

CHAPTER SIX

THE RAID OF THE HUDHAYL: IBN SHIHĀB AL-ZUHRĪ'S VERSION OF THE EVENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of Islam, the Hudhayl were a tribe of Northern Arab descent living near Mecca.¹ According to the Islamic sources, they were related to the Quraysh in Mecca, with whom they sided in their struggle against the prophet Muḥammad and the new religion of Islam.² To revenge the murder of their chief Sufyān ibn Khālid ibn Nubayḥ by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Unays, who had acted on the authority of the prophet Muḥammad, a branch of the Hudhayl, the Liḥyān, ambushed a group of Muslims sent by Muḥammad and killed most of them. They sold the remaining Muslims in Mecca, where the prisoners were killed in the end.³ Muḥammad tried to attack the Liḥyān a few months later as a reaction to their raid, but he did not succeed in overtaking them.⁴

The raid of the Hudhayl is part of the *sīra*, “the life of Muḥammad”, and belongs to the *maghāzī*, the stories about Muḥammad’s military campaigns. According to the Muslim historiographical sources, the raid took place at the end of the year 3/625 or in the beginning of the year 4/625 after the battle of Uḥud.⁵ The Muslim source material contains a number of variant narrative accounts of the raid. The aim of the study is to examine the origins and the authenticity of one of these variants, the account attributed to the famous Medinan transmitter Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742).

¹ I would like to thank prof. H. Motzki and prof. C. Versteegh for their valuable suggestions to improve this article. Any inaccuracy or mistake is, of course, my fault.

² G. Rentz, “Hudhayl,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition (EI2)*, III, Leiden 1971, 540–541.

³ G. Levi Della Vida, “Liḥyān. In Islamic Sources,” in *EI2*, V, Leiden 1986, 763.

⁴ A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, Karachi 1978, 485–486.

⁵ Ibn Ishāq places the raid in the year 3 A.H. according to the version of Ibn Hishām, but most other sources agree on the year 4 A.H. See for example Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, IV, Beirut 1966, 61–62. Ibn Hishām, *Sirat sayyidnā Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, I, Frankfurt am Main 1961, 638.

The article deals with the issue of whether the traditions ascribed to al-Zuhrī are fictitious or not. Schacht claims that most of them are fabricated, not only the legal ones but also those on the life of Muḥammad.⁶ Juynboll follows Schacht's opinion by suggesting that "it is no longer possible to shift the genuine Zuhri-traditions from the fabricated ones".⁷ Motzki, however, shows that large amounts of al-Zuhrī's legal traditions can be reconstructed by a comparative study of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* and Mālik's *Muwatta'*.⁸ Recently, it has been argued that there are also genuine al-Zuhrī-traditions dealing with the life of Muḥammad. One case was even detected by Juynboll, while others were published by Schoeler, Motzki and Görke.⁹ Besides, Schoeler has recently shown that on the basis of the sources available at present Schacht's conclusions on al-Zuhrī's traditions about the life of Muḥammad are erroneous.¹⁰

In a recent publication, Juynboll discusses the origin and the authenticity of al-Zuhrī's tradition on the raid of the Hudhayl analysed in this study. He concludes that "Zuhrī is doubtless the chronicler of this *khbar*". However, he questions the authenticity of the part of the chain of transmitters below al-Zuhrī, which he describes as an "improvement" from a later transmitter. Al-Zuhrī's original chain was probably *mursal*¹¹ without the name of al-Zuhrī's informant, who he supposes is "wholly fictitious".¹²

The method applied in this study to examine the origins of the traditions ascribed to al-Zuhrī is the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis developed by Schoeler and Motzki. The research starts with an analysis of the

⁶ J. Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford 1950, 246 and "On Mūsā b. 'Uqba's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*," in *Acta Orientalia* 21 (1953), 288–300.

⁷ G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth*, Cambridge 1983, 158.

⁸ See chapter 1 of this book. The article was originally published as "Der Fiqh des -Zuhrī: die Quellenproblematik," in *Der Islam* 68 (1991), 1–45.

⁹ G.H.A. Juynboll, "Early Islamic Society as Reflected in its Use of Isnāds," in *Le Muséon* 107 (1994), 151–194; 182 in particular. G. Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*, Berlin 1996. H. Motzki, "The Murder of Ibn Abī l-Huqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of some Maghāzī-Reports," in *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources*, ed. H. Motzki, Leiden 2000, 170–239. A. Görke, "The Historical Tradition about al-Ḥudaybiya. A Study of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr's Account," in *The Biography*, ed. H. Motzki, 240–275.

¹⁰ G. Schoeler, "Mūsā b. 'Uqba's Maghāzī," in *The Biography*, ed. H. Motzki, 67–97.

¹¹ *Mursal* is an *isnād* in which the name of the Companion is lacking between the Successor – al-Zuhrī in this case – and the Prophet. G.H.A. Juynboll, "Mursal," in *EI2*, VII, Leiden 1993, 631.

¹² G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Leiden 2007, 718.