STUDIES IN
LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY ISLAM

3

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A SOURCE-CRITICAL STUDY

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ALBRECHT NOTH

Second Edition,
in Collaboration with

LAWRENCE I. CONRAD

Translated from the German
by
MICHAEL BONNER

THE DARWIN PRESS, INC.
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
1994

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Noth, Albrecht.

[Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung. English]

The early Arabic historical tradition : a source-critical study / Albrecht Noth in collaboration with Lawrence I. Conrad ; translated from the German by Michael Bonner. – 2nd ed.

p. cm. – (Studies in late antiquity and early Islam)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-87850-082-0 (alk. paper) : $27.50

1. Islamic Empire–Historiography. I. Conrad, Lawrence I., 1949– . II. Series.

DS38.16.N67213 1994

909'.097671'0072–dc20 94-6798

CIP

The paper in this book is acid-free neutral pH stock and meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

Printed in the United States of America

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Abbreviations

AIEO	*Annales de l'Institut des études orientales*. Paris, 1935–.
BGA	*Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*. Ed. M.J. de Goeje. 8 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1870–94.
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. London, 1917–.
CSCO	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*. Paris, Leuven, 1903–.
EI[1]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. M.T. Houtsma *et al*. 4 vols. Leiden and London, 1913–34.
EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. Ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al*. Leiden and London, 1960–proceeding.
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*. New York and London, 1970–.
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. Jerusalem, 1979–.
WI	*Die Welt des Islams*. Berlin, 1913–.
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*. Tübingen, 1947–.
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*. Berlin, 1886–1922.
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. Leipzig, Wiesbaden, 1847–.

Preface to the Second Edition

TWO DECADES HAVE NOW PASSED since the publication in 1973 of my *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung, I. Themen und Formen* by the Department of Oriental Studies in the University of Bonn. This work represented the first half of my Habilitationsschrift, and it was my intention to publish the remainder of the text, on *Tendenzen*, in due course. Eventually, however, this plan was overtaken by other considerations. The more important sections of this second part have appeared as articles in various journals and collective volumes, and publication of the whole would thus, to a large extent, amount to the restatement of research which is already widely available in print, and to which I would have little new to add.

A second edition of the first part, on the other hand, seems appropriate at this time. The past two decades have witnessed both a vast expansion in the range and quantity of published Arabic source material, and a dramatic increase in the scholarly literature pertaining to early Islamic history and the historiographical problems involved in its study. This source material and new research bear most immediately on the arguments set forth in the 1973 study; and while they have not established any need to alter its main views, they have indicated areas which might usefully be clarified or elaborated. An especially attractive incentive for addressing these matters afresh at this time has been the opportunity to publish a revised English edition under the auspices of the Late Antiquity and Early Islam project, which is rendering an invaluable service to scholarship in its field by encouraging and organizing closer and broader contacts among researchers in the various relevant disciplines. As more sources become accessible to expanding

circles of interested colleagues, the question of how these sources can (and cannot) be used clearly becomes a more pressing concern; such further discussion as this new edition may stimulate will hopefully involve not just Arabists, though these are obviously its primary audience, but also students and colleagues in Byzantine and Syriac studies and other adjacent fields.

Readers will find that this new edition represents a thorough revision of the original German text, which may now be regarded as superseded. Much new material has been introduced, and an effort has been made to take advantage of the rich insights to be gained from several sources which were either unavailable for consultation for the German study, or generally unrecognized at that time for their early date and significance. Of these, the *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Azdī and the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī have been especially valuable. On the other hand, an effort has been made to avoid the temptation to increase the bulk of the notes with new references which do not significantly enhance our knowledge or comprehension of the topic under discussion—a point does not become twice as clear if the references pertaining to it are doubled.

The preparation of this edition has been facilitated by the invaluable assistance of several colleagues. To Dr. Michael Bonner I am grateful for the time and effort he has devoted to rendering the German text into smooth and accurate English. Professors Averil Cameron and Tarif Khalidi read a draft of the English text, offered useful comments on numerous points, and drew attention to areas where further consideration was required. The excellent index was prepared by Brenda Hall, MA, registered indexer of the Society of Indexers.

My greatest debt of gratitude, however, is to Dr. Lawrence I. Conrad, without whose efforts this edition could hardly have appeared at all, and certainly not in its present form. Quite apart from his key rôle in organizing and sustaining the project, he has contributed enormously to the content of the book itself. Many of the revisions, additions, and directions for new development are based on the marginal notes to his well-worn copy of the German text, or were suggested by him during our many stimulating sessions in Hamburg and London. Access to his superb collection of historical texts and modern historiographical studies has been instrumental to our work, and his own research in early

Arabic historiography has contributed much to the book as a whole. The English edition thus represents an enterprise of scholarly collaboration in the full sense of the term, and in citation should be referred to as "Noth/Conrad".

Finally, I should like to stress that while the book has changed in many ways, the purpose of its collaborators remains the same—to offer a practical guide to the problems which must be recognized and taken into account in any attempt to study early Islamic history. As before, it will emerge that Arab-Islamic historical tradition contains much which, however richly it may inform us about the perceptions and views of later times, reveals nothing *per se* about the historical object of its discussion. Such problems require that the researcher remain cognizant of the widely varying origins and character of the materials before him, and demonstrate that traditional positivist approaches to the subject are, as others have also argued, essentially untenable. But while the difficulties confronting the historian of early Islamic times are undoubtedly considerable, it should not be concluded that they require the abandonment of Arab-Islamic tradition as a source for historical inquiry on early Islamic times; nor should they be taken to imply that as a more firmly grounded view of early Islam emerges, it will bring to light a history utterly unrecognizable in terms of the tradition itself. Great civilizations may not easily give up the secrets of their formative eras, but do not lose sight entirely of the momentous events and ideas which brought them into being.

Albrecht Noth

INTRODUCTION

The period from the death of the prophet Muḥammad (11/632) until the death of his fourth "deputy", the caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (40/661), encompasses some 30 years. Never again in the history of Islam would so many events of such significance take place within so short a space of time; never again in Islamic historical tradition would so much be handed down concerning so short a period of time as there was for these three decades; and nowhere else, despite the richness of the sources, does the historian of Islam who wishes to reconstruct what actually happened encounter such great difficulties as he does here.

Consequently, a thorough critique of the sources must precede the reconstruction of what actually happened, and this is the objective of the following investigation. In doing so, this inquiry will limit itself to historiographical literature in the strict sense. That is to say, other genres such as biography and geography, which at times may offer historical reports, will not be taken into primary consideration, even though these genres must, in the nature of things, be brought in frequently to clarify certain problems, and despite the fact that the same sorts of materials that made their way into later historical collections also appeared in other types of literary sources. Al-Ṭabarī (wr. 303/915), the most broad-ranging and detailed of the early compilers, will set the chronological limit for the historiographical literature to be examined.[1]

[1]On this historiographical landmark, see now Franz-Christoph Muth, *Die Annalen von aṭ-Ṭabarī im Spiegel der europäischen Bearbeitungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1983); Franz Rosenthal, "General Introduction", in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, I: *From Creation to the Flood* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 5–154.

The goal of this source-critical investigation is a purely practical one. Anyone who has ever come into contact with Arabic historical traditions dealing with the period of the early caliphs will have learned that criteria for the evaluation of these traditions—and thus for their application to a relevant context—can be established only with considerable difficulty. This book is devoted to an attempt to work out at least some such criteria.

A number of outstanding studies have already dealt with this subject. These works fall into two groups. The first group is represented by the investigations of such scholars as Franz Rosenthal,[2] Nabia Abbott,[3] A.A. Duri,[4] and Fuat Sezgin.[5] A common characteristic of these books is that they tend to take as the object of their consideration not the stuff of tradition, the material itself which has been handed down to us, so much as the manner and style in which it has been transmitted. They deal with such matters as the reasons for the development of an Islamic historical tradition, the original point of departure of such a tradition, the question of written and oral transmission, the manner in which one transmitter takes information from another, and the position of history in relation to the other Islamic sciences. In short, they are concerned more with the literary genre of "the composition and transmission of history" than with its results, the traditions themselves.

The questions posed by investigations of this type and the results which they have achieved are without any doubt of great interest for this study. They do not, however, constitute its point of departure or its theme. Keeping in mind the practical goal of indicating how to make appropriate use of the traditions, this study will proceed from the very form and content of these traditions. The questions of how and under what circumstances they came about will be of interest only insofar as they can help to achieve this goal.

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[2] *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 3–197.

[3] *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, I: *Historical Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 5–31.

[4] *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, ed. and trans. Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[5] *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967–proceeding), I, 235–56.

The traditions themselves are the theme of the second group of studies: the investigations of M.J. de Goeje,[6] Julius Wellhausen,[7] N.A. Mednikov,[8] and Leone Caetani.[9] These studies are on the whole so meticulously argued, and their results have been so widely accepted, that one may well ask whether and why it should be necessary to undertake yet more research on this theme. Having answered the former question in the affirmative, response to the latter obliges us to provide a fundamental critique of these earlier works. This critique will allow us, at the same time, to set forth a fuller outline of the present study.

The titles of the above-mentioned four studies show clearly what these authors wished to achieve with their critical investigation of the sources of the Islamic tradition: namely, a presentation of early history. De Goeje and Mednikov (in the relevant sections of his book) sought to write the history of the conquest of Syria/Palestine; for Wellhausen and Caetani it was a matter of describing the epoch of the first four caliphs. This uniting of source criticism with the presentation of history had two drawbacks. First, in evaluating the results of their source criticism, the authors had to make certain concessions in favor of a generally convincing picture of the sequence of events. Their studies still bear the traces of this process. Second, each of these authors limited his critical efforts to a certain group of traditions which he thought most likely to provide him with a foundation for a presentation of the events he wished to describe. Criticism was thus not brought to bear upon a representative cross-section of all the available traditions, but rather was limited to discrete groups of reports restricted in scope and content by the researcher's topical or regional interests. De Goeje, for example, sought to establish the course and chronology of the con-

[6] *Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1900).

[7] "Prolegomena zur ältesten Geschichte des Islams", in his *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, VI (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899), 1–160.

[8] *Palestina ot zavoevaniia eia Arabami do krestovych pochodov po arabskim istočnikam* [Palestine from its conquest by the Arabs until the Crusades, according to the Arabic sources], 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: Izdanie imperatorskago pravoslavnago palestinskago obščestva, 1897–1903), I, 1–644, on sources and the early caliphate to the death of 'Uthmān.

[9] *Annali dell'Islam* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1905–26).

quests in Syria, and therefore based his source criticism not on the general category of "conquest traditions", but rather confined it to the more limited corpus of material on the Syrian conquests in particular.

We shall explain presently why it is necessary to address one's source criticism to all available traditions. For the moment, we may state that because of the drawbacks posed by such methods, the present investigation will deliberately avoid combining source criticism with historical description.

Further, the studies of de Goeje, Wellhausen, Mednikov, and Caetani agree on the basic starting-points of their source criticism. They begin with the assumption that each of the great early compilations, which date from between approximately 750 and 850 and comprise the sources of such formal historians as al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarī, represents a distinct historical picture of the period of the early caliphs. They work out these historical perspectives, and then use them as the basis for their evaluation of the sources. In this manner they arrive at the conclusion, in broad agreement with one another, that two main groups of transmitted material are to be distinguished: the "Medinan" or "Ḥijāzī" school, consisting of the corpus of accounts deriving from the Meccans/Medinans, as transmitted by the compilers Ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/761), al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), and al-Madā'inī (d. 228/843), and the "Iraqi school", comprising the material of the Iraqis as transmitted by the collectors Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) and, above all, Sayf ibn 'Umar (d. 180/796).[10] For the most part they give prefer-

[10] A "Syrian school" is also occasionally mentioned. However, the source critics do not characterize this school precisely, and do not base their source criticism on it as they do in the case of the other two. See Gernot Rotter, "Abū Zur'a ad-Dimašqī (st. 281/894) und das Problem der frühen arabischen Geschichtsschreibung", *WO* 6 (1970–71), 80–104, and the literature cited therein; Shākir Muṣṭafā, "Madrasat al-Shām al-ta'rīkhīya min qabl Ibn 'Asākir wa-min ba'dihi", in *Ibn 'Asākir: Fī dhikrā murūr tis'a mi'a sana 'alā wilādatihi 499/1399* (Damascus: Wizārat al-ta'līm al-'ālī, 1399/1979), I, 333–420; Fred M. Donner, "The Problem of Early Arabic Historiography in Syria", in Muḥammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt, ed., *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām During the Early Islamic Period Up to 40 A.H./640 A.D.* (Amman: University of Jordan, 1987), I, 1–27. In any case, the entire question of a "Syrian school" has been rendered passé by Riḍwān al-Sayyid's recent demonstration that even within a framework allowing for the

ence to reports of the "Medinan school" over those of the "Iraqi school". The Iraqi accounts are rejected because of their legendary character, their pro-Iraqi bias, and their often hair-raising chronology.

We must thus begin with a critique of this "theory of schools". The essentials of what we have to say on this matter have already been set down elsewhere, and so need not be repeated in detail.[11] Here we will expand on several points.

The first argument to be made against the "theory of schools" derives from the peculiar character of Islamic historical tradition, a character which is still recognizable in the tradition as it has come down to us.[12] Unlike the comparable historical tradition of the Christian West, and unlike the historical books of the Old Testament (Wellhausen's previous object of study), the earliest Islamic historical tradition did not consider a longer period of time all at once, and similarly did not consider a sequence of events from a particular point of view. All the larger compilations (these are the only ones which we still have) were based upon individual traditions, which referred to things and events in the minutest detail and were usually very short. These individual traditions, which had the most varied origins (for instance, there were traditions of tribes, of families, of factions), encompassed a great variety of biases and perspectives. From these small building blocks compendia were constructed, limited at first, later broader in scope. But their original compilatory character can be recognized from the fact that they so frequently introduce traditions with a chain of transmitters (*isnād*). And even in the works of such historians as al-Dīnawarī (d. 282/891), al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897), and al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), who do not make

theory of "schools" of Arab-Islamic historical writing, there was no "Syrian school" in the time of interest to us here. See his "The Syrian School of Historical Writing in Early Islam", in Lawrence I. Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography in Early Islamic Times: Studies and Perspectives* (Princeton: Darwin Press, forthcoming); and the overview in Gerhard Conrad, *Abū'l-Ḥusain al-Rāzī (-347/958) und seine Schriften. Untersuchungen zur frühen damaszener Geschichtsschreibung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 1–6.

[11] Albrecht Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen von Nachrichten zur frühen Kalifenzeit", *Der Islam* 47 (1971), 168–99.

[12] See now the detailed study of Stefan Leder, *Das Corpus al-Haiṯam ibn 'Adī (st. 207/822). Herkunft, Überlieferung, Gestalt früher Texte der Aḫbār Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991).

systematic use of *isnāds*, it is still usually clear when a new tradition has been inserted.

Now it would be naive indeed to maintain that the traditions as we now have them in the compilations represent the original individual reports in unadulterated form. Both transmitters and collectors invented and circulated reports on a large scale. They accomplished this precisely through a process of compiling and systematizing, of expanding and abbreviating, of inventing the chronology and the order of events, of omitting and creating, and through other such manipulations. There were numerous possibilities which clearly were amply used.[13]

But let us be absolutely clear about what it means to refer to "falsification" within the framework of historiographical traditions of writing. As used in this book, the concept of "falsification" refers to the results of the work of the transmitters, and not to their motives. That is, it is not meant to convey the notion that tradents and authors worked with the deliberate and consistent aim of producing false or misleading narratives of past events, but rather to assert that the result of the ways in which they handled their material was to give a picture of historical events which was highly distorted, or even entirely wrong.

While it is of course true that all this represented the work of certain individuals, adherents of the theory of schools distort the facts when they try to ascribe these falsifications to clearly identified, known times and places. For instance, they describe the Ḥijāzīs Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī and the Iraqis Abū Mikhnaf and Sayf ibn 'Umar as responsible for the larger historical pictures and the presentations of events which seem to emerge from their various collections. However, the falsification of the historical tradition did not result from any one particular act, but rather from a long process. This process began early, more or less at the very beginning of the historical tradition, and did not end by any means with the great early compilations with which we are now familiar. The above-named compilers are therefore to be considered primarily as links in a long chain of transmitters and tradents handling

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[13]For a particularly vivid example of these trends in operation, see Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Conquest of Arwād: a Source-Critical Study in the Historiography of the Early Medieval Near East", in Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, I: *Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 317–401.

received material, and not as the particular individuals responsible for the biased presentations of early Islamic history.

Accordingly, while these compilers did add their own changes to the material which they had assembled, they were nonetheless *collectors* of historical reports first and foremost. The individual reports had by that time already undergone a long process of change. But these changes cannot be ascribed to a single region, to a single group, or even to a single school. They had their origins, rather, in a variety of geographical areas and in different social environments. An exception may be found only in the case of collections which address a single highly restricted theme in favor of one particular faction. So far as I know, the only such collections to have survived are those of al-Azdī (fl. *ca.* 190/805), whose history of the Arab conquest of Syria presents a pro-Ḥimṣī viewpoint and exalts the rôle of the southern tribes,[14] Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim (d. 212/827), author of a thoroughly pro-ʿAlid compilation on the confrontation between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya at Ṣiffīn,[15] and Abū Isḥāq al-Thaqafī (d. 283/896), compiler of another pro-ʿAlid collection of material on ʿAlī's conflicts with his enemies.[16]

Having escaped from the paradigm of the "schools", we may now remark that each of the various compilations, first, contains many contradictions within itself relative to its conception of history and its presentation of events; and second, is often very similar to other compilations in precisely the same respects. A thorough investigation of those

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[14]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, ed. William Nassau Lees (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1854). This work was long neglected as a concoction of the time of the Crusades, due almost entirely to the critique of M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire sur le Fotouho's-Scham attribué à Abou Ismaïl al-Baçri* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1864). See the reassessment in Lawrence I. Conrad, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests in Bilād al-Shām: Some Historiographical Observations", in al-Bakhīt, ed., *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām*, I, 28–62.

[15]Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Al-Mu'assasa al-ʿarabīya al-ḥadītha, AH 1382). Cf. Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, 47–48 and the literature cited therein.

[16]Al-Thaqafī, *Kitāb al-ghārāt*, ed. Mīr Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Urmawī (Tehran: Anjuman-i āthār-i millī, AH 1395). See the editor's long introduction to the text; also Ursula Sezgin, *Abū Miḫnaf. Ein Beitrag zur Historiographie der umaiyadischen Zeit* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 164–71; *idem*, "Abū Miḫnaf, Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl aṯ-Ṯaqafī und Muḥammad b. Aʿtham über *ġārāt*", *ZDMG* 131 (1981), "Wissenschaftliche Nachrichten", *1–2.

sections of the compilation of Sayf ibn 'Umar retained by al-Ṭabarī has shown that Sayf could not possibly have had a unified conception of history which could be related to a "school".[17] Sayf's collection exhibits many gross contradictions in matters of fact. It also juxtaposes within itself widely discrepant accounts, based in turn upon larger historical presuppositions which are clearly at odds.[18]

Even the relatively few fragments which have survived from Ibn Isḥāq's compilation of caliphal history (*Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*) provide the researcher with clear evidence against the theory of schools. To begin with, we find factual contradictions, as when 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm is supposed to have been at one and the same time in Malaṭya on the upper Euphrates[19] and at al-Qādisīya in Iraq.[20] But beyond this, we find the *Medinan* Ibn Isḥāq transmitting pro-*Iraqi* traditions, as in a saying attributed to Khālid ibn al-Walīd in which the conqueror of Iraq gives precedence to the conquest of Iraq over that of Syria;[21] and in a report that Mesopotamia (al-Jazīra) was conquered from al-Kūfa (that is, from Iraq) with Kūfan troops,[22] while most other authorities present the conquest of Mesopotamia as a Syrian undertaking.[23]

A similar situation prevails in other compilations. For instance, in the *Futūḥ Miṣr* of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/870), 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ figures on the one hand as the celebrated initiator and hero of the Egyptian campaign, even to the extent of being compared with Moses,[24] while on the other hand he appears in a very poor light in certain other traditions: as when a Companion of the Prophet must

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[17] Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 168–99.

[18] *Ibid.*, 171–79.

[19] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje *et al.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879–1901), I, 2349:5–10.

[20] *Ibid.*, I, 2350:3–5. On both passages, see de Goeje, *Conquête de la Syrie*, 134–35.

[21] Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 193–94.

[22] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2505:6–7.

[23] Cf. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, IV, 32–48; Nadine Posner, "Whence the Muslim Conquest of Northern Mesopotamia?", in Farhad Kazemi and R.D. McChesney, eds., *A Way Prepared: Essays on Islamic Culture in Honor of Richard Bayly Winder* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1988), 27–52.

[24] Cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, ed. Charles C. Torrey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 151:3–7.

assume the command from him, because of his incompetence, so as to assure the Muslims of victory;[25] when he receives a scolding from 'Umar because of his tardy delivery of Egyptian taxes to Medina;[26] and when, on his deathbed, he anxiously ponders his past conduct in office.[27]

In traditions collected by al-Balādhurī we also find, aside from other contradictions, assessments of a single person which fundamentally differ from one another—precisely as one would expect from an author whose rôle was primarily that of a collector/compiler. The long chapter in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf* on the caliph 'Uthmān thus includes traditions which lay stress upon this caliph's superior traits, above all his early conversion to Islam and his special status as a faithful Companion of the Prophet;[28] while elsewhere it includes traditions in which 'Uthmān is mercilessly pilloried for his inadequacies and mistakes.[29]

Al-Dīnawarī combined reports on the caliph 'Alī and his followers, together with reports on 'Alī's bitterest opponents, the Khārijites.[30] These reports give positive assessments of both the quarrelling parties; they go so far as to compare, in Qur'ānic fashion, the departure of the Khārijites from 'Alī's camp with Moses' exodus from Egypt.[31]

Gustav Richter has shown that while the historical compendium of al-Ya'qūbī does include a number of traditions which exhibit a Shī'ite tendency, in accordance with that author's own bias, this compendium does not otherwise differ essentially from the Sunnī historical tradition.[32] On the basis of this and similar observations, Richter has em-

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[25] *Ibid.*, 79:14–21.

[26] *Ibid.*, 158:13–161ult.

[27] *Ibid.*, 180:12–181:8, esp. 181:3–4.

[28] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, ed. S.D.F. Goitein (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1936), 1–15.

[29] *Ibid.*, 25–29.

[30] Al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. Vladimir Guirgass and Ignatius Kratchkovsky (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1888–1912), 174–215 ('Alids), 215–30 (Khārijites).

[31] *Ibid.*, 218:7–11, alluding to Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ (28), vss. 20–21: "So he departed therefrom, fearful and vigilant; he said: 'My Lord, deliver me from the people of the evildoers'. And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me on the right way'."

[32] *Das Geschichtsbild der arabischen Historiker des Mittelalters* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1933), 13–14; also William G. Millward, "The Sources of al-Ya'qūbī and the Question of Shī'a Partiality", *Abr-Nahrain* 12 (1971–72), 47–74.

phasized the "strung-together character" (*Nebeneinanderhafte*) of Arabic historical writing.[33] To a certain extent, we may even observe this "strung-together character" in historical works devoted to the cause of a single party, as in the collection of reports on Ṣiffīn by Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, which has already been mentioned above. The views and arguments of Mu'āwiya's party are not passed over in silence, but rather are reported at length,[34] if only then to be refuted in accordance with the views of the 'Alid side.

By way of rounding out the picture, we may further give some examples of compilations of traditions which are *opposed* to one another. These compilations belong to genres other than historiography, and thus are not part of our present subject. Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) speaks with approval of the accomplishments of the Umayyad caliphs, despite his outspoken pro-'Abbāsid attitude.[35] 'Umar ibn Shabba (d. 264/877) takes great pains to juxtapose differing opinions on the 'Alid rebellion of 145/762.[36] Finally, we have the early jurists who composed books of *ikhtilāf*, which are collections of differing views on legal questions.[37]

For all this, each of the early historical collections under investigation here does indisputably display certain characteristic qualities of its own. Of these some may be traced to the compiler's choice of theme, others to the way in which the collected materials have been reworked and edited in the collections. Nonetheless, it is impossible to speak of a unified historical picture, deriving from a "school", in any one of the historical compilations. What emerges as characteristic, rather, is an overall abundance of conceptions of history. This is already sensed by Duri, who, while referring to "schools" of historical

[33]Richter, *Geschichtsbild*, 22.

[34]Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, 200:7–12, 239:9–241:2, and frequently elsewhere.

[35]Abbott, *Arabic Literary Papyri*, I, 19.

[36]Tilman Nagel, "Ein früher Bericht über den Aufstand des Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh im Jahre 145 h", *Der Islam* 46 (1970), 227–62.

[37]The subject headings of Abū Yūsuf's *Kitāb al-kharāj* (Cairo/Būlāq: Al-Maṭba'a al-amīrīya, AH 1302) are already arranged this way. Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb al-amwāl*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-tijārīya al-kubrā, AH 1353) is constructed according to the *ikhtilāf* principle, though not named according to it. Finally, there is al-Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*, ed. Joseph Schacht (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1933).

writing, modifies Wellhausen's theory into one which views the sources in terms of an "Islamic" perspective typical of Medina and a "tribal" perspective typical of Iraq, with varying degrees of reciprocal influence between them.[38] But here too it can be shown that attempts to formulate broad categories which stand diametrically opposed to one another do not accurately convey the true character of historical awareness and transmission in early Islamic times.[39]

Indeed, it is precisely with respect to their view of history that the various collections exhibit close links with one another. That is to say, in any one collection we can frequently identify conceptions of history which are at odds with one another, if not in outright contradiction; together with these go similarly discrepant or contradictory presentations of events. And in every such case it is possible to identify parallels in other collections. This further undermines the theory that each collection represents a self-contained unit.

I have gone into this matter more closely elsewhere, and have shown that nearly all the characteristics which Wellhausen and, following him (more pointedly), Caetani,[40] named as typical of the "Iraqi school", and in particular of its main "exponent", Sayf ibn 'Umar, are likewise to be encountered, to greater or lesser degree, in other collections.[41] These characteristics include: the conceptualization of the early Islamic state as a strictly centralized structure; systematization and schematization of events; a predilection for anecdotes; consideration of the earliest conquests in a religious light; an inclination for listing by name as many persons as possible; and the singling out and praising of Iraq.

Here it is not necessary to set out all the evidence once again. Merely by way of completing the picture, we may point to several traditions

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[38]Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, 39–40, 60–61, 113–14, 144. His views on this are most explicitly stated in his recent *The Historical Formation of the Arab Nation: a Study in Identity and Consciousness*, trans. Lawrence I. Conrad (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 90.

[39]See Fred M. Donner, "The Tribal Perspective in Early Islamic Historiography", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming.

[40]Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, II.1, 549–53, 563–69; II.2, 1184–92, esp. 1191–92.

[41]Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 179–97. See also Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Sayf ibn 'Umar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship", *Der Islam* 67 (1990), 1–26, offering further contributions toward a reassessment of Sayf and his position in early Islamic historiography.

from the collection of the *Medinan* Ibn Isḥāq which clearly exhibit traits usually considered to be typically "Iraqi".

The concept of strong, central, caliphal power is an anachronism upon which we shall have more to say in the next chapter.[42] Here we may simply note that it is frequently encountered in the stereotyped letters from caliphs, by means of which the first successors of the Prophet are supposed to have exerted influence over the course of events from their seat in Medina. These include a missive from Abū Bakr to Khālid ibn al-Walīd, containing instructions to march into Iraq;[43] a letter from the caliph ʻUmar to Saʻd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, the governor of al-Kūfa, a letter which is supposed to have resulted in the conquest of Mesopotamia (al-Jazīra);[44] and correspondence between ʻAmr ibn al-ʻĀṣ and ʻUmar concerning certain events which took place during the conquest of Egypt: here it would appear that ʻAmr was completely unable to function without constant contact with Medina.[45]

Systematization and schematization prevail over purposeful description of actual events in, for instance, the account of Khālid's first battles in Iraq.[46] Elsewhere, ʻUmar takes counsel with the Medinans over the measures to be taken after the Muslims' defeat at the hands of the Persians at the Battle of the Bridge; these deliberations finally lead to the nomination of Saʻd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ as commander in Iraq[47]—a tradition, moreover, which the Iraqi Sayf ibn ʻUmar took up from the Medinan Ibn Isḥāq.[48] We see this trend further in the group of traditions dealing with the battles of al-Yarmūk, al-Qādisīya, and Nihāwand, a group which consists essentially of topoi and anecdotes strung together.[49] Finally, we have an account giving the reasons why ʻUthmān's Egyptian opponents turned back toward Medina, and began to entertain the idea of murdering the caliph—an anecdotal pseudo-

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[42] See below, 55–57.
[43] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2016:15–17.
[44] *Ibid.*, I, 2505:6–11.
[45] *Ibid.*, I, 2589ult–2590:6.
[46] *Ibid.*, I, 2016:15–2018:2.
[47] *Ibid.*, I, 2214:8–2215:6. He finally becomes commander because a letter from him reaches the council just in time.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*, I, 2347:1–2348:2, 2349ult–2350:5, 2596:9–2598:12.

cause, having to do with a captured letter, takes the place of the actual causes.[50]

Even in the few fragments which have come down to us from Ibn Isḥāq's collection, there is absolutely no lack of anecdotes: in this respect Ibn Isḥāq yields nothing to Sayf. Such anecdotes are to be found in accounts of the fight against Ṭulayḥa and Musaylima, the leaders of the *ridda*.[51] The material which Ibn Isḥāq transmits concerning the dismissal of Khālid is anecdotal, as are his accounts of how 'Umar behaved during the "plague of 'Amwās", and of the siege of 'Uthmān in his house in Medina.[52] We have already mentioned the traditions on al-Yarmūk, al-Qādisīya, and Nihāwand. Finally, the well-known account of Khālid's crossing of the desert also comes from the compilation of Ibn Isḥāq.[53]

The tendency to lend a religious tinge to the earliest Muslim conquests can likewise be identified in Ibn Isḥāq's collection. Thus, according to a tradition on the battle of Ajnādayn, the Byzantine commander is told by a spy whom he has sent to scout out the Muslim camp that his opponents are "monks by night and horsemen during the day", news which causes him to despair of victory.[54] This tradition is also to be found—in a different context—in Sayf.[55] In the accounts of the battle of al-Qādisīya, we find the Muslims calling upon the Persians to embrace Islam.[56] Al-Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin desired fervently to exchange his activity as a tax collector for that of a warrior against the unbelievers; to this pious wish he is said to have owed his promotion to command of the Muslim forces at Nihāwand.[57] The Muslim troops in Egypt are supposed to have busied themselves as missionaries to their Christian prisoners.[58]

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[50] *Ibid.*, I, 2983:6–2984:12.

[51] *Ibid.*, I, 1890:6–1891:11 (Ṭulayḥa), 1940:11–1941:17 (Musaylima). Al-Ṭabarī's remark at I, 1940:11–12 is also instructive: namely, that the tradition just cited *resembles* the one preceding, taken from Sayf ibn 'Umar.

[52] *Ibid.*, I, 2148:10–2150:3, 2511:12–2513:15, 3003:5–3004:2.

[53] *Ibid.*, I, 2121:12–2126ult.

[54] *Ibid.*, I, 2125:16–2126:9.

[55] *Ibid.*, I, 2395:2–2396:3.

[56] *Ibid.*, I, 2353:5–17.

[57] *Ibid.*, I, 2596:9–2597:5.

[58] *Ibid.*, I, 2583:1–6.

Traditions from the collection of Ibn Isḥāq can also be cited as examples of the effort to list by name as many persons as possible. Six people, whose names are given, are supposed to have washed the Prophet's corpse.[59] It is possible to recite the names of the leaders of three troop formations of one army which set out in pursuit of the Persians after the battle of al-Qādisīya.[60] In one of the traditions which we have just cited concerning the missionary efforts of Muslim troops in Egypt, one of the Christian converts is named: Abū Maryam 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ("Father of Mary, the servant of God, son of the servant of the Merciful")—a transparent fiction.[61] Finally, in the account of the battle of Nihāwand there appears a list of seven "leading Companions of the Prophet" (*wujūh aṣḥāb al-nabī*) who are supposed to have participated in the fighting.[62]

Moreover, it has already been mentioned that Ibn Isḥāq's collection includes traditions which are obviously pro-Iraqi.[63]

There can thus be no further doubt that the theory of schools as it was formulated in its time does not correspond adequately to the facts. We must now inquire into the reasons which led to the rise of this theory.

Wellhausen took the compiler Sayf ibn 'Umar as the starting point for his source criticism. His contemporaries de Goeje and Mednikov did the same, as did Caetani, who later followed in his footsteps. The reason for doing so was purely formal: since al-Ṭabarī's presentation of the period of the early caliphs had made more use of Sayf than of anyone else, most of the traditions available concerning that period had of necessity to come from Sayf. But any rigorous critic could see the deficiencies of Sayf's compilation.

By contrast, extant traditions from the Medinan collections were in extremely short supply. One could therefore gain the impression that the Medinans had transmitted material which was not as absurd as that offered by Sayf, nor as legendary or schematic. This impression then grew simply because, in the absence of a genuine, complete object

[59] *Ibid.*, I, 1830:10–1831:3.
[60] *Ibid.*, I, 2358:8–12.
[61] *Ibid.*, I, 2583:8.
[62] *Ibid.*, I, 2597:5–9.
[63] See above, 8.

of comparison, it was impossible properly to compare the two. We have already mentioned the fact that Sayf's collection agrees on a number of fundamental points with the (relatively few) fragments which survive from the collection of Ibn Isḥāq. From this we may conclude that these two collections did not actually differ from one another all that much; that is, that both contained legendary material and betrayed underlying biases, and were prone to systematization and schematization, all in more or less similar doses.

The second reason for the rise of the school theory has to do with the structure of those books which advocate this theory; specifically, the manner in which they unite source criticism with the writing of history. In Wellhausen's day, if you wanted to write history you were required, for better or worse, to establish a more or less plausible picture of the chronological sequence of events.[64] Now, as these authors set about creating such a picture, it would have become apparent to them that the dating and arrangement of traditions in Sayf's collection are unconvincing, and on occasion downright fantastic. Medinan traditions, on the other hand, offered a better and clearer dating of events, and a better arrangement of them, even though these traditions still contained plenty of contradictions and absurdities. Lines of reasoning based on chronology therefore played a vital rôle in the upgrading of Medinan traditions, and in the condemnation of Sayf's compilation. Such a procedure is quite understandable if we keep in mind the authors' intention of writing history. Besides, it was no small achievement for the advocates of the "theory of schools" to have worked out a more or less useful *vue d'ensemble* of the chronological sequence of events for the period of the early caliphs—even if their results were often too "good" (that is to say, too "precise").

To be sure, there is a fatal weakness in the method of assessing individual collections both according to their chronology and their arrangement of traditions by subject-matter. Those who take this approach overlook the fact that in early Islamic historical tradition there was originally no link between the content of tradition, on the one

[64]For a broader perspective on this attitude in nineteenth and early twentieth-century German scholarship, see Karl-Georg Faber, *Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 5th ed. (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1982), 10–13.

hand, and the arrangement of these traditions according to absolute or relative chronology, on the other.[65] Consequently, whenever we judge traditions, we must make a fundamental distinction between content and arrangement. The "school theory" advocates, who did not do this, rejected *a priori* material which would otherwise have supplied them with a significant basis for comparison. But in any case, even when we can identify essential differences between collections in their arrangement of material, this in itself is not enough to permit us to assign the traditions *en masse* to particular schools.

Let us now summarize the results of this confrontation with the theory of schools, and draw the consequences for the present study.

1) Quite unconsciously, modern scholars have transferred the circumstances of historical tradition in other, non-Islamic civilizations (the Christian West, ancient Israel) into that of early Islam. In so doing, they have tended to maintain that each of the early Islamic works of history represents a self-contained unit, thoroughly imbued with its own characteristic notions of history and its own biases.

2) This view gained ground for two reasons in particular. First, the scholars in question thought that they could recognize the characteristic conceptions of history which set each of the early collections apart from all the others. Here they neglected to notice that they were comparing something which had, to a large extent, survived intact (Sayf ibn 'Umar) with fragmentary material (Medinan and Syrian traditions), so that a solid basis of comparison was in fact lacking. Second, the collections differed greatly from one another in their chronology and in their arrangement of the traditions. These differences were thought to be related to fundamental discrepancies in the sources' historical outlook. But here there was a failure to notice that the formulation of content and the imposition of arrangement constitute different stages in the process of the transmission of traditions.

3) Beginning with the notion that each collection represents a distinct view of history, the source critics developed the following method.

[65]On this see below, 40–48, 59–61.

First, they would assess each collection as a whole; next, they would place the compilations side by side and evaluate them; finally, they would decide which single collection was best suited to the presentation of history. As a result of this procedure, reports from the Medinan (and occasionally Syrian) collections were accounted more trustworthy, while the Iraqi collections, above all that of Sayf ibn 'Umar, were largely discounted.

4) Against this, we have shown in the discussion above that each collection contains within itself completely discrepant—and indeed, mutually contradictory—historical notions.

5) It has also become apparent that various biases and conceptions of history permeate all the collections. As far as their view of history is concerned, therefore, no single one of the collections can be considered as a self-contained unit.

6) We may look for the reason for this in the fact that the early compilers were first and foremost *collectors* of the most varied sorts of material. While it is certainly true that they did redact this material in different ways, they did not reduce it to a single cohesive structure.

7) We may now suggest a new point of departure for source criticism. We propose to take *all* compilations into consideration, bringing together all individual traditions which have in common certain forms, conceptions of history, and biases; and then to attempt to discover order in these complexes of traditions, and to evaluate them. This approach will enable us to make a complete assessment of all the traditions which belong together, instead of evaluating heterogeneous material.

It would be a great misunderstanding to conclude from the above that we mean to imply that there never existed any such thing as an Iraqi, Medinan, or perhaps even Syrian historical tradition. It is absolutely clear, however, that no single one of these early collections represents *exclusively* any *one* of these groups of traditions; and that consequently one cannot judge in advance from a compiler's place of origin as to the character of the traditions which he has collected.

It has already been stated above that this study will avoid any connection between source criticism and the presentation of actual history, because of the disadvantages which accompany such a connection. We have already discussed one of these disadvantages: namely, that once Wellhausen and his colleagues had developed a somewhat plausible chronological framework, they were misled into emphasizing the chronological and organizational aspects of their material to a greater extent than was warranted. Another important disadvantage was that they limited their criticism to those reports which they subsequently needed for their presentation of historical events. They failed, meanwhile, to expand their criticism to all the transmitted material which they then had available. Furthermore, in presenting an event or a series of events, they would as a rule adduce only those traditions which had been transmitted in the sources as relating specifically to that event or series of events. We must now explain more fully why this procedure fails to do justice to the peculiar character of early Islamic tradition.

Elsewhere we have thoroughly investigated a tradition on the battle of Iṣfahān,[66] a tradition which probably originated in al-Baṣra around 132/750. It was ascertained that in its origins this tradition probably had nothing whatsoever to do with Iṣfahān, being instead a Nihāwand tradition. It was then determined that this tradition is likewise worthless as a source for the battle of Nihāwand, since almost all of its components can also be identified in various other traditions on the conquests. In the final analysis, this tradition about the conquest of Iṣfahān/Nihāwand thus represents nothing more than a conglomeration of topoi of the *futūḥ* tradition.

Here we do not have an isolated phenomenon, but rather an extreme example selected from among many similar cases.[67] Along these lines, we have already indicated that in reconstructing an event or a development, it is not sufficient to draw only upon those traditions which relate to it directly. Instead we must take an all-encompassing view of the forms and the biases of early Islamic tradition as a whole, in order

[66] Albrecht Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand. Eine quellenkritische Studie zur frühislamischen Historiographie", *ZDMG* 118 (1968), 274–96.

[67] That the totally baseless account is not an anomaly, but rather very common, is discussed and demonstrated, with numerous examples, in Conrad, "Conquest of Arwād", 386–98.

to assess accurately even *one* such occurrence. This will become clearer in the following examples.

Traditions about sieges and the conquest of cities are not rare in the historical accounts of the period of the early caliphs. If we consider each of these traditions by itself, it seems plausible enough: things could have happened that way. This impression no longer holds, however, if we collect and compare reports on the conquest of different cities. For instance, Damascus and Caesarea in Syria,[68] Bābilyūn/al-Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria in Egypt,[69] Tustar in Khūzistān,[70] and Cordoba in Spain[71] are all described as having fallen into the hands of the Muslims in precisely the same fashion. Certain motifs recur constantly in different combinations: the traitor who, with or without an *amān* (safe-conduct), points out a weak spot in the city's fortifications to the Muslim besiegers; a celebration in the city which diverts the attention of the besieged; then a few assault troops who scale the walls, often with a ladder; a shout of *Allāhu akbar!*, "God is great!", from the assault troops as a sign that they have entered the town; the opening of one of the gates from inside, and the onslaught of the entire army. That these details are so readily transportable from accounts of one event to those of another is in itself sufficient to indicate that they represent not the reporting of history, but rather the deployment of literary stereotypes.

Let us remain with the cities. There is a tradition, which can be traced back to Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128/745), according to which 'Umar wrote a letter to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ forbidding him to settle the Muslim troops in Alexandria, in the western reaches of the Nile delta. 'Umar is supposed to have wanted to avoid having a body of water separating the conquerors from himself, and al-Fusṭāṭ accordingly be-

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[68]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2150:4–2155:10, and anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1866), 120:17–123:1 (Damascus); Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844) in al-Balādhurī, *Futuḥ al-buldān*, 141:11–142:1 (Caesarea).

[69]'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ (d. 219/834) in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 63:9–11 (Bābilyūn), and Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'īd al-Balawī in *ibid*, 80:17–23 (Alexandria).

[70]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 380:3–381:1; and anon. in al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 138:2–139:13.

[71]Anon. in *Akhbār majmū'a fī fatḥ al-Andalus*, ed. with Spanish trans. by Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara as *Ajbar Machmuâ: crónica anónima del siglo XI* (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1867), 10:9–12:6.

came the military base.[72] In and of itself, this tradition might seem plausible. But precisely the same story is recounted concerning the foundation of al-Kūfa: this site was also selected because, among other reasons, 'Umar would not allow any body of water to come between the warriors and himself.[73] A third tradition reports a similar story: 'Umar was against permitting the tribe of Hamdān to settle in al-Jīza (Giza), because then a body of water would lie between Hamdān and the main center of al-Fusṭāṭ.[74] In none of these three cases may we take 'Umar's prohibition at face value; further, the perils posed by such stereotypical features may be gauged by the fact that attempts to rescue them will almost inevitably lead to further difficulty. An excellent recent study on early al-Fusṭāṭ, for example, notes the suspicious repetition of this narrative theme, and then seeks to explain it away in terms of 'Umar's "common policy" and his "firm restraint" of the Arab armies, all this effected through a precisely defined hierarchy of command and an efficient communications system which rapidly and constantly kept the caliph "informed in detail on every matter".[75] But as has been observed above, the notion of a firm central power in earliest Islamic times is itself an illusory image retrojected from the times of the later tradents discussing this history; and if the prohibition of settling "across the water" is already a transparently mobile motif, it is nowhere near as transportable, or obvious, as the topos of "letters of caliphs".

It may perhaps be possible to advance a step further in this instance, but only by way of hypothesis. The motif in question might belong to a group of traditions which take a dim view of the too wide-ranging and overconfident advance of the conquering Muslim armies. Such views are ascribed mostly to 'Umar (I) ibn' al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44), but they seem better suited to the outlook and policy of 'Umar (II) ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20),[76] or else—more broadly—to a time

[72]In Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 91:2–7.

[73]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2483:8–9; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, 2360:3–5; al-Wāqidī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 275:7–12.

[74]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb/Ibn Hubayra in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 128:19.

[75]Wladislaw B. Kubiak, *Al-Fustat: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1987), 58–61, 144 n. 4.

[76]Cf. Julius Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902), 167.

when the Muslims had reached the limits of their capacity to expand, and had come to appreciate the difficulty of maintaining control over armies operating at great distances from the center of the state.

It may not be immediately obvious that in assessing reports on the battle of al-Qādisīya, we ought to refer to traditions on Ṣiffīn, and vice versa. But it is necessary to do this all the same, since so many similarities can be identified in the traditions on these two events, however different their historical contexts.[77]

Those who sought to remove the caliph 'Uthmān from his office are said to have made various accusations against the caliph, including that of financial misconduct. A tradition on this theme, transmitted by Abū Mikhnaf, seems quite innocuous when considered by itself. 'Uthmān's governor in al-Kūfa, al-Walīd ibn 'Uqba ibn Abī Mu'ayṭ, is said to have borrowed money from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, who was in charge of the Kūfan *bayt al-māl* (treasury). He then failed to return the money properly, and there arose between governor and treasurer a quarrel in which the caliph became involved. 'Uthmān protected his governor, whereupon Ibn Mas'ūd resigned his position in protest.[78] Another tradition, also transmitted by Abū Mikhnaf, may give us pause. A similar quarrel is supposed to have occurred between the caliph and his treasurer in Medina, with a similar result.[79] But a third tradition, transmitted by Sayf, finally makes it clear that we are dealing here with a recurrent motif. Once again the scene is al-Kūfa, and the treasurer is 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd. But this time the office of governor is held by Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, and the caliph takes Sa'd's misconduct as an occasion to remove him from his governorship. 'Uthmān then names as his successor al-Walīd ibn 'Uqba, who appeared in the first version in the rôle of borrower.[80] The motif thus behaves like a standard contract in law, a form which can be used in different contexts, according to the names which are entered onto it. But it is only after we have brought these three traditions together that we can clearly see that none of them may, with any degree of confidence, be upheld as straightforward

[77]So in general Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, 50. This will be dealt with later at greater length.

[78]Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 30pu–31:5.

[79]*Ibid.*, V, 58:7–59:1.

[80]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2811:14–2813:7, with four *isnāds* differing beyond Sayf.

narration of the events described. One could of course appeal to the oft-encountered "kernel of truth" argument. But in this particular case the futility of this line of reasoning can immediately be seen when we consider the "kernel of truth" embedded in the three traditions cited above: in the reign of the caliph 'Uthmān some money was borrowed in either Medina or al-Kūfa by a man whose name we do not know, and who held some official position; this led to difficulties which had negative consequences for someone. To the historian this is distinctly unhelpful, and an enormous distance short of the apparent clarity and veracity of each of the three traditions, when considered separately.

From these examples it should be apparent that traditions capable of formal comparison can be widely scattered within the early historical tradition as a whole, in material of the most varied origins; and further, that it is indispensable for us to know all this material if we are to assess any individual case correctly. Such a comprehensive knowledge of early traditions is therefore all the more necessary if we wish to recognize falsifications which have been introduced into traditions because of an underlying bias. For this purpose, moreover, those legendary and anecdotal traditions which source criticism has hitherto proscribed so vehemently can also be of great use to the critic. For since the tendentious coloring of such traditions shows itself clearly, knowledge of them can lead us to recognize falsifications in other traditions which on their surface appear to be referring to historical facts.

Certain biases and conceptions of history have been precipitated into the most varied areas within the historical tradition. For instance, the theory of the superiority of the Companions of the Prophet (*aṣḥāb*, *ṣaḥāba*) appears in *futūḥ* traditions, in traditions on the *fitna*, in traditions on cities, in reports on administration, law, and the caliphate, and indeed in practically all areas covered by the early transmitters.[81] But each tradition which is based on this theory can only be classified correctly after it has been examined in connection with all other traditions which touch upon this idea.

There is an entire group of *futūḥ* traditions which risk being falsely interpreted, unless they are linked with those very numerous traditions which set out the more or less systematic conceptions of the jurists

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[81] On this see below, 53–55.

concerning the personal and property rights of the conquered peoples and the taxation and administration of their lands and dwelling-places. These traditions, moreover, are to be found in a great variety of collections, under the most varied rubrics. In general, it may be said that legal questions of all kinds—the scale extends from constitutional law to the validity of a promise of safe-conduct (*amān*)—have also played an important rôle in shaping and determining the early historical tradition. This influence of law on early tradition has already been remarked in individual instances;[82] nonetheless, its true extent and its consequences will be fully recognized only after early tradition has been taken into consideration as a whole.

We may conclude that the peculiar character of the early Islamic historical tradition requires that we examine the sum total of transmitted material, all at once, instead of proceeding from individual collections and distinct subject areas. For first of all, the various compilations are not homogeneous entities, and they resemble one another greatly on many important points. Second, traditions amenable to comparison are not always restricted to individual subject areas, but rather are likely to be found widely scattered under many topic headings.

The plan of the present study follows from these observations. Traditions which in all probability belong together, however different their origins and ostensible subject matter, will be assembled and commented upon, and discussions along similar lines will in turn be grouped into three large chapters, one dealing with the forms of early historical traditions, and two others with topoi and schemata—that is, with the underlying biases which recur in such traditions (here bias is understood in the broadest sense, as intentional and unintentional falsification). Forms and biases do overlap on occasion, but it is still justifiable to view them as distinct areas of investigation. These three chapters will be preceded by a shorter chapter on "themes", which is intended to give the reader a sense of the sorts of questions which preoccupied the early Islamic transmitters of history.

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[82]So Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 139; Robert Brunschvig, "Ibn 'Abdalḥakam et la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes: étude critique", *AIEO* 6 (1942–47), 110–55.

The structure of this book thus differs fundamentally from that of its predecessors. This does not mean that it intends to replace them, or that it could do so. On the contrary, it will refer repeatedly to these earlier studies and will make use of their results. With respect to these previous investigations it thus represents no more than a supplement, but—for the reasons which we have set out—a necessary supplement.

Since the publication of the original German edition of this book in 1973, the field of early Islamic studies has become embroiled in controversy over the central question of whether—and if so, to what extent—the Arab-Islamic sources can be used to reconstruct the events and trends of earliest Islamic times. The works of John Wansbrough[83], Patricia Crone and Michael Cook,[84] and Suliman Bashear,[85] to name some of the leading contributors to the debate, may differ in their conclusions, but all express grave reservations concerning both the overall historicity of the Arab-Islamic literary tradition and the view of early Islamic history which emerges from that tradition. That these revisionist studies raise crucial issues and highlight areas where reassessment is required is beyond doubt; but to point to such difficulties is one thing, and to resolve them clearly another. A central argument of this book will continue to be that the tradition offers much material which, if in need of careful examination, is still of historical value for the early period. It needs to be recalled that when an account is for various reasons found to misrepresent or color what it claims to report, this is in itself a contribution to historical knowledge—if not the same as what one expected or sought. Similarly, while source criticism repudiates some accounts, it vindicates others, as will be seen in several important cases in the pages to follow.

The key question is not whether an entire tradition of historical transmission, vast in both physical proportions and breadth of scope, is or is not to be "trusted", but whether it is possible for modern scholarship to establish reliable *criteria* according to which individual

[83] *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[84] *Hagarism: the Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[85] *Muqaddima fī l-ta'rīkh al-ākhar: naḥwa qirā'a jadīda li-l-riwāya al-islāmīya* (Jerusalem: private printing, 1984).

traditions or groups of traditions can be assessed—not only for their "historicity", but in other ways as well.[86] This book, then, is oriented completely toward the practical goal mentioned at the outset, that of providing criteria for the historiographical assessment of early Islamic traditions, the particular frame of reference here being the first decades after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. These traditions are important not only to historians of early Islam, but also to students of later periods, since traditions of this kind were afterwards of great importance in the subsequent history and historiography of Islam. If this investigation attains this goal, even approximately, then it will have fulfilled its purpose.

[86]Cf. the further remarks in Albrecht Noth, "*Futūḥ*-History and *Futūḥ*-Historiography: the Muslim Conquest of Damascus", *Al-Qanṭara* 10 (1989), 453–62.

CHAPTER I

THE SALIENT THEMES OF EARLY HISTORICAL TRADITION

WE MAY NOW TAKE UP the themes of early Islamic historical tradition. A fully comprehensive analysis is not sought here, nor is it even necessary. Preliminary studies on this topic are entirely lacking, and our goal is to give a general idea of what can be learned from the early transmitters—whether the information they give is true, partially true, or false. Just as important, we intend to give an idea of what can only be learned from them indirectly, or else not at all.

Knowledge of the themes of tradition will afford us insight into two important areas. First, we shall see what it was that to the transmitters seemed important and worth handing down. Even if all this now strikes us as trivial, it must have had some meaning for the time which is described in the transmitters' reports, or else for the time in which they themselves lived. Second, we shall discover the rubrics under which the transmitters considered their own past. These rubrics must necessarily differ greatly from those of anyone who considers this material today, but we must become acquainted with these categories; otherwise we run the risk of construing this history anachronistically.

A knowledge of whatever can be learned from the traditionists must necessarily be supplemented by a knowledge of what they *cannot* teach us. Knowledge of this sort will prevent the modern investigator from asking the sources questions to which they can never give answers. And it will enable him to cast some light into these dark areas, through prudent combination of whatever indirect reports may be available to him.

For historiographical investigation to proceed on a sound basis, two kinds of themes in early Islamic tradition must be clearly distinguished from one another: the primary and the secondary. A primary theme is a subject area which, so far as the extant evidence allows us to judge, represents a genuine topic of early interest, as opposed to an offshoot derived from—and therefore secondary to—one or several such early topics. Secondary themes, on the other hand, are formulations which result in a recasting of material which is already available, material which would originally have belonged to other thematic groups. This process of reworking is a creative one, and therefore will necessarily produce material not to be found in the primary themes. But this "new" information is either literary embellishment or pure fiction: never can it be taken to represent old original material which has, for whatever reason, failed to survive in the primary themes. Never do we encounter such secondary traditions in or close to a form we can take to be "original", for the simple reason that—by definition—no such "original" form ever existed.

When we deal with primary themes, we do not find that all, or even most, of the traditions which they offer us are "original". It is rather the case that all these traditions have undergone a long process of development. The point is that this development began with a very old core of traditions, a core which we find in the primary themes, but which is lacking in the secondary themes. The implication of this for the historian is that when he seeks reliable historical data concerning a given individual or event (as opposed to later discussion or perceptions of these persons or events), he must limit his quest to primary themes: the information he seeks *may* be found in these primary themes, or in such contexts as indicate a primary theme as their ultimate source, but the desired historical information will *never* be found in themes of a purely secondary character. The process of assessing and critiquing historical traditions is thus a delicate task fraught with difficulty, but at the same time, one to which the reliability of all of the researcher's results will be firmly linked.

In addition to sources which are still available today, the following discussion will further take into consideration historical works which have been lost, or which at any rate have not yet been recovered. Relevant information is to be found above all in the *Fihrist*, or "Book

Index", of (Ibn) al-Nadīm, who finished his work about 377/987,[1] and also scattered here and there in various other works. The period under consideration extends to the end of the ninth century AD.

Primary Themes

The topics of demonstrably primary interest to the tradents of early Islamic times were vast in terms of the amount of material they contained, but relatively limited in number. These themes may be categorized as follows:

Ridda

By *ridda* ("apostasy") the traditionists understood the confrontations of the Islamic state of Medina with the tribes of the Arabian peninsula after the death of the Prophet, confrontations which resulted finally in the unification of Arabia under Islamic rule.[2] The designation of these events as "apostasy" is (consciously or unconsciously) a tendentious one, for as Caetani has convincingly demonstrated, the Muslims' opponents in these struggles included not only apostates, but also—and perhaps in the majority of cases—tribes and tribal groups which in the lifetime of Muḥammad had remained largely or completely independent of the political entity led by him.[3]

Ridda as a self-contained theme of tradition can be detected quite early on. As early as Abū Mikhnaf we have the author of a "Book

[1] *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1871–72). On the author, see Johann Fück, "Eine arabische Literaturgeschichte aus dem 10. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (Der *Fihrist* des Ibn an-Nadīm)", *ZDMG* 84 (1930), 111–24; *idem*, art. "Ibn al-Nadīm" in *EI*², III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 895a–896b; *idem*, *Arabische Kultur und Islam im Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1981), 17–30, reprinting his two previous studies; Bayard Dodge, ed. and trans., *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: a Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), I, xv–xxiii.

[2] For an assessment of this movement, see Elias S. Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

[3] *Annali dell'Islam*, II.2, 805–31.

of the *Ridda*" (*Kitāb al-ridda*).[4] Isḥāq ibn Bishr (d. 206/821, i.e. the famous Abū Ḥudhayfa),[5] al-Madā'inī,[6] Abū Isḥāq Ismā'īl ibn 'Īsā al-'Aṭṭār (d. 232/847),[7] and Wathīma ibn Mūsā (d. 237/851),[8] all followed suit with works bearing the same title. The theme of *ridda* is also isolated in such extant compilations as those of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (wr. 204/819),[9] Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854),[10] al-Balādhurī,[11] and al-Ṭabarī.[12]

Sayf ibn 'Umar, who lived in the time of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809), and al-Wāqidī seem to constitute exceptions. The former is said to have written on "Conquests and *Ridda*",[13] the latter on "*Ridda* and the House (*al-dār*)".[14] But from al-Ṭabarī, who quotes Sayf copiously, it may be ascertained that Sayf (in that book) did distinguish clearly between the themes of "conquest" and *ridda*,[15] just as al-Balādhurī in his *Futūḥ al-buldān* treats both conquests and *ridda* without linking them thematically. The character of *ridda* as a specific early theme of historical tradition is set in particularly sharp relief in the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* of Ibn A'tham, who clearly marks off his *ridda* material as treating a topic distinct from what precedes and follows. Nothing precise may be said about al-Wāqidī's book: the title suggests that he wished to draw a comparison between the *ridda* and the upris-

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[4] Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 93:8.

[5] *Ibid.*, 94:1. Cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), *Ta'rīkh Baghdād aw Madīnat al-Salām* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1349/1931), VI, 326:18–328:10 no. 3370.

[6] Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 102:18.

[7] *Ibid.*, 109pu.

[8] Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Waṯīma's Kitāb ar-Ridda aus Ibn Ḥaǧar's Iṣāba* (Mainz: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1951), 228–35.

[9] *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān *et al.* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-'uthmānīya, 1388–95/1968–75), I, 5:5–87ult.

[10] *Ta'rīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-ādāb, 1386/1967), I, 65ult–84:16.

[11] *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 94:4–107:10.

[12] *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1851:13–2012:3. Cf. the collection of these materials in Muḥammad Ḥasan Āl Yāsīn, *Nuṣūṣ al-ridda fī Ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-nahḍa, 1393/1973).

[13] Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 94:5.

[14] *Ibid.*, 99:2.

[15] Cf. Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, 76, 170.

ing of tribal elements against 'Uthmān;[16] but the extant citations from his work on the *ridda* preserved in Ibn A'tham[17] and al-Ṭabarī show no sign of such a linkage, and other biographical and literary sources likewise seem unaware of it.

The general theme of *ridda* may be supposed to represent a synthesis of several narrowly limited groups of traditions. This appears in the subdivisions of the *ridda* traditions which have survived to the present day. These subdivisions represent individual subject areas, at times according to tribes and tribal groupings, at other times according to the deeds and efforts of the leaders of these tribes, at yet other times according to the great battles which took place.[18] We do know of a book which dealt with such a subtheme of *ridda* in monograph form, the now-lost work by Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204/819) on the Islamic polity's campaign against one of its most formidable opponents, the "Book of the Liar Musaylima" (*Kitāb Musaylima al-kadhdhāb*).[19] In this group of traditions, which is thematically narrowly defined, we may surely obtain an idea of what the older (if not the oldest) layers of tradition were like. But from a thematic point of view, even these smaller units of tradition never go beyond what early Islamic tradition as a whole designates as *ridda*. Accordingly, we must see in *ridda* an original theme of early tradition.

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[16]The sources often designate the murder of 'Uthmān as "the day of the House" (*yawm al-dār*); of the many examples, see al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 11:15, 47:20. The word *al-dār* can also mean Medina; see Edward William Lane, *An Arabic–English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93), I.3, 931a–b. It is unlikely, however, that this sense of the term is applicable in the context referred to here.

[17]That al-Wāqidī was one of Ibn A'tham's main sources for the *ridda* is specifically attested in the Bankipore MS of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, which Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh mistakenly took for al-Wāqidī's original text and published as such; see his *Kitāb al-ridda wa-nubdha min Futūḥ al-'Irāq li-... l-Wāqidī* (Paris: Editions Tougui, 1409/1989), 19:6, filling a lacuna in the Hyderabad edition.

[18]Cf. the chapter headings in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1851–2015 (numerous examples); al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 94:4 (*khabar riddat al-'arab*), 100:12 (*riddat banī Walī'a wa-l-Ash'ath ibn Qays...*), 105:1 (*amr al-Aswad al-'Ansī wa-man irtadda ma'ahu bi-l-Yaman*); Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 72:7 (*khabar al-Yamāma*).

[19]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 97:19.

Futūḥ

The great majority of the traditions which deal with the time of the first four caliphs is concerned with the first large-scale conquests of the Muslims outside the Arabian peninsula—in Syria/Palestine, Iraq/Iran, and Egypt/North Africa.[20] These are designated overall as *futūḥ*. *Futūḥ* thus constituted a—if not the—principal historical rubric under which the early traditionists considered the first decades of Islamic history after the death of Muḥammad. Today around 50 works on *futūḥ* are still known by name, and in all likelihood there were many more.

What could only be surmised for the theme of *ridda* is as clear as day for the theme of *futūḥ*, namely the presence of an entire series of subthemes within this general theme. Traditions are brought together in these smaller literary units, basically according to the following historical rubrics: conquest of provinces, storming of cities, and great battles.

Thus there are individual works on the conquests in Iraq,[21] Syria,[22] Egypt,[23] Mesopotamia,[24] Armenia,[25] al-Ahwāz,[26] Jurjān and Ṭabāristān,[27] Kirmān,[28] Sijistān,[29] and other provinces. There existed apparently isolated collections of traditions, for instance, on the taking of the cities of al-Ubulla, al-Ḥīra, and al-Madā'in in the Sasanian Empire, and Buṣrā, Ḥimṣ, Damascus, Jerusalem, Caesarea, Ascalon, and

[20]The conquests in Syria and Iraq are discussed in Fred M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). On Egypt, see Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion*, 2nd ed. by P.M. Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). Both of these thoughtful works consider historiographical problems in detail, although Butler's work is of course old and out of date (Fraser contributes only appendices and additional bibliography).

[21]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 93:9, 99:1, 103:4.

[22]*Ibid.*, 93:8–9 (cf. Sezgin, I, 309 no. 8), 98ult (cf. Sezgin, I, 296), 103:17 (this reading is not certain: cf. the editor's comment; also Sezgin, I, 270 no. 12).

[23]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 103:15.

[24]*Ibid.*, 103:16–17.

[25]*Ibid.*, 54:8, 103:13–14.

[26]*Ibid.*, 54:8–9.

[27]*Ibid.*, 103:19.

[28]*Ibid.*, 103:14.

[29]*Ibid.*, 103:13.

Gaza in Syria/Palestine. Such collections also existed for the battles of Marj al-Ṣuffar, al-Yarmūk, al-Qādisīya, and Nihāwand.[30] Two of these thematically restricted *futūḥ* works have fortunately survived: the very early *Futūḥ al-Shām* by al-Azdī (fl. *ca.* 190/805) on the conquest of Syria, and the *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871) on the conquests in Egypt and North Africa.[31]

Within the history of traditions, those collections of material which adhere to narrowly defined subject areas ought to be older than the compilations of traditions on the general theme of *futūḥ*. For so far as can be seen from extant works and references to lost ones, it is unlikely, and would not in any case have been the rule, that a complex of traditions, originally all-embracing in character, would later have been divided up into separate parts. The most likely succession of *futūḥ* themes in the history of tradition should be, roughly speaking, as follows: the first sieges and conquests; the subjugation of provinces and territories; *futūḥ* as a whole.

The only apparent evidence to the contrary is the fact that many of the collections of traditions devoted to limited subject areas were

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[30] *Ibid.*, 103:1–19. From the manner in which these works are cited it is not absolutely clear in every instance whether we have to do with individual works, or with chapters in larger collections. In the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), for example, there are several chapters which are later named as independent works by Ibn al-Nadīm (see, e.g., 34 n. 45 below). The fact remains, however, that such chapters formed self-contained units.

[31] The books entitled *Futūḥ al-Shām* (ed. William Nassau Lees, Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan Press, 1854–62, and many subsequent Middle East printings) and *Futūḥ Ifrīqiya* (ed. al-Tijānī al-Muḥammadī, Tunis: Maṭbaʿat al-manār, 1966) and ascribed to al-Wāqidī are apparently compilations from a much later period. On the pseudo-Wāqidī *Futūḥ al-Shām*, cf. D.B. Haneberg, "Erörterung über Pseudo-Wakidi's Geschichte der Eroberung Syriens", *Abhandlungen der Königlich-Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-philologische Classe, 9.1 (1860), 125–64; Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la croisade: idéologie et propaganda dans les réactions musulmanes aux Croisades* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1968), 197–200; Rudi Paret, "Die legendäre Futūḥ-Literatur. Ein arabisches Volksepos?", in *La poesia epica e la sua formazione* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1970), 745–47. A quick perusal of the *Futūḥ Ifrīqiya* will lead the reader to a similar conclusion. See John E. Long, *Futūḥ Ifrīqiya: Analysis, Arabic Text, and Translation* (Brandeis University: Ph.D. dissertation, 1978). On other *futūḥ* books ascribed to al-Wāqidī, of which manuscripts are still extant, cf. Sezgin, I, 296 and n. 1. Sezgin leaves open the question of authenticity.

often fixed in writing at the same time as the more all-encompassing compilations, or even, on occasion, later than these. The reason for this apparent discrepancy is that the date on which traditions became fixed in writing was, in the early period, more or less a matter of chance. This date is by no means the same as the time at which the traditions originated and were first circulated. We find further support for this assertion in the fact that the surviving large collections can often be recognized as compounded of smaller units, units which are first traceable as individual works simultaneously with or even later than these larger ones.

Fitna

Fitna in Islamic historiography indicates inter-Muslim confrontations, in other words, civil war. The first great civil war, which began with the murder of the caliph ʻUthmān and ended when Muʻāwiya assumed sole authority, represents another important theme of the early traditionists. However, there do not seem to be any compilations of reports on this theme in general. It differs in this respect from the themes of *ridda* and *futūḥ*. The works which are still known are mainly collections of reports on one of the following three events of the First Civil War: the murder of ʻUthmān, the Battle of the Camel, and the confrontation at Ṣiffīn, each with its immediate prehistory.[32]

The oldest known work on the murder of the third caliph seems to be "The Book of the Electoral Council (*shūrā*)[33] and the Murder of ʻUthmān" by Abū Mikhnaf.[34] After him came Abū ʻUbayda Maʻmar ibn al-Muthannā (d. between 208/823 and 213/826),[35] al-Madā'inī,[36] and ʻUmar ibn Shabba (d. 264/877),[37] each of whom wrote a *Kitāb maqtal ʻUthmān* ("Book of the Murder of ʻUthmān").

[32]There are also collections devoted exclusively to ʻAlī's battle against the Khārijites at Nahrawān. Cf. Sezgin, I, 307 no. 4, 323 no. 31.

[33]This *shūrā* is supposed to have been appointed by ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb on his deathbed, after which it elected ʻUthmān as caliph.

[34]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 93:12.

[35]*Ibid.*, 54:8.

[36]*Ibid.*, 102:18 (cf. Sezgin, I, 315 no. 19).

[37]*Ibid.*, 112pu. Cf. below, 35 n. 55.

Nearly all the known compilers of the eighth and ninth centuries AD collected reports on the Battle of the Camel. This is the battle in which the caliph 'Alī crushed his Medinan opponents, the Prophet's widow 'Ā'isha and the famous Companions al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām and Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubayd Allāh. These compilations all bore the title *Kitāb al-jamal*, "Book of the Camel". The authors include Abū Mikhnaf,[38] Sayf ibn 'Umar,[39] Isḥāq ibn Bishr,[40] al-Wāqidī,[41] Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī,[42] al-Madā'inī,[43] Ismā'īl ibn 'Īsā al-'Aṭṭār,[44] and 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849).[45] The Battle of the Camel and the confrontation at Ṣiffīn together form the subject of a work by the already-mentioned Abū 'Ubayda.[46]

Many of these same people appear again as compilers of traditions on Ṣiffīn: Abū Mikhnaf,[47] Isḥāq ibn Bishr,[48] al-Wāqidī,[49] Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim,[50] al-Madā'inī,[51] Ismā'īl ibn 'Īsā,[52] and Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā' al-Ghalābī (d. 291/903).[53] Of these numerous works on the first *fitna*, the only ones which appear to have survived are the collection on the Battle of the Camel by Ibn Abī Shayba, preserved in his *Muṣannaf*,[54] the material on the opposition to 'Uthmān collected by 'Umar ibn Shabba, which engulfs fully a third of his history of

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38 *Ibid.*, 93:9 (cf. Sezgin, I, 309 no. 10).

39 *Ibid.*, 94:5. See the collection of materials in Aḥmad Rātib 'Armūsh, *Al-Fitna wa-waq'at al-jamal, riwāyat Sayf ibn 'Umar al-Ḍabbī al-Asadī* (Beirut: Dār al-nafā'is, 1391/1972).

40 Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 94:2.

41 *Ibid.*, 99:1.

42 *Ibid.*, 93:27.

43 *Ibid.*, 102:18.

44 *Ibid.*, 109ult.

45 *Ibid.*, 229:12. Ibn Abī Shayba's account was in fact a chapter in his compendium of *ḥadīth*; see n. 54 below.

46 *Ibid.*, 54:5.

47 *Ibid.*, 93:9.

48 *Ibid.*, 94:3.

49 *Ibid.*, 99:2–3.

50 *Ibid.*, 93pu. Cf. above, 7 n. 15.

51 Sezgin, I, 315 no. 16.

52 Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 109ult.

53 *Ibid.*, 108:14–15.

54 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Al-Muṣannaf*, ed. 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Afghānī (Bombay: Al-Dār al-salafīya, 1399–1403/1979–83), XV, 248–333.

Medina,[55] and the collections on Ṣiffīn by Abū Mikhnaf[56] and Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim.[57]

With these three themes of "the murder of 'Uthmān", "the Battle of the Camel", and "Ṣiffīn", we have probably the oldest themes of tradition relating to *fitna*. We may infer this from the fact that the above-mentioned compilers, who lived 100 to 150 years after the events in question, apparently had no choice but to assemble reports on the First Civil War under these three historical headings. And indeed, the traditions themselves which were available to these compilers tend to fall into this thematic triad. This principle of division in reporting on the first *fitna* can still be clearly recognized in the comprehensive collections on the history of the time of the early caliphs.[58]

Administration

The original thematic areas dealing with early Islamic administration are probably limited to the following pair: the compilation of pension lists by the caliph 'Umar, and the founding and status of the early garrison towns of al-Baṣra, al-Kūfa, and al-Fusṭāṭ.

On 'Umar's pension lists (*dawāwīn*[59]), compiled for the purpose of dividing the income from the conquered provinces fairly among those with recognized claims to support from the Islamic "polity",[60] the

[55]'Umar ibn Shabba, *Ta'rīkh al-Madīna al-munawwara*, ed. Fuhaym Muḥammad Shaltūt (Jedda: Bakrī Shaykh Amīn, n.d.), III, 1108–IV, 1315. The preceding 200 pages of the text provide the prehistory to the events surrounding the *fitna*.

[56]Preserved in a manuscript of the sixth century AH, according to Sezgin (I, 309 no. 4).

[57]See above, 7 n. 15.

[58]E.g., Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 145–55, 160–73, 173–80; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2927–3065, 3091–3235, 3254–3343; al-Mas'ūdī (d. 349/956), *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1861–77), IV, 265–87, 304–43, 343–69.

[59]Sing. *dīwān*. However, the plural is usually employed in traditions describing how this institution was introduced. The phrase used is *dawwana l-dawāwīn*.

[60]Basically new points of view on the origins and character of this institution are set forth in Gerd-Rüdiger Puin, *Der Dīwān des 'Umar ibn al-Ḫaṭṭāb. Ein Beitrag zur frühislamischen Verwaltungsgeschichte* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1970).

early compilers include chapters with varying amounts of detail in their collections.[61] The traditions collected there are concerned in the main with two questions: for what motive and on what advice did the second caliph introduce these lists, and which groups of persons were entitled to which kinds of grants (*'aṭā'*).[62] Nothing is known of isolated collections of traditions on this theme. However, one part of a two-part treatise (now lost) of al-Wāqidī, entitled "The Claims of Quraysh and the Anṣār to Landholdings *and* the Introduction of the Pension Lists by 'Umar, Together with Classification, Ordering, and Genealogical Relations of the Tribes",[63] may have been a collection of traditions on this important administrative measure of 'Umar.

The early compilers likewise assembled traditions into separate chapters on the foundation and status of the cities founded by the early Muslim conquerors.[64] These traditions are divided into chapters which discuss the founder of each city and the circumstances of its origins, together with the legal status of the property and persons of the tribes and tribal groups which settled in these cities. Although the theme of the founding of cities is closely bound to that of *futūḥ*, it nonetheless represents a separate thematic concern within that larger theme. We still know of a relatively early collection of traditions concerned with the founding of individual cities, the "Book of the Tribal Quarters of al-Kūfa" (*Kitāb khiṭaṭ al-Kūfa*) of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Haytham ibn 'Adī (d. 207/822).[65]

Our traditions also bring up another entire series of questions regarding early administration; here, however, we have to do with thematic areas which either are not unquestionably original, or else which are certainly secondary. On this we shall have more to say later in this chapter.

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[61] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 448ult–461:12; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2411:14–2418ult, 2749:13–2757:6; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1379/1960), II, 153:1–154:5. Further evidence in Puin, *Dīwān*, 126–29.

[62] Cf. Puin, 95–100.

[63] *Madā'ī Quraysh wa-l-Anṣār fi-l-qaṭā'i' wa-waḍ' 'Umar al-dawāwīn wa-taṣnīf al-qabā'il wa-marātibuhā wa-ansābuhā*, in al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 99:4–5.

[64] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 91:1–97ult (al-Fusṭāṭ); al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 275:6–289:14 (al-Kūfa), 346:5–372:19 (al-Baṣra); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2377:8–2388:14 (al-Baṣra), 2481:12–2486:9 (al-Kūfa).

[65] Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 100:2. Cf. also Leder, *Korpus al-Haiṯam*, 79–80.

Sīrat al-khulafā'

Aside from the election and acclamation of caliphs, the original questions posed with regard to the theme of "the caliph" seem to have been limited to *ad hominem* statements. This thematic trend corresponds to the category which Islamic literature designates as *sīra*. Islamic biographical literature tends in general to consider matters in this fashion.

These caliphal traditions are concerned with the genealogy and names of the rulers (at times also with their marriages and progeny), and also with their appearance and manner of dressing, sometimes going into the most minute detail. They discuss the age attained by the caliphs and the length of their reigns, their deaths, and their funerals. Finally, we find sayings and deeds which—usually expressed succinctly—serve the purposes of characterization. In this last area there is, to be sure, a great deal of secondary material, but it may, for all that, have been built around an original core of traditions.[66]

Ansāb

The Arabs' predilection for genealogy is well known. Already in pre-Islamic times genealogy (*ansāb*) played a significant rôle, and with the arrival of Islam nothing changed in this respect. The early precepts of Islam, together with certain measures of the Prophet, did indeed aspire to an equality of all believers, uninfluenced by genealogical thinking. But this could not prevent genealogical considerations from fundamentally determining the social hierarchy of the Muslims. The themes, forms, and goals of early Islamic genealogy have been discussed in detail by Goldziher, Caskel, and al-Mashhadānī;[67] here we shall simply discuss genealogy as a theme of early historical tradition.

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[66]As examples of such *sīrat al-khulafā'* traditions, the ones collected by al-Ṭabarī for the deaths of the first caliphs are instructive; see his *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2129:13–2134:4, 2728:6–2776:5, 3025:11–3057:5, 3456:15–3476ult; also the biographies of the first caliphs in Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. Eduard Sachau *et al.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1904–40), III.1, 11–27 ('Alī), 36–58 ('Uthmān), 119–52 (Abū Bakr), 190–274 ('Umar). Cf. Rotter, "Abū Zur'a ad-Dimašqī", 91–92.

[67]Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1889–90), I, 177–90; Werner Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab. Das genealogische Werk des Hišām*

The genealogical concerns of our traditions focus now upon groups (tribes, families), at other times upon individuals. Accordingly, the rôle—whether positive or negative—of genealogical units is described within the framework of *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*. This also applies to the ranking of such groups in 'Umar's pension lists and the manner of their settlement in the first garrison towns. Considerations of this sort stand juxtaposed to—and often in competition with—a habit of considering the activity not so much of genealogical groups *per se*, as of Muslims plain and simple. (This holds true most particularly for the thematic area of the *futūḥ*).

In these traditions, the persons whom we find arranged in detailed genealogical order mostly belong to the circle of the "high nobility": caliphs, governors, and members of the Prophet's family. This stands in close relation to the biographical notices on the caliphs (*sīrat al-khulafā'*), the arrangement of the Prophet's relatives in 'Umar's pension lists, and the historical traditions of a partisan nature dealing with the *fitna*. The genealogical ordering of less prominent people takes place for the most part through brief indications of their tribes or families, that is, through *nisba* ("genealogical affiliation"). This is meaningful nonetheless: it is a matter of fitting the actions and sayings of actors of the early period—whether rightly or not—into the familiar system of tribes and families, to the fame or shame of these groups.

The significance of genealogical questions, recognizable everywhere in traditions on the early period, is underlined by the fact that a compiler of the ninth century could arrive at the idea of giving the title and, to some extent, the framework of a genealogical work to an ambitious collection of traditions on early Islamic history. In giving his *Ansāb al-ashrāf* ("Genealogies of the Notables") such a prominent genealogical tenor, al-Balādhurī reveals not only the direction of his own interests, but the continuing importance of *ansāb*-related matters in society at large.[68]

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b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), I, "Einleitung"; Muḥammad Jāsim Ḥamādī al-Mashhadānī, *Mawārid al-Balādhurī 'an al-usra al-umawīya fī Ansāb al-ashrāf* (Mecca: Maktabat al-ṭālib al-jāmi'ī, 1407/1986), I, 69–135.

[68]On the title and character of the work, cf. Goitein's introduction to vol. V of al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 14–24; also the detailed assessment of al-Balādhurī's

Iran

Traditions on the Iranian Sasanian Empire and the precedents which it set for Islam occur quite frequently in early tradition.[69] For the most part these are connected with the theme of *futūḥ* in such a manner as to explain Muslim successes through Sasanian precedents, while at the same time identifying the *futūḥ* of Islam as the cause of certain developments in Iranian history. Even if these causal links, at least in the form in which they have been transmitted, are subject to doubt,[70] it can nonetheless hardly be contested that the history of Iran at the time of the first Islamic conquests was an original theme of early tradition. For a great many of the "Persian traditions" have thoroughly individual traits and cannot be explained away as constructions out of Islamic *futūḥ*. We have only to compare this with the traditions relating to the Byzantine Empire, almost all of which can be recognized as congeries of motifs transposing specifically Islamic historical conceptions onto their East Roman opponents and their activities: Byzantine personalities routinely speak and act as if they were renegade "Muslims". It is true that a similar trend can be detected in some "Persian traditions", but these problematic cases do not characterize or typify the "Iran" corpus as a whole.

Secondary Themes

By now we have exhausted the themes which can be described with certainty as original. Let us now take up those themes which are in all probability secondary.

Ghārāt

One of the most illustrative examples of a secondary theme and how it originates can be seen in the so-called *ghārāt*, the approach and scope

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place within the genealogical tradition in al-Mashhadānī, *Mawārid al-Balādhurī*, esp. I, 115–47.

[69]See Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, 58–60, and the further studies cited therein.

[70]Cf. Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 81–83.

of which are set forth in detail in the extant fragments of the *Kitāb al-ghārāt* of al-Thaqafī.[1] This theme assembles material from the primary theme of *fitna* and recasts it so as to present the events of the First Civil War as nothing but *ghārāt*, or "raids", the implication being that the opposition to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, from whatever quarter, could be characterized as unlawful encroachment upon his legitimate authority as caliph. That is, the theme not only reflects a pro-'Alid/Shī'ī reinterpretation of already existing historical material, but also presupposes the existence of a fully-developed 'Alid/Shī'ī doctrine of the historical significance of the First Civil War to which this reinterpretation could be made to adhere. These features alone are sufficient to demonstrate that the theme of *ghārāt* is entirely secondary to that of *fitna*.

Dating According to the Hijra

A uniform chronology, beginning its epoch with the Prophet's emigration from Mecca to Medina (the *hijra*) was first introduced into Islam under 'Umar in AH 16/AD 637 (the years 17 and 18 are also named).[2] Our first incontestable evidence for the use of *hijra* dating are an Egyptian papyrus from 22/643 and an inscription in the Ḥijāz of 29/650.[3] The form of dating set down by the second caliph was in all likelihood stipulated for official documents,[4] and to this extent the early use of *hijra* dating may be accepted as historically probable.

That broader use of this dating system was much more limited, however, is suggested by a recent epigraphical survey in Saudi Arabia. This has brought to light large numbers of old Kūfic inscriptions, but fewer than one percent of them are dated.[5] In any case, the practice attested for official documentary usage hardly allows us

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[1]See above, 7 and n. 16.

[2]Adolf Grohmann, *Arabische Chronologie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 11.

[3]*Ibid.*, 13–14.

[4]*Ibid.*, 11. This is also indicated by the association of the introduction of dating with the introduction of sealing; see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2749:7 (*arrakha l-kutub wa-khatama bi-l-ṭīn*).

[5]See the findings tabulated in A. Livingston *et al.*, "Epigraphic Survey 1404–1984", *Al-Aṭlāl* 9 (1405/1985), 128–44. Of 759 Kūfic inscriptions discovered during the survey, only seven are dated, the oldest to 40/660.

to infer that this was in general public use from the moment of its introduction, to say nothing of its place in the practice of the transmitters of historical events who at that time were still largely relying upon oral transmission.[6] One can hardly avoid the conclusion that several more decades would probably have had to elapse before historical traditions would be dated according to the *hijra*. The confusion that prevailed on this point, and the arbitrary manner in which *hijra* dates were imposed in later times, is clear from the fact that sharp and irresolvable contradiction prevails on not only the dating, but even the order, of even the most central events in the history of the expansion of Islam.[7] The problem which so often confronts the modern historian has been neatly summarized by Donner: "It is virtually impossible to accept one sequential or chronological arrangement of the material and to reject another except on grounds that are essentially arbitrary".[8]

Just as importantly, the Arabs in earliest Islamic times were for the most part unfamiliar with any formal chronological system, as is demonstrated with manifest clarity by early attempts to sort out fundamental issues of chronology, at times with reference to the dating systems already in use among other peoples in the Near East. The date of Muḥammad's birth, for example, was traditionally given with reference to the Year of the Elephant. But the tradents who pass on information on this question—one of obvious importance in Islamic terms—cannot decide whether the Prophet's birth occurred *in* the Year of the Elephant, 15 years *before* it, or 10, 15, 20, 23, 30, 40, or 70 years

[6]On the important question of oral v. written tradition, a long-standing topic of controversy among scholars working on the early Islamic period, see now the seminal studies of Gregor Schoeler, "Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung der Wissenschaften im frühen Islam", *Der Islam* 62 (1985), 201–30; "Weiteres zur Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung der Wissenschaften im Islam", *Der Islam* 66 (1989), 38–67; "Mündliche Thora und Ḥadīṯ. Überlieferung, Schreibverbot, Redaktion", *Der Islam* 66 (1989), 213–51; "Schreiben und Veröffentlichen. Zu Verwendung und Funktion der Schrift in den ersten islamischen Jahrhunderten", *Der Islam* 69 (1992), 1–43.

[7]There are many examples of this. For some representative cases, see Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 102, 105; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 116, 124–26, 142–46, 175–76, 211–12, 217.

[8]Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 128.

after it. Dates given in other dating systems (year of the world, Seleucid and Christian eras, regnal year of Chosroes Anūshirvān) produce dates of AD 547, 552, 580, 597, and 608. The classical formulation which was later to dominate scholarly opinion—that Muḥammad had been born *in* the Year of the Elephant, 40 years prior to the beginning of his Prophetic mission—thus obscures a background of considerable confusion which was not resolved, but rather only brushed aside.[9]

We may accordingly conclude that the introduction of precise standardized dating represented a dramatic innovation, and that the great majority of traditions referring to the early Islamic era were originally not dated according to the *hijra*, or at any rate were dated only relative to some other event. The arrangement of the traditions into a *hijra* chronology thus comprised the results of a later systematization, and did not in itself constitute an original theme of early historical tradition.

This provides an explanation for the endless confusion in the sources with regard to the chronological ordering of traditions on the period of the early caliphs. Such keen-witted sleuths as de Goeje, Wellhausen, Mednikov, and Caetani were thus unable to resolve this confusion completely, especially since the non-Arabic sources (Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic) can provide further help only at a few points, and are in any case demonstrably dependent upon the emergent Arab-Islamic historical tradition for some of their information.[10]

Annalistic Style

Islam produced a significant annalistic tradition. The oldest known annalistic work is most likely the *Ta'rīkh 'alā l-sinīn*, "History According to Years", by the Kūfan al-Haytham ibn 'Adī.[11] This was followed by the *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh* by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb (d. 238/852),

[9] See Lawrence I. Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad: Some Observations Apropos of Chronology and Literary Topoi in the Early Arabic Historical Tradition", *BSOAS* 50 (1987), 228–29, 234–37.

[10] *Idem*, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 15 (1990), 1–44.

[11] *Fihrist*, 100:7. Cf. Leder, *Korpus al-Haiṯam*, 15–16, 254.

who seeks to combine an annalistic arrangement with one according to caliphates.[12] Then came the *Ta'rīkh* of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ,[13] the *Ta'rīkh 'alā l-sinīn* of Abū Ḥassān al-Ziyādī (d. 243/857), a student of al-Haytham's,[14] and finally the famous *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* ("History of the Prophets and Kings") of al-Ṭabarī, a work which set the standard for later annalistic tradition.[15]

Since annalistic works were manifestly being composed already at a relatively early date, the question arises whether an annalistic design of history—of whatever dimensions—had already been in existence from the beginning, and consequently whether annalistic presentation is an original theme of Islamic historical tradition.

Even before the introduction of *hijra* dating, it would have been possible for Muslim authors to arrange their entries annalistically, that is to say, grouped together according to years. In this case they would have had to indicate the years through some means other than *hijra* dating.[16] But a glance at the three oldest surviving annalistic works—those of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, Khalīfa, and al-Ṭabarī—will show us that the original arrangement of the great majority of the traditions collected in these works could not possibly have been annalistic. The ordering by years obviously results from editorial reworking by the three compilers, or else by their tradents. The formula "and in this year" (*wa-fī hādhihi l-sana/wa-fīhā*) does not belong to the text, and does not accord with the tenor of most of the traditions.

There is, it is true, a small group of reports which might point to the existence of an original annalistic style. These reports differ from other traditions: first, they are very short; second, they often do

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[12]'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Jorge Aguadé (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1991), with a useful study of the author and his history. This work is especially interesting for the way in which its area of interest shifts, after Umayyad times, to biographical notices, *faḍā'il*, and legal matters.

[13]See above, 29 n. 10.

[14]See Sezgin, I, 316 no. 14; Leder, *Korpus al-Haiṯam*, 15–16.

[15]See above, 1 n. 1.

[16]Before the introduction of dating according to the *hijra*, various other means of dating were already available. Cf. Grohmann, *Arabische Chronologie*, 3–10; Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, 20; also al-Azraqī (d. *ca.* 250/865), *Akhbār Makka*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1858), 102:20–103:1.

not include chains of transmitters; third, they usually report events which in one way or another have to do with the original center of the Islamic state, Medina–Mecca. These reports usually have the following themes: leaders of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca; births, marriages, and deaths among the Islamic "nobility"; and the positions held by caliphs' officials, all set out according to specific years.[17]

Were reports of this type arranged then and there according to years? And did such rudimentary annals then continue to be handed down, alongside the great mass of traditions which belonged to other types? In sum, could there have existed an annalistic tradition limited to these few themes, a tradition which would have been contemporary with the events themselves, and therefore original? Doubts immediately arise, because uniformity does not prevail in the tradition in this regard. A few examples, selected from the huge number available to us, may serve to clarify this.

Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī tell us, using different eyewitness-*isnāds*, that the leader of the pilgrimage in AH 12 was the caliph Abū Bakr. This statement is contradicted by a report, transmitted again by Ibn Isḥāq but this time without an *isnād*, in which the view is put forth ("some people said", *qāla baʿḍu l-nās*) that Abū Bakr never led the pilgrimage during his caliphate, and that in AH 12 this office was performed by either ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who subsequently became caliph, or by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf.[18] Three different versions have thus been offered for this annalistic notice.

In the late first century AH there could hardly have been a more famous Companion of the Prophet still alive than ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās. Yet in later times biographical authorities could not decide whether he had died in AH 68, 69 or 70.[19] If information of this kind was indeed being recorded annalistically at the time of Ibn ʿAbbās' demise, then such a discrepancy—and over such a renowned personality, among authorities who would certainly have been very well aware of the basic details of his life—would not have been possible.

[17]In al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh* usually, but not always, at the end of the section for each year.

[18]Cited in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2077:12–2078:11.

[19]See, for example, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-maʿārif al-niẓāmīya, AH 1325–27), V, 278:10–12.

For the "officials" of the central government discrepancies of this sort occur again. For AH 13, al-Ṭabarī names 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as *qāḍī*, or judge, of the caliph 'Umar (without *isnād*), and immediately adds that it is also mentioned (*qīla*) that 'Umar in his entire life never had a *qāḍī*.[20] There is also lack of consensus over Baṣran government officials of the caliph 'Umar in AH 17,[21] the governor of Medina (!) in AH 37,[22] and the governor of Khurāsān in AH 38.[23]

Occasional difficulties of this kind could of course be viewed as nothing more than the product of confusion or error among individual tradents. But this handful of examples is in fact typical of numerous other available instances, and these are so common that—taken together—they fatally compromise the likelihood that the short annalistic notices are based upon an original annalistic tradition contemporary with the events in question. They seem instead to resemble other traditions, from which they differ formally; they would appear to have been arranged into a chronological system at a later stage. For if we take into account the fact that these reports—assuming that they did originate in a contemporary annalistic tradition—were not dated according to the *hijra* in the first instance, we find ourselves able to explain minor problems of chronology, but not the glaring material discrepancies, especially those which pertain to persons.

In any case, these notices have a peculiar form which would require an investigation of its own. Here we must be content with stating that they cannot be accepted as proof for the existence of an original annalistic tradition, and that arrangement in annalistic form must therefore be considered a secondary theme of early historical writing. This certainly applies to the great mass of traditions, and probably applies to the short reports which we have just discussed.

Arrangement According to Caliphates

Collections in which the transmitted material is set out according to caliphates appeared somewhat later than annalistic compilations. There

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[20] *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2212:10–12.
[21] *Ibid.*, I, 2481:6–9.
[22] *Ibid.*, I, 3390:5–6.
[23] *Ibid.*, I, 3443:18–19.

are papyrus fragments which are attributed by some scholars to a *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'* by Ibn Isḥāq,[24] but this identification is by no means secure or of immediate relevance to our concerns here. Al-Nadīm refers to Ibn Isḥāq's work as *Kitāb al-khulafā'*, not *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*,[25] and the extant papyrus contains nothing which would indicate that it comes from a history arranged according to caliphates. Furthermore, al-Nadīm knows of the *Kitāb al-khulafā'* only as a work redacted by the Kūfan scholar Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Umawī (d. 194/809).[26] It may well be that al-Umawī authored this work and compiled it largely from materials which had earlier been transmitted in Ibn Isḥāq's name; this conclusion would accord with the fact that the accounts in the papyrus are transmitted by Kūfan tradents. In sum, then, it is difficult to assign the rise of historical works arranged according to caliphates to any period earlier than the late second/early ninth century.

We are further informed about histories, compiled according to caliphates, by al-Madā'inī[27] and Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/860),[28] and here there is no reason to doubt that these were indeed arranged according to caliphates. The earliest compilations of this kind to have survived are the small caliphal chronology *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'* by Ibn Māja (d. 273/886)[29] and the full-scale *Ta'rīkh* of al-Ya'qūbī.[30]

Once again, we must ask whether or not this was the original arrangement of the material. In this case the answer is unambiguously negative. This emerges from the observation that the original themes around which most traditions cluster, namely *futūḥ* and *fitna*, as discussed above, clash with a thematic outlook oriented towards everything that happened under each individual caliph. Indeed, these original themes practically exclude such an outlook. (This applies in any

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[24]See Abbott, *Arabic Literary Papyri*, I, 87–99, and the earlier literature cited therein.

[25]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 92:29–30.

[26]On al-Umawī, see Sezgin, I, 293 no. 7; and especially Ella Landau-Tasseron, "On the Reconstruction of Lost Sources", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming.

[27]Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 102:11–12 (two titles); Sezgin, I, 315 no. 14.

[28]*Fihrist*, 106:28.

[29]*Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, ed. Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiẓ (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1399/1979).

[30]See above, 36 n. 61.

case only to the period of the four orthodox caliphs, which is dealt with here.)

The overall theme of *fitna* embraces the caliphates of *both* ʿUthmān and ʿAlī; it cannot be attached uniquely to either of the two. And the campaigns of conquest were carried out by the Muslim commanders in the field, to a large extent independently of whoever happened to be caliph at the time; changes of caliph did not represent turning points in the ongoing ventures of *futūḥ*.[31] This emerges with particular clarity in the surviving *futūḥ* collections of al-Azdī (Syria), Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (Egypt), and Ibn Aʿtham and al-Balādhurī (*futūḥ* in general). Whatever groupings or categories these compilers may have had in mind, arrangement of the material according to caliphates never appears in these books.

The theme of *ridda* does coincide with the caliphate of Abū Bakr, but the tenor of the *ridda* traditions is anything but that of a caliphal history of the first successor to the Prophet. If any one person occupies center stage in this material, it is the Muslim commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd,[32] the leader of numerous campaigns against various tribes and regions.

The early traditionists thus did not typically arrange their material according to caliphates. This trend must rather have emerged gradually, with the establishment of an official historiography under a strong, central, caliphal government and, as suggested above, not earlier than the early ninth century AD. Indeed, an important transitional stage may be seen in the *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh* of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb. Here the arrangement of traditions for early Islamic times is specifically annalistic, but also includes headings, provided inconsistently, announcing the beginnings of the reigns of various caliphs.[33] This suggests that the

[31] Whenever it is maintained that the movement of the conquests came to a halt under the third caliph ʿUthmān, this is a defamation of ʿUthmān on the part of his opponents.

[32] On the way in which the *futūḥ* tradition (especially the materials collected by al-Azdī) sets forth a specific personality for Khālid, see Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Arabic *Futūḥ* Tradition: Problems and Prospects", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming.

[33] See, for example, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh*, 102:6, 110:18–19, 114:10–11, 116:9–10, 127:6–7, 129:20–21, 130:2–4, 7–9, 135pu.

organization of source material according to caliphates was a secondary development from the annalistic style of presentation.

Law and Administration

Law and administration are often so closely related in their subject matter that they can count as a single theme, which we shall now discuss. Traditions which deal only with one or the other of these two will be dealt with afterwards.

Most traditions which deal with law/administration have in common the fact that in one way or another they are connected with the early wars of conquest. One of the main problems which arose at the time of these conquests was how to incorporate the conquered lands into the Islamic state. Above all, questions pertaining to law and administration had to be solved: what status was to be accorded to the conquered cities and the newly acquired lands? For the latter there arose yet another distinction, namely, between territories which remained with their original (non-Muslim) owners and those which had become the property of the Muslims. Beyond all this lay legal questions pertaining to the personal status of the Muslims who had settled in the conquered lands, and that of the subjugated non-Muslim population.

Traditions in our compilations take positions on these questions, at times in great detail, using the following terms: *ṣulḥan*/*'anwatan* (by treaty/conquered by force), *jizya*/*kharāj* (taxation), *fay'* (income/property of the state), *qaṭī'a* (landholdings of individual Muslims), *dhimma* (protection for non-Muslims), *qismat al-araḍīn* (division of the conquered lands), and *'aṭā'* (grants paid out regularly to the warriors).

These traditions are closely tied to early legal sources which deal with the same question.[34] These early law books, however, owed their existence to a gradual process whereby the conditions which prevailed at the beginning were made into a system. This process of systematization did not gain real momentum until the first great movement of conquest had come to a halt. Most traditions which deal with law

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[34] As in the cases of Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*; Yaḥyā ibn Ādam (d. 203/818), *Kitāb al-kharāj*, ed. Th.W. Juynboll (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1896); Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*.

and administration accordingly offer system rather than actual practice. They can hardly be expected to convey the original concerns of the early traditionists.

It cannot be contested, however, that the systematizing traditions and the law books to which they are so closely related are based in part on genuine facts relating to the time of the early conquests. Such facts must indeed have been handed down, in addition to all the rest. But even though this is the case beyond any doubt, the traditions which relay these facts must be clearly distinguished from the systematizing traditions. The main reason for this is that unlike the systematizing traditions, these traditions which report facts do not emerge from the secondary thematic concerns of "law and administration in the early period", but rather belong to primary thematic groups (above all *futūḥ*), and touch these other questions only indirectly. An example may help to clarify this point.

Reports on the capture of fortified places can indicate whether these places came under Muslim control through a treaty of capitulation, or else through siege and storm. These reports intend merely to report the fact that the city in question was conquered, together with the type of conquest. They accordingly proceed from the original theme of *futūḥ*.

Now in the course of time the theory arose that the legal and administrative status of a place depended upon the manner of its conquest, whether "by treaty" (*ṣulḥan*) or "by force" (*'anwatan*). In keeping with this theory, newer traditions tried to emphasize the type of conquest of each fortified place. These traditions probably relied upon *futūḥ* traditions which provided a basis for deciding what type of conquest took place in a particular instance. Nonetheless, they belong without any doubt to the secondary theme of "law and administration". It seems, moreover, that most of the traditions which discuss law and administration proceed from secondary questions of this kind.[35] As stated above, the only exceptions would seem to be the traditions on the in-

[35]For further discussion, see Albrecht Noth, "Zum Verhältnis von kalifaler Zentralgewalt und Provinzen in umayyadischer Zeit. Die 'Ṣulḥ'–' 'Anwa'-Traditionen für Ägypten und den Iraq", *WI* 14 (1973), 150–62; *idem*, "Some Remarks on the 'Nationalization' of Conquered Lands at the Time of the Umayyads", in Tarif Khalidi, ed., *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984), 223–28.

troduction of 'Umar's pension lists and on the founding of the early garrison towns.

It also seems that most traditions which deal only with questions of (religious) law similarly result from theories which at the time of the events themselves had not yet come into being. Here we find such questions as the authority enjoyed by the commanders, special donatives for the warriors (*nafal*), the division of spoils, the validity of treaties of safe-conduct (*amān*), the rights of the victors over the vanquished, and finally, pronouncements on the extent to which the cultic prescriptions of religious law may be set aside or modified for Muslims engaged in war.

The secondary character of such traditions is clear from their close tie to the early law books, as indicated above. It becomes even clearer if we consider the form they take: namely, that of anecdotes which culminate in the pronouncement of legal maxims, or which display the legal verdicts of the caliphs, pronounced once a "case" has been presented to them, usually in writing.[36]

Another very important legal question is connected with the *fitna*, namely the question of who is entitled to the caliphate. A large number of *fitna* traditions are completely preoccupied with this theme, as, for example, in the *ghārāt* material discussed above.

It will be immediately obvious that traditions of this kind have their origins in a partisan quarrel.[37] The followers of Mu'āwiya and/or 'Uthmān, the faction (*shī'a*) of 'Alī, and the community of the Khārijites, which renounced and fought the other two (to mention only the principal groups), all have their say. These factions were, however, already in existence at the time of the First Civil War. The question of who is entitled to the caliphate may therefore have been a primary one.

It is doubtful, nonetheless, that people at that time posed this question and attempted to answer it in the same form as appears in the traditions which we have today—traditions which represent a later stage of development (as in the *ghārāt*) of the tradition as a whole.

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[36]Cf., again, the studies cited above, 48 n. 34.

[37]See, for instance, Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim's *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, one of the most extensive early collections of such traditions still extant today.

In other words, we cannot assume that in these traditions we actually have the thematic concerns of the various feuding groups of the first *fitna*. There is much to be said against such an assumption, above all the distinct possibility that—contrary to what these traditions would imply—Mu'āwiya did not set out to fight 'Alī with the primary intention of becoming caliph in his own right,[38] just as the Khārijites' hostility towards Mu'āwiya and 'Alī could not at first have been based—as many sources imply—on a specific coherent theory of the caliphate. It must therefore remain doubtful that we can still locate an original thematic concern in the traditions on the right to the caliphate which are available to us today.

Finally, let us turn to the traditions which deal with the theme of administration in particular. It has already been recognized that some of these grew out of original thematic concerns (the persons on 'Umar's pension lists, and the foundation of the garrison towns), while others could be identified with a certain degree of confidence as the results of secondary thematic concerns (annalistic notices on officials and governors).[39] There still remain the non-annalistic reports on the governors of provinces and their "officials", as well as the court officials of the early caliphs.

Let us begin with the provincial governors. These were—at least under the first three caliphs—above all commanders (*amīrs*) in the various campaigns of conquest. This is how they usually appear in the sources, that is, in *futūḥ* traditions. People such as Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ, 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm, and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ are portrayed in the sources chiefly as heroes of *futūḥ* ventures, and not as agents of the "central government" in Medina. On the other hand, governors who did not take part in the *futūḥ*, in particular those who held office in the various provinces of the Arabian peninsula, are known at most by name, through the annalistic notices which we have already mentioned.

From the outbreak of the *fitna*—in other words, beginning with the events which led to the murder of the caliph 'Uthmān—the provincial governors also played intermittent rôles in the struggle over supremacy

[38]See also Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, 48, 65.

[39]See above, 35–36, 48–50.

in the Islamic state. They did this at times through decisive action on their own part, while at other times they were simply drawn in by the course of events. But here again they appear less as instruments of a central power than as active or passive participants in the events of the First Civil War. That is, their rôle is considered under the historical rubric of *fitna*, and then evaluated according to the factional allegiances of the various traditionists.

There remain the "court officials" of the caliphs and governors. These include, among others, the offices of secretary (*kātib*), judge (*qāḍī*), chamberlain (*ḥājib*), financial administrator (*ṣāḥib bayt al-māl*), and leader of the (police) guard (*ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*).

Doubts arise as to whether traditions which report on such "offices" were original, above all because such "offices" are generally understood to refer to clearly defined activities with persons specifically assigned to them. Here the early period is quite obviously being regarded from the viewpoint of a centralizing power, that is to say, according to the circumstances of later times. For regular offices such as we have just mentioned cannot have existed in the first decades after the death of the Prophet. We might at most admit that in this period certain activities which afterwards became familiar as "offices" were practiced on an *ad hoc* basis by various people (such as scribes, judges, or financial administrators).

In this connection it is instructive that—contrary to reports which state otherwise—the existence of an office which afterwards became one of the most important, that of judge, is disputed for the entire period comprising the reigns of Abū Bakr and 'Umar.[40] Justice was certainly administered in the time of these two caliphs, but it seems clear that judges simply did not exist during the reigns of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. 'Uthmān's chamberlain (*ḥājib*) is named;[41] but this supposed chamberlain is known elsewhere only as a client (*mawlā*) of the caliph, who soon afterwards exiled him to al-Baṣra.[42] Here we probably have a man who—precisely because he was the caliph's client—was known to have belonged to the ruler's most intimate circle, and who was raised

[40]See above, 45 and n. 20; further at al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2798:16–20.

[41]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 157:13.

[42]Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 57:17–58:4, 66:6–7, 286:2–3; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 209:3–6; VII.1, 108:6–11.

posthumously to the rank of chamberlain because people assumed or wished to assume that this office already existed in the early period. 'Uthmān is similarly supposed to have been the first to have created a corps of guards (*shuraṭ*), and the leader of these guards is known by name.[43] If such guards did in fact exist in 'Uthmān's time, then they would have had to come into action at some time or other, for instance when the caliph was besieged in his house in Medina by his opponents. But of this we find not a trace. In any case, efforts to vindicate this sort of material would first have to demonstrate that it did not grow out of a secondary thematic area with no link to a primary theme.

Cities

Original themes relating to the garrison towns, especially al-Kūfa, al-Baṣra, and al-Fusṭāṭ, have to do with such questions as how these cities were founded, which tribes and families settled in them, and the legal status of the persons and property of these tribes and families.[44] Other themes of traditions about cities which occur frequently are "conquests", Companions of the Prophet (*aṣḥāb*), and—connected in part with these two themes—the merits (*faḍā'il*) of the cities.

The question of which city would receive credit for which conquest takes up an entire series of traditions. We know of a monograph by al-Madā'inī on the campaigns of conquest which were undertaken from al-Baṣra.[45] For a thematic concern of this type, two preconditions were necessary. First, naturally, the cities had to be in existence (the origins of al-Baṣra can be traced to 16/637 or 17/638,[46] al-Kūfa to 17/638[47]—AH 18 and 19 are also mentioned—and al-Fusṭāṭ to 22/643[48]). Second, there had to be competition between them.

[43]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 157:12–13.

[44]See above, 35–36.

[45]*Fihrist*, 103:6–9.

[46]Charles Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ǧāḥiẓ* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), 2–3.

[47]See Hichem Djaït, art. "al-Kūfa" in *EI*², V (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 345b; also his *Al-Kūfa: naissance de la ville islamique* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986), 65–135.

[48]See Jacques Jomier, art. "al-Fusṭāṭ" in *EI*², II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 958a; and the recent detailed discussion in Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, 58–75.

Al-Fusṭāṭ must be excluded from this competition, because the conquests of Egypt and the conquests which originated from there are, for the period under consideration here, obviously to be accounted to the garrison of al-Fusṭāṭ. There was accordingly nothing to prove or to dispute in this case.

For al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa the situation is quite different, for a fierce rivalry prevailed between these two cities, as is well known. We cannot state precisely when this rivalry began; the second *fitna* is a likely possibility. At any rate, al-Kūfa and al-Baṣra did cooperate early on in the series of *futūḥ*, and it seems quite possible that a major reason for the enmity between these cities was that they disagreed over the administrative responsibility for the cities which they had captured together.[49] The question of how these cities were conquered would then have to be a secondary theme, arising out of this quarrel. It remains possible all the same that soon after their founding, the two neighboring garrison towns already paid careful attention to their relative position in campaigns of *futūḥ* in the Sasanian Empire. They would then have transmitted information on these conquests according to this point of view; that is to say that here we have at least the nucleus of an original theme of tradition.

However, we find an unambiguously secondary theme in the question of the rôle of the Companions of the Prophet, the *ṣaḥāba*, in the newly founded cities. At first, people who had lived at the time of the Prophet were regarded as human beings like any others, encumbered with faults and weaknesses (the *maghāzī* literature contains many examples). Afterwards there developed a gradual tendency to glorify these personalities. This resulted finally in their being seen as something like "saints",[50] a process for which other religions offer numerous parallels.[51]

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[49]For an impressive example of quarrels of this sort, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2672:6–2673:13 (from the compilation of Sayf ibn 'Umar).

[50]At the end of this development we find prophetic sayings like the following: "Each of my Companions who dies in a place will be awakened on the Judgment Day as a leader and a light for the people [who will have lived there]." See A.J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936–88), IV, 481a:4, citing al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892).

[51]On the evolving attitude toward the *ṣaḥāba*, see Miklos Muranyi, *Die Prophetengenossen in der frühislamischen Geschichte* (Bonn: Orientalisches Semi-

In keeping with this trend there arose city traditions which aimed at constructing numerous links between various Companions of Muḥammad (*aṣḥāb*, *muhājirūn*, *anṣār*) and individual cities. They did this above all in such a way as to turn the Companions into warriors residing in the towns, or else to make them active in one of the cities as transmitters of sayings and deeds of the Prophet. Two reports which appear in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's *Futūḥ Miṣr* will reveal the obviously secondary character of such traditions.[52] In the first of these, the conquest of Alexandria is ascribed to ʿUbāda ibn al-Ṣāmit instead of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ,[53] even though it is possible that ʿUbāda never set foot in Egypt.[54] The second report is a list of Companions who are supposed to have had contact with the garrison town of al-Fusṭāṭ. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam himself introduces this list by saying that he has left out all those *aṣḥāb* for whom some connection with Egypt is claimed, whenever he could not verify this connection.[55]

Finally, there are traditions which derive at times from *futūḥ*, at other times from the supposed presence of Companions, at yet other times from other series of events and circumstances. These traditions present the merits of a city on some occasions by simply stating these merits, at other times through comparison with another city. We still know of the existence of early collections of such *faḍāʾil* (*fakhr*, *mafākhir*) traditions.[56] The secondary character of traditions of this kind is so obvious as to make further comment superfluous.

Court and Central Government

It has already been established that the arrangement of traditions according to caliphates was secondary,[57] in other words, that at first peo-

nar, 1973); Albrecht Noth, "The *Ṣaḥāba* Topos", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming.

[52]Further detailed examples will be given in what follows.

[53]*Futūḥ Miṣr*, 79:14–18.

[54]See Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, III.2, 93:20–94:13; VII.2, 113:18–114:3, where it is specifically stated that after the conquest of Syria ʿUbāda remained there for the rest of his life and never left this province of the caliphate.

[55]*Futūḥ Miṣr*, 248:5.

[56]E.g. *Fihrist*, 100:2–3, 104:15, 111:1, 112:2.

[57]See above, 45–48.

ple did not transmit information with an eye to the institution of the caliphate.[58] Corroborating this statement is the fact that we learn very little from our sources on conditions in the caliphal residences, and even then what we do find tends to be the result of later fabrications. Life at the caliphal courts, which afterwards became a major preoccupation of historical tradition, remains thoroughly obscure for the "courts" of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān in Medina, of 'Alī in al-Kūfa, and of Mu'āwiya in Damascus (the latter must be included because from the time of 'Uthmān's death onwards, he held power for all intents and purposes independently).

Reports dealing with the thematic area of "the caliphs" must originally have been limited to the elevation and acclamation of each caliph, together with his *sīra* (as described above).[59] But most of what the modern scholar wants to know is lacking here, or else can be clearly recognized as later fabrication. This applies to reports on the caliphs' conception of their rule, on their plans and goals, on their advisors, on factions and intrigues in their various residences—in other words, all the things which would take up a great deal of space in an official historiography. Whatever can be learned about these things with any degree of confidence is for the most part indirectly attributable to other primary thematic groups (above all *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*).

The direct reports which we have had on this theme of "caliphs" can mostly be established as secondary. They arose at a time when the theme of "the caliphal court" had become a leading thematic concern, after a strong, central, caliphal power had established itself. In this regard, it must be borne in mind that the concept of strong central authority is entirely anachronistic where the early caliphate is concerned. Several indications of this have already been noticed above. The issue will return to our attention again on several occasions below, and as it has been discussed in detail elsewhere,[60] we need not dwell on the

[58]See also D.S. Margoliouth, *Lectures on Arabic Historians* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1930), 58.

[59]See above, 37.

[60]Albrecht Noth, "Früher Islam", in Ulrich Haarmann, ed., *Geschichte der arabischen Welt* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1987), 80–100; cf. also 58–72, on the era of the *futūḥ*; *idem*, "Eine Standortbestimmung der Expansion (*Futūḥ*) unter den ersten Kalifen (Analyse von Ṭabarī I, 2854–2856)", *Asiatische Studien* 43 (1989), 120–36.

matter at length here. It is worth stressing, however, that it is a very serious—if common—error to assume that early Arab-Muslim rulers exercised "central authority" in some way comparable to the modern understanding of the term. Certain caliphs were able, it is true, to give effective political expression to their will through personal appeal, the manipulation of individual and tribal bonds of loyalty, factors of mutual interest, or of course, sheer force of arms. But the key question is not one of the knack for leadership possessed by certain gifted rulers, or the effectiveness of various *ad hoc* measures, but rather that of the powers conceded to the *institution* of the caliphate as its *legitimate* sphere of action. Viewing the early Islamic central government in this way, we find that in the field of law it could not legislate; in that of military affairs it could not compel its subjects to fight for it; in taxation and economic affairs it distributed such income as was sent to it from its various domains, but was restricted even in this and was denied the right to control fiscal affairs in general.

Causal Links

The fact that our reports in their original state lacked an absolute chronology would not be so disadvantageous, if we could have recourse to the original causal links between individual traditions and groups of traditions. But unfortunately, this is only rarely possible. Instead, we repeatedly encounter pseudo-causes, etiologies, and rhetorical formulae of transition, all of which have been introduced by later tradents.

The reason for this is that the original units of tradition were very small (they could rarely have occupied more than a page), and would have been collected into larger units only at a later stage. In this manner, there came into being historical "photomontages" which now pose enormous difficulties for the modern historian who wishes to break them down and replace them with a true historical picture.

Transitional formulae of this type, which replace true circumstances, include *thumma sāra ḥattā*, "then he went on as far as/until...", and similar formulations; also simply *thumma*, "then"; quite frequently, *wa-lamma farigha minhu*, "and once he had finished with it, then...". The

authors are particularly fond of introducing letters of caliphs and anecdotes as pseudo-causes. The conquest of Iraq from al-Ḥīra to Ctesiphon (al-Madā'in), for example, is alleged to have begun with letters from Abū Bakr to Khālid ibn al-Walīd and 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm.[61] A letter of 'Umar to Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ is supposed to have regulated the sequence of conquests in Syria and the order of command there.[62] The subjugation of Ifrīqiya (modern Tunisia) supposedly began with a request made by letter from the governor 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Sarḥ to 'Uthmān, and the caliph's letter of reply.[63]

The battle of Nihāwand is given a basis in an anecdote: 'Umar asks the captured Iranian general Hurmuzān how to subdue the Sasanian Empire, and receives a metaphorical answer to the effect that the next objective should be Nihāwand.[64] The motif of women dressed as warriors appears as the basis of a peace treaty (*ṣulḥ*) of Khālid with the *ridda* leader of the tribe of Ḥanīfa, Mujjā'a ibn Murāra.[65] We also have an anecdote and a false "cause" for the Muslim conquest of Spain. The governor of Ceuta had sent his daughter to be raised at the court of the king of the Visigoths. The king violated her, and to seek revenge the governor encouraged the Muslims under Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād to invade Spain.[66]

The simultaneous lack of a fixed chronology and of original causal links can, in an extreme case, lead to the result that events which must in fact have been separated by years are portrayed as occurring in one year, one right after the other.[67]

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We have been concerned here to give only a general view of the themes which occur in the sources for the period of the first four caliphs.

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[61] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2021ult–2022:7.
[62] *Ibid.*, I, 2150:4–14.
[63] 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 183:5–10.
[64] Asad ibn Mūsā in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2600:16–2601:5.
[65] Ibn Isḥāq in Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 199 no. 510.
[66] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 205:6–8.
[67] Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 102, 105.

The matter may therefore rest with the original and secondary thematic areas which we have discussed. We could certainly add more to the latter, but from our reading of the relevant sources it would seem that the themes we have named are the most important ones.

The goal of this chapter has been, as stated at the outset, to provide an answer to the question of what the modern scholar can learn from the traditions on the period of the early caliphs, and what he can learn only indirectly or else not at all. First, the positive side.

The three principal original themes, from which most of the traditions proceed, are *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*. Among them the theme of *futūḥ* repeatedly takes a special position, so far as proportions of the total material are concerned. The questions originally posed with regard to administration, the theme of the "Iranian Empire", and to some extent the theme of "genealogy" are all closely tied to *futūḥ*. All these original themes, to which we may add the *sīrat al-khulafā'*, correspond only partially to the thematic concerns which modern-day historians wish to bring (and have brought) to the sources on the period of the early caliphs.

All this must first be stated emphatically. But then we may ask if the modern scholar should not allow himself to be guided in many respects by these original thematic concerns of the early Islamic traditionists.[68] For those original themes do reflect whatever it was that appeared as particularly important to those who actually lived through the events in question, or to those who at any rate were still quite close to them. This must indeed have some importance. A treatment of the period of the early caliphs under the rubrics of *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna* thus has much in its favor. It seems in any case to be better suited to the object than, for instance, a treatment of events by years (Caetani), or by caliphates (the dominant procedure in many modern works of a general nature).

These three original themes do provide suitable points of departure for studying the period of the early caliphs. Nonetheless, in the interest of a precise investigation into this period, it is still to be regretted

[68] Wellhausen, who (unlike his disciple Caetani) had a highly refined sensitivity to source-critical problems, did this instinctively in his "Prolegomena zur ältesten Geschichte des Islams".

that the concerns of modern historians, namely the caliphate, law and administration, chronology, and causal links, are all of a pronounced secondary character. As a result, many essential matters may well remain obscure. It is all the more important that these facts and their consequences be held up clearly to the light.

In particular, our sources' arrangement of material in chronological order and the causal links which they employ are both secondary in nature. From this fact we may derive the following vital consequence for the source critic: namely, that one must first consider traditions independently of their temporal and material order. That is to say, the worth or worthlessness of traditions does not depend primarily upon either the chronology or the general context imposed upon them by their placement in later compilations. It can even happen, in an extreme case, that a falsely dated tradition, or a tradition placed in the wrong context, can give a more accurate version of what happened than does a tradition which—according to what can be known—has been correctly dated and correctly placed. A most important example of this appears in a tradition allegedly transmitted from "Jurja", a Greek soldier captured during the al-Yarmūk campaign who converted to Islam and offered the following observations on the Arabs the Greeks had encountered as they advanced:

> Those Arabs in Syria who were polytheists subject to the Emperor were of three types. One group consisted of persons of the religion of the Arabs, and they adhered to them. Another group consisted of Christians possessed of a sincere attachment to Christianity, and they were with us (i.e. with the Byzantines). As for the third group, this consisted of Christians who did not possess that same attachment to Christianity, and so said: "We are loath to fight our co-religionists, but we are also loath to help non-Arabs to gain victory over our own people."[69]

The form of this tradition—an eyewitness account by a Greek captive/convert to Islam—is a transparent fiction, and a false context has been provided by accretions of detail on the awesome advance of the

[69] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 150:9–14.

Byzantine host: their numbers were beyond counting by any save God, and all of the non-Arab Christians—even stylites who had spent long periods on their pillars—flocked to join them. Even the association with the al-Yarmūk campaign itself is dubious, since the dilemma described in this text would have arisen far earlier than al-Yarmūk, once the Muslim Arabs had demonstrated their ability to defeat the Byzantines in battle. But while grave doubts must be entertained about these aspects of the report, its core conforms to none of the familiar clichés and stereotypes of the *futūḥ* tradition. Its assessment of the conflicting loyalties of Arab groups in Syria at the time of the conquest is completely without parallel, and appears to represent a genuine survival of ancient and authentic information.

The fact that the caliphate and the central government, together with basic questions of law and administration, did not originally fall into the purview of the traditionists now leads us to the following conclusion. If traditions are available which deal directly with such themes as these, then they are of no fundamental use in reconstructing what actually happened, however plausible and logical they may appear. Instead, we must have recourse to those indirect reports, often scarce and contradictory, which belong to the area of the original themes, and which provided the point of departure for later secondary constructions.[70] If answers are lacking to basic questions in the area of the original themes, then we must resign ourselves to the conclusion that knowledge in this case is beyond reach.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show *what* the traditions on the period of the early caliphs relate. In the next chapter we shall discuss *how* they reported on it. Let us therefore turn to the *forms* of tradition.

[70]Wellhausen already came to similar conclusions, particularly in regard to land tenure and taxation, in *Das arabische Reich*, 177–78.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY FORMS

EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORICAL TRADITION is typified by an abundance of formal elements, none of which can be ascribed to any one compiler or to any one "school", but which were rather the common property of early tradition as a whole. It is important that we become acquainted with the characteristics and functions of these forms, for only in this way can we recognize the individual traits of the reports, traits which lie hidden beneath a welter of forms and formulae. A knowledge of the forms is therefore an indispensable requirement for the source critic.[1]

The forms of early Islamic tradition cannot all be dealt with here in their full richness. We have had to make choices, taking into consideration first the frequency with which the forms recur, and second the extent of their influence upon accounts of significant events. Those forms which, according to these two criteria, seem most important, will be considered in the following discussion. It would certainly be possible to consider additional material, and such further discussions would add significantly to our knowledge.

Individual traditions in early Islamic historiography typically assume the general narrative form of *akhbār*, relatively short accounts most frequently introduced by a chain of transmitters, or *isnād*. This sense of form is well known for the genre, and has recently been pursued in numerous important studies by Stefan Leder.[2] Here, discussion will

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[1]No monograph has been written on this topic. Important indications may be found in Wellhausen, "Prologomena", and Margoliouth, *Lectures on Arabic Historians*.

[2]See his *Korpus al-Haiṯam*, with full bibliography; and for an excellent orientation, his "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*: a Basic Form of Historical Writing", in Cameron and Conrad, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, I, 277–315.

instead focus on three other formal elements which can be distinguished in early Islamic historical writing within the category of *akhbār*: literary forms, topoi, and schemata. We will begin here with the literary forms, and consider the other two categories in subsequent chapters.

Documents

The written sources for early Islamic history contain a number of documents.[3] We have no original documents with which to compare the copies embedded in the literary texts; and so long as this remains the case, we may not consider these copies as verbatim survivals from the earliest period. Hence we must consider them under the heading of literary forms. Without any doubt, written documents were produced in the decades immediately following the death of the Prophet, as indeed they were produced during his lifetime. Moreover, we can infer from occasional claims made by later traditionists that documents were still available for them to examine.[4] Nonetheless, it is impossible to declare with certainty that any one of these documents which have undergone literary transmission is an authentic copy of the original from which it claims to be derived.

In this chapter we will concern ourselves only with the formal aspect of the documents. Their legal contents have been examined elsewhere,[5] and are of interest here only insofar as they have distinct formal characteristics.

[3]On the documents preserved in the historical sources for the early Islamic period, see Donald R. Hill, *The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests, A.D. 634–656* (London: Luzac, 1971); and especially the excellent study by Wadād al-Qāḍī, "Madkhal ilā dirāsat 'uhūd al-ṣulḥ al-islāmīya zaman al-futūḥ", in Muḥammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt and Iḥsān 'Abbās, eds., *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām*, II, 193–269.

[4]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 123:1–7, 243:18–21, 286:7–9, 333:11–12; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 189:3–4.

[5]Noth, "Die 'Sulḥ'–''Anwa' Traditionen"; *idem*, "Die literarisch überlieferten Verträge der Eroberungszeit als historische Quellen für die Behandlung der unterworfenen Nicht-Muslime durch ihre neuen muslimischen Oberherren", in *Studien zum Minderheitenproblem im Islam*, I (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1973), 282–314; *idem*, "Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und Nicht-Muslimen. Die 'Bedingungen 'Umars (*aš-šurūṭ al-'umariyya*)' unter einem anderen Aspekt gelesen", *JSAI* 9 (1987), 290–315.

The documents which have undergone literary transmission are almost without exception treaties made by the Muslims with groups who surrendered to them during the conquests.[6] These documents encompass nearly all the areas which were reached by the *futūḥ*.

Two types of treaty document can be formally distinguished. Some take the form of a letter in which the recipient is addressed in the second person; others take the objective form, naming the recipient in the third person.[7] But at the same time, there is little difference between these two types in their component parts and in the formulae which they employ. Accordingly, we may consider the following component parts as common to both types. These will first be presented in a purely descriptive fashion.

1) Component Parts

a) INVOCATIO (*basmala*): The introductory formula *bi'smi llāhi l-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", is present in all treaty documents known to me.

b) ISSUERS AND RECIPIENTS: The documents are, as a rule, issued in the name of the Muslim general in command at the time in question.[8] The caliph is mentioned only rarely.[9] The persons named as recipients are individuals (governors or lords of cities),[10] or the inhabitants of a city or province,[11] or else both of these at once.[12]

[6] We may name as exceptions two receipts (one of them drawn up by the recipient) confirming the payment of the agreed sum (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2054:14–2055:8), and a later document confirming a treaty (al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 202:4–12).

[7] Contamination of the two types occurs infrequently: see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2658:6–2659:2, and a later document confirming a treaty in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201:14–202:4.

[8] E.g. Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:3–4; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2588:5–6, 2632:16–17; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 173:17, 200:12–13.

[9] In al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2662:4–5, 2665:7–8, the issuers are designated as " *'āmil* of the Commander of the Faithful 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb".

[10] E.g. Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2017:4, 2655:9–10.

[11] E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2405:4–5, 2588:5–6.

[12] E.g. *ibid.*, I, 2665:8, 2641:2–3.

c) Legal Content (Dispositio): This usually consists of a guarantee of safety, often very precise,[13] a citation of the amount of tribute agreed upon, and an enumeration of all rights and obligations of the recipients which do not pertain to property, all usually specified in this order.

d) Witnesses: In most cases it is at this point that the document provides for the witnessing of the content of the treaty. If the treaty mentions the fact that it was recorded in writing, then it occasionally does so at this point.[14] Only exceptionally do treaties fail to refer to the fact that they have been witnessed.[15]

Persons are usually named as witnesses. Their number varies between one and five (most often three), but God can also be invoked as a witness.[16] On occasion the document will only state the fact that witnessing took place, without naming the witnesses themselves.[17]

e) Indication of Written Record: References to the actual writing down of the treaty (use of the verb "to write") occur only in roughly half of the examples known to me, and in the cases where this is stated it is usually mentioned here.[18] The scribe's name is given in only four instances.[19] In other cases it is therefore impossible to state with certainty whether the word used in the text (*k-t-b*) is to be read as active (*kataba*, "he wrote") or passive (*kutiba*, "it was written"). That is to say, we cannot tell if the scribe's name is lacking, or if there is a date lacking which might have been introduced by

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[13]E.g. *ibid.*, I, 2588:6–7, 2675:7–8; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:3–6.

[14]Sayf (with a collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2641:9–10, 2655ult, 2657:12, 2662:13–14, 2656:9.

[15]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 202:12, 205:16; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2045:4–5.

[16]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2675:15–16 (together with angelic and human witnesses); al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:9, 173pu, 174:11, 14, 19, 200:15–16.

[17]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2655:9–10, 2656:9, 2657:12.

[18]For exceptions, see item d above.

[19]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2589:4, 2662:13, 2666:2; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 405:16.

kutiba.[20] In one instance the scribe is also a witness, along with other persons.[21]

f) DATING: Unambiguous dates[22] appear, as a rule, at the end of the document. Formally they occur as dating by year,[23] by month and year,[24] and in one instance as the day of the week and the month without the year.[25] Unambiguous dating is somewhat rarer than indications of written record of the document.

g) SEALING: I know of only one instance of a treaty announcing that it has been sealed.[26] In that instance the announcement comes at the very end of the document. The issuers (the Muslim commanders) are named as sealers.

2) Formulae

a) INVOCATIO (*basmala*): This always takes the form *bi'smi llāhi l-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate".

b) LINKS BETWEEN ISSUERS AND RECIPIENTS: Documents in epistolary form differ from documents in objective form above all on this point (aside from the use of second or third person). Documents in epistolary form almost always use the formula *hādhā kitābun min* ... (name) *li-*... (name), "this is a written message from ... to ...." The shortened form *min* ... (name) *li-*...(name), "from ... to ...", constitutes an exception.[27] We find an outstanding anomaly in the case of the document in epistolary form from the *marzubān* of Marw al-Rūdh, which first names the recipient, then gives the *salām* formula, *salām 'alā man ittaba'a*

[20]Thus in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2633:8, 2659:2, and frequently elsewhere.
[21]*Ibid.*, I, 2666:2.
[22]See the doubtful cases mentioned above under item e.
[23]*Ibid.*, I, 2406:12, 2659:2, 2660:2, 2662:13–15, 2667:3–4.
[24]*Ibid.*, I, 2633:8, 2045:4–5, 2050:10.
[25]*Ibid.*, I, 2900:2.
[26]*Ibid.*, I, 2900:2–3; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 173pu, 200:16, 405:16.
[27]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:4, 2898:13–14.

l-hudā wa-āmana wa'ttaqā, "Peace upon him who follows the right way, who believes, and who is mindful [of God]", and contains an equally unusual *narratio* beginning with the untranslatable epistolary formula *ammā ba'du*.[28]

Treaty documents in the objective style are characterized by the linking formula *hādhā mā a'ṭā* ... (name) ... (name), "this is what ... granted to ...." The formula *hādhā mā amara bihi* ... (name) ... (name), "this is what ... ordered ...", also occurs,[29] as does *hādhā mā 'ahida 'alayhi* ... (name) ... (name), "... concluded a treaty with ... concerning the following".[30] In three instances known to me, the formula of documents in epistolary style occurs.[31]

c) FORMULAE IN THE DISPOSITIO: In this part of the document we find formulae for the transition from the guarantee of safety to the conditions, or else simply for the words which introduce the conditions. Other formulae are used for the issuers' assumption of the guarantee for the content of the treaty, and for threats to revoke protection under specified circumstances.

The conditions are most often introduced by *'alā* (followed by the stipulated requirement, in the form of a substantive), or else by *'alā an* (followed by the stipulated requirement, in the form of a verbal sentence). The particle *bi-* also appears in the same sense as *'alā*, and in addition to *'alā an* we find *mā* and *idhā*, both in the sense of "so long as". *'Alā* can also be linked with the person of the recipient, as in "It is incumbent upon ... (name)" The rights of both parties to the treaty are introduced by *li-*, followed by the name of the issuer or of the recipient. These introductory formulae do not occur by themselves, but rather in various combinations with one another.

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[28] *Ibid.*, I, 2898:15.

[29] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 405:12.

[30] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2044:14–15.

[31] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:3—*hādhā kitābun amānin li-*... (name), "this is a letter of protection for ...", 174:16, 210:15.

The none-too-frequent guarantees on the part of the issuer for the stipulated conditions take the following forms: *wa-'alā mā fī hādhā l-kitābi 'ahdu Allāhi wa-dhimmatu rasūlihi wa-dhimmatu l-khulafā'i wa-dhimmatu l-muslimīn*, "And the covenant of God and the protection of His Prophet, of the caliphs, and of the Muslims will be conditional upon [observance of] what is set forth herein";[32] *wa-laka bi-dhālika dhimmatī wa-dhimmatu abī wa-dhimamu l-muslimīna wa-dhimmatu abā'ihim*, "For this (i.e. for the content of the treaty) you have my protection and that of my father, and a guarantee of safety from the Muslims and their fathers";[33] *wa-'alaynā l-wafā'u wa'llāhu l-musta'ān*, referring to Sūrat Yūsuf (12), v. 18, and Sūrat al-Anbiyā' (21), v. 112, "We are obligated to observe our contracts faithfully, and God is the one implored for help";[34] and *wa-'alaynā l-wafā'u lakum bi-l-'ahdi mā wafaytum wa-addaytum*, "We must keep our treaty with you as long as you remain faithful to it and pay what you owe".[35]

Finally, the threat of annulment of the guarantee of safety or of the treaty (or both) in the event of the recipient's violation of terms of the treaty takes the two following forms: *fa-dhimmatunā minhum barī'a*, "then we will be free of our obligation to protect them",[36] and *fa-lā amāna lakum*, "then you will have no more protection".[37] The document which confirms the treaty for Tiflis is unique: here the issuer commands the audience of the document to observe its conditions with regard to the recipients, *fa-man quri'a 'alayhi kitabī fa-lā yata'adda dhālika fīhim*, "He before whom my

[32] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2406:9–10; very similar phrasing at I, 2588ult–2589:1.
[33] *Ibid.*, I, 2899:12–13.
[34] *Ibid.*, I, 2666ult–2667:1.
[35] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 200:15.
[36] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2633:7, 2657:11–12 (*fa-l-dhimmatu minhum barī'a*); I, 2045:4 (same phrasing); Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 189:7 (*fa-qad bari'at minkum al-hudna*).
[37] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2667:1 (same phrasing), 2656:9 (*fa-lā 'ahda lahu*); al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 405:15–16 (*fa-lā 'ahda lahu wa-lā dhimma*).

treaty is read, let him not act in contradiction to that [which has been agreed upon] concerning them".[38]

d) QUR'ĀNIC ELEMENTS IN THE DISPOSITIO: When the tribute is discussed, reference is made to Sūrat al-Tawba (9), v. 29, and the phrases *'an yadin*[39] and *wa-hum ṣāghirūn.*[40] When there is a question of permission to emigrate, reference is made to Sūrat al-Tawba (9), v. 6, *thumma ablighhu ma'manahu*, "then deliver him to his place of security".[41] The Qur'ānic origin of the phrase *wa'llāhu l-musta'ān* in one form of the issuer's guarantee has already been mentioned.[42] I know of only one instance of a longer Qur'ānic citation.[43]

e) ATTESTATION: If witnesses are listed, they are, as a rule, introduced with the formula *wa-shahida* ... (name), "... is a witness". In two instances the introduction is more explicit: *shahida 'alā dhālika* ... (name), "... is a witness for this",[44] and *shahida 'alā mā fī hādhā l-kitāb* ... (name), "... is a witness for what is written herein".[45] For an incomplete or unnamed group of witnesses the word *shahida* stands by itself.[46]

If God is invoked as witness, it is usually in the form *shahida llāhu*, "God is witness", with the Qur'ānic phrase *wa-kafā bi'llāhi shahīdan*, "God suffices as witness".[47] Other forms are *shahida llāhu wa-malā'ikatuhu wa-l-muslimūn*, "God and His angels and the Muslims are witnesses", and *ushhidu llāha wa-malā'ikatahu wa'lladhīna āmanū wa-kafā bi'llāhi*

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[38] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 202:11–12.

[39] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2044pu, 2657:8–9.

[40] *Ibid.*, I, 2675:8 (*'alā l-iqrāri bi-ṣaghari l-jizya*).

[41] *Ibid.*, I, 2406:5, 2588pu, 2658pu.

[42] See above under item 2c.

[43] *Ibid.*, I, 2675:13, based on Sūrat al-Anfāl (8), v. 60: *'alā sawā'in inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-khā'inīn*, "...equally; surely God loves not the treacherous".

[44] *Ibid.*, I, 2406:10–11.

[45] *Ibid.*, I, 2899pu.

[46] See above, 65 n. 17.

[47] Cf. Sūrat al-Nisā' (4), vv. 79, 106; Sūrat Yūnus (10), v. 29; Sūrat al-Ra'd (13), v. 43; Sūrat al-Isrā' (17), v. 96; Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (29), v. 52; Sūrat al-Aḥqāf (46), v. 8; Sūrat al-Fatḥ (48), v. 28.

shahīdan, "I name as witnesses God, His angels, and those who believe, and God suffices as witness".[48]

f) INDICATION OF WRITTEN FORM: Before the name of the scribe (which in most cases is lacking), there always stands *wa-kataba*.[49] This word standing by itself is ambiguous: read as active, "... wrote", it indicates the omitted name of a scribe, read as passive, "written ....", it indicates an omitted date.[50]

g) DATING: Dates are introduced with the formula *wa-kutiba fī* ... (date), "and [this] was written on ...." Exceptions are *wa-ḥaḍara* ... (year),[51] and the combination of scribe and date: *wa-kataba* ... (scribe's name) followed by the date.[52]

h) SEALING: In three of the four instances known to me, sealing is reported with *wa-khatama* ... (name of issuer), "and ... sealed [it]". In one instance we have *wa-khatama bi-khātamihi* (or *bi-khātimihi*), "and he affixed his seal". In one place we are informed about the legend of the seal; it read *na'budu llāh*, "we worship God". This probably should not be considered part of the text of the treaty.[53]

Let us now summarize the results of our investigation of the formal elements of documents which have undergone literary transmission.

1) Only two types of document occur: the epistolary and the objective types.

2) The individual sections which recur in the documents are few in number. These vary between four (*basmala*, issuer and recipient, *dispositio*, *one* part of the eschatocol) and seven (*basmala*, issuer and recipient, *dispositio*, witnesses, scribe, date, sealing).

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[48] Examples cited above, 65.

[49] Cf. above under item 1d.

[50] Cf. above under item 1e.

[51] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2406:12. On the basis of this passage we can identify the phrase *wa-ḥaḍara*, standing by itself at I, 2489:5, as a date which has not been filled in.

[52] See further examples above, item 1f.

[53] Examples above at item 1g.

3) There is also a limited stock of formulae; but these are used in a great variety of ways.

4) Despite their numerous variations, these documents all share a similar character, namely that of a guarantee of safety made conditional upon payment of tribute and upon other stipulations which do not relate to property. Thus we find, first of all, that all the documents which have been transmitted are clearly related in their form. Hence we cannot explain these documents away as pure fictions which the individual transmitters might have composed according to their own personal whims; otherwise, we should expect to find a much broader range of contradiction and diversion than what actually occurs. Second, we do not find any rigid, fixed scheme controlling the documents. Within the forms which we have already outlined, individual examples may vary, at times quite sharply. For this reason they cannot be viewed as the result of a systematic falsification originating at any one time or from any one side.

Furthermore, these documents cannot be accounted true copies of originals which would have been at the disposal of the individual transmitters. Many arguments can be adduced against this view, of which the most telling are the following:

1) The documents are often incomplete. Formulae which introduce parts of these documents sometimes stand without being filled in, e.g. *wa-kataba wa-shahida*, "and (no name) wrote and (no name) bore witness".[54] In one instance there are not even any issuers or recipients.[55]

2) Anachronisms occur. For instance, the expression *dhimmat al-muslimīn*, "protection by the Muslims", seems to imply a fully developed concept of a precise relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The treaty documents almost always refer to a grant of security by a particular Arab commander on behalf of

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[54] Cf. above, items 2e, f. One could, of course, read the phrase in the passive, *wa-kutiba wa-shuhida*, "written and witnessed", in which case no omission is implied.

[55] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:3.

himself and his men—no broader commitment is either stated or implied.[56] For a document to speak of protection by the Muslim community at large is therefore anomalous in the context of the otherwise *ad hoc* tenor of the treaty documents, and furthermore, represents the result of a longer process of development and so could not have existed from the very beginning.

3) Similarly, the call to Islam (*da'wa*), which appears in one treaty document, does not belong in such a text for the simple reason that a treaty is a *consequence* of the non-Muslims' negative response to the *da'wa*. That is, they have decided to adhere to their own religion and to pay the *jizya*, which is why the treaty is now being concluded.[57]

4) Citations from and allusions to the Qur'ān,[58] as well as typically Islamic religious and moral hortatory statements,[59] could only have been comprehensible and meaningful to Muslims; as the audience for such citations was a Muslim one, they do not make sense in a treaty for defeated non-Muslims.

5) Finally, blatant anachronisms are also to be found in the *dispositiones*. These have been discussed at length elsewhere.[60]

We thus have to do neither with individual fictions, nor with systematic forgeries, nor with copies taken from originals. These documents, as we have them in the early compilations, can at most allow us to discern the faded outlines of the originals, barely perceptible after a long process of (most likely oral) transmission, in the course of which they have been subjected to all sorts of changes.

Apart from the fact that other explanations are unconvincing, a number of arguments speak in favor of this conclusion. We may refer,

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[56] Examples cited above, 65 n. 16.

[57] Thus in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:7, 201:14–202:4; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2675:11–13, 2899:9–13. On the question of the *da'wa*, see below, 146–67.

[58] Cf. above under item 2d.

[59] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 405:13; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2898:15.

[60] Noth, "Die literarisch überlieferten Verträge der Eroberungszeit", 282–314.

first of all, to formal similarities with treaty documents of the Prophet.[61] We cannot, however, suppose that these Prophetic documents served as the literary model for our treaties. Arab armies and the smaller contingents which often accepted the surrender of towns and villages would not have had sample texts with them to use as such literary models, and in any case would not have needed them to formulate the straightforward arrangements under discussion. The Prophetic documents could, on the other hand, have been the model for early treaties with regard to their subject matter, with which they are clearly related.

Moreover, our documents have—in this they again closely resemble the treaties of Muḥammad—the character of guarantees of safety, tied to stipulated conditions, rather than of definitive treaties. They thus accord with the character of the early expansion of Islam, which was still largely unplanned and unorganized. Similarly, the documents are almost always issued in the name of the Muslim general in command at the time. In this way, the independence enjoyed by the *amīrs* during the conquests clearly emerges, even though it was repeatedly denied afterwards.

At times, formulae which serve to introduce parts of the documents have not been filled in. These formulae speak against the idea that the documents were originally pure fiction. They also speak against the supposition that our treaties are true copies of originals. The best explanation may be that they result from lax transmission of the original documents.

If our assumption is correct—and for the time being it must remain a hypothesis—then those documents which in the extant literary sources exist in two or more verifiably independent versions offer us an instructive opportunity to investigate how and to what extent the original documents have undergone changes as the result of their prolonged transmission. Let us look more closely into three instances of parallel

[61] E.g. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, I.2, 35:25–36:13, 37:20–26; = al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, ed. Marsden Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), III, 1032:2–10. For documents allegedly preserved from the time of the Prophet, see the materials assembled in Aḥmad Zakī Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasā'il al-'arab* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1356/1937), I, 31–88; and the much larger corpus of Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-siyāsīya li-l-'ahd al-nabawī wa-l-khilāfa al-rāshida*, 4th revised and expanded ed. (Beirut: Dār al-nafā'is, 1403/1983), 41–368.

traditions of this type: the treaties with Tiflis, with Edessa, and with (Ibn) Ṣalūbā (a magnate of the lower Euphrates region).

The two versions of the Tiflis treaty[62] are in general agreement on the following parts, all of which may quite conceivably have been in the original document: linking of issuers and recipients with the formula *hādhā kitābun min ... li- ..*, "this is a letter from ... to ..."; a detailed guarantee of safety; this guarantee made conditional upon payment of tribute to the amount of one *dīnār* per capita; the recipients obligated to give good counsel to the Muslims, to support them against their enemies, to provide hospitality for one day to travelling Muslims, and to show them the right way; invocation of God as witness.

Each of the two versions also contains passages which the other lacks. For instance, the version transmitted by al-Balādhurī contains a stipulation for the protection of the recipients from textual tamperings which might result in their being forced to pay a higher tribute. It also contains a clause stating that in the event that the Muslims should be unable to protect their partners to the treaty, because of other duties, this shall not be viewed as breach of the treaty. The version in al-Ṭabarī, transmitted by Sayf with a collective *isnād*, contains a citation from the Qur'ān and a list of witnesses. Within the parts which by and large agree with one another, we find on the one hand verbatim agreement, and on the other hand deviations which are to be attributed to the use of synonyms, to trivial additions and omissions, and to the rendering of (longer) passages in different words (with more or less the same content).

In the parallel traditions for Edessa[63] we find the following areas of agreement: the formula *hādhā kitābun min ... li-...*, "this is a letter from ... to ..."; guarantee of safety made conditional upon tribute and performance of services; God as witness. Material differences have to do with the type of payments due (specified precisely in money and kind in the one instance, formulated generally in the other) and the types of services required. Otherwise the versions vary from one another

[62]Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2675:5–16, and with tradents from the Armenian capital Dabīl (= Dwīn) in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201:14–202:4. Cf. Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 208–10 no. 521.

[63]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 174:10–14, and Dā'ūd ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (with family *isnād*) at 174:14–19.

only in details of formulation which have little bearing upon matters of substance.

The two versions for Ibn Ṣalūbā[64] differ most sharply, but here again we may suppose the existence of a common source. In contrast to the full *hādhā kitābun min* ... *li-*... of one version stands the truncated *min* ... *li-*... of the other. Both versions confirm the receipt of an installment of tribute and note that it was satisfactory. In return they promise protection and mention witnesses. Material differences consist in the amount of the tribute (the longer version names a sum ten times larger than that in the other), and in the following points which are included in only one of the two versions: protection and tribute made dependent upon one another; naming of two extra witnesses (the sole witness figuring in the short version also functions as witness in the longer one); and the date. Moreover, the *dispositio* is constructed differently.

If we begin with the hypothesis that these parallel traditions go back, however circuitously, to one and the same original treaty, then we may infer that the originals were corrupted in the following manner (this could also be applied to documents which have been transmitted in only one version, but with a grain of salt):

1) The structure, component parts, legal content, and formulation of the originals are present only in rough outline. In the most favorable case (that of Tiflis), the document may agree more extensively with the original.

2) Expressions occurring in the original texts are frequently replaced by synonyms.

3) We find additions and omissions of little material importance.

4) Entire passages of the original may be reformulated in a different sense.

5) Entire sections of a document can be added or omitted, as can conditions of a treaty (not pertaining to property rights).

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[64] Ibn Isḥāq–Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:3–9, and Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in I, 2050:1–8.

6) Tampering with the *dispositio* (Ibn Ṣalūbā: amount of the payment due) is to be found.

We may conclude that such documents as have undergone literary transmission can give us only a general idea of the original texts of the treaties. The question of their reliability must be posed and answered on an individual basis. But they do allow us, in any case, to form an approximate picture of the character and form of written treaties at the time of the early conquests.

Letters

If we are to believe early Islamic historical tradition, many important matters in the time of the first four caliphs were settled through letters and exchanges of letters.[1] Indeed, at times entire sequences of events are reported in letter form. These numerous letters, some of which have been transmitted verbatim, others more loosely according to their content, and yet others in a combination of the two, cannot automatically be considered as fictitious.[2] Very early on in the history of Islam, people could and did express themselves in letters. This emerges from the important correspondence of the Prophet Muḥammad, the authenticity of part of which can be contested in a number of details, but not fundamentally.[3] Our first task is therefore to prove that in the letters attributed to the time of the first four caliphs we have to do not with actual documentary evidence, but rather with a literary form.

We may first note that in Roman and Byzantine historiography, it was a standard literary convention to use the form of invented letters or exchanges of letters as a means of carrying the narrative forward. Letters of this kind are especially common in such military histories as those of Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius, and reflect the continuity of literary conventions which had been in place for nearly a

[1] Cf., again, the collections of Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasā'il al-'arab*, I, 89–555; Ḥamīd Allāh, *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-siyāsīya*, 369–545.

[2] As in Margoliouth, *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, 122–23; Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", *passim*.

[3] The letters are collected in Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, I.2, 15:1–38:7. On the question of authenticity, see Michael Lecker, "On the Preservation of the Letters of the Prophet Muḥammad", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming.

millennium.[4] One reason for their survival was their manifest utility as narrative devices, and this usefulness would of course not have been limited to works written in the classicizing tradition of late antiquity.

While there is no direct evidence for a connection with these precedents, it is not too burdensome to demonstrate that the Arab-Islamic letters also reflect a literary form. First of all, we have a group of letters which certainly could not have been available in their original form to the traditionists. For instance, there is a letter containing military instructions from the Persian magnate Ardashīr to a Persian governor,[5] a letter from the Byzantine emperor Heraclius to the generals whom he has commissioned to fight the Muslims in Syria,[6] a letter transferring supreme command over the Persian troops to Rustam, through the Sasanian princess Būrān (this letter uses the Islamic formula *Allāh 'azza wa-jalla*, "God, may He be praised and exalted"),[7] and a letter from Rustam himself to Persian compeers.[8]

We also encounter fictitious letters of this type outside the area with which we are dealing here. In al-Azraqī we read of a correspondence between Abraha and the Negus of Abyssinia;[9] Ibn Isḥāq tells us of an exchange of letters between Wahrīz, the Persian conqueror of the Yemen, and the Sasanian monarch.[10] It is of course perfectly reasonable to propose that Abraha would have corresponded with the Negus, or Wahrīz with his master; but to reiterate the point made above, later Muslim scholars would not have had access to these letters, and we must thus reject the possibility that the texts they transmit have anything to do with what may actually have transpired between the parties concerned.

In some cases it is clear that letters simply provide a means—historically baseless—to fill out a story or carry the narrative forward.

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[4]See Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 148–49.

[5]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2032:7–11.

[6]*Ibid.*, I, 2088:3–6.

[7]*Ibid.*, I, 2164:5–8.

[8]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2251:5–10. Further examples of this kind: Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2117:2–4, 2551:13–16; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 144:15–17.

[9]*Akhbār Makka*, 88:12–17. This may be attributable to Ibn Isḥāq, who figures as tradent in the last *isnād* mentioned at 87:13–15.

[10]Transmitted in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 949:17–950:3.

This is clear from the way in which letters are cited in accounts of an entirely legendary character. Ibn A'tham, for example, relates how an officer under Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, leading his men in prayer during an expedition, is confronted by the voice of an apparition (*hātif*). Upon the return of the warriors to their base, the incident is reported to Sa'd; this provokes an exchange of several letters between Sa'd and the caliph 'Umar, revolving around an effort to repeat the contact with the apparition.[11]

If rational arguments oblige us to conclude that "original letters" of this sort are completely fictitious, it is straightforward practical considerations which dictate that we also consider other letters in the tradition to be unauthentic. The *futūḥ* reports abound with instructions sent by letter from the caliphs to the Muslim warriors, and with answers and queries made by the field commanders to the "Commanders of the Faithful". Here we must recall that the distance from Medina to Syria or to Iraq is around 1000 kilometers, which in those days meant a journey of twenty days,[12] or, for a simple exchange of letters, about 40 days. Urgent messages of an official nature, it is true, must have proceeded at faster rates; but even if we concede this, a critique of the *futūḥ* letters cannot be grounded on the proposition that such missives could have been rushed back and forth, as a matter of predictable routine, at the fastest speeds attested for early medieval times. One might also ask how the caliph would have known exactly where all his commanders were at any given time. The reports on letters assume that there was never any doubt about this, while in reality, and especially where armies in motion were concerned, a messenger leaving Medina with a letter for a commander in (for example) Syria could hardly have known exactly where he would eventually find the leader he sought. Seen in this light, a correspondence such as the one which is supposed to have taken place immediately before the battle of al-Qādisīya between the caliph 'Umar and his commander in Iraq, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ,[13] becomes completely unbelievable: each of the two is supposed to have sent three letters, and the entire correspondence—assuming a pace of

[11]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 281:2–284:13.

[12]Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J.H. Kramers (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1938–39; *BGA* 2), I, 40:7–8.

[13]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2226:1–5.

travel *twice* as fast as the normal rate—can have lasted no less than two months. Similarly, 'Umar's instructions to Sa'd to write to him every day[14] seem rather absurd when considered in their real geographical and logistical context.

We must also bear in mind that many of the letters cited in *futūḥ* reports are by Muslim commanders requesting that the caliph send them reinforcements.[15] The way in which these matters are presented implies that reserve military units were constantly ready and waiting (in Medina or elsewhere) for precisely such requests, and could be transferred to any trouble spot almost instantly, regardless of the enormous distances involved. In reality, of course, any dispatch of reinforcements would have taken some time to organize, and upon its departure, the relieving force probably would have been limited to a pace *slower* than that maintained by smaller groups or individuals. Certainly it could not have hurried to the rescue at rates in any way comparable to those reached by high-speed dispatch riders.

Many of these letters also contain obvious anachronisms. The results of military campaigns in Iraq and Syria could only have emerged gradually, more or less by chance. But in the caliph's letters, these results are already known well in advance. As Abū Bakr sends Khālid ibn al-Walīd and 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm to al-Ḥīra,[16] he already knows that the Muslims are going to conquer al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon).[17] In his letter ordering Khālid to march from Syria to Iraq, Abū Bakr names as the goal of the march the Yarmūk River, that is, the place where the famous battle against the Byzantines would take place.[18] In similar fashion, 'Umar reveals foreknowledge of details of the Syrian campaign in a letter to Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ.[19] He has enough information on the qualities of the future Persian opponents to inform Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ of these characteristics in a letter.[20]

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[14] *Ibid.*, I, 2235:10.

[15] See below, 123–26.

[16] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2021ult–2022:3. Cf. I, 2057:4–6.

[17] *Ibid.*, I, 2022:4–7.

[18] Anon. (*qālū*) in *ibid.*, I, 2076:3–5. Cf. Sayf at I, 2111:6–8, a similar letter from Abū Bakr to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ.

[19] *Ibid.*, I, 2150:6–14.

[20] Sayf–Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī in *ibid.*, I, 2227:15–16.

The assumption underlying these numerous letters from caliphs is that the Muslim troops and commanders were incapable of operating without a steady stream of orders from the caliphs, conveyed in the form of letters.[21] It can easily be shown from counterexamples that this does not correspond to the facts.[22] We must remember that the period of the first four caliphs was remembered afterwards as a model worthy of imitation—indeed, as a golden age. Accordingly, the early Islamic state appears here as a strictly centralized structure, with its "capital" at Medina.

It can no longer be doubted that the letter was a formal element of early Islamic tradition, and that its character is not that of an actual historical document. Exchanges of letters, as between caliphs and commanders, may very well have occurred in fact. But the letters which our sources have transmitted are not the authentic ones, and may not be cited as proof of the existence of correspondence of this sort.

In the meantime, we may venture a general suggestion concerning the time when Islamic historical tradition may have begun to portray an intensive correspondence between rulers and "subjects". In three traditions (so far as I know) the exchange of news between the caliph and the *futūḥ* warriors is connected with the establishment of the *barīd*. During the battle of al-Yarmūk the *barīd* arrives from Medina, and after Nihāwand and after a victorious battle with the Daylam, news of victory reaches the caliph through the *barīd*.[23]

The *barīd* (from Latin *veredus*, Greek βέρεδος), the post and information service, which the Arabs took over from the Byzantines and perhaps also from the Sasanians,[24] was intended above all to assure written contact between the center and the provinces. The Islamic traditionists may have had this arrangement in mind as they described these prolonged correspondences. Naturally, the *barīd* as such does not belong to the period of the *futūḥ*. However, both literary and docu-

[21]See, for instance, Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 124:17–18, 217ult–218:6, 270:12–15.

[22]Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 182, and the sources and literature cited therein.

[23]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2096:6–2097:1; *ibid.*, I, 2628pu–2629:16, 2651:4–9.

[24]On this subject see Dominique Sourdel, art. "Barīd" in *EI*², I (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 1045a–1046b.

mentary sources attest to it for the period around 80/700.[25] Under the second 'Abbāsid caliph, al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75), it was already functioning smoothly.[26]

It would appear from the accounts cited above that the early Islamic traditionists, as they reported these brisk exchanges of letters, presupposed the existence of a *barīd*. If this is so, then the traditions which deal with this subject must have originated no earlier than about 80/700.

We must now ask about the functions of the literary form of "letters". Like dialogues and anecdotes, letters can often be employed to make reports livelier and more enjoyable. But the function of this literary form obviously did not end with this. The letters of caliphs above all, which account for most of the letters, are not to be explained merely on stylistic grounds.

As we have just mentioned, underlying many of these letters was the notion that in the early Islamic state everything already took place on the orders of the central authority of the "caliphal court". The caliphs themselves would thus have seen to the planning, regulating, and deciding of all important affairs. According to this view, it was not as the result of gradual developments that the Muslims took al-Ḥīra, that they encountered the Byzantines on the Yarmūk, that Damascus was conquered at a certain specific time,[27] that 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ set off for Egypt,[28] or that the Muslims fell upon Tunisia.[29] All these events would have come rather as the consequences of far-seeing plans on the part of the heads of the Muslim community: a caliph would formulate a strategy, disclose it in the form of letters containing instructions for the Muslim commanders, and then shepherd it through to its final execution through exchanges of queries and responses.

[25] C.H. Becker, "Studien zur Omajjadengeschichte", *ZA* 15 (1900), 18–19; *idem*, "Arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes", *ZA* 20 (1907), 96.

[26] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, III, 435:3–6, in a report for the year 158/774–75 stating that throughout his reign the directors of the post (*wulāt al-barīd*) in all of the lands of the caliphate kept al-Manṣūr informed of food prices.

[27] See the letters cited above, 79.

[28] 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ, Ibn Lahī'a, and al-Layth ibn Sa'd in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 56:10–13.

[29] Ibn Lahī'a in *ibid.*, 172:12–173:4, and 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ *et al.* in *ibid.*, 183:5–7.

This planning and regulating function of the caliphs, which emerges from the letters and correspondence, touched not only upon the course of the *futūḥ*, but also upon problems which resulted from the *futūḥ* in the areas of law and administration. Letters of caliphs which discuss legal matters pertaining to the status of the conquered lands are quite numerous, especially those of the second successor to the Prophet, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Either upon request or upon their own initiative, the caliphs take positions on such questions as the distribution of the conquered lands among the Muslim victors,[30] the status of the subjugated population,[31] the taxes they must pay,[32] the services they must perform,[33] division of the spoils, [34] donations of land,[35] use of the former crown domains (*ṣawāfī*),[36] and finally even on such specialized problems as the validity of a guarantee of safe-conduct (*amān*) granted by a slave.[37]

The legal questions which come up in these letters of caliphs need not detain us now, except to refer to a formal characteristic which many of them have: that of pronouncements of legal sentences made, as it were, *ex cathedra*. These letters may decide a particular case which establishes a general rule, or else they may contain a general legal maxim. A few examples may clarify this.

The question arises whether and under what circumstances noncombatants have a right to a share of the booty. A solution appears in the case of Syrian warriors who arrived at the battle of al-Qādisīya after the fighting had ended. Their demand for booty is forwarded by letter to the caliph 'Umar, who in his reply states that if the Syrians arrived before the dead had been buried, then they should be included

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[30] *Ibid.*, 84:8–13, and *passim.*

[31] Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2367:13–2368:10, and *passim.*

[32] Al-Layth ibn Sa'd and Ibn Wahb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 151ult–152:10, and *passim.*

[33] Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Aḥdab in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 152:11–12 (obligation to provide hospitality).

[34] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2342:3–6, and *passim.*

[35] Al-Shaybānī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 350:18–351:2, and *passim.*

[36] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2469:6–14, and *passim.*

[37] Marwān ibn Mu'āwiya al-Fazārī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 390:13–19, and *passim.*

in the division of spoils.[38] That grants of land (*iqṭā'*) could be legally made is shown through the individual case of a Baṣran to whom 'Umar assigns a piece of land in writing, after having ascertained that the land in question did not belong to the category of lands which owe tax (*araḍī l-kharāj*).[39] The sensitive question of whether Arab men could marry Persian women comes up in an exchange of letters between Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān and the caliph. The caliph's verdict is delivered in a letter: a marriage of this sort is not forbidden, but [one must bear in mind the danger that] the charms of the Persian women might alienate Arab men from Arab women.[40]

In addition to individual cases requiring general decisions, these letters also contain general statements of legal principles. We find the much-discussed question of whether the conquered lands ought to be distributed among the Muslims who had taken part in the conquests. Strictly speaking, these lands qualified as spoils of war, the division of which had been specifically enjoined and regulated in the Qur'ān in Sūrat al-Anfāl (8), v. 42. Islamic tradition ascribes many fundamental judgments on this question to 'Umar. In one of these, 'Umar writes in a letter to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, the conqueror of Egypt: "Leave the land (to its original owners), so that those who come afterwards (*ḥabalū l-ḥabala*) can undertake military campaigns from its yield".[41] 'Umar is supposed to have established the payments and services from the conquered peoples in a general letter addressed simply to the tax administrators (*umarā' al-jizya*).[42] He is also supposed to have pronounced the following legal maxims concerning the *fay'* (here in the general sense of booty, both moveable and immoveable), in a letter to an unnamed addressee:[43] "Take possession of your *fay'*, for if you do not, then time will pass the matter by [and another habit will de-

[38] Al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, 256:15–20.

[39] Al-Shaybānī in *ibid.*, 350:18–351:2.

[40] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2374:13–2475:4. A further example of this kind may be seen in the report from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 457:1–4 (*'aṭā'* for *mawālī*).

[41] Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 88:4–10; = *ibid.*, 263:14–19.

[42] Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Aḥdab in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 152:8–12.

[43] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2469:14–2470:1.

velop irrevocably]".[44] Finally there is the already-mentioned decision of 'Umar concerning the validity of a promise of safe-conduct (*amān*) made by a slave. The caliph receives a letter containing a query on this, allegedly arising from a real situation. His reply contains the maxim: "The Muslim slave belongs to the Muslims, and his offer of protection has the same validity as theirs" (*dhimmatuhu ka-dhimmatihim*).[45]

The caliphs appear in their letters not only as planners, regulators, and legal authorities, but also, if less frequently, as religious and moral admonishers. Commanders and troops are thus encouraged to direct their thoughts to the hereafter, to exhibit no pride, to commit no sins, and to devote themselves to achieving correct intentions.[46] In a letter to Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ, who has just been named supreme commander in Syria, the caliph warns him, among other things, not to lead the Muslims into perdition on account of the booty, and to remain aloof from the distractions of this world.[47] With exhortations of this sort the letters of the caliphs once again stand in close relation to the *ḥadīth*.

We may now summarize and conclude. There can be no doubt that fictitious letters and correspondence entered into early Islamic tradition in large numbers. This has been made sufficiently clear through examples—it would be easy to add more—of things which are impossible from the point of view of the techniques of transmission, or else from that of geography. Examples have also been given of anachronisms and of false insinuations, whether made consciously or not. In many instances it can be demonstrated that a letter has been utilized by the early traditionists as a formal element, and that consequently it cannot be a historical document. This being the case, we must next account for those letters which have not (or have not yet) been clearly established as fictions. Our first task in these instances would not be to determine whether or not such letters are literary fictions, but rather whether or not they are original documents. As of now, I am unaware of any letters in the tradition on the period of the pre-dynastic caliphate

[44]This renders the Arabic *yalḥaju* in a paraphrase.

[45]Marwān ibn Mu'āwiya al-Fazārī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 390:13–19.

[46]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2057:9–10; anon. at *ibid.*, I, 2079:8–2080:1; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2088:1–2; *ibid.*, I, 2228:9–11.

[47]Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān in *ibid.*, I, 2145:5–8.

to which the character of documents can clearly be attributed. Again, this does not mean that no one wrote or corresponded in the period of the early caliphs. But if we wish to use the testimony of the transmitted letters, then we must begin with the assumption that they are not "authentic", if by this term one has in mind a verbatim or largely verbatim transcription of a documentary text which originated at the time to which the later tradents attribute it.

Various functions can be detected for the literary forms of "letter" in the materials which passed through the tradents' hands:

1) Making the reports more enjoyable in style.

2) Anticipating and telescoping events which actually occurred gradually, thereby making them appear planned and regulated, above all to the benefit of a fixed picture of the caliphs. However, even non-Islamic rulers appear in a similar light in their own letters.[48] From this we may deduce that these particular letters reflect not a conscious bias, but rather an unconscious, false preconception.

3) Deploying the high authority of the first caliphs in deciding important questions of law and administration.

4) Making the first caliphs appear as religious and moral counsellors, as if their primary function were that of a preacher.

The fact that most letters of the early Islamic tradition are not authentic does not mean that the reports which have been clothed in this literary form of "letters" are completely lacking in veracity. As we consider the contents of the letters, we have only to set aside everything which is determined by the epistolary form: sender and addressee, the system of dating, and the functions of letters. Whatever then remains must be examined afresh for its content of truth. In closing, let us demonstrate this with the example of one of the letters already mentioned above.

From the caliphs' instructions to their commanders we can, under some circumstances, determine how the *futūḥ* followed one upon the

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[48]See the letters cited above, 77.

other, without any influence from the caliphs. However, we usually have better information on all this from other reports, so that the value of these sorts of letters should not be assessed too highly in this regard. At most they might serve as a control.

It is also indisputable that such questions as division of the spoils, marriage with non-Arab women, distribution of the conquered lands, the validity of an *amān*, and other similar matters, may have been real concerns at the time of the conquests. We must therefore ask if we find customs or norms of the early period mirrored in these supposed decisions of the caliphs.

The attitude towards marriage with non-Arabs which we find in ʻUmar's letter is suited to the period immediately following the first conquests, when the Muslims began gradually to settle in the conquered areas. Only a few decades later this was no longer an issue, since mixed marriages of this kind were no longer unusual. All the same, it remains possible that these letters originated in connection with polemics against non-Arab converts to Islam (*mawālī*).

On the other hand, the decisions on division of spoils and distribution of the subjugated territories give the impression of being later constructions by the jurists. The legal pronouncement that "whoever arrives too late for the battle, but before the burial of the dead, will receive a share of the spoils" might be a theoretical limitation of claims to the spoils, rather than something which grew out of actual practice. If one opts for the former possibility, then the *isnād* of the tradition betrays the true originator of this maxim—the Kūfan traditionist and jurist al-Shaʻbī (d. ca. 103/721).

There is indeed a group of traditions which discuss whether or not the lands ought to be distributed. But I am still unaware of any reports which would make it possible to conclude that the early conquerors tried *in fact* to institute such a measure. And indeed, an endeavor of this sort is not likely to have occurred, for it would have entailed a complete transformation of prevailing conditions. We know for certain that in nearly all areas of administration the early conquerors allowed conditions to remain as they found them, and in any case were themselves incapable of fundamentally changing them. The discussions on the distribution of land may have arisen as the jurists worked out the law of spoils of war, a law which, strictly speaking, applied to land as well.

The formula "regard for later generations"[49] which frequently occurs among the arguments against distribution of the land makes it clear who was actually doing the debating: the later generations themselves.

The question of the validity of an *amān* granted by a slave certainly does not belong to the early period. As Heffening has shown, it must be taken as the object of juridical speculation at the end of the Umayyad period.[50] Meanwhile, it is impossible to date the religious and moral exhortations, or to place them in any order with regard to their overall social perspective. For this they are too general and too undifferentiated. The letters of non-Islamic rulers and notables may well be pure fictions, not only in their form, but also in their content.

Speeches

Much as people in the earliest period of Islamic history liked to write letters, they were even fonder of making speeches. Such, at any rate, is the impression one derives from the early traditions as we have them in their full variety. From a formal point of view, these speeches exhibit so many varieties that it is quite impossible to speak of *the* literary form of "speeches". It would similarly be both useless and impossible to assemble a catalogue of types of speeches and orations. Here we will be content with discussing those kinds of speeches which occur more or less frequently, and which contain the most important subject matter.

It must be stated at the outset that the question of the authenticity of these speeches—unlike that of the letters—does not even need to be asked: we must view them as fictions from beginning to end, and again, attention may be drawn to a major precedent in the literature of late antiquity.[1] Furthermore, it must have been a basic function of certain speeches to make the style of the reports more enjoyable, as is also true, as we have seen, of letters. Speeches which were composed specifically with this goal in mind will not be considered here.

One type of speech which is frequently encountered is that of a caliph's speech to a departing army. Two forms must be distinguished

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[49]See above, 83.

[50]Willi Heffening, *Das islamische Fremdenrecht bis zu den islamisch-fränkischen Staatsverträgen. Eine rechtshistorische Studie zum Fiqh* (Hannover: H. Lafaire, 1925), 110–15, esp. 114.

[1]See Cameron, *Procopius*, 142–43, 148–50, 212–13.

here: orders pertaining to real concrete matters, and general exhortations, mostly with a religious coloring. First, let us consider the genuine orders.

The practical instructions have parallels in the *sīra–maghāzī* literature. Just as the Prophet appears in that literature as a speaker,[2] so Abū Bakr and 'Umar appear as speakers in the *futūḥ* tradition.[3] Here we might possibly have transmitters of *futūḥ* traditions taking over material from the *maghāzī*. But the reverse is also conceivable: instructions which were ascribed first to the early caliphs may afterwards have been put in the mouth of the Prophet as the higher authority. This often occurs in the *ḥadīth*.

Now for the practical instructions. These almost always specify how the Muslim warriors are to deal with their future enemies. In form and in subject matter we may distinguish four types:

1) Short prohibitions.

2) References to future events, together with rules of conduct to be observed when these occur.

3) Instructions to summon the enemy to Islam (*da'wa*).

4) Instructions relating to the granting of protection (*dhimma*).

The prohibitions (*lā*, "do not", followed by verb, or by verb plus object) invariably include orders not to kill helpless persons (women, children, the elderly). They rarely omit prohibitions against dishonest dealings (usually *ghadara* or its synonyms) and misappropriation (*ghalla*) of the booty. Less frequent are prohibitions against maiming (*maththala*) and against destroying useful objects, above all fruit-bearing trees.[4] The prohibition against killing may therefore be the

[2]Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 561:2–10 (before Dūmat al-Jandal), 757:3–758:2 (before Mu'ta); Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 119pu–120:15 (again, sending the army off); Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24 no. 60 (the same situation).

[3]Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1850:7–17 (Abū Bakr before sending out Usāma ibn Zayd); eyewitness *isnād* in *ibid.*, I, 2713:12–2714pu ('Umar); = Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:2–13.

[4]Cited, again without naming tradents, in al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 561:2–10, 757:3–758:2; al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 8:11–13; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1850:7–17,

oldest of these, while the triad "do not kill—do not deceive—do not misappropriate" may be the earliest combination of such prohibitions.

Allusions to future events (introduced with the future particles *sa-* or *sawfa* plus the verb in the second-person plural) are concerned with the Muslims' encounters with the local inhabitants, with priests, and with unfamiliar foods.[5] The inhabitants are to be spared, the priests put to the sword, and the strange foods consumed "while remembering God" (verb: *dhakara*).

The *da'wa* should be a summons to choose one of three alternatives: conversion to Islam, payment of tribute, or combat (lit. *al-sayf*, "the sword").[6] If the first of these is chosen, then the converts must be informed that to achieve full equality of status with the Muslims, they must abandon their present abodes and join the Muslims.

Finally, we have instructions concerning the guarantee of protection (*dhimma*). If the enemies of the Muslims agree to a treaty, then the Muslims may not guarantee them the protection of God, but rather their own protection and that of their fathers.[7]

Each of these four kinds of caliphal instructions must originally have been transmitted on its own. This follows not only from the fact that they differ from one another in style and content, but also because they appear in different combinations in the caliphs' speeches.[8] They may also have originated at various times and in different situations.[9] We do not, however, have to concern ourselves here with their contents. Only

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2713:12–2714pu (= Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:2–13); Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 119pu–120:2; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24 no. 60.

[5] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 758:5–7; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1850:11–17.

[6] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 757:7–12; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1850:11–17; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24:15–17.

[7] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 757:15–758:2; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2714:13–14; Zayd ibn 'Alī, *Musnād* (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāt, 1966), 351:11–13.

[8] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1850:7–17 (prohibitions, reference to future events); al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 757:3–758:2 (prohibition, *da'wa*, *dhimma*); *ibid.*, II, 561:2–10 (prohibition); *ibid.*, II, 758:1-2 (reference to future events, prohibition); Zayd ibn 'Alī, *Musnad*, 349:5–351:13 (*da'wa*, prohibition, *dhimma*); Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 119pu–120:2 (prohibition); Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24 no. 60 (prohibition, *da'wa*).

[9] Some of the prohibitions and the *da'wa* may reproduce usages of the time of the Prophet; the references to future events and the limitation of the guarantee of safety must have developed in the course of the conquests.

two points need to be noted and borne in mind: first that caliphal speeches of this kind are an example of how the early transmitters tied together originally heterogenous material;[10] and second, that the function of these speeches resembles that of many of the letters which we have already discussed:[11] to promulgate norms or usages (here pertaining to the law of war) as expressions of the will of the high authorities (the early caliphs, or Muḥammad).

Aside from these practical instructions, we find religious exhortations made by the caliphs to armies about to set out. These speeches are distinguished by their lack of any specific reference to the business at hand. They could just as well have been pronounced during the Friday service in the mosque. And indeed, the phrase *qāma khaṭīban*, "he rose to deliver a *khuṭba*", which on occasion introduces speeches of this kind, brings these speeches into the realm of the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*). Let us explore this lack of relevance to what is actually going on.

As the Muslim warriors set off for Iraq, 'Umar pronounces the following words:

> God has only coined metaphors for you, and made figures of speech available to you, that He might thereby restore hearts to life, for hearts are dead in their chests until God revives them. Whosoever knows something, let him take advantage of it. Righteousness (*'adl*) has certain features and certain signs. Its features are decorousness, generosity, kindness, and mildness; its sign is mercy. God has created a gate for every thing, and has made a key available to each gate. The gate to righteousness is *i'tibār*, the key to it *zuhd*. *I'tibār* means thinking about death, by remembering the dead, and preparing for death through busying oneself beforehand with [good] works. *Zuhd* means claiming one's right from whomever it is due, and granting people their right if they have a just claim to it.[12]

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[10]For other similar cases, cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 294–95, and *passim*.
[11]See above, 85.
[12]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2219:13–2220:3.

This is moralizing preaching, and totally inappropriate to the situation in which it is supposed to have been spoken: a ruler addressing warriors about to depart on a military expedition. Here we only refer to more speeches of this type, made by a caliph to a departing army.[13]

The speeches of caliphs are often designated as *waṣīya*.[14] The speaker's activity is also described with the verb *awṣā*.[15] Until now *waṣīya* has usually been understood as a testamentary disposition, either a will in the legal sense, or else a spiritual legacy.[16] Here we have before us yet another type of *waṣīya*: the (living) caliph instructing his "subjects" in law, religion, and morals.

The key word *khuṭba* has just appeared in connection with the religious exhortations of the caliphs. With the *khuṭba*, the oration in the mosque, we come to another frequent type of speech. This is not the place to give an overview of the characteristics of the sermons which the early traditionists have handed down. This would require a monograph on the *khuṭba*, which we still do not have. In the present study, we must be content with bringing several examples to bear on the task of clarifying the purpose of the literary form of the *khuṭba*.

The caliph can appear in a *khuṭba* simply as a preacher, and thereby as the spiritual leader of the Muslim community. We can see this already in the caliphs' religious harangues to the army, which resemble *khuṭbas*. Another instructive example is a Friday sermon which 'Alī is supposed to have preached in Medina and al-Kūfa. This sermon is nothing more than a set of religious topoi strung together, such as praise of God, the testament of faith (*shahāda*), calling upon the audience to be mindful of God, to perform good deeds, to be obedient, and to direct all their activity toward the hereafter. It concludes by asking for a blessed life in the other world.[17]

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[13]E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2083pu–2084:6 (Abū Bakr); *ibid.*, I, 2216:15–2217:16 ('Umar).

[14]*Ibid.*, I, 2083:5–6, 2107:7, 2217:5.

[15]*Ibid.*, I, 1850:8; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 119:25; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24 no. 60.

[16]Cf. Albert Dietrich, "Das politische Testament des zweiten 'Abbāsidenkalifen al-Manṣūr", *Der Islam* 30 (1952), 133–65.

[17]Reported by the Baṣran Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīra (d. 165/781–82) in Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, 10:1-16.

Another kind of *khuṭba* is the oration pronounced by a new caliph as he receives his first acclamation (*bay'a*) from the people (usually *al-nās*). Although these also have the character of sermons, their primary function is to allow the new caliph to set out the basic principles of his office and/or his future reign.[18] Let us take as an example the two versions, transmitted by al-Wāqidī, of 'Uthmān's accession *khuṭba*.[19] Here is the train of thought of the first one: It would be better if I had nothing to do with affairs of state. [But since that is not the case,] I wish to follow the example of my two predecessors (Abū Bakr and 'Umar). May God strengthen me and help me! In the other version, 'Uthmān turns directly to the people: may they help him to achieve the good, and may they not openly be [his] brothers, but rather secretly [his] enemies. If anyone sees anything that is blameworthy (*munkar*), he may remove it; if he is unable to do so, let him bring the matter before him ('Uthmān). Further, they should rid themselves of their fools (*sufahā'akum*), for a fool, once suppressed, will behave himself; but if left to do as he likes, he will just become worse and worse.

It seems perfectly justifiable to maintain that in the two versions of 'Uthmān's accession *khuṭba* the enemies and the supporters of the beleaguered caliph each have their say. Thus his enemies in the first version: 'Uthmān himself confesses that he is inadequate to the task. His assertion that he will adhere to the example set by Abū Bakr and 'Umar may be tied to his opponents' charge that he broke with his two predecessors' conception of government (the point would then be: even though he promised the opposite when he came to power!). The request which he makes in the second version, that people should be honest with him, fits in with the view of his supporters, namely that he was open to frank discussion of any grievance, and therefore that there could have been no justification for the actions of those fools who overthrew and killed him. If this argument is correct, then we have

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[18]In speeches of this kind, as in moralizing speeches by rulers in general, Islamic historical tradition follows a Persian model. Cf. Theodor Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos* (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner, 1896), 14, 41.

[19]Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 24:13–25:4. Other accession *khuṭbas* may be found in al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 127:17–19 (Abū Bakr); *ibid.*, II, 139:11–13 ('Umar); Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2800:6–2801:2 ('Uthmān, completely different from the ones just cited); *ibid.*, I, 3078:10–3079:5 ('Alī).

here a spurious accession *khuṭba* formulated in two different ways to suit opposing political views.

As a third type of *khuṭba* we must finally mention orations which offer a specifically Islamic link between religious and moral formulae and trains of thought on the one hand, and very concrete practical instructions on the other. Here we refer only to a *khuṭba* of 'Umar which sets limits on the authority of a governor (*'āmil*),[20] and to a Friday sermon of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ which lends a religious guise to an old usage, that of the annual driving of the horses out to spring pasture.[21]

Also of great importance are speeches in which army leaders and tribal chiefs seek to ignite the enthusiasm of their warriors, either before or during a battle. Although these are certainly fictitious in their formulation, like all other speeches, they merit attention because they apparently still contain allusions to early conditions and ideas. They must indeed have also had the goal of emphasizing the religious aspect of Muslim warfare. This conclusion is fairly clear from such spiritually oriented formulations as: "Praise God for having led you directly to Him... and remember His blessings";[22] "Trust in God";[23] "Let nothing be more contemptible to you than the things of this world";[24] "The risk which you take is for the sake of Paradise, whereas theirs (i.e. that of your enemies') is for the world";[25] and others of a similarly pious character.

But at the same time different chords are struck: "Before you lies Paradise *or* booty";[26] "Fight for both religion (*dīn*) *and* the world (*dunyā*)";[27] "You are the nobles of the Arabs (*a'yān al-'arab*); turn now against the non-Arabs (*'ajam*)";[28] "Truly this man (Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ at al-Qādisīya) would have called upon others for help, if he

[20] Asad ibn Mūsā in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 167:5–15.
[21] Ibn Lahī'a, from eyewitnesses, in *ibid.*, 139:15–141:14.
[22] Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2292:9–10.
[23] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:4–5.
[24] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:9–10.
[25] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:13.
[26] *Ibid.*, I, 2292:10, 2458:17–18.
[27] *Ibid.*, I, 2293pu.
[28] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:12–13.

had known of people who were more worthy of providing help than you are....Attack them like warlike lions: you are named lions (*asad*), so behave like them"—thus the chief of the tribe of Asad (the name of which means "lion") to his fellow tribesmen;[29] "I hope that today the Arabs (*al-'arab*) will not be ruined because of you";[30] "Do nothing today which would bring shame upon the *'arab* tomorrow";[31] "Think about what people are going to say about you tomorrow";[32] "Keep in mind the stories which people will tell about you in the market on fair days, so long as there are people who tell stories".[33] It can hardly be doubted that such formulations have nothing to do with religion. Here it is a matter of such priorities as the quest for booty (at least in addition to religious goals), the old opposition of *'arab* against *'ajam* and the warlike virtues of the former, the fame of the tribe, and the striving for praise (or alternatively, fear of scorn) from those who recite historical accounts when the tribes meet together. With this we have certainly identified views which represent, to borrow Wellhausen's phrase, some "remains of Arab paganism".

In light of conclusions reached earlier,[34] these examples of Islamic and pagan Arab elements juxtaposed with one another are of special interest. Once again, we see how little interest the early compilers took in homogenizing their collections of reports according to any particular tendency.

In the *futūḥ* and *fitna* traditions above all, we find a type of oration which concentrates upon the theory of state. While the *futūḥ* traditionists mostly transmit statements on the essence and goals of Islam, the *fitna* traditionists transmit floods of eloquent speech on who is entitled to the caliphate. Here again we do not have to concern ourselves with the material contained in these speeches, but rather need only refer briefly to their formal qualities.

In the *futūḥ* tradition it is, as a rule, the Muslim messenger in the enemy camp who informs his astonished and perplexed listeners of the

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[29] *Ibid.*, I, 2299:3–6.
[30] *Ibid.*, I, 2191:12.
[31] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:14–15.
[32] *Ibid.*, I, 2293:2–3.
[33] *Ibid.*, I, 2294:1.
[34] See above, 7–14.

principles and purposes of the community of Islam. Messenger speeches of this kind—often concluding with the summons to Islam (*da'wa*)—occur chiefly in the accounts of particularly important military events, as in traditions on al-Yarmūk,[35] al-Qādisīya,[36] Nihāwand,[37] and the conquest of Egypt.[38]

The *locus classicus* for speeches detailing the views of both the supporters and opponents of an 'Alid caliphate is in reports on the confrontation on 'Alī and Mu'āwiya at Ṣiffīn. Of particular importance is the collection of traditions entitled *Waq'at Ṣiffīn* of Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī, which abounds with such programmatic speeches. As the tradents portray the negotiations between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya before the clash and describe the situation as the two parties confront one another fully prepared for battle, they state the fundamental principles motivating both sides.[39] The introductory parts of these speeches—at times quite long—are often closely related to the Friday sermons discussed above. That is, they consist of religious and moral formulae, strung together more or less indifferently.

Finally, we must mention speeches with a legal content. These obviously have the same function as the letters containing legal pronouncements, namely that of establishing authoritative foundations for legal usages, and deciding juridical problems on the basis of major precedents.[40] It will thus be apparent that the literary forms of "letter" and "speech" both have the same goal in this instance, especially since the transmitters often tend to bring in a letter on one occasion, and a speech on another, to decide one and the same legal question.[41]

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[35]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2097:4–15. Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 178–79.

[36]See Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 284 and n. 71.

[37]*Ibid.*, 279, 281.

[38]Anon. ('Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ?) in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 66:5–68:15.

[39]Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, 200ult–201pu ('Alī to Mu'āwiya's messengers), 239:5–241:2 (Dhū Kalā' before the Syrian army), 313:17–315:8 ('Alī before the Iraqi army), and frequently elsewhere. See also Abū Mikhnaf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3270:1–3272:2, 3274:5–3279:11.

[40]See above, 82–84.

[41]E.g. "The Egyptians have no fixed treaties with the Muslims", in a *speech* by 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 89:2–7, and in a *letter* of 'Umar II in *ibid.*, 90:10–12. This sort of thing occurs often.

The practical instructions from the Prophet and the caliphs to the Muslim warriors, which have already been discussed,[42] can easily be counted among the speeches with legal contents, insofar as they touch upon military questions. Three judgments on fundamental legal questions may suffice as examples. Asked to distribute the agricultural lands of the Sawād and of al-Ahwāz, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb pronounces a negative decision: "What will remain for those Muslims who will come after us?"[43] We have already encountered a similar decision of this caliph, stated in the form of a letter.[44] On the law concerning ownership of uncultivated lands (*mawāt*), 'Umar is again supposed to have pronounced the following maxims: "If someone puts uncultivated land to the plow, then it belongs to him; the original owner[45] loses his right to it after three years".[46] Finally, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ: "The inhabitants of the Pentapolis (Barqa and its environs) have a fixed treaty [with us], which must be observed".[47] Considerable importance must be ascribed to the last two of these sayings, since they were pronounced from the pulpit (*'alā l-minbar*).

Speeches with a legal content are not too numerous in any case; in general the epistolary form was preferred in these instances. This must be because the letter, for which the status of "document" could be claimed, carried more weight as proof than did the spoken word, however solemn the occasion on which it was pronounced.

Lists

A striking characteristic of early Islamic tradition is its love of lists. Names are constantly being collected, beginning in the *maghāzī* literature with the well-known lists of martyrs appended to the accounts of each of the Prophet's campaigns. Next come the works of *ṭabaqāt*, which were originally nothing other than collections of lists of persons. These were arranged by cities and regions, and within each of these, by

[42]See above, 88–90.

[43]Al-Wāqidī, from al-Zuhrī, in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 384:4–7.

[44]See above, 83.

[45]Literally, "the one who has staked it out for himself," *al-muḥtajir*; see Lane, *Lexicon*, I.2, 517a.

[46]Ibn Isḥāq, from al-Zuhrī, in Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 37:2–3.

[47]Ibn Lahī'a in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 170ult–171:2.

genealogical affinity and by generation. This trend appears clearly in the *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ,[1] and in the curious book of lists by Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb entitled *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*,[2] which contains names collected according to such principles as "Sharp Wits (*duhāt*) among the Arabs",[3] "Women Named 'Ātika in the Prophet's Family Tree",[4] or even "Men of al-Baṣra Who Lived Long Enough to See a Hundred of Their Children and Grandchildren".[5] Almost any category, however exotic or limited, could generate at least the beginnings of a list.[6]

Historical tradition on the period of the early caliphs also favored the form of the list. This form occurs most frequently in *futūḥ* traditions, if only because these make up the greatest number of early traditions overall.[7] There we find lists of the fallen, though not nearly as well arranged or as complete as in the *maghāzī* literature. As a rule, the compilers contented themselves with making a selection of names, whether out of all those who had fallen, as in the case of al-Yarmūk;[8] or else of a particular group of the slain, as for the members of the tribe of Quraysh who fell at the battle of Ajnādayn;[9] or else a selection of "prominent Muslims" (*a'lām al-muslimīn*), as at the (probably fictitious) battle of Buwayb.[10]

More numerous than these lists of the dead are lists of those who took part in the fighting in various battles. Naturally, these must always

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[1]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā' al-'Umarī (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-'Ānī, 1387/1967).

[2]Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstädter (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-'uthmānīya, 1361/1942).

[3]*Ibid.*, 184:7–10.

[4]*Ibid.*, 47:4–51:9.

[5]*Ibid.*, 189:10–13.

[6]*Ibid.*, 289:3–7, a "list" containing one name, identified for the distinction of having both a maternal and paternal aunt who had been married to the Prophet.

[7]See above, 31.

[8]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2101:8–15.

[9]Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2126:13–16. See also Rotter, "Abū Zur'a ad-Dimašqī", 88.

[10]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2196:13–16. Further examples of lists of this kind may be seen in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 77:10–83:5 (those Muslims who fell at al-Yamāma, arranged according to tribe), 87:12–88:1 (Ajnādayn), 88:5–8 (Marj al-Ṣuffar); Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2349:11–15; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 113:15–17.

represent a selection. They also often have the character of indirect traditions: that is, they were not intended simply to establish that these persons took part in the fighting, but instead were collected for some other purpose, and only allow us to ascertain the bare fact of participation.

In the majority of the lists devoted only to participants in battles, we find enumerations of Companions of the Prophet (*aṣḥāb*, *ṣaḥāba*, or *muhājirūn*, *anṣār*). *Ṣaḥāba* lists of this sort have already been discussed,[11] and their value as sources will come up later in another context. Here we need cite only two representative examples.[12] Lists of participants chosen according to other principles occur less frequently. We may name as examples the warriors who went off to Iraq with Abū 'Ubayd ibn Mas'ūd,[13] the leaders (*quwwād*) who were present at Fiḥl (Pella),[14] and tribal notables (*ashrāf*) who took part in the conquest of Sijistān.[15]

The lists we have discussed so far have, at least in their formal appearance, the character of documents. This character, however, is completely lacking in the "indirect" lists of participants, which have been compiled for other motives. A few illustrative examples are the following: Abū Bakr tied the banner (*liwā'*) to the spearpoints of eleven men setting out for the *ridda* wars, while stating precisely whom they would have to fight and in what order. We have the names of these eleven in a list.[16] Similarly, in the year AH 17 'Umar is supposed to have declared himself in agreement with the idea that the Muslims should undertake the conquest of the eastern provinces of the Sasanian Empire. He then had the banner brought to seven warriors who were to conduct the war in certain designated provinces, and whose names are listed.[17] We also have two lists of seven or, alternatively, fourteen persons who

[11]Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 276, 280–81, 286, 293, with examples.

[12]Anon. in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2820:3–6; 'Abd al-Malik ibn Maslama *et al.* in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 92pu–96:10.

[13]Al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2162:16–19.

[14]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2150:14–2151:3.

[15]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 396:7–9. Further examples are al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2385:8–12; al-Wāqidī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 154:6–11.

[16]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1880:6–1881:8.

[17]*Ibid.* (with collective *isnād*), I, 2568:10–2569:13.

are supposed to have been sent as messengers to the Persian general Rustam before the battle of al-Qādisīya. In the first of the two, they are sent by the supreme commander in Iraq, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ;[18] in the second at the instigation of the caliph 'Umar, who sends orders to Sa'd by letter.[19] In the second list, the fourteen messengers are more fully described: seven of them as men "of noble appearance", and the other seven as men who "are well-proportioned, who emanate dignity, and who are judicious in their views". Finally, we have a letter of 'Umar in which he assigns the task of marching against Hurmuzān in al-Ahwāz to a group of persons.[20]

All these lists have in common the fact that the traditionists associate them with prestigious and honorable missions. Similarly, it is not a matter of statistics, but rather of emphasis, when Persian leaders who had sought safety in flight after the battle of al-Qādisīya are listed together with the Muslims who had confronted them. In the same manner, the names of fighters in the Sasanian army who preferred death to flight are named together with their Muslim counterparts.[21] The same applies to the list of those Muslims who declared themselves ready to speed to the aid of their coreligionists who were under attack in Fārs,[22] and to the series of names of courageous fellow tribesmen (from the tribe of Asad).[23]

Aside from the *futūḥ* traditions, we find many lists in connection with administrative matters. In traditions on the garrison towns there appear lists of individuals or tribes, together with statements on the quarters (*khiṭaṭ*, sing. *khiṭṭa*) in which they had settled.[24] Lists of "officials" are also transmitted, as for instance seven frontier commanders (*umarā' al-thughūr*) whom Khālid ibn al-Walīd is supposed to have appointed in Iraq,[25] or the governors whom al-Ṭabarī lists for every year (often, but not always, at the end of the section for each year), or the

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[18] *Ibid.* (with collective *isnād*), I, 2269:12–2270:1.
[19] *Ibid.*, I, 2236:2–10 (on this see I, 2235:8–9).
[20] *Ibid.* (with collective *isnād*), I, 2552:2–11.
[21] Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in *ibid.*, I, 2345:13–2346:8.
[22] *Ibid.* (with collective *isnād*), I, 2548pu–2549:5.
[23] *Ibid.* (with collective *isnād*), I, 2298:14–16.
[24] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 99–128.
[25] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2052:8–11.

governors, judges, and "court officials" (*kātib*, *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*, *ḥājib*, *ṣāḥib bayt al-māl*) listed for each individual caliphate in the history of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ.[26] There remain, finally, the lists of Companions of the Prophet who took up residence in the various garrison towns.[27]

These examples may be separated into two categories: lists which resemble documents, and lists which serve to draw attention to particular matters. The first of these two categories includes the lists of the fallen, of those who had simply taken part in the fighting, of Companions (both as *futūḥ* warriors and as settlers in the cities), and of officials and tribes. All of these lack (at least overtly) any sort of positive or negative coloring. May we therefore consider them authentic?

Aside from 'Umar's *dīwān*, we do not know of any lists of names from the early period which were drawn up precisely at the time in question.[28] Therefore, it must not be supposed that these collections of names bear the authority or reliability of documentary evidence. Indeed, there is need for great caution even in the case of lists which seem to promote no particular interest or partisan view, and so convey the impression that they may well be objective material transmitted in unaltered form from the time to which they are attributed. Accounts of events involving famous Muslims—the choice was limited to them only—provide many indications that this is not the case.

It may well be supposed, for example, that Muslims in later times would have remembered (or otherwise known) when and in what circumstances famous Companions had died in the era of the *futūḥ*. In reality, however, the demise of all but the most central figures is routinely assigned by different authorities to different battles or circumstances, and the names of the Companions concerned thus appear in lists of the dead for various events in different years and different places. In such cases the form of "list" serves a double function: to specify the contents of a category which in earlier times had been allowed to remain ambiguous, and to provide biographical and other details hitherto unknown. Many historical contexts handled in the tradition practically invited the provision of an appropriate list, arbitrarily filled with

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[26] *Ta'rīkh*, I, 127:14–130:14 ('Umar), 156:5–159:15 ('Uthmān), 183:9–186ult ('Alī).

[27] See, for example, the elaborately subdivided lists of such Companions in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 248:1–319ult.

[28] Cf. Puin, *Dīwān*, 61–62.

the names of persons who may (or may not) have had anything to do with the event in question.[29] The famous Meccan leader Suhayl ibn 'Amr, for example, is said to have died during the plague of 'Amwās, at the battle of al-Yarmūk, or of natural causes in Aleppo (northern Syria) or Jilliq (south of Damascus).[30] In some cases the absurd character of the list reveals from the very start that here we have to do with a manifest fiction, as in Ibn A'tham's effort to specify a list of at least a few of the allegedly 700 Muslims who lost an eye at al-Yarmūk.[31] While we certainly should not conclude that no authentic names were ever available to generate a list which would be at least partially accurate, the fact that such lists were so often secondary offshoots from earlier traditions, and at all times invited the introduction of new names,[32] raises very serious doubts as to how the historian is to judge, in individual cases, the extent to which they inform us about the persons who had really belonged to the categories they seek to specify.

The lists of participants in battles require even more caution. Financial and ideological claims tended to be made on the basis of participation in the early conquests,[33] and the lists of *ṣaḥāba* in particular must be viewed in connection with the veneration of the Companions of the Prophet, which emerged only later.[34] It redounded to the glory of an enterprise and of the groups involved (tribes, cities) if it could be said that *ṣaḥāba* had taken part in it. We know of clumsy forgeries which were made in this area.[35] The same applies to lists of Companions who are supposed to have settled in the newly founded cities, although lists of this kind may have retained an authentic core. Among the lists of officials, those of governors may be reasonably reliable. Governors (*'ummāl*) did in fact hold office from the earliest times, and their po-

[29] See Conrad, "The Arabic *Futūḥ* Tradition", forthcoming.

[30] Caetani's annual necrologies leave no doubt that this practice was quite widespread in Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid times, and even later; see *Annali dell'Islam*, IV, 128–29, for this particular example.

[31] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 265:9–12. Cf. below, 194.

[32] See below, 126–29.

[33] Claims of this sort become apparent in such traditions as those in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2343:4–8, 2540:5–11, 2633:17–18.

[34] Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 194–95.

[35] *Ibid.*, 195–96.

sition was such that their names could have been remembered. But we cannot consider the lists of court officials as authentic sources. Here we find anachronisms, as has already been indicated: people wanted to suppose that offices which were familiar in later times were already in existence in the early period.[36] The persons named may, for all that, have played certain rôles in the entourage of the caliphs and governors.

Next we come to those lists whose purpose is to emphasize or to glorify. The very tone of these lists speaks against their trustworthiness. It certainly enhanced the prestige of those persons who figured on these lists, and consequently of their descendants or fellow tribesmen, if they were named as leaders of the *ridda* wars, or as heroes of the *futūḥ* in eastern regions of the Sasanian Empire, or if they were credited with the honorable task of instructing the unbelievers on the principles and purpose of Islam, or if they were counted among those who had declared themselves ready to help their comrades in distress, or if they appeared in a list of bold warriors who had fought an important battle.

These general considerations can only be confirmed through closer investigation of lists of this type. Wellhausen cast some critical light on the two lists of men who were assigned the task of leading the fight against the *ridda* and of subjugating the eastern provinces. He not only recognized that these lists resulted from schematic and ahistorical considerations; he also established that the people enumerated in these lists could not in reality have played the rôles assigned to them.[37]

The list, already mentioned above, which mentions nine persons whom Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ is supposed to have sent as messengers to the Persian general Rustam provides us with another instructive example, to which others could easily be added. Out of the nine, only one is familiar in early Islam: al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba. Two of them, Qirfa ibn Ẓāhir al-Taymī (*thumma* al-Wāthilī) and Ma'bad ibn Murra al-'Ijlī, are mentioned only here, so far as can be ascertained. Of the other six it can be established that they appear frequently in other lists, or whenever names are needed.[38] 'Arfaja ibn Harthama al-Bāriqī appears six times in lists and once in a military formation;

[36]See above, 52–53.

[37]"Prologomena", 11 (on the *ridda* list), 101–102, 105 (on the *futūḥ* list).

[38]The indices of names for the relevant early historians have been searched.

Ḥudhayfa ibn Miḥṣan four times in lists, once in a military formation, and twice as messenger; Ribʻī ibn ʻĀmir al-Tamīmī six times in lists or the like, three times in military formations, and once as bearer of a letter from ʻUmar; Madhʻūr ibn ʻAdī al-ʻIjlī four times in lists; al-Muḍārib ibn Yazīd al-ʻIjlī once in a military formation and once as messenger. We may remark in connection with this that the military formations and the naming of messengers are also of dubious value as sources. This will be discussed later in connection with the problems posed by topoi.[39]

We have one further indication that our lists are not documents of historical value for the period to which they refer, but rather fictions set into circulation by the tradents of later times. The last of these messengers to appear on the list is characterized as "one of the shrewd ones among the Arabs" (*wa-kāna min duhāt al-ʻarab*).[40] But it is not the last man on the list, the otherwise unattested Maʻbad ibn Murra al-ʻIjlī, who is known as the "shrewd one of the Arabs", but rather the first man named, al-Mughīra ibn Shuʻba.[41] Al-Mughīra, moreover, seems to have been the prototype of the Muslim messenger in the enemy camp.[42] From this we may infer that all the names which stand between al-Mughīra and the epithet "shrewd" were interpolated afterwards.

Our spot checks of these lists have not revealed them to be particularly trustworthy. If this is so, we may conclude by asking if these lists can at least permit us to determine if the persons named were present at all on the occasions designated, even if they did not play the rôle which has been ascribed to them: for instance, the purported leaders of the *ridda* wars; the persons supposedly commissioned by ʻUmar to subjugate the East; and those who are supposed to have been messengers at al-Qādisīya. Wellhausen was inclined to include such instances in his discussion,[43] and he may well have been right. Nonetheless, here we must advise caution. We are going to become acquainted with purely fictitious names as a peculiarity of early Islamic tradition;[44] here we

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[39]See below, 111–14, 117–20.
[40]Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʼrīkh*, I, 2270:1.
[41]Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 184:9–10.
[42]Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 284, 291.
[43]See above, 102 n. 37.
[44]See below, 111–14.

refer only to 'Ubāda ibn al-Ṣāmit, who is accounted one of the Companions of the Prophet who took part in exemplary fashion in the conquest of Egypt, but who in reality probably never went to Egypt in his entire life,[45] and to the listings *by name* of Persian (!) warriors at al-Qādisīya.[46]

Awā'il

The question "who was first?", a legitimate concern even to modern-day historians, occurs often in Islamic literature under the rubric of *awā'il*. Works devoted to "firsts" of all kinds began to appear perhaps as early as the middle of the ninth century. In later periods they were produced in large numbers.[1]

As an area of interest and a literary form, the *awwal* appears already in our early transmitters of historical materials in the eighth century, and perhaps even in the seventh. The transmitters did not give preference to any particular area. Anything that seemed worth handing down could be treated according to "the first".

Thus we learn, beginning with the *futūḥ* as the main theme of early Islamic historical tradition, who was the first commander to go to Syria (Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān),[2] who was the first commander to kill a Persian at al-Qādisīya,[3] who was the first to break into the city of Tustar,[4] who was the first to bring news to 'Umar of the Muslim defeat at the Battle of the Bridge,[5] which was the first city in Syria to be conquered (Buṣrā),[6] which news of victory was the first to reach 'Umar (news of

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[45]See above, 55, and the corresponding list in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 92pu–96:10; and on 'Ubāda, *ibid.*, 93:11.

[46]See above, 99.

[1]Franz Rosenthal, art. "Awā'il" in *EI*², I (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 758a–759b; Walther Björkmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten* (Hamburg: Walter de Gruyter, 1928), 91–92; Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 36; G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 10–23, on *awā'il* in the *ḥadīth* literature.

[2]Al-Madā'inī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2079:7–8.

[3]Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 260:4–6.

[4]Mubārak ibn Fuḍāla in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 119:5–6.

[5]Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2180:13–14; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2187:7–8.

[6]Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2125:4–5.

al-Yarmūk),[7] from whom the first tribute (*jizya*) was levied in Iraq,[8] places of origin of the first Persian prisoners of war (*sabī*) who arrived in Medina,[9] and who established the first garrison town in Tunisia (Ifrīqiya).[10] Further *awā'il* from other areas include the first act,[11] speech,[12] and letter[13] of the caliph 'Umar; the first *qāḍī* in Egypt;[14] the first man who personally held the governorships of Egypt and the Maghrib combined;[15] and the first governor of Egypt to have the *dīwān* translated from Greek into Arabic,[16] or to be buried on the Jabal al-Muqaṭṭam,[17] or to build two-story buildings,[18] or to forbid the wearing of the burnous.[19] The list could extend much further, but the examples already cited should suffice to demonstrate that the form of *awā'il* was quite widespread. We may therefore turn to what interests us here, namely the function of this form, while indicating further references, to which, again, many more could easily be added from the vast range of sources which displayed an interest in such material.[20]

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[7]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2165:6–7.

[8]Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2018:1–2.

[9]Al-Madā'inī in *ibid.*, I, 2077:4–5.

[10]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 197:14–17.

[11]See the partially contradictory statements by al-A'mash in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2144:10–12; Sayf at I, 2159:13–14, 2164:9–2165:3.

[12]Ibn Fuḍayl in *ibid.*, I, 2144:13–17.

[13]Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān in *ibid.*, I, 2144:17–19.

[14]Anon. in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 244:1–4.

[15]Anon. in *ibid.*, 233:5–6.

[16]Al-Layth ibn Sa'd in *ibid.*, 122:7–8.

[17]*Ibid.*, 157:6–7.

[18]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in *ibid.*, 104:17–20.

[19]Al-Layth ibn Sa'd in *ibid.*, 122:8–9.

[20]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 4:15–16 (the first one to respond to Abū Bakr's appeal for troops to invade Syria), 23ult–24:1 (the first Syrian city to conclude a *ṣulḥ* with the Muslims), 55:1–2 (the first money to come to Medina from Iraq), 60:2–3 (the first minors to be taken captive by the Muslims in Iraq); Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 168:9 (the person, specified as an Anṣārī, who initiated the fighting at the Battle of the Bridge), 268:8–9 (the first Muslim to fight in single combat with a Byzantine commander at al-Yarmūk); al-Madā'inī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2079:5–6 (the first one to have received a banner from Abū Bakr); Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2079:16–17 (the first to receive the post of *'āmil* over a fourth of Syria); al-Madā'inī (?) in *ibid.*, I, 2108:7–8 (first treaty in Syria); al-Madā'inī (?) in *ibid.*, I, 2108:11–12 (first combat in Syria); Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2151:8 (the first siege of a Syrian city);

What purpose could our traditionists have had in mind as they busied themselves with *awā'il*? It can hardly be denied that underlying many of the *awā'il* was an honest effort on the part of the traditionists to identify the origins of various processes and institutions. The accuracy of these statements depends upon the extent to which traditionists were able to acquire correct information; in other words, to what extent were good *primary* sources available to them for these *secondary* questions they were asking. Untendentious *awā'il* of this sort might be found in, for instance, reports on the first commanders in Syria, the origins of the first Persian prisoners of war, the first tribute levied in Iraq, the first garrison town in Ifrīqiya, and the first translation of the Egyptian *dīwān*. In all these instances the statements may be considered to be objectively correct.

But at the same time, honor and glory could also be tied to the question of "who was first?". There is no lack, in any case, of *awā'il* traditions which may be suspected of bias in this regard. Most important here are the *awā'il* traditions which confer the rank of "first" upon individuals or groups. It is doubtful that people would really have noticed who killed the first Persian at al-Qādisīya, or who was first to ford the Tigris at Jalūlā'.[21] But reports of this kind could doubtless have enhanced the prestige of the descendants and fellow tribesmen of the persons named. The extreme precision of the genealogy given of the man who slew the first Persian may be an indication of such a bias. The report that the first city conquered in *Syria*, Buṣrā, was

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ibid., I, 2165:5 (first army sent off by 'Umar); Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2359:3–4 (the first man who forded the Tigris during the battle of Jalūlā'); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2749:4–12 (*awā'il* of 'Umar in the areas of administration and religious cult); al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 154:23–24 ('Umar as the first to send out commands and to seal them—cf. Puin, *Dīwān*, 85); Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 104:5–8 (the first to ride his horse into the Tigris on the way to al-Madā'in); *ibid.*, I, 119:5 (the first man to break through the city gate of Tustar, with a statement of his tribal affiliation); al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2800:1–2 ('Uthmān as the first to send an embassy to the inhabitants of the garrison towns); *ibid.*, I, 2981:5–14 (the first to revile 'Uthmān); a series of curious *awā'il* in al-Jahshiyārī (d. 331/942), *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalabī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1357/1938), 1:5–2:7, 11:20–21.

[21] Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2359:3–4.

taken by Khālid ibn al-Walīd and his *Iraqi* warriors, must be taken as a pro-Iraqi tradition and seen against the background of the rivalry between the provinces of Syria and Iraq. We also find evidence of later generations of Muslims in a particular town discussing matters which were settled, and indeed, disputed, through *awā'il*. Hence the interest in Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid Ḥimṣ, for example, in such topics as who had been the first Muslim to raise his standard in Ḥimṣ, the first to kill a polytheist in Ḥimṣ, and the first Muslim born in Ḥimṣ.[22]

Still other *awā'il* traditions belong to the realm of *fiqh*. Thus the tradition on the first governor to build two-story buildings in Egypt aims at promulgating a legal sentence. For it goes on to say that the caliph 'Umar learned of these buildings and wrote a letter (we already know the procedure[23]) forbidding their construction, on the grounds that they would enable and encourage people to spy on the private chambers of their neighbors' houses.[24]

We have a story purporting to be the account of a Muslim warrior who says that he was the first of the besiegers of Tustar to set fire to the city gate. For this he claimed a special supplement from the booty. All this may be intended to justify special additions (*nafal*, pl. *anfāl*) of this kind.[25] A report on the first *qāḍī* appointed by 'Umar in Egypt is intended to make the office of judge appear as a very early institution, dependent upon the caliph.[26] Here for once we have a possible control: elsewhere in the same compilation there occurs a tradition (again in *awwal* form) according to which the first appointment of an Egyptian judge occurred at a far later date, which must be closer to the truth.[27]

With the *awā'il* of a caliph upon his accession to the caliphate—examples for 'Umar have already been mentioned[28]—we are in the area of the attributes and praises of rulers. A similar phenomenon occurs in medieval European historiography, as in Wipo's *vita* of Conrad II,

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[22]See Conrad, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests", 52–53, for these discussions and their context.

[23]See above, 82–84.

[24]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 104:17–20.

[25]See Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 122:22–24.

[26]Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 229:10–16.

[27]*Ibid.*, 244:1–4. The appointing caliph is the second of the 'Abbāsids, al-Manṣūr.

[28]See above, 105.

which includes a chapter on the *Prima gesta Chuonradi regis*, "the first deeds performed by King Conrad".[29]

Finally, it is important to realize that the form of *awā'il* also offered vast opportunities for entertainment and displays of knowledge and cleverness. One can hardly read very far in the *awā'il* literature, where topics extend to such trivia as the first person to say "hello" and "welcome", the first to address a letter "from So-and-So to So-and-So", the first to light a fire on al-Muzdalifa (a mountain near Mecca), and the first to call Friday *al-jum'a*, without concluding that the modern fascination with challenges and games of random knowledge is perhaps a universal phenomenon, and certainly one of great antiquity.[30]

[29] *Gesta Chuonradi II. Imperatoris*, ed. Harry Bresslau, in *Wiponis Opera*, 3rd ed. (Hanover and Leipzig: Hahnische Buchhandlung, 1915; Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum), 26–27.

[30] See, for example, al-'Askarī (wr. 395/1005), *Al-Awā'il*, ed. Walīd Qaṣṣāb and Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, 2nd ed. (Damascus: Dār al-'ulūm, 1401/1981), esp. I, 41–153, for these and other illustrations.

CHAPTER III

TOPOI

IN THIS CHAPTER and the following one we now turn to two different types of literary devices which were universally available to and frequently deployed by historical writers. These devices, topoi and schemata, merit a few words of preliminary explanation,[1] since they are often misunderstood and can easily be mistaken one for the other.

A topos is a narrative motif which has as its primary function the specification of *content*, and aims to elaborate matters of fact. Its scope is thus very narrow, and it is normally bound to description of a specific situation, definition of a brief moment, or characterization of a person. A topos may very well have a basis in fact, for it is often the case that a topos was once securely anchored to real historical referents—this has already been discussed elsewhere,[2] and several further examples will be considered below. Such references move from the domain of life to that of literature, however, when they become transferable. The key to the detection of a topos is the way it drifts from one setting to another, reappearing again and again in situations to which it had never originally belonged, and indeed, never could have belonged. Topoi were sometimes used for mere embellishment or for literary effect, but also provided powerful means to promote certain distinct tendencies and biases.

A schema, on the other hand, is a narrative motif which is, first and foremost, concerned with matters of *form*, with connecting, relating,

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[1]For a discussion of these devices in the *ḥadīth* literature, see Eckart Stetter, *Topoi und Schemata im Ḥadīṯ* (Universität Tübingen: Inaugural-Dissertation, 1965).

[2]See Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 286–93; *idem*, "The *Ṣaḥāba* Topos".

and organizing matters of content. Thus, while a topos is rather narrow in scope, a schema is paradigmatic, and so tends to be very broad in scope. Further, while a topos may have an original basis in historical fact, a schema does not, for its starting point is a situation in which genuine interpretive connections and relations are not known. Its raison d'être is to fill such voids, and since the point of departure is lack of knowledge, this process is a completely arbitrary one. If a schema has any relation at all to historical fact, this is purely a matter of coincidence.

The distinctions between topoi and schemata are clear in principle, but in specific cases the situation can be somewhat blurred. A topos may be schematic in its styling, or may contain schematic elements, as in the *wa-'alā* topos discussed below. Similarly, the matters of content organized within a schema may themselves comprise a string of topoi, as in the undifferentiated reports to be considered in Chapter IV.[3] What is common to both is their transferability: they were tools which every historical writer had in his workshop, and which he used to craft reports and accounts which he considered would meet the expectations of his audience and stand in harmony with the mood of his times. In the ways the writers wielded these tools we see—here perhaps more clearly than anywhere else—the crucial creative dimension of the work of the early *akhbārīs*.

Topoi, which will be considered in this chapter, may be collected into groups, as follows: 1) topoi connected with personal names; 2) topoi emphasizing feats of arms; 3) topoi serving to glorify the early period in general; 4) the topos of the summons to Islam (*da'wa*); 5) topoi with no recognizable tendency whatsoever. This material is offered to illustrate how topoi were deployed and the primary areas where they seem to appear, but does not pretend to exhaust the full range of possible occurrences. Further research will unquestionably reveal other topoi which were also quite important.[4]

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[3]See below, 204–18.

[4]For further indications, see Stetter, *Topoi und Schemata im Ḥadīṯ*, 4–34; Lawrence I. Conrad, "Historical Evidence and the Archaeology of Early Islam", in Samir Seikaly, Ramzi Baalbaki, and Peter Dodd, eds., *Quest for Understanding: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Malcolm H. Kerr* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1991), 264–68.

Topoi Connected with Personal Names

Order of Battle (*wa-'alā*)

Descriptions of how armies were arrayed for battle belong to the basic stock of *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*. Such descriptions are characteristic of all the early historical compilations. The forms which they take are stereotypical: either "the leader of ... (formation or unit) was ... (name)"; or else "... (a person of high rank) entrusted the command of ... (formation or unit) to ... (name)" (*wa-kāna 'alā* or *ja'ala 'alā*). Major deviations from this form, as opposed to minor variations, occur only rarely.

Among these units and formations we usually find the right and left flanks (*maymana*, *maysara*), or else both together (*al-mujannibatān*, "the two flanks").[5] Then, as a rule, comes the main body of the army (*qalb*),[6] followed by cavalry (*khayl*, *mujarrada*),[7] infantry (*rajl*, *rajjāla*),[8] vanguard (*muqaddima*, *muqaddama*),[9] and scouts (*ṭalā'i'*).[10] Less common are the rearguard (*sāqa*),[11] archers (*murāmiya*),[12] am-

[5]E.g. al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 70:4, 76:18–19, 83:7–8, 114:14–15, 168:11–15, 194:14–15, 254:15–16; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 145:9–11, 201:13–202:1, 255:1–2, 272:12–14; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2034:5–6, 2116ult–2117:2, 2207:10–15; Ibn al-Kalbī–Abū Mikhnaf in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 305:11–12; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2353:13–16; Abū Mikhnaf–Abū Salama al-Zuhrī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3380:1–3; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 137:15–17.

[6]E.g. Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 202:1–3, 255:2; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2353:11–16; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2479:6–8; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 128:6–13.

[7]E.g. al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 70:5–8, 76ult–77:1, 83:8, 114:15–16, 168:15–16, 194:15–16, 254:16; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 272:14; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2151:11–12, 2185:7–8; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 141:3–4; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 223:12–14.

[8]E.g. al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 70:5, 76:17–18, 83:8–9, 114:15, 168:15–18, 194pu, 254:16–17; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 272:15; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2265pu–2266:4; Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 178:2–179:1; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 137:15–18.

[9]E.g. Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2156:13–15, 2207:10–13, 2265pu–2266:4, 2456:15–2457:2.

[10]E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2185:7–8, 2191:3–7, 2225:7–11.

[11]E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2191:3–7, 2249:13–15.

[12]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2265pu–2266:4.

bush party (*kamīn, kumanā'*),[13] and baggage train (? *rukbān*).[14] These individual units occur constantly in various combinations, though it is particularly common for such references to be limited to mention of the two flanks and their respective commanders.

It is not difficult to argue against the authenticity of these *wa-'alā* reports and in favor of their character as topoi. We can thus begin by setting aside the otherwise perfectly justifiable question of whether these units and formations were already in existence as fixed institutions in the early period. Instead, we have only to refer to the traditionists' pretentions to knowledge of names, knowledge which on closer inspection often proves to be largely devoid of historical foundation.

This can be seen in the fact that not only the names of Muslim officers, but also those of their opponents are given in many cases. Thus in three instances we have the names of the flank commanders of Khālid ibn al-Walīd's opponents during his Euphrates expedition,[15] and again at Buwayb.[16] For al-Qādisīya we have the leaders of the Persian vanguard, flanks, and rearguard,[17] for Jalulā' the commanders of the Persian flanks and center,[18] and for Nihāwand the commanders of the Persian flanks and cavalry.[19] The credibility of these statements is further weakened by the occurrence of rhyming names such as Bandawayh/Tīrawayh and al-Kawkabad/al-Khawkabad (both pairs of flank commanders).[20] Tending in the same direction are the names of the flank commanders of both sides (Persian and Arab) at the pre-Islamic (!) battle of Dhū Qār.[21]

The transmitters of these reports could not have known all these personal names. This would not necessarily have been the case with regard to the Muslim personalities of the *wa-'alā* reports. But here again, we find a good deal speaking against the authenticity of the re-

[13]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 145:11–12, 202:3–4.
[14]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2225:7–11.
[15]Al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2023:10–11; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2034:5–6, 2063:3–6.
[16]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2191:6–7.
[17]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2249:12–15.
[18]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 272pu–273:1.
[19]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2618:11–12.
[20]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2169:10–11; *ibid.*, I, 2117:1–2.
[21]Abū 'Ubayda Ma'mar ibn al-Muthannā *et al.* in *ibid.*, I, 1032:16–19.

ports. Above all, there are frequent contradictions among the tradents. We may cite a few examples: Sayf ibn 'Umar has preserved two entirely different versions of the order of battle for Buwayb;[22] Ibn Isḥāq and al-Dīnawarī differ completely on the order of battle and commanders for al-Qādisīya,[23] as do Sayf and al-Dīnawarī for Jalūlā';[24] Abū Mikhnaf and Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ give different versions of the commanders of the Khārijites at Nahrawān;[25] two of Khalīfa's tradents give conflicting versions of Mu'āwiya's order of battle at Ṣiffīn.[26]

We might attempt to resolve these contradictions by opting for one account over its rival, despite the fact that there are no valid criteria for making such a decision. But even then it would have to be conceded that entire series of reports must be rejected as fictions. We may find a better explanation for these differences in the early traditionists' practice of filling in the blank formula of *wa-'alā* with whatever names they had available.

Quite surprisingly, we find corroboration of this view among the early Islamic traditionists themselves. After citing contradictory statements on the lower-ranking leaders among both the Muslims and the pagans at the battle of Badr, al-Wāqidī adds a view expressed by two of his tradents, namely that the leaders of individual formations on either side are simply not known.[27] Spurious connections between formations and individual commanders were thus made quite early on, and the Muslim traditionists themselves were aware of this fact.

In reports on military events of the early period, the *wa-'alā* motif is usually tacked onto the narrative of the battle itself. Quite often the motif has no further link with the actual content of the narrative: the persons named do not appear again. On occasion it assumes the literary form of a letter, in which a caliph informs a commander of the names of the officers whom he wishes to appoint.[28] In a few cases, one

[22] *Ibid.*, I, 2185:7–8, 2191:3–7.

[23] *Ibid.*, I, 2353:13–17; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 128:10–16.

[24] In al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2456:13–2457:2; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 135:6–8.

[25] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3380:1–5; Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 180:10–15.

[26] Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 176:5–7, 178:2–179:8.

[27] *Maghāzī*, I, 58:7–10.

[28] E.g. Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2154:6–9, 2478:2–6, 2456:13–2457:2, 2479:6–8.

can hardly entertain any doubt that the *wa-'alā* categories in question are complete fictions. Ibn A'tham's report on the Muslim military deployment at al-Yarmūk, a battle fought in open countryside, includes Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasana—a well-known name in the *futūḥ*—as "commander" of a *darrāja*, a testudo or shed-like shelter used to provide cover for men advancing to undermine a wall.[29] Elsewhere we are told of how 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm marched all the way from Syria to the Jazīra with his army deployed for battle, complete with vanguard, left and right flanks, and rearguard.[30]

It is impossible to say anything precise about the relation of this topos to actual concrete circumstances. It is not clear if any or all of the formations and units which appear in a number of these traditions were already in existence in the early period. As for the origins of the names which have become attached to them, we may consider various possibilities. In descriptions of the opposing side, especially the Persians, we have to do with pure fiction. Here it often appears that names which were simply available to hand have been put to use. In a report on the siege of Damascus, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ, 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm, and Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasana all appear as subordinate commanders.[31] These four were, of course, well known for their activity in Syria and the Jazīra. We have a report (which cannot be authentic) on 'Umar's intention of going to Iraq so as to involve himself personally in the progress of the war.[32] From here it was again not far to go to name members of 'Umar's immediate entourage—Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf—as commanders of the vanguard and the two flanks.[33] Finally, the lists of participants in battles, which we have already discussed in another context,[34] must also be considered here. Such lists—or at least, groups of names associated with particular battles—may well have comprised prosopographies on the basis of which tradents could freely speculate about matters of command.

[29] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 254ult–255:1.
[30] *Ibid.*, I, 325:13–16. Cf. also below, 205.
[31] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2151:11–15.
[32] Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 183–84.
[33] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2213:15–16.
[34] See above, 97–98, 100–101.

Persons Who Kill or Capture Well-Known Enemies

Like the *wa-'alā* motif, the naming of a man who captured or killed a person of note from the other side counts among the recurring narrative elements of *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna* traditions. Although it is impossible to identify a completely typical form for this motif, such remarks on killing and capturing confront us once again with a corpus of statements not to be accepted at face value. Contradictions, which occur so often as to become downright typical, arise between parallel traditions, and at times even within one and the same tradition. Here are some representative examples of both.

Ibn al-Kalbī and some of al-Wāqidī's tradents name two different killers of the Persian Jālīnūs after al-Qādisīya.[35] Tradents of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ and al-Balādhurī have different versions of who it was who dispatched the Persian general Suhrāb during the struggle for the province of Fārs.[36] Al-Madā'inī and al-Wāqidī give different names for the murderer of 'Uthmān.[37]

Contradictions within one and the same tradition occur much more frequently. At times, we have entire lists of persons to whom the topos is applied. Khalīfa's tradents name three possible killers of the *ridda* leader Musaylima, while al-Balādhurī's sources give as many as six.[38] Al-Balādhurī also records a compromise version, evidently of a secondary character: five of these men would have killed Musaylima together.[39] Embarking upon a list of possible killers of Māhān in the aftermath of al-Yarmūk, Ibn A'tham gives two names and then reconsiders: "[Authorities] disagree on who killed him—God knows best".[40] We find a similar lack of agreement over who killed the Persian general Rustam at al-Qādisīya. Al-Balādhurī proposes seven versions,[41] and al-Madā'inī offers three while also adding a fourth possibility, namely that

[35] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 259:17–19.

[36] Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 113:7–8; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 387:8–10.

[37] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 80:21–22, 83:5–6.

[38] Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 75:10–76:2; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 88:14–89:5.

[39] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 89:3–4.

[40] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 270:9–11.

[41] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 259:1–2.

Rustam died of thirst.[42] In Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ we find two names for the person who killed the Persian general Suhrāb,[43] and three names for the murderer of 'Uthmān.[44] Abū Mikhnāf and his tradents offer three names for the killer of the individual who killed the caliph 'Umar's son 'Ubayd Allāh at the battle of Ṣiffīn.[45]

For the underlying reason for contradictions of this sort, we may look to these traditions themselves. To begin with, it is striking that the genealogies of the persons named as killers or capturers are in most cases set forth with great precision. On occasion the genealogy is pushed into the foreground, as if it were the essence of the matter.[46] We hear, further, of conflicting claims made by members of various genealogical groups concerning the killing of one and the same famous enemy, and of the quarrels resulting from such claims.[47] Finally, disagreement is reported among the various genealogical units themselves, with different groups contending that one of their own members killed or captured a famous enemy.

The view that 'Ubayd ibn Aws of the Ẓafar group of Khazraj took al-'Abbās prisoner at Badr is contested by the Salima group of the same tribe, who claim this glory for one of their own.[48] The Banū 'Āmir ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghālib, the Anṣār, and the Banū Umayya (the Umayyads) each name someone from their own ranks as the killer of Musaylima—the Umayyads name the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān himself.[49] The Hamdān, the Ḥaḍramawt, and the Bakr ibn Wā'il tribes each give the credit for killing the caliph's son 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Umar to one of their fellow tribesmen.[50]

There can be no further doubt that this killing/capturing motif, which usually has a supplementary rôle in the reports on the deaths of famous opponents, was used by various groups, especially genealogical

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[42]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 102:10–11.

[43]*Ibid.*, I, 113:7–8.

[44]*Ibid.*, I, 153:3–13.

[45]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3314:12–3315:5.

[46]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 113:12.

[47]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3169:8–3170:3, 3208:1–5; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhabab*, IV, 205ult–206:6.

[48]Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, III.2, 26:23–27:5.

[49]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 88:15–89:5.

[50]Abū Mikhnaf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3314pu–3315:2.

ones, which sought to claim glorious deeds of the past for themselves. It was also used to achieve its corollary, that is, to defame rival groups. Of this we may have at least one example, in which the enemies of the Umayyads foist responsibility for the death of the Companion of the Prophet Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubayd Allāh after the Battle of the Camel onto Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, the classic scapegoat.[51] Traditions which name only one killer and have no parallels may on occasion be authentic.[52] But everything we know about how this motif was employed enjoins us to proceed with great caution here.

According to Caskel, this motif would have arisen in tribal traditions, such as have been preserved in the *ayyām al-'arab* literature.[53] These traditions proclaim warlike deeds of former times which still redound to the glory of the tribe. The problem here, however, is that the origins of the *ayyām* tales, as we now have them, are even more obscure than those of the *ridda*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*, and we would thus again be best advised to proceed with great caution.[54]

Messages of Victory Sent to the Caliph

Reports on messages of victory sent to the caliph after a battle or campaign occur about as frequently as do the *wa-'alā* motif and the killing/capturing traditions. We find them, however, almost exclusively in *futūḥ* traditions. Once again, these reports are strongly formulaic in nature. Three concepts recur constantly: *fatḥ*, "victory" (or "tidings of victory"); *khums* (or its plural *akhmās*), the "fifth of the booty" to be sent back to the caliph; and *wafd* (or its plural *wufūd*), "delegation".

Used either alone or in various combinations, these occur in formulaic sentences of the following types:

1) *wa-ba'atha bi-l-akhmāsi ilā* ... (caliph) ... (name), "and he sent ... (name) with the fifth to ... (caliph)",[55]

[51] Al-Zuhrī in *ibid.*, I, 3186:9–10.

[52] E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2069:4–9; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2201:14–16; Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 260:4–6.

[53] On this see Werner Caskel, "Aijām al-'Arab. Studien zur altarabischen Epik", *Islamica* 3: Ergänzungsheft (1930), 1–99.

[54] See the remarks in Conrad, "Conquest of Arwād", 388 n. 192.

[55] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2073:6–11.

2) *wa-ba'atha bi-l-akhmāsi wa-waffada wafdan ma'a* ... (name), "and he sent the fifth and dispatched a delegation with ... (name)",[56]

3) *wa-bu'itha bi-l-akhmāsi wa surriḥat al-wufūd*, "and the fifth was sent and the delegations dispatched",[57]

4) *wa-ba'atha bi-l-fatḥi wa-l-hadāyā ilā* ... (caliph) *ma'a* ... (name), "and he sent word of the conquest and the gifts to ... (caliph) with ... (name)",[58]

5) *wa-kataba ilā* ... (caliph) *bi'lladhī fataḥa llāhu ilayhi ma'a* ... (name) *wa-waffada bi-l-akhmāsi ma'a* ... (name), "and he wrote to ... (caliph) with news of the conquest God had granted him, [sending the letter] with ... (name), and dispatched the fifth with ... (name)",[59]

6) *wa-kataba ilā* ... (caliph) *bi-l-fatḥi wa-ba'atha bi-l-akhmāsi ma'a* ... (name) *wa-qad waffadahu*, "and he wrote to ... (caliph) with news of the conquest and sent the fifth with ... (name), whom he had dispatched",[60]

7) *wa-kataba bi-l-fatḥi wa-l-akhmāsi ilā* ... (caliph) *wa-waffada wafdan*, "and he wrote to ... (caliph) with news of the conquest and the fifth and dispatched a delegation",[61]

8) *wa-ba'athū bi-l-akhmāsi ma'a* ... (name) *wa-bi-l-fatḥi ma'a* ... (another name), "and they sent the fifth with ... (name) and sent word of the conquest with ... (name)".[62]

These few examples could easily be multiplied, but will suffice to demonstrate both the formulaic character and the underlying types of this narrative motif.

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[56]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2028:4–5.
[57]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2147:17–18.
[58]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2041pu.
[59]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2655:4–6.
[60]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2392pu.
[61]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2541:11–12.
[62]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2477:10–12.

It did, of course, make perfect sense to send messengers to the caliph after the conclusion of a successful venture, and to send him the fifth of the booty which was rightly his. In all likelihood, this did often happen; but we may doubt that it took place on all the occasions mentioned in the sources, or that it always assumed the precise form which they describe. To begin with, we have the formulaic character of these reports, which we have already demonstrated. In many *futūḥ* traditions this formulaic character is so pronounced as to make it appear that the motif of a delegation to the caliph arises more or less automatically, without any relation to what actually took place.[63] Furthermore, this motif is closely tied to the complex of traditions on caliphal correspondence, and must therefore be subject to all the same doubts:[64] the idealized notion of an all-controlling "central power" would indeed require that the caliph be informed immediately of a victory, even if this victory was achieved in a remote area such as Khurāsān or Makrān.[65] The reports of messengers bearing news of victory back to the Muslim ruler often come up in stories of the type "messenger from afar at the caliph's court", which bear all the traits of an idealized depiction of the early period.[66]

Even the matter of sending the fifth of the booty to the caliph, which seems unobjectionable, may turn out to be something other than a simple statement of what happened. The Qur'ān does prescribe that a fifth of the moveable spoils is to be set aside "for God, for the Prophet, for the near relations", and various charitable purposes.[67] But we frequently see evidence that at the time of the early conquests people did not always adhere to this Qur'ānic injunction.[68] The traditions in question may thus have been determined by later ideals of religious law pertaining to spoils of war.

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[63]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2147:17–18, 2541:11–12, 2661ult–2262:1, 2690:2–3.

[64]See above, 78–80.

[65]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2690:12–13 (Khurāsān), 2707:9–10 (Makrān).

[66]E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2025:11–14, 2707:9–12; Abū Janāb or 'Alqama ibn Marthad in *ibid.*, I, 2715:3–2720:3. See also Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 189.

[67]Sūrat al-Anfāl (8), v. 41.

[68]E.g. Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2197:2–2198:5 (no mention of a fifth of the cattle taken as booty); Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2233:11–12; Abū Mikhnaf in al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, V, 28:1–5; Ibn Sa'd in *ibid.*, V, 27:19–22.

Finally, there remain the names of the messengers. A past appearance in this rôle amounted, quite obviously, to a title of honor.[69] Thus we find once again the genealogies of the messengers set out with great precision,[70] and again we hear of competition among the tribes.[71] Yet here this characteristic is not so pronounced as in the case of the killing/capturing traditions.[72]

The general lack of parallel traditions prevents us from determining if there were differences of opinion on the names of the messengers. The one instance of parallel traditions known to me does contain contradictions. Three different tradents of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam name three different persons who are supposed to have brought news of the conquest of Ifrīqiya to the caliph: ʿUqba ibn Nāfiʿ, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, and Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam.[73] All three names are otherwise quite familiar; it would therefore seem that with this motif of messengers bearing news of victory we have to do with the arbitrary filling in of blank formulae.[74]

To summarize, this motif has some incontestable relation to reality. We may be quite certain that reports of victory and shares of the booty often did reach the caliphs. However, the contexts in which this motif occurs and the forms which it assumes demonstrate that reports of this kind were inserted in the *futūḥ* traditions without any concern for actual fact. In other words, this motif was also a topos and was applied in the various ways we have described above.

Arranging the Succession of Command

An especially interesting narrative motif, well attested in traditions on three battles, has it that with an expedition about to set out, or with fighting about to begin, a number of replacements are nominated for the commander, to take his place in case of his death. The basic form is: if ... (commander) falls, then ... (name) shall assume the command;

[69] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2710:4–7.
[70] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2028:4–5.
[71] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 142:6–11; cf. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 151:4–8.
[72] See above, 116–17.
[73] *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 185:18–187:21.
[74] See above, 113–14.

if he falls, then ... (name), and so forth. As many as seven names may occur. But why should deputies not in fact have been named for the commanders at the battles of Mu'ta, the Bridge (*yawm al-jisr*), and Nihāwand?

The problem with these traditions is that in every case, without exception, the commander and his appointed successors *all* fall in battle, and in exactly the order as that of their appointments. We may therefore conclude that this arrangement of the succession to the command was a later invention. One version of the Battle of the Bridge, preserved by al-Dīnawarī, will support this inference. Here there are no preliminary arrangements: the Muslim commander Abū 'Ubayd ibn Mas'ūd simply falls in the battle, So-and-So takes over the banner, and after his death So-and-So.[75] This may very well correspond to reality.

Once it had become available, the succession motif could be elaborated and put to use for a variety of purposes. In one variant of its Mu'ta version, it serves to demonstrate the prophethood of Muḥammad. The prophet names two replacements for the commander Zayd ibn Ḥāritha, and a Jew then observes that if Muḥammad is truly a prophet, then the men he has named will all have to die; for whenever the prophets of Israel had named a commander and specified deputies to take his place in case of his death, all the persons named had died. He assures Zayd ibn Ḥāritha that he will never survive if Muḥammad is indeed a prophet. As we may expect, Zayd and his deputies all fall in the battle.[76]

In traditions on the Battle of the Bridge we find the motif exploited in different ways. In one case the Muslim commander appoints a series of six successors, and concludes with the order that should all six perish in the battle, then "give orders to each other".[77] Another tradition is tied to the concept of martyrdom. The commander feels compelled to name his own successors after his wife has a dream presaging a martyr's death for him.[78] The motif also serves to demonstrate the view that the caliphs determined everything that went on. Thus three traditions on Nihāwand assert that the caliph 'Umar personally named successors

[75] Al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 119:2–5.
[76] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 756:4–14.
[77] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 169:4–8.
[78] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2177ult–2178:6.

to the commander al-Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin.[79] In parallel traditions it is "only" al-Nu'mān himself who takes this measure.[80]

Finally, the succession motif again makes it possible to accommodate more names. In reports on the deaths of the successors, we may suppose that lists of the dead were the actual sources for their names.[81] Thus the tradition of al-Dīnawarī lists a sequence of commanders, each taking the banner from his dying predecessor. We then find the statement that "So-and-So also fell". In this instance the persons named would indeed have been present at the battle, and would merely have received a posthumous promotion in rank from that of a mere participant to that of the commander who dies the glorious death. If there is no mention of the death of the successors to the commander, then the names may have been transmitted in traditions about participants in the fighting,[82] with the same result. However, since there are considerable discrepancies over the names of these successors, especially in the Nihāwand traditions,[83] and since being named as a successor to the command was doubtless viewed as a distinction (we still find hints of this in our traditions),[84] we must remain aware of the possibility of false statements regarding names.

Appointing Deputies

Futūḥ traditions often report that after taking a city or a fortress, a commander would leave a deputy in charge there before returning home. Here we find the expressions *khallafa* and *istakhlafa*, "he appointed",

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[79]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2615:17–20; Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān*, ed. Sven Dedering (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1931–34), I, 20:7–11; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 143:2–6.

[80]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, II, 47ult–48:6; Asad ibn Mūsā in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2604:6–9; Ḥammād ibn Salama in *ibid.*, I, 2645:2–4.

[81]See above, 97.

[82]See above, 97–99.

[83]Cf. above, nn. 79–80. In this regard, even the versions of the Battle of the Bridge are not unequivocal: cf. above, 121 nn. 75, 77–78; Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 93:2–6.

[84]Cf. Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 93:5–6; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2597:19–20.

always with the commander as subject and the nominee as object.[85] Reports of this kind could very well correspond to reality, and thus be authentic sources. But once again reservations must be expressed.

As in the killing/capturing traditions and, in part, in the messenger/victory motif,[86] we again repeatedly find the deputy's genealogy set out with precision:[87] once again, tribal interests may have influenced the choice of name. Furthermore, when we hear of the appointment of a "deputy" after the battle of al-Yarmūk,[88] we must not preclude the possibility that the motif has been used like a topos; but all the same, such a deputy could have been appointed after a battle, even if (as at the Yarmūk River) the battle did not occur at a fortified place. Tending in the same direction is the report that as Khālid ibn al-Walīd was leaving Iraq for Syria, he received a letter from the caliph Abū Bakr instructing him to appoint Muthannā ibn Ḥāritha as his deputy in Iraq.[89] If Muthannā did indeed remain on the Euphrates after Khālid's departure, as the sources report, then his "official appointment" as Khālid's deputy may have derived from this as a later secondary development.

We may close with a final question. The Prophet,[90] the caliphs,[91] and the provincial governors[92] all appointed deputies during their absences, above all when they went on pilgrimage or on military campaign. Could not this fact have influenced our "appointment" traditions, or could it not even have been the reason for their coming into being?

Reinforcements

Reports on how reinforcements were requested (*istamadda*) and provided (*amadda*) could, like the "appointment" traditions, be faithful

[85]E.g. Ḥātim ibn Muslim in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 110:20–21; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2030:9, 2062:9, 2158:9–10; al-Madā'inī in *ibid.*, I, 2109:4.

[86]See above, 116–17, 120.

[87]E.g. Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2065:2–3, 2105:8, 2206:14, and *passim*.

[88]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2105:8.

[89]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2089:1–2.

[90]E.g. al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, I, 180:16–17.

[91]E.g. Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 86:13–15, 91:1–2, 106:4–5, 127:19–20.

[92]E.g. *ibid.*, I, 128:14–18, 158:13–14, 186:7, 13, and *passim*.

descriptions of what actually took place. However, as so often, the contexts in which these reports appear lead us to believe that they also entered the *futūḥ* tradition without any relation to reality.

This is already evident in reports such as the following, relating the reaction in Medina to an urgent request from Abū 'Ubayda for reinforcements:

> When the letter reached him, 'Umar summoned the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and read Abū 'Ubayda's letter to them. The Muslims wept bitter tears, and raised their hands and entreated God to aid [the troops] and keep them safe, and to protect them. So profound were their feelings of concern for them that they said: "O Commander of the Faithful, send us to our brothers and either appoint a commander acceptable to us to lead us, or go with us yourself, for, by God, if they are stricken down, then after their [demise] there will be no good left to life."[93]

This sort of account clearly serves to lend a sense of drama to the narrative, but it is not this alone which should raise our suspicions. An old authentic report would reflect consideration not only for the fact that (as every field commander in the area would have known) a Byzantine army advancing south through Syria could reach a Muslim position at the Yarmūk River in less than a week,[94] but also for the futility of requesting reinforcements from Medina in any situation of immediate danger.[95]

As in the *wa-'alā* traditions, the Muslim transmitters show precise knowledge of the situation in the enemy camp.[96] The Persian Hurmuz asks some of his compatriots, whose names are given, for reinforcements. They send these under the leadership of a man who is also named.[97] Similarly, before the Battle of the Bridge, Abū 'Ubayd's Per-

[93] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 161:6–9.
[94] At one point (*ibid.*, 162:6–7) the tradition even concedes this.
[95] See above, 78–79.
[96] See above, 112.
[97] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2027:1–3.

sian opponents request reinforcements from their queen Būrān. She complies with this request by sending a general, whose name is given.[98]

Other available or familiar names crop up.[99] Thus Sa'īd ibn 'Āmir ibn Ḥudhaym is supposed to have been sent by 'Umar to the Yarmūk with a corps of reinforcements.[100] He is otherwise known only as an early Companion of the Prophet and as a successor to 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm as governor of Ḥimṣ[101]—this probably led to his association in the sources with the battle of al-Yarmūk.

We see the caliphs at work,[102] most impressively and least believably, in an al-Qādisīya tradition. Here Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ hears of the Persians' approach and sends a written request to 'Umar for reinforcements. 'Umar sends men from Medina and 700 veterans from al-Yarmūk commanded by Qays ibn Makshūḥ al-Murādī. In another letter Sa'd also asks Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ to provide help, and the latter sends him a thousand men under 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm.[103] This tradition seems intended to prove that Medinan warriors took part in the fighting at al-Qādisīya, and that the Syrians were also present at that battle in force.

Another "reinforcements" tradition makes it even clearer that to claim decisive participation in the *futūḥ* often served to argue in favor of immediate material gains. At the siege of Balkh, Kūfan reinforcements under four commanders, who are expressly named, are supposed to have been made available to the Baṣran general al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays. Al-Aḥnaf sent them out against Balkh, and then arrived on the scene himself after the Kūfans had already taken the city. "Balkh therefore belongs to the conquests of al-Kūfa".[104] But a parallel tradition says unambiguously that al-Aḥnaf conquered the city himself, thereby establishing a claim for its capture by the Baṣrans:[105] at issue here, of course, was the right to administer the taxes and revenues of the rich district of Balkh.

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[98]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2172:5–6.
[99]See above, 113–14.
[100]Ibn al-Kalbī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 100:7.
[101]Cf. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV.2, 13:23–14:9; VII.2, 122:13–26.
[102]See above, 119, 120–22.
[103]Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2349ult–2350:5.
[104]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2683:13–17.
[105]Al-Madā'inī in *ibid.*, I, 2903:2–8.

Similarly, we have a report that Ḥabīb ibn Maslama made a written request to 'Uthmān for reinforcements during an expedition in Armenia. 'Uthmān, again replying by letter, sent him Kūfan help.[106]

In these examples we see various uses to which a "reinforcements" topos could be put; and the arbitrary dimension evident throughout is highlighted by the fact that when emphasis on different issues was desired, the topos could be, as it were, reversed. Though reports on Arab leaders requesting or sending reinforcements are legion in any *futūḥ* text, it was still possible for tradents in such a work to ignore all this and report that the Greeks liked to delay and put off fighting to await reinforcements: having observed the endurance and determination of the Muslims, and the divine assistance they enjoyed, they hesitated to engage them in battle for fear of falling into grave difficulty or suffering a disgraceful defeat. On the other hand, the same authorities relate, "nothing was dearer to the Muslims than the actual struggle and coming to grips with them".[107]

The one characteristic which all these *loci communes* have in common is their constant citation of names. Otherwise, in the forms they assume and the ways they are deployed, their features are quite distinct. Further discussion of these individual features is not necessary. But the attestations of names may, and even must receive a complete evaluation, above all from the point of view of the tendencies which they may exhibit.

However, to avoid premature conclusions on any of these tendencies, we must first describe another typical quality of our early traditionists. This quality is separate from our narrative motifs, and may be thought of as a kind of "onomatomania", an obsession for providing names. It is best illustrated with several examples:

1) The Persian general Rustam had a Persian–Arabic translator named 'Abūd.[108] Yazdajird III himself also had a translator named 'Abūd during a meeting with al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba,[109] although,

[106] Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 197:16–198:5.
[107] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 97pu–98:5, 114:6–8, 168:1–2.
[108] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2278:8–10; cf. above, 112 n. 17.
[109] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 197:10–11.

as the story goes on to claim, the monarch had a fluent command of Arabic.[110]

2) There is a legal tradition, clad in historical garb, proving the validity of a safe-conduct offered by a slave.[111] In keeping with the theme of the discussion, this tradition gives the slave's name as Muknif,[112] "guardian", "protector".

3) The messenger who brought news of the concentration of the Persians at Nihāwand to the caliph 'Umar was named Qarīb ibn Ẓafar. From this 'Umar concluded that the Muslims were going to achieve victory, since *qarīb* means "near" and *ẓafar* means "victory".[113]

4) 'Umar is supposed to have sent a letter to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ as the latter set out to conquer Egypt. In this letter 'Umar instructed 'Amr to turn back if he had not yet reached Egyptian soil. 'Amr, suspecting that the letter contained something of this sort, did not open it until he had crossed the border. The name of the bearer of the letter is given: it was Abū Ḥammād 'Uqba ibn 'Āmir al-Juhanī.[114]

5) Two slaves of the caliph 'Uthmān, who defended him to the bitter end, had the parallel names Najīḥ and Ṣabīḥ.[115]

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[110] *Ibid.*, I, 197:15: *wa-kāna Yazdajird faṣīḥan bi-l-'arabīya.*

[111] See above, 82, 84.

[112] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2568:4–5.

[113] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2609:10–14. On names as portents of impending good or bad fortune, see Julius Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1897), 1–10, 199–200; August Fischer, "Das Omen des Names bei den Arabern", *ZDMG* 65 (1911), 52–56; Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe: études religieuses, sociologiques et folkloriques sur le milieu natif de l'Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 455–59; M.J. Kister, "Call Yourselves by Graceful Names...", in *Lectures in Memory of Professor Martin M. Plessner* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 3–25, reprinted in Kister's *Society and Religion from Jāhiliyya to Islam* (London: Variorum, 1990), no. XII.

[114] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 94:16–17.

[115] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3049ult–3050:1. The narrative paradigm of similar figures with rhyming names is already evident in the Old Testament. See Genesis 29–30, on Zilpah and Bilhah, servant girls given by Laban to his two daughters

6) The elephant which accompanied Abraha the Abyssinian to Mecca was named Maḥmūd;[116] similarly, at the Battle of the Bridge the Persians had with them an elephant named al-Aṣamm.[117]

Assigning names in this fashion was a characteristic of the popular reciters of tales, the *quṣṣāṣ*, and served the important function of enhancing the credibility of the story.[118] It was also closely linked to the fascination with *awā'il*, which by their very nature encouraged the proliferation of names associated with specific events, in this case "famous firsts".

A great many of the names which we have discussed here must certainly have resulted from the onomatomania of the early transmitters. We have, first and foremost, the non-Muslims who are expressly named.[119] But the joy of namegiving was not necessarily limited to the simple invention of names. The traditionists had available to them a large reservoir of names whose bearers actually had played rôles in the early history of Islam. The traditionists could easily dip into this reservoir whenever they needed names. We have already seen examples of this procedure, whereby names which are already familiar or simply available are put to use.[120] If we wish to look for tendencies which may possibly be at work in these traditions, then we must keep in mind these two forms in which the obsession with names is expressed: outright fiction, and the arbitrary use of names which are already familiar. In either case, the result is—quite ironically—that the tradents confuse the situation with details intended to add clarity and focus to it.

Onomatomania will help us to explain many, though not all of the names which have come up in the narrative motifs we have been investigating. Quite early on, it was considered honorable to have participated in the *futūḥ* (and, with minor variations, in the *ridda* and the *fitna*),

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Leah and Rachel upon their marriage to Jacob, and who both bore Jacob children when their mistresses passed beyond childbearing age.

[116]Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, 96:17.

[117]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 168:11.

[118]Cf. the remarks in Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, 167; Tilman Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1967), 126.

[119]See above, 112, 124–25.

[120]See above, 119, 122, 125.

and such participation might also constitute the basis of very real material claims. It must therefore have been fairly common for people to strive with might and main to prove that they had played preeminent parts in the early conquests, and in later times, for their descendants to claim similar rôles for them. All the narrative motifs we have discussed here are designed to suit that very purpose. We must look especially to two groups of persons: an older group still bound together by genealogical ties, and a more recent one in which loyalties were focused upon one's own garrison town. Both of these groups were concerned to use the possibilities provided by our narrative motifs for their own purposes.[121] This sort of thing probably went on much more frequently than can now be ascertained, and we may conclude that names which cannot be derived from the early traditionists' obsession with name-giving may alternatively be explained as arising out of the interests of certain groups. These groups were concerned to elevate their own members posthumously to preeminent positions in the early history of Islam, so as to lay the foundations of their own fame, of their material claims, or else for both of these purposes at once.

Topoi Emphasizing Feats of Arms

Early Islamic tradition, especially where the *futūḥ* are concerned, reflects the deployment of numerous topoi emphasizing the importance of military developments or the display of martial skills. Some of the most significant ones will be considered here, and it should be observed from the beginning that there are important connections among certain of these motifs.

The Significant or Decisive Battle

The assertion that a battle was particularly important or even decisive for the further course of history can appear in five ways in the *futūḥ* tradition:

[121] See above, 116–17, 120, 123, 125–26.

1) As the Muslims begin a siege, one of the besiegers (as a rule the commander) predicts that the other side will never again be able to "gather" against the Muslims.[1]

2) The formula: "This is the day which decides everything" (*hādhā yawmun lahu mā ba'dahu*).[2]

3) The subsequent evaluation of a military event as a "victory of victories" (*fatḥ al-futūḥ*).[3]

4) A battle is declared the equal of an earlier battle known to have been crucial.[4]

5) Pursuit of themes of eschatological finality. At Ajnādayn, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal exhorts his men: "If you put them to flight today, this land will be an Islamic land (*dār al-Islām*) for you forever".[5] Just before the battle of al-Yarmūk, the view is expressed that the Greeks will be a people devastated so completely that it will be as if they had never existed;[6] on the same occasion, a messenger sent by Abū 'Ubayda to 'Umar advises the caliph that in his view, the impending battle will be the decisive clash (*faṣl*, *fayṣal*) with the Byzantine, and concludes: "If God grants us victory over them this time, the Rūm will have suffered the utter perdition that 'Ād and Thamūd suffered."[7]

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[1]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2027:5–6, 2228:10–11, 2547:8–9; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2598:12.

[2]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2091ult, 2092:11, 2548pu, 2611ult, 2613:1–2; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 192:1–2; III, 294:4.

[3]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2629:17–18; Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 305:12–13; various tradents in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 108:5, 11.

[4]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 153:1–2; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 261:8, 263:16, 273:2–3; II, 56:10; III, 162:2, 197:4; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2459:8–9; *ibid.*, I, 2651:2–3; anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 387:11–12; perhaps also Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2689ult–2690:1.

[5]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 77:12–13.

[6]*Ibid.*, 148:6–7.

[7]*Ibid.*, 140:5–6; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 226ult–227:2. Cf. also al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 190:14–15. The allusion is of course to the many Qur'ānic references to God's destruction of the ancient tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd.

The emphasis in these cases was added subsequently, and they must, in my opinion, be considered as topoi. This is because, first of all, these motifs were obviously transferable. No *communis opinio* emerges in our sources as to which battles must be considered important or decisive: several battles are days which "decide everything", and numerous clashes lay claim to the title of "victory of victories". Both the battles of al-Yarmūk and of Fiḥl (Pella) have thus been considered the crucial event for the future of Syria as an Islamic land.[8] We find even more disagreement over the question of which battle was conclusive for the fall of the Sasanian Empire. The candidates named are al-Madhār (during the first Euphrates expedition),[9] al-Qādisīya,[10] Jalūlā',[11] and Nihāwand.[12] Jalūlā' is declared the equal of al-Qādisīya,[13] an encounter with the Daylamites is declared the equal of the battle of Nihāwand,[14] and finally, the engagements at Rāshahr, in the province of Fārs, are declared the equal once again of al-Qādisīya.[15]

I am inclined to see at least one reason for the frequent occurrence of this "decisive battle" topos in the fact that participation in important battles of the *futūḥ* constituted the basis for the ranking of the fighters in the pension lists, and consequently for calculating the amounts of their grants (*'aṭā'*) and those of their descendants. In this connection, the events which counted as most important were the first engagements on the Euphrates, which were called the *ayyām* (those who had taken part in them were called the *ahl al-ayyām*[16]), the battle of al-Yarmūk, and the battle of al-Qādisīya.[17] When people placed such strong emphasis on the importance of other battles, which mostly came later

[8]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 192:1–2 (Fiḥl); Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2091ult, 2092:11 (al-Yarmūk); and 2156ult–2160:1, 2157:13–14 (Fiḥl).

[9]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2027:5–6.

[10]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2228:10–11.

[11]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2457:8–9, 2458:15, 2459:8–9.

[12]Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2598:12.

[13]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2459:8–9.

[14]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2651:2–3.

[15]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 387:11–12.

[16]This definition is given in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2412:12–13; the term occurs very frequently.

[17]*Ibid.*, I, 2343:4–8, 8–11, 2540:5–11, 2633:17–18. Cf. Puin, *Dīwān*, 113 (tables), and 173–75 (the sources).

than these three, they were probably asserting their claim to grants in amounts similar or equal to those received by the warriors of the early "classical" battles.[18] We are told that the caliph 'Umar made the grants of Nihāwand warriors and of participants in the conquests of al-Ahwāz equal to those of men who had fought at al-Qādisīya.[19] Whether or not this tradition corresponds to reality is for present purposes a matter of indifference. The point is that here we can show that attempts were made to make later battles equivalent to the earlier ones. Our topos was ideally suited to supporting these attempts.

The topos of the decisive battle may have been used not only as support for material claims, but also as the basis of the fame of a garrison town. This seems to emerge from a report which states that the battle of Nihāwand, in which Kūfans were present in the most significant numbers, was designated a "victory of victories" (*fatḥ al-futūḥ*) by the Kūfans and by the Muslims in general.[20]

Three further topoi can also be connected with this tendentious direction of the "decisive battle" topos, even if at first glance this does not seem likely.

War Elephants

War elephants appear on the Sasanian side in a number of *futūḥ* reports. The occasions on which elephants are supposed to have appeared include an encounter between Muthannā ibn Ḥāritha and the Persians at Bābil,[21] the Battle of the Bridge (*yawm al-jisr*),[22] Buwayb,[23] al-

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[18]For an important example of this sort of dispute, see Martin Hinds, "Kûfan Political Alignments and Their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century AD", *IJMES* 2 (1971), 346–67.

[19]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2540:5–11 (al-Ahwāz), 2633:17–18 (Nihāwand).

[20]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2629:17–18.

[21]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2117:14.

[22]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 168:11–169:11; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2175:10–11, 2178:7–12; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, 2181:3–7; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 251:13–14.

[23]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2190:11–12.

Qādisīya,[24] and Nihāwand.[25] For pre-Islamic times elephants are mentioned in connection with the encounter of an Arab confederation with the Persian *'ajam* at Dhū Qār.[26] Precise indications are given of their numbers and of the tactics employed against them (severing the straps which fastened the saddles on which the warriors sat, chopping off the elephants' trunks).

The Sasanian use of war elephants is well attested in Roman and Byzantine sources, which leave no doubt that the elephant corps was an important element in the Sasanian army. Elephants were routinely taken on major expeditions, and are referred to, for example, in Byzantine accounts of Sasanian campaigns against Amida (in AD 502), Edessa (544), Archaeopolis (551), and Dara (573).[27] It is hardly likely, in any case, that the Arab tribes of northern Arabia could have remained ignorant of such an ostentatious feature of Persian military tactics; and indeed, one of the reasons for the deployment of elephants in the first place was to awe both enemies and subjects with a magnificent display of overwhelming force.

We would do well, however, to query the proposition that Sasanian forces appeared with elephants on all the occasions during the conquest period for which they are mentioned by the early Arab tradents. Nöldeke has already declared his misgivings with regard to Dhū Qār,[28] and this must equally apply to the fights at Bābil and Buwayb. All of these clashes were at the most minor border skirmishes in which the Persians could hardly have appeared with such an elaborate display of force. The elephant motif has some firm relation to reality only in the reports on the defeat of the Muslims at the Battle of the Bridge. Here the different versions agree that the Muslim field commander Abū

[24]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 203:8–16, 204:7–12; Sayf (with several *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2266:16–2267:6.

[25]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, II, 31ult–32:1, 52:11–13. According to these reports, the Persians had "about 70" elephants, all of which were subsequently killed by the Muslims in the course of the battle.

[26]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1031:2.

[27]See George Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1877), II, 311; H.H. Scullard, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 205–207.

[28]Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879), 335 n. 5.

'Ubayd ibn Mas'ūd lost his life in combat with an elephant. On the other hand, it is uncertain whether elephants were actually used at al-Qādisīya. Sasanian military practice would lead us to expect references to elephants at such a major battle; but in fact, they have no part to play in the extraordinarily detailed Arabic reports on this important event, and instead are mentioned only marginally, in connection with vague statements on their numbers.

The elephant topos provides us with a useful illustration of how topoi in general could be generated from genuine historical referents. There can be no doubt that the Sasanians used war elephants in late antiquity, and it may safely be conceded that they continued to do so in major battles against the advancing Arabs in the early seventh century. The problem is that the later Arab tradents circulating accounts of the *futūḥ* in Iraq appropriated such references as the basis for a literary motif, which could then be—and was—introduced into accounts of other clashes where it is hardly possible that Sasanian war elephants were present. The topos thus generated was linked to that of the decisive battle, since any clash in which the Sasanians used war elephants must necessarily have been a very important one. As this case clearly demonstrates, the intertwining of historical reality and literary motif could, in time, produce accounts which confront the historical researcher with formidable source-critical difficulties.

Crossing Over

A narrative motif which frequently appears in *futūḥ* reports has it that before a battle the Arabs and their opponents would agree on who would "cross over" (*'abara*) to fight whom. It has already been noted elsewhere that this motif obviously has the character of a topos.[29] To repeat briefly: it appears in reports on the Battle of the Bridge, on Buwayb, on al-Qādisīya, on Nihāwand, and on the Muslims' triumph over Hurmuzān at al-Ahwāz. To these we may add reports on the fighting at al-Ubulla,[30] on an encounter, which may be completely

[29] Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 280–89, 291–92.

[30] 'Umar ibn Shabba (?), Abū Mikhnaf (?) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2387:17–18.

imaginary,[31] between Khālid and a confederation of Byzantines, Persians, and heathen Arabs at al-Firāḍ,[32] and on an episode at Ḥimṣ. In this last case the topos is deployed in the context of the exploits of a single warrior, a man called Shuraḥbīl of the tribe of Ḥimyar. He encounters a troop of Greek cavalry outside the city, single-handedly kills seven of them, and then—for an unstated reason momentarily obscure to the reader—stops by a river to water his horse. But then 30 more Greeks appear, and the point of the respite becomes clear: Shuraḥbīl "crosses over" to attack them, and kills eleven more.[33]

As for the place of origin of this topos, we can only echo what we have said already in another context: it may have to do with the Battle of the Bridge, especially since a river was actually crossed during that battle. Within the creative context of *futūḥ* tradition, it is not difficult to see how early, and perhaps authentic references to individuals "crossing over" for single combat with opposing champions eventually gave rise to entirely specious accounts of whole armies "crossing over" for combat with the other side.[34]

Chains

There are also reports which state that numbers of the Muslims' enemies were bound together in iron chains (*silsila*, pl. *salāsil*), in order to make flight from the Muslims impossible. Since these reports have already been discussed elsewhere,[35] we may again limit ourselves to a short summary with some additional comments.

We have pointed out this detail in *futūḥ* traditions on the so-called "battle-day of the chains" (*yaum dhāt al-salāsil*), an engagement which took place before al-Qādisīya—and which therefore belongs to the lore of the *ayyām*[36]—and then further in reports on al-Qādisīya itself and Nihāwand. It also occurs in two reports of similar character which will

[31] On this see below, 205–206.
[32] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2074:6–7.
[33] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 127:5–13.
[34] See Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 291–92.
[35] *Ibid.*, 280–83, 285, 292–93; Conrad, "The Arabic *Futūḥ* Tradition".
[36] On this expression, see above, 131.

be discussed later,[37] in other versions of the battle of al-Qādisīya (not referred to in the article),[38] and in connection with al-Yarmūk.[39] Such reports appear to have a loose connection with statements to the effect that the Muslims' opponents laid down caltrops which are supposed to have had the same function as the iron chains, namely to prevent their own men from fleeing, while at the same time creating difficulties for the Muslims. We hear of this in traditions on al-Qādisīya,[40] Nihāwand,[41] and the conquest of Egypt.[42]

That these reports are topoi is already evident from the fact that while the later tradents took the phrase *yawm dhāt al-salāsil* to mean "battle-day of the chains", the place Dhāt al-Salāsil was a pool which probably owed its name to its sweet water or to its rippling wind-blown surface.[43] It is also beyond doubt that unlike the case of the war elephants, the Muslims could never have encountered the tactic of chaining troops on the part of their opponents. Apart from the fact that such a practice is completely unknown in the Byzantine literature on military tactics, some of which dates from the era of the conquests, one must note that troops chained to their comrades on either side could not have performed the simplest military maneuvers—turn around, for example—and with the first exchanges of shots and blows would have been obliged to drag the bodies of the dead and wounded around with them for the duration of the battle.[44] Consequently, it must be concluded that while other topoi may well represent transportable motifs cut adrift from genuine historical referents, the chain topos confronts us with an example of an entirely baseless topos, or, at best, one which reflects complete confusion where the original referent is concerned.

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[37]Sayf (with various *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2456:9–2460:4; Asad ibn Mūsā–al-Mubārak ibn Fuḍāla in *ibid.*, I, 2600:16–2605:11. See also the discussion below, 208, 209, 211.

[38]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2258:8; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2356:4–5.

[39]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 197ult–198:1; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 256:6–13; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2089:12–17, 2099:10–2100:1.

[40]Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2356:3–4.

[41]Asad ibn Mūsā–al-Mubārak ibn Fuḍāla in *ibid.*, I, 2603:7–8.

[42]Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 59:17–18. Cf. also 61:18.

[43]See Lane, *Lexicon*, I.4, 1397c.

[44]Conrad, "The Arabic *Futūḥ* Tradition".

Enough has been said here to show that these three motifs have the character of topoi. Let us now reexamine the hypothesis advanced above[45] on a possible link between the way these motifs were used and the tendentious direction of the topos of the decisive battle.

The motifs of "crossing over", and above all of war elephants and of the chaining together of enemy soldiers (or alternatively, of strewing caltrops in their path of retreat) are pronouncedly characteristic details of the *futūḥ* battles. It can be demonstrated that the tradents transferred these details from one battle to another without any consideration for what actually happened; in doing so, they may also have intended to make various *futūḥ* events equivalent to one another. This attempt at making events equivalent was characteristic of the topos of the decisive battle.[46] In both cases the same underlying tendency may have been at work: relatively minor events of the *futūḥ* were now considered to have been crucial, whether for subjective considerations such as glory and honor, material reasons such as claims to higher grants, or as the simple result of the tendency for such tales to become more elaborate with the passage of time. Indeed, Donner has shown how considerations of this kind led to the *ex nihilo* invention of a whole battle, that of Buwayb, by tradents from the tribe of Shaybān, who were obliged to fashion for themselves a great victory as a counter to accounts of their defeat by the Persians at the Battle of the Bridge.[47]

Topoi Which Serve to Glorify Former Times

Early Islamic society looked back on the period of the conquests and the Rāshidūn ("rightly guided") caliphs as a golden age worthy of emulation, and more specifically, as a source of authoritative pronouncement or guidance in many areas. In this area too, then, many topoi appear.

"To begin with..."

In accounts of important military events of the early period, a caliph will often order an army commander to begin by concentrating his

[45]See above, 132.
[46]See above, 130.
[47]Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 198–200.

activity on a certain place, "to begin with it" (*bada'a bi-*). We find commands of this type, issued by word of mouth or in writing, in traditions on the northward expedition which Usāma ibn Zayd undertook immediately after the death of the Prophet (the directive came from Abū Bakr),[1] on the subjugation of the *ridda* (Abū Bakr),[2] on the first Iraqi campaign (Abū Bakr),[3] the Syrian expedition ('Umar),[4] and the battle of Nihāwand.[5] In this last case, the caliph 'Umar is supposed to have sought the advice of the Persian Hurmuzān.[6] The caliph will also, on occasion, announce what is to take place in connection with the "beginning".

We have already examined these and similar reports in other contexts; there we established the likelihood of their having been constructed after the fact.[7] Through constructions of this sort, events which had come about more or less by chance could be made to appear as the results of planning and regulation on the part of a central caliphal power. In this manner, people formed an idealized picture of an early communal leadership which was in full control of the *umma*'s destiny, could lay claim to full credit for its successes, and was therefore worthy of imitation.

The Caliphs and Their Advisors

Reports on how the caliphs sought the advice of those around them in Medina occur primarily in two contexts: when important military or political decisions must be made, and when questions of administration or law require clarification. Here are a few examples.

Immediately upon his accession, Abū Bakr takes counsel over the northward campaign which the Prophet has already planned, now placed in jeopardy by events in the Arabian peninsula since the death of the

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[1]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1851:3–8.
[2]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 1977:12–13.
[3]Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2016:5–6, 2020:17.
[4]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2150:6–9.
[5]Ḥammād ibn Salama in *ibid.*, I, 2642:3–10.
[6]Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 275.
[7]See above, 76–87 (on letters), especially 77–80; and Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 287.

Prophet.[8] After the defeat of the *ridda*, Abū Bakr inquires if military operations against the Byzantines in Syria would now be advisable.[9] His successor 'Umar summons councils both after the Muslim defeat at the Battle of the Bridge (on the Euphrates) and before the engagement at Nihāwand, so as to hear his advisors' opinion of his plan to assume personal command of the Muslim armies in the field.[10] Finally, the same caliph asks his entourage what they think of a journey of inspection through all the lands which the Muslims have conquered.[11]

Legal and administrative questions are the theme of councils which 'Umar is supposed to have held on the status of the Sawād (Iraq),[12] on making the Zoroastrians (*majūs*) equivalent in status to the Christians and Jews (*ahl al-kitāb*)[13] and on the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses in Sūrat al-Mā'ida (5), vss. 90–91, which mention the drinking of wine.[14]

The group of persons assembled by the caliph for their advice can be designated as "the people" (*al-nās*), or else as "them" (personal suffix *-hum*).[15] However, we hear more often simply of Companions of the Prophet (*aṣḥāb*),[16] or else of particular individuals of these. In the latter case, these may be designated as "the most eminent Companions of the Prophet and the most distinguished of the Arabs" (*wujūh aṣḥāb al-nabī wa-a'lām al-'arab*),[17] "a group of the Companions of the Apostle of God" (*jamā'a min aṣḥāb rasūl Allāh*),[18] "advisors from the Compan-

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[8] Sayf–Hishām ibn 'Urwa–his father ('Urwa ibn al-Zubayr) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1848:3–11.

[9] Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 132ult–133:12.

[10] Sayf and Ibn Isḥāq (in two traditions) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2212:14–16; further in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 255:4–12 (Battle of the Bridge); Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2609ult–2610:4, 2611:12–14 (Nihāwand).

[11] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2514:6–8.

[12] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2369:9–2370:3; Abū Isḥāq in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 266:12–18.

[13] Ja'far ibn Muḥammad in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 267:4–9.

[14] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2571:1–12.

[15] E.g. Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2369:9; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2214:15; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2571:6 (*nās*); Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2611pu (personal suffix).

[16] Abū Isḥāq in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 266:15–16.

[17] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2213:8.

[18] Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 132:23.

ions of the Apostle of God" (*ahl al-ra'y min aṣḥāb rasūl Allāh*),[19] "a group of senior Companions of the Apostle of God" (*jamā'at mashāyikh aṣḥāb rasūl Allāh*),[20] and Muhājirūn.[21] Individuals are often singled out, such as 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf,[22] 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib,[23] 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām,[24] and 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.[25]

Without excluding the possibility that the first caliphs did on occasion seek the advice of other Muslims around them, we must cast considerable doubt on the credibility of these particular reports and admit that their true character is that of topoi. The recurrence of Companions of the Prophet in this counseling motif is rather startling. As has already been shown elsewhere in detail,[26] the growing appreciation of the *ṣaḥāba* as wielders of authority in the early development of Islam, a trend which ended in their out-and-out glorification, is a secondary phenomenon which cannot be attributed to the time of the first caliphs. Further, on the occasions when 'Alī is the one who gives the only correct and acceptable advice,[27] we are dealing with a legitimist or perhaps pro-'Alid bias.

However, of even more importance to our critique is the fact that this advising motif, like other narrative motifs we have examined, appears in reports which cannot be considered authentic. It has already been shown in another context that the reports on the plan of the caliph 'Umar to assume personal command of the Muslim armies (after the Battle of the Bridge and before Nihāwand) are extremely untrustworthy.[28] They are more likely to have been apologetic in character: the somewhat painful fact that the Prophet's successors did not

[19]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2610:7–9.
[20]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 255:6.
[21]Ja'far ibn Muḥammad in *ibid*, 267:6.
[22]E.g. Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2214:17.
[23]E.g. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 266:16; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 133:1–2; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2613:2.
[24]E.g. Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2610:7–8.
[25]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 255:6–7.
[26]Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 293; idem, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 194–95.
[27]See the references above, n. 23.
[28]Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 183–84.

take part in the *futūḥ* would have been softened by traditions proclaiming that the caliphs had at least a desire to go to war.

An obvious attempt to address a problem of this kind appears in an account of deliberations between the caliph Abū Bakr and his advisor and successor, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, concerning 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The two agree that 'Alī is "a fair man acceptable to most of the people in view of his virtue, courage, close relationship to the Prophet, learning, sagacity, and the gentleness he shows in endeavors he undertakes", but they further conclude that in consideration of this gentleness he should stay in Medina to advise Abū Bakr, rather than involve himself in military campaigns.[29] 'Alī's non-participation, the real reasons for which are unknown, is thus explained in terms of the best interest of the Muslim community at large, and made out as the decision of the reigning caliph.

In the reports on the status of the Sawād we doubtless have to do with retrojections to the time of 'Umar of developments which in reality occurred gradually in the wake of the conquests.[30] The same applies to the declaration that the *majūs* are equal in status to the *ahl al-kitāb*. The practice of accepting tribute from the Zoroastrians, instead of forcing them to convert to Islam, contradicted the Qur'ānic injunction in Sūrat al-Tawba (9), vs. 29; it had to be justified through a purported council of Companions of the Prophet, in the course of which one of them duly produced a saying of the Prophet in favor of this practice. From all this it clearly follows that stories about advisory councils convened by the caliphs cannot be accepted at face value. Rather, it must be considered that they are as likely to be commonplaces which can occur in many contexts.

The examples which we have cited will now permit us to define the function of this motif, more or less as follows:

1) The impression must have arisen that the "rightly guided" caliphs would have sought advice, above all from Companions of the Prophet, on important matters of state.

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[29] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 72:1–11.

[30] See above, 96, 139.

2) Later legal practice had to be justified by having the early caliphs, together with members of their entourage, make binding pronouncements upon it.

3) Significant personalities of early Islamic history—such as ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib—could be invoked to great effect by presenting them as the ones who gave the best advice during deliberations on important matters.

Mountains at the Backs of the Muslim Armies

We read in traditions on the Prophet's battle with the Meccans at the mountain of Uḥud that for tactical reasons, Muḥammad chose to wait for the enemy with his back to the mountain.[31] Knowledge of this may have caused *futūḥ* transmitters to attribute the same tactics to Muslim commanders during the early conquests. At any rate, the reports which convey this information cannot be considered authentic.

Before a battle in eastern Khurāsān, the Muslim commander is said to have walked incognito through the ranks of his army, so as to hear what his warriors were thinking. He overheard a conversation in which someone maintained that it would be best for the army to keep its back to the mountain. The commander followed this advice, and achieved victory.[32]

This mountain motif is transposed into the realm of the supernatural in a tradition on Nihāwand and in a tradition on the battle of Fasā/Darabjird (in the southeast of Fārs). From his pulpit in the mosque of Medina, ʿUmar calls upon the commanding officer in the field: "The mountain, the mountain!" These instructions arrive instantly through the air, and are put into effect with successful results.[33]

This motif made it possible to relate battles of the conquests to the famous battle fought by the Prophet at Uḥud. Furthermore, it could (as in the last two traditions mentioned) emphasize the caliph's

[31] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, I, 220:1–6, 9–10.
[32] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2686:1–2687:4.
[33] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2700:12–2702:1; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 156:10–13.

influence on the course of events during the conquests by giving it a miraculous quality.

The Takbīr *as the Signal to Attack*

A *takbīr*—the phrase *Allāhu akbar*, "God is Great"—used as a signal to attack, or as a slogan to acknowledge divine support, occurs frequently in early *futūḥ* materials. In some cases, especially for Syria, it is simply mentioned in connection with a decisive event or an especially important point in a battle: the desert march of Khālid ibn al-Walīd,[34] Fiḥl,[35] Ajnādayn,[36] al-Yarmūk,[37] an engagement with remnants of the Greek army near Ḥimṣ,[38] and the capture of Edessa.[39] It is similarly attested for significant events in eastern lands: e.g. at al-Qādisīya,[40] the crossing of the Tigris,[41] the campaign against Tustar,[42] the battle of Nihāwand,[43] and the conquest of Fārs.[44] There are also reports to the effect that it was uttered three times by the Muslim commander, with the first two *takbīrs* indicating preparatory moves and the third calling for the attack itself.[45]

This motif's character as a topos has already been discussed elsewhere, and the fact that it occurs in the Iṣfahān–Nihāwand reports, which are completely undifferentiated, already indicates that it could be used quite arbitrarily.[46] This is confirmed by instances where the

[34] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 64:12; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 138:3–4.

[35] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 116:5, 119:10; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 190:15, 193:5, 8, 11.

[36] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 146:10, 147:9.

[37] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 172:5; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 262:17–18, 267:16, 269:3.

[38] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 270:6–7.

[39] *Ibid.*, I, 330:2.

[40] *Ibid.*, I, 207:3–4, 12.

[41] *Ibid.*, I, 213:11.

[42] *Ibid.*, II, 22:12–13, 23:1

[43] *Ibid.*, II, 44:11–12, 50:2–3, 52:1, 53:16, 57:16. Cf. also below, n. 46.

[44] *Ibid.*, II, 73:3–4

[45] References in Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 276, 280–82; see also Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2332:1–5, 6–11. For a fourfold *takbīr*, see Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2295:1–6.

[46] Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 292–93.

takbīr figures in entirely fictitious accounts: an interview a delegation of Muslims supposedly had with Heraclius in Antioch, an encounter with an apparition (which is aroused by the sound of the *takbīr*), and a baseless story of the capture of Arwād, off the Syrian coast.[47]

A few further points and observations may be worth noting. In reports on Nihāwand we repeatedly find, in place of the threefold *takbīr*, the brandishing of a lance (with a banner attached), again three times.[48] Might we have here a genuine contemporary practice of which the *takbīr* is merely an embellished secondary form?

In two al-Qādisīya traditions the *takbīr* motif has the function of emphasizing the eagerness for combat of certain Arab tribes, who are so impatient that they enter the fray before the sounding of the third *takbīr*.[49]

Finally, supernatural force is claimed for the *takbīr* in a tradition on the conquest of the Syrian city of Ḥimṣ. A twofold *takbīr*, this time shouted by all the Muslim warriors, causes the city walls to crumble; the inhabitants then have no choice but to give up the fight and to conclude a treaty with the Muslims.[50] The biblical story of the Israelite conquest of Jericho[51] is unmistakeable here as the literary model.

The topos of *takbīr* comprises another useful illustration of the complex nature of topoi in general. In a historiographical discussion of the Arabic sources for early Islamic history, Patricia Crone asserts that it is a mistake to consider the *takbīr* as a topos, since a Syriac source (apparently written *ca.* 44/664) refers to how Arab warriors campaigning in Asia Minor shouted *Allāhu akbar* as they attacked a Byzantine force.[52] But as has already been stated above, many topoi are, in their

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[47]Ibn Aʿtham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 128:17, 281:10–11; II, 146:6. On the Arwād account, see Conrad, "The Conquest of Arwād", esp. 348–64.

[48]So Ḥammād ibn Salama in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2644:6–13; al-Rabīʿ ibn Sulaymān in *ibid.*, I, 2603pu–2604:2; Abū Nuʿaym, *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān*, I, 20:19–24.

[49]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2332:1–5, 6–11.

[50]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2391ult–2392:4.

[51]Joshua 6:1–21.

[52]Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 12. For the passage in question, see *Chronicon maroniticum*, ed. E.W. Brooks (Paris: L. Durbecq, 1904; *CSCO* 3, *Scr. syri* 3), 72; trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris: L. Durbecq, 1904; *CSCO* 4, *Scr. syri* 4), 56.

origins, linked to genuine historical referents. A topos is identified as such not by its utter lack of such referents (although this situation is not uncommon), but rather by indications that tradents in later times have begun to appropriate it as a literary motif and introduce it quite arbitrarily into contexts where it has no genuine historical basis. That this was the case with the *takbīr* is perfectly clear from the examples cited above, and nothing surprising should be seen in the fact that the *takbīr* as topos springs from some genuine historical referent.

The Seeking of Martyrdom

Traditions on the *ridda*, the *futūḥ*, and the *fitna* tell us of Muslim warriors who strove to achieve death in battle, which according to Islamic notions constitutes martyrdom (*shahāda*).[53] Such attempts are mentioned, for instance, for the day (*yawm*) of al-Yamāma (*ridda*),[54] for the battle of al-Qādisīya,[55] in connection with the battles against Hurmuzān in Fārs,[56] for Nihāwand,[57] for Bayrūdh in the region of al-Ahwāz[58] (all of them *futūḥ*), and for the encounter at Ṣiffīn (*fitna*).[59] In these traditions the quest for martyrdom (*ṭalab al-shahāda*) is characteristically fulfilled, that is, they end with the death of the warrior seeking it.

This last observation gives us an occasion to begin our critique of these reports. When the sources claim that someone "sought martyrdom", we very likely have to do, as in the case of the succession motif,[60] with a later invention. The purpose of this invention would have been to represent a person's death in battle—reports of which may have been authentic—as an act of religious devotion.

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[53]On this see Albrecht Noth, *Heiliger Krieg und heiliger Kampf in Islam und Christentum* (Bonn: Röhrscheid Verlag, 1966), 27–28; *idem*, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 173–74.

[54]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 73:6–17, with various *isnāds*.

[55]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2309:15–17.

[56]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2554:7–8, 2556:6–7.

[57]Al-Rabīʿ ibn Sulaymān in *ibid.*, I, 2603:15–2604:1, 2604:15–18; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2624:10.

[58]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2709:7–10.

[59]Abū Mikhnaf in *ibid.*, I, 3304:11–12.

[60]See above, 121.

Two of our traditions will strengthen this suspicion. All of the very numerous reports on the battle of Nihāwand agree that the Muslim commander, al-Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin, met his death there, but only two accounts describe his preparation for martyrdom.[61] This would suggest that these two traditions represent efforts to transform a simply battle casualty into a paragon of self-sacrificing piety. An account of how members of the tribe of al-Namir successfully sought martyrdom at Ṣiffīn—an account which has been transmitted within that tribe[62]—bears all the signs of a similar glorification of the fallen. It seems, moreover, to convey the message that 'Alī's confrontation with Mu'āwiya is to be viewed as a "holy war" for all those who took part on 'Alī's side. We therefore have to do here with an arbitrary use of the motif of "seeking martyrdom", in which the simple fact of death is clothed in religious garb.

The Summons to Islam

The *da'wa*, or "summons to Islam", is an offer made by the Muslim warriors to their non-Muslim opponents. As a rule, it consists of three parts. The non-Muslims are first invited to accept Islam; should they decline to convert, they are invited to pay tribute (*jizya*); and should they refuse this as well, they are called to a decisive battle. It can hardly be contested that the Muslims did make such offers to the non-Muslim Arabs in the time of the Prophet, and it is completely conceivable, moreover, that the *da'wa* played a rôle at the time of the early conquests. We must therefore begin by stating why we number the *da'wa* among the topoi which were employed by the early Islamic traditionists.

This argument is justified by the fact that the traditionists set the *da'wa* in completely inappropriate material contexts. For instance, we have two letters which Khālid ibn al-Walīd is supposed to have sent to the lords of Persia (*mulūk Fārs*) and the *marzubāns* (governors, pl. *marāziba*) of the Sasanian Empire, after the first skirmishes on the Iraqi border.[1] At that particular time, any further penetration of the Persian Empire could not have been anticipated and the possibility of

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[61]See above, 145 n. 57.

[62]See above, 145 n. 59. The chain of transmitters goes back to *ashyākh al-Namir*, "teachers/tradents of al-Namir".

[1]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2053:9–2054:2.

establishing any sort of written contact with the rulers of that empire was simply out of the question. Of even less historical value are two traditions which describe two Muslim messengers who are supposed to have proposed the *da'wa* to the last Sasanian ruler Yazdajird.[2] In reality, no such meeting can ever have taken place. The story is told that 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, together with certain other Muslims, remained unrecognized for a while as a prisoner with the Byzantine garrison in Alexandria, during which time he proposed the *da'wa* to a Byzantine *patricius*.[3] Once again, this is pure legend.

So also are *da'was* proposed by Muslim commanders to their Byzantine counterparts in Syria. The form and content of such discussions is generally the same. The Byzantine leader asks the Arabs to send him one of their most eminent representatives to discuss the issues outstanding between the two sides; in the parley which follows, he asks why the Arabs have come to Syria, makes various boasts and threats revolving around the theme of Byzantine might and numerical superiority, and proposes a settlement which would require that the Muslims return to Arabia. As deliberations quickly evolve into a confessional dispute, however, the Muslim leader speaks boldly and disparagingly, and summons the Greeks to choose between conversion to Islam, payment of tribute, and the decision of arms. The transferability of the topos is particularly clear in the Syrian examples of such *da'wa* altercations. The *locus classicus* is the *da'wa* of Khālid ibn al-Walīd to Māhān/Bāhān at al-Yarmūk,[4] but similar episodes frequently appear elsewhere. Different accounts of Mu'ādh ibn Jabal's discussion with the Rūm place this at both Fiḥl[5] and Baalbek;[6] the *da'wa* to the people of Jerusalem is attributed both to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ[7] and, in a shorter and less elaborate form of the same letter, to Abū 'Ubayda.[8] The arrival

[2]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 199:13–20; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2238:7–14, 2240:4–10, 2241:1–5, 2242:9–14.

[3]Eutychius (d. 328/940), *Naẓm al-jawhar*, ed. Louis Cheikho, Bernard Carra de Vaux, and Habib Zayyat (Paris: L. Durbecq, 1905–1909; *CSCO* 50–51, *Scr. arabici* 6–7), II, 25:1–12.

[4]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 183:8–14; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 245:17–246:5.

[5]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 103:1–8.

[6]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 183:1–7.

[7]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 147:8–148:7

[8]*Ibid.*, 219:9–16.

of a Byzantine messenger, or even just the mention of a forthcoming meeting with the Greeks, is sufficient cause for introduction of *da'wa* material.[9]

Finally, we might ask what the *da'wa* was supposed to accomplish in treaties made with defeated enemies.[10] The very fact that a treaty is being concluded demonstrates that the *da'wa* has already been offered and that the opponent has already responded: he has decided to keep to his religion and pay tribute. As a choice has already been made, the issue posed by the *da'wa* has already been decided and it would be superfluous to raise it again in the treaty. The *da'wa* would of course remain open were the opponent to refuse both Islam and tribute, but in that case no treaty would be concluded—the matter would be settled by force of arms.

Certain other traditions in which the *da'wa* appears are undifferentiated: that is to say, they have no genuine relation to any particular historical event. As the Persian convert Salmān al-Fārisī was besieging some Persian fortress or another (*ḥiṣn min ḥuṣūn Fāris/Fārs*—this could also mean "any fortress in the province of Fārs"), he is said to have approached his countrymen with the *da'wa*.[11] In a story about a campaign described as occurring simply "under 'Umar",[12] we again hear of the *da'wa*.[13] Thus, if the transmitters wished to discuss the *da'wa*, they did not need any genuinely historical *futūḥ*.

It will be sufficiently clear from these examples that early Islamic tradition presents purely fictitious instances of the *da'wa*, and further, that these may be "transportable" narrative motifs, and consequently topoi. If, however, it can be ascertained that a particular example of the *da'wa* does in fact have the character of a topos (as indeed is often the case), then the authenticity of all traditions concerned with the

[9] *Ibid.*, 108:15–109:9, 174:7–11.

[10] Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2675:11–16; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201:14–202:4 (Armenia–Tiflis); al-Madā'inī (?) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2899:10–2900:3 (*marzubān* of Marw al-Rūdh); anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:7 (Baalbek).

[11] Ḥammād ibn Salama in Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24 no. 61.

[12] Kurds are mentioned in only one variant.

[13] Eyewitness report (Abū Janāb? 'Alqama ibn Marthad?) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2714:5–15, 2714ult–2715:9; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitab al-kharāj*, 120:5–13, 14–15.

da'wa must immediately come into doubt. There is no firm evidence to the contrary, except where it can be documented through independent traditions—and then only in each individual case—that certain *da'wa* reports are authentic. In the discussion to follow we shall find that a more careful examination of the form and content of the *da'wa*, far from dispelling these doubts, establishes quite clearly the importance of this as a literary motif.

We already know of several contexts in which the *da'wa* occurs in the tradition: the practical instructions which a caliph gives to an army about to set off for war,[14] the speeches on the fundamentals of Islam made by Muslim messengers in the enemy camp,[15] and the treaty documents which we have just mentioned.[16] Other (shorter) *futūḥ* reports mention the *da'wa* as a simple fact. It is striking, furthermore, that the *da'wa* appears above all in traditions which describe the military events considered to have been the most important in the period of the early conquests. These are the taking of al-Ḥīra,[17] the battles of al-Yarmūk[18] and al-Qādisīya,[19] the conquests of al-Madā'in/Ctesiphon[20] and Caesarea,[21] and the subjugation of Egypt.[22] In the case of al-Qādisīya we have a veritable flood of *da'was*.

The *da'wa* is, as we have said,[23] usually a threefold offer of alternatives: Islam–tribute–fighting. Exceptions to this pattern, which do not occur frequently, leave out the tribute or the fighting, or both, but

[14]See above, 88, 89.

[15]See above, 94–95.

[16]See above, 72.

[17]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 54:7–10; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:9–2018:2; Hishām ibn al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2019:9–2020:1; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2039:10–2040:14, 2041:8–2042:2.

[18]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 183:8–14; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 245:17–246:5; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2097:16–20.

[19]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2272:6–12, 2273:14–2274:5; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2278:16–2279:2, 2280:2–2281:9, 2284:10–2285:10; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2353:5–9. The traditions are of various origins.

[20]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2435:11–15, 2441:3–11.

[21]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 251:7–9.

[22]Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar*, II, 22:21–23:9, 25:6–7; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2585:8–2586:1; Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb and Khālid ibn Ḥumayd in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 65:11–14, and *passim*.

[23]See above, 146.

never omit the summons to Islam.[24] But these exceptions do, all the same, argue against the idea that the *da'wa* would have had this pronounced tripartite character from the very beginning. That this is a later literary motif is further suggested by the fact that it has a close parallel in the *ayyām al-'arab*, in which it is usual for disputes to lead to one party's proposal of a triad of solutions.[25] It likewise appears in the description of the battle between the Persians and neighboring Arab (not yet Muslim) tribes at Dhū Qār (date uncertain, usually placed after Badr in 2/624).[26] From all this we may infer that the invitation to Islam, which figures in every version of the *da'wa*, was the original form of this motif. The other two would then have been added on, because the motif conformed so well to a familiar literary schema.

When the *da'wa* occurs in our sources, the three offers which it contains are usually explained in some detail. For the first of these offers, the call to Islam, we may distinguish two types of specifications. The first type, which occurs more frequently, includes a promise that new converts to Islam will enjoy the same rights as Muslims of long standing. In its shortest form, this reads: "You will have the same rights and obligations that we do" (*lakum mā lanā wa-'alaykum mā 'alaynā*, or with other personal suffixes).[27] Additional formulations can also occur, such as "[Then] you will be our brothers, and we may not harm you or oppose you",[28] or "There will be no disputes over precedence among us" (*laysa tafāḍul baynanā*).[29] The new Muslims

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[24]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 54:7–9; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2053:9–15, 2280:2–2281:9, 2254:8–15; al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, III, 1122pu–1123:8.

[25]See Caskel, "Aijām al-'Arab", 49–52 and n. 6.

[26]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1030:10–19; = Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 334.

[27]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 54:8, 103:4, 109:2–3, 174:8–9, 183:10; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 183:3–4; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:13–14; Hishām ibn al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2019:13–14; Abū Mikhnaf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2020:7; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2041:9–10; Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar*, II, 10:11–12, 23:3–4; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2242:9–10; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2278:16–17; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2435:12–13, 2441:9–10, 2585:8 (*mithlunā*); anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 130:7; Ḥammād ibn Salama in Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 25 no. 61.

[28]Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 103:4, 109:2, 183:9–10; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 245:19–20; Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar*, II, 10:12, 23:4, and *passim*.

[29]Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2278pu.

are often promised what amounts to autonomy: "We will return to our homes, and leave you with only the Book of God";[30] "We will leave you and your land in peace";[31] "We will confirm you in [possession of] your land and withdraw, and no one will enter this land of yours except by your permission";[32] "We will never again approach your land, except to carry out commerce, or for other pressing reasons (*ḥāja*)";[33] or else, more insistently, "We will return to our land, and you will return to yours; we do belong together, but your region belongs to you, and you are to regulate your own affairs (*amrukum fīkum*). Whatever your actions gain you (*mā aṣabtum mimmā warā'akum*) shall serve to benefit you, and not us: [but] we will come to your aid if someone attacks you or is more powerful than you".[34]

The second type of clarification of the offer of Islam contradicts the specifications we have just discussed. Here the new converts receive full equality of rights only if they abandon their homes and join the other Muslims on the battlefield. Otherwise they receive no share of the *fay'* (state income from conquered lands classified as booty) and the *ghanīma* (the movable spoils of war).[35] The term *hijra* (and grammatically related forms) indicates the abandonment of the home and the severing of important social relations. This type of offer is, with only one exception of which I am aware, attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. These prophetic versions compare the condition of new converts who are not prepared to emigrate with that of the Muslim bedouins (*ka-a'rāb al-muslimīn*).

Before turning to questions which arise from the offer of Islam, we must devote a few words to the form of the two other alternatives included in the *da'wa*. The demand for taxes (or tribute: *jizya*, *jizā'*, rarely *kharāj*) can be described as a bilateral treaty. The enemies make

[30] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2284:11.

[31] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2272:6–7.

[32] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 199:16–17.

[33] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2269:3, 2273:16–17.

[34] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2280:4–6; on a similar note Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid*, I, 2353:5–9; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2240:8–10.

[35] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, II, 757:3–13; III, 1122pu–1123:8; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24–25 no. 60; eyewitnesses in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2714:5–8 (= Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:6–8).

payments, in return for which they receive protection (*dhimma*, *man'a*, *amān*);[36] however, the payments could also be considered a humiliation, following the Qur'ānic view expressed in Sūrat al-Tawba (9), v. 29.[37]

The final alternative, fighting, is occasionally interpreted as God's verdict: God will decide between us and you (forms derived from the root *ḥ-k-m*).[38] In this connection we also find the formula: "[If you do not agree either to Islam or to tribute, then you will have to deal with] people who love death as you love life" (*qawm yuḥibbūna l-mawta kamā tuḥibbūna l-ḥayāt*).[39]

To return to the offer of Islam, the traditions which include the passage on equality of rights or autonomy are obviously intended to convey more than the simple assertion that the Muslims made an offer to their opponents to enter Islam on this or that occasion, and in this or that form. This emerges from the contexts in which these traditions appear, which are the events seen as fundamental for the rule of Islam in places beyond the land of its birth. These events include the first taking of a town under Persian rule (al-Ḥīra), the decisive battle which assured the Muslims control over Iraq (al-Qādisīya), the conquest of the residence of the Sasanian monarch (Ctesiphon/al-Madā'in), the battle of al-Yarmūk, which brought about the collapse of Byzantine rule in Syria/Palestine, and the negotiations conducted with the rulers of Egypt over terms of surrender, which proved crucial for the incor-

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[36] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 148:3–4, 183:9; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 183:4–5, 245:18–19; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2022:11, 2054:1; Eutychius, *Naẓm al-jawhar*, II, 10:13–16, 23:5–7; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2097pu; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2240:9–10, 2242:10–11; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2272:6–8, 2273:16–17, 2585:8–13, 2714:8–10.

[37] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 103:5, 109:3–4, 148:4, 174:9–10, 183:11–12, 251:8 (allusions to this Qur'ānic passage are exceedingly frequent in this text; see Conrad, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests", 47–48 and n. 77); Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 199:18, 245ult–246:1; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2278:17–18; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 118:15–16.

[38] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 103:6–7, 109:6–7, 174:10–11; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:14–16; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2242:11; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2435:13–14; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2353:8–9.

[39] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 54:9; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2017:14–16; Hishām ibn al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2019:14–15 (with variants); Abū Mikhnaf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2020:8–10; Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2022:12–13; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2041:11–12, 2053:14–15.

poration of that land into the realm of Islam.[40] They further include the parleys which are said to have taken place between the Arabs and the last Sasanian ruler Yazdajird,[41] and various undifferentiated *futūḥ* reports which apply indiscriminately to different situations:[42] in short, all occasions which could and did provide opportunities for proclaiming the fundamental principles and goals of Islam. On the other hand, it is telling that the offer of Islam hardly ever occurs on less spectacular occasions. Where it does occur, however, it has a basically programmatic character, emphasized all the more through being described as God's command.[43]

All the principles which underlie this invitation to Islam, set in such highly visible places, tend in one direction: they are polemical. This appears clearly in the strong emphasis on equality of rights, however self-explanatory this might otherwise seem. In one instance, the view expressed in the second type of invitation to Islam, that equality of rights for the new converts should be dependent on their *hijra*, is expressly opposed: "You will have the same rights and obligations that we do, whether you rise and emigrate, or if you remain in your homes".[44] At the battle of al-Yarmūk, Khālid ibn al-Walīd is supposed to have offered conversion to Islam to a Byzantine commander, who then asked about the consequences of such a conversion. Khalid's answers constitute a massive attack on the privileged position of those Arabs who had already entered Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet. After Khālid has insisted that differences in rank have no place in Islam, he is asked, "Then does someone who converts to you now (*al-yawm*) receive the same reward and the same maintenance as you?" "Yes", replies Khālid, "indeed, even more". When he is then asked: "How can he become your equal, if you have precedence over him in time?", Khālid offers the following explanation:

> As long as our Prophet lived among us, receiving communications from Heaven, passing the Scriptures on to us, and

[40]See references above, 149 and nn. 17–22.
[41]See above, 147.
[42]See above, 148.
[43]Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2242:3, 11; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2273:15–16.
[44]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2041:9–10.

> permitting us to see the Signs (*al-āyāt*), we were all in agreement and swore loyalty to him. Now for anyone who saw what we saw and heard what we heard, it was entirely appropriate that he should become a Muslim and swear the oath of loyalty. You, however, have not seen the miracles and proofs which we have seen. Therefore, any one of you who enters [Islam] truthfully and with correct intention (*nīya*) is more meritorious (*afḍal*) than we are".[45]

The clear claims to full equality, here disguised as commentary on the *da'wa*, in all probability aim not only to argue for such abstractions as reputation and equal social status, but also seem to express very concrete material claims. In the oft-challenged type of *da'wa* which contains the *hijra* clause, it is asserted that new converts must emigrate if they wish to claim shares of the booty and of state income which derives from conquered lands considered as booty (*fay'*).[46] Accordingly, a rejection of the *hijra* clause could implicitly assert a claim to those very state incomes. Something of the sort may be at issue in Khālid's conversation with the Byzantine commander. The Byzantine asks whether those who now convert to Islam will receive the rewards and recompense of Paradise, and again receives assurances that in these respects the converts are the equals of others, or even superior to them.[47]

But we do not need to remain content with conjectures. In the treaty which al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays is supposed to have concluded with the *marzubān* of Marw al-Rūdh, there is an invitation to Islam which reads as follows: "If you become a Muslim... you will receive a grant (*'aṭā'*) from the Muslims, together with position (*manzala*) and maintenance (*rizq*), and you will be their brother".[48] It is highly improbable that

[45]Sayf–Syrian tradents in *ibid.*, I, 2097ult–2098:9; cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 178–79.

[46]See above, 151.

[47]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2098:3–4: *hal li-man dakhala fīkum al-yauma yā Khālida mithla mā lakum mina l-ajri wa-l-dhukhr*. On *dhukhr* as "récompense dans la vie future" and synonymous to this sense of *ajr* and *thawāb*, see R.P.A. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1881), I, 484a.

[48]Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2899:10–12. Ibn Ḥubaysh's reading of the passage may be better (*ibid.*, note n.): "You will receive the same amount

such an offer would actually have been made to the *marzubān*; as has already been stated, the *da'wa* has no place in the text of a treaty.[49] It is more likely that we have to do here with a statement of how things ought ideally to be: the converts should also be included in the grants (*'aṭā'*, pl. *a'ṭiya*, *a'ṭiyāt*) paid out by the *dīwān* which 'Umar established.[50]

The same demand is made quite broadly in an obviously tendentious tradition on the *dīwān* of 'Umar. The caliph sent letters[51] to the *amīrs* of the *junds* (*ajnād*[52]) with orders that non-Arabs (*ḥamrā'*[53]) who have been manumitted and who have converted to Islam shall have the same ranking in the *dīwān* as their patrons (*mawālī*);[54] *they shall have the same rights and obligations*, and even if they prefer to live apart in a tribe of their own, they must still receive the same grant (*'aṭā'*) as their former masters.[55] Here we may clearly see the connection between the demand for equal rights, in the form which this usually assumes in the *da'wa* (*lahum mā lanā wa-'alayhim mā 'alaynā*) and the demand for inclusion in the *dīwān*. We must therefore conclude that the invitation to Islam which includes the passage on equality of rights is intended to make material demands of this kind.

To round out the picture, we may consider yet another tendentious tradition on the *dīwān*. People once came to a governor who had been

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of *'aṭā'*, *manzala*, and *rizq* as the Muslims", thus reading *laka mā li-l-muslimīn min* instead of *laka min al-muslimīn*. This corresponds to the formulations usually used in these contexts. See above, 150.

[49]See above, 148.

[50]Cf. Puin, *Dīwān*, 116–19.

[51]For a source-critical evaluation of these caliphal letters, cf. above, 77–87.

[52]The Syrian origin of the tradition leads us to conclude that the word *ajnād* here refers to Syrian administrative districts, and not to "armies".

[53]Arabic sources give *'ajam* as an equivalent for *ḥamrā'*; cf. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 280:9–11; al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), *Al-Kāmil fī-l-lugha wa-l-adab*, ed. William Wright (Leipzig: G. Kreysing, 1874–92), 264:6–17. By this "Persians" are usually understood, but it is impossible to tie it down to one precise meaning. See also Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, I, 268; Wolfgang Fischer, *Farb- und Formbezeichnungen in der Sprache der altarabischen Dichtung* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), 338–39; Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, 66, 99–100.

[54]On the term *alḥaqa*, used here for classification in the *dīwān*, cf. Puin, *Dīwān*, 122 n. 2. The translation is further supported by the following *'aṭā'*.

[55]Ḥakīm ibn 'Umayr in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 458:1–5.

appointed by 'Umar. The governor distributed payments (*'aṭā'*) to the Arabs among them, and sent the non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*) away empty-handed. A letter then arrived from 'Umar himself, stating that anyone who mistreats his brother Muslim[56] is to be accounted one of the evildoers.[57] The undifferentiated context—"people" came to "an *'āmil*" of 'Umar—is striking here, and we may note that the "letter" arrives from the caliph for no reason. These features are typical of fictitious traditions of this type.

After all this, there can remain no further doubt that the traditions on the invitation to Islam and the passage on equal rights have a common origin: they came from the milieu of the *mawālī* (later converts to Islam, of non-Arab stock), who were seen as second-class Muslims, and perhaps also of like-minded Muslim Arabs. The most obvious indication of this is the above-mentioned discussion between Khālid ibn al-Walīd and a Byzantine commander: the case for the merit of those who have not seen, and yet believe, comes straight from the common New Testament argument based on Christ's admonition to the doubting Thomas,[58] and would have been very well known in Christian *mawālī* circles.

The following observations will make this even clearer. We have already seen that the setting for the invitation to Islam is frequently that of a conversation held in the enemy camp between a Muslim messenger and a non-Muslim of high station. Here the messenger's interlocutor often draws attention to the weakness and poverty of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The messenger does not reject this characterization, and even sharpens it at times with further examples. However, he goes on to say that with the arrival of Islam all this has fundamentally changed. He admits that the strength of the Islamic community does not have a national, that is, an Arab basis. The Arabs are more powerful than others not because they enjoy any outstanding qualities as a people, but rather because they are Muslims. It would have been in the interest of the *mawālī* to lay such stress on the inferiority of the Arabs by attributing Arab successes to Islam and Islam alone. Messenger stories

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[56] The brother-motif also occurs in the invitations to Islam; see above 150, 154.
[57] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 457:1–4.
[58] John 20:29; I Peter 1:8; Hebrews 1:1.

of this kind must therefore have originated with the *mawālī*.[59] Since the invitation to Islam also occurs frequently in these messenger stories, it would again appear to have had its origins in the milieu of the non-Arab Muslims.

We spoke at the outset about undifferentiated—and certainly fictitious—*da'wa* traditions, which included those in which Salmān al-Fārisī (that is, "Salmān the Persian") guarantees his countrymen full equality of rights if they convert to Islam.[60] Now the Companion of the Prophet Salmān is, as Horovitz has indicated, an elusive character who cannot be considered historical, and who was promoted afterwards as a sort of "national saint" of the Persian Muslims.[61] Salmān's appearance as *dā'ī*, or "bearer of the *da'wa*", in the manner which we have described proves that there was a close connection between the *da'wa* traditions and the (Persian) *mawālī*.

Finally, we must take note of the chains of transmitters attesting the traditions we have been discussing. In the majority of cases where the identity of these transmitters can be ascertained, we have to do with persons who are not of (pure) Arab stock. The *da'wa* letter supposedly sent by Khālid to the Persian *marzubāns*,[62] and the reports on Muslim messengers who are said to have invited the last Sasanian monarch, Yazdajird, to convert to Islam, promising full equality of rights and autonomy,[63] all go back to the Kūfan al-Sha'bī.[64] This well-known jurisconsult and traditionist had a Persian mother whom the Muslims had taken captive at the battle of Jalūlā'.[65] A *da'wa* tradition on al-Qādisīya, set in a messenger story and which strongly emphasizes equality of rights,[66] was transmitted by al-Sha'bī together with

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[59] Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 284, 290 (with references). The Persians' dislike of the Arabs can also be detected in the *Shāhnāme*, which in many cases reflects very old conceptions. Cf. the discussion in Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, 37–38.

[60] See above, 148.

[61] Josef Horovitz, "Salmān al-Fārisī", *Der Islam* 12 (1922), 178–83.

[62] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2020:2–10.

[63] *Ibid.*, I, 2239:11–12 (*isnād*), 2240:4–10, 2242:9–14 (the reports).

[64] Cf. Fritz Krenkow, art. "al-Sha'bī" in *EI*[1], IV, 242b–243b.

[65] Sayf (with a collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2264:8; al-Sha'bī by himself in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 264:2–6.

[66] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2278:10–2279:1.

the Kūfan Sa'īd ibn al-Marzubān, a man of Persian origin and a client of Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān.[67] An al-Ḥīra tradition which is similar in tone[68] was set into circulation by Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān, a *mawlā* of Medina (d. 132/750 at an advanced age).[69] The traditions which have just been discussed, in which Salmān al-Fārisī appears as *dā'ī* and promises his countrymen full equality of rights if they convert,[70] originate with Abū l-Bukhturī (or Abū l-Bakhtarī) Sa'īd ibn Fayrūz,[71] a Persian client resident in al-Kūfa (d. 83/701 at the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim). The report on the treaty with the *marzubān* of Marw al-Rūdh, which stated that if the *marzubān* converts to Islam he will receive a grant (*'aṭā'*) from the *dīwān*,[72] goes back to the Baṣran Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/729), a son of a man who had been taken prisoner at 'Ayn Tamr and then became a client of Anas ibn Mālik.[73] The obviously tendentious tradition which states that 'Umar reprimanded one of his officials because he had allowed only the Arabs, and not the clients (*mawālī*), to receive money,[74] was transmitted by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), whose father had fallen prisoner to the Muslims during the first Iraqi campaign of Khālid ibn al-Walīd.[75]

The death dates of these traditionists permit us, moreover, to establish an approximate chronology for these traditions. All the tradents who can be documented died between 701 and 750. The earliest of them met a premature, violent death in 701, while the latest died in 750 at

[67]Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VI, 247:4–5.

[68]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2016:15–16 (*isnād*), 2017:9–16 (the summons).

[69]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 263:16–17; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, IV, 399–401 no. 682.

[70]Al-Ṭabarī, I, 2441:3–15; Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 118:13–19; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 25 no. 61 (perhaps only three versions of one tradition).

[71]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 154:5–6; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VI, 204:11–205:7.

[72]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2897:8–10 (*isnād*), 2899:10–12 (the proposal).

[73]Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in *ibid.*, I, 2064:5; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 247:6–8. See also Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VII.1, 140:11–150:7; Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 210:15–17; Toufic Fahd, art. "Ibn Sīrīn" in *EI*², III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 947b–948b.

[74]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 457:1–4.

[75]Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2029:1–2; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 344:6–8 (partly from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī himself). See also the further discussion of these points in Helmut Ritter, art. "Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī" in *EI*², III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 247b–248b.

a very advanced age.[76] We may therefore posit the last quarter of the seventh century and the first quarter of the eighth as the approximate time span during which these traditions came into being.

That tendentious traditions such as we have been describing should have arisen among the *mawālī* in the late seventh and early eighth centuries is perfectly consistent with what we know from other sources about the non-Arab Muslims at that time.[77] During the pro-ʿAlid revolt of al-Mukhtār (65–67/685–87), who gained a large following among recent converts to Islam,[78] the *mawālī* became a politically active group for the first time. They later suffered from the harsh measures taken by al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf during his governorship (75–95/694–714), and this may be one reason why so many *mawālī* joined Ibn al-Ashʿath's revolt (81–84/700–703) against al-Ḥajjāj.[79] Shortly afterwards, under ʿUmar II (99–101/717–20), they made a loud and clear demand for equality of rights with the Arabs who made up the ruling class, and met with some success.[80] The tendentiousness of our *daʿwa* traditions

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[76]See above, 158. For the chronological arrangement of the traditions the dates of the Syrians Khālid (ibn Maʿdān), ʿUbāda (ibn Nusayy) and Ḥakīm ibn ʿUmayr, all of whom came from Ḥimṣ, can be adduced: the former two, who together transmit the tradition of Khālid's conversation at al-Yarmūk (see above, 153–54), and a *daʿwa* report on the conquest of Egypt (in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2585:3–13; *isnād* at 2584:9–11), died respectively in 726–27 and 736–37 (see also Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 310:13–14, 15). Ḥakīm ibn ʿUmayr, who figures in the tradition on ʿUmar's supposed directive on the *dīwān*, to the effect that manumitted non-Arabs who have converted to Islam are to receive the same grants from the *dīwān* as the other Muslims (see above, 155), died ca. 110/728–29, according to his entry in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 310:4. It is impossible to decide if these three Syrians were themselves *mawālī*, but the tone of their traditions leaves no doubt that they stood on the side of the *mawālī*.

[77]See the excellent study by Jamāl Jūda, *Die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Mawālī in frühislamischer Zeit* (Tübingen: Fakultät für Kulturwissenschaften der Universität Tübingen, 1983).

[78]G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: the Umayyad Caliphate* AD *661–750* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 51–52.

[79]Cf. Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, 178–79; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 69–71. On the revolt and its background, see Redwan Sayed, *Die Revolte des Ibn al-Ašʿaṯ und die Koranleser. Ein Beitrag zur Religions- und Sozialgeschichte der frühen Umayyadenzeit* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1977).

[80]Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, 166–94, esp. 193; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 76–81.

can now be explained by the existence of a class of *mawālī* who had gradually achieved self-consciousness, and who could now dare to make claims which were justified in their own eyes, but which were still denied them.

To demonstrate the affinity between the demands which the *mawālī* actually made in the early eighth century, and our *da'wa* traditions, which have quite different dates, we may cite the words supposedly pronounced by a *mawlā* from Khurāsān who appeared as a messenger at the court of 'Umar II. These words give an accurate idea of the mood of the *mawālī* at that time:

> Commander of the Faithful, twenty thousand *mawālī* now fight without receiving grants (*'aṭā'*) or maintenance (*rizq*), and just as many of the protected peoples (*ahl al-dhimma*) who have converted to Islam are now burdened with the *kharāj* (tax). [But] our *amīr* is a fanatical Arab lout. He stands on our pulpit (*minbar*) and says: "I came to you as a well-meaning friend, but now I am an Arab fanatic and, by God, one man from my own people is dearer to me than a hundred others". He is so uncouth that the sleeve of his robe is as large as half of the rest.[81] And what is worse, he is a henchman of al-Ḥajjāj who has dealt [with me] with injustice and enmity.[82]

We have come far away from our original point of departure, the *da'wa* as a topos. However, this diversion has been necessary in order to demonstrate the contexts in which this commonplace occurs. We can now say that the invitation to Islam, in the form in which it currently appears, belongs to a completely different historical landscape from that of the early conquests, where the early traditionists placed it. The *da'wa* topos was apparently used to support political demands current among the non-Arab Muslims in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. It was well suited to this purpose, so long as it could

[81] The full loose sleeves of men's robes were often used to carry things. The image evoked here is that of a corrupt official using his position primarily to "stuff his sleeve", i.e. to enrich himself.

[82] Al-Madā'inī *et al.* in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 1354:2–7.

be shown that the Arab conquerors themselves, at crucial moments in their victorious advance, had offered full equality, both ideal and material, and even precedence and autonomy, to those of their enemies who chose to convert to Islam.[83]

The consequence of all this, however, is that the traditions on the *da'wa* of the type which we have been investigating (and thus the overwhelming majority) are of no fundamental use as sources for the behavior of the early Muslim conquerors vis-à-vis their non-Muslim opponents. These traditions neither assert anything about the occasion on which a call to Islam could have been issued, nor give information on the form which the *da'wa* could at times assume. As has already been stressed above, this is not to argue that the *da'wa* was not extended to non-Muslims in the period of the early conquests, but rather to say that if we seek genuine knowledge about the rôle of the *da'wa* in these times, we must look to traditions of different origins. These, however, lead only to vague conjectures.

It may be conceded at the outset that Islam as understood in the lifetime of Muḥammad was not the fully developed religious system that existed in later times, but there are no good reasons—gratuitious hyper-scepticism is not a good reason—to doubt that Islam possessed sufficient content and identity to gain numerous adherents who would suggest to others that they too should embrace the new faith. As has already been mentioned above, we may be certain that the *da'wa* was proclaimed frequently during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad. Reports in the *maghāzī* literature on offers of Islam occur fairly often: these are made in passing, and are generally beyond reproach. While Muḥammad was attempting to unite the Arabian peninsula under the leadership of Medina, it made perfect sense to invite one's enemies to Islam before beginning an armed confrontation with them, with all the risks which that entailed. It is only the idea that Muḥammad prescribed the *da'wa* as obligatory for *all* military undertakings[84] that we

[83]The scenes of the action of our traditions, together with their tradents, indicate Persian *mawālī* above all. In Persia the *mawālī* played the most important rôle. But the *da'wa* is also shifted at times to Egypt and Syria, where we encounter Egyptian (e.g. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 65:1) and Syrian (see above, 159 n. 76) tradents.

[84]Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 125:6–7; Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl*, 24:11–12.

must set aside as very unlikely. Such a supposition would smack of the systematizing and generalizing we so often encounter among the tradents and compilers of early Islamic times, and can be opposed by examples to the contrary.[85]

The example of the Prophet could also have served as a guideline for the early Muslim conquerors. However, we must take into consideration the fact that from the very beginning they faced different opponents. Previously, during the Prophet's lifetime, the Muslims had had to confront tribal communities and relatively modest-sized groups who were largely neutral with respect to religion, and capable of joining the new faith without undue reflection or difficulty. Now, however, the Muslims met on the one hand with adherents of religious communities which had been established institutionally for centuries (the Nestorians in Iraq and the Monophysite Copts in Egypt), and on the other hand with representatives of great empires (Persian satraps, Byzantine governors and generals). For the former, conversion to Islam meant giving up basic values and ideals and important habits of everyday life; the simplest and most logical thing for these people to do was to acknowledge the overlordship of the Muslim Arabs, and to pay them tribute in amounts comparable to what their previous masters had demanded in any case. The representatives of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires could not, however, think even for a moment of agreeing to a change of religion for the states which they represented, or even of discussing such a question. With them there could only be armed confrontation.

It must gradually have become clear to the Muslim warriors that the conditions which prevailed in the regions which they sought to conquer were entirely different from those of the Arabian peninsula. Therefore, as time went by they must have found it less expedient to propose Islam to their enemies, at least in the opening stages of battles. Here they could appeal to the Qur'ānic authority of Sūrat al-Tawba (9), v. 29, according to which the "people of the Book"—this included most of the parties with whom they actually had to deal—can bring fighting against them to a halt by agreeing to pay tribute (*jizya*). It is possible, in any case, that in the earliest stage of their *futūḥ* they may at times,

[85]E.g. al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, III, 1122pu–1123:8.

out of ignorance of the situation, have allowed the summons to Islam to continue as before, according to the example of the Prophet.[86]

We must compare all this with whatever we can learn of how the early Islamic jurists assessed the *da'wa*. From al-Ṭabarī's book on "differing opinions of the jurists" (*Kitāb ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*) we may deduce that already in the eighth century jurists no longer held it absolutely necessary to issue a *da'wa* before a battle. Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) does recommend a summons, but represents it as a matter of personal inclination, rather than as a guideline binding upon everyone ("it is preferable to me", *aḥabbu ilayya*). But Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) both declare themselves in favor of an invitation to Islam only in cases where the enemy has not yet heard of Islam.[87] This same opinion can be dated still further back. Abū Yūsuf transmits it from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,[88] as well as from several other jurists and *tābi'ūn*.[89] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī died in 110/728, and *tābi'ūn* are usually understood as referring to tradents of the generation after the Prophet and his Companions. We may therefore assume that already in the late seventh century AD, that is, some 30–50 years after Muḥammad's death, the invitation to Islam was seen as inappropriate and unsuited to the times.[90] The validity of a prophetic *sunna*, in itself absolutely binding, could thus be cast in doubt at such an early stage. We must therefore take into consideration the fact that *sunna* was no longer in conformity with practice from the earliest times.

The chronicle of the Armenian prelate Sebēos (d. *ca.* 660–70),[91] which covers the early Muslim conquests, appears at one point to contradict the assumption that the summons to Islam occurred in the

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[86]In al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 144:16–145:2, we have what may very well be a genuine *da'wa* from the early period. It falls completely outside the usual framework of the *da'wa* traditions.

[87]*Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*, 2:13–3pu.

[88]*Kitāb al-kharāj*, 118:20–21.

[89]*Ibid.*, 118:17–19.

[90]The observation is made that the *da'wa* is appropriate only if the enemy has not yet heard of Islam; it is then usually remarked that for all practical purposes this situation no longer arises (see above, nn. 84–86). This is an indirect way of saying that the *da'wa* is no longer suitable *at all*.

[91]Sebēos, *Zur Geschichte Armeniens und der ersten Kriege der Araber*, trans. Heinrich Hübschmann (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1875), 7–8.

earliest stages of the *futūḥ*. Sebēos informs us that when Mu'āwiya conceived his plan of conquering Constantinople, he immediately sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor, inviting him to embrace Islam.[92] The citation of such a document in a non-Islamic source, and in so early a text, is clearly a matter of importance, so let us consider the invitation and its literary context in somewhat greater detail.

The letter of invitation begins with the words: "If you wish to live in peace, then abandon this vain religion in which you have been instructed since childhood. Disown this Jesus, and turn to the great God whom I serve, the God of our father Abraham". It goes on to say that should the Emperor decide to change his religion, he will remain a powerful governor, but he will keep only a fourth of his treasures, with the remaining three fourths to go to the Muslims. Aside from this, tribute would have to be paid in extremely large amounts. "But if not", the letter concludes, "how shall this Jesus, whom you call Christ, save you from my hands, when he could not even save himself from the Jews?" The Emperor reacted by betaking himself to the church. He implored God to have pity on the Christians, and to bring the heathen down in shame and ruin so they might recognize His power. He then donned the garb of a penitent, and gave orders for a public fast. The ensuing battle ended with a victory for the Byzantines, with God's help.

The purpose of this account is clearly recognizable: to oppose the fleeting superiority of the pagans with the Christians' trust in God, which in the end brings victory. In this Mu'āwiya plays the rôle of the overweening—and of course, unsuccessful—tempter of the Byzantine Emperor. In presenting events this way, the Armenian chronicler did not need to have any actual instances of the summons to Islam in mind. His portrayal of matters in this way would have been possible, and even natural, regardless of what he did or did not know about the *da'wa*. This letter therefore has nothing whatsoever to do with the Islamic *da'wa*, resulting as it does from Christian thinking and formulation. And we cannot use this passage of Sebēos as proof for the Muslim practice of *da'wa*, in particular since it is obvious that the words allegedly spoken by Mu'āwiya are but a calque on the Gospel

[92] *Ibid.*, 35–37.

passage in which Jesus is mocked and invited, if he really is who he claims to be, to save his own life.[93]

We may conclude with a few brief remarks on the second type of *da'wa*, which we have already mentioned.[94] This type is usually characterized as an offer made by the Prophet,[95] all of which may very well correspond to reality. New converts receive shares in the *fay'* and the *ghanīma* only if they emigrate (*hijra* and related forms). Only then are they considered the equals of the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār. It is also possible for them to obtain shares if they participate in military campaigns with their fellow Muslims. Stipulations of this sort are appropriate only to the time of the Prophet, when emigration (*hijra*) to Medina was still meaningful, and when, moreover, Muḥammad was trying to transform into comrades-in-arms, through promises of booty, bedouins who were merely well disposed towards him. By contrast, an offer of Islam of this kind makes little sense for the circumstances of the early *futūḥ*.

From the time of the Prophet onwards, this kind of *da'wa* remained familiar as a prophetic *sunna*. There are also indications that it may have been used as a counterargument to the demands for equality of status which we have already discussed, and which refer quite clearly to the prophetic summons.[96] There it states that new Muslims have fully equal rights, whether they emigrate or remain in their native lands. We may now fairly confidently regard traditions of this sort on equality of status as having originated in a *mawālī* milieu in the late seventh/early eighth centuries. This may lead us to a plausible explanation for the opposition to the prophetic *hijra* clause which is implicit in these traditions. For we may assume that the opponents of equal status opposed the claims of the non-Arab Muslims by stating that the Prophet had indeed made emigration a precondition for equality of status and for sharing in the booty—a precondition which the later *mawālī* were utterly incapable of meeting. Even the assertion—which so far as I can see stands alone—that 'Umar imposed the *da'wa* with the emigration

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[93]Matthew 27:41–44; Mark 15:29–32; Luke 23:35–39.

[94]See above, 151.

[95]An exception in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2714:4–15 (= Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:5–19), an offer extended by 'Umar.

[96]See above, 153.

clause[97] could have originated in the camp of the opponents of the *mawālī*, since this assertion would uphold the validity of this claim for the time of the early conquests. If this hypothesis is correct—and it can be no more than a hypothesis—then the *da'wa* motif would have been used as a weapon not only by the *mawālī*, but also by the opposing party.

We may now sum up. The offer of Islam, usually consisting of three parts (Islam–tribute–fighting), which the Muslim warriors propose to their opponents, is a topos in the tradition of the period of the early caliphs. For it is placed in material contexts in which it demonstrably does not belong, while it also appears in generalizing traditions which lack any relation whatsoever to actual events.

The first part of the offer, the summons to Islam, is to be dated, in the form in which we have it, to around 80/700. This conclusion emerges from its content, its literary context, and its chains of transmitters. Traditions of this kind on the summons to Islam would have served the interests of non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*) and of Arab Muslims who would have joined their cause. The *da'wa* in this form would have supported their demand for equality of status for all Muslims, both in ideal terms and in reality, without regard to their origins or to the time of their conversion. *Da'wa* traditions of this type are accordingly of no use as basic sources to answer the question of when, where, and in what form the early conquerors may have proposed Islam to their enemies.

While the summons to Islam did certainly play an important rôle at the time of the Prophet, doubts arose in later legal discussions as to whether it was warranted some decades after Muḥammad's death. From this we may conclude that the practice of the *da'wa* was progressively abandoned during the early conquests. The explanation for this lies in the fact that whereas the *da'wa* could have some hope of success among the pagans of the Arabian peninsula, who were predominantly neutral in matters of religion, it would have seemed much less suited to the peoples whom the Muslims fought afterwards, who showed little readiness to change their religion, but who were also, for that very reason, all the more prepared to submit and to pay tribute.

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[97] See above, 165 n. 95.

Finally, the summons to Islam with the *hijra* clause, which must belong to the time of the Prophet, was also used as a counterargument against the demands of the *mawālī* for equality of status.

Topoi with no Recognizable Coherent Tendency

Conquest of Cities

At the outset of this study we briefly mentioned the clichés used by the early traditionists in portraying the conquest of cities.[1] Certain distinct motifs constantly recur in different order, whether for the taking of Damascus and Caesarea in Syria, Bābilyūn/al-Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria in Egypt, Tustar in Khūzistān, or Cordoba in Spain:

1) The traitor who—usually after receiving a guarantee of protection (*amān*)—points out a weak spot in the city's fortifications to the Muslim besiegers;

2) A festival in the city, which diverts the attention of the besieged;

3) The immediate attack of a number of assault troops, often with ladders;

4) A *takbīr* as signal from these assault troops to the main army, indicating that they have made their way in;

5) The opening of a gate from within, and the attack of all forces combined.[2]

All these motifs describing the outward form of the conquest of a city could be randomly transferred from one account to another.

The same applies to attendant circumstances which at first glance seem completely particular. For the conquest of Damascus the bishop of the city is supposed to have proposed to Khālid ibn al-Walīd a treaty

[1] See above, 19–20.
[2] See the examples cited above, 19 nn. 68–71.

containing the preamble: "Your affair (i.e. the dominion of Islam) is approaching (*muqbil*)".[3] This same thought, expressed in similar fashion, occurs again in a tradition on the conquest of Tustar in Khūzistān: the Persian commander Hurmuzān conjectures that the traitor who showed the Muslims an entry into the city did this thinking that the dominion of the Muslims was approaching, and that of the Persians departing (*iqbāl amrihim wa-idbār amrinā*).[4] We may mention in passing that the Muslim traditionists, as they describe how cities were conquered, once again give free rein to their passion for names. We know the names of the Muslim fighters who were first to rush into a city,[5] and, on occasion, those of the non-Muslim traitors.[6]

Single Combat

Large numbers of one-to-one duels within battles occur in traditions on the *ridda*, the *futūḥ*, and above all on the *fitna*.[7] These are usually designated by the verb *bāraza*, "he stepped forth for single combat". Now single combat was beyond any doubt a custom of the early period, especially since this usage has its roots in pre-Islamic times.[8] It is difficult, furthermore, to determine the extent to which narratives of single combat also have the character of topoi, since in the nature of things it is impossible to arrive at practical criteria for judging them. We would therefore do well to let the matter rest with a few critical observations by way of marginal comment.

It certainly counted as a title of honor to have engaged one of the foe in single combat, and to have concluded either with victory or with death. The motif of single combat accordingly offered the possibility of casting actors of the early period of Islam in heroic rôles, and in

[3] Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 121:8.

[4] Anon. in *ibid*., 381:1–2.

[5] For instance, anon. in *ibid*., 380:18–19; 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 63:9; Sa'īd ibn 'Ufayr in *ibid*, 63:18–64:2.

[6] Al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 138:6; Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'īd al-Balawī in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 80:18.

[7] Many instructive examples may be found in Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, *passim*.

[8] Cf. Caskel, "Aijām al-'arab", 19–22.

this fashion it could carry out the same functions as the narrative motif connected with the recitation of names.[9] Such a heroicization of Khālid ibn al-Walīd is certainly at work in the story which says that during an engagement in the course of his Euphrates campaign Khālid slew in single combat a Persian who possessed the strength of a thousand warriors (a "thousandman"—on this more will be said shortly).[10] An even more dramatic characterizaton of the fearsome Khālid is offered in an account of fighting at Ḥuwwārayn (modern al-Qaryatayn in central Syria), where he again slays a thousandman, this time a Greek.[11] Little confidence is inspired by the report that two Muslim warriors at al-Qādisīya triumphed over two Persians who bore the rhyming names al-Bayrazān and al-Bindawān.[12] A single combat is often described with the words "they exchanged two blows" (*ikhtalafā ḍarbatayn*), whereupon the contest comes to an end for one of the two champions.[13] This again gives the impression that here we have to do with a formula which can be transferred at random.

The Thousandman

The "thousandman" (*hazārmard*), a warrior who in effect equals a thousand other soldiers, doubtless entered early Islamic tradition from Persia.[14] We encounter this in numerous traditions: on Khālid's Euphrates expedition,[15] on al-Qādisīya,[16] on Abū Bakr's preparations for the invasion of Syria,[17] on fighting at Ḥuwwārayn,[18] on al-Yarmūk,[19]

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[9] See above, 111–29.

[10] Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2031:10–12.

[11] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 69:10–15.

[12] Sayf–al-Sha'bī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2306:1–5, 8–12.

[13] Sayf–al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 2024:13, 2101:6, 2687:8–9, 3212:15–3213:6 (repeatedly); in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 74:10.

[14] Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 230, 284; see further al-Layth ibn Sa'd in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 61:8–11.

[15] See above, n. 10.

[16] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2263:17–18.

[17] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 25:7–8; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 102:7.

[18] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 69:10–15.

[19] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 104:7–9.

on the siege of Bābilyūn in Egypt,[20] and on the conquest of Sijistān.[21] In three cases (the Euphrates expedition, al-Qādisīya, and Ḥuwwārayn), the thousandman is a Persian or Greek, who is then killed by a Muslim. In the other cases, the point is made that a Muslim fighting for his faith is worth a thousand of his opponents.

The transmitters of the Bābilyūn report use the motif, moreover, so as to achieve what is obviously a schematization of their statements. The caliph 'Umar sends four thousandmen (al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, al-Miqdād ibn 'Amr, 'Ubāda ibn al-Ṣāmit, and Maslama ibn Mukhallad) as reinforcements to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ. Each of these four in turn commands *a thousand men*.[22]

The broad scope for deployment of this topos is indicated by the fact that the Prophet himself is implicitly portrayed as a thousandman. When the angels cleanse the heart and belly of the Prophet and then weigh him against various numbers from his community, they find that he outweighs ten, a hundred, and finally a thousand other men.[23] Unless one opts for the unlikely view that the later tradents reporting on the *futūḥ* would have been unaware of this precedent, it would appear that our authorities were deploying a motif which had already shifted from one of secular valor to one with definite religious overtones. This is further suggested by Ibn A'tham's story of the thousandman al-Hilqām ibn al-Ḥārith, which begins as a tale of martial valor in pre-Islamic Arabia, featuring some of the most famous heroes from the lore of that period, and ends with al-Hilqām fighting as an inspired Muslim at al-Yarmūk.[24]

Women Clad as Warriors

In three instances the Muslims' enemies are supposed to have resorted to the ruse of giving women the outward appearance of male warriors,

[20]Ibn Lahī'a *et al.* in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 61:3–6 (cf. 79:6–7).

[21]Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 396:16–17.

[22]See above, n. 20.

[23]See Ibn Hishām (d. 218/834), *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalabī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1355/1937), I, 175:5–176:3.

[24]Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 104:12–114:6.

so as to give the Muslims a false idea of their strength. Each of these is described as occurring during the siege of a fortress: at 'Aqraba (*ridda*),[25] Alexandria,[26] and Orihuela.[27] At 'Aqraba and Orihuela the tactic succeeds, in that it causes the Muslims to make terms of capitulation unfavorable to themselves. As for Alexandria, the Muslim commander 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ is supposed to have recognized the ruse in time, and to have adroitly diverted it from its expected course.

Analogous Narrative Motifs

In conclusion, we return to pairs of traditions which are parallel, each of which has a completely different material context from its counterpart.

1) It is well known that the Anṣār refused to acclaim Abū Bakr after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, and sought instead for the leadership to be shared between two men, one of whom would come from among the Muhājirūn (Quraysh), and the other from their own ranks.[28] Their slogan is transmitted as: *minnā amīr wa-min Quraysh amīr*, "an *amīr* from us and an *amīr* from Quraysh". We must compare this with a *ridda* report according to which the rebellious Banū Ḥanīfa, upon being asked their views by Khālid ibn al-Walīd, are supposed to have replied: *minnā nabī wa-minkum nabī* ("a prophet from us and a prophet from you").[29]

2) There are reports of a "night of howling" (*laylat al-harīr*) both in connection with the battle of al-Qādisīya[30] and the confrontation at Ṣiffīn.[31]

3) In the stories about Muslim messengers in the enemy camp the motif often occurs that the Muslim sits down shamelessly next to his high-ranking interlocutor on his chair of state.[32] We find a parallel to

[25] Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1952:9–1953:9.

[26] Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 220:14–16.

[27] *Akhbār majmū'a*, 12ult–13:7.

[28] Abū Mikhnaf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1837:13–1839:11, esp. 1839:8.

[29] Ibn Isḥāq in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 73:3.

[30] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2333ult–2334:2.

[31] Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, III, 303:10–304:6; VI, 180:4; Abū Mikhnaf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3327:11–15.

[32] See the examples in Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 276, 281, 284 (with n. 71); also the discussion above, 147.

this in the legendary report of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib's audience with the Ethiopian Abraha.[33] In the messenger stories the Muslim messenger's behavior comes across as presumptuous, whereas in the Abraha legend the Ethiopian shows honor to the Arab by seating him next to himself.

Finally, we make a tentative suggestion. In Sasanian historical tradition there is a report on a battle which erupted because one of the two parties had defaulted on a treaty. During this battle, a copy of the treaty was stuck on a lance and brought against the offending party.[34] Might there not be a literary tie between this tradition and the well-known motif of the copies of the Qur'ān stuck on the lances of Muʿāwiya's party at Ṣiffīn?

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[33] Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, 95:5–8.

[34] Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 126.

CHAPTER IV

SCHEMATA

WE MAY NOW TURN to schemata, the second category of narrative motifs deployed by the early tradents. The most important of these, and the ones which will be considered below, are the following:

1) transitional formulae
2) pseudo-causes
3) etiologies
4) systematization
5) undifferentiated reports

As in the case of topoi, the discussion here does not pretend to exhaust the full range of schemata in the early Arabic historical tradition, but rather seeks to set forth and illustrate some of the main trends. Further examples, both in historical writing and in other fields, can easily be pursued, and would add much to our knowledge.[1]

Transitional Formulae

At the beginning of this book we alluded briefly to the rather thin and meaningless transitional formulae by means of which the early traditionists linked events to one another, in particular those relating to the *futūḥ*. We also mentioned the problems which these formulae create for the modern historian.[2] Here our task will be to consider more closely the type, the extent, and the consequences of this form of schematization, through the use of characteristic examples.

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[1] Again, see Stetter, *Topoi und Schemata im Ḥadīṯ*, 35–122.
[2] See above, 57–58.

The simplest form which we find of transition from one event to another is a simple "then" (usually *thumma*).[3] Ibn Isḥāq links the battle of al-Qādisīya, the fights at Jalūlā', and the founding of the garrison town of al-Kūfa in this fashion, with repeated use of *thumma*.[4] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam describes conquests in the Maghrib with a succession of *thummas* strung out one after the other.[5]

One transitional formula which occurs frequently is *thumma* or its equivalent, connected with a verb of motion. The first attacks on Syria/Palestine and Khālid ibn al-Walīd's march from al-Ḥīra into this region, for example, are set out as follows: "then they came to (*thumma ataw*) ... (place-name), then there was (*thumma kānat*) ... (an encounter with the Byzantines), then he came to (*thumma atā*) ... (place-name), and he came to (*wa-atā*) ... (place-name), and he came to (*wa-atā*) ..., and he came to (*wa-atā*) ... , and he came to (*wa-atā*) ...", each time with a place-name.[6]

A similar series of links preserved by Abū Yūsuf is even more striking in its lack of differentiation, i.e. in its lack of specific elements which give it an individual identity, as opposed to reports for other events. These links provide the external framework for a description of Khālid's Euphrates expedition: "then he arrived at" (*fa'ntahā ilā*) ... (place-name)—and so on—"then he went on until he arrived at (*thumma maḍā ḥattā ntahā ilā*) ... (place-name), and so went on from (*fa-maḍā min*) ... (place-name) until he stopped at (*ḥattā nazala*) ... (place-name), then he went on to (*thumma maḍā ilā*) ... (place-name), and then Khālid went on to (*thumma anna Khālida maḍā ilā*) ... (place-name), then he marched on until he stopped at (*thumma sāra ḥattā nazala*) ... (place-name), then he sent (*thumma ba'atha*) ... (name of person) until he arrived at (*ḥattā ntahā ilā*) ... (place-name), then he went on until he came to (*thumma maḍā ḥattā atā ilā*) ... (place-name).[7] This "itinerary style" is also characteristic of traditions preserved by

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[3]E.g. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 32:10–33:6; Abū Ḥafṣ al-Dimashqī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 138:7–15, and the passages cited in the notes which follow.

[4]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2358:6–2359:11.

[5]Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 194:7–196ult.

[6]Al-Madā'inī (?) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2108:12–2109:13.

[7]Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 82:25–87:7. Further examples are Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2124:12–2125:11; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 131:5–12; al-Madā'inī

al-Balādhurī, above all those which describe Muslim conquests in the eastern regions of the Sasanian Empire. Here we need refer to only one example, concerning *futūḥ* in the region of Sijistān and Kābul.[8]

Another transitional formula of frequent occurrence is: "and when he was/they were finished with ... (place-name), then..." (*wa-lamma farigha min* ...). A few examples of this formula from the sources will suffice.[9]

We may conclude this rapid survey with two instances of a somewhat different kind of schematization, which nonetheless demonstrates this same lack of differentiation.

The events which occurred between the battle of al-Qādisīya and the conquest of al-Madā'in/Ctesiphon are compressed into the following scheme: "then [the Muslim commander] went forth (*thumma sāra*) ..., so [the inhabitants of al-Ḥīra] came to him (*fa-atāhu*) [proclaiming their loyalty] ... and [a Persian prepared to come to terms] came to him (*wa-atāhu*) ... and so he met a group (*fa-laqiya jam'an*) ... and then he met a group (*thumma laqiya jam'an*) ... and then he met a group (*thumma laqiya jam'an*) ... and then he went forth (*thumma sāra*) ... until (*ḥattā*) ..."[10]

Conquests in the south and the southeast of the Sasanian Empire are presented with these formulae of transition:

> "and 'Uthmān ibn Abī l-'Āṣ proceeded to Iṣtakhr... and they fought as God willed... and killed as God willed... and gained whatever they wished", *wa-qaṣada 'Uthmān ibn Abī l-'Āṣ li-Iṣṭakhr... wa' qtatalū mā shā'a llāh... wa-qatalū mā shā'a llāh wa-aṣābū mā shā'ū*.[11]

> "and Sāriya ibn Zunaym proceeded to Fasā and Darabjird, until he arrived at their camp... and besieged them as God willed", *wa-*

in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 140:11–141:9; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 170:12, 171:7.

[8] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 396:17–397:3.

[9] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2036:13, 2062:8–9, 2065:2; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2145:15–16; Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2158:11, 2567:15–16.

[10] Al-Madā'inī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 103:3–8.

[11] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2696:6–9.

qaṣada Sāriya ibn Zunaym Fasā wa-Darabjird, ḥattā ntahā ilā 'askarihim... wa-ḥāṣarahum mā shā'a llāh.[12]

"and Suhayl ibn 'Adī proceeded to Kirmān... and they fought in the nearer [parts of] their land... and gained whatever they wished of ...", *wa-qaṣada Suhayl ibn 'Adī ilā Kirmān... fa'qtatalū fī adnā arḍihim... fa-aṣābū mā shā'ū min....*[13]

"and 'Āṣim ibn 'Amr proceeded to Sijistān... and they clashed in the nearer [parts of] their land... and they plowed their way through the land of Sijistān as they wished", *wa-qaṣada 'Āṣim ibn 'Amr li-Sijistān... fa'ltaqū fī adnā arḍihim... wa-makharū arḍ Sijistān mā shā'ū....*[14]

"and al-Ḥakam ibn 'Amr al-Taghlibī proceeded to Makrān, until he arrived there...", *wa-qaṣada al-Ḥakam ibn 'Amr al-Taghlibī li-Makrān, ḥattā ntahā ilayhā....*[15]

With these few examples, which could easily be multiplied, one can see that early historical tradition made frequent use of thin transitional formulae. All this leaves the modern scholar in the dark concerning, above all, two things: the time which elapsed during the events which have been connected with one another in this manner, and the causes of the events. It is likely that the early traditionists worked with transitional formulae of this type because they were already ignorant of the correct chronological sequence and the "causes" of the events which they were transmitting.

Even if we admit that transitional formulae at least arrange events in the correct sequence—and this concession is itself anything but sure—they still tell us nothing about the duration of time of these events; instead, they present a "chronological conflation" which is likely to lead us astray.

Let us recall a tradition of Ibn Isḥāq which we have already cited.[16] Events here are presented in such a way as to give the impression that

[12]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2700:13–14.
[13]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2703pu–2704:5.
[14]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2705:4–7.
[15]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2706ult.
[16]See above, 174.

the conclusion of the battle of al-Qādisīya, the encounter at Jalūlā', and the founding of al-Kūfa were all separated from one another merely by a few days. The same applies to the lapidary comment: "After the Muslims had conquered Egypt, they undertook a campaign against the Nubians",[17] leaving completely out of consideration all the time which elapsed between the two events. Muslim conquests and campaigns in the enormous region of Sijistān and Khurāsān (with the cities of Herāt, Ṭūs, Sarakhs, Bayhaq, and Marw), Ṭukhāristān, and Khwārazm[18] all proceed in close chronological proximity, through the use of simple particles such as "and" (*wā-*), "and thus" (*fa-*), and "then" (*thumma*), connected with such verbs as "went" (*sāra*), "made his way to" (*tawajjaha*), "sent" (*ba'atha*), and "made a treaty" (*ṣālaḥa*). Writing long after these events, the writer who transmits them assigns them all to *one* year, AH 30.

Given their "fast-forwarding" quality, the transitional formulae are incapable of depicting the temporal dimension of events and developments. But if this is so, then they are equally devoid of reliable information about the origins and motives behind those events and developments. They tell series of stories, but they tell us no history.

Pseudo-Causes

Through their use of meaningless transitional formulae, the early traditionists thus indirectly admitted that the actual historical conditions of particular events and developments lay shrouded in ignorance. Equally indicative of this uncertainty is the recourse to pseudo-causes which we constantly encounter in early Islamic tradition.

The traditionists liked especially to use the two literary forms of the letter and the anecdote, which could also be combined together, when they sought to explain things through pseudo-causes. We have already alluded briefly to these two literary forms.[1] Enough has already been said about how the letter functioned as a pseudo-cause:[2] many of the important events of the early period were afterwards said to have been based upon decisions and commands which the caliphs made either

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[17] Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in *ibid.*, I, 2593:7.

[18] Al-Madā'inī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 140:11–141:9.

[1] See above, 81.

[2] See above, 76–87.

upon their own initiative, or else in response to queries made in letters, and which they themselves communicated in letter form. In this chapter, we may therefore set aside the letters of caliphs and concentrate instead upon anecdotes, combinations of letters and anecdotes, and letters written by persons other than the caliphs. Examples should be chosen according to the importance of the events which have been provided with fictitious foundations of this kind.

One fact of tremendous importance for the history of Islam in general (and not just of the early period) was the founding of the garrison town of al-Kūfa. For this undertaking Ibn Isḥāq has transmitted to us a pseudo-cause which we may almost call "classic". After the encounter at Jalūlā', a correspondence consisting of three letters each takes place between the Muslim commander Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and the caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. In his first reply 'Umar forbids the Muslim warriors to advance any further. In his second reply he speaks of the need to establish a "place of emigration" (*dār hijra*) and "permanent quarters for the fight against the unbelievers" (*manzil jihād*); for this a site must be chosen which is not cut off from Medina by any watercourse. Sa'd then decides upon al-Anbār, but there the Muslims are afflicted by fever. In his third letter 'Umar states that since the Arabs can only feel at ease where camels and small cattle thrive, an open space in the vicinity of water should be sought. This time Sa'd chooses a place called al-Kuwayfa; but there fever strikes the Muslims again, and they are also harassed by flies. Finally an Anṣārī whom Sa'd has sent out (two names from which to choose are given) finds the site of al-Kūfa, where the foundations of a mosque and of residential quarters (*khiṭaṭ*) for the individual tribes are traced out.[3]

This pseudo-cause is a conglomeration of alleged origins and motives which can be described as follows:

1) The Muslim warriors should stay within easy reach of the "center" at Medina. This is expressed in the caliph's prohibition against advancing further and in his instructions to avoid being cut off

[3] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2360:1–14; cf. also al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 275:6–276:13, 277:14–15.

by a watercourse. Both of these commands are demonstrably transferable motifs of early tradition.[4]

2) 'Umar's alleged wish that a place be founded to serve as a *dār hijra* and a *manzil jihād*, which is given as a second underlying reason for the founding of al-Kūfa, implicitly contradicts the rest of his orders. The first order maintained that the troops should not venture further afield, but unless they do, how can al-Kūfa be a base for pursuit of the *jihād*? In the second order this anomaly is even more striking: one finds both a command not to allow any watercourse to come between the caliph and his armies, and a command implying that Kūfan forces will pursue the *jihād*, which within a few miles of their town will of course bring them to precisely the sort of watercourse (i.e. a major river, the Euphrates) which the caliph has forbidden them to cross. We seem, moreover, to have here a favorable characterization of al-Kūfa made at some later time when a need was felt to glorify the standing of the town.

3) The report on the unsuitable climate of other locations, and the statement that Arabs can live only under certain environmental conditions, do not account for the plan of founding a city in and of itself; they rather presuppose the ultimate choice of al-Kūfa. Both assertions could have an authentic core: on the one hand, Sa'd and his people may very well have had bad experiences with the climate as they sought an appropriate place to settle, while on the other hand, they may have begun with certain geographical preconditions for the site. In any case, the fact that fever is mentioned twice (with flies added the second time around) conveys the impression of being a literary repetition. The remark about the Arabs' requirements for living could likewise be a description of al-Kūfa and its environs, made some time after the founding of the city; this remark did not, in any case, occur in a letter of 'Umar.

4) Finally, the report that an Anṣārī found the right site for al-Kūfa belongs to a completely different context. As an Anṣārī he ranked

[4]See above, 19–21.

> among the Companions of the Prophet, an identification which permitted the later Kūfans to boast that the actual founder of their city was a *ṣaḥābī*. In view of this we should not be surprised at the contradictions among the sources concerning the name of this "founder".

The final verdict on this crudely formulated pseudo-cause must be that the garrison town of al-Kūfa was not and could not have been founded in this fashion.

Let us remain at al-Kūfa. Given the significance of this town, it is important for us to know why its governors changed so quickly in the earliest period of its history. But here again we are put off with anecdotes. Let us consider a series of traditions on the succession of the governors 'Ammār ibn Yāsir, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, and al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba.

We are told that 'Ammār ibn Yāsir was removed from office because he had no idea of what territory he actually had under his authority as governor. This emerges from an exchange of questions and answers between him and the caliph 'Umar. His successor is supposed to have been sacked because his servant (*ghulām*) attempted to make some money on the side by selling horse fodder on the market in al-Kūfa. Finally, the appointment of al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba is explained by the maxim "better a strong despotic governor than one who is weak, even if he is a good Muslim". Religious qualifications are a matter of concern to the individual, whereas political strength or weakness affects all Muslims. In all likelihood we have here a later characterization of the rather sinister al-Mughīra.[5]

One of the most important administrative measures of the early period was the caliph 'Umar's creation of the *dīwān*. The transmitters give us an entire series of pseudo-causes, mostly of anecdotal character, but not the real causes and motives for this institution. Puin has collected all these pseudo-causes in his study on 'Umar's *dīwān*, and has subjected them to criticism. It is therefore sufficient for us to refer to the relevant chapter of his book.[6]

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[5]Sayf (with different *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2677:8–2680:4.

[6]Puin, *Dīwān*, 95–100.

Many of our sources state that the caliph 'Umar accepted the capitulation of Jerusalem in person during his stay in Syria (at al-Jābiya).[7] Quite apart from the difficult question of whether or not 'Umar ever made such a journey,[8] one should probably see a pseudo-cause in those traditions which make the pact with Jerusalem into the actual reason for the caliph's journey to Syria—the Jerusalemites would have declared themselves willing to come to terms, but only with 'Umar himself; once informed of this, 'Umar set off for Syria.[9]

Arguing against the credibility of this explanation is, first of all, the lack of awareness in other traditions of this causal relationship between the caliph's journey and the surrender of Jerusalem. Indeed, these other traditions expressly say that negotiations did not actually begin until 'Umar had arrived in al-Jābiya.[10] Even more telling is the fact that instead of proceeding directly to Jerusalem (the supposed primary goal of his journey), 'Umar pitched his tent in al-Jābiya, a place which lies in the Jawlān, some 80 kilometers to the south of Damascus and far astray from the route one would follow from the Ḥijāz to Jerusalem.[11]

Beyond all this, an explanation, albeit a hypothetical one, suggests itself for the invention of this particular causal nexus. To make the most renowned of the four "rightly guided" caliphs appear in person in Syria/Palestine to receive the surrender of Jerusalem was, without any doubt, to emphasize strongly the importance of that city. Now in

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[7]Sayf (with different *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2402:10–2410:13; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 138:15–139:4; Ibn al-Kalbī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 105:12–15.

[8]Despite the fact that in the treaty transmitted in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2405:4–2406:12, 'Umar appears as the author of the treaty, it is unlikely that 'Umar ever made any such journey. For an evaluation of treaties which have been subject to literary transmission, see above, 64–76; and for a compelling case against the historicity of 'Umar's journey, see Heribert Busse, "'Omar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb in Jerusalem", *JSAI* 5 (1984), 73–119; *idem*, "'Omar's Image as the Conqueror of Jerusalem", *JSAI* 8 (1986), 149–68.

[9]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2404:3–6; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 146ult–147:2; Ibn al-Kalbī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 105:12–15; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 138:15–139:4.

[10]Sayf in two traditions in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2402:11–2403:6; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 139:5–9.

[11]Cf. Henri Lammens [Janine Sourdel-Thomine], art. "al-Djābiya" in *EI*², II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 360a–b.

the time of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik there was an interest in the revaluation of the city of Jerusalem. 'Abd al-Malik sought to create in Jerusalem a sanctuary comparable to Mecca, since the classical sanctuary of Islam then lay in the hands of the counter-caliph 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr.[12] Our pseudo-cause may possibly have originated at that time and for these reasons.

Scholars are now basically in agreement that 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ did not undertake his expedition to Egypt—a campaign which ultimately led to the Islamization of that Byzantine province—on his own account, but rather that the caliph 'Umar at least gave his consent, if not the actual impetus.[13] Our sources differ with regard to the extent of the caliph's influence over the Egyptian campaign. Some of them speak of a direct order from 'Umar to 'Amr to proceed to Egypt,[14] others report that 'Amr had great difficulties in obtaining the caliph's consent,[15] while yet others know of an unauthorized action on 'Amr's part which aroused the caliph's ire. But even in this last case, the "Commander of the Faithful" does not remain completely idle: he sends a letter after 'Amr, stating that if 'Amr receives this letter before he has reached Egyptian soil, he must turn back, otherwise he must proceed. 'Amr receives the letter and, guessing at its contents, first opens it in Egyptian territory where nothing further stands in the way of his march forward.[16]

As we seek to discover the actual motives behind this Egyptian campaign, we should pay careful attention to how we evaluate this

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[12]Cf. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, 35–37; Werner Caskel, *Der Felsendom und die Wallfahrt nach Jerusalem* (Köln and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1960).

[13]Cf. C.H. Becker, art. "Egypt" in *EI*¹, II (Leiden and London: E.J. Brill, 1927), 5; A.J. Wensinck, art. "'Amr b. al-'Āṣ" in *EI*², I (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 451a; Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1961), 160; Francesco Gabrieli, *Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam*, trans. Virginia Luling and Rosamund Linell (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), 167.

[14]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 114:9–10; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 212:13–16; anon. in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 57:17–58:3; Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2580:14–17.

[15]Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 55ult–56:6; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 147ult–148:5.

[16]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 212:9–13; Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 57:4–9.

last anecdote. We may take it as certain that this story of letters is unauthentic, for its content, and above all its point, already assume the conquest of Egypt in advance; consequently, it must be a secondary invention.

If we then ask for what purpose the letter anecdote was invented, we must take into consideration the fact that while it occurs in some, but not all traditions which speak of 'Umar ordering a campaign to Egypt, or else of 'Amr persuading 'Umar to do so,[17] it is *always* an element in reports in which 'Amr takes action on his own account.[18] This last group would consequently appear to be the letter anecdote's original context; also arguing in this direction is the tale's obvious function in this context, namely to cast blame on 'Amr for acting without authorization and to belittle the effects of his action, or else to show his cunning. In the other reports this anecdote would make the caliph appear to vacillate and act in a contradictory manner. In view of the close connection in the history of tradition between the reports of 'Amr's insubordination and the anecdote of the letter, we may take our deductions one step further. The anecdote owes its existence to the fact that 'Amr did in fact go to Egypt on his own account. Otherwise there would have been no need to invent the tale of the letter.

To this result of source-critical analysis we may add a further observation. As is generally known, and as has been confirmed repeatedly in the present study, early tradition tended to present all important events of the early period, above all the campaigns of the *futūḥ*, as having been planned and regulated from the caliphal "control room". All reports which contradict this trend can therefore claim a higher degree of credibility. This certainly applies to these reports in which 'Amr acts on his own account.

Accordingly, we may imagine the "'Amr in Egypt" traditions as having developed as follows. The account in which 'Amr acts on his own behalf was authentic. Its effect was mitigated—at first somewhat ineptly—by having 'Umar interfere, at least at a later stage of the events. The next step was to construct a successful, if difficult, per-

[17]Anon. in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 57:17–58:3; *ibid*, 55ult–56:6, continuing at 56:10–13; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 147ult–148:5. Cf. above, 182.

[18]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 57:4–9; anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 212:9–16.

suasion of the caliph by 'Amr. At the end of this process, traditions arose which ascribed the initiative for the Egyptian expedition to 'Umar alone. The anecdote of the letter thus appears as a necessary ingredient in the later layers of tradition as well.

If this hypothesis is correct (while very probable, it cannot be taken, strictly speaking, as proven), then we would have instances of pseudo-causes in traditions reporting 'Umar's influence on the Egyptian campaign of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ. In such a case, only 'Umar's annoyance at 'Amr's action could be accepted as historical.

If 'Amr's Egyptian campaign was the decisive step towards the Islamization of that province, then 'Amr's second taking of the city of Alexandria was the decisive event for the continued presence of Muslim rule in the land. For the Byzantines managed to regain Alexandria from the Muslims, who then had to reconquer it.

To explain the Byzantine's reappearance after the first Muslim conquest of the city, an obvious pseudo-cause of anecdotal character is transmitted. The lord (*ṣāḥib*) of Ikhnā (near Alexandria)[19] is said to have asked 'Amr how much tribute each of the Egyptians would have to pay. 'Amr informed him that in all good conscience he could not say: "You are a treasure-house for us. If we need more, then we will take more from you, and if we need less, then we will take less". Enraged by this response, the Egyptian incited the Byzantines to attack the Muslims.[20]

This anecdote is connected with a theory which arose in late Umayyad times, to the effect that Egypt had surrendered without any treaty and could therefore be taxed at the rulers' discretion.[21] Elsewhere it is also transmitted in isolation, that is, without any reference to the return of the Byzantines (this time the lord of Ikhnā does not draw any consequences from 'Amr's reply),[22] and this must certainly have been its original form. We thus have before us an instructive example

[19]On the site, cf. Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1866–73), I, 166:10–23.

[20]Ḥaywa ibn Shurayḥ–al-Ḥasan ibn Thawbān–Hishām ibn Abī Ruqayya in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 176:19–177:1.

[21]See Noth, "Die 'Ṣulḥ'–''Anwa'-Traditionen", 154–56.

[22]From the same tradents (n. 20 above) in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 153pu–154:4.

of how, when people no longer knew the actual causal connections of things, they could become preoccupied with pseudo-causes.

Now let us leave behind the Muslim conquests in the West, and turn to important *futūḥ* in the East. Here again the early transmitters know how to serve up pseudo-causes which are easily recognizable as such. We have already spoken above of an anecdote purporting to give the reason for the battle of Nihāwand. The caliph 'Umar asks a Persian captive in Medina what the next goal for the *futūḥ* warriors should be, and receives a reply clothed in a metaphor: "Nihāwand". The Muslims accordingly make their way there.[23]

Another reason given for the battle of Nihāwand is equally unconvincing. After the Muslims' success in the land of Fārs, the inhabitants of that province sent a written request for assistance to their king (*malik*), who at that time was staying in Marw. The king thereupon sent letters to mobilize all the subjects of his kingdom ("the mountain folk between al-Bāb and Sind and Ḥulwān", *ahl al-jibāl bayna l-Bāb wa-Sind wa-Ḥulwān*). These in turn corresponded with one another and agreed to meet at Nihāwand.[24] The unnamed "king" must refer to Yazdajird, who, in reality, was by then practically powerless; this, together with the network of correspondence and the size of the forces supposedly deployed, will suffice to prove this tradition's lack of authenticity. It may be explained as the result of an attempt to give a particularly impressive stamp to the encounter at Nihāwand. It may accordingly belong to the same context as those topoi, already discussed above,[25] which for very practical reasons stress the importance of particular military events in retrospect.

Conquests in the East which followed after Nihāwand are supposed to have arisen from the following events. The caliph 'Umar saw that Yazdajird, the last Sasanian ruler, left him no peace and invaded the realm of Islam every year. When he was told that this state of affairs would not change until the Persian had been driven out of his kingdom, 'Umar allowed the Muslims to "swarm forth" (*insiyāḥ*) deeper into the Sasanian Empire.[26]

[23]Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 275, 283–84, 287.
[24]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2605:13–18.
[25]See above, 129–32.
[26]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2634:11–14.

Once again, the situation in reality must have been quite different. The campaigns of *futūḥ* which followed after Nihāwand were a natural consequence of previous conquests. To carry out these conquests, the Muslim warriors had no need for permission from the caliph; in any case, they would not have conceived of their advances in terms of strictly defined (and authorized) stages. But once an imaginary permission had been postulated, imaginary activity on the part of Yazdajird had in turn to be provided to explain the caliph's action.

Yet another intensive correspondence—this time among the Daylamīs, the inhabitants of Rayy, and the Adharbayjānīs—is supposed to have led to a powerful confederation of these groups, and then to a great battle with the Muslims[27] at Wāj al-Rūdh (between Hamadhān and Qazwīn).[28] The underlying purpose of this pseudo-cause (where would the Muslims ever have learned of such a correspondence?) becomes clear from the following. The encounter at Wāj al-Rūdh is declared the equal of Nihāwand and of other great battles in the extent of its violence and carnage.[29] To achieve this purpose it could be useful to maintain that the Muslims' enemies had made careful plans and levied large numbers of troops. We can now clearly recognize this tradition's close connection with the tradition on Nihāwand which we have already cited.

It will never be possible to know clearly the actual reasons for the murder of the caliph 'Uthmān, which led to the First Civil War. None of the groups which were either involved or neutral wished to be objective, nor was this even possible for them. The extensive tradition on this event is therefore a mélange of literary invention, camouflage, and polemic.[30]

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[27]Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2650:10–2651:2.

[28]Cf. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, IV, 872:17–873:1.

[29]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2651:2–4.

[30]Cf. Georgio Levi della Vida, art. "'Othmān b. 'Affān" in *EI*¹, III, 1010a–1011a, and the literature cited there. The polemically charged thrust of later discussions of what had happened to 'Uthmān, and why, emerges very clearly in Michael G. Morony, "Conceptualization of the Past and the Origins of Islamic Historiography", in Conrad, ed., *History and Historiography*, forthcoming. Cf. also Marshall G.S. Hodgson, "Two Pre-Modern Muslim Historians: Pitfalls and Opportunities in Presenting Them to Moderns", in John Ulric Nef, ed., *Towards World Community* (The Hague: W. Junk, 1968), 55–58.

But even though the sources are so unfavorable to historical investigation, it may nevertheless be of some use at least to point out some obvious fictions, and thus to make a negative selection. For this the example of a single group of traditions on the murder of 'Uthmān will suffice.

The decisive involvement of a group of Egyptians in the siege and final murder of 'Uthmān lies beyond dispute. The relevant reports present the matter as follows. The Egyptians (whose leaders are usually mentioned by name) had accused the caliph of responsibility for certain abuses in their country and demanded that he abolish them. 'Uthmān is supposed to have promised that he would carry out their requests, whereupon they departed from Medina; however, they then turned back and came into conflict with 'Uthmān once again. No agreement was reached, whereupon the Egyptians attached themselves to other opponents of 'Uthmān in Medina, together with whom they then murdered the caliph.

Our sources give an anecdote to explain the underlying reason for the Egyptians' fateful return to Medina. On their way home, the Egyptians met a man riding a camel from Medina. Since he appeared suspicious to them they searched his baggage, and in it they found a letter from the caliph to his governor in Egypt ('Abd Allāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Sarḥ). This letter instructed the governor to subject certain individuals among them to harsh punishment. This discovery compelled them to turn around.[31]

This messenger story is unbelievable in certain important respects. The place in which the encounter is supposed to have occurred is not defined with any precision, but most likely would have been somewhere on the main route from the Ḥijāz to Egypt; a place called Buwayb which lies on this route is in fact twice named in the sources.[32] But surely 'Uthmān's messenger would have known that the discontented

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[31]The different versions: Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2957ult–2958:3; Ya'qūb ibn Ibrāhīm in *ibid.*, I, 2964:16–2965:4; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2983:13–2984:10; Muḥammad al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2984:12–16; Ibn Isḥāq in *ibid.*, I, 2985:5–17; al-Wāqidī in *ibid.*, I, 2991:2–2992ult, 2995:3–8; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 175:5–8.

[32]The last two versions cited give the place-name "Buwayb", which is likely to correspond to a prominent spot on the usual route from the Ḥijāz to Egypt. Cf. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, I, 764:18–22.

Egyptians were travelling ahead of him somewhere along this road, and it can hardly be doubted that he would have been warned to avoid them at all costs. That is, the chance meeting along the way could not have occurred. Furthermore, the various versions of the anecdote differ considerably over the punitive measures which the caliph is supposed to have had in mind for the Egyptians.

On the other hand, we find that the story has obviously been constructed to demonstrate 'Uthmān's lack of qualifications for the office of caliph. The Egyptians immediately recognize an insidious move on the caliph's part: the messenger is one of his servants (*ghulām*), he rides one of 'Uthmān's camels, the letter is written in the hand of one of his scribes, and it bears his seal. Despite all this, when they call upon the caliph to answer their charges, he pleads ignorance or makes specious excuses. He is therefore no longer acceptable as ruler, and once they have proposed that he step down the Egyptians are perfectly justified in proceeding against him with force. The underlying intention of the story is thus to deny 'Uthmān's right to the caliphate, and this emerges with particular clarity in one of its versions. Here the Egyptians make it clear to 'Uthmān that he is unworthy of his office, whether he knew nothing about the messenger (and was thus speaking the truth), or if he was lying to them (and had thus been aware that the messenger had been sent out). For in the first case, he would be unworthy because such vital matters could proceed behind his back; in the second case, because he had maliciously tried to deceive them.[33]

If our observations are correct, then the story of the messenger and the letter is nothing more than an alibi for the Egyptians. Their unhappiness with the caliph's interference in the affairs of their land was not enough to excuse their participation in the murder of one of the oldest Companions of the Prophet and the "Commander of the Faithful". To absolve the killers of blame for their deed, a need was felt for justifications which were stronger and more convincing.

In closing this section it must be stressed that not all pseudo-causes arise from considerations of factional interest or partisan advantage, for in numerous cases one can hardly avoid the conclusion that considerations of entertainment value and general edification have carried

[33] Al-Wāqidī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2995:13–17.

the day.[34] It can only be factors such as these that explain why al-Balādhurī, for example, should have given the following anecdote as the reason for the Arabization of the *dīwān* of Syria in 81/700. One of the Greek-speaking scribes needed to copy a document; but when he could find no ink, he urinated into his inkwell—i.e. documents expressing sentiments of piety and caliphal might and dignity will in fact be written with urine. When word of this outrage reached the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, he punished the scribe and ordered that the language of the *dīwān* be changed to Arabic.[35] Here again a pseudo-cause replaces the genuine reasons behind a crucial historical development. But the problem goes further. One easily recognizes and sets aside the pseudo-cause embedded in the anecdote, but it is this same anecdote which dates the change to Arabic to 81/700 and attributes it to the personal initiative of 'Abd al-Malik. This information too thus becomes suspect: in fact, other sources attribute the Arabization to 'Abd al-Malik's son al-Walīd, and from documentary evidence it is clear that the shift was effected gradually. No sudden change was ordered, nor could such a drastic measure have been put into effect.[36]

Etiologies

Etiologies[1] represent a completely different way in which early Islamic tradition subsequently represented the underlying causes and motives of events. They occur almost exclusively in connection with noteworthy place-names. Beginning with possible philological interpretations of particular toponyms, *futūḥ* stories were concocted which culminated in explanations for place-names. The story itself, which purports to be primary, thus turns out in reality to be a secondary construction.

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[34]On this problem as a factor in the expansion of historical accounts generally, see Conrad, "The Arabic *Futūḥ* Tradition".

[35]Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 193:2–5. For varia on this theme, citing other offenses and a range of names for the guilty scribe, see al-Jahshiyārī, *Al-Wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, 40:3–15; al-Ṣūlī (d. 243/857), *Adab al-kuttāb*, ed. Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-salafīya, AH 1341), 192:19–193:6.

[36]See A.A. Duri, art. "Dīwān" in *EI*², II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 324a; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 63–64.

[1]On the concept of "etiology" and its various functions, cf. Rudolf Smend, *Elemente alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenkens* (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1968; *Theologische Studien* 95), 10–18.

The toponyms constitute the primary element, while possible interpretations or translations of these toponyms provide points of departure for the secondary narrative. In many instances it is still not certain if a toponym which has become embedded into a *futūḥ* etiology did actually figure in the history of the conquests: the linking of a place-name with the early conquests could itself be a secondary phenomenon. Furthermore, it is still not entirely clear to what extent these etiologies were witty displays of erudition, rather than explanations intended to be taken seriously. As we have already seen on several occasions above, literary and entertainment considerations could often play just as important a rôle in the shaping of historical tradition as other more weighty factors did.

In what follows, we shall attempt to demonstrate, through a series of examples, the characteristics of these etiologies and the possible ways in which they could be constructed. In doing so we shall also speak of traditions which cannot be identified with absolute certainty as etiologies.

As a rule, the correct explanations for the names which constitute the basis for our etiologies are unfortunately beyond reach. Jalūlā', the enigmatic name of a place in Iraq where the Muslims achieved an important victory over the Persians,[2] suggested several etiologies to Muslim traditionists, who connected the word with the second form of the verb *jalla* (*jallala*, "to cover"), and with *majāl* ("[round] space"). On this basis they maintained that the Muslims had, with God's help, killed so many of the foe that the heaped-up corpses "covered" the "space" surrounding their fortification trenches.[3] Others associated this toponym with the root *j-w-l* ("to make a turn"). From this they could construct two stories: first, the Muslims triumphed by making a "[tactically adroit] turn";[4] or second, the Muslims "turned around [in flight]", but upon being reminded by their commander of the shame associated with such behavior, they returned to face their enemy and achieved victory.[5] Finally, a fourth version comes from the fifth form

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[2]On the site, see Maximillian Streck, art. "Djalūlā'" in *EI*[2], II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 406a.

[3]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2459:14–2460:4.

[4]Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 107:14.

[5]*Ibid.*, I, 108:2–5.

of the root *jalla* (*tajallala*, "to take the greater part" of something). According to this, Jalūlā' has its name "because of the great destruction (for the Muslims or the Persians?) which was associated with this battle (*li-mā tajallalahā mina l-sharr*)".[6]

An etiology crystallized around a place called Thanīyat al-'Uqāb ("Heights of the Eagle") near Damascus. As he arrived from Iraq, Khālid ibn al-Walīd is supposed to have spent an hour at this place, during which time he unfurled the banner of the Prophet; the bedouins used the word "eagle" (*'uqāb*) for banner (*rāya*). Two further explanations are given for this toponym, one of which may perhaps hit upon the truth: there was a stone statue of an eagle at this place.[7]

Another hill, Thanīyat al-'Asal ("Heights of Honey") in the neighborhood of Nihāwand, is explained as follows. After their victory at Nihāwand, the Muslims set off in pursuit of the fleeing Persian commander. They were finally able to seize and kill him, because a number of donkeys and mules laden with honey blocked his path of flight.[8]

A community belonging to Iṣfahān was known as Rustāq al-Shaykh ("Suburb of the Old Man") because a "very old man" (*shaykh kabīr*) who commanded the vanguard of the Persians is supposed to have fallen there in single combat with the leader of the Muslim vanguard.[9]

A tale is constructed to explain the toponym Dhāt al-Lujūm ("Place of the Reins"), apparently in the environs of the ancient Armenian capital of Dabīl/Dwīn. The warriors of Ḥabīb ibn Maslama, the conqueror of Armenia, are supposed to have sent their horses to pasture there. They removed the horses' reins and heaped them into a pile, whereupon some of the natives stole the reins and a number of the beasts. The Muslims managed, all the same, to retrieve their possessions and put the thieves to death.[10]

The Egyptian tradents Sa'īd ibn 'Ufayr, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Maslama, and the father of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, used three different etiologies in an attempt to explain the Egyptian place-name Khirbat Wardān

[6] *Ibid.*, I, 108:8–9.

[7] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 72:3–5; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 141ult–142:3; al-Wāqidī (?) in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 112:6–10.

[8] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2626:4–9; cf. I, 2649:6–10.

[9] Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2638:9–12.

[10] Local tradents from Dabīl in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 201:1–7.

("Ruins of Wardān"). The first two of these etiologies begin with the person of Wardān, a client of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ. For Sa'īd, it was the mistreatment accorded by the inhabitants of the place to this Wardān which led to its destruction by 'Amr. 'Abd al-Malik maintains that Wardān was an Arab commander under 'Amr, and that when the people of the place committed an act of treachery against a detachment from 'Amr's army, Wardān himself levelled their town at 'Amr's command. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's father only explains the word "ruins", and this with an extremely curious anecdote on the (apparently) magical ability of soil from this place to compel its people to obey 'Amr anytime he had this soil spread under himself as he sat in his prayer place (*muṣallā*).[11] Naturally, none of these explanations has anything to do with reality; they do, however, demonstrate the impressive variety of ways in which etiologies could be invented.

The existence of a Masjid al-Raḥma ("Mosque of Mercy") in Alexandria is likewise linked to the conquest of Egypt. After taking Alexandria for the second time, 'Amr and his people pressed deep into the interior of the city, killing as they went. In response to a protest, 'Amr then ordered the killing to stop. The "Mosque of Mercy" was then built on the spot where this was supposed to have happened.[12] It is likely, however, that *raḥma* here refers to the mercy of God, rather than to that of 'Amr, and that the Masjid al-Raḥma has nothing whatsoever to do with the second conquest of Alexandria.

An etiology of miraculous content was constructed to explain the toponym Mā' Faras ("Water for Horses"), referring to a place in the Fezzān. During the campaigns of 'Uqba ibn Nāfi' in that area, the Muslim army was unable to find water and nearly died of thirst. 'Uqba asked God for help, whereupon his horse discovered a watering place, known ever since as Mā' Faras.[13]

The following traditions probably have the character of etiologies, though this is not completely certain:

1) The explanation for the name of a canal in the neighborhood of Ullays, the Nahr al-Dam ("Blood-Canal"), is that the Muslim

[11] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 177:6–17.
[12] Al-Haytham ibn Ziyād in *ibid.*, 176:9–12.
[13] *Ibid.*, 195:16–20.

conquerors slaughtered great numbers of their enemies there.[14] The name may perhaps go back to the geological phenomenon of red-colored water (containing iron).

2) After the battle of al-Yarmūk, the Muslims found that more than 200,000 fleeing Greeks had perished by falling down the steep slopes of the river gorge and breaking their necks (*waqaṣū*). From that day on, the gorge was therefore called al-Wāqūṣa.[15]

3) In connection with the first Euphrates expeditions of the Muslims, a Nahr al-Mar'a ("Canal of the Woman") is mentioned, where a treaty is supposed to have been concluded with an anonymous woman; a man, again anonymous, is also supposed to have played a rôle.[16] Speaking in favor of the surmise that this pair and their activities were invented on the basis of the toponym is the fact that in other versions the canal is called Nahr al-Marra (meaning unclear), and thus has nothing to do with a "woman".[17]

4) The wife of the Companion of the Prophet 'Ubāda ibn al-Ṣāmit is supposed to have taken part in Mu'āwiya's first Cyprus expedition. There she was killed when her mount stumbled and fell. She was buried on the island, and her grave became known as the "Grave of the Pious Woman" (*Qabr al-mar'a al-ṣāliḥa*).[18] This tale may possibly be another instance of an attempt to explain a toponym which is no longer understood.

Closely related to the place-name etiologies are explanations, made after the fact, of characteristics attributed (perhaps in the popular imagination) to particular events of the *futūḥ*. Following are two examples.

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[14] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 53pu–54:1; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2034:9–2035:3; Hishām ibn al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2018pu–2019:2.

[15] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 208:16–18.

[16] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2026:3–8; anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 340:16–19.

[17] Al-Madā'inī in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 85:12–14; al-Sha'bī in *ibid.*, I, 97:5–7.

[18] Al-Wāqidī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 154:2–6.

The encounter at al-Anbār was called [*Waqīʻat*] *dhāt al-ʻuyūn* ("the [Battle of] the Place of Eyes") because, so the story goes, the Muslims, following orders from Khālid ibn al-Walīd, aimed only at the eyes (*ʻuyūn*) of the Anbārīs, and shot out 1,000 eyes.[19] This explanation is not very convincing, and in any case, it evokes a motif we have already encountered elsewhere.[20] The word *ʻuyūn* can also mean "springs", and Dhāt al-ʻUyūn, in the sense of "place rich in springs", may have been a nickname of al-Anbār.

The battle of Buwayb was known as *yawm al-aʻshār*. It would appear that the Muslims had fighting on their side a hundred men, each of whom slew *ten* of the enemy.[21] Aside from the bizarreness of this report, the derivation of *aʻshār* from *ʻashara* ("ten") is unconvincing. At all events, the various possible ways of translating the plural *aʻshār*[22] do not lead to any unambiguous conclusion concerning the original meaning of *yawm al-aʻshār*; and as we have seen above, there are good reasons for doubting that any battle of Buwayb ever occurred in the first place.[23]

As pointed out earlier,[24] all etiologies are by definition secondary formulations. But all explanations of place-names are not necessarily etiologies, for some are clearly worthy of consideration for a basis in fact. An outstanding example of this is Dayr Khālid (the "Monastery of Khālid"), which is described in *futūḥ* reports as a monastery near the Bāb al-Sharqī gate of Damascus; it is said to have owed its name to the fact that Khālid ibn al-Walīd made his camp there during his siege of the Syrian capital.[25] As it happens, the presence of a monastery at this spot is well attested, and its ruins were described by several visitors in later times. As it is also well attested that Khālid camped in this area during the siege, it would have been a perfectly ordinary

[19] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʼrīkh*, I, 2060:4–7.

[20] See above, 101, on the 700 Muslims who lost an eye at al-Yarmūk. The historical referent here is limited to the fact that military injuries of this kind were known, and were viewed with some apprehension.

[21] Sayf–eyewitnesses in *ibid.*, I, 2196:3–6.

[22] Cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, I.5, 2051a–c.

[23] See above, 137.

[24] See above, 109–10.

[25] Al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 72:6–8, 81:9–10; al-Walīd ibn Muslim–Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 121:2.

development for the monastery to become known for this fact among later Muslims.[26]

The traditions we have cited thus far should illustrate clearly the possible ways in which etiologies could originate, their essential character, and their function in early Islamic tradition. We need only indicate further examples of this phenomenon.[27] But one further observation should be made. The concluding formula "until the present day", characteristic of etiologies in the Old Testament,[28] also comes at the end of some of our *futūḥ* etiologies,[29] though by no means all of them. It remains to be seen if we have here an instance of the Old Testament exerting influence over early Islamic tradition.

Systematization

It is already well known that the early traditionists liked to systematize the material they had at their disposal.[1] The task of this section is to examine more closely the three most important forms which this systematization assumes, again through the use of illustrative examples. Let us begin with an attempt at a general description:

1) Different events and developments are collected, some time after they have occurred, into a schematic complex. This causes them to lose their historical individuality and temporal depth.

2) The same formulations are used in presenting particular, distinct incidents. This gives the impression of a parallelism among the historical issues involved.

3) Reports which otherwise have completely individual features are provided with formulaic structures (topoi and the like).

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[26]See the discussion of Dayr Khālid, with further references, in Conrad, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests", 35–39.

[27]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2627pu–2628:10; *ibid.*, I, 2647ult–2649:11. An example of an etiology for a personal name should be mentioned: *ibid.*, I, 2133:6–2134:4 (explanation of Abū Bakr's nickname *al-'atīq*).

[28]Cf. Smend, *Elemente alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenkens*, 11.

[29]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2035:3; *ibid.*, I, 2638:12; 'Abd al-Malik ibn Maslama in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 177:12.

[1]See especially Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 11, 62, and *passim*.

These three types do not always occur in unadulterated form. By assigning each relevant passage from the sources to one of these three types of systematization, we shall be able to judge how it represents the events in question.

To the first type of systematization belong some of the letters of caliphs which we have already discussed in another chapter. Events which were in reality the results of gradual developments are stylistically transformed into commands made in the form of letters by the successors to the Prophet, and concentrated into one moment.[2]

Here is another characteristic example. The conquest of the Jazīra (northern Mesopotamia) is supposed to have taken place as follows: ʿUmar writes to Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, saying that now that Syria and Iraq have been conquered, the Jazīra is next to follow. Three commanders capable of leading the expedition are proposed to the caliph. One of these is then sent off; he wins victories and concludes treaties. Two other commanders, and finally Saʿd himself, carry out the rest. All this takes place within *one* year, AH 19.[3]

Even when they do not figure as letter-writers, the caliphs frequently appear as the central figures in a schematic presentation of history. In one familiar example, Abū Bakr is supposed to have divided Syria into administrative subdistricts and named governors for these subdistricts—this while the province still lay under Byzantine rule, and before the Muslim warriors had even set out to conquer it.[4] An historical development which must in reality have grown out of the step-by-step conquest of Syria is thus replaced by a schematic *post eventum* construction.

In similar fashion, we find schematic descriptions of the conquest of the eastern parts of the Sasanian Empire. ʿUmar gives his approval to a further outward surge (*insiyāḥ*) of the Muslims into these regions.[5] He names *amīrs* for the Kūfans and Baṣrans, and assigns these *amīrs* to particular eastern provinces by handing over lances with banners (*liwāʾ*)

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[2]See above, 78–80.

[3]Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2505:6–16.

[4]Al-Wāqidī in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 108:19–20; Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2084:6–12. A similar, though less precise version, is also given by Sayf in *ibid.*, I, 2086:1–2, 2111:12–13. Cf. Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 62.

[5]Cf. above, 185.

to them. The names of the appointees are given for the provinces of Khurāsān, Ardashīr Khurra and Sābūr, Iṣṭakhr, Fasā and Darabjird, Kirmān, Sijistān, and Makrān. 'Umar provides more help to four of these by sending them reinforcements under *Kūfan* leaders (*amadda*).[6] 'Umar takes these measures in AH 17, and in the year 18 all the appointees set out for the provinces to which they have been assigned.[7]

Such a strictly regimented plan for the subjugation of the vast areas in question is in itself suspect, and a tradition preserved by Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ shows how little planning and concentration actually went into the Muslim conquests in the East. Over a period of years during the caliphates of 'Umar and 'Uthmān, a Muslim commander would conduct summer expeditions out of Tawajj, a place in the province of Fārs, and then return to spend the winter in his own quarters.[8]

There is systematization not only of the conquests themselves, but also of their consequences for the vanquished populations. The sources can thus state the conditions which 'Umar imposed in *every* treaty.[9] Now first of all, this focus on the caliph 'Umar is ahistorical, since it was not he, but rather the Muslim commanders in the field, who used to conclude treaties.[10] Second, in this arrangement together of individual conditions which are likely to have obtained at different times and under varying conditions, we may very well have a secondary phenomenon.

As a final example, we may cite an obviously schematic summary in al-Ya'qūbī of the *ridda* movement. Here the "apostates" are divided into three groups: those who claimed the gift of prophecy for themselves, those who set crowns on their own heads (that is, who set themselves up as independent rulers), and those who refused to pay Abū Bakr the alms tax (*zakāt*), which had been made obligatory for all Muslims. The *ridda* was in reality complex and multi-layered, and up to this point the report seems to show a keen appreciation for this fact.

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[6]For critical comments on the *amadda* topos, see above, 123–26.

[7]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2568:10–15. Cf. also above, 98, and Wellhausen, "Prolegomena", 101, 105. For a comparable instance of schematization from the *ridda* tradition, see above, 98.

[8]Al-Walīd ibn Hishām (with family *isnād*) in Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 126:6–8.

[9]Sayf (with two different *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2470:9–15.

[10]See above, 64, 73.

The problem is, however, that it goes on to claim that Abū Bakr fought and defeated these groups one after the other in this very same order—that is, according to the descending gravity of their transgressions.[11]

We may now turn to the second form, systematization through the creation of parallelisms. According to a tradition about the conquest of Syria, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius set four Byzantine generals against four corresponding Muslim commanders who were then active in that province. We thus have the corresponding pairs of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ and Tadhāriq, Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān and Jaraja, Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasana and Darāqiṣ, and Abū ʿUbayda and Fiqār ibn Nasṭūs. The Muslim commanders convene together before the battle of al-Yarmūk, whereupon the Byzantines follow suit, with Tadhāriq as commander-in-chief, Jaraja as leader of the vanguard, Darāqiṣ (together with Bāhān) as flank commander, and Fiqār *ʿalā l-ḥarb*.[12] In all likelihood, the only authentic information in all this is simply that the Muslims named here were involved in military campaigns in Syria.

Also belonging to this type of systematization is a tradition already mentioned above in another context. The caliph ʿUmar answered a request from ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, who was then besieging Bābilyūn/al-Fusṭāṭ, by sending reinforcements numbering exactly four thousand, divided into four groups under the command of four persons whose names are specified, each of them in charge of precisely a thousand men.[13] In objection to this we may note that the combination of the topoi of "four" and "one thousand" is a common and almost always baseless motif of historical tradition.[14] Another report transmitted on the same theme, to the effect that it was only al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām who came to ʿAmr's aid with a number of men, corresponds more closely to reality.[15]

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[11]Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 128:18–19, 129:1, 131:13, 131:19.

[12]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 2086:14–2087:4, 2088:3–6. On the order of battle as a topos, see above, 111–14. The meaning of the phrase *ʿalā l-ḥarb*, lit. "in charge of war", is unclear.

[13]Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 61:3–8. Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 185, and above, 170.

[14]See Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad", 230–32; *idem*, "Conquest of Arwād", 354–58.

[15]Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 61:4–5.

Conquests in Egypt which occurred after the Muslims had taken Bābilyūn/al-Fusṭāṭ are made parallel to that event. 'Amr is supposed to have sent out—stereotyped expression: *wa-wajjaha*, "and he sent forth"—four persons (expressly named) who then concluded treaties of the al-Fusṭāṭ type—stereotyped expression: *fa-fa'ala* ... *mithla dhālika*, "and ... (the commander at the time) did likewise".[16] It is tempting to concede that the names of the persons and places may be correct, but again the possibility that the topos of "four" is in play poses a serious problem. In any case, a temporal perspective and the historical individuality of the events are certainly lacking.

'Umar's commands to the victors after the battle of Nihāwand are arranged in the following symmetrical scheme. The caliph directed the *amīrs* of the Kūfans and the Baṣrans to proceed (to the East). He sent reinforcements to the Kūfans under So-and-So, and to the Baṣrans under So-and-So. He also set two persons, both of whom are expressly named, in command over the province of Ādharbayjān. He commanded one of them to march into the country from the right (from Ḥulwān), and the other to come from the left (from Mosul), "whereupon one of them remained to the right of his companions, and the other to the left".[17]

Elsewhere we have already discussed similar actions which parallel this one, where two commanders and their people are called for by Abū Bakr for the taking of al-Ḥīra (on the Euphrates), and by 'Uthmān for the conquest of Khurāsān.[18]

A *fitna* tradition reports nearly identical behavior on the part of 'Uthmān's opponents at the beginning of their hostile activity against the caliph. Egyptians, Kūfans, and Baṣrans set out in the direction of Medina; each of these groups was divided into four contingents commanded by four *amīrs*; each group had its own commander (names are given), and all were of exactly the same size. The Egyptians wanted 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Baṣrans wanted Ṭalḥa ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, and the Kūfans wanted al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām as caliph in place of 'Uthmān

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[16]Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb–eyewitnesses in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 216:18–217:7.

[17]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2634:14–2635:13.

[18]Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 185–86.

(this too is described with the same formulation). Here the recurrence of the topos of "four" is quite striking.[19]

Even the countermeasures taken by 'Uthmān, sore pressed by his enemies in Medina, underwent a process of parallelization. In two letters of identical content, he calls upon the Syrians and the Baṣrans to come to his aid. The reactions to these letters in Syria and al-Baṣra are described in part with the exact same words. The troops sent from both places to help the caliph arrive only in the neighborhood of Medina (two place-names); there they learn that the caliph has already been murdered.[20] This latter event is also formulated similarly in both instances, and the purpose of the whole exercise is quite clearly to exonerate the Syrians and Baṣrans of any blame for the death of 'Uthmān: they had responded when the caliph asked for their help, but it was too late.

During a famine in the Ḥijāz during the caliphate of 'Umār, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ came to the aid of his afflicted fellow-believers with a cargo of grain from rich Egypt. This event, which may well be authentic,[21] has been schematized in the following manner in a tradition preserved by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam. The caliph sends a letter to 'Amr requesting help; 'Amr sends his consent in writing. The two letters have stylistic parallels. 'Umar writes: "Help, and again more help!" (*yā ghawthāh, thumma yā ghawthāh*); 'Amr responds: "At your service, and again at your service!" (*yā labbayka, thumma yā labbayka*). 'Amr thereupon equips a caravan, the end of which is still in Egypt as its head arrives in Medina. Once the train has arrived, *each* family receives *one* beast from the caravan, together with its cargo. The tradition then specifies exactly the full range of benefits the people would derive: they would eat the food which the camels had brought, slaughter the camels and consume the meat and fat, make the hides into footwear, and use the packing material for blankets and the like.[22]

Al-Ya'qūbī has transmitted a striking schema to describe the promulgation of 'Uthmān's recension of the Qur'ān in the Islamic world of the time. The caliph institutes a kind of postal sample packet, by send-

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[19]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2954:9–2955:8.

[20]Muḥammad ibn Sā'ib al-Kalbī in *ibid.*, I, 2985:2–2986:6.

[21]On this matter see Puin, *Dīwān*, 82–84.

[22]Al-Layth ibn Sa'd in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 162:18–163:10.

ing only one copy apiece to al-Kūfa, al-Baṣra, Medina, Mecca, Egypt, Syria, al-Baḥrayn, the Yemen, and the Jazīra.[23]

One final question. In one group of traditions on the murder of 'Alī it is maintained that those responsible for the deed also intended to assassinate Mu'āwiya and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ; however, the attempts on the lives of these two failed.[24] Are we to explain this statement through the obvious pleasure which the early tradents took in the construction of parallels? If so, it would have to be declared a fiction. In any case, it is a fact that only 'Alī died at the hands of an assassin.

A third characteristic type of systematization arises from the fact that the early traditionists gladly used completely stereotyped formal elements (especially topoi) to provide the external framework for reports on individual events which—in and of themselves—may be of a completely unstereotyped, and therefore perhaps authentic character. The modern historian seeking reliable source material will only be able to use a tradition describing conquests in Syria, for instance, when he has recognized the formulaic nature of such elements and has excluded them from consideration. The following are some representative examples:

1) The caliph 'Umar sends to Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ a letter in which he determines the course of the conquests in advance ("begin with").[25]

2) The men who lead the Muslim warriors whom Abū 'Ubayda sends to Fiḥl (Pella) are, to the extent possible, taken from the ranks of the Companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*).[26]

3) Fiḥl was the *first* place to be besieged in Syria.[27]

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[23] Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 170:11–12.

[24] Ismā'īl ibn Rāshid in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 3456:15–3457:9; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 212:8–15; al-Dīnawarī, *Al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 227:7–15; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, IV, 426:6–10, 436:9–438:6.

[25] On this see above, 137–38.

[26] On this see Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 194–95.

[27] On this see above, 104–108.

4) The Muslim order of battle for the fight over Damascus: the names which appear here were well known, and easily available to the transmitters.[28]

5) The Damascenes ask the emperor Heraclius in vain for reinforcements (*istamadda*).[29]

6) The portrayal of the taking of Damascus partly follows the usual schema for the conquest of cities.[30]

7) Once the Muslims have triumphed, they send a letter with news of victory to 'Umar.[31]

8) A letter sent by the caliph in response orders the Iraqis who have participated in the fight to return again to Iraq; the order of march is determined, according to the topos of battle formation.[32]

Battles which the Muslims fought in the region of Māsabadhān and Qarqisīya, after their victory at Jalūlā', are described in conceivably accurate terms in two traditions. Nonetheless, each of these follows a definite scheme:[33]

1) The enemy suddenly "gathers" (forms of the root *j-m-'*).

2) Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ informs the caliph 'Umar of this in writing.

3) In a letter of reply, 'Umar determines who is to command, and who is to lead the vanguard and the two flanks.

4) The caliph's wishes are carried out.

A tradition on Iṣfahān contains quite credible statements on the two suburbs of the city and on how the Muslims assumed control of the city by treaty. However, it is generally built upon topoi:[34]

[28] On this see above, 111–14.
[29] On this see above, 123–26.
[30] On this see above, 167–68.
[31] On this see above, 117–20.
[32] Abū 'Uthmān Yazīd ibn Asīd al-Ghassānī in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2150:5–2155:2.
[33] Sayf (with the same collective *isnād*) in *ibid.*, I, 2478:1–15, 2479:2–17.
[34] Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in *ibid.*, I, 2637ult–2640:12.

1) In a letter, 'Umar orders the Muslims to set out for Iṣfahān.

2) In the same letter, he specifies the leaders of the vanguard and the two flanks.

3) The caliph is informed of the victory by letter.

4) Another letter arrives from the caliph, containing orders that a specifically named person is to be sent to the province of Kirmān, and that a deputy is to be left behind (*khallafa*) in one of the conquered suburbs of Iṣfahān; this takes place (*istakhlafa*), and the deputy's name is given.[35]

These same topoi—'Umar's designation of the commander, the leader of the vanguard and of the two flanks, and the obligatory victory message sent to the caliph, to which is added a correspondence between commander and caliph concerning the legality of a treaty—constitute the outer framework of a *futūḥ* tradition on the Muslims' advance into the Caucasus area (Bāb/Darband), which is probably historical in its core.[36] Early tradition abounds with examples of systematization of this kind.

To conclude this section, we refer to another rather curious instance of schematization on a structural level. In a tradition on the naval battle of Dhāt al-Ṣawārī with the Byzantines, which took place off the Lycian coast in 35/655, two verses of the Qur'ān constitute the framework for the events described in the report. Sūrat al-Baqara (2), v. 249: "How often a little company has overcome a numerous company, by God's leave! And God is with the patient." is the watchword and leitmotif of the Muslim warriors. Of the two possible interpretations of Sūrat al-Rūm (30), v. 2, *both* are used to describe the behavior of the Byzantine emperor during the battle. When he learns that the battle is being fought with bows and arrows, the emperor says, "The Byzantines have triumphed" (*ghalabat al-Rūm*), following the view that the verb *gh-l-b-t* in this Qur'ānic verse is to be read in the active voice and so vocalized *ghalabat*. He reacts similarly when told that people are now throwing stones; but upon being informed that the ships have been

[35]On *khallafa–istakhlafa*, see above, 122–23.

[36]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2663:3–2667:4.

lashed together and that the fight is going on with swords, he cries out, "The Byzantines have been defeated" (*ghulibat al-Rūm*), now adhering to the alternative interpretation of the verb as passive.[37]

Undifferentiated Reports

Muslims of the early period who involved themselves in the transmission of historical materials had at their disposal a rich supply of forms and formulae which they used to shape their material into narrative accounts. It is hoped that this much will have become evident from the preceding chapters; it may also have become clear how difficult it is at times to discover the individual features of particular events beneath the covering layer of formal and formulaic elements. In this final chapter we will discuss the most extreme possibility: the absolute rule of form over content.

The analysis which we have undertaken elsewhere concerning a tradition on Iṣfahān–Nihāwand has led us to conclude that early Islamic tradition as a whole includes accounts which are nothing other than conglomerations of current narrative motifs, and which are consequently of no use whatsoever as historical sources for the facts which they claim to depict.[1] There we surmised that in this respect, the Iṣfahān–Nihāwand tradition is not an isolated instance, but rather is representative of a broader problem.[2] The following examples which, like the tradition on Iṣfahān–Nihāwand, belong to the thematic group of the *futūḥ*, will serve to confirm this conclusion.

It is quite impracticable, and indeed nearly impossible, to arrange the undifferentiated reports systematically according to a superimposed point of view. They will therefore be cited here according to an approximate chronology of the events which they pretend to represent. We leave it to the reader to examine afterwards the remaining constituent elements of these artificially constructed traditions, and here we will limit ourselves to referring to the relevant places in the present study when one of the formal phenomena already described appears for the first time.

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[37] Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 190:7–19.

[1] Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 274–96.

[2] *Ibid.*, 279.

I

An encounter between the Muslims—allegedly under Khālid ibn al-Walīd—and a confederation of Byzantines, Persians, and allied Arabs, at al-Firāḍ on the upper Euphrates (?),[3] is depicted exclusively in terms of clichés, as follows:

1) The opposing army gathers, through *ista'āna*, *istamadda*, and *amadda*.[4]

2) Agreement is reached on "crossing over".[5]

3) With great anxiety, the enemy recognizes the abilities of the Muslims, in this case through the example of their leader Khālid, who "fights for the faith, and [also] has understanding".[6]

4) A "long mighty battle" develops (*iqtatalū qitālan shadīdan ṭawīlan*, a stereotyped expression in *futūḥ* traditions), which God finally brings to a victorious conclusion for the Muslims.

5) The enemy are then pursued without mercy; their dead number 100,000.[7]

6) The army is arranged in formation (names of leaders are given) for the homeward march.[8]

In verses which have been transmitted elsewhere on this "great battle" at al-Firāḍ, it appears rather as one of the usual raids of the early period.[9] This is likely to constitute the historical core of our tradition.

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[3]Sayf (with collective *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2074:1–2075:2. Cf. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, III, 864:5–9. Yāqūt's entry on this place may, however, originate from the Sayf tradition, to which he in any case explicitly refers.

[4]See above, 123–26.

[5]See above, 134–35.

[6]A frequently occurring motif; see below, 213, 214–15, and for further examples, al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, 85:1–4, 187:1–12, 189:1–11; Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 127:10–12, 151:9–13, 219:8–10.

[7]Exaggeration of numbers is typical of *futūḥ* traditions.

[8]See above, 111–14, esp. 114.

[9]Preserved in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, III, 864:10–12.

We come across this confrontation at al-Firāḍ once again, but in a completely different connection. The Kūfans who took part in the early battles in Iraq before al-Qādisīya, the so-called *ahl al-ayyām*,[10] are later supposed to have come into conflict with Mu'āwiya—the exact reason is not given—and said: "What does Mu'āwiya want then? We were [already] present at [the battle of] Dhāt al-Salāsil". They then enumerated all the battles in which they had participated between Dhāt al-Salāsil and al-Firāḍ, and did not mention any battle after the latter "because they belittled what came later in favor of what came earlier".[11]

It follows from this tradition that there existed a hierarchy of *futūḥ*. It meant more to have taken part in the early *ayyām*, to which al-Firāḍ also belonged, than to have been present at the later battles.[12] By referring to this hierarchy, one could ward off demands made by the central government, in this case (unfortunately not clearly defined) demands by Mu'āwiya. In view of this, we cannot allay a suspicion that *ayyām*, such as al-Firāḍ in this instance, which in themselves were originally quite insignificant, were afterwards puffed up with topoi of the *futūḥ* tradition so as to allow no doubt as to their precedence over later and more important battles.[13]

II

Abū Yūsuf transmits a completely undifferentiated report on the battle of al-Qādisīya, as follows:

1) Seven or eight thousand Muslims face 60,000 Persians.

2) The Persians put war elephants into action.[14]

3) The Persians taunt the Muslims.

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[10]See above, 131, and n. 16.
[11]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2076:10–15, and (identically) *ibid.*, I, 2110:6–11.
[12]See above, 131–32.
[13]See also above, 137.
[14]See above, 132–34.

4) Al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba appears as messenger in the enemy camp; he sits down on the Persian general's throne[15] and holds the usual conversation with him.[16]

5) Negotiations on "crossing over" (*'abara*).

6) The battles, and victory for the Muslims: "the Muslims then attacked and killed them, slaying them as they fled".[17]

III

An extensive tradition on the battle of Jalūlā' offers only one historical fact, namely that the Muslims won that battle, and perhaps in addition that a trench had some rôle to play; all other elements represent ubiquitous features in traditions for other events.[18]

1) After the Muslims have taken al-Madā'in/Ctesiphon, they divide up the spoils and send the fifth to 'Umar.[19]

2) The caliph is informed by letter of the sudden appearance of a Persian general; he responds with a letter[20] in which he determines the order of battle (*wa-'alā*).[21]

3) The significance of the event is repeatedly emphasized:

   a) The Persians concede that if they are scattered now, they will never again be able to gather together.

   b) On the Muslim side it is maintained that this battle will determine everything.

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[15]See above, 171.
[16]See above, 94–95, 147, 153–54, 156.
[17]Ḥaṣīn–eyewitnesses in Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 16:9–32.
[18]Sayf (with several *isnāds*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2456:9–2460:4.
[19]See above, 117–20.
[20]See above, 77–87.
[21]See above, 111–14.

c) As for the harshness of the confrontation, Jalūlā' is compared[22] with al-Qādisīya (*laylat al-harīr*).[23]

4) The Persians protect themselves by setting out wooden, later iron caltrops.[24]

5) Leading Companions of the Prophet (*wujūh al-muhājirīn wa-l-anṣār*) participate in the battle.[25]

6) The Muslims are then said to have attacked their enemies victoriously 80 times.

7) The Muslim warriors, fired up by the pious words of their commander, receive support from God in the form of a (dusty) wind, boding ill for their opponents.

8) Daring *coup de main* of a Muslim fighter, in anecdotal form.

9) Etiology of the name "Jalūlā'", on the basis of which it is maintained that a fearful slaughter of the Persians took place after the battle (100,000 killed).[26]

IV

A woman who is alleged to have been an eyewitness to the battle of al-Ubulla (near al-Baṣra), and whose husband and son are supposed to have been among the participants in that battle, depicts the Muslim victory with the following clichés:[27]

1) Trivial detail on her husband's and son's rations, intended perhaps to illustrate the modest means of the Muslim warriors.

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[22]See above, 129–32.
[23]See above, 171.
[24]See above, 136.
[25]Cf. Noth, "Der Charakter der ersten grossen Sammlungen", 194–95.
[26]See above, 190.
[27]Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2387:15–2388:5.

2) Negotiations with the other side on "crossing over" (*'abara*), after which the Muslims do cross over.

3) A threefold *takbīr* before the attack.[28]

4) A miracle: enemy heads roll, struck off by an invisible hand.

5) "God gave the victory into their hands".

V

Two further traditions on the battle of Nihāwand must be taken into consideration, together with the undifferentiated tradition on Iṣfahān–Nihāwand.[29] These two consist of the following topoi:

First Version:[30]

1) Al-Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin, collector of taxes in Kaskar, writes to 'Umar that he would rather fight the unbelievers than collect taxes, whereupon the caliph instructs Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ to send al-Nu'mān to Nihāwand.

2) The Persians have already gathered (form of *j-m-'*) precisely in Nihāwand.

3) Another letter from the caliph, this time to al-Nu'mān, containing general advice, partly of a religious nature.

4) The Muslim army includes seven Companions of the Prophet, whose names are given.

5) The Persians lay out caltrops; an anecdote is associated with this motif.

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[28] See above, 143–45.

[29] Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand".

[30] Ibn Isḥāq in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2596:9–2598:12.

6) Arrangement of the succession of command (three potential successors to al-Nu'mān are named).[31]

7) It is decided to begin the attack in the evening, following the example of the Prophet.[32]

8) A threefold *takbīr* as the signal to attack.

9) Enemy soldiers are chained to one another.[33]

10) Death of al-Nu'mān, and passing of the banner to the first of the previously appointed successors (the two others have no further rôle to play).

11) After this defeat, the Persians are no longer able to gather together (form of *j-m-'*).[34]

Second Version[35]

1) Hurmuzān's bird metaphor, as pseudo-cause for the battle of Nihāwand.[36]

2) 'Umar sends forces from Medina, including Companions of the Prophet (i.e. Muhājirūn and Anṣār), and from al-Kūfa and al-Baṣra to Nihāwand. For no stated reason he names al-Nu'mān as commander.

3) The Muslim messenger (al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba) in the enemy camp, holding the usual conversations.

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[31] See above, 120–22.
[32] Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 285.
[33] See above, 135–36.
[34] See above, 130.
[35] Al-Rabī' ibn Sulaymān–Asad ibn Mūsā–eyewitnesses in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2600:16–2605:11.
[36] Cf. Noth, "Iṣfahān–Nihāwand", 275, 283–84, 287; and above, 185.

4) "Crossing over".

5) Persians chained to one another.

6) The Persians set out iron caltrops (*ḥasak al-ḥadīd*), which in this case not only hinder the Muslims, but also—like the chains—make it impossible for their own soldiers to flee.

7) The Muslims attack in the evening, according to the example of the Prophet.

8) Al-Nuʿmān seeks martyrdom.[37]

9) Spears are brandished three times, as a signal to attack, connected with the *takbīr*.

10) Arrangement of the succession: a name, two anonymous persons (*fulān*, "So-and-So"); seven such replacements were supposedly named in all.

11) Desperate fighting, and defeat of the Persians, who are hindered above all by their own chains and caltrops.

12) Upon al-Nuʿmān's death, the command passes to the man named in advance as his successor.

13) A messenger is sent with tidings of victory to the caliph;[38] they hold a conversation in Medina.

VI

Two traditions on battles in which the Muslims achieved victory in the province of Fārs, near Fasā and Darabjird, offer us stories, but not the real story.

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[37] See above, 145–46.
[38] See above, 117–20.

First Version:[39]

1) Transitional formula *wa-qaṣada*, "and [the Muslim commander] proceeded...."[40]

2) The enemy gathers his forces, through "requests for reinforcements" (*istamadda*).

3) The motif of the "mountain at the Muslims' backs", as a vision which 'Umar has in a dream and then conveys to the warriors.[41]

4) Putting this dream of the caliph into effect leads to victory.

5) The caliph is informed of the victory in writing.

Second Version:[42]

1) 'Umar personally sends the commander on his way.

2) The mountain motif, this time as advice given by the caliph during the Friday sermon in Medina.

3) This advice is put into effect, with successful results.

4) A coffer containing precious stones is among the booty which falls into the hands of the Muslims.

5) The Muslims decide to send this valuable prize as a gift to the caliph; a messenger brings it to Medina.

6) A long anecdote on the meeting between messenger and caliph.

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[39] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2700:12–2701:10.
[40] See above, 173–77.
[41] See above, 142–43.
[42] Sayf (with another *isnād*) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2701:10–2703:11.

7) The caliph declines to accept the costly present and orders it to be divided up like all other booty; that is, he adheres to the Qur'ānic precept, and claims no more than his due as caliph.[43]

VII

The following undifferentiated report likewise describes a victory of the Muslims in Fārs, near Rāshahr:[44]

1) The *marzubān* of Fārs is disconcerted over the outstanding qualities of the Muslims and their resultant success.[45]

2) He gathers a mighty army (forms of *j-m-'*).

3) The leader of the Muslim vanguard is expressly named.

4) Reference to the fact that "they fought a hard fight" (*iqtatalū qitālan shadīdan*).

5) An anecdote intended to illustrate the charismatic invincibility of the Muslims, recognized even by the Persians.[46]

6) Death of the Persian commander, with the Muslim who killed him expressly named.[47]

7) God bestows victory on the Muslims.

8) This battle-day compared with al-Qādisīya.

9) A messenger sent to the caliph with news of victory.

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[43]This motif occurs frequently. See below, 218.

[44]Anon. in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 386:18–387:15.

[45]On this motif, see above, 205, and below, 214–15.

[46]Cf. the first major motif of this tradition, with further examples above, 205, and below, 214–15.

[47]See above, 115–17.

VIII

A long pair of traditions (with the same *isnād*) which depicts battles in the eastern regions of Khurāsān and the end of the last Sasanian ruler, Yazdajird III, is nothing more than a hotchpotch of well-known narrative motifs, anecdotes, and legends:[48]

1) In a letter, 'Umar forbids al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays to cross the Oxus.[49]

2) Yazdajird, who has withdrawn to the East, goes to the peoples across the Oxus for help, whereupon the Muslims prepare themselves for battle.

3) The motif of the "mountain at the backs", this time in the form of al-Aḥnaf walking incognito at night among the ranks of his warriors, seeking tactical suggestions for the battle which is about to take place; he hears someone express the view that it would be best to keep contact with the mountain.

4) Creation of parallels: the number of Kūfans who participate is approximately equal to the number of Baṣrans.

5) Al-Aḥnaf is victorious in two single combats; in each of these, "two blows are exchanged".[50]

6) The Turks who come to the aid of the Sasanian ruler return home, being forced to admit that they stand no chance against the Muslims.[51]

7) The Persians advise their king to make peace with the Muslims, since they can be trusted and believe in God; in other words, another recognition of the Muslims' superiority on the part of their opponents.

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[48]Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2685:1–2693:6.
[49]On the motif of forbidding any further advance, see above, 19–21, 178–79.
[50]See above, 169.
[51]See above, 205, 213, and two other places in this report.

8) Yazdajird does not follow this advice, whereupon his followers drive him out of the land by force; however, he remains in continual correspondence with them.

9) Perhaps the only authentic piece of information in this entire report: the Persians of Khurāsān conclude treaties with the Muslims, who grant them a considerable degree of independence.

10) An indirect comparison of the battles against Yazdajird and his allies (*yawm Yazdajird*) with al-Qādisīya: the share of booty received then by a horseman was equal to that of a horseman at al-Qādisīya.

11) The legendary death of Yazdajird in Marw.

12) A letter, a share of the booty, and an embassy all sent to ʿUmar, with the formula: *wa-kataba [al-Aḥnaf] ilā ʿUmar wa-baʿatha ilayhi bi-l-akhmās wa-waffada ilayhi l-wufūd*, "[al-Aḥnaf] wrote to ʿUmar, sent the fifth to him, and sent the delegations to him".[52]

13) Yazdajird makes approaches to the emperor of China for help. The emperor submits the Sasanian messenger to a thorough questioning, in the course of which the messenger describes the outstanding qualities of the Muslims; the emperor then refuses to provide help. We thus have acknowledgment of the Muslims' eminence by their enemies for the third time in this report.

14) Arrival of the messengers in Medina with news of victory, and a sermon by ʿUmar using pertinent verses from the Qur'ān.

IX

We have already mentioned a tradition on an encounter of the Muslims with the Daylamīs, Ādharbayjānīs, and the inhabitants of Rayy at Wāj al-Rūdh, near Qazwīn;[53] this must likewise be accounted one of the undifferentiated reports:[54]

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[52] See above, 117–20.

[53] See above, 186.

[54] Sayf in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2650:10–2651:13.

1) A pseudo-cause: the enemies of the Muslims gather together as the result of an extensive correspondence which they carry on while the Muslims are besieging Hamadhān.

2) When al-Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin learns of this before the walls of Hamadhān, he sets out for the meeting-place of the enemy confederation, having left a deputy behind (*istakhlafa*) at Hamadhān.[55]

3) A desperate battle ensues (*iqtatalū... qitālan shadīdan*).

4) This battle is the equal of Nihāwand, and comparable in the number of those killed there to the other great battles.

5) The caliph 'Umar has learned of the battle by letter, and waits impatiently in Medina for news of its outcome.

6) The messenger arrives with news of victory, and after him comes yet another embassy of Kūfans, bringing with them the fifth of the booty.

7) This embassy includes three persons with the name Simāk. This gives the caliph occasion for a play on words of the *nomen est omen* type: "O God, exalt (*usmuk*) Islam through them, and support them through Islam!"[56]

X

We conclude this section with the most extreme example of formalization at the expense of subject matter. While we may concede the historicity of the toponyms, the names of the commanders on the Muslim side, and the results of the battles in some of the traditions which we have discussed so far, the tradition which we now have before us has no relation to any facts whatsoever. The caliph, who is naturally the

[55] See above, 121–23.
[56] Cf. above, 127 and n. 113.

instigator of the campaign, remains anonymous,[57] as do the enemies of the Muslims[58] and the place. The Muslim leader, Salama ibn Qays al-Ashjaʿī, is a Companion of the Prophet about whom nothing else is known.[59] Here we have before us the transition from history (each of the motifs used in composing the reports may well have had its own historical place) to ideology: this is how history—in the realm of the *futūḥ* as tradition—ought to look.[60]

*

* *

What, therefore, is the ideal form of a *futūḥ* campaign?

1) Whenever an army of believers assembled (form of *j-m-ʿ*) around the caliph, he would give them a man versed in *ʿilm* and *fiqh*—that is, both wise and familiar with the religious law—as their leader.

2) The supreme command was held by a Companion of the Prophet, expressly named.

3) The caliph's orders to the army as it set out:[61]

   a) Religious introduction (Qur'ān).

   b) Tripartite *daʿwa* with the *hijra*-clause.

   c) Conditions dictated to the enemy, and grants of protection to them, are not to be made in the name of God.

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[57] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2714:1; and Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:3, ʿUmar is named; that is likely to be simply because the name was ready to hand, and a secondary phenomenon.

[58] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2713:11, 2720:9, names Kurds, which is probably secondary.

[59] Cf. Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 47:19, 130:1; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VI, 21:13–14.

[60] Abū Janāb (perhaps ʿAlqama ibn Marthad) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 2713:12–2720:3; the same at Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, 120:2–15 (only up to the Muslim victory).

[61] See above, 87–91.

d) Rules of conduct for the warriors, set out in short negative commands.

4) The caliph's orders are followed precisely, and God grants victory to the Muslims. As for the obstinate enemy, all males of military age are put to death and their dependents are enslaved.

5) A valuable piece of booty is reserved for the caliph, and brought to him by a messenger.[62]

6) The messenger in Medina:

a) Simple food and behavior in Medina; the provisions which the messenger has brought with him are better.

b) The caliph inquires as to the condition of the Muslims.

c) The caliph declines to accept the costly piece of booty, and asks for his usual share of the spoils, threatening the commander and the messenger with punishment.

[62] See above, 213.

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In the arrangement adopted here, the Arabic definite article *al-* at the beginning of a personal name or book title, the transliteration symbols for the Arabic letters *hamza* (') and *'ayn* ('), and distinctions between letters of the same basic Latin form (e.g. *d* and *ḍ*, *o* and *ö*) are disregarded for purposes of alphabetization.

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