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Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî Revisited

A Case Study of Muḥammad and the Jews in Biographical Literature

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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1995



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Abstract

Author: Rizwi Shuhadha Faizer

Title: Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî Revisited: A Case Study of Muḥammad and the Jews in Biographical Literature

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University

Degree: Ph. D.

Sîra-maghâzî, which tells of the life of the Prophet and the early Islamic community, is not a historical genre. A literary mode which has its origins in an oral transmission, it is essentially hagiographic in spirit. The literature carries some unique characteristics. Constituted of numerous individual traditions juxtaposed one next to the other, it is—other than for those key events that have become mythologized—essentially dependent on the compiler and his purpose for its layout.

This dissertation explores the genre through a comparative case study of Muḥammad and the Jews as narrated in the Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh of Ibn Ishâq and the Kitâb al-maghâzî of al-Wâqidî. Appreciating the interpretation of the individual compiler concerned, it compares, in terms of method, structure, sources, chronology, and style, their different approaches to the subject of the early establishment of Islam. The differences reinforce the argument for appreciating *sîra-maghâzî* as a literary rather than a historical genre. More importantly, they bring into focus the tendentious nature of *sîra-maghâzî* to understand why neither one of these texts may be used to substantiate the information in the other.

Résumé

Auteur: Rizwi Shuhadha Faizer

Title: Ibn Ishâq et al-Wâqidî revus: étude de cas de la place Maḥomet et les Juifs dans la Littérature biographique

Département: Institut des études islamiques, Université McGill

Diplôme: Doctorat

Sîra-maghâzî, ce qui relate la vie du Prophète et de la communauté islamique des premiers temps, n'est pas un genre historique. C'est un mode littéraire qui doit ses origines à la tradition de transmission orale; il comporte au fond un esprit hagiographique. Toutefois le genre comporte ses caractéristiques uniques. On y trouve maintes traditions orales juxtaposées l'une à l'autre; à part les événements-clés devenus mythifiés, c'est le compilateur lui-même suivant son but particulier qui en détermine l'agencement.

Cette dissertation examine le genre par le biais d'une étude de cas comparé du sujet de Mahomet et les Juifs tel que traité dans le *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh* d'Ibn Ishâq et le *Kitâb al-maghâzî* d'al-Wâqidî. Tout en reconnaissant les interprétations particulières des compilateurs, cette étude se veut une comparaison des méthodes, structures, sources et chronologies adoptées par chacun d'eux dans son traitement du sujet de l'établissement primordial de l'islam. Les différences entre les deux textes qui se manifestent au cours de cette étude soulignent la nature littéraire plutôt qu'historique de *sîra-maghâzî*. Ce qui est plus important, ces différences mettent au point la nature tendancieuse de *sîra-maghâzî*; elles nous mènent à comprendre pourquoi l'on ne peut pas se servir de l'information comprise dans l'un de ces deux textes pour en faire la preuve de l'autre.

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Preface

My interest in investigating *sîra-maghâzî*, or biographical literature on the Prophet Muḥammad, was awakened by the ambiguous nature of the existing scholarship on this material, which, on the one hand, rejects its content as a historical source, yet on the other attempts to use it as a basis upon which to judge the character of the Prophet. Ironically enough, there is little scholarship available in terms of what these works themselves are trying to communicate. It is this vacuum in our understanding that I seek to address, through a case study of Muḥammad and the Jews in *sîra-maghâzî*.

Happily, problems of research have been few and far between, and there is no doubt that it is to the splendid facilities of the Islamic Institute Library, of McGill University, that I owe many thanks. My work has been both challenging and rewarding. When it is a people's beliefs and values that are being studied, the responsibility of the student concerned is, I believe, compounded. It is with such a sense of responsibility and deep sincerity that I have undertaken to examine the issue of the historical validity of the two earliest extant texts on the life of the Prophet. In this regard I owe much to my teacher and advisor, Professor Donald P. Little. I have found Dr. Little challenging, demanding, and at the same time, amazingly broad minded, and I am truly grateful for his patience.

My difficulties have largely been due to problems of understanding the numerous languages I have had to approach in order to make a sufficient investigation. Fortunately, there have always been numerous ready friends in this

regard: I was extremely fortunate to have the help of both Professor S. Alvi and Professor F. Khan who so kindly gave their time and translated some Urdu articles for me; fellow students Maria, Steve, Maha, Rashid, Salah, and Zaman, deserve special mention for their ready assistance in terms of German and Arabic grammar and translation, though indeed they were not the only friends I tapped; Ben-Ahmad translated the various Italian texts that I required. I take this opportunity to also thank the many who have patiently listened to my musings, and encouraged me along the way. Professor G. Hundert, who read some of my drafts and advised me on relevant bibliography, is especially to be thanked in this regard; and my late father whose letters of gentle reassurance never failed to revitalize me in my moments of trepidation. And yet writing a dissertation has been far more demanding than I ever imagined, for it is not merely a matter of reading and understanding, but also one of careful documenting. To help and encourage me along this difficult path I was extremely fortunate in having the informed and generous advice of Steve Millier. I thank Elizabeth Dwivedi for her editorial comments, and Elizabeth Richards, Violette Masse and Ivan Lavoie for the French translation of my "Abstract."

As for my family: I am afraid I have always taken the support of my family for granted. It is to them, my darlings, Rumi, Akram, Iqbal, and Faizer, that I dedicate this dissertation with heartfelt gratitude.

Technical Details

Transliteration All transliterations are italicized. The Institute of Islamic Studies transliteration system for Arabic has been followed except in the case of the long vowel which is indicated by a circumflex (^), and the *tâ' marbû'a* which is indicated by an ' a' (a); and an 'at' in an *i'dâfa* (at).

Citation Footnotes and Bibliography are cited in accordance with Kate L. Turabian's guide: A Manual for Writers, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Dates: Dates for the relevant events are given according to both Muslim and Christian calendars.

List of Abbreviations

AO = Acta Orientalia

BJRL = Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

BSOAS = Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

CJH = Canadian Journal of History

EI¹ = Encyclopaedia of Islam. 1st. ed.

EI² = Encyclopaedia of Islam. 2d. ed.

GAS = Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums

IJMES = International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies

IC = Islamic Culture

IQ = Islamic Quarterly

IOS = Israel Oriental Studies

JSAI = Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam

JQR = Jewish Quarterly Review

JJS = Journal of Jewish Studies

JNES = Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JSS = Journal of Semitic Studies

JESHO = Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JRAS = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

MSOS = Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen

MW = Muslim World

RSR¹ = Recherches de Sciences Religieuses

RSR = Religious Studies Review

REJ = Revue des Études juives

SI = Studia Islamica

Chapter One

Sîra - Maghâzî

Modern approaches to biographical literature on the Prophet Muḥammad, or the genre of *sîra-maghâzî* as it is technically termed, by authors such as Ibn Ishâq (85/704 - 151/767)¹ and al-Wâqidî (130/747 - 207/823),² have been overwhelmingly concerned with evaluating its content for information about the Prophet's life and the life of the early Islamic community.³ The justification for

¹Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, in the recension of 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishâm, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld under the title *Das Leben Muhammed's nach Ibn Ishâk* 2 vols. in 3 (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1858-60); Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, ed. and trans. Alfred Guillaume (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1955).

²Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, ed. J. M. B. Jones, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

³Leone Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. 1 (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1905); P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Moshe Gil, "The Medinan Opposition to the Prophet," *JSAI* 10 (1987): 65-96; Hartwig Hirschfeld, "Essai sur l'histoire des Juifs de Médine," part 1, *REJ* 7 (1883): 167-93; part 2, *REJ* 10 (1885): 10-31; J. M. B. Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî* - A textual Survey," in *BSOAS* 19 (1957): 247-80; M. J. Kister, "The Expedition of Bi'r Ma'ûna," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honour of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965): 337-57; M. Lecker, "Muḥammad at Medina: A Geographical Approach," *JSAI* 6 (1985): 29-62; R. B. Serjeant, "*Haram* and *Hawt ah* the Sacred Enclave in Arabia," in *Mélanges Taha Husain* ed. A. R. Badawi (Cairo: Al-Maaref, 1962), 41; William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953); idem, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956); idem, "Muhammad," in P. M. Holt and Bernard Lewis, *Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 30-56; Arent Jan Wensinck, *Mohammed en de Joden te Medina* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1928), trans. by Wolfgang Behn under the title *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina* (Freiburg im Breisgau: K. Schwarz, 1975).

such an approach has been that these texts are essentially repositories of archaic traditions based on historical facts. Needless to say, the readiness with which authenticity is ascribed to various traditions, varies from scholar to scholar. Despite the denial of historicity to much of this material by many, historians ranging from Wellhausen to Lammens, and Jones and Serjeant to Crone, come together to assert that Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî are telling us the same thing. More recently, scholars such as Ella Landau-Tasseron and G. R. Hawting, recognizing that in fact differences do exist between these narratives, have sought to explain these differences through the study of isolated traditions, though with limited success because of the restricted nature of their investigations.⁴ Significantly, little weight has been given to understanding the material in terms of the nature of the genre concerned and what it meant to the persons who compiled it.

This dissertation attempts a case study of Muḥammad and the Jews as established in the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq and the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* of al-Wâqidî, based on a careful textual comparison of the relevant material. It takes into consideration the purposes of the author concerned, as well as the nature of the genre within which he chose to write. Approached contextually, despite Muḥammad's aggression against the pagan Arabs, it is through the subordination of the Jews that the might and authority of Muḥammad are established in this literature. This contrast is heightened by a constant portrayal of the Jews as wicked. The portrayal of Muḥammad's opposition to the Jews makes of *sîra-maghâzî* a combination of salvation history and Arab saga. As a result, the Jewish faith is superseded by that of Islam. The Jews, and those who join with them, are the mythical dragon which

⁴See Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Processes of Redaction: The Case of the Tamîmite Delegation to the Prophet Muḥammad," *BSOAS* 49 (1986): 255-70; and G. R. Hawting, "Al-Hudaybiyya and the Conquest of Mecca: a Reconsideration of the Tradition about the Muslim Takeover of the Sanctuary," *JSAI* 8 (1986): 1-23.

must be vanquished by Muḥammad before he may return home as victorious lord. Neither the Christians nor the pagan Meccans are so righteously crushed as are the Jews.

The subject of Muḥammad's relations with the Jews has received much attention from scholars because of the contentious issues involved. Important in the context of this dissertation is the way in which modern historians have used the narration of the Prophet's biography, by al-Wâqidî in particular, to interpret what has come to be known as the 'Constitution of Medina,' a text of which has been discovered in the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq, but has also come down to us through the medieval sources of Abû 'Ubayd (d. 224/829),⁵ Ibn Zanjûya (d. 248/862),⁶ and Ibn Kathîr (d. 774/1372).⁷ From Julius Wellhausen, Arent J. Wensinck, and Leone Caetani, to W. Montgomery Watt, R. B. Serjeant, Uri Rubin, and Moshe Gil,⁸ one sees analyses and interpretations which contradict and deny each other. None of them give recognition to the fact that both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî were unique

⁵Abû 'Ubayd gives an *isnâd* of 'Abd Allâh b. Sâlih (d. 223), Yahyâ b. 'Abd Allâh b. Bukayr (d. ?), al-Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175), 'Uqayl b. Khâlid (d. ?), Ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî (d. 124); see *Kitâb al-Amwâl* (Cairo: 1968), 202-07, cited in Akira Goto, "The Constitution of Medina," *Orient* 18 (1982): 2-3.

⁶Entitled "*Kitâb al-Amwâl*," the text has not yet been published. The manuscript has been studied by Hamidullah at Burdur, Turkey. Ibn Zanjûya was a scholar who collected *aḥādīth* from al-Layth and Abû 'Ubayd. See Goto, *ibid.*

⁷Ibn Kathîr, *Al-Bidâya wa'l-nihâya* (Beirut: Al-Maaref, 1966), 3: 224, cited in Moshe Gil, "The Constitution of Medina: a Reconsideration," *IOS* 4 (1974): 47.

⁸Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 1: 391-95; Gil, "The Constitution of Medina," 44-66; Uri Rubin, "The 'Constitution of Medina': Some Notes," *SI* 42 (1985): 5-20; R. B. Serjeant, "The *Sunnah Jâmi'ah*, Pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the *Taḥrîm* of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the documents Comprised in the so called 'Constitution of Medina'," *BSOAS* 41 (1978): 1-42; *idem*, "The Constitution of Medina," *IQ* 8 (1964): 3-16; W. Montgomery Watt, "Condemnation of the Jews of Banû Qurayzah," in *Early Islam: Collected Articles* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 1-12; Julius Wellhausen, "Muḥammads Gemeindordnung von Medina," in *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1889), 4: 65-83; Wensinck, *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina*.

individuals in their own right, each trying to express his own vision of what the Prophet's life entailed.

Simultaneously there has been a rise of Muslim apologetics from scholars such as W. N. Arafat and Barakat Ahmad concerning the execution of the B. Qurayza. It has been asserted that such an act is contradictory to the very essence of Islam.⁹ Kister, in a 1986 article addressing the issue, seems to indicate otherwise. Muslim society of the time not only recognized the executions, he writes, but famous jurists from al-Shâfi'î on used the event as a basis from which Islamic law could be derived.¹⁰

In the light of these conflicts, the contribution I hope to bring to Islamic studies is an understanding of the significance of the motif of Muḥammad and the Jews in *sîra-maghâzî*, and thus a better understanding of the nature of *sîra-maghâzî* itself. I limit myself to the issue of Muḥammad and the Jews, one of the many motifs of the genre, because it provides an opportunity to analyze how our sources treat several well-defined incidents and how scholars have subsequently interpreted these sources. The choice of subject is due to the fact that *sîra-maghâzî* literature concerns Islam's supersession over pre-existing faiths, but more particularly Judaism, given the context of the Hîjâz in which the Jews were the predominant monotheistic community before the coming of Islam.

That the sources to be studied in this dissertation, viz., the Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh of Ibn Ishâq in the recension of Ibn Hishâm (d. 218/833), and the Kitâb al-maghâzî of al-Wâqidî, were significant even in medieval times is clear from the

⁹W. N. Arafat, "New Light on the Story of Banû Qurayza and the Jews of Medina," JRAS (1976): 100-07; and Barakat Ahmad, Muhammad and the Jews (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979).

¹⁰M. J. Kister, "The Massacre of the Banû Qurayza: a Re-examination of a Tradition," JSAI 8 (1986): 68.

numerous biographical notices that express either satisfaction or irritation with the traditions narrated and the methods of transmission adopted by these writers.¹¹ It is a conspicuous fact that scholars from the tenth century onwards should cite either one or both these texts to support their own statements regarding early Islam. For instance, al-Balâdhurî (d. 279/892)¹² depended to a large extent on the traditions transmitted by al-Wâqidî, while al-Ṭabarî (224/839 - 310/923),¹³ even though he uses both these authorities, has, according to Yâqût (d. 626/1229), established his history on the traditions of Ibn Ishâq.¹⁴

In writing about the Prophet, both authors were conforming to a particular genre which has come to be appreciated as the genre of *sîra-maghâzî*. However, to understand what went into the making of *sîra-maghâzî* is difficult because very little of the material that was written before Ibn Ishâq is available to us today. What we do have are fragments of the works of Wahb b. Munabbih (d.110/114

¹¹For example see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, *Ta'riḫ Baghdād aw Madīnat al-Salām* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanjî, 1931), 1: 214-34, and 3: 3; Ibn al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist*, trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 1: 200 and 1: 213-16; Ibn Qutayba, *Kitâb al-Ma'ârif*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld under the title *Ibn Coteibâ's Handbuch der Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1850), 247; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-tabaqât al-kabîr*, ed. Eduard Sachau (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1904-40), 7: 67 and 5: 314-21; Ya'qûb ibn 'Abd Allâh Yâqût, *Irshâd al-arîb ilâ ma'rifat al-adîb (Mu'jam al-udabâ')*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, ed. D. S. Margoliouth. 7 vols. (Leiden and London: 1907-27), 6: 399-401 and 9: 277-82.

¹²Al-Balâdhurî, ed. M. J. de Goeje, *Futûḥ al-Buldân* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1866).

¹³Abû Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarîr al-Ṭabarî, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulûk (Annales)*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, 15 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901).

¹⁴Yâqût, *Mu'jam al-udabâ'*, 6: 430 cited in Nabia Abbott, *Historical Texts*, vol. 1, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 94. It is undeniable that there are differences between the interpretations of Ibn Ishâq and al-Ṭabarî, however, as for instance regarding the agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews.

A.H.)¹⁵ and Mûsâ b. 'Uqba (55/675 -141/758),¹⁶ but also a reconstruction of the work of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 92/711) put together by M. M. A'zami.¹⁷ A'zami establishes his text very much in the manner that Alfred Guillaume¹⁸ uses to reconstruct the text of Ibn Ishâq, i.e., by collecting and bringing together citations from more recent works that are extant today. We can also find information about this earlier literature in bio-bibliographical works which sometimes go beyond mere citation in supplying us with biographical information on writers of *maghâzî*. Citations from such works are also to be discovered in the 'historical' writings of authors such as al-Balâdhurî,¹⁹ al-Ṭabarî,²⁰ and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî.²¹

Although 'historical' tradition or *akhbâr* constitutes the major component of *sîra-maghâzî*, it is certainly not the only one. Poetry, miracle stories, *qisâṣ* genealogy, and even documents such as lists of those who fought at the Battle of Badr, for instance,²² or of the delegates sent by the Prophet to the various courts abroad,²³ had their part to play. Another important component was that of stories designed to explain the exact moment of a Qur'ânic revelation. As Duri states:

¹⁵Raif Georges Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1972); also Nabia Abbott, "Wahb b. Munabbih: a Review Article," *JNES* 36 (1977): 103-12.

¹⁶See "A Fragment of the Lost Book of Mûsâ b. 'Uqba," in Alfred Guillaume, introduction to *The Life of Muhammad*, by Ibn Ishâq, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1955), xliii-xlvi; and Joseph Schacht, "On Mûsâ b. 'Uqba's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*," *AO* 21 (1950): 288-300.

¹⁷'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, *Maghâzî rasûl Allâh*, ed. M. M. A'zamî (Riyad: Maktab Tarbiyati'l-'Arabî, 1981).

¹⁸Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*.

¹⁹Al-Balâdhurî, *Futûḥ al-Buldân*.

²⁰Al-Ṭabarî, *Ta'rîkh al-rusul wa'l-mulûk*.

²¹Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, *Ta'rîkh Baghdâd*.

²²Mûsâ b. 'Uqba gives lists of persons who participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud, and Ibn Sa'd is supposed to have derived this information from him. See N. A. Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography* (New Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Deli, 1979), 269-70.

²³See J. Schacht, "On Mûsâ b. 'Uqba's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*," 293.

... the accounts of al-Wâqidî quoted from al-Zuhrî clearly demonstrate that the study of the Qur'ân, which is full of references to Muslim affairs in Medina, was another factor in the emergence of historical studies.²⁴

Needless to say, many such citations are found in the text of Ibn Ishâq as well.

Although difficult to prove because we know so little about this material, the claim has been made that *ayyâm* (battle days) literature had a broad influence on the writing of *maghâzî*.²⁵ Poetry, generally recognized as the most important mode of oral tradition, is known to have formed an important part of pre-Islamic *ayyâm* literature. Islam, whose attitude to pagan poetry was somewhat ambiguous,²⁶ had come up with new poems of its own to go hand in hand with the older material, poems which were in many ways comparable to the pre-Islamic accounts of tribal warfare.²⁷ The battles and the poetry (scraps of popular poetry have been found in the fragments of Ibn Munabbih's *Sîra*)²⁸ held as much fascination for their audience as did the accounts of miracles and visions of the *Isrâ'îl îyât* or biblical stories. And they were all a part of the early *maghâzî* writings. Thus Mûsâ b. 'Uqba tells of the Prophet's vision of Jesus

²⁴A. A. Duri, *Bahth fî nash'at 'ilm al-ta'rîkh 'inda al-'Arab* (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1960), trans. by Lawrence Conrad as *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 111-12. Subsequent references to this work are to the English translation.

²⁵*EI*¹, s.v. "Sîra," by G. Levi Della Vida; also Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 19, 20.

²⁶"It is better for a man that his body be full of pus than that he be full of poems," is a saying attributed to the Prophet. Another saying attributed also to the Prophet forbids only the bad poetry that incites inter-tribal conflict. See M. J. Kister, "The *Sîrah* Literature." *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. F. L. Beeston, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 358.

²⁷Kister commenting on the poetry of the *Sîra* writes: "A part of this poetry is false, and some of these forgeries were convincingly shown to be so by 'Arafat; a certain portion seems, however, to be authentic." See *ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*

circumambulating the Ka'ba,²⁹ and al-Zuhrî of 'Âtikâ's dream.³⁰ Ibn Munabbih, of whose *maghâzî* we only have traditions concerning the Prophet's meetings at 'Aqaba and his *hijra* to Medina, also includes several miracle stories: the story of Surâqa; of the dove and the spider at the entrance of the cave; of Abû Bakr's meeting with the Devil.³¹ And the attitude of the public to this genre seems to have been to treat it as something frivolous. Thus, for instance, Goldziher tells us that,

According to a report from al-Zuhrî, the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik saw such a *maghâzî* book in the hands of one of his sons and had it burnt, recommending his son to read the Koran and pay heed to the sunna.³²

While Kister, explaining the easy-going approach of early Muslims to this genre, says:

It was considered less binding as a duty to narrate the *maghâzî* than to transmit utterances of the Prophet. Scholars refrained from recording *Hadîth* utterances transmitted by unreliable scholars while they did not hesitate to relate *maghâzî* material on their authority.³³

Indicating that Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra* was no exception to this rule he adds:

The fragment of Wahb's papyrus reflects the very early stage of the formation of the legendary type of *Sîrah*; the *Sîrah* of Ibn Ishâq is in fact a selective collection of this material.³⁴

According to Kister, *sîra* literature was inspired by the imposing personality of the Prophet.³⁵ Yet Hartmann informs us that "Ibn Ishâq *hat keine*

²⁹See tradition 1 in "A Fragment of the Lost Book of Mûsâ b. 'Uqba," trans. by Guillaume in his introduction to *The Life of Muhammad*, by Ibn Ishâq, xliii.

³⁰See Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 102.

³¹Kister, "The *Sîrah* Literature," 356-57.

³²Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 2: 191.

³³Kister, "The *Sîrah* Literature," 357.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*, 352.

Sîra geschrieben”, indicating to us that the term ‘*sîra*’ was not used at that time.³⁶ Hinds believes that it was probably not used in such a context until around the time of al-Wâqidî and Ibn Hishâm.³⁷ As for the term *maghâzî*, according to A. A. Duri,

The earliest studies of the Prophet’s life were also referred to as the *maghâzî*, a word which from a linguistic point of view means the raids and military campaigns of the Prophet, but which actually extended to the entire period of his prophetic mission.³⁸

And Martin Hinds comes to a similar conclusion. In his article , “*Maghâzî and Sîra in Early Muslim Scholarship*,” he declares:

It looks as if the two senses of *maghâzî* co-existed. In its broader scope—the life and background of the Prophet—the term echoed an earlier scope which had been yet broader . . . and seems to have been used more or less synonymously with *sîra* as a genre label [emphasis mine]. The narrower sense appears to have been a more technical one, i.e. the *maghâzî* “proper”, as distinct from the *mab’ath*, for example.³⁹

J. M. B. Jones further qualifies the meaning of the term as a literary technicality, explaining that “it is specifically applied to the accounts of the early Muslim military expeditions in which the Prophet took part; those at which he was not personally present are termed *sarâyâ* or *bu’ ûth*.” He adds, “At the same time, the early books of *maghâzî* include accounts of events which are not military expeditions, such as the treaty-making at Ḥudaybiyah, the Prophet’s last pilgrimage (*Ḥajjat al-wadâ’*), etc.”⁴⁰ This is clearly observed with regard to al-

³⁶Hinds, “*Maghâzî and Sîra in Early Islamic Scholarship*,” *La vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg*, October 1980 (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1983), 62.

³⁷Ibid., 62-65.

³⁸Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 24.

³⁹Hinds, “*Maghâzî and Sîra in Early Islamic Scholarship*,” 66.

⁴⁰J. M. B. Jones, “The *Maghâzî* Literature,” in *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. F. L. Beeston, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 344.

Wâqidî's Kitâb al-Maghâzî for instance, which does not merely deal with the Prophet's raids, but with his treaty making at Ḥudaybiya,⁴¹ the conversion of 'Amr b. al-ʿÂṣ,⁴² the affair of the destruction of al-ʿUzzâ (by Khâlid b. al-Walîd),⁴³ and the Prophet's farewell pilgrimage as well as his last sermon.⁴⁴ Significantly, the article entitled "Al-Maghâzî" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam states that

... not just Ibn Ishâq but *all* transmitters and compilers before Ibn Hishâm (d. 218 or 213) who dealt with material about the period of the Prophet in general regarded that material as being about *maghâzî*. . . .⁴⁵

It may be argued that because Ibn Ishâq deals with the entire life of the Prophet whereas al-Wâqidî merely with his *maghâzî*, such a comparison is not feasible. My reply to this is that both the Sîra and the Kitâb al-maghâzî may be compared, not only on the grounds that they conform to the same genre, but also because they both concern the Prophet's life and the life of the Islamic community, and they both deal with the Prophet's relations with the Jews, which is the concern of this dissertation. It is important to realize that present appreciation of this material is largely based on the juxtaposition of data taken from the two texts,⁴⁶ and while it is the interest of this dissertation to deny the correctness of such methods because these materials are indeed different, this difference can only be established by comparing the one with the other.

⁴¹Al-Wâqidî, Kitâb al-maghâzî, 571-633.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 741-54.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 873-74.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 1088-1103.

⁴⁵EI², s.v. "Al-Maghâzî," by Martin Hinds.

⁴⁶Thus one of the standard text books for students of Islam discussing the life of the Prophet states: "Material on the life of Muhammad is available in ample . . . quantities. The earliest complete extant text stems from a version of the biography (Sîra) of Muhammad by Ibn Ishaq (d. 767) edited by Ibn Hisham (d. 833). This may be supplemented by other fairly early texts such as those by al-Wâqidî (d. 823) . . . In broad outline, all these sources present the same story but matters of chronology and detail are always problematic." See Andrew Rippin, The Formative Period vol. 1, Muslims: Their Beliefs and Practices (London: Routledge, 1990), 31.

Western scholarship on *sîra-maghâzî*, with notable exceptions, has been overwhelmingly critical of the use of this material as a historical source.⁴⁷ Most prominent among these critics are Caetani, who in 1905 undertook an examination of all the biographical sources only to conclude that the texts were formulations of doctrine or a polemical point rather than statements of history;⁴⁸ Lammens, who saw in the traditions nothing but Qur'ânic *midrash* with the objective of praising the Prophet;⁴⁹ and Levi della Vida, who asserts that

. . . the continually increasing veneration for the person of Muḥammad provoked the growth around his figure of a legend of hagiographical character in which alongside of more or less corrupt historical memories there gathered episodes modeled on Jewish or Christian religious tradition. . . .⁵⁰

Modern attitudes to the use of *maghâzî* materials for the reconstruction of early Islamic history are best viewed against the backdrop of Schachtian skepticism. In 1949, Schacht, in an article calling for a re-evaluation of Islamic tradition, had asserted that as regards the traditions of the Prophet, even seemingly reliable historical information is only the background for legal doctrines and therefore devoid of independent value.⁵¹ Advocating the adoption of "sound critical standards," Schacht went on to examine the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* of Mûsâ b. 'Uqba in a subsequent article, only to alert the scholar to the fact that

A considerable part of the standard biography of the Prophet in Medina, as it appeared in the second half of the second century A.H., was of very recent origin and is therefore without independent historical value; the vague collective memory of the community was formalized, systematized,

⁴⁷J. E. Royster, "The Study of Muḥammad: A Survey of Approaches from the Perspective of the History and Phenomenology of Religion," *MW* 62 (1972): 49-70.

⁴⁸Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 1: 28-58.

⁴⁹Henri Lammens, "Les Juifs de la Mecque à la veille de l'Hégire," *RSR* 1 8 (1918): 145-93.

⁵⁰*EI*¹, s.v. "Sîra."

⁵¹Joseph Schacht, "A Revaluation of Islamic Tradition," *JRAS* (1949): 143-54.

replenished with details and shaped into formal traditions with proper *isnâds* only in the second century A.H.⁵²

It was in the wake of such harsh skepticism that a more sympathetic investigation of Islamic sources was undertaken by such scholars as Robson, Jones, Abbott, and Duri who affirmed the authenticity of early Islamic sources. It is important to emphasize that, notwithstanding Schacht's argument, there is much to indicate that not only had Mûsâ b. 'Uqba actually written a work on *maghâzî*, for traditions from this work have been cited by both Ibn Sa'd and al-Wâqidî, but that, in fact, *maghâzî* writing probably went back to the time of Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110-114/728-732), based on the evidence of a manuscript of the latter's writings.⁵³ It is therefore certainly worth examining both the recension of Ibn Ishâq by Ibn Hishâm, as well as the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* of al-Wâqidî, in order to evaluate the nature of these 'historical' traditions concerning the Prophet.

Robson's 1955 article, "Ibn Ishâq's use of the *Isnâd*," is an attempt to provide such an evaluation of the traditions used by Ibn Ishâq. On the basis of a careful analysis, Robson concludes that his use of the *isnâd* indicates a sincerity which is difficult to ignore:

⁵²Schacht, "On Mûsâ b. 'Uqba's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*," 288; in a somewhat abrupt examination of Mûsâ b. 'Uqba's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî* Schacht attempts to show this. His methodology is based on an examination of the substance/*matn* of the 20 traditions involved. But first he establishes not only that all the traditions of the *Kitâb* had originally been related on al-Zuhrî's authority, but also that the *Kitâb* itself had been transmitted by Mûsâ's nephew Ismâ'il b. Ibrâhîm b. 'Uqba alone. Schacht then goes on to deny on this basis the plausibility of the inclusion of those traditions which had not originated from al-Zuhrî or had not been transmitted by his nephew. Next, he finds other traditions which are ridden with 'Abbâsid tendencies. This, he says, makes it difficult to believe that Zuhri, who after all was the main source of Mûsâ, was the author of those traditions. Finally, Schacht also finds traditions that do not belong to the original work, because they do not concern *maghâzî* material at all. We are not informed, however, of what his definition of *maghâzî* material is.

⁵³M. J. Kister, "On the Papyrus of Wahb b. Munabbih," *BSOAS* 37 (1974): 545-71; idem, "Notes on the Papyrus Account of the 'Aqaba Meeting," *Le Museon* 76 (1963): 403-17.

He does not claim that all the information he gives is of full authority, neither does he try to trace everything back to the Prophet. We may therefore be inclined to trust him when he does quote direct authorities and when he gives connected *isnâds*.⁵⁴

However, this does not lead Robson to conclude that the information conveyed by these traditions is factual. Instead he declares:

It has often been suggested that, although the main body of Tradition cannot be genuine, there is a genuine core; but no one has yet provided a method of extracting this core.⁵⁵

Abbott's appreciation of this literature is expressed in the same spirit. She accords the literature an authenticity on the basis of her acquaintance with the material, and recognizes the development of both technical and stylistic skills in methods of compilation. Most importantly, she acknowledges the establishment of disciplines of transmission which ensured the trustworthiness of the information that was communicated. She nevertheless clearly qualifies her acknowledgment of this material:

. . . basic authenticity is not to be equated with scientific reliability or factuality. In other words, to accept *Akhbâr 'Uбайд*, *Kitâb al-mubtadâ'*, and a *Kitâb al-maghâzî* as basically authentic works of 'Uбайд ibn Sharyah, Wahb ibn Munabbih, and 'Urwah ibn al-Zubair or Zuhri, respectively, is not in itself proof enough to indicate that these works are factual histories or that their authors are reliable historians.⁵⁶

Watt, Kister, and Jones, on the other hand, clearly equate authenticity with factuality. For Watt, who has not sufficiently appreciated the traditional role this genre of literature has played in early Islamic society, it was largely a misplaced sympathy for the Muslim community which led him to assert that "ostensible sources for any series of events are always to be accepted unless some grounds can

⁵⁴James Robson, "Ibn Ishâq's use of the *Isnâd*," *BJRL* 38 (1955-56): 457.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 464.

⁵⁶Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 26.

be shown for their rejection or partial rejection.”⁵⁷ Watt believes that the accountability of this material is due to the early beginnings, i. e., the ‘family memories,’ of the collection of this material:

... many of the first collectors and historians themselves came from the families of men who had played an important part under Muḥammad. Thus of the first ten writers mentioned by Sezgin, no. 1 is the son of Sa’d ibn ‘Ubâda, the leader of the Khazraj, no. 4 is a son of the poet Ka’b ibn Mâlik, no. 7 is ‘Urwa the son of al-Zubayr. . . .⁵⁸

Thus Watt concludes that the essential work of collecting the traditions concerning the life of the Prophet had been completed by family members of those closely connected with the main events, so that by the first Islamic century, the data were established. Thus, for instance, Watt examines the various versions of ‘the condemnation of the Banû Qurayẓa’ and attributes their differences to ‘modifications of a basic account from political and theological motives.’⁵⁹ According to Watt, the claim that the request for Sa’d’s appointment came from the Jews, “may simply be to make a good story.” The statement “that Muḥammad merely asked Sa’d for advice,” on the other hand, was probably intended “to magnify the position of the Prophet.” And as for the claim that the Prophet remarked in regard to Sa’d, “stand in honour of your *sayyid*,” Watt states the opinion that “the Anṣâr could and did take it to mean that one of them was worthy and capable of having authority over the Quraysh.”⁶⁰ But according to him there was behind it all a historical account. In this case the account consisted of four distinct events:

a) the unconditional surrender of the Jews;

⁵⁷W. Montgomery Watt, “The Reliability of Ibn Isḥaq’s Sources,” Early Islam: Collected Articles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 13-14.

⁵⁸*ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁹Watt, “Condemnation of the Jews of Banû Qurayẓah,” 5.

⁶⁰*ibid.*, 5.

- b) the Aws' plea for their confederates;
- c) Muḥammad's appointment of Sa'd as judge
- d) Muḥammad's proclamation that he has judged correctly.

As already indicated, this is one tradition that modern Muslim scholars such as Arafat would like to refute. Among Arafat's reasons for refuting the tradition, are, first, the fact that Ibn Ishâq had probably obtained his traditions from the descendants of those Jews who had converted to Islam; and second, that the very cruelty of the act speaks for its un-Islamic nature.⁶¹ Barakat Ahmad, on the other hand, re-examining the relationship between Muḥammad and the Jews, questions the historicity of the accounts concerning the raids against the Jews of Medina and especially the traditions regarding the execution of the B. Qurayza. For Ahmad there exists the possibility that these were but cautionary tales written as a warning to the Jews of Baghdad to keep them from rebelling against the 'Abbâsid caliphate.⁶² Nevertheless it is important to realize that these traditions have been recorded in very early compilations such as Qur'ân commentaries,⁶³ and that contemporaries of Ibn Ishâq have also reported similar traditions on the authority of their teachers.⁶⁴

The protest against the traditions regarding the executions meets with the following response from Kister:

The early jurists availed themselves of the traditions of the *maghâzî*. . . . The events of this expedition served as precedents, conclusions were duly drawn

⁶¹Arafat, "New Light on the B. Qurayza," 106.

⁶²Ahmad, *Muḥammad and the Jews*, 10.

⁶³Rubin for instance tells us of numerous variations on the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr which are recorded in early *tafsîr* such as that of Muqâtil ibn Sulaymân. See Uri Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," *Oriens* 32 (1990): 65-71.

⁶⁴Thus 'Abd al-Razzâq gives us two variations of the tradition concerning the Banû Qurayza, one from Mûsâ ibn 'Uqba and the other from al-Zuhrî. See Kister, "The Massacre of the Banû Qurayza," 82-83.

and rules of the Muslim law of war were molded according to these precedents.⁶⁵

The fact that the tradition was used to establish legal principles is certainly no guarantee that the incident happened. The field of Islamic law is full of examples of rules derived from events of dubious authenticity; yet the different conclusions that have been drawn from this particular incident—the execution of the B. Qurayza—is instructive. “The rule in Islam,” says Arafat, “is to punish only those who are responsible for sedition.”⁶⁶ Interestingly, Shâfi‘î’s ruling has political implications; according to him, it is obvious that people who do not revolt against their iniquitous leaders and join the righteous party may be put to death by order of the *Imâm*.⁶⁷

Kister subscribes to the view that

Sîrah literature . . . came into being in the period following the death of the Prophet. It developed in the first half of the first century of the *hijrah*, and by the end of that century the first full-length literary compilations were produced.⁶⁸

He adds,

Although some accounts about the recording of the utterances, deeds and orders dictated by the Prophet to his companions are dubious and debatable and should be examined with caution (and ultimately rejected), some of them seem to deserve trust.⁶⁹

Clearly Kister is aware of the distance that separates what actually happened from the information conveyed about that happening by the majority of the traditions. The care with which he selects the authentic material reflects a search for archaic

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 73-74.

⁶⁶Arafat, “New Light on the Story of Banû Qurayza,” 103.

⁶⁷Kister, “The Massacre of the Banû Qurayza,” 68.

⁶⁸Kister, “The *Sîrah* Literature,” 352.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

remnants accidentally left behind. By putting together such pieces of information from a multiplicity of sources, Kister attempts to obtain a picture of the original historical situation. In other words, Kister claims that Islamic tradition literature can be used to obtain historical data if a careful process of sifting is undertaken.⁷⁰ And yet his determination of what is archaic is entirely subjective; there are no rules by which an objective assessment of his choice may be made.⁷¹

For Jones, whose methodology is comparable to that of Watt, *maghâzî* as a form of oral literature “existed soon after the death of the Prophet—perhaps even in his lifetime.”⁷² What is suggested here is that there is a link between observed fact and record regarding the life of Muḥammad.⁷³ Thus, in two articles entitled “The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*” written in 1957, and “Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî” written in 1959, Jones claims that (1) a growing consciousness of the importance of chronology seems to have marked the emergence of the *maghâzî* literature in Medina;⁷⁴ and (2) that it is very probable that both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî had

⁷⁰This is clearly seen in the way Kister attempts to understand the facts of Bi'r Ma'ûna by sifting through a wide range of obviously interpretationally slanted tradition material. See M. J. Kister, “The Expedition of Bi'r Ma'ûna.”

⁷¹Kister's method is wholeheartedly endorsed by his student Michael Lecker who agrees that history may be discovered through the selection and subsequent rationalization of such [tendentious] information. See Lecker, “The Ḥudaybiyya-Treaty and the Expedition against Khaybar,” *JSAI* 5 (1984): 1-11. But see also G. R. Hawting's Review of *The Banû Sulaym: a Contribution to the Study of Early Islam*, by Michael Lecker, in *BSOAS* 54 (1991): 359-62.

⁷²Jones, “The *Maghâzî* Literature,” 344.

⁷³It is significant that for Jan Vansina, writing on the value of oral tradition as a historical source, this is an essential aspect of recording oral tradition: “. . . those portions that were observed as existing situations and then incorporated into the setting . . . do go back to an observation and are evidence. . . . A chain of transmission exists in which each of the parties is a link. . . . This means that a tradition should be seen as a series of successive historical documents all lost except for the last one and usually interpreted by every link in the chain of transmission.” See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as a Source of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 29.

⁷⁴Jones, “The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*,” 247-80.

recourse to a common fund of Prophetic and historical traditions.⁷⁵ That Jones should try to “win through to a safer position”,⁷⁶ where discrepancies regarding the dating of events in the writings of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî occur, seems to indicate that he does assume the existence of an ‘authentic’ event. Interestingly, Jones asserts that al-Wâqidî was the better ‘historian’ of the two, in that he demonstrated greater respect for chronological accuracy:

In Ibn Ishâq, the chronological details are usually, but not always, given. In al-Wâqidî, the chronological framework is complete. . . .⁷⁷

Thus, as far as Jones is concerned, al-Wâqidî had arrived at his chronology through a thorough investigation of the tradition material, a notion which more recent investigations by such as Hawting, whose work I discuss below, show to be incorrect.

Then, in 1960 there appeared the work of Duri, who diligently set out to explain the development of Arab historiography during the early years. According to him the influence of the *ḥadīth* scholars of Medina had an important impact on *sīra-maghâzī* and saw the distilling of historical tradition away from the adulterating folk tales and miracle stories. It is important to realize that for Duri the *sīra-maghâzī* was not history, and that historical writing per se finally evolved only at a later date, long after the *Kitâb al-Maghâzī* of al-Wâqidî. Nevertheless, scholarly appreciation of the genre of *sīra-maghâzī* was not adequate, and he too was unable to fathom some of its complexities, such as the problems regarding the approach of the compiler to the issue of chronology, referred to above. Thus, obviously impressed by the imposing scholarship of Jones, Duri lends his voice to

⁷⁵J. M. B. Jones, “Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî,” *BSOAS* 22 (1959): 51.

⁷⁶Jones, “The Chronology of the *Maghâzī*,” 245.

⁷⁷Jones, “The *Maghâzī* Literature,” 349.

the argument that, yes, Ibn Ishâq was remarkable, but—and here he is referring in particular to the impact of the Medinan scholars on the writer's representation of *sîra-maghâzî*—that al-Wâqidî was the better 'historian':

Historical studies developed further in the work of Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wâqidî (130 - 207/748 - 823). His book . . . in content and method is more strictly in keeping with the school of Medina than was the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq.⁷⁸

It is with Sellheim's structural analysis of the *Sîra*, which is at least partly informed by accepted data on Ibn Ishâq's own career, that we have a first attempt to appreciate the essentially interpretative nature of this genre which takes into consideration the purposes of the author concerned. True, essentially it is the search for a historical core which is the goal of his analysis. According to him, a *Grundsicht*,⁷⁹ which he believes consists of material derived from the Hijâzî environment, and 'documents' such as the 'Constitution of Medina,' lie buried beneath (in chronological order of the antiquity of the materials) a first layer (*erste Schicht*) formed of prophetic and mythical legend,⁸⁰ and a second (*zweite Schicht*) or surface layer, made up of material which Ibn Ishâq adds to justify the 'Abbâsid *dawla*.⁸¹ But behind it all, says Sellheim, is the author's purpose. The legitimacy of the ruling Arab Muslim minority needed to be asserted, and Ibn Ishâq, who had been commissioned by the caliph to put down his *Sîra* in writing, willingly lent his voice to support their claims. According to him, Muḥammad, a member of the ancestral family of the 'Abbâsids through whom God had revealed His Qur'ân, who was an Arab, born in Mecca—the site of the temple of God originally built by

⁷⁸Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 37. Such a statement is difficult to accept given the numerous scholars who have criticized the way al-Wâqidî uses the collective *isnâd* without naming all those concerned, for instance. See below in my chapter on al-Wâqidî, for more detail.

⁷⁹Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," *Oriens* 18-19 (1967): 73-78.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 53-73.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 49-53.

Adam, where Abraham had finally sacrificed a sheep instead of his son—was the last of the monotheistic prophets; Islam was the culmination of the monotheistic faiths.

Sellheim's approach leads to the recognition of the content of biblical and mythic patterns in the representation of Muḥammad. This is an important statement, for here lies the realization that these traditions were as much (if not more) based on interpretation as on a reminiscence of the facts that constituted the life of Muḥammad. For instance, he explains the way the story of Muḥammad is knit to parallel the story of the family of Abraham: just as Abraham had desired to sacrifice his son Ismâ'il, so had 'Abdul Muṭṭalib almost sacrificed his son, 'Abd Allâh. Just as Abraham's grandson Jacob had ascended the ladder, so had Muḥammad accomplished his *mi'râj* from Jerusalem. The individual strands of Jewish, Christian and Muslim tradition—as, for example, in the story of how Abû Lubâba, who very much like Judas of the New Testament, betrays Muḥammad when he is with the B. Qurayza—are quite inextricable. An intricate weave of these legends is intermingled with that of universal mythic formulae such as that of the hero who is born, emigrates to Medina, and dies on the same day, a Monday (which may be viewed as a mnemonic device as well); and the symbolic use of the stone-throwing myths, such as when the B. Naḍîr planned to throw down a stone on Muḥammad, and when a woman from the Qurayza was induced to throw down a millstone on the Muslims who stood at the ramparts of their fortress. The significance of Sellheim's contribution is realized when we hear Guillaume, despite his deep understanding of this literature, inquire:

... who can read the story of al-Zabîr, who was given his life, family, and belongings but did not want to live when the best men of his people had been slain, without admitting that here we have a true account of what actually happened? Similarly who but an impartial historian would have included verses in which the noble generous character of the Jews of the Hijaz was

lauded and lamented? The scepticism of earlier writers seems to me excessive and unjustified.⁸²

The fact of the matter is that the extermination of the B. Qurayza seems to have been a theme which has been regularly recalled in early Arabic literature. It is significant that al-Aghânî should recount that even before Islam the Qurayza were regarded as the enemy of the Medinan Arabs, and mention two occasions when that tribe, i.e., the B. Qurayza, were invited by the Arabs on false pretences, only to be massacred.⁸³ The point is that legends of pre-Islam, the well known *ayyâm al-‘Arab* motifs, have become incorporated into *sîra-maghâzî*.⁸⁴ At the same time the immense influence of Qur’ân-Biblical patterns on the shaping of these traditions cannot be overlooked either. As Humphreys reminds us:

(In the Qur’anic view of things, to accept God and his commandments is an obligation not merely for individuals but also for communities. . .). Here the story of Noah is paradigmatic: the community that rejects the messenger recalling it to its covenant is abruptly and violently obliterated.⁸⁵

Sellheim is one of the rare scholars who attempts to explain for the reader, this mix, by picking out the various strands which come together in the narrative of Ibn Ishâq.

Wansbrough takes a literary approach as well—a methodology of form and redaction criticism developed by Biblical scholars—though with considerably different intentions.⁸⁶ The key to understanding Wansbrough’s radicalism is to

⁸²Guillaume, introduction to The Life of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishâq, xxiv.

⁸³Hirschfeld, “Essai sur l’histoire des Juifs de Médine,” 172-74.

⁸⁴EI¹, s.v. “Sîra.”

⁸⁵R. S. Humphreys, “Qur’anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography,” in Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity, ed. F. M. Clover and R. S. Humphreys (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 277.

⁸⁶John Wansbrough, Qur’anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); and The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

recognize his Schachtian leanings which permit him to deny the historicity of tradition literature, and, as well, to appreciate the entire corpus of early Islamic documentation as salvation history.⁸⁷ According to him, the portrait of the Prophet was fiction which had emerged

... in response to its [the community's] needs and as a result of polemic, and derived its elements from the Rabbinic prophetology of Moses, its emblems being mainly divine election and inspiration, telling the unknown, and performing miracles.⁸⁸

Concerned to appreciate *Sîra-maghâzî* from such a position, that is to say, as the stuff of Gospels rather than the 'entertainment-oriented-religious-literature' that it was to the Muslim community of the time, Wansbrough seeks out morphological constants "which demands attention not merely to the typical units of narrative exposition . . . but also to the motives dictating their employment."⁸⁹ Discovering twenty-three polemical motifs traditional to the Near Eastern sectarian milieu, he contends that *sîra-maghâzî* is essentially "Torah-centric" and demonstrates an adaptation of Biblical materials for sectarian purposes. Reminding the reader that Islamic literature per se first appeared in Mesopotamia at the end of the second/eighth century, Wansbrough suggests that this literature was the creation of an Islamic community which had probably existed as a sectarian elite within a largely Jewish milieu. Importantly, for Wansbrough, the Qur'ân could not have been redacted before the early ninth century, and the traditions concerning an 'Uthmanic collection were a later fiction by the community created in order to

⁸⁷"Salvation history did not happen; it is a literary form which has its own historical context." See Thomas L. Thompson, The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), 328, cited in Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of *Qur'ân*, *Tafsîr* and *Sîra*," in Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies, ed. R. C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 155.

⁸⁸Issa J. Boullata, Review of Quranic Studies, by John Wansbrough, in MW 47 (1977): 306.

⁸⁹John Wansbrough, Sectarian Milieu, 4.

trace its origins to the Hijaz. This would mean that for Wansbrough, Ibn Ishâq's narrative would have appeared before the recension was established, but al-Wâqidî's, after. It is this aspect of his thesis that appears to be picked up by Landau-Tasseron, whose conjectures I discuss below.⁹⁰

Using methods which are by contrast clearly grounded in an historical approach, Patricia Crone, a former student of Wansbrough, examines Islamic literature on the Prophet to arrive at a degree of skepticism about its historicity which parallels that of her teacher. Crone claims that her appreciation of the *sîra* traditions goes back to J. M. B. Jones' clarification that they were selections from a common pool of *qâṣṣ* material.⁹¹ In fact, Jones had included traditions along with the *qâṣṣ*, which is why these texts embody for him a certain reliability.⁹² For Crone, however, the fact of the matter is that the *maghâzî*-material just does not tell the truth. If one wants to know the truth, it would do just as well to look outside the Muslim 'sources,' where, fortunately for us, something of Muḥammad's life has been recorded.⁹³ It is significant that these outside sources do not agree with the chronology presented by the Muslims. Yes, Muḥammad lived, but his *hijra* took place around 628 A. D., and he was still alive in 634 A. D.⁹⁴ Explaining the distortion in the Islamic sources, Crone says:

Muḥammad was a militant preacher whose message can only have been transmitted *bî'l-ma'nâ*, not *bî'l-lafẓ*. . . For one thing, rabbinic methods of transmission were not current among the bedouin; and for another, the

⁹⁰See below, page 34.

⁹¹Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 225.

⁹²Jones, "Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî," 51.

⁹³See for instance Crone's assertions in her *Slaves on Horses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 15: "As far as the origins of Islam are concerned, the only way to escape the entropy is thus to step outside."

⁹⁴Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chapter 1.

immediate disciples of a man whose biography was for some two hundred years studied under the title of *'ilm al-maghâzî*, the Prophet's campaigns, are unlikely to have devoted their lives to the memorization of *ḥadīth*.⁹⁵

If Crone is conveying her disregard for the use of the texts of either Ibn Ishâq or al-Wâqidî as historical material, she is right to do so; and yet, there is no indication in Crone's work to suggest that her attitude is born out of an appreciation of the nature of *'ilm al-maghâzî*, or of an understanding of the approach of early Muslims towards that material. Instead, like Schacht, she tends to focus on the individual traditions themselves, indicating their a-historical nature. According to Crone, although the Prophet's immediate heirs were the caliphs to whom the religion owed its "initial survival", yet it is the *'ulamâ'* who appear with the Oral Tradition, "perhaps" in the mid-Umayyad period, and Islamic history is essentially the history of the *'ulamâ'*'s victorious emergence from their conflict with the Caliphal authority. Explaining the piecemeal quality of the numerous traditions, she states:

As the caliphs pushed new doctrines at their subjects and the nascent *'ulamâ'* took them up, worked them over and rejected them, the past was broken into splinters, and the bits and pieces combined and recombined in different patterns . . . For over a century the landscape of the Muslim past was thus exposed to a weathering so violent that its shapes were reduced to dust and rubble. . . .⁹⁶

And there was still another aspect to this weathering which she brings out in her more recent work, Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam:

. . . much of the apparently historical tradition is in fact of exegetical origin. Thus the story of Hâshim and his journeys owes its existence to *Sûrat Quraysh*, for all that it is in historical rather than exegetical works that it survives. Similarly, the numerous historical events said to have triggered a revelation (the raid at Nakhla, the battle of Badr, the oath of allegiance . . .)

⁹⁵Crone, Slaves on Horses, 5.

⁹⁶*ibid.*, 6.

are likely to owe at least some of their features, occasionally their very existence, to the Qur'ân.⁹⁷

This very explanation would justify her rejection of Muḥammad's conflict with the Jews as well:

Given the proliferation of variant versions in the tradition, we clearly cannot adopt a literal-minded approach to any one alleged event We cannot even tell whether there was an original event: in the case of Muḥammad's encounter with Jews and others there was not. Either a fictitious theme has acquired reality thanks to the activities of storytellers or else a historical event has been swamped by these activities. The result is that we are left with little but spurious information: the fact that the stories consist of themes and subthemes in different combinations means that we cannot get *behind* the storytellers.⁹⁸

For Crone, the storytellers affect this material in three ways:

1. They provide contradictory information, of which Crone cites the most obvious in Ibn Ishâq's presentation of the Jews in Medina on the eve of Islam:

On the one hand, we are told that they used to side with their Arab allies . . . fighting against each other with a lamentable lack of monotheist solidarity But on the other hand we are also told that the Jews . . . were united in the hope for a prophet who would kill their Arab oppressors. Here the Jews display no lack of monotheist solidarity . . .⁹⁹

2. The independent accounts tend to collapse into variations on a common theme; Crone cites the numerous variations on the theme of the young Muḥammad's encounter with representatives of non-Islamic religions to make her point:

He was taken to Syria by Abû Ṭâlib (or 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib) and was seen by Jews of Taymâ', or by a nameless monk in a nameless place, or by Baḥîrâ, a

⁹⁷Crone, Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam, 214-15. For a simple and clear statement of Crone's views see D. P. Little, Review of Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam, by Patricia Crone, in CJH 23 (1988): 386-88.

⁹⁸Crone, Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam, 222.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 218.

Christian monk at Buṣrâ, or by Baḥîrâ in an unnamed place, or by Baḥîrâ, a Jewish rabbi.¹⁰⁰

3. There is a steady growth of information; by which Crone means that there is a continuous elaboration of detail, so that the original story becomes increasingly detailed and quite unrecognizably voluminous.¹⁰¹

My criticism of Crone is on two fronts: on the one hand, her attacks are in fact directed at Western scholars such as Watt, who like herself have not cared to understand the approach of the Muslim tradition itself to the particular genre of *sîra-maghâzî*, despite the constant reminders provided in the numerous biographical dictionaries which inform us of the criticisms of important Muslim leaders such as Imâm al-Bukhârî, or al-Shâfi'î. Thus, though her criticisms are indeed appropriate in their rejection of such material for historical purposes, they are, together with the works of those she critiques, of little event to the scholar of Islamic history itself. At the same time, perhaps because of her prejudices, Crone has not tried to appreciate the work of either Ibn Ishâq or al-Wâqidî for what it says. She thus underestimates the place of the compiler in the writing of his work. Unable to recognize the compiler's considerable say in the choice of the materials, including Qur'ânic verses, that he cites, and that his citations, of Qur'ân as well, are in accordance with what he wants to say—as witnessed by the fact that al-Wâqidî does not necessarily call upon the same verses cited by Ibn Ishâq to establish the various events that constitute the life of the Prophet—she mistakenly claims that it is the Qur'ânic verse that must have inspired the narrative. Her inadequate appreciation of *sîra-maghâzî* is surely the basis of her misjudgment.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 219.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 223.

Despite her considerable pessimism however, Crone (along with Cook) willingly accords historicity to the 'document' which has come to be recognized as the 'Constitution of Medina.' According to Crone, the 'Constitutional' document told of the first years when Jews and Arabs lived in peace.¹⁰² Importantly, John Wansbrough, the one-time mentor of Crone and Cook, disassociates himself from their methodology.¹⁰³ Asserting that Islam was essentially Jewish sectarianism, he insists that a sufficient Jewish experience was not available in peninsular Arabia for such a religion to become formulated there.¹⁰⁴

It is in an attempt to resist rather than respond to such "solipsism", as he calls it, that Newby resorts to a methodology which seeks a reconstructive positivism. While remaining within the direct and obvious bounds of the text's definition of itself, Newby uses what he describes as a web of ideas, interpretations, inscriptions, archaeology, etc., to help him explore the limits of its positivist possibilities. Thus, for instance, he explains, "when the texts speak of rabbis, I begin to privilege an interpretation of *yaḥūd* that is more "rabbinic" and less Samaritan."¹⁰⁵ It is quite alarming that Newby should, on the basis of al-Wāqidī's story regarding the murder of the Jew Abū Rāfi' (which importantly is

¹⁰²"In contrast to the standard Islamic account of the relations between Muḥammad and the Jewish tribes of Medina, the Jews appear in the document . . . as forming one community (*umma*) with the believers." See Crone and Cook, Hagarism, 7. Significantly, Crone's methods are akin to those of Kister,—a selectiveness based on the archaic content of the material.

¹⁰³" . . . can a vocabulary of motives be freely extrapolated from a discrete collection of literary stereotypes composed by alien and mostly hostile observers, and thereupon employed to describe, even interpret, not merely the overt behaviour but also the intellectual and spiritual development of the helpless and mostly innocent actors?" asks John Wansbrough, Sectarian Milieu, 116-17.

¹⁰⁴See for instance, Wansbrough, Quranic Studies, 49-52.

¹⁰⁵See Gordon Darnell Newby's "Response" in William M. Brinner et al, Reviews of A History of the Jews of Arabia from Ancient Times to their Eclipse under Islam, and The Making of the Last Prophet: a Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad, both by Gordon D. Newby, in RSR 18 (1992): 188.

not narrated in such detail in the text of Ibn Ishâq, and was probably inspired by the Jewish practices that al-Wâqidî himself had observed in Iraq during his own life time), actually claim that one could here observe how the Jews of Medina practiced Passover during the time of the Prophet!¹⁰⁶ The point is that Newby has not in any way tried to understand the manner in which al-Wâqidî uses traditions. His method, then, is to ignore rather than confront the numerous analyses which discover that *sîra* literature has little historical significance, a method quite insufficient in terms of its critical viability.¹⁰⁷ Shlomo Dov Goitein's remark based on a careful investigation of Muḥammad's Islam is, in this regard, a pertinent reminder of the fragile nature of this information. He states:

Concerning the great encounter between Muhammad and the Jews, about which the Qur'an and Muslim historiography speaks so much, we possess not a single Hebrew source. All the many detailed particulars come to us exclusively from Arabic literature . . . We cannot identify with any degree of certainty even one Hebrew book from any (Arabian) Jewish community of that period.¹⁰⁸

It is a telling fact that William M. Brinner should ironically comment in his "Review" of Newby's A History of the Jews of Arabia: "The history of the Jews of Arabia still remains to be written. . . ."¹⁰⁹

Chronology is an important indicator of interpretational differences. It requires thorough investigation because it is, after all, a criterion of cause and effect. According to Watt, what chronology we do have for the Prophet's life is

¹⁰⁶Gordon D. Newby, "The *Sîrah* as a Source for Arabian Jewish History: Problems and Perspectives," *JSAI* 7 (1986): 131-35.

¹⁰⁷Gordon D. Newby, A History of the Jews of Arabia from Ancient Times to their Eclipse Under Islam (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); idem, "The *Sîrah* as a Source for Arabian Jewish History," 131-35.

¹⁰⁸The Islam of Muhammad: How a New Religion Emerged in the Shadow of Judaism (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1956), 88, cited by Ronald C. Kiener, in his "Review" of Newby, in William M. Brinner et al, *Reviews of Newby*, 183.

¹⁰⁹Brinner et al, *Reviews of Newby*, 182.

provided by what he calls “*maghâzî* material”, without which the order of the expeditions and the detailed outline of what happened on the main ones would not be established:

It would appear to be impossible to discover from the Qur’ân the chronological order of the main events: Badr, Uḥud, Khandaq, al-Ḥudaybiya, conquest of Mecca, Ḥunayn, Tâbûk; and the minor expeditions are not even mentioned. Nor can the basic framework be derived from the collections of Ḥadīth.¹¹⁰

Certainly the dates given in *maghâzî* are not corroborated in either *ḥadīth* or *tafsīr*. Thus Bukhârî’s dating of the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr is before Uḥud; he cites a tradition on the authority of al-Zuhrî from ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr.¹¹¹ As regards *tafsīr*, Uri Rubin provides an interesting exposition on the case of the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf. According to him there are essentially two possible dates which have come down to us in two parallel traditions. In the *sīra* literature the murder is linked with Badr, and happens soon after; but in *tafsīr* literature the event takes place around the same time as the exile of the B. Naḍîr, an association first seen, according to Rubin, in the interpretation of *sūrat al-ḥaṣhr* by Muqâtil b. Sulaymân (d. 151/767).¹¹² However, a careful reading of the *Sīra* indicates the recognition of both these possibilities.¹¹³ And a tradition similar to that cited in Bukhârî regarding the B. Naḍîr is cited on the authority of ‘Abd al-Razzâq - Ma‘mar - al-Zuhrî by al-Zurqânî in his *Sharḥ al-mawâhib*.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî disagree on the dates of both the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ’ and

¹¹⁰Watt, “The Reliability of Ibn Ishâq’s Sources,” 14.

¹¹¹See Jones, “The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*,” 268.

¹¹²Uri Rubin, “The Assassination of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf,” 65-71.

¹¹³See the poetry mouthed by ‘Alî at the end of the chapter regarding the exile of the B. Naḍîr, Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sīrat rasûl Allâh*, 657.

¹¹⁴See Zurqânî cited in M. J. Kister, “Notes on the Papyrus Text about Muḥammad’s Campaign against the Banû al-Naḍîr,” *Archiv Orientalni* 32 (1964): 235.

the murder of Abû Râfi'.¹¹⁵ The point is, there is no consistency regarding chronology within the *maghâzî* material either.

I have already mentioned Crone's 'discovery' that, in fact, the dates established by Muslim historians for the period of the Prophet's life do not tally with those indicated by documents written outside the Islamic world.¹¹⁶ At the same time, Caetani has called our attention to the fact that the various narratives regarding the chronology of events leading up to the Battle of Badr,¹¹⁷ to say nothing of the dating of a little incident such as the murder of Abû Râfi',¹¹⁸ show significant differences. Al-Zurqânî has called our attention to the fact that the several versions of Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra*, which were transmitted concurrently through several channels, exhibit differences of both commission and omission in terms of the stated chronology.¹¹⁹ Thus, for instance, three dates have been attributed to the event of the expulsion of the B. Qaynuqâ' by Ibn Ishâq.¹²⁰

In an article entitled "The chronology of the Maghâzî," Jones, while recognizing that there are events concerning which all or most sources are agreed on, bemoans the mass of contradictory data in *sîra-maghâzî* literature, yet believes that in some cases "it may be possible to win through to a safer position."¹²¹ To me such an exercise seems uncalled-for. True, there are those events in the Prophet's life such as Badr and Uḥud, for instance, which seem to be accepted by all the authorities. But how has this consensus been achieved?

¹¹⁵Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 247 and 260.

¹¹⁶See above, page 21-22.

¹¹⁷Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 1: 466.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 591.

¹¹⁹Al-Zurqânî, *Sharḥ 'alâ'l-mawâhib al-ladunîya* (Cairo: 1907), 1: 553, cited in Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 261.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 260-61.

¹²¹Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 245.

It is possible that the requirements of memorization in oral tradition demanded that certain events be concretized, so that there would be no confusion in the mind of the narrator. These events have become 'mythologized,' as it were, to acquire a permanent place in the scheme of things. Thus, with regard to the birth date of the Prophet, Sellheim sees its establishment as an aspect of Ibn Ishâq's creativity.¹²² Given the fact that these dates are corroborated by al-Wâqidî, it seems plausible that the tradition material had become mythologized even before it was handled by Ibn Ishâq; it was the mnemonic of myth which had been used to help the oral transmission of the story of the Prophet-hero. This applies to what Sellheim points out as another aspect of the 'mythologizing,' which he explains as indicative of the particularly Arab nature of the text. According to him, chronological juggling was a practice often indulged in by Arab authors in order to synchronize the data when dates could no longer be remembered. It is surely very convenient that each of the important battles with the Meccan Quraysh be followed by a raid against one of the significant Jewish tribes. According to Sellheim, it was by adopting a system of periodization that Ibn Ishâq was able to blend in nicely the various layers of information, so that all the material could be knit together to establish an Islamic *Heilsgeschichte*.¹²³

It is significant that Jones categorizes the given chronological data in *sîra-maghâzî* into four divisions:

The first consists of instances where there is complete or almost complete accord in the sources on the dating of an event. . . . The second comprises dates found after collation and internal criticism of the texts Thirdly, there are the dates given only by al-Wâqidî and not substantiated by any other source.¹²⁴

¹²²Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 77-78.

¹²³Ibid., 78.

¹²⁴Jones, "The *Maghâzî* Literature," 349.

The fourth category consists of cases where the contradictions in the sources are not resolvable.¹²⁵ With reference to the fourth category, Jones submits:

The possibility remains that in such cases we are dealing with an historical interpretation of events rather than an historical reminiscence of them.¹²⁶

It is my contention that such inaccuracies, or differences, as I prefer to view them, are a reflection of the fact that historical tradition had lost its definitiveness because of its oral beginnings and the erosive effects not only of orality but also of the numerous politico-religious persuasions that had become manifest at the time, to say nothing of the fact that the early caliphs, such as ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, had actively tried to put an end to the writing down of prophetic tradition on the grounds that they may be confused with the word of God—the Qur’ān.¹²⁷ As a result there was an enormous variety of traditions at the disposal of the traditionist, who could now pick and choose in order to say whatever he was inclined to. Significantly, there is no consistency visible in this material with regard to the rational for any event either. Thus, according to Kister’s “Papyrus text about Muḥammad’s campaign against the B. Naḍīr,” the latter were accused of cooperating with the Quraysh when the Meccan Quraysh attacked the Muslim army at Uḥud, and their payment of a part of the indemnity was as penalty for the hostility towards the Prophet.¹²⁸ According to both Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī, however, the B. Naḍīr agreed to help with the payment of the blood money because they—the B. Naḍīr—were in alliance with the B. ‘Āmir, two of whom had been killed by a companion of the Prophet. Similarly there are various stories

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Jones, “The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*,” 278.

¹²⁷Abbott, *Qur’ānic Commentary and Tradition*, vol. 2, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 7.

¹²⁸Kister, “Notes on the Papyrus Text about Muḥammad’s Campaign against the Banû al-Naḍīr,” 234-35.

about what led to the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf as well. Thus Kister investigates a group of traditions which tell of how a quarrel regarding the market of the Prophet led to his assassination.¹²⁹ And Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî do not agree on the circumstances that led to Abû Râfi's assassination either.

The implications of the above are serious: they bring to our ken the realization that Jones' appreciation of the historical traditions as being part of a single corpus is meaningless, so different are these traditions in terms of not just chronological data, but other aspects as well, such as what it was that led to the incident in question, and even the very details which constitute the particular incident. It meant that this same 'corpus' could yield completely contrary data, just as much as it could provide similar ones.¹³⁰

In her paper on "Processes of Redaction," Ella Landau-Tasseron has attempted to understand how these differences have arisen through an investigation of the numerous variations of tradition regarding the Tamîmite delegations to the Prophet.¹³¹ Investigating their various forms, she concludes that while Ibn Ishâq preserves an earlier representation of two disparate accounts, al-Wâqidî illustrates a more recent version which shows a single account, but which in fact is a bringing together of the earlier forms now narrated as one event.

According to Landau-Tasseron, historicizing accounts must have originally been attached to the separate Qur'ânic verses during the period before

¹²⁹M. J. Kister, "The Market of the Prophet," *JESHO* 8 (1965) 272-76.

¹³⁰Thus for instance *muḥ addithûn* place the raid on the B. Naḍîr six months after Badr; *mufassirûn*, with the exception of al-Ṭabarî, place it after the battle of Uḥud, but connect it with the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf; see Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," 70. While biographical literature on the Prophet places the exile variously; Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî both place it after Uḥud but distinctly separate it from the assassination of Ka'b.

¹³¹Ella Landau Tasseron, "Processes of Redaction," 255-70.

the Qur'ân was redacted. These accounts, she believes, probably helped the redactors to bring the verses together to constitute the various chapters of the Qur'ânic text. Thus the two distinct accounts narrated by Ibn Ishâq, an account of the *mufâkhara*, and another separate account of a raid and delegation, had, probably because they both fell under the category of Tamîmî, been brought together under the same chapter *sûrat al- fujarât* when the Qur'ân redactors were first compiling the Qur'ân. But in the process of bringing these verses together, the traditions had also to be rationalized so that the verses would make sense as they now lay in their newly assigned sequential position. By the time of al-Wâqidî they were available in their combined format and probably influenced him when he decided to establish their *asbâb al-nuzûl* in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*.¹³² There is much that is attractive about this theory, but it should be noted that the revelations cited by the two authors in relation to a particular incident do not always agree. For instance, the revelations connected to the chapter on the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' are different in the two versions of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, for Ibn Ishâq refers to the *sûras* 'Âl 'Imrân' and 'al-mâ'ida', while al-Wâqidî, refers to 'al-anfâl'; similarly, in the case of the Ka'b story, while Ibn Ishâq refrains from associating the episode with a Qur'ânic verse, al-Wâqidî cites verses from the chapters 'Âl 'Imrân' and 'al-baqara'.¹³³ Thus we see that Landau Tasseron's example of the Tamîmite traditions is not the norm.

But there is another aspect to *sîra-maghâzî* which concerns the very traditions which together comprise the narration of an event such as the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' or the Battle of Uḥud. To appreciate more fully the individual

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 185.

traditions which constitute such an event, it is necessary to take a closer look at the tradition material itself. Rosenthal, explaining the scope of *akhbâr* states:

Aḥbâr corresponds to history in the sense of story, anecdote. It does not imply any fixation in time, nor is it ever restricted to mean an organically connected series of events. The term later on assumed the additional meaning of information about the deeds and sayings of Muhammad, and, . . . in fact something of a synonym of *ḥadīth*.¹³⁴

The nature of this difference—between *akhbâr* and *ḥadīth*—as being essentially one of usage, is realized by Hawting in his study of the Ḥudaybiya tradition in *sīra-maghâzī*. Investigating the confusion that has risen regarding the traditions concerning the Muslim takeover of the sanctuary, Hawting finds that some authors associate the takeover or “*fatḥ*” with al-Ḥudaybiya, while others associate the same traditions with that of the conquest of Mecca. What is important, however, is the fact that while these traditions exist in various forms—and here I quote Hawting—

Hardly any of the forms of tradition itself contain an indication of the context, that is, when the incident took place. From the citations of it in *ḥadīth* collections it would rarely be possible to say when the Prophet entered the Ka‘ba and prayed. In *sīra* and *ta’rīkh*, on the other hand, the form of the literature obviously demands an historical setting and this is supplied by including the tradition at a particular point in the life of the Prophet.¹³⁵

This view that traditions themselves like the events they comprise are essentially a-chronological and decontextualized by nature is also understood from Crone’s evaluation of Islamic tradition material as fragmented,¹³⁶ and is further reinforced by Humphreys, who, explaining the nature of compilations states:

¹³⁴Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 11.

¹³⁵G. R. Hawting, “Al-Ḥudaybiyya and the Conquest of Mecca,” 18.

¹³⁶See page 24 above, and Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 5.

... they consist of a series of discrete anecdotes and reports (Ar., *khavar*, pl. *akhbâr*), which ... are not explicitly linked to one another in any way; they are simply juxtaposed end to end, ... each being marked off from the others by its own *isnâd*.¹³⁷

But Hawting goes further. Appreciating the interpretational differences which accompany the change in the context within which the tradition is cited by al-Wâqidî as against that of Ibn Ishâq, Hawting continues on to inform us that the tradition regarding the takeover is cited by al-Wâqidî on several occasions, both in the account of the '*umrat al-qaḍâ'*' (which al-Wâqidî insists is not accurate), and the '*ḥajjat al-waḍâ'*'.¹³⁸ Interestingly, my own research indicates that al-Wâqidî anticipates this tradition of the *Fatḥ* even as early as in the episode of al-Khandaq!¹³⁹ The numerous citations of this particular tradition by al-Wâqidî appears then to be primarily a stylistic venture, distinct from the chronological variations for the events, which the genre of *sîra-maghâzî* itself seems to permit.

This view is substantiated by Stefan Leder's appreciation of *khavar*. Indicating the flexibility of these traditions for interpretational purposes, Leder, examining the use of *khavar* in the historical writing of tradition literature, explains:

These sources are not transmitted in their entirety; instead, single *akhbâr* are taken out and woven into a new context consisting of material from different sources. Within the compilation, the *khavar* forms a mobile element which may be described as a module; it is not a constituent part of an integrated overall-composition. ... the *khavar* ... may appear at different stages of a complex process of reproduction and be characterized by its own idiosyncrasy.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, revised edition (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 73.

¹³⁸G. R. Hawting, "Al-Ḥudaybiyya and the Conquest of Mecca," 18.

¹³⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 460

¹⁴⁰Stefan Leder, "Authorship and Transmission in unauthored Literature: The Akhbar attributed to Haytham ibn 'Adi," *Oriens* (1988): 67-68.

It is clear that the atomistic nature of these traditions has permitted the stylistic usage of the information by al-Wâqidî in various ways.

How does one explain this difference between Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî? The general understanding of the Arabic historical tradition is to recognize its division into distinct schools of tradition, the one situated in Medina and devoted to the development of *ḥadīthī* methods, the other, in Iraq, consisting of the two schools of Kûfa and Basra, and concentrating on the writing of *akhbâr*. The difference is best explained by Abbott, who states that while the *ḥadīthī* methods of Medina sought strict accuracy and refused to take stylistic liberties, the *akhbârī* method permitted a wide margin of stylistic play.¹⁴¹ Ibn Ishâq, who has been characterized by both Gibb¹⁴² and Horovitz¹⁴³ as one disciplined by the science of *ḥadīth*, probably belonged, however, as we can see if we examine his *Sîra*—and as shown by Abbott—in a formative period in which political, religious, and literary history still had much in common.¹⁴⁴ With the passage of time, however, each method was to become increasingly distinct, developing an identity of its own.¹⁴⁵ According to Leder, the late ninth century—the age of al-Wâqidî—was a time which saw the transmission of *akhbâr* reach a professional standard and win a considerable recognition among scholarly circles.¹⁴⁶

Given the milieu in which he lived, it is plausible that al-Wâqidî was influenced by the new approaches and methods of his time, and tended towards a

¹⁴¹Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 9.

¹⁴²*Supplement to EI*¹, s. v. “*Ta’rīkh*,” by H. A. R. Gibb.

¹⁴³*EI*¹, s. v. “Al-Wâqidî,” by Horovitz.

¹⁴⁴Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 19.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶Stefan Leder, “The Literary use of the *Khabar*,” *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1992), 314.

more stylistic approach when he compiled his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*. Shifting not merely the main events of *maghâzî*, but even the traditions which according to Ibn Ishâq comprised those events, al-Wâqidî is able to establish for the reader a variant version of the life of the early Islamic community. But there is more to the method of al-Wâqidî. This was also a period when the authority of Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra* was considerable. Recensions of that work were being put together all over the Islamic Empire, in Rayy, Kûfa, Basra, Harrân, Egypt, and Medina.¹⁴⁷ Al-Wâqidî must have known it well, for not only would the system of learning in that part of the world make it unavoidable, but al-Wâqidî himself was a young contemporary of the compiler and a resident of Baghdad, the city in which Ibn Ishâq lived his last years and was finally buried. According to al-Ṭabarî, al-Wâqidî is supposed to have commended the knowledge of Ibn Ishâq.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, al-Wâqidî is reputed to have owned an expensive library, so that it seems unlikely that such a well known work would have escaped him.¹⁴⁹ Yet al-Wâqidî does not mention Ibn Ishâq throughout his compilation. Using different traditions, altered chronologies, and additional details, he shapes a compilation of his very own, a compilation which nevertheless causes Horowitz to remark that al-Wâqidî "undoubtedly made very great use of his [Ibn Ishâq's] book and obviously follows him in the arrangement of the material."¹⁵⁰ It is to this referential nature of al-Wâqidî's work to the text of Ibn Ishâq that I would like to call the attention of my reader as well.

The genre of *sîra-maghâzî* readily accommodates the changing interpretations of the Prophet's biography as they are narrated through the

¹⁴⁷See below in my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, page 48, f. n. 22.

¹⁴⁸See below in my chapter on al-Wâqidî, page 154.

¹⁴⁹See Ibid., f. n. 16.

¹⁵⁰EI¹, s.v. "Al-Wâqidî."

centuries. J. N. Mattock's attempt to understand this mode as an art form, as it moves from the hands of Ibn Ishâq to al-Wâqidî, through an analysis of the episode concerning the murder of Abû Râfi', is still the best there is to be had in this direction. Here, Mattock's comparison of the processes at work to those of Greek, epic, oral poetry provides an important insight into the processes at work in the making of *sîra-maghâzî* as a whole—on the larger scale. According to Mattock, the compiler is essentially sticking to the key components of the story as narrated by his predecessor, but he inevitably changes the details to suit the immediate circumstances he faces as he narrates his tale. Says Mattock:

What is suggested by the presence of these common elements? Obviously, and tritely, that there once existed an archetype, from which the extant versions derive, at various removes. It seems to me, however, that there may be more to it than this. The phenomenon reminds me forcibly of the process that has been observed in the oral composition of poetry, specifically epic poetry. What happens there is that the poet, or his reciter, believes that, at each repetition of his poem, he is reciting the same poem that he originally composed, or received, . . . but, in fact, he produces a new poem on each occasion, constructing it round certain key components that remain more or less constant. Furthermore, the composition varies, in the emphasis placed on certain elements and in the role played by them, to suit the particular audience being entertained.¹⁵¹

In the case of al-Wâqidî, however, I believe the changes are (as compared to the established statement of Ibn Ishâq) quite consciously undertaken, with not just an audience, but the narrative of Ibn Ishâq, as well as his own unique interpretation in mind.

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The new approach that I hope to bring to the study of *sîra-maghâzî* is firstly, to view it from within the Islamic tradition, giving it its due as an a-

¹⁵¹J. N. Mattock, "History and Fiction," Occasional Papers of the School of 'Abbasid Studies, 1 (1986): 96.

historical form; and secondly, to observe it in terms of its existence as the statement of a particular author, one which must be examined from the perspective of the author himself to be fully appreciated. Whereas this dissertation is concerned to appreciate how al-Wâqidî's Kitâb al-maghâzî compares with Ibn Ishâq's Sîra, I suggest that the reader consider the possibility that al-Wâqidî, living in a world which saw so many recensions of the Sîra, decided to write his own original version of *sîra-maghâzî*. He therefore, very deliberately, not only sought out a new interpretation but carefully avoided any reference to his predecessor.

In order to appreciate the differences in the *sîra-maghâzî* written by the two authors Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, it is essential that we make an attempt to understand the unique contribution of each: their purpose, and approach. In interpreting the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq, I take into consideration the fact that he was the *maghâzî* writer *par-excellence* of the Islamic world at the time, a time when much of what we recognize as Islam had just left the melting pot: al-Bukhârî (d. 257/870), the famous compiler of al-Sahîh, was not even born; and as for the Qur'ân, it had but barely been established in terms of a definitive vowelling, while the dogma of its uncreatedness was not yet affirmed.¹⁵² It was thus a time which still belonged in the age of the *penseable*, to use Arkoun's turn of phrase.¹⁵³ The readiness with which Ibn Ishâq expresses doubts about the trustworthiness of traditions, the honesty with which he informs his readers that the chronology of those traditions is confused, as well as the willingness with which he expresses his indebtedness to the earlier biblical traditions, even admitting the exegesis of Qur'ânic verses by Jews in his Sîra, is surely a reflection of this fact. The

¹⁵²A. Jones, "The History of the Text of the Qur'ân after the Death of Muḥammad," in Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, ed. A. F. L. Beeston et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 232-235.

¹⁵³Mohammed Arkoun, Rethinking Islam Today, Occasional Papers Series (Washington D. C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1987), 13-14.

traditions that were available were of an infinite variety, and there is little doubt that though it was a compilation that he put together, he was, nevertheless, very much its author.

In interpreting the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq, every statement of Ibn Ishâq's must be accepted for what he indicates it to be. An attitude such as Caetani's, which claims that Ibn Ishâq did not understand the true meaning nor value of the document which he, Ibn Ishâq himself, has chosen to include within his biography of the Prophet, cannot be accepted.¹⁵⁴ If Ibn Ishâq suggests to us that the so-called 'document' which has come to be known as the 'Constitution of Medina' is a set of negotiations which were all concluded at the same time, then we must accept it for what it implies. And if he indicates to us that these negotiations were concluded before Badr, then again, we must accept that as well. Moreover, it is important that we attempt to appreciate what each author makes of an event in terms of the larger statement of his *sîra-maghâzî*. To isolate a particular tradition and try to evaluate it without appreciating the context in which it has been stated is to deny a place to the compiler, who is, in many ways, the author of the work concerned.

A similar analysis will be made of the Kitâb al-maghâzî of al-Wâqidî. The milieu in which he lived must be reckoned with. That in writing about the Prophet's life, the author used the genre of *maghâzî* must be viewed as a deliberate act of choice. That in doing so he should avoid the portion concerning Muḥammad's youth and go directly into a discussion of the Prophet's achievements in Medina must be similarly construed as an intelligent decision on the part of the author concerned. Again, the fact that al-Wâqidî does not cite the

¹⁵⁴Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, 1: 392.

'Constitution of Medina', but does inform the reader of agreements concluded by the Prophet with the Jews, must be emphasized when we attempt to understand his narration of the events that took place during the Prophet's lifetime. Variation in formal content and chronology, as well as the narrative patterns of each author regarding his sources, structure, embellishments, and omissions will be noted, and their significance indicated. Presumably such a systematic comparison, which takes into account the purposes of each author, will help define the overall interpretation of each writer as he establishes for posterity his statement on the life of the Prophet.

Chapter Two

The *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq in the Recension of Ibn Hishâm

Any scholarly evaluation of Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra* is faced with the question: To what extent are we able to regard Ibn Hishâm's recension as an accurate abridgment of Ibn Ishâq's original work? The answer lies in a thorough understanding of what constituted the original, and of Ibn Hishâm's methodology in producing the recension that has survived under the title Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh.

It is not certain whether the original text on the life of the Prophet by Ibn Ishâq comprised one or several volumes.¹ According to Abbott, it was for the writing of his Kitâb al-maghâzî that Ibn Ishâq won his fame:

The earliest references to Ibn Ishâq's reading aloud, dictating, or writing down the *Maghâzî* in Medina or 'Irâq cover primarily the campaigns of Muḥammad and not the full and complete events of his life.²

According to Duri, Ibn Ishâq wrote three works, al-Mubtada', al-Maghâzî, and Ta'rikh al-khulafâ', which together articulate his conception of universal history.³ As explained by Guillaume, however:

¹According to Abbott, Ibn al-Nadîm names only one book, Kitâb al-sîra wa'l-mubtadâ' wa'l-maghâzî; Yâqût views them as two: Kitâb al-siyar wa'l-maghâzî, and Kitâb al-mabdâ', whereas Mas'ûdî's use of *kutub* indicates three distinct books; see Abbott, Historical Texts, 88.

²Ibid.

³Duri, The Rise of Historical Writing, 37.

It must not be supposed that the book ever existed as three separate parts: ancient legends, Muḥammad's early life and mission, and his wars. These were simply sections of the book which contained Ibn Ishâq's lectures.⁴

For Newby, on the other hand, Ibn Ishâq's Sîra comprises a first section entitled Kitâb al-mubtadâ' which begins with the Creation and includes stories featuring all the Jewish, Christian, and Arabian prophets, some of whom are not mentioned in the Qur'ân, and sets the stage for the coming of the last apostle of God; a second section entitled Kitâb al-mab'ath dealing with Muḥammad from birth to the age of forty; and a final section entitled Kitâb al-maghâzî dealing with Muḥammad from the beginning of his prophethood until his death.⁵ Clearly Newby's reconstruction does not conform to our standard understanding of what these texts comprise. Essentially it is the latter sections—Mab'ath and Maghâzî—that have been abridged and edited as the recension of Ibn Hishâm. According to Abbott, it is highly probable that al-Mubtadâ' was written later, having been conceived as a forerunner to the Sîra.⁶ I shall discuss this text very briefly as I believe that it sets the tone for the message Ibn Ishâq conveys in his Mab'ath and Maghâzî.

The Kitâb al-mubtadâ' does not form a part of the recension by Ibn Hishâm. Here Ibn Ishâq used Jewish and Christian informants and the two books of Abû 'Abd Allâh Wahb b. Munabbih (34/654-110/728) entitled the Kitâb al-mubtadâ' and Kitâb al-isrâ'îliyyât (which was previously entitled Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyâ') for his narrative.⁷ Though not essential for an understanding of the Sîra,⁸ the Kitâb al-mubtadâ' nevertheless provides the additional emphasis necessary to establish the significance of the prophetic experience in the shaping of

⁴Guillaume, introduction" to The life of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishâq, xvii.

⁵Newby, The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 7.

⁶Abbott, Historical Texts, 89.

⁷Guillaume, introduction to The life of Muhammad by Ibn Ishâq, xviii.

⁸Sîra will be used from here on to denote the recension by Ibn Hishâm.

Muḥammad's life. The Mubtadâ leads to the Sîrah, and thus provides us with a hint, an indication, that Muḥammad, because he represents the culmination of prophethood, is destined to be the perfect and ideal prophet. Says Newby: "When we add the Kitâb al-Mubtada' to the rest of the Sîrah, Ibn Ishâq's plan for a history of the world becomes clear."⁹

Newby has provided us with a text of the Kitâb al-mubtadâ', having reconstructed it largely on the basis of citations contained in the work of al-Tabarî.¹⁰ The main focus in Mubtadâ' is the history of prophecy to mankind, and the various prophets are presented chronologically so as to fit into a tightly knit genealogical scheme. Ibn Ishâq, for whom the hero of his *Heilsgeschichte*, Muḥammad, is the perfect representative of prophethood, takes us through the prophetic lives of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and interestingly enough, "George", with each of these prophets manifesting particular aspects of Muḥammad's own prophetic personality. These characteristics then finally come together in the Sîrah to shape the last prophet of God. Thus, through the use of the *Isrâ'îlyât*, midrashic explications of the Hebrew Bible, and popular tales which go back to the New Testament, Ibn Ishâq attempts to link the life of the Prophet to the Qur'ân, which itself deals very briefly and only referentially to such early Biblical tales. Says Newby:

The Sîrah, particularly the Kitâb al-Mubtada', is a commentary on the Bible as well as a commentary on the Quran. It fosters the Muslim claim that Islam is the heir to Judaism and Christianity.¹¹

⁹Newby, The Making of the Last Prophet, 16.

¹⁰Says Newby, "Al-Tabari uses the *Sanad* Ibn Humayd - Salamah b. al Fadl - Ibn Ishaq almost to the exclusion of all others when he quotes the Kitâb al-mubtada,'" *ibid.*, 15.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 3.

As for the original text of the Sîra, we do not have a copy of it in the hand of Ibn Ishâq.¹² According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), however, there must have been at least two such texts, as Ibn Ishâq is supposed to have gifted a copy to the Caliph, while another entire set of his originals, which had been written down on papyrus, were given by him to Salama b. al-Faḍl (d. 191/807).

Says Abbott:

... Salamah's transmission was preferred to that of any other because of his possession of the originals. Ṭabarī both confirms and supplements the biographers in such a way as to make it abundantly clear . . . that Salamah definitely transmitted the Ta'rîkh along with the rest of Ibn Ishâq's works¹³

Abbott explains, however, that the Ta'rîkh, had "a character and identity of its own," that is to say it was distinct from the main biographical work on the Prophet.¹⁴

The practice in Ibn Ishâq's time and for long afterward was for an author to give a lecture, the text of which would be written down by his students and others who attended his classes.¹⁵ It was such a set of notes taken by Ibn Ishâq's

¹²If he did present a copy to the Caliph al-Manṣûr as is alleged by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, it is no longer extant. See Abbott, Historical Texts, 89; Johann Fück, "Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq: Literarhistorische Untersuchungen," (diss., Frankfurt am Main, 1925), 34, n. 49; Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3., IC (1928): 172.

¹³Abbott, Historical Texts, 94.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁵Nabia Abbott is one of the few who have attempted to understand the nature of learning in the early years of Islam. She divides the students who attended the 'recitals' of Sheikhs/lecturers into three groups: a) those who attended for the purpose of listening only. Such a session was termed a *sam'*; b) those who had previously read and copied the text of the Sheikh's lecture, and brought their manuscripts to him to be checked, a process known as the *'arḍ*; c) those who combined the *sam'* and the *'arḍ*. The correction could be done in any of three ways: a) by correcting the manuscript from a second reading of the Sheikh, either by memory or the use of his own notes; b) by reading the text back to the Sheikh so that he might correct it; c) by comparing the text with another authenticated text established by the Sheikh himself. See Historical Texts, 93.

student al-Bakkâ'î (d.182/798)¹⁶ that was later used by Ibn Hishâm for his compilation of the Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh. However, Ibn Hishâm was not content to limit himself to repeating what he had obtained from al-Bakkâ'î, nor did he simply abridge that voluminous work; rather, he edited it. As he explains:

God willing I shall begin this book with Ismâ'il son of Ibrâhîm and mention those of his offspring who were the ancestors of God's apostle one by one with what is known about them, taking no account of Ismâ'il's other children, for the sake of brevity, confining myself to the prophet's biography and omitting some of the things which I.I. [Ibn Ishâq] has recorded in this book in which there is no mention of the apostle and about which the Quran says nothing and which are not relevant to anything in this book or an explanation of it or evidence for it; poems which he quotes that no authority on poetry whom I have met knows of; things which it is disgraceful to discuss; matters which would distress certain people; and such reports as al-Bakkâ'î told me he could not accept as trustworthy - all these things I have omitted. But God willing I shall give a full account of everything else so far as it is known and trustworthy tradition is available.¹⁷

It is important to note, however, that Ibn Hishâm has not mingled his contributions with those of Ibn Ishâq. Ibn Hishâm quite significantly begins his work with the statement, "What I have just written about the prophet's genealogy back to Adam and about Idrîs and others I was told by Ziyâd b. 'Abd Allâh al-Bakkâ'î on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ishâq;"¹⁸ and, as Khoury correctly explains, this is the essential *isnâd* on which the book is based.¹⁹ Nor is there any confusion due to lack of explicitness. Thus where Ibn Ishâq cites many of his

¹⁶The Kûfan, al-Bakkâ'î, is recognized as the most reliable transmitter of Ibn Ishâq because his text is supposed to have been dictated to him twice by the author. See R. G. Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," in La Vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg, Octobre 1980 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), 10.

¹⁷Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 4; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 691.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Says Khoury, "Il s'agit là de l'*isnâd* de base du livre, même s'il n'est pas toujours mentionné in extenso, car on est en droit de penser que la majorité des récits, . . . ont passé par cette voie, pour arriver à Ibn Hishâm . . ." Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," 9.

traditions without providing an *isnâd*, for instance, Ibn Hishâm always makes it clear that the tradition was nevertheless a contribution of Ibn Ishâq's. An important example is the case of the so-called 'Constitution of Medina', which, while left without an *isnâd* by Ibn Ishâq, is introduced by Ibn Hishâm as originating from Ibn Ishâq: "*Qâla Ibn Ishâq. . .*"²⁰ Fück's verdict is that Ibn Hishâm gives an indication of his own additions and changes in such a way that one can recognize the real words of Ibn Ishâq.²¹

While only the recension of Ibn Hishâm is available to us today, according to Fück²² there are supposed to have been fifteen recensions of Ibn Ishâq's text recorded, to which Abbott would add another three, one of them being that of the famous Abû Yûsuf (d. 98/731), pupil and friend of Abû Ḥanîfa, and favorite of Mahdî and Hârûn al-Rashîd!²³

One recension in particular, however, that of Ibn Bukayr (d. 199/814), has not received the attention it deserves from more recent scholars, in spite of the early notice concerning its existence by Guillaume. In this regard my meaning is best explained by the words of Guillaume himself. I quote:

A comparison of the text of the MS. with the edition of Ibn Hishâm forces me to admit that in one respect at least I failed to do justice to Ibn Hishâm's

²⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 341.

²¹Johann Fück, "Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq," 36.

²²According to Fück the 15 known recensions of Ibn Ishâq were done by: 1. Ibrâhîm b. Sa'd, (110/728 -184/800), in Medina. 2. Ziyâd b. 'Abd Allâh al-Bakkâ'i; 3. 'Abd Allâh b. Idrîs al-Awdî, (115/733 -192/808); 4. Yûnus b. Bukayr; 5. 'Abda b. Sulaymân; 6. 'Abd Allâh b. Numayr, (115/733 -199/815), in Kûfa. 7. Yaḥyâ b. Sa'îd al-Umawî (114/732 -194/810), in Baghdad. 8. Jarîr b. Kâzim, (85/704 -170/787); 9. Hârûn b. 'Isâ, in Basra. 10. Salama b. Al-Faḍl al-Abrash (d.191/807); 11. 'Alî b. Mujâhid; 12. Ibrâhîm b. al-Mukhtâr, in Rayy; 13. Sa'îd b. Bazî'; 14. 'Uthmân b. Sâj; 15. Muḥammad b. Salama al-Harrânî. See *ibid.*, 44.

²³Abbott would add three more to Fück's list, viz., 1. Abû Yûsuf (113/731 -182/798); 2. the Kûfan Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-'Awfî (d. 201 or 202/ 816 or 817); 3. Muḥammad ibn Sa'îd al-Umawî. See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 92.

work as an editor. If Ibn Ishâq gave his lectures in the form and order in which Yûnus b. Bukayr recorded them -naturally we have no information on the point [emphasis mine]- then we owe much to Ibn Hishâm for his painstaking efforts to introduce some sort of logical and chronological order into the narrative. As the full summary will indicate the pages of the MS. run from subject to subject at times, and without the *textus receptus* to keep one on the right track it would be a difficult task to arrange the material in a way satisfactory to any reader. Men like Ibn Hishâm and more especially Ṭabarî have performed a service of inestimable value in introducing order into what may have been an incoherent assembly of traditions. . . .²⁴

What has to be noted here, however, is that the Ibn Bukayr text is not necessarily the ideal version upon which to base a comparison. Recent editions of Ibn Ishâq's text such as those of Hamidullah and Zakkâr have overlooked the fact that Ibn Bukayr had not merely written down the material of Ibn Ishâq, but had in fact incorporated other traditions which did not belong to the Ibn Ishâq corpus.²⁵ It is regrettable that Sezgin as well fails to recognize this aspect of the Ibn Bukayr manuscript,²⁶ even though Ibn Bukayr himself refers to its broader content in its very title: *Al-juz' al-thânî min kitâb al-Maghâzî riwâyat Yûnus b. Bukayr 'an Muḥammad b. Ishâq wa ghayrihi*.²⁷

On the other hand, Zakkâr does come up with the interesting, and, I believe, quite plausible thesis, that the Ibn Bukayr text comprises the earliest text which was written by Ibn Ishâq, one which was probably established before his transfer to Baghdad. Zakkâr asserts that this text is more pro-'Alî than the texts which were written later at the 'Abbâsîd court, and doctored to suit the 'Abbâsîd

²⁴Alfred Guillaume, *New Light on the Life of Muḥammad*, Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph no. 1 (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1960), 8.

²⁵See Miklos Muranyi, "Ibn Ishâq's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî* in der *Riwaya* von Yûnus b. Bukayr: Bemerkungen zur frühen Überlieferungsgeschichte," *ISAJ* 14 (1991): 216-18.

²⁶Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967 - in progress) 1: 289, cited in Muranyi, "Ibn Ishâq's *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*," 218.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 218. Sadun Mahmud al-Samuk recognizes the presence of traditions other than those from Ibn Ishâq as well, in his study of al-'Utâridî's copy of Ibn Bukayr's *Sîra*; see his *Die historischen Überlieferungen nach Ibn Ishâq*, (Frankfurt, 1978), 82-83.

claims.²⁸ It is difficult to judge this theory of Zakkâr's as we cannot tell what exactly were the traditions left out by Ibn Hishâm. But the theory that there was a separate earlier text would explain the difference between the Ibn Bukayr text and the Ibn Hishâm text, which Guillaume finds so difficult to reconcile. Moreover, it corroborates the existence of a Medinan text which had been passed on to Ibrâhîm b. Sa'd.²⁹

The recension—or rather citations from it—that is most readily available for comparison is that of the major source of al-Ṭabarî, Salama b. Faḍl.³⁰ According to Abbott, “It has been remarked by Yâqût that ‘Ṭabarî erected his own history on Ibn Ishâq’s *mubtadâ’* and *maghâzî* as transmitted by Salamah’.”³¹ However, it was not the latter’s direct recension that al-Ṭabarî used, but the recensions of two contemporary transmitters from Salama, Aḥmad b. Ḥammâd al-Dûlâbî (d. post 256/869)³² and Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd b. Ḥayyân al-Râzî (d. 248/862),³³ named as Muḥammad b. Ḥamîd by Abbott.³⁴ Ismail Poonawala, who provides a careful collation of the last years of Muḥammad’s life as described in al-Ṭabarî’s text with the latter part of the *Sîra* of Ibn Hishâm, makes the important observation that, “Despite a number of variants and some minor additions and omissions, it is worth

²⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb al-siyar wa'l-maghâzî*, ed. Suhayl Zakkâr (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1978), 13.

²⁹See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 89.

³⁰Ibn Sa'd, *qâḍî* of al-Rayy, informs us that he transmitted both the *Mubtada'* and the *Maghâzî*. See R. G. Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘*Sîra*’,” 20-21. According to Newby, “Salamah was Ibn Ishâq’s closest pupil. He heard all the material from his master, had his notes checked, and received his master’s lecture notes.” See Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*, 15.

³¹See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 94.

³²*Ibid.*

³³A scholar of Rayy, he was respected by both Abû Dâwûd and Ibn Ḥanbal, who have transmitted traditions from him. See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 94; and Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘*Sîra*’,” 20.

³⁴Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 94.

noting that, on the whole, there is remarkable agreement between the two *riwâyahs*.”³⁵ Thus it would appear that Ibn Hishâm has been quite honest in his statement describing the nature of his editing.³⁶ More importantly, we may put away the fears expressed by Guillaume concerning the “logical and chronological order” expressed by the narrative of the *Sîra* as having been established by Ibn Ishâq himself.

In an attempt to accommodate such methodological difficulties, my own response is, on the one hand, to awaken the reader to an awareness of the problem, to treat the work as it presents itself to us, i.e., as essentially Ibn Hishâm’s recension, and yet, on the other hand, to accept Ibn Hishâm’s statement on how he adapted the Ibn Ishâq text, and to use it as a basis from which to distill out the original Ibn Ishâq. I must emphasize that in discussing Ibn Ishâq, I restrict myself to the text of the *Sîra* in the recension of Ibn Hishâm and have not in any way tried to broaden my perspective on Ibn Ishâq by insinuations from citations in other sources, as does Guillaume for instance, mostly because my study is primarily a textual comparison. Thus my study is a comparison of the text of Ibn Ishâq as edited by Ibn Hishâm, with the text of al-Wâqidî.

At this point, I would like to add that, on a more obvious but superficial level, what distinguishes the recension of Ibn Hishâm is the fact that it includes the document known as the ‘Constitution of Medina.’ The latter does not seem to

³⁵See the translator’s foreword to Al-Ṭabarî, *The Last Years of the Prophet*, vol. 9, *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, trans. and ed., Ismail K. Poonawala (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), xi.

³⁶It is important to recognize that al-Ṭabarî does not limit himself to Salama’s recension of Ibn Ishâq. The recension of Yûnus b. Bukayr b. Wâsil al-Shaybânî (of which only a fragment is extant today), through the mediation of Abû Kurayb Muḥammad b. ‘Alâ b. Kurayb al-Kûfî (d. 248/862), is also used, though admittedly only in the early portion of his *Ta’rîkh*, and these borrowings reflect authorities other than Ibn Ishâq as well. See Muranyi, “Ibn Ishâq’s *Kitâb al-Magâzî*,” 215-16.

have been included in any other recension of Ibn Ishâq—the fact that al-Ṭabarî does not mention it is certainly suggestive of the possibility that Salama had not included it either; nor, for that matter, is it mentioned in any other ‘biography’ of the Prophet written prior to the tenth century, and it must be noted that Ibn Ishâq himself has not furnished the information with any kind of *isnâd*.

Before going on to discuss the life of Ibn Ishâq, it would be advisable to say a few words about the lives of al-Bakkâ’î and Ibn Hishâm, regarding which we have extremely little information.

Ziyâd b. ‘Abd Allâh al-Bakkâ’î (d.183/799), whose date of birth is unknown, was an Iraqi from Kûfa, whose reputation among the tradition collectors was not exceptional.³⁷ However, he was one of the two transmitters of Ibn Ishâq’s *Sîra* who had combined both the *sam’* and the ‘*arḍ*’ techniques of transmission when recording his notes on the *maghâzî* of the Prophet by Ibn Ishâq.³⁸ On the whole, his transmission is, as explained by Poonawala, quite faithful to the original as is noticed when his traditions are compared with the traditions of Salama cited by al-Ṭabarî.³⁹

As for Ibn Hishâm, his full name was ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hishâm b. Ayyûb al-Ḥimyarî al-Ma’âfirî.⁴⁰ He is supposed to have been of Yemenite descent, but was born in Basra where his family had come to live. He later moved to Egypt,

³⁷For information on his life see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalânî, *Tahdhîb al-Tahdhîb*, (Hyderabad: Dâ’irat al-Ma’ârif al-Nizâmiyya, 1907), 3: 375-377; Shams al-Dîn al-Dhahabî, *Mîzân al-i’tidâl fî naqd al-rijâl*, (Cairo: 1963), 2: 91-92; and Ibn Abî Ḥâtim, *al-Jarh wa’l-ta’dîl*, (Bayrût: Dâr al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1970), 1₂: 753; cited in Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘Sîra’,” 10.

³⁸The other was Salama ibn al-Faḍl (d. 191/807), see Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 94, where she cites al-Khatîb, *Ta’rîkh Baghdâd*, 8: 476, ff; and al-Dhahabî, *Mîzân*, 1:407.

³⁹See page 51, f. n. 35 above.

⁴⁰Identified as Abû M. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hishâm b. Ayyûb al-Ḥimyarî Jamâladdîn, by Sezgin in *GAS*, 1: 297.

where he finally died in Fustat in the year 218/834. Acknowledging his contribution, al-Suyûtî cites Abû Dharr as having said that “Ibn Hishâm produced one of the four compendia which were better than their sources.”⁴¹ Ibn Khallikân informs us that he was knowledgeable in the fields of genealogy and philology; according to Guillaume, he aired his knowledge of the subjects through his additional comments which he provided in his recension of the Sîra :

“Occasionally he is helpful with genealogical notes; more rarely he has something useful to say about the interpretation of a line in I. I.’s [Ibn Ishâq’s] work.”⁴²

Probably Ibn Hishâm’s greatest contribution to the field, however, is his faithfulness to the text of Ibn Ishâq, and hence his inclusion of the text of what has come to be known as the ‘Constitution of Medina.’ It is significant that the *isnâd* attached to this text should leave out al-Bakkâ’î, stating only, “*Qâla Ibn Ishâq*,” indicating to us that Ibn Hishâm had obtained the information from the notes of Ibn Ishâq himself.

In addition to his recension of the Sîra by Ibn Ishâq, Ibn Hishâm is the author of two books: Kitâb al-Tijân, which deals with the kings of Himyar and the glorification of Yemen’s past,⁴³ and another which deals with some of the obscure poetry found in the Sîra.⁴⁴

The Life and Times of Ibn Ishâq

To appreciate the life and times of Ibn Ishâq (85/704 -151/767), it is necessary to read the numerous records of his life provided by biographical writers

⁴¹Al-Suyûtî, Al-Muzhir, Cairo (n.d.) 87, cited in Guillaume, introduction to The Life of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishâq, xlii.

⁴²Ibid., xli.

⁴³Guillaume, introduction to The Life of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishâq, xviii.

⁴⁴Ibid., xlii, and Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘Sîra’,” 9.

such as Ibn Sa'd (168/784 - 230/845), who, incidentally, is our earliest extant source for his career.⁴⁵ One must then go on to read the texts ascribed to Ibn Ishâq himself, so that one may understand more clearly the opinions and ideas of the author.

Biographical dictionaries must be approached with caution, however, for one must understand the evolution of these works in order to be able to evaluate their contents.⁴⁶ It is significant that Heffening has tried to explain the development of this material as an offshoot of pre-Islamic Arab genealogical studies.⁴⁷ As a result, the information provided by such dictionaries is limited and biased and is usually restricted to: a) name and genealogy; b) place of birth; c) a list of authorities on or teachers of the subject of the biography; d) a list of his students; e) reliability and degree of accuracy of the traditions relayed by him; f) the extent of his transmission; g) date of death. Through such 'dictionaries' the biographers seem to have tried to erect a chronological framework around the tradition literature, so as to prop up, as it were, a history of transmissions.⁴⁸

The information provided below on Ibn Ishâq has been drawn from such biographical dictionaries. When dealing with such sources, we clearly stand on much firmer ground when it concerns information on more recent writers, such as

⁴⁵See Fück, "Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq," 15.

⁴⁶Much of the data concerning early Islam, the Prophet, and his companions, is contained in such dictionaries. Here, each individual's social status is established not only by reference to his tribal heritage, but also in terms of the role he had played in the making of Islam: how early a convert was he to Islam? Did he participate in the battle of Badr? Had the Prophet bestowed any special favors on his person? These were all important issues for the nascent Islamic community, and helped to establish the person concerned on a particular step of the social ladder. It was on the basis of such status that one's place in the *dîwân* of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb was determined; and it was on the basis of the latter that the stipend due to each one of them was computed.

⁴⁷Supplement to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st. ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), s. v. " *Ṭabaqât*," by Heffening.

⁴⁸Fück, "Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq," 13.

Ibn Ishâq, than we do when we are considering information about the life of the Prophet and his companions. The latter were unknown to the biographers; their activities belonged in a time concerning which the writers had little or no acquaintance and were based on a memory that had been orally communicated to them. Ibn Ishâq, on the contrary, had barely died when one of the earliest compilers of biographical dictionaries, al-Wâqidî (d. 207/822), composed two collections of biographical material, the first entitled Kitâb al-ṭabaqât al-kubrâ, and a second, which was of a smaller dimension, entitled Kitâb al-ṭabaqât al-ṣuḡhrâ.⁴⁹ Both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî—who had probably written a biographical note on Ibn Ishâq as well in his Ṭabaqât—had direct contact with the high circles of the ‘Abbâsid court, so that fairly accurate data on Ibn Ishâq’s life must have been available to the latter. Even though the texts of al-Wâqidî’s biographical dictionaries are no longer available to us, Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845), the diligent amanuensis and *kâtib* of al-Wâqidî, has fortunately communicated much of al-Wâqidî’s information to us in his own writings, so that the information given by Ibn Sa’d may be regarded as essentially reliable.⁵⁰ As well, historical writers such as al-Balâdhurî (d. 279/892)⁵¹ and al-Ṭabarî (d. 310/923)⁵² and biographical writers such as Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889)⁵³ also provide interesting information on the author. The facts that are preserved by these early historians, though limited, are important.

⁴⁹Ibrahim Hafsi, “Recherches sur le genre ‘*Ṭabaqât*’ dans la littérature arabe,” Arabica 23 (1976): 242.

⁵⁰See Ibn Sa’d, Kitâb al-ṭabaqât, 5: 314-21.

⁵¹Al-Balâdhurî, Futûḥ al-buldân, 248.

⁵²Al-Ṭabarî, Ta’rîkh al-rusul wa’l-mulûk, 1: 2064 and 2122-2123.

⁵³See Ibn Qutayba, Kitâb al-ma’ârif, 447, cited under the title Handbuch der Geschichte in Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 2: ii.

A more critical view, however, claims that in fact such biographical dictionaries were not purely historical in outlook, but were indeed an outgrowth of tradition-criticism, *'ilm al-rijâl wa'l-ta'dîl*, which actually developed only in the middle of the second century A.H. They insist that the information of later biographers tends to become slanted according to the views of the writer concerned. The biographical dictionary thus served the purpose of establishing, rather than merely enabling, the investigation of the trustworthiness of transmitters of tradition.⁵⁴ As we shall see below, such information cannot be accepted at face value and must be carefully distilled if the facts are to be understood.

Muḥammad b. Ishâq b. Yasâr b. Khiyâr (or Kûthân) al-Muṭṭalibî was born into a Medinan *mawlâ* family whose ancestors were probably of Persian extract.⁵⁵ In A.H. 12 his grandfather Yasâr was among the hostages taken by Khâlid b. al-Walîd from the Persian king when he captured a church⁵⁶ at 'Ayn al-Tamr.⁵⁷ Together with his fellow captives, Yasâr was one of the slaves to be brought over

⁵⁴Supplement to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, s. v. "Ṭabaqât." See also Hafsi, "Recherches sur le genre 'Ṭabaqât'," 229.

⁵⁵Horovitz informs us that he was a Christian Arab from Iraq: see Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3., IC 2 (1928): 169; this is probably an error caused by his confusion of the town of 'Ayn al-Tamr which lay within what was the geographical region of Iraq; and though we do know that the marches that divided Persia from the Arabian peninsula were inhabited by Arabs even in those early years- the fact that he kept the name of the family who had earlier purchased his grandfather, Yasâr, as a slave, to be manumitted after his conversion to Islam, seems to indicate that he was indeed a *mawlâ* of non-Arab origin. According to the EI ², "The *mawlâ* is a non-Arab freedman, convert or other newcomer in Muslim society." It may be that the particular relationship of *mawlâ* referred to in this instance is merely that between captive and manumitter. But the fact that he takes on the name of his manumitter suggests that he did not have an Arab identity that would enable him to move in Arab society: "From the point of view of the client, the main role of the patron was to provide him with access to a privileged society." In Umayyad society the Arabs equated them with slaves in part because most of them were freedmen who were originally captives of war. The 'Abbâsid revolution is supposed to have deprived the Arabs of such social and political privileges, so that non-Arabs could reach top positions. S.v. "Mawlâ," by P. Crone.

⁵⁶Al-Balâdhurî, Futûḥ al-buldân, 248.

⁵⁷Ibn Sa'd, Kitâb al-ṭabaqât al-kabîr, 7: 67.

to the caliph Abû Bakr in Medina, who in turn handed him over to Qays b. Makhrama b. al-Muṭṭalib b. ‘Abd Manâf b. Quṣayy, who finally manumitted him when he converted to Islam.⁵⁸ According to al-Khaṭīb (who refers to al-Haytham b. ‘Adî and al-Madâ’inî), however, it was not Yasâr who was captured by Khâlid, but his father Khiyâr.⁵⁹ As was customary, even after manumission he remained attached to the family he had served taking on their names, al-Makhramî and al-Muṭṭalibî, as his own.

Ibn Ishâq’s father was one of three sons, Ishâq, Mûsâ, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmân.⁶⁰ Ishâq (b. 50/670) married the daughter of Sabîh, the freedman/*mawlâ* of Khuwaylid b. ‘Abd al-’Uzzâ, and in the year 85/704 there was born to them a son, Muḥammad b. Ishâq, the subject of this chapter.⁶¹ His *kunyâ*, according to Ibn Sa’d, was Abû ‘Abd Allâh, but Abû Bakr according to al-Bukhârî.⁶² Despite their subordinate status in Medina, it has been suggested that Ibn Ishâq’s family had been of high standing in Iraq before being taken captive by the Muslims.⁶³

Both Ishâq, Muḥammad’s father, and Ishâq’s brother, Mûsâ, had shown an interest in the collecting of traditions, and it is likely that it was from them that Muḥammad and his two brothers, Abû Bakr and ‘Umar,⁶⁴ acquired a considerable

⁵⁸See Ibn Qutayba *Kitâb al-ma’ârif*, 447. According to Yâqût, this was the first group of slaves to be transported from Iraq to Medina. See *Mu‘jam al-udabâ’*, 400.

⁵⁹Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdâdî, *Ta’rîkh Baghdâd*, 1: 215; Hamidullah believes that the latter is the more correct version. See, Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muhammad Ibn Ishaq* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1967), 2.

⁶⁰Ibn Qutayba, *Kitâb al-ma’ârif*, 447.

⁶¹Fück, “Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq,” 28.

⁶²Hamidullah, *Muhammad Ibn Ishaq* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1967), 2. See also, *EJ*², s.v. “Ibn Ishâq,” by J. M. B. Jones.

⁶³Lists of famous ancestors of the captives of ‘Ayn al-Tamr can be found in al-Ṭabarî, *Ta’rîkh al-rusul wa’l-mulûk*, 1: 2064, 2122, and Balâdhurî, *Futûḥ*, 247. Also, see Fück, “Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq,” 28, f.n. 12.

⁶⁴Ibn al-Najjâr, *al-Kamâl fî ma’rifat al-rijâl*, cited in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 2: ix-x.

knowledge of the subject. The two latter are numbered among the traditionists named in Ibn Ishâq's narration of the Prophet's life. But it was particularly Muḥammad b. Ishâq who emerged as a scholar, associating himself increasingly with the second generation of Medinan traditionists such as al-Zuhrî, 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda, and 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr.⁶⁵ Ibn Sa'd informs us that Ibn Ishâq left Medina early in his career.⁶⁶ It was during a visit to the caliph al-Manṣûr at Hîra in around 142/760 -146/763 that Ibn Ishâq was commanded by the caliph to put down in writing the *maghâzî* of the Prophet.⁶⁷

Apart from the short notice provided by Ibn Sa'd, the earliest biographical notices on Ibn Ishâq are furnished by writers who seem hostile to him, namely, 'Abd al-Sallâm al-Jumâhî (d. 231/845), who argues that he debased the ancient Arab poetry "and corrupted it and passed on all sorts of rubbish;"⁶⁸ and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), who protests his 'qadarism,' viz., his acclamation of 'free will.' In his *Kitâb al-ma'ârif*, Ibn Qutayba does, however, provide what is probably the earliest report stating that Ibn Ishâq "visited Abû Ja'far at Hîra and wrote for him the book about the battles (*maghâzî*) which the inhabitants of Kûfa had occasionally heard from him."⁶⁹ And Ibn al-Nadîm (d. 385/995), who strangely refrains from commenting on his theological views, but informs us that Ibn Ishâq is not trustworthy because he had poetry specially composed for his work on the biography of the Prophet, and because he had sought information from Jews and Christians who had provided him with inaccurate data regarding

⁶⁵Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3, *IC* 2 (1928): 177.

⁶⁶Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-tabaqât*, 7: 67.

⁶⁷Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 89.

⁶⁸Al-Jumâhî, *Tabaqât al-shu'ârâ*, ed. J. Hell (Leiden: 1916), 4, cited in J. T. Monroe, "The poetry of the *Sîrah* literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. T. M. Johnstone, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 372.

⁶⁹Cited by Wüstenfeld in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 2 : ii.

genealogy.⁷⁰ Ibn al-Nadîm also informs us of the reprimand delivered to Ibn Ishâq by the Governor of Medina for his fondness for women. He then tells us of how Hishâm b. 'Urwa denied the possibility of the biographer's ability to convey traditions from his wife Fâtima bint al-Mundhir b. Zubayr, declaring, "When did he ever enter into her presence or hear her speak?"⁷¹ Ibn al-Nadîm concludes his notice on Ibn Ishâq with the information that he had written two works, namely, The Caliphs and The Biography. Regarding another work attributed to Ibn Ishâq by Hajji Khalîfa entitled Sunan, Ibn al-Nadîm is silent.⁷²

It is unfortunate that our information for the middle period of Ibn Ishâq's life is quite insufficient. Interestingly, early biographical notices do not inform us of Ibn Ishâq's trip to Egypt. It seems, however, that the writer must have left for Egypt in around 115/733 to meet one of his well known non-Medinan authorities on tradition, Yazîd b. Abî Ḥabîb (d. 128/745).⁷³ It was the document communicated to him by the latter, regarding the embassies sent out by the Prophet to the various non-Muslim Princes that Ibn Ishâq had checked by his teacher al-Zuhri.⁷⁴ But he must have returned to Medina before his trip to Kûfa, for the (by now) 'notorious' *ḥadîth* collector is supposed, according to the Ta'rikh of al-Bukhârî, to have met Sufyân b. Uyayna there in 132/749.⁷⁵

⁷⁰Ibn al-Nadîm, Al-Fihrist, 1: 200.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid. According to Idris, this title may be simply due to a paleographical error. See H. R. Idris, "Réflexions sur Ibn Ishâq," SI 17 (1962), 30.

⁷³Ibn Abî Ḥabîb was a traditionist who was well informed on pre-Islamic Arabia as well, see R. G. Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," 15; on the other hand Ibn Abî Ḥabîb himself is said to have reported traditions on the authority of Ibn Ishâq. See Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, xiii.

⁷⁴Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 972.

⁷⁵Cited in Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3., 170.

The criticism leveled against Ibn Ishâq by Mâlik b. Anas (d. 180/796), famed writer of the Muwatta', is difficult to dismiss. Mâlik b. Anas is reported to have declared that it was Mûsâ b. 'Uqba's (d. 141/758) Maghâzî that was the most correct *maghâzî*.⁷⁶ Sellheim seems to recognize, however, that some kind of traumatic conflict with Mâlik b. Anas led to Ibn Ishâq's departure from his hometown.⁷⁷

The association of Mâlik with the opposition of Hishâm b. 'Urwa to Ibn Ishâq suggests that there was more to the conflict than the obvious criticisms cited. Ibn Ishâq had reported several traditions from Hishâm's father 'Urwa, not only on the authority of al-Zuhrî, his teacher, but also through Hishâm himself, his *mawlâ* Yazîd b. Rûmân, and Hishâm's wife Fâtîma bint Mundhir. However, it was alleged that some of the traditions communicated by Ibn Ishâq were not trustworthy, and Ibn Qutayba informs us that Hishâm b. 'Urwa denied that Ibn Ishâq had ever visited his home, implying that he could not possibly report traditions from his wife Fâtîma.⁷⁸ Furthermore, according to Ḥusayn b. 'Urwa, Mâlik b. Anas had asserted that Ibn Ishâq was a liar.⁷⁹ Could this be because he had heard of the complaint of Hishâm regarding Ibn Ishâq's narration of tradition on the authority of his wife Fâtîma? On the other hand, according to Ibn Idrîs, when he mentioned to Mâlik b. Anas that Ibn Ishâq had claimed the ability to 'surgically' analyze the knowledge or *'ilm* of Mâlik, the latter remarked that he

⁷⁶Goldziher, Muslim Studies, 2 :192.

⁷⁷See Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 34.

⁷⁸Ibn Qutayba, Kitâb al-ma'ârif, 247. It is difficult to understand Hishâm's consternation at the fact that Ibn Ishâq had met his wife Fâtîma on chauvinistic grounds, for she is said to have been around forty years older than the writer; see Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3., 171. However it is possible that he wanted to keep the traditions within his family, and that therefore he was irritated that they had been transmitted to Ibn Ishâq, who thus obtained the authority to narrate them.

⁷⁹Al-Khatîb al-Baghdâdî, Ta'rîkh Baghdâd, 1: 223.

was an antichrist.⁸⁰ And again, we are told that according to Abû Bakr al-Ashram, when he inquired of Ibn Ishâq from Mâlik b. Anas, the latter replied that he was a veritable antichrist!⁸¹

It is possible that these attacks against Ibn Ishâq were, in essence, attempts to discredit his traditions because of his *mawâlî* status. Ibn Ishâq was born at a time when non-Arab converts, despite their Islamic assertions, were considered unequal. Their only chance to rise in society was by participating in the administrative system or the translation chambers, for their learning skills were recognized and needed. Indeed, the success of the ‘Abbâsid revolution was to some extent made possible by the support of the *mawâlî*, whose demands had been neglected by the Umayyads. By the beginning of ‘Abbâsid rule, Arab chauvinism, which saw a clash between the Persians and Arabs each asserting their claims to an intellectual superiority, was on the rise. Nevertheless, the mathematical, grammatical, and linguistic skills of the non-Arab were appreciable, and it was only in the regions of exegesis and *ḥadīth* that the Arab had managed to hold his own. But things were fast changing, and the genre of *maghâzî*, a form of composition closely linked with exegesis and tradition, was rapidly becoming dominated by the *mawâlî*. That Ibn Ishâq had somehow been able to establish his name in this field is a sign of the changing times. It is a telling fact that Mâlik b. Anas is known to have taken great pride in his Arab ancestry, and that Ibn Ishâq took a malicious pleasure in contesting his Arab genealogy!⁸²

⁸⁰Ibid. Yâqût informs us that Ibn Idrîs, who was a student of Ibn Ishâq related that Ibn Ishâq had declared: “Lay the knowledge of Mâlik before me and I will handle it as a surgeon,” Yâqût, *Mu‘jam al-udabâ’*, 11: 400.

⁸¹Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rīkh Baghdād*, 1: 223.

⁸²According to Abû Ḥatīm b. Ḥibbân (d. 354), “Nobody in the Hijaz knew more about genealogies and wars than Ibn Ishâq and he used to say that Mâlik was a freed slave of Dhû Aṣṣabah while Mâlik alleged that he was a full member of the tribe . . .” Cited by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, xl.

It is interesting that Ibn Qutayba should, in establishing a biographical sketch of Ibn Ishâq, classify him as a Qadarite.⁸³ According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn Ishâq was dragged like a criminal with a rope around his neck and whipped by the orders of the ‘Umayyad governor; the reason, it seems, was that Ibn Ishâq was a Qadarite.⁸⁴ The same story is also related by Yâqût, on the authority of al-Wâqidī, but this time it is explained that Ibn Ishâq was being punished for his desire to be close to the women when he took his seat in the mosque.⁸⁵ Fück, discussing Ibn Ishâq’s conflict with Mâlik, states, “Above all he attacked Ibn Ishâq’s belief in *qadar* as heterodoxy”, adding, “personally unfavorable literature appears to drown this controversy.”⁸⁶

In fact, Qadarism had become associated with the political will to overthrow the ruling house of the Umayyads, and, perhaps because organized political opposition to the Umayyads was largely associated with Shī‘ism, with Shī‘ism as well.⁸⁷ Ibn Ishâq had not visited the palace even though his worthy teacher al-Zuhrī interacted with the members and even participated in the activities of the court.⁸⁸ Moreover, Ibn Ishâq had certainly voiced ‘Alid sympathies in his biography of the Prophet, naming him as the first male convert to Islam,⁸⁹ and claiming that it was ‘Alī whom Muḥammad had chosen to be his ‘brotherly-partner’ soon after their immigration to Medina.⁹⁰

⁸³See Ibn Qutayba, Kitâb al-ma‘ârif, 447, cited in Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 2: ii.

⁸⁴Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ta’rîkh Baghdâd, 225-26.

⁸⁵Yâqût, Mu‘jam al-udabâ’, 400.

⁸⁶See Fück, “Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq,” 31-32;

⁸⁷Thus, says Yâqût, Shâdhakûnī said, “Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq was a Shī‘î and a Qadarî.” Cited in Mu‘jam al-udabâ’, 400.

⁸⁸Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors,” part 3., 171-72.

⁸⁹Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 158-59.

⁹⁰Ibid., 344.

Al-Samuk, investigating the issue, points to the numerous accounts which indicate the harsh treatment meted out to Ibn Ishâq by the Umayyad authorities, and compares it to the encouragement proffered him by the 'Abbâsids.⁹¹ Noting the numerous accusations of *Qadarî* belief advanced against him, Samuk suggests that this was probably due to Ibn Ishâq's anti-Umayyad position. Nevertheless, Samuk is not willing to go so far as to associate Ibn Ishâq's opposition to the authorities with either pro-Shî'î or pro-'Abbâsid tendencies. According to him, Ibn Ishâq is ambivalent on that issue.⁹²

If it is agreed that the main characteristic of Qadarism is the belief in free will as against predestination, then *Qadarî* ideas may well have been conveyed by Ibn Ishâq in his writings. Thus, for instance, we have al-Ṭabarî giving us Ibn Ishâq's view of the creation of the world: "The First (thing) created by God was light and darkness,"⁹³ as opposed to that of Ibn 'Abbâs who claimed that the first thing that God created was the pen—the pen, of course, being the symbol of predestination, for He would use it to write down all that will be. In the following paragraph, al-Ṭabarî gives one example of the kind of reaction a statement such as that of Ibn Ishâq's would provoke:

I said to Ibn 'Abbâs: There are people who consider predestination untrue? He said: (Then), they consider the Book of God untrue! I shall seize one of them by the hair and shake him up.⁹⁴

⁹¹"Die Nachrichten über das Leben Ibn Ishâq's, die wir bei Yâqût (Irsâd 18: 6 f.), al-Xaṭîb (1: 214-34), ad Dahabî (Mîzân 2: 343-47; Tadhkirah 1: 164) oder Ibn Nadîm (Fihrist s. 92) finden, zeigen die Schwierigkeiten, die Ibn Ishâq von den Umayyaden zu ertragen hatte." See al-Samuk, *Die historischen Überlieferungen nach Ibn Ishâq*, 12, f. n. 12.

⁹²Ibid., 11-12, f. n. 11 and 12.

⁹³Al-Ṭabarî, *The History of al-Ṭabarî: General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood*, vol. 1. *The History of al-Ṭabarî*, trans. and ed. Franz Rosenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 201.

⁹⁴Ibid., 201-02.

On the other hand, if we take another look at the citation by Ibn Ishâq, the close resemblance of his position to that taken in the Hebrew Bible is striking. Says Wansbrough:

The emergence of an Arabian prophetic tradition, of which the earliest agent appears to have been the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq, may well have contributed to its author's dispute about methodology with Mâlik b. Anas and his subsequent departure from Medina.⁹⁵

There is little doubt concerning the large influence played by the Biblical tradition upon Ibn Ishâq. Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs informs us that Mâlik b. Anas' anger against Ibn Ishâq was probably due to the fact that he had incorporated not only the *qiṣaṣ* of Wahb b. Munabbih, but also information acquired from the offspring of Jews regarding the Prophet's raids against Khaybar, the B. Qurayza, and the B. Naḍîr.⁹⁶ Moreover, Ibn Ishâq represents the latter as being very early residents of Yathrib/Medina who were knowledgeable in the Torah.⁹⁷ It seems possible that Mâlik b. Anas did not agree, and in fact believed the Jews of Medina to be bedouin converts to Judaism.⁹⁸

Ibn Ishâq was eventually compelled to leave Medina. After his conflict with Mâlik, there was widespread suspicion of his beliefs in Medina, and he was no longer able to hold classes for his students. The transmission of his materials in Medina itself was henceforth discouraged.⁹⁹ Sellheim, however, suggests otherwise: could it be that his trips to Alexandria and Kûfa were really made in

⁹⁵Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 58.

⁹⁶Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, *Uyûn al-athâr* (al-Quds: Husâm al-Dîn al-Qudsî, 1937) 1: 17.

⁹⁷"While Tubba' was occupied in this fighting there came two Jewish rabbis from B. Qurayza—Qurayza, and al-Naḍîr . . ." Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 13-14.

⁹⁸Gil believes that "fragments preserved in Muslim sources showing the Jewish tribes of Yathrib to be the offspring of proselytes were part of one particular trend of Islamic hermeneutics." See Gil, "The Origin of the Jews of Yathrib," *JSAI* 4 (1984): 220.

⁹⁹Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 91.

search of the papyrus he required to document his vision?¹⁰⁰ If so, then Sellheim is indeed providing us with a timely reminder of the prejudiced nature of our sources. Nevertheless, it is important to take cognizance of the fact that criticisms were leveled against the author, however false they may have been, for they indicate to the reader that the community did not wholeheartedly approve of his writings. Even Sellheim recognizes the fact that Ibn Ishâq must have been forced to leave his hometown because of the strongly authoritarian nature of Medinan prejudices.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Ibrâhîm b. Sa'd was the only Medinan student of Ibn Ishâq who narrated the *maghâzî* on his authority.¹⁰²

The intellectual feast that Ibn Ishâq met with in the Jazîra, however, must have provided all the inspiration and encouragement that the artist within him had hungered for. This was the age which saw the rise of the translation movement—133/750 - 236/850—which became established in the time of Hârûn al-Rashîd and peaked around 215/830 with the building of the *Bayt al-Ḥikma* by al-Ma'mûn.¹⁰³ But the momentum had already been built up by the time of our author, and translations of Greek medical works into Syriac and Arabic are said to have begun even earlier in Jundishapûr. Ibn Ishâq's famous contemporary Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh b. al-Muqaffa' (d. 139/756) is known to have been one of the earliest

¹⁰⁰Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 44. It is important to note that paper had not yet become readily available (indeed the first paper factories of Baghdad were established in the reign of Hârûn al-Rashîd) and papyrus was still in use. See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 91.

¹⁰¹"... der Medinenser Ibn Ishâq musste seine Vaterstadt verlassen, weil eine streng auf Autoritäten verteilte Tradition seinem - wie wir sahen- sehr viel weiter gestreutem Material keinen Raum liess." See Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 90.

¹⁰²Yâqût, *Mu'jam al-udabâ'*, 399.

¹⁰³Haskell D. Isaacs, "Arabic Medical Literature," in *Religion Learning and Science in the 'Abbâsîd Period*, ed. M. J. L. Young, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 343.

translators of Greek logical and medical works into Arabic.¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, it is claimed that early scholars such as Ibn ‘Abbâs and Abû Hurayra had both referred to Christian and Jewish scholars of the Bible in an attempt to understand the Qur’ân better.¹⁰⁵ It was a climate of intellectual activity which saw the rare tolerance of religiously provoked philosophical debates between scholars of different denominations. Certainly this trend was fast disappearing, as is indicated by Mâlik b. Anas’ opposition to Ibn Ishâq’s use of traditions from Jews and Jewish converts.¹⁰⁶ But for the time it was there, if only for a brief moment, and as Abbott reflects:

The early Muslims’ preoccupation with non-Islâmic thought and literature was reflected in the subsequent negative approach to such questions as whether it was permissible for Muslims to read such books and to transmit *akhbâr* and *hadîth* from the “people of the Book” and . . . whether Islâmic literature, particularly the Qur’ân, should be taught or even exposed to the “people of the Book.”¹⁰⁷

It was inevitable that the cultural atmosphere around him should have led Ibn Ishâq to see Islam in the context of the other two monotheistic faiths. It was probably here that Ibn Ishâq mulled over what he had already collected, and finally decided to compose a universal history situating Muḥammad and his new faith as the climax to the story of God’s revelation that began with His creation of the world.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴L. E. Goodman, “The Translation of Greek Materials into Arabic,” in *ibid*, 480-81.

¹⁰⁵Abbott, *Qur’ânic Commentary and Tradition*, 7-9.

¹⁰⁶See above f. n. 96.

¹⁰⁷Abbott, *Qur’ânic Commentary and Tradition*, 9-10.

¹⁰⁸Says Abbott, “It is in connection with this very period of al-Manṣûr’s patronage at Hîrah that Ibn Ishâq is first mentioned as *writing down* the *Maghâzî* for al-Manṣûr—*fa kataba lahu al-maghâzî*—that is, sometime between 142/760 and 146/763.” See *Historical Texts*, 89.

At the same time, the source of authority had come to be a fundamental issue during the first centuries of Islam. This was a time when the newly canonized Qur'ân had barely won recognition, and its vowelling had just become established under the orders of the governor al-Ḥajjāj (d. 96/714).¹⁰⁹ The place of the Qur'ân in the Islamic scheme of things was thus an important concern. But the Qur'ân had become established as an abstract statement. Compared to the Biblical texts of the Jews and Christians, in which the prophets were central to their religious image (a fact to which Ibn Ishâq like the Muslims outside Arabia, was becoming increasingly exposed), the Qur'ân said very little about Muḥammad. By including passages from the Qur'ân during the critical moments of the Prophet's life, Ibn Ishâq implied that these were the actual moments of revelation during the course of the development of Islam. Thus he firmly establishes Muḥammad as the earthly source for the Islamic revelation—the Qur'ân.

Ibn Ishâq was very much the product of the Medina School of Tradition. He had learned tradition from Ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî, 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda, and 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr; a knowledge of Qur'ân and *ḥadîth* had been acquired at the feet of *mawlâ* Muḥammad b. Abî Muḥammad, a freedman of the family of Zayd b. Thâbit, the well-known scribe of the Prophet.¹¹⁰ Ibn Ishâq's career was to be geared to relating the biography of the Prophet on the basis of tradition. One cannot help but be amazed at the enormous powers of memory such demonstrations would have required of him or any other religious scholar for that

¹⁰⁹According to A. Jones, the account most widely found which remains unchallenged is that al-Ḥajjāj, ordered Naṣr b. 'Âṣim to introduce markings to protect the pronunciation of the text. See Jones, "The History of the Text of the Qur'ân after the Death of Muḥammad," 232-35.

¹¹⁰Thus according to Fück there are many citations of Ibn Ishâq in al-Ṭabarî's *Tafsîr* with the *isnâd*, "*Ḥaddathnî Muḥammad b. Abî Muḥammad Mawlâ li 'l Zayd b. Thâbit 'an 'Ikrimah,*" or, "*'an Sa'îd b. Jubayr 'an Ibn 'Abbâs,*" See his "Muḥammad Ibn Ishâq," 29, f. n. 22.

matter; there was little doubt in the minds of those who understood that he was indeed a genius in his field.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, despite the loyal support that both al-Zuhrî and 'Âṣim provided Ibn Ishâq,¹¹² there is no denying the fact that the very method of this author-collator indicated a breakaway from the School of Medina. Ibn Ishâq had not limited himself to the scholars approved by orthodoxy, but had strayed into the sphere of *qiṣaṣ*, biblical legend, and Arab folklore. To obtain these, he had listened to traditions from those frowned upon by the school of Medina (Orthodoxy?): the traditions of Wahb ibn Munabbih, renowned for his compilations of *akhbâr* and *qiṣaṣ* and particularly for his knowledge of the *Isrâ'îliyyât*, had been learned from Mughîra b. Abî Labîd; but he had also visited Jewish and Christian converts to Islam.¹¹³ It is a telling sign of the times and the influences that were prevailing upon him that he should not only have included a whole passage from the Palestinian version of the New Testament in the *Mab'ath*,¹¹⁴ but have gone to the extent of suggesting that there were Christian influences in Mecca before the birth of Islam.¹¹⁵ Nor can we ignore the presence of mythic symbolization which permeates this literature. The numerous miracles

¹¹¹He was known as *ṣaḥîb al-sîra*, and *ṣaḥîb al-maghâzî*, see Abbott citing al-Khaṭîb al-Baghdâdî, *Ta'rîkh Baghdâd*, 1: 214-16, *Historical Texts*, 89.

¹¹²Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs informs us that al-Zuhrî described Ibn Ishâq as "the most knowledgeable of men in maghâzî," while 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda had remarked that "knowledge will remain among us as long as Ibn Ishâq lives." See citation of Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 2: x- xiii.

¹¹³According to Aḥmad, out of the 304 *isnâds* used in the *Sîra* by Ibn Ishâq only 9 involve a Jew or a Jewish convert. See Barakat Ahmad, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 14-15.

¹¹⁴Ibn Ishâq claims that the term *Munahhemana* used in John 15. 23, refers to the Prophet Muḥammad. See Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 104.

¹¹⁵"Layth b. Abû Sulaym alleged that they found a stone in the Ka'ba . . . containing the inscription 'He that soweth good shall reap joy etc.' "(which according to Guillaume is a citation from Matthew 7.16.). Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 86.

performed by Muḥammad during the course of his *maghâzî* are indicative of both Christological and universal mythic influences. There is no denying that Ibn Ishâq's was an inclusive and catholic vision.

It is important to understand, however, that whereas historical tradition had continued to be written down, the case of prophetic traditions was different: fearing that they may become confused with the canon, the early caliphs had prohibited their being formally recorded.¹¹⁶ It was only in the reign of 'Umar II—99/717 - 102/720—that an attempt was made to collect prophetic tradition and record them for the use of the community. Ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî (d. 124/742), perhaps Ibn Ishâq's most reputed teacher, is famed for the enormous contribution he made in this regard.¹¹⁷ In the meantime, however, the intense nature of the conflict that revolved around 'Alî and his rivals (Abû Bakr, 'Umar, and particularly 'Uthmân, for instance) meant that the political prejudices of the *muḥaddith* brought an unavoidable tendentiousness to the relaying of traditions. The situation had been further exacerbated by the volume of tradition put out by the Umayyads to justify their political actions, to say nothing of the heterodoxies that were inventing their own traditions.¹¹⁸ All this made the more skeptical among the Muslims deny the credibility of these traditions. Such a position is clearly visible in Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra* in the way he treats traditions, and in his simple acknowledgment of not knowing exactly how reliable they were.

¹¹⁶Abbott, *Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition*, 7.

¹¹⁷Al-Zuhrî was assigned the task of coordinating and recording the *Sunna* materials which were collected together by 'Umar II during his caliphate. See *ibid.*, 33.

¹¹⁸'Abd al-Karîm ibn 'Ajwâ al-Waḍḍâ' (d. 155/772), for instance, claimed he had forged 4,000 traditions. See *ibid.*, 70.

His first stop after leaving Medina was reportedly Kûfa; in the Jazîra he is supposed to have given a 'recital' of his prophetic biography to the audiences who gathered to hear him under the patronage of the 'Abbâsid Governor, 'Abbâs b. Muḥammad, in the year 143/760 A.D. Next he traveled to meet the caliph al-Manṣûr (136/754 -158/775) at Ḥîra, and thence to Rayy, where he met the crown prince al-Mahdî; from there he finally moved to the recently constructed circular court of Baghdad. Ibn Ishâq never returned to his birthplace, Medina. He died in Baghdad in 150/767 A.D., and was buried in the Khayzuran cemetery.¹¹⁹

Muḥammad and the Jews in the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq

The *Sîra* is as much an account of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, as it is one of the last prophet of God; for Ibn Ishâq, even as he deals with the Prophet, concerns himself with universal history, moving from the very creation of the world to his own day, so as to lend weight to his assertion that Muḥammad is indeed the last prophet of God. At the same time, Muḥammad is also the model of Arab manhood: the ideal hero celebrated so often in the *ayyâm* literature of pre-Islam.¹²⁰

Essentially written to glorify the person of the Prophet, *sîra* literature had, even in the very early stages—despite the Qur'ân's insistence that he was but a man—become intertwined with miraculous stories and legendary material in an attempt to assert proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood. To this material Ibn Ishâq brings an interpretation which is to a large extent affected by his own personality,

¹¹⁹This is the general order of his travels given by Ibn Sa'd. See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 7: 67, but the actual details are provided by Yâqût, *Mu'jam al-udabâ'*, 2: 399.

¹²⁰Meir M. Bravmann, "Heroic Motives in Early Arabic Literature," part 2, *Der Islam* 35 (1960): 2-4.

that of an open-minded *mawlâ* and Muslim scholar, which informs his every impulse as he sets out to shape the life of the Prophet.

What was it that made Ibn Ishâq's method so different from that of his fellow *maghâzî* writers? His uniqueness derives partly from the character of his family, his father, uncle, and brothers, all of them schooled in the art of tradition in Medina, just as he was, but unavoidably touched by their own origins, which were Persian by culture and probably Christian by religion.¹²¹ Ibn Ishâq's knowledge of the 'Bibles', the Old and New Testaments, to say nothing of the Qur'ân, seems to have been thorough. Moreover, the milieu in which he lived was a tolerant one (socially, if not politically) in which Christians, Jews and Muslims interacted with one another. Inevitably it led to his keen awareness of the need for a tangible representation of the Prophet in a manner comparable to the representation of Moses in the Hebrew Bible or of Jesus in the New Testament. That even the Zoroastrians had been able to introduce a text which affirmed the charisma of their prophet was perhaps a source of inspiration. These notions of prophethood influenced his 'sculpting' of Muḥammad, and his weave of the story of "Muḥammad and the Jews" is a tapestry of universal history and Arab saga intricately intertwined with his attitude towards Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam.¹²²

Ibn Ishâq's reliance on informants such as the Yemeni Wahb b. Munabbih and the Egyptian Yazîd ibn Abî Ḥabîb, seen especially in the first part of his biography, helps him to relate about Muḥammad's place in the biblical tradition, and suggests that the very nature of his identity as a Persian *mawlâ* probably rendered him more accommodational in spirit. Indeed, a careful study of

¹²¹See section on his life, given above.

¹²²See Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," especially 55-68.

the *isnâds* used by the writer indicates that Ibn Ishâq defies categorization. He does not belong with the School of Medina because of his liberal-minded inclusiveness; but he cannot be rejected and dumped with the non-Medinans either, for his appreciation of the traditions of Medina is too deep to be ignored.

No doubt an interesting aspect of his method is Ibn Ishâq's inclusion of traditions from the other non-Muslim communities. It is on the authority of an elder from the tribe of the B. Qurayza that Ibn Ishâq relates a tradition he had obtained from 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda informing us of the conversion of some of the young members of that tribe to Islam.¹²³ On the other hand, it is on the authority of a collective *isnâd*, some of whom he does not name, that he tells us of the many Christological miracles wrought by the Prophet during the building of the trench: providing his companion-helpers first with sufficient dates, and later with a meal of roasted mutton, very much in the manner that Jesus had once shared his portion of fish.¹²⁴

The materials Ibn Ishâq employs are of a great variety. He had spared no pains to seek them out, for it was a universal view of Muḥammad that he desired to shape for posterity; the traditionists he employed came from all over the Islamic empire, personifying the broad vision he had in mind as he plotted out his narration of the *maghâzî*. Ibn Ishâq introduces all kinds of variations into his traditions so as to be able to show himself a master of the *sîra*, shaping for the reader a tale which is clearly being interpreted and related by himself. Perhaps the most engaging but also frustrating ploy he uses is to recall a tradition right to its very end and then conclude it by declaring, "God knows best,"¹²⁵ or "God only

¹²³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 135-36.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 672.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 363.

knows which account is correct.”¹²⁶ Thus, however important his various authorities may have been, Ibn Ishâq himself never loses control of the information he conveys. He is always there at the reader’s elbow, commenting, interjecting, perhaps sometimes manipulating the *isnâds*, indicating to the reader where exactly the truth lies, so that the final statement, the actual impact produced by the *maghâzî* he has written, is shaped by him alone.

This is clearly seen in the way he uses the traditions of al-Zuhrî, considered by Muslims to be one of the most authoritative traditionists of Islam. Ibn Ishâq presents his traditions in numerous ways: sometimes without further *isnâd*,¹²⁷ sometimes in a composite *isnâd*,¹²⁸ and sometimes going back to a companion of the Prophet¹²⁹ or to the Prophet himself.¹³⁰ True, Ibn Ishâq may be relaying the *isnâds* just as he received them; but then other implications are evident in the way he cites his authority. Sometimes he recollects: “I asked Ibn Shihâb al-Zuhrî . . . and he told me,”¹³¹ communicating his intimate relationship with his teacher; more frequently, simply, he told me”;¹³² sometimes he explains, “according to what he told me,”¹³³ implying interpretation; at other times, merely “he said.”¹³⁴ And very rarely, but most significantly, he seems to indicate doubt: “he alleged,” as in the case of the tradition regarding Muḥammad’s journey to the heavens:

¹²⁶Ibid., 396.

¹²⁷Ibid., 266, 684, 691, 779.

¹²⁸Ibid., 669.

¹²⁹Ibid., 151, 222, 289, 393.

¹³⁰Ibid., 5.

¹³¹As in the case of the palms of Khaybar; see *ibid.*, 779.

¹³²Ibid., 393, 691.

¹³³Ibid., 684.

¹³⁴Ibid., 289.

Al-Zuhrî alleged as from Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab that the Apostle described to his companions Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as he saw them that night, saying: "I have never seen a man more like myself than Abraham. . . ." ¹³⁵

There is no doubt that as far as Ibn Ishâq was concerned, it was he whom the reader could most depend on in his quest for information on the life of the Prophet. According to Ibn Ishâq, even Zuhri's traditions were sometimes suspect.

And yet, crucial to a proper understanding of his method is Ibn Ishâq's underlying admission of uncertainty. He never pretends to be certain of material regarding which he is not. He states contradictory traditions regarding all kinds of incidents, such as the killing of Ka'b b. al-Asraf; the changing of the *qibla*; the nature of the agreement, now known as the 'Constitution of Medina'. One can almost sense a note of cynicism when he juxtaposes contrary material, as when he tells of the Prophet's attitude to the stealing of booty. Thus, when the people seeing the slave of the Prophet being killed accidentally by an arrow assert his certain entrance into paradise, he has the Prophet declare:

Certainly not. His cloak is even now burning on him in hell. He had surreptitiously stolen it on the day of Khaybar from the spoil of the Muslims. ¹³⁶

But Ibn Ishâq immediately follows this up with another tradition which reads:

'I took a bag of lard[? fat] from the booty of Khaybar and carried it off on my shoulder to my companions, when the man who had been put over the spoil met me and laid hold of the end of it, saying, "Hie! This we must divide amongst the Muslims." I said that I would not give him it and he began to try and pull the bag away from me. The apostle saw what was happening and laughed. Then he said to the officer in charge of the spoil "Let him have it" ¹³⁷

¹³⁵Ibid., 266; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 183.

¹³⁶Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh, 765; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 516.

¹³⁷Ibid.

Often he would also convey doubt in the very *isnâds* he would use. Indeed, much of the first part of the *sîra* introduces the early legendary traditions about Mecca and the Prophet's youth with the phrase "It is alleged that" which seems to be a formal way of saying "it is rumored". Such is the case with the story about the light on 'Abd Allâh's forehead;¹³⁸ the account of Abû Tâlib taking Muḥammad to Syria¹³⁹ and of their encounter with Bahîra, who recognized him as the expected Prophet;¹⁴⁰ and Maysarâ's story of how the angels shaded Muḥammad from the heat of the sun on his second trip to Syria.¹⁴¹ Moreover, Islamic tradition was clearly not limited by a particular formal structure of *matn* and *isnâd*, at least not as yet. Ibn Ishâq would quite conscientiously and deliberately provide no *isnâd*, as in the case of the 'Constitution of Medina'¹⁴² and the lists of names of Jewish adversaries,¹⁴³ or of the Jews joined by Anṣârî hypocrites.¹⁴⁴ And then there were the vague *isnâds* sometimes indulged in by Ibn Ishâq, such as "one of the learned,"¹⁴⁵ or "a man from the family of so and so,"¹⁴⁶ or "some of my tribesmen,"¹⁴⁷ or "one whom I do not suspect."¹⁴⁸

One cannot overlook the fact that Ibn Ishâq, during his lifetime, had probably conveyed his information orally in the form of a recital or presentation. The exercise must have demanded that all kinds of mnemonics be used so that his memory would not fail him. It is clear that the very mythic patterns were

¹³⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 101.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 115-16.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 119-20.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, 341.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, 351-52.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 355-61.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 265, 798.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 899.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 142, 669, 676.

mnemonics in themselves. That Muḥammad should have been born, have emigrated, and died on a Monday is a convenient detail to remember;¹⁴⁹ so was the pattern of three used with regard to Muḥammad's raids against the significant Jewish tribes; the alternating patterns of aggression in terms of the major battles against the Arabs between which the raids against the Jews are spaced out; as well as the escalation of violence with which the Jewish groups are confronted.

Structurally the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq may be divided into three parts, the *Mubtadâ'*, the *Mab'ath*, and the *Maghâzî*. For reasons of convenience the *Mab'ath*, may be divided into two parts: the first, *Mab'ath I*, deals with Arabia before Islam while the second, *Mab'ath II*, with Muḥammad's preaching in Mecca. It is in the *Mab'ath I* and the *Maghâzî* that the reader will sense the tangible presence of the Jews. Ibn Ishâq presents them as ethnic Jews who have resided in Yathrib for a considerable length of time, and who are knowledgeable in the Torah.¹⁵⁰

The *Mab'ath I* tells of an original Arab monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia, one which is described as the source of both Judaism and Christianity, but which is clearly differentiated as Ḥanîfism. Ibn Ishâq, however, takes great care to convey the notion that true Judaism and Christianity are in fact Islam, which in turn, is a renewed Ḥanîfism. Significantly, there were two Jewish kahins who explained to the Tubba' king of Yemen his prophetic vision; and there were two rabbis from Medina who persuaded the Tubba' not to ravage Medina. This was because:

Yathrib was the place to which a prophet of the Quraysh would migrate in time to come, and it would be his home and resting-place.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 77-78.

¹⁵⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 13-14.

¹⁵¹Ibid., trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 7.

It was likewise two Jewish rabbis who advised the Tubba' to circumambulate and venerate the temple at Mecca.¹⁵²

At the same time, the chapter on Christianity in Najran shows 'Abd Allâh b. al-Thâmir being taught 'Islam' by the Christian Faymîyûn. Interestingly, this true Christianity or Islam expresses Jewish attitudes: when 'Abd Allâh asks for the 'great' name of God for instance, Faymîyûn refuses to inform him, because, he says, "you will not be able to bear it; I fear that you are not strong enough," reflecting a typically Jewish sentiment in his desire to avoid mentioning God's name.¹⁵³ Thus, all in all, the view is conveyed that true Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are in fact the same monotheistic creed.

During the course of the *Mab'ath I*, we are shown how both Judaism and Christianity went astray from the original monotheistic impulse; at the same time we are reminded of the expected arrival of a new prophet who will reintroduce the religion of Abraham to mankind. Of course such expectation is only voiced by the few sincere believers who come from three groups, of which two are monotheistic: there is the Jew, Ibn al-Hayyabân; the Christian, Salmân; and the Arab, Zayd b. 'Amr—reminiscent perhaps of the three wise men who visited the manger in Bethlehem. These three come to realize that it is from Mecca that the next prophet will arrive. Nevertheless, the notion that it is the Jew, rather than the Christian, who will challenge the authority of Muḥammad, is confidently prophesied. Thus it is that the monk Baḥîra of Buṣra, who recognizes Muḥammad by the seal of prophethood which lies between his shoulders, should warn Abû Ṭâlib:

¹⁵²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl al-Allâh*, 15-16.

¹⁵³Ibid., 23.

... guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah! if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil. . . .¹⁵⁴

The existence of both *Mab'ath* I and II in the Ibn Ishâq version of the *Sîra* tells us why Muḥammad decided to move into Medina, and also indicates the degree of success he might have hoped for. In the *Mab'ath* I, for instance, we see the Jews of Medina predict the coming of a Prophet from Mecca who will make his home in Medina. As for the *Mab'ath* II, it is here that we are informed of the failure of Muḥammad, both in Mecca and al-Ṭâ'if, in his attempt to win sympathy and converts to his new religion; it is here as well that the 'Aqaba meetings are situated; it is at 'Aqaba that the Medinans invite Muḥammad to live with them and establish peace among them. Again it is at 'Aqaba that Muḥammad makes the decision to immigrate to Medina, having discovered that the Khazraj were already familiar with the terms of monotheism because of their associations with the Jews:

... when the apostle met them he learned by inquiry that they were of the Khazraj and allies of the Jews. . . Now God had prepared the way for Islam in that they lived side by side with the Jews who were people of the scriptures and knowledge. . . .¹⁵⁵

And finally, it is once more at 'Aqaba that the Medinans agree to acknowledge Muḥammad as their leader, and promise to watch over him as they would over their women.¹⁵⁶

In a sense, it is in the *maghâzî* portion of the *Sîra* that one sees Muḥammad establish a viable Muslim community. The structure of this portion is complex. There seems to be a dividing line separating Muḥammad's wars with the pagan Arabs from those with the Jews of Medina, climaxing in the execution of

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 116-17; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 81.

¹⁵⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 286; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 197.

¹⁵⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 296.

the B. Qurayza, which is followed by the murder of Abû Râfi', and the rest of the material. But there is also the underlying mythical structure which would place the divide at the taking of Mecca, at which point one sees the beginnings of Muḥammad's spiritual journey which climaxes in his Farewell Pilgrimage, the only *ḥajj* pilgrimage he ever completes as a Muslim. In this context, his battles with the Jews are primarily symbolic of his overcoming of the 'worldly' problems.

It is in this third section, the *Maghâzî*, that Muḥammad actually comes face to face with a Jew for the first time, and ironically it is a Jew who is the first from among the Medinans to recognize him.¹⁵⁷ Once the author establishes Muḥammad in Medina, and informs us of Muḥammad's intentions toward the Jews through a '*kitâb*/document', we are given five chapters (roughly fifty pages) devoted largely to the wrongdoing of the Jews.¹⁵⁸ A large part of this consists of *asbâb al-nuzûl* on the *sûrat al-Baqara*.¹⁵⁹ The chapter does not concern that particular *sûra* alone, however, but moves through the various raids against the Jews, from the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' to the raid on Khaybar, as *asbâb al-nuzûl* dealing with different *sûras* of the Qur'ân along the way. Thus, for instance, when discussing the B. Qaynuqâ', *sûrat Âl 'Imrân* (3) is mentioned; and while discussing the B. Naḍîr, *sûrat al-mâ'ida* (5); in the latter case it should be pointed out that this is not the *sûra* associated with the B. Naḍîr later on when Ibn Ishâq narrates the traditions concerning their exile. Here the chapter associated with the B. Naḍîr is that of the *sûrat al-ḥashr* (59). And there are other inconsistencies.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 334.

¹⁵⁸Chapters entitled: the names of the Jewish adversaries; 'Abd Allâh b. Salâm accepts Islam; the story of Mukhayriq; the testimony of Ṣafîya; the Jews are joined by Anṣârî hypocrites; the rabbis who accepted Islam hypocritically; references to the hypocrites and the Jews in the *sûra* entitled "The cow"; ibid., 351-400.

¹⁵⁹See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 363-400.

For instance, here the date for the changing of the *qibla* is given as Rajab.¹⁶⁰ In the narrative that follows, it is established in the month of Sha‘bân.¹⁶¹ Such inconsistencies are difficult to understand; my explanation is that Ibn Ishâq found the traditions to be inconsistent and did not try to hide the inconsistencies.

Ibn Ishâq portrays the Jews as being knowledgeable of the Torah, but as consciously practicing *ta‘hrîm*.¹⁶² Unfortunately, Muḥammad as Messenger of God is, by his very nature, bound to preach Islam, and the ridicule of the Jews who refuse to accept an Arab prophet comes across as active hostility. According to Ibn Ishâq, it is because the Jews recognized his prophetic personality that they became hostile towards him, for they were envious that God had chosen His last prophet from among the Arabs.¹⁶³

It is Muḥammad the Prophet, then, who calls down God’s wrath upon the Jews. Just before the battle of Badr, Ibn Ishâq gives the reader an abrupt notice of Muḥammad’s decision to change his *qibla* from Jerusalem to the Ka‘ba; after that, every notable confrontation with the Meccans is followed by a confrontation with one of the significant Jewish tribes who are, one by one, subordinated, exiled from, or executed (is there a mnemonic in the progression of violence that is enacted against the Jews?¹⁶⁴) in Medina.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 381.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 427.

¹⁶²An example was the case of their denial of stoning being the prescribed punishment for adultery. See *ibid.*, 393-94.

¹⁶³“If he prescribes *tajbîh* (which is scourging with a rope of palm fibre smeared with pitch, the blackening of their faces, mounting on two donkeys with their faces to the animal’s tail), then follow him, for he is a king and believe in him. If he prescribes stoning for them, he is a prophet so beware lest he deprive you of what you hold.” See *ibid.*; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 266.

¹⁶⁴From what we know of earlier *sîra-maghâzî*, such as that of ‘Ma‘mar b. Râshid and Mûsâ b. ‘Uqba it was the raid on the B. Naḍîr that took place six months after Badr—raid on the B. Qaynuqâ’ not being mentioned—indicating that the episode concerning the Qaynuqâ’ was probably introduced by Ibn Ishâq (see page 116 below).

The key to the appreciation of these raids and battles as presented by Ibn Ishâq is to understand that they were provoked by Muḥammad's desire to establish the message that had been revealed to him from God; they were not caused by the abrogation of an agreement by the Jews. The fighting that resulted must be viewed as a kind of trial by war. The very act of winning would prove whose side God was on. It was important that the Jewish tribes of the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza were defeated by the Prophet: this was a sign that Muḥammad was indeed God's prophet. As far as the Jews were concerned, their communities were completely destroyed, one by one. If, as in the time of the earlier prophets, the community that rejects the messenger recalling it to its covenant is not exactly "abruptly and violently obliterated,"¹⁶⁵ this is because here we see Ibn Ishâq's artistry come into play. The violence with which each community is eradicated escalates: even the B. Qaynuqâ' are first defeated, and though all we are told is that they were handed over to Ibn Ubayy, they are never to be heard of as a community again; the B. Naḍîr are exiled; while the B. Qurayza are executed. Thus, as far as Muḥammad and his community are concerned, these people ceased to exist; and in a sense it is this role of the Qur'âno-Biblical prophet,

This episode increases the number of significant Jewish tribes attacked by Muḥammad from two to three. Given that three is a well recognized numerical mnemonic, and that Ibn Ishâq was famous for his oral performances of the *Sîra*, the possibility that the inclusion of the raid accompanied by the escalation of violence was established for mnemonic reasons must be considered. It is important to remember that historical fact is not necessarily behind these incidents. According to Goitein (see page 28 above) there is only Arabic literary evidence to support such an opinion.

¹⁶⁵See Chapter One, page 18 above.

of Noah and Moses and Hûd before him, who had similarly brought about the destruction of those who opposed them, that Muḥammad is made to assume. Which is not to say that other influences were ignored, for Ibn Ishâq was an eclectic. Significantly, the universal mythic symbolism of throwing rocks is brought to the fore in the story of the B. Naḍîr. As for the B. Qurayza, their massacre savors of *ayyâm al-‘Arab*.

Whatever it was, all the Jews did not leave the city. Just previous to Muḥammad’s conquest of Mecca, for instance, it is in the hair of a Jewess traveling from Medina to Mecca that ‘Alî discovers a letter sent by the Jews of Medina, informing the Meccans of Muḥammad’s intentions.¹⁶⁶

Despite having removed the significant Jewish communities from Medina, Muḥammad’s attempted *‘umra* to the Meccan Ka‘ba is a failure. Is it because the Jews of Khaybar, Fadak, Wâdî al-Qurâ’, and Taymâ’ had yet to be confronted? Once the latter are brought under his authority, Muḥammad’s access to Mecca becomes easy, and he soon wins control over the whole of the peninsula of Arabia.

Contained within this basic outline motif of Muḥammad and the Jews are several smaller incidents telling of the provocation of individual Jews, generally recognized as Jewish hypocrites, who irritate the Prophet with their ridicule, such as Finḥâş of the B. Qaynuqâ’, who, with a ridiculous retort—“we are not poor compared to Allâh, but he is poor compared to us . . .”—protests their having to contribute to the costs of war as demanded by Muḥammad.¹⁶⁷ There are also the acts of aggression undertaken by individuals and small groups of Muslims against

¹⁶⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 809.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 388-89.

Jews, such as the murders of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf,¹⁶⁸ 'Amr b. Jihâsh,¹⁶⁹ and Sallâm b. Abû'l-Ḥuqayq,¹⁷⁰ in response to their acts of hostility against Muḥammad. The intent behind relating such incidents is usually to display the acts of valor which the faithful accomplish in their desire to express their loyalty to Muḥammad. Sometimes they are occasions for acclaiming the miraculous powers of the Prophet as for instance when Muḥammad spits on the wound of al-Ḥârith, one of the men who had joined in the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, and heals it.¹⁷¹

Sources: When Ibn Ishâq decided to write or communicate information about the life of the Prophet, he did not take off on a flight of imagination. Not only was his information, or at least most of it, taken from an acknowledged repertoire of traditions about the Prophet,¹⁷² but indeed, the very format through which he chose to present his material was that of a recognized genre, the genre of *maghâzî*, through which many traditionists had already attempted to impart information on the life of the Prophet.¹⁷³ *Sîra-maghâzî* is not fiction; the latter presumes a degree of freedom with data which cannot be assumed for *sîra - maghâzî*. The traditions of al-Zuhrî and the *maghâzî* of Mûsâ b. 'Uqba are essentially considered to be typical of the Medina school. Ibn Ishâq, for his part, was of the school of Medina, which was largely influenced by al-Zuhrî himself, but his inspiration was such that he could not let himself be limited to any single point of view. To make his statement he was willing to look not merely in every

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 548-53

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 654.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 714-18.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 368.

¹⁷²J. M. B. Jones, "Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî," *BSOAS* 22 (1959): 51.

¹⁷³Horowitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors," part 1: 535-59; part 2: 22-50; 164-82.

direction, but at every kind of material that he could possibly use.¹⁷⁴ Nor was he content merely to impart information; instead he touched it, shaped it with a signature all his own,¹⁷⁵ and then established it where he would, to impart what he believed to have been the life of the Prophet.

Ibn Ishâq's sources comprise a great variety of materials such as traditions, folk tales, documents, poetry, and Qur'ânic text. What is immediately noticed when surveying the contents of the *Sîra* is that most of them are forms used to communicate authentic information. Take, for instance, the seemingly entertaining material known as *qiṣaṣ*. It is significant that Duri's rejection of Wahb b. Munabbih's reliability as a historian is largely due to his suspicion of this kind of material.¹⁷⁶ Yet, not only do the *qiṣaṣ* contain information that has come down orally from a historical past, but the term itself has the connotation of honest stories, as against *asâṭîr* which is the word used in the Qur'ân to signify false tales or fables.¹⁷⁷ The legendary content of the *qiṣaṣ* aims at generating an identity for the Arabs as a people who had originally lived according to monotheistic beliefs. In the *Sîra* these stories take the form of legends and visions,¹⁷⁸ but it is important to realize that these tales were appreciated as a component of history by the religious mind during those early years. The tradition cited by Ibn Ishâq on the

¹⁷⁴I would hypothesize that Ibn Ishâq's uniqueness lay in his willingness to accommodate the traditions/materials of the other regions in order to consolidate a universal view of the Prophet's *maghâzî*.

¹⁷⁵For instance he would add such comments as, 'God only knows', or instead of naming an authority merely refer to him as 'one whom I do not suspect' or use the verb *za'ama* to indicate that the assertion is suspect.

¹⁷⁶According to Duri, "Wahb ibn Munabbih was, . . . a story teller, or *qâṣṣ*, who in his *Mubtadâ* . . . set forth folk tales and legends which he cited as if they were history." See Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 133.

¹⁷⁷Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam Today*, 5.

¹⁷⁸See the story of 'Shiqq and Saṭîḥ' in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 9-12; and the account of Bahîrâ, *ibid.*, 115-18; as well as the tale of the "Dream of 'Âtika," *ibid.*, 428-30.

authority of al-Zuhrî, going right back to the Prophet, on the issue of why soothsayers are sometimes right, is interesting in this regard.¹⁷⁹

As for Ibn Ishâq's use of poetry, which according to Sellheim constitutes one-fifth the *Sîra* of Ibn Ishâq,¹⁸⁰ it is interesting that seventy-eight poems have been ascribed by Ibn Ishâq to Ḥassân b. Thâbit, the literary propagandist of the Prophet, and one of the Anṣâr to boot, probably chosen to voice the Shî'î sentiments that Ibn Ishâq is believed to have held.¹⁸¹ Ibn Ishâq was writing about the Prophet after the sad events of the massacre of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alî b. Abî Tâlib and his followers at Karbalâ' (61/680), and the sack of Medîna (63/682) which was followed by the execution of many of the Anṣâr, including companions of the Prophet.¹⁸² Using the voice of the poet, he sets forth the claim of the Anṣâr, not merely as those who helped the Prophet, but as belonging to his very family: Muḥammad's grandfather was, significantly, the son of Hâshim and a woman of the B. Najjâr, and thus of Yamanî stock.¹⁸³ Shî'î attitudes are also voiced in the account of the Tubba's march against Mecca. As Guillaume points out, the Tubba's great respect for Mecca's sanctity "stands in clear contrast with the treatment it received from the Umayyads when al-Ḥajjâj bombarded it."¹⁸⁴

Generally there are two patterns of usage which can be seen in the poems of the *Sîra*. Sometimes they appear inserted in the midst of prose accounts, and

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 131-32.

¹⁸⁰Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 47.

¹⁸¹Monroe, "The poetry of the *Sîrah* literature," 370. Significantly, Walîd 'Arafat shows, on the basis of style and the presence of contradictions and anachronisms, that between 60-70 per cent of these poems is spurious. See Walîd N. Arafat, "A Critical Introduction to the Study of the Poetry ascribed to Ḥassân b. Thâbit," (Ph. D. diss., University of London, 1953), cited in Monroe, "The poetry of the *Sîrah* literature," 370.

¹⁸²Ibid., 368-73.

¹⁸³See Guillaume "Introduction" to *The Life of Muhammad*, by Ibn Ishâq, xxvii.

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

follow the pattern of *naqâ'id*, poetical contests which were found in the older *ayyâm* literature. Thus, for instance, the duel fought between Marḥab the Jew and one of the Muslims at Khaybar is brought to life through the poetical contest between the two opposing parties, in which the poet who comes second answers his challenger in the same meter and rhyme.¹⁸⁵ At other times, Ibn Ishâq would bring together a collection of poems which testify to a certain event, as, for instance, at the end of the chapter on the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr,¹⁸⁶—interesting because it includes poetry which contradicts the general drift conveyed by the traditions on the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf¹⁸⁷—as well as at the end of the chapter on the battle of Khandaq.¹⁸⁸

As far as the presence of 'documented' material within that part of the literature which deals with Muḥammad and the Jews is concerned, Ibn Ishâq has been quite liberal in his inclusion of the various kinds: the Prophet's genealogy;¹⁸⁹ the numerous Qur'ânic passages;¹⁹⁰ the names of those who witnessed the second 'Aqaba;¹⁹¹ the list of Jews who opposed Muḥammad;¹⁹² the list of Jews who were hypocrites;¹⁹³ and perhaps most important of all the contents of the so-called document the 'Constitution of Medina.'¹⁹⁴ Documents are indicative of a certain moment in history when a particular situation occasions the writing down of a

¹⁸⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 760-62.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 656-61.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 548-53. Here Ibn Ishâq seems to be playing the authority of poetry, which brings with it the insinuation of tribal reports, against the *ḥadîth* traditions of Medina, leaving the reader uncertain of its implications.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 700-13.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 3.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 364-400; 545; 546-47; 654-55;

¹⁹¹Ibid., 305-13.

¹⁹²Ibid., 351-52.

¹⁹³Ibid., 361-62.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 341-44.

particular statement. They are therefore extremely significant for our appreciation of history.

Using the thread of material which is generally recognized as *asbâb al-nuzûl*, Ibn Ishâq establishes Muḥammad in the heart of the Qur'ânic revelation, and at the same time provides authenticity to his narration of the life of the Prophet. Explaining *asbâb al-nuzûl*, Andrew L. Rippin states:

This, of course is the theoretical basis of the entire concept of the *sabab*, that the revelation of the Qur'ân responded, at times, to the needs and requirements in the life of Muḥammad, and that those situations and the Qur'ânic response to them are recorded in the *asbâb al-nuzûl* material.¹⁹⁵

Ibn Ishâq's narratives regarding the battles against the Meccans, raids against the Jews, and the numerous legal and religious edicts are given historical significance through reference to the Qur'ânic text. At the same time, there is little doubt that the stories act as mnemonic devices which remind the community of when a particular passage of the Qur'ân was revealed. On the other hand, Ibn Ishâq's references are not consistently made, and it is possible that he is either letting the reader know that opinion concerning *asbâb al-nuzûl* is not the same as among biographical writers and other exegetes and *asbâb* writers; or he may even be suggesting that he is actually not quite certain what happened when. Thus, for instance, though in an earlier reference Ibn Ishâq suggests that the verse from the *sûrat al-mâ'ida*—5:14—was revealed about the B. Naḍîr,¹⁹⁶ he later states that *al-faṣṣḥ* was the *sûra* that was revealed during the raid on the B. Naḍîr,¹⁹⁷ and that *sûra* 5:14 was probably revealed on the occasion of the raid of Dhât al-Riqâ'.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵Andrew L. Rippin, "The Qur'ânic *Asbâb al-nuzûl* material: An analysis of its use and development in exegesis," (Ph. D. diss., McGill University, 1981), 48.

¹⁹⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 392.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 654.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 663.

As far as what has come to be recognized as the ‘Constitution of Medina’ is concerned, it appears that what is presented in the text is an interpretation by Ibn Ishâq of the agreement that is supposed to have been concluded by the Prophet; this is indicated both by the format in which it is presented to the reader, as well as the lack of an *isnâd*, which indicates that therefore Ibn Ishâq was himself the source of that information. It is notable that there is stated in this material notions of a *dhimmat-Allâh* which applies to, and an *umma* which includes the Jewish groups along with the Muslims; nevertheless, and quite interestingly, the significant Jewish communities of the B. Qaynuqâ‘, the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza are not mentioned in this agreement.¹⁹⁹

The nature of Ibn Ishâq’s account of the contents of the ‘Constitution of Medina’²⁰⁰ has led many scholars to the conclusion that it is indeed an accurate rendering of what Muḥammad wrote at that time. According to Wellhausen, it is not merely the archaisms, but the fact that

No later falsifier. . . . would have included non-Muslims in the *umma*, would have retained the articles against Quraysh, and would have given Muḥammad so insignificant a place.²⁰¹

Of course one could respond effectively to all of the above arguments, though I hasten to add that I am not saying that this is not a document, merely that we do not know whether it is a document or not. Thus the archaic language could very well have been affected to generate the impression of age.²⁰² It is known that students of law were attempting to simulate documents pertaining to the meaning

¹⁹⁹See page 101 below.

²⁰⁰In discussing the ‘Constitution’ I follow the enumeration of clauses as established by Wellhausen, who counts 47 clauses in all.

²⁰¹Julius Wellhausen, “Muhammads Gemeindeordnung von Medina,” *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, 4: 80, cited in W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 225.

²⁰²It is interesting that Watt himself should admit this possibility! See M. Watt, “Condemnation of the Jews of Banû Qurayzah,” 6.

of the term *dhimmî* and its legal implications. The document which claims to go back to the time of 'Umar, the second caliph of Islam, is a notorious example.²⁰³ The 'Constitution of Medina' could have been drawn up along similar lines, for whatever reason.

Nor are the anti-Quraysh paragraphs any guarantee of the document's authenticity. Ibn Ishâq indicates that the Prophet's uncle himself had opposed the Prophet at the battle of Badr. Moreover, in political terms, this was a time when the whole issue of succession to the caliphate was being rigorously examined. The 'Abbâsîd take-over was not exactly the kind of change that the opponents of the Umayyads (and perhaps Ibn Ishâq was one of them) had been looking forward to.

As for the claim that Muḥammad had but an insignificant position in the 'Constitution,' a comparison of the 'Constitution' with a later document, namely, that which was concluded at al-Ḥudaybiya, is interesting for what it clarifies in terms of the status accorded to Muḥammad and Islam by the 'Constitution'. In narrating how the agreement at Ḥudaybiya was drawn up, Ibn Ishâq informs us that the Quraysh of Mecca objected not only to the format of the introductory formula, but even to the designation claimed by Muḥammad. Significantly, Muḥammad is willing to accommodate their demands, and so it is that that document bears the phrase "*bismika Allâhumma*" as its opening clause, and the plain name of the Prophet, 'Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh,' devoid of any title such as *nabî* or *rasûl Allâh*.²⁰⁴ By comparison, the very *basmallâ* used in the 'Constitution', viz. "*bismillâh al-raḥmân al-raḥîm*," to say nothing of the fact that Muḥammad is referred to as both *nabî* and *rasûl* in the statement of the

²⁰³A. S. Tritton, The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects: a Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 12.

²⁰⁴See Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh, 747.

‘Constitution’, denotes an authority for the Prophet in the society of Medina-soon-after-the-Prophet’s-emigration-to-that-region, which is surely significant.

But to examine the problem of authenticity from another direction: a critical study of the language of tradition requires that the evaluation of a testimony should begin with the investigation of the opportunities open to the initial informant for acquiring knowledge of the information relayed.²⁰⁵ Ibn Ishâq himself cites at least two traditions which inform us of an agreement between Muḥammad and the Medinans who accept his leadership. Thus there is the agreement concluded at ‘Aqaba, a tradition related on the authority of ‘Abd Allâh b. Ka‘b from his father Ka‘b, who was one of those present at al-‘Aqaba and did homage to the Prophet;²⁰⁶ and following Muḥammad’s emigration to Medina, there is the information regarding the pacting of a brotherhood between the Muhâjirûn and Anṣâr, a tradition which is, however, given on the authority of Ibn Ishâq alone.²⁰⁷ There is also recognition of agreements between Muḥammad and the Jews: with the Qaynuqâ‘, on the authority of ‘Âṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda,²⁰⁸ and with the Qurayza, on the basis of a collective *isnâd*.²⁰⁹ There is no mention of these agreements having been written down, however.

Looking for recognition of these traditions as regards an agreement between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr outside of Ibn Ishâq’s *Sîra*, Ibn Sa’d informs us that the text of a document was preserved in the sheath of the famous sword of the Prophet, Dhu’l-faqr,²¹⁰ which was handed down to ‘Alî, and later found with

²⁰⁵Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, 114-15.

²⁰⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 294.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 344-45.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 545-46.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 674.

²¹⁰See Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqât*, 1-2: 172; cited in Gil, “The Constitution of Medina,”

one of his descendants, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, when he died on the battlefield. Yâqût believes that Ibn Ishâq probably obtained his information about the ‘Constitution’ from the leader of the ‘Alawî sect, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥasan b. Ḥasan, with whom, apparently, Ibn Ishâq often conferred, though the evidence of such a close relationship is certainly not visible in the *Sîra*.²¹¹ According to Serjeant, it is probably this same text that the Shî‘îs claim was found in the hands of Ja‘far al-Ṣâdiq.²¹² *Hadîth* literature includes traditions regarding ‘Alî’s reference to a document which mentioned blood money, the ransoming of prisoners, and the prohibition against slaying a Muslim in retaliation for a *kâfir*.²¹³ According to Ibn al-Athîr, a tradition related on the authority of Anas b. Mâlik states that two agreements were made in his house by the Prophet between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr.²¹⁴ Importantly, the above traditions are in accordance with several clauses which constitute the early part of the ‘Constitution’,²¹⁵ which brings one to the conclusion that the first part of the ‘document’ at least was based on a recognized agreement.

As far as the ‘Constitution’ itself is concerned, however, according to the information of Ibn Hishâm, Ibn Ishâq is our only informant. Ibn Ishâq does not cite an *isnâd*, nor does he inform the reader as to how he obtained the information regarding the agreement. Ibn Hishâm simply conveys the information on the authority of Ibn Ishâq alone.²¹⁶ Significantly, the name of al-Bakkâ’î is left out,

²¹¹Yâqût, cited in R. B. Serjeant, “The Constitution of Medina,” 4-7. According to Serjeant there are only three traditions related on the authority of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥasan b. Ḥasan in the *Sîra* by Ibn Ishâq.

²¹²Ibid., 6.

²¹³See citations of Abû Dâ‘ûd and al-Bukhârî in *ibid.*, 5. Also see Wensinck, *Muḥammad and the Jews of Medina*, 66-68.

²¹⁴See Serjeant, “Constitution of Medina,” 6.

²¹⁵See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 341-42.

²¹⁶Ibid., 341.

which seems to indicate that Ibn Hishâm may have taken the information directly from Ibn Ishâq's notes. Neither is there any indication that what is being relayed is taken from a document, as in the case of the memorandum regarding the Prophet's deputations to the various kings, given him by Yazîd b. Abî Ḥabîb al-Miṣrî, which Ibn Ishâq sends to al-Zuhrî for confirmation.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is clear that Ibn Ishâq wants the reader to accept the information he presents as the text of the agreement concluded by the Prophet.

As regards the nature of the information provided in the latter part of the 'Constitution', especially regarding the nature of the *umma* and the payment of *nafaqa* by the Jews, it is a telling fact that it is only with Ibn Ishâq's portrayal of the Prophet's life that we see the inclusion of the terms by which Muḥammad hoped to include the Jews within his community. Neither al-Wâqidî, nor al-Balâdhurî, nor al-Ṭabarî is willing to accept this view in his representation of the Prophet's life.²¹⁸ Importantly, Ibn Ishâq indicates that the Prophet's notions of *dhimma*, *umma*, and *nafaqa* change as Islam develops.

According to Vansina, one of the ways by which traditions came to be falsified was when traditionists insinuated their prejudices into the tradition material along with the well established information.²¹⁹ It should be realized, therefore, that even if there was an authentic document that Ibn Ishâq employed, it is possible that he might have introduced some changes to it.²²⁰ I suggest that Ibn

²¹⁷Ibid., 972.

²¹⁸Wensinck, Muhammad and the Jews of Medina, 62-64.

²¹⁹Vansina, Oral Tradition, chapter 3.

²²⁰I agree with Noth that the onus of proof as to whether a certain passage is in fact an actual document, lies with the person/s who claim it to be so. See Albrecht Noth, Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung, (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität, 1973), 60. In this regard, the kind of rationale provided to justify the claim that the 'Constitution' was indeed a document, seems quite inadequate!

Ishâq was using the recognized traditions about agreements between the Muhâjirûn and the Anşâr and Muḥammad and the Jews to introduce notions regarding Muḥammad's early intentions towards the Jews: his temporary and conditional recognition of them as being protected along with the Muslims by a *dhimmat Allâh*, and belonging within an *umma* which included both Muslims and Jews.

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The issue at stake as far as this dissertation is concerned, however, is not whether the material which has come to be called the 'Constitution of Medina' is a historical document or not. What it is concerned to assert is that Ibn Ishâq was perfectly aware of what he was citing when he decided to narrate the particulars of what he claims constituted the agreement which Muḥammad concluded between the Muhâjirûn and Anşâr with the Jews.

It is interesting that most modern interpreters of this document so far, ranging from Caetani to Crone, have seen the 'Constitution' as an accident which has made available to the public an actual moment from the history of the Prophet's life. Caetani claims that Ibn Ishâq does not understand either the true meaning nor the value of the document;²²¹ Crone sees in the 'document' signs of a peaceful co-existence of Muslims and Jews, a notion which is contradicted by the confusion of traditions which narrate instances of conflict between the two peoples instead.²²² Gil explains the document as an "act of preparation for war," as

²²¹See Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 1: 392.

²²²Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 7. See also chapter one of this dissertation for discussion of Crone's approach to the literary sources of early Islam, pages 23-26.

opposed to which the “Muslim sources have developed a tradition about a treaty between Muḥammad and the Jews.”²²³

This dissertation, in opposition to the above analyses, views the ‘Constitution of Medina’ as having been included by Ibn Ishâq because of what it said, and not in spite of it, and therefore seeks to appreciate this text in terms of the larger context of Ibn Ishâq’s discourse, within which it is contained. Here I would like to point out that the ‘Constitution’ is presented to the reader with the words, “Ibn Ishâq said,” instead of the usual *isnâd* which would trace the information to its origins. I suggest that by avoiding the *isnâd*, Ibn Ishâq is informing the reader very honestly that this was indeed his interpretation of the accepted information/traditions regarding a written agreement between both the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr and Muḥammad and the Jews. Therefore, it will certainly not do to assert for it a documentary nature, and then search among the statements of al-Wâqidî, or the Qur’ân, or the version of the ‘Constitution’ reproduced by Abû ‘Ubayd, with the intent of clarifying what Ibn Ishâq’s ‘document’ should have said, or actually meant.²²⁴ Ibn Ishâq does not inform us that the statement which has come to be recognized as the ‘Constitution of Medina’ is an actual document. He merely tells us that the Prophet wrote a document, and then proceeds to give us the information that was contained in the document. As already suggested, it is therefore plausible, that as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, he was giving the reader

²²³Gil, “The Constitution of Medina,” 64-65.

²²⁴For instance Uri Rubin claims that ‘*umma minal-mu’minîn*’, the phrase used by Abû ‘Ubayd, seems more accurate than that used by Ibn Ishâq who uses the preposition *ma’a*, with reference to the Jews because it compares with the terminology used by the Qur’ân as well. See “The ‘Constitution of Medina’,” 13-15; and R. B. Serjeant refers to al-Wâqidî, to justify his division of the ‘Constitution’ into several parts, each established at a different time. See his “The *Sunnah Jâmi’ah*,” 1-42.

his interpretation of what the Prophet wrote, while claiming that such a document was indeed written by the Prophet of Islam.²²⁵

As established in the Sîra, the 'document' is placed before the fraternization between the Muhâjirûn and the Anşâr, roughly five months after Muḥammad's arrival in Medina, and is an indication of the date on which the agreement was established. Equally implicit in Ibn Ishâq's statement is the notion that the entire document was established at one and the same time, and not on several occasions as asserted by Hamidullah, Watt and Serjeant.²²⁶ It is on the basis of a structural analysis that gives significance to the repetition of particular phrases that Serjeant has attempted to divide the 'Constitution' into several distinct agreements.²²⁷ Nevertheless, it is to other biographical writings such as the Maghâzî of al-Wâqidî that he turns in order to establish the chronology of the different agreements.²²⁸ However, as explained by Gil, the repetitious phrases could very well be the result of oral transmission, for

Rather than separate agreements, they are vestiges and echoes of one and the same document. They have that fragmentary, and often deteriorated, form in which components of the *Kitâb*, whose original text was hidden during several generations, were preserved in the oral tradition.²²⁹

More importantly, Ibn Ishâq, for his part, also indicates that the *kitâb* is a unit by placing it before the reader all at once, at the same moment.

²²⁵Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 341-42.

²²⁶Hamidullah believes that the 'document' has been put together from two independent sources. See Muhammad Hamidullah, Le Prophète de l'Islam (Paris: Vrin, 1959), 1: 128; Serjeant differentiates eight separate agreements. See "Haram and Hawṭah", 48; whereas Watt asserts that "this document seems to be conflated from two or more separate documents," see Watt, "Muḥammad," 41.

²²⁷For instance the clause "observation of one's undertakings eliminates treachery . . ." is explained as a typical terminal formula. See Serjeant, "The *Sunnah Jâmi'ah*," 28.

²²⁸Ibid., 25 and 32.

²²⁹Gil, "The Constitution of Medina," 48.

Nonetheless, Ibn Ishâq does not inform us as to who the signatories to the agreement were. We are not even informed if the Jews, or for that matter the Muslims, accepted the terms of the agreement. On the basis of the information provided by Ibn Ishâq, it therefore seems fair to conclude that the 'Constitution' was, in fact, a unilateral declaration, rather than an agreement written by Muḥammad.²³⁰ On the other hand, Wellhausen's description of the 'Constitution' as an unwritten or oral agreement is also plausible.²³¹ This suggests that what was orally negotiated by Muḥammad was preserved as a tradition, and that Ibn Ishâq had preferred to represent it as an agreement that had been written down.

While Wensinck, Wellhausen, Hamidullah, and Serjeant understand the 'Constitution' to be an agreement with the Jews, Gil disagrees on three counts. Referring to clause sixteen, Gil explains that what the 'Constitution' establishes is that the Jews who will be accepted into the *umma* of Muḥammad are necessarily only those who would be willing to convert to Islam. Here, Gil interprets the phrase *man tabi'anâ* to mean those Jews who will accept Islam and not merely the political authority of Muḥammad's leadership.²³² Referring to clause twenty-five which refers to the Jews, and particularly to the phrase "*Wa li'l- Yahûdi d-y-nuhum wa-li'l-muslimîna d-y-nuhum mawâlîhim wa-anfusihim*," Gil interprets "*d-y-n*" to mean '*dayn*' or debt, instead of '*dîn*' or religion.'²³³ Gil also claims that the document limits the powers of the Jewish communities so that it was made easier for the Prophet to remove them from Medina. The specific clause he

²³⁰Thus Caetani entitles it an '*ordinanza*'. See Gil, "The Constitution of Medina," 45.

²³¹Wellhausen had termed it '*Erlass*', says Gil. See *ibid*.

²³²Gil, "The Constitution of Medina," 63.

²³³According to Gil the phrase, '*wa-li'l-muslimîna daynuhum mawâlîhim wa-anfusihim*,' proclaims the responsibility of Muslims for debts both of their *mawâlî*, and themselves. It is just another manner of saying that '... the client is like the man himself'... Thus he justifies his rendering of *dyn* as *dayn*. See *ibid.*, 62-64.

mentions is number forty, “*Wa-inna al-jâra kal-nafsi ghayra muḍârin walâ âthima,*” which leads Gil to understand that

In this particular case we obviously have a deterioration in the status of the Jews in Medina, who were the *jiwâr* par excellence. In other words, the Jews were no longer allowed to engage either in inter-tribal politics, such as concluding new treaties, or in warfare.²³⁴

Here a previous clause—number thirty-six—is probably also involved, viz.:

And verily none of them shall go out [to war ?] except with the permission of Muḥammad . . .²³⁵

On the basis of Ibn Ishâq’s introduction however, one is made to understand that the ‘Constitution’ was a statement which was hopeful, even optimistic, in its intent regarding the accommodation of Jewish groups. The phrase “*Wa-aqarrahum ‘alâ dînihim wa-amwâlihîm,*” meaning to leave them unopposed or uncontradicted in their religion and their property, in reference to the Jews, is significant; it is Ibn Ishâq’s assessment of Muḥammad’s attitude to the Jews which is expressed later on in the ‘document.’ It is interesting that Gil, probably influenced by the politics of his day, should attempt to establish Muḥammad as anti-Jewish from the very beginning, and deny the claim that Muḥammad had agreed to tolerate the Jewish faith. In support of his views, Gil points out that even at the very first ‘Aqaba meeting, Ibn Tayyihân had questioned Muḥammad about his attitude to the Jews:

“O apostle, we have ties with other men (he meant the Jews) and if we sever them perhaps when we have done that and God will have given you victory, you will return to your people and leave us?” The apostle smiled and said: “Nay, blood is blood and blood not to be paid for is blood not to be paid for. I

²³⁴Ibid., 62-63.

²³⁵Says Hamidullah, “The text of this section . . . may also yield the sense that the Jews themselves were not to declare war against anyone independently without the permission of the Prophet.” See his The First Written Constitution in the World, 34.

am of you and you are of me. I will war against them that war against you and be at peace with those at peace with you.”²³⁶

Moshe Gil has construed this passage to mean that Muḥammad’s intentions, right from the beginning, were absolutely hostile.²³⁷ Such an interpretation, if one considers the entire context of Ibn Ishâq’s narrative, is difficult to accept. As we have already seen, Muḥammad had looked forward to moving to Yathrib/Medina because he knew that there were Jews already living there, and he believed that this would make it easier for him to introduce concepts of monotheism to the people of Yathrib/Medina.²³⁸ Moreover, tradition recalls that the wars of Medina had been wars of the Arabs against their fellow Arabs, in which the Jews had split up to support the different factions, the Khazraj being supported by the B. Qaynuqâ’ and the B. Naḍîr, the Aws by the B. Qurayza.

The purpose of the conversation cited above, then, is probably to express some of the concerns that must have prevailed among the Arabs of Yathrib/Medina. Muḥammad’s reply was in no way the beginning of an anti-Jewish policy. He was merely reassuring the Arabs that his loyalty was primarily to them—those who had given him their fealty or *bay’a*. The ‘Constitution’ was a natural follow up to the events of ‘Aqaba. The ‘Constitution’ is a clear stipulation of the terms on which Muḥammad was willing to tolerate the Jews. This was necessary for a better relationship with the Jews, but important for the Arabs as well, who probably did not quite understand the nature of Muḥammad’s message as a continuation of the earlier Biblical message. Ibn Ishâq insinuates that

²³⁶Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb Sîrat rasûl Allâh, 296-97; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muḥammad, 203-04.

²³⁷Gil, “The Constitution of Medina,” 64-65.

²³⁸Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 286

Muḥammad was aware of the Messianic teachings of Judaism and that he hoped the Jews would recognize him as the expected one.²³⁹

Introducing the 'Constitution,' Ibn Ishâq says:

The apostle wrote a document concerning the emigrants and the helpers in which he made a friendly agreement with the Jews and established them in their religion and their property, and stated the reciprocal obligations. . . .²⁴⁰

What Ibn Ishâq's introduction implies is that one cannot accept Gil's interpretation of the document. Moreover, as far as the word *d-y-n* in clause twenty-five (referred to above) is concerned, Rubin explains, Gil's interpretation would require that the preposition *'alâ* be used instead of *li* as, for instance, in the demand for *nafaqa*, thus: "*wa-inna 'alâ l-Yahûdi nafaqatahum wa-'aiâ l-Muslimîna nafaqatahum.*"²⁴¹ Therefore it seems best to accept Ibn Ishâq's interpretation as given in his introduction to the 'document', namely, that he, Muḥammad, confirmed for the Jews their right to their religion. Hence the passage, just referred to in the 'document' itself must mean: *to the Jews, their religion and to the Muslims their religion, their clients and their persons.*

Gil is perhaps right in recognizing the threat placed before the Jews because of the authority won by Muḥammad. On the other hand, the denial of their right to war without the consent of the Prophet may be explained on the basis that the Prophet had come to Medina, after all, to reduce the factionalism that had divided the Aws against the Khazraj, and, given the fact that the Jews had themselves divided as participants in this conflict, needed to be restrained.

²³⁹ See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 286.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 341; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 231.

²⁴¹ Uri Rubin, "The Constitution of Medina," 16, f.n. 44.

Did the Prophet have sufficient authority to make such a unilateral decree? That he did is indicated by the considerable regard shown to Muḥammad by the Medinans, even at 'Aqaba, and the fact that they had, according to Ibn Ishâq, invited Muḥammad to Medina to act as an arbitrator and leader among them:

We pledged ourselves to war in complete obedience to the apostle [emphasis mine] in weal and woe . . . and that in God's service we would fear the censure of none.²⁴²

The confident support given by Sa'd b. Mu'âdh of the Anṣâr during Muḥammad's preparation for Badr is also a sign of the authority he wielded at this time.²⁴³

But who are these Jews referred to in the 'Constitution'? Wellhausen, Wensinck, Hamidullah, and Serjeant claim that the Jews referred to in the document include the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza. They explain that the document includes these groups as communities who live among the named Arab tribes. Such an assumption does not bear out, however, if one accepts the methodology which I have proposed, namely, to see Ibn Ishâq as the interpreter of the document which Muḥammad is supposed to have written, which means that everything that he states, and does not state, is carefully made note of. It is important to notice that Ibn Ishâq, while mentioning the names of the Jewish groups who are considered in the 'Constitution,' should distinctly avoid mention of the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza. That their existence is not implied as included with the Jews living with the Arab groups is clear because he does include them along with the minor Jewish clans who live

²⁴²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 304-05; Guillaume's trans., Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 208.

²⁴³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 435.

with their Arab confederates when he discusses the Jewish opponents of Muḥammad.²⁴⁴ Says Watt:

Ibn Ishâq has a list of sixty-seven Jewish opponents of Muḥammad and arranges them under the following heads: B. an-Naḍîr (12), B. Tha‘labah b. Fityawn (3), B. Qaynuqâ‘ (31), B. Qurayzah (17), Jews of B. Zurayq (1), Jews of B. Hârithah (1), Jews of B. ‘Amr b. ‘Awf (1), Jews of B. an Najjâr (1). This makes it probable that ‘the Jews of B. Tha‘labah’ . . . are those whom Ibn Ishâq . . . reckon[s] as a Jewish clan, and shows that at some period small groups of Jews, distinct from the three main clans, were known as ‘the Jews of such-and- such an Arab clan’. It seems probable, then, that the three main Jewish groups are not mentioned in the document.²⁴⁵

Rubin not only agrees with such a view, but explains why the three main Jewish groups were left out.²⁴⁶ Given the fact that the B. Qaynuqâ‘, the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza are not mentioned in the ‘Constitution’ by Ibn Ishâq, it seems plausible that the appreciation of the agreement as one which does not include these groups is the interpretation desired by Ibn Ishâq.

Nevertheless, agreements made by the main Jewish clans of Medina are mentioned on three occasions: twice with the B. Qaynuqâ‘—once by Abû Bakr while protesting his anger at Finḥâṣ of the B. Qaynuqâ‘,²⁴⁷ and again by ‘Âṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda;²⁴⁸ and with the B. Qurayza, this time as reported by Ka‘b b. Asad.²⁴⁹ Significantly, the tradition mentioned by ‘Âṣim does not use the word ‘agreement’ per se, and may be interpreted to mean simply an understanding. As

²⁴⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 351 - 52.

²⁴⁵Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 227.

²⁴⁶“As for the greater Jewish tribes, they had their own territory outside the main Arab districts . . . there was no cause to deal with them in the ‘Constitution’. The direct aim of this document was confined to determining the position of the Arab tribes of Medina in relation to those Jewish groups who shared in their territory.” See Rubin, “The Constitution of Medina,” 10.

²⁴⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 388-89.

²⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 545.

²⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 674.

for the agreement mentioned by Ka'b b. Asad, it is interesting that Muḥammad is supposed to have raised the blood price of the B. Qurayza to equate it with that of the B. Naḍîr,²⁵⁰ and this occasion may have provided the necessary incentive for an agreement to have been reached. If so, the agreement does not imply that the terms of the written 'Constitution of Medina' were imposed. Indeed, an actual document is not referred to on any of the above occasions by Ibn Ishâq.²⁵¹

Importantly, the enemies of Muḥammad and Islam as established in this document are the pagan Meccans alone; there is no indication at all that this would be the role assigned to the Jews. At the same time, however, the document does not assert that there was an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews. Instead it shows that the Jews were included only as the confederates of the Anṣâr along with whom they lived. On the other hand, the inclusion of Medinan Jews within the *umma* is confirmed by the fact that they are asked to pay *nafaqa* along with the Muslims.

Thus the point of the 'Constitution' is, it seems, primarily to confirm the existence of an agreement between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr; an agreement already concluded in 'Aqaba, just before Muḥammad's entry into Medina; an agreement further buttressed by the 'brotherhood' agreed to between the two peoples soon after.²⁵² Which raises the question: Is that indeed the point?

It would appear that there are, in fact, two striking features about the 'Constitution' of Medina: firstly, one that envisages the kind of relationship that Muḥammad expected to have with the Jews—they were to constitute a *dhimmat*

²⁵⁰Ibid., 395-96.

²⁵¹Ibid., 674. See also Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina*, 196, who appears to have come to the same conclusion.

²⁵²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 344-46.

Allâh along with the Muslims, paying *nafaqa* as the Muslims did; secondly, though perhaps less obvious, is the fact that the significant Jewish communities, the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and B. Qurayza, have been left out of the agreement.

The terms of the agreement are stated roughly five months after Muḥammad's arrival in Medina, which is significant for it lays down before the Arabs, who had requested that he come, his (Muḥammad's) attitude towards both the Arabs and the Jews of Medina and the conditions under which he was willing to live there. Despite the expulsion of some and the execution of others from among the Jews of Medina, Muḥammad's attitude to the Jews of Khaybar shows a change of attitude which results, finally, in the concession to both Jews and Christians of their right to exist as subordinates. It is important to understand the monotheistic and Biblical impulse that inspired Muḥammad, at least in terms of Ibn Ishâq's interpretation of the man. The notion is especially visible in Muḥammad's letters to the heads of the non-Muslim lands around him, letters which explain Islam to them. Thus, for instance, in his message sent to the Kings of Himyar who had just accepted Islam, he writes:

He who fulfills this and bears witness to his Islam and helps the believers against the polytheists he is a believer . . . If a Jew or Christian becomes a Muslim he is a believer . . . He who holds fast to his religion, Jew or Christian, is not to be turned from it. He must pay the poll tax - for every adult, male or female, free or slave . . . He who pays that to God's apostle has the guarantee of God and His apostle, and he who withholds it is the enemy of God and His apostle.²⁵³

Muḥammad's prejudices in favor of the 'People of the Book' are obvious. Was the passage quoted above part of an actual document written by the Prophet?

²⁵³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 956; trans. by Guillaume's in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 643.

According to Ibn Ishâq, it certainly was. The point is, however, that this policy of tolerance had gradually evolved, moving from a desire to be inclusive to one of rejection, but finally settling in to become one of accommodation. This existentialist approach toward the making of Islam is an aspect that contributes to the uniqueness of Ibn Ishâq's interpretation of the way the Prophet functioned. It is possible that the purpose of Ibn Ishâq in citing or explaining a 'document' was primarily to demonstrate this evolution.

Compared to documents, traditions, especially oral traditions, are usually not considered to have the same authoritative weight as documents in terms of their factual content; but when supplied with a sound *isnâd*, as are the prophetic traditions of Islam, they certainly imply honesty, which is a good substitute for authenticity. True, the degree of verity an *isnâd* could confer depends on a scale of evaluation which is based on such variables as genealogy, continuity, level of scholarship, and plain and simple memory; but such criteria had not yet been developed in the time of Ibn Ishâq—given which, who better to tell us of the Prophet's life than the very man chosen by the caliph himself to write it down?

The majority of Ibn Ishâq's traditionists came from Medina,²⁵⁴ and his weightiest authorities were from the School of Medina. They included his dear teacher Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Shihâb al-Zuhrî (50/670 - 124/742),²⁵⁵ founder of the School of Medina, student and collector of the traditions of 'Urwâ b. al-

²⁵⁴According to Horovitz, Ibn Ishâq cited over a hundred traditionists from Medina alone. See "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3, 170.

²⁵⁵Born into notoriety as it were, his father having been one of the Meccans who had sworn to kill Muḥammad, Ibn Shihâb built up a reputation for his scrupulous scholarship and honesty, and for his collection of traditions of the Prophet. See Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 2, 33-50; and Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 280-83.

Zubayr (d. 94/712);²⁵⁶ ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm (60/679 - 56/675), who was supposed to have authored a *maghâzî* work (which was transmitted by his nephew), and who is also known to have transmitted some of the Prophet’s messages to his contemporaries, such as the letter delivered to the Kings of Himyar;²⁵⁷ ‘Âṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda (d. 129/746),²⁵⁸ who was ordained by the caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azîz (63/683-101/720) to teach *maghâzî* and *manâqib al-ṣaḥâba* at the mosque of Damascus;²⁵⁹ and ‘Abd Allâh b. Abû Najîh (d. 131/748), a savant of Mecca who was commended for his commentary on the Qur’ân.²⁶⁰

The *isnâds* that Ibn Ishâq uses take various forms and do not conform to any particular pattern; indeed they show no consistency. A few examples are cited here. On Badr, the given *isnâd* states:

Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Zuhrî and ‘Âṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda and ‘Abdullah b. Abû Bakr and Yazîd b. Rûmân from ‘Urwa b. Zubayr and other scholars of ours from Ibn ‘Abbâs, each one of them told us this story and their account is collected in what I have drawn up of the story of Badr.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶Son of ‘Asmâ’ daughter of Abû Bakr and sister of ‘Â’isha, the wife of the Prophet, and al-Zubayr, son of al-‘Awwâm, brother of Khadîja, the first wife of the Prophet. See Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet,” part 1, 542; and Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 278.

²⁵⁷Tradition has it that ‘Abd Allâh’s great grandfather was sent by the Prophet as judge to the Yemen, and asked to instruct the inhabitants in the teachings of Islam. His grandfather is said to have been killed on the day of *harra*, and his father was appointed judge in Medina in 86, when ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azîz took over its governorship. It was he whom ‘Umar II is supposed to have sought out to obtain the *hadîth* of the Prophet and write them down. See Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet,” part 2, 22-33; and Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 284.

²⁵⁸His grandfather was the famous Qatâda whose eye ball was replaced in its socket by the Prophet, and who is reported to have declared that he could see better with that eye, than the one that had not been wounded. See Eduard Sachau, “Studien zur ältesten Geschichtsüberlieferung der Araber,” *MSOS* 7 (1904): 168.

²⁵⁹Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘Sîra’,” 12-13; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1: 279-80.

²⁶⁰Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘Sîra’,” 13.

²⁶¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 428; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 289.

On al-Sawîq: the date is given on the authority of Ibn Ishâq himself, which is unusual. For the rest, the *isnâd* is

Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Zubayr and Yazîd ibn Rûmân and one whose veracity I do not suspect from 'Abdullah b. Ka'b b. Mâlik who was one of the most learned Helpers told me. . . .²⁶²

On Qaynuqâ': Here, a series of *isnâds* are cited. See my chapter 4 for details.

On Ka'b b. al-Ashraf:

'Abdullah b. al-Mughîth b. Abû Burda al-Zafarî and 'Abdullah b. Abû Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm and 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda and Sâlih b. Abû Umâma b. Sahl each gave me a part of the following story. . . .²⁶³

On Muḥayyiṣa and Huwayyiṣa:

I was told this story by a client of B. Ḥâritha from the daughter of Muḥayyiṣa from Muḥayyiṣa himself.²⁶⁴

On B. Naḍîr: "According to what Yazîd b. Rûmân told me. . . ."²⁶⁵

On Khandaq:

Yazîd b. Rûmân, client of the family of al-Zubayr b. 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, and one whom I have no reason to suspect from 'Abdullah b. Ka'b b. Mâlik, and Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓi and al-Zuhrî, and 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda, and 'Abdullah b. Abû Bakr and other traditionists of ours told me the following narrative, each contributing a part of it:²⁶⁶

²⁶²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 543; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 361.

²⁶³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 548; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 364-65.

²⁶⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 554; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 369.

²⁶⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 652; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 437.

²⁶⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 669; trans. by Guillaume, see Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 450.

The information regarding Khaybar is related on the basis of a series of *isnâds*, as in the case of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ'.²⁶⁷

Thus, though Ibn Ishâq would often depend on a very well known authority such as al-Zuhrî, at other times he would provide his information on the basis of a collective *isnâd*; and this did not mean that he would name all those involved, as, for instance, when he tells of the battle of Khandaq. In the case of the murder of Ibn Sunayna, he uses a family *isnâd*, obtaining his information from the daughter of Muḥayyiṣa. Sometimes, as in the case of the raid on the B. Naḍîr, he would rely on just one man. On the statement regarding the agreement that Muḥammad implemented between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr, it is only Ibn Ishâq's word that we have to depend on. To understand the weave of Ibn Ishâq's narrative, and in particular his narrative of Muḥammad's relations with the Jews, it is therefore essential not to underestimate the writer, but to listen carefully to his every word and appreciate it in the context of his larger statement. It is, after all, Ibn Ishâq who has been acclaimed by both Zuhri and 'Âṣim,²⁶⁸ and indeed ordered by the caliph to write down for posterity what he knew of the life of the Prophet.²⁶⁹

Ibn Ishâq was aware of his authority on the subject, and as he wrote he interpreted the traditions that he had gathered from so many around him, to shape for the reader his own view of what Muḥammad was all about. Thus, the traditions narrated by Ibn Ishâq may not be displaced by those approved of by al-Wâqidî, or even al-Bukhârî or al-Zuhrî, for instance, since this would result in our misunderstanding of what it was that Ibn Ishâq was trying to communicate. To

²⁶⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 756-63.

²⁶⁸See page 68 above, f. n. 112.

²⁶⁹See page 66 above, f. n. 108.

prefer the chronology of al-Wâqidî and appropriate it for the purposes of understanding Ibn Ishâq's narration more adequately, as Jones attempts to do when he acquires the chronology of al-Wâqidî to contextualize the murder of 'Asmâ' bint Marwân, for instance, can only result in misinterpretation.²⁷⁰ Instead we must give Ibn Ishâq his due and hear him out.

It is clear that, as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, Islam was an unknown quantity still in the making, right up until the Prophet's farewell sermon. Such an approach allows that in the early years in Mecca, Muḥammad should be described as praying towards Jerusalem, placing the Ka'ba in-between. Caetani's remarks on the issue of the *qibla* are pertinent here: according to him, Muḥammad could not possibly have ordered his followers in Mecca to turn towards Jerusalem while praying; such an act would have been provocative and offensive behavior on Muḥammad's part, given the veneration of the Ka'ba by the Meccans. This would be to inflict an obvious insult on the Meccan sanctuary. It was far more likely that the direction of prayer was determined only in Medina, brought about by Muḥammad's contact with the Jews and the need to get along with them, but also in the hope of attracting them to Islam.²⁷¹ In other words, Caetani views the sources as apocryphal, choosing to believe what he wants to believe according to his understanding of early Islam. Once the interpreter of this literature moves away from this historical mold, however, and places the burden of interpretation upon Ibn Ishâq himself, it then becomes possible to see that, in fact, Ibn Ishâq is placing Islam in the context of a developing monotheism. The tradition that Muḥammad, even when he prayed in Mecca, placed the Ka'ba between himself

²⁷⁰Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî* - A Textual Survey," 98.

²⁷¹See Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 1: 468.

and Jerusalem, must be seen as an indication of a Judeo-monotheistic impulse inherent (according to the interpretation of Ibn Ishâq) within Islam itself.²⁷²

It seems obvious that in his *Sîra*, Ibn Ishâq was shaping tradition to suggest that Judaism was the precursor to Islam.²⁷³ Thus, it was Jewish rabbis from the B. Qurayza who, alarmed by the news of the Tubba's intention to destroy Yathrib, came to the Tubba' and prevented him, because

Yathrib was the place to which a Prophet of the Quraysh would migrate in time to come, and it would be his home and resting place.²⁷⁴

Again, it was two Jewish Rabbis who advised the Tubba' to circumambulate the Temple at Mecca, for "it was indeed the Temple of their father Abraham";²⁷⁵ and it is significant that it was a Jew whom Ḥassân b. Thâbit heard calling out, "O company of Jews . . . Tonight has risen a star under which Aḥmad is to be born";²⁷⁶ while the statement by Ibnu'l Hayyabân on his death bed is certainly interesting:

"O Jews, what do you think made me leave a land of bread and wine to come to a land of hardship and hunger?" When we said that we could not think why, he said that he had come to this country expecting to see the emergence of a prophet whose time was at hand.²⁷⁷

²⁷²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 190.

²⁷³Thus: "Jewish rabbis, Christian monks, and Arab soothsayers had spoken about the apostle of God before his mission when his time drew near." Ibid., 130; Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 90; and "Tonight has risen a star under which Aḥmad is to be born . . ." Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 102; Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 70.

²⁷⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 13-14; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 7.

²⁷⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 15; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 9.

²⁷⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 102; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 70.

²⁷⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 136; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 94.

Ibn Ishâq also presents the reader with several reasons for Muḥammad's emigration to Medina: we are informed that the Meccans were angered by his new religion and wanted him out of there.²⁷⁸ We are told that the Medinan Arabs wanted him in Medina because: firstly, they needed a peace maker who would resolve the antagonisms that existed between the Aws and the Khazraj;²⁷⁹ secondly, they had been informed by the Jews of a prophet who would come from Mecca, and having been warned by the Jews that they would be destroyed by them under the leadership of this Meccan prophet, they had decided to invite Muḥammad to lead them instead;²⁸⁰ and thirdly, according to Ibn Ishâq, it seems that the Jews of Medina provided a part of the attraction of Medina for Muḥammad, for they were monotheists and knew of the monotheism that Muḥammad preached. Muḥammad, for his part, did go that extra distance to accommodate the Jews. This is suggested by the fact that he did originally treat Jerusalem as his *qibla*; moreover it is indicated by his attitude to that community as expressed in the document the 'Constitution of Medina.'

Muḥammad's intentions toward the particular Jews mentioned in his 'document' written between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr is to treat them as part of the same community of Muslims under a common *dhimmat Allâh*, with the Jews paying their share of the *nafaqa* along with the Muslims and fighting together with them. Ibn Ishâq indicates that the Messianic expectations of the Jews of Arabia had been distinctly voiced, and presents Muḥammad as believing that he was the 'Expected One'.

²⁷⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 279 and 281, both indicating the hostility of the majority of the Meccans.

²⁷⁹Ibid., 287.

²⁸⁰Ibid., 134, and 286-87.

Here it must be pointed out that the textual space taken to explain the developing conflict between Muḥammad and the Jews of Medina also admits Jewish willingness to hear Muḥammad's message. The Muslims had been permitted by the Jews to address their people in their synagogues.²⁸¹ It is a significant fact that the Jews actually allowed Muḥammad to act as a judge for them. He had been asked to pass sentence on an adulterous couple;²⁸² his decision that the blood values of the B. Naḍīr and the B. Qurayza be equated had, according to Ibn Ishāq, been respected.²⁸³ Jewish opposition had not been wholehearted. Some had converted to Islam. We are told of the conversions of 'Abd Allāh b. Salām²⁸⁴ and Mukhayrīq.²⁸⁵

But on the whole, the larger community had rejected him; and this, Ibn Ishāq believed, was because they were envious that God had chosen a prophet from among the Arabs, ignoring their own kind. Their resistance is followed by Muḥammad's changing of the *qibla*. Even at this point, we are informed that the Jews regretted this act, pleading with him to maintain Jerusalem as his *qibla*, promising that "if he would return to the *qibla* of Jerusalem they would follow him and declare him to be true."²⁸⁶ Ibn Ishāq is not precise about the timing of the change of the *qibla*. Generally it is dated before the expedition of Badr.²⁸⁷

The significance of the victory at Badr has to be clearly understood. If one tries to rationalize and explain how Muḥammad's comparatively small force

²⁸¹Ibid., 388.

²⁸²Ibid., 393-94.

²⁸³Ibid., 395-96.

²⁸⁴Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb sirat rasūl Allāh*, 353-54.

²⁸⁵Ibid., 354.

²⁸⁶Ibid., 381; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishāq, *Life of Muhammad*, 259.

²⁸⁷Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb sirat rasūl Allāh*, 427.

won over the Meccans, it is obvious that one has missed the point. The idiom of this literature belongs with the religious mind.

My father Ishâq b. Yasâr from men of B. Mâzin b. al-Najjâr from Abû Dâ'ûd al-Mâzinî, who was at Badr, told me: 'I was pursuing a polytheist at Badr to smite him, when his head fell off before I could get at him with my sword, and I knew that someone else [an angel] had killed him.'²⁸⁸

According to this idiom, Muḥammad's victory made it perfectly clear to mankind that God was on his side: that Muḥammad was His chosen messenger. To boldly go forward after such a victory, and invite the B. Qaynuqâ' to Islam, cannot be regarded as conceit. That the B. Qaynuqâ' chose not to accept was, in fact, sheer obstinacy on their part. For the religious mind of the seventh and eighth century A.D., such a favor as that granted by God to Muḥammad at Badr could not be taken lightly.

Moreover, Ibn Ishâq indicates to the reader that Muḥammad had hoped that the Jews would convert to Islam. This notion is cleverly insinuated through various statements expressed during the course of Ibn Ishâq's narration. I have already indicated how Ibn Ishâq has suggested that Judaism was a precursor to Islam, establishing that Muḥammad was born in the wake of Messianic expectations. In addition, Islam is made out to be a monotheistic faith like Judaism.²⁸⁹ Thus, Muḥammad is seen to be optimistic about moving to Medina because of the presence of the Jews in that town:

²⁸⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 449-50; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 303.

²⁸⁹Thus a Jewish neighbor spoke to the Arabs about "the resurrection, the reckoning, the scales, paradise, and hell." See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 135; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 94.

Now God had prepared the way for Islam in that they lived side by side with the Jews who were people of the scriptures²⁹⁰

And this optimism is made obvious in his agreement ‘the Constitution of Medina.’²⁹¹ Above all, we have the B. Qaynuqâ‘ declare, on being ‘invited’ to Islam: “O Muḥammad, you seem to think that we are your people,” suggesting that Muḥammad believed that the Jews agreed with his teachings.²⁹² They had certainly encouraged his optimism when they had allowed him to arbitrate over their legal battles.²⁹³ Moreover Muḥammad’s victory at Badr despite his small forces was surely a sign from God that he was indeed His messenger, a sign which the Jews could not possibly fail to understand. But the B. Qaynuqâ‘ chose to reject him, thereby provoking Muḥammad’s attack.

When Ibn Ishâq positions the Meccan raid of Sawîq before the siege of the B. Qaynuqâ‘ (which chronologically falls between Badr and Uḥud), he is indicating to us that it was the B. Naḍîr rather than the B. Qaynuqâ‘ who were the first to irritate Muḥammad by hosting his enemy Abû Sufyân.²⁹⁴ Having lost the battle of Badr, Abû Sufyân vows that he will abstain from sexual intercourse until he has raided Muḥammad.²⁹⁵ Though rejected by Ḥuyayy b. Akḥṭab, he is hosted and fed, and given secret information about the people of Medina by Sallâm b. Mishkam, chief of the B. Naḍîr. Abû Sufyân is able to burn some young palm trees and kill one of the Anṣâr and his companion before he returns home to

²⁹⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 286; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 197.

²⁹¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 341-43.

²⁹²Ibid., 545.

²⁹³Ibid., 393-94, and 395-96.

²⁹⁴See the chapter entitled Raid of Sawîq in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 543.

²⁹⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 543.

Mecca.²⁹⁶ Perhaps this was why Muḥammad decided to approach the B. Qaynuqâ' first with his invitation to Islam.

During the course of his chapter on the siege of the B. Qaynuqâ', the word agreement or contract is, interestingly enough, not mentioned. However, Ibn Ishâq informs us on the authority of 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda, that the Qaynuqâ' were the first of the Jews to break "what was between Muḥammad and the Jews." Here the fact that the B. Qaynuqâ' have not been mentioned in what has come to be known as the 'Constitution' makes the reader realize that what is being referred to may be just a simple understanding or a situation of peaceful existence. Moreover, the reader's awareness of Sawîq makes him question 'Âṣim's communication, for he knows that, in fact, the B. Naḍîr had already broken their understanding with the Prophet even earlier, when—despite the fact that Ḥuyayy b. Akḥṭab would not open the door to him—Abû Sufyân was finally invited in by Sallâm b. Mishkam. Interestingly, the folk tale, introduced by Ibn Hishâm, about the Arab woman being insulted in the market place—an incident which is supposed to have sparked off the aggression between the Muslims and the Jews—maintains Ibn Ishâq's prejudices by informing the reader that the woman refused to unveil. Thus, Ibn Hishâm indicates to us that this is a pseudo-tradition, for the veil had not as yet been decreed for the Muslim woman.²⁹⁷

Thus, as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, the only provocation that led to the fighting between Muḥammad and the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' was caused by Muḥammad's demand—and here we see him function just as any prophet would—that they convert to Islam. Indeed, according to Ibn Ishâq, Muḥammad is a prophet of God who functions just as any other prophet, and, like Moses or Noah,

²⁹⁶Ibid.

²⁹⁷Ibid., 545.

not only brings God's message to mankind, but also brings down His wrath upon those who deny Him. Thus, the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' were, despite their ability in warfare, defeated by the Prophet. The issue here was, therefore, not the abrogation of an agreement, but the Jewish rejection, in spite of Badr, of the message brought by the Prophet Muḥammad, and the fact that the Jews in denying Muḥammad were in fact denying God Himself. Significantly, the B. Qaynuqâ', even if they were handed over to Ibn Ubayy, cease to exist as a community and are never heard of again.

The date for the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf is just as significant in terms of the controversy it has awakened. Ibn Ishâq places it after the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', and soon after the raid on al-Qarada; the motive for the killing, however, is explained as having been caused by the insulting poetry composed by Ibn al-Ashraf on both the Prophet and some Muslim women when he learned of the many brave Quraysh who had been killed at the Battle of Badr.²⁹⁸ In his section of poetry on the exile of the B. Naḍîr, however, Ibn Ishâq also dates the event just previous to the raid on the B. Naḍîr. Here the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr is associated with the crimes of Ka'b.²⁹⁹ The poetry Ibn Ishâq cites through 'Alî, soon after the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr, tells of the plea from the Jews for a delay of their sentence on the grounds that they had not as yet completed their mourning for Ibn al-Ashraf, their leader.³⁰⁰ The question arises, whether in fact it was Ka'b's actions that actually led to the final expulsion of the B. Naḍîr. It seems to me that Ibn Ishâq is deliberately making the reader aware of the contradictory, and therefore undependable, nature of tradition, or perhaps of its a-chronological content. On the other hand, it is interesting that earlier traditionists such as

²⁹⁸Ibid., 548-50.

²⁹⁹Ibid., 657.

³⁰⁰Ibid.

Ma'mar b. Râshid and Mûsâ b. 'Uqba have dated the exile of the B. Naḍîr after Badr and before Uḥud.³⁰¹ One wonders if it was Ibn Ishâq who, by introducing the raid of the Qaynuqâ' (which, interestingly enough, is narrated simply as a tale/report about the Jews of that tribe), conveniently displaces the 'traditional' chronology which perhaps had linked Sawîq to the exile of the B. Naḍîr.³⁰² Ibn Ishâq's chronology conveniently allows for the displacement of the notion of a 'broken contract' as cause for assault, against both the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr. It also incorporates the most popular numerical mnemonic, the number three. Thus according to Ibn Ishâq, Muḥammad attacks three significant Jewish tribes on three significant occasions.

With the assassination of Ka'b "there was no Jew in Medina who did not fear for his life."³⁰³ Soon after, the Prophet makes the pronouncement: "Kill any Jew that falls into your power,"³⁰⁴ and this leads to Muḥayyiṣa b. Mas'ûd murdering Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant. When Muḥayyiṣa's elder brother understands the significance of what has just happened, he immediately converts to Islam. The situation seems to be somewhat tense, but is outweighed by the events that lead to the battle of Uḥud.

The battle of Uḥud does not lead to the raid on the B. Naḍîr. according to Ibn Ishâq. True enough, the Jews had refused to follow Mukhayrîq into the battle field and participate in that battle, because it occurred on the Sabbath.³⁰⁵ But this refusal was not considered sufficient provocation for a raid on the B. Naḍîr. It was

³⁰¹M. J. Kister, "Notes on the Papyrus Text about Muḥammad's Campaign against the Banû al-Naḍîr," 235.

³⁰²Thus for instance according to al-Zuhrî the raid against the B. Naḍîr took place six months after Badr. See *ibid.*

³⁰³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allah*, 552.

³⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 583.

³⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 578.

the incident at Bi'r Ma'ûna, where two men of the B. 'Âmir, who had an alliance with the B. Naḍîr, were murdered, that eventually led to the siege.³⁰⁶

The story told by Ibn Ishâq in the chapter regarding the deportation of the B. Naḍîr, is again meaningful only if one understands that this is information for the religious mind. According to Ibn Ishâq God speaks to Muḥammad and informs him of the evil intention of the B. Naḍîr to drop a stone on him and kill him. Significantly, nowhere in the narrative is there any denial of this intent on the part of a Jew. The point is that God had informed Muḥammad, and this in itself was indicative of his prophetic stature.

The significance of the miracle of God's inspiration of Muḥammad must not be down-played when regarding the work of Ibn Ishâq, because it is this kind of prophetic personality that the author desires to establish for Muḥammad. When authors such as Barakat Ahmad ignore the stone throwing plot of the Jews, this is probably because they have not given consideration to the fact that this theme is a typical plot of universal myth, and was probably being harnessed for his purposes by Ibn Ishâq.³⁰⁷ Combining this theme with Qur'ânic patterns which portray God as always watching over his prophets, he is able to establish the tradition in his Sîra, to project a situation which is ideally suited in terms of the theme which he is trying to maintain. Barakat Ahmad, instead of trying to appreciate Ibn Ishâq's text as a work in itself, reaches back to another tradition concerning the incident which draws on the *maghâzî* narrated by Ibn Lahî'a of Egypt (d. 174/790), which tells us that the B. Naḍîr were guilty of plotting with the Quraysh against the Muslims:

³⁰⁶Ibid., 650 and 652.

³⁰⁷Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif, und Geschichte," 69.

... and they sent secretly to the Quraish when they encamped at Uḥud in order to fight the Prophet and they incited them to fight and showed them the weak spots.³⁰⁸

For Barakat Ahmad, this appears to be the more plausible story. The problem is that Ahmad is looking for facts, failing to realize that wherever he looks he will, in fact, obtain but an interpretation of what happened; equally clear is it that he has missed the larger theme of the Ibn Ishâq statement.

Importantly, nowhere during the course of this interlude concerning the B. Naḍîr is the existence of a contract or agreement ever mentioned by Ibn Ishâq. As well, Ibn Ishâq not only expressly indicates that the Prophet did permit the destruction of crops in times of war, an act which is witnessed by the revelation of a Qur'ânic verse, but he also establishes the rights of the Muhâjirûn to the land of the B. Naḍîr, which, because of the absence of active force against the enemy, had been claimed as the property of God and His Prophet, and then been gifted by the Prophet to them. Furthermore, Ibn Ishâq uses the occasion to establish that while many of the B. Naḍîr on being exiled left for Khaybar, some of them emigrated to Syria. Significantly, the whole incident is associated with the *sûrat al-ḥaṣhr*, and the references are explained by Ibn Ishâq toward the end of the narrative section.

The battle of the Trench, al-Khandaq, sees the coming together of a number of Jews including Sallâm b. Abî'l-Ḥuqayq al-Naḍrî, Huyayy b. Akḥṭab al-Naḍrî, Kinâna b. Abî'l-Ḥuqayq al-Naḍrî, Hawdha b. Qays al-Wâ'ilî, Abû 'Ammâr al-Wâ'ilî, with the Quraysh, the Ghaṭafân (including those of the Ashja' who

³⁰⁸Ahmad, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 63. See also Kister, "Notes on the Papyrus Text About Muḥammad's Campaign Against the Banû al-Naḍîr," 234.

followed them),³⁰⁹ and the B. Qurayza,³¹⁰ in order to completely destroy Muḥammad. The Muslims build a trench around themselves for the purposes of defense. Ibn Ishâq tells us of the numerous Christ-like miracles performed by the Prophet while it was being built, and how the Muslims rallied to his cause and worked hard to have it completed before the arrival of the enemies.

It is Huyayy b. Akṭab who persuades Ka'b b. Asad, the leader of the B. Qurayza, to join their forces against Muḥammad. It is interesting that Ibn Ishâq should here portray Ibn Asad as someone who was forced against his will to join with them, for in the earlier chapter on the *sûrat al-baqara* he portrays him as a hypocrite and an "enemy of God" in every sense of the phrase. Thus, the reader is informed:

The apostle spoke to two of the chiefs of the Jewish rabbis 'Abdullah b. Şûriyâ al-A'war and Ka'b b. Asad calling on them to accept Islam, for they knew that he had brought them the truth; but they denied that they knew it and were obstinate in their unbelief.³¹¹

And again:

Ka'b b. Asad and Ibn Şalûbâ and his son 'Abdullah and Sha's said one to another, "Let us go to Muḥammad to see if we can seduce him from his religion, for he is only a mortal . . ." ³¹²

Nevertheless, in the chapter on al-Khandaq we hear Ka'b's despair:

By God, you have brought me immortal shame and an empty cloud which has shed its water while it thunders and lightens with nothing in it. Woe to

³⁰⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 669.

³¹⁰*Ibid.*, 674.

³¹¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 390; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 264.

³¹²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 396; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 268.

you Huyayy leave me as I am, for I have always found him [Muḥammad] loyal and faithful.³¹³

It is difficult to explain the discrepancy. The very specific *asbâb al-nuzûl* established for the specific verses from *sûrâs* four and five of the Qur'ân in this earlier section,³¹⁴ followed by the very different explanations provided in the chapter on the battle of al-Khandaq, which is here largely associated with *sûrâ* thirty-three of the Qur'ân, on the authority of various traditionists (as is indicated in the examples above), seems to indicate that Ibn Ishâq was exploiting the genre of *sîra-maghâzî* to expose the contradictions that existed in the field of tradition. But the battle of the Trench is narrated by Ibn Ishâq on the authority of a collective *isnâd* that reads,

Yazîd b. Rûmân, client of the family of al-Zubayr b. 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, and one whom I have no reason to suspect from 'Abdullah b. Ka'b b. Mâlik, and Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazî, and al-Zuhrî, and 'Âsim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda, and 'Abdullah b. Abû Bakr and other traditionists of ours . . .³¹⁵

And the elusive nature of the *isnâd* indicates that Ibn Ishâq may have had a hand in shaping the narrative based on the traditions.

Once again the issue for Ibn Ishâq, however, is not whether the Jews had broken their contract or not. The dreadful fear and anguish experienced by the Muslims during the raid of al-Khandaq had seen moments when Muḥammad's reputation was in the balance, which were cause enough:

³¹³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 674; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 453.

³¹⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 396; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 268.

³¹⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 669; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 450.

... Mu'attib b. Qushayr brother of B. 'Amr b. 'Awf said, 'Muhammad used to promise us that we should eat the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar and today not one of us can feel safe in going to the privy'³¹⁶

And again:

Hudhayfa said, 'I can see us with the apostle at the trench as he prayed for a part of the night and then turned to us and said, "Who will get up and see for us what the army is doing and then return . . . I will ask God that he shall be my companion in paradise." Not a single man got up because of his great fear, hunger, and the severe cold.'³¹⁷

And this to say nothing of the incident at the fortress of Fâri', in which the women and children were being housed, which lay open to enemy attack because

... the B. Qurayza had gone to war and cut our communications with the apostle, and there was no one to protect us while the Apostle and the Muslims were at the enemy's throats . . .³¹⁸

In the given circumstances, one cannot understand the conclusion of scholars such as Norman A. Stillman, who declares:

According to Muslim tradition, Ka'b b. Asad, the Qurazî chieftain, had made a treaty with Muḥammad. This seems doubtful, however, and is probably the invention of later Muslim writers who wished to justify the harsh punishment that was meted out to the Qurayza. . . .³¹⁹

Surely the enormity of the Qurayza's crime was that they had joined with the enemies of the Muslims which was the cause of the Muslim insecurity, according to the narrative of Ibn Ishâq.³²⁰

³¹⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 675; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 454.

³¹⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 683; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 460.

³¹⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 680; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 458.

³¹⁹Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 14-15.

³²⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 693-94; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 466-67.

Muḥammad tried every means to win the war. War is deceit, and deceit was certainly permissible, according to Muḥammad's view as portrayed by Ibn Ishâq. We see Muḥammad not only try to bribe the Ghatafân to turn back home--from which he is dissuaded by the Anṣâr,³²¹ but successfully use the help of a new convert from among the Ghatafân, Nu'aym b. Mas'ûd, to deceive his opponents into distrusting one another and ultimately giving up their intention to destroy Muḥammad.³²²

The hostility of the B. Qurayza was expressed not only in a betrayal of Muḥammad and the Muslims alone, however. At least Sa'd b. Mu'âdh does not see it in this light. Fatally wounded by an arrow aimed at him from among the Quraysh during the battle of the Trench, his immediate response is to cry out to the one who had hit him, "May God make your face sweat in hell." But he does not stop there, for he continues:

O God, if the war with the Quraysh is to be prolonged spare me for it, for there is no people whom I want to fight more than those who insulted your apostle, called him a liar, and drove him out. O God, seeing that you have appointed war between us and them grant me martyrdom and do not let me die until I have seen my desire upon B. Qurayza.³²³

There is little doubt that Sa'd was blaming the B. Qurayza (whose loyalty, incidentally, he had been able to depend on during the years before Islam, during the battle of Bu'âth, but was now being denied him) for his fate. It is in response to his prayer, or so Ibn Ishâq would have us believe, that Muḥammad is inspired to call on Sa'd to pass judgment on that tribe.

³²¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 676.

³²²Ibid., 680-82.

³²³Ibid., 679; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 457.

The extermination of the B. Qurayza was to be expected. Ka'b b. Asad had offered his community three other options, all of which were rejected.³²⁴ Interestingly, Walîd Arafat, who studies this part of the tradition, explains that much of this information has been taken from the Jews themselves. He adds:

... the story, in my view, has its origins in earlier events. It can be shown that it reproduces similar stories which survived from the account of the Jewish rebellion. . . in the year A.D. 73 . . . Stories of their experience were naturally transmitted by Jewish survivors who fled south.³²⁵

Arafat then goes on to see a remarkable parallel between the speech given by Eleazar when he addressed the besieged Jews in Masada and the speech given by Ka'b b. Asad when they were being besieged by Muḥammad. According to Arafat the happenings of Masada were being recalled by the Jews to explain their fate in Islam.³²⁶ The point, however, is not whether it is true or false, but the fact that Ibn Ishâq, in interpreting the life of Muḥammad, saw no harm in this particular aspect of it. Why? My answer is, of course, that this massacre fits in very well with the kind of pattern that Ibn Ishâq was trying to establish. Once again, through this particular story, we are shown Muḥammad the Prophet calling down the wrath of God upon those who have rejected him, which in turn results in the removal of the entire community of the B. Qurayza.

The wishes of the Aws, despite the role of Sa'd b. Mu'âdh, are, however, denied; it is rather surprising that in these circumstances the Khazraj should seek to compete with the Aws for the Prophet's favor:

One of the things which God did for His apostle was that these two tribes of the Anṣâr, Aws and Khazraj, competed the one with the other like two

³²⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 685-86; trans. Guillaume, in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 461-62.

³²⁵Arafat, "New Light on the Story of Banû Qurayza and the Jews of Medina," 106.

³²⁶*ibid.*

stallions: if Aws did anything to the apostle's advantage Khazraj would say, 'They shall not have this superiority over us in the apostle's eyes and in Islam' and they would not rest until they could do something similar.³²⁷

But compete they did, or so Ibn Ishâq would have us believe, seeking the Prophet's permission to kill Sallâm b. Abî'l Huqayq, who was living in Khaybar. The mission is successful, and perhaps the most striking tradition that emerges through this event is that which tells of how the Prophet, by inspecting the swords of the group that had attacked Sallâm, is able to determine that it was the sword of 'Abd Allâh b. Unays that killed him, for he—the Prophet Muḥammad—could see traces of food on it.³²⁸

This major victory over the dissident Jewish communities in Medina, which climaxes with the murder of Abû Râfi', is not sufficient to bring the 'hero' back home to Mecca, however. Muḥammad must take Khaybar, Fadak, and Wâdî al-Qurâ', to say nothing of the hand of the daughter of his arch enemy Huyayy b. Akḥṭab, before such a return could be entertained. That it was the conditions of Ḥudaybiya that provoked Khaybar is suggested by the interesting fact that Muḥammad shares the plunder of Khaybar with those who had gone along with him in his first attempt to enter Mecca and joined him in Ḥudaybiya, even if they had not participated in the raid of Khaybar.³²⁹

It was in the year seven A.H., in the month of Muḥarram, that Muḥammad set out from Medina to take Khaybar. Apparently, the Prophet first wrote to the Jews of Khaybar, inviting them to Islam. Interestingly, the Prophet, having preluded the letter with the *basmalla*, continues, "from Muḥammad the apostle of

³²⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 714; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 482.

³²⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 715.

³²⁹*Ibid.*, 774.

God friend and brother of Moses who confirms what Moses brought,”³³⁰ again conveying his acceptance and recognition of Judaism as a monotheistic faith. Khaybar rejects Muḥammad. Muḥammad therefore captures it, and with ease. The conquests of the various fortresses are associated with significant events: the conquest of the fortress of Nâ'im sees the death of Maḥmūd b. Maslama, who was killed by a millstone which was thrown down on him;³³¹ al-Qamūs was the fortress from which the Prophet was to take Ṣafīya bint Ḥuyayy;³³² and the fort of Ṣa'b b. Mu'âdh, which was rich in food and the wealthiest, was taken particularly with the intent of rewarding the B. Aslam.³³³

The People of Khaybar surrender, leaving their property to the Prophet on condition that he spare their lives. In addition they ask the Prophet to employ them on the land with a half share in the produce, saying:

“We know more about it than you and we are better farmers.” The apostle agreed to this arrangement on the condition that ‘if we wish to expel you we will expel you.’ He made a similar arrangement with the men of Fadak.³³⁴

Importantly, however, while Khaybar was given to the Muslims, Fadak, like the land of the B. Naḍîr, became the personal property of the Prophet “because they [the Muslims] had not driven horses or camels against it.”³³⁵

With the Khaybar scenario as well, the reader is entertained with the expected dose of ‘Islamic’ attitudes, based on the teachings of the Prophet, and miracles. It is here that we are told about laws forbidding the consumption of the

³³⁰Ibid., 376; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 256.

³³¹Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 758.

³³²Ibid.

³³³Ibid., 759.

³³⁴Ibid., 764; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 515.

³³⁵Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 764; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 516.

flesh of the domesticated donkey or any carnivorous animal, and laws regarding the purchase of gold ore with silver coin, and vice versa, are established.³³⁶ Once again, the bravery and strength of ‘Alî is extolled when he attacks the enemy. Memorable is the moment when, loosing his shield, ‘Alî picks up one of the heavy gates of the Khaybar fortress to protect himself from the arrows of the Jews.³³⁷ As for the miracles, it is here that Zaynab bint al-Ḥârith, wife of Sallâm b. Mishkam, prepares some roasted lamb for the Prophet, having first put a lot of poison on it. The Prophet does not swallow what he bites, for the bone tells him that it is poisoned!³³⁸ Three years later, however, he dies a martyr from that very poison, which was surely a fine note on which to conclude the life of this ‘most heroic of Prophets’. Importantly, it is with Muḥammad’s martyrdom that Ibn Ishâq confirms the humanity of the Prophet, for it is by establishing his human nature that Ibn Ishâq makes of his life an example which any man could and should follow.

The singularity of Ibn Ishâq’s contribution extends into his treatment of the **chronological** aspect of Muḥammad’s life. Thus it is no easy task, as many scholars have found, to reconcile the sequence of events during this period as described by some authors with the chronology established by Ibn Ishâq. Indeed, a brief overview of several *maghâzî* writings indicates that the chronological sequence given by the authors varies.³³⁹ The fact is that historical writing among the Arabs began with the use of tradition materials, which included folk and battle-day traditions as well as prophetic traditions, none of which had paid much

³³⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 758-59; Guillaume’s trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 512.

³³⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 762.

³³⁸*Ibid.*, 764-65.

³³⁹Says Jones, “There are often different dates for the same events . . .”; see “The *Maghâzî* Literature,” 349.

attention to the prescription of dates for the happenings which they commemorated. It seems that the dating of an event was of a relative nature, and even the use of the *hijra* as a point of departure for chronological purposes was established only in the reign of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph of Islam. Thus, the sequential arrangement of events when the material came to be juxtaposed as *maghâzî* lay to a large extent in the hands of the *maghâzî* writer himself.

The basis for the arrangement of chronology regarding the events that constitute the Prophet’s life appears to be, first of all, the Prophet’s life itself—his birth, Prophethood, emigration, and death; but the mythic pattern of the hero’s adventure represented in the rites of passage, of separation-initiation-and return,³⁴⁰ around which the traditions have become selectively arranged, seems to have been taken into consideration. Whether this arrangement happened consciously or unconsciously is not known. It is important to recognize, however, that oral tradition does not possess a concept of mathematical time. Instead, time was a relative factor based on ecological or sociological data, or a periodization which represented stages of development such as chaos, beginnings of social organization, and the establishment of a social system. Thus, in the case of pre- and early Islamic Arabia, we learn that:

‘Alî b. Mujâhid said on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ishâq from al-Zuhrî . . . The B. Ismâ‘îl dated from the fire of Abraham to the building of the temple . . . then they dated from the building of the temple until they dispersed. . . Then they dated from the death of Ka‘b to the elephant. The dating from the time of the elephant continued until ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb dated from the Hijra which was the year 17 or 18.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 30.

³⁴¹Guillaume citing al-Ṭabarî in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 239.

Early Islamic tradition reflects the division of time in relation to periods as well as population movements. In terms of periodization, there was a *Jahilîya* which existed prior to Islam, which contrasted with the beginnings of organized society witnessed when the Prophet moved to Medina. Interestingly, many of the traditions recorded from women indicate the day on which the veil was made compulsory for women as their point of reference in time. On the other hand, in terms of population movements, we have the Prophet's emigration to Medina, which coincides with the beginnings of social organization under the Prophet of Islam; the expulsion of the B. Naḍîr, which marks the first signs of ownership of property in Medina by the Meccan Muḥâjirûn; the execution of the B. Qurayza, which symbolizes Muḥammad's final control of Medina; and the taking of Mecca, the fulfillment of his spiritual persona. There is little doubt that the various battles and raids in which the Prophet participated also provided the landmarks which indicated to the Muslim the various occasions when different passages of the Qur'ân had been revealed to the Prophet.

But this kind of periodization had little relevance for the society of Ibn Ishâq's day, by which time an Islamic lunar calendar had been established. The accommodation of tradition to the demands of this society meant that a time scheme had now to be imposed on the material—a task which Ibn Ishâq performed most efficiently. His method is to make careful injections of data regarding chronology, while insinuating at the same time that this literature was not really conscious of a precise calendar, and maintaining a balanced recognition of the fact that traditions are sometimes contradictory and not always dependable. As far as his narrative concerning Muḥammad and the Jews is concerned, it is seldom that an exact date is declared (neither the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', the murder of Ka'b, the raid on the B. Naḍîr, or the murder of Abû Rafî' have been assigned dates by

Ibn Ishâq), and even when it is, there is sometimes other material provided that tends to contradict the given chronology. A notable example is the date established for the changing of the *qibla*, which is first stated as having taken place in the month of Rajab, but later given as Sha‘bân.³⁴² At other times, Ibn Ishâq does not even make a guess, as, for example, with the murder of Abû Afak and ‘Asmâ’, which Ibn Ishâq simply places at the end of the text and leaves undated.³⁴³

It is by establishing a sequence to the series of events, a chronology, if not a precise one, that Ibn Ishâq determines most effectively his interpretation of the life of Muḥammad. In this regard his insinuation of an essential periodization of the Prophet’s life is certainly interesting:

... the apostle came to Medina on Monday at high noon on the 12th. of Rab‘ u’l-awwal. The apostle on that day was fifty-three years of age, that being thirteen years after God called him.³⁴⁴

As important is the close association Ibn Ishâq maintains between the essential chronology of events and the causes and effects of the activities of Muḥammad. Ibn Ishâq may not elaborate on chronology, but there is no denying that an important aspect of context is time. Given the fact that Ibn Ishâq’s *Sîra* is essentially oriented towards evaluating the life of the Prophet, the various contexts of his (the Prophet’s) activities required careful and honest investigation. It is by presenting himself as the honest and trustworthy scholar—was not this why the Caliph had chosen Ibn Ishâq from among so many others to write down for him the life of the Prophet—who is able to indicate to the reader the various and

³⁴²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 381 and 427.

³⁴³Ibid., 995-96.

³⁴⁴Ibid., 415; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 281.

uncertain nature of the chronology of tradition, that Ibn Ishâq asserts his command of this literature.

Narrative patterns within this literature take two basic forms, exploiting either the religious symbolism or that of the mythic hero—here both universal and *ayyâm al-‘Arab* motifs have been borrowed—separately or at the same time, as the author sees fit. Take, for instance, the way in which Ibn Ishâq introduces us to the life of the Prophet. His story has been woven into universal history mixed with legendary tales from Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The *Mubtadâ*, the first portion of the work, generates a sense of the beginning of time; through the representation of the genealogical table of the Prophet, which he traces right back to Adam, the first man to settle on earth, Ibn Ishâq indicates Muḥammad’s prophetic descent.³⁴⁵ The exact location where Adam settled is naturally Mecca, the place of the Prophet’s birth as well. Adam had built the Ka‘ba there, the house of the one God; and incidentally, one of the duties of Muḥammad was to protect God’s house. The genealogical table of Muḥammad is followed immediately by a similar table tracing the descent of the King of Yemen to the line of Ismâ‘îl, son of Abraham who rebuilt the Ka‘ba when he visited it with his son.³⁴⁶ These two tables serve to remind us that the Arabs belonged in the same tradition as the Jews; it was their ancestor Abraham who was the first of the Ḥanîfs; but he was neither Jew nor Christian, for the Ḥanîfs were chronologically previous to both Judaism and Christianity.³⁴⁷ Of equal interest is the fact that the names of the sons of

³⁴⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 3.

³⁴⁶*Ibid.*

³⁴⁷“The rabbis said that Abraham was nothing but a Jew. The Christians said that he was nothing but a Christian; so God revealed concerning them . . . Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was a Muslim *ḥanîf* and he was not a polytheist.” 384; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 260..

Ismâ'îl listed by Ibn Ishâq agree very closely with Genesis 25: 13-16.³⁴⁸ Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that this first section of the *Mubtadâ'*, which includes the story of Yemen in pre-Islamic times, is based on the Qur'ân *sûra* 85, which treats of the *asḥâb al-ukhdud*, traditionally viewed as an allusion to the downfall of the Jewish king Dhû Nuwâs; and *sûra* 105, dealing with the *asḥâb al-fil*, which is explained by exegetes as a reference to the Abyssinian governor Abraha's attempt to destroy the Ka'ba, an act prevented by God Himself.³⁴⁹ Thus, right from the start, we are made to understand the close ties that exist between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This is particularly seen in traditions regarding the building and rebuilding of the Ka'ba, into which are woven the traditions concerning the 'growing up' of the Prophet Muḥammad.³⁵⁰

The prophetic essence of Muḥammad's person is established from the beginning. He is of prophetic heritage; we know this because of his very genealogy. The plausibility of this thesis (i.e., that Muḥammad is to become a prophet) is further substantiated by the fact that not only was Muḥammad's grandfather the keeper of the Ka'ba, but he had also experienced that very same crisis experienced by his ancestor Abraham: the need to sacrifice his son, Muḥammad's father, 'Abd Allâh. And one can take the image a step further: it was Abraham's grandson Jacob who dreamed of a ladder that reached up to the heavens; Muḥammad's *mi'râj* from Jerusalem was a striking parallel.

It is the nature of his submission that makes of Muḥammad a prophet 'like unto Abraham.' As Abraham, so was he responsible for the destruction of idols in his hometown, and beyond. But Muḥammad's story also recalls that of Moses,

³⁴⁸Horrovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 3, 179.

³⁴⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allah*, 3-41.

³⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 46.

who, like him, was taken away from the love of his own family to live with a foster mother (or is Ibn Ishâq merely recalling some Iranian customary practice which did not allow that a mother suckle her own children?);³⁵¹ and again like Moses and so many other prophets such as Noah and Hûd, Muḥammad brings down the wrath of God on those who deny Him, to effect their subjugation: the B. Qaynuqâ' are subordinated, never to be heard of as a community again; the B. Naḍîr are exiled; and the B. Qurayza executed. At the same time, we are also introduced to many Christ-like miracle performances in the *maghâzî* section of the *Sîra*, such as the healing of wounds³⁵² and the feeding of the multitude, for example.³⁵³ This compulsive need to bring man to God is indeed what appears to be the peculiar characteristic of prophets, and what better way than by performing miracles? Thus, despite the inherent belief of Islam which insists that Muḥammad is but a man and that the only miracle of Islam is the Qur'ân, Ibn Ishâq chooses to vest him with miraculous powers in order to assert his Prophetic authority. And yet the Biblo-Qur'ânic materials were not Ibn Ishâq's only source of inspiration; there were the mythic patterns endorsed through the symbolism displayed in the manner in which the B. Naḍîr attempted to kill the Prophet by throwing a rock upon him, for instance, while the execution of the B. Qurayza found its inspiration in tales of *Ayyâm al-'arab*.

More importantly, because the techniques of Arabic writing had not yet been fully developed in the time of the Prophet, it was largely through oral communication that his story was to be communicated through the passage of time. Oral traditionists adopted the mnemonic of myth, number, and rhyme, and somewhere along the way the saga of the *ayyâm* tales had become incorporated

³⁵¹Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte," 60-61.

³⁵²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 552.

³⁵³*Ibid.*, 672.

into the prophetic persona of Muḥammad. Muḥammad's life could not escape the pattern of the mythic hero who must leave home and win his accolades before he could obtain recognition.³⁵⁴ And leave home he did—to meet the Jews, who, in this literature, were the very personification of the unknown, the suspect, and all that that represents. That it was Muḥammad who had to set the record straight by prescribing the punishment of stoning against the Jewish couple guilty of adultery, despite the presence of the many learned rabbis in the community, made the corruption of the Jews clear.³⁵⁵

The mythic component on which the basic chronology of Muḥammad's life has been built must be appreciated. It is significant that it is only after Muḥammad has defeated the Jews of Khaybar, Fadak, and Taymâ', albeit on the basis of religious tolerance, that 'God' (or the Meccans?) permits him to enter Mecca as its master, and concentrate on his spiritual journey. Of equal interest is the tradition presented by Ibn Ishâq that it is only after the taking of Khaybar that Muḥammad weds Ṣafîya, the daughter of his arch-enemy Ḥuyayy b. Akṭab, who was put to death along with the B. Qurayza.³⁵⁶ The story symbolizes the containment of the Jewish community; Ṣafîya's ready conversion to Islam explains and justifies their subordination.

In conclusion, it seems very obvious that, in his Sîra, Ibn Ishâq was shaping tradition to establish the legitimacy of the Arab, 'Abbâsid caliphate, not only over Muslims and Arabs, but over Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians as well

³⁵⁴"The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation - initiation - return . . ." The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men. See Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces 30.

³⁵⁵Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 393-94.

³⁵⁶Ibid., 766.

as Persians and Byzantines. This he does very effectively by establishing Mecca as the birthplace of original monotheism, and Muḥammad, the nephew of al-‘Abbâs, the progenitor of the ‘Abbâsids, as the last of the monotheistic prophets. It was here that Adam had built the first house of God, which was rebuilt first by Abraham, and then much later by Muḥammad’s family. Muḥammad, the descendent of Abraham through his son Ismâ‘îl, was not just a prophet who brought the message of God to the Arab people and the rest of mankind, however. He was also a valiant hero who embodied all the virtues of bravery, courage, honesty and forgiveness with which the Persians and Byzantines imbued their own heroes. He was the last prophet of God who had come to revitalize the monotheism of prophets as well as the leadership of men, which had somehow become adulterated with time. His course of action was severe. But if one understands Ibn Ishâq’s communication, there is no need to apologize. From the very beginning, prophecies (and here Ibn Ishâq brings together both universal mythic and Biblo-Qur’ânic notions of the ability to predict) had indicated that ‘the Messiah’ would come from Mecca, and that his dominion would prevail until the end of time. This is the essence of the vision of the Tubba’ of Yemen.³⁵⁷ A warning had been provided by Ibnu’l-Hayyabân, the Syrian Jew who had left his home to seek out the expected prophet:

His time has come . . . and don’t let anyone get to him before you, O Jews; for he will be sent to shed blood and to take captive the women and children of those who oppose him. Let not that keep you back from him.³⁵⁸

Despite Muḥammad’s gestures of recognition, the majority of the Jews had remained his adversaries “because God had chosen His apostle from the Arabs.” Finally, possibly in recognition of their common belief in a single God,

³⁵⁷Ibid., 9-10.

³⁵⁸Ibid., 136; Guillaume’s trans. in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 94.

and for reasons of sheer practicality—to say nothing of the revelation that commands his obedience³⁵⁹—Muhammad agrees to accommodate the Jews, tolerating their religious practices in return for their payment of a tax.

³⁵⁹Qur'ân, 9:29.

Chapter Three

Al-Wâqidî and his Kitâb al-maghâzî

Under the entry “*sîra*,” The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam states “only one other writer has a position of hardly less importance than Ibn Ishâq, namely Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wâqidî (797 - 874) . . .”¹ Yes, the dates stated are incorrect, but they belong with the quotation, and I have included them if only to indicate to the reader how little known al-Wâqidî is by the scholars of today. Born in 130/747, al-Wâqidî was better known in his own time; indeed, his Kitâb al-maghâzî was an important source for the narration of the life of the Prophet in the historical writings of both al-Balâdhurî (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarî (d. 310/923), entitled Futûḥ al-Buldân and Ta’rîkh al-rusul wa’l mulûk, respectively, to say nothing of the significant influence it had on the making of Ibn Sa’d’s (d. 230/845) Kitâb al-tabaqât.² Named Abû ‘Abd Allâh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, better known as al-Wâqidî after his grandfather al-Wâqid, *mawlâ* to ‘Abd Allâh b. Burayda of the Banû Aslam of Medina, he too, like his fellow compiler Ibn Ishâq, belonged in the category of *mawâlî*,³ but was born just in time to see the ‘Abbâsid revolution (133/750), which put an end to the kind of class distinctions that had been

¹ Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, eds. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), s. v. “Sîra.”

² EI¹, s. v. “Al-Wâqidî.”

³ Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet,” part 4., 498.

permitted by the Umayyads.⁴ According to Abû Faraj al-Iṣfahânî, al-Wâqidî's mother was the daughter of 'Îsâ b. Ja'far b. Sâ'ib Khâthir, a Persian,⁵ and the great granddaughter of Şâ'ib, who introduced music into Medina.⁶ Al-Wâqidî himself was born in Medina during the reign of caliph al-Marwân b. Muḥammad (126/744 - 133/750).⁷ The crucial factor that differentiates the life of al-Wâqidî from that of his predecessor, Ibn Ishâq, is that while Ibn Ishâq lived for many years under an Umayyad caliphate which, according to what little evidence we have, does not seem to have appreciated his scholarship, al-Wâqidî lived almost all his life under an 'Abbâsid caliph whom he favored.

We do not have any information on al-Wâqidî's early education. That he was well versed in the traditions concerning the Prophet's life is, however, indicated by the fact that he acted as a pilgrim's guide in Medina. It was in the year 170/786, when the Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd, while performing the pilgrimage, decided to visit Medina with his *wazîr* and companion Yaḥyâ b. Khâlîd al-Barmakî,⁸ that in response to their request for a tour of the holy places in the city, al-Wâqidî was introduced to them as a guide. From this moment on, al-Wâqidî was established on a fairly secure footing, being financially provided for by either the Caliph al-Rashîd, or the Caliph's companion and advisor, Yaḥyâ al-Barmakî, in times of need.⁹

⁴EI², s.v. "Mawlâ."

⁵Abû Faraj al-Iṣfahânî, *al-Aghânî* (Cairo: 1935), 8: 322, cited in Jones, introduction to *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, by al-Wâqidî, 5.

⁶Al-Iṣfahânî, *al-Aghânî*, 7: 189, cited in EI¹, s. v. "Al-Wâqidî."

⁷Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 7b: 77 and 5: 321.

⁸Al-Ṭabarî, *Ta'rikh*, 3 (1): 605; he adds that Hârûn was on pilgrimage in A.H. 180 as well, see *Ta'rikh*, 3: (1): 645, cited in Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 499, and f. n. 2.

⁹There were three particular instances when al-Wâqidî was in dire need according to Ibn Sa'd: in A.H. 180 when he decided to visit Baghdad to get some aid; the time when he gave up what he had for the 'Alids, but was helped nevertheless soon after (for this occasion we are not given a date by Ibn Sa'd); And finally when, after having

In the year 180/796, al-Wâqidî traveled from Medina to Iraq because, according to Ibn Sa'd, of the huge amount of debt he had accumulated.¹⁰ Jones claims that this move was probably due to the writer's desire to meet Yaḥyâ al-Barmakî,¹¹ and from what Ibn Sa'd tells us, it does seem that the latter was extremely generous and gentle with al-Wâqidî.¹² Al-Wâqidî recounts for us how he was invited to partake in the discussions held at al-Raqqā under the auspices of Yaḥyâ al-Barmakî during the last days of the Ramaḍān, when he visited him with the hope of obtaining some financial aid. He indicates to us that even then his opinions were considered unusual:

I sat down and began to speak of that of which he had conversed with me, and the answers which I gave to him were different from those of the others. I saw how the company wrinkled their brows.¹³

Despite his high regard for Yaḥyâ, al-Wâqidî does not seem to have been victimized when the Barmakids fell out of favor (187/803) with Hârûn al-Rashîd. In fact, a certain caliphal concern for al-Wâqidî's welfare was maintained by al-Ma'mûn (d. 198/813), the son and heir to al-Rashîd.

According to Yâqût, al-Wâqidî had been appointed judge over eastern Baghdad by the Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd.¹⁴ It is more certain, however, that around the year 204/819, he was appointed by al-Ma'mûn to the position of *qâdî*

been appointed judge by al-Ma'mûn, the latter settled his debts. See Ibn Sa'd *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 5: 314-21; also Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 506-14.

¹⁰Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 7: 77.

¹¹Jones, introduction to *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, by al-Wâqidî, 7.

¹²Wâqidî is supposed to have protested his affection for Yaḥyâ after his death, Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 5: 321.

¹³Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 5: 318-19, cited in Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 507.

¹⁴Yâqût, *Mu'jam al-udabâ'* cited in Jones, introduction to *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, by al-Wâqidî, 8. According to Horovitz however, no earlier source gives this information, a fact which places it in considerable doubt; *EI*¹, s.v. "Al-Wâqidî."

in eastern Baghdad; more specifically, over the military camp of the prince al-Mahdî at Râşâfa.¹⁵ It is significant that he was able to accumulate a considerable collection of books, and even produce a large volume of writing in Baghdad.¹⁶ As for his financial needs, he seems to have been a spendthrift by nature and generous to a fault; he was unable to refuse others in need, which often meant that he fell into debt, and invariably needed financial assistance to get out of the mess. The fact of the matter is that he was considerably dependent on his sponsors at the court for his position and was not his 'own man' in any sense of the phrase.¹⁷

To appreciate al-Wâqidî it is necessary to take note of the kinds of issues that interested him, issues which are reflected both in the material he undertook to write about, and in his general approach to the Prophet's campaigns. Ibn al-Nadîm gives us a long list of the numerous works authored by al-Wâqidî.¹⁸ Yâqût, in Mu'jam al-udabâ' divides his writings into two categories: those on *fîqh*, Qur'ân and *h adîth*, etc., entitled: (1) Kitâb al-ikhtilâf, (2) Kitâb Ghalat al-ḥadîth, (3) Kitâb al-sunna wa'l-jamâ'a wa dhamm al-hawâ, (4) Kitâb dhikr al-Qur'ân, (5) Kitâb al-âdâb, (6) Kitâb al-raghîb fî 'ilm al-Qur'ân; and those on historical issues: (7) al-Ta'rîkh al-kabîr, (8) al-Ta'rîkh wa'l maghâzî wa'l-ba'th, (9) Akhbâr Makka, (10) Azwâj al-nabî, (11) Al-saqîfa wa bay'at Abî Bakr, (12) Sîrat Abî Bakr wa wafâtuhu, (13) Al-Ridda wa'l-dâr,¹⁹ (14) al-Sîra, (15) Amr al-ḥabasha wa'l-fîl, (16) Ḥarb al-Aws wa'l-Khazraj, (17) Al-manâkiḥ,

¹⁵Ibn Sa'd, Kitâb al-ṭabaqât, 5: 314.

¹⁶Ibn al-Nadîm informs us that, "after his death al-Wâqidî left behind "six hundred cases of books, each case a load for two men. He had two young men slaves who wrote for him day and night. Previously there had been sold to him books costing two thousand gold coins." Ibn al-Nadîm, Fihrist, 214.

¹⁷See f. n. 9 above; also see Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 513.

¹⁸See Ibn al-Nadîm, Fihrist, 215.

¹⁹Which Horovitz surmises was probably two separate works erroneously made into one book. See "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 516.

(18) Yawm al-jamal, (19) Siffîn, (20) Mawlid al-Ḥasan wa'l-Ḥusayn, (21) Maqatal al-Ḥusayn, (22) Futūḥ al-Shâm, (23) Futūḥ al-'Irâq, (24) Darb ad-dananîr wa'd-darâhim, (25) Marâ'î Quraysh wa'l-anṣâr fî'l-qatâi' wa waḍ'a 'Umar al-dawâwîn, (26) al-Ṭabaqât, (27) Ta'rîkh al-fuqahâ, (28) Kitâb al-jamal, (29) Wafât al-nabî.²⁰

The above list indicates that while it is only his Kitâb al-maghâzî that has survived, al-Wâqidî was interested in the early history of Mecca and Medina and *mabda'* as well. According to al-Ṭabarî, al-Wâqidî had read Ibn Ishâq's biography of the Prophet and had gone so far as to commend his knowledge of the *maghâzî* and *ayyâm al-'Arab*.²¹ According to Horovitz, "Ibn Sa'd quotes Wâqidî once or twice as authority for the biblical history."²² Furthermore, two of his works (Akhbâr Makka and Ḥarb al-Aws wa'l-Khazraj) treat of pre-Islamic Mecca and Medina, and Horovitz informs us that Ibn Sa'd makes considerable use of al-Wâqidî's Sîra, Mab'ath, and Azwâj in his Kitâb al-ṭabaqât.²³ Thus, statements such as that of Ibrâhîm al-Ḥarbî, that "Wâqidî was the most erudite of men in the region of Islâm; but of *Jâhilîyah* he knew nothing,"²⁴ seem unfair. Nevertheless, his interest in the Islamic world was obviously greater. Thus, while four of his works deal with the life of the Prophet, the majority of his writings are devoted to excerpts from the history of Islam after the death of the Prophet, and, though none of these are extant, quotations from these works have been preserved for us in the works of later historians: accounts of the murder of 'Uthmân have been cited in both al-Ṭabarî and Ibn Hubaysh (d. 584/1188)²⁵ from the Kitâb al-dâr, for instance, while accounts from his Ta'rîkh al-kabîr, in which Wâqidî listed all the

²⁰Yâqût, Mu'jam al-udabâ', 7: 58, cited in *ibid.*, 515.

²¹Al-Ṭabarî, Ta'rîkh, 3: 2512.

²²Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 517.

²³EI¹, s.v. "Al-Wâqidî."

²⁴Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 520.

²⁵EI¹, s.v. "Al-Wâqidî."

important events of history in the form of annals up to the year 179/795 have been cited by other scholars.²⁶ As for his Kitâb al-ṭabaqât, which, after that of al-Haytham b. 'Adî al-Tha'labî (d. 207/822),²⁷ was the earliest such work, it served as the basis of Ibn Sa'd's biographical dictionary, and provided information on the companions of the Prophet and their descendants, who were divided by him into classes or categories.²⁸

Al-Wâqidî died a pauper in the fourth year of his judgeship at the age of seventy-eight, in Baghdad, in the year 207/822 or 823. He was buried at the Khayzuran cemetery.²⁹ It is said that even the shroud for his burial had to be purchased by the caliph al-Ma'mûn, whom al-Wâqidî had appointed as executor of his will.

The information I have provided above was established within a reasonable period after al-Wâqidî's death; it is based on the writings of Ibn Sa'd who was his amanuensis, and on those of al-Iṣfahânî and al-Ṭabarî, to whom much of al-Wâqidî's writings were available. Given that the anecdotes narrated are plausible, this information may be considered sufficiently reliable for appreciating the author's life. Information provided by those who lived later, that is to say, long after the death of al-Wâqidî, is suspect. For instance, Ibn Sa'd clearly informs us of his master's year of birth and death, making nonsense of the assertions of al-Ṣafadî and Ibn Taghrî Birdî, who for some reason insist that he was born in 129/746.³⁰ On the other hand, the information of al-Khaṭîb al-

²⁶Al-Ṭabarî, Ta'rîkh, 1: 2941-3060; 3: 639.

²⁷Ibn al-Nadîm, Fihrist, 99, cited in Hafsî, "Recherches sur le genre 'ṭabaqât,'" 241.

²⁸Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 516-17.

²⁹Ibn Sa'd, Kitâb al-ṭabaqât, 7: 77.

³⁰Jones, introduction to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, 5.

Baghdādî that al-Wâqidî was particularly interested in the geographical locations of places mentioned in the material concerning the campaigns of the prophet, even if a late pronouncement, is very probably correct, if only because this fact is reflected in al-Wâqidî's narrative.³¹

The claim of Ibn al-Nadîm that al-Wâqidî was Shî'î is certainly interesting, for none of the earlier biographical writers corroborate this assertion. It is to be noted that one of the ways in which *Sunnî* scholars generally expressed their low opinion about fellow scholars was by casting upon them the aspersion of being Shî'î. It is not likely that this would apply to Ibn al-Nadîm as well, however, as he himself is supposed to have held Shî'î sympathies.³² Significantly, Ibn al-Nadîm does not make a similar allegation about Ibn Ishâq, while others do, so that his statement must at least be investigated. That al-Wâqidî had 'Alid sympathies is clearly indicated by the fact that he is reported to have written a book on the birth of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. According to al-Nadîm, "it was he who quoted that 'Alî . . . was one of the miracles of the Prophet, . . . as the rod was to Mûsâ (Moses), and the raising of the dead to 'Îsâ (Jesus)."³³ Ibn Sa'd informs us that al-Wâqidî once gave up a sum of money he had just obtained with a view to settling his own financial difficulties in order to help a great-grandson of 'Alî b. Abî Ṭâlib.³⁴ Moreover, the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* presents 'Alî in a sufficiently favorable light, portraying him as an exceptionally brave warrior in the raid on the B. Naḍîr,³⁵ the battle of al-Khandaq³⁶ as well as the battle of Khaybar.³⁷ Of

³¹Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, *Ta'rîkh Baghdâd*, 3: 6.

³²EJ², s. v. "Ibn al-Nadîm," by J. Fück.

³³Ibn al-Nadîm, *The Fihrist*, 214; also see Jones, introduction to *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, by al-Wâqidî, 16-18.

³⁴Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 5: 320.

³⁵Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 372.

³⁶Ibid., 470-71.

³⁷Ibid., 654-55.

course, reports that are sympathetic to ‘Alî b. Abî Tâlib could be explained simply by the fact that ‘Alî was not only Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law, but also the father of the only grandsons of the Prophet.

Ibn al-Nadîm’s claim that al-Wâqidî was practicing *taqîya* should also be questioned. *Taqîya*, meaning dissimulation, refers to an aspect of the doctrine of the imâmate as developed by the Shî‘î Imâm Ja‘far al-Ṣâdiq (d. 145/765), which repressed the political claims of his community so that they would be tolerated by the ‘Abbâsids who were then in power.³⁸ It is perhaps significant, therefore, that in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, al-Wâqidî does not, for instance, cite the tradition regarding the occasion of the *Barâ’a*, according to which the Prophet is supposed to have said “None shall transmit it from me but a man of mine own house.”³⁹ Nor does he cite the tradition which compares ‘Alî (b. Abî Tâlib)’s relationship to Muḥammad with that of Hârûn to Mûsâ, as does Ibn Ishâq in his *Sîra*; although as pointed out by Sellheim in his essay on Ibn Ishâq, it is also true that though Hârûn was the spokesman of Mûsâ, he was not his successor, and being aware of this adds another dimension to the whole situation.⁴⁰ According to Horowitz, al-Wâqidî also does not mention ‘Alî’s name in several accounts of events in which Ibn Ishâq expressly mentions his participation.⁴¹

It is significant, however, that al-Wâqidî also suppresses information that is unfavorable to the ‘Abbâsids. Thus, for instance, he omits the name of al-‘Abbâs from the list of Muḥammad’s opponents taken prisoner at Badr, and substitutes *fulân* in the list of the providers to the Qurayshî army. He also places

³⁸S. Husain M. Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi‘a Islam* (London: Longman, 1979), 299.

³⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allah*, 921; trans. by Guillaume, Ibn Ishâq, *Life of Muhammad*, 619. Compare, al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 1077-78.

⁴⁰Sellheim, “Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte,” 51.

⁴¹*EI*¹, s.v. “Al-Wâqidî.”

al-‘Abbâs first on ‘Umar’s list of pensioners.⁴² Interestingly, though Ibn Sa’d informs us that al-Wâqidî had collected a great deal of evidence of Muḥammad’s having died on ‘Alî’s bosom,⁴³ none of this is mentioned in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, and indeed Muḥammad’s death is mentioned only referentially. It is a telling fact that he was constantly in debt and therefore considerably dependent on the generosity of the caliph. One wanders, therefore, if al-Wâqidî is merely being political rather than practicing *taqîya*, for his dependence on the caliph must have made him more sensitive to the situation of his benefactor, and inevitably affected his narration of the traditions.

According to Horovitz, the narratives of the main traditionists of al-Wâqidî (cited by al-Wâqidî in the beginning of his work) go back to well recognized authorities such as al-Zuhrî, ‘Âṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda, and Yazîd b. Rûmân. Other traditionists named by al-Wâqidî included Abû Ma’shar, Ma’mar b. Râshid, and Mûsâ b. ‘Uqba, traditionists who had apparently written books on *maghâzî* themselves.⁴⁴ Significantly, many of these names were associated with the school of Medina. In fact Horovitz, who discovers that the main traditionists of al-Wâqidî were residents of Medina, having either been born there or moved there during their productive years, asserts that it is possible to consider al-Wâqidî as a representative of the school of Medina, simply because his sources are largely Medinan.⁴⁵

⁴²See Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors,” part 4., 521.

⁴³See Ibn Sa’d, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 2 (ii): 50, 51, 61, 63, 76, 86, cited in *EI*¹, s.v. “Al-Wâqidî.”

⁴⁴Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors,” part 3., 164-68; and part 4., 495-98.

⁴⁵*EI*¹, s.v. “Al-Wâqidî,” and Horovitz, “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors,” part 4., 518.

Wellhausen, preferring the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq to that of al-Wâqidî, referring in particular to “the dream of ‘Âtika,” remarks that, in fact, the narrative of al-Wâqidî can at times be understood only if one refers back to Ibn Ishâq’s version of the tale.⁴⁶ Indeed, modern historians such as Wellhausen and Horovitz have accused al-Wâqidî of plagiarizing the work of Ibn Ishâq, for he has neglected to mention him as an authority.⁴⁷ It is arguable that the congruency that exists between the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq and the Kitâb al-maghâzî is quite inevitable. Jones points out, in the course of his defensive discussion comparing the different narrations of “the Dream of ‘Âtika,” that the dramatic outlines of the story must have been already formalized by the second century A.H., i.e., prior to the time of Ibn Ishâq, since even Ibn Kathîr, referring to Mûsâ b. ‘Uqba’s narration of it, declares it to be very similar to that presented by Ibn Ishâq.⁴⁸ Importantly, the tradition method is based on the accuracy with which traditions are transmitted from one transmitter to the next; and the reliability of a tradition is assessed not merely on the basis of the plausibility of the information being considered, but also on the reliability and memory skills of the traditionists concerned. Comparing two versions of a not particularly significant story that is related by transmitters whose traditions seem to originate from the same school of Medina, and who pride themselves on their ability to memorize and convey with accuracy, in the hope of discovering some obvious difference in the traditions transmitted, appears to me, therefore, to be inadequate and unsound. Moreover, it must be appreciated that in the particular case being investigated, the choice of narratives studied by Wellhausen and, later, Jones are merely incidental and, even worse, taken out of context and studied individually, as distinct traditions, so that the context of the

⁴⁶Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, ‘Uyûn al-athâr, 1:20.

⁴⁷See Julius Wellhausen, preface to Muhammad in Medina, by al-Wâqidî (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882), 12.

⁴⁸Jones, “Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî,” 46-47.

larger narrative which is so vital to their interpretation has not really been examined.

Investigating the charge of plagiarism in his article “Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî,” Jones examines the narration by the two biographical writers of “The dream of ‘Âtika” and “The raid of Nakhla” to find al-Wâqidî “not guilty” regarding the charge of plagiarism; but Jones does indicate that the main difference between the two is that al-Wâqidî is essentially providing an “oral and semi dramatized”⁴⁹ variation of the tradition material that was in circulation, which in fact must represent “the *qisṣa* of his own time, faithfully recorded even to the point of preserving the literary short-comings endemic in *qâṣṣ* style.”⁵⁰ Emphasizing the differences, he points out that the style of al-Wâqidî is that of the typical story-teller, and that it is possible that this is because the traditions were transmitted to him “*bi’l ma’nâ*” rather than “*bi’l lafẓ*.”

In his introduction to the Kitâb al-maghâzî, Jones claims that al-Wâqidî’s avoidance of any mention of Ibn Ishâq was probably because Ibn Ishâq had left Medina before al-Wâqidî was even born; and it was because al-Wâqidî himself had not been able to obtain traditions from any of Ibn Ishâq’s students (which is possible given the fact that his only student from Medina was Ibrâhîm b. Sa’d) that he failed to include him in his Kitâb al-maghâzî.⁵¹ Now, it is certainly possible that the writer had no personal contact, direct or indirect, with Ibn Ishâq, for it is recognized that only one Medinan continued to transmit traditions from him; but it is also true that this kind of personal contact was not necessary, and, in fact, that it was sufficient for an author merely to have read the traditions concerned, if he

⁴⁹Ibid., 46.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Jones, introduction to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, 30.

were to use the verb *dhakara* instead of *akhbaranî* or *ḥaddathanî*, when transmitting them.⁵² The fact is, as I have already explained, al-Wâqidî was aware of Ibn Ishâq's work and had even commended it, so that it is difficult to understand why he does not cite it.

On the other hand, Duri, appreciating al-Wâqidî's *Maghâzî* as typical of the school of Medina, states:

Al-Wâqidî took nothing from Ibn Ishâq. This is attributable to the attitude of Medina towards the latter, to the divergence of al-Wâqidî's approach from that of Ibn Ishâq, and to the prevailing attitude in Medina that historical *ḥadīth* materials were the property of the school of Medina and so were at the disposal of both men.⁵³

This view—that al-Wâqidî's approach diverged from that of Ibn Ishâq—is, ironically enough, corroborated by the fact that several *muḥaddith* have, contrary to Duri, voiced dissatisfaction with the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* while expressing a general acceptance of the work of Ibn Ishâq.⁵⁴

To study the assessment of al-Wâqidî's scholarship in biographical dictionaries is to notice, as in the case of Ibn Ishâq, the existence of a divergence of opinion concerning the way in which al-Wâqidî handled the traditions which constitute his narration of the *maghâzî* of the Prophet. To deal with the positive appraisals first: one finds that both al-Khaṭib al-Baghdādî and Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs point out that he had an extensive collection of books, and that he had an inextinguishable curiosity concerning the affairs of early Islam, which led him to question the descendants and *mawâlî* of either the companions of the Prophet or

⁵²See Abbott, *Historical Texts*, 13.

⁵³Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 39.

⁵⁴For instance, see Sulaymân Nadwî, "Reply [to Guillaume's Inquiry Regarding the Trustworthiness of al-Wâqidî]," in *Maqalât-i-Sulaymân*, ed. S. Mu'în al-dîn Nadwî (A'zamgarh: Matba' Ma'ârif, 1968), 2: 143-65.

of the martyrs who had died in battle during those early years. Moreover, he is also supposed to have been extremely interested in the locations mentioned in tradition and to have visited the places of historical interest, which was probably why he was chosen to act as guide to the Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd when the latter visited Medina on pilgrimage.⁵⁵ Importantly this suggests that al-Wâqidî was an informed source on the subject of the Prophet's life. According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, there are several authorities who accept the traditions of al-Wâqidî as trustworthy; Muḥammad b. Salâm al-Jumahî named him the scholar of his age; Ibrâhîm al-Ḥarbî found him trustworthy and declared that "he was the most knowledgeable of men in the matters of Islam . . ."; Darâwardî named him the "*Amîr al-mu'minîn* of tradition."⁵⁶

In direct opposition to these scholars, however, Yaḥyâ b. Ma'în calls al-Wâqidî untrustworthy, and Dâraqutnî declares his traditions to be weak; according to Bukhârî, who was in Baghdad two years after al-Wâqidî's death, everyone had abandoned al-Wâqidî; while Abû Hâtîm al-Râzî informs us that when he referred to the sources (he names Ibn Abî Za'îb and Ma'mar) cited by al-Wâqidî, he found that the latter had provided incorrect information. Shâfi'î calls his biography of the Prophet, "a collection of lies";⁵⁷ while Ibn 'Adî says that his traditions are unknown and unattested to. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal not only objects to the fact that al-Wâqidî says too much, but also calls the author a liar-- *kadhdhâb*! He objects to his use of the collective *isnâd* and the fact that he not only states all his information as a whole, but that he mixes up the information without defining the

⁵⁵Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, *Ta'rîkh Baghdad*, 3: 3-20; Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, *Uyûn al-athâr*, 1: 17-21.

⁵⁶Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādî, *Ta'rîkh Baghdad*, 3: 5.

⁵⁷See Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, *Uyûn al-athâr*, 1: 17-21; all the above traditions are also mentioned in Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî, *Tahdhîb al-Tahdhîb*, 9: 363-67, cited in Sayyid Sulaymân Nadwî, "Reply," 161. Interestingly, Bukhârî, al-Râzî, and Shâfi'î were all three much younger contemporaries of al-Wâqidî.

various strands. On being challenged by the statement that both al-Zuhrî and Ibn Ishâq also used the collective *isnâd*, Ibn Ḥanbal explains that in the case of al-Wâqidî, the information is confused to the extent that one believes that what the nephew of al-Zuhrî had stated was what al-Ma'mar had actually stated and vice versa.⁵⁸

Jones explains:

The point is well illustrated by a further account on the authority of Ibrâhîm al-Ḥarbî- 'I heard al-Musayyibî say: "We said to al-Wâqidî: You group together the *rijâl* and you say so and so related to us and you come with a single text instead of relating the *ḥadîth* of each man separately."⁵⁹

Here it must be stressed that Jones, both in the above statement and when he asserts that "it was, presumably, due to the fact that al-Wâqidî used it [the collective *isnâd*] extensively and as an essential part of the conceptual framework of his *Kitâb al-maghâzî* that scholars objected to his tradition method,"⁶⁰ in fact misrepresents the issue. As one can see from the criticisms made by Ibn Ḥanbal, this is an extremely simplistic way of describing the confusion that results from al-Wâqidî's method. The insinuation, which is difficult to accept, is that Ibn Ishâq did not confuse or mix the various traditions but maintained their distinctness. There is, however, the occasion where al-Wâqidî includes Ma'mar b. Râshid in the *isnâd* for his narration of the traditions regarding the raid on the B. Naḍîr, even though the latter, in fact, places that raid after the battle of Badr, instead of after the battle of Uḥud.⁶¹ It must be admitted, nevertheless, that the kind of criticism extended by Ibn Ḥanbal would only be appreciated by specialists in tradition, that

⁵⁸See Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, *Uyûn al-athâr*, 1: 20.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 1: 18, cited in Jones, "Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî," 50-51.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 50.

⁶¹Al-Bukhârî, *al-Jâmi' al-ṣaḥîḥ*, 5: 210, cited in Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 268.

is to say *muḥaddithûn*, who know the traditions and thoroughly understand the science of *ḥadīth*. It is important to notice that it is the traditions themselves that are being challenged, and not their sequential arrangement or chronology. The latter, as I have already explained in my first chapter, was a variable as far as the genre of *sīra-maghâzī* was concerned.

The attitude of modern Muslim scholars, equipped with the tools of Islamic *ḥadīth* criticism, to the *Kitâb al-maghâzī* of al-Wâqidī is best expressed by Sayyid Sulaymân Nadwī. Listing the names of those *muḥaddithûn* who praise al-Wâqidī as against those who oppose his traditions, Nadwī discovers that the weightier authorities, such as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Imâm al-Bukhârî, and al-Shâfi‘î, were those who considered al-Wâqidī to be unreliable. They call him a liar and discredit his methodology as being confusing. Another of the criticisms aimed at al-Wâqidī is that many of his traditionists are not known or recognized.⁶² Nadwī claims that Ibn Ishâq’s traditions are more reliable, for even though he too uses collective *isnâds*, he cites traditionists who are better recognized; moreover, argues Nadwī, Ibn Ishâq was held in esteem by recognized Islamic scholars such as al-Zuhrî and ‘Āsim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda.⁶³

Attempting to compare the traditions of al-Wâqidī to those of al-Bukhârî, Nadwī explains that among the requirements listed for a tradition to be declared ‘sound’ are that its *isnâd* should reach right back to the Prophet, and that it should not be contradicted by any other tradition. Clearly Nadwī’s analysis of tradition is based on a methodology which had not yet been established in the time of al-Wâqidī. Reflecting his prejudice, Nadwī conveniently overlooks the fact that both

⁶²See below on page 152 for a list of his main traditionists. Notice that even their dates of birth and death are not known in many cases.

⁶³Nadwī, “Reply,” 143-65.

al-Zuhrî and Ibn Ishâq did not fulfill these criteria either. Moreover, even though he is aware that *maghâzî* is a genre that developed before strict *ḥadīthī* standards were established, he still insists on trying to evaluate al-Wâqidî's *maghâzî* by the criteria of the latter. Thus one can only state that the criticism of al-Wâqidî by Nadwî is not historically informed.⁶⁴

Despite the fact that most of the traditionists used by al-Wâqidî in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî* are from the school of Medina, Nadwî, unlike Horovitz, does not view al-Wâqidî as a representative of the school of Medina, but instead characterizes him as a scholar from Iraq.⁶⁵ The transmission of *akhbâr*—the term given to the use of historical tradition material in the writing of compilations—is associated by writers such as Duri with the historical school of Iraq.⁶⁶ Nadwî's characterization of al-Wâqidî as a member of the Iraqi school is based largely on the reports of early authorities who had either known him, or of him, such as the famous al-Bukhârî.⁶⁷ While it is not certain, it is possible that it was a recognition of the stylistic play with tradition material, clearly visible in al-Wâqidî's method, that led to the compiler being characterized in that manner. On the other hand it is also true that al-Wâqidî had compiled several works on the history of the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet, and this too may have led to his being characterized as a member of the Iraqi school. According to Leder, who is presently the most outstanding scholar on the nature of *akhbâr*, authors such as al-Wâqidî who are considered unreliable authorities on *ḥadīth* are "recognized in

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 136-51. Interestingly, Duri does not list al-Wâqidî among the *Akhhârîyûn*.

⁶⁷Nadwî, "Reply," 143-65

their capacity as experts on *akhbâr*.”⁶⁸ Interestingly, it is largely through Iraqis that al-Wâqidî’s Kitâb al-maghâzî has been conveyed.⁶⁹

Based on the manuscripts used by Marsden Jones, all four of the traditionists through whom the Kitâb al-maghâzî was relayed were Iraqis: they were Ibn al-Thaljî (d. 266/879);⁷⁰ Ibn Abî Ḥayya (d. 319/931);⁷¹ Ibn Hayyawayhî (d. 382/992);⁷² and al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alî al-Jawharî (d. 454/1062),⁷³ respectively. This information is significant in that it indicates to us that for several generations, the Kitâb al-maghâzî, which came to be edited by Jones, had been considered to be a single and complete narrative: in other words, we have both the beginning and end of what al-Wâqidî had conceived as a comprehensive text.

Here it must be pointed out that the edition of Jones, which is based on three manuscripts, is the only edition that does justice to the efforts of al-Wâqidî. The main manuscript used by Jones which is preserved in the British Museum, though written in clear *naskhî* with full diacritical pointing, was, according to him discovered to be, in fact, full of errors, and extremely difficult to edit. It is significant that Wellhausen used that same manuscript to establish his German abridgment, Muhammad in Medina (Berlin, 1882); Jones finds the latter to be quite inadequate, with difficult passages left untranslated, and many passages

⁶⁸Leder, “The Literary use of the Khabar,” 314.

⁶⁹Jones, English preface to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, v.

⁷⁰Described by al-Baghdâdî as “*faqîh* of the people of Iraq in his day,” who specialized in law, the recitation of Qur’ân, and *ḥadîth*. See al-Baghdâdî, Ta’rîkh Baghdad, 5: 350; cited in Jones, English preface to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, v.

⁷¹The librarian of al-Jâhîz. See al-Baghdâdî, Ta’rîkh Baghdad, 11: 28; cited in Jones, English preface to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, v.

⁷²He specialized in *ḥadîth* and *maghâzî* and transmitted from Ibn Sa’d as well. See al-Baghdâdî, Ta’rîkh Baghdad, 3: 121; cited in Jones, English preface to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, v.

⁷³One of the ‘*ulamâ*’ of the Iraqi school, later the *qâḍî* of Medina. See Ta’rîkh Baghdad, 7: 364, cited in Jones, English preface to Kitâb al-maghâzî, by al-Wâqidî, ii.

mistranslated. The earlier edition by Von Kremer, on the other hand, is based on an incomplete manuscript.⁷⁴ According to Jones, the text published by ‘Abbās al-Shirbīnī (Cairo, 1947) “is identical with Von Kremer’s version, even to reproducing some of the errors.”⁷⁵

Muhammad and the Jews in al-Wāqidī’s *Kitāb al-maghāzī*

It is Jones’ verdict that al-Wāqidī’s work establishes a final stage in the development of writing on the *maghāzī* of the Prophet in the first and second centuries of Islam⁷⁶ and yet, quite astonishingly, the repetition and displacement methods which characterize al-Wāqidī’s use of tradition and mark his style seem to have passed Jones by. Indeed, the very approach of al-Wāqidī to *maghāzī* writing is so different from that of Ibn Ishāq that it is difficult to accept Jones’ conclusion.⁷⁷ It is the purpose of this dissertation to help the reader appreciate this difference.

Al-Wāqidī wrote his *Kitāb al-maghāzī* roughly a generation after Ibn Ishāq had composed his *Sīra*. The relevance that Ibn Ishāq had instilled into the events of the Prophet’s life seem to have taken hold, for numerous recensions of his work proliferated soon after his death, and one finds very few original equivalents⁷⁸ until the authorship of the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* by Muḥammad b. ‘Umar

⁷⁴Von Kremer, *Wakidy’s History of Muhammad’s Campaigns*, (Calcutta: 1855).

⁷⁵Jones, English preface to *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, by al-Wāqidī, vi- vii.

⁷⁶See Jones, introduction to *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, by al-Wāqidī, 29.

⁷⁷If Jones implies that al-Wāqidī’s work represents the culmination of an art form where Ibn Ishāq’s is but a step towards that culmination, then I disagree.

⁷⁸See chapter two page 48, f. n. 22, above for a list of the numerous recensions.

al-Wâqidî.⁷⁹ Importantly, al-Wâqidî himself knew Ibn Ishâq's work, and, in fact, commended him for it, declaring him to be

... a chronicler, genealogist, and traditionist, who transmitted poetry and was an indefatigable searcher of tradition, a man to be trusted.⁸⁰

While this dissertation is concerned to assert that the Kitâb al-maghâzî of al-Wâqidî is different from that of Ibn Ishâq's Sîra, I would ask the reader to consider the proposition that, knowing the work of Ibn Ishâq, al-Wâqidî deliberately set out to compile an original *sîra-maghâzî* of his own.

In al-Wâqidî's biography of the Prophet, traditions narrated by Ibn Ishâq are not visible. What had been recounted by Ibn Ishâq as the biography of the Prophet is now related by al-Wâqidî as the plain and simple *maghâzî* or achievements of the Prophet. It is an interesting fact that, unlike Ibn Ishâq, al-Wâqidî does not present his reader with the scenarios of either the Prophet's birth, emigration, or death.⁸¹ The different approach to the Prophet's life taken by al-Wâqidî is an aspect of the compiler's originality: it indicates a parallel change in the way al-Wâqidî would recount the events that constitute the life of the Prophet. Yet it would be incorrect to argue that this was because al-Wâqidî was only concerned with the raids of the Prophet. As has already been mentioned in chapter one of this dissertation, al-Wâqidî not only informs us of other subjects such as the various agreements concluded by the Prophet, but he tells, as well, of the treaty at Ḥudaybiya, the conversion of 'Amr b. al-'Âs, the destruction of al-'Uzzâ, and the Prophet's farewell pilgrimage.⁸² Sometimes the title of the raid is a mere

⁷⁹In a sense al-Wâqidî's work is the earliest biography that has come down to us, since it is only the recension of Ibn Ishâq by Ibn Hishâm that we possess, and Ibn Hishâm was a younger contemporary of al-Wâqidî.

⁸⁰Al-Ṭabarî, Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulûk, 3: 2512, cited in Guillaume, introduction to The Life of Muhammad, by Ibn Ishâq, xxxii.

mnemonic which helps recall the numerous other incidents that occurred at the same time.⁸³

In his *Sîra*, Ibn Ishâq begins by narrating the pedigree and genealogy of the Prophet Muḥammad which traces his ancestry right back through Jesus, Moses, and Abraham to Adam. He then introduces us to the *maghâzî* of Muḥammad through a *mab'ath* which tells of Mecca in the time of the Prophet's birth and youth. The main theme of Ibn Ishâq's work is the history of monotheism, with Muḥammad confirmed as the last prophet of God. The miraculous powers that we know belonged to Moses and Jesus are used by Ibn Ishâq to set the stage for the accomplishments and demonstrations of Muḥammad. And this prophetic theme is woven together with universal legendary patterns and mnemonic devices creatively linked through citations of *asbâb al-nuzûl* to establish that the Qur'ân was the message that God had revealed through Muḥammad, His last messenger to mankind.

The most dominant monotheistic presence on the peninsula during the time of the Prophet were the Jews. Through Jews and Judaism in particular, the Arabs, according to Ibn Ishâq, are introduced to concepts of monotheism. It is significant that, according to the portrayal of Ibn Ishâq, Muḥammad is born in the wake of Messianic expectations.⁸⁴ The notions of life after death⁸⁵ and of a temple sanctuary were attitudes held by the Prophet in common with the Jews. In

⁸¹The Prophet's death is mentioned incidentally in the course of the chapter on the raid of Khaybar, and Usâma's raid of Mu'ta, for instance, but these are only references to the event. See *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 678 and 1120.

⁸²See Chapter One, foot notes 41-44 above.

⁸³Thus for instance the *ghazwa muraysî'* is but a mnemonic for the recollection of the traditions regarding the scandal about 'Â'isha. See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 426-40.

⁸⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 103.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 135.

fact, Ibn Ishâq even suggests that the very entry of Muḥammad into Medina was because of the Jewish presence there.⁸⁶ It is because of this larger scheme that Ibn Ishâq is able to establish Muḥammad as the ideal monotheistic prophet so effectively.

In al-Wâqidî's Kitâb al-maghâzî, on the other hand, the achievements of the Prophet are his central concern. Here it must be emphasized that the decision to restrict his biography of the Prophet to his *maghâzî* in Medina was in no way due to ignorance, nor was it an oversight. We have seen in the portion discussing al-Wâqidî's life that he had in fact written works on pre-Islamic Arabia, viz., Akhbâr Makka and Harb al-Aws wa'l Khazraj. That he should decline to use this information, except referentially, must therefore be viewed as a deliberate act of choice. In other words, al-Wâqidî had not found it necessary or relevant to discuss monotheism in Arabia before Islam or the Prophet's youth in Mecca when he undertook to establish his Kitâb al-maghâzî. The absence of this information must, therefore, also be viewed as a statement by the author. It indicates to the reader al-Wâqidî's interpretation of what the genre of *sîra-maghâzî* was meant to be.

The insistence on the part of al-Wâqidî that he deal with only that part of Muḥammad's life which takes place after his emigration to Medina, ignoring both the time preceding his birth as well as his early years in Mecca, has its positive aspects. In order to expedite his Mab'ath, Ibn Ishâq had to depend to a considerable extent on the traditions of Wahb b. Munabbih who was renowned for his knowledge of the *Isrâ'îliyyât*, a traditionist not exactly respected by the school

⁸⁶"Now God had prepared the way for Islam in that they lived side by side with the Jews who were people of the scriptures and knowledge, . . ." *ibid.*, 286; Guillaume's trans. in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muḥammad, 197.

of Medina even in Ibn Ishâq's day.⁸⁷ In Ibn Ishâq's version, similar traditions were usually presented with the phrase "they allege," roughly meaning 'it is rumored.' Al-Wâqidî chose to avoid such traditions, creating the impression that he was willing to deal only with those traditions which were most reliable. Yet importantly, his attitude also signifies an avoidance of the tales of the pre-Islamic prophets—the *Isrâ'îliyât* for which Ibn Munabbih was renowned—which had been learned from Jews and Christians. It is possible that al-Wâqidî was affected by the changing attitudes of the Muslim authorities with regard to the tolerance of other confessional groups. In my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, I have already discussed how the mood of tolerance which prevailed during Ibn Ishâq's life time was fast changing into one of suspicion.⁸⁸

It is important to understand the difference in the nature of the relationship that existed between Muḥammad and the Jews, as conveyed first by Ibn Ishâq and then by al-Wâqidî. It is clear that Ibn Ishâq communicates the influence of Jews and Judaism, whether positively or negatively, in the making of Islam. This conflict is stressed in his statement of religious issues, such as those brought out in the chapter analyzing the Qur'ânic *sûra* entitled "the Cow," of which "the first hundred verses . . . came down in reference to these Jewish rabbis and the hypocrites of Aus and Khazraj . . .,"⁸⁹ as well as by the significance given to such issues as that of the changing of the *qibla*.⁹⁰ It is also seen in the nature of the agreement as depicted in the 'Constitution' and the change in the approach to the Jews indicated by the agreement finally established in Khaybar.⁹¹

⁸⁷See Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 135.

⁸⁸See my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, page 66, above.

⁸⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 363,

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 381 and 398-99.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 341-44; and 764.

By contrast, al-Wâqidî barely refers to the religious controversies that arose between Muḥammad and the Jews. The issue of the *qibla* is avoided by al-Wâqidî. There is no mention of Muḥammad giving his verdict regarding the adulterous Jewish couple.⁹² Muḥammad does not interfere to adjust the blood value of the Jews and alter it to equate that of the B. Naḍîr with that of the B. Qurayza.⁹³ It would appear that, according to al-Wâqidî, the Jews of Medina generally lived as an independent community throughout Muḥammad's life in Medina, and the notion of the Jews living as an *umma* with the Muslims, under the common protection of a *dhimma* Allâh, was never considered. One wonders if the absence of such views in the narrative of al-Wâqidî is due to his rejection of the idea suggested by Ibn Ishâq that Muḥammad may have been willing to accommodate the Jews in anticipation of their acceptance of his prophethood.

In his portrayal of the Jews, al-Wâqidî denies their understanding of monotheism. Instead he shows the Jews to be confused and considerably influenced by the pagan Arabs. As early as in the chapter on the exile of the B. Naḍîr, for instance, we are told that the daughter of Kinâna b. Ṣuwayrâ' had a relationship with Ḥassân, a relationship which would have been taboo under Islam, given that Ḥassân was a pagan at that time.⁹⁴ In the same chapter, we are also informed that the Torah had been subverted by the leaders of the community.⁹⁵ An extremely interesting picture of their life in Khaybar is portrayed, showing not only that the Jewish women had taken Arabs as their foster children, but that their love for them allowed them to betray their own leaders, as happens in the case of

⁹²Ibid., 393-94.

⁹³Ibid., 395-96.

⁹⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 366.

⁹⁵Ibid., 365.

the murder of Sallâm b. Abî'l Ḥuqayq.⁹⁶ The Jews have Arabized names, Arab husbands, and even speak *Ya ḥûdîya*, which apparently is a dialect of Arabic, rather than Hebrew or Aramaic.⁹⁷ While Ibn Ishâq indicates that the Jews regretted Muḥammad's changing of his *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca, al-Wâqidî shows the reader how the Jews join in pagan ritual with the polytheist Quraysh at the Meccan Ka'ba.⁹⁸

Al-Wâqidî may have been affected by the debate on whether the early commentaries on the Qur'ân, which had taken much from Medinan Jews, should be accepted. Basrans, in particular, had a stake in insisting that the Jews of Medina were not of the Jewish sages but bedouin converts to Judaism. It seems that establishing the Jewish tribes of Yathrib as the offspring of proselytes was part of a trend in Islamic hermeneutics. The issue has partly to do with the Jewish communities living in Arabia in the time of the Prophet. Were they indeed the foreign element (ethnic Jews) that Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî had believed them to be? The significance given to Muḥammad's defeat of these people, if understood in terms of its mythic (saga) implications, seems to indicate that they must have been different from the Arabs. This regard for the ethnic Jews as people of the B. Isrâ'îl is beautifully communicated through Muḥammad's words of comfort to Ṣafîya, recorded by al-Wâqidî, "Say: My father is Harûn, and my uncle is Mûsâ."⁹⁹

The discourse on this topic in later years has insisted that these "Jews" were merely bedouin converts to Judaism, who in fact knew very little about the

⁹⁶Ibid., 391-95.

⁹⁷Newby, "Observations about an Early Judeo-Arabic," *JQR* 61 (1970-71): 217-21.

⁹⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 442.

⁹⁹Ibid., 675

interpretation of their Torah. According to the renowned authority on Medina al-Samhûdî (d. 911/1505), ‘Abd al-Malik b. Yûsuf, who was known as al-Asmâ’î (d. 213/828), had established the tradition that the Jews of the B. Naḍîr and B. Qurayza were from the Judham and Shu‘ayb. Says Ibn Khaldûn, criticizing Ibn Ishâq for citing Ḥuyayy b. Akḥṭab and his brother Abû Yâsir regarding a tradition on the numerical value of letters, “[they] are not the sort of people whose opinion should be considered an argument; nor were they of the Jewish sages, since they were bedouin of Ḥijâz, ignorant of crafts and sciences, and even of the knowledge of their own law or the legal aspects (*fīqh*) of their book and religion.”¹⁰⁰

In the context of this dialogue, the position taken by al-Wâqidî appears to be one that lies somewhere in between. While agreeing with the claim that the B. Naḍîr and B. Qurayza were ethnic Jews, he, however, explains that their knowledge of Judaism had been adulterated or significantly reduced by their having lived with the pagan Arabs and intermarried with them. The point al-Wâqidî seems to be making is, on the one hand, that the shaping of Islam was not touched by Jewish influence either in a negative or positive manner, for the Jews of Arabia were ignorant of their faith; on the other, that the Jews in Iraq should not be consulted for their skills in exegesis which they are supposed to have inherited from their forefathers, for their abilities had become considerably diluted since even the time of the Prophet.

According to Horovitz:

The Kitabu’l - Maghazi is . . . much richer in accounts of the events of the Madînah period than the work of Ibn Ishâq, though indeed a part of these

¹⁰⁰Ibn Khaldûn, Muqaddima, (Cairo: 1930), 332, 439, cited in Gil, “The Origin of the Jews of Yathrib,” 220.

accounts belong not properly to historical but rather to juristic Hadīth. In this respect also Wâqidī's book stands nearer to the Hadīth collections . . .¹⁰¹

That al-Wâqidī's narrative, generally speaking, is much richer in the accounts of events appears to be true: thus, for instance, his information about the Jewish groups as they leave Medina for a new home is much more colorful in the sequences concerning the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍīr.¹⁰² So is his account of what follows after the execution of the B. Qurayza; the scenario he presents us of Sa'd b. Mu'âdh's death;¹⁰³ the information he provides concerning how the Jews meeting in Khaybar plan to join together, but this time without the Arabs, to attack Muḥammad;¹⁰⁴ the unheard-of details regarding the Prophet's marriage to Ṣaḥīya;¹⁰⁵ and the material he provides on the more conspicuous characters such as Abû Râfi'¹⁰⁶ or Abû Lubâba.¹⁰⁷ And then there are the popular tales of early Islam, the story of how 'Urwa b. Ward lost his beloved in a state of drunkenness to the B. Naḍīr,¹⁰⁸ of Nabbâta, who, according to al-Wâqidī, is supposed to have been persuaded by her husband to drop the millstone onto the Muslims below, and thus killed one of them.¹⁰⁹

Many of the juristic and ritualistic issues dealt with by al-Wâqidī had already been mentioned by Ibn Ishâq: the Prophet's right to one-fifth of any booty

¹⁰¹Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 519.

¹⁰²Al-Wâqidī, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 180 and 374-76.

¹⁰³Ibid., 525-29.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 529-31.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 707-09.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 391-95.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 505-09.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 376.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 516-17.

that has been taken by force¹¹⁰ and to his acquisition of the entire property belonging to an enemy when force is not used, as happens in the case of the property of the B. Naḍir and the Jews of Fadak;¹¹¹ the ruling that one ensures that a woman captured in war is not pregnant and is in a state of 'cleanliness' before being enjoyed sexually;¹¹² the prohibition against consuming the flesh of the domesticated donkey;¹¹³ and traditions which asserted that even those women who helped in the war effort by nursing the wounded, for instance, were not entitled to a share of the booty, for the Prophet had granted them only gifts of appreciation.¹¹⁴

As regards a few of these rulings, where Ibn Ishâq appears quite vague, al-Wâqidî establishes a more precise practice. Ibn Ishâq, for instance, indicates that a male is responsible for his actions when he becomes an adult, a ruling which is indicated when all male adults among the B. Qurayza are punished by execution. He does not indicate, however, how adulthood is to be determined.¹¹⁵ Al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, defines 'adult' as any male who has attained puberty.¹¹⁶ Similarly, while Ibn Ishâq establishes that the portion of the booty which is granted to the Prophet is for God and His Prophet, his wives, his kindred, etc., he

¹¹⁰According to both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî this division is first established by Qur'anic revelation soon after the battle of Badr. See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 481; and al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 134.

¹¹¹See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 654-55, and 764 and 776-77; and al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 377-78 and 706-07.

¹¹²See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 759. Al-Wâqidî indicates the same information through the Prophet's own behavior when he takes Rayḥâna bint Zayd for his wife/ concubine, but also, as does Ibn Ishâq, at Khaybar; see al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 521 and 682.

¹¹³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 758; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 661.

¹¹⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 767-68; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 687.

¹¹⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 692.

¹¹⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 517 and 524.

does not explain who the kindred of the Prophet are.¹¹⁷ Al-Wâqidî defines them as the “sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.”¹¹⁸ The definition is interesting, given the fact that there was a time when ‘kindred’, *dhû’l qurbâ*, was more broadly defined to mean the Quraysh.¹¹⁹

And there are also those traditions regarding the origin of Islamic practices which are peculiar to al-Wâqidî alone: the prohibition against burning crops, which though permitted in the case of the date palms of the B. Naḍîr, is prevented during the capture of Khaybar, when Abû Bakr persuades the Prophet that it is a meaningless exercise¹²⁰—a ruling which therefore originates from the words of the Prophet rather than a Qur’ânic revelation—and interestingly is in keeping with al-Wâqidî’s approach;¹²¹ and the occasion for the revelation regarding women’s right to inheritance (not booty),¹²² for instance.

Organization seems to direct al-Wâqidî’s very method and presentation of material. The compiler begins his *Kitâb al-maghâzî* by citing for the reader the names of the twenty-five most important traditionists upon whose traditions his principal account is based. These are: Mûsâ b. Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm b. al-Ḥârith al-Taymî (d. 151/768); Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allâh b. Muslim al-Zuhrî (d. 152/769); ‘Abd al-Raḥmân b. ‘Abd al-‘Azîz b. ‘Abd Allâh b. ‘Uthmân b. Ḥanîf (d. 162/779); Ibn Abî Ḥabîba (d. 165/782); Muḥammad b. Ṣâliḥ b. Dînar (d. 168/784); Abû Ma’shar (d. 170/786); Ismâ’il b. Ibrâhîm b. ‘Uqba (d. after 160/777); ‘Abd al-

¹¹⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 655.

¹¹⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 378.

¹¹⁹See J. Van Ess, “The Beginnings of Islamic Theology,” in *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning: Proceedings of the First International Colloquium on Philosophy Science and Theology*, Sept. 1973 ed., John Emery Murdoch and Dudley Sylla (Boston: D. Reidel, 1975), 97.

¹²⁰Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 644.

¹²¹See al-Wâqidî’s explanation of Qur’ân 59:7 in *Ibid.*, 382.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 658.

Majîd b. Abî 'Abs (d. 164/781); 'Amr b. 'Uthmân b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Sa'îd b. Yarbû' al-Makhzûmî (d. 169/785-179/795); Mûsâ b. Ya'qûb b. 'Abd Allâh b. Wahb b. Zam'a (d. 158/775); 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Miswar b. Makhrama (d. 170/786); Abû Bakr b. 'Abd Allâh b. Muḥammad b. Abî Sabra (d. 202/817); Sa'îd b. 'Uthmân b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. 'Abd Allâh al-Taymî (d. ?); Yûnus b. Muḥammad al-Zafarî (d. ?); 'Â'idh b. Yaḥyâ (d. ?); Muḥammad b. 'Amr (d. ?); Mu'âdh b. Muḥammad al-Anṣârî (d. ?); Yaḥyâ b. 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Qatâda (d. 95/714); Muḥammad b. Yaḥyâ b. Sahl b. Abî Ḥatma (d. ?); 'Abd al-Ḥamîd b. Ja'far (d. 153/770); 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Muḥammad b. Abî Bakr (d. 135/752); Ya'qûb b. Muḥammad b. Abî Ṣa's'a (d. 169/785-179/795); 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Abî Zinâd (d. 174/790); Mâlik b. Abî al-Rijâl (d. 154/771-164/781); 'Abd al-Ḥamîd b. 'Imrân b. Abî Anas (d. 74/693).¹²³ According to Horovitz, "almost all these authorities are natives of al-Madînah or had come to live there."¹²⁴ Having given the reader the names of his authorities, al-Wâqidî then follows up with the statement that

... each of them related to me a portion of this, some of them being more trustworthy (having a keener memory) in their accounts, and others have related to me also. I wrote down all that they related to me: they said. . . .¹²⁵

Al Wâqidî then lists chronologically all the important events that he is about to discuss in the next several pages. Having thus very systematically laid out for the reader the organization of the contents of his book, al-Wâqidî then proceeds.

Most of al-Wâqidî's information is carefully differentiated and classified. The *maghâzî* material, for instance, consists of *ghazawât*, in which the Prophet

¹²³See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 1; for a study of the traditionists used by al-Wâqidî, see Sachau, "Studien zur ältesten Geschichtsüberlieferung," 164-85.

¹²⁴Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 518.

¹²⁵Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 2; but see also the collective *isnâd* for the traditions concerning the raid on the B. Naḍîr, *ibid.*, 363.

himself participates, and *sarîya*, which are raids in which the Prophet does not take part.¹²⁶ The information al-Wâqidî establishes is methodically arranged, the notice concerning each event being introduced by the date of that event and concluded with information on who was in charge of Medina during the Prophet's absence.

Aspects of al-Wâqidî's method suggest a concern to establish a chronology and context. The basic sequence of the various events appears to be carefully considered and synchronized. Thus, for instance, he carefully dates the various incidents in the life of the Prophet, even those incidents for which Ibn Ishâq has provided no chronological data, such as the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' ¹²⁷ and the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf.¹²⁸ It is important to note that this chronology is stated at the beginning of each chapter, on his own authority, distinct from the traditions which inform of the incidents that constitute the event. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the ability to establish such a chronology appears to be a feature of the *maghâzî* genre, for, as I have explained in my first chapter, it is seldom that one finds consensus regarding the date of a particular event among the various compilers. Sometimes al-Wâqidî alters the chronology provided by Ibn Ishâq, which has been understood by writers such as Duri and Jones to indicate that he is more authoritative on the subject, although it may simply mean that he is merely offering the reader an alternative interpretation, as, for instance, with the

¹²⁶Jones, "The *maghâzî* Literature," 344.

¹²⁷Ibn Ishâq does not provide a date for the event; see Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545; al-Wâqidî on the contrary dates the raid in the month of Shawwâl, twenty months after the Prophet's emigration; see *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176.

¹²⁸Al-Wâqidî dates it as the month of Rabî' al-Awwal, in the year 3. See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 184.

raid of al-Sawîq¹²⁹ and the killing of Abû Râfi'.¹³⁰ At other times he indicates a chronology where Ibn Ishâq is either uncertain or just not willing to take a guess: as, for instance, with the *sarîya* of 'Alî b. Abî Tâlib to Fadak¹³¹ and the murder of Usayr b. Zârim, a Jew from Khaybar.¹³² As well, there is a remarkable consciousness regarding the geography of the regions where the Prophet was born, received his revelations, and finally died. The detail with which al-Wâqidî explains the way the Prophet divides up the work involved in digging the trench, for instance, tells of an eye for realism which is quite remarkable.¹³³

Often al-Wâqidî introduces more detail than Ibn Ishâq, creating the impression of being better informed, as for instance when he tells of the refusal of Ka'b b. Asad, the leader of the B. Qurayza, to come to the rescue of the B. Naḍîr when the Prophet besieges the latter;¹³⁴ when he describes the participation of the Jews and Meccans in pagan ritual around the Ka'ba;¹³⁵ and when he relates the numerous traditions that inform of how the enemies of the Prophet, who had gathered to attack him at the battle of Khandaq, were deceived into quarreling among themselves.¹³⁶

Many of the traditionists cited by al-Wâqidî go back to the School of Medina, of which al-Zuhrî, the teacher of Ibn Ishâq, was the founder; and several

¹²⁹For instance al-Wâqidî places the raid of Sawîq after the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', and by providing the exact date of both events, asserts his authority on the subject. Ibid., 181.

¹³⁰Al-Wâqidî dates Abû Râfi's murder in the year four, having told us of his considerable authority in the chapter on the exile of the B. Naḍîr. See Ibid., 391.

¹³¹Ibid., 562-64.

¹³²Ibid., 566-68.

¹³³Ibid., 445.

¹³⁴Ibid., 368.

¹³⁵Ibid., 442.

¹³⁶Ibid., 480-94.

of the traditions go back to fellow students of Ibn Ishâq, such as Ma'mar b. Râshid (96/715) or Abû Ma'shar (d. 170/786). Probably because both authors were considered to be dealing with the same data, namely, the life of the Prophet, and because many of the events al-Wâqidî describes compare with those narrated by Ibn Ishâq, the notion that both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî were in fact narrating the same material seems to have developed. Indeed, it has been claimed that al-Wâqidî's dependence on Ibn Ishâq was so great that there are portions of the Kitâb al-maghâzî which are unintelligible unless studied with reference to Ibn Ishâq's text.¹³⁷ The conspicuous avoidance of Ibn Ishâq by al-Wâqidî has been glibly explained away by some scholars with the assertion that he was guilty of plagiarism, and by others as being due to the fact that traditions had to be communicated personally, and that al-Wâqidî had not had the opportunity of such direct contact with the older compiler.

The fact of the matter, as this dissertation seeks to prove, is that Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî are not saying the same thing. While al-Wâqidî indicates an awareness of the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq throughout his compilation, he never completely agrees with him. Al-Wâqidî does not cite traditions from Ibn Ishâq nor accept his chronology of events, and indeed does supply details which differ conspicuously from those established by his predecessor. Nevertheless, as we have seen above, al-Wâqidî is known to have commended the traditions of Ibn Ishâq. Clearly then, the chronology and the details established by Ibn Ishâq were not the criteria upon which his affirmation of the author's Sîra was based.

¹³⁷“Das Verständnis Vakidi's wird dann nur durch Vergleichung des Ibn Ishâq möglich . . .”, see J. Wellhausen, introduction to Muhammad in Medina, by al-Wâqidî, 12.

Al-Wâqidî's contribution to the genre was inspired by the developing methods of the compiler. With al-Wâqidî a few patterns are conspicuous. Thus, for instance, one sees a recontextualizing of tradition, sometimes through chronological variation and sometimes through repetition, as compared to the work of Ibn Ishâq. In the case of the incident at the fortress of Fânî', al-Wâqidî mentions the tradition both at the battle of Uḥud and again during the battle of Khandaq;¹³⁸ on the other hand he moves the prayer of Sa'd b. Mu'adh from the scene of Khandaq where it is narrated by Ibn Ishâq, to the raid of the B. Qurayza.¹³⁹

Also fascinating is the way al-Wâqidî re-characterizes some of the *Sîra* personalities who have been portrayed by Ibn Ishâq in a biblical manner. Thus, for instance, Salmân al-Fârisî, who is presented as one of those seeking Islam in the manner of one of the three wise men who had visited Bethlehem in search of Christ,¹⁴⁰ is remembered by al-Wâqidî for his knowledge of tactical warfare;¹⁴¹ as for Abû Lubâba whom Ibn Ishâq represents as a kind of Muslim Judas,¹⁴² al-Wâqidî successfully denies him that role by telling the reader of his generally aggressive attitude towards the Prophet from earlier on in the time of Uḥud.¹⁴³ According to Leder, the activities of the *Akhbârîyûn* included the reshaping and creation of narrative material, and this is exactly what al-Wâqidî seems to be doing in these cases.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 288 and 462.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 512.

¹⁴⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 136-43.

¹⁴¹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 445.

¹⁴²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 686-87; and Sellheim, "Prophet Chalif und Gescichte," 62.

¹⁴³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 505.

¹⁴⁴Leder, "The Literary uses of the Khabar," 314.

At the same time one also witnesses anecdotal material used repeatedly to delineate the character traits of important personalities such as Ibn Ubayy,¹⁴⁵ Huyayy b. Akhtab,¹⁴⁶ and indeed the Prophet Muḥammad himself.¹⁴⁷ Leder, explains:

... through innumerable repetitive representations in various situations, they have come to personify certain attributes. This penchant for the depiction of characteristics may be due to the connection of *akhbâr* with a conventional or "public" art of story telling. Related to this important orientation of *akhbâr* narration is its characteristic edifying moralizing impulse.¹⁴⁸

It is the same method that al-Wâqidî uses to depict the Jewish people as an untrustworthy lot who abandon their agreements.¹⁴⁹

Sources and Contents: As with Ibn Ishâq's *Sîra*, a variety of materials are used in al-Wâqidî's *Kitâb al-maghâzî* ranging from documents to poetry and Qur'ânic citation, but most of all consisting of traditions and popular stories. As far as this case study of Muḥammad and the Jews is concerned, the documents included are largely lists—of those who participated in the various battles and

¹⁴⁵For instance al-Wâqidî's depiction of Ibn Ubayy as a hypocrite who could not be depended on even by his confederates, is indicated in both the episode of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' and the exile of the B. Naḍîr; see al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 178, 371.

¹⁴⁶The jinxed character of Huyayy is indicated both in the chapter on the B. Naḍîr, and in the chapter of al Khandaq; see, for instance, *ibid.*, 369-70 and 455-57.

¹⁴⁷The Prophet is depicted as an excellent leader who consults with his companions on non-religious matters, as for instance the decision to move out of Medina for the battle of Uhud, to distribute the land taken from the B. Naḍîr among the *muhâjirûn*; and the decision to build a trench around Medina for the battle of Khandaq. See *ibid.*, 209-11; 379; and 445. Neither does the Prophet take treachery such as the abandoning of an agreement lightly. Each time the Jews betrayed their agreement with him, he punishes them for it as was seen in the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr and the B. Qurayza. See *ibid.*, 176-80; 363-80; and 496-521.

¹⁴⁸Leder, "The Literary Use of the Khabar," 310-11.

¹⁴⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176-80; 363-80; and 496-521.

raids;¹⁵⁰ of those who were martyred;¹⁵¹ of those who were taken prisoner;¹⁵² and of those who were given shares in various booty.¹⁵³

Besides the lists, we are told of the writing of agreements between the Muslims and the Jews, but what exactly these documents stated is not clearly established; moreover, information about them is conveyed through traditions (as is probably the case with the information regarding the so-called 'Constitution of Medina' related by Ibn Ishâq in his *Sîra*) rather than citations of the documents themselves.

As far as the so called 'Constitution of Medina' is concerned, Ibn Ishâq informs the reader that Muḥammad made a written agreement soon after his entry into Medina, just previous to the making of the pact of brotherhood between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr. Ibn Ishâq does not give the date in so many words, but he indicates the moment at which the agreement was made by placing the evidence in that particular position. According to the agreement, Muḥammad, together with the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr, agreed to let specific Jewish tribes—excluding the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza—identified by their relationship to the Medinan Arab tribes, live unmolested and as a part of the *umma* in accordance with their religious beliefs.¹⁵⁴

Did Muḥammad have the authority to make such a concession, and could the Jews have been forced to live accordingly? According to Ibn Ishâq, it would

¹⁵⁰Thus the names of those who witnessed Badr, see al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 152.

¹⁵¹As for instance those who were martyred at the battle of al-Khandaq, *ibid.*, 495-96; those killed during the raid on the B. Qurayza, *ibid.*, 529; those who were martyred at Khaybar, *ibid.*, 699-700.

¹⁵²Those who were taken prisoner at Badr, *ibid.*, 138-44.

¹⁵³Portions allotted from what was taken from the B. Naḍîr, *ibid.*, 379-80.

¹⁵⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 341-44.

seem so. The Anṣārî support, even at ‘Aqaba, had been vehement and continued to hold in Medina at this point.¹⁵⁵ More importantly, Ibn Ishâq shows us that the Jews actually permitted Muḥammad to participate in the activities of their community during the first few months after his arrival in Medina. The scenario presented by Ibn Ishâq shows Muḥammad pass sentence on a Jewish couple, raise the value of the blood price of the B. Qurayza to equal that of the B. Naḍîr, and become involved in religious arguments with them. It suggests an atmosphere of integration and active proselytizing that is barely visible in the al-Wâqidî text. Ibn Ishâq suggests that the better moments had encouraged Muḥammad to believe that the Jews could be included in an *umma* with the Muslims. Unfortunately, the activity led to much religious conflict between the two communities, and soon enough, Jewish rejection of Muḥammad. One sees Muḥammad himself turn away from the Jews with the symbolic gesture of changing his *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca. But Muḥammad’s God-given victory at Badr leads him to change his mind. Surely such a victory indicated even to the Jews that he, Muḥammad, was indeed the Chosen One? We thus see the Prophet proceed to invite the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ’ to Islam soon afterwards.¹⁵⁶ Ibn Ishâq brings to our notice the optimism with which Muḥammad invites the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ’ to Islam, for in rejecting Muḥammad, the Jews declare, “O Muḥammad, you seem to think that we are your people.”¹⁵⁷

Al-Wâqidî, for his part, does not give us any information regarding a written agreement in which the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr are key participants, as is

¹⁵⁵See my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, pages 79-80 above.

¹⁵⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

indicated in Ibn Ishâq's 'Constitution of Medina'.¹⁵⁸ It is possible that al-Wâqidî was not aware of the existence of this document; but if he knew the work of Ibn Ishâq, which I believe he did, one must admit that such a possibility is remote. Yet it is significant that even Ibn Hishâm does not cite the 'constitution' on the authority of al-Bakkâ'î, but on the authority of Ibn Ishâq himself, which suggests that even al-Bakkâ'î was either ignorant of it or had avoided it. Thus it is possible that al-Wâqidî was not aware of the so-called 'document'.

It may be that al-Wâqidî believed that the loyalty of both groups—the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr (comprising mainly the Aws and the Khazraj)—to the Prophet was such that a formal agreement between them was unnecessary. In fact, al-Wâqidî in his chapter on the B. Naḍîr indicates that the Anṣâr were honoured by the presence of the Muhâjirûn and decided which of them should host whom by casting lots.¹⁵⁹ As portrayed by Ibn Ishâq, the factionalism that existed within one of these two groups, namely the Anṣâr, had seen the Awsî undertaking to murder Ka'b b. al-Ashraf matched by that of the Khazraj when they agreed to remove Abû Râfi'. It is fear for the consequences of such rivalry that justifies an agreement being formally contracted between the three groups—the Muhâjirûn, the Aws and the Khazraj—in the Ibn Ishâq narrative. Al-Wâqidî does not call attention to this rivalry, perhaps because he believes that the Prophet had helped them to overcome it; and indeed, this is insinuated in al-Wâqidî's interpretation of the events that see the division of the land taken from the B. Naḍîr among the Muhâjirûn alone: there is no apprehension witnessed among the Anṣâr because of this action.¹⁶⁰ And this

¹⁵⁸"The Prophet wrote a document concerning the emigrants and helpers in which he made a friendly agreement with the Jews . . ." see Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 341; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 231.

¹⁵⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 378, 379.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 379.

may be the reason why he does not indicate the conclusion of such an agreement.¹⁶¹

Al-Wâqidî does indicate to the reader that Muḥammad desired to establish a *muwâda'a* agreement between all the peoples of Medina, the Aws and the Khazraj, and those who converted to Islam, on the one hand, and those who did not convert, such as the pagan Arabs and the Jews, on the other. To cite his words:

The Messenger of God came to Medina [emphasis mine] whose inhabitants were a mixed lot, consisting of Muslims whom the mission of Islam united, including the people of coats of mail and fortresses, and among them the confederates of the two tribes together, the Aws and the Khazraj. The prophet desired when he arrived in Medina to establish peace for all of them/treat all of them well and to be reconciled¹⁶² with them. It happened that a man would be a Muslim and his father a disbeliever, . . .¹⁶³

Yet at no point does al-Wâqidî indicate the conclusion of a written agreement between the Anṣâr and Muhâjirûn, as is indicated by Ibn Ishâq.

However, we are given considerable information regarding written and direct agreements between Muḥammad and the Jews. Al-Wâqidî claims that Muḥammad in fact concluded an agreement with the Jews soon after his entry into Medina. This information is first provided as an introduction to the chapter on the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ':

¹⁶¹Thus it is interesting that what appears to be a crucial sentence in Ibn Ishâq's narration of the murder of Abû Râfi', viz.: "Now Aws had killed Ka'b b. al-Ashraf before Uhud because of his enmity towards the apostle. . . so Khazraj asked and obtained the apostle's permission to kill Sallâm who was in Khaybar," is absent from the text of al-Wâqidî. See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 714; trans. by Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, 482.

¹⁶²According to E. W. Lane *wâda'ahu* means "He made a peace or reconciled himself with him;" and the term *muwâda'a* means simply "a mutual leaving, or leaving unmolested"; see *Arabic -English Lexicon*, 2:3051.

¹⁶³See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 184.

When the Messenger of God arrived in Medina [emphasis mine] all the Jews were reconciled/made a peace with him, and he wrote between him and between them an agreement/document. The Prophet attached every tribe with their confederates and established a security/protection between himself and them and he stipulated conditions to them. One of these conditions was that they would not assist an enemy against him.¹⁶⁴

Al-Wâqidî also informs us of a second contract, one that was established between Muḥammad and the Jews (of the B. Naḍîr and the B. Qurayẓa) when the latter approach him to complain of the insecure conditions that he had created when he had Ka'b b. al-Ashraf killed. Interestingly, the tradition even informs us of the location where the agreement was contracted: "at the house of Ramla bint al-Ḥârith".¹⁶⁵ It is significant that al-Wâqidî never associates this agreement with the 'Constitution of Medina' or any part of it as cited by Ibn Ishâq.

While it seems only logical that it is this latter agreement concluded in the home of Ramla that is referred to during the course of al-Wâqidî's narration of the raid of the B. Naḍîr and the battle of Khandaq, his statement regarding the agreement in his account of the latter event is not clear, especially because of the phrase "upon his arrival," with which the information on the agreement is introduced:

Upon his arrival [emphasis mine] the Messenger of God made a peace/reconciliation with the Qurayẓa and al-Naḍîr and the other Jews of Medina on the condition that they were not to take sides for or against him. It is also said that he made a peace or reconciliation with them [the Jews] stipulating that they were to protect him against anyone from amongst those who attacked him, and that they were to keep their original blood price which was prevalent among al-Aws and al-Khazraj.¹⁶⁶

This seems to indicate the same agreement as that which is mentioned earlier, in the account of the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ'. That an agreement actually existed

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 176;

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 192.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 454.

between the B. Qurayza and Muḥammad is indicated by al-Wâqidî as well, however, by the fact that according to al-Wâqidî the B. Qurayza refused to help the B. Naḍîr when the latter were being besieged by Muḥammad,¹⁶⁷ and by the fact that the B. Qurayza had lent Muḥammad their baskets and spades to dig the trench when the Muslims began preparation for the battle of the Trench.¹⁶⁸

Regarding the terms of the above agreement, it is important to notice that here al-Wâqidî clearly indicates that the blood values are maintained as before.¹⁶⁹ This differs from the information of Ibn Ishâq, which shows Muḥammad actually interfering to equate the blood value of the Qurayza and the B. Naḍîr, though this is enacted separately and does not constitute a part of the 'Constitution of Medina'.¹⁷⁰ Indeed al-Wâqidî's representation of the situation in Medina, in contrast to that of Ibn Ishâq, indicates that the various communities lived according to their own communal regulations, and that Muḥammad on his arrival did nothing to change this pattern of separate existence.

For al-Wâqidî, all these agreements are purely political in nature. Al-Wâqidî does not inform the reader that the Prophet desired to impose upon the Jews social or religious structures such as are implied by the terms *dhimmat Allâh*, *umma*, or *nafaqa* as they appear in Ibn Ishâq's account of the 'Constitution of Medina'. Indeed, al-Wâqidî does not indicate in any way that he was aware of the 'Constitution.' According to Ibn Ishâq, the attitude of the Prophet changed from one which saw the Jews as part of a single *umma*, paying *nafaqa* along with the Muslims, to one which considered them a distinctly subordinate community which

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 370-71.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 445.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 454 and 458.

¹⁷⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 395-96.

paid a *jizya* to their Muslim superiors, as when Muḥammad came to deal with the Jews of Khaybar.¹⁷¹ As for al-Wâqidî's interpretation, for him the Prophet's religious approach to the Jews was consistent throughout.

Extremely pertinent in al-Wâqidî's narrative is the statement made by 'Amr b. Su'dâ', who, while disassociating himself from the treachery of the Qurayza, nevertheless does not convert to Islam:

O Jewish people, you entered into an alliance with Muḥammad according to which you agreed that you would not help one of his enemies against him, and that you would protect him against those who attacked him. . . . If you refuse to enter [into an alliance] with him, then remain steadfast in Judaism and give the *jizya*, though, by God I do not know if he will receive it or not.¹⁷²

And the reply of the Jews to this suggestion is ominous:

We will not concede to the Arabs a tax upon our necks with which they will lord it over us. Death is better than that.¹⁷³

But what al-Wâqidî seems to be suggesting here, interestingly enough, through the voice of a Jew himself, is that the *jizya* is a payment which may take the place of Jewish participation in defending the Muslims; a payment made in compensation. It is such a payment that is agreed to by the Jews of Khaybar later on. Thus al-Wâqidî is, in fact, presenting us with a premonition of what is to come. At the same time, one may also read it as an attempt on the part of al-Wâqidî to try to

¹⁷¹Ibn Ishâq has the Jews and Muslims both living under the *dhimmat Allâh* according to the terms of Muḥammad's agreement with the Jews of Medina; but the agreement made with the Jews of Khaybar indicates that they were offered terms which would establish them under a *dhimma* from the Muslims rather than God: in other words they are no longer "a community with the Muslims;" but a community under the protection of the Muslims. Thus, the notion that Jewish monotheism can be considered comparable to Islamic monotheism, is done away with.

¹⁷²See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 503-04.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*

make a connection between the agreements concluded by the Prophet both within and outside of Medina.

And then there is an agreement which seems to have gone unnoticed, which must have been concluded by Muḥammad and those Jews who continued to remain in Medina after the execution of the B. Qurayẓa. It is indicated by al-Wâqidî just before the Prophet moves out to raid Khaybar:

Ibn Abî Ḥadrad said: O enemy of God, do you frighten us of our enemy even though you are in our protection and are our confederates [emphasis mine]? By God, surely I will inform the Messenger of God about you.¹⁷⁴

As to the consequences of disloyalty for these latter Jews of Medina, al-Wâqidî gives us no information.

It is certainly true that all these agreements indicated by al-Wâqidî sound similar to the 'Constitution of Medina'. Thus, it is significant that Julius Wellhausen should prelude his discussion of the 'Constitution of Medina' with the above citations from al-Wâqidî, because he believed that they were important for the "interpretation of the purpose of this agreement."¹⁷⁵ That al-Wâqidî's statements are not interpretations of the 'Constitution of Medina' is clear, however, because while the latter gives the Jews a subordinate place in the agreement, al-Wâqidî describes a one-to-one agreement between the Muslims and the Jews. At the same time, while the 'Constitution' deals with the recognition of the Jews as a part of the *umma* under the common protection of a *dhimmat Allâh*, al-Wâqidî merely refers to an agreement of mutual protection against their enemies. Finally, while Ibn Ishâq excludes the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 635.

¹⁷⁵Wellhausen, "Muhammad's Constitution of Medina," trans. Behn in Wensinck, Muhammad and the Jews of Medina, 128-29.

B. Qurayza, al-Wâqidî indicates direct negotiations with these very groups. Thus, rather than assume that al-Wâqidî was interpreting the 'Constitution' as narrated by Ibn Ishâq, I suggest that both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî were, in fact, providing the reader with their individual interpretations of an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews which belonged in the genre of *sîra-maghâzî*. Importantly, I would insist that these two interpretations are very different, and indicate the different approaches of the two authors. For Ibn Ishâq, there is no agreement between Muḥammad and the main Jewish communities of Medina; for al-Wâqidî there were several agreements.

The Jews of Khaybar, on the other hand, had not made an agreement with Muḥammad before he attacked them. According to al-Wâqidî these later agreements indicate no change in the religious attitude towards the Jews on Muḥammad's part. Certainly the aftermath of the raid of Khaybar sees the Jews being allowed to remain on their land, but this again is not based on any kind of development in the Prophet's religious attitude towards the Jews. The reasons as stated by al-Wâqidî seem purely pragmatic—the Jews are portrayed as excellent farmers of the date palm.¹⁷⁶

Qur'anic citations are considered to be documentary by the believer, they were revealed, after all, by God to His prophet when the occasion required it.¹⁷⁷ While al-Wâqidî intersperses a few Qur'anic verses in his narrative, as does Ibn Ishâq, it is at the end of the chapter that al-Wâqidî tends to give more attention to explaining the text as the *sabab al-nuzûl* of the Qur'anic passage with which he

¹⁷⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 690. The reasons with Ibn Ishâq are pragmatic as well, but there has been a change in the religious status granted them by the 'Constitution of Medina.'

¹⁷⁷See chapter two of this dissertation, page 88 for a definition of *asbâb al-nuzûl*.

associates the narrative; the verses cited are extensions of what has already been mentioned in the chapter concerned. It is significant that generally it is here in this position, i. e., immediately after the narrative section, that Ibn Ishâq presents the reader with a series of poems concerning the event just narrated about. Al-Wâqidî's careful linking of the revelation with the occasion described may be an attempt to fix the chronology of the Qur'ânic text. It is possible that in replacing the poetry section found in Ibn Ishâq's work with a more elaborate statement on *asbâb al-nuzûl*, al-Wâqidî may have been trying to insinuate a more reliable status for his work. There is no doubt, however, that when information gathered from traditions can be linked closely to Qur'ânic passages, as is seen in the texts of both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, a sense of historicity is generated for the believer.

Many of the citations from the Qur'ân in al-Wâqidî's work parallel those of Ibn Ishâq's, though there are differences, as, for instance, in the case of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', where Ibn Ishâq cites *sûrat âl 'Imrân* and *al-baqara*,¹⁷⁸ and al-Wâqidî *sûrat al-anfâl*.¹⁷⁹ The difference is not a superficial one, however, since the traditions cited by al-Wâqidî not only are different from those of Ibn Ishâq, but also are inevitably narrated differently. Otherwise the citations used by al-Wâqidî include *sûrat âl 'Imrân* and *al-baqara* while narrating the information regarding Ka'b b. al-Ashraf's murder;¹⁸⁰ *sûrat al-munâfiqûn* at the end of his chapter on the Battle of Uḥud;¹⁸¹ *sûrat al-ḥaṣhr* during and at the end of the chapter on the B. Naḍîr;¹⁸² and the *sûrat al-aḥzâb* at the end of the chapter on the raid of al-Khandaq.¹⁸³ It is interesting that while Ibn Ishâq has no citation of the Qur'ân at

¹⁷⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545, 546.

¹⁷⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 177.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 184-85.

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*, 319-29.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 380-83.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, 494-95.

this point, he does include *asbâb al-nuzûl* on the very same chapter i. e., *sûrat al-aḥzâb*, which, according to him, “God sent down concerning the Trench and the B. Qurayza,”¹⁸⁴ at the end of his chapter on the B. Qurayza. In al-Wâqidî’s text, just as with the text of Ibn Ishâq, there are no Qur’ânic citations either during or after the chapters on the murder of Abû Râfi‘, or on the raids on Khaybar and Fadak.

How the connection between an event and a particular verse has been achieved is difficult to discover. The biographical narrator is not necessarily following on the lead of some *mufassîr*.¹⁸⁵ It has been suggested that originally the Qur’ânic verses were the inspiration for the narratives which are now related as events which constitute the life of Muḥammad.¹⁸⁶ Given the fact that different authors cite different Qur’ânic texts for the same occasion however, it is far more likely that the choice of verse depended on the compiler concerned and was a later inclusion. As with the citations of Ibn Ishâq, however, there is no denying that the main purpose of the citation of Qur’ân in *sîra-maghâzî* is to link the life of the Prophet to the revelation, insinuate his, the Prophet’s, presence in its midst, and establish him as its worldly source. It is significant that al-Wâqidî does indeed follow up on some of his narratives with considerably lengthy passages of *asbâb al-nuzûl*, as, for example, after his narration of the raid on the B. Naḍîr and the raid/battle of al-Khandaq.

Al-Wâqidî’s use of poetry appears superficial and suggests a direct borrowing from the text of Ibn Ishâq, since the similarity is so great. If there is any plagiarism involved, it is to be found in this area, given the fact that Ibn Ishâq

¹⁸⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 693-97.

¹⁸⁵See Rubin, “The Assassination of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf,” 68.

¹⁸⁶Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, 214-24; also see *El*¹, s.v. “Sîra”, by Levi della Vida.

is supposed to have had these poems specially written for himself!¹⁸⁷ Al-Wâqidî does not, as does Ibn Ishâq quite often, tend to mark the end of a narrative with several poems. Thus, for instance, the selection of poems included by Ibn Ishâq at the end of his narrative of the raid of the B. Qurayza is excluded by al-Wâqidî. As stated above, al-Wâqidî cites far fewer poems than does Ibn Ishâq, conveying the impression that he would rather rely on the Qur'ân than on poetry. The poetry included by al-Wâqidî seems to be purely entertainment oriented, whereas Ibn Ishâq uses poetry to indicate possibly an earlier, oral tradition.¹⁸⁸

The traditions (except in the case of a *ḥâdîth* in the form of *asbâb al-nuzûl* which are cited on the authority usually of either Abû Hurayra or Ibn 'Abbâs), used by al-Wâqidî are generally presented on the basis of a more regular chain of authorities, or *isnâd*, very traditionally stated. They rarely extend back to the Prophet's time, which is just as it should have been in al-Wâqidî's day, and generally come to an end at the level of the *Ṭâbi'ûn*, the successors to the Companions of the Prophet.¹⁸⁹

Al-Wâqidî introduces his traditions in various ways. Often he uses the format of the collective *isnâd* at the beginning of an episode as the basis and authority for many of the important events that he presents to the reader. For instance, when he narrates the account of the assassination of Ibn al-Ashraf,

¹⁸⁷Compare for instance the poetry in al-Wâqidî's chapter on the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 185-92, with the poetry in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 548-53; in many of the poems al-Wâqidî seems to have changed only a handful of words; only one of the poems is not the same as that in Ibn Ishâq's text. Compare also the *naqâ'id* recited as the duels were fought at Khaybar. Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 760-62; and al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 654-57.

¹⁸⁸See my chapter on Ibn Ishâq for an evaluation of his use of poetry.

¹⁸⁹Horovitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet," part 4., 518. According to Horovitz al-Wâqidî must have been about twenty-five years or less when he began to collect traditions, for some of his authorities died only a little after A.H. 150.

‘Abd al-Ḥamîd b. Ja‘far related to me from Yazîd b. Rûmân, and Ma‘mar from al-Zuhrî, from Ibn Ka‘b b. Mâlik and Ibrâhîm b. Ja‘far, from his father from Jâbir b. ‘Abd Allâh¹⁹⁰

And when he talks of the raid on the B. Naḍîr,

Al-Wâqidî says, “Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allâh, and ‘Abd Allâh b. Ja‘far, and Muḥammad b. Ṣâliḥ, and Muḥammad b. Sahl, and Ibn Abî Ḥabîba, and Ma‘mar b. Râshid, including men whom I have not named, related to me, and each has related to me some of this tradition”¹⁹¹

To introduce the account of the battle of Khandaq he gives a collective *isnâd* of numerous authorities.¹⁹² The phrase “they said” is then repeated constantly in the following sequence of traditions, and I agree with Jones’ verdict that “there can be no doubt about its referring back to the original collective *isnâd*.”¹⁹³ In the accounts of the raid on al-Khandaq and B. Qurayza, however, despite the use of the collective *isnâd*, from time to time isolated pieces of information are given on the basis of a particular *isnâd*. Not all the names of the authorities are necessarily recorded. This was probably not considered to be a requirement. (Ibn Ishâq, as well, quite often left his authorities unnamed, even within collective *isnâds*). But not all accounts are necessarily introduced with a collective *isnâd*. The account of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ‘, for instance, is reported on the basis of distinct traditions for which a special *isnâd* is cited each time.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, the account of the murder of Abû Râfi‘ is based on a family tradition: “Abû Ayyûb b. Nu‘mân related to me from his father from ‘Aḡya b. ‘Abd Allâh b. Unays from his father, saying. . . .”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ See Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 184.

¹⁹¹ See *ibid.*, 363.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 441.

¹⁹³ Jones, “The *Maghâzî* Literature,” 348.

¹⁹⁴ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176-80.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 391.

The question is, however, whether al-Wâqidî is merely restating what has been already said by Ibn Ishâq, or whether he is able to bring to the essential data of the Prophet's life a new interpretation. The answer would be a *litmus* as to the degree of consistency that prevails in the transmission of these traditions, as well as the degree of flexibility with which they could be employed in the writing of *sîra-maghâzî*.

Comments of Ibn Ishâq such as "God only knows" or "one whom I do not suspect," for instance, are never met with in the *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, for al-Wâqidî does not seem to approve of such clauses to qualify his relaying of traditions. Al-Wâqidî adds interjections of his own, however, to indicate that something is wrong with the tradition, or to indicate what he himself believed to be true. Thus, for instance, when referring to the tradition concerning the struggle between Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwâm and one of the Jews during the raid of the B. Qurayza, al-Wâqidî interjects, "Do not listen to this tradition about their fighting . . . this was in Khaybar."¹⁹⁶ And again, when relating the tradition concerning Khâlid b. al-Walîd's statement of how he had heard the Prophet forbid the eating of the flesh of domesticated donkeys, mules, horses, and camels, at Khaybar, al-Wâqidî interposes: "Khâlid did not witness Khaybar."¹⁹⁷

There are those occasions when, despite the obvious similarity—in the case cited below both passages inform of the escort provided by Bilâl to Şafîya and her cousin—the information is overshadowed by the different insinuations made by the different traditions. Thus, Ibn Ishâq's version states:

Bilâl who was bringing them led them past the Jews who were slain; and when the woman who was with Şafîya saw them she shrieked and slapped

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 504-05.

¹⁹⁷See *ibid.*, 661.

her face and poured dust on her head. When the Apostle saw her he said, “take this she devil [emphasis mine] away from me.” He gave orders that Ṣaḥīya was to be put behind him and threw his mantle over her, so that the Muslims knew that he had chosen her for himself.¹⁹⁸

The parallel passage in al-Wāqidī reads:

The Messenger of God had sent her [Ṣaḥīya] ahead with Bilāl to his camel. And he passed with her and her cousin by the slaughtered. And Ṣaḥīya’s cousin screamed a loud cry. The Messenger of God hated what Bilāl did . . . The Messenger of God said to the cousin of Ṣaḥīya: This is only the devil [Referring to Bilāl. [emphasis mine]].¹⁹⁹

The simple but obvious transference of imagery is delightful. It certainly establishes the image of the Prophet as kinder and more tolerant than what Ibn Ishāq would have us believe. It is possible, however, that al-Wāqidī was reacting to the information communicated by Ibn Ishāq and adjusting the tradition in an honest attempt to be faithful to his interpretation of the nature of the Prophet.

Sometimes the changes are more important, and indeed quite significant. For instance, Ibn Ishāq cites the tradition regarding Sa’d b. Mu’adh’s prayer for the right to take vengeance on the B. Qurayza before finally achieving martyrdom, even as he—Sa’d—is shot by an arrow from one of the Meccan Quraysh during the battle of Khandaq.²⁰⁰ Thus, Ibn Ishāq suppresses the traditions concerning the abrogation of a written agreement, and sees the destruction of the B. Qurayza as the result of the prayer of Sa’d, whose purpose tallies with that of the Prophet. Al-Wāqidī, by contrast, shifts the tradition concerned to the scene of the pronouncement of Sa’d’s verdict upon the B. Qurayza.²⁰¹ The immediate effect is to take away from the significance of Sa’d’s authority during the raid of al-

¹⁹⁸Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb sirat rasūl Allāh*, 763, trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 515.

¹⁹⁹Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, 673-74.

²⁰⁰Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb sirat rasūl Allāh*, 679.

²⁰¹Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, 512.

Khandaq. But it also lends credibility to the claim that it was the abrogation of their agreement by the B. Qurayza that provoked Muḥammad to attack them.

We have seen that al-Wâqidî has been accused of plagiarizing the work of Ibn Ishâq. Given the above circumstances, it would seem more fair to give the author the benefit of the doubt and take al-Wâqidî's avoidance of Ibn Ishâq to be a serious concern of his. His narration of the biography of the Prophet indicates that he is not in total agreement with everything that Ibn Ishâq says. If one makes a careful comparison of the traditions used by Ibn Ishâq with those used by al-Wâqidî, one notices that neither the *isnâds* nor the *matns* of these traditions are the same. And the same goes for much of the chronology.

Al-Wâqidî's 'differentness' is also present at another level.²⁰² An example that comes to mind is the story of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf. Just as does Ibn Ishâq, al-Wâqidî indicates that Ibn al-Ashraf was murdered because of the way he had insulted the Prophet after the Battle of Badr. The *isnâds* used by al-Wâqidî, however, indicate that he is using different traditions compared to those used by Ibn Ishâq, and this difference is reflected also in the compiler's choice of *asbâb al-nuzûl*. Thus, al-Wâqidî indicates that verses from the *sûras* "*âl 'Imrân*" as well as "*al-baqara*" were revealed at this time, while Ibn Ishâq (who associates *âl-'Imrân* with the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ') does not indicate the revelation of any passages from the Qur'ân during his account of the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf, but suggests instead a possible link of Ibn al-Ashraf's murder with the raid on the B. Naḍîr

²⁰²It is important to notice, however, that though there are other traditions concerning the Prophet's anger against Ibn al-Ashraf, al-Wâqidî nevertheless sticks with a variant of the story narrated by Ibn Ishâq. Thus for instance see Kister, "The Market of the Prophet," and Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," who give us other explanations for the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf.

which he associates with *sûrat al-ḥaṣhr*. Also al-Wâqidî indicates that not only Abû Nâi'la but Muḥammad ibn Maslama as well were foster brothers to Ka'b.

More importantly, whereas Ibn Ishâq simply informs the reader that the Jews were extremely fearful after the killing of Ka'b, which was followed soon after by the murder of Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant, by Muḥayyiṣa b. Mas'ûd, al-Wâqidî builds on the incident to tell us that the Jews therefore met with the Prophet to protest his action. At this point, al-Wâqidî has the Prophet make the significant comment indicating that any insults against his person would be punished by death:

If he had remained [not acted] as did others of the same opinion, he would not have been assassinated. But he hurt us and insulted us with poetry, and none of you shall do this but he shall be put to the sword.²⁰³

The Prophet then invites the B. Naḍîr to make a written agreement with him, and they do so under a date palm at the home of Ramla bint al-Ḥārith.²⁰⁴ R. B. Serjeant attempts to reconcile the latter part of the text of the 'Constitution of Medina' with this agreement as recorded by al-Wâqidî.²⁰⁵ As I have explained in my analysis of the 'Constitution' in my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, however, the 'Constitution' does not include the Jews of the B. Naḍîr as participants, whether directly or indirectly; nor does Ibn Ishâq refer to an agreement of any kind during the whole of the episode concerning the B. Naḍîr. For al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, the disturbance leads the Jews to meet with Muḥammad and come to an agreement with him, which is written down.²⁰⁶ It seems clear that Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî are, in fact, giving two different interpretations of what may have

²⁰³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 192.

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*

²⁰⁵Serjeant, "The *Sunnah Jâmi'ah*," 32.

²⁰⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 192.

actually taken place. It is obvious that they are not describing the same situation, as is suggested by Martin Lings, who mistakenly attempts to juxtapose the two narratives saying: "He then invited them to make a special treaty with him in addition to the covenant [emphasis mine], and this they did."²⁰⁷ The fact is that Muḥammad's provocative cry permitting the killing of any Jew would have brought to an end any agreement with the Jews even if there had been one.²⁰⁸ With Ibn Ishâq, however, the murder of Ibn Sunayna does not lead to the making of another agreement. According to al-Wâqidî, Ibn Sunayna's killing leads to the conclusion of a second agreement, [the earlier agreement made by the Prophet on his arrival in Medina having been already destroyed] at the house of Ramla bint Ḥârith.

Al-Wâqidî's account of the murder of Abû Râfi' is also a variation of the basic story as related by Ibn Ishâq, but this time the additional details pertain to elaboration on the main theme, the theme itself not being extended as happens in the case of the Ka'b story. Whereas Ibn Ishâq suggests that the Khazraj, envious of the Aws for having won the Prophet's favor by killing Ka'b, sought to win a similar regard from the Prophet by killing Abû Râfi',²⁰⁹ al-Wâqidî neglects to mention that factionalism played a part in the venture. Instead he indicates that Abû Râfi' was an active leader of the B. Naḍîr, and suggests that the Prophet sent out the mission against the Jew because he had incited the Ghatafân and the Arab polytheists against him.²¹⁰ For al-Wâqidî, who, incidentally, gives us the story on the basis of a family tradition (the family of 'Abd Allâh b. Unays—the man who is

²⁰⁷Martin Lings, Muhammad: his Life Based on the Earliest Sources, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 171.

²⁰⁸Al-Wâqidî, Kitâb al-maghâzî, 191; and Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 553.

²⁰⁹Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 714.

²¹⁰Al-Wâqidî, Kitâb al-maghâzî, 394

supposed to have actually killed Abû Râfi'), Ibn 'Atîk was chosen to lead the band of five by the Prophet because of his proficiency in speaking *Yaḥūdîya*, a form of Judaized Arabic which was spoken among the Jews of Khaybar.²¹¹ The result is a story which is quite different from that related by Ibn Ishâq; al-Wâqidî uses the event to provide the reader with a more entertaining and 'realistic' picture of the Khaybar episode.

In investigating this passage, I have already, in chapter one of this dissertation,²¹² appreciated Mattock's comparison of the processes at work to those of epic poetry. According to Mattock, the compiler is, while sticking to the key components of the story as narrated by his predecessor, nevertheless changing the details to suit the immediate circumstances he faces.²¹³ While Mattock indicates that these changes are unknowingly wrought, a careful examination of al-Wâqidî's method suggests that they have been intentionally established. In this particular case, having already established the links that existed between Abû Râfi' of the B. Naḍîr and the Jews of Khaybar in particular, al-Wâqidî continues on to inform the reader of the many associations that brought the Jews and pagan Arabs together: they spoke *Yaḥūdîya*, rather than Hebrew or Aramaic; they intermarried, and the Jews had their women suckle Arab children and, in effect, adopt them. Al-Wâqidî indicates the considerable ease with which the Muslim band were able to penetrate the formidable fortress of the Jews and kill one of their leaders, because of their former ties established during their pagan days. It would be well to remember that al-Wâqidî had already expressed similar views, both in his chapter on the murder of Ka'b as well as the chapter on the exile of the B.

²¹¹The language of *Yaḥūdîya*, was an early form of Judeo-Arabic; see Newby, "Observations about an Early Judeo-Arabic," 221.

²¹²See pages 37-38 above.

²¹³J. N. Mattock, "History and Fiction," 96.

Naḍîr. In the latter, he has the elders admit that they have changed the biblical text.²¹⁴ This view is considerably reinforced when we are told, later, in the chapter of Khandaq, that the Jews joined the Meccans in pagan ritual around the Ka'ba.²¹⁵ Thus we see al-Wâqidî cumulatively building up an image of an adulterated Jewish community, that is to say, a community which is ignorant of its proper religious beliefs and rituals.

This brings us to Newby's analysis of the same passage. According to Newby, his methodology involves "a species of mining," though he certainly does not dig very deeply! Examining the various narrations of the same story, viz., the murder of Abû Râfi', Newby comes to the conclusion that, in fact, al-Wâqidî relates the more detailed and informative account of that which is also related by Ibn Ishâq and al-Ṭabarî. It is essentially on the basis of the tale as narrated by al-Wâqidî that Newby is provided with a "glimpse [of] the ways that the Jews of Khaybar, and probably the rest of the Ḥijaz, practiced Passover."²¹⁶ The latter information is not related by Ibn Ishâq, so that one is justified in attributing the additional data to the 'family' tradition cited by al-Wâqidî. It appears to me to be far more reasonable to accept Marilyn Waldman's approach, whereby she argues that the historical narratives tell us most, and most reliably, about the author of the work rather than the material the author is discussing.²¹⁷ In this case, we see al-Wâqidî's prejudices focused on representing the Jewish community in Khaybar as being considerably adulterated. According to al-Wâqidî, those Jews not only spoke *Yaḥūdîya*, had Arabized names and Arab husbands, as we have already

²¹⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 365.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, 442.

²¹⁶Newby, "The *Sîrah* as a source for Arabian Jewish History," 135.

²¹⁷M. R. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamic Historiography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), cited in *ibid.*, 121.

witnessed in the case of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, but they even adopted Arab children for whom they would willingly betray their own leaders.²¹⁸

It appears, then, that these differences found in al-Wâqidî's text are not ill-considered idiosyncrasies but, rather, carefully thought out alterations which come together to establish a meaningful statement distinct from that of Ibn Ishâq's. This difference is clearly connected to al-Wâqidî's more stylistic approach to the compiling of *sîra-maghâzî*, which enables him to recontextualize, through the repetition and transference of traditions, the narrative accounts of events and the characterization of distinct personalities as established by Ibn Ishâq. A close comparison of the texts of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî is necessary to appreciate more fully the contrived nature of this art form.

Take, for instance, the way the two authors recall the events that lead to the various raids on the significant Jewish tribes by the Muslims. According to Ibn Ishâq, the battle of Badr had been won, and God had thus indicated to the Jews that Muḥammad was His chosen messenger; it was time now for Muḥammad to remind the Jews of their covenant with God, and demand their recognition of him as a Prophet.²¹⁹ When the Jews refuse to comply with his request, Muḥammad attacks them. As far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' were not attacked because they had broken an agreement, but because they had rejected His message.

But consider al-Wâqidî's interpretation: he begins his chapter on the raid of B. Qaynuqâ', as always, with the date of the raid, stating that it happened in the

²¹⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 391-95.

²¹⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545-47. I would remind the reader that while al-Wâqidî's Prophet also demands conversion of the Jew, he does this only after defeating them in war, and it is an offer made to the Jew in the last resort.

middle of Shawwâl, (he places the raid of Sawîq after it, in the month of Dhû'l Hijja). As always, he concludes his chapter with a statement on who was left in charge of Medina during the Prophet's absence: on this occasion it was Abû Lubâba. Al-Wâqidî informs the reader that Muḥammad had, soon after his entry into Medina, made an agreement with the Jews, offering them security in return for their political allegiance. The Jews had invited the Muslim attack on themselves when they broke their agreement with Muḥammad. It would appear that what caused the aggression started off as a little incident in the market place, when a Jew insulted an Arab woman, and one of the Arabs, much provoked, killed the Jew in anger, only to be killed himself, thus exacerbating the situation of antagonism that already existed between the two communities.²²⁰

The basic structure of the narrative as established by al-Wâqidî is, in fact, quite different from that of Ibn Ishâq. Ibn Ishâq moves right away into the scene which shows Muḥammad inviting the Jews to Islam. By contrast, al-Wâqidî first tells us of the agreement that was made between Muḥammad and the Jews, then of the sudden revolt of the B. Qaynuqâ', and only after that, of the Prophet inviting them to Islam, all of this relayed on the authority of 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far from al-Hârith b. Fuḍayl from Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazî. The phrase "You think that we are your people,"²²¹ which is included by Ibn Ishâq and indicates that Muḥammad may have believed that the Jews would acknowledge his authority, is not mentioned by al-Wâqidî.

Particularly interesting is the way al-Wâqidî gives us the information parallel to that reported by Ibn Ishâq on the authority of 'Âsim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda. Immediately noticeable is the way Ibn Ishâq has avoided mention of a written

²²⁰See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176-77.

²²¹See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545.

agreement per se. Ibn Ishâq informs us that the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' were the first of the Jews "to destroy what was between them and the Messenger of God." (see my chapter on Ibn Ishâq).²²² "What" was between the Prophet and the Jews may have very well been an understanding, or a peace. On the other hand, observe how al-Wâqidî by introducing the chapter with information regarding the contracting of an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews, leaves no room for doubt that what was destroyed was indeed the contract. The parallel narrative as reported by al-Wâqidî—and here I provide a literal translation so that the reader may appreciate how al-Wâqidî, by adding what is probably an interpretative gloss ("of the agreement") makes his point—states:

When the Prophet overcame the companions of Badr and arrived in Medina, the Jews acted wrongfully and broke what was between them and the Messenger of God, of the agreement.²²³

A closer examination of the traditions used to narrate the information about the raids on the Jewish groups reveals that the *isnâds* in the two parallel passages of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî are nowhere the same.²²⁴ One cannot deny that the traditionists used by al-Wâqidî have already been made familiar to us by the work of Ibn Ishâq. Nevertheless, they are not the identical traditionists which

²²²Ibid., 543-44.

²²³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176.

²²⁴Thus for instance the *isnâds* used by Ibn Ishâq are: a) a report about the B. Qaynuqâ'; b) a freedman from the family of Zayd b. Thâbit from Sa'îd b. Jubayr from 'Ikrima from Ibn 'Abbâs; c) 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda; d) Ishâq b. Yasar from 'Ubâda b. al-Walîd b. 'Ubâda b. al-Ṣâmit. The *isnâds* used by al-Wâqidî on the other hand are: a) 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far from al-Hârith b. Fuḍayl from Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazî; b) Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh from Zuhri from 'Urwa; c and d) are two traditions which begin "they said", probably referring to the collective tradition given at the beginning of the book; e) Muḥammad b. Maslama "said"; f) "Muḥammad related to me from al-Zuhri, from 'Urwâ"; g) "Muḥammad b. al-Qâsim related to me from his father from al-Rabî' b. Sabra from his father"; h) "Yahyâ b. 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Qatâda related to me from 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr B. Ḥazm". See Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muḥammad*, 363-64, and al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176-80, respectively.

Ibn Ishâq uses as his authorities when he narrates the particular episode regarding the B. Qaynuqâ', and, in fact, the actual traditions used are not the same either. In other words, Jones' statement, "Mûsâ b. 'Uqbah, Ibn Ishâq, and al-Wâqidî were drawing upon a central core of material so well known that verification by conventional *isnâd* was superfluous,"²²⁵ implying that the three compilers were using the same traditions and saying the same thing, is based on too simplistic an appreciation of the narrative, and cannot be accepted.

The difference that emerges when two authors cite different Qur'ânic passages as having been revealed on the occasion of the same event is significant. Ibn Ishâq's citation—"one force fought in the way of God; the other disbelievers, thought they saw double their own force with their very eyes"—indicates that the victory at Badr was a miracle from God, a sign that informed the people of Muḥammad's role.²²⁶ With al-Wâqidî, however, who insists that the Jews abrogated their agreement first, the citation is, accordingly:

If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their Covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms: for God loveth not the treacherous.²²⁷

Here the reference appears to be to the fact that the Jews had not kept the agreement; indeed, Qur'ânic exegesis usually explains it as such. Al-Wâqidî's claim that the Jews had provoked Muḥammad's attack by abrogating the agreement is asserted by reference to this citation.

What immediately strikes the reader who is aware of the Ibn Ishâq narrative is that al-Wâqidî introduces two new themes into this episode, which in

²²⁵Jones, "The *Maghâzî* Literature," 348.

²²⁶See Qur'ân, 3:10, cited in Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allah*, 545.

²²⁷Qur'ân, translated by Yusuf Ali, 8:58. Cited in Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 177.

Ibn Ishâq's text are present only in the episode on the raid on the B. Naḍîr: that of the hypocrisy of Ibn Ubayy; and that of the punishment of exile to Adhri'ât being inflicted on the Jews and the capture of weapons as booty from them. These additional traditions bring a new dimension to the story of the B. Qaynuqâ'. On the one hand, al-Wâqidî, right from this very early stage, sets for the reader the character of Ibn Ubayy as that of a hypocrite, and here we see the author exploit methods of repetition to establish this personality. On the other hand, he also establishes for the reader the fact that the B. Qaynuqâ', who were mere silversmiths by occupation, were exiled to Adhri'ât.²²⁸ The justification for such repetition is based on the understanding that the traditions are in actual fact a-chronological and therefore may be placed wherever, or even repeated if, the compiler so desires. Certainly knowing that the B. Qaynuqâ' have already been exiled makes one more reconciled to the notion when the B. Naḍîr are later removed from Medina.

According to al-Wâqidî, the possessions of the Qaynuqâ' are confiscated by the Prophet and divided as booty between the Muslims, with one fifth being granted to the Prophet. Al-Wâqidî neatly avoids any confusion by connecting the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' with the revelation of *sûrat al-anfâl* which relates to the division of the spoils and is also associated with the Battle of Badr. Interestingly, Ibn Ishâq claims that the whole chapter of the *sûrat al-anfâl* was revealed soon after Badr. Ibn Ishâq's traditions regarding the B. Qaynuqâ' are associated with verses from the chapters *âl 'Imrân* and *al-mâ'ida* instead.²²⁹ This is important in that it indicates very clearly that the traditions used by al-Wâqidî indicate a different context from that established by Ibn Ishâq.

²²⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 179.

²²⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545-47.

Significantly, though al-Wâqidî claims that verses from the *sûrat al-anfâl* were revealed during the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' as well, the particular verse dealing with the Prophet's one-fifth share is, according to him, associated with Badr:

And know that out of all of the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to God, and to the Apostle, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer. . . .²³⁰

This information is further confirmed when, in his chapter on the B. Naḍîr, he has 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb inquire:

O Messenger of God, are you not going to take one-fifth of what you gained from the B. Naḍîr, the same as the one-fifth that you gained from Badr? ²³¹

Thus we see al-Wâqidî in agreement with the position taken by Ibn Ishâq, despite his differences.

In the narrative of al-Wâqidî, the raid against the Qaynuqâ' is followed immediately by the raid of al-Sawîq.²³² Here one sees a deliberate shift from the place given it by Ibn Ishâq in order to explain why the Prophet's first attack was against the B. Qaynuqâ'. The raid of al-Sawîq takes place in the month of Dhû'l Hijja, and tells of Abû Sufyân and a group of Meccans being entertained and given information about the Muslims by the B. Naḍîr.²³³ Essentially, al-Wâqidî is informing the reader of a breach of contract by the B. Naḍîr, in that they were entertaining the enemy of the Muslims. When Muḥammad hears of this, he gives chase to Abû Sufyân but is not able to catch up with the Meccans.

²³⁰Qur'ân, translated by Yusuf Ali, 8:42. Cited in al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 134.

²³¹Ibid., 377.

²³²Ibid., 181.

²³³Ibid., 181-82.

Introducing the scene of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf’s murder, al-Wâqidî informs us of Muḥammad’s desire to come to a settlement with the Jews and the polytheists in Medina.²³⁴ It seems that the murder of Ka‘b, who is guilty of blasphemy against the Prophet, followed by Muḥammad’s announcement permitting the killing of any Jew, produces the necessary climate for the conclusion of such an agreement.²³⁵ We are not told the exact nature of that agreement, but it was probably one of neutrality, for when at Uḥud the Jews refuse to join with Mukhayrîq on Muḥammad’s side because it is the Sabbath, Muḥammad makes no protest. At the same time, we are told by al-Wâqidî of an incident at the fortress of Fâri‘ when Ṣafîya bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib kills one of a group of Jews whom she sees moving towards the fortress.²³⁶ While the incident is a play upon what Ibn Ishâq tells us regarding the same fortress when he relates the happenings during the raid of al-Khandaq,²³⁷ the impact of the repetition in this instance is to de-emphasize (as with the notion of exile) the significance of a similar story when it is repeated by al-Wâqidî in his account of the raid of al-Khandaq.²³⁸

The affair of Bi‘r Ma‘ûna concerns one of the Muslims, who not knowing that Muḥammad had but recently come to an agreement with them, murders two members of the B. ‘Âmir.²³⁹ Muḥammad turns to the B. Naḍîr for help in paying their blood moneys. The latter agree, but, despite the fact that they had but recently concluded a written agreement with the Prophet at the house of Ramla bint Ḥârith, they nevertheless plot to murder him.²⁴⁰

²³⁴Ibid., 184.

²³⁵Ibid., 192.

²³⁶Ibid., 288.

²³⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 680.

²³⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 462.

²³⁹Ibid., 346.

²⁴⁰Ibid., 364.

Though al-Wâqidî cites the exile of the B. Naḍîr on the authority of such as Ma‘mar, these traditionists had, in fact, placed the event six months after the battle of Badr,²⁴¹ while al-Wâqidî himself situates it after Uḥud, as does Ibn Ishâq.²⁴² Significantly, though al-Zuhrî is recognized as the teacher of Ibn Ishâq, the latter has not cited al-Zuhrî as an authority for this incident for Zuhrî like Ma‘mar places the incident after Badr, a view with which Ibn Ishâq disagrees.

It is important to notice that despite the many variants available, al-Wâqidî retains much of what is found in the text of Ibn Ishâq, even if he does not cite him, thus creating effects comparable to those of Greek epic oral transmission as explained by Mattock;²⁴³ as with Ibn Ishâq, the B. Naḍîr plot to kill the Prophet by throwing a rock upon him while he is visiting them in search of help with the payment of the blood money as compensation for the two members of the B. ‘Âmir that one of his companions had killed; as does Ibn Ishâq, al-Wâqidî informs the reader that the destruction of the palm trees of the B. Naḍîr by Muḥammad, in an attempt to force out the Jews, was an act based on inspiration from God; as does Ibn Ishâq, al-Wâqidî indicates that Yâmin b. ‘Umayr willingly pays someone to have his cousin murdered, in order to please the Prophet.²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it seems clear that al-Wâqidî is not using the traditions that are used by Ibn Ishâq, for his *isnâds* are not the same. The difference is significant. To a certain extent, this difference can be accounted for by the

²⁴¹See Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 268; Kister, "Notes on the Papyrus Text about Muḥammad's Campaign against the B. al-Naḍîr," 235; and Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," 69.

²⁴²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 652; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 363. See also Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 249.

²⁴³See page 187 above.

²⁴⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 374. Once again al-Wâqidî uses material comparable to that used by Ibn Ishâq, even though other versions are available.

differences in the nature of events that lead to the raid in the two different narratives. In Ibn Ishâq's account, the murder of Ka'b had left the Jews concerned as to their future, but nothing is done about it,²⁴⁵ and it seems that their plot to kill Muḥammad is an answer to that problem. In al-Wâqidî, the murder of Ka'b leads to an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews.²⁴⁶ The B. Naḍîr's plot to kill Muḥammad is thus focused on, as essentially an abrogation of the agreement and al-Wâqidî indicates this through the words of Sallâm b. Mishkam:

... he will surely be informed that we acted treacherously against him. Surely this is the destruction of the agreement that is between us and him, so do not do it.²⁴⁷

If one looks more carefully at the narrative, it appears that the emphasis given to the events by al-Wâqidî is also different from that given by Ibn Ishâq. Thus, discussing the tradition regarding the Prophet's distribution of the land of the B. Naḍîr among the Muhâjirûn, Ibn Ishâq's version portrays the Prophet as an autocratic leader who unhesitatingly gives the land he has acquired from the B. Naḍîr to his own people, for it is God himself who establishes that such land as is taken without force is the property of the Prophet—and thus by extension—the Prophet has the right to divide it among whomever he pleases. For al-Wâqidî, however, Muḥammad was a leader who acted on non-religious matters with the approval of the people. This is seen in the compiler's interpretation of the Muslims' decision to move out of Medina during the battle of Uḥud,²⁴⁸ and later on in the decision to build a trench during the battle of Khandaq.²⁴⁹ In narrating this particular account about the B. Naḍîr, al-Wâqidî not only provides the reader

²⁴⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 552-54.

²⁴⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 192.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 365.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 209-13.

²⁴⁹Ibid., 444-45.

with several traditions regarding the Prophet's use of that land, but, more importantly, sets out to explain to the reader the circumstances that are supposed to have led to the Prophet's decision regarding gifting of all the land he had acquired from the B. Naḍîr to the Muhâjirûn alone, to the exclusion of the Anṣâr—except for two of them who were very poor. Once again, according to al-Wâqidî, Muḥammad acted after consulting the community. According to al-Wâqidî, the Anṣâr had considered it an honour to have the Muhâjirûn live with them in their homes from the time they first arrived in Medina. When God granted Muḥammad the land of the B. Naḍîr, which was captured without the use of arms, Muḥammad called the Anṣâr together and offered them either a share in the property, in which case the Muhâjirûn would continue to live in their homes, or the right to retain their homes for themselves if they would be willing to let the Muhâjirûn alone share the Naḍîri property. That both the Sa'ds (Sa'd b. 'Ubâda and Sa'd b. Mu'âdh) should then cry out, "rather, you will apportion it to the Muhâjirûn, but they will stay in our homes just as they were," indicates a warm acceptance of the grant of land to the Muhâjirûn, which is certainly not suggested by Ibn Ishâq.²⁵⁰

As for the exile of the B. Naḍîr, it is interesting that Ibn Ishâq has indicated that while some of the B. Naḍîr moved to Khaybar others moved to Syria.²⁵¹ Al-Wâqidî, as well, in his chapter on their exile, does inform us that members of the B. Naḍîr moved to Syria, but only in his section on *asbâb*. In his narrative section on the B. Naḍîr, al-Wâqidî tells us only of the movement of the B. Naḍîr to Khaybar.²⁵² Norman A. Stillman, who does not appreciate the interpretative nature of this literature, by neglecting the *asbâb* of al-Wâqidî, and

²⁵⁰Ibid., 379.

²⁵¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 653.

²⁵²Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 375; However, al-Wâqidî then associates the exile with the *sûrat al-faṣḥr* which tells of how the B. Naḍîr moved to Syria. See my chapter 4 for a closer look at al-Wâqidî's explanation of the *sûra*.

having ignored the interpretation of Ibn Ishâq, thus misrepresents the episode to assert that:

Two years later, the men of Naḍîr lost their lives, their wealth, and their women when the Muslims took Khaybar.²⁵³

It is in anticipation of the approaching murder of Abû Râfi' that al-Wâqidî finds it sensible to provide additional (as opposed to that of Ibn Ishâq) information on the raid on the Banû Naḍîr, indicating that Abû Râfi' was an important and powerful leader of that tribe who maintained close associations with the Jews of Khaybar:

Abû Râfi' Sallâm shouted to them, 'If the 'Ajwa are cut over here, surely to us in Khaybar are 'Ajwa.' An old woman among them said, 'Khaybar will see the same fate!' Abû Râfi' replied, 'May God break your jaw! Surely my confederates at Khaybar are ten thousand warriors.'²⁵⁴

Indicating that Abû Râfi' was also an influential money-lender al-Wâqidî declares:

Abû Râfi' Sallâm b. Abî al-Ḥuqayq was owed a hundred and twenty dinars, by Uṣayd b. Ḥuḍayr, which were due in a year, and he agreed to take his capital of eighty dinars, canceling the remainder.²⁵⁵

And as we discover in his chapter on the murder of Abû Râfi', al-Wâqidî explains the attack on that Jew, saying:

For Ibn Abî al-Ḥuqayq used to incite the Ghatafân and the polytheist Arabs around him, and give them a large payment/ inducements to fight Muḥammad.²⁵⁶

Ibn Ishâq places the murder of Abû Râfi' after Khandaq in the year A.H. six; none of the latter information provided by al-Wâqidî during the raid of the B.

²⁵³Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 14.

²⁵⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 373.

²⁵⁵Ibid., 374.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 394.

Naḍîr has been included in Ibn Ishâq's work. In contrast, al-Wâqidî dates the murder in the year A.H. four, after the exile of the B. Naḍîr, but before the battle of Uḥud, while indicating that the year A.H. six was another possibility.

The events after the raid on the B. Naḍîr leading to the battle of the Trench are as follows: the last expedition to Badr; the killing of Sallâm; the raid of Dhât al-Riqâ'; raid on Dûmat al-Jandal; and the raid of Muraysî'a. The most noticeable difference between the narratives of al-Wâqidî and Ibn Ishâq is that the latter places both the murder of Sallâm and the raid of Muraysî'a after the battle of the Trench, whereas al-Wâqidî places them before. As far as al-Wâqidî is concerned, Abû Râfi' is not a participant in the battle of the Trench for he has already been killed.

The battle of the Trench or the raid of al-Khandaq, as it is also known, according to both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, was inspired by the Jews of the B. Naḍîr joined by others of their confession in Khaybar. Importantly, however, it is just previous to the battle (in Dhû'l Qa'da of the year A.H. five) that al-Wâqidî informs us of the dissension caused in the community by the scandal about 'Â'ishâ, an affair which is dated by Ibn Ishâq just previous to al-Ḥudaybiya. Al-Wâqidî thus indicates the battle as happening at a considerably inopportune moment, as far as Muḥammad and the Muslims were concerned.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, the cooperative spirit in which they join hands to build the trench could be understood to imply that the community had overcome its doubts about the Prophet. Once again, the outline of the narrative itself as indicated by Ibn Ishâq is maintained by al-Wâqidî while various details change in a manner reminiscent of Greek oral epic poetry transmission:²⁵⁸ they both tell of the desperate plight of the

²⁵⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 426-40.

²⁵⁸See Mattock, "History and Fiction"; and page 189 above.

Muslims when they are attacked by the joint forces of their enemies, which they happily are able to overcome. Many of the various incidents related by al-Wâqidî have been narrated by Ibn Ishâq, even the seemingly frivolous ones, such as, for instance, how the Prophet changed the name of Ju'ayl to 'Amr;²⁵⁹ the Prophet's participation in the digging of the trench and the various miracles which inform of his prophethood, such as the changing of hard rock into sand by pouring water on it;²⁶⁰ the increase in the quantity of dates such that they were sufficient to feed all those working on the trench;²⁶¹ and, similarly, with the lamb and bread cooked for just the Prophet by one of the Muslims who had been moved by the sight of his hardship;²⁶² the story of 'Amr b. 'Abdu Wudd's challenge which is answered finally by 'Alî;²⁶³ the Prophet sending for 'Uyayna b. Ḥiṣn in an attempt to bribe him away from the enemy forces;²⁶⁴ Sa'd b. Mu'âdh's injury at battle due to the short length of his sleeve;²⁶⁵ and the mischief of Nu'aym b. Mas'ûd who brought about anger and hostility among the Ghatafân and the Quraysh against the Jews.²⁶⁶

And yet the very nature of these traditions with their very different *isnâds* makes it clear that the narratives could not be quite the same. Thus, for instance, though both authors date the battle of Khandaq in the year A.H. five, Ibn Ishâq places the event in the month of Shawwâl, while al-Wâqidî places it in the month of Dhû'l Qa'da; and while Ibn Ishâq includes Sallâm b. Abî'l Ḥuqayq among the Jews who visit the Quraysh looking for their support against Muḥammad, al-

²⁵⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 671; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 447.

²⁶⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 671; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 452.

²⁶¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 672; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 476.

²⁶²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 672; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 452.

²⁶³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 677-78; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 470.

²⁶⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 676; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 477.

²⁶⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 678-79; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 469.

²⁶⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 680; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 480-84.

Wâqidî does not.²⁶⁷ While both authors indicate that the Jews win the support of the Ghaṭafân in their mission against the Prophet, al-Wâqidî indicates that the Jews in fact bribe the Ghaṭafân with a promise of dates for a year.²⁶⁸ While Ibn Ishâq indicates that the notion of building a trench was not an Arab one, al-Wâqidî clearly shows that the idea is recommended by Salmân al-Fârisî:²⁶⁹ While both authors tell us of how the Prophet sent Hudhayfa to spy on the camp of Abû Sufyân, Ibn Ishâq merely informs the reader that “so and so” was seated on the side of Hudhayfa, while al-Wâqidî informs us that ‘Amr b. al-‘Âṣ sat on one side of Hudhayfa while Mu‘âwiya b. Abî Sufyân sat on the other (surely indicating his anti-Umayyad sentiments), but in addition portrays the return of Hudhayfa as a miracle.²⁷⁰

And then there are the traditions which seem to be exclusively those of al-Wâqidî. It is al-Wâqidî who informs us that the Jews participated along with the Quraysh and Ghaṭafân in a pagan ritual under the curtains of the Ka‘ba, indicating their obvious ignorance about their own Jewish practices;²⁷¹ that the Qurayza had just previously lent their baskets and spades to the Muslims in order to build their trenches, emphasizing the existence of an agreement with Muḥammad;²⁷² that the two Sa‘ds of the Anṣâr pleaded with the Qurayza to return to the Prophet, rather

²⁶⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 669; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 441.

²⁶⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 670; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 443.

²⁶⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 677; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 445.

²⁷⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 683. Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 489.

²⁷¹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 442.

²⁷²*Ibid.*, 445.

than obey Huyayy;²⁷³ and that the Prophet expressed the hope that he would circumambulate the Ka'ba and take possession of its key in the near future.²⁷⁴

Interestingly, and importantly, both biographers show the B. Qurayza at the last moment betraying the Prophet with whom they had an agreement, preferring the unreliable Huyayy and his associates to the accord with Muḥammad, who even in their own assessment had always been fair to them:

O Huyayy I have contracted with Muḥammad and reached an agreement with him. We have not seen from him except honesty. . .²⁷⁵

While, Ibn Ishâq's position on the issue is unclear because in his earlier chapter on "The Cow" he establishes the considerable hostility of Ka'b b. Asad to the Prophet, al-Wâqidî, instead, stresses the claim that there was a written agreement between Muḥammad and the B. Qurayza:

Huyayy sent for the document/agreement which the Messenger of God wrote between them, and he ripped it.²⁷⁶

This, according to al-Wâqidî, is the primary act which brings about Muḥammad's aggression against them, and their final execution. The B. Qurayza are seen as doubly treacherous, for it was because they lent their support to the enemies of the Prophet that the Muslims very nearly lost their control over Medina.

Given the above, it is difficult to appreciate the position of M. J. Kister, who declares:

²⁷³Ibid., 458.

²⁷⁴Ibid., 460. On his hope which would soon be recalled by the Prophet in a dream as a promise from God, and would lead him to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, see *ibid.*, 572.

²⁷⁵Ibid., 455.

²⁷⁶Ibid., 456.

The suspicions that Qurayza attempted to plot with Quraysh against the Prophet would probably not justify the cruel punishment of execution . . .²⁷⁷

Furthermore, citing the work of 'Alî b. Burhân al-Dîn, Kister attempts to explain the actions of the Prophet on the basis that he desired to acquire this land in order to provide the *Muhâjirûn* with property so that they would become self-supporting.²⁷⁸ The problem with Kister's reasoning is essentially methodological and is of two kinds. In the first place, he has misunderstood the interpretational nature of the work, and therefore not given sufficient consideration to what either Ibn Ishâq or al-Wâqidî is saying. It seems clear that according to both Ibn Ishâq's and al-Wâqidî's portrayal of the incident, the problem was not one of mere suspicion, but of clear evidence. The betrayal of the Prophet by the B. Qurayza had led to considerable insecurity for those on the Prophet's side. Moreover, while Ibn Ishâq has the Prophet himself listen to their insults against him, and their denial that they had an agreement with him, al-Wâqidî goes further to show the two Sa'ds plead with the B. Qurayza to come back to their agreement with the Prophet. As indicated by al-Wâqidî, the pleas of the Medinans were not heeded and the destruction of the agreement by Ka'b b. Asad held.²⁷⁹

Preferring to ignore all this evidence, Kister claims that the agreement drawn up between Muḥammad and the Jews was a simple *muwâda'a* agreement, which, according to him, was one of neutrality. Kister then attempts to show that the behavior of the Qurayza was indeed in accordance with such a neutral position: they did not participate in the war, but they did aid the Prophet with baskets and spades—information which has been carefully selected from the text of al-Wâqidî.

²⁷⁷Kister, "The Massacre of the Banû Qurayza," 94-95.

²⁷⁸Ibid., 96.

²⁷⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 458.

The other aspect of this literature which Kister does not seem to appreciate is the decontextualized nature of these traditions, which the compilers of *sîra-maghâzî* quite confidently seem to have placed where they wished, according to their purposes. It is this ability to move the a-chronological material around, and even repeat it, that enables al-Wâqidî to confidently shift the tradition regarding the exile of the Jews, established with regard to the B. Naḍîr by Ibn Ishâq, to assert the exile of the B. Qaynuqâ' as well.²⁸⁰ It is in a similar spirit that al-Wâqidî includes a parallel tradition regarding the fortress of Fâri' in the context of Uḥud as well as Khandaq, which in the narrative of Ibn Ishâq is found only in the context of Khandaq.²⁸¹ It would appear that in the narrative of 'Alî b. Burhân al-Dîn referred to by Kister, the tradition concerning the grant of land to the Muhâjirûn has probably been recalled from the position given it by both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, who place it in the context of the B. Naḍîr, and moved into the context of the raid on the B. Qurayza.²⁸² Kister's justification for selecting the traditions of 'Alî b. Burhân al-Dîn is probably his identification of what he would categorize as 'genuine tradition.' Such a qualification is not only based on an ignorance regarding the nature of chronology and context within this genre, but as well, on too subjective an approach, regarding the choice of narrative. Indeed, Kister misunderstands the nature of these traditions, and ignores the interpretation of Ibn Ishâq who sees the Qurayza as guilty of rejecting their earlier Arab confederates and their chosen leader Muḥammad;²⁸³ the interpretation of al-Wâqidî, by contrast, sees the Qurayza as guilty of abrogating the contract.

²⁸⁰Ibid., 178.

²⁸¹Ibid., 288 and 462.

²⁸²Kister, "The Massacre of the Banû Qurayza," 96.

²⁸³See chapter two above for an analysis of Ibn Ishâq's interpretation.

The shift in the setting from the battle of the Trench to the raid on the Qurayza is immediate in the texts of both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî. As always Wâqidî gives the reader the chronological details as well as information regarding who was left in charge of Medina for that time. He then gives us a premonition of what is to follow through a tradition which tells of the dream of the wife of Nabbâsh b. Qays:

She said: I saw the trench, there was no one in it. I saw that the people turned towards us, while we were in our fortresses, and we were slaughtered like goats.²⁸⁴

From here on, the rest of the episode is very similar to that presented by Ibn Ishâq: of how the Prophet handed over the banner to 'Alî;²⁸⁵ of how 'Alî attempted to protect the Prophet from the insults of the B. Qurayza;²⁸⁶ of how 'Amr b. Su'da', "a man of God" was rescued for his faithfulness;²⁸⁷ of how the Prophet's aunt asked for the life of Rifâ'a b. Samaw'al with whom she had a relationship;²⁸⁸ and, most importantly, of how the Prophet had the consent of the Aws in his choice of Sa'd b. Mu'âdh as the one who is to pass sentence on their Jewish confederates.²⁸⁹

Some of these similar traditions are presented by al-Wâqidî in a different manner. Thus, both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî tell of how the Prophet had withdrawn from the battle, only to be called out again by the Angel Gabriel, but al-Wâqidî provides the additional detail that Muḥammad had withdrawn to 'Â'ishâ's

²⁸⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 497. This knack of presenting the reader with a kind of premonition of what is soon to happen is a characteristic of al-Wâqidî's style, which I have had occasion to comment on before.

²⁸⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 684; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 497.

²⁸⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 684; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 499.

²⁸⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 687-88; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 504.

²⁸⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 692; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 515.

²⁸⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 688; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 510.

house.²⁹⁰ Both authors tell of how the Prophet alerted those around him to the fact that they had really seen the Angel Gabriel rather than Dihya al-Kalbî ride by; but al-Wâqidî informs us that they were the B. Najjâr, whom Muḥammad addressed.²⁹¹ Both relate how Ka'b b. Asad offered his people three alternatives to escape death,²⁹² but interestingly, in the al-Wâqidî text, we have already heard a similar offer being made to the Jews of the B. Naḍîr by Kinâna b. Şuwayrâ', so that a certain fatalism is conveyed.²⁹³ Even as Ka'b starts to speak, the reader knows that his advice will not be heeded.

Some traditions, that are barely mentioned by Ibn Ishâq are skillfully drawn out by al-Wâqidî and extended, I believe, for the purpose of providing a kind of relief-oriented entertainment in the style of the *qiṣṣa*, such as the tale of Nabbâta. Thus, while Ibn Ishâq informs the reader that only a single Jewess was executed, and that was because of a crime she had committed, al-Wâqidî tells us exactly who she was, informing us not only of her name but also of exactly what she had done. Nabbâta had been persuaded by her husband to drop a millstone from atop their fortress down onto the Muslim soldiers below—the very manner in which they had earlier attempted to kill the Prophet. One of the Muslims had been crushed to death as a result. Again, by providing more information al-Wâqidî suggests that he is the better informed. Both narratives come together in relating traditions concerning the hysterical laughter with which Nabbâta faces the knowledge of her impending doom.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 684; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 497.

²⁹¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 685; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 498-99.

²⁹²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 685-86; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 501-03.

²⁹³*Ibid.*, 366.

²⁹⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 690-91; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 516-17.

Sometimes the traditions are differently recalled, such as regards the identity of Rayhâna, who is described as one of the B. Qurayza by Ibn Ishâq, for instance, but who, according to al-Wâqidî, was of the B. Naḍîr—though married to one of the B. Qurayza—and whom, both agree, the Prophet chose for himself;²⁹⁵ but more significant differences in this episode of the Prophet's life concern the characterization of Abû Lubâba and the prayer of Sa'd b. Mu'âdh. Al-Wâqidî introduces Abû Lubâba through traditions describing his behavior even before Uḥud,²⁹⁶ relating about his stubborn and insubordinate attitude to the Prophet and his refusal to give a cluster of dates, first to Muḥammad in order that he may hand it to an orphan, and then directly to the orphan himself in return for a similar cluster in paradise.²⁹⁷ This little episode devalues the impact of Abû Lubâba's well-known betrayal of God and Muḥammad when he went out to advise the B. Qurayza—a narrative which evokes the biblical persona of a Judas in the Ibn Ishâq context.²⁹⁸

The tradition that probably effects the greater impact, however, is that regarding Sa'd's prayer, which Ibn Ishâq narrates during the course of the battle of al-Khandaq, indicating Sa'd b. Mu'âdh's anger at the hostility of the B. Qurayza, who had until then, since the time before Islam, joined with him against his opponents even when those opponents were their fellow Jews.²⁹⁹ This tradition is situated by al-Wâqidî in the chapter on the raid on the B. Qurayza. Thus, in al-Wâqidî's *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, it is in the episode concerning the B. Qurayza that we

²⁹⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 693; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 520.

²⁹⁶We know that it happened before Uḥud because the man who bought the fruit off Abû Lubâba was martyred at Uḥud. See Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 505.

²⁹⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 505.

²⁹⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 686-87, and Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geshichte," 62.

²⁹⁹Ibid., 679.

have Sa'd b. Mu'adh, who having just passed the sentence on the Jews that every male adult be executed, declare:

O God, if you have anything left of the war with the Quraysh, keep me for it. Indeed there is no tribe that I want to fight more than a tribe which has disbelieved in the Messenger of God, caused injury to him and exiled him. And if the war has ended between us and them, make me a martyr. Let me not die until I have seen my desire upon the B. Qurayza.³⁰⁰

The shift is significant. By placing a very similar tradition in the midst of the battle of Khandaq, Ibn Ishâq suggests that Sa'd's prayer was that he be permitted to decide the very fate of the B. Qurayza. In other words, Ibn Ishâq was placing the responsibility for the sentence of execution that was passed on the B. Qurayza upon Sa'd b. Mu'adh.³⁰¹ It was this act of his which resulted in his being sanctified, as it were. Al-Wâqidî, however, by placing the tradition where he does, i.e., after the passing of the sentence upon the B. Qurayza, removes the responsibility for the verdict from Sa'd b. Mu'adh and places it, if indirectly, on Muḥammad's shoulders. Of course, according to al-Wâqidî, the Jews had broken their agreement with Muḥammad, and this, together with the fact that the Muslims had been dangerously exposed to the enemy forces, justified the verdict. Nevertheless, the difference effected by al-Wâqidî dilutes considerably any justification for Sa'd's special place in heaven. Al-Wâqidî spends considerable time and space describing the special circumstances of Sa'd b. Mu'adh's death and burial; but his sanctification comes across as overstated.³⁰²

At this point, mention of Watt's analysis of this event becomes unavoidable. Says Watt:

³⁰⁰Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 512. Compare Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 679.

³⁰¹See my chapter on Ibn Ishâq above for a fuller discussion of Ibn Ishâq's interpretation.

³⁰²Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 525-29.

Caetani's suggestion that the judgment was attributed to Sa'd in order to avoid making Muḥammad directly responsible for the 'inhuman' massacre is completely baseless. In the earliest period his family and their friends remembered his appointment as judge as an honour. . . Caetani's alternative suggestion that Sa'd pursued not the course that he thought best but that dictated to him by Muḥammad is more difficult to dispose of. The prayer of Sa'd for vengeance might have been introduced to defend him from a charge of subservience.³⁰³

Despite their different interpretations, the fact is that both Caetani and Watt have viewed this material as historical evidence. At the same time neither Caetani nor Watt seems to appreciate the enormous risks that the Muslims were forced to face because of the betrayal of the B. Qurayza, according to the interpretation of Ibn Ishâq in particular. The differences in the narratives of the authors, however, are telling. It is here that Ibn Ishâq informs us that the women and children of the Muslims were given protection in the fortress of Fâri', which, due to the betrayal of the Qurayza, now became an easy target for the enemy. Al-Wâqidî reduces the weight of the blame placed on the B. Qurayza on this occasion however, because he has previously cited this same tradition in the course of the battle of Uḥud. As for Sa'd's prayer, it is situated only after the raid on the B. Qurayza by al-Wâqidî. Thus while Ibn Ishâq seems to suggest that Muḥammad's aggression against the Jews was because they had put the Muslims at considerable risk, al-Wâqidî once again projects the notion that it was because the Jews had abrogated their agreement that the Prophet attacked them. Significantly, neither Caetani nor Watt has noticed the way the tradition has been manipulated and used variously by the two authors to suggest subtly different positions. The reason probably lies in the fact that the two 'Orientalists' did not notice the shift of the tradition, and that, if they did, did not give it the necessary significance. I do believe such lack of attention to detail is the result, on the one hand, of isolating

³⁰³Watt, "Condemnation of the Jews of Banû Qurayzah," 11.

and selecting particular traditions without taking their context into consideration; and on the other hand, of not appreciating sufficiently the nature of this material as being essentially interpretative. The point is that these traditions are not chronologically fixed. Thus each author-collator is at liberty to place the traditions where he wills. It is therefore important, if one desires to appreciate *sîra-maghâzî* for what it is, to search for the differences and try to understand them.

The events that lead from the execution of the B. Qurayza to the raid on Khaybar are differently related in the versions of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî. With Ibn Ishâq, the raid on the B. Qurayza is followed by the killing of Sallâm, the conversion of ‘Amr b. al-‘Âṣ and Khâlid b. al-Walîd,³⁰⁴ the attack on B. Liḥyân, the attack on Dhû Qarada, attack on the B. al-Mustaliq, the scandal about ‘Â’isha,³⁰⁵ the affair of al-Ḥudaybiya,³⁰⁶ and the raid on Khaybar. In Ibn Ishâq’s version, the raid on Khaybar is expected only with the arrival of the Prophet’s letter calling for the submission of the Jews of Khaybar—according to “The Chapter on The Cow and Jewish opposition”—and is not expected according to his chapter on the taking of Khaybar.³⁰⁷ With al-Wâqidî, one moves from the execution of the B. Qurayza, through a series of raids such as the *sarîya* led by ‘Alî to Fadak,³⁰⁸ and that of ‘Abd Allâh b. Rawâḥ against Usayr b. Zârim,³⁰⁹ before one comes to the treaty of Ḥudaybiya.³¹⁰ Thus, in al-Wâqidî’s narrative, the reader is continuously given glimpses of the hostile interaction which goes on between Medina and Khaybar.

³⁰⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 716-18.

³⁰⁵Ibid., 731-40.

³⁰⁶Ibid., 740-51.

³⁰⁷Ibid., 755-63.

³⁰⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 562.

³⁰⁹Ibid., 566.

³¹⁰Ibid., 571.

According to Hamidullah, had Muḥammad not signed the treaty at Ḥudaybiya, his victory over Khaybar might have been threatened:

At that time, he [Muḥammad] had embittered Jews in the formidable colony of Khaibar, in the north; and the irritated, though much exhausted, Quraish of Mecca in the south. A Khaibar - Mecca coalition was imminent. At least this much was certain that, if the Muslims marched towards Mecca, the Jews would storm the empty and undefended Madīnah; and if the Muslims attacked Khaibar, the same was the fear on the part of the Meccans . . .³¹¹

It is a similar position that appears to be taken by Lecker with the help of al-Sarakshī, though one should note that while Hamidullah talks of an 'imminent' coalition, for Lecker the agreement has already been concluded:

Indeed the Messenger of God agreed in the truce on the day of Ḥudaybiyya . . . because there was in it a benefit (*naẓar*) for the Muslims, owing to the agreement (*muwâṭ' a'a* [*? muwâḍa'a*]) which was between the people of Mecca and the people of Khaybar. It prescribed that if the Messenger of God marched on one of the two parties, the other party would attack Medina.³¹²

However, as far as Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidī are concerned, such an agreement was not likely, if only because during the battle of Khandaq the Prophet had successfully used trickery to create animosity between the various Arab factions as against those of the Jews, so that at Khandaq their efforts to oppose him jointly had failed.³¹³ While Ibn Ishâq gives the reader just one story in which Nu'aym b. Mas'ūd, the new convert to Islam, creates confusion between the factions who opposed Muḥammad, al-Wâqidī gives several. It is to the resulting confusion that al-Ḥajjāj b. 'Ilāt refers, when he, weaving his own thread of deception, states:

³¹¹Muhammad Hamidullah, Muslim Conduct of State, 4th. ed. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1961), 272.

³¹²Michael Lecker, "The Ḥudaybiyya Treaty and the Expedition against Khaybar," JSAI 5 (1984): 4.

³¹³Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sīrat rasūl Allāh, 680; Al-Wâqidī, Kitâb al-maghâzī, 480-93.

“And therefore they (i.e., the people of Khaybar) will apply to you seeking an assurance of security for their clans and a return to their previous conditions (i.e., regarding their relations with you; this is probably an indication to a treaty between the two parties); you should not comply with their request after what they had done to you.”³¹⁴

Lecker is confused by the statement; but only because he is not trying to understand either Ibn Ishâq or al-Wâqidî in terms of what they are saying.³¹⁵ That Lecker should interpose an interpretation by as-Sarakshî, who lived so many years later, speaks for the incorrect nature of his methodology. If one reads al-Wâqidî for what he says, the statement becomes clear and simple; similarly with Ibn Ishâq. Significantly, in the version of al-Wâqidî, soon after the execution of the B. Qurayza, we see the Jews in Khaybar plan to come together against the Muslims, but without the help of the Arabs:

Let us go to him [Muḥammad] with those of the Jews of Khaybar who are with us, and they are many . . . and we will not seek help from a single Arab, for you saw in the raid of Khandaq what the Arabs did to you.³¹⁶

This is an important declaration in the narrative of al-Wâqidî, for it indicates very clearly that the likelihood of an agreement between the Meccans and Khaybar Jews was quite remote. It is Ibn ‘Ilât’s advice to the Meccans that they should not comply with the request (which, incidentally, was invented by Ibn ‘Ilât) of the Khaybarîs to re-negotiate the alliance.³¹⁷

The victory of Ḥudaybiya is, in a sense, equally misunderstood by both Lecker and Hamidullah. Here it is important to appreciate sufficiently the interpretation of Ibn Ishâq that Muḥammad—just as his ancestor before him—had

³¹⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 703, trans. by Lecker in “The Ḥudaybiyya Treaty,” 5.

³¹⁵Ibid.

³¹⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 530.

³¹⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 770-73; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 702-05.

very intentionally stayed away from attacking the Meccans because he did not want to be in any way responsible for the destruction of God's sanctuary. Muḥammad's words, "the one who restrained the elephant from Mecca is keeping it [his camel] back," are extremely significant. It is a spiritual rather than a political victory that is being appreciated at this point.³¹⁸

It is significant that Ibn Ishâq should claim that the booty of Khaybar was essentially for those who had come to Ḥudaybiya, whether they participated in Khaybar or not.³¹⁹ This position continues to be maintained by al-Wâqidî:

They had stayed away from him in the raid of al-Ḥudaybiya and spread lies about the Prophet and the Muslims. They said: We will go out with you to Khaybar. . . . The Messenger of God said: You will go out with me only desiring *jihād*. As for plunder there is none [for you].³²⁰

As I have already suggested, however, al-Wâqidî's narrative keeps the readers aware of the tensions which prevailed between the Muslims and the Jews of Khaybar, and hence prepares them for the conflict which is to come.

Much of the information regarding the taking of Khaybar as given by al-Wâqidî is certainly very similar to that narrated by Ibn Ishâq: of how Muḥammad entered Khaybar;³²¹ of a series of duels fought between the Jews and Muslims in which the Muslims were invariably successful and in which the valor of both Zubayr and 'Alî are extolled—interestingly a very similar series of duels is repeated in the course of the taking of Wâdî al-Qurâ' by al-Wâqidî;³²² of how Muḥammad

³¹⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 741; trans. by Guillaume in *The Life of Muhammad*, 500-01; and, Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 587.

³¹⁹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 774.

³²⁰Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 634.

³²¹Ibid., 642; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 756-77.

³²²Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 655-57, and 710.

prohibited the eating of the flesh of the domesticated donkey;³²³ of how Muḥammad took the fortress of the Jew Sa'b b. Mu'âdh for the Banû Sahm of Aslam in particular, who had complained to him that they had not profited by the venture;³²⁴ of how 'Alî used the heavy door of the Jewish fortress as a shield;³²⁵ of how Kinâna refused to inform the Prophet of the hidden jewels, and thus was tortured to death;³²⁶ of the slave of the Prophet being marked by the Prophet as one who would go to hell;³²⁷ of Bilâl oversleeping, so that all those who were with the Prophet missed their morning prayer—a tradition which, interestingly, al-Wâqidî repeats, in keeping with his methods, during the course of the raid on Tabûk;³²⁸ of the girl who menstruated for the first time while riding with the Prophet;³²⁹ of how al-Ḥajjâj b. 'Ilât returned to Mecca and lied about the Prophet, indicating to the Meccans that the Prophet had lost to the Jews of Khaybar, in order to collect his money (which has already been discussed);³³⁰ and of how Maḥmûd b. Maslama was killed when a millstone was dropped on him.³³¹

There are those traditions, however, which are similar but not quite the same: for instance, whereas both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî tell of al-Akwa' and his composition of *rajaz* verse, only al-Wâqidî is able to inform the reader that it was another of the Prophet's companions, 'Abd Allâh b. Rawâḥa, concerning whom the Prophet had used the same words, and who in fact was martyred at Khaybar—

³²³ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 661; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 758.

³²⁴ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 659; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 759.

³²⁵ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 655; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 762.

³²⁶ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 671-73; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 763-64.

³²⁷ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 681; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 765.

³²⁸ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 711 and 1015; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 767.

³²⁹ Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 685; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 768.

³³⁰ Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 770-73; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 702.

³³¹ Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 758; al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 658.

al-Akwa', on the contrary, was martyred at Mu'ta.³³² The story of how Muḥammad had promised Ṣaffīya to Dihya, but how, when he decided to keep her for himself, he gave him two of her cousins instead, is told by both authors,³³³ except that with al-Wâqidî it was only the one cousin that Muḥammad gifted to Dihya,³³⁴ similarly how Abû'l Yasar stole two of the sheep belonging to the Jews, "bringing them back at a run as though I carried nothing", which were duly killed and eaten,³³⁵ but with al-Wâqidî there were two miracles: not only did Abû'l Yasar come running back with the sheep under his arms, but, "There did not remain one among the people of the camp who had besieged the fortress, but they had eaten from it."³³⁶

What really makes the difference, however, are those traditions introduced by al-Wâqidî which have not been mentioned by Ibn Ishâq during the course of his narration of the raid of Khaybar. Thus, for instance, there is the repetition of the tradition regarding the Jewish attempt to win help from the Ghaṭafân, but with a difference, for this time they are won over with the promise of the dates of Khaybar:

Kinâna b. Abî'l Ḥuqayq went along with fourteen Jews to the Ghaṭafân to ask them for their help, promising them half the dates of Khaybar for a year³³⁷

But that when the Prophet tries to turn them back, with a similar promise, the Ghaṭafân this time refuse:

³³²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 756; Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 638-39.

³³³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 758.

³³⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 674.

³³⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 762.

³³⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 660.

³³⁷Ibid., 642, also 640.

The Messenger of God sent (a message) to 'Uyayna b. Ḥisn who was at the head of the Ghatafân, and their leader, saying, "return with whoever is with you, and I will give you half the dates of Khaybar for this year, for surely God has promised me Khaybar." 'Uyayna said, "I will not ally myself nor make an agreement with a Muslim."³³⁸

The Ghatafân return home only when they hear a voice warning them that their families at home are about to be attacked.³³⁹ Thus al-Wâqidî, while confirming much of the information narrated by Ibn Ishâq, is nevertheless narrating traditions different from those presented by his predecessor. That they are different traditions is realized both by their content or *matn*, as well as by the names of those through whom these traditions have been conveyed, which constitutes the *isnâd*. Moreover, al-Wâqidî situates these traditions in different parts of the larger tale, as compared to Ibn Ishâq, in order to establish his own version of those happenings.

Al-Wâqidî also brings in entirely new material. He informs us of the situation in Medina when Muḥammad first decides to take Khaybar. Thus, for instance, we are told that even after the execution of the B. Qurayza, there still remained a fairly affluent community of Jews in Medina, Jews who had the means which enabled them to lend money to their needy Muslim confederates. Inevitably these Jews are drawn to their fellow Jews in Khaybar, so that though the Jews of Medina are bound by a *dhimma* agreement to be loyal to the Muslims, they are nevertheless hopeful that the latter will be defeated by their brethren in Khaybar:

Abû Shahm said with envy and greed: Do you consider that the fighting at Khaybar will be comparable to what you met from the Bedouin? By the Tora, in it are ten thousand warriors. Ibn Abî Ḥadrad said: O enemy of God, do you frighten us of our enemies, while you are under our protection?³⁴⁰

³³⁸Ibid., 650.

³³⁹Ibid.

³⁴⁰Ibid., 634-35.

Their hope leads them to betray their protectors, the Muslims, to the Jews of Khaybar, not only giving them information regarding the size of their forces, but promising them their support from Medina once the war actually begins.³⁴¹

It is conspicuous that while Ibn Ishâq barely gives the reader any information on Khaybar until he comes to the raid on that town, al-Wâqidî repeatedly emphasizes the strength of Khaybar's fortresses, the large number of forces maintained within its walls, and its general invulnerability. The reader is first informed about Khaybar as early as the time of the exile of the B. Naḍîr, after which the information concerning Khaybar is repeated in the account of the murder of Abû Râfi', and also at the beginning of the chapter on al-Khandaq, at the end of the chapter on the raid of the B. Qurayza, and at the beginning of the chapter on the raid of Khaybar itself.³⁴² Thus, according to al-Wâqidî, Muḥammad's victory over Khaybar is as miraculous as his earlier victory at Badr.

The Jewish town of Fadak, which submits to Muḥammad immediately after Khaybar, does so before it is actually attacked, so that its land is considered to be the property of the Prophet. Nevertheless, Fadak had, according to the information provided by al-Wâqidî, not submitted straight-away as one would presume if one were to depend on the information provided by Ibn Ishâq alone. In weaving for the reader the story of Khaybar, Fadak, Wâdî al-Qurâ', and Taymâ', al-Wâqidî as usual uses a style of repetition: thus, while Khaybar is taken by force, Fadak surrenders before attack; and similarly, while Wâdî al-Qurâ' is, like Khaybar, captured; Taymâ' like Fadak, surrenders to become the property of God and His Prophet. Al-Wâqidî also uses the raid as a kind of mnemonic which brings to mind certain practices established by the Prophet at the time. Thus for

³⁴¹Ibid., 641.

³⁴²Ibid., 373, 391, 531, 634-35.

instance al-Wâqidî indicates that the Jews, in coming to a settlement, proposed to the Prophet that while the land would continue to be theirs, they would leave Khaybar and return only whenever it was time to harvest the dates—a suggestion strangely reminiscent of what Sallâm b. Mishkam had hoped for during the siege of the B. Naḍîr.³⁴³ The Prophet, however, refuses. Instead, a settlement is reached whereby it is agreed that they would own half the land with its soil, and leave the other half to the Prophet. The second of these traditions, says al-Wâqidî, is the more trustworthy of the two.³⁴⁴

Again, many of the traditions are similar to those related by Ibn Ishâq, such as, for instance, the story of Abû Ayyûb, who stays up all night fearing for the Prophet who had just married Şafîya (whose father and uncle had both died because of him);³⁴⁵ and the tradition about the Prophet's slave whom the Prophet declares would find himself in hell because of the fact that he had stolen a piece of the booty before it had been divided up.³⁴⁶ To this category also belong traditions which indicate that the Prophet was agreeable to the use of *Qasâma* in deciding a legal issue, whether it be as an oath of accusation or as an oath of defense.³⁴⁷

Al-Wâqidî relates a considerable amount of new information as well, much of it concerning Muḥammad's 'courtship', if one may call it that, of Şafîya.³⁴⁸ But perhaps the most fascinating tradition yet to be cited is the amazingly thoughtful advice counseling against visits to one's 'women' without due warning, after '*ishâ*'. Here, al-Wâqidî cites the case of a man returning home

³⁴³Ibid., 368-69.

³⁴⁴Ibid., 706-07.

³⁴⁵Ibid., 708; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 766.

³⁴⁶Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 710; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 765.

³⁴⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 715; and Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 778.

³⁴⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 707-09.

to find his wife in bed with another man. The punishment of stoning is importantly not mentioned.³⁴⁹ It is significant that while Ibn Ishâq does tell of a tradition regarding the punishment of the adulterer by stoning, which appears in accounts of the Prophet's Farewell Sermon,³⁵⁰ al-Wâqidî does not..

Al-Wâqidî, having begun his work by naming for the reader the traditionists who constitute his main sources, goes on to list the various events of the *maghâzî* of the Prophet in chronological order.³⁵¹ It seems clear that al-Wâqidî's approach is based on a much emphasized respect for chronological detail, especially in comparison to the vague 'then' and 'after' attitude to the dating of events that is taken by Ibn Ishâq.³⁵² The basic structure of the *Kitâb al-Maghâzî* of al-Wâqidî, however, compares favorably with that of Ibn Ishâq, i.e., the sequence of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq, each in turn followed by the raids of Qaynuqâ', Naḍîr, and Qurayza respectively; after which there is movement into Khaybar, Fadak, Wâdi al-Qurâ', and Taymâ' before the taking of Mecca. But if one scrutinizes the above material more thoroughly, one finds that there are innumerable differences.

Here, once again, it is necessary to stress the fact that the genre of *sîra-maghâzî* does not envision a fixed chronology. It is, therefore, extremely important to notice that al-Wâqidî's chronology has not been the result of a thorough investigation of tradition, but rather, has in fact been imposed by him to establish his unique rendition of *sîra-maghâzî*. Thus, for instance it is on his own authority that he gives us the chronology of the various events. It is on the basis of

³⁴⁹Ibid., 712-13.

³⁵⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 970.

³⁵¹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 1-8.

³⁵²See my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, pages 128-29 above.

such a chronology that he places al-Sawîq after the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ'. It is on his own authority that he dates the agreement between the Jews and the Prophet when, according to him, it was written down in the House of Ramla, before the raid on the B. Naḍîr. Such a chronology enables him to assert that it was because of the abrogation of the agreement with Muḥammad by the Jews that the Prophet attacked them.

It is significant that al-Wâqidî's commendation of Ibn Ishâq as a traditionist comes in spite of his differences with him regarding both sequence and chronology. Chronology which establishes cause and effect is no doubt a key to interpretation. Given the fact that al-Wâqidî supplies his own, for as I have explained he states his chronology in an introductory statement on his own authority, one would be forced to acknowledge that chronology is an important key to appreciating the originality of al-Wâqidî.

Al-Wâqidî adopts all kinds of tactics to claim validity for the chronology he establishes, which at first seem merely based on a desire to emphasize a certain verisimilitude regarding his information. Thus, for instance, he takes the trouble to give the reader incorrect information and then correct it. He does this at least twice within his treatment of the motif of Muḥammad and the Jews. While detailing the course of the raid on the B. Qurayza, for instance, he tells the reader –and this, I repeat, is incorrect information–that on this occasion Zubayr b. al-'Awwâm went forward to duel with one of the Jews, much to the apprehension of his aunt Ṣafîya b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib:

A man from the Jews said, 'Who will come for a contest?' Zubayr stood up and challenged him. Ṣafîya said, 'Prepare me.' The Messenger of God said, 'Of the two of them the one who is above his companion will kill him.' Zubayr was above and he killed his companion. The Messenger of God was

fair to him and gave him his share of the loot. Ibn Wâqid said, 'Do not listen to this tradition about their fighting . . . this was in Khaybar.'³⁵³

And, again, during his account of the raid on Khaybar:

Zubayr went out to him, and Ṣafiya said, 'O Messenger of God it makes me sad! My son will be killed O Messenger of God.' The Prophet said, 'Rather your son will kill him.'³⁵⁴

One wonders why al-Wâqidî takes the trouble to provide such incorrect information, for he clearly 'knew' where and when he himself would prefer to situate the incident. It is possible that his style of repetition may have something to do with it, for he does end up by citing the information in two different locations. The point is, of course, that by doing so, he portrays himself to the reader as an extremely conscientious student of the traditions; but he is also indicating to the reader the various situations within which these traditions, which are a-chronological, could be contextualized.

Al-Wâqidî's shaping of chronology is particularly seen in his claim that the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' were the first to break their agreement, for here we see him change the sequence established for the traditions by Ibn Ishâq, a sequence which moves from the raid on al-Sawîq to the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', to one which places al-Sawîq after the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ'; the purpose is obviously to establish that it was the latter who were the first of the Jews to break their contract with Muḥammad: it was as a result of the abrogation of the agreement that Muḥammad besieged them. As I have discussed in my chapter on Ibn Ishâq, the account of the raid on al-Sawîq asserts that the B. Naḍîr gave shelter to the Meccans. If, as indicated by al-Wâqidî, an agreement had existed between Muḥammad and the Jews, and if, as indicated by Ibn Ishâq, the raid on al-Sawîq

³⁵³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 504-05.

³⁵⁴Ibid., 657.

preceded the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', then the B. Naḍîr should have been the first Jewish group to have been attacked by Muḥammad.

Since both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî date the raid of al-Sawîq in Dhû'l-Hijja, Jones believes that this was indeed when the event occurred.³⁵⁵ This misunderstanding of the issue is probably due to Jones' focus on the date per se, and to his inability to appreciate chronology as essentially a litmus of cause and effect rather than a deliberation regarding an exact point in time. Thus, though both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî declare that the raid of al-Sawîq was in Dhû'l-Hijja, for Ibn Ishâq, the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' (which he does not date) takes place afterwards; according to al-Wâqidî, the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' was before al-Sawîq, in around the month of Shawwâl. Interestingly, the word contract or agreement is not used by Ibn Ishâq during his account of the entire chapter on the B. Qaynuqâ'.³⁵⁶ Al-Wâqidî introduces his account of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' by informing the reader that the Prophet had made an agreement with the Jews of Medina. He then goes on to explain how because of the abrogation of that agreement by the Jews, the Prophet decided to attack them. Significantly, it is with this event that al-Wâqidî associates the first movement of Medinan Jews to Syria.³⁵⁷

In the case of the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, al-Wâqidî again asserts his version of the chronology of events by claiming to be able to give a very close approximation to the date of the event: "in the middle [the fifteenth] of Rabî' al-Awwal, of the year three."³⁵⁸ As Jones points out quite clearly, however, this

³⁵⁵Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 261.

³⁵⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 545-47.

³⁵⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176-81.

³⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 189.

could not possibly be accurate. The problem is, al-Wâqidî himself unwittingly contradicts this assertion in his account of the raid on Dhû Amarr by stating that the Prophet had set out for that raid on the twelfth of that month, and that he stayed away for eleven days; which makes it then impossible for the Prophet to have dispatched Muḥammad b. Maslama, having accompanied him, for a part of the way, on the fifteenth.³⁵⁹ There is little doubt that al-Wâqidî's intention is to establish his chronology, not because he believes it to be the historical truth but because it is necessary for him to assert his own thesis regarding early Islam. Al-Wâqidî's claim that the murder of Ka'b took place after Badr, and was an event distinct from the exile of the B. Naḍîr (a claim which is not clearly asserted by Ibn Ishâq), enables him to explain that the insecurity of the Jews following the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, led to their writing an agreement with Muḥammad. It was because the Jews abrogated this agreement that Muḥammad attacked them. The chronology asserted by al-Wâqidî provides for the necessary passage of time which makes the information regarding such an agreement appear more plausible.

Regarding the chronology of the murder of Sallâm b. Abî'l-Huqayq, al-Wâqidî dates the event at some point in the month of Dhû'l-Hijja in the year A.H. four, suggesting that he was murdered for his activities during the raid of the B. Naḍîr.³⁶⁰ In contrast, Ibn Ishâq dates the murder soon after al-Khandaq, implying that he was being punished for joining with the Meccans to attack Medina.³⁶¹ Moreover, Ibn Ishâq explains the murder as being motivated by the conflicts and competition which existed between the Aws and the Khazraj.³⁶² Al-Wâqidî makes no reference to the traditions regarding factionalism, and indicates that it was the

³⁵⁹Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 262-63.

³⁶⁰Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 391.

³⁶¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 714-16.

³⁶²*Ibid.*, 714.

Prophet who took the initiative in sending the expedition out against Abû Râfi‘, just as he did in the case of Ka‘b. His earlier dating—A.H. four—suggests that the Prophet’s actions were such that they did not encourage the development of factionalism either. According to him, it makes sense to fix the date of the murder at a point closer to the exile of the B. Naḍîr.³⁶³ To justify his chronology, al-Wâqidî brings in a whole series of new details (i.e., information not provided by Ibn Ishâq) into his account of the exile of the B. Naḍîr, informing the reader of the authority of Abû Râfi‘ and indicating his links with the Jews of the formidable fortress of Khaybar, events which explain the attack on Abû Râfi‘ in A.H. four. Though al-Wâqidî mentions an alternative date in A.H. six,³⁶⁴ nevertheless, the fact that he does not mention Abû Râfi‘ during the battle of Khandaq gives a certain finality to his original chronology.

As for the chronology of the raid of al-Khandaq, al-Wâqidî situates it soon after the raid of Muraysî‘. On this occasion, the Prophet’s authority is challenged by important members of the community who question his wife’s faithfulness to him. The community’s morale seems to have been at an ebb when the Prophet’s enemies decided to attack him at what later came to be known as the battle of al-Khandaq. (On the other hand, al-Wâqidî also indicates that the problems of the community had been overcome when he describes, for the reader, the way the community comes together, under the Prophet, to build the trench).

And similarly the events that lead to the raid of Khaybar are also differently narrated by al-Wâqidî, who indicates both ‘Alî’s expedition to al-Fadak as well as another minor expedition to Khaybar in the period between the raid on

³⁶³Jones, however, feels that the differences regarding the date of the murder of Abû Râfi‘ was a matter of simple confusion. See Jones, “The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*,” 270.

³⁶⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 395.

the B. Qurayza and the Prophet's conclusion of peace with the Meccans at al-Ḥudaybiya. Significantly, neither of these raids is chronologically situated by Ibn Ishâq, and in fact, both are mentioned by him only at the end of his account of the Prophet's *maghâzî*. Al-Wâqidî by situating them as he does, indicates that there was hostility between the two communities long before the better known raid of Khaybar, which he dates with Ibn Ishâq in A.H. seven.

Al-Wâqidî also differs from Ibn Ishâq with regard to the chronology of *asbâb al-nuzûl* passages. Ibn Ishâq, who, as we have seen, is not obviously disturbed by the existence of contradictory traditions regarding an event, gives two explanations for the occasion of the revelation of the verse:

Remember God's favor to you, how a people were minded to stretch out their hands against you, but He withheld their hands from you³⁶⁵

One explanation, according to Ibn Ishâq, is that this revelation referred to the B. Naḍîr when they attempted to throw down a stone upon the Prophet.³⁶⁶ Al-Wâqidî disagrees: according to him the verse was revealed during the raid on Dhû Amarr.³⁶⁷ There is a difference of opinion regarding the verses revealed during the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' as well. The point is that each compiler sought out the Qur'ânic citations which best suited the interpretation or bias that he desired to impose on the various events that constituted the life of the Prophet. Al-Wâqidî seeking an interpretation that would accommodate his interpretation of *sîra-maghâzî* did not blindly include the verses cited by his predecessor, but instead, carefully selected his own.

³⁶⁵Qur'ân, trans. by Yusuf Ali, 5:12.

³⁶⁶Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 392.

³⁶⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 196.

As for his style, the most obviously damaging aspect of al-Wâqidî's Kitâb al-maghâzî is his tendency to popularize and sentimentalize issues, possibly, in order to interest his audience. Four of these incidents are particularly striking: the first of these describes the pageantry with which both the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr leave Medina, calling forth a memory of their hospitality and their generosity. The reader is reminded that the Jews had participated in their wars and been ever ready to help their Arab friends:

Is this how you have rewarded them? You asked them for help and they helped you against the Khazraj; surely you had asked help from all of the Arabs, and they had refused it to you.³⁶⁸

The reply, which is heard on several occasions, is that Islam had destroyed all earlier ties, an answer which somehow sounds inadequate, though it is probably meant as the pronouncement of the dawn of a new era.

The second incident shows Muḥammad at the scene of the battle of the Trench, having fallen into a deep slumber, being repeatedly awakened with the knowledge (with which he has been inspired) that the enemy was trying to infiltrate their camp. Each time, Muḥammad himself ventures out to face the enemy and returns having seen them withdraw.³⁶⁹ Here the bravery of the Prophet is being extolled, and the believing audience probably enjoyed it when it was narrated to them, but the numerous repetitions make it tedious for the reader.

The third incident concerns the B. Ghaṭafân who were on their way to help the Jews of Khaybar. On the way they hear what Ibn Ishâq is satisfied with calling a rumor, but which al-Wâqidî exaggerates into a voice echoing out of nowhere, warning the Ghaṭafân that their homes are being destroyed. The whole incident is

³⁶⁸Ibid., 375.

³⁶⁹Ibid., 466-67.

a simulation of the fantastic, a kind of aural display of God's help to the Prophet.³⁷⁰

The fourth incident is the extremely romantic and sentimentalized version of Muḥammad's marriage to Ṣafīya bint Ḥuyayy.³⁷¹

It is obvious that a kind of patterned repetitiveness which is seen in many aspects of al-Wâqidî's *Kitâb al-maghâzî* adds to his quantity of information. Take, for instance, his approach to the depiction of Ibn Ubayy as a hypocrite. While Ibn Ishâq does not include this theme when he discusses the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', al-Wâqidî does not omit it. And similarly with the traditions regarding the exile of the Jews from Medina. Al-Wâqidî narrates them in the accounts of the raids of both the B. Qaynuqâ' as well as the B. Naḍîr.

It is the same style of repetitiveness that leads al-Wâqidî to mention the movement of a few Jews towards the fortress of Fâri', not only in the affair of al-Khandaq, where Ibn Ishâq brings to the fore the issue of increased risk to the Muslims of Medina in a possible attempt to justify the execution of the Qurayza, but also in the earlier sequence of Uḥud where he gives us an early version of Ṣafīya's bravery in the face of Ḥasân's cowardice.³⁷² And similarly with the story of Bilâl oversleeping: we hear of it during the taking of Khaybar, which is when Ibn Ishâq tells of that tradition as well,³⁷³ but then we hear it again during the march on Tabûk.³⁷⁴ Thus, there is a repetitiveness in the method of al-Wâqidî which brings to it a certain flatness but also brings a kind of ritualistic effect which

³⁷⁰Ibid., 650.

³⁷¹Ibid., 707-09.

³⁷²Ibid., 288 and 462.

³⁷³Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 767; and al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 711.

³⁷⁴Ibid., 1015.

the audience must have found attractive. It is quite different from the style of Ibn Ishâq, who seems to bring out the differences while moving towards a climax. This repetitiveness is seen in al-Wâqidî's traditions concerning the agreements made by Muḥammad with the Jews as well. There is a regular pattern of the Jews breaking their 'contract' with Muḥammad, which is consistently maintained as the reason for his decision to fight them. At the same time, the repetition stresses the characterization of the Jews as undependable.³⁷⁵ We see a similar repetitiveness in the manner in which al-Wâqidî depicts the hypocrisy of Ibn Ubayy and the jinxed personality of Huyayy b. Akṭab.³⁷⁶

Thus we see that al-Wâqidî's use of tradition material affects *sîra-maghâzî* to make two kinds of changes. The first kind of change concerns the very content of the traditions he uses. We see him introduce more information and new information to establish his distinctness from Ibn Ishâq. Thus, for instance, he tells of the contract written by Muḥammad at the house of Ramla³⁷⁷—a piece of information that is not mentioned by Ibn Ishâq to establish that there was an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews of the B. Naḍîr, and that it was because they broke their agreement that Muḥammad attacked them. As importantly we see al-Wâqidî maintain a chronology which would allow for such an interpretation.

We also see al-Wâqidî locate similar traditions in several places. Generally the intent is to provide new situations for their recollection, but occasionally also to achieve an effect of de-emphasis, as, for instance, in the case

³⁷⁵See for instance al-Wâqidî's explanations of the events that lead to the raids on the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza.

³⁷⁶See al-Wâqidî's description of Ibn Ubayy's activity during the raids of the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr.

³⁷⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 192.

of the exile of the Jews, and in the case of the incident at the fortress of Fârî'. The result is to deny the full impact given the different incidents by Ibn Ishâq, who uses the traditions but once to indicate the exile of the B. Naḍîr, and to show that the Muslims had been badly let down during the battle of Khandaq by the B. Qurayza, respectively. Sometimes al-Wâqidî situates the tradition in a modified form early in the course of the narrative in order to create the effect of a premonition: thus as early on as in the battle of Khandaq, we hear the Prophet convey his hope of holding the key to the Ka'ba, an act about which he would soon enough have a vision, and later fulfill; and similarly with the notion of *jizya*, which is suggested by 'Amr b. Su'da during the raid on the Qurayza.³⁷⁸ It may be that al-Wâqidî merely desires to indicate another possible situation which might have recalled the particular tradition concerned—as for instance the traditions which tell of how Bilâl over slept and the account of Zubayr b. al-'Awwâm's duel against one of the Jews. At other times the tradition is simply displaced, taken away from one position and placed elsewhere, as, for instance, in the case of Sa'd's prayer.³⁷⁹

But the relocation of traditions which constitute a particular event must not be confused with the relocation of the very events themselves, such as the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' or the murder of Abû Râfi'. This is another aspect of al-Wâqidî's use of *maghâzî* material which is probably, as I have argued in my first chapter, an aspect of the very genre itself. Al-Wâqidî does not bide by the sequence of events as detailed by Ibn Ishâq, but, rather, changes it around to establish his interpretation of the Prophet's life.

³⁷⁸Ibid., 504.

³⁷⁹Ibid., 512.

Thus the originality of al-Wâqidî's method lies largely in his restatement of *sîra-maghâzî* in the light of his unique interpretation of the Prophet's life. The compiler, appreciating the traditions as being unattached and de-contextualized, assigns to them various and altered positions within the scheme of—in this case particularly Ibn Ishâq's—*sîra maghâzî*, to effect a re-creation. The success of such a recreation depends on the skill with which the traditions are re-situated and manipulated within the given genre. In using this methodology al-Wâqidî provides a new relevance for the traditions that constitute the story of the *maghâzî* of the Prophet. The changed and sometimes more detailed information he introduces is thus not due to a desire to provide more accurate information, but largely the result of a stylistic impulse which helps him use the data for his own purposes. In effect, he very successfully pours the old wine into a new bottle as it were, to become the compiler of a new and original biography of the Prophet.

Chapter Four

A Closer Look

Having explored the genre of *sîra -maghâzî*, it seems clear to us that al-Wâqidî, in establishing his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, chose to do so differently from Ibn Ishâq, and, as importantly, that he, al-Wâqidî, set out to establish this difference very deliberately, for the variations that exist are not accidental. It would be well to remember that al-Wâqidî never mentions Ibn Ishâq in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, that he does not cite the traditions cited by Ibn Ishâq, and that avoiding the scenes of the Prophet's birth, emigration, and death, which are prominent in Ibn Ishâq's work, he, focuses instead on the achievements of Muḥammad.

Before concluding what has been essentially a comparative study of the *sîra-maghâzî* of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, I examine in this chapter two passages in detail, those concerning the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr—both of which are sufficiently well known to any student of Islam—the point being to make the reader appreciate more fully the unique contribution of each author in terms of the traditions, poetry, and Qur'ânic verses cited, and how the use of these sources relates to the purposes they each had in mind. This approach contrasts considerably with the reductive pronouncements concerning these events, that have come to be presented as history, by historians as vastly different in their views as Caetani and Lings.

The passages selected for study in this section, the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' and the exile of the B. Naḍîr, together with the chapter on the raid of the B. Qurayza which is not investigated here, constitute a unit within the structural framework of the *maghâzî* indicating Muḥammad's relations with the Medinan Jews; in mythical terms, the hero's journey away from home to prove himself. It is certainly true that these tribes were not the only Jews of Medina, but they were the most significant, and Muḥammad was responsible for destroying their existence as distinct communities within Medina. The way this happened is differently explained by Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî. To appreciate this difference, in terms of the full complexity of the *maghâzî* genre is to go a long way towards understanding why either of these texts may not be used to substantiate the information provided by the other, or why the two cannot be treated as though they were saying the same thing.

Ibn Ishâq represents Muḥammad's conflict with the Jews of Medina in a truly eclectic fashion. On the one hand, we have the conflict with each tribe represented differently: with the Qaynuqâ', we have the Prophet in true Biblo-Qur'ânic fashion inviting the Jews to Islam; with the B. Naḍîr, Ibn Ishâq introduces instead the universal mythic pattern of stone throwing—the B. Naḍîr plan to throw a rock upon Muḥammad and kill him; while with the Qurayza we see borrowing from the tales of the *ayyâm*. As for the actual destruction of the tribes, here Ibn Ishâq seems to use a combination of mnemonic and Biblo-Qur'ânic patterns: the community that rejects Muḥammad is obliterated in the sense that not only do we see the better prepared Jews defeated by the small forces of the Muslims, but none of the Jewish tribes are ever heard of again. As for the actual means of Muḥammad's supersession, the violence is seen to escalate from forced submission to exile and execution.

Al-Wâqidî, for his part, plays with the scenario depicted by Ibn Ishâq, using repetition, change of chronology, and new material (as is his wont) to weave in a motif about the abrogation of the agreement with Muḥammad by the Jews. In a sense this too is an age old Biblical-theme: the Jews had not kept their covenant with God either. But al-Wâqidî does not stop here. He takes aspects of the B. Naḍîr incident as depicted by Ibn Ishâq and presents it during the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' as well, so that, for instance, the hypocrisy of Ibn Ubayy is now repeated, as is the notion of the exile of the Jews. Through repetition al-Wâqidî emphasizes the character of the Prophet as honest, a man of his word who keeps his agreements, but as one who was forced to attack the Jews because they abrogated theirs. As for the Jews, they are portrayed as predictably unfaithful. It is significant that Ibn Ishâq, for his part, does not specifically mention an agreement. Al-Wâqidî, by emphasizing the writing of one introduces his own interpretation of these events.

My discussion will take the following pattern. I shall first briefly explain the events that lead from the first raid to the later one, as they unfold in the hands of Ibn Ishâq as compared to al-Wâqidî. This will be followed by a translation and careful analysis of each of the passages, and a comparative statement showing how al-Wâqidî differs in his interpretation of the two particular events. Finally, I shall try to justify these differences in terms of the different approaches to authorship taken by the two compilers of the Prophet's biography, Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî.

It is important to realize that throughout I have adopted an approach which insists on seeing the parts within the context of the whole, so that the centrality of the author as the interpreter of all that he writes about is primary to the appreciation of the texts examined. It is vital that the reader concede the integrity of the text. In writing within the genre of *sîra-maghâzî*, the authors concerned

have exploited its form to the full. Both that which is included within the text, as well as that which is excluded, must be viewed as being based on a deliberate decision of the author concerned.

I provide a translation of the basic passages. Where Qur'ânic text is cited (passages in italics) I have relied on the translation of Yusuf Ali. Where the text of Ibn Ishâq is concerned, though guided by the translation of Guillaume, I have tried to keep close to the edition of Wüstenfeld; yet I have endeavored to present the reader with the material of Ibn Ishâq alone, as established in the recension of Ibn Hishâm. For the section of the poetry, which is an important aspect of Ibn Ishâq's material, I have provided the reader with Guillaume's translation.

An Outline of the Events according to Ibn Ishâq:

No date is given for the raid on the Banû Qaynuqâ', but it is placed following the raid of Sawîq which is dated in the month of Dhû'l Hijja. The story moves from—here I have simply translated the titles as given by the authors themselves—the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ'; the raid on al-Qarada; the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf; **Muḥayyiṣa** and **Huwayyiṣa**; the affair of Uḥud and its traditions/tales; the tale of the day of Rajî' in A.H. three; the affair of Bi'r Ma'ûna in Ṣafar of A.H. four, and the affair of the exile of the B. Naḍîr in A.H. four. (Since this dissertation is a case study of Muḥammad and the Jews in particular, we deal with only those events in which the Jews are involved, which I have outlined in bold print.)

The story goes thus: The battle of Badr had seen the defeat of the Meccan Quraysh, and while Abû Sufyân their leader had sworn to take his revenge, Ka'b, the son of a Jewish woman from the B. Naḍîr and an Arab father, mourning the

death of important Meccans, decides to incite the Arabs into action by assaulting the Muslims through verse in which he attacks both their Prophet and some of their women.¹ In the Ibn Ishâq version of the story, the raid at Sawîq tells of Abû Sufyân's visit to the B. Nađîr in search of information regarding the Muslims, during which time he takes the opportunity to kill two of the Anşâr.² When the Prophet hears of this he gives chase to the Meccan group, but fails to catch up with them. Sawîq is followed, after the raid on Dhû Amarr and al-Furu', by the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ'. The result of this raid is that the B. Qaynuqâ' submit to the authority of the Prophet but are handed over to 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy who objects to the Prophet executing them:

No, by God, I will not let you go until you deal kindly with my clients. Four hundred men without mail and three hundred mailed protected me from all mine enemies; would you cut them down in one morning?³

However, we never learn whether that was indeed the intention of the Prophet.

The Prophet then goes on to remove Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, and soon after the murder of Ka'b,⁴ Muḥammad proclaims the order to kill any Jew, one of those murdered as a result being Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant. The situation leaves the Jews feeling extremely uneasy and insecure.⁵

After the battle of Uḥud, the affair of Bi'r Ma'ûna, which sees the murder of two of the B. 'Âmir by a Muslim, 'Amr b. Umayya al-Ḍamrî, who was unaware that Muḥammad had made an agreement with that tribe,⁶ leads Muḥammad to seek the help of the B. Nađîr for the payment of the blood money. The latter agree,

¹Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 548-50.

²Ibid., 543-44.

³Ibid., 546; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 363; .

⁴Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 548-52.

⁵Ibid., 553-54.

⁶Ibid., 648-51.

apparently because they have an alliance with the B. 'Âmir.⁷ Even as they invite Muḥammad to share a meal with them, the B. Naḍîr begin to plot his murder. The events which follow lead to their eviction.

An Outline of the Events according to al-Wâqidî

Here the sequence is as follows: The raid of the B. Qaynuqâ'; the raid of al-Sawîq; the raid of Qirâra al-Kudr; the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf; the affair of the Ghatafân; the raid of B. Sulaym; Sarîya of al-Qarada; the raid of Uḥud; sarîya Abî Salama; the raid of Bi'r Ma'ûna; raid of Rajî'; raid of the B. Naḍîr. (The events outlined in bold print concern the issue of Muḥammad and the Jews.)

In this version, the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', dated the month of Shawwâl in the year two, concludes with their exile. Al-Wâqidî informs us that they left for Adhri'ât.⁸ The raid against the B. Qaynuqâ' is followed by the raid on Sawîq which takes place in the month of Dhû'l Hijja. In al-Wâqidî's account, the raid on al-Sawîq is the occasion which tells of Abû Sufyân and some of his friends being entertained and given information about the Muslims by the B. Naḍîr, and of his killing of two Muslims.⁹ Essentially, al-Wâqidî is informing the reader of a breach of contract by the B. Naḍîr, in that they were entertaining the enemy of the Muslims. When Muḥammad hears of this, he gives chase but does not catch up with Abû Sufyân.

⁷Ibid., 652.

⁸Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 180.

⁹Ibid., 181-82.

Introducing the scene of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf's murder, al-Wâqidî acquaints the reader with Muḥammad's desire to come to a settlement with the Jews and the polytheists in Medina.¹⁰ It seems that the murder of Ka'b, who is guilty of blasphemy against the Prophet, followed by Muḥammad's announcement permitting the killing of any Jew, produces the necessary climate for the conclusion of such an agreement. The Jews and polytheists go to the Prophet seeking an explanation. He informs them that insulting poetry against him will not be tolerated, and then invites them to sign an agreement with him, which they do soon after.¹¹

After the affair of Bi'r Ma'ûna, where one of the Muslims, not knowing that Muḥammad had but recently come to an agreement with them, murders two members of the B. 'Âmir,¹² Muḥammad turns to the B. Naḍîr for help in paying their blood money. The latter agree, but, despite the fact that they have a written agreement with him, then plot to murder the Prophet by dropping a rock upon him.¹³ The chapter concludes with their exile.

The Besieging of the Banû Qaynuqâ' from Ibn Ishâq's Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh in the recension of Ibn Hishâm.¹⁴

(p. 545) Ibn Ishâq said: Meanwhile the affair of the B. Qaynuqâ' was among the raids of the Messenger of God. There was a report about the B. Qaynuqâ' that the Messenger of God gathered them in their market, saying: "O

¹⁰Ibid., 184.

¹¹Ibid., 192.

¹²Ibid., 346.

¹³Ibid., 364-65.

¹⁴In the following translation I have excluded the contribution of Ibn Hishâm so that the text of Ibn Ishâq is appreciated for what it must have been. Numbers cited in brackets refer to page numbers in the edition by Wüstenfeld.

Community of Jews, beware and convert lest God brings a destruction down upon you similar to that which he brought upon the Quraysh, for surely you know that I am the Prophet who has been sent and you will find that in your books and God's agreement/ covenant with you. They said, "O Muḥammad, you think that we are your people. Do not deceive yourself because you met a people who have no knowledge of war, and got the better of them. By God if we fight you, you will learn that we are men."

Ibn Ishâq said: A client from the family of Zayd b. Thâbit related to me from Sa'îd b. Jubayr or from 'Ikrima from Ibn 'Abbâs, saying, These verses were not revealed except about them: *Say to those who reject Faith: "Soon will ye be vanquished and gathered together to Hell, an evil bed indeed (to lie on)! There has already been for you a sign in the two armies that met (in combat);*¹⁵ i.e., the Companions of the Messenger of God at Badr, and the Quraysh. *One was fighting in the Cause of God, the other resisting God; these saw with their own eyes twice their number. But God doth support with His aid who he pleaseth. In this is a warning for such as have eyes to see.*"¹⁶

Ibn Ishâq said: 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda related to me that the B. Qaynuqâ' were the first of the Jews to destroy what¹⁷ was between them and the Messenger of God and to go to war between Badr and Uḥud. Ibn Hishâm said..... (p. 546) Ibn Ishâq said: 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda related to me that the Messenger of God besieged them until they surrendered unconditionally. 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy b. Salûl went to him when God had placed them in his power, saying, "O Muḥammad deal kindly with my clients; they were clients of the Khazraj." But the Messenger of God put him off. Ibn Ubayy repeated, "O Muḥammad deal kindly with my clients." He said: And the Messenger of God

¹⁵Qur'ân, 3:12.

¹⁶Ibid., 3:13.

¹⁷Here I have maintained a literal translation so that the reader will appreciate the subtle changes introduced by al-Wâqidî in his version of the story. Guillaume translates, "The B. Qaynuqâ' were the first of the Jews to break their agreement," but the word 'agreement' is his insinuation, and is probably based on his reading of the al-Wâqidî text. See Guillaume's translation in Ibn Ishâq, The Life of Muhammad, 363.

turned away from him, so he [Ibn Ubayy] thrust his hand into the collar/neck opening of the robe/coat of mail of the Messenger of God. Ibn Hishâm said.....

Ibn Ishâq said: The Messenger of God said to him, "Let go of me," and he became angry so that they saw his face darken. Then he said, "Woe unto you, let go of me." Ibn Ubayy said, "No, by God, I will not let go until you deal kindly with my clients. Four hundred men without mail and three hundred mailed protected me from all my enemies, and you will mow them down in one morning? Indeed I am a man who fears that circumstances may change." The Messenger of God said, "They are yours." Ibn Hishâm said.....

Ibn Ishâq said : My father, Ishâq b. Yasâr, related to me from 'Ubâda b. al-Walîd b. 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit saying: When the B. Qaynuqâ' fought the Messenger of God, 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy stood by them and defended them. He said: 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit, one of the B. 'Awf who had the same alliance as that which 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy had with them, went and renounced them and exonerated himself before God and His Messenger from their pact, saying, "O Messenger of God, I take God and His Messenger and the believers as my friends, and I renounce this pact and these polytheists and their friendship." He said: It was about him and 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy that this portion from 'the table' was revealed: *O Ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust. Those in whose hearts is a disease,*¹⁸ i.e., referring to 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy, and his saying, (p. 547) "Indeed I fear a change of circumstances." *How eagerly they run about amongst them, saying: "We do fear lest a change of fortune brings us disaster." Ah! perhaps God will give (thee) victory or a decision according to His will. Then they will repent of the thoughts which they secretly harboured in their hearts,*¹⁹ until God's saying, *Your (real) friends are (no less than) God, His Apostle and the (Fellowship of) believers, those who establish regular prayers and*

¹⁸Qur'ân, 5:54.

¹⁹Ibid., 5:55.

regular charity, and those who bow down humbly (in worship),²⁰ mentioning ‘Ubâda b. al-Ṣâmit taking God and His apostle and the believers as friends, and renouncing his agreement and friendship with the B. Qaynuqâ‘. As to those who turn (for friendship) to God, His Apostle and the (Fellowship of) believers it is the Fellowship of God that must certainly triumph.²¹

Raid of the B. Qaynuqâ‘ from Al-Wâqidî’s Kitâb al-Maghâzî²²

(p. 176) The raid of the Qaynuqâ‘ (began) on Saturday in the middle of Shawwâl at the beginning of the twentieth month (after the *hijra*). The Prophet besieged them until the first day of the month of Dhû’l-Qa‘da.

‘Abd Allâh b. Ja‘far related to me from al-Ḥârith b. Fuḍayl from Ibn Ka‘b al-Qurazî, saying: When the Messenger of God arrived in Medina, the Jews, all of them, were reconciled/were at peace with him, and he wrote between him and them an agreement. The Prophet attached every tribe with their[? its] confederates and established a security/protection between himself and them. He stipulated conditions to them, among which it was stipulated that they would not help an enemy against him.

When the Prophet overcame the companions of Badr and arrived at Medina, the Jews acted wrongfully and destroyed what was between them and the Messenger of God of the contract/agreement.²³ The Prophet sent for them and collected them together, then he said, “O Jewish people, convert—for, by God, you surely know that I am the Messenger of God—before God inflicts upon you the like of what he inflicted on the Quraysh.” The Jews said, “O Muḥammad, let not those whom you met deceive you. Surely you have defeated a people who have no experience [in war] and got the better of them. We are, by God, the masters of

²⁰Ibid., 5:58.

²¹Ibid., 5:59

²²Page numbers refer to the edition by J. M. B. Jones.

²³Here I have provided a literal translation so that the phrase “of the agreement” will be seen for what it is, namely, an interpretative gloss.

war, and if you fight us you will learn that you have not fought with the likes of us.”

While they were thus showing enmity and breach of the agreement, a strange²⁴ woman from the Arabs married to a man from the Anṣār came to the market of the B. Qaynuqâ'. She sat down by a goldsmith's with a trinket of hers. A Jew of the B. Qaynuqâ' came and sat behind her without her knowledge. He fixed her outer garment to her back with a pin. When the woman stood up her pudenda showed and they laughed at her. (p. 177) A man from the Muslims stood up and followed him and killed him. The B. Qaynuqâ' gathered and they surrounded and killed the Muslim. They abandoned the contract/agreement with the Prophet and fought against him, fortifying themselves in their fortress, but the Prophet went to them and besieged them. They were the first of those to whom the Prophet marched. The Jews of Qaynuqâ' were driven away. They were the first of the Jews who fought [with the Prophet].

Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh from Zuhri from 'Urwa told me: When this verse was revealed, *if thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms: for God loveth not the treacherous*,²⁵ the Prophet marched to them on the basis of this verse. They said: He besieged them in their fortress (for) fifteen nights most vigorously until God put fear in their hearts. The Jews said, "May we surrender and leave?" The Prophet said, "No, except upon my judgment." The Jews surrendered unconditionally to the Prophet and he ordered that they be tied up.

He [Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allâh] said: "They were fettered with shackles." They said: The Prophet employed al-Mundhir b. Qudâma al-Sâlimî to fetter them. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh said: Ibn Ubayy passed by them and he said, "Set them free!" And al-Mundhir said, "Will you set free a people whom the Prophet has tied up? By God, a man will not set them free but I will cut off his

²⁴The adjective used is *nazî'a* which Wellhausen translates as 'in die Fremde verheiratet.' See al-Wâqidî, *Muhammad in Medina*, 92.

²⁵Qur'ân, 8:58.

head.” Ibn Ubayy rushed to the Prophet and thrust his hand into the robe/coat of mail of the Prophet from behind him, and he said, “O Muḥammad, deal kindly with my clients.” The Prophet turned to him angrily, his face changed, and said, “Woe unto you, release me!” But he [Ibn Ubayy] said, “I will not release you until you deal kindly with my clients. Four hundred men in mail, and three hundred without mail protected me on the day of Ḥadā’iq and Bu’āth from all my enemies.²⁶ And you desire to mow them down (p. 178) in one morning? O Muḥammad, I am a man who fears change.” The Prophet said, “Set them free, and may God curse them and curse him with them!” When Ibn Ubayy spoke for them the Prophet refrained from killing them, and commanded that they be exiled from Medina.

Ibn Ubayy came with his confederates, who were prepared to leave. He desired to speak to the Prophet about settling them in their houses. Ibn Ubayy found ‘Uwaym b. Sā’ida at the door of the Prophet when he went to enter, and ‘Uwaym turned him back, saying, “Do not enter until the Prophet notifies you.” Ibn Ubayy pushed him, and ‘Uwaym treated him harshly until Ibn Ubayy’s face was scratched by the wall and blood flowed. His Jewish confederates shouted, “Abū’l-Ḥubāb, we will never stay in a home/land wherein your face suffered this, and we are not able to change it.” Ibn Ubayy began to shout to them while he wiped the blood from his face, saying, “Woe unto you! Be firm, remain!” But they began to shout together, “We will never live in a home/land in which your face suffered such as this, and we are not in a position to change it!” They were surely the bravest of the Jews, and Ibn Ubayy had ordered them to enter their fortress, claiming that he would enter with them, but he forsook them and did not enter with them. They remained in their fortress and did not shoot an arrow nor fight until they surrendered to the peace and judgment of the Messenger of God with their possessions for him. When they came out and opened their fortress, it was Muḥammad b. Maslama who expelled them and seized their possessions.

²⁶Here he is referring to the wars that were fought between the Aws and the Khazraj with the support of the Jews in pre-Islamic times.

The Prophet took from their weapons three bows: one bow named al-Katûm which was broken at Uḥud, another bow called al-Rawhâ', and another called al-Bayḍâ'. And he took two coats of mail from their weapons: one which was called al-Şaghḍiyya and another, Fiḍḍa. And three swords: a Qala'î sword, a sword named Battâr, and (p. 179) another sword; and three spears. He [Muḥammad b. Maslama] said: They found many weapons and tools for gold smithery in their fortresses, for they were goldsmiths.

Muḥammad b. Maslama said: The Messenger of God gave me one of their coats of mail. To Sa'd b. Mu'âdh he gave a coat of mail which is famous, called al-Saḥl. They did not possess land nor plantations (meaning fields). The Messenger of God took the fifth (*khums*) from whatever was captured from them (booty), and apportioned what remained among his companions. The Messenger of God commanded 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit to expel them. The Qaynuqâ' began to say, "O Abû'l Walîd, we are your confederates from among the Aws and the Khazraj, and you do this to us?" 'Ubâda said to them, "When you fought, I came to the Prophet and said, 'O Prophet, I exonerate myself to you from them and from my alliance with them.' " Ibn Ubayy and 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit were in the same position with them, in alliance. 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy said, "Did you free yourself from alliance with your confederates? How is this (which is) in their hands with you!" And he reminded him of some cases in which they had stood the test. 'Ubâda said, "Abû'l-Ḥubâb, hearts have changed and Islam (has) erased the agreements. On the other hand, by God, surely you are involved in an affair whose end you will see tomorrow." The Qaynuqâ' said, "O Muḥammad, some people owe us a debt." The Messenger of God said, "Hasten and settle it."

'Ubâda imposed on them departure and exile. They asked for time, but he told them there would not be an hour exceeding three days for them. "This is the command of the Messenger of God, if it were I, I would not have given you a moment." When three (days) passed he set out on their trail until they were on their way to al-Shâm. He says, "The most distant and furthest honour is the

furthest.”²⁷ When he reached Khalf Dhubâb (p. 180) he turned back. They settled in Adhri‘ât.

Regarding their expulsion when they breached the pact, we heard a report other than that of Ibn Ka‘b:

Muḥammad [b. ‘Abd Allâh] related to me from Zuhri from ‘Urwa, saying: Surely when the Prophet returned from Badr, they (the Jews) were envious and displayed deceit/disloyalty. Jibrîl revealed to him this verse: *If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms. For God loveth not the treacherous.* He said: When Jibrîl had finished, the Messenger of God said to him, “I fear them.” The Prophet marched to them on the basis of this verse until they yielded to his judgment. The Prophet got their possessions, and they had their children and their women.

Muḥammad b. al-Qâsim related to me from his father from al-Rabî‘ b. Sabra from his father. He said: I was between the two Faljâs²⁸ coming from al-Shâm when I met the B. Qaynuqâ‘ carrying the children and the women on camels while they themselves were walking. I questioned them and they said, “Muḥammad expelled us and he took our possessions.” I said, “Where are you going?” They said, “Al-Shâm.” Sabra said: When they alighted at Wâdî al-Qurâ‘ they remained for a month. The Jews of Wâdî al-Qurâ‘ gave mounts to those who were on foot and fed them. They went to Adhri‘ât and stayed there. And theirs was not a short stay.

Yaḥyâ b. ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Qatâda related to me from ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm, saying: The Prophet appointed Abû Lubâba b. ‘Abd al-Mundhir to represent him at Medina on three occasions: the battle of Badr, B. Qaynuqâ‘, and the raid of al-Sawîq.

²⁷I do not understand the phrase. I have directly taken the translation from M. V. McDonald’s translation of al-Ṭabarî. See The Foundation of the Community, 87.

²⁸Two places named by the same name ‘Falja’.

A Comparison of the two Narratives Relating to the Raid on the B. Qaynuqâ'

The approaches taken by the two compilers to the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' are different. Having dated the raid on Sawîq as Dhû'l-Hijja of A.H. two, Ibn Ishâq places the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' after it, that is to say either at the very end of A.H. two or at the beginning of A.H. three. But he does not give a date. Al-Wâqidî, by contrast, begins his chapter on the raid of B. Qaynuqâ', as always, with the date of the raid, stating that it happened in the middle of Shawwâl. He places the raid of Sawîq after it, in the month of Dhû'l Hijja. As always, he concludes his chapter with a statement on who was in charge of Medina during the Prophet's absence: on this occasion it was Abû Lubâba.

The issue of date is important in terms of the very nature of *sîra-maghâzî*. The traditions that constitute the genre are known to be a-chronological. Therefore it is the compiler who, by situating the traditions in a particular sequence, or establishing a chronology for the event, provides the context for the narrative concerned. According to Ibn Ishâq, when the B. Qaynuqâ' were invited to Islam by the Prophet, there had already been a disruption of the relations that existed between the Jews and the Muslims. It was caused by the B. Naḍîr's hospitality to Abû Sufyân, the Meccan enemy of the Prophet, during the raid of al-Sawîq. Nevertheless, the Prophet is hopeful that the B. Qaynuqâ' will convert to Islam because of his recent (miraculous) victory at the battle of Badr. This is why we hear the B. Qaynuqâ' say to the Prophet, "You think that we are your people."

Al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, by dating the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' in the month of Shawwâl, previous to the raid of al-Sawîq, re-contextualizes the whole incident for the reader. Thus, for instance, in al-Wâqidî's account, the raid of al-Sawîq, which sees the Jews entertaining the Meccans, has not as yet taken place.

As importantly, al-Wâqidî begins the chapter by telling the reader that as soon as Muḥammad arrived in Medina, he made a written agreement with the Jews of Medina. According to al-Wâqidî, what leads to the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' is the fact that the Jews abrogated their agreement with the Prophet.

The recontextualizing, introduced by al-Wâqidî through a change in chronology, is further entrenched by the use of different sources. A glance at the two narratives indicates that the account of Ibn Ishâq consists of traditions which are quite different from those used by al-Wâqidî. The information provided by Ibn Ishâq includes:

1. A report about the B. Qaynuqâ'.
2. *Asbâb al-nuzûl* on verse ten of the *sûrat al 'Imrân*, on the authority of either "a *mawlâ* from the family of Zayd b. Thâbit²⁹ from Sa'îd b. Jubayr³⁰ or from 'Ikrima³¹ from Ibn 'Abbâs."³² (Notice how Ibn Ishâq insinuates doubt at the most unexpected moments).
3. Two traditions from 'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda:³³ regarding (a) the abrogation of what could be explained as an understanding or even a state of peace

²⁹Zayd b. Thâbit (d. 45/665) was the famous amanuensis of the Prophet who was later asked to compile the Qur'ân by Abû Bakr during his caliphate. See Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography*, 122-25.

³⁰Sa'îd b. Jubayr (45/665-95/714), was a student of Ibn 'Abbâs, and a commentator from Kûfa. He is reported to have been killed by Ḥajjāj b. Yûsuf. See *GAS.*, 1: 28.

³¹'Ikrima (d. 121/723), client and Qur'ân student of Ibn 'Abbâs, he is supposed to have been of Berber origin; see Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," 15-16.

³²Ibn 'Abbâs (d. 68/687), the famous nephew of the Prophet who is supposed to have approached both Jewish and Christian scholars in his desire to study the Qur'ân. See *GAS.*, 1: 23-25.

³³'Âṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatâda (d. 121/737) is supposed to have been ordered by 'Umar II to teach *Sîra-maghâzî* at the Great Mosque of Damascus. See Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," 12-13.

which existed between Muḥammad and the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ', and (b) Ibn Ubayy's standing up for the B. Qaynuqâ'.

4. *Asbâb al-nuzûl* on verse fifty-six of *sûrat al-Mâ'ida*, on the authority of Ibn Ishâq from his father Ishâq b. Yasâr³⁴ from 'Ubâda b. al-Walîd b. 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit, informing the reader of 'Ubâda's relinquishing of his alliance with the B. Qaynuqâ'.

Al-Wâqidî does not give us the date of the incident on the basis of any traditional authority other than himself, which indicates that the chronology has been imposed on the material. The traditions of Ibn Ishâq are completely left out. The *isnâds* used by al-Wâqidî are as follows:

1. The main narrative which is given on the authority of 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far³⁵ from al-Ḥârith b. Fuḍayl (d. ?) from Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazî.³⁶

2. *Asbâb al-nuzûl* on the authority of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh³⁷ from al-Zuhrî³⁸ from 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr.³⁹

3. Muḥammad b. Qâsim (d. ?) from his father (d. ?) from al-Rabî' b. Sabra (d. ?).⁴⁰

³⁴Father of Muḥammad b. Ishâq. See Khoury, "Sources islamiques de la 'Sîra'," 13.

³⁵'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far (d. 170/786); see Sachau, "Studien zur ältesten Geschichtsüberlieferung," 176.

³⁶Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazî (d. 118/736); one of the oldest *tâbi'ûn* according to Sezgin. See *GAS*, 32.

³⁷Full name was: Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allâh b. Muslim b. 'Ubayd Allâh b. 'Abd Allâh b. Shihâb al-Zuhrî, (d. 152/769); nephew of the reputed al-Zuhrî. See Sachau, "Studien zur ältesten Geschichtsüberlieferung," 164.

³⁸Al-Zuhrî (d. 742/124). See above, chapter 2, f.n. 255.

³⁹'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 713/94). See above, chapter 2, f.n. 256.

⁴⁰Ibn Sa'd has a very brief notice on Ibn Sabrâ saying that he was of the Juhnâ, and that al-Zuhrî related traditions from him, but he does not give a date of birth or death. See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât al-kabîr*, 5: 187.

4. Yahyâ b. ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Qatâda (d. ?) from ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm ⁴¹

The above *isnâds* are interesting in that, although they indicate that the set of traditions used by al-Wâqidî are different from those used by Ibn Ishâq, they, nevertheless, all go back to personalities who have been made known to us by Ibn Ishâq. Al-Zuhrî, ‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr, and al-Qurazî are all well-known traditionists of the school of Medina. This may explain the attitude of Jones who claims that all these traditions come from a single corpus. On the other hand, the traditionists through whom the information has been communicated to al-Wâqidî are little known: it was difficult to obtain information on those persons.

That the traditions of al-Wâqidî are different from those of Ibn Ishâq becomes clearer when we realize that his narrative (i.e., the information supplied in the *matns*), though similar, is hardly the same. According to Ibn Ishâq, it is on the basis of a report about the B. Qaynuqâ’ that he informs the reader of how Muḥammad assembled the Jews in the market of the Qaynuqâ’ and demanded their conversion. “O Jews,” he says, “beware lest God brings upon you the vengeance that He brought upon the Quraysh, and become Muslims.” Of course, the reference is to the Prophet’s recent victory at Badr, where his small army defeated the large armies of the enemy because God was behind him.

Significantly, the mention of an agreement per se is not indicated by Ibn Ishâq. There is the reference by ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatâda to the fact that they (the B. Qaynuqâ’) “were the first of the Jews to destroy what was between them and the Messenger of God . . .”⁴² “What was” between the Jews and the

⁴¹‘Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr b. Ḥazm (d. 130-35/748-752). See Khoury, “Sources islamiques de la ‘Sîra’,” 12.

⁴²Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 545

Messenger of God could well have been a simple understanding rather than a formal agreement. But since the raid on al-Sawîq has already taken place, according to Ibn Ishâq, we realize that this tradition of ‘Âsim’s is questionable. The B. Nađîr, when they entertained Abû Sufyân and gave him information about the Muslims, had been the first to destroy the good relations that existed between the Muslims and the Jews, according to the narrative of Ibn Ishâq.

Al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, turns to Ibn Ka‘b, who is clearly of Jewish descent. Notice how al-Wâqidî uses a tradition that provides information about an agreement and the fact that it was broken by the Jews, even as he introduces the reader to the event. According to al-Wâqidî, a little incident at the market of the Qaynuqâ‘ had led to hostility between the two communities, and the breaking of the agreement by the Jews. It is because the Jews abrogated their agreement, we are told, that Muḥammad is supposed to have besieged the B. Qaynuqâ‘.

The issue of al-Sawîq does not arise in the case of the al-Wâqidî-narrative, since he establishes the raid of al-Sawîq after the expulsion of the B. Qaynuqâ‘. But observe how al-Wâqidî has appropriated a tradition very similar to that related by Ibn Ishâq on the authority of ‘Âsim, to which he adds what is probably his own interpretative gloss, in order to establish his own version of the tale:

When the Prophet overcame the companions of Badr and arrived at Medina, the Jews acted wrongfully and destroyed what was between them and the Messenger of God of the contract [emphasis mine].⁴³

The incident is explained as the occasion for the revelation of Qur’ân 3:12, by Ibn Ishâq. According to him, “A freedman . . . from Ibn ‘Abbâs told me that the latter said that the following verses came down about them”:

⁴³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176.

*Say to those who reject faith: Soon will ye be vanquished and gathered together to Hell, an evil bed indeed (to lie on)! There has already been to you a sign in the two armies that met (in combat); i.e., the Companions of the Messenger of God at Badr, and the Quraysh.*⁴⁴

These lines immediately bring the reader to ask whether in fact this whole story about the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' could have originated as a form of *asbâb al-nuzûl* on the Qur'ânic verse cited above. Certainly Crone seems to think so.⁴⁵ But if the Qur'ânic verse was what triggered the narrative, and if Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî were indeed using similar traditions which constituted comparable narratives, then both narratives should have been linked to the same Qur'ânic verse. A quick glance at the al-Wâqidî-material indicates that this is not so. The fact is that a theory such as that of Crone's does not give the compiler sufficient credit for the initiative that he takes in shaping his text. It seems to me far more likely that Ibn Ishâq, in shaping a narrative which told of Muḥammad as a typical prophet, then went on to attach to his story a verse which would justify his interpretation. The verse cited by him is perfectly suited to the argument that he is making.

And similarly with al-Wâqidî: The latter narrates a tradition on the authority of al-Zuhrî indicating that it was Qur'ân, 8:58 that was revealed.

*If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms: for God loveth not the treacherous.*⁴⁶

The point is that he explains the Prophet's aggression against the B. Qaynuqâ' as being provoked by their abrogation of an agreement; he thus seeks out and discovers a Qur'ânic verse that would accommodate his interpretation of the event.

⁴⁴Qur'ân, 3:12.

⁴⁵Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 214-15;

⁴⁶Qur'ân, 8:58.

It is important to notice the fact that Ibn Ishâq does not tell us that the B. Qaynuqâ' were exiled, a tradition which is communicated by al-Wâqidî alone, and appropriated by historians to provide a reductive 'history' of the event for students of today. The fact is that Ibn Ishâq communicates the Prophet's conflict with the Jews with considerable artistry, bringing into play not only the Biblo-Qur'ânic paradigm regarding God's prophets, but also notions of a patterned mnemonic which focuses on the figure three—there are three Jewish tribes and three distinct occasions of violence against each of them—and at the same time gives significance to each moment of conflict in distinct terms by indicating that what happened to each group was different, a difference which again is remembered in terms of an escalation of violence: the first community is defeated; the next is exiled; and the third is executed. The escalation represents, at the same time, God's warning; unheeded it leads each time to more damning retribution. Thus, the key to understanding Ibn Ishâq's Biblo-Qur'ânic paradigm is to notice his deliberate rejection of the notion that there was a written agreement between Muḥammad and the significant Jewish communities of Medina. In Ibn Ishâq's narrative Muḥammad's role was to invite mankind, the Jews included, to Islam. This was the essence of his prophethood.

For al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, the existence of an agreement was vital. He therefore emphasizes the contract, and the fact that the Jews were the first to destroy it, whenever possible. According to him, an agreement had been concluded by Muḥammad with the Jews, soon after he came to Medina.

And differences persist throughout the two narratives. In Ibn Ishâq's version, Ibn Ubayy is represented as the loyal confederate who defends those who are his dependents. Because Ibn Ubayy confronts Muḥammad, the latter is deterred from killing the defeated B. Qaynuqâ', or so it appears according to the

words of Ibn Ubayy. Thus the Prophet hands over the B. Qaynuqâ' to Ibn Ubayy. The B. Qaynuqâ' are not only saved, but, as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, they are not exiled either. Significantly, Ibn Ishâq does not exploit *sûrat al-anfâl*, as does al-Wâqidî, if only because there is no division of spoils referred to in this particular incident.

What must be appreciated, however, is that Muḥammad's inexperienced forces were able to defeat the B. Qaynuqâ' because God's wrath was visited upon them. True, Ibn Ishâq hands over the B. Qaynuqâ' to Ibn Ubayy who speaks for them; nevertheless, the community is never heard of again. Thus, the community of the B. Qaynuqâ' ceases to exist from this point on, as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned.

On the other hand, al-Wâqidî has the community exiled: does this mean that al-Wâqidî was saying the same thing as Ibn Ishâq, but more effectively? The answer is no; as already indicated, the key to the issue is that according to Ibn Ishâq, Muḥammad, when he was inviting the Jews to Islam, and when he called down God's wrath upon them for rejecting God's message, was performing as a typical prophet. Al-Wâqidî, on the other hand, indicates that it is only when the Jews abrogate their agreement that Muḥammad demands that the Jews convert to Islam. Here Muḥammad is being represented as the typical leader, whose actions derive from political motives. At the same time al-Wâqidî is making a negative statement about the Jews who are depicted, again and again in the narrative, as unreliable, not able to bide by an agreement to which they had been party.

With al-Wâqidî the story is extended, on the one hand, to establish the notion that Ibn Ubayy was certainly a hypocrite, and on the other, to explicitly indicate to the reader that the Jews of the B. Qaynuqâ' were exiled to Adhri'ât.

Ibn Ubayy's hypocrisy is made clear by the information that, despite his assurance that he would come to their aid if they would remain in their fortresses, he nevertheless abandons the B. Qaynuqâ' when the Prophet besieges them. According to al-Wâqidî, the B. Qaynuqâ' did not own lands or plantations, thus their possessions, which consisted largely of tools and weapons, became the booty of the Muslims.

Interestingly, while Ibn Ishâq basically gives the reader a general outline of what happened during the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' through reference to several traditions and Qur'ânic verses, al-Wâqidî provides two different versions. According to the first version, the Prophet exiles the B. Qaynuqâ', permitting them to leave with their women and children, while the Muslims take their property, which consists largely of weapons. Regarding the booty, al-Wâqidî indicates to the reader, that the Prophet was entitled to his first pick from what was captured, in addition to being entitled to his share of one-fifth of the booty in keeping with the recent prescriptions of *sûrat al-anfâl*. Significantly we are informed that he gives generously to his two new allies from the Anşâr, Muḥammad b. Maslama and Sa'd b. 'Ubâda.

According to the second version, a very similar story is narrated in terms of the identical Qur'ânic verse, but this time, we are told that the Prophet takes all the booty, whereas the Jews are exiled with their women and children. Here the outcome compares closely with that of the raid of the B. Naḍîr, except that the B. Qaynuqâ' did not own any land.

Ibn Ishâq ends this chapter by informing the reader that 'Ubâda b. al-Şâmit had renounced his alliance with the B. Qaynuqâ'. A similar tradition is narrated by al-Wâqidî, indicating the Anşârî's break from his past association with

the Jews. But al-Wâqidî further extends the story to communicate the role of ‘Ubâda in the expulsion of the B. Qaynuqâ’. It would seem that it was with the withdrawal of his alliance from the Jews that the latter gave up hope and accepted their expulsion from their homeland.

Al-Wâqidî cannot resist adding a touch to the narrative which perhaps is based on observations of Jews in his own lifetime. According to him, the Jews were the money lenders of the town. It is interesting that he should repeatedly depict them collecting their debts from their Arab customers.⁴⁷ We see this in his account of the B. Qaynuqâ’ as well:

The Qaynuqâ’ said, “O Muḥammad, some people owe us a debt.” The Messenger of God said, “Hasten and settle it.”⁴⁸

Of the verses that are historicized by Ibn Ishâq on this occasion, the last comes from the Qur’ânic chapter on the table (*sûrat al-mâ’ida*). It is an aggressive statement:

O You who Believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but protectors and friends to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them.⁴⁹

In many ways, the verse cited anticipates the assassination of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf. The Prophet’s call, “Kill any Jew that falls into your power,” climaxes with the affair of Muḥayyiṣa and Ḥuwayyiṣa.⁵⁰ Once again, Ibn Ishâq is highlighting those traditions which effectively suppress the visibility of a contract or agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews.

⁴⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 179; 374; 634.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 179.

⁴⁹Qur’ân, 5:54.

⁵⁰Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 553.

As already indicated, Ibn Ishâq does not inform the reader that the B. Qaynuqâ' were exiled. He gives us no information about the community after the Prophet hands them over to Ibn Ubayy. Al-Wâqidî's narrative leaves us with a picture of the Jews migrating to al-Shâm, their women and children riding on camels as the men walk. According to al-Wâqidî, it is the B. Qaynuqâ' who settled in Adhri'ât.

The Affair of the Exile of the B. Naḍîr in A.H. Four from the Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, by Ibn Ishâq in the Recension of Ibn Hishâm

(p. 652) Ibn Ishâq said: According to what Yazîd b. Rûmân related to me the Messenger of God set out to the B. Naḍîr to seek their help in the payment of the bloodwit of the two murdered men from the B. 'Âmir, whom 'Amr b. Umayya al-Ḍamrî had killed, because⁵¹ of the protection which the Messenger of God had promised them. There was between the B. Naḍîr and the B. 'Âmir a contract and an alliance, and when the Messenger of God came to them to ask for their help in the payment of the bloodwit of the two murdered men, they said, "Yes, O Abû'l Qâsim, we will give you the help you want and which you asked from us." Then some of them withdrew with others, while the Messenger of God was seated at the side of a wall of one of their houses, and they said, "Surely you will never find the man in a situation such as this. Is there a man who will ascend atop this house and throw upon him a stone and rid us of him?" And one of them, 'Amr b. Jihâsh b. Ka'b, was willing, and he said, "I am for that," and he ascended [the roof] in order to throw a rock upon him [Muḥammad]. According to what he [Yazîd b. Rûmân] said, the Messenger of God was with a group of his companions including Abû Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Alî, when the news came to him from heaven about what the people [Jews] intended. So he stood up and went out, returning to Medina.

⁵¹*li'l-jiwâr*. Guillaume's translation: "after he had given them a promise of security," may be preferred.

When the companions deemed that the Prophet had been gone long enough (p. 653) they rose [to go] in search of him. They met a man approaching from Medina, and they asked him about the Prophet, and he said, "I saw him entering al-Medina." The Companions of the Messenger of God approached until they finally reached him and he informed them of the news of what the Jews had treacherously intended to do to him. The Messenger of God commanded them to prepare for war and to march against them. Ibn Hishâm said..... Then he marched until he alighted upon them. Ibn Hishâm said.....

Ibn Ishâq said: They [the Jews] fortified themselves/took refuge in their fortresses and the Messenger of God commanded the cutting and burning of the date palms. They called out to him, "You have prohibited wanton destruction and found fault with whoever was guilty of it, so why are you cutting down and burning the palm trees?" And there was a group from the B. 'Auf b. al-Khazraj, amongst them 'Abd Allâh b. Ubayy b. Salûl, Wadî'a, Mâlik b. Abî Qawqal, Suwayd and Dâ'is, who had sent a message to the B. Naḍîr, "Be firm and protect yourselves, for we will never abandon you. If you are attacked we will fight with you, and if you are expelled we will leave with you." They waited for their help but they did not act.

God put fear in their hearts and they asked the Messenger of God to exile them; to spare their blood on the condition that they depart bearing only so much of their belongings, except weapons, as can be carried by a camel, and he agreed. So they hauled away from their property what a camel carries, and each man among them demolished his house to the lintel of his door, and placed it upon the back of his camel, and departed with it.

They went to Khaybar, and among them were some who marched to al-Shâm. Of their nobility who went to Khaybar were Sallâm b. Abî al-Ḥuqayq, and Kinâna b. al-Rabî' b. Abî al-Ḥuqayq, and Ḥuyayy b. Akḥṭab. When they alighted there its people became subject to them. 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr related to me that he was told that they carried the women and children and property with them; the tambourines and the pipes and singing girls making music behind them. With them

was Umm ‘Amr, mistress of ‘Urwa b. al-Wardî al-Absî, whom they bought from him. She was one of the women from the B. Ghifârî.

Such pomp and splendor had not (p. 654) been seen in the life of the people of their time.

They had left their property to the Messenger of God. It was for the Messenger of God alone to bestow it where he wished. He apportioned it to the first Muhâjirûn to the exclusion of the Anşâr, except for Sahl b. Hunayf and Abû Dujâna Simâk b. Kharasha, who claimed poverty, and the Messenger of God gave [of it] to them. Only two men converted from the B. Naḍîr. Yamîn b. ‘Umayr Abû Ka‘b b. ‘Amr b. Jihâsh, and Abû Sa‘d b. Wahb converted to preserve their property. Ibn Ishâq said: Some of the family of Yamîn related to me that the Messenger of God said to Yamîn, “Did you not see how your cousin treated me and what he plotted to do concerning me?” So Yamîn paid a man in order to kill ‘Amr b. Jihâsh, and this man killed him, or so they allege.

The *sûrat al-ḥashr* was revealed about the B. Naḍîr in its entirety, mentioning in it how God had His vengeance upon them, and what powers God gave the Messenger of God over them, and how he dealt with them. He said, *It is He Who got out the unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first gathering (of the forces). Little did ye think that they would get out: and they thought that their fortresses would defend them from God! But the (Wrath of) God came to them from quarters from which they little expected (it), and cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their dwellings by their own hands and the hands of the Believers.*⁵² And that is for their demolishing their homes (down) to the lintels of their doors when they carried them. *Take warning, then, O ye with eyes (to see)! [what would have happened] And had it not been that God had decreed banishment for them. Vengeance from God He would certainly have punished them in this world, i.e., with the sword, and in the Hereafter they shall (certainly) have the punishment of the fire. Whether ye cut down (O ye Muslims!) the tender palm trees, or ye left them standing on their*

⁵²Qur’ân, 59:2.

roots, Lina means other than the best kind of dates. *It was by leave of God*, i.e., it was by God's command that it was cut; it is not corruption but it is vengeance from God to humble the evil doers. Ibn Hishâm said..... (p. 655) Ibn Ishâq said: *And what God has bestowed on his Apostle (and taken away) from them*, i. e., of the B. Naḍîr, *for this ye made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry: but God gives power to His apostles over any He pleases, and God has power over all things*'⁵³ i.e., [it was] for him especially. Ibn Hishâm said.....

What God has bestowed on His Apostle (and taken away) from the people of the townships, belongs to God,—to His Apostle, Ibn Ishâq said: (That which) the Muslims struggled for with horses and riding camels and is conquered with fighting and force, is for God and His Messenger, *and to kindred and orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; in order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you. So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.* Some say this is another portion about what was achieved in war among the Muslims according to what God put down/prescribed for him. Then God said, *Hast thou not observed the hypocrites—* i.e., Ibn Ubayy and his companions and those who are similar in their affairs—*say to their misbelieving brethren among the People of the Book?* i.e. the B. Naḍîr, until His saying, *Like those who lately preceded them, they have tasted the evil result of their conduct; and (in the Hereafter there is) for them a grievous penalty*,⁵⁴ meaning the B. Qaynuqâ', then the tale until His saying: *(Their allies deceived them), like the Evil One, when he says to man "Deny God": but when (Man) denies God, (The Evil One) says, "I am free of thee (p. 656) I do fear God, the Lord of the Worlds!"*⁵⁵ *The end of both will be that they will go into the fire, dwelling therein for ever. Such is the reward of the wrong-doers.*⁵⁶

⁵³Qur'ân, 59:6

⁵⁴Qur'ân, 59:15.

⁵⁵Qur'ân, 59:16.

⁵⁶Qur'ân, 59:17.

Among the verses composed about the B. al-Naḍîr are the following from Ibn Luqaym al-‘Absî. Others say Qays b. Baḥr b. Ṭarîf was the author. Ibn Hishâm said.....

My people be a ransom for the immortal man
 Who forced the Jews to settle in a distant place.
 They pass their siesta with live coals of tamarisk.
 Instead of the young shooting palms they have the bare hills of ‘Ūdî.
 If I am right about Muhammad
 You will see his horses between al-Ṣalâ and Yaramram
 Making for ‘Amr b. Buhtha. They are the enemy.
 (A friendly tribe is the same as an evil one.)
 On them are heroes, firebrands in war,
 Brandishing spears directed at their enemies.
 Every fine sharp Indian blade
 Inherited from the days of ‘Âd and Jurhum.
 Who will give Quraysh a message from me,
 For is their one honoured in glory after them?
 That your brother Muhammad, and know it well,
 Is of that generous stock between al-Ḥajûn and Zamzam.
 Obey him in truth and your fame will grow
 And you will attain the greatest heights. He is
 A prophet who has received God’s mercy.
 Ask him no hidden uncertain matter.
 You had an example at Badr, O Quraysh,
 And at the crowded cistern
 The morning he attacked you with the Khazrajîs,
 Obeying the Great and Honoured One,
 Helped by the Holy Spirit, smiting his foes,
 A true apostle from the Compassionate on high;
 An apostle from the Compassionate reciting His book.
 When the truth shone forth he did not hesitate.

I see his power mounting on every hand
In accord with God's decree.

(p. 657) Mentioning the deportation of the B. al-Naḍîr and the killing of
Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, 'Alî said:

I know, and he who judges fairly knows.
I'm sure and swerve not
From the determined word, the signs which came
From God the Kind, the Most Kind,
Documents studied among the believers
In which he chose Aḥmad the chosen one.
So Aḥmad became honoured among us,
Honoured in rank and station.
O you who foolishly threaten him
Who came not in wickedness and was not overbearing,
Do you not fear the basest punishment
(He who has nothing to fear from God is not like him who lives in dread.)
And that you may be thrown beneath his swords
As Ka'b al-Ashraf was
The day that God saw his insolence
When he turned aside like a refractory camel?
And he sent down Gabriel with a gracious revelation
To His servant about his killing.
So the apostle secretly sent a messenger to him
With a sharp cutting sword.
Eyes wept copiously for Ka'b
When they learned that he was dead.
They said to Aḥmad, 'Leave us awhile,
For we are not yet recovered from weeping.'
So he left them; then he said, Begone
In submission and humiliation.
He sent al-Naḍîr to a distant exile,

They having enjoyed a prosperous home
To Adhri'ât riding pillion
On every ulcerous worn-out camel that they had.

Sammâk the Jew answered him:

If you boast, for it is a boast for you
That you killed Ka'b b. al-Ashraf
That day that you compassed his death,
A man who had shown neither treachery nor bad faith,
Haply time and the change of fortune
(p. 658) Will take revenge from 'the just and righteous one'
For killing al-Naḍîr and their confederates
And for cutting down their palms, their dates ungathered.
Unless I die we will come at you with lances
And every sharp sword that we have
In the hand of a brave man who protects himself.
When he meets his adversary he kills him.
With the army is Ṣakhr [Abû Sufyân] and his fellows.
When he attacks he is no weakling
Like a lion in Tarj protecting his covert,
Lord of the thicket, crushing his prey, enormous.

Ka'b b. Mâlik said on the same subject:

The rabbis were disgraced through their treachery,
Thus time's wheel turns round.
They had denied the mighty Lord
Whose command is great.
They had been given knowledge and understanding
And a warner from God came to them,
A truthful warner who brought a book
With plain and luminous verses.
They said, 'You've brought no true thing

And you are more worthy of God's disapproval than we.'
 He said, 'Nay, but I brought the truth,
 The wise and intelligent believe me;
 He who follows it will be rightly guided
 And the disbeliever therein will be recompensed.'
 And when they imbibed treachery and unbelief
 And aversion turned them from the truth,
 God showed the Prophet a sound view,
 For God's decision is not false.
 He strengthened him and gave him power over them
 And he was his Helper, an excellent Helper!
 Ka'b was left prostrate there.
 After his fall Naḍîr was brought low.
 Sword in hand we cut him down
 By Muhammad's order when he sent secretly by night
 Ka'b's brother, to go to Ka'b.
 (p. 659) He beguiled him and brought him down with guile.
 Maḥmûd was trustworthy, bold.
 Those Banû'l-Naḍîr were an evil case,
 They were destroyed for their crimes
 The day the apostle came to them with an army
 Walking softly as he looked at them.
 Ghassân the protectors were his helpers
 Against the enemies as he helped them.
 He said, '(I offer) peace, woe to you,' but they refused
 And lies and deceit were their allies.
 They tasted the results of their deeds in misery,
 Every three of them shared one camel.
 They were driven out and made for Qaynuqâ',
 Their palms and houses were abandoned.

Sammâk the Jew answered him:

I was sleepless while deep care was my guest
 On a night that made all others seem short.
 I saw that all the rabbis rejected him,
 All of them men of knowledge and experience
 Who used to study every science
 Of which the Law and Psalms do speak.
 You killed Ka'b the chief of the rabbis,
 He whose ward was always safe.
 He came down to Maḥmūd his brother,
 But Maḥmūd was harboring a wicked design.
 He left him in his blood looking as though
 Saffron was flowing o'er his clothes.
 By your father and mine,
 When he fell al-Naḍīr fell also.
 If we stay safe we shall leave in revenge for Ka'b
 Men of yours with vultures circling round them
 As though they were beasts sacrificed on a feast day
 With none to say them nay,
 With swords that bones cannot resist,
 Of finest steel and sharpened edge
 Like those you met from brave Ṣakhr
 At Uḥud when you had no helper.

'Abbās b. Mirdās, brother of B. Sulaym, praising the men of the B. al-Naḍīr,
 said:

(p. 660) Had the people of the settlement not been dispersed
 You would have seen laughter and gaiety within it.
 By my life, shall I show you women in howdahs
 Which have gone to Shaṭāt and Tay'ab?
 Large-eyed like the gazelles of Tabāla;
 Maidens that would bewitch one calmed by much truck with women?
 When one seeking hospitality came they would say at once

With faces like gold, 'Doubly welcome!
 The good that you seek will not be withheld.
 You need fear no wrong while with us.'
 Don't think me a client of Salâm b. Makhzûm
 Nor of Huyayy b. Akhtab.

Khawwât b. Jubayr, brother of B. 'Amr b. 'Auf, answered him:

You weep bitterly over the Jewish dead and yet you can see
 Those nearer and dearer to you if you want to weep.
 Why do you not weep over the dead in Urayniq's valley
 And not lament loudly with sad face (over others)
 When peace reigned with a friend you rejected it.
 In religion an obstruction, in war a poltroon.
 You aimed at power for your people, seeking
 Someone that you might get glory and victory.
 When you wanted to give praise you went
 To one whom to praise is falsehood and shame.
 You got what you deserved and you did not find
 One among them to say Welcome to you.
 Why did you not praise people whose kings
 Built up their standing from ancient fame,
 A tribe who became kings and were honoured?
 None seeking food was ever hungry among them.
 Such are more worthy of praise than Jews;
 In them you see proud glory firmly established.

'Abbâs b. Mirdâs al-Sulamî answered him:

You satirized the purest stock of the two priests,
 Yet you always enjoyed favours at their hands.
 'Twere more fitting that you should weep for them,
 Your people too if they paid their debt of gratitude.
 Gratitude is the best fruit of kindness,
 And the most fitting act of one who would do right.

You are as one who cuts off his head
 (p. 661) To gain the power that it contains.
 Weep for B. Hârûn and remember their deeds,
 How they killed beasts for the hungry when you were famished.
 O Khawwât shed tear after tear for them.
 Abandon your injurious attack upon them.
 Had you met them in their homes
 You would not have said what you say.
 They were the first to perform noble deeds in war,
 Welcoming the needy guest with kind words.

Ka'b b. Mâlik answered him:

On my life the mill of war
 After it had sent Lu'ayy flying east and west
 Ground the remains of the family of the two priests, and their glory
 Which was once great became feeble.
 Salâm and I. Sa'ya died a violent death
 And I. Akḥṭab was led to a humiliating fate.
 He made such noise in seeking glory ('twas really humiliation he sought),
 What he gained from his fuss was frustration,
 Like him who leaves the plain and the height distresses him,
 And that men find more difficult and arduous.
 Sha's and 'Azzâl suffered war's fiery trial,
 They were not absent as others were.
 'Auf b. Salmâ and I. 'Auf, both of them,
 And Ka'b chief of the people died a disappointed man.
 Away with B. Naḍîr and their like
 Whether the result be victory or God.

(p. 363) The Raid Of the B. Naḍîr according to Al-Wâqidî's Kitâb al-Maghâzî

This was in Rabî' al-Awwal, at the beginning of the thirty-seventh month after the emigration of the Prophet. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allâh, 'Abd Allâh b. Ja'far, Muḥammad b. Şâlih, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyâ b. Sahl, Ibn Abî Ḥabîba, and Ma'mar b. Râshid, among men whom I have not named, related to me, and each one has related to me about some of this tradition, though some of the people have a keener memory for/of it than others. I have combined all of what they related to me. They said: 'Amr b. Umayya approached Bi'r Ma'ûna until he reached a canal, where he met two men from the B. 'Âmir. He asked them about their genealogies, and they related them. He sat and chatted with them, until when they slept, he pounced on them and killed them.

Then he set out from there until (p. 364.) he arrived before the Prophet (in) about the time it takes to milk an ewe. When he informed the Prophet about these two men, the Prophet said: "What you have done is unfortunate. The two of them had protection and a contract from us!" He said: "I did not know, I used to see them in their polytheism and their people have taken what they took from us by deceit." He brought what he had plundered from them, but the Messenger of God commanded that their plunder be set aside until he sent it with their blood money. This was because 'Âmir b. Ṭufayl had sent (a message) to the Messenger of God, "Surely a man from your companions has killed two men from my tribe who had protection and a contract from you. So send their blood money to us."

The Messenger of God went to the B. Naḍîr seeking help with the payment of the blood money, for the B. Naḍîr were confederates of the B. 'Âmir. The Messenger of God left on Saturday, and he prayed in the mosque of Qubâ' with a group of Muhâjirûn and Anşâr who were with him. Then he arrived at the B. Naḍîr and found them at their meeting place. The Messenger of God and his companions sat and the Messenger of God spoke to them and asked them to help him with the blood money for the two Kilâbîs whom 'Amr b. Umayya had killed. They said, "O Abû'l Qâsim, we will do what (ever) you wish. It is about time that you visit us, and come to us. Be seated until we bring you food!" While the

Messenger of God was leaning against one of their houses, some of them withdrew and whispered to each other, and Huyayy b. Akhtab said, "O community of Jews, Muḥammad has come to you with a small group of his companions which does not amount to ten, including Abû Bakr, 'Umar, 'Alî, al-Zubayr, Talḥa, Sa'd b. Mu'âdh, Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr, and Sa'd b. 'Ubâda. Throw upon him a stone from above this house which he is under, and kill him, for you will never find him more unaccompanied than he is now. It is certain that if he is killed his companions will split up, and those of the Quraysh will go to their sanctuary while the Aws and the Khazraj who are here will remain your confederates. The time for that which you had desired to do one day is now!" 'Amr b. Jihâsh said, "I will ascend atop the house (p. 365) and I will throw upon him a stone."

Sallâm b. Mishkam said, "Obey me this once, my people, and you may disagree with me forever after, for by God if you act he will surely be informed that we have acted treacherously against him. Surely this is the destruction of the contract which is between us and him, so do not do it! By God if you do that which you intend, this religion will surely stay among them unshakable till the day of judgment. He will destroy the Jews and his religion will prevail."

He ['Amr] had prepared to let go the stone and drop it on the Messenger of God and when he was on the verge of [dropping] it, news from the heavens came to the Prophet about that which they planned for him. The Prophet rose swiftly as though he had a need and he went towards Medina. His companions sat talking among themselves, thinking that he had left to fulfill a need. When they became distressed about that, Abû Bakr said, "Our place is not over here in this affair, the Prophet must have left for some matter," so they stood up, and Huyayy said, "Abû'l Qâsim has hurried away. We desired to fulfill his need and feed him." The Jews regretted what they did.

Kinâna b. Şuwayrâ' said to them, "Did you know why Muḥammad got up?" They said, "No by God, we do not know, and you do not know!" He said, "But certainly, by the Tora, I do know. Muḥammad was informed about the treachery you planned against him. Do not deceive yourselves. By God, he is

surely the Messenger of God, for he would not have stood up except that he was informed about that which you planned against him. Surely he is the last of the Prophets. You used to desire him [the Messiah] to be from the B. Hârûn, but God made him as he pleased. Surely our books and that which we studied of the Tora, which were not changed and not altered, state that his birth is in Mecca and the land of his emigration is Yathrib. His exact description does not disagree by a letter from that which is in our book. Whatever he is bringing you is better than his fighting you. But it appears to me as if I see you departing. Your children screaming, for you have left behind your homes (p. 366) and your property, which are the basis of your nobility. So obey me in two things, for the third has no virtue in it." They said, "What are the two?" He said, "Convert and enter with Muḥammad, you will secure your property and children, for you will be among the highest of his companions, and your property will remain in your hands for you will not leave your homes." They said, "We will not depart from the Tora and the covenant of Moses."

He [Ibn Ṣuwayrâ'] said, "It is a message to you, 'leave from my home,' agree, and then surely he will not deem your blood and money lawful, and your property will remain. If you wish you may sell and if you wish you may keep it." They said, "As for this, yes." He [Ibn Ṣuwayrâ'] said, "By God, surely the last is the best of them for me." He said, "By God, if it was not for disgracing you I would have converted to Islam, but by God, Sha'thâ' will never be disgraced by my conversion for what happens to you happens to me." His daughter was Sha'thâ', whom Ḥassân used to flirt with. Sallâm b. Mishkam said, "I dislike what you have done, it is a message to us: 'Leave from my home.' O Huyayy, do not let him repeat his words; agree to leave and depart from his town!" Huyayy said, "I will leave."

When the Prophet returned to Medina his companions followed him. They met a man leaving Medina and they asked him, "Did you meet the Messenger of God?" He said, "I met him entering, at the bridge." When his companions finally reached him, they found he had sent a messenger to Muḥammad b. Maslama summoning him. Abû Bakr said, "O Messenger of God,

you left without our knowing.” He [the Messenger of God] said, “The Jews plotted treachery against me, and God informed me about it, so I left.”

Muḥammad b. Maslama came. He [the Prophet] said to him, “Go to the Jews of the B. Naḍīr and say to them, the Messenger of God sent me [to you to tell you] to leave from his town.”

When he came to them he said, “The Messenger of God has sent me to you with a message, but I will not tell it to you until I inform you of something you know.” (p. 367) He said, “I adjure you by the Tora which God revealed to Moses, do you know that I came to you before the sending of Muḥammad’s mission, and with you was the Tora, and you said to me in this same assembly of yours, ‘O Ibn Maslama, if you wish us to feed you, we will feed you, and if you wish us to convert you to Judaism, we will convert you.’ And I said to you, ‘Feed me, but do not convert me, for by God, I will never become a Jew!’ You gave me food in a bowl of yours, and by God, I was looking at it as if it were a bead (unappetizing). You said to me, ‘Nothing forbids you from our religion, except that it is the Jewish religion. It is as though you desire the Ḥanīfiya which you have heard about. Or is it that Abū ‘Āmir deplored it and was not a follower of it? The leader of it is one with a murderous frequent laughter and will come to you with reddened eyes from the direction of Yemen, riding a camel, wearing a shamla/cloak, is content with little, his sword upon his shoulder. He has no miracle, but speaks with wisdom, as if he had a close relationship with you. By God, he will surely be in your village, plundering and killing and such like.’ ” They said, “By God yes, we have said that to you, but he (Muḥammad) is not he (the Expected One).”

He said, “I have finished. The Messenger of God sent me to you to say to you, ‘You have broken the contract which I have made for you with what treachery you planned against me,’ ” and he informed them about what they had planned--the appearance of ‘Amr b. Jihāsh atop the house in order to throw the rock. They were silent and did not say a word. “He (the Prophet) said, ‘leave from my town. I have granted you a period of ten days. Whoever is seen after that, I will cut off his head!’ ” They said, “O Muḥammad we did not think that a

man from the Aws would come with this.” Muḥammad b. Maslama said, “Hearts (have) changed.”

They stayed thus some days in preparation. They sent for camels of theirs from Dhû al-Jadr and brought them together, and they hired camels from the people of Ashja‘ (p. 368) and they began the preparation (to leave). While they were thus employed, the messenger(s) of Ibn Ubayy, Suwayd and Dâ‘is came to them saying, “‘Abd Allâh b. Ubayy says, ‘Do not leave your homes and your property. Remain in your fortresses for I have two thousand of my tribe and others from the Arabs (who) will enter with you into your fortress, and they will die to the last one of them before he (Prophet Muḥammad) reaches you. You will be helped by the Qurayza, for surely they will never disappoint you, and you will be helped by your confederates among the Ghatafân.’ ” Ibn Ubayy then sent to Ka‘b b. Asad and told him to help his companions. But Ka‘b said, “Not a single man from the B. Qurayza will break the contract.”

Ibn Ubayy despaired of the B. Qurayza and he desired to patch up the affair that was between the B. Naḍîr and the Messenger of God. He continued to send to Ḥuyayy until Ḥuyayy said, “I will send to Muḥammad informing him that we will not leave from our homes and our property and he is to do whatever is best.” Ḥuyayy had hopes for what Ibn Ubayy said, stating, “We will repair our fortress, then we will bring in our cattle, we will make our alleys passable for we will move stones to our fortresses. We have sufficient food for a year, and a steady source of water in our fortress which we do not fear will dry out. Do you think that Muḥammad will besiege us for a year? We do not.” Sallâm b. Mishkam said, “By God, Your soul has deceived you, O Ḥuyayy, with what is futile! By God, were it not for the fact that your opinion would be discredited and you would be belittled, I would surely withdraw from you with whoever obeys me from among the Jews. Do not do it, O Ḥuyayy, for by God, you know and we know with you that he is the Messenger of God, and that we have his description. Indeed we did not follow him, but envied him when prophecy left the B. Hârûn. So come let us accept the protection he offers us and depart (p. 369) from his town. I know that you disobeyed me in the treachery against him. When it is the

time for the ripening of fruit, we will come, or someone from among us would, to the fruit/dates, sell them or do what is seen fit to be done, and will return to us, such that it will appear as if we did not go away from our land, since our property is in our hands. But we have been ennobled over our people by our property and our actions. So if our property goes from our hands, we would be like the rest of the Jews in lowliness and deprivation. If Muḥammad marches to us and besieges us in this fortress for a single day and we then proposed to him that which he ordered us, he would not accept it, and he would refuse us.”

Ḥuyayy said, “Surely Muḥammad will not besiege us, unless he found an opportunity, if not he will leave. Ibn Ubayy promised me what you have seen.” Sallâm said, “Ibn Ubayy’s saying is meaningless. Ibn Ubayy only wanted to put you in danger so that you would fight Muḥammad. Then he would sit in his house and abandon you. He desired help from Ka‘b b. Asad, but Ka‘b b. Asad refused and said, ‘Not a single man from the B. Qurayza will destroy the contract while I am alive.’ Did not Ibn Ubayy promise his confederates among the B. Qaynuqâ‘ the same as that which he promised you, until they fought, breaking the contract, and fortified themselves in their fortresses, awaiting the help of Ibn Ubayy, but he sat in his house while Muḥammad went and besieged them until they surrendered unconditionally? Ibn Ubayy did not help his confederates and those who used to protect him. And we continued to strike our swords with the Aws, in all their wars, until Muḥammad arrived and separated them. Ibn Ubayy is not a Jew faithful to the religion of Judaism, nor of the religion of Muḥammad, nor is he of the religion of his tribe. So how do you accept anything he said?” Ḥuyayy said, “My soul rejects [anything] except the enmity of Muḥammad and fighting him.” Sallâm said, “By God, either he will exile us from our land, so that our property and our nobility are lost; or our children will be taken prisoner and our warriors killed.” Ḥuyayy insisted on fighting the Messenger of God. Sârûk b. Abî al-Ḥuqayq said to him—and he was [considered] feeble minded among them, (p. 370) as though he were possessed—“O Ḥuyayy, you are a man of ill omen, you will destroy the B. Naḍîr.” Ḥuyayy became angry and said, “All the B. Naḍîr have

spoken to me, even this maniac.” His brothers struck him and said to Huyayy, “Our fate follows yours. We will not oppose you.”

Huyayy sent his brother Judayy b. Akḥṭab to the Messenger of God saying, “We will not leave our homes and our property. You can do whatever you want.” Huyayy commanded him to come to Ibn Ubayy and inform him of his message to Muḥammad, ordering him to expedite the help he had promised him. Judayy b. Akḥṭab went to the Messenger of God with that which Huyayy sent him, reaching him while he was seated with his companions, and informed him. The Messenger of God proclaimed *takbîr* and the Muslims magnified it. He said, “The Jews have chosen war!”

And Judayy continued on his way until he reached Ibn Ubayy who was seated in his house with a small group of his confederates/friends. The herald of the Messenger of God had called out, commanding them [his companions] to march to the B. Naḍîr. ‘Abd Allâh b. ‘Abd Allâh b. Ubayy entered the place of ‘Abd Allâh his father and the group that was with him—including Judayy b. Akḥṭab—and he put on his armor, took up his sword and left at a run. Judayy said, “When I saw Ibn Ubayy seated in his house and his son wearing his weapons, I gave up all hope of his help and left at a run to Huyayy.” He said, “What is behind you?” I said, “Evil! As soon as I informed Muḥammad about the message you sent him, he proclaimed *takbîr*, and he said, ‘the Jews have chosen war.’ ” Huyayy said, “This is a trick of his.” Judayy said, “I came to Ibn Ubayy and I informed him, and Muḥammad’s herald proclaimed the march on the B. Naḍîr.” Huyayy said, “And how did Ibn Ubayy answer you?” Judayy said, “I saw no good of him. He said, ‘I will send a messenger to my confederates and they will join you.’ ”

The Messenger of God marched with his companions and performed *al-‘asr* in the field of the B. Naḍîr, who, when they saw them, stood up on the walls of their fortresses with arrows and stones. The Qurayza kept away from them and did not help them (p. 371) either with weapons or men, and they did not approach them. They [the B. Naḍîr] began to shoot that day with arrows and stones until

darkness was upon them. The companions of the Messenger of God began to arrive—there were those who had stayed behind for some reason—until they all gathered at the time of the evening prayer. When the Messenger of God had prayed *'isha* with ten of his companions he returned to his house, wearing his coat of mail, and mounted on a horse. He left 'Alî in charge of the army, but some say it was Abû Bakr. The Muslims spent the night besieging them, and shouting *takbîr* until dawn. Then Bilâl pronounced the call to prayer in Medina. The Messenger of God went with those companions who were with him. He prayed with the people on the field of the B. Khaṭma, having appointed Ibn Umm Maktûm as his representative in Medina.

A tent of leather was carried with the Prophet. Yaḥyâ b. 'Abd al-'Azîz related to me, saying: The tent was of wood, and was covered with hair. Sa'd b. 'Ubâda sent it and ordered Bilâl to pitch it at the site of the small mosque in the field of the B. Khaṭma. The Messenger of God entered the tent. A Jew called 'Azwak who was a left handed marksman, shot an arrow which reached the tent of the Prophet, so that he commanded it to be moved to the masjid al-Faḍîkh, out of arrow range.

By evening neither Ibn Ubayy nor one of his confederates had come near them; Ḥuyayy sat in his house. The B. Naḍîr gave up hope of help for him. Sallâm b. Mishkam and Kinâna b. Şuwayrâ were saying to Ḥuyayy, "Where is the help of Ibn Ubayy that you claimed?" Ḥuyayy said, "What shall I do? (p. 372) It is the trial that was written for us." The Messenger of God spent the night in his coat of mail, while he continued to besiege them.

One night 'Alî b. Abî Ṭâlib was missed when it was close to *'ishâ*. People said, "We do not see 'Alî, O Messenger of God." He replied, "Leave him, for surely he is in some affair of yours!" It was not long before 'Alî arrived with the head of 'Azwak which he threw before the Prophet and said, "I waited in ambush for this rogue, but I saw a brave man, for, I said, how brave of him to leave when evening falls upon us, seeking to take us by surprise. He drew near, with his sword unsheathed in a group of Jews. I attacked and killed him. His

companions ran away and did not remain in the vicinity. If you send a group with me, I hope to catch them.” He (the Prophet) sent Abû Dujâna and Sahl b. Ḥunayf with ten of his companions and they reached the Jews before they entered their fortress. They killed them, and returned with their heads. The Messenger of God commanded that their heads be thrown in one of the wells of the B. Khaṭma.

Sa’d b. ‘Ubâdah was carrying dates to the Muslims. They (the Jews) remained in their fortress, and the Prophet commanded that the date-palms be cut and burnt, appointing two of his companions to cut them: Abû Laylâ al-Mâzinî and ‘Abd Allâh b. Salâm. Abû Laylâ was cutting the ‘Ajwa (dates). ‘Abd Allâh ibn Salâm was cutting al-Lawn. When they were asked about that, Abû Laylâ said, “The ‘Ajwa will be more painful for them.” Ibn Salâm said, “I knew that God would award him their possessions as booty, and the ‘Ajwa were the best of their possessions. The following verse was revealed in approval of what we did together.” *What you cut of the Lîna*, a species of date palm, referring to what Ibn Salâm did, *or what you left of them standing on their roots*, meaning the ‘Ajwa, *it was by leave of God*. Abû Laylâ cut the ‘Ajwa *to shame the transgressors*, meaning the B. Naḍîr, (p. 373) with approval from God about what the two factions did together. When the ‘Ajwa was cut, the women tore their dresses, struck their cheeks, crying out in affliction. The Messenger of God said: “What is wrong with them?” It was said, they are saddened by the cutting of the ‘Ajwa. The Messenger of God said, “Is the like of ‘Ajwa grieved over?” Then he added, “The mellowed ‘Ajwa, and the dry—the male with which the female date palm is pollinated—are the date palms of paradise. The ‘Ajwa are a cure for poison.” And when the women shouted, Abû Râfi‘ Sallâm shouted to them, “If the ‘Ajwa are cut over here, we have ‘Ajwa in Khaybar.” An old woman among them said, “Khaybar will see the same fate!” Abû Râfi‘ replied, “May God break your jaw! Surely my confederates at Khaybar are ten thousand warriors.” When this reached the Messenger of God, he grinned. Their anguish over the cutting of the ‘Ajwa induced Sallâm b. Mishkam to say, “O Ḥuyayy the ‘Adhq is better than the ‘Ajwa. They are planted and not nourished for thirty years nor assigned for cutting.” Ḥuyayy sent to the Messenger of God, “O Muḥammad, surely you used to forbid

wrong doing. Why are you cutting the date palms? We will give you what you asked. We will leave your land.” The Messenger of God said, “I will not accept that now. But leave from here, and you may keep that which a camel can carry, excluding weapons.” Sallâm said (to Huyayy), “Accept, woe unto you, before you have to accept worse than this.” Huyayy said, “What can be worse?” Sallâm said, “The enslavement of children and the killing of your warriors with their property. For wealth today is worthless among us if we are to mend this affair (from) with killing and enslavement.” Huyayy refused to accept (it) for a day or two.

When Yâmîn b. ‘Umayr and Abû Sa’d b. Wahb saw that, one of them said to the other, “Surely you know that he is the Messenger of God. Why do you wait to convert and secure our blood and property?” They descended by night and converted, thereby saving their blood and property. (p. 374) Then the Jews submitted on condition that they be permitted to keep that which camels can carry, except weapons. When he expelled them the Messenger of God said to Ibn Yâmîn, “Did you not see how your cousin ‘Amr b. Jihâsh plotted to kill me?” The latter was the husband of Ibn Yâmîn’s sister, Ruwâ’ bint ‘Umayr, married to ‘Amr b. Jihâsh. Ibn Yâmîn said, “I am sufficient for you against him, O Messenger of God.” He gave ten dinars to a man from the Qays to kill ‘Amr b. Jihâsh; and some say five loads of dates. So he sought out and killed him. Then Ibn Yâmîn came to the Prophet and informed him of the killing, and he was pleased by that.

The Messenger of God besieged the B. Naḍîr for fifteen days. He drove them away from Medina, appointing Muḥammad b. Maslama to expel them. They said, “We have debts from the people that are due at different times.” The Messenger of God said, “Hurry and settle.” Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr owed Abû Râfi’ Sallâm b. Abî al-Ḥuqayq a hundred and twenty dinars which were due in a year, so he agreed to take his capital of eighty dinars, canceling the remainder. While they were besieged, the Jews were destroying their own homes that were on their side, and the Muslims were destroying and burning what was on their side, until peace was settled. They loaded and they carried the wood and the lintels. The Messenger of God said to Ṣafiya bint Huyayy, “You should have seen me, while I

tied the saddle for your uncle Bahrî b. 'Amr and banished him from there."⁵⁷ They gave the women and children beasts upon which to ride. They left Bal Ḥârith b. al-Khazraj, then Jabalîya, then over the bridge until they passed Bal Muṣallâ', then they crossed the market of Medina. The women in the howdas were dressed in their silks and brocade and green and red silk velvets. The people lined up for them. They began to proceed, one camel train in the tracks of another. They were carried on six hundred camels.

The Messenger of God said, (p. 375) "These people have the same status in their tribe as the B. Mughîra in the Quraysh." Ḥassân b. Thâbit, seeing them with their chiefs on their saddles, said, "By God, surely it was with you that one who seeks favor would find it, hospitality prepared for the guests, water for the thirsty, tolerance for the one who was impudent to you, and help when your help was sought." Ḍahhâq b. Khalîfa said: "What a morning! I will offer my soul as ransom for you! What power and splendor, courage and generosity you have borne." He said, "Nu'aym b. Mas'ûd al-Ashjâ'î says, "We sacrifice ourselves for these faces which are like the lighted lanterns departing Yathrib. Who will assist the anxious who need help, guide the exhausted, and quench the thirst of the thirsty? Who will provide the fat above the meat? We will have no place in Yathrib after you leave." Abû 'Abs b. Jabr says, hearing his words, "Yes, follow them so that you may enter the fire of hell with them." Nu'aym said, "Is this your reward to them? Surely you had asked them for help and they helped you against the Khazraj. And surely you had asked help from all the Arabs and they refused you." Abû 'Abs said, "Islam destroyed the agreements."

He said: They passed by striking tambourines and playing pipes, the women wearing dyes of saffron and jewelry of gold, all this to show themselves tough. He said: Jabbâr b. Şakhr says, "I have not seen this glamour of theirs in a people who have had to leave from one home to another." Abû Râfi' Sallâm b. Abî'l Ḥuqayq raising the halter of the camel, cried, "This is that which we reckon as the lowering and rising of the land, (for good times and for bad); if there are

⁵⁷Wellhausen translates: Der Prophet band dem Mutterbruder seiner späteren Frau Cafijja den sattel fest. See al-Wâqidî, Muhammad in Medina, 164.

palm trees that we have left here, surely we are going to other date palms in Khaybar.”

Abû Bakr b. Abî Sabra related to me from Rubayḥ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmân b. Abî Sa‘îd al-Khudrî from his father from his grandfather, he said: “On that day some of their women passed (p. 376) in those howdas, revealing their faces; perhaps I will never see the like of their beauty in women again. I saw al-Shaqrâ’ (the blond) bint Kinâna that day, like the pearl of a pearl diver, and Ruwâ’ (fabulous) bint ‘Umayr, who was like the sunrise. In their hands were bracelets of gold and pearls around their necks. The hypocrites were greatly saddened on the day the women departed. I met Zayd b. Rifâ‘a b. al-Tâbût who was with ‘Abd Allâh b. Ubayy, whispering to him about Banû Ghanm, saying, ‘I am desolate in Yathrib for the loss of the B. Naḍîr, but they leave for the power and wealth among their confederates and to impenetrable, towering fortresses, on the tops of mountains unlike those here.’ ” He said, “I listened to the two of them for a while and each one of them was unfaithful to God and his Messenger.”

They said: In their exodus passed Salmâ, mistress of ‘Urwa b. Ward al-‘Absî. From her way of talking she appeared to be a woman of the B. Ghifâr. ‘Urwa had captured her from her tribe, and she was a woman of beauty. She delivered to him children, and she had won his trust. She said to him when his sons were being reproached about their mother ‘O sons of the enslaved woman’, “Do you not see your sons being reproached/shamed?”

He said: “What do you advise?” She said, “Return me to my people until they let you marry me.” He said, “Yes.” She sent to her people that they should meet him with wine, and then leave him to drink until he becomes drunk, because when he becomes drunk he will grant everything that you ask of him. They met him and he stayed with the B. Naḍîr. They gave him wine to drink and when he was intoxicated they asked him for Salmâ, and he returned her to them. Then they gave her in marriage to him. And some say, rather, he came with her to the B. Naḍîr, destitute, looking for loot. They gave him wine to drink. When he was intoxicated they detained him. There was nothing with him but her. He pawned

her and did not stop drinking until she (the pawn) was lost. When he regained consciousness, he said to her, "Leave with me." They said, "There is no way to do that. You forfeited her as ransom. With this she belonged to the B. Naḍîr."

They gave me wine to drink
 And the enemies of God engulfed me in lies and deceit
 They said: After the ransoming of Salmâ
 You will be neither rich with what you have, nor poor
 No by God if my situation were as it is today and if I had the circumspection
 that I now have
 I would have opposed them as regards Salmâ,
 Even if they rode into the thorny shrubs of Musta'ûr.

Ibn Abî al-Zinâd recited this to me.

(p. 377) Abû Bakr b. 'Abd Allâh related to me from Miswar b. Rifâ'a: The Messenger of God seized the property and the weapons, and among the latter he found fifty armor plates, fifty helmets, three hundred and forty swords, and it is said that they hid some of their weapons and left with them. It was Muḥammad b. Maslama who was in charge of taking the property and the weapons and disclosing them. 'Umar said, "O Messenger of God, are you not going to take out one fifth of what you gained from the B. Naḍîr, the same as the one fifth that you gained from Badr?" The Messenger of God said, "I shall not make/treat something which God most high has given to me, to the exclusion of the believers." In the words of the highest, *What God bestowed on his Messenger from the people of the Townships*. . . etc. The verse is like the group (of verses) that came down about the portions for the Muslims. 'Umar used to say, there was for the Messenger of God three leader's portions (the leader was allowed the first pick) of loot. (p. 378). The B. Naḍîr's was reserved for his unexpected contingencies. Fadak was for the wayfarer. And Khaybar had been divided into three parts, two portions for the Muhâjirûn, and a portion of it was being spent on his family. If there was excess The Messenger of God returned it to the destitute of the Muhâjirûn.

Mûsâ b. 'Umar al-Ḥârithî related to me from Abî 'Ufayr, saying: From the B. Naḍîr's (loot) he was paying only for the support of his family. It was purely his property. He gave whom he wished from it, and reserved what he

wished. He planted many plants under the palm trees. The Messenger of God took from it every year for himself and his family—his wives and the sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib—provisions of barley and dates. That which was in excess he allocated for horses and weapons. Indeed, these weapons which were bought during the time of the Messenger of God were found with Abû Bakr and ‘Umar. The Messenger of God appointed Abû Râfi‘, his *mawlâ*, in charge of the property of the B. Naḍîr. Sometimes he came to the Messenger of God with the first fruits from it. The Messenger of God’s *ṣadaqa* was from it and from the property of Mukhayrîq. There were seven wells: al-Mîthab, al-Ṣâfiya, al-Dalâl, Husnâ, Burqa, al-A‘wâf, and the water hole of Umm Ibrahîm, where the mother of Ibrahîm lived. The Messenger of God used to come to her there. It is said that when the Messenger of God moved from B. ‘Amr b. ‘Awf to Medina, his companions amongst the Muhâjirûn also moved. The Anṣâr competed to have them live in their homes, and they cast lots for this honour. No one hosted any of them except by the casting of lots.

Ma‘mar related to me from Zuhri from Khârija b. Zayd from Umm al-‘Alâ‘i. (p. 379) She said: ‘Uthmân b. Maz‘ûn came to us through the casting of the lots. He was in our house until he died. The Muhâjirûn were in their land and property, but when the Messenger of God took booty from the B. Naḍîr, he called Thâbit b. Qays b. Shammâs and he said, “Bring your people to me.” Thâbit said, “The Khazraj, Messenger of God?” The Messenger of God said, “The Anṣâr, all of them!” And he summoned the Aws and the Khazraj to him. The Messenger of God spoke and praised God, and he praised Him as was befitting to Him. Then he mentioned the Anṣâr and that which they did for the Muhâjirûn, their hosting them in their houses, and their preferring them to themselves. Then he said, “If you like, I will divide between you and the Muhâjirûn from the booty God has given from the B. Naḍîr. The Muhâjirûn will still be living in your dwellings and your property. If you like, I will give it to them and they will leave your homes.” Sa’d b. ‘Ubâda and Sa’d b. Mu‘âdh spoke, saying, “O Messenger of God, rather you will apportion it to the Muhâjirûn and they will stay in our homes just as they were.” The Anṣâr called out, “We are satisfied and content O Messenger of God.”

The Messenger of God said, "May God have compassion on the Anṣâr and the sons of the Anṣâr." The Messenger of God divided that which God had given as booty to him. He gave to the Muhâjirûn; he did not give to any one from the Anṣâr anything from that booty except two men. They were the two needy, Sahl b. Ḥunayf and Abû Dujâna. He gave Sa'd b. Mu'âdh the sword of Ibn Abî Ḥuqayq, which was a sword which was renowned among them.

They said: Among the recipients from the Muhâjirûn named to us were Abû Bakr al-Ṣiddîq, to whom he gave the well of Ḥijr, and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb to whom he gave the well of Jaram, 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. 'Awf, Suâ'la, which is called Mâl Sulaym, Ṣuhayb b. (p. 380) Sinân, al Ḍarrâṭa. And he gave al-Buwayla to Zubayr b. al-'Awwâm and Abû Salama b. 'Abd al-Asad. The property of Sahl b. Ḥunayf and Abû Dujâna was well known. It was called the property of Ibn Kharasha. The Messenger of God was generous with the people as regards that property.

Mention of what was revealed of the Qur'ân concerning the B. Naḍîr

*Whatever is in the heavens and on earth,*⁵⁸ God said: All things praise Him, (even) the demolished walls give praise. Rabî'a b. 'Uthmân related to me from Ḥuyayy from Abû Hurayra about that. *It is He who got out [drove out] the unbelievers among the people of the book, from their homes, at the first gathering,*⁵⁹ meaning the B. Naḍîr when the Messenger of God exiled them from Medina to al-Shâm and that was the first gathering in the world to al-Shâm. *Little did ye think that they will get out,*⁶⁰ God most high says to the believers, You did not think, for they had power and might/invincibility. *They thought that their fortress would defend them from God,*⁶¹ [that is] when they fortified themselves. *But (the wrath of) God came to them from quarters from which they little*

⁵⁸Qur'ân, 59:1.

⁵⁹Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶⁰Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶¹Qur'ân, 59:2.

expected,⁶² He said, referring to the Messenger of God's appearance and their exile. *And (He) cast terror into their hearts,*⁶³ [meaning] when the Messenger of God descended to their courtyards, they were fearful and certain of destruction. Fear was in their hearts for him, and they trembled. *They were destroying their homes with their own hands and the hands of the Believers,*⁶⁴ He said: When they were besieged the Muslims were digging for them from behind them, and they were digging what was around them, taking the wood and the lintels. *Take warning then O ye with eyes (to see),*⁶⁵ He said, meaning, O people with (p. 381) understanding. *And had it not been that God had decreed for them banishment,*⁶⁶ He says: It is written in the mother of the book that they will be exiled. *That is because they resisted God and His Apostle,*⁶⁷ He says: They disobeyed God and His messenger and opposed Him. *Whether ye cut down the tender palm trees, or you left them . . . etc.,*⁶⁸ He said: The Messenger of God had employed Abû Laylâ al-Mâzinî and 'Abd Allâh b. Salâm to cut their date palms, and Abû Laylâ was cutting the 'Ajwa, and Ibn Salâm was cutting the al-lawn. The B. Nađîr said to them, "You are Muslims and it is not lawful for you to destroy the palm trees." The companions of the Prophet disputed about that. Some said they are to be cut and others said they are not to be cut. God most high revealed about that, *What you cut of the tender palm trees,*⁶⁹ the various kinds of the palms except the 'Ajwa, *or you left them standing on their roots,*⁷⁰ He said of the 'Ajwa. *It was by leave of God in order that he might cover with shame the rebellious transgressors,*⁷¹ He says [that] what was cut of the dates will enrage them. *What God bestowed on His Apostle and (took away) from the people of the townships belongs to God and His Apostle and to kindred and orphans and the needy and the*

⁶²Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶³Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶⁴Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶⁵Qur'ân, 59:2.

⁶⁶Qur'ân, 59:3.

⁶⁷Qur'ân, 59:4.

⁶⁸Qur'ân, 59:5.

⁶⁹Qur'ân, 59:5.

⁷⁰Qur'ân, 59:5.

⁷¹Qur'ân, 59:5.

wayfarer,⁷² God says, for His Messenger, the same. *And to those who possess kinship,*⁷³ that is, the relatives of the Messenger of God. *And orphans and poor and the wayfarer,*⁷⁴ and the share of the Messenger of God is a fifth of the *khums*. The Messenger of God used to give the B. Hâshim from the *khums* and marry off their widows. ‘Umar had offered to them that he would have their widows married, their families employed, and pay the debts of the indebted. They refused and demanded that all of the *khums* be surrendered, which ‘Umar refused. Muṣ‘ab b. Thâbit related to me from Yazîd b. Rûmân from ‘Urwa that Abû Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Alî used to give it to the orphans, the poor, and the wayfarers. He says, *in order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you,*⁷⁵ He says, so that it will not become a practice that it is (p. 382) given to the rich, *so take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you,*⁷⁶ He says [that] what comes from the Messenger of God by way of command or prohibition has the status of that which has been revealed. *(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhâjirs, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking grace from God and His good pleasure,*⁷⁷ that is, the first Muhâjirûn from the Quraysh who emigrated to Medina before Badr. *But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge,*⁷⁸ meaning the Anṣâr, He says [that] the Aws and the Khazraj are the people of the homes. *And entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the latter, but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot,*⁷⁹[that] they did not find in themselves envy for what was given to the rest of them, meaning the Muhâjirûn, when the Messenger of God gave them and he did not give the Anṣâr. This is the preference over themselves, when they said to the Prophet:

⁷²Qur’ân, 59:7.

⁷³Qur’ân, 59:7.

⁷⁴Qur’ân, 59:7.

⁷⁵Qur’ân, 59:7.

⁷⁶Qur’ân, 59:7.

⁷⁷Qur’ân, 59:8.

⁷⁸Qur’ân, 59:9.

⁷⁹Qur’ân, 59:9.

“Give them and do not give us, for they are the needy.” *And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,*⁸⁰ He said [meaning] the evil of the people. *And those who came after them,*⁸¹ meaning those who embraced Islam, it is incumbent on them to seek forgiveness for the companions of the Prophet. *Hast thou not observed the hypocrites say to their misbelieving brethren among the people of the book, “If ye are expelled, we too will go out with you, and we will never hearken to any one in your affair?”*⁸² The statement of Ibn Ubayy when he sent Suwayd and Dâ’is to the B. Naḍîr: Stay and do not leave, surely with me and my people and others, are two thousand, who will enter with you and die to the last of them in defending you. God most high says, *But God is witness that they are indeed liars,*⁸³ meaning Ibn Ubayy and his companions. *If they are expelled,*⁸⁴ when the Messenger of God expelled them and not a single man from the hypocrites left with them, and they were fought, and not one man among them entered the fortress. *And if they do help them they will turn their backs,*⁸⁵ meaning they will be put to flight from fear. *Of a truth ye are stronger than they because of the terror in their hearts sent by God,*⁸⁶ meaning Ibn Ubayy and the hypocrites with him, feared that the Muslims would proceed against them; *That is because they are men devoid of understanding. They will not fight you even together,*⁸⁷ meaning the B. Naḍîr and the hypocrites. *Except in fortified townships,*⁸⁸ God says, in their fortresses. *Or from behind walls strong is their fighting (spirit),*⁸⁹ for each other. *Thou wouldst think they were united but their hearts are divided,*⁹⁰ meaning the hypocrites and the B. Naḍîr. *That is because they are a people devoid of*

⁸⁰Qur’ân, 59:9.

⁸¹Qur’ân, 59:10.

⁸²Qur’ân, 59:11.

⁸³Qur’ân, 59:11.

⁸⁴Qur’ân, 59:12.

⁸⁵Qur’ân, 59:12.

⁸⁶Qur’ân, 59:13.

⁸⁷Qur’ân, 59:14.

⁸⁸Qur’ân, 59:14.

⁸⁹Qur’ân, 59:14.

⁹⁰Qur’ân, 59:14.

wisdom,⁹¹ He says [that] the religion of the B. Naḍîr is different from the religion of the hypocrites and they are all united in their enmity of Islam together. *Like those who lately preceded they have tasted the evil result of their conduct,*⁹² He says, meaning the Qaynuqâ' when the Messenger of God exiled them. *Like the Evil One when he says to man, "Deny God," but when (man) denies God (the Evil One) says, "I am free of thee. I do fear God the Lord of the Worlds!"*⁹³ He said [that] this is a comparison to Ibn Ubayy and his companions who came to the B. Naḍîr saying as a falsehood, "Stay in your fortresses we will fight with you if you are attacked, we will leave if you leave." Their affliction is from themselves. *O ye who believe, fear God and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow,*⁹⁴ He says, referring to what you have done for the day of resurrection. *And be ye not like those who forgot God. And he made them forget their own souls,*⁹⁵ He says [that] they turn away from the remembrance of God, and God leads them astray to do good for themselves. *The Holy one,*⁹⁶ the knowing. *The Guardian,*⁹⁷ the witness.

A Comparison of the raid of the B. Naḍîr as narrated by Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî

On reading the accounts of what is known as the raid on, or exile of the B. Naḍîr—whether it be the account of Ibn Ishâq or al-Wâqidî—what is noticed immediately is that the very form/structure of the narrative has been considerably changed and enlarged, when compared with that of the B. Qaynuqâ'. But there are also differences between the two authors with regard to the form chosen to narrate the event.

⁹¹Qur'ân, 59:14.

⁹²Qur'ân, 59:15.

⁹³Qur'ân, 59:16.

⁹⁴Qur'ân, 59:18.

⁹⁵Qur'ân, 59:19.

⁹⁶Qur'ân, 59:23.

⁹⁷Qur'ân, 59:23.

Ibn Ishâq, in his account, includes a main section of traditions, followed by a section of *asbâb* or occasions of revelation, which in turn is followed by a series of poems many of which are dedicated to Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, whose murder as described in the poetry section is associated with the B. Naḍîr's exile. The *asbâb al-nuzûl*, which are concerned with *sûrat al-ḥashr*, is not related on the basis of any *isnâd*, which are the case regarding the account of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ'. Though authorship is assigned to the various poems as they are presented to the reader, the real composer of these poems, we are told, is Ibn Luqaym al-Absî, while others say that it is Qays b. Baḥr b. Ṭarîf.⁹⁸

By comparison, the structure of the parallel episode by al-Wâqidî is simpler than that of Ibn Ishâq, consisting of a narrative section based on tradition, and including bits of poetry and Qur'ânic verse. This is followed by a quite literal expounding of *asbâb al-nuzûl* on many verses from the *sûrat al-ḥashr*, which, though stated more distinctly and with greater detail (al-Wâqidî first cites the Qur'ânic text, and then follows it up with an explanation) is very similar in sentiment to the explanation given by Ibn Ishâq.

With regard to the main narrative based on tradition, Ibn Ishâq cites two authorities. The first is Yazîd b. Rûmân, a *mawlâ* of the family of al-Zubayr, who gives us the basic information concerning what led to the exile of the B. Naḍîr.⁹⁹ The other is 'Abd Allâh b. Abî Bakr, who tells of how the B. Naḍîr set off for their new homeland.¹⁰⁰ The main body of information in al-Wâqidî, however, is delivered on the authority of a collective *isnâd*—but a collective *isnâd* with a difference, for he states,

⁹⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 656.

⁹⁹ibid., 652.

¹⁰⁰ibid., 653.

Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh¹⁰¹ and ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far¹⁰² and Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ¹⁰³ and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Sahl¹⁰⁴ and Ibn Abī Ḥabība¹⁰⁵ and Ma‘mar b. Rāshid¹⁰⁶ related to me, including traditionists I have not named, and all have related to me about some of these traditions, and some of the people are more trustworthy than some¹⁰⁷

And yet one cannot forget that the science of tradition had not yet been established; indeed, if al-Wāqidī’s *isnād* cited above is compared to a similar collective *isnād* used by Ibn Ishāq, such as, for instance, the collective *isnād* on the basis of which that author narrates the tradition concerning the battle of the Trench, al-Wāqidī’s is hardly any worse:

Yazīd b. Rûmân, client of the family of al-Zubayr b. ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr and one whom I have no reason to suspect from ‘Abd Allāh b. Ka‘b b. Mālik and Muḥammad b. Ka‘b al-Qurazī and al-Zuhrī and ‘Āsim b. ‘Umar b. Qatāda and ‘Abdullāh b. Abī Bakr and other traditionists of ours told me the following narrative, each contributing a part of it.¹⁰⁸

Al-Wāqidī’s narrative regarding the Raid on the B. Naḍīr includes other *isnāds* as well. They are:

1. Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz related to me, saying¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 152/769) ; see above f. n. 37.

¹⁰²Known as ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far b. al-Raḥmān b. al-Miswar b. Makhrama (d. 170/786); see Sachau, “Studien zur ältesten Geschichtsüberlieferung,” 176.

¹⁰³Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Dīnār al-Tammār (d. 168/784); *ibid.*, 167-68.

¹⁰⁴His grandfather was Sahl b. Abī Ḥathma b. Sā‘ida b. ‘Āmir al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Madanī was born in 3/624 and died during the reign of Mu‘āwiya (40/660-63/682), whose traditions he learned from his father. See *ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰⁵Ibn Abī Ḥabība (d. 165/781), named Abū Ismā‘īl Ibrāhīm b. Ismā‘īl b. Abī Ḥabība was a cousin of Mūsā b. ‘Uqba. See *ibid.*, 166.

¹⁰⁶Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 96/714), born in Basra, was a student of al-Zuhrī, whose *maghāzī* has been transmitted through his student ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. A.H. 126/744). See Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography*, 271-72.

¹⁰⁷Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, 363.

¹⁰⁸Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb sirat rasūl Allāh*, 669.

¹⁰⁹Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, 371.

2. Abû Bakr b. Abî Sabra related to me from Rubayḥ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmân b. Abû Sa‘îd al-Khudrî from his father from his grandfather, saying¹¹⁰
3. Abû Bakr b. ‘Abd Allâh related to me from Miswar b. Rifâ‘a, saying¹¹¹
4. Mûsâ b. ‘Umar al-Ḥārithî related to me from Abî ‘Ufayr, saying¹¹²
5. Ma‘mar related to me from al-Zuhrî from Khârija b. Zayd from Umm al-Alâ‘î saying¹¹³

Here I review briefly the modified information that has now become available through al-Wâqidî’s work in terms of the main story as related by Ibn Ishâq :

1. The basic account regarding what happened to the two men of the B. Naḍîr, but al-Wâqidî details for us exactly where Muḥammad meets with the B. Naḍîr, and when.¹¹⁴

2. While Ibn Ishâq merely tells us that a group of companions including Abû Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Alî had accompanied the Prophet, al-Wâqidî gives us a more precise idea of the party: “ Ḥuyayy b. Akṭab said,

O community of Jews, Muḥammad has come to you with a small group . . . which does not amount to ten. With him are Abû Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Alî, al-Zubayr, Ṭalha, Sa‘d b. Mu‘âdh, Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr, and Sa‘d b. ‘Ubâda’.

3. While Ibn Ishâq talks of the treachery of the B. Naḍîr generally, al-Wâqidî seems to be pointing a finger at Ḥuyayy in particular.

4. Whereas, in Ibn Ishâq, Muḥammad cuts and burns the date palms of the B. Naḍîr when he finds the Jews fortifying themselves against him (and it is at

¹¹⁰Ibid., 375.

¹¹¹Ibid., 377.

¹¹²Ibid., 378.

¹¹³Ibid., 378-79.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 364.

this point that Ibn Ubayy, joined by Wadî'a, Mâlik b. Qawqal, Suwayd, and Dâ'is, promises help to the B. Naḍîr if they would hold their ground and remain in Medina), in the al-Wâqidî version, the Jews, having agreed to leave, are then persuaded by Ibn Ubayy to stay and fortify themselves. This leads Muḥammad to cut and burn their date palms, which in turn leads them to ask for exile. In this version Ibn Ubayy is given a more authoritative role, for he sends a message to the B. Naḍîr through Suwayd and Dâ'is. The crime committed by Ibn Ubayy seems greater.¹¹⁵

5. Extremely interesting is the way al-Wâqidî narrates for us the story of 'Urwa b. Ward al-Absî's mistress. Ibn Ishâq uses the incident to indicate the arrogance of the Jews, who, despite their exile, had purchased one of the prettiest women from her Arab master. Al-Wâqidî modifies the story, giving two versions. The first has a happy ending, with Salmâ marrying al-Absî; the second indicates the folly of taking too much alcohol. Here, it is the B. Naḍîr who provide the wine; it is the B. Naḍîr, who, taking advantage of his drunken state, accept his mistress in exchange for the wine. The B. Naḍîr are portrayed as mean, and it is insinuated that their wealth has been dishonestly made. Apparently al-Absî was at the B. Naḍîr's looking for loot: unauthorized loot? One wonders. There seem to be several morals behind the tale.

6. Al-Wâqidî indicates that there are several traditions regarding the division of the land of the B. Naḍîr, whereas Ibn Ishâq informs the reader of but one. With reference to this latter tradition, al-Wâqidî provides an amplified version. He tells of how when the Muhâjirûn first arrived among the Anṣâr they stayed in the homes of the Anṣâr as their guests. However, the ability to house

¹¹⁵Ibid., 368.

these Qurayshî companions of the Prophet was considered such an honour that it was feared that the distribution of these guests among the hosts might lead to factionalism. To prevent such a mishap these guests were, interestingly enough, 'distributed' among the Anṣâr by lottery.¹¹⁶ Al-Wâqidî then informs the reader that when the Prophet took possession of the land of the B. Naḍîr, he decided to consult with the Anṣâr before making a decision about it. The question that is put to them is, however, whether they should all share in the land, in which case the Muhâjirûn would continue as guests, or whether the land should be distributed among the Muhâjirûn alone, in which case the latter would leave from the homes of the Anṣâr. The Anṣâr volunteer not only the land, but also that the Muhâjirûn continue to stay with them as guests. Importantly, the decision is voiced by both Sa'd b. Mu'âdh and Sa'd b. 'Ubâda, indicating that the agreement of both the Aws and the Khazraj was granted.

7. It may well be that al-Wâqidî's use of *isnâds* is only as vague as Ibn Ishâq's; nevertheless, that it is an important tool, one which enables him to include various kinds of information, is clear. His information about the argumentation among the elders of the B. Naḍîr, as well as the two traditions he reproduces regarding 'Urwa b. Wardî al-Absî and how he was to lose his mistress, warning of the dangers of alcohol, clearly belong in the category of popular folk tales. On the other hand, they may well be an embroidery of the basic information that is stated by Ibn Ishâq.

Al-Wâqidî does not desist from bringing in totally new information, that is to say, traditions that have not been mentioned by Ibn Ishâq. The new material includes:

¹¹⁶Compare with the pacting of brotherhood described by Ibn Ishâq, Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh, 344-46.

a) An account regarding Muḥammad b. Maslama's conversation with the Jews, when he is sent by Muḥammad to deliver his message of expulsion.

Maslama, however, has had a previous encounter with the Jews and a long meeting takes place wherein he reminds them of how they had told him of the Messiah who was to come from the direction of Yemen. Maslama challenges them to recognize Muḥammad, but they deny his identity.¹¹⁷

b) An account regarding Huyayy b. Akḥṭab sending his brother Judayy to Muḥammad and then to Ibn Ubayy, and Judayy's observation of Ibn Ubayy's son's loyalty to Muḥammad.¹¹⁸

c) Information regarding Ka'b b. Asad's refusal to help the B. Naḍîr against the Prophet.¹¹⁹

d) New information regarding the Prophet's tent, and how a Jew aimed at it with his arrow.¹²⁰

e) New data regarding 'Alî going out to fight some Jews, and having killed them, returning with their heads.¹²¹

f) New traditions relating how the Prophet was to deal with the land which he acquired from the B. Naḍîr, such as:

Mûsâ b. 'Umar al-Ḥârithî related to me from Abû 'Ufayr, saying: rather he was paying for the support of his family from the B. Naḍîr's loot. It was purely his property. He gave out as he wished from it and held as he wished

¹¹⁷Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 367.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 370.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 369.

¹²⁰Ibid., 371.

¹²¹Ibid., 372, where 'Alî kills 'Azwak, and then goes back to return with the heads of several other Jews.

...¹²²

Al-Wâqidî seizes the opportunity, at the same time, which I believe is in keeping with his anticipatory style, to provide

g) information about what the Prophet did with other lands that he received, which included not only the land gifted to him by Mukhayrîq, but also the Fadak which he obtains later on. Interestingly, the land of Khaybar is also mentioned, it being stated that:

Khaybar was divided into three parts, two portions for the Muhâjirûn, while a portion of it was being paid for his family. If there was excess he returned it to the destitute of the Muhâjirûn.¹²³

While Ibn Ishâq does not mention any agreement between Muḥammad and the B. Naḍîr, neither in the so called “constitution” nor later on (and in fact it would seem that there could not have been an agreement given the fact that Muḥammad had just previously proclaimed to the Muslims “kill any Jew”), al-Wâqidî shows that the assassination of Ka‘b leads to

h) information about the Jews coming to Muḥammad and signing an agreement with him.¹²⁴ We also see Sallâm b. Mishkam advising his fellow elders, “This is the destruction of the agreement which is between us and him, so do not do it . . .”¹²⁵ indicating that there was an agreement between the two groups, as of course there was according to al-Wâqidî’s version of the tale.

i) New information about how Suwayrâ’ informs his community that there are three options available to them. The first is conversion; the second--and this is interesting--that Muḥammad would ask them to leave Medina, and if they should

¹²²Ibid., 378.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid., 192.

¹²⁵Ibid., 365.

promptly obey, then “Your blood and wealth will not be spilt, and your property [the date palms] will remain, and if you wish you may sell, and if you wish you may keep it.” Al-Wâqidî seems to be indicating to the reader that if Ibn Ubayy had not intervened at that point and persuaded the B. Naḍîr to hold on to their fortresses promising them not only his help but the help of the Ghatafân and the B. Qurayza as well, the B. Naḍîr may have been permitted to retain ownership of their date palms. Interestingly, not only is a similar proposal made to the Prophet by the Jews of Fadak, which he refuses,¹²⁶ but the whole incident regarding the leader of the community advising his people is very similar to the later occasion (established in the account of the raid on the B. Qurayza) when Ka'b b. Asad would offer similar advice to the B. Qurayza. The repetition is clearly to do with al-Wâqidî's style of compilation.

j) Mention of Sallâm b. Abî Râfi's activities as a leader among the B. Naḍîr, which is not seen in the narrative by Ibn Ishâq. Al-Wâqidî also indicates that the Ghatafân are allies of the B. Naḍîr, and that the latter did hope to get support from other Arab groups as well. The point is that the information comes together to justify placing the murder of Abû Râfi' before the battle of Khandaq, in A.H. four. According to Ibn Ishâq, the murder of Abû Râfi' is dated after the battle of Khandaq instead.

k) New details about the corruption of the Jewish community in terms of their religious awareness is provided. Thus we learn that Ḥassân had a relationship with Ibn Suwayrâ's daughter, a relationship that would have been taboo in Islam, considering that Ḥassân was a pagan at that time. More importantly, the reader practically hears the leaders of the community tell them of

¹²⁶Ibid., 706.

the coming of Muḥammad; nevertheless the community rejects the information, for they now believe in a Tora which has been changed. In rejecting the advice of their leaders the community ironically cries out, "We will not depart from the Tora."¹²⁷

The main narrative based on tradition is followed in both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî with exegetical material. Comparatively speaking, the substance of the exegetical passage in Ibn Ishâq is less detailed than that of al-Wâqidî and deals basically with the issue of the Jewish exile, the destruction of the palm trees, and the grant of the lands which had belonged to the B. Naḍîr to God and His Prophet. It also tells of the punishment that lies ahead for those who disbelieve.¹²⁸

In the al-Wâqidî text, only two explicit references to the Qur'ân appear in the narrative section based on tradition: that which concerns the right of the Prophet to have the crops destroyed; and that which concerns the division of the property of the B. Naḍîr. In the supplement concerning *asbâb al-nuzûl* proper, however, the whole incident is connected with the Qur'ânic text. The exegesis is narrated on the authority of Rabî'a b. 'Uthmân on the authority of Ḥuyayy on the authority of Abû Ḥurayra. There are several issues which call for comment:

1. Ibn Ishâq's association of the exile of the B. Naḍîr with the *sûrat al-ḥashr* is not clear. In an earlier chapter entitled "References to the Hypocrites and the Jews in the *sûra* entitled 'The Cow'" Ibn Ishâq associates the incident with a verse from *sûrat al-mâ'ida*. On the other hand, one cannot help but wonder why al-Wâqidî should claim, in his narrative section, that all the B. Naḍîr left for Khaybar when they were exiled, if only to associate the event with the *sûrat al-ḥashr* with its eschatological symbolism which is based in Syria.

¹²⁷Ibid., 366.

¹²⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 654-55.

2. Al-Wâqidî speaks of the “mother of the book,” which carries with it implications of predestination.¹²⁹ It is believed that compilers did use *sîra-maghâzî* to voice attitudes to theological positions such as predestination and freewill.¹³⁰ Ibn Ishâq was punished for his support of free will, though it is not certain how he is supposed to have expressed his inclination. Certainly his *Sîra* reflects a changing Islam, for instance, in the case of the idea of *dhimma*. What ever it is, it is believed that he was penalized for holding Qadarite beliefs—probably because free will insinuates the right to protest governments in authority. By contrast, al-Wâqidî indicates an acceptance of predestination, which, given the context of the ‘Abbâsid authority of his day, as well as his close relationship with the caliphs, is understandable. Al-Wâqidî was certainly not one who would wish to protest the authority of the ‘Abbâsids. As already indicated, at his death it was al-Ma’mûn who saw to his burial.¹³¹

3. It is interesting to observe the almost arbitrary conclusions made by al-Wâqidî as he expounds on a general Qur’ânic revelation to appreciate a specific historical moment. Particularly noticeable is his explanation of the phrase, “so take what the Apostle assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.” Here, al-Wâqidî, anticipating al-Shâfi‘î, explains: “Whatever commands and prohibitions the Prophet makes are of the same authority as revelation.”¹³² It is certainly significant that the right to burn the crops of the Jews, granted by the Qur’ân, is later denied by the words of the Prophet, when he forbids it at Khaybar.¹³³ Al-Wâqidî’s derivation of the division of the *khums* on

¹²⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 381.

¹³⁰Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 41.

¹³¹Ibn Sa’d, *Kitâb al-ṭabaqât*, 7:77.

¹³²Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 382.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 644.

the basis of the Qur'ân is just as arbitrary. The usual interpretation is that the Prophet could use his one-fifth share to distribute it among the needy as he pleased: it was his property. The statement of al-Wâqidî is not absolutely clear, but it seems to indicate that Muḥammad's one-fifth is in fact to be divided into five parts—between the kindred, the poor, the orphans, and the wayfarer, one fifth being kept for God and himself!¹³⁴

While we glance at the two chapters of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî it seems to the reader that the poetry section that is present in Ibn Ishâq's version has been replaced by al-Wâqidî with *asbâb al-nuzûl*. The very little poetry that is included by al-Wâqidî is for rhetorical effect rather than anything else; it does not present new information.

The chapter on the B. Naḍîr by Ibn Ishâq concludes with a series of poems, nine in all. The first speaks of Muḥammad as the chosen Prophet of God who functions totally in accordance with God's decree. Poems two to five deal with Ka'b's assassination. These poems seem to indicate that the exile of the B. Naḍîr took place soon after the death of Ka'b, their leader, for whom their lament is a commemoration of the achievements of the B. Naḍîr as well. Significantly, the poem by 'Alî indicates that Ka'b's murder was effected on God's request.¹³⁵

A rather confusing intimation, this time through the fourth poem, is that the B. Naḍîr "made for Qaynuqâ'." The insinuation seems to be that the latter was either a place name, or a place to which the B. Qaynuqâ' of Medina had moved; it could be understood to indicate that the B. Naḍîr were leaving to join the Qaynuqâ', a fact not mentioned anywhere else by Ibn Ishâq. The last three poems

¹³⁴Ibid., 381.

¹³⁵Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 657.

comment on the end of the B. Naḍîr, one of the priestly tribes of the Jews. They bemoan their loss, remembering sadly and with gratitude the help and kindness the B. Naḍîr had proffered them in troubled times.

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To appreciate more fully the passages discussed above by Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, it is necessary first to understand the purpose of the respective narratives. Does Ibn Ishâq indicate in any way that he is writing history? Does al-Wâqidî? Is this what the genre *Sîra-Maghâzî* is all about?

Information regarding the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr as narrated by the two author-collators is, to a certain extent very similar. It is this presence of "a solid core" as Watt puts it, that generates a sense of history, a sense that there is some truth to what is being related. It is through the establishment of such a core that the author makes available to the believer the otherwise barely tangible or recognizable existence of the Prophet. But is this core based on historical fact or an investigated chronology? It is necessary to carefully examine the details and appreciate more fully the statements of the different compilers to answer this question.

To begin by looking at what comprises the common of material in these two incidents: in the case of the B. Qaynuqâ', both authors indicate that the raid took place soon after the battle of Badr;¹³⁶ both authors inform us that Muḥammad invited the B. Qaynuqâ' to Islam; and that the B. Qaynuqâ' were forced to surrender; that Ibn Ubayy stood by his confederates, demanding that they be set

¹³⁶Ibid., 545; al-Wâqidî *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176.

free;¹³⁷ that ‘Ubâda b. Şâmit renounced his alliance with the B. Qaynuqâ’. But this is about all that the two narratives have in common.

And similarly with the raid on the B. Naḍîr. As with the story of the B. Qaynuqâ’, there is a basic “hard core”—similar material in the two different narratives. Thus, according to both narrators the refusal of the Jews to participate in the battle of Uḥud had nothing to do with the exile of the B. Naḍîr. Says Ibn Ishâq:

... the Messenger of God set out to the B. Naḍîr to seek their help in the payment of the bloodwit of the two murdered men from the B. ‘Âmir whom ‘Amr b. Umayya al-Ḍamrî had killed, because of the protection which the Messenger of God had promised to them. According to what Yazîd b. Rûmân related to me, there was between the B. Naḍîr and the B. ‘Âmir a contract and an agreement and when the Messenger of God came to them and asked their help in the payment of the blood wit of the two murdered men, they said yes, O Abû’l Qâsim we will help you . . .¹³⁸

And al-Wâqidî agrees:

... the Messenger of God commanded that their plunder be set aside until he sent it with their blood money, because ‘Âmir b. Ṭufayl had sent to the Messenger of God [a message]: surely a man from your companions has killed two men from my tribe who had protection and an agreement from you. So send their blood money to us. The Messenger of God went to the B. Naḍîr seeking help with the payment of the blood money for the B. Naḍîr were confederates of the B. ‘Âmir.¹³⁹

Once they had brought Muḥammad into one of their homes, they were tempted, however, to throw a stone upon him and kill him.¹⁴⁰

And there are other issues on which the two authors agree: for instance, both writers tell us of how Ibn Ubayy attempted to persuade the B. Naḍîr to stay in

¹³⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 546; al-Wâqidî *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 177.

¹³⁸Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 652.

¹³⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 364.

¹⁴⁰This too is agreed on by both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî.

Medina; both writers indicate that the palm trees of the B. Naḍîr were destroyed, and that the people were exiled; and both writers indicate that the land of the B. Naḍîr became the property of the Prophet. But the differences that exist between the two narratives are too significant to be overlooked.

This difference is visible at the very beginnings of the two statements. As regards the account of the B. Qaynuqâ', according to Ibn Ishâq, it would appear that Muḥammad's demand that the B. Qaynuqâ' convert was largely born out of his success at Badr:

There was a report about the B. Qaynuqâ' that the Messenger of God gathered them in the market of the B. Qaynuqâ', and said: O Jews, beware and convert lest God brings a destruction down upon you similar to that which he brought upon the Quraysh, for surely you know that I am the Prophet who has been sent and you will find that in your books and God's agreement with you.¹⁴¹

And this is also visible in the text of the Qur'ân with which Ibn Ishâq associates the occasion, as already explained:

There has already been for you a sign in the two armies that met (in combat); i.e. the companions of Badr from the companions of the Messenger of God and the Quraysh. One was fighting in the cause of God, the other resisting God; these saw with their own eyes twice their number.¹⁴²

Al-Wâqidî approaches the affair differently. Having first informed the reader about how Muḥammad had made an agreement with the Jewish people he continues:

When the Prophet overcame the participants of Badr and arrived at Medina some Jews acted wrongfully and destroyed what was between them and the Messenger of God of the contract/agreement. The Prophet sent for them and collected them together, then he said: "O Jewish people, convert . . ."¹⁴³

¹⁴¹Ibid., 545.

¹⁴²Ibid. See Qur'ân, 3:13.

¹⁴³Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 176.

The verse he associates with the occasion is equally suggestive:

If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms. God loveth not the treacherous. ¹⁴⁴

And similarly with the account of the raid on the B. Naḍîr, al-Wâqidî is seen to recontextualize the whole issue. Thus while Ibn Ishâq tells of how the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf led to the desperate insecurity of the Jews, al-Wâqidî tells us that the Jews therefore met with the Prophet to sign an agreement with him. For al-Wâqidî it is the abrogation of this agreement (which occurs when the Jews of the B. Naḍîr plot to kill Muḥammad) that leads Muḥammad to demand that they leave Medina.

It is my contention that al-Wâqidî, while maintaining a certain parallelism with the text of Ibn Ishâq, thereby creating an illusion of history, deliberately recontextualizes the events that constitute the life of the Prophet in order to establish a unique *sîra-maghâzî* of his own. This he does, particularly by introducing a new chronology and more detail, and as well, by recontextualizing the individual traditions themselves which in the Ibn Ishâq-text are associated with a particular incident. Through these changes al-Wâqidî attempts, by introducing the theme of an abrogated agreement, to give new meaning to his *sîra-maghâzî*.

When Ibn Ishâq uses 'chronology' or 'sequence' he seems to have more in mind than merely telling the reader that this happened on such and such an occasion. As far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, not everything is clearly understood or recognized. It is significant that all this information about Muḥammad's assaults on important Jewish communities, the Jews of Khaybar included, is dealt with by Ibn Ishâq, not only under the particular chapters devoted to them, but also in an

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 180.

earlier chapter entitled “References to the Hypocrites and the Jews in the *sûra* entitled ‘The Cow’.” But differences between the two chapters exist in terms of their treatment of the different issues. Thus for instance the earlier rendering of the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ’ does not include the sentence: “O Muḥammad you seem to think that we are your people,” which is included in the account presented under the title “The Affair of the B. Qaynuqâ’.”¹⁴⁵ The author may have simply overlooked the particular sentence, or he may have intentionally left it out, as it is with the Qur’ânic citation that he is here concerned—the statement having been part of the response from the Jews, he may have found the phrase to be inappropriate for mention in analyzing the Qur’ân. Nevertheless, the communication of this earlier passage, as well, indicates that the act of aggression originates from Muḥammad against the B. Qaynuqâ’ and not vice versa, so that what differentiates Ibn Ishâq’s statement from al-Wâqidî’s continues to hold. Ibn Ishâq says:

When God smote Quraysh at Badr, the apostle assembled the Jews in the market of the B. Qaynuqâ’ when he came to Medina and called on them to accept Islam before God should treat them as he had treated Quraysh. They answered, ‘Don’t deceive yourself, Muḥammad. You have killed a number of inexperienced Quraysh who did not know how to fight. But if you fight us you will learn that we are men and that you have met your equal.’ So God sent down concerning their words: ‘Say to those who disbelieve, You will be defeated and gathered into hell, a wretched resting place. You had a sign in the two parties which met: one party fought in the way of God and the other was unbelieving seeing twice their number with their very eyes. God will strengthen with His help whom He will. In that there is a warning for the observant.’¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, neither the abrogation of an agreement, nor even the contracting of one, are mentioned.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 545-47.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 383; trans. by Guillaume in Ibn Ishâq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 260.

And there is no attempt on Ibn Ishâq's part to pretend that the facts are well established when he narrates information about the B. Naḍîr, either (as in the case of the B. Qaynuqâ'). In the earlier chapter entitled "The chapter on The Cow and Jewish Opposition,"¹⁴⁷ the references within the chapter are not restricted to *sûrat al baqara*; but the reference made in this chapter to the exile of the B. Naḍîr is certainly not linked to the *sûrat al-ḥ ashṛ*, which is the one indicated under the chapter entitled "The Exile of the B. Naḍîr." In the chapter entitled *sûrat al-baqara*, Ibn Ishâq states:

The apostle got to know of their [the B. Naḍîr's] scheme and he left them and God sent down concerning him and his people's intention: '*O you who believe, remember God's favor to you when a people purposed to stretch out their hands against you and He withheld their hands from you. Fear God and on God let the believers rely.*'¹⁴⁸

This particular reference is to Qur'ân 5:14. This difference is important. The fact that different verses are being adduced to refer to the same incident is indicative of the fact that once again Ibn Ishâq is not certain exactly when the incident occurred. References to the Qur'ânic text should help indicate the chronology. But which verse is the correct one? The variable is the Qur'ânic reference rather than the narrative account. If there was a historical association, that association is no longer clearly recollected. It would therefore appear that the choice of the verse depends, rather, on the author-compiler concerned, and the effects he wants to achieve.

With al-Wâqidî, a comparatively more straightforward approach is observed. Recognizing that these traditions are not contextualized, that even Ibn Ishâq does not indicate any certainty about chronology, he decides to provide his

¹⁴⁷Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 363.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 392.

own chronology and context for the events in terms of his interpretation of the life of the Prophet. Thus, for instance, according to Ibn Ishâq, the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' took place after the raid on al-Sawîq; whereas for al-Wâqidî it took place before al-Sawîq. Al-Wâqidî has moved the episode of al-Sawîq to a position after the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' to confirm the tradition that the B. Qaynuqâ' were the first of the Jews to be attacked by the Prophet, they being the first to have broken the contract. As for the traditions regarding the B. Naḍîr, al-Wâqidî situates the event after another written agreement has been concluded with the Jews, this time at the home of Ramla bint al-Ḥârith. Significantly, according to the text of Ibn Ishâq, such an agreement was never concluded.

As already indicated, the pool of tradition into which Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî dipped was not of monolithic content. It was varied to the extent that even contradictory traditions were available, as, for instance, in the case of the traditions regarding the exile of the B. Naḍîr.¹⁴⁹ It is thus clear that Jones' reference to a single body or corpus of traditions to explain the similarities discovered in the information of the various writers regarding two particular events is based on a lack of understanding, for important differences do surface. Ella Landau-Tasseron has attempted to understand how these differences have arisen. It is with the numerous variations of tradition regarding the Tamîmite delegations to the Prophet that she is concerned in her paper on "Processes of Redaction".¹⁵⁰ Investigating their various forms, she concludes that while Ibn Ishâq preserves an earlier representation of two disparate accounts, al-Wâqidî illustrates a more recent

¹⁴⁹Thus for instance *muḥaddithûn* place it six months after Badr; see f. n. 51 above. *Mufasssirûn* with the exception of al-Ṭabarî place it after the battle of Uhud, but connect it with the assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf; see Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," 70. While biographical literature on the Prophet places the exile variously, Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî both place it after Uhud but distinctly separate it from the assassination of Ka'b.

¹⁵⁰Ella Landau Tasseron, "Processes of Redaction," 255-70.

version which shows a single account, but which, in fact, is a result of the bringing together of the earlier forms under a single common heading effected by the redaction of the Qur'ânic text.

The Landau-Tasseron hypothesis immediately brings to mind the tradition regarding the assassination of Ka'b as well as the traditions regarding the exile of the B. Naḍîr, and their association with *sûrat al-ḥ ashir*. Though Ibn Ishâq places Ka'b's assassination after Badr distinctly separate from the episode concerning the exile of the B. Naḍîr, exegetes such as Muqâtil b. Sulaymân (d. 149/767) and al-Baghawî (d. 515/1122), can be seen to associate the event with the exile of the B. Naḍîr, which, in turn, they associated with *sûrat al-ḥ ashir*.¹⁵¹ The connection of Ka'b with the B. Naḍîr is logical enough, given the fact that Ka'b's mother was of the B. Naḍîr, and he a leader of that tribe, though his father was an Arab. Equally logical is the connection of the two events with the *sûrat al-ḥ ashir*, a chapter which in fact had originally been entitled *sûrat-al-Naḍîr* by early commentators such as Qurtubî.¹⁵² Thus it is possible that (as argued by Tasseron in the case of the Tamîmî verses), in the process of the redaction, of the Qur'ân, the two Naḍîrî traditions had been brought together and rationalized into position so that their connected nature had also become established. It was this version which the *mufasssîr* confronted, hence their interpretation.

There is much that is attractive about this theory, but it enters into uncharted waters, which, given the extent of the unknown in terms of early Islamic history, is certainly a step I would not like to take. An important consideration that has to be taken into account is that there are many more variations regarding

¹⁵¹Uri Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf," 68.

¹⁵²Ibid., 65, f. n. 6.

the story of Ka‘b,¹⁵³ and one wonders why the story chosen by Ibn Ishâq should be given a priority in terms of later historical writings unless of course one is willing to accept the conspiracy theory of Wansbrough—who regards the information concerning the ‘Uthmanic recension to be false—to which Landau-Tasseron makes no obvious commitment.

Perhaps more significant in the case of the Ka‘b story is that al-Wâqidî chooses a particular chronological arrangement that distinctly separates the account of the murder from that of the exile, by indicating the writing of an agreement in-between. Moreover al-Wâqidî also cites Qur’ânic verses from chapters—*sûrât al-‘Imrân* and *al-baqara*—the first of which is associated by Ibn Ishâq with the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ‘.¹⁵⁴ Al-Wâqidî, for his part, associates the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ‘ with *sûrat al-anfâl* instead. So that it does seem plausible, as indeed I have suggested earlier on, that it is the compiler who decides which verse should be cited when, depending on the thesis he desires to establish.

But let us examine the traditions concerning the assassination of Ka‘b and the raid of the B. Naḍîr for what they tell us of the different approaches of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî. In historicizing these events, Ibn Ishâq has separated the two incidents quite effectively, placing Ka‘b’s assassination after Badr and before Uhud, and the Naḍîr exile after Uhud. He thus maintains the traditions which associate Muḥammad’s anger against Ka‘b as having been provoked by the effects of Badr. According to both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf had gone to Mecca after Badr and instigated the Quraysh to fight the Prophet. Ka‘b had also composed verses mourning the death of the brave Meccan victims who had been

¹⁵³See for instance Kister, “The Market of the Prophet,” which tells of how Ka‘b roused the anger of the Prophet when he cut the ropes of the tent which he had just put up in the Baqî‘ al-Zubayr, 272-76.

¹⁵⁴Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 185.

killed at Badr; on returning to Medina he had then composed love poems of an insulting nature to some Muslim women.¹⁵⁵ Ibn Ishâq does not cite any Qur'ânic verse on the occasion of Ka'b's assassination but, on the other hand, he does suggest that there did exist traditions that had linked the assassination of Ka'b to the exile of the Naḍîr; by placing a poem, apparently composed by 'Alî, at the end of the chapter on their exile, he indicates that the two incidents had been linked according to some traditionists.¹⁵⁶

There are more details to contend with. It is significant that early *sîra* literature dates the raid on the B. Naḍîr six months after Badr. This tradition is related on the authority of Zuhri from 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, there also exist traditions which indicate that according to 'Urwa, the conflict with both the B. Qaynuqâ'¹⁵⁸ and the B. Naḍîr took place around the same time, i.e., six months after Badr.

Why then did Ibn Ishâq place the raid against the B. Naḍîr after the battle of Uḥud? Ibn Ishâq may have been falling back on exegetical tradition. In that genre of literature, not only is the assassination of Ka'b linked to the exile of the B. Naḍîr, but both of them are chronologically placed after Uḥud. Moreover, just as the *mufasssîrûn*, Ibn Ishâq, too, links the chapter with the *sûrat al-ḥaṣhr*. On the other hand, it seems that there also existed traditions regarding the assassination of Ka'b leading to an agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews. It is this latter tradition that al-Wâqidî has made use of in his *Kitâb al-maghâzî*. This tradition

¹⁵⁵See Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sîrat rasûl Allâh*, 548-53. Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*,

¹⁵⁶See above page 292 above.

¹⁵⁷'Abd al-Razzâq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabîb al-Raḥmân al-A'zamî (Beirut: 1970), 5: 357, cited in Rubin, "The Assassination of Ka'b b al-Ashraf," 69, and f. n. 27.

¹⁵⁸Qastallânî, *Sharḥ 'alâ'l mawâhib al-ladunîya*, 1: 551, cited in Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghâzî*," 247, f. n. 21.

implies that there must have existed a considerable lapse of time between the assassination of Ka'b and the exile of the B. Naḍîr.¹⁵⁹ It justifies al-Wâqidî's arrangement, which, like Ibn Ishâq's, sees the placing of the Ka'b assassination after Badr, but the exile of the B. Naḍîr after Uḥud.

Why then was Ibn Ishâq's narration of the assassination not followed up with information regarding an agreement between Muḥammad and the B. Naḍîr? My answer is that he deliberately left it out, just as in his representation of the agreement which has come to be called the 'Constitution of Medina' he has deliberately left out the names of the three important Jewish tribes. Significantly, an agreement is never mentioned throughout Ibn Ishâq's narration of either the raid of the B. Qaynuqâ' or the B. Naḍîr. An important theme in his biography of the Prophet is the representation of Muḥammad as a prophet like any other: a prophet who had come as God's Messenger and therefore must be obeyed. Whether an agreement was broken or not was, as far as Ibn Ishâq is concerned, beside the point. Thus he conveys the notion that it is because the Jews rejected Muḥammad and His message that the wrath of God was brought down upon them: the Jews were defeated and the various communities never heard of in Medina again.

How Ibn Ishâq chose to depict the manifestation of God's wrath upon the Jews is interesting. In the first place, that the experienced forces of the Jews should be defeated was itself a sign of His wrath, to which could be added the fact that Muḥammad probably won because God was on his side. But there was also the general depiction of the whole community being destroyed, never to be heard of again. Ibn Ishâq clearly shows this in the case of both the B. Qaynuqâ' and the

¹⁵⁹Al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 192.

B. Naḍîr. The B. Qaynuqâ' may not have been exiled; but despite the fact that they are handed over to Ibn Ubayy, the fact is that their communal existence in Medina has been brought to an end. The B. Naḍîr, for their part, are clearly exiled: some of them leave for Khaybar, others to al-Shâm, their existence in Medina abruptly concluded. And Ibn Ishâq does not overlook the device of the mnemonic. The manipulation of the timing of the raid on the B. Naḍîr from six months after Badr, as dated by his teacher al-Zuhrî, to after Uḥud, had the benefit of providing a certain artistic design to the larger scheme of his *Sîra*. Ibn Ishâq's artistry is realized in the way he synchronizes the events so that Badr is followed by the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ', Uḥud by the exile of the B. Naḍîr, and Khandaq by the execution of the B. Qurayza. Needless to say, the escalation of violence from mere defeat, to exile, to execution is an added bonus as far as the memory is concerned. Significantly, neither the raid on the B. Qaynuqâ' nor that on the B. Naḍîr is specifically dated by Ibn Ishâq.

Al-Wâqidî tells a different story. According to him, the Prophet had a written agreement with the Jews, both the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr, which they destroyed. It was only then that the Prophet besieged them. It is important to realize that al-Wâqidî is not disagreeing with Ibn Ishâq's depiction of Muḥammad as the last of the monotheistic prophets. This is an aspect of Islamic belief. But he is introducing a new variant into the events that led to the removal of the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr. And he is able to bring this new element into these episodes only because he is using different traditions, different Qur'ânic citations, and a different sequence of events to those narrated by his predecessor.

That al-Wâqidî should prefer the chronological pattern used by Ibn Ishâq as against that which was used by 'Abd al-Razzâq on the authority of Ma'mar b. Râshid on the authority of Zuhrî (according to which authorities the raid on the B.

Naḍîr took place six months after Badr)¹⁶⁰ is confusing, especially when given the fact that he had included Ma‘mar b. Râshid’s name in his *isnâd*. It explains the irritation expressed concerning his method by such as Bukhârî and Ibn Ḥanbal, his late contemporaries.¹⁶¹ But he too had a purpose in maintaining that sequence. According to al-Wâqidî, the Jews had come to an agreement with the Prophet soon after the murder of Ibn al-Ashraf, so that a period of peace must have existed between the murder and the exile of the B. Naḍîr; such a peace could only be accounted for if the time frame adopted by Ibn Ishâq is accepted.

Al-Wâqidî’s ability to considerably modify the biography of the Prophet in this manner is largely due to the attitude to tradition compilations that he brings to this material, which views these traditions as essentially a-chronological, and therefore mobile. This permits him, al-Wâqidî, to determine the chronology of an event himself, and enables him to recontextualize the event in accordance with the theme he desires to portray: namely that the Jews were attacked by the Prophet only because they had abrogated the agreement. The patterned re-emergence of tradition material is seen in various forms in the *Kitâb al-Maghâzî*.¹⁶² In this particular study, the tradition regarding Ibn Ubayy shows him hypocritically persuading the Jews, first the B. Qaynuqâ’ and then the B. Naḍîr, to remain in Medina, promising them aid if they should need to fight Muḥammad, but never there when he is needed. The Prophet Muḥammad, on the contrary, is the ideal leader, who not only consults his companions—as he does with regard to the distribution of land among the Muhâjirûn—but who furthermore stands by the

¹⁶⁰Rubin, “The Assassination of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf,” 69.

¹⁶¹See my section on the life of al-Wâqidî.

¹⁶²An interesting example is the repetition of the incident at Fâri‘, which he places both during his narration of the battle of Uḥud and Khandaq, but which in Ibn Ishâq appears only during the battle of Khandaq. See al-Wâqidî, *Kitâb al-maghâzî*, 288 and 462; Ibn Ishâq, *Kitâb sirat rasûl Allâh*, 680.

decisions arrived at, and is always there fighting amidst his companions and encouraging them into battle. There is a similar repetitiveness in the notion of the contract made between Muḥammad and the Jews, as in the assertion that the Jews were the first to abrogate that agreement. And the notion of exile has similarly been repeated: it is placed by Ibn Ishâq with reference to the B. Naḍîr, but we see it recalled by al-Wâqidî with reference to both the B. Qaynuqâ' and the B. Naḍîr.

Thus we see that al-Wâqidî, while maintaining a certain continuity in his rendition of the Prophet's life along the lines of those established by Ibn Ishâq, is not in complete agreement with his interpretation of these events. To establish his differences, al-Wâqidî resorts to all kinds of methods: bringing into play traditions not used by Ibn Ishâq, providing more detail, insinuating changes, introducing a different chronology. Most interesting of all is his ability to recontextualize, which permits him to install a tradition in various ways and different places, sometimes once, at other times on several occasions, to explore the genre in a manner different to that of Ibn Ishâq. This—the fact that the genre of *sîra -maghâzî* lends itself to such variability—is an important aspect which can hardly be overlooked. The result is an original statement that has little bearing on the *Sîra* as narrated by Ibn Ishâq. It means that the seemingly more precise data established by the *Kitâb al-maghâzî* of al-Wâqidî is largely a matter of style, and may not be used to substantiate the narrative of Ibn Ishâq.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Present appreciation of *sîra-maghâzî* is based largely on Marsden Jones' analysis. His investigation is primarily a response to the statement by Wellhausen, who, noticing two motifs of the Prophet's biography in particular, that of the raid on Nakhla and the dream of 'Âtika, asserted that al-Wâqidî had taken much from Ibn Ishâq but not admitted his borrowing, and that in fact he had plagiarized the work of the latter. Jones investigating the motifs for himself, admits that they are very similar statements, but claims that there is no plagiarism involved for the language used indicates a modification representing the style of the typical story teller through whom al-Wâqidî had probably arrived at his information. Jones further explains the "close parallels" that exist between the different narratives by claiming that the compilers of *sîra-maghâzî* were, in fact, drawing upon a common reservoir or corpus of *qâṣṣ* and tradition material. It is this notion of a "single corpus" that has led Crone to declare:

Wâqidî did not plagiarize Ibn Ishâq, but he did not offer an independent version of the Prophet's life, either; what he Ibn Ishâq and others put together were simply so many selections from a common pool of *qâṣṣ* material. And it is for the same reason that they came to agree on the historicity of events that never took place¹

¹Crone, Meccan Trade, 225.

In denying the above, this dissertation asserts that al-Wâqidî was the compiler of an original statement of *sîra-maghâzî* different from that of Ibn Ishâq, and, as well, that the intentions of the compilers, when they put together their biographical works, was not history, but literature. To establish this thesis I have approached this material from three directions. Firstly, I have appreciated the genre for what it is from within the Islamic tradition, accepting it as a mode written in light hearted vein, i.e., as an essentially literary genre, but I have also taken into account the investigations of modern historians who have sought to understand the nature of this genre and the traditions of which it is comprised. Secondly, I have taken into consideration the lapse of time that had taken place between the writing of Ibn Ishâq and the writing of al-Wâqidî, and have seen each compiler as a man of his times, writing in a fashion which was appreciated by his times. Thirdly, I have made a case study of the material regarding Muḥammad and the Jews, using methods of textual comparison to appreciate the differences that exist in terms of structure, theme, sources, chronology, and style, between the two compilations.

The methodology I have used is simple. My argument is that, contrary to the assertion made by Jones, the enormous variety of information that the numerous traditions communicate makes it meaningless to view traditions as belonging within a “single corpus.” It thus becomes clear that the choice of materials that are ultimately brought together to establish a given compilation is determined by the purpose of the author-compiler concerned. This dissertation, therefore, views as imperative the need to study each particular work as an integral statement shaped by the prejudices of its author, and attempts to understand how the author has exploited the genre to say whatever he wants to say.

The argument of my thesis develops as I move from chapter to chapter. In the first, I attempt to understand the nature of *sîra-maghâzî*, and to establish, at the same time, the intellectual context within which this dissertation belongs. I have been open-ended in my investigations, taking into consideration the views of early *muḥaddithûn* who condemn the authority of these compilers and challenge the verity of their traditions; but also heeding the evaluation of this material by modern critics such as Caetani and Hawting, who question the chronology asserted by the various compilers. As well, I have appreciated the studies of writers such as historians as Rosenthal, Crone, and Leder, who explain the fragmented nature of the tradition material. Neither have I ignored the studies of Levi della Vida and Sellheim who indicate the mythical and Biblical patterns that have touched this literature. Perhaps most importantly, I have tried to appreciate the genre in positive terms, recognizing its early oral origins, its essentially spontaneous nature, and its ready accommodation of changing situations. Turning to Mattock, I have understood that the spontaneity which the compiler brings to the genre is grounded in a thorough knowledge of the materials of which it is constituted.

Nevertheless, what is significant about each compilation as I have come to realize, is that it is directed by the compiler concerned, and therefore different from the text of any other. It is the compiler who selects the information of which his text is to be composed—these pieces of information are available in a decontextualized state—and it is the compiler who decides the sequence in which to place them. Which is not to say that there is no framework to this material: there is, and it is based on an appreciation of the Prophet's life, his birth, emigration, and death. But this framework, as is explained by Sellheim, has been built through time and a process of mythologizing rather than with reference to factual moments

in history. For the rest, much has depended on the theme that the compiler desired to shape.

Chapters two and three investigate how Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, respectively, exploit *sîra-maghâzî*, and the issue of Muḥammad and the Jews in particular, to project their individual interpretations of the Prophet's life. Here my aim is to appreciate how *sîra-maghâzî* are handed down and narrated diachronically in time, generation after generation. Insisting as I do on the centrality of the author of the narration concerned, both chapters begin by informing the reader, of the life of the author, and the author's times. They include an investigation of the purposes and prejudices of each author, as he set out to compile his work. This is followed by a textual analysis of Muḥammad's relations with the Jews, as established in the particular texts concerned.

My chapter on Ibn Ishâq is largely concerned with informing the reader of how the author has used his materials to assert his unique perspective. The very structure of his text is significantly shaped to present the life of Muḥammad, his birth, prophethood, emigration, and death, which provide the essential base on which his narrative is established. It is important to notice the Biblical and legendary material that pervades this literature, though it is not certain that it was Ibn Ishâq himself who introduced these patterns. If it is, it is probably due to Ibn Ishâq's concern to legitimize Muslim, Arab, authority over Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. Muḥammad's role as the seal of the Prophets as stated within the scope of a Universal and Monotheistic history, characterizes his statement.

As interesting is Ibn Ishâq's depiction of what is recognized as the 'Constitution of Medina', indicating the agreement that was desired by Muḥammad between the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr with the Jews. This is probably

Ibn Ishâq's interpretation of an agreement that is traditionally conveyed as part of the genre, *sîra-maghâzî*. By denying a place in this agreement to the significant Jewish communities, the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza, Ibn Ishâq effectively establishes Muḥammad as a 'Messenger of God' who conforms to the pattern of Biblical prophets, and brings down God's wrath on those who deny Him.

My chapter on al-Wâqidî is more complex. I appreciate that he has been enormously influenced by his predecessor Ibn Ishâq and yet succeeds in bringing to the material a uniqueness which derives from his different interpretation of early Islam. Thus al-Wâqidî does not present Islam within the perspective of universal history as does Ibn Ishâq, for instance, but prefers to deal merely with the achievements of Muḥammad. At the same time, by ignoring the 'Constitution of Medina' as depicted by Ibn Ishâq, he is not only able to claim that Muḥammad participated in the making of written agreements with the important Jewish communities of the B. Qaynuqâ', the B. Naḍîr, and the B. Qurayza, but to insist that it was because the Jews abrogated their agreements, that Muḥammad attacked them.

It is interesting that al-Wâqidî's sources finally reach back to Medinans who are cited by Ibn Ishâq or were his colleagues; but the final authorities through whom the information reached al-Wâqidî were not of equal repute. A second look makes one realize that the traditions of al-Wâqidî are indeed quite different from those of Ibn Ishâq: they speak of a different context, for the particulars which they detail are not the same. Thus, for instance, in the scenario concerning the B. Qaynuqâ', it is only al-Wâqidî who informs the reader of the hypocrisy of Ibn Ubayy, and of the exile of the Jews to Adhri'ât; in the incident concerning Ka'b, it is only al-Wâqidî who informs the reader of the contract signed at the house of

Ramla bint al-Ḥārith; and regarding the exile of the B. Naḍīr, it is only al-Wāqidī who tells us of the activities of Abū Rāfi'. The sequence in which the two compilers relate the events is also different. According to al-Wāqidī, the murder of Abū Rāfi' takes place soon after the exile of the B. Naḍīr, in the year four; it is justified on the basis of his involvement in the hostilities against the Prophet during the raid on the B. Naḍīr. While the battle of Khandaq follows right on the heels of the raid of Muraysī', which tells of the scandal about 'Ā'isha. And the raid on the B. Qurayza is followed by small escapades against Fadak and Khaybar, before the signing of the truce at Ḥudaybiya. For Ibn Ishāq the sequence in which these events lead from one to the other is quite different. But it is only if one observes the larger tale, that these differences take on meaning.

With regard to style, the differences between the statements of the two authors are glaring. While there is little repetition in the work of Ibn Ishāq, and indeed, in the case of his depiction of Muḥammad's aggression against the Jews of Medina, a tendency to move towards an escalating climax, al-Wāqidī's style, on the contrary, is one of repetition, which, on the one hand, evokes a sameness, but as well, a sense of ritualistic drama. In this regard attention must be paid to the development of methods of and attitudes to writing that were fast changing in the Arab world of the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. Motivated by all kinds of stylistic approaches to the compilation of historical traditions, they saw the compiler insinuate different nuances into the composition that he was putting together. Al-Wāqidī was recognized for his compilations of historical traditions, and it is certain that he introduces these styles to the writing of *sīra-maghāzī* as well. It is through a combination of repetition and shifts in chronology that al-Wāqidī cleverly establishes a new context for not merely the traditions, but also

the personalities and events which come together, to inform of the life of the early Islamic community, in a compilation which is truly distinct from that of Ibn Ishâq.

Importantly, this chapter also explains why interpretations of modern historians, who have not understood the unique nature of each author's statement, have generally come up with confused interpretations of what they declare to be the facts of Muḥammad's life.

Chapter Four, which is entitled "A Closer Look," attempts to communicate a 'close up' of two *ghazawât*, that of the attack on the B. Qaynuqâ' and the raid of the B. Naḍîr. I provide the reader with translations of both authors' interpretations. I explain the different approaches of each author point by point, my intention being to make clear that al-Wâqidî very consciously disturbs the layout of the events as communicated by his fellow collator, for his own purposes. My purpose is to indicate to the reader that the tendentious nature of these accounts forbids the use of the information provided by any one of these authors to understand better the information provided by the other.

Various conclusions may be drawn from the above appreciation. Given that the body of tradition used by both Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî is so diverse, affected by biblical, mythical and mnemonic factors, it becomes clear that the history which at one point lay behind these traditions has become irrevocably lost. On the one hand, Ibn Ishâq himself is not quite certain when the different events took place; and as for al-Wâqidî, it becomes apparent that his chronology is largely a means to assert an interpretation quite his own. Indeed, as both Hawting and Leder inform us, the traditions of which this literature consists are by nature a-chronological. What does all this tell us about the genre of *sîra-maghâzî*?

Significantly, the *ḥadīth* that the Muslim relies on for his appreciation of Islam does not fall into the category of *sīra-maghāzī*, and indeed we have seen that *sīra-maghāzī* was not considered a historical genre by early Muslim scholars. The best description I can provide of the genre is to assert its interpretational orientation and to insist that while it is not fiction, it is, nevertheless, a kind of hagiographical literature which combines notions of both the Arab hero and the Qur'āno -Biblical Prophet in its depiction of Muḥammad. Goldziher tells us that the *maghāzī* were frowned upon by the early caliphs; Kister, that those who were accepted as compilers of *maghāzī* were not recognized as trustworthy *muḥaddithūn*. Indeed, we have found that throughout history, there have been groups who have challenged the credibility of both Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī: for instance, Mālik b. Anas, Bukhārī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. The credibility of the author, as we all know, is an important criterion for determining the credibility of the traditions he establishes.

More importantly, because Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī are not only, not using the same information, but are not even trying to say the same thing (I have shown in my chapter on al-Wāqidī that the latter deliberately sets out to recontextualize the events which constitute the life of the Prophet as envisaged by Ibn Ishāq) it is incorrect to use the material provided by al-Wāqidī to appreciate better the narrative of Ibn Ishāq, whether it be regarding the chronology of the agreement with the Jews, or the details of a raid such as the raid on the B. Qaynuqā'. Just as with Ibn Ishāq, the chronology of the events as delineated by al-Wāqidī is artificial and imposed and based on the purposes of the compiler and the interpretation he desires to give to this material (as, for instance, with his dating of the raid of the B. Qaynuqā' in Shawwāl, and of al-Sawīq in Dhū'l Ḥijja, or of the murder of Abū Rāfi' in the year four), rather than a search for factual data.

From Duri's characterization of the approaches of Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî, it appears that they both belonged to the historical school of Medina, which he views as being essentially *ḥadīth* oriented.² Recent studies, however, question the existence of such a stark division between the two regional schools.³ It is interesting that while Leder indicates that *khavar* is essentially a-chronological, Hawting similarly characterizes the traditions of *sīra-maghâzī* as comparable to the *ḥadīth* that is found in the collections of Bukhârî, but now qualified by chronology and/or context. This supports the view that it is the collator and compiler who, by situating the traditions (whether they are *ḥadīth* or *akhbâr*), in place, gives them a context, and interprets the events. It is evidently by situating anew the traditions which tell of the life of the Prophet that a compiler brings new meaning to this material and shapes an original text.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the genre *sīra-maghâzī* is not a confused collection of tradition materials, as Crone would have us believe. Ibn Ishâq and al-Wâqidî are not saying the same thing, but we as readers will only appreciate this material if we try to understand each author's work as an integral statement which is distinct from any other. To isolate various traditions and try to understand them out of context as they are transmitted through time is a meaningless exercise, and will not produce an appreciation of the processes at work. This unsympathetic approach has, disappointingly enough, been the nature of most modern research on the biographical literature on the Prophet. An approach which places the author-compiler at the center of his work is what is really required, for it is the latter's interpretation of the Prophet's life, rather than some absolute data, that we in fact hold.

²Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, 36-38.

³See Fred M. Donner's introduction to Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing*, xvi.

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