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Because of the size of this volume it has been decided not to publish the Autumn issues 1985 and 1986 of this journal.

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PREFACE

This special number of *Al-Serāt* contains papers which were either presented at, or, in some cases, subsequently submitted in longer written form to, the International Conference on the Imam Ḥusayn held in London from the 6th to the 9th of July, 1984. The event was jointly organized by the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre, Toronto, Canada, to commemorate the 1400th *hijrī* anniversary of the birth of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the third Shʿī Imam and grandson of Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam, in 4 AH. Further details of the conference and speakers can be found in: Maryam Wdlings, 'Report on the International Seminar on Imam Ḥusayn. peace be upon him', *Al-Serāt* X/2 (Autumn, 1984), 3-12.

The papers have been arranged thematically under three headings, and within these headings the order is alphabetical, according to author. Given both the variety of ways in which the subjects were treated in the papers themselves, and the different backgrounds of the contributors, only an absolute minimum of uniformity has been imposed by the editors, and, while it is hoped that consistency has been maintained within each paper, such consistency should not be looked for between them. Dates, for example, usually appear in their *hijrī* form, but in some places they are given according to the Christian calendar, or in both forms; it should be clear from the context which system is being used. Qur'ānic quotations have been given throughout in the form of, e.g., 2:156. without further indication. The transliteration of Arabic names and terms follows the usual style of *Al-Serāt*, but in the case of other languages the editors have generally retained the transliterations given by each author.

The Muhanimadi Trust would like to thank the contributors and organizers for their cooperation and assistance, and for their kind patience in awaiting the delayed publication of these papers. In particular, they would like to thank Mahmoud Ayoub and Azim Nanji for their help and advice in the preparation of this volume, and Lynda Clarke for her translation of Professor al-Janhānī's contribution.

INTRODUCTION

This publication of the proceedings of the conference to commemorate the 1400th *hijra* anniversary of the birth the the Sayyid al-Shuhadā', the Imam Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, gives me the opportunity to say a few words of introduction about the Muhammadi Trust and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre for those whose do not already know about their operations and activities. The Muhammadi Trust was established in the United Kingdom in 1973, with its registered office in London, for the purpose, *inter alia*, of encouraging Islamic studies and disseminating knowledge of Islamic teachings: and its sister organization, the Muhammadi Islamic Centre of Canada, was set up in 1979, with the additional aim of awarding fellowships to students and scholars of Islam, and it has recently been registered under the name of the Muhammadi Islamic Foundation so as to allow it greater freedom and independence in its activities. Both organizations are anxious to strengthen unity among all Muslims, and, in particular, the youth. In pursuit of these objectives, the Trust has published a number of books and booklets in the English language. Some of these are translations of Arabic books on religious themes and topics, written by renowned scholars, and some are original works by scholars of international repute who have contributed to the study of Islam. The Trust also publish a journal, *Al-Serāt*, which prints articles on religious topics by eminent writers. Those who are familiar with this journal know that the utmost importance is given to the quality and standard of the articles, and, at the same time, full freedom to express views is allowed the writers so as to permit the publication of articles propounding diverse views with which the publishers may not necessarily agree. This effort of the Trust is directed towards the dissemination in English of knowledge concerning Islam in all its aspects.

Although a large body of literature on Islam exists in oriental languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, there is, in contrast, a dearth of such literature in English. Yet English is the only language with which our younger generation living in the Western world is familiar.

The diffusion and dissemination of knowledge is. according to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the religious duty of every Muslim, man or woman. The Prophet of Islam has enjoined us to acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave. As Sa'dī said,

پئے علم چوں شمع باید گداخت کہ بے علم نتواں خدا را شناخت

'*to kindle the light of knowledge, one must necessarily melt like a candle; for how can one understand the divine Being without the glow of learning.*'

I will now say just a few words as my humble tribute to the great Imam whose memory we have honoured in this conference. As a gem of the purest rays, serenest sparkles and reflected light, the life of the Imam Ḥusayn mirrors the light of guidance through its every facet. It is no wonder that the Imam Ḥusayn is looked upon as an ideal by all who believe in righteous causes, who believe that no sacrifice is too great for the achievement of a noble aim, who believe that death for a righteous cause is the very acme of noble living and far preferable to a life of ignominy and degredation based on compromising principles. How rightly Kawar Mchandra Singh Bedi has said:

جی کے مرنا تو سب کو آتا ہے مر کے جینا سکھا دیا تو نے

'*Everybody knows that after life there is death;*
but it is you [O Ḥusayn] who has taught how to live by dying.'

As Thomas Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, has put it: 'The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husayn and his followers were rigid believers in God: they illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husayn, despite his minority, marvels me.'

On the plains of Karbalā', Ḥusayn showed what *jihād* stands for in Islamic terminology. He taught us, as no one else could have done,

that it does not mean aggrandisement or the flamboyant display of valour which cries out: 'One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.' He showed, as none else could have done, that to remain firm and steadfast in the hour of trial and tribulation, to surrender to the will of Allah with complete resignation is the zenith of martyrdom and *jihād*. He showed us that even the death and destruction of his dearest ones cannot deter a person from the performance of the appointed task, from the fulfillment of the ordained purpose, without the least hesitation, without the least demur, without a word or murmur of complaint. Who else but Ḥusayn could have prayed to Allah for the salvation of Muslims without any rancour or bitterness under the dagger of the assassin. And all this with the utmost serenity and calm which comes from supreme resignation to the will of Allah and complete submission to His divine purpose. As Yagana says,

ڈوب کر پار اتر گیا اسلام آپ کیا جانیں کربلا کیا ہے

Only after drowning did Islam survive. How is it possible for anyone to comprehend the meaning, message, and significance of Karbalā'?

Secretary to the Muhammadi Trust.

ḤUSAYN THE MARTYR: A COMMENTARY ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE MARTYRDOM IN ARABIC SOURCES

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The importance of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn can be seen in the great attention paid to it by the early Muslim historians whose works have survived to the present day. Most of these historical works are of a general kind but the amount of space which they devote to this event indicates the momentous impact it had on Muslims. The early historians whose works are my main concern all lived in the third and fourth centuries of the Islamic era. They based their works, in the main, on earlier monographs devoted entirely to the subject which only survived in these later works. Fortunately the bibliographical works of Ibn Nadīm, al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī provide us with evidence of many of these earlier monographs. We can also deduce them from the writings of later historians. In attempting to describe this historical tradition, I have divided the account into ten phases. In these phases, I will point out what survives from earlier writers and analyze the different presentations.

It will be necessary, first, to give a list of the monographs or lengthy accounts on the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn which we have some record of or which we can summarize: al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta[1] (d. second half of 1st cent. AH), Jābir b. Yazīd al-Juʿfī[2] (d. 128), ʿAmmār b. Muʿāwiya[3] (d. 133), ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakam[4] (d. 147), Abū Mikhnāf[5] (d. 157), Hishām

1 Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* (Mashhad, 1348sh), p. 63.

2 Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* (Teheran, n.d.), p. 100.

3 This account was probably not a monograph but it represents a substantial, continuous piece. It is recorded in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa-al-Muluk* (Leiden 1881-3),11, 227-32, 281-3.

4 That he had an account can be assumed from the extracts used by Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Ṭabarī's version.

5 On Abū Mikhnāf, see U. Sezkin, *Abū Mikhnāf* (Leiden, 1971).

b. al-Kalbī[6] (d. 204), Al-Wāqidī[7] (d. 207), Naṣr b. Muzāḥim[8] (d. 212), Al-Madāʿinī[9] (d. 215).

These are all the early works which we know at present but there were certainly many more. We also know of monographs written later, but in the third and fourth centuries more general historical writing flourished and most historians preserved some account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. The main works which will provide the material for the investigation of this historical tradition are those of Khalifa b. Khayyāṭ (d. 246), al-Balādhurī (d. 279), al-Dīnawarī (d. 282), al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292), al-Ṭabarī (d. 311), Ibn Aʿthām (d. 314), al-Masʿūdī (d. 346), Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356), and al-Mufīd (d. 413).

In an attempt to reconstruct the tradition of historical writing about the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, it seems appropriate to divide the narrative into distinct sections. Naturally differences between different writers may concern only some of these sections and reports if only some of these occur in early writings. I have adopted the following divisions: (i) the situation prior to the death of Muʿāwiya after the death of the Imam al-Ḥasan; (ii) Yazīd's succession and his attempt to get the Imam al-Ḥusayn to pay homage to him, followed by the latter's retreat to Mecca; (iii) the letters to the Imam al-Ḥusayn from Kūfa; (iv) the mission of Muslim b. ʿAqīl to Kūfa and the appointment and activities of Ibn Ziyād as governor of Kūfa; (v) the Imam al-Ḥusayn's journey to Karbalā'; (vi) negotiations with ʿUmar b. Saʿd and the Kūfan army; (vii) the battle and the death of the Imam al-Ḥusayn; (viii) the desecration of his head and the treatment of his family.

Al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta is accredited with the first known account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. He was a prominent member of the Shīʿī community who came from Kūfa. It is claimed that he was in charge of the *shurṭa* in Kūfa for the Imam ʿAlī. He seems to have lived well into the second half of the 1st century AH and was contemporary

6 Most of his account is preserved by al-Ṭabarī.
7 Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, tr. Bayard Dodge (New York, 1970), I, 215.
8 Al-Ṭūsī, *op. cit.*, p. 347.
9 Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, tr. I. K. A. Howard (London, 1981), p. 300.

with the events of the martyrdom.[10]

It seems that little or nothing of his work survives. However, Ibn al-Kalbī (in al-Ṭabarī's version of his account) and al-Madā'inī (as reported by Abū al-Faraj) give reports emanating from his son al-Qasīm. These may, in fact, belong to his father's book.

The account from Ibn al-Kalbī tells how when the Imam's camp was overrun, he attempted to reach the water and was stopped by a tribesman leading a group of his tribe. The Imam al-Ḥusayn calls on God to make him thirsty, and the tribesman's retort is to shoot an arrow into his throat. The Imam catches the blood with his hands after pulling the arrow out. The account then goes on to describe how that man suffered from an illness so that water would not quench his thirst, and eventually the amount he drank of it killed him.[11]

The second report tells of the sufferings of the killer of al-'Abbās b. 'Alī. This killer dreamed of being flung into hell, so that every night he woke up screaming.[12]

The second account is attributed to Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī. He was a well known Shī'ī scholar and follower of the Imam al-Bāqir. He died in 128.[13] His account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn seems to have been preserved by Naṣr b.Muzāḥim on the authority of Jābir's pupil, 'Amr b. Shamīr. Extracts from Naṣr's work are preserved by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī. In fact Abū al-Faraj has cited very little of Jābir's account. What little there is are the names of some of the killers of the members of the *ahl al-bayt*, together with a verse which is included in Abū Mikhnāf's account.[14] The verse tells that the blood shed by the tribesmen will be reckoned against them.

Ibn al-Kalbī also reports one narrative from Jābir. This is also on the

10 Al-Ṭūsī, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63; Ibn Ḥajār, *Tadhīb al-Tahdhīb.*
11 Al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., II, 361-2.
12 Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *Maqātil al- Tālibiyyīn* (Najaf, 1965), pp. 78-9.
13 Al-Najāshī, *loc. cit.*
14 Abū al-Faraj, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56, 57, 61, 62. Cf al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

authority of Jābir's pupil, ʿAmr b. Shamīr. In this report Jābir's authority is not given but it may well be the Imam al-Bāqir again. The report tells us how the Imam al-Ḥusayn was thirsty, and was struck in the mouth by an arrow shot by Ḥusayn b. Tamīm. The blood spurted from his mouth, and he brushed it away into the air. He then prayed: "O God, count their number, destroy their power and do not leave one of them on earth."[15]

From the little that has survived of Jābir's account, it is difficult to assess his work; but what remains does call into question the account of his contemporary, ʿAmmār b. Muʿāwiya al-Duhnī.[16] This narrative is reported by al-Ṭabarī, and ʿAmmār claims to be reporting on the authority of the Imam al-Bāqir.

The report begins with a vivid introduction in which ʿAmmār says that he asked the Imam al-Bāqir to tell him about the death of al-Ḥusayn so that it might be as if he was there himself. What follows is an account which agrees in its basic outline with the version of Ibn al-Kalbī, while being much shorter and briefer.

This version seemingly adds nothing to Ibn al-Kalbī's narrative. It differs only in giving a different house for the one which Muslim b. ʿAqīl stayed in when he came to Kūfa; it does omit some of the things which Ibn al-Kalbī has reported, but nothing of real substance. What, then, is the purpose of this narrative? It is clearly put forward as the authoritative Shīʿī account. ʿAmmār was a well known traditionalist who, while being regarded as trustworthy by the general run of traditionalists, was also known for his Shīʿī inclinations, and as an adherent of the Imam al-Bāqir. He died in 133[17] and is claimed to have a book of traditions on the authority of the Imam al-Bāqir. This account might well be regarded as the official account of the Imam al-Bāqir and therefore the one which should be accepted.

In fact, this seems to be what happened in the case of al-Masʿūdī. In

15 *Ibid.*, p. 361.
16 See n. 3.
17 Ibn Ḥajār, *Tadhīb al-Tahdhīb.*

Murūj al-Dhahāb, he reproduces the first half almost word for word with a few omissions.[18] He gives a slightly different version of Ibn Ziyād's entry into Kūfa and adds some descriptions of the attempt to persuade al-Ḥusayn not to go to Kūfa. He then reverts to ʿAmmār's account and faithfully reproduces it.[19] It seems conceivable that al-Masʿūdī got his account from al-Ṭabarī. Nowhere does al-Balādhurī use this account. Nor does Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī use it, although he was aware of it. He uses an *isnād* with a different intermediary from al-Ṭabarī.[20]

Why, then, should this account be questioned? There are two main reasons. The first is that it reports that when the Imam al-Ḥusayn heard of the news of Muslim b. ʿAqīl's death, he wanted to return; and the second is that it reports that when ʿUmār b. Saʿd's army came near, the Imam offered three options: (i) that he should return, (ii) that he should go to the outposts of the empire, and (iii) that he should go to Yazīd.

It is worth analyzing Abū Mikhnāf's reports of these two incidents to see what they actually say and whether they are firm on these points. As far as Abū Mikhnāf is concerned, the Imam al-Ḥusayn learns of the death of Muslim before al-Ḥurr arrives. Those who bring the message of Muslim's death urge the Imam al-Ḥusayn to return but, before he can speak, the sons of Aqīl intervene and say that they will not return.[21] There is no report of the Imam saying that he would return in this conversation. Thus ʿAmmār's version, which uses the words 'he was about to go back', attempts to read the Imam's mind. It also omits the speech that he made in which he encouraged his supporters to leave him, not wanting to endanger their lives on a mission which was now clearly impossible.[22] In a speech to al-Ḥurr's men from Kūfa, the Imam al-Ḥusayn does say that they had given him covenants and promises. If they had kept to them, he would go on to Kūfa, but if they had changed

18 Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahāb* (Beirut, n.d.), III, pp. 53-5.
19 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.
20 Abū al-Faraj, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
21 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, 11, pp. 292-3.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 294.

their minds, he would return.[23] However, this statement demanded that the Kūfans respond and admit that they had been false, and they did not do that.

As for the conversations between ʿUmār b. Saʿd and the Imam al-Ḥusayn, Abū Mikhnāf gives three versions. The first clearly states that no one knew what they talked about.[24] The second, preceded by the comment that it is what the majority of reporters hold, is the story of the three options.[25] However, it is followed by a report from ʿUqba b. Simʿān, the Imam al-Ḥusayn's servant who was with him at Karbalā' and survived. He claimed that he was with the Imam al-Ḥusayn all the time and heard everything he said. He goes on: 'By God, he never gave the promise, which the people mention and allege, that he would put his hand in the hand of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, nor that they should send him to any one of the Muslim's border posts. Rather he said: "Leave me and I will go in this broad land so that we may see how the people's affair develops".'[26] With regard to the third report, which Abū Mikhnāf said was the majority opinion of reporters, the evidence for the Imam al-Ḥusayn making such proposals is in a letter written by ʿUmār b. Saʿd to Ibn Ziyād. According to this, Ibn Ziyād is about to agree with these terms but is dissuaded by Shamīr b. Dhī Jawshān.[27] As Shamīr is directly involved in the murder of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, this could be a report which tried to remove as much of the blame from the authorities and to transfer it to individuals. It could be an attempt to exonerate the authorities and as such could have been put out by supporters of the Umayyads. On the other hand, it might again be an attempt by ʿUmār b. Saʿd to get a further delay in the operations.

When the reports of Abū Mikhnāf of these two incidents are compared with ʿAmmār's version, we see that the latter provides interpretations of Abū Mikhnāf's reports. Because they are seemingly reported on the authority of the fifth Imam, al-Bāqir, they would seem to provide

23 *Ibid.*, p. 300.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 314.
25 *Ibid.*
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.*, p. 315.

interpretations which Shīʿī supporters must accept. It seems that this was the purpose of ʿAmmār's version; while still showing the death of the Imam al-Ḥusayn to be a tragedy it diminishes the stature of the Imam. It does not do so forShīʿīs but it does so for non-Shīʿīs. It seems that its aim is to confirm to those who oppose the Imamate the weakness of individual Imams and to do so by putting this interpretation into the mouth of the Imam. It certainly does so in the case of Wellhausen in his study of this event. He accepts ʿAmmār's interpretation without even realizing that he has done so.[28]

Doubt has been cast on the validity of ʿAmmār's report from the fifth Imam. This is further confirmed if one examines its brief account of the actual fight. Thus it says: ʿAll the Imam al-Ḥusayn's followers were killed, among whom were more than the young men from his family. An arrow came and struck his son, who he had with him, on his lap. He began to wipe the blood from him saying, "O God, judge between us and a people who asked us to come so that they might help us and then killed us." He called for a striped cloak, tore it and then put it on. He took out his sword and fought until he was killed. A man of the tribe of Madhhij killed him and cut off his head.'[29]

This is supposed to be a vivid account of the death of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, as told by the Imam al-Bāqir to a Shīʿī adherent, ʿAmmār. It is clearly unacceptable. He does not know the exact number of the members of the Imam al-Ḥusayn's family who were killed. We have reports from Jābir b. Yazīd in which the Imam al-Bāqir names killers of individual members of the Imam al-Ḥusayn's family; yet, according to ʿAmmār, he does not even identify the killer of the Imam. I have already mentioned an account from Jābir which describes vividly one attack on the Imam al-Ḥusayn. Ibn al-Kalbī also gives a similar report on the authority of the Imam al-Bāqir of the killing of the child with a slightly different prayer,[30] but this in no way confirms that ʿAmmār's report is from the Imam. Rather it lends credence to it by including one report

28 J. Wellhausen, *The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam*, tr. Walzer and Ostle (Amsterdam, 1975).

29 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, II, 282.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 360.

well known to non-Shīʿīs from the Imam. Furthermore Abū Mikhnāf tells us that the sixth Imam reported that Imam al-Ḥusayn had received thirty-three spear thrusts and thirty-four sword blows on his body by the time he was killed.[31] Yet ʿAmmār gives us one brief sentence describing how the Imam died.

ʿAmmār's account must be suspect. It almost certainly did not come from the Imam al-Bāqir and seems unlikely to be the work of a Shīʿī such as ʿAmmār who was contemporary with Jābir b. Yazīd al-Juʿfī and reported traditions from him.

Ibn al-Kalbī has included some narratives from ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakam which supplement the version of Abū Mikhnāf and sometimes provide alternatives for it. Al-Balādhurī also gives quotations from ʿAwāna from different sources than Ibn al-Kalbī.[32] ʿAwāna presents his reports without any further *isnād*. This suggests that they are taken from a continuous account which ʿAwāna had written.

The first extract which we have from it concerns Yazīd's appointment of Ibn Ziyād as governor of Kūfa after receiving complaints from his supporters that Nuʿmān b. Bashir was not acting firm against Muslim b. ʿAqīl and the Shīʿī in Kūfa. ʿAwāna seems to be the only source for the story of Yazīd consulting his father's Christian advisor, Sergius. Sergius tells Yazīd that his father was going to appoint Ibn Ziyād over Kūfa and advises him to do the same. Yazīd takes this advice and writes to Ibn Ziyād, telling him to go to Kūfa and hunt for Muslim. He gives him three choices in his treatment of Muslim: to imprison him, to kill him or to banish him.[33]

Ibn Aʿthām repeats this account in a somewhat embellished version without giving any reference to ʿAwāna[34] but it is clear that ʿAwāna must be his source, probably in the version of Ibn al-Kalbī. Shaykh al-Mufīd also reproduces the account but he says that his version is

31 *Ibid.*, p. 366.
32 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (Beirut, 1977), III, 165, 213, 218.
33 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, II, 239-40.
34 Ibn Aʿthām, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, V, 60-1.

based on Ibn Aʿthām;[35] al-Mufīd did not realize the implications of this version of ʿAwāna; it removes the responsibility of the appointment of Ibn Ziyād from Yazīd and puts it, in effect, not on Muʿāwiya, but instead on Muʿāwiya's Christian advisor. Thus Yazīd is exonerated to some extent from Ibn Ziyād's conduct. Even the three choices given to Ibn Ziyād for dealing with Muslim are presented in such a way as to lay less emphasis on the killing of Muslim. The first is imprisonment, the last banishment. Ibn Ziyād's choice of the second, killing, put more of the responsibility for that on himself rather than Yazīd.

Another report from ʿAwāna of some significance is paralleled by reports from Abū Mikhnāf. It emphasizes the reluctance of ʿUmār b. Saʿd to go against the Imam al-Ḥusayn and stresses the pressure that Ibn Ziyād put on him by threatening to withdraw the appointment that he had earlier given him. ʿUmār b. Saʿd suggests that the task be given to a tribal leader in Kūfa but Ibn Ziyād refuses. When ʿUmār b. Saʿd's army reaches the Imam al-Ḥusayn, he finds it difficult to send a messenger to the Imam because nearly all of them had previously sent messages to the Imam urging him to come to Kūfa. The report ends with ʿUmār b. Saʿd's hope that he will not have to fight the Imam al-Husayn.[36]

This account, like others, put the blame for ʿUmār b. Saʿd's situation on Ibn Ziyād. It also stresses the treachery of the Kūfan tribal leaders. In this context, again, we see the blame for the ensuing situation being transferred from Yazīd to Ibn Ziyād and the Kūfan traitors.[37]

A further report from ʿAwāna concerns Yazīd's behaviour when the head of the martyred Imam and the prisoners of the *ahl al-bayt* are sent to him by Ibn Ziyād. In this account we are told that the members of the *ahl al-bayt* were imprisoned while Ibn Ziyād sent after Yazīd. A message was sent to them in which there was a promise to inform them of their fate. When the prisoners are sent to Yazīd, he justifies his action and indicates that he was unwilling that such a thing should happen. The report describes his good treatment of the prisoners, and even the

35 Al-Mufīd, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-8.
36 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, II, 309-11.
37 *Ibid.*, pp. 379-83.

praise of his treatment by one of them.[38]

This report should be seen in conjunction with another isolated report by Ibn al-Kalbī, which has clearly pro-Yazīd tendencies. In it, Yazīd expresses regret for the death of the Imam and puts the blame on Ibn Ziyād.

ʿAwāna, in his narrative, seems to be presenting again a slant which diverts the blame for the killing of the Imam away from Yazīd and towards Ibn Ziyād. There is no mention of Yazīd's desecration of the Imam's head.

A report from ʿAwāna, which has no support elsewhere, describes how Ibn Ziyād tries to get his letter instructing ʿUmār b. Saʿd to attack the Imam al-Ḥusayn from ʿUmār b. Saʿd, but ʿUmār b. Saʿd has already used it as a justification for himself.[39]

Thus insofar as the reports from ʿAwāna which have been included in Ibn al-Kalbī's version may be taken as a sample of ʿAwāna's full account, it would seem that ʿAwāna is presenting an account which reduces the amount of blame attached to Yazīd in the affair. He is writing a marginally pro-Umayyad version. In his accounts of the battle of Siffin, it has been noted that ʿAwāna tends to shift responsibility from Muʿāwiya to ʿAmr b. al- Ās.[40] The same operation appears to be taking place here with ʿAwāna shifting the responsibility away from Yazīd to Ibn Ziyād and ultimately to his advisor, Sergius, for suggesting Ibn Ziyād's appointment.

Abū Mikhnāf's account survives in the reports taken by later writers from the recensions of Ibn al-Kalbī, Naṣr b. Muzāhim and al-Madā'inī. Ibn al-Kalbī's work is given in very full form by al-Ṭabarī. Al-Balādhurī tends to use the collective 'they said (*qālū*)'. But it is clear that the major source is Abū Mikhnāf. Abū al-Faraj uses both Naṣr b. Muzāhim's

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 374-6.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 385.

40 E. L. Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya in Early Arab Tradition* (Copenhagen, 1964), pp. 32, 48, 53.

version and al-Madā'inī's, but he mainly relies on Naṣr b. Muzāhim's. It is clear from a comparison of the three texts that the fullest version is Ibn al-Kalbī's, but all three recensions indicate that sometimes narratives are compressed together and summarized. What emerges is a very full account based on numerous sources, where alternatives are put side by side.

As far as Abū Mikhnāf's reports are concerned, it can be said that he is anti-Umayyad and in favour of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, but whether he was actually a Shīʿī is questionable. Certainly, he is hostile to both Ibn Ziyād and Yazīd; both poke at the teeth in the head of the martyred Imam in his account.

Because of the nature of al-Ṭabarī's annalistic approach to history, Abū Mikhnāf's beginning of the account is missing, as it does not belong to events of the year 60. Part of it may be preserved by al-Balādhurī by using the collective term *qālū*. When the Imam al-Ḥasan died the Shīʿī in Iraq wrote to the Imam al-Ḥusayn to ask him to come to lead them. He wrote back reminding them of the agreement that his brother had made with Muʿāwiya and promising to lead them. Muʿāwiya heard that the people thought that the Imam al-Ḥusayn would lead them after his death and wrote to him warning him against this. The Imam al-Ḥusayn wrote back denouncing him. Thus the scene is set for the confrontation on the death of Muʿāwiya.

The variety of Abū Mikhnāf's stories and his statement about the majority of the reporters[41] suggest that he was reporting from an existing literature. We have already discussed the accounts of al-Aṣbagh, Jābir and ʿAmmār, and it is noticeable that he does not report from them. His work has already been closely examined by Ursula Sezkin; but she did not attempt to reconstruct possible literary sources, despite the thoroughness of her work.[42]

Of the four major monographs by the most distinguished historians of

41 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, 11, 314.
42 U. Sezkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-22.

the end of the second century, Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Wāqidī, Naṣr b. Muzāhim and al-Madā'inī, Ibn al-Kalbī is by far the best represented. Al-Ṭabarī has reported what is very probably almost the complete monograph. As we have already noted Ibn al-Kalbī relies very heavily on Abū Mikhnāf but he does use other narratives. He has one one quotation from Jābir b. Yazīd and perhaps one from Aṣbagh b. Nubāta and he also uses ʿAwāna. By and large, he follows Abū Mikhnāf in hostility both to Yazīd and to Ibn Ziyād. He does however supplement Abū Mikhnāf's reports, which we have already discussed.

Naṣr b. Muzāhim's monograph is reported in a very limited fashion by Abū al-Faraj in *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*.[43] He seems to have had two main sources: Abū Mikhnāf, whom he reports on the authority of his mentor ʿUmār b. Saʿd, and Jābir b. Yazīd al-Juʿfī, whom he reports through ʿAmr b. Shamīr. Naṣr b. Muzāhim uses both of these sources in his monograph on the Battle of Siffin. If his full work had survived, we would have had a much fuller Shīʿī version of the account, as Naṣr was himself a Shīʿī, and tended to favour the Shīʿī tradition.

We have no clear idea of the account of al-Madā'inī. It is possible that it is the main source of al-Balādhurī for Abū Mikhnāf, but al-Balādhurī introduces his account with the collective *qālū*. However, this version does not refer to the variation from `Awana which Ibn al-Kalbī has introduced into his account. Al-Madā'inī is used as a source by Abū al-Faraj for a report from al-Qasīm b. al-Aṣbagh which has already been cited, and there are other reports from him which are not from Abū Mikhnāf. So clearly he used other material to supplement Abū Mikhnāf's account.

Unfortunately little or nothing survives of the monograph written by al-Wāqidī. It is claimed by both Ibn Nadīm and his secretary, Ibn Saʿd, that al-Wāqidī was a Shīʿī.[44] However, Shaykh al-Mufīd accuses him of being a member of the ʿUthmaniyya.[45] What al-Mufīd means by that is that al-Wāqidī had strong sympathies with the Zubayrid faction

43 Abū al-Faraj, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-81.
44 E. L. Petersen, *op. cit.*. p. 89.
45 Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Jamal.*

which had supported greater authority for Medina, and seen the family of Zubayr (and in particular his son, Ibn al-Zubayr) as the fittest people for the caliphate. If any of his account had survived, it would have been interesting to examine his treatment of Ibn al-Zubayr. The ʻUthmaniyya attitude to Ibn al-Zubayr with regard to this incident is clearly established in the work of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, and there is also a similar report in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*.

Khalīfa b. Khayyāt is writing annalistic history, and therefore has to mention the death of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. He does so in the briefest form possible and gives a list of the members of the Imam's family who were killed. He devotes much more space to Yazīd's request of his governor, al-Walīd, that the oath of allegiance should be taken from Ibn al-Zubayr and the Imam al-Husayn.[46]

Before discussing his account, it will be necessary to look at the accounts that we have from Abū Mikhnāf. Ibn al-Kalbī's version has unified two separate reports from Abū Mikhnāf; they are given separately by al-Balādhurī. In the first, al-Walīd's messenger comes to Ibn Zubayr and the Imam al-Ḥusayn, and they make excuses for not attending. Al-Walīd concentrates his pressure on Ibn al-Zubayr by sending him messengers, and Ibn al-Zubayr escapes to Mecca. The report adds that al-Ḥusayn arrives there later, but there is no mention of any actual meeting with al-Walīd. It suggests that when both men are in Mecca, Ibn al-Zubayr wants the Imam al-Ḥusayn to go to Kūfa to get him out of the way because he is jealous of his influence.[47]

In the second report, Abū Mikhnāf speaks of a meeting between al-Walīd and the Imam al-Ḥusayn in the presence of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam in which the Imam puts of pledging allegiance to Yazīd and gets angry with Marwān for threatening to kill him.[48]

The Uthmaniyya view of this event is somewhat different. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt gives an account from Wahb b. Jarīr on the authority of

46 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta'rīkh* (2nd ed., Beirut, 1977), pp. 231-6
47 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (Beirut, 1979), IV/2, 299-301
48 *Ibid.*, pp. 302-3; cf. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 216-19.

Abū Bakr Juwayriyya b. Asmā' al-Hudhālī, who says that he heard from so many scholars of Medina that he cannot count them. According to this, Yazīd's letter comes to al-Walīd. He sends for Marwān who advises him to make Ibn al-Zubayr and the Imam al-Ḥusayn pledge allegiance to Yazīd immediately. Ibn al-Zubayr arrives first and there follows a conversation which is almost identical with the one Abū Mikhnāf reported to have taken place with the Imam al-Ḥusayn. Al-Walīd orders them both to leave. The Imam al-Ḥusayn arrives, but nothing is said to him until both men return. The narrative is interrupted at this point by the omission of something, and then goes on with Marwān advising al-Walīd to appoint spies to watch Ibn al-Zubayr. Ibn al-Zubayr then makes his escape to Mecca and is followed later by the Imam al-Ḥusayn. In Mecca, he asks the Imam al-Ḥusayn why he has not gone to his supporters, adding that if he had such supporters, he would go to them.[49]

Al-Balādhurī has another report from Wahb b. Jarīr which purports to come from a servant of Muʿāwiya.[50] Khalīfa b. Khayyāt reports the first half of it but prefers Abū Bakr al-Hudhālī's account of the actual meeting with al-Walīd.[51] In this report, Zurayq, the servant of Muʿāwiya, brings the message to al-Walīd from Yazīd. It is a very colourful account which gives details of the clothes all the main characters are wearing. Al-Walīd is full of bitter grief at the death of Muʿāwiya and sends for Marwān. Marwān advises that the men should be sent for. The Imam al-Ḥusayn arrives first, followed by Ibn al-Zubayr; then a new character arrives, Abd Allāh b. Muti', who is a supporter of Ibn al-Zubayr. Al-Walīd announces the death of Muʿāwiya and calls upon them to pledge allegiance. It is Ibn al-Zubayr who takes it on himself to answer and he persuades al-Walīd to let them delay it until the morning. Al-Walīd does so and they all escape.

Clearly these two 'Uthmaniyya accounts are meant to build up the reputation of Ibn al-Zubayr at the expense of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. They seem like propaganda. Abū Bakr al-Hudhālī gives us as his authority countless scholars of Medina but does not name one of them. When

49 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-3.
50 Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-10.
51 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *op. cit.*, pp. 232.

compared with Abū Mikhnāf's tradition, it is obvious that one of them is based on the other and it seems probable that Abū Mikhnāf's account is the earlier. The second account is full of such great detail with regard to the clothes people were wearing as to suggest that it was written by a fashion critic. Clearly, these details are meant to establish its authenticity, but they rather tend to suggest that it is a fabrication.

Other fragments of the 'Uthmaniyya version of events survive in the *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of al-Balādhurī. In the first, Wahb b. Jarīr describes briefly the coming of Ibn Ziyād to Kūfa and his demanding Hanī b. 'Urwa to hand over Muslim. When he refuses, he has him executed and then seizes Muslim. He takes Muslim out on the balcony and demands that Muslim say: 'I am Muslim b. 'Aqīl, the leader of rebels.' Muslim says it and then Ibn Ziyād executes him.[52] This isolated report manages again to undermine the bravery of such men as Muslim, and by implication the *ahl al-bayt*, by making Muslim repeat such words. Such a story is not to be found elsewhere in the sources.

Another report, again from Wahb b. Jarīr, concerns the Imam al-Ḥusayn addressing the army of 'Umār b. Sa'd before the battle. It is not surprising that even this tries to undermine the Imam al-Ḥusayn. He is reported to have asked the Kūfans: 'Shall I submit to the rule of Yazīd?' To which the reply came: 'You must submit to the rule of Ibn Ziyād.' This the Imam al-Ḥusayn refused to do, and the battle took place. The implication of the report is that the Imam al-Ḥusayn was prepared to submit to Yazīd. This seems to attempt to undermine his stature and to make an unfavourable comparison with Ibn al-Zubayr, the hero of the later 'Uthmaniyya resistance to Yazid.[53]

Al-Balādhurī's account, which is split up into sections in his life of Muslim, his life of Yazīd, and his life of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, gives the impression of being the most historically balanced, in the sense of presenting all possible versions. The kernel of the account is presented with a collective *qālū* (= they said) but if the earlier surmise is correct,

52 Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, (Beirut, 1974), II, 86.
53 Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, III, 227.

it is probably based on al-Madā'inī's monograph, which, in turn, was based on Abū Mikhnāf. However, al-Balādhurī also gives the more hostile reports of Wahb b. Jarīr, as well as other sources. As already noted, he gives some reports from ʿAwāna, but not through Ibn al-Kalbī. He also uses a brief account from Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān.[54] This account is also used by al-Ṭabarī. This account is brief and adds nothing to our knowledge of the historical tradition. It does present the view that the Imam al-Ḥusayn was prepared to submit to Yazīd but refused to submit to Ibn Ziyād. It also reports that Yazīd wept when the head of the dead Imam was brought to him.

From the point of view of historiography, al-Balādhurī's version is very useful. It is, however, questionable whether al-Balādhurī was just being an unbiased historian reporting all the accounts available to him. On occasions al-Balādhurī is known to mention two accounts and say which one is correct. Nowhere in his presentation of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn does he do this. The use of the collective *qālū* makes much of the account sound very unverifiable, whereas the alternatives to the general account are given with full chains of authority. This makes them look more authentic. Thus accounts which undermine the stature of the Shīʿī Imam are included in a way that seems to be intended as a correction of the general account. This in no way means that he is not sympathetic to the plight of the Imam. He clearly is, but he is concerned to undermine the Shīʿī conception of the Imamate, and this will be the case if he brings forward accounts which in some way undermine the stature of the man. A particularly good example of that is his report of the three options the Imam al-Ḥusayn is said to have offered ʿUmār b. Saʿd and the Kūfans. He reports that fully, but ignores Abū Mikhnāf's earlier report that no one knew what ʿUmār b. Saʿd and the Imam al-Ḥusayn talked about. He merely adds a paragraph of the third account, without giving it the authority of ʿUqba b. Sim'ān, the Imam's servant. In fact, he reports that 'it is said' that Ibn Ziyād only asked the Imam to return to Medina. The very use of the words 'it is said' implies that this should not be accepted as a truthful report, but rather should be considered as an unidentified and unlikely claim.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 173.

At the end of his account al-Balādhurī includes some of the reports of the sky raining down blood, but these reports would suggest that the tragedy of the death of the Imam al-Ḥusayn was such because of his blood relation with the Prophet rather than because of his status as an Imam.[55]

Al-Dīnawārī gives us a fairly full account.[56] In the main, it seems to follow the traditional account, but it was probably based on a later recension of Abū Mikhnāf's work. On two points in the account he introduces material that differs from what has been reported earlier. He presents an account of Ibn al-Zubayr trying to persuade the Imam al-Ḥusayn not to go to Kūfa but to carry out his resistance to Yazīd from the Hijāz.[57] This may be a survival of a Zubayrid Medinan tradition which supported Ibn al-Zubayr, but did not want to denigrate the Imam al-Ḥusayn. The other point is that al-Dīnawārī does not mention the three options often alleged to have been offered by the Imam to ʿUmār b. Saʿd. As far as he is concerned, the Imam only said that he was willing to go back, but Ibn Ziyād insisted that he pledge allegiance to Yazīd.[58]

In effect, al-Dīnawārī's version is basically presenting the standard version with a high degree of sympathy and support for the Imam al-Ḥusayn.

It is surprising that al-Yaʿqūbī, who was almost certainly a Shīʿī, has devoted little space to the account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn in his history.[59] It seems to be a mere summary of Abū Mikhnāf's account, with the addition at the end of a miraculous tradition. According to this, the Prophet had given Umm Salāma some soil which he had received from the angel Gabriel. This would turn red when the Imam al-Ḥusayn was killed. When that happened, Umm Salāma tearfully announced the death of the Imam in Medina, at the

55 *Ibid.*, p. 182.
56 Al-Dīnawārī, *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl* (Cairo, 1960), pp. 229-62.
57 *Ibid.*, p. 244.
58 *Ibid.*, p. 254.
59 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh* (Najaf, 1964), II, 229-33.

time that it had happened at Karbalā'.[60]

He strays slightly from Abū Mikhnāf's account in suggesting that both the Imam al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr went to see al-Walīd together when he summoned them to pledge allegiance to Yazīd.[61] Generally al-Yaʿqūbī's account gives the impression of being a rather hurried summary of Abū Mikhnāf and it does not add appreciably to our knowledge of the historical tradition.

Al-Ṭabarī's account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn has long been regarded as the definitive account. He gives the *isnād* of the account that he uses, and interrupts the narrative to give other alternative or confirmatory traditions. In the main he relies on Ibn al-Kalbī and ʿAmmār b. Muʿāwiya al-Duhrī. Al-Ṭabarī seems to be using ʿAmmār's version as a means of interpreting Ibn al-Kalbī's. Thus he gives the first half of ʿAmmār's version first, and then follows it with Ibn al-Kalbī's fuller version. He then presents the second half of ʿAmmār's version, followed by the second half of Ibn al-Kalbī's. On two occasions he interprets Ibn al-Kalbī with differing reports from ʿUmar b. Shabba,[62] and he concludes his account with the brief version of Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān — similar to that of al-Balādhurī. What emerges looks at first glance to be the authoritative version of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. However, this is not quite the case. As already mentioned, the annalistic nature of the work means that the agreement made by Muʿāwiya with the Imam al-Ḥasan, and the death of the Imam al-Ḥasan and the letters of the Kūfans, are not reported. The surprising thing is that, in what purports to be a comprehensive history, they are not reported elsewhere in the text. The other annalistic historians, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Dīnawārī, and Ibn Aʿthām do not report them. These omissions must make us question al-Ṭabarī's motive. The answer to this problem will lie in a more comprehensive study than this, which is limited to the account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn.

We have already noted that the use of ʿAmmār's version is intended to

60 *Ibid.*, p. 233.
61 *Ibid.*, p. 229.
62 Al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, II, 242-6, 272.

be an interpretation of Ibn al-Kalbī's, and thus weakens the stature of the Imam. This is probably deliberately done by al-Ṭabarī. However, he ignores, at least in this account, material from the ʿUthmaniyya.

Ibn Aʿthām al-Kūfī gives us the most embellished account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. He prefaces his account by including lists of *isnāds*, which he claims are his sources.[63] These lists are muddled, and seem like an attempt to show that this is indeed an authoritative account. Ibn Aʿthām's exaggeration in his authorities sets the tone for the rest of the account. It is based on what has become the standard version, but it is that standard version in a very embellished form. Each individual battle is prefaced by verses, most of which are not reported by any other source. The prowess in the battle of the Imam al-Ḥusayn's followers and the Imam himself is such that one is surprised that they were not victorious. In his partisan approach, Ibn Aʿthām forgets that it is a tragedy which is taking place. The same tendency to exaggerate is a feature also of the account attributed to Abū Mikhnāf. Such treatment diminishes the real story of the Imam's sufferings and places it in the realm of a peculiar kind of hagiography. Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī deals with the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn in his *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*. The work, as its name suggests, is a survey of the persecution of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib. His account is brief in comparison with al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī, but he does give a useful account.[64] His main authority is Naṣr b. Muzāhim but he also uses al-Madā'inī. A third authority of Abū al-Faraj — and one he uses throughout his book — is Yaḥya b. al-Ḥasan. The latter is also an authority of al-Mufīd for his *Kitāb al-Irshād*, and he seems to have written a

The other annalistic historians, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Dīnawārī, work on the descendants of the Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. The account supplements the reports of Abū Mikhnāf, but by and large it acts as confirmation that al-Ṭabarī's use of Ibn al-Kalbī is authentic.

63 Ibn Aʿthām, *Kitāb al-Futuḥ* (Hyderabad, 1971), IV, 209-10. The whole narrative is IV, 209-24, and V, 8-252.

64 Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-81.

The last writer in the list of authorities is Shaykh al-Mufīd. In his work *Kitāb al-Irshād*,[65] he presents an account of the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn. He claims that his authorities are Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Madā'inī. In fact, he seems mostly to have used Ibn al-Kalbī in al-Ṭabarī's recension. On one occasion he uses an alternative to Ibn al-Kalbī which al-Ṭabarī has provided concerning Ibn Ziyād's entry into Kūfa,[66] but without indicating a different source. Al-Mufīd does, however, make the beginning of the story clear by giving those events prior to Muʿāwiya's death which al-Ṭabarī has omitted.

The historiographical study of this event shows how the martyrdom of the Imam al-Ḥusayn became an important subject for historians from an early time. Despite attempts by some to diminish the stature of the Imam, the historical tradition has, by and large, preserved the general picture of heroism and sacrifice. The reality, in the simpler stories, has conveyed a more profound effect than the embellishments of some later writers. It was the martyrdom that gave rise to the historical writings, and the historical writings have carried on the tradition of the martyrdom to inspire men throughout the years since the tragic event.

65 Al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, pp. 299-372.
66 *Ibid.*, p. 308.