

RE-THINKING OTHER CLAIMANTS TO PROPHETHOOD: the Case of Umayya ibn Abī Ṣalt¹

Al Makin

*The Faculty of Theology, State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga
Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

Abstract

This article questions the domination of the prophethood of Muḥammad in the narrative of the seventh century of the Arabian Peninsula presented by both Muslim and Western scholars. There were many other claimants to prophethood, who are ignored in Muslim and Western sources. In this vein, this article deals with Umayya ibn Abī Ṣalt, a poet who claimed prophethood. Umayya's short biography, collections of his poems (divān) and, and examples of his poems are discussed.

Keywords: prophethood, Qurʾān, Umayya, revelation, *sīra*, *divān*.

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A. Introduction

1. *Issues in Narrating the Accounts of the Seventh Century of Arabian Peninsula: the centrality of Muḥammad, the Qur'ān, and Islam*

The narrative of the sixth and seventh centuries in the Arabian peninsula has been dominated by the prophethood of Muḥammad, Islam, and the Qur'ān. Muslim and Western sources have offered more or less this same pattern of narration. While treating Muḥammad as the central figure, the other figures, who also claimed prophethood, receive too little attention. However, it is hard to pinpoint the causes of this problem. This seems like what Foucault called discourse, where a certain powerful stream has compelled all of us to subscribe to the same view. Many generations of both Muslim and Western scholarship, have inherited this common view. Various sources portray Muḥammad as the only prophet, the heir of all revealed religions (*dīn samāwī*), who brought Islam, the final religion, revealed the Qur'ān, and built the Islamic umma (community) in Medina. No other claimant to prophethood has come into the spotlight.

The primary traditional sources, e.g. *sīra* (e.g. written by Ibn Ishāq),² devote hundreds of pages to the story of Muḥammad, from his genealogy, childhood, his appointment as the prophet, death, companions, campaigns, etc. According to this worldview, the Arabian peninsula, even the world, centers on the prophethood of Muḥammad. This stance is supported by later Muslim literature, i.e. in sufism, *dalā'il* (proofs of prophethood), *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (inimitability of the Qur'ān), *ḥadīth* (tradition), *fadā'il* (excellences), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), ethics (*akhlāq*), to historiography (*sīra*, *ṭabaqāt*, and *tārīkh*).

The centrality of the figure of Muḥammad is not only found in the genres of literature (*adab*), but also in constructing history (*tārīkh*).

In various genres of literature, Muḥammad has been praised for his perfection, serving as *insān kāmil*. In the *tārīkh*, this universe is centered

² Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawīyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭba'a al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlādūh, 1375/1955); trans. A. Guillaume., *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Ishāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

in the figure Muḥammad. *Tārīkhs* by Ibn Ishāq, Ṭabarī,³ al-Ya‘qūbī,⁴ Ibn al-Athīr,⁵ Ibn Kathīr,⁶ Balādhurī⁷, al-Nuwayrī,⁸ etc present the creation of the universe by God, history of kings and prophets, with the ultimate aim that all accounts support the prophethood of Muḥammad.

The following is an account of the prophethood of Hūd, a non-Biblical Arabian prophet, as al-Kisā’ī tells us:

When Hūd was forty years old, God spoke to him, saying, “O Hūd, I have selected thee as a prophet and have made thee a messenger to the tribe ‘Ad. Go therefore to them and fear them not. Call upon them to witness that there is no god but I alone, who have no partner, and that thou art my servant and my messenger⁹.”

The following is also the appointment of Ṣāliḥ, another non-Biblical prophet:

When Ṣāliḥ was forty years of age, Gabriel descended to him and gave him the tidings of his apostleship. “Go to Thamūd,” he said, “and command them to say that there is no god but God and that you, Ṣāliḥ, are the servant and apostle of God. Also command them to cease worshipping idols!”¹⁰.

As Albrecht Noth¹¹ warns us, the two descriptions above are typical topos, for echoing the *sīra*’s theme. Both prophets, Ṣāliḥ and Hūd, are portrayed in the same way as Muḥammad was, appointed as the messenger of God, according to *sīra*, when he was forty, to the tribe of Quraysh, who worshipped idols. The Prophet taught monotheism.

³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa’l-Muluk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1962).

⁴ Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964).

⁵ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī’l-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965).

⁶ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa’l-Nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma‘ārif, 1966).

⁷ Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.).

⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nibāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hay’ al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li’l-Kitāb, 1975).

⁹ al-Kisā’ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā*, ed. I. Eisenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1922-3), trans. W. M. Thackson Jr. as *The Tales of the Prophet of al-Kisā’ī* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978) 111.

¹⁰ al-Kisā’ī, *The Tales*, p. 120.

¹¹ Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen Frühislamischer Geschichtüberlieferung, Teil 1: Themen und Formen* (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1973), pp. 71-4.

Now we are dealing with the centrality of the Qurʾān. Numerous texts from early and later Muslim literature (*iʿjāz* literature) have defended the miracle of the Qurʾān, which is seen as unmatched in terms of rhetoric, language, wordings, structure, and content. According to this doctrine, nobody can produce writings whose quality is equal to that of the Qurʾān, much less surpass it.¹² According to the doctrine of *saḥfa*, formulated and supported by many Muʿtazilite thinkers such as Abu Hudhayl, al-Nazzām, and al-Jāhiz, God has taken away—or at least weakened—man’s ability to rival the Qurʾān.

Thus, the sole prophethood of Muḥammad, the superiority of the Qurʾān, and the religion of Islam has dominated the narration. Other prophets, other Qurʾāns/readings (what I call Qurʾān here refers to any other oral traditions, borrowing Richard Bell’s explanation),¹³ and other cults are overlooked. Indeed, I would like to submit to you now that there was more than one prophet, one Qurʾān, one mosque, and one *ḥanīf* movements during the emergence of Islam.

2. *The Finality of Muḥammad’s Prophethood (Kbātam)*

According to the doctrine of *kbātam*, Muḥammad is the final prophet, and no prophet comes after him. He sealed all previous prophets. This argument is developed in the *dalāʾil* (proofs of prophethood) literature. However, upon my reading of many collections of *ḥadīth* e.g. Ibn Hanbal, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasāʾī, Darīmī and later *ḥadīth* collections such as e.g. Ibn Kathīr—*kbātam* does not necessarily refer to the finality of the prophet Muḥammad. Rather *kbātam* refers to: 1) a brick in a building; 2) physical sign/birthmark; 3) stamp/ring. *Kbātam* related to finality is found in the traditions, which likely circulated later, with the motifs of 4) miracle; 5) fitna; and 6) end of days motif/shafāʾa/intermediation in the day of judgment:

¹² Matthias Radscheit, *Die koranische Herausforderung: Die taḥaddī-Verse im Rahmen der Polemikpassagen des Korans* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996); Issa J. Boullata, “The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qurʾān: Iʿjāz and Related Topics,” in ed. A. Rippin, *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

¹³ Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qurʾān*, ed. Edmund Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) vol. 2, p. 329.

In the *Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal*¹⁴ the images of all prophets are described as a building (*bunyān*), where Muḥammad's position is that of a cornerstone (*fa ana tilk labīnah*). See also the collection of Muslim in *kitāb Faḍā'il* and that of Tirmidhī in *kitāb Manāqib*.

In the same work,¹⁵ *kbātam* is also meant to be the Prophet's birth mark, located on his back (*ẓabr*), which Abū Zayd, his companion, accidentally touched. His fingers felt the *kbātam al-nubunnwa*, which was surrounded by the hairs between the shoulders (*sha'rā' bayn katafayb*). See also Bukhārī in *kitāb adab, wuḍu, mardā*, Tirmidhī in *kitāb manāqib*.

Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan*, k. *kbātam*¹⁶ reports that the Prophet sent some letters to foreigners and made a *kbātam* (stamp) from *fiḍḍa* (silver), engraved with the words: Muḥammad rasūl Allāh. This *kbātam* was inherited by Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān.

The meaning of *kbātam*, from the very beginning, does not necessarily refer to the finality of prophethood.¹⁷ But, it refers to a physical sign, stamp, seal, etc. The meaning of *kbātam* as finality of prophethood, came into circulation later, when there were civil wars, perhaps wars between 'A'isha and 'Alī, 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, Zubayr and Marwan, 'Umayya and 'Abbāsiya. The emergence of false prophets has to be related to the story of civil disturbance in the early Muslim community, where dynasty comes after dynasty, caliph after caliph, 'āmir after 'āmir, revolt after revolt. The *kbātam* doctrine referring to finality must have arisen in this context. During these disturbances some rebel leaders claimed to be prophets, such as al-Mukhtār, whom his adversaries accused of being a false prophet and liar, as no prophet came after Muḥammad.

I have examined the isnād (the chain of transmission) of many *kbātam* traditions. The most reliable among them, in terms of the strands of sanad, is the physical sign (birthmark), followed by the brick building.

¹⁴ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.) vol. 2, p. 398.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 77.

¹⁶ *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) k. *kbātam* vol. 2, p. 701.

¹⁷ See e.g. Yohanan Friedmann, "Finality of Prophecy in Sunni Islam", *Jerusalem Studies for Arabic and Islam*, 7 (1986) elsewhere; See also S. Evstatiev, "On the Perception of the *Kbātam al-Nabīyyīn* Doctrine in Arabic Historical Thought: Confirmation or Finality" in S. Leder, et. al. (eds), *Studies in Arabic and Islam* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002) elsewhere, pp. 455-67; especially p. 460.

The weakest among them is *kbātām* related to politics and stories of false prophets.

Additionally, the *kbātām* doctrine is also used by both Umayyad and Abbāsīd caliphs in order to silence those who claim prophethood after Muḥammad. The challenger of Islam, who claimed prophethood, would consequently challenge the power of caliphs. Here is a quote from a letter of an Umayyad caliph, al-Wālid II, in nominating his two sons—Ḥakam and ‘Uthmān—as his successors.

Then God appointed His caliphs to follow in the path of Muḥammad’s prophetic ministry, after He had taken His prophet unto Himself, and (after) *He had sealed His revelation by Muḥammad*, in order that His rule should be accomplished, His sunnah and His penalties established, and His precepts and laws adopted. *This was done so that, by His caliphs*, God might confirm Islam, by them He might consolidate its sway, by them He might strengthen its ties, by them He might safeguard its sanctities, (and) by them He might administer justice amongst His servants and might maintain the common wealth in His lands.” [italics mine]¹⁸

We can also find similar content in the letters of other Umayyad and Abbāsīd caliphs.

3. *The Forgotten Prophets*

The following figures, Umayya ibn Abī Saḥ, Abū ‘Āmir, Ṭulayḥa, Aswad, Sajāḥ and Musaylima, who were contemporaries of Muḥammad, also claimed to be prophets. There were also several claimants after Muḥammad, e.g. al-Mukhtār, al Ḥārith ibn Sa‘īd, Muḥammad ibn Sa‘īd al-maslūb, Muqanna, Maḥmūd ibn al-Faraj al-Nisābūrī, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad. It is noteworthy that the above claimants were historical persons, whereas 25 of the messengers and apostles mentioned by the Qur’ān are mythical figures. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that the Qur’ān often employs metaphorical or allegorical modes. Thus, historical persons, including Musaylima, Umayya, Abū ‘āmir, and other Arab prophets, are often not mentioned, whereas mythical ones

¹⁸ Al-Ṭabaṭī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, p. 220; *The History*, trans. Carole Hillenbrand, p. 108. For more on the discussion of the letter, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God’s Caliph*, p. 120; see also T. Nagel, *Rechtleitung und Kalifat: Versuch über eine Grundfrage der islamischen Geschichte* (Bonn: Selbstverlage des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität, 1975), pp. 82-3.

serving as archetypes are highlighted.

Later *sīra* and *tārīkh* literature perpetuated the way the Qur'ān narrates this.

The following is the way in which Ibn Khaldun narrates the story of some claimants of prophethood:

Having performed the Farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him] took a rest. However, he complained (of his pain). The news about this then spread. Al-Aswad in Yaman took the [opportunity to claim prophethood] as mentioned; Musaylima in Yamāma and Ṭulayḥa ibn Khuwaylid from the tribe Asad did likewise. All of these proclaimed prophethood. The Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him] battled them by sending emissaries and letters and exhorting the people who remained faithful [Muslims] in their tribes to perform jihād. It worked in the case of al-Aswad, [as he was killed] a day before his [Prophet's] death. The [Prophet's] pain did not distract him from the duty given by God to defend His religion. The [Prophet] also sent many Arab Muslims to many areas where the [above] arch-liars (*kaḍhbābīn*) lived. [The Prophet] also ordered the [Muslims] to perform *jihād* against them [the arch-liars].¹⁹

Here we may ask, for what reasons are these claimants called liars? Were they not prophets similar to Muḥammad? Who labeled them in such a way? Why did they earn the label of liars? Did this occur during the lifetime of the Prophet or later in the Muslim literature?

4. From polytheism to monotheism

Classical major cities in the Arabian peninsula, such as Mecca, Ṭā'if, and Yamāma, were religious centers and shrines and temples were common to all of them. Classical Muslim writers report that the Meccans worshipped idols, whose names, latta, uzza, hubal and manat, are preserved in the work of al-Kalbī (*kitāb asnam*).²⁰ In addition, belief in supernatural beings, such as spirits, was common among the Arabs.

¹⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn al-Musammā bi-Kitāb al-'Ibar wa-Diwān al-Mubtada' wa'l-Khabar fī Ayyām al-'Arab wa'l-'Ajam wa'l-Barbar wa man 'Aṣarabum min dbawī al-Sulṭān al-Akbar* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Nahḍah, 1355/1936), vol. 2, p. 266.

²⁰ *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī (Cairo: Maṭba'a al-Amīriyya, 1384/1964); trans. R. Klinke-Rosenberger, *Das Götzenbuch* (Leipzig: Harrasowitz, 1941); N. A. Faris, *The Book of Idols, Being a Translation from the Arabic of Kitāb al-Aṣnām by Hishām ibn al-Kalbī* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).

Both pre-Islamic poetry and the Qurʾān attest that the jinn was seen as a powerful spiritual being and there were many who believed themselves possessed by one. Due to these beliefs in the supernatural world and deities, in Arabia the concepts of sacred places and times were preserved and guarded by believers. The word used to express the taboo was *ḥrm* (*ḥaram* or *mahram*), meaning sacred or sacrosanct, e.g. the *mahram* of Bilqīs at Maʿrib, that of Dhū Samāwī at Ṭimnaʾ, capital of Qabaṭan, and another in Jawf of Yemen.

Various Arabian temples—al-Maqāh in Maʿrib, Sayin at Shabwa and Dhū Samāwī at Yathill (modern Barāqish)—served as holy places and destinations for pilgrimages. Long before Islam, in fact, certain deeds—such as sexual relations and bringing weapons—were prohibited in the sacred months during which the pilgrimage took place. Certain tribes even bore particular responsibility for guarding these sacred places, such as Quraysh who guarded the Kaba in Mecca.

My thesis is that around these shrines, temples, kaʿba, *mahram*, *ḥaram* found in many regions of the Arabian peninsula, there were more cults, readings (Qurʾān), and prophets, who attempted to reconcile the local pagan values with those of Judaism and Christianity.

B. Siblings of Islam

My hypothesis is that the teachings of Umayya ibn Abī Ṣālt, like those of other Arabian prophets, were siblings to Islam. All of these were attempts at blending the older values of Judaism and Christianity with the local Arab pagan traditions. The project of relating Islam (and the Qurʾān) to Judaism and Christianity (and to the Bible) directly—as most scholars have argued—should thus be re-examined, as Islam was not a direct sibling to the two much older religions. However, Islam was a sibling to the local cults, such as those of Umayya, Abū ʿĀmir, Musaylima, Sajāh, Aswad, and Ṭulayḥa, who were contemporaries of Muḥammad, and who served as prophets to their people and tribe.

1. *Umayya: a Short Biography*

Umayya's name is provided by many texts of Muslim literature as follows: Umayya ibn Abī Ṣālt ʿAbdalla ibn Rabīʿa ibn ʿAwf ibn ʿUqda ibn Ghayra ibn Qussay, i.e. Thāqif. Umayya is also known as Abū Qāsim (the

name of the Prophet Muḥammad), Abū ‘Uthman, and Abū al-Ḥakam. Umayya’s mother was Ruqayya bt. ‘Abd Sham ibn ‘Abd Manāf, the Qurayshite, the Prophet Muhammad’s tribe in Mecca.

From the beginning, there was a relationship between the two prophets: between Ṭā‘if, Umayya’s origin and Mecca, Muḥammad’s first town, between the Thāqif, Umayya’s tribal affiliation, and the Quraysh, that of Muḥammad. Note as well that the Thāqif during the Umayyad period, the first caliphal dynasty in early Islam, played a very critical role in politics, such as holding the positions of ‘amir or governor. The Thāqif, in short, became the main ally of the Quraysh in holding the caliphal dynasty, the Umayyads. Some prominent governors and amir came from the Thāqif. Al-Hajjāj al-Thaqafī, for instance, a governor of ‘Abd Mālik ibn Marwān—who restored the ka‘ba in Mecca and who played a very important role in the early codification of the Qur’ān—came from Thāqif. A long poem attributed to Umayya ibn Abi Ṣalt was read before al-Hajjāj to lampoon his murder of one of the members of the Khārijites, the rebel party against the Umayyad faction. It is said that before his death, the victim recalled Umayya’s poem on the theme of repentance, which was originally revealed before the poet’s own death.

Interestingly, the Prophet Muḥammad once cursed three tribes: the Quraysh, the *Ḥanīfa* and the Thāqif.²¹ This ḥadīth seems to voice the later antagonism in the early Muslim community, in which the three tribes were involved. Note as well that the people of Thāqif in Ṭā‘if converted to Islam very late, during the late Medinan period, after the conquest of Mecca. Thus, the Thāqif seem to hold their own beliefs. However, it is unclear whether they remained polytheists or they regarded Umayya as their prophet. One can speculate as follows. Before their defeat, the tribe of *Ḥanīfa* in Yamāma also supported their own Prophet Musaylima. So did the Tamīm, the Asad and the Yemenite for their own prophets. It may well be that the Thāqif also supported Umayya as their prophet. However, this conclusion is speculative. Further evidence is indeed needed.

Returning to Ṭā‘if and Mecca, these two towns were like twin, in terms of religious significance, for their temples and shrines, but different in terms of weather. Ṭā‘if is colder than Mecca, various wines and dates are reported to have grown there. During the conquest of Ṭā‘if by Muslim

²¹ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, “K. Manāqib”, p. 992.

troops, the soldiers used vine trees to climb the wall.

Another interesting story: Umayya's sister named Fari'a once came to the Prophet Muḥammad, who then asked her to recite her brother's poem. She did so in front of the Prophet Muḥammad, who then said that her brother is one of those whom the Qur'ān lampoons as trying to rival the miracle of the Qur'ān (6: 93).

However, various reports preserved in the tafsīrs of Ṭabaṛī,²² al-Suyūṭī,²³ and al-Ṭabarsī,²⁴ said that those whom the verse lampooned were originally, Musaylima, claimant to prophethood from Yamāma, 'Abdalla ibn Abi Sharḥ, the Prophet Muḥammad's secretary who apostatized, and Nadr ibn al-Ḥārith who said that what the Prophet revealed was nothing but *asātīr anwālīn* (fairy tales)—all of whom challenged the Prophet Muḥammad.

Another striking point is that Umayya's poems were considered as rivaling the Qur'ān, at least the Prophet himself hints as much. Indeed, Umayya was a known poet, as al-Jāḥiẓ, a known Mu'tazile author, attested. True, Umayya came from a family of poets. Umayya's father 'Abdallah Abī Ṣalt was also a poet and so were Umayya's two sons, Qāsim and Rabī'a.

Umayya, as a claimant to prophethood, played a role similar to that of Musaylima, Abū 'Āmir, Sajāḥ, Aswad, Ṭulayḥa in many respects. Due to their claims of prophethood, all of these are regarded to be antagonistic to the main figure, the Prophet Muḥammad. With regard to the prophethood claimed by Umayya, on the one hand, early and later Muslim literature undermined this claim. For example, Umayya, as a 'failed prophet,' is described as being merely jealous of the prophethood of Muḥammad.²⁵ On the other hand, this literature highlights serious

²² Al-Ṭabaṛī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), vol. 11, pp. 532-8.

²³ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīr al-Ma'tbūr*, *Mukhtasar Tafsīr Tarjamān al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1411/1990), vol.3, pp. 55-6.

²⁴ Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Qum: Manshūrāt Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-'Uẓmā al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1403H/1985), vol. 7, p. 132.

²⁵ U. Rubin, "Hanafiyya and Ka'ba: an Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Dīn Ibrāhīm" in ed. Peters, *Arabs and Arabia*, p. 278; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārij*, ed. Tharwat 'Ukāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1960), p. 28; Abū al-Farāj al-Iṣbahānī, *al-Aghānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1390/1970) vol. 4, 127; al-'Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1992) vol. 1, 250; Mas'ūdī, *Murij al-Dhabab wa-Ma'ādan al-Jawhar*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo:

efforts made by Umayya to pursue information concerning the matters of prophethood. In doing so, Umayya, accompanied by Abū Sufyān, the father of Mu‘āwiya, the founder of Umayyad dynasty, went to Shām to consult a monk on the matter of prophethood prior to the birth of Muḥammad.²⁶ Inferring from this story, these texts also seem to acknowledge that Umayya had claimed prophethood earlier than Muḥammad. The relation between the Quraysh and the Thāqif, two important tribes, is also implied. Abū Sufyān a prominent Qurayshite figure was a friend to Umayya, the Thāqif prophet. This friendship was also a symbol of a later alliance of the two tribes in the two or three centuries to come. In view of the history of early Islam, it is ironic that the Qurayshites, who were the main opponents of Muḥammad, later used Islam as legitimacy for their power in ruling the umma. The Thāqif, who had their own prophet, Umayya, supported this stance.

The story of *Basmalla*, the most famous expression which every Muslim recites no less than ten times a day, is worth presenting here. Umayya, it is said, had revealed his own version of *Basmalla* before Muḥammad did, which reads *bi’-smik allāhumma*.

Umayya is portrayed in early Islamic literature as among those who embraced *ḥanīf*, which is often interpreted as the true religion of Abraham. He taught monotheism, prayed to God, forbade drinking wine, adultery, and other sinful deeds. This meaning of the *ḥanīf* has long been debated in both Muslim and Western sources. But in the Arabic of the seventh century, it refers to the Monotheist movement, that is the religion of Abraham. I would rather say that this *ḥanīf* was an attempt at reconciling the older values of Judaism and Christianity with local Arab traditions, as the evidence leads us to conclude.

Having embraced another version of *ḥanīf*, Umayya was involved in a serious rivalry with the Prophet Muḥammad, whose mission was also to restore that *ḥanīf*. Returning to the rivalry between the two prophets, the Prophet, it is said, forbade recitation of Umayya’s poems. In turn, Umayya stood on the side of the Quraysh against Muḥammad in the campaign of Badr. It appears that these two *ḥanīf* movements could not

al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1377/1958), vol. 1, pp. 70-1.

²⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 170; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa’l-Nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma‘ārif, 1966), vol. 2, p. 206.

coexist. Instead, the antagonism between the adherents of both versions of *ḥanīf* was apparent. The well-known statement made by Umayya reads as follows: “I know that the *Ḥanafīyya* is true, but I cast doubts on [that of] Muḥammad (*ana a’lam anna al-Ḥanafīyya ḥaqq, walākin al-shakke yudākblmī fī Muḥammad*).”

Beware of the topos, or thematic story. The meeting of two prophets appears in the story of Musaylima, Aswad, Abū ‘Āmir, and Umayya. This story of the encounter between two prophets still attracts too little attention from scholars in Islam.

The meeting between Muḥammad and Musaylima is as follows. Musaylima asked for a branch of a tree from the Prophet, who refused to give it.²⁷ Aswad, who was killed in Yemen, once came with the deputation of his tribe to Muḥammad in Medina. Abū ‘Āmir, a Medinan prophet, had debated the Prophet Muḥammad concerning *ḥanīf*.²⁸ Abū ‘Āmir, it is said, erected his own mosque, known as *maṣjid ḍirār* (mosque of dissent), where he and his followers prayed. As for another claimant Ṭulayḥa, he converted to Islam and made bay‘a (allegiance) to Abū Bakr.²⁹ Sajāḥ also annulled her claim and converted to Islam. She died in Kufa during Mu‘āwiya’s time.³⁰

In the meeting between Muḥammad and Umayya, Muḥammad read *sūra Yāsin*, whose tone Umayya admired. Due to this, Umayya almost embraced Islam. But then during the Badr war, he saw many victims killed by the Muslim faction. Thus he composed a eulogy to the victims, and his sympathy towards Muhammad and Islam was gone. From this story, it seems that Umayya embraced pacifism, standing against war. It is not hard to imagine that Umayya was a monk who wore *musub* (humble woven wool) and hated bloodshed. In fact, he was neither a political leader nor a skillful general. Due to his lack of these two skills, he did not attract many loyal followers. Thus, his *ḥanīf* version did not survive. On another occasion Umayya also stood against war: “I found much destruction in

²⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, “k. maghāzī”, vol. 2, p. 873.

²⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb* (Cairo: Maktaba Nahḍa, nd.) vol. 1, p. 380. See also Moshe Gil, “The Medinan Opposition to the Prophet,” *Jerusalem Studies for Arabic and Islam*, 10 (1987), pp. 87-92. Ref. cited.

²⁹ Ṭabaṛī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 261; trans. Donner, *The History*, p. 74.

³⁰ Ṭabaṛī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, p. 274; trans. Donner, *The History*, p. 97.

our war; and the destruction leaves us unguided” he said (*Ḥadīthi* 143).

In the two lines below, Umayya condemned war waged by men (*Ḥadīthi* 120: 1):

As they (men) have fought against Jins and honorable men thousands times,

We see (nothing but) madness in them; and we (thus) said, do we see these wars in dreams?

Umayya is said to have run away from the Prophet Muḥammad, his rival, to avoid Islam, and to have remained an unbeliever until his death. Muḥammad is reported to have said that he was a *āmana sha’ru wa kaffara qalbu* (believer in his poems but not in his heart). This expression indeed deserves our attention. His poems, most of which contain religious messages and are in line with Islamic teachings, are acknowledged to contain the truth of Islam. But the poet remains an unbeliever. This describes the rivalry between the two prophets and proponents of *ḥanīf*. What is clear is that the antagonism between the two led to the censorship of Umayya’s poems even in the later Muslim literature. Many early Muslim authors admitted that what we have are only a few fragments of Umayya’s poems. Thus Umayya must have said more than what is at our disposal.

However, Muslim literature describes Umayya as one who almost embraced Islam (*kāda yuslim*). This is in line with his *sha’r* (poem), which contain his repentance to God. However, note that his repentance does not necessarily mean that he almost converted to Islam, but it rather indicates the religiosity of the poet who embrace *Ḥanīf*, and, like other claimants to prophethood, places God at the center of their teachings.

As reported by Muslim literature, Umayya composed certain forms of *dua* (prayers to God), to whom he asked forgiveness. The texts sound like many verses of the Quran and various *ḥadīths* (traditions). Once again, *dua* is usually performed by those who are pious. Often, *dua* stresses humbleness of man in front of the almighty God. This does not contradict the reports by Muslim authors of the piety and religious enthusiasm of Umayya.

O God, do not make me ingratitude forever; and set faith in the throne of my heart in the course of time (*Ḥadīthi* 125: 7)

O God, do not prevent me from (entering) paradise *khuldi*; and O our Lord, make me a humble (and) compassionate (person) (*Ḥadīthi* 142; cf.

Q. Maryam: 47).

O God, forgive me, (forgive) all my sins, I will humbly come to your service in the day (that you have promised to come) (*Ḥadīthi* 36: 8; cf. Q. 11: 47; 26: 82)

2. *Diwān Umayya*

Both Western and Muslim scholars, whom we should thank, have collected Umayya's poem from various sources and contexts.

- Louise Cheikho (1890): 256 lines,³¹
- Schulthess (1911): 530 lines,³²
- Bashīr Yamūt (1934): 747 lines,
- Al-Satli (1974):³³ 895 lines, including analysis on the spurious, changed, and authentic poems. Qur'ānic and Biblical citations are traced.
- Ḥadīthī (1975):³⁴ 857 lines, including analysis on the themes, styles, and content. Qur'ānic citations are also traced.

The following sources contain Umayya's poems.

Authors	Works	Number of Lines (<i>bayt</i>)
Ibn Hishām (d. 218)- Ibn Iṣḥāq (d. 153 H)	<i>Sīra</i>	96 <i>Sīra</i> materials
Ibn Salām (d. 231 H)	<i>Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl Shu'arā'</i>	8
Jāhiz (d. 255 H)	<i>Kitāb Ḥayawān</i>	100, mostly on moral lessons
Ibn Qutayba (d. 276)	<i>Sha'r wa-Shu'arā'</i>	about 8 lines
Ibn Dāwūd al-Zāhiri (d. 297)	<i>Kitāb Zabrah</i>	about 72 lines
Ṭabarī (d. 310 H)	<i>Tārīkh</i>	11 lines
Abū Farj al-Asfihānī (d. 357)	<i>Aghānī</i>	73 lines

³¹ L. Cheikho, *Wuḍarā' al-Naṣrānīya wa-Kuttābubā fi al-Islām* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1987); idem, *al-Naṣrānīya wa-Ādābubā bayna 'Arab al-Jābiliya* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1989).

³² F. Schulthess, *Umajja ibn Abi ṣ Ṣalt die unter seinem Namen überlieferten Gedichtfragmente gesammelt* (Leipzig, 1912).

³³ al-Satli, *Diwān Umayya ibn Abi Ṣalt* (Dimashq, 1974).

³⁴ al-Hadithi, *Umayya ibn Abi Ṣalt* (Baghdad, 1975); Cl. Huart, "Une nouvelle source du Qoran", in *JA*, ser. 10, vol. iv (1904).

Al-Maḡdīsī (d. 355)	<i>Al-Bad' wa al-Tārīkh</i>	about 117 lines, religious content
Ibn Asākir (d. 571)	<i>Tārīkh Kabīr</i>	56 lines
Abi Farj al-Baḡrī (d. 759),	<i>Ḥamasa Baḡrīyya</i>	51 lines
Ibn Kathīr (d. 774)	<i>Bidāya wa'l-Nibāya</i>	87 lines
Nuwayrī (d. 733)	<i>Nibāyat al-Arab</i>	74 lines
Ibn 'Umar al-Baḡhdādī (d. 1093)	<i>Khiḡānat al-Adab</i>	97 lines
Ibn Manzūr (d. 711)	<i>Lisān al-Arab</i>	78 lines

It is worth presenting here, some attestations made by some early Muslim authors about the existence of Umayya's poems. al-Aḡmā'i (d. 216) the author of *Fuḡhūla Shu'arā'* said that he saw 300 lines of Umayya's *shi'r*. Al-'Aynī (d. 855 H), the author of *Maḡāsid Naḡwiyya*, also claimed he saw hundred lines attributed to Umayya. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baḡhdādī (1093 H) the author of *Khiḡāna*, also saw them.

The following are the transmitters of Umayya's poems:

- Farī'a, Umayya's sister, who met the Prophet Muḡammad, who then asked her to recite some of her brother's poems.
- Sharīd ibn Suwayd al-Thāqafī (d. reign of Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya), who wrote a book, which did not reach us.
- Ibn 'Abbās (d. 79/70H), a known Companion of the Prophet, whose story we can find in masā'il ibn 'Asraq (which contains a conversation between Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Azraq, the Kharijite rebel leader from the tribe of Ḥanīfa in Yamāma, on some ambiguous meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān). In this work, Ibn 'Azraq asked some questions of Ibn 'Abbās about some unclear words of the Qur'ān. Ibn 'Abbās then answered him with reference to Umayya's poems.

What modern critics have said about the authenticity of the poems attributed to Umayya:

(1) The Poems may have served as one of the sources of the Qur'ān. A. Sprenger, who seems to have read only some of Umayya's poems, gives this theory with regard to the idea that Umayya was a proponent of *ḡanīf*. The most prominent proponent of this theory is Clement Huart

who, in *Une nouvelle source du Qur'ān*, 1904,³⁵ said that Umayya, being older than the Prophet Muḥammad, as claimed by some early Muslim literature, may have served as a model for Muḥammad, who likely may have taken some verses of Umayya for the composition of the Qur'ān.

(2) Skeptics argue that the poems attributed to Umayya were fabricated by later Muslim scholars. This theory points to the example of Umayya being praised by the Prophet Muḥammad, his rival. Umayya in this spurious poem cites the *kh̄bātam* doctrine, which was developed in later Muslim literature.

The most prominent scholar of this theory is Tor Andrae, (1923-5).³⁶ To him most of Umayya's poems have exegetical content which reflect the tafsīr of later Muslim Qur'ānic hermeneutics. This skepticism has played a vital role in the later analysis of Umayya's poems. And indeed this view has contributed to the discussion and analysis of others, such as Kamanetzky,³⁷ who cast doubt on the authenticity of most of Umayya's poems. However, Kamanetzky still argues that at least 225 lines of the poems are authentic, particularly those with religious content. Ḥadīthi and Satli, whose *diwān* I consult mostly, also subscribe to this skeptical stance, even indicating less lines of authentic poems attributed to Umayya.

Total skepticism regarding Umayya's poems, as far as my reading is concerned, comes from those who have not carefully read Umayya's poems. But those who do so, like Kamanetzky, Ḥadīthi, Satli, Seidenticker,³⁸ and Berg Borg, see some possibilities of their authenticity. I have contacted Prof. Seidensticker, who is now Professor at Jena University, and he is happy to hear that I deal with Umayya's poems. Seidensticker also believes that some poems contain good material and may bear authentic messages from Umayya, or at least early writings from the early century of Hijra.

³⁵ Cl. Huart, *Une nouvelle source du Qoran*, in *JA*, ser. 10, vol. iv (1904).

³⁶ Tor Andrae, *Mohammed sein Leben und sein Glaube* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1932); *Les origines de l'Islam et le Christianisme* (Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1955).

³⁷ J. Frank-Kamenetzky, *Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis der dem Umajja ibn Abi ṣ-Ṣalt zugeschriebenen Gedichte zum Qoran* (Kirchhain: Max Schmarsow, 1911).

³⁸ T. Seidensticker, "The authenticity of the poems ascribed to Umayya Ibn Abī al-Ṣalt," in J.R. Smart (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* (Richmond, 1996).

(3) Others, like Hirsberg,³⁹ argue that both the Qurʾān and the poems of Umayya came from the same tradition. In this regard, Hirsberg 1923 disagrees with Andrae, showing parallelism between the poems and Jewish, pre-Islamic Haggada materials.

The following facts should be kept in mind:

- Some poems bear similar content and words with the Meccan verses of the Qurʾān. Note that stanzas attributed to Musaylima, which I have discussed in my dissertation, which is now under consideration for publication by Peter Lang, bear similar style and content to the Meccan verses. This however needs further analysis.
- Certain ḥadīth stories.
- Some poems follow the style of early Arabic speech, from the genre of *sajʿ*, *rajaz*, to *shiʿr*.
- Some poems bear similarities to the Old and New Testament in terms of content and texts, as shown by Gert Borg, Satli, and Hirsberg.
- Surprisingly, Umayya's poem resembles texts other than the Bible and the Qurʾān, e.g. Gilgamesh and Athrahasis. In this regard, it is very surprising and yet at the same time challenging.

The following is an example of the story of Noah, which is similar to the story found in Genesis of the Old Testament, Gilgamesh, and later genres of Muslim literature, such as *qiṣaṣ*.

Umayya (Ḥadīthi 5: 9-11; Satli 3: 8-10):

The dove was sent after seven days (of the flood) resulting in the unbearable destructions.

(Noah commands it), “seek whether you see any area of the earth in which the flood of water ends.”

And after (the dove) rushed away, it came with a cluster of grape, (and) with the dark mud and sticking clay

³⁹ J. W. Hirschberg, *Jüdische und christliche Lebrn im vor- und frühislamischen Arabien* (Cracow, 1939).

Gen. 8: 6-12:

After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.

Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground.

But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark.

He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.

He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

Gilgamesh tab. XI:

145) When the seventh day arrived

146) I sent forth a dove and let (her) go

147) the dove went away and came back to me

148) there was no resting place, and so she returned.

152) (Then) I sent forth a raven and let (her) go

153) The raven went away, and when she saw that the waters and abated

Tha'labī, trans. Brinner, 2002, p. 101:

Noah sent a raven to bring him a report, but it found a corpse and fell upon it and was too busy to return. So Noah invoked fear upon it, and for that reason it is not fond of human habitation. Then he sent a dove, and it brought back an olive leaf in its beak and mud in its claws, so he knew that the land had dried up. So (Noah) gave the dove its green (collar) that encircles its neck and blessed it to feel at home and safe in houses.

Kisāʿī, trans. Thackson, 1978, p. 104:

Noah rejoiced and sent out a dove, saying, “Go see how much water remains on the face of the earth.” The dove passed over the east and the west and hastened to return, for Noah had charged it with haste, and said, “O Prophet of God, the earth is destroyed and likewise all the trees, except the olive, which is green as usual.” Nuh had sent a raven before; but it was so slow in returning, so he sent the dove.

C. Concluding Remarks

Allow me to submit my early hypothesis upon reading Umayya’s poems. The following are the characteristics of Umayya’s poems, which are collected in the four *diwāns* (Schulthess, al-Ṣaṭfī, *Ḥadīthī*, and Bashīr Yamūt). Like the Qurʾān and other early texts of Muslim literature, the poems are repetitive—the same themes, phrases and words appear in many different occasions and contexts. Some lines appear to be mere copies of other lines in a different story and context. This reminds us of the style of the Qurʾān, which also repeats many words, phrases, stories, and ideas. John Wansbrough⁴⁰ remarks that it may indicate the copy and paste style of the Qurʾān. In fact, this repetitive style is not strange for early Muslim literature, from ḥadīth, qīṣṣa, *tārīkh*, *tabaqāt*, *adab*, *shaʿr* and *qaṣīda*. Some ideas are mixed with others, and added by later transmitters who were also authors in themselves.

A certain story, like a snowball, flows, rolls, and grows. In the study of ḥadīth, Joseph Schacht, Juynboll, Micheal Cook⁴¹ and many others have remarked on this, that the later the version is, the bigger the story becomes. Likewise, the later the isnād (the chains of transmission too) is, the more complete it becomes.

⁴⁰ *Qurʾānic Studies, Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁴¹ See J. Schacht “Modernism and Traditionalism in a History of Islamic Law” in *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1 (1965), p. 393; Marston Speight, “The Will of Saʿd ibn A. Waqqāṣ: the Growth of a Tradition”, *Der Islam*, 50 (1973), p. 250; cf. H. Motzki, “Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey”, *Arabica* 52, 2 (2005), pp. 211-2.

Richard Bell relates this repetitive style of the Qurʾān to the chronology of its revelation. To him, this indicates insertions in the text of the Qurʾān performed by later editors, who were either the Prophet himself or his secretaries. Lüling boldly sharpens this idea, saying that the process of editing the Qurʾān was not simple and started with the Prophet himself, using older material from Arabic poetry or Christian hymns.⁴² The editors after the Prophet continued this task. The Qurʾān, for these scholars, was not like today's Qurʾān.

Umayya's poems employ the same pattern and styles. We can analyze them as to which parts may have come earlier and which parts may be a copy of the early version. In other words, we may juxtapose many lines.

Note that Umayya's poems have no *isnād*. So are the Qurʾānic texts. Ḥadīth criteria cannot be used here to analyze the poems. In fact, early genres of Muslim literature, such as *sīra*, *tārīkh*, and early *ḥadīth*, bear no *isnād* either. Only later *ḥadīth*s collections, e.g. Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasaʿī and others, show more complete *isnād*.

The style of the poems attributed to Umayya varies, from *sajʿ*, *rajaʿ*, and *shiʿr*. In *shiʿr*, Umayya's poem follow different metre (*baḥr*), such as *wafir*, *munṣarib*, *baṣṭ*, *kbafif*, *mutaqārib*, etc. However, the collectors of *dinān* Umayya, e.g. Bashīr Yamūt, Saṭfi and Ḥadīthi, seem to apply a strict standard of *shiʿr* style upon the poems. Certain reading is forced to follow the pattern of *shiʿr*. We do not have to accept their proposal.

The following is among the examples (*rajaʿ*):

<i>Lam tukblaq al-samāʿu wa al-nujūmu</i>	<i>waʾl-shamsu maʾabā qamaru yaʾūmu</i>
<i>qaddarahu al-mubayminu al-qayyūmu</i>	<i>waʾl-jasru waʾl-jannatu waʾl-jaḥīmu</i>
<i>illā li-mri shaʾnubu aẓīmu</i>	

The above reading can be changed to a more reasonable reading following the *sajʿ* style, which is often seen in the early Meccan revelations of the Qurʾān. According to Nöldeke, Bell, and Neuwirth,⁴³ the early Meccan revelations have no strict rhyme and metre. But the rhyme often changes abruptly. So does the composition.

⁴² Günter Lüling, *Über den Urkoran, Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion der vorislamisch-christlichen Strophenlieder im Koran* (Erlangen: Verlagsbuchhandlung Hannelore Lüling, 2004).

⁴³ A. Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), p. 92.

Perhaps, due to the task of guardianship in the light of the i'jāz doctrine, later authors seem to distort certain messages of Umayya and making them different from the Qur'ānic style. (Ṣaṭṭī and Ḥadīthī call this taṣḥīf). This attempt seems to also obscure the prophethood of Umayya, who, according to these authors, should be seen as no more than a poet. However, let us read the message differently, using saǰ' style.

*Lam tukhblaq al-samā'u wa al-nujūmu wa'l-shams
Ma'abā qamaru ya'ūmu
qaddarahu al-mubayminu al-qayyūmu
wa'l-jasru wa'l-jannatu wa'l-jaḥīmu illā li-mri sha'nubu azūmu*
(Ḥadīthi 111: 1-2)

The above reading is in line with the style of many early revelation of the Qur'ān, which is characterized by a short rhyme prose, and abrupt changes in the ending.

It is interesting to see many tendencies in presenting Umayya's poems. In *Masā'il ibn 'Azraq*, when Ibn 'Azraq poses questions about difficult vocabularies in the Qur'ān, Ibn 'Abbās presents Umayya's poem as references. Al-Jāḥiẓ in his *Ḥayawān* mostly preserved poems about *ḥikma* (wisdom), *amṭḥāl* (moral advises), and fables. Al-Maqḏīsī in *al-Bad' wa'l-Tārīkh* cites religious messages attributed to Umayya, with good characteristics and unique style. Abū Dāwūd in his *Kitāb al-Zabrah* preserves poems that bear substantial similarities with the words, composition, and content of the Qur'ān. Abū Dāwūd also presents lines which praise the Prophet Muhammad. Poems attributed to Umayya found in many later adab texts follow the style of shi'r, and their literary elements are maintained. Thus each genre of literature shaped the image of Umayya and presented his works in line with their interests. Umayya then has many faces, depending on who represents him and who cite his works.

It is important here to determine Umayya's authentic characteristics. For sure, poems whose style is too Qur'ānic can be suspected as being an invention of later Muslim authors. Likewise, poems whose metre strictly follows that of later Arabic poetry is also likely an invention of later adab authors. Thus, our task is to find the true characteristics of Umayya's messages, which may be defined as not too Qur'ān nor too poetic, although certain characteristics of both may be contained in the poems.

However, I should warn myself here for the sake of my own further study. We should not take general rules too far or apply certain generalizations to all poems. But we should treat the poems line per line, poem per poem, case per case, like Sidney Griffith has examined the sura of the cave, al-Kahfi, which is comparable to certain Christian texts.

To close this paper, I would like to use this analogy and reflection. From the earth, we see only the sun every day. What we see during the night are only stars. In fact, our sun is part of millions or billions of stars in our Milky Way galaxy. From an Islamic perspective, and Islamic studies, Muḥammad is the only prophet. In fact, there were many more prophets and Umayya is only one of them. Although his cult died out, due to his lack of political and leadership skills, attracting no significant number of followers, some of his teachings seem to endure in Islam, which absorbed many other traditions, from Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, paganism, Mazdaism, and others.

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