

# الأبحاث Al-Abhath

---

Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

---

VOLUME 69 (2021)



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

## A Version of Ibn Lahī'a's Transmission of 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr's "*Maghāzī* Notebook"

*Maher Jarrar\**

Professor, Civilization Studies Program and Department of Arabic and Near  
Eastern Languages, Faculty of Arts and Sciences,  
American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon  
[mjarrar@aub.edu.lb](mailto:mjarrar@aub.edu.lb)

*Dedicated to Professor Sebastian Günther, on his sixtieth birthday (9 June 2021)*

### Abstract

This article examines one recension of the *maghāzī* notebook by 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr. It introduces an Egyptian branch that was transmitted from Abū l-Aswad by Ibn Lahī'a. It studies the transmission chain that extends over five generations and offers a detailed investigation of some eight narratives that cover three episodes in the life of Prophet Muḥammad. It also casts considerable light on the development of the early *maghāzī* tradition and its reception in Egypt. The study revisits the image of Ibn Lahī'a in the sources and in modern scholarship, and it finally embarks on a comparative study aiming to establish the relationship of the material with the *Maghāzī* of Mūsā ibn 'Uqba.

### Keywords

early Islamic historiography – *Sīra* and *maghāzī* – 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr – 'Abdallāh b. Lahī'a – Heraclius

---

\* My genuine thanks are due to my student and graduate assistant Hassan Amro (MS Medical Studies) for his diligence and valuable assistance.

## المستخلص

تُعنى هذه الورقة بدراسة رواية عبد الله بن لهيعة لمغازي عروة بن الزبير عن أبي الأسود. وهي تتبّع الخطّ المصريّ للرواية كما وصلتنا في المصادر، وتدرس سلسلة السند التي تمتدّ على مدى خمسة أجيال، ثمّ تقدّم مقارنة مفصّلة لثمانى سرديّات تغطّي ثلاث مراحل من سيرة النبيّ محمّد. كما إنّها ترمي إلى وضع الخطوط العامّة المتّصلة بتطوّر علم المغازي والسير المبكر، ومراجعة المقاربات المنهجية المتّصلة بهذا العلم، وتتبع بعض مناحي تلقّيه في مصر. وتعيد الدراسة النظر في صورة ابن لهيعة في المصادر وفي الدراسات الحديثة، لتشرع أخيراً في إجراء مقارنة تهدف إلى مراجعة مسألة العلاقة بين مغازي عروة برواية أبي الأسود بمغازي موسى بن عقبة.

## الكلمات المفتاحية

التاريخ الإسلاميّ المبكر - المغازي والسير - عروة بن الزبير - عبد الله بن لهيعة - الإمبراطور الروميّ هرقل

### A. Introduction

Some years ago, while working on a second critical edition of Ibn Sahl al-Rāzī's (d. early fourth/tenth century) *Akhbār Fakhkh*, I was unable to identify the names in a transmission chain that provides an account of Idrīs b. 'Abdallāh's (d. 175/791) flight to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Idrīs fled in the aftermath of an 'Alid uprising in which he had participated. The revolt started in Medina in the Hijaz around the middle of Dhū l-Qa'da 169/May 786. It was, however, subdued, and most of the 'Alid participants were killed at Fakhkh, some three miles north of Mecca,<sup>2</sup> on 8 Dhū l-Ḥijja 169/11 June 786.<sup>3</sup>

The chain runs as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Khālid Abū 'Ulātha transmitted to me (*akhbaranī*), he said: My brother Abū Khaythama 'Alī b. 'Amr b. Khālid narrated to us in an assembly (*haddathanā*): Ibrāhīm b. Abī Ayyūb narrated to me (*haddathanī*): "When Idrīs arrived in Egypt..."

At that time, it did not occur to me that this chain of transmission might be

1 Ibn Sahl al-Rāzī, *Akhbār Fakhkh*, 164.

2 al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, 30:14, fn. 55.

3 Jarrar, introduction to *Akhbār Fakhkh*, 44–61; Haider, "Community Divided," 459–60.

4 For the terminology: *akhbaranā* (to transmit in an assembly of students); *haddathanā* (to narrate directly to students), see Ibn al-Ṣalāh, *Introduction*, 97–102; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1:77.

a common chain in transmitting *maghāzī* and *sīra* reports; sometime later I found the chain among my notes on the material transmitted by ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 93/711–712 or 94/712–713). It turned out that Abū ‘Ulātha Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Khālid (d. in Rabī‘ I 292/January 905 or Rabī‘ I 293/January 906) was one of the transmitters of the *maghāzī* attributed to ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr.<sup>5</sup> Abū ‘Ulātha transmitted on the authority of his father ‘Amr b. Khālid al-Ḥarrānī (d. Sha‘bān or Shawwāl 229/May or June 844), who was a student of ‘Abdallāh b. Lahī‘a (d. 174/790)<sup>6</sup> who in turn transmitted directly on the authority of Abū l-Aswad Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nawfal (d. 136/753–754 or 137/754–755), known as ‘Urwa’s foster-child (literally: *yatīm* or orphan). Since then, I was able to assemble a great number of traditions and *akhbār* on the theme of *maghāzī* that are attributed through this *isnād* to ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr.

The main purpose of this article is to present the preliminary results of my research and to undertake a comparison of a few texts with the matching reports related on the authority of both ‘Urwa’s son Hishām (d. ca. 146/763–764) and Mūsā b. ‘Uqba (d. 141/758).

Let us first focus our attention on the above-mentioned transmission chain:

#### A.1. *Abū ‘Ulātha and his family*

Abū ‘Ulātha Muḥammad b. ‘Amr was born in Egypt (al-Fuṣṭāṭ).<sup>7</sup> His father, Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Amr b. Khālid<sup>8</sup> migrated to Egypt from Ḥarrān in Northern Mesopotamia.<sup>9</sup> Mughulṭāy (d. 762/1290),<sup>10</sup> quoting the famous early Egyptian scholar Ibn Yūnus (d. 347/958),<sup>11</sup> says that ‘Amr b. Khālid worked as copyist of manuscripts (*warrāq*)<sup>12</sup> for the traditionist ‘Abd al-Ghaffār b. Dāwūd Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥarrānī (d. 224/839) and that he entered Egypt together with the latter when he settled there.<sup>13</sup> In fact Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥarrānī<sup>14</sup> lived for some time in

5 Schoeler, “‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr,” Juynboll, *ECH*, 644–45; Görke and Schoeler, *Die älteste Berichte*, 11–12.

6 Houry, *‘Abd Allāh Ibn Lahī‘a*, 7–11.

7 “In the period between the Arab conquest and the foundation of Cairo, the name Miṣr was regularly applied to the early settlement,” Wensinck, “Miṣr.” Al-Fuṣṭāṭ, however, was the capital where the ruling elite resided, cf., Jomier, “al-Fuṣṭāṭ;” Kennedy, “Egypt as a Province,” 62–85.

8 al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:601, no. 4356; Mughulṭāy, *Ikmāl*, 10:160, no. 4085.

9 Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, 2:235–36; Fehérvári, “Ḥarrān.”

10 Hamdan, “Mughulṭāy.”

11 Rosenthal, “Ibn Yūnus, Abū Sa‘īd.”

12 For the various meanings of the term, see Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition*, 150; Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, 187–98, 199.

13 Mughulṭāy, *Ikmāl*, 10:160.

14 Ibn Yūnus, *Tārīkh*, 2:130, no. 340; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 10:438; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 18:225.