



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME VII

**The Foundation of
The Community**

translated and annotated
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mah is an evil thing for the Jews and the Arab Hypocrites. They say, 'If Muḥammad were a prophet, his companion would not have died'; but I have no power with God either for myself or for my companion."

According to Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-A'lā—Yazīd b. Zuray'—Ma'mar—al-Zuhri—Anas: The Messenger of God cauterised As'ad b. Zurārah for a whitlow (*shawkah*).⁸

[1261] According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq—'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatādah: Abū Umāmah As'ad b. Zurārah had been the representative (*naqīb*)⁹ of Banū al-Najjār, and when he died they came as a group to the Messenger of God and said, "O Messenger of God, you know what position this man held among us; appoint one of us to his place to perform for us the functions he used to perform." The Messenger of God replied, "You are my maternal uncles,¹⁰ and I am one of you; I will be your representative." The Messenger of God was unwilling to single out any one of them for this honour to the disadvantage of others. As a result, it was counted a distinction for the people of Banū al-Najjār that the Messenger of God was their representative.

In this year there died Abū Uḥayḥah in al-Ṭā'if with all his wealth, and al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah and al-'Āṣ b. Wā'il al-Sahmī in Mecca.¹¹

The Marriage with 'Ā'ishah

In this year also the Messenger of God consummated his marriage with 'Ā'ishah.¹² This was in Dhū al-Qa'dah (May–June 623) eight

8. The identification of *shawkah* with "whitlow" is based on Hava's Dictionary. Elsewhere it is said to be a redness of face or body (Lane; Lisān al-'Arab; s.v.).

9. At the second meeting at al-'Aqabah (June 622) twelve men were appointed as *nuqabā'* (sing. *naqīb*) or "representatives" of the Anṣār, the Muslims from Medina. They were leading men in their clans, but their function is obscure; see Watt, *Mecca*, 145–8; *Medina*, 248.

10. He is referring to the fact that his great-grandmother, Salmā bt. 'Amr, wife of Hāshim, was of Banū al-Najjār.

11. These were three powerful Meccan leaders of an older generation who had opposed Muḥammad; see Watt, *Mecca*, index.

12. 'Ā'ishah was the daughter of Abū Bakr, Muḥammad's chief lieutenant, and the marriage was important in cementing the relationship of the two men. According to the statements given below, the original marriage, which could be considered rather a betrothal, must have been about April or May, 620 or 621, since

months after his arrival in Medina according to some accounts, or in Shawwāl (April–May 623) seven months after his arrival according to others. He had married her in Mecca three years before the Hijrah, after the death of Khadijah. At that time she was six or, according to other accounts, seven years old.

According to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bayān al-Sukkārī—Muḥammad b. Yazīd—Ismā'il (that is, Ibn Abī Khālid)—'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī al-Ḍahhāk—a man from Quraysh—'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad: 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣafwān together with another person came to 'Ā'ishah, and 'Ā'ishah said (to the latter), "O so-and-so, have you heard what Hafṣah has been saying?"¹³ He said, "Yes, O Mother of the Faithful." 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣafwān asked her, "What is that?" She replied, "There are nine special features in me that have not been in any woman, except for what God bestowed on Maryam bt. 'Imrān.¹⁴ By God, I do not say this to exalt myself over any of my companions." "What are these?" he asked. She replied, "The angel brought down my likeness; the Messenger of God married me when I was seven; my marriage was consummated when I was nine; he married me when I was a virgin, no other man having shared me with him; inspiration came to him when he and I were in a single blanket; I was one of the dearest people to him; a verse of the Qur'ān was revealed concerning me when the community was almost destroyed;¹⁵ I saw Gabriel when none of his other wives saw him; and he was taken (that is, died) in his house when there was nobody with him but the angel and myself."

According to Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabari): The Messenger of God married her, so it is said, in Shawwāl, and consummated his marriage to her in a later year, also in Shawwāl.

intercalary months presumably kept Shawwāl about the same time of the solar year.

13. Daughter of the second caliph 'Umar; married Muḥammad in 3/625. "Mother of the Faithful" was a title conferred on Muḥammad's wives in 9/630 probably; and this incident must have occurred later; see Watt, *Medina*, 286f.

14. That is, Mary the mother of Jesus (see Qur. 3.35f.; 66.12), but hardly any of the special features apply to her.

15. This refers to the scandal about 'Ā'ishah after the raid on the tribe of al-Muṣṭaliq in 5/627. The verse is held to be Qur. 24.11.

Further Reports Concerning This

According to Ibn Bashshār—Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd—Sufyān—Ismā'il b. Umayyah—'Abd Allāh b. 'Urwah—his father ('Urwah)¹⁶—'Ā'ishah: The Messenger of God married me in Shawwāl and consummated his marriage to me in Shawwāl. 'Ā'ishah liked her women's marriages to be consummated in Shawwāl.

[1263] According to Ibn Wakī'—his father—Sufyān—Ismā'il b. Umayyah—'Abd Allāh b. 'Urwah—'Urwah—'Ā'ishah: The Messenger of God married me in Shawwāl and consummated his marriage to me in Shawwāl, and which of the Messenger of God's wives did he favour more than me? 'Ā'ishah liked her women's marriages to be consummated in Shawwāl.

According to Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī): It is said that the Messenger of God consummated his marriage to her on a Wednesday in Shawwāl in the house of (her father) Abū Bakr in al-Sunḥ.¹⁷

Muslim Women Brought to Medina

In this year the Prophet sent Zayd b. Ḥārithah and Abū Rāfi' to his daughters and his wife Sawdah bt. Zam'ah, and they brought them from Mecca to Medina.¹⁸ It is said that when 'Abd Allāh b. Urayqit'¹⁹ returned to Mecca he informed 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr of the situation of his father Abū Bakr, and the latter brought his father's family to him. The party included Umm Rūmān, the mother of 'Ā'ishah, ('Ā'ishah herself) and 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr, and they were accompanied to Medina by Ṭalhah b. 'Ubayd Allāh.

16. 'Urwah, a son of al-Zubayr, had access to 'Ā'ishah because she was his maternal aunt. His important collection of historical material was known to al-Ṭabarī, partly through Ibn Ishāq and partly through other channels. See n. 56 below.

17. Al-Sunḥ was a district of Medina where Abū Bakr lodged in the house of one of the local Muslims (IH, 334).

18. Zayd b. Ḥārithah was Muḥammad's adoptive son and Abū Rāfi' his *mawlā* or client. It is usually said that they escorted to Medina his two unmarried daughters, Umm Kulthūm and Fātimah, as well as his wife Sawdah, whom he had married after Khadijah's death.

19. Or b. Arqaṭ. He was a pagan who had guided Muḥammad and Abū Bakr on their Hijrah from Mecca to Medina.

Prayers of Travellers

In this year, it is said, two *rak'ahs* were added to the prayers of those who were not travelling; up till now the prayers of those not travelling and of those travelling had both been of two *rak'ahs*. This change took place a month after the arrival of the Messenger of God in Medina, that is, on 12 Rabi' al-Ākhir (October 24, 622). Al-Wāqidi asserts that there is no difference of opinion among the people of Hijāz on this point.

Births

In this year also, some say, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr was born;²⁰ but according to al-Wāqidi, he was born in the second year of the Messenger of God's residence in Medina, in Shawwāl (April 624).

According to Al-Ḥārith—Ibn Sa'd—Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi: Ibn al-Zubayr was born in Medina twenty months after the Hijrah.

According to Abū Ja'far (al-Ṭabarī): He was the first child born to the Emigrants in the abode of the Hijrah. It is said that the Messenger of God's companions cried, "Allāh Akbar" ("God is very great"), when he was born. This was because a story was current among the Muslims that the Jews claimed that they had bewitched the Muslims so that no children would be born to them. The Muslims praised God in joy that he had shown the Jews' claim to be false. His mother, Asmā' bt. Abī Bakr, is said to have been pregnant with him when she emigrated to Medina.

It is also said that al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr was born in this year and that he was the first child born to the Anṣār after the Emigration of the Prophet to them.

Al-Wāqidi denies that this (happened in year 1).

According to Al-Ḥārith—Ibn Sa'd—al-Wāqidi—Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Sahl b. Abī Ḥathmah—his father—his grandfather: The first child born to the Anṣār was al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, who was born fourteen months after the Hijrah (about October—

20. Son of the prominent Companion al-Zubayr. He attempted to set himself up as caliph in Mecca from 64/684 to 73/692. 'Urwah (n.16) was his full brother.



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(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

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The Victory of Islam

translated and annotated
by

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The
Events of the Year

5

(JUNE 2, 626—MAY 22, 627)



Muḥammad's Marriage to Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh

In this year the Messenger of God married Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh.¹

According to Muḥammad b. 'Umar [al-Wāqidi]²—'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir al-Aslamī³—Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥabbān,⁴ who said:

1. Zaynab was the daughter of Muḥammad's paternal aunt Umaymah bt. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Jaḥsh b. Ri'āb, a member of the tribe of Asad b. Khuzaymah, who had settled in Mecca and become a confederate of the Banū Umayyah of the 'Abd Shams clan of Quraysh. Muḥammad had arranged her marriage to his freedman and adopted son, Zayd b. Ḥārithah. Cf. *Et*¹, s.v. Zainab bint Djahsh; Lings, *Muhammad*, 40; Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, 87-89.

2. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (b. 130/747 in Medina, d. 207/823 in Baghdād) was a major historian and author of *Kitāb al-maghāzī* on the military campaigns of the Prophet. See *GAS*, I, 294-97.

3. 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir al-Aslamī Abū 'Āmir al-Madanī was a traditionist who died in Medina in 150/767-68 or 151/768. As a transmitter of *ḥadīth* he was considered "weak." See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, V, 275-76.

4. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥabbān al-Anṣārī al-Māzinī was a scholar who taught in Medina. He died in 121/738-39 at the age of seventy-four. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 507-8.

The Messenger of God came to the house of Zayd b. Hārithah.⁵ (Zayd was always called Zayd b. Muḥammad.) Perhaps the Messenger of God missed him at that moment, so as to ask, "Where is Zayd?" He came to his residence to look for him but did not find him. Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh, Zayd's wife, rose to meet him. Because she was dressed only in a shift, the Messenger of God turned away from her. She said: "He is not here, Messenger of God. Come in, you who are as dear to me as my father and mother!" The Messenger of God refused to enter. Zaynab had dressed in haste when she was told "the Messenger of God is at the door." She jumped up in haste and excited the admiration of the Messenger of God, so that he turned away murmuring something that could scarcely be understood. However, he did say overtly: "Glory be to God the Almighty! Glory be to God, who causes hearts to turn!"

When Zayd came home, his wife told him that the Messenger of God had come to his house. Zayd said, "Why didn't you ask him to come in?" She replied, "I asked him, but he refused." "Did you hear him say anything?" he asked. She replied, "As he turned away, I heard him say: 'Glory be to God the Almighty! Glory be to God, who causes hearts to turn!'"

So Zayd left, and, having come to the Messenger of God, he said: "Messenger of God, I have heard that you came to my house. Why didn't you go in, you who are as dear to me as my father and mother? Messenger of God, perhaps Zaynab has excited your admiration, and so I will separate myself from her." The Messenger of God said, "Keep your wife to yourself." Zayd could find no possible way to [approach] her after that day. He would come to the Messenger of God and tell him so, but the Messenger of God

5. Zayd b. Hārithah was brought to Mecca as a slave by a nephew of Muḥammad's first wife, Khadijah. The nephew sold Zayd to Khadijah, who gave him to Muḥammad before the beginning of his calling as a prophet. Although Zayd's father later came to Mecca to free his son, Zayd refused to leave Muḥammad, who subsequently freed him and adopted him. Zayd came to be known thereafter as Zayd b. Muḥammad. He was a very early convert to Islam and emigrant to Medina; fought at Badr, Uhud, and the Trench; was present at al-Hudaybiyah; and commanded several expeditions. He died as one of the commanders of the expedition to Mu'tah in A.H. 8. See *EP*¹, s.v. Zayd b. Hārithah.

would say to him, "Keep your wife." Zayd separated from her and left her, and she became free.⁶

While the Messenger of God was talking with 'Ā'ishah,⁷ a fainting⁸ overcame him. When he was released from it, he smiled and said, "Who will go to Zaynab to tell her the good news, saying that God has married her to me?" Then the Messenger of God recited: "And when you said unto him on whom God has conferred favor and you have conferred favor, 'Keep your wife to yourself . . .'"—and the entire passage.⁹

According to 'Ā'ishah, who said: "I became very uneasy because of what we heard about her beauty and another thing, the greatest and loftiest of matters—what God had done for her by giving her in marriage. I said that she would boast of it over us."

According to 'Ā'ishah, who said: "Salmā, the maidservant of the Messenger of God, went out to inform Zaynab of this, and [Zaynab] gave [Salmā] some anklets that she was wearing."¹⁰

6. Sc. from any impediment to marriage. Ordinarily this implied abstinence from conjugal relations with the former husband for a time (*'iddah*) long enough to establish that the woman was not pregnant by him, thereby removing any uncertainty about the paternity of any future children. The passage implies that Zayd divorced Zaynab.

7. The marriage of Muḥammad to Abū Bakr's daughter 'Ā'ishah was arranged after the death of Khadijah and three years before the emigration to Medina. 'Ā'ishah was only six years old at the time, and the marriage was not consummated until seven or eight months after the Hijrah, when 'Ā'ishah was about ten years old (v. al-Ṭabarī, I, 126r). She was very beautiful and remained Muḥammad's favorite wife. See *EP*², s.v. 'Ā'ishah bt. Abī Bakr, Abbott, *Aishah the Beloved of Muḥammad*; and Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*.

8. Arabic *ghashyah*, a swoon or fainting spell, literally "a covering": here signifying an episode of revelation (*wahy*). See *EP*¹, s.v. *wahy*, for a description of such episodes.

9. Qur'an 33:37. The verse continues: ". . . and fear God." And you did hide in your mind that which God was to bring to light, and you did fear mankind whereas God had a better right that you should fear Him. So when Zayd had performed the necessary formality [of divorce] from her, We gave her unto you in marriage, so that [henceforth] there may be no sin for believers in respect of wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have performed the necessary formality [of release] from them. The commandment of God must be fulfilled." Cf. the commentary on the passage in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXII, 10-11.

10. The pronouns in the Arabic are ambiguous regarding who gave whom the anklets. My translation is suggested by a similar incident at p. 109, below, where another prospective bride of the Prophet gives the bearer of the good news a gift out of joy.

According to Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā¹¹—Ibn Wahb¹²—Ibn Zayd,¹³ who said: The Messenger of God had married Zayd b. Hārithah to Zaynab bt. Jahsh, his paternal aunt's daughter. One day the Messenger of God went out looking for Zayd. Now there was a covering of haircloth over the doorway, but the wind had lifted the covering so that the doorway was uncovered. Zaynab was in her chamber, undressed, and admiration for her entered the heart of the Prophet. After that happened, she was made unattractive to the other man.¹⁴ So he came and said, "Messenger of God, I want to separate myself from my companion." Muḥammad asked: "What is wrong? Has anything on her part disquieted you?" "No, by God," replied Zayd, "nothing she has done has disquieted me, Messenger of God, nor have I seen anything but good." The Messenger of God said to him, "Keep your wife to yourself, and fear God." That is [the meaning of] the Word of God:¹⁵ "And when you said unto him on whom God has conferred favor and you have conferred favor, 'Keep your wife to yourself, and fear God.' And you did hide in your mind that which God was to bring to light." *You did hide in your mind* [the thought] that "if he separates himself from her, I will marry her."

The Expedition to Dūmat al-Jandal and Other Events

According to al-Wāqidī: In this year he mounted an expedition against Dūmat al-Jandal¹⁶ in the month of Rabī' I.¹⁷ The reason for

11. Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā was born in 170/787 and died in 264/877. He was Egypt's leading scholar in the fields of *ḥadīth* and Qur'ān reading. Al-Ṭabarī studied with him in Egypt. See *GAS*, I, 38 (which identifies this *isnād* as pointing to a Qur'ān commentary by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd b. Aslam); and F. Rosenthal, in "General Introduction," 27.

12. 'Abdallāh b. Wahb b. Muslim al-Fihri al-Qurashī was born in Egypt in 125/743 and died in 197/812. He was a traditionist, Qur'ān commentator, and jurist, and was a student of Mālik b. Anas. See *GAS*, I, 466.

13. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd b. Aslam al-'Adawī of Medina (d. 182/798) was known primarily as a Qur'ān commentator. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, VI, 177-78; *GAS*, I, 38.

14. I.e., God caused her to become unattractive to her husband Zayd. Cf. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, 88.

15. Qur'ān 33:37.

16. Dūmat al-Jandal is an oasis in northern Arabia at the head of Wādī Sirḥān. It was inhabited by the Banū Kinānah subtribe of the Banū Kalb, plus some Christian Arabs. The present town of al-Jawf is on the site. See *EP*², s.v. Dūmat al-Jandal.

17. Rabī' I of A.H. 5 began on 31 July 626. Parallels: *IH*, III, 213 (tr. Guillaume, 449); *W*, I, 402-4 [fuller version].

it was that word reached the Messenger of God that a host had assembled there and had approached his territories; so the Messenger of God mounted an expedition against them and reached Dūmat al-Jandal, but he had no clash with the enemy. He left Sibā' b. 'Urfuṭah al-Ghifārī in charge of Medina.

According to Abū Ja'far [al-Ṭabarī]: In this year the Messenger of God made a truce with 'Uyaynah b. Ḥiṣn¹⁸ that the latter might pasture his herds in Taghlamān and its vicinity.

According to Muḥammad b. 'Umar [al-Wāqidī]—Ibrāhīm b. Ja'far—his father [Ja'far b. Maḥmūd]:¹⁹ This was because 'Uyaynah's lands became affected by drought. The Messenger of God therefore made a truce, so that 'Uyaynah might pasture his herds in Taghlamān as far as al-Marād.²⁰ The land there had become lush with pasturage because of a rain cloud that had arrived. The Messenger of God made a truce with him that he might pasture his herds there.

According to al-Wāqidī: In this year the mother of Sa'd b. 'Ubādah²¹ died while Sa'd was journeying with the Messenger of God to Dūmat al-Jandal.

The Battle of the Trench

In this year the battle of the Messenger of God at the trench took place in the month of Shawwāl,²² according to Ibn Ḥumayd²³—

18. 'Uyaynah b. Ḥiṣn b. Ḥudhayfah was leader of the Banū Fazārah subdivision of the tribe of Dhubyān (itself part of Ghatafān). See Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 91-92; and *EP*², s.v. Fazārah.

19. Parallel: *W*, II, 552. Ibrāhīm b. Ja'far b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Maslamah al-Anṣārī al-Hārithī was a frequent informant of al-Wāqidī, providing information from his father. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, II, 106.

20. Al-Marād was about 36 Arab miles from Medina, in the area of al-Taraf (present-day al-Ṣuwaydirah) on the road to Iraq, according to al-Samhūdī, *Khulāṣat al-wafā'*, 578-79, 604.

21. Sa'd b. 'Ubādah of the Banū Sā'idah clan was a leader of the tribe of al-Khazraj of Medina. See also Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 475-76.

22. Shawwāl of A.H. 5 began on 23 February 627. For general background, the article *Khandaq* in *EP*² by W. Montgomery Watt may be consulted, as well as Hamidullah, *The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad*, 29-36.

23. Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd b. Ḥayyān al-Rāzī al-Tamīmī died in al-Rayy in 248/862. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 127-31; al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, II, 259-64.