

The History of al-Ṭabarī

VOLUME XIX

The Caliphate
of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah



TRANSLATED BY I.K.A. HOWARD

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XIX

The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah

A.D. 680-683 / A.H. 60-64



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The preparation of this volume was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.



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

VOLUME XIX

The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah

translated and annotated
by

I. K. A. Howard

University of Edinburgh

State University of New York Press

Published by

State University of New York Press, Albany

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For information, address State University of New York
Press, State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y., 12246

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ṭabarī, 838?-923.

[Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk. English. Selections]

The caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah/translated and annotated
by I. K. A. Howard.

p. cm.—(The history of al-Ṭabarī = Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l
mulūk, v. 19) (SUNY series in Near Eastern studies) (Bibliotheca
Persica)

Translation of extracts from: Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-7914-0040-9. ISBN 0-7914-0041-7 (pbk.)

1. Islamic Empire—History—661-750. 2. Yazīd I, Caliph,
ca. 642-683. I. Howard, I. K. A. II. Title. III. Series.

IV. Series: Ṭabarī, 838?-923. Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk.

English; v. 19. V. Series: Bibliotheca Persica (Albany, N.Y.)

DS38.2.T313 1985 vol. 19

[DS38.5]

909'.1 s—dc19

88-39753

[909'.097671'01]

CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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.

Al-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 *dirham* 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 published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



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Translator's Foreword



This section of Ṭabarī's history, which is devoted to the caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah, is in fact almost entirely concerned with the reactions of two men to his recognition as Caliph. Apart from this, Ṭabarī merely records the names of governors and *qādīs* and gives a brief description of a campaign in Khurāsān. These two men, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām, represent two of the most influential Islamic families. They are the sons of two great Islamic leaders and they oppose Yazīd's succession. Thus, the central question involved in the caliphate of Yazīd is the constitutional question of succession.

In order to understand Ṭabarī's handling of this problem, it is useful to examine what sources he used and how he used them. Two earlier historians, Dīnawarī (d. 282/895–6) and Ya'qūbī (d. 292/905), have given accounts of these events. Like Ṭabarī, they concentrate on the opposition to Yazīd's caliphate from al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr, but their accounts are summaries and interpretations of previous historical writings without clear references to their sources; whereas Ṭabarī's account is much more detailed and through the use of *isnāds* (chains of authority) gives us a much clearer picture of the sources he used. A third historian, Balādhurī (d. 279/892), has, in his *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, provided us with a detailed picture, which enables us to check Ṭabarī's account. Sometimes Balādhurī gives summaries introduced by *qālū* ("they reported") and sometimes he gives even more detailed accounts than Ṭabarī with their *isnāds*. He also provides

versions, not given by Ṭabarī, that help balance the account. A fourth earlier historian, Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ (d. 246/860), briefly deals with al-Ḥusayn and gives more space to Ibn al-Zubayr but very limited information.

Of the later historians, Mas'ūdī provides accounts which, although lacking *isnāds*, can be seen to come from the same sources as those used by Ṭabarī. The Shī'ite al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) gives a slightly abbreviated version of Ṭabarī's account of al-Ḥusayn, which is almost certainly taken from Ṭabarī. Similarly Ibn al-Athīr uses Ṭabarī's for his version. These three accounts add very little to our knowledge about the historical writings on the event, but they do help to check and understand Ṭabarī's text. The same is the case with regard to Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* (d. 356/967) which, by and large, provides confirmation of the basic sources used by Ṭabarī for the accounts of the deaths of al-Ḥusayn and his followers, but through a different transmission.

With regard to al-Ḥusayn, a third type of historical writing emerges in the account of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (d. 314/926). This is hagiographical literature with the feats and exploits of al-Ḥusayn exaggerated to the point of almost miraculous actions. Similar hagiographical writing is found in the clearly forged work that was attributed to Abū Mikhnaf. This tradition is continued in *Maqatal al-Ḥusayn* by al-Khwārazmī. Here he generally uses Ibn A'tham's account and provides interpretations, explanations, and supplements.

In his account of al-Ḥusayn, Ṭabarī has relied heavily on Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204/819–20). The latter has provided us with the most detailed version of Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774). By and large this seems to follow Abū Mikhnaf word for word and in the main is confirmed as authentic by the corroborating evidence of reports in other historians, particularly Balādhurī, which have come from Abū Mikhnaf through a different transmission. Ibn al-Kalbī has supplemented this with extracts from 'Awānah b. al-Ḥakam (d. 147/764). He also gives a few reports from the Shī'ite Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī (d. 128/746) and al-Qāsim, the son of the Shī'ite al-Aṣbagh b. Nubātah (d. 1st/7th century).

The second source used by Ṭabarī is the account purporting to be that of the fifth Shī'ite Imām Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-

Bāqir (114/732) b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn by the Shī'ite 'Ammār b. Mu'āwiyah al-Duhnī (d. 133/750-1). This account is also the one used by Mas'ūdī with only minor differences. Clearly this is presented as the authentic view of Muḥammad al-Bāqir on the subject and therefore the view that ought to be accepted by the Shī'ah. In its outline, and it is brief, it is, with only slight variations, the same as Ibn al-Kalbī's version.

To these two accounts Ṭabarī adds a very brief summary from Abū al-Ḥudhayl Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān and a few supplementary details from 'Umar b. Shabbah. The impression conveyed is that we have been presented with a definitive account of the event where all the evidence has been collated and presented. This impression is not altogether correct and it is appropriate in introducing Ṭabarī's version to examine it a little more closely. In order to do this, it is convenient to divide the account into the following sections:

1. The attempt to confirm Yazīd's caliphate by making important figures among the Muslims give him the oath of allegiance.
2. The letters from Kūfah to al-Ḥusayn, the appointment of Ibn Ziyād as governor of Kūfah, and the abortive mission of Muslim b. 'Aqīl.
3. Al-Ḥusayn's journey to Karbalā', his negotiations with 'Umar b. Sa'd, and his death.
4. The desecration of the head of al-Ḥusayn, and the treatment of the survivors from his family.

All the sources are agreed that at his succession Yazīd was anxious to obtain the oath of allegiance from al-Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr, and many also include Ibn 'Umar. Dīnawarī adds 'Abd al-Raḥman b. Abī Bakr but this is clearly wrong as the latter was already dead. It is evident to all that these are leading Muslims, the sons of famous fathers, and therefore we are left with the impression in Ṭabarī's account that it was only natural that Yazīd should want them to pledge allegiance to him. There may, however, have been a little more to it than that. According to both Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham, Mu'āwiyah had agreed, in the treaty he made with al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī on the latter's abdication, that there should be a consultative council (*shūrā*) to decide the suc-

cession after him. However, Ṭabarī fails to mention this. The *shūrā* was the institution introduced by ʿUmar for his succession; the six leading Muslims chose one of their number as the Caliph. Therefore al-Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn ʿUmar could naturally have expected to have been among the group who decided on the next Caliph, and almost certainly that group would not have chosen Yazīd. What Yazīd was doing—and his father seems to have tried to do the same toward the end of his life—was trying to preempt the *shūrā* by obtaining these men's oaths of allegiance.

In presenting al-Ḥusayn's and Ibn al-Zubayr's reaction, either Ṭabarī or Ibn al-Kalbī has amalgamated two reports from Abū Mikhnaf. In the second half of the first report, the part omitted by Ṭabarī or Ibn al-Kalbī, both men have made excuses to avoid seeing al-Walīd, the governor of Medina, when he asked them to come. Guessing the reason why he has asked them, they make their escape to Mecca. The second report from Abū Mikhnaf, which in Ṭabarī's version has been tacked on to the beginning of the first report, deals with the conversation between al-Ḥusayn and al-Walīd. Ṭabarī completely ignores reports included by both Balādhurī and Khalīfah b. Khayyāt from the Baṣran historian Juwayriyyah b. Asmā' (d. 173/789) in which both Ibn al-Zubayr and al-Ḥusayn meet al-Walīd together and Ibn al-Zubayr is the main spokesman. The selective picture that emerges from Ṭabarī's version favors al-Ḥusayn at the expense of Ibn al-Zubayr.

All the sources are agreed upon the Kūfans' sending to al-Ḥusayn to come to them as their leader. All, too, are agreed on the mission of Muslim b. ʿAqīl to find out the situation in Kūfah. Yazīd's remedy for that situation is the appointment of ʿUbaydallāh. For this Ibn al-Kalbī's account, or Ṭabarī's version of it, leaves the main source, Abū Mikhnaf, and adopts the account of ʿAwānah b. al-Ḥakam. In this account, Yazīd's appointment of ʿUbaydallāh is as the result of advice from his Christian adviser Sarjūn, who presents it as Muʿāwiyah's advice. Clearly the appointment of ʿUbaydallāh is being laid at the door of the Christian Sarjūn and blame for what ensues is in some way removed from Yazīd. Surprisingly, the apparent Shīʿite account from Muḥammad al-Bāqir supports this report of the appointment of ʿUbaydallāh. However, since it gives this in greater detail than many of the events that one would expect someone sympathetic to al-Ḥusayn to dwell

on, that account begins to look suspect in terms of its apparent origin. It is 'Awānah, too, who reports the three choices given by Yazīd of dealing with Muslim b. 'Aqīl: (a) the first to imprison him; (b) the second to kill him; (c) and the third to banish him. The fact that 'Ubaydallāh chooses to kill him again in some way diminishes the responsibility of Yazīd for that action.

The Baṣraḥ historian Wahb b. Jarīr (d. 207/822) has Muslim, before he is killed, declare at the behest of 'Ubaydallāh that he is a leader of rebels, in this way detracting from any heroism Muslim may have shown. This historical report is completely ignored by Ṭabarī.

Abū Mikhnaf's account, as reported by Ṭabarī, of al-Ḥusayn's journey to Kūfah provides us with the most detailed account with important speeches and letters by al-Ḥusayn. The significance of these is that al-Ḥusayn in them makes the kind of claims about himself and the Imāmate that are clearly of a Shī'ite character. This indicates that there was a Shī'ite version of the events prior to Abū Mikhnaf that Abū Mikhnaf has incorporated into his own account along with other reports.

In the historical presentation of the account, the next major issue is the responsibility for al-Ḥusayn's death. According to Abū Mikhnaf, the consensus of historians at this time was that al-Ḥusayn had offered 'Umar b. Sa'd, 'Ubaydallāh's commander of his forces against al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā', three options: (a) he would go back; (b) he would go to a frontier post; or (c) he would go to Yazīd and put his hand in his and see what his view was. If these were really offered, then 'Ubaydallāh's task was over. All he had to do was send al-Ḥusayn to Yazīd. However, 'Ubaydallāh insisted that al-Ḥusayn must submit to him; this was too much for al-Ḥusayn. He, his followers, and his family accepted death. The blame for al-Ḥusayn's death according to this is clearly the responsibility of 'Ubaydallāh, and not Yazīd. The purpose of this version originally may have been merely intended to transfer the blame for al-Ḥusayn's death from Yazīd to 'Ubaydallāh. However, it also had implications for those who believed in the Imāmate of al-Ḥusayn, for he was, in fact, agreeing to accept Yazīd as Caliph; he was willing to renounce his whole mission, which was the rejection of Yazīd's caliphate. Abū Mikhnaf admits that there is a tradition that maintains that all al-Ḥusayn offered was to go back

to Medina or go anywhere else in God's broad land. Despite this view, which would agree with the Shī'ite version, we have the Shī'ite Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir endorsing again the attitude that does not agree with the views of the Shī'ah.

The treatment of al-Ḥusayn's head after his death is another example of the division of opinion concerning who is more blameworthy, Yazīd or 'Ubaydallāh. Abū Mikhnaf himself has reports for both Yazīd and 'Ubaydallāh, poking at the teeth in al-Ḥusayn's head. In 'Awānah's version, when the surviving prisoners are sent to Yazīd, he treats them well and declares that if he had been there he would never have killed al-Ḥusayn. From the extracts we have from 'Awānah's account, it seems that he is transferring all the blame he can from Yazīd to 'Ubaydallāh. Abū Mikhnaf provides us with a variety of versions, very few of which seem to have been edited in the same way in which the account about the oath of allegiance was edited. However, Ṭabarī has contrived to make the account of Muḥammad al-Bāqir the arbiter over such conflicts and in it the action is Yazīd's.

Despite these comments on Ṭabarī's version of the death of al-Ḥusayn, we owe to him the fact that we have the most detailed version of the narrative available to us in his report of Ibn al-Kalbī's recension of Abū Mikhnaf's work. The space given to this event, which in terms of political history was a failed revolution, emphasizes the importance of the event for Muslims in general, and the Shī'ah in particular. The death or martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn was for a long time a problem for the consciences of devout Muslims. He was, after all, the grandson of the Prophet. For the Shī'ah its significance is much deeper. Al-Ḥusayn serves in their eyes as a redemptive hero, who by his actions set an example to Muslims that should always be remembered.

After the death of al-Ḥusayn, Ṭabarī deals with the opposition to Yazīd by Ibn al-Zubayr. In fact, he introduces an account of the beginnings of that opposition that is clearly out of place. During his description of the events of the year 60/680, he gives an account of the attack by Ibn al-Zubayr's brother, 'Amr b. al-Zubayr, on Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca. If this had been the case, it would have taken place either before al-Ḥusayn had departed or immediately afterward. That it is out of place is corroborated by

Balādhurī, who also has the incident, and puts it correctly after al-Ḥusayn's death. The account of this given by Ṭabarī is based entirely on Wāqidi. The general tenor of Ṭabarī's account of this incident is borne out by Balādhurī, who gives a much wider range of sources, including Wāqidi.

The accounts given of Yazīd's attempts to persuade Ibn al-Zubayr and the people of Medina and Mecca to accept his authority are again confirmed by much fuller accounts from Balādhurī. The same is the case for the battle of Ḥarrah and the bombardment of the Ka'bah. There is the same tendency in the sources to try to mitigate the responsibility of Yazīd for these crimes against Islam by thrusting the blame on his generals, in this case, Muslim b. 'Uqbah and Ḥuṣayn b. Numayr al-Sakūnī.

One constitutional problem does emerge from Ṭabarī's treatment of his sources. This is the problem concerning the condition on which Ibn al-Zubayr was receiving the oath of allegiance. In Balādhurī it is quite clear that Ibn al-Zubayr at this juncture is receiving the oath of allegiance on the condition that there will be a *shūrā*. Ṭabarī never mentions this. On one occasion in a report that is identical with one given by Balādhurī, he deliberately omits the words "on the condition of a *shūrā*" from the statement that Ibn al-Zubayr was receiving the oath of allegiance from the people. In fact *shūrā* is only mentioned once and then, perhaps, by accident when he reports that the people of Mecca held the view that a *shūrā* was appropriate.

An answer to why this omission took place has yet to be given.

In the Arabic texts the names Ḥusayn and Ḥuṣayn have been given sometimes with the article *al-* and sometimes without it. In general for al-Ḥusayn, it is more usual that the *al-* occurs. In some accounts the *al-* is clearly missing for derogatory reasons, but in others this is not so. I have in fact followed the Arabic, and where there is al-Ḥusayn I have written it and, where not, I have omitted it. In citations from the Qur'ān, where two different numbers are given for a verse, the first is that of the official Egyptian edition and the second that of Flügel's text.

I would like to thank my former colleagues Dr. 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Alī and Dr. Farid al-Shayyal for help in checking the translation. I owe thanks, too, to Dr. Carole Hillenbrand for help and advice. I

must also thank Mrs. May O'Donnell and Miss Irene Crawford for their help in typing a difficult manuscript. However, any imperfections in the translation are my responsibility.

I. K. A. Howard



The Events of the Year

60 (cont'd)

(APRIL 22—SEPTEMBER 30, 680)

[216]



In this year (60/680) the oath of allegiance was given to Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah after the death of his father on 15 Rajab (April 22, 680) in the reports of some, but in the reports of others on the 20 of the month (April 27, 680), as we have mentioned earlier in the account of the death of his father, Mu'āwiyah.¹ Yazīd confirmed 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād² as governor of al-Baṣrah³ and al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr⁴ as governor of al-Kūfah.⁵

1. The death of Mu'āwiyah, the previous Umayyad Caliph, is dealt with in Ṭabarī, II, 198.

2. 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād is one of the sons of Mu'āwiyah's earlier governor in Iraq, Ziyād b. Abihi, literally 'Ziyād, the son of his father'. Mu'āwiyah had won the father over to his side by recognizing him to be his brother as a result of a liaison between Mu'āwiyah's father, Abū Sufyān, and Ziyād's prostitute mother, Sumayyah. 'Ubaydallāh had also attained prominence and authority. See *EI*¹, s.v. 'Ubaid Allāh b. Ziyād.

3. Al-Baṣrah is a garrison town of the Arabs, which is located in the south of Iraq. Just to the south is the site of modern Baṣrah. See *EI*², s.v. Al-Baṣra.

4. Al-Nu'mān's father, Bashīr b. Sa'd, had been one of the leaders of the Anṣār. After serving the Umayyads, al-Nu'mān later joined Ibn al-Zubayr and was killed in his service. See *EI*¹, s.v. al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr.

5. Al-Kūfah is a garrison town of the Arabs in Iraq on the Euphrates river. See *EI*², s.v. Al-Kūfa.

According to Hishām b. Muḥammad (al-Kalbī)⁶—Abū Mikhnaf:⁷ Yazīd succeeded at the beginning of the month of Rajab in the year 60 (April 8, 680). Al-Walīd b. 'Utbah b. Abī Sufyān⁸ was governor of Medina, al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr al-Anṣārī of al-Kūfah, 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād of al-Baṣrah, and 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-'Aṣ⁹ of Mecca. Yazīd's only concern, when he assumed power, was to receive the oath of allegiance from the individuals who had refused to agree with Mu'āwiyah's demand for this oath of allegiance to Yazīd. Mu'āwiyah had summoned the people to give an oath of allegiance to him that Yazīd would be his heir.¹⁰ Yazīd's concern was to bring their attitude to an end. Therefore he wrote to al-Walīd: "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, from Yazīd, Commander of the Faithful, to Walīd b. 'Utbah. . . . Mu'āwiyah was one of the servants of God, whom God had blessed, appointed to authority, and given power and ability. He lived for a measured time and died at an appointed time. May God have mercy on him, for he lived as a praiseworthy man and died as a pious, God-fearing man. Peace be with you." He wrote to him on another parchment as small as a rat's ear: "Seize Ḥusayn, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar, and 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr¹¹

6. Hishām b. Muḥammad was also known as Ibn al-Kalbī. He was an important compiler of historical traditions, who died in 204 (819) or 206 (821). See *EP*², s.v. Al-Kalbī. His recensions of the events in Yazīd's caliphate form the basis of Ṭabarī's account.

7. Abu Mikhnaf's name was Lūṭ b. Yaḥyā. He was an important source for the early Iraqī historical tradition. He died in 157 (775). See Sezgin, *Abū Miḥnaf*.

8. Al-Walīd b. 'Utbah b. Abī Sufyān was a nephew of Mu'āwiyah, who had a reputation for drinking. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV/1, 135. Throughout his career he is involved in the inter-Umayyad dispute over the benefits of power. His quarrel with Marwān indicates this. See p. 3, below.

9. 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-'Aṣ was a prominent Umayyad, who later revolted against the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, claiming that Marwān had promised him the succession. Eventually 'Abd al-Malik had him killed. See *EP*², s.v. 'Amr b. Sa'īd.

10. Mu'āwiyah's attempt to bring about the succession of Yazīd is reported in Ṭabarī's account of his caliphate. See Ṭabarī, II, 173–77.

11. Al-Ḥusayn, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar and 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr were three leading Qurashites, who all felt they had some claim to the caliphate. Al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī had claims to the caliphate by virtue of the fact that both his father and brother, al-Ḥasan, had occupied that position. 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar had a similar claim through his father, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. In the case of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, his father had been a member of the group nominated by 'Umar to form the consultative council (*shūrā*), which was to choose his successor from among themselves.

to give the oath of allegiance. Act so fiercely that they have no chance to do anything before giving the oath of allegiance. Peace be with you." [217]

When the news of Mu'āwiyah's death came to al-Walīd, it shocked and greatly disturbed him. He sent a dispatch to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam,¹² summoning him to come to him. Earlier, when al-Walīd had come to Medina, Marwān had only visited him there reluctantly. When al-Walīd perceived his attitude, he abused him in front of those who attended his gatherings. Marwān learned of this and kept away from him, cutting off all contact with al-Walīd. Marwān had continued to stay away from him until news of the death of Mu'āwiyah came to al-Walīd. Since the death of Mu'āwiyah and the order to take the oath of allegiance from this group weighed heavily on al-Walīd, he sought help for that from Marwān and summoned him. After al-Walīd read Marwān Yazīd's letter, he said, "We belong to God and to Him we shall return."¹³ May God have mercy on him." Then al-Walīd asked Marwān's advice about the affair, saying, "How do you consider we should act?" Marwān answered, "I consider that you should send immediately to this group and summon them to give the oath of allegiance and enter into obedience. If they do so, you should accept that from them and leave them alone. If they refuse, you should take hold of them and execute them before they learn of the death of Mu'āwiyah. Indeed, if they learned of that, each one of them would rise up from a different direction, proclaim opposition and secession, and summon men to himself. I am afraid things are not that clear. However, in the case of Ibn 'Umar, I do not think that he would consider fighting. For he would only be willing to be entrusted with authority over the people if this matter were given to him spontaneously."

Therefore he sent 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr b. 'Uthmān¹⁴—he was a young boy then—to the two of them, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and

12. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam was a prominent Umayyad, whose father, al-Ḥakam b. al-'Aṣ b. Umayyah, had been expelled from Medina by the Prophet. Marwān became 'Uthmān's adviser when he was Caliph and he also became Caliph in 64 (684). See *EI*¹, s.v. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.

13. Qur'ān, 2:156 (151).

14. 'Abdallāh b. Amr b. 'Uthmān was a grandson of the Caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, who seems to have had an insignificant role in affairs. See Balādhurī *Ansāb*, IV/1, 602.

'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr. 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr b. 'Uthmān found the two sitting in the mosque. However, he came to them at a time when al-Walīd did not hold assemblies for the people; the two would not go to him at such a time. He said, "Both of you answer the summons of the governor." They replied, "Go now, we will come."

One of them approached the other.¹⁵ 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr asked al-Ḥusayn, "Why do you think he has sent for us at this time when he does not hold assemblies?" The latter answered, "I have been wondering. In my view their despot has perished, and he has sent for us to get the oath of allegiance from us before news spreads among the people. I do not think it can be anything else." [218] Ibn al-Zubayr asked, "What do you intend to do?" Al-Ḥusayn said, "I will gather my servants immediately and go to him. When I reach the door, I will make them wait there, and I will go in to see him." Ibn al-Zubayr commented, "I fear for you if you go in." He replied, "I would not go to him unless I were able to resist him."

Al-Ḥusayn got up and gathered his *mawālī*¹⁶ and his household around him. Then he began to walk until he came to the door of al-Walīd's house.¹⁷ He told his followers. "I am going in. If I call you, or you hear his voice raised, all rush together to me. Otherwise, do not leave until I come out to you."

He went in and greeted al-Walīd as governor. Marwān was sitting with him. Ḥusayn said, as if he did not harbor any suspicions about Mu'āwiyah's death, "Fostering relations is better than

15. Balādhurī has given an almost identical account but does not include this dialogue. See *Ansāb*, IV/1, 300.

16. *Mawālī* (singular *mawālā*) denotes either patrons or clients. It was by this institution that a freed slave maintained his relationship with a tribe. The same institution was used for all newcomers to Islamic society. Although it could also mean kinsmen, here it means clients and slaves, as kinsmen are mentioned separately. See Crone, *Slaves*, 49–57, 197–200.

17. Balādhurī has two separate reports. One, which has so far been identical, apart from the dialogue, with Ṭabarī's version from Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, deals with Ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn 'Umar with no mention of al-Ḥusayn's visit to al-Walīd. See *Ansāb*, IV/1, 299–302. He has a separate report about that visit, which is identical to Ibn al-Kalbī's version given here. See *ibid.*, p. 302–3. Ibn al-Kalbī probably amalgamated the two reports, for the amalgamation had taken place by the time of Dīnawarī, whose version is similar to Ṭabarī. See Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 240–42.

severing them. May God reconcile you both." They said nothing in reply. He came forward and sat down. Then al-Walid read him the letter, gave him the news of Mu'āwiyah's death, and demanded the oath of allegiance from him. Al-Ḥusayn said, "We belong to God and to Him we shall return."¹⁸ May God have mercy on Mu'āwiyah and increase your reward. As for the oath of allegiance which you have asked me to give, a person like me should not give his oath of allegiance in secret. I do not see that you would be satisfied with less than my public oath made before all the people." Al-Walid agreed, and al-Ḥusayn suggested, "When you come out before the people and summon them to give the oath of allegiance, you should summon us with the people. Then it will be one affair." Al-Walid, who preferred the easy way, said to him, "Go then in the name of God and come to us with the people."

Marwān interrupted, swearing, "By God! If he leaves you now without giving the oath of allegiance, you will never have the same opportunity without much bloodshed between you and him. Hold the man; do not let him leave you until he gives the oath of allegiance or you cut off his neck." At that al-Ḥusayn jumped up and said, "O son of a blue-eyed woman!¹⁹ Would you or he kill me? By God! You are a liar and a sinner." With that he went out and passed his followers; they followed him until he reached his house.

Marwān told al-Walid, "You disobeyed me. No, by God! He will never give you the same hold over him again." Al-Walid replied, O, Marwān, let someone other than you blame me. Indeed, you chose for me something which would have involved the destruction of my religion. By God! I would not want to have all the worldly wealth and dominion which the sun rises and sets over for having killed al-Ḥusayn. Glory be to God! Should I kill al-Ḥusayn because he said, 'I will not give the oath of allegiance?' By God! I think that on the Day of Resurrection a man who is held

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18. Qur'ān, 2:156 (151).

19. A reference to Marwān's maternal grandmother, Māriyyah bt. Mawhab of Kindah. Her father had been a slave, probably a Christian from Armenia; and the Armenians were hated by the Arabs. Hence, the grandmother was referred to as "blue-eyed" as an insult; the insult was used against the grandson. See Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, V, 129.

responsible for the blood of al-Ḥusayn will weigh little in the scales of God." Marwān said, "If this is your opinion, then you have acted correctly." He said this to him without commending him for his view.²⁰

As for Ibn al-Zubayr, he had said that he would come at that time, but then he went to his own house and hid. Al-Walīd sent for him and discovered that he was gathering his followers as a means of protecting himself. He harassed him with a great number of messengers and men, one after another. Ḥusayn, for his part, replied to them, "Stop this so that you can consider and we can consider and so that you can reflect and we can reflect."²¹ On the other hand, Ibn al-Zubayr said to them, "Do not hurry me; I am coming to you. Give me time." They harassed them both all evening and during the early part of the night; however, they were more considerate to Ḥusayn. Al-Walīd sent mawālī of his to Ibn al-Zubayr, who abused him, shouting at him, "Son of Kāhiliyyah,²² by God! You should come to the governor or he will kill you." All that day and for the early part of the night, Ibn al-Zubayr remained there answering, "I will come now." When they urged him, he replied, "By God! I am being made suspicious by the great number of requests to come and the succession of messengers. Do not hurry me until I send the governor someone who will bring me his views and his orders." He sent his brother, Ja'far b. al-Zubayr,²³ to al-Walīd. He said to him, "May God have mercy on you, leave 'Abdallāh alone. You have terrified him and terrorized him with the great number of your messengers. He will come to you tomorrow, God willing. Order your messengers to leave us." Al-Walīd sent to them, and they went away.

20. This last sentence is omitted by Balādhurī. The narrative of Ibn al-Kalbī now returns to the first report of Balādhurī. See *Ansāb*, IV/1, 300f.

21. As a result of his careless editing of two versions, Ibn al-Kalbī has produced a contradiction in what was meant by him to be a continuous narrative.

22. This is disparaging reference to Ibn al-Zubayr. The mother of his grandfather Khuwaylid was Zuhrah bt. 'Umar b. Ḥanthar of the clan of Kāhil of the tribe of Asad. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 198. This reference is using his non-Qurashī female ancestor as a means of insulting him.

23. Ja'far b. al-Zubayr is Ibn al-Zubayr's brother from a different mother, Zaynab bt. Marthad b. 'Amr. Despite later taking part in his brother's revolution, Ja'far lived to an old age and died in the caliphate of Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik, between 96 (715) and 99 (717). See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 136-37.

Under cover of night, Ibn al-Zubayr left. He and his brother, Ja'far, without anyone else, took the road to al-Fur'.²⁴ He avoided the main road out of fear of pursuit and headed for Mecca. In the morning, al-Walid sent for him and found that he had left. Marwān declared, "By God! If he has mistaken the road to Mecca . . . So send men after him." He sent a horseman from the mawālī of Umayyah with eighty other horsemen.²⁵ They pursued him, but they were not able to catch up with him and so they returned. For the whole of that day until evening, they were distracted from Ḥusayn by the pursuit of Ibn al-Zubayr. Then in the evening he sent men to Ḥusayn. He answered them, "Come in the morning. Then you will consider and we shall consider."

They left him that night without harassing him. Ḥusayn left under cover of night. It was Sunday night with two days left in the month of Rajab in the year A.H. 60 (May 4, 680).

Ibn al-Zubayr had departed the night before Ḥusayn; Ibn al-Zubayr had gone on Saturday night and he had taken the road through al-Fur'. While Ibn al-Zubayr was traveling with his brother Ja'far, Ja'far recited the words of Ṣabrah al-Ḥanzalī:²⁶

All the sons of one mother will find out one night
that only one of their offspring has remained

"Glory be to God!" exclaimed 'Abdallāh. "What did you mean by what I just heard, brother?" Ja'far replied, "By God! Brother, I did not mean anything that you would dislike." 'Abdallāh said, "By God! It is even more hateful to me that this thing should be uttered by you unintentionally."

The narrator commented that it was just as if he were drawing a bad omen from the poem.

As for al-Ḥusayn, he left accompanied by his sons, his brothers, and his brother's sons. These people were most of his household,

24. Al-Fur' is a village between Medina and Mecca. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 878.

25. "If," in the previous sentence, is added from Balādhurī, who also identified the horseman as Ḥabīb b. Kurrah, and reported that there were only thirty horsemen. See *Ansāb*, IV/1, 300; also Dinawarī, *Akhhār*, 242, where the name is Ḥabīb b. Kadin.

26. Balādhurī attributes this verse to another poet, Mutammim b. Nuwayrah al-Ḥanzalī. See *Ansāb*, IV/1, 300.

[221] except for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah.²⁷ The latter had said to him, "My brother, you are the most lovable of people and the dearest to me. I could not give my stored advice to any creature more entitled to it than you. Keep away from Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah with your followers, and avoid the provinces as long as you can. Then send your messengers to the people and summon them to you. If they give you the oath of allegiance, I praise God for that. If the people agree upon someone other than you, God will neither make your religion nor your reason deficient on that account; He will not remove your manliness and outstanding merit either. Yet I am afraid that you will enter one of these provinces and you will come to a group of people. They will differ among themselves: one group will be with you and another against you. They will fight, and you will be a target for the first of their spears. Then the best of all this community in person, in father, and in mother would be the one whose blood was most wastefully squandered and whose family most humiliated." Al-Ḥusayn asked him where he should go, and he answered, "Stay at Mecca. If that place is secure for you, it will serve its purpose. However, if it is unsuitable for you, you can resort to the deserts and the mountain peaks; You can move from place to place until you see what becomes of the affairs of the people and then you will know their views. You will be most correct in judgment and firmest in action as long as you can directly face matters. Affairs will never be more abstruse for you than when you turn your back on them." Al-Ḥusayn replied, "Brother, you have given good advice and shown your concern. I hope that your judgment is correct and appropriate."

According to Abū Mikhnaf—'Abd al-Malik b. Nawfal b. Musāḥiq²⁸—Abū Sa'īd al-Maqburī.²⁹ I watched al-Ḥusayn en-

27. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah is a son of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib by a Ḥanīfite woman called Khawlah. After the death of al-Ḥusayn, he was described as the imām and mahdī by al-Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd. He neither declined the title nor accepted it, but he did give the oath of allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik. See *EP*, s.v. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanīfiyya.

28. 'Abd al-Malik b. Nawfal b. Musāḥiq was a well-known traditionist and an authority of Abū Mikhnaf, who lived during the first half of the second (eighth) century. See Sezgin *Abū Miḥnaf*, 193–94.

29. Abū Sa'īd al-Maqburī was Kaysān, a mawlā of Kinānah. He died in 100 (718–19) or in the caliphate of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, 86–96 (705–15). See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 61–62.