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# *The Collection of the Qur'ān in the Early Shī'ite*

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## *Discourse: The traditions ascribed to the fifth Imām Abū*

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### *Ja'far Muḥammad al-Bāqir<sup>1</sup>*

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#### **Introduction**

In the introduction to his article, entitled “The Murder of Ibn abī l-Ḥuqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some *Maḡhāzī* Reports”, Harald Motzki summarises “special biases” by which western scholars deal with the Muslim sources concerning the life of the Prophet. For Motzki, one of the most important biases held against the Muslim sources is that “The background is theological, in that the traditions tried to create a specific theology of history, or in that the Muslims simply tended to put a halo around the founder of their religion”.<sup>2</sup>

This argument can be extended to the sources related to the life of ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib. There is ample ground for bias on the subject. Although ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib was not the founder of the religion and therefore did not occupy an equal status in the eyes of Muslims in general, he is believed by the Shī'ites to be the first divinely appointed Imām of their faith and thus has certainly been a central figure in their belief. Hence, the traditions concerning him may well have been exposed to the same bias in the sense that they “tried to create a specific theology of history” about him.

In the same pattern of thought, it could be argued that the idea of the collection of the Qur'ān by ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib soon after the demise of the Prophet was appealing to some Shī'ites who might have used it as further proof of ‘Alī's merits and proximity to the Prophet. Likewise, the tradition that all the other caliphs either commissioned or possessed their own copies of the Qur'ān, hence depriving ‘Alī of the same privilege, would have certainly diminished the Shī'ite claim for ‘Alī's divine right for political and religious leadership or Imāmat.

Considering the political and religious profits that some early caliphs accumulated through compiling a copy of the Qur'ān, some followers of ‘Alī must have been troubled by his lack of similar esteemed status. Consequently, it is conceivable that some concerned Shī'ites might

<sup>1</sup>This paper is based on my PhD thesis. I am greatly indebted to Harald Motzki and Muhammad Saeed Bahmanpour for their criticism, suggestions and numerous corrections on my thesis. I have included some of their comments in the paper. I also extend my gratitude to Robert Gleave, James Piscatori, Colin Turner, Andreas Görke and the anonymous readers for their valuable suggestions and criticism, which further improved the paper. Needless to say, the author takes full responsibility for any shortcomings that may exist in the paper.

<sup>2</sup>Harald Motzki, “Murder of Ibn Abī l-Huqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some Maghazi-Reports”, in *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources*, (ed.) Harald Motzki (Leiden, 2000), p. 171.

have responded to this by fabricating traditions. Nevertheless, without a rigorous study of the traditions it is impossible to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

In a separate article,<sup>3</sup> I will demonstrate that there is indeed a significant number of traditions recorded in early Sunnī and Shī'ite sources which give an account of 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib's collection of the Qur'ān right after the demise of the Prophet. An analysis of these traditions according to the *isnād-cum-matn* method can trace some of these traditions to year 110/728 at the latest. This does not however, disprove that there were attempts within the early Shī'ite community to attribute the collection of the Qur'ān to 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib by at least tampering with the existing traditions. The aim of this study is thus to trace such a forgery attempt in the early Shī'ite traditions by using the *isnād-cum-matn* method. Harald Motzki, who mostly developed and implemented the method along with Gregor Schoeler<sup>4</sup> and Andreas Görke, has already proven its efficacy and responded to criticism of it.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, a detailed assessment of the method would be redundant here. However, it is still worthwhile to provide a brief overview of the method and discuss some of the key issues that the present research may need to address in its attempt to analyse the relevant traditions.

### A brief overview of the *isnād-cum-matn* method

In his work entitled "Dating Muslims Traditions: A Survey",<sup>6</sup> Harald Motzki takes on various approaches to the early Islamic sources. Like all the other historical disciplines, he avers, Islamic studies have been trying to establish the reliability of their sources and in this regard source criticism has played an important role as it was a significant methodological achievement of modern times. By making use of the method in various ways, scholars of Islam have been involved in the quest of dating the early Islamic sources.<sup>7</sup> The Muslim *ḥadīth* corpus is one of the earliest and most widely available Islamic sources; therefore, these methods have mostly focused on the field of *ḥadīth* studies.

Motzki classifies these methods into four groups and examines their reliability: "1) methods which use the *matn* [the text part of the traditions], 2) dating on the basis of the collections

<sup>3</sup>Its title is "Suppression of 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālib's codex: Study of the traditions on the earliest copy of the Qur'ān" (Under review).

<sup>4</sup>Both Schoeler and Motzki developed the *isnād-cum-matn* method independently of each other. Schoeler's study *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds* (published in English in 2010 under the title *The Biography of Muḥammad: Nature and Authenticity*) was published in the same year (1996) as Motzki's study "*Quo vadis Ḥadīth-Forschung*" (published in English in 2010 in his *Analysing Muslim Traditions*).

<sup>5</sup>See Christopher Melchert, "The Early History of Islamic Law", in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, (ed.) Herbert Berg, Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, vol. 49 (Leiden, 2003), pp. 293–324; Irene Schneider, "Narrativität und Authentizität: Die Geschichte vom weisen Propheten, dem dreisten Dieb und dem koranfesten Gläubiger", *Der Islam* 77, 1 (2000), pp. 84–115. doi:10.1515/islam.2000.77.1.84.; Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Richmond, 2000); Stephen J. Shoemaker, "In Search of 'Urwa's Sīra: Some Methodological Issues in the Quest for 'Authenticity' in the Life of Muḥammad", *Der Islam* 85, 2 (January 2011), p. 292, doi:10.1515/islam.2011.006. For Motzki, Schoeler and Görke's rebuttal see Andreas Görke, Harald Motzki, and Gregor Schoeler, "First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad? A Debate", *Der Islam* 89, 1–2 (January 2012), pp. 2–59. Also see Harald Motzki, "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article", in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, edited by Herbert Berg, Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, vol. 49 (Leiden, 2003), pp. 211–57.; Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth*, Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, vol. 78 (Leiden, 2011), pp. 209–303.

<sup>6</sup>Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey", *Arabica* 52, 2 (April 1, 2005), pp. 204–253.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 204–206.

in which traditions appear, 3) dating on the basis of the *isnād* [chain of transmitters part of the traditions], and 4) methods using *matn* and *isnād*".<sup>8</sup>

Motzki then carries out a detailed survey of various representations of the first three methods and points out their flaws. His criticism of these methods targets mainly the unsubstantiated premises upon which they are built,<sup>9</sup> and reliance on *argumentum e silentio* and form criticism.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, Motzki argues that these methods led scholars to wrongly assume that Muslim scholars were involved in a large-scale and organised *ḥadīth* forgery process. He strongly rejects this allegation and asserts that such a claim has yet to be substantiated. In his response to Cook, he makes his position clear:

However, in view of the reservations against his arguments, these are not the only positions which can be chosen. Neither Schacht nor Cook have convincingly shown that 'spread of *isnāds*' was really practised on a significant scale. They have only shown that there were several possible ways how *isnāds* could be forged and that Muslim scholars could have had different motives to do so. Apart from possibilities, Schacht and Cook produced only scarce evidence that *isnād* forgery really happened.

On the basis of mere possibilities and a few instances of real forgery, it makes no sense to abstain completely from using the *isnāds* for dating purposes.<sup>11</sup>

Motzki then proposes the fourth method as the most reliable in dating early Muslim traditions. He mentions that investigation of both *isnād* and *matn* of traditions was first emphasised in Jan Hendrik Kramers's article, "Une tradition à tendance manichéenne (La 'mangeuse de verdure')",<sup>12</sup> published in 1953, and Joseph van Ess' book *Zwischen Hadīth und Theologie*, published in 1975. At the time it was not well received in the academia. However, the method has begun to re-emerge in recent times due to the understanding that examination of both aspects of traditions can provide better results, as well as dissatisfaction with the present *isnād* analysis which is thought to be "a too artificial interpretation of the *isnād* bundles".<sup>13</sup>

The *isnād-cum-matn* method, as Motzki describes it, involves five different stages:

1. All the variants of a *ḥadīth* that are available need to be gathered together. 2. *Isnād* variations in the *ḥadīth* that is being treated need to be composed in the form of a diagram so that the transmission process is documented and identifies a common link and partial common links.<sup>14</sup> 3. Then, through a *matn* analysis, it needs to be established that the identified common link was the real collector or the professional disseminator of the tradition. This stage also involves "compiling the texts belonging to the different transmission lines in order

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>12</sup> An English translation of the article was published in *Hadīth: Origins and Developments*, (ed.) Harald Motzki (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 245–257.

<sup>13</sup> Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions", p. 250.

<sup>14</sup> Juynboll describes the partial common link as "transmitters who receive something from a common link (cl) (or any other sort of transmitter from a generation after the cl) and pass it on to two or more of their pupils. . . ." (G.H.A. Juynboll, "Some Isnād-Analytical Methods Illustrated on the Basis of Several Woman-Demeaning Sayings From Ḥadīth Literature", in *Hadīth: Origins and Developments*, edited by Harald Motzki, 28, pp.175–216. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World (Aldershot, 2004), p.184.

to make possible a synoptic comparison of one to the other”.<sup>15</sup> 4. In order to establish if there is a correlation, the gathered *matn* and *isnād* variants need to be compared. 5. If the correlation is established, then the researcher is able to draw conclusions about “the original *matn* transmitted by the common link and the one responsible for whatever changes have occurred in the course of the transmission after the common link”.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from these stages of investigation, the method is also based on several principles: First, the transmission variants that are found are the result of a transmission process. Second, *isnāds* of the variants mirror (at least partially) the genuine way of transmission. For Motzki, “the second premise follows from the experience that the different chains of transmission belonging to one and the same tradition more often than not have common links above the level of the authority to whom the tradition allegedly goes back”.<sup>17</sup> Third, cases in which the textual affinity correlates with the common links in the *isnāds* are most probably instances of real transmission. If the *isnāds*, however, give the impression of a relationship between variants but the respective texts do not show it, it is to be concluded that either the *isnāds* and/or the texts of the traditions are faulty, either from carelessness of transmitters or because of intentional changes.<sup>18</sup>

In short, the method is based on a comparative study of variant *isnād* and *matn* clusters of a tradition with the aim of establishing a correlation between them. Crucially, the existence of a correlation between *matn* and *isnād* can then confirm the reliability or source value of a tradition. However, it should be noted that the method’s main aim is not to authenticate the traditions, but to trace the traditions to a certain point in time. This is based on the theory that whether authentic or not, traditions “have a history”.<sup>19</sup> Further, during the process of dating it might be possible, “in very rare cases”, to authenticate the traditions.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, Motzki adds that in this method, the number of variant narrations of a tradition is important, as the availability of a diversity of variants results in a healthier conclusion to the analysis.<sup>21</sup> But the variation should not be limited to the *isnāds*; in order to be able to establish the authenticity of a tradition, there should also be textual variation of the same tradition. This is based on the assumption that “if reports are handed down from one generation to another, they are bound to change”.<sup>22</sup> This, Motzki continues, becomes more visible in the cases of oral transmission. The changes or distortions of the text are reduced when the text is recorded in written format or “standardised” and, as far as Islamic history is concerned, standardisation of transmission developed gradually during the first three Islamic centuries. Therefore, he argues that the variations in the text must have been more significant in the early periods but would have been less in the later periods.

<sup>15</sup>Harald Motzki, “Dating Muslim Traditions”, p. 251.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>Harald Motzki, “Murder of Ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some *Maghāzī*-Reports”, p. 174.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Hadīth*, p. 235.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>Harald Motzki, “Dating Muslim Traditions”, p. 251.

<sup>22</sup>Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Hadīth*, p. 91.

Further, Görke elaborates on the variations of Muslim traditions. He suggests that these variations might be simply a natural result of an oral transmission process or a result of deliberate interpolations, omissions and forgery:

A third kind of change would be the deliberate change of the meaning — or the *isnād* — to make it sound better for the audience, make it fit a special situation, etc. Finally a tradition may be completely reworked to change the meaning and give the opposite sense, counter *aḥādīth* can be invented, duplicate traditions can be produced with completely new *asānīd*. All of these changes can be shown to have happened in Muslim traditions, but not all traditions underwent the same changes.<sup>23</sup>

As Motzki points out, the method is employed more successfully in the traditions that have many variants. This may often lead to the mistaken assumption that the method can only be implemented on traditions that enjoy a plethora of variants. This is perhaps due to the fact that it is a rather new and complicated method and consequently the field of Islamic studies is often not very well accustomed to it. However, this does not change the fact that the *isnād-cum-matn* method may be employed on traditions that have fewer variants and Motzki has best demonstrated this in his article entitled “The Prophet and the Cat: On Dating Mālik’s *Muwattaʾa*’ and Legal Traditions”.<sup>24</sup> Similarly to this paper, the variants that Motzki deals with in the study are few and therefore, it is a good example of the use of the *isnād-cum-matn* method for traditions that do not have many variants.

Motzki’s meticulous study of Mālik b. Anas’ *Muwattaʾa*’ was written in response to Norman Calder’s claims in *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*,<sup>25</sup> wherein he argued that the book is not the work of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) but was produced in a much later period, around 270 (AH).<sup>26</sup> Calder comes to his conclusion by presenting various arguments, one of which is a comparison of two works that are attributed to Mālik. In his comparative analysis of Mālik’s works, *Muwattaʾa*’ and *Mudawwana*, Calder notices that a tradition narrated from the Prophet regarding the purity of cats and water that comes into contact with them, is included in *Muwattaʾa*’ but not in *Mudawwana* when a similar issue comes into question. Therefore, he speculates that if the tradition is not included in *Mudawwana* it can be deduced that the tradition came into existence later than *Mudawwana*. Calder then concludes that the notion that Mālik “is personally responsible for the *Muwattaʾa*’” in its present form is unlikely. For him the book is clearly the product of organic growth; “it needed time to grow”.<sup>27</sup>

In order to challenge Calder’s allegation, Motzki undertakes a study of the tradition to determine whether Mālik narrated the tradition about the purity of cats or not. To implement the *isnād-cum-matn* method he first identifies 16 variants of the tradition. He then takes on the comparison of the *asānīd* and *mutūn* (texts) of the different variants. Based on this analysis of the variants, Motzki concludes that Ishāq b. ʿAbdallāh b. abī Ṭalḥa (d. between 130/747 and 134/751) is the common link for the variants of Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, Hishām b.

<sup>23</sup>See also Andreas Görke, “Eschatology, History, and the Common Link: A Study in Methodology”, in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, (ed.) Herbert Berg (Leiden, 2003), p. 182.

<sup>24</sup>Harald Motzki, “The Prophet and the Cat: On Dating Mālik’s *Muwattaʾa*’ and Legal Traditions”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 22 (1988), pp. 18–74.

<sup>25</sup>Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 35–36.

‘Urwa and ‘Alī b. al-Mubārak. However, since Mālik’s *matn* has a more “improved narrative structure” and *isnāds* than those of other versions, Mālik was the source of the version that he narrated.

Motzki also answers to Calder’s allegation that the tradition developed from an “anecdote” that reported the behaviour of the Companion Abū Qatāda in relation to water that came into contact with a cat. This is very pertinent to the present study as it involves the analysis of only eight variants. Motzki examines the variants of the tradition, which is reportedly narrated from the Companion Abū Qatāda. The Prophet is not mentioned in these reports; therefore, they are dealt with separately.

There are eight variants of the tradition and Motzki investigates them in order to determine whether they existed before the narration of the Prophet that was dealt with above. If they existed before the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet then Calder’s claim might be plausible.<sup>28</sup> However, *isnād* and *matn* analysis of the three variants, which were reported through ‘Ikrima, reveal that they were independently transmitted through ‘Ikrima who is the common link for the variants. *Isnād* and *matn* analysis of another version that was reported by Abū Qilāba reveals that its *matn* very similar to one of the versions of the ‘Ikrima bundle, despite differences in its *isnād*. This leads Motzki to suspect the authenticity of the version, as he believes that “it is a rare coincidence if two persons relate the same incident independently of each other with the same words”.<sup>29</sup> After ruling out the possibility of a forgery, Motzki concludes that this version is a result of error.<sup>30</sup>

In this study Motzki demonstrates that employment of the *isnād-cum-matn* method is possible even if there are fewer variants. Thus, in the same vein, I undertake the study of a group of seven problematic variants that are ostensibly related to the history of the collection of the Qur’ān. Having said that, it needs to be further emphasised that the present paper, based on the limited number of traditions, neither elaborates on the Shī’ite view on the history of the text of the Qur’ān<sup>31</sup> nor attempts to reach a conclusion regarding ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib’s collection of the Qur’ān. Rather its aim is first to date the traditions in question and then, if possible, understand the unusual nature of the group of variants.

Nevertheless, the *isnād-cum-matn* method continues to suffer from the misconception that the method may only work if a tradition “1) is attested in a large number of versions, 2) has many branching *isnāds*, and 3) boasts a wide geographic spread”.<sup>32</sup> Of course in an ideal world this scenario would be very desirable for scholars of early Islam, yet in the face of the scarcity of the sources historians cannot afford to indulge in such an expectation.

<sup>28</sup>Harald Motzki, “The Prophet and the Cat: On Dating Mālik’s *Muwatta’* and Legal Traditions”, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>For an examination of the past and present scholars’ views on the issue see Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī, *Revelation and Falsification*, (ed) Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Text and Studies on the Qur’ān (Leiden, 2009).; Hossein Modarressi, “Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur’ān: A Brief Survey”, *Studia Islamica*, 77 (January 1, 1993), pp. 5–39. doi:10.2307/1595789.; Joseph Eliash “The Shī’ite Qur’ān”, *Arabica* 16, 1 (1969), pp. 15–24. doi:10.1163/157005869X00162.; B. Todd Lawson, “Note for the Study of a Shī’ī Qur’ān”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXVI, 2 (1991), pp. 279–295. doi:10.1093/jss/XXXVI.2., p. 279.; W. St. Clair Tisdall, “Shī’ah Additions to the Koran”, *The Muslim World*, 3 (1913), pp. 227–241. doi:10.1111/j.1478-1913.1913.tb00204.x.; Rainer Brunner, “The Dispute about the Falsification of the Qur’ān between Sunnīs and Shī’īs in the 20th Century”, in *Studies in Arabic and Islam: Proceedings of the 19th Congress* (Leuven, 2002), pp. 437–446.

<sup>32</sup>The author received the criticism in preparation of this article.

It is not difficult to comprehend that this misconception stems primarily from the belief that the *isnād-cum-matn* method relies only on *isnād* analysis. However, leading proponents of the method, Motzki, Schoeler and Görke, have repeatedly stressed that this is not the case. In this regard, when Görke and Schoeler<sup>33</sup> responded to Stephen J. Shoemaker's criticism regarding the *isnād-cum-matn* method's use of single strands,<sup>34</sup> they also addressed the issue. They state that Shoemaker's focus on the *isnāds* prevents him from grasping that although a reliable analysis of *isnāds* may require a dense network of transmitters if one only deals with *isnāds*, in the *isnād-cum-matn* method different variants of *matn* are also taken into consideration. Thus, there is no need for a dense network of transmitters: "when taking into account the variants of the *matn*, secure statements about the interdependency of texts can already be made with a less dense network of transmitters".<sup>35</sup>

Further, Motzki notes the improbability of Juynboll's theory that only traditions that are widely transmitted can be considered authentic. Motzki asserts that there are only several hundred traditions in the Muslim *ḥadīth* corpus that were widely transmitted, and on the other hand there are thousands of other traditions. But, he asks, can historians afford to disregard this colossal amount of historical data just because it seems to be more convenient to do so? "Is it truly realistic? Is it really 'logical' or methodologically sound to dismiss the historicity of all single strands simply because there are some strands which are linked up in a network?"<sup>36</sup>

This does not mean that one can choose any tradition and successfully date it and, if applicable, detect the reworking and identify the person who was responsible for it. If the tradition is widely attested and recorded in a large number of sources, the outcome of the research would of course be more credible.<sup>37</sup> Having said that, we may stress that if a tradition has fewer variants but contains enough textual evidence it may still be possible to reach fair conclusions about the tradition. A final comment to be made on the matter is that "whether any conclusions can be drawn from a comparison of a few traditions very much depends on their actual content and wording; this can only be judged by studying the traditions in detail and on a case by case basis".<sup>38</sup>

Another important issue to be considered in the implementation of the *isnād-cum-matn* method is that one of the main characteristics of the method — and also an area of criticism against it — is that it excludes the historical context from the study of the traditions. In any historical study, the context potentially provides valuable information that allows the reader to make sense of the research. However, the *isnād-cum-matn* method has a valid reason for not dealing with the context: the context is based on "historical data" and "historical data" related to the early period of Islamic history is exceedingly problematic.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Görke, Motzki, and Schoeler, "First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad?"

<sup>34</sup>Shoemaker, "In Search of 'Urwa's Sira."

<sup>35</sup>Görke, Motzki, and Schoeler, "First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad?", p. 41.

<sup>36</sup>Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth*, p. 55.

<sup>37</sup>Andreas Görke, "Eschatology, History, and the Common Link: A Study in Methodology," in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, (ed.) Herbert Berg (Leiden, 2003), pp.184–186.

<sup>38</sup>This is from Andreas Görke's feedback on the methodology part of this article.

<sup>39</sup>See Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, 2004); Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough" in *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, (ed.) Ibn Warraq (Amherst, N.Y., 1998), pp. 351–363.; Fred McGraw Donner, "The Qur'an



In this regard, Husain M. Jafri states that the main problem in understanding the events that took place right after the demise of the Prophet is the gap between the period in which the events took place and the period during which they were systematically recorded. The historical sources that mention the events were written in the first half of the second century at the earliest. At that time the sectarian division between Shī'ites and Sunnīs had already crystallised and it is very likely that the authors who recorded the events filtered the accounts through their inclinations to the respective camps. Those who report the events, such as Ibn Ishāq, al-Ya'qūbī and al-Mas'ūdī, were believed to have Shī'ite sympathy whereas Ibn Sa'd, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī were thought to be in the Sunnī camp.<sup>40</sup> As a result, in order to provide a context, the method first needs to establish the historicity of the data that the historical context is based on. Such an undertaking is well beyond the scope of this paper, as it will require analysis of hundreds of traditions. Therefore, in accordance with the *isnād-cum-matn* methodological approach to historical context, the paper will abstain from studying the historical context of the period in question. Finally, the *isnād-cum-matn* method does not rely on the traditional Muslim grading method but I have included the grading of transmitters to make the work accessible to traditional scholarship.

### Traditions Attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir

A study of early Islamic sources (both Shī'ite and Sunnī) reveals that there are a significant number of traditions that mention 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib's collection of the Qur'ān. These traditions were attributed to various individuals: 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib (40/661) himself, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (57/676–114/733), the fifth Shī'ite Imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (83/702–148/765), the sixth Shī'ite Imām and Ibn Sīrīn (110/728). Among these traditions, the ones that are attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir,<sup>41</sup> who appears in the traditions with the *kunya* (teknonym) Abū Ja'far, seem to be problematic.

As mentioned above, I will treat the traditions that contain a clear reference to the event of 'Alī's collection of the Qur'ān, attributed to 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Ibn Sīrīn, elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> Despite their differences, the central theme in these traditions is that soon after the demise of the Prophet, 'Alī took an oath that he would not leave his house until he collects the Qur'ān and after spending some time at his house he fulfils his oath. In this regard it may be helpful to present one of the traditions that was recorded in one of the earliest Sunnī *ḥadīth* collection, the *Muṣannaḥ*<sup>43</sup> of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826):

in Recent Scholarship—Challenges and Desiderata” in *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, (ed.) Gabriel Said Reynolds (Abingdon, 2008), pp. 29–50.; Harald Motzki, “The Collection of the Qur'ān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments”, *Der Islam* 78, 1 (2001), pp. 1–34.

<sup>40</sup>S. Husain M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (Qum, 1989), p. 28.

<sup>41</sup>On Muḥammad al-Bāqir see Arzina R. Lalani, *Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir* (London, 2004).

<sup>42</sup>“Suppression of 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālib's codex: Study of the traditions on the earliest copy of the Qur'ān”

<sup>43</sup>On this see Harald Motzki, “The *Muṣannaḥ* of 'Abd Al-Razzāq Al-San'ānī as a Source of Authentic *Aḥādīth* of the First Century AH”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50, no. 1 (January 1991), pp. 1–21.



'Abd al-Razzāq from Ma' mar from Ayyūb from 'Ikrima<sup>44</sup> he said: When Abū Bakr received the pledge of allegiance, 'Alī remained in his house. 'Umar met him and [asked]: 'Are you opposing to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr?' He said: 'When the Messenger of God was taken, I took an oath that I will not put on my cloak except for the obligatory prayers until I have collected the Qur'an; I fear that the Qur'an will be lost'. He then came out of his house and pledged allegiance to him.<sup>45 46</sup>

The traditions attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir, however, are in statement format and, unlike the traditions mentioned above, do not give an account of the event of 'Alī's collection of the Qur'an. Further, some of the variants of the traditions attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir make it difficult to accept that they refer to the physical collection of the Qur'an. This is due to the fact that the word *jama'a*, which appears in all the variants, seems to refer to the general Shī'ite belief about the true and definitive understanding of the Qur'an which can only be grasped by the Imāms. Only two of the seven variants challenge this perception by suggesting that the traditions refer to a physical collection of the Qur'an by 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib. Most importantly, unlike the other five variants, these two variants have a strong sectarian undertone. This peculiar characteristic noted in the two variants prompts us to undertake a study of the traditions attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir in order to discover the cause of the incongruity in the variants.

Among the seven traditions that I have gathered, four variants were recorded in Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār's (d.290/903) *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, two variants in Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī's (d.329/941) *al-Kāfī fī 'Ilm al-Dīn* and one variant is recorded in 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī's (d. 307/980) *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. In order to make the reading easier I have divided these traditions into three groups based on the similarities of their *mutūn*. I shall label the traditions using the capital letters of the names of the authors of the books in which they appear.

### Group One Variants

#### *Isnād* analysis

The first tradition can be traced back to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī's (d. 290/902–3) *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī is also known as Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farrūkh. He was a companion of the eleventh Shī'ite Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī and one of the *shaykhs* of renowned Shī'ite *ḥadīth* collector Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī. Al-Ṣaffār was a resident of Qum, considered to be

<sup>44</sup>Despite the fact that the *sanad* of the tradition gives the impression that the tradition was narrated from 'Ikrima, I have demonstrated in my article "Suppression of 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālib's codex: Study of the traditions on the earliest copy of the Qur'an" that this is the result of an error and in reality Ibn Sīrīn is the source of the tradition. This conclusion is based on an analysis of several other variants.

<sup>45</sup>Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣana'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, (ed.) Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī, vol. 5 (South Africa, 1970), p. 450.

<sup>46</sup>'Abd al-Razzāq 'an Ma' mar 'an Ayyūb 'an 'Ikrima qāla: Lammā būyi'a li- [sic. 'bi' (correction from the editor of the book)] Abī Bakr takhallafa 'Alī fī baytīhi, fa-laḳiyahu 'Umar, fa-qāla: Takhallafa 'an bay'ati Abī Bakr? Qāla: Innī ālaytu bi-yamīn ḥīna qubiḍa Rasūl Allāh allā artadī bi-ridā'i illā ilā al-ṣalāt al-maktūba ḥattā ajma'a al-Qur'an fa-innī khashaytu an yatafallat al-Qur'an. Thumma kharaja fa-bāyi'ahu.

a prolific writer, and classified as a trustworthy (*thiqa*) person.<sup>47</sup> His work *Başā'ir al-Darajāt* is known to be one of the oldest Shī'ite collections and was written in praise of the Prophet and the Shī'ite Imāms. According to Āghā Buzurg Ṭahrānī the book was later abridged and this abridged version is called *Mukhtaṣar al-Başā'ir*. Later on, Shaykh Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Ḥillī<sup>48</sup> selected some traditions from the abridged version for his famous book entitled *Muntakhab al-Başā'ir*, which first mentioned the concept of *al-raj'ā*.<sup>49</sup>

In the tradition, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Bāqir ostensibly informs his audience about the collation of the Qur'ān by the Imāms:

### 1. Al-Ṣaffār's Version (S1):

Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn 'an Muḥammad b. Sinān 'an 'Ammār b. Marwān 'an al-Munakhhkhal 'an Jābir 'an Abī Ja'far: Mā yastaṭī'u aḥadun an yadda'ī annahu jama'a al-Qur'ān kullahu zāhirahu wa-bāṭinahu ghayru al-awṣiyā'.<sup>50 51</sup>

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī (250/864–329/941) is known to be the most important *ḥadīth* collector of the Shī'ite faith and the book is considered the most authentic *ḥadīth* collection.<sup>52</sup> He recorded a variant of the tradition in his *al-Kāfi fī 'Ilm al-Dīn*:

### 2. Al-Kulaynī's version (K1):

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn 'an Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn 'an Muḥammad b. Sinān 'an 'Ammār b. Marwān 'an al-Munakhhkhal 'an Jābir 'an Abī Ja'far, 'alayhī al-salām, annahu qāla: Mā yastaṭī'u aḥadun an yadda'ī anna 'indahū jamī' al-Qur'ān kullihī zāhirihī wa-bāṭinihī ghayru al-awṣiyā'.<sup>53 54</sup>

There is a third version of the tradition mentioned in *Başā'ir al-Darajāt*. The text of the tradition resembles the other two versions (although it is shorter), but the *isnād* is very different save the existence of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn in it:

### 3. Al-Ṣaffār's version (S2):

Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn 'an al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb 'an 'Abd al-Ghaffār:

<sup>47</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī* (Beirut, 2010), p. 338.

<sup>48</sup>He was one of the students of Muḥammad Jamāluddīn al-Makkī al-Āmilī (1334–1385) also known as Shahīd al-Awwal.

<sup>49</sup>Āghā Buzurg Ṭahrānī, *Al-Dharī'a Ilā Tāsānīf al-Shī'a*, vol. 3 (Qum and Tehran, no date), p. 124.

<sup>50</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Başā'ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā'il Āl Muḥammad*, 2nd edition (Qum, 1983), p. 193.

<sup>51</sup>Translation: No one can claim to have collected the *Qur'ān* — in its entirety — inwardly and outwardly, except the trustees.

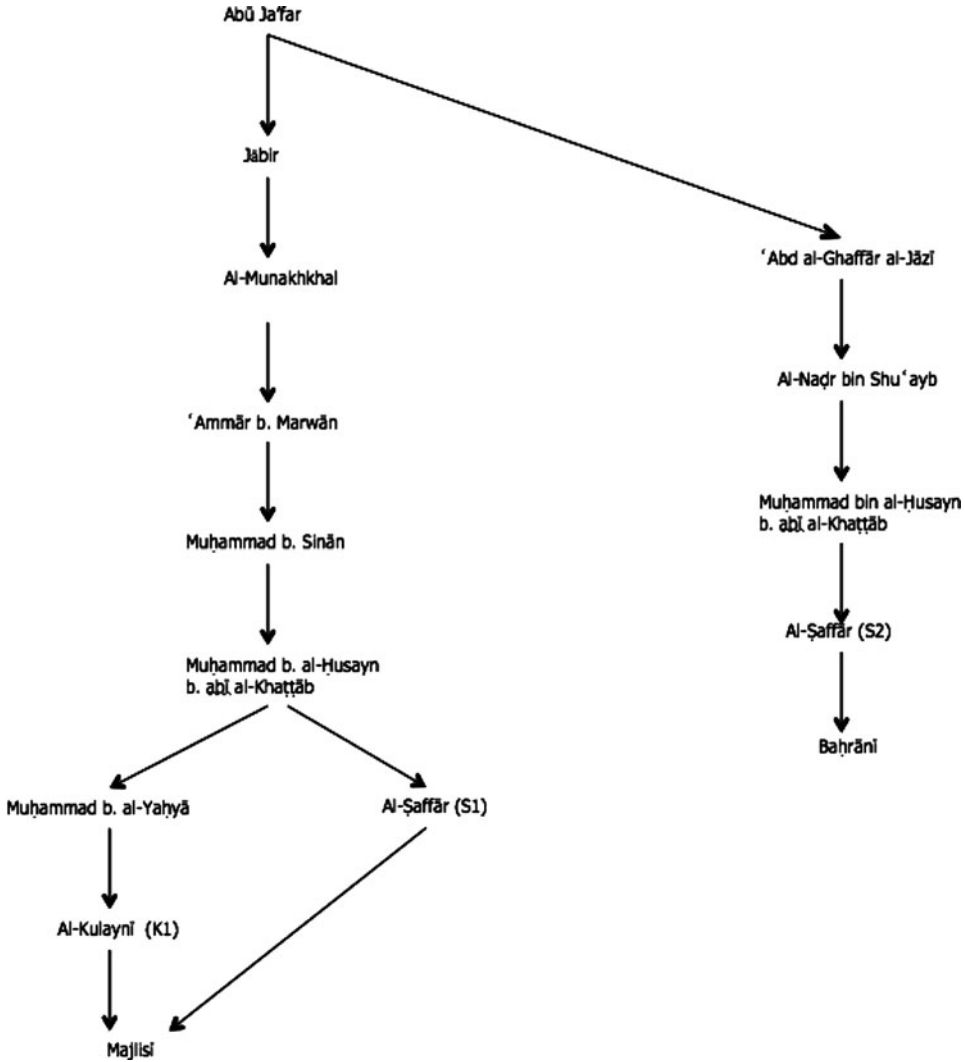
<sup>52</sup>On *al-Kāfi* see Robert Gleave, "Between Ḥadīth and Fiqh: The 'Canonical' Imāmī Collections of Akhbār", *Islamic Law and Society, Hadith and Fiqh*, 8, 3 (2001), pp. 350–382.; Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shī'ism*, (Richmond, 2000).

<sup>53</sup>Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi fī 'Ilm al-Dīn*, vol. 1 (Qum, 2008), p. 566.

<sup>54</sup>Translation: No one can claim to possess the collection of the Qur'ān in its entirety, with its inward and outward [meaning], except the trustees.

Sa'ala rajulun Abā Ja'far (a) fa-qāla Abū Ja'far mā yastaṭī'u aḥadun yaqūl jama'a al-Qur'ān kullahu ghayr al-awṣiyā<sup>55 56</sup>

Upon first glance, one notices that there are three versions of the tradition mentioned in the works *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā'il Āl Muḥammad* and *al-Kāfī fī 'Ilm al-Dīn*, which were written in the third and fourth Islamic centuries.



The *asānīd* of S1 and K1 are almost identical, but despite the similarities, the version that is reported in K1's *sanad* seems peculiar, as before it reaches al-Kulaynī it goes through two Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayns whose identities are not mentioned, thus giving the impression

<sup>55</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā'il Āl Muḥammad*, pp. 193–194.

<sup>56</sup>Translation: A man asked Abū Ja'far (peace be upon him) and Abū Ja'far replied: No one can say that he collected the Qur'an in its entirety except the trustees.

that there is an irregularity in the *sanad*. However, I have demonstrated elsewhere<sup>57</sup> that this apparent irregularity occurs due to a typological error and in fact al-Kulaynī's informant is Muḥammad b. al-Yaḥyā, who was a favourite informant of his.

After Muḥammad b. al-Yaḥyā the two *asānīd* (S1 and K1) merge at Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 262/875), who seems to be a partial common link (pcl) for this group. He was a highly revered Kūfī scholar and has been praised greatly in both *Rijāl al-Najāshī* and al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*. Najāshī considered him a great Shī'ite scholar who authored books on various subjects. He was also a prolific transmitter and has been graded as *thiqa*.<sup>58</sup> According to al-Hilālī, he was a companion of three Shī'ite Imāms: Imām al-Jawād, Imām al-Hādī and Imām al-'Askarī. Further, al-Hilālī feels obliged to mention that he was different from his father, Muḥammad b. abī Zaynab al-Khaṭṭāb, who was an "infamously damned" man.<sup>59</sup> Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb was a contemporary of both Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā<sup>60</sup> and al-Ṣaffār (d. 290/202–903), thus it is highly probable that Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb was the one who distributed tradition K1. Although Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā was a Qummī scholar, there was extensive interaction between Qum and Kūfa at the time as both were major Shī'ite centres of knowledge and scholars very often travelled back and forth between the two cities.<sup>61</sup>

Therefore, we can trace the tradition to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb, the common link, who lived in the third Islamic century in Kūfa. Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb either fabricated the tradition or learned it from another source and genuinely disseminated it. As for the first possibility, the *isnād-cum-matn* method prompts the question: Is there any reason why Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb would have invented the tradition? Biographical books do not suggest any reason for him to take such a course of action. One possibility, however, is that as a devout Shī'ite he wanted to boost the reputation of 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib through the fabrication of this tradition. As has been mentioned above, such a tradition would have implied significant political and religious gains for 'Alī and his followers, and one might always argue that the fabrication of traditions on the subject must have been a very tempting enterprise for the Shī'ite scholars. Having said that, unless it is substantiated such an assumption remains the result of bias and the burden of proof is on the scholars who come up with such allegations.

Further, the identities of the remaining transmitters in the *sanad* significantly weaken the possibility that Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb invented the tradition. His source, Muḥammad b. Sinān (d. 220/835) was a very well-known reporter to the Shī'ite scholars. He was a *mawla* (client) of 'Amr b. al-Ḥamīq al-Khazā'ī,<sup>62</sup> who was allegedly involved in the rebellion against the third caliph 'Uthmān that resulted in his assassination.<sup>63</sup> Both al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī<sup>64</sup> give a very negative account of him and consider him weak, unreliable and extremist (*ghālī*).

<sup>57</sup>"An attempt to establish the identity of al-Kulaynī's informant: Use of transmission patterns in contemporary Shī'ite *isnād* analysis" (Under review).

<sup>58</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 319–320.

<sup>59</sup>Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī, *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Qum, 1984), p. 236.

<sup>60</sup>There is no date of death for him in the sources but he might have died around the same date as al-Ṣaffār.

<sup>61</sup>See Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shī'ism*.

<sup>62</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 313.

<sup>63</sup>Al-Khazā'ī was later captured and killed by Mu'āwiya b. abī Sufyān.

<sup>64</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 313–314.; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 143.

Although Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) clears him of all the accusations<sup>65</sup> there remains a controversy around his personality. Muḥammad b. Sinān narrates the tradition from 'Ammār b. Marwān,<sup>66</sup> who was known to be the *mawlā* of Banū Thaubān. There is not much information regarding 'Ammār b. Marwān in the biography books despite his frequent appearance in the *asānīd* of many traditions. According to al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā mostly report traditions from him and he reports from Muḥammad b. Sinān.<sup>67</sup>

'Ammār b. Marwān narrates the tradition from al-Munakhhkhal b. Jamīl.<sup>68</sup> He was from Kūfa and had a book on *tafsīr*. He narrates from Abū 'Abdallāh and Abū al-Ḥasan. The majority of *rijāl* scholars consider him weak and of extremist tendencies (*ghālī*).<sup>69 70</sup> However, al-Ṭūsī was neutral on the issue and did not pass any judgment about him.<sup>71</sup> Finally, al-Munakhhkhal b. Jamīl narrates it from Jābir b. Yazīd (d. 127/745), who was a disciple of Abū Ja'far and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.

Since Muḥammad b. Sinān was a controversial personality it is difficult to carry on with the *isnād* analysis after him. As he was accused of being a *ghālī*, it makes it more likely that he fabricated the tradition or at best was inclined to be careless regarding the reliability of transmitters when collecting traditions that revere the status of the Imāms. On the other hand, al-Mufīd's assurance about his reliability might help us to lift the controversy around him. But, at this stage, it is best not to stray into more controversial areas.

As for the third version (S2) of the same tradition, its *matn* resembles the previous two versions yet the *isnād* significantly differs after Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn. The transmission goes as a single strand through al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb and 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī and then again reaches the fifth Imām, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir (d. 114/733). In comparison to the previous two versions, there are significantly fewer transmitters involved in this chain of transmission. As we have covered Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb when we treated the previous two versions, we can begin with examining al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb.

The information regarding al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb is limited as he is a rather unknown personality to Shī'ite scholars. His name was mentioned in the few Shī'ite traditions that were reported through al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb. He was certainly not one of the individuals who very often appeared in the Shī'ite *asānīd*. Nevertheless, some traditions in which al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb narrates can be found through an examination of major Shī'ite works. This includes 17 traditions in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, 11 traditions in *al-Kāfī*, and two narrations in *Man Lā Yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*,<sup>72</sup> written by Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh (d. 381/991), one of the most important *ḥadīth* collectors in the Shī'ite faith. Further, Ibn Bābawayh narrates one tradition through al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb in his book entitled *al-Amālī*<sup>73</sup> which is a collection

<sup>65</sup>Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 49 (Beirut, 1983), p. 276.

<sup>66</sup>No date of death.

<sup>67</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (Qum, no date), *Al-Fihrist*, p. 117.

<sup>68</sup>No date of death.

<sup>69</sup>Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn Wāsiṭī Baghdādī, *Al-Rijāl*, (ed.) Muḥammad Riḍā Ḥusaynī, vol. 1 (Qum, 1985), p. 89.

<sup>70</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 403.; Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Taqī Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il wa-Mustanbaḥ al-Masā'il*, vol 6 (Qum, 1987), p. 320.

<sup>71</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 169.

<sup>72</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh, *Man Lā Yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*, 4 vols. (Qum, 1992).

<sup>73</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh, *Al-Amālī*, vol. 1 (Tehran, no date), p. 294.

of lecture notes recorded by his students, two traditions in *al-Khiṣāl*<sup>74 75</sup> and finally two more traditions in Ibn Bābawayh's *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*.<sup>76</sup> Shaykh Muḥīd (d. 413/1022) narrates two traditions through al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb in his *al-Ikhtisās*.<sup>77</sup> In addition, al-Ṭūsī mentions seven traditions in his *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*,<sup>78</sup> and six traditions in *al-Istibṣār fi-mā Ikhtalaf min al-Akhhbār*<sup>79</sup> that were transmitted through al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb. Finally, Muḥammad Muḥsin b. Shāh Murtaḍā Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's (d. 1091/1680) celebrated compilation *al-Wāfi* also mentions 15 traditions that contain the name al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb in their *asānīd*.<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps his lack of frequent appearance in the *asānīd* was the main reason why there was no interest in al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb by the early Shī'ite scholars and, consequently, there is no direct information about him in the early sources. The only information we may attain about al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb is indirectly, when he is mentioned in the articles about his informants and reporters in the early *rijāl* works. In these works, by studying Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī we can determine that al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb is usually mentioned when he transmits traditions from 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī.<sup>81</sup>

In the traditions where al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb appears in the *asānīd*, most of the time Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb reports from him and al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb reports from 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī. Thus the *sanad* is not unprecedented. However, lack of information about al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb makes it very difficult to examine the *sanad* adequately. The *sanad* of this version could have been stronger if al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb were excluded, as the other transmitters were well-known individuals and often transmitted traditions through the same paths.

In this regard, the last person in the chain of transmission before it reaches Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir is 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī, who was a prominent Shī'ite transmitter. In *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī is also mentioned with additional titles: al-Ghaffār b. Ḥabīb and al-Ṭā'ī.<sup>82</sup> He was from Jaziyyah (*ahli Jaziyya*) a village between two rivers, presumably Tigris and Euphrates (*qarya bi-al-Nahrāyn*).<sup>83</sup> He reports from Abū 'Abdallāh, the sixth Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (83/702–148/765), and was rated as *thiqa*. Al-Najāshī also informs about the usual chains of transmission through which reports from 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī were transmitted. One of the transmission paths includes: "Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn (Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb) narrated to us (*ḥaddathanā*), he said: Al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb narrated to us (*ḥaddathanā*), from 'Abd al-Ghaffār in his book".<sup>84</sup>

There is adequate information in al-Najāshī's brief paragraph to figure out that 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī lived in Iraq, a village in Mesopotamia called *Jāziya*, and he was a

<sup>74</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh, *Al-Khiṣāl*, vol. 1 (Qum, 1983), p. 72.

<sup>75</sup>The book contains traditions about Islamic ethics.

<sup>76</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh, *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, vol. 1 (Qum, 1982).

<sup>77</sup>Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Muḥīd, *Al-Ikhtisās*, vol. 1 (Qum, 1992).

<sup>78</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, 10 vols. (Tehran, 1986).

<sup>79</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Istibṣār fi-mā Ikhtalaf min al-Akhhbār*, 4 vols. (Tehran, 1970).

<sup>80</sup>In the work, Fayḍ al-Kāshānī compiles traditions that already existed in the *Four Books* (*al-Kutub al-Arba'a*), the most important *ḥadīth* collections of the Shī'ite faith, and rearranges them into different chapters with his clarifications and explanations. Thus, they are not different traditions.

<sup>81</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 237.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

contemporary of the son of the fifth Imām Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir. Therefore it is possible that he saw al-Bāqir himself and reported the tradition from him. Although his date of death is not available, since he was a contemporary of the fifth and the sixth Imāms, we may try to deduce the possible time period in which he lived. The fifth Imām al-Bāqir died in year 114 and reportedly served as an Imām for 19 years before he was poisoned. In order for al-Jāzī to be able to report from al-Bāqir he should have been at a reasonable age, perhaps between 15 and 25 years old. Since he only narrates one tradition from Abū Ja'far, we might assume that he was very young during Abū Ja'far's period of Imāmat.

As he also witnessed the period of Imāmat of the sixth Imām and reported many traditions from him, we may assume that he was at the peak of his career at this time and lived through most of the period of the Imāmat of al-Ṣādiq, which spanned 34 years. Since he did not narrate traditions from the seventh Imām Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Kāẓim (128–183/745–799) one may assume that he died towards the end of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's life. Therefore it might be feasible to accept Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's date of death 148, as roughly also al-Jāzī's date of death.<sup>85</sup> However, he may also have survived through some parts of the period of the Imāmat of al-Kāẓim but was too old or sick to travel and attend the gatherings of al-Kāẓim in order to collect traditions from him. Nevertheless, he may have continued to receive students in his house and to teach them traditions.

He should have been roughly in his 60s or 70s when he died, so considering the untimely death of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq perhaps it is more reasonable to assume that he died a few years later than al-Ṣādiq, around year 155. We also know the date of death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb, which is 262/875. At this juncture, despite the lack of information about al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb, it appears that through the *isnād-cum-matn* method it might be possible to find out if he lived at a time when he could have transmitted the tradition from al-Jāzī to Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb. Considering the fact that Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb was a companion of three Shī'ite Imāms: Imām al-Jawād, Imām al-Hādī and Imām al-Askarī,<sup>86</sup> he must have had a considerably long life. He was perhaps in his 70s or 80s when he died. If we assume he died around 70 years old, he would have been born around year 192.

Consequently, al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb should have been born at least in year 140 and perhaps died around 210 so that Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb could have met him. Although it might be physically possible that al-Naḍr b. Shu'ayb transmitted the tradition, there are other issues to consider. For example, there is only one instance in the entire Shī'ite *ḥadīth* corpus in which 'Abd al-Ghaḥfār al-Jāzī reports a tradition from Abū Ja'far. He reports all the remaining traditions from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. This might cast some doubt regarding the authenticity of the tradition, but a possible explanation is that he was very young during the period of the Imāmat of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and therefore only heard a few traditions from him, among which only this one found its way into the *ḥadīth* books.

In addition, it is strange that this tradition was only recorded by al-Ṣaffār. It does not appear in any other major Shī'ite sources; is it possible that al-Ṣaffār fabricated it? In order to establish this we need to find evidence and/or motive, but we have not encountered any

<sup>85</sup>Modarressi, in his biographical work, groups him with scholars who died in the period between 136 and 198. See, Hossein Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shiite Literature* (Oxford, 2003).

<sup>86</sup>Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī, *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī*, vol. 1, p. 236.



information that suggests he might have fabricated the tradition. Even if it was only recorded by al-Şaffār, this does not necessarily mean that the version was fabricated.

Therefore, we can trace the tradition to Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb, who was also the pcl of the previous two versions of the traditions. Again, according to the *isnād-cum-matn* method there is no reason not to trace it back to al-Naḍr b. Shu‘ayb who seems to be the source of the version. Al-Naḍr b. Shu‘ayb transmitted a number of traditions in major Shī‘ite collections but he was an unknown personality, and this casts doubt about the reliability of the tradition. It is physically possible for him to have received the tradition from ‘Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī; nevertheless perhaps it is more prudent to pause at al-Naḍr b. Shu‘ayb and date the version to year 210, al-Naḍr b. Shu‘ayb’s estimated date of death.

#### Matn analysis

We have three very short versions of the tradition; therefore it might be difficult to extract enough information from the texts to help date the tradition. The *mutūn* are in the statement format, which initially gives the impression that the Imāms (*al-awṣiyā*) collated the Qur’ān in its entirety. However, there is a possibility of an alternative reading of *jamī‘*, as especially in the early periods, the word *jamī‘* meant knowing the Qur’ān by heart. If that is the case, the tradition refers not to the collation of the Qur’ān but to its true and definitive understanding which no one can claim to have. In this group of variants this reading of *jamī‘* seems to be more plausible, especially considering that K1’s text includes the wording ‘*indahū jamī‘ al-Qur’ān* (he possesses the collection of the Qur’ān).

At first sight, despite the shortness of the two versions, there are visible differences between them. In al-Şaffār’s version the pronoun *hu* is added to the word *anna* which is then followed by the word *jama‘a*; however in al-Kulaynī’s version the word *anna* stands alone and is followed by ‘*indahū jamī‘*. In addition, in S1 and in S2 *kullahu* is accusative while in K1 *kullihī* is genitive.

The *matn* of K1 seems to be the result of transmission errors. *Jamī‘ al-Qur’ān kulluhu* is a doubling. *Jamī‘ al-Qur’ān* and *al-Qur’ān kulluhu* mean the same and *jamī‘* and *kull* together do not make sense; thus it is possibly the result of transmission errors. For instance, a copyist wrote *jamī‘* instead of *jama‘a* or read it from the manuscript he was copying, because the word was not well legible and he (or a later copyist) inserted ‘*inda* in order to make the sentence more comprehensible. Another guess is that someone purposely changed the original wording, placed the word ‘*inda* between *anna* and *hu* and changed *jama‘a* to *jamī‘*. In any case, version K1 seems to be corrupt, and the corruption is probably due to Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā or al-Kulaynī.

Despite the differences, there are undeniable similarities between the two variants. The two versions are clearly interdependent, which gives the impression that they were reported from the same source. Aside from noting the common source, *matn* analysis does not have much to offer in taking us further than the source that we have identified: Muḥammad b. Sinān. The *matn* analysis only reveals that al-Şaffār and al-Kulaynī had different sources, which as we demonstrated above reach Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb and then finally go back to Muḥammad b. Sinān. Therefore, the earliest date to which we can trace the two versions is 220, the date Muḥammad b. Sinān died.

As for the third version (S<sub>2</sub>), we may say that it is very similar to the other two versions but looks more complete in the sense that it briefly gives information about the context in which Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir uttered the statement regarding the collection of the Qurʾān. An unknown man asked him about it and he gave a terse answer. In this version (S<sub>2</sub>) the word *yaddaʿī* is replaced by the word *yaqūl*. In addition, the words “*ẓāhir*” and “*bāṭin*” do not exist in version S<sub>2</sub> but the word *kullu* (*kullahu*) is used.

Since the pcl for these versions is Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb, one might argue that he invented this seemingly more complete version to strengthen the version that he already possessed. However, the question remains whether S<sub>2</sub> is more complete: Although it might seem so owing to its proper introduction, the way the statement was uttered misses certain information such as the words “*ẓāhir*” and “*bāṭin*”. Had Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb wanted to put together a more complete version he would surely have included these crucial pieces of information. Perhaps he could have also included some other details to “perfect” this version. Therefore, the evidence from *matn* analysis suggests that the version can be traced back to Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb’s source al-Naḍr b. Shuʿayb, whose date of death is roughly around year 210.

This date is earlier than the date we reached when we examined the two other versions, which could be traced to year 220. At this stage, we might ask if it is possible to go beyond the date we have at hand and trace the versions to earlier than year 210. Despite the nuances in the versions, their structure is similar as in all of them the statement starts with the expression *Mā yastaṭīʿu aḥadun*. Also, they all have the expression *ghayr al-awṣiyāʾ* and other similar words, as a result of which one might argue that the versions are interdependent and must come from a common source. We can now try to find out who this source might have been.

The intersection point for the versions is Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb and therefore we might single him out as the usual suspect. But did he forge the three versions? In the light of the study we carried out above, it is highly unlikely; he does not seem to have any personal input and he probably simply transmitted them. This is obvious from the differences between versions S<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>. Had he fabricated them, common sense dictates that he could have rather merged them into a single tradition with a more seamless *isnād*. Or, he could have kept the versions but made sure they did not omit any details that were given in the others. Further, he could have removed problematic people in the chains, especially someone like al-Naḍr b. Shuʿayb.

Upon ruling out this possibility, we might look for other possibilities for the common source. Until the chain of narration reaches Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir, there is no intersection point for the versions that we have grouped into two. Our search for a connection between the two groups’ transmitters proved fruitless. In other words, aside from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb there is no connection between the groups of transmitters as they do not appear in any *sanad* together; hence we might conclude that the only intersection point for the versions is Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who might be the real source for the versions. If this is correct, with the help of the *isnād-cum-matn* method the tradition could be traced back to year 114, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir’s date of death.

Could that be possible? There seems to be no other explanation for the two groups of versions that are interdependent. There must be a source for the versions (S<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>)

and if it was not Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb, it could only have been Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir. There are other findings that may confirm this possibility. For instance, the fact that Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124) spread narrations about the collection of the Qur’ān by Abū Bakr (‘Umar was also involved in this project) and ‘Uthmān.<sup>87</sup> Obviously, the issue of the correct Qur’ān was heatedly contentious at the turn of the first Islamic century. However, we may perhaps reach a more convincing conclusion after examining the remaining variants.

### Group two variants

Another tradition regarding the “collection” of the Qur’ān by ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib and the Imāms of his offspring was reported in two different versions in *Baṣā’ir* and *al-Kāfī*. The versions have almost identical chains of transmission.

#### 4. Al-Ṣaffār’s tradition (S3):

Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ‘an al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb ‘an ‘Amr b. abī al-Miqdām ‘an Jābir qāla sami‘tu abā Ja‘far (‘a) annahu qāla:

Mā min aḥadin min al-nās yaqūlu annahu jama‘a al-Qur’ān kullahu kamā anzala Allāhu illā kadhdhābun wa-mā jama‘ahu wa-mā ḥafīzahu kamā anzala Allāhu illā ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib wa-al-A‘imma min ba‘dihī.<sup>88 89</sup>

The *matn* of the tradition seems to be similar in tone to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. abī al-Khaṭṭāb’s tradition, which we covered above. It is in the form of a statement by Abū Ja‘far and mentions the preservation of the Qur’ān by the Shī‘ite Imāms. A difference is that the first Imām ‘Alī’s name is expressly mentioned. Due to the similarities in the content and differences in the *sanad*, we may argue that this is another statement that Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir made regarding the collection and preservation of the Qur’ān.

The second version of the tradition was reported in *al-Kāfī* and has an almost identical *sanad* and *matn*:

#### 5. Kulaynī’s tradition (K2):

Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā ‘an Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ‘an Ibn Maḥbūb ‘an ‘Amr b. abī al-Miqdām ‘an Jābir qāla: Sami‘tu abā Ja‘far ‘alayhī al-salām yaqūlu:

<sup>87</sup>Harald Motzki, “The Collection of the Qur’ān: A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Development”.

<sup>88</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā’il Āl Muḥammad*, p. 193.

<sup>89</sup>Translation: It has been reported by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad from al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb from ‘Amr b. abī al-Miqdām from Jābir, he said: I have heard from Abū Ja‘far (a) saying:

Anyone among people, who says that he collected the Qur’ān in its entirety as God revealed it, is nothing but a great liar. Nobody has collected and memorised (or preserved) it (the Qur’ān) as God revealed it except ‘Alī b. abī Ṭālib and after him the Imāms.

Mā idda ʿā aḥadun min al-nās annahu jamaʿa al-Qurʾān kullahu kamā unzila illā kadhhdhābun. Wa-mā jamaʿahu wa-ḥafīzahu kamā nazzalahu Allāhu taʿālā illā ʿAlī b. abī Ṭālib wa-al-ʿImma min baʿdihī ʿalayhim al-salām.<sup>90 91</sup>

### *Isnād analysis*

Al-Ṣaffār's *sanad* (S<sub>3</sub>) goes through one of his preferred reporters Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, from him to al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb, from him to ʿAmr b. abī al-Miqdām, from him to a renowned companion Jābir, and then finally reaches Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir himself. Al-Kulaynī's *sanad* (K<sub>2</sub>) is identical to al-Ṣaffār's *sanad*, save that it does not go through al-Ṣaffār. Instead Kulaynī receives it from his informant Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār, and through him it reaches Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. It seems that for one reason or another al-Kulaynī did not copy the tradition from al-Ṣaffār despite al-Ṣaffār being al-Kulaynī's *shaykh*; instead he received it from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā.

As we have mentioned earlier, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā was a favourite informant of al-Kulaynī and al-Kulaynī reported a great number of traditions from him. In the majority of cases, al-Kulaynī reports from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, and the transmission goes through Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā in between and al-Kulaynī in the end. There is no reason to doubt that al-Kulaynī narrated the tradition from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā as he was al-Kulaynī's contemporary and lived in the vicinity of al-Kulaynī.

After Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, both versions merge at Aḥmad b. Muḥammad and continue as a single strand. Therefore, we may provisionally conclude that the partial common link for this group was Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. There are several Aḥmad b. Muḥammads mentioned in the *rijāl* books who lived in al-Kulaynī's time or shortly before his time and could have reported the tradition to al-Kulaynī. In the majority of cases, al-Kulaynī (or his informers) did not mention which Aḥmad b. Muḥammad transmitted the tradition. Hence, it could have been difficult to carry out an *isnād* analysis. But an examination of al-Najāshī's *Rijāl* reveals that among them, only Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbaydallāh and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā reported traditions from al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb who is in the upper position of the *isnād* at hand. Thus, we can narrow down the possibilities to these two people: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbaydallāh was a renowned scholar from the famous al-Ashʿarī tribe, based in Qum. According to biographical works he was a very trustworthy person and authored several books. He reported from the "third Ḥasan"<sup>92</sup> or the 10<sup>th</sup> Imām ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥādī (214/829–254/868).

<sup>90</sup> Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi fī ʿIlm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, p. 566.

<sup>91</sup> Translation: Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad from b. Maḥbūb from ʿAmr b. abī al-Miqdām from Jābir he said I have heard Abū Jaʿfar may peace be upon him saying:

Anyone among the people who claims that he collected the Qurʾān in its entirety, as it was revealed, is nothing but a great liar. Nobody has collected and preserved it, as God Exalted sent it down, except ʿAlī b. abī Ṭālib and the Imāms, may peace be upon them, after him.

<sup>92</sup> Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 77.

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā (d. 274/887) was an even more prominent scholar, again from the al-Ashʿarī tribe. His *kunya* (teknonym) was Abū Jaʿfar. He was first based in Qum and then emigrated to al-Kūfa. He also authored several books.<sup>93</sup>

It is almost impossible to distinguish which Aḥmad b. Muḥammad transmitted the tradition to al-Ṣaffār and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā. They were both contemporaries of al-Ṣaffār and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā and resided in Qum. Neither al-Ṣaffār nor al-Kulaynī usually specifies who they referred to when they wrote Aḥmad b. Muḥammad in *asānīd*. However, al-Ṭūsī in his *al-Fihrist* states that Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā transmitted traditions from Maḥbūb and he does not mention Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbaydallāh or any other Aḥmad b. Muḥammad as a transmitter of Maḥbūb's (also called al-Zarrād) traditions.<sup>94</sup> Al-Ṭūsī reaches his conclusion through examining the usual transmission path of Maḥbūb's traditions.

In addition, when al-Ṭūsī discusses ʿAmr b. abī al-Miqdām, he again mentions Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā as one of the people through whom al-Miqdām's traditions were transmitted. This further strengthens the view that the tradition was transmitted through Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā. This view was also held by a seventeenth-century Iranian scholar, Muṣṭafā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Tafrishī (d. 1030/1621), in his work *Naqd al-Rijāl*.<sup>95</sup>

There was no obstacle for any of them to have transmitted the tradition, and we lack compelling evidence about whether it was Ibn ʿUbaydallāh or Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā. It does not make much difference, for the *isnād* analysis, which of them reported the tradition. We do not know the date of death of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbaydallāh, but his contemporary Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī died around 274. Therefore we can conclude according to the *isnād* analysis that, at any rate, this tradition was available during the third quarter of the third century.

Is it possible to trace the tradition to an earlier source? According to the *isnād-cum-matn* method this might be possible. First, there is no reason to doubt that the tradition was transmitted either by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā or ʿUbaydallāh. Second, evidence from the *rijāl* sources backs up the possibility that either of them could have transmitted the tradition.

Third, both scholars could have transmitted traditions from al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb (d. 224/838); therefore, we may trace the tradition to him, the source of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. Al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb's *kunya* (teknonym) was Abū ʿAlī and he was a *mawlā* of Bajīla,<sup>96</sup> based in al-Kūfa. He reported from the eighth Imām ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (148/766–203/819) and from six companions of the sixth Imām.<sup>97</sup> There is no significant age gap between him and both of the Aḥmad b. Muḥammads. Further, although they were Qummī scholars, it was very common for the scholars of the time to travel back and forth between Qum and al-Kūfa, which were major Shīʿite learning centres. Hence we can conclude that al-Ḥasan

<sup>93</sup>Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 79–80.; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 25.

<sup>94</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 46.

<sup>95</sup>Muṣṭafā b. al-Ḥusayn Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 5 (Qum, No date), p. 56.

<sup>96</sup>An Arab subtribe.

<sup>97</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 46.

b. Maḥbūb was the source for the tradition and consequently, the tradition can be traced to the last years of al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb.

The person before al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb is 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām Thābit al-Ḥaddād (d. 172) who was a Kūfī scholar and *mawlā* of Banū 'Ajl,<sup>98</sup> a clan of Bakr b. Wā'il.<sup>99</sup> He reported traditions from the fourth, fifth and sixth Imāms,<sup>100</sup> as well as Sunnī traditions.<sup>101</sup> Al-Ṭūsī mentions that his *kunya* was Maymūn abū Miqdām, and that he narrated traditions from the fifth Imām through Jābir.<sup>102</sup> However, some of al-Ṭūsī's assertions were contested by al-Khū'ī as he rejected the idea that 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām reported from the fourth Imām, on the ground that there is no *sanad* in which 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām reports a tradition from him. He further argues that he was not a companion of the fourth Imām but only of the fifth and the sixth Imāms.<sup>103</sup> Al-Khū'ī also argued against the *kunya* Maymūn abū Miqdām; he believed that this was al-Ṭūsī's error as al-Miqdām did not use this *kunya*. His proof is that al-Najāshī does not mention this *kunya* in his *Rijāl*. Al-Khū'ī's argument certainly makes sense as there is no tradition in which 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām reports from the fourth Imām.<sup>104</sup>

Another important issue regarding 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām is the confusion regarding his name. The tenth and eleventh-century prominent Shī'ite scholar Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī, in his *Rijāl*, states the name as 'Umar b. abī al-Miqdām, referring to 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām.<sup>105</sup> <sup>106</sup> Al-Tafrishī concludes in his *Naqd al-Rijāl* that 'Umar b. abī al-Miqdām and 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām were the same person.<sup>107</sup> However, this information is rejected by al-Mīlānī who, upon examining all the *rijāl* works, concludes that there was no person by the name of 'Umar b. abī al-Miqdām and no *asānīd* mention this name. Therefore, al-Mīlānī postulates that al-Tafrishī must have confused 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām Thābit with 'Amr abī al-Miqdām b. Harm (*ha-ra-mim*) who is an unknown person.<sup>108</sup>

According to Sunnī sources, Ibn abī al-Miqdām was an extremist Shī'ite who cursed the companions of the Prophet, including the first three caliphs, and went as far as to consider them apostates. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal reports that 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām displayed a particular hatred towards the third caliph 'Uthmān and cursed him.<sup>109</sup> Ibn abī al-Miqdām died in 172, theoretically making it possible for al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb to have received the tradition

<sup>98</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 278.

<sup>99</sup> Hossein Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shiite Literature*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 2003), p. 205.

<sup>100</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 278.

<sup>101</sup> Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>102</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 111.

<sup>103</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafsīl Tabaqāt al-Ruwāt* (No place, no date), vol. 14, p. 80.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Al-Ghaḍā'irī was a classmate of both al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī; they all studied with al-Ghaḍā'irī's father al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ghaḍā'irī (d. 411/1020). Al-Ghaḍā'irī then became a shaykh of al-Najāshī. However, some Shī'ite scholars such as al-Khū'ī and Āghā Buzurg Ṭahrānī have disputed the authenticity of the work. (Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafsīl Tabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, 5th edition, vol. 10 (Tehran, 1992), p. 318.; Āghā Buzurg Ṭahrānī, *Al-Dharī'a Ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'a*, vol. 10, pp. 88–89.)

<sup>106</sup> Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī al-Wāsiṭī al-Baghdādī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*, 1st edition, (Qum, 2001), p. 111.

<sup>107</sup> Muṣṭafā b. al-Ḥusayn Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 5, pp. 123–124.

<sup>108</sup> Sayyid Fāḍil al-Ḥusaynī al-Mīlānī, "'Umar b. abī al-Miqdām'" (Office of Āyatullāh Sayyid Fāḍil al-Ḥusaynī al-Mīlānī), accessed May 31, 2014, <http://almilani.com/>.

<sup>109</sup> Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol. 1, p. 205.

from him. However, according to the *isnād-cum-matn* method, since we do not have any affirmative evidence through an *isnād* analysis it is not possible to trace the tradition to Ibn abī al-Miqdām and date it to the time period in which he lived.

The *sanad* then reaches Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju‘fī (d. 127/744–45 or 128/745–46) who was a Kūfī scholar and very well-known to both Shī‘ite and Sunnī scholars of *hadīth*. He was a companion of the fifth and the sixth Imāms and extensively narrated traditions from both of them. He influenced both Shī‘ite and Sunnī scholars of his time as many of the prominent early Abbasid era scholars studied with him and reported traditions from him, albeit they opposed his Shī‘ite views.<sup>110</sup> His *kunya* was Abū ‘Abdallāh and/or Abū Muḥammad.<sup>111</sup> Al-Najāshī expressed negative views regarding the merits of Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju‘fī and mentioned that a number of people who have reported from him are disparaged and undermined, such as ‘Amr b. Shimr, Mufaḍḍal b. Ṣāliḥ, Munakhkhal b. Jamīl and Yūsuf b. Ya‘qūb.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, al-Ṭūsī refrains from passing any judgment about him and only gives general information about his works and usual paths of transmission.<sup>113</sup>

There have been mixed views regarding the reliability of Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju‘fī both in Shī‘ite and Sunnī sources due to his “esoteric views”.<sup>114</sup> He was also accused of being the second head of Muḥrīyya, a Shī‘ite extremist sect founded by Muḥhira b. Sa‘īd al-Bajālī (d. 119). However, according to Modarressi, this allegation was false since there were indications that he remained faithful to the fifth and sixth Imāms.<sup>115</sup> Further, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī<sup>116</sup> (d. between 300/912–310/922), a renowned Shī‘ite scholar and theologian who resided in Baghdad, in his only surviving work *Kitāb Firaq al-Shī‘a*<sup>117</sup> argued that the extremist views associated with Jābir b. al-Ju‘fī were false. This is because they were attributed to him after his death (in 127 or 128) by some of the followers of ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya al-Ṭālibī (d. 129 or 131), who developed extremist ideas after ‘Abdallāh b. Mu‘āwiya al-Ṭālibī’s death and attributed these ideas to Jābir b. al-Ju‘fī.<sup>118</sup>

The evidence for either view is not conclusive. Nevertheless, although his grading as a transmitter by the Muslim biographers is not much of a concern for *isnād* analysis, his rumoured *ghālī* tendencies should be taken into consideration, as they may indicate a motivation for him to fabricate the tradition. But since there is no certainty on the issue, this information on its own is not enough to reach a conclusion. At this stage, it is best to move on with *matn* analysis and see if we can get an earlier result. The *isnād* analysis of the

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.

<sup>111</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 127.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>113</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 45.

<sup>114</sup> Maria Dakake, “Jāber Jo‘fī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (New York, 2007), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jaber-jofi>; Wilferd Madelung, “Jābir al-Ju‘fī,” (ed.) P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill Online, 2012), [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djabir-al-djufi-SIM\\_8481](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djabir-al-djufi-SIM_8481); Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol 1, pp. 86–8.

<sup>115</sup> Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol 1, p. 87.

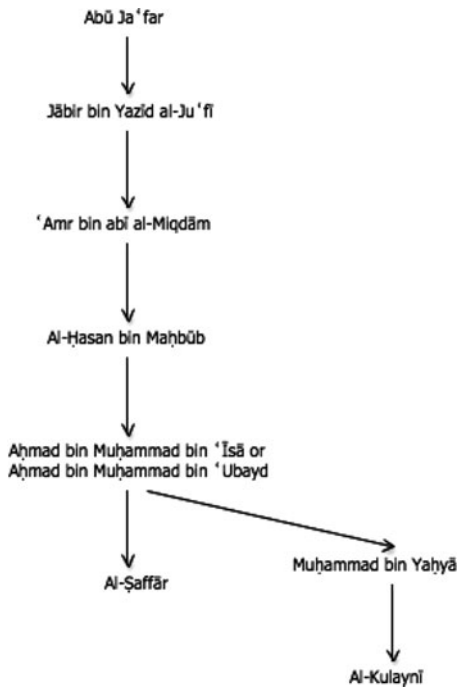
<sup>116</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī was one of the first Shī‘ite theologians to merge Shī‘ite teachings with Mu‘tazilī theology. *Kitāb Firaq al-Shī‘a* is believed to be the genuine work of al-Nawbakhtī but this view is contested. (Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi and Andrew Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature*, 2nd edition (Abingdon, 2013)).

<sup>117</sup> The work has been translated into English under the title *Shī‘a Sects* (Al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Shī‘a Sects*, Translated by Abbas Kadhīm (London, 2007).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*



tradition indicates that this tradition can only be traced back to the first quarter of the third century, al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb's date of death, 224.



#### Matn analysis

We have two versions for this tradition, the first of which is from al-Ṣaffār and the second from al-Kulaynī. Both *mutūn* give an account of a statement allegedly made by the fifth Imām, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir, regarding the collection and preservation of the Qur'ān by 'Alī and the following Imāms. Although Abū Ja'far did not witness the collection of the Qur'ān by 'Alī, he had access to the people who could have informed him about the event. In addition, since the *mutūn* are also about the preservation of the Qur'ān by 'al-A'imma', (the Imāms) it is possible but cannot be proven that he was in possession of the copy at the time as he was considered to be the fifth Imām.

The *mutūn* of the two versions at hand (S<sub>3</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>) are slightly longer than the versions that we treated in the previous section and seem to contain more information; they are especially significant in that the name of 'Alī b. abī Ṭālib as a collector of the Qur'ān is explicitly mentioned. Similarly to the previous versions (S<sub>1</sub> and K<sub>1</sub>), both are in the statement format, therefore giving a general testimony of the event that includes the collection of the Qur'ān by 'Alī and its preservation by the later Imāms. In this sense, aside from S<sub>2</sub>'s different format in which the context of the statement was given, the structure of all five versions that we have examined so far is the same.

The *mutūn* of S<sub>3</sub> and K<sub>2</sub> seem to be identical save minor differences. They both begin with pronoun *mā* and continue with the same statement, except K<sub>2</sub> uses the word *idda'ā* instead of *yaqūlu*. Then S<sub>3</sub> continues as an active sentence with the use of *anzala Allāhu illā*, while at this stage K<sub>2</sub> turns into a passive sentence and uses *unzila illā*. In addition, S<sub>3</sub> uses *anzala* instead of *nazzala*. Aside from these, there are no significant differences between the two versions.

The statement was obviously made in defensive form; perhaps someone questioned the Imām regarding the other compilations of the Qur'ān and in reply, he issued a strong statement against those who “claim” that they have collected the Qur'ān, and accused them of being great liars (*kaddhābun*). It might be also in the context of general claims about the collection of the Qur'ān by the first three caliphs. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir felt obliged to counter these claims and to issue a bold statement, so as a result he uttered this tradition.

Whatever the context, the initial examination indicates that the versions are certainly interdependent as the structures are strikingly similar. The two versions seem to stem from a master version and it is likely that the few variations occurred when Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā or Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh transmitted the tradition to al-Ṣaffār and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā. It is also probable that Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā or Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh paraphrased his version when he reported the tradition, or the recorders al-Ṣaffār and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā edited the tradition upon receiving it. Consequently, the initial analysis of the versions proves the existence of a common link, who was most likely Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā or alternatively Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh. These are possibilities and we can only come to a conclusion upon examining the *mutūn* in detail.

An important point to consider at this junction is that all five versions begin with the Arabic particle *mā*, which is used as a negation. This is yet another strong indication that there was a single source for all these versions and since the versions intersect at Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī, one could conclude that it was he who forged and/or disseminated the versions. Considering his controversial personality and alleged *ghālī* tendencies this is not inconceivable. However, we still have a version that skips Jābir and reaches the fifth Imām through 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī, preventing us from reaching such a conclusion.

The other problematic issue is that apart from the version that goes through 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī, there are two different traditions and four versions that seem very similar to each other and were reported by the same person, Jābir. If this was an original statement of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir, there are two possible explanations for how it happened that Jābir managed to report the two similar traditions from Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir: First, there were two occasions on which Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir made the statement and Jābir was present on both occasions, hence managing to report two different traditions on the issue. This seems rather implausible; considering that there were not many traditions on the issue and most of the existing traditions were reported by Jābir, it is unlikely that he would be present on both of the occasions when Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir made the statements. Moreover, the differences between the versions are so minimal that it would not have been necessary to record both of them separately. Having said that, one should bear in mind that Jābir was one of the first Shī'ites

and Muslim scholars who authored a *tafsīr* work;<sup>119</sup> thus it would be normal for him to show interest in traditions regarding the Qur'ān and to collect them.

As we have seen, the striking similarities in the *mutūn* of the variants indicate that there is a strong possibility that the variants were derived from each other. This leads us to consider a second possibility: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir made the statement on only one occasion and Jābir was present when the event took place. He reported the tradition to two people ('Amr b. abī al-Miqdām and al-Munakhkhal) at different times and therefore his memory failed him on either occasion, resulting in two different variants which are thought to be different traditions. Although this scenario is not improbable, we have evidence that Jābir was among the few early scholars who wrote down the traditions that he received<sup>120</sup> and therefore, it is likely that he would have transmitted them from his records, not from his memory. Especially considering the vast number of traditions that he possessed, this makes more sense since it would have been difficult for him to recall all the traditions that he had.

The third possibility is that someone in the transmission line tampered with Jābir's original report by adding to it. If this is the case, the *isnād-cum-matn* method might be able to identify this person. In order to do so we should find out which version(s) were corrupted. A quick examination of the *asānīd* of the variants would rule out the possibility of corruption in variants S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and K<sub>1</sub> which we have called group one. The evidence for this conclusion is the *sanad* of S<sub>2</sub>, which goes through a different transmission line and gives us reasonable confidence to argue that it would have been more difficult to corrupt this version since we have two different *sanad* paths for variants S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and K<sub>1</sub>.

The comparison of the *mutūn* of the two groups of variants (S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, K<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>3</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>) backs up this finding, since the *mutūn* of the first group are more concise and do not carry any offensive statement; rather they are informative. The *mutūn* of the second group, however, are obviously aimed at accusing and insulting individuals who claimed to have collected the Qur'ān and hence carry a strong sectarian undertone. Therefore, evidence from both *isnād* and *matn* analysis points to the variants of group two. The *asānīd* of variants S<sub>3</sub> and K<sub>2</sub> go through a single transmission line, therefore making them more vulnerable to tampering by transmitters. At this point, we can study the transmitters in the *isnād* in order to identify a possible culprit for the corruption.

As we have examined above, there are two people in the chain of narration who might have had the motivation to tamper with the tradition and may be considered suspects: Jābir and 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām. Among these two, the chances of Jābir tampering with the tradition remain slim since he also transmitted what we considered the master version; it is unlikely that he transmitted both the original and the corrupted version. If he had such an objective, he could have kept the master version to himself and disseminated the version that he had tampered with. Disseminating two versions that have an almost identical structure would have been embarrassing for him as his students would have immediately noticed the striking similarities between the two versions and figured out that at least one, if not both of them, was corrupted. Furthermore, as we have covered above, allegations that he was

<sup>119</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 127.

<sup>120</sup>Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol. 1, p. 92.

an extremist remain inconclusive; therefore we cannot be sure if he had the motivation to produce a tampered version of the tradition.

On the other hand, there is no doubt regarding the motivation of ‘Amr b. abī al-Miqdām who openly expressed his enmity towards the companions and showed a special hatred towards the third caliph ‘Uthmān who is widely accepted as the person who commissioned the collection of the official version of the Qur’ān. Is it possible that ‘Amr heard the tradition from Jābir and changed it to use it in his campaign against ‘Uthmān? Jābir was a very prominent scholar of his time and, as we have discussed earlier, it was not uncommon practice for the extremists to attribute their ideas to him<sup>121</sup> after his death, perhaps in order to legitimise them. Consequently, it is very likely that ‘Amr b. abī al-Miqdām was the one who tampered with the tradition due to his extremist views. This view can be further enforced by the fact that only the variants that come through ‘Amr contain the name of ‘Alī as the “collector” of the Qur’ān; all the other variants refer to the Imāms in general. Therefore, it is probable that ‘Amr also inserted ‘Alī’s name into the text, thereby giving the word *jama‘a* the meaning of the collection/collation of the Qur’ān and countering the traditions that are about ‘Uthmān’s collection/collation of the Qur’ān.

Nevertheless, the similarities between the texts of S1, S2, S3, K1 and K2 strengthen our earlier conclusion that the traditions are interdependent and can be dated back to Abū Ja‘far and his date of death, 114.

### Group Three Variants

There are two more variants that were reported on the authority of Abū Ja‘far. One of them was recorded in ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī’s (d. 307/980) work entitled *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and the other in *Baṣā’ir. Tafsīr al-Qummī* is one of the most important sources of traditions for the Shī’ite faith as it is considered one of the earliest sources. Al-Qummī was one of the teachers of Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb b. Ishāq al-Kulaynī. Shī’ite scholars have generally accepted the work as an authentic source as the author informs that he only narrates from reliable narrators.<sup>122</sup> However, they also argue that the copy that exists today is not the same as that which was written by al-Qummī, as the book consists of two parts. One part is narrated by al-Qummī to his student ‘Abū Faḍl al-‘Abbās. The second part consists of ‘Abū Faḍl al-‘Abbās’s own chains of narration that are independent from al-Qummī’s chains of narration, which go back to Abū Ja‘far through his companion Abū Jārūd.<sup>123</sup> The tradition at hand is not reported through Abū Jārūd; hence we may assume that it is collected by al-Qummī himself, who died in year 329.

#### 6. Al-Qummī’s version (Q1):

Ḥaddathanā Ja‘far b. Aḥmad qāla ḥaddathanā ‘Abd al-Karīm b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm qāla ḥaddathanā Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī ‘an Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl ‘an Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī ‘an Abī

<sup>121</sup>See Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 127; Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol. 1, pp. 87–93.

<sup>122</sup>Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt* (Tehran, 1976), pp. 49–50.

<sup>123</sup>Ja‘far Ṣubḥānī, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 313–315.

Ja'far ('a) qāla: Mā ahadun min hādhihi al-umma jama'a al-Qur'an illā waṣiyyu Muḥammadin (ṣ).<sup>124 125</sup>

#### 7. Al-Ṣaffār's version (S4):

Ḥaddathanā 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir 'an Abī 'Abdallāh al-Barqī 'an al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān 'an Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl 'an al-Thumālī 'an Abī Ja'far ('a) qāla: qāla Abū Ja'far ('a): Mā ajidu min hādhihi al-umma man jama'a al-Qur'an illā al-awṣiyā'u.<sup>126 127</sup>

In both *asānīd*, Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī reports the tradition from Abū Ja'far and Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl reports from Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī. After Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl the chain of transmission separates into two strands as al-Qummī's version goes through Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qurashī, 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm, Ja'far b. Aḥmad, and 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, while al-Ṣaffār's version goes through al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Barqī, 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir and al-Ṣaffār.

#### Isnād Analysis

Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī received the tradition from Ja'far b. Aḥmad. There is not much information about Ja'far b. Aḥmad in *rijāl* works; he is thought to be an unknown person. The only information we have about him is that he was a disciple of the tenth Imām, 'Alī al-Hādī al-Naqī (212 or 214/827 or 217/830–254/868)<sup>128</sup> and that he reports several traditions in *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. Although there is not much information about him, since we know that he was a disciple of Imām al-Hādī, we may say that it was possible for al-Qummī to receive the tradition from him and include it in his book. Ja'far b. Aḥmad received the tradition from 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm who is also an unknown person.<sup>129</sup> He only appears in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and reports 15 traditions from Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qurashī, and Ja'far b. Aḥmad reports traditions from him.

The next person in the chain of narration is Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qurashī, whose full name was Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā Abū Ja'far al-Qurashī. His nickname (*laqab*) was Abū Samīna and he was a nephew of Khallād al-Maqrī'. Al-Qurashī initially resided in Kūfa but then moved to Qum. He was believed to be a disciple of the eighth Imām, 'Alī Riḍā.<sup>130</sup> Al-Najāshī considered him very weak, corrupt in his faith and an unscrupulous person. He was also accused of being a *ghālī*.<sup>131</sup>

However, al-Khū'ī mentions the possibility that two different personalities have been united under the name of Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā abū Ja'far al-Qurayshī.

<sup>124</sup>'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. Ṭayyib Mūsawī Jazā'irī, vol. 2 (Qum, 1983), p. 451.

<sup>125</sup>Translation: No one from this nation (*umma*) has collected the Qur'an except the trustee (*waṣiyyu Muḥammadin*) of Muḥammad (ṣ).

<sup>126</sup>Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt fī Faḍā'il Āl Muḥammad*, p. 194.

<sup>127</sup>Translation: No one from this nation can be found who has collated the Qur'an, except the trustees.

<sup>128</sup>Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, vol. 5 (No place, no date), p. 16.

<sup>129</sup>There is no information about him in the *rijāl* works.

<sup>130</sup>Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafsīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, vol. 17 (No place, no date), pp. 319–323.

<sup>131</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl Al-Najāshī*, p. 332.

He argues that it is probable that the nickname Abū Samīna belonged to some other person who was undoubtedly a weak and unscrupulous person but for some reason was confused with Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī; therefore those traits were falsely attributed to him.<sup>132</sup> Al-Khū’ī’s argument casts doubt on the allegation that Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī was an extremist. Still, even if we accept al-Khū’ī’s argument, there are two other problematic individuals in the chain of narration before it reaches Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl. We may continue examining the remaining two people in the chain as al-Ṣaffār’s version also goes through Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl and Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī before reaching Abū Ja‘far.

Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl b. Ghazwān b. Jarīr was a Kūfī scholar who authored several books and was also a prolific *ḥadīth* transmitter. He was well regarded in both Sunnī and Shī’ite sources and considered *thiqa*. He died in 194/807 or 195/808.<sup>133 134</sup> He was believed to be a disciple of the sixth Imām and was a client of the tribe *Banū Ḍabbah*.<sup>135</sup> Despite the problematic issues regarding Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī we have the information that he was a disciple of the eighth Imām who lived between years 148 and 203, and therefore it is possible for Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qurashī to have met and received the tradition from Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl b. Ghazwān who died in year 194. The last person in the *sanad*, before it reaches Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir, is Abū Ḥamza Thābit b. Dīnār al-Thumālī. He was a Kūfī client of al-Muḥallab b. abī Ṣufra and a very prominent scholar and *ḥadīth* transmitter.<sup>136</sup> He was a disciple of three Shī’ite Imāms: ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. Al-Thumālī authored several books, including a book on the exegesis of the Qur’ān, and died in 148–150 AH<sup>137</sup> He was reportedly praised by Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and highly esteemed among Shī’ite scholars. The biographical information confirms that it is possible for Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl to have received the tradition from Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī and for Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī to have received it from Muḥammad al-Bāqir. As for al-Ṣaffār’s version, he apparently received the tradition from ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Āmir b. ‘Imrān. There is no information about him in the classical *rijāl* works; al-Khū’ī is the only scholar who mentions him briefly<sup>138</sup> and this does not include information regarding his date of death or place of activity.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Āmir b. ‘Imrān received the tradition from Aḥmad b. abī ‘Abdallāh al-Barqī who was a Qummī scholar, the son of Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī. He was also a contemporary of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. abī Ḥammād, who died around the second quarter of the third century, as al-Najāshī mentions that when ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. abī Ḥammād visited Qum, he stayed in the house of Aḥmad b. abī ‘Abdallāh al-Barqī.<sup>139</sup> He was also a disciple of the ninth and tenth Imāms and a very prominent Shī’ite scholar of his time who authored

<sup>132</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū’ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafṣīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, vol. 17, pp. 319–323.

<sup>133</sup> Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, First edition, vol. 9 (Beirut, 1984), pp. 405–406.

<sup>134</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Jawād Ḥayyūmī Iṣfahānī (Qum, 1994), p. 292.

<sup>135</sup> Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘a*, vol. 10 (Beirut, no date), pp. 37–39.

<sup>136</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 114.

<sup>137</sup> Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, vol. 1, p. 377.

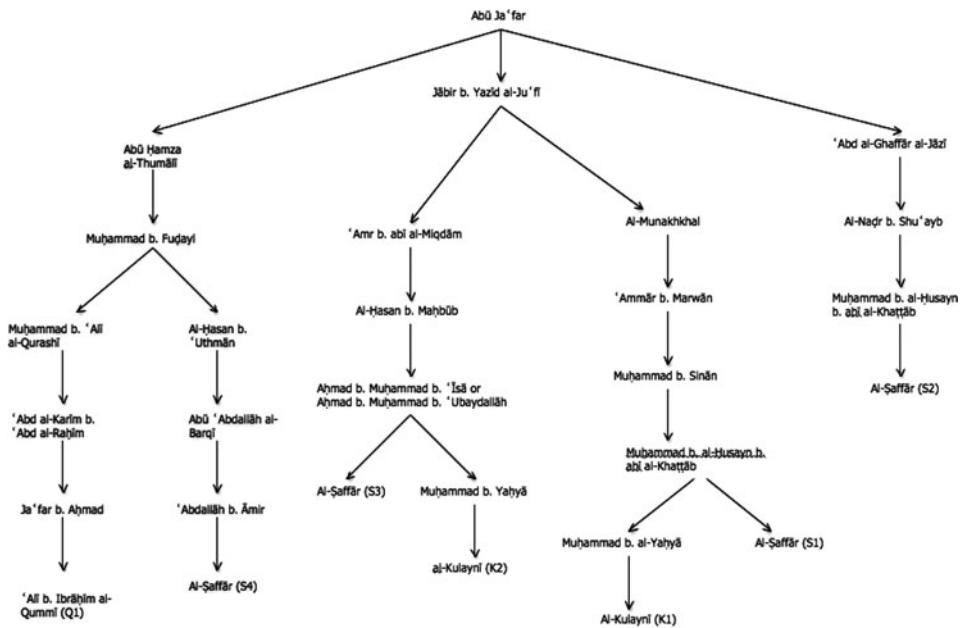
<sup>138</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū’ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa-Tafṣīl Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, vol. 11 (No place, no date), pp. 244–245.

<sup>139</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Asadī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 229.

a number of books, most importantly *al-Mahāsīn*.<sup>140 141</sup> In addition, Al-Barqī, who died in 274/888 or 280/894, was a *shaykh* of 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī.

Although we do not know much about 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir, with the help of the information provided above we may conclude that there was not a significant time gap between al-Ṣaffār and Aḥmad b. abī 'Abdallāh al-Barqī and thus it is possible for 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir to have seen both of them and transmit the tradition.

Al-Barqī apparently received the tradition from al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān who was also an unknown person. Al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān received the tradition from Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl who, as we have noted above, died in 194/807 or 195/808. Although al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān is an unknown person and we do not have any information regarding him, it is still possible for him to have transmitted the tradition. This is based on the conclusion that there was no significant time gap between al-Barqī and Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl; one person would have been enough to connect the two to each other. From Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl, the transmission line goes through Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī and reaches Abū Ja'far.



Matn Analysis

The texts of both versions are very short; they contain similar themes and some similar wording which gives the impression that they are interdependent. However, they are not identical in the sense that there are signs of paraphrasing in the texts. They both begin with particle *mā* but al-Ṣaffār's version contains an additional pronoun (*man*) and states that the collators of the Qur'an were *al-awṣiyā'u*, while al-Qummī's version states that the collator

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>141</sup> On al-Barqī see Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism*; Roy Vilozny. "A Shi'i Life Cycle According to Al-Barqī's Kitāb al-Mahāsīn." *Arabica* 54, 3 (July 2007), pp. 362–396.



of the Qur'ān was *wasiyyu Muḥammadin*. At first sight, the differences between the two variants might be a manifestation of the oral transmission process, indicating that although the variants come from the same source, they underwent changes when transmitted orally. These changes are usually natural and part of a healthy process of transmission.

However, the phrase *wasiyyu Muḥammadin* indicates an important difference; it specifically refers to 'Alī b. abī Ṭālīb as the collator of the Qur'ān. Such an allusion also suggests that *jama'a al-Qur'ān* refers to the physical collection of the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, we have other variants (K<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>) which state that the collators of the Qur'ān were *al-awṣiyā'u*. It may be possible that the occurrence of *wasiyyu Muḥammadin* was an error and was intended to refer to all the Imāms. But it is more likely that *wasiyyu Muḥammadin* indicates one of the transmitters' attempt to give priority to 'Alī in the physical collection of the Qur'ān.

As the texts are very short we cannot say much about them, but it is obvious that they are interdependent and presumably were paraphrased during either the recording or oral transmission process. Therefore, through examining the texts we can trace the variants to a common source, or in this specific case to a partial common link, who was Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl. Then, through him via Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī, it reaches Abū Ja'far. Upon examination of the last two variants (Q<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>) it becomes clear that Abū Ja'far is both the common link and source for these seven variants and there are four pcls: Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl, Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā or Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh, and Ibn abī Khaṭṭāb.

Although these two variants (Q<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>) are short, they are very helpful in the evaluation of this complex of traditions. The *mutūn* of K<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>4</sub> mention only *al-awṣiyā'*. According to the *asānīd*, these texts go back to three different transmitters from Abū Ja'far ('Abd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī, Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī, and Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī). This seems to be the original version of Abū Ja'far's statement wherein the words *jama'a al-Qur'ān kullahu ḡāhirahu wa-bāṭinahu ghayru al-awṣiyā'* indicate not that the collection is comparable to that accomplished by Zayd b. Thābit, but rather refer to a complete knowledge of the text and its correct understanding.

In K<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>3</sub> of the Abū Ja'far complex, 'Alī is added to *al-awṣiyā'* and Q<sub>1</sub> even replaces *al-awṣiyā'* with *wasiyyu Muḥammadin*, i.e. 'Alī. These changes must be ascribed to one of the transmitters after Jābir b. Yazīd in the case of S<sub>3</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>, and in Q<sub>1</sub>, to one of the transmitters after Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl, who tried to give 'Alī the priority among *al-awṣiyā'* in the "collection" (perhaps in its literal meaning) and preservation of the Qur'ān. But this was probably not the original statement of Abū Ja'far. As a result of the study of the *ḥadīth* clusters that are attributed to Abū Ja'far we have established three independent chains of transmission that reach Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Bāqir, which makes him both the common link and the source of the traditions. Abū Ja'far resided in Madīna and therefore we may say that the traditions were in circulation in year 114, in Madīna.

### Summary and Conclusion

We have, in total, examined seven traditions that were attributed to Abū Ja'far. We found that we could initially trace variants S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub> and K<sub>1</sub> back to Ibn abī al-Khaṭṭāb's sources

Muḥammad b. Sinān (d. 220) and al-Naḍr b. Shuʿayb (d. 210). Further, with the combined help of *isnād* and *matn* analysis I managed to trace the traditions back to Abū Jaʿfar and his date of death, 114. This was largely a result of my understanding that despite the nuances in the versions, the text structures are all similar, as in all of them the statement starts with the expression *Mā yastaḥīʿu aḥadun*. Also, they all contain the expression *ghayru al-awṣiyāʾ* and some other similar words. Thus, I deduced that the versions are interdependent and must come from a common source. At this stage I discovered that until the chains of narration reach Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Bāqir there is no intersection point for the versions, leading to the conclusion that Abū Jaʿfar must have been the source for these traditions.

During the course of *matn* analysis of the traditions, I noted that the word *jamʿ* could refer to either the true and definitive understanding of the Qurʾān, or the physical act of collating the Qurʾān. The reading of the texts (S1, S2 and K1) initially gave the former meaning, especially the wording in K1, *ʿindahū jamīʿ al-Qurʾān*, where it is apparent that the subject of discussion was the true and definitive understanding of the Qurʾān.

However, at the end of the *matn* analysis, I reached the conclusion that the *matn* of K1 contains transmission errors due to the use of *jamīʿ al-Qurʾān kulluhu*, which is a doubling as *jamīʿ al-Qurʾān* and *al-Qurʾān kulluhu* mean the same. The error might have taken form in that a copyist wrote *jamīʿ* instead of *jamaʿa* or read it from the manuscript he was copying, because the word was not well legible and he (or a later copyist) inserted *ʿinda* in order to make the sentence more comprehensible. It may also be possible that someone deliberately changed the original wording by placing the word *ʿinda* between *anna* and *hu* and changing *jamaʿa* to *jamīʿ*. In any case, I inferred that version K1 seems to be corrupt.

As for the second group of traditions (S3 and K2), I also detected a possible corruption in the text with the inclusion of a harsh statement against those who “claim” that they have collected the Qurʾān, accusing them of being great liars (*kaddhābūn*). I identified ʿAmr b. abī al-Miqdām as the possible culprit for the corruption due to his anti-caliph campaign, especially his strong dislike for ʿUthmān. The similarities between the texts of S1, S2 and K1 strengthened our earlier conclusion that the traditions are interdependent and can be dated back to Abū Jaʿfar and his date of death, 114.

Upon examination of the last two variants (Q1 and S4) it became clear that the meaning of the word *jamʿ* is used to refer to the true and definitive understanding of the Qurʾān. This is due to the fact that the *mutūn* of K1, S1, S2 and S4 mention only *al-awṣiyāʾ*. According to the *asānīd*, these texts go back to three different transmitters from Abū Jaʿfar (ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Jāzī, Jābir b. Yazīd al-Juʿfī, and Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī). This seems to be the original version of Abū Jaʿfar’s statement, wherein the words *jamaʿa al-Qurʾān kullahu ḏāhirahu wa-bāḥinahu ghayru al-awṣiyāʾ* refer not to a collection comparable to that accomplished by Zayd b. Thābit, but rather a complete knowledge of the text and its correct understanding.

The findings have three implications. First, the traditions allude to the existence of the Qurʾān as a unified text at the time, and a concern among some Muslims regarding its true and definitive understanding. However, this limited study is unable to make any judgement about the content of the Qurʾān. Second, they also suggest an ongoing debate regarding the collection of the Qurʾān (concerning who was its first collector/collator) during the second

Islamic century, and some Shī'ite scholars were involved in this debate by giving the priority of collecting and preserving the Qur'ān to 'Alī. It is likely that 'Amr b. abī al-Miqdām, possibly for the purposes of his sectarian campaign, tampered with an original tradition of Abū Ja'far to state that 'Alī collected the Qur'ān. Thus, the third implication of the findings is that the *isnād-cum-matn* method is competent to detect *ḥadīth* forgery in its analysis of Shī'ite sources. <[kara.seyfeddin@gmail.com](mailto:kara.seyfeddin@gmail.com)>

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