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 Umayyad period, there was a real beginning in the writing of books on these allied subjects. The celebrated handbook for lawyers, the *Muwatṭa*[^27], 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-Zuhri, and his work, which bore the same title, *Al-Muwatṭa*[^2], 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 Umayyad 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

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 Zaidi— and which regards him as one of the martyrs of the Prophet’s family.  

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 (sira), and the records of conquest (maghāzi). The oldest biography which survives is that of Ibn Iṣḥāk (d. 150/768), in the recension of Ibn Hīšām (d. 833 A.D.), and the earliest example of maghāzi literature is the Book of the Wars, by al-Wākidī (d. 822 A.D.). Both were written under the first Abbasids. Behind them lay earlier and perhaps cruder works of similar types.  

Urwa 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 Khadija, Mohammed’s first wife and his maternal aunt, Ā’isha, was the Prophet’s favorite wife. Urwa 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 Ā’isha is spurious. He took little part in the political and military escapades of his brother, Abd Allāh, but lived in studious retirement at Medina, broken only by visits to Egypt and the Umayyad court at Damascus. Urwa is considered one of the seven outstanding divines of Medina and is frequently quoted as a most reliable authority. Hājjī Khalīfa credits him with having written a biography of the Prophet. Of such a work nothing else is known, and it is more likely that the quotations from him in the writings of Ibn Iṣḥāk, al-Wākidī, Ibn Sa’d, al-Baladhuri, al-

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30 Kashf al-Zunūm (Leipzig and London, 1835–58), V. 646, § 12464; others say a maghāzi work. Horovitz credits Abān, son of ʿUthmān, the third caliph, with having been the first to put into writing a special collection dealing with maghāzi; of his writing nothing has survived. See “The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors,” Islamic Culture, October, 1927, p. 539.
Ṭabarî, al-Bukhari, 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 'Urwa was influenced by the current prejudice against books other than the Koran and destroyed his writings. His son, Hishâm, stated that in 63 A.H. he burned his books of law (kutub fikh) and subsequently regretted their loss,²¹ for he said his books would have been useful to his children. Whether he re-wrote them is uncertain, but he took pains to teach traditions to his children and pupils.²²

There is evidence that with 'Urwa we have a genuine beginning of Arabic prose literature. Al-Ṭabarî, in his great history, preserves several fragments of 'Urwa'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 'Abd al-Malik,²³ and in one case also by al-Walid.²⁴ All of them are preserved on the authority of 'Urwa's son, Hishâm. One of these is prefaced by the remark, "Thou hast written to me concerning Abû Sufyân and his sortie, and askest me how he then conducted himself."²⁵ Horovitz has shown that the fragments addressed to 'Abd al-Malik connect and are pieces of the same dissertation.²⁶ Another answer preserved by al-Zuhri, his pupil, was addressed to Ibn Abi Hunaida, who lived at the court of al-Walid.²⁷ 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 'Urwa 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.

²¹ Ibn Sa'd, V, 113; al-Dhahabî, Tahâbih, ed. by Fischer as Biographien von Gewährsmännern, etc. (Leiden, 1890), p. 41.
²³ Al-Ṭabarî, I, 1180, 1224, 1234, 1284, 1634; probably also 1654, 1636, 1670, 1770.
²⁴ Ibid., III, 2458.
²⁵ 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 'Urwa's significance see ibid., pp. lxxi ff., and Horovitz's excellent and detailed sketch, op. cit., pp. 542–52; Wüstenfeld, Die Familie el-Zubeir (Göttingen, 1878), pp. 51–56.
²⁶ Horovitz, op. cit., pp. 548 f.
²⁷ Ibn Hishâm, p. 754; al-Ṭabarî, Tafsîr, XXVIII, 42; see Horovitz, op. cit., pp. 549 f.
in the development of historical writing. A characteristic of Urwa’s style is the inclusion of bits of poetry of which he is said to have known a great deal. Ibn Ishâk, later, was also fond of quoting verses.

The remark of V. Vacca in his article on Urwa 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 Urwa possessed. It seems very likely that Urwa at times used documents; for instance, he quotes from Mohammed’s letter written to the people of Hajar. Sprenger’s remarks on the library of the historian al-Wâkidî (d. 207/823) apply as well to the libraries of Urwa and other early historians:

Al-Wâkidî’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-Wâkidî 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.

We are also told that Urwa’s pupil, al-Zuhri (d. 124/742), owned many books (kutub) which filled his house; the study of them occupied all his time that his wife complained, “By Allah! These books [kutub] annoy me more than three other wives would [if you had them].” 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’Islam (Milan, 1905), I, Introd. §§ 11, 269, and 340; Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, Fasc. V, pp. 1154 f., lists all the references to Urwa.
39 Horovitz, op. cit., pp. 551 f.
41 Al-Baladhuri, Kitâb al-Futuh al-Buldân, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1866), p. 79; Ibn Hishâm, Das Leben Muhammeds, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858–90), p. 961. Other scholars also had access to copies or originals of the Prophet’s official communications; see al-Tabari, op. cit., l, 1717, and Ibn Hishâm, p. 961.
42 Das Leben, etc., III, lxxi.
43 Ibn Khallikân (De S.), II, 582 = Arabic text (Cairo ed.), 1, 451 f.
after having memorized their contents he tore them up. 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.

Several of the Umayyad 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 *hadīth* 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 ʿAli. If true, the story does credit to al-Zuhri’s veracity and personal courage. Whatever the facts may be, nothing has detracted from his reputation as a dependable jurist, traditionalist, and historian. The caliph ʿUmar II is reported to have sent letters to the various provinces recommending that al-Zuhri be consulted in all legal difficulties, “for no man is better acquainted than he is with the *sunna* [usages] of times past.”

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

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45 Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 69.


49 Ḥājji Khalīfa, §§ 10513 and 12464.
statement as recorded by al-Ṭabarî, he wrote also a list of the caliphs with their ages, which Margoliouth calls one of the very earliest attempts at written history. Al-Zuhrî is also quoted as saying that he started to write a work on the North Arabian clans which he never completed. The same man who had commissioned him to write it also asked him to compose a biography (ṣīra) of the Prophet. Al-Zuhrî’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-Mansûr (ruled 754–75 A.D.) said, quoting some traditions: “Al-Zuhrî informed me.” Asked where he had met al-Zuhrî, he answered: “I have not met al-Zuhrî, but I found a book of his at Jerusalem.” His influence on Moslem studies was considerable: among his pupils were al-Ḥārî and Mālik ibn Anas, two outstanding canon lawyers. Sprenger was of the opinion that al-Zuhrî and one of his teachers, Shurahbîl ibn Sa‘d, were influential in giving the biography of the Prophet a stereotyped pattern from which subsequent writers never departed.

Another historian, most of whose life was spent under the Umayyads, was Abû Mikhnaf (d. 154/744). He was the author of more than thirty historical monographs, considerable parts of which are preserved by al-Ṭabarî. 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 ʿAlî, manuscripts of which exist in several libraries, is genuine. One sees in the treatises of Abû Mikhnaf a continuation of the episodal type of historical writing begun by ʿUrwa. When Hishâm asked al-Ḥârî to write on the virtues of ʿUthmân and the sins of ʿAlî, he probably expected this sort of little treatise. In a collection of traditions on ʿUmar II there

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50 Al-Ṭabarî, II, 428; The Years of the Caliphs is twice quoted by Ṭabarî, ibid. and p. 1269.
52 Kitâb al-Aghâni (Bulaq, 1284–85 a.h.), XIX, 59, referred to by al-Dhahâbî, op. cit., p. 68.
53 Al-Aghâni, loc. cit.
54 Sprenger, Origin and Progress of Writing, p. 328, as from al-Khatîb al-Baghdâdî.
55 Ibid., pp. 202–10; Muir, op. cit., I, xxxviii.
are preserved two letters, one from that caliph asking Sālim ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar to write a biography (ṣūra) of his grandfather ʿUmar I and the author's reply, promising to accede to the request.\textsuperscript{57} From these indications, as well as from the writings of al-Zuhri, 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 Ishāk (d. 127 or 128 A.H., at an advanced age) and Abū Mījlaz (d. shortly after 100 A.H.) of great importance, for they represent a different line of tradition than that followed by Ibn Ishāk and Ibn Hishām. They are quoted by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Saʿd; nearly the whole of Ibn Hibbān’s biography of Mohammed was taken from Abū Ishāk.\textsuperscript{58} Abū Maʿshar (d. 170/786–7), author of a work on maghāzi, 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-Wāqīdī, Ibn Saʿd, and al-Ṭabarī, who depended on him for chronological data.\textsuperscript{59}

Al-Suyūṭī preferred the maghāzi by Mūsā ibn ʿUkba (d. 141/758) to any other, which indicates that this early history was still extant in Egypt in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{61} Mūsā was a student of al-Zuhri, on whose opinions he depended greatly, and, as seen above, he utilized the writings of Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet’s cousin.\textsuperscript{62}

Along with strictly religious history, based on the traditions collected by recognized authorities, the Umayyad 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 Muʿāwiya, composed a

\textsuperscript{58} Sprenger, “Von Kremer’s Edition of Wāqīdī,” \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 219 f.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Encyc. Islam}, Horovitz art. “Abū Maʿshar.”
\textsuperscript{60} Sprenger, “Von Kremer, etc.,” \textit{op. cit.}, p. 219; Mālik ibn Anas also had a very high estimate of Mūsā’s work (see Horovitz, \textit{Islamic Culture}, April, 1928, p. 165).
\textsuperscript{62} See \textit{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 *Fihrîst*\(^{63}\) 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 (*tabakât*). Then as now the preparation of genealogies furnished opportunities for forgeries. A poor but celebrated authority on the companions and life of Mohammed, Shuraḥbîl ibn Sa'd (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 *maqḥâzî*, was regarded as dependable. Mūsā ibn ʿUkba refers to the lists Shuraḥbîl 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-Baladhurî says 'Abd al-Mâlik ibn Marwân first ordered the state registers

\(^{63}\) *Fihrîst*, p. 89, ll. 10 ff.

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


\(^{66}\) Ibn Hajâr, X, 361; see also IV, 321, for commendation of his knowledge of *maqḥâzî*; cf. Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 552.
to be written in Arabic in the year 81/700,\textsuperscript{67} but Barhebraeus says the change from Greek to Arabic was made under Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik.\textsuperscript{68} Al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq, transferred the register from Persian to Arabic about A.D. 700.\textsuperscript{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 maghāzi literature, histories of the early wars of conquest, and biography (ṣīra) 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 (kūsṣāṣ), 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 kūsṣāṣ 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 ʿĀbd al-Mālik, seeing his son reading such a book, commanded it to be burned and ordered him to study the Koran instead.\textsuperscript{70} In addition to strictly Moslem literature, the Umayyads relished stories of Arab antiquity and the history of other peoples. Al-Masʿūdī has a charming account of how Muʿāwiya 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


\textsuperscript{68} The Chronography of Gregory Abūl-Paraj (Barhebraeus), trans. from Syriac by Budge (Oxford, 1932), p. 106.

\textsuperscript{69} Al-Balādhuri, op. cit., pp. 485 f.; Fihrist, p. 242, gives accounts of the transfer of both registers to Arabic. Al-Suyūṭī, Ḥunūn al-Muḥāḍarah (Cairo, 1299) II, 9 seems to say that Arabic was first used for the Egyptian diwan’s sometime between 86 and 90 A.H.

\textsuperscript{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 (dafāṭir, 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 Muʿāwiya summoned from Ṣana`a, in the Yemen, ʿUbaid 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-Maṣūdī and al-Hamdānī.73 Krenkow, however, believes that ʿUbaid is a fictitious person and that both the Book of Kings and the Book of Proverbs are to be identified with the Relation of ʿUbaid Ibn Sharya, which was actually the work of Ibn Ishāk and revised by Ibn Hishām, as was his biography of the Prophet.74

Another Yemenite, who supplied several of the Umayyad caliphs with a considerable amount of historical, legendary, and biblical lore, and of whose reality there is no question, was Wahb ibn Munabbīh (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 Luṭmān; 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-Maṣūdī, 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. 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 Himyar, revised by Ibn Hishām, who misused and enlarged it in the same fashion as he did the Sīra by Ibn Ishaq. 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. Wahb was acquainted with the legend of Alexander the Great (Dhwēl-Karnain), 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.” 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. 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-Munīm ibn Idrīs (d. 229 A.H.), devoted himself to their preservation. His Kitāb al-Mubtada, used by al-Thaʿlabī in the version of ʿAbd al-Munīm, is attributed to the latter in the Fihrist. 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-


75 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 Yaḥyā, op. cit., VII, 232, as The Book of the Crowned Kings of Himyr and Reports and Stories concerning Them and Their Sepulchers and Their Poems; see Horovitz, “Earliest Biographies,” op. cit., p. 557.

76 Krenkow, op. cit., pp. 232 f.

77 Ibid., p. 233. For the frequent confusion of the Alexander legend with that of other heroes see Encyc. Islam, arts. “Dhwēl-Karnain,” “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 Dhwēl-Karnain.

80 Krenkow, op. cit., pp. 55 and 232 ff.


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-Israiliyāt, for Yāḵūt says that Wahb "took much from old books which are known as Israiliyāt." Two works containing wise sayings, the Ḥikma and the Manҁiza, are mentioned and were known in Spain in the sixth century A.H. A translation of the Psalms of David, a theological work, Kitāb al-Ḳadar, and a historical work, the Futūḫ, 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 dhẉl-kaʿda, 229 A.H. 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." It appears, therefore, that the tradition that Wahb dealt with distinctively Moslem subjects, as well as ancient lore, is founded on fact.

The popularity enjoyed by Wahb is but one indication that the Arabs had by this time become interested in antiquity. Al-Maṣūdī says he saw in 303 A.H. at Iṣṭakhr 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 ʿAbd al-Mālik. Al-Maṣūdī drew some of his information on Persian history from this book.

[To be continued]