

The
History of al-Ṭabarī

VOLUME II

Prophets and Patriarchs



TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM M. BRINNER

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME II

Prophets and Patriarchs



The History of Al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME II

Prophets and Patriarchs

translated and annotated
by

William M. Brinner

University of California, Berkeley

State University of New York Press

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Acknowledgements

In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain.

Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as qāḍī and imām, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been translated.



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Translator's Foreword



Like almost all other medieval Muslim historians and chroniclers, Ṭabarī begins his history with the creation of the world and the story of Adam. As he proceeds to follow the descendants of Adam, his point of view becomes clear. The two great civilizations to which the Arabs—and hence Islam—were heirs were the civilization of the ancient Israelites, as recorded in the Qur'ān and in Muslim tradition, and the civilization of ancient Iran. These two civilizations, in turn, must be connected with each other, must be shown as two strands which intertwine, genealogically and historically, and give rise to pre-Islamic civilization which was to be transformed by the coming of Islam.

This volume treats one part of that early history. Based on Qur'ān, on Muslim tradition of the Israelite past, and on a version of Iranian history very close to that found in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*, the national epic of Iran, it unfolds the stories of Noah, Abraham, the Arabian prophets—Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Job and Shu'ayb—Lot, and Joseph. These tales form part of the literary genre of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* or tales of the prophets, namely stories of biblical figures regarded as prophets by Muslims. Unlike most such collections, these fascinating tales are treated by Ṭabarī with a certain scholarly detachment, making clear his own acceptance of or doubts about certain traditions such as which of his sons Abraham was commanded to sacrifice, Isaac or Ishmael, or exactly which sins of Lot's people brought about the destruction of Sodom. Together with this comes the interweaving of Iranian tradition as in the case of Bīwarasb—a legendary ruler—and

Noah, or of Nimrod, the persecutor of Abraham, and his role in Iranian history.

This is proto-history presented in fascinating detail and with the meticulous scholarship which Ṭabarī displays when he deals with more recent or contemporary history in later volumes.

The translator's thanks go to Dr. Mahmoud Omidšalar for his assistance with the Old Persian material; to Dr. Maurice Salib for reviewing the translation; and to Mr. Jeffrey Deboo for his assistance with the final revision and typing.

William Brinner
University of California, Berkeley



An Account of Bīwarasb, that is, al-Azdahāq¹



The Arabs call him al-Ḍaḥḥāk, for they take the sound between the letters *s* and *z* in Persian to be a *ḍ*, the *h* to be *ḥ*, and the *q* to be *k*.² He is the one whom Ḥabīb b. Aws³ had in mind when he said, "He did not accomplish merely what Pharaoh had accomplished in this world, nor Haman, nor Korah;⁴ rather, he was like al-Ḍaḥḥāk in the greatness of his power over the world, and you are Afarīdhūn."⁵ He was the one about whom al-Ḥasan b. Hāni⁶ boasted by claiming that al-Ḍaḥḥāk was from his people:

1. New Persian Bēwar.asp, another name for Zahhāk (al-Ḍaḥḥāk) in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. A compound from *bēwar* "myriad, ten thousand" and *asp/asb* "horse", i.e., "master of ten thousand horses." See *Shāhnāmeḥ*, 44, verses 83–85. Al-Azdahāq, from Avestan *aži.dahāka*- who was a three-headed dragon king. This Avestan form was later Arabicized into al-Azdahāq and finally al-Ḍaḥḥāk (Zahhāk in New Persian). For a full discussion see Omidsalar, n. 9.

2. This is Ṭabarī's effort to explain the phonetic shift from what he considered a Persian form, Azdahāq (which, as we have seen above, is already Arabicized), to al-Ḍaḥḥāk.

3. Abū Tammām Ḥabīb b. Aws al-Ṭā'ī (808–842). This is found in his *Dīwān*, III, 321. There the name of the hero is Ifrīdhūn.

4. Fir'awn, Hāmān, Qārūn; in the Qur'an, 40:23–25, Moses was sent to these three with "our revelation and clear warrant," but they disbelieved and ordered the slaying of the sons of believers. The three became symbolic figures representing disbelief and tyranny in Islamic literature.

5. The name occurs as Farēdūn, Ferīdūn, Afrīdūn, and Āfarīdūn in New Persian. The hero who defeated Zahhāk and imprisoned him in Mount Dama-vand. (See below).

6. Muḥammad b. Hāni' b. Muḥammad b. Sa'dūn al-Azdi al-Andalusī, Abū al-Qāsim [326–362(938–973)]. See *al-A'lām*, VII, 354.

One of us was al-Ḍaḥḥāk whom
the madmen and jinns worshipped in their river beds.

- [202] The Yemenites have claimed him as one of themselves. I have transmitted the following account from Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib regarding this al-Ḍaḥḥāk: The Persians claim al-Ḍaḥḥāk, asserting that Jam⁷ gave his sister in marriage to one of the nobles of his family and made him ruler over the Yemen, whereupon she bore him al-Ḍaḥḥāk. But the Yemenites claim him, asserting that he was one of them. They say that he was al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. 'Alwān b. 'Ubayd b. 'Uwayj, and that he appointed his brother Sinān b. 'Alwān b. 'Ubayd b. 'Uwayj as ruler over Egypt. The latter was the first Pharaoh and was ruler of Egypt when Abraham, the Friend of the Merciful, came there.

- As for the Persians, they attribute to this al-Azdahāq a Yemenite genealogy different from the one given by Hishām. They say that he was Bīwarasb b. Arwandasb b. Zīnkāw b. Wīrawshak b. Tāz b. Farwāk b. Sayāmak b. Mashā b. Jayūmart.⁸ There are others who attribute this genealogy to him, but pronounce the names of his forefathers differently. They say that he is al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Anduramasb b. Ranḥadār b. Wandarisah b. Tāj b. Faryāk b. Sāhimak b. Mādhi b. Jayūmart. The Magians⁹ assert that this Tāj was the ancestor of the Arabs, and they also claim that al-Ḍaḥḥāk's mother was Wadak bt. Wīwanjahān.¹⁰ Also, they claim that he killed his father to curry favor with

7. Or Jamshīd; Avestan, Yima-. Fourth of the mythical kings of Iran, he appears as both Jam and Jamshīd in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. He was overthrown and killed by Zāhhāk after a reign of some seven hundred years. *Shāhnāmeḥ*, I, 49, verses 165–183, and I, 50, verses 184–186.

8. The genealogy as given in the *Bundahishn*, 293, is Ḍaḥḥāk son of Khru-tāsp son of Zaiḡāw son of Avirashyang son of Tāj son of Farvāk son of Siyāmak [son of Mashya son of Gayōmart (Jayūmart)], op. cit., line 1. Ṭabarī is thus in general agreement with this early genealogy, although the individual names appear in greatly differing forms in various manuscripts. The next genealogy given below may be explained, in part at least, as being due to confusion of Arabic letters *r* for *z*, or substitution of *y* and *w*.

9. Al-Majūs, i.e., the Zoroastrians. See *Shorter Encyc.*, 298.

10. Not mentioned in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*, her name and genealogy are given in the *Bundahishn*, 293, as Uṭa (misreading by editor for Vadak) daughter of Tam-bayak of Owōikhm of Pairiurvo of Urvaesm of Gadwithw of Drujaskān of Ganā Mīnūy.

the devils. He often lived in Babylon, and he had two sons, one of them named Sarnafiwār and the other Nafawār.¹¹

Al-Sha'bi¹² used to say that he (al-Daḥḥāk) was Qarishat, whom God had transformed into Azdahāq.

The Account of That Tale

According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah b. al-Faḍl—Yaḥyā b. al-'Alā'—al-Qāsim b. Salmān—al-Sha'bi: Abjad, Hawwiz, Ḥuṭṭi, Kaliman, Sa'faṣ, and Qarishat¹³ were tyrannical rulers. One day Qarishat became engrossed in thought and said, "Blessed be God, the best of Creators," so God transformed him into Ajdahāq. He had seven heads and was the one who lived in Danbawand.¹⁴ All the historians, both Arab and Persian, claim that he ruled over every clime and that he was a wicked sorcerer. [204]

According to Hishām b. Muḥammad: Al-Daḥḥāk reportedly reigned for one thousand years after Jam—but God knows better. Settling in the Sawād in a town called Nars¹⁵ near the Kūfah Road, he ruled over all the earth, displaying tyranny and oppression. He killed excessively and was the first to enact (the punishments of) crucifixion and mutilation. He was also the first to levy tithes and to mint dirhams, and the first to sing and be sung to. It is said that there were two ganglia growing out of his shoulders, which caused pain to him. The pain be-

11. Not mentioned in any of the sources.

12. Abū 'Amr 'Āmir b. Sharāḥil (640–721). An early traditionist, legal and literary scholar. See *GAS*, I, 277⁵.

13. These names are actually combinations of the letters of the alphabet in the traditional order of the Semitic alphabet (*ḥurūf al-abjad*), combined in groups of four, three, three, four, and four from *aleph* to *taw*.

14. The highest summit of the Elburz Mountains in Iran. While the early Persian manuscripts show the spelling Danbavand, the word is today pronounced Damavand. The *nb* cluster > to *mb* and finally > *m*.

15. Nars, on the canal of the same name, which took its name from the Sasanian king Narses who came to the throne in A.D. 292 (LeStrange, *Lands*, 74) to the east of al-Kūfah. The latter was founded immediately after the Muslim conquest of Mesopotamia, about 17(636) during the caliphate of 'Umar. On the Arab, or desert, side of the Euphrates, it became 'Alī's capital city. (LeStrange, *op.cit.*, 74–75).

came so intense for him that he would anoint them with the brains of human beings. For this purpose he killed two men each day and anointed his ganglia with their brains. When he did this, the pain would abate.

A man of the common people of Babylon rebelled against him; he set up a banner and many people rallied to him. When al-Ḍaḥḥāk learned of this he was alarmed and sent (the following message) to him, "What is the matter? What do you want?" The man replied, "Do you not claim that you are the ruler of the world, and that the world belongs to you?" Al-Ḍaḥḥāk replied, "Certainly." Whereupon the rebellious man said, "Then let your thirst be for all the world and not only for us, for you kill us alone of all the people." Al-Ḍaḥḥāk agreed with him [205] about this and ordered that the two men whom he would slay each day should be divided among all the people and should not be taken specifically from one place rather than another.¹⁶

We have been told that the people of Iṣbahān¹⁷ are descendants of that man who raised the banner, and that this banner is still preserved by the kings of Fārs¹⁸ in their treasure-houses. According to what we have been told, it was the skin of a lion, which the kings of Fārs covered with gold and brocade and from which they drew good auguries.

Hishām continued: We have been told that al-Ḍaḥḥāk was Nimrod¹⁹ and that Abraham, the Friend of the Merciful, was born during his era, and that al-Ḍaḥḥāk was Abraham's master who wanted to burn him. We have been told that Afaṛīdhūn (who was of the stock of Jam, the king before al-Ḍaḥḥāk—some claim that he was the ninth among his children and that

16. See the Persian translation of the text by al-Bal'amī, which adds many details.

17. See LeStrange, *Lands* 202–207. Today generally known as Iṣfahān, the usual Arabic name was as given in the text. Located in the southwestern corner of the Jibāl province of Iran. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, 292–98.

18. The province of Fārs (southwestern Iran) was the home of the Achaemenian dynasty and the center of their government. Its name, Hellenized as Persia, became a common European name for the whole country. Shīrāz, founded by the Arabs after the conquest, became its capital. LeStrange, *Lands*, 248–298; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 835–838, s.v. Fāris.

19. Namrūd, Namrūdh, Nimirūd. As in Jewish aggadic literature, though not in the Bible or explicitly in the Qur'ān, associated with the childhood of Abra-

his birthplace was Danbawand) went forth until he reached the residence of al-Ḍaḥḥāk while the latter was away in India. Afarīdhūn then took possession of the residence and of everything in it. News of this reached al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and he came back. But God deprived him of his power, and his rule was ended. Afarīdhūn attacked him, tied him fast, and led him to the mountains of Danbawand. The Persians claim that he is there to this day, fettered with iron, and still being punished.

Someone other than Hishām mentioned that al-Ḍaḥḥāk was not away from his residence, but that Afarīdhūn b. Athfiyān came to a dwelling of his in a fortress called Zaranj²⁰ (during the month of) Māh Mihr, (on the day of) Rūz Mihr²¹ and married two of his women, one called Arwanāz and the other Sanwār. Bīwarasb was frightened when he discovered this, and fell down speechless and uncomprehending. Afarīdhūn struck his head with an iron mace—he had one with a curved top²²—and Bīwarasb became more terrified and confused. At this, Afarīdhūn made off with him to Mount Danbawand where he tied him up securely. He ordered the populace to adopt Mihr Māh, Mihr Rūz, the day on which Bīwarasb was tied up, as a holiday (*'īd*)—it is today called al-Mihrjān.²³ Then

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ham. The Muslim tales hinge on the verses in *sūrah* 2, which are attributed to Nimrod's speech although he is not mentioned by name. Muslim legend derives the name from *tamarrada* "he who rebelled" (against God). See *Shorter Encyc.*, 437–438. See also n. 52 below.

20. Zaranj/Zarang. The capital of Sijistān/Sistān (present-day Zahedan) on the Afghan frontier in eastern Iran, destroyed by Timur. LeStrange, *Lands*, 335; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, 926.

21. Lit. "the month of Mihr, the day of Mihr," here in its Arabic form. In the Sassanian calendar each month had thirty days, each one named after a deity, as were the months. When the name of the day coincided with the name of the month in which it fell, there was a festival. The 16th day of every month was called *Mihr Rūz* (or *Rōz*), "day of Mihr" (Old Iranian, Mithra-), the god of contracts and protector of the Iranian peoples. The name of the seventh month was also Mihr. Thus the 16th day of the seventh month, when the day-name and the month-name coincided, was called *Mihrgān* (Arabic, *Mihrjān*/*Mahrjān*) and was an important festival. It fell on the autumnal equinox, and was the harvest festival.

22. *Jurz*, for Persian *gurz*, club or mace. After preparing to attack Zāhhāk, Ferdyun ordered a great mace topped with a bull's head to be made for him. See *Shāhnāmeḥ*, I, 75, verse 429, and 66, verses 261–265.

23. See n. 21, above.

Afarīdhūn ascended the throne. It is mentioned that when al-Ḍaḥḥāk reigned and the crown was set upon him, he said, "We are rulers of this world, possessors of all therein." The Persians claim that rule will belong only to the clan from which Awshhanj, Jam, and Ṭahmurat came,²⁴ and that al-Ḍaḥḥāk had been a rebel who had seized the people of the land with witchcraft and deceit and had completely terrified them with the two serpents which had been on his shoulders. They also said that he had built a city in the land of Babylon and named it Ḥawb,²⁵ and that he made the Nabateans²⁶ his companions and courtiers. The people were subjected to every kind of pressure by him, and he slew the young boys.

Many of those who are learned in books say that the things on his shoulders were two long, swollen pieces of flesh, each of which looked like the head of a serpent, and that in his wickedness and cunning he hid them with his clothing. In order to cause terror he let it be known that they were two snakes which demanded food from him and moved under his garment when he was hungry, just as the organ of a person moves when he burns with hunger or anger. However, there are some people who say that they really were two snakes. I have mentioned what is related on the authority of al-Sha'bī regarding that, but God knows better concerning its truthfulness and accuracy.²⁷

[207] According to some authorities on the genealogies of the Persians and their affairs: People went on suffering greatly from this Bīwarasb until God decided to destroy him. At that time a

24. Awshhanj, for Persian Hūshang, the second mythical king of the *Shāhnā-meh* and the father of Jam and Ṭahmūrath (here, Ṭahmūrāt, Avestan, Taxmū.urupi-), the third of the mythical kings.

25. *Bundahishn* XXXII:4. "One is that which Zahhāk erected in Babylon which they call Kvirinta Duzita." If this is the same as Ḥawb, the latter was probably spelled *khawb/khub/kh^wab*.

26. Nabateans: in the early Arab chronicles, usually applied to peoples who inhabited areas of Iraq; later applied to people of mixed stock (i.e., Arab and non-Arab) and the lowest level of society—probably because of their being distinguished for agriculture. See Lane, VIII:2759–60, s.v. nbt.

27. Some variations on this story occur in the Persian version by al-Bal'amī, who records that these actions of al-Ḍaḥḥāk the Arab went on for two hundred years and almost caused the world to be depopulated. See al-Bal'amī, 144.

common man of Iṣbahān, named Kābī,²⁸ attacked him. He did this because two of his sons had been seized by Bīwarasb's messengers for the two serpents on his shoulders. It is said that when grief for his sons overtook this Kābī, he took a staff which he had and hung a leather bag on its end. He set this up as his banner and called upon the people to come out against Bīwarasb and engage him in combat, since they shared his great distress and felt oppressed as he did. When Kābī was victorious, the people looked upon the banner as a good omen. They bestowed more and more honor upon it until it became the greatest banner of the kings of Persia. They sought blessing through it and named it Darafsh Kābiyān.²⁹ They brought it out for travel only in the most important campaigns, and raised it only for princes who were being sent on important missions.

From the account of Kābī we learn that he left Iṣbahān with his original followers and with those who joined him on his way. When he drew near to al-Ḍaḥḥāk and looked over his position, al-Ḍaḥḥāk became terrified and fled from his encampments, abandoning his place to the Persians who were able to capture whatever they wanted from him. They gathered round Kābī and argued. Kābī told them that he did not want to be king because he was not of royal lineage. He ordered them to take one of the sons of Jam as king because Jam was the son of the great king Awshhanq b. Farwāk,³⁰ who had been the first to design the institution of kingship and had preceded all others in carrying it out.

Afarīdhūn b. Athfiyān,³¹ who was off in some other region [208] hiding from al-Ḍaḥḥāk, appeared before Kābī and those who were with him. The people took his arrival to be a good omen because, according to a tradition of theirs, Afarīdhūn was a

28. Kābī is an Arabic rendering of the New Persian, Kāva; Middle Persian, Kāvag. Not mentioned in Avestan material, he figures prominently in the Classical Persian sources.

29. Lit. "banner of Kābī."

30. Jam, son of Hūshang, was the first king to sit on a throne, and he began many important institutions of kingship, according to Iranian tradition. See *Shāhnāmeḥ*, I, 41, verses 48–49, and 42, verses 50–52.

31. Athfiyān. (Middle Persian, Aspyān) was Ferēydūn's father. See *Bundahishn* XXXV, line 8. In the *Shāhnāmeḥ* his name appears as Ātbin or Ābtin; see *Shāhnāmeḥ*, I, 57, verse 117.

candidate for rule. They then made him king, and Kābī and the notables became aides to Afarīdhūn in his affairs. Afarīdhūn assumed control and did everything necessary to consolidate his rule. Having also taken possession of al-Ḍaḥḥāk's dwellings, he pursued him and made him a prisoner in the Danbawand mountains. Some Magians claim that he took al-Ḍaḥḥāk captive and imprisoned him in those mountains, putting a group of jinn in charge of him; others assert that he killed him.

They assert that only one thing that could be considered good was ever said of al-Ḍaḥḥāk. When his affliction became great, his tyranny prolonged, and his days lengthened, the people felt that they were suffering so badly under his rule that their notables discussed the situation and agreed to travel to al-Ḍaḥḥāk's gate. When the notables and powerful men from various districts and regions reached his gate, they argued among themselves about coming into his presence and complaining to him and achieving reconciliation with him. They agreed that Kābī al-Iṣbahānī would approach him to speak on their behalf. When they were traveling toward al-Ḍaḥḥāk's gate, al-Ḍaḥḥāk was told that they were coming and permitted them to enter, which they did, with Kābī leading them. The latter appeared before al-Ḍaḥḥāk but refrained from greeting him. He said, "O king! What greeting should one give you? The greeting for one who rules all these climes or the greeting for one who rules only this clime—meaning Babylon?" Al-Ḍaḥḥāk replied, "Nay, but the greeting for one who rules all these climes, for I am king of the earth." Then al-Iṣbahānī said [209] to him, "If you rule all the climes and your sway extends to all of them, why then have we in particular been assigned the burden of you, your intolerance, and your misdeeds out of all the peoples of the climes? Why then do you not divide such-and-such a matter between us and the other regions?" Speaking the truth boldly, he addressed the issue and enumerated to al-Ḍaḥḥāk the ways in which the latter would be able to lighten their burdens. His words pierced al-Ḍaḥḥāk's heart, and he kept working on him in that way until the king ended by admitting his wrongdoing. He talked intimately with the people and promised them what they wanted. Then he commanded them to leave so that they might go to their camps and remain

calm. They were to return to him to fulfill their needs before going back to their towns.

They claim that his mother Wadak was worse than he, and more wicked, and that while the people were remonstrating with him she was nearby, following what they were saying to him. When the people left she entered, burning with anger. Disapproving of al-Ḍaḥḥāk's patience with the people, she said to him, "I have been told of everything that happened and of these people's boldness toward you, that they frightened you in such-and-such ways and reviled you in such-and-such ways. Would you not destroy them and unleash your wrath on them or cut off their hands?" When this became too much for al-Ḍaḥḥāk he said to her, in spite of his haughtiness, "O you! You have not thought of anything that I had not thought of before, but the people surprised me with the truth and frightened me with it. When I was about to assail them harshly and attack them, the truth presented itself and appeared between me and them like a mountain. So I was unable to do anything against them." Thus he silenced her and sent her away. Then, after some days, he held audience for the people of the provinces and fulfilled his promises to them. He thus warded them off, having become gentle with them, and met most of their needs. This was the only good deed which is said to have been done by al-Ḍaḥḥāk.

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The lifespan of this al-Ajdahāq was reportedly a thousand years. He actually ruled for six hundred years, while during the rest of his life he was like a king because of his power and the authority of his command. Some have said that he ruled for one thousand years and lived for one thousand one hundred years, until Afarīdhūn rebelled against him and overthrew and killed him. Some of the Persian sages have said, "We do not know of anyone who lived longer, whose name was not mentioned in the Torah, than this al-Ḍaḥḥāk and Gomer b. Japheth b. Noah,³² the father of the Persians—for it is [also] said that Gomer's lifespan was one thousand years."

32. Gomer: Jāmīr, Jāmar, in the text, and Jawmar or Jūmar, Ṭabarī, I, 211. (The Arabic text by De Goeje is meant whenever Ṭabarī is cited, as here.) According to Gen 10:2-3, I Chron 1:5-6, the first-born son of Japheth and the fa-

We have only mentioned the story of Bīwarasb at this point because some people claim that Noah lived during his reign and was, in fact, sent to him and to those people in his kingdom who gave him allegiance and followed him in spite of his insolence and insubordination towards God.³³ We have mentioned God's kindness and helpfulness to Noah. This was because of Noah's obedience to God and his steadfastness in the face of all the injury and unpleasantness which befell him in this world. God thus saved him and those of his people who believed with him and followed him. God peopled the world with his descendants and made his name a name to be praised forever, and stored up for him a life of everlasting pleasure and ease in the hereafter. All others He slew, because they had disobeyed Him and rebelled against Him, contradicting His command. He deprived them of the comforts they had and made an example of them for all those who came after them, along with the painful punishment He had stored up for them in the hereafter with Him.

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Now let us return to Noah and the tales about him and his progeny, for they—as God has mentioned—are those who are alive today. The others to whom Noah was sent, save his children and descendants, perished as did their offspring; none of them or their descendants remained. We have mentioned earlier that God's messenger, referring to God's word, "And we made his seed the survivors,"³⁴ said that they (his seed) are Shem, Ham, and Japheth.³⁵

According to Muḥammad b. Sahl b. 'Askar—Ismā'il b. 'Abd

ther of Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. Also, in Ezek 38:6, the name of a nation, today associated with the Assyrian, Gi-mir-ra-a; Greek, Kimmerioi. See *Encyc. Judaica*, VII:768.

33. Illustrative of the effort by early Islamic chroniclers to connect the two ancient histories known to them, i.e., those of the Jews and the Persians, to serve as a unified history of revelation culminating in the final revelation to Muḥammad.

34. Qur'an 37:77.

35. In the text, Sām, Hām, and Yāfith (rarely, Yāfit; see Ṭabarī, I, 222). Though alluded to in the Qur'an, they are not mentioned by name there. According to Qur'an 40:42–47, one son of Noah drowned in the deluge and three survived. Hence a fourth son is posited, sometimes (but not here) associated with Canaan, who in the Bible is a son of Ham. See *Shorter Encyc.*, 128, s.v. Hām; *El²*, s.v. Ham.