ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD—*Continued*

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Moslem traditions are valuable not only in themselves, but also because they are the roots from which grew the more important legal, historical, and biographical studies and literature. However formless and temporary the written collections of traditions remained in the Umaiyad period, there was a real beginning in the writing of books on these allied subjects. The celebrated handbook for lawyers, the *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, of Mālik ibn Anas, a jurist of Medina (d. 179/759–6), was preceded by similar works, none of which has survived, for instance, by Mohammed ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿĀmirī (d. 120/737), Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūba (d. 156/773), and ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Juraij (d. 150/767). The first of them, al-ʿĀmirī, was, like Mālik ibn Anas, a pupil of al-Zuhrī, and his work, which bore the same title, *Al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, was considered by some Arabic critics as superior to the later one which has survived.[27] Although this type of book incidentally preserves traditions, that is not its primary purpose, which is rather to establish a system of law based on the customary procedure of Medina. Although Mālik's book was written in the early days of the Abbasids, it is the fruit of earlier legal studies and practice, and furnishes some evidence of the activities during the Umaiyad period. We see in the writings of Mālik and his predecessors the rise of Moslem canon law, which is a long step from the mere recounting and collecting of tradition.[28]

Another legal compendium which purports to come from this period is that attributed to Zaid ibn ʿAlī (d. about 122/740), an ʿAlid who led an unsuccessful revolt against the caliphs of Damascus. Although there is evidence that Zaid possessed some learning, it is exceedingly doubtful if this work and others also bearing his name are actually

[27] Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 65 f.; Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 220; Guillaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 f.

[28] *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mālik ibn Anas"; Guillaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.; D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory* (New York, 1903), pp. 99–103.

from his hand, at least in their present form. It is more likely that they were fathered on him by the sect which bears his name—the *Zaidīya*—and which regards him as one of the martyrs of the Prophet's family.[29]

Moslem traditions consist of unconnected anecdotes purporting to record the words and deeds of the Prophet and events of the early days of Islam. Moslem history arose with the first attempts to put these sources into a more connected narrative form. This takes the shape of biographies of the Prophet and accounts of his military exploits. Hence we have two types of literature dealing with Mohammed's life and work—the biography (*sīra*), and the records of conquest (*maghāzī*). The oldest biography which survives is that of Ibn Isḥāḳ (d. 150/768), in the recension of Ibn Hishām (d. 833 A.D.), and the earliest example of *maghāzī* literature is the *Book of the Wars*, by al-Wāḳidī (d. 822 A.D.). Both were written under the first Abbasids. Behind them lay earlier and perhaps cruder works of similar types.

ᶜUrwa ibn al-Zubair (d. about 94/712–13) was the first so to utilize traditions. He was unusually well situated to gather traditions, for both of his parents were early converts. His paternal grandfather was a brother of Khadīja, Mohammed's first wife and his maternal aunt, ᶜĀᵓisha, was the Prophet's favorite wife. ᶜUrwa made good use of his opportunities, and recited numerous traditions on their authority, although it is probable that the inclusion of his name in the genealogies of many traditions purporting to come from ᶜĀᵓisha is spurious. He took little part in the political and military escapades of his brother, ᶜAbd Allāh, but lived in studious retirement at Medina, broken only by visits to Egypt and the Umaiyad court at Damascus. ᶜUrwa is considered one of the seven outstanding divines of Medina and is frequently quoted as a most reliable authority. Ḥājji Khalīfa credits him with having written a biography of the Prophet.[30] Of such a work nothing else is known, and it is more likely that the quotations from him in the writings of Ibn Isḥāḳ, al-Wāḳidī, Ibn Saᶜd, al-Balādhurī, al-

[29] Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 f.; *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Zaid Ibn ᶜAlī."

[30] *Kashf al-Zunūm* (Leipzig and London, 1835–58), V, 646, § 12464; others say a *maghāzī* work. Horovitz credits Abān, son of ᶜUthmān, the third caliph, with having been the first to put into writing a special collection dealing with *maghāzī*; of his writing nothing has survived. See "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors," *Islamic Culture*, October, 1927, p. 539.

Ṭabarī, al-Bukharī, and others are either from oral traditions or the brief tractates which are the characteristic form of his writing. Unfortunately at one time in his life ᶜUrwa was influenced by the current prejudice against books other than the Koran and destroyed his writings. His son, Hishām, stated that in 63 A.H. he burned his books of law (*kutub fiḳh*) and subsequently regretted their loss,[31] for he said his books would have been useful to his children. Whether he rewrote them is uncertain, but he took pains to teach traditions to his children and pupils.[32]

There is evidence that with ᶜUrwa we have a genuine beginning of Arabic prose literature. Al-Ṭabarī, in his great history, preserves several fragments of ᶜUrwa's writings in the form of little treatises written to elucidate various points on early Moslem history in response to inquiries made by the caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik,[33] and in one case also by al-Walīd.[34] All of them are preserved on the authority of ᶜUrwa's son, Hishām. One of these is prefaced by the remark, "Thou hast written to me concerning Abū Sufyān and his sortie, and askest me how he then conducted himself."[35] Horovitz has shown that the fragments addressed to ᶜAbd al-Malik connect and are pieces of the same dissertation.[36] Another answer preserved by al-Zuhrī, his pupil, was addressed to Ibn Abī Hunaida, who lived at the court of al-Walīd.[37] It is apparent that these brief expositions, of which there were doubtless others, preceded the writing of longer and more formal books. As has been observed before, the word "books" must be interpreted with caution, and it may be that the only writings of ᶜUrwa were of this sort—short tracts of a page or two each, with little or no effort to connect them. As Caetani has pointed out, although they are mere fragments, the style of which is awkward, they are of great significance

[31] Ibn Saᶜd, V, 113; al-Dhahabī, *Tahdbih*, ed. by Fischer as *Biographien von Gewährsmännern, etc.* (Leyden, 1890), p. 41.

[32] Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wāḳidī," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1856, p. 208, as from al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī.

[33] Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1180, 1224, 1234, 1284, 1634; probably also 1654, 1636, 1670, 1770.

[34] *Ibid.*, III, 2458.

[35] *Ibid.*, I, 1284, trans. Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 549; for a translation of several of the longer sections see Sprenger, *Das Leben, etc.*, I, 356; II, 42; III, 142 ff. For a discussion of ᶜUrwa's significance see *ibid.*, pp. lxii f., and Horovitz's excellent and detailed sketch, *op. cit.*, pp. 542–52; Wüstenfeld, *Die Familie el-Zubeir* (Göttingen, 1878), pp. 51–56.

[36] Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 548 f.

[37] Ibn Hishām, p. 754; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXVIII, 42; see Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 549 f.

in the development of historical writing.[38] A characteristic of ᶜUrwa's style is the inclusion of bits of poetry of which he is said to have known a great deal.[39] Ibn Isḥāḳ, later, was also fond of quoting verses.

The remark of V. Vacca in his article on ᶜUrwa in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, "He had collected an *important library* bearing upon many subjects both historical and juridical," is somewhat misleading unless one is reminded that this collection probably consisted of notes taken down by himself and perhaps by others. The same may be said of Sachau's reference to the books ᶜUrwa possessed.[40] It seems very likely that ᶜUrwa at times used documents; for instance, he quotes from Mohammed's letter written to the people of Hajar.[41] Sprenger's remarks on the library of the historian al-Wāḳidī (d. 207/823) apply as well to the libraries of ᶜUrwa and other early historians:

> Al-Wāḳidī's patron spent some 2,000 dinars on books for him, and in addition the historian kept two slaves busy copying others for him, and thereby amassed 600 chests of books, each of which was so heavy that it required two men to carry it. It is evident from his "Book of the Wars" that al-Wāḳidī had gathered thousands of traditions, often the same one in several versions. These he sifted and arranged to make a fairly continuous narrative. There is no reason to doubt that he had some real books, but most of his material consisted of lecture notes [*Kollegien Hefte*] taken down by numerous students.[42]

We are also told that ᶜUrwa's pupil, al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), owned many books (*kutub*) which filled his house; the study of them so occupied all his time that his wife complained, "By Allāh! These books [*kutub*] annoy me more than three other wives would [if you had them]."[43] At one time he shared the general disapproval of writing but later saw that its use was not incompatible with piety—in fact, his friends jested about his habit of writing down everything he heard. At first his notes were merely for his own convenience, for

[38] *Annali dell'Islām* (Milan, 1905), I, Introd. §§ 11, 269, and 340; Caetani, *Chronographia Islamica*, Fasc. V, pp. 1154 f., lists all the references to ᶜUrwa.

[39] Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 551 f.

[40] E. Sachau, *Ibn Saᶜd's Biography of Mohammed* (Leyden, 1904), III, Part I, Introd., p. xix.

[41] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb al-Futuḥ al-Buldān*, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1866), p. 79; Ibn Hishām, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858–60), p. 961. Other scholars also had access to copies or originals of the Prophet's official communications; see al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, I, 1717, and Ibn Hishām, p. 961.

[42] *Das Leben, etc.*, III, lxxxi.

[43] Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 582 =Arabic text (Cairo ed.), I, 451 f.

after having memorized their contents he tore them up.[44] Later he permitted his writings and the material he dictated to be used by others. He is accused of having permitted a volume of traditions transmitted by him to be circulated without having read it through, although the volume had been submitted to him.[45]

Several of the Umaiyad caliphs thought highly of him, and he is supposed to have admitted that he forged traditions in their favor. The evidence for this charge is of dubious veracity. One would rather agree with Horovitz that whereas at the behest of the caliphs he departed from his former reticence and dictated traditions, this innovation does not prove that he invented *ḥadīth* in their interests. There is even a report, of which there are several versions, that he once engaged in a heated verbal battle with either Hishām or al-Walīd, who tried to force him to change a statement so that it would reflect adversely on ᶜAlī. If true, the story does credit to al-Zuhrī's veracity and personal courage.[46] Whatever the facts may be, nothing has detracted from his reputation as a dependable jurist, traditionalist, and historian. The caliph ᶜUmar II is reported to have sent letters to the various provinces recommending that al-Zuhrī be consulted in all legal difficulties, "for no man is better acquainted than he is with the *sunna* [usages] of times past."[47]

His pupil, Maᶜmar, is authority for the statement that in the library of the caliphs were piles of books (*dafātir*) containing the writings or notes of al-Zuhrī, for he is quoted as saying, "We were of the opinion that we had heard much from al-Zuhrī till al-Walīd was killed; for then volumes from his treasure chambers [khazāʾin] were loaded upon beasts of burden. He [Maᶜmar] means: filled with the learning of al-Zuhrī."[48] Al-Zuhrī was the author of *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*,[49] ("Book of the Wars"), which is frequently quoted. According to his own

[44] Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 67. See anecdotes on him in Horovitz, *op. cit.*, continued in *ibid.*, January, 1928, pp. 46 ff., indicating his changing attitude.

[45] Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 72; al-Bukharī and others give variants of the story; see Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 41, and, for an estimate of his character and literary activities, pp. 46–50.

[47] Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 582; Huart, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[48] Ibn Saᶜd, II*b*, 136; see also al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 71 and note. Maᶜmar ibn Rāshid here quoted was also the author of a *Book of Wars* (Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 168); he died 154 A.H. (Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 f.; Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wāḳidī," *op. cit.*, p. 211).

[49] Ḥājjī Khalīfa, §§ 10513 and 12464.

statement as recorded by al-Ṭabarī,[50] he wrote also a list of the caliphs with their ages, which Margoliouth calls one of the very earliest attempts at written history.[51] Al-Zuhrī is also quoted as saying that he started to write a work on the North Arabian clans which he never completed.[52] The same man who had commissioned him to write it also asked him to compose a biography (*sīra*) of the Prophet.[53] Al-Zuhrī's books, perhaps because of royal patronage, seemed to have been more adequately published and preserved than those of some of his contemporaries, for a scholar of the time of Al-Manṣūr (ruled 754–75 A.D.) said, quoting some traditions: "Al-Zuhrī informed me." Asked where he had met al-Zuhrī, he answered: "I have not met al-Zuhrī, but I found a book of his at Jerusalem."[54] His influence on Moslem studies was considerable: among his pupils were al-ᶜĀmirī and Mālik ibn Anas, two outstanding canon lawyers. Sprenger was of the opinion that al-Zuhrī and one of his teachers, Shuraḥbīl ibn Saᶜd, were influential in giving the biography of the Prophet a stereotyped pattern from which subsequent writers never departed.[55]

Another historian, most of whose life was spent under the Umaiyads, was Abū Mikhnaf (d. 154/744). He was the author of more than thirty historical monographs, considerable parts of which are preserved by al-Ṭabarī. Although most of the independent writings which have come down under his name are probably forgeries, it may be that the one on the death of Ḥusain, the son of ᶜAlī, manuscripts of which exist in several libraries, is genuine.[56] One sees in the treatises of Abū Mikhnaf a continuation of the episodal type of historical writing begun by ᶜUrwa. When Hishām asked al-ᵓAᶜmash to write on the virtues of ᶜUthmān and the sins of ᶜAlī, he probably expected this sort of little treatise. In a collection of traditions on ᶜUmar II there

[50] Al-Ṭabarī, II, 428; *The Years of the Caliphs* is twice quoted by Ṭabarī, *ibid.* and p. 1269.

[51] D. S. Margoliouth, *Early Development of Mohammedanism* (New York, 1914), p. 4.

[52] *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Bulaḳ, 1284–85 A.H.), XIX, 59, referred to by al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[53] *Al-Aghānī, loc. cit.*

[54] Sprenger, *Origin and Progress of Writing*, p. 328, as from al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 202–10; Muir, *op. cit.*, I, xxxviii.

[56] Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 65; *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abu Mikhnaf"; De Slane's n. 17, p. 448, to Ibn Khallikān IV, 446; Sprenger, *Report of Researches into Muhammadan Libraries of Lucknow* (Calcutta, 1896), p. 3; *Encyc. Brit.* (9th ed.), art. "Ṭabari," p. 2; *Fihrist*, I, 93.

are preserved two letters, one from that caliph asking Sālim ibn ᶜAbd Allāh ibn ᶜUmar to write a biography (*sīra*) of his grandfather ᶜUmar I and the author's reply, promising to accede to the request.[57] From these indications, as well as from the writings of al-Zuhrī, it is apparent that the scope of historical writings was beginning to broaden to include subject matter other than that dealing directly with the career of the Prophet.

Several other early historians are quoted frequently by later authors. Sprenger considered Abū Isḥāḳ (d. 127 or 128 A.H., at an advanced age) and Abū Mijlaz (d. shortly after 100 A.H.) of great importance, for they represent a different line of tradition than that followed by Ibn Isḥāḳ and Ibn Hishām. They are quoted by al-Bukharī and Ibn Saᶜd; nearly the whole of Ibn Hibbān's biography of Mohammed was taken from Abū Isḥāḳ.[58] Abū Maᶜshar (d. 170/786–7), author of a work on *maghāzī*, spent part of his life under the Abbasids, but lived at Medina until 160, hence his work probably represents the studies of that school. He is quoted by al-Wāḳidī, Ibn Saᶜd, and al-Ṭabarī, who depended on him for chronological data.[59]

Al-Suyūṭī preferred the *maghāzī* by Mūsā ibn ᶜUḳba (d. 141/758) to any other, which indicates that this early history was still extant in Egypt in the fifteenth century.[60] Nineteen excerpts from it exist in a college notebook of a student who lived at Damascus in the fourteenth century, which is preserved at Berlin.[61] Mūsā was a student of al-Zuhrī, on whose opinions he depended greatly, and, as seen above, he utilized the writings of Ibn ᶜAbbās, the Prophet's cousin.[62]

Along with strictly religious history, based on the traditions collected by recognized authorities, the Umaiyad period witnessed an interest in other sorts of historical literature, much of which was hardly more than folklore.

The report that Ziyād, the foster-brother of Muᶜāwīya, composed a

[57] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz* . . . . (Cairo, 1346/1927), p. 125.

[58] Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wāḳidī," *op. cit.*, pp. 219 f.

[59] *Encyc. Islam*, Horovitz art. "Abū Maᶜshar."

[60] Sprenger, "Von Kremer, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 219; Mālik ibn Anas also had a very high estimate of Mūsā's work (see Horovitz, *Islamic Culture*, April, 1928, p. 165).

[61] E. Sachau, "Das Berliner Fragment des Mūsā ibn ᶜUḳba," in *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1904, p. 445.

[62] See *AJSL*, LII (1935–36), 249.

book on the pretensions of Arab families, which he intended as a weapon for his descendants in case their origin was ever attacked, is somewhat dubious, although the book is mentioned in the *Fihrist*[63] as the first book of calumny.[64] If genuine, it is indicative of the general interest in genealogical studies, which had practical utility as well as serving to satisfy the inordinate family and tribal pride of the Arabs. It is noteworthy that the literary historian al-Ṣūlī (d. 946 A.D.) says that Ziyād was the first person to copy books, apparently meaning professionally. Genealogical lists served as an army roll, for state pensions and the shares in plunder were apportioned according to the participation of families in the conquests of Islam. Criticism of traditions, consisting largely of the study of the lives, characters, and connections of those who transmitted them, gave further impetus to genealogical studies. Reporters were arranged in classes (*tabaḳāt*). Then as now the preparation of genealogies furnished opportunities for forgeries. A poor but celebrated authority on the companions and life of Mohammed, Shuraḥbīl ibn Saᶜd (d. 123 A.H.), turned his reputation to account. Sprenger said of him, "If a man made him a handsome present, he assured him his father or grandfather or some member of his family was close to the Prophet, and woe to the ancestors of those who did not pay."[65] It is unfortunate that extreme poverty and possibly failing mental powers in old age drove him to such dubious practices, which have tarnished his reputation, for the work of his younger days, especially on *maghāzī*, was regarded as dependable. Mūsā ibn ᶜUḳba refers to the lists Shuraḥbīl wrote of the names of the emigrants to Medina and of those who had participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud.[66]

The need of preserving genealogies led to the establishment of a rolls office. At first, public records for Syria were kept in Greek by Christian scribes, and in Persian for the eastern provinces. Al-Balādhurī says ᶜAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān first ordered the state registers

[63] *Fihrist*, p. 89, ll. 10 ff.

[64] Huart, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Brocklemann, *op. cit.*, I, 64; I am indebted to Miss Nabia Abbott, of the Oriental Institute, for drawing my attention to al-Ṣūlī's remark on Ziyād as a copyist; see al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-Kuttāb* (Cairo, 1341), p. 122.

[65] *Op. cit.*, pp. 203 f.; see also p. 201, and Horovitz, *Islamic Culture*, 1927, pp. 552 f.; Ibn Saᶜd, V, 228, 321; al-Dhahabī, ed. Fischer, in *ZDMG*, XLIV, 437; Ibn Hajar, IV, 321.

[66] Ibn Hajar, X, 361; see also IV, 321, for commendation of his knowledge of *maghāzī*; cf. Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

to be written in Arabic in the year 81/700,[67] but Barhebraeus says the change from Greek to Arabic was made under Walīd ibn ᶜAbd al-Mālik.[68] Al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq, transferred the register from Persian to Arabic about A.D. 700.[69] State archives, of course, are not strictly libraries, but their existence indicates a recognition of the value of preserving written records of public affairs.

We have noticed the rise of *maghāzī* literature, histories of the early wars of conquest, and biography (*sīra*) from the pens of serious scholars. At the same time a more popular and legendary variety also flourished, the hearers of which demanded no authorities. A great deal of it was highly fanciful and was originated and perpetuated by popular story-tellers (*ḳuṣṣāṣ*), who recited such tales for the edification and amusement of those who gathered in public houses, on street corners, and at mosques, particularly on festal occasions. Stories of the birth and infancy of Mohammed were especially popular. Much as such tales were enjoyed by the common people, they and their relators were frowned upon by religious authorities, and the *ḳuṣṣāṣ* were not infrequently forbidden to hold forth in mosques. Official disapprobation, however, had little or no effect on the propagation of this pious form of entertainment, and some of the stories were even committed to writing. It is related that the caliph ᶜAbd al-Mālik, seeing his son reading such a book, commanded it to be burned and ordered him to study the Koran instead.[70] In addition to strictly Moslem literature, the Umaiyads relished stories of Arab antiquity and the history of other peoples. Al-Masᶜūdī has a charming account of how Muᶜāwiya was in the habit of giving audience to his people, great and small, daily after the evening prayer and meal; then "he devoted a third of the night to the history of the Arabs and their famous battles, the histories of foreign peoples, their kings and their governments, the biographies of monarchs, including their wars and stratagems and methods of rule and other matters connected with

[67] *Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. P. Hitti (New York, 1916), p. 301.

[68] *The Chronography of Gregory Abūl-Faraj* (*Barhebraeus*), trans. from Syriac by Budge (Oxford, 1932), p. 106.

[69] Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, pp. 465 f.; *Fihrist*, p. 242, gives accounts of the transfer of both registers to Arabic. Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah* (Cairo, 1299) II, 9 seems to say that Arabic was first used for the Egyptian *dīwān*'s sometime between 86 and 90 A.H.

[70] Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

ancient history." After sleeping the second third of the night, the caliph had pages, in whose charge they were intrusted (evidently the royal librarians and readers), bring in books (*dafātir*, a Persian word for "notebooks" or "books"), in which were biographies of kings and accounts of their battles and tactics, which they read to him.[71] These may have been the *Book of the Kings and Past Events* referred to in the *Fihrist*.[72] There it is said that Muᶜāwiya summoned from Ṣanaᶜāᵓ, in the Yemen, ᶜUbaid ibn Sharya to recount to him narratives of past events and the kings of the Arabs and foreigners, after which he commanded them to be recorded. The *Fihrist* also mentions a book of proverbs by the same writer. One of his historical works was much read as late as the fourth (tenth) century, when it was known to al-Masᶜūdī and al-Hamdānī.[73] Krenkow, however, believes that ᶜUbaid is a fictitious person and that both the *Book of Kings* and the *Book of Proverbs* are to be identified with the *Relation of ᶜUbaid Ibn Sharya*, which was actually the work of Ibn Isḥāḳ and revised by Ibn Hishām, as was his biography of the Prophet.[74]

Another Yemenite, who supplied several of the Umaiyad caliphs with a considerable amount of historical, legendary, and biblical lore, and of whose reality there is no question, was Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110/728). He is the source from which Moslems have derived much of their knowledge of the ancient world, including that of the South Arabian civilizations. Wildly fanciful stories have been told of his erudition. For instance, he had read ten thousand chapters of the *Wisdom of Luḳmān;* seventy, seventy-two, seventy-three, or even ninety-two of the scriptures of Jews and Christians. Much of the material he recounted was highly legendary, and in later times stories of dubious origin were attributed to him, so that some have considered him merely an audacious liar.[75] The fault, however, lies rather with the nature of the material he transmitted and the use made of his

[71] Al-Masᶜūdī, *Le praires d'or*, ed. Barbier de Meynard [Paris, 1869]), V, 77 f.; see also Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 f. The distinction between the activities of the first and last thirds of the night may be that in the first the caliph listened to recitals of history, whereas later he was read to from books. We have other allusions to caliphs' librarians reading to them. This does not necessarily imply that these rulers were illiterate.

[72] P. 89.

[73] Goldziher, *op. cit.*, I, 182 f.

[74] Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore" (cont.), *Islamic Culture*, April, 1928, pp. 234–36.

[75] See De Slane's estimate of him in *Ibn Khallikān*, III, 673 nn.

name in after-years than with Wahb himself, for he appears to have been a man of piety and integrity.[76] At any rate, he is a source upon which subsequent historians drew heavily. Krenkow has recently edited his *Book of the Crowns concerning the Chronicles of the Kings of Himyār*,[77] revised by Ibn Hishām, who misused and enlarged it in the same fashion as he did the *Sīra* by Ibn Isḥāḳ. Krenkow calls this work "the oldest book in profane Arabic literature which has been preserved" and "the only epic the Arabs have produced," carrying the story of the Arabs from creation to the time of Islam.[78] Wahb was acquainted with the legend of Alexander the Great (*Dhuʾl-Ḳarnain*), although he makes him a Yemenite king, and there are other evidences for non-Semitic origins of some of his stories. It is obvious that he had read both Jewish and Christian literature, canonical and apocryphal, but much as he was indebted to his ancient sources, the distinctive quality of the book itself is due to "the exuberant imagination of the author, which has never been equaled again in Arabic literature."[79] The *Tījān*, as well as the above-mentioned *Relation of ʿUbaid ibn Sharya*, served two purposes: to celebrate the glorious past of South Arabia and to furnish information on the nations of the past who are alluded to in the Koran.[80] Several other books covering a wide range of subject matter are ascribed to Wahb. His writings were handed down by his pupils and members of his own family. A grandson, ʿAbd al-Munʿim ibn Idrīs (d. 229 A.H.), devoted himself to their preservation.[81] His *Kitāb al-Mubtada*, used by al-Thaʿlabī in the version of ʿAbd al-Munʿim, is attributed to the latter in the *Fihrist*.[82] It gave the origin of man according to biblical accounts, and stories of prophets and saints of the past, so that it forms a sort of introduc-

[76] Horovitz gives very sympathetic sketches of Wahb's character and literary activities in his article, "Wahb ibn Munabbih," in *Encyc. Islam.*, and in "The Earliest Biographies, etc.," in *Islamic Culture*, 1927, pp. 553–59.

[77] For a résumé of *Al-Tījān* see Krenkow, *op. cit.*, January, 1928, pp. 55–89, and cont. April, 1928, pp. 204–36. This work is referred to by Yāḳūt, *op. cit.*, VII, 232, as *The Book of the Crowned Kings of Himyār and Reports and Stories concerning Them and Their Sepulchres and Their Poems*; see Horovitz, "Earliest Biographies," *op. cit.*, p. 557.

[78] Krenkow, *op. cit.*, pp. 232 f.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 233. For the frequent confusion of the Alexander legend with that of other heroes see *Encyc. Islam*, arts. "Dhūʾl-Ḳarnain," "Iskandar," "Iskandar Nāma." Some version of the Alexander legend was known to Mohammed and utilized in the Koran in *Sūra* xviii on Mūsā, vss. 59 ff.; also vss. 82 ff. on Dhūʾl-Ḳarnain.

[80] Krenkow, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 and 232 ff.

[81] *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Wahb ibn Munabbih," p. 1084.

[82] P. 94.

tion to the history of revelation which culminates in the Prophet of the Arabs. This is probably the same work which Ḥājji Khalīfa called the *Kitāb al-Israīlīyāt*, for Yāḳūt says that Wahb "took much from old books which are known as Israīlīyāt."[83] Two works containing wise sayings, the *Ḥikma* and the *Manᶜiza*, are mentioned and were known in Spain in the sixth century A.H.[84] A translation of the Psalms of David, a theological work, *Kitāb al-Ḳadar*,[85] and a historical work, the *Futūḥ*,[86] are attributed to him. Becker discovered among the papyri of the Schott-Reinhardt collection a Fasciculus from a biography of Mohammed by Wahb dealing with events before the flight of Medina. As has been mentioned, this twenty-seven-page papyrus book, written on fifty-three sides, is the oldest Arabic book manuscript in existence. It is dated *dhuʾl-ḳaᶜda*, 229 A.H.[87] Horovitz observed that although the Heidelberg fragment adds little new information, it is important as establishing "the fact that early in the year 100 A.H. or earlier the biography of the Prophet was narrated exactly as in later works."[88] It appears, therefore, that the tradition that Wahb dealt with distinctly Moslem subjects, as well as ancient lore, is founded on fact.[89]

The popularity enjoyed by Wahb is but one indication that the Arabs had by this time become interested in antiquity. Al-Masᶜūdī says he saw in 303 A.H. at Iṣtakhr a valuable book on the sciences of the Persians and the history of their kings, which had belonged to the royal library. It was taken by the Arabs in conquest, and in 113 A.H. was translated for Hishām ibn ᶜAbd al-Mālik. Al-Masᶜūdī drew some of his information on Persian history from this book.[90]

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[83] Yāḳūt, *op. cit.*

[84] Ibn Saᶜd, VII*b*, 97; *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana*, ed. Codera and Ribera (1895), IX, 129 and 294.

[85] Yāḳūt, *op. cit.*

[86] Ḥājjī Khalīfa, § 8932; on the writings of Wahb see Horovitz, "Earliest Biographies," *op. cit.*, pp. 555–57.

[87] Becker, *op. cit.*, I, 8 f.

[88] Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 559. This helps to substantiate Sprenger's thesis that the pattern of the biographies was set very early, and in the light of it one must perhaps qualify the statement that the oldest biography extant is Ibn Isḥāḳ's in the recension of Ibn Hishām.

[89] According to Ibn Saᶜd, VII*b*, 97, the studies of Wahb embraced "narratives of the Prophet, of the pious and the Banū Israīl."

[90] *Kitāb al-Tanbīh*, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1894), p. 106.

[*To be continued*]