

# Gautier H.A. Juynboll, Hadith and Hadith-related Technical Terminology: *khbar* in Western Studies and Early Islamic Literature

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## 1 Introduction

Gautier H.A. Juynboll was undoubtedly one of the leading scholars of hadith literature. His vast knowledge of this literary genre and his great interest in the way it emerged and developed in content and in its formal devices is somehow unique in contemporary scholarship. He was not the only one in the last thirty years to work on this topic, of course, but there is no doubt that only few other scholars can be compared with him in knowledge or approach. Harald Motzki is a case in point and their differing attitudes and even polemical confrontations still constitute a significant contribution to the study of hadith and in particular to the momentous question of the dating of hadith and other reports on the basis of their chains of transmitters (*isnāds*). In particular, Juynboll was not convinced by the results of the so-called *isnād-cum-matn* method used and promoted by Harald Motzki and others following more or less the same line of enquiry. The disagreement concerned method (the weight to be given to the *isnād* as a tool to date the *matns* and to judge their historicity) as well as substance, since it was clear that Juynboll did not feel at ease with datings as early as the ones proposed by Motzki, who emphatically pointed to the last quarter of the 1st century AH (ca. 700 CE).<sup>1</sup>

1 Additional criticism on the usefulness of the *isnād-cum-matn* method has recently been voiced by Stephen Shoemaker, who pointed out that the proposed dating going back through this methodology to the last quarter of the first Islamic century is not so different from studies using different methods of comparison between hadith materials; see his “In Search of ‘Urwa’s *Sūra*: Some Methodological Issues in the Quest for ‘Authenticity’ in the Life of Muḥammad,” *Der Islam* 85 (2011): 257–344. Andreas Görke, Harald Motzki and Gregor Schoeler have replied to Shoemaker’s criticism in their joint article “First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad? A Debate,” *Der Islam* 89 (2012): 2–59. Apart from this confrontation, *isnād-cum-matn* is the method followed by other scholars aiming at the analysis and reconstruction of early Islamic traditions; see for instance the recent studies by Pavlovitch on the traditions on *kalāla* and the work of Elad on the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya: Pavel

The question of the *isnād* was the specific field of research of Juynboll, who throughout his scholarly life struggled with bundles, lines, dives and common links, spending most of his time in the reading rooms of Leiden University Library, all this, I assume, with one major concern, namely, to find meaning in the formal devices of the transmission and diffusion of reports through the analysis of their chains and lists of names. I believe that the quest for the meaningfulness of the traditional devices of transmission could be an apt definition of Juynboll's approach and personal feelings towards the literature he analysed. His scholarly activity was not aimed at dismissing or accepting the soundness of a text, but rather at discovering whether the presumed soundness is corroborated by the formal or technical peculiarities of the material transmitted by the early Muslim generations and of their literature.

This being the case, one of the major concerns implicit in Juynboll's oeuvre, comprised of several books, numerous articles, encyclopedia entries and other publications, was no doubt related to the terminology and the technical definition of the material which emerged in early literature and also to the terms to be used in the description of that same material. This is a sensitive point in the field of hadith studies, since it appears that no comprehensive research has been carried out so far into the use of the technical terms related to hadith literature, not even into the use of key terms such as hadith, *khabar/akhbār*, *āthār* and additional terminology or, more significantly, their use in Islamic literary genres and non-hadith literature. My argument is that to a higher degree than other major scholars of his time working on hadith, Juynboll reveals in his publications a growing sensitivity to and awareness of the problems connected to the terms he used and their relation to the various Arabic terms he encountered in the sources. In addition, in his use of the terms he shows an awareness of the problematic relation and tension between the contents of later hadith and non-hadith literature and terminology on the one hand, and the appearance of the technical terms to define this material in early traditions and literature on the other. For this reason, I shall discuss, in what follows, one specific point related to terminology, namely: the ambiguous use and meaning of the word *khabar/akhbār*, first of all in Juynboll's works in relation to western studies and subsequently in some samples from Islamic literature.

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Pavlovitch, *The Formation of the Islamic Understanding of kalāla in the Second Century AH (718–816 CE). Between Scripture and Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Amikam Elad, *The Rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762. Ṭālibīs and Early ‘Abbāsīs in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

## 2 History, Literary History and Differing Uses of *Isnāds*

In a contribution that appeared in *Le Muséon* in 1994,<sup>2</sup> Gautier Juynboll deals with the question of the supposed different uses and even attitudes adopted by early Muslim authors who produced works not belonging to proper hadith literature. Given his major concern with the formal devices of transmission, the first question posed by Juynboll was if in the display of *isnāds* and also in the relevant terminology there were specific features pointing to a meaningful difference in use and circulation and, consequently, signs of a difference in genre between the reports circulated and transmitted in early Muslim society. In the introduction of this article, he states that it is his intention to analyse the “*isnāds* in hadith collections (...) and texts which are usually called by the collective term *akhbār* literature”.<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion of this study is that in early times there was a close connection between the reports (*akhbār*) that were collected by hadith scholars and those accounts then entering historical works or even exegesis (*tafsīr*). The *quṣṣāṣ* (storytellers) played a major role, according to Juynboll, in the early spread of reports which only in the later literary transmission and redaction came to have the formal devices of hadith reports or, alternatively, took other directions. This picture is fully compatible with Juynboll’s conception that the *isnāds* emerged only later on and thus that a real distinction in literary genres is only the result of a later imposition of formal devices such as chains of transmission on variant versions of a single circulating *khbar*. Juynboll posits the beginning of this phenomenon quite late, but this is another matter. What is more important is that he considers it possible to find historical evidence of the diffusion of the reports in the dynamics of the family *isnāds* and of the later “perfect” *isnāds* of hadith literature. Many other questions are also touched upon in the article, such as the passage from orality to script, and the importance in this process of legal and even exegetical questions which prompted the formal re-styling of already existing traditional units.

One point of interest in this discussion is the terminology used by Juynboll to characterise such a situation. In the *Muséon* article he makes a clear distinction between the different kinds, not to say genres, of tradition when he mentions, as shown above, hadith on the one hand and *akhbār* on the other. Juynboll uses the terms to indicate two different categories, namely hadith and *akhbār* col-

2 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, “Early Islamic Society as Reflected in Its Use of Isnads,” *Le Muséon* 107 (1994): 151–194, reprinted in Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996, x1).

3 Juynboll, “Early Islamic Society,” 151.

lections, so as to distinguish in genre what is beyond doubt the proper hadith literature on one side and all the other traditional (i.e. based on the transmission of material ascribed to early generations) genres on the other. This appears to be the main distinction in his use of these terms. *Akhhbār* is used for reports in general, but mainly, given the specific episode analysed by him as a case-study related to the biography of Muḥammad, in relation to reports with historical content. For this reason, he further uses *khabar* in relation to a report on the Prophet mentioned in the *Sīra* by Ibn Ishāq.<sup>4</sup>

There are a few additional points to be underlined concerning this article which is the starting point in our analysis. It seems clear that in his search for the meaningfulness of the reports and report bundles or chains of transmission, Juynboll was mostly interested in the formal devices of hadith or hadith-oriented reports. Consequently, he was also interested in the proper definition of the materials circulating in early Islamic societies though, for the sake of his enquiry, he made a sharp and precise distinction between hadith collections and collections of *akhhbār*, which is related to the different use of these reports in the final literary genres in which they were fixed and written down. Furthermore, Juynboll's use of the terms seems to be more closely related to western scholarship than to what is found in Islamic literature.

### 3 The Terminological Question and the Use of *Khabar/Akhhbār* by Gautier Juynboll

As regards our concern and thus the relation between the different literary genres, kinds of report and the terms, in particular *khabar*, that were employed to define them, Juynboll shows throughout his work a growing interest in the use of terms along with the definition given to hadiths and their parts. Apart from the above-mentioned questions discussed in his *Muséon* article, the terms Juynboll uses here do not reflect a consistent and categorical divide between hadith and *khabar* nor even a definition of what he means, taking for granted, I would suggest, their sense in western Islamic studies. Another example from his oeuvre illustrates this. The question of the uses of the term *khabar* and its relation to other technical terminology is also mentioned by Juynboll in his early article on Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Here, so as to explain the occurrences of the terms in that introduction, Juynboll states in one note

4 Juynboll, "Early Islamic Society," 159, 179.

that *khavar* and hadith “are not synonymous in all the works of and about traditions. In this text, however, there is virtually no distinction between the two terms”.<sup>5</sup>

The point that is relevant for us here, and worth focusing upon, is that notwithstanding its use in relation to history and historical traditions and works (*akhbār*), the term *khavar* also has a significant and unexplored history in hadith-related literature, although according to Juynboll, it reflects varying and different meanings. In this regard, a first theoretical exploration of terminology is no doubt his monograph *Muslim tradition*, which appeared in 1983.<sup>6</sup> In his introduction to this book, Juynboll mentions first of all hadiths and their peculiarities as traditions, stating that in early times, when methods of transmission and the related formal devices were neither established nor frequently used, “the *aḥādīth* and the *qīṣaṣ* were transmitted in a haphazard fashion”,<sup>7</sup> thus making a distinction in genre between reports. Further down, *qīṣaṣ* appear as a first layer of traditions and proper stories emerging and told in Muslim societies.<sup>8</sup> In addition, when pointing to early reports, Juynboll cites *akhbār* and *faḍā’il/mathālib*.<sup>9</sup> It is, however, in a passage in the first chapter that a significant point on terminology is made. Here Juynboll mentions, as an alternative way of conveying information and discourse, alternative to *ra’y*, “*‘ilm* as comprising the knowledge, including the transmission, of *āthār*, *akhbār* or *aḥādīth*, depending on the person(s) to whom these were ascribed”.<sup>10</sup> In the footnote (n. 116) following this statement, Juynboll writes that usually the terms *āthār* and *akhbār* refer to statements made by Companions or Successors while hadith refers to prophetic traditions, though the subsequent comments show that the use of the terms in a technical sense was not binding in his view. Thus when he needed to include all the reports, Juynboll referred to hadith and *āthār*.<sup>11</sup>

5 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Translated and Annotated with an Excursus on the Chronology of *Fitna* and *Bid’a*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 265, n. 3, reprinted in Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996, 111). In the same footnote he mentions Nabia Abbott’s criticism of Franz Rosenthal on this point, only to dismiss it; on this see below.

6 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

7 Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 5.

8 Juynboll, 11–12, 74; on an opposition *qīṣaṣ/‘ilm* or their connection, see 77, 162.

9 Juynboll, 7, 74.

10 Juynboll, 33.

11 Juynboll, 41, 120.

In his later research, which largely found its way into articles now collected in a Variorum reprint, Juynboll delves deeper into the discussion of traditions and the use of terminology to define or only refer to them. As a matter of fact, we can observe a generic and non-technical use of *akhbār*, for instance where he states that in early works, *akhbār* appear in relation to the definition of historical sources or traditions: “in the *akhbār* sources”, that is, reports also having a transmission chain or further being specified as “historical *akhbār*”.<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere he distinguishes between hadith, explained as tradition literature, and *akhbār*, defined as historical literature.<sup>13</sup> This is again connected to the use of these terms in western scholarship, rather than in later Islamic literature.

Juynboll's final major work, the *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (2007), must be considered his *summa* and thus reflecting his definitive formulations, also with regard to the technical use of the terms that it includes. But in fact, something quite different transpires here, which appears to reveal an increasingly conscious technical use of the terminology on Juynboll's part, strictly connected to his evaluation of the origin of hadith literature. *Khabar* appears in connection to the well-known question of the *khabar al-wāḥid*,<sup>14</sup> but in general Juynboll refers to *khabar* to indicate traditions dealing with historical facts which can also be related to the life of Muḥammad, and which can show “many textual variants”, or be “ancient”.<sup>15</sup> *Khabar* is thus the core of a narrative, emerging in early times in different wordings and versions, and later constituting the basis for the traditions as a whole. Thus, in another passage, Juynboll states that a tradition “function(s) also in a *khabar* describing (...)”,<sup>16</sup> or elsewhere, in a rather strange formulation: “for other versions of this what may be in fact a *khabar*”.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in general, *khabar* is the preferred term to define a generic unit (i.e. a tradition) on a topic and in particular its content.<sup>18</sup> This is made even

12 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, “The Role of *Mu‘ammarūn* in the Early Development of the *Isnād*,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 81 (1991): 155–175, reprinted in Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996, VII), 159, 164, 165 respectively.

13 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, “The Origin of Arabic Prose: Reflections on Authenticity,” in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. Gautier H.A. Juynboll (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1982), 162, 163, *passim*.

14 Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), xxiv, 396.

15 Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, quotations respectively from 22 and 25.

16 Juynboll, 106.

17 Juynboll, 189.

18 Juynboll, 71, 89, 192, 220, 245, 247, 271, 275, 286, 340, 468, 470, 478, 483, 487, 508, 541, 554, 565, 578, 579, 585, 591, 692, 703, 703–706, 713, 718, 720, 722, 724, 730.

clearer by some more explicit passages where it is stated that a particular “*matn* (...) is an offshoot of a *khavar*”;<sup>19</sup> or, later on, when Juynboll states that lines of transmission going back to the Prophet were added to a *khavar* “for good measure”.<sup>20</sup> Finally, elsewhere *khavar* appears in the sense of traditions and reports displaying a more narrative feature or content, as in the use of the expression “*khavar-like*” applied to Abū Usāma (d. 201/816), responsible for “the wording of a *khavar-like* report”.<sup>21</sup>

*Khavar* is thus a sort of early layer of the traditional reports, in the singular *khavar* or in the plural *akhbār* still denoting a bundle of reports and traditions around a specific topic or event, displaying textual variety and instability, from which only later on proper hadiths evolved; that is, when someone, according to Juynboll’s thesis, applied *isnāds* and traced them back via that channel to the Prophet, or when other kinds of traditions without trustworthy chains emerged and came to be attested in later literature. This is especially obvious in the use of the plural, which also indicates the whole of the traditional material relating to a topic or an event. The plural *akhbār* in fact specifies the corpus of traditional reports on a particular topic.<sup>22</sup> In other instances in the *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* the term *akhbār* is also glossed as “historical accounts”, or mentioned in related contexts, such as “historical *akhbār*”, or “*akhbār* collections like Ibn Ishāq, Wāqidī and Ibn Sa’d”,<sup>23</sup> while in other passages *akhbār* is mentioned together with hadiths, thus indicating another, different class of traditions.<sup>24</sup> *Akhabār* is also connected to historical traditions and collections such as that of Muḥammad b. Ishāq.<sup>25</sup> In one significant passage, however, Juynboll suggests that hadith and *akhabār* stand on common ground, and together make up a genre of tradition that differs from *tafsīr* literature: “... in Muslim *tafsīr* and hadith/*akhabār* literature ...”.<sup>26</sup> The plural form *akhabār* must also be considered in strict relation to the other plurals that define categories of reports. Thus *akhabār*, in its specific meaning also having historical connotations, must be listed in connection to other terms such as *mursalāt* or *mawqūfāt*, or to what Juynboll calls *qawl/aqwāl*, i.e. the sayings going back to the

19 Juynboll, 223.

20 Juynboll, 421.

21 Juynboll, 68, 492.

22 Cf. Juynboll, 26, 27, 243, 250, 256, 270, 372, 433, 434, 470, 569, 589, 691, 702, 706.

23 Juynboll, quotations respectively from 73, 693, 599.

24 Juynboll, 132, and cf. 396.

25 Juynboll, 419.

26 Juynboll, 591.

later generations, such as that of the Successors, to which belonged the early exegetes and *fuqahā*.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4 *Khabar* in Other Western Studies

The use of the term *khabar/akhbār* and its relation to traditions and reports, whatever these terms may mean, has a long history in western scholarship. The evolution of this use in Juynboll's work must also be seen in connection to this history. In general, this use is unspecific, and therefore ambiguous, being a reflection of the complexity of the term "history" in Islamic literature and literary genres. Important and substantial evidence for the use of *khabar/akhbār* appears, for example, in works of Islamic historiography. Since in later times the term is associated mostly with historical writing—in book titles such as *akhbār majmū'a fī fatḥ al-Andalus*—western studies use *khabar/akhbār* first of all as a synonym for historical notice or reports. In most of these studies, the problematic relation of the term *khabar/akhbār* to hadith in some hadith-related literature is therefore not discussed. Stefan Leder, among others, uses the term *akhbār* and thus *akhbārīs* to refer to the textual units (ranging from one line to several pages) innervating historiographical and biographical compilations.<sup>28</sup> Using the term broadly to define the historical material, he in fact states that *khabar* means "a piece of information".<sup>29</sup> The same line is followed by Fred Donner in whose view *akhbār* are historical reports whose *matn* is introduced by an *isnād*. But since Donner is more interested in the origin of this material in connection to religious tradition as a whole, he writes about "the hadith format—*akhbār* with validating *isnāds*".<sup>30</sup> Other studies take a sim-

27 We find instances of the term *qawl* (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, 113, 426, 443, 470) and of the plural *aqwāl* (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical ḥadīth*, 443, 447, 464, 469, 701), but Juynboll mostly mentions the plural *aqwāl* along with *mursalāt* and/or *mawqūfāt*, as a group of the same kind, or in connection with the first *fuqahā*' (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, 215, 234, 239, 334, 380, 386, 391, 407, 441, 447, 698, 725, 727). Cf. already Gautier H.A. Juynboll, "Some Notes on Islam's First *Fuqahā*' Distilled from Early *Ḥadīth* Literature," *Arabica* 39, no. 3 (1992): 298, reprinted in Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996, VIII).

28 See for example Stefan Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*: A Basic Form of Historical Writing," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, Vol. 1: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, eds. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1992), 278.

29 Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*," 279.

30 Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998), 255–256.

ilar direction, without paying attention to the question of the term, but using it to indicate the narrative units constituting medieval Islamic literature.<sup>31</sup>

The scant interest in the meaning of *khavar* and its relation to other terminology could be connected to the fact that the earlier major western scholars of hadith did not deal with *khavar/akhbār* nor even mentioned the terms. Goldziher does not refer to *khavar* in his discussion of hadith and *sunna*.<sup>32</sup> Neither does Schacht mention *khavar* when briefly discussing the terms used by al-Shāfiʿī in relation to the *sunna*.<sup>33</sup> Hadiths (Ar. *ḥadīth*; pl. *ahādīth*) is the preferred term given to this material in these seminal studies, and the term *khavar* appears only in discussions of the expression *khavar al-wāḥid/al-infirād* and in relation to other definitions such as *khavar al-khāṣṣa* or *khavar al-tawātur*.<sup>34</sup> Only a few, late works show a specific concern with the relation of the term to hadith and hadith-related traditions, and thus with the fact that early reports mention various terms along with hadith literature and terminology. In general, these are studies that try to define the relation between traditions and the historiographical literature built on them on the one hand, and the literature collecting the dicta of Muḥammad and those of the first Muslims on the other. The first (*sīra*, *maghāzī* etc.) were produced by the so-called *akhbārīyyūn*, while the second category (hadith, *akhbār*, etc.) was produced by the so-called *muḥaddithūn*. Some attention is paid to the terminological question in relation to the contents of the different traditions or to their interaction, in brief notes on the use and meanings of the terms hadith and *khavar* especially in their earliest attestations.<sup>35</sup>

31 See e.g. D. Beaumont, "Hard-Boiled: Narrative Discourse in Early Muslim Traditions," *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 5–31. Hinting at the transition in early Islam from the *qiṣṣa* to the *khavar*, he means a change in content and tone of the narrations, without considering the terms used to define this.

32 See Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. from German by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 17 f.

33 Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), 16. The opposition is hadith/*āthār*, see for example p. 75.

34 Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, 50–52.

35 See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 11, where it is stated that *khavar* "became in fact something of a synonym of *ḥadīth*". According to Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Literary Papyri. 1. Historical Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 7, *khavar* is a wider category while hadith is more specific; and Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 131–151, where he discusses *khavar* in al-Shāfiʿī and in theologians and religious authors who use it as a synonym of hadith; see in particular p. 137, where he mentions that, according to al-Shāfiʿī, *akhbār* (meaning reports, traditions) constitute in their totality the hadith of Muḥammad. On p. 141 the author further mentions the opinion of Nazzām that *khavar* is of interest to a wider group than hadith scholars. Furthermore Khalidi dis-

The most recent important contributions dealing with the early use of *khabar* are those concerned with the role of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) and the meaning he attached to the term. The frequent use of the term *khabar* in al-Shāfiʿī's work is shown clearly in the recent monograph dedicated to him by Joseph Lowry.<sup>36</sup> The author demonstrates that in al-Shāfiʿī's *Risāla akhbār* means "revealed reports", such as in expressions where *khabar* appears as a generic indication of what is stated in the Qurʾān and the *sunna* (see for example: *naṣṣ kitāb aw sunna/naṣṣ khabar lāzim*).<sup>37</sup> This would also be reflected in the use of other terminology such as *āthār* or even *aqāwīl al-salaf* to refer to reports going back to persons who lived after the Prophet or to the Companions.<sup>38</sup> Much space is also devoted in Lowry's study to the *khabar al-wāḥid*.<sup>39</sup> Al-Shāfiʿī's use of the term *khabar* and the meaning he attaches to it has also been underlined by Josef van Ess, who interestingly states that al-Shāfiʿī moved away from the general meaning given to it by Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131/748), thus using it in connection with hadith and *sunna*. According to Van Ess, al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868–869) was to take a middle position between the two. He states that in the meantime the term *khabar* "had become too ambiguous".<sup>40</sup> The early centrality of the use of *khabar* would thus be further attested by the Muʿtazilī use of *khabar al-umma* for the *ijmāʿ* and *khabar al-nabī* for the hadith.<sup>41</sup> In this reconstruction the use of *khabar* appears to be in polemical contraposition to the Sunnī hadith theory which was evolving by then, or intentionally to depreciate it.

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cusses the various classes of *akhbār* according to authors from the 10th century onwards, in whose works the terms are more connected to historical reports in general than to the question of historical soundness of them connected to their sources of origin.

36 Joseph E. Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory. The Risāla of Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

37 Lowry, *Early Islamic Legal Theory*, 118.

38 Lowry, 204.

39 Lowry, 189–205. Closely connected to this order of questions, though not directly related to Lowry's work, is an interesting paper by Murteza Bedir, "An early response to Shāfiʿī: ʿĪsā b. Abān on the prophetic report (*khabar*)," *Islamic Law and Society* 9, no. 3 (2002): 285–311, which discusses the theory of *khabar* in the work of the Ḥanafī jurist ʿĪsā b. Abān (d. 221/836), living only a generation after Shāfiʿī. Ibn Abān gives a twofold classification of the *khabar*, one rational and one religious. The discussion concerns the certainty of the various kinds of *khabar*, but what is more relevant is the use of the term here in line with Shāfiʿī, thus attesting to its diffusion in juridical discussions and definitions.

40 Josef van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 158; cf. on these points the same author's *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1991–1997), II, 2, 279–280, IV, 649–650.

41 Van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, 168; cf. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, IV,

Apart from all these issues and others coming up in scholarly research on Islamic historiography versus hadith literature and Islamic law, it is obvious that the use and meaning of *khavar* in early literature is an issue to be handled with care and deserving further enquiry. This point is made by Chase Robinson in his *Islamic Historiography*.<sup>42</sup> Stating that both terms are crucial in understanding the first circulation of traditions, he argues that *khavar* evolved as a more general term and hadith as a saying connected to the Prophet. However, one aspect connected to the employment of the terms was related to the use of *isnāds* and their diffusion. Most recently, the problems connected to the use and meaning of *khavar* and its relation to the parallel use in non-hadith literature were touched upon by Pierre Larcher, in a brief article dedicated to the term hadith.<sup>43</sup> Larcher quotes a passage from al-Tahānawī (d. in or after 1158/1745) which presents contrasting opinions on the affirmation that the terms are synonymous or that *khavar* is broader in meaning and thus includes hadith, further adding other possible definitions. Larcher then discusses the relation between these two terms and others to define narratives and traditions which attest first of all to the existence of contrasting accounts of the meaning of the term *khavar*.<sup>44</sup> Andreas Görke also mentions briefly, in a footnote to one of his articles, that the distinction between the terms hadith and *khavar* was a controversial issue among Muslim authors and, evidently, also among western scholars.<sup>45</sup>

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657. Cf. instead the terminology of al-Shāfiʿī *akhbār al-khāṣṣa* and *akhbār al-ʿamma*, on which see the studies by Lowry and also Norman Calder, “Ikhtilāl and Ijmāʿ in Shāfiʿī’s Risāla,” *Studia Islamica* 58 (1983): 56.

42 Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15–17.

43 Pierre Larcher, “Le mot de *ḥadīṭ* vu par un linguiste,” in *Das Prophetenḥadīṭ. Dimensionen einer islamischen Literaturgattung*, eds. Claude Gilliot and Tilman Nagel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 7–13, in particular p. 12: the terms hadith and *khavar* have a complex relation; *khavar* can refer to a saying of the Prophet, or a have wider generic definition, or can stand in opposition to hadith.

44 The distinctions in meaning which are proposed by other studies are not based on an analysis of Islamic literature, see e.g. Rizwi S. Faizer, “The Issue of Authenticity Regarding the Traditions of al-Wāqidi as Established in His *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 58 (1999): 100, according to whom hadiths are prophetic traditions and *akhbār* all the other ones, but without giving any reference.

45 Andreas Görke, “The Relationship Between *Maghāzī* and *Ḥadīṭ* in Early Islamic Scholarship,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 74 (2011): 176, n. 28. It must be added that the term *khavar* is used in Imāmī Shīʿism to define the traditions ascribed to the Prophet and to the Imams, see e.g. Robert Gleave, “Between *Ḥadīṭ* and *Fiqh*: the ‘Canonical’ Imāmī Collections of *Akhbār*,” *Islamic Law and Society* 8 (2001): 350–382.

All these studies demonstrate a certain awareness of the problems involved in terminology and of the fact that no one has taken care to review the occurrences of the terms discussed in early Islamic literature. Various hypotheses are given in accordance with later uses or with a partial scrutiny of the statements of individual Muslim scholars and authors. Although some of these authors played a major role in the development of an Islamic criticism of the traditions and reports collected and written down in the early period, their use of terminology has never been analysed in relation to what is found in the Arabic sources. While a comprehensive discussion of the use of *khavar* and its relation to hadith and hadith-related terminology in these sources would take up too much space, an enquiry in online data bases and digitised repositories nowadays permits us to offer some preliminary considerations and a general outlook on the use of terms in early Islamic literary activity and thus to draw some lines to the previous discussions on the topic. In what follows, then, I will focus on the use of *khavar* and the apparent meaning reflected in some literary works.<sup>46</sup>

## 5 *Khavar* in Early Islamic Sources

Even a cursory glance at the occurrences of the term *khavar/akhbār* in early Islamic literature reveals a complex situation as regards its use and meaning. The question is no doubt further complicated by the wide circulation of the term in its primary sense: news or reports, with no specific connection to hadith, hadith-like or historical literary genres. The first point to make is that these occurrences reflect a situation that is not as straightforward as the one we find in western scholarship. It appears that the term covers different uses and meanings following differing lines of diffusion and use, or lack thereof. This occurs in all early Islamic Arabic literature with no well-defined distinctions between genres or supposed early developments of what will later on become fixed literary genres. This being the situation, it is nevertheless significant to look first of all at the hadith collections so as to establish if the term *khavar/akhbār* is used there, before moving to the larger body of literary attestations.

Early hadith collections, both the so-called canonical works and the early *Muṣannafs*, do not in general exhibit a technical use of the term with a specific

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46 I relied for this enquiry on materials collected in *al-Maktaba al-shāmila* and *Ahl al-bayt* 1.0, plus some additional works.

meaning related to transmitted material, with some relevant exceptions.<sup>47</sup> Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889) is a case in point, since in his *Sunan* the formula *al-khabar ‘an al-nabī* is quite frequent and somehow original when compared to other hadith works. Where a *khabar ḍa‘īf* is mentioned, as in al-Nasā‘ī (d. 303/915), this appears as an isolated, not a systematic quotation.<sup>48</sup> Although Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) does not systematically use a fixed formula, we do find the term *khabar/al-khabar* with reference to something from (‘an) the Prophet in his *Musnad*.<sup>49</sup> The meaning of expressions such as *khabar ‘Atā’, khabar Abī Sa‘d, khabar ‘an Ṣaḥīḥa*, etc. in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s (d. 211/827) *Muṣannaf* must be similar.<sup>50</sup> But that this is not a technical use is evident from the fact that we have further occurrences of the term *khabar* followed by the name of an historical episode just to indicate that what is dealt with is indeed the story of an event rather than the story about or related from somebody. Such instances occur for example in Ibn Abī Shayba’s (d. 235/849) *Muṣannaf*. Furthermore, it is also in connection to this meaning that the term *khabar* appears in chapter or paragraph titles, though the question of whether chapter titles were already included in the original works is in some cases debated and even doubtful.

The same situation can be found in early historical writing. The *Sīra* by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833) is an example. *Khabar* is story, like in *Khabar Dhī al-Qarnayn* (I, 306), in *Khabar Khaybar* (II, 353) etcetera, or, also as a paragraph title, in the story of the call to prayer (*khabar al-adhān*, I, 571).<sup>51</sup> In al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822) and other early works, by contrast, there is no mention at all of the term *khabar/al-khabar* in connection to the traditions of the Prophet and no relevant indication that the term indicated something related to historical reports.

As a matter of fact the sources show what is already known from other studies, namely that the first to provide a comprehensive discussion and use of the term *khabar* was al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820). In his works, and mainly in the *Risāla* and the *Kitāb al-umm*, *khabar* appears as the key term to indicate any probat-

47 The occurrences of the term in Muslim’s introduction to his major hadith work was discussed by Juynboll himself. Muslim speaks about the “*akhbār* from the Messenger of God”; see Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction,” 268. But see also the use later on of *āthār*: Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction,” 299.

48 Nasā‘ī, *al-Sunan al-ṣuḥrā* (Aleppo, 1986), VIII, 325 no. 5703.

49 Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut, 2001), nos. 6087, 6749, and cf. XXIII, 132 no. 14834: *awwal khabar qadīma ‘alaynā ‘an rasūl Allāh, passim*; see also X, 441 no. 6375: *khabar ‘an Ṣaḥīḥa bt. Abī ‘Ubayd*.

50 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* (Beirut, 1983), II, 93 no. 3040, II, 441 no. 4011, II, 546 no. 4401.

51 See also Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya* (Cairo, 1955), I, 583: *aṭā Rasūl Allāh (ṣ) al-khabar min Allāh*.

ive text, either originating from the Prophet or from the holy text itself. It also indicates specific reports from Muḥammad, in expressions such as (*al-*)*khavar* ‘*an*.<sup>52</sup> One expression of this kind is quite frequent: *khavar lāzim*,<sup>53</sup> and in many passages it is clearly stated that *khavar* and *qiyās/ijmā’* are the reference tools to ascertain certain matters. Al-Shāfi‘ī also frequently uses the term when discussing the question of the prophetic report going back to only one Companion, the so-called *khavar al-wāhid*, which consequently receives special attention—attention which caused the expression to gain wide circulation and to survive the later doubts around the use of *khavar*.<sup>54</sup>

Other authors following al-Shāfi‘ī appear to give the term a significant place and to make extensive use of it. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is of particular importance in this regard. The term *khavar* is ubiquitous in his *Tahdhīb al-āthār*, and closely connected to the reports going back to Muḥammad. But it is also evident in his commentary on the Qur’ān, which is the first work of this literary genre to introduce the term in any systematic way. The previous *tafsīrs* quote the term very rarely and when they do, it is in its original generic meaning. Al-Ṭabarī’s view, however, is clear from the introduction to his commentary: *khavar* is a relevant report, going back to the Prophet or to the Companions, and the related expressions communicate this fundamental meaning.<sup>55</sup> But additional uses which further define the meanings of what a *khavar* can be, appear in other early literary attestations. For instance, *khavar* can also be a broad category: the mention of *khavar* in connection to words denoting soundness such as *ṣihḥa/ṣahḥa* indicates that the category of the *khavar* is a comprehensive one also including reports whose soundness is to be ascertained.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, what is also significant in our discussion is that *al-khavar* ‘*an* sometimes

52 Al-Shāfi‘ī *al-Umm* (Beirut, 1990), I, 158, II, 50; cf. II, 199. See also *khavar* + the name of a person: al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Risāla* (Cairo, 1940), I, 434, 447; *khavar* + the Prophet/Al-Ṣādiq, I, 413.

53 al-Shāfi‘ī, *Risāla*, I, 476; al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Umm*, II, 54, IV, 101.

54 There is more in the works of al-Shāfi‘ī in relation to *khavar*, but the questions related to *khavar al-khāṣṣa/al-‘amma*, for example, are relevant to our discussion only to give further testimony to the centrality of the term in his works.

55 We find the expression “a *khavar* from (‘*an*) the prophet/Muḥammad”, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘and ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān* (Beirut, 2000), I, 50, 87, 88; or “a *khavar* from ‘Ā’isha” or ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd etc., Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, I, 89, or Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, I, 75, 95. In the same introduction it is stated of the contents of a report: *naṣṣ hadhā al-khavar*, see Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, I, 50.

56 Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, I, 56, 107. A *khavar* can also be not *ṣahīḥ*, see Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, III, 437: *wa-ammā al-khavar allatī ruwiya ‘an al-nabī (s.) fa-innahu in kāna ṣahīḥan* (cf. Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, IV, 365), while in other passages a *khavar* confirms (*thabita*, see Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, III, 76, *passim*).

stands for “the story/report about”.<sup>57</sup> It can even refer to the contents of the Qur’ān: *wa-fi al-āya allatī ba’d al-khabar ‘an khalq Ādam*,<sup>58</sup> or even to define that of which God informs us, with a plethora of expressions which demonstrate the wide use of the term in literary devices.<sup>59</sup> Significant in this regard, but also in connection with the meanings recalling traditions is that the terms *khabar* and *hadith* may be linked in one passage, where it is stated that a *khabar* is a *mukhtaṣar* from one *hadith*.<sup>60</sup>

*Khabar* becomes the preferred term in the connective spaces between reports where al-Ṭabarī articulates his specific exegetical discourse and elucidates his preferences among the material selected and quoted. To judge by the use of the term it appears to denote a general meaning including every kind of report and content, ranging from the contents of Qur’ānic verses, passing first of all through the traditions going back to Muḥammad and ending up with the reports traced back to the following generations. There is no technicality in it, but it seems to be a pragmatic descriptive tool with no specific concern for technical discussions relating to *hadiths* and *āthār*. It is not necessary at this point to add further examples from other authors. There are indeed some who attribute the same relevance to the term *khabar* in the organisation and even definition of the reports and traditions they quote and discuss, apart from its emerging use in relation to the technical use attested, mainly in relation to the plural, in historiography. Among these few authors are Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) and Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) in whose works *khabar* is the term

57 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, I, 259: *‘an Iblīs wa-Ādam*; cf. also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, I, 500, II, 214, III, 218.

58 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, I, 413; cf. also I, 425.

59 See for example *khabara Allāh al-khabar alladhī ...*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, II, 557; *anzala Allāh al-khabar min al-samā’*, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, III, 590. See also in this vein the passages stating that a *khabar yunbi’u*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, I, 513, III, 60, or it indicates, i.e. *yadullu*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, II, 155. See also *al-khabar min Allāh* in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, VIII, 18. There is also an explicit indication of the meaning of a report: *ma’nā al-khabar*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, II, 515. The *khabars* have *isnād*, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, II, 9, they can be also uncomplete: *khabar ghayr tāmm*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, III, 195. *Ruwḍya al-khabar ‘an* is also widely used, see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, I, 266, 304, *passim*. There is also the expression *naẓīr al-khabar*, in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, XI, 113, XVII, 28; or in XI, 117: *makhraj al-khabar*, in XI, 300: *kharaja makhraj al-khabar*.

60 See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, IV, 165. The meaning of *akhbār* as reports going back to traditions or garants and thus of established knowledge not based on personal intuition or interpretation also appears in al-Ṭabarī’s introduction to his *Ta’rīkh*, where the term stands for identified reports, cf. R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History. A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, rev. ed., 1991), 7, and see in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, eds. M.J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1879–1901), I, 6–7.

to designate reports, in line with al-Ṭabarī and al-Shāfiʿī.<sup>61</sup> In any case it must be recalled that this is only a preliminary examination still awaiting a comprehensive study, for instance of *fiqh* literature or the use of terms such as *khabar* in the discussion on *uṣūl*, or of the circulation of the term in Shīʿī literature, where it became the preferred term to indicate traditions.

## 6 Some Expressions and Formulas to Mention *Khabar*

Although a comprehensive review of all the occurrences of the term *khabar* would take up too much space, something useful can be obtained by an enquiry into the body of Islamic literature as a whole, searching for specific uses of the term in formulas and expressions which give some information concerning the traditions and reports quoted. The selection presented here is no doubt a small and subjective sample, but in my opinion it is a good example of the persistent use of the term in literature in relation to hadith-like reports and narratives.<sup>62</sup> What is significant here is that the occurrences of the term *khabar* in some expressions became formulaic, and the use and repetition of formulas give an indication of a stereotyped use that alludes to or implies a technical meaning, notwithstanding the difficulty to draw exact lines between the various uses in different contexts. Some particular and more often attested expressions are those indicating that something belongs to/is included in what is defined as *khabar*.

This is indeed the first meaning of the expression *jā'a fī al-khabar* (it came/arrived [to us] in the *khabar*).<sup>63</sup> *Jā'a fī al-khabar* is apparently the preferred

61 As regards the attestation of *khabar* in general terms, and before a comprehensive enquiry into its occurrences, we may say that Muslim authors display differing attitudes in its use. Al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* for instance is full of quotations of the simple term. On the other side the term, which is also quoted by al-Farrā', is somehow less frequent in the commentaries written after those of al-Zamakhsharī or Ibn 'Aṭīyya, though a *tafsīr* such as that of al-Ālūsī quotes it several times. Commentaries on early collections of hadiths and reports, such as the one of Ibn Ḥajar, or all those on the *Muwatta'* by Mālik b. Anas, make extensive use of the term *khabar*. Al-Makkī is another author often quoting *khabar*.

62 A different version of this paragraph and the following one are included in Roberto Tottoli, "L'espressione *ruwiya fī al-khabar* nella letteratura islamica," in *Studi Magrebini*, special issue *Labor limae. Atti in onore di Carmela Baffioni*, eds. by A. Straface, C. De Angelo and A. Manzo, n.s. 12–13 (2014–2015): 589–603.

63 See e.g. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Uṣūl al-sunna* (Beirut, 1411AH), I, 34; al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibāna 'an uṣūl al-dīyāna* (Cairo, 1397AH), I, 193; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal wa-l-niḥal* (Cairo, n.d.), IV, 163; al-Harawī, *Dhamm al-kalām wa-ahlīhi* (Medina, 1998), IV, 16, 17; al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa-ī'rābuhu* (Beirut, 1988), II, 297, 319; al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna* (Beirut, 2005),

expression using the term *khbar* for some authors who were active in various literary genres and used it as a generic expression recalling the transmitted traditions as a whole.<sup>64</sup> Some of these authors make slightly different use of the same expression as in the case, for instance, of the lexicographer al-Azharī (d. 370/981), who mostly quotes the words *jā'a fī al-khbar* to introduce the words of the prophet Muḥammad or stories about his life, while in another case he uses the same words to introduce a story on the pro-'Alid rebel al-Mukhtār (d. 67/687).<sup>65</sup> *Khbar* in this case is the religious tradition transmitted by early generations as a whole and thus including also the sayings of Muḥammad, his acts and the acts of the first generations of Muslims. As such the expression is also used in *adab* literature.<sup>66</sup> The same meaning must be attributed to cognate formulas such as "it is found in the *khbar*" (*warada fī al-khbar*)<sup>67</sup> or "it is mentioned in the *khbar*" (*dhukira fī al-khbar*)<sup>68</sup> or some other ones that appear

- I, 374, III, 38, 41, 306, 435, V, 401, VII, 152, X, 365; al-Sam'ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Riyadh, 1997), V, 171, *passim*; al-Bāwardī Ghulam Tha'lab, *Yāqūt al-shīrāt fī tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān* (Medina, 2002), I, 266; Niẓām al-Dīn al-Shāshī, *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (Beirut, n.d.), 23, 26; al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *al-Fuṣūl fī al-uṣūl* (al-Kuwait, 1994), IV, 353; al-Sarakhsī, *al-Uṣūl* (Beirut, n.d.), I, 286; Al-Māwardī, *al-Hāwī al-kabīr fī fiqh madhhab al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī* (Beirut, 1999), II, 323, 496; Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī* (Cairo, 1968), III, 315, 385, *passim*; al-Samarqandī, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (Damascus-Beirut, 2000), I, 24, 69; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb* (Beirut, 2005), I, 37, 49, *passim*; al-Ishbīlī, *al-Āqiba fī dhikr al-mawt* (Kuwait, 1986), 245, 299; al-Anbārī, *al-Zāhir fī ma'ānī kalimāt al-nās* (Beirut, 1992), II, 113; al-Shaybānī, *Uṣūl al-sunna* (Beirut, 1991AH), I, 34, 54; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal wa-l-niḥal*, IV, 163; 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qāḍī, *Daqā'iq al-akhbār fī dhikr al-janna wa-l-nār* (Beirut, 1984), 3, 48, 61, 62, 80.
- 64 See Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk* (Beirut, 1988), I, 17, 32, 41 *passim*; Burhān al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Gharā'ib al-tafsīr wa-'ajā'ib al-ta'wīl* (Beirut, 2001), I, 143 *passim*.
- 65 al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā* (Beirut, 2001), I, 86, IV, 261; IX, 90, IX, 112, 119, X, 192, 231, XIII, 176, XIV, 70; on al-Mukhtār see V, 65.
- 66 al-Jāhīz, *al-Ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1966), VI, 430; Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farīd* (Beirut, 1986), IV, 191, V, 240; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara wa-akhbār al-mudhākara* (Cairo, 1973), II, 269; al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfi wa-l-anīs al-nāsiḥ al-shāfi'ī* (Beirut, 2005), I, 194, 224, 630; Ibn Sīrīn, *Tafsīr al-aḥlām* (Cairo, 1949), I, 4, 98, 120, II, 158, 159; the expression is also attested in the *Thimār al-qulūb* by al-Tha'ālabī and in the *Asrār al-balāgha* by al-Jurjānī.
- 67 Abū Ḥamid al-Tūsī, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā* (Beirut, 1987), 112, 164, 169; *warada fī al-khbar 'an al-nabī*; Abū Ḥamid al-Tūsī, *Ma'ārij al-quds* (Beirut, 1975), 99, 158; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* (Cairo, n.d.), I, 63, 187, 188; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo, 1949), I, 249, II, 26 *passim*; al-Ishbīlī, *al-Āqiba fī dhikr al-mawt*, I, 172, 229.
- 68 al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, I, 573, II, 157, 191, 266, III, 344, 581 (*mā dhukira fī al-khbar*), 615, V, 346, 433, VII, 204, 291, 403, VIII, 43, 113, 133, 250, 286, 304, 310, 346, 354, 508, 519, 626, IX, 41, 79, 102, 121, 185, 214, 309, 386, 414, 418, 420, 532, 549, X, 177, 188, 469, 571 (on Moses), 628, 629, 640; Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, IV, 18, X, 14; Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr* (Beirut, 1993), I, 41, 209, 369 *passim*; al-Samarqandī, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, I, 192; al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *al-Fuṣūl fī al-uṣūl*, I, 53, III, 164.

to reflect the same use and meaning as *jā'a fī al-khabar*, and thus show a variety of usages of the term *khabar* with the aim to convey a generic, broad meaning in relation to traditional legacy.<sup>69</sup> In occurrences of this kind it is further significant that they sometimes introduce words attributed to the Prophet that are attested in well-known hadiths,<sup>70</sup> or words of his that are given as paraphrases of other hadiths.<sup>71</sup> These generic references are qualified by some others using *khabar* but specifying explicitly that for instance a tradition *jā'a fī al-khabar 'an rasūl Allah/al-Nabī*, otherwise *fī al-khabar al-ṣaḥīḥ* thus indicating that the sound *khabar* is after all within the broader category of the generic *khabar*.<sup>72</sup>

## 7 A Case-Study: The Expression *Ruwiya fī al-khabar*

Among the various expressions and ways of using the term *khabar* when introducing reports of different kinds, one in particular stands out as significant, for a number of reasons. This is not the only one to display features of interest, but we focus on it as a way to exemplify the need for further research into the technical use of this and similar terms in Islamic literature in general. The expression is *ruwiya fī al-khabar*, which is akin in meaning and use to the expressions and occurrences quoted above, such as *jā'a fī al-khabar*. But the terms used reveal a deeper characterisation in relation to the proper meaning of *ruwiya* which recalls narration, narratives and tales and thus alludes more to the contents of a *khabar*. The term *khabar*, in the occurrences of this expression, appears to indicate what is in the most authoritative religious tradition in early Islam, but not in the Qur'ān. It thus includes dicta of Muḥammad but also all other reports and units attested since the first generations.

In this regard the use attested, for instance, in the Qur'ān commentary of al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) can be considered emblematic. In one passage al-Māturīdī specifies that a certain question is not dealt with in authoritative texts or passages, and literally states that it is neither in the Qur'ān nor in the *khabar*. As a matter of fact, as we have already seen also with regard to other

69 al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, 111, 113: *qad ۞ buyyina fī al-khabar*; al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibāna 'an uṣūl al-diyāna*, 1, 194: *wa-qad qīla fī al-khabar*.

70 See e.g. al-Sam'ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Riyadh, 1997), v, 171, *passim*.

71 See e.g. Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, 1, 374.

72 See e.g. Ḥajjāj, *Tafsīr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* (Beirut, n.d.), 1, 38: *jā'a fī al-khabar al-ma'thūr 'an rasūl Allāh*; al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibāna 'an uṣūl al-diyāna* (Cairo, 1397), 1, 126: *'an al-nabī*; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Uṣūl al-sunna*, 1, 51; al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, 11, 162, 180, 185. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ṭūsī, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā*, 1, 112, 164, 169: *warada fī al-khabar 'an al-nabī*; al-Ishbīlī, *al-Āqiba fī dhikr al-mawt*, 1, 172, 229: *jā'a fī al-khabar al-ṣaḥīḥ*.

expressions and occurrences, al-Māturidī is one of the authors who mostly make use of the expression *ruwīya fī al-khabar* to introduce different typologies of tradition: hadiths quoted in the authoritative collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) or mentioned in another collection and even quoted in a different form and not literally, but even more frequently to introduce other reports whose prophetic origin is not explicated or that deal with other prophets, angels, eschatology or creation, or even reports on the biography of Muḥammad or the history of early Islam.<sup>73</sup> Other authors use the expression in the same way but occasionally also with some slight difference. Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), for instance, makes use of *ruwīya fī al-khabar* to introduce traditions on prophets and eschatology, as well as sayings of the prophet Muḥammad.<sup>74</sup>

Other authors, though not using the expression with the same frequency, attest to its diffusion, besides the ones discussed above, as a way of introducing reports and narrative units of various kinds belonging as a whole to the religious tradition and that, most importantly, are quoted verbatim from the author and the work in which they are included or recalled in the contents. This occurs in more or less the same way among authors of various genres of literature, from Qurʾānic exegesis to *adab* works.<sup>75</sup> In all these attested occurrences,

73 al-Māturidī, *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*, I, 425, see also 491, 490, 623, II, 76, 79 (a tradition in Bukhārī and Muslim etc.), II, 121, II, 165, 190, 210, 219, III, 42, 162, 227, 332, 369, 370, 501, 611, 617, 654, IV, 66, 67, 93, 165, 190 (from Bukhārī and Muslim), 247, 354, 383, 550, V, 207, 264, 284, 286, 287, 333, 358, 374, 412, 413, VI, 146, 214, 277, 316, 368, 415, 462, 470, VII, 23, 202, 220, 242, 243 (on Moses), 246, 291, 363, 410, 423, 491, 496, 528, 542, 546, 556, 569, VIII, 15, 126, 281, 355, 375, 396, 491, 525, 673, 708, IX, 7, 182, 205, 264, 292, 317, 318, 336, 400, 406, 531, X, 4, 23, 142, 178, 240, 363, 564, 567, 578, 598, 622.

74 al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, I, 12 a hadith with *isnād*, 53 Aaron and the Golden Calf, 67, 68, 79, 93 Abraham and Ishmael, 171, 284, 302, 310, 441, 448 Moses, 454, 516, 519 on the life of Muḥammad, 542 Musaylima writes to Muḥammad, 552 Moses, II, 88, 153, 188, 199 Zulaykha, 231, 235 Moses, 309, 431, 457, 483, 505 the Day of Judgement, 510, 531, 535, 537, 538, 569, 627, III, 35 on the four faces of the Angel of Death, 46, 146, 147 Joseph, 161, 164 David, 183, 239, 371, 393, 442 on the day of Muʿta, 483, 549, 565, 570, 584, 599, 621; al-Samarqandī, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, I, 79, 81, 84, 138, 187, 202, 207, 248 on Abū Bakr, 263 ʿAlī and Muḥammad, 268, 312, 398 Moses, 408, 416 on one Israelite, 417, 418, 422 on paradise, 481, 482 Moses, 564 David, 595 Jesus.

75 Al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ʿan tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Beirut, 2002), II, 252 Nimrod, III, 94, VII, 36 (expression quoted together with others such as *jāʾ fī al-khabar*, see also II, 77, 82); al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīʿ fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd* (Beirut, 1994), I, 204 in Bukhārī and Muslim etc., II, 268, 330, cf. IV, 223 (*jāʾ fī al-khabar*); al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Tafsīr* (Tanta, 1990), I, 42, 104, 112, 151, 310, 331, 341, 499 on Israelites; 511 Saul, 512: *fī al-khabar al-marwī*, II, 601, III, 855 *mā ruwīya fī al-khabar*, III, 1228, 1281; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut, 1420 AH), II, 250, V, 343 from Muslim, VIII, 20, 264, IX, 446, XI, 202, XII, 380, XV, 448, XVII,

the reference to contents, sometimes through a paraphrase, is without doubt one of the most significant aspects in the use and literary circulation of the expression *khobar*. *Ruwiya fi al-khobar* sometimes introduces dicta attributed to Muḥammad that are not attested in hadith collections, which shows that *khobar* refers to a wider tradition or, most frequently, that it introduces a non-literal quotation of what the prophet Muḥammad said.<sup>76</sup> In these cases, then, the expression and the term *khobar* apparently refer to the content of prophetic traditions and reports which are consequently quoted without *isnād* and mostly simply evoked without particular care for the exact wording. However, it cannot be ignored that some authors preferably use the same expression to introduce historical events of early Islam rather than reports going back to Muḥammad.

To further complicate the picture, there are also attestations of slightly different formulas and expressions which appear as variations on the theme with the same aim, namely, to introduce what is “told” in the “tradition”.<sup>77</sup> However,

190, XXI, 421, XXII, 89; Aaron and al-Sāmīrī, 186, 192, XXIV, 507 Pharaoh and his people, xxvii, 588 (using *jā'a fi al-khobar*, *warada fi al-khobar*); Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'an* (Cairo, 1964), I, 328 Gabriel, 395, II, 103 on words by God, II, 285 eschatology, v, 253, VII, 165, 281 Gabriel, x, 229, xv, 204 Solomon, 207, xx, 126, and using most frequently other expressions: IX, 35, xii, 243: xiv, 189 on Zayd and Zaynab; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-firaq* (Beirut, 1977), III, 4, 12; Abū Ya'lā, *Ibtāl al-ta'wilāt li-akhbār al-ṣifāt* (al-Kuwait, n.d.), I, 119, 173, 184, 250; Ibn Fūrak, *Mushkil al-ḥadīth wa-bayānuhu* (Beirut, 1985), 51 Adam, 83, 96 the wives of the Prophet, 104, 108, 118 Adam, 158, 196, 221, 270, 271, 272, 279 *passim* (also using other expressions though *mā ruwiya* etc. is the favourite one); Al-Māwardī, *al-Hāwī al-kabīr fi fiqh madhhab al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*, III, 223 Israelites, VI, 321, IX, 41 on a woman married without permission from her guardians; Abū Bakr al-Shāshī, *Ḥilyat al-ulamā' fi ma'rifat madhāhib al-fuqahā'* (Beirut, 1980), III, 128, 321; al-'Umrānī, *al-Bayān fi madhhab al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī* (Jiddah, 2000), II, 180 (III, 166: *al-marwī fi al-khobar*), III, 520, *passim*; al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' sharḥ al-madhhab* (Beirut, n.d.), I, 119, 121, xiii, 71; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, I, 62 (*wa-qad ...*), 134, 173, 174, 262, 271, 317, II, 67, *passim* (though the favourite formula is *jā'a fi al-khobar*); al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ulūm al-Dīn*, I, 307, III, 22, IV, 201, 371, using all the expressions; see e.g. al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-dālla 'alā al-bayān fi anwā' al-ulūm wa-l-ahkām* (Medina, 2003), II, 254, 270, III, 557, IV, 6, 110, 205, 396; al-Jassās, *Ahkām al-Qur'an*, (Beirut, 1405 AH), I, 335, III, 75, 89, IV, 167 Nimrod, 307 on Christians, along with the other expressions; al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fi gharīb al-Qur'an* (Damascus, 1412), I, 179, 184, 397, 433, 498, 532, 833; Al-'Umrānī al-Yamanī, *al-Intiṣār fi al-radd 'alā al-mu'tazila al-qadariyya al-ashrār* (Riyadh, 1999), II, 372, III, 776, *passim*; al-Tustarī, *al-Tafsīr* (Beirut, 1423 AH), I, 172, 189, 190, 194; Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, I, 195, II, 253, v, 138; al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *al-Amthāl min al-Kitāb wa-l-sunna* (Beirut, n.d.), 75 Moses, 257 Moses; 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Qāḍī, *Daqā'iq al-akhbār fi dhikr al-janna wa-l-nār*, 22, 63.

76 Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-firaq*, I, 101 on a historical episode of the times of 'Umar; 201: on Badr. Other authors, but not so frequently, use it in the same vein, see for example al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt ahl al-sunna*, I, 407.

77 al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fi al-lughā wa-l-ādāb* (Cairo, 2001), I, 95 on David, introduced by

in some other cases, the expression is further qualified so as to give a more precise definition of what it introduces. It is thus stated that a quoted report *ruwiya fi al-khabar al-ṣaḥiḥ*,<sup>78</sup> *ruwiya fi al-khabar al-marwī*,<sup>79</sup> (...) *fi al-khabar al-ma'thūr*,<sup>80</sup> (...) *al-khabar al-mashhūr*.<sup>81</sup> It is therefore not at all strange to find that in the work of Ibn Kathīr the term *mutawātir* (uninterrupted), coming from formal hadith criticism, is added to the expression, as can already be observed in earlier juridical literature.<sup>82</sup> This use and various qualifying attributes of what a quoted *khabar* is, are perfectly in line with what happens in the whole body of Islamic literature, with regard to other terms such as hadith. Rather than being a way specifically to qualify the term *khabar*, the adjectives added to the expressions simply serve the purpose of underlining the soundness of what is reported in a generic way and thus the aim is to enhance what is quoted rather than implicitly maintain that there can be *khabars* which are not sound.

The cognate formula *ruwiya fi al-akhbār* (as opposed to *al-khabar*) which is used by authors such as al-Māturīdī and other exegetes who mostly employ the main formula in their works, appears less frequently.<sup>83</sup> These few quotations

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*yurwā fi al-khabar* (expression also found in al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, I, 50); see also the expression *wa(-qad) ruwwiyanā fi al-khabar*: al-Isfarāyīnī, *al-Tabṣīr fi al-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya 'an al-firqa al-hālikīn* (Beirut, 1983), I, 151; al-Māwardī, *al-Ḥawī al-kabīr fi fiqh madhhab al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*, II, 281; al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr* (Cairo, 1997), V, 187 before an excerpt from Bukhārī on al-Khiḍr and Moses; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, I, 76, 82, 139 *passim*, and cf. I, 358: *wa-ruwwiyanā fi al-khabar al-tawīl*; also al-Ṭabarī, *Tahdhīb al-āthār* (Cairo, n.d.), I, 194, II, 773 (*al-khabar alladhī ruwiya 'an ...*), and see other expressions in I, 285, 295, II, 725; Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm* (Beirut, 1990), VI, 148: *hal rawaytum hādha fi al-khabar*; Muḥammad al-Ḥaddād, *al-Jawhar al-nafīs fi siyāsāt al-ra'īs* (Riyadh, 1996), I, 122: *ruwiya fi al-khabar al-jalī*; al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfi wa-l-anīs al-nāsiḥ al-shāfi'ī*, I, 321: *qawl al-rāwī fi al-khabar*.

- 78 Al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, V, 210; Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1964), XII, 243: *kamā jā'a fi al-khabar al-ṣaḥiḥ*; al-Qādī 'Iyād, *al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* (Amman, 1407 AH), II, 378.
- 79 al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *Tafsīr*, I, 512; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī, *al-Minhāj al-qawīm* (Beirut, 2000), I, 76; al-Sam'ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, I, 134, 149 *passim*, IV, 211 *fi al-khabar al-ma'rūf 'an al-nabī*; al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā* (Beirut, 1993), 274. See also Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, IV, 42 *khabar ṣaḥiḥ*.
- 80 al-Washshā', *Kitāb al-Muwashshā* (Cairo, 1953), 6.
- 81 al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, II, 67; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī, *al-Minhāj al-qawīm*, VI, 165.
- 82 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* (Cairo, 1984), I, 24: *fi al-khabar al-mutawātir anna rasūl Allah*. See already in Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, *al-Mu'tamid fi uṣūl al-fiqh* (Beirut, 1403 AH), II, 82; al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fi uṣūl al-fiqh* (Beirut, 1997), I, 216, 217; al-Sarakhsī, *al-Uṣūl*, I, 296. Cf. also al-Isfarāyīnī, *al-Tabṣīr fi al-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya 'an al-firqa al-hālikīn*, I, 176: *wa-qad warada fi al-khabar al-ṣāḥiḥ*—expression followed by a hadith on Munkar and Nakīr.
- 83 Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunna*, I, 466, III, 343, V, 143, 362, VII, 365 *passim*, quoting, appar-

show on the one hand that *ruwīya fī al-khabar* is a more frequently attested formula to introduce generic material and, on the other, that in these occurrences *akhbār* is not used in relation to historical traditions and reports. In Shiʿī literature, quotations of the formula are rare and not significant for our present concern, since they are not only few but also rather late and refer to the meaning of *khabar* as traditions going back to Muḥammad and the Imams.<sup>84</sup>

Another point of interest with regard to the use and meaning of this formula is without doubt its relation to questions of canonisation and the development of other terminology in connection to hadith and consequently the theological discussion on the role of hadith or *khabar* in early Islamic debates. Although a definitive conclusion would be in need of further study, it appears that *ruwīya fī al-khabar* reflects an approach less bound to the primacy accorded to the sayings of Muḥammad which were selected in collections such as those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim as well as other authors, whose normativity was imposed only after the 10th century CE. This would explain why the expression *ruwīya fī al-ḥadīth* is less attested in Islamic literature, occurring only in works by authors who do not use the term *khabar*. Only a few authors use both formulas and in these it is evident that *ruwīya fī al-ḥadīth* points to a stricter category than what is termed *khabar*.<sup>85</sup> However, most authors who mention one expression do not use the other, thus indicating that there is an alternative use of the two terms. This situation demonstrates that the use of *khabar* not only reflects the necessity to quote material which is not restricted to the sole canonical hadiths, but also the specific intention by some authors to use it as a unique term comprising the religious tradition as a whole, consequently expressing a different attitude than that of those affirming the authoritative role of the canonical

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ently, the same kind of material introduced by *ruwīya fī al-khabar*; see also al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, v, 102, viii, 72 on two traditions on Abraham and David; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb*, iii, 472, viii, 198, xvi, 272 *passim*.

84 See for example the most ancient attestations in al-Qummī, *Tafsīr* (Qom, 1404 AH), i, 94, 267; al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd* (Qom, n.d.), 217, Id., *Kanāl al-Dīn wa-tamām al-niʿma* (Qom, 1405 AH), 530; al-Sharīf al-Riḍā, *al-Majāzāt al-nabawīyya* (Qom, n.d.), 190; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Nāsiriyyāt* (Beirut, 1997), 245 on one saying by ʿAlī; see also al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Khilāf* (Qom, 1420 AH), 19, Id., *al-Tibyān* (Beirut, 2002), iii, 564, viii, 123; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān* (Beirut, 1995), iv, 214, vi, 129.

85 Only a few authors use both formulas, even in the same work, see al-Jassās, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* (Beirut, 1988), iv, 309, Id., *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, ii, 370, iii, 31; al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, ii, 273, ix, 125, 138; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb*, iv, 173, v, 353, vii, 61, 114, *passim*; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, vii, 122, xii, 133, xvii, 90 *passim*. Rather emblematic is that Ibn Qutayba prefers *ruwīya fī al-ḥadīth* in his *Taʿwīl mushkil al-ḥadīth* (Beirut, 1982), i, 160, 166, 231, 233, above the only one occurrence of *ruwīya fī al-khabar*: 250.

sayings of Muḥammad only. In this regard the use of the formula *ruwiya fī al-khabar* emerges as a preferred expression to introduce sayings of Muḥammad as well as all the other materials that are accordingly put on the same level, with more formal freedom and through a formula emphasising the contents and what is “recounted” in these *khabars*.

## 8 Conclusion

The literature reviewed in the preceding pages illustrates the diffusion and various uses of the term *khabar* when relating to religious traditions and reports. It appears that the proper meaning(s) of the term *khabar*—much more so than its plural *al-akhbār*—was the subject of differing evaluations according to literary genres.

Al-Shāfiʿī first gave the term prominence in his works, and used it as a category broader than hadith, not in the sense of including *āthār* and reports later dismissed as unsound according to the definition of formal devices, but rather including even Qurʾānic contents as probative texts in relation to some questions. This definition, however, did not gain wide circulation, though it had a history of diffusion in Islamic literature, since in the works by authors such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Ḥibbān the word *khabar* is given the meaning of a report or text usually originating with the Prophet and/or connected to his life. This interpretation of the term also comes up in later writings such as Qazwīnī’s *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt* or in other works, where *khabar* is not merely a broad reference to a wide corpus of reports including prophetic hadiths and *āthār* and reports going back to later generations, but rather a specific quotation of a probative text, whatever its origin. This meaning is the one surviving also in the expression *khabar al-wāḥid*.

Though not emerging early as a reference term to indicate reports and traditions from the first generations, this meaning soon came to be attested in Islamic literature. In its various uses and meanings, *khabar* is in fact attested in all literary genres while only hadith is used more often as a technical reference to a specific kind of report. Most of these quotations, and especially those from the literature written from the 10th century CE onwards give evidence of a certain shift in meaning and use. When indicating hadith-like literature, *khabar* is no longer used to indicate generic probative texts, but rather traditions and reports in general, with less concern for the now established formal devices. The numerous attestations of the formula *ruwiya fī al-khabar* is one case in point which shows that it mostly refers to the contents of what is mentioned and quoted. Though the meaning of *khabar* is not always clear, it appears in

most cases to indicate the contents of a “tradition” as being a narrative unit dealing with, first of all, the words of Muḥammad, episodes in his life, and, secondly, also stories on the creation, biblical prophets, eschatological themes, and stories on early Islam. Thus, unlike the term *hadith*, *khavar* is attested in later literature and can point to the contents of the reports and not only to their exact form. Early, but especially later authors quoting the term in this way made a conscious choice confronting early *hadith* literature that came to be canonised and the success of the term in historiography (mainly in the form *akhbār*) and probably its circulation among Shī‘īs to designate their traditions. If on the one hand this led to criticism of continued use of the term, on the other it did not prevent many authors from using it to designate generic traditions with the peculiarities mentioned above.

This final consideration calls us back to the beginning of this study, that is: the use of the terms in western studies in general and in the work of Gau-tier Juynboll in particular. This composite and also complex meaning and use of *khavar* in Islamic literature first of all reminds us of the necessity of further research. Other scholars have already pointed out the broader meaning of *khavar* and its use in literature, but the few samples collected here will, I hope, at least demonstrate how many occurrences there are to be collected and discussed not only with regard to *khavar* but also in relation to other terminology in the field of *hadith* studies. I believe that in the course of time Juynboll became more and more aware of this problematic issue and of the lack of a well-founded assessment of the meaning of the terms used in the criticism and discussion of *hadith*. His last work bears the signs of a first reflection in this direction, and tries to give a more systematic meaning to the various terms used to designate traditions and reports. As regards *khavar* Juynboll gives the term a specific meaning related mostly to the first layer of traditions from which the so-termed *hadiths* evolved later on. This is a possible and probable explanation of the appearance of the term *khavar*, but the evidence collected in the sources discussed here reveals that this meaning moved and changed somewhat in the following centuries. Even after the final triumph of *hadith* criticism, the term *khavar*, also through the attestations of various formulas, continued to have wide circulation and use, and if some authors still privileged the connection to the sayings of Muḥammad, many others now used it in a more generic sense in contraposition to canonised *hadith*. Meanwhile the term gained specific meaning and further circulation in some literary genres which did not, however, obscure its use in Islamic literature as a whole.

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