View point of Ibn Sa'ad, one of Ahl <u>Hadith</u>, about the history of the beginning of Islam

A case study about the biography of Imam 'Ali (a.s.) in the book "al-Tabaqat al-Kubra"

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Abstract: al-Tabaqat al-Kubra by Muhammad Ibn Sa'ad (TT* A.H.) is of the significant ancient books about the biography of Prophet Muhammad, his companions, Tabi'in (companions of his companions), and tradition narrators till the beginning decades of the third Hijrah century. The present study in a case study on the biography of imam 'Ali_included in this book explained the differences among records of historians and tradition narrators about the events at the beginning of Islam. The findings show that Ibn Sa'ad as a tradition narrator (Muhaddith) and a historian due to his commitment to the beliefs of Ahl Hadith in explaining the events at the beginning of Islam pictured the course of events different from other historians.

Key words: historiography, Ashab Hadith, Ibn Saʻad, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, 'Ali

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Introduction

In the third Hijrah century, tradition recorders and great historians of the history of Islam came into existence. One ofthese historians and traditionalists of Sunnah who was succeeded to write a complete series of books about the biography of Prophet Muhammad, Companions (Sahabah), Tabi'in, and tradition narrators till his time is Ibn Sa'ad. The book al-Tabagat al-Kubra by him due to including details of life of people and Islamic cultural and social aspects, is considered as a political, social and religious book till the beginning of the third century. The present study deals with the differences among Ahl Hadith view points and historians and tries to explain these differences by reviewing the records of Ibn Sa'ad regarding biography of Imam 'Ali.

Abu 'Abdullah ibn Sa'ad ibn Mani' al-Basari_al-Hashimi known as "Katib al-Waqidi" was born in \f^A A.H. in Basra. He benefited from the masters of that time. Then he traveled to other Hadith scholars in Kufa, Medina, and Baqdad. He said, I visited some scholars in Medina and I benefited from their knowledge. Finally when he was "vears old, he traveled to Baqdad to learn from Waqidi." Ibn Sa'ad after joining

Wagidi's students attended all his classes and adhered to him in such a way that he was known as "Katib al-Waqidi" (the scriber of Waqidi)", "Sahib Waqidi" and "Ghulam Waqidi". Ibn Sa'ad after the death of Waqidi (Y·Y A.H.) stayed in Baqdad and was among the first biography writers who was from out of Medina. The prior biography writers such as ibn Ishaq (\d\ A.H.) and Waqidi both were from Medina. He wrote another book besides al-Tabaqat al-Kubra titled al-Tabaqat al-Saghir. Finally Ibn Sa'ad passed away in YT. A.H. in his FT in Bagdad.[^]

The first issue regarding Ibn Sa'ad is to clarify in which groups of Muhaddithan, Akhbaris or historians he can be classified. Though in the book "al-Fihrist", he is known as Akhbaris based on his approach in recording history which is based on documentation, he can be regarded as Muhaddith (traditionalist) as Fuck' said. Caetani also introduced him as an influential individuals in revolution documentation of Hadith. 'He reached to the level of "Hafiz" in Ilm al-Hadith and ibn Hujr mentioned him as he enjoyed both groups' traditions, Akhbaris and Muhadittan, and by mixing them he could prepare his book historical work. Therefore, as according to my opinion, he should be

regarded as a traditionalist-historians. His interest in traditions and believes of traditionalists are clear in this book. He wrote this book to introduce the biography of tradition recorders. Due to this, traditionalists generally knew him as a thiggah narrator unlike his master Waqidi. The trend of traditionalists in the first half of third A.H. century was the common trend among Sunnis and his look towards history of Islam had fundamental differences with other historians. One of the beliefs of Ahl-Hadith was "justice of Sahabah" which was mentioned in his book Tabagat. According to Ahl-Hadith, companions of Prophet are just and there is not even a little doubt about them. For example the story of Hatib ibn Abi Bal'atah can be mentioned:

When it was cleared that he had secret correspondent with infidels of Mecca, 'Umar asked for permission from Prophet to behead him. The holy Prophet said, "Isn't he the one who took part in Badr battle?... We don't know. God knows him the best. Do whatever you want that heaven is guaranteed for you." 'According to this, the tradition "Asharah Mubashshirah" is accepted by them. 'F And the virtues of companions of Prophet should be mentioned. Therefore, mentioning whatever against them, criticizing them or disputes among them is not suitable. Because

these disagreement can bring their justice under question. The best attempt had been done to cover up these disagreement which was against the approach of Akhbaris. Shaykh Mufid, the great Shia scholar, at the beginning of the book "al-Jamal" pointed out to this group of traditionalists and said,

According to a group of them, it shouldn't be studied and searched about disputes among companions of Prophet or even listen to them. So anyone who ignores this advice makes a change in religion and is standing against the religion; because it is narrated from Prophet who said, do avoid of what will occur among my companions. "

Because according to them, speaking about some events like Saqifah, 'Uthman murder, Jamal and Siffin are distortion." \(\)

This belief of keep quite regarding disputes among companions of Prophet sometimes causes their discord with Akhbariyun. Because Akhbariyun wrote a lot of books about some events like Jamal, Siffin, 'Uthman murder,... or like Tabari and Biladhuri talked about these events in details which was not interesting to traditionalists. This causes them to become weak or sometimes they were accused of being Shia.' Asserting this point is what Ibn Salah

found as a fault in the book al-Isti'<u>a</u>b ibn 'Abdulbar because of its including disputes among companions and traditions of Akhbariyun.'\(^1\)

This difference can be seen in the book Tabagat ibn Sa'ad. The reader not only does find himself reading a historical book but also a theological book of Ahl-Hadith. In the present article, it has been tried to compare and contrast the information in this book about Imam 'Ali and other historians' to prove this book is written based on his religious tendencies traditionalists; towards therefore in accepting his words specifically regarding disputes among companions should act wisely.

Those scholars who are studying about Islam were always interested in history recorded in Sirah, Maghazi and later events in the beginning of Islam. Accordingly, they prepared some researches, for example, Ella Landau-Tasseron in an introduction titled "process of redaction: a case study over Tamim approaching Muhammad" compared and contrasted traditions by Waqidi and ibn Ishaq (mentioned in Sirah ibn Hisham), cited his coming towards Prophet as the biggest Wafad of 9th year ('Am al-Wafad) and showed the difference among traditions and their reasons. He knew several factors involving in this:

amongst the mistakes of traditionalists we can say mixing events with each other, tribe-bound honors, ... he benefited from various historical, traditional and interpretational sources and depicted explicitly that a tradition in the way of its perfection, or as he put "process of redaction" underwent changes and evolutions.

Jones in his two essays compared and contrasted Sirah by ibn Ishaq and Maghazi. In the first titled Chronology of the Maghazi- A Textual survey" studied "chronology" in these two books and at the end concluded that any date mentioned only by Wagidi is doubtful.'In the second article, titled " Ibn Ishaq and al-Waqidi: the dream of Atika and the Raid to Nakhla in relation to the charge of plagiarism" he studied these two events. According to him, in the report by Wagidi which included details more than Ibn Ishaq's. storytelling is more apparent.\^Though these stories were appeared at the time of Ibn Ishaq and about early Ynd century.

Motzki also gathered a collection of articles from various authors on the reviewing Sirah source books. A few of them are related to the topic at hand: Uri Rubin in an essay titled "the life of Muhammad and Islamic self-portrait: a comparative analysis from events of Badr and Hudaybiyah" reviewed the

war council that Prophet had with his companions. Various verses described this event and each one offered different and ... explanation about time and place and other details. He shows that in this council and councils like that some issues are made bold: \. The importance of consultation in the opinion of Prophet; as Abu Hurayrah said, the Prophet consulted his companions more than other leaders.\frac{1}{2}Though in other tradition, Abu Hurayrah emphasized that Prophet consulted with companions about martial issues. T.Y. Bolding the role of Abubakr and 'Umar in getting consultation. In some traditions, some decisions made by the Prophet had been known to be from Abubakr and these two were the special advisors of Prophet and there is no word about 'Ali,". Making honors and virtues for Muhajirs and Ansars by themselves. Rubin also pointed out to this point that Muslims accepted easily whatever about the bravery of the first fighters... and did not question them. So they spread fast.

Marco Scholler reviewed quoted traditions from Kalbi about related verses to Medina Jews and showed their discrepancies in article "Sirah and interpretation of Muhammad Kalbi about Medina Jews; though he did not ignore the importance of this traditions. According to him, interpretational works and traditions in them as we see

in Maghazi's traditions are not from reports and not adapted with them but in contrast they are prior to them. Because of not interest in solving questions related to Islamic jurisprudence, these traditions are saved in interpretational works while in Sunnah by Maghazi and Sirah are put aside.

Leites reviewed the important issue of different opinions among Sunni and Shia towards Muhammad in an article "Sirah and the issue of tradition". He, in this article, reviewed the tradition of comets-filling-of-sky the time Muhammad birth based on Sunni and Shia sources. He, quoted from Tor Andrae, depicted two opposite pictures from prophethood based on Shia and Sunni sources. According to the first picture, Prophet is merely a human being who was given the responsibility of being a Prophet in a special period of life. According to the second picture, Prophet is a super human whose life turned into prophethood by a choice. From Andrae's research we can realize the first picture belongs to Sunnite scholars and the second rooted in Shia thoughts which found its way to the Sunni Traditions

Muhammad Qasim Zaman also by comparing Maghazi part in three books of al-Musannaf Abdul Razaq Sanani, al-Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah, and Sahih

Bukh<u>ari</u> pointed out to the differences of their reports of these two groups about this unique event. According to him, their traditions can clarify the horizon in front of a traditionalist in terms of selection, order and submitting historical variables....

For example some events like Sulh Hudaybiah (Hudaybiyah peace treaty) has clear difference in San'ani's wording and ibn Abi Shaybah. About murdering 'Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah, ibn Abi Shaybah mostly tended to omit a number of these traditions instead of including the various traditions. The author concluded at the end that the new theology of Sunnah is traceable in every corner of the books "Kitab al-Maghazi" and "al-Jamal" of ibn Abi Shaybah. This theology asserted that Islamic society is moving in the true path, the caliphs all were right, 'Uthman was killed violently, but his murder would not put the purity of society under question and the leaders of Jamal made a mistake but as they repented, they should not be blamed. Traditions form a collection which can be regarded as a sample of "traditional histography".

In an article "Ashab Hadith and the first half of first century" this difference has been dealt with. In this essay it has been said due to the opposition of all traditionalists with quoting the disputes

among companions and neglecting this issue by Akhbaris, most of Akhbaris works and first historians records lost or reached us a little. This opposition shows us somehow why Akhbaris were accused of being Shia and fabricating traditions by traditionalists. Examples of these kinds of judgment can be found in the words of Sunni traditionalists and Rijaliyun talking about the first writers. i.e. Wagidi and ibn Sa'ad. While a large group of them knew Waqidi a liar. But they praised ibn Sa'ad, Waqidi's student, who as famous as Waqidi scriber for his extreme accompany with Wagidi. YY According to Bahramiyan, these discrepancy refers to the method of ibn Sa'ad who did not mention some opinions due to following Ashab hadith's rules.

The biography of Imam Ali in the book "Tabaqat ibn Sa'ad"

Ibn Sa'ad included the biography of Imam 'Ali in the first level in his book, i.e. Ashab Badr (companions of Badr) a branch of Bani Hashim. The number of traditions mentioned in this biography is about ^\delta mostly about the appearance and physical characteristics of Imam 'Ali and a few traditions about political life and his virtues. In this study, some historical traditions related to the life of imam at the life time of Prophet

according to the time and not the order of the book have been reviewed.

\.Islam of Imam 'Ali

The first part of biography in the book Tabagat al-Kubra is about Islam of Imam 'Ali. Ibn Sa'ad in four continuous traditions emphasized on Ali being the first Muslim. Tr In the fifth opinion, he mentioned his master's opinion Wagidi in this regard which can be counted as his own idea; because after reading the traditions of Tabagat the same opinion ca be concluded. According to Waqidi, "our companions" all are agreed that the first Muslim was Khadijah but there are disagreement which one was the first among these three ones: Abu Bakr, 'Ali, and Zayd ibn Harithah and 'Ali accepted Islam when he was \\ \\ years old YE

The traditions of <u>Tabaqat</u> about the first Muslim (man) are different. For example in the biography of Khadijah well-known story about Prophet's accompanied pray by Khadijah and imam 'Ali." This approves Imam 'Ali being the first Muslim. Besides, in the biography of Zayd ibn Harithah^{۲1} and Abubakr.^{۲۷} There are some traditions concerning him being the first Muslims. From these traditions we can conclude that ibn Sa'ad did not express his idea and

sufficed to gather opposed ideas. The disagreements on the identity of the first Muslim is traceable in other sources. YA 'Abdulbarah and ibn Hisham believed that the first (male) Muslim was imam 'Ali." According to ibn Abdulbarah, quite a few number of first and great traditionalists knew 'Ali (a.s) as the first Muslim like Zahri, Mujahid, 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Aghil, Qatadah and Abu Ishaq. T. Muhammad Ibn Ka'ab Qurazi was asked who the first Muslim was, 'Ali or Abubakr? He answered, God is praiseworthy! 'Ali is the first Muslim and people's disagreement was this that 'Ali hide his Islam from Abutalib but Abubakr revealed it."

As in some traditions, the age of Imam 'Ali is mentioned at the time of accepting Islam, this question can be raised why there is such an emphasis on the age of him. It is feasible that doubts of some opponents of Imam 'Ali on this point caused this reaction; 'Uthmaniyah hold that his Islam is not comparable to the Islam of adults.** According to Mas'udi, a group of fans of Imam Ali, in contrast, believed that 'Ali was an adult then. Because when the verse Indhar 'Ashirah was sent down to Prophet to invite his relatives to Islam. first he invited 'Ali." Meanwhile if it was not supposed his Islam be accepted the Prophet did not tell him you are the

first person that accept me. And also he would not tell Fatimah I marry you off with the first Muslim r_{ϵ}

Y.Brotherhood promise ('Aqd Ukhuwwat)

The second part of this biography is about the tradition named Ukhuwwat". In two traditions, we see there is an emphasis on the brotherhood promise between Prophet and Imam 'Ali. But in the third tradition, which is narrated through three channels, we read that holy Prophet announced 'Ali and Sahl ibn Hanif to be each other's brother."Though 'Uthmaniyah used the claim of this brotherhood between Sahl and Prophet to reject brotherhood between 'Ali and Prophet" but it should be noticed that Prophet sometimes set this brotherhood promise not only among Muhajirs and Ansars but also among Muhajirs themselves. This point is clearly cited in the tradition of Biladhuri. According to him, Prophet set prophethood between him and 'Ali and also between 'Ali and Sahl ibn Hanif Ansari. ** According to resources, the Prophet announced 'Ali as his brother. It is worth mentioning that this was given to him before Hijrah in the event of Indhar 'Ashirah."

T.The honors of Imam 'Ali at the battleship

The last two traditions of this part is about the role of Imam 'Ali in the battles of the lifetime of Prophet." In another place, it is written about the face-to-face fight among Hamzah, 'Ali ibn Abitalib and 'Ubaydah ibn Harith against three enemies from dualists in Badr which the verse Haj ' was sent down regarding them. There is also another tradition about the place of Abubakr and 'Ali in the battle of Badr narrated from Imam 'Ali who said on the day of Badr he and Abubakr were told one of you are accompanied by Gabriel and the other one by Michel. '

Regarding the role of Imam 'Ali in the battle of Khaybar there are two traditions in Tabagat which pointed out to the event of giving flag. 1 In them there is no word about Shaykhayn's (two shavkh) failure in opening and conquering Khaybar. Giving the flag to Ali in the battle of Khaybar is of the honors specific to 'Ali. Ibn Sa'ad regarded this event, doubled with Manzilat tradition and Mubahilah event as the three great honors of Ali. This event of giving flag to 'Ali mentioned in other sources in details. According to source books, first, Abubakr and 'Umar with the armies went to fight to conquer Khaybar; when they were unable to open the door of that castle, the Prophet said, I will give my flag to the one whom God and his Prophet like him and

God will conquer us by him and he is not a man of escape. Fr As Waqidi included this tradition completely, it is possible that disability of Shaykhayn in conquering Khaybar castle caused this part of the event be omitted in Tabaqat and this event cited without any background.

٤.Manzilat tradition

One of the valuable traditions regarding the statues of Imam Ali is Manzilat tradition. According to this tradition, when Prophet delegated his position to 'Ali when he was setting off for Tabuk battle as his representative in Medina, a group of hypocrites spread this rumor that Muhammad did not take 'Ali with him as he does not like him. When the rumor spread everywhere, 'Ali came to Prophet and asked for permission to join them. The Prophet command him to return and said, oh 'Ali! Aren't you satisfied that your place to me be similar to the place of Haroon to Moses? Unless there is no Prophet after me. In Tabagat traditions there are discord concerning the successorship of 'Ali in Medina or only among Prophet's family. In some other places, it is talked about the successorship of him in Medina. 44

In the opinion of Ibn Sa'ad, the first tradition is more authentic and Prophet chose Muhammad Ibn Maslamah as his representative in Medina. 1t is not far from truth that the political understanding of this tradition by Shias to prove 'Ali's rulership caused some of these traditions emphasize on 'Ali's succesorship only among his families; this tradition due to the place of Haroon to Moses- specially he was Moses successor among his nation not his family and Prophet meant this very content – can be regarded political word if it refers to 'Ali's successorship in Medina. Though Waqidi, the master of ibn Sa'ad did not record this event in the report of Tabuk Battle. 17Ibn 'Abdulbar recognized this tradition in the group of the best and most authentic traditions which are narrated by a group of Prophet's companions like Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqas, Abusa'id Khudri, Um Salmah, Asma bint 'umays and Jabir. "

o.Haj al-Wida' and Ghadir event

There is no word about Ghadir event in \underline{T} abaq \underline{a} t, but about the reason of sending this verse maeda/ $^{\circ}$ down , which is believed by Shia and a lot of Sunnis sources which is sent down for Ghadir even, a tradition is cited. According to Shaʻabi, when this verse was sent down the Prophet was in 'Arafat where Ibrahim was standing and duality was destroyed, the base of ignorance was uprooted and no one circled Kaʻba naked. $^{\text{EA}}$ A group of Sunnit scholars

took this stand against this verse and by bolding Ahkam in Haj al-Wida² recognized the reason of sending this verse to be this. *

Ibn Sa'ad, though, allocated 9 pages to the event of haj al-Wida' and even a tradition about 'Ali's eating with Prophet in Hajj° did not say anything about al-Ghadir event against all present documents. As some great people mentioned in traditions of ibn Sa'ad are among the tradition narrators of Ghadir tradition° we can not accept he did not access to this tradition, especially when some of his contemporaries mentioned this tradition such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal° who lived in Baghdad (the resident of ibn Sa'ad). Biladhuri, the student of ibn Sa'ad, also narrated this tradition in the book Ansab al-Ashraf.°° All these points declare that this tradition existed among tradition narrators and historians of that time. But Waqidi, ibn Hisham, and Bukhari did not speak about it. Even Abubakr ibn Abi Dawud Sajistani denied presence of imam 'Ali in Ghadir. According to him, imam Ali was in Yemen at that time. "\

Quoting the tradition of Ghadir is a sign of being Shia, as <u>Tabari</u> was accused of being Shia due to approving this tradition. "It was because Ghadir was not counted as a virtue for imam 'Ali

but it was a proof to his successorship. According to resources, imam 'Ali during the time of choosing the next caliph asked witnesses of Ghadir to speak about it. A large group of people said it happened."

Conclusion

In <u>Tabaqat</u> al-Kubra ibn Sa'ad pictured the general life of imam 'Ali like this: at the time of Prophet, because of his services he enjoyed a valuable position. But in brief, against issuing some valuable traditions like Manzilat, there is no word about Ghadir event in this book.

^{&#}x27; R<u>iyad</u> 'Abdull<u>a</u>h, introduction of al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, \/\\

^{*} Mahdavi, introduction of al-<u>T</u>abaq<u>a</u>t al-Kubr<u>a</u>, \/four

^τIbn Khalk<u>a</u>n, ۴/τω\; Samʻani,ω/Λ

^{&#}x27;lbn Sa'ad,V/ \VΔ

[°]Sam'ani, Δ/Λ

^ፕGulshani, ፕ/۶۸•

Ybid, T/8/Y

¹Ibn Sa'ad, V/ \VΔ

^{&#}x27;lbn Nad<u>i</u>m, \/ \ΥΛ

^{&#}x27;Fuck.\\\/9\\\

'Rabsun. Tr9

'Biladhuri, 1/575

Ybn Abi al-'Iz, 497

'Shaykh Mufid, TT

Bahramiyan, TTT

'Haji Khalifah, 7/11+4

Yones, p.ΥVΔ

۱bid, ۴۶

'Perhaps this emphasis is to pave the way to say choosing next caliph is based on consultation.

ˁMagh<u>a</u>z<u>i</u> al- W<u>a</u>qid<u>i</u>, ፕ/۵Λ•

۴kha<u>ti</u>b Baqd<u>a</u>d<u>i</u> ۳/۱۳

'ľbid, Δ/ΥΥ 1-ΥΥΥ

Thn Sa'ad, T/1T

biďi

107\/\,bid¹

۱̈bid, ۳/۹۱

1)bid, \(\gamma/\q\)

19 Ibn 'Abdulb<u>a</u>r, $\Upsilon/97$; ibn Hisham, 1/18V and after them

"Ibn 'Abdulbarah, \"/\ •9\"

^ribid

آ<u>آa</u>hiz, ۵

"Mas'ud<u>i</u>, 1/۴9Ω-۴9۶

"Jahiz, T94" (these two traditions were cited by Abu Ja'far Askafi in the book Naq al-Uthmaniyah which is in refusing 'Uthmaniyah by Jahid. But as this book is destroyed, Ihsan 'Abbas, editor of 'Uthmaniyah by Jahiz included the words of ibn Abi Hadid from Haskani book at the end of his book.

Thn Sa 'ad, T/14

ኘahiz, ነዖነ

[™]Biladhur<u>i</u>, ፕ/Λ۵-Λ۶

Jafari, TT

'libid. \\/9\\

1bid, 7/7.0

'lbn Hujr, al-Isabah, Υ/Δ•9

^{ετ}Waqid<u>i</u>, Υ/۶۵۳; ibn Hish<u>a</u>m, ۲/۷9Λ;

<u>T</u>abari, ۲/۱۱-۱۲

'fbn Sa 'ad, ۲/۱۵

'fbid, T/TTT

'W<u>a</u>qid<u>i</u>, ۲/99۵

fibn 'Abdulb<u>a</u>r, ۲/۱•۹۷

'Ibn Sa'ad, T/TYY

'lbid, 7/747

"Siyuti in his Tafsir mentioned the traditions proving this. Refer to: al-Durrul Manthur, T/YOV after.

îbid, ۲/۲۲۶

°ľbid, ۲/۲۲۸

"Such as Abu'amir 'Aghdi (Tabari, the book Fazayl 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, \(\lambda\text{V}, 9\O); 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa (ibid, \(\lambda\text{N}, 9\cdot\); 'Afan ibn Muslim (Biladhuri, edited by Mahmudi, \(\lambda\text{V}, \cdot\); Abi Nu'aym Fadl ibn Dakin(ibid, \(\lambda\text{V}, \cdot\); Ma'an ibn "Isa (Nisa'i, \(\lambda\text{A}\))

Ίbn Hanbal, \/ΛΥ, Υ/ΥΣΛ, Δ/Υ) 9

°Bilazuri, edited by Mahm<u>u</u>d<u>i</u>, ۲/۱۰۸-

 $^{\circ}$ Jafariyan, introduction to Fazayl ibn Abi <u>Ta</u>lib, \\V-\\\Lambda

ٵ๊bn <u>H</u>ujr, Lisan al-M<u>i</u>zan, ۵/۱۰۰

°^Ibn Athir, Usdul-Ghabah, ۴/۲/I for more references refer to Amini, 1/۶۶