

وَمَا كَانَ يُدْعَىٰ بِهَا وَلَا يُزَالُ  
القرآن ٣-١٣٠

# A Critical Study of Al-Balādhuri

As A Historian

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UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB  
LAHORE, PAKISTAN



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135135



PRINTED BY

**ANNOOR**

PRINTERS & PUBLISHERS

3/2, FAISEL NAGAR, MULTAN ROAD, LAHORE-25.

پرفیہ  
PREFACE

The author feels immense pleasure in presenting this research work in its published form. This research composition was submitted to the University of the Punjāb in 1971, for the award of the Degree of Ph.D. in Islāmic Studies. The researcher considers it a great favour of the Most Beneficent Lord of the worlds, upon him that he was pioneer in getting this Degree.


The thesis, as its title suggests, is not merely a biography of Al-Balādhurī, and his evaluation as a historian, rather it is a profound study and a critical survey of the genesis and development of Muslim Historiography during the first three centuries of Islāmic Era. An endeavour has been made to trace and highlight the influence of the Holy Qur'ān and the "Science of Ḥadīth", in this regard.

All possible efforts have been made to utilize the original sources alongwith very important secondary sources. The study is being presented in its original form with minor amendments.

The author is indebted to the University of the Punjāb, Lahore, and its worthy Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Rafique Aḥmad, who graced this thesis with the honour of being a University publication. I am also thankful to Professor Dr. S. Muḥammad Akram Shah, Dean, Faculty of Islāmic and Oriental Learning, for his sincere collaboration and help in this regard.

It is hoped that this humble attempt of the writer will be beneficial for the readers.

December 1, 1986

  
(Dr. Amānullāh Khān),  
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## INTRODUCTION

The present Research Work is devoted to the study of the life, works, and contribution of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir, al-Balādhurī, to the Muslim Historiography. Al-Balādhurī enjoys a prominent and respectable position among his preceding, contemporary, and succeeding Muslim historians. It goes to his credit that two principal forms of Muslim Historiography namely, "The Conquests", and "The Genealogical form of writing History", saw completion in his works Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashrāf, which are primary and valuable sources of Islāmic History. The writings of al-Balādhurī have influenced extensively such eminent scholars as, Al-Mas'ūdī, Ibn 'Asākir, Ibn Khallikān, Yāqūt, and Ibn Athīr, etc., and through them almost all the scholars of Islāmic History and Geography.

Dr. S.D.F. Goitein, who edited the 5th Volume of Ansāb al-Ashrāf of al-Balādhurī, realizing the need of writing a full biography of this great historian and thoroughly appraising his work said in his introduction:

"When the edition of this celebrated work is complete, it will no doubt be necessary to add a full biography of Balādhurī and a thorough appraisal of his work". But unfortunately the above work could not be accomplished.

The present attempt, the writer hopes will be fulfilling the above need.

The thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with al-Balādhurī's times and his life. After conducting a brief survey of the Muslim Literary and Scientific activity during the third century of the Islāmic Era, and emphasising its surpassing excellence, all possible efforts have been made to give an authentic biography of al-Balādhurī.

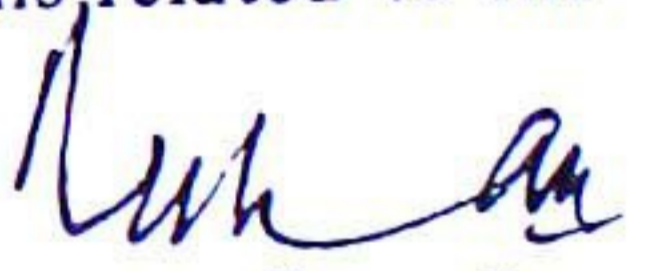
The second chapter comprises the origin and development of Muslim Historiography during the first three centuries. The influence of the Holy Qur'ān and the Science of Ḥadīth on Muslim Historiography has been traced.

The most eminent historians of the above centuries, whose lives, activities, and contributions, particularly in the field of Historiography have been described, include persons like Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām, al-Madā'inī, Hishām al-Kalbī, al-Wāqidī, Ibn Qutaiba, Abū Ḥanifa al-Dināwarī, al-Ya'qūbī, and al-Ṭabarī, etc.

The third chapter has been devoted to the study of the principal works of al-Balādhurī. In this connection an investigation has been made into the names of his works, and then a brief study of the contents of Ansāb al-Ashrāf and Futūḥ al-Buldān has been made, which also includes relevant information regarding these works.

The fourth and the last chapter deals with al-Balādhurī's critical appreciation. In this connection a thorough appraisal of Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashrāf has been made, and al-Balādhurī's contribution to the Muslim Historiography has been evaluated. In this chapter an attempt to bring to light the extensive influence of al-Balādhurī over the subsequent historians has also been made, and a reference to his acknowledgement by different scholars – ancient and modern has also been given.

The writer feels immense pleasure in acknowledging his profound gratitude to his Supervisor Professor 'Allāma 'Alāuddīn Siddiquī, Vice-Chancellor, University of the Punjāb, Lahore, whose kind supervision and guidance was a source of inspiration throughout the period the researcher was working over the subject. The writer is also obliged to all those scholars of the subject whose valuable discussions helped him in solving the problems related to the subject.

  
(Amanullah Khān)

Lahore:  
October, 1971.

## CHAPTER I

## HIS TIMES AND LIFE

## HIS TIMES

”يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ط وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ“

(Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, to high ranks. And Allāh is aware of what you do).

The third century of the Islāmic era (9th century A.D.), in which al-Balādhurī lived, was one of the most glorious epochs of Islamic history. This century witnessed Muslim leadership of the whole humanity in the realm of knowledge and culture. In this period, and during the several centuries which followed, these torch-bearers of learning made valuable contributions in the fields of Qur’ānic studies, Ḥadīth, Islāmic law, Arabic grammar, philology, literature and poetry, biography, ansāb and history, scholasticism as well as in astronomy, physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, geography, philosophy, etc. George Sarton, the renowned historian of science says:

“The ninth century was essentially a Muslim century. To be sure, intellectual work did not cease in other countries; far from it; but the activity of the Muslim scholars and men of science was overwhelmingly superior. They were the

real standard-bearers of civilization in those days. Their activity was superior in almost every respect. To consider only the first half of the century, the leading men of science, al-Kindī, the sons of Mūsā, al-Khwārizmī, al-Farghānī, were all Muslims; Ibn Māsawaih, it is true, was a Christian, but he wrote in Arabic".<sup>2</sup>

P.K. Hitti observes :

“The victory of Moslem arms under al-Mahdi and al-Rashid over the inveterate Byzantine enemy undoubtedly shed its luster on this period, the luxurious scale of living made this period popular in history and in fiction, but what has rendered this age especially illustrious in world annals is the fact that it witnessed the most momentous intellectual awakening in the history of Islam and one of the most significant in the whole history of thought and culture.

.....

.....

.....

In three-quarters of a century after the establishment of Baghdād the Arabic-reading world was in possession of the chief philosophical works of Aristotle, of the leading Neo-Platonic commentators, and of most of the medical writings of Galen as well as of Persian and Indian scientific works. In only a few decades Arab scholars assimilated what had taken the Greeks centuries to develop”.<sup>3</sup>

“The epoch of translation (ca 750-850), ..... was followed by one of creative activity; for the Arabs not only assimilated the ancient lore of Persia and the classical heritage of Greece but adapted both to their own peculiar needs and ways of thinking. In medicine and philosophy, their independent work was less conspicuous than in alchemy, astronomy, mathematics and geography. In law, theology, philology and linguistics as Arabs and Moslems

they carried on original thinking and research. Their translations, transmuted in no small degree by the Arab mind during the course of several centuries were transmitted, together with many new contributions to Europe through Syria, Spain and Sicily and laid the basis of the canon of knowledge which dominated medieval European thought. And transmission, from the standpoint of the history of culture, is no less essential than origination, for had the researches of Aristotle, Galen and Ptolemy been lost to posterity the world would have been as poor as if they had never been produced".<sup>4</sup>

Throwing light on the enthusiasm for learning during this early 'Abbāsid period, Professor Nicholson observes :

" . . . This material expansion was accompanied by an outburst of intellectual activity such as the East had never witnessed before. It seemed as if all the world from the Caliph down to the humblest citizen suddenly became students, or at least patrons, of literature. In quest of knowledge men travelled over three continents and returned home, like bees laden with honey, to impart the precious stores which they had accumulated, to crowds of eager disciples, and to compile with incredible industry those works of encyclopaedic range and erudition from which modern science, in the widest sense of the word has derived far more than is generally supposed".<sup>5</sup>

Syed Ameer 'Alī describes the literary activity of the period in the following words:

"Their achievements were not restricted to any particular branch of science or literature, but ranged over the whole course of the domain of intellect; speculative philosophy and belles lettres were cultivated with as much avidity as the exact sciences. Mathematics, Astronomy, the science of Medicine, etc; all made gigantic strides during this glorious

period of Asiatic civilization, its intellectual heritage passed both into the Saracenic Spain and Christian Constantinople, whence it descended to modern Europe".<sup>6</sup>

"Such were the glorious achievements of the Moslems in the field of intellect; and all was due to the teachings of one man. Called by his voice from the abyss of barbarism and ignorance in which they had hitherto dwelt, with little hope of the present, with none of the future, the Arab went into the world, to elevate and civilise. Afflicted humanity awoke into new life. Whilst the barbarians of Europe, who had overturned an effete empire, were groping in the darkness of ignorance and brutality, the Moslems were building up a great civilisation. During centuries of moral and intellectual desolation in Europe, Islam led the vanguard of progress. Christianity had established itself on the throne of the Caesars, but it had failed to regenerate the nations of the earth. From the fourth century of the Christian era to the twelfth, the gloom that overshadowed Europe deeper and deeper. During these ages of ferocious bigotry Ecclesiasticism barred every access through which the light of knowledge, humanity, or civilisation could enter. But though jealousy shut out from this land of fanaticism the benignant influences of Islamic culture in time made themselves felt in every part of Christendom. From the schools of Salerno, of Baghdad, of Damascus, of Cordova, of Granada, of Malaga, the Moslems taught the world the gentle lessons of philosophy and the practical teachings of stern science".<sup>7</sup>

Marmaduke Pickthall, while discussing the literary and scientific contributions of the Muslims, says :

"The Muslims set out on their search for learning in the name of God at a time when Christians were destroying all the learning of the ancients in the name of Christ. They had destroyed the library at Alexandria, they had murdered

many philosophers including the beautiful Hypatia. Learning was for them a devil's snare beloved of the pagans. They had no injunction to "seek knowledge even though it were in China". The manuscripts of Greek and Roman learning were publicly burnt by the priests. The Eastern Roman Emperors kept their library and entertained some learned men, but within their palace walls. The priests ruled everything beyond. We find the Khalifa Al-Mamun making war upon the Christian Emperor of Constantinople for the sole purpose of obtaining certain ancient books and persons of certain men of learning versed in ancient sciences. These were shut up in the imperial palace at Constantinople, but when they came to Baghdad their learning became useful to humanity; for those learned men, in collaboration with the learned men among the Muslims, were set to work at once on the translation of the ancient books. Thus the Muslims saved the ancient learning from destruction and passed its treasures down to modern times".<sup>8</sup>

Professor A.M.A. Shushtery writing about the educational institutions under the 'Abbāsids observes :

"During the reign of Harun al-Rashid and his son (Al-Mamun) a large number of richly endowed schools were opened, a University was founded, libraries were organised and an observatory was set up. In many schools Muslims and non-Muslims studied together and learned men without distinction of religion and race were honoured and supported. It had become a fashion for rulers and wealthy nobles and ministers to become patrons of learning, to hold meetings in which subjects of science, philosophy and theology were freely discussed, and to collect large numbers of books for the public libraries".<sup>9</sup>

After quoting a number of modern writers, it is quite appropriate to refer to some of the most important early sources, which have preserved

information about the eminent scholars of various branches of learning and about the valuable works produced in the various fields of knowledge.

Ibn al-Nadīm, Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. ‘Alī Ya‘qūb (d. 385 A.H./995 A.D.), has collected information in his celebrated book “al-Fihrist”, about the learned men and the literary and scientific works produced by them, and has brought this information down to the year 377 A.H./987 A.D. The work is a rapid topical summary, which provides us with an overall view of the literary history of the Arabs to the end of the fourth century A.H. The author says in the introduction :

“The Fihrist is an index of the books of all nations, Arabs and foreigners alike, which are extant in the Arabic language and script, on every branch of knowledge; comprising information as to their compilers and the classes of their authors, together with the genealogies of those persons, the dates of their birth, the length of their lives, the times of their death, the places to which they belonged, their merits and their faults, since the beginning of every science that has been invented down to the present epoch: namely, the year 377 of the Hijra”.<sup>10</sup>

The book is divided into ten discourses (maqālāt), which are subdivided into a varying number of sections (funūn). The author discusses in the first discourse, the languages, scripts and the sacred books of the Arabs and other peoples, the revelation of the Holy Qur’ān, the order of its chapters, its collectors, readers and commentators, etc. The next chapter is devoted to the origin of grammar and to the various schools of grammarians, with the treatises they wrote. The third discourse deals with the history, belles-lettres, biography, and genealogy; the fourth treats poetry, ancient and modern. The fifth discourse is further divided into five sections and gives information about the scholastics and scholasticism (‘ilm-al-Kalām). Islāmic law, its various schools - Māliki, Ḥanafī, Shāfi‘ī Zāhiri, Jurisconsult of the Shi‘a, etc; Ḥadīth and the traditionists form the subject of the sixth discourse. The seventh discourse deals with philosophy and “the ancient sciences”, their origin and introduction to the lands of Islam; a list of translators and the books which they rendered into Arabic; an account of the



Greek philosophers, with the names of their works that were known to the Muslims; and finally a literary survey of the remaining sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, physics, logic, etc. The eighth discourse is devoted to the works on magic, amulets, etc. The ninth deals with the doctrines, and writings of the Ṣābians and the Dualistic sects founded by Māni, Mazdak, etc. The book concludes with the tenth discourse which throws light on the chemists, ancient and modern, and the works produced by them.<sup>11</sup>

“Some conception”, says Nicholson, “of the amazing intellectual activity of the Moslems during the early part of the ‘Abbasid period, and also of the enormous losses which Arabic Literature has suffered through the destruction of thousands of books that are known to us by nothing beyond their titles and the names of their authors, may be gained from the Fihrist”.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Mas‘ūdī, Abū ‘l-Ḥassan ‘Alī b. Ḥusain b. ‘Alī (d. 346 A.H./957 A.D.), the renowned historian, in the introduction to his ‘Murūj’ about the Muslim historians and the important works of history, says :

”وقد ألف الناس كتباً في التاريخ والخبار ممن سلف و خلف -  
فأصاب البعض واخطأ البعض . و كلّ قد اجتهد بغاية إمكانه ،  
و اظهر مكنون جوهر فطنه كوهب بن منبه...“<sup>13</sup>

(Men have written books on history of the ancients and the moderns, some are of more and some of less value. Everyone has exerted himself according to his own powers and talents, as Wahab b. Munabbih . . . )

Al-Mas‘ūdī then mentions no less than eightyfive renowned historians with brief comments on the works of some of them.<sup>14</sup>

It is worthy of note that he adds to the above information by saying:

ولم نذكر من كتب التواريخ والخبار والسير والآثار الا ما اشتهر  
مصنفوها و عرف مولفوها . ولم نتعرض لذكر كتب تواريخ  
اصحاب الاحاديث في معرفه اسماء الرجال و اعصارهم و طبقاتهم .  
اذ كان ذلك (كله) اكثر من ان ناتي على ذكره في هذا الكتاب ،  
اذ كنا قد اتينا على جميع تسميه اهل الامصار من جملة الآثار  
و نقلة السير و الاخبار و طبقات اهل العلم من عصر الصحابه،  
ثم من تلامهم من التابعين و اهل كل عصر على اختلاف انواعهم .  
وتنازعهم في آرائهم ، من فقهاء الامصار و غيرهم من اهل الآراء  
و النحل والمذاهب والمجدل الى سنة اثنتين و ثلاثين و ثلثمائه ،  
في كتابنا المترجم بكتاب اخبار الزمان ، و في كتاب الاوسط<sup>15</sup> -

(We have mentioned only those chronicles, histories, biographies and documents, the authors of which are known, and have omitted the historical works of the persons who have written on the traditions, containing the names, lives and times, and classes of men; for this volume is too limited to contain all that. Besides in our works entitled, 'Kitāb Akhbār al-Zamān', and 'Kitāb al-Ausat', we have named the persons who have made themselves in any way, remarkable, with their biographies, anecdotes of their lives, and we have given an account of the men of letters and their classes, beginning from the time of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the followers after them; we have followed up the great men of every age, till the year 332 (A.H), according to the difference of their pursuits and opinions, whether they were jurists of leading cities, or other persons who espoused the cause of some opinion, sect, system, or controversy).

Next we come to the marvellous work of Yāqūt, generally known as Mu'jam al-Udabā,<sup>16</sup> (dictionary of the learned men). Abū 'Abd-Allāh Yāqūt b. 'Abd-Allāh al-Rūmī al-Hamawī (574-626 A.H./1178/1179-1228 A.D.), says in the introduction to this work:

”وجمعت في هذا الكتاب ما وقع اليّ من اخبار النحويين واللغويين و النسابين و القراء المشهورين و الاخباريين و المورخين و الوراقين المعروفين و الكتاب المشهورين و اصحاب الرسائل المدونة و ارباب المخطوط المنسوبة والمعينة - و كل من صنف في الادب تصنيفاً او جمع في فنّه تاليفاً - مع ايثار الاختصار و الاعجاز في نهاية الاجاز - ولم آل جهداً في اثبات الوفيات و تبين المواليد و الاوقات و ذكر تصانيفهم و مستحسن اخبارهم - و الاخبار بانسابهم و شئ من اشعارهم . . . . في تزدادى الى البلاد . و مخالطتى للعباد ، و حذفتم الاسانيد الا ما قل رجاله ، و قرب مناله مع الاستطاعة لاثباتها سماعاً و اجازة الا انى قصدت صفراً لحجم و كبر النفع و اثبت مواضع نقل و مواطن أخذى من كتب العلماء المعول فى هذا الشأن عليهم و المرجوع فى صحة النقل اليهم . . . . -

(I have given in this work all the information I could obtain respecting the grammarians, the philologists, the genealogists, the eminent Qur'an-readers, the narrators of historical facts, the historians, the book-sellers of note, the secretaries of renown, the authors of such epistles as have been collected into volumes, the persons distinguished for the beauty of their 'mansūb' and particular handwriting, and all those who composed or compiled works on literature. In this task, I aimed at conciseness, though unable to remain within the limits of brevity, and I spared no pains in determining the dates of the deaths and fixing the days of births and the periods. I mention the works composed by them, the more interesting of the anecdotes concerning them, their genealogy and some of their poetry . . . . .

(I compiled this work) during my travels in various countries and after meeting their inhabitants. The Isnād (chains of authorities) I have omitted except those which contain

but a few names and which are easy to be learned. Moreover, I did all in my power to have the exactness of these traditions certified by oral declaration and by the licences given to teach them. As it was my object to produce a small but useful work, I have indicated in it the sources whence I derived my information and the places where I found it: the books, for instance, composed by such of the learned as were considered sure authorities in these matters and on whose declarations all relied for the genuineness of these Traditions).

Needless to say that the above work is a valuable mine and store-house of information about hundreds of learned and eminent men of the Muslim world upto Yāqūt's time, and about thousands of books on various branches of knowledge.

The work of Ibn Khallikān, Abū'l 'Abbās Shamsuddin Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abi Bakr (608-681 A.H./1211-1282 A.D.), entitled 'Wafayāt al-A'yān', is another most authentic and valuable early source of our information for the literary history of the Muslims. The edition of this work, was published in six volumes by Maktaba al-Nahḍat al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, in 1948 A.D. under the editorship of Muḥammad Muḥyi'ddin 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. The work is a biographical dictionary, arranged in alphabetical order, of 826 illustrious men of the Muslim world-the commentators of the Holy Qur'ān, the Qur'ān - readers, the traditionists, the jurists, the judges, the juris-consults, the grammarians, the philologists, literary men, the poets, philosophers, physicians, scholastics, holy men and saints, secretaries of note, etc. Ibn Khallikān says in the introduction to his work :

”ولم اذكر في هذا المختصر احداً من الصحابة رضوان الله تعالى عليهم اجمعين و لا من التابعين رضى الله عنهم . الا جماعة يسيرة تدعو حاجة كثير من الناس الى معرفة احوالهم . و كذلك الخلفاء لم اذكر احداً منهم اكتفاء بالمصنفات الكثيره في هذا الباب“<sup>١٦</sup>

(I have not mentioned in this compendium the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor the Tabi'īn (may God be pleased with them); with the exception of a few, whose history many persons require to know. As regards the Caliphs I have not mentioned any of them, in view of the many works that have been composed on this subject).

The scholars of Islamic History are well aware that two very important supplements to the above work, in several volumes were later on composed by Muḥammad b. Shākir b. Aḥmad al-Kutabi<sup>19</sup> (d. 764 A.H./1362 A.D.), and Ṣalāḥ al-Din Khalil b. Aibak al-Ṣafadi<sup>20</sup>

The present writer has sorted out some of the most eminent scholars of the third century Hijra, from a total of 131 given at various places in the work of Ibn Khallikān, and has arranged them below, according to their specialities in the various fields of learning. A cursory glance over these personalities will give an idea of the literary activity of the highest order of this period:



## TRADITIONISTS (MUḤADDITHŪN)

1. Abū 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, the author of Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ (d. 256 A.H./869 A.D.).
2. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Muslim b. Al-Ḥajjāj b. Muslim al-Qushairī, the author of the book 'al-Ṣaḥīḥ' (d. 261 A.H./874 A.D.)
3. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad b. Yazid, Ibn Mājah, the author of 'al-Sunan' (d. 273 A.H./886 A.D.)
4. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Dāwūd Sulaimān al-Sijistānī, the author of 'al-Sunan' (d. 275 A.H./888 A.D.).
5. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad b. 'Isā al-Tirmidhī, the author of 'al-Jāmi' (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.)

Thus we see that five out of the six books on Ḥadīth which are termed as Ṣiḥāḥ Sittā (The six most authentic Books) were compiled in this very period.

Other prominent traditionists of the period were :

6. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn (d. 233 A.H./847 A.D.), and
7. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, Ibn Rahwaih (d. 238 A.H./852 A.D.).

## JURISTS (FUQAHĀ')

1. Imām Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204 A.H./819 A.D.).
2. Imām Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H./ 855 A.D.).
3. Yaḥyā b. Aktham b. Muḥammad, the chief justice (d. 242 A.H./856 A.D.).
4. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr (d. 295 A.H./907 A.D.).
5. Imām Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Zāhiri (d. 297 A.H./909 A.D.)

## GRAMMARIANS, PHILOLOGISTS & MEN OF LETTERS (UDABĀ')

1. Al-Farrā', Yaḥyā b. Ziyād b. 'Abd-Allāh (d. 207 A.H./ 822 A.D.), about whom the great Tha'lab has said:

” لولا الفراء لما كانت عربية لانه خلصها و ضبطها“<sup>٢١</sup>

(Were it not for al-Farrā', pure Arabic would no longer exist; it was he who disengaged it (from the ordinary language) and fixed it (by writing).

2. Abū 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. Al-Muthanna (d. 213 A.H./828 A.D.) about whom Jāhiz has said :

”لم يكن في الارض خارجي ولا جماعي اعلم بجميع العلوم منذ“<sup>٢٢</sup> -

(There was never on earth a Kharijite or an orthodox believer more learned in all the sciences than him).

3. Aṣma'ī, 'Abd al-Malik b. Quraib (d. 216 A.H./831 A.D.). Ibn Khallikān says about him :

”كان الا صمعي المذكور صاحب لغة و نحو و اماما في الاخبار و النوادر و المطح و الغرائب“<sup>٢٣</sup> -

(Al-Aṣma'ī was a complete master of the Arabic language, and able grammarian and the most eminent of all those persons who transmitted historical narrations, singular anecdotes, amusing stories, and rare expression of the language).

4. Abū 'Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224 A.H./838 A.D.), the author of scores of books on various branches of learning<sup>24</sup>.
5. Ibn al-Sikkit, Ya'qūb b. Ishāq, the author of the book 'Iṣlāḥ al-Mantiq' (d. 244 A.H./858 A.D.).
6. Jāhiz, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr b. Maḥbūb (d. 225 A.H./868 A.D.). This great personality needs no introduction.
7. 'Abd-Allah b. Muslim b. Qutaiba al-Dinawarī (d. 276 A.H./889 A.D.), a great scholar of the Qur'ān, Ḥadith, grammar, history, literature and poetry.<sup>25</sup>

8. Al-Mubarrad, Abū'l 'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazid (d. 286 A.H./899 A.D.), one of the greatest Imāms in grammar and philology.
9. Tha'lab, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Zaid b. Sayyār (d. 291 A.H./903 A.D.), the leader of the Kūfa school of grammarians and philologists.
10. Al-Anbārī, Abū 'l - 'Abbās 'Abd-Allāh b. Muḥammad (d.293 A.H./905 A.D.).

## HISTORIANS

1. Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi (d. 204 A.H./819 A.D.).
2. Al-Haitham b. 'Adī (d. 206 A.H./821 A.D.).
3. Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Wāqid (d. 207 A.H./822 A.D.).
4. Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Manī' al-Zuhri, Kātib al-Wāqidī (d. 230 A.H./844 A.D.).
5. Al-Zubair b. Bakkār (d. 256 A.H./869 A.D.).
6. Al-Dinawarī (mentioned above among the grammarians, etc.).

## SCHOLASTICS (MUTAKALLIMĪN)

1. Al-'Allāf, Muḥammad b. al-Hudhail (d. 235 A.H./849 A.D.).
2. Jāḥiẓ (mentioned above among the philologists and grammarians).
3. Ibn al-Munajjim, Yaḥyā b. 'Alī Yaḥyā (d. 300 A.H./912 A.D.)

## POETS

1. Abū'l 'Atahiya, Ismā'il b. Al-Qāsim (d. 211 A.H./826 A.D.).
2. Abū Tammām Ḥabib b. Aus, the author of the Ḥamāsa (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.).
3. Ibrāhim b. 'Abbās al-Ṣūlī (d. 243 A.H./857 A.D.).
4. Al-Buḥturī, al-Walid b. 'Ubaid (d. 284 A.H./897 A.D.).
5. 'Abd-Allah b. al-Mu'tazz (d. 296 A.H./908 A.D.).<sup>26</sup>



## PHILOSOPHERS AND SCIENTISTS<sup>26</sup>

1. Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Shākir (d. 259 A.H./872 A.D.), one of the three eminent brothers who made a mark in philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, music, etc.
2. Ḥunain b. Ishāq (d. 260 A.H./873 A.D.), the greatest physician of his time, and a meritorious scholar of other sciences.
3. Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288 A.H./900 A.D.), mathematician, physician and philosopher.
4. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā b. 'Alī Maṣṣūr al-Munajjim (d. 275 A.H./888 A.D.), astronomer and philosopher.

## MYSTICS AND SAINTS

1. Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣri, Thaubān b. Ibrāhīm (d. 245 A.H./895 A.D.).
2. Abū'l Ḥasan Sariyy al-Saqāṭiyyu (d. 251 A.H./865 A.D.).
3. Abū Yazid al-Buṣṭāmī, Ṭaifūr b. 'Isā b. Adam (d. 261 A.H./874 A.D.).
4. Aḥ-Junaid b. Muḥammad (d. 297 A.H./909 A.D.).

The depth of interest in the Qur'ānic studies can be judged from the example of the renowned queen Zubaida b. Ja'far, the wife of Hārūn al-Rashid (d. 216 A.H./831 A.D.), about whom Ibn Khallikān gives us the following information:

”واند كان لها مائة جارية يحفظن القرآن ، ولكل واحدة ورد  
عشر القرآن ، و كان يسمع في قصرها كدوى النحل من قراءة  
القرآن ٢٠٠ -

(And she had one hundred hand-maids, who all knew the Qur'ān by heart, and that each of them had the task of repeating one tenth of its daily; so that her palace resounded with a continual humming like that of bees).

It may also be noted that Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H./922 A.D.), was busy in the preparation of his monumental work on the commentary of the Qur'ān, which was destined to serve as the basis for all the succeeding commentaries of the Holy Book.

One more point may also be kept in mind, that it was from the study of the Qur'ān, that sciences like Arabic grammar and philology arose and that these sciences primarily served as handmaids to theology.<sup>28</sup>

The following early sources also possess an immense value for the literary and scientific history of the period:

TĀRĪKH BAGHDĀD of Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 A.H./ 1070 A.D.), published in 14 large volumes in Beirut. In this biographical dictionary, alphabetically arranged, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī mentions no less than seven thousand eight hundred and thirty one men of repute and scholars of eminence.<sup>29</sup>

TĀRIKH AL-ḤUKAMĀ' of Jamāl al-Dīn 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Qiftī (d. 646 A.H./ 1248 A.D.) 'The book gives information about the philosophers, physicians and other scientists, etc.<sup>30</sup>

'UYŪN AL-ANBĀ' FI ṬABAQĀT AL-AṬIBBĀ' of Ibn Abi Uṣaibiah, Abī 'Abbās Aḥmad b. Qāsim b. Khalifa b. Yūnus al-Khazarjī (d. 668 A.H./1269 A.D.), is a valuable mine of information concerning the history of medicine, physicians, surgeons, scientists and philosophers, etc.<sup>31</sup>

AL-TĀRIKH AL-KABIR OR TĀRIKH MADINA DIMASHQ<sup>32</sup> of Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571 A.H./1175 A.D.).

## HIS LIFE

Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir b. Dāwūd, whose life we are going to discuss, here, was one of the greatest Muslim historians of all times. It would be very interesting to note the statements of C.H. Becker and F. Rosenthal about al-Balādhurī:

“Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Djābir b. Dāwūd, one of the greatest Arabic historians of the 3rd/9th century.

Little is known of his life, neither the year of his birth nor that of his death is directly attested .....

As he is said to have been a translator from the Persian, Persian origin has been arbitrarily assumed for him .....

The statement that he was a tutor of the poet, Ibn al-Mu'tazz, appears to be the result of a confusion of our historian with the grammarian Tha'lib, and the story that he died mentally deranged through inadvertent use of balādhur (semecarpus Anacardium 1; marking nut), a drug believed beneficial for one's mind and memory, is meant to refer not to him but to his grand father, but even so, it constitutes a puzzle for which no satisfactory explanation is offered by the sources".<sup>33</sup>

Keeping in view the remarks of the above two great orientalists, all possible efforts have been made to search out authentic information about the life of al-Balādhurī.

#### NAME AND NISBA

Both from internal<sup>34</sup> and external<sup>35</sup> evidence it is proved that his complete name was Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir b. Dāwūd. His surnames were Abū Ja'far, Abū Bakr, Abū'l-Ḥasan and Abū'l-Abbās, and his most important nisba was al-Balādhurī. Here we feel confronted with the problem of explaining the puzzle caused by this Nisba.

Brockelmann, the great authority on the history of Arabic Literature, in his book: "Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur", on the authority of al-Jahshiyārī, Kitāb al-Wuzarā, quoted by Yāqūt in his Mu'jam al-Udabā has contended that it was Jābir b. Dāwūd who took balādhur and not Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā.<sup>36</sup>

The account given by al-Jahshiyārī in his 'Kitāb al-Wuzarā wa'l-Kuttāb', about Jābir b. Dāwūd, on which Brockelmann has based his conclusion, is itself confusing. The exact words run as follows:

”وكان يكتب للخصيب ابو عبد الحميد جابر بن داود البلاذري،  
المولف للكتاب البلدان وغيره من الكتب ، ولد اشعار حسان“<sup>٢٤٠</sup> -

(Abū 'Abd al-Ḥamid Jābir b. Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, the author of Kitāb al-Buldān and other books, was the secretary (Kātib) to al-Khaṣīb; and he has composed a very good poetry).

From the above statement it seems that Jahshiyārī could not collect correct information about Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā and his grand-father Jābir b. Dāwūd. As a result, he not only attributed the Nisba of the grandson to his grandfather, but also attributed the grandson's book 'Kitāb al-Buldān (i.e. Futūḥ al-Buldān) to him. So the authenticity of this statement becomes doubtful and needs clarification.

Moreover, Yāqūt was himself doubtful about this surname. He says:

”وقال الجهشيارى فى كتاب الوزراء جابر بن داود البلاذرى كان  
يكتب للخصيب بمصر هكذا ذكر ولا ادري ايها شرب البلاذر احمد  
بن يحيى او جابر بن داود“<sup>٣٨٠</sup> -

(And says Jahshiyārī in Kitāb al-Wuzarā: Jābir b. Dāwūd al-Balādhurī was the secretary to Khaṣīb in Egypt, And I don't understand who drank balādhur, whether Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā or Jābir b. Dāwūd).

For the solution of the problem we may depend on the following valuable statements of the eminent scholars:

Ibn al-Nadīm in his renowned book Fihrist says:

» . . . وكان جده جابر يكتب للمخضيب صاحب مصر ، وكان شاعرًا راويًا و وسوس آخر ايامه فشدّ في البيمارستان و مات فيه و سبب وسوسته انه شرب تمر البلاذر على غير معرفه ، فلحقه ما لحقه<sup>٣٩</sup> -

(And his grandfather Jābir was secretary to Khaṣīb, the minister of Egypt, and he (Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā) was a poet and a historian; in his old age he was mentally deranged. So he was kept fastened in the hospital until he died in it. The cause of his illness was that he took balādhur inadvertently and then happened to him what has happened).

Ibn 'Asākir gives us the following information:

” . . . وتوفى في ايام المعتمد و وسوس في آخر عمره . . . “<sup>٤٠</sup>

(And he died in the days of al-Mu'tamid, and in his old age he was mentally deranged).

Ibn Kathīr, one of the greatest Muslim historians, quoting Ibn-'Asākir says:

” . . . و توفى في ايام المعتمد و وسوس في آخر عمره و حصل له هوس<sup>٤١</sup> -

(And he died in the times of al-Mu'tamid, and in his old age he was mentally deranged and he developed love for wealth).

Khair al-Din Zirkili says:

” و اصاب في آخر عمره بذهول شبيه بالجنون فشدّ في البيمارستان الى ان توفى ، نسبة الى حب البلاذر قيل انه اكل منه فكان سبب علته<sup>٤٢</sup> -

(Towards the end of his life he suffered from a terrible mental weakness resembling lunacy. So he was kept fastened in the hospital until he died. His nisba to balādhur is due to the reason that it is said that he took it, and this caused his illness).

Hitti, in his introduction to Futūḥ al-Buldān, says:

“The year 279/892 saw his death, mentally deranged as a result of drinking the juice of anacardia; hence his surname al-Balādhurī”.<sup>43</sup>

All these sources speak of the mental derangement of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā in his old age, and it is evident enough that the illness was caused by taking ‘balādhur’ ...

So from the discussion it can be safely concluded that the man who took ‘balādhur’ was Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā and not Jābir b. Dāwūd, the grandfather of Aḥmad. Hence it is the nisba of the grandson, Aḥmad, our historian.

## DATE OF BIRTH

His date of birth cannot directly be ascertained from the early sources. However, from the dates of his teachers it is evident that he cannot have been born later than the beginning of the second decade of the ninth century A.D.<sup>44</sup> (End of the second century A.H.).

Ṣālah al-Dīn al-Munajjid provides the following information :

”و ترجع انه ولد في بغداد في اواخر القرن الثاني - و اول ما نعرفه عن حياته العامه انه مدح المامون بمدائح - ولا ندرى متى اتصل به ، و من المؤكد ان ذلك قبل وفاة المامون سنة ٥٢١٨ ،

و قد تجاوز العشرين على اقل تقدير - فما كان يناح له ان يمدح  
الخليفه بمدائح الا وقد كان له علم و نباهة<sup>٣٥</sup>“

(And we are of the opinion that he was born at Baghdad towards the end of second century A.H. The earliest account which we know about his general life is that he praised Al-Māmūn in many panegyrics. And we do not know when he met him. This, however, is definite that it was before Al-Māmūn's death, which happened in 218 A.H./833 A.D, And he must be, at that time, at least above twenty years, for it was not possible for him to eulogize the caliph in so many panegyrics except that he possessed substantial knowledge).

Jurji Zaydan says: ”ولد في اواخر القرن الثاني للهجرة ٠٠٠٠“<sup>٣٦</sup>

(He was born towards the end of second century A.H.).

Prof. Muḥammad Shafī' is also of the same opinion. He says:

(He was born towards the end of the second century A.H., and was brought up at Baghdad).

”دوسری صدی ہجری کے آخر میں پیدا ہوئے اور بغداد میں  
نشوونما پایا“<sup>٣٧</sup> -

Khurshid Aḥmad Fāriq also agrees with these scholars and is of the opinion that al-Balādhurī was most probably born towards the end of the second century A.H.<sup>48</sup>

In the light of the evidence it can be safely concluded that Al-Balādhurī was born somewhere in the last decade of the second century A.H. i.e. the beginning of the second decade of the ninth century A.D.

## NATIVE PLACE

Al-Balādhurī was a native of Baghdād, and was born in this very city. He spent most of his life in this great capital, which was the cradle of Islamic civilization and Islamic learnings. At Baghdad he studied with the eminent scholars of his time. Then he travelled to Syria, Ḥimṣ, Anṭākiya, Manbij, Raqqā, Tikrīt, Ḥalb, the cities of al-Jazirah and border cities, etc., in quest of more knowledge most probably after the death of Al-Māmūn (218 A.H.), and during the caliphates of Al-Mu'tasim (218-227 A.H./833-842 A.D.), and Al-Wāthiq (227-232 A.H./842-847 A.D.), for our sources do not give any information concerning his presence at Baghdād during the period. Moreover, one of his teachers Abū Ḥafṣ al-Dimashqi, from whom he collected information at Damascus, died in the year 225 A.H./839 A.D. It means that al-Balādhurī was definitely in Syria before the specified date to hear Abū Ḥafṣ.

After the completion of his journeys in search of knowledge, he returned to Baghdād to become the boon companion of the Caliphs, Al-Mutawakkil (232-247 A.H./847-861 A.D.), Al-Musta'in (248-251 A.H./862-866 A.D.), and Al-Mu'tazz (251-255 A.H./866--869 A.D.).<sup>49</sup>

## PARENTAGE

The name of his father, as mentioned already was Yaḥyā and that of his grandfather Jābir. Dāwūd was his grand-grandfather.

Little is known about the life and profession of Yaḥyā. Jābir was, however, a well-known learned man. He served as secretary to al-Khaṣīb, Hārūn's Minister of Finance in Egypt.<sup>50</sup>

## FAMILY

Al-Balādhurī belonged to a noble and respectable family, which had a long tradition of government service. Its members were endowed with

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love of learning, and were held in high esteem in Islamic society. As we know that Jābir, his grandfather, was an eminent secretary attached to an important ‘Abbāsīd minister. In those heydays of Islamic glory, this high position was held only by such persons as had earned reputation in learning. Jāḥiẓ pays a glowing tribute to the noble profession of Kātib in the following words:

“Writing is a tongue to which the heart runs and is the depository of secrets, the investigator of news and the preserver of historical memorials”.<sup>51</sup>

In fact this reverence for writing and the writers, apart from its usefulness, was due to the Holy Qur’ān, in which Allāh, the All Knower, swears by the pen and the writing and reveals:

”ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ“<sup>٥٢</sup>

( By the pen and what they write)

Our sources do not throw any light on the life and position of Yaḥyā, al-Balādhurī’s father. We are perhaps justified in assuming that under the care and influence of his learned father Jābir, he too might have acquired a skill in art and learning. Yaḥyā’s love for knowledge seems to have culminated in the shape of a brighter child like al-Balādhurī, whom he nourished, and who was in a position, even when he had hardly attained the age of twenty, to eulogize the Caliph Al-Māmūn (d. 218/833 A.D.), in so many panegyrics, as is evident from Ibn ‘Asākir who says: ”و مدح المامون بمدائح“<sup>٥٣</sup>

(And he praised al-Māmūn in so many panegyrics).

In those days it was a general practice with the wise parents to inculcate in their children a true urge and real love for knowledge and learning and then put all their available services at the disposal of their children so that they might serve and promote the cause of learning in the real sense of the word. We notice, as Margoliouth tells us, how anxious was Ṭabarī’s father in the upbringing of his child and what great share had he in making his son great.<sup>54</sup>

As regards the question whether or not Al-Balādhurī was of Persian origin, it may be pointed out that there are very sound reasons to believe that he was of Persian extraction. These reasons are enumerated below:—

- 1) His genealogy beyond Dāwūd, is neither known nor preserved by any source. The case would have been different had al-Balādhurī belonged to an Arab family.
- 2) He was adept in Persian language and he received an appointment most probably in his early age due to his skill in this very language. Consequently he made his mark in translations from Persian into Arabic. Ibn Nadīm informs us:

”كتاب عهد اردشير ترجمه بشعر وكان احد النقلة من الفارسي الى اللسان العربي“<sup>55</sup> -

(He translated the book ‘Ahd-i-Urdshir into Arabic in verse; and he was a translator, who translated from Persian into Arabic).

- 3) Long-standing tradition of government service of Al-Balādhurī’s family.<sup>56</sup>
- 4) And finally that almost all the modern sources assume Persian origin for al-Balādhurī. A few are quoted below:

George Sarton says:

“Abū’l ‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā Jabīr al-Balādhurī. Of Persian birth but very Arabicized”.<sup>57</sup>

Dr. Goitein in his introduction to Ansāb al-Ashrāf says:

“. . . This is remarkable when we consider that Balādhurī was almost certainly of Iranian origin”.<sup>58</sup>

Professor Hitti observes :

“Two of the leading historians of the Moslem conquests were the Egyptian Ibn Abd al-Hakam (870-71). . . and the Arabic - writing Persian Ahmad b. Yahyā al-Balādhurī (892) whose main works were the Futūh al-Buldān and the Ansāb al-Ashrāf”.<sup>59</sup>

Professor Nicholson is also of the same opinion when he says:

“Aḥmad B. Yahyā al-Balādhurī (892 A.D.), a Persian, wrote an account of the early Moḥammadan conquest . . . .”<sup>60</sup>

## HIS TEACHERS

In our sources a very long list is attached to the teachers of al-Balādhurī. The number of his teachers, from whom he collected information directly, exceeds one hundred; and they included great and eminent scholars of the Qur'ānic studies, Ḥadīth, genealogy, history and biography, philology, grammar, poetry, etc., and were the authors of valuable works on these disciplines.

Ibn 'Asākir says:

”سمع الحديث من ابي عبيد و الدولابي و جماعة ..“<sup>٦١</sup>

(He collected his information from Abū 'Ubaid and al-Dulābi and from many others . . .)

Yāqūt gives us the following information :—

”و ذكره ابن عساکر في تاريخ دمشق فقال سمع بدمشق هشام بن عمار و ابا حفص“<sup>٦٢</sup> . . . عمر بن سعيد و بجمص محمد بن مصفى و بانطاكية محمد بن عبدالرحمن بن سهم و احمد بن مرد الانطاكي و بالعراق عفان بن مسام و عبدالاعلى بن حماد و على بن المديني و عبدالله ابن صالح العجلي و مصعبًا الزبيرى و ابا عبيد القاسم بن سلام و عثمان بن ابي شيبه و ابا الحسن على بن محمد المدائني و محمد بن سعد كاتب الواقدي و ذكر جماعة“<sup>٦٣</sup> -

(And Ibn 'Asākir has given information about him (Al-Balādhurī) in Tārīkh Dimashq. He said: he studied in Dimashq under Hishām b. 'Ammār and Aba Ḥafṣ . . . 'Umar b. Sa'id; in Ḥimṣ under Muhammad b. Muṣaffā; in Anṭākiya under Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Saḥm and Ahmad b. Murd al-Anṭāki; and in 'Irāq under 'Affān b. Muslim, 'Abd al-A'lā b. Ḥammād, 'Ali b. al-Madīnī, 'Abd, Allah b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Ijlī, Muṣ'ab al-Zubairi, Abū 'Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām, 'Uthmān b. Abi Shaiba, Abū'l Ḥasan 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Madā'inī, and Muhammad b. Sa'd, Kātib al-Wāqidi; and he has mentioned many others).

Abū 'Ubaida Ma'mar b. al-Muthannā, Shaibān b. Farrūkh, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dauraqi, 'Abbās b. Walid al-Narsi, 'Abd al-Wāhid b. Ghiāth, Abū'l-Rabi' al-Zuhrāni, and Muhammad b. Ḥātim were also among his teachers.<sup>64</sup>

From this long list of al-Balādhurī's teachers the following few are selected and a brief information is given about them:

#### MUḤAMMAD B. SA'D (D. 230 A.H./844 A.D.)

Ibn Khallikān gives us the following information about him:

”ابو عبد الله محمد بن سعد بن منيع الزهرى، كاتب الواقدي - كان احدا الفضلاء النبلاء الاجلاء، صحب الواقدي المذكور قبله زماناً و كتب له، ف عرف به، و سمع سفيان بن عيينه و انظاره، و روى عنه ابو بكر بن ابى الدنيا و ابو محمد الحارث بن ابى اسامة التميمي، و صنف كتاباً كبيراً فى طبقات الصحابة و التابعين و الخلفاء الى وقته، فاجاد فيه و احسن، و هو يدخل فى خمس عشرة مجلده، و له طبقات اخرى صغرى - و كان صدوقاً ثقة، و يقال اجتمعت كتب الواقدي عند اربعة انفس - اولهم كاتبه محمد بن سعد المذكور و كان كثير

العلم غزير الحديث و الرواية كثير الكتب ، كتب الحديث و الفقه وغيرها . وقال الحافظ ابوبكر الخطيب صاحب تاريخ بغداد في حقه :  
 محمد ابن سعد عندنا من اهل العدالة ، وحديثه يدل على صدقه ، فانه يتحرى في كثير من رواياته ، وهو من موالى الحسين بن عبدالله بن عبيدالله بن العباس بن عبدالمطلب - وتوفى يوم الاحد لاربع خلون من جمادى الاخرة . سنة ثلاثين ومائتين ببغداد - و دفن في مقبره باب الشام - وهو ابن اثنتين و ستين سنة ، رحمه الله تعالى“<sup>٦٥</sup>

(Abū ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Sa‘d b. Mani‘ al-Zuhri Kātib al-Wāqidi, was a man of the highest talents, merit, and eminence. He lived for some time with al-Wāqidi, in the position of a secretary, and for this reason he became known by the appellation of Kātib al-Wāqidi. Amongst the masters under whom he studied was Sufyān b. ‘Uyaina; traditional information was delivered on his own authority by Abu Bakr b. Abi’d-Dunya, and Abū Muhammad al-Hārith b. Abi Usāma al-Tamimi. He composed an excellent work, in fifteen volumes, on the different classes of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and of the Tabi‘i’s; it contains also an history of the caliphs brought down to his own times. He left also a smaller Ṭabaqāt. His character as a veracious and trustworthy historian and traditionist is universally admitted. It is said that the complete collection of al-Wāqidi’s works remained in the possession of four persons, the first of whom was his secretary, Muhammad b. Sa‘d. This distinguished writer displayed great acquirements in Hādith, history, and law. The Khatib Abu Bakr, author of the History of Baghdad, speaks of him in these terms: We consider Muhammad b. Sa‘d as man of unimpeached integrity, and the traditions which he delivered are a proof of his veracity, for in the greater part of the information handed down by him, we find him discussing it, passage by passage’. He was a mawla to al-Husain b. ‘Abd

Allāh b. al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He died at Baghdād, on Sunday, the 4th of the latter Jumāda, 230 A.H., at the age of sixty-two years, and was interred in the cemetery outside the Syrian gate. May God bless him).<sup>66</sup>

#### ABŪ ‘UBAID AL-QĀSIM B. SALLĀM (D. 224 A.H./838 A.D.)

Ibn Khallikān says:

“Abū ‘Ubaid made the Traditions, philology, and jurisprudence the objects of his studies, and was distinguished for piety, virtuous conduct, orthodox principles and eminent talent.”

Ibn Khallikan continues:

“Abū ‘Ubaid”, said the Qāḍi Aḥmad b. Kāmil, “was conspicuous for piety and learning, a doctor versed in the various branches of Islamic Sciences, such as the Qur’ān reading (Qira’at), jurisprudence, grammar, and history, and a correct transmitter of poems and narrations preserved by oral tradition. Never, to my knowledge, has any person impeached the sincerity of his faith.” “Almighty God”, said Hilal b. Al’Ala al-Raqqi, “bestowed, out of his bounty, four men on this Umma at different times: He gave them Shāfi‘ī, who founded a system of Jurisprudence on the Traditions; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who showed such firmness under persecution that, without his example, the people had relapsed into infidelity; Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, who, from among the genuine Traditions relative to the Prophet (peace be upon him), expelled those which were false; and Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām, who explained the obscure terms of Traditions, and had he not done so, the people had rushed into error”. Ishaq ibn Rahwaih remarks about him, “Abū ‘Ubaid surpasses us all in learning, in philological knowledge, and in the mass of information which he has collected; we stand in need of Abū ‘Ubaid, and he standeth not in need of us.”

Abū 'Ubaid exercised the functions of Qāḍī for eighteen years in the city of Ṭarsūs. He has composed more than twenty valuable works relating to the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth, the obscure expressions occurring in the traditions, philology, poetry, genealogy and revenue matters, etc. He died in the year 224 A.H., at Makkah or Madina.

ABŪ 'UBAIDA MA'MAR B. AL-MUTHANNA (D.C. 213 A.H./828 A.D.)

Ibn Khallikān has discussed the biography of Abū 'Ubaida in several pages. He opens his account with Jāhiz's opinion about this eminent scholar:—

”لم يكن في الارض خارجي ولا جماعي اعلم بجميع العلوم منه“ -

(There was never on earth a Kharijite or an orthodox believer more learned in all the sciences than him).

Abū 'Ubaida was a native of Baṣra, and leader of the Baṣra school of grammarians and philologists. His opinions were those of the Khārijites. In the year 188 A.H./804 A.D., he proceeded from Baṣra to Baghdād, whither he had been called by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashid, and explained some of his works to the Caliph. Ibn Khallikān tells us that Abū 'Ubaida continued to compose works until he died and left nearly two hundred treatises on the various subjects, of which we may name the following few:—

'Kitāb Majāz al-Qur'ān', 'the Gharib al-Qur'ān', 'the Ma'āni'l-Qur'ān', 'the Gharib al-Ḥadīth', 'the Kitāb al-Qabā'il', 'the Kitāb al-A'yān', 'the Kitāb al-Insān', 'the Kitāb al-Shi'r wa'l Shu'ārā', 'the book on verbs', 'the Kitāb al-Mathālib', 'the Kitāb Khalq al-Insān', 'the Kitāb al-Lughat', 'the Kitāb al-Addad', 'the Kitāb Ma'athir al-'Arab', 'the Kitāb Makka wa'l Haram', 'the Kitāb Qissāt al-Ka'ba', 'the Kitāb Quḍāt al-Baṣra', etc. <sup>68</sup> From the above titles one can easily form an idea about Abū 'Ubaida's profound interest in various useful branches of knowledge.

Abū 'Ubaidā died at Baṣra according to Ibn Khallikān in the year 209 A.H., or, according to other statements, in 211, or 210, or 213A.H. <sup>69</sup>

MUṢ'AB B. 'ABD ALLĀH AL-ZUBAIRI (D. 233 A.H./847 A.D.)

Muṣ'ab al-Zubairi was a traditionist, historian, poet, genealogist and a man of letters. According to Ibn Nadīm he died in the year 230 A.H., and he composed works like 'the Kitāb al-Nasab al-Kabir', and 'the Kitāb Nasab Quraish', etc.<sup>70</sup>

'ALI B. MUHAMMAD AL-MADĀ'INĪ (D. 225 A.H./839 A.D.)

We will take up this renowned scholar of history in the second chapter of the present work.

### AL-BALĀDHURĪ'S ZEAL FOR LEARNING

How great was al-Balādhurī's zeal for learning and what a burning passion he had to acquire knowledge is evident from the long list of his teachers, from his travels to different centres of learning in quest of knowledge, and from the celebrated works he produced.

In his early age he pursued his studies zealously, and in his latter days he served the noble cause of knowledge by composing valuable works on different subjects. His whole life was spent as a student, a teacher, an agreeable companion of the Caliphs and as an author.

His studies led him to Damascus, Hims, Antakia and Al-'Irāq, etc. At these places he studied with the famous scholars of his time. It was in Al-'Irāq that Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā matured and emerged as an erudite and eminent scholar. The age in which al-Balādhurī was living was an age of creative activity and the main centre of this activity was the 'Abbāsīd's central province of al-'Irāq. The munificent patronage of the Caliphs had attracted the greatest scholars of the time from the four corners of the Islamic world to this province. So al-Balādhurī was fortunate enough to quench his thirst for knowledge at the hands of those who had lighted up the lamp of learning and were holding it very high. His close association with luminaries enabled him to get an up-to-date knowledge of the different branches of learning, which we are taking up below:—



## HIS INTEREST IN DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE

It is an admitted fact that al-Balādhurī had a profound interest in the different branches of knowledge. To acquire efficiency and skill in them, he utilized all his resources, mental, physical and economic, etc., for the possession of learning. His special interest lay in Ḥadīth, ansāb, history, poetry, satire, geography, etc.

Yāqūt acknowledges his skill in various sciences in the following words:

”وكان احمد بن يحيى بن جابر عالماً فاضلاً و شاعراً راويةً نساباً ،  
متقناً و كان مع ذلك كثير الهجاء“ -

(And Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir was a man of learning, a meritorious scholar, a poet, traditionist, a scholar of ansāb and very accurate in whatsoever he transmitted. He was interested in satiric invectives).

Ibn ‘Asākir observes:

”بلغني انّ البلاذري كان اديباً راويةً لد كتب جواد و مدح المامون  
بمدائح . . .“ -

(I have come to know that Al-Balādhurī was a man of letters and a traditionist. Some excellent works go to his credit and he praised al-Māmūn in so many panegyrics).

To show al-Baladhuri’s interest in these sciences, we may briefly discuss them below with special reference to our historian :

### ḤADĪTH

As we go through the works of al-Balādhurī, we easily arrive at the conclusion that he had a thorough knowledge of this branch of learning.

He knew it as a science and he made an extensive use of it in presenting his information.

Even the form of his presentation of the historical material is that of the stereotyped Islamic Ḥadīth. Each event is related in words of eye-witnesses or contemporaries and transmitted to the final narrator through a chain of intermediate reporters. Thus would al-Balādhurī start his account about the acceptance of Islam by Ḥadīrat ‘Uthmān: “Muhammad b. Sa‘d, the client (Maula) of Bani Hāshim, related to me, on the authority of al-Wāqidī, Muhammad b. ‘Umar, on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ, on the authority of Yazid b. Rumān, who said . . . ”<sup>73</sup>

In a similar way, he would begin his account about Zufar b. Hārith al-Kilābī: “Hishām bin ‘Ammār al-Dimashqī related to me, on the authority of al-Walid bin Muslim, on the authority of Marwān bin Janāḥ, on the authority of Yūnus bin Maisarah . . . ”<sup>74</sup>

And similarly he would start his narrative regarding the capitulation of Najrān:

“Bakr ibn al-Haithamī related to me, that ‘Abdallāh ibn Ṣāliḥ related to him, on the authority of al-Laith ibn Sa‘d, on the authority of Yūnus ibn Ziyād al-Āilī, on the authority of al-Zuhri, who said . . . ”<sup>75</sup>

Another way of handling traditions is that in which the compiler combines different traditions into one continuous account, prefixing a statement of his authorities or contenting himself by interrupting the narrative, wherever necessary, by citing the particular authority. While al-Balādhurī is an exponent of the former type and spares no pains in basing every fact, whenever possible, on an independent chain of narrators, yet he sometimes resorts to the other method as he himself acknowledged in the first lines of his Futūh al-Buldān:

“I have been informed by certain men learned in tradition, biography and the conquests of lands, whose narrative I transmitted, abridged and pieced up together into one whole . . . ”<sup>76</sup>

Where the store of his authorities fails him, al-Balādhurī introduced his narrative by <sup>“قالوا”</sup> (they said), or <sup>“قال”</sup> (he said) or <sup>“يقال”</sup> (it was said). Even by prefixing these words he meant that he had collected his information from learned men and reliable personalities. Thus he would start his *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*:

“Says Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir, I was informed by a group of learned men, who said . . . ”<sup>80</sup>

However, in addition to the principle of conciseness, Balādhurī made use of another method which is directly the opposite of it, and which is very close to that of the compilation of Ḥadīth, that is, he often provides several versions of an episode, according to the various isnāds.<sup>81</sup> This application of the method of Ḥadīth to historiography which, by the way was nothing new, certainly enhanced the value of his books for his own and succeeding generations.

In fact the chief source from which historical writing flowed was the Prophetic Tradition. In the words of P.K. Hitti:

“It was a pious custom that when Moslems met, one should ask for new (hadith), and other should relate a saying or anecdote of Muhammad<sup>82</sup> (peace be upon him).”

“To the pious Moslem the science of hadith soon became the science par excellence. It was primarily in its quest that the would be scholar, in response to the famous Prophetic Tradition, “seek ye learning though it be in China”, undertook long and tiresome journeys throughout the extensive domains of the Caliphate. Such journeys (al-Rihlah fitalab al’ilm) were elevated into acts of consummate piety; he who lost his life through their perils was likened to him who lost it in the holy war”.<sup>83</sup>

Thus we see that learning of Ḥadīth was indispensable to every pious Muslim. So al-Balādhurī, also, acquired a great proficiency in this science and learned it from famous scholars of his time.

## ANSĀB (GENEALOGY)

Al-Balādhurī's monumental work 'Ansāb al-Ashrāf' is a clear testimony to his great interest in this branch of learning.

Prof. D.S. Margoliouth has traced the importance of Ansāb thus :

“The study of Tradition is what underlines all works of this kind, just as it underlines the Geographical Dictionary of Yāqūt, and the History of Damascus. But the utility of these works is by no means confined to that study. They are mines of valuable information, and the Ansāb may prove nearly as indispensable to Arabic Scholars as is the work of Yāqūt”.<sup>84</sup>

The Caliph 'Umar's system of assigning state pensions to Muslims according to their kinship to the holy Prophet (peace be upon him), gave impetus to the study of genealogy, in which even pagan Arabs, who attached special importance to descent, were interested.

Due to the reverence for those who were closely related to the Prophet (peace be upon him), his house and his family viz., Quarashite or Hashimite and 'Alid descent, many positions of leadership were assigned to them. Thus a fertile field of practical usefulness was opened for those learned in genealogical lore. During the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., the historians were at the same time also genealogists. Since the members of the leading families were at the same time also the leaders of political life, the extension of genealogy to history was a natural process.

Al-Balādhurī attained the highest degree of skill in this branch of knowledge, and applied this genealogical principle of writing history, on a very large scale, to his book “Ansāb al-Ashrāf”.

## HISTORY

Two great extant historical works - Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashrāf, of al-Balādhurī stand a clear testimony to his deep interest in

this branch of knowledge. As we are going to take up this subject in a separate chapter, here we confine ourselves to a few remarks of some of the some of the most noteworthy biographers of al-Balādhurī.

The great Ibn ‘Asākir describes him as “Ṣāhib al-Tārikh”<sup>85</sup> (The author of history), any further comment being unnecessary.

Al-Mas‘ūdī in the introduction to his Murūj al-Dhahab proceeds:

”و كتاب التاريخ لاحمد بن يحيى البلاذرى . . . و لا نعلم  
فى فتوح البلدان احسن منه“<sup>86</sup> -

(And the Book of History by Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī . . . . We know of no better work on the history of the Muslim conquests than his).

To Yāqūt we have referred already.<sup>87</sup>

The great Muslim historian, Ibn Kathīr, opens his account about al-Balādhurī with the words :

”البلاذرى المورخ احد المشاهير“<sup>88</sup> -

(Al-Balādhurī, one of the great and celebrated historians).

In the same way, P. K. Hitti,<sup>89</sup> D.S. Margoliouth,<sup>90</sup> E.G. Browne,<sup>91</sup> C.H. Becker,<sup>92</sup> have a very high opinion about him as a historian.

## POETRY

Al-Balādhurī was a very good poet, and he even claimed superiority over the celebrated poet Al-Buḥturī (d. 284 A.H./897 A.D.). Ibn Khallikān has preserved an anecdote of considerable interest in the account of Al-Buḥturī. He says :

”و قال ميمون بن هارون : رايت ابا جعفر احمد بن يحيى بن جابر بن داود المورخ ، و حاله متماسكه ، فسالته ، فقال : كنت من جلساء المستعين فقصده الشعراء ، فقال : لست اقبل الآمن قال مثل قول البحتري في المتوكل (من الكامل) :

فلو ان مشتاقاً تكلف فوق ما في وسعه لمشى اليك المنبر  
فرجعت الى داري ، واتيته و قلت : قد قلت فيك احسن مما قاله  
البحترى في المتوكل ،

فقال : هاته . فانشدته (من الطويل)

ولو ان برد المصطفى اذ لبسته  
يظن لظن البرد انك صاحبه

و قال قد اعطيته ، و لبسته  
نعم ، هذه اعطافه و مناكبه

فقال : ارجع الى منزلك ، و افعل ما آمرک به ، فرجعت فبعث  
الى سبعة آلاف دينار . وقال : ادخر هذه لحوادث من  
بعدي ، و لك على الجراية و الكفاية ما دمت حيا - - -  
و البيت الذي للبحترى من جملة قصيدة طويله . احسن فيها  
كل الاحسان ، يمدح بها ابا الفضل جعفر المتوكل على الله .  
و يذكر خروجه لصلاة عيد الفطر ، و اولها (من الكامل) - - -  
” ٩٣ - - - - -

(Maimūn b. Hārūn related as follows: I met the historian Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir b. Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, while he was absorbed in thought. I asked him what had happened and he said: 'I was one of those persons whom (the caliph) al-Musta'in admitted into his intimate society. Some poets having come to sing his praises, he said: I will

receive eulogiums from no man, unless he produces a verse like that which al-Buḥturī composed on (the caliph), al-Mutawakkil 'Alallāh and which runs thus :

'If a passionate lover could be forced to do what is beyond his power, the pulpit would certainly hasten forward to salute you'.

I returned home and, the next time I went to see him. I told him that I had composed some verses which were better than those of al-Buḥturī. 'Let us hear them', said he; and I recited as follows:

'If the mantle of the chosen one (Muhammad, peace be upon him) possessed the faculty of thought, it would think that you were its former master; and, when you received it and put it on, it would have said: These are his shoulders and his arms.'

He told me to return to my dwelling and execute the orders which I should receive from him. He then sent me seven thousand dinārs, with his message: Treasure them up for what may befall you after my death, for, as long as I live, you shall receive from me a pension sufficient for your support . . .

Al-Buḥturī's verse is taken from a long panegric in which the author has attained the height of excellence. He praises in it (the caliph) Abu'l Faḍl Ja'far al-Mutawakkil 'Alallāh and describes his going forth to preside at the public prayer on the day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr).

Ibn 'Asākir has mentioned some very beautiful pieces of poetry composed by al-Balādhurī, e.g.,

(۱) ”محمود الوراق قال له قل من الشعر ما يبقى لك ذكره ويزول  
عنك اثمه فقال :

استعدى يا نفس للموت وابتغى النجاة فالحازم المستعد  
فذا بما انت مستعيرة ما سوف تردى والعواري ترد  
انت تسهين والحوادث لا تسهو و تلهين والمنايا تجد  
اي ملك في الارض او اي حظ لا مري حظه من الارض لحد  
لا ترجى البقاء في معدن الموت و دار حتمو فهالك ورد  
كيف يهوى امرؤ لذاه ايا م عليه الانفاس فيها تعد“<sup>۹۳</sup>

(Maḥmūd al-Warrāq said to him: Recite the verses which you still remember and their harmfulness has disappeared. And so he (al-Balādhurī) recited; O, Self! be prepared for death and seek salvation, because the prudent is always ready. You are only a borrowed thing which is shortly going to be returned, for borrowed things are to be returned. You are forgetful, but vicissitudes do not forget, you become careless but death is marching forward. For a king or an ordinary man, whoever he may be, his share in the land is only a grave. Eternity is not to be expected in the mine of death, and the abode of deaths will be for you a resort. How will a man desire the pleasure of days, while his breaths are numbered).

(۲) ”وهو القائل :

يا من روى ادباً ولم يعمل به فيكف عادته الهوى باريب  
حتى يكون بما تعلم عاملاً من صالح فيكون غير معيب  
ولقلما تجدى اصابه صائب اعماله اعمال غير مصيب“<sup>۹۴</sup>

(O, who! has transmitted knowledge, but has not acted upon it, he should refrain from his habit of desiring (to be called) a learned man, until he acts what he has learnt of the virtues, so that he becomes without a blemish. It is very rarely that the soundness of a soundman - that his actions would not be correct).



Al-Balādhurī took special interest in satirical invectives and practised it on very important personalities. From a number of such verses preserved alongwith others in Yāqūt, it appears that he resorted to this form of poetry in the days of al-Mu'tamid, for all the eminent personalities about whom he composed such verses belonged to that period. One more interesting point may be noted that he composed such poetry during his hard days.<sup>96</sup>

## GEOGRAPHY

His interest in geography can be seen from his book Futuḥ al-Buldān. This book is considered to be a remarkable work on geography also. 'Allāma Sakhāwī has mentioned this book among the geographical works. He says:

“There are geographical works, which give information about the countries, their outstanding features, and their conquests (by the Muslims), but, as a rule, do not have any biographies of the peoples of those countries. There are very many such works . . . . Aḥmad b. Yāḥyā al-Balādhurī . . . . described the countries in the east, west, north and south”.<sup>97</sup>

Hitti passes the following remarks:

“Not only did later historians draw freely from al-Balādhurī, but subsequent geographers used him extensively as a source. The remarkable work of Yāqūt reproduces a great part of the book (Futūḥ), Mukaddsi quotes him and so al-Hamadānī and al-Mas'ūdī”.<sup>98</sup>

Khair al-Dīn Zirkili observes :

”احمد بن يحيى . . . . مورخ، جغرافى ، نسابه . . . .“<sup>99</sup>

(Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā . . . . the historian, geographer and genealogist . . . .).

(۱) ”محمود الوراق قال له قل من الشعر ما يبقى لك ذكره ويزول  
عنك اثم فقال :

استعدى يا نفس للموت وابتغى النجاة فالحازم المستعد  
فذا بما انت مستعيرة ما سوف تردى والعواري ترد  
انت تسهين والحوادث لا تسهو و تلهين والمنايا تجد  
اي ملك في الارض او اي حظ لا مري حظه من الارض لحد  
لا ترجى البقاء في معدن الموت و دار حتمو فهالك ورد  
كيف يهوى امرؤ لذاه ايا م عليه الانفاس فيها تعد“<sup>۹۳</sup>

(Mahmūd al-Warrāq said to him: Recite the verses which you still remember and their harmfulness has disappeared. And so he (al-Balādhuri) recited; O, Self! be prepared for death and seek salvation, because the prudent is always ready. You are only a borrowed thing which is shortly going to be returned, for borrowed things are to be returned. You are forgetful, but vicissitudes do not forget, you become careless but death is marching forward. For a king or an ordinary man, whoever he may be, his share in the land is only a grave. Eternity is not to be expected in the mine of death, and the abode of deaths will be for you a resort. How will a man desire the pleasure of days, while his breaths are numbered).

(۲) ”وهو القائل :

يا من روى ادباً ولم يعمل به فيكف عادته الهوى باريب  
حتى يكون بما تعلم عاملاً من صالح فيكون غير معيب  
ولقلما تجدى اصابه صائب اعماله اعمال غير مصيب“<sup>۹۴</sup>

(O, who! has transmitted knowledge, but has not acted upon it, he should refrain from his habit of desiring (to be called) a learned man, until he acts what he has learnt of the virtues, so that he becomes without a blemish. It is very rarely that the soundness of a soundman - that his actions would not be correct).

Al-Balādhurī took special interest in satirical invectives and practised it on very important personalities. From a number of such verses preserved alongwith others in Yāqūt, it appears that he resorted to this form of poetry in the days of al-Mu'tamid, for all the eminent personalities about whom he composed such verses belonged to that period. One more interesting point may be noted that he composed such poetry during his hard days.<sup>96</sup>

## GEOGRAPHY

His interest in geography can be seen from his book Futuḥ al-Buldān. This book is considered to be a remarkable work on geography also. 'Allāma Sakhāwī has mentioned this book among the geographical works. He says:

“There are geographical works, which give information about the countries, their outstanding features, and their conquests (by the Muslims), but, as a rule, do not have any biographies of the peoples of those countries. There are very many such works . . . . Aḥmad b. Yāḥyā al-Balādhurī . . . . described the countries in the east, west, north and south”.<sup>97</sup>

Hitti passes the following remarks:

“Not only did later historians draw freely from al-Balādhurī, but subsequent geographers used him extensively as a source. The remarkable work of Yāqūt reproduces a great part of the book (Futūh), Mukaddsi quotes him and so al-Hamadānī and al-Mas'ūdī”.<sup>98</sup>

Khair al-Dīn Zirkili observes :

”احمد بن يحيى . . . . مورخ، جغرافی ، نسابه . . . .“<sup>99</sup>

(Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā . . . . the historian, geographer and genealogist . . . .).

## HIS FAITH

Al-Balādhurī was an accepted Sunni authority. The Shi'ite al-Sharīf al-Murtadā (d. 436 A.H.), who according to Goitein made very extensive use of al-Balādhurī, says of him:

”حاله في الثقة عند العامد و البعد عن مقاربة الشيعة والضبط لما  
يرويه معروف“<sup>١٠٠</sup> -

(It is well known that he is an accepted Sunnī authority, that he is far from supporting the Shi'a, and he is accurate in whatsoever he records).

## HIS PROFESSION

Al-Balādhurī was a translator, a secretary, a poet, a boon companion of a number of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs, an eminent teacher, and a remarkable author.

He was appointed, most probably in his early days a translator in the central office of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs. Ibn Nadīm informs us:

”وكان احد النقلة من الفارسي الى اللسان العربي“<sup>١٠١</sup> -

(He was one amongst those who translated from Persian into Arabic language).

Jurjī Zaidān says:

”وكان شاعرًا و كاتبًا و مترجمًا ينقل من الفارسيه الى العربيه“<sup>١٠٢</sup>

(And he was a poet, a secretary, and a translator, who translated from Persian into Arabic).

Similarly Dr. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq is of the same opinion:

”خلافت عباسی کے مرکزی دفتر میں فارسی سے عربی میں ترجمہ کرتے تھے۔ ان کا ایک ترجمہ عہد اردشیر آج تک مشہور ہے“<sup>۱۰۳</sup>۔

(He used to translate from Persian into Arabic in the central office of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs. His translation of the book ‘Ahd-i-Urdshir’ is well known till to-day).

Al-Balādhurī’s enormous industry in the field of knowledge and his devotion to its cause bore him fruit readily. He became a well-known figure among the learned men of Baghdād and was admitted to the company of the caliphs like Al-Mutawakkil, Al-Musta‘īn and Al-Mu‘tazz. Those caliphs, in addition to giving casual financial help to their companion in the form of gifts and prizes must have fixed a regular pension or stipend for him as an acknowledgement of his services to the cause of learning. At least in the case of the caliph al-Musta‘īn, we are sure that he once not only gave him seven thousand gold coins as a prize for merely composing two couplets in his praise, but he also ordered for him a regular pension, and gave him a promise to fulfil all his needs during his (caliph’s) lifetime.<sup>104</sup>

Al-Balādhurī’s fortunes seem to have dwindled during the caliphate of Al-Mu‘tamīd, as he himself admits by saying:

”کانت بینی و بین عبیدالله بن یحییٰ بن خاقان حرمہ منذ ایام المتوکل  
وما کنت اکلفہ حاجة لاستغنائی عندہ ، فنالتنی فی ایام المعتمد علی اللہ  
اضاقہ فدخلت الید وهو جالس للمظالم فشکوت تاخر رزقی و  
ثقل دینی . . . .“<sup>۱۰۵</sup>۔

(There was a mutual respect between ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān and myself, from the days (caliphate) of al-Mutawakkil. And I never requested him a favour as I dispensed with him. But in the days of al-Mu‘tamīd ‘Alallāh I was hard up (by the circumstances), so I went to him, while he was hearing petitions. I complained about my want of sustenance and heavy debts . . .).

## HIS ASSOCIATIONS

Al-Balādhurī associated himself with such persons as were serving the cause of knowledge, whether by acquiring it or by transmitting it to others or by patronising it. So among his companions and friends were the students, the eminent scholars, the ministers, and the caliphs, etc. We are told, as mentioned above, that he was admitted as a boon companion and a friend to the noble assembly of the caliphs like Mutawakkil (232-247 A.H./847-861 A.D.), Al-Mustaʿīn (248-251 A.H./862-866 A.D.), al-Muʿtazz, (251-255 A.H./866-869 A.D.), and of the ministers like ʿUbaid Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān and Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ, etc.

Yāqūt tells us the following interesting anecdote concerning our historian on his own authority, while he was in the company of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, where many other eminent scholars and the minister ʿUbaid Allāh, were present. The caliph Mutawakkil ordered Ibrāhim b. ʿAbbās al-Ṣulī to draw up a memoir delaying the payment of Kharāj and dating the commencement of its exaction by a Christian month. The memoir was read out in the presence of Mutawakkil and the minister ʿUbaid Allāh b. Yaḥyā, both of whom expressed their admiration of it. Balādhurī, as he confesses, moved by jealousy, remarked that it was defaced by an error. None of the others could detect it, but Balādhurī had done so. This was that the author supposed the Christian days like the ʿArabic to begin with the night, whereas of course they begin with the sunrise. The author of the memoir admitted his ignorance of the matter, and the Caliph ordered him to correct the error.<sup>106</sup>

## HIS PUPILS

A very long list of his pupils is found in our sources - ancient and modern.<sup>107</sup> Among such students were some of the eminent scholars of his times, such as Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī b. al-Munajjim al-Nadīm,<sup>108</sup> Jaʿfar b. Qudāma, Aḥmad b. Abd Allāh b. ʿAmmār, Abū Yūsūf Yaʿqūb b. Naʿīm Qarqār al-Azdi, and ʿAbd Allāh - the most celebrated poet and the brilliant son of the caliph al-Muʿtazz. We may discuss briefly the following three from amongst his pupils :—

## IBN AL-MUNAJJIM,

Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Yahyā b. Abi Mansūr (d. 300 A.H./912 A.D.). He was a native of Baghdād. Ibn Khallikān and Yāqūt, both have a very high opinion about him. He was an eminent poet, well-versed in literature, a scholastic and a specialist in Islamic law. A number of valuable works like, ‘Kitāb al-Bahir Fi Akhbār Shu‘arā . . . .’, ‘Kitāb al-Ijmā ‘Fi’l Fiqh . . . .’, ‘Kitāb al-Auqāt’, etc; stand to his credit. He was a very close companion of the caliphs, al-Mu‘taḍid, al-Muktafi, etc. <sup>109</sup>

## JA‘FAR B. QUDĀMA (D. 310 OR 319 A.H./922 OR 931 A.D.)

Khaṭīb and Yāqūt, both have given an account of this great scholar in their works. Khaṭīb passes the following remarks about him:

”جعفر بن قدامد بن زياد الكاتب - احد مشايخ الكتاب و علمائهم  
و كان وافر الادب . حسن المعرفة ولد مصنفات في صنعة الكتاب  
وغيرها“ ١١٠ -

(Ja‘far b. Qudāma b. Ziyād al-Kātib, was one of the most celebrated secretaries, a man of letters, having a profound understanding of the literary matters. He has composed a number of works on the art of secretaryship, etc.).

Yāqūt gives two dates for his death, i.e. 310 A.H./922 A.D. or 319 A.H./931 A.D. <sup>111</sup>

## ‘ABD ALLĀH B. AL-MU‘TAZZ (D. 296 A.H./908 A.D.)

‘Abd Allāh the most brilliant son of the caliph al-Mu‘tazz was born in the year 247 A.H. and was murdered over the dispute of caliphate in 296 A.H./908 A.D, Khaṭīb has given his detailed account. He holds him in high esteems and says:

”كان متقدماً في الادب ، غزير العلم ، بارع الفضل ، حسن الشعر . . . “<sup>112</sup> -

(He excelled in learning, was a man of letters, an erudite scholar, and a celebrated poet).

Margoliouth,<sup>113</sup> Hitti,<sup>114</sup> De Goeje,<sup>115</sup> Jurji Zaidan,<sup>116</sup> Khurshid Ahmad Fāriq,<sup>117</sup> etc., all agree that Al-Balādhurī was appointed by the caliph al-Mu‘tazz, as teacher of his son ‘Abd Allāh.

The opinion of these scholars is supported by the fact that Al-Mu‘tazz became caliph in the year 251 A.H./865 A.D. when ‘Abd Allāh, his son, had already attained the age of four years. Al-Mu‘tazz remained in the position of a caliph upto 255 A.H./868 A.D., and it is beyond any doubt that during this period al-Balādhurī was his intimate companion. So Al-Mu‘tazz, taking advantage of his close association with al-Balādhurī, entrusted his son ‘Abd Allāh, to the care of our historian, so that he might educate him.

In connection with al-Balādhurī’s pupils, it is worthy of note that Ustādh ‘Abd al-Sattār Farrāj, while evaluating the position of al-Balādhurī, says:

”و يكنى في قيمته ان من تلاميذه يحيى بن على بن المنجم . . .  
و جعفر بن قدامة“<sup>118</sup> -

(It is a sufficient proof of his greatness, that Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. al-Munajjim and Ja‘far b. Qudāma were among his pupils).

## HIS CHARACTER

Al-Balādhurī has been held in high esteems by almost all his biographers. He, in fact, deserved the praise he has received. He was a man of upright and excellent character. Goitein has drawn up a beautiful picture of his character.



The following few lines are worth quoting:

“It is impossible to see in Balādhurī’s exposition any partisan tendency. Above, it has been made clear that his position at the court of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs did not have the slightest influence on him, when he described the Omayyads.

It is characteristic that Shi‘ite as-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, who made very extensive use of Balādhurī, says of him (as-Shafi, 207, from the bottom).

حاله في الثقة عند العامة والبعده عن مقاربة الشيعة والضبط لما  
يرويه معروف -

(It is well known that he is an accepted Sunni authority, that he is far from supporting the Shi‘a and he is accurate in whatsoever he records).

Like the great Abu Mikhnaf whom he apparently valued very highly, Balādhurī, if one may so express oneself, was a partisan of one class only: his own class of authors, who wish to be interesting and therefore cannot resist a sensation and even a touch of scandal”.<sup>119</sup>

His self-respect and uprightness can also be judged from the anecdote preserved by Yāqūt, in connection with al-Balādhurī and ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Yahyā b. Khāqān-the renowned minister.<sup>120</sup>

## HIS DEATH

The most probable date for al-Balādhurī’s death is 279 A.H./892 A.D. The great historian Ibn Kathīr in his book ‘al-Bidāya wa’l-Nihāya’, written in annalistic form, has given al-Balādhurī’s account under the year 279 A.H., from which it is quite evident that he died in the specified year.<sup>121</sup>

Ibn ‘Asākir informs us:

”و توفى في ايام المعتد . . .“ ١٢٢٦ -

(And he died in the days of al-Mu‘tamid . . . )

Yāqūt is of the opinion:

”مات في ايام المعتد على الله في اواخرها وما ابعده ان يكون ادرك  
اول ايام المعتد“ ١٢٢٦ -

(He died in the later days of al-Mu‘tamid ‘Alallāh, and it is, also, possible to assume that he remained alive for some-time during the early days of al-Mu‘taḍid).

And it is an established fact that al-Mu‘tamid died in the year 279 A.H./ 892 A.D., and the same year Mu‘taḍid was instituted as caliph. So we may safely infer from the account that it was in the year 279 A.D., that al-Balādhurī died.

Moreover, almost all the modern biographers of al-Balādhurī suggest the year 279 A.H./892 A.D., for his death).<sup>124</sup>

A great misfortune befell al-Balādhurī in his old age, when he was mentally deranged. The cause of his illness was the inadvertent use of ‘balādhur’. His illness was so acute that he had to be kept bound in the hospital. He could not recover from the disease, and so the same year, this brilliant star of the sky of learning, after shedding its lustre over the world, disappeared in Baghdād for ever.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

### CHAPTER I

- 1 *Al-Qur'ān*, 58:11.
- 2 George Sarton, *Introduction To the History of Science* (Washington, 1950), i, p. 520.
- 3 Phillip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (New York, 1964), pp. 306–07.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 363.
- 5 R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 281.
- 6 Ameer 'Alī, *A Short History of the Saracens* (London, 1949), p.274.
- 7 Ameer 'Alī, *The Spirit of Islām* (Karachi, 1969), pp. 396–97.
- 8 Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *Islamic Culture* (Lahore, n.d.), pp. 64–65.
- 9 A.M.A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture* (Banglore, 1954), p. 123.
- 10 Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Cairo, 1348 A.H.), p.2.
- 11 Cf. *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 3–5.
- 12 *Literary History of the Arabs, op. cit.*, pp. 361-62.
- 13 Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Cairo, 1948), i, p. 12.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–17.
- 15 *Murūj*, p. 17.
- 16 The original name of the work is '*Irshād al-Arib ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb*'.
- 17 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* (Cairo, 1928), 2nd Ed., i,p.5.
- 18 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyat al-A'yān* (Cairo, 1948), i, p. 3.
- 19 Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Cairo, 1951).
- 20 Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wafī bi'l-Wafayāt* (Istanbul, 1931).
- 21 *Wafayāt*, v, p. 225.
- 22 *Ibid.*, iv, p. 323.
- 23 *Ibid.*, ii, p. 344.
- 24 Cf. *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 225-227.
- 25 Cf. *Wafayāt*, ii, p. 304.
26. It is very strange that Ibn Khallikān and Yāqūt both have failed to give the biography of Fail-sūf al-'Arab, al-Kindī, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ishāq (d.260 A.H./873 A.D)., in their works.
- 27 *Wafayāt*, ii, p. 70.
- 28 Cf. Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
- 29 Cf. Khaṭīb, *Tārikh Baghdād* (Beirut, n.d.), i-xiv.
- 30 Cf. Al-Qiftī, *Tārikh al-Hukamā'*, Urdu Tr. Ghulām Jilānī.
- 31 Cf. Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah, '*Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Tabaqāt al-Aṭibbā'*' (Beirut, 1965 A.D).
- 32 Cf. Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārikh Madīna Dimashq* (Damascus, 1951) Ed., Ṣalāh al-Dīn Munajjid; *Tahdhib Tārikh Ibn 'Asākir* (Damascus, 1330 A.H.), Ed. Ibn Badrān.
- 33 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām* (New Edition; 1960), i,p. 971.
- 34 Cf. (i) Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (Cairo, 1959), i, pp. 3, 107, 252.  
(ii) Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Leiden, 1866), p.2.
- 35 Cf. (i) Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist* (Leipzig, 1871), p. 113.  
(ii) Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* (Cairo, 1948), i, 14.  
(iii) Ibn 'Asākir, *Al-Tārikh al-Kabir* (Syria, 1330 A.H.), ii, 109.

- (iv) Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-ʿUdabā'* (Cairo, 1924), 2nd Ed. ii, p. 127.
- (v) Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Cairo, 1951), i, p. 11.
- (vi) Ibn Khallikān, *op. cit.*, v, p. 76.
- (vii) Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* (Istanbul, 1931), i, p. 13.
- (viii) Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya* (Egypt), xi, p. 65.
- (ix) Ḥajī Khalifa, *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istanbul, 1941), i, p. 79.
- (x) Brockelmann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1937), supp. i, p. 216.
- (xi) Khair al-Dīn Zirkilī, *A'lām* (Egypt, 1927), i, p. 85.
- (xii) 'Umar Ridā Kaḥḥālah, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn* (Demashq, 1950), i, p. 281.
- (xiii) Jurjī Zaydān, *Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughat al-'Arabiyya* (Cairo, 1912), ii, p. 191.
- 36 Cf. Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, i, p. 216.
- 37 Al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb* (Egypt, 1938), p. 256.
- 38 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (Cairo, 1924), 2nd Ed; ii, pp. 127-28.
- 39 *Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 40 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabir*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 109.
- 41 *Al-Bidāya*, *op. cit.*, xi, p. 65.
- 42 *A'lām*, i, p. 86.
- 43 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, English Tr. by P.K. Hitti in *The Origins of Islamic State* vol. Lxviii (New York, 1916), Intr. p.6.
- 44 Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, i, p. 971.
- 45 Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *A'lām al-Tārīkh wa'l Jughrāfiya fīnd al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1959), i, p. 18.
- 46 *Tārīkh Ādāb*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 191.
- 47 *Jawāhir al-Buhūr* (Lahore, 1949), 6th Ed., p.1.
- 48 Cf. Khurshid Aḥmad Fāriq, *Balādhurī kī Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, *The journal Burhān* (Delhi, April, 1957), p. 209.
- 49 Cf. (i) Ibn Asākir, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 109.  
(ii) Yāqūt, 2nd Ed. (Cairo, 1924), ii, p. 127.  
(iii) *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.  
(iv) *Al-Bidāya*, xi, p. 65  
(v) M.J. De Goeje, Intr. to *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Urdu Trns. by Abū'l-Khair Maudūdī, Hyderabad, 1932), pp. 1-2, 5,7.
- 50 Cf. *Al-Jahshiyārī*, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-56; *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 51 Quoted by Arnold, *Painting in Islam* (London, 1928), p.2.
- 52 *Al-Qur'ān*, 68:1.
- 53 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabir*, ii, p. 109.
- 54 Cf. Margoliouth, *Lectures on Arabic Historians* (Calcutta, 1930), pp. 104-5.
- 55 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 56 *Al-Jahshiyārī*, p. 256.
- 57 *History of Science*, *op. cit.*, 1, p. 616.
- 58 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (Jerusalem, 1936), v, Intro. by S.D.F. Goitein, p. 21.
- 59 P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1960), p. 388.
- 60 Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs* (London, 1907), p. 349.
- 61 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabir*, ii, 109.
- 62 “—”
- 63 Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 127.
- 64 Cf. *Al-Bidāya*, xi, p. 65; De Goeje, Intr. to *Futūḥ*, p.4.
- 65 Ibn Khallikān, iii, p. 473.
- 66 *Ibid.*, pp. 225-227.
- 67 Ibn Khallikān, iv, 323.

- 68 Cf. Ibn Khallikān, iv, pp. 326-27; Yāqūt, vii, pp. 168-70.
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 330.
- 70 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 166. K. *Nasāb al-Quraish* has been edited by Levi Provençal and Published at Cairo, 1953.
- 71 *Mu'jam*, ii, p. 128.
- 72 *Al-Tārikh al-Kabir*, ii, 109.
- 73 *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Goitein, v, p. i.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 298.
- 75 *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 70.
- 76 *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 9.
- 77 *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, i, pp. 270-71.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 526.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 81 Cf. Numerous Traditions in *Ansāb*, i, v.
- 82 Intr. to *Futūḥ*, p.2.
- 83 *History of the Arabs*, 2nd Ed. pp. 393-94.
- 84 Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* (Leyden, 1912), Ed. D.S. Margoliouth, Intr. p. 4.
- 85 *Al-Tārikh al-Kabir*, ii, p. 109.
- 86 *Murūj*, p. 14.
- 87 See above, 71.
- 88 *Al-Bidāya*, xi, p. 65.
- 89 *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Art; History*, vii, p. 538.
- 90 *Lectures On Arabic Historians*, pp. 116-17.
- 91 *Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1956), i, p. 268.
- 92 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, i, p. 971.
- 93 Ibn Khallikān, v, pp. 76-79; Al-Kutubi has also described the above event with a little difference in words (Cf. *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Cairo, 1951), i, pp. 11-12)
- 94 *Al-Tārikh al-Kabir*, ii, p. 109.
- 95 *Ibid.*  
\* In Yāqūt ١١١; Second couplet is after the third (cf. v, p. 99).
- 96 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, 2nd Ed., ii, pp. 128-32.
- 97 Sakhāwī, *I'ān*, Eng. Tr. Rosenthal in *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), pp. 408-09.
- 98 *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, Eng. Tr., Intr. p. 10.
- 99 *A'lām* (Cairo 1927), i, 85.
- 100 *Kitāb al-Shāfi*, p. 207., quoted by Goitein, intr. *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, v, p. 23; 'Abd al-Sattār Farrāj, intr. to *Ansāb*, i, p. 14.
- 101 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 102 *Tārikh Ādāb al-Lughat al-Arabiyya* (Cairo, 1912), ii, p. 191.
- 103 *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, op. cit., p. 209.
- 104 Cf. Ibn Khallikān, v, pp. 76-79, quoted above, ref. 93.
- 105 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, ii, pp. 131-32.
- 106 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, ii, pp. 128-29.
- 107 See above No. 35.
- 108 De Goeje has wrongly taken him for Ibn Nadīm, the author of *al-Fihrist* (d. 385 A.H./995 A.D.), Cf. Intro. p. 3.
- 109 See for details, Ibn Khallikān, v, pp. 244-47; *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, vii, pp. 287-88.
- 110 *Tārikh Baghdād*, Egyptian Ed., vii, p. 205.

- 111 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, ii, p. 413.
- 112 *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Beirut), x, p. 95; for his detailed account see pp. 95-101.
- 113 Cf. *Lectures, op. cit.*, p. 116.
- 114 Cf. *Intr. to Futūḥ*, p. 6.
- 115 Cf. *Intr. to Futūḥ*, p. 2.
- 116 Cf. *Ādāb*, ii, 191.
- 117 Cf. *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, p. 209.
- 118 *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, i, *Intr.* p. 14.
- 119 *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, v, *Intr.*, pp. 23-24.
- 120 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, v, p. 100.
- 121 *Al-Bidāya*, xi, p. 65.
- 122 *Tārīkh al-Kabir*, ii, 109.
- 123 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, v, p. 90.
- 124 Cf. (i) Hitti, *Intr. to Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 9.  
(ii) Goitein, *Intr. to Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, v, p. 9.  
(iii) Jurjī Zaidān, *Tārīkh . . .*, ii, p. 191.  
(iv) *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1960), i, p. 508. etc.

## CHAPTER II

## (A) MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY BEFORE AL-BALĀDHURĪ

## THE BEGINNING OF MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historiography was among the earliest disciplines cultivated by the Muslims after the advent of Islam. Numerous definitions have been attached to the word history. It would be noted with interest if we give below some of the definitions given by scholars - ancient and modern, Muslims and non-Muslims :—

James Thompson Shotwell observes :

“The word history is used in two senses. It may mean either the record of events or events themselves. Originally limited to inquiry and statement, it was only in comparatively modern times that the meaning of the word was extended to include the phenomena which form or might form their subject . . .

History in the wider sense is all that has happened, not merely all the phenomena of human life, but those of the natural world as well. It includes everything that undergoes change; and as modern science has shown that there is nothing absolutely static, therefore the whole universe and every part of it has its history”.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Elmer Barnes informs us in this connection:

“In an objective sense history is, to use the words of Professor

Robinson, 'all we know about everything man has ever done, or thought, or hoped or felt'. Subjectively or psychologically expressed, history may be regarded as a record of all that has occurred within the realm of human consciousness".<sup>2</sup>

Henri Berr and Lucien Febvre remark :

"That in the broadest sense history comprises nature as well as humanity . . . In its narrower sense - history is the study of change in humanity . . . The formula that history is the study of human facts of the past although general and perhaps a little vague, excludes no element of history." <sup>3</sup>

'Allāma Sakhāwī (831-902 A.H./1427-1497 A.D.) had the same broader view of history as is professed by these scholars, when he said :

"In sum, the term tā'rikh signifies a branch of learning that is concerned with research regarding the occurrences which take place in time, with the intention to establish their character and their place in time. In fact, it is concerned with everything that was (and is) in the world".<sup>4</sup>

Earlier in the first half of the fourth century of the Muslim era, al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346 A.H./957 A.D.) commenting on history observed:

"History is a branch of knowledge, which is enjoyed by both scholars and ignorant persons and which is relished by both the stupid and the intelligent. Everything remarkable becomes known through history. Every marvel gains its appreciation through it. Noble and sublime traits of character are derived from it. The political education of kings and others is based on it. History collects for you the first and the last (of persons and things), insufficiency and abundance, nomadic life and city life (persons and) things of the past. Many judgements (regarding the moral



and legal character of things) are based upon history. The knowledge of it is considered as an asset in any gathering and station”<sup>5</sup>

Al-Masūdi continues that his motive to write works on history (tārikh) and world events (akhbār) was :

“The desire to follow the aim which was aspired to and pursued by scholars and sages, and the wish to leave in the world a praise-worthy memory and ready, well-arranged knowledge”.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 A.D.), the great Muslim philosophic historian who gave a new meaning to history, defines it thus :

“History is a discipline widely cultivated among nations and races. It is eagerly sought after. The men in the street, the ordinary people aspire to know it. Kings and leaders vie for it.

Both the learned and the ignorant are able to understand it. For on the surface, history is no more than information about political events, dynasties, and occurrences of the remote past, elegantly presented and spiced with proverbs. It serves to entertain large, crowded gatherings and brings to us an understanding of human affairs. (It shows) how changing conditions affected (human affairs), how certain dynasties came to occupy an ever wider space in the world, and how they settled the earth until they heard the call and their time was up.

The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves specialisation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. (History), therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy)”.<sup>7</sup>

Speaking of the excellence of historiography and critically appreciating the various approaches to history, Ibn Khaldūn says :

“It should be known that history is a discipline that has a great number of (different) approaches. Its useful aspects are very many. Its goal is distinguished. (History) makes us acquainted with the conditions of past nations as they are reflected in their (national) character. It makes us acquainted with the biographies of the prophets and with the dynasties and policies of the rulers. Whoever so desires may thus achieve the useful result of being able to imitate historical examples in religious and worldly matters.

The (writing of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness. (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from customs, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from the high road of truth”.<sup>8</sup>

The thing that is common to all the definitions, is that history is an objective & critical study of the human past. With this definition of history, in its limited sense, we proceed with our discussion.

Our sources have preserved information about innumerable Muslim historians and their works. Ibn Nadīm devotes a long chapter to the study of historians - Akhbāriyyūn, genealogists and biographers, etc., and to their books. He opens this chapter with an account of Ziyād and throws light on the life and works of different historians, like ‘Ubaid b. Shariyah,

'Awānah, Muḥammad b. Ishāq, Abū Mikhnaf, Ishāq b. Bishr, Al-Zuhri, Muḥammad b. Sā'ib al-Kalbi, Hishām al-Kalbi, al-Wāqidi, Muḥammad b. Sa'd, Haytham b. 'Adī, al-Madā'ini, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, al-Kātib, Muṣ'ab b. 'Abd Allāh al-Zubayri, Zubair b. Bakkār, al-Azraqi, al-Balādhuri, Abu'l Faraj al-Ispahāni, and many others. The chapter is closed with al-Jalūdi.<sup>9</sup>

As for al-Mas'ūdi, we have already referred to him in the preceding chapter.<sup>10</sup>

The renowned bibliographer Ḥājī Khalifa (1599-1658) after conducting an investigation into the names of the historical works produced by the Muslim scholars, gives a long list in alphabetical order of one thousand and three hundred such works.<sup>11</sup> And it is evident that this list is not a complete one.

The most recent efforts made by the renowned orientalists like Wustenfeld and Brockelmann to collect information about the names, lives and works of Arabic historians, also show the great interest which the Muslims took in this branch of learning and reveal that innumerable scholars were engaged in this sort of literary activity. The point which calls our attention here is how the art of historiography began among the Muslims and what were the main channels in which it flowed.

Many of the orientalists<sup>12</sup> are of the opinion that the main influence which contributed to the development of Muslim historiography was that which came from such Persian books of history as Khuda-i-nama, which was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 757) under the title of Siyar Mulūk al-Ājam.<sup>13</sup> But this opinion can be reviewed in the light of the remarks passed by Franz Rosenthal in his book : 'A History of Muslim Historiography' - He observes:

"The available evidence as to the form of Iranian historiography in the seventh century is very slim - This much, however, seems certain : There is nothing that would permit us to assume that the Persians used an annalistic arrangement. Everything tends to show that they did not, and there is

the additional theoretical consideration that the absence of a continuous era would have made the compilation of a long-range historical works a difficult task. All those who preferred to stress the predominance of Persian influence upon the origins of Muslim historiography failed to give proof that simultaneously with dynastical historiography also the annalistic form was introduced under Persian influence. In fact, this cannot have been the case".<sup>14</sup>

Elucidating his remarks he adds :

"Even supposing that the Hwātaynāmak and similar products of Sasanian historiography were based upon official "annals", that would not mean that the historical works were written in annalistic form . . . . According to the Arabic versions of Hwātaynāmak, the only data contained in it concerned the length of the reigns of the individual rulers".<sup>15</sup>

In fact historiography among the Muslims seems to have begun and developed under different influences - semi-historical, historical and religious, among these, the influence of Islam being the most conspicuous. It would be more convenient, if the various influences are discussed separately :—

### Pre-Islamic History

Let us start with a quotation from Professor Margoliouth who observes:

"That Arabic history owes nothing to Greek history and little if anything to Persian history, seems clear; but it also appears to be independent of pre-Islamic Arabian chronicles".<sup>16</sup>

Professor Hitti says:

"Although rudimentary elements of historiography can be traced back to the descriptions of the "days", i.e. the battles

between the tribes and such stories as the “Ma’rib dam”, “the owners of the elephant”, and the digging of the zamzam well - all of pre-Islamic antiquity-, yet Arabic historical writing, in the strict sense of the term, is a branch of Islamic literature”.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand the writer of the article on ‘Tārikh’ in the Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam, has tried to trace the influence of pre-Islamic inscriptions, oral and tribal traditions, on the beginning and development of the writing of history among the Muslims.<sup>18</sup>

It is an admitted fact that in southern Arabia, i.e. Yaman, which had been the cradle of ancient Arabian culture and civilization, there existed inscriptions, and some of those exist even now, which contained the names of the kings of those regions and told certain stories related to the early periods and painted an obscure yet comparatively less exaggerated picture of the century preceding Islam. In the words of Margoliouth :

“We may call many of the inscriptions historical records, though normally the form which they take is to give the reason why some votive offering was presented to a god. Such inscriptions commence with the name or names of the donors and an account or list of the services whereby the deity had earned such a gift”.<sup>19</sup>

Through the influence of such inscriptions it is said :

“People used to tell stories about their past in an exaggerated form. These stories were transmitted through oral tradition to the Muslims of the first century of their era, who with the help of their imagination developed such stories further and continued transmitting those to the succeeding generations, who continued considering such stories as ancient history. ‘Ubaid b. Shariyah and Wahb b. Munabbih gave place to such stories in their works and the former was among the authorities of Ibn Ishāq. Thus this influence

crept into the works of later historians and affected the development of critical outlook and obstructed in the way of understanding ancient history".<sup>20</sup>

We are perhaps justified in analysing further, the above remarks in the light of the following facts :

- (a) That such inscriptions had little attraction for the adherents of Islam; for, what these inscriptions record directly is not tribal or national history, but the record of service rendered by a fictitious deity, rewarded by a pagan rite. The very names of deities and offering of images were sufficient to evoke a dislike in the minds of the Muslim Arabs.
- (b) No doubt, 'Ubaid b. Shariyah on the orders of Amir Mu'āwiyah wrote 'Kitāb al-Amthāl' and 'Kitāb al-Mulūk wa'l-Akhbār al-Mādiyyūn'<sup>21</sup> and Wahb ibn Munabbih composed 'Kitāb al-Mubtadā'<sup>22</sup>, but these works are not before us to see how they utilized the oral tradition - whether or not they accepted it critically.
- (c) Arabic historians in general seem to be very cautious in accepting ancient history. Even in the first century of their era they, under the influence of Islamic teachings in general and under the injunctions of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in particular, had developed a profound critical outlook. Especially the Science of Tradition as we will see under a succeeding sub-head, had contributed much to the cause of history by furnishing the Muslim historian with a science of criticism, which he is seen applying to every aspect of his particular field.
- (d) If, at all, the above influence, through certain sources

crept into the sphere of Muslim historiography, it is so insignificant that it is unworthy of our attention.

As regards the pre-Islamic Arabian influence of Northern regions in the domain of Muslim historiography, we may say that it does not seem to have extended beyond the sphere of mode of expression, the method of narrating the tribal traditions and to an insignificant extent to genealogy.

The Arabs of this region had their tribal traditions, which every tribe had preserved in its memory. These traditions were in most cases preserved in the form of poetry. As poetry is said to have been national record (Diwān) of the Arabs, this was considered to be the chief mode of expression among them, though at times prose too was used to narrate such stories. This way of expression also came down to the Muslim Arabs, and the earlier historians cite verses in illustration of the chief events. This they could do more easily, since the military organisation was still tribal.

The other less conspicuous influence which came from the pagan Arabs was that of Anṣāb. The Arabs had an interest in preserving their genealogies from the early times, as they attached special importance to descent. An impetus was, however, given to the study of genealogy by the introduction of the system of 'Aṭā (assigning state pensions) by the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, by which there arose the necessity of ascertaining the genealogical relationship of each Muslim Arab, his kinship to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and his precedence in accepting Islam, etc.

### Religious Influence

The Qur'ānic teachings, the interest of the Muslims in the life and teachings of their Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and the study of Ḥadīth, played the most important role in connection with the beginning and shaping of the historical outlook among the Muslims; and perhaps this influence stands supreme to all other influences.

Tracing the importance of the study of history in the introduction to the History of Malaqah (Malaga), Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Muhammad b. 'Alī b. Khamīs (d. after 636 A.H./1239 A.D.) said:

“Next to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, the most deserving subjects of assiduous study are history and biography. They serve to remind (man) of the fact that time turns its children up and down. They show the remarkable events (anbā) which happened in former times. They call attention to the (religious) scholars whose activities must be followed and whose qualities and stories (akhbār) must be written down. Those scholars will thus be (as) familiar to you as if they were standing before you together with other (living) men, were in contact with you and spoke to you, and were known to be exactly as they are said to be. Those who never saw them personally will read their marks. Those whose age did not permit them to see them will witness their good actions. Their rank and position will thus be known. It will be known who among them was conversant with the knowledge acquired through tradition and understanding and who excelled in the knowledge acquired through observation and through books, it will become clear who was well educated and equipped for leadership. Great zeal will be displayed in order to reach them and share their status’’.<sup>23</sup>

‘Allāma Iqbāl - the great poet philosopher also agrees with other Muslim scholars, when he attaches an immense importance to the study of history for the growth of Muslim community.<sup>24</sup>

In fact the Holy Qur’ān has laid emphasis on history as a realistic and purposeful account of the facts of human experience. God, Almighty narrating the best of narratives to his Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reveals the purpose and the real significance of history, thus:

”لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ط مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِن تَصَدِّيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ  
يُؤْمِنُونَ، ٢٠ ؕ

(In their history verily there is a lesson for men of understanding. It is no invented story but a verification of what



is before it and a distinct explanation of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for folk who believe).

A practical incentive to the study of history was the abundance of historical data in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān tells many stories which contain a good deal of information about the peoples of the past, such as the people of Nūḥ, and Hūd, and Madyan, and Thamūd. Moreover, there are stories about the Prophets Mūsā and Hārūn (peace be upon them) and about Pharoah (Fir'awn) and Qārūn, about Aṣḥāb al-Kahf and Namrūd and the prophets Ibrāhim, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf, Dāwūd, Sulaimān, 'Isā (peace be upon them), etc. These stories serve as an incentive to imitate these great men in all those things for which they found Allāh's favour and, on the other hand, they serve as a warning against the actions which Allāh disliked, and in addition they develop a historical sense among the Muslims and explain to them the real purpose of history.

As the art of Tafsīr developed among the Muslims, the Qur'ān commentators were forced by these circumstances to look for illustrative historical material. In the course of time, the occupation with the historical material of the Qur'ān came to be considered one of the branches of learning that were developed in connection with the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān infused in its followers a spirit of preserving contemporary history by predicting the outcome of the struggle between the Byzantines and the Persians. The Qur'ān stated:

”غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ۗ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ۗ فِي بضعِ سنينَ ۗ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ مِنْ بَعْدُ ۗ وَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۗ“

(The Romans have been defeated in the nearer land, and they, after their defeat will be victorious within nine years - Allāh's is the command in the former case and in the latter - and on that day the believers will rejoice in Allāh's

help (to victory). He helpeth (to victory) whom He pleases. He is the Mighty, the Merciful).

Moreover, many events concerning the life and times of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) are narrated in this Holy Book. These events soon acquired supreme historical significance for the Muslims, and stimulated historical research among them.

The most Gracious and Merciful Lord gives an idea of the science of time-reckoning and of an era to the believers by revealing:

”وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتٍ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً  
لِتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۗ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ  
فَعَلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ۝٢٧”

(And We made night and day two signs. We made the sign of the night to pass away, and We made the sign of the day luminous, so that you might seek excellence from your Lord and know the computation of years and (the science of time) reckoning. And everything We have explained with a detailed explanation).

Again He reveals :

”يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ ۗ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۝٢٨”

(They ask thee about the new moons. Say, ‘They are means for measuring time for (the general good of) mankind and for the pilgrimage).

At an other place we find:

”هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ  
السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۗ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ  
يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٢٩”

(It is He Who made the sun a shining brightness, and the moon a light, and ordained for it stages, that you might know the number of years and reckoning (of time). Allāh only created that for a good reason establishing distinct signs for people who have knowledge. Surely in the variation of the night and the day, and that which Allāh has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for a people who keep their duty).

Due to this Qur'ānic influence, apart from the administrative needs, the great importance and instructiveness of annalistic fixation of history was in the mind of the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and the men around the Prophet (peace be upon him), when they devised the Islamic Era.

Professor Margoliouth says in this connection:

“ . . . . We note certain methods devised by the Arabic historians for ensuring accuracy in the record of events. One is dating them by the year and month, and even the day. The historian of civilization, Buckle, states that this practice in Europe is not earlier than 1597 A.D. Among Arab historians we find it developed in Ṭabari and an earlier author al-Haitham b. 'Adi, born 130 A.H., is credited with a history arranged in order of years. For such a purpose an era was necessary, and it is asserted that the practice of dating by the Prophet's Hijrah was introduced by the second caliph”.<sup>30</sup>

The next very important influence under which the writing of history flowed among the Muslims was their keen interest in the personality and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which necessitated the compilation of traditions relating to his life, and teachings, etc.

The class of scholars that contributed to the above work was primarily known as the class of Muḥaddithūn. From amongst them arose another class known as akhbāriyyūn, genealogists and narrators of the campaigns

of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who were later on identified as historians. The collections of the Traditions of the Prophet were different from those written on Siyar (biography) and campaigns of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The historical method was first of all introduced and applied on a large scale to the works composed on biography and campaigns, etc., (Siyār and Maghāzi). This we say in the light of the evidence that the earliest works that have been preserved to us comprise biographies, books of conquests, genealogies and classified sketches (ṭabaqāt) of Traditionists; though a rare attempt was made by a Yamanite story-teller 'Ubaid b. Shariyah,<sup>31</sup> who composed for the caliph Mu'āwiyah (661-80 A.D.), a number of works dealing with the ancient history of South Arabia, yet his form of presentation does not seem to have gained ground among the Arabs.

The domains of Siyār and Maghāzi in their early stage overlap, and are not sharply distinguished from one another. In such books were included events relating to the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his activities, and the accounts of his battles, etc.

The caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz paid special attention to the science of Maghāzi, and issued orders that special study circles should be set up for the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He also ordered 'Āsim b. 'Umar b. Qatādah Anṣārī (d.c. 120 A.H.), who was a specialist in this science to give lessons to the people in the congregational Mosque of Damascus on Maghāzi and Manāqib.<sup>32</sup>

About the same time, Imām Zuhri wrote an independent work on Maghāzi and it was the first book on this subject.<sup>33</sup> It was due to Imām Zuhri that the interest in Maghāzi and Sira was intensified. His school produced many persons who were experts in this art.<sup>34</sup>

Of the pupils of Imām Zuhri, Mūsā b. 'Uqbah (d. 141 A.H.), acquired a great reputation in this art. Imām Mālik was Mūsā's pupil in Ḥadīth and was his great admirer. He used to tell people in a persuasive manner to learn Maghāzi from him if they wanted to study it. The following are the distinctive features of his work on Maghāzi.

1. He took special care to verify the authenticity of the traditions.

2. The tendency of the authors generally was to record the events in large numbers, the in-avoidable result of which was that traditions both relevant and irrelevant, were incorporated. Mūsā took necessary precautions and accepted only those traditions which appeared to him to be more authentic. That is why his book was comparatively shorter than other works on Maghāzi.
3. Mūsā, unlike many others, had studied the Traditions of the Prophet in his mature age; thus his knowledge of this branch of learning was more sound. <sup>35</sup>

Next to Mūsā, Muḥammad b. Ishāq acquired the high reputation in Maghāzi, with whom we shall deal, among others, under a separate heading.

Before closing this topic, we may sum up below the conclusions we have reached so far.

The chief influence and the main sources from which the historical writing flowed among the Muslims were: The Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth, interest of the believers in the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and his early Companions, natural interest in history due to its usefulness, which was further heightened by the teachings of Islam, and the necessity of ascertaining the genealogical relationship of each Muslim Arab due to the introduction of the system of stipends by the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

The less significant influences were: partial interest of some of the Muslim Arabs in legends and stories relating to pre-Islamic days; the desire of some of the early caliphs like Amīr Mu'āwiyah, etc. to look over the records of preceding kings and rulers, and the elucidation of passages in Arabic poetry.

## THE SCIENCE OF ḤADĪTH AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

The Holy Qur'ān, ever since its revelation, has served as the basic source of inspiration and guidance for the Muslims of all times. It clearly enjoins the Believers to show obedience to Allāh and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Obedience to the Prophet is declared as second only to the obedience to Allah. There are a number of verses in the Holy Qur'ān in this connection, e.g.

”مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ“<sup>٣٦</sup>

(Whosoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh).

”قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ“<sup>٣٧</sup> -

(Say: if you love Allāh, follow me, Allāh will love you).

The Muslims are further enjoined to accept the Prophet as their perfect Exemplar. The Holy Qur'ān says:

”لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ“<sup>٣٨</sup> -

(Verily in the Messenger of Allāh you have an excellent exemplar).

Under the influence of such Qur'ānic injunctions and in obedience to the clear instructions of the Prophet as

”بلغوا عني ولو آية“<sup>٣٩</sup> -

(Circulate from me though (it be) a sentence), the followers of Islām set out to collect and preserve the Traditions of the Prophet – his sayings, actions, and silent approvals. They were, however, warned to proceed with great caution. The Prophet said:

”بلغوا عني ولو آية و من كذب عليّ متعمداً فليتبوا مقعده  
من النار“ -

(Circulate from me though (it be) a sentence . . . And whosoever fabricates falsehood against me intentionally, let him seek his abode in fire).

Every believer had to take the conduct of the Prophet as a model for himself in all the affairs of life. Consequently, great endeavour was made to preserve every piece of information regarding his conduct with exactitude. How careful and strict were the four Pious Caliphs of Islam in the acceptance of Traditions is a matter very well known to scholars of Muslim learning. In spite of this strict attitude the quest for collecting the prophetic words or reports of the Prophet's deeds went on increasing, and the devotees of Islam preserved the Prophetic wisdom with great care and reverence. This attitude brought about the collection of a large amount of Traditions about the practice of the Holy Prophet.

In course of time as this record of Traditions related to the prophetic practice increased in volume, misguided persons began to fabricate traditions and attribute them to the Prophet. The Muslims accepted the challenge of the fabricators and developed a “Science of Tradition” or ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth’ by which they could judge the authenticity of the reports and the reliability of the reporters. The marvellous job they did in preserving the traditions related to the words and deeds of their Prophet and in discriminating the reliable from the unreliable, is simply astonishing. The Muslims are rightly justified in taking pride in their Science of Tradition. In fact, they have no rival in the world in collecting and preserving the details of the life and the sayings and actions of their Prophet with exactitude. What arduous task they performed in this field can be judged by the fact that, in order to sift the Traditions of their Prophet, they preserved the records of lives of about half a million persons who were in any way involved in the narration and transmission (riwāyat) of Ḥadīth.

Prof. Hitti, the well-known orientalist and historian, says:

“Among all peoples Moslems stand unique in having developed a science (‘ilm) out of their mass of religious traditions”.<sup>41</sup>

Juynboll, while appreciating the Science of Tradition, in his article on Ḥadīth observes: –

“The critical investigation of isnād’s has caused the Muslim scholars to make thorough researches. They endeavoured not only to ascertain the names and circumstances of the authorities (ridjāl) in order to investigate when and where they lived, and which of them had been personally acquainted with the other, but also to test their reliability, truthfulness and accuracy in transmitting the texts, to make certain which of them were “reliable” (thika). This criticism of the authorities was called al-djarḥ wa’l-ta’dīl (wounding and authentication). . . . The so-called “knowledge of the men” (ma’rifat al-ridjāl) was considered indispensable for every student of ḥadīth; all the commentaries on the collection of Tradition therefore contain more or less copious details concerning the authorities”.<sup>42</sup>

We come across scores of such works composed by the Muslim scholars as convey information about the life, character, reliability or unreliability and categories, etc., of the reporters of Tradition. Some of these works are Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa’d, Usd al-Ghāba fī Ma’rifat al-Ṣiḥāba of Ibn al-Athīr, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffāz by Dhahabi, Shadharāt al-Dhahab by Ibn ‘Imād, al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣiḥāba by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī and Lisān al-Mizān and Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb by the same author.

Similarly, we see standard works composed on ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth or the Science of Tradition. According to Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, the first known comprehensive work of this type was composed by Abū Muḥammad Ramahurmuzī.<sup>43</sup> His work entitled Kitāb al-Muḥaddith al-Fāsil bain al-Rāwī wa’l-Wa’i, is preserved in the form of a number of MSS. but has not yet been published.<sup>44</sup> Ramahurmuzī was soon followed by al-Ḥākim Abū ‘Abd



Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Naisābūrī (321 -405 A.H.), who compiled Kitāb Ma‘rifat Ulūm al-Ḥadīth in which he dealt with the whole subject, dividing the material into different categories. An edition of this work has been published by Dr. Mu‘azzam Ḥusain (Cairo, 1937). Other works on this subject are Al-Kifāya by Khaṭīb Abū Bakr, Ilmā’ by Qāḍī ‘Iyād and a treatise Mā Lā Yasa’ al-Muḥaddithu Jahluhū by Abū Ḥafṣ Mianjī. Another work of importance, which may be mentioned here, was composed by Ḥāfiẓ Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān b. al-Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Shahrazūrī (d. 643 A.H.). His work is generally known as Muqaddama Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, the well-known traditionist and a great critic, already mentioned, improved the arrangement of the work and prepared its summary giving it the name: “نخبة الفكر في مصطلح أهل الأثر” (Nukhbat al-Fikar Fi Muṣṭaliḥ Ahl al-Aṭhar). As this work was considered too brief, Ibn Ḥajar wrote, at the request of his contemporaries, a commentary on it known as Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar.

This work may well be considered a classical work on ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth. It was a natural and necessary step towards the systematisation of the various studies which had been carried on since the Muḥaddithūn (the Traditionists) began to investigate the credentials of transmitters and the value of their traditions.

Ibn Ḥajar has discussed the various aspects of this science in a very systematic order. According to the different chains (ways, Ṭuruq) of transmitters, the following categories are distinguished:—

1. *Mutawātir*: A communication handed down from the very beginning to its compilation, through so many sources that there was no scope left for any objection and suspicion against it.
2. *Mashhūr*: A statement which is handed down by at least three different authorities.
3. *‘Azīz*: A communication which is transmitted by at least two persons.
4. *Gharīb*: is in general a rare tradition. With reference to the Isnād, Fard-i-Muṭlaq or Gharib-i-Muṭlaq means a tradition which

is transmitted in the second generation only by one Tabi'ī and Fard-i-Nisbi or Gharib-i-Nisbi is a tradition which is transmitted by only one definite person of later generations.

The last three categories are further distinguished as Aḥād. Such traditions are again of three grades, according to the authenticity and reliability of the reporters, viz., Ṣaḥīḥ (sound), Ḥasan (good), and Ḍa'īf (Weak). Likewise, if the chain of transmitters is unbroken and complete, it is called Mutṭaṣil; and if the chain is broken or incomplete it is called Munqaṭi'. Similarly, traditions have been placed into many categories like Mu'allaq (suspended), Mursal (defective), Munkar (unknown), Ma'rūf (known), Shādh (contradictory), Marfū' (raised), Mauqūf (suspended), etc.

Every Hadith has two parts:

- a) Isnād (the chain of narrators),
- b) Matan (the text). The text is suffixed to the Isnād. For example, in the tradition:

”حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَىٰ عَنْ مَالِكٍ ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: صَلَاةُ الْجَمَاعَةِ تَفْضُلُ صَلَاةِ الْفَدَىٰ بِسَبْعٍ وَعِشْرِينَ دَرَجَةً“<sup>٣٥</sup> -

(Yaḥyā reported to me on the authority of Mālik, on the authority of Nāfi', on the authority of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) said: Prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times better (as regards rewards) than one offered alone).

From حَدَّثَنِي to ابن عمر (Ibn 'Umar) is isnād or chain of rāwis and from ”صلاة“ (Ṣalāt) to the end is matan or text.

This method of giving the Isnād along with the text, was for the first time used by the Arabs. The history of other nations does not contain the chain of narrators of every text with it. It is completely missing in the historical literature of the Greeks, the Romans, the Hindus and the Chinese.

It is remarkable that this method was also extended by the Muslims to other branches of learning such as history, geography, etc.

Prof. Margoliouth says:

“The anxiety to know more about the Prophet and the heroes of early Islam led, as we know, to greater industry and effort among the Muslims than in any analogous case; and the study of the traditions of the Prophet is largely responsible for and to be credited with the growth of geography and biography; if the way to test the authenticity of a tradition was to estimate the trustworthiness of the transmitters, it was indispensable to learn as much as possible about their lives; it was necessary to know when and where they had lived, and this rendered geography and history requisite”.<sup>46</sup>

In the beginning, Ḥadīth and history were very closely related to each other, and it was from amongst the class of the Traditionists (Muḥaddithūn) that arose another class known as Akhbārīyyūn (the narrators of traditions), the genealogists and the authors of the accounts of campaigns of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who were later classified as historians.

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavi considers history an indispensable branch of learning for the student of Ḥadīth and mentions the close relation between these two branches:

”انقطاع اور سقوط راوی کا پہچاننا، راوی اور مروی عنہ کے عدم ملاقات کی پہچان پر ہے۔ اور دونوں کے درمیان عدم ملاقات اس طرح معلوم ہو سکتی ہے کہ یا تو یہ معلوم ہو جائے کہ راوی اور مروی عنہ کا آپس میں اجتماع نہیں ہوا اور راوی نے مروی عنہ سے اخذ و تحمل نہیں کیا اور راوی کو اجازت نہیں ہوئی اور یہ سب باتیں علم تاریخ کے ذریعہ معلوم ہوتی ہیں جس میں روایات و ناقلین اور رجال و افراد حدیث کے پیدائش و اموات،

زمانہ تحصیل حدیث اور سفر وغیرہ وغیرہ - - - جملہ امور زندگی کے احوال کا بیان اور سوانح حیات اور حالات کا تذکرہ ہوتا ہے اسی بنا پر علم تاریخ و فن محاضرات محدثین اور مشائخ حدیث کے نزدیک - - - ایک بہت زبردست بنیادی چیز ہے اور ایک درجہ میں علم حدیث کا علم تاریخ و محاضرات پر دارومدار ہے۔“ -

(The knowledge of a broken chain of authorities and dropping of a reporter depends on the information that the reporters and the person from whom he reported did not see each other, and this in turn can be ascertained by the fact that they did not meet each other, and the transmitter did not collect his information from whom he is transmitting and the reporter was not given an ijāza (permission) to transmit traditions. All this is known through history, which deals with the reporters, copyists and rijāl (authorities) of Ḥadīth, their birth, death, period of their collection of Ḥadīth and their journey, etc . . . in short with almost all the affairs of life. Due to this very reason the Muḥaddithūn and Mashā'ikh al-Ḥadīth consider history... a very basic thing and of immense importance, and in one degree 'Ilm-al-Ḥadīth is based on history).

All the scholars of Islamic history hold the view that the Muslim historians of the early period followed in their works on biography, genealogy, conquests and other historical composition, like local histories, ṭabaqāt, etc., a style which was adopted by the traditionists in their oral and written transmission of Ḥadīth. Even the form of their presentation was that of Ḥadīth, and it was primarily the study of Ḥadīth which necessitated the study of history.

Professor Hitti, in his article on “History” in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, has discussed the different influences which were responsible for the development of Muslim historiography and has characterised the early historical works composed by various Muslim scholars in the following words:

“In these early historical works and in others which followed, the form of presentation was that of the stereotyped religious tradition (Ḥadīth). Each event is related in words of eye-witnesses or contemporaries and transmitted to the final narrator – the author, through a chain of intermediary reporters. Thus al-Balādhurī introduces his story of the capitulation of Najrān to the Prophet:

“Bakr ibn al-Haitham related to me that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ related to him, on the authority of al-Layth ibn Sa’d, on the authority of Yūnūs ibn Yazid al-Ayli, on the authority of al-Zuhri, who said . . . ”<sup>48</sup>

Appreciating this form of presentation, he continues:

“this tracing of the event to its ultimate source served to develop exactitude, as did also the insistence on dating occurrences even to the month and day”.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, in his introduction to Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān, he elaborates the statement by saying:

“The chief source from which history writing flowed was tradition (Ḥadīth); it was a pious custom that when Moslems met, one should ask for news (Ḥadīth), and the other should relate a saying or anecdote of Muḥammad. Each event is related in the words of eye-witnesses or contemporaries and transmitted to the final narrator through a chain of intermediate reporters. The authenticity of the reported fact depends on (1) the continuity of the chain and (2) the confidence in each reporter”.<sup>50</sup>

Comparing this form of presentation with the modern historical methods, he pays it a high tribute by observing:

”This form of historic composition is unique in the case of the Arabs and meets the most essential requirements of modern historiography namely, ‘back to the source’ and ‘trace the line of authorities’”.<sup>51</sup>

Margoliouth, another great orientalist (editor of a number of valuable Arabic works, and an author of so many books), while tracing the beginnings of Arabic history, compares the form of presentation of the Muslims with that of the Greek historians and acknowledges its superiority over their system, as well as over the Christian and Jewish historical and religious literature. He observes:

“As we have seen, the Arabic historians render the tracing of sources far easier than those of other nations by the fact that their history is a development of Aḥadith (the Traditions). It does not begin with either the continuous or the official chronicle, but with the narratives of the eye-witnesses. The possession of this system gave the Muslims an obvious advantage in their controversies with Jews and Christians, who gave more the appearance of taking their information on trust. They had no chain of authorities for either sacred or secular history. Where, e.g., the Greek historians are not describing their own experiences, they rarely give us the opportunity of testing the sources of the information which they present; we have to assume that it was obtained from people who knew. Ultimately the Jews had to compose an isnād for their Taurāh”.<sup>52</sup>

It would be enlightening, if we examine our point of view in the light of certain historical works produced by the Muslim scholars.

Ibn Hishām relates, in his Sira of the Prophet, the Prophet’s grief at the martyrdom of Ja‘far in the battle of Muta:

“Says Ibn Ishāq that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bakr, told him, on the authority of Umm-i-Mūsa al-Khuzā‘iya, on the authority of Umm-i-Ja‘far bint Muḥammad b. Ja‘far b. Ja‘far b. Abi Ṭālib, on the authority of her grandmother Asmā bint ‘Umais who said . . .”<sup>53</sup>

Jahshiyārī in his Kitāb al-Wuzarā wa’l-Kuttāb, while tracing the causes of the slaughter of the Bermicides at the hands of Hārūn al-Rashid, prefixes an Isnād to the text by saying:

“And said ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khaqān: I questioned Masrūr, the elder, in the days of al-Mutawakkil. . . .about the cause of the murder of Ja‘far at the hands of al-Rashid, who said. . . .”<sup>54</sup>

Al-Balādhuri gives an account of the Prophet’s instructions issued to ‘Amr ibn Ḥazam, while sending him to al-Yaman:

“And al-Ḥussain told me on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Ādam, on the authority of Ziyād on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ishāq that the Prophet of Allāh . . .”<sup>55</sup>

A similar style is adopted in their works by Ibn Jarir Ṭabari, Ibn Athir, Ibn Kathir and other important Muslim historians.

Another way of handling traditions, to which the Muslim historians have sometimes resorted, is that in which the compiler combines different traditions into one continuous narration, prefixing a statement of his authorities or contenting himself by interrupting the narrative, wherever necessary, by citing the particular authority.

For instance, al-Balādhuri himself acknowledges in the beginning of his Futūḥ al-Buldān:

“I have been informed by certain men learned in tradition, biography and the conquests of lands whose narrative I transmitted, abridged and pieced up together into one whole”.<sup>56</sup>

A recent example of traditional method of presentation is to be found in the historical work produced by Shah Wali Allāh Muḥaddith Dehlavi. In his book ‘Izālat al-Khafā ‘An Khilāfat al-Khulafā’, he is very careful in prefixing Isnād to the text of each report.

This application of the method of Ḥadīth to historiography by the Muslims has enhanced the value of their works, and has influenced the modern historical methodology to such an extent that it seems to be an offshoot of the ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth.

## HISTORIANS OF THE SECOND CENTURY A.H.

### MUḤAMMAD IBN IṢḤĀQ (D.C. 151 A.H./768 A.D.)

Muḥammad ibn Iṣḥāq, about whom Imām Zuhri said:

“Knowledge will remain in Madina as long as Ibn Iṣḥāq lives,”<sup>57</sup> was born at Madina around the year 85 A.H./704 A.D. A detailed information regarding his life, activities and works, etc., can be collected from such sources as Fihrist,<sup>58</sup> Mu‘jam al-Udabā,<sup>59</sup> Wafayāt al ‘A‘yān,<sup>60</sup> Tahdhib al-Tahdhib,<sup>61</sup> The life of Muḥammad: A translation of Iṣḥāq’s Sirat Rasūl Allāh,<sup>62</sup> and Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah,<sup>63</sup> etc.

From the sources mentioned above and from certain other books, we come to know that Muḥammad’s grand-father Yāsir fell into the hands of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, when he captured ‘Ayn al-Tāmr in 12 A.H./633 A.D. Iṣḥāq and his brother Mūsā were well known traditionists and were regarded as most reliable authorities on Ḥadīth. So Muḥammad’s (Ibn Iṣḥāq) literary bona fides were already established.

Muḥammad ibn Iṣḥāq was a Ṭābi‘ī. He had seen one Companion (Ṣahābi) Ḥaḍrat Anas. He is associated with the second generation of the Traditionists and was expert in the science of Ḥadīth. There is a difference of opinion about his reliability and authenticity, as regards the matters concerning Ḥadīth. Let us examine the opinions of different scholars in this connection. The following are the opinions of those who were favourable to Ibn Iṣḥāq.

”لا يزال في الناس علم ما بقي ابن اسحاق“<sup>64</sup> -

- (a) Knowledge will remain among men as long as Ibn Iṣḥāq lives. (‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatāda)



- (b) “The best informed man about Maghāzi is Ibn Ishāq”.<sup>65</sup>  
(Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri)

”من اراد ان يتبحر في المغازي فهو عيال على ابن اسحاق“<sup>٦٦</sup> -

- (c) He who wants to study the Maghāzi deeply must consult  
Ibn Ishāq. (Imām Shāfi‘i)

”مدار حديث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على ستة فذكرهم ثم

قال فصار علم الستة عند اثني عشر فذكر ابن اسحاق فيهم“<sup>٦٧</sup> -

- (d) Apostolic Tradition originally lay with six men, and he mentioned their names and further said: then it became the property of twelve, of whom Ibn Ishāq is one.

(‘Alī b. al-Madīnī)

”محمد بن اسحاق امير المؤمنين في الحديث“<sup>٦٨</sup> -

- (e) Muḥammad b. Ishāq, the supreme leader of the Tradition-ists.  
(Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj)

Likewise Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Yaḥyā b. Sa‘d al-Qattan, Abū Ḥātim and many others have considered him most trustworthy. A detailed discussion about his authenticity and integrity is to be found in *Tahdhib*<sup>69</sup> and *Wafayāt*.<sup>70</sup>

Imām Bukhārī has not accepted his narratives for his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, due to Imām Mālik’s remarks against Ibn Ishāq, but he has considered him as *Thiqah* (reliable) and has taken most of the facts for his *Tārīkh* from him. Imām Muslim also, has not taken any tradition from him except one *ḥadīth* on *Rajm*.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand the Imāms: Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, al-Nasāi and Ibn Mājah have quoted him as a reliable transmitter of *Ḥadīth*.<sup>72</sup>

Ibn Ishāq’s trustworthiness was questioned due to the following charges levelled against him:

1. He was called false messiah *دجال* by Imām Mālik, for whose work he had shown his contempt.

2. He quoted Fātimah bint Mundhir, the wife of Hishām b. ‘Urwah as an authority for some of his Traditions. The husband was annoyed and he denied that he had ever met his wife.

Ibn al-Nadīm adds to these charges by saying that Ibn Ishāq was once punished by the Amir of Madina on being accused of making overtures to women. Further that he made serious mistakes in the genealogies he introduced and that he obtained information from Jews and Christians, whom he calls in his book “people of the former learning”; and that he employed versifiers to compose poems to insert in his Sirah, as though they had been composed on the occasion e.g. a poem in which Abū Ṭabīb defends his conduct to his fellow citizens, etc.<sup>73</sup>

Refuting the charges levelled against Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hibbān said that the two men who attacked Ibn Ishāq were Hishām and Mālik. The former denied that he had heard traditions from Fātimah. But what he said does not impugn man’s veracity in Ḥadīth, for Companions (Ṣiḥābah) like al-Aswad and ‘Alqamah heard Ḥadīth from ‘Āishah’s voice without seeing her. Similarly Ibn Ishāq used to hear Fātimah, when the curtain was let down between them. Imām Mālik’s strictures were also somewhat unwarranted. He did not intend to bring him into disrepute as a traditionist; all that he disliked was his contact with Jews who had become Muslims, and his reliance on their account of Khaibar, Qurayza and similar unattested happenings. In his Maghāzi, Ibn Ishāq used to learn from them but without necessarily asserting that their reports were correct. But Mālik himself only relied on trustworthy and truthful men.<sup>74</sup>

Even in legal matters Abū-‘Isā al-Tirmidhī and Abū Ḥātim ibn Hibbān accepted him as an authority. The refutation of his opponents would not have been undertaken were it not for the favourable verdict and the credit that the learned gave him.

Ibn Ishāq left Madina for Egypt in his thirties. He visited Alexandria in 119 A.H./737 A.D. where he collected information on Maghāzi and Ḥadīth from the scholars like Yazīd b. Ḥabīb and ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Abi Ja‘far, etc., and afterwards quoted them among his authorities. Yāqūt says that

from Egypt he came to Kūfa and obtained there an audience for his works. From Kūfa he went to al-Jazīrah and remained there with ‘Abbās b. Muḥammad. Even at this place he obtained an audience. While Abu Ja‘far al-Manṣūr was at al-Ḥīrah, Ibn Ishāq composed his work on Maghāzi (Sirah) and dedicated it to the Caliph. Then he came to Ray, where his traditions won a great number of adherents. Transmitters of his narratives remained here more than those at Madina. At last he came to Baghdād—the newly constructed capital of the Muslim empire, and settled down there. He died at Baghdād in 151 A.H./768 A.D. or perhaps 150 or 152, and was buried near the grave of Imām Abū Hanīfah in the cemetery of Khayzurān (named after the mother of caliph Hārūn al-Rashid).

The following four books are attributed to Ibn Ishāq.<sup>75</sup>

1. Kitāb al-Khulafā (doubtlessly the Umayyads).
2. Kitāb al-Siyar Wa’l-Maghāzi—his most renowned book.
3. ‘Kitāb al-Mabdā’—transmitted by Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh.
4. ‘Sunan’.

Ibn Ishāq’s reputation rests on his most informative and valuable book, ‘Kitāb al-Siyar wa’l-Maghāzi’, which has also come down to us, and is the earliest comprehensive extant work on the history and biography composed by the Muslims. Ibn Ishāq, as already discussed, acquired the widest reputation in Maghāzi and is known as its pioneer. The judgement of the Muḥaddithūn, in general is that his narrations may be quoted as authoritative in Sirah and Maghāzi.

Ibn Ishāq improved the science of Maghāzi, and made it attractive to such an extent that even the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs who had a taste for other branches of literature developed an interest in Maghāzi. It is certain that his biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no serious rival. In the second century of Hijrah many maghāzi works were produced in ‘Irāq and Syria, etc., but no book known to us can compare in comprehensiveness, proper arrangement or systematic treatment with Ibn Ishāq’s work. Ever since its compilation this book has been regarded as the chief source of Muslim history. Its popularity can be judged by the fact that almost all

the Muslim historians, while writing on the early history of Islam, have borrowed substantively from this book; and by the fact that it has been translated into many foreign languages, and it has been versified by persons like Abū Naṣr Faṭḥ b. Mūsā Khidrawī (d. 663 A.H.), ‘Abdal-‘Aziz b. Aḥmad (d. 607 A.H.), Abū Ishāq Ansārī Ṭilimsāni, and Faṭḥ al-Din Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, known as ibn al-Shāb (d. 793 A.H.). The last mentioned book contains about ten thousand verses and is entitled Faṭḥ al-Gharīb fi Sirat al-Ḥabīb.<sup>76</sup>

#### IBN HISHĀM (D.C. 218 A.H./833 A.D.)

Not much is known about the life and activities of Ibn Hishām. From the sources like Ibn Khallikān,<sup>77</sup> Ibn Kathīr,<sup>78</sup> Ibn ‘Imād,<sup>79</sup> Al-Suyūṭī,<sup>80</sup> Al-Sirat al-Nabawīyyah,<sup>81</sup> The Encyclopaedia of Islām,<sup>82</sup> etc., we come to know that Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mālīk b. Hishām b. Ayyūb al-Ḥimyarī al-Mu‘āfri was born at Baṣra. He was a very trust-worthy and famous historian. He was renowned for his knowledge of genealogy, grammar and philology etc., especially in the matters of philology he was regarded as a great authority. ‘Allāma Jalāl al-Din Suyūṭī says:

”وكان يقول الشافعي حجة في اللغة“<sup>83</sup> -

(And al-Shafi‘ī used to say (about him) that he was a great authority in philology).

Ibn Hishām contributed to the cause of learning by composing such works as ‘Sharḥ Mā Waqa‘a fi Ash‘ar al-Siyar min-al-Gharb’, and ‘Ansāb Ḥimyar wa Mulūkuhā—known as Kitāb al-Tijān.

As he himself was a Ḥimarite he might have been interested in composing a work on the genealogies of his tribe, and might have been anxious to furnish ready information about the kings of Ḥimyar.

He also edited the Sirah of Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq. In fact his fame rests upon his recension of Ibn Ishāq’s biography of the Prophet (peace be upon Him), which is known as Sirat Ibn Hishām. The principles which guided him to make addition to the original text and to ignore certain parts of it are laid down in the beginning of Sirat Ibn Hishām, in his own hand.<sup>84</sup>

Consequently Ibn Hishām added explanatory notes on difficult words occurring in the Sirah and scrutinized it very carefully. He ignored those parts of the Sirah which were not transmitted to him through Ziyād al-Bakāi', who was an interlinking chain between Ibn Hishām and Ibn Ishāq. A very useful service is his critical observation of the authenticity of the poetry of Sirah. He has rejected certain poems altogether; and at places has corrected Ibn Ishāq by assigning verses to their true authors. Thus he has taken great pains in removing a defect of the Sirah about which Ibn al-Nadim also complains by saying:

“That he employed versifiers to compose poems to insert in his Sirah, as though they had been on the occasion. . . .”<sup>85</sup>

Due to Ibn Hishām's labour in editing the Sirah, his version is even today considered more authentic than the original. 'Allāma Suyūṭī thought highly of Ibn Hishām and reported that Abū Dharr had said that Ibn Hishām produced one of the four compendia which were better than the originals.<sup>86</sup>

Ibn Hishām died at Fuṣṭāṭ in Egypt. Opinions differ about the date of his death. Ibn Khallikān gives two dates of his death; one on the authority of Abū'l Qāsim al-Suhayb, which is 213 A.H., and the other on the authority of Abū Sa'id 'Abdal-Raḥmān, who has composed a history of Egypt, and that is the 13th Rabī II, 218 A.H.<sup>87</sup>

'Allāma Suyūṭī, also gives these two dates for his death, but supports 218 A.H./833 A.D.<sup>88</sup>

Ibn Kathīr asserts:

”والصحيح انه توفي سنة ثمان عشرة و مائتين كما نص عليه ابو سعيد  
يونس في تاريخ مصر“<sup>89</sup> -

(And the right thing is that he died, as is asserted by Abū Sa'id Yūnus in his 'Tārikh Miṣr', in the year two hundred and eighteen (A.H.)

So from this discussion it can be very safely concluded that the most probable date of his death was 218 A.H./833 A.D.

## AL-MADĀ'INĪ (D.C. 225 A.H./839 A.D.)

Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Abi Saif al-Madā'inī, a client (maula) of the Quraish family of the 'Abd Shams b. 'Abd Manāf, was born in the year 135 A.H./752 A.D. in Baṣra.

Ibn al-Nadīm on the authority of Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, etc. says:

”انده قال ولدت سنة خمس و ثلاثين و مائة“<sup>٩٠</sup> -

[That he (al-Madā'inī) said: I was born in the year 135].

At Baṣra he remained a pupil of the theologian Ma'mar b. al-Ash'ath, but he became more interested in literature and history.<sup>91</sup> For a time he went to live in Madā'in, which gave him his nisba, and thence he moved to Baghdād, where he remained till his death. At Baghdād he was closely associated with Ishāq b. Ibrāhim al-Mawṣilī, who did him great favour. Yāqūt tells a story of some distinguished men like Yaḥyā bin Ma'in and Muṣ'ab al-Zubairi seated at Bab-Muṣ'ab one evening when a man came by in fine attire on a handsome ass. One of the party knew him to be Madā'inī and asked him where he was going. He replied “to that munificent person who fills my pocket from top to bottom with dinārs”, meaning Ishāq al-Mawṣilī.<sup>92</sup>

Yaḥyā b. Ma'in, a great authority on tradition declared him to be a trustworthy narrator.

Yāqūt after telling the story says:

”فلما ولى قال يحيى بن معين : ثقة ، ثقة ، ثقة“<sup>٩٣</sup> -

(When he went, said Yaḥyā b. Ma'in: He is a trustworthy scholar, trustworthy, trustworthy).

Al-Madā'inī earned a great reputation even during his lifetime. He was very bold in expressing his own views. He was honoured alike by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs and their subject.

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Yāqūt tells a story in al-Madā'ini's own words, about his meeting with the caliph Māmūn: how the Caliph ordered him to come to his court, and recite traditions to him: he repeated a number of them, and presently told the story of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib being cursed from the pulpits by the Umayyads. And told him further how during Umayyad domination in Syria nobody could hear anyone called 'Alī or Ḥasan or Ḥusain, only the names of Umayyad caliphs were given to the children. A traveller at this time passing by a house asked the owner for water, who called a son Ḥasan by name to fetch some. The traveller asked how he came to call his son by that name. The reply was that parents constantly abused their children, and he did not like to abuse anyone who was called after an Umayyad caliph.<sup>94</sup> The story was meant to shock this Caliph, and probably it did, as he contemplated having a member of the family of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to succeed him.

Al-Madā'ini died at Baghdād, as has already been pointed out, in the year 225 A.H. or 215 A.H., or 231 A.H. Ibn al-Nadim suggests former two dates for his death, while Yāqūt says:

”ولد المدائني سنة خمس و ثلاثين و مائة، و مات سنة خمس و  
عشرين و مائتين“<sup>95</sup> -

(Al-Madā'ini was born in the year 135, and he died in the year 225).

Margoliouth<sup>96</sup> and Khair al-Din<sup>97</sup> also agree with Yāqūt on the issue.

Al-Madā'ini's literary activity was very extensive. He is one of the most prolific Arab historians. He has composed works on the history of the Prophet (peace be upon him), of Quraish, of the conquests, of the events, of the caliphate as well as the history of the poets and literature, etc.

A very long list is attached to his works in the Fihrist and the Mu'jam. The Fihrist gives 239 titles of works from his pen. The list of al-Madā'ini's writings is, however, like a series of chapters or sections or monographs. Even the list of Ibn Nadīm, as asserted by Brockelmann is not complete. He has added certain more works to the list in the Fihrist.<sup>98</sup>

Al-Madā'ini's works are divided into groups. It would be enlightening to reproduce here some specimen of the works contained in those groups: -

The first group is 'Akbār al-Nabi' (peace be upon him)—the Records of the Prophet which contains among others, works like 'The Book of the Mothers of the Prophet', 'Narratives of the Hypocrites', 'The Prophet's Treaties', 'Names of the Hypocrites, and other persons about whom Qur'ānic texts were revealed'; 'The Speeches delivered by the Prophet' and 'the Book of Seal and messengers', etc.

The next group is Records of Quraish (Akhbār Quraish), like Nasāb-Quraish and its records, The Book about al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Records of Abū Ṭālib and his children and Kitāb Faḍā'il Quraish, etc.

Next group: Records of the Caliphs (Akhbār al-Khulafā) 'Names of the Caliphs, etc. and the length of their lives', 'Ornaments of the Caliphs', 'Kitāb Tārikh al-Khulafā'. The most important work included in this group is that which is called '*Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafā al-Kabir*', and which dealt with the time of The Caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, the Umayyad Caliphs and the early 'Abbasid Caliphs upto al-Mu'tasim. This historical work of Al-Madā'inī seems to have been very comprehensive. Doubtless, portions of this are what we find embodied in the works of later historians, where Madā'inī is cited as the authority.

The next group is Events (al-Aḥdāth) i.e., monographs dealing with the chief events in the history of Islam: 'Kitāb al-Ridda' (Book of Apostasy), 'Kitāb al-Jamal' (Book of the Camel)—concerning the battle of Jamal, 'Kitāb al-Nahrawān', 'Kitāb al-Khawārij', 'Kitāb Khuṭub 'Alī (Karram Allāh Waj-hahū) wa Kutubihi . . .', etc. Yāqūt adds to this long list a great work called 'Kitāb al-Dawlat-al-'Abbāsiya (The Book of Abbāsīd Dynasty) not mentioned in the Fihrist, but of which Yāqūt had seen a part in the hand writing of Sukkāri. Brockelmann defends Ibn al-Nadīm by saying:

“He (Yāqūt) is wrong however in thinking that this work was unknown to Ibn al-Nadīm, for it is evidently the Kitāb al-Dawla of the Fihrist, 103, 12, but it was omitted in the copy used by him”.<sup>99</sup>

The next group deals with the Records of the Arabs (Akhbār al-Arab), which also include works like 'Kitāb Binā-al-Ka'ba (The construction of



Ka'ba) and 'Kitāb al-Madina wa Jibaliha wa Audiyaṭihā', etc.

The next group deals with poets and their poetry, etc.

In addition to this lengthy series of al-Madā'īnī's works, Ibn al-Nadīm and Yāqūt both quote an additional list of his 'kutub al-Mu'allafah', which includes among others works like 'Kitāb Qūḍat Ahl-al-Madina' (Book of the Qaḍis of Madina), 'Kitāb Qūḍat Ahl-al-Baṣra' (Book of the Qaḍis of Baṣra), 'Kitāb Ḍarb al-Darāhim wal-Saraf' (Book of the Striking of Dirhams and exchange), 'Kitāb Iṣlāh al-Māl' (Book of the Principles of Taxation) and 'Kitāb Makka', etc.<sup>100</sup>

Unfortunately, almost all the works of al-Madā'īnī have been lost. However, numerous remnants of his writings are to be found in the later histories. Later historians used him freely, and seem to be greatly influenced by his writings.

Brockelmann, in his article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam<sup>101</sup> has tried to show al-Madā'īnī's influence on al-Ṭabari and al-Balādhurī. He is of the opinion that his Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafā al-Kabīr was used by al-Ṭabari, while writing the account of the end of the reign of al-Walīd. Of his historical monographs, the one used by al-Ṭabari was his history of Khurāsān (K. Futūḥ Khurāsān) which was most important for the history of Central Asia in the period of the Muslim conquest. His history of Baṣra seems also to have been Ṭabari's main source for his account of this town. And his work on Khārijites (Kitāb al-Khawārij) was used not only by al-Ṭabari but also by al-Balādhurī in his Kitāb Ansāb al-Ashrāf, by Mubarrad in the 'Kāmil' and Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahāni in the Kitāb al-Aghāni. Lastly, his work on the battle of Nahrawān (Kitāb al-Nahrawān) might also have been used by al-Ṭabari for the year 38 A.H., and that al-Balādhurī also seems to have taken his statement, in the Kitāb al-Futūḥ al-Buldān from his history of Madina.

HISHĀM B. MUḤAMMAD B. AL-SĀ'IB B. BISHR  
AL-KALBĪ (D.C. 204 A.H./819 A.D.)

Abū'l-Mundhir Hishām al-Kalbī about whom Yāqūt says:

”ابوالمندر الاخبارى النسابة العلامة ، كان عالماً بالنسب و اخبار

العرب و ايامها و وقائها و مثاليها . . . .“<sup>102</sup> -

(Abū'l-Mundhir, the chronicler, genealogist and an erudite scholar was well informed about the genealogies, akhbār (history), “days” and events of the Arabs),

belonged to a family of scholars who had made themselves conspicuous in the study of the Qur'ān, Tafsīr, history and genealogy, etc.<sup>103</sup>

Hishām's grand-father, Al-Sā'ib, with his brothers 'Ubaid and 'Abd al-Raḥmān and also accompanied by his father Bishr fought by the side of the Caliph 'Alī in the battle of Jamal and gave his life in the battlefield.

Hishām's father Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib took part in the battle of Dair al-Jamajam as a follower of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ash'ath. He was a very good scholar of Tafsīr, genealogy, and history.<sup>104</sup> He lectured in Kūfa on Qur'ānic commentary and history, and at the invitation of Sulaimān b. 'Alī he expounded the Qur'ān for a time in Baṣra.

About his works Ibn al-Nadīm conveys the following information:—

”ولد من الكتب كتاب تقسيم القرآن“<sup>105</sup>

(And he has composed works, including 'Kitāb Taqsīm al-Qur'ān').

Before throwing some more light on the life, activities, and works of Hishām. b. Muḥammad, a detailed account of which is to be found in the sources like: Fihrist,<sup>106</sup> Tārikh-Baghdād,<sup>107</sup> Wafayāt al-A'yān,<sup>108</sup> Mu'jam al-Udabā,<sup>109</sup> and the Encyclopaedia of Islam,<sup>110</sup> it is necessary to remove a misunderstanding created by Brockelmann in his article “al-Kalbi”,<sup>111</sup> about Hishām b. Muḥammad and Muḥammad b. Al-Sā'ib. He has wrongly attributed not only the date of death of Hishām to his father Muḥammad,

but also his 140 works, about which a clear and detailed account is to be found in the Fihrist,<sup>112</sup> Mu'jam<sup>113</sup> and Wafayāt.<sup>114</sup>

Muḥammad died in 146 A.H. as is asserted by Ibn Sa'd and Ibn al-Nadīm, and not in 204 or 206 as is professed by Brockelmann.

Ibn Sa'd says:

”وكان محمد بن السائب عالمًا بالتفسير و انساب العرب و احاديثهم و توفي بالكوفة سنة ست و اربعين و مائة في خلافة ابي جعفر“<sup>115</sup> -

(And Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib was a scholar of Tafsīr, genealogy and history of the Arabs. He died at Kūfa during the caliphate of Abū Ja'far in the year one hundred and forty six).

Ibn al-Nadīm remarks:

”و توفي محمد بن السائب بالكوفة سنة ست و اربعين و مائة“<sup>116</sup> -

(And Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib died at Kūfa in the year 146 A.H.).

Hishām b. Muḥammad was an authority of the highest order on genealogies. In his historical studies he gained much from his learned father. He did not lack warm defenders. Imām Aḥmad b. Hanbal says about him:—

”وكان صاحب سير و نسب“<sup>117</sup> -

(And he was a scholar of 'Siyar' (biographies) and genealogies).

Khaṭīb Baghdādi tells us an interesting anecdote narrated in Hishām's own words, about his retentive memory and at the same time of his weak memory.

That story is:

”حفظت ما لم يحفظه احد ، و نسيت ما لم ينس احد ، كان لي عم يعاتبني على حفظ القرآن - فدخلت بيتًا و حلفت ان لا اخرج منه

حتى احفظ القرآن ، فحفظته في ثلاثة ايام - ونظرت يوماً في المرآة  
فقبضت على لحيتي بأخذ مادون القبضة . فاخذت ما فوق القبضة<sup>١١٩</sup> -

[I (Hishām) have learnt by heart or preserved in my memory, things which others could not and at the same time I have forgotten what others could not (imagine even). An uncle of mine constantly showed his displeasure on my not learning the Qur'an by heart. (One day) I entered the house and made a pledge that I should not come out of it unless I would learn the whole of the Qur'an by heart. So I did that in three days. And on a day while looking in a looking glass, I intended to trim my beard, but (in a state of forgetfulness) instead of cutting the extra hair, I cut my beard].

Perhaps it is due to his slips of memory at moments that al-Dāraqūṭni

says: "هشام متروك"<sup>١١٩</sup> -

(Hishām's tradition is not to be accepted).

And others say: "ليس بثقة"<sup>١٢٠</sup> -

(He is not a reliable authority).

The year 204 A.H. saw Hishām's death; according to others he died in 206 A.H. Ibn al-Nadīm<sup>121</sup> suggests 206 A.H., for his date of death, while Yāqūt<sup>122</sup> and Khaṭīb<sup>123</sup> proposing both of the above dates for his death give preference to the former, i.e. 204 A.H. Ibn Khallikān also agrees with Yāqūt and Khaṭīb, when he says:

"و توفى سنة اربع و مائتين و قيل سنة ست و الاول اصح"<sup>١٢٣</sup> -

(And the year 204 saw his death, and it is also said that he died in the year 206, but the former is more correct).

## HIS WORKS

In the Fihrist, a very long list is attached to Hishām's works, which he composed on genealogy, pre-Islamic and Islamic history and other subjects. Yāqūt making some additions to 140 works contained in the Fihrist says:

”و تصانيفه تزيد على مائة و خمسين مصنفه . ذكر منها ابن النديم

نقلا عن ابى الحسن بن الكوفى“ ١٢٥ -

(And the works composed by him exceed even one hundred and fifty. Ibn al-Nadīm has mentioned some of them, copying from Abi'l-Hassan al-Kufī).

Ibn Khallikān also agrees with Yāqūt, when he says:

”و تصانيفه تزيد على مائة و خمسين تصنيفاً“ ١٢٦ -

(And the number of works composed by him exceeds one hundred and fifty).

Ibn Hishām resembles al-Madā'inī both in his subjects and his mode of treatment. Many of his works are also like a series of chapters or monographs. Ibn al-Nadīm, like al-Madā'inī, has also grouped his works under different titles. The first group is 'Kutubuhu Fi'l Aḥlāf' (Pledges or Treaties).

The next group deals with his books on archeology, etc. The next: 'Kutubuhu Fi-ma Qaraba'l-Islam min Amr al-Jahiliyya'. The next: 'Kutubuhu Fi Akhbār al-Islam'. This group contains the names of the works like 'Kitāb al-Tārikh', 'Kitāb Tārikh Ajnād al-Khulafā', and 'Kitāb Ṣifat al-Khulafā', etc., which seem to be very comprehensive monographs on history. In the next group i.e. 'Kutubuhu Fi Akhbār al-Buldān' are included books like 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabir' and 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Saghir', which seem to be detailed histories of Muslim conquests. These two books seem to resemble Kitāb Futuḥ al-Buldān of al-Balādhuri, to which Ibn al-Nadīm also gives the name 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Saghir'. Other groups contain his works on poets, "days" and genealogy, etc.<sup>127</sup>

Ibn Khallikān describes his most important works in the following words:

”و احسنها و انفعها كتاب المعروف بالجمهرة في معرفة الانساب ولم يصف في باب مثله و كتابه الذي سماه المنزل في النسب ايضاً وهو اكبر من الجمهرة و كتاب الموجز في النسب و كتاب الفريد صنفه للمامون في الانساب و كتابه الملوكي صنفه لجعفر بن يحيى البرمكي في النسب ايضاً“<sup>١٢٨</sup> -

(The most comprehensive and useful among them are his works like: Kitāb known as ‘al-Jamharah Fi Ma‘rifat al-Ansāb’, and in that subject nobody has composed better work than his; and his book to which he gave the name ‘Al-Munazzal Fil-Nasāb’ and that book is more voluminous than al-Jamharah; and his book ‘al-Mujaz Fil-Nasab’ and ‘Kitāb al-Farid’ on genealogies, which he composed for al-Māmūn; and his book ‘al-Mulūki’ also on genealogy, which he wrote for Ja‘far b. Yaḥyā al-Barmaki).

Unfortunately most of his works have been lost to us. Those surviving are:

1. A portion of his book ‘Kitāb al-Nasāb al-Kabir’ or ‘Jamharah Fi Ma‘rifat al-Ansāb’.
2. Kitāb Fuḥūl al-Khail Fi’l-Jahiliyya wa’l-Islām.
3. Kitāb al-Aṣnām.
4. An extract from the Kitāb al-Kullāb is given by Ibn al-Anbārī in the commentary on the Mufaḍḍaliyāt.<sup>129</sup>

#### MUḤAMMAD B. ‘UMAR AL-WĀQIDĪ (D. 207 A.H./822 A.D.)

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Wāqid al-Wāqidī, a renowned scholar of the second century of Muslim Era was a native of Madina. Information about his life, activities and works, and about his position as a traditionist and a historian, can be collected from such sources as:—

Ṭabaqāt,<sup>130</sup> al-Ma'ārif,<sup>131</sup> al-Fihrist,<sup>132</sup> Tārikh Baghdād,<sup>133</sup> Mu'jam al-Udabā,<sup>134</sup> Wafayāt al-A'yān,<sup>135</sup> Mizān-al-I'tidāl,<sup>136</sup> Tahdhib al-Tahdhib,<sup>137</sup> The Encyclopaedia of Islām,<sup>138</sup> the monthly Ma'ārif,<sup>139</sup> and G.A.L.,<sup>140</sup> etc.

Al-Wāqidī was born in the year 130 A.H. He was so called after his grand-father al-Wāqid; and he was also called al-Aslami as he was a mawla of 'Abd Allāh b. Buraida, who belonged to the Medinese family of Aslam—a descendant of Sālim. Al-Wāqidī was a very industrious student, and was interested in different branches of learning. In order to quench his thirst for knowledge, he would go to the renowned and erudite scholars of his time. The list of his teachers includes such important persons as Imām Mālik b. Anas, Sufyān al-Thauri, Abū Ma'shar, Ibn Abi Z'ib, 'Umar b. Rashid, Rabi'ah b. 'Uthmān and Muḥammad b. 'Ijlān, etc. Ibn Juraij, who is associated with the commencement of the study of Tradition, was also among his teachers.

Likewise, the list of his pupils, who delivered traditional information on his authority includes a number of distinguished luminaries of his time, like his secretary Muḥammad b. Sa'd, Abū Ḥasan al-Ziyādi, Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Sughāni, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Hāshmi and Ḥārith b. Usāma, etc. Imām Shafī'ī, Abū 'Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Azdi have also conveyed information on his authority.

The range of al-Wāqidī's studies covered Tafsir, Ḥadith, jurisprudence, genealogy and history, etc. Special attention was paid by him to history, in which he acquired the greatest skill and reputation. By the year 170 A.H., he had become quite a prominent figure among the eminent scholars of Madina. It was mostly due to his profound knowledge of history that he on the occasion of Hārūn al-Rashid's pilgrimage in the above year was recommended to him as the best authority on the holy places of his native town. So he acted as a guide to the Caliph and his most benevolent 'wazir' Yaḥyā b. Khālīd, when they visited the sacred places.

Khaṭīb Baghdādi tells us how al-Wāqidī met with the financial difficulties in 180 A.H., and paid his first visit to Baghdād. There at first he went to the residence of Yaḥyā b. Khālīd and called on him. He was kindly

received by that eminent 'wazir', who gave him rich gifts and provided him with abundant money to pay his debts. He also provided him with a furnished house to live in: and when al-Wāqidī requested him to allow him to go back for a time to Madina for paying off his debts, he made arrangements for his journey. On al-Wāqidī's return to Baghdād, he was once again warmly received by Yaḥyā and this time was presented to Hārūn al-Rashid at Raqqa, where he was holding his Court. The Caliph recalled with pleasure his visit to Madina, and gave him rich gifts.<sup>141</sup>

Yāqūt informs us that al-Wāqidī was appointed by Hārūn judge of the eastern quarter of Baghdād.<sup>142</sup> But J. Horowitz criticises the statement of Yāqūt by saying:

“The older sources make no reference to his receiving from Hārūn the office of Qāḍi of the eastern quarter of Baghdād, the story first appears in Yāqūt, Udabā, vii, 56 without a source being given”.<sup>143</sup>

We may solve this puzzle by referring to Khaṭīb Baghdādi and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalāni. Khaṭīb says in this connection:

”قدم الواقدي بغداد وولى القضاء الجانب الشرقى فيها“<sup>١٤٢١</sup> -  
(Al-Wāqidī entered Baghdād and he was appointed Qāḍi of the eastern quarters of the City).

Ibn Ḥajar makes it more clear by giving a statement on the authority of Aḥmad b. Manṣūr al-Rimādi. He says:

”وقال احمد ابن منصور الرمادى قدم علينا على بن المدينى بغداد سنة سبع او ثمان وثمانين قال و الواقدي قاض علينا“<sup>١٤٢٠</sup> -

(Says Aḥmad b. Manṣūr al-Rimādi: 'Alī b. al-Madīnī came to us in Baghdād in the year 87 or 88 (i.e., 187 or 188 A.H., when Hārūn al-Rashid was still in the seat of Caliphate); and he said further that at the time al-Wāqidī was working as our Qāḍi).



From this statement it is quite evident that al-Wāqidī served as a Qāḍī of Baghdād in the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashid. And it is quite clear that he was appointed Qāḍī by no other person than Hārūn himself.

Afterwards in the caliphate of Al-Māmūn he was appointed Qāḍī of ‘Askar al-Mahdī (Al-Mahdī’s Camp) in Ruṣāfa, which position he held till his death.

Both the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs—Hārūn and Māmūn and the Barmicide ‘wazīr’ Yahyā held Wāqidī in very high esteem. They met his demands, bestowed their favours upon him and provided him with facilities of all sorts. Khaṭīb tells us an interesting anecdote which depicts the good nature of al-Wāqidī and at the same time shows his close relations with Māmūn:

“Al-Wāqidī wrote to the Caliph complaining of some difficulty which had compelled him to run into debt, mentioning the amount. Māmūn replied on the reverse of the letter received by him: You have, I see, two qualities, munificence and modesty: the former has caused you to deal lavishly with your possessions, the latter has induced you to mention to us only part of the debt which you have incurred. And we have ordered such and such amount for you. If we have fulfilled your request, then practise even greater liberality than before, for the treasuries of God are open, and His hand is stretched out in munificence. You yourself reported to me when you were al-Rashid’s judge that the Prophet said to al-Zubair: The keys of wealth are in front of the Throne, and God al-Mighty sends down to mankind their provision according to their expenditure, whosoever spends much will receive much, and whoso spends little receives little. Wāqidī stated that he had forgotten that tradition, and was more rejoiced at Māmūn’s reminding him of it than by his gift”.<sup>146</sup>

## HIS FAITH

Al-Wāqidī is described by Ibn al-Nadīm a Shi’ite of the moderate school. He says:

”وكان يتشيع حسن المذهب“<sup>147</sup> -

We are further told by him that he considered the practice of Taqiyya to be lawful. "يلزم التقيّة" ١٣٨ -

And it is also to be found in the Fihrist:

"و هو الذي روى ان عليا عليه السلام كان من معجزات النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كالعصا موسى عليه السلام و احياء الموتى لعيسى بن مريم عليه السلام" ١٣٩ -

(That he transmitted the statement that 'Ali (peace be upon him) was one of the miraculous signs of the Prophet (peace be upon him) like the rod of Mūsa (peace be upon him) and the revival of the dead by 'Isā (peace be upon him).

J. Horowitz also holds the same opinion as is professed by Ibn al-Nadīm, and according to his view-point al-Wāqidi had a great inclination for Shi'ite tendencies and he practised taqiyya even in his Kitāb al-Maghāzi. He says:

"When we are further told in the Fihrist that Wāqidi also studied takiya<sup>150</sup> (Yalzamu'l takiya) this is in keeping with his point of view in the kitāb al-Maghāzi; for there Ali's name is not mentioned in several accounts of events in which Ibn Ishāq expressly mentions his participation and Wāqidi did not suppress traditions hostile to 'Ali . . . On the other hand, the very title of the monograph Mawlid al-Ḥasan wa'l Ḥussain (see above) reveals a Shi'i attitude—a non Shi'i would hardly have dealt with this subject—and the zeal for 'Ali is also seen in the fact that Wāqidi collects a great deal of evidence of Muḥammad's having died in 'Ali's bosom . . ." <sup>151</sup>

But it is interesting to note that the same biographer of Wāqidi, after arriving at the above conclusion says:

"The story in the Fihrist seems, however, to be isolated and the Shi'i Ridjāl books do not quote Wāqidi". <sup>152</sup>

## HIS DEATH

Al-Wāqidī died at Baghdād in the year 207 A.H./822 A.D., while he had reached the 78th year of his age. He was buried in Khaizurān cemetery and the funeral service was conducted by Muḥammad b. Samā'h al-Tamimi.<sup>153</sup> Such a munificent person was he that when he died, even grave cloth could not be found in his house to cover his body. Al-Māmūn became aware of the fact. Consequently, he made the necessary arrangements for his funeral.<sup>154</sup>

## HIS WORKS

The list of Wāqidī's works is lengthy and varied, and is to be found in the Fihrist and Mu'jam-al-Udadā, etc. Mostly his works are of historical nature, and they cover the early history of Makka and Madina as well as the Muslim period. From the titles of the works - several of which are monographs - it is gathered that Wāqidī favoured that style, which we have seen to be favoured by al-Madā'inī. Like al-Madā'inī he has composed monographs on special incidents in the history of Islam, such as 'Wafāt al-Nabi,' 'al-Saqifa wa-Bai'at Abū Bakr', 'Ṣiffin', 'al-Jamal', 'Maqtal al-Hussain' and 'al-Ridda wa'l Dar', etc. But he is considered to be more serious personage than either Madā'inī or Hishām al-Kalbi.<sup>157</sup> Three of al-Wāqidī's compositions seem to be very comprehensive books on the early history of Islam. One is his "Al-Tārikh al-Kabir" (the great history), the other is "al-Ṭabaqāt", which is the foundation of the Ṭabaqat of Ibn Sa'd and the third is his "al-Tārikh wa'l-Maghāzī wa'l-Mab'ath", i.e., an account of the Prophet's mission and his campaigns. Some of the titles of his other works are:

'Akbār-Makka', 'Futūḥ-al-Shām', 'Futūḥ al-'Irāq', 'Ḥarb al-Aus wa'l-khazraj', 'Amr al-Ḥabsha wa'l-Fil', 'al-Sira', 'Azwāj al-Nabi', 'Sirat Abū Bakr wa Wafātuhu', 'Mawlid al-Ḥassan wa'l-Ḥussain', 'Ḍarb al-Danānir Wa'l-Darā-him', and 'Tārikh al-Fuqahā', etc.

According to Margoliouth, the only work of al-Wāqidī which has seen the light is a part of his Maghāzī, published in Calcutta. A translation in German of a fuller Ms. is preserved in the British Museum.<sup>158</sup> A photostat copy of the manuscript is also to be found in the library of the Punjab University, Lahore. Jurji Zaydān gives the following names of his published works:—

1. Kitāb al-Maghāzī
2. Kitāb Futūḥ al-Shām
3. Faṭḥ Ifriqiyyah
4. Faṭḥ al-'Ajam
5. Faṭḥ Miṣr wa'l-Iskandriya,

and a number of books on Arab conquests like 'Faṭḥ Minaf wa'l-jazirah,' etc. A manuscript copy of his 'Tafsir al-Qur'an' is also to be found.<sup>159</sup>

But according to Margoliouth and Horovitz, the Futūḥ al-Shām and al-'Irāq are not preserved; the books which go under these names belong to a later date and have been credited to Waḳidī.<sup>160</sup>

### HIS EVALUATION

Al-Wāqidī has been a very controversial figure with the Muslim scholars of repute. While some recognize him as an authority in the field of Ḥadīth and history, others reject him as an authority on Ḥadīth proper. Khaṭīb Baghdādī, Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī and 'Allama Dhahabī, etc., have collected the verdicts of different luminaries, both favourable and unfavourable to him. Among his admirers and supporters are persons like Ya'qūb b. Shaiba, Muṣ'ab al-Zubairi, Ibn Numair, Yazid b. Hārūn and al-Balādhuri's teacher Abu 'Ubaid al-Qāsim b. Sallām, etc; and those who do not accept him as an authority in the matter of Ḥadīth and who doubt his reliability are Imām Bukhārī, Imām Nasā'ī, Imām Shāfi'ī, al-Madini, Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Yaḥyā b. Ma'in, Imām Abū Dā'wūd, Abū Ḥatim and Imām Dāraqūṭni, etc. Imām Dhahabī says in "Mizān al-I'tidāl":

”استقر الاجماع على ومن الواقدي“<sup>161</sup> -

(There is a consensus of opinion on the weakness of al-Wāqidī).

The side of the critics of Wāqidī is very strong and it includes the Imāms of the science of Tradition. So we are constrained to say that in matter of Ḥadīth, Al-Wāqidī is not to be relied upon. But in the field of

history he is to be recognized as a valuable authority. In history he has been quoted and relied upon by such important historians as Ṭabari, Ibn Sa'd and al-Balādhurī, etc. Even certain Imāms as we shall see in the course of our discussion, have collected historical information from him and have considered him to be the most authentic source on history. After giving an account of the favourable remarks passed about him by the different scholars, Yāqūt says:

”وهو مع ذلك ضعفه طائفة من المحدثين . . . اما في اخبار الناس و السير و الفقه و سائر الفنون فهو ثقة باجماع“ ١٦٢ -

[With all this (praise) he has also been criticized and termed as weak (reporter) by a section of traditionists . . . But in the matters concerning history, biography, fiqh and all other branches of learning, he is reliable- unanimously].

Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī holding him in high esteem says:

”قدم الواقدي بغداد و ولي القضاء الجانب الشرقي ، وهو ممن طبق شرق الارض و غربها ذكره ، ولم يخف على احد عرف اخبار الناس امره ، وسارت الركبان بكتبه في فنون العلم من المغازي و السير . و الطبقات و اخبار النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم و الاحداث التي كانت في وقته و بعد وفاته صلى الله عليه وسلم و كتب الفقه ، و اختلاف الناس في الحديث ، و غير ذلك ، و كان جوادًا كريمًا مشهورًا بالسخا“ ١٦٣ -

(Al-Wāqidī entered Baghdād, and he was appointed judge of the eastern quarter of the city. He is one of those persons, whose reputation has reached the four corners of the world. His personality is known to all those persons who know about the history of people. The riders have spread (in the world) with his books on Maghāzī, biography, ṭabaqāt, Akhbār al-Nabi, on the events which occurred in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life and after his death; and with his works on Fiqh and the differences of people in Ḥadīth, etc.: and he was a munificent and noble person, famous for his generosity).

From the study of *Tārikh Baghdād*, we come to know that al-Wāqidi was very careful in collecting information for his historical works. He would go and personally inspect the places of the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and would gather information only from the most reliable persons.<sup>164</sup> Allāh the most Merciful Lord had given him a very retentive memory. Yāqūt proceeds to give an account of the size of Wāqidi's library: When he moved from the western to the eastern side of Baghdād, his books formed 120 camel loads: for all that he boasted that whereas other people possessed more books than was stored in their memories, in his case the contents of his memory were the more copious. He says thus:

”وروى ابن سعد عن الواقدي انه قال : ما من احد الا و كتبه اكثر من حفظه و حفظي اكثر من كتبي و قال يعقوب بن شيبة لما نحول الواقدي من الجانب الغربي يقال : انه حمل كتبه على عشرين و مائة وقر و قيل كان له ستمائة قمطر كتب“<sup>١٦٥</sup>

It was perhaps due to his profound knowledge, sharp memory and carefulness, that he was held in high esteem by the great Imām Mālik, and he was consulted by the Imām in the matters concerning history. Khaṭīb records an anecdote, wherein the Imām is shown collecting information from al-Wāqidi and he is depicted using praiseworthy words for him. Khaṭīb proceeds thus:

”سئل مالك بن انس عن المرأة التي سمت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بخيبر ما فعل بها ، فقال ليس عندي بها علم ، وسأسئل اهل العلم ، فقال فلقى الواقدي فقال : يا ابا عبدالله ما فعل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالمرأة التي سمته بخيبر - فقال الذي عندنا انه قتلها ، فقال مالك ، قد سالت اهل العلم فاخبروني انه قتلها“<sup>١٦٦</sup> -

(Imām Mālik b. Anas was enquired as to what treatment was extended to that woman who poisoned the holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in Khaibar. He expressed his ignorance about the matter and told him that he would collect information about it from the learned men. Afterwards, he met Wāqidi and said: “O’ Abū ‘Abd Allāh! What the holy Prophet

(peace be upon him) did with that woman, who poisoned him in Khaibar?" The reply was that she was killed. Said Mālik (to the enquirers): I have collected information from the learned men and the information is that she was killed).

European scholars hold him very high and consider him an authority of the first order on early Muslim history. His special attention to chronology has won him praise from them, and has made his work much valuable. J. Horowitz says:

“Wāqidi’s merit lies mainly in his transmission of a very large amount of material and in fixing its chronology”.<sup>167</sup>

His particular style as is seen in his *Kitab al-Maghāzī*; i.e. assimilating the different stories together in order to reproduce them as a continuous whole, and prefixing the list of his authorities in the beginning of the book and sometimes in the beginning of each chapter, has also made him favourable in the eyes of modern scholars of history. This very style, though in an improved form, was afterwards adopted by al-Balādhurī in his *Futūḥ al-Buldān*. J. Horowitz complains that Wāqidi’s work is of a style adopted in the works on *Ḥadīth*. He says:

“In Wāqidi also the tradition either separately or digested into one record follow one another without being linked up together just as in works on *Ḥadīth*, but quite contrary to the method of Ibn Ishāq who gives them great cohesion by adding a connecting text”.<sup>168</sup>

## KITĀB AL-MAGHĀZĪ

The manuscript contained in the British Museum, a photostat copy of which is also available in the Punjab University Library, comprises 252 folios i.e., 504 pages. In the very beginning of the work we find a list of al-Wāqidi’s authorities from whom he collected traditional, as well as historical information. Many of the authorities, quoted by Wāqidi, like

Imām Zuhri, Mūsā b. ‘Uqba, and Abū Ma‘shar, etc., had themselves composed works on the Maghāzī. The list comprises entirely the names of well-known and well-informed scholars. Some times in the beginning of the new chapters of his book Wāqidī also gives the names of his other reporters. And sometimes he prefixes a chain of reporters to the most important information.

The book as it appears from its title deals with the campaigns of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and it throws no light on the Prophet’s life at Makka and his Hijra. After giving the names of different battles of the Prophet and the expeditions despatched by him, and fixing their dates, Al-Wāqidī goes on giving a detailed account of those battles and expeditions. He describes with fullest details the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, the pact of Ḥudaibiya, the battle of Khaibar, Mu’ta, the grand Victory of Makka, the battles of Ḥunain, Ṭāif, Tabūk, etc., and throws light on almost all other battles and expeditions despatched. He has also discussed the affairs of Banū Naḍir, Banū Quraiza and Fadak, etc. He also throws light on the acceptance of Islām by ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ, and on the Ḥajj of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, known as Ḥajj-Akbar in the history of Islam. A very detailed description of the Ḥijjat al-Wadā’, the last sermon of the Prophet, a gist of his teachings and his last words are also to be found in the book. The book ends with an account of the preparations which were being made for the despatch of the Muslim army under Usāma b. Zaid in the year 11 A.H.

Throughout his work it is seen that he is very careful in fixing the dates of each event and each battle. Before giving an account of each battle, he would definitely fix its date and year. It is remarkable to note that he has furnished us with the minutest details of the important battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He would give the names of the participants, throw light on the preparations made, and draw a scene of the battle-field before our eyes. He would also discuss the treatment extended to the prisoners and describe the division of the booty. Moreover, he would bring to light the difference of opinion of the companions of the Prophet on certain matters and the verdicts of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in that connection.



His interest in the Holy Qur'an, Ḥadith and fiqh is seen throughout his work. He quotes verses of the Qur'an, revealed in connection with different battles; thus he discusses Sūra Anfāl in connection with the battle of Badr, and tells us what was revealed in the Holy Qur'an about Uhud, Banū Naḍīr, the battle of Khandaq and the battle of Tabūk, etc. It is worthy of note that even he closes his book with a Qur'ānic verse by which the Caliph Abū Bakr argued that the despatch of Usāma b. Zaid's army was essential.

He also uses poetry, as was the general practice in those days, as a vehicle of history, and quotes poetical couplets in making the narrative more comprehensive. But unlike Ibn Ishāq, he did not make an extensive use of it.

It is strange to note that Wāqidī neither includes Ibn Ishāq among his authorities, nor quotes in his work, his remarkable work on Maghāzī. Harovitz has tried to solve this problem by saying:

“ . . . . Wāqidī never mentions by name his most celebrated predecessor in the field of biography of the Prophet, Muḥammad b. Ishāq. This is all the more remarkable as he not only (in Ṭabari, iii, 2512) passes a very favourable verdict on him but undoubtedly made very great use of his books and obviously follows him in the arrangement of the material (. . .); he possibly wished to conceal his indebtedness by not mentioning the name of Ibn Ishāq”.<sup>169</sup>

We may conclude with the words that the importance of the work as a valuable source of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) campaigns and his life at Madina and the Muslim history during the Prophet's time is very great.

AL-HAYTHAM B. 'ADĪ B. 'ABD AL-RAḤMĀN (D.C. 207 A.H./ 822 A.D.)

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Haytham b. 'Adī, a prolific historian like Hishām al-Kalbi, was born at Kūfa in the year 114 A.H./732 A.D. His

father later on moved to Wāsiṭ-the city of Ḥajjāj. His mother was among the captives brought from Manbij.

Yāqūt passes the following remarks about him:

”و كان اخبارياً علامةً راويةً ، نقل من اخبار العرب و اشعارها  
ولغاتها شيئاً كثيراً . . .“<sup>١٤٠</sup>

(And he was a historian, a well known scholar and a traditionist. He collected a vast material concerning the history, poetry and philology of the Arabs).

Ibn al-Nadīm says:

”ابو عبدالرحمن الهيثم الثعلبي عالم بالشعر و الاخبار و المثالب  
و المناقب و المآثر و الا نساب“<sup>١٤١</sup> -

(Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Haytham al-Tha‘li, a celebrated poet, a historian having a good knowledge of the vices and virtues of people and of their traditions and genealogies).

He is said to have surpassed Hishām al-Kalbi to an extent that Hishām was supposed to collapse at his sight. Jāhiz on the authority of Abū Ya‘qūb al-Khuzaimi says:

”كان هشام بن الكلبي علامةً نصابةً راويةً للمثالب عيابةً ، فاذا  
راى الهيثم بن عدى ذاب كما يذوب الرصاص (على النار)“<sup>١٤٢</sup> -

(Hishām b. al-Kalbi was a great scholar, genealogist and a critic of the defects (weaknesses) of people: even he at the sight of al-Haytham used to collapse like lead in fire).

The great traditionists, like Imām Bukhāri, Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā‘i, etc., were not satisfied with his authority, and did not accept the traditions narrated by him.

Ibn Khallikān has tried to trace the causes which were responsible for annoyance of even the general public with him. He observes:

”وكان الهيثم يتعرض لمعرفة اصول الناس و نقل اخبارهم فاورد معايهم و اظهرها و كانت مستورة فكره لذلك و نقل عنه انه ذكر العباس بن عبدالمطلب رضى الله تعالى عنه بشئى فحبس لذلك عدّة سنين و يقال انه نقل عنه زوراً لبسوا عليه ما لم يقله“<sup>١٧٤</sup> -

[And al-Haytham (was so inquisitive that he) conducted researches into the parentages (genealogies) of people for criticism, and made it public and he tried to find the secrets (faults and shortcomings, etc.,) to disclose them. For this he was disliked. And on passing certain remarks against ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib he was kept in the prison for years together. It is said that they attributed a lie to him and blamed him for a thing, for which he was not responsible].

The Diwān of Abū Nuwās contains a violent lampoon on him, which he is said to have earned by failing to treat this important personage with due respect, when he came to hear his lectures.<sup>174</sup>

At a time his reputation seems to have arisen very high, for he is seen attending the courts of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs like Al-Manṣūr, Maḥdī, Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd. He also conveys information about his conversation with them.<sup>175</sup> He died at Fam al-Ṣulḥ, a place near Wāsiṭ, according to the Fihrist in the year 207 A.H., according to Yāqūt in 209 or 207 A.H. and according to Ibn Khallikān in 206 or 207 or 209 A.H.

## HIS WORKS

A very long list is attached to his works in the Fihrist,<sup>176</sup> Wafayāt al-A’yān<sup>177</sup> and Muḥjam al-Udabā.<sup>178</sup> These series of titles of monographs deal with chapters of pre-Islamic tribal history, or events in early Islām or archeological matters concerning the Islamic cities and Islamic institutions. We find in it histories of the nobles named as ‘Kitāb Tārikh al-Ashrāf al-Kabir’, ‘Kitāb Tārikh al-Ashrāf al-Ṣaghir’, and of the judges and governors of Baṣra and Kūfa. Among them we also find a treatise on the Khārijites, and

books on *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣihāba* and *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā wa'l-Muḥaddithūn*, etc. There is also a history arranged according to years, which must be a very early example of this type, which afterwards became universal. It is just probable that he composed this history before Ibn-al-Muqaffa' who translated the Persian 'Khudā'i-Nāma' into Arabic. His works seem to have acquired a great reputation even during his lifetime. This can be inferred from the account given by Ibn Khallikān, who shows certain 'Abbasid Caliphs obtaining historical information direct from al-Haytham.<sup>179</sup> Yāqūt tells us how the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashid, when an action against al-Haytham was brought before him, immediately recognized him as the person meant in Abū Nuwās's satire.

It is a great misfortune that almost all the works of this celebrated scholar have been lost to us.

## (B) MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY DURING AL-BALĀDHURĪ'S TIMES

AL-ZUBAIR B. BAKKĀR (D. 256 A.H./869 A.D.)

Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Zubair b. 'Ali Bakr Bakkār, a lineal descendant of that great 'Abd Allāh b. Zubair, who for sometime maintained himself in the seat of caliphate, was born at Madina in the year 172 A.H./788 A.D. He was a great scholar of history, genealogy, Ḥadīth and was a poet as well. Ibn al-Nadīm says about him:

”ابو عبدالله الزبير . . . من اهل المدينة اخبارى ، احد النسّابين  
و كان شاعراً صدوقاً ، راويةً نبيل القدر“<sup>١٨٠</sup> -

(Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Zubair . . . a resident of Madina, was a historian, genealogist, a celebrated poet and a well-esteemed reporter (of Ḥadīth).

Khaṭīb Baghdādī passes the following remarks about him:

”و كان ثقةً ثبتاً عالماً بالنسب ، عارفاً باخبار المتقدمين ، و سائر  
الماضيين و غيرهم“<sup>١٨١</sup> -

(And he was the most reliable authority on Ḥadīth, was a scholar of genealogies and had a vast knowledge of the history of the preceding luminaries and of all those who had passed (before him).

He studied with the great scholars of his time. Among his reporters we come across such important persons as Ibn Majāh, Ja'far b. Muṣ'ab, Abū Hātim, Abū 'I-Qāsim al-Baghawī and Aḥmad b. Sulaimān, etc. Abū 'I-Qāsim Baghawī, Imām Daraquṭnī and Hākim have also considered Zubair as the most reliable authority on Ḥadīth.<sup>182</sup>

Ibn Khallikān informs us about him:

”الزبيري كان من اعيان العلماء و تولى القضا بمكة . . . و صنف الكتب النافعة ، منها كتاب انساب قريش و قد جمع فيه شيئاً كثيراً و عليه اعتماد الناس في معرفة نسب القرشيين ولد غيره مصنفات دلت على فضله و اطلاعه“<sup>١٨٢</sup> -

(Al-Zubairī was among the renowned scholars and was appointed as a Judge of Makka. He has composed valuable works; among those is his book namely 'Kitāb Ansāb Qurāish', in which he has collected very useful information and which is a reliable source on the genealogies of Quraish. In addition to that work he has composed many other books, which are a clear proof of his greatness, erudition and wide information).

Al-Zubair visited Baghdād many a time during his life. His last visit to that great city took place in the year 253 A.H. Due to his wide reputation as a scholar and due more to his piety the caliph Mutawakkil showed him great favours. When he requested him to accept the tutorship of his son, he ordered for him ten thousand dirhams, ten suits of valuable and ten mules to carry his luggage to Sāmarra - the residence of the Caliph.

In his old age, he was appointed a judge of Makka, where he died in the year 256 A.H./869 A.D. Yāqūt on the authority of Mūsā b. Hārūn

tells us the story of his appointment to that great post in a very interesting way. He says:

“Says Mūsā, I was present in the company of Amir Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir, when Zubair b. Bakkār sought Amir’s permission to enter his court. As he entered, Muḥammad showed great respect and honour for him and after saying complimentary words conveyed him the message of the Caliph, who had ordered for his appointment as a Judge. On hearing that message said Zubair: At a stage when old age has overtaken me, it would not be possible for me to do full justice to this responsible position, and you know whosoever is appointed a judge he becomes so much indebted that we may use for him the term: ‘has been slain without knife’. And even then you offer me to accept that position! Amir replied: You better see the Caliph yourself at Sāmarrā. Zubair b. Bakkār agreed with that and arrangements were made for his journey to that place.”<sup>184</sup>

Khaṭīb has narrated certain traditions on Zubair’s authority.

## HIS WORKS

The list of his works, which is to be found in the Fihrist and Mu‘jam al-Udabā is fairly long. His thirty-three works mentioned in the Fihrist deal with the biographies of poets, other great personalities, historical events and throw light on the genealogies and history of people, etc.

His most comprehensive works seem to be his, ‘Kitāb Ansāb-Quraish wa-Akhbārihā’, ‘Kitāb Akhbār al-‘Arab wa-Ayyāmihā’, and ‘Kitāb al-Muwaffaqiyyāt Fi’l Akhbār’ – composed for Muwaffaq Billāh the brother of al-Mu‘tamid. The first among these three books is considered to be the most authentic source on the genealogies of Quraish. Ibn Khallikān says in this connection:

”وَصَنَّفَ الْكُتُبَ النَّافِعَةَ مِنْهَا كِتَابُ أَنْسَابِ قُرَيْشٍ وَقَدْ جَمَعَ فِيهِ شَيْئًا كَثِيرًا وَعَلَيْهِ اعْتِمَادُ النَّاسِ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ نَسَبِ الْقُرَشِيِّينَ“<sup>185</sup> -

(He has composed valuable works, among those is his book namely 'Kitāb Ansāb Quraish', in which he has collected very useful information and which is a reliable source on the genealogies of Quraish).

Yāqūt certifies the above statement by saying:

”و على كتابه في انساب قريش الاعتماد في معرفة انساب  
القرشيين“<sup>١٨٦</sup> -

(And his book on Ansāb Quraish is the most reliable source on the genealogies of Quraish).

The manuscript copies of this valuable book are available at Oxford and with the library of Kopreli (Istānbul). Four volumes from 16–19 of his third work namely al-Muwaffaqiyyāt, written originally in nineteen volumes for his pupil al-Muwaffaq b. al-Mutawakkil, have also been found and have seen the light in the year 1878.<sup>187</sup>

IBN QUTAIBA (D.C. 276 A.H./889 A.D.)

Ibn Qutaiba, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dinawarī, a renowned contemporary of al-Balādhurī, was born in the year 213 A.H./828 A.D., according to Ibn al-Nadīm<sup>188</sup> and Ibn al-Anbārī<sup>189</sup> (d.577 A.H./1181 A.D.) at Kūfa, and according to some other scholars,<sup>190</sup> at Baghdād.

Some of the most important sources, which have been consulted while writing about the illustrious scholar of the ‘Abbāsīd period, are:

Al-Ma‘ārif,<sup>191</sup> al-Fihrist,<sup>192</sup> Tārikh Baghdād,<sup>193</sup> Nuzhat al-Alibbā Fi Ṭabaqāt al-Udabā,<sup>194</sup> Wafayāt al-A‘yān,<sup>195</sup> Tahdhib al-Asmā wa'l-Lughat,<sup>196</sup> Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlāṣ,<sup>197</sup> Bughyat al-Wu‘āt,<sup>198</sup> the Encyclopaedia of Islām<sup>199</sup> and the Doctoral Thesis of Muḥammad Zia al-Haq Ṣūfī,<sup>200</sup> etc.

From these sources we come to know that Ibn Qutaiba was brought up at Baghdād, where he also completed his studies with the well-known scho-

lars of his time, like Ishāq b. Rahwaih, Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistāni and Harmala b. Yaḥyā, etc.

For the greater part of his life he remained at Baghdād, where he pursued his literary activities very earnestly. Due to his brilliance and industry, he seems to have won pre-eminence, especially in literary circles. He attracted a large number of pupils, including such important persons as Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd-Allāh b. Ja‘far b. Durustawaih, ‘Ubaid Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sukkārī, his own son Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥassan al-Dinawarī and ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Bakr al-Tamīmī, etc.

For a time, Ibn Qutaiba also served as a judge of Dinawar—a city in the province of Jibāl, which also gave him another title al-Dinawarī. After the completion of his term as qādī at Dinawar, he returned to Baghdād, where he remained till his death.

Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Ubaid Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān, the renowned minister of the ‘Abbāsids, held Ibn Qutaiba in high esteem, respected him for his profound learning and felt pleasure in becoming his patron. Ibn Qutaiba, to show respect in turn, wrote his most valuable work ‘Adab al-Kātib’ for the minister.

Ibn Qutaiba belonged to that school of thought, which was established by Imām Aḥmad and Ishāq, and he was among the defenders of the path of al-Sunna. Says Brockelmann in the Encyclopaedia of Islām:

“He took part in the theological disputes of his time, and defended the Qur’ān and Tradition against the attacks of philosophic scepticism; but he himself fell under the suspicion of heresy and had to write a book against the Mushabiha to defend himself against the reproach of belonging to them”.<sup>201</sup>

Imām Ibn Taimiyya says about his faith:

”و ابن قتيبه من المنتسبين الى احمد و اسحق و المنتصرين لمذاهب السنة المشهوره وله في ذلك مصنفات متعدده“<sup>202</sup> -



(And Ibn Qutaiba belonged to the School of Aḥmad and Ishāq and was amongst the defenders of the important schools related to al-Sunna and he has composed many works in this connection).

Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh was a straight-forward, reliable and truthful person.

Khaṭīb Baghdādī observes:

”و كان ثقةً ديناً قاضياً“<sup>٢٠٣</sup> -

(And he was the most reliable and honest person, and an erudite scholar).

Ibn Taimiyya says on the authority of the author of the book “Al-Taḥdith Bi-Manāqib-i-Ahl al-Ḥadith”:

“He is one of the famous leaders, scholars and learned men. He is one of the best writers, having about 300 works to his credit . . . The people of al-Maghrib had great regard for him and they said: He who finds faults with Ibn Qutaiba should be accused of heresy . . . there is no good in a house which does not have some of the writings of Ibn Qutaiba”.<sup>204</sup>

Jalāl al-Din Suyuṭī has refuted the statement of Ḥākim about the unreliability of Ibn Qutaiba by saying:

”و قال الحاكم اجتمعت الامة على انه كذاب وقال الذهبي ما علمت احداً اتهم القتيبي في نقله مع ان الخطيب قد وثقه وما اعلم الامة اجتمعت الا على كذب الدجال و مسيلمه“<sup>٢٠٥</sup> -

(Says Ḥākim: The entire Muslim Community agrees that he was a great liar. While Dhahabī said: I do not know of any person who might have accused al-Qutaiba of relating (defective or false) traditions. Besides al-Khaṭīb has termed him as ‘Thiqah’ (the most trustworthy and authoritative),

and I do not know whether all the Muslim Community has ever agreed upon the falsehood of any person with the exception of Dajjāl and Musailima).

Opinions differ about the date of his death. Some scholars hold the view that he died at Baghdād in the year 270 or 271 A.H., while others assert that the year 276 A.H. was the year of his death. Ibn al-Nadim<sup>206</sup>

suggests 270 A.H., Khaṭīb<sup>207</sup> gives 270 and 276, while Ibn al-Anbārī<sup>208</sup> also gives these two dates for his death.

Ibn Khallikan after recording the opinions of different biographers of Ibn Qutaiba gives his decision in favour of 276 A.H. and says:

”وكانت ولادته سنة ثلاث عشرة و مائتين و توفى في ذى القعدة سنة  
سبعين و قيل احدى و سبعين و قيل منتصف رجب سنة ست و  
سبعين و مائتين و الاخير اصح الاقوال“<sup>٢٠٩</sup> -

(And he was born in the year 213 and he died in Dhi'l-Qa'dah of the year 270 or 271 (or) as it is said that he died on the fifteenth of Rajab of the year 276. And the last statement is the most correct).

## HIS EVALUATION

Ibn Qutaiba's literary activity was very extensive. He acquired a surpassing excellence in so many branches of learning, like the sciences related to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, Islamic law, literature, philology, grammar, history, poetry and genealogy, etc.

Brockelmann observes in this connection:—

“As a matter of fact however his activities like those of his contemporaries, Abū Ḥanifa al-Dinawari and al-Djāhiz,

covered the whole learning of his period. He sought to make available the lexical and poetical material which had been collected especially by the Kūfi grammarians as well as historical information, for the requirements of the man of the world particularly the kuttāb, who were then beginning to gain influence in the administration. But he also took part in the theological disputes of his time, and defended the Qur'ān and Tradition against the attacks of philosophic scepticism".<sup>210</sup>

Many other learned biographers of Ibn Qutaiba have a very high opinion about him and his works. Opinions of a few of them are quoted below:

Ibn al-Nadīm says:

”وكان صادقاً فيما يرويه عالماً باللغة و النحو و غريب القرآن و معانيه و الشعر و الفقه كثير التصنيف و التأليف“<sup>211</sup> -

(And he was accurate and truthful in whatsoever he transmitted. He was a scholar of philology, grammar, of uncommon and rare words of the Qur'ān and their meaning, of poetry and jurisprudence and was a voluminous and prolific writer).

Al-Nawawī (d. 676 A.H./1277 A.D.) says:

”ابو محمد عبدالله بن مسلم بن قتيبة الدينوري الكاتب اللغوي الفاضل في علوم كثيره - سكن بغداد و له مصنفات كثيراً جداً رايته فهرستها و نسيت عددها اظنها تزيد على ستين مصنفات في انواع العلوم“<sup>212</sup> -

(Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutaiba al-Dinawarī, al-Kātib, al-Lughawī (Lexicographer) and a well-informed scholar in the different branches of learning, lived at Baghdād. He has composed many valuable works, a list of which I saw but I could not remember the exact number of

his works. I think that the list contained the names of more than sixty of his works composed on various branches of knowledge).

Ibn Khallikān observes:

”ابو محمد عبدالله بن مسلم بن قتيبة الدينوري و قيل المروزي النحوي اللغوي صاحب كتاب المعارف و ادب الكاتب - كان فاضلاً ثقتاً سكن بغداد وحدث بها . . . و تصانيفه كلها مفيدة“<sup>٢١٣</sup> -

(Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutaiba al-Dinawarī, al-Marwazī, grammarian and a philologist, author of the books: ‘Kitāb al-Ma‘ārif and ‘Adab al-Kātib’, was an erudite scholar and the most reliable authority. He lived at Baghdād and gave his lessons there. Almost all his works are very useful).

Ibn al-Anbārī passes the following remarks:

”و كان فاضلاً في اللغة و النحو و الشعر متقناً في العلوم“<sup>٢١٤</sup> -

(And he was a well informed scholar of philology, grammar and poetry, etc., and was well versed and accurate in science).

Jurji Zaidān gives his opinion in the following words:

”و كان عالماً في اللغة والنحو و الشرع متقناً بالعلوم صادق في ما يرويه مستقل الفكر جرئياً في قول الحق - وهو أول من تجرأ على النقد الادبي فالف في اكثر فنون الادب المعروف و الباقي من مؤلفاته الى اليوم حسن و شائع و بعضها من امهات كتب التاريخ و الادب“<sup>٢١٥</sup> -

(And he was a scholar of philology, grammar, Islāmic law and was well-versed in many other branches of learning. He

was reliable and truthful in whatsoever he recorded; he was a sound thinker and was bold in pleading the right cause. He was the first to look into the literature with a critical eye. He composed works on almost all the favourite branches of literature. And the works from his pen which have come down to us are the best and are widely read. Some of them are the most valuable sources of history and literature).

## HIS WORKS

A very long list has been attached to his works in the sources quoted in the beginning. Ibn Taimiyya has recorded the statement of the author of the book: 'Kitāb al-Taḥdith Bi-Manāqib-i-Ahl-al-Ḥadith', which shows that the number of the works which Ibn Qutaiba composed was 300. This seems to be quite an exaggerated view in the light of the evidence recorded in the sources like Fihrist, Wafayāt, Tārikh Baghdād and Nuzhat al-Alibbā, etc. Doctor Sūfī, after conducting thorough researches into the different sources, has been able to collect the names of fifty of his works on different subjects related to the Qur'ān, Ḥadith, literature, jurisprudence, poetry, genealogy and history, etc.<sup>216</sup>

Four of his works namely 'Adāb al-Kātib', 'Kitāb al-Shi'r wa'l-Shu'ārā', 'Uyūn al-Akhbār' and 'Kitāb al-Ma'ārif' have gained immense importance and are really mines of information for the student of Arabic literature and history. These books have already seen the light of day.

Professor Nicholson says about these four works:

"We have more than once cited his 'Book of General knowledge' (Kitābu'l-Ma'ārif) and his 'Book of Poetry and Poets' (Kitābu'l-Shi'r wa'l-Shu'ārā) and add here the Adabu'l-Kātib, or Accomplishments of Secretary, a manual of stylistic, dealing with orthography, orthoepy, lexicography, and the like; and the 'Uyūnu'l-Akhbār, or choice Histories, a work in ten chapters, each of which is devoted to a special theme such as government, war, nobility, friendship, women".<sup>217</sup>

The books, which he composed on history, are 'Tārikh Ibn Qutaiba' and 'Kitāb al-Ma'ārif'. A third book namely 'Al-Imāma wa'l-Siyāsa' is usually attributed to him, but it is not his composition.

Brockelmann says in this connection:

"The pseudohistorical Kitāb al-Imāma wa'l-Siyāsa, Cairo 1322 and 1327, is ascribed to Ibn Qutaiba but, according to de Goeje . . . ., was probably written in his lifetime by a Maghribi or an Egyptian".<sup>218</sup>

Margoliouth observes:

"Another book which is ascribed to him is very different in character. This is called: 'The Book of Sovereignty and Government', and is a history of the Islamic State from the death of the Prophet till that of Hārūn al-Rashid. Its falsification or ignorance of history is however so glaring that it cannot possibly be Ibn Qutaiba's work".<sup>219</sup>

Dr. Ṣūfī, has also arrived at the same conclusion.<sup>220</sup>

About his book 'Tārikh Ibn Qutaiba', Zia al-Ḥaq Ṣūfī says:

"A book of this name exists in al-Khizāna al-Zāhiriyya at Damascus. Ḥāji Khalifa states on the authority of al-Mas'ūdī that Ibn Qutaiba got material for this book from the book of history written by Abū Ḥanifa Aḥmad, son of Da'ūd al-Dinawari (d. 282 A.H.)".<sup>221</sup>

The 'Kitāb al-Ma'ārif' is one of his most important works. The author of the book has written a very useful and informative introduction to it. In his introduction Ibn Qutaiba calls attention to the main purpose of writing the book and gives an outline of the subjects discussed in it.

He says:

“This is a book in which I have collected information for the use of every person upon whom God has bestowed his highest favours and whom He has made remarkable due to his knowledge and power of speaking clearly. This type of knowledge is essential for him, whether he be in the company of kings, nobles or in the gathering of scholars”.<sup>222</sup>

He continues:

“Among the nobles I have come across such persons as do not know their genealogy, and among the respectables (have seen) such persons as do not have information about their ancestors. There are descendants of the Quraysh, who do not know where the tree of their genealogy meets the holy Prophet (peace be upon him), or any of his companions. I have also seen the sons of the Persian kings who have little knowledge of their fathers and the period of their rule”.<sup>223</sup>

He proceeds further:

”و قد يكون الرجل متبوعاً في الادب قد سمق فيه و اخذ بالحظ الاوفى منه الا انه اغفل شيئاً من الجليل كان اولى به من بعض ما حفظ فليحتمه فيه النقيصه و يرجع عليه من الهجنه (العيب) كطالب غوامض النغمه . وقد اغفل ابواب الصلاة و الفرائض و طالب طرق الحديث ، وقد اغفل متونها و معانيها . . . . . -<sup>224</sup>

(Sometimes it so happens that a person who has acquired a great skill in literature and whom people follow in that respect, ignores certain most important factors relating to that branch. So it is regarded as his weakness and fault. For an instance a person engaged in solving the intricacies of Fiqh (Jurisprudence) who ignores the most important chapters concerning prayer and obligation; and a seeker of the chains of Hadith, who pays little heed to the text and its meaning . . . .).

Keeping all this in view Ibn Qutaiba wrote this book and said:

“My this book contains general information about different sciences and branches of knowledge”.<sup>225</sup>

This book begins with the creation of the world, and after giving a brief account of the various Prophets (peace be upon them) and Patriarchs and after mentioning the number of the Prophets and of the revealed Books, conveys information about the names of the true believers before the advent of the holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Then it gives the genealogies of the ‘Arabs, including those of Yamanites, al-Aus and al-Khazraj; the genealogies of the holy Prophet and his kinsfolk, including his wives, children, clients and his horses and mules, etc., his mission, his battles particularly Badr, Uḥud and the Victory of Makkah, and his death. Then it throws light on the history of the four right-guided Caliphs and of other prominent companions of the Prophet including lists of al-Mu‘allafat al-Qulūb—such new converts as were paid from the state exchequer, so that they might remain faithful to their religion, and of hypocrites, etc. The author, then tells us about the history of the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs down to al-Mu‘tamīd. He devotes a separate chapter to the biographies of certain famous statemen, officers, generals and governors of the Muslim Empire including some important rebels and Khārijites. He also discusses the biographies of the Tabi‘īn (those who had seen any of the companions of the Prophet), of the Chief doctors (Jurists), traditionists, Aṣḥāb al-Qira‘at, genealogists, historians, grammarians, and transmitters of verse, etc; the principal mosques such as al-Ḥaram, Jerusalem, Baṣra and Kūfa, etc; a very brief account of the Muslim conquests; occupations of the nobles; people exposed to sufferings; those having certain physical defects such as the deaf, the maimed, the cross-eyed, the boldies, the scantybearded, one-eyed, the blind, and those who were long-statured and shortstatured. The book also throws light on the famous battles of the Pagan Days, i.e. ‘Ayyām al-‘Arab’, religions prevailing in ‘Arabia in the pre-Islamic times and the different sects. A complete chapter is devoted to the history of the kings, including those of Yaman, Syria, Ḥīra and Persia. This account is brought down to the Islamic days and closes with the death of the last Persian king Yazda Jird.



To quote Dr. Zia al-Ḥaq Ṣūfī: ‘al-Ma‘ārif’ is an indispensable book of reference for a student of Arabic Literature. It is one of the most reliable and authoritative books in various branches of literature. It provides in a handy form exact and correct information about rare anecdotes connected with poetry, history, biography, geography, genealogy, scholars of the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, fiqh, and grammar. It throws sufficient light on the various aspects of different sciences and discusses the history of religions from the beginning of the world, the mission of the important Prophets and their number and the Books revealed to them. It is a storehouse of stray information that is not to be found in one place in any other book. Many of the disputed questions and ambiguous problems would have remained unsolved in the absence of this book . . . The fact that for both epoches, for the Jāhiliyya as well as for the epoch of Islam, ‘al-Ma‘ārif’ provides much raw material, is of no little importance. It is a valuable instrument for comparing, checking and corroborating the material contained in the works of the authors of the later period, including al-Ṭabarī . . . , the most important source for the history of Islam.<sup>226</sup>

No doubt the book is a valuable mine of historical information yet it is very brief, brief to the extent that in certain matters it gives only hints. It contains neither the details of administration nor of Muslim conquests. It is rather a handbook of the biographies of great Muslims of the early period as has been suggested by Ibn Qutaiba himself. That is why Margoliouth passes the following remarks about this book:

“Of Ibn Qutaibah’s historical works, one which is called al-Ma‘ārif is a compendium of historical information largely consisting of lists, facts connected with the Prophet, genealogical tables, names of sects and the like. The utility of the book is unquestionable, but it can scarcely be called history”.<sup>227</sup>

AḤMAD B. DĀWŪD ABŪ ḤANIFA AL-DINAWARĪ  
(D.C. 282 A.H./895 A.D.)

Abū Ḥanifa Aḥmad b. Dāwūd al-Dinawarī, a well known erudite and celebrated Muslim scholar was born at Dinawar – a city of Persian 'Irāq, probably in the first decade of the 3rd century of Hijra. The sources, which throw light on his life and works are: Fihrist,<sup>228</sup> Mu'jam al-Udabā,<sup>229</sup> Bughyat al-Wu'āt,<sup>230</sup> Khizant al-Adab,<sup>231</sup> and the Encyclopaedia of Islām<sup>232</sup> etc.

Yāqūt says about him:

ابو حنيفة الدينورى ، اخذ عن البصريين و الكوفيين و اكثر اخذه عن  
ابن السكيت و كان نحويًا . لغويًا ، مهندسًا منجمًا ، حاسبًا ،  
راوية ثقة ، ٢٣٣ -

(Abū Ḥanifa al-Dinawarī received his education from the scholars of Baṣra and Kūfa, and profited chiefly from Ibn al-Sikkit. And he was a grammarian, lexicographer, geometer, astronomer, mathematician and the most reliable reporter).

He further records on the authority of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tauḥidī, a debate which took place in the salon (a large room or a place for social gatherings) of Abū Sa'īd al-Ṣairafi, the grammarian, as to whether Abū Ḥanifa al-Dinawarī or the great Jāḥiẓ of Baṣra was the better stylist. Abū Sa'īd endeavoured to settle the controversy making Abū Ḥanifa's Arabic more idiomatic whereas Jāḥiẓ's the more original in his matter and more attractive.<sup>234</sup>

The study of Mu'jam al-Udabā shows that Abū Ḥanifa occupied a unique and most honourable place not only among his contemporary Muslim scholars of repute, but also among those luminaries who had passed before him and who succeeded him. Abū Ḥayyān says that he placed three writers at the head of all who had ever composed any work: They were Jāḥiẓ of Baṣra, Abū Ḥanifa al-Dinawarī and Abū Zaid Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhi. About Abū Ḥanifa he says:

”فانه من نوادر الرجال ، جمع بين الحكمة الفلاسفة ، و بيان العرب . له في كل فن ساق . و قدم و رداء و حكم و هذا كلامه في الانواء ، يدل على حظ وافر من علم النجوم ، اسرار الفلك ، فاما كتابه في النبات فكلامه فيه : في عروض كلام آبدى بدوى . و على طباع افصح عربى“<sup>٢٣٥</sup> -

(And he was among the greatest scholars. He combined the wisdom of philosophers with the eloquence of the Arabs, in every department of knowledge he had a standing and these are his remarks about his book ‘Al-Anwā’, which lead us to believe that he was a proficient astronomer). About his book on Botany he says: ‘He combined in it knowledge of the Bedouin with the eloquence of the true Arab’).

To prove Abū Ḥanifa’s greatest skill at philology, Yāqūt quotes a story of the great Mubarrad coming to Dinawar, where his host ‘Isā b. Māhān asked him the meaning of a difficult word in the Prophetic Tradition. Mubarrad being unprepared for the question, improvised a meaning for the word, and when asked for a quotation as a proof invented a rajaz couplet for the purpose. Later on when Abū Ḥanifa was consulted in the same matter, he asserted that al-Mubarrad’s quotation was a forgery, and that the word had quite a different sense from that which Mubarrad had assigned it. Al-Mubarrad was constrained to admit that Abū Ḥanifa was right.<sup>236</sup>

In addition to his profound scholarship, he was gifted with excellent moral qualities, which won him respect of the general public and the Caliphs alike. He attracted the notice of al-Muwaffaq Billāh, the son of Al-Mutawakkil, who became his patron. Abū Ḥayyān after acknowledging his high position as a scholar says:

”و هذا مع ورعه و زهده و جلاله قدره“<sup>٢٣٤</sup> -

(And it is in addition to his piety, supreme devoutness to God and greatness of his position among the public).

Al-Dinawari is said to have been staying at Iṣfahān to make astronomical observations, which he recorded in his 'Kitāb al-Radd 'Ala Raṣad al-Iṣpahānia'. He afterwards seems to have spent most of his time in his native town, where his observatory was pointed out for several centuries later.

The dates given for his death vary; according to Yāqūt he died in 282 A.H. or before 290 or in 280 or in 281 A.H., according to Khizanat al-Adab, in 282 A.H., and according to A'lām and Tārikh Adāb al-Lughat al-Arabiyya also in 282 A.H. So 282 A.H./895 A.D. appears to be the most reliable date for his death.

### HIS WORKS

The list of his most comprehensive works, which is to be found in the Fihrist, Mu'jam al-Udabā and Khizanat al-Adab, is very miscellaneous. Geography, botany, mathematics, astronomy, philology, literary as well as general history and Qur'ānic Tafsir, etc., are all represented. The list includes works like 'Kitāb al-Shi'r wa'l Shu'ārā', 'Kitāb al-Faṣāhat', 'Kitāb al-Anwā', 'Kitāb al-Baḥth Fi Hisāb al-Hind', 'Kitāb al-Jabar wa'l-Muqābalah', 'Kitāb al-Jama'wa'l-Tafriq', 'Kitāb al-Buldān-al-Kabir', 'Kitāb al-Nabāt' and 'Kitāb al-Akbār al-Ṭiwāl', etc.

His works which seem to have acquired fame and won appreciation are his 'Kitāb al-Anwā', 'Kitāb al-Nabāt' and 'Kitāb Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl'. Abū Ḥayyān's remarks about his 'Kitāb al-Anwā' are sufficient to prove the importance and utility of that work.<sup>238</sup> About his Kitāb al-Nabāt which is the most famous work on Botany, Yāqūt on the authority of Ibn al-Nadīm says:

”لم يصنف في معناه مثله“<sup>٢٣٩</sup> -

(No work in that subject has ever been composed like his).

This work, as is the case with his other works with the exception of 'Kitāb Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl', has also been lost. But according to Brockelmann, numerous extracts of it have been preserved in the lexicographers, particularly Ibn Sidā, and also in Ibn al-Baiṭār. This work was of much greater

importance to science. According to the same writer:—

“It was the result of philological study of the old poets and was intended to explain the numerous plants mentioned by them . . . Besides, the description of plants, which have for the most part alone survived, the work, which was still accessible to the author of *Khizant al-Adab* in six large volumes, in addition to numerous illustrative quotations from the poets, must have contained many philological and historical excursus on the latter. It began with a detailed account of the kinds of soil and formation of Arabia, its climate and distribution of water, and the general condition necessary for the growth of plants. It then proceeded to treat of the classification of the plants in general and the morphological structure of the individual plants”.<sup>240</sup>

His third work namely, '*Kitāb Akhbār al-Tiwāl*' actually not a book of lengthy narratives as the title suggests, has come down to us in its entirety. It was edited by W. Guirgass and published in Leiden, in the year 1888 A.D.

It is a universal history on a small scale comprising 402 pages. It opens with an account of Adam, and the narrative is brought down to the end of the caliphate of Mu'tasim (d. 227 A.D./841 A.D.), the 'Abbāsīd Caliph. A feature of this work is that it omits Isnāds, a practice which was an early departure from the general Muslim way of writing history. The narrative is continuous. There can, however be no comparison between his work and that of his contemporary Ṭabari's; a universal history which occupies 402 pages is obviously on a wholly different scale from the most comprehensive work of the other. Al-Dinawari, unlike Ṭabari and al-Balādhurī, has not discussed the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life in detail, rather he has given, so to say, a passing reference to it. Likewise, he throws light only on certain important aspects of the Orthodox Caliphate. It, however, devotes particular attention to matters of special interest to Persians. He, therefore, gives a full account of the history of Alexander, of the Sasanids, the conquest of 'Irāq by the 'Arabs, with a detailed description of the battle of

Qādisiya and of the administrative arrangements made by the Muslims in Persia. He also describes the battles of the Camel and of Şiffin, the affair of the Khārijites, the tragedy of Karbalā, the risings of Azraqis and Mukhtār b. Abi 'Ubaid; the caliphates of 'Abd al-Malik, Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. After throwing light on the fall of the Umayyads, he proceeds to tell the story of the rise of the 'Abbāsids; conveys information about some of their Caliphs and of the foundation of Baghdād, of the conflict between Amin and Māmūn. The account is closed as has been pointed out already, with the death of Al-Mu'tasim which occurred in the year 227 A.H. Margoliouth criticises his work by saying:

“He tells history in the style of a romancer; wherein private conversations are reported at length and the parties are made to bandy verses with each other . . . He exhibits little critical power”.<sup>241</sup>

The value of this work as an early source<sup>3</sup> of Muslim history, however, is very great.

AL-YA'QŪBĪ, AḤMAD B. ABI YA'QŪB B. WĀḌIH  
AL-KĀTIB AL-'ABBĀSĪ. (D.C. 292 A.H./904 A.D.)

A renowned historian and geographer, who was a contemporary of al-Balādhurī and who composed a universal history on a small scale and a comprehensive book on geography, was Aḥmad b. Abi Ya'qūb, generally known as Ya'qūbī and Ibn Wāḍih al-Kātib. Early sources do not throw enough light on his life. Yāqūt has only a few lines about him. We are, however, fortunate enough in having before us two of his most important works on geography and history, which have already seen the light of day. The study of these books can help us in the evaluation of the author and of his work. Other sources, which can be consulted about him are: Mu'jam al-Udabā,<sup>242</sup> A'lām,<sup>243</sup> Tārikh Ādāb<sup>244</sup>, Lectures on Arabic Historians<sup>245</sup>, The Encyclopaedia of Islām,<sup>246</sup> Introduction to his published works and the introduction to Al-Ya'qūbī's chapter on Jesus Christ by D.M. Donaldson.<sup>247</sup>

Yā'qūbī was a descendant of Wāḍih, a freedman of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Manşūr, after whom the family takes the name al-'Abbāsī. Originally

from Khurāsān in far eastern Persia, he made extensive journeys to different parts of the Islamic empire, as well as to other countries. He visited Egypt, Armenia, Syria, provinces of Arabia and the western parts of the Arab kingdom including Morocco and Spain. He also visited India, in the East. He spent his youth in Armenia and in the service of the Ṭāhirids in Khurāsān. He was in Armenia in the year 260 A.H. He took these long journeys only in quest of knowledge, as is apparent from the author's own words, which he has written as an introduction to his Kitāb al-Buldān. Ya'qūbī tells us that from his very young age he was very keen about knowing the social conditions of different peoples and was interested in collecting information about their manners, customs, sects, their learned men, their rulers, sources of the income of their states and the distances between different places. He would collect information only from the authoritative persons of every region.<sup>248</sup>

Ya'qūbī was a Shi'ite, inclined to the moderate Musawiya tendencies. His deep interest in the Caliph 'Ali and the Shi'ite Imāms is seen throughout his historical work, which throws substantial light on the life and sayings of these Imāms.

After the fall of the Ṭāhirids, he is said to have gone to Egypt, where he remained till his death. He died according to Yāqūt in the year 284 A.H.,<sup>249</sup> and according to Brockelmann also in 284 A.H. in Egypt.<sup>250</sup> But according to the Editor of Najaf edition of Ya'qūbī's history, he was alive in the year 292 A.H. The editor quotes a reference from Ya'qūbī's Kitāb al-Buldān (Najaf Ed. p. 131), in which he is shown giving information about Banū Ṭūlūn celebrating 'Īd festival in the year 292 A.D./904 A.D.<sup>251</sup> So we may infer that he died somewhat after the year 292 A.H./904 A.D.

## HIS WORKS AND HIS EVALUATION AS A HISTORIAN

A reference about his works is to be found in Mu'jam al-Udabā whose author, on the authority of Abū 'Umar says:

”وله تصانيف كثيرة منها : كتاب التاريخ كبير - كتاب اسماء البلدان  
مجلد ، و كتاب في اخبار الامم السالفة صغير . كتاب مشاكلة الناس  
لزمانهم“<sup>٢٥٢</sup> -

(And some of the many works he composed are: 'Kitāb al-Tārikh-Kabir, Kitāb Asmā al-Buldān-Mujallad, and Kitāb Fi Akhbār al-Umam al-Sālifa – Ṣaghir, 'Kitāb Mushakalāt al-Nās Lizamānihim).

Out of these four works, first and second are extant and have been published. The first being his historical work and the second being his geographical composition. The fourth work has been lost to us. The third one seems to be the first part of his universal history, which comprises the ancient and pre-Islamic history. This presumption is further strengthened by the study of Ya'qūbī's introductory remarks, which he has given before writing about Islamic history.<sup>253</sup>

His geographical work was completed, in the opinion of Brockelmann in the year 278 A.H.<sup>254</sup> Our main concern is with his *Kitāb al-Tārikh*, generally known as *Tārikh Ya'qūbī*, which throws light on the ancient, pre-Islamic and Islamic history. This work was first published in two volumes by M. Th. Houtsma in the year 1883 A.D. in Leiden and afterwards in three volumes by the Murtaḍawiya Maktaba in Najaf. The first volume of Houtsma deals with pre-Islamic times, with eighty nine pages devoted to the Prophets and patriarchs from Adam to Jesus Christ (peace be upon them), followed by lists of Kings – Assyrian, Babylonian and Indian; Then there are sixty pages on Greek philosophers and their thoughts, with a review of the times of Alexander, and the lists of the rulers of Byzantine and Persian empires with a brief account of the rulers of China and Egypt and of the Berbers, of Abyssinia, Sūdān, Syria, Yaman and other parts of Arabia. Finally there are fifty pages on the descendants of Ḥaḍrat Ismā'īl b. Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) with additional chapters on the rulers, azlām or gaining arrows (without heads made use of in drawing lots), religions, poets and markets of the 'Arabs.

The second volume almost twice as long begins, after a brief introduction with the life of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), then follows the history of the first four Caliphs; then the history of the Umayyads and then of the 'Abbāsids. The account is brought down to the year 259 A.H./872 A.D., i.e. to the reign of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph Aḥmad al-Mu'tamid.



A striking feature of the history is that its author devotes particular attention to a detailed history, according to the scope of the work, of the Shi'ite Imāms and their sayings. The arrangement of historical material is according to reigns, which is also adopted in modern works of analogous nature. Unlike Ṭabari and al-Balādhuri and the general practice of many other early Muslim historians, Ya'qūbi has omitted chains of his authorities. On the other hand, he has given the names of his authorities in the introduction of the second volume, among whom were persons like Ishāq b. Sulaimān, Abū al-Bakhtari, Abbān b. 'Uthmān, Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, 'Abd al-Malik, b. Hishām, Haytham b. 'Adī, Al-Madā'inī and Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī, etc.<sup>255</sup> The plan of the book as well as his introductory remarks show that considerable amount of labour was spent and thorough researches were made to compose the work. The author is very much interested in astrology, as is evident from the attention he pays to astrological details for the commencement of every reign. In astrology he is indebted to Muhammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī, whose authority he acknowledges in the introduction.<sup>256</sup> He seems to have given these details for experts, who would be able to see how the course of events followed the conditions of the planets at the inauguration of each reign. In his work he follows a scheme of recording at the end of each reign the names of the persons who had close association with the Caliph, who led the Pilgrimage in each year, who conducted raids, and who distinguished themselves as Jurists. In order to make his work concise, he avoided poetry and long narratives. He is also interested in speeches, letters, as well as ethics.

According to Margoliouth:

“His work may be regarded as a serious compendium of the national history for the use of students, who had not time or desire to pursue the study very profoundly . . . . The limited space which he allotted himself renders his accounts of events obscure, as he rarely has found room to explain their cases, and he possesses no great skill in selecting for narration those acts which are most indicative of character”.<sup>257</sup>

Comparing his work with that of Ṭabari, he says:

“His information can occasionally be used to supplement the statements of Ṭabarī, but it is too scanty to perform any considerable service in this respect”.<sup>258</sup>

In the opinion of Brockelmann:

“His work is of importance as a check on the tradition which is otherwise almost entirely dependent on Ṭabarī, although his interest in speeches and letters often leads him to digressions”.<sup>259</sup>

Another criticism against him is that his information for the time covered by his own life is exceedingly scanty, and is confined to the merest skeleton.<sup>260</sup>

His work has been written from the author's distinctly Shi'ite point of view, which however, in the words of Brockelmann, never influences him sufficiently to present a false view. In the words of D.M. Donaldson: —

“The value of his work, enhanced by his conciseness and his wide observation, is strikingly evident when we realize that he was contemporary with “the Six” compilers of Sunnite traditions, and that his “History” was about twenty-five years earlier than the first of “The four” books of Shi'ite Traditions”.<sup>261</sup>

### ABŪ JA'FAR MUḤAMMAD IBN JARĪR AL-ṬABARĪ (D. 310 A.H./922 A.D.)

It is told that Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, whom we are going to discuss here, proposed to dictate a historical work to his students: the number of leaves which he at first proposed to cover was 30,000. As the students held that life would not be long enough for the composition of such a work, he reduced the number to one tenth, 3,000 leaves which corresponds fairly to the bulk of the work in the editions of Leyden and Cairo. This composition left him time for a work of similar bulk on Qur'ānic

exegesis (Tafsir), which also is said to be one tenth of the amount originally contemplated. For the forty years of his later life the average amount which he wrote was forty leaves a day; those who divided the leaves which he had covered by the days of his life from the cradle to the grave found that he had written fourteen leaves for each day of his existence.<sup>262</sup>

Almost all the subsequent writers, while writing about Muslim history and Muslim scholars have given Ibn Jarir, a very high place in their works. Some of the sources which convey information about Ṭabarī and his works, etc; are Ibn al-Nadīm,<sup>263</sup> Ibn Khallikān,<sup>264</sup> Khaṭīb Baghdādī,<sup>265</sup> Yāqūt,<sup>266</sup> Subki,<sup>267</sup> Ibn Ḥajar,<sup>268</sup> the Encyclopaedia of Islām,<sup>269</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica,<sup>270</sup> (Ninth Edition), and De-Goeje,<sup>271</sup> etc.

According to these sources, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was born at the end of 224 A.H. or in the beginning of 225 A.H. (838-839 A.D.) at Amul, the chief town of Ṭabaristān, whence he is commonly named al-Ṭabarī.

From his very early age he showed the greatest zeal for learning and exhibited an extraordinary intelligence. At the age of seven he learned the Qur'ān by heart; at the age of eight he led the prayer in Mosque and on reaching the ninth year of his age he started taking down the Traditions. He started his studies at his native town and upon the completion of his elementary education, he obtained permission from his father, who was a well-to-do person, to visit the great centres of Islamic learning, such as Ray and Baghdād, besides other places in 'Irāq and Egypt. He was only of twelve years, when he left his native town in search of knowledge. First of all he proceeded to Ray, where he studied Tafsir and Ḥadīth, etc., with such scholars as Muḥammad b. Ḥamid al-Raḍi and Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dūlabi. Says Abū Ja'far:

“We used to take down (Ḥadīth) with Muḥammad b. Ḥamid al-Raḍi. He would come out to us several times in the night to ask us what we had taken down, which he would proceed to read to ensure accuracy. We used to go to hear Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dūlabi who lived in a village some little distance

from Ray, and then run back like mad in order not to miss Muḥammad b. Ḥamid's lecture".<sup>272</sup>

It is said that Ibn Ḥamid communicated to him more than 100,000 traditions.<sup>273</sup>

From Ray Ṭabarī proceeded to Baghdād, where he intended to study under Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who however died shortly before his arrival there. Ṭabarī stayed for a time in this great centre of Islamic learning and kept himself busy in acquiring more and more knowledge, from leading scholars of that metropolis. His quest for learning took him to Baṣra also. On his way to Baṣra, he stopped for a while at Wāsiṭ – the city founded by Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. From Baṣra he proceeded to Kūfa, where he learned different religious sciences from such eminent scholars as Abū Kuraib Muḥammad b. al-'Ala al-Ḥamdḥāni, Ḥammād b. al-Sarri and Ismā'il b. Mūsā, etc. Abū Kuraib was a great authority on Ḥadīth. Says Abū Ja'far:

“In the company of other students who desired admittance, I presented myself at the door of Abū Kuraib, who put his head out of a window and asked: which of you know by heart what he has taken down at my dictation? All the students looked at me, and said, doubtless you do. I replied in the affirmative, and I was able to reproduce the Tradition (i.e. could satisfy the rigid test of Shaykh)".<sup>274</sup>

Ṭabarī obtained from Abū Kuraib more than 100,000 traditions.

From Kūfa he returned to Baghdād. This time he stayed there for a long time and took to the disciplines of law (Fiqh) and the studies connected with the Qur'ān. From there he travelled westward to Egypt. On his way, he attended courses at Syrian coastal and border towns, and he reached Fustāṭ – the capital of Egypt, in the year 253 A.H./867 A.D.<sup>275</sup> In Fustāṭ at that time, Abū 'l-Ḥassan 'Alī b. Sirāj al-Miṣri, was the most profound and renowned scholar and was the most hospitable as well. He found Ṭabarī an expert, not only in almost all the branches of learning related to religion but also having a great skill in poetry, philology, grammar, literature, etc. Ṭabarī

was able to recite before him, from his memory, the Diwān of Ṭirimmāḥ, which Ibn Sirāj had been searching for.

At Fustāṭ he founded a law school of his own, having previously followed that of Imām Shāfi'ī. Yāqūt tells a story about Ṭabarī, which indicates that even at Fustāṭ, his reputation as a scholar had risen to the highest peak. There he was beset by the learned persons of all sorts, examining him in the different branches of knowledge in which they themselves had acquired a skill. One day one of these persons asked him a question about prosody ('Urūd). Ṭabarī had not previously devoted any attention to that subject, but was unwilling to plead ignorance. He got the questioner to put off his question for a day, and in the meantime borrowed the treatise of Khaṭīb b. Aḥmad, the classical authority on the subject. By the time, the questioner repeated his visit, Ṭabarī had become a metrician ('Urūḍī).<sup>276</sup>

From Egypt he again returned to Baghdād, and this time to settle there finally. During this stay at Baghdād, he paid two visits to his home in Ṭabaristān, the second visit he paid in 290 A.H. He had to quit Ṭabaristān after his last visit, because the practice of maligning the three first Caliphs was rife in the province, and Ṭabarī was afraid of personal injury owing to his views. The governor of the province sent his men to arrest Ṭabarī, but he was informed in time by a friend, so he escaped.

At Baghdād he became a man of great authority. He devoted himself to an extremely prolific and versatile literary activity and continued imparting a very useful instruction to his pupils, who came from the remotest corners of the Islamic empire to hear him. Such was the esteem in which he was held that a famous theologian once said:

“Should you undertake the long journey to China, only to hear Ṭabarī explain the Qur'ān, it would be worth the trouble”.<sup>277</sup>

He, however, got into trouble with the Ḥanbalites owing to his remarks about Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, which sounded to his followers disrespectful, and due to his interpretation of certain Traditions (Aḥādith), related to

'al-Julūs 'ala'l-'Arsh'. The enraged Ḥanbalites flung inkstands at him and pelted his house with stones, which were removed by the police. In order to console the uncompromising persons, he had to compose a book wherein he wrote about his faith and expressed his praise for Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. His monumental work, 'Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', in which he had differed at certain points with Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was not published till after his death. Ṭabarī died at Baghdād in the year 310 A.H./922 A.D., and his body was laid to rest in a house in Rahbat Ya'qūb.

### HIS EVALUATION PARTICULARLY AS A HISTORIAN

Ṭabarī's literary activity, as has already been pointed out was very enormous. He has composed valuable works on different branches of knowledge. Ibn Kāmil tells us how Ṭabarī divided his day: from noon till afternoon he was occupied with writing. After the afternoon prayer, he would go to the Mosque and give lessons in the Qur'ān until the 'Aṣr prayer'. After that he would give lessons in jurisprudence and then he would return to his residence.<sup>278</sup>

Khaṭīb Baghdādi pays him a tribute in the following glowing words:

”وكان احد ائمة العلماء يحكم بقوله و يرجع الى رايه لمعرفة و  
فضله و كان قد جمع من العلوم ما لم يشاركه فيه احد من اهل  
عصره . . . . . ٢٤٨٠ -

(And he was among the leaders of the scholars; disputes were decided on his sayings and due to his profound knowledge and erudition his opinion was held supreme. He had obtained skill at so many branches of learning that no scholar of his time could reach his intellectual level).

Yāqūt, on the authority of Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī says about him:

”كان ابو جعفر من الفضل و العلم و الذكاء و الحظ على ما لا يجهد  
احد عرفه لجمعه من علوم الاسلام - ما لم نعلمه اجتمع لاحد من

هذه الامة ، ولا ظهر من كتب المصنفين و انتشر من كتب  
المثولفين ما انتشر له و كان راجعاً في علوم القرآن و القرأت و  
علم التاريخ من الرسل و الخلفاء و الملوك و اختلاف  
الفتهاء . . . . .<sup>٢٤٩٠</sup> -

(Abū Ja'far was so profound a scholar, well informed, intelligent and had such a great memory that everybody acknowledged him. He is well-known in acquiring a great skill at so many branches of Islamic learning, that no other among the Muslims is known to have excelled him. And no work of the authors and compilers has won the fame and publicity as his books have acquired. He was especially noted for his deep understanding of Qur'ānic learning, Qirā'at, the history of Prophets, Caliphs, kings, etc; and the diversity of opinions of the jurists).

De Geoje in his article on "Ṭabarī and early Arab Historians" says:

" . . . All these histories are more or less thrown into the shade by the great work of Ṭabarī, whose fame has never faded from his own day to ours, and who well deserves to have this article on early Arabic histories placed under his name".<sup>280</sup>

He continues:

"The success of the annals and commentary was due above all to the author's personality. The respect paid to him by his contemporaries appears in various anecdotes preserved in his biography. His pupils had an unbounded admiration for his extraordinary knowledge, and what he said seemed to them the best that could be said. In truth, both his great works, were the best of their kind, especially the commentary which, in the judgement of all impartial critics has not been equalled before or since, in completeness, learning, and independent judgement. A contemporary says 'that it would

be worth a journey to China to procure the Book. So general was this view that the opinion of Ṭabarī was quoted as a legal authority".<sup>281</sup>

Thus Ṭabarī occupies a unique position not only among the Muslim scholars of repute but also among the most eminent historians of the world. His great historical compilation 'Tārikh-al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk; the distinguishing features of which are completeness of detail, accuracy, and the truly stupendous learning of its author that is revealed throughout, and that makes the work a vast store house of valuable information for a historian as well as the student of Iṣlam, is a standard authority of a high rank for early Muslim history. In the words of Margoliouth:

"probably we are to regard Ṭabarī as performing for history a task similar to what Bukhārī and Muslim did for Tradition. The selection of really historical matter out of the quantity of material presented by the works of Madā'inī and others, followed by the difficult and to some extent dangerous task of bringing the record upto his own time".<sup>282</sup>

Prof. Rudi Paret observes:

"Ṭabarī's most important work is his history of the world (Tārikh-al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk). The well known Leyden edition gives only an abbreviated text of the huge work which is said to have been ten times as long but even it fills 12½ volumes."<sup>283</sup>

"Ṭabarī procured the material", he says further:

"for his history of the world from oral tradition, for the collection of which he had ample opportunity on his wide travels which were mainly devoted to the ṭalab al-'ilm, and in studies under celebrated scholars. He also used literary sources . . . Ṭabarī did not work up the material into a connected account of historical events. He was rather content to record the different, often contradictory, accounts,



as they were handed down to him. He therefore declined any responsibility for the reliability of the traditions collected by him. But it is just in the conscientious unharmonised repetition of the collected material of tradition that the value of Ṭabari's work for modern historical research lies, especially when it is a question of reconstructing the events of the early period of Islam".<sup>284</sup>

Certain remarks of R. Paret, pertaining Ṭabari's selection of traditions, contradictory accounts given in the annals and repetition of traditions termed as unharmonious, etc. can be reviewed in the light of the opinion of De Goeje, who says:

"Nevertheless the value of the book is very great. The author's selection of tradition is usually happy, and the episodes of most importance are treated with fulness of details so that it deserves the high reputation it has enjoyed from the first. This reputation rose steadily; there were twenty copies (one of them written by Ṭabari's own hand) in the library of Fāṭimite Caliph 'Aziz (latter half of the 4th century). Whereas when Ṣaladin became lord of Egypt the princely library contained 1200 copies (Maqrizi 1.408). Only princes and rich men could own a book which in the time of 'Aziz cost one hundred dinārs. We know that it had a place in most great libraries in other countries, for we find that it was used in all lands. Thus the fact that no complete copy can now be found anywhere and that the Leyden Edition rests on old volumes lying in various places, gives a striking image of what the east has suffered from barbarism".<sup>285</sup>

The text of the Annals contains the history from the creation till the year 302 A.H./914 A.D. The work begins, after an introduction, with the history of Prophets and rulers, etc., of the early period. Then comes the history of the Sāsānian period, and of the period of our Holy Prophet

(peace be upon him) and the first four Caliphs; the history of the Umayyads; and lastly the history of the 'Abbāsids upto 302 A.H. From the beginning of the Muslim era the material is arranged annalistically under the years of Hijra.

We can get an idea of the length of time taken by the physical effort of copying such a work as either of his Qur'ānic Tafsir or history from the story of some one, who claimed to have taken the whole Commentary down from Ṭabari's dictation. It had taken eight years, from 283 A.H. to 290 A.H. The history he then tells us, was completed on Wednesday last but two of Rabi II, 303, having been continued to the end of 302.<sup>286</sup>

A striking feature of Ṭabari's works is the impartiality with which he proceeds. Evidently, he was not a court historian. He was never ready to accept any material assistance from the state authorities. Since he had a modest income from his estate in Ṭabaristān, he rejected all financial assistance and even refused lucrative official positions offered him. Even he is said to have hesitated in receiving any gift which was greater than he could match with a return gift. This strength of character is also visible in his writings.

De Goeje informs us that the Annals of Ṭabari soon came to be dealt with in various ways. They were published in shorter form with the omission of the names of authorities and of most of the poems cited. Then many supplements were written, e.g. by Ferghāni (not extant) and by Hamadhāni (partly preserved in Paris), 'Arib of Cordova made an abridgement adding the history of the West and continuing the story to about 365 A.H. Ibn Miskawaih wrote a history from the creation to 369 A.H., with the purpose of drawing the lessons of the story, following Ṭabari closely, as far as his book is known, and seldom referring to other sources before the reign of Moqtadir. In 352 A.H. an abridgment of the Annals was translated into Persian by Bal'ami, who, however, interwove many fables. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630 A.H.) abridged the whole work, usually with judgement, but sometimes too hastily . . . later writers took Ṭabari as their main authority.<sup>287</sup>

## HIS WORKS

In addition to his two monumental works on Tafsir and History, namely: 'Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'An Tāwil al-Qur'an' and Tārikh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk wa'l-Khulafā', Ṭabarī composed many other works, which have been mentioned in the sources cited in the beginning. The names of certain important works are given below:—

1. 'Kitāb Basīṭ al-Qaul Fi Aḥkām Sharāi' al-Islām'- a juristic treatise.
2. Tārikh Al-Rijāl Min al-Aṣḥāb wa'l-Tabi'in.
3. Kitāb al-Qirā'at wa Tanzīl al-Qur'an.
4. Kitāb Laṭīf al-Qaul Fi Sharāi' al-Islām — a monumental work on Fiqh.
5. Kitāb Khafīf al-Qaul.
6. Kitāb Ikhtilāf Ulamā al-Amṣār.
7. Āthār al-Bāqiyah 'An Qurūn al-Khāliya.
8. Kitāb Tahdhīb al-Āthār fi'l-Ḥadīth — An account of the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

At the time of his death, he was engaged on a great treatise on ethics, similar in plan to 'Ihya al-'Ulūm', afterwards produced by al-Ghazzālī. Unfortunately most of the works of this great author have been lost to us. Those surviving in addition to his History and Tafsir are:

1. A fragmentary compendium of his Tārikh al-Rijāl which has been published as an appendix to the Leiden edition;
2. Fragments of a work on the diversity of opinion of the chief Faqihs, and,
3. The first part of a compendium on the principles of law, entitled al-Tabsir.<sup>288</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES CHAPTER II

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- 2 *Encyclopedia Americana* (1949), xiv, p. 205.
- 3 *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (1951), vii, p. 358.
- 4 Al-Sakhāwī, *I'lān*, Eng. Tr. F. Rosenthal in '*A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), p. 205.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 222.
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- 7 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, Eng. Tr. by Franz Rosenthal (New York, 1958), i, p. 6.
- 8 Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
- 9 *Cf. Al-Fihrist*, pp. 137-73.
- 10 See Chap. 1; 13, 14, 15.
- 11 *Cf. Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istanbul, 1941), i, pp. 271-333.
- 12 *Cf. Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islām* (Lahore, 1959), 4, Fas. 1, p. 47.
- 13 *Cf. Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* (1950), Articles on History & Historiography, vii, p. 382.
- 14 Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, p. 66.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- 16 *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, p. 22.
- 17 *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, Intr. p. 1.
- 18 *Cf. Vol. 4, Fas. I*, pp. 47-49.
- 19 *Lectures, op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 20 *Cf. Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 47.
- 21 *Cf. Al-Fihrist*, p. 152.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 23 Al-Sakhāwī, *I'lān*, Eng. Tr. *op. cit.*, p. 232.
- 24 *Cf. Rumūz-i-Bikhūdi* (Lahore, 1954), pp. 169-73.
- 25 *Al-Qur'ān*, 12:111.
- 26 *Al-Qur'ān*, 30:2-5.
- 27 *Al-Qur'ān*, 17:12.
- 28 *Al-Qur'ān*, 2:189.
- 29 *Al-Qur'ān*, 10:5.
- 30 *Lectures*, pp. 17-18.
- 31 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 132.
- 32 Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (Hyderabad Daccan, 1326 A.H. ), v, pp. 53-54.
- 33 Shibli Nu'mānī, *Sīrat al-Nabi* (5th Ed; Lahore), i, p.21.
- 34 *Tahdhib*, pp. 445-51.
- 35 (a) *Tahdhib*, pp. 360-62.  
(b) Mūsā's work is now extinct, but it was in circulation and was available for a long time; and has been frequently referred to in all the ancient works on sirah.

- 36 *Al-Qur'ān*, 4:80.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 3:30.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 33:21.
- 39 Khaṭīb Tabrizi, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 *History of the Arabs* (London, 1940), p.393.
- 42 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, ii, 190-1.
- 43 *Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar*, Urdu Tran. by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayy (Delhi, n.d.), p.7.
- 44 James Robson (Tr.), *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ* (Lahore, 1960), Intr., p. vii.
- 45 Imām Mālik, *Al-Muwatta'*, ed. Fuwād al-Bāqī (Egypt, 1951), Kitāb al-Ṣalāt al-Jamā'at, p.129.
- 46 Margoliouth, *Lectures*, p. 56.
- 47 Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Muqaddima Mishkāt*, Urdu Trans. Khawāja Muḥammad 'Alī (Lahore, n.d.), pp. 58-9.
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- 51 *Ibid.*, p.3.
- 52 Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- 53 Cf. Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*.
- 54 Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā w'al-Kuttāb*, p. 254.
- 55 Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Cairo, 1319 A.H.), p.77.
- 56 Cf. Hitti (Tr.), *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, i, p. 15.
- 57 Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *'Uyūn al-Aḥar fī Funūn al-Maghāzi wal-Siyar* quoted by A. Guillaume, p. xxxv.
- 58 P. 136.
- 59 Yāqūt, xviii, pp. 5-8.
- 60 Ibn Khallikān (Persia, 1284 A.H.), ii, pp. 58-59.
- 61 Ibn Ḥajar, *op. cit.*, ix, pp. 38-46.
- 62 A. Guillaume, (London, 1955), Introduction.
- 63 Ibn Hishām, Ed. Muṣṭafā, *et al* (Egypt, 1936), Introduction.
- 64 *Wafayāt*, ii, p. 58.
- 65 *Ibid.*
- 66 *Tahdhib*, ix, p. 40.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 44; *Wafayāt*, ii, 58.
- 69 Ibn Ḥajar, ix, pp. 38-46.
- 70 Ibn Khallikān, ii, p. 58.
- 71 *Ibid.*
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- 73 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 136; Yāqūt, xviii, pp. 5-8.
- 74 Cf. *Tahdhib*, ix, p. 45.
- 75 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, xviii, pp. 5-8; *Al-Fihrist*, p. 136; *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istanbul, 1943), ii, p. 1012; *A'lām*, iii, p. 862.
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- 77 *Wafayāt*, i, p. 315.
- 78 *Al-Bidāya*, *op. cit.*, x, p. 267
- 79 *Shadharat al-Dhahab* (Egypt, 1350 A.H.), ii, p. 45.
- 80 *Bughyat al-Wu'āt* (Egypt, 1326 A.H.), p. 315.

- 81 Ibn Hishām, *op. cit.*, Intr. f. pp. 'ع - ف'; p.4.  
82 Vol. ii, p. 387.  
83 *Bughyat al-Wu'āt*, p. 315.  
84 *Cf. Al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, p.4.  
85 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 136.  
86 *Cf. A. Guillaume*, f. p. xlii.  
87 *Wafayāt*, i, p. 315.  
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90 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 147.  
91 *Cf. Ibid.*, Yāqūt, xiv, p. 128.  
92 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, xiv, p. 126.  
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95 *Ibid.*, p. 125.  
96 *Lectures, op. cit.*, p. 85.  
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100 For details see (a) *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 147-152.  
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106 *Ibid.*, pp. 140-43.  
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(ii) Jurjī Zaidān, *Tārīkh Ādāb*, ii, p. 149.
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- 131 Ibn Qutaiba (Egypt, 1934), p. 226.
- 132 Ibn al-Nadīm, pp. 144-45.
- 133 Khaṭīb, iii, pp. 3-20.
- 134 Yāqūt, xviii, pp. 227-282.
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- 137 Ibn Ḥajar, ix, pp. 363-368.
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- 143 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, iv, p. 1104.
- 144 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, iii, p. 3.
- 145 *Tahdhib*, ix, p. 364.
- 146 Cf. *Tārīkh Baghdād*, iii, p. 19.
- 147 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 144.
- 148 *Ibid.*
- 149 *Ibid.*
- 150 It does not seem to be a correct translation of the word "يلزم التقيد" which means he thought taqiyya indispensable.
- 151 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, iv, p. 1105.
- 152 *Ibid.*
- 153 Cf. *Al-Fihrist*, p. 144; Ibn Khallikān, ii, p. 84.
- 154 Cf. Khaṭīb, iii, p. 20.
- 155 Ibn Nadīm, pp. 144-45.
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- 173 *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ii, p. 342.

- 174 Cf. *Yāqūt*, xix, pp. 306-309.
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- 177 Ibn Khallikān, ii, p. 342.
- 178 *Yāqūt*, xix, pp. 309-10.
- 179 Cf. *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, ii, pp. 342-344.
- 180 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 160.
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- 182 Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, iii, p. 312.
- 183 *Wafayāt*, i, p. 207.
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- 188 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 115.
- 189 *Nuzhat al-Alibbā Fi Tabaqāt al-Udabā* (n.p., n.d.), p. 272.
- 190 Cf. Ibn Khallikān, i, p. 272.
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- 197 Imām Ibn Taimiyya (Egypt, 1323 A.H.), pp. 86, 95-86.
- 198 Al-Suyūṭī (Egypt, 1326 A.H.), p. 291. (d. 911 A.H.)
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- 202 *Tafsīr Surat al-Ikhlās*, p. 86.
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- 207 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, x, p. 170.
- 208 *Nuzhat al-Alibbā*, op. cit., pp. 273-74.
- 209 *Wafayāt*, i, p. 272.
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- 212 *Tahdhīb al-Asmā wa'l-Lughāt*, op. cit., ii, p. 281.
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 263 *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 326-28.  
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 277 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, 2nd Ed., vi, p. 424.  
 278 *Tārikh Baghdād*, ii, p. 163.  
 279 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, xviii, p. 59.  
 280 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Ninth Ed.), xxiii, p.3.  
 281 *Ibid.*, p. 4.  
 282 *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, p. 111.  
 283 *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, iv, p. 578.  
 284 *Ibid.*, p. 599.  
 285 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (Ninth Ed.), xxiii, p. 4.  
 286 Cf. *Lectures*, p. 102.  
 287 Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Ninth Ed.), xxiii, p.4.  
 288 Cf. M. J. De Geoje, *Selections from the Annals of Ṭabari* (1902), Introduction f. pp. x-xi.

## CHAPTER III

## HIS PRINCIPAL WORKS

## NAMES OF AL-BALĀDHURĪ'S WORKS

Among the extant original sources the earliest mention of the names of al-Balādhurī's works is made by al-Mas'ūdī in his introduction to *Murūj al-Dhahab*. He places his work on history very high and says:

”و كتاب التاريخ لاحمد بن يحيى البلاذرى ، و كتابه ايضاً في البلدان و فتوحها صلحاً و عنوةً من هجرة النبي و ما فتح في ايامه و على يد الخلفاء ، بعده و ما كان من الاخبار في ذلك و وصف البلدان في الشرق و الغرب و الشمال و الجنوب ولا نعلم في فتوح البلدان احسن منه“ -

(And *Kitāb al-Tārikh* (Book on history) of Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī is also on the history of countries and their conquest by surrender or by force since the Hijra of the Prophet (that is) the story of conquests in Prophet's days and afterwards under the Caliphs. And as regards the history (*Akhbār*) in it al-Balādhurī described the countries in the East, West, North and South and we know of no better work on the history of the conquest of countries than his).

Ibn al-Nadīm gives us the following information in this connection:

”وله من الكتب :-

كتاب البلدان الصغير - كتاب البلدان الكبير ولم يتمد - كتاب الاخبار و الانساب - كتاب عهد اردشير ترجمه بشعر و كان احد النقلة من الفارسي الى اللسان العربي“ -

(The works he produced are:

'*Kitāb al-Buldān al-Ṣaḡhīr*',

'*Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr*', which he could not complete,

'Kitāb al-Akhbār wa'l-Ansāb',  
'Kitāb Ahd-e-Urdshīr', which he translated into verse, and he  
was one amongst those who translated from Persian into  
'Arabic).

Ibn 'Asākir, who is a note-worthy biographer of al-Balādhurī, describes him as "صاحب التاريخ" (the author of a history).

Yāqūt, on the authority of Ibn al-Nadīm, throws light on his works as follows:—

"وقال محمد بن اسحاق النديم :- ولد من الكتب ، كتاب البلدان الصغير، كتاب البلدان الكبير ولم يتمه - كتاب جمل نسب الاشراف ، وهو كتابه المعروف المشهور - كتاب عهد اردشير ، ترجمه بشعر . كتاب الفتوح" -

(And says Muḥammad bin Ishāq al-Nadīm: and the works he produced were:

'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Ṣaghīr',  
'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr', which he could not complete,  
'Kitāb Jumul Nasab al-Ashrāf', and that is his well known and famous book,  
'Kitāb Ahd-e-Urdshir, which he translated into verse, and  
'Kitāb al-Futūḥ').

Ḥājī Khalifa conveys the following information:

(الف) "الاستقصا في الانساب و الاخبار للشيخ ابي العباس احمد بن جابر البلاذري سوده في اربعين مجلدات ولم يكمله" -

- (a) ('Al-Istiqṣā Fi'l-Ansāb wa'l-Akhbār', by Shaikh Abi'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Jābir al-Balādhurī. He prepared its draft in forty volumes, but he died before its completion).

( ب ) ” انساب الاشراف لابى الحسن احمد بن يحيى البلاذرى المتوفى سنة . . . . و هو كتاب كبير كثير الفائدة - كتب منه عشرين مجلدا ولم يتم“ -

(b) ('Ansāb al-Ashraf' by Abi'l-Hassan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī d . . . ., and that is a voluminous and very useful work. He wrote its twenty volumes, but could not complete it).

Khair al-Din observes:

”و كان يجيد الفارسيه و ترجمه عنها كتاب عهد اردشير . . . . و من كتبه : فتوح البلدان و القرابه و تاريخ الاشراف ، و كتاب البلدان الكبير ، لم يتمه“ -

(And he had a very good knowledge of Persian and translated the book 'Ahd-e-Urdshir' from this language . . . . And his books are 'Futūḥ al-Buldān', 'Al-Qarābah wa Tārikh al-Ashraf' and 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr', which he could not complete).

Jurji Zaidān discusses his principal works as follows:

”ولد مؤلفات اهمها :-

١ - فتوح البلدان : هو اشهر كتبه و يظهر انه ، مختصر من كتاب اطول منه كان قد اخذ في تاليفه وسماه . كتاب البلدان الكبير ، لم يتمه فاكتفى لهذا المختصر . . . . و هو اجمع كتب الفتوح و اصحها -

٢ - انساب الاشراف : و يسمى ايضاً الاخبار و الانساب ، و هو مطول في ٢٠ مجلدا لم يتم“ -

[His most important works are:

(1) Futūḥ al-Buldān: and that is very important among

his books and it appears as if it is a shorter edition of another larger work which he had started to compose under the name 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr', that he could not complete. Hence he contented himself with this shorter one . . . and his Futūḥ al-Buldān is the most comprehensive and most authentic book of all the works on 'Arab conquests.

- (2) 'Ansāb al-Ashrāf', which also bears the name 'Al-Akḥbār wa'l Ansāb', is a voluminous book in twenty volumes, which he could not complete].

Prof. Hitti on the authority of Al-Mas'ūdī (iii, pp. 109-10) gives a clue to another book named 'ar-Radd'ala ash-Shu'ūbiyah' (Refutation of the Shu'ūbiyah) of al-Balādhurī, which is not extant.<sup>9</sup>

Al-Zabidī, the author of Tāj al-'Arūs mentions the "كتاب المعاليم" (Kitāb al-Ma'ālim' by al-Balādhurī in thirty volumes) in the introduction in the list of sources and in vol. I, p. 487. But he also mentions the 'Ansāb' as "انساب البلاذري" e.g. 1,234; 1,316; 2, 6.

In the above case the opinion of S.D.F. Goitein<sup>10</sup> and Ustādh 'Abd al-Sattār<sup>11</sup> Farrāj is very sound and acceptable, that "كتاب المعاليم" are nothing else than the 'ANSĀB'.

Goitein says:

"The author of Tāj al-'Arūs knows only one book (في كتابه) of Balādhurī, namely the Ansāb . . . On the other hand it would have been remarkable had Balādhurī's book of 30 vols. disappeared from the notice of all the biographers and bibliographers who deal with him. The curious point that an author mentions one and the same work under two different titles is to be explained, according to Dr. Baneth, by the fact that the various volumes of the book bore diffe-

rent titles. I might add that the name is chiefly used for theological works, and also for a book on the family of Muḥammad, Ḥājī Khalifa, 5, 612. It is possible that the first volume, or the early volumes of Ansāb which deal with the Prophet and his family including of course, the wars of 'Ali with the Khārjites, was given the name by some copyist or other. It would, thus, be intelligible that the author of the Tāj al-'Arūs gives the Ansāb this name in his introduction, in which he would certainly quote the title of the first volume".<sup>12</sup>

From the detailed evidence, we can infer that so far known works of al-Balādhurī, irrespective of the difference in their names, are as follows:—

1. 'Futūḥ al-Buldān' or 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Ṣaghīr'.
2. 'Ansāb al-Ashrāf' or 'Kitāb al-Akhbār wa'l Ansāb' or 'Kitāb Jumul Nasab al-Ashrāf', or 'Istiqṣā fi'l-Ansāb wa'l-Akhbār', etc.
3. 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr' (an incomplete work).
4. 'Ar-Rad 'ala ash-Shu'ūbiyah'.
5. 'Kitāb Ahd-e-Urdshir' - An Arabic translation in verse of the original which was in Persian.

Yāqūt has added another book to the list, namely Kitāb al-Futūḥ.<sup>13</sup> But since Yāqūt quotes it on the authority of Kitāb al-Fihrist of Ibn al-Nadīm, where we don't find this addition,<sup>14</sup> we may say that this is a mere repetition of 'Kitāb al-Buldān' or 'Futūḥ al-Buldān'.<sup>15</sup>

Three out of the five works of al-Balādhurī, namely 'Kitāb al-Buldān al-Kabīr', 'ar-Rad 'ala ash-Shu'ūbiyah' and 'Kitāb 'Ahd-e-Urdshir', have either been lost or are still unidentified. The other two, i.e. Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashrāf, have been identified. Futūḥ al-Buldān has already been published, and has also been translated into several languages. Some volumes of Ansāb al-Ashrāf have also seen the light of day, while others are still awaiting their publication.

The two existing works of al-Balādhurī are presented to us, as we have seen in the preceding account, under various titles. This is partly due to the reason that al-Balādhurī did not write any introduction or preface to his works, and partly due to the literary character of Ansāb al-Ashraf.

The various titles, given to these works by different scholars, are reproduced here to arrive at a decision. At first, we take up Ansāb al-Ashraf.

The Colophon of Istānbul Ms. has the following words:

”هذا آخر ما صنفه احمد بن يحيى بن جابر البلاذرى من جمل  
انساب الاشراف و اخبارهم“<sup>١٦</sup> -

(This is the last work composed by Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī on Jumul Ansāb al-Ashraf wa Akhbār-i-Him).

Though it is not clear that the writer intended to give in these words the exact title of the book.

Ibn-al-Nadīm gives this work the title ”كتاب الاخبار والانساب“<sup>١٧</sup>  
Yāqūt on the authority of Ibn-al-Nadīm calls it ”جمل نسب الاشراف“<sup>١٨</sup>  
Ibn ‘Asākir calls it ”التاريخ“<sup>١٩</sup>  
Likewise Ibn Kathīr says ”صاحب التاريخ المنسوب اليه“<sup>٢٠</sup>  
Hājī Khalifa discusses it under two names, i.e.,  
”انساب الاشراف“ - ”استقصاء في الانساب والاخبار“<sup>٢١</sup>  
Khairuddin Zirkili calls it :<sup>٢٢</sup>

”القراية و تاريخ الاشراف“<sup>٢٢</sup>

‘Abd al-Sattār Farrāj in his introduction to Ansāb refers to Ibn Khallikān who calls it ”كتاب انساب الاشراف و اخبارهم“ and to the author of Tāj al-‘Arūs who calls it ”كتاب انساب الاشراف“ and ”شروح الاشراف“ to Murūj al-Dhahab, where it is mentioned as ”كتاب النسب“ and he refers to Kitāb al-Shāfi where it receives the title ”كتاب المعروف بتاريخ الاشراف“ and to Kitāb Sharḥ Nahjal-Balāghah whose author gives it the name: ”تاريخ الاشراف“<sup>٢٣</sup>



Goitein while discussing the title of the work observes:

“The title “انساب الاشراف” which has also been adopted for this edition is attested for the first time by the Spaniard Ibn al-Abbār (death 658/1260), who states that he used the autograph copy of Balādhurī himself . . . . The title is given in this form also by Ibn al-‘Adīm, Tārikh Ḥalab Cf.

Futūḥ introduction p. 4 . . . and by the bibliographer Ḥājī Khalīfah . . . one or other two parts of this name is found in K. as-Shāfi, Ibn ‘Asākir, Yāqūt and Tāj-al-‘Arūs<sup>24</sup>

From the detailed discussion we arrive at the decision that the complete name of the book is:

“جمل انساب الاشراف و اخبارهم”

(‘Jumul Ansāb al-Ashraf wa Akhbār-i-Him’)

and in its abbreviated form the title is:

“جمل انساب الاشراف - جمل نسب الاشراف - انساب الاشراف و اخبارهم - انساب الاشراف - كتاب النسب - شروح الاشراف - تاريخ الاشراف - التاريخ”

and in its changed form it is: “كتاب الاخبار و الانساب”  
and “استقصا في الانساب و الاخبار”

Next we take up the second existing work of al-Balādhurī to determine its exact title. The earliest reference regarding its name, as already has been pointed out, is to be found in Murūj al-Dḥahab, where al-Mas‘ūdī says:

” - - - ولا نعلم في فتوح البلدان احسن منه“<sup>25</sup>

(And we know of no better work on Futūḥ al-Buldān than his).

Ibn al-Nadīm gives it the name:<sup>26</sup> “كتاب البلدان الصغير”<sup>26</sup>  
 Yāqūt, on the authority of Ibn al-Nadīm gives it the names “كتاب البلدان الصغير”  
 and “كتاب الفتوح”, from which it is inferred, that even  
 Yāqūt was not clear about the title of the book.<sup>27</sup> Since the book deals  
 with the history of the conquest of different regions, it has received two  
 titles namely: “فتوح البلدان” and “كتاب البلدان”.

The modern scholars like Margoliouth,<sup>28</sup> De Goeje,<sup>29</sup> Hitti,<sup>30</sup> Khair al-Din Zirkilī,<sup>31</sup> ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah,<sup>32</sup> and Jurjī Zaidān<sup>33</sup> all agree in giving this work the title: ‘Futūḥ al-Buldān’. Moreover, the detailed study of this work reveals that the most appropriate name for the work can be ‘Futūḥ al-Buldān’; as suggested by al-Mas‘ūdī, and supported by the above-mentioned scholars.

## ANSĀB AL-ASHRĀF

In our times ‘Ansāb al-Ashrāf’ was first of all identified by W.Ahlwardt, who in 1883 A.D. published an historical fragment dealing with the reign of ‘Abd-al-Malik, which is found in an anonymous Berlin manuscript. In the introduction to his edition he came to the conclusion that this fragment belonged to the Ansāb al-Ashrāf of the celebrated historian al-Balādhurī. This view was endorsed by some other scholars and it was confirmed beyond any doubt by DeGoeje, who examined the Paris Manuscript, which contains about a quarter of the Ansāb.

At the thirteenth International Congress of Orientalists, which took place in Hamburg in 1902, C.H. Becker announced that he had discovered a complete manuscript of the Ansāb in Istānbūl, and that he proposed to publish it. The proposal was supported by many distinguished Orientalists and some offered their collaboration. But for various reasons the project came to nothing. Finally, on the suggestion of Prof. G. Weil, the Project

was entrusted to the newly established School of Oriental Studies in the Hebrew University.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. S.D.F. Goitein commenced his study of the manuscript in 1929. He was allotted Vol. V, containing the history of the Caliph 'Uthmān and his family, of Marwān and his family, and of the caliphate of Ibn al-Zubair in the times of Marwān and 'Abd al-Malik.

This volume was published through the labour of this orientalist, at the University Press Jerusalem in 1936.

Mr. Max Schloessinger worked on the volume IV B, of Ansāb al-Ashrāf, which was published by the same Press in 1938. This volume deals with the second Umayyad ruler, Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah and his family, with the descendants of Ziyād b. Abi-Sufyān, and at greater length with Ziyād's son, 'Ubaid Allāh. Then follow the accounts of al-'Āṣ b. Umayya and his family and of Abu'l-'Īṣ ibn Umayya and his descendants. The text finally deals briefly 'Affān b. al-'Āṣ ibn Umayya and his offspring, including the Caliph 'Uthmān, whose biography forms the beginning of Vol. V.

But the scholars of the Hebrew University could not proceed further with the work they had started. The second world War with all its devastation broke out; tension surmounted between the 'Arabs and Israel, and the strained relations and deteriorated circumstances made it impossible to complete the most useful work.

Some years ago, the Arab League (al-Jāmi'at-al-Arabiyya) established a Department namely "The Department for the Revival of Arabic Manuscripts (شعبه احیاء مخطوطات عربيه). This Department has undertaken to publish the whole work that is Ansāb-al-Ashrāf under its own supervision. The project was entrusted to Dr. Ḥamidullāh, a celebrated scholar of 'Arabic Literature and Islamic history, with whose tiresome and laborious efforts the first volume of this great work was published in Egypt in 1959. This volume excluding introduction and indices, etc., comprises 594 pages which correspond to pp. 1-285 of Vol. I, of the original Ms. Other volumes are still awaiting their publication.

The portions of 'Ansāb al-Ashraf' so far published are mentioned below:—

1. Vol. I: Edited by Dr. M. Ḥamidullāh, published in Egypt in the year 1959. Comprises 594 pages excluding introduction, indices, etc. Corresponds to . . . PP. I – 285 of Vol. I of the Iṣtānbūl Ms. = 285 PP
2. Vol.IV B: Edited by Max Scholessinger, published at the University Press Jerusalem in the year 1938. Comprises 170 pages excluding indices, etc. Corresponds to . . .PP. 818–917 = 100. PP.
3. Vol. V: Edited by Dr. S.D.F. Goitein, published at the University Press Jerusalem in the year 1936. Text comprises 379 pages Corresponds to . . . PP.918–1137 = 220 PP. of Vol. I, of Iṣtānbūl Ms.
4. Vol. IIth: Edited by W. Ahlwardt. Published in Greifswald in 1883 A.D. Text comprises 359 pages. Corresponds to (Vol.I) PP. 1110–1196 = 87 (Vol.II) PP.1–29 = 29. Total printed pages 721–28 = 693

The Iṣtānbūl Manuscript of 'Āshir Efendi, No.597/98 of the 'Ansāb' contains 1227 folios or 2454 pages. It is in twelve parts, comprising two thick volumes of which the first contains 1196 pages, and the second 1258 (1268) pages, Each page has got 37 lines in it.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the volumes published upto this time represent less than one-third of the whole work.

It is our great fortune that another Manuscript of the Ansāb al-Ashraf has recently been discovered in Rabāṭ (Morocco).

Uṣtādh 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Maimanī, while he was Head of the 'Arabic Department, University of the Punjāb, Lahore, told me, that he had come

to know through Ibrāhīm al-Kattāni (Librarian of the Public Library of Rabāṭ), that a new Ms. of Ansāb al-Ashrāf, better than that of Istānbūl, had been discovered in Al-Zāwiya al-Nāṣiriyya, in Tamjarūt (Morocco). Afterwards this Ms. came into the possession of Jalāwī Pāshā, the governor of Morocco. The rich collection of Jalāwī Pāshā, which also contained the above Ms. was handed over by the Govt. of Morocco to the Public Library of Rabāṭ.

Dr. Ḥamidullāh has written a long and valuable article under the title

”مخطوطه جديده من انساب الاشراف للبلاذري“

(The New Ms. of Ansāb al-Ashrāf of al-Balādhurī) highlighting the main facts about this new Ms.<sup>36</sup> He informs us that the Rabāṭ Ms. is in one big volume, comprising 934 pages. Each page measures about 24 x 17”, containing 44 lines in thin and small handwriting. Each page is equal to seven printed pages, and to 2½ pp. of Istānbūl Ms.<sup>37</sup> The title-page (لوح) of the Ms. bears the following words:—

”المجلد فيه جميع كتاب جمل انساب الاشراف تصنيف الاديب  
 الفاضل ابي الخير احمد بن يحيى بن جابر البغدادي الكاتب المعروف  
 محمد رسول الله“  
 بالبلاذري رضى الله عنه“<sup>38</sup> -

(This volume contains the whole of the book: ‘Jumul Ansāb al-Ashrāf’ of the celebrated man of letters and eminent scholar Abi'l-Khair Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Baghdādi, al-Kātib, generally known as al-Balādhurī (May God be pleased with him . . .)).

Dr. M. Ḥamidullāh has also given, in the article a table of the contents of this new Ms. and has compared its pages with that of Istānbūl Ms.<sup>39</sup>

In the following pages an attempt has been made to give a summary of the contents of Istānbūl Ms:—

Dr. Goitein has given a brief summary of the contents of Ansāb al-Ashrāf (Istānbūl MS.), as follows:—

“The manuscript contains 1227 folios. The volume now published represents 110 folios, i.e. less than a tenth of the whole work; the part edited by Ahlwardt from the Berlin Ms. only amounts to approximately 1/25 of the Ansāb. The Ansāb is thus larger than the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa’d, and is slightly smaller than the Tā’rikh of Ṭabari.

“At the beginning of the book, there is a brief outline of the genealogy of the Arabs of the “Ishmaelite” stock, from Noah to the tribal ancestors of Quraish. Ff. 14b-344b are concerned with the Hāshimites; of this section about 130 folios consist of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and about 120 ff. are devoted to the descendants of Abū Ṭālib (rather more than half of this space being given to ‘Ali and his Caliphate, and the rest mainly to the unsuccessful attempts of his unfortunate relatives to acquire power).

The ‘Abbāsids are given a little more than 70 ff. (263b-336a), only the first two ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs being described with any degree of completeness (both of them are dealt with in 30 ff.). On the other hand, the Umayyads occupy 454 folios (345b-799a), i.e. more than a third of the book. There is a very detailed biography of each Umayyad Caliph; Mu‘āwiya covers 60 ff; and ‘abd al-Malik 130 ff. (but these also include events of the period with which he was not directly connected). The rest of Quraish extends over a further 147 ff. (to 947a), including a detailed biography of ‘Umar (887a-923a), which to some extent takes the form of a legend of a saint.

The remaining 280ff. (947a-1227a), i.e. less than a quarter of the book, deal with the tribes of Muḍar, except Quraish, in the following order: Kināna, Asad, Hudhail, ‘Abd Manāt, Muzaina, other small tribes ascribed to Udd, the tribe of Tamim (120 ff.), and finally almost the whole of

Qais, i.e. Dhubyān-Fazāra, 'abs, Hawāzin, Sulaim and especially Thaqif, the last tribe that the author described. There are a few tribes which are not included, but these are of lesser importance for the earlier history, such as Hilāl, Kilāb, and Qushair. The second group of 'Ishmaelite' tribes, Rabi'a and the Yaman clans do not appear at all in this work; according to Hādjdjī Khalifa 1,274

Balādhurī died before he finished the Ansāb . . .

The fullest biography occurring in that part which deals with the clans other than the Hāshimites and the Umayyads, is that of Hādjdjādj, comprising 20 ff. (in addition to this there is a lengthy chapter on "ولاية الحجاج العراق" also containing 22 ff. in the section on the reign of 'abd al-Malik); it is, at the same time, also the only biography of a statesman that is given considerable space in this part of the book. Perhaps we may suggest that it is introduced here inadvertently, because Balādhurī usually brings biographical details of important men within the historical narrative of their respective epoch as set forth in the biographies of the individual Caliphs. Note, for instance in this volume pp. 188–379, the account of the rise and decline of 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair, where even such a detail as the list of his wives is given (p.378), while in his proper genealogical place(819) very little biographical material about him is given, and even that, it may be added, is already included in our volume. This explains why distinguished Quraishites like Khālid b. Walīd or 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ receive merely a few lines, or a page at most: their activities are described within the framework of the histories of the appropriate Caliphs. Apart from the Caliphs, fuller biographies, are given, both in the section on Quraish and in that on the other tribes of Muḍar, chiefly in those cases which have a literary interest. Thus, there are extensive biographies of poets like Farazdaq (10 ff.) and Djarīr (7 ff.), of masters of epigram and 'bon mot' like Khālid b. Ṣafwān (8 ff.) and al-Aḥnāf (8 ff.) , of an authority on

proverbs like Aktham b. Saifi (5 ff.), of a caustic judge like Iyās b. Mu'āwiya (3 ff.), and also of early religious devotees like 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd (5 ff.), ar-Rabi' b. Khuthaim (3 ff.) and Sufyān ath-Thauri (2½ ff.)".<sup>40</sup>

The volume-wise summary of this book is given below:—

## VOLUME I (PP. 1-200)

The book opens with the genealogy of the Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him). Al-Balādhurī, after giving a brief information about the children of the above prophet devotes about 39 pp. to the following aspects:

Those who were pioneers in speaking Arabic Language; the Prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (peace be upon them), nasab and progeny of 'Adnān b. Udd, the death of Nizār, Muḍar and his off springs and a brief account of them, Quṣaiy and his services—construction of the House of Nadwah, management of Ka'ba, etc., and his descendants, 'Abd Maṣāf, a detailed nasab of Hāshim (b. 'Abd Maṣāf b. Quṣaiy b. Kilāb), the episode of 'al-Fīl' (The Elephant), the battle of Dhat Nakīf and the digging of Zamzam well.

The account of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) begins from page 40 and covers the remaining part of this volume. A well-connected, detailed and continuous biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is given; under the following heads:

His family—father and grandfather, his early life at Makkah before his prophethood cover the space upto p. 46. The remaining pages are devoted to the following matters; Advent (Bi'that) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his preaching, Abū Jahl and his mischiefs, Abū Lahab and his hostile attitude towards the Prophet, Aswad b. Yaghūth, Hārith b. Qais, and other influential Quraishies like Umayya and Ubayyi b. Khalf, 'Uqbah b. Abi Mu'it, Ḥakam b. al-'Ās, etc; who opposed, persecuted and insulted the Prophet and his companions in every possible way; the weak and poor Muslims ('al-Mustaḍ'afin), like 'Ammār b. Yāsir, Khabbāb b. al-Aratt, Suhaib al-Rūmī, Bilāl and 'Āmir b. Fahīrah, etc., who were the main target of the



tyrannies and atrocities of the Makkans; those who migrated to Abyssinia, Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, Prophet's journey to Ṭā'if, his preaching to the various tribes, Bai'at of 'Aqabah, and his Mi'raj.

Next is the Prophet's Hijra to Madina, the immediate arrangements-religious, social, administrative, etc., made by him, the hypocrites, the Jews; a very detailed account of the military expeditions (Ghazwāt and Sarāyā), covering the pp. 135-186; the Prophet's general appearance, his habits, character, and an account of his wives. The above volume ends at p. 200, while the account of the Prophet's wives still continues.

## VOLUME II (PP. 201-400)

The above volume deals, among others, with the following topics:

The Prophet's wives and his children (continued from vol. i, p. 200), his clients (mawālī) and servants and among their account an incident related to Mughīrah b. Shu'bah, the Prophet's dress, his horses, etc., arms and armour, officials appointed by him, his ambassadors to the contemporary kings, etc., his scribes; wells used for the Prophet, Prophet's namesakes in pre-Islamic and early Islamic days, his sayings in praise of Abū Bakr al-Siddiq, his illness, death, bath and burial (upto the p. 278).

A detailed account of the meeting in Saqīfah Bani Sā'idah and the Bai'at (swearing allegiance to) of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr for his caliphate, elegies on the Prophet's death. The Prophet's account is closed at p. 289. The treaty termed as 'Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl' is, however, discussed alongwith the accounts of the Prophet's uncles.

From p. 290 onwards to the end of the above volume, an account of Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭālib and his descendants is given: Abū Ṭālib and his offsprings, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and his letters (pp. 313-36), the children of the Caliph 'Alī (pp. 336-46), oath of allegiance to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, 'the affair of 'Ḥakamain', the battle of Nahrawān. The above volume ends on p. 400, while the account of the above Caliph still continues.

## VOLUME III (PP. 401-600)

The above volume (pp. 401-437) deals with the state of affairs in Egypt during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, an account of Muhammad b. Abi Hudḥai-fah, sundry armed conflicts between Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī and Amir Mu‘āwiyah, and the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī.

From pp. 437 to the end: Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan and his peace with Amīr Mu‘āwiyah, Ḥaḍrat Ḥusain and his progeny. Here abruptly appears the account of the ‘Abbasid caliph Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr and an important discussion regarding his relations with the claimants to the caliphate, from amongst the family of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, is opened, which also includes the details of the unsuccessful attempts made by the prominent ‘Alids to acquire power during the Umayyad period; a considerable space is allotted to Ḥaḍrat Ḥusain, his departure from Makkah and the Tragedy of Karblā; then follows the account of Zaid b. ‘Alī b. Ḥusain, his relations with the Umayyads and his martyrdom; a detailed account of ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his descendants, among whom ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās has been discussed at a considerable length. Then follows the account of the first ‘Abbasid Caliph, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Saffāh; the genesis, growth and climax of the ‘Abbasid propaganda and the most important leaders of the Movement; the above volume comes to an end with the account of Ibn Hubairah and his murder.

## VOLUME IV (PP. 601-800)

The following eminent personalities and matters related to them form the above volume:

Muslim b. Qutaibah, the caliph *Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr* (10 pp.), Abū Muslim Khurāsānī, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, Abū Ayyūb al-Mūriyānī-al-Kātib, ‘Uqbah b. Muslim; very brief accounts of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs—Al-Mahdī, Hādī, Hārūn; Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and other descendants of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib; Umayya, Ḥarb b. Umayya, Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb; *Amir Mu‘āwiyah* (pp. 695-762)—a very lengthy account of his personality and his caliphate, his efforts to obtain ‘bai‘at’ for his son Yazīd, Khārijites during

his time, Ziyād—his life and achievements, etc; the volume ends at p. 800, and the account of Ziyād still continues.

#### VOLUME V (PP. 801-1000)

The account of Ziyād continues upto the p. 817; then follows the discussion about the children of Amir Mu'āwiyah, *Yazid b. Mu'āwiyah* (pp. 818-853), his habits, character, likes and dislikes, etc. the affairs of Ḥadrat Ḥusain, Ḥadrat 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and Ḥadrat 'Abd Allāh b. Zubair during Yazīd's reign, the attitude of 'Abd Allāh b. Zubair after the martyrdom of Ḥadrat Ḥusain, the episode of Ḥarrah and the nobles who fell in the battle, Ibn Zubair in Makkah; the offsprings of Yazīd, among them an account of the prince Khālid; the progeny of Ziyād b. Abi Sufyān, among them an account of 'Ubaid Allāh; the children of Sufyān b. Umayya and Sa'id b. al-'Ās.

Then follows a detailed account of the third Caliph Ḥadrat 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (pp. 918-978), which includes his life, character, state of affairs during his caliphate, his various governors, affairs of 'Ammār b. Yāsir, Abū Dharr, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf, etc., worsening of the conditions during his caliphate, their detail and causes, uprightness of Ḥadrat 'Uthmān and his martyrdom, etc. The above volume closes with an account of the progeny of Ḥadrat 'Uthmān in about 20 pp., and after describing the battle of Marj-i-Rāhiṭ.

#### VOLUME VI (PP. 1001-1196)

The above volume deals with the following men and matters: Nu'mān b. Bashir and his murder, the battle of Rabadhah, the children of Ḥakam b. al-'Ās, *Marwān* and his progeny, 'Abd Allāh b. Zubair during the days of Marwān, the affair of Tawwābin and Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubaid Thaqafī, Zufar b. Hārith al-Kilābī, Muṣ'ab b. Zubair as governor of 'Irāq and his murder, fighting among Banū Qais and Banū Taghlib, etc., an account of 'Abd Allāh b. Zubair during the times of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, and his murder; the Khārijites from the reign of Yazīd to the caliphate of 'Abd al-

Malik; the caliph *'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān*, a detailed account of the state of affairs during his caliphate.

#### VOLUME VII (PP. 1-210)

This volume comprises the following aspects:

The account of *'Abd al-Malik* continues, appointment of *Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf* as governor of *'Irāq* and a very detailed account about him, the *Khārijites* during the caliphate of *'Abd al-Malik*, the caliph *Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik*, the *Kharijites* during his caliphate, the caliph *Sulaimān b. 'Abd al-Malik*, the *Kharijites* during his times, the caliph *'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz* and a detailed account of his achievements, etc. (pp. 129-165), the *Khārijites* during his caliphate, the descendants of *'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz*, the caliphate of *Yazid b. 'Abd al-Malik*, the affairs of *Sallāmah*, *'Umar Hubairah* and *Yazid b. Muhallab*.

#### VOLUME VIII (PP. 211-421)

This volume throws light on the following men and matters: *Yazīd b. Muhallab*, *Banū Muhallab* in *Qandābil*; descendants of *Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik*, the *Khārijites* during his times, the caliphate of *Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik*, his governors, his progeny, the *Kharijites* during his period, the reigns and affairs of *Walid b. Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik*, *Yazīd b. Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik* and *Ibrāhīm b. Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik*, the caliph *Marwān b. Muhammad b. Marwān* and the state of affairs during his caliphate, the *Kharijites* during his times, important battles of his period, his murder, the end of the *Umayyad Caliphate*. Then follow the accounts of other *Quraishites* among whom are included *Abū Hudhaifah*, *Sālim*, client of *Abū Hudhaifah*, the children of *Rabi'ah*, *'Abd al-Uzzā*, *'Abd al-Dār*, etc.

#### VOLUME IX (PP. 422-631)

This volume is very important due to the fact that it contains the biographies of the pious Caliphs *Abū Bakr* (pp. 470-491) and *'Umar* (pp. 571-631). In addition to these personages the volume deals with the

following personalities: 'Urwah, Muṣ'ab and 'Abd Allāh, the sons of Zubair, the descendants of Zuhrah b. Kilāb b. Murrah, among whom are the accounts of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Ḥaḍrat 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf, and Imām Ibn Shihāb Zuhri; among the descendants of Taim b. Murrah, the account of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, his caliphate, his offsprings, etc., the children of Murrah b. Ka'b, among them accounts of Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥah b. 'Ubaid Allāh and Ḥaḍrat Khālid b. Walīd. The account of Ḥaḍrat Sa'id b. Musayyib covers about five pp. (553-557). Then the descendants of Qais b. 'Adi b. Ka'b b. Murrah receive the attention of our author, and among them the detailed account of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (pp. 571-631) is given. The account continues and the volume ends at p. 631.

#### VOLUME X (PP. 632-843)

The account of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb extends to the p. 649, then follow the accounts of Ḥaḍrat 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and other children of the Caliph. The rest of the volume deals with the following men and matters:

Zaid b. 'Amr b. Nufail, Ḥaḍrat Sa'id b. Zaid, the children of 'Āmir b. Luwaiy b. Ghālib b. Fihri, among them the account of Ḥaḍrat Abū 'Ubaidah b. al-Jarrāh, 'Iyād b. Ghanam, Kinānah b. Khuzaimah b. Mudrikah b. Ilyās b. Muḍar and his descendants; the account of Abu'l-Aswad Du'ili (pp. 710-713), the progeny of Hudhail b. Mudrikah, among them the account of Ḥaḍrat 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, which also includes information regarding the jurisconsults among the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him); genealogy of 'Adi b. 'Abd Manāt b. Aus b. Tabikhah and his descendants, among them the account of Sufyān al-Thauri, Nu'mān b. Muqarrin (p. 815), Iyās b. Mu'āwiyah, the judge (pp. 819-825), the judge of Kufa, 'Abd Allāh' b. Shabramah; the volume ends at p. 843, with the account of Ṣafwān b. Ṭarīf.

#### VOLUME XI (PP. 844-1053)

The contents of this volume are as follows:

The genealogy and descendants of Murrah b. Udd, Ḥājib b. Zurarah and

other prominent sons of Zurarah; Farazdaq and his poetry (pp. 876-895), the descendants of Nahshal b. Dārim and Yarbū' b. Hanẓalah, the children of Kulaib b. Yarbu', and among them an account of Jarīr and his poetry (pp. 947-961), genealogy of Banī Sa'd b. Zaid Manāt b. Tamīm, an account of Khālid b. Ṣafwān (pp. 977-991), an account of Aḥnaf b. Qais, a descendant of Murrah (pp. 974-1010), the descendants of Bahdalah—Zibriqān b. Badr, Mālik b. 'Utārid b. 'Auf and a number of poets; genealogy of Banī 'Amr b. Tamīm. The volume ends at page 1053 with a brief account of Abū'l-Dardā', etc.

#### VOLUME XII (PP. 1054-1268)

This volume deals with the following men and matters:

Accounts of the eminent men among the descendants of Tamīm, Aktham b. Ṣaifi, the renowned wise man of Arabia, his letter to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and its reply, his sayings—in prose and poetry, genealogy of Qais, his descendants and accounts of the prominent statesmen, poets, scholars, secretaries, etc., among them the poets Nābighah Dhubyāni, Ibn Miyādah (pp. 1102-1106), nasab of Fazārah, his descendants, the notorious aspostate 'Uyainah b. Ḥiṣn, the children of 'Abs b. Baghīḍ and the different clans related to him, the descendants of Anmār b. Baghīḍ, the account of Qutaibah b. Muslim (pp. 1161-1165), nasab of Ghani, Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz the teacher of Ibn al-Kalbī, the ansāb of Fahm b. 'Amr, Māzin b. Manṣūr, Banī Salīm, etc., upto p. 1210.

Nasab of Thaqīf, among them a detailed account of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, (pp. 1217-1258)-Mughīrah b. Shu'bah covers pp. 1211-1216. Yūsuf b. 'Umar (pp. 1259-1261), accounts of eminent poets, statesmen, physicians, etc; on page 1267 of the book there is a brief account of the poet Umayya b. Abi 'l-Ṣalt. The book closes at p. 1268 with the account of Wahb b. Abi Khuwailid

#### FUTŪḤ AL-BULDĀN

The second existing work of al-Balādhurī is Futūḥ al-Buldān, about which al-Mas'ūdī says:

” ولا نعلم في فتوح البلدان احسن منه“<sup>41</sup> -

(And we know of no better work on the history of the conquests of countries than his).

It was first published in our times by the renowned orientalist De Goeje, in Leyden in the year 1863. Since then a number of editions have been published from Leyden and Cairo, etc.<sup>42</sup>

This book has also been translated into several Languages, viz., English, German and Urdu, etc.<sup>43</sup>

The subject of the book is history of the Muslim Conquests of different countries. It is a concise history of such conquests right from the Hijra of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to al-Balādhurī's own times. The book has been divided into different parts, and the various territories receive the attention of our historian under different headings. The conquest by war, surrender or capitulation of Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, North Africa, Andlusia, 'Irāq and Persia, Media, Ādharbā'ijān, Mauṣil, Jurjān, Ṭabaristān and their districts, Fārs and Kirmān, Sijistān and Kābul, Khurāsān, and Sind, etc., has been dealt with in separate chapters.

Some chapters dealing with the social and cultural aspects of the period have also been included, viz., introduction of Arabic as State-Language, founding and colonization of Kūfa, Basra, Baghdād, etc., the affair of Qarātīs, the laws of Kharāj lands, history of state stipends ('Atā) in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the Seal, the Coinage, and the Script, etc. This endeavour enhances the value of the book from the social and cultural view-point of history.

Commenting on the need of composing such a work, Hitti says:—

“Campaigns playing an important role in the life of Muhammad and the early caliphs soon began to assert their claim for special attention and were treated in special books. Be-

sides, the necessity of recording and studying the campaigns arose from the fact that in levying a tax (Kharāj) on the conquered land, those in authority were first confronted with the task of determining whether it was taken “by peace”, “by capitulation”, or “by force”, and what the terms in each case were. This gave rise to many books on campaigns (maghāzi), one of the oldest of which is al-Wāḳidi’s (d. 207/822). Some books were issued treating of the conquest of one city, most of which books have been lost. Given a number of books on the conquest of different cities, the next step would be to compile them into one whole. That step was taken by al-Balādhuri—the last great historian of Moslem campaigns”.<sup>44</sup>

A brief Part-wise summary of the book is given below:—

#### PART I – ARABIA (PP. 1-107)

The above part has been divided into twenty-one chapters. The Prophet’s Hijra to Madina, the possessions of Banū Naḍīr, the possessions of Banū Quraizah, Khaibar, Fadak, Wādi’l-Qurā and Taimā, Makka, its wells and floods, Tā’if, Tabālah and Jurash, Tabūk, Ailah, Adhruh, Maqnā and Jarbā, Dūmat al-Jandal (XIII Chap.), the capitulation of Najrān, Yaman ‘Umān, Baḥrain, Yamāmah. The last three chapters deal with the apostasy of the Arabs and the false prophets.

The book opens with the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Hijra to Madina and his stay at Qubā. Then the following matters are discussed in the first chapter: The Mosque founded on piety, Prophet’s (peace be upon him) arrival at Madīna, construction of the Prophet’s mosque, its renovation, reconstruction, extension, etc., the account has been brought down to the year 247 A.H./861 A.D. (i.e. Al-Mutawakkil’s caliphate); valley of ‘Aqīq and fiefs given out of it by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Caliph ‘Umar, etc., the wanderings of al-Azd, the origin of the brave and warlike tribes of Aus and Khazraj, and a brief description of the Treaty concluded between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Jews of Madīna, violation



of the covenant by Jewish tribe of Qainuqā' and their expulsion from Madīna.

Chapters II and III deal with the Jews of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah, respectively, their violation of the treaty concluded with them, loss of their possessions, etc. The capitulation of Khaibar and Fadak has been discussed in the next two chapters. Details about the conquest of Khaibar, terms of the capitulation, state of affairs in Khaibar during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, expulsion of the Jews from Khaibar, and a detailed account of the capitulation of Fadak claimed by Prophet's wives and Ḥaḍrat Faṭimah. The affair of Fadak has been brought down to the times of al-Mutawakkil.

Chapter VI deals with the grand victory of Makkah, sermon of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the occasion, administrative arrangements made by him, a brief history of the Ḥaram Mosque and the Ka'ba, reconstruction, renovation, etc., of the Mosque, down to the period of Al-Mutawakkil.

Chapter VIII gives a detailed account of the wells of Makkah and throws light on certain important houses, including Dār al-Nadwah.

Chapter IX deals with the devastating floods of Makkah.

The siege of Tā'if by the holy Prophet (peace be upon him), terms of capitulation, administrative arrangements, levying tithe on its fruits and grains, etc., form the tenth chapter of this part.

Chapter XI deals with Tabālah and Jurash, whose inhabitants accepted Islam without offering any resistance.

Chapter XII is related to the terms made with the people of Tabūk, Ailah, Adhruh, Maqnā' and Jarbā'. The Prophet's statement written for the inhabitants of Maqnā' is also given here.

The capture of Ukaidir, the leader of the inhabitants of Dūmat al-

Jandal by Ḥaḍrat Khālīd b. Walīd, while he was sent there by the Prophet (peace be upon him), Ukaidir's acceptance of Islām, words of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) statement, violation of the covenant by Ukaidir, despatch of Ḥaḍrat Khālīd by the Caliph Abū Bakr against him, and the capture of Dūma, etc., comprise the chapter XIII.

The capitulation of Najrān, its terms, etc. including an account of the delegation of the people of Najrān that visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), etc; form the XIV chapter. The account of the people of Najrān is brought down to the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd.

Embracing of Islām by the people of Yaman, Prophet's (peace be upon him) letters to the inhabitants of Yaman, to Zur'ah and the kings of Ḥimyar, etc., and account of Mu'adh ibn Jabal, when he was appointed at Yaman, instructions given to him, levying of tax on the people of Yaman, products subject to sadaqah, tax on Dhimmis, etc. are the main points of chapter XV.

Acceptance of Islām by the inhabitants of 'Umān, their apostasy and return to Islām, text of the letter of 'Umār b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to 'Adī, and emphasis on the fact that 'Umān remained in a fair state, until the caliphate of Al-Rashīd, when they detached themselves from the Caliph making their own man as their ruler, etc., form the contents of XVI chapter.

## AL-BAḤRAIN (CHAP. XVII)

This chapter throws light-on the following aspects:

Al-'Alā' ibn al-Ḥaḍramī sent by the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a delegate to the inhabitants of al-Baḥrain. Acceptance of Islam by Arab population and by some of the Persians. Text of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) letters written to the people of Hajar and to the Magians, imposition of tax on al-Baḥrain and its collection, removal of al-'Alā and appointment of 'Uḥmān b. Abil-'Ās as 'āmil of al-Baḥrain, governorship of Abū Hurairah, confiscation of his wealth by the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, apostasy of al-Ḥuṭam and his tribe and their subjugation, etc.

## AL-YAMĀMAH (CHAP. XVIII)

The contents of this chapter are as follows:

The origin of Al-Yamamah's name, the delegates who came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), Musailimah—the false prophet, a description of his appearance, his activities, apostasy of al-Yamamah's inhabitants, fierce battles fought between the Muslims and the apostates, martyrdom of a large number of Muslims, names of some prominent Muslims who fell martyrs, ultimate defeat of Musailimah and his murder, etc.

The three last chapters of the above part deal mainly with the causes, events, etc. of the apostasy of the Arab tribes during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr. Details about the suppression of this movement, along with an account of the false prophets and their mischiefs, etc. have also been given.

## PART II – FUTŪḤ AL-SHĀM (PP. 107-171)

The conquest of Syria as is evident from its title is discussed in this part, further sub-divided into sixteen chapters.

The first chapter deals with the unfurling of the three banners, and despatch of the troops by the Caliph Abū Bakr, under different generals to the different frontiers of Syria. This also mentions the appointment of Ḥaḍrat Khālīd b. Walīd to help these generals, and throws light on the first minor battles.

### THE ADVANCE OF KHĀLID IBN AL-WALĪD UPON SYRIA AND THE PLACES HE REDUCED ON HIS WAY (CHAPTER II)

The departure of Khālīd from al-Ḥīrah for Syria in 13 A.H., reduction of some places on his way, his stoppage for a while at a gate of Damascus, receiving homage and gifts from the Bishop of Damascus, his departure therefrom and his joining the other Muslim troops at Qanāt Busrā or at

Jābiyah, from where they went together to Buṣrā.

### THE CONQUEST OF BUṢRĀ (CHAPTER III)

Conquest of Buṣrā under the leadership of Khālīd or Yazīd ibn Abi-Sufyān, terms agreed upon with the inhabitants, surrender of Ma'ab to Abū 'Ubaidah b. Al-Jarrāh on the terms similar to those made with Buṣrā, forms the above chapter.

### THE BATTLE OF AJNADIN OR AJNADAIN (CHAP. IV)

Date, participants, view of the battle-field, violent battle fought by the Muslims, unprecedented courage and tactics shown by Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, heavy casualties and defeat of the enemies, names of some of the distinguished Muslims who fell martyrs in this battle, massing of the routed enemies at Wāqūṣah and their defeat for the second time, their flight, etc. are the main points of this chapter. The Caliph Abū Bakr's date of death is also to be found here.

### THE BATTLE OF FIHL IN THE PROVINCE OF JORDAN (CHAP. V)

Reduction of Fiḥl under the command of Abū 'Ubaidah b. al-Jarrāh in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb, terms made with the inhabitants and the covenant drawn up in this connection comprise the above chapter.

### THE AFFAIR OF THE PROVINCE OF JORDAN (CHAP. VI)

Conquest of the province by Shuraḥbil bin Ḥasanah with the exception of Tiberias, the inhabitants of which agreed on specific terms; reduction of the sea coasts by Yazid and 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, to whom Abu 'Ubaidah wrote regarding their conquest; transplantation by Amir Mu'āwiyah in 42 A.H. of a body of Persians from Bālabak, Ḥimṣ and Antioch to the coasts of Jordan, and of certain Asāwīrah from al-Baṣra and Kūfah and certain Persians to Antioch; making Acre ('Akkā) and Tyre (Ṣūr) the naval centres by the Muslim rulers, settlement of artisans alongwith the sea coast and

conversion of these towns to industrial towns, etc, comprise this chapter.

### THE BATTLE OF MARJ AL-ŞUFFAR (CHAP. VII)

A detailed account alongwith the date of the battle is given, and the story of Şamsāmah sword is discussed in this chapter.

### THE CONQUEST OF DAMASCUS AND ITS PROVINCE (CHAP. VIII)

Advance of different Muslim Commanders upon Damascus, after the above battle; taking of positions at different gates of the city and entry into it; full text of the statement issued by Khālid b. al-Walīd, date of the conquest, terms agreed upon with the inhabitants, case regarding the cathedral of St. John, the wall of Damascus, etc., are highlighted first, then follows an account of the capture of Tripoli and the reduction of the sea-coast, etc; terms made with the people of Ba'labak and the text of the statement issued by Abū 'Ubaidah, and the management of the conquered cities, etc.

Chapter IX deals with the affair of Ḥimş. The account has been brought down to al-Balādhurī's own times.

Chapter X describes the battle of Yarmūk, and Flight of the enemy alongwith Heraclius—their ruler who said adieu to Syria with the words “peace unto thee ‘O’! Syria and what an excellent country this is for the enemy”. This chapter also includes the affair of the inhabitants of Ḥimş, who preferred Muslim rule to that of Heraclius, and its reason. The incident of returning the Kharāj, the Muslims had collected from the inhabitants of Ḥimş to them with the words, “we are too busy to support and protect you, take care of yourselves”, and the reply of the inhabitants with the words, ‘we like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were, the army of Heraclius we shall indeed with your ‘āmil’s help, repulse from the city”, has also been mentioned.

### THE AFFAIR OF PALESTINE (CHAPTER XI)

The following aspects are highlighted:

The conquest of Jerusalem; Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's visit to Syria; the plague of 'Amawās, the deaths of Abū'Ubaidah, Yazīd ibn Sufyān, etc; conquest of Qaisariyah, date of its conquest, captives taken and a description of the city, etc, nomination of Amir Mu'āwiyah as governor of Syria, reduction of 'Asqalān, repairs made to 'Asqalān and Qaisariyah by the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, foundation and colonization of al-Ramlah by Sulaimān and 'Abd al-Malik, reduction in the Kharāj, and restoration of fiefs in 'Asqalān, etc.

#### THE AFFAIR OF QINNASRIN AND THE CITIES CALLED AL-'AWĀṢIM (CHAP. XII)

This chapter deals with the conquest of Qinnasrin, Aleppo, Antioch, Bālis and Qāsirīn, Manbij, etc., digging of the Maslamah Canal, advice of Ḥaḍrat Mu'adh to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin al-Khattāb against the division of land among the Muslims; fixation of tax by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, and the tithe lands of Syria.

#### THE AFFAIR OF CYPRUS (CHAP. XIII)

Conquest of Cyprus by Amir Mu'āwiyah, treaty of peace concluded, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ṣāliḥ's desire to annul the treaty, when the Cyprians started a rebellion, opinions of the various leading jurists of the time, like al-Laith b. Sa'd, Mālik b. Anas, Sufyān b. 'Uyainah, Mūsā bin A'yān, and Yaḥyā b. Ḥamzah, etc; in this regard, are discussed in this chapter.

The affairs of the Samaritan-the Jews and al-Jarājimah—the Christians have been discussed in the XIV and XV chapters.

#### THE FRONTIER FORTRESSES OF SYRIA (CHAP. XVI)

This chapter deals with the Muslim Frontiers in Syria—the places which were on the confines of the Muslim possessions and which connected their territory with that of the Romans, their administration, reconstruction of various fortresses, stationing of troops therein and their reinforcement, the interesting way in which the roads of Antioch were cleared of lions by means of buffaloes.

### PART III – THE CONQUEST OF MESOPOTAMIA (AL-JAZIRAH) (PP. 172-193)

This part comprises four chapters which deal with the conquest of Mesopotamia, the affair of the Christian of Banū Taghlib, the fortification, etc. of Mesopotamia, and declaration of Arabic as the language of the State Registers.

### PART IV–THE CONQUEST OF ARMENIA (PP. 193-212)

The above part throws light on the geography of Armenia, on its pre-Islamic history, its conquest by the Muslims, different Muslim governors, right from the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān to that of al-Mutawakkil, along with a brief account of their administrative arrangements, etc.

### PART V–THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT & AL-MAGHRIB (PP. 212-230)

The above part comprises six chapters and deals with the conquest of Egypt, Alexandria, Barqah and Zawilah, Tripoli, Ifriqiyah and Ṭanjah. In the first chapter a detailed account of the conquest of Egypt along with such items as administrative arrangements, treatment of its inhabitants and income from this territory, etc. has been given. The conquest of Alexandria after fierce battles forms the second chapter. The third chapter deals with the conquests of Barqah and Zawilah. This also includes an account of the origin, etc. of the Berbers. The conquest of Ifriqiyah and its affair during the times of different Caliphs has been discussed in the fifth chapter.

The conquest of Ṭanjah by Mūsā b. Nuṣair, subjugation of al-Sus al-Aqṣā, appointment of Ṭāriq b. Ziyād as governor of this territory, his return to Qairawān, comprise the sixth chapter.

### PART VI–THE CONQUEST OF ANDALUS (PP. 230-235)

The above part deals with the conquest of Andalusia,<sup>45</sup> various governors of Al-Maghrib (Ifriqiyah), like Ismā‘il, Yazīd, Bishr and others, arrange-

ments made by them to govern this territory, founding of different cities like al-'Abbasiyah, etc., expansion of the cities of al-Qairawān and Bārah. The account has been brought down to the caliphate of Al-Musta'īn Billāh (862-866 A.D.).

#### PART VII—ISLANDS IN THE SEA (PP. 235—236)

Conquest of Sicily, Rhodes, Arwad and Crete is discussed in this short chapter.

#### PART VIII—THE TERMS MADE WITH NŪBIA AND THE AFFAIR OF QARĀṬĪS (PP. 236-240)

##### TERMS MADE WITH NŪBIA (CHAP. I)

'Uqbah ibn Nāfi's attack on the Nūbians, his retreat without success due to 'the Archers of the Eyes' as the Arabs began to call the Nūbians on account of their skill as archers, terms agreed upon with them during the governorship of 'Abdallāh ibn Sa'īd, attitude of various Muslim governors and Caliphs towards them, Al-Qummi and his attack on Al-Bujah in the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil, and the terms made, etc., are the contents of this chapter.

##### THE AFFAIR OF QARĀṬĪS (CHAP. II)

This short but very useful and informative chapter about the social aspect of history throws light on the following matters:

That the qarāṭīs (rolls of papyrus for writing; also cloth of Egyptian fabrics used for carrying vases or clothes) were prepared in Egypt, which were exported to the Romans and in return the Muslims used to get Dinārs (minted), till the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, when for some time the Muslims withheld its export due to an objection raised by the Romans, when the former began to inscribe the name of Allāh on the upper part of the fabrics. The king of Byzantine threatened to associate the name of the holy Prophet on the dinārs with certain hateful words if this practice was not stopped. The Muslims met this challenge by minting their own



dinārs and prohibited the circulation of the Roman dinārs.

**PART IX—THE CONQUEST OF AL-SAWĀD  
(‘IRĀQ AND PERSIA) (PP. 241-301)**

The above part has been divided into twelve chapters, viz. the conquest of al-Sawād al-‘Irāq during the caliphates of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar, the battle of al-Jisr, the battle of Mihrān, the battle of Qādisīyah, the conquest of al-Madā’in, the battle of Jalūla’, the founding of Kūfah, Wāsiṭ al-‘Irāq, the Marsh land (Bāṭā’ih), Baghdād—the Madīnat al-Salām, and introduction of Arabic as the Language of the State Registers.

**PART X—MEDIA (AL-JIBĀL) (PP. 301-325)**

The eight chapters—Ḥulwān, the conquest of Nihāwand, the occupation of al-Dīnawar, etc. by the Muslims, the conquest of Hamadhān, Qum, Qāshān and Iṣbahān; the death of Yazdajird, the conquests of al-Rai and Qūmas, Qazwīn and Zanjān, comprise the above part.

**PART XI—ĀDHARBĀ’IJĀN (PP. 325-331)**

The conquest, administration, and other related matters are discussed. A reference about the birth-place of great Zoroaster is also given in this part.

**PART XII—AL-MAUṢIL (PP. 331-334)**

The conquest of different parts constituting al-Mauṣil in 20 A.H., founding, colonization and expansion of al-Mauṣil, the conquest of Shahrzur by ‘Utbah, surrender of Ṣamaghān and Drābādḥ to him and separation of Shahrzur and its districts from al-Mauṣil in the caliphate or al-Rashīd, etc. have been described in this part.

**PART XIII—JURJĀN AND ṬABARISTĀN AND  
THEIR DISTRICTS (PP. 334-340)**

This part throws light on the following matters:

Advance of Sa'id b. al-'Āṣ upon Ṭabaristān in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, his conquests, terms agreed upon with its inhabitants, Maṣqalah's disaster in the caliphate of Amir Mu'āwiyah, campaigns of Yazīd ibn Muhallab in the caliphate of Sulaimān b. 'Abd al-Malik, conquest of Jurjān, surrender of Sūl, terms made with Jurjān, breach of the covenant by its people, suppression of the rebellion by Yazīd, tribute received from their leader, the frequent revolts of the people of Ṭabaristān from the time of Marwān ibn Muḥammad to that of Abū'l-'Abbās, capture of the city and complete subjugation of its people during the caliphate of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, 'Umar ibn al-'Alā as governor of Ṭabaristān, governorship of Māy-azdyār, his apostasy, and his sad end.

#### PART XIV—THE DISTRICTS OF THE TIGRIS (KUWAR DIJLAH (PP. 340-372))

The first chapter deals with the conquest of these districts by 'Utbah b. Ghazwān, governorships (of al-Baṣra) of 'Utbah, Mughirah b. Shu'bah, and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Ash'arī's inspection of the districts, survey of the land and assessment of Kharāj, etc.

The next lengthy chapter of this part throws light on the founding, colonization and expansion of Baṣra, the mosques of Baṣra, its important houses, baths, castles, canals and fiefs, etc. This chapter also describes the social and economic life of the people of the region. Affairs like census of Baṣra, its drainage and water supply and its improvement, digging of the various canals, etc. have also been discussed.

#### PART XV (PP. 372-386)

#### CONCERNING THE ASĀWIRAH AND THE ZUṬṬ

Embracing of Islām by the Persian cavalry under the leadership of Siyah at the hands of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, covenant drawn up with them on this occasion, their settlement in Baṣra, etc., acceptance of Islām by Siyābjah and al-Zuṭṭ, their settlement in Baṣra, their appointment in the Treasury of al-Baṣra, their transportation by Amir Mu'āwiyah to the coast

of Syria and Antioch, and an account of the emigrants from Bukhāra and their settlement in the Islamic regions, etc. form the above chapter.

## THE DISTRICT OF AL-AHWĀZ

The conquest of these districts by Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, the tomb of the Prophet Daniel, Hurmuzān’s interview with the Caliph ‘Umar, martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar and the assassination of Hurmuzān, etc., are described in this chapter.

## PART XVI—FĀRS AND KIRMĀN (PP. 386-392)

The conquest of the above territories during the caliphates of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar and Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān, and certain other matters related to the above regions have been discussed in this part.

## PART XVII—SIJISTĀN AND KABUL (PP. 392-402)

This part describes the affairs of the above regions right from the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān, when an expedition was sent to these territories under Ibn ‘Āmir, down to the caliphate of al-Māmūn, when Kabul surrendered completely to the Muslims and its ruler embraced Islam.

## PART XVIII—KHURĀSĀN (PP. 403-431)

Khurāsān, its conquest and administration, etc. has been discussed in this lengthy part as follows:—

## CALIPHATES OF ḤAḌRAT ‘UMAR AND ḤAḌRAT ‘UTHMĀN

Raids conducted on Khurāsān in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar, conquest of two forts namely Tabasain considered to be the gates of Khurāsān, Ibn ‘Āmir’s campaigns in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān, subjugation of Nishābūr with its surrounding places, surrender of Nasā, Abiward, Sarakhs Qif, Harāt and its vicinity, etc. text of the treaty concluded with the Mayor

of Harāt, terms agreed upon with Marzubān of Marv, capture of Marv al-Rūz, attack on Ṭukhāristān by Aḥnaf appointed by Ibn 'Āmir, capture of Jūzjān, Ṭāliqān and Fāryāb, surrender of Balkh—the capital city of Ṭukhārā, return of Ibn 'Āmir to the Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, while he left his charge to Qais b. al-Haitham, who went through the whole land of Ṭukhārā.

### CALIPHATES OF ḤADRAT 'ALĪ AND AMĪR MU'ĀWIYAH

Khurāsān in a state of confusion during the caliphate of Ḥadrat 'Alī, Khurāsān's governors appointed by Amir Mu'āwiyah and their work and achievements, Arab Colonists, and their settlement in the colonies this side of the river (Oxus), governorship of 'Ubaidallāh b. Ziyād and attack upon Transoxiana, capitulation of Khātūn of Bukhārā, her rebellion, recapture of Bukhārā by Sa'īd b. 'Uthmān after a fierce battle, conquest of Samarqand and Tirmidh, etc.

### THE TIMES OF YAZĪD AND 'ABD AL-MALIK

State of chaos for some time in the region, the governor Umayya b. 'Abd Allāh and the restoration of peace and order.

### MŪSĀ'S INSURRECTION

Al-Muhallab and Yazīd b. Muhallab as governors and their achievements, insurrection of Mūsā ibn 'Abdallāh, Mufaḍḍal as governor and the suppression of Mūsā's insurrection, and his death.

### QUTAIBAH'S CONQUESTS AND HIS DOWNFALL

Appointment of Qutaibah to the governorship by Al-Ḥajjāj, capture of Khwārizm and Samarqand, conquest of Baikand, Kish, Nasaf and Shāsh, his raids on Farghānah and subjugation of a part of it, and his successful march upon as-Sughd and Ashrosnah is discussed first. Then follows an account of the downfall of Qutaibah, its causes, details, and finally his death.

Then our author discusses the appointment of al-Jarrāḥ by Caliph

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz to the governorship, his advance upon the frontier of China, his partisan spirit and removal from the above post.

Then follows the account of Khurāsān during the caliphates of Yazīd Ibn 'Abd Al-Malik and Hishām.

## UNDER THE 'ABBĀSIDS

The following information is given:

Border raids on Ashrosnah, Al-Māmūn's visit to Khurāsān, his attack upon Sughd, Ashrosnah and upon those inhabitants of Farghānah who revolted against him, Māmūn's preaching for Islam, subjugation of Kābul, King of Ashrosnah, his submission and disobedience, march of Aḥmad b. Abi Khālid upon him, conquest of his capital city and resubmission of the King to the Caliph, Transoxiana under the rule of Al-Māmūn and Al-Mustā'in, domination of Islam in those regions, conquests of Ṭāhir, etc.

The chapter closes with the statement that it was Qutaibah b. Muslim, who colonized the Arabs in Transoxiana.

## PART XIX – THE CONQUEST OF AL-SIND (PP. 431-446)

This part can be divided into the following four chapters :—

- (1) Border Raids
- (2) Campaigns under al-Ḥajjāj
- (3) The state of affairs during the caliphate of Sulaimān
- (4) The state of affairs during the 'Abbasid period.

### (1) BORDER RAIDS

The following information is given in this section:

Despatch of expeditions to Tānah, Barwaṣ and the Gulf of Al-Daibul during the caliphate of Ḥadrat 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Ḥadrat 'Uthmān's

restraint from sending an army to invade al-Sind, when he was made aware of the unfavourable conditions for such an expedition, Al-Ḥārith's raid during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Al-Muhallab's appointment over the frontier of al-Hind, his border raids, conquest of Makrān, capture of Qunduhār by 'Abbād b. Ziyād, Al-Mundhir over this frontier, his successful raids on al-Būqān and al-Qīqān, capture of Quṣḍār for the second time and Mundhir's death, Ibn Harri and his successful campaigns over this border.

## (2) CAMPAIGNS UNDER AL-ḤAJJĀJ

The following matters are highlighted:

Appointment of Sa'īd b. Aslam over Makrān and his murder by his own Arab companions, Mujjā'ah and the conquest of a part of Qandābīl, his death in Makrān, governorship of Muḥammad b. Hārūn, ransacking of the ship carrying Muslim women by sea pirates near Daibul, Ḥajjāj's protest to Dāhir, his refusal to get the captured women set free, unsuccessful raids on Daibul by 'Ubaid Allāh b. Nabhān and Budail b. Ṭahfah, advance of the Muslim army upon Sind with full preparation under Muḥammad b. Qāsim, capture of Qannzabur or (Qannajbūr), siege of Daibul, an account of its great temple, reduction of the city, surrender of Al-Birūn, conquest of Sahbān, Muḥammad's advance to meet Dāhir, his encampment on the bank of the River Mihran (Sind), capture of Sadūsān, crossing of the river, fierce fighting among the Muslims and Dāhir and his army, murder and defeat of Lāhir, Muḥammad's complete control over al-Sind, his further advance into this land, conquest of Rawar, defeat of the disordered forces of Dāhir at Brahmanābād and capture of this place, surrender of this place, surrender of Sawndri and Basmad, conquest of Al-Sikkah, siege and capture of Multān—the city of gold, Muḥammad's return to al-Rur after the death of Ḥajjāj, surrender of Bailmān and Surast to Muḥammad, conquest of al-Kīraj, dismissal of Muhammad during the caliphate of Sulaimān, etc.

## (3) STATE OF AFFAIRS DURING THE CALIPHATE OF SULAIMĀN

Removal, imprisonment and death of Muḥammad b. Qāsim, Yazīd and Ḥabīb as governors, Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz's invitation to several rulers and princes of Sind to accept Islam, Junaid's successful raids upon

Ujjain (Uzain), Malibah and Jazar (Gujrat), etc., unrest in the region, foundation of the city of al-Manṣūra, al-Ḥakam as governor and the success he gained.

#### (4) STATE OF AFFAIRS DURING THE ‘ABBASID PERIOD

The state of affairs of the country during the caliphates of Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr and al-Mu‘taṣim, fighting among the different tribes of Arabia, different governors of the region and their achievements, etc. The chapter is closed with the account of the king of ‘Usaifān who accepted Islam during the caliphate of al-Mu‘taṣim Billāh.

#### PART XX—APPENDICES (PP. 447-473)

##### APPENDIX I: CONCERNING THE LAWS OF KHARĀJ LANDS

From the study of the above appendix it is revealed that the land taken by attack was subject to Kharāj. If the land was divided among those who conquered it, it was declared as tithe land, and if the leader did not divide it, then its people were required to pay Jizyah and the land was subject to Kharāj. Laws concerning the land of a person who accepts Islam from amongst the people conquered by force, a person who sows his land several times in a year and laws concerning one who leaves his land fallow are also brought to light. Further we come to know the procedure adopted when insects or floods destroyed the crops, the laws concerning land belonging to a slave, and laws concerning shops and market places, gardens, unoccupied grounds reclaimed by Muslims, and foreign customs of long standing.

##### APPENDIX II

##### HISTORY OF THE SYSTEM OF ‘AṬĀ IN THE CALIPHATE OF ḤADRAT ‘UMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB

This appendix at first deals with the conference of Ḥadrat ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in Muḥarram 20 A.H. with other prominent Companions

of the holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to introduce the system of 'Aṭā'. Then the following matters are discussed: Approval of the Caliph's suggestion, institution of the Register (Diwān) and its introduction, enrolment of the troops therein, discussion regarding the order in which the people were to be entered in the Register, Tabaqāt division—enrolment of the people according to their ranks (Manāzil), size of the allotments to different Muslims, pension of food and clothing to the people of upland of Najd, pensions for children, distribution of 'Aṭā in the Capital and in its vicinity by the Caliph himself, rejoicings on its introduction, 'aṭā to Mawālī and those of foreigners who accepted Islam, non extension of 'aṭā to the people of Makkah who in turn were not required to render any military service, apportioning of the tithes to the families and children of the soldiers, stipends for other children including even those as were illegitimate, determining of the quantity per month of rations which was to be apportioned to the people—men, women or slaves, etc.

### APPENDIX III : THE SEAL

The Seal of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and its material, words engraved upon it, its loss in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uṭhmān, preparation of another seal-ring on the orders of the Caliph 'Uṭhmān, counter feiture of the Seal by Ma'n in the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and his securing money from the Kharāj of al-Kūfah, punishment he received for this crime, etc; have been described first. Then follows an account of the Seals of Persian kings, which were numerous and were used for various purposes. Further we come to know that Ziyād, b. Sufyān was the first Arab who kept a regular system of account-books and used a seal. A brief description of the system concerning the revenue and financial reports, adopted during the times of Persian kings is also given.

### APPENDIX IV: THE COINAGE

This chapter throws light on the various aspects of coinage and the weights used in Arabia as follows:—

Weights used in Arabia in the pre-Islamic days, weight of the Dirham



and Mithqāl, usage of foreign coins by the Muslims, introduction of their own coinage, unengraved (plain) coins and engraved dinārs, spurious coins, inscriptions on the coins, Al-Ḥajjāj's mint, improvement in the striking of the coins, punishment for counter-feiting and cutting of coins, etc.

## APPENDIX V: CALLIGRAPHY

This appendix deals with the following matters:—

Invention of the art of writing in Arabic by three persons of the tribe of Ṭaiy who patterned the Arabic Alphabet after Syriac, spread of this art among the people, extent of the art on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) advent (Bi'that), names of the men and women who could write during Prophet's time, the scribes of the holy Prophet (peace be upon him), scribes from the tribes of Aus and Khazraj, the 'Kāmil', and the learning of Hebrew script by Zaid b. Thābit on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) command.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

## CHAPTER III

- 1 *Murūj*, *op. cit.*, i, p.14.
- 2 *Al-Fihrist*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- 3 *Al-Tārikh al-Kabīr*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 109.
- 4 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, *op. cit.*, v, pp. 99-100.
- 5 *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Istānbūl, 1941), i, p.79.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *A'lām*, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 85-86.
- 8 *T. Ādāb Lughāt*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 192.
- 9 *Futūh al-Buldān*. Eng. Tr., *op. cit.*; intr., p. 7.
- 10 Cf. *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, intr., v, p. 10.
- 11 Cf. *Ibid.*, intr., i, pp. 16-18.
- 12 *Ibid.*, intr., p. 10.
- 13 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, v, pp. 99-100.
- 14 Cf. P. 113.
- 15 See also 'Abd al-Sattār al-Farrāj, *Ansāb*, intr., i, p. 15.
- 16 Cf. (i) Goitein, *Ansāb*, intr., v, p. 9.  
(ii) A. Sattār Farrāj, *Ansāb*, intr., i, p. 18.
- 17 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 18 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, v, pp. 99-100.
- 19 *Al-Tārikh al-Kabīr*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 109.
- 20 *Al-Bidāya*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 65.
- 21 Cf. above nos 5, 6.
- 22 *A'lām*. i, p. 85.
- 23 *Ansāb*, intr., i, pp. 18-19.
- 24 *Ansāb*, intr., v, pp. 10-11.
- 25 See above no. 1.
- 26 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 27 Cf. *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, v, pp. 99-100.
- 28 Cf. *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- 29 Cf. *Futūh al-Buldān* (Leiden, 1866), Edited by him.
- 30 Cf. His intr. to *Futūh*, Eng. Tr., *op. cit.*, p.7.
- 31 *A'lām*, i, p. 86.
- 32 *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn* (Dismashq, 1957), i, p. 202.
- 33 *Tārikh Ādāb*, ii, p. 192.
- 34 For further details see Goitein intr; *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, v, pp.7-8; M. Ḥamīdullāh, intr., *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, i, pp. 5-6.
- 35 Cf. Goitein, intr., *Ansāb*, v, pp. 11-26; M Ḥamīdullāh & 'Abd al-Sattār Farrāj, intr., *Ansāb*, i, pp. 5-6, 23-24; Khurshid Aḥmad Fāriq, *Balādhurī Ki Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, in Burhān(Delhi, April, 1957, pp. 208-09.

- 36 Cf. M. Ḥamīdullāh, *Makḥṭūṭāh Jadidah Min Ansāb al-Ashrāf Lil-Balaḏhurī*, in the Journal 'Ma'had al-Makḥṭūṭat al-Arabiyya' (May, November, 1960). Vol. vi, Fas. 1-2, pp.211-26.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 212.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p.213.
- 39 *Ibid.*, pp. 222-26.
- 40 Goitein, intr., *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, v, pp. 11-13.
- 41 *Murūj*, i, p. 14.
- 42 Cf. Ṣalāḥ al-Din al-Munajjid, *A'lām al-Tārikh*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 39; Cf. Urdu Tr. Abu-'l-Khair Maudūdī, *op. cit.*
- 44 *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, Eng. Tr. intr., p. 5.
- 45 The conquest of Spain has been disposed off in about one page, and the rest of the chapter deals with the affair of al-Maghrib (Ifriqiyah).

## CHAPTER IV

## AL-BALĀDHURĪ'S EVALUATION AS A HISTORIAN

## A CRITICAL STUDY OF FUTŪḤ AL-BULDĀN

Al-Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* is a valuable rather indispensable source of Islamic History, especially for the history of the conquests of different countries by the Muslims right from the Hijra of the Prophet (peace be upon him) down to al-Balādhurī's own times. Ever since its composition its value has never been diminished, and the work has served as a very rich and useful store-house of information for the subsequent scholars of Islāmic history and geography. The contents of the book have been utilized by such eminent classical scholars as al-Mas'ūdī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Yāqūt, etc.

Al-Mas'ūdī acknowledges the excellence of the book by saying:

“And Kitāb al-Tārīkh (Book on History) of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, is also on the history of countries and their conquest by surrender or by force since the Hijra of the Prophet (peace be upon him) (that is) the story of the conquests in the Prophet's days and afterwards under the Caliphs. And as regards the history (Akhbār) in it, al-Balādhurī described the countries in the east, west, north and south, and we do not know any better work on the history of the conquests than his”.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Asākir describes him as 'the author of the history', and quotes information in his monumental work: *The History of Damascus* “تاريخ مدينة دمشق” on his authority. A few such examples are given below :—

(الف) ”و ذكر البلاذرى ان انطاكية المحترقة ببلاد الروم احرقها  
العباس بن الوليد ابن عبد الملك“ -

(Al-Balādhurī has described that Antioch in the land of the Romans, was burnt by ‘Abbās b. Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik).

(ب) ”و ذكر ابوبكر احمد بن يحيى بن جابر البلاذري  
عن المدائني : ان وظيفة دمشق التي وظيفها معاوية اربعة مائة  
الف دينار“ -

(And Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī on the authority of al-Madā’ini has told that the total amount assigned by (Amir) Mu‘āwiyah to Damascus as subsidy was 400,000 dinārs).

Ibn ‘Asākir, while giving an information about the banner of the ‘Arabs called ‘Uqāb says:

(ج) ”ذكر ابوبكر احمد بن يحيى البلاذري هذا المعنى ثم قال ،  
و قوم يقولون انها سميت بعقاب من الطير كانت ساقطه  
عليها“ -

(Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī after describing the matter in the same way said: Others say that it was thus called because an eagle (‘Uqāb) happened to descend on it that time).

Yāqūt has utilized the contents of al-Balādhurī’s Futūḥ al-Buldān freely for his Mu‘jam al-Buldān. The following few examples will prove the above fact:

Yāqūt, after giving a detailed account of Fadak, its history, and various viewpoints regarding this land and its ownership, relies on the authority of Al-Balādhurī, gives a lengthy quotation from the Futūḥ, and appreciates his account thus:

”و اصح ما ورد عندي في ذلك ما ذكره احمد بن جابر البلاذري  
في كتاب الفتوح له فانه قال : بعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم  
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(الى قوله) فلما استخلف جعفر المتوكل ردها الى ما كانت عليه“ -

(In this connection I consider the account given by Aḥmad b. Jābir in his book Kitāb al-Futūḥ, the most authentic and reliable. And he said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent

...

(to his words) Ja'far al-Mutawakkil, when he was installed as Caliph, he reversed the position of (Fadak) to that of ...)

While giving the details of Baṣra, its construction, expansion, colonization, and its surroundings, etc; Yāqūt again and again quotes al-Balādhurī,<sup>6</sup>

viz., (١) "و ذكر البلاذري : لما دخل المسلمون الابله - - -"

(And said al-Balādhurī: When the Muslims entered Uḅullah . . .).

(٢) "قال :حمد بن يحيى بن جابر - - -"

(And said Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir . . .)

Again while giving an account of Qunduhār ( قندهار ) he has not only relied on the information given by al-Balādhurī, but has copied it word for word from the Futūḥ.<sup>9</sup>

He quotes Futūḥ al-Buldān for the history and geography of Syria by saying (vol. xi, p. 280): "و في كتاب الفتوح -"

(And in the book: Kitāb al-Futūḥ)

Again he refers to al-Balādhurī in connection with history of the Bilāl canal of Baṣra, and says:

"قال البلاذري قال القحذمي - كان بلال بن ابي بردة فتح نهر معقل في فيض البصره" -

(Says al-Balādhurī on the authority of al-Qaḥḍhamī that Bilāl b. Abi Burdah connected the Ma'qil canal with the main course of Baṣra canal).

'Allāma Sakhāwī, the author of the celebrated work: I'lān describes

Futūḥ al-Buldān under the head: Geographical Works, and acknowledges its worth by saying:

“There are geographical works which give information about the countries, their outstanding features, and their conquest (by the Muslims), but, as a rule, do not have any biographies of the people of those countries. There are very many such works. Yāqūt, Mu‘jam al-Buldān, is the most substantial work of the type . . .

Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, on the history (akhbār) of the countries and their conquest by surrender or by force since the Hijrah, (that is), the story of the conquests in (Muḥammad’s) days and afterwards under the Caliphs. (Al-Balādhurī) described the countries in the east, west, north and south. Al-Mas‘udī said: ‘We know not better geographical work’.<sup>11</sup> This was, we must say, before Yāqūt’.<sup>12</sup>

De Goeje, who is credited with publishing and editing the very first edition of Futūḥ al-Buldān, in our times, says about the work in his introduction :—

“A German historian who has profited abundantly from his traditions says: ‘Al-Balādhurī has got a place among such historians as are conspicuous, for the critical investigation of their collected material, and in discriminating between the material worthwhile and otherwise’. I share in the good faith, the above historian has in al-Balādhurī, but in my opinion the above scholar has not done full justice to our author, for this book conveys such valuable and profound information about certain historical facts, as is not available elsewhere; especially the information relating to the numerous ancient cities of al-‘Irāq, whose marks and traces have been washed off by the time, and only a few mounds, etc. remain there to remind their glory. A helping factor to Al-Balādhurī, in describing such cities and numerous other useful things, was that he was a contemporary of many of

those persons, who had witnessed the cities in their full glory and bloom".<sup>13</sup>

De Goeje continues to say:

"If we try to evaluate the subject matter of the book and attempt a critical appreciation of the work, the words will definitely fail us. It is sufficient to say that the work is like a mirror, in which the real picture of the early Islamic Empire can be seen. The reader of the book feels that the founder of the Islamic Empire 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was the best leader and a true embodiment of the Islamic morals and elegance. Pious, humble of mind and spirit, frugal, kind to the weak and strong for the enemies of Islam, disliking avarice in others property as also pomp and show, he saved the urban population from the onslaughts of the Beduins, and protected the rights of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as against the nobles of Mecca. In addition to the above facts the reader comes to know through its study how the brave Arab warriors attacked the Roman and Persian territories, and how in spite of their illiteracy, etc., and ignorance about the principles of civilization and culture – a state in which they had been for a long period, they by dint of their valour, bravery and fighting skill removed all the hurdles from their way and were successful in achieving their only aim, the aim of preaching Islam and establishing the superiority of the Muslim Community."<sup>14</sup>

Professor Hitti, who has translated more than half of Futūḥ al-Buldān into English, says about the book, in his introduction to this translation:

"Of the works of al-Balādhurī the one that claims our special attention is Futūḥ al-Buldān. The book shares with other books of Arabic history the advantage of tracing the report back to the source. Being a synopsis of a larger work, its style is characterized by condensation whereby it gains in conciseness but loses in artistic effect and clearness. . . It.



is free from exaggeration and the flaws of imagination. Throughout the work the sincere attempt of the author to get to the fact as it happened and to record it as it reached him is felt. The chapters on colonization, soldier's pay, land tax, coinage and the like make it especially valuable".<sup>15</sup>

"A weak characteristic of Arabic historians is their utter disregard of the social side of national life. Political history to them is history par excellence. It should, however, be said, to the credit of al-Balādhurī, that while from a modern standpoint he is defective in that respect, still he stands superior to other historians".<sup>16</sup>

"Not only did later historians draw freely from al-Balādhurī but subsequent geographers used him extensively as a source. The remarkable work of Yāqūt, Mu'jam al-Buldān, reproduces a great part of the book. Muḳaddasi quotes him, and so al-Hamadhāni, and al-Mas'ūdī".

"The above-sketched attempt to view al-Balādhurī in his historic setting warrants the conclusion that the tradition recorded by him was mostly communicated to him by word of mouth and partly through books that have mostly been lost, and that it was a source of al-Mas'ūdī and Yāqūt, and through them for many subsequent Arabic historians and geographers".<sup>17</sup>

Professor D.S. Margoliouth, who wrote on Arabic historians, passes the following remarks about the author and the book, Futūḥ al-Buldān:

"A historian who has with justice acquired a high reputation, also belonging to this century, is Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Balādhurī, who died in 279. He was a courtier, quotes information given him by the Caliph Mutawakkil, and was appointed by Mu'tazz teacher of his son 'Abdallāh".

"Two historical works of his are in our hands. One Futūḥ al-Buldān, is a record of the Islamic conquests, wherein each

section usually gives some details as to the subsequent history of the country. The details are often, he tells us, gathered from local authorities: He visited the places and learned the ideas current on the spot with regard to the name of the conqueror, the mode of conquest, and subsequent events of importance. These details often include the allocation of districts to tribes, the transference of populations from one place to another, the foundations and completions of public monuments or works of utility, the source of particular names and other matters which it was important to commemorate. Besides obtaining this local information, which was no doubt trustworthy to a great extent, he also made use of the works of earlier researchers, such as Wāqidi through Muḥammad b. Sa'd, his secretary and the author of *Ṭabaqāt*. That some uncertainty prevailed on matters of importance, and considerable inexactitude in dates owing to the practice of oral communication is clear. Yet it should be admitted that the amount of this is less than would have been expected".<sup>18</sup>

C.H. Becker/Rosenthal, in their article on *Al-Balādhurī*, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, while critically appreciating his book on the Muslim conquests, observe:

“His *History of the Muslim Conquests (Futūḥ al-Buldān)* is the short version of a more comprehensive work on the same subject. The work begins with the wars of Muḥammad, followed by accounts of the ridda, the conquest of Syria, the Djazira, Armenia, Egypt, and the Maghrib, and lastly, the occupation of ‘Irāk and Persia.<sup>19</sup> Remarks of importance for the history of culture and social conditions are interwoven with the historical narrative, for instance, *al-Balādhurī* discusses the change from Greek and Persian to Arabic as the official Language in government offices, the quarrel with Byzantium concerning the use of Muslim religious formula at the head of letters originating in Egypt, questions of taxation, the use of signet-rings, coinage and currency, and

the history of Arabic script. The work, one of the most valuable sources for the history of the Arab conquests, was edited by M.J. De Goeje, *Liber . . .*, Leiden, 1863-66, and reprinted repeatedly later on . . . .”<sup>20</sup>

Some of the distinctive features of *Futūḥ al-Buldān* are as follows: –

1) The book is a concise, consolidated, well arranged and continuous history of the Muslim conquests, right from the Hijra of the Prophet (peace be upon him), down to al-Balādhurī’s own times. It was a very useful and important improvement on the general popular style of writing on the conquests, and marks the end of an era in which the composition of monographs on various aspects and topics concerning the Muslim conquests was the general form of historiography. The book was considered to be so comprehensive on the subject that the subsequent scholars of history thought it useless to write anymore on the above subject concerning the above period. This is evident from the fact that so far we do not know of any work of the above nature after al-Balādhurī.

The learned author of the article on History and Historiography, in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* observes:

“The leading historian of the Islamic wars, after Wāqidī, was the Persian al-Balādhurī (d. ca. 892), who was one of the first to integrate the many stories of the conquests of various cities and lands into one comprehensive whole . . . ., thus ending the era in which the monograph was the typical form of historical composition”.<sup>21</sup>

Professor Hitti agrees with our above claim by saying:

“Some books were issued treating of the conquest of one city, most of which books have been lost. Given a number of books on the conquest of different cities, the next step would be to compile them into one whole. That step was taken by al-Balādhurī – the last great historian of Moslem campaigns”.<sup>22</sup>

2) The work is very authentic and reliable source of Islamic History. Author's choice of the traditions is very sound and happy. The sincere and utmost effort of the historian to convey an accurate, reliable and authentic information is felt throughout the work. He is very careful in the investigation of his collected material and in placing it at its proper place. He is also careful in affixing an isnād (Chain) to the matter reported. Where his store of authorities fails him he uses the words "It is said", or "They said", etc., even by that he means that every effort has been made to know the actual fact.

De Goeje appreciates this aspect of the author and the book and says:

"It is evident from the most of his traditions that he left no stone unturned to check the reliability, authenticity and soundness of his traditions. He did not consider it sufficient to quote his information on the authority of the most eminent and reliable scholars of Baghdad, rather he, in order to check its authenticity and to make further investigations and to arrive at the truth, undertook long and tiresome journeys and crossed the seas. Ibn al-Nadīm says: 'that he travelled through all the cities of Northern Syria, from there he went through the cities of al-Jazira (Mesopotamia), and also visited Tikrit'. The purpose of these journeys was, that the traditions he had collected from the scholars of Baghdad might be compared with those of the inhabitants of various regions, as had preserved such traditions."<sup>23</sup>

About the sources of al-Balādhurī, Professor Hitti makes the following observations:

"That in most cases the same tradition that underlies the life of Muḥammad according to ibn-Hishām is made use of by al-Balādhurī in the first chapters of his Futūḥ is made evident by a comparison of the chapters on the banu-an-Nadīr, Khaibar and Tabūk. Al-Balādhurī makes no mention of ibn-Hishām but quotes ibn-Ishāq eleven times. The isnād in Balādhurī being longer, it might be conjectured that he did not get his material at first hand from ibn-Ishāq's work but

through subsequent reporters. Al-Madā'ini lived from 135-215 (753-830). He wrote a "History of the Caliphs" and a book of "Campaigns", both of which are lost and are known only by excerpts through al-Balādhurī, at-Ṭabarī and Yaḳūt, of these, al-Balādhurī alone has over forty citations from him.

Al-Wāḳidi (d. 207/823) wrote 28 books recorded in al-Fihrist, only a few of which have come down to us. Having lived at Baghdād his works were certainly accessible to al-Balādhurī, who quotes him on 80 different occasions and more than any other source. Most of the quotations are made through ibn Sa'd, the secretary of al-Wāḳidi, and one of al-Balādhurī's teachers. A comparison between the campaigns against banu-an-Naḍir and banu-Ḳuraizah in al-Balādhurī, and the corresponding ones in al-Wāḳidi's Kitāb al-Maghāzi, shows many points of contact but no absolute interdependence.

Ibn Sa'd (d. 230) being the disciple of al-Wāḳidi and the professor of al-Balādhurī acted as a connecting link between the two. In his Futūḥ, al-Balādhurī has 48 citations from him, many of which were communicated by word of mouth and were recorded verbatim by al-Balādhurī. In his book at-Ṭabaḳāt (the Book of Classes), many striking similarities to the Tradition of al-Balādhurī are noticed.

Ad-Dīnawari (d. 282/896) was another contemporary of al-Balādhurī. He wrote a number of books of which only one of importance has come down to us, i.e., al-Akḥbār at-Ṭiwāl. Contrary to al-Balādhurī, al-'Irāḳ tradition is the basis of his work. It is probable that neither of the two authors was familiar with the work of the other.

In addition to these, al-Balādhurī quotes many other authorities of whom the most favourite ones are: Ḥammād ibn-Salamah, Bakr ibn-al-Haitham, 'Amir ash-Sha'bi, Sufyān ibn-

Sa'id ath Thauri, 'Amr ibn-Muhammad an-Nāḳid and Hishām ibn-al-Kalbi, most of whose works, are either unknown to us or have entirely disappeared."<sup>24</sup>

3) The author is very particular in affixing exact dates to the important events and is careful to take a decision after comparing the different versions, where such a situation arises. For instance, about the date of conquest of Damascus he says:

"According to al-Wāḳidi, the conquest of Damascus was affected in Rajab, year 14, but the date which Khālid's statement of capitulation bears was Rabī' II, year 15. The explanation is that Khālid wrote the statement with no date, but when the Moslems were preparing to set out against those gathered for their fight in al-Yarmūk, the bishop came to Khālid asking him to renew the statement and add as witness abū 'Ubaidah and the Moslems, Khālid granted the request and inserted the names of abū 'Ubaidah, Yazid ibn-abi-Sufyān, Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah and others as witnesses. The date he put was the one in which the statement was renewed".<sup>25</sup>

4) It goes to the credit of Futūḥ al-Buldān, that it also describes certain aspects of the social and cultural life of the Muslims, thus making itself unique according to the modern standpoint of History. The chapters concerning the colonization of Kūfah, Baṣrah, Baghdād, Wāsiṭ, etc., introduction of Arabic as the language of state-registers, the affair of Qarāṭīs, Makkah, its wells and floods, the laws of kharāj lands, the history of 'Aṭā in the caliphate of Ḥadṛat 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the seal, the coinage, and the calligraphy and script, etc., are very important in this connection.

About the affair of Qarāṭīs al-Balādhurī informs us:

"The Greeks used to get the ḳarāṭīs (Rolls of papyrus for writing; also cloth of Egyptian fabric used for carrying vases or clothes), from Egypt, and the Arabs used to get the dinārs from the Greeks. 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān was the first to

inscribe on the upper part of these fabrics such phrases as “Declare: Allāh is one!”, and others with the name of Allāh. One day, he received from the Byzantine King a message, saying:

“You have recently introduced upon your Ḳarāṭīs some inscription that we hate. If you leave that out well and good; otherwise, you shall see on the dinārs the name of your Prophet associated with things you hate”. This was too much for ‘Abd al-Malik, who hated to abolish a worthy law that he had established. He thereupon sent for Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah and said to him, “O Abū-Hāshim! It is a calamity!” Khālid replied, “Be free from your fright, ‘Commander of the Believers’; declare the use of their dīnārs illegal; strike new coinage in place of them, and let not these infidels be free, from what they hate to see on the fabrics”. “Thou hast eased my mind”, said ‘Abd-al-Malik, “may Allāh give thee ease!” He then struck the dīnārs.

According to ‘Awānah ibn-al-Ḥakam, the Copts used to inscribe the word “Christ” at the top part of the Ḳarāṭīs, and to ascribe divinity to him (may Allāh be highly exalted above that!); and they used to put the sign of the cross in place of ‘In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful’. That is why the Byzantine king was disgusted and his anger was aroused with the change that ‘Abd-al-Malik introduced.

According to al-Madā’ini, it was stated by Maslamah ibn-Muḥarib that Khālid ibn-Yazīd advised ‘Abd-al-Malik to declare the use of Greek dīnārs illegal, to prohibit their circulation and to stop the sending of the Ḳarāṭīs to the Byzantine empire. Accordingly, no Ḳarāṭīs were carried there for some time.<sup>26</sup>

In a long chapter devoted to the founding and colonization of Kūfah,

and other relevant information regarding it al-Balādhurī says:

“Muḥammad ibn Sa’d from ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd ibn Ja’far and others:— ‘Umar ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb wrote to Sa’d ibn-abi-Waqqās ordering him to adopt for the Moslems a place to which they could emigrate, and which they could use as a meeting place (ḳairawān), provided that between him (‘Umar) and the Moslems, no sea should intervene. Accordingly, Sa’d came to al-Anbār with the idea of occupying it. Here, however, flies were so numerous, that Sa’d had to move to another place, which proved to be unsatisfactory, and therefore he moved to al-Kūfah which he divided into lots, giving the houses as fiefs and settling the different tribes in their quarters. He also erected its mosque. All this took place in the year 17 . . .

Then ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Buḳailah presented himself before Sa’d and said to him:

“I can point out to thee site which is outside the waterless desert, and higher than the muddy places where mosquitoes abound”. Saying this, he pointed out the site of al-Kūfah which was then called Suristān. When Sa’d arrived on the spot destined to be the site of the mosque, a man shot, by his orders, an arrow towards the ḳiblah, another, towards the north, another to the south, a fourth to the east and marked the spots where the arrows fell. Sa’d then established the mosque and the governor’s residence on the spot where the man who shot the arrows had stood, fencing in all the space around the spot. He then drew lots with two arrows between the tribe of Nizār and the tribes of al-Yaman, promising the left side, which was the better of the two, to the one whose arrow was drawn first. The people of al-Yaman had their first; and they were, therefore, allotted the pieces on the east side. The pieces allotted to the Nizār fell on the west side beyond the boundaries fixed for the mosque,



leaving what was fenced in within the marks for the mosque and the governor's residence. Later, al-Mughirah ibn-Shu'bah enlarged the mosque; and Ziyād (ibn-Abihi) rebuilt it strongly and rebuilt the governor's residence. Ziyād often repeated, "On every one of the pillars of the mosque at al-Kūfah, I spent 1,800 (dirhams)". Another building was established by 'Amr ibn-Huraiṭh al-Makhzūmi, whom Ziyād used to leave in his place over al-Kūfah whenever he absented himself in al-Baṣrah—Ziyād's agents erected many buildings which made the place crowded and thickly set. . . . Wahb ibn-Bakiyah-l-Wāsiṭi from ash-Sha'bi: The latter said:

"We (the Yamanites) were 12,000 men; the Nizār were 8,000 from which you can easily see that we constituted the majority of the settlers of al-Kūfah. Our arrow went to the east side of the mosque. That is why we hold the pieces we now hold". (Futūḥ, Eng. Tr. pp. 435-436).

In the chapter dealing with the Marsh Lands (Al-Batā'ih) al-Balādhurī throws light on the reclamation of new lands by Maslamah thus:

"Abū-Mas'ūd from 'Awānah: — In the days of al-Ḥajjāj, new breaches were made. Al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Walīd ibn-'Abd-al-Malik stating that he estimated that 3,000,000 dirhams would be required for blocking them. Al-Walīd thought that too much. Maslamah ibn 'Abd-al-Malik said to al-Walīd, "I offer to pay the expenses provided thou givest me as fief the depressed tracts in which the water remains, after spending 3,000,000 dirhams, which sum shall be spent under the direct supervision of thy counsellor and trusted man, al-Ḥajjāj". Al-Walīd accepted the offer. Maslamah gained possession of lands that had many cantons close together. He dug as-Sībain and induced the farmers and tenants to come and hold land. Thus the land flourished; and in order to secure protection, many landowners voluntarily turned their farms over to him, and then held them from him as

fief. When the “blessed dynasty” came and the possessions of banū-Umayyah were confiscated all as-Sībain was assigned as fief to Dā‘ūd ibn-‘Ali ibn-‘Abdallah ibn-al-‘Abbās, from whose heirs it was bought with its rights and boundaries and was included in the crown-domains.”<sup>27</sup>

Al-Balādhurī describes the Consultative Committee of the Caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and its functions thus:

“‘Amr an-Nāḳid from Ja‘far ibn-Muḥammad’s father:— The Emigrants had a sitting place in the mosque in which ‘Umar used to discuss with them the news he received from the different regions. One day he said, “I know not how to treat the Magians”; upon which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn-‘Auf rose and said, “I bear witness that the Prophet said, ‘Treat them according to the same law with which ye treat the People of the Book’”.<sup>28</sup>

“Al-Ḥusain ibn-al-Aswad from Hārithah ibn-Mudarrīb:— ‘Umar ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb, desiring to divide as-Sawād among the Moslems, ordered that they be counted. Each Moslem had three peasants for his share. ‘Umar took the advice of the Prophet’s Companions, and ‘Ali said, “Leave them that they may become a source of revenue and aid for Moslems”. Accordingly, ‘Umar sent ‘Uṭhmān ibn-Ḥunaif al-Anṣārī who assessed on each man 48, 24 or 12 (dirhams)”.<sup>29</sup>

About the change of language from Persian into Arabic in Persia and ‘Irāq, etc., al-Balādhurī informs us as follows:—

“Al-Madā’ini ‘Ali ibn-Muḥammad ibn-abi-Saif from his Sheikhs:

“Persian was the language of the register of the kharāj of as-Sawād and the rest of al-‘Irāq. When al-Ḥajjāj became ruler of al-‘Irāq he chose Zādān Farrūkh ibn-Yabra for secretary,

and the latter was assisted by Ṣāliḥ ibn-‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, a freedman of the banu-Tamim, who knew both Arabic and Persian. Ṣāliḥ’s father was one of the captives of Sijistān. Through Zādān Farrūkh, Ṣāliḥ was acquainted with al-Ḥajjāj, who found him acceptable. One day Ṣāliḥ said to Zādān, “Thou art the means by which I became acquainted with the governor; and I see that he has found me acceptable. I, therefore, do not wonder if he should promote me over thee, in which case thou wouldst fall”. “Never believe that”, answered Zādān; “he has more use for me than I for him, because none but myself can be found to keep his books”. “By Allah”, retorted Ṣāliḥ, “If thou so desire I could change the accounts into Arabic”. “Try a part of it”, said Zādān, “and I will see”. Ṣāliḥ having done that, Zādān asked him to feign illness, which he did. Al-Ḥajjāj sent his own physician, but found nothing wrong with Ṣāliḥ. Hearing that, Zādān ordered him to appear.

“In the days of ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn-Muḥammad ibn-Ash‘ath al-Kindi, Zādān Farrūkh was killed on his way from some house to his own home, or some other man’s house. Thereupon, al-Ḥajjāj made Ṣāliḥ secretary in the place of Zādān. Ṣāliḥ reported to al-Ḥajjāj the conversation that took place between him and Zādān relative to the change of the language of the register. Al-Ḥajjāj immediately made up his mind to adopt Arabic as the language of the register and charged Ṣāliḥ with the task. Mardānshah ibn-Farrūkh asked Ṣāliḥ “What wouldst thou do with dahwiyah and Shashwiyah?” To this, Ṣāliḥ replied, “I shall use instead ‘Ushr (tenth) and Nuṣf ‘ushr (half-tenth)”. “And what about wid?”—“I shall use aidān” (wid means excess). Hearing that, Mardānshah said, “May God efface thy trace from the world as thou hast effaced the trace of the Persian”. “Ṣāliḥ was later offered 100,000 dirhams in order to show that it was impossible to change the language of the register and to refrain from doing it; but he refused and carried out the plan. ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā,

the secretary of Marwān ibn-Muḥammad used to say, “Great is Ṣāliḥ, and great is the favour he has bestowed upon ‘the secretaries!’”

“ ‘Umar ibn-Shabbah from Sahl ibn-abi-as-Ṣalt:— Al-Ḥajjāj assigned for Ṣāliḥ ibn-‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān a certain period in which to change the language of the register”.<sup>30</sup>

5) The language of the book is decent, polished and dignified. Even the Orientalist like Professor Hitti appreciates this aspect of the book by saying:—

“One might also add that Arabic historians were not very sensitive on the question of indecency of language. In general the language of Futūḥ is clean, with the exception of the case of al-Mughirah, the governor of al-Baṣrah under ‘Umar”.<sup>31</sup>

6) The use of poetry as a vehicle of historical information is avoided as far as possible. The rare instances in which the author has quoted a few verses are mostly such incidents as have left indelible effects on the minds of the people in general. For instance to paint a gloomy picture of the sad end of Muḥammad b. Qāsim, the conqueror of Sind, al-Balādhurī quotes the verses of Muḥammad b. Qāsim and others. A few are given below:—

“They have wasted and lost me—a young man who was a brave warrior and the protector of the frontiers . . . . ‘If I have been imprisoned in chains in Wāsiṭ it does not harm my reputation, for I am the same man who has made the best riders and warriors to sleep in the bed of death’. . . ‘Had I wished to fight back, I would have easily gathered around myself numerous horsemen, then it would not have been possible for the Sukasik to enter our territory, and none from the family of ‘Akk would have been my ruler, and I would not have been subservient to a mean person. Woe to thee O world! How deceitful are you to the nobles”.<sup>32</sup>

7) As it has been pointed out already that the book is also a valuable store-house of geographical information, so much so that great Yāqūt has reproduced a large part of Futūh al-Buldān in his Mu‘jam al-Buldān.<sup>33</sup>

8) Another characteristic of the book is that it also contains such information as is not available in any other source. De. Goeje says:—

“... for this book conveys such valuable and profound information about certain historical facts, as is not available elsewhere; especially the information relating to the numerous ancient cities of al-‘Irāq, whose marks and traces have been washed off by the time . . . .”<sup>34</sup>

## A CRITICAL STUDY OF ANSĀB AL-ASHRĀF

Al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashraf* is a comprehensive, reliable and very useful source of Islamic History. The work, which is larger than the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd and slightly smaller than the history of Ṭabari is a continuous, authentic and well connected history of the Prophet (peace be upon him), containing also the history of the four pious Caliphs, all the Umayyad Caliphs, and the first two 'Abbāsīd Caliphs, described at various places according to the genealogical plan. The book is a mixture of genealogy, biography, general history, activities of the various sects, Hadith, poetry, literature, etc. The form of the book is genealogical, and perhaps we are justified in saying that genealogical form of writing history has seen completion in the above work of al-Balādhurī.

Dr. Goitein, who edited the V volume of *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, observes:

“The framework of the book, as we have seen, is genealogical. This method was not new, for genealogical lore was, it seems, the first of the historical disciplines to be put in writing by the 'Arabs . . . . Two generations before Balādhurī, Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbi (d. about 204/6-819/22) compiled, for this branch of knowledge, a great compendium, which aroused the admiration of later ages, the *Djamharat al-Ansāb*, book which according to . . . is not merely genealogical, but also biographical. Hishām b. al-Kalbī, with his son 'Abbās as intermediate link, was one of the principal authorities of Balādhurī (see the Index). Al-Kalbi's book was taken as a model by Ibn 'Abda and others, even before the time of Balādhurī, (cf. *Fihrist* . . . .). Mus'ab az-Zubairi and 'Umar b. Shabba, the teachers of Balādhurī . . . also wrote genealogical works.

“However, the immediate model for the great work of Balādhurī was perhaps the *كتاب تاريخ الاشراف* of al-Haitham b. 'Adi, who, like al-Kalbi, died in the first decade of the third century of the Hidjra; . . . The title of al-Haitham's book,

which is the same as that given to Balādhurī's work by the author of ash-Shafī (198 last line), leads us to think that al-Haitham, like al-Balādhurī, included much historical material. As a matter of fact, al-Haitham was a very important source for al-Balādhurī, though somewhat less important than Ibn al-Kalbī (see the Index).

“But the *Ansāb* is not merely a genealogical and biographical record. It provides within the biographies of the Caliphs a continuous account of the history of their times, even in those matters in which the Caliph himself was entirely outside the story (as for instance, in this volume, in the long chapter on al-Mukhtār). A comparison with the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd proves that this procedure is quite unexpected in a book of biographies. Ibn Sa'd, too, introduces part of the history of the time in the biographies of the Caliphs, but as a rule only so far as this history concerns them personally.

“In this matter, no doubt the model for Balādhurī was al-Madā'inī who wrote a history of the Caliphs from Abū Bakr to al-Mu'taṣim . . . Al-Madā'inī is quoted 163 times in the present volume, that is, much more than any other writer, and frequently he is the authority not only for brief reports but also for narratives more or less continuous. In eight instances only, al-Madā'inī is introduced with *حدثنى* i.e. 'he told me', and as a matter of fact Balādhurī heard the lectures of al-Madā'inī as a young man, according to *Learned Men* 2, 127 . . . Since however all the numerous other quotations are cited without any introduction other than the name of al-Madā'inī or are merely prefaced by *قال*, we may assume that Balādhurī received his information primarily not through al-Madā'inī's lectures but as a rule through his writings.

“We now come to a difficult problem. Balādhurī was persona grata to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs Mutawakkil, Mustā'in and

Mu'tazz: he reports information which he received from members of this family, including even the Caliph Mutawakkil himself, Futūḥ 146 . . . The question arises: What induced Balādhurī to expatiate to such an extent on Ummayyad history, and on the other hand, to break off his historical narrative at the reign of al-Manṣūr, the second 'Abbāsīd Caliph (see above)? Al-Madā'inī and other previous historians had continued the story of the 'Abbāsīds to a period that falls within Balādhurī's lifetime. It seems to me that his curious point is to be explained by the general character of the book. In the genealogical and biographical sections the nucleus of the material belongs to the period of Djāhiliyya, the early days of Islām and the Umayyads, while hardly anything in those sections comes from the 'Abbāsīd period. It is possible that this historiographic peculiarity reflects a real historical fact. Above we alluded to the extensive use of the records of the dīwān's made in the genealogical list. In the 'Abbāsīd period the Ashraf very quickly ceased to be recipients of government grants, because they were no longer the chief holders of military posts. At all events it appears that Balādhurī was wise in not continuing his historical exposition beyond the time of al-Manṣūr, for thus the historical part of his book was able to correspond with the genealogical".<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq is of the opinion that al-Balādhurī composed the above work in accordance with the style of Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa'd, who was also his teacher, and al-Balādhurī kept this work before him.<sup>36</sup> But Dr. Goitein does not agree with Dr. Fāriq. He discusses the relationship of Ansāb with Ṭabaqāt literature including the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa'd as follows:—

“In conclusion, we must consider the relation between the Ansāb and that great class of literature that is also based on biography, i.e. the ṭabaqāt, the stories of the Companions of Muḥammad and of the successive generations of their



disciples. The ṭabaqāt books, it must be remembered are distinct as a branch of literature only in respect to the arrangements of the material; the classification in them follows a line of spiritual relationship, just as the ansāb—books are arranged in accordance with the actual family tree. The guiding principle in the ṭabaqāt books is Islamic, whereas the ansāb—albeit that they entailed the religious valuation of the nobility of Muḥammad, his family and his tribe Quraish—are dominated by the idea of Arab aristocracy. But in regard to the expository method there is no difference between the two (except where this is conditioned by the difference in theme). The ‘Einzelnitz’ is not peculiar to the ṭabaqāt, as was assumed by C.H. Becker . . . ; it is a dominant factor in the whole of Arabic biographical literature. I do not wish to imply that the ancient Arabs were incapable of depicting the character of a man in a coherent form. On the contrary, they created very fine characterizations, but chiefly in historical narrative when they described a man in connexion with his deeds. *Balādhurī is thus not dependent on ṭabaqāt literature for the method of his composition*, and as a source of material the ṭabaqāt rank as of secondary or even lesser importance. We must now deal with the attitude of Balādhurī to the two great representatives of this class of literature, Ibn Sa’d and Wāqidi.

“The only book that Balādhurī mentions specifically by name—and that, so far as I know, only once—is the Ṭabaqāt of his elder contemporary Ibn Sa’d. Nevertheless we must assume that as a general rule, whenever Balādhurī quotes Ibn Sa’d the source is not the Ṭabaqāt, but Ibn Sa’d’s own words, dictated by Ibn Sa’d himself. Firstly, Ibn Sa’d almost in every instance is mentioned in conjunction with *حدثني* ‘he told me’, and, as stated above, Balādhurī was in the habit of using the formula of isnād with precision. Secondly, to take one example, the subject matter of the biography of ‘Uthmān contained in this volume is arranged in an order different

from that of the Ṭabaqāt; and to clinch the argument, this biography includes many traditions on the authority of Ibn Sa'd that do not appear in the printed edition of the Ṭabaqāt . . . . “Six-sevenths of the traditions of Ibn Sa'd quoted in this volume are taken from Wāqidi. We may therefore discuss both of them at one and the same time.

“Apart from al-Madā'inī, Wāqidī is the authority who is quoted most often in this volume; he is mentioned 126 times, but most of the quotations consist of short notices. He is a basic authority for Balādhurī's narrative only in two episodes, the history of 'Uthmān and his family, 1-121, and the death of 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair, 355-374; that is to say in the two chapters of this volume in which the scene of action is Hidjāz, the birth place and home of Wāqidi. Apart from this, Wāqidi is only mentioned in six isolated notes in the history of Marwān and his family, and in a note on 'Abdallāh b. abī Farwa 280.

“In the biography of 'Uthmān most of the information reported on the authority of Wāqidi was obtained by Balādhurī from Ibn Sa'd; but in the chapter on 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair, less than a third of Wāqidi's material reached him through Ibn Sa'd. More than 40 passages are prefaced by the words قال الواقدي without further explanation; which means that we are to assume that Balādhurī also used Wāqidi's writings. Very few, indeed, of these passages are found in the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa'd, for instance . . . . Perhaps we may assume that these passages are taken from the Tārīkh of Wāqidi, and not from his Ṭabaqāt. . . . “On the other hand, in the section dealing with the downfall of 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair it seems that Balādhurī's main source was neither of these books, but a third work of Wāqidi, entitled اخبار مكة , the chronicle of Mecca . . . . A convincing argument for this assertion is, I think, the fact that in the whole of the long chapter on 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair in this volume, 188 sq;

Wāqidi is not quoted once, except in the section on the siege of Mecca and the profanation of the Ka'ba by al-Ḥadjdadj, where he is one of the chief authorities. Moreover, Ibn Sa'd, in so far as his Ṭabaqāt is concerned, appears as an intermediary only in a small number of cases in connection with the story of the siege of Mecca, . . . Besides, in the major part of Wāqidi's reports in this section, a marked interest in the fortunes of the holy city is exhibited. In general, I am left with the impression that much of the special information regarding other cities, as Medina, Kūfa and Baṣra, is likewise obtained from 'chronicles' of these towns. For example, the whole chapter entitled *عمال ابن الزبير* 273 sq. and especially the first part of it, might have been drawn up on the basis of a work of this nature, cf. e.g. Fihrist 112, *كتاب امرأ الكوفد* of 'Umar b. Shabba, who is named in this chapter, p. 273, as one of Balādhurī's authorities".<sup>37</sup>

Describing another distinctive feature of the book Dr. Goitein says:

"A system of genealogy has special advantages for the history of the Arabs. For example, it is of some relevance that in this volume, immediately after the caliphate of 'Uthmān, we find the account of 'Uthmān's family and especially of the rise of the Marwānids. The rise to power of the Marwānids only occurred some thirty years after 'Uthmān's death, but was due to a considerable extent, to the part played by Marwān during 'Uthmān's caliphate. Such literary continuity mirrors faithfully the historical sequence. Again, before describing the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, Balādhurī gives us the extremely interesting story of this family before its rise to power, in a chapter which is of considerable length. Another instance is the chapter which gathers together the unsuccessful attempts of the 'Alids to assume the caliphate, which extended over generations".<sup>38</sup>

Throwing light on the origin, development and usefulness, etc., of the genealogical form of writing history, says Rosenthal:—

"During the first two centuries of Islam, the old importance

of family relationships in the social organization of Arabian life was maintained, if not augmented. Quraṣite or Hāṣimite and ‘Alid descent, or the descent from members of the old guard of Islam, constituted nobility in Islam and opened the door to all positions of leadership. Thus a fertile field of practical usefulness was opened for those learned in genealogical lore. During the eighth and ninth centuries, the antiquarian–historian–philologists were at the same time also genealogists. Their works were ḵabār-style collections of the deeds of the various members of tribal groups. A partly preserved example is the famous Nasāb Qurays by az-Zubayr b. Bakkār; like an earlier work of Abū ‘Ubaidah Ma‘mar b. al-Muṭannā, it was more concerned with the good qualities and virtues of the Quraṣites than their relationships. Since the members of the leading families were at the same time also the leaders of political life, the extension of genealogy to history was easily done. On a large scale, the genealogical principle of writing history was applied by al-Balādhurī to his Kitāb al-ansāb. The tribal and family affiliations of historical personalities are its basic principle arrangement, even though it is dominated by the biographies of the caliphs. Its form is that of Ḵabar and dynastic historiography”.<sup>39</sup>

At another place he elaborates the above point by saying:

“The practical importance of genealogy has already been stressed. The political interest in the Quraṣites, the sectarian interest in the family of ‘Ali, the antiquarian interest in the Arab tribes, the pride of rulers and distinguished men in their ancestors, all this never ceased, and was instrumental in the production of a good number of books on those subjects at all times . . . “On a large scale, as it has been stated, genealogy influenced historical writing in the Ansāb work of al-Balādhurī, whose contents was exploited by later historians such as Ibn al-Aṭir in his Kāmil, and in the genealogical literature of western Islam”.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. M. Ḥamīdullāh, who has edited the first volume of *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, considers the book such a unique source of Islamic history, as can serve as a storehouse of such information hitherto not known through sources like Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa'd, etc. He says:

”وما يجدر بالذكر ان بعض الاقتباسات من ابن سعد و ابن اسحاق لا توجد في كتاب الطبقات و كتاب سيرة رسول الله لابن هشام المطبوعين - و من المعروف انه ، لم توجد نسخة كتاب الطبقات كامله لدى ناشره - فكتاب البلاذري هذا مصدر لتكميل ما لم يصل الينا من تلك الكتب“ -

(It is quite appropriate to mention that some of the quotations (given in the *Ansāb*) from Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ishāq, are not to be found in the published works—*Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* and *Kitāb Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* of Ibn Hishām, and it is well-known that a complete copy of *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* is not available with the publishers. So this book of *al-Balādhurī* is a source of completion for such information, as has not reached us through these books).

In addition to the above merits of the book the following are a few more chief characteristics of *Ansāb al-Ashraf*:

1. The *Ansāb* is not merely a genealogical and biographical record; it provides within the biographies of the Caliphs a continuous account of the history of their times, even in those matters in which the Caliph himself was outside the story.
2. The book deals not only with the political and biographical details of important personalities, but also imparts light on the lives, literary pursuits and achievements of men of learning, as also on the lives and achievements of the judges, the secretaries, the wise men, the religious leaders, the warriors and the poets etc. Thus there are extensive biographies of the early

religious leaders like ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar and Sufyān al-Thaurī, etc., of the warriors like Khālid b. al-Walīd, Abū ‘Ubaidah b. al-Jarrāh, Sa‘d b. Abi Waqqās, Nu‘mān b. Muqarrin, and Qutaibah b. Muslim, etc; of the poets like Farazdaq and Jarīr, of an authority on proverbs like Aktham b. Ṣaifi, of distinguished judge like Iyās, b. Mu‘āwiyah, and of men like Sa‘id b. al-Musayyib, Abu’l-Aswad al-Du‘alī, Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ and Abu Ayyūb al-Muriyāni, etc.

3. The work has immense value as regards the history of the Kharijites and their literary pursuits are concerned. It is definite that upto this time no other known source of Islamic history has preserved such an extensive information regarding the above sect, as has been preserved by *Ansāb al-Ashraf*. Throughout the account of the Umayyad Caliphs, we find detailed chapters devoted to the Kharijites.

Dr. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq says:—

“The *Ansāb* is unique in the matter of preservation of the poetry of the Khārijites, and no other source of Islamic history has collected such a detailed information in this connection”.<sup>42</sup>

4. It is a wonderful treasure and store-house of Arabic Poetry. Al-Balādhurī has freely utilized poetry as a vehicle of historical information. Dr. Goitein says in this connection:—

“In accordance with a characteristic of early Arab historiography—and in contrast to the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa‘d,—verses are quoted in the *Ansāb* in abundant measure, more so than in *Ṭabari*; the latter as a rule cites long poems, while *Balādhurī* generally prefers

shorter fragments. Any one who is familiar with ancient Arabic literature does not need to be told that most of the verses found in the *Ansāb* are known to us from other sources. Nevertheless this volume (i.e. V) alone contains about 400 lines that I was unable to trace elsewhere, including verses of famous poets like Farazdaq, A'sha-Hamdān, Kuthayyir, and of many poets not hitherto known to us. Special attention might be drawn to a long political satire of 'Abdallāh b. az-Zubair . . . . From the ancient commentary attached to it we may discover, among other things, the districts into which 'Irāq was divided at that early period. When the *Ansāb* is completely published, it will be clear that this work represents one of the richest collections of ancient Arabic poetry".<sup>43</sup>

5. The influence of the Science of Tradition is seen throughout the Work. The author is very careful and particular in affixing a chain of authorities (*isnād*) to the text. Even where he introduces his narrative with the words "it is said", "they said", or "he said", he means by it that information had been collected by dependable authorities and investigation had been made to check the traditions.
6. The sincere effort of the author to convey reliable information is felt throughout.
7. In the matter of affixing the most reliable and exact dates to the important events, the author makes all possible efforts. The following quotation from Dr. Goitein will be noted with interest:—

"Moreover, it should be noted that whenever *Balādhurī* mentions events of any significance, he always adds the exact dates (in this volume alone he does this more than

seventy times), and explains the inconsistent traditions, regarding them. De Goeje Z.D.M.G. 38, 393 and Levi Della Vida, R.S.O. 6,492 many years ago pointed out that sometimes the exact date even of an event of prime importance like the battle of Ṣiffīn is known to us only through the Ansāb, and Wellhausen, almost on every page of his book 'Das Arabische Reich', quotes the dates given in the Ansāb in the appropriate sections—in so far as they were known to him from the part published by Ahlwardt".<sup>44</sup>

8. The author is objective and impartial in the matter of reporting the historical information. This appreciable quality of the author and of the above book is so conspicuous that Dr. Goitein is constrained to suggest the Orientalists to modify the generally accepted view that history of the Umayyads, under the 'Abbāsīd court, was presented badly or misrepresented.

He says:

"Let us now take up another question, which is bound up with the preceding, namely: How was it possible for Balādhurī, a member of the entourage of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs, to describe the Umayyads not only at such length, but also with perfect objectivity, or as appears from certain pages, even with sympathy? Prof. D.S. Margoliouth in his small but very instructive book on Arab historians (p. 16) points out that Arab historiography was remarkably objective because the historians enjoyed a position of financial independence. However, Balādhurī was no landed proprietor like Ṭabari, for instance, but a court official, and he came of a family of officials of the Caliphs. It seems that we should modify to some extent the generally accepted view that Umayyad history, under the influence of the 'Abbāsīd court, was presented badly or misrepresented. Doubtless



some such distortion occurred, though, to a much lesser extent than common opinion would have us believe. Even in the early tales of the Ayyām al-'Arab it was the custom to ignore the enemy's prowess, as in a game one might be interested in the achievements of the other side. We are left with the impression that the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs saw in stories about men like Mu'āwiya, 'Abd al-Malik, and Hishām, not so much the glorification of a rival dynasty—there were still Umayyads in Spain—, as useful precedents in the art of state administration and the conduct of majesty. Moreover, the influence of the literary tradition makes itself felt also in this matter. It has already been pointed out that al-Madā'inī is a principal source for Balādhurī in the history of the Caliphs. Most of what al-Madā'inī reports, is taken from 'Awāna according to Yāqūt, Learned Men . . . , who also states that 'Awāna, wrote in the interest of the Umayyads. Margoliouth (p. 53) proved the truth of this assertion on the basis of citations of 'Awāna that are found in the part of the Ansāb edited by Ahlwardt".<sup>45</sup>

We may conclude our discussion about Ansāb al-Ashraf with the following words of Dr. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq, taken from his lengthy and very useful article namely, 'Balādhurī Kī Ansāb alAshraf:

”کتاب کی چند بنیادی حیثیتیں . . . کتاب کا اکثر حصہ مطبوعہ تاریخوں کی معرفت ہم تک پہنچ چکا ہے۔ کم حصہ اچھوتا اور نیا ہے لیکن کم ہونے کے باوجود یہ حصہ بہت قیمتی ہے۔ اس کو پڑھ کر اسلام کی تاریخی شخصیات کے بارے میں مسلمہ نظریات و آرا میں ترمیم و اصلاح کی ضرورت محسوس ہونے لگتی ہے۔ کتاب میں خلافت راشدہ اور بنو امیہ کی تاریخ کے بہت سے اجمال کی تفصیل موجود ہے۔“

تاریخ کے دہائے جہاں جہاں ٹوٹ گئے ہیں یا الجھ گئے ہیں ان کو جوڑنے اور سلجھانے میں اس کتاب سے مدد ملتی ہے“<sup>46</sup>۔

(Chief characteristics of the book: Though a large portion of the contents of the book has already reached us through other printed sources yet, that small portion which is quite new and rare, is very valuable, and through its study need of reconstruction or modification of the general established views about the great personalities of Islām, is felt.

There is a lot of additional information in the book regarding the history of the pious Caliphs and the Umayyads.

Moreover, the work is a connecting link between the broken threads of history, and is helpful in solving the historical intricacies).

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## HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

After critically appreciating his *Futūḥ al-Buldān* and *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, it is now quite proper to evaluate al-Balādhurī as a historian. It goes to the credit of al-Balādhurī that two very important forms of Arabic historiography namely, 'The Conquests', and 'Genealogy', saw, completion in his person. We are justified in saying in the light of the evidence that in these two forms of historical composition he stands superior to all his fore-runner and contemporary historians. A comparison between al-Balādhurī and the leading historians of the second and third centuries of the Islāmic era described in the II Chapter of the present composition proves the truth of this assertion. Moreover the works produced by these historians on these two subjects have not been preserved, those available are in no way a match to Al-Balādhurī's remarkable works, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* and *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*. Dr. Goitein sums up his conclusions in this connection as follows:—

“To sum up the conclusions obtained so far: Balādhurī was acquainted with the principal forms of historiography which the three preceding generations of historians had devised, and he made use of all these methods. In the essentials, however, he chose to shape his book in accordance with a principle that was peculiarly Arab, both in his selection of material and in its arrangement. In choosing his subjects he restricted himself to Arabs of noble descent on the father's side (*Ashrāf*); in the arrangement, he did not adopt an annalistic method such as was then current among Byzantine historians nor a scheme of a line of rulers as was preferred it seems, by Sassanian historiographers, but the genuinely Arab Principle of genealogical order ('*Ansāb*'). This is remarkable when we consider that Balādhurī was almost certainly of Iranian Origin”.<sup>47</sup>

The quote from Rosenthal once again:

“On a larger scale, as it has been stated, genealogy influenced historical writing in the *Ansāb* work of Al-Balādhurī, whose

contents were exploited by later historians such as Ibn al-Aṭir in his *Kāmil*, and in the genealogical literature of Western Islam".<sup>48</sup>

In connection with the superiority of Al-Balādhurī over all other historians of the Muslim Conquests, the following two quotations from Prof. Hitti are worthy of our attention:

"Given a number of books on the conquest of different cities, the next step would be to compile them into one whole. That step was taken by Al-Balādhurī—the last great historian of Muslim campaigns".<sup>49</sup>

"Two of the leading historians of the Moslem conquests were the Egyptian Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (870-871). . . and the Arabic writing Persian Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Balādhurī (892) whose main works were the *Futūḥ al-Buldān* and the *Ansāb al-Ashraf*. The latter was one of the first to integrate the many stories of the conquests of various cities and lands into one comprehensive whole, thus ending the era in which the monograph was the typical form of historical composition."<sup>50</sup>

Some of the other merits of al-Balādhurī are described below:—

- 1) *Objectivity*: Al-Balādhurī's objective historical approach gives him a very respectable place among the historians of all times, and it also invites our special attention. It is remarkable to note when even the Shi'ite Sharif al-Murtaḍā says of him:

"حاله في الثقة عند العامد و البعد عن مقاربة الشيعة و الضبط لما يرويه معروف"<sup>51</sup> -

(It is well known that he is an accepted sunni authority, that he is far from supporting the Shi'a and that he is accurate in whatsoever he records).

In the opinion of De Goeje, al-Balādhurī did not write any introduction to his both the extant works, for the simple reason that he unlike the most of his contemporary scholars wanted to avoid the unnecessary praise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs.<sup>52</sup>

It has already been made clear that his position at the court of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs did not have the slightest influence on him, when he described the Umayyads, not only with perfect objectivity but at times with sympathy.<sup>53</sup>

Dr. Goitein appreciates this aspect of al-Balādhurī’s personality:

“Like the great Abū Mikhnaf, whom he apparently valued very highly, Balādhurī, if one may so express oneself, was partisan of one class only: his own class of authors, who wish to be interesting and therefore cannot resist a sensation and even a touch of scandal”.<sup>54</sup>

- 2) *Accuracy, Soundness and Reliability*: Above it has been made clear how careful Al-Balādhurī was in the matter of the collection of his historical material, its careful and proper scrutiny and selection, in the checking of its soundness and reliability, and presenting it in a very accurate, precise, well arranged and ordered way.<sup>55</sup>
- 3) *Careful in the matter of using decent language*: Al-Balādhurī, as we have seen already was very careful in the matter of using decent and proper language. Both of his extant works are a clear testimony to this excellent quality.<sup>56</sup>
- 4) *His Thoroughness and Reflection*: Ibn Khaldūn considers these two qualities indispensable for a good historian.

He says:

“The (Writing of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principle resulting from customs, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, and if, further more, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and deviating from the high road of truth”.<sup>57</sup>

Thoroughness of al-Balādhurī is reflected from his utilization of the numerous sources, from the long list of his teachers with whom he studied, from the gigantic amount of information and material collected by him for his works, and from his long and tiresome journeys to the various cities and lands of the Islāmic Empire, undertaken for the sole aim of getting more information for his books, and for the checking of the authenticity of his collected information.

His speculative and reflective mind is mirrored throughout his composed works, in whose presentation he has fully utilized this quality of his mind.<sup>58</sup>

- 5) *Careful in affixing dates to the events of significance:* Al-Balādhurī, as has already been shown above was very careful and particular in the matter of affixing dates to the important and significant events and matters. This quality of our historian has won him a high praise, especially from the Orientalists of repute.<sup>59</sup>
- 6) Another distinguishing feature of al-Balādhurī as a historian is his surpassing skill in the matter of the arrange-

ment of his collected material. While appreciating critically, his *Futūḥ al-Buldān* and *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, the above quality of the author has already been emphasised.<sup>60</sup>

## HIS INFLUENCE ON THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORIANS

Ever since his age, al-Balādhurī has exercised a tremendous influence on the writings of the scholars of repute. The list of the eminent scholars who have utilized the works of Al-Balādhurī, and who quote him is fairly long, and it includes scholars like, Al-Mas'ūdi, Ibn 'Asākir, Yāqūt, Ibn Athir, Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, and through them, all the modern scholars of history.

The influence of *Futūḥ al-Buldān* on subsequent scholars, has already been highlighted.<sup>61</sup>

The authors who quote from the *Ansāb* are as follows:

“I have so far come across the following authors who made use of Balādhurī and quote him by name referring to the *Ansāb*:

1. al-Marzubānī (d. 384/994), *Mu'jam ash-Shu'arā*, cf. p. 10.
2. ash-Sharīf al-Murtadā (d. 436/1044), *K.ash-Shāfi* 196. last line, 207 . . .
3. Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176), *Tā'rīkh Dimashq* . . .
4. Ibn Shahrāshūd (d. 588/1192), *Manāqib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* . . . . p. 32.
5. Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Learned Men and Mu'djam al-Buldān*, cf. p. 10.

6. Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658/1260), cf. lc.
7. Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), Wafayāt . . .
8. An-Nuwairī (d. 732/1332), Nihāyā . . .
9. Ibn Ḥadjar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Iṣāba, cf. p. 10.
10. al-‘Aini (d. 855/1451), ‘qd al-Djumān fi Tā’rikh Ahl az-Zamān, Ms . . .
11. Ibn Taghri Birdī (d. 870-4/1465-69), an-Nudjūm az-Zāhira, cf. p. 10.
12. Muḥammad Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791), Tādj al-‘Arūs, cf. p. 9.
13. The author of the Kitāb al-‘Uyūn, according to De Goeje Z.D.M.G. 38, 393.
14. al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956), cf. p. 10, and 15, aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), cf. l.c. These two authors mention the historical work of Balādhuri in their introduction. Regarding Mas‘ūdī it seems to me to be likely that he made use of Balādhuri, for many passages in the Ansāb are found only in his work. The supposition holds good also for aṣ-Ṣafadī, although I have not found any quotation from the Ansāb in the single volume so far published; for I learn from a passage on p. 55 that he only mentions those sources from which he actually drew.
16. Ibn al-Athīr, the best of the later historians. It was a moot point for Ahlwardt, Noldeke, Brokelmann, and Wellhausen, whether he used the Ansāb, or not. It is



possible for us to answer in the affirmative. Whole Chapters of this volume, like those on the wars of Qais and Kalb, 313 sq; and on Zufar b. al-Hārith, 301 sq. were transcribed by Ibn al-Athīr word for word, of course with many omissions, especially of verses. A convincing proof that Ibn al-Athīr used Balādhurī and not a source common to both is that Balādhurī's narrative in these two chapters is not a transcript of a single story, but as the isnāds testify, a combination of various accounts. Moreover, the reader will find in this volume all the appropriate passages, noted by Brokelmann in his monograph as missing in Ṭabarī, and in addition, many others, especially verses. Even in those passages which Ibn al-Athīr takes from Ṭabarī, there are several small additions, found only in Balādhurī. However, since Ibn al-Athīr follows the order of Ṭabarī in these sections, and not that of Balādhurī, it is possible to surmise that for these passages he used a fuller version of Ṭabarī than we possess. But this difficult problem can only be solved when the greater part—or the entire text of Balādhurī will have been published".<sup>62</sup>

The recent discovery of another complete Ms. of the Ansāb al-Ashraf at Morocco, even better than that of Istanbūl shows the popularity of the work among the western Muslims and its influence on western historical tradition.<sup>63</sup>

#### HIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY DIFFERENT SCHOLARS – ANCIENT AND MODERN

Al-Balādhurī's excellent qualities as a man and a scholar, and his valuable contribution to the noble cause of knowledge has won him appreciation from the scholars of all times. It is not an exaggeration when De Goeje says that wherever we find an account about him, we find therein his praise and an acknowledgement of his works.<sup>64</sup>

As the opinions of the most of the eminent scholars—ancient and modern, about al-Balādhurī's respectable position as a scholar and a histo-

rian, have already been given while describing the life and works of al-Balādhuri, while critically appreciating his Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashrāf and while evaluating his position as a historian,<sup>65</sup> it is sufficient to give below names and brief statements of some of the eminent scholars:

The author of the History of Damascus described him as “the secretary, the author of the History”, and further praised him by saying, “I have been informed that al-Balādhuri was a man of letters and a historian. He has composed a number of excellent and valuable works”.<sup>66</sup>

The author of Murūj al-Dhahab acknowledged his authority by praising his work, Futūḥ al-Buldān in the words: “We know of no better work on the history of conquests than his”.<sup>67</sup>

The author of al-Bidāya Wa'l-Nihāya opens his account about our historian with the words:

“Al-Balādhuri, one of the renowned and greatest historians”.<sup>68</sup>

Ibn al-Nadīm,<sup>69</sup> Yāqūt,<sup>70</sup> Ibn Khallikān,<sup>71</sup> ‘Allāma Sakhāwī,<sup>72</sup> have also got a very high opinion about al-Balādhuri.

Some of the great admirers of al-Balādhuri among the modern scholars are: De Goeje,<sup>73</sup> S.D.F. Goitein,<sup>74</sup> Prof. Hitti,<sup>75</sup> Prof. D.S. Margoliouth,<sup>76</sup> Dr. M. Hamīdullāh,<sup>77</sup> C.H. Becker,<sup>78</sup> F. Rosenthal,<sup>79</sup> Prof. Browne,<sup>80</sup> George Sarton,<sup>81</sup> Khairuddīn Zirkili<sup>82</sup> ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālāh,<sup>83</sup> Jurjī Zaidān,<sup>84</sup> Dr. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq,<sup>85</sup> and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, etc.<sup>86</sup>

## CONCLUSION

To sum up the conclusions obtained so far:

1. Al-Balādhurī was an upright and straight-forward man, gifted with excellent moral qualities.
2. He was fully acquainted with the major forms of historiography, which the preceding generations of historians had devised, and he made use of all these methods.
3. Two principal forms of historiography namely, "The Conquests", and "The Genealogical form of writing history", reached their climax, in his works Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashraf.
4. So far as essential qualities of a good historian are concerned, we may safely say that he was endowed with almost all of these.
5. He enjoys a prominent and respectable position among his preceding, contemporary, and succeeding Muslim as well as non-Muslim historians.
6. Both of his extant works, Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashraf are primary, valuable, rather indispensable sources of Islāmic history.
7. He has exercised an extensive influence over the writings of subsequent historians and geographers.
8. We are perhaps justified in concluding our discussion about al-Balādhurī with the remarks that he was one of the greatest Muslim historians of all times.

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**CHAPTER IV**

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- 2 Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārikh Madīna Dimashq* (Damascus, 1951) Ed. Ṣalāh al-Din al-Munajjid, i, p. 210.
- 3 *Ibid.*, i, p. 239.
- 4 *Ibid.*, ii, p. 118.
- 5 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1957), xiv, pp. 239-40.
- 6 *Cf. Ibid.*, iv, p. 430-40.
- 7 *Ibid.*, iv, p. 432.
- 8 *Ibid.*, iv, p. 437.
- 9 *Cf. Ibid.*, xvi, pp. 402-03.
- 10 *Ibid.*, xix, p. 318.
- 11 In Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, it is, 'on the conquest of countries'; cf. i, p. 14.
- 12 Al-Sakhāwī, *I'lān*, Eng. Tr. F. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 408-09.
- 13 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, Urdu Tr. *op. cit.*, Intr. pp. 7-8. ➤
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 15 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, Eng. Tr. *op. cit.*, Intr. p. 7.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
- 18 *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-118.
- 19 The book does not end here, rather there are many other chapters dealing with the conquests and affairs of Media, Adharbā'ijān, Mauṣil, Jurjān, Ṭabaristān, Fārs and Kirman, Sijistān and Kābul, Khurāsān and Sind, etc.
- 20 *The Encyclopedia of Islām*, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 971-972.
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- 22 *Futūḥ*, Eng. Tr. *op. cit.*, Intr. p. 5.
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- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 189.
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- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 456.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 424.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 423.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 465-66.
- 31 *Futūḥ*, Eng. Tr. Intr. p. 8.
- 32 *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Cairo, 1319), p. 446.
- 33 *Cf. Yāqūt, Mu'jam al-Buldān, op. cit.*
- 34 *Futūḥ*, Urdu Tr. *op. cit.*, p. 8. (Intr.)
- 35 *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, V, *op. cit.*, Intr., pp. 14-15.
- 36 *Cf. Balādhurī Ki Ansāb al-Ashraf, op. cit.*, p. 211.
- 37 *Ansāb*, v, Intr. pp. 17-20.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 39 *A History of Muslim Historiography, op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
- 41 *Ansāb*, i, *op. cit.*, intr. p. 6.
- 42 *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
- 43 *Ansāb*, v, intr. p. 20.
- 44 *Ansāb*, v, intr. p. 17.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
- 46 *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb*, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-212.
- 47 *Ansāb*, v, intr. pp. 20-21.
- 48 *A History of Muslim Historiography*, p. 88.
- 49 *Futūḥ*, intr. p. 5.
- 50 Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1940), p. 388.
- 51 Quoted by 'Abd al-Sattār al-Farrāj in the intr. of *Ansāb op. cit.*, i, p. 14.
- 52 *Futūḥ*, Urdu Tr. *op. cit.*, intr. p. 8.
- 53 See above no. 45; See also *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb*, p. 210.
- 54 *Ansāb*, v, *op. cit.*, intr. p. 24.
- 55 Cf. Ref. Nos. 23, 45.
- 56 Cf. Ref. No. 31.
- 57 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, Eng. Tr. *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- 58 Cf. Above, *A Critical Study of Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashraf*.
- 59 Cf. Above Ref. Nos. 25, 44.
- 60 Cf. Above, *A Critical Study of Futūḥ al-Buldān and Ansāb al-Ashraf*.
- 61 Above, *A Critical Study of Futūḥ al-Buldān*.
- 62 *Ansāb*, v, intr. pp. 24-25.
- 63 See above, Chap. II, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*.
- 64 Cf. *Futūḥ*, Urdu tr. *op. cit.*, intr. p. 7.
- 65 Cf. Chapters I, III, IV; relevant portions.
- 66 Cf. Ibn Badrān, *Tahdhib Tārikh Ibn 'Asākir*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 109.
- 67 Al-Mas'ūdī, i, p. 14.
- 68 Ibn Kathīr, xi, p. 65.
- 69 *Al-Fihrist*, p. 113.
- 70 *Mu'jam al-Udabā*, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 127-132.
- 71 *Wafayāt*, v, pp. 76-77.
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- 73 Cf. *Futūḥ*, Urdu tr. *op. cit.*, intr.
- 74 Cf. *Ansāb*, v, intr.
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- 78 Cf. *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, i, p. 971.
- 79 Cf. *Ibid.*
- 80 *Literary History of Persia*, *op. cit.*, i, p. 268.
- 81 Cf. *Introduction to the History of Science*, *op. cit.*, p. 616.
- 82 Cf. *A'lām*, i, pp. 85-86.
- 83 Cf. *Mu'jam*, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 201-202.
- 84 Cf. *T. Adāb*, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 191.
- 85 Cf. *Balādhurī Kī Ansāb*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
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