

**THE MAN WHO WOULD BE CALIPH:
THE EVOLVING LIFE-STORY OF ABU ‘UBAYDAH b. AL-JARRAH**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

ALİ GALİB CEBECİ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
HISTORY

JUNE 2018

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

Examining Committee Members:

	DECISION	SIGNATURE
Assist. Prof. Abdurrahman Atçıl (Thesis Advisor)	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
Prof. Abdulhamit Kırmızı	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
Assoc. Prof. Hasan Karataş	<u>Accepted</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of İstanbul Şehir University.

Date

08.06.2018

Seal/Signature



I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and standards of ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and standards, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

First Name, Last Name: Ali Cebeci

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ali Cebeci', written over a horizontal line.

ABSTRACT

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE CALIPH: THE EVOLVING LIFE-STORY OF ABŪ 'UBAYDAH b. AL-JARRĀḤ

Cebeci, Ali Galib

MA in History

Thesis Advisor: Assist. Prof. Abdurrahman Atçıl

June 2018, 164 pages

Upon the death of the Prophet, Abū Bakr reportedly nominated two candidates to lead the Islamic polity: 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ. Ultimately Abū Bakr himself was chosen, and he appointed 'Umar as caliph after him. Later, 'Umar reportedly remarked that had Abū 'Ubaydah lived longer, 'Umar would have appointed him as third caliph. The reports that document Abū Bakr and 'Umar's alleged support for Abū 'Ubaydah's caliphate seem to contradict foundational aspects of Sunni identity, namely that the best Companions are the first four caliphs (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī) by virtue of their receiving the caliphate in that order. However, despite their problematic implications, these reports continued to be narrated.

This thesis studies *why* Sunni historians narrated these reports, *how* they interpreted them, and *how* they understood Abū 'Ubaydah's legacy. It analyzes about fifty biographical entries on Abū 'Ubaydah from Sunni historians of the 3rd/9th to the 10th/16th centuries. The study finds that a majority of entries narrate at least one of these reports, and that the rate of narration increases over time. However, many of these same historians also explicitly supported the Sunni doctrine on ranking Companions. They were willing to narrate reports that did not fit established doctrine - suggesting that Sunni historiography was to some degree resilient to the external pressure of doctrine - but they were unwilling to explore the theological implications of such reports - suggesting that in other respects, Sunni historiography was *not* fully insulated from theological pressures. The issue is

important not just because it clarifies the hitherto-understated legacy of a man who nearly became Islam's first caliph, but also because it sheds light on the interpretative tools Sunni historians deployed to deal with problematic reports, and explores the dynamic between historiography and theology in Islamic thought.

Keywords: Sunni historiography, prosopography, *hadith*, *khavar*, caliph, Abū 'Ubaydah



ÖZ

NEREDEYSE HALİFE OLAN SAHABE:

EBU UBEYDE b. EL-CERRAH'IN DÖNÜŞEN HAYAT HİKAYESİ

Cebeci, Ali Galib

Tarih Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Abdurrahman Atçıl

Haziran 2018, 164 sayfa

Peygamberin vefatı üzerine Ebu Bekir'in İslam toplumuna liderlik etmesi için iki aday gösterdiği rivayet edilir: Ömer ve Ebu Ubeyde b. el-Cerraḥ. En nihayetinde Ebu Bekir'in kendisi seçildi ve kendinden sonra halife olması için Ömer'i atadı. Rivayetlere göre Ömer daha sonra şöyle dedi: eğer Ebu Ubeyde daha uzun yaşamış olsaydı, onu üçüncü halife olarak atardım. Ebu Bekir ve Ömer'in halife olması için Ebu Ubeyde'ye verdikleri söylenen bu destek, Sünni kimliğin temel yönlerinden biri olan "makamı en yüksek sahabeler, halifelığe geldikleri sıra hasebiyle; ilk dört halifedir (Ebu Bekir, Ömer, Osman, Ali)" fikri ile çelişiyor gibi görünüyor. Ancak, sorunlu olabilecek içermelerine rağmen, bu rivayetler nakledilmeye devam edildi.

Bu tez çalışması, Sünni tarihçilerin bu raporları neden aktardıklarını, bunları nasıl yorumladıklarını ve Ebu Ubeyde'nin mirasını nasıl anladıklarını araştırmaktadır. Bu tez, 3'üncü/9'uncu ve 10'uncu/16'ıncı yüzyıllar arasında Sünni tarihçilerin Ebu Ubeyde hakkında yazdıkları 50 biyografik kaydı analiz etmektedir. Bu araştırmada, kayıtların çoğunun bu raporlardan en az birini içerdiği ve bu rivayetlerin nakledilme oranının zaman içerisinde arttığı görülmektedir. Fakat aynı tarihçilerin çoğu, sahabe makamlarının sıralamasında Sünni doktrini açıkça desteklemiştir. Yerleşik doktrine uymayan rivayetleri nakletmeye razı olmaları Sünni tarihyazımının bir dereceye kadar doktrinin dış baskısına karşı dirençli olduğunu gösteriyor, fakat aynı zamanda bu tür rivayetlerin teolojik içermelerini incelemeye isteksiz olmaları da diğer bir açıdan Sünni tarihyazımının teolojik baskılardan tamamen yalıtılmış olmadığını gösteriyor. Bu araştırmanın اهمیyeti, sadece Müslümanların ilk halifesi

olabilecek bir sahabenin şimdiye dek hafife alınmış mirasını açıklığa kavuşturmakta değil, aynı zamanda Sünni tarihçiler tarafından sorunlu rivayetlerle başa çıkmak için kullanılan yorumlayıcı araçlara da ışık tutmakta ve İslam düşüncesinde, tarihyazımı ve teolojinin arasındaki dinamik ilişkiyi incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sünni tarihyazımı, prosopografi, hadis, rivayet, halife, Ebu Ubeyde



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Abdulrahman Atçıl for his continued support over the course of this entire project. The thesis has something to commend itself, it is through his many points of feedback and guidance. I would also like to thank Professor Abdulhamit Kırmızı and Professor Hasan Karataş, both of whom provided me with the feedback needed to improve the project, and the encouraged needed to continue down this particular path of research. I must further thank Professor Abdulhamit for supplying the idea that sparked the entire project, and for laying the methodological groundwork without which this would not be possible. I wish to thank Professor Engin Akarlı for taking the time to help me develop that idea into a practical project, whether this meant dedicating hours of class time to drilling me on the thesis structure or giving up his lunch-breaks to talk over the wider significance of the project. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Tufan Buzpınar, who so warmly welcomed me to the department and made my transition into academic life in Istanbul far easier than it otherwise might have been.

I cannot express enough thanks to my family - we were always a big family and today we are bigger, with the happy result that I am not sure who to name first and who to name last. I duck the issue by noting that to each and every one of them I owe a great deal of gratitude that I may not be able to always express, but I hope they know is always there.

All that being said, I must end with the humble admission that all *ḥamd* is for God, *Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Öz	vi
Acknowledgements	viii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
List of Symbols and Abbreviations	xiii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Structure & Sources	8
1.2. Ranking the Companions	10
2. THE LIFESTORY(S) OF ABŪ ‘UBAYDAH	14
2.1. Classical Sunni Portrayal	19
2.2. Referencing the Reports	23
3. SET 1 PRIMARY SOURCES	30
3.1. Three paradigms on the origins of Islamic historiography	30
3.2. Set 1 Entries	39
3.3. Analysis of Set 1	63
4. SET 2 PRIMARY SOURCES	65
4.1. Khalidi on History and <i>Adab</i>	65
4.2. Khalidi on History and <i>Hikma</i>	67
4.3. Set 2 Entries	68
4.4. Analysis of Set 2	84
5. SET 3 PRIMARY SOURCES	87
5.1. Khalidi on History and <i>Siyasa</i>	87
5.2. Set 3 Entries	90
5.3. Analysis of Set 3	105
6. SET 4 PRIMARY SOURCES	107
6.1. Set 4 Entries	107
6.2. Analysis of Set 4	136

7. CONCLUSION.....	138
7.1. Development of the Genre.....	144
7.2. Comprehensiveness.....	144
7.3. Usage of <i>Isnād</i>	147
7.4. Ordering of Entries.....	150
BIBLIOGRAPHY	155



LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Reference Table	23
Table 3.1. Ibn Sa'd	41
Table 3.2. Ibn Abī Shayba	45
Table 3.3. Ibn Ḥanbal	52
Table 3.4. Ibn Qutayba	59
Table 3.5. al-Nasā'ī	62
Table 4.1. al-Ṭabarānī	72
Table 4.2. al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī	74
Table 4.3. Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī	76
Table 4.4. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr	83
Table 5.1. Ibn 'Asākir	92
Table 5.2. Ibn al-Jawzī	97
Table 5.3. Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn	100
Table 5.4. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī	104
Table 6.1. Muhib al-Dīn al-Tabarī	109
Table 6.2. al- Mizzī	115
Table 6.3. al-Dhahabī, <i>Siyar</i>	119
Table 6.4. al-Dhahabī, <i>Tārīkh al-Islām</i>	124
Table 6.5. Ibn Kathīr	128
Table 6.6. Ibn Ḥajar	131
Table 6.7. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Malik	135

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 7.1. Length of Entries.....	145
Figure 7.2. Method of Isnad Citation.....	148
Figure 7.3. Set 1 Ordering Systems.....	151
Figure 7.4. Set 2 Ordering Systems.....	151
Figure 7.5. Set 3 Ordering Systems.....	152
Figure 7.6. Set 4 Ordering Systems.....	152
Figure 7.7. Complete Range of Ordering Systems.....	153



LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The thesis uses ‘b.’ to represent ‘ibn’ and ‘bt.’ to represent ‘bint’ – respectively meaning ‘son of’ and ‘daughter of’ in Arabic, and (s) to represent the customary phrase “Peace and blessings be upon him.”



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hanging underneath the massive dome of the Aya Sofya are eight plaques of careful craftsmanship. The two at the front are emblazoned with the name of God and the Prophet (s). The two at the back carry the names of the Prophet's grandsons. The remaining plaques bear the names of the first four caliphs of the Islamic world: Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), 'Umar (d. 23/644), 'Uthmān (d. 35/656) and 'Alī (d. 40/661). So esteemed is their memory that they were given pride of place here in the Aya Sofya and across the Sunni Muslim world.

The honor accorded to these four men is unique in Sunni history - not even the caliphs who succeeded them could aspire to a similar legacy, as within a few centuries the four of them came to be collectively referred to as the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*), a description implying as much about those who came after them as it does about the four themselves.¹ Even Shī'ī factions hostile to

¹ 'Caliph' as a title is of controversial origin. Traditional Sunni historiography held that that upon his ascension to political authority, Abū Bakr was suggested the title *Khalīfat Allāh*, (lit: God's appointee), but found this too overweening and elected for *Khalīfat Rasūl Allāh* instead (successor to God's Apostle). 'Umar was said to have continued this tradition, while also taking on the title *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Believers). That the Umayyads preferred *khalīfat Allāh*, as attested both in Sunni literature and modern studies, was viewed by many Sunni scholars as a corruption of the original title, one with pretentious undertones that broke with the tradition of the first four caliphs. However, in contrast to this narrative, modern critical scholarship has argued that Abū Bakr likely did not even use the appellation *Khalīfat Rasūl Allāh*, and that reports indicating he chose it over *Khalīfat Allāh* are mere retrospective justifications offered by Sunni scholars seeking support for their resistance to an increasingly authoritarian 'Abbāsīd caliphate. As the study is concerned with the classical Sunni conception of these figures, the point of contested origins is mostly moot, but for introductory discussions, see Sourdel, D., Lambton, A.K.S., Jong, F. de and Holt, P.M., "*Khalīfa*", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* and Bosworth, C.E., "*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, as well as Kennedy, Hugh. *Caliphate: The History of an Idea*. Pelican, 2016; pp.1-33.

As for the term *al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*, its canonical acceptance in Sunni literature likely dates to no earlier than the 'Abbāsīd era, since the concept as it later came to be understood was not fully compatible with 1st and 2nd century proto-Sunni controversies over the relative ranking of 'Uthmān and 'Alī. Nonetheless, the term itself does have some roots in the early tradition, though in an apparently unspecified sense. See in particular the ḥadīth in which the Prophet (s) reportedly said, "I exhort you to have piety towards God, and to listen and obey [the rulers], even if a slave is put in command over you. For indeed, those of you who live [long] will witness many disagreements, so hold to my *Sunna*, and the *Sunna* of *al-khulafā' al-rāshidīn al-mahdiyyīn*. Stick to it stubbornly. And beware of newly innovated matters, for indeed every innovation is misguided." (Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. 'Īsā. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. Ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī

the first three caliphs had no less respect for the title of caliph itself, as demonstrated in the belief that 'Alī should have been the first caliph.

Arguments over who should be caliph were as old as the title itself. In the wake of the Prophet's passing, the Muslim community was left momentarily up in the air. According to what would become the conventional Sunni accounts,² there does not seem to have been a single leader designated to take over by default upon the Prophet's death. Though there were a number of likely candidates, there were initially no rules for how the successor ought to be selected, what his mandate would be, or even whether the community should be subject to the authority of a single individual. As the traditional Sunni narrative goes, hours after the Prophet's passing, the *Anṣār* -- natives of Medina who had welcomed the *Muhājirīn*, the early Muslim emigrants -- gathered in the portico of *Banū Sā'ida* to discuss the issue of succession and put forward a candidate from amongst themselves. Abū Bakr caught word of this and set out for the portico alongside 'Umar and a *Muhājirī* man by the name of Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, who like them was of the senior-most Companions.

One can imagine the tension that engulfed the gathering as the three of them entered the *Anṣārī* meeting-place. The Prophet (s) had only hours before passed away. If the usually stern 'Umar's reported breakdown is anything to go by,³ the

& Ibrāhīm 'Uṭwa, Egypt, 1975; Vol. 5, p.44) A variant occurs in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, See: Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn, Beirut; Vol. 4, p. 200.

² Broaching the topic of early Islamic history is a risky enterprise, whatever one's methodological approach may be. There is no consensus on the history of the early years of Islam among modern scholars, and there certainly was not among classical Muslim historians, with differences not only between sects, e.g. Sunni and Shi'i, but also within them. Hence there are several variant narratives of this event even within Sunni tradition. But since this study is concerned more with how the events were remembered and used by later Sunni scholarship than with how they necessarily took place, what follows is representative in generals if not particulars of the classical Sunni conception of the selection of the first caliph, as narrated in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (3:201-202). See: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*. Dār al-Turāth, Beirut, 1967. Having said that, it is perhaps academically criminal to attempt to escape the whirlpool of debates around the issue of the early years of Islam, therefore, the issue of modern critical scholarship on the history of the early caliphs is undertaken briefly in n.5 below.

³ When rumours of the Prophet's (s) passing began to spread, 'Umar is reported to have rejected them outright, and to have threatened any man who repeated them with a swift beheading. When

Medinan Muslim community was now collectively and utterly devastated. They had just lost their spiritual guide, their teacher, their leader, their beloved companion and their ultimate inspiration - and personal bereavement was not their only worry. Though in the last few years the Muslims had witnessed victory after victory, with tribes from across the peninsula coming to profess their allegiance to the Prophet (s), this network of allied Arab tribes was shaky at best, and without the Prophet's unifying authority, they would (and did) break away. The signs of such fractures were apparent from the very first day, as the *Anṣār* put to Abū Bakr the suggestion that there be two caliphs: one from themselves and one from the *Muhājirīn*.

A report from Ṭabarī has the conversation start with the *Anṣār* offering, "From us an *amīr* (commander) and from you all an *amīr*." Abū Bakr responds, "From us the *amīr*'s and from you the viziers." Then Abū Bakr continues on, taking the hands of his two friends, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah, and saying, "but I am happy with one of these two men for you [as *amīr*], 'Umar or Abū 'Ubaydah. So give your allegiance to whichever of the two you wish."⁴

'Umar refuses the notion that he, Abū 'Ubaydah or any other man could be caliph while Abū Bakr still lives. He immediately turns Abū Bakr's hand over and professes allegiance to him. Abū 'Ubaydah does the same, and following them, the rest of those in the portico. The next day, Abū Bakr goes to the mosque of Medina and there receives the allegiance of 'the people' and the well-known story continues on from there. Abū Bakr serves as caliph for two years, and pulls back together that network of alliances that had for the first time held the whole of the Arabian peninsula under a single political authority. Immediately after, he sets the Muslim armies advancing towards neighboring empires. The fruit of his work are harvested by 'Umar, his chosen successor, who is caliph for a decade and oversees the period of greatest expansion before falling to an assassin's blade in 23/644. With his death rapidly approaching, he tasks a six-man council of senior Companions to select from

Abū Bakr confirmed the rumors, 'Umar said, "I was stunned. I fell to the ground for my legs could not carry me. I [now] knew that the Messenger of God had passed away," (*Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 3:201).

⁴ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 3:206.

within themselves an appropriate successor. From these, two candidates emerge as lead-runners: 'Uthmān and 'Alī. Ultimately the former is chosen, and serves for twelve years before also falling prey to the sword, this time one from within the Muslim community itself. The sprawling caliphate is thrust upon 'Alī, who over the next five years struggles to hold its disparate regions and armies together under a single authority. In 40/661, he is assassinated by a *khārijī* and the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs comes to an end.

That, at least, is how classical Sunni scholarship has generally portrayed the matter, and - minus the details and moral layering - has been the general scheme of early Islamic history according to some factions of modern scholarship.⁵

Those familiar with the narrative are likely skimming over these lines having heard the story time and again. But the unacquainted reader listening to this tale for the first time may ask a question that bears further reflection: what happened to that person with the long name, the one who was with Abū Bakr at the very start but did not show up in the narrative after that? Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ? If the person who became first caliph said that he and 'Umar were *the* two candidates for the job,

⁵ The issue of academic historiography on the early Islamic years is a deeply controversial one. Concisely put, contemporary academic scholarship generally holds that sources on the first century of Islamic history are to some degree or another problematic; they are not contemporary with the events they describe and are often contradictory, anachronistic or manifestly influenced by ongoing political or sectarian tensions. Scholars have dealt with these problems in different ways, of which F. Donner in his *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* identifies four general responses. The first approach, termed the Descriptive Approach, "was simply to accept, in the main, the traditional picture of Islamic origins presented by the Muslim sources" (*Narratives*, 5). But discoveries of new manuscripts at the turn of the 20th century broke the perception of a unified and accurate Sunni history of the early period by bringing to light a host of critical issues in the source material. This led to the the birth of a 'Source-Critical Approach,' which sought to decipher the accurate sources from the inaccurate by means of careful comparison and analysis. Skepticism concerning the integrity of early sources was fueled by studies on the forging of reports in the early oral tradition and in turn led to a 'Tradition-Critical Approach,' in which the practicality of identifying the 'kernel of truth' nestled in the sources as sought by the Source-Critics became doubtful, but perhaps still possible to a limited degree. An outgrowth of this approach deemed that the 'kernel' was so obscure as to be lost forever; Donner labels this the 'Skeptical Approach,' which held that "whatever tidbit of historical fact the traditions may once have contained has either been redacted out of existence, or is so completely buried in a matrix of later accretions as to be impossible to isolate" (20). Contemporary scholarship usually lies somewhere in between the last two approaches, although changes have occurred since Donner's original mapping of the debate. Donner, Fred M. *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton, 1998.

why did he not get any more credit or fame? Where is his giant plaque in the Aya Sofya?

Though perhaps overly candid in its wording, this question has deep implications for the academic understanding of not only one individual's life story, but also the nature of the early caliphate and of Companion-hood, concepts which have great bearing on the course of Islamic history forever after. Providing a suitable answer has been the driving force behind this project.

The thesis is at its heart concerned with the biographical narratives on Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, whom - as we shall see below - was reportedly suggested for the first caliphate by Abū Bakr, and for the third caliphate by 'Umar and 'Ā'isha, wife of the Prophet (s). The project's main research consists of closely reading, analyzing and comparing about fifty biographical entries on him as collected from a wide range of Sunni Muslim historians from the 3rd/9th century to the 10th/16th. While this reading may touch upon issues of veracity, accuracy and sourcing, on the whole it is concerned not so much with *who* Abū 'Ubaydah actually was, but *how he was believed to be* according to scholars (and, by extension, societies) of different eras and regions across the Muslim world. What was the legacy of this man who very nearly became ruler of the entire Muslim world? And what changed in that legacy so that today he is a relatively obscure side-character in the story of early Islamic history?

As a supplement to the reading of these classical biographical entries, the study also reviews Abū 'Ubaydah's place in Western academic scholarship, a field in which he seems to have received relatively scant attention despite his interesting socio-political role in the formation of the Islamic state.

But biographical data on a single individual, even one with such an intriguing life story, is not the end-goal of this project. Its secondary goal is to use data on Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy for the caliphate to gain insight into the historiographic and interpretive tools classical Sunni historians deployed to deal with reports from

within their corpus of narrated sources (*akhbār*) that seemed to have problematic implications for the established Sunni identity. As we shall see, the issue of ranking Companions was a central debate in the formation of Sunni identity in the 2nd and 3rd centuries of Islam. In contrast to Shi'i assertions that 'Alī should have been the first caliph, proto-Sunni thinkers rallied around the legacies of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, claiming that they were the two Companions with the highest virtue and greatest claim to the caliphate. They also frequently included 'Uthmān in their schematic as the third best Companion, and third best-suited for the caliphate. 'Alī was only added as fourth to this list at a later stage in the evolution of Sunni identity.⁶

There was little room in these heated polemics for a figure like Abū 'Ubaydah, who after all did not actually become caliph, and who had no 2nd or 3rd century faction supporting his 'claims' to the caliphate. Yet his story continued to be narrated throughout the proto-Sunni and then the Sunni historiographic literature - even those reports which established his candidacy for the caliphate. This, despite the fact that these reports fit only awkwardly with classical Sunni orthodoxy on the concepts of how Companions ought to be ranked and how the caliphate was initially instituted. The 'awkwardness' of Abū 'Ubaydah's life story for the developing Sunni identity makes it an ideal point of entry to understand the methodologies of Sunni historiography. How, for instance, do 13th century Sunni biographers deal with reports in which Abū Bakr state that he would be pleased with Abū 'Ubaydah as first caliph, or similar sayings from 'Umar, who nearing his deathbed is reported to have said, "had Abū 'Ubaydah lived, I would have directly appointed him as caliph [after me],"⁷ when both of these instances seem to cause issues for the orthodox position that the best of the Companions were the first four caliphs, and they - above all other Companions - deserved the caliphate, each in turn according to the sequence it historically followed?⁸ Do Sunni biographers de-

⁶See Zaman, M. Q.. Religion and Politics Under the Early 'Abbasids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite. Leiden ; New York: Brill Academic Pub., 1997, pp. 50-1.

⁷ Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*. Ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ et al. Mu'assas al-Risāla, 1985, Vol.1 p.10.

⁸ In ranking Companions, the order of the first four caliphs is the *only* criteria by which Sunni thinkers were able to rank individual Companions. All subsequent ranking is by category, (e.g. '*Asharah Mubashsharah*' or '*Anṣār* who participated at Badr') within which there is no clear measure by which

emphasize such reports, or ignore them entirely? Do they narrate them but with a careful contextualizing commentary to justify why orthodoxy does not allow Abū ‘Ubaydah to be ranked above any of the four caliphs? Do they resist the influence of doctrinal orthodoxy and include all these reports without modification or condition, regardless of the problematic creedal implications? Analyzing how Sunni biographers navigate these theoretical issues reveals dimensions of their historiographic practice that otherwise would remain undiscussed.

The study finds that there were Sunni historians from virtually every period between the 3rd/9th and 10th/16th centuries who chose to narrate what we will term ‘controversial’ reports - i.e. reports from senior Companions like Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Ā’isha that assert that Abū ‘Ubaydah should have been the first or the third caliph. Thus, the reports are well-circulated irrespective of time and region. However, there is a general increase in the rate at which these reports are narrated; latter biographers include such reports frequently than their earlier counterparts. The increase in the rate of these reports seems to fly in the face of gradually crystallizing Sunni identity, which was founded in great part on the principle that the best Companions were the first four caliphs, in order of their caliphates. But the same historians who continue to narrate these reports well after the doctrines of ranking Companions had been fully fleshed out, had no trouble professing their full support for those Sunni doctrines. In this way, there is a sense of disconnect between the ‘controversial’ reports they narrate and the doctrines they uphold. Exactly why *ḥadīth* collectors and historians would narrate in their works reports that they themselves did not seem to accept is a lingering question that requires further study. By the end of the thesis however, we can tentatively conclude that in classical Sunni historiography, the act of identifying with conventional Sunni doctrine did not preclude the transmission of reports contrary to that doctrine. As long as those reports were of sound authenticity, they could (and for some *ḥadīth* scholars, *had* to) be transmitted regardless of their problematic implications. The general image painted by these observations is that Sunni historiography and *ḥadīth*

to prefer one such Companion over another. The point is that the four Rightly Guided Caliphs are elevated above all other Companions, and are ranked in the order that they served.

scholarship were to some degree resilient to the external pressures of doctrine and orthodoxy.

Apart from tracking the changes in Abū 'Ubaydah's portrayal across the breadth of Sunni historiography, this study also keeps notes on the more general changes within the mechanics and methodologies of Sunni historiography. This includes changes in structure, writing style, citation style and organization. The study analyzes what elements remain constant across all the entries and what elements change, drawing a roadmap of the development of Sunni historiography based on the accumulated measurements of these constants and variables.

1.1. Structure & Sources

To summarize, this thesis consists primarily of a close reading and analysis of the extant biographical entries on Abū 'Ubaydah in the Arabic-Islamic prosopographical tradition, encompassing about fifty entries from the 3rd/9th century to the 10th/16th, and ranging in length from the very short (less than a page) to the extremely long (upwards of fifty pages). The entries are arranged chronologically and divided into four sets: Set 1 (3rd/9th - 4th/10th century entries), Set 2 (5th/11th century entries), Set 3 (6th/12th - 7th/13th century entries) and Set 4 (up until the 10th/16th century). Each set is prefixed with a concise summary of the intellectual and sociopolitical context which framed that era, and suffixed with an analysis of the entries in that set.

The sources are limited to pre-10th/16th century Arabic sources – right up until the rise of Ottoman-era literary culture. While that period boasts a great number of biographical dictionaries in general, the amount of dictionaries focusing on Companions decreases significantly, and due to logistical constraints, I am not able to research the few examples that are extant. As for the modern period, there are a great number of works on Companions but given that such works are so separate in time and historical context from the literature I study here, I decided to leave them out so that more attention could be afforded to the development of Islamic biographical literature in the 3rd/9th to the 10th/16th centuries. As such, the

sources studied below are exclusively in Arabic, and are nearly all from authors who would identify themselves with Sunni or proto-Sunni tendencies. I have yet to find a self-identified Shi'i or non-Sunni biographical dictionary that includes Abū 'Ubaydah, and while no doubt the study would be made richer by a greater variety of sources, there is no getting around the lack of extant sources.

The standard for inclusion into the pool of primary sources is that the entry be explicitly dedicated to Abū 'Ubaydah. This rules out certain bodies of sources - chronological histories like Ṭabarī's which reference Abū 'Ubaydah but never assign to him a specific section to discuss his life, merits, death, etc. are mostly left out of the below analysis. However, the sources that contain entries explicitly dedicated to Abū 'Ubaydah are still a varied and numerous set, pulled from multiple sub-genres within the Islamic historiographic corpus. Among these are biographical dictionaries on *ḥadīth* transmitters, encyclopedies on Companions, universal histories which provide obituary entries, and *ḥadīth* collections that include reports on the merits and virtues of certain Companions.

In discussing these works, we will often use the terms biographical dictionary and prosopography interchangeably. All of the above works can be classified as prosopographical to some degree or another, as they all include a sequence of biographical notices on a variety of individuals, but many of them defy strict definitions by combining elements of the three main sub-genres of prosopography, chronography and biography that Robinson identified. The blurred boundaries between these sub-genres means that the study cannot track the changes in a particular sub-genre, but rather places all of the sources under the general umbrella of Sunni historiography, and tracks their changes according to that grouping.

The first entry - the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd - is taken as a kind of starting standard, if only because it is the earliest extant dictionary to date. Every entry thereafter is studied in relation to its predecessors, with idiosyncrasies and changes of different kinds - in content, organization, structure, citation, style, etc. - noted as they occur in the texts. Those entries that are longer than a paragraph are presented in table

form; this shows more clearly the structure and content of each entry, and allows the reader to more easily draw similarities between different entries.

In reading each entry, I focused on four major elements: first, the introduction to the text within which the entry is found (if an introduction is present); second, the system by which biographical entries in the text are ordered (e.g. alphabetically, or by merit, etc.); third, Abū 'Ubaydah's place within that ordering system; and fourth, the specific content of the entry vis-a-vis Abū 'Ubaydah's portrayal, and especially the inclusion and interpretation of the 'controversial' reports. These points are analyzed with two questions in mind: first, what does this demonstrate about the portrayal of Abū 'Ubaydah, and his candidacy for the caliphate? Second, what does this demonstrate about the evolving mechanics of the genre of Sunni historiography?

Prior to the primary source analysis, we must lay the groundwork for our study by discussing two key concepts: first, the development of the doctrine of ranking Companions (which forms the rest of Chapter 1), and second, an introduction to the reports that form the building blocks of Abū 'Ubaydah's various biographical entries (which is the focus of Chapter 2).

1.2. Ranking the Companions

While the concept of Companion-hood and the ranking of Companions has been the subject of some scholarly attention, few are the studies that have measured out the process by which that ranking came to be. Of these, Muhammad Qasim Zaman's *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids* is perhaps the most substantial. In his study, he embeds the issue of ranking Companions within the broader context of the development of proto-Sunni thought during the era of 'Abbāsid patronage and influence. As his study provides a solid framework with which to not only date the formation of Sunni 'orthodoxy' on the issue of ranking Companions, but also to understand the process by which that orthodoxy was formed, we provide a summary of his relevant findings below.

Zaman begins by reviewing past studies of the relationship between the 'Abbāsīd caliphs and the proto-Sunni scholars of the early 'Abbāsīd era. Though these studies utilized "varied approaches to these questions, and to early 'Abbāsīd history in general" they were in "remarkable agreement...on the 'classical model' of religion and politics in Islam, a model which postulates a sharp conflict between the caliphs and the 'ulamā' and the eventual separation of religion and politics."⁹ However, in his own study, Zaman found that far from perpetuating a rivalry between themselves and the 'ulamā', the pre-*Miḥna* 'Abbāsīd caliphs generally sought to capitalize on the religious authority wielded by the 'ulamā' by acting as their patrons and demonstrating "a public commitment to those fundamental sources of authority on which the 'ulamā's expertise, and a slowly evolving Sunnism, were based."¹⁰ In other words, the "caliphs gradually came to align themselves with the proto-Sunni trends" a development which "seems to have crystallized in the reign of Ḥārūn al-Rashīd."¹¹

It is true, he points out, that there were exceptions to this rule. The earliest 'Abbāsīd rulers could be loosely defined as Shi'i, and supported religious policies that would have antagonized the proto-Sunni community. They issued caliphal proclamations against Mu'āwiyah and decreed that "'Alī was to be ranked above all other Companions of the Prophet."¹² But these measures were quickly overturned by the caliphs themselves, as they came to identify more closely with the socially-dominant proto-Sunni scholarship of their time.

Later, al-Ma'mūn's *Miḥna* represented something of a return to those Shi'i policies, but his policies were overturned by al-Mutawakkil within fifteen years, and the *Miḥna*, like the policies of the first 'Abbāsīd caliphs, should be considered exceptions to the general rule of 'Abbāsīd patronage of proto-Sunni scholarship.

⁹ Zaman, 7.

¹⁰ Ibid, 105.

¹¹ Ibid, 11.

¹² Ibid, 106.

Now accepting that the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs on the whole supported proto-Sunni scholarship, what exactly were the parameters of that scholarship? Zaman shies away from drawing definite boundary lines, citing the fluidity of thought that was characteristic of the intellectual communities of that early period (e.g. the early Hanafī’s, which later would be accepted by *all* Sunni’s as part of the Sunni community were in this time considered by some to be outside *ahl al-sunna* and by others as an integral component of the *ahl al-sunna*). He does however describe the proto-Sunni as “those groups of the late 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries which defined their identity in terms of what they saw as their adherence to the Prophet’s *sunna*.” Adherence to the *sunna* here manifested as an “increasingly unrelenting advocacy of the authority of *ḥadīth*,” and “a firm (but evolving and therefore not always consistent) commitment to the righteousness of the early Muslim community and the rectitude of the Prophet’s first successors.”¹³

Though the point on the advocacy of the authority of *ḥadīth* is, as we shall see, a crucial feature of nearly all early Islamic historiography, it is the second point on the commitment to the righteousness of the early Muslims that is of greatest relevance to our question, for it eventually translated into a doctrine of reverence for the first four caliphs of Islam.

This doctrine was not, however, monolithic, at least during the nascent stages of Sunnism. From their inception, the proto-Sunni’s were characterized by their staunch support for Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, such that “any criticism of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar was, for the *ahl al-sunna*, tantamount to heresy” and even “the sheer possibility that anyone among the Prophet’s Companions could have been superior to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar was not to be countenanced.”¹⁴ However, “the status of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī as righteous caliphs after ‘Umar continued to be much debated in the second and early third centuries of Islam.”¹⁵ It was only by the time of Ibn Ḥanbal that the doctrine of four righteous caliphs crystallized.

¹³ Ibid, 1.

¹⁴ Ibid, 50.

¹⁵ Ibid, 1.

In summary, according to Zaman, the doctrine that “all four of the Prophet’s immediate successors were legitimate and rightly guided, and that the historical sequence of their succession was also the order of their religious merit” was the product of a gradual crystallization of doctrine over the course of the first two centuries of Islam.



CHAPTER 2

THE LIFESTORY(S) OF ABŪ 'UBAYDAH

After the first four caliphs, Abū 'Ubaydah is one of the most honored Companions in Sunni prosopographical works. In ordering his biographical dictionary, Dhahabī places him immediately after the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Many other dictionaries ordered by merit have him at least in the top ten. Yet despite this legacy, he is largely overlooked by Western scholarship of early Islamic history; when he is mentioned, it is most often to make short references to his military action as one of the Muslim commanders in the Syrian conquests.

General histories of the early period mention him sparingly. The stark exception is Sr. William Muir who in his early *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall* has a relatively large number of references to Abū 'Ubaydah, starting with a colorful retelling of the events under the portico and continuing all the way to his death.¹⁶ But as the traditional sources on early Islam came under increasing scrutiny, emphasis on the exploits and anecdotes of individual Companions naturally decreased. In *Muhammad at Medina*, Montgomery Watt makes only two simple references to Abū 'Ubaydah, both in the context of commanding expeditions.¹⁷ Marshall Hodgson in *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* does not seem to mention him at all.¹⁸

A good deal of conquest studies reference him only in his role as a commander in Syria. Walter Emil Kaegi's *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* is a good example of this. Being a work focused on the wars between Byzantium and the early Muslim state, the text naturally references Abū 'Ubaydah only as one of the many Muslim generals in Syria.¹⁹ Kaegi's more recent work, *Heraclius: Emperor of*

¹⁶ Muir, William. *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall*. Khayats, 1963.

¹⁷ Watt, William Montgomery. *Muhammad at Medina*. Clarendon Press, 1956.

¹⁸ Hodgson, Marshall Goodwin Simms. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. University of Chicago Press, 1974.

¹⁹ Kaegi, Walter Emil. *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Byzantium, provides even fewer references to Abū ‘Ubaydah, all of them in relation to the conquest of Syria.²⁰ On rare occasions, Abū ‘Ubaydah receives explicit mention for some military maneuver against the Byzantine forces and no more. This is to be expected given Kaegi’s focus - he is not concerned so much with early Islamic history itself but on the aspects of that history that relate to Byzantium.

Donner, who in *The Early Islamic Conquests* recounts various reconstructions of the early conquests, references Abū ‘Ubaydah almost always in his role as a commander in Syria. The one exception is in describing discussing the Prophet’s practice of appointing representatives in various distant provinces, where he mentions Abū ‘Ubaydah as an example representative.²¹ Donner names him as one of four core commanders in the Syrian theatre of war, and recounts the paths that these four took and their respective regions of influence. Some discussion is reserved for the controversial transfer of leadership of the Syrian forces from Khālīd to Abū ‘Ubaydah, as per ‘Umar’s orders. While the issue is clouded with conflicting reports, Donner concludes that “[i]n any case, Abū ‘Ubaydah appears to have been the main commander for operations in northern Syria for a time, and he clearly sent out small forces under subordinates to establish garrisons in several areas adjacent to the main region of the Muslims’ activity.”²²

A recurring theme in Donner’s references to Abū ‘Ubaydah is his close coordination with Medina. Donner mentions various instances in which Abū ‘Ubaydah corresponds with Abū Bakr and later with ‘Umar as the caliphs sought to orchestrate the conquests from afar. Though Donner does not explicitly make the connection, this coordination is indicative of wider theme that he does discuss: the undercurrent of ‘Qurashite elitism’ that shaped the course of the early conquests. Donner points to how “conquered areas in Syria appear to have been ‘reserved’ especially for the Quraysh” and how members of Quraysh were frequently

²⁰ Kaegi, Walter Emil. *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

²¹ Donner, Fred M. *The Early Islamic Conquests*. Princeton University Press, 1981. In discussing the Prophet’s practice of appointing representatives to various distant provinces, Donner mentions Abū ‘Ubaydah as one example of these. See Donner, p. 74.

²² *Ibid*, 149.

appointed to positions of military power. He offers Abū 'Ubaydah as one such example.²³

Moshe Sharon in "The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam" makes the case for the same Qurashite elitism, noting that "[a]t the very beginning, immediately after the death of the Prophet, the action of Abū Bakr, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah quashed the demand of the *anṣār* of Madinah to get a share in the leadership."²⁴

The idea of Qurashite elitism runs parallel with another concept in the analysis of early Islamic state structures: that of the Muslim Triumvirate. Based on Henri Lammens' "Le "triumvirat," Abo Bakr, 'Omar et Abo 'Obaida,"²⁵ this idea holds that Abū Bakr, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah formed a triumvirate of power-players reminiscent of their counterparts in the last days of the Roman Republic, ready to aid each other in order to gain political dominance. Proponents point to their coordinated behavior in selecting the first caliph, their close cooperation during the conquests and Abū Bakr's direct appointment of 'Umar after him as incriminating evidence of their conspiracy. In this framework, Abū 'Ubaydah is the least influential of the three.

Though formulated relatively early, the idea has been upheld by some scholars to the present day. More recent histories using the Triumvirate framework include Hugh Kennedy's *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*²⁶ as well as Wilfred Madelung's *The Succession to Muḥammad: a Study of the Early Caliphate*.²⁷ However, as far as I am aware, even those studies that do mention the triumvirate do not explore in-depth the impact of this political concept on the formation of

²³ Ibid, 274.

²⁴ Sharon, Moshe. "The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam." *The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures*, edited by Fred MacGraw. Donner, Ashgate Variorum, 2012, p.20.

²⁵ Lammens, Henri. "Le 'Triumvirat,' Abo Bakr, 'Omar Et Abo 'Obaida." *Mélanges De L'Université Saint-Joseph*, vol. 4, 1910, pp. 133–44.

²⁶ Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. Pierson Education Limited, 2004.

²⁷ Madelung, Wilferd. *The Succession to Muhammad: a Study of the Early Caliphate*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Sunni identity, nor do they track how the relationship between the three was portrayed across a broad range of primary sources.

Other studies do not refer to a triumvirate but nonetheless suggest the existence of a strong - perhaps conspiratorial - alliance between the three Companions. We have already seen Donner and Sharon's hints above. Khalil Athamina in "The Appointment and Dismissal of Khālīd b. al-Walīd From the Supreme Command" approaches the question of the dynamic between the Syrian commanders and Medina from a study focused on one particular event: the replacement of the general Khālīd b. al-Walīd with Abū 'Ubaydah.²⁸ He calls into question traditional accounts on the transfer of power, introducing doubt concerning Khālīd's loyalty to the Medinan state which, once broached, forces a rethinking of the entire affair. He portrays Abū 'Ubaydah as one of the pro-'Umar players arrayed against Khālīd, noting the frequent correspondence between Abū 'Ubaydah and 'Umar, and the "special interest" 'Umar's messengers had in Khalid's movements.²⁹ In this framework, Abū 'Ubaydah acts as a kind of local Syrian enforcer acting for Medina, there to ensure that the rapidly expanding Syrian campaign remained under the control of the caliph.

Athamina also proposes that Abū 'Ubaydah, despite having been a prominent Companion of the Prophet, "had no military aspirations and lacked the military experience and credit necessary to convince him to undertake a military post as important as the one he had been offered," - he thus would not have been a logical replacement for Khālīd.³⁰ Even those reports attesting to Abū 'Ubaydah's merits were merely "designed to raise the prestige of Abū 'Ubaydah," though the identity of those promoting him and their motivations are not discussed.³¹ The image that emerges from Athamina's article is that of a willing pawn who is used as a

²⁸ Athamina, Khalil. "The Appointment and Dismissal of Khalid b. Al-Walid From the Supreme Command." *Arabica*, vol. 41, no. 2, Jan. 1994, pp. 253–272.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 259.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 258.

³¹ *Ibid*, 256.

convenient if not ideal replacement for Khālīd, whose continued rule in Syria was unacceptable to Medina.

From the histories then, the general image that emerges is that of a Syrian commander who, according to some, played a significant role in a coup d'état that made Abū Bakr first caliph. On the whole, however, he is not treated as a key figure in the history of early Islam, and the notion that he almost became caliph, though mentioned by some, is not extensively explored and the implications on the conceptual history of the ranking of Companions are not pursued.

Encyclopedia entries provide a different perspective. As one would expect, the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entries provide a detailed summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's life. In the third edition, Athamina continues the triumvirate paradigm, and mentions both Abū Bakr's and 'Umar's support for Abū 'Ubaydah's caliphate but does not pursue the idea much further.³² Earlier, in the *Encyclopaedia's* second edition, H. A. R. Gibb covers the same reports, but instead of labelling the network as a 'triumvirate' merely notes his and 'Umar's "decisive part in the election of Abū Bakr."³³ He also notes that "[Abū 'Ubaydah] was clearly a man whose personality impressed his contemporaries, but he is presented by later tradition in a rather colourless fashion."³⁴ Unfortunately, despite the recognition of an interesting discrepancy, Gibb's entry ends there.

To these two may be added Ahmet Onkal's *İslam Ansiklopedisi* article "Ebû Ubeyde b. Cerrâh."³⁵ More accepting of the classical sources, Onkal's entry exceeds both Athamina's and Gibb's in detail, and though he does discuss Abū Bakr's and Umar's support for Abū 'Ubaydah, he does not mention any notion of a conspiratorial 'triumvirate' or explore the implications of any of these.

³² Athamina, Khalil, "Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, 2007.

³³ Gibb, H.A.R., "Abū 'Ubayda 'Āmir b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Djarrāh", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Onkal, Ahmet. 'Ebû Ubeyde b. Cerrâh.' *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10, pp. 249-50. (1994).

2.1. Classical Sunni Portrayal³⁶

Most entries on Abū ‘Ubaydah begin with his patronym (Abū ‘Ubaydah), actual name (‘Āmir) and the names of some of his paternal ancestors. One of the first to heed the Prophet’s call, Abū ‘Ubaydah ‘Āmir b. al-Jarrāḥ played a significant role in nearly all of the political and social struggles of the nascent Muslim community. He was an early convert to the religion, reportedly amongst the first ten. Though some narrators held that he was of those who emigrated to Abyssinia, Dhahabī notes that he must have returned earlier than the main body of emigrants, for he also emigrated from Mecca to Medina as one of the *Muhājirūn*.³⁷ He was present at all of the battles and expeditions undertaken by the Prophet (s), including Badr - where reports have him reluctantly facing his polytheist father and striking him down³⁸ - and Uḥud - where he was one of the few to defend the Prophet (s) against the Qurashite counter-assault.³⁹ In addition to these, the Prophet (s) also placed him in charge of several smaller expeditions - among them the famous expedition of *Dhāt al-Salāsīl*, in which he was placed as commander of a company of elite Companions including Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.

Another honor for which he was singled out was the title, given by the Prophet (s), of “Trustee of this Community” (*Amīn hādhihi’l-Ummah*). The title’s origins are traced to the request of a delegation of Christians from Najrān, who upon entering into tributary status with the Muslim community asked for a trustworthy (lit: *amīn*) tax-collector to come with them and initiate their tribute. The Prophet (s) is

³⁶ What follows is a summary of his life story as generally reported in the more comprehensive classical biographical entry on him. Though, as shall be discussed, contemporary historians of early Islam would likely take issue with the confidence with which certain details are expressed below, this summary is meant not as a portrayal of ‘what actually happened’ but as an introduction to the core reports that were used as building blocks in the various classical biographies on him. As such, it is meant as a reference tool, and for the most frequent reports mentioned here, I assign a title and reference so that when the report is repeated ten, twenty, sometimes thirty times across the various primary sources to be reviewed, I can refer to the report simply by its title and avoid having to repeat the same text of the same report every time. Refer to the end of this chapter for the full table of references and translations.

³⁷ Dhahabī, *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’* Ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnā’ūṭ et al. Mu’assas al-Risāla, 1985, Vol. 1 p.8.

³⁸ See the ‘Badr & Father Report’ in the table below.

³⁹ See the ‘Uḥud & Metal Links Report’ in the table below.

reported to have said, “I shall send with you an *amīn* most trustworthy.”⁴⁰ He thereupon sent with them Abū ‘Ubaydah.

Why of all Companions he was singled out for this honor the biographers do not explain. They do however describe him as a man of humble bearing and gentle character, a pious ascete willing to put his own claims to power aside for the greater good. In the debates over who was to succeed the Prophet (s) as political leader of the new community, Abū Bakr put forth ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah as the two candidates he saw fit for the role.⁴¹ Though Abū Bakr was ultimately selected for the role and ‘Umar succeeded him, still Abū ‘Ubaydah was accorded rank and honor, being appointed as one of the primary military commanders of the Muslim forces in Syria and also reportedly serving as a kind of treasurer for the nascent Muslim state. In Syria, Abū ‘Ubaydah alongside Khālīd b. al-Walīd led the Muslims to major victories, including those of Ajnadayn and Yarmouk.

There are a number of reports centered around Abū ‘Ubaydah’s tenure in Syria. One of the earliest recounts how when ‘Umar succeeded Abū Bakr as caliph, one of his first orders was to appoint Abū ‘Ubaydah, formerly just one among many commanders in Syria, as the chief of all the Syrian forces. This meant replacing the current acting leader - Khālīd b. al-Walīd, who had been appointed by Abū Bakr. The report narrates the gentlemanly exchange between the two as Abū ‘Ubaydah shows to Khālīd the orders from the new caliph. Khālīd addresses the army, saying, “[‘Umar] has sent upon you all the *Amīn* of this *Ummah*; I heard the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, saying that *The Amīn of this Ummah is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.*” Abū ‘Ubaydah responds, “I heard the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, saying: *Khālīd is a sword from the swords of God, and the best youth of the tribe.*”⁴²

⁴⁰ A multitude of reports attest to his receiving this title. See the two ‘Najrān Amīn Reports, the Base Amīn Report and the Yemen Amīn Report in the table below.

⁴¹ See the ‘Abū Bakr Caliphal Report’ in the table below.

⁴² See the ‘Khālīd Replacement Report’ in the table below.

In a particularly famous event, the then-caliph ‘Umar travels to Syria to review his officers and finds them all lacking and living in luxury except his ‘brother’ Abū ‘Ubaydah, who arrives to greet the caliph on a weary camel while everyone else is decked out in fine clothes. ‘Umar accompanies Abū ‘Ubaydah to his home to find that the chief Commander of the Syrian forces had in his possession only a shield, sword and saddle. A shocked ‘Umar says, “Had you but taken some provisions...” to which Abū ‘Ubaydah replies, “O Commander of the Believers, this will get me to where I need to go.”

The comradery between Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah is another recurring theme in extant reports. On one occasion, ‘Umar is walking with his companions and bids them, “make a wish.” They wish for houses full of gold or jewels to spend in the way of God, and ‘Umar responds, “As for myself, I wish for a house full of men like Abū ‘Ubaydah, that I might send them out in the way of God.”⁴³ On another occasion, he sends a substantial amount of money to Abū ‘Ubaydah and to Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, ostensibly as gifts, but orders the deliverer to watch closely what they do with it. Both Abū ‘Ubaydah and Mu‘ādh give the money as charity right then and there, and ‘Umar thanks God for putting in the religion men like the two of them.⁴⁴

But the most renowned anecdotes involving Abū ‘Ubaydah and ‘Umar revolve around the plague that struck Syria in 638, where Abū ‘Ubaydah was still serving as chief commander. In one report, when news of the outbreak reached Medina, ‘Umar said, “If my time came, and Abū ‘Ubaydah were alive, I would have made him caliph, and if my Lord - Exalted and Magnificent - asked me why I made him caliph over the *Ummah* of Muḥammad, I would answer, ‘I heard the Messenger of God (s) saying, “Indeed, every *Ummah* has an *Amīn*, and the *Amīn* of this *Ummah* is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.”⁴⁵

⁴³ See the ‘Umar Wishing Report’ in the table below.

⁴⁴ See the ‘Charity Report’ in the table below.

⁴⁵ See the ‘Umar Caliphal Report’ in the table below.

In another report, upon hearing of the plague in Syria, ‘Umar writes to Abū ‘Ubaydah ordering him to return to Medina for he has need of him. Abū ‘Ubaydah says, “I know the need of the *Amīr* - he wishes to make live one who is not immortal.” He replies to ‘Umar’s letter by asking permission to be excused from the caliph’s orders, for he is with the army and does not wish to abandon them. ‘Umar reads the reply and weeps, knowing that the death of one of his closest friend is not far away.⁴⁶

A few entries recount Abū ‘Ubaydah’s patience when he was first struck by the plague and as it developed. Chronologically, the latest report typically cited about Abū ‘Ubaydah recounts his final words, his appointment of Mu‘ādh to lead the prayer, his death and Mu‘ādh’s eulogy of Abū ‘Ubaydah as one of the most sincere, gentle and pure-hearted members of the Muslim community.⁴⁷

At this point, having covered the plague and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death, the more extensive entries sometimes append a short reference to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s appearance and general character. On the former topic, the most oft-cited report is from Wāqidī, stating that Abū ‘Ubaydah was “a slender man, tall and gaunt, with a light beard and a gap between his teeth.”⁴⁸ For the latter, biographers tend to mention the report narrated by ‘Ā’isha in which the Prophet (s) is asked whom is most beloved to him, and he replies, “Abū Bakr.” He is asked, “then who?” and

⁴⁶ See the ‘Plague & Letter Report’ in the table below. There is evidence of a strong friendship between ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah. Multiple reports link the two together, particularly when ‘Umar is Caliph and Abū ‘Ubaydah is reportedly his right hand in Syria. ‘Umar on multiple occasions commended Abū ‘Ubaydah’s austerity and dedication. His son ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar describes Abū ‘Ubaydah with high praise, and apparently names one of his sons after him (See Ibn ‘Umar’s biographical entry in *Sīyar*, Vol 3., p. 238). Other reports also group the two men together. The scholar-Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ūd is reported to have said, “My best friends (*akhillā’ī*) were three: Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abū ‘Ubaydah” (*Sīyar*, Vol. 1, p.14). A still more obscure connection in this network of friendship: Ibn Mas‘ūd seems to have named his son after Abū ‘Ubaydah, in both *kunya* (Abū ‘Ubaydah) and actual name (‘Āmir), such that the boy was called Abū ‘Ubaydah ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ūd. It is that son who narrates the above report from his father; one can imagine the young Abū ‘Ubaydah asking his father why he was given this name and then receiving a response similar to the reported text. (For the young Abū ‘Ubaydah’s biographical notice, see *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* Vol.6 p.237).

⁴⁷ See the ‘Mu‘ādh Eulogy Report’ in the table below.

⁴⁸ See the ‘Wāqidī Appearance Report’ in the table below.

replies “‘Umar,” and again, “then who?” and he replies “Abū ‘Ubaydah.”⁴⁹ This is similar in structure and transmission to the report, also narrated by ‘Ā’isha that she was asked whom the Prophet (s) would have made caliph [had he explicitly done so]. She replies, “Abū Bakr,” and is asked, “then who?” She replies “‘Umar,” and is again asked, “then who?” She replies “Abū ‘Ubaydah.” She is asked once more, “then who?” but thereafter remains silent.⁵⁰

2.2. Referencing the Reports

As many of the entries are made up to large degree by the same reports, rather than repeat the content of the report each time, I have assigned reference titles to the most frequent reports, so that I can refer to them by their title when analyzing the entries. The below table provides the reference title and a translation of the content of the report, which can be referred to as the reader proceeds through the primary source analysis. The table is by no means exhaustive, it is simply meant to capture the most frequently narrated reports within the entries. It begins with the four reports that, for lack of a better term, we name the ‘controversial’ reports. In their most literal meaning, all four of these reports seem to have problematic implications for the Sunni doctrine on Companions outlined above.

Table 2.1. Reference Table

‘Controversial’ Reports	
Abū Bakr Caliphal Report	It is related that Abū Bakr said on the day of <i>Saqīfa</i> , “I am pleased with one of these two men for you [as caliph]: ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah.

⁴⁹ See the “‘Ā’isha The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report’ in the table below.

⁵⁰ See the “‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report’ in the table below.

Table 2.1. (Continued)

‘Umar Caliphal Report	Related by Shurayḥ b. ‘Ubayd, Rashīd b. Sa’d and others that ‘Umar said, when news reached him that Sham was being afflicted by a severe plague, “If my time came, and Abū ‘Ubaydah were alive, I would have made him caliph, and if my Lord - Exalted and Magnificent - asked me why I made him caliph over the <i>Ummah</i> of Muḥammad, I would answer, ‘I heard the Messenger of God (s) saying, “Indeed, every <i>Ummah</i> has an <i>Amīn</i>, and the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.” And if my time came, and Abū ‘Ubaydah had passed away, I would make Mu’ādh b. Jabal caliph, and if my Lord asked me why I made him caliph, I would answer, ‘I heard the Messenger of God (s) saying, “He will indeed be resurrected a degree above the <i>‘ulamā’</i>””
‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report	Related by Ibn Abī Mulaykah who said that he heard ‘Ā’isha being asked about whom the Messenger of God (s) would have appointed as caliph, had he chosen to appoint someone. She said, “Abū Bakr.” It was said to her, “Whom after Abū Bakr?” She said, “‘Umar.” It was said to her, “Whom after ‘Umar?” She said, “Abū ‘Ubaydah.”
‘Ā’isha The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report	Related by ‘Abd Allāh b. Shaqīq that ‘Ā’isha was asked which of the Companions of the Messenger of God (s) were most beloved to him. She said, “Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar, then Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.”
Other Frequently Narrated Reports	
Conversion Report	Related by Yazīd b. Rumān who said, “Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ became a Muslim along with ‘Uthmān b. Maḥ’ūn and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf and their friends, [this was] before the Messenger of God (s) entered the House of Arqam”

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Badr & Father Report	Related by Ibn Shawdhab that, “On the Day of Badr, the father of Abū ‘Ubaydah kept charging Abū ‘Ubaydah, and Abū ‘Ubaydah kept turning away from him. When he continued to do this again and again, Abū ‘Ubaydah [finally] turned to him and slew him. And God revealed this <i>āyah</i> when he slew his father, {al-Mujādala: 22}.
Uḥud & Metal Links Report	Related from Abū Bakr who said, “On the Day of Uḥud, when the Messenger of God (s) was struck such that two metal links from his helmet penetrated his cheekbones, I turned to run to the Messenger of God (s) and [I saw] a man who was already heading for him, coming from the East, flying like a bird. I said to myself, ‘O God, make [his running] obedience [i.e. let him be a friend, not a foe].’ We both reached the Messenger of God (s) and [now I saw] that it was Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ who had come before me. He said, ‘I ask you by God, O Abū Bakr, let me be the one to take it out from the cheek of the Messenger of God (s).’ So I let him, and Abū ‘Ubaydah took a hold of one of the metal links with his front tooth and pulled it out. [In the effort] Abū ‘Ubaydah stumbled over onto his back and his tooth fell out. Then he took a hold of the other metal link [with his other tooth] and it [too] fell out. And thus Abū ‘Ubaydah was gap-toothed among the people.”
Najrān Amīn Report	Related by Hudhayfah who said, “the People of Najrān came to the Messenger of God (s) and said, ‘Send with us a trustworthy man.’ [The Prophet (s)] said, ‘I shall send with you a trustworthy man, worthy of trust.’ So all the Companions of the Messenger of God (s) sought to be the one given that honor, [but the Prophet (s)] sent Abū ‘Ubaydah.”

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Najrān Amīn Report 2	Related by ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd that, “The ‘ <i>Āqib</i> and the <i>Sayyid</i> - the two nobles of Najrān - came to the Messenger of God (s) wanting to condemn him by cursing him, but one of them said, ‘Don’t curse him, for by God if he is a Prophet, we would be ruined.’ They said to [the Prophet (s)], ‘We will give you [the <i>jizya</i>] that you bid us to, so send with us a trustworthy man, worthy of trust.’ All the Companions sought to be the one given the honor. [The Prophet (s)] said, ‘Stand up, Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.’ When he stood up, [the Prophet (s)] said, ‘This is the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> .’”
Yemen Amīn Report	Related by Anas b. Mālik that “the people of Yemen, when they came before the Messenger of God (s), asked him to send with them a man who would teach them, so he sent Abū ‘Ubaydah and said, ‘He is the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> .’”
Base Amīn Report	Related by Anas b. Mālik that the Prophet (s) said, “Indeed, every <i>Ummah</i> has an <i>Amīn</i> , and the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.”
Khālīd Replacement Report	Related by ‘Abd al-Mālik b. ‘Umayr that “‘Umar made Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ commander over Sham, replacing Khālīd b. al-Walīd. Thereupon Khālīd b. al-Walīd said [to the army], [‘Umar] has sent as commander over you the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> , and I heard the Messenger of God (s) saying, “the <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i> is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.””
Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1	Related by Thābit who said that Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ said, while he was commander over Sham, “O people! I am a man of Quraysh [but] there is not a single one of you, light-skinned or dark-skinned, who has more piety than I do except that I would love to be in his skin.”
Encouraging the Troops Report 2	Related by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Imrān that Abū ‘Ubaydah was out among the troops, saying, “How many a man purifies his clothes while his religion is dirtied, and how many a man seeks to act nobly with his soul but he humiliates it. Replace old bad deeds with new good deeds.”

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Plague & Letter Report	Related by Ṭāriq that ‘Umar wrote to Abū ‘Ubaydah when the plague struck, saying, “I have need of you [back in Medina], so hasten to me.” When Abū ‘Ubaydah read the letter, he said, “I know the need of the Commander of the Believers, he is trying to protect something that cannot live forever.” He thereupon wrote back [to ‘Umar], “O Commander of the Believers, I know your need, but give me permission [to ignore] this decision, for I am in an army of the Muslims, and I do not want to separate myself from them.” When ‘Umar read the response, he wept. Those around him asked, “Abū ‘Ubaydah has died?” He replied, “No, but he is about to.”
Mu‘ādh Eulogy Report	Related that upon Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death, Mu‘ādh b. Jabal said, “You are struck by the death of a man - I do not think I have seen someone purer in heart, farther from ill-will, or greater in love for the people than him. [Now], ask God to have mercy on him - may God have mercy on him - and stand for prayer upon him.”
Wāqidī Death & Age Report	Related by Wāqidī that “Abū ‘Ubaydah was present at Badr, and he was 41 years old [at the time]. He passed away in the year 18, and was 58 years old [at the time]. He would dye his hair. He was buried in Sham, and Mu‘ādh b. Jabal prayed over him.”
Wāqidī Appearance Report	Related by Wāqidī that [Abū ‘Ubaydah was] “a slender man, tall and gaunt, with a light beard and a gap between his teeth.”
Commanders of Syria Report	Related by Ibn Shihāb who said, “There were two commanders over Sham: Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, and Yazīd b. Sufyān. When Abū ‘Ubaydah passed away, he appointed as successor his maternal uncle ‘Iyāḍ b. Ghanam, one of the Banū al-Ḥārith b. Fihir. [‘Umar] concurred with this [appointment]. Then ‘Iyāḍ passed away, so [‘Umar] appointed in his place Sa‘īd b. ‘Āmir b. Hidhaym, then Sa‘īd b. ‘Āmir passed away, so he appointed in his place ‘Umayr b. Sa’d.

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Not Take to Task Hadith	Related by al-Ḥasan who said that the Prophet (s) said, "There is not a single Companion of mine who, had I wanted, I could not take him to task [for something] in his character, except Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ."
Ibn Mas'ūd Friendship Report	Related by Abū 'Ubaydah b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd that Ibn Mas'ūd said, "My closest friends from the Companions of the Messenger of God (s) were three: Abū Bakr, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah."
'Umar Wishing Report	Related from Ibn Abī Najīḥ who said that Umar b. al-Khattab said to those sitting with him, "Wish [for something]." So one of them said, "I wish that this house was filled with gold, that I might spend it in the way of God." Then ['Umar] said, "Wish." So a man said, "I wish that [the house] was filled with pearls or jewels, that I might spend it in the way of God." Then ['Umar] said "Wish." So they said, "We do not know, O Commander of the Believers." He said, "I wish that [the house] was filled with men like Abū b. al-Jarrāḥ, and Mu'ādh b. Jabal, and Sālim the <i>mawlā</i> of Abū Ḥudhayfa, and Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān."
What an Excellent Man Report	Related by Abū Hurayra that the Messenger of God (s) said, "What an excellent man Abū Bakr. What an excellent man 'Umar. What an excellent man Abū 'Ubaydah. What an excellent man Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr. What an excellent man Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās. What an excellent man Mu'ādh b. Jabal. What an excellent man Mu'ādh b. 'Amr b. al-Jumūḥ."
Mu'ādh Praise Report	Related by Zayd b. Aslam from his father that Mu'ādh b. Jabal heard a man saying, "Had Khālīd b. al-Walīd [still been commander] we would not be in this [bad] situation." This was in the time that Abū 'Ubaydah was commander. I heard some people say that Mu'ādh said, "Woe unto you! By God, [Abū 'Ubaydah] is of the best of those left on the earth."

Table 2.1. (Continued)

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr Praise Report	Related that ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr said, “Three from Quraysh are the most handsome in appearance, the most beautiful in character and the most exquisite in modesty. When they speak to you, they never lie, and when you speak to them - true or false - they would never call you a liar: [they are] Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān and Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ
Charity Report	Related from Mālik b. Anas that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb sent 4,400 dirhams to Abū ‘Ubaydah, saying to the messenger, “Look to see what he does [with the money].” Abū ‘Ubaydah spent the money in charity. Then [‘Umar] sent to Mu‘ādh a similar amount, and said to the messenger the same. Mu‘ādh spent it in charity except for a small amount, which is wife said they needed. When the messenger informed ‘Umar of what happened, he said, “Praise be to God, who has placed in Islam those who act thusly.”
Self-sacrifice Report	Related from Qatāda that Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ said, “Would that I were a ram to be sacrificed for my family, that they’d eat my meat and benefit [even] from my marrow.”

CHAPTER 3

SET 1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Set 1 consists of twelve entries from the 3rd/8th century to the beginning of the 4th/9th century. The earliest of these, indeed one of the earliest extant texts of the Islamic historiographical tradition, is the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd (d. 213/845). However, judging by the numerous references to earlier historians found in Ibn Sa'd's entry, the *Ṭabaqāt* cannot be characterized as a *founding* text of Islamic historiography, but rather as a product of what must have been by then an already established and functioning historiographical tradition. While deep questions as to the *origins* of Islamic historiography are beyond the scope of this project, we still have need of a general understanding of the origins of the genre up to Ibn Sa'd's time in order to understand the context which produced his text and which set the trajectory which Islamic historiography was to closely follow for at least the next three centuries. To that end, the actual analysis of the primary sources is prefixed by a concise sampling of major studies on the origins of Islamic historiography.

3.1. Three paradigms on the origins and development of Islamic historiography

Tarif Khalidi's seminal study of Arabic-Islamic historiography, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, studies texts spanning from the 3rd/8th to the 10th/15th centuries. In it, he proposes a periodization within which four dominant modes of thought - *Hadith*-oriented, *Adab*-oriented, *Hikma*-oriented and *Siyasa*-oriented - successively exercised influence on the development of Islamic historiography. Specifically, he writes: "*Hadith* cast its shadow over historical writing approximately from the 1st-4th/7th-10th centuries, *Adab* from the 3rd-5th/9th-11th centuries, *Hikma* during the 4th-5th/10th-11th centuries and *Siyasa* from the 6th-9th/12th-15th centuries."⁵¹

These broad categories are not meant to be rigid; as manifest in the above dating, there was already chronological overlap between the modes of thought, and there

⁵¹ Khalidi, Tarif. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge, 1994, p. xii.

was yet more overlap within each individual historian's methodology, as a given historian often worked under the canopy of multiple approaches. But Khalidi's periodization is meant to portray the general periods of greatest influence for each mode. *Hadith* comes first, spanning the first three centuries of Islamic historiography. It is therefore Khalidi's understanding of the *Hadith*-oriented approach that is most relevant to the Set 1 primary sources.

Though he dates the initial influence of the *Hadith*-approach to the first century *hijrī*, Khalidi concedes that there were small, pre-*Hadith* approaches to historiography that were often centered around regional schools of thought. He references an early Iraqī focus on tribal lore, a Syrian concern for ancient histories and a Hijazī proclivity for aristocratic and religious tradition. However, all of these regional idiosyncrasies quickly dissolved in the solute of the pan-Islamic world view and the intra-regional networking that characterized the science of *Hadith*. Thus it was, Khalidi asserts, that "under the general rubric of *Hadith* that the basic religious sciences of Islam, including historical writing, were to develop."⁵²

Within the sciences of *ḥadīth*, the *isnād* - chain of transmission - was crucial. It was the core component of a citation system by which the Sunni religious establishment could "regulate the production of religious scholarship."⁵³ Every piece of information had to be properly cited through individuals who had been deemed (by *ḥadīth* scholars) to be trustworthy and reliable. It was in connection to this foundational feature of the *ḥadīth* sciences that biographical literature gained ground; lists of biographical entries on *ḥadīth* transmitters, scholars and prominent individuals were primarily used to provide *ḥadīth* scholars with the essential and "intimate knowledge of the orthodox scholars in this field."⁵⁴ With that knowledge, they could determine whether a given scholar fulfilled their criteria of trustworthiness and adherence to the *Sunna*.

⁵² Ibid, 17.

⁵³ Ibid, 23.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 43.

Yet prosopography was not exclusively the realm of *Hadith* scholars. Even in this early period, Khalidi identifies individuals who, though acting as transmitters of *ḥadīth*, also doubled as historians who felt at liberty to buck some of the *isnād*-centered restrictions of the *Hadith* science, among them Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/768) and Zuhri (d. 124/742).

Still, the general rule was that for the first two and a half centuries of Islam, historiography would largely remain in service of or at least pliable before the rules of the developing *ḥadīth* sciences. It would not become a fully independent science itself until, ironically enough, the *ḥadīth* sciences had crystallized in the early/mid-third century - the same era of our earliest primary sources. It was at that point, Khalidi writes, that “in delimiting the scope and criteria of *Hadith*, Muslim and his generation were in fact helping to emancipate historical writing.”⁵⁵ By that he means that as a defined methodology formed within *Hadith* scholarship, the circle of what could be considered *Hadith* work was tightened and the empty space was filled with “a field of knowledge broader than *Hadith*...that of *akhbār* or historical reports in a general sense” - a new, independent historiography that was open to “looser, more ambiguous standards of evidence” and given “greater latitude in literary form and expression.”⁵⁶

But if standards of evidence were more lax in terms of *isnād* usage, still the historians of this new era - represented by Wāqidī and Ibn Sa’d - seemed to take a step closer to modern standards of historiography. In their works, “the didactic and homiletic elements in the work of Ibn Ishāq and even more of ‘Urwa and Zuhri, are now less explicit and secondary to the establishment of well-attested, consensually accepted facts” and while “the story is still of course sacred at its core...the spirit is less ideological.”⁵⁷ The text produced by Wāqidī and Ibn Sa’d - the *Ṭabaqāt* - is thus for Khalidi a turning point, one that marks the beginning of a more “critical and investigative” spirit in Islamic historiography coming after a long period wherein the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 44.

science was largely in the service of *ḥadīth* scholarship's biographical needs.⁵⁸ It is at this turning point that our primary source reading begins.

Unlike Khalidi, Fred Donner tends to de-emphasize the role of the *ḥadīth* sciences in the origins of Islamic historiography. In his *The Narratives of Islamic Origins*, rather than approaching the issue by analyzing other genres' influence on historiography, Donner analyzes the early development of Islamic historiography in light of three foundational needs felt by the nascent Muslim community: "the need to define itself as a community of Muslims distinct from other monotheisms," "the need to justify its claim to religious and temporal superiority" and "the need to adjudicate internal disputes over political and religious leadership within the community."⁵⁹ Only through the systematic collection and organization of oral reports into a coherent story of 'what really happened' could the Muslim community satisfy these needs.

Having identified the initial triggers, Donner move on to the actual development of Islamic historiography, which he divides into four phases: the Pre-Historicist Phase (to ca. 50 AH), the Proto-Historicist Phase (ca. 25 AH to ca. 100 AH), the Early Literate Phase (ca. 75 AH to ca. 150 AH) and the Late Literate Phase (ca. 125 AH - ca. 300 AH).

The Pre-Historicist Phase (to ca. 50 AH) spans a time when "the community of Believers, preoccupied with issues of piety and living in accordance with the revealed Law...lacked a properly historical vision of itself and had not yet clearly formulated historical questions related to its own self-conception."⁶⁰ This does not mean they bore no historical knowledge, for "raw information about the recent past...was available to the Believers...in the form of personal memories or as incidental or contextual information embedded in stories that were related for

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Donner, Fred M., *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton, 1998, p. 291.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 276.

moral, genealogical, or other purposes.”⁶¹ (276). But there were no systematic attempts to collect and organize these reports beyond the simple act of transmission by word of mouth.

In the Proto-Historicist Phase (ca. 25 AH to ca. 100 AH), as the community faced the internal catastrophe of several civil wars, the raw information of the previous phase was used by partisans on all sides to create competing narratives of what happened. At the same time, as the community came in increasing contact with the intellectual traditions of their newly conquered neighbors, they had to formulate a “sharply defined identity as Muslims” and legitimize the supremacy of Islam over other belief systems by means of narratives centered around the miracles of the Prophet’s life, and the divinely-ordained military victories (*futūḥ*) that were given to his community after him.⁶² It is in this phase that the influence of Donner’s ‘needs’ become well-rooted in the development of Islamic historiography.

In the Early Literate Phase (ca. 75 AH - ca. 150 AH) those narratives “that circulated, initially orally, during the Proto-Historicist Phase began to be set down in fixed written form(s).”⁶³ Donner dates the emergence of more elaborate tools of historiography - like structured sequencing of events - to this time.

Finally, in the Late Literate Phase (‘Classical Islamic Historiography,’ ca. 125 AH - ca. 300 AH), “early narratives assembled during the preceding phase were collected (or re-collected) and sometimes reworked.”⁶⁴ Chronography became a recurrent feature rather than a rare luxury and “accounts were edited, selected, or dropped according to political, theological and social needs of the compilers and interests of the community.”⁶⁵ From this process, “larger compilations (for example, the first universal histories and annalistic works) were compiled, using material from the earlier generation of monographs” and “these works, or their direct descendants,

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, 277.

⁶³ Ibid, 280.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 281.

are those that have survived to our own day.”⁶⁶ It is in this period that our earliest extant texts were written.

In summary, in Donner’s framework, historiography is - in the beginning at least - a tool to be used almost exclusively for legitimization, whether that is the legitimization of the Muslim community vis-a-vis other faith communities, or the legitimization of conflicting parties struggling against each other. Things that we would consider the staples of classical historiography, like logical sequence or chronology, are here secondary features that developed after the origins of the practice.

Writing several years after both of the above texts, Chase Robinson provides something of a compromise between the two previous paradigms. In his *Islamic Historiography*, he divides the origins of Islamic historiography into three phases. In Phase I (ca. 610 to ca. 730), historians (or rather, proto-historians) were concerned foremost with the transmission of *ḥadīth*. The themes in such stories were mostly uniform, concerning the Prophetic campaigns or the caliphal conquests. However, alongside this oral tradition was a slowly emerging culture of documentation, “triggered principally by state functions (e.g., levying taxes, paying the army, building public works.”⁶⁷ Robinson notes that “since a great deal of this documentation carried dates, the emerging bureaucracy had the two-fold effect of encouraging literacy and chronological consciousness amongst its Arab élite.”⁶⁸ One cannot speak of actual historiographic texts from this phase.

Phase II (ca. 730 to ca. 830) witnessed the emergence of a fully aware Islamic historiographical tradition. As tensions grew between “an ever-expanding corpus of *akhbār* material...and the construction of narrative frameworks engineered to contain and order it” the *ḥadīth*-centric nature characteristic of Phase I was increasingly challenged; building a narrative was, after all, beyond the purview of

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Robinson, Chase F. *Islamic Historiography*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 21.

the *ḥadīth* scholar, whose primary functions were narrating the text of the report and analyzing the chain of its transmission.⁶⁹

The drive to order this corpus into unified narratives was fueled by a desire on the part of the 'Abbāsid caliphs - and by extension their beneficiaries - to channel the *ḥadīth* corpus into a legitimizing force capable of “establishing their cultural credentials and legitimizing the violence that had brought them to power.”⁷⁰ They acted as patrons for historiographic and literary work, and as a result, historiography (and literary work in general) underwent “explosive growth” in this period. This growth in turn necessitated “the sharpening of literary genres” and the complexification of the literary terms and methodologies of the various forms of Islamic historiography.⁷¹ By the end of this phase, the three primary sub-genres of Islamic historiography - biography, prosopography and chronography - had all taken shape.⁷²

Phase III (*ca.* 830 to *ca.* 925) then would seem a somewhat superfluous stage in studying the origins of the science, considering that Robinson has already dated the origins of all three major genres of Islamic historiography to Phase II. The problem, however, is that there are virtually no extant texts from Phase II. Most were lost due to their make; the paper of that period was not nearly as durable as that of later periods. Even those rare texts that might have had the physical durability to survive a few centuries were still lost because they were not recopied, having been rendered obsolete by later, more comprehensive works.

It is the superseding texts that claim the bulk of attention in Phase III. In this period, “we have left behind the age of the relatively brief and single-topic ‘monograph’ and have entered the age of the large-scale and synthetic collection,” a process which Robinson terms the ‘gobbling up’ phenomenon: “a crucial feature of the

⁶⁹ Ibid, 24.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 26.

⁷¹ Ibid, 29.

⁷² Ibid, 30.

ninth- and tenth-century tradition.”⁷³ These writers collected hundreds, if not thousands, of reports, usually without providing much commentary in between. However, Robinson cautions against portraying the authors of this phase as unimaginative collectors as is sometimes thought. Rather, “late ninth- and tenth-century compilers impressed their vision upon the material not merely by selecting and arranging pre-existing *akhbār*, but by breaking them up, by rephrasing, supplementing and composing anew.”⁷⁴

Having covered the origins of Islamic historiography up to the ninth century, Robinson transitions from a chronology-based study of the subject to a thematic one, arguing that “discernible patterns were now in place, and we are far enough along that the trajectory has begun to flatten.”⁷⁵ He thereafter studies Islamic historiography as three distinct sub-genres: chronography, biography and prosopography. “Having crystallized in the middle of the ninth century,” Islamic historiography remains “relatively conservative” with these three sub-genres to “remain the prestige forms of the tradition throughout the medieval and pre-modern period.”⁷⁶ As these categories help us analyze the following primary sources, we briefly review his study of each sub-genre below.

Robinson identifies two main types of Islamic biography: chronological biography (in which the life of the subject is covered chronologically) and devotional biography (in which various aspects of the subject’s life, and in particular, moral excellence, are covered as themes). The two contrasting forms are indicative of a wider tension in both biography and prosopography: that dynamic “between chronographic particularism on the one hand, and timeless universalism on the other,” a dichotomy that, as we shall see, recurs in our primary sources.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid, 34-5.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 39.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 60.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 66.

Unlike contemporary conceptions of biography, classical Islamic biography typically did not, according to Robinson, see “character as contingent and dynamic” but rather “as determined and fixed.”⁷⁸ Moreover, Muslim biographers and prosopographers were “generally interested not so much in what made their subjects unique as in what made them exemplary, and they favoured in their modes of characterization the external (appearance, speech, the sequence of events and actions) over the internal.”⁷⁹ Again, this focus on the exemplary actions of a fixed character is a recurring feature of nearly all the entries we review below.

While biographies “accentuate the individual,” prosopography “compiles and organizes those items of biographical data that mark an individual’s belonging to a group.”⁸⁰ In this case, ‘group’ almost always refers to some elite class of society, whether high statesmen, famous scholars or renowned warriors.⁸¹

Some prosopographies were organized chronologically (usually termed *Ṭabaqāt*), others, alphabetically for ease of reference (*Muʿjam*). For all texts in this category, however, “the building block...is the capsule biography written in the third person, whose coverage and size depend on the purpose and range of the host prosopography.”⁸² The typical entry would include “a full name (including variants), provenance...reputation...an account of training and career...and, if the data is available, a death date.”⁸³ Reputation is a core component of such entries, especially in those biographical dictionaries meant for use in *ḥadīth* criticism, a rather substantial portion of the prosopographical corpus.

Defining the chronographic text as one whose structure explicitly follows chronology, Robinson identifies two primary types of chronography in the Islamic tradition: annalistic history (those texts whose unit of time is by year) and caliphal history (whose unit of time is by caliphal reigns). The latter seems to predate the

⁷⁸ Ibid, 62.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 66.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 68.

⁸³ Ibid, 70.

former, which - Robinson speculates - may be due to the simple fact that reigning periods are a wider unit of time and therefore preclude the need to know the exact year a given event occurred.⁸⁴ In both cases, the core characteristic of a chronographic text was its 'accordion-like' structure wherein each section could be stretched or compressed according to the amount of narrated reports which were relevant to that time unit.

3.2. Set 1 Entries

Both Donner and Robinson end their periodization of the origins of Islamic historiography around the start of the 4th century, which directly overlaps with the first set of primary sources to be reviewed in this study. In both frameworks, Islamic historiography has by this point reached a certain maturity wherein it has its own genres and methodologies of a sort, yet the needs and methodologies of the *ḥadīth* sciences continues to exert significant influence. This coincides with Khalidī's depiction of early historiography, which was one largely in the service of *ḥadīth*.

Set 1 begins with Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* and ends with al-Nasā'ī's work on the merits of the Companions. It boasts many of the greats of the *Hadith* tradition, including Ibn Ḥanbal, Bukhārī and Muslim. Not surprisingly then, many of Abū 'Ubaydah's entries here are in either biographical works written for the purposes of *ḥadīth* scholarship or in *ḥadīth* collections which happen to include short biographies on the merits of individual Companions. As we shall see, the *ḥadīth*-centered nature of his early biographies would set the basic framework which nearly all of his latter biographies would follow.

3.2.1. Ibn Sa'd

Born to a family with ties to the Banū Hāshim, Muḥammad b. Sa'd (d. 231/845) began his studies in Basra, where he was student to several Successors and Successors to the Successors before journeying to Kufa, Mecca and Medina, and later Baghdad and Damascus in pursuit of knowledge.⁸⁵ Though he is said to have

⁸⁴ Ibid, 75-7.

⁸⁵ Fayda, Mustafa. 'Ibn Sa'd', *Türkiye Diyanet İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 20, p.294. ISAM.

become an expert in a wide range of Islamic sciences, his specific mastery was in history and *ḥadīth*. He studied under another famous historian of his time, al-Wāqidī (d. 823) and together the two worked to compile biographical dictionaries of unprecedented magnitude. The fruit of this labor: Ibn Sa’d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, is today the oldest extant biographical dictionary of the Islamic world.⁸⁶

The entries of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*⁸⁷ are ordered according to a combination of lineage and religious precedence. The first two “*Ṭabaqāt*’s” - classes - of individuals consist exclusively of Companions, whom Ibn Sa’d orders first by precedence then by lineage. Thus, the “Participants of Badr from the *Muhājirūn*” come before the “Participants of Badr from the *Anṣār*,” and so on. That he selects religious precedence as the premier criteria by which to rank Companions demonstrates its centrality in his worldview, and suggests that there was some notion of a hierarchy among the Companions based on the time of their conversion.⁸⁸ Yet religious precedence is not the only factor at play here, for within each category of precedence, Companions are listed according to their lineage. Thus in the first category, “Participants of Badr from the *Muhājirūn*,” the first entries are of those participants who happened to be from the Banū Hāshim, the Prophet’s (s) own family. The next batch is of those from Banū Muṭṭalib (brother-clan to the Banū Hāshim), then from the Banū ‘Abd al-Shams b. ‘Abd al-Manāf, which is a few degrees removed, and so on, through the various clans of Quraysh, each subsequent batch being one more step removed from the Banū Hāshim until at the very end of the category, from the “Banū Fihri b. Mālīk b. al-Naḍr b. Kināna, the last of those within Quraysh,” we find the entry of Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.

The influence of lineage highlights the importance of blood ties in early Arabo-Islamic society. As we shall see, Ibn Sa’d’s ordering differs drastically from what would become the classical merit-based system in later centuries. His concern for

⁸⁶ Ibid, 295.

⁸⁷ Ibn Sa’d. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Ed. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qahir. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1990.

⁸⁸ It ought to be noted that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had, as Caliph, enacted a system of pensioning in which those who converted first received the most, and so on down, in much the same way Ibn Sa’d groups his entries. For more on ‘Umar’s decision, see: Afsaruddin, Asma. *The First Muslims: History and Memory*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2011. Chapter 2.

tribal ties suggests that pre-Islamic notions concerning who is, for instance, of the core Qurashite families and who is of the peripheral families were still directly relevant in Ibn Sa'd's time.⁸⁹

Table 3.1. Ibn Sa'd

The entry itself is relatively long. At about four pages, it is the second longest entry in Set 1. The entry reads as follows:	
1	Abū 'Ubaydah's full name and lineage back to Fihir, the progenitor of Quraysh. ⁹⁰
2	The name of Abū 'Ubaydah's wife, Hind bt. Jābir, and two sons, Yazīd and 'Umayr, both of whom passed away young without any heirs.
3	Conversion Report, establishing Abū 'Ubaydah as one of the earliest converts to Islam.
4	Ibn Ishāq held that Abū 'Ubaydah emigrated to Abyssina, but Mūsā b. 'Uqbah and Abū Ma'shar Qatāda did not mention this position.
5	Abū 'Ubaydah's emigration to Medina.
6	First report on Abū 'Ubaydah's bond-brother in Medina, in which it is said to be Kulthūm b. al-Hidm.
7	Second report on Abū 'Ubaydah's bond-brother, in which it is said to be Sālim the client of Abū Hudhayfa.
8	Third report on Abū 'Ubaydah's bond-brother, in which it is said to be Muḥammad b. Maslama.
9	Uḥud & Metal Links Report.
10	Abū 'Ubaydah's participation in all the battles of the Prophet (s).
11	Abū 'Ubaydah's command over several smaller expeditions.
12	Jābir's report on the a military expedition led by Abū 'Ubaydah.

⁸⁹ Wadad al-Qāḍī discusses Ibn Sa'd's hierarchy in his "Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholar's Alternative History of the Muslim Community." "The use of *tabaqa* here clearly refers to a structural principle, according to which, first, people who partake in the same level of activity (in this case, seniority in Islam) are grouped together in one class and, second, people who succeed each other in the same activity are placed one after the other, thereby indicating difference in rank or standing (within the criterion of seniority in Islam)." See al-Qāḍī, Wadad. "Bigoraphical Dictionaries as the Scholars' Alternative History of the Muslim Community." *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, Leiden, 2006, p. 27.

⁹⁰ Ibn Sa'd, all of the below reports are from 3:312-16.

Table 3.1. (Continued)

13	Yemen Amīn Report.
14	Base Amīn Report.
15	Najrān Amīn Report 1.
16	Najrān Amīn Report 2.
17	Excerpt from What an Excellent Man Report.
18	Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1.
19	‘Umar Wishing Report.
20	‘Umar Caliphate Report.
21	Variant of ‘Umar Caliphate Report.
22	Self-sacrifice Report.
23	Immediate Charity Report.
24	Mu‘ādh Praise Report.
25	Abū ‘Ubaydah, when struck by the plague, appointed Mu‘ādh to lead the prayer.
26	Abū ‘Ubaydah narrates Prophetic ḥadīth about those who die from the plague being counted as martyrs.
27	Wāqidī Appearance Report.
28	Wāqidī Death & Age Report.

For the most part, the entry seems to follow a roughly chronological order, with a few reports clustering together around specific issues. Reports 1 and 2 recount Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, genealogy and basic family details. Report 3 discusses his conversion, followed by Reports 4 and 5 noting his emigration(s). Thereafter, Reports 6, 7 and 8 are three different positions on whom he was bonded to as part of the *mu’ākha* - the bond-brother pacts enacted by the Prophet (s) between the Emigrants and the Medinese Muslims.

Though the *mu'ākha* reports contradict each other, Ibn Sa'd remains silent, simply citing the reports in rapid succession. I am therefore tempted to say that Ibn Sa'd saw his role as that of a compiler rather than a storyteller - he sought to collect whichever reports fulfilled a certain standard of authenticity, and if such reports happened to contradict each other, it was not his job to establish 'certain truth' or even narrative continuity between them.

However, immediately before that, in the report on Abū 'Ubaydah's emigration to Abyssinia, Ibn Sa'd notes that Ibn Ishāq held that Abū 'Ubaydah emigrated to Abyssinia, but neither Mūsā b. 'Uqbah nor Abū Ma'shar Qatāda made any mention of such an emigration.⁹¹ In this case, then, Ibn Sa'd *does* break his editorial silence to note the suspicious lack of evidence for a certain position. From this we may conclude that a) Ibn Sa'd is actively cross-checking a number of different sources and b) he will comment on a given issue if he deems it necessary. Beyond that, questions on the process by which Ibn Sa'd decides to comment or remain silent are unfortunately obscure.

Reports 9-12, center around Abū 'Ubaydah's military service, altogether covering his participation at Uhud and all other expeditions of the Prophet (s), and his commandership over a number of smaller expeditions.

The next set of reports detail the circumstances under which he received the title *Amīn* of the *Ummah*. Report 13 is in the context of the Yemenī delegation seeking a teacher, Report 14 is without context, and Reports 15 and 16 are in the context of the Najrānī delegation.

Thereafter, the topical links between reports becomes more obscure. Report 17 records the Prophet's (s) praise of Abū 'Ubaydah as well as other Companions. Report 18 involves Abū 'Ubaydah, now commander in Syria, exhorting his troops to

⁹¹ Ibid, 3:313. Robinson identifies Mūsā b. 'Uqbah as one of "the greatest early *sīra* authorities" whose work was apparently abridged in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. *al-Durar fī ikhtisār al-maghāzī wa'l-siyar*. Cairo, 1966.

good action. It is somewhat similar in style to Report 22, again in Abū ‘Ubaydah’s words, emphasizing the futility of a life spent chasing after the luxuries of this world.

Reports 19, 20, 21 and 23 can be loosely grouped together as instances where ‘Umar praised Abū ‘Ubaydah. It is the middle two reports that are of special concern for us, as they are variants of the ‘Umar Caliphal Report. Ibn Sa’d narrates these reports without any commentary - political, theological or otherwise. The implications of the report are apparently not troubling enough to warrant any clarification from Ibn Sa’d, who simply continues to cite other reports in praise of Abū ‘Ubaydah.

Report 24, in which Mu’ādh b. Jabal says of Abū ‘Ubaydah that, “By God he is from the best of those [remaining] on the face of the earth!”⁹² would also seem to demand some sort of qualification, but Ibn Sa’d again remains silent. He instead narrates two reports (25 and 26) on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s illness and eventual death. This is followed by Report 27, on his general appearance, and Report 28, dating his age at Badr and at death.

All in all, Ibn Sa’d provides almost no narrative of his own to connect or order these events. Virtually all of the material is either a report or a chain of transmission for that report, chains which Ibn Sa’d cites in full back to the initial narrator. This being the earliest extant entry on Abū ‘Ubaydah, it is difficult to isolate what is unique about Ibn Sa’d’s approach and what is in keeping with his predecessors within the nascent historiographic tradition. However, even without commentary on the controversial reports, we can at least conclude that the ‘Umar Caliphal Report and its variants were in circulation as early as Ibn Sa’d’s time, if not earlier.

3.2.2. Ibn Abī Shayba

Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849) was a *ḥadīth* scholar and historian native to Kufa. He began his study of *ḥadīth* at a young age, a passion

⁹² Ibid, 3:316.

which would take him to Basra, Rayy, Baghdad and eventually the Hijaz and allowed him to study with some of the greats of the early *ḥadīth* tradition, including Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna and ‘Abd Allāh b. Mubārak.⁹³ This study culminated in what would become his most famous work: the *Muṣannaf* - a collection of *ḥadīth* organized according to topic.

One of the sections of this compilation is devoted to “*Faḍā’il*,” (merits) and begins with the merits of the Prophets before continuing on to the merits of individual Companions. The Companion entries are ostensibly ordered by merit, and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s comes as the twenty-third, a placement in strong contrast with what would become the conventional merit-order system of later biographers in which he is almost always placed tenth as the last of the Ten Promised Paradise. Ibn Abī Shayba’s take on the merit-based ordering is indicative of the still fluid nature of ranking Companions at this early time.

Table 3.2. Ibn Abī Shayba

As this is a collection of <i>ḥadīth</i> and not a biographical dictionary, the entry is composed entirely of reports to the exclusion of any other biographical material. The reports number six in total. ⁹⁴	
1	Base Amīn Report ⁹⁵
2	Not Take to Task Report
3	Najrān Amīn Report 2
4	Variant of Najrān Amīn Report 2
5	Report related by al-A’mash that ‘Umar said, “Whom am I to make caliph? If only it were Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.”
6	What an Excellent Man Report

⁹³ See Yardım, Ali. “İBN EBŪ ŞEYBE, Ebû Bekir.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 442–43.

⁹⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, Abū Bakr. *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba*. Maktaba al-Rushd, 1409, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-9944/page-36635>.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 6:391, as are all the reports that follow.

While the entry is brief, Ibn Abī Shayba includes two reports that are noteworthy for our study: Reports 2 and 5. Report 2 we shall see reoccur in latter entries, but Report 5 is of special note, since it is included in no other entry after his. Yes, the spirit of the report is carried over in the much more frequently cited ‘Umar Caliphal Report, but this particular expression of the sentiment is unique, as far as I can tell.

In any case, Ibn Abī Shayba does not comment on either, so we cannot know how he himself interpreted these reports. Yet his inclusion of the reports is significant in and of itself, and, taken alongside Ibn Sa’d’s entry, demonstrates that the idea of Abū ‘Ubaydah being a potential caliphate, and having an especially high standing with the Prophet (s) was not a marginal one this early on in the biographical tradition.

3.2.3. Mus‘ab al-Zubayrī

Mus‘ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236/850) was a genealogist and historian descended from the famous Companion al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām (d. 36/656). Though not much is known about him, his work on the lineage of Quraysh - *Nasab Quraysh* - has survived until the present day, and is, in the words of Abd al-Aziz al-Duri, “considered the best book on Quraysh genealogy.”⁹⁶ As the title implies, the work is a genealogical dictionary of the Qurashites. Its entries are organized according to lineage, with the first set of entries focusing on the ancestors of the Prophet (s) and the entries thereafter detailing the remaining clans of Quraysh, arranged according to their genealogical closeness to the Prophet (s). The entries of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s clan - the Banū Hārith - being the most distant in relation to the Prophet (s), come relatively late.

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry is short - about half a page.⁹⁷ It begins with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, along with that of his father and grandfather. Mus‘ab notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah participated in Badr, and that ‘Umar appointed him a commander over

⁹⁶ Duri, Abd Al-Aziz. *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*. Princeton University Press, 2014. p. 52.

⁹⁷ Mus‘ab al-Zubayrī. *Nasab Quraysh*. Edited by Evariste Lévi-Provençal, Third, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-2922/page-426>. p. 1:442.

Sham. He mentions that Abū ‘Ubaydah was referred to as al-Qawī al-Amīn. He names Abū ‘Ubaydah’s mother and her clan, as well as his own wife and two children - Yazīd and ‘Umayr. But, Mus‘ab notes, neither he nor his siblings were to have surviving descendants.

That is the whole of the entry. In a book of genealogy, it should come as no surprise that the majority of the short entry is devoted to detailing familial relations. The closest Mus‘ab comes to discussing Abū ‘Ubaydah’s rank is in noting his title of al-Qawī al-Amīn and mentioning his commandership over Syria, but neither of these measure up against the explicit reports found in more extensive entries.

3.2.4. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt

Khalīfa b. Khayyāt al-‘Uṣfurī (d. 240/854), early traditionist, chronicler and genealogist, was a native of Basra, where he studied, taught and remained for nearly all his life, “not travelling to other cities as was then customary.”⁹⁸ Consequently, most of his teachers and transmitters were based in Basra - among them Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 196/811), ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā’inī (d. 228/843) and Hishām al-Kalbī (d. 204/819).

Though Ibn Khayyāt had not travelled much himself, Basra’s centrality meant that he had a chance to teach many promising traditionists who came to the city in search of *ḥadīth*, among them Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Bukhārī (d. 256/870). He composed a number of texts on history and biography, of which one has an entry on Abū ‘Ubaydah: *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā’*.

Ibn Khayyāt’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā’* consists of about 3,300 biographical notices of *ḥadīth* transmitters. Each entry is relatively brief - “often just bare names (or even just a single name) slotted into the appropriate generation.”⁹⁹ The entries are organized first according to lineage and second, religious precedence, a reverse of

⁹⁸ Zakkar, S., “Ibn Khayyāt al-‘Uṣfurī”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

⁹⁹ Robinson, 67.

Ibn Sa'd's ordering system.¹⁰⁰ In keeping with this lineage-oriented ordering, some scholars, S. Zakkar amongst them, see in Ibn Khayyāt a preoccupation with genealogy, an assertion that holds true with Ibn Khayyāt's own remarks in the introduction to his work. There, Ibn Khayyāt begins by naming several transmitters which he heard from, transmitters who told him about:

The names of the forefathers of the Messenger of God - peace and blessings be upon him - and the names of the forefathers of those who memorized *ḥadīth* from the Messenger of God - peace and blessings be upon him - and their mothers, and their places of birth, and what was remembered of the date of their deaths. All of these have mentioned something [of this information], and I combined all of that in this book of ours according to a well-known [order of] lineage.¹⁰¹

From this emerges a template of Ibn Khayyāt's typical biographical entry: name, lineage, mother's lineage, and information on death - basically the bare minimum biographical information, with an added emphasis on lineage. From the later half of his introductory remarks we also learn of his citation methodology. Ibn Khayyāt does not cite a full *isnād* for every piece of data he relays; rather he summarizes several reports into a single biographical entry, and forgoes the need for citation by mentioning his main sources up front. Though this practice would become frequent in later sets, Ibn Khayyāt is something of an outlier in this approach, given that at his time historiographical work was still under the wing of the *ḥadīth* sciences, which demanded a full *isnād* for every data point.

Abū 'Ubaydah's entry bears out the position that Ibn Khayyāt's main fascination is with genealogy. His (extremely brief) entry on Abū 'Ubaydah is almost exclusively about Abū 'Ubaydah's lineage. As the entry is so short, it is possible to translate it in full here:

¹⁰⁰ Mustafa Fayda identifies Ibn Khayyāt's system with the diwan system of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, See: Fayda, Mustafa. "HALĪFE b. HAYYĀT." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 15, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997, pp. 301. The editor of *Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrā'*, Suheyli Zakkar agrees with this, noting that it is organized according to genealogical relation to the Prophet (s). See Khalīfa b. Khayyāt. *Ṭabaqāt*. Ed. Suhayl Zakkār Dār al-Fikr, 1993, vol. 1, p. 13.

¹⁰¹ Khalīfa b. Khayyāt. *Ṭabaqāt*. Ed. Suhayl Zakkār Dār al-Fikr, 1993. vol. 1, p. 25.

Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ: his name is 'Āmir b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Jarrāḥ b. Hilāl b. Wuhayb b. Dabba b. al-Ḥārith b. Fihr b. Mālik. His mother is from the Banū Ḥārith b. Fihr. She lived to [the time of] Islam and became Muslim. He died in Sham in the plague of 'Amawās in the year 13.¹⁰²

As demonstrated, this is the bare minimum of biographical information: some genealogical information followed by a death date. In fact, it reads more like a list item than a fleshed out biographical entry, an observation in keeping with the position that early Islamic historiography had a preoccupation with lists.

What would have been Ibn Khayyāṭ's goal in building a relatively long work out of such seemingly insubstantial building blocks? By the bare minimum provided in this entry, we can assume that the purpose of this information was not to learn much about what each individual did (apart from narrate ḥadīth from the Prophet (s) which is vital to *ḥadīth* transmission sciences), but to bring to light one aspect or another of the network of tribal ties which ran through early Islamic society. This would explain why Ibn Khayyāṭ goes out of his way to mention the often overlooked data on the biographee's mother's tribal affiliation, which manifests a different dimension of tribal alliances.

3.2.5. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) renowned *ḥadīth* scholar, jurist and theologian of Baghdad, was in the words of H. Laoust "one of the most vigorous personalities of Islam, which he has profoundly influenced both in its historical development and its modern revival."¹⁰³

Born to an Arab family with ties to the 'Abbāsīd revolution two generations earlier, Ibn Ḥanbal spent his youth studying in Baghdad and Iraq before travelling to the Hijaz, Yemen and Syria to study with *ḥadīth* transmitters. Among his teachers were the *ḥadīth* scholars Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/812-3) and Wakī' b. Jarrāḥ (d.

¹⁰² Ibid, 1:65.

¹⁰³ See Laoust, H. "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com.

197/812-3), the Hanafī jurist Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), and the master-jurist al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820).

He was a teacher in his own right when al-Ma’mūn’s *Mihna* began. In defiance of the caliph’s inquisition, Ibn Ḥanbal “vigorously refused to accept the dogma of the creation of the Ḳur’ān” according to H. Laoust, and was subsequently arrested, imprisoned and tortured before finally being released several years later.¹⁰⁴ He died of illness at the age of 75. Buried in Baghdad, his grave was to become “one of the most frequented places of pilgrimage in Bagħdād,” and his legacy, one of the cornerstones of classical Sunni identity.¹⁰⁵

Of the works attributed to him, no doubt the most famous is the *Musnad*, a collection of *ḥadīth* organized according to their initial narrators. Though it is a foundational text of the *ḥadīth* genre, much has been said about Ibn Ḥanbal’s choice to include in it weak reports. Against this, M. Yaşar Kandemir in his *İslam Ansiklopedisi* article argues that Ibn Ḥanbal did not add any reports from people he knew to be liars, and was in general lenient about *ḥadīth* that had no legal content, but stringent in legal *ḥadīth*.¹⁰⁶ On the general culture of leniency in the pre-*Şaḥīḥ* era, Jonathan Brown in his *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim* further notes that “reports traced back to the Prophet, bearing his name and conveying his authority, were *prima facie* compelling” and as for weak or mediocre *ḥadīths*, these were “indispensable in fields like the history of the Prophet’s campaigns, contextualizing Quranic verses or recounting the virtues of the Prophet’s Companions” - a feature we must suspect was present when Ibn Ḥanbal was recounting the virtues of Abū ‘Ubaydah.¹⁰⁷

In recounting Ibn Ḥanbal’s conception of the Companions, Laoust emphasizes the juristic weight Ibn Ḥanbal assigned to the rulings of the Companions, as he argues

¹⁰⁴ Laoust, “Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Kandemir, M. Yaşar. “AHMED b. HANBEL.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1989, p.79.

¹⁰⁷ Brown, Jonathan. *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim*. Brill, 2011, p. 59.

that “the Companions knew, understood, and put into practice the Qur’ān and the Sunna much better than later generations, and all of them are worthy of respect.”¹⁰⁸ In cases where the Companions disagree, Ibn Ḥanbal would have recourse to the Qur’an and Sunnah, or “tak[e] into account their order of pre-eminence.”¹⁰⁹ This order he outlines in his *Kitāb al-Sunna*, where he “puts Abū Bakr first, then ‘Umar, then the six *aṣḥāb al-shūrā* appointed by ‘Umar “all of whom were worthy of the caliphate and merit the title of *imām*”: ‘Uṭhṡmān, ‘Alī, Zubayr, Ṭalḥa, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, and Sa’d b. Abī Waḳḳās; then the fighters at Badr, the Muhādḡjirs and the Anṣār.”¹¹⁰ As we shall see, Ibn Ḥanbal’s ordering of the Companions in this way does not seem to harmonize with reports that he includes in his entries on Abū ‘Ubaydah. This divergence between the *implications* of certain reports that a transmitter narrates, and the *explicit* theological precepts that same transmitter expresses is a common motif in many of the primary sources we review.

Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Faḡḡ’il al-Ṣaḡḡāba* lacks a formal introduction. It begins with an *isnād* to ‘Abd Allāh, son of Aḡmad and primary narrator of the text, who relates several different *akḡbār* on the virtue of the Companions as a whole. These reports command the believers to love the Companions, and warn against hurting or cursing them.

Then, having established the respect due to Companions as a generation, Ibn Ḥanbal begins the specific entries. Unlike Ibn Sa’d and Ibn Khayyāt, but much like what would become the norm for latter Sunni biographical dictionaries, Ibn Ḥanbal devotes his first four entries to the first four caliphs in their reining order, demonstrating his proto-Sunni grounding and the beginnings of a Sunni orthodoxy on the ordering of Companions. After these four come the entries of five of the remaining six Ten Promised Paradise, with Abū ‘Ubaydah being the third of these.

¹⁰⁸ Laoust.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Table 3.3. Ibn Ḥanbal

Abū 'Ubaydah's entry is made up of eleven distinct <i>akhbār</i> , narrated one after the other without any commentary. Each report has its own <i>isnād</i> , from 'Abd Allāh to his father up through to the Companion.	
1	The Najrān Amīn Report, establishing Abū 'Ubaydah's role as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> from the start. ¹¹¹
2	The report narrated by Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (ostensibly named after Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir b. al-Jarrāḥ), from his father, the famous early Companion 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd who said, "My closest friends from this <i>Ummah</i> are three: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrah."
3	The Khālīd Replacement Report, in which Khālīd suggests the title of <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> affords Abū 'Ubaydah political and military precedence.
4	The Yemen Amīn Report, that again reinforces Abū 'Ubaydah's role as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> .
5	The 'Umar Wishing Report, another manifestation of the reported bond between 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah.
6	A report narrate by 'Amr b. al-Āṣ in which 'Amr asked the Messenger of God: "Who is most beloved to you?" He said, "'Ā'isha." 'Amr said, "From the men?" He said, "Her father." 'Amr said, "then who?" He said, "Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ"
7	Not Take to Task Report, another ḥadīth in which the Prophet voices strong support for Abū 'Ubaydah.
8	A report narrated by Abū al-Bukhtarī in which 'Umar, presumably on the Day of <i>Saqīfah</i> , tells Abū 'Ubaydah, "Extend your hand that I might give allegiance to you, for I heard the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, saying, <i>You are the Amīn of this Ummah</i> . Abū 'Ubaydah said, "I am not one to promote himself before the man whom the Messenger of God ordered to lead the prayer."
9	The 'Umar Caliphal Report
10	The 'Ā'isha Caliphal Report.
11	A variant of the 'Umar Caliphal Report

Though Ibn Ḥanbal does not himself explicitly outline any structure or thematic

¹¹¹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. *Faḍā'il Al-Ṣaḥāba*. Mu'assasa al-Risala, vol. 2, 1983, p. 738. All of the below reports are from 2:738-42.

division to his entry, the entry's reports can be classified as achieving four distinct functions: establishing Abū 'Ubaydah as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*, emphasizing the strong friendship between Abū 'Ubaydah and 'Umar (and to a lesser degree, Abū Bakr), demonstrating the Prophet's special love for Abū 'Ubaydah, and offering evidence for Abū 'Ubaydah's potential as caliph.

Reports 1, 3 and 4 all center around his role as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*. Though no clear definition of the role is given, each report provides a distinct shade to the term. The Najrān *Amīn* Report suggests the title meant one who could be trusted with money (i.e. the tribute of the Najrāni peoples). The Yemen *Amīn* Report suggests the term meant someone who could be trusted as a spiritual mentor and teacher. The Khālīd Replacement Report suggests that, for Khālīd at least, the title could be interpreted as affording Abū 'Ubaydah a certain political and military precedence over other Companions.

Reports 2 and 5 emphasize the close relationship between the first two caliphs and Abū 'Ubaydah. Given the notion of a tripartite conspiracy reviewed above, this kind of evidence is noteworthy, though it is worth mentioning that in Report 2 at least, the connection seems to be in the context of genuine friendship, not political alliance-building.

Reports 6 and 7 act as evidence for the Prophet's love for Abū 'Ubaydah. If classical scholars took either report as true, the implications are significant. Specifically, Report 6 puts Abū 'Ubaydah above even 'Umar, not to mention the later two Rightly Guided Caliphs. Report 7 puts him above *all* other Companions as the one person whom the Prophet (s) would *not* take to task over a given fault. While there are certainly many ḥadīth in which the Prophet (s) praised a certain Companion for a trait he or she embodied more than any other, these are often hard to measure against each other. Yet these two ḥadīth by their literal interpretation *do* imply a certain ranking, with Abū 'Ubaydah much higher than Sunni scholarship typically places him. That Ibn Ḥanbal includes them at all while in another text he explicitly upholds the Sunni orthodox position on ranking Companions is a conundrum.

One might try to resolve the confusion by saying that the reports may be weak or even false, yet if Ibn Ḥanbal judged them to be weak, and already thought of them as problematic, why not drop these doubly-condemned reports from his collection entirely? As we shall see, the question remains pertinent throughout the breadth of Sunni biographies on Abū ‘Ubaydah.

The last four reports of the entry consist of other Companions describing Abū ‘Ubaydah as a strong candidate for the caliphate. ‘Umar is the main speaker here, advocating for Abū ‘Ubaydah’s caliphate in three separate reports. He specifically cites Abū ‘Ubaydah’s status as *Amīn* of the *Ummah* to justify preferring him over the Companions of the *Shūra*. As we saw in Laoust’s comments earlier, Ibn Ḥanbal had in his *Kitāb al-Sunna* specifically ranked the Companions as the first four caliphs, *then* the Six of the *Shūra*, then the other Companions of Badr. Ironically enough, this report suggests an explicitly contradictory ranking, in which Abū ‘Ubaydah is preferred *over* the Six of the *Shūra* by no less a figure than ‘Umar, the one who appointed the Six of the *Shūra*.

The tenth report both reaffirms the strong bond between Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah and provides corroborating evidence of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy from a different, but equally prestigious perspective: the wife of the Prophet (s). That Ibn Ḥanbal does not comment on any of these reports means we cannot understand how he interpreted it, but we are again left with the mystery of why he includes these reports at all when their implications are so contradictory to professed theological points. Leave off not including the reports, in structuring the entry Ibn Ḥanbal seems to have intentionally grouped the four caliphate reports together, back-to-back, as if to avoid the image of a single, erroneous report and to demonstrate how each of them supports the other. We further explore the implications of this dichotomy between the historian’s expressed beliefs and his narrated reports in the summary to Set 1.¹¹²

¹¹² Ibn Ḥanbal does have a dedicated entry to Abū ‘Ubaydah in one more book: *K. al-Zuhd*. As it is extremely short, we merely summarize it here: The work is essentially a collection of sayings

3.2.6. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī

Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), perhaps the most famous traditionist of Islamic history, was born in Bukhara to a family already steeped in the *ḥadīth* sciences. His father is said to have taken *ḥadīth* from the likes of Mālik b. Anas and ʿAbd Allāh b. Mubārak. Bukhārī himself began training in *ḥadīth* at a young age, and by the end of his training, he had studied with - among many others - Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn and Ishāq b. Rāḥawayh.¹¹³ Later in his life, Bukhārī settled in Naysabur and passed away in isolation in a small village near Samarqand.

His most famous work by far is the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, a collection of some 2700 *ḥadīth* arranged topically and hand-picked for their accuracy. Though initially seen as “just one among others,” the work was “soon recognized as outstanding, and by the 4th century it came to be placed along with Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* at the head of collections of Sunni tradition.”¹¹⁴

However, the book that initially gained him renown was not his *Ṣaḥīḥ* but his *al-Taʾrīkh al-Kabīr*, a collection of the names of those men and women who appeared in his chains of transmission. All told there are about 12,300 biographical entries, most relatively short - Brown notes that Bukhārī “consistently provides neither full names nor evaluations of the persons in question” and argues that the work’s goal seems to be to locate “each subject within the vast network of *ḥadīth*

encouraging escapism as related by the greats of the early Muslim community. It is organized according to the initial speakers or subjects of the reports, with the sayings of the Prophets coming first, then the Companions. Among the Companions, the order of entries is neither alphabetical nor chronological. It at first seems to follow the conventional merit order, with the first four caliphs given the first four entries. Thereafter however Ibn Ḥanbal does not cover the remaining Ten in the order it would be later come to be established as, instead including in there other Companions known for their asceticism: Abū Dharr, Salmān al-Fārisī and others. Abū ʿUbaydah’s entry comes seventeenth. The entry itself is made up of four reports. The first three are in the words of Abū ʿUbaydah himself, exhorting the Syrian troops under his command to takwa, to hope, and to give up the evils of this world. The fourth recounts Umar’s trip to review the troops of Syria - he visits Abū ʿUbaydah’s abode to find it completely empty except for a sword, shield and spear, and is immensely touched by this asceticism. See: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. *Kitāb Al-Zuhd*. Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, vol. 1, 1999, 151.

¹¹³ See Robson, J. “Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

transmission”¹¹⁵ It is in this collection of short entries that we find a small entry devoted to Abū ‘Ubaydah.

The ordering of the entries is alphabetical (with the exception of the ‘Muḥammad’s,’ which come first). The alphabetical ordering suggests this is more of a reference work than anything else, meant to be as accessible as possible for students of *ḥadīth*. Among our primary sources, this is the earliest instance of an alphabetical ordering, and is something of an outlier. Over the next century, only two other works would use such a system.

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes in the *‘ayn* section. The entry is very short - only a paragraph. It begins: ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Jarrāḥ Abū ‘Ubaydah al-Fihri al-Qurashī, may God be pleased with him.’ Bukhārī then notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah died in the caliphate of ‘Umar, in Sham and then cites a report wherein ‘Umar decides not to replace an officer appointed by Abū ‘Ubaydah, saying, “I am not one to replace a commander which ‘Āmir b. [‘Abd Allāh] put in charge. [About him] the Prophet, (s), said: *Abū ‘Ubaydah is the Amīn of this Ummah.*”¹¹⁶

That ends the entry. It is short, but most of the entries in this biographical dictionary are even shorter (just long enough to identify their tribal affiliation and whether they were Companions or not). The work is clearly meant for reference, not for breadth of information.

Bukhārī also dedicates an entry to Abū ‘Ubaydah in the “Book on the Companions of the Messenger of God” of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹¹⁷ There, the Companions seemed to be ordered by merit, with Abū ‘Ubaydah coming sixteenth. His entry consists of only two reports: the Base Amīn Report, and the Najrāni Amīn Report. Both are reported with full *isnād* but without commentary, and apart from cementing the portrayal of

¹¹⁵ Canonization, 68.

¹¹⁶ Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. *al-Ta’rīkh al-Kabīr*. Dār al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, vol. 6, pp. 444-45.

¹¹⁷ Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Edited by Muhammad Zuhayr, Dar Tuq al-Najah, vol. 5, 2001, p. 25.

Abū 'Ubaydah as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*, does not give us much insight into Bukhārī's position on other aspects of Abū 'Ubaydah's life.

3.2.7. Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj

Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj b. Muslim al-Naysābūrī (d. 261/875) was a Persian *ḥadīth* scholar of famous reputation. He was student to some of the greats of the *ḥadīth* tradition, including Bukhārī and Ibn Maʿīn, and was himself teacher to other notable scholars within the field, among them al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī. However, his crowning achievement in the field is no doubt his compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, which along with Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* would become a pillar of classical Sunni *ḥadīth* scholarship.

Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* includes a section on the *Faḍā'il* of the Companions. The seventh entry there is on Abū 'Ubaydah. Like Bukhārī's entry in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, this entry contains only those reports about or narrated by the biographee which fulfill the compiler's relatively high standards of *ḥadīth* transmission. For Abū 'Ubaydah, this means that the three reports that make up the section are: the Base Amīn Report, the Yemen Amīn Report, and the Najrān Amīn Report.¹¹⁸ In other words, it is virtually the same as Bukhārī's entry, with the addition of the Yemen Amīn Report.

Though Muslim's entry - and Bukhārī's before him - are brief, we can deduct several things from them. First, none of the reports we specifically selected as controversial are of a high enough veracity (according to Bukhārī and Muslim) to be included in their *Saḥīḥ* works. However, this is not to say that the reports were completely baseless according to the classical *ḥadīth* method, as a) the *Ṣaḥīḥ* movement was meant to collect only the soundest reports, and not everything left out of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* books was by default "fabricated" or "weak" and b) there was a whole sub-genre of works dedicated to collecting reports which, though left out of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nonetheless fulfilled the standards of Bukhārī and Muslim, as we shall see in the work of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī.

¹¹⁸ Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, vol 4., pp. 1881-82.

3.2.8. Ibn Qutayba

Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnawārī, commonly referred to as Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), was a Sunni-Iranian scholar of many-varied talent. According to G. Lecomte’s *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry, Ibn Qutayba was at the same time a theologian, litterateur, linguist and historian.¹¹⁹ He was educated by men Lecomte characterizes as having a strong “attachment to the *Sunna*” - including Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Rāhawayh (d. ca. 237/851) himself a student of Ibn Ḥanbal.¹²⁰ From these bastions of Sunni thought, Ibn Qutayba studied *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, history, *kalām* and literature. That was not, however, the limit of his education; as noted by Hüseyin Yazıcı in his *İslam Ansiklopedisi* article, though in later years Ibn Qutayba distanced himself from the man, he reportedly had at a young age developed a strong student-teacher relationship with the great Mu’tazilite litterateur al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868-9).¹²¹

Reviewing Ibn Qutayba’s works, Lecomte writes that he sought to “put his literary talents at the service of the enterprise of the restoration of Sunnism which was undertaken by al-Mutawakkil.”¹²² Khalidi offers a similar characterization, noting that “he was an *adib* of very wide accomplishments but one who was intent upon bringing *Adab* into line with the moral expectations of the formidable regiments of *Hadith* scholars of his day.”¹²³ This came at a time - the second half of the third/ninth century - when “the Abbasids...seemed at last to be adopting what was eventually to become Sunni ‘orthodoxy.’”¹²⁴

Of particular relevance for our study, Ibn Qutayba’s “attitude concerning the Companions is that which remained in later times the touchstone of the *Sunna*,” - as in, he upheld the conventional ranking of Companions.¹²⁵ However, he also “retained a deep and reverent respect for the family and descendants of the

¹¹⁹ Lecomte, G. “Ibn Qutayba.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Yazıcı, Hüseyin. “İBN KUTEYBE.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, p. 146.

¹²² Lecomte.

¹²³ Khalidi, 109.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 111.

¹²⁵ Lecomte.

Prophet, so far as they were politically neutral” - something that was not always amenable to later Hanbali thinkers.¹²⁶ What emerges is the portrait of an eclectic but brilliant thinker, someone who attempted to uphold the *Sunna* while also keeping “a mind open to all the current intellectual ideas.”¹²⁷

Ibn Qutayba authored a number of works in various fields; he wrote works of *tafsīr* and language, compilations of ḥadīth and history, polemics against Muʿtazilite theology and more besides. Of these, his *al-Maʿārif* contains an entry dedicated to Abū ʿUbaydah.

Ibn Qutayba’s *al-Maʿārif* was, in Khalidi’s description: a short book “of useful facts, a ‘nobleman’s’ *vademecum*, a historical compendium of whichever *adib* stands in need.”¹²⁸ Robinson picks up on this same feature, noting “it was thus to a non-specialist audience - men with broad interests and catholic minds, but little expertise or time to spare - that a large industry of popularizing history was geared” going on to name Ibn Qutayba’s *al-Maʿārif* as an early example of this type.¹²⁹

Table 3.4. Ibn Qutayba

Ibn Qutayba divides Abū ʿUbaydah’s entry into two sections, the first on “ <i>akhbār</i> ” (general reports on Abū ʿUbaydah’s life) and the second “ <i>ḥilya</i> ” (reports on his appearance and character). It is relatively short (about 2 pages) but still one of the longer entries in this early set of primary sources, despite the fact that Ibn Qutayba cuts out the bulk of the <i>isnād</i> and mentions only the primary narrator, if at all.	
‘Akhbār’ ¹³⁰	
1	Names the source he used to get the information of this section: Abū Yaqẓān
2	Abū ʿUbaydah’s name & lineage back to Kināna

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Khalidi, 111.

¹²⁹ Robinson, 117.

¹³⁰ Ibn Qutayba. *al-Maʿārif*. Cairo, vol. 1, 1992, p. 247.

Table 3.4. (Continued)

3	Mother's lineage and conversion
4	Notes that Abū 'Ubaydah was "one of the Greats of the Companions"
5	Base Amīn Report
6	Abū Bakr Caliphal Report
7	Notes that Abū 'Ubaydah died in Syria to the plague
8	Notes that Abū 'Ubaydah had no surviving progeny
Hilya ¹³¹	
9	Names the source he used to get the information of this section: Wāqidī
10	Wāqidī Appearance Report
11	Explains why in the preceding report he is described as missing his front teeth: because of the events of Uḥud
12	Wāqidī Death & Age Report

Ibn Qutayba's entry contains only one of the controversial reports: Abū Bakr's caliphal report. He offers no commentary and we therefore have little way of knowing how he interpreted such a report. That he included it at all is a sign that he found it truthful enough, but in the absence of explicit commentary, we must look at the implications to be found in the rest of his work, which seems to suggest that he did not interpret the report literally. In ordering the entries, he placed Abū 'Ubaydah as tenth of the Ten Promised Paradise, which would seem to belie any argument that he saw Abū 'Ubaydah as on equal footing with the first and second caliph.

Despite being something of an outsider within the first set of sources, Ibn Qutayba seems to have set certain standards for the entries of later generations. He is the first to order Abū 'Ubaydah as tenth - which would become standard practice by the

¹³¹ Ibid, vol. 1, p. 248.

end of the 5th century - and was also one of the few early sources to include Wāqidī's appearance report, a staple component of latter entries.

3.2.9. Yaq'ūb b. Sufyān

Yaq'ūb b. Sufyān al-Fārisī (d. 277), Persian *ḥadīth* scholar, devotes a very short entry to Abū 'Ubaydah in his *al-Ma'rifa wa'l-Tārīkh*. A combination of chronography and prosopography, the work includes Abū 'Ubaydah's entry in its strangely organized section on biographies of famous figures of Islamic history. The organization is a cross between merit- and alphabetically-based listing in which the names of the Ten Promised Paradise are in their conventional order, but under each name, other individuals of the same name are added. In this way, though Abū 'Ubaydah is in merit placed tenth, his entry comes thirty-eighth, thanks to the many 'Uthmān's, Zubayr's and 'Abd al-Raḥmān's that populate the list above him.

The entry itself is short, constituting no more than half a page. It includes Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage back to Fihri, and a single *ḥadīth* narrated by him, with a full *isnād* connecting Yaq'ūb back to him.¹³² This single *ḥadīth* does not have any apparent bearing on his biography, and it would seem Yaq'ūb narrates it solely to have a connection between himself and the biographee.

3.2.10. al-Nasā'ī

al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915) is known chiefly for his *ḥadīth* compilation, which was to become one of the six canonical Sunni collections. Despite the status of his work, however, little is known about his life. Reportedly, he travelled extensively, staying sometime in Egypt then Damascus. He may have studied with Bukhārī, though Brown notes some doubts in that regard.¹³³

Ideologically he had clear pro-'Alid tendencies - demonstrated in his compilation of *ḥadīth* on the special status of 'Alī, *Kitāb al-Khaṣā'ish fi faḍl 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* - and conversely, he could also be characterized as anti-Umayyad.

¹³² Yaq'ūb b. Sufyān. *Al-Ma'rifa Wa'l-Tārīkh*. Mu'assasa al-Risala, vol. 1, 1981, pp. 294-5.

¹³³ *Canonization*, 55.

His work, *Faḍā'il al-Sahāba*, is a collection of reports on the merits of individual Companions, organized as a biographical dictionary. In content and structure it most matches Ibn Ḥanbal's text of similar name. The text starts with Abū Bakr, then the other three Rightly Guided Caliphs, and continues on to other senior Companions. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry comes fourteenth. That the Ten Promised Paradise are not all placed first in their order suggests that such a system had not yet become the sole option of merit-based ordering.

Table 3.5. al-Nasā'ī

Like Ibn Hanbal's entry on Abū 'Ubaydah, al-Nasā'ī's is not so much a biography as it is a listing of <i>ḥadīth</i> which attest to Abū 'Ubaydah's general merit. It does not even begin with a single sentence summary of his life, but rather is made up solely of eight reports wherein Abū 'Ubaydah is the subject.	
1	A report listing the Ten Promised Paradise ¹³⁴
2	A variant of the above report
3	Najrān Amīn Report 2
4	Variant of Najrāni Amīn Report 2
5	Najrāni Amīn Report 1
6	'Ā'isha The Prophet's Beloved Companions Report
7	'Ā'isha Caliphal Report

The entry seems to be consciously separated into three distinct themes: the Ten Promised Paradise, the coming of the Najrāni delegation, and 'Ā'isha's attestation to Abū 'Ubaydah's merit. Reports 1 and 2 are variants reports listing the Ten Promised Paradise. In the former, Abū 'Ubaydah is listed tenth, and in the later, eighth. From their narration we can be sure al-Nasā'ī was aware of the report later scholars would use to order Companions, which makes it all the more significant when he opts for a different ordering scheme in sorting his entries.

¹³⁴ Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb. *Faḍā'il al-Sahāba*. Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, vol. 1, 1984, p. 28. All of the reports thereafter are from 1:28-30.

Reports 3, 4 and 5 revolve around the visit of the Najrāni delegation to the Prophet (s). Each narration concludes with the bestowal of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s famous title, *Amīn* of this *Ummah*.

Reports 6 and 7 are both controversial reports. Coming back to back, they make a strong case that ‘Ā’isha, at least, would have ranked Abū ‘Ubaydah next to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, both in closeness to the Prophet (s) and capacity for the office of caliphate. Unfortunately, al-Nasā’ī does not comment on either report, and we are left in the same position as with Ibn Ḥanbal’s reports: they both transmit the controversial reports without giving any sign (other than the act of transmission itself) that they are interpreting the reports at their literal value.

3.3. Analysis of Set 1

From the above reading of Set 1, we can conclude that the controversial reports were clearly in circulation as early as the earliest extant texts. Each of the reports occurs at least once, and three of them occur two or three times. As for the texts, most contain only one or two of the controversial reports, with the exception of Ibn Ḥanbal’s text which contains all but the ‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report. The net result is that out of 48 possible occurrences (i.e. if each text narrated every single one of the controversial reports) the reports are cited 8 times - a rate that is, as we shall see, significantly less than comparable rates in the latter sets.

Apart from actual narration, we find little commentary on how the reports were interpreted. What we *do* have is expressions of Sunni doctrine *against* the notion that Abū ‘Ubaydah was considered for the first or third caliphate, often from the very same authors who include the above reports. Ibn Ḥanbal is the most telling example of this - he narrates both Abū Bakr’s and ‘Umar’s testimony as to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy for the caliphate, as well as ‘Ā’isha’s statement that he was most beloved to the Prophet (s) after Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, but then in his *Kitāb al-Sunna* he does not even mention Abū ‘Ubaydah by name when ranking Companions, which leaves him after all the Companions of the *Shūra*. *Why* staunch

proto-Sunni scholars like Ibn Ḥanbal would include reports which contradict the doctrine on ranking Companions that he himself was helping to build is a key question. Perhaps it is a logical outcome of *ḥadīth* scholarship's focus on *isnād*-based verification - if the *isnād* is sound, then the *matn* must be given some measure of acceptance, nominal acceptance if the theological implications are too extreme, but acceptance nonetheless.

In terms of ordering of entries, Set 1 exhibits the richest variety of orderings systems, probably because this early on, no conventional system had been in use long enough to accrue dominant authority. Thus in orderings by merit (which are present in seven of the twelve entries), Abū 'Ubaydah entry is placed anywhere from seventh to twenty-third. Apart from merit, lineage is present in two of the entries, three if we count Ibn Sa'd's combination of merit and lineage in his *Ṭabaqāt*. This lineage-based ordering does not recur again in any of the latter entries; that it is present in Set 1 only acts as handy indication that the genealogical focus so evident in early Islamic historiography was largely superseded by the end of the 3rd century.

In terms of the mechanics of these entries, they tend for the most part to be short. Five of the entries are less than a page, and the longest entry is only five pages. Furthermore, the entries lack internal structure relative to latter entries. While in latter sets, the content of the entry usually ran more or less chronologically, in these entries, with the exception of Ibn Qutayba's, it is difficult to discern a logic or sequence to the way the information is presented in the entry. This is perhaps because virtually all of the above entries are made up almost exclusively of separate, atomistic *akhbār*, which follow the *isnād-matn* pattern with no commentary in between. Each of these reports are meticulously reported with a complete *isnād* from the author to the initial narrator.

CHAPTER 4

SET 2 PRIMARY SOURCES

The second set of reports spans from the early 4th century to the beginning of the Crusades, encompassing a total of nine biographical entries. We have by now left behind the latest stages in Robinson and Donner's periodizations. The influence of the *ḥadīth* science, though no doubt still present, diminishes somewhat in this century and a half. In Khalidi's framework, the influence of *ḥadīth* is in this time slowly being replaced by the influence of *adab* (from the 3rd to the 5th century AH) and of *hikma* (from the 4th to the 5th century AH). We briefly summarize the relevant sections of his work as a contextualization to the sources of this set.

4.1. Khalidi on History and *Adab*

Khalidi defines *adab* as "a process of moral and intellectual education designed to produce an *adib*, a gentleman-scholar."¹³⁵ In the early and classical period, this denoted "a *special* kind of education, a moral and intellectual curriculum aimed at a particular urban class and reflecting the needs and aspirations of that class," - a class which was more open to secular and foreign literary features than *ḥadīth* scholars.¹³⁶

Gentleman-scholars were different from their counterparts of the *ḥadīth* tradition in a number of ways. They would "display a pronounced willingness to speak in the first person singular, to pass severe and explicit verdicts on men and events and to use historical and literary evidence to prove or disprove authenticity."¹³⁷ Furthermore, while *Hadith* transmitters "felt themselves constrained by their subject-matter to withdraw into the background and allow their material to speak for itself, the early *adibs* felt no such constraint."¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 83.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 87.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Historians influenced by an *adab* education began to develop “criteria of truth quite different from those prevalent among *Hadith* scholars,” wherein “reports transmitted by only a few can, if they pass the test of rational inquiry, possess the same credibility status as reports of multiple witnesses” - effectively undercutting the cruciality of the *isnād* based citation.¹³⁹ This departure from the *isnād* format meant that *adab*-historians could vastly expand the scope of their histories. *Hadith* naturally dealt with early Islamic history (in addition to certain references to the history of earlier Prophets), but *adab*-historians could, and often did, access foreign literary and historical works to compose universal histories of the entire known world. While in the entries we review, the foundational nature of the *ḥadīth* report never disappears, Khalidi’s observation may help explain the decline of the full-*isnād* citation to take place in the later two sets of primary sources.

In their intention, *Adab*-historians were more comfortable in openly projecting their own *persona* onto their work, as demonstrated by the growth of the introduction, “in which intentions, method and organization are spelled out and some indication is offered as to why the work has been produced and to whom it is addressed.”¹⁴⁰ This also accounts for the relative increase in “citation of bibliography” which “spells out more clearly the way that the historian has decided to proceed and indicates some of his own criteria of accuracy and reliability.”¹⁴¹ We already saw the beginning of this in the later entries of Set 1, and continue to see its impact in Set 2 and on.

In numbers and statistics, the *Adab*-historians benefited from state records, access to which was available to these historians, many of whom served as scribes or bureaucrats in the Umayyad or ‘Abbāsīd administration. Such data included information on taxes, personal estates and the price of staple goods. Apart from access to a wider source of statistics, *Adab*-historians also differed in their conceptualization of numbers. They inclined to “a less symbolic, more literal use of

¹³⁹ Ibid, 106.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 113.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 115.

numbers” which brought them to ask, for instance, “could these ancient kings and patriarchs really have lived for so long?”¹⁴² While “the full implications of these doubts were elaborated by the *Hikma*-oriented historians...a blanket of scepticism was already being drawn by the historian-*adibs* across the facts and figures of ancient history.”¹⁴³

Finally, in structure, *Adab*-oriented historiography moved away from the “individual, discrete unit (*khavar*) of historical information beloved by *Hadith*-oriented historiography” to longer, merged narratives.¹⁴⁴ This too is evident starting in Set 2 and more so in Sets 3 and 4.

4.2. Khalidi on History and *Hikma*

Khalidi defines *Hikma* as those rational sciences which “did not descend directly from the Qur’an and *Hadith*.”¹⁴⁵ These he subdivided into the “natural science, i.e. mathematics, astronomy, alchemy and medicine” and the “philosophical sciences, i.e. logic, philosophy and dialectical theology.”¹⁴⁶ It was under the epistemic guidance of this rational system that “historical thought reached its widest theoretical extent,” dealing with issues “regarding historical knowledge, what it is, how it occurs and what purposes it serves.”¹⁴⁷ This growth in theoretical rigour was due in large part to internal debates within the *Hikma*-tradition on the nature and value of history, as well as debates against the *Hadith*-dominated historiography that acted as a whetstone for *Hikma*-historiography, honing its methodology. Within the period of *Hikma*-oriented historiography, Arab-Islamic histories for the first time “apply the principles of scientific method and philosophical reasoning to the study of history.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Ibid, 124.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 129.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 131.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 136.

Much of these discussions centered around the role of the *akhbār* in this method, with *Hikma*-historians differing from *Hadith*-historians in their insistence that it is rational analysis of the text and its point of origin *along with* a verification of the chain of transmission, that provides historical proof of the validity of historical information.

All in all, the period of *Hikma* influence left the historiographic tradition much more sophisticated, and methodologically rigorous, than it had been before. As he writes, “wherever history was touched by *Hikma*, it was left a more accurate, more law-like, more practicable and more comparative discipline.”¹⁴⁹

4.3. Set 2 Entries

4.3.1. Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī

Though in general the length of entries tends to increase over time, the first four entries within this set are all less than a page in length. Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī’s (d. 310/923) is the first of these.¹⁵⁰ In his *al-Kunyā wa’l-Asāma’* he provides details on the names and titles of first the Prophet (s), then the Ten Promised Paradise, then other Companions (arranged alphabetically), Followers and *ḥadīth* transmitters. Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry begins with his name and lineage, which Dūlābī supports with more *khavar*-references than the typical biographer might deem necessary.¹⁵¹ Dūlābī then narrates in full, with *isnād* stretching from himself back to Abū ‘Ubaydah, a single *ḥadīth* in which Abū ‘Ubaydah narrates the Prophetic *ḥadīth* on the rewards of good deeds and charity, and the benefit of patience in affliction.¹⁵² That ends his entry.

Focused almost exclusively on name and lineage, but arranged, for the most part, alphabetically, this work can be seen as a kind of transition stage between the genealogical works of Ibn Khayyāt and Mus‘ab half a century earlier, and the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 181.

¹⁵⁰ Topaloğlu, Nuri. “DŪLĀBĪ, Ebū Bişr.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 09, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994, pp.551-52.

¹⁵¹ Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī. *Al-Kunyā Wa’l-Asāma’*. Dar Ibn Hazm, vol. 1, 2000, p. 30.

¹⁵² Ibid, 1:31.

extremely concise *ḥadīth*-transmitter's reference works that would become popular within the next century. For data on Abū 'Ubaydah, we cannot glean much except to observe that his position as tenth of the Ten, to be placed before all other Companions, is slowly becoming a norm.

4.3.2. Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī

Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī's (d. 327/938) *al-Jarḥ wa'l-Ta'dīl* on *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism is the second such text. The work, being the epitome of a reference project, is organized alphabetically. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry therefore comes next to all the other entries on the name 'Āmir.¹⁵³ It is short - not exceeding a single paragraph - and contains his name along with that of his father and grandfather, his tribal and sub-tribal affiliation and a brief note on when and where he died. As this is a work on *ḥadīth* transmitters, it concludes with a list of those who related *ḥadīth* from Abū 'Ubaydah.

4.3.3. Ibn Ḥibbān

Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) *ḥadīth* scholar and historian of Khurasān, includes a short entry on Abū 'Ubaydah in his regional prosopography *Mashāḥīr 'Ulamā' al-Amṣār*. The work is ordered by both geographical locale and merit. Individuals are first grouped according to their region of operation, and within that group, they are ordered by merit. The people of Medina come first, and within those, the famous Companions. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry is twelfth, as the last of the Ten. What is unique here is that Ibn Hibban places the Prophet's (s) grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, immediately after their father 'Alī.

The entry itself is extremely short, consisting of only Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage back to al-Naḍr, a reference to his title of *Amīn* of the *Ummah*, and a note on where and when he died.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī. *Al-Jarḥ Wa'l-Ta'dīl*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, vol 6, 1952, p. 325.

¹⁵⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān. *Mashāḥīr 'Ulamā' Al-Amṣār*. Dar al-Wafa', 1991, p. 27.

4.3.4. al-Muṭṭahir b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī

al-Muṭṭahir b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 355/965) was a relatively unknown historian, philosopher and theologian of the Mu'tazilite school. Most of what we do know is directly concerned with his universal history, *al-Bad' wa'l-Ta'rīkh*. The work covers pre-Islamic, Islamic, Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd history and in content and style is akin to Mas'ūdī's more famous work: *Murūj al-Dhahab*. In the work, Maqdisī eschewed sole reliance on *isnād* analysis and favored a verification method which placed great weight on reason and logic. In the words of Süleyman Sayar in his *İslam Ansiklopedisi* entry, this marks the beginning of a new, more independent type of Islamic historiography.¹⁵⁵

At its core a work of universal history, *al-Bad' wa'l-Ta'rīkh* has only a small portion of the text taken up by biographies of Companions. These are in the fifth volume, in the section entitled "Mentioning the Most Meritorious of the Companions, and those in command from the Muhājirun and Anṣār - describing their states, the length of their lives, the beginning of their conversion, their children and those who had descendants and those whose line of descent was cut off." Abū 'Ubaydah's entry comes ninth, as one of the Ten Promised Paradise.

In the entry, Maqdisī takes after Ibn Qutayba. He divides the very short entry into two sections: the first provides a brief summarizing biography mentioning Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage back to his grandfather, his time and place of death, and his having had no living descendants. The second section, like Ibn Qutayba's entitled "*ḥilya*," begins with the same physical description narrated by Wāqidī, then the Conversion Report, also from Wāqidī. The entry contains no *isnād*, and no 'sample' *ḥadīth* connecting the biographer to the biographee.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Sayar, Süleyman. "MAKDİSÎ, Mutahhar b. Tâhir." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003, p. 433.

¹⁵⁶ Maqdisī, al-Muṭṭahir b. Ṭāhir. *Al-Bad' Wa'l-Ta'rīkh*. Maktaba al-Thiqafa al-Diniyya.

4.3.5. al-Ṭabarānī

Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) was an expert ḥadīth scholar native to Syria. He reportedly travelled for 33 years in pursuit of ḥadīth, a journey which took him from Iraq to the Hijaz, Yemen, and finally Egypt. He was able to study under a broad range of ḥadīth and history experts, including al-Ṭabarī and al-Nasāʾī.¹⁵⁷ His expertise in the field eventually brought him the title of Ḥāfiẓ of *Hadith* of his era.¹⁵⁸ Ṭabarānī ultimately settled in Isfahan, under the patronage of its governor. There, he taught Abū Nuʾaym al-Iṣfahānī - covered below - among other students of *Hadith*.

Ṭabarānī compiled a number of *ḥadīth* collections, of which the *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* is the largest. Apart from *ḥadīth*, he also wrote works of *tafsīr* and polemics against Muʿtazilite theology, himself being a staunch Hanbali. In commenting on his methodology, Brown writes that “he took pride in gathering rare *ḥadīths* found nowhere else as well as their relatively short *isnāds*” and “authenticity was not one of his concerns.”¹⁵⁹

al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr is a collection of *ḥadīth* sorted, like a *musnad*, according to the initial Companion-narrator. Unlike typical works of the *musnad* genre, however, the actual reports narrated by that Companion are preceded by often-extensive biographical notices on that narrator, as told through *other* reports in which that Companion is the subject. The result is something of a cross between a *musnad* and a biographical dictionary.

Like other *ḥadīth* scholars before him, Ṭabarānī organizes the vast majority of the entries alphabetically. However, he makes an exception for the Ten Promised Paradise, because, as he writes in his introduction, “they cannot be preceded by

¹⁵⁷ Fierro, Maribel. “Al-Ṭabarānī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Görmez, Mehmet. “TABERÂNÎ.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 39, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010, p. 310.

¹⁵⁹ *Canonization*, 61.

anyone outside of themselves,”¹⁶⁰ a note which hints at the crystallization of the Ten placed at the top of the Companions.

Table 4.1. al- Ṭabarānī

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry is last of the Ten, following the most frequent order of the Ten. The entry consists of four distinct sections.	
“The lineage of Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, may God be pleased with him”	
1	Report from Ibn Ishāq on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s lineage back to Fihir. Ṭabarānī includes a full <i>isnād</i> from himself to Ibn Ishāq ¹⁶¹
2	Report from Ibn Abī Shayba on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name. Ṭabarānī includes a full <i>isnād</i> from himself to Ibn Abī Shayba
“Abū ‘Ubaydah’s slaying of his father on the Day of Badr”	
3	Badr & Father Report
4	Report from ‘Urwa identifying Abū ‘Ubaydah as one of the few members of the Banū Ḥārith b. Fihir to participate (as a Muslim) in Badr.
5	Report from Ibn Ḥanbal on Abū ‘Ubaydah racing a young jockey. Ṭabarānī does not explain the connection between this report and Badr.
“The death & age of Abū ‘Ubaydah, may God be pleased with him”	
6	Wāqidī Death & Age Report
7	Report detailing how Abū ‘Ubaydah and Mu‘ādh were first struck by the plague, and responded with patience
8	Commanders of Syria Report
“What was related by Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, may God be pleased with him”	
9	Hadith on the merits of the morning prayer, related through Abū ‘Ubaydah
10	Hadith on the entropy of human character in latter times
11	Variant of the previous ḥadīth

¹⁶⁰ Ṭabarānī, Sulaymān b. Aḥmad. *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*. Maktaba Ibn Taymiyya, Cairo, vol. 1, 1994, p. 51.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 1:154. The reports that follow are from 1:154-57.

The entry's structure and content is mostly self-explanatory. Abū 'Ubaydah's portrayal here is, relatively speaking, laid back. No mention is made of any of the controversial reports, and Ṭabarānī does not even reference his status as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*. From his ordering, however, we can see a growing consensus around the rank of the Ten Promised Paradise above all other Companions, and from Ṭabarānī's elaborate entry structure we can perhaps see signs of the elaboration of the historiographic science.

4.3.6. al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī

Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī (d. 354/1014) was a famous *ḥadīth* scholar and historian. Said to have studied *ḥadīth* with over two thousand scholars, he eventually became *the* authority on *ḥadīth* in his hometown of Naysabūr. Apart from a biographical dictionary and a work on Prophetic biography, al-Hakim's "works revolved around the science of *ḥadīth* criticism" of which the *Mustadrak*, reviewed below, is the most famous.¹⁶²

The work is a collection of *ḥadīth* organized topically. Within the legal topics of the collection is a section titled "Book on Knowledge of the Companions, may God be pleased with them." al-Ḥākim begins that section with the note that:

As for the two *Shaykhs* [Bukhārī and Muslim], they did not include much of the *Manāqib* [i.e. reports on the virtues of certain individuals]. In our entry of the Companion, we have begun with his lineage and death, then with what reports discussing that Companion's *manāqib* were authenticated based on the standards of the two [*Shaykhs*], though they did not collect them. In this, I am indebted to Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī and his contemporaries, in *al-Ma'rifa*.¹⁶³

In other words, these entries are meant to include reports on the individual Companion that, though not included by Bukhārī or Muslim, *would* have been included had they known of them. Dhahabī wrote a commentary on the work,

¹⁶² *Canonization*, 156.

¹⁶³ al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh. *Al-Mustadrak 'alā Al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, vol. 3, 1990, p. 64.

giving his input on al-Ḥākim's judgment regarding the ḥadīth. His comments provide a useful second opinion on the *ḥadīth* that al-Ḥākim deems fit to count as *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

al-Ḥākim's ordering of entries is not entirely clear. The first entries are devoted to the first four caliphs, then to the immediate *Ahl al-Bayt*. One would expect this to be followed by the Ten, and while individuals of the Ten do come next, these are interjected with sections on lesser known Companions. In any case, Abū 'Ubaydah comes around the fifteenth entry.

Table 4.2. al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī

The entry itself consists of more than twenty reports, each narrated with its own <i>isnād</i> .	
1	A citation from Ibn Ishāq, noting Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage, as well as the lineage of his mother. ¹⁶⁴
2	A citation from Ibn Khayyāt, specifying that Abū 'Ubaydah's mother became Muslim.
3	'Umar Wishing Report.
4	Ibn Mas'ūd Friendship Report.
5	Plague & Letter Report. al-Dhahabī notes that this report fulfills the conditions of Bukhārī and Muslim.
6	Report in which the plague is spreading, and Mu'ādh sends a messenger to check on Abū 'Ubaydah - the messenger finds him afflicted but completely at calm with his lot.
7	Mu'ādh Eulogy Report.
8	Wāqidī Appearance Report.
9	Report on Abū 'Ubaydah's death - where and when it occurred.
10	Report in which 'Urwa records Abū 'Ubaydah as one of the participants at Badr.
11	Badr & Father Report.
12	'Iyyāḍ Visit Report.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 3:294. The reports that follow are from 3:294-300.

Table 4.2. (Continued)

13	Report on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death - where and when, and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s age at the time.
14	A variant of the preceding report.
15	Najrān Amīn Report.
16	Not Take to Task Hadith. al-Ḥākim notes that the report is <i>mursal</i> - meaning the initial narrator did not actually meet the Prophet (s), but he also notes that its transmitters are all trustworthy. Dhahabī just notes that it is <i>mursal</i> .
17	A report in which Abū Bakr says to Abū ‘Ubaydah, upon sending him to Sham, “I would like you to know my esteem for you, and your place in my heart - for by [God], there is no man on earth, <i>Muhājir</i> or otherwise, that I equate with you, not even this” - meaning ‘Umar - “though he has with me the highest station except for yours.”
18	Report in which Abū Bakr narrates Abū ‘Ubaydah helping the Prophet (s) at Uḥud.
19	A summarizing report from al-Wāqidī, mentioning Abū ‘Ubaydah’s early conversion, his two <i>hijra</i> ’s and his participation in Badr and Uḥud.
20	A report detailing that Abū ‘Ubaydah had a seal with the phrase: Trustworthiness is precious.
21	Najrān Amīn Report 2. According to Dhahabī, it fulfills the conditions of Bukhārī and Muslim.
22	Yemen Amīn Report.
23	Abū Bakr Caliphal Report. al-Ḥākim notes that the report is <i>ṣaḥīḥ</i> in its transmission while Dhahabī says that it is <i>munqaṭi’</i> - meaning the Successor relating it did not meet Abū Bakr, and so it is a kind a <i>mursal</i> .
24	‘Umar Caliphal Report. Dhahabī is noted to have kept silent about it, which could either mean he has nothing to say in criticism of it, or nothing to say in praise of it. Nevertheless, seeing as he did criticize earlier reports for weaknesses in their chain, his silence here may be taken as tacit approval.
25	What an Excellent Man Hadith.

All in all, the entry is one of the longest entries we have on Abū ‘Ubaydah, but largely unstructured. Though there are one or two reports that cluster around a given topic, there does not seem to be any general scheme guiding the order of reports. Still it is clear that, according to al-Ḥākim, certain controversial reports were authentic enough to pass Bukhārī and Muslim’s standards.

4.3.7. Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī

Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1039) was born to a family which, though only recently converted, were nonetheless steeped in the religious sciences, specifically in the field of *taṣawwuf*.¹⁶⁵ *Taṣawwuf* would later become one of Abū Nu‘aym’s specialities, but it was in the realm of *ḥadīth* that he became a master, according to later classical biographers.

Abū Nu‘aym’s most famous work is a biographical dictionary of Sufi saints and scholars. Apart from this, he wrote a local biographical dictionary on the people of Isfahan, as well as a number of smaller works, among them an encyclopedia on Companions and a biographical dictionary of the Caliphs, both of which we review below.

His *Ma‘rifat al-Saḥāba* is a kind of cross between a *miscellanea* on Companion-hood and a biographical dictionary of Companions. It begins with a number of short sections covering aspects of the generation of Companions - their number, general merit, different ranks, etc. Thereafter the work is an alphabetically arranged dictionary of Companions, with the Ten Promised Paradise preceding everyone else.

Table 4.3. Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī

Of the ten, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry again comes last. Though Abū Nu‘aym does not divide the entry into sections, it can be divided into three distinct groups, the first a general biography of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life in the words of Abū Nu‘aym, the second a series of fully-cited reports to support the preceding section, and the third a <i>musnad</i> of <i>ḥadīth</i> narrated by Abū ‘Ubaydah.

¹⁶⁵ Pedersen, J. “Abū Nu‘aym Al-Iṣfahānī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

Table 4.3. (Continued)

“General knowledge on Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ, [including] his name, lineage, description, age and death”	
1	Notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s lineage as well as that of his mother. ¹⁶⁶
2	References some of the highlights of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s career - making <i>hijra</i> to Abyssinia then Medina, participating in Badr, leading military expeditions and receiving the title <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> .
3	Notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah was “present in the <i>Saqīfa</i> with al-Siddīq and al-Fārūq, and gave allegiance to al-Siddīq after al-Siddīq bade him [instead] to accept their allegiance, noting that he [Abū Bakr] was pleased with that.”
4	Continues to reference other highlights, specifically Abū ‘Ubaydah’s generalship in Syria and how he replaced Khālīd b. al-Walīd.
5	Provides some physical description, based on but not citing al-Wāqidī’s Appearance Report.
6	Details Abū ‘Ubaydah’s age at Badr and at death.
7	Report from Ibn Ishāq recounting Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name and lineage.
8	Variant of the preceding, Ibn Ishāq report.
9	Badr & Father Report.
10	Report on Abū ‘Ubaydah participating in a horse race
11	Wāqidī Appearance Report.
12	Uḥud & Metal Links Report.
13	Report describing Abū ‘Ubaydah’s appearance - how he would dye his hair and beard with <i>henna</i> , wore his hair in two plaits, and was missing his two front teeth.
14	Wāqidī Death & Age Report.
15	Report on where Abū ‘Ubaydah died (Jordan) and who prayed over him (Mu’ādh).
16	Report on where Abū ‘Ubaydah’s grave is (<i>Bīstān</i>).

¹⁶⁶ Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣbahānī. *Ma’rifat al-Sahāba*. Dar al-Watan, vol. 1, 1998, p. 148. The following references are from 1:148-50.

Table 4.3. (Continued)

17	Commanders of Syria Report.
18	Base Amīn Report.
19	Najrān Amīn Report 1.

The first section is one of the most cohesive biographical summaries encountered so far. Abū Nu‘aym follows a generally chronological order and does not interrupt the narrative flow to cite *isnād*’s or individual reports. He likely synthesized the summary from earlier biographies as well as individual reports that he had collected, as many of the texts are similar if not identical to reports but are here fitted together to paint a broader picture. Of particular note is his reference to the incident at *Saqīfa*. He does not say much - only that Abū Bakr was pleased with him or ‘Umar as caliph, really no more than the original report states. Yet the fact that he summarizes it here, without recourse to an *isnād* or report, and states the occurrence as historical fact, suggests that for Abū Nu‘aym at least the original report was reliable enough to use without qualification or reservation.

The second section is almost the opposite of the first. It is made up entirely of individual reports with an *isnād* cited for each. Many of them repeat the same information as the previous section, and perhaps act as a kind of footnote system, verifying the information of the previous summary. Other reports here act as a kind of miscellanea on Abū ‘Ubaydah, each addressing some other aspect of his biography or character.¹⁶⁷

As for his *Faḍā’il al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, as the title suggests, *Faḍā’il* is chiefly about the merits of the first four caliphs. In it, however, Abū Nu‘aym also discusses the merits of a few other elite Companions. Abū ‘Ubaydah comes up in two sections.

¹⁶⁷ Abū Nu‘aym does mention Abū ‘Ubaydah again in *Ma’rifā*, under his proper alphabetical listing. However, this entry is far shorter and includes only one ḥadīth narrated by Abū ‘Ubaydah not included in the third section of the earlier entry. See Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī. *Ma’rifā Al-Saḥāba*. Dar al-Watan, vol. 4, 1998, p. 2049.

The first, entitled “Ways in Which Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrah was without peer,” is a collection of three reports on his merit.

The first of these is the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report. The second report is again from Abū Bakr, that he heard the Prophet (s) say, *For every Ummah there is an Amīn, and the Amīn of this Ummah is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāh*. This is perhaps a variant of the first report, because in that one too, Abū Bakr cites the Prophet’s (s) title for Abū ‘Ubaydah as sufficient justification to give Abū ‘Ubaydah the caliphate. The third report is centered around the Base Amīn report. Abū Nu‘aym notes that this particular report was narrated by many Companions, among them: Jābir, Ibn ‘Umar, Anas b. Mālik, Hudhayfa, Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and Abū Umama.

He concludes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry - and the general section on the merits of the Ten - by writing the following:

So these are the Ten Promised Paradise. We began with [them, and] what was said about their merit and speciality because they are the *Sādāt* (Masters) of the Companions, the best of them. God Most High chose them to be the *viziers* of His Messenger (s). And for the *Ahl al-Bayt* there is *al-Sābiqa* and *al-Taqqaddum* over all remaining people, due to their *sharaf* and their close ties with the Messenger of God, (s). They are his flesh and blood, no other man of noble lineage can partake in their *sharaf* and precedence. And no partner nor ally shares with them in their station and virtue.¹⁶⁸

He then goes on to discuss the merits of member of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. The implication is that, for Abū Nu‘aym at least, the best Companions are: the first four caliphs, then the remaining of the Ten, then the *Ahl al-Bayt*, then everyone else. His discussion of the concept in such confident terms gives clear evidence of the crystallization of this ranking scheme in Sunni thought.

Abū ‘Ubaydah receives substantial mention in one more occasion. In the section entitled “On the Oath of Allegiance given by ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr and Abū ‘Ubaydah to Abū Bakr, may God be pleased with them all” Abū Nu‘aym collects

¹⁶⁸ Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī. *Faḍā’il Al-Khulafā’ Al-Rāshidīn*. Dar al-Bukhari, 1997, p. 114.

reports on the events during and after the *Saqīfa* incident. One of these is the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report.¹⁶⁹

4.3.8. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) was a traditionist, historian and Maliki jurist native to Andalusia. According to his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry, he was “considered the best traditionist of his time” and was “equally distinguished in *fiqh* and in the science of genealogy.”¹⁷⁰ Leys Cāsim provides equally laudatory remarks in his *Islam Ansiklodelisi* article, noting that Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr enjoyed a great renown from his own time onwards, and received the praises of scholars like Ibn Ḥazm, al-Suyūṭī and al-Dhahabī.¹⁷¹ Ibn Taymiyya, however, suspected him to have Shi‘i tendencies due to his apparent preference for ‘Alī over other Companions. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr authored a number of works on biography, law and *ḥadīth* methodology, among them the following biographical dictionary on the Companions.

His *Kitāb al-Istī‘āb fī ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb* begins with an uncommonly long introduction, one relevant in many ways to our study of the ranking of Companions. He begins by emphasizing the importance of the *Sunnah*, its critical role in providing interpretive lens for the Qur‘an, and the corresponding crucial role of the Companions in first interpreting and second transmitting the *Sunnah*. He lists their virtue - that they are the best of people, and all upright (in the technical meaning of the term) - and he discusses their ranks, in particular noting the special merit of those who witnessed Badr and those who swore the oath at Hudaybiyya.¹⁷² Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr here includes numerous variants of the same core report on the merits of certain Companions:

Indeed, the most merciful of my Ummah towards my Ummah is Abū Bakr, the strongest of them in matters of religion is ‘Umar, the most true of them in modesty is ‘Uthmān, the most judicious of them is ‘Alī, the most literate of

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 187.

¹⁷⁰ Pellat, Ch. “Ibn ‘Abd Al-Barr.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

¹⁷¹ Cāsim, Leys Suud. “İBN ABDÜLBER en-NEMERÎ.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 269–72.

¹⁷² Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. *Kitāb al-Istī‘āb fī ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*. Ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad. Beirut, 1992, pp. 1-16.

them is Ubayy, the most skilled in the laws of inheritance is Zayd, the most knowledgeable of the permissible and the impermissible is Mu'ādh b. Jabal, and for every Ummah there is an *Amīn*, and the *Amīn* of this *Ummah* is Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāḥ.¹⁷³

Then he offers rare commentary on the nature of ranking Companions:

The Messenger of God, (s), saw merit in all of the Companions, each one having some special merit by which he named them, and which he identified. There has not come [any report] in a *ṣaḥīḥ* way from him that he preferred one from them over another specifically, but he did mention about their merits things that were used to derive evidence on their relative position and rank in merit and religiosity and knowledge. Furthermore, he was too forbearing and noble in social interaction, and too knowledgeable about the beautiful aspects of character than to tell a virtuous person to his face that there is someone else more virtuous than he, so that the man would harbor something in his soul. Rather, he extolled the most foremost from amongst them, and the people of special virtue over those who did not reach their level, and said to them: 'If you were to spend the like of *Uḥud* in gold, you would not equal a handful of charity from them, or even half of that.'¹⁷⁴

A little after that he continues, "And for every group of them there is a known rank, and a described state. We will mention in each entry every one of these from what has reached us about that, God willing."¹⁷⁵ From these passages, we can establish two core points about Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's conception of ranking Companions: first, that there were general categories of ranking Companions, with the earliest converts having the greatest amount of precedence. Second, *within* those broad categories, and in particular, within the top bracket, the Prophet (s) did not extoll one individual over another; each after all had his own special virtue that set him apart. As for arguments saying that the greatest Companions were ranked, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr dismisses them by simply stating that there is no sound *ḥadīth* as to the Prophet (s) enumerating such a ranking. Referring to our earlier discussion of ranking Companions, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's position comes as rather unique. That a scholar so embedded, even extolled, within his Sunni intellectual milieu could hold a

¹⁷³ Ibid, 1:16.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 1:18.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 1:18.

position like this suggests that the issue of ranking Companions did not have as strict a consensus as some other scholars suggest.

Next in his introduction, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr justifies the study of Companion biography, arguing that “it is necessary to study their names and research their lives and states in order to be guided by their guidance, for they are the best of those who took [the Prophet’s (s)] path, and who emulated him.”¹⁷⁶ They are, in other words, the “link between the Prophet and his Ummah.”¹⁷⁷ Therefore, studying their lives is crucial to understanding the normative example of the Prophet (s). Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr concludes his introduction with extensive notes on his sourcing. He writes the following:

A group of scholars has [already] collected reports about this and produced books. I looked at much of what they produced in that regard, and studied what they collected closely. I found that they - may God have mercy on them - had gone on too long in some aspects, repeating and going too far back in terms of lineage, or in the ranks of the [reports’] narrators. Even if there is a place for that, it is long-winded for those who wish to simply know the crucial facts in regards to their names and biographies...and I saw that every one of these had something that his contemporaries did not have, so I sought to collect all that together and abridge it, and make it available to the one who seeks it...I mention the specific virtues of the virtuous of them, and their precedence and station, and I clarify their rank in the briefest way possible according to what has reached me. In this way the intelligent will find what they need, and be sufficed from reading the long works about the topic. I organized it alphabetically that it may be easier for the one perusing it, and that the seeker may arrive to what he is seeking. In this book I have relied upon the well-known reports from the experts of *sīra*, of *ḥadīth* reports and of genealogy, as well as the well-known histories upon which the scholars build their understanding of the history of Islam and the biographies of its people.¹⁷⁸

He then goes on to list the various sources he used, in the following format: *name of original narrator, number of chains of transmission I have going back to him, recitation of each of those chains of transmission*. In this way, he cites Mūsā b. ‘Uqba, Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī, Ibn Sa’d, Ibn Khayyāt, al-Zubayr b. Abī Bakr, Mus’ab b.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 1:19.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 1:19-20.

‘Abd Allāh, al-Madā’inī, Abū Ma’shar, Bukhārī, Abū al-Abbās Muḥammad b. Ishāq, Abu Ja’far al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Dūlābī, Sa’īd b. Uthman, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad, al-Baghawī and Ibn Abī Hatim al-Razī.¹⁷⁹

This is one of the earliest example of an extensive source citation in the introduction to the text. Coming at the end of Set 2, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s introduction represents a kind of transition from the bare-bones reports of earlier sets to the more elaborate entries to come in Set 3 and 4.

Table 4.4. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr

The entry is made up of 13 points which follow a roughly chronological order.	
1	Notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name and lineage back to Kināna. ¹⁸⁰
2	Cites al-Zubayr[ī] on why Abū ‘Ubaydah lost his two front teeth.
3	Summarizes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s biography according to what “some of them mentioned” - his emigration to Abyssinia (according to one group), his participation in Badr and Hdaybiyya, and his status as one of the Ten.
4	Discusses Abū ‘Ubaydah’s two linked titles: al-Qawī al-Amīn, and <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> . References the Najrānī delegation as an explanation for how Abū ‘Ubaydah received the title.
5	References how Abū Bakr used the title as a proof that Abū ‘Ubaydah ought to be one of the two candidates for the first caliphate.
6	Quotes Ibn Abī Shayba narrating the Not Take to Task Hadith.
7	References the Khālīd Replacement report as another manifestation of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s status as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> .
8	Report on why ‘Umar replaced Khālīd (“that the [people] understand that God is the One who gives victory to His religion”).
9	Quotes Ibn Khayyāṭ, who lists the various commanders and officers of Sham before and after the plague.
10	Discusses Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death - he was one of 25,000 who fell to the plague.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 1:20-24.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 2:792. The following references are from 2:792-94.

Table 4.4. (Continued)

11	Discusses the etymology of the plague's name - 'Amawās, based on al-Aṣma'ī's opinion.
12	Dates Abū 'Ubaydah's age at time of death.
13	Cites in full, with <i>isnād</i> from him back to Anas, the Najrān Amīn Report.

Though not one of the longer entries, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's biography is compact and structured; he manages to convey a relatively substantial amount of information in a limited space. This is because he for the most part leaves out the full *isnād*, cites biographers rather than reports and gives information in digest form.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr does mention one of the key reports: the Abū Bakr caliphal report. It is included in its digest form, and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr states it not as a cited report but as historical fact: Abū Bakr *did* refer to his status as *Amīn* to justify offering him the caliphate - another reference to how embedded this particular concept has become. He does not comment further on the implications of the report.

Finally, the only report Ibn 'Abd al-Barr cites with a full *isnād* is the Najrān Amīn report at the end of the entry. That this is the very last thing Ibn 'Abd al-Barr mentions, and that it is cited in full suggests that for Ibn 'Abd al-Barr it is a kind of capstone *ḥadīth*, and that Abū 'Ubaydah's most prominent merit was his title of *Amīn* of the *Ummah*.

4.4. Analysis of Set 2

Set 2 contains about the same percentage of controversial reports as Set 1 (~14%) with a relatively even spread throughout the individual authors. This means that from the earliest extant texts (from the mid-3rd century) to the end of the 5th century, Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy as caliphate was discussed (at least in biographical literature) at about an equal rate, with no significant increases or decrease.

What this statistic does not show, however, was the change in *how* these concepts were being discussed. In Set 2, we witness for the first time Abū Bakr's Caliphal Report being referenced not as a report but as a historical 'fact,' as something that happened in Abū 'Ubaydah's life without needing a citation or report to back it up. This new way of expressing the concept can partly be attributed to the gradually increasing independence of the historiographic tradition, and the corresponding separation between it and its former patron-science: *ḥadīth*. Yet by itself this does not explain why Abū Bakr's attestation can be stated as historical fact while the majority of remaining points in each entry are still made up of *isnāds* and *akhbār*. It is likely that there was something special about Abū Bakr's words - either they were so verified or at least so central to the life-story of Abū 'Ubaydah that biographers felt comfortable citing it without a *khavar* support.

In terms of ordering the entries, we begin to see in Set 2 the standardization of merit-based rankings. Abū 'Ubaydah's place is now regularly number ten, coming as the last of the Ten Promised Paradise (see al-Dūlābī and Abū Nu'aym's *Faḍā'il*). There are signs of a lingering fluidity however, and several merit-based orderings do not entirely conform to the new convention (see how Ibn Ḥibbān located Ḥasan and Ḥusayn after their father, pushing Abū 'Ubaydah down two spots). Set 2 also witnesses the rapid rise of the alphabetical ordering. Though Bukhārī and Ya'qūb b. Yūsūf both used an alphabetical system in Set 1, now in Set 2 the alphabetical-based ordering takes nearly half the entries (4 out of 9), with merit-based ordering claiming the rest (as mentioned in Set 1, there were to be no more lineage-based orderings after Ibn Khayyāṭ's in the mid-3rd century).

The rise of the alphabetical system is evidence of the increasing complexity of both the historiographic *and* the *ḥadīth* sciences. Having just spoke of the growing separation between the two sciences, it is perhaps self-contradictory to attribute to the *ḥadīth* sciences a role in changing the format and conventions of historiographic works, but the interdependence of these two branches should not be underestimated. Yes, historiography may have won some breathing space in terms

of citation and usage of *akhbār*, but the primary use of a significant portion of biographical dictionaries on Companions, from their earliest examples down to the 10th century, was to act as a reference work for *ḥadīth* scholars in their *ḥadīth* work, which explains the rise of the reference-friendly alphabetical ordering. One need only look at the names of Set 2's authors - Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Tabarānī, al-Ḥākim, Abu Nu'aym, all known more as *ḥadīth* scholars than historians - to spot the well-rooted interdependence of the *ḥadīth* and historiographical sciences.

In terms of the mechanics of the texts, Set 2 is the dying ground of full *isnād* citation. While the majority of entries in Set 2 do still cite their reports with a full *isnād* from the author back to the original narrator, we see the early signs of a shift that will actualize in Set 3, which is the omission of the *isnād*. Four entries in Set 2 removed the *isnād* either fully or partially from their texts. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's text, coming as the last entry of Set 2, is an excellent example of the transition from full citation to other systems. As mentioned, he gives a full *isnād* to all of the texts he used to compile the reports, but he does this only *once* and in the introduction of his book. Thereafter, in the actual entries, he mentions only the original narrator or author of the text he is citing, leaving out the *isnād* connecting him back to that piece of data.

There are also signs of a more coherent internal structure for entries. Maqdisī and Tabarānī both divide their entries into multiple sections, and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's entry, though not explicitly divided, runs along a tight chronological sequence. This corresponds with a general increase in the length of entries. In Set 2, only three entries are shorter than a page, compared to Set 1's five, and there are two entries that surpass Set 1's longest, at six pages each. All in all, it is safe to say that Khalidī's observations on the growing complexity of the historiographic science are in keeping with the changes witnessed in Set 2.

CHAPTER 5

SET 3 PRIMARY SOURCES

Set 3 stretches from the end of the 5th/11th century to the rise of the Mamluk dynasty in 647/1250. This period was one of extreme crisis for Sunni Islam; it marked the beginning of the Crusades and though a century later Saladin defeated the Fatimids and pushed back the Third Crusade, his victories were soon followed by the beginning of the Mongol invasion into the Middle east. Perhaps because of the enormous external pressures, the Sunni state underwent a reinvigoration in this period which brought with it an abundance of state patronage for those Sunni scholars (and there many of them) willing to work closely with the state.

According to Khalidi's periodization, by the end of the 5th/11th century, the dominance of the *Hadith* sciences on historiography had largely waned. *Hikma*-based historiography had also faded, though *Adab*-based history would continue for a century more. The ascendant form of historiography starting at the end of the 5th/11th century and continuing until the 8th/14th was *Siyasa*-based historiography.

5.1. Khalidi on History and *Siyasa*

In Khalidi's periodization, the latest dominant influence on historiography is *Siyasa*, which witnessed its period of greatest influence "roughly between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries."¹⁸¹ By now, history as a genre was well-defined and self-aware and had a confidence which it projected to its subject matter. According to Khalidi, "whereas earlier historiography was largely an interpretation of a momentous past, the new historiography boldly projected its own present as being of equal if not greater significance."¹⁸² The influx of both invading armies (in the form of Crusaders and Mongols) and of non-Arab Muslim powers (of Persian and Turkish origins) brought about an "increasing militarization of Arab-Islamic society"

¹⁸¹ Khalidi, 182.

¹⁸² Ibid.

in which “the ruling military elites, having monopolized political power, constantly interfered in the economic, social and religious life of their subjects.”¹⁸³

The paragon of this new political order was the sultan, who soon overshadowed the figurehead of the caliph and forced “a reassessment of the purpose and structure of political power.”¹⁸⁴ While “earlier scholars had debated the qualifications and legitimacy of the caliphate, later theory was more concerned with the efficiency of government.”¹⁸⁵ In tandem with the rise of this *realpolitik* was the concept of *siyasa*: “meaning rule or governance,” which was “soon to be contrasted with *sharʿ*, or religious law” as a new way of analyzing the legitimacy of an administration.¹⁸⁶ The tension between *siyasa* and *sharʿ*, between the secular and the sacred, was to have great impact on the historiography of the period.

In fact, Khalidi argues, the rise of *siyasa* produced a new sub-genre of history: the imperial bureaucratic chronicle. Concerned largely with contemporary dynasties and the bureaucratic minutia of their rule, such histories incorporated “economic and social data hitherto considered beneath the dignity of history” and in doing so made use of “archival and diplomatic material.”¹⁸⁷ The historian, in other words, had become a bureaucrat.

At the same time as this new approach was on the rise, *Hikma*-based discussions of the epistemological basis of historical thought were largely abandoned. “To these historians,” Khalidi writes, “historical knowledge is all knowledge that bears a direct or indirect relationship to the governance of *mamalik*, or feudal principalities.”¹⁸⁸ This new historiography’s purposes were much less intellectual; not to understand, honor or revere but “to survey, to comprehend, to control, to consummate: these are the verbs embedded in the titles of many works of history of that period.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Ibid, 183.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 184.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Of special note for us is the growth of the biographical sub-genre. It was during this time that “biography interpenetrated history to the point where terms like *tarajim* and *siyar* became synonymous with *tarikh*.”¹⁹⁰ To Khalidi, much of this biographical drive was fueled by the *siyasa*-based “desire to ‘survey’ an entire cross-section or group of the community.”¹⁹¹ But it also was driven by a growing self-awareness, which Khalidi measures by things like the increase in autobiographical works or the extensive use of “‘I say’ (*qultu*) to interrupt the narrative and introduce the historian’s personal comments.”¹⁹²

The growth of the biographical sub-genre brought along with it a certain standardization of practice. Khalidi notes how one scholar set a model biographical entry that was widely followed thereafter.

Safadi gave one standard plan of presentation of the biographical entry which was widely accepted by later biographers. One begins with the name and surname, then *kunya*, then connection to a town, then descent, then school of law, then the person’s particular knowledge, craft, power, position or principality. The teachers of a person are well to the fore...The date of birth, or more commonly of death, is given and the general character estimate comes at the end. With particularly important entries, the biographers often devoted a final section to an assessment of the personality as seen by other biographers, by themselves if they possessed first-hand information or by collating several authoritative opinions...As several biographers cited above insisted, biography should not only judge character, thus invoking criteria inspired by *Hadith*, but should also imaginatively evoke a personality, thus invoking criteria inspired by *Adab*.¹⁹³

Most but perhaps not all of the trends that Khalidi identifies with the new *siyasa* paradigm are evident in the sources of Sets 3 and 4. Certainly the “standardization of practice” is in evidence, with both content and mechanics of the entries much less varied than their earlier counterparts. And while we do not see evidence of an increasing use of statistics and archival data, the increased confidence and self-

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid, 201.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 210.

expression that Khalidi identifies with *siyasa*-based historiography is in clear evidence in the below sources.

5.2. Set 3 Entries

5.2.1. al-Baghawī

al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) was a Persian scholar of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. Apart from his famous *tafsīr*, much of his work was focused on studying the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, about which he wrote multiple texts including the *ḥadīth* collection *Sharḥ al-Sunna*. Like earlier collections, Baghawī's *Sharḥ al-Sunna* has a section devoted to the *Faḍā'il* of the Companions. He begins with the merits of broad groups like the Quraysh before moving to individual entries. Within the individual entries, Abū 'Ubaydah's comes eleventh - missing out on the tenth spot because Baghawī includes among the Ten Promised Paradise the *Ahl* of the Prophet (s).

Abū 'Ubaydah's entry is short, made up of three reports. The first is the Base Amīn Report, about which Baghawī writes "the authenticity of this ḥadīth is agreed upon."¹⁹⁴ The second is the Najrān Amīn report.¹⁹⁵ The third is Anas's report on the virtues of various Companions, among them Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and Abū 'Ubaydah, who is listed as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*.¹⁹⁶

5.2.2. Ismā'īl al-Iṣbahānī

Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Iṣbahānī (d. 535/1141) was a *ḥadīth* scholar and historian, as well as author of the work: *Siyar al-Salaf al-Sāliḥīn*. As the title implies, Ismā'īl's text is a biographical dictionary of the earliest generations of Muslims, beginning with the Companions and ending with later Sufis. The entries are organized first by generation (Companions, Followers, etc) and then, within each generation, alphabetically. The exception is the Ten Promised Paradise, who are placed before all the other Companions.

¹⁹⁴ al-Baghawī, al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd. *Sharḥ Al-Sunna*. al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya, vol. 14, 1983, p. 130.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 14:131.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 14:131-32.

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes last of the ten. It begins with his name and lineage back to Mālik, accompanied with Ibn Ishāq’s report (cited by initial narrator, not *isnād*) on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s early conversion.¹⁹⁷ Ismā‘īl then narrates the Base Amīn report and the Najrān Amīn Report 2. To these Ismā‘īl adds the comment that “[the Prophet] said this more than one time.”¹⁹⁸ Ismā‘īl then cites a variant of the Najrān Amīn Report before concluding with the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report, in which Abū Bakr suggests Abū ‘Ubaydah deserves the caliphate due to his status as *Amīn*.

In this way, nearly the entire entry is taken up by Abū ‘Ubaydah’s status as *Amīn* of the *Ummah*, with a brief reference to his candidacy for the caliphate at the very end (perhaps itself a suggestion that the title of *Amīn* was evidence for his eligibility for the caliphate). By narrating the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report in an entry as short as this, where many other reports are not included, Baghawī is demonstrating the significance this report had for him.

5.2.3. Ibn ‘Asākir

Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571/1176) was born to an illustrious Damascene family with strong ties to the old Umayyad elite. He spent his youth studying grammar and *ḥadīth* before leaving Damascus to study in Baghdad at the Nizamiye, where he became student to al-Ghazālī’s disciple, Sa’d al-Khayr. Later, he left Baghdad for travels across both the Levant and Iran, collecting *ḥadīth* until he reached the level of *hafīz*.

His reputation grew once he returned to his native Damascus. It is reported that when Nūr al-Dīn al-Zangī occupied the city, he specifically sought out Ibn ‘Asākir as “a valuable ally in successfully implementing his programme of Sunni reaction in Damascus.”¹⁹⁹ Nūr al-Dīn built the first Dār al-Ḥadīth of the city for Ibn ‘Asākir, and Ibn ‘Asākir in turn wrote a collection of *ḥadīth* supporting Nūr al-Dīn’s stance on jihad.

¹⁹⁷ Ishbahānī, Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad. *Siyar al-Salaf al-Sāliḥīn*. Dār al-Rāya, Riyad, p. 259.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 260.

¹⁹⁹ Elisséeff, N. “Ibn ‘Asākir.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

But Ibn ‘Asākir’s most famous work is the *Ta’rīkh Madinat Dimashq*. Modelled after al-Khaṭīb’s monumental city-history of Baghdad, the *Ta’rīkh* consists mostly of alphabetically arranged biographies of all sorts of individuals who had some connection to the city of Damascus. The work “champions Damascus as a centre of learning, and it does so in a deeply traditionalist manner,” Robinson writes, and “Ibn ‘Asākir’s *History* is notable in precisely this respect...other historians of his period had dispensed with the *isnād*, he was retaining them.”²⁰⁰

Ibn ‘Asākir’s (perhaps outdated) adherence to earlier *ḥadīth*-standards of historiography is, as we shall see, extremely apparent. Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīkh* represents the clearest marker by which to chart the end of the *dominance* of *ḥadīth* over historiography, for it is the last entry we review that uses full *isnād* citation.

Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīkh Dimashq* begins with an explanation that the entries are arranged not by precedence or knowledge or nobility, but by name, for ease of access. This alphabetical ordering is by now becoming a frequent feature of biographical dictionaries.²⁰¹ Correspondingly, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry is in the *‘ayn* section.

Table 5.1. Ibn ‘Asākir

At almost 60 pages in the Dār al-Fikr edition, Ibn ‘Asākir’s entry is by far the longest entry of its kind, in part because for every report he cites, he cites along with it a full chain of transmission from himself back to the original narrator, and in part because his goal seems to have been to collect as many reports on the individual as he can, even if they are simple (i.e. a report whose sole content is that Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name was ‘Āmir) or repetitive (the simple “his name was ‘Āmir” report is cited more than ten times with just as many chains of transmission). Because of the excessive length and repetition, we do not cover his reports individually, but summarize them by type, though this requires rearranging the order of some of them. The entry begins with a brief biography, and thereafter follows the format of *isnād-matn* with no commentary in between.

²⁰⁰ Robinson, 109.

²⁰¹ Ibn Asākir. *Ta’rīkh Dimashq*. Dār al-Fikr, vol. 1, 1995, p. 5.

Table 5.1. (Continued)

Biography
Notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and lineage back to Kināna, his status as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> and as one of the Ten Promised Paradise. ²⁰²
Notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah related <i>ḥadīth</i> from the Prophet (s) and narrated <i>ḥadīth</i> to al-‘Irbāḍ b. Sāriya, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, Abū Umāma al-Bāhili, Abū Tha’alaba al-Khushani, Samura b. Jundub, ‘Abd Allāh b. Surāqa, Aslam the freed slave of ‘Umar, ‘Iyāḍ b. Ghaṭīf, and Maysara b. Masrūq.
Discusses Abū ‘Ubaydah’s connection to Syria - specifically, notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah was one of the generals in command during the conquest of Damascus as well as other victories.
Reports Abū ‘Ubaydah narrated
The first three reports Ibn ‘Asākir cites are all Prophetic reports narrated by Abū ‘Ubaydah. There is the <i>ḥadīth</i> to remove the Jews and Najrānī’s from the Hijaz and to avoid taking the graves of Prophets as places of worship, and two variants of the <i>ḥadīth</i> about the coming of the Anti-Christ.
Reports about Abū ‘Ubaydah
Ibn ‘Asākir next quotes a number of summarizing reports, drawn usually from some earlier biographical authority like Ibn Khayyāt or Ibn Sa’d.
First is a report from Zubayr b. Bakkār noting Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, his participation at Badr and Uḥud, his high status with the Prophet (s), and the events at <i>Saqīfa</i> where Abū Bakr called for allegiance to be given to ‘Umar or Abū ‘Ubaydah. Ibn ‘Asākir cites this without commentary. A few reports later, Zubayr is again cited to note Abū ‘Ubaydah’s mother’s lineage, as well as Abū ‘Ubaydah’s own wife and children, who passed without continuing his lineage.
The next few notes deal with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s governorship in Syria and participation in Yarmuk and Jabiya.
Ibn ‘Asākir cites Ibn Khayyāt for Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, lineage, death date and mother’s lineage - effectively the same entry in Ibn Khayyāt’s surviving entry.
He quotes from Ibn Sa’d’s <i>Ṭabaqāt</i> information on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, lineage, mother’s lineage, children, wives, and the general highlights of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life: his emigration to Abyssinia, his <i>mu’ākhā</i> , his participation in Uḥud, Khandaq and all the other battles fought by the Prophet (s).

²⁰² Ibid, 25:435. Unless noted otherwise, the following references are from 25:435-38.

Table 5.1. (Continued)

Following these summarizing reports, Ibn ‘Asākir begins citing the miscellaneous and often repetitive short reports that form the bulk of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry. Many of them - upwards of thirty - just state his name and basic lineage, sometimes also mentioning the lineage of his mother. About ten others list him as one of the Ten Promised Paradise. Around fifteen note his participation in one of the milestone events of the early community - like Badr or the Hijra. These read like single notes in a much longer list.²⁰³
A handful of reports narrate longer anecdotes - Abū ‘Ubaydah’s facing his father at Badr is the subject of about four reports, with a fifth countering these with the claim that his father died before Islam. His commandership of reinforcements to ‘Amr comes up in several reports.
Abū ‘Ubaydah’s status as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> is a frequently recurring theme. The events around the delegation of Najrān are narrated through about fifteen reports, each a different variant covering virtually all of the variants we have encountered so far. There are another ten narrating how the Prophet (s) sent Abū ‘Ubaydah as a representative to Yemen after they asked for someone to be sent to teach them; these too conclude with the Prophet (s) referring to Abū ‘Ubaydah as <i>Amīn</i> of this <i>Ummah</i>. There are reports of several more events of a similar nature - a distant group seeks aid in arbitrating financial matters, or delivering their tribute, or learning about the religion - and in each, the Prophet (s) sends the <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i>. Thirteen reports more cut out the historical contextualization and just tell that Abū ‘Ubaydah’s title was <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i>.
Then Ibn ‘Asākir arrives at the issue of the caliphate. He narrates the ‘Umar Caliphal Report several times from multiple narrators. Ibn ‘Asākir immediately follows this with Abū Bakr’s Caliphal Report. This is followed not with commentary but with more reports from prominent Companions attesting to his status as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i>, including Khālīd b. al-Walīd, Umm Salama and Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh.
About ten reports are variants of ‘Ā’isha statement that Abū ‘Ubaydah was most beloved to the Prophet (s) after Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.
Four reports are variants of the Not Take to Task ḥadīth.
‘Umar’s Wishing Report recurs three times.
‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd’s Friendship Report also recurs three times.
‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr’s Praise Report is narrated twice.

²⁰³ This and the following are all single reports scattered across the remaining pages of the entry, See Ibid, 25:438-454.

Table 5.1. (Continued)

The next series of reports all deal in some or another with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s military exploits in Sham. This is naturally an important topic for Ibn ‘Asākir, and he cites several reports on the conquest of Damascus, with Abū ‘Ubaydah winning the city on diplomatic terms. In another two reports, a soldier under Abū ‘Ubaydah’s command complains about him, saying if Khālīd were the commander, ‘things wouldn’t be like this;’ Mu‘ādh retorts that Abū ‘Ubaydah is the best of those left on earth. In a similar set of reports, ‘Umar comes to Sham to review his officers and is amazed by Abū ‘Ubaydah who unlike many other officers has not slipped into a luxurious lifestyle despite the spoils won in the Syrian conquests.
Thereafter are a series of reports in which Abū ‘Ubaydah encourages his men to good deeds and humility. The portrayal of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s asceticism builds up through various reports recounting ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s final exchange, wherein Abū ‘Ubaydah refuses to abandon his men to the plague despite ‘Umar’s ordering him to return to Medina. It culminates in Abū ‘Ubaydah’s last words to those around him, exhorting them to good acts and sincere goodwill. Upon his passing, Mu‘ādh calls out to those around him, giving them further exhortation before saying, “You are struck by the death of a man - I do not think I have seen someone purer in heart, farther from ill-will, or greater in love for the people than him. [Now], ask God to have mercy on him - may God have mercy on him - and stand for prayer upon him.”
This is followed with a kind of postscript set of reports detailing Abū ‘Ubaydah’s burial place, his age at death as well as at other milestone dates.

Thus concludes Ibn ‘Asākir’s entry. It would not be far-fetched to say Ibn ‘Asākir sought to include literally every report he could get his hands on about Abū ‘Ubaydah. His organization of the entry, though at first inscrutable, seems to run along a somewhat logical path: he begins with name and genealogy, moves to specific anecdotes centered around major milestones within Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life and concludes with information on his final days. There are many references to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s potential as caliph. All but one of the controversial reports (Ā’isha’s Caliphal Report) are cited here, and their citation does not come as one isolated report but as many iterations and variants. Though inclusion in *Tārīkh* is by no standards a fool-proof measure of sound authenticity, still the fact that Ibn ‘Asākir could find multiple chains of transmission to narrate these key reports is indicative of their relatively widespread circulation in the Sunni community.

5.2.4. Ibn al-Jawzī

Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) was a Hanbali jurist, traditionist and historian of Baghdad. He received an extensive education in his home city, studying under Ibn al-Zāghūnī and Abū Bakr al-Dināwarī among others. Apart from his local teachers, H. Laoust identifies three influences on his thought: “the Shāfi‘ī Ash‘arī Abu Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038-9)” whose *Ḥilya* Ibn al-Jawzī would extend; “the historian and traditionist al-Khaṭīb al-Baḡhdādī (d. 463/1070-1),” a one-time Hanbali, and Ibn ‘Aqīl, a Hanbali jurist. Ibn al-Jawzī himself was staunchly Hanbali, and severely critical of contemporary *kalām*.²⁰⁴

He began teaching during the caliphate of al-Muktafī (530/1136 - 550/1160), under the patronage of the Hanbali vizier Ibn Hubayra, whose drive for a “Sunni revival” pushed Ibn al-Jawzī to hold popular revivalist sermons instead of classes proper. His sermons soon became famous and his support among the Baghdad populace grew. This is perhaps the reason why the caliph al Muṣṭaḍī‘ (566/1171 - 574/1179) gave him “virtually inquisitorial powers,” with which Ibn al-Jawzī “encouraged his hearers to denounce to him all those who, by their words or their attitude, impugned the reputation of the Companions - a measure aimed directly at the Shi‘ism which still flourished in Baghdad.”²⁰⁵ He was also made director of a number of schools in the region, and Hanbalism flourished in the city.

Discussing his works, Laoust asserts that Ibn al-Jawzī “was one of the most prolific writers of Arabic literature,” authoring texts in virtually all the major genres of his time. A large portion of these were polemics, against both non-Sunni sects, and Sunni-Sufi groups. Yet despite his polemical work as a staunch Sunni-traditionist, Ibn al-Jawzī was open to changes in the classical Sunni historiographical formula. In fact, Yusuf Şevki Yavuz in his *İslam Ansiklopedisi* entry notes that Ibn al-Jawzī’s works of history were transformative texts in the genre, and that his criticism of certain reports based not on their *isnād* but their content (*matn*) paved the way for a new

²⁰⁴ Laoust, H. “Ibn Al-Djawzī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

historical critical method to be adopted by wider Sunni scholarship.²⁰⁶ Yavuz specifically identifies the works of al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, and al-Suyūṭī as taking heed from Ibn al-Jawzī’s methodology.²⁰⁷ Though the concept of *matn*-criticism had by then been championed by marginal historians for centuries, Ibn al-Jawzī’s position as one of the pillars of Sunni revivalism afforded him a kind of influence on Sunni historiography that other pioneering historians further from the ideological center did not have.

Three of his works have entries dedicated to Abū ‘Ubaydah. The first, *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwa*, is a biographical dictionary of spiritual guides and saints. The second, *al-Munṭaẓam*, a universal history. The third, *Talqīḥ al-Fuhūm*, a biographical dictionary of early caliphs and Companions.

Laoust describes Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwa* as making “a well-documented history of Ṣūfism which aims to demonstrate that the true Ṣūfis in Islam were primarily in fact those who set themselves to follow faithfully the teaching of the great Companions.”²⁰⁸

Table 5.2. Ibn al-Jawzī

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes eleventh in the entire work, the first being the Prophet (s), then the preceding nine Promised Paradise. ²⁰⁹	
1	Notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name and lineage back to Kināna
2	Summarizes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life - his early conversion, his <i>Hijra</i> , participation at Badr and Uḥud and all the other battles of the Prophet (s).

²⁰⁶ Yavuz, Yusuf. “İBNÜ’L-CEVZÎ, Ebü’l-Ferrec.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 543.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 20, 544. This should not be taken as a blanket truth. Brown in Canonization notes that “when Ibn al-Jawzī declared some *ḥadīths* from Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* forgeries because their contents seemed to contradict tenets of the faith, the great champion of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* canon, Ibn Ḥajar wrote that we must try to reconcile this material and not dismiss it,” see Canonization, 333.

²⁰⁸ Laoust, H. “Ibn Al-Djawzī.”

²⁰⁹ Ibn al-Jawzī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*. Ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad. Cairo, vol. 1, 2000, p. 137. The following references are from 1:137-39.

Table 5.2. (Continued)

On his General Description	
3	Describes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s physical appearance, using the same wording as Wāqidī but not citing any specific report.
4	Mentions Abū ‘Ubaydah’s children and wife.
A Summary of his <i>Manāqib</i>	
5	Base Amīn report.
6	Yemen Amīn Report.
7	‘Umar Caliphal Report.
8	‘Umar Wishing Report.
9	A report on ‘Umar’s visit to the Syrian officers.
10	Abū ‘Ubaydah Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1.
11	Abū ‘Ubaydah Encouraging the Troops Report 2.
12	Details on where and when Abū ‘Ubaydah died.

On the whole, Ibn al-Jawzī seems to have taken great care to make his biography accessible. The entry is relatively well-structured and divided into several distinct categories. He keeps away from long *isnāds* - most of the information is presented in his own words and *isnāds* are cited only when absolutely necessary. Even when he does mention an *isnād*, he does not cite them completely but skips to the earliest narrators. He also avoids repeating reports - each note in his entry makes a separate point.

In terms of the controversial reports, though Ibn al-Jawzī narrates the ‘Umar Caliphal Report, he does not comment on it except to say it that is “from Shurayḥ b. ‘Ubayd, and Rāshid b. As’ad and others” - the multiple chains implying it cannot be dismissed as a single, weak report.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Ibid, 1:138.

As for his work *al-Muntaẓam fī tārikh al-Mulūk wa'l-Umam*, it is a universal history beginning with the Prophet Adam's creation and continuing until the year 574/1179. The work is a chronography according to Robinson's categorization, and after the start of the *Hijri* calendar, Ibn al-Jawzī divides the work by year, in each year providing historical narrative of the events that took place in that year followed by obituary biographies for that year. As such, it is according to Robinson "among the first works to combine systematically chronography and prosopography."²¹¹ While earlier works had also included such obituaries, Ibn al-Jawzī's "not only makes the practice consistent for the length of his work, but throws traditional chronography out of balance: the obituaries...now frequently outweigh the 'events.'"²¹²

With the chronological order, Abū 'Ubaydah's entry comes under the section on the Year 18 AH, in the sub-section detailing those who passed away that year. Ibn al-Jawzī mentions Abū 'Ubaydah's name, details that he is Fihri, and provides a physical description of Abū 'Ubaydah based on Wāqidī's (uncited) report. He summarizes Abū 'Ubaydah's biography, mentioning his early conversion, *hijra*, participation in Badr and Uḥud - where he stayed strong next to the Prophet (s) as others fled - and his commandship over several other military expeditions.

With the general highlights complete, Ibn al-Jawzī narrates longer anecdotes through a pair of full reports. The first is the Yemen Amīn report.²¹³ The second is the Uḥud & Metal Links Report.²¹⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī then concludes the entry with details on Abū 'Ubaydah's death.

The entry is a kind of streamlined version of the one found in his *Ṣifat*. Many events are left unmentioned, and Ibn al-Jawzī does not even cite Abū 'Ubaydah's full

²¹¹ Robinson, 169.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Al-Muntaẓam Fī Tārikh Al-Mulūk Wa'l-Umam*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, vol. 4, 1992, p. 261.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 4:262.

genealogy. As this work is a combination of chronography and biography, it is to be expected that he does not include as much material as in his exclusively biographical work.

The third work of Ibn al-Jawzī's in which Abū 'Ubaydah receives a dedicated entry is the *Talqīh al-Fuhūm*. A mixed work of history, Prophetic biography, ḥadīth and prosopography, the text begins with biographies of the Prophets, then of the Caliphs, then of individual Companions. It is not meant for its comprehensive biographical information. In fact, Abū 'Ubaydah's entry - which comes in his now conventional place of tenth of the Ten - is very short, containing only name, lineage, a short summary of his life, physical description, a reference to his wife and children, and then information on his death.²¹⁵

5.2.5. Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn

Majd al-Dīn al-Mubārak b. Muḥammad (al-Athīr) (d. 606/1210) was one of three brothers all referred to as Ibn al-Athir and all masters of their respective branch of education. Majd al-Dīn's expertise was in *ḥadīth*, and among his many works on the subject is *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*. The work is a kind of encyclopedia on *ḥadīth* scholarship and *ḥadīth*-related topics. Its first part is devoted to the science of *ḥadīth* itself, its second part is an alphabetically arranged encyclopedia of *ḥadīth* topics, and its third part is a kind of index for the entire work. Biographical entries on the Companions can be found in two sections. The first, containing more extensive entries, is under the title "*Faḍā'il* of the Companions" from the category "*Faḍā'il* and *Manāqib*," itself a subsection of the letter 'Fa' entries. Within that heading, Abū 'Ubaydah's entry comes tenth, as last of the Ten.

Table 5.3. Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn

The entry is built around a handful of core reports compiled by famous ḥadīth scholars like Bukhārī and Muslim.
--

²¹⁵ Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Talqīh Al-Fuhūm*. Dar al-Arqam. 1997, p. 85-6.

Table 5.3. (Continued)

1	Notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name. ²¹⁶
2	Narrates Base Amīn Report.
3	Narrates Yemen Amīn Report.
4	Narrates Najrān Amīn Report. Provides definition of difficult terms in the report.
5	Narrates Badr & Father Report.

Throughout the entry Majd al-Dīn does not include any *isnād* but simply notes that Bukhārī, Muslim or Tirmidhī collected the report - by now their works had become canonical enough that their names sufficed as a citation.

Apart from this *report*-centered entry, Majd al-Dīn references Abū ‘Ubaydah in several other pages scattered across his work. In Part III, Majd al-Dīn provides Abū ‘Ubaydah’s full name and lineage back to Kināna, notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah was *Amīn* of the *Ummah*, that he converted early on, that he made both *Hijra*’s, and participated in all the expeditions of the Prophet (s). He also provides a description of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s appearance before noting where and when he passed away.²¹⁷ All of this is without *isnād* or reference to earlier sources. Majd al-Dīn has digested that information into a short, paragraph-length summary.

In Part II, before the section on specific individual *faḍā’il*, Majd al-Dīn devotes a section to the *faḍā’il* that “is shared between a group of them.” There, Abū ‘Ubaydah receives mention multiple times in reports on the Ten Promised Paradise. Majd al-Dīn also includes ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report, which he notes was reported by al-Tirmidhī,²¹⁸ the What an Excellent Man Hadith

²¹⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn. *Jāmi’ Al-Uṣūl*. Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol. 9, 1972, p. 20. The following references are from 9:20-21.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 12:130.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 8:577.

(also included by Tirmidhī),²¹⁹ and the Ā'isha Caliphal Report, included by Muslim.²²⁰ Though the last inclusion is one of the most explicit proofs we have of Abū 'Ubaydah's potential caliphate, Majd al-Dīn does not comment on it except to state it is collected by Muslim. Nonetheless, his inclusion of the report at all must be taken as some kind of approval of its authenticity, not to mention Muslim's own acceptance of the report, which is strong evidence that the report was considered sound within classical Sunni circles.

All in all, Majd al-Dīn's works seem to represent the increasing maturation of the historiographic and the ḥadīth science. By now, references can be made by citing a collector's name rather than the *isnād*. Difficult terms are defined. Topics are alphabetized, sorted into a complex network of titles and subtitles, and rendered searchable through the index at the end of the work. All of this results in a concise presentation of compact bits of information compared to the often scattered format of earlier works.

5.2.6. 'Alī Ibn al-Athīr

'Alī b. Muḥammad (Ibn al-Athīr) (d. 630/1233), brother to Majd al-Dīn and famous historian in his own right, Ibn al-Athīr was born and spent much of his youth in Mosul, where his father was working in the Zangid administration. Upon reaching adulthood, Ibn al-Athīr served in the armies of Saladin in their campaigns against the Crusaders before settling first in Aleppo then in Baghdad, where he spent much of the rest of his life.

In his studies Ibn al-Athīr pursued history and soon became an expert historian and biographer. Khalidi states that for Ibn al-Athīr, "history had both a religious and a mundane value" and "could be used to reform kingdoms, enrich the mind with experiences and teach the value of asceticism to the truly percipient."²²¹ Franz Rosenthal praises Ibn al-Athīr's historiographical methodology as "distinguished by

²¹⁹ Ibid, 8:580.

²²⁰ Ibid, 8:583.

²²¹ Khalidi, 216.

the well-balanced selection of its vast material, by its clear presentation, and by the author's occasional flashes of historical insight," but faults him for his lack of rigour in sourcing material.²²²

Among his most famous works are three standard-setting texts: a universal history that would become the "standard annalistic history of his time (the thirteenth century)"²²³; a secular history of the Zangid Mosul dynasty; and finally, *Usd al-ghāba fi ma'rifa al-Sahāba*, a biographical dictionary of Companions and early figures which Rosenthal describes as a "very successful improved compendia of al-Sam'ānī's *Ansāb* and of some earlier collections of biographies."²²⁴ He thus proved himself an expert in what were by then three major sub-genres of historiography.

In the introduction to *Usd al-ghāba*, Ibn al-Athīr justifies the study of the Companions primarily by their deep experiential understanding of the *Sunna* of the Prophet (s), and he suggests that the *Sunna* is best understood through their interpretive lens.²²⁵ There, Ibn al-Athīr reviews earlier biographical dictionaries on the Companions, noting that much excellent work has already been done, but so far there has not been an exhaustive or systematic list of the Companions, because "when I looked at them, I saw that each one of them had taken a methodology in collecting [the data] that differed from the other," each list having its own deficiency. Ibn al-Athīr's response was to "collect all these books together, then add to them what they missed" and then to look at the mistakes within these books and "clarify what is correct regarding the things they differed upon."²²⁶ His comments demonstrate that by his time, Companion-prosopography was a fully established, expansive body of literature.

Ibn al-Athīr then outlines his own methodology and sourcing, referencing the various major works he used (he most relied on Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's, Abū Nu'aym's

²²² Rosenthal, F. "Ibn Al-Athīr." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

²²³ Robinson, 162.

²²⁴ "Ibn Al-Athīr."

²²⁵ Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī b. Abī al-Karam. *Usd al-ghāba fi ma'rifa al-Sahāba*. Dar al-Fikr, vol. 1, 1989, p. 9.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 1:10-11.

and Abū Mūsā's works).²²⁷ He also explains and justifies the choice of an alphabetical ordering, and much like a modern academic explaining the idiosyncrasies of his notation system, Ibn al-Athīr details how he ordered certain types of names and why. Overall, the introduction reads like a proto-academic introduction, complete with justification, sourcing and a detailing of inner mechanics.

Table 5.4. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī

The entry itself is a mix of Ibn al-Athīr's own summaries as well as reports cited sometimes with a full sometimes with a partial <i>isnād</i> . As Ibn al-Athīr switches between full and partial <i>isnāds</i> frequently, the specific citation is noted for each report.	
1	Notes Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage back to Khuzayma, father of Kināna. ²²⁸
2	Provides a summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's life - he was one of the Ten, he participated in Badr, Uḥud and all other expeditions of the Prophet (s), he was one of the earliest converts and emigrated to both Abyssinia and Medina, he was called al-Qawi al-Amīn.
3	Notes he was missing his two front teeth, because of his removal of the metal links on the day of Uḥud.
4	Narrates the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report (without <i>isnād</i>).
5	Discusses Abū 'Ubaydah's commandership in Syria.
6	Narrates the Khālīd Replacement Report (without <i>isnād</i>).
7	Narrates the Badr & Father Report (without <i>isnād</i>).
8	Notes that al-Wāqīdī disagreed with the preceding report, claiming that Abū 'Ubaydah's father passed away before Islam. Some " <i>ahl al-ʿilm</i> " upheld Wāqīdī's position.
9	Narrates (with full <i>isnād</i> through Abū 'Ubaydah) the <i>ḥadīth</i> on the Anti-Christ.
10	Narrates Base Amīn Report (with full <i>isnād</i>).
11	Narrates variant of Base Amīn Report (with full <i>isnād</i>).

²²⁷ Ibid, 1:11.

²²⁸ Ibid, 3:24. The following references are from 3:24-26.

Table 5.4. (Continued)

12	Narrates ‘Umar’s visit to Syria (with full <i>isnād</i>).
13	Narrates Abū ‘Ubaydah Self-sacrifice Report (with partial <i>isnād</i>).
14	Details where and when Abū ‘Ubaydah died, and how old he was at the time.
15	Details how he appointed Mu‘ādh as his successor, as related “by three [historians].”

Neither long nor short, Ibn al-Athīr’s entry perhaps epitomizes the average scholarly biography of a given Companion: he includes some biographical information in his own words, narrates a few seminal reports describing the individual’s life, and concludes with his death. He includes only one of the controversial reports and does not comment on it. But the way that he introduces the event not as a report but as a historical fact that does not need an *isnād* to support it suggests that by Ibn al-Athīr’s time, this was an accepted, well-circulated report that was a regular feature of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life story.

5.3. Analysis of Set 3

Compared to Sets 1 and 2, Set 3 contains a significantly greater number of controversial reports (about 33% more). Apart from their greater frequency, the reports - and in particular Abū Bakr’s and ‘Umar’s Caliphal Reports - have also become an embedded component of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life-story. The process which started in Set 2, with some scholars citing Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy as historical ‘fact’ without an attached report is in Set 3 becoming more frequent.

In ordering, the merit-based and alphabetical-based systems continue to dominate. Within the former, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s position as tenth has by now become convention. Of the four merit-based entries in Set 3, only one of them (Baghawī) places Abū ‘Ubaydah differently, and even there he is eleventh. Apart from these two systems, Set 3 witnesses the first iteration of a chronologically organized history that includes entries on the Companions. Though by then chronography had

become an established genre of Islamic historiography, Ibn al-Jawzī's universal history *al-Muntaẓam* represents the first systematic and comprehensive combination of chronography and prosopography within a single text. His is the only chronologically organized text of Set 3, but his text was something of a hit and within a century and a half chronological-based systems would come to rival the merit and alphabetical systems, as we shall cover in Set 4.

In terms of mechanics, the growth of entry length continues in Set 3. For one, it contains an astonishingly long entry by Ibn 'Asākir (at 56 pages!), but even if we set that aside as an extreme outlier, all of the entries in Set 3 are longer than a page, and all but three of them are three pages or longer.

In use of *isnād*, Set 3 only has two entries which use full *isnād* citation, and even then, one of them is the earliest entry of the Set and the other is Ibn 'Asākir's. The rest use partial citation (where the author mentions only the initial narrator) with the exception of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Talqīḥ al-Fuhūm* which has no citation at all.

In Set 3 we also see, for the first time, encyclopedias of concepts used in the *ḥadīth* and historiographic sciences. In these works, various *concepts* (not figures or legal rulings) are organized alphabetically and defined. Abū 'Ubaydah's entries in such works come within the "fa" section, sub-section "*Faḍā'il*" (and even sub-sub-section "*Faḍā'il* of the Companions"). This structure is perhaps a natural outcome of the growth of alphabetically-ordered biographical dictionaries, but represents a wholly new level in the complexity of both the *ḥadīth* and the historiographic sciences.

CHAPTER 6

SET 4 PRIMARY SOURCES

Set 4 consists of fifteen entries starting from the rise of the Mamluks in 647/1250 and extending up to the end of the 10th/16th century. This period witnessed the end of the Ayyubid dynasty and the rise of the Mamluk state. In general, Khalidī's descriptions of the *siyasa*-oriented historiography can be said to extend through to the end of this period. Apart from his observations, Michael Cooperson in his *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of Al-Ma'mun* also notes that under Mamluk rule, Sunni historiography featured "an increasing willingness to interrupt historical narration with 'personal comments or opinions on people and events,' as well as a new assertiveness in criticizing contemporary rulers."²²⁹ This manifested as "an eagerness to pass judgement, and an admirable zeal in assembling whatever evidence might serve as a basis for their evaluations."²³⁰

6.1. Set 4 Entries

6.1.1. al-Nawawī

Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) was an expert *ḥadīth* scholar, jurist and theologian. Most famous for his various collections of *ḥadīth* and his commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, al-Nawawī also penned the *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa'l-Lughāt*. As its title suggests, the text is a dictionary of names (i.e. biographies) and terms in which the entries are ordered alphabetically like an encyclopedia. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry begins with his name and lineage. al-Nawawī then cites a few other biographical dictionaries in which Abū 'Ubaydah has an entry. He mentions Abū 'Ubaydah's participation at Badr, and all other expeditions of the Prophet (s) before detailing Abū 'Ubaydah's death. He discusses where and when he died, and where he was buried before adding the uniquely personal comment (recalling Cooperson's

²²⁹ Cooperson, Michael. *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of Al-Ma'mun*. Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 64.

²³⁰ Ibid, 65.

notes on personal commentary above) that: “I have been [to his grave] and experienced a wonderful [feeling] there.”²³¹ He then mentions who was present at Abū ‘Ubaydah’s funeral prayer before concluding the entry with the Base Amīn Report, which he notes was included in both *Ṣaḥīḥ*.²³²

Throughout the entire entry, al-Nawawī does not include a single *isnād*. Most of the entry is in his own words, and in keeping with the title, the entry is more like an extension of a names list than a biographical entry. Of special note is his reference to other biographical dictionaries which included an entry on Abū ‘Ubaydah. This kind of referencing, reminiscent of modern academic footnoting, highlights the crystallization of the corpus of Companion-dictionaries and the establishment of ‘standard’ texts which could be referenced by other works in the field.

6.1.2. Muhib al-Dīn al-Tabarī

Muhib al-Dīn al-Tabarī (d. 694/1295), jurist and *ḥadīth* scholar of the Shafī’i school, was born to a Meccan family of extensive religious education.²³³ He too grew up in the heartland of the Islamic world, and after studying, teaching and serving as a *qāḍī* there, he came to be, in the words of F. Bauden, “considered as the greatest scholar of his century in the *Hijāz*.”²³⁴

Muhib al-Dīn authored a number of works in various different fields, though most have not survived to this day. Among those that have are several works of early Islamic figures - a biography on the Prophet (s), a prosopography of the wives of the Prophet (s), and a prosopography on the Ten Promised Paradise: *al-Riyād al-naḍira fī manāqib al-‘ashara al-mubashsharīn bi ‘l-janna*. In discussing Muhib al-Dīn’s methodology in *al-Riyād al-naḍira*, Bauden writes that he “omitted the *isnād* of the traditions which he cited but took care to give his sources.”²³⁵ Though acknowledging that *isnāds* were important to *ḥadīth* scholars, for the regular

²³¹ al-Nawawī, Yahyā b. Sharaf. *Tahdhīb Al-Asmā’ Wa’l-Lughāt*. Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol 2., p. 259.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Hatiboğlu, İbrahim. “MUHİBBÜDDİN et-TABERÎ.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 31, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006, pp. 38.

²³⁴ Bauden, F. “Al-Ṭabarī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

²³⁵ Ibid.

readership, he “probably thought that the *isnād* distracted the reader and stopped him from coming directly to the point which interested him...the *matn*.”²³⁶ Those interested in sourcing could refer to “a bibliographical list (170 titles) in his introduction to *al-Riyāḍ al-naḍira*.”²³⁷ About this, Bauden writes that if “al-Ṭabarī did not innovate in regard to this cite-sources-in-introduction method, it appears that he was the first to make use of it on such a scale, since he applied it to most of his works.”²³⁸ As we have seen earlier, he was *not* the innovator of this method, but may have played a strong role in popularizing it.

As the title indicates, Muhib al-Dīn’s book is dedicated solely to the Ten Promised Paradise. If we still needed evidence for the canonical status of the Ten above all other Companions, such a work should suffice. His introduction focuses on the merit of the Ten, and after them, of the early Companions in general.²³⁹ Muhib al-Dīn also explains the structure of the text: divided into two sections, the first dealing with the merits of the Ten as a whole, the second dealing with the individual merits of each.²⁴⁰

Table 6.1. Muhib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī

Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes, as is by now conventional, last of the ten. The entry itself is divided into ten components, demonstrating a level of structural complexity hitherto unmatched.	
1	Muhib al-Dīn groups the first three parts together. They focus on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s lineage, name and general description. Muhib al-Dīn reiterates his lineage and notes exactly where it meets with that of the Prophet (s). He notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name, both in pre-Islam and during Islam, was ‘Āmir, while the <i>kunya</i> by which he was known was Abū ‘Ubaydah. He writes that the Prophet (s) gave Abū ‘Ubaydah the title of <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> .
2	

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ṭabarī, Muhib al-Dīn. *al-Riyāḍ al-naḍira fī manāḳib al-‘ashara al-mubashshārīn bi ‘l-janna*. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol. 1, p. 6.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 1:7.

Table 6.1. (Continued)

3	The three sections conclude with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s physical description - the same details mentioned by prior reports. After mentioning that his two front teeth were missing, Muhib al-Dīn explains why, relating the incident at Uḥud. ²⁴¹
4	The fourth section describes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s conversion. It is a one-sentence section where Muhib al-Dīn summarizes existing reports.
5	The fifth section describes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s <i>hijra</i> . Like the previous, it is a one-sentence section where Muhib al-Dīn summarizes existing reports.
6	The sixth section is on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s “ <i>khaṣā’iṣ</i> ” - his special characteristics. In typical Muhib al-Dīn fashion, the section is broken down into four subsections, each for one of his four <i>khaṣā’iṣ</i> .
The first is Abū ‘Ubaydah’s status as the <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> . Muhib al-Dīn narrates the Base Amīn report, the Najrān Amīn Report, the Najrān Amīn Report 2 and the Yemen Amīn Report.	
The second is Abū ‘Ubaydah’s “being singled out for command on some occasions.” Muhib al-Dīn cites the several reports in which Abū ‘Ubaydah is appointed commander over military expeditions.	
Abū ‘Ubaydah’s third <i>khaṣā’iṣ</i> is “‘Umar singling him out for the caliphate if [‘Umar] dies while he is alive.” Here Muhib al-Dīn narrates the ‘Umar Caliphal Report. Apart from linguistic commentary, Muhib al-Dīn’s only comments on this report is to write the following:	
We have already mentioned in the section on the caliphate of Abū Bakr how ‘Umar sought to give allegiance to Abū ‘Ubaydah when the Prophet (s) passed away, saying <i>You are the Amīn of this Ummah</i>, but [Abū ‘Ubaydah] refused, excusing himself with reference to Abū Bakr’s precedence. And when ‘Ā’isha was asked: ‘Who would the Messenger of God (s) appoint as caliph had he done so?’ She said: ‘Abū Bakr.’ It was said: ‘Then you?’ She said: ‘‘Umar.’ It was said: ‘Then who?’ She said ‘Abū ‘Ubaydah.’ And that has been mentioned before in the section on the caliphate of Abū Bakr.	

²⁴¹ Ibid, 4:344-46. The following references are from 4:344-59 unless otherwise noted.

Table 6.1. (Continued)

	As a side note, looking back to those sections on the caliphate of Abū Bakr that Muhib al-Dīn refers to here, we find him narrating two variants of the same report in which ‘Umar comes to Abū ‘Ubaydah on the day of <i>Saqīfa</i> and tells him to let ‘Umar give allegiance to him, for he is the <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i>. In both cases, Abū ‘Ubaydah refuses and redirects ‘Umar to Abū Bakr. Muhib al-Dīn notes that Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] and others collected such reports.²⁴² Muhib al-Dīn does not further comment on these, or explore the implications of ‘Umar interpreting Abū ‘Ubaydah’s title as making him the first candidate he thought of for the caliphate.
	Abū ‘Ubaydah’s fourth <i>khaṣā’iṣ</i> is Abū Bakr’s praise of his character. Muhib al-Dīn cites a long anecdote in which a band of Arab warriors go to Abū Bakr during the conquest of Sham and ask him to put them under the command of a commander that he loves, Abū Bakr responds by saying “[I will appoint you to someone] modest and gentle, who when oppressed does not oppress back, and when wronged, forgives, and when shunned, reconnects, merciful with the Believers, severe against the non-Believers. He is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāh.” Muhib al-Dīn defines some of the more difficult terms here before citing Abū Bakr’s Caliphal Report. Muhib al-Dīn does not offer any further commentary on this point.
7	Then Muhib al-Dīn moves to section seven: on the Prophet (s) bearing witness that Abū ‘Ubaydah is of the people of paradise. Here, Muhib al-Dīn simply references the many <i>ḥadīth</i> in preceding sections of the text that attested to the same idea.
8	Section eight is “on a sample of his many merits.” It is basically a miscelania of reports attesting to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s general merit. Muhib al-Dīn begins by noting that Abū ‘Ubaydah participated in every expedition of the Prophet (s). He then narrates the following reports: - Hadith that praises Abū ‘Ubaydah and other Companions, ‘Ā’isha The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report - The ‘Umar wishing report - The ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr Praise Report - The report of ‘Umar visiting his officers in Syria - The Khālīd Replacement Report - Abū ‘Ubaydah’s report on futility of the life of this world - Report in which Abū ‘Ubaydah is appointed commander over a band of senior Companions, sent to reinforce an army already in the field - Report on Abū ‘Ubaydah first being struck by the plague - Report on Abū ‘Ubaydah sending aid to drought-struck Medina

²⁴² Ibid, 1:219-20.

Table 6.1. (Continued)

9	The ninth section is on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death. Muhib al-Dīn recounts the events of the year 18 AH, when the plague spread across Sham and Abū ‘Ubaydah, as well as many other Companions, passed away. Muhib al-Dīn quotes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s final words, exhorting the believers to good works, as well as Mu‘ādh’s eulogy after his death.
10	The tenth section is on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s offspring. Muhib al-Dīn notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah had two sons, Yazīd and ‘Umayr, with his wife Hind bt. Jābir, but they both passed away and he was left without a line of descent.

With that, his entry ends. It is one of the most comprehensive, both in terms of general length (the third longest entry we have on Abū ‘Ubaydah, at about 14 pages in the Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition) and in terms of the controversial reports it includes (the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report, the ‘Umar Caliphal Report, the ‘Ā’isha The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report and the ‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report, some of these narrated with many citations). In fact, he devotes a whole section to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s potential as caliphate, supporting the concept with multiple different reports. This is the strongest support to-date for the caliphal candidacy of Abū ‘Ubaydah. Unfortunately, despite the substantial support he lends to such a concept, he does not offer any personal commentary on the issue, and referring back to earlier chapters, his text is filled with reports attesting to the supremacy of the first four caliphs over all other Companions.

In this case, one would expect the reports on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy to be a bit problematic, as they seem to contradict Muhib al-Dīn’s earlier statements on the precedence of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī over him. One cannot resolve the conundrum by arguing that he saw the Abū ‘Ubaydah reports as weak, for he cites these reports without any apparent hesitation, even stressing them, with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s section on Abū Bakr attesting to his caliphate. Nor can it be solved by saying Muhib al-Dīn is closed to any and all commentary, for throughout the text he offers linguistic commentary on archaic terms. Rather the simplest explanation is that he is not willing to supercede what is established theology for the sake of a few reports,

verified though they may be, and he deals with this by remaining silent - i.e. by not exploring the implications of the problematic reports he narrates.

In terms of mechanics, Muhib al-Dīn favors a minimalist citation style. When narrating reports, he does not cite *isnāds*, but mentions only the initial narrator and/or the canonical compiler. This is not to say that his sourcing was simplistic; in his discussing of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *hijra*, for example, he mentions that some scholars held that Abū ‘Ubaydah emigrated to Abyssinia, while Ibn ‘Uqba and others did not mention this. Muhib al-Dīn is, apparently, cross-checking his sources.

Furthermore, the structure of his work displays an unparalleled level of complexity. While earlier entries may have had one or two sections within a single entry, Muhib al-Dīn divides the entry into ten, each section focusing on a distinct aspect of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s biography. This indicates the crystallization of a template for these kind of entries, i.e. there is now a formal style to entries wherein one discusses the subject’s name, lineage, studies, merits, death, offspring, etc. With such a template, one could begin each entry with an existing framework and merely fill in the slots with the relevant details.

6.1.3. Ibn Manẓūr

Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Alī (d. 1311), more commonly referred to as Ibn Manẓūr was a Shafi’i jurist, literateur and linguist most famous for his massive Arabic lexicon the *Lisān al-‘Arab*. Born and raised in Egypt, he received a traditional education before entering into administrative service in Cairo. Later he served as a *qāḍī* of Tripolis, under the Qalawūn administration of North Africa.

Aside for his administrative work, he also studied *ḥadīth* and the ‘classics’ of Arabic literature. J. Fück describes him as “fond of epitomizing voluminous works of earlier authors” - a well-earned reputation; he had, after all, abridged the *Aghanī* and the

Tārīkh Dimashq, among others.²⁴³ One scholar claimed there was not a voluminous work he left unabridged.²⁴⁴

It is in Ibn Manẓūr's abridgment of the *Tārīkh Dimashq* that we find an entry on Abū 'Ubaydah. It is - as expected - very similar to Ibn 'Asākir's entry, and for that reason we do not break down each report here. Suffice it to say the following: the chief difference between the two entries is that Ibn Manẓūr omits the (many) *isnāds* included in Ibn 'Asākir's original, skipping right to the primary narrator. Ibn Manẓūr also leaves out variants of the same report, and restructures parts of the entry to make it more chronological.

With all these omissions however, he still includes several of the key reports: the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report,²⁴⁵ the 'Umar Caliphal report,²⁴⁶ and 'Ā'isha's The Prophet's Beloved Companions Report.²⁴⁷ Apart from their inclusion, he does not comment on any of these.

6.1.4. al-Mizzī

Yūsuf 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), historian and biographer extraordinaire, grew up in Syria, where he studied *Qur'an* and *ḥadīth* before setting out at the age of twenty to gather still more *ḥadīth*, a journey that took him across Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Hijaz. Apart from memorizing the *ḥadīth* reports themselves, Mizzī also studied the Arabic lexicon and specifically, the meaning of archaic words occasionally found in the *ḥadīth* corpus.²⁴⁸ His greatest achievement, however, was in the study of the transmitters of *ḥadīth*. According to Juynboll, he "developed into the greatest *ridjāl* expert the Muslim world had ever seen."²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Fück, J. W. "Ibn Manẓūr." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

²⁴⁴ Kılıç, Hulusi. "İBN MANZŪR." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 171.

²⁴⁵ Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad b. Mukarram. *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*. Dar al-Fikr, vol. 11, 1984, p. 265.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 11:268-69.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 11:270.

²⁴⁸ Kandemir, M. Yaşar. "MİZZÎ, Yūsuf b. Abdurrahman." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005, pp. 220.

²⁴⁹ Juynboll, G. H. A. "Al-Mizzī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

Mizzī was a close friend to Ibn Taymiyya, and seems to have been influenced by the latter's theological approach. Apart from Ibn Taymiyya, Mizzī also met and taught other prominent historians and *ḥadīth* scholars of Damascus, including al-Dhahabī and Ibn Kathīr, who would become his son-in-law.

Mizzī is most famous for his *ḥadīth* reference work: *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*. The *Tahdhīb* is a biographical dictionary of all the transmitters used in the six canonical Sunni collections. It is a truly monumental work; Juynboll writes, "As Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, the modern editor of the *Tahdhīb*, points out, it not only comprises the biographical material collected in earlier works of that kind, but al-Mizzī has also brought together virtually every scrap of information on the *ruwāt kutub al-sitta* that he could lay his hands on."²⁵⁰ Brown simply describes it as "the most comprehensive biographical dictionary of *ḥadīth* transmitters."²⁵¹ This being a late reference work, the order of entries is alphabetical. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry therefore comes in the 'ayn section.

Table 6.2. al- Mizzī

Abū 'Ubaydah's entry is of a relatively average length (about 3 pages in the <i>Mu'assassa al-Risāla</i> edition).	
1	Begins with Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage, the lineage of his mother, and a brief summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's life - being promised paradise, participating in Badr where he faced his father, and participating in all the other Prophetic expeditions. ²⁵²
2	Details whom Abū 'Ubaydah narrated <i>ḥadīth</i> from (the Prophet (s)) and to whom.
3	Quotes Ibn Sa'd's <i>al-Ṭabaqāt</i> for a general summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's life.
4	Quotes Ibn Ishāq on the <i>mu'ākhā'</i> of Abū 'Ubaydah with Sa'd b. Mu'ādh.
5	Quotes a different position, this one from Muḥammad b. 'Umar, that Abū 'Ubaydah's <i>mu'ākhā'</i> was with Muḥammad b. Maslama.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ *Canonization*, 286.

²⁵² Mizzī, Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*. *Mu'assassa al-Risāla*, vol. 14, 1980, p. 53. The following references are from 14:53-57.

Table 6.2. (Continued)

6	Quotes Ibn Khayyāṭ on the lineage of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s mother, and her conversion to Islam.
7	Quotes a different position on his mother’s name and lineage, this one from Ibn al-Barqī.
8	Quotes a third opinion that she had yet a different name.
9	Quotes a relatively long portion of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s account, recording that Abū ‘Ubaydah was at Badr, and at Uḥud, where he removed the metal links. al-Zubayr continues on to recount the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report. The report ends with al-Zubayr noting how ‘Umar made Abū ‘Ubaydah commander in Syria, and how he was present in various victories there.
10	Quotes Wāqidī Appearance Report.
11	Narrates the Base Amīn Report. Notes that this was related by many different chains from the Prophet (s).
12	Narrates ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report.
13	Narrates the ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr Praise Report.
14	Draws to a conclusion with his own note, saying Abū ‘Ubaydah’s “ <i>Manāqib</i> and <i>faḍā’il</i> are many and well-known.”
15	Cites Ibn Sa’d and others on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s place and time of death.

The entry’s note on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s transmitters is somewhat rare, though from now on this will become a more common feature of reference works like this. That is Mizzī’s main input. From then on, the entries is essentially a sequence quotes from earlier biographical entries. He includes two of the controversial reports: ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report and the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report, but he does not comment on either.

Mizzī does show a tendency to provide conflicting reports. On both the issue of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *mu’ākhā’* and the issue of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s mother’s name, he cites multiple conflicting positions. We can assume then that had Mizzī thought that there was some conflicting positions to the above Abū Bakr and ‘Ā’isha reports, he

would have cited them here. The lack of any such commentary indicates that these reports were unopposed, at least in the way Mizzī interprets them.

In citation, we see more evidence of the crystallization of the corpus of biographical material. Mizzī quotes multiple biographers, and several of them he quotes by book title. He omits the *isnāds*, but makes sure to cite whom he is getting the report from.

6.1.5. al-Dhahabī

Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Dhahabī (d. 1348), renowned Sunni historian, *ḥadīth* expert and theologian, was born to a Turkmen family residing in Syria. He himself grew up in Damascus, where we studied under al-Mizzī and other scholars of the city. Though he received an education covering the breadth of the traditional sciences, Dhahabī's lifelong passion was in *ḥadīth*. Tayyar Altıkulaç identifies three individuals who played crucial roles in sparking this interest: his early *ḥadīth* teacher 'Allām al-Dīn al-Birzālī, al-Mizzī and Ibn Taymiyya.²⁵³

With al-Mizzī's death the top *ḥadīth* teaching position in Damascus became vacant, Dhahabī was considered but ultimately passed over because he was suspected of harboring Hanbali - not Ashari - tendencies, a suspicion which stemmed in part from his close friendship with Ibn Taymiyya.²⁵⁴ In any case, Dhahabī did teach *ḥadīth* at the Umm al-Ṣāliḥ Complex and at the Zāhiriyya and the Nafsiyya *Dār al-ḥadīth*.

Dhahabī was of exacting standards in his study of *ḥadīth*. He was not afraid to question the veracity of the reports he studied, analyzing potential weaknesses not just in their chains of transmission but in their *matn* based on what seemed implausible.²⁵⁵ Ben Cheneb describes his works as "distinguished by careful composition and constant references to his authorities," an exactitude also

²⁵³ Altıkulaç, Tayyar. "ZEHEBÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 44, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013, p. 181.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 44:182.

emphasized by Altıkulaç.²⁵⁶ Brown summarizes his contributions to Islamic intellectual thought as follows:

[Dhahabī] shines as one of the most intelligent and influential figures in Islamic intellectual history. A member of the remarkable Damascus circle of Ibn Taymiyya, Jamal al-Din al-Mizzī and Ibn Kathīr, his works and those of his associates have exercised an inordinately powerful effect on the course of Sunni thought. Through his many studies on the *ḥadīth* sciences and remarkable biographical dictionaries, Dhahabī elaborated an independent *ḥadīth*-oriented vision of Islamic history that angered more staunch devotees of the legal and theological schools as much as it provided them indispensable benefit. Dhahabī rejected the tradition of speculative theology as well as what he perceived as the over-involved and self-indulgent complexities of the Sunni scholarly edifice.²⁵⁷

Dhahabī authored many works on *ḥadīth*, history, biography and the like. From those, two are of particular relevance: his *Tārīkh al-Islām*, an annalistic history of Islam starting with the Prophet (s) and ending in the year 700 and his *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, an extensive biographical dictionary which contains perhaps the most comprehensive entry on Abū 'Ubaydah available to modern readers.

The *Siyar* is a biographical dictionary made up of about 40 *ṭabaqāt* and 7000 entries. Unlike many of his immediate predecessors, Dhahabī orders his entries according to merit. Perhaps he meant this not as a reference tool for *ḥadīth* scholars consulting an entry or two for immediate technical answers, but as a morally instructive work to be read start to finish, offering spiritual insight from the lives of the great men and women of Islamic history.

Whatever Dhahabī's vision in ordering might be, he interestingly enough chooses to put Abū 'Ubaydah immediately after the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, placing Abū 'Ubaydah first of the remaining six Promised Paradise. This is the highest ranking Abū 'Ubaydah ever receives in these merit-based biographical dictionaries -

²⁵⁶ Ben Cheneb, Moh, and J. de Somogyi. "Al-Dhahabī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. Also see: Altıkulaç, 44:182.

²⁵⁷ *Canonization*, 356-57.

previous orderings almost always have him tenth. This, and other signs we shall see below, suggest that Dhahabī had an unusually high esteem for Abū ‘Ubaydah.

Table 6.3. al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*

The entry, running at 18 pages in the <i>Risāla</i> edition, is the second longest entry we have on Abū ‘Ubaydah.	
1	Begins with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and lineage up to ‘Adnān, going back farther than most biographers. ²⁵⁸
2	Provides a highlight summary of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life, writing that he was “one of the earliest converts, and the one whom al-Siddīq invited to take over the caliphate, urging him [to do so] on the day of <i>Saqīfa</i> due to his outstanding qualifications [for the position] according to Abū Bakr.
3	Details where Abū ‘Ubaydah meets the Prophet (s) in lineage.
4	Narrates the <i>ḥadīth</i> in which Prophet (s) named Abū ‘Ubaydah as a person of paradise.
5	Details how many <i>ḥadīth</i> Abū ‘Ubaydah narrated, and to whom. Notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah “has one <i>ḥadīth</i> in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> Muslim, one <i>ḥadīth</i> in <i>Jāmi’</i> Abī ‘Isa [al-Tirmidhī], and fifteen <i>ḥadīth</i> in the remaining <i>Musnad</i> ’s.
6	Narrates a <i>ḥadīth</i> with full <i>isnād</i> from himself to Abū ‘Ubaydah.
7	Quotes from Ibn Sa’d’s <i>Ṭabaqāt</i> the Wāqidī Appearance Report, as well as the Conversion Report.
8	Recounts how Abū ‘Ubaydah was present at Badr - where he faced his father - and at Uḥud - where he remained steadfast and where he removed the metal links.
9	Writes that “Abū Bakr al-Siddīq said at the time of the passing of the Messenger of God (s) in the portico of Banū Sā’ida: ‘I am pleased with one of these two men [for you as caliph], ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaydah.’”
10	Quotes al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s report on how Abū ‘Ubaydah did not have any surviving descendants, nor did any of his siblings, and on how he had emigrated to Abyssinia.
11	Notes that Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī supported the claim that Abū ‘Ubaydah emigrated, but “I say that if he did emigrate there, he did not stay long.”

²⁵⁸ Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*. Ed. Shu’ayb al-Arnā’ūṭ et al. Mu’assas al-Risāla, vol 1., 1985. p. 5. The following references are from 1:5-20.

Table 6.3. (Continued)

12	Quotes Mūsā b. 'Uqba's <i>Maghāzī</i> to recount a story of one of the expeditions Abū 'Ubaydah commanded.
13	Narrates the Base Amīn report, about which he notes "it is well-established from multiple chains."
14	Narrates the 'Umar Caliphal Report, again offering no comment.
15	Narrates a report from 'Amr b. al-ʿĀs in which the Prophet (s) is asked who is most beloved to him and replies, "'Ā'isha." "From the men," the questioner asks. "Abū Bakr," he replied. "Then who?" he is asked. "Then Abū 'Ubaydah." On this Dhahabī notes that "thus it was narrated by Ḥammād, but the majority contradicted him, for it is related from al-Jarīrī from 'Abd Allāh that 'Ā'isha RA was asked which of the companions of the Messenger of God (s) were most beloved to him and she said Abū Bakr, then 'Umar then Abū 'Ubaydah.
16	Narrates a variant of the Base Amīn Report.
17	Narrates the Base Amīn Report.
18	Narrates the Khālid Replacement Report.
19	Narrates the Najrān Amīn Report 2.
20	Narrates the Not Take to Task <i>ḥadīth</i> , but notes that it is <i>mursal</i> .
21	Notes that "Abū 'Ubaydah was described as having beautiful character, great forbearance, and much humility."
22	Quotes Ibn Sa'd in recounting the 'Umar Wishing Report.
23	Quotes Ibn Abī Shayba who records the Not Take to Task <i>ḥadīth</i> .
24	Narrates Ibn Mas'ūd's Friendship Report.
25	Quotes Ibn Khayyāṭ who reportedly wrote that Abū Bakr placed Abū 'Ubaydah in charge of the " <i>bayt al-māl</i> " after which Dhahabī notes, "I say that he meant the " <i>Amwāl al-Muslimīn</i> " because there was not a <i>Bayt al-Māl</i> at that time - the first who decreed it was 'Umar."
26	Quotes Ibn Khayyāṭ who records Abū 'Ubaydah's military appointment as 'Umar's replacement for Khālid.

Table 6.3. (Continued)

27	Recounts some anecdotes of the relationship between the then Caliph 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah, still serving in Syria. In one, they meet after a long time apart and both are in tears. In another, 'Umar in Medina receives news of the threats facing the Muslim Syrian forces and writes a letter exhorting Abū 'Ubaydah and the Muslims to courage and remembrance of God. Abū 'Ubaydah replies with similar exhortations.
28	Relates the Mu'ādh Praise Report.
29	Relates the report in which 'Umar visits Abū 'Ubaydah in Syria to find him living in near-poverty, despite being Commander of the army. Notes that Abū Dāwūd also narrated this, then adds the comment: "And this - by God - this is real asceticism, not the [involuntary] asceticism of one who is poor and destitute."
30	Narrates the Charity Report.
31	Narrates Abū 'Ubaydah's Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1 and 2.
32	Narrates the Plague & Letter Report.
33	Narrates the report in which Abū 'Ubaydah's relative visits him when he is suffering from the plague and witnesses his patience and contentment.
34	Now nearing Abū 'Ubaydah's death, Dhahabī provides a summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's political career, writing that "The Prophet (s) put him in charge [of an expedition] more than once. From those occasions is the one in which the army was starving." Dhahabī goes on to note how Abū Bakr sent him and other commanders to Syria, how they won several victories there during Abū Bakr's caliphate, how 'Umar replaced Khālid with Abū 'Ubaydah upon becoming caliph, and how Abū 'Ubaydah thus became in charge of the entire Syrian forces. He also notes some of the victories they won thereafter, among them the conquest of Damascus, before concluding with the arrival of the plague.
35	Narrates two more anecdotes about Abū 'Ubaydah's patience during the plague, and notes how Abū 'Ubaydah appointed Mu'ādh as successor.
36	Concludes with several short reports detailing where and when Abū 'Ubaydah died, and how old he was at the time.

All in all, the entry is a mix of Dhahabī's own summary, of narrated reports and of quotations from earlier biographers. It is perhaps the most comprehensive entry we

have on Abū 'Ubaydah - though surpassed by Ibn 'Asākir's in length, this entry more than makes up for it with a tighter chronological structure and more concise coverage.

In terms of the controversial reports, Dhahabī is perhaps the only example of a late scholar who thought Abū 'Ubaydah deserved a higher rank than he was conventionally assigned. He not only narrates but emphasizes several of the key reports. Abū Bakr's Caliphal Report comes very early on (Point 2) as part of Dhahabī's one-sentence introduction to Abū 'Ubaydah's life. The only other data included in that introduction is that he was one of the earliest converts. The Abū Bakr Caliphal Report is then repeated again in his general summary of Abū 'Ubaydah's life (Point 9). Later he also narrates the 'Umar Caliphal Report, and the Not Take to Task *ḥadīth*, which he includes but with the note that it is a *mursal ḥadīth*.

His remarks in Point 15 are of particular significance: he begins by narrating the report from 'Amr in which Abū 'Ubaydah is listed after Abū Bakr as the most beloved man to the Prophet (s). He then notes that this was a minority opinion from Ḥammād, and "the majority contradicted him, for it is related from al-Jarīrī from 'Abd Allāh that 'Ā'isha was asked which of the companions of the Messenger of God (s) were most beloved to him and she said Abū Bakr, then 'Umar then Abū 'Ubaydah."²⁵⁹ For Dhahabī then, the position that Abū 'Ubaydah was the second most beloved man to the Prophet (s) is a minority opinion which was historically superseded by the majority position encapsulated in 'Ā'isha's The Prophet's Beloved Companions Report, in which Abū 'Ubaydah is the third most beloved man, after Abū Bakr *and* 'Umar. But by submitting the latter report as evidence of the majority position, Dhahabī is giving us the strongest evidence yet that 'Ā'isha's report was strong enough to be used as proof in resolving contradictions between differing reports. Thus even in the case of the 'Amr report being superseded by the 'Ā'isha report, we end up in a situation where Abū 'Ubaydah is listed as more beloved than any of the other Ten Promised Paradise, with the exception of Abū

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 1:10.

Bakr and 'Umar, a position which must have had problematic implications for established Sunni identity.

Having said all of this, Dhahabī does not offer any kind of theological commentary on Abū 'Ubaydah's ranking. The closest we can get to that kind of commentary is his choice of ordering entries, and in this too we have proof that he assigned to Abū 'Ubaydah a uniquely high rank - for in Dhahabī's merit-based ordering, Abū 'Ubaydah is the first entry after the Rightly Guided Caliphs, putting him before all of the remaining Ten. This may have been unremarkable among early biographers - we have already seen the fluidity of the merit-based ranking Set 1 texts - but in Dhahabī's time, when it had become standard practice for merit-based biographical dictionaries to place Abū 'Ubaydah as tenth of the Ten, his choice to break from the established conventions is highly telling.

Apart from its coverage of Abū 'Ubaydah's potential as caliph, the text is noteworthy for its general comprehensiveness. As noted above, though it is shorter than Ibn 'Asākir's entry, it is, I think, more informative. Apart from the usual information, Dhahabī also provides details of Abū 'Ubaydah's *ḥadīth* transmission, usually only present in a few *ḥadīth* reference works. He details Abū 'Ubaydah's narrated *ḥadīth* - how many he related, and to whom. He also notes which canonical collections contained those reports. Finally, he narrates a *ḥadīth* sample that, though not providing much biographical content, does allow Dhahabī to demonstrate his connection to the biographee via a direct isnād - a kind of credentialing system in this intellectual context.

In structure, though Dhahabī does not explicitly divide the entry into specific sections, his entry follows a generally topical and chronological order. He begins with a very succinct introduction to Abū 'Ubaydah's life, a kind of hook, then provides details on Abū 'Ubaydah's narrated *ḥadīth*, then gives a longer summary of his life, discusses his status as *Amīn* and details some of his general merits before moving on to his service in Syria, and finally the advent of the plague and his death.

Throughout all of this, he provides very thorough citations. Most (though not all, as this is no longer the era of *isnād-matn*-only entries) of the reports he narrates are given with full *isnād* as well as details on which of the canonical collections includes that report. His comments in citing the reports alone are enough to demonstrate his mastery of *ḥadīth* scholarship.

As for his *Tārīkh al-Islām*, Dhahabī wrote it before the *Siyar*, and the former tends to include less information per biographical entry than the former. It is, like the title suggests, a history of Islam, starting with the Prophet's life (s) and ending in the year 700. Like Ibn al-Jawzī's history before, it is organized chronologically, with obituary biographical notices after every year. All told, it contains about 40,000 biographies.

Table 6.4. al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*

Abū 'Ubaydah's entry in the <i>Tārīkh</i> comes in the Year 18 AH. It is shorter than his entry in the <i>Siyar</i> , but provides further evidence of Dhahabī's uncommon emphasis on Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy for the caliphate.	
1	Begins with Abū 'Ubaydah's name and lineage back to Fihri. ²⁶⁰
2	Introduces Abū 'Ubaydah as follows: "Amīn of this <i>Ummah</i> and one of the Ten [Promised Paradise] and one of the two men whom Abū Bakr recommended for the caliphate on the Day of <i>Saqīfa</i> ."
3	Details who narrated <i>ḥadīth</i> from Abū 'Ubaydah.
4	Summarizes Abū 'Ubaydah's biography: he was commander of one of the armies of Syria, was one of the earliest converts to Islam, was present at Badr and Uḥud and had no living descendants.
5	Notes that "it was said" that his <i>mu'ākhā'</i> was with Muḥammad b. Maslama.
6	Narrates the Wāqidi Appearance Report.
7	Narrates a shortened version of Mūsā b. 'Uqba's report on an expedition Abū 'Ubaydah commanded.

²⁶⁰ al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Tārīkh Al-Islām*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, vol. 1, 1993, p. 171. The following references are from 3:171-74.

Table 6.4. (Continued)

8	Narrates a shortened version of ‘Umar’s Caliphal Report.
9	Narrates ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report.
10	Narrates ‘Umar visiting Syria report.
11	Narrates a few short reports on where and when Abū ‘Ubaydah died, and at what age.
12	Concludes with a short description of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s appearance.

Despite having very few reports, the entry still manages to include a relatively high number of the controversial reports. He opens with a reference to the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report - this is right next to Abū ‘Ubaydah being entitled *Amīn* of the *Ummah*. Like in the *Sīyar*, by introducing Abū ‘Ubaydah with these reports, Dhahabī establishes the importance of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy for the caliphate according to Dhahabī. He later includes shortened versions of the ‘Umar Caliphal Report and the ‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report.²⁶¹

In general, all of the reports he includes are shortened, and he narrates them without an *isnād*, an indication that this is not meant as a *ḥadīth* work but as a universal history.

6.1.6. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Mughlatay

Abū ‘Abd Allāh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Mughlatay b. Kılıç (d. 762/1361) was born in Cairo to a family of Turkish origins. He studied *ḥadīth* and genealogy, attending the classes of Yusuf al-Mizzī and others. Though not much is known about him, Kandemir notes

²⁶¹ Dhahabī includes a very brief entry on Abū ‘Ubaydah in one more text: his *al-Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, another chronographical history. There he writes, “In the year 18, the plague of Amawās struck the land around Jordan [River]. Abū ‘Ubaydah Amir b. Abd Allāh b. al-Jarrah al-Fihri became a martyr; [he was] Amīn of the Ummah, Commander of the Syrian Commanders. From his merits was that Abū Bakr referred him and Umar for the caliphate on the day of Saqīfa [1:16-17].” In this extremely concise text, those details were the ones Dhahabī saw most important to note.

that he was an extremely capable historian, displaying an accuracy and exactitude lacking in many contemporaneous works.²⁶²

He worked in the Zāhiryya and Najmiyya schools of *ḥadīth* and wrote several works, mostly on *sira*, history and *ḥadīth*. Perhaps most famous of these was an extension of al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb*, titled *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, a text used by later masters of the *ḥadīth* tradition, like Ibn Ḥajar and Suyūṭī.

His work is an extension of Mizzī's *Tahdhīb*, and therefore much of the content and style in his entry on Abū 'Ubaydah is comparable to Mizzī's earlier entry. Like Mizzī, Mughlatay devotes most of the entry to quoting from the works of earlier biographers. Though the structure of his entry is slightly different, many of the quoted reports overlap.

He begins by quoting Ibn Sa'd, who held that Abū 'Ubaydah emigrated to Abyssinia. Mughlatay notes that this position was supported by Ibn Ishāq and Muḥammad b. 'Umar, but was not mentioned by Mūsā b. 'Uqba or Abū Ma'shar.²⁶³ Mughlatay then notes that Abū 'Ubaydah was sent by the Prophet (s) on an expedition at the head of 300 of the *Muhājirīn* and *Anṣār*.

Thereafter Mughlatay includes one short reference after the other, most of them following no discernable structure. He narrates the What an Excellent Man *ḥadīth* and the Wāqidī Death & Age Report.²⁶⁴ He quotes Baghawī's entry to note that Abū 'Ubaydah is of those promised paradise. He narrates through the *Musnad* of Ibn Abī Shayba and others the Not Take to Task Hadith. He notes that Mizzī said that Abū 'Ubaydah killed his father at Badr, but that Wāqidī rejected that position, saying he had died before Islam. Mughlatay references the text of Ibn al-Athīr stating that Abū 'Ubaydah was assigned Abī Talḥa al-Anṣārī as bond-brother. He references *Tārīkh Dimashq* to state that Abū 'Ubaydah was buried in Jordan, references the book of

²⁶² Kandemir, M. Yaşar. "MOĞULTAY b. KILIÇ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005, pp. 229.

²⁶³ Mughlatay, 'Alā' al-Dīn. *Ikmāl tahdhīb al-kamāl*. Ed. 'Ādil b. Muḥammad, vol 7., 2001, p. 140.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. All of the following reports from him are from 7:140-41.

Yazīd b. ‘Ubaydah to state that Abū ‘Ubaydah died in the year 17 and references another text to give his full name and lineage, as well as that of his mother. He ends the entry with a poem from al-Marzbānī in his *Mu’jam* on the Battle of Mu’tah, whose connection to Abū ‘Ubaydah is not entirely clear.

Throughout all of these, Mughlatay offers virtually no comment of his own. Of note here is what he did *not* cite: Abū Bakr’s report on giving allegiance to ‘Umar or Abū ‘Ubaydah, which Mizzī had included. The text *is* meant as an abridgement, so it is not clear whether his leaving out the report is a result of the pressure of Sunni orthodoxy, or a natural product of his choice to abridge the text.

6.1.7. al-Yāfi’ī

‘Abd Allāh b. As‘ad al-Yāfi’ī (d. 786/1384), historian, *ḥadīth* scholar and author of *Mir’āt al-Jannān wa ‘Ibra al-Yaqzān*. His text is a chronography obituary. As such, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes in the year 19 AH.²⁶⁵ The entry is very concise. It notes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and tribal affiliation and mentions that he was *Amīn* of the *Ummah* and Commander of the Syrian forces. al-Yāfi’ī then narrates the Base Amīn Report, which he notes was *Ṣaḥīḥ*. He mentions that Abū ‘Ubaydah was present at Badr and Uḥud, and all other expeditions of the Prophet (s), including the Farewell Pilgrimage.²⁶⁶

6.1.8. Ibn Kathīr

Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar b. Kathīr (d.774/1373) *ḥadīth* scholar, historian, exegete and theologian of Mamluk Damascus, was part of the circle of traditionist Sunni scholars that included al-Mizzī, Ibn Taymiyya and their contemporaries. His famous *al-Bidāya wa’l-Nihāya* was a universal history of great fame within latter Sunni historiography. As the work is a chronography, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry comes in the year 18 AH, under a chapter sub-section on those who died during the plague.

²⁶⁵ This is somewhat dissimilar to most chronographies, which date Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death to 18 AH.

²⁶⁶ al-Yāfi’ī, ‘Abd Allāh b. As‘ad. *Mir’āt Al-Jannān Wa ‘Ibra Al-Yaqzān*. Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol. 1, 1997, p. 63.

Table 6.5. Ibn Kathīr

The entry is relatively long for an obituary, running at about 2 pages in the <i>Dar Hijr</i> edition.	
1	Begins with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and lineage back to Fihir.
2	Introduces Abū ‘Ubaydah as <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> , one of the Ten Promised Paradise, and one of the ‘Five’ who converted in a single day. ²⁶⁷
3	Mentions how Abū ‘Ubaydah made <i>hijra</i> , and how his <i>mu’ākhā’</i> was with Sa’d b. Mu’ādh, noting that it was also said his <i>mu’ākhā’</i> was with Muḥammad b. Maslama.
4	Mentions Abū ‘Ubaydah’s participation at Badr.
5	Narrates the Base Amīn report, which he notes is included in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥayn</i> .
6	Writes, “and it is also established in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥayn</i> that al-Siddīq said on the day of <i>Saqīfa</i> , ‘I am pleased for you with one of these two men [as caliph], so give allegiance to them,’ referring to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Abū ‘Ubaydah.”
7	Notes how Abū Bakr appointed Abū ‘Ubaydah as one of the four Syrian commanders while Khālīd was still in Iraq, but then when Khālīd was brought to the Syrian theater, “he was [made] commander over Abū ‘Ubaydah and others too, due to his skill at war. When the caliphate was transferred to ‘Umar, he replaced Khālīd with Abū ‘Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāh, and ordered him to take counsel with Khālīd. Thus he brought together for the <i>Ummah</i> the <i>amāna</i> of Abū ‘Ubaydah and the bravery of Khālīd”
8	Narrates the Wāqīdī Appearance Report.
9	Describes how Abū ‘Ubaydah lost his teeth at Uḥud.
10	Concludes by discussing where and when Abū ‘Ubaydah passed away, and where he was buried, as related by different authorities.

In terms of controversial reports, Ibn Kathīr includes only one - the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report. But his comment that it was “also established in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*” lays to rest any doubt - on his part at least - that the report could be dismissed based on a weakness in its chain. Judging by the canonical status of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, the reports

²⁶⁷ Ibn Kathīr seems to have made this into a named group, previous scholars just named the converts individually.

inclusion in *both* would likely have been enough for any Sunni scholar living in the post-Canonical phase.

In terms of mechanics, Ibn Kathīr keeps the entry concise. He does not use any *isnāds*, though he does sometimes cite which collection the report was collected in. His conciseness aside however, we do find him interjecting into the entry more than the usual biographer. His comments in Point 7, where he reasons that Khālīd was appointed due to his skill in war, then ‘Umar replaced him with Abū ‘Ubaydah to bring together the *amāna* of the one and the bravery of the other, demonstrates that Ibn Kathīr was willing to express his own perception of what happened. Compared to the earliest entries, where virtually the entire text was *isnād-matn* after *isnād-matn*, this level of personal interjection is significant.

6.1.9. Ibn Qanfadh

Ahmad b. Ḥasan (d. 810/1408), more commonly referred to as Ibn Qanfadh, was a North African jurist, historian and *qāḍī*. He authored *al-Wafayāt*, essentially a prosopographical dictionary consisting only of death dates. As one would thus expect, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s extremely short entry provides only his name, lineage and year of death.²⁶⁸ Unlike other works of a similar purpose, Ibn Qanfadh does not order his entries according to death date. Rather, he divides generations into 100 years each, and for each generation, he orders entries according to merit. Thus Abū ‘Ubaydah comes ninth, as one of the Ten.

6.1.10. Muḥammad al-Makkī

Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Makkī (d. 832/1429) historian and *ḥadīth* scholar native to Mecca, wrote a text on the history of his hometown entitled *al-‘Iqd al-Thamīn fī Tārīkh al-Balad al-Amīn*. Part of the text is a biographical dictionary of individuals connected to the city, and one such entry is on Abū ‘Ubaydah. As the entries are ordered alphabetically, Abū ‘Ubaydah’s comes in the *‘ayn* section. It begins with his name and lineage back to al-Ḥārith. al-Makkī mentions that he is one of the Ten,

²⁶⁸ Ibn Qanfadh, Ahmad b. Ḥasan. *Al-Wafayāt*. Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, vol. 1, 1983, p. 30.

one of the earliest converts to the religions, and one of those who emigrated to Abyssinia, as reported by Ibn Ishāq.²⁶⁹ He notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah participated in Badr and all the other expeditions of the Prophet (s), and was granted the title *Amīn* of the *Ummah* as reported in both *Ṣaḥīḥ*’s from Anas. He quotes al-Zubayr b. Bakkār who in describing Abū ‘Ubaydah praises his inward and outward beauty, and explains how he lost his two front teeth. He details how ‘Umar appointed Abū ‘Ubaydah over Syria, and relates a variant of the report in which ‘Umar visits Abū ‘Ubaydah in Syria. al-Makkī then concludes the entry by mentioning Abū ‘Ubaydah’s death and the different positions on where he was buried. Rather short and sparse, the entry does not include any *isnāds*.

6.1.11. Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī²⁷⁰

In his Encyclopedia of Islam entry, Franz Rosenthal describes Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) as a *ḥadīth* scholar and historian “whose life work constitutes the final summation of the science of *ḥadīth* and makes him one of the greatest and, at the same time, most typical representatives of Muslim religious scholarship.”²⁷¹

Born in Cairo, Ibn Ḥajar pursued religious studies from a number of local prominent scholars, including Ibn al-Qattān, Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī and Ibn Jamā’a. From a young age he had a great interest in *ḥadīth* and pursued it all his life. At the same time, he progressed rapidly along the routine profession path of “lecturer, professor and head of college, and, finally, judge.”²⁷²

But his professional advancements aside, Ibn Ḥajar’s “enduring fame was earned by numerous works mainly on the science of *ḥadīth* and covering its entire range” and “their volume alone presupposes the expenditure of a staggering and almost incredible amount of time and labour.”²⁷³ This extraordinary mastery of the

²⁶⁹ al-Makkī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Al-‘Iqd Al-Thamīn Fī Tārīkh Al-Balad Al-Amīn*. Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol 4., 1998, p. 307.

²⁷⁰ Rosenthal, F., “Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

²⁷¹ Rosenthal, F. “Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

sciences of *ḥadīth* was encapsulated in the title he would later be given: *Amīr al-Mu'minīn fi'l-Ḥadīth*.²⁷⁴ Despite a strong inclination for the *ḥadīth* sciences, Ibn Ḥajar was, according to *İslam Ansiklopedisi* author Yaşar Kandemir, fully aware of the need to study history in addition to *ḥadīth* - taking after the example of his role model Dhahabī.²⁷⁵ The result is that many of his works on *ḥadīth* are imbued with a strong sense of historical context.

Ibn Ḥajar's work demonstrates the exactitude and rigor that was becoming characteristic of historians of this late period. While perhaps most of his work was derivative - Rosenthal notes that his writings are "to a large degree mechanical compilations; the bulk of their material (except for contemporary data) consist[ing] of excerpts from one or more similar compilations by earlier authors" - Ibn Ḥajar worked to a very rigorous standard. "He always looked out for additional material with which to enrich and clarify the information furnished by his predecessors," Rosenthal writes, and created enormous handbooks that "summarize practically all the earlier relevant literature and have remained indispensable reference works for present-day scholars."²⁷⁶

One such reference work was *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba*. A biographical dictionary dedicated solely to the Companions, it is not the most extensive work of its kind, but does seem to be the product of extensive research and source-checking. Meant primarily as a reference work for *ḥadīth* scholarship, the book has its entries ordered alphabetically. Abū 'Ubaydah's entry comes in the *'ayn* section.

Table 6.6. Ibn Ḥajar

The entry is of medium length (about 3 pages), and does not seem to follow any discernible chronology. It reads mostly as a collection of miscellaneous reports on Abū 'Ubaydah.

²⁷⁴ Kandemir, M. Yaşar. "İBN HACER el-ASKALÂNÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 517.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ "İbn Ḥadjar Al-'Askalânî."

Table 6.6. (Continued)

1	Begins with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and lineage back to Fihri. ²⁷⁷
2	Notes that some biographers skipped Abū ‘Ubaydah’s father (‘Abd Allāh), but that most avoided this error.
3	Notes how Abū ‘Ubaydah converted early on along with other famous Companions, as reported by Ibn Sa’d.
4	Summarizes Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life, noting that he performed both <i>Hijra’s</i> , was present at Badr and all the expeditions after, was the one to remove the two metal links, and was told by the Prophet (s) that he was <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> .
5	Notes that the circumstances of the Prophet (s) giving him the title of <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> are narrated by Anas in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> of Muslim, and by Hudhayfah in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> of Bukhārī.
6	Narrates the Yemen Amīn Report.
7	Notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah “was sent to Sham as a commander, and most of the conquest of Sham was at his hands.”
8	Recounts how Abū ‘Ubaydah faced his father at Badr, as reported in Ṭabarānī’s collection.
9	Notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah had related a number of <i>ḥadīth</i> from the Prophet (s). Ibn Ḥajar also provides details as who narrated from him, and which reports of his were collected in the <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> .
10	Quotes al-Wāqidī who held that Abū ‘Ubaydah’s <i>mu’ākhā’</i> was with Sa’d b. Mu’ādh.
11	Quotes Ibn Sa’d for a physical description of Abū ‘Ubaydah.
12	Narrates a report on an expedition Abū ‘Ubaydah led.
13	Narrates ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report.
14	Narrates the Not Take to Task Hadith, which Ibn Ḥajar notes is <i>mursal</i> , but “all its men are trustworthy.”
15	Narrates the ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr Praise Report.
16	Narrates the Mu’ādh Praise Report.

²⁷⁷ Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī. *al-Iṣāba fī Tamayiz al-Ṣaḥāba*. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, vol. 3, 1994, 475. The following references are from 3:475-78.

Table 6.6. (Continued)

17	Narrates the ‘Umar visit report.
18	Narrates Abū ‘Ubaydah’s Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1.
19	Narrates Abū ‘Ubaydah’s Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 2.
20	Recounts how Abū ‘Ubaydah was first struck by the plague and narrates Mu‘ādh’s eulogy as reported in the <i>Mustadrak</i> .
21	Notes that, “they are all in agreement that he passed away in the plague of ‘ <i>Amāwas</i> in Sham in the year 18 AH. Some dated it to 17 AH but that is an abnormal [opinion].”
22	Cites four short reports on how old Abū ‘Ubaydah was when he died, and where he was buried.

Despite Ibn Ḥajar’s mastery of the *ḥadīth* science and reputation for exhaustive scholarship, his entry on Abū ‘Ubaydah is not nearly as extensive or as structured as some earlier biographies. He does not mention either of the caliphal reports, though he does include ‘Ā’isha’s report on the Prophet (s) love for Abū ‘Ubaydah. Despite these gaps in his entry, it is clear that Ibn Ḥajar was familiar with the available material, evidenced through his repeated source checking and cross-genre citations.

As part of his broader *ḥadīth* work, Ibn Ḥajar also wrote a *Tahdhīb* of Mizzī’s famous *Tahdhīb* entitled, not surprisingly, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. Abū ‘Ubaydah’s entry is in most places a verbatim repetition of Mizzī’s entry, though with some of the components cut out.²⁷⁸ However, Ibn Ḥajar does *not* cut out Mizzī’s reference to Abū Bakr’s Caliphal Report, where he writes, “On the day the Messenger of God (s) passed away, Abū Bakr called those in the portico of Banū Sā’ida to give allegiance to ‘Umar or Abū ‘Ubaydah.”²⁷⁹ His choice to leave the report in, despite having a plausible justification (he cut out many other parts of Mizzī’s entry) suggests that

²⁷⁸ Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī. *Tahdhīb Al-Tahdhīb*. vol. 5, Matba Da’ira al-Ma’arif, p. 73.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

Ibn Ḥajar - a bastion of Sunni *ḥadīth* scholarship - did not find the report weak or controversial enough to remove it from his work.

6.1.12. Ḥusayn al-Diyārbakrī

Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Diyārbakrī (d. 966/1559) is a relatively unknown scholar. Little is known about him except that he was a *qāḍī* of Mecca and authored a chronography: *Tārīkh al-Khamīs fī Aḥwāl Anfas al-Nafīs*. The work is a universal history which proceeds chronologically from the beginning of creation to the *hijra* and then on. Entries following the *hijra* are divided by year, and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s obituary notice comes in the year 18 AH.

The entry begins with Abū ‘Ubaydah’s name and lineage back to al-Naḍr.²⁸⁰ Then Ḥusayn highlights some key events in Abū ‘Ubaydah’s biography: his participation at Badr, Uḥud and all the other expeditions of the Prophet (s).²⁸¹ He then provides a physical description of Abū ‘Ubaydah, names his children and wife, and notes that Abū ‘Ubaydah had no surviving line of descent.²⁸² Next, Ḥusayn narrates a shortened version of the ‘Umar Caliphal Report. He does not offer any commentary, but continues on to discuss Abū ‘Ubaydah’s other merits before concluding with some notes on where and when he died.²⁸³ The only actual report in the entire entry is the ‘Umar Caliphal Report. It’s inclusion not as one among many, but as the sole report in the entry is perhaps evidence that for Ḥusayn at least, this report is a central feature of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s life-story.²⁸⁴

6.1.13. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Hindī

‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Hindī (d. 975/1567) was a *ḥadīth* scholar and historian native to India. His work *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* is a kind of encyclopedia, wherein entries on a vast array of topics within the Islamic sciences are arranged alphabetically. Abū ‘Ubaydah’s biography finds space in the section on *Faḍā’il*, specifically in the

²⁸⁰ al-Diyārbakrī, Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad. *Tārīkh Al-Khamīs Fī Aḥwāl Anfas Al-Nafīs*. vol. 2, Dar Sadir, p. 244.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

subsections detailing the *faḍā'il* of individual Companions. His entry is eighth of the Ten Promised Paradise, whose entries come after al-Hindī discusses the general merits of the Companions as a group.

Table 6.7. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Malik

The entry is relatively long, at about six pages.	
1	al-Hindī opens with the report in which Abū Bakr is sending Abū 'Ubaydah to Syria and tells him of how Abū 'Ubaydah has an unrivaled place in his esteem. ²⁸⁵
2	Narrates a second report, again from Abū Bakr, in which Abū Bakr says that he heard the Prophet (s) say three things to Abū 'Ubaydah that Abū Bakr wished for all the wealth in the world that they had been said to him. One of the three is the Not Take to Task Hadith. Another is the title <i>Amīn</i> of the <i>Ummah</i> , given to Abū 'Ubaydah when the Najrān delegation asked for an <i>Amīn</i> . The last is the Prophet (s) saying to his Companions, when watching Abū 'Ubaydah depart from their gathering: "Those are the shoulders of a believer."
3	Narrates the 'Umar Caliphal Report. al-Hindī's only comment is to say that Ibn Jarīr collected it, and it is <i>ṣaḥīḥ</i> .
4	Narrates a shorter variant of the 'Umar Caliphal Report.
5	Narrates a second variant of the 'Umar Caliphal Report. He appends these narrations with the note that Ibn Sa'd collected these reports.
6	Narrates a variant of the Najrān Amīn report, told from the perspective of 'Umar.
7	Narrates the 'Umar Wishing Report.
8	Narrates the Najrān Amīn Report.
9	Narrates a variant of the Najrān Amīn Report.
10	Narrates the Abū 'Ubaydah Encouraging the Troops to Piety Report 1.
11	Narrates the Abū 'Ubaydah Encouraging the Troops Report 2.
12	Narrates report detailing Abū 'Ubaydah being struck by the plague, and Mu'ādh's eulogy after his death.

²⁸⁵ al-Hindī, 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Malik. *Kanz Al-'Ummāl*. Mu'assasa al-Risala, vol. 13, 1981, p. 214. The following references are from 13:215-18.

All in all, this latest entry is one of the more extensive entries in terms of the controversial reports, with a number of variants for the ‘Umar Caliphal Report. About that report, al-Hindī notes that it was in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. His judgement as the latest entry we have, combined with all the evidence from earlier scholars, provides solid evidence that Abū ‘Ubaydah’s candidacy for the caliphate was a well-established and well-circulated concept *throughout* the breadth of Sunni historiography.²⁸⁶

6.2. Analysis of Set 4

Given the relative silence of biographers up to this point, it is no surprise that Set 4 entries do not provide much commentary on the controversial reports. Still, from brief asides scattered throughout the entries, we can carefully build the case for the authenticity (at least by Sunni *ḥadīth* standards) of these reports, especially the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report and ‘Ā’isha’s The Prophet’s Beloved Companions Report. Dhahabī’s inclusion of every report except the ‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report coupled with his placement of Abū ‘Ubaydah fifth in his merit-based ordering does suggest that this late master of Islamic historiography saw in Abū ‘Ubaydah a unique role in early Islamic history. But even he does not address the issue head on, and we are left on the whole with a frustrating lack of commentary.

A lack of explicit commentary aside, we can still observe that Set 4 contains a remarkably high concentration of the controversial reports; relative to earlier Sets 1 and 2, it has about twice the concentration of reports. This is due in large part to the rise of the master biographies that sought to include *all* authenticated information on their subjects, epitomized by Dhahabī’s *Siyar* and Muhib al-Dīn’s *al-Riyāḍ al-naḍira*. Correspondingly, the length of entries in Set 4 is on average longer than all previous sets. This increase in length is all the more noteworthy when one accounts for the *decrease* in length brought about by the omission of *isnāds*; in Set

²⁸⁶ Apart from this dedicated biographical entry, Abū ‘Ubaydah also comes up in a later section where al-Hindī quotes the ‘Ā’isha Caliphal Report. See 13:253.

4 eleven out of a total of fourteen entries omit the *isnād* entirely, and the remaining three make use of partial omission.

Other changes in the mechanics of biography point toward the same complexification that was observed in Set 3. In particular, Set 4 witnesses the rise of extensive introductions. In stark contrast to the sparse introductions of earlier texts, these books began with long explanations of the sources used in their work, the formatting choices they made, and the wider intellectual context in which they are placing their text.



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the set summaries, there is over time a general increase in the rate of references to reports that document Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy for the caliphate. Specifically, in Set 1, out of a potential 48 references, the reports are referenced 8 times (17% of the time).²⁸⁷ In Set 2, out of a potential 36 references, they are referenced 5 times (14%). In Set 3, out of a potential 32 references, they are referenced 8 times (25%). In Set 4, out of a potential 60 references, they are referenced 23 times (38%). Though the rates of Sets 1 and 2 are roughly equal, Set 3 and Set 4 witness a very clear increase in the rate of reference.

What this statistic does not measure is the *way* these reports were included. In Set 1, they were almost always included as fully cited reports, complete with an *isnād* and an exact *matn*. Starting in Set 2 however, and more so in Sets 3 and 4, the content of the report was conveyed while the *isnād* and even the entire *matn* was left out. This suggests that these reports had by that point become embedded within the 'conventional' Sunni biography of Abū 'Ubaydah, and could be mentioned as historical 'fact' without need for a *khavar* support structure.

Despite the general increase in his portrayal as a potential caliph, in *none* of the sets do we find substantial commentary on Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy for the caliphate. What commentary we do have attests to the *authenticity* of these reports, especially Abū Bakr's Caliphal Report and 'Ā'isha's report on Abū 'Ubaydah being the third most beloved Companion to the Prophets (s). However, this commentary, though it establishes the reliability of such reports, never discusses the *implications*

²⁸⁷ The 'potential' number of references is calculated by multiplying the total number of sources within that set with the number of 'controversial' reports - in this case, 12 x 4. Such a product measures the amount of times the reports would be referenced if every biographer referenced each report. This is then compared to the actual references in that set. The resulting percentage is useful in comparing the rate at which biographers of each set referenced the reports vis-a-vis biographers of other sets.

of any of these reports, or explains why, if these elite Companions saw in him a caliph, Sunni doctrine never ranked him accordingly.

On the contrary, evidence from various sources across the four sets suggests there was a gradual crystallization of the ranking of Companions so that Abū 'Ubaydah came to conventionally be ranked as tenth, last of the Ten Promised Paradise. While Zaman had already provided evidence on the systemization of proto-Sunni doctrine around the ranks of the first four caliphs during the early 'Abbāsīd era, he did not discuss individual ranks below those four, most likely because - as our evidence suggests - there was no consensus around a ranking of individual Companions after the four caliphs during the early 'Abbāsīd era to which Zaman limit's his study. In *that* time, the relative rankings of the first four caliphs was of far more pressing import (given the polemical implications for both proto-Sunni and Shi'a) than the ranking of any other Companion after them.

However, as our above evidence suggests, the idea that the six non-caliphs of the Ten Promised Paradise ought to be ranked as the next top six Companions was not fully systematized until the 5th/12th century. Prior to then, a handful of earlier biographers did rank the Ten Promised Paradise as the top ten, but this was only one among many different systems of ranking the Companions. Once standardized, however, the concept became deeply rooted. The 'Ten Promised Paradise' or even simply 'The Ten' became a reference all in itself, and by Muhib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī's time (in the late 7th/14th century), whole monographs were being written about only the 'Ten.' In this system, Abū 'Ubaydah is almost always placed as tenth of the Ten.

The standardization of Abū 'Ubaydah's ranking as 10th makes Dhahabī's contravention of it in the mid-8th/15th century all the more surprising. His placement of Abū 'Ubaydah fifth, immediately after the first four caliphs, is the highest rank Abū 'Ubaydah's entry is given in all the extant biographies I have found. He also references (and even emphasizes) three of the four 'controversial' reports in his entry, thus leaving no doubt as to the fact that *he* thought that there

was ample evidence that several elite Companions thought Abū 'Ubaydah should have become caliph.

While this sounds like a promising lead, Dhahabī unfortunately does not elaborate on his decision to place Abū 'Ubaydah fifth, nor does he comment on the controversial reports except to state them as having happened. Therefore, we are left only guessing that he saw in the caliphate reports *something* that most other Sunni scholars did not see. However, even he, who among all the biographers is most expressive about Abū 'Ubaydah's potential as caliphate, does not place Abū 'Ubaydah's entry among the four Rightly Guided Caliphs but rather places it right after them, leaving no doubt that he too, like virtually all other Sunni scholars, did not see in these reports enough grounds to contradict what was a by-then foundational precept of Sunni identity: the notion that the first four caliphs rank above all other Companions, and are themselves ranked according to the order of their rule.

At this point, having extensively explored Abū 'Ubaydah's portrayal within the biographical sources without finding any substantial discussion of the reports that establish Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy for the caliphate, I must now attempt to explain *why* this silence was uniform throughout the classical biographical literature.

One possible explanation is that the controversial reports were weak and therefore did not merit much attention, let alone commentary. Now as a general phenomenon, weak reports *were* a common feature of *Faḍā'il* works specifically and biographical works in general. As Jonathan Brown writes in *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, "books on the virtues of Companions and *sunna* often contained reports that later Sunni scholars and sometimes the authors themselves found baseless or reprehensible."²⁸⁸ One would thus be tempted to dismiss these reports as weak, they are after all from the very "books on the virtues of Companions" that Brown mentions. Yet this position does

²⁸⁸ *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. Oneworld Publications, 2009, p. 37.

not hold with the substantial evidence as to the authenticity of these reports within the Sunni critical method. The clearest proof of this is their inclusion in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* texts (the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report is included in Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the 'Ā'isha Caliphal Report is included in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and 'Ā'isha's The Prophet's Most Beloved Companions Report is included in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhī),²⁸⁹ but for the other reports too we see scholars interact with them in a way which suggests that they had complete confidence in the veracity of these reports. Thus, Dhahabī counters a report using 'Ā'isha's The Prophet's Beloved Companions Report as his main evidence, and 'Umar's Caliphal Report becomes an embedded theme within Abū 'Ubaydah's biography that can be mentioned without any recourse to a particular *khabar* or *isnād*.

The above is written with classical Sunni standards of authenticity in mind, but even from a Western critical perspective, the veracity of these reports cannot be easily dismissed. If for the purposes of argument we accept the claims of the more skeptical adherents of the Western critical approach, and if we say that the vast majority of the reports we have on early Islam were fabricated much after the fact for the purposes of polemical argumentation in the 2nd or 3rd century, we are left with the very perplexing question of *who* exactly stood to benefit from reports putting forth Abū 'Ubaydah as a candidate for the caliphate?

There was no pro-Abū 'Ubaydah party, no faction that stood to gain from fabricating reports about him almost becoming caliph. Any musings on what Abū 'Ubaydah's place in the establishment of the early caliphate would have been quickly drowned out by the much more immediate need to settle the issue of the relative ranking of 'Uthmān and 'Alī and the polemics raging between the 'Uthmānid and 'Alīd factions of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In fact, far from providing either side with some polemical edge, the reports on Abū 'Ubaydah's candidacy

²⁸⁹ For the Abū Bakr Caliphal Report, see Hadith 3668: Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. Ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr b. Nāṣir. Damascus : Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, vol. 5, 2001, p. 6. For the 'Ā'isha Caliphal Report, see Hadith 2385: Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, vol. 4, p. 1856. For the 'Ā'isha's The Prophet's Beloved Companions Report see Hadith 3657: Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. 'Īsā. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. Ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī & Ibrāhīm 'Uṭwa, Egypt, vol. 5, 1975, p. 607.

must have been embarrassing for all parties involved, for it certainly does not support the pro-ʿAlīd position of ʿAlī’s prior right to the caliphate, nor does it fit in with the pro-ʿUthmānid position of ʿUthmān deserving the caliphate after Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. The reports do not even harmonize with the proto-Sunni conception of the early caliphate, in which all four caliphs were Rightly Guided. One might argue that these reports *do* shore up one core aspect of the proto-Sunni position, which is Abū Bakr’s and ʿUmar’s position as the top two Companions (as per ʿĀ’isha’s two reports, and as suggested in the Abū Bakr report as well), but if we are assuming that all of these reports were fabricated anyway, then why not fabricate the reports to include just these two, without tacking on Abū ʿUbaydah after them? Wouldn’t that be much less awkward for the Rightly Guided Caliphs paradigm? The point, then, is that even from the skeptical, Western critical perspective, it is difficult to make the case for the fabrication of these reports; they are simply too problematic for all sides to have been *intentionally* fabricated, and we are left with the conclusion that according to both the classical Sunni standards and Western critical standards, these reports were relatively reliable.

Having ruled out the explanation that these reports are weak and therefore did not merit any commentary, we are left with the explanation that it was simply normal for a *ḥadīth* collection or historiographic work to include within it contradictory reports, and that contradiction between reports did *not* require an explicit response from the compiler, as per the established conventions of the genre. Zaman in his *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbāsids* deals with a comparable conundrum in trying to explain the discord between two different reports. Skipping to his concluding statements, he writes “it is tempting to think, however, that the thirty-year *ḥadīth* supersedes and in a sense ‘abrogates’ the one about the twelve caliphs, and though the latter continued to be a part of the Sunni collections, it did so without any of that doctrinal importance which was reserved for the former.”²⁹⁰ In other words, both continued to be included in *ḥadīth* collections because both were of a high enough veracity, but one of them, in addition to being included, was also given doctrinal significance *while the other was not*.

²⁹⁰ Zaman, 177.

Robinson observes a similar occurrence in his *Islamic Historiography*. His conclusion is that “preserving disagreement - indeed, even accentuating it - is an important feature of traditionist historiography, which in this respect, as in others, seems to have been produced by the same conventions and attitudes that produced comparable legal discussions of jurists’ disagreements.”²⁹¹ This, he explains, is due to a fundamental characteristic of Islamic historiography, for:

While we moderns take it for granted that the historian’s task is to isolate that single reconstruction that describes most accurately a given event in the past, medieval Muslim historians held an inclusive and catholic view of the past, which accomodated multiple reconstructions.²⁹²

Now in the case of the controversial reports, I am not sure that Robinson’s concept of multiple reconstructions is of especial relevance, as this is not a matter of multiple historical reconstructions so much as a set of reports which problematize doctrinal tenets. Rather, it seems Zaman’s observations in which one set of reports are assigned doctrinal significance while those reports that contradict these are still narrated but not given the same doctrinal significance comes closest to describing the state of the Abū 'Ubaydah reports.

Returning to our earlier thoughts on the relationship between theology & doctrine and *ḥadīth* & historiography, the above evidence suggests that there was not a simple, one-way power dynamic between the two fields of thought. As Zaman’s research into the formation of the doctrine of ranking Companions demonstrates, *ḥadīth* were the critical tools of the Sunni theologian, without any *ḥadīth* support, he would be hard-pressed to rally the majority of the Sunni community behind his doctrinal arguments. But as the phenomenon of Abū 'Ubaydah’s reports suggest, *ḥadīth* and historiography were not themselves independent from theology. The *ḥadīth* and historiographic sciences were resilient enough that they did not forgo the narration of these reports, despite the problematic theological implications they

²⁹¹ Robinson, 79.

²⁹² Ibid.

contained. Yet even if the problematic reports were not cut out from the collections, still their significance was essentially neutralized, as they were assigned no doctrinal value. This whole phenomenon paints the picture of a complex, interdependent dynamic between theology and historiography, one where neither side is wholly dominant. The foundations of theology are built upon individual *ḥadīth* reports, but once established and canonized as orthodoxy (as the ranking of Companions was made orthodox doctrine by Sunni scholarship), then that particular doctrine had the ability to neutralize the impact of individual reports that went against it, even if it could not entirely remove such reports from circulation.

The Abū 'Ubaydah reports are but one example of what I estimate are many cases of theologically problematic reports that were narrated by scholars of the orthodox position. More extensive research into these kinds of reports would reveal volumes about the nature of Islamic historiography. In a time where much attention has been given to the tools historians used to bend their reports to conform to a certain worldview, it would be refreshing, I think, to also focus on the resilience of the simple *khbar*, that continues to be narrated despite its problematic implications.

7.1. Development of the Genre

While the previous section concluded with the project's driving question, the following section details a few more general trends in the genre-mechanics of Islamic historiography as demonstrated over the course of the four sets of entries. These trends are presented as charts, where possible, with corroborative evidence from specific sources noted where relevant.

7.2. Comprehensiveness

We have already covered the inclusion of the 'controversial reports' above, concluding that in general, the inclusion of these reports increased over time. While this in itself is not a fool-proof measure of the comprehensiveness of the entries, this increase combined with the below measurements of the lengths of each entry gives us a relatively clear picture of the amount of data each entry conveyed. The below chart tracks the length of entries over time. Entries are sorted into five

categories, represented by five numbers: **1**: very short (>1 page), **2**: short (1-2 pages), **3**: medium (3-5 pages), **4**: long (6-15 pages) and **5**: very long (>15 pages). As the red line of best fit demonstrates, the average length of entry increased from 'short' in the earlier entries to 'medium' by the end of Set 4.

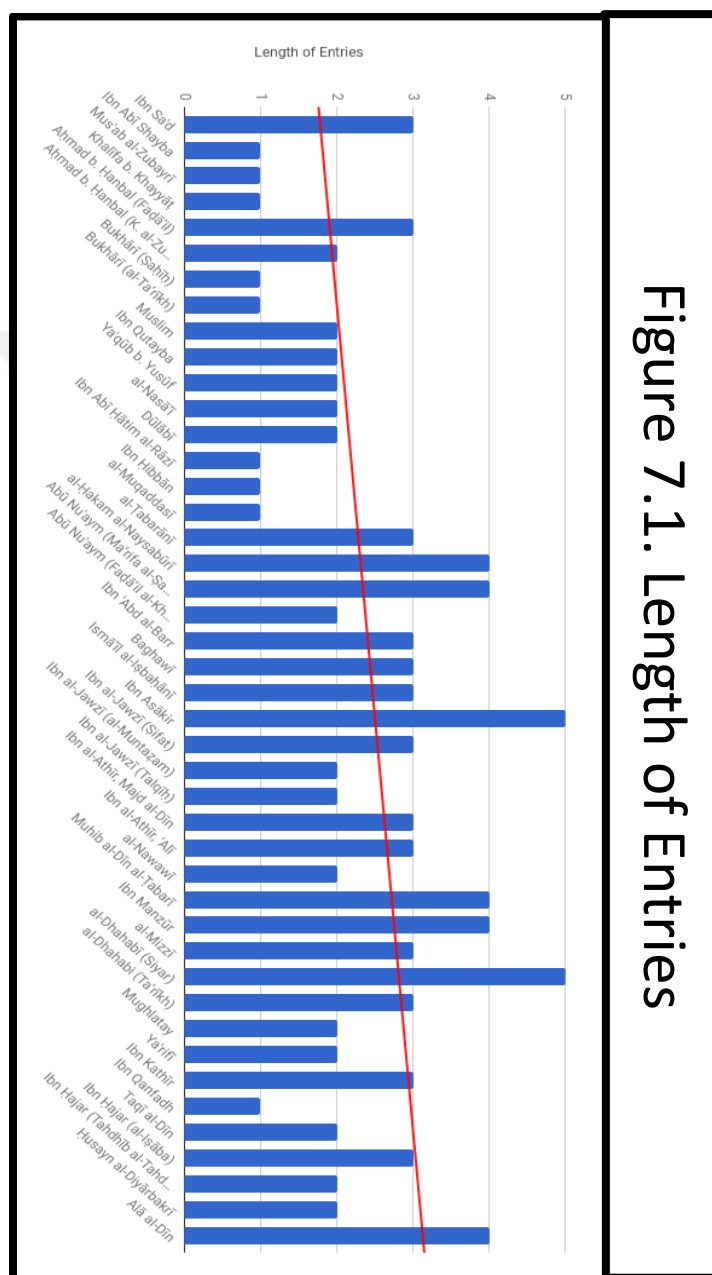


Figure 7.1. Length of Entries

Having documented the increase in length, the question then arises: where does the extra material come from? It seems that the increase in length is a result of an

increase in the amount of reports being included in each entry, and an increase in the amount of personal input from the biographer.

Though not fit to be charted on a table, the study's data demonstrated that earlier entries tended to consist exclusively of *akhbār* - their chains of transmission and their actual text - without any commentary or input from the biographer himself. There were a few exceptions to this: Mus'ab al-Zubayrī, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ and Ibn Qutayba all injected their entries with some kind of non-*khavar* content, but these were the exception to the rule. This lack of personal input fits well with Robinson's observations. He characterizes early Islamic historiography as one based primarily on the act of collecting *ḥadīth* or *akhbār*; "early Muslim historians, following the lead of the jurists, were generally concerned less with composing attractive narrative than they were with collecting assiduously and judiciously."²⁹³ In doing so, they took the lead of the *ḥadīth* scholars, so that "virtually all of the earliest surviving [historiographic] works conform" to the *ḥadīth*-orientation towards collection rather than composition.²⁹⁴

However, starting in the mid-5th/11th century with the works of Abū Nu'aym, the field witnessed an abrupt shift in personal input, with scholars now willing to explicitly express their own comments and ideas in the entries. This most often took the form of a biographer rewording the information presented in one or several reports without actually citing any of the reports. We know that they were closely following the reports because in content and even format, they are similar to the original reports. However, their choice to forego the citation of a report represents something of a step away from the *ḥadīth*-oriented tradition, and thus is noteworthy. Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn al-Athīr, Muhib al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī and later al-Dhahabī offer the most explicit input into their entries.

²⁹³ Robinson, 16.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 18.

7.3. Usage of *Isnād*

The trend of longer entries is all the more noteworthy because it was enough to counterbalance and then exceed the decrease in entry-length that resulted from the removal of *isnād*'s. As shown in the table below, starting in the mid-6th/12th century, biographers regularly cut the *isnād* out of their entries; in narrating the texts, they either mentioned only the initial narrator (what I term "partial" in the table), or mentioned no one at all ("none"). In the table, a value of 0 means no *isnād* was cited in the entry, a value of 1 means partial *isnād*'s were used, and a value of 2 means full *isnād* was given for most reports in the entry.



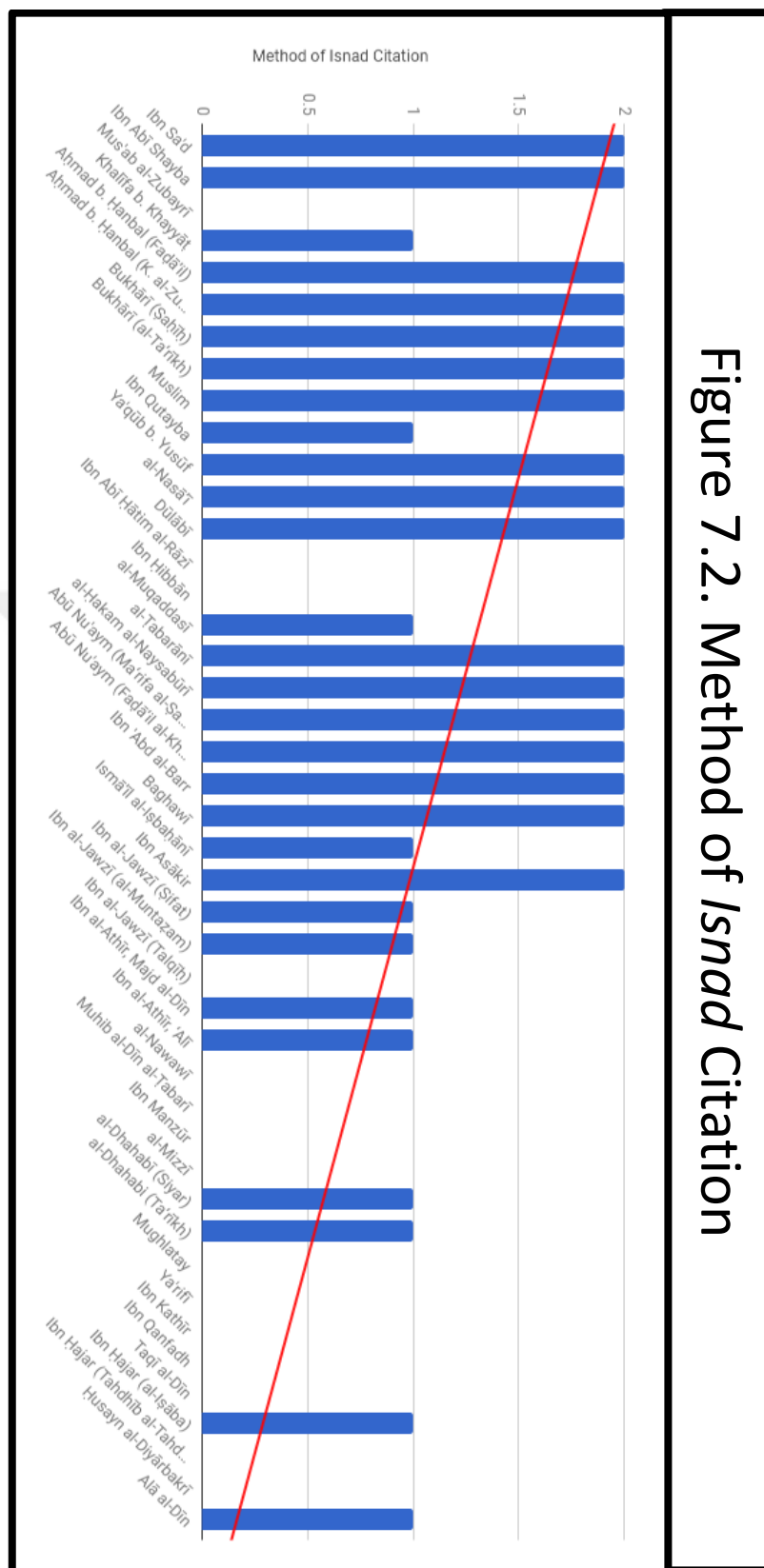


Figure 7.2. Method of *Ismad* Citation

Figure 7.2. Method of Isnad Citation

Here, Ibn 'Asākir is something of an outlier, but his *Tārīkh Dimashq* is, after all, a call back to earlier city-based compilations that were paragons of *ḥadīth*-based historiography. His text excluded, there are *no* entries from the mid-6th century onwards that use full *isnād*'s. This is in stark contrast to the earliest entries, which are almost exclusively narrate their reports with full *isnād*'s.

How do we explain this dramatic change in citation style? In his *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, Brown charts the process by which the famed Six Books of *ḥadīth* came to be canonical within the Sunni world. There he dates the beginnings of their canonization to the end of the 4th century, when “for the first time Muslim scholars began discussing *ḥadīth* tradition in terms that endowed certain books with a sense of communal and epistemological preeminence.”²⁹⁵ As these books - specifically the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*'s of Bukhārī and Muslim - were based on the premise of including only those reports which met a certain level of authenticity, the fact that a given report was included in a *Ṣaḥīḥ* text began to suffice as a measure of its credibility, without recourse to its individual *isnād*. In practical terms, this meant that only the *ḥadīth*-expert, if anyone, would carefully examine the *isnād*'s of a given report of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, everyone else could merely cite the fact that it was collected by Bukhārī and Muslim, and its inclusion in those texts would act as a voucher for the authenticity of its *isnād*.

Brown here is dealing specifically with the canonization of the two most famous works of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* genre, but if we extend his arguments to post-Bukhārī *ḥadīth* collections in general, it may explain the shift in citation methodology documented above. As inclusion in a collection becomes the simple standard by which to judge *ḥadīth*, it becomes possible to cite a *ḥadīth* by merely stating “it was collected by Muslim” rather than listing the full *isnād*.

This gives us the *mechanism* by which cutting out the *isnād* became a practical possibility, but what about the *motives*? Why would scholars want to remove the *isnād*'s in the first place? First, and most obvious, is that by the very nature of being

²⁹⁵ *Canonization*, 144.

a *chain* of transmission, these pieces were growing to enormous and unwieldy lengths in the 5th and 6th centuries. By that time, citing the *isnād* in full would theoretically take extremely more space than narrating the relatively short *matn*. Second, canonical texts by this time brought a certain amount of universal recognition that most single reports could never achieve by themselves. Even a *ḥadīth* expert might have trouble judging the authenticity of a given chain of transmission without consulting the corpus of biographical dictionaries, but any lay-scholar could tell with a single glance that the *ḥadīth* “collected by Muslim” ought to be considered authentic. Replacing the *isnād* with a note on who collected it thereby enables the non-expert reader to get a quick idea of the reliability of the report.

In either case, the end result is the same: a shift away from the *isnad-matn* format of earlier entries, a change which acts, I think, as a marker of the growing independence of the historiographic science vis-a-vis the *ḥadīth* sciences. Yes, the prosopographer still expressed deference to the canonical *ḥadīth* compiler like Muslim or Bukhārī, but he no longer had to devote a majority of his entries to the citation of actual *ḥadīth* and its *isnād*.

7.4. Ordering of Entries

As demonstrated by the charts below, the ordering of entries experience significant change from set to set. The four pie-charts the method of ordering entries for each set respectively. This is followed by a comprehensive pie-chart including all of the four sets.

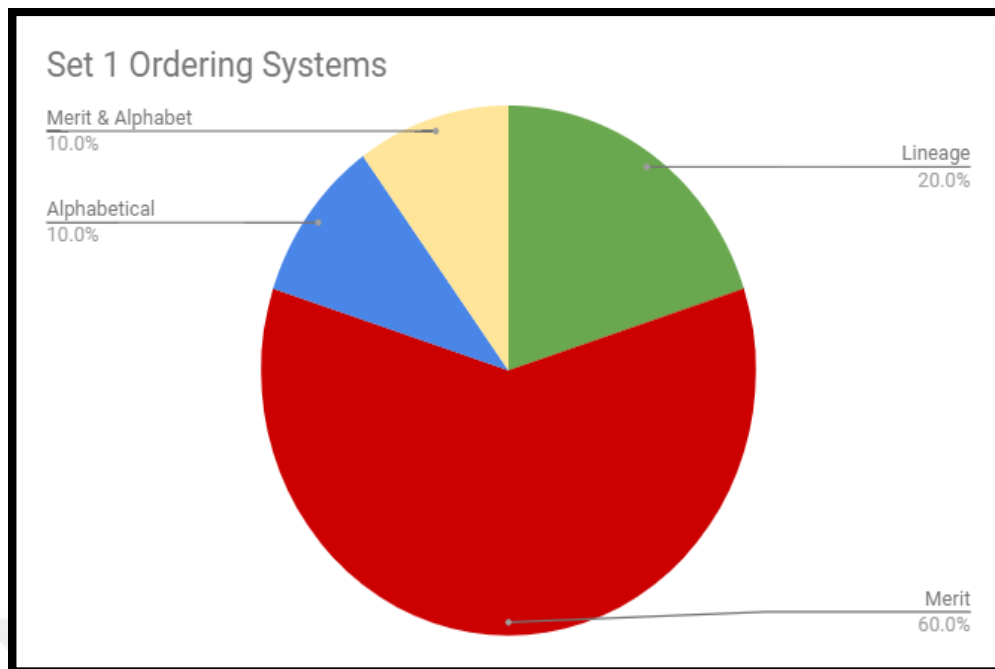


Figure 7.3. Set 1 Ordering Systems

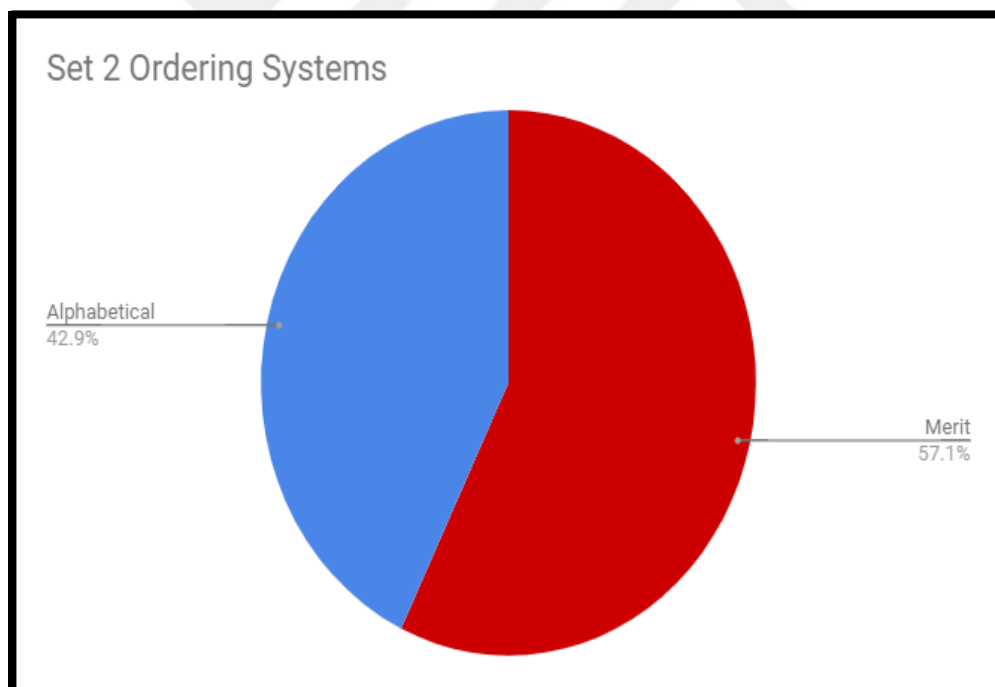


Figure 7.4. Set 2 Ordering Systems

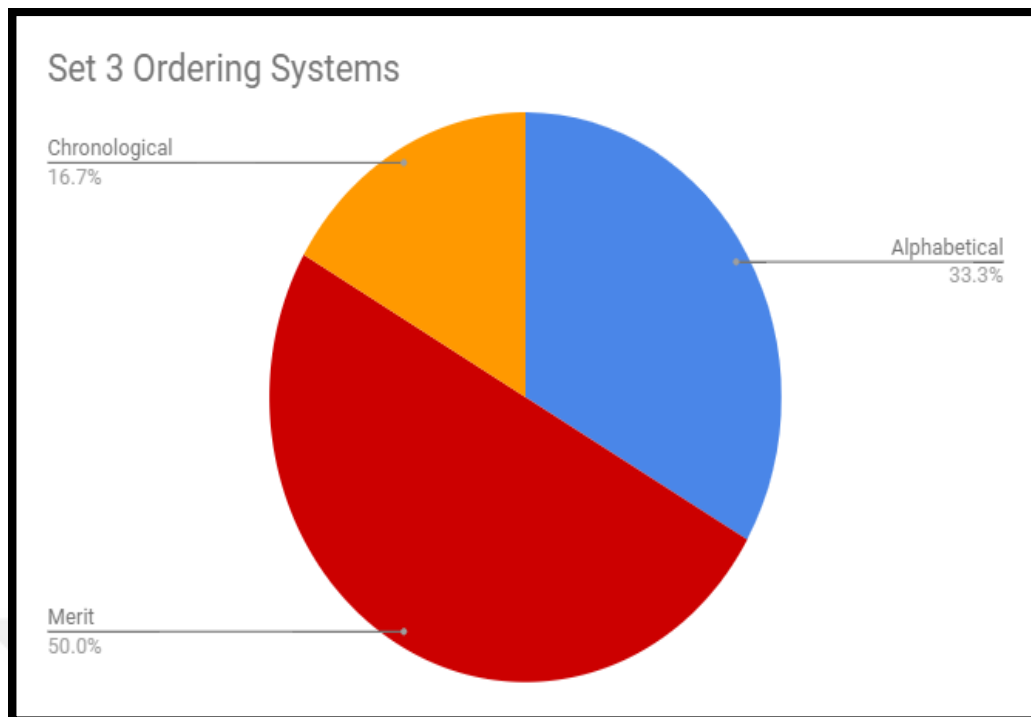


Figure 7.5. Set 3 Ordering Systems

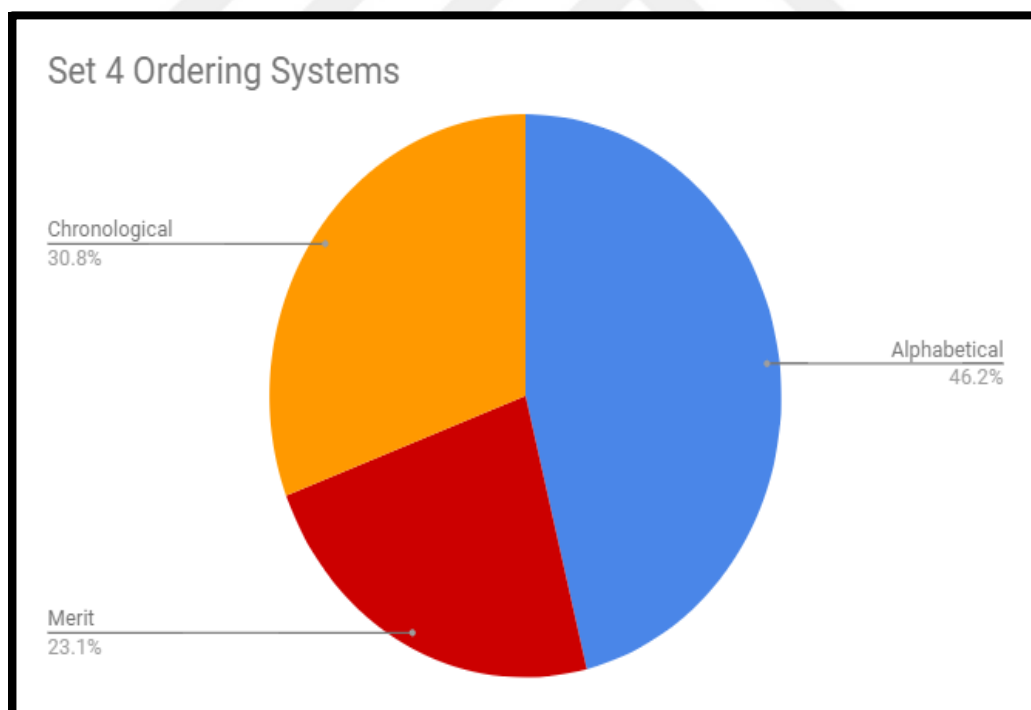


Figure 7.6. Set 4 Ordering Systems

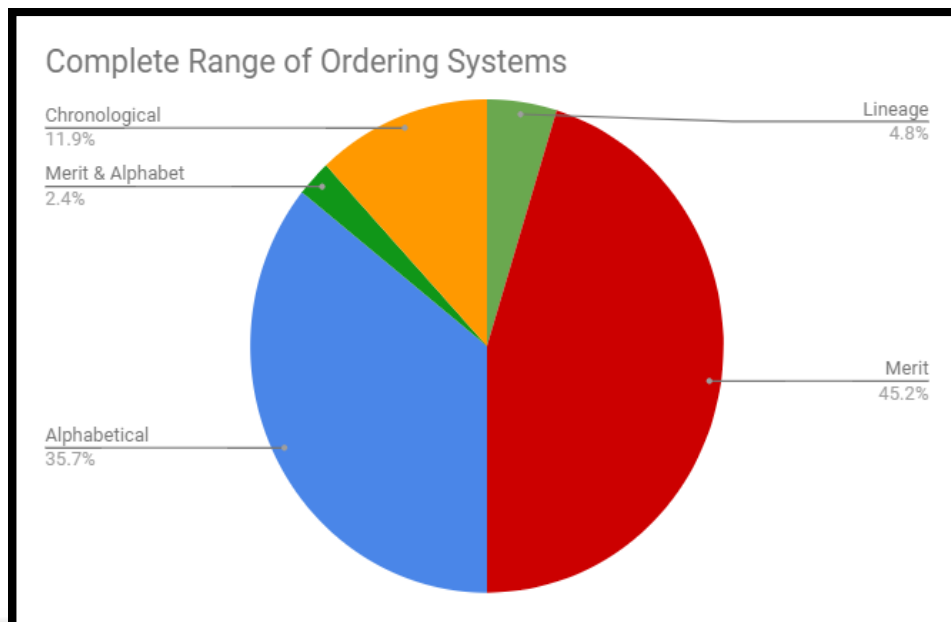


Figure 7.7. Complete Range of Ordering Systems

Merit-based orderings were present from the earliest of entries, but (as we saw earlier) they gradually experienced a standardization in which the Rightly Guided Caliphs came first, then the remaining of the Ten Promised Paradise, then other Companions after them. Lineage-based orderings, already few in Set 1, did not remain a major feature of the entries after the 3rd/9th century. Alphabetical-based orderings were present early on, but did not become popular until about the end of the 4th/10th century, after which they became a dominant form of organizing material. Chronological ordering is the latest system to emerge - the earliest example is Ibn al-Jawzī's universal history, written towards the end of the 6th/12th century. Though it never gained the kind of traction held by merit- or alphabetical-based orderings, it nonetheless became a frequent approach to prosopography in Sets 3 and 4.

In conclusion, over the course of seven centuries, the format and mechanics of Islamic prosopography changed to a substantial degree. When taken one at a time, these changes may seem insignificant, but understood all together, they paint the picture of an evolving science which grew in complexity and structure over time. While the data presented above is far from an exhaustive portrayal of the changes

within Islamic historiography, it does, I hope, provide an example of how broad case studies like this are essential to detailing the exact development - and by extension, the nature - of this branch of the Islamic intellectual sciences.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbott, N. *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I: Historical Texts*. Chicago, 1957.
- Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn, Beirut.
- Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī. *Ma'rifa Al-Saḥāba*. Dar al-Watan, 1998,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-10490/page-620>.
- Faḍā'il Al-Khulafā' Al-Rāshidīn*. Dar al-Bukhari, 1997,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-8237/page-214>.
- Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. *al-Jāmi li'ulūm al-imām Aḥmad*. Dār al-Falāḥ, Egypt, 2009.
- Faḍā'il Al-Ṣaḥāba*. Mu'assasa al-Risala, 1983,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-13136/page-1251>.
- Uṣūl Al-Sunna*. Dar al-Minar, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-6418/page-23>.
- Kitāb Al-Zuhd*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-8494#page-1070>.
- al-Ashkar, M. Sulaymān, *Taḥqīq munfi al-rutba li man thabata lahu sharf al-suḥba*. 1991.
- Altıkulaç, Tayyar. "ZEHEBÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 44, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013, pp. 180-88.
- Asmā bt. Sulaymān, *Mawqif al-Saḥābah min al-furqa wa'l-firaq*. Riyad, 2005.
- Athamina, Khalil. "The Appointment and Dismissal of Khalid B. Al-Walid From the Supreme Command." *Arabica*, vol. 41, no. 2, Jan. 1994, pp. 253–272.
- "Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, 2007.
- Auchterlonie, Paul. *Arabic Biographical Dictionaries: A Summary Guide and Bibliography*. Durham, 1987.
- Baghawī, al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd. *Sharḥ Al-Sunna*. al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya, 1983,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-7891/page-5597>.

Balādhurī, *Jumal min Ansāb al-Ashrāf*. Ed. Suhayl Zakkār et al. Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1996.

Bauden, F. "Al-Ṭabarī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-tabari-COM_1134](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-tabari-COM_1134).

Ben Cheneb, Moh, and J. de Somogyi. "Al-Dhahabī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-dhahabi-COM_0159](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-dhahabi-COM_0159).

Bosworth, C.E., "al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

Brown, Jonathan. *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim*. Brill, 2011.

Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World. Oneworld Publications, 2009.

Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. *al-Ta'rikh al-Kabīr*. Dār al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, Hyderabad.

Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī. Ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr b. Nāṣir. Damascus : Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 2001, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-1681/page-2>.

Câsim, Leys Suud. "İBN ABDÜLBER en-NEMERÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 269–72.

Cooperson, Michael. *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of Al-Ma'mun*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Diyārbakrī, Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad. *Tārīkh Al-Khamīs Fī Aḥwāl Anfas Al-Nafīs*. Dar Sadir, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-9784/page-753>.

Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*. Ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ et al. Mu'assas al-Risāla, 1985.

Tārīkh Al-Islām. Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1993, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-12397/page-1420>.

Al-Ibar Fī Khabar Man Ghabar. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-25841/page-14>.

Donner, Fred M. *Muhammad and the believers: at the origins of Islam*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing. Princeton, 1998.

The Early Islamic Conquests. Princeton University Press, 1981.

‘Uthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs in Ibn ‘Asākir’s Ta’rīkh madinat Dimashq: a Study in Strategies of Compilation,’ in James E. Lindsay (ed.), *Ibn ‘Asākir: A Muslim Historian and his work*. Princeton: Darwin Press, 2001.

Duri, Abd Al-Aziz. *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*. Princeton University Press, 2014.

Ed. “Al-Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir (or Al-Muṭahhar) Al-Maḳḍisī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mutahhar-b-tahir-or-al-mutahhar-al-makdisi-SIM_5643?s.num=705&s.rows=20&s.start=700](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mutahhar-b-tahir-or-al-mutahhar-al-makdisi-SIM_5643?s.num=705&s.rows=20&s.start=700).

Efendioglu, Mehmet. “SAHÂBE.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 35, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008, pp. 491-500.

Elisséeff, N. “Ibn ‘Asākir.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-asakir-SIM_3086](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-asakir-SIM_3086).

Fayda, Mustafa. “İBN SA‘D.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 294-97.

“HALÎFE b. HAYYÂT.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 15, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997, pp. 301-03.

Fierro, Maribel. “Al-Ṭabarānī.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-tabarani-SIM_7246](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-tabarani-SIM_7246).

Fück, J. W. “Ibn Manẓūr.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-manzur-SIM_3284](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-manzur-SIM_3284).

Gibb, H.A.R., "Abū 'Ubayda 'Āmir b. ' Abd Allah b. al-Djarrāḥ", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

'Islamic biographical literature', in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962.

Görmez, Mehmet. "TABERÂNÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 39, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010, pp. 310-12.

Hâkim al-Naysabūrī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh. *Al-Mustadrak 'alā Al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1990, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-2266#page-5517>.

Hatiboğlu, İbrahim. "MUHİBBÜDDİN et-TABERÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 31, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006, pp. 38-39.

Hindī, 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Malik. *Kanz Al-'Ummāl*. Mu'assasa al-Risala, 1981, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-2677/page-9106>.

Hodgson, Marshall Goodwin Simms. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Humphreys, R. S. *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*. Princeton, rev. Ed., 1991.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. *al-Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa'l-siyar*. Cairo, 1966.

Kitāb al-Istī'āb fī ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb. Ed. 'Alī Muḥammad. Beirut, 1992.

Ibn Abī Shayba, Abū Bakr. *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba*. Maktaba al-Rushd, 1409, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-9944/page-36635>.

Ibn Abī Ḥatīm al-Rāzī. *Al-Jarḥ Wa'l-Ta'Dīl*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1952, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-2170/page-2829>.

Ibn Asākir. *Ta'rīkh Dimashq*. Dār al-Fikr, 1995, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-71/page-11552>.

Ibn al-Athīr, 'Alī b. Abī al-Karam. *Uṣd al-ghāba fī ma'rifa al-Saḥāba*. Dar al-Fikr, 1989.

Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn. *Jāmi' Al-Uṣūl*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1972, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-25800/page-6765>.

Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Al-Muntaẓam Fī Tārīkh Al-Mulūk Wa'l-Umam*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1992, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-12406/page-1435>.

- Talqīḥ Al-Fuhūm*. Dar al-Arqam. 1997.
- Şifat al-şafwa*. Ed. 'Alī Muḥammad. Cairo, 2000.
- Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī. *al-Işāba fī Tamyīz al-Şaḥāba*. Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994.
- Ibn Ḥibbān. *Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ Al-Amşār*. Dar al-Wafaʾ, 1991,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-896/page-23>.
- Ibn Kathīr, Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar. *Al-Bidāya Waʾl-Nihāya*. Dar Hijr, 1997,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-4445/page-5574>.
- Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad b. Mukarram. *Mukḥṭaşar Taʾrīkh Dimashq*. Dar al-Fikr, 1984, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-3118/page-3904>.
- Ibn Saʿd, Muḥamad. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Ed. Muhammad ʿAbd al-Qahir. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1990.
- Ibn Qānīʾ. *Muʿjam al-Saḥāba*. Medina, 1997.
- Ibn Qanfadh, Ahmad b. Ḥasan. *Al-Wafayāt*. Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1983,
<http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-10921/page-9>.
- Ibn Qutayba. *al-Maʿārif*. Cairo, 1992.
- Işbahānī, Abū Nuʾaym. *Maʿrifa al-Saḥāba*. Riyad, 1998.
- Faḍāʾil al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidīn*. Ed. Şāliḥ b. Muḥammad. Medina, 1997.
- Işbahānī, Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad. *Siyar al-Salaf al-Sāliḥīn*. Dār al-Rāya, Riyad.
- Juynboll, G. H. A. "Al-Mizzī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012.
referenceworks.brillonline.com,
http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mizzi-COM_0761.
- Kaegi, Walter Emil. *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kandemir, M. Yaşar. "AHMED b. HANBEL." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1989, pp.75-80.
- "İBN HACER el-ASKALÂNÎ." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 514-31.

“MİZZÎ, Yûsuf b. Abdurrahman.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005, pp. 220-21.

“MOĞULTAY b. KILIÇ.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005, pp.229-31.

Kennedy, Hugh. *Caliphate: The History of An Idea*. Pelican, 2016.

The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century. Pierson Education Limited, 2004.

Khalidi, Tarif. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge, 1994.

‘Islamic biographical dictionaries: a preliminary assessment’ *MW* 63, 1973, pp. 53-65.

Khalîfa b. Khayyât. *Tabaqât*. Ed. Suhayl Zakkâr Dâr al-Fikr, 1993.

Kılıç, Hulusi. “İBN MANZÛR.” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 171-72.

Lammens, Henri. “Le ‘Triumvirat,’ Abo Bakr, ‘Omar Et Abo ‘Obaida.” *Mélanges De L’Université Saint-Joseph*, vol. 4, 1910, pp. 133–44.

Laoust, H. “Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ahmad-b-hanbal-COM_0027](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ahmad-b-hanbal-COM_0027).

“Ibn Al-Djawzî.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-al-djawzi-SIM_3139](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-al-djawzi-SIM_3139).

Lecomte, G. “Ibn Kutayba.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. [referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-kutayba-COM_0333?s.num=2&s.rows=50&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Ibn+Qutayba](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-kutayba-COM_0333?s.num=2&s.rows=50&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=Ibn+Qutayba).

Madelung, Wilferd. *The Succession to Muhammad: a Study of the Early Caliphate*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Makdisi, George. ‘*Tabaqât*-biography: law and orthodoxy in classical Islam’, *IS* 32, 1993, pp. 371-396

- Maqdisī, al-Muṭṭahir b. Ṭāhir. *Al-Bad' Wa'l-Ta'rīkh*. Maktaba al-Thiqafa al-Diniyya, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-12318/page-989>.
- Makkī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Al-'Iqd Al-Thamīn Fī Tārīkh Al-Balad Al-Amīn*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-20989/page-1618>.
- Māwardī, 'Alī b. Muḥammad. *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya*. Dār al-ḥadīth, Cairo.
- Meisami, J. S. *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*. Edinburgh, 1999.
- Mizzī, Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*. Mu'assas al-Risāla, 1980.
- Mughlatay, 'Alā' al-Dīn. *Ikmal tahdhīb al-kamāl*. Ed. 'Ādil b. Muḥammad, 2001.
- Muir, William. *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall*. Khayats, 1963.
- Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-1727/page-7333>.
- Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Alī. *Mukhtaṣar Ta'rīkh Dimashq*. Dār al-Fikr, 1984.
- Mus'ab al-Zubayrī. *Nasab Quraysh*. Edited by Evariste Lévi-Provençal, Third, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-2922/page-426>.
- Maqdisī, al-Muṭṭahir b. Ṭāhir. *al-Bad' wa'l-Ta'rīkh*. Maktaba al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya.
- Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb. *Faḍā'il al-Saḥāba*. Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1984.
- Nāṣir b. Al Ḥasan, *'Aqīda ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jamā'a fī'l-Saḥābah al-Kirām*. 1993.
- Nawawī, Yahyā b. Sharaf. *Tahdhīb Al-Asmā' Wa'l-Lughāt*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-9702/page-605>.
- Noth, A. *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung* (Bonn, 1973); revised edition (in collaboration with L.I. Conrad), translated by M. Bonner as *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source Critical Study*. Princeton, 1994.
- Onkal, Ahmet. "EBÛ UBEYDE b. CERRÂH." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994, pp. 249-50.
- Pedersen, J. "Abū Nu'aym Al-Iṣfahānī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com,

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/abu-nuaym-al-isfahani-SIM_0239.

Pellat, Ch. "Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-abd-al-barr-SIM_3027.

Petersen, E.L. *'Alī and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition: Studies on the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the End of the Ninth Century*. Copenhagen, 1964; 2nd ed. Odense, 1974.

al-Qāḍī, Wadād. 'Biographical dictionaries: inner structure and cultural significance', in G.N. Atiyeh, ed., *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*. Albany, 1995, pp. 93-122.

"Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars' Alternative History of the Muslim Community." *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 23-75.

Richards, D.S. 'Ibn al-Athīr and the later parts of the *Kāmil*: a study of aims and methods', in D.O. Morgan, ed., *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), pp. 76-108.

Robinson, Chase F. *Islamic Historiography*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Robson, J. "Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-bukhari-muhammad-b-ismail-SIM_1510.

Rosenthal, Franz. *A History of Muslim Historiography*. Leiden, 2nd rev. ed., 1968. "Ibn Al-Athīr." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-al-athir-SIM_3094.

"Ibn Ḥadjar Al-'Askalānī." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Apr. 2012. referenceworks.brillonline.com, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-hadjar-al-askalani-SIM_3178.

Sayar, Süleyman. "MAKDİSÎ, Mutahhar b. Tâhir." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003, pp.432-434.

- Sharon, Moshe. "The Development of the Debate around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam." *The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures*, edited by Fred MacGraw. Donner, Ashgate Variorum, 2012.
- Sourdell, D., Lambton, A.K.S., Jong, F. de and Holt, P.M., "Khalīfa", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.
- Tabarānī, Sulaymān b. Aḥmad. *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*. Maktaba Ibn Taymiyya, Cairo, 1994.
- Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*. Dār al-Turāth, Beirut, 1967.
- Tabarī, Muhib al-Dīn. *al-Riyād al-naḍira fī manāḳib al-ʿashara al-mubashshārīn bi ʿI-janna*. Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya.
- Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. Ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqī & Ibrāhīm ʿUṭwa, Egypt, 1975.
- Topaloğlu, Nuri. "DÜLÂBÎ, Ebû Bîsr." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 09, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994, pp.551-52.
- Watt, William Montgomery. *Muhammad at Medina*. Clarendon Press, 1956.
- Wensinck, A. J. "al-ʿAshara al-Mubashshara", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*
- Yāfiʿī, ʿAbd Allāh b. Asʿad. *Mirʾāt Al-Jannān Wa ʿIbra Al-Yaqzān*. Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-9091/page-57>.
- Yaqʿūb b. Sufyān. *Al-Maʿrifa Waʿl-Tārīkh*. Muʿassasa al-Risala, 1981, <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-12403/page-1857>.
- Yavuz, Yusuf. "İBNÜ'L-CEVZÎ, Ebü'l-Ferec." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 543-49.
- Yazıcı, Hüseyin. "İBN KUTEYBE." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 20, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp.145-49.
- Young, M. J. L. 'Arabic biographical writing' in *Religion, Learning and Science in the ʿAbbasid Period*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Yardım, Ali. "İBN EBÛ ŞEYBE, Ebû Bekir." *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999, pp. 442-43.
- Yücesoy, Hayrettin, "Caliph and caliphate up to 923/1517", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*.

Zaman, M. Q. (1997). *Religion and Politics Under the Early 'Abbasids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite*. Leiden ; New York: Brill Academic Pub.

