI : 103-110, VIII : 1, 41, III : 161, are also connected with the events of Badr. The Chapter *al-Anfāl* (VIII) is particularly rich in regard to references to what happened at Badr, the most critical juncture in the history of Islam.

The spoils of war obtained at the time of Badr, led to some differences among the Companions of the Prophet, who had participated in the battle. Every tribe asserted its right for a major share. The above chapter refers to the war as ordained by Allah. Some of the Companions were reluctant to wage the war because of their being out-numbered and less-equipped than their rivals. The following verses are in the same context : "They ask thee (O Moḥammad) of the spoils of war. Say : The spoils of war belong to Allah and the messenger, so keep your duty to Allah, and adjust the matter of your difference and obey Allah and His messenger, if ye are (true) believers..." Even as the Lord caused thee (Moḥammad) to go forth from thy home with the Truth, and lo ! a party of the believers were averse to it, disputing with thee of the Truth after it had been made manifest, as if they were being driven to death visible..."[1]

Battle of Uḥud :

Similarly, some of the verses of the Qur'ān refer to the battle of Uḥud.[2] Al-Wāqidî has given a report on the autho-

1. *al-Qur'ān* : VIII : 1-20 et. seq. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IX : 168 *Tārîkh* II : 421. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 606-608 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 131-132. The following verses according to the early commentators also refer to the events at Badr : XXXVII : 176-177, XLIV : 16, XXV : 77, XXII : 55, XXIII : 77, LIV : 45, VII : 185, LXXIII : 11, XVII : 80, X : 109 : VIII 16, 66, XIV : 28, XX III : 64, XXXII : 21 and XXII : 55.
2. *al-Qur'ān* VIII : 17 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IX: 204 According to al-Ṭabarî the verse refers to the battle of *Badr* when the Prophet had hurled a handful of pebbles on the army of the Quraish, but al-Wāqidî (*Maghāzî* I : 250) cites a report on the authority of Sa'îd b. al-Musayyib that the above verse was revealed on the occasion of *Uḥud*.

[illegible] Bakr, daughter of al-Miswar b. Makhrama, that her father requested 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf to describe the events of the battle of Uḥud. 'My dear cousin', replied 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'you just count a hundred and twenty verses from the chapter *Āle-'Imrān*[1] and after that it will be (so illustrative) as if you have yourself attended us (in the battle-field of Uḥud).'

According to the commentators, "When two parties of you almost fell away, and Allah was their Protecting Friend".[2] refers to the preparatory arrangements for the battle. "Allah had already given you the victory at Badr, when ye were contemptible.. And when thou didst say unto the believers : Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should support you with three thousand angels sent down (to your help) ? Nay, but if ye persevere, and keep from evil, and (the enemy) attack you suddenly, your Lord will help you with five thousand angels sweeping on." (III : 123-125)

Banū al-Naḍîr :

The Qur'ānic Sūra (*al-Ḥashr*) refers[3] to the compaign launched against the Jewish tribe Banū al-Naḍîr whom the Prophet had banished to Syria. Their palm-trees had been cut down and burnt by orders of the Prophet, who had deputed 'Abdullah b. Salām and Abū Lailā al-Māzinî to execute the order. These palm-trees were mostly of two kinds—of *Layyina* and '*Ajwa* dates.[4]

The Jews enjoyed special regard for their being the people of the Book and for having knowledge of the ancient history of Prophethood. But, they had become open supporters of the Quraish. Once Abū Sufyān said to them : 'O

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1. *al-Qur'ān* III : 121 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IV : 69 *et. seq.*
2. *al-Qur'ān* III : 122 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IV : 72 (these two parties were the tribes of Banū Salîma and Banū Ḥāritha).
3. *al-Qur'ān* (*al-Ḥashr*) 1-7 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXVIII : 27-44.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : LIX : 1-23 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXVIII : 28 *et. seq. Tārîkh* : II : 550 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 190 al-Wāqidî: *al-Maghāzî* I: 381-384.

Jews, you are the people of the Book and have the knowledge of the ancient past; Tell us whether our religion is true or that of Moḥammad? We are the builders of the Sacred Home, we offer sacrifices there, we satiate the pilgrims, and we worship the idols (kept therein)'. The Jews said: You have a stronger right on the Sacred Home of Allah than Moḥammad has. The following verse was revealed on the same occasion to condemn the Jews: "Hast thou not seen of those unto whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given, how they believe in idols and false deities, and how they say those (idolators) who disbelieve: These are more rightly guided than those who believe."[1]

Battle of the Trench:

The Qur'ānic chapter entitled *al-Aḥzāb* was revealed in the context of the Battle of the Trench (*Khandaq*) hence most of its verses (XXXIII: 9-24) deal with the same event.[2] "O ye who believe, Remember Allah's favour unto you when there came against you hosts and we sent against them a great wind and hosts ye could not see..." (XXXIII: 9).

It refers to the context that the believers had been besieged along with the Prophet; and the tribes of Quraish, Ghaṭafān as well as the Jews of Banū al-Naḍîr had united to attack the Muslims. It was an intensely chilly day and most of the believers were suffering from severe cold. Perchance, cyclone hit the entire region and the 'allies' against Muslims could not execute their original plan because of unfavourable season. 'Abdullāh said that his uncle 'Uthmān b. Maẓ'ūn had sent him to Medîna to fetch a few blankets and some food. But the cold spell was so strong and whirlwind was blowing so intensely that when he went to obtain permission from the Prophet, he said that if any believer was to be found in the way coming on to this side, he should tell

1. *al-Qur'ān* III: 51 al-Ṭabarî: *Tafsîr* V: 131-132, al-Wāqidî: *al-Maghāzî* II: 442.
2. al-Ṭabarî: *Tafsîr* XXI: 127, al-Wāqidî: *al-Maghāzî* II: 494-495. *et. seq.*

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back to Medina. Some Muslims met him in the way and he communicated to them the Prophet's order. Everyone used to listen to his words and returned accordingly but, as he tells us, nobody was able to turn his face toward him because of heavy blows of cold wind.[1] References to such minute details found in the Qur'ān are quite useful for the historiographer dealing with that period.

The Prophet's compaign against the Jewish tribe Banū Quraiẓa is also referred to in some of the Qur'ānic verses.[2] The compaign was, as al-Wāqidî tells us, aimed at Usair b. Zārim, and headed by 'Abdullāh b. Rawāḥa[3] (Shawwāl 6 A.H.).

Truce of Ḥudaibiya :

"We have given thee (O Moḥammad) a signal victory"[4] the Qur'ānic Sūra *al-Fatḥ* (the Victory) describes the events that took place at the time of Ḥudaibiya Truce. Similarly, other small expeditions of the Prophet prior to the Conquest of Mecca, are referred to in the Qur'ānic verses *raison d'etre* of which the commentators have pointed out in their respective contexts.

The Conquest of Mecca :

The Qur'ānic description of the Conquest of Mecca is : "And say : Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo ! falsehood is ever bound to vanish."[5] Abū Baraza al-Aslamî had murdered 'Abdullāh b. Khaṭal within the sacred boundary of the Ka'ba and the Qur'ān has also made a reference to it.[6]

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXI : 127 al-Wāqidî : *al-Maghāzî* II : 494. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* III : 214.
2. For example : IX : 102, VIII : 27, V : 41.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : V : 33 al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* II : 570.
4. *al-Qur'ān*: XLVIII : I.
5. *al-Qur'ān* : XVII : 81.
6. *al-Qur'ān* : XC : 1-2.

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The attitude of the Prophet after the Conquest, and the treatment meted out by him to the polytheist Meccans who had expelled him from his hometown a few years back, is manifested in the chapter entitled "Succour."[1] The day of Ḥunayn is mentioned by name in the Qur'ān : "Allah hath given you victory on many fields and on the day of Ḥunayn, when ye exulted in your multitude but it availed you naught, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you ; then ye turned back in flight."[2]

The expedition launched at the Tabūk is also referred to in the Qur'ān at sporadic places.[3] The chapter *al-Tauba* (The Repentance) mostly deals with the same event.[4] Apart from these military operations and major events of the early days of Islam, some other events of the life of the Prophet have also been referred to in the Qur'ān. As we find a reference to the unfortunate event of the false allegation (*ifk*) against 'Ā'isha : "Why did not the believers, men and women, when ye heard it, think good of their own folk, and say : It is a manifest untruth."[5]

Such illustrations can easily be multiplied of the references found in the Qur'ān regarding, say, wives of the Prophet, his adopted son Zaid, or his companion Abū Bakr, their accompaniment in migration to Medīna, the mosque of Qubā or that of Ḍarār etc.

The commentators have in most cases tried to mention the context or *raison d'etre* of the Qur'ānic verses and thus the important events of the history of Islam have been brought to light in explanation of the relevant verses. Ibn Is'ḥāq has also tried to cite such verses of the Qur'ān as have

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1. *al-Qur'ān* CX : 1-3.
2. *al-Qur'ān* IX : 25 al-Ṭabarī : *Tafsīr* X : 99-103 *Tārīkh* III : 70-82. al-Wāqidī : *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* III : 889 Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* IV : 437.
3. *al-Qur'ān* IX : 49, 81, 82, 92.
4. al-Wāqidī : *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* III : 1022-1024.
5. *al-Qur'ān* XXIV : 12 al-Ṭabarī : *Tafsīr* XVIII : 96 *Tārīkh* II : 610-619. Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* III : 381.

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such expeditions as he has dealt with. Similar is the attitude of al-Wāqidî, Ibn Sa'd, and al-Ṭabarî who generally describe context and background of a particular verse of the Qur'ān. Even sporadic examples which we have cited are sufficient to prove that the Qur'ān is the first and foremost source of the history of Islam.

The Tafsîr Literature :

Tafsîr or commentary of the Holy Qur'ān was another important aspect of the intellectual activities that directly influenced the historical literature as well as historiographical attitudes of the early Muslims. Most significant contribution to this particular branch of knowledge is attributed to 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās. He is quite frequently quoted in the *Tafsîr* of al-Ṭabarî. The Jewish traditions have also permeated the *tafsîr* literature through his channel. Since most of the narratives regarding the *tafsîr* were committed to writing during the Abbasid period, there is every likelihood to believe that the transmitters might have attributed their own opinions and ideas to 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās with a view to pleasing the ruling family as well as to authenticate their versions.

Ibn Nadîm has given a list of such commentaries as were common during this period, including the *Tafsîr* by Ibn Tha'lab, *Kitāb al-Tafsîr* by (a Shî'a transmitter) Abū Ḥamza Thābit b. Dînār al-Thumalî, *Kitāb al-Tafsîr* by Zaid b. Aslam.

Mālik b. Anas, al-Sadî, and Sufyān Thaurî also transmitted a commentary of the Qur'ān. But the main source of their exegesis is the Companions like Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'îd b. Jubair, 'Urwa, etc.

Most of the significant commentaries of the Qur'ān have been incorporated by Moḥammad b. Jarîr al-Ṭabarî (d. 310 A.H.) in his monumental work entitled *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'un Tā'wîl āye al-Qur'ān.*[1]

1. Cairo, 1954 (Muṣṭafā al-Bābî) II edition (30 parts).

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Jewish myths and legends are almost an indispensable part of the *tafsīr* literature. The characteristic features of these myths are that, first, they are the offspring of phantasy and imagination, without any basis of reality. Secondly, they are based upon the idea of one unique will and invariably impart some moral or ethical teaching.

Thirdly, if we study the Jewish myths in the historical perspective, we will find that the majority of these legends came into existence towards the end of the Jewish national life, hence they bear the traces of Persian and Graeco-Roman influence.[1]

Fourthly, these myths, contrary to myths of Greece, have entirely excluded the faminine sex from celestial regions.

Fifthly, Jewish myths deal with all parts of the Universe. They extend to heaven and to earth, water and air, angels and demons, Paradise and Hell.

The ethical purpose of the Jewish myth is to explain the course of the Universe and the destinies of man.

Lastly, the majority of their myths and legends are based on the Holy Writ, endeavouring to explain them so as to appeal to the people.

Old Testament characters mostly appear in these legends and some of them are common with the Qur'ān, like Joseph, Solomon, David, etc. Hence, Muslim commentators could not ignore these myths, nor they could find a better substitute to them.

Foreign Influence on Isrāeliyyāt :

"In the course of their peregrinations", to quote Rappoport, "the Jews adopted many ideas and conceptions from their neighbours whom they came into contact. The

1. (Rappoport (A.S.) : *Early Literature and Tradition of the Jewish (Nation* vol. I (Introduction) (Gresham, London, n.d.)

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which originated in the ruins of Palestine, was carried to and continued in Babylonia and Africa[1]..."

Anyhow, the Jewish traditions had remained subject to many foreign influences prior to their flourishment in the southern regions of the Arabian peninsula. Palestine itself had been a thoroughfare from the very beginning, where Eastern and Western ideas have mingled.

The Palestine had the 'advantage of becoming to a certain extent the melting point of different civilizations and *Weltanschauungen*. Foreign civilizations Egyptian, Persian, Babylonian, and Indian, have left their traces upon Judaism, and specially upon the Jewish myths and legends which, side by side with the law, were developed among the nation, handed down from generation to generation, and penetrated into the oral law and its *Haggadic* portions."[2]

And this *Haggadic* portion has provided material for the early story-tellers[3] like Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓî and Tamîm Dārî etc.

The major portion of the material employed in *tafsîr* literature had been derived from pre-Islamic sources; from Torah, Talmud, Mishna, Haggada and the folklore. Later on, as the popularity of story-tellers increased, they started to transmit non-Islamic traditions indiscriminately and unscrupulously. It was because of this common practice of the story-tellers that the Caliphs, specially 'Umar I, were constrained to put restrictions on such unfounded stories. 'Umar I, had allowed Tamîm Dārî to narrate stories,[4] in public assemblies, while 'Alî had given permission to Ḥasan al-Baṣrî to sit in a mosque at Baṣra and narrate stories with

1. Rappoport : *Early Literature and Tradition of the Jewish Nation* p. X IX.
2. Rappoport : *Early Literature and Tradition of the Jewish Nation* p. XX.
3. For details see Mūsa Sulemān : *al-Qiṣaṣ al-Adabî 'inda al-'Arab.*
4. Goldziher : *al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ān*, Arabic tr. by 'Alî Ḥasan 'Abd al-Qādîr, Cairo, 1944.

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a view to educate the masses and to arouse in them the sense of piety and fear of God. Story-tellers of the early period did also invent new stories and added fresh material to it in order to cope with the increasing demand for such fictions.

But the orthodox Muslim scholars and the Traditionists like Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal never approved of the increasing influence of this foreign element and Ibn Ḥanbal is often quoted to have said :

"Three branches of Islamic knowledge are totally unfounded—*Tafsîr*, *Malāḥim* and *Maghāzî*."[1]

The Element of Isrāeliyyāt in Tafsîr :

As we have discussed earlier in some detail, Jew and Christian scholars had accumulated considerably large traditions as commentaries of the Bible and that they claimed that everything, whether significant or trivial, was recorded in their Scriptures.[2]

The Qur'ān has referred to some of the Prophets[3] who preceded the Prophet Moḥammad and tells some stories

1. Goldziher : *al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ān* p. 55.
2. An interesting example of this has been cited by Ibn Khaṭîb that when al-Manṣūr laid the foundation stone of the city of Baghdād in 145 A.H., a Jew passed by the site where foundations were being dug and said : 'We find in our books that this city will be built by a king whose name would be *Necholas*. On hearing this Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr said : 'By God, my mother used to call me Necholas when I was a child'. (*Tārîkh Baghdād* vol. I p. 66). Similar is the example of Ka'b al-Aḥbār who had foretold the assassination of Caliph 'Umar on the authority of Jewish scriptures. (*Fajr al-Islām* p. 161). Muslim scholars and transmitters had also developed a taste for soothsaying in order to gain cheap popularity.
3. For example *Abraham* II : 124, 258, 260. III : 33, 55; 67, 84, 95, 97. IV, 54, 125, 163, XXI : 51, XXII : 26, 43. XXVI : 69. XXIX : 16, 31. XXXVII : 83. XXXVIII : 46. XLII : 13. XLIII : 26 LI : 24. LX : 4. (Continued).

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...which it refers to as '*Qiṣaṣ*' : 'We narrate unto thee the best of narratives in that We have inspired in thee this Qur'ān, though aforetime thou wast of the heedless'. (XXII :3).

In addition to it, Islām holds the view that Allah sent down His messengers to guide all nations and in all ages; they preached monotheism and some of them even brought a *Sharī'a* for their followers. But, with the passage of time their followers misinterpreted the *Sharī'a* and deviated from the right path. Ultimately, the Prophet Moḥammad was

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(Continued from p. 144) :

Adam II : 31. III : 33.59. VII : 11, 19. XX : 115. *David* II : 251, IV : 163. V : 78. XVII : 55. XX XIV : 10 XXXVIII : 18.

Dhu Nūn XXI : 87. *Dhu'l Kifl* XXI : 85, XXXVIII : 49. *Dhu'l Qarnain* XVIII : 84 *Elias* VI : 86. XXXVII : 123. *Elisha* VI : 87, XXXVIII : 49. *Ezra* IX : 30 *Hūd* VII : 65, XI : 50, XXVI : 124. XLVI : 21. *Idrīs* XIX : 56, XXI : 85, '*Imrān* III : 33, III : 35, LXVI : 12. *Isaac* II : 133, III : 84, 87, IV : 163, VI : 85, XI : 70, LI : 28, XIX : 49, XXI : 72, XXXVII : 112, XXXVIII : 46. *Ishmael* II : 125, 133, IV : 163, VI : 87. XIV : 39. XIX : 54. XXXVIII : 49. *Jacob* II : 132, III : 84, XII : 6, 38, 68. IV : 163. VI : 85, XI ; 70, XIX : 49, XXI : 72, XXXVIII : 46. *Jesus* II : 87, 136 253. IV : 157, 171, XLII : 13, XLIII : 57, LVII : 27, LXI : 6, 14. III : 45, XIX : 16, III : 52, V : 46, 78, 110. XIX : 22, XXIII : 50. *Job* IV : 163, XXI : 83, XXXVIII : 42. *John the Baptist* III : 39, VI : 86 XIX : 7, 12, XXI : 90. Jonah IV : 163, VI : 87, X : 99, XXX : 139, LXVIII : 48. *Joseph* VI : 85, XII : 4, XL : 34. *Lot* VI : 87 VII : 80, XI : 77, XV : 59, XXI : 71. XXII : 43, XXVI : 161, XXVII : 54, XXIX: 28, XXXVII : 133, LIV : 33, LXVI : 10. *Moses* II : 51, 108, 136, V : 20, XXXII : 23, II : 60. II : 67, 92, VII : 102, VII : 138, 150, XIV : 5, XVII 101, XXVII : 7, LXXIX : 15, XVIII : 61, IX : 51, XX : 9-80, 92, XXVIII : 3, XXI : 48, XL : 23, XLIII : 46, XLIV : 17, XXXVII : 114, XL : 23, XLII 13, XLIII : 43, XLIV : 17, LI : 38, LXI : 5, LXXIX : 15, XXVII : XXVIII : 7, *Noah* : III : 33, IV : 163, VI : 85, VII : 59, X : 72, XIV : 9, XI : 25, XVII : 3, XIX : 76, XXII : 42, XXIII : 23, XXVI : 106, XXIX : 14, XXXIII : 7, XXXVII : 75, XLII : 13, LIV : 9, LXXI : 1-28, LXVI : 10, *Ṣāliḥ* VII : 73, 75, XI : 61, XXVI : 142, XXVII : 45. *Sho'ayb* VII : 85, XI : 84, XXVI : 177, XXIX : 36. *Zachariah* III : 37, 38, VI : 86, XIX : 2, XXI : 89.

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sent with an accomplished *Sharī'a* for all the mankind and all ages, and in him Allah maninfested a perfect conduct of life and a model of virtues. The long chain of prophethood also ended on him.

The Muslim scholars of early centuries who undertook absorbing studies of the Qur'ān, had no choice but to depend on Jewish sources while commenting on such verses of the Qur'ān which referred to the history of prophethood and the missions carried out by the early prophets. Since this material came from Jewish religious sources, it was also not possible for the Muslim scholars to establish whether or not this material could be regarded historically reliable. Once the door to the exploitation of Jewish sources in Muslim history was opened, they did not remain content with and confined to 'the stories of the prophets' alone, but the Jewish myths, traditions, fantastic tales, and superstitions all found way to creep into Islamic literature without any check and it became evident that *Israeliyyāt* would remain as a permanent chapter of Muslim history as long as the Muslims asserted that the prophethood of Moḥammad was the closing[1] chapter of the history of prophethood. The transmitters of Jewish traditions were mostly the Jews converted to Islam. 'Abdullāh b. Salām, Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazî etc. represent this group of early narrators and we will examine in some detail the material they have transmitted to the later historiographers.

Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazî (d. 118-120 A.H.) :

Moḥammad b. Ka'b[2] b. Sulaim b. Asad belonged to the Medinite Jewish tribe Banū Quraiẓa, an ally of the tribe of Aus. He was a convert from Judaism to Islam and had special study of the Jewish *Haggada* which he utilized in

1. Abū Is'ḥāq Aḥmad b. Moḥammad b. Ibrāhîm al-Tha'ālibî has discussed in detail the philosophy of the tales that have been narrated in the Qur'ān. vide : al. Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* pp. 49-50.
2. For his notices see : Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 272 *et. seq.* *Tehdhîb al-Tehdhîb* IX : 420, *'Uyūn al-Akhbār* I : 201, 264, II : 14, 343, III : 4, al-Shi 'rānî : *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* I : 33.

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...ing and became a popular *Qāṣṣ* (story-teller) of his period. Since he was knowledgeable in the ancient Scriptures and the Jewish traditions, he could explain such characters of the Qur'ān as are also found in the Torah and Talmud literature, so he enjoyed the position of a *mufassir* or the commentator of the Qur'ān, and his reports are frequently cited by the early commentators in their works. Al-Ṭabarî has obtained his transmissions in the *Tafsîr* without any hesitation.

That he was popular among the elite too, is evident from the fact that he had quite friendly relations with 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz, perhaps, from the time of his governorship of Medîna, and 'Umar II had special regard for al-Qurazî's scholarship.

In Medîna, he used to sit in a mosque and narrated stories of Jewish origin before his curious listeners who wanted to know more and more about the early history of Prophethood and about some of the equivocal references found in the Qur'ān. What had encouraged the early story-tellers, is the attitude of Islam toward the Jewish literature. Bukhārî has given a *ḥadîth* on the authority of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ that the Prophet said : "Communicate from me, be it a single verse. Narrate the traditions of Banî Israel, and do not attribute a false statement (to me)...." Hence, later historians' somewhat lenient and indifferent attitude that *Isrāeliyyāt* are neither true verbatim, nor they should be condemned and belied. Such traditions of Jewish origin as do not contradict the basic Islamic faith are allowed to be transmitted for the sake of making a narration more rich, palatable and popularly acceptable.[1]

An Examination of his Reports :

Among those from whom Ibn Is'ḥāq obtained material for his *Sîrah* is Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazî (d. 120 A.H.). Al-Ṭabarî has also incorporated his reports at more than 23 places.

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1. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 323.

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First, he is quoted in the story of Abraham while commenting on the Qur'ānic verse : "And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a Prophet of the righteous",[1] and "And his wife, standing by, laughed and when We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Isaac and, after Isaac, of Jacob".[2] According to al-Qurazî it was Ishmael whom Allah commanded to be sacrificed.

In the story of Lot he describes how the community of Lot was chastized by Allah and explains the verse, "And We utterly confounded them, and We rained upon them stones of heated clay".[3] He names those five cities *Sab'a, Sa'rah, Amra, Dauma and Sadum* which were destroyed in the course of chastisement.[4]

Again, in the story of Shu'ayb he comments on the verse : They said : "O Shu'ayb ! doeth thy way of prayer command thee that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we (should leave off) doing that what we will with our own property",[5] and says that the last phrase of the verse refers to their practice of cutting from coins (*Qaṭa' al-Darāhim*), which Allah disapproved and chastised them for the sin.

The matter that al-Qurazî has used in the *tafsîr* of such verses having any reference to the stories of the prophets has apparently been borrowed from Jewish sources. Commenting on the Qur'ānic verse : "And when the terror fell on them they cried O Moses Pray for us unto thy Lord, because He hath a covenant with thee. If thou removest the terror from us we verily will trust thee and will let the children of Israel go with thee."[6]—al-Qurazî narrates a story of Jewish

1. *al-Qur'ān* XXXVII : 112. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXIII : 89 *Tārîkh* I : 269.
2. *al-Qur'ān* XI : 71. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XII : 71-72 *Tārîkh* I : 270.
3. *al-Qur'ān* XV : 74. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XIV : 45-46 *Tārîkh* I : 306.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : I : 307.
5. *al-Qur'ān* : XI : 87. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XII : 101 *Tārîkh* I : 329.
6. *al-Qur'ān* : VII : 134. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 418 *Tafsîr* IX : 40-41.

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that a woman of the family of Pharaoh used to visit a woman of the Children of Israel when they were dying of thirst. She offered them water but as soon as the woman of Banî Isrāel intended to drink, it transformed into blood and this condition of theirs remained for seven days. It was in this context that the Children of Israel complained before Moses in the above manner. Moses prayed for them and the terror was removed, but the Children of Israel did not fulfil their promise to Moses and perfidiously turned disobedient. Then Allah revealed to Moses that he should leave Egypt with his true believers and Allah will rescue him and destroy the forces of Pharaoh. Moses prayed for their effacement and Allah transformed their properties, slaves, edibles, palm trees and all into lifeless stones. This was the first out of nine signs which Allah showed Pharaoh.

Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓî says that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz asked him about those nine manifest signs which Allah showed Pharaoh, and he replied : They were deluge, locust, louse, frogs, blood, Moses' staff, his radiant hand, transmutation, and the ocean. 'Umar II asked : "Wherefrom did you learn that the transmutation was one of those seven signs ?" Al-Quraẓî said : "Because Moses prayed for them and Aaron tried to safeguard them ; Allah transmuted their properties into stone". "But how could you infer this except in a way...' said 'Umar II and asked for a bag which contained of some pieces found by 'Abd al-'Azîz b. Marwān in Egypt. Among its contents were some of the remains af the properties of the family of Pharaoh. He took out one egg half-peeled and it was stoney, a nut without shell and it was stony, similarly chickpea and lentil seeds that were made of stone.[1]

The above report is quite important to show that the Umayyad rulers took particular interest in collecting such material of archaic value as could be used in understanding the ancient traditions referred to in the Qur'ān.

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1. *al-Qur'ān* XVII : 101, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XV : 171-172. *Tārîkh* I : 418-419.

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Another report from al-Qurazî about the description of Moses and his confrontation with Pharaoh is found in the commentary of the following verse : "And when the two hosts saw each other, those with Moses said : Lo ! we are indeed caught. He said : Nay, verily ! for lo ! my Lord is with me. He will guide me".[1] Moḥammad b. Ka'b says that Pharaoh had marched to catch Moses and his followers, with seventy thousand deep black horses, apart from horses of other breed that were in his cavalry.

Similarly, he describes the details of the army of Solomon commenting on the verses : He said : "My Lord Forgive me and bestow on me sovereignty such as shall not belong to any after me. Lo ! Thou art the Bestower. So We made the wind subservient unto him, setting fare by his command whithersoever he intended".[2] "And unto Solomon We gave the wing, whereof the morning course was a month's journey and the evening course a month's journey, and We caused the front of copper to gush forth for him, and (We gave him) certain of the jinn who worked before him by permission of his Lord. And such of them as deviated from Our command, them We caused to taste the punishment of flaming fire".[3] Al-Qurazî states that the army of Solomon was of such multitude as to cover an area of a hundred *farsakh* (one farsakh= 3 miles) then gives the break up as 25 *farsakh* of men, 25 for the genii, 25 for the beasts and 25 for birds. Solomon also possessed one thousand houses made of glass fixed on wood of which three hundred mansions were visible while the remaining seven hundred invisible.

Like Wahb b. Munabbih, al-Qurazî also paid attention to the history of Yemen and al-Ṭabarî has quoted his report in the description of the spread of Christianity in Yemen. This report is also of mythological nature and tells us how

1. *al-Qur'ān* XXVI : 61-62 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsir* XIX : 79 *Tārikh* I : 420.
2. *al-Qur'ān* XXXVIII : 36 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsir* XXXII : 160 *Tārikh* I : 487.
3. *al-Qur'ān* XXXIV : 12 al-Ṭabarî :*Tafsir* XXII : 68-7. *Tārikh* 10 : 487.

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b. al-Thamir succeeded in preaching Christianity among the people of Nejrān.[1]

Sīrah : Meccan Period :

That Moḥammed b. Ka'b al-Qurazī collected material of the early Islamic history according to the general plan followed by the ancient scholars can be judged by his narrations regarding various aspects of *Sīrah* which Ibn Is'ḥāq has exploited in his work. The much-discussed report has been obtained by Ibn Is'ḥāq through his channel that while the Prophet noticed that his people have turned hostile because of such revelations as he received from Allah, in condemnation of their deities he wished that such verses should also be revealed to him as to cause to promote the spirit of amity and reconciliation between him and the people of Mecca. It was in this context that Allah revealed unto him : "By the Star when it setteth, your comrade erreth not, nor is deceived ; Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired..."[2] When the Prophet during his recitation of the above verses in prayer reached the word : "Have ye thought upon *al-Lāt* and *al-'Uzzā*, and *Manāt*, the third, the other?"[3] Satan caused him pronounce what he was contemplating those days : "These are high idols and intercession is sought from them."

The Quraish, who listened to the Prophet recite these words, were quite happy that he had referred to their idols. At the end of this chapter, he went prostrate and all the believers as well as non-believers who were present there, prostrated with the Prophet. Now, Gabriel appeared to him saying : "O Moḥammad what is this, that you have recited something which I did not communicate to you from your Lord". The Prophet was very much disturbed and grieved at this unhappy event till Allah revealed unto him : "Never sent We a messenger or a prophet before thee but when he recited (the

1. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* II : 121-123. Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* I : 31-35.
2. *al-Qur'ān* LIII : 1-4 al-Ṭabarī : *Tafsīr* XXVII : 40 *Tārīkh* II : 338.
3. *al-Qur'ān* LIII : 19-20 al-Ṭabarī : *Tafsīr* XXVII : 58-61.

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message) Satan proposed (opposition) in respect of that which he recited thereof. But Allah abolisheth that which Satan proposeth. Then Allah establisheth His revelations".[1] The interpretation of these verses and their *raison d'etre* has been cited on the authority of Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qūraẓî in most of the commentaries of the Qur'ān including al-Ṭabarî.

His next report in the history of al-Ṭabarî occurs about the Prophet's visit to Ṭā'if after the death of his uncle Abū Ṭālib. The Prophet had undertaken this journey alone, tells al-Quraẓî, and had approached three eminent personalities of the tribe Banū Thaqîf Their names have also been given by al-Ṭabarî.[2]

It appears that like other scholars of the early period, al-Quraẓî had also accumulated historical reports and *Sīrah* material according to the plan laid down by 'Urwa and followed by the later *Sīrah*-writers like al-Zuhrî, Ibn Is'ḥāq, Ibn Sa'd etc. Ibn Is'ḥāq has obtained his narratives regarding the Hijra through the channel of Yezîd b. Ziyād that while the Prophet came out of his home to migrate to Medîna, the Meccans had surrounded him ; but he picked up a handful of dust and hurled at them reciting the Qur'ānic verse : "And We have set a bar before them and a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not".[3] When the Prophet finished this verse all of them were unable to see and he went away unmolested.[4] From this description of Hijra, he narrates the events that took place at the compaign of Dhāt al-'Ushairā. The Prophet, according to this report of al-Quraẓî, had called 'Alî by the name *Abū Turāb*,[5] while the latter was asleep on earth in the oasis of Banū Mudlij. But, al-Bukhārî in his *al-Jāmi'* has given another version of the background in which the Prophet called 'Alî as Abū Turāb. Both the versions

1. *al-Qur'ān* XXII : 52 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* : XVII : 186-190.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 344-345.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : XXXVI : 9.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 373.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 409. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 58.

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contradictory to each other, except that we believe that the Prophet called him by the nickname on both the occasions, once in the mosque and on another occasion at the time of the compaign of Dhāt al-'Ushairā.

In the description of the Battle of Uḥud we meet al-Qurazî telling us about the murder of Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. The enemies had mutilated the corpse of Ḥamza. The Prophet was very much grieved to see this inhuman treatment of the polytheists with the corpse of his beloved uncle, and the believers had declared that if they were to find a chance in future they would also mutilate the dead bodies of their enemies in an exemplary manner unprecedented in the history of the Arab. Allah revealed to the Prophet in this context : "If ye punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith ye were afflicted. But, if ye endure patiently, verily it is better for the patient".[1] At this the Prophet forbade his followers that they should not mutilate corpses in war.

His report about the battle of the Trench is also found in the history of al-Ṭabarî, and he tells us that the Jews of Medîna, including Salām b. Abî al-Ḥuqaiq al-Naḍarî, Ḥuyayy b. Akhṭab, Kināna b. al-Rabî' and Haudha b. Qais al-Wā'ilî etc. had conspired with the Quraish to fight against Moḥammad. It was in this context that the Qur'ānic verse refers to : "Has thou not seen those unto whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given, how they believe in idols and false deities, and how they say of those (idolators) who disbelieve : These are more rightly guided than those who believe".[2]

Moḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazî said that a young man from Kūfa said to Ḥudhaifa b. al-Yamān, O Abū 'Abdillāh had you seen the Prophet and joined his company ? 'Yes,

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1. *al-Qur'ān* XVI : 126 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XIV : 194-195 *Tārîkh* II : 528-529.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 14 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* III : 89-90.
   al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî*.
2. *al-Qur'ān* IV : 51-55 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 565.

Ḥudhaifa replied. 'Then what did you do with him', asked the young chap. 'By God', replied Ḥudhaifa, 'we used to struggle hard while with him'. "If we were to find his company", said the youth, 'we would not have left him walking on the earth, instead we would have raised him on our shoulders." "My dear nephew", said Ḥudhaifa, 'By God, we saw the Prophet at the battle of the Trench that he offered prayers late in the night and then said to those in his company : "Who is there to go and see what are these people (enemies) doing, and come back to report". He repeated these words thrice, but nobody came forward because it was an intensely chilly night, all of them were hungry and terrified. Then the Prophet called Ḥudhaifa to go out and watch the activities of the enemy's camp.[1] The report is quite in detail and reflects the treatment of Ka'b with the *Sîrah* material.

That al-Quraẓî had collected historical material is also attested by his narration of the Truce of Ḥudaibiya. He tells us that at the time of writing the Treaty the Prophet called 'Alî and ordered him to reduce the agreement to writing. When the Prophet dictated : 'Write, in the Name of Allāh..., Suhail b. 'Amr took an exception to it and said : "We do not recognize this invocation, instead you should write : '*bismikallahumma*'. The Prophet said : Write it thus. Then 'Alî inserted at the end of the document : "this agreement was made between Moḥammad the Prophet of Allah and Suhail b. 'Amr." The latter again objected saying : 'If we recognized you as the Prophet of Allah, we would not have fought against you." The Prophet said : Write : "This agreement was made between Moḥammad b. 'Abdillāh and Suhail b. 'Amr", and 'Alî accordingly did.[2]

Ibn Is'ḥāq and al-Ṭabarî have taken the description of Abū Dharr al-Ghifārî's death at *Rabadha* after the Caliph 'Uthmān had expelled him from Medîna. It is in the context of Tabūk expedition, that the Prophet told about Abū Dharr : 'He walks alone, will die alone and will be resurrected

1. al-Ṭābarî : *Tārîkh* II : 579-581.
2. al-Ṭābarî : *Tārîkh* II : 634-635 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* III : 317.

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Al-Ṭabarî cites, on the authority of al-Qurazî, a report depicting the circumstances in which Abū Dharr died (32 A.H.) and his last rituals were performed, in order to show that the above prediction of the Prophet had come true.

Again, al-Qurazî is quoted in the history of al-Ṭabarî[2] that the Prophet had, during the year 9 A.H., deputed Abū Bakr as the leader of Ḥajj pilgrims as well as he had delegated 'Alî with 30 or 40 verses of the Chapter *al-Tauba* (Repentance) to be read out to the people which the latter did on the *'Arafa* day. He also recited the verses of the above *Sūra* in the camps of Arab pilgrims at Mecca and announced that after that year no polytheist would be allowed to enter the *Ka'ba* nor half-clad women would circuit around the Ka'ba, as had been the practice since the age of *Jāhiliyya*.[3]

It appears that he was also interested in collection of reports about other contemporary events of significance since we find a report from him regarding the appointment of 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd as envoy to Africa, by the Caliph 'Uthmān. He gives details of revenue that had been collected from Africa.[4]

His last narration in al-Ṭabarî is regarding the Karbalā episode when he says that al-Ḥusain was martyred at Karbalā on the 10th of Muḥarram 60 A.H.[5] Some other useful details of historical and biographical value are transmitted through Ka'b as he informs us that al-Zubair b. al-'Awwām did not dye his hair.[6]

'Abdullah b. Salām :

'Abdullāh b. Salām b. al-Ḥārith, a Companion of the Prophet, was originally a Jew converted to Islam. He was

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1. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam* III : 24.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 107.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 123 *Tafsîr* X : 60 *et. seq.* Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* IV : 543.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 256.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 394.
6. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 107.

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well-versed in Jewish literature with intensive knowledge of the Torah, Talmud, Midrash, Halaga, Haggada etc. as well as national traditions of the Jews. Prior to his conversion to Islam, according to an anonymous manuscript, his name was Samuel.[1] While Ibn Is'ḥāq says that his Jewish name was al-Ḥuṣain b. al-Ḥārith. The Prophet gave him the present name after he professed Islam.[2] Ibn Is'ḥāq has cited his name among those of the tribe of Banū Qainuqā' who were arch enemies of Moḥammad. Ibn Salām, however, turned a sincere believer, and as we shall see later, he took active part in operations launched by the Prophet against the Jewish tribes of Medîna. The following Qur'ānic verse refers to 'Abdullāh b. Salām, as al-Ṭabarî and al-Wāqidî tell us : "And lo of the people of the Scripture there are some who believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed unto them, humbling themselves before Allah."[3]

At the compaign against the Jews of Banū Quraiẓā, the Prophet had appointed two persons namely Abū Lailā al-Māzinî and 'Abdullāh b. Salām to cut down the palm-trees of the Jews. Ibn Salām cut the *Layyina* trees down while Abū Lailā uprooted the '*Ajwā* trees.[4]

Abū Ḥumaid al-Sadî reported that when the Prophet came out of Medîna on the day of Uḥud and reached the valley of Thaniyat al-Wadā',[5] he came across a detachment of tough fighters. On asking about their identity he was told that it was 'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salūl leading a 600-strong cavalry of the Jews of Banū Qainuqā'. All the soldiers were

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1. *Masā'il 'Abdullāh b. Salām* (Ms. f. 1. a) Salār Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
2. Ibn Hishām : *Sirah* I : 515 Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 352-353 Ibn Khaldūn : 367.
3. *al-Qur'ān* III : 199 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IV : 219 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 319.
4. The Qur'ān has a reference to the same event. LIX : 5 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXVIII : 32.
5. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* II : 46.

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(*mawāli*) and belonged to the family of 'Abdullāh b. Salām. "Have they professed the religion of Islam ?" asked the Prophet. 'No,' he was told. "Then, tell them that they should go back since we do not accept assistance from the polytheists against polytheists."[1]

'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās narrated, according to another report, that when the Prophet announced his mission he, commanded his followers that letters should be sent to the Jews and the Christians, inviting them to profess the new religion of Islam. So, Gabriel the Arch Angel dictated a letter in the following words: "In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent the Merciful : From Moḥammad, the messenger of Allāh, to the Jews of Khaibar : Verily the earth belongs to Allāh and the Day of Judgement is for those who fear Him most, and peace be upon those who follow the right path, and there is no power, nor might, save in God the Most High, the Most Sublime". Then he sealed the letter and sent it away to the Jews of Khaibar. When the letter was received by the Jews, they rushed to their sage Ibn Salām saying : 'O Ibn Salām. this is a letter from Moḥammad addressed to you, so read it out to us. He accordingly read the letter out and said : "Whatever has been written in this letter you will find the same signs in the Torah ; Moḥammad is the same Prophet about whom Moses had fore-told". They said : "O Sheikh, his Book declares those things unlawful unto us which Allah had made lawful for us".

"O my people". Ibn Salām said : 'you have opted mundane things in lieu of the world hereafter and the torture of hell in place of the mercy of Allah'. They said : O Ibn Salām, had Moḥammad been following our faith he would have been dearer to us than to his other followers. At this Ibn Salām said : I go to see him and put before him some questions from the Torah. In case he answered the questions correctly, I shall profess his religion and shun Judaism. Then he stood up, and picked up the Torah, and framed 1400 questions out of it. In addition he selected four

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 48, III : 535.

difficult questions of mysterious nature and came to see the Prophet. The Prophet was sitting in his mosque when Ibn Salām entered upon him greeting: 'Peace be on you O Moḥammad and on your Companions.' 'And peace on you also and on those who follow the right path'. Those present replied. 'Who are you ?' 'I am 'Abdullāh b. Salām, one of the leaders of Banî Israel and the Torah-reciters. I have come as the envoy of Jews to see you'. 'In fact I have come to you with something to ask, if you could explain it as you are from among the virtuous'.

'O Ibn Salām, the Prophet replied quietly: 'Sit down please and ask whatever you like to, and I shall inform you of whatever you ask'.

'O Moḥammad, inform me, because it would increase faith in me', said Ibn Salām. Thereupon the Prophet said: 'O Ibn Salām you have brought 1400 questions from the Torah and in addition to them four difficult questions of mysterious quality which you have framed from the Torah'. At this 'Abdullāh b. Salām kept quiet first, then turned his face toward the Prophet and tears were trickling down his cheeks ,and said: 'You are right O Moḥammad. Are you a Prophet (*Nabî*) or a messenger (*Mursal*)?

The Prophet said: "Allah has deputed me as His Messenger and I am the Last of the Prophets'. Have you not read the Torah? which says: "Moḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, and those in his company are coarse unto disbelievers but merciful to each other from among them. You would find them in prostration and genuflection desiring to obtain the pleasure of Allah and His blessings".

And it was revealed to me: "Moḥammed was not father of anyone from among you, but the Messenger of Allah and Last of the Prophets'. 'You are right O Moḥammad', said Ibn Salām. 'Now please tell me whether you speak on your own will or you receive revelation from Allah'? 'But revelation from Allah descends on me through Gabriel'. 'You are true, Said Ibn Salām...'[1]

1. *Masā'il 'Abdillāh b. Salām*, ff. 1-9 (Ms. Salār Jung Museum).

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goes on the description of queries from Ibn Salām, and in reply to his questions the Prophet tells him that Allah sent one lakh and twentyfour thousand prophets on earth of whom 313 were bestowed a *Sharī'a* and were (*Mursal*), seven were Arab by origin, one thousand prophets came during the period between Moses and Christ. Allah revealed 104 scriptures to various prophets of which 14 books were given to Adam, 20 to Abraham, 50 to Shîth, 30 to Idrîs, Psalms to David, Torah to Moses, Gospel to Christ and the Qur'ān He revealed to Moḥammad.

Ibn Salām asked whether the Qur'ān contained anything common with the Torah? Moḥammad recited the following verses :

"He is successful who groweth
And remembereth the name of his Lord, so prayeth.
But ye prefer the life of the world
Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.
Lo ! this is in the former scrolls,
The books of Abraham and Moses".[1]

In reply to his inquiry Moḥammad also described the features of Gabriel, his habits and manners. Other questions were about the Genesis, Adam and his creation, then his descent on earth. He also inquired about the forbidden tree and how Adam left Paradise, on which part of the earth he was sent down etc. Answers of all these questions were fully endorsed by the Torah and other Jewish sources. On finding each and every answer to his entire satisfaction Ibn Salām embraced Islām.[2]

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1. *The Qur'ān* LXXXVII : 14-19
It was revealed in support of Ibn Salām (Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* I : 557). Similarly Sūra *Ikhlās* (CXII) was revealed to satisfy the Jews who had come to Ibn Salām with odd questions about the 'birth of Allah '! (vide: *Ibn Hishām Sîrah* I : 571).

2. Ibn Salām, according to al-Mas'ūdî (*al-Tanbîh wa al-Ishrāf*, p. 201), embraced Islam during the month of Shawwāl, nine months after the Hijra. See also Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* (ed. Ibrāhîm al-Saqqā, 1955) vol. I p 516, 557, 571.

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This small treatise shows the impact of Jewish sources on early Islamic knowledge and comprehends all subjects ranging from the Genesis to the day of Resurrection and its would be proceedings. During the early days of Islam, Ibn Salām was regarded as the most erudite scholar because of his comprehensive knowledge of Jewish traditions. Mu'ādh b. Jabal, a senior Companion of the Prophet, a jurist and Traditionist of the first rank who had received the knowledge of Islamic *Sharī'a* directly from the Prophet at the time of his appointment as Qāḍî of Yemen, advised his pupil Yezîd b. 'Umaira al-Siksakî to obtain knowledge in the event of his death from four scholars : 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh b. Salām, Salmān al-Farisî and Abū al-Dardā. These four names represent the four[1] dimensions of intellectual activities of the early century and Ibn Salām is the source of historical knowledge by virtue of his being conversant in Jewish sources.

Ibn Sa'd has another version of the first meeting of Ibn Salām with the Prophet. Ibn Salām said : 'When the Prophet arrived in Medîna, he was quite a rage in the city. People thronged to see him in large numbers. When I entered upon him for the first time, as soon as I cast a look on his countenance, it occurred to my mind that his was not an impostor's face'. The first word that I listened to from the Prophet was, 'Make greetings, O my people, to one another, quite a common practice ; feed hungry ; do good to your kith and kin ; pray Him when others are fast asleep and enter paradise in peace'.[2]

'Abdullāh b. Salām was alive till the Umayyad period and kept himself aloof from political activities and upheavals of his age.[3]

His Reports :

The first appearance of Ibn Salām is in the description of the Genesis. Ibn Salām said : 'I know the time (of

1. *Fajr al-Islām* p. 146.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 235.
3. *Fajr al-Islām* p. 255.

Allah began creation of heavens and the earth on Sunday and finished the work of creation in the last hours of Friday.'[1] Another version attributed to Ibn Salām describes that the creation of earth was performed within two days i.e. Sunday and Monday.[2]

Some Qur'ānic verses have also referred to him, as al-Wāqidî mentions in the description of Uḥud (2 : 245), that Ibn Salām[3] had participated in the expedition against Jewish tribe Banū al-Naḍîr and the Prophet had deputed him and Abū Lailā al-Māzinî to cut the palm trees in the estate of Banū al-Naḍîr. The Qur'ān also refers (59 : 5) to the same.[4] Similarly, he took active part in the Prophet's operation against Banū Quraiẓa. The Prophet launched his campaign against the Jews of Banū Quraiẓa (*Dhū al-Qa'da*) after the battle of the Trench. Muslim army besieged Banū Quraiẓa. After their surrender, 'Abdullāh b. Salām was entrusted with the charge to collect booty from their forts. He collected 1500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 1000 spears, 1500 shields etc.[5]

Next we meet 'Abdullāh b. Salām in 35 A.H. in the description of the cruel murder of 'Uthmān. He is warning those who have trespassed the house of 'Uthmān : 'O people, do not unsheathe the sword of Allah on yourselves, because, by God, once you have taken it out you will never be able to sheathe it again. Today your authority is being maintained by the help of a whip ; but if you kill him, it will never be restored except by a sword. Woe to you ! your city is surrounded by angels, by God if you murder him, they will leave this city.'

They said : 'O son of a Jewish woman, who are you to interfere in our affairs' ! and Ibn Salām returned silently.[6]

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol I : p. 23.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol I : pp. 43, 47, 54, 55, 117.
3. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* :I-329.
4. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* I : 323 pp. 372-373, 381.
5. *Ṭabaqāt* : II : pp. 75, 352.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* Vol. IV p. 391.

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'Abdullāh b. Salām was an eye witness to the whole unfortunate episode of which the drop scene was the murder of 'Uthmān. Ibn Sa'd reports that 'Abdullāh b. Salām said : No prophet had been killed, but 70 thousand of his community were assassinated in his revenge and no caliph of a prophet was murdered but 35 thousand from among his people were beheaded in his revenge.[1] He could foresee the repercussions and retaliations of this unholy conspiracy reflected in the future history of Islam. He kept himself totally detached from political activities and after the murder of 'Uthmān left the city of Medîna to settle down in Syria. Ibn Salām was present at the last prayer[2] and funeral of 'Umar I. 'Uthmān had contacted him during his besiege.[3] But Ibn Salām was intelligent enough to perceive the repercussions of the murder of 'Uthmān and is reported to have said : 'The Arab have perished today.'[4] Someone asked him as to what he found in the ancient Scriptures regarding the murder of 'Uthmān, to which he furnished an answer in a typically soothsayers' style.[5] Ibn Salām was from among those who did not take the oath of allegiance to 'Alî.[6] But when Ṭalḥa, al-Zubair and 'Ā'isha rose to demand that the blood of 'Uthmān be avenged and 'Alî came out of Medîna to leave for Baṣra, Ibn Salām again came forward and advised him not to leave the city and said : "O Commander of the faithful, do not leave the capital, because by God, once you left it, you will never be able to come back and authority of the Muslims will never be restored in this city." The followers of 'Alî reprimanded him for his uninvited counsel, but 'Alî said : "Do not say anything, he is one of the best Companions of the Prophet", and embarked on his journey.[7]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 82
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 369.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 71.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 81.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 81, 83.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* Vol. IV p. 430.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* Vol. IV p. 455.

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about the last years of his life are not available to us except that he kept himself away from political machinations and passed the remaining days of his life as a silent spectator of deteriorating socio-political conditions of the Muslim society.

Ibn Is'ḥāq has given a different account of Ibn Salām's conversion to Islam. When he heard that the Prophet has arrived in Medîna and learnt about his character and intrinsic qualities, he understood that the much-awaited Prophet had appeared. The Prophet had, at first, put up in the locality of Banū 'Amr b. 'Auf at Qubā. At the time Ibn Salām received the news of the Prophet's arrival, the former was sitting in his oasis in the suburb of Medîna. He received the news quite jubilantly so much so that his aunt Khālida bint al-Ḥārith reproached him saying : 'By God, if you were to listen to the re-appearance of Moses, you would not have received the news more jubilantly.' Ibn Salām said : 'O my aunt, he is, by God, brother of Moses and has been sent by Allah as Moses was sent.' Is he the same Prophet', she asked, 'about whom we were told that he would be sent by Allah on the eve of the Day of Judgement' ?

'Yes', Ibn Salām replied. He came to see the Prophet and returned to his home the same evening while he was a Muslim. His family also converted to Islam keeping their conversion a secret for sometime.[1] On hearing that Ibn Salām had professed Islam, the Jews were quite annoyed and said that 'only some bad characters from among them had supported the Prophet and accepted his religion', to which the Qur'ān has also made a reference.[2]

Since he was one of the five eminent scholars[3] of his age, the other four being Ibn Yamîn, Tha'āliba b. Qais, Asad and Usaid—Muslims always referred to him in matters of metaphysical nature. It was in reply to a question put by the Jews that the Qur'ān described *Dhū al-Qarnain*.[4]

1. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : pp. 516-517.
2. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 557, 571.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : p. 353.
4. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 571.

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Some reports of Ibn Salām portray him in quite a different colour. These versions remind us the predictions attributed to the soothsayers who were always ready to answer curious questions.[1] Saṭîḥ al-Dha'ibî and Shiqq al-Yashkurî were such soothsayers in the pre-Islamic times. It was the institution of *Kāhins* which used to keep records[2] of their knowledge inscribed on baked bricks and tablets called *zuber*.[3]

The above quoted extracts from the narrations of Ibn Salām and the questions that he put before the Prophet are not in conformity with the general behaviour and outlook of the Prophet. These should be studied as an example of the influence of pre-Islamic traditions on the historical literature produced during the subsequent centuries.

'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās (d. 70 A.H.) :

Broadly speaking there are three facets of the intellectual movement during the early Islamic century : First, the religious aspect, that people gradually developed their taste for the exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān, or knowledge of the Traditions of the Prophet, or that of the injunctions of the *Sharî'a*. Secondly, their growing interest in story-telling *qiṣaṣ*, and *akhbār* complemented with poetry, genealogical details and biographical data of eminent personalities. Thirdly, intellectual queries arising out of philosophical interpretations of Islamic dogmatic view. While the first phase had begun during the lifetime of the Prophet, that the Companions not only collected the Qur'ānic chapters but even asked the Prophet every now and then, to explain such verses as they could not fully understand. It was the beginning of the *tafsîr* literature, which later on, during the Abbasid Caliphate came in its full bloom.

Ibn al-'Abbās is the exponent of this branch of knowledge which derived material from all sources, Islamic and non-

1. An example of the nature and style of these questions and their answers can be noticed in al-Mas'ūdî : *Akhbār al-Zamān* pp. 93-94.
2. al-Mas'ūdî : *Akhbār al-Zamān* p. 106.
3. al-Mas'ūdî : *Ibid.* III, pp. 131, 137.

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He was the most erudite of all early scholars in *tafsîr*, *siyar*, *maghāzî*, *ḥadîth*, *ayyām*, *ansāb*, poetry, *Israeliyyāt*, and the national traditions of the Arab. He is supposed to have known the *raison d'etre* of each and every verse of the Holy Qur'ān more than anyone else from amongst his contemporaries. He acquired both extensive and intensive knowledge of the classical Arabic poetry which helped him understand the real purport of the Qur'ān. He was also distinguished in having obtained knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, Talmud, Midrash, Haggada and other branches of the Jewish knowledge. He kept himself absorbed throughout his life in the service of Islamic lore—studying and imparting knowledge to posterity. We can hardly find any book on the subjects of *ḥadîth*, *fiqh*, *tafsîr*, *maghāzî*, *ansāb* or *futūḥ* without a reference to Ibn al-'Abbās. In the *Sîrah* of Ibn Is'ḥāq his name occurs at 39 places in authority chains, while al-Wāqidî quotes him at 58 places. In al-Ṭabarî (*Tārîkh*) the name of Ibn al-'Abbās is found at 313 places. It would help us understand the contribution of Ibn al-'Abbās to the early Islamic knowledge. It has been said that whenever Ibn al-'Abbās was asked a question to explain, if an answer to it was available with the Qur'ānic text, he used to furnish it. In case the Qur'ān was silent in that particular matter, he answered it in the light of *ḥadîth*. If, perchance, the *ḥadîth* was also not available in that matter, then Ibn al-'Abbās answered it in the light of what Abū Bakr and 'Umar had practised. Having failed to find a precedence in the practices of the first two Caliphs too, he asserted his personal opinion (*ijtihād*) to solve the problem.[1]

Such Traditions are also found that the Prophet himself had blessed him praying that Allah may vouchsafe wisdom to Ibn al-'Abbās. The Prophet touched his forehead and prayed : "My Lord, teach him wisdom, and interpretation of the Holy Book."[2]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. II : p. 366.
2. Ibid : II : 365.

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Ibn al-'Abbās himself interpreted the words of the Qur'ān: "Do not know about them save a few person," and said : 'I am one of those few—they are only seven.'[1] It was by virtue of his vast knowledge that he used to issue decrees (*fatwa*) during the time of 'Umar and 'Uthmān.

'Umar I had very much regard for his sagacity and scholarship[2] and his deep erudition in Islamic knowledge and at one time contemplated to appoint him as the governor of a province, but on further thought he dropped the idea when he was convinced that Ibn al-'Abbās would insist on the *khums* (one fifth portion of the booty as fixed by the Qur'ān for the Prophet's family).[3]

Later on, when the fourth Caliph 'Alî appointed him governor of Baṣra, Ibn al-'Abbās drew the *khums* from the state exchequer and informed the centre of its justification in a simple way.

That his opinion regarding legal matters was held high even by the dissidents is proved by such reports as we have received from Moḥammad b. Is'ḥāq that Najda al-Ḥarūrî, the Khārijite leader, wrote to 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās asking him about the portion fixed for the family members (next of kin) or *Dhawî al-Qurbā*. 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās wrote to him : 'You have written to me asking about the portion of the family members. It is for us. 'Umar had declared that we (the Prophet's next of kin) may perform marriages, repay our debts, serve our needy members, out of this share, (but should not put in a claim for this share as our right). We refused to abide by these conditions and he did not revise his decision.'[4]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. II : 366.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. II : 369.
3. Abū Yūsuf : *Kitāb al-Kharāj* p. 11 (Būlāq, 1302 A.H.).
   Ibn Is'ḥāq reports that although 'Alî also had the same opinion regarding the *khums* as other members of the family of Banū Hāshim held, yet he did not want to deviate from the path of his three predecessors in this particular policy. (Abū Yūsuf : *Kitāb al-Kharāj* p. 11).
4. Abū Yūsuf : *Kitāb al-Kharāj* p. 12.

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reports covering a vast range from the Genesis to the political upheavals during the early Umayyad period, frequently occur in the historical works compiled by those who claim to have obtained them from various channels ending on Ibn al-'Abbās. His *Tafsīr* has been transmitted by one of his many pupils, Mujāhid, from whom it was transmitted by Ḥumaid b. Qais. Another channel is of 'Ikrima and Abū Ṣāliḥ.

'Wherefrom did you obtain this much knowledge,' someone asked Ibn al-'Abbās. 'By virtue of an intelligent mind and because of an inquiring tongue', was his terse reply. He was the first Muslim scholar and commentator of the Qur'ān who appeared on the public stage of Baṣra. He ascended the pulpit, recited the chapter *al-Baqara* from the Qur'ān and explained its text word by word.'[1]

"People say that you denounce Ibn al-'Abbās," someone asked al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî, the most celebrated saint seated at Baṣra. On hearing these remarks he wept bitterly till his beard was moistened and said : 'Ibn al-'Abbās had a place in Islam, and a special status among the Companions. By God, his was an intelligent mind and an inquiring tongue ; and by God he was an unfathomable and ever-flowing ocean (of knowledge).'[2]

Ibn al-'Abbās was a good orator too. He was, as al-Jāḥiẓ says, from among those eloquent orators whom none could resemble or surpass. During the period of the seige of 'Uthmān he delivered a discourse in Mecca while he was leading the Ḥajj season. First he recited the chapter *al-Nūr* from the Qur'ān, then explained it in his own lucid style so much so that Abū Wā'il admitted that he had never listened to a speech more eloquent, more convincing than that. 'Had the Turks, the Persian and the Roman listened to it they would certainly have converted to Islam.'[3]

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1. al-Jāḥiz : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* vol. I : 84-85, 141.
2. *Ibid* I : 141.
3. al-Jāḥiz : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* vol. I : 262.

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Whenever Ibn al-'Abbās listened to something new and informative, he used to preserve it by committing to writing.[1] Such evidences are also found that he had collected a rich library which could be transported on several mounts. Ibn al-'Abbās was distinguished among his contemporaries in several qualities', says 'Abdullāh b. 'Ubaidillāh b. 'Utba, in his unprecedented scholarship, his sharp-mindedness and power to infer, sagacity, wisdom and liberality. I have not met anyone more knowledgeable in the Traditions of the Prophet or more aware of the rulings of Abū Bakr, 'Umar[2] and 'Uthmān. Nor have I come across anyone more expert in legal matters, nor a greater scholar of poetry, Arab traditions, *tafsîr*, mathematics, laws of inheritance, and history of the past. Nor have I found anyone of more sound opinion than him. He used to sit one day before his pupil and nothing was discussed in his assembly except *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), the other day the subject of discussion in his company would be commentary of the Qur'ān, another day the *maghāzî*, another day poetry, another the 'Days of the Arab'. I have not found any scholar who came to his assembly and did not submit to his erudition; nor did I find any inquirer who did not receive a satisfactory answer to his question from Ibn al-'Abbās.[3]

I used to pay visit to the Companions of the Prophet, *muhājir* as well as the *anṣār*, 'Abdullāh Ibn al-'Abbās said to Abū Salama al-Ḥaḍramî, and asked them about the *maghāzî* of the Prophet and about the revelations connected to them. I did not visit anyone of them but he was very much pleased by my visit because of my relationship with the Prophet. So, one day I used to inquire from Ubayy b. Ka'b who had a sound knowledge of the *raison d'etre* of the Qur'ān. He informed me that twentyseven chapters of the

1. al-Jāḥiz : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* : II : 52.
2. While faced with difficult or compound legal problems, 'Umar used to consult Ibn al-'Abbās and in most of the cases appreciated his verdict. (*Tabaqāt* II : 369).
3. *al-Jāḥiz* : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* II : 368.

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were revealed at Medîna while all the rest portion was revealed at Mecca.[1]

People used to throng to the assembly of Ibn al-'Abbās for obtaining knowledge about various subjects. Some visited him for poetry, others for genealogical material, some people for *ayyām* and *akhbār* of the Arab ; and he used to furnish valuable information in all these subjects.[2]

He is, perhaps, the first Muslim scholar who employed the ancient Arabic poetry for the commentary of the Holy Qur'ān. Ibn al-'Abbās received a lot of queries regarding the Qur'ānic usages, says Yūsuf b. Mehrān, and used to explain : 'It means this, and this. Have you not heard the ancient Arabic poet who said thus, and quoted the verse.'[3]

It was because of this vast and versatile knowledge not only of Islamic sciences but of its purport and background too, that he was regarded as the *rabbānî* of the Muslim community. 'Today the *rabbānî* of Muslim community has passed away' was the comment of Ibn al-Ḥanafiya on the death of Ibn al-'Abbās.[4]

Ka'b al-Aḥbār is also reported to have said to 'Ikrima (*maulā* of Ibn al-'Abbās) : 'Your master is the *rabbānî* of this community and is the most erudite scholar among all the living men as well as among those who have passed away.'[5]

Ṭā'ūs, the famous *tābi'î* scholar-commentator of the Qur'ān said : 'I found the company of some seventy Companions of the Prophet and I saw that whenever they differed in some problem, they always tried to find out the opinion of Ibn al-'Abbās regarding that vexed question.'[6]

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1. al-Jāḥiz : *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyîn* : II : 371.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 367.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 367.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 368.
5. *Ibid* : II : 370.
6. *Ibid* : II : 367.

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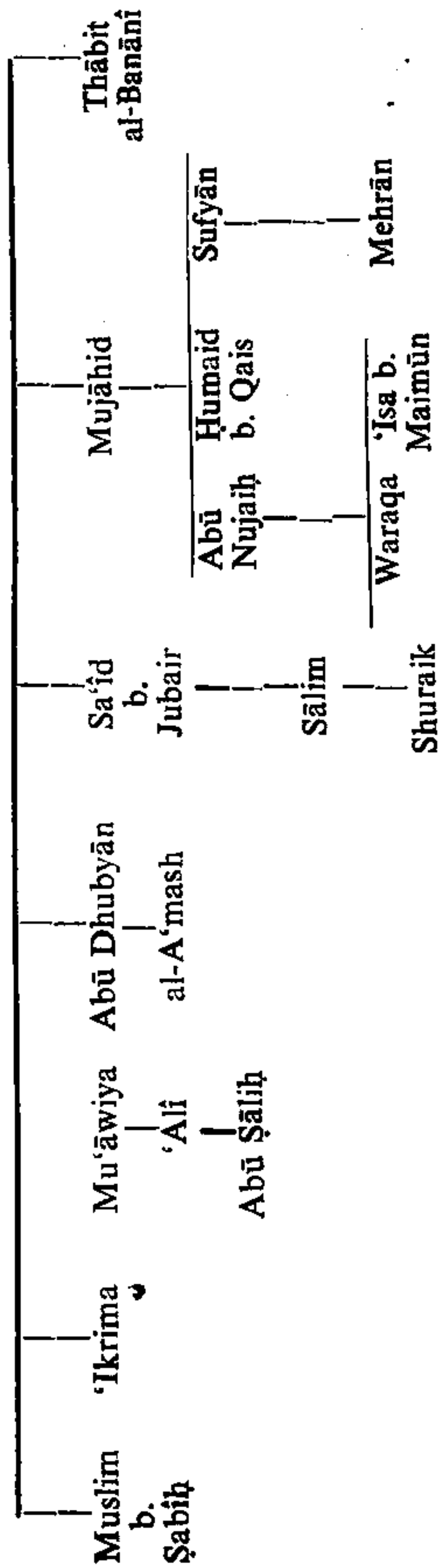
Transmission Table

'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās
(His transmissions)



CHAPTER VII

Hadith Literature and its Historical Value

An important source of the history of Islam—its advent, expansion and fundamental teachings, as well as of the life and Traditions of the Prophet of Islam—is the vast treasure of *ḥadīth* literature, which the Companions of the Prophet preserved from the very beginning, and which, during the subsequent years attained the position of a permanent branch of knowledge. Some other branches did also spring up for the scrutiny and verification of this material. Among these ramifications of Islamic sciences *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* (or principles of scrutiny) and *Asmā al-Rijāl* (or Narrators' Who's Who) are exclusively Islamic in character. These methods of criticism assured a high and sound standard of *ḥadīth*-compilation which was quite unknown to the followers of other religions.

Practice of Writing in Early Period :

The majority of the Arabs were quite illiterate and only some members of the urbanized tribes like Quraish knew reading and writing before the advent of Islam. Arabs had learnt writing from the people of Ḥîra who had taken it from the Ḥimyarite.[1] According to early reporters there were only 17 persons in the tribe of Quraish who were conversant with reading and writing at the time of the advent of Islam; they were as al-Balādhurî enumerated, 'Umar I, 'Alî, 'Uthmān,

1. Aḥmed Amîn : *Fajr al-Islām* p. 140.

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Abū 'Ubaida, Ṭalḥa, Yazîd b. 'Abî Sufyān, Abū Ḥudhaifa b. 'Utba, Rabî'a, Ḥāṭib b. 'Amr, Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Asad al-Makhzūmî, Abān b. Sa'îd b. al-'Āṣ b. Umayya, Khālid b. Sa'îd, Abdullāh b. Sa'îd b. Abî Sarah al-'Āmirî, Ḥuwaiṭib b. 'Abd al-'Uzza al-'Āmirî, Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb, Mu'āwiya b. Abî Sufyān, Juhaim b. Abî al-Ṣalt, and from among the allies of the Quraish, Abū al-'Alā al-Ḥaḍramî.[1] Some women like Ḥafṣa, Umm Kulthūm, Shifā *bint* 'Abdillāh were also capable of writing while some other women like 'Ā'isha *bint* Abî Bakr and Umm Salma were able to read but could not write.

Ibn Sa'd[2] has given some other names of such Companions as were conversant with writing in Arabic prior to the advent of Islam. They include Ubayy b. Ka'b,[3] Sa'd b. al-Rabî'[4] 'Abdullāh b. Rawāḥa,[5] Bashîr b. Sa'd,[6] Abdullāh b. Zaid,[7] Aus b. Khawalî,[8] al-Mundhir b. 'Amr,[9] Usaid b. al-Ḥuḍair,[10] Sa'd b. 'Ubāda,[11] and Rāfi' b. Mālik.[12]

In Medîna, particularly in the tribes of Aus and Khazraj, some Jews had known writing which they used to teach to children. When these tribes embraced Islam, only 11 persons in Medîna, according to al-Balādhurî, were able to write.[13]

Since to be able to write was regarded a speciality, those conversant with writing, shooting and swimming were called *Kāmil* (perfect). Sa'd b. 'Ubāda and Usaid b. Ḥuḍair and

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1. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* p. 471.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 465.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 498.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 522.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 526.
6. *Ibid* : III : 531.
7. *Ibid* : III : 536.
8. *Ibid* : III : 542.
9. *Ibid* : III : 555.
10. *Ibid* : III : 604.
11. *Ibid* : III : 613.
12. *Ibid* : III : 622.
13. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* p. 473.

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...ullāh b. Ubayy and Aus b. Khawalî had the title of *Kumil.*[1]

The Prophet had engaged from among his Companions those conversant with lettering, for writing down the Qur'ān and the first man to commit the revelation to writing was Ubayy b. Ka'b. In case of his being absent the Prophet used to ask Zaid b. Thābit to write down.

But neither all these scribes had a uniform style of writing, nor they followed any set rules strictly. As a result, in many cases writing of a man could not be easily deciphered by others. But, when Islam became dominant, writing of letters, documents and other treaties etc. as well as that of the Qur'ān and the *Sharī'a* laws became quite imperative. According to a well-known version when 'Umar, prior to his conversion to Islam, entered the house of his sister, Khabbāb b. al-Araṭ was also present there and both of them were reciting the Qur'ān of which they had the Chapter *Ṭāha* written on a parchment.

Another report showing the significance of writing is indicated by the fact that the war prisoners of the battle of Badr (2 A.H.) were asked by the Prophet each of them to teach ten Muslims how to write. Those who fulfilled this condition were set free. The Prophet also encouraged his Companions to learn foreign languages so that the mission of Islam could easily be spread among other linguistic areas. Zaid b. Thābit had learnt the Hebrew and Syriac languages within 17 days at the instance of the Prophet as Bukhārî and Ibn Sa'd report. 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ (d. 65 A.H.) also knew the Syriac language.[2] He was also conversant with the Jewish Scriptures.[3]

With the expansion of Islamic territories, those converted to Islam tried to learn the Arabic language in order to

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1. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* p. 474.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* IV : 262.
3. *Ibid* : IV : 267.

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understand the meaning of the Qur'ān, while the Muslims endeavoured to learn about, the history and socio-cultural life of their subjugated neighbours.

Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarî report that the Prophet had given a written directive regarding the administrative policies to 'Amr b. Ḥazm when he departed to assume his office as governor of Yemen. And later on, when departments of Justice and Education were put in charge of Mu'ādh b. Jabal and he took leave for Yemen he had also received similar directives in black and white.

In spite of the fact that the majority of the Arabs were illiterate and the practice of writing books was not so common, we find the early Muslims to have rendered commendable service in recording the events and in transmitting them onward to posterity. It appears still more surprising to find that in comparatively civilized countries where education was common and people were familiar with writing books, not a single effort had ever been made, neither in pre-Islamic days nor afterwards, to preserve, on such a large scale, the record of doings and sayings of any reformer, religious leader or even a ruler. The Jews of Yemen and Palestine were far more civilized and educated than the Bedouin Arabs, but even they could not preserve such minute details of the actions and dicta of their prophets.

Some of the modern historians of Islam, more specially the European orientalists, assert that the practice of writing was absolutely unknown to the Arab during the early days of Islam. It is only partially true; it should not imply that the Arabs could not write even when it was necessary. We come across so many Traditions of the Prophet which record his commands to his followers to write down some important rules. The Prophet, for example, before Hijra, had issued written orders to Tamîm Dārî that *Jaron*, a town in Palestine, would be treated as his *jāgīr* whenever it came under the Muslim rule. And during his journey to Medîna, he granted

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assurance of peace to Surāqa b. Mālik al-Mudlaji.[1] The Prophet had also signed a covenant with the tribe of Juhaina (Ist year A.H.). The text of this pact is not available to us, yet Ibn Hishām, while describing the expedition of Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (sent from *Yanbū'*) says: "Majdî b. 'Amr al-Juhanî came and stood between the Muslims and the Quraish since he had peace covenants with both of them."[2]

Another agreement was made with Banū Ḍamra in Ṣafar (2nd year A.H.) beginning with these words : "This has been written by the Prophet of Allah for Banū Ḍamra...." During the 5th year after Hijra at the time of the *Khandaq* battle a treaty with Banū Fazāra and Banū Ghaṭafān was also drafted but was destroyed, since the terms could not be agreed upon by the two parties.

The famous *Ḥudaibiya* Treaty was written during the 6th year after Hijra and the infidels took exception to the words '*Messenger of Allah*' in the document and the Prophet himself replaced them with '*Ibn Abdillāh*'. The historians also report about the Tabūk expedition that Ukaidir b. 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-Jinn al-Ḥîrî the ruler of Dūmat al-Jandal, had written a document showing his allegiance to Islam, and the Prophet had affixed his seal on the document with his nail impression. Abū 'Ubaid Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224 A.H.) says : 'I have seen this document, it was written on a parchment of white leather. I had also transcribed it...'[3]

It was a common practice among the rulers of al-Ḥîra that instead of putting a stamp or thumb impression they made a half-circle on the documents with their nails. Some of the ancient agreements, discovered in recent excavations, also contain such type of nail-stamps. In certain cases it has also been mentioned clearly that the nail-stamp was

1. Ibn al-Athîr : al-Kāmil II : 564-570 (also in *Bukhārî*).
2. Ḥamîdullāh : *al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyya* No. 159.
3. Ḥamîdullāh : *Ṣaḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih* (Introduction).

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affixed for attestation'. Some authentic texts of the letters written by the Prophet to Caesar, Kisra, Muqauqis, Najāshī or other neighbouring rulers are quoted by the early authorities and a few original letters have also been discovered during the later centuries. Ibn 'Asākir says that Abū al-'Abbās 'Abdullāh b. Moḥammad had purchased for 300 gold coins, the original document of the treaty which the Prophet had made with the citizens of *Aila*.[1]

We do also find in the early chronicles many instances of writing down the directives for provincial administrators. They were dispatched to the district officers and provincial governors. During the last days of his life, the Prophet is also reported to have framed rules and regulations regarding the rates of *zakāt* on cattle, farms, mines etc. He gave up the ghost before those rules could be dispatched to the district tax-collectors. Abū Bakr and 'Umar executed those rules during their tenure of office as Caliphs. The text of such rules is found in various historical sources like the *Sunan* of Dārqaṭnî, *Abū Dā'ūd*, *Tirmidhī*, *Kanz al-'Ummāl* etc. *Abū Dā'ūd* and *Tirmidhī* say, on the authority of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, that the Prophet had compiled a document on *zakāt*-rules but he passed away before that could be circulated among the district officers. He had suspended those rules with his sword. Abū Bakr followed the same regulations until his death and then 'Umar observed them till his last breath.

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî (d. 124 A.H.) says that he had seen the text of those rules. It was under the custody of the descendants of 'Umar, and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz (d. 101 A.H.) had procured a copy of it for the State Records Office.

The Practice of Writing and Compilation Work during the Caliphate :

The Righteous Caliphs were not generally in favour of committing the Traditions of the Prophet to writing. We

1. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* I : 292.

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[illegible]d by the early *rāwīs* (reporters) that Abū Bakr had compiled some Traditions but on further contemplation he himself reduced it to ashes. 'Umar, the second Caliph, was also reluctant in this matter and ultimately gave up the idea of writing down the *ḥadīth*. 'Urwa b. al-Zubair reports, that 'Umar wanted to compile Traditions of the Prophet and had convened a meeting of the Companions in order to seek their advice in this matter. The majority voted for compilation but 'Umar vetoed their decision since he was not convinced that Muslims would scrupulously observe the strict rules needed for keeping the *ḥadīth* and the *Qur'ān* in water-tight compartments.

"I was contemplating to write down the Traditions of the Prophet," he pronounced before a general audience of believers, "but, in the meantime I recalled that People of the Book, who preceded Muslims, committed to writing books other than the revealed Scriptures, and consequently, they left behind the Holy Scriptures and stuck to their own compilations. By God, I shall never mix the Book of Allah with other human works,"[1] and ultimately he gave up the idea.

In matters concerning the transmission rules, the first four Guided Caliphs were very particular. But interestingly we also find such reports that Abū Bakr and 'Umar not only encouraged the compilation of Traditions but they did also commit them to writing. According to Ibn Sa'd, 'Umar had acquired the house of al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 32 A.H.) for extension of the Medīna mosque, but al-'Abbās was not willing to surrender it. The case was referred to Ubayy b. Ka'b (d. 21 A.H. for arbitration and Ubayy narrated a *ḥadīth* regarding the construction of *Bait al-Maqdis*. 'Umar caught hold of the skirt of Ubayy and said : 'I came to you for a settlement but you have put before me a still heavier task (of reporting a *ḥadīth* without proper authentication). Now

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : p. 287.
Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arī had also destroyed a collection of *ḥadīth* transmitted by him (Ibn Sa'd IV : 112).

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'Umar came out of the court of Ubayy to the assembly of the Companions, with the skirt of Ubayy in his hand, and asked those present to attest to the authenticity of the Tradition narrated by him. Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and others certified that they had also heard the same *ḥadīth* from the Prophet. Only then 'Umar let Ubayy proceed with the case he was assigned to arbitrate.[1]

As we have discussed somewhere else, 'Umar introduced the Hijra calendar and thus provided a fresh impetus to historiographical activities of the early period. Thenceforward, historical anecdotes, and *maghāzī* and *Sīrah* literature, began to be recorded in chronological sequence. 'Umar also introduced the system of *Dīwān* (state registers) wherein names and qualifications of those who were entitled to receive stipends from the state exchequer (*Bait al-Māl*) were indexed according to their seniority in embracing Islam or their participation in holy wars prior to the Conquest of Mecca. It means that these indices of stipendiaries were kept according to the *Ṭabaqāt* system later on followed by the historions.

The registers of those who participated in expeditions (*maghāzī*) during the lifetime of the Prophet, were maintained according to tribes and clans which must have contributed a lot to the rapid advancement of studies in genealogy (*'ilm al-ansāb*). 'Abdullāh b. Ma'bad reports that 'Umar having issued orders for the preparation of *Dīwāns*, suggested that names of those belonging to the family of Banū Hāshim should be preferred and according to this rule 'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib topped the list.[2] These *Dīwāns*, as al-Balādhurī puts it, were prepared in Muḥarram 20 A.H.

Compilation of Hadith Literature :

There are sufficient evidences to believe that the work of *ḥadīth* compilation had started during the Prophet's lifetime.

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* IV : pp. 21-22.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* IV : p. 32.

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and some equally reliable evidences to confirm that the Prophet, and later on his Companions, did not encourage those who wanted to compile the Traditions in a book form, as a precautionary step, lest the believers should confuse the Holy Book[1] and the Traditions of the Prophet as the Jews and the Christians had done. The Qur'ān had already impeached them for interpolating in their Holy Scriptures, incorporating their own words in them, and assigning to them a status parallel to the divinely revealed Book. The Prophet and his successor Caliphs apprehended lest Muslims should follow the example of the Jews and the Christians in attributing too much importance to the *ḥadīth*-collections as their predecessors had given to *Talmud* and *Midrashim*. Nevertheless, their apprehensions did not prevent the followers from preserving the spoken word of the Messenger of Allah and transmitting it to posterity. Compilation of *ḥadīth* in a book form had become a known practice even during the Prophet's lifetime. We are told that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib had compiled a small book containing Traditions of the Prophet. 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ[2] had also collected by permission of the Prophet, some Traditions in a book, which he named as *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Ṣādiqa*. Similarly, Jābir b. 'Abdillāh (d. 78 A.H.) was the compiler of a small collection on *ḥadīth*.[3]Abū Huraira and 'Amr b. Ḥazm are also reported to have gathered some Traditions while the latter had also committed to writing a number of such letters of the Prophet as he had despatched to the neighbouring rulers inviting them to embrace the new faith. Abū Huraira, a close Companion of the Prophet, had preserved and transmitted a large number of Traditions. Apart from oral transmissions, he is reported to have dictated some Traditions to his pupils who committed them to writing. Hammām b. Munabbih compiled a book entitled *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Ṣaḥīḥa*, of which the manuscripts are found in the libraries of Berlin and Damascus. Its Arabic text along with the Urdu translation and necessary notes has

1. *Fajr al-Islām* : pp. 209, 221.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* IV : 262.
3. *al-Iṣāba* I:213, *Dhail al-Mudhayyal*; 22.

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recently been published by Dr. Ḥamīdullāh.[1] Ma'mar b. Rāshid, a disciple of Hammām, also compiled a book entitled *Jāmi'*, manuscripts of which are in the Ankara University Library and in Istanbul. Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-San'ānī (126-211 A.H.) was a student of Ma'mar and one of the teachers of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. He is also the compiler of a book entitled '*Musannaf*'.[2] In view of these facts, it would be erroneous to assume, as some of the orientalists do, that the work of *ḥadīth*-compilation was unknown during the Prophet's lifetime, and hence the entire collection of *ḥadīth* becomes of questionable authenticity. We have seen that Abū Huraira, his pupil Hammām b. Munabbih, his disciple Ma'mar b. Rāshid, his student 'Abd al-Razzāq and his pupil Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal have made continued efforts in preserving and compiling the *ḥadīth* literature. After the discovery of these works we may rightly suppose that there must have been some other compiled works which did not come down to us. It should also be kept in mind that because of scarcity and dearth of writing material, oral transmission was a popular practice during the early days of Islam. Furthermore, this had become a common practice since the pre-Islamic days because the 'Days of the Arab', legends of the Prophets, and the *jāhiliyya* poetry were transmitted orally. Nay, dictation or writing of such material was rather looked down upon as compared to oral transmission.

A Catalogue of the Early Compilations :

From Ibn Sa'd alone we can prepare a short catalogue of such compiled works on various aspects of Islamic studies, including, of course, history as were available by the end of the second century A.H. Authors of these works, mostly of

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1. Ḥamīdullāh (M.) : *Ṣaḥīfa-e-Hammām b. Munabbih*, Hyderabad, 1956 (Introduction).
2. The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq has recently been published in 10 volumes with annotations and introduction by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zami. (Beirut, 1975).

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had transmitted their knowledge directly from the Companions of the Prophet.

1. *Kitāb Nasab al-Anṣār*[1]
2. *Ṣaḥīfa Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya*[2]
3. *Books of 'Urwa b. al-Zubair*[3]
4. *Maghāzī Abān b. 'Uthmān*[4]
5. *Books of 'Abdullāh b. 'al'Abbās*[5]
   (in possession of Kuraib b. Abî Muslim d. 98 A.H.)
6. *Book of Zakariyyā b. Is'ḥāq*[6]
7. *Book of Ibn Juraij*[7]
8. *Ṣaḥīfa Hishām b. 'Urwa*[8]
9. *Book of Ibn Ḥasan b. Muslim*[9]
10. *Books of 'Abdullāh b. Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya*[10]
11. *Kitāb fī al-Irjā*[11]
    (by al-Ḥasan b. Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya)
12. *Books of Furāt b. Muslim*[12]
    He used to present his works to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz on Fridays.
13. *Sīrat 'Umar I, written by Sālim*[13]
    'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz commissioned him to write down the biographical account of 'Umar I.

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 74.
2. Ibid : V : 105.
3. Ibid : V : 179, 398.
4. Ibid : V : 210. It is perhaps a wrong attribution. Abān b. 'Uthmān al Bajalī (d. 200 A.H.) known as Abān al-Aḥmar had prepared a book on *Maghāzī*. (*Bughyat al-Wu'āt* : 177).
5. Ibid : V : 293.
6. Ibid : V : 493.
7. Ibid : V : 492.
8. Ibid : V : 492.
9. Ibid : V : 479.
10. Ibid : V : 328.
11. Ibid : V : 328. *Tehdhīb* II : 320
12. Ibid : V : 377.
13. Ibid: V : 396.

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14. *Ṣaḥîfa Jābir*

People thought that Mujāhid b. Jābir (d. 103 A.H.) used to transmit Traditions from '*Ṣaḥîfa Jābir*' of which a copy he had with him.[1]

15. *Ṣaḥîfa 'Abdillāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ*[2]
He had collected some Traditions with the Prophet's approval and called his book '*al-Ṣaḥîfa al-Ṣādiqa*' (The Genuine Book). All Traditions mentioned in this *Ṣaḥîfa* were directly transmitted by the Prophet without any intermediary chain between him and the compiler.

16. Abū 'Amr b. Ḥuraith al-'Udharî refers[3] to the books of his forefathers for the description of the Delegation of 'Udhra tribe.[3] وَجَدتُ فی کتب ابائی

17. *Books of Sahl b. Abî Hathma*

Moḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Sahl b. Abî Hathma, in the description of the delegation of his tribe Salaman says : I have found it written in the books of my father.[4] وَجَدتُ فی کتب ابائی

18. *Book of Abū al-Walîd al-Ṭayalisî*
containing the Traditions transmitted by 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar.[5]

19. *Book of Abū Ma'shar on Maghāzî.*[6]

20. *Book of 'Ammār b. Saif.*[7]

21. *Muṣannaf* Moḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abî Lailā[8].

22. *Ṣaḥîfa Masrūq.*[9]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : V : 466.
2. Ibid : II : 373.
3. Ibid : I : 331.
4. Ibid : I : 332.
5. Ibid : III : 273.
6. Ibid : III : 538.
7. Ibid : VI : 388.
8. Ibid : VI : 379, 406.
9. Ibid : VI : 80.

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23. *Book of 'Abdullāh b. Abî Hudhail*[1]
24. *Book of Zaid* b. Sūhān[2]
25. *Muṣḥaf Abî Burda*[3]
26. *Ṣahîfa of al-Ḥārith*[4]
27. *Ṣaḥîfa of al-Rabî'*[5]
28. *Ṣaḥîfa of Ḥijr*[6] (d, 51 A.H.)
29. *Ṣaḥîfa of Ibn Jubair*[7] (d. 95 A.H.)
30. *Books of maula banî Asād*[8]
31. *Tafsîr Abî Rauq*[9]
32. *Tafsîr Azra*[10]
33. *Tafsîr al-Sadî*[11]
34. *Muṣḥaf of Ḥammād*[12]
35. *Muṣḥaf Abî Ḥayyān*[13]
36. *Books of Moḥammad b. 'Ubaidillāh*[14]
37. *Tafsîr of Asbāṭ b. al-Naṣr*[15] (d. 170 A.H.)
38. *Books of Jarîr*[16]
39. *Books of Ibn 'Urūba*[17]
40. *Books of Haudha*[18]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* VI : 116.
2. Ibid : VI : 126.
3. Ibid : VI : 268.
4. Ibid : VI : 168.
5. Ibid : VI : 187, 189.
6. Ibid : VI : 220. *al-'Ibar* I : 57
7. Ibid : VI : 257, 258.
8. Ibid : VI : 343.
9. Ibid : VI : 369.
10. Ibid : VI : 266.
11. Ibid : VI : 323, 376.
12. Ibid : VI : 333.
13. Ibid : VI : 342.
14. Ibid : VI : 368.
15. Ibid : VI : 408, 410. *Tehdhîb* I : 211, *āl-Kuna* II : 160
16. Ibid : VI : 412.
17. Ibid : VII : 333.
18. Ibid : VII : 339.

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41. *Book on al-Sîrah*[1]
transmitted *by Abū Is'ḥāq Fazārî*
42. *Books of Laith b. Sa'd*[2]
43. *Book of Ḥafṣ b. Sulaimān*[3] (d. 180 A.H.)
44. *Books of al-Ḥasan b. Dīnār*[4]
45. *Book of Ibn Ma'rūf*[5]
46. *Book of al-Thaurî*[6]
47. *Muṣ'ḥaf Ka'b b. Sūr*[7]
48. *Muṣ'ḥaf al-Aḥnaf*[8] (d. 72 A.H.)
49. *Ṣaḥîfa Khallas b. 'Amr*[9]
50. *Ṣahîfa Ḥasan al-Baṣrî*[10] (d. 110 A.H.)
51. *Books of Ḥammād b. Salama*[11] (d. 167 A.H.)
52. *Book of Mālik b. Anas*[12]
53. *Books of Jābir b. Zaid*[13] (d. 93 A.H.)
54. *Books of Abî Qalaba*[14]
55. *Book of Bashîr b. Nuhaik*[15]
56. *Ṣaḥîfa Jābir*[16]
57. *Books af Shu'ba*[17]
58. *Books of Zā'ida*[18]
59. *Books of Ḥafṣ b. Sulaimān*[19] (d. 180 A.H.)

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Tabaqāt* VII : 341.
2. Ibid : VII : 342.
3. Ibid : VII : 276 *Tehdhîb* II : 400, *Mîzan al-I'tidāl* I : 261.
4. Ibid : VII : 279.
5. Ibid : VII : 300.
6. Ibid : VII : 328.
7. Ibid : VII : 92.
8. Ibid : VII : 95 *Wafayāt* I : 230, *Tehdhîb* : VII : 10.
9. Ibid : VII : 149.
10. Ibid : VII : 159 *al-I'tidāl* I : 254, *Dhail al-Mudhayyal* : 93.
11. Ibid : VII : 301 *al-I'tidāl* I : 277, *Tehdhîb* III : 11.
12. Ibid : VII : 302.
13. Ibid : VII : 181 *Tehdhîb* II : 38, *al-Bidāya* IX : 93.
14. Ibid : VII : 185, 251.
15. Ibid : VII : 223.
16. Ibid : VII : 253.
17. Ibid : VII : 256.
18. Ibid : VII : 341.
19. Ibid : VII : 276 *al-I'tidāl* I : 261, *Tehdhîb* II : 400.

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a Branch of History :

As the word '*ḥadīth*' includes all doings and sayings of the Prophet, as well as those of his Companions, this branch of Islamic learning is regarded as the richest and the most important source of the early history of Islam. We will find in the collections of *ḥadīth*, a considerable quantity of such material as contains the basic teachings and imperatives, rules regarding the status of non-Muslims, treaties, letters, despatches, judgements, rituals of worship, and many other aspects of the Islamic social life. It would, therefore, be improper to ignore or underestimate the significance of the *ḥadīth* literature as a historical source even if its authenticity may appear doubtful. The modern occidentalists are of the opinion that in spite of the fact that Apocrypha are of doubtful authenticity, we can still peep through them into the social life and behaviour of their fabricators, hence their significance as a source of history should not be denied. Similarly, even such portions of the *ḥadīth* material as have been declared fake, unauthentic and of doubtful nature, contain most valuable hints regarding one or the other aspect of the early Islamic society. The early historians of Islam have accepted the significance of the 'narrations of the Days of the Arab (*ayyām al-'Arab*), or the 'Legends of the Arab' (*qiṣaṣ-al-'Arab*) or 'Legends of the Prophets' (*qiṣaṣ-al-Anbiyā*), or the major part of the *Jāhiliyya* poetry, just because they are quite helpful in bringing out certain historical inferences ; though we do not find any evidence to believe that their narrators had exercised any conscious effort to preserve or transmit this material. On the contrary, every single *ḥadīth* has undergone a thorough scrutiny and investigation. The early Traditionists (*Muḥaddithūn*) have put in their effort in the difficult task of moderation, co-ordination and critical examination of this material. Personal character of every single name occuring in the chains of authority has also been put to test by the careful investigators. Hence, the *ḥadīth* material, critically examined by the scholars through the ages, has a stronger claim to dependability than the 'Legends of the Prophets' of Jewish origin or say, the Apocrypha.

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The *ḥadīth* literature, as we have already emphasised, contains many important hints regarding the life and conditions of the early Islamic society. Rāfe' b. Khadīj, for example, tells us that the Prophet had declared Medīna a '*ḥarem*' (Sanctuary). This declaration was committed to writing on a parchment of *Khaulānī* leather and was preserved with Rāfe'.[1] The Prophet, after his emigration to Medīna, had also chalked out a civil code. It was, as Dr. Ḥamīdullāh has rightly observed, the first written constitution in the history of mankind.[2] The available text of this document reveals that these civil laws were framed in consultation with the citizens of Medīna and that they were committed to writing. There are 52 clauses in this code. In this very document we find, as Rāfe' reported : "The meadows of Yathrib have the status of a sanctuary for the people governed by these laws."[3] We also find similar evidences to the effect that the Prophet had issued orders to demarcate the Muslim-ruled territory. He deputed Ka'b b. Mālik to fix mile-stones on the borders of *Makhīs*,[4] *Hafya*, *Dhul-'Ashīra* and *Taim* hills. According to another *ḥadīth* occuring in al-Bukhārī, as we have discussed elsewhere, the Prophet had ordered a public census. "We recorded for him names of 1500 believers, and the census record was handed over to the Prophet." It was perhaps in the light of this document that 'Umar I framed the rules which we find in *al-Mu'aṭṭā* (*Kitāb al-Zakāt*) by Mālik (d. 179 A.H), who also affirms that he had seen "Book of Alms" (*Kitāb al-Ṣadaqa*) compiled by 'Umar.[5]

Writing down of Historical Material during the Umayyad Period :

We have quoted elsewhere the statement of al-Mas'ūdī that Mu'āwiya I (40-60 A.H.) used to listen to historical

1. *Musnad :* (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) Vol. IV p. 141.
2. See for the text : *al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyya* No. 1.
3. Ḥamīdullāh : Ṣahīfa *Hammām b. Munabbih* p. 24.
4. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* vol. V p. 73 ; II. p. 276.
5. Ḥamīdullāh (M) : *Ṣahīfa Hammām b. Munabbih* (Introduction).

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accounts and stories of the Arab and non-Arab monarchs as a part of his daily routine. These accounts were written in registers and young slaves were specially trained to read them out to the Caliph. Their subject-matter was biographies of ancient kings, their characters, war strategies, panel codes and diplomatic policies.[1] We are also aware that 'Abîd b. Sharya, a professional story-teller of Yemenite origin, had compiled at the instance of Mu'āwiya, tales and legends of ancient Yemenite rulers. 'The activity of Daghfal under Mu'āwiya I', writes Goldziher, 'shows us that this productivity in the ancient history of the Arabs in fact and fiction found much encouragement under this prince's rule, which is shown too, by the activity of the southern Arab scholar 'Abîd b. Sharya at the court of the Caliph, who had summoned this man to Syria in order to discuss with him information concerning antiquity. The compilation of a work on the old stories, the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs the confusion of languages and its cause, the history of the dispersal of mankind in the various countries is said to have been due to such information.[2] This work which is now completely lost in which, as is evident from the title, the ancient history of the Arabs was interwoven with Biblical accounts, was widespread and widely read in the first centuries of Islam. We learn from al-Hamdānî (d. 334 A.D.) that in his day various versions of the book were current; these were so widely divergent and so much was added to the original text that there were hardly two copies alike ; and the younger contemporary of the above-mentioned author, al-Mas'ūdî (d. 346 A.H.) calls it a well-known book in everybody's hands."[3]

The interest of Umayyad rulers in historical literature and historiographical forms continued to develop throughout the period of their rule. Mu'āwiya I, also kept himself

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1. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* vol. III : p. 29.
2. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* : p. 244.
3. Goldziher (Ignaz) : *Muslim Studies* vol. I : 169.

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constantly posted with developments at the Muslims' religio-cultural centre at Medîna. Apart from this, all significant happenings throughout the whole Islamic world were reported to him directly by his official as well as non-official reporters.[1]

According to al-Sakhāwî, 'Ali b. Mujāhid (d. 182 A.H.) and Khālid b. Hishām had recorded annals of Umayyad rulers,[2] while some other reports prove beyond doubt that state records and written official documents of historical value were preserved during the early Umayyad period. For example, the pact between 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ[3] and Mu'āwiya to the effect that they will mobilize public opinion to demand the revenge for the murder of 'Uthmān from 'Alî, was written down and the text is quoted by Ibn Sa'd showing the name of the scribe as Wardān and the year 38 A.H.[4] Ibn Shihāb reports on the authority of Sahl b. Sa'îd al-Sa'îdî that the latter saw Marwān b. al-Ḥakam sitting in the Mosque (of Medîna) and when he approached him, Marwān was saying: 'I was told by Zaid b. Thābit that the Prophet dictated to him the following *'Lā yastawî al-Qā'idūn min al-Mu'minîn wa al-Mujāhidūn fî Sabîl Allāh'*, at the same moment the blind Companion Ibn Umm Maktūm entered the scene and said: 'O Prophet of Allah, if we were capable of fighting, we would certainly have recruited ourselves'. At the same moment the words *Ghair ūli al-Ḍarar* (except those incapable) were revealed to the Prophet and he asked the scribe to add them to the above Qur'ānic verse.[5]

The above statement testifies at least two points. First, the Umayyad rulers and chiefs took practical interest in propagation of Islamic knowledge and transmitted Traditions to

1. Al-Walid b. 'Utba informed Mu'āwiya of the death of Abū Huraira (d. 59 A.H.) vide Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV : 340.
2. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 207.
3. Mu'āwiya reckoned 'Amr, Abu al-Dardā and Ka'b al-Aḥbār among the most erudite scholars of his age (*Ṭabaqāt* II : 358).
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV p. 254.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV pp. 210-212.

the authority of those from whom they had obtained them. Secondly, the Prophet used to dictate the revealed version of the Qur'ān and the same was committed to writing at that early stage.

Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, the governor of Mecca, during the rule of Mu'āwiya I, reported to the centre that people have forgotten proper names of various places in the *Ḥarem*. 'Inquire from Kurz b. 'Alqama if he is still alive' replied Mu'āwiya, 'he will tell you about their identification'. So, the matter was referred to Kurz and he pointed out the names and signs of various places within the boundary of *Ḥarem* which existed till the days of al-Ṭabarî in the same position.[1]

It was the practice of Mu'āwiya I, that he used to ask various questions and clarifications concerning the early history of Islam from such knowledgeable persons whom he granted audience in his court. Sometime he asked them to transmit any Traditions of the Prophet which the visitor might have known through some source, with the intention of acquiring fresh and authentic knowledge of the subject.[2]

'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān:

The Umayyad ruler 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān had also shown keen interest in historical knowledge and historiography. Even casual visitors to the Umayyad court were asked such questions as could be useful in understanding the historical accounts of the early years. Khālid b. Dahqān reported on the authority of someone who was present in the court of 'Abd al-Malik, when the latter asked a member of the tribe of Banū Ḥanîfa the name of the man who killed Musailima al-Kadhdhāb (the impostor prophet) and the man described his features. 'Abd al-Malik, after listening to his version attentively, exclaimed: 'By God, you have decided in favour of Mu'āwiya'.[3]

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Dhail al-Mudhayyal* p. 2366.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Dhail al-Mudhayyal* p. 2426.
3. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* p. 96 (1901 ed.).

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'Abd al-Malik also received communications from the Companions and used to inquire from them regarding the Traditions of the Prophet every now and then.[1] He inspired Sa'îd b. Jubair to write a commentary of the Qur'ān which Sa'îd did and it was deposited with the Imperial Library.[2]

Al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik:

Al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik also sent queries to various contemporary scholars and knowledgeable persons in matters concerning the early history of Islam. Once he asked al-Zuhrî about the ages of former Umayyad rulers[3] which inspired al-Zuhrî to compile a book entitled *Asnān al-Khulafā.*[4]

Similarly, he used to send inquiries to 'Urwa b. al-Zubair asking about the details of the *Sîrah* of the Prophet. Al-Ṭabarî reports on the authority of Hishām b. 'Urwa and from his father 'Urwa b. al-Zubair, that 'Abd al-Malik wrote to him asking whether the Prophet had married the sister of al-Ash'ath b. Qais. 'The Prophet never asked her hand nor did he marry any woman of the tribe of Kinda except the sister of Banî al-Jaun whom he purchased and when she was brought before him in Medîna, he cast a look on her and divorced her without touching her', was the answer of 'Urwa which he sent away to the Umayyad court.[5]

Another important change that took place during the Umayyad rule was that all official records hitherto in Roman language and hence controlled by the Christian secretaries and clerks were translated into Arabic. Sarjūn b. Manṣūr a Christian secretary was incharge of secretariate during the reign of Mu'āwiya. It was under Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, that Abū Thābit Sulaimān b. Sa'd al-Khushānî rendered

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV pp. 152, 183, 184.
2. *Mîzān al-I'tidāl (vide* Shiblî : *Sîrah* I. p. 19).
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. II p. 149.
4. *Ibid* : vol. II p. 428.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Dhail al-Mudhayyal* p. 2458.

records into Arabic[1] thus providing opportunities to the Arab scribes to participate in the State affairs directly. The switch over of State language from Roman to Arabic might have helped in preservation and greater utilization of those records by the later Arab historiographers.

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz (d. 101 A.H.) :

The pious[2] 'Umayyad Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz (d. 101 A.H.) in spite of being in power for quite a short span of time, showed greater interest in compilation of Islamic knowledge and sciences than his predecessors or successors did collectively. He started the practice of writing down oral Traditions and transmissions and appointed official scribes to note down the transmissions from various Traditionists who visited his court very often. Once 'Ubaiduallāh b. 'Abdillāh (d. 106 A. H.) came to see 'Umar II and the latter appointed a few scribes to sit behind a curtain in order to take notes of his conversation and narrations. When 'Ubaidullāh stood up to leave the court, 'Umar II said : 'We have done something unusual. We have written down all that you have just now narrated before us." 'Where are those notes ?' asked 'Ubaidullāh, and when they were brought for his perusal, since he was not in favour of writing down the Traditions, he took those written notes and rendered them into small pieces.[3]

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz also circulated a letter among all provincial governors asking them to endeavour in accumulating as much material from contemporary knowledgeable personages as possible. One such letter addressed to Abū Bakr Moḥammed b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, the governor of Medîna, has been cited by Ibn Sa'd: "Commit to writing whatever Traditions of the Prophet or transmissions from 'Amra[4] you come across,

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1. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist p. 569.*
   Jahashyārî : *Kitāb al-Wuzarā wa al-Kuttāb* p. *40.*
2. al-Shi'rānî : *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* I : 29.
3. Ṣubḥî Ṣālim : *'Ulūm al-Ḥadîth* p. 65.
4. 'Amra daughter of 'Abd al-Reḥmān. In other versions the name of Qāsim b. Moḥammad b. Abî Bakr (d. 107 A.H.) is also found. Both

(Continued)

since I apprehend the disappearance of such Traditions and their depositories (because of continuous civil wars)."[1] Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm carried out the order of the Caliph and collected material available from living Companions of the Prophet, but before he could send it away to the royal court, Umar II had passed away.[2]

That 'Umar II took keen interest in accumulation of *Sīrah* material is evident from such examples as are found in the contemporary historical reports. Once he sent a letter to Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm asking him about the names of the servants of the Prophet—both males and famales. Abū Bakr sent the following detail in reply to the Caliph's letter :

"That Umm Aiman whose name was *Baraka* was the servant of the Prophet's father. She was set free after the Prophet inherited her. Umm Aiman was married to 'Ubaid al-Khazrajî and bore him a daughter namely Aiman. When Khadîja purchased Zaid b. Ḥāritha, Hakîm b. Ḥizām b. Khuwailid (d. circa 54 A.H.) purchased Aiman from the market of 'Ukāẓ for 400 *dirhams*. The Prophet asked Khadîja, after their marriage, that Zaid b. Ḥāritha be presented to him which she willingly did. The Prophet set Zaid free. Then the Prophet set Baraka free. Abū Kubaisha was from amongst the cross-breed of Mecca whom the Prophet set free. Similarly, Anasa was of a cross-breed, the Prophet set her free. Ṣāliḥ Shuqrān was his slave and was set by the Prophet free. Safîna was his

(*Continued*)

were eminent disciples of 'Ā'isha wife of the Prophet (See also: al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh p. 57)*. 'Umar II had also commissioned the pre-eminent Traditionist of his time, Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm, to collect and compile the Traditions of the Prophet and he did it in several volumes. *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* p. 36 vide Shiblî I,32).

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Tabaqāt* vol. II-2 p. 134.
   Horovitz : *The Earliest Biographies* IC. I (1927).
2. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānî, the famous commentator of *Bukhārî* says on the authority of Abū Nu'aym's *Tārîkh Isbahān* that this ordinance of the Caliph 'Umar II was not meant exclusively for Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm but he had sent such a circular to nearly all provincial governors of Islamic State. See : *Fatḥ al-Bārî vide Ṣaḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih* p. 37 f.n.

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was afterwards liberated. Thaubān was a Yemenite by origin, the Prophet had purchased him in Medîna then set him free. His relations were found in Yemen. Rabāḥ was an Abyssinian and was set free. Yasār was a *Naubî* slave, captivated at the battle of Banî 'Abd Thā'laba, he was also liberated. Abū Rāfi' was the slave of Ibn al-'Abbās and he had presented him to the Prophet. When al-'Abbās professed the religion of Islam, Abū Rāfi' came to inform the Prophet, who was so pleased that he set Abū Rāfi' free. Faḍāla was a Yemenite *maulā* of the Prophet, and later on had settled in Syria. Abū Muwāhiba was a cross-breed of Muzaina, the Prophet set him free. Rāfi' was the slave of Sa'îd b. al-'Āṣ, whom his son inherited. Rāfi' came to the Prophet and requested him to be freed. His master presented him to the Prophet and the latter set him free. Rāfi' used to boast: I am *maulā* of the Messenger of Allah. Mud'im was also the slave of the Prophet whom Rafā'a b. Zaid al-Judhamî, a cross-breed of *Hisma* had presented to the Prophet."[1] On another occasion he inquired from Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm about the dates of al-'Adhaq. Umar II also said that he used to go to the oasis of al-'Adhaq while he was the governor of Medîna and tasted its dates which were very delicious and tasteful.[2]

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî (d. 124 A.H.) had also compiled the material he had accumulated during long years of absorbing studies. The Caliph commissioned him to prepare a collection of Traditions which he accordingly did. Several copies of this work were prepared by royal order and sent away to all corners of the Muslim world. It appears that al-Zuhrî himself realized the importance of compilation work and its far-reaching benefits, and once he exclaimed in a jubilant mood : 'None has made this knowledge more popular than myself.' Another statement attributed to him indicates that he had undertaken the work of compilation under persistent demand from the ruling elite:[3] *Kunnā nakrahu Kitāb al-'Ilm*

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 498.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 502.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II-3 : pp. 35, 389.

ḥattā akrahnā 'alayhi hā ūlāi al-umarā. Qāsim b. Sallām says that by 'these rulers' *hā ūlāi al-ūmarā* al-Zuhrī meant 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz.[1] This book of al-Zuhrī contained 300 Traditions of the Prophet.[2]

As we have quoted earlier, 'Umar II apprehended the disappearance of orally transmitted knowledge since he had himself witnessed that hundreds of Traditionists and reporters had been massacred in various civil wars erupted after the murder of 'Uthmān. Moreover, politically segmented society of the second Islamic century had initiated the malpractice of fabrication and interpolation at an unprecedented scale for propagation and popularization of political slogans. Sincere and orthodox Traditionists felt the dire need of compilation of all available Traditions in order to check further possibilities of forgery and invention.

'Umar II showed keen interest in transmission of *ḥadīth* and narrations of historical significance. For instance, he informs us that Khālid b. Sa'īd (d. 14 A.H.) was governor of Yemen at the time of the death of the Prophet.[3] Similarly, we find a report from 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda who heard it from a member of Banī 'Abd al-Qays on the authority of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz that Salmān Fārisī went to see the Christian monks who announced before him the good news of the appearance of the Prophet Moḥammad in the near future.[4]

'Umar II also remained in touch with such Companions of the Prophet as had devoted themselves to the transmission of *ḥadīth* or *maghāzī* literature.[5] Once Nāfi' *maulā* 'Abdillāh b. 'Umar informed him on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (d. 74 A.H.) that the latter was 14 years old at the time of Uḥud and the Prophet had not allowed him to participate in the

1. Ibn Sallām : *Kitāb al-Amwāl* p. 578, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* p. 136.
2. Khaṭīb : *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. XIV p. 87.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. IV p. 96.
4. *Ibid* : vol. IV : p. 80.
5. Horovitz : *Early Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors* : I.C. vol I. II.
   Shiblī : *Sīrah* I : p. 21.

But, the next year when he grew up to 15 years, the Prophet recruited him to take part in the 'Battle of the Trench'. On hearing this Tradition 'Umar II sent a circular to all provincial governors that stipends should be granted to those who came within this age-group while those below should be counted as dependent on their parents. Apart from the interest he displayed in compilation of *ḥadīth*, 'Umar II was also fully aware of the value and significance of the historical material which was being collected by the *maghāzî* reporters. He called 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda (d. 121 A.H.) to the Capital and ordered him to sit in the Great Mosque of Damascus and disseminate among the Muslims the knowledge of *Sīrah* and *maghāzî* of which he was an expert.[1]

After the death of 'Umar II, a brother of 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥakam compiled his biography and obtained material for it from some written documents as well as from such pious reporters as were an eye witness to the practices of 'Umar II. And it is noteworthy that most of these informants belonged to the city of Medîna.

Practice of the Tābi'ūn:

As we have seen earlier, the practice of writing down historical and *ḥadîth* material was not absolutely absent during the age of the Companions of the Prophet. By the time of the *Tābi'ūn* (those who succeeded the Companions) all doubts and apprehensions regarding the misuse of written Traditions had been cleared away and the class of *Tābi'ūn* had emerged as the fore-runners in the field of scientific and methodological compilation of historical knowledge. Some of the *Tābi'ūn* were however, either due to their concept of piety or because they wanted to stick to the practice of their predecessors literally, destroyed their *collectionea* or notebooks with a view to following the system of oral preservation strictly. They were of the opinion that such notes and *collectionea* were meant only

1. **Horovits : *Early Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors* : IC. vol. I, II.**
   Shibli : *Sîrah* I : p. 21.

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for their personal use to help them where their memory failed to recollect the real version of a Tradition. 'Abd al-Rehmān b. Ḥarmala once complained of his ill memory before the distinguished and pious *Tābi'ī* Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab (d.105 A.H.) : 'Take down notes of what you hear' was the latter's answer. Another eminent scholar al-Sha'bī (d.104 A.H.) instructed his disciples: 'Whenever you listen to a transmission from me, write it down, be it on a wall.' Al-Sha'bī himself had prepared several compilations for circulation. Mujāhid (d. 103 A.H.) had a fairly large collection of books in his personal library. Similar was the case of 'Aṭā b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114 A.H.) and Qatāda b. Di'āma al-Sadūsī (d.118 A.H.) who had received them from their respective teachers.

Scrutiny of the Transmission Chains :

The *ḥadīth* literature has also rendered an indirect service to the early Muslim historiography. When by the beginning of the second century after the Hijra, fabrication and forgery of the *ḥadīth* material became a common practice, critical examination of the whole material also emerged as a timely demand and consequently the scholars started investigations into biographical details of the narrators and thus another important branch of the Muslim sciences came to flourish i.e. 'principles of criticism of the *ḥadīth* literature and the narrators' Who's Who commonly known as *Asmā al-Rijāl.*

We can easily classify the early transmitters into three main categories namely : Companions of the Prophet, Followers (or *Tābi'ūn*) and the 'Next Followers' (or *Tab' Tābi'īn*). The last of this group of the Traditionists undertook the painstaking labour of investigations into the bio-data of their informers and thus the science of *Asmā' al-Rijāl* had come to its full bloom by the 3rd century A.H.

Scope of Investigations :

The scope of these investigations was to determine the details of biographical data as well as the personal character of a transmitter e.g. his name or pseudonym, his genealogical

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ancestoral background, occupation, nationality and family traditions. It was also to be inquired whether or not he was of a sound memory ; how far he was pious and God-fearing ; who were his teachers and, how extensively or frequently he travelled in search of knowledge. A thorough scrutiny in the light of these principles made the difficult task of testimony quite feasible. For example, now it was possible to know whether the transmitter was a *Qaḥtānī* or a *Nizārī*, hailed from Ḥijāz or belonged to the Yemen ; his ancestors professed Judaism or Christianity, he himself belonged to the *Shī'a* community or was a Khārijite by faith, or a partisan of Umayyads. If he had travelled in the non-Arab countries, it was easy to trace foreign influence upon his ideas. It was also possible to decide what type of political, racial or sectarian prejudices he nurtured in his mind. His dates of birth and death bore witness to the effect whether or not he could have seen the person whom he asserted to be his teacher or informer. It was indeed a tedious job to collect such details of more than half a million transmitters. But this was done, and within a short span of time, cumulative books containing minute details regarding the life and character of a hundred thousand Companions, the Followers and the Next-Followers came into existence.

It was such a vast material the like of which was not to be found about the followers of other world religions. Hence, this branch of the *ḥadīth* literature is considered a peculiarity of the Muslims alone. It is axiomatic that the history of a nation or country revolves around some personalities who figure prominently in the events ; so this biographical data of the transmitters, generally people of distinction in their respective societies, served as the most important source of the entire Muslim history of that period.

The first group of transmitters comprised mainly the 'Companions of the Prophet', who during last days of the Prophet numbered approximately 1,14,000, but our investigators could collect the bio-data of only 10 to 11 thousand of them. The singular advantage of compilation of the Narrators'

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Who's Who was that the Traditionists declared the citation of 'Chains of Authority' incumbent upon every learner as a compulsory part of the text. Now, the scholars of *ḥadīth* were able to detect the crime of forgery and could peep into the personal character, religious beliefs or political loyalties of the fabricators.

These biographical details also made it easier to judge whether a particular *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet was genuine or fake, sound or unreliable. Now the entire *ḥadīth* literature was classified according to the qualities of their 'Chains of Authority.' There are sufficient reasons to believe that even the Companions knew the significance of authentication and they had also preserved the Chains. "Al-Zuhrî read out a *ḥadīth*", says Sufyān b. 'Uyaina, "we requested him to repeat the text without Chains." "Do you want to climb a roof without a ladder?" was al-Zuhrî's instant reply."

Even during the lifetime of the Prophet there seems to have existed a class of narrators who did not hesitate in attributing false pronouncements to the Prophet. Hence his warning: "He who deliberately attributes false statements to me takes his lodging in Hell." Cautious and careful Companions made it a practice to recite the above warning of the Prophet before delivering the text of a *ḥadīth*. Abu Huraira, we are told, used to recite the following invocation prior to reading out the text:

> "The Messenger of Allah, Abū al-Qāsim, the Veracious, the Trustworthy, blessings of Allah be upon him, said: 'He who deliberately attributes false statement to me takes his lodging in Hell...'"

'Umar I, during his caliphate, issued orders to the effect that whosoever transmitted a new *ḥadīth* he must produce two witnesses in his favour. Once Abū Mūsa al-Asha'rî came to see him; called at his door thrice and finding no response he turned back. 'Umar I, asked him in the next meeting as to why he could not visit him earlier. Abū Mūsa

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hadith that he himself had heard the Prophet saying : "When you call on someone, give him three indications by saluting aloud and if you get no response, come back quietly." 'Umar asked him to produce any witnesses to support that the Prophet had pronounced these words. At this Abū Mūsa felt a little perplexed. But for Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī who came to his rescue, he would have certainly tasted the Caliph's dreadful lash.

Status of the Companions as Transmitters :

Scholars of the later ages have, almost unanimously, declared that the first line of the transmitters, i.e. the Companions, should not be treated on a par with the professional narrators. Ibn Sa'd says on the authority of Anas b. Mālik (d. 93 or 95 A.H.) that the Companions never accused each other of lying deliberately, nor did they ever suspect each other of forgery.[1] It may be partially true ; we hardly find an example of a Companion having accused his fellow of the crime of forgery, though certainly there existed among them differences of varied intensity.

Once a *ḥadīth*—'when a bereaved family weeps over a dead person the latter is chastised in his grave'—was referred to 'Ā'isha on the authority of 'Umar and his son 'Abdullāh. 'May Allah have mercy on 'Umar and his son', retorted Mother of the Faithful, 'neither of them was a liar or exaggerator. They simply misunderstood it.'[2] In view of the same possibility of plausible interpretations the Guided Caliphs, and more particularly 'Umar, kept the doors of *ijtihād* open as a source of Islamic law following the Qur'ān and the *Sunna*. Notwithstanding the fact, scores of instances are to be found when the Caliphs refused to follow the manifest text and acted according to the spirit of the law." "After the expansion of Islamic territory, simple and monotonous Bedouin life of the Prophet's age had disappeared," Professor Fāriq rightly concludes, "and such problems of a complicated society were

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : p. 13.
2. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal : *Musnad*, 6 : p. 281.

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constantly pouring into which the Qur'ān or the *hadith* offered no solution. Although in carrying out the state affairs or public dealings all the four 'Guided Caliphs' were courageous enough to impose their prudent rulings, yet the majority of the Companions was not so liberal in regard to Canonical affairs and they disliked the practice. On the other hand, whenever a new convert to Islam or a curious inquirer approached them with such difficult questions as had no clear mention in the Qur'ān, they did not hesitate in forging a fresh *ḥadīth* to satisfy the questioner."[1]

During the Caliphate of 'Uthmān, the Shî'ites as well as the Khārijites mobilized a propaganda campaign aiming at the character assassination of the aged Caliph. It was during this period that 'Abdullāh b. Sabā found an opportunity to shatter the entire image of Islam. His movement prevailed not only in Iraq, Syria and Ḥijāz, but the non-Arab countries also came under his sway. The most effective and dangerous weapon in the hands of his partisans was to circulate forged Traditions. These activities of 'Abdullāh b. Sabā and his followers made the Traditionists more cautious and rigid towards the scrutiny and proper screening of chains of authority. They also found it safer to commit to writing the entire material in order to prevent further interpolations and distortions.

Followers of the Companions :

The second line of the transmitters comprised the Followers of the Companions of the Prophet. They did not see the Prophet alive but had had the privilege of joining the company of one or more Companions. This class of transmitters displayed commendable efforts in piling up each and every word of the Prophet, its valuation, critical examination and textual coordination. They did also undertake long and tedious journeys in search of knowledge. It was no doubt, due to their untiring labour that the two branches of

1. Fāriq (K.A.) : *Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān Ke Sarkārî, Khuṭūṭ*, (Urdu) p. 11. See also Khuḍrî : *Tārîkh Tashrî 'al-Islāmî*, Egypt, 1934, p. 127.

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sciences i.e. *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*—became popular subjects. Moḥammad b. Shihāb al-Zuhrî (d. 124 A. H.), Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146 A.H./763 A.D.), Mak'ḥūl Dimashqî, Qais b. Abî Ḥāzim, 'Aṭā b. Abî Rabāḥ, Sa'îd b. Jubair and Abū al-Zannad are some of the distinguished Followers (*Tābi'ūn*) who rendered valuable services to the *ḥadīth* literature. "When I reached Kūfa in search of knowledge", says Moḥammad b. Sîrîn, "there were 40,000 students of *ḥadīth*." This number may not be statistically true, nevertheless, there is no gainsaying the fact that from the beginning of the second century after the Hijra, a vast treasure of *ḥadīth* material had come into existence and the work of scrutiny and criticism had commenced on a large scale throughout the Muslim world. Ḥākim Nîshabūrî, in his work *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* has mentioned several thousand Traditionists belonging to this category of the Followers.

Status of the Followers as Transmitters :

Most of the Traditionists of this class were also given the status of 'sanctity' and it was strictly forbidden to question their integrity on the ground that they belonged to the 'Best Period' as the Prophet of Allah is reported to have said : 'The best period is mine ; then of those who follow me ; then of those who follow them.'

The *'Ulamā*, during the later times, declared that the transmitters who lived in this 'blessed period' transcend all doubts and criticism. "During the first century after the Hijra," says al-Sakhāwî, "which passed away with the Companions and their Followers, with rare exceptions like Ḥārith al-A'war and Mukhtār the Liar, no transmitter was unreliable. A group of reporters, no doubt, did exist whom the critics have accused of feeble memory and weak retention."

Khalaf b. Khalîfa (d. 181 A.H.) was the last Follower to leave this world according to al-Sakhāwî.

Chains Made Obligatory :

Though we have evidences to prove that even the Companions were not unfamiliar with the system of authentication

(*isnād*), they sometime employed it and were perhaps aware of its significance too, yet, proper reference to the Chain of Authority along with the text of a *ḥadīth* was made compulsory after the assassination of 'Uthmān (35 A H.). The main objective behind this obligation was to facilitate the task of the scholars in recognizing a fabricator and to determine his political loyalties. "People were not asked to produce Chains of Authority", Moḥammad b. Sirîn once clarified, "but after this political disturbance (i.e. the advent of Abdullāh b. Sabā) the transmitters were obliged to cite their authorities. If the authority was found from amongst the followers of the *Sunna*, the Tradition was accepted, and in case of his being an heterodox his transmission was rejected outright."

The pre-Islamic narrators also used to transmit poetry or anecdotes along with chains, but the credit of making this system scientific and regular goes to the Traditionists of the second century. We may safely deduce another point : the effort our scholars have shown in collecting biographical data of thousands of people and, the rigid rules they have framed for scrutiny and criticism, itself reveal the fact that the practice of forgery was becoming rife, rampant, hence uncontrollable. When during the early period this method of scrutiny was not so much developed the Caliphs had no way but to impose restrictions on transmission. 'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib (d. 40 A.H.) would not accept a *ḥadīth* unless the transmitter took an oath before him. He had also declared : "Speak only of familiar Traditions and abstain from reading out strange ones."[1]

Bashîr b. Ka'b once visited 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās (d. 68 A.H.), and read out a *ḥadīth*. Ibn al-'Abbās paid no attention to it. Bashîr was taken aback at this attitude and asked the reason for his indifference. Ibn al-'Abbās replied : "When someone used to start before us saying : 'the Prophet' has said, we were accustomed to listening to one most attentively, but when all and sundry started trans-

1. *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* I : 12.

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and it became difficult to distinguish the right from the wrong, we listen only to those Traditions with which we are familiar."

These Followers were so much careful and cautious in regard to the authentication (*isnād*) that they tried to verify the transmitted word from every living member of its Chain. Once Rabî' b. Khaitham transmitted a *ḥadîth* to al-Sha'bî, "whom have you heard saying this ?" al-Sha'bî inquired and was referred to 'Amr b. Maimūn. When al-Sha'bî happened to meet 'Amr he made the same querry to him and Maimūn quoted 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abî Lailā (d. 83 A.H.) as his authority. Then al-Sha'bî met the latter after some time and asked him as to whom he owed that Tradition. 'Abd al-Raḥmān referred to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārî and thus the entire chain was verified.

Grand Chains of Authority :

The shorter chain of authority a Tradition contains the better. These short chains are called 'Grand Chains' (*Isnād 'Āliya*). The Traditionists tried their utmost to obtain their knowledge of *ḥadîth* from the nearest living source. It happened very often that after receiving 'certificate of further transmission' (*ijāza*) a scholar of *ḥadîth* undertook travels to far off areas in order to revise the same stock of knowledge before the immediate source of his teacher, in case the latter was still alive. Our sources inform us that students of 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32 A.H.) after finishing their studies before him went to Medîna in order to listen to the same stock of Traditions from 'Umar and his son 'Abdullāh (d. 73 A.H.). Once a man undertook the tedious journey from Medîna to Damascus only to obtain a *ḥadîth* from Abū al-Dardā. In another case 'Ubaidullah b. 'Adî went to 'Irāq to obtain permission from 'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib to transmit a *ḥadîth* on his authority. So we find that study tours had grown in vogue during the Caliphate and after. They were mainly aimed at making the 'chains' shortest, and thus to gain the social distinction of having the most authenticated and specialized knowledge of the subject. The number of journeys

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a transmitter made in pursuit of his studies was considered his special qualification.

Accusation and Appraisal of Authorities :

Political loyalties, dogmatic interpretations, religious heterodoxy or character assassination of the rivals, are some of the main objectives working behind the practice of forgery. It was also committed with the purpose of gaining a position in the royal court and receiving cash awards from the rulers. Ghyāth b. Mahdî once entered upon al-Mahdî b. al-Manṣūr who was flying pigeons at that time. Ghyāth promptly read out a *ḥadīth* in praise of pigeon-flying hobby and al-Mahdî, though did not believe him, was pleased and awarded him 10,000 *dirhams*. Similarly, Moḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Nakha'î used to sell cooked meat and wheat pounded together which is called '*harîsa*'. He forged a *ḥadīth* showing the rewards given in the hereafter to those who would eat '*harisa*' in this world.'[1]

Political rivalries of 'Alî and Abū Bakr or Mu'āwiya or between 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair and 'Abd al-Malik, or enmity between the Umayyads and the Abbasids also provided ample opportunities for fabricators. Shî'ites have forged *ad infinitum* material to show high virtues of the 'Prophet's Lineage' (*Ahl al-Bait*), while the Sunnites have countered them with the same weapon and have forged innumerable Traditions in praise of the Companions. According to Aḥmad Amîn, on the authority of Ibn 'Urāfa, most of the Traditions showing merits and qualities of the Companions were forged during the Umayyad period. Some of the obvious reasons which prompted the forgers are : First, some of them wanted to prove that the tribe or clan to which they belonged was superior to all, so they forged Traditions in praise of their own tribe. To this category belong those numerous Traditions which glorify the tribes of Quraish, Juhaina, Anṣār or Muzaina. Secondly, there are Traditions showing the superiority of the Arab over all other nations

1. *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* : III : p. 40.

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world. They were obviously coined to oppose the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement. *Shu'ūbīds*, on the other hand, produced counter-Traditions to show that the Prophet himself had acknowledged the virtues and the superior qualities of the non-Arab races. Lastly, diversified dogmatic views, controversial issues, different interpretations of the Canon, philosophical disputes like the question of Free-will and Pre-destination, discussions regarding the Purity of God or anthropomorphism etc. did also play an important role in activating the fabricators during later centuries.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the business of forgery in the *ḥadīth* literature, during the age under the present study, had developed into an art of which many people were not even ashamed. Muslim quotes, on the authority of Moḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, that the latter said : "We do not find the pious people uttering more falsehood than they utter in Traditions." Muslim has expounded the above judgement in a still more peculiar way. He says : "They tell a lie unintentionally, they do not really mean it."

'Abd al-Karīm b. Abī al'Aujā was a master of forgery. He, at the time of his persecution, confessed that he had forged more than 40,000 Traditions regarding lawfulness or unlawfulness of various things. An uncle of Ma'n b. Zā'ida, 'Abd al-Karīm was also accused of having loyalties with Manichaeism. He forged Traditions with such strange chains that it was quite difficult to detect him. Traditions regarding rewards of recitation of different *Sūras* of the Qur'ān are also not genuine. The story-tellers also produced innumerable sayings simply to appeal or inspire their audience while they portrayed a picture of the would be happenings in hereafter. There was, no doubt, another motive behind this large-scale production of unauthentic sayings. The orthodox *'Ulamā* wanted to check the scholars who interpreted the vexed questions in accordance with the spirit of Islam and did not attach too much importance to the 'Letter of the Law'. A group of people having their axe to grind wanted to assert, by fair means or foul, that each and every problem under the sun can

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be decided, nay, has its solution before hand, in the text of the Qur'ān or the *ḥadīth*. So, whenever they were confronted with a complicated question and found that their sources were deficient, they hastened to coin a new *ḥadīth* so that their rivals may not take the advantage of this weakness.

CHAPTER VIII

Age of Preservation

(a) The Early Historical Monuments and Remains :

We may well divide the early Islamic century into two categories : the age of preservation of historical material followed by the age of compilation. That such historical monuments and remains as had some historical significance were preserved from the very beginning of the age of Islam, is evident by some illustrations cited below :

1. Quṣayy had kindled fire at Muzdalifa and it was visible from 'Arafa. This fire was kept kindled till the advent of the Prophet and afterwards during the period of the first three Caliphs.[1]

2. The Prophet had a seal-ring which after his death remained in possession of Abū Bakr and which he bequeathed to 'Umar who in turn gave it to 'Uthmān. In the sixth year of 'Uthmān's Caliphate it fell in the 'Arîs well situated in the estate of the Caliph.[2]

'Uthmān left no stone unturned in search of the seal, but to no avail. Ultimately, he decided to fill up the well, lest the seal should fall in someone else's hand.[3]

3. Sandals of the Prophet were preserved with Fāṭima daughter of 'Ubaidullāh b. al-'Abbās till about 110 A.H.[4]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 72.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* I : 298, Ibn Sa'd : I : 473.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 474.
4. Ibn Sa'd I : 479.

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4. *Duldul*, the mule presented by Maqauqis to the Prophet was also alive till the age of Mu'āwiya.[1]

5. The tree referred to in the Qur'ān beneath which the Prophet administered the oath of allegiance called *Bai'at al-Riḍwān* was, for sometime after the death of the Prophet, visited by the Muslims as a historical place, and there they offered prayer. 'Umar I, however, apprehended lest people should take it as a sanctuary and commanded that the tree should be cut down.[2] After a few years, people could not recognize the exact place.[3]

6. Anas b. Mālik reported that he saw the Prophet while a barber was shaving his head and the Companions were sitting around the Prophet. Each hair that fell from his head, the Companions were trying to take it in their hands.[4] Abū Ṭalḥa had also preserved the holy relics (hair) of the Prophet which he obtained on the day of the Last Pilgrimage.[5] Some nails and hair of the Prophet were preserved by 'Abdullāh b. Zaid.[6]

7. House of 'Uthmān at Medîna was preserved till the time of al-Wāqidî.[7] 'Amr b. Ḥazm was the former's immediate neighbour.[8]

8. 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd was in possession of some of the holy relics of the Prophet like his pillow, bed, tooth brush, Sandals etc. and he always kept these things with him even when out of station.[9]

9. Yaḥyā b. 'Imrān b. 'Uthmān b. al-Arqam said on the authority of his grandfather 'Uthmān b. al-Arqam, that he was seven years old when his father al-Arqam professed Islam.

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : p. 491.
2. *Ibid* : II : pp. 99-100.
3. *Ibid* : II : p. 105.
4. *Ibid* : II : p. 181.
5. *Ibid* : III : p. 506.
6. *Ibid* : III : p. 537.
7. *Ibid* : III : p. 56.
8. *Ibid* : III : p. 73.
9. *Ibid* : III : p. 73.

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the seventh Muslim to embrace the new religion. His house *Dâr al-Arqam* was on the Ṣafā and the Prophet used to offer prayers in that house till 'Umar embraced Islam and the mission was declared publicly.

Later on, the house had been named as *Dār al-Islām* and al-Arqam had declared it a trust. 'Uthmān had seen the *waqf*-deed of that house of which the text has been quoted by Ibn Sa'd.[1] The house was preserved till the age of Abū Ja'far al-'Abbāsî who had acquired it forcibly for 17 thousand *dirhams*. Then Abū Ja'far gave the house to Khaizurān (mother of Mūsa and Hārūn) who reconstructed it. A brief history of the house is found in Ibn Sa'd.[2]

10. The house of Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya was preserved till the days of al-Wāqidî and Ibn Sa'd. It was situated at the same place near *Jannat al-Baqī'*, where 'Uthmān b. Maẓ'ūn had been buried.[3]

11. The Prophet had allotted to al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib a plot of land in Medîna. Adjacent to it was the house of Naufal. The locality was called Ruḥbat al-Faḍā, near the Mosque of Medîna. During the days of Ibn Sa'd, *Dār al-Imāra* called *Dār Marwān* was situated at the same place.[4]

Another house of al-'Abbās, which 'Umar had built for him with the aid of *Bait al-Māl*, also existed till the days of Ibn Sa'd.[5]

Naufal b. Ḥārith's house was also near the Medîna Mosque opposite *Dār al-Imāra*. His other house was at al-Thaniyya road near the market. It was divided by him among his sons who lived in it till the days of Ibn Sa'd.[6]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III : p. 243.
2. *Ibid* : vol. III : pp-243-244.
3. *Ibid* : vol. III : p. 397.
4. *Ibid* : vol. IV : p. 29.
5. *Ibid* : vol. IV : p. 22.
6. *Ibid* : vol. IV : p. 46.

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12. Ibn 'Umar had inherited the sword of 'Umar which he had used in the battle of Badr.[1]

13. Al-Ḥajjāj b. E'lāt had settled in Medîna where he constructed a house and a mosque. The mosque was known with his name as *Masjid E'lāt*. It was preserved till the days of al-Wāqidî and Ibn Sa'd.[2]

14. People of the tribe of Juhaina had also built a mosque and it was also preserved.[3]

15. The Sword of the Prophet was with Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān had taken it from him.[4]

16. 'Abdullāh b. Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya had shown the grave of his father at al-Baqî' to Zaid b. al-Sā'ib, who informed al-Wāqidî of its location.[5]

17. The Staff of the Prophet was with 'Umar II who used to keep it in hand while delivering the discourse at Jum'a prayers.[6]

18. Umar II had left a will that nails and hair of the Prophet, which he had with him, should be kept in his shroud at the time of his burial and it was accordingly done.[7]

19. 'Abdullāh b. 'Āmir, a cousin of 'Uthmān, had settled in Baṣra. He was the first Muslim who constructed a pond at 'Arafa, a water reservoir that served the common man. It existed till the days of Ibn Sa'd.[8]

20. 'Utbān b. Mālik, a Companion of the Prophet had lost his eyesight during his last years. The Prophet had allowed him to offer prayers in a corner of his house and himself had joined him in prayer. The house was preserved

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : vol. IV : 161.
2. *Ibid* : vol. IV : 271.
3. *Ibid* : vol. IV : 345.
4. *Ibid* : vol. V : 113.
5. *Ibid* : vol. V : 116.
6. *Ibid* : vol. V : 361.
7. *Ibid* : vol. V : 406.
8. *Ibid* : vol. V : 47.

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of al-Wāqidī. People used to visit the house as a sacred remnant of the past and offered prayers in the same corner where the Prophet was reported to have offered.[1]

21. Al-Zuhrī figures among those who reported that after 46 years of the battle of Uḥud, some of the graves were damaged by torrent rain and the corpses became visible. Jābir b. 'Abdillāh said that he had seen the dead body of his father 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr (a martyr in Uḥud) and it was as fresh as buried on the same day.[2]

22. Sa'īd b. Moḥammad b. Jubair b. Muṭ'im said : 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān asked Moḥammad b. Jubair : "When the Quraish were called Quraish ?" He said : 'When they assembled again in the *Ḥarem* after they had been expelled and dispersed for sometime. Since *taqarrush* means *tajammu'* i.e. concentration. "I have not heard this version". 'Abd al-Malik said, 'instead I have come to know that Quṣayy was the first man to be called *al-Qarashī*, and nobody knew the title of Quraish before him."[3]

23. Once Nāfi' b. Jubair waited on the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and was asked : "Do you remember the names of the Prophet which Jubair b. Muṭ'im used to report"? "Yes, they are six, Moḥammad, Aḥmad, Khātem, Ḥāshir, 'Āqib, Māḥī."—— Nāfi' replied, 'Ḥāshir because he was sent on the eve of the Last Day, to warn the mankind that they will have to face severe punishment, 'Āqib because he was last of all the Prophets. Allah will forgive, because of him, all the errors of his followers, hence he was called Māḥī."[4]

(b) Preservation of Documents :

When Quraish heard the news of the hospitality of Nejashī shown to the emigrants to Abyssinia, they were

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : vol. III : 550.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : vol. III : 562.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : vol. I : 71.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : vol. I : 105.

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quite furious and made an agreement between themselves that no member of the family of Banū Hāshim would give his daughter in marriage to them ; and that they will be put under a boycott on socio-economic front. The terms of this agreement were recorded in black and white and it was pasted up on the wall of Ka'ba.

I. Manṣūr b. 'Ikrima al-'Abdarî had written the agreement and an old man of the tribe of Quraish informed Jābir that the document was with his grandfather and that every word of it had been eaten by moth except the phrase 'In the name of Allah.'[1]

II. Letters sent by the Prophet to foreign chiefs and rulers were also preserved as Ibn Sa'd says that the Prophet sent a letter to the king of Abyssinia, through 'Amr b. Umayya, and the King had kept it in an ivory box.[2]

أَخَذَ الكِتَابَ فَجَعَلَهُ فِي حُقٍّ مِنْ عَاجٍ
وَخَتَمَ عَلَيْهِ وَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى جَارِيَتِهِ

Similarly the Coptic chief *Muqauqis* of Alexandria had preserved the Prophet's letter.

III. A man from among the tribe of Banū Buḥtur informed Hishām al-Kalbî that a member of his tribe namely al-Walîd b. Jābir had visited the Prophet, who had written for him a document and it was preserved with the family of al-Walîd in *Jabalayn*.[3]

IV. In one of the reports we are told by 'Abdullāh b. Yaḥyā b. Salmān that a member of the family of Su'ayr b. 'Adda had shown him the letter despatched by the Prophet to al-Su'ayr b. 'Adda.[4]

V. The Prophet had sent a letter to Ukaidir of which al-Wāqidî obtained a copy from an old man of *Dūma*, and

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 209.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 259.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 280.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 282.

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been cited by Ibn Sa'd.[1] Similarly, al-Wāqidî mentioned copy of the letter written by the Prophet to the people of *Adhruḥ*.[2]

VI. A letter of the Prophet written on a parchment of red leather was with the family of Muṭarrif b. 'Abdillāh who had come to see the Prophet along with the delegation of 'Uqail b. Ka'b.[3]

The Prophet had given Banū 'Uqail some fief in the village *Fali*, and it was also written down for them. The document was with the family till the age of Hishām al-Kalbî.[4]

VII. The Prophet had written another letter to Qais b. Salama of which al-Kalbî had obtained a copy.[5]

VIII. The delegation of Mahra also waited on the Prophet and was given a letter scribed for the Prophet by Moḥammad b. Maslama al-Anṣārî. It was preserved till the days of Ibn Sa'd.[6]

IX. A treaty made by the Jews after the battle of Badr, was preserved with 'Alî.[7]

X. The treaty of Ḥudaibiya scribed by 'Alî had been preserved by the Prophet himself and a copy of the said document was kept by Suhail b. 'Amr.[8]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 288-289.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. I : 290.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 302.
4. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 309.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I : 325.
6. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : I : 356. *al-wathā'iq* No. 137
7. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 34.
8. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : I : 97:

CHAPTER IX

Sirah-Literature

Sīrah-literature is, perhaps, the most important phase of the growth and development of Muslim historiography. It deals with the biographical details of the holy Prophet, his actions, sayings and practices. The early Muslims showed keen interest in accumulating minute details about his deeds and words because the Qur'ān emphasizes that every spoken word of the Prophet is a revelation by Allāh since he was sent to teach the believers wisdom and sagacity : "Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers, by sending unto them a messenger of their own who reciteth unto them His revelations and causeth them to grow, and teacheth them the Scripture and wisdom ; although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error."[1]

His was a perfect model for the Muslims not only in his lifetime but for all ages to come. Every true believer must follow the ideals and actions of the Prophet and must try to abide by his sayings in all mundane affairs as well as in affairs related to the hereafter.

During the period of the Righteous Caliphs, the status and seniority of a Companion of the Prophet was determined by his participation in holy wars. Those who converted to Islam prior to the Conquest of Mecca and took part in the early battles of Badr and Uḥud were regarded as seniors and hence more sincere in their faith. In the words of the Qur'ān "Allāh is well pleased with them and they are pleased with

1. *al-Qur'ān* III : 164.

their stipends from the state exchequer were also fixed accordingly. It necessitated at that early stage that a comprehensive list of those who joined the Prophet in the early wars should be carefully prepared. Our present scholars believe that Mūsa b. 'Uqba was the first to make such a roll on the basis of information collected by Shur'ḥabîl b. Sa'd and others.[2]

Apart from this, it was also considered a social honour if someone or one's father or grandfather had taken part in, say, the Battle of Badr, or was martyred in the battle of Uḥud. During the later decades people even bribed the narrators of the *maghāzī*, or the professional transmitters, in order to get names of the members of their family included in such lists. Shur'ḥabîl b. Sa'd has been accused by his critics that he included names of such persons in the list maintained by him who actually had not participated in the battles of Badr or Uḥud. As he was poor and indigent, clever men used to exploit him for their own ends, by greasing his palm.

For the purpose of making these rolls uptodate and comprehensive, accounts of various battles fought by the Prophet were carefully prepared. It was done on the same lines that was adopted for collection of such sayings of the Prophet (*ḥadîth*) as were to serve the purpose of legislation, being the source of *Sharî'a*, next to the Holy Qur'ān. But, since the accounts of the *maghāzī* were not free from the tinge of the *ayyām*-tales and transmitters had added many details for their embellishment to make them more colourful and popular; these portions of the *Sîrah*-literature dealing with the life account of the Prophet at Medîna, were given a separate title of the *maghāzî* and were treated as something more roomy and liberal than the *ḥadîth*-literature. Later on, the transmitters of the *maghāzî* were grouped with the reporters of the *akhbār* and their status was regarded below that of a *muḥaddith*. That is why the *muḥaddithūn* do not accept the version of al-

1. *al-Qur'ān* IX : 100.
2. Horovitz : *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors*, Islamic Culture, Vols. I,II, (1927-1928) Ur.tr. by N.A. Fārūqî p. 49.

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Wāqidî in matters of the *hadîth* though they consider him an expert scholar of the *maghāzî*. At first no discrimination was shown in the collection of *Sîrah* and *maghāzî* vis-a-vis the *ḥadîth*-literature. In fact the early transmitters narrated both *Sîrah* and *maghazî* as well as other sayings of the Prophet as one and the same subject. Later on, those Traditions which served the purpose of *Sharî'a'* legislation were eliminated from this stock and the remaining material was left for the use of *Sîrah*-writers. The word '*maghāzî*' is the plural form of *maghzā* or *maghzāt* meaning the place of fighting or the battle itself. Gradually, the word expanded in its meaning and it was used for all topics concerning the *Sîrah*, or biography of the Prophet. It did also include the character of the Prophet, his day to day life, convictions and behaviour.[1]

Those who engaged themselves during the early period in collecting the *ḥadîth*-literature by word of mouth, neither had any idea of *Sîrah*-writing nor did they compile the material in chapters. But, when it was once accumulated and they tried to classify it, such Traditions as had any reference to the life and achievements of the Prophet were automatically separated from Traditions on other juristic subjects. We may for our convenience lay down the early phase of *Sîrah* material in the following chart. By the end of the first century A.H. three generations (*Ṭabaqāt*) remained active in collecting this material and they laid down the outlines of *Sîrah*-literature and a major part of the basic material was reduced to writing :

Ist Category : (The Medinite Authors) :

1 Abān b. 'Uthmān (d. 105 A.H.)
2. 'Urwa b. al-Zubair b. al-'Awwām (d. circa 92. A.H.)
3. Shur'ḥabîl b. Sa'd (d. 123 A.H.)
4. Wahb. b. Munabbih (d. 110-114 A.H.)

IInd Category : (The Medina School) :

5. 'Abdullāh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm (d. 135 A.H.)
6. 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda (d. circa 120 A.H.)

1. Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuhā al-Islām* II : p. 219.

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[illegible]n Shihāb al-Zuhrî (from Mecca) d. 124 A.H.

Third Category :

8. Mūsa b. 'Uqba (d. 141 A.H.)
9. Ma'mar b. Rāshid (from Baṣra) d. circa 150 A.H.
10. Moḥammad b. Is'ḥāq (d. circa 150 A.H.)
11. al-Wāqidî (d. circa 207)

On going through the list of these authors we find that all of them, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî and Ma'mar b. Rāshid excepted, belonged to the city of Medîna, the centre of Muslim intellectual activities at that time. From these authors, the historical literature passed on to the reporters belonging to the cities of Kūfa and Baṣra which constitute the 'Irāqî School of Muslim historiography. Moḥammad b. Is'ḥāq is the perfect model of the Medîna School and his work on the *Sīrah* has come down to us through Zayyāt al-Bakkā'î (d. 183 A.H.) a Kūfî by origin, from whom Ibn Hishām (d. 218 A.H.) obtained it. Similarly, another writer of the Medîna School, al-Wāqidî, transmitted his knowledge through Moḥammad b. Sa'd (d. 230 A.H.) who belonged to the city of Baṣra.

Now we turn to look, in some detail, into the works of these early authors :

1. **Abān b. 'Uthmān** (22 A.H./95-105 A.H.)

Abān son of the third Caliph 'Uthmān[2] was the governor of Medîna for seven years during the rule of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. He was a distinguished jurist (*faqîh*) and a Traditionist (*muḥaddith*) of his time and had a special taste for *maghāzî* as well. He was one of those seven scholars of Islamic Law who used to issue religious decrees (*fatwa*) during the early century.[3]

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1. For Abān reference may be made to : Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. V : 57, 112, 116, 151, 210, 229.
   Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* II : 320.
2. Abān's mother was Umm 'Amr b. Jundub al-Azdî: al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 420, Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 86, Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. III : 54.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 383.

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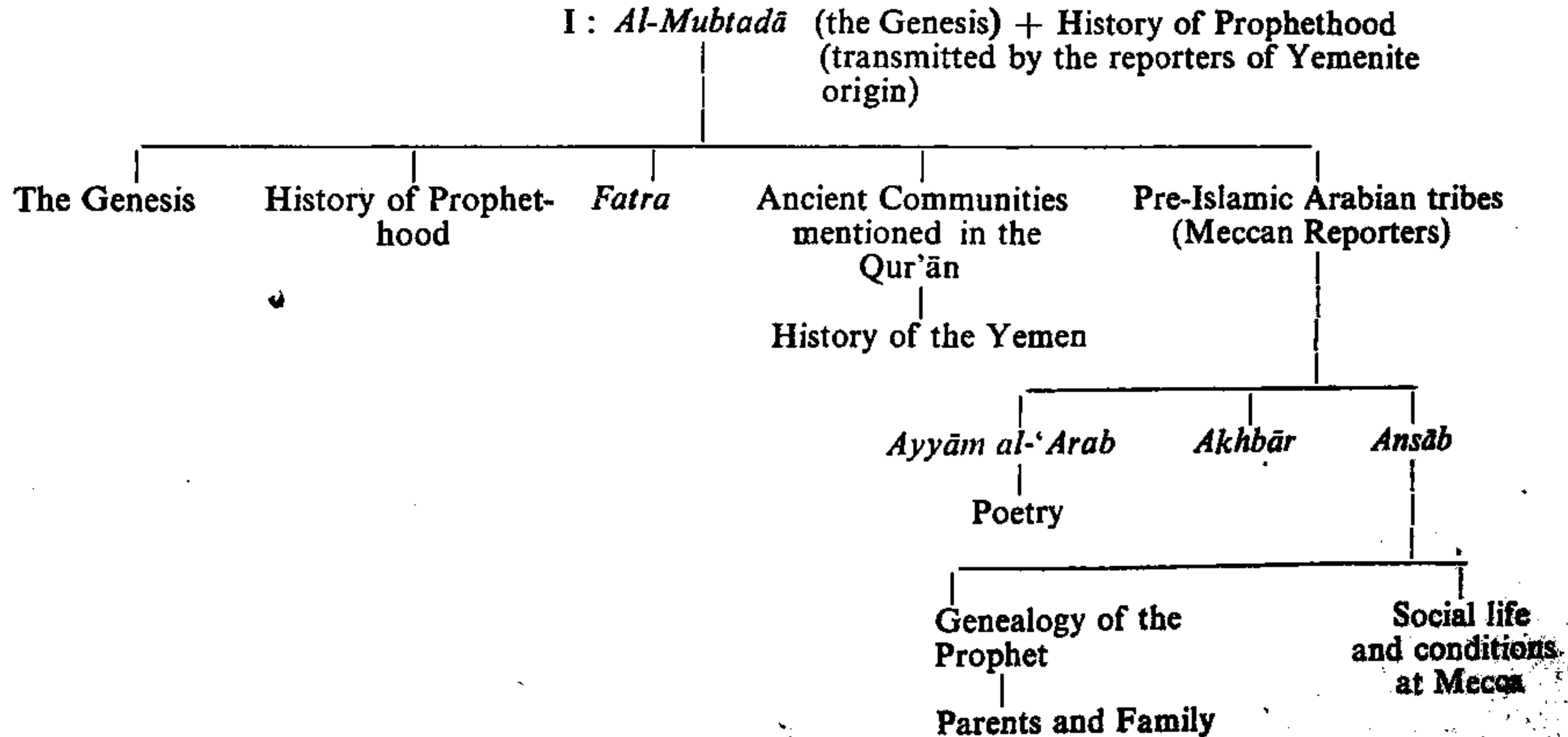
PLAN OF SIRAH-LITERATURE

(As laid down by the early transmitters and followed by the later Sîrah-writers)

ḤADITH (Traditions of the Prophet)

SIRAH :



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SIRAH :

II : *al-Mab'ath* (The Prophet at Mecca)
(transmitted by the Meccan reporters)

- The Early life of the Prophet
- Beginning of *Waḥī*
- Migration to Ḥabsha
- *'Aqaba*

SIRAH :

III : *Al-Maghāzī* (The Prophet at Medina)
(transmitted by the Medinite reporters)

- *Hijra*
- Expeditions
- Conquest of Mecca
- Death
- Succession

Available information shows that he was perhaps the first man to compile a book on the subject of *Sīrah* during the first century. The work is not available now, except a few excerpts which the later writers have quoted in their works. It appears that the work of Abān was not an independent monograph on the biographical account of the Prophet, instead it must have been a collection of *ḥadīth* like such *Saḥīfas* as we come across in the description of some of the Companions.[1]

This collection might have had special reference to the *Sīrah* and the *maghāzī* material. It does not appear to have been a very authentic[2] and properly classified book. Ibn Sa'd has reported in the notice of Mughīra b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. before 125 A.H.) that the latter was "reliable with regard only to a few transmissions in *ḥadīth*, but was trustworthy in matters of *maghāzī* which he obtained from Abān b. 'Uthmān. These *maghāzī* were often read out to him and he used to allow their transmission."[3]

'Utba b. al-Mughīra b. al-Akhnas (d. 128 A.H.) had also obtained from him. But curiously enough, the early compilers like Ibn Hishām have not reported any thing from Abān.[4] Some of his reports like one about the murder of the Caliph 'Umar is found in Ibn Sa'd.[5] But he does not appear in the description of the *Sīrah* by Ibn Sa'd. Ibn Nadīm has mentioned Abān among those *Tābi'ūn* who had their own style of recitation of the Qur'ān.[6] That Abān was interested in genealogical information too, is evident by a report which Zubair b. al-Bakkār related from Moḥammad b. Sallām from

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 56 (Leiden)
2. No *Sīrah*-writer or historian, al-Ya'qūbī (vol. I p. 3) excepted, has obtained from Abān, while his name frequently occurs in the *ḥadīth* collections. al-Dūrī : *Baḥth* pp. 20-21
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 156 *Fajr al-Islām* p. 158 *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* II : 320
4. Aḥmed Amīn : *Ḍuḥā al-Islām* II : 321.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 360-361.
6. Ibn Nadīm : *al-Fihrist* p. 76.

Muhammad b. al-Faḍl al-Hāshim and Abān b. 'Uthmān, that the woman with the most noble group of sons-in-law was Hind b. Nemāta, the old woman of the Banū Jurash, who had four daughters : The first Maimūna bint al-Ḥārith al-Hilāliyya, was the wife of the Messenger of God, ... ; the second Lubāba bint al-Ḥārith, called Umm al-Faḍl, was al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's wife ; the third, Salma bint 'Umais al-Khath'amiyya was Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's wife ; and the fourth, Asmā bint 'Umais, was successively the wife of Ja'far b. Abî Ṭālib, of Abū Bakr and of 'Alî, may God be pleased with him.'[1]

It appears that the family of Abān showed interest in the transmission of *maghāzî* and historical anecdotes even after the death of Abān. His son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, also transmitted some reports on the authority of Abān. As we find the version of the last moments of the Caliph 'Umar cited on his authority.[2]

During his gubernatorial term at Medîna, Abān led the funeral prayers of some of the eminent personalities like Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya (d. 81 A.H.) with whom he had good friendly terms. We find both of them present at the court of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.

"Zaid b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zaid b. al-Khaṭṭāb said : I visited the court of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, with Abān b. 'Uthmān and Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya was already sitting there. 'Abd al-Malik asked someone to bring the Prophet's sword. It was brought before him. Then he asked for a polisher who looking into it said : 'I have never seen an iron of better quality than this."

"But by God, I have not seen a man like the owner of this sword."

"O Moḥammad, give me this sword", 'Abd al-Malik said.

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1. al-Tha'ālibî : *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif* p. 80 (tr. C.E. Bosworth, Edinburgh, 1963).
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 360.

Moḥammad replied : "whomsoever you find more deserving, it belongs to him."

"If you claim relationship with the Prophet, then for all of us, there is a relationship and hence a right to claim." Then Moḥmmad b. al-Ḥanafiya gave the sword to 'Abd al-Malik and said : "O Commander of the Faithful, this man (he meant al-Ḥajjāj, who was present there) has teased me and has minimized my privileges. If they were only five *dirhams*, they were sent to me. 'Abd al-Malik said : 'He has no command on you.'

When Moḥammad went away 'Abd al-Malik said to al-Ḥajjāj : 'Go to him and remove his malevolence for you'. Al-Ḥajjāj went to see him and said : The Commander of the Faithful has sent me to you that I should remove your malevolence for me, and we do not approve anything which is not liked by you. Moḥammad said : "O Ḥajjāj, woe to you. Fear God, every morning when people wake up, there are 360 such moments in which if a man is caught, is caught for his misdoings and if he is forgiven, is forgiven for His benevolence. So you must fear Him. "You would not ask a thing from me but I shall give it to you" al-Ḥajjāj said. Will you do it ? asked Moḥammad. Yes, al-Ḥajjāj affirmed. Then I ask you to cease fighting, he said. Al-Ḥajjāj mentioned it before 'Abd al-Malik who sent him to Rās al-Jālūt and mentioned what Moḥammad had said. 'A man had narrated to us a *ḥadīth* which we never heard save from him' and informed him of the words of Moḥammad. Rās al-Jālūt said : 'This word has not come out except from the house of the Prophet'.[1]

An Examination of his Reports :

According to al-Ṭabarî, when Ṭalḥā and al-Zubair came out to demand that the murder of 'Uthmān (36 A.H.) be avenged, 'Urwa b. al-Zubair was quite young and he was not allowed to join the army; but Abān b. 'Uthmān and al-Walîd b. 'Uthmān were among those who accompanied the forces to the camp of Baṣra.[2] It means that by that time Abān must

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 112-113.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 453.

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at least 15 years old. When 'Uthmān b. Ḥunaif was imprisoned by the army, Abān was deputed to consult 'A'isha about the treatment that should be meted out to him.[1]

In 75 A.H. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān came to perform Ḥajj pilgrimage and Yaḥya b. al-Ḥakam, the governor of Medîna, also joined him. Abān was the officiating governor of Medîna during that period.[2] Again in Rajab 76, Yaḥya b. al-Ḥakam went to the capital from Medîna and deputed Abān as his successor and the latter also acted as chief of the Ḥajj that year as Abū Ma'shar and al-Wāqidî have reported.[3] He was the governor of Medîna and the Amîr of Ḥajj in 77 A.H. as well.[4] His gubernatorial assignment, according to al-Wāqidî, lasted for 7 years 3 months and 13 days as 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān terminated his services on the 13th of Jumadi II, 82 A.H.[5] Hishām b. Ismā'îl al-Makhzūmî succeeded Abān as the governor of Medîna.[6]

During his tenure of governorship he introduced certain reformative schemes. He increased the standard weight of (*Ṣā'*).[7] He is also reported to have performed the funeral (*Janāza*) prayers of several important personalities who died during the time of his governorship, like Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya b. 'Alî (d. Muḥarram 81 A.H.).[8]

Nevertheless, we do not find his reports on the *maghāzî* and the *Sîrah* in the works of Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabarî[9] or Ibn

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV: 468-469.
2. *Ibid* : VI : 209.
3. *Ibid* : VI : 256.
4. *Ibid* : VI : 318.
5. *Ibid* : VI : 355.
6. *Ibid* : VI : 384.
7. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 697
8. al-Mas'ūdî : *Kitāb al-Tanbîh wa al-Ishrāf* p. 273.
   al-Ṭabarî : *Dhail al-Mudhayyal p. 2339.*
9. al-Ṭabarî has obtained one report from Abān on the authority of Mu'āwiya b. 'Ammār al-Duhnî : that the Prophet ordered his followers on the Day of Badr to watch from a certain place, the members of his family (Banū Hāshim) in the enemy's camp. 'Alî went out and found al-'Abbās, Naufal and 'Aqîl and informed the Prophet of their presence. (*Dhail al-Mudhayyal* p. 2340).

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Hishām. He must have taken interest in collecting information about historical events during his governorship of Medîna. His book on the *maghāzī* compiled by Mughîra b.[1] 'Abd al-Raḥmān has not come down to us. In the absence of his transmissions, it is difficult to say about the method and treatment of Abān in his reports or his style and diction. It is, however, a fact accepted by all later historians, that Abān was the first transmitter who had collected material on the *Sîrah*, and it was compiled in a book form.[2] Thus we cán say that Abān was the founder of the Medîna School of *Sîrah*, and the later writers must have followed his course in the compilation of their works on the *Sîrah* and the *maghāzī*.[3]

Abān, according to Ibn Qutaiba, was both leprous and cross-eyed. He was nicknamed as Baqî'. He married Umm Kulthūm b. 'Abdillah b. Ja'far whom, after the death of Abān, al-Ḥajjāj and 'Uqba also married in succession.

2. 'Urwa b. al-Zubair : (23 A.H./94 A.H./712 A.D.) :

'Urwa b. al-Zubair,[4] a renowned jurist[5] and Traditionist of

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1. The book on *Maghāzî* attributed by some early writers to Abān b. 'Uthmān really belongs to another Abān b. 'Uthmān al-Bajalî of much later period. See Horovitz : *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet & their Authors*. I.C. (1927).
2. A book entitled "*Maghāzî Abān b. 'Uthmān*' has been mentioned by Aḥmed Zekî Pāchā in the index of *Kitāb al-Tāj*, but I could not find its reference in the text.
3. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma 'ārif* pp. 86-87.
4. For 'Urwa reference may be made to :
   Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma 'ārif* p. 98.
   Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 57, 106, 175, 178, 186, 269, 306, 334, 398, 435, 485, 537.
   Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I : 316-317; al-Shi'rānî : *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* I : 26 (Egypt).
   Ḥājî Khalîfa : *Kashf al-Zunūn* vol. II, 1747.
   al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 99.
   Horovitz : *Early Biographies* IC(1928) Aḥmed Amin : *Ḍuḥa al-Islām* II p. 321.
   Al-Mawrid Quarterly Vol. V No. 4—1976
   article " 'Urwa b. al-Zubair" by Khalîl Ibrāhîm 76-80.

(*Continued*)

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regarded the pioneer of the *Sīrah* and the *maghāzī* studies. He was, probably, the first Muslim to compile a book on the subject of the *maghāzī*. This work of 'Urwa is now extinct, and only some extracts, *et passim*, are found in the works of later historians like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, Ibn Kathīr etc. These versions being the oldest available material on the *Sīrah* of the Prophet, are of extraordinary significance for the historians. They cover various aspects of the life and achievements of the Prophet, e.g. *Bad'a al-Waḥī* (or beginning of the revelation), some of the expeditions launched by the Prophet, or his characteristic qualities etc. 'Urwa does not appear to be interested in accumulating much details of the *maghāzī* in his narrations. Some of these narrations were extracted from his aforesaid work on the *Sīrah*, while others were his written answers to such queries as 'Urwa very often received from the Umayyad court. Another important aspect of the reports transmitted by 'Urwa is the use of 'authority chains' which reflects the tendency and practice of his age in this regard. In his written answers to the Umayyad court he relied on the Traditions with authority chains; but at the same time when he describes a story he does not necessarily mention its chain of authority in the beginning.[1] But, when he narrates important anecdotes like the 'beginning of revelation' or the Migration of the Prophet, he produces authority chains carefully. It shows that the rules regarding the use of *isnād* in the transmission of reports during the time of 'Urwa were not observed very strictly.

(*Continued*) :

5. He was one of those ten Jurists of Medīna whom 'Umar II, during his period of governorship (87-93 A.H.) had selected as his counsel in matters of *Sharī'a*. He was also one of those seven personalities about whom it was said that knowledge of the Laws of Islam ended on them (*Ḍuḥā* II-322).

1. 'Umar II had issued a circular to various cities for compilation of oral knowledge. A similar letter was received by Abū Bakr b. Moḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm : Whatever Traditions of the Prophet, precedences of the past or transmissions from 'Urwa or 'Amra bint 'Abd al Raḥmān you come across, commit them to writing because I apprehend vanishing away of the knowledge and its depositories. (*Ṭabaqāt* II : 387).

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The style of 'Urwa in writing and presenting the historical material was quite simple and far from any complexity or ambiguity. His approach is quite realistic, clear and free from exaggeration. His social position, as well as his family connections, enabled him to obtain first hand information from early sources, especially from 'Ā'isha, al-Zubair, and Asmā bint Abî Bakr.[1] He was also privileged to have used certain early documents as is reflected in narrations indicating *raison d'etre* of certain Qur'ānic verses and the anecdotes related to them.

His narrations also reveal the tendency of his age in the use of poetical verses, his own liking for the poetry and the role poetry played in the culture of that period. Among the teachers of 'Urwa in the *ḥadīth*, the *maghāzī* and the *akhbār* are the eminent personalities of the time including al-Zubair b. al-'Awwām, Zaid b. Thābit, Usāma b. Zaid, Abū Huraira, 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar,[2] 'Abdullāh b. al-Abbās etc.

The interest of 'Urwa in history remained active till the age of the Umayyad Caliphs. He was an eye-witness to some very important historical events like the war of *Ridda*, the Qādsiyya and the Yermūk battles etc. It might have been the cause of his growing interest in the history of the Muslim world around him. But the reports which have come down to us from the channel of 'Urwa are few and sporadic which do not help us in obtaining a clear view regarding his attitude to narrations and the style of presentation. Nevertheless, while studying the growth and development of the Arab historiography in a general framework, we must keep in mind that individual efforts in this field cannot be isolated from the group work. Since, every one from among the promoters of knowledge during that period added his studies and critique to those of his teachers and predecessors which ultimately resulted in the formation of a particular school of transmission.

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1. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* I : 754, al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* 79. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 424-25, Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 380.
2. Saudā, daughter of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar (d. 74 A.H.) was also married to 'Urwa. (*Ṭabaqāt* IV : 168).

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'Urwa and his family, as we know, were not on friendly terms with the ruling Umayyads. 'Urwa had his seat in the Medina Mosque where he used to pass his time with 'Alî b. al-Ḥusain and they discussed together the atrocities of the Umayyads and their own helplessness in amelioration of the situation. They feared lest the displeasure of Allah should befall them both for their keeping quiet.[1]

From Medîna, 'Urwa had migrated to Egypt and remained there for about seven years. A report of 'Urwa says : 'I remained in Egypt for seven years and married there. I found that the people of Egypt were laborious but they had been kept under heavy and unbearable taxes while 'Amr had taken charge of the country by a peaceful covenant which envisaged only nominal taxation.'[2]

'Urwa has also transmitted abundant material of *ḥadîth* and he is held reliable by the scholars of *ḥadîth.*

He had definitely compiled his knowledge of history of Islam in a book form as is proved by a statement of his son Hishām :

"My father set fire to his collection of books on *fiqh*, on the day of *Ḥarra* and, afterwards, he used to say that those books, had they remained with him, would have been dearer to him than his family and his children."[3]

The family of 'Urwa had been closely connected with the house of the Prophet and that is why 'Urwa could be able to accumulate information on matters of *Sîrah* and other subjects of historical value. His father was al-Zubair b. al-'Awwām, cousin of the Prophet, 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair and Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair were his two renowned brothers. The former being an active participant in political upheavals

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. V. 135.
2. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ al-Buldān* 225.
   The period of his stay in Egypt is determined by a version of Ibn Sallām who says that when 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair deposed Yezîd I, 'Urwa was in Egypt.
   Ibn Sallām : *Ṭabaqāt* : 35.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V. 133.

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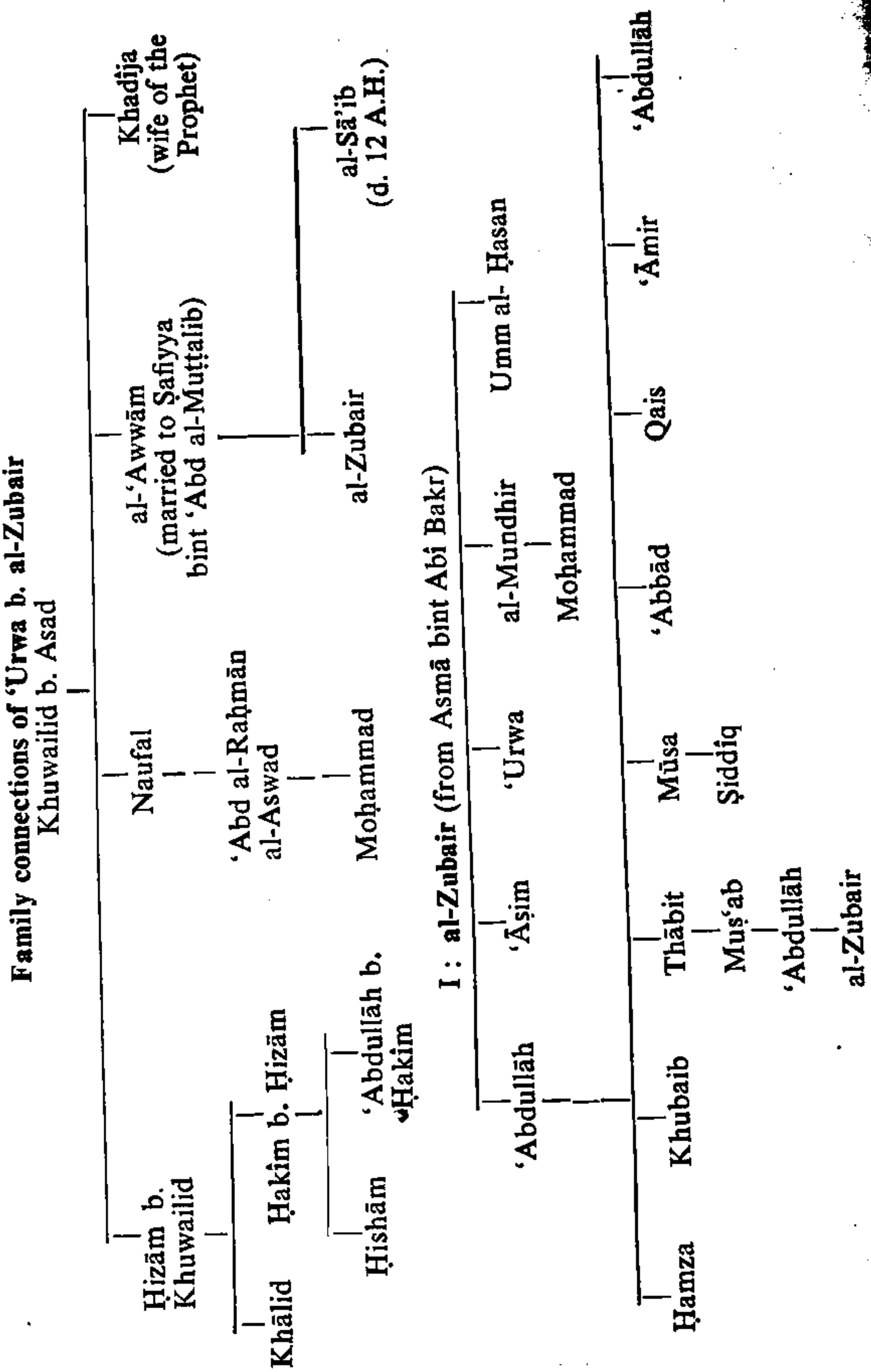
Family connections of 'Urwa b. al-Zubair



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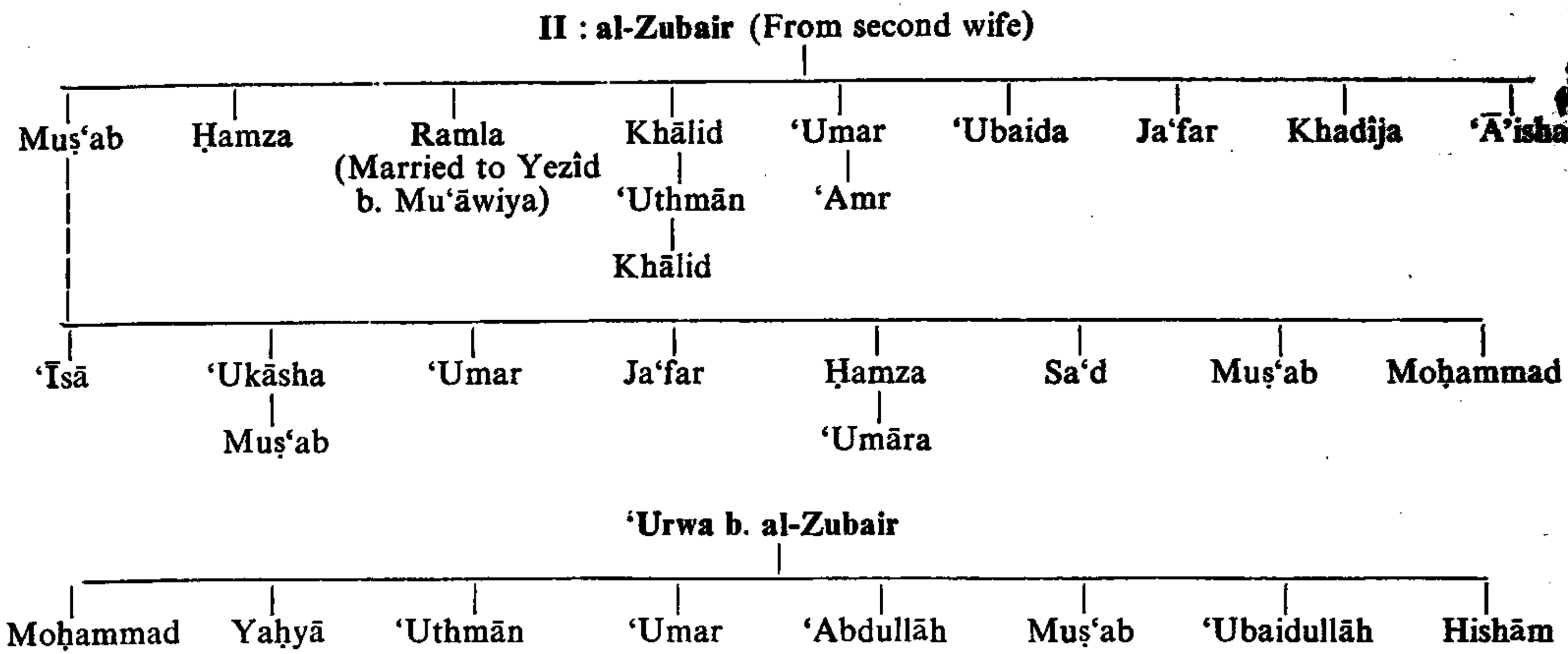

Prepared with the help of Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* vols. I-IV, Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*
Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt*

(1) Malîka bint al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alî was his wife (vide Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 100-101).

and the latter, a famous scholar of the *Ayyām*, as well as a genealogist of note. 'Urwa's mother was Asmā bint Abî Bakr (the first Caliph) and 'Ā'isha, Mother of the Faithful, was his aunt.

His son Yaḥya b. 'Urwa was also a noted genealogist and knowledgeable in the *akhbār* and the *ayyām* of the Arab.[1]

Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146 A.H.) was also one of the distinguished scholars of Islamic jurisprudence in Medîna. During the period of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, he had migrated to Kūfa, where the scholars of Kūfa obtained from him knowledge of the *fiqh*, the *ḥadīth* and the *maghāzī*.[2]

'Urwa had dug a well which was called *Bî'r 'Urwa*[3] and was famous for its delicious water. He died in his estate called *Fura'*, near Rabadha, at four night's journey from Medîna, and was buried there.[4]

'Urwa attended the assembly of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz and discussed with him matters related to the early Islamic history. Once, 'Umar II narrated to him a report regarding Muṣ'ab b. 'Umair.[5]

After the murder of 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān showed great regard for 'Urwa. Once 'Urwa went to see 'Abd al-Malik. The Caliph offered him a seat on his throne. In the meantime, some other people entered the court and during the course of conversation they abused 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair. 'Urwa stood up in annoyance and going out of the court informed the Lord Chamberlane : " 'Abdullāh was my real brother. When you intend to abuse him, do not allow me to enter."[6]

Hishām b. 'Urwa reported that during the reign of al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik a wall of the apartment of 'Ā'isha (the present tomb of the Prophet) had collapsed. While it

1. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* 98.
2. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* : 98.
3. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* I : 301.
4. Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I : 317.
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 116-117.
6. al-Isbahānî : *Kitāb al-Aghānî* XVI : 45.

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being re-erected, people found a leg uncovered through one of the graves and they thought it was that of the Prophet. The event caused a stir among the citizens and nobody could recognize whose leg it was. 'Urwa was also consulted and he declared that it was not the Prophet's leg, but it was certainly that of 'Umar.[1]

Examination of his Reports :

In the history of al-Ṭabarî, 67 reports have been taken from 'Urwa while al-Wāqidî obtains 30 transmissions from his channel. In the *Sîrah* of Ibn Hishām his name occurs at 44 places.

In al-Ṭabarî, his first appearance is in the commentary of the Qur'ānic verse : "And Lot (Remember) when he said unto his folk : Lo ye commit lewdness such as no creature did before you. For come ye not in unto males, and cut ye not the roads (for travellers), and commit ye not abomination in your meetings ? But the answer of his folk was only that they said : Bring Allah's doom upon us if thou art a truth-teller."[2] This report is connected with the story of Lot and his people.

Al-Mab'ath :

His next report is about the age of the Prophet at the time of his declaration of the mission. According to 'Urwa the Prophet was 40 years old when he declared himself a Messenger of Allah.[3]

Beginning of Wahî :

The *Sîrah*-writers describe in detail the maiden experience of the Prophet at the moment he received the message of Allah through the Arch Angel. What were his reactions and what type of visions he underwent during that period. According to 'Urwa, the beginning of revelation to the Prophet was that he visioned such dreams as proved true.

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 369.
2. al-Qur'ān : XXIX : 28-29, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XX : 145, *Tārîkh* I : 294.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 291.

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Then he was inclined to pass his time in seclusion and went to the *Ḥirā* cave for supplication and prayers, where he remained for two or three nights consecutively. One day he saw Gabriel who communicated to him the revelation from Allah : 'Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth.'[1] The details of the beginning of revelation have been given by 'Urwa on the authority of 'Ā'isha. The same details occur in all *Sīrah* works written subsequently. He does also inform us that the next revelation from Allah to the Prophet was "*Nūn*, By the Pen, and that which they write (therewith), Thou art not, for thy Lord's favour unto thee, a mad man,"[2] and "O thou enveloped in thy cloak, Arise and Warn,"[3] and then : "By the morning hours and by the night when it is stillest, Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee nor doth He hate thee."[4]

Since 'Urwa was keenly interested in accumulating as much details about the biography of the Prophet as he could, he did obtain information on various aspects of the life and mission of the Prophet not only from his kith and kin, from the well-informed members of his own clan, but from such Companions of the Prophet whom he had seen. About the early Meccan period of the Prophet he inquired from Abū Dhar al-Ghifārî who had asked from the Prophet how he felt at the time of revelation from Allah and how did it begin ? The Prophet told him his experiences in some detail which 'Umar b. 'Urwa narrated on the authority of his father and which al-Ṭabarî has quoted in his history.[5]

According to 'Urwa the first male to profess Islam was Zaid b. Ḥāritha.[6] Other reporters like Ibn al-'Abbās, Abū Dhar, Ibrāhîm al-Nakha'î etc. say that the first male from among the free men was Abū Bakr and from among the slaves

1. *al-Qur'ān* XCVI : 1 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXX : 161-162, *Tārîkh* II : 298-299.
2. *al-Qur'ān* LXVIII : 1-2, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXIX : 14, *Tārîkh* II : 299.
3. *al-Qur'ān* LXXIV : 1, al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXIX : 143, *Tārîkh* II : 299.
4. *al-Qur'ān* XCIII : 1-3, al Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXX : 232, *Tārîkh* II : 229.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 304, 433.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 316.

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[illegible] is significant to note in the above version of 'Urwa, that Abū Bakr was his maternal grandfather.

'Urwa received communications from the Umayyad court seeking knowledge about the early life of the Prophet and his expeditions. In such a letter 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān had inquired from him about the early history of Islam as to who professed the new religion first, how it was preached in those early days, how the people of Mecca reacted and what measures the Prophet adopted to counter their attacks. In one of his letters addressed to the Umayyad ruler 'Abd al-Malik, 'Urwa described the circumstances that compelled the Prophet to order his followers to migrate to Abyssinia. Quraish used to visit Abyssinia in connection with their trade and they met very courteous and hospitable treatment from the ruler and citizens of Abyssinia. So the Prophet was aware that his followers will be safe in that country.[1]

His son Yaḥya narrates, on the authority of his father 'Urwa, the reaction of the Quraish of Mecca after the migration of the believers to Abyssinia. These details 'Urwa received from 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, how the Meccans were annoyed with the Prophet and how they taunted him when he visited Ka'ba to circuit around.[2] 'Umar b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Urwa b. al-Zubair narrated on the authority of his grandfather that the Meccans used to throw into the Prophet's house bowels of slaughtered animals and the Prophet used to come out picking them up on a stick saying: "What type of treatment is this O people of Quraish?" then threw it away on the roadside.[3]

The First Allegiance at 'Aqaba :

Before planning his migration to Medîna the Prophet had received a delegation of the citizens of Medîna who had professed the religion of Islam and had entered a pact of allegiance (*Bai'at*) to the Prophet that their tribes would

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 328-329 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* I : 170-171.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 332-333.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 343 Ibn Hishām : *Sīrah* I : 231-232.

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defend the Prophet in the event of an assault or maltreatment from the side of the Meccans. It is called the First Allegiance of 'Aqaba (*Bai'at al-'Aqaba al-Ūlā*) and we find the details of this *Bai'at* in a report of 'Urwa transmitted through his son Hishām.[1]

3. Shurḥabîl b. Sa'd : (d. 123 A.H./740 A.D.)

Shurḥabîl b. Sa'd, a contemporary of 'Urwa b. al-Zubair, also played an important role in the growth and enrichment of the material produced and preserved by the Medîna School of Arab historiography. He is from among those early historians who prepared detailed indices of the names of those Companions of the Prophet who had participated in early expeditions like the Badr, the Uḥud, etc. Names of those who migrated to Ethiopia or to Medîna are also cited by the later historians on the authority of Shurḥabîl.

The *Sîrah* and the *maghāzî* literature produced during the early period of the second century owes to the scholarly efforts of three historians, namely : 'Abdullāh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm, 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî. Although only some sporadic quotations from their compilations are available to us in the works produced by later historians like Ibn Is'ḥāq, Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarî etc., yet these excerpts show that these pioneers of the Arab historiography contributed a lot towards the preparation of a general frame-work of the Muslim historiography, and their narrations constitute a great part of the material which the later historians like Ibn Is'ḥāq and al-Wāqidî have utilized.

Shurḥabîl lived for more than a hundred years. Most of his narrations are obtained from Zaid b. Thābit,[2] Abū Sa'îd al-Khudrî, Abū Huraira etc. He is reported to have prepared exhaustive lists of those who immigrated into Medîna[3] as well as he had indexed the names of the participants of the Badr and the Uḥud battles. Sufyān b. 'Uyaina remarked on

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 366-367 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* I : 277-278.
2. Shur'ḥabîl had passed sometime in al-Aswāf, the estate of Zaid b. Thābit. (Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* I :269).
3. Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* X : 361.

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that no other person was more knowledgeable in the *maghāzī* than Shur'ḥabîl,[1] but he was not reliable like Abān and 'Urwa. Ibn Sa'd says that during the last years of his life Shur'ḥabîl's mind had become puzzled because of old age and abject poverty[2] and indigence. Some Traditions have also been reported by him but these are not supposed authentic.[3]

He has also been accused by other critics that when he visited someone for some need and one did not fulfil his demand, he used to say : 'Your father was not present at the Badr'. Because of this, Ibn Is'ḥāq and al-Wāqidî do not accept his reports,[4] but Ibn Sa'd has included his version about the Prophet's shifting from Qubā to Medîna.[5] It does not contain any chain of authority.

Shur'ḥabîl belonged to the *mawālī* class. He was an ally of Banū Khaṭama of Medîna.[6] He had also met the Fourth Caliph 'Alī.

4. Moḥammad b. Muslim b. Shihāb al-Zuhrî :

(50 A.H. / 124 A.H. / 741 A.D.)

Abū Bakr Moḥammad b. Muslim b. 'Ubaidillāh b. 'Abdillāh[7] Shihāb b. 'Abdillāh b. al-Ḥarath b. Zuhra al-

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1. Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* IV : 321.
2. When Mūsa b. 'Uqba heard people accusing Shur'ḥabîl of including in or excluding names from the list of the participants of the early expeditions, he felt sorry that they were unnecessarily ragging an old man and to rescue him from adverse criticism he prepared the lists of the participants to avoid any changes in future. Similarly, Mūsa listed the names of the emigrants to Ḥabshà and Medina. (Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* X : 361:).
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : Vol. V : 228.
4. Horovitz : *Early Biographies* I. C. (Ur. tr. p. 35).
5. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* I-1 : 160.
6. Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* IV : 321.
7. This 'Abdullāh b, Shihāb, great grandfather of Ibn Shihāb, was present at the battle of Badr and fought against the Prophet and was among those few who had sworn an oath on the day of Uḥud that they would kill the Prophet wherever they would find him. His father Muslim was with Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair when the latter had revolted against Banū Umayya. (*Ibn Khallikān* : I p. 451).

Qarashî, commonly known as Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî[1] was one of the eminent scholars of the Medîna School of historiography during the Umayyad period. He obtained his knowledge of the *Sīrah* and the *maghāzī* from well-informed sources like 'Urwa b. al-Zubaîr. He did not confine himself merely to a simple reproduction of their narrations but absorbed himself in extensive and intensive researches in the material produced by the transmitters belonging to the Medîna School.[2] After a careful study and scrutiny of these sources, oral as well as written, he prepared a consolidated framework of the *Sîrah* and the *maghāzī*. The credit goes undoubtedly to him for working out a general pattern of the biography of the Prophet and introducing the term *Sîrah*[3] for the same. His plan of the *Sîrah* begins with an outline of the pre-Islamic history which serves as the socio-political and religio-cultural background of the life of the Prophet. Then he deals with some significant events of the Prophet's biography during his Meccan period. Next, he describes the Prophet's immigration into Medîna. From this point the second phase of the biography, i.e. the Medîna period, is portrayed ; then his expeditions ; the *maghāzī*, the Conquest of Mecca ; list of important converts to Islam; foundation of an Islamic state with its headquarter at Medîna ; emissaries and envoys sent by the Prophet to various neighbouring countries and the delegations which he received from abroad. At the end of this phase he mentions other social, religious, and political activities of the Prophet. This plan of the *Sîrah* ends at the description of illness and finally, death of the Prophet ; the last rites ; assembly of the followers in the *Saqīfa banî Sā'ada* and consequently the election of Abū Bakr as the

1. Ibn Khallikān : *Wafayāt* I : 451-452.
2. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 89.
3. He was, according to Suhail, the first Muslim scholar who compiled a monograph on the *maghāzî* of the Prophet as early as during the first century, and the excerpts of his reports which we find in the works of al-Ṭabarî, al-Wāqidî, Ibn Hishām etc. clearly indicate the plan of the *Sîrah* that al-Zuhrî must have followed in his book on the *maghāzî*. It was perhaps the pious Caliph 'Umar II who put a pressure on him to compile the work.

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[illegible]nph. Al-Zuhri has generally observed the chronological sequence of events and in many cases he refers to the date and time of important historical anecdotes. One of the characteristic features of the *Sīrah* material provided by al-Zuhrî is that he had obtained it from the transmitters of the *ḥadīth* literature. Since the *ḥadīth* transmission was, from the very beginning particularly during the Caliphate period, subject to strict rules, this early *Sîrah* material was also governed by the same. But, al-Zuhrî also showed some interest in the pre-Islamic history, especially in the history of the prophets (*Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiā*), and some legendary material is also found in his narrations showing him comparatively liberal in matters of authentication and transmission rules.

Not a poet himself, al-Zuhrî, like his other contemporaries has shown interest in poetical compositions connected with historical anecdotes, and has freely used them in his narrations. His fondness of poetry is reflected in many reports which we hear about him from the later reporters.

Al-Zuhrî lived during the late Caliphate period (born 50 A.H.) and was privileged to witness almost all important events of the early days of Islam as well as the consolidation of the Umayyad rule[1] and the beginning of its downfall.[2] Thus, in matters regarding major historical events like the election of Abū Bakr, the foundation of State Secretariate (*Dīwān*), the electoral advisory council (*Shūrā*), the dissension, the murder of 'Uthmān, election of 'Alî, the first civil war of Jamel, the war of Ṣiffîn, the Karbalā episode, are the topics which he can describe accurately and with minute details.

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1. He was closely associated with the Umayyad court. But as we shall see later, in matters of historical and religious significance, he observed accuracy and impartiality and did not yield to timely political pressures. He went to the court of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in 80 A.H. and remained associated with it until his death in 124 A.H. He was also appointed the tutor of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik's children.
2. He died on the 17th of Ramaḍān 124 A.H. and was buried in his estate called *Adama* near *Shaghb*. (*Ibn Khallikān* I : 452).

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His reports also emphasize the significance of these experiences of the *Umma* and their reverberating influences.

He was also a genealogist and had compiled a book on the genealogy of the Quraish to which he belonged. This work of al-Zuhrî is quoted in the book entitled '*Kitāb Nasab Quraish*' by Muṣ'ab al-Zubairî.

As regards the use of 'authority chains,' he is extremely particular about them and does not omit even a single link. His attitude reflects the common practice of the Medina School during that period. His important contribution towards the development of early Muslim historiography is the introduction of the system of collective chains (*al-Isnād al-Jama'î*) by assimilating the missing chains into one unified narration on the basis of all available reports. This method facilitated the work of later historians like Ibn Is'ḥāq, al-Wāqidî, Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabarî etc. In later works, we find that all authorities are listed in the beginning of a report without pointing out the particular channel from which a specific portion of the entire narration emerges, and the historian (say Ibn Sa'd) explains at the very outset that all chains have been amalgamated into one and that the report of a particular transmitter has been interrupted by other versions with the presumption that all reporters are equally reliable in this version. This system of assimilated reporting was introduced by al-Zuhrî because some reports came to him from as many as two hundred channels and it was practically extremely difficult, painstaking and unavailing to narrate a single report along with so many chains and channels, as later on al-Ṭabarî has done in the compilation of his *Tafsīr*.

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî also rendered a great service to historiography by writing down the history of Islam of that early period on the basis of his personal knowledge. He is considered the first scholar to compile historical works in a systematic way. Although none of his compilations are available now, yet, as is told by our reporters, his works were preserved in the imperial library of the Umayyads. According to al-Zuhrî, he was pressurized by the ruling class to commit to writing his fund of information regarding the

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[illegible] Islam for the common men. The studies of 'Urwa b. al-Zubair and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî throw light on the early historiographical activities in Medina, the first centre of Islamic learning. As for the factors that led to the promotion of interest in history-writing, we find that first, it was the *Sīrah* of the Prophet which served as the main incentive for the transmitters to preserve details about the biography of the Prophet. Secondly, the significant experiences and decisive wars that resulted in the establishment of an Islamic state with its centre at Medîna. Thirdly, it was the Qur'ān with its many references to the history of Prophethood as well as to the current social activities of the believers which gave an impetus to the early scholars to collect such material as could be utilized in writing the *Tafsir*. Apart from these, official exigencies like the organization of state records, promulgation of the *Sharî'a* Law, introduction of taxes and levies, fixation of stipends according to the seniority of the Muslims etc. also necessitated the collection and compilation of historical material. Since these traditionists, jurists, transmitters of early history of Islam and the *maghāzī*-reporters[1] enjoyed special reverence in their respective societies and their scholarship was judged by the standard of authority chains which they offered. The academic activities in Medîna and afterwards in the twin cities of Baṣra and Kūfa gathered momentum with such a quick pace as was unprecedented in history.

The diction and style of both 'Urwa and al-Zuhrî are quite simple and free from exaggeration. Their narrations are distinctly different from other contemporary reporters of the Umayyad period whose interpretation of events is tinged with their belief in predestination (*jabriyya*). The concept of predestination was propagated by the Umayyads to justify their occupation of religio-political leadership. Al-Zuhrî describes in his narrations the actions of the Prophet as they were 'revealed by Allah' or were simply a human action (which

1. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ-al-Buldān* : 19, 20; 61, 384.

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implied both success and failure) as can be judged by his report of the Battle of Trench.

The works of both 'Urwa and al-Zuhrî also bear out that the outlines of the *Sīrah* were drawn out by the early authors, and that those who decided the pattern of the *Sīrah*-writing were not merely story-tellers like Wahb b. Munabbih (q.v.) but they were orthodox Traditionists (*Muḥaddithūn*) who gifted with best qualities of assimilation, critique and discernment worked out the general plan of the *Sīrah* after careful investigations into all available material. As a matter of fact, the influence of story-tellers who derived their knowledge from Jewish sources or from local folk-lore permeated the Muslim historiography after al-Zuhrî.

His Teachers :

Al-Zuhrî did also obtain knowledge of genealogy. 'I used to sit in the assembly of 'Abdullāh b. Tha'laba b. Su'ayr al-'Udharî in order to learn from him the genealogy of my community. One day, an unlettered man came to him and asked about a woman who received two divorces at a time; then she remarried, and the latter husband consumated with her then divorced her. Now, on what conditions would she remarry her first husband'? He said : 'I do not know. Consult that man, and referred to Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab.' 'He is definitely elder than Sa'îd,' al-Zuhrî thought, 'he had found the Prophet's time when an infant and the Prophet had put his saliva in his mouth (for blessing).' I stood up, followed the inquirer, who presented his question to Sa'îd. I became a punctual visitor to his assembly. He had a good command over the Medînite Traditions and was amongst those seven sages who issued religious decrees, others being : Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām, and Sulemān b. Yasār, 'Urwa b. al-Zubair (q.v.), 'Ubaidullāh b. 'Abdillāh b. 'Utba, Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Khārija b. Zaid b. Thābit, al-Qāsim and Sālim.[1] Al-Zuhrî attended the assembly of Sa'îd for ten consecutive years.[2]

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 382—383.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : II : 383.

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also accumulate transmissions from 'Amra bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān and 'Urwa b. al-Zubair.[1] "Is it true what people say that you do not obtain Traditions from the *mawālī* class?" al-Zuhrî was asked.

"No, I obtain from them as well. But when I receive the same transmission from the *muhājir* and the *anṣār* reporters, I rely on them and do not need to ask from others."[2] Al-Zuhrî had also obtained from the family of 'Umar as much Traditions as he could.

Ṣāliḥ Ibn Kaisān said : "Al-Zuhrî and myself used to gather material (of *ḥadîth* and history) together." "Let us commit these reports to writing", we proposed and accordingly committed to writing whatever Traditions of the Prophet we came across. Then he said : "Let us write the practices of the Companions as well, since those are also held as Traditions."

"It does not come within the range of *Sunna*," I differed. He started writing them also, while I abstained. Consequently, he was successful and I remained at a loss."[3]

Ma'mar b. Rāshid said : "We used to think that we have accumulated more knowledge than that of al-Zuhrî, till al-Walîd was murdered, and a huge collection consisting of the knowledge of al-Zuhrî was shifted on mounts from his treasures."[4]

His Disciples :

Although several generations were benefited by him yet among those who obtained knowledge of the *Sīraḥ* and the *maghāzî* from al-Zuhrî, Mūsa b. 'Uqba (d. 141 A.H.) and Moḥammad b. Is'ḥāq (d. 150 A.H.) are pre-eminent. Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhîm, Moḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ Tammār (d. 168 A.H.) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd al-'Azîz (d. 162 A.H.) are

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* II : 388—389.
2. *Ibid* : II : 389.
3. Ibn Sa'd : Ṭabaqāt II : 388-389.
4. *Ibid* : II : 389.

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also among his distinguished disciples. We shall study Mūsā in some detail, because he represents those trends in the form and content of the *Sīrah* which were current during the latter half of the second century. Moḥammad b. 'Abdillāh, a nephew of al-Zuhrî, also transmitted his uncle's reports to posterity. Al-Wāqidî did also obtain from him.[1]

An Examination of his Reports :

Ibn Shihāb occurs about 110 times in the history of al-Ṭabarî and from his reports we can easily understand the scope of his studies in the field of history. We have listed his reports according to their subject and their analytical study.

I. **al-Mubtadā :**

1. On the authority of Abū Huraira he informs us that Friday is the most honoured day because Adam was created on this day; that he was admitted to Paradise on this day and that he came down on earth on this day.[2]

2. When Adam descended on earth and his sons scattered on various parts of the globe, they started dating events from the time of Adam's descent and the practice was observed till the time of Noah etc. According to this report the calendar system is as old as Adam himself.[3]

II. **History of Prophethood :**

I. Al-Zuhrî transmitted a *ḥadîth* on the authority of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abdillāh b. Ka'b b. Mālik al-Anṣārî that the Prophet said, "When you conquer Egypt, treat its people well because they have (upon us) liability and relationship." When asked to explain the 'relationship', al-Zuhrî replied that it referred to

1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 5.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* vol. I : 114.
3. Ibid I : 192-193 al-Suyūṭî : *al-Shamārîkh* (MS).

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the fact that Hager, mother of Ishmael, had been an Egyptian lady.[1]

2. Then al-Zuhrî, on the authority of Abū Huraira and Ka'b al-Aḥbār, informs us that it was Isaac, son of Abraham, whom Allah commanded to be sacrificed.[2] He has narrated the story of Isaac and how Satan tried to lead them astray. These details he has taken from Jewish sources through Ka'b al-Aḥbār.

3. Transmitting the version of 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās through 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd,[3] he affirms that the Companion of Moses referred to in the Qur'ān was Khiḍr.

III. History of Persia :

Ibn Shihāb had also collected information about the Persians. We find him reporting on the authority of Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf, how Kisra Parwîz, the Persian monarch, contemporary of the Prophet, saw an angel who warned him either to profess the faith of Islam or be prepared to lose his kingdom. This story was narrated before 'Umar II[4] who added to it that Kisra, according to another report reaching 'Umar II, had seen the angel with two bottles of glass in his hand. When Kisra did not show his inclination to accept Islam, the angel struck the two bottles with each other till they were broken to pieces, and it was an indication that the kingdom of Kisra will soon come to an end.[5] This report is an evidence of the interest of the Umayyad rulers in historical material, that 'Umar II, on hearing the version of al-Zuhrî added to it what he

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārīkh* I : 247.
2. Ibid : I : 265 *Tafsīr* 23 : 54.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārīkh* I : 369.
4. 'Umar II was a patron and admirer of al-Zuhrî. He had sent a circular to all provincial headquarters appealing the scholars of the Islamic world to obtain as much knowledge through al-Zuhrî as they could, since there was nobody more knowledgeable in the Traditions of the past than him. *Ibn Khallikān* I : 451.
5. al-Qur'ān : *Kahf* II : 191.

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had obtained from some other source. It also proves beyond doubt that al-Zuhrî, in order to make all aspects of the *Sîrah* fully intelligible, had obtained information about the Persian rulers of that period.[1]

IV. Ancestors of the Prophet :

Al-Zuhrî says on the authority of Qabîṣa b. al-Dhu'aib that an Arab woman had vowed to sacrifice her son on the altar of Ka'ba if she commited a certain act. On committing the same act she came to atone for her sin but she was not willing to sacrifice her son. She asked several sages the way how to save her son from being sacrificed. At last 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās narrated to her the story of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim, grandfather of the Prophet, who had also vowed to sacrifice his son 'Abdullāh but in lieu of him had sacrificed one hundred camels to fulfil the promise. Al-Zuhrî has collected other reports concerning the family of the Prophet, his grandfathers and parents.[2]

We know that al-Zuhrî was also interested in genealogical studies. He took special interest in the family of Quraish and broadly in the genealogy of the Prophet Abraham. Al-Ṭabarî has quoted him in genealogical tables of the Quraish.[3]

V. The Prophet at Mecca :

About the early life of the Prophet, called as the Meccan period, all that is available to us was collected during the Medinite period and the *maghāzî*-writers had obtained details about the early life of the Prophet from knowledgeable sources. Al-Zuhrî reports the circumstances leading to the Prophet's marriage with Khadîja, but al-Wāqidî does not accept his version. Al-Ṭabarî has given both the reports.[4]

Reports saying that the soothsayers were conjecturing the appearance of a prophet when Hazrat Moḥammad was

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 239 - 242.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 273.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 282.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 282.

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been sent by Allah, have also been included in the *al-Mab'ath* portion of the *Sīrah*. Al-Zuhrî gives a report on the authority of Moḥammad b. Jubair b. Muṭ'im which dates back 'one month before the appearance of the Prophet'.[1] He informs us through 'Urwa and 'Ā'isha, how the revelation began to be made to the Prophet which in the terminology of classical *Sīrah*-writers is called *Bad' al-Waḥî*.[2] Similarly, he tells us about the first revelation ; and verses of the Qur'ān that were revealed to the Prophet during the early period of his prophethood.[3]

The revelation came to the Prophet at short or long intervals. When he did not receive any message from Gabriel for long, the Arab began to ridicule him saying that Allah had been displeased with the Prophet and that He would no more reveal unto him. With this background al-Zuhrî gives the *raison d'etre* of the *Sūra al-Muddaththir*.[4]

He also informs us about those who were first to profess the religion of Islam. Khadîja, according to al-Zuhrî, was the first woman and Zaid b. Ḥāritha the first male to embrace Islam.[5] Some of his reports give us details of the Prophet's struggle in the propagation of the new religion. He tells us that the Prophet himself visited various tribal localities and invited them to Islam.[6] The entrants into the First 'Aqaba allegiance (*Bai'at al-'Aqaba al-Ūlā*) before the holy war (*jihād*) was declared obligatory,[7] also form the subject of the Meccan chapter of the Prophet's biography.

VI : The Prophet at Medîna :

The historiographical activities of al-Zuhrî begin with the description of the Medînite life of the Prophet. First he is quoted by al-Ṭabarî in the description of *Hijra*. He

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 297.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 298.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 299 *Tafsîr* 29 : 90.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 305.
5. al-Ṭabari : *Tārîkh* II : 316.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 349.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 356.

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describes the arrival of the Prophet in Medîna in the month of Rabî' I, and his asking the people to adopt the event as the starting point of the Islamic calendar.[1] He also describes in detail the system of chronology in ancient times and says that the descendants of Ishmael used to mark the date and time according to the construction of Ka'ba by Ibrāhîm and later on other significant incidents and events served the purpose of calendar among the Arab till the Hijra era was adopted by 'Umar in 17 or 18 A.H.[2] Another report from al-Zuhrî says that the Prophet entered Medîna on Monday the 12th of Rabî' I.[3]

His narratives concerning the Medînite period begin with the first Hijra year. Even such minute details as cauterization of As'ad b. Zurāra by the Prophet's advice for some skin disease that he was suffering from, have been collected by him.[4]

So far as the events of the second year after Hijra are concerned, al-Zuhrî is one of those reporters whom al-Ṭabarî has quoted to prove that after the Prophet returned from his search of Kurz b. Jābir al-Fihrî in Jumādî II, he sent 'Abdullāh b. Jaḥsh to an expedition and gave under his command eight members of Muhājir tribes.[5] No Anṣār participated in this *Sariya* (military detachment).[6] The Prophet had also given a letter to 'Abdullah b. Jaḥsh with the instruction that he should open the cover after completing two days' journey from Medîna onward.[7] These details have come from the channel of 'Urwa and Yezîd b. Rūmān.

In this year he describes some detailed account of the battle of Badr[8] on the authority of Ḥakîm b. Ḥizām.

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 388.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 390-391 al-Suyūṭî : *al-Shamārîkh* (MS.)
3. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārîkh* II : 393.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 398 Ibn al-Athîr : *Nihāya* IV : 240-241.
5. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 16.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 410.
7. al-Ṭabari : *Tārîkh* II : 411.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 426, 449 : al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 34 : 59-60, 63, 70, 91, 103, 110, 111, 116, 119, 144, 135, 152.

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expedition to Banū Qainuqā' was launched during the month of Shawwāl 2 A.H. He also informs us that the Qur'ānic verse (*al-Anfāl* : 58) was revealed to the Prophet in the same context and refers to the affair of Banū Qainuqā'.[1]

In the events of the third Hijra year, he narrates the circumstances leading to the murder of Abū Rāfi' and Ibn Abī al-Ḥuqaiq.[2] Then he is quoted in the description of the battle of Uḥud.[3] It was during this battle that the Prophet had received severe injuries and at one stage the rumour was spread among the Muslim camp that the Prophet had been killed. The first man, according to al-Zuhrî, who recognized the Prophet lying among the wounded, was Ka'b b. Mālik.[4] He also reports in the account of the expulsion of Banū al-Naḍîr in the year 4 A.H. that the Prophet made an agreement with them on the condition that they would leave the city to resettle in Syria.[5] Al-Ṭabarî, as his usual practice has amalgamated various reports on the event of the battle of the Trench, and narrations from al-Zuhrî, as is clarified by him, are included in that account.[6] The Prophet, one of his reports declare, had been inspired by Allah through Gabriel to embark on the expedition that he had launched against Banū Quraiẓa.[7]

That al-Zuhrî paid attention to the entire historical and biographical details of the life and achievements of the Prophet is also evident from what he has reported about the False Allegation (*Ifk*) against 'Ā'isha. He collected reports about this unfortunate episode from 'Alqama b. Waqqāṣ al-Laithî, Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab, 'Urwa b. al-Zubair, 'Ubaidullāh b. 'Abdillāh b. 'Utba and prepared an amalgamated version.[8] Al-Zuhrî was quite scrupulous in such delicate matters and did not yield to his contemporary political pressures as is

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 480 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 177, 180.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 496.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 500 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* : I : 610.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 518 al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* : I : 236.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 554.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 564-565, 573.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 581, 589.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 611-612.

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evident from a report quoted by al-Dhahabî : Sulaimān b. Yasār was present in the court of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik and the latter asked him as to whom the Qur'ān refers in the following verse :

"Lo they who spread the slander are a gang among you. Deem it not a bad thing for you; nay it is good for you. Unto every man of them (will be paid) that which he hath earned of the sin; and as for him among them who had the greater share therein his will be an awful doom." (XXIV:11).

'It is 'Abdullāh b. Ubayy b. Salūl who had 'the greater share therein.' Sulaimān replied. 'No, it is not he but 'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib', Hishām retarded and turning towards al-Zuhrî asked him to explain. Al-Zuhrî also supported the view expressed by Sulaimān. 'You are a liar ; it is 'Alî who is meant here in the Qur'ānic verse' said Hishām. 'I am a liar ? By God ! even if it is called from heavens that Allah has made telling a lie permissible, I would not do so. I have been told by Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, by 'Urwa, 'Ubaidullāh and 'Alqama b. al-Waqqāṣ on the authority of 'Ā'isha herself, that the man referred to by the Qur'ān in the above verse was 'Abdullāh b. Ubayy who had aggravated the matter.'

'You get out of my court' the Caliph ordered in exasperation, 'By God it is not good on our part to deal with people like you with magnanimity.'

'Yes, you may terminate my services because neither you depend on me nor I am dependent on you,' al-Zuhrî was equally furious.

'No, I will not terminate your services since you are under heavy debts,' the Caliph said. 'You know full well and before you, your father did also realize the fact that I had not incurred these debts because I had any assurance from you.'

Now Hishām became polite and said, 'We should not antagonize the Sheikh, as he becomes outspoken at once'.[1]

1. Horovitz : *The Earliest Biographies* : (Ur. tr.) 71-72. I.C. (1927).

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The Treaty of Ḥudaibiyya was made in the year 6 A.H. Al-Zuhrî describes on the authority of 'Urwa b. al-Zubair, al-Miswar b. Makhrama and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam that the Prophet came out of Medîna with the intention of visiting the Sacred Home of Allah. He did not intend to wage a war at all. He had seventy stout animals for offering, and seven hundred people accompanied him.[1] In his report al-Zuhrî gives the details of the Prophet's sojourn in the valley of Thaniyat al-Murār.[2] The Quraish sent al-Hulais b. 'Alqama to see whether the Prophet intended a confrontation or he had with him animals for offering at the Ka'ba.[3] When the Prophet administered the famous oath of allegiance beneath the tree,[4] the Quraish deputed Suhail b. 'Amr to negotiate with the Prophet on the condition that he would return without paying a visit to Mecca and would come again the following year.[5] The agreement was made between the Prophet and the Quraish. 'Umar was, in the beginning, opposed to enter into such a humiliating treaty but he reconciled later with the Prophet's diplomacy. Al-Zuhrî is the chief reporter of these details.[6] He is also aware of the far-reaching consequences of this agreement and says : 'Muslims had not achieved a greater victory before that.'[7] During the same year and after the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyya it was revealed to the Prophet :

"O ye who believe, when believing women come unto you as fugitives examine them. Allah is best aware of their faith. Then, if you know them for true believers send them not back unto the disbelievers. They are not lawful for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. And give

1. al-Ṭabarî: *Tārīkh* II : 620-621, 623-624.
2. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* II : 85.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 628.
4. "Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree. and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and hath rewarded them with a near victory." (*al-Qur'ân* XLVIII : 18).
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 633.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 634, 637.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 638.

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the disbelievers that which they have spent upon them. And it is no sin for you to marry such women when ye have given them their dues. And hold not to the ties of disbelieving women; and ask for (the return of) that which ye have spent; and let the disbelievers ask for that which they have spent. That is the judgement of Allah. He judgeth between you. Allah is Knower, Wise."[1]

'Umar had two wives namely Quraiba b. Abî Umayya b. al-Mughîra and Umm Kulthūm b. 'Umar b. Jarwal al-Khuza'iyya (mother of 'Ubaidullāh b. 'Umar). On the revelation of this judgement of Allah, he divorced both of them since they had not embraced Islam. The former was married to Mu'āwiya and the latter to Abū Jahm b. Ḥudhāfa b. Ghānim.[2] After the Truce of Ḥudaibiyya, the Prophet sent his envoys to various monarchs of the neighbouring non-Arab countries. Yazîd b. Ḥabîb had found a document containing the names of those whom the Prophet had sent as delegates to various courts and the messages they carried from him. Yazîd had presented this document to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî who showed it to those trustworthy persons who could verify its genuineness.[3] It is a clear proof that al-Zuhrî had direct access to various original documents preserved during his age.

The delegation of the Prophet to king *Hiraql* (Hercales) who was at that time on his way to *Bait al-Maqdis*, has been described by al-Zuhrî on the authority of 'Ubaidullah b. 'Abdillah b. 'Utba, 'Abdullah b. al-'Abbās and Abū Sufyān. The last of them had not embraced Islam till that time but was on his commercial tour of Ghazza and Buṣrā.[4] Another witness to it, a Christian bishop, met al-Zuhrî during the time of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, and informed him that Hercales had received the letter through Daḥya b. Khalifa and had sent his reply in the Roman language.[5] The Prophet had

1. al-Qur'ān : LX : 10.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 640.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 645 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 353.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 646-647, 649.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : II : 649.

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[illegible] letter to the Persian monarch, Kisra, through 'Abdullāh [illegible]. The King did not observe the protocol and tore [illegible] the letter before the envoy. Al-Zuhrî had collected this report from Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf.[1] These reports about various aspects of the Prophet's biography prove that al-Zuhrî had collected material of the *Sīrah* with some arrangement and chronological consciousness and had also paid special attention to the acquisition of the texts of such documents as were pertaining to the early Islamic history having a historical significance.

VII. The Maghāzî Reports :

Al-Zuhrî has furnished the later historians with substantial matter on the subject of the *maghāzî* i.e. expeditions launched by the Prophet, through authentic and most trusted Companions of the Prophet. In al-Ṭabarî he occurs in the description of the *Wādî-al-Qurā* expedition and explains the background of a Qur'ānic verse also.[2] Concerning the distribution of the Khaibar[3] booty, Ibn Is'ḥāq had asked al-Zuhrî as to how the Prophet returned the Khaibar estate to the Jews? In reply to this query he has explained the attitude of the Prophet and his two succeeding Caliphs toward the Jews.[4]

He has also dealt with the events of 8 A.H., the year of the Conquest of Mecca. These reports have been obtained from 'Urwa, al-Miswar b. Makhrama, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and other scholars[5] like 'Ubaidullāh b. 'Abdillah b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd[6]. He also cites the names of those who had embraced Islam after the Conquest.[7]

Al-Zuhrî, as we have pointed out earlier, was also fond of poetry. He has used poetical compositions connected with

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 655.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 17 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 241-242. al-Qur'ān : XX : 14 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* : XVI : 148.
3. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* II : 409-410.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 20-21 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 249.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 43.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 49 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 267.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 63 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 278.

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anecdotes as in the report which he received from 'Abdullāh b. Abî Ḥadrad al-Aslamî.[1] That he was quite particular about obtaining minute details of historical value, is evident from such reports as the Prophet, after the Conquest of Meccá, remained in the conquered city for fifteen days and there he used to offer his daily five prayers in shortened form prescribed for travellers.[2] His reports generally come from the most knowledgeable quarters; from persons who had them selves participated in the events or were closely associated with such first hand sources.[3]

He also informs us about the details of Tabūk war,[4] which is an event of the year 9 A.H. In the next year, i.e. 10 A.H., the Prophet received hundreds of deputations from various tribes of the Arabian peninsula. Al-Zuhrî gives a careful account of these deputations. The deputation according to him from the tribe of Kinda consisted of sixty riding men with al-Ash'ath b. Qais as their head.[5]

Wives of the Prophet :

That the Prophet had married al-'Ālia, a woman of the tribe of Banū Bakr, Qutaila bint Qais b. Ma'dikarib, sister of al-Ash'ath b. Qais, and Fāṭima bint Shuraiḥ but divorced them before joining them, is reported by al-Zuhrî.[6]

Other Biographical Details of the Prophet :

Al-Zuhrî gives us the detail about the mule which the Prophet had received from Muqauqis as a present. It was named *Duldul*, but according to al-Zuhrî it was presented to the Prophet by Farwah b. 'Amr al-Judhamî.[7]

The names that the Prophet had received from heavens, have been recounted by al-Zuhrî in a report. One of the names

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 68-69.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 69.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 75.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 101.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III 138.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 168.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 174.

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prophet, according to him, was *al-'Āqib* which, as al-Zuhrī explained, means 'one after whom there is none to succeed (as prophet).'[1]

The Prophet's Illness and Death :

In the events of the year 11 A.H., he describes on the authority of 'Ā'isha that the Prophet was indisposed in her house.[2] He came out in the mosque with his head wrapped around (owing to severe headache), sat down on the pulpit, sent up prayers for those who died martyrs at Uḥud, and then delivered a short speech. The Prophet also ordered that all doors of houses adjacent to the mosque which were used by their respective residents, should be closed except that of the house of Abū Bakr.[3] It is also reported by al-Zuhrî that during the illness of the Prophet, 'Alî came out of his house and met al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib outside the Prophet's house. Al-'Abbās advised him to request the Prophet to nominate his successor. In case, he pointed out, his successor is someone from outside, they would come to know of his will and if they were going to be his successor, it would be clarified once for all. But, 'Alî did not approve of the suggestion and replied that if they requested the Prophet and he refused to make them his successor they might lose the right to succession for ever.[4]

Details about the illness of the Prophet, his last days and the hectic activities of those around him, have been collected by al-Zuhrî from very trustworthy and knowledgeable sources like 'Urwa and 'Ubaidullāh b. 'Abdillāh,[5] and Anas b. Mālik. 'Ā'isha informs us about the condition of his health during this period and Anas reports about the last public appearance of the Prophet.[6] His last moments and death are described in

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 178.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 188.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 190-191.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 193-194.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 195.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 198.

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the words of 'Ā'isha, in whose apartment the Prophet passed away, and where he was buried.[1]

Election of Abū Bakr :

After the description of the last illness and then death of the Prophet, al-Zuhrî attends to the most significant event of the time, that is the election of his successor in the Saqîfa of Banî Sā'ada.[2] He narrates this report on the authority of Ibn al-'Abbās through 'Ubaidullah b. 'Abdillah b. 'Utba. Other details of the same anecdote have been obtained by 'Urwa b. al-Zubaîr. It is also interesting to note what al-Zuhrî narrates on the authority of 'Ā'isha through 'Urwa, that Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet, and al-'Abbās b. al-Muṭṭalib came to Abū Bakr and demanded their shares in the legacy of the Prophet in Khaibar and Fadak. Abū Bakr refused to give them possession of these properties on the plea that the Prophet had himself told him that 'Prophets do not bequeath; whatever property they leave behind is a charity.' Consequently, Fāṭima was so much displeased with Abū Bakr that she was not on speaking terms with him. She died within six months of the death of his father. 'Alî buried her under the night cover, without giving Abū Bakr an opportunity to attend her funeral prayer. As long as Fāṭima was alive, 'Alî also enjoyed popular support and people had a regard for him, but as soon as his wife Fāṭima passed away, people also turned their faces from him.[3] Ma'mar b. Rāshid, who obtained this report from al-Zuhrî, asked, whether it was true that 'Alî did not take oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr for six months after his election ? 'Yes', replied al-Zuhrî, 'It is true, not only he, but the entire family of Banū Hāshim kept aloof and all of them took the oath after 'Alî had taken it.[4]

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 199.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 203.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 208.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 207-208.

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proceedings of the Saqîfa on the following day, speeches of 'Umar and Abū Bakr, have been reported to al-Zuhrî[1] by Anas b. Mālik. The last rites and burial of the Prophet took place the following day after the election of Abū Bakr was finalized. Here al-Zuhrî, as he was told by 'Alî b. al-Husain, tells us about the quality of the shroud the Prophet was wrapped in.[2] The last words spoken by the Prophet that 'two religions should not be allowed to remain in Arabia' are also reported by him.[3] That the Prophet lived for 63 years in all, is also accepted on the authority of al-Zuhrî though other reporters like Daghfal al-Nassāba have their own versions that the Prophet was 65 years old at the time of his death.[4]

Another important point worth our notice is that the Companions of the Prophet were conscious of the significance of the historical events they were privileged to play their role in, and eachone from among them wanted to accumulate as much knowledge about the biographical details of the Prophet as was possible. Later, al-Mughîra b. Shu'ba used to claim that there was none but he who remained with the Prophet when the latter was being buried. He came out of the grave after the Prophet's body was laid in it, and then deliberately threw off his ring at the time the grave was being covered. On the pretext of picking up his ring, he again got down in the grave and came out after a few moments to boast afterwards that the last person to have touched the body of the Prophet was he. Another version describes Qutham b. al-'Abbās to have been the last man who remained in the grave at the time of the burial.[5]

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 210.
   al-Zuhrî obtained some of his reports from Anas b. Mālik, the last Companion of the Prophet whom al-Zuhrî had seen, and Anas also transmitted some of the reports from al-Zuhrî. For example, he narrated on the authority of al-Zuhrî that during the time of the first two Caliphs there were no officially appointed *Qāḍîs*. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 241.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 212 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 375.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 214 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 377.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 216.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 214.

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Al-Zuhrî has given us the information that Fāṭima, daughter of Moḥammad, passed away only after six months of her father's death, in 11 A.H.[1]

In the events of the year 13 A.H., al-Zuhrî describes the death of Abū Bakr and says that 'Umar on hearing the noise of wailing women came to the door of Abū Bakr's house and prevented the wailing women from crying aloud. He also lashed Farwa, daughter of Abu Quḥāfa (Abu Bakr's sister) for her loud lamentations.[2]

Abū Bakr : His Life and Practices :

That al-Zuhrî did not only devote himself to the biography of the Prophet but he also collected information regarding the life and practices of the first Caliph Abū Bakr, is proved by such details as he has given us about his property in *al-Sunḥ*, his household, business[3] etc. From al-Qāsim b. Moḥammad and Asmā, daughter of 'Umais too, he obtained details regarding the last moments of Abū Bakr and that Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubaidillāh had taken exception to the nomination of 'Umar by Abū Bakr.[4]

The Caliphate of 'Umar and the Conquests :

Next, al-Zuhrî enters into the details describing the conquest of Syria during the time of 'Umar (17 A.H.). These reports have come down to him through the son of a cousin of 'Umar, named 'Abd al-Ḥamîd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zaid b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[5] When 'Umar was about to despatch the Muslim army to Syria, it was 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf who got it postponed because of the virus of plague in those regions.[6] This year 'Umar discharged al-Mughîra from his office of the governorship of Baṣra and appointed Abū Mūsa in his place. Al-Zuhrî is one of the chief reporters of this

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 240.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 423.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 432.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : III : 433.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 57-58.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 58.

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The family of al-Zuhrî had also developed interest in the collection of historical material and his sons were equally absorbed in historical studies that their learned father had pursued and popularized during his lifetime. In the description of the murder of 'Umar, al-Ṭabarî, quoting two sons of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî, without mentioning their names, reported the date and time of the murder as being Wednesday, the 23rd of Dhu al-Ḥijja, 23 A.H.[2] The 'people of the Book,' according to al-Zuhrî had called 'Umar as *al-Fārūq*.[3] Such minute details indicate that al-Zuhrî must have prepared full length monographs on the Guided Caliphs with the help of the information he had accumulated from his contemporary knowledgeable sources at Medîna. He does also tell us the age of 'Umar as being 55 years at the time of his death.[4] The nature of minor and careful details cited by him regarding the Caliphate period is also attested by reports like 'Umar's branding a horse on its thigh and then consecrating it in the way of Allah.'[5] Some of the discourses of 'Umar have also been transmitted by al-Zuhrî.[6]

The Murder of 'Uthmān :

In reporting the annals of the year 31, he describes political machinations aimed at removing 'Uthmān from the Caliphate.[7] He has also quoted the time and date of the murder of 'Uthmān.[8]

Oath of Allegiance to 'Alî :

'Alî b. Abî Ṭālib, the fourth Caliph, took the oath of allegiance after the murder of 'Uthmān, and al-Zuhrî reports that al-Zubair and Ṭalḥa had also taken oaths when Mālik al-Ashtar had intimidated them by flourishing his sword over

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 69.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 194.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 195.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 197.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 211.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 214-215.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 292.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 417.

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them.[1] Al-Zuhrî has also given names of some of the eminent persons who fled to Syria from Medîna in order to escape[2] the oath of allegiance.

Ṭalḥa and al-Zubair, according to him, came to Mecca after four months and held a meeting in the house of 'Ā'isha, where it was resolved that they should proceed to Kūfa and Baṣra to mobilize public opinion against 'Alî and to demand the revenge of the murder of 'Uthmān.[3] 'Alî, on hearing the news of their march, came out and encamped at Dhî Qār. Ṭalḥa, al-Zubair and 'Ā'isha were near Dhāt 'irq.[4] These reports of political upheavals of the Caliphate period have been narrated by Yūnus b. Yazîd al-Ailî, on the authority of al-Zuhrî, but they do not reveal the source of al-Zuhrî who must have obtained them from such senior persons who had actively participated in those events.[5] 'Alî appointed Qais b. Sa'd as governor of Egypt. Al-Zuhrî refers to the circumstances that led to the murder of Muḥammad b. Abî Bakr.[6] The nature of these excerpts from his reports also speaks of al-Zuhrî's collecting the details of the events that took place during the tumultuous period of the Caliphate.

The Battle of Ṣiffîn :

After describing the details of the War of Camel, al-Zuhrî reports to us the conditions that prepared the ground for a confrontation between 'Alî and Mu'āwiya.[7] He narrates the famous issue of the *Teḥkīm* which had a tremendous reverberating influence on the history of Islamic polity. Al-Zuhrî gives the text of the speech that Mu'āwiya delivered on the occasion of the *Teḥkīm* issue.[8]

A portion of his report about the arrival of Muḥammad b. Abî Bakr has been extracted by al-Ṭabarî in the annals of

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 419.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 429.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 430.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 452.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 469.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : IV : 555.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : V : 57.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* : V : 58.

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the year 35 A.H., and the remaining part is cited in the events of 38 A.H., since Muḥammad b. Abî Bakr was murdered in that year.[1]

al-Ḥasan b. 'Alî :

During the year 40 A.H., 'Alî was murdered and his followers took the pledge of allegiance to his son al-Ḥasan b. 'Alî who, as al-Zuhrî reports, did not want to wage a war against Mu'âwiya. Instead, he proposed to bargain with Mu'āwiya to the maximum extent possible, and then joined the common consent. But Qais b. Sa'd did not fall in with him to approve of this policy. Al-Ḥasan removed him from the governorship and appointed 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās in his place.[2] At last, an agreement was made with Mu'āwiya and the latter came to Kūfa to take the oath of allegiance from its citizens, mostly Shî'ites.[3] The policy of al-Ḥasan was not supported by the entire Shî'ites, and al-Zuhrî indicates that after a few months al-Ḥasan was also put to death. He also reports the truce between Qais b. Sa'd and Mu'āwiya.[4]

Mu'āwiya b. Abî Sufyān :

Al-Zuhrî was asked by al-Walîd about the ages of various Caliphs and when he was told that Mu'āwiya was 75 at the time of his death, al-Walîd, got it verified.[5] Later, at the instance of al-Walîd, he compiled a book on this subject which has already been referred to elsewhere.

Yazîd b. Mu'āwiya :

In the annals of 61 A.H., al-Zuhrî has accounted for the removal of 'Amr b. Sa'îd by Yazîd from the governorship of Medîna and appointment of al-Walîd b. 'Utba in his place. These reports have come down through the channel of 'Uqba

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 94.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 158.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 162.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 164.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 325.

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b. Mūsa on the authority of al-Zuhrî; which means that 'Uqba did also take interest in the historical accounts of the first century. Al-Zuhrî quotes 'Abd al-'Azîz b. Marwān for his information which speaks of the interest of the Umayyads in the subject of history. These reports, as well as his other narrations, regarding the annals of the Caliphate, battle of the Camel, the battle of Ṣiffîn etc., are also bedecked with poetical compositions and clearly manifest the influence of the *ayyām* on their style and subject-matter. In the book he compiled for al-Walîd, about the bio-data of the Umayyad rulers, he describes that Yazîd b. Mu'āwiya died at the age of 39 and his tenure of Caliphate lasted for three years and six months.[2] This work of al-Zuhrî has again been quoted in the description of al-Walîd b. 'Abd al-Malik who ruled for a total of nine years and eleven months.[3] His death occurred on the 15th of Jumādî II, 96 A.H., when al-Zuhrî was himself associated with the royal court.

Al-Zuhrî informs 'Abdullāh b. Farwa about the circumstances leading to the dismissal of 'Abd al-Reḥmān b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk from the governorship of Medîna during the period of Yazîd II. Al-Zuhrî had advised him at the time of his appointment that the people of Medîna would not tolerate any thing that was against their social customs and practices, so the governor should also try to follow the consensus and should obtain counsel with al-Qāsim b. Moḥammad and Sālim b. 'Abdillāh, because they would give sincere and the best advice in such matters. But, al-Zuhrî regrets, he did not follow any of his suggestions and consequently, all the *Anṣār* turned deadly against him. When the governor flogged Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm without any justification, there was neither a single poet in Medîna who did not compose satirical verses ridiculing him, nor was there any of the pious men who did not reprove him for that brutality. "So much so that during the reign of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, I found his position in utter humiliation and disgrace."[4]

1. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 476.
2. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 499.
3. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* VI : 495.
4. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* VII : 14.

Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik patronized al-Zuhrî but al-Walid was not an admirer of him, and al-Zuhrî knew full well that when al-Walid came to power he would have to face great difficulties at his hand. Al-Ṭabarî has quoted a report from Abū al-Zannād that when the latter reached the court of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, he was reproving al-Walid in quite harsh and disgraceful words and al-Zuhrî was also present there. He (al-Zuhrî) did not take part in those conversations, and in the meantime al-Walid also entered the court. He came and sat for sometime, and left the court while his face was burning with anger and fury. After the death of Hishām when al-Walid came to power, he sent for Abū al-Zannād and when he arrived from Medîna, invited him to the court and said : 'Do you remember the conversation between that cross-eyed (Hishām) and al-Zuhrî ?' 'Yes', I replied 'but I did not take any part in it.' 'You are right, but you know how I came to know about their dialogue in camera" ? 'No', I replied. "The attendant standing behind Hishām informed me. I swear by God, if that insolent al-Zuhrî were alive today I would have beheaded him."[1] Al-Zuhrî was also aware that the ill-fate was waiting for him in the time of al-Walid, so he had already decided to migrate to the Byzantine territory if such conditions prevailed. But, luckily, he did not see the time of al-Walid and died about a year before his enthronement.[2]

Even after his death, al-Zuhrî enjoyed great regard by the 'Abbāsid rulers as is evident from a conversation of al-Manṣūr who advised al-Mehdî and said : "Do not hold a meeting but there are scholars with you to talk to you," because Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî has said : "The word *ḥadîth* is masculine and only those who possess manly qualities love it, and those having faminine qualities shun it. And the brother of Zuhra was, no doubt, right."[3]

Mūsa b. 'Uqba (circa 55 A.H./141 A.H.)

The academic activities of al-Zuhrî during the first

1. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* : VII : 26.
2. Horovitz : *Early Biographies* ... IC (1927) (Ur. tr. p. 73).
3. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* : VIII : 72.

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century were not confined to the Umayyad court. Thousands of sincere knowledge-seekers obtained from him reports about the *ḥadīth*, *Sīrah*, *maghāzī* and other branches of the Arab lore. Among his pupils three names are quite pre-eminent : Mūsa b. 'Uqba, Ma'mar b. Rāshid and Ibn Is'ḥāq. All that we find in the later histories transmitted through al-Zuhrī, has been compiled due to the sincere efforts of these three scholars who were the reservoirs of knowledge of the Muslim history.

Mūsa b. 'Uqba b. Abī 'Ayyāsh is reckoned in the class of *Tābi'ūn* as he had seen 'Abdullah b. 'Umar. He also belonged to the *mawālī* class and was a *maulā* of Umm Khālid, wife of al-Zubair b. al-'Awwām.

Mūsa is regarded the most trustworthy and erudite scholar in the subject of *maghāzī*. Mālik b. Anas is often quoted to have said about him : 'Obtain the knowledge of the *maghāzī* from Mūsa b. 'Uqba because he is trustworthy. He studied the subject when he was quite mature and did not transmit copiously.'[1] It means that the work of 'Uqba on the *maghāzī* must have been a small treatise on the subject. His reports have been transmitted by his nephew Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Uqba (d. 158 A.H.).[2] The original work is not available now, but apparently it had been exploited by Yāqūt and Diyār Bakrī.

Mūsa b. 'Uqba narrated on the authority of Sālim b. 'Abdillāh (grandson of 'Umar) that the Prophet met Zaid b. 'Amr b. Naufal before the beginning of revelation ; Zaid presented to him some food, which contained meat also. The Prophet refused to eat saying : "We do not eat what you sacrifice on your idols nor we eat that which is not sacrificed in the name of Allāh." The report describes the early period of the Prophet at Mecca, before his declaration of the Mission (*al-Mab'ath*).[3]

1. Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhīb* X : 361.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 6 et. seq..
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 380.

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Mūsa, as we have discussed earlier while describing Shurḥabīl, had prepared an exhaustive list of those who took part in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. Those lists have been utilized by the later historians in their works. At certain places they differed from other versions as well. For example, Moḥammad b. Is'ḥāq, Abū Ma'shar and al-Wāqidî agree that al-Sā'ib b. 'Uthmān b. Maẓ'ūn was present at the battlefield of Badr, but the list prepared by Mūsa b. 'Uqba did not include his name.[1]

Similarly, Mūsa had made an index of those early Muslims who had migrated to Ḥabsha. Abū Sabra b. Abî Ruhm had migrated to Abyssinia on both occasions as Ibn Is'ḥāq and al-Wāqidî believe; but Abū Ma'shar and Mūsa do not include his name in the list of those who had migrated.[2]

Salîṭ b. 'Amr was among those present at Badr, according to the list of Mūsa, while others do not mention his name.[3]

The list of Mūsa b. 'Uqba also differed in some of the names as compared with the works of Ibn Is'ḥāq or Ma'mar. Ibn Sa'd has pointed out such variations at various places. For example, Abū Ma'shar and al-Wāqidî record a name as Ma'mar b. Abî Suraḥ, while Mūsa says he was 'Amr b. Abî Suraḥ. Hishām al-Kalbî and Ibn Is'ḥāq also support his view.[4]

Rāfi' b. Yezîd b. Kurz was among those who participated in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. He was martyred on the day of Uḥud. Ibn Is'ḥāq, Mūsa and Abū Ma'shar have described his genealogy in a different way and 'Abdullāh b. Moḥammad b. 'Umāra al-Anṣārî, a scholar of the genealogy of Anṣār has differed with them.[5]

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1. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 402, 405, 406, 407, 408. 410, 601, 602.
2. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 403-404.
3. *Ibid* Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 405.
4. *Ibid* Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 417.
5. *Ibid* Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* : III : 442.
   For other variations in the reports as compared with Mūsa, reference may be made to : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 418, 449, 454, 456, 464, 470, 474, 475, 478, 479.

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Al-Ṭabarî states, on the authority of Mūsa b. 'Uqba (from 'Abdullāh b. Dīnār from Ibn 'Imrān), that when the Prophet entered the ruined village of *Thamūd*, he said to his followers that no one should enter this village of the accursed and the chastised people but shedding tears on them. If one cannot weep for their doom, one should not enter it, lest the doom which befell them (the people of Thamūd) should befall one.[1]

Another report from Mūsa is found in the description of the early period of Abū Bakr's Caliphate and in the despatch of the army under the command of Usāma b. Zaid (11 A.H.).[2] This report also includes 'that Usāma completed the task within forty days.' The time that he took in the journey and in coming back to Medīna, was not included in it.

These two reports cited above, clearly indicate at least two points of our immediate interest : first, Mūsa was not confined to the narration of the *maghāzî* alone; instead he had secured knowledge about the pre-Islamic history connected with the history of the advent of Islam, and similarly he paid attention to the developments that took place during the Caliphate. Secondly, though his report about the expedition of Usāma is not properly dated, yet it has a reference to the time involved in it, and he tells us that the whole affair was completed within forty days. Another report which Mūsa transmits from al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Khalîfa is also related to the period of Abū Bakr (11 A.H.) and tells about the *Riddah* (apostasy) of Ḥaḍramaut. Al-Muhājir was deputed by Abū Bakr to keep a curb on the rebels. During his operations he came across two singing women : one of them was singing satirical verses about the Prophet and the other about the Muslims. Al-Muhājir punished both of them. On receiving the report about the punishment meted out to them, Abū Bakr wrote to al-Muhājir that those found guilty of swearing at the Prophet deserved a still more severe punishment.[3] This

1. al-Tabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 231.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 227.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 341-342.

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indicates that Mūsa had acquired knowledge about the *Riddah* ; and as the text of a letter from Abū Bakr written to al-Muhājir is also found in the above report, it means that his reports were authenticated by the related documents as well.

Similarly, in the annals of 23 A.H., he reports a dialogue between 'Umar and a deputation of a tribe who complained to the Caliph : 'Our family is large and we are hard pressed ; so please increase our stipends !' 'Umar said : 'You have done it yourself. You have kept several wives and maintain women attendants against the property of Allah (*Bait al-māl*). By God, I wish that myself and you people were in a boat sailing in troubled waters, wandering with us hither and thither; then it will not be difficult for the people to appoint a man from among them. If he remains upright, follow him, if he goes astray kill him.' 'Why do you not say that if he goes away from the right path, remove him ?' Ṭalḥa asked the Caliph 'Umar. 'No', 'Umar replied, 'murder would be an exhortation to his successor. Beware of the young man of the tribe of Quraish who does not sleep except when he is pleased, and who smiles when he is furious and who has within his reach all that is below and that is high.'[1]

This narrative is also an example of the scope of Mūsa's studies in early Muslim history. During the year 35 A.H., he appears on the scene of the murder of the third Caliph 'Uthmān, and transmits from Abū Ḥabîba, who had met the Caliph before his confinement and the siege of his house in Medîna.[2] In another version he says that the day 'Uthmān was murdered, Sa'd b. Abî Waqqāṣ came to see him and was distressed at the sight of the people who had assembled at the Caliph's gate to conspire his murder. A dialogue between Marwān and Sa'd is also reported in this narration.[3]

The informant of Mūsa b. 'Uqba on these affairs of the period of Caliphate was a *maulā* (freed slave) of al-Zubair

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 213.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 366.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 377-378.

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b. al-'Awwām. He was knowledgeable in such matters because of his association with a family so closely related to the Prophet, and active participant in all important events of the period. The family of al-Zubair had made great contribution toward the historical material, its preservation, transmission and compilation during the first century as is evident from the services rendered by 'Urwa and Hishām b. 'Urwa etc. Mūsa b. 'Uqba, as we have pointed out earlier, was himself a *maulā* of the family of al-Zubair and his maternal grandfather Abū Ḥabîba had informed Mūsa that after the murder of 'Uthmān people had taken the oath of allegiance to 'Alî. 'Alî came to see al-Zubair. The latter unsheathed his sword, kept it beneath the carpet he was sitting upon, and then asked Abū Ḥabîba to call 'Alî inside the house. 'Alî came and stood in front of al-Zubair but he left the house in haste and al-Zubair asked Abū Ḥabîba to stand in the same place where 'Alî was standing just a few minutes before, to see whether there was any sign of the concealed sword. When Abū Ḥabîba stood at the same place he felt that the tip of the sword was touching his feet. Al-Zubair said : "That is why the man ('Alî) has left so hastily."[1]

Besides his maternal grandfather Abū Ḥabîba, Mūsa did also obtain reports from other trustworthy sources like 'Alqama b. Waqqāṣ al-Laithî. In the description of the battle of the Camel, he informed Mūsa that when 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubair came out to march forward, they encamped at *Dhāt 'Irq* and people presented themselves for recruitment. 'Urwa b. al-Zubair also came to join the army but he was rejected because of being too young.[2] A conversation between 'Alqama and Ṭalḥa at the time of the latter's departure to the scene of the battle is also given by Mūsa.[3]

These extracts from Mūsa b. 'Uqba have been quoted by al-Ṭabarî. Having been transmitted on the authority of his maternal grandfather Abū Ḥabîba, or through other knowledgeable sources, they mostly deal with the Caliphate period.

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 432.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 453.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 476.

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[illegible]nals of the Umayyad period (61 A.H.), he reports on the authority of Ibn Shihāb, the dismissal of Yezid b. 'Amr b. Sa'id[1] from the governorship of Medîna at the time of the parallel government formed by 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair. This report is also supported by some verses composed in the context of the events and contains some dialogues too. The style that the *ayyām* tales developed during the later centuries is clearly seen in such primitive reports as well as in other reports of al-Zuhrî already examined in his description. This is the only report of Mūsa through al-Zuhrî, which al-Ṭabarî has extracted from him.

Mūsa b. 'Uqba is also quoted by al-Ṭabarî in the description of the tenure of governorship of Khālid b. 'Abdillāh al-Qasrî who had been appointed by the Umayyads to curb the revolt of 'Abdullah b. al-Zubair who had taken refuge in the Ka'ba to avoid his arrest and murder. This report belongs to the year 91 A.H. and is the last quotation in al-Ṭabarî.[2]

Mūsa b. 'Uqba, undoubtedly, obtained knowledge of the *maghāzî* from al-Zuhrî, either directly or through his compilations, but al-Ṭabarî has not accepted the transmissions of al-Zuhrî on the subject of the *maghāzî* through Mūsa b. 'Uqba. These reports he accepts through other channels like those of Ma'mar b. Rāshid and Ibn Is'ḥāq.

In the *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* by al-Wāqidî, Mūsa b. 'Uqba appears only at five places. We have already discussed that Mūsa had prepared a list of those who had participated in the expeditions of the Prophet; particularly of those who had taken part in the Uḥud and the Badr battles. Mūsa gives a list of those who are called *Muṭ'imūn* i.e. those who provided meals to the Quraishites.[3] Next, he reports that on the day of the Conquest of Mecca, Ḥuwayṭib b. 'Abd al-'Uzza escaped and hid himself in the lavatory of 'Auf. When Abū Dharr came to use the lavatory he ran away in fright. Abū Dharr called

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 576.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* VI : 465.
3. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* I : 144-145.

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him saying : "Come on, you have been granted protection!" Then he went to see the Prophet and informed him that he had given shelter to Ḥuwayṭib and wanted to obtain his approval. The Prophet said : 'Have I not declared that all people of Mecca are protected except those whom I expressly order to be killed.'[1] This report of Mūsa is supported by the authority of al-Mundhir b. Jahm.

'Abdullah b. al-Zubair gave his *maulā* Abū Ḥabîba (maternal grandfather of Mūsa) a very detailed version of those who embraced Islam on the Day of the Conquest, those who took the oath of allegiance to the Prophet, the method of *bai'at* the Prophet observed for women, the acceptance of Islam by Ṣafwān b. Umayya etc.[2]

Al-Wāqidî quotes Mūsa b. 'Uqba on the authority of al-Zuhrî in the description of the battle of Ḥunayn. He says that Abū Bakr told the Prophet on the day of Ḥunayn that Muslims were not going to be outnumbered and dominated by the disbelievers on that day, as had been the case in the earlier battles. At this Allāh revealed to the Prophet the following :

"Allāh hath given you victory on many fields and on the day of Ḥunayn, when ye exulted in your multitude but it availed you naught, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you; then ye turned back in flight."[3]

Al-Wāqidî gives details of Dūmat al-Jandal[4] expedition (Rajab 9 A.H.) on the authority of Ibn al-'Abbās, 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda and Mūsa b. 'Uqba. Here he has amalgamated various reports and their chains have been cited collectively. But, the chief report is based on the version of Abū Ḥabîba which is transmitted by Mūsa.[5]

Mūsa had reduced to writing the lists of those who took part in important expeditions. Names of the participants in the Badr were collected from the notes of Shurḥabîl b. Sa'd

1. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* II : 849.
2. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* II : 850-855.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : IX : 25 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* X : 99, al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 890.
4. Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Buldān* II : 487-488.
5. al-Wāqidî : *Kitāb al-Maghāzî* III : 1025-1026.

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and the later historians refer to Mūsa b. 'Uqba in matters concerning the participation of the early believers.

Although Ibn Is'ḥāq has not utilized the reports of Mūsa in his work on the *Sīrah*, yet the book of Mūsa on the *maghāzī* has been accepted authentic by scholars like Shāfi'ī and Mālik b. Anas who prefer the version of Mūsa to that of other narrators. As Ibn Is'ḥāq reports, the battle of Trench had taken place in Shawwal, 5 A.H. But, the later writers accept the version of Mūsa that it occurred in 4 A.H.[1] Similarly, in the description of those who migrated to Abyssinia, Ibn Is'ḥāq has given three names from the tribe of Banū Makhzūm including Hishām b. Abî Ḥudhaifa. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr has added a note saying that the list prepared by Mūsa or Abū Ma'shar does not include his name.[2] Al-Suhailî also refers to the treatise of Mūsa on the *maghāzī* while explaining certain points in the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām.

His Work on Maghāzî :

Mūsa b. 'Uqba according to al-Sakhāwî, was the first scholar to have compiled a book on the subject of *maghāzī*.[3] Dîyār Bakrî, as stated earlier, had utilized the work of Mūsa in his *Tārîkh al-Khamîs* (compiled in 940 A.H.) of which a compendium is found in the Prussian State Library. It was edited with notes, translated into German by Edward Sachau, and was published in 1904. The manuscript contained fragments of the *maghāzī* of Mūsa b. 'Uqba.[4] Whatever fragments or extracts of Mūsa we have been able to look through, are sufficient to prove that the book did not merely deal with the subject of the *maghāzī* but, at least, contained the description of the Hijra also.[5] Although, as we have seen earlier, neither al-Wāqidî nor Ibn Hishām have obtained any report from Mūsa in their detailed versions of the

1. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 214 f.n.
2. Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* II : 364 f.n. II : 369.
3. al-Sakhāwî : *al-E'lān bi al-Taubîkh* p. 88. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* III : 405.
4. For extracts from the work of Mūsa see ; Ibn Kathîr : *al-Bidāya* III : 140, 149, 199, 242, 300, IV : 48.
5. Horovitz : *Early Biographies* IC vol I (1927) Ur. tr. p. 105.

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maghāzî, yet Ibn Sa'd, the famous pupil and secretary of al-Wāqidî, has obtained from Mūsa many details particularly in presenting the lists of emigrants or those of participants of wars etc. Al-Ṭabarî quotes him in the annals of the Caliphate and one of the reports of Mūsa is as recent as the period of Umayyads. A statement of 'Amr b. Zaid indicates that Mūsa had also made efforts to collect information about the pre-Islamic period.[1]

Style and Attitude of Mūsa :

Mūsa b. 'Uqba is quite particular about giving full authority chains. All transmissions that we have received from him are fully authenticated.[2] It is also proved by some of his chains that he had utilized written books and documents in the compilation of his work. He had access to the collection of 'Abdullāh b. al-'Abbās :

> "Kuraib (*maulā* 'Abdillāh b. al-'Abbās d. 98 A.H.) had placed at our disposal a camel-load of compiled books of Ibn al-'Abbās. Whenever 'Alî b. 'Abdillāh b. al-'Abbās needed any book, he used to write to me: 'Send me such and such book (*Ṣaḥîfa*)'. He used to copy it and return the original."[3]

Apart from compiled books on historical subjects he had with him some important documents also. At one place, he refers to the letter sent by the Prophet to al-Mundhir b. Sāwa.[4] In one of his reports he has also quoted poetical compositions. He is also particular about dating the events whenever it is possible for him.[5]

His Disciples :

The narrations of Mūsa have been mainly transmitted by his grandson Ismā'îl b. Ibrāhîm (d. 158 A.H.).[6] A grandson

1. al-Isbahānî : *al-Aghānî III* : *16* (vide Horovitz : op. cit.).
2. Horovitz : *The Earliest Biographies* IC (1927) Ur. tr. p. 107.
3. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* vol. V : 216.
4. al-Balādhurî : *Futūḥ* III : 8 (ed. De Goeje) vide Horovitz *op. cit.*
5. al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* : 27.
6. Ibn Sa'd : *Ṭabaqāt* V : 31.

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of [illegible] b. al-Zubair and Ibn Abî Sabra have also transmitted some reports from Mūsa.[1]

Ma'mar b. Rāshid (b. circa 96 A.H. - d. circa 154 A.D.)

Abū 'Urwa Ma'mar b. Rāshid is another distinguished disciple of al-Zuhrî. He was born at Baṣra and was, like other two eminent pupils of Ibn Shihāb, a *maulā* of the family of Banū Huddān of the tribe of Azd. He had obtained the knowledge of *ḥadīth* from Qatāda b. Di'āma (114 A.H.) during his early days at Baṣra. Sometime during the early decades of the second century he left Baṣra in search of knowledge and went to Yemen. The people of Yemen persuaded him and he settled in that country. He had also married a Yemenite woman there. But, it appears that every now and then he came to his hometown Baṣra, as we find him at the time of the death of his mother.

He died at the age of 56 in Yemen. The Qāḍî of Ṣan'ā had married his widow. Ma'mar is regarded by the critics and scholars as trustworthy in his transmissions and knowledgeable in the *maghāzî*. His main discipline was the *ḥadīth* literature, but he did also render great services to the subjects of the *maghāzī* and the *Sīrah*. According to some early sources, he had also compiled a treatise on the *maghāzî* of the Prophet. The book is now extinct, but the reports of Ma'mar are found in the early works transmitted through his pupil 'Abd al-Razzāq.

His Sources :

Ma'mar b. Rāshid has mainly transmitted the reports he received from al-Zuhrî. In most of the cases he is found to have asked questions from al-Zuhrî and preserved his answers to those questions. The plan of his work includes the pre-Islamic background of the *Sīrah*, the stories of the prophets, life of the Prophet at Mecca, the *Hijra*, and the *maghāzî*. Some of his reports deal with the events of the age of Caliphate also.

1. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 849.

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Al-Wāqidî has utilized the transmissions of Ma'mar in his *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* at more than 46 places. Al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Is'ḥāq, Ibn Sa'd and others also rely on him. According to Ibn Nadîm, he had compiled a book on the *maghāzī*. Ma'mar had also met Hammām b. Munabbih, (brother of Wahb b. Munabbih) (d. 131 A.H.) in his old age. Hammām read out his *Ṣaḥīfa* to Ma'mar and when due to old age, he felt tired, Ma'mar picked it up from his hand and read it himself before him.[1]

His Disciples :

Among his eminent disciples, besides 'Abd al-Razzāq[2] b. Hammām (126-211 A.H.), compiler of "*Muṣannaf 'Abd al-Razzāq*" in several volumes, is 'Abd al-Mun'im b. Idrîs, a nephew of Wahb b. Munabbih.

Ṣaḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih :

Ma'mar obtained Traditions of the Prophet from Hammām b. Munabbih and transmitted them to his pupils. The same work has been introduced and edited by Dr. Moḥammad Ḥamîdullāh and contains about 140 *ḥadīths*. Ma'mar was himself the compiler of a collection of *ḥadīths* which he had obtained from his teachers belonging to different regions. A manuscript of this work *Jāmi' Ma'mar b. Rāshid* has recently been discovered in Turkey University (Ismā'îl Sāib Collection No. 2164). It is moth-eaten and in a tattered condition, and was scribed in Tolede (Spain) during the year 364 A.H., Another copy of the same work scribed in 606 A.H. has been found in the Faiḍullāh Afandî Library Istanbul (No. 541). The order of this work of Ma'mar is not according to the transmissions followed in various *ḥadīth* collections, instead, it has been compiled subjectwise. It contains more than 200 pages.[3]

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1. Ḥamîdullāh : *Ṣaḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih* p. 54.
2. "Aḥmed b. Ḥanbal, Sufyān b. 'Uyaina and Yaḥyā b. Mo'in have transmitted from him." *Ibn Khallikān* : I : 303.
3. Ḥamîdullāh : *Saḥîfa Hammām b. Munabbih* p. 55 (f.n.) 4th edition (Islamic Publications Society, Hyderabad, 1956).

An [illegible]mination of his Reports :

I. Genesis :

The name of Ma'mar occurs in the history of al-Ṭabarī for more than 36 times. First, he appears in the description of the Genesis and tells us on the authority of al-A'mash that Ibn al-'Abbās informed him that the first thing that Allah created was the pen.[1] Then he describes the verse of the Qur'ān : "And His throne was upon the water ;"[2] when asked by Ibn al-'Abbās where was the water, he said, "on the air." In a verse of the Qur'ān that reads : "And one of them who should say : 'Lo I am a God beside Him,' that one We should repay with hell."[3] He informs us on the authority of Qatāda b. Di'āma that here Satan is meant by Allah. Another commentary is referred to him by 'Abd al-Razzāq on the authority of Qatāda that the verse : "And He taught Adam all the names,"[4] means that Allah taught him : this is mountain, that is ocean etc.

II. History of the Prophets :

In the history of Prophethood he narrates from Qatāda that Allah sent down Adam on the earth and he landed in India.[5] The Sacred Home (Ka'ba) was built for Adam.[6]

At first, the Home was sent down for him from heavens. It was like a single piece of pearl or ruby. At the time of the Deluge, Allah elevated it to heavens and only its foundations were left on the earth, which afterwards Abraham erected inspired by revelation from Him. This report has been given on the authority of Abān b. 'Uthmān [7] Commenting on the Qur'ānic verse : "Mankind were one community, and Allah

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1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 34.
2. *al-Qur'ān* : XI : 7 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* 12 : 4 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 40.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : XXI : 29 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 82.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : II : 31 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 98.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 121.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 123.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 132—I tend to believe that here Abān b. 'Uthmān al-Bajalî is meant and not our Abān son of the Caliph 'Uthmān.

sent (unto them) Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners..."[1]

Ma'mar informs us that all people were on the right path ; and afterwards they went astray. Another commentary of the verse : "And remember when his Lord tried Abraham with His commands"[2]—Ma'mar presents a mythological version of the nature of this trial, connecting his chain with Ibn al-'Abbās. Another report about this verse has been cited on the authority of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî.[3] In the commentary of another verse : "Bethink thee of him who had an argument with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom ; how, when Abraham said : My Lord is He who giveth life and causeth death, he answered : I give life and cause death. Abraham said : Lo Allah causeth the Sun to rise in the East, so do thou cause it to come up from the West. Thus was the disbeliever abashed."[4]

Ma'mar tells, on the authority of Zaid b. Aslam, the story of Namrūd and his confrontation with Ibrāhîm, the details of which seem to have been borrowed from the Jewish sources. The remaining portion of his narration of the history of Ibrāhîm is quoted in the commentary of the verse : "And when Our messengers brought Abraham the good news (that he was to have a son), they said : Lo we are about to destroy the people of that township, for its people are wrongdoers. He said : Lo Lot is there. They said : We are best aware of who is there. We are to deliver him and his household, all save his wife, who is of those who stay behind."[5]

In commenting on these verses he again cites small details about the matter and the dialogues between Abraham and those messengers of God. Such details clearly bear the stamp of Jewish traditions.

1. *al-Qur'ān* : II : 213 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* IV : 275 *Tārîkh* I : 178.
2. *al-Qur'ān* : II : 124 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* : III : 14 *Tārîkh* I : 280, 284.
3. al-Ṭabarî *Tārîkh* I : 285 : *Tārîkh* I : 287-288.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : II : 258 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* III, 23-27.
5. *al-Qur'ān* : XXIX : 31-32 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* : XXII : 55 *Tārîkh* I : 298, 303, 305.

Ma'mar is quite particular about citing his chain of authority in all narrations, but sometimes he avoids it as he says in the story of Sho'ayb commenting on the verse: "There came on them the retribution of the day of gloom,"[1] that "a man from among our companions has reported from some of the scholars."[2] Here, Ma'mar seems to have deliberately avoided the names of his informants, as they might have been the Yemenite jews.

In the story of Joseph he is cited in the commentary of the verse : "We inspired in him (Joseph) Thou wilt tell them of this deed of theirs when they know thee not."[3] Ma'mar says, on the authority of Qatāda, that Joseph was inspired while he was still in the pit he was thrown off therein. When Joseph's brethren embarked on their journey to Egypt their father Jacob said : "O my sons, go not in by one gate,[4] go in by different gates," according to Ma'mar it was because Jacob feared lest an evil eye should afflict his children as all of them were quite handsome. Then he explains the words of Allah : "And they brethren fell down before him (Joseph) prostrate,"[5] that it was a common practice of those days that people prostrated to show their reverence to elders.

Most of these transmissions of Ma'mar are taken from Qatāda and are basically in regard to the *tafsîr* of the Qur'ān, which he might have obtained from his teacher. The influence of the Jewish and the Yemenite traditions is also discernible in most of them. We do not think that these extracts of Ma'mar, dealing with the stories of the Prophets have been taken from his work on the *Sîrah* and from its chapter on the Genesis (*al-Mubtadā*).

But, what Ma'mar has reported from Isma'îl b. Sadūs, on the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih, regarding the story of the People of the Cave (*ahl al-Kahf*), is of quite different nature and style, and might have been a part of his work on the *Sîrah*.

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1. *al-Qur'ān* : XXVI : 189 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārikh* I : 328.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 228.
3. *al-Qur'ān* : XII : 15 al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 332.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : XII : 67 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XIII : 13.
5. *al-Qur'ān* : XII : 100, al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 362.

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One of the devouts of Christ, according to this report, wanted to enter the city of the people of the Cave. He was told that there was an idol fixed on the gateway of the city and everyone who wanted to enter the city was obliged to prostrate in front of the idol. The devout disliked the practice and came to a bathing place situated by the city wall. He concealed his identity from the owner of the bath, but the master felt that (after employing the devout as servant) the bath (*Ḥammām*) yielded more profit than before and that his earnings were pouring in copiously. Now, the devout began to present to the master the religion (of Islam) and convinced him gradually. Some youths of the city joined him and he used to inform them about the affairs of the hereafter, so much so that they became believers and their faith also became as firm as was his. He had made an agreement with the master of the bath that he would be free during nights and that none would interfere with his prayers at night. One day, a prince entered the *Ḥammām* with a woman. The devout reproached him saying that being a prince it did not behove him to enter the *Ḥammām* with the woman. The prince felt ashamed of his action and went away. But next time he came and without caring for the devout's sermon he entered the *Ḥammām* with a woman and both of them died there. When the news reached the king he sent for the devout but he escaped... Thus goes on the story of the people of the Cave.[1] Ma'mar also informs us that these people were from a royal family of Rome and Allah had guided them toward Islam.

The Sîrah : Family of the Prophet :

Ma'mar tells us about the father of the Prophet that he was a very handsome young man.[2] But what he has reported about the marriage of 'Abdullāh b. 'Abdil Muṭṭalib has not been accepted by al-Wāqidî. Similarly, al-Wāqidî denies the report of Ma'mar that Khadîja had employed the Prophet and another man from the tribe of Quraish, to go to Ḥubāsha in

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XV : 136 *Tārîkh* II : 7-9.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 246.

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[illegible], and that Khuwailid was the man who had arranged the marriage of the Prophet with Khadîja.[1]

Beginning of Revelation :

In the plan of the *Sīrah*, the narration of the early life of the Prophet and the conditions under which he realized that he had been entrusted with the most sacred responsibility of propagating monotheism and eradicating polytheism, are written under the title *bad'a al-waḥî*, or the beginning of the revelation. In al-Ṭabarî, we find Ma'mar with a report that for some time the Prophet did not receive any revelations and he was quite anxious, so much so that he went to the top of a mountain with the intention of committing suicide, but when he made an effort to jump down, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and consoled him saying that he was a Prophet sent by Allah for the guidance of all so he should not feel frustrated.[2]

The Prophet at Medîna :

In the annals of the first Hijra year, al-Ṭabarî reports the death of As'ad b. Zurāra, who died at Medîna before the construction of the Mosque was complete. Ma'mar says that the Prophet had treated As'ad b. Zurāra with cauterization method.[3]

In the account of the Battle of Badr, it is reported, on the authority of Ma'mar, that three hundred ten and odd persons were on the side of the Prophet.[4]

The Prophet had, in the year 4 A.H., expelled the Jews of Banū al-Naḍîr from Medîna, and they were deported to Syria.[5] His next report is about the Truce of Ḥudaibîya (6 A.H.) and here he also informs us, on the authority of 'Urwa

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 282.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 305.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 398 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* Ibn al-Athîr : *Nihāya* IV : 240-241.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 433.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 554.

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and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam through al-Zuhrî, that when the Prophet came out of Ḥudaibiya, he had with him one hundred ten and odd followers. It means that Ma'mar had been particular about keeping the record of those who participated in various expeditions.[1]

The Prophet had alighted at a place of stagnant water. Such minute details[2] of this campaign have come down from the source of Ma'mar.[3] The account of Ḥudaibiya has been transmitted by Ma'mar as he obtained from al-Zuhrî who in turn had been informed by al-Miswar b. Makhrama and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.

Biographical Details :

Apart from the account of the Prophet's expeditions (*maghāzî*), Ma'mar paid attention even to minute biographical details of the Prophet. He tells us names of various mounts that the Prophet kept in service, particularly about the *Duldul* which was presented to him by Muqauqis.[4]

Election of Abū Bakr :

One of his reports in al-Ṭabarî is about the election of Abū Bakr and he informs us that al-'Abbās and Fāṭima (daughter of the Prophet) had come to Abū Bakr to demand their inheritance.[5]

The Caliphate of 'Umar :

In the annals of the year 17 A.H. Ma'mar deals with the circumstances that led to the removal of Mughîra from the governorship of Baṣra and the appointment of Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arî,[6] Again, he appears in the description of the Syrian conquests by the Muslims. He informs us that (in the year 31 A.H.) Moḥammad b. Abî Ḥudhaifa and Moḥammad b.

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 621.
2. For detailed account of the Truce see : Afzal Iqbāl : *The Prophet's Diplomacy* (Claude Stark & Co. Mass. U.S. 1975) pp. 142.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* II : 625-626, 637.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 174.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 207-208.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 69.

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[illegible] had come out to mobilize public opinion against 'Uthmān on the pretext that he had deviated from the practices of his predecessors and hence his elimination would be totally justified.[1]

The Period of Mu'āwiya :

That Ma'mar had been interested in the historical accounts of his age, is sufficiently proved by his report about the letters exchanged between al-Mughîra and Mu'āwiya of which he gives texts.[2] This report has been transmitted on the authority of Ja'far b. Burqān.

When Ma'mār was residing in Yemen, he must have received information from the family of Wahb b. Munabbih also. This conjecture is supported by a transmission which he narrates from Hammām b. Munabbih, brother of Wahb. In this report he praises Mu'āwiya for his generosity and politeness comparing his character with that of 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair who, according to Ibn al-'Abbās, the first reporter, was stiff and reticent.[3]

Al-Wāqidî has also taken from Ma'mar about 46 reports regarding various expeditions of the Prophet. Some of these reports are connected with the commentary of the Qur'anic verses;[4] others occur in the description of the battle of Badr,[5] the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf,[6] expedition on Banū Sulaim,[7] the battle of Badr (in collective chains),[8] expedition of al-Rajî',[9] expedition on Banū al-Naḍîr,[10] Badr' al-Mau'id,[11] al-Muraisa' (in collective chains),[12] Battle of the Trench,[13]

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 292.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 331.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 337.
4. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 18, 70.
5. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 91, 110.
6. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 184.
7. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 196.
8. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 199, 235, 236.
9. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 358.
10. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 379.
11. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 384.
12. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* I : 404, II : 435.
13. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 440.

Banū Quraiẓa,[1] Banū Liḥyān,[2] Truce of Ḥudaibiya,[3] *Bai'at al-Riḍwān*,[4] expedition on Khaibar,[5] (in collective chains), Prophet's return from Khaibar to Medîna,[6] despatch to Fadak in Sha'bān 9 A.H.,[7] Conquest of Mecca,[8] (in collective chains), expedition on Banî Jadhîma,[9] Battle of Ḥunayn,[10] al-Ji'irrāna,[11] Dūmat al-Jandal,[12] Battle of Tabūk,[13] the Last Pilgrimage of the Prophet[14] (in collective chains), March of the military despatch under the command of Usāma b. Zaid.[15]

Al-Wāqidî has exploited the compiled work of Ma'mar on the subject of *maghāzî*, as is obviously seen in the arrangement and coherence of the material that has been reported on the authority of Ma'mar. In all these reports the chief informant of Ma'mar is al-Zuhrî, who tells him what he received from 'Urwa. But, as we have noticed at several places, Ma'mar had acquired knowledge of the *maghāzî*, the *Sîrah*, and other biographical details of the Prophet, from other scholars of the Medîna school, as well as he got reports from some Yemenite scholars like Hammām b. Munabbih during his stay in the Yemen. His interest in the historical material of his age was not confined only to the narrations of the *maghāzî* but he had also reported matters concerning the period of the rightly-guided Caliphate. Some of his reports cover even the history of the court of the Umayyads.

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1. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzi* II : 486, 505, 507, 509.
2. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 535 Ibn Hishām : *Sîrah* III : 292.
3. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 586-587 Ibn al-Athîr : *Nihāya* III : 107.
4. *al-Qur'ān* : XLVIII : 18 al-Ṭabarî : *Tafsîr* XXVI : 85, al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* : II : 621.
5. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 633, 695, 696.
6. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 715, 717.
7. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 725.
8. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* II : 781, 865.
9. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 875, 877, 881.
10. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 889, 890, 898, 901.
11. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 945.
12. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 1045.
13. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 1076.
14. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 1088, 1092, 1105, 1108, 1110, 1115.
15. al-Wāqidî : *Maghāzî* III : 1126.

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CHAPTER X

Towards the Age of Chronicles (Ḥauliyyāt)

Early narrations of the Days of the Arab (*ayyām al-'Arab*) and the historical anecdotes (*akhbār*)[1] which had a limited canvas of time and people, developed into the universal form of history of a nation or community with comparatively wide scope and treatment. By the advent of the Abbasid period, it had assumed the character of 'historical anecdotes' in chronological sequence, and the term '*ḥauliyyāt*' was applied to it. The basic material of *ḥauliyyāt* is '*khabar*' minus chronology. The style of *khabar* resembled that of the narratives of *ayyām* in as much as it was supported by poetical compositions, and its subject-matter lacked proper interlink and cohesion. But, at the same time, it was different in respect of dating and chronology of events vis-a-vis the *akhbār*. On further development, '*khabar*' attained the form of annalistic recording which meant compilation of historical events according to the sequence of their occurrence and it was distinctly different from *khabar*, in its being cohesive and interlinked with other anecdotes.

1. During the third century the outstanding *akhbārī* were al-Haitham b. 'Adī (d. 207 A.H.) and al-Zubair b. Bakkār (d. 256 A.H.). Among more scientifically compiled annals we may mention *al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa* by Ibn Qutaiba (d. 276 A.H.) and *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl* by Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī (d. 282 A.H.).

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What is more important from the view-point of our present study, is to consider these early annalistic histories as a step forward in the direction of writing universal general histories which the Arab historiographers undertook during the fourth century, so well-represented by the famous historian al-Ṭabarî.

The tribal anecdotes of the Iraq School of history, and the annals recorded in chronological sequence, are clearly distinguished from each other, and their gradual development can be seen distinctively.

The Iraq School specialized in exploitation of the material collected by the philologists which mainly consisted of tribal traditions, legends and poetry. The traditions of the tribe of Azd were collected by Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ b. Yaḥyā al-Azdî (d. 157 A.H./774 A.D.) from whom Hishām b. Moḥammad al-Kalbî transmitted them onward to later historians. These *akhbār* and traditions are anti-Umayyad and pro-'Alîd in their spirit. Abū Mikhnaf concentrated on the traditions highlighting various aspects of the Shî'a movement in Iraq.

Another contemporary of Abū Mikhnaf, who is also a famous *akhbārî*, on whom later historiographers have mainly depended in obtaining reports of the civil wars between Banū Umayya and Banū Hāshim, is 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam (d. 147 A.H./764 A.D. or 158 A.H./775 A.D.). He had a special knowledge of the *akhbār* of Banū Kalb. These reports have come down to us through the channel of Hishām b. al-Kalbî and go in favour of the Syrians.

The third tribe Banū Tamîm was covered by another distinguished reporter Saif b. 'Umar (d. circa 180 A.H./ 796 A.D.), who has presented them in the form of tribal saga. Saif heavily depends on poetical compositions which are so thickly intervowen with prose narrations that the style of the *ayyām*-tales of the old Arab seems to have been revived. But, these tribal *akhbār* are richer in material and more dependable with regard to their authenticity than the *ayyām*

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Moreover, contrary to the *ayyām al-'Arab*, these *akhbār* have been compiled with proper chains of authority and in this particular respect they resemble the *ḥadīth* literature. Some scholars are of the view that the practice of compilation of the *akhbār* along with their chains of authority was introduced by the famous Traditionist al-Sha'bî (d. 110 A.H./728 A.D.).

Another work of Saif b. 'Umar has dealt with the murder episode of 'Uthmān. It shows a direct impact of the political events on the early historiography as well as it provides clues to interpolations in historical material as a result of political partisanship. In spite of these facts, al-Ṭabarî prefers the transmissions of Saif b. 'Umar to the reports coming from the channel of al-Wāqidî. It speaks of the development of scientific methods of historiography and evolution of a more vivid concept of critical appreciation of available sources, but the Traditionists regard al-Wāqidî as an unreliable source for their purpose.

Besides, the impact of traditions of other tribes like the Bahila, regarding the wars of Qutaiba b. Muslim, is also found on the Iraq School of historiography. During the first and second centuries, the transmitters of the *akhbār*, the *ansāb*, poetry and philology, had been separately engaged in their respective activities. The *akhbār*-reporters were playing an important role in the development of history writing. But, sometimes, we notice the reporters encroaching upon the fields of one another and transgressing ones own jurisdiction. Kūfa and Baṣra were the centres of these activities, as there were strong settlements of Bedouin tribes; and that is why the characteristics of the Iraq School flourished in these twin cities. These *akhbār* or tribal traditions were narrated at nocturnal tribal gatherings, or in assemblies of an *amīr*, or sometimes, even in the city mosques. The central theme of these *akhbār* was glorification of tribal exploitations and achievements. These *akhbār* were regarded as a common heritage of the entire tribe. With the emergence of civilization and inflation of wealth the hired *akhbārîs* and the pro-

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fessional story-tellers came to flourish. They specialized in the traditions, the *ansāb*, the *akhbār* and the poetry of a particular tribe or tribes, and earned their livelihood as well as social distinction and popularity. Now, the transmitters of poetry had gone into oblivion but, thanks to the historical literature their reports had enriched, and our knowledge about the *akhbār* narrators is not so obscure and scanty. The practice of the compilation of the *akhbār* was introduced during the Umayyad period and the *akhbārīs* had acquired a position a little higher than that of a *Qāṣṣ* (story-teller), but lower than that of a *muḥaddith*, and their reports were collected according to the subject they dealt with, like the war of Ṣiffîn or the episode of Karbalā etc.

The *akhbārîs* are also responsible for introducing and promoting the tribal outlook of historiography in the Iraqi School. In order to collect their historical material, they rushed to such family traditions as were commonly prevalent in the city assemblies. Then to complement these anecdotes—particularly those concerned with the Caliphate period—they exploited the material accumulated by the transmitters of Medîna School. State records like the *Dîwān al-Ḥātim* etc. and army registers containing descriptions of various tribes, were also preserved in Iraq and Syria, which the *akhbārîs* have obviously exploited.[1]

What is more important to observe is the fact that the *akhbārîs* could not bypass the channel of authentication rules in their reportings because the practice had become, by that time, under the influence of the *ḥadîth*-scholars, an essential pre-requisite of history-writing and reporting, be it *ḥadîth* or *akhbār*. But, these *akhbārîs* applied the rules of authentication comparatively in a liberal way, and sometimes, even unscrupulously. Notwithstanding, the significance of the chain of authority increased during this period and we find the *akhbār*-reporters gradually deviating from the orthodox rules of Muslim historiography.

1. al-Dūrî : *Baḥth fî Nash'at 'Ilm al-Tārîkh* p. 34.

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accumulation of the *akhbār* had become a cultural phenomenon of the Muslim society of that time in every city, but only such *akhbārs* of the early period have survived as are found *et passim* in the works of al-Ṭabarî, al-Dînawarî, Ibn Qutaiba or al-Balādhurî etc. No separate book containing them is available to us.

'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam : (d. 147 A.H./764 A.D.)

'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam, a reporter from the centre of political and cultural activities—Kūfa, had a special liking for poetry and genealogy. He represented the Syrian view of the political issues of his period and had also compiled biographies of Mu'āwiya and other important personalities of Banū Umayya. The book must have been a history of the Umayyad dynasty, with special reference to the succeeding Umayyad rulers.[1] A treatise entitled *Kitāb al-Tārîkh* is also attributed to him which probably deals with the history of Islam during the first century. Later historians have extracted from this work and a careful study of these quotations shows that the work deals with the Caliphate, the Apostasy, the Arab Conquests of Iraq and Syria, conflicts between 'Alî and his opponents, Cession by al-Ḥasan and general political conditions in Iraq and Syria till the end of the reign of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.

His reports regarding political conflicts during the Umayyad period reflect a deep insight and awareness. A considerable portion of those reports must have been obtained from the elder members of the tribe of Banū Kalb, the allies of the Umayyads, whom 'Awāna had specially studied.[2] He had relations with such Kalbites as had settled down in Syria and were closely connected with the Umayyad court. But, 'Awāna never enjoyed the patronage of Banū Umayya directly. 'Awāna generally represents the Syrian, or more precisely the Umayyad[3] version of an event vis-a-vis

1. Rosenthal : *History of Muslim Historiography, p. 92.*
2. Yāqūt : *Mu' jam al-Udabā* VI : 95.
3. *Lisān al-Mîzān* IV : p. 386.

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the Irāqi reporters. He has on many occasions emphasized the Umayyad version. Nevertheless, sometimes, he presents Iraqi and Madanî versions which seldom go in favour of the Umayyads. On such occasions he seems quite impartial and free from political bias or prejudices.

Reports of 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam have been transmitted to us by Ibn al-Kalbî, al-Madā'inî, and Haitham b. 'Adî who had either received those anecdotes from 'Awāna directly or from his compiled books on those subjects. His plan of a general history on the principles of coherent historical anecdotes in chronological order, or his writing the *Sîrah* of the Caliphs, clearly show a step forward in the direction of universal history. He has also employed the 'chains of authority' occasionally, and the use of poetry in historical anecdotes mirrors the impact of the *ayyām*-tales on his diction and style.

Ibn al-Nadîm has given a list of his works which include :[1]

1. *Kitāb al-Tārîkh* :
2. *Sîrah Mu'āwiya wa Banî Umayya* : According to Ibn al-Nadîm some say that the work actually belongs to Manjab b. Hārith which is not true.

Saif b. 'Umar Usayyidî Tamînî : (d. 180/796 A.D.).

Saif b. 'Umar also belongs to the School of Kūfa. Ibn al-Nadîm gives the following list of his works :[2]

1. *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Kabîr wa al-Riddah* :

2. *Kitāb al-Jamal wa Masîr 'Ā'isha wa 'Alî* : This work deals with the murder-episode of 'Uthmān, and Saif transmitted it through Sho'ayb b. Ibrāhîm.[3] In my opinion the word '*Masîr*' is perhaps the scribe's error, it might well be '*Siyar*' in the original.

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1. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 223.
2. Ibn Nadîm : *al-Fihrist* p. 228 Ibn Ḥajar : *Tehdhîb* Vol. IV : pp. 295-296.
3. Ibn Nadîm *al-Fihrist* : p. 228.

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his reports, Saif combines both versions of Iraq and Medina regarding major political events, but basically he represents the Irāqi view of history and derives major portions of his narrations from the tribal traditions of Banū Tamīm to which he himself belonged. His reports on the *Futūḥ* of Iraq more vividly represent the views of Banū Tamīm, and in their style the impact of the *ayyām*-tales is also easily discernible.

Among his major transmitters are Hishām b. 'Urwa and Ibn Is'ḥāq.[1]

Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ b. Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd b. Mikhnaf b. Sulaim al-Azdī : (d. 157 A.H. / 774 A.D.)

Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ b. Yaḥyā b. Mikhnaf, the famous *akhbārī* of the last days of the Umayyad period, belonged to Kūfa and had specialized in genealogical studies. His grandfather, a partisan of 'Alī,[2] laid down his life in the battle of Ṣiffīn.[3]

Abū Mikhnaf has dealt with the subject of *Riddah* (apostasy) as well as with the conquests in Iraq and Syria, and the battle of Ṣiffīn. Other incidents of the Umayyad period, particularly of Iraq, like the upsurge of the Khārijites, civil disturbances, wars etc. are the subject of his more than thirty works which he is reported to have compiled.[4]

Abū Mikhnaf is not very particular about and scrupulous in authority chains. He has abundantly incorporated

1. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* Vol. III : 185-187.
2. Mikhnaf, his grandfather, was a Companion of the Prophet. Some *ḥadīths* have also been transmitted by him which are found in the *ḥadīth*-collections. (Ibn Ḥajar : *al-Iṣāba* Vol. I p. 753 al-Ṭabarī : *al-Dhail* p. 2367, *Usd al-Ghāba* IV p. 339.)
   Mikhnaf had three brothers : 'Abd Shams was killed in the battle of al-Nukhaila, al-Ṣaq'ab and 'Abdullah were killed in the battle of the Camel. (*al-Dhail* p. 2367).
3. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* Vol. I p. 3302 (Leiden ed.).
4. Ibn Nadīm : *al-Fihrist* p. 93, Yāqūt : *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, Vol. IV : 99, 220-221.

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in his narratives, especially in the narration of Ṣiffîn episode, the tribal stories and the local gossips. For these reasons, the *muḥaddith* scholars regard him as a weak source. He has heavily relied on the tales of his own tribe Azd also.[1] Some other Kūfî traditions have also served as the source of his information.[2] Scholars like al-Sha'bî, are among those from whom he obtained knowledge. Moreover, he derived information from the tribes of Tamîm, Hamdān, Ṭayy, Kinda etc. and complemented them with the narrations which he received from the Madanî transmitters. He has applied many chains of authority in his narratives which change according to the subject they deal with.[3]

Abū Mikhnaf presents the Irāqî (or precisely speaking the Kūfî) version of the events and expressly sympathizes with the Irāqi (Shî'a) party. His reports are, however, not free from tribal glorifications, though in the *akhbār* he tries to remain impartial. The chronological sequence is also found in his narratives, but their internal link is either at times missing or very obscure. In some cases, his reports are alive, substantial and having dramatic touch. Sometimes, he quotes lengthy dialogues in full, and cites complete texts of lectures or discourses.[4] He does also use poetical compositions for the embellishment of a report and in this regard his narratives bear a very close resemblance with the *ayyām* tales or the *Qiṣaṣ* (stories).

His Works :[5]

Abū Mikhnaf has dealt with the anecdotes of the Umay-

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1. Ibn Qutaiba : *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* p. 194.
   Fawāt al-Wafayāt Vol. II, p. 135, *Tehdhîb* IV : 295.
   al-Dūrî : *Baḥth* p. 35 Aḥmed Amîn : *Ḍuhā al-Islām* II : 341-342.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 3323-3325-3202-3203, 3270.
   al-Balādhurî : *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, Vol. V : 19-20.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* I : 3296, 3298, 3303.
   al-Balādhurî : *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* Vol. V : 34, 35, 300, 301.
4. See also Brocklemann : G.A.L. I : 65 Supl. I p. 213.
5. Abū Mikhnaf is also particular, as far as possible, about citing dates of significant events. For example, he has reported that 'Umar sent 'Utba b. Ghazwān to the site of Baṣra in 14 A.H., with the purposer of driving away the Persians from al-Madāin and its suburbs afte- the victory at Jilaulā, and that this was the beginning of the founda tion of Baṣra city. (al-Mas' ūdî : *al-Tanbîh wa al-Ishrāf* p. 310).

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period and later historiographers have mainly derived their information from Abū Mikhnaf. Saif b. 'Umar al-Tamîmî is among those who transmitted the *akhbār* from him to posterity. Ibn al-Nadîm has given the following list of the works of Abū Mikhnaf :

1. *Kitāb al-Riddah*
2. *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Shām*
3. *Kitāb Futūḥ al-'Irāq*
4. *Kitāb al-Jamal*
5. *Kitāb Ṣiffîn*
6. *Kitāb Ahl Naharwān wa al-Khawārij*
7. *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*
8. *Kitāb al-Khirrît b. Rāshid wa Banî al-Najî'*
9. *Kitāb Maqtal Ḥijr b. 'Adî*
10. *Kitāb Maqtal Moḥammad b. Abî Bakr wa al-Ashtar wa Moḥammad b. Abî Ḥudhaifa*
11. *Kitāb al-Shūrā wa Maqtal 'Uthmān*
12. *Kitāb al-Mustaurid b. 'Ullafa*
13. *Kitāb Maqtal al-Ḥusain*
14. *Kitāb Wafāt Mu'āwiya wa Wilāyat Ibnihî Yazîd wa Waq'at al-Ḥarra wa Ḥiṣār Ibn al-Zubair*
15. *Kitāb Mukhtār b. Abî 'Ubaid*
16. *Kitāb Sulaimān b. Ṣurad wa 'Ain al-Warda*
17. *Kitāb Marj Rāhiṭ wa Bai'at Marwān wa Maqtal Daḥḥāk b. Qais*
18. *Kitāb Muṣ'ab wa Wilāyat al-'Irāq*
19. *Kitāb Maqtal 'Abdillāh b. al-Zubair*
20. *Kitāb Maqtal Sa'îd b. al-'Āṣ*
21. *Kitāb Hadîth Yā Ḥumayrā wa Maqtal Ibn al-Ash'ath*
22. *Kitāb Bilāl al-Khārijî*
23. *Kitāb Najdat Abî Qubais*
24. *Kitāb Ḥadîth al-Azāriqa*

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25. *Kitāb Ḥadīth Rustaqbadh*
26. *Kitāb Shabīb al-Khārijī wa Ṣāliḥ Ibn Masraḥ*
27. *Kitāb Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra*
28. *Kitāb Dayr al-Jamājim wa Khala' 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ash'ath*
29. *Kitāb Yazīd b. al-Muhallab wa Maqtaluhū*
30. *Kitāb Khālid b. 'Abdillāh b. al-Qasrī wa Yūsuf b. 'Umar wa Maut Hishām wa Wilāyat al-Walīd*
31. *Kitāb Yaḥya*
32. *Kitāb al-Daḥḥāk al-Khārijī*
33. *Kitāb Maqtal 'Alī*

An Examination of his Reports :

Abū Mikhnaf's name occurs in the history of al-Ṭabarī for more than 345 times. His first appearance is in the description of the last illness of the Prophet when he reports, on the authority of al-Ṣaq'ab b. Zuhair, a jurist of Medina, that the Prophet had fallen ill during the last days of Ṣafar and that at that time he was in the house of Zainab b. Jaḥsh.[1] On hearing the news of his illness, he adds, all his wives, al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib etc. came to his house. Asmā b. 'Umais suggested that the Prophet might be suffering from pleurisy and on her advice they heated him.[2] Next reference to Abū Mikhnaf is in the discussion about the day and date of the death of the Prophet, who holds that 'the Prophet died at noon, on Monday, the 2nd Rabī' I, and Abū Bakr was elected on the same day.'[3]

He has also obtained information from 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī 'Amra al-Anṣārī about the proceedings at the Saqīfa of Banī Sā'ada on the question of

1. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* III : 187.
2. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* III : 196.
3. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* III : 200.

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[illegible].[1] In this report he has entered into details and has cited full dialogues and debates regarding the question of the *Khilāfat*. His reports on the *Riddah* are also found in the history of al-Ṭabarî, which might have been taken from his work on the subject listed above.[2] In these reports, he has quoted poetical compositions in the style of the *ayyām*-tales.[3]

From *Riddah* we find his reports in the *Futūḥ* narrations[4] through Hishām b. al-Kalbî, and this information he cites on the authority of a person from Bakr b. Wā'il. Two points are worth our notice in these reports : First, he quotes from or refers to various letters or communications between the centre and the commanders in forward areas. Secondly, his attitude in citing the authority chains becomes quite liberal when he refers to '*a person from the tribe of...*'[5] and the like. Lastly, he quotes the texts of documents to support his reports. For example, he has given the text of the letter written by Khālid b. al-Walîd to the people of al-Madā'in.[6] At the same time, he does not ignore to mention the date and time of an event whenever it is possible for him to specify e.g. : '*and it was in the year 12 A.H.*'[7]

He tells us that after the death of Mahrān in Ṣafar, 14 A.H. 'Umar had commissioned 'Utba b. Ghazwān to guard the border areas of Ḥîra and to see that the Persians not encroach upon the Muslim territory in their attempt to avenge their defeat at *Jilaulā*. 'Utba descended in the outskrit of Baṣra with some 500 bedouin, in Rabî' I, or II, 14 A.H. The place was at that time called *Arḍ al-Hind* because pebbles of small size were found there in plenty. It was the origin of the city of Baṣra.[8]

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 218, 222.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 254, 255.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 267.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 344-345.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 344.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 346.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 346.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* III : 590-591, al-Mas'ūdî : *al-Tanbîh wa al-Ishrāf* : 309.

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Again, he figures in the description of the events of *Shūrā* and the death of 'Umar.[1] The report is quite detailed and al-Ṭabarî has incorporated various versions into a single report with a collective chain in the beginning. But, the material of this report must have been extracted from his work (No. 11).

That Abū Mikhnaf used to collect information from tribal sources is evident from his report regarding the expedition to Ādharbāijān and Armenia led by al-Walîd b. 'Uqba. This report has been obtained by a member of his own clan Farwa b. Laqîṭ al-Azdî al-Ghāmidî, who might have joined the expedition with the Kūfî soldiers.[2] Here in this report he has given full text of a letter of 'Uthmān addressed to al-Walîd b. 'Uqba.[3] In the anecdotes of 31 A.H , he describes the *Futūḥ* of Khurāsān.[4] His report on the pledge of allegiance to 'Alî after the murder of 'Uthmān was obtained through the channel of Moḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya, son of 'Alî.[5] This must have been taken by al-Ṭabarî from his work No. 11 or No. 33. Another report on the period of 'Alî (year 36 A.H./657 A.D.) is about the conversation of Qatāda with 'Alî advising him to embark on quelling the rebels.[6] Abān b. 'Uthmān was deputed to consult 'Ā'isha in the case of a prisoner in 36 A.H., and the report is given by al-Ṭabarî[7] on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf which might have been taken from his work No. 4. He has also cited the text of a letter of 'Ā'isha addressed to al-Khālid Zaid b. Sūhān and its reply.[8] 'Alî's encampment at Rabadha and arrival of the members of Banū Ṭayy, is also reported by Abū Mikhnaf.[9]

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 227-229.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 246.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 247.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 301.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 429.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 451.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 468.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 476.
9. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 478.

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report occurs on the occasion of the deputation of al-Ḥasan from Dhî Qār along with 'Ammār b. Yāsir to repulse the people of Kūfa.[1] The description of the battle of the Camel between 'Ā'isha and 'Alî (36 A.H.) is taken from his work No. 4, and Abū Mikhnaf has also used poetry in this version.[2] Another information about this battle reached Abū Mikhnaf through 'Abbād b. 'Abdillah b. al-Zubair, a participant in the event.[3] One after another, people came forward to hold the reins of the Camel of 'Ā'isha. Their description is fairly in detail and a member of the tribe of Azd, al-Ḥārith b. Zuhair comes forward bravely reciting a *rajaz* in the typical *ayyām* style. These portions are quite probably from work No. 4 and depict clearly the impact of the *ayyām*-tales on the diction and style of our reporter.[4]

At the end he refers to a dialogue between 'Ammār b. Yāsir and 'Ā'isha, after the battle of the Camel, and in this chapter he informs us, on the authority of 'Abbās b. Sahl al Sa'îdî,[5] that Moḥammad b. Abî Ḥudhaifa[5] b. 'Utba b. Rabî'a had got infilterated the Egyptians into the house of 'Uthmān which eventually resulted in the latter's assassination. In his work No. 10, he has collected reports about the assassination of Ibn Abî Ḥudhaifa. On the resumption of the office of Caliph, 'Alî sent for Qais b. Sa'd al-Anṣārî and ordered him to proceed to Egypt and take charge of the governorship of that country. Qais accordingly went to Egypt and gave his maiden public appearance in the city mosque. He had taken with him a letter of 'Alî which he read out to the audience. Abū Mikhnaf has given full text of that letter.[6] Another letter of Qais b. Sa'd to Mu'āwiya is also given in the same report.[7] When 'Alî deposed Qais, Moḥammad

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 499-500.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 512.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 519.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 521.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 546
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 548
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 553

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b. Abî Bakr assumed the charge of governorship and later on he was killed. Abū Mikhnaf had compiled a monograph on these anecdotes (No. 10) which al-Ṭabarî has evidently utilized in writing the events of 36 A.H.[1] Al-Ṭabarî has quoted al-Madā'inî, on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf, that 'Alî had deputed Khulayd b. Ṭarîf to the province of Khurāsān.[2] On reaching the place al-Raqqa, 'Alî ordered that a bridge should be constructed on the river Euphrate. This report Abū Mikhnaf has obtained from 'Abd Yaghuth al-Bāriqî. 'Alî crossed the river, and preparations for a confrontation with the Syrian army began. These reports provide such details which clearly speak of the consciousness of the *akhbarî* class in history writing and exhibit an easily understandable development in the presentation of historical material vis-a-vis the oral transmitters of the first century. Al-Ṭabarî must have extracted these details from the monograph of Abū Mikhnaf on the battle of Ṣiffîn (No. 5).[3] In the early days of Muḥarram 37, 'Alî sent a delegation consisting of 'Adî b. Ḥātim etc. for peace negotiations with Mu'āwiya. 'Adî made a brief speech in the court of the Umayyad ruler of which the text is given by al-Ṭabarî, on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf.[4] Other dialogues between the members of the delegation and the Caliph are also given. Similarly, Mu'āwiya sent a delegation to 'Alî's camp, headed by Ḥabîb b. Maslama al-Fahrî, their endeavours in negotiations and conversation with 'Alî are also fully reported.[5] It appears that al-Ṭabarî has utilized the work of Abū Mikhnaf on Ṣiffîn (No. 5) almost in toto and details about the episode are mainly derived from there.[6]

These reports from Abū Mikhnaf are rich in information, ornate in style, having fanciful imagination at places

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 555.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 558.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* IV : 567-568, 573, 575.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 5.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 7.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 10, 11, 13, 14, 16-19, 22, 25-28, 30, 32, 35-36, 42, 45-49, 51, 53-56, 59, 60, 62-64, 66, 70, 72, 73, 78, 80, 83.

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same time they provide some very minute details of the event. He is particularly fond of quoting dialogues between parties and letters exchanged between people concerned with the event. These dialogues, speeches, texts of letters and documents, and above all, poetical compositions meant for the occasion, give the report a dramatic touch and make it an absorbing study.

What al-Ṭabarî has given about the events of 38 A.H./ 659 A.D., is most probably taken from Abū Mikhnaf's work on the subject (No. 10).[1]

As we have noticed earlier, Abū Mikhnaf's grandfather Mikhnaf, was a Companion of the Prophet who had also transmitted some Traditions. Being a supporter of 'Alî, he took active part in the campaigns launched by 'Alî and was killed in the battle of Ṣiffîn. Not only Mikhnaf, but his three brothers 'Abd Shams, al-Ṣaq'ab and 'Abdullah also laid down their lives in the battles of al-Nukhaila and Jamal respectively. Abū Mikhnaf had special privilege of obtaining detailed information because of his family background and long standing loyalty to 'Alî's camp. Al-Mas'ūdî (d. 347 A.H.) has also relied on Abū Mikhnaf in matters of certain details, though he does not seem to have obtained much from Abū Mikhnaf in the anecdotes of the early century and particularly for the description of political conflicts between 'Alî and Mu'āwiya. Abū Mikhnaf's name occurs only at three places in the history of al-Mas'ūdî.[2] First, he has referred to Abū Mikhnaf in the description of the characteristic features of various Arab tribes. When 'Amr b. Ma'dîkarib met the second Caliph 'Umar, he inquired about the Arab tribes and their characteristic features, which 'Amr described in his typically terse style. This portion seems to have been extracted from a work of Abū Mikhnaf which is not mentioned in *al-Fihrist*

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 102, 105, 106.
2. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* II : 324, 354, III : 49.

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and is a very illustrating example of the specialization of Abū Mikhnaf in the tribal history of the old Arabs and their national traditions.

At another place, al-Mas'ūdî tells us, on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf, that Ḥassān b. Thābit, Ka'b b. Mālik and al-Nu'mān b. Bashîr had come to 'Alî during the last days of the third Caliph 'Uthmān, and had taken oath of allegiance to 'Alî. His third report in the book of al-Mas'ūdî is about the last moments of Mu'āwiya[1] when he repents and prays for the forgiveness of Allah and recites a couplet.

Al-Ṭabarî has also quoted Abū Mikhnaf in the anecdotes of 40 A.H. Here he gives details of the correspondence that took place between 'Alî and Ibn al-'Abbās when the latter left Baṣra and came to Mecca.[2] Then reports about the activities of Khawārij are given (42 A.H.) apparently borrowed from Abū Mikhnaf's work '*Kitāb al-Naharwān wa al-Khawārij*' (No. 6).[3]

Other reports of Abū Mikhnaf in the history of al-Ṭabarî are briefly listed here to show the scope and treatment of his subject and the topics regarding which later historians have relied on him.

1. Report on the Assassination of al-Mustaurid b. 'Ullafa (vide his treatise No. 12).[4]

A careful study of these reports show that Abū Mikhnaf has transmitted them from such sources as were active participants in these political events, like Murra b. Munqidh b. al-Nu'mān, Sālim b. Rabî'a, 'Abdullāh b. 'Uqba al-Ghanavî, 'Abdullāh b. al-Hārith, Zaid b. Rāshid al-Fā'ishî etc.

2. Maqtal Ḥijr b. 'Adi (50 A.H.) : Reports on the assassination of Ḥijr b. 'Aḍî have been extracted by al-Ṭabarî from the work of Abū Mikhnaf (No. 9). But al-

1. al-Mas'ūdî : *Murūj al-Dhahab* III : 49.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 141.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 173, 174, 178.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 185.

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incorporated in it the narration of Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbî, which he had transmitted through other channels like al-Mujālid b. Sa'îd, al-Ṣaq'ab b. Zuhair, Fuḍail b. Khadîj, al-Ḥusain b. 'Uqba, al-Murādî etc. and Hishām has given collective chains[1] in the report of this story. It is, therefore, difficult to point out what material he obtained from Abū Mikhnaf exclusively.

But, at certain places he has mentioned the name of Abū Mikhnaf, and we can find out that those portions are taken from the work referred to above.[2] These reports reach Abū Mikhnaf through 'Uthmān b. 'Uqba al-Kindî, Ḥusain b. 'Abdillāh al-Hamdānî, 'Abdullāh b. 'Auf b. al-Aḥmar etc.

3. **Deposition of Ḍaḥḥāk from Kūfa and Appointment of 'Abd al-Raḥmān :**

These reports are apparently from his work (No. 17) which he wrote on the statements of 'Abdullāh b. 'Uqba al-Ghanavî etc.[3]

4. **The Episode of Karbalā :**

From 60 A.H., al-Ṭabarî enters into detailed account of the circumstances that led to the most unfortunate and politically reverberating episode of the history of Islam i.e. assassination of al-Ḥusain b. 'Alî. These accounts have been extracted from his book *Maqtal al-Ḥusain* (No. 13). First, Abū Mikhnaf appears to report that the Shî'ites had gathered in the house of Māriya b. Sa'd, a woman of the family of 'Abd al-Qais, while al-Ḥusain had arrived in the vicinity of Karbalā and Ziyād the governor of Kūfa, had received the news of his arrival.[4] Sources of Abū Mikhnaf for his reports about the events in Karbalā are : Numayr b. Wa'la,[5] al-Ṣaq'ab b. Zuhair,[6] Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdî,

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 253.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 271, 278, 279, 281.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 209.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 353.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 355.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 357.

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'Abū Wadāk,[1] Al-Ḥasan b. 'Uqba al-Murādī,[2] al-Ḥajjāj b. 'Alī,[3] 'Abdullāh b. Khāzim,[4] 'Abbās al-Jadalī,[5] Abū Janāb al-Kalbī,[6] al-Mujālid b. Sa'īd,[7] Qudāma b. Sa'īd al-Thaqafī,[8] Ja'far b. Ḥudhaifa al-Ṭā'ī,[9] Sa'īd b. Mudrik b. 'Umāra,[10] 'Aun b. Abī Juḥaifa,[11] Abū Janāb Yaḥyā b. Abī Ḥayya al-Kalbī,[12] 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām al-Makhzūmī,[13] 'Uqba b. Sum'ān,[14] 'Adī b. Ḥrmala al-Asadī,[15] Abū Sa'īd 'Uqayṣa,[16] 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib[17] etc. who appear as an eyewitness to these events. Sometimes, he does not mention the name of the premier authority and quotes simply 'from someone who was present there',[18] or 'from a member of the tribe of Banū Fazāra'[19] etc. He has also obtained his reports from women who had either participated in the happenings or were knowledgeable in the matters concerning the episode.[20]

5. Episode of Ḥarra :

When Abū Mikhnaf enters 62 A.H. his informants change according to their association with the Umayyad court, or according to their connections with the personages at Mecca. Here he obtains reports from 'Abdullāh b. 'Urwa,[21] 'Abd al-Malik b. Naufal b. Musāḥiq, Moḥammad

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1. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 358, 361.
2. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 364.
3. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 368.
4. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : p. 368 He was a member of the tribe of Azd from Banū Kuthayyir.
5. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 370.
6. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 369.
7. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 369.
8. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 371.
9. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 373.
10. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 375.
11. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 378.
12. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 378, 381.
13. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 380.
14. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 382.
15. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 383.
16. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 384.
17. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 385.
18. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 387.
19. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 394.
20. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 396.
21. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 396.

al-'Azîz[1] b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf,[2] al-Ḥasan b. 'Aṭiyya al-'Aufî,[3] etc. These reports have been extracted from his work (No. 14) on the subject.

6. **Marj Rāhiṭ** : Events of the year 64 concerning the rebellion of Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qais have been taken by al-Ṭabarî from Abū Mikhnaf's treatise (No. 17) and these reports are based on the information supplied to Abū Mikhnaf by Ḥabîb b. Kurra,[4] 'Abdullāh b. 'Auf b. Aḥmar al-Azdî,[5] Ḥumaid b. Muslim,[6] al-Ḥusain b. Yezîd b. 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd,[7] 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd b. Naufal, etc.

7. **'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair** : The description of 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair and his parallel government comes under the anecdotes of 64 A.H., and after. These reports are from the treatise of Abū Mikhnaf on the subject (No. 19). The informants of Abū Mikhnaf are Abū al-Mukhāriq al-Rāsibî,[8] Abū 'Alqama al-Khath'amî,[9] al-Naḍr b. Ṣāliḥ,[10] 'Abbās b. Sahl b. Sa'd[11] Sa'îd b. 'Amr b. Sa'îd b. al-'Āṣ[12] 'Aṭiyya b. al-Ḥārith Abū Rauq al-Hamdānî,[13] 'Ubaida b. 'Amr,[14] Yaḥya b. Abî 'Īsa.[15] These reports are usually rich in details regarding the dialogues between the parties concerned, letters exchanged, their texts, and witnesses of those who were present in the events.

1. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 478.
2. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 480.
3. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 491.
4. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 539.
5. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 552.
6. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 554.
7. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 555.
8. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 564.
9. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 565.
10. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 569.
11. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 573.
12. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 577.
13. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 577.
14. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 579.
15. al-Ṭabarî : *Tārîkh* V : 581.

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8. **Sulaimān b. Ṣurad :** The movement of *Tawwābūn* (repenters) launched by Sulaimān b. Ṣurad to avenge the assassination of al-Ḥusain, is also a part of the events that took place in the year 64 A.H., and al-Ṭabarī must have obtained these reports from the compilation of Abū Mikhnaf (No. 16). The informants of these events are 'Abdullāh b. 'Auf al-Aḥmarī,[1] Ḥumaid b. Muslim,[2] al-Sarī b. Ka'b al-Azdī,[3] 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ghaziyya,[4] Abū Sādiq,[5] al-Muhill b. Khalīfa al-Ṭā'ī,[6] Ad'ham al-Muḥriz al-Bāhilī.[7]

Abū Mikhnaf has dealt in detail with the events of the Umayyad period, particularly with the government of 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair, the movement launched by Mukhtār al-Thaqafī, assassination of 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubair, murder of Sa'īd b. 'Amr, Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubair and his encounter with 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, Khālid b. 'Abdillāh al-Qasrī, al-Ash'ath b. Qais, etc.

Conclusion :

It is an accepted fact that man is deeply impressed by the environment he lives in, and it does also shape the way of his thinking and his approach toward the events around him. The Arab historiographers of the period under study are no exception to this universal rule. We find that some of them belonged to the city of Medina, the abode of Islam, while others hailed from either Kūfa, Baṣra, or Damascus. All these cities were important centres of intellectual and cultural activites during the early centuries. Differences of geographical divisions or political affinities had deep impact on their minds and on their attitude towards transmission of historical knowledge. Thus, we find that early reporters belonging to the city of

1. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 583.
2. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 584.
3. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 585.
4. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 589.
5. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 589.
6. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 591.
7. al-Ṭabarī : *Tārīkh* V : 605.

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were deeply impressed by the Islamic ideology, while their counterparts in other regions, were influenced by tribal prejudices or the local political leanings. Major portion of the material of *Sīrah* was collected in Medîna, the seat of the Prophet, where he passed the last ten years of his life. Similarly, the Traditions of the Prophet were gathered in this city; that is why the structure of *Sīrah*-narrations or (*maghāzī*) is derived from the *ḥadīth*-literature and the same principles of scrutiny govern both of them. Some of the Orientalists have expressed doubts whether or not any documents, letters etc. of basic historical importance, were preserved in Medîna, till the period of the Guided Caliphs. But, from various evidences one can easily infer that such documents were preserved and were transmitted to posterity by the early reporters of the Medîna school. Similarly, the presence of such documents in the cities of Kūfa, Baṣra and Damascus, is proved beyond doubts. Moreover, the practice of later historians in observing integrity of subject-matter, does also show that the early Islamic state had maintained a State Records Office preserving registers containing information on various aspects and these were kept in the archives like the yearly lists of the Ḥajj-leaders etc.

The Medîna school was quite particular in the observance of the principle of 'the chains of authority' (*isnād*) in all transmissions. Sometimes, they present 'collective chains' (*asnād jama'ī*) and insist on their repetition each time even for the transmission of a single word or phrase, while other schools keep their attention concentrated on the text of a narration.

The historians of Kūfa and Baṣra are heavily inclined to support their historical material by poetical compositions, while the Madanî *rāwīs* use poetry comparatively carefully.

The Medîna school of history-writing is also distinguished from its sister institutions in matters of careful recording of chronology and dates, while others follow it in anecdotes and war-narratives only.

The Medîna school has a special tendency to a detailed description of religious aspects like the *Sīrah*, the *maghāzī* and

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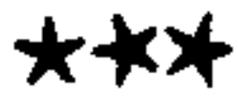
the *ḥadîth* etc. while others specialized in worldly *welt politik*, Days, genealogy, the *akhbar* of the battles etc.

The Bedouin tribes had settled in kūfa and Baṣra in separate localities meant for each tribe. They were deeply steeped in tribal legends, sagas and narrations, and reports on inter-tribal conflicts. It had resulted in the emergence of local and tribal partisanship, narrow concepts of nationalism, pride for purity of race and blood etc. The major part of their narratives is dominated by the glorification of their forefathers, eulogies or satires composed by their tribal bards, or family traditions depicting a prejudiced outlook on other tribes.

Among those who represent the charactersitic features of the Medîna school are Abān b. 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (d. 105 A.H.) Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrî (a Meccan by origin) (d. 124 A.H.) and Ibn Is'ḥāq (d. 150 A.H.).

'Abîd b. Sharya, Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110 A.H.) and Abū Mikhnaf Luṭ b. Yaḥyā (d. 157 A.H.) belong to other schools.

The school of historiography with its centre at Baghdād during the early Abbāsid period is dominated by the colour of a complex civilized society, hydraheaded problems and a clearer universal consciousness; but all this is beyond the scope of our present study.



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