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## Table of Contents

<p>Integrated Marketing Communication Campaigns of Entrepreneurs in Gombak: A Maqāsid Sharī'ah Perspective</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Aida Mokhtar Neng Inah</i></p>	5-27
<p>Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for Culinary Students At SMKN 3 Pekan Baru</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Raihanatu Binqalbi Ruzain Rangga Adhitya Rosman Dede Suhada Rani Tri Abelia Maisaroh Agustin Dwi Rahmah Putri</i></p>	29-48
<p>The Concept of Patience in Literary Psychology (An Empirical Study on the Malay Society in Riau)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Ahmad Hidayat Lisfarika Napitupulu</i></p>	49-73
<p>Dating and Periodization in Islamic Historiography: A Comparative Study of Early Islamic Historical Works up to the 5th Century of the <i>Hijrī</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Metin Zengin Fauziah Fathil</i></p>	75-95
<p>Chinese Students' Pronunciation Errors in Arabic Speaking Skills</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Asem Shehadeh Saleh Ali Wei Jing</i></p>	97-115
<p>Muslim Women, Agency and Work: An Exploration of Maqāsid Perspective</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Zulqernain Haider Subhani</i></p>	117-134
<p>The Concept of Punishment for Adultery in Islamic Sharia Law in Kelantan for the Year of 2015</p> <p>مفهوم جريمة الزنا في الشريعة الإسلامية والقانون الجنائي ولاية كلنتن لعام ٢٠١٥ م</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Nik Mohd Noor Nik Mat Kamarudin Awang Mat</i></p>	135-158

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## Dating and Periodization in Islamic Historiography: A Comparative Study of Early Islamic Historical Works up to the 5th Century of the *Hijrī*

Metin Zengin\*  
Fauziah Fathil\*\*

### Abstract

Dating and periodization are fundamental frameworks for interpreting historical records. In the case of pre-Islamic Arabs, their use of a complex and variable calendar system significantly influenced the dating and periodization found in early Islamic historical sources. Although the majority of Islamic historiographical works were written after the adoption of the *Hijrī* calendar, narratives concerning the *pre-Hijrah* period within these texts still reflect the effects of the earlier variable calendar system. Muslim historians compiled extensive historical records and structured them into periods based on key events in Arabian history, including wars, natural disasters, and significant milestones in the life of the Prophet. This study examines how Muslim historiography integrated external chronological frameworks, particularly those derived from non-Muslim sources, while contextualizing them within the emerging Islamic historical tradition. Focusing on the earliest historical works written by Muslim scholars up to the 5th Century of the *Hijrī*, the research highlights the interplay between inherited systems of dating and the development of a distinct Islamic historiographical identity.

**Keywords:** Periodization, Islamic Historiography, *Hijrī* Calendar, *al-Sīrah*.

### Introduction

For this study, we have used Islamic history sources written up to the 5th century Hijrī. The first of these sources includes works written in the field of *al-megāzi* (battles of the Prophet). In this study, we used al-Wāqidī's (d. 207 AH/822 CE) *Kitāb al-Megāzi* (Book of the Battles).

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This work is particularly important for the chronology of the Madīnah period. Secondly, we benefited from Ibn Hishām's (d. 218 AH/833 CE) *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* (Biography of the Prophet) in the field of *al-sīrah*. This work is considered one of the fundamental sources in the field of prophetic biography.

Apart from *megâzi* and *sīrah*, *ṭabaqāt* (biographies) books are also important sources for Islamic history. Due to being one of the first works written in the field of *ṭabaqāt*, we examined Ibn Sa'd's (d. 230 AH/845 CE) *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* (The Great Book of Biographies) in this study. Additionally, Muslims produced significant works in the field of world history up to the 5th century *Hijrī*. Among these, we have used al-Mas'ūdī's (d. 345 AH/956 CE) *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l-Ishrāf* (The Book of Admonition and Revision) and *Murūj al-Dhahab* (The Meadows of Gold), Ibn Ḥabīb's (d. 238 AH/853 CE) *al-Muḥabbar*, Ya'qūbī's (d. 292 AH/905 CE) *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī* (The History of al-Ya'qūbī), Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt's (d. 240 AH/854-55 CE) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* (The History of Khalīfah), and al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310 AH/923 CE) *Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk* (The History of Nations and Kings). These works are particularly important for understanding Muslim historian's perspectives on pre-Islamic world history.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the dating and periodization methods used in history works written up to the 5th century of the *Hijrī*. The reason we limit this to the 5th century AH is to limit the number of books to be used in this study. Therefore, instead of focusing on the causes of events, the focus is on how the authors approached these events. In addition, although the selected events follow a certain chronology, not all events from the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic periods are included. The events selected for this article were chosen based on two criterias:

1. The events that are dated using multiple methods across various sources, enabling effective comparison and analysis of the differences.
2. The events that are mentioned in at least a few of the sources referenced in this article to ensure a diverse and reliable basis for comparison.

### **Calendar, Dating and Periodization Among Pre-Islamic Arabs**

There is still scientific research on how the Arabs used the calendar before the advent of Islam. These studies are important in helping us better understand the historical texts written by Muslim scholars. Although the

use of the lunar calendar was widespread among Arab tribes, the South Arabians employed both lunar and solar calendars simultaneously. The solar calendar was primarily utilized for agricultural activities, such as scheduling planting and harvest periods. Additionally, the payment of taxes was organized at specific times of the year. The month names used in the South Arabian solar calendar were derived from climatic conditions, including *rain (al-maṭar)*, dryness (*al-jaffāf*), cold (*al-bard*), and heat (*al-ḥār*).<sup>1</sup> The lunar calendar, on the other hand, was employed for matters such as debt repayment, the implementation of blood money, and commercial transactions.<sup>2</sup> Today, inscriptions from tribes such as the Thamud and Nabataeans, who lived in various regions of Arabia, reveal that they used the solar calendar for events related to natural phenomena while preferring the lunar calendar for other purposes due to the ease of tracking lunar phases.<sup>3</sup> Since all the documents currently available originate from tribes in southern Arabia, information about similar practices among tribes in the northern part of the peninsula can only be found in the historical records of other civilizations, such as Greek and Latin sources. Based on this evidence, it can be inferred that the northern Arabian tribes utilized the solar calendar for their religious seasons, as their pilgrimage rituals were consistently performed at the same time each year. Al-Jabartī (d. 1822 CE) states;

During the Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic) period, the Arabs used the lunar calendar, which had been in practice since the time of Prophet Ibrāhīm. However, the Hajj season sometimes coincided with the summer months and other times with winter. The Arabs desired the Hajj season to occur during a period that was not only more seasonally favourable but also a time when offerings of sacrificial animals and fruits were more abundant. They presented this matter to the tribal leaders, who decided to ensure that the Hajj season occurred at the same time each year. To achieve this, they adjusted the lunar calendar by adding an extra month, thereby aligning it with the solar calendar, a practice known as *naṣī'*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jawād Ali, *Al-Mufasssal Fī Tārihi'l-Arab Kable'l-Islām* (Beirūt: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1976), p. 8/510.

<sup>2</sup>Ali, *Al-Mufasssal Fī Tārihi'l-Arab Kable'l-Islām*, p. 8/510.

<sup>3</sup>Ali, *Al-Mufasssal Fī Tārihi'l-Arab Kable'l-Islām*, p. 8/510.

<sup>4</sup>In the pre-Islamic era, Arabs employed various methods to regulate and adjust the timings of the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) and the sacred months. One such practice was *naṣī'*, which entailed postponing specific events or periods within their calendar system. 'Abd Jabartī, *Ajā'ib Al-Āthār Fī Al-Tarājim Wa-Al-Akhhbār* (Qairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, no date), p. 1/3.

In South Arabia, tribes documented significant events by either engraving them on stone or inscribing them with ink on constructed buildings. Typically, events they wished to preserve, such as advice, significant agreements, or notable occurrences, were recorded along with their dates in highly visible and enduring parts of a building, often in areas least susceptible to erosion. When dating an event, the Arabs prioritized describing the nature of the event and referenced the ruler in power at the time of its occurrence, rather than specifying the exact year. For example, an inscription from the Maʿīn Kingdom states, *This event occurred during the reign of the Maʿīn King al-Yafāʾ Yashir*.<sup>1</sup> As evidenced in this inscription, only the name of the reigning king is mentioned, with no additional details provided.<sup>2</sup> Today, the names of certain prominent individuals referenced in these dated inscriptions are known. However, it is not possible to ascertain who these individuals were, the exact periods in which they lived, or any details about their eras. Furthermore, it is also impossible to establish a chronological sequence among these figures.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Bīrūnī states that Quraysh, who adopted the Jewish calendar two hundred years before Islam, used both lunar and solar calendars. He also states that they learned the *nasiʾ* practice from the Jews.<sup>4</sup> But even though Quraysh used the Jewish calendar, they continued to create new events as the beginnings of new calendars. Therefore, the change did not occur in months or days, but in the beginnings of new calendars.

İsmail Hami Danişmend (d. 1967 CE) articulates the issue as follows:

The reason we cannot provide a lunar equivalent to the solar Gregorian year, as is done with the Hijrī calendar, lies in the absence of a fixed calendar in pre-Islamic Arabia, despite the lunar year being the basis. Instead, the Arabs of the Jahiliyyah period used various significant events as starting points for dating different eras. The last of these historical events was the defeat suffered by Abraha, the general governor representing the Abyssinians who ruled Yemen at the time, during his campaign against Makkah. This campaign, known as *ʿĀm al-Fīl* (the Year of the Elephant), was named after the presence of one or two white elephants in the Abyssinian army. The event is also referred to as *ʿĀm al-Fīl* or the Story of the Elephant. This practice of dating by significant events

<sup>1</sup> Ali, *Al-Mufasssal Fī Tārīhi ʿl-Arab Kable ʿl-Islām*, p. 8/512.

<sup>2</sup> Jabartī, *Ajāʾib Al-Āthār Fī Al-Tarājim Wa-Al-Akhabār*, p. 1/512.

<sup>3</sup> Ali, *Al-Mufasssal Fī Tārīhi ʿl-Arab Kable ʿl-Islām*, p. 8/515.

<sup>4</sup> Abu Rayhān Muhammad ibn Ahmād al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb Al-Āthār al-Bāqiyah ʿan al-Qurʾān al-Khāliyah* (Qairo: Maktaba al-Saqāfa al-Dīnīyya, 2008), 13; Ibrahim Zein - Ahmed al-Wakil, “On the Origins of the Hijri Calendar: A Multi-Faceted Perspective Based on the Covenants of the Prophet and Specific Date Verification,” *Religion*, p. 12/42 (2021), p. 3.

influenced Islamic sources and became a precedent for marking other historical occurrences in world history.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the variable calendar culture, the Arabs of the Hijāz region also transmitted three distinct types of information orally: these were *ayyam al-Arab* (significant battles between Arab tribes), *al-ansāb* (genealogies), and information concerning other nations. These oral traditions were essential for preserving the historical and cultural memory of the Arabs. *Ayyām al-Arab* refers to the battles fought between Arab tribes during the Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic) period and the early years of Islam. These battles were often named according to their location or the reasons for their occurrence, such as *Yawm Buās* (the Day of *Buās*) or *Yawm Dhukār* (the Day of *Dhukār*).<sup>2</sup> The Arabs would recite these events, sometimes in poetry and sometimes in prose, to boast of their victories over other tribes. This oral tradition became a key part of their historical narrative. However, when these poems were forgotten, the historical knowledge they contained also faded and was lost.<sup>3</sup>

The science of *al-ansāb* was another important aspect of Arab culture, focused on studying the lineage and ancestry of tribes. In the absence of a unifying state to protect them, the *al-ansāb* served as a binding element for tribal unity, helping to maintain cohesion among members. Tribal pride, stemming from the honor of their ancestors, encouraged individuals to take pride in their heroes and historical events. This sense of pride often led to the promotion of genealogical knowledge, with *Jahiliyyah* poets regularly celebrating their tribes' heritage.<sup>4</sup> The science of *al-ansāb* continued as part of oral history even after the advent of Islam. However, since there was no unified state at the time, each tribe possessed its own genealogy, and thus there was no common cultural framework. Consequently, the genealogical knowledge of the pre-Islamic period can only be traced back 300 to 500 years due to the formation of familial ties among some tribes and the later Arabization of others.<sup>5</sup>

In summary, before the establishment of the *Hijrī* calendar in Islamic history, there was no unified system of dating or common calendar used

<sup>1</sup> Ergün Göze, *Mukayeseli İslam Tarihi Kronolojisi* (İstanbul: Köşebaşı Yayınları, 1971), pp. 98–99.

<sup>2</sup> Mehmet Ali Kapar, “Eyyâmü'l-Arab” (Ankara: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi, 1995), pp. 12–14.

<sup>3</sup> Husayn Nassar, *Nashaât Tadwîn Al-Tarikh `ind al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dar Iqra, 1980), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Mustafa Fayda, “Ensâb” (Ankara: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi, 1988), pp. 12/244–249.

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa Shakir, *At-Tarikh al-'Arabî Wa al-Muarrîkhun* (Beirut: Daru `ilm lil-Melayin, 1983), p. 52.

across the Arabian Peninsula. Instead, various regional and tribal practices existed, reflecting diverse approaches to timekeeping. These practices continued after the arrival of Islam in the Hijāz region and continued until the 16th year of the Hijri calendar, during caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khaṭāb, when the Hijrī calendar was officially adopted.

### **Dating and Periodization in Early Islamic Sources**

The varying references to different periods in early Islamic historical sources can be attributed to several factors, including the use of different source materials by the authors, their varying emphasis on certain periods, and the diverse reference points they adopted for dating events. These discrepancies often result in different datings for the same period within the same work or across different works. One of the primary reasons for this variation is the flexible and regionally diverse calendrical system used by the Arabs before Islam, as discussed earlier. Early Islamic historians continued this tradition in their writings, offering different reference points for various periods as they compiled their works. Understanding these periods is crucial not only for interpreting early Islamic historical sources but also for comprehending the calendrical practices during the early spread of Islam and before.

Based on the reference points used by the authors, it is more methodologically sound to divide the historical sources into four distinct periods for a clearer understanding. These periods are: the period before the birth of the Prophet, the period from the Prophet's birth to the beginning of his mission (*al-bi`tha*), the period from the commencement of his mission to the migration (*hijrah*), and the period following the *hijrah*.

The events discussed below are selected as representative examples to illustrate the methods of periodization used for various historical eras. These examples are not exhaustive and are not intended to cover all events comprehensively. Instead, they serve as a foundation to analyze the approaches historians employ to categorize and structure the timeline of history.

### **Dating and Periodization before the Birth of the Prophet**

Some early Islamic historical sources contain information about the pre-Islamic period. While this information is organized chronologically in certain works (e.g., those of al-Ya‘qūbī and al-Ṭabarī), it is presented in a relatively more scattered manner in others (e.g., Ibn Habīb and al-

Mas‘ūdī).<sup>1</sup> These works display differences in the dates they provide due to their use of diverse sources and varying approaches to the topics. Early Islamic historical sources do not adhere to a specific chronological methodology for this period. However, the authors cite reports on topics such as the duration of humanity’s existence on earth, calculations of the world’s age, the intervals between prophets, and the histories of neighboring peoples in the Arabian Peninsula.

One of the earliest general historical works, *al-Muḥabbar*, provides detailed accounts of the pre-Islamic period, especially regarding the duration of humanity’s earthly journey, the intervals between prophets, and their lifespans.<sup>2</sup>

In al-Ṭabarī’s works, there are various narrations transmitted through different chains of transmission concerning the age of the world and the duration of humanity’s existence on earth. These narrations generally do not exhibit significant discrepancies. al-Ṭabarī records these accounts while also noting the sources to whom the views are attributed. For instance, a narration attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās states that the age of the world is 7,000 years.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, al-Ṭabarī provides more detailed accounts regarding the intervals between prophets. For example, he reports that the period between Prophet Ādam and Prophet Nūḥ was 1,000 years, as was the interval between Prophet Nūḥ and Prophet Ibrāhīm, and similarly, 1,000 years between Prophet Ibrāhīm and Prophet Mūsā.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī also includes perspectives from the People of the Book. He records that, according to Jewish sources, the time from Prophet Ādam (pbuh) to the Hijrah was 4,642 years. Christian sources estimate the same period as 5,992 years, while Zoroastrian sources provide a calculation of 3,139 years.<sup>5</sup>

One of the authors who provides detailed information on this subject is al-Mas‘ūdī. In his work *al-Tanbīḥ wa al-Ishrāf*, al-Mas‘ūdī presents the historical timeline from Prophet Adam to the *Hijra* of the Prophet

<sup>1</sup> Abu’l-Hasan Ali Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Ali al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitab Al-Tanbīḥ Wa al-Ishrāf* (Leiden, 1893), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Ja‘far Muhammad al-Hashimi Ibn Habīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, ed. Ilze Lichten Schtir (Beirut: Daru Afaq al-Jadid, 2009), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid al-Amulī al-Ṭabarī al-Baghdadī al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk* (Beirut, 2013), p. 1/10.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/18.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/18.

Muḥammad along with the number of days, offering the following calculations:

The period from Prophet Adam to the Flood of Noah spans 2,242 years. From the Flood to the diversification of languages, the duration is 670 years. There are 411 years between the diversification of languages and the birth of Prophet Ibrāhīm. The time between the birth of Prophet Ibrāhīm and the death of Prophet Moses is 545 years. From the death of Prophet Moses to the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, 678 years and 246 days passed. From the start of Nebuchadnezzar's reign to the exile of the Jews to Babylon, there are 31 years and 34 days. The total period between the death of Prophet Moses and the exile of the Jews spans 1,060 years and 32 days. The interval between the Jewish exile and the birth of Prophet Jesus is 608 years and 37 days. From the birth of the Prophet Jesus to the *Hijra* of the Prophet Muḥammad, the duration is 629 years and 361 days. Based on this calculation, al-Mas'ūdī narrates that the total historical period amounts to 6,323 years, 11 months, and 10 days.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, the method applied by the authors in this period is a variable dating system shaped by the information derived from the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), the sayings of the Companions, and the texts of other nations. In particular, it reflects the contributions of those who converted to Islam from Judaism and Christianity, often transmitting details from their own pre-Islamic scriptures.

### **Dating from the Birth of the Prophet to the Beginning of His Mission (*al-bi'tha*)**

The most distinctive feature of this period is the use of different reference points for dating events. As seen in the examples below, authors frequently use varying references when describing the same event. By examining the dating methods for this period, we can discern the major events that shaped the Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Prophet's birth. These include the death of Alexander the Great (323 BCE), the ascension of Khosrow I (d. 579 AD), the Year of the Elephant (the *'Am al-Fīl*), the *Fijār* Wars, and the reconstruction of the *Ka'ba*. These events not only mark significant occurrences in the pre-Islamic

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb Al-Tanbīh Wa al-Ishrāf*, p. 118. The dates given here are calculations based on the solar calendar. This is because the Jews and those who followed their calendars calculated the years according to the solar calendar and the months according to the lunar calendar, see. Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb Al-Āthār al-Bāqiyah 'an al-Qur'ān al-Khāliyah*, p. 13.

era but also serve as reference points for the dating systems established at different times.

For example, the *‘Ām al-Fīl* refers to the event when the governor of Yemen, launched a campaign to destroy the *Ka‘ba* in Makkah, only to be defeated by divine intervention. The significance of this event is highlighted by its widespread use as a reference point for many other events across the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in the Hijāz. The magnitude of this incident, which was heard about by various peoples in the region, marked it as a pivotal moment in history, and it later became the starting point for a new calendar. This event also played a crucial role in determining the date of the Prophet’s birth. Early Islamic historical sources often refer to the Prophet’s birth and events leading up to his mission, including the *al-bi‘tha*, using this historical reference point.

Early Islamic historical sources are unanimous in affirming that the birth of the Prophet occurred in the Year of the Elephant. Furthermore, many of these sources, particularly those based on the reports of Ibn Ishāq, state that the Prophet was born on a Monday, the 12th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*.<sup>1</sup> However, there are variations in some of the reports. For instance, Ibn Sa‘d mentions that the Prophet was born on the 10th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*, a Monday, and adds that the Abyssinians arrived in Makkah in the middle of *Muḥarram*, with a gap of 55 nights between their arrival and the Prophet’s birth.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, on the other hand, mentions that the Prophet's birth occurred on the 2nd of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*, a Monday, while another report cites the 8th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī records several different accounts, noting that there were variations, including the Prophet's birth on the 12th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*, a Tuesday evening, and also mentions the astronomical details of the position of the sun, moon, and stars on that date.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, al-Ṭabarī, while confirming that the Prophet was born on the 12th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*, also points out that this date coincided with the 24th year of the reign of Khosrow I (Anushirvan).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hishām Abu Muhammad Jamal al-Din Abd al-Malik, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, ed. Ibrahim al-Abyari, Abd al-Hafiz Shibli, Mustafa al-Saqqa (Beirut, 2005), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Manī‘ al-Kâtib al-Hashimī al-Basrī al-Baghdâdī Ibn Sa‘d, *At-Tabaqâtu al-Kabir*, ed. Ali Muhammad Omer (Qairo: Maktabetu al-Hanci, 2000), p. 1/81.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Abu'l-Abbās Ahmed Ibn Abi Ya‘qūb Ishāq Ibn Ja‘far b. Wahb Ibn Wazīh al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī*, ed. Abdu Amir Mehna (Beirut: Alami Publications, 2010), p. 1/327.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/339.

## Some Events and Dates from the Birth of the Prophet to His Mission (*al-bi`tha*)

**The Death of the Prophet's Mother;** According to sources such as Ibn Hishâm, Ibn Sa'd, and al-Ṭabarī, the Prophet's mother, Âmina, passed away while returning from a visit to her relatives in Madīnah. She died at a place called *al-Abwā'* when the Prophet was six years old.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Ibn Ḥabīb mentions that the Prophet's mother passed away when he was eight years old.<sup>2</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, provides a different account, based on a report from Ibn Ishāq, stating that Âmina died at the age of thirty and that the Prophet was six years and three months old at the time.<sup>3</sup>

**The Death of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib;** According to Ibn Hishâm and al-Ṭabarī, *'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* passed away when Prophet was eight years old.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sa'd reports that *'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* died at the age of 82, and he mentions that the Prophet was eight years old at that time. Another report, also from Ibn Sa'd, suggests that *'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* died before the *Fijār* War, at the age of 120.<sup>5</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, however, mentions that *'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* was between 120-140 years old when he passed away, while the Prophet was eight years old.<sup>6</sup>

**The First Journey to Syria;** Ibn Sa'd narrates that when Abū Tālib set out for Syria on a trade expedition and took the young Prophet with him, the Prophet was 12 years old.<sup>7</sup> al-Ṭabarī and al-Ya'qūbī also provide accounts of the Prophet's age during this journey, with some discrepancies in the precise age reported.<sup>8</sup>

**The *Fijār* War;** Ibn Hishâm mentions that Prophet was about 14 or 15 years old when the *Fijār* War occurred. According to another narration attributed to Ibn Ishāq, the Prophet was 20 years old at the time of the *Fijār* War.<sup>9</sup> Other sources, such as Khalifa ibn Khayyāt and Ibn Sa'd confirm that the Prophet was 20 years old during this battle.<sup>10</sup> al-Mas'udī states that

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, 1/95; Ibn Hishâm, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 1/331.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hishâm, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, 127; Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/97.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/97.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 1/335.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/99.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, 1/394; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 335.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Hishâm, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 177.

<sup>10</sup> Abu Amr al Laythi al Ufuri Khalifah ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Khalifa*, ed. Akram Diyah (Riyadh: Dar al-Tayyiba, 1985), 53; Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/106.

there were four instances of the Fijār War, and the Prophet participated in the final one, although he does not mention the Prophet's age.<sup>1</sup>

**Marriage to Khadījah;** According to Ibn Hishām, the Prophet was 25 years old when he married Khadījah<sup>2</sup> Ibn Sa'd adds that Khadījah was born 15 years before the Year of the Elephant.<sup>3</sup> al-Ṭabarī confirms that the Prophet was 25 years old when he married, and Khadījah was 40 years old.<sup>4</sup>

**The Reconstruction of the Ka'ba;** According to *Ibn Hishām*, the Prophet was 35 years old when the *Ka'ba* was rebuilt.<sup>5</sup> al-Ṭabarī, however, states additional information that the reconstruction took place when the Prophet was 35, which was 10 years after his marriage.<sup>6</sup> al-Mas'ūdī, says that the reconstruction of the Ka'ba occurred 5 years before the Prophet's mission began (*al-bi`tha*).<sup>7</sup>

In summary, the method applied by the authors in this period is a variable dating system shaped by the significant events of the time. We can see that the Arabs were influenced by both internal and external events, and this influence is similarly reflected in later sources. Additionally, by referencing figures such as Alexander the Great, the Jewish calendar, and Persian kings, it can be understood that the Arabs knew both Jewish and Persian calendars. Furthermore, the events surrounding the Prophet and those in his environment are presented comparatively with the aforementioned events. A notable aspect of the dates recorded in this period is that, aside from the Prophet's birth, very few dates specify the day and month.

Another characteristic of this period is that, in general, the dates provided by the authors are pieces that complement each other from different perspectives. The dates related to the Prophet's marriage are a prime example of this. Ibn Hishām states that the Prophet was 25 years old when he married, Ibn Sa'd mentions that Khadījah was born 15 years before the event of the Elephant, and al-Ṭabarī reports that Khadījah was 40 years old when they married. These varying accounts show that the

<sup>1</sup> Abu'l-Hasan Ali Ibn al-Husayn Ibn Ali al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, ed. Kamal Hasan Mer'i (Beirut, 2005), p. 2/213.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/109.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/394.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/396.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, p. 2/215.

same event is approached from different angles. This, in our opinion, makes it easier to establish connections between dates and events.

### Dating the Period Between the *al-Bi`tha* and the *Hijrah*

The event of *bi`tha*, the commissioning of the Prophet as a messenger, holds indisputable significance in both Islamic and human history. The proposal, during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattāb, to begin the Islamic calendar from *al-bi`tha* highlights the importance of this event. However, the *Hijrah* was ultimately chosen as the starting point due to its more precise historical dating.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the timing of the *al-bi`tha*, Ibn Hishām states that the Prophet was 40 years old when he received the first revelation, which occurred during the month of *Ramaḍān*. Similarly, Ibn Sa‘d affirms that *al-bi`tha* occurred in the Prophet’s 40th year, and in another narration indicating it happened at the beginning of his 40th year. Ibn Sa‘d further reports a tradition from Anas Ibn Mālik (d. 92/711), who recounted that the Prophet resided in Madīnah for 10 years and in Makkah for 10 years. Additionally, Ibn Sa‘d records that the first revelation was received on a Monday, specifically on the 17th of Ramaḍān.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, al-Ya‘qūbī asserts that the Prophet was nearing the completion of his 40th year when he was commissioned as a prophet. al-Ya‘qūbī also challenges the view that *al-bi`tha* occurred in Ramaḍān, deeming it weak, and instead argues that it took place in the month of Rabi‘ al-Awwal.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī’s account of the *al-bi`tha* is notably more detailed. He asserts that the Prophet was at the beginning of his 40<sup>th</sup> year when he received the first revelation, which occurred in the month of Ramaḍān on a Monday. To support this, al-Ṭabarī cites a hadith narrated by *Abu Qatāda al-Ansāri* (d. 54/674), in which the Prophet explained the significance of Monday: “I was born on a Monday, I was appointed as a prophet on a Monday, and the Qur’an was revealed to me on a Monday”<sup>4</sup> Monday.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the specific date within Ramaḍān, al-Ṭabarī mentions differing scholarly opinions, some of which identify the 18th of Ramaḍān as the date of the first revelation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Muhammed Hamidullah, “Islamic Calendar and Its Historical Background,” *Near East and Islam, of the 27th Congress of Orientalists* (Michigan University, 1967), p. 678.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī*, p. 2/20.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, pp. 1/399–400.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, pp. 1/399–400.

Al-Mas‘ūdī offers additional context, noting that the Prophet was 40 years old when the Angel Gabriel initially appeared to him on a Saturday and Sunday. However, the first verse of revelation was delivered on a Monday while the Prophet was at Mount *al-Hira*. Mas‘ūdī, further links the *al-bi`tha* to global historical events, claiming it occurred during the 20th year of the reign of the Sasanian king Khosrow Anushirwan and 6113 years after the descent of Adam to earth.<sup>1</sup>

### **Some Events and Chronologies During the Period Between the *Bi`thah* and the *Hijrah***

**The Conversion of ‘Alī to Islam:** Ibn Hishām, based on the narration of Ibn Ishāq, states that Alī was 8 years old when he embraced Islam. Al-Ṭabarī discusses debates regarding who was the first male to accept Islam and also cites Ibn Ishāq’s account. However, he also includes a narration transmitted from al-Wāqidī, which mentions that ‘Alī became a Muslim one year after the beginning of the Prophet’s prophethood.<sup>2</sup>

**The Public Proclamation of Islam:** According to Ibn Hishām, based on Ibn Ishāq’s report, there was a three-year interval between the *al-bi`tha* and the Prophet’s public proclamation of his message *da`wah*. This period signifies a shift from the private invitation to Islam to the broader public outreach.<sup>3</sup>

**The Deaths of Khadijah and Abū Ṭālib;** al-Ṭabarī, citing Ibn Ishāq, reports that both Khadijah and Abū Ṭālib passed away in the same year. Ibn Hishām, referencing a narration attributed to ‘Aisha, states that Khadijah’s death occurred three years before the Prophet’s marriage to ‘Aisha.<sup>4</sup>

According to al-Mas‘ūdī, both Khadijah and Abū Ṭālib passed away when the Prophet was 50 years old. al-Ya‘qūbī provides further details, noting that Khadijah died during the month of Ramadān, three years before the Hijrah, at the age of 65. Abū Ṭālib, at the age of 86, died just three days after Khadijah.<sup>5</sup>

**The *Isrā’* and *Mi`rāj* Event;** The most detailed account of the *Mi`rāj* (Ascension) is found in Ibn Sa’d’s *Tabaqāt*. According to this work, the *Mi`rāj* occurred 18 months before the Hijrah, on the evening

<sup>1</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, pp. 2/220.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/408.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, 1/420; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah*, p. 362.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī*, p. 34.

of Saturday, the 17th of *Ramadān*. Regarding the *Isrā'* (Night Journey), Ibn Sa'd mentions it separately, stating that it occurred a year before the Hijrah, on the 17th of Rabi' al-Awwal.<sup>1</sup> Mas'ūdī, however, asserts that the event took place when the Prophet was 51 years old.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, it is observed that during this period writers seem to have abandoned most of the reference events used in the previous period and generally adopted a dating system based on the age and *al-bi'tha* of the Prophet. During this period, dates rarely included the month and day.

Considering that the Prophet stayed in Mecca for 13 years after his *al-bi'tha* before migrating to Madīnāh, it can be said that the number of dated narratives from the Makkah period is limited.

### **The Chronology of Events Following the Hijrah**

The Hijrah holds immense significance in Islamic history, marking a pivotal moment in the propagation of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic state. Its adoption as the starting point of the Islamic calendar is one of the most tangible indicators of its importance. Through the Hijrah, Muslims came to possess an official calendar to document their history. Before this event, historians like al-Ṭabarī primarily presented events in a general chronological order. With the Hijrah, however, al-Ṭabarī began recording events year by year, reflecting the systematic nature of historical recording that emerged during this period. Similarly, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt commenced his historical work with the chapter on the Hijrah.

While some authors provided detailed accounts of the Hijrah and its timeline, others limited themselves to its date alone. al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Hishām are notable for their detailed coverage, though their approaches differ. Ibn Hishām focused more on the narrative and formation of the event rather than its specific dates. According to him, the Prophet arrived in Madīnāh on Monday, the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, as the sun rose high. Ibn Hishām also notes that the Prophet was 53 years old at the time, and this date corresponded to the 13th year of his prophethood.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Sa'd corroborates this account, narrating that on Monday, the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, as the sun grew intense in the morning, the companions of the Prophet waiting in *Madīnāh* began to retreat to the shade of their homes. It was at this moment that a Jewish man shouted the news of the Prophet's arrival.<sup>4</sup> Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, basing his account

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 2/182.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, p. 2/226.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 1/200.

on Ibn Ishāq, similarly records that the Prophet reached *Madīnah* on Monday, the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, in the early morning as the temperature began to rise. According to al-Ya'qūbī, however, the Prophet's arrival in *Madīnah* occurred either on the 8th or 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, on a Monday or Thursday.<sup>1</sup> This variation in dates highlights both the rich narrative tradition surrounding the Hijrah and the challenges of pinpointing precise details in early Islamic historiography.

Al-Ṭabarī, before recounting the details of the Hijrah, narrates several reports concerning the Prophet's time in Makkah. By analyzing these reports and drawing conclusions from the most authentic ones, he establishes that the *bi'thah* occurred during the Prophet's fortieth year. He further notes that the Prophet received revelations in Makkah for 13 years before the Hijrah took place.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the timeline of the Hijrah, al-Ṭabarī details that there was exactly one week between the Prophet's departure from Makkah and his arrival in *Madīnah*. According to him, the Prophet left Makkah on Monday, the 5th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, spending three nights in the Cave of Thawr. Afterwards, he resumed his journey, eventually reaching the area of *Qubā*, located 6 kilometers from *Madīnah*, on Monday, the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*. After staying in *Qubā* for a brief period, he proceeded to *Madīnah*.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Mas'ūdī also situates the Hijrah within a broader historical context. He concurs that the event occurred when the Prophet was 53 years old, and the arrival in *Madīnah* took place on Monday, the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*. Additionally, al-Mas'ūdī aligns the Hijrah with the 34th year of the reign of the Persian king Khosrow II (Khusraw Parvīz), emphasizing its historical and political significance in the context of contemporary world events.<sup>4</sup>

### **Key Events and Dates in the Post-Hijrah Period**

**The Battle of Badr;** The accounts regarding the timeline of the Battle of Badr vary slightly among the sources:

Ibn Sa'd mentions two possible dates for the battle: Monday, the 17th of *Ramaḍān*, and Friday evening, the 17th of *Ramaḍān*.<sup>5</sup> al-Ya'qūbī,

<sup>1</sup> Khalifah ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Khalifa*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/436.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/436.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqât al-Kabir*, p. 2/16.

however, specifies that the battle occurred 18 months after the *Hijrah*, on the Friday, 17th of Ramaḍān.<sup>1</sup>

**The Battle of Uḥud;** Al-Wāqidī reports that the Muslim army left Madīnah in the 32nd month after the Hijrah, on the 7th of *Shawwāl*.<sup>2</sup> al-Ya‘qūbī notes that the Battle of *Uḥud* occurred a year after the Battle of *Badr*, in the month of *Shawwāl*, without specifying the exact date. al-Mas‘ūdī states that the battle occurred in the 3rd year after the Hijrah.<sup>3</sup>

**The Battle of the Trench (Khandāq):** Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Hishām agree that the battle took place in *Shawwāl* of the 5th year after the *Hijrah*.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb specifies that the battle began on the 10th of *Shawwāl* and ended ten days before the end of *Dhū al-Qa‘dah*, on a Saturday. al-Ya‘qūbī and al-Mas‘ūdī also mention the 5th year but do not specify the month.<sup>5</sup>

**The Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyyah:** All authors agree that the Treaty of *Ḥudaybiyyah* occurred in the 6th year of the *Hijra*. Both Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī record that the event took place during the month of *Dhū al-Qa‘dah*. The Muslims departed from Madīnah in *Dhū al-Qa‘dah* and returned before the end of the same month.<sup>6</sup> Ibn Sa‘d narrates that the departure from Madīnah occurred on a Monday at the beginning of *Dhū al-Qa‘dah* in the 6th year of the Hijra. He adds that the Muslim army remained at the location of *al-Ḥudaybiyyah* for 10 to 20 days before returning to Madīnah within the same month. This event serves as a noteworthy example of a historical incident on which all authors are in consensus regarding its date.<sup>7</sup>

**The Battle of Khaybar:** Al-Wāqidī reports that the Battle of Khaybar took place in the month of Safar during the 7th year of the Hijra, while also mentioning another narration that places the event at the beginning of *Rabi‘al-Awwal*.<sup>8</sup> Ibn Hishām, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, and al-Ṭabarī narrate that the expedition for the Battle of *Khaybar* began in the month of *al-Muḥarram* in the 7th year of the Hijra. al-Ya‘qūbī,

<sup>1</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī*, p. 2/47.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Umar al-Madanī al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Al-Megāzi*, ed. Muhammad Abdūlqādir Ahmad Ata (Beirut, 2004), p. 1/185.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī*, p. 2/47.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, p. 771.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Al-Megāzi*, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, *At-Tabaqātu al-Kabir*, p. 2/92.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Al-Megāzi*, p. 2/11.

however, states that the battle occurred at the beginning of the 7th year of the *Hijra*.<sup>1</sup>

**The Conquest of Makkah:** Al-Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, and Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, relying on Ibn Ishāq, agree that the Prophet departed Madīnah on the 10th of Ramaḍān in the 8th year after the *Hijrah*.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Sa'd adds that the departure occurred on a Wednesday afternoon, and the conquest was completed ten days before the end of *Ramaḍān*. al-Ya'qūbī narrates that the departure happened two days into Ramaḍān, after the afternoon prayer.<sup>3</sup>

**The Farewell Pilgrimage (*Hajjat al-Wadā'*):** Al-Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām, and al-Ṭabarī report that the Prophet left Madīnah five days before Dhū al-Qa'da, on a Saturday. He performed the dawn prayer at Dhū al-Ḥulayfah.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, and al-Ya'qūbī merely state that the Farewell Pilgrimage took place in the 10th year after the *Hijrah*.<sup>5</sup>

**The Prophet's Passing:** Most authors agree that the Prophet passed away in Rabī' al-Awwal of the 11th year after the *Hijrah* on Monday. al-Ṭabarī lists multiple accounts, with the most common being the 2nd or 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*. Al-Ṭabarī himself favors the 12th.<sup>6</sup> Al-Wāqidī, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, and al-Ya'qūbī concur on the 12th of *Rabī' al-Awwal*. Al-Mas'ūdī provides the most unusual account, placing the death in the 10th year after the *Hijrah*.<sup>7</sup>

**The Martyrdom of Uthman (r.a.):** Discrepancies in historical writing persisted even after the passing of the Prophet. After providing a detailed account of the martyrdom of 'Uthmān, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt mentions differing reports regarding the date of his martyrdom. These reports include: a few days before the end of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* in the year 35 AH, or on the 17th or 18th of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* in the same year.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī, in his accounts of 'Uthmān's martyrdom, refers to two distinct reports: one placing the event on the 18th of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* in the year 36 AH, and the other on the 18th of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* in the year 35 AH. Additionally, al-Ṭabarī records two varying reports regarding

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 969.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Al-Megāzi*, p. 2/80.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 1/337.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 601.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Al-Muḥabbar*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/631.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Al-Megāzi*, p. 2/470.

<sup>8</sup> Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, *Tārīkh Khalīfa*, p. 176.

Uthman's age at the time of his martyrdom, suggesting he was either 88 or 90 years old.<sup>1</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, on the other hand, narrates that Uthman was martyred 12 days before the end of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* in the year 35 AH, at the age of 83 to 86. Al-Mas'ūdī, provides yet another account, stating that Uthman was martyred on the evening of Friday, three days before the end of *Dhū al-Ḥijjah*.<sup>2</sup>

**The Martyrdom of 'Alī:** There are also varying reports concerning the martyrdom of 'Alī. According to Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, 'Alī was martyred on a Friday, seven days before the month of Ramaḍān ended, in the year 40 AH. Khalīfah also states that 'Alī was 58 years old at the time of his martyrdom.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Ya'qūbī narrates that 'Alī passed away on the first Friday night of the last ten days of *Ramaḍān* in the year 40 AH. Similarly, al-Ṭabarī highlights differing accounts regarding the date of Ali's martyrdom, citing reports that place the event on Friday, the 17th of *Ramaḍān* in the year 40 AH. In another account attributed to al-Waqīdi, 'Alī is reported to have been martyred in Kufah on a Friday, either 11 or 13 days before the end of *Ramaḍān*.<sup>4</sup> al-Mas'udi, meanwhile, states that 'Alī's martyrdom occurred on Friday, the 21st of *Ramaḍān*. He also notes differences concerning 'Alī's age at the time of his death, mentioning reports that he was either 72 or 73 years old.<sup>5</sup>

**The Martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn:** Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt reports that the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn occurred on the *Day of 'Ashura*, the 14th of *Muḥarram*, in the year 61 AH.<sup>6</sup> al-Ya'qūbī, however, narrates that the event took place on the 20th of *Muḥarram*, though he acknowledges disagreements regarding the exact date. al-Mas'ūdī, provides yet another account, stating that the martyrdom occurred on the 10th of *Muḥarram*, and reports that al-Ḥusayn was 55 years old at the time of his death.<sup>7</sup>

The authors, with the migration (*Hijra*), have made more precise dating. Undoubtedly, the significance attributed to this period and the greater reliability of the numerous reports have played a major role in this. During this period, while the years given by the authors often align, disagreements are observed regarding specific days. Moreover, the fact

<sup>1</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/1004.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 2/73.

<sup>3</sup> Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, *Tarikh Khalifa*, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Umam Wa al-Mulūk*, p. 1/1145.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj Al-Dhahab*, p. 2/322.

<sup>6</sup> Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt, *Tarikh Khalifa*, p. 234.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Al-Ya'qūbī*, p. 2/158.

that all dates provided during this period are based on the Hijrī calendar demonstrates that Muslims had fully embraced this calendar. However, the discrepancies in dating within the sources have not been entirely resolved due to the continuation of some dating and periodization practices used before the use of the of *Hijrī* calendar.

### **Conclusion**

Chronology is a practice shaped according to the unique needs and cultural structure of each nation. Before Islam, the Arabs, particularly in South Arabia, used different calendar systems. These calendars were typically a combination of solar and lunar calendars, with the solar calendar being based on natural events and the lunar calendar being linked to religious and cultural rituals. Similar calendar practices in the Hijāz region have also been mentioned in Greek and Latin sources. However, these calendars varied between tribes, each of which determined its own calendar, usually based on regional characteristics.

In the pre-Islamic period, historical writing was quite limited, and the transmission of historical knowledge largely relied on oral traditions. Poetry, genealogy (the study of lineage), and historical information from other nations were the main tools of historical transmission during this period. However, these pieces of information may have been lost or forgotten over time, making it difficult to access accurate historical knowledge. With the rise of Islam, particularly during the Caliphate of Umar, the acceptance of the *Hijrī* calendar marked the beginning of the systematic organization of historical events according to a fixed calendar. The *Hijrī* calendar replaced the previous variable calendar systems, allowing Muslim societies to record historical events in a more organized manner. The implementation of the *Hijrī* calendar facilitated the creation of more regular annual calendars, thereby contributing to the development of calendar-based historical writing.

The majority of the information incorporated by authors into their works regarding the period before the birth of the Prophet was derived from the historical texts of the People of the Book and other nations. These authors included such information in their writings primarily because more reliable sources about the pre-Islamic era were not available.

From the time of the Prophet's birth to the beginning of his prophethood (*al-bi`tha*), it is possible to observe the implementation of the variable calendar systems used by Arabs in the pre-Islamic period. Significant events during this era often prompted the establishment of

new calendars. Furthermore, the Arabs, being aware of the calendars used by both the Jews and the Persians, occasionally presented events in a comparative framework using these systems.

During the period between the Prophet's prophethood and the migration (*hijra*), the previously utilized dating methods referencing various historical periods were no longer employed. Dates from this period were generally linked to the Prophet's age or the events of his prophethood, with occasional references to Jewish and Persian calendars for context used by the Arabs before Islam continued to influence the early Islamic period, with historical milestones being determined based on this calendar. In this context, periodization was made according to events deemed significant by Muslims, and these important events were recorded in historical records. With the advent of Islam, there was a significant transformation in terms of calendars and periodization, leading to the more systematic recording of historical events.

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