The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Umm Salama and her Hadith

A Thesis Submitted to
the Department of Arabic and Islamic Civilizations
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

by

Yasmin Amin

Under the supervision of Dr. Mohamed Serag

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A Thesis Submitted by Yasmin Ahmed Anin
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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has been approved by

Dr. Mohamed Seag
Thesis Committee Chair/Adviser
Professor-Department of Arab & Islamic Civilizations-The American University in Cairo.

Dr. Abdel Rahman A. M. Salem
Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner
Associate Professor-Department of Islamic History & Civilization, Faculty of Dar al-Ulum,
Cairo University.

Mr. Lennart Sandelin
Thesis Committee Reader/Examiner
Adjunct Faculty -Department of Arab & Islamic Civilizations-The American University in Cairo.

Department Chair/ Date Dean Cato
DEDICATION

To my grandfather,

for being the first.

To my Uncle Hussein,

for carrying the torch.

To my parents,

for being who they were.
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Abstract

Narrations by notable Islamic personalities are a significant part of the Islamic religious edifice. However, these narrations are of variable quality and authenticity. To evaluate these narrations, standards and tools were developed and used. This study will look into whether or not it is possible to add a new tool that might aid in evaluating the narrations of an individual muḥaddith, using the example of Umm Salama.

The study investigates Umm Salama from multiple perspectives to draw a rich picture of her. A detailed review of Umm Salama’s life is presented, her genealogy reviewed, her character explored, her contributions to political and social events studied. The research uses both Shi‘ite and Sunnī expositions on her life and draws upon both Shi‘ite and Sunnī hadīth collections to extract her narrations, creating the first musnad of Umm Salama.

The research results point to several interesting conclusions. It becomes evident that all types of sources of both Twelver Shi‘a and traditional Sunnī scholarship (annals, chronicles, hadīth collections, literature, etc.) have to be used when possible to enable an objective evaluation of a narrator. The original sources themselves suffer from inherent biases and methodological issues which necessitate using material produced by both sects to enable a more balanced view. The final result shows that these sources themselves provide a more complete image of the personality and the characteristics of the narrator, which when compared to the prophetic traditions narrated by that person provide a tool to help evaluate these aḥādīth.
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Introduction

This study will look into whether or not it is possible to arrive at certain standards governing the narrations of a single narrator using the example of Umm Salama, Mother of the Believers. This project will investigate whether an analysis of the *matn* (textual body) of the different collective narrations of Umm Salama reveal consistent subject matters as well as a consistent image of her personality. The collective narrations of Umm Salama will also be studied to determine whether there are any differences between ḥadīth in Sunnī collections and those in Shīʿite collections, and also between early and late collections. The study will attempt to determine whether it is possible to draw any conclusions about the historical accuracy of the image of Umm Salama emerging from her collective narrations (taking into consideration that some proportion of the narrations attributed to her or some of the historical reports about her may not be historically accurate, even if they are consistent with her image).

The first chapter will discuss some of the sources used for this research. Subsequently the problems related to the sources and the extent to which Islamic historiographical material should be used critically will be examined by means of summarizing the debate raging in scholarly circles for decades about the original Islamic narrative. The aim of that chapter is to arrive at guidelines facilitating the choice of which original sources to use and how to use them.

The second chapter will examine Umm Salama's genealogy; retrace her life after Islam, her first immigration to Abyssinia and her second one to Medina. After reconstructing her life with her first husband, Abū Salama, and her first widowhood, the research also explores her subsequent marriage to the Prophet, her second widowhood and finally her life events till her death. A study of Umm Salama’s character traits, attributes, interests and qualities that emerged
from the original historical sources will be provided, as well as her various versatile roles related to her life in the Prophet’s household, her contributions to Islamic causes, political events and her participation in battles and in the life of the community. Her role as a political advisor to the Prophet; adoption of women’s issues; contribution to fiqh and the role attributed to her with regard to the revelation of certain qur’anic verses as mentioned in asbab al-nuzul (reasons for revelation) books will be highlighted. Due to the importance of the first fitna as well as the contradictions surrounding Umm Salama’s role in those events, a part will be dedicated to the depiction of the historical events and the development of the relevant narrative in the original sources, both Shī’a and Sunnī, placing them in their historical context and drawing conclusions about this development. The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct the life of Umm Salama’s and write her first complete biography. The reason why there has not been any previous complete biography of Umm Salama is that in medieval as well as in modern times, her role and contributions have received scant recognition from scholars, which is reflected in the negligible number of articles or entries dealing solely with this remarkable lady. Hence, this chapter aims at filling a gap in the available literature about Umm Salama by compiling her biography from a multiplicity of sources.

The third chapter will look at a wide range of hadīth collections, covering about eight centuries of hadīth scholarship. A close look at the different existing versions of certain narrations will enable an analysis of the development of some of the different versions and shed some light on possible reasons for the diverse narrations, as well as analyze omissions and added inclusions and find possible motives for them. A look at the isnāds with reference to the narrations and the determination of the most frequently used chain for Umm Salama may provide a potential clarification of why these developments took place. The aim of this chapter is to analyze whether the narrations attributed to Umm Salama reveal consistent subject matters, a consistent image of Umm Salama and whether there are differences between Sunnī and Shī′ite collections, and between early and late collections.
The fourth chapter focuses on a comparison of the image of Umm Salama that emerged from the biography as reconstructed from the original sources to the one that emerged from the findings of the quantitative hadīth analysis in the previous chapter. The aim of this chapter is to answer the remaining questions posed above and to establish whether or not the hadīth narrated by a particular muhaddith or muhadditha can help to deduce the narrator’s personality by using Umm Salama as an example. Furthermore it also aims at establishing whether the narrator’s persona emerging from the narrations is consistent with that emerging from the biography. Reconstruction of Umm Salama’s life, as well as her voice as a narrator, will also help to distinguish this from what passes as the ‘truth’ or what “authority” or “orthodoxy” wants us to accept as true.

The research will draw upon many of the primary original and medieval sources, major historical works, biographical dictionaries, hadīth collections and Sīra books of both Shī‘a and Sunnī scholarship. In addition some contemporary works dealing with various aspects of early Islamic history will also be used. As many Arabic historical works have disappeared over the centuries, it is often necessary to consult available contemporary works for information about them. Furthermore, various secondary sources discussing the strengths and weaknesses in the primary medieval sources will be used, as well as some modern works. This will enable a view of more than one side of the story, and to balance the – sometimes conflicting – narrative, to arrive at a more reasonable and realistic reconstruction of the original events and therefore a balanced image of Umm Salama.
Chapter One - Sources and Historical Context

Introduction

Khadija and ‘A’isha are two of the best known wives of the Prophet, and the subject of a number of scholarly articles and books. Khadija was his first wife, the mother of his surviving children and was an exemplary woman on all accounts. ‘A’isha was at his side for many significant events in his life and attained major significance, not only due to the enormous number of prophetic traditions she narrated, but also due to the role she played in historical events around the Sunnī-Shī’a split. However, there have been other wives as well who have not been treated similarly in historical memories such as Umm Salama, whose achievements for the Prophet and the early community of Muslims has not been comparatively studied.

In medieval as well as in modern times, Umm Salama’s role and her contributions have received scant recognition by the scholars, as evidenced by in the negligible amount of articles or entries dealing solely with this remarkable and unique lady. Hence, this study – amongst other aims – aspires to fill a gap in the available literature on one of the individual wives of the Prophet other than Khadija and ‘A’isha.

However, this study is not just a compilation or a compendium of information on Umm Salama, but it also explores the methodological issue of whether the matn1 of different narrations of a muḥaddith can be used to generalize and deduce certain standards about the narrator using Umm Salama as an example. Furthermore, the study aims at answering a number of questions such as whether the analysis of the ahādīth attributed to Umm Salama reveal a consistent subject matter and whether that subject matter is consistent with her personality as described in the original sources. Does it seem that a particular image of Umm Salama has been constructed and if so, is it possible to make any suggestion as to why this was so? Is it possible to draw any

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1 The text of the prophetic report.
conclusion about the historical accuracy of this image of Umm Salama, taking into consideration that some of the reports attributed to her may not be historically accurate, even when they are consistent with her image described in the original sources? The study will draw upon many of the primary original and medieval sources, major historical works, biographical dictionaries, hadith collections and Sīra books of both Shī’a and Sunnī scholarship. However, the Shī’a sources used will be restricted to Twelver/Imāmī scholarship, as other Shī’a schools’ research and scholarship was not easily available. Hence, throughout this study the term “Shī’a” is used to mean Twelver/Imāmī.

Before embarking on a reconstruction of the life of Umm Salama from the available historical sources, the study takes a closer look at these sources, to determine which ones to use and how to use them.

1. **Some Background to the Historical Sources**

Bernard Lewis argues that Islam is a religion with a strong sense of history. He further suggests that the sagas of the Arabian tribes could be deemed forerunners of historical writing. A keen interest in nasab (genealogy) appears to have been prevalent among the Arabs since early times. Muslim historiography started with the biographies of the Prophet and almost every dynasty in Islam had its own annals or chronicles of some kind; in many countries serious historiography only began with the advent of Islam. Rosenthal, on the other hand argues that Prophet Muḥammad’s own interest in history and the manner in which this interest found expression, acted as a powerful motivation for the creation of an Islamic historiography.

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4 Lewis, , 1962, p. 3.
said, Islamic historiography begins in fact with the biographies of the Prophet, the surviving earliest versions of which dates from two centuries after his life. These biographies have been studied from a range of different positions. Some scholars reject them entirely, seeing products of the Muslim community’s idealisation of its history in them, while others accept them at face value, reasoning that, if they are not exact versions of the historical events, the events could not have differed too much from their descriptions. Horovitz, who was one of the first western scholars to study the biographies of the Prophet, argues that there are distinct domains of Arabic literature, which were concerned with recording the sayings and doings of the Prophet and that they differed from one another. The main argument Horovitz makes is that the written material about the Prophet’s life can be traced back to transmissions by the generation of the ṭābiʿūn (successors of the companions), who had known companions of the Prophet, but had never met with the Prophet himself. This pool of transmitted material then made its way into different kinds of literature: collections of ḥadīth (Prophetic traditions) and sayings and deeds of the early Muslims, works on sīra (aspects of the prophet’s life) and tafsīr (Qur’ānic exegesis).

1.1. Orality

Taking Horovitz’s domain taxonomy as a starting point, it logically follows that the written material he mentions, based on transmissions by the ṭabiʿun, was originally oral in nature. Hence, one needs to investigate this point and determine the quality of oral, as opposed to written, communication.

The Qurʾān itself appeared in an environment known for its long history of oral poetic works and their narration. Ancient Arabic poetry, as well as ayyām al-ʿArab and the akhbār (tribal traditions and genealogy) were originally intended for recitation and oral propagation. The

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7 Ibid, p. xxvii.
recitation itself was their publication. William Graham argues that: “this signals clearly that the revelations were from the outset meant to be oral repetitions of the revealed word of God himself.” The various historical accounts, which were also orally transmitted, establish that the Qurʾān remained mainly oral in the early phases.

There is conflicting evidence on when and precisely how the Qurʾān was written down. It is believed that the Qurʾān was collected and recorded during the lifetime of the Prophet. This information has been transmitted by a number of people, including Ibn Abī Shayba, Ibn Hibbān, al-Ḥākim al Naysabūrī and al-Bayhaqī, all reporting on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās. There are several indications of the existence of the Qurʾān in written form, even if not textually compiled, during the lifetime of the Prophet. Hadīth gives the names of various scribes. Up to forty-eight of them have been mentioned by Azami, with the most prominent being Zayd Ibn Thābit and Ubbay Ibn Kaʿb. Other reports claim that the collection of the Qurʾān happened during Abū Bakr’s caliphate after he was urged by ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to do so, following the battle of Yamāma. In another report it was Abū Bakr who ordered the collection, following the slaying of seventy reciters of the Qurʾān at the battle of Biʾr Maʿūna, and that of four hundred persons at the aforementioned battle.

Uthmān Ibn ʿAffān is said to have started the official final collection of the Qurʾān. In the times of ʿAbd al-Malak Ibn Marwān, it became clear that the way the Quran was written, omitting vowels and punctuation, was inadequate, so diacritical marks and vowel points were introduced. This makes it clear that there is no unanimous agreement regarding how and when the collection

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of the Qurʾān was actually undertaken. What has been considered the most likely version though, is that *tawātur*\(^1\) was used to verify the content and wording of the chapters.

Given the importance of the Qurʾān to Islam, the way it was written down, passing through various stages from oral to written, became the seminal model which was applied to other traditional Islamic sciences, such as *hadīth* (prophetic traditions), *ṣīra* (biography), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *tafsīr* (exegesis). Schoeler argues that: “in history and philology there were at first only notes as aids to memory, then systematically organized collections and not until a fair while later edited and published books, books in the proper sense of the word” emerged.\(^12\) It is generally accepted that the Muslim oral tradition had once been genuinely oral. Ghazoul opines that “sacred texts, even when oral, tend to survive intact.”\(^13\) Nabia Abbott strongly emphasizes the written transmission of tradition and sees the time of al-Zuhrī as that of the major shift from oral to written transmission.\(^14\) In Sezgin’s first major study, he agreed with that view, however he later corrected his initial findings and argued for a written tradition "*from the beginning*.\(^15\) Based upon the evidence, there are varying opinions about the reliability of the oral rather than the written transmission. One should at this point, however, emphasize, that the oral transmission is not always of the same reliability (as measured by consistency, uniformity and repeatability) as a written one. Despite these shortcomings, the fact that the written tradition was based on preliminary oral accounts is indisputable.

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\(^{11}\) Agreement about succession or sequence in narration, i.e. that the same wording of Suras would be reported by a big number of people from different geographical locations in the same way, which ultimately denotes that it is highly improbable to have had the same source of origin.


\(^{13}\) Ghazoul, Ferial J. *Nocturnal Poetics*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1996, p. 3.


A comparison between the historical accounts found in Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarī, reveal certain similarities in many cases, but also expose numerous divergences in the phrasing, arrangement and details of the various accounts, as well as in their isnāds. This points to an initial oral transmission,¹⁶ in which the tradition was not fixed, but was still in process of becoming so. It was then followed by a fixed tradition handed down word by word in a more exact transmission in a later period than the first mentioned and finally ended with a written account of an agreed upon version. Nevertheless there are multiple versions which have to be closely and critically examined by historians. The corpus of Islamic material was written down in the form of a vast body of traditions which are sometimes competing with each other and more oftenin agreement. The different versions are due to different factions and sects and the introduction of altered and forged materials supporting their respective views into that corpus. Therefore, the written corpus of Islamic traditions was fiercely criticized and discussed.

1.2. Tools for establishing the veracity of the body of different narratives

As was seen above, there were a number of issues associated with the written works and Muslim scholars themselves noticed them early on. They tried to find solutions to determine the accuracy and veracity of the different narratives, be that in historical works or other genres. One such tool, devised by the Muslim scholars, is the isnād (chain of authorities) related to the narration of a specific piece of information. The isnād later became an integral part of Ḥadīth, an essential part of the transmission of a certain prophetic tradition. The need for that was not realized in the earliest times, but as the second century of Islam advanced, the need for stating one’s authority developed. Ḥadīth developed as a particular genre because the Qurʾān, Islam’s primary source of guidance, did not offer many details, especially about rituals such as prayer. After a lengthy process Ḥadīth was considered second in authority only to the Qurʾān, more so

after al-Shafi’ī defined and expounded on the Prophet’s authority. People travelled far and wide to collect traditions and the body of collected traditions grew. Hence, it became necessary to produce authorities for these traditions. “There is reason to believe that the practice was to some extent in force before the end of the first century; but it was late in the second century before it seems to have become essential to have a complete chain of authorities back to the source.”

Iṣnād was also used in history books to some extent, even if the chains were not always complete and did not extend all the way back to the Prophet, but stopped at one of the tabi‘ūn. Before the (now canonized) collections were compiled, the number of aḥādīth had grown tremendously, and the Muslim scholars identified that a good deal of it was fabricated. The quṣṣāṣ (storytellers) were said to have invented many traditions with ostensibly perfect isnāds.

As mentioned by Alan Jones, there were four kinds of oral literature in pre-Islamic Arabia, namely that of the shu’ara’ (poets), the kahana (soothsayers), the khuṭtabā’ (orators) and the quṣṣāṣ (storytellers). It is rather difficult to give an indisputable and comprehensive definition of the term quṣṣāṣ. This is not due to a lack of material, but rather due to the existence of an extensive variety of information on the one hand, and the many purposes performed by the quṣṣāṣ on the other. However, it can be said that the storytellers originally focused on purely religious matters such as the interpretation of the Qur’an, mainly through traditions of the Prophet, as well as stories of ancient prophets interspersed with moral preaching to warn against the evil of sins and transgressions and to promote virtues. The combination of these three elements:

18 Singular: kāhin.
Qur’an, interpretation, and Hadith, which was the foundation for the activity of the early quṣṣāṣ, became the example followed by their later counterparts. The quṣṣāṣ always defended their activity by quoting verse [12.111]. The archetype storyteller used to sit in a mosque, surrounded by people to tell stories interspersed with myths and tales.

Tamīm al-Dārī, a Yemenite Christian who converted in the ninth year of hijra, was the first to tell stories in the Prophet’s mosque at Medina. He later asked ‘Umar’s permission who refused. ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān later granted him permission to tell stories twice a month on Friday. He was the first one to tell the story of al-jassāṣa and al-dajjāl. The most famous early storytellers were Wahb Ibn Munabbih, a narrator, author and transmitter of Persian origin and Ka‘b al-Ahbār a Yemenite Jew who converted to Islam and is accused of introducing isrā‘īlyyāt (Jewish elements) into Islam.

People used to like the storytellers for their entertainment value and rulers used to fear them, because they could change public opinion against them and sometimes prohibited them from telling their stories, such as ‘Aīl Ibn Abī Tālib, who banished them from the mosques.

Other rulers used the quṣṣāṣ as propaganda tools such as Mu‘awiya.

There were two types of stories, al-ʿām was when a storyteller used to gather the people in the mosque or market place

[12.111] In their stories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a narrative which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe.

Amin, Fajr al-Islām, p. 159.


Amin, Fajr al-Islām, p. 158.


al-Sabbāgh Tarikh al-quṣṣāṣ, p. 40.

Amin, Fajr al-Islām., p. 160.

and tell them stories and al-\textit{khāṣ} was when he was appointed to tell a particular type, like praise the caliph or denounce one of his opponents, as was started also in the time of Mu‘awiya.\textsuperscript{30}

In the course of time some of the famous and well established \textit{quṣṣās} became very influential. In Baghdad in the ninth century, for instance, their popularity was so great that their followers and audience were prepared to defend them against any authority, including the caliph himself.\textsuperscript{31} Hence the influence of them became so noticeable that, the authorities soon realized the important benefits they could gain from their support.

Despite the interest in producing historical works, nevertheless, many works include a very strong folkloric content by emphasizing the heroic, the supernatural and fantastic. The early ‘Abbāsid period, however, is said to have produced a larger number of big works which are systematically permeated with folklore.\textsuperscript{32} The most famous is the ‘Kitāb al-Futūḥ’ of Ibn A’tham al-Kūfī.

Duri dismisses the storytellers and their accounts leading to the conclusion that the more elaborate the imagination and the more inclusion of legend and folk tale elements, the less the historical value of the account is in terms of its veracity.\textsuperscript{33} Conversely, Robinson wrote: \textit{"The storyteller in a non-literate and non-monotheistic context generally holds an altogether more continuous view of time and his project is not so much one of recording or transmitting as it is re-inventing"}\textsuperscript{34} and also his description that the \textit{akhbāriyūn} (historians) collected their diverse

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\item \textsuperscript{30} al-Sabbāgh, \textit{Tārīkh al quṣṣās}, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Duri, A. \textit{The Rise of Historical Writing}, p. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Robinson, \textit{Islamic Historiography}, p. 10.
\end{itemize}
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materials "to entertain, amuse, edify, educate and moralize." Other scholars, however, defend the qussās saying that they developed as an essential necessity of a later Islamic society, when Islam reached monumental proportions. This was not only in terms of territory, but also with regard to the number of converts among them Arab tribesmen, non-Arabs from other nations and ethnic groups in the conquered areas, where the qussās then taught the Qur’an (by reciting passages from it after prayers), and particularly focused on its interpretation, to aid these newly converted masses in understanding it.

Serious Muslim scholars, on the other hand, were very hostile and antagonistic towards the qussās claiming that they would have reached an even higher creative level, if the Hadīth scholars had not stopped them, as any addition to the already vast corpus of Hadīth was undesirable. Al-Ghazālī sharply criticised them and reported that they only started practicing their evil in the times of 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān and more so during and right after the fitna. Ibn Qutayba accused the qussās of elaborating and embellishing Hadīth with unreasonable details. Ibn Taymiya devotes an entire epistle to the qussās in which he lists seventy-nine traditions that he believes were forged by them. The longest Ḥadīth of all is Ḥadīth al-ifk to which the storytellers definitely added details, showing that nothing was sacred to them.

Traditions were not only fabricated to amuse or entertain, but also to lend a certain political, sectarian or social faction more legitimacy or credibility. Later on the isnād was

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38 al-Sabbāgh, Tarīkh al quṣṣāṣ., p. 57.
developed more and when the traditions were compiled in the Hadīth collections, it was an integral part alongside of the matn (the text of the tradition) with its very own specific terminology.

Another tool devised by the Muslim scholars was ilm al-rijāl (the study of transmitters). This became a science in its own right and was devoted to studying the persons quoted in the various isnāds to establish their credibility and truthfulness. This in turn led to another tool, namely the biographical dictionaries, where all the details about these persons’ lives were collected, to enable a judgment about their character. Furthermore these collections of biographies aimed to enable the exact identification of each transmitter’s name, to avoid any confusion between persons of similar or even the same name. The biographical dictionaries will also be discussed below in a separate section.

This tool was also adopted by the Twelver Shīʿīs, however, in a different capacity. It was used as a way of ideological differentiation. The earliest lists identified the most loyal and distinguished partisans and gradually became subsumed in ‘ilm al-tarājim,42 which is merely a branch of Islamic historical research and thus in theory different from ‘ilm al-rijāl.43

Al-Jarḥ wa-l-Taʿdīl (disparaging and declaring as trustworthy) was yet another device by which to judge the different narrators truthfulness. It is a tool used mainly in Hadīth and

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41 The Oxford Dictionary of Islam defines it as: Study of the men. Refers to study of the people who transmitted hadith reports, manifested in the production of biographical dictionaries (tabaqat). Aimed to demonstrate their moral character as a means of validating the reliability of those reports. The details of the geographical and historical events in a person’s life allowed a judgment to be made on the likelihood of a given transmitter having received a report from another transmitter. When this was combined with assessments of the transmitter’s character, theological affiliation, and mental capacity, rankings of reliability were established. Chains of transmission (isnads) containing “weak links” were, in theory, eliminated. Assessments were codified starting in the tenth century in a specific genre often called al-jarḥ wa-l-tadīl (rejecting and admitting).


particularly in the evaluation of the *isnād*. *Al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* comprises of two parts, namely *al-jarḥ* (disparaging or declaring as untrustworthy) and *al-taʿdīl* (declaring as trustworthy) and many Muslim scholar preferred to engage in the latter.

For Sunnī scholars, the Companions of the Prophet were eventually all considered reliable and later on even above reproach. Dickinson discusses the concept of *taʿdīl al-sahāba* (impeccability of the Companions), previously discussed by Juynboll at the end of his ground-breaking study of *rijāl* criticism. Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Raḍī appears to be the first to formulate the concept explicitly, although it was Ibn Hibbān who limited unquestionable reliability to the Companions, excluding the Followers after them. Dickinson observes that this doctrine seems to be more prominent in modern discussions than it was in pre-modern ones. The thorough investigation of the transmitters’ character and their classification into these two groups sounds uncomplicated; however this tool was anything but that. Transmitters, who were regarded as trustworthy by one scholar, were regarded as weak by others and some authorities were known to engage more in *jarḥ* than *taʿdīl* or were famous for setting very high standards or having a sharp tongue or pen. Consensus later agreed that if both labels were attached to one transmitter, *taʿdīl* would be applied, because that man must have had access to information that was not available to others and for fear of rejecting any tradition that could be true. Ibn al-Salāḥ al-Shahrazūrī opines that the testimony of one man is satisfactory to affirm the reliability or otherwise of a transmitter of tradition.

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47 Ibid, pp. 63-64.
1.3. Ṭabaqāt Works (Biographical dictionaries)

As mentioned above, Ṭabaqāt Works are a branch of historical writing, which developed out of a certain need and hence are an original creation of the Muslim community. They did not appear until the beginning of the third/ninth century. Unlike chronicles or annals, the defining feature of biographical dictionaries is people.

The earliest existing biographical collection is the *kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* by Ibn Sa’d, which deals with ṭabaqāt (classes or generations) of men and women from the time of Prophet to Ibn S’ad’s own time using earlier written works as well as oral traditions. The earlier written works have unfortunately not survived to modern times.

Rosenthal proposed rooting the conception of biographical dictionaries in several phenomena, the first being the politico-religious experience of the early Muslim community (the interest in the Prophet’s biography) and the importance of knowing the lives of the transmitters of the Prophetic traditions. The second reason was the dogmatic struggle in Islam, which was waged in the name of individuals. The third is the practical aspect for the historians and biographers, namely to be useful and gain employment. The fourth is the readers’ demand to learn about the exemplary men of the past and the fifth is the mentality of the Muslims, namely their firm conviction that all politics was the work of individuals and understandable in the light of their personal qualities and experiences. Finally, that under the influence of theology, even the

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49 Ibid, p. 97.
history of the various branches of learning was conceived as a collection of biographies of the outstanding scholars.\textsuperscript{53}

Biographical dictionaries were used for religious, as well as for secular purposes. In general the author's preface, when analyzed, reveals the author's motive, scope, method, selectivity and can also give insight about whether the author will present facts or his subjective opinions.\textsuperscript{54}

Robinson on the other hand proposed "a three-part typology of historiography, namely first chronography (writing genres that explain events according to a chronological order in time), and secondly biography (biographical narratives of single-subject works that relate the life of person in a representational form), and finally prosopography (known conventionally as biographical dictionaries which cover individual biographies of many individuals usually belonging to the same group)."\textsuperscript{55}

The motives for writing biographical dictionaries are as varied as their number. They can be written to commemorate virtuous ancestors, or trace the genealogy in relation to the Prophet and his folks or for moral edification, praise of certain skills or simply to distinguish between men and women and highlight those worthy of emulation. As mentioned previously they grew out of a need to establish the veracity of the muḥaddithūn (transmitters).

The method of the various authors of biographical dictionaries also varied. While some authors believed in using \textit{al-jarh wa-l-taʿdīl}, other authors put the burden of proof on \textit{jarh}, which they considered a duty to prevent misinformation and yet others only mentioned \textit{taʿdīl} and omitted all derogatory information. Many authors considered acknowledging faults in other scholars or leaders to be a matter of religious duty. The authors had different selectivity criteria. Some listed

\textsuperscript{53} Rosenthal, \textit{A history of Muslim historiography}, pp. 101-102.
\textsuperscript{54} Khalidi, \textit{Arabic Historical Thought}, pp. 53-65.
\textsuperscript{55} Robinson, \textit{Islamic Historiography}, pp. 55-79.
those whom they thought as worthy and included only those who were in their opinion outstanding men, while others listed the famous men of intelligence and excellence. Some authors included both trustworthy and untrustworthy men for the purpose of deflating hollow reputations, while others included everyone who participated in the historical drama or those engaging in a certain profession.⁵⁶

There is a direct relationship between the items included in biographies and the specific interest of their authors as well as the discipline to which the subjects in these dictionaries belong.⁵⁷ One can find biographical dictionaries devoted to Qurʾān reciters, Qurʾān exegists, jurists, sūfis, grammarians, poets, scholars, imāms, judges, philosophers and scientists. There are also some which are devoted to certain geographical areas or cities such as Baghdad, Damascus, etc. The inclusion in biographical dictionary was seen by the scholars as a sign of public recognition. Although there are tabaqāt works of all sorts, from people with diseases or disabilities to chess players, surprisingly enough there is none for historians.⁵⁸

The facts about the various persons included the surname, kunya (patronymic), town, descent, madhhab (doctrine, tenet or school of law), knowledge, craft, power, position and the various teachers of the person. Later additions included the date of birth and death. Generally the entries would either ‘whitewash’ a person or assess his character critically. The character estimate came at the end of the entry and the assessment of the person and his personality was based on firsthand information available or through collation of several earlier opinions. The qualities and merits used as basis for assessment differed from one biographer to the next. While some considered humility and rejection of worldly office as merits, others focused on good handwriting, breadth of knowledge, intelligence and eloquence. Various biographers also

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⁵⁶ Khalidi, Arabic Historical Thought, pp. 53-65.
considered asceticism, poverty, piety, poetic talent and eloquence to be merits. Some biographers idealized their subjects, while others engaged in critical appraisals, and many late biographers drew heavily on their predecessors. While all biographers tried to do as much justice as they could, the entries reflected the social background, their time periods and personal interest of the biographers.

Biographical dictionaries show that the history of the Islamic community was mainly viewed as the contribution of the individual men and women to the building up and transmission of its specific culture and that their contributions were worthy of being recorded for future generations.\(^\text{59}\) Hence, the original biographical dictionaries were later supplemented with works called as *tahdīb* or *zayl* or *takmila*, to ensure their continuity and update the information. The sheer number of these biographical dictionaries grew; “*they seem endless, in their hundreds or thousands*” as Stephen Humphreys so appropriately put it.\(^\text{60}\)

Nowadays biographical dictionaries are considered to be very valuable sources of historical and cultural information about different groups of individuals living in different eras. Biographical dictionaries as well as other original sources were manipulated as an ongoing phenomenon argues Afsaruddin, who focused on studying women related entries in biographical dictionaries.\(^\text{61}\) She argued that a critical examination and comparison of the entries in biographical dictionaries from different periods can divulge how the changing social and historical circumstances affected the portrayal of the lives of those exceptional early Muslim women. These women fought against the *kuffār* (non-believers) alongside the Muslim men, assisted them, brought them water, tended the wounded and nursed them. Şafiyya Bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, for example, fought at Badr and was later wounded at Uḥud where she saved the life of the Prophet

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\(^{59}\) al-Qadi, *Organizing Knowledge*, p. 32.  
\(^{60}\) Humphreys, *Islamic History*, p. 188.  
by taking a spear meant for him. Another, female warrior, Nusayba Bint Kaʿb al-Anṣāriyya, fought in the very early ghazawāt (raids), at Badr, in the Ridda wars and was one of the female leaders who gave their bayʿa (oath of allegiance) to the Prophet at 'Aqaba. Ibn Saʿd’s biographical entries list many important women companions of the Prophet and detail their contributions, showing that women led an active visible productive life. However, this image is in strict opposition to the seclusion portrayed later by most of the fuqahā’ resulting from local ʿurf and customs, especially in Iran and Iraq.

Afsaruddin investigates this phenomenon by comparing the entries of biographical dictionaries such as Taʾrikh madīnat Dimashq, Tarājim al-nisāʾ, Ṣifat al-ṣafwa, Tadhkirat al-awliyāʾ, Wafayāt al-aʾyān wa-anbāʾ al-amān, Siyar aʾlām al-nubalāʾ and al-Wāfī bi-al-wafayāt as well as al-Iṣāba fī lamyīz al-ṣaḥāba.

Afsaruddin argues that for Sunnī scholars the importance of the first generation of Muslims, women as well as men lies in their elevated position of salaf (predecessors), whose example the pious Muslims of later generations should follow meticulously. However, this caused a problem, specifically in the Seljuk and Mamlūk periods, where the ideal, virtuous Muslim woman was expected by the theologians to stay mainly at home. For Afsaruddin, this becomes very obvious from works by a number of jurists and theologians on aḥkām al-nisāʾ (legal ordinances for women). “These works should not be taken as reflective of actual social practices and realities

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63 by 'Abd b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176).
64 by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Ali Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201).
65 by Fārīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 628/1230).
66 by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282).
67 by Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347).
68 by Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafādī (d. 764/1362).
69 of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449)
but rather as a masculine "wish-list" of desirable qualities in the proper and decorous Muslim lady of the late Middle Ages."\(^70\)

Afsaruddin accuses Ibn Hājjar of altering the details available in the older biographical dictionaries to make them fit with the social expectations and sensibilities of his cultural environment and shows how certain elements such as participating in battle and leading mixed gender prayers were completely disregarded by Ibn Hājjar.

1.4. Debate about the Sources

When consulting the early extant original Islamic sources, it is important to note that most of the early Islamic material had only been written down much later than the events they portrayed. As seen above, the existing body of accounts and versions was so vast, that it sometimes led to agreement and more often to discrepancies. This becomes even more of a problem when one compares Shī'a and Sunnī sources for their accounts regarding a certain incident, more so if the event played a pivotal role in history, such as the events at Saqīfa, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān's murder, the Battle of the Camel and events around Ṣīffān and the resulting arbitration. Another reason for the often contradictory conclusions scholars reach is the scarcity of sources or their complete silence on certain events, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Furthermore, the collectors of traditions were almost all exclusively theologians and traditionists, a fact that suggests that the first Muslim conception of history was predominantly theological.\(^71\) Muslim historiography began with the biographies of the Prophet. The collection of traditions and examining their genuineness and sifting the true from false traditions by means of

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isnād (chain of narrations), developed a kind of scientific and critical attitude among Muslims, which was vital for the development of historiography and historical outlook.

Muslim historiography can be divided into phases. In the initial phase, during the late first/seventh century, there was a rapid expansion in Islamic historiography in the form of an enormous body of historiographical records preserved (both in written form and as oral tradition) by people mainly interested in the history of their families and clans. The second phase was during the latter half of the first/seventh and continued into the second/eighth century, where systematic compilations appeared and compilers such as al-Zuhrī, Ibn Isḥāq, al-Wāqidī and several others emerged. They sifted and examined the enormous and unstructured amount of narratives available to them and selected what they considered to be relevant and reliable in line with their own individual criteria, as studied and defined by later historians. Unfortunately the bulk of early Arabic historical texts have not come down to us in their original form, but are somewhat preserved as citations and quotes in the later compilations.

The past few decades witnessed several scholars who have tried to develop theories of Islamic historiography and to establish various methodologies for writing Islamic history. Most scholarly work falls within two extremes and there seems to be enough evidence to support both sides; the two poles are either dismissing the early tradition as completely unreliable or placing - perhaps too much - faith in the sources that have survived. There also exists a middle position compromising between both extremes and in favor of using the sources critically. Watt sums up the middle position perfectly saying: “It is worth reminding ourselves of a general principle of all

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historical research, namely, that the ostensible sources for any series of events are always to be accepted unless some grounds can be shown for their rejection or partial rejection.”

The debate about whether or not to regard the original sources as an authentic account, depicting the veracity of historical accounts *wie es geschehen ist* (as it really happened) or whether to look at them as forged, fabricated or altered has raged in scholarly circles for decades. Several scholars tried to develop theories and to establish various methodologies for writing Islamic history. Most scholars’ work, after Goldziher’s and Schacht’s, falls between these two extremes. The actual debate is too vast to discuss in detail given the scope of this study, however a summary will be presented as it pertains to this research and affects the sources to be used to attempt to rewrite Umm Salama’s biography.

Hallaq argues that three camps of scholars may be identified: one attempting to reconfirm Goldziher’s and Schacht’s conclusions, and at times going beyond them; another endeavoring to refute them; and a third seeking to create a middle, perhaps synthesized, position between the first two. Among the various scholars, Lammens, Wansbrough, Crone and Cook belong to the first camp, while Duri, Abbott, Sezgin, Al-Azami, Schoeler and Fück belong to the second. Motzki, Santillana, Juynboll, Rahman, Noth, Donner and Robson, according to Hallaq, take the middle position.

Many scholars have devoted a large portion of their research to contribute to this debate. A review of the relevant literature will be presented to explain the use of the sources selected for Umm Salama’s biography.

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75 Ibid, p. 76.
1.4.1. Goldziher and Schacht

The western study of *Hadīth* relied significantly on the scholarship of Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht. These two scholars brought a different framework to the study and to the value analysis of *Hadīth* per se. Muslim behavior is frequently reinforced, encouraged or forbidden by the use of *Hadīth* and to assess whether this judgment is right, a good grasp of the history and historiography is vital to know if *Hadīth* narrations are accurate, authentic or not.

Ignaz Goldziher inaugurated the critical study of *Hadīth* authenticity. Concerned with the early evolution of Islamic dogma and theology, Goldziher concluded that the great majority of Prophetic *Hadīth* constitute evidence, not of the Prophet's time, but rather of much later periods. Goldziher's critical approach to *Hadīth* was expanded upon, and undeniably refined, by Joseph Schacht, who took it further and claimed that legal *Hadīth* should be regarded as fictitious until the contrary was proven.76

Goldziher presented two views with regard to *Hadīth*, namely: the carelessness in reciting *Hadīth* in the early days (as per Abū Hurayra's example) as opposed to the great care and caution taken with respect to *Hadīth* at a later time (pointing to the biographies written by Ibn Sa'd known as *Tabaqāt*).78 Goldziher also deals with the issue of writing down traditions versus keeping them as oral transmissions. Furthermore, he also mentions that the [early] Mu'tazalites and the Kharijites were against concluding any facts from *Hadīth* and preferred to take the Qur'ān as their main source.

Schacht believes that it is due to al-Shafīʿī, who theorized (the till then implicit) concept of the Prophet's authority, that *Hadīth* gained such importance. Schacht writes: "It is one of the main results of the first part of this book, that Shafīʿī was the first lawyer to define sunna as the model

76 Ibid, p. 75.
behavior of the Prophet, in contrast with his predecessors for whom it was not necessarily connected with the Prophet, but represented the traditional, albeit ideal, usage of the community, forming their 'living tradition' on an equal footing with customary or generally accepted practice.\textsuperscript{79}

Therefore, based upon al-Shaf\textsuperscript{2}i's treatise, Schacht theorizes that the great bulk of Hadith originated in al-Shaf\textsuperscript{2}i's time and the fabrications continued after that. Political loyalties, dogmatic interpretations and religious deviation are some of the main reasons of Hadith forgery. Forgers also fabricated Hadith to gain a position in the royal court or to receive cash awards from the rulers.\textsuperscript{80}

Schacht opines that believing in the existence of an authentic core of information from the Prophet's time is false and that this needs to be studied objectively and extensively to enable the findings of an accurate chronology of events.

The more obvious conclusions Schacht arrived at were that isn\textsuperscript{2}d grew backwards and that the more perfect the isn\textsuperscript{2}d, the later the tradition was, as well as his view that family isn\textsuperscript{2}d is no indication of authenticity, but rather a positive indication of forgery and that traditions of companions were not even their own, but of the schools of thoughts of a later time.

Schacht's theory posed a difficult challenge to Muslim scholars and their resistance to it remained strong. Muhammad M. Azami and Fazlur Rahman, as well as other Western Arabists and Islamicists expressed hostility or even engaged in polemical attacks against it, summaries of which can be found in the work of Harald Motzki. In contrast, G. H. A. Juynboll, Harald Motzki, and a few others have engaged Schacht and criticized his theory and tried to present logical and sound arguments against parts of it, yet the controversy regarding Joseph Schacht's views - both on the authenticity of Hadith in general and as the basis of Islamic law in particular - are still raging.


\textsuperscript{80} Faruqi, Nisar Ahmed. Early Muslim Historiography. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyyati, 1979, p. 204.
Schacht's theory has been challenged from a different methodological perspective by G. H. A. Juynboll, who expressed his reservations about what he considered Schacht's too rigid judgment about the earliest stages of Hadīth circulation which the sources provided.\textsuperscript{81} Juynboll, however, used parts of Schacht's theory, namely the backward growth of isnāds and the 'common link' concept. He believed that Schacht was too skeptical and too severe in his criticism of the sources. Juynboll did accept a certain body of awa'il (original early) literature and concluded that the early beginnings of scholarly interest in Hadīth, legal and non-legal, can be found much deeper into the first century than Schacht's theory indicated.\textsuperscript{82}

1.4.2. The First Camp

Duri attributes the first materialization of historical accounts to two fundamental perspectives or schools: "the Islamic perspective which arose among the scholars of Hadīth [in Medina] and the tribal perspective or that of the ayyam [in Iraq]."\textsuperscript{83} However, this view is not shared by Donner, who posits that the emergence of Islamic historiography was directly linked to the need of legitimization, first through piety or sabīqa (early conversion to Islam), then by genealogical and theocratic means of legitimization. Donner argues that historical narrations developed from a gradual 'historicisation' of the concept of piety.

According to Duri, Ibn Ishāq mixes Hadīth, historical accounts, al-Isrāʾīliyyāt (judaica), popular stories and a great deal of poetry together to produce his account. Duri also tells that later authors who used Ibn Ishāq's work, such as Ibn Hishām, refined and revised it by omitting certain elements, such as the 'fabricated' poetry. Duri then gives a detailed example of a later historian, al-Waqīdī. He points out his preferences and methods and mentions the other genres which developed to aid historians in their quest to write down history as accurately as they knew.

\textsuperscript{81} Juynboll, \textit{Muslim Tradition}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{83} Duri, A. A.. \textit{The Rise of Historical Writing}, p. 22.
how to at their time, such as the biographical dictionaries or *tabaqāt* genre, which helped to evaluate *isnād* as well as *Muḥadithūn* and scholars. He explained the further development of historical writing and the various other genres and professionals, such as narrators of *akhbār*, i.e. *akhbāriyūn*, *qusṣas* (storytellers), philologists and genealogists, who all pursued their own fields, yet still influenced historical writing. He provides examples of authors from these genres, such as Abū Mikhnaf, Ibn al-Ḥakam, Naṣr Ibn Muzāḥim, al-Madāʾīnī, Abū Yaqzān, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṣaʿīb al-Kalbī and his son Hishām, as well as Musʿab al-Zubayrī and Haytham Ibn ʿAdiyy, in addition to Abu ʿUbayda.

However Duri agrees with Abbott in emphasizing the reliability of Arabic historiography. Both Duri and Abbott counter Wansbrough, Cook and Crone by arguing that there were indeed sources earlier than the material available now, which have not been preserved, but have survived in numerous quotes in later sources, and were attributed to their original authors. Abbott writes: "For us, however, the realization that books and pamphlets existed earlier and had a wider circulation than hitherto suspected should increase the value of much of the earlier material that thanks to the practices of these authors among others of their contemporaries, have survived to our day."\(^{84}\)

However much Duri and Abbott believe in the authenticity of the Islamic master narratives, they are both still critical of the content.\(^{85}\) Abbott and Duri both accept that the early Arab histories should be regarded as essentially authentic. Abbott however makes a distinction and believes she must: "caution the reader that basic authenticity is not to be equated with scientific reliability or factuality … in other words accepting the sources to be authentic is not in itself proof enough to indicate that these works are factual histories or that their authors are reliable historians."\(^{86}\)

\(^{84}\) Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, p. 25.
1.4.3. The Middle Camp

In the book, “The Biography of Muḥammad - Nature and Authenticity” by Gregor Schoeler and James E. Montgomery the biographies of the Prophet Muhammad are studied and compared closely. The book analyses both the transmission and the content of the various accounts as well as the interaction between written and oral modes of transmission. It demonstrated that careful sifting of the accounts, as well as the lines of transmission, enables a possible reconstruction of the original events taking place a few generations earlier and not witnessed by the Muslims who wrote about them. This book is an extension of Schoeler’s earlier research exploring the ways in which texts were published in the early Islamic period. Schoeler examines the earliest days of Islamic religious sciences and the systematic collection of information about the life of the Prophet and his companions, as well as the beginnings of teaching, using knowledge transmitted by a combination of written texts and recitation.

Noth and Conrad list several occurrences in different texts, which display common concepts and are tied together by common style, patterns, formulations and themes. They point out that these common concepts are much too numerous and excessively similar and almost habitual to be historically believable or credible. Their book deals mainly with the historical accounts from the early period of the Arab futūḥ (conquests) and exposes problems of textual reliability and authenticity in the available historical sources. In their view, early Muslim historians were collectors before they were ‘synthesizers’. They also argued against a theory of early

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Islamic historiography first presented by Wellhausen and later on adopted and expanded upon by Duri that identified distinctive historiographical "schools" in Medina and Iraq.\textsuperscript{90}

Noth and Conrad, propose new methodological guidelines for extracting fact from fiction and argue that all the historical texts, compiled by various individual authors in any identified school, frequently contain materials attributed to another school or used the other school’s methods. Noth and Conrad divorce their methodology from the concept of the “schools” and suggest a different framework for evaluating the veracity of the texts. Their suggestion is to read all historical texts available as a collection of narratives, which over time were subjected to adaptation, alignment, copying and variations according to certain concerns relating to style, topic or theme.

Noth and Conrad implement a method, based on content and style, to expose the patterns and repetitions in the historical texts, to identify the common concepts. They classify what they believe to be the major themes of the historical texts, which govern the entire remaining content around them. These major themes are further divided into primary\textsuperscript{91} and secondary\textsuperscript{92} themes. They posit that the secondary themes offer untrustworthy historical information with regard to authenticity and historical veracity. They also study the recurrent use of certain set literary forms, found in documents, letters and speeches. They conclude that as these documents cannot be validated and substantiated by other sources, they should not be taken as reliable or considered trustworthy in their reflection of historical events.

Overall, Noth and Conrad correctly identify and classify the problematic subjects and issues found within the classical historical sources. However, it is not very convincing to conclude


\textsuperscript{91} The primary themes include \textit{futūh} (conquests), \textit{ridda} (apostasy), \textit{fitna} (sedition), \textit{ansâb} (genealogies), and administration.

\textsuperscript{92} The secondary themes include \textit{gharât} (raids), the \textit{Ḥijrī} calendar, a chronological historical arrangement according to the caliphs, and other matters related to law and administration.
that the frequent repetitions can be used to generalize all the way to judging that the historicity of a report is unreliable. Tayib El-Hibri phrases this aptly saying: "Repetition by itself, however, cannot be used as a yardstick for judging the veracity of a report. Repetition can occur because certain formulae of expression get coined from time to time and are borrowed in a standard way afterwards."\(^93\)

Comparing Donner's classification to Noth-Conrad's, it can be observed that Donner, to a great extent, keeps these classifications, though he expands on them and includes more details such as, for example, 'taxation'. Donner also deals extensively both with the sīra (biographies) of the companions, as well as the Qur’ān as a text and unlike Noth-Conrad provides much more documentation. One can say that if Noth-Conrad intended to strip the collective narratives down to their skeletons, Donner reappplies some of the flesh back onto them.

Donner summarized the approaches adopted by various scholars towards the Islamic sources by dividing them into "at least four distinct approaches" which are based on somewhat different histographical assumptions, namely the 'descriptive approach', the 'source-critical approach', the 'tradition-critical approach' and finally the 'skeptical approach'.\(^94\) Donner's work has many similarities with Khalidi's work, who says: "my ultimate purpose is to show how historical writing evolved in step with the expanding horizons of Arabic-Islamic culture through the attempt to understand the nature and causes of the evolutionary process itself."\(^95\)

Donner believes that historical writing arose due to certain needs in the community. Donner, like Khalidi, quotes extensively from the Islamic sources and summarizes many of the master narratives available. Large parts of Donner's fourth chapter are devoted to comparing and summarizing the distinctive parts of the different historical accounts (such as al-Ṭabarānī, al-Waṣīqī, etc.).

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\(^94\) Noth-Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical*, p. 5.

\(^95\) Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, p. xii.

Whereas Khalidi looks at the conceptual framework in which the historians worked and divided their output into "four dominant epistemic canopies or modes" according to their chronological appearance, namely “Hadīth (prophetic traditions), adab (belles-lettres or paideia as Khalidi prefers to call it), hikma (wisdom) and siyāsa (politics), Donner points out main topics of historical writing (e.g., nubuwwa (prophecy), umma (community), futūḥ (conquests) and ridda (apostasy)). Donner says: “the themes of the Islamic origins narratives address four basic issues, which we shall designate nubuwwa (prophecy), umma (community), hegemony [including futūḥ (conquests) and khilāfa (caliphate)] and leadership [including fitna (sedition), sirat al-khulafāʾ, pre-Islamic Arabia, ridda and pre-Islamic Iran].”

Donner does not adopt a reconciliatory position between the different approaches, but rather returns to the earliest point of origin. He reviewed all previous approaches, agreed with many (Abbott, Khalidi), refined and built on some (Duri, Noth-Conrad) and criticized others explicitly (Cook-Crone, Wansbrough) and implicitly (North-Conrad). Despite his own views, he was very careful in phrasing his ideas so as neither to discredit the authenticity of the master narrative, nor to accept it at face value. His thorough description of the sources, even the ones that did not survive, but according to him could be reconstructed, closes the circle of Western scholarship in the field of Islamic historiography, by returning it to the ‘descriptive approach’ yet retaining the information and conclusions gained through the other approaches. Even the skeptical approach is included as a gain, as it has provoked and motivated more in depth analysis and study of the sources, if not for anything else other than to refute it. Donner’s main argument

96 Ibid, p. xii.
97 Ibid, p. 83.
is that Islamic traditions offer a narrative of the basic events albeit in multi-versions, which could hardly have resulted from a collective conspiracy and a collective cover up of a massive invention.

Chase Robinson reviews a large portion of the literature in the field of Islamic historiography and touches upon the major debates of historians studying the formative years of early Islamic time. Unlike Donner, he does not place the scholars or their theories in any categories. Robinson very clearly situates himself within the group that is critical of the validity of the early sources, but still accepts that they include a ‘kernel’ of truth which can be retrieved from them, using source critical approaches and methodology. Robinson attempts to place Islamic historiography into its social and cultural context, explaining the development of Islamic historiography as ‘a question of cultural rather than intellectual history’, accounting for tastes and fashions and looking into the practical and social conditions behind historiography. Robinson is looking at why and how the Muslim historians wrote. His goal, as explained in the preface of his book ‘Islamic Historiography’, is not to survey the corpus of Islamic historical writing, nor to interpret it, as Tarif Khalidi did in ‘Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period’, but to make this body of literature and genre of writing “comprehensible” by answering the questions of how and why Muslim historians wrote.99

Robinson describes the production of historiography within the “sociology of learning”. He ascribes different motives and motivation for writing history, such as state patronage, educational background and the transmission of information, religion and traditionalism. Robinson writes:

“Biography was selective and modeling was intended not merely to edify or inspire, but to produce social and institutional consequences.”100 Hence, biographies were meant to portray ideal men (the ideal ruler, ideal saint, ideal jurist, ideal traditionist etc.) “This approach to

99 Robinson, Islamic Historiography, p. xxiv.
100 Ibid, p. 63.
biography consists in the selective enumeration of manāqib (glorious exploits), maḥāsin (excellences) and fadāʾil (virtues) of foundational figures.”¹⁰¹ This echoes the Noth-Conrad thesis about the glorification of earlier times. By bringing attention to the social and personal backgrounds of historiography (including methods of note-taking, concepts of authorship, etc.), Robinson is able to shed light on why Islamic historiography developed as it did.

It is convincing that state patronage is important to historical writing, but there have always been other forms of sponsorship outside the boundaries of the state, especially in times of conflict, civil war, or revolution. By not distinguishing between history written for the purposes of political patronage and history written as a result of political issues, Robinson makes the state look much too hegemonic and monolithic in its power and influence over historical writing.

Robinson engages in literary criticism of the sources; however his main focus is a sociological analysis. Though written in a simple, yet animated and descriptive language, the book is an important work that places the development of Islamic historiography within a social, cultural, as well as a historical context.

1.4.4. The Deniers Camp

Watt mentions that skeptical views were elaborated on by Henri Lammens, Carl Heinrich Becker and taken further by John Wansbrough when he adopted the view that the Qurʾān did not take its present shape until a century and a half after the Prophet; furthermore, two of John Wansbrough’s disciples¹⁰² went on to reject all the Muslim sources for the early history of Islam and to postulate an alternative first phase of that religion, which they renamed ‘Hagarism’.¹⁰³ Henri Lammens had also gone so far as to reject the entire biography as no more than a

¹⁰¹ Ibid.
¹⁰² Particia Crone and Michael Cook
conjectural and tendentious exegesis of a few passages in the Qurʾān, devised by and elaborated upon by later generations of Muslims.104

Wansbrough systematically questions the historicity of the Meccan and Medinian origins of Islam and argues that no Islamic source material from the first century of Islam could have survived, simply because they never existed.

Cook-Crone on the other hand not only question the authenticity of early Islamic sources, but they also theorize that the Qurʾān was a fabrication and “the product of the belated and imperfect editing of materials from a plurality of traditions. At the same time the imperfection of the editing suggests that the emergence of the Koran must have been a sudden, not to say hurried, event.”105

Cook-Crone question Islam as a religion in the first place and reduce it to being an Arab military movement, called ‘Hagarism’ inspired by Jewish messianism to conquer the world after reclaiming the ‘Promised Land’ from the Byzantine Empire.

From the above, it has been demonstrated that the sources indeed have significant issues that need to be studied, addressed and accounted for. Many scholars have tried to establish methods to arrive at conclusions about the content of the sources. Despite the existence of two extreme views, the majority of scholars seem to accept that the Islamic traditions of the ninth and tenth centuries contain genuine historical as well as theological information dating back to the seventh century – the problem being that no one knows for sure how to separate history from theology or fact from fiction.106

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104 Lewis, 1962, p. 5.
105 Cook & Crone, Hagarism, p. 18.
1.5. Further Challenges regarding the Sources

a) Sunnī perspective

The historical works of the late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries incorporated the existing vast corpus of narratives that existed then, be they oral traditions or earlier works. They also set the religious and political meaning of these narratives in a way that was later to become the orthodox view adopted and accepted for many centuries. One of the most famous compilations is that of al-Ṭabarī. However, a substantial amount of confusion between the various accounts in the compilations was the consequence not of fabrications, distortions or failures of accurate recollection of oral material, but rather due to the inclination of the Muslim scholars and their interpretation of the various events, which guided their redaction of the material. Hence, it is the compilers, rather than their primary sources, who are responsible for the confusion.107

These amalgamations became so authoritative, that later historians hardly attempted to examine the first two centuries of Islamic history, but rather used, quoted or condensed the – by then regarded as - "classical" view. Consequently, most of the older sources were no longer reproduced or read, though many of them were still extant then.108 There were many divergent views of 'Uthmān’s murder. An analysis, by Hodgson, of Tabarī’s account of the murder showed that he was trying to reconcile the demands of power with his moral responsibility.109 Ṭabarī’s

“editorial manipulation, arrangement, and omission” was obvious in the way he presented the accounts of both the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Ṣiffin.\textsuperscript{110}

Furthermore the concerns changed. Topics that were dealt with earlier such as al-maghāzī were replaced by other issues and topics such as the standpoint toward the ‘Abbāsids.\textsuperscript{111} Sectarian works developed and authors were identified by their leanings, and dismissed. Petersen states that: “the status of historical recording in the Islamic society as well as its potentialities left a wide margin for tendentious presentations.”\textsuperscript{112}

Historians then compiled the existing narrative into a digest form, where they refined the conflicting material by selectively including or excluding certain versions and offering their own interpretation of historical events. At times, the differences and opposing views were quoted only to be disputed.\textsuperscript{113} Additionally, after filtering the different versions available to them, the compilers often edited the reports they decided to incorporate in their works, frequently creating a new story.\textsuperscript{114} “Even so, their works preserve the historical writing of earlier generations because they present their accounts in the form of (highly selective) quotation and paraphrase of their sources.”\textsuperscript{115}

The compilations were undoubtedly facilitated by the growth in the paper industry, which provided cheaper writing materials.\textsuperscript{116}


\textsuperscript{112} Petersen, Erling Ladewig. \textit{Ali and Mu’awiya in Early Arabic Tradition - Studies on the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the End of the Ninth Century}. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964, p. 18.


\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, p. 12.

Madelung writes that: "the original collectors of traditions were almost all exclusively theologians and traditionists, which suggests that the Muslim conception of history was predominantly theological."\(^{117}\) This in turn also affected the choice of the material to be included in the historical compilations. Al-Wāqīḍī for example was considered by the muhaddithūn as untrustworthy and his narrations of prophetic traditions were considered ḍaʿīf (weak). It required historians from outside the field of Ḥadīth, such as Ibn Khallikān and Yāqūt, to write al-Wāqīḍī’s biography objectively and praise his efforts as an early historian and proclaim him trustworthy in history and other branches of knowledge.\(^ {118}\)

Petersen studied the development of one single historical incident with its various versions in the original sources and concluded that the earliest transmission agreed upon by the muhaddithūn was "used as a type of historical convention, a general historical idea bearing a regional or partisan stamp."\(^ {119}\) This view is supported by Fazlur Rahmān who argued that the central purpose of Ḥadīth was "not so much history-writing, but history-making" and that existing incidents were back-projected in the form of Ḥadīth "to succeed in moulding the community on a certain spiritual, political and social pattern."\(^ {120}\) Hence the consensus about a certain tradition passes as the ‘truth’ or rather what the “authority” at that point wants everyone to accept as true.

b) Shi‘ā perspective

As with Sunnī sources, Shi‘ā sources also have their problems. Documenting the early history of any politico-religious movements is often a very difficult endeavor, more so when it was

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\(^{116}\) Petersen, *ʿAlī and Mu‘awiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, p. 18.

\(^{117}\) Rasoul, *The Origin and Development of Muslim Historiography*, p. 4.

\(^{118}\) Landau-Tasseron, "Sayf Ibn ʿUmar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship.", p. 7.


\(^{120}\) Rahman, Fazlur. *Islamic Methodology in History*. Karachi: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1965, p. 47
not the ideology of the rulers.\textsuperscript{121} Shi‘ā mainstream view was recorded later with the canonical Shi‘ite texts being compiled even later than the Sunnī orthodox view.\textsuperscript{122}

Shi‘ās, originally named \textit{shī‘atu ʿAlī} (ʿAlī’s supporters), identified themselves as a distinct group as a result of the first \textit{fitna} (civil war). However, the earliest heresiographers, Sa‘d al-Ash‘arī and al-Nawbakhtī clearly state that Shi‘ism (in the sense of a particular regard and appreciation of ʿAlī’s personal merits) had already appeared in the Prophet’s lifetime.\textsuperscript{123} In later times, the justification of their distinctive beliefs necessitated the analysis and re-interpretation of older historical events and crucial years in order to establish ʿAlī’s right to the Caliphate. Furthermore, this interpretation had to free him of any responsibility associated with what might be interpreted in any way as a failing on his part, such as laxity in punishing ʿUthmān’s murderers as mentioned in some of the Sunnī sources or his agreement to \textit{taḥkīm} (arbitration) as mentioned by the Khawārij. This process of religio-historical interpretation created a body of material designed to hold the first three Caliphs accountable for opposing ʿAlī and portrayed them in the most unfavorable way possible.\textsuperscript{124} The main targets for criticism were the first three Caliphs, for usurping the leadership of the Muslim community which, in their view, belonged rightfully to ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. In addition, they also criticized ʿA‘īsha, Talḥa, al-Zubayr, and Mu‘āwiya intensely for opposing ʿAlī after his accession to the Caliphate and withdrawing their initial \textit{bayʿa}. “While the Imamate became a major issue in Islamic theological polemics, the cursing, deprecation, and vilification of preeminent Companions of the Prophet was one of the most prominent popular manifestations of Shi‘ite identity throughout medieval Islamic history.”\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid, p. 37.
Al-Ṭabarī reported that Muʿāwiyah ordered the suppression of all traditions favorable to the house of 'Alī and to have them replaced by pronouncements about the glory of 'Uthmān’s and his family.\(^{126}\) This would indicate that the caliphs recognized the value of traditions for propaganda purposes. It also falls in line with other indications that a body of distinctly Umayyad traditions once existed.\(^{127}\) The plan seems to have succeeded, because it is almost impossible today to find a satisfactory objective history of the Umayyid period.\(^{128}\)

The Shiʿā consider 'Alī as the first scholar of Islam and his short rule as the beginning of true Muslim learning.\(^{129}\) Hence a modern Muslim writer, Amir Ali, wrote about the fourth caliph as the "beloved disciple" and the "scholar," and referred to the accession of the Umayyids as a "blow to the progress of knowledge and liberalism."\(^{130}\) Amir Ali probably quoted Shiʿā sources, where 'Alī is frequently called "the scholar of God in this community".\(^{131}\) There are many Shiʿā traditions claiming that 'Alī had a special copy of the Qurʾān, which were most likely notes he took of the Prophet’s explanations. This kernel seems to have expanded to become a mysterious book, the 'Jafr', however, 'Alī always denied having any special book.\(^{132}\)

'Alī might indeed have possessed a record of instructions by the Prophet. However, its growth into a document "seventy cubits long as measured by the arm of the Prophet," containing "everything permitted and forbidden" and "everything necessary for mankind," "the knowledge of the prophets and the reports of the prophets and the scholars of the Banū Isrāʾīl,"\(^{133}\) is


\(^{128}\) Ibid, p. 245.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., p. 246.


\(^{132}\) Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period.", p. 251

characteristic of the tendencies of traditional literature. It appears that the ‘Jaf’r’s existence is only alleged, but not true.\footnote{Amini, Fajr al-Islam, p. 149} Al-Kulaynī who describes the ‘Jaf’r also reports that before his death ‘Alī gave “the sacred book and his amour” to his son al-Hasan along with specific regulations as to their later disposal.\footnote{al-Kulaynī, al-uṣūl min al-Kāfī fī ‘ilm al-dīn, p. 110.}

Shī‘ites criticize ‘A’isha for her alleged hatred of ‘Alī in addition to many other defects. It seems to be necessary for Shī‘ites to attack her character in order to establish ‘Alī’s lack of faults. A number of incidents are noted as indicative of ‘A’isha’s true nature, particularly that of Hadīth al-ifk, which caused her to be accused of adultery, and some accounts have suggested that the accusation was true.\footnote{Accusations of sexual indecency may be the reason behind the declaration of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim forbidding gargir (arugula) because it was one of ‘A’isha’s favorite foods. There seems to have been some association of ‘A’isha with the aphrodisiac qualities of the plant. Heinz Halm, " Der Treuhänder Gottes: Die Edikte des Kalifen al-Hakim ", Der Islam 63 (1986): pp. 27-29.} She is also condemned for her role in the ‘Battle of the Camel’ and for daring to take sides with Talḥa and al-Zubayr against ‘Alī.\footnote{See Charles Pellat, "A’isha Bint Abi Bakr ", EI2 1: 307-8; L. Veccia Vaglieri, " al- Djamal", EI2 2: 414-16; Muhsin al-Amin, A’yān al-shi‘a, Vol. 1, pp. 447-464.} ‘Alī’s forces won, killing Talḥa and al-Zubayr and capturing ‘A’isha. Sources report that ‘Alī treated her with compassion and kindness and had her escorted back to Medina despite her disrespect. Naturally this incident serves to portray ‘A’isha’s ‘un-ladylike’ behavior, while at the same time emphasizing ‘Alī’s nobility and mercy.\footnote{al-Mufīd, (Abū ‘Abd Allāh) Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu’mān. [d. 413 AH]. al-Jamāl aw al-naṣra fi ṣahr al-Baṣrā. Iran: Maktabit al-Dawārī., 1980, pp. 178-204.} Furthermore, which is of importance to this study, sources compare and contrast her to Umm Salama judging her behavior, emphasizing Umm Salama’s dignified abstinence from participating in warfare. The sources blame on ‘A’isha for going to war, which is of no concern to women in the first place, for disobeying to the Prophet’s explicit command that his wives stay at home, for obstinately refusing to admit what was right and just, and for causing the unnecessary deaths of thousands of Muslims. At the end of the battle, according to Shī‘ī sources, ‘Alī is said to
have knocked on her arrow riddled palanquin to ask her: “Oh little red one! Did the Prophet of Allah command you to behave this way?” (ya humayra'u a-rasūlu'lāhi amarakī bi-hadhā)\textsuperscript{139}, or “Oh little blond one! Did the Prophet of Allah propose you do this?” (ya shuqayrā'u bi-hadha wasṣakī rasūlu'lāh?)\textsuperscript{140} She is said to have replied, in a subdued tone much in contrast to her earlier boldness “Oh son of Abū Ṭālib, you have won, so forgive in goodness” (ya 'bna Abī Ṭālib qad malakta fa-aslih)\textsuperscript{141}

Later Shi‘ī works by authors such as al-Tabarsi\textsuperscript{142} and al-Majlisi\textsuperscript{143} are said to be mainly polemic in nature, giving a rather tendentious pro-Shi‘ī account of little historical value.\textsuperscript{144}

Wellhausen complains that conflicting events are recorded with great confusion and fragmentation in the sources, making it very difficult to place certain critical details of the abdication of al-Hasan in a chronological order.\textsuperscript{145} A historical survey of the nine-year period between al-Hasan’s abdication and his death is almost impossible, as the sources are almost completely silent.\textsuperscript{146}

Some of the sources include stories about certain miraculous and supernatural events related to the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn, such as terrible manifestations of grief in nature, like skies turning red and sands bleeding. “It would perhaps be a grave error to expect that a book written in the early eighth century about a great religious personality would not accept supernatural occurrences as a matter of course, especially when the main event itself is so charged with emotion and suffering.”\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, p. 203.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid, p. 197.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, p. 197.
\textsuperscript{142} Al-Ḥtijāj
\textsuperscript{143} Bihār al-Anwār
\textsuperscript{144} Jafri, The Origins and Early Development of Shi‘ī Islam, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{146} Jafri, The Origins and Early Development of Shi‘ī Islam, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid, p. 215.
Maher Jarrar provides a useful survey of early Shi'ī sources on the life of the Prophet in his "Sirat Ahl al-Kisā': Early Shi'ī Sources on the Biography of the Prophet." He mentions the earliest credible compiler of sīra and maghāzī as being the Kufan Abān Ibn 'Uthmān al-Ahmar, who was a follower of both, the sixth and seventh Imams, Ja'far al-Sadiq and Mūsa al-Qazim. His material is quoted in al-Kulaynī, Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, al-Ṭābrīsī, and al-Majlisī. Jarrar's analysis of these akhbār leads him to the discovery that they originate from a wide range of transmitters and that the language and style of many of these reports resemble the style of Abān's contemporaries al-Waqīdī and Yunus Ibn Bukayr. Jarrar concludes that a fairly well-developed sīra-maghāzī genre with a distinctive form, topoi, and schemata were already in circulation in the early second/eighth century in the Hijaz, Iraq, and Syria. He ends his article by speculating, quite credibly, that early sīra works like Abān's were allowed to fade away because their content, more similar to Sunnī accounts, no longer fit together with later Shi'ī ideology that elevated the status of the Prophet's family as well as the supernatural knowledge of the Imāms.

c) Combined Perspective

‘Sunnism’ grew to become the religion of the ruling class or the state and to be an essential part of the state’s legal and cultural system. ‘Sunnism’ developed in agreement with, and through adjustment to, the requirements of the central state. The different sects (fīrāq, nīḥal, tawā'īḥ) emerged and evolved as ideologies of specific groups opposed to the state and concerned with their own cultural and social independence. ‘Sunnism’ developed historically as the religion and described its doctrine as being that of the entire group (al-jama'a – al 'umma), whereas sects were described as having deviating beliefs (khawārij), being extremist (ghūlāt), or

rejectionist (*bughāl*, *rāfīḍa*), and their followers were regarded as incongruous parties (*aḥzāb*).¹⁵⁰

A frequently quoted Hadith states that the Prophet declared that Islam would eventually be divided into seventy-three sects, all of which would be doomed, except one. This had a strong effect on the organization of the books of *fīraq*.¹⁵¹

Over time, ‘Sunnism’ absorbed the accumulated religious heritage and incorporated it systematically with politics, whereas the Shiʿites, who mostly originated from underprivileged groups, tended to praise the virtues of austerity, modesty, and simplicity and had been denied political power for a long time.¹⁵² Thus the sources present divergent interpretations. We find for example that the history and historiography of the first civil-war are two radically different views.¹⁵³ One might, therefore, suspect the reports of the historians, who were said to have Shiʿī sympathies such as al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdi as being biased in favor of the Shiʿīs; and similarly the writings of Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī and even al-Tabarī as reporting in Sunnī voice.¹⁵⁴ However, by the time Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī and other Sunnī writers started to compile their works; Sunnī Islam had already defined its attitudes and allegiances. It was, therefore, understandable for these writers to manipulate the data and suppress or ignore any report that might clash with the accepted norms of their time. Most of that material which could support the Shiʿī position in favor of ʿAlī was either suppressed or conveniently suspected of being fabricated.¹⁵⁵ The problems are aggravated by the fact that the earliest extant manuscripts or fragments date back to the early ʿAbbāsid period.¹⁵⁶ However, modern scholars are aware of this and have stated clearly, that the

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¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 80.
¹⁵¹ Buckley, “The Early Shiʿite Ghūlah.”, p. 303.
¹⁵³ Petersen, ‘ʿAlī and Muʿawiyah in Early Arabic Tradition’, p. 12.
¹⁵⁴ Jafri, The Origins and Early Development of Shiʿa Islam, p. 28.
¹⁵⁶ Petersen, ‘ʿAlī and Muʿawiyah in Early Arabic Tradition’, p. 18.
‘Abbāsid period’s political situations might have influenced the historical records of the earliest history of Islam.\textsuperscript{157}

The study of both (Sunnī and Shīṭ) versions of ‘Alī’s rule and of the Abbāsid period facilitates the establishment of the circumstances under which Arab historical writing was shaped and assess the extent it was influenced by Islam’s political and religious evolution.\textsuperscript{158} Regarding the tradition of the conflict between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya, Petersen argues that: “the formation of the historical tradition consists above all in reflections of the political and religious conflict of its own age, so there can be very little doubt that the tradition in itself was a product of the prevailing affairs of state.”\textsuperscript{159} This obviously can be extended to any other tradition affecting both (Sunnī and Shīṭ) perspectives, as is the case with the depiction of Umm Salama. The materials available from either side prove that they deliberately contested and refuted one another.\textsuperscript{160} Each version offers individual points of view that have to be resolved by confrontation with other sources. The only reasonable explanation of these contradictions must be that the two accounts ‘polemize’ against each other and that the depiction in both cases rather depends on fabrications around some of the facts.

\textbf{1.6. Summary, Recommendations and Methodology}

From all of the above we can conclude that no theme was left unaffected by flawed oral transmission, erroneous additions and embellishments by the storytellers and even by historians themselves, no matter how hard the early Muslim scholars sifted the material or devised and used tools to distinguish the fake from the real. Hence, all sources available should be used, the various narrations in them should be contrasted and compared to arrive at the kernel of truth that, most modern scholars agreed upon, exists within the narrative.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, p. 64.
A collection of ten essays discussing the various problem of using the primary Arabic sources to reconstruct the life of the Prophet was recently published. The editor, Motzki, describes the central dilemma as currently perceived by many modern scholars of Islam saying: “on the one hand, it is not possible to write a historical biography of the Prophet without being accused of using the sources uncritically, while on the other hand, when using the sources critically, it is simply not possible to write such a biography.”

Critical re-reading of the sources allows us to reassess this situation more optimistically, especially since the project of reconstructing the historical reality which the sources reflect is an issue which has been scarcely studied in depth and is indeed far from being settled.

The assorted historical collections do not constitute a monolithic body, meaning that works of a particular genre often differ considerably from one another in the way the subject matter is treated and to what purpose. Even sources which have been looked down upon, such as the manāqib literature can be used to extract certain information. Afsaruddin concluded in an article that a thorough investigation of some of the manāqib traditions on the Companions in general and Abū Bakr and ‘Aī in particular reveal certain ideological thrusts behind their formulations and that this in turn can help towards a better understanding of the early history of the disputes over Muslim leadership. She further states that the manāqib traditions, especially after the ninth century show that each side argued for its candidate’s greater excellence in displaying – especially - the virtues of courage, truthfulness, asceticism, and generosity.

Hence, both - Sunnī and Shiī - sources should be consulted simultaneously and jointly, to enable researchers to fill in the various blanks left out deliberately by sectarian differences. Visions of the

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163 Ibid, p. xvi.
past are always partial, selective, and abstracted; hence Claude Levi-Strauss's often quoted line that "history is therefore never history, but history-for."\textsuperscript{166}

Furthermore other genres should also be consulted, such as, for example, *balāgha* (eloquence) or grammar books, as they sometimes preserve certain documents or letters for their linguistic value without adding any political connotations or sectarian interpretations. In addition there is a pressing need to read between the lines, because sometimes what is omitted is more important than what is stated clearly in the narrative. Moreover, one should look at the development of individual traditions, mainly like Petersen has done, as well as put the author or compiler at the heart of his work to understand his intentions or aims. In addition, the author should also be placed in the context of his time, politically, socially and economically, because that can also shed light on his motives and reasons for depicting events in the way he did. It has been shown that looking at isolated traditions is rather meaningless, does not provide much insight and confuses the big picture even more. It is for these reasons that this study will make use of different genres, different sectarian materials as well as the canonized sources available in attempting to rewrite the life of Umm Salama. Modern writers have started to utilize both Sunnī and Shīʿite sources to allow for more objectivity, such as the new publication\textsuperscript{167} by Mary Saad Assel.\textsuperscript{168} She argues that bringing together the validated interpretations of both Sunnī and Shīʿa schools of thought is a step to sustain objectivity and allow room for comparison and interpretation.

Furthermore the repetition in themes demonstrates how historians simply quoted or misrepresented what was written before, rather than checked the actual information. This kind of


\textsuperscript{168} Though Mary Saad Assel holds a masters and doctorate from Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan, she is not an expert on Islamic Studies. However, she attended classes in Islamic exegeses and jurisprudence and has published a number of articles on various topics about Islam.
taqlīd (imitation) means that mistakes will be repeated. However, the manipulation of the sources was not restricted to early Islamic times, but was also practiced in medieval and modern times to influence the main message of the data, the most recent examples being feminist and reformist interpretations.

Different interpretations were used to promote certain agendas, past and modern, of various interested parties, each promoting a certain set of values, be they jurists, conservatives, feminists or reformists. Each of them used the sources to extract or edit material in support of their respective views. These views and agendas varied from promoting the seclusion of women all the way to calling for more liberties for women, their emancipation, education and their right to work and vote as well as different shades in-between. However, a reconstruction of the events and biographies of the early Islamic period and its people is not impossible if one includes the various versions, putting each in its contexts.

a) Methodology

The importance of the use of both Sunnī and Shī'a materials together, to arrive at a complete picture, has been demonstrated above. Hence, this study will make use of materials written by both Sunnī and Shī'a authors. Investigation of various adopted methodologies did not result in any directly relevant study whose methodology could be used in this study. Therefore, the following methodology was constructed to suit this particular research problem. The biography of Umm Salama will be presented as a complete combined narrative using materials from both Sunnī and Shī'a sources seamlessly without differentiation between of the sectarian attributions to fill in the blanks left in either side of the presentation. The sources used form an agreed upon canon in the respective sects, hence, neither an examination of the quality, integrity, or the credibility of the sources used will be given, nor will a judgment be passed on the sources. This was chosen to arrive at a picture combining both views in a holistic manner, specifically in the depiction of problematic events such as the Battle of the Camel. However, no in-depth analysis of
the sources will be made as to the veracity of their depiction, except for very divergent information. A core image of Umm Salama was needed to weigh it against the image reflected by the narrations attributed to her. The integrity of Umm Salama as a narrator is not in question and she has been classified as trustworthy and reliable by both Shi'a and Sunnî scholars. However, a personal element in narrations is indeed present, as a human being is not a recorder, but an individual with preferences and opinions. Furthermore, narrating Hadîth b-il-ma'na (according to its meaning) invariably introduces personal opinions, preferences, perspective and understanding.

Watt wrote in his book “The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe” that in this book, his “view will be given from the standpoint of an Islamist and not of a historian,” which is also the method adopted in the chapter attempting to collect the community’s memories of Umm Salama’s life.169 The main purpose of reconstructing the life of Umm Salama is to arrive at her personality, character traits and identify her interests and most important concerns. This will then be compared and contrasted in the following chapter to the narrations attributed to her in an attempt at answering the questions mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. The comparison will show whether or not the narrations attributed to a narrator are in accord with the narrator’s interests, concerns, personality and character traits as depicted in the historical sources. If the hypothesis that different narrations of a muḥaddith can be used to deduce certain standards about the narrator is shown to be valid, then this can then be used as a tool for Hadîth analysis and criticism and can be extended to other narrators. If the hypothesis cannot be validated and the comparison shows a diversion between the image emerging from the narrations and the person’s interests and characteristics, then a negative result will be obtained, showing that narrations are not necessarily influenced by the person’s character or interests.

In addition to the histories such as those by al-Ṭabarî, al-Balâdhurî, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn al-Athîr, Ibn al-Jawzî, al-Ḥalabî, Ibn Hishâm, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzîyah, al-Yaʿqûbî and al-Ṭūsî, Abû Mikhnaf, to name a few, biographical dictionaries will also be used, such as for example by Ibn Saʿd, al-Dhahabî, al-Mizzî and Ibn Ḥajar. Unfortunately, access to any primary source Shīʿī biographical dictionaries was not possible; hence the biographical dictionaries used are by Sunnī scholars. Furthermore tafsîr works by Sunnī and Shīʿa scholars will be used, such as for example those by al-Bayḍâwî, al-Râzî, Ibn Kathîr, al-Ṭabarî, al-Ṭabarîsî, al-Ṭabâṭabâ’î and al-Qummî. Due to the limitation and the inability to obtain primary Shīʿa sources equal to the number of Sunnī ones, secondary sources were used, such as for example by Madelung, Jafri, Lalani, Muḥsin al-Amîn, Bayhom-Daou, Halm and Dakake. Both, the versions of her narrations as well as her life are ultimately derived from the same sources based on oral transmission, and there are no original sources such as documents or extant letters (other than the correspondence with ʿUthmân preserved in literary sources) to compare with.

b) **Methodology adopted in compiling the *musnad* of Umm Salama**

The *ahâdîth* narrated by Umm Salama were extracted from the various collections available on the two hadîth software programmes. The Sunnî programme is titled ‘Jawâmiʿ al-Kalîm’ and includes the digitalised searchable form of 1.400 *hadîth* books, of which 543 are still in manuscript form, in addition to over 70,000 biographies of narrators, extracted from biographical dictionaries. The Shīʿa programme is titled ‘Jâmiʿ al-Aḥâdîth’ and includes the digitalised searchable form of 187 *hadîth* books covering a total of 442 volumes including the four canonised books in addition to others. Both programmes were used to extract the narrations attributed to Umm Salama and form the dataset used in this study, which comprises of 5,378 different versions.

The collected *ahâdîth* were examined in detail and about a quarter were confirmed by reviewing the original *Hadîth* collections as a test to verify the accuracy of the software. They
were then studied closely to find a common core *matn*, after which the different versions with the same core were grouped together for both Sunnī and Shīʿa and then arranged chronologically using the date of death of the collector as a starting point of analysis. If the *matn* included an addition to the core, then it was still considered as a version of the same *Hadīth*.

The next step was to identify the common narrations between the Sunnī and the Shīʿa collections. All resulting groups of narrations were then arranged in a sequence, whereby the first forty-four narrations are common between Sunnī and Shīʿa collections and hence were selected to be listed in the beginning of both annexes and given identical numbers. The rest of the narrations were then listed and arranged according to topic. The classification by topic and genre as well as the rationale behind the choice of classifications will be explained in detail in Chapter 4. The first part (Annex 1) includes 4408 versions that have been grouped as belonging to 331 different narrations and were collected from Sunnī collections forming the Sunnī musnad of Umm Salama. The second part (Annex 2) includes 970 versions grouped into 158 narrations that were collected from Shiʿa collections, forming the Shīʿa musnad of Umm Salama. Both Annexes together form the *musnad* of Umm Salama in its entirety.
Chapter Two - The Life of Umm Salama

There is no full-length detailed biography of Umm Salama. Most of the history books as well as biographical dictionaries only provide a small entry dedicated to her. However, she is mentioned within numerous other entries relating to many other eminent personalities. Having seen the problems associated with the sources, as discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter will give the background of Umm Salama by providing her genealogy and antecedents, attempt to reconstruct her life until her death, highlight the most important events she participated in, some of her likes and dislikes, most important obvious character traits as well as interests and concerns. In addition it will show her active role in politics, Ḥadīth and fiqh as well as gender issues. The information from the sources is not comprehensive, as there are numerous gaps where the sources remain silent; however, the biography of Umm Salama in this chapter presents the community’s memories of her collected in the different sources.

2.1. Genealogy

The Quraysh tribe had been long dominant at Mecca. The most aristocratic and powerful branches of the tribe at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad were the Banū Umayya and the Banū Makhzūm.¹⁷⁰ Watt describes the importance of Banū Makhzūm in detail in his book series on Prophet Muḥammad."¹⁷¹

Umm Salama was Hind Bint Abi Umayya, who was also known as Zād al-Rākib, Ibn al Mūghira Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Makhzūm.¹⁷²

Al-Qurtubī says her father's name was Ḥuzayfa and it was also said that he was named Suhayl.\textsuperscript{173} Ibn al-Jawzī on the other hand reports his name as Sahīh.\textsuperscript{174} Ibn Qayyim calls him Ḥuzayfa Ibn al-Mūghira.\textsuperscript{175} Al Imām al-Dimashqī calls him Suhayl.\textsuperscript{176} Al-Zirkīlī also calls him Suhayl, but others say his name was Ḥuzayfa.\textsuperscript{177} Taking all the conflicting information in consideration, one can conclude that her name was Hind Bint Abī Umayya Ḥuzayfa Ibn al-Mūghira Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar Ibn Makhzūm Ibn Yaqaza Ibn Murra Ibn Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy Ibn Ghalīb al-Qurashiyya al-Makhzūmiyya.

Similar confusion also exists about her mother’s name. Al-Nūwayrī calls her: ‘Atika Bint ‘Amer Ibn Malīk Ibn Khūzayma Ibn ‘Alqama Ibn Firās.\textsuperscript{178} Ibn Hājjar however differed by adding al-Kinaniyya to Ibn Firās without mentioning Khūzayma Ibn ‘Alqama.\textsuperscript{179} Al-Ṭabarī calls her ‘Atika Bint ‘Amer Ibn Rā‘īl Ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.\textsuperscript{180} Ibn Sa’d also differs, saying she was the daughter of Ibn Malīk Ibn Jurayma Ibn ‘Alqama Juzl al-Tīān Ibn Firās Ibn Ghannām Ibn Malīk Ibn Kinān.\textsuperscript{181} However, al-Dimashqī says that saying Umm Salama’s mother was the daughter of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib is not accurate, because she was not the Prophet’s cousin. There was, however,


a woman named as ʿAtika bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who was the Prophet’s cousin and was also married to Umm Salama’s father, Abī Umayya Ibn al-Mūghira al-Makhzūmī, which could be the reason for the aforementioned confusion.¹⁸²


Al-Ṭabarī¹⁹⁰ claims that some people wrongly attributed the name Ramla to her, which is also supported by Abū ʿUmar, however, by no one else.¹⁹¹

Umm Salama was first married to Abū Salama, who was named ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Asad Ibn Hilāl Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Makhzūm.¹⁹² His mother was another cousin of the Prophet,

¹⁸² Ibn Bakkār al-Muntakhab min kitāb azwāj al-Nabī, p. 147.
¹⁸⁸ Ibn Bakkār al-Muntakhab, p. 28.
¹⁹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, al-Simṭ al-thamīn, p. 133.
named Barra Bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.\textsuperscript{193} Abī Salama was a brother to the Prophet \textit{bil riḍa’ah} (by means of suckling from the same nursemaid), namely Wahmaza Thuwaiba.\textsuperscript{194}

Umm Salama had a number of brothers, namely: ‘Abd Allah Ibn Umayya, Zuhayr and Mas‘ūd. According to Ibn Qutayba\textsuperscript{195} Mas‘ūd was one of the worst enemies of the Muslims and only accepted Islam very late, right before the battle of Ta‘if, where he was killed. Ibn al-Athīr on the other hand writes that ‘Abd Allah and Zuhayr are only half-brothers to Umm Salama from her paternal side, but have a different mother, namely ‘Atika Bint Abī Muṭṭalib.\textsuperscript{196} It seems likely that her mother and step-mother were sometimes confused in the sources. Al-Ṭabarī however draws a different relationship between Umm Salama and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Umayya, by saying that they were her father’s maternal uncles.\textsuperscript{197} Al-Dhahabī\textsuperscript{198} says that Mas‘ūd Ibn Abī Umayya al-Makhzūmi was the brother of Umm Salama and that she was the paternal cousin of both Khalid Ibn al-Walīd and Abū Jahl Ibn Hishām.

Ibn Ishāq wrote: Abū ‘Ubayda Ibn al-Ḥarīth and Abū Salama Ibn ‘Abd al-Asad and ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Arqam al-Makhzūmi, as well as ‘Uthman Ibn Maz‘ūn rushed to the Prophet to give their allegiance and convert to Islam. The Prophet recited some Suras of the Qur’an to them and they took their \textit{Shahada} (oath) and declared that he was bringing them \textit{al-hudā wal nūr} (enlightenment and illumination).\textsuperscript{199}
2.2. Acceptance of Islam

There has been no explicit mention in the sources about when Umm Salama converted to Islam. However, most of the *Sīra* (Prophet’s biography) books mention that Abū Salama was amongst the first to do so. Ibn Ishāq mentions that he was the eleventh man to become Muslim. However, when he became Muslim, he was already married to Umm Salama, so it is likely that she also converted at the same time or very soon after, as the sources also mention that she emigrated with Abū Salama to Abyssinia in the fifth year after the commencement of revelation. Al-Zirkiūī mentions that Umm Salama was one of the earliest Muslims.

2.3. Emigration to Abyssinia

Ever since the Qurayshis learnt about the conversion of some men and women to Islam, they tried to dissuade them from joining this new religion which they felt threatened the status quo. When some of the pagans of Quraysh resorted to torture and other cruel means to subdue the new converts to Islam, permission was given to the Muslims to leave for Abyssinia. The Prophet allowed them to do so, saying that Abyssinia was ruled by a just ruler who did not persecute anybody. Emigration is a difficult enough undertaking, more so at a time where travel involved many hardships and strains. It involved leaving all possessions behind, except those one could carry and also leaving family, friends and the homeland. However, the early immigrants preferred to leave everything behind for an atmosphere of liberty, where they could perform their rituals and prayers in freedom and at peace, without persecution, torture and harassment.

Umm Salama is reported to have said: "When we reached the land of al-Ḥabasha, we became neighbors to the best of neighbors anybody could have, who allowed us to perform our rituals and prayers in freedom, without persecution, torture and harassment."

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rituals and pursue our religion without any harassment of any kind, not even listening to anything we did not want to hear.” She further compares al-Najāshī, a very tolerant and charitable ruler, to her own people. He allowed them to have a home, treated them much better than their own people who tried to make them abandon and reject their religion. Most of the historical sources report events in Abyssinia on the authority of Umm Salama.

When Quraysh learned that some of the Muslims left to Abyssinia and settled there, they sent envoys to the Abyssinian ruler asking him to return them. The envoys were led by ʿAbd Allah Ibn Abī Rabʿa and ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿĀṣ. They arrived laden with precious gifts for the Emperor and his patriarchs. According to Umm Salama, the gifts included valuable leather hides and an Arabian mare.

Umm Salama described the conversation between the Muslims and the Abyssinian emperor al-Najāshī following, where he refused to send back the Muslim refugees. Al-Najāshī’s bishops and priests advised him to send them back with their own people, however, Umm Salama reports that al-Najāshī exclaimed angrily: “By Allah I shall not return these people who have trusted me and chosen me and my country above all else. I shall not return them until I hear them out and learn their side of the story. If their story is identical to that of the emissaries I shall hand them over to their own people, but if it is not, then I will protect them and they can remain here under my protection.”

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207 Ibid.
Umm Salama continues saying that al-Najāshī then asked for the Muslims, who had decided amongst themselves to say the truth, namely that they were following the teachings of their Prophet Muhammad, who taught them what he had personally received from Allah.

Umm Salama concludes her long detailed narration saying that Ja‘far Ibn Abī Ṭalib enumerated all the duties placed upon each Muslim and recited the Chapter of Maryam to him. Umm Salama relates that al-Najāshī cried upon hearing the chapter and said: “This is what has come to us from our Prophet Jesus to lead us from darkness to light. Go in peace, you shall not be returned to your people.”

Umm Salama continues describing the battle that erupted between the forces of al-Najāshī and an opponent from across the Nile and that al-Najāshī and his forces were victorious. Al-Najāshī continued to offer his protection to the Muslims until their return to Mecca.

The Muslims remained in Abyssinia for the rest of the months of Rajab, Sha‘ban and Ramadan and then returned to Mecca in the month of Shawwāl, after they heard of the conversions of Hamza, the Prophet’s uncle and ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb in the fifth year after the beginning of revelations.

When the Ansār made their pledge to the Prophet, Quraysh became even more vicious in their persecution and the Muslims could no longer bear the hardships imposed on them. Hence, the Prophet allowed them to leave Mecca for Medina and join the Ansār there.

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209 Sura 19 of the Qur’ān.
213 literally helpers - the Medinan citizens who helped the Prophet and the Muhajirūn (immigrants) upon their arrival to the city after the migration to Medina.
2.4. Emigration to Medina

When Umm Salama returned from Abyssinia to Mecca with her husband, she discovered that the news about Quraysh ceasing their harassment of Muslims was nothing but a rumor. Her husband, Abū Salama, decided to leave again, but this time to Medina, being the first to do so. However, Umm Salama was prevented from joining him. She faced tremendous hardship and heartache. Umm Salama gives an account of what happened saying: “When Abū Salama decided to leave to Medina, he packed our belongings and saddled a mule for me to ride. I had Salama in my lap and Abū Salama led us out of Mecca. Unfortunately a number of men from my clan, the Banū Makhzūm, blocked his way, refusing that he take me with him. They told him: “Though you are free to do what you like with yourself, you have no power over your wife. She is our daughter, from our tribe. Do you expect us to allow you to take her away from us?” They forcefully took the reins of my mule from him. At that point a group of men from ʿAbd al-Asad (her in-laws) interfered. When the Banū ʿAbd al-Asad saw them taking both me and my child, they became hot with rage. “No! By Allah,” they shouted, “we shall not abandon the boy. He is our son and we have a first claim over him.” They took his hand and pulled him away from me. Two men from each tribe tried to claim the boy and they were pulling the child by his arms until they dislocated one of his shoulders. Banū ʿAbd al-Asad rode away with Salama to their dwellings, while Banū Makhzūm took me to theirs and Abū Salama had no choice but to make his way to Medina alone.”

She narrated: “Suddenly in the space of a few moments, I found myself alone without my husband and son. My husband headed for Medina by himself and his clan had snatched my son away from me. My own clan, Banū Makhzūm, overpowered me and forced me to stay with them.”

She was desolate, being separated from her husband and child and held prisoner by her own tribe. Every day, she would go early in the morning and make her way to a place called al-Abtah, on the outskirts of Mecca, where she would sit on the ground and cry and wail until sunset and pray that Allah would reunite her with her son and husband. She kept up this daily ritual for an entire year, until one day one of her cousins, from the clan of Banū al-Mūghīra, saw her and asked what she was doing and why. When he learned her story, he went to his kin and implored them to let this poor bereft woman leave and join her husband. Umm Salama relates that he went back to her clan and said: “Why don’t you free this poor woman? You have caused her husband and her son to be taken away from her.” He continued trying to soften their hearts and appeal to their emotions. At last they listened to him and took pity on Umm Salama and allowed her to leave and told her: “Go and join your husband if you wish.” Umm Salama related: “But how could I join my husband in Medina and leave my son, a piece of my own flesh and blood, in Mecca among the Banū ‘Abd al-Asad? How could I be free from anguish and my eyes be free from tears were I to reach Medina not knowing anything of my little son left behind in Mecca?” Some of her kin realized the turmoil she was going through and their hearts went out to her. They petitioned the Banū ‘Abd al-Asad on her behalf to return her son to her. Banū ‘Abd al-Asad returned Salama and she started with him on the journey to Medina on her own. She did not even want to linger any moment longer in Mecca, till she found someone to travel with her for protection. She was afraid that something might happen that would delay or prevent her from reaching her husband.

Umm Salama got a camel ready, placed her son on her lap and left in the direction of Medina. When she reached a place called al-Tanṭām, she met with ʿUthmān Ibn Ṭalḥa, who had still not embraced Islam at that time. He asked her: “Where are you going, Bint Zād al-Rākib?”
She told him she was on her way to Medina to rejoin her husband. ʿUthmān was surprised that she was all alone with her little boy and asked her if someone would be catching up with her, which she denied and emphasized again that she was all alone, saying: "No, except Allah and my little boy here." ʿUthmān decided that he would take her to her husband and spare her from travelling all this distance by herself. Umm Salama praised his generosity and kindness throughout her life. She repeatedly said: "I have, by Allah, never met an Arab more generous and noble than he." She narrated that he would hold the reins of her camel all the way and at nightfall find a place for them to rest for the night. He would make the camel kneel down, wait until she dismounted, then lead the camel to a tree and tether it. He would then walk away into the distance to allow her some privacy, yet be close enough to protect her in case any danger should arise. This was repeated every day until they reached the village of Banū ʿAmr Ibn ʿAuf at Qabāʾ on the outskirts of Medina. ʿUthmān then told her that her husband had settled in that village and then he turned around to return to Mecca.

Umm Salama and Abū Salama were finally reunited after the long separation. She was overjoyed and he was delighted to have his wife and son back. When the Prophet had arranged for the Muslims to leave for Medina, Abū Salama had already been there for a whole year.

2.5. Medina

After reaching Medina, Umm Salama was faced with yet more difficulties and suffering, even if not as dire as in Mecca. However, despite all the hardship faced by her, she never once complained to anybody, nor did her faith wane. The people of Medina did not believe her. They doubted her lineage and name and her being of the clan of Banū Makhzūm. She lived between

them, forever being questioned and blamed by their accusing eyes. When some of them went for pilgrimage to Mecca, they asked her to write to her folks there and she did. They took her letter and delivered it to her family.220 Her family accepted the letter and so the pilgrims from Medina ascertained that she had not lied to them about her father and as a result her status in Medina rose, as her father was well known and a member of the Meccan aristocracy.221 Umm Salama, however, did not complain and every time some dire circumstances befell her she used to say: “By Allah, I do not know of a family in Islam which had to go through what the family of Abū Salama had to face.”222

The sources do not reveal many details about the lives of Umm Salama and her family in Medina other than that Umm Salama had more children by Abū Salama, and that he participated in the battles of Badr (2 AH) and Uhud (3 AH), where he fought alongside the Prophet. He was wounded by an arrow shot by Abū Salama al-Jashmī and suffered for an entire month until the wound finally started to heal.223 After his wound healed, the Prophet sent him to lead an expedition to Qatan in response to news that had reached the Prophet, about Ṭulayhā and Salama, sons of Khuwaylid, who had rallied their people to fight the Prophet.224

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Abū Salama at the head of one hundred and fifty men from the *Muhajirūn* and the *Anṣār*. Abū Salama led the raid and as a result, his wound from the battle of Uḥud reopened.

### 2.6. First Widowhood

Due to the reopening of his wound, Abū Salama became bedridden and stayed at home, where Umm Salama nursed him. It was in Medina that she proposed to her husband that they make a covenant never to remarry after the other's death, wishing only to be reunited again in Paradise. She told him: "I heard that any woman whose husband dies a martyr and goes to heaven and who does not re-marry will join him in heaven as his partner again. I also heard that if a pious woman dies and heaven is her abode later and if her husband does not remarry after her death, they will also be joined in heaven again. So, let us promise one another not to remarry in the event one of us should die." Abū Salama asked her if she would obey him. She replied that she would not have suggested this pledge if she had any intentions of disobeying him. Abū Salama then told her: "If I die, you should remarry." Then he prayed to Allah saying: "Reward Umm Salama after my death with someone better than me, who would honor her, treat her well, not cause her any sadness or grief and who would not harm her." As Abū Salama lay dying he kept repeating this prayer interchangeable with another, namely: "Reward my family with someone better than myself."

The Prophet heard of Abū Salama’s predicament and went to see him. He watched over him, praying for him and invoking Allah’s protection upon him until Abū Salama passed away. The Prophet closed his eyes and made nine *takbīrāt* (*calling Allahu akbar – Allah is Great*). He was

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227 Ibn Sa’d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 8, 61.
later asked if he had lost count or forgotten. The Prophet replied: “If I had made a thousand takbirāt over Abū Salama they would have been well deserved.”

The Prophet also prayed saying: “Allah, forgive Abū Salama and raise his stature to that of al-mahdiyyūn (the enlightened), widen his grave and light it up for him and forgive him and us.” This shows the reverence the Prophet had for Abū Salama and his gratitude for all the efforts he engaged in to further the cause of Islam.

Umm Salama was devastated when her husband died. She kept repeating the prayer that the Prophet had taught her: “We are from Allah and to him we return. Allah help me in my calamity and reward my loss with something better.”

It was reported in Sahih Muslim (918) that Umm Salama narrated that as she was about to say this prayer, she felt that there could be no other Muslim better than Abū Salama who was one of the first to believe, as well as one of the first to immigrate to Abyssinia and Medina. Therefore she hesitated in completing the prayer, but then Allah made her complete it. However, she was wondering deep inside who could possibly be better than Abū Salama. She cried and vowed to keep on crying over the death of Abū Salama who died a stranger away from his own homeland. A woman, who had been to see the Prophet, came to her and told her not to cry, as the Prophet said that the devil would then enter her house. So Umm Salama asked the Prophet what she should do instead. The Prophet instructed her to pray saying: “Allah forgive him and myself and follow his demise with subsequent good.”

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232 This prayer was narrated in Sahih Muslim (920), Sahih Abu Dawoud (2675), Sunan Ibn Maja (1454), Musnad al Imam Ahmad and al-Mu'jam al Kabir (712), vol. 23, p. 315.
233 al-Ṭabarī, al-Simṭ al-thamin, p. 236.
234 A slight variation of this report is also found in Musnad al Imām Ahmad, vol. 6, p. 309, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, (692) and (957), Al-Ṭabarī, al-Simṭ al-thamin, p. 136.
2.7. Second Marriage

After his death two eminent Companions wished to marry her, but she declined both marriage proposals.236 In the month of Shawwal of the fourth year of Hijra, Umm Salama completed her waiting period.237 Her first suitor was Abū Bakr, then 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb asked for her hand and she declined both times. There are three versions with regard to her third suitor, the Prophet.

According to the first version, the Prophet sent someone to ask for Umm Salama’s hand in marriage on his behalf. According to various sources238 Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balʿata came to ask Umm Salama for her hand on behalf of the Prophet and she replied that she was no longer young and had many children. She added that she was afflicted by jealousy and had no guardian239 to perform the marriage. The Prophet sent his reply saying: “As for your age, I am older than you, as for your children, they will be my children and as for your jealousy, I will request from Allah to make it vanish and finally having no guardian present is not an issue, for even those who are not present would accept me as a suitor.”

According to the second version, similar to the first one, it was ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb who was asked to propose marriage to her on behalf of the Prophet.240 When Umm Salama declined,

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he exclaimed angrily with utter disbelief: “You reject the Messenger of Allah?” However, the first story appears to be more accurate, as ‘Umar had asked for her hand in marriage for himself.

The third version states that the Prophet went himself to propose to her without any third party interceding on his behalf. One could reconcile the different versions in explaining that the Prophet asked for the hand of Umm Salama twice. Once by sending Haṭīb Ibn Abī Bal’ata, who received the negative reply and then he went himself to discuss Umm Salama’s reasons for the rejection and renew the proposal.

Umm Salama’s reply demonstrates that she was very honest and very much aware of her own perceived character flaws, such as jealousy. It could also be understood as extreme loyalty to her first husband, after whom she did not want to marry again. This also shows that she was sensible in opting to point out negative traits that the Prophet might dislike later. In addition, and more importantly, it shows that she had a strong character and independent will to refuse marriage to both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb both highly revered by Sunnīs.

Another disagreement in the narrative is found in the conflicting versions about the year of the marriage itself. It has been mentioned that she married him in the second year of Hijra, in the third year and finally in the fourth year of Hijra. Looking at the various versions, one can assume that the first two are incorrect, as the battle of Uḥud took place in the third year of Hijra and it has been demonstrated above, that Abū Salama participated in that battle. Hence, Abū Salama must have died either at the end of the third year or in the early months of the fourth year of Hijra to allow for the waiting period of four months and ten days.

Another disagreement found in the narratives is regarding the person who acted as Umm Salama's guardian. It has been reported that it was her son 'Umar. Another version states that it was not her son, but rather 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, because they were related through the Ka'b bloodline. 'Umar was the son of Khaṭṭāb Ibn Nufayl Ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza Ibn Rabbāḥ Ibn 'Abd Allah Qirāṭ Ibn Razzāḥ Ibn 'Adiy Ibn Ka'b and Umm Salama was Hind Bint Abī Umayya Ibn al-Mūghīra Ibn 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Umar Ibn al-Makhzūm Ibn Yaqzā Ibn Murra Ibn Ka'b. It is more logical to believe that it was 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, because 'Umar Ibn Abī Salama was much too young to act as his mother's guardian. It is reported that after the Prophet married Umm Salama, he allowed 'Umar Ibn Abī Salama to sit in his lap, so he could teach him the proper manners of eating. It has been narrated that 'Umar was sitting in the Prophet's lap during a meal and his little hand would roam around the dish. The Prophet told him to say the Basmallah (invoke the name of Allah) and eat with his right hand and only pick up the food closest to him. It has also been narrated that 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr, who was the first baby born to the Muhajirūn in Medina had said that 'Umar Ibn Abī Salama was two years older than him. So it appears that 'Umar was much too young to act as his mother's guardian. Hence, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb was the most likely candidate - named 'Umar - to contract Umm Salama's marriage to the Prophet.

Al-Baladhurī, however, mentions explicitly that it was her son 'Umar, despite his young age, who acted as her guardian. According to al-Kāsānī, in some of the Shiʿī sources it has not...
only been mentioned, but has been used as a precedent to derive a *fiqh* ruling that a son can act as his mother's guardian despite his young age.\(^{250}\)

The Prophet paid Umm Salama a dowry equal to the one he paid to each of his previous wives, in addition to giving her a bed, a dish, a beaker, a broom and a bowl.\(^{251}\) Umm Salama became one of the Mothers of the Believers\(^ {252}\) and a member of his household.\(^ {253}\)

2.8. **In the Prophet's Household**

Umm Salama moved into the house previously belonging to Zaynab Bint Khūzayma,\(^ {254}\) who had passed away. When she first moved in, she inspected all the rooms. She found an earthen container which held some barley, a mill, some pots and a container of fat.\(^ {255}\) She ground the barley and used some of the fat to cook a meal, which the Prophet shared with the guests who came to attend the marriage ceremony.\(^ {256}\) She was the bride and it was her very own wedding, yet she did not hesitate to familiarize herself with her new home and also cook for her husband and the guests. This fits with the conditions of all the immigrants at that time, who were poverty stricken after leaving everything behind. According to the old Arabian customs of hospitality guests had to be given the best of care available, by sharing whatever is there,

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\(^{252}\) Qur'an [33.6] The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves, and his wives are (as) their mothers; and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allah to inheritance, one with respect to another, than (other) believers, and (than) those who have fled (their homes), except that you do some good to your friends; this is written in the Book.

\(^{253}\) Qur'an [33.33] And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.


however much or little it is. Umm Salama was an aristocrat by birth and used to be served rather than serve, yet this could be interpreted as establishing her role as the lady of this house.

At the beginning Umm Salama was not eager to consummate the marriage and she excused herself often. Having just lost Abū Salama a few months earlier and having rejected two marriage proposals, she may have been reluctant to replace Abū Salama by another man, even if he was the Prophet. Each time the Prophet came to her, he would find her youngest child, Zaynab, in her lap as if she was just going to breastfeed her. This happened a number of times until ‘Ammār Ibn Yasīr, one of her maternal relatives, witnessed it. ‘Ammār snatched the baby from her lap and told her: “Give me this ugly brat who has caused the Prophet so much sadness.” 257 ‘Ammār gave the baby away to be suckled, first by Qurayba Bint Abī Umayya, and then later by Asmā’ Bint Abī Bākr. When the Prophet came, he asked Umm Salama about ‘Zanāb’, his nickname for little Zaynab. He asked where she was and what she had done with her. Umm Salama told him that ‘Ammār took her away. When the Prophet learned that they were finally alone and unlikely to be disturbed, the marriage was consummated. 258

‘Ammār Ibn Yasir is said in one version to have been the step-brother of Umm Salama on her mother’s side 259 and in another, her brother through suckling. 260 The latter must be the correct version, as Umm Salama’s mother was ‘Atika Bint ‘Amer, while ‘Ammār’s mother was Sumayya Bint Khubbat, a mawla of Umm Salama’s uncle. 261

The Prophet respected Umm Salama and her wisdom and often sought her advice and council. The first time was when he asked her, after spending three nights with her, about her

thoughts and preferences. According to various sources, he told her that she meant a lot to him and that he knew that she was not worthless to her family.\textsuperscript{262} He then told her that he had spent three nights with her now and gave her the choice to increase them to seven nights. However, he told her that he would be spending seven nights with each of his other wives as a result, because he liked to treat them all equally.\textsuperscript{263}

Many narratives, scattered in different history books and biographical dictionaries, indicate that the Prophet had a special fondness for Umm Salama and respected her for her devotion and good judgment. Al-Baladhurî, for example, mentions that the Prophet used to say: “ʿAʾisha holds a special position nobody else has reached, she is a part of me.” After his marriage to Umm Salama he was asked about ʿAʾisha’s previously mentioned position. He remained silent, which was taken as an implicit admission that now Umm Salama held this position and occupied a special place in his heart.\textsuperscript{264} This information could explain ʿAʾisha’s excessive jealousy towards the Prophet's other wives in general and Umm Salama in particular.

2.9. Motherhood

Umm Salama had four children by Abū Salama, namely Salama, ʿUmar, Durra and Zaynab. Some of the sources mention a fifth child, a daughter named Umm Kulthūm.\textsuperscript{265} Salama was the oldest child who came with her to Medina, as previously stated. The other children were born later after she rejoined her husband in Medina. Al-Baladhrui, however, mentions that they

\textsuperscript{262} In al-Hifnî, ʿAbd al-Munʿîm. ʿMawṣūʿat umm al-muʿminin ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Bakr : al-ṣiddiqah bint al-ṣiddiq, aʾzām nisāʾ al-ʾālamīn, ṣabībat ṣabīb Allāh, al-mubarrāʾah fi Kitāb Allāh. Cairo: Maktabat Mâdûlî, 2003, p. 144, it has been explained that when the Prophet used the word “family” he meant himself, which actually signifies that she is precious to him and he would honor her and make her happy.

\textsuperscript{263} Muslim, ʿṢaḥīh Muslim. (1460).

\textsuperscript{264} al-Balâdhurî, Ansâb al-ashrâf, vol 1, p. 432 and vol. 2, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{265} Ibn al-ʿAthîr, Usd al-ghābah, vol. 5, p. 613, Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad lists a Hadith narrated by Umm Kulthum Bint Abi Salama, in vol. 6, p. 404.
were born in Abyssinia, when Abū Salama emigrated there with Umm Salama. There are no narrations in the sources about her daughter Durra; a few mention her without giving any details about her life. It may well be that Durra was confused with Zaynab, because of a certain narration whereby Zaynab was originally called Birra, a name the Prophet disliked. He advised Umm Salama to change her name, because only Allah knew the ‘ahl al Birr’ (generous and giving people) and he advised not to praise the child unknown of whether she will grow up to be generous and giving or not. He suggested naming her Zaynab instead.

Zaynab was still an infant when Umm Salama married the Prophet. Her children were raised in the Prophet’s household and many aḥādīth were narrated and transmitted by both ʿUmar and Zaynab. None, however, were narrated by Salama.

The children grew up with the Prophet and frequently met the Companions when they came to visit the Prophet, ask his advice or council at his home. They were familiar with the way the Companions conversed with the Prophet and reflected on how to derive certain rulings from the Qur‘ān and witnessed many discussions between them. The Prophet helped raise Umm Salama’s children, which becomes apparent from various aḥādīth transmitted by ‘Umar. An example above, showed how the Prophet taught him manners and appropriate behavior.

It was reported that Salama married Amāma Bint Ḥamza Ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was in great demand by a number of people such as ‘Alī, Ja‘far and Zayd. The demand for her was so great, that all three men became rivals. However Ibn Sa‘d states that Salama received her hand in marriage because his mother was married to the Prophet. According to other versions the
Prophet is supposed to have asked: “Have I rewarded him, i.e. Salama?” The Prophet must have appreciated being married to Umm Salama and wanted to single out her son.

Umm Salama taught her children herself, for she was herself an educated woman. She made it a point to tell Zaynab in particular about certain events in the Prophet’s life and household to teach her certain values. Zaynab came to the Prophet’s household as an infant and hence, absorbed every event around her easily. Zaynab narrated many such events relating to the Prophet’s life, which are found in the various Hadith collections such as Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and others. The children’s upbringing in the Prophet’s household enabled them later on to set good examples to others and become a pillar of their community. We see for example ‘Umar Ibn Abi Salama participating in the battle of al-Khandaq (the trench) next to al-Zubayr. It was in response to Umm Salama’s urgent request, that ‘Umar Ibn Abi Salama fought next to ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib in the Battle of the Camel. He also participated in a number of other battles during the reign of ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib and was sent on a mission to Bahrain.

Zaynab taught what she knew of Hadith which she had heard in the Prophet’s household. Like her mother, she also became a trusted and preferred resort of fiqh (jurisprudence) questions for women.

Umm Salama’s mothering extended to Fāṭima, the Prophet’s daughter, who reportedly moved into Umm Salama’s house after her marriage to the Prophet. In addition, Sunnī reports narrate that Umm Salama breastfed al-Ḥusayn with her own daughter Zaynab, due to his mother’s frailty after three consecutive births. However, one of these reports seems to be fabricated, as Umm Salama nursed Zaynab right after her marriage and therefore could not have accomplished both, raising Fāṭima and breastfeeding al-Ḥusayn. A simple mathematical

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272 Ibn al-Athîr, Usud al-ghâbah, vol. 4, p. 79.
273 Ibid, vol. 4, p. 79.
calculation of three ‘nine’months’ pregnancies would result in a period of at least two to three years, which would exclude both, breastfeeding Fāṭima’s child and raising Fāṭima before her own marriage. It seems more likely that Fāṭima was raised by Sawda after her mother’s death and that Umm Salama breastfed al-Ḥusayn. The sources vary about the year and the month of Fāṭima’s marriage. According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam the marriage took place in the first or second year of the Hijra, more likely the latter, which corroborates the version of Umm Salama breastfeeding al-Ḥusayn.

2.10. With the Mothers of the Believers

When the Prophet married Umm Salama, ‘A’isha was very jealous. She felt that her position was being threatened. In her own words she is to have said: “I was exceedingly sad, having heard much of her beauty. I was gracious to her, desiring to see her for myself. And, by Allah, I saw that she was twice as beautiful and graceful as she was reputed to be. I mentioned this to Hafṣa but she said: “No, by Allah, this is nothing but jealousy [clouding your vision]; she is not as they say.” Hafṣa too was gracious to her, and having called to see her, she said to me, “I see her not as beautiful as you say, not even anywhere near it; though she is [unquestionably] beautiful.” I saw her afterwards and, by my life, she was as Hafṣa had said. But still I was jealous.”

Sources report that ‘A’isha was best friends with Hafṣa in the harem.274 Many references are made in the sources about ‘A’isha’s jealousy. One such incident relates to Umm Salama. She is reported to have asked the Prophet: “ya rasūl Allāh ‘ama tashba’u min Umm Salama?” (O Messenger of Allah, don’t you ever get enough of Umm Salama?), so he just smiled. Then she asked him “O Allah’s Apostle! Suppose you landed in a valley where there is a tree of which some branches have already been eaten and then you found trees that were untouched, of which tree would you let your camel graze?” He said, “(I will let my camel graze) of

the one of which nothing has been eaten before." The allusion here is that the Prophet had not married a virgin besides herself.\textsuperscript{276} However, her biggest outburst happened when \textit{Mariya al-Qibtiyya} gave birth to Ibrāhīm.\textsuperscript{277}

‘A’īsha is frequently described in Sunnī sources as the Prophet's favorite wife; however, this standing seems to have been greatly exaggerated after the Prophet’s death and could possibly be in reaction to her vilification in Shī‘ite sources. The Shī‘a view of ‘A’īsha is a negative one, which is mainly due to her role in the \textit{fitna} and her participation in the ‘Battle of the Camel’, (detailed later in this chapter) which is taken as contempt for \textit{ahl-al-bayt} in general and animosity towards ‘Ālī Ibn Abī Ṭālib in particular\textsuperscript{278} and is attributed to a reaction by her due to his advice to divorce her after the incident of \textit{al-Ifk}. The Shī‘a also believe ‘A’īsha to be a key player in the rebellion against ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān. They quote her naming ‘Uthmān a \textit{na’thal} (old fool), who should be killed.\textsuperscript{279} They claim her motive was to establish Ṭalḥa Ibn Ubaydullah as ‘Uthmān’s successor. They also believe that only when the tides turned and ‘Ālī Ibn Abī Ṭālib was chosen as caliph did she change her attitude and fight ‘Ali to demand \textit{qisās} (retaliation, vengeance) for ‘Uthmān’s murder.\textsuperscript{280} However, it has also been reported that ‘A’īsha disliked ‘Ālī long before he became caliph, most probably because of the \textit{irf} affair, during which ‘Ālī had allegedly rebuked her as a woman of loose morals and little importance.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{276} al-Bukhārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī}, vol. 7, Book 62, Number 14.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{277} al-Balādhurī, \textit{Ansāb al-ashrāf}, vol. 2, p. 88.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{279} Ibn Qutaybah, \textit{al-imāmah wa-al-siyyāsah}, vol. 1 p. 52.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{280} Ibid, vol. 1, p. 52.}
\end{footnotes}
The Shi'a view of Ḥafṣa is like that of 'A'isha, generally a negative one. She is criticized heavily and unflattering portraits of her are presented, which probably relates to her being the daughter of 'Umar and is not based on any particular characteristic of her own.\(^\text{281}\)

The Shi'a's view of Umm Salama, on the other hand, is very positive. Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imām is quoted as saying: "The books were kept by 'Alī. When he decided to make a journey to Iraq, he entrusted them to Umm Salama. When he died, they were passed on to Imām Hasan, and from him to Imām Husayn. When he was martyred, they came into the possession of 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn, after which they were passed on to my father."\(^\text{282}\) Furthermore, the Shi'i sources report that she was given a letter by the Prophet and told that only the true Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Commander of the Believers) will ask for it from the pulpit of the mosque. According to the sources, Umm Salama sent her son to listen to the speeches of Abū Bakr and 'Umar and finally gave the letter to 'Alī when he became Caliph because he used the right words in his speech, which the Prophet had told Umm Salama before his death.\(^\text{283}\)

When the aristocratic Makhzūmite, Umm Salama, came to the Prophet's harem the rift mirroring the ambitions of the rivals became apparent. Umm Salama leaned towards Fatīma and 'Alī. When the Prophet's harem increased, Umm Salama became close to Ramla Bint Abī Sufyan, better known as Umm Ḥabība, as well as Maymūna Bint al-Ḥarith, both of whom — according to Watt, the Prophet married, primarily for political reasons, in the seventh year of Hijra.\(^\text{284}\) Shi'i sources criticize Umm Ḥabība for being the sister of Mu'awiya. Much like 'A'isha, the sources attribute a role to her in instigating the First Civil war, by sending 'Uthmān's bloody shirt


to her brother in Syria, which he then displayed in public to rally people’s support for the cause of avenging ‘Uthmān. Maymūna, on the other hand is portrayed favorably in Shī‘ite sources because of her blood-relationship and her descent from the Banū Hāshim clan. The Shī‘ite sources say that she was favorably disposed of ‘Alī and his cause.

Watt opines that with this development, the earliest political parties in Islam were already being reflected. He states: "Both she and her former husband, though Muslims of long standing, belonged to the clan of Makhzūm, the clan of Abū-Jahl, and one of the chief centres of opposition to Muḥammad at Mecca. This marriage was at the very least a way of providing an important Emigrant widow, but it may have also been designed to help Muhammad, to reconcile the Meccans."

According to Abbot, ‘A’ishah and Ḥafṣa represented Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, who were both ambitious and regarded themselves as the Prophet’s heirs. There were representatives of various fractions and power groups in the harem, namely the aristocracy of Mecca represented by the Makhzūmite Umm Salama and the Umayyad Umm Ḥabiba. There were ahl al bayt, represented by Faṭīma and perhaps Maymūna as a later addition. Nabia Abbott writes: "With ‘A’ishah’s party in power, the other two, each opposed to or envious of it, found it convenient sometimes to unite their forces; though at other times their own specific ambitions and jealousies led them to go their separate way, as groups, and even as individuals." According to Abbott, the other wives of the Prophet had no political ambitions for any of their kin and therefore allowed

286 Watt, Muhammad : Prophet and Statesman, p. 156.
287 Abbott, Aishah, , p. 15.
288 Maymūna was the half-sister of ‘A’isha’s stepmother, Amsa’ Bint ‘Umāis.
289 Abbott, Aishah, , p. 15.
their emotions or the demands of the time to influence them, sometimes for ‘A’isha and some other times for Umm Salama, as these two were the most influential of them all.\textsuperscript{290}

‘A’isha seems to have had little or no difficulty at all in gaining the cooperation of the three other wives in her group, namely Hafsa, Sawda and Safiya for any scheme, conspiracy or intrigue, regardless of them being harmless or not and whether they were against a member of this group itself or against any other rival in the harem.\textsuperscript{291} There is for instance, the well known episode of Muḥammad and the honey. In this, according to some accounts, ‘A’isha, Sawda and Safiya schemed against Ḥafṣa,\textsuperscript{292} but according to others, it was ‘A’isha and Ḥafṣa who intrigued against either Zaynab\textsuperscript{293} or Umm Salama.\textsuperscript{294} The central elements of the conspiracy in all three versions are so similar, that the different details in the various accounts must have been added later on. Furthermore, since Ḥafṣa was never a favorite with Muḥammad, while Zaynab and Umm Salama alternated with ‘A’isha for this position,\textsuperscript{295} the plot was in all likelihood directed against one of the others and not against Ḥafṣa.

The Prophet was said to have been in the habit of stopping for a short visit with each of his wives before he retired to the apartment of the one whose ‘turn’ it was for the night. One day he lingered unusually long at the house of either Zaynab or Umm Salama, enjoying a treat of honey, a delicacy of which he was very fond. ‘A’isha jealously noticed and asked Ḥafṣa, Sawda and Safiya to ask him, as he visited them on that day, if he had eaten maghāfir, the strong-

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{291} Ibid, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{294} Ibn Sa’d, Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr, vol. 8, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{295} Ibid, vol. 8, p. 81 & 73.
They continued with the agreed upon script by ’A’isha and answered his expected "No" with, "Why, then, have you so strong a breath?"

"Zaynab, (or Umm Salama in the other version) gave me some honey to drink", was his answer. They countered with: "The bees that made that honey must have devoured the urfut." The Prophet was very particular about personal odors and refused honey the next time it was offered to him. Afterwards Sawda felt guilty and felt that they had overstepped their lines and gone too far. She mentioned that they were depriving the Prophet of his favorite honey and causing him to abstain from something he liked which was also halal (lawful, permitted) to him. But ’A’isha, apparently consumed by jealousy and afraid about the revelation of her part in the plot, asked Sawda to keep quiet.

Many more lively and even stormy scenes involved ‘A’isha and the other wives in the Prophet’s harem, especially concerning Māriya Bint Sham‘ūn known as Mariya al-Qibtiyya. Māriya was reported as being a very pretty, fair woman with curly hair, which caused immense jealousy between the other wives and therefore she was lodged in a house on the edge of Medina, belonging to Ḥaritha Ibn al-Nu’man al-Anṣārī. Verses [66:1]-[66:3] are said to have been revealed about an episode involving her. Theodor Nöldeke writes that this tradition mentioned in asbab al-nuzūl (reasons for revelation) has to be authentic. He argues that the episode depicts the Prophet in a rather unflattering light and hence must be true for Muslims to include it in their literature.

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296 A tree or a thorny shrub which exudes an evil-smelling resin.
297 [Ibid, vol. 8, p. 44.]
298 [66.1] O Prophet! why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. [66.2] Allah indeed has sanctioned for you the expiation of your oaths and Allah is your Protector, and He is the Knowing the Wise. [66.3] And when the prophet secretly communicated a piece of information to one of his wives-- but when she informed (others) of it, and Allah made him to know it, he made known part of it and avoided part; so when he informed her of it, she said: Who informed you of this? He said: The Knowing, the one Aware, informed me.
Despite the Prophet's genuine effort to be fair, equal and just towards all his wives, the sources claim that most of the Muslim community assumed that 'A’isha was his favorite. Wanting to please the Prophet, the Muslims picked 'A'isha's day to send any gift they had for him. The Prophet distributed these gifts, usually household provisions, among all his wives equally. Still the other wives resented this practice. They felt it was discrimination. They chose Umm Salama to appeal to the Prophet to have this changed. She asked him, but he remained silent. They urged her to try again and again until she received an answer. However, the only answer she finally got was, "Trouble me not about 'A'isha. She is the only woman in whose company I receive revelations." This answer seems to have been before revelations occurred in Umm Salama's house or could possibly have been added later to bolster the constructed image of 'A'isha as the favorite wife.

"Allah forgive me for troubling you," answered Umm Salama. The rest of the wives were not satisfied and asked his daughter Fatima to broach the subject again. First the Prophet managed to extract from the hesitant Fatima that Zaynab was behind this. He then surprised Fatima by asking her: "Dear little daughter, do you not love whom I love?" Fatima answered: "Yes, surely." And that was the end of this issue, as she would not be persuaded to try and broach this subject with her father again. Zaynab, however, was still not satisfied and decided to handle it personally. Disregarding ‘A’isha’s presence, she protested in no uncertain terms about the favoritism shown to ‘A’isha. The Prophet and ‘A’isha watched each other for a reaction. Meanwhile, Zaynab, perhaps predicting an eminent failure, lost control of herself and started to insult ‘A’isha. "Defend yourself," the Prophet encouraged ‘A’isha, who did not need any

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300 Ibn Sa’d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 8, p. 49.
encouragement and defended herself with a vengeance. Zaynab was quickly rendered speechless.\(^{302}\)

Still another incident is recorded involving 'A'ishah and either Zaynab or Umm Salama, most probably the latter, for it was she and not Zaynab who generally sought to identify herself with the family of Fatima and 'Alî,\(^{303}\) both of whom became involved in this affair. Furious at the Prophet's obvious display of affection for 'A'ishah in her presence, the proud Makhzûmite, who had already warned him earlier of her jealousy when he asked for her hand in marriage, exclaimed angrily, "I see that the rest of us are as nothing in your presence." The Prophet tried to calm her down, but failed. The disappointed Umm Salama went to Fatima and 'Alî, both of whom disliked 'A'ishah. She told them not only of the abuse she received from 'A'ishah, but of some of the abuse that 'A'ishah had apparently heaped on them. 'Alî then sent Fatima to complain to her father, to no avail, as the Prophet told her: "By the Lord of the Ka'ba, 'A'ishah is your father's best beloved!"\(^{304}\)

'Alî then went to see his cousin, foster-father and father inlaw in person. "Was it not enough for you that 'A'ishah should insult us, but you also needed to tell Fatima that she is your best beloved?" he asks.\(^{305}\) The answer has not been narrated, however, after that incident, the door between the harem apartments and the adjacent apartment of Fatima and 'Alî was closed shut.\(^{306}\)

It does not seem plausible that Umm Salama would act in this manner or involve Fatima and 'Alî. As we have seen, Umm Salama was outspoken and courageous. She stood up to 'Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, whom everyone else feared, as well as to the Prophet himself. She also acted as a peace-maker, hence it does not seem likely that she would further worsen an already bad relationship between Fatima and 'Alî on one hand and 'A'ishah on the other.


\(^{303}\) Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 292, 298, 304.

\(^{304}\) Ibid, vol. 6, p. 130.

\(^{305}\) Ibid, vol. 6, 130.

The sources mention that Prophet reprimanded ‘A’isha once, when she insulted his first wife Khadija. ‘A’isha was very jealous of her and called her a "that toothless old woman whom Allah had replaced with a better one." The Prophet became very angry and exclaimed, "Nay, indeed, Allah has not replaced her by a better. She believed in me when I was rejected; when they called me a liar, she proclaimed me truthful; when I was poor, she shared her wealth with me; and Allah granted me her children though withholding those of other women."\(^{307}\)

2.11. Fiqh

Umm Salama was keen on talking about what had transpired between her and the Prophet in their home so as to let the Muslims know what was permissible or prohibited and to enable them to derive rules of conduct from that. She did not fill time by idle gossip. One example was the permissibility of kissing between husband and wife during the fast of Ramadan. Umm Salama narrated that the Prophet used to kiss her during the day of Ramadan and before breaking the fast at sunset.\(^{308}\)

A different version mentions that a woman came to Umm Salama and told her about her husband who used to kiss her while fasting. She wanted confirmation that this was permissible during the fast. Umm Salama reassured her that it was by citing the example of the Prophet.\(^{309}\) According to a third version of the same, 'Umar Ibn Abī Salama asked the Prophet if it was permissible for a man to kiss while observing the fast. The Prophet told him to go and ask his mother Umm Salama, who then told him that the Prophet used to kiss her while he was fasting.\(^{310}\)

Another example would be the ruling about lying with a wife while she was menstruating. According to one narrative, while the Prophet was sleeping in Umm Salama's house she awoke


\(^{309}\) Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 291.

during the night and felt that her menses had started. So she got up from under the covers and went to check. Her suspicions were confirmed and she cleaned herself, used the appropriate bindings and returned to the room, yet was afraid to go back to bed in case she would sully the Prophet. The Prophet asked her if she had started menstruating and she confirmed that. He lifted the covers and invited her back to bed. In a slightly different version the Prophet is said to have invited her back to bed saying that this was the normal way with all the daughters of Adam.

Umm Salama was not shy about revealing intimate details of her life with the Prophet for the benefit of the Muslim community. She related how the Prophet and herself used to use the same vessel of water to purify themselves together from janaba (impurity) after having engaged in marital relations. Umm Salama narrated that she received a shoulder of a female sheep (ewe) and prepared it for their dinner. She continues saying that the Prophet ate and then got up to perform his prayers without renewing his ablution.

Umm Salama also gave a detailed account of her home, where she lived with the Prophet, detailing the position of the furniture. She also narrated how she used to watch the Prophet pray during the night while she was in bed. It shows that she was very concerned about what her husband was doing and that she stayed awake in case he needed anything yet she did not disturb him during his worship.

Umm Salama also used to derive fiqh rulings from the ahādīth she heard and narrated and used to render advice based upon them. Once a woman asked her advice about visiting her father to take care of him during his illness, while she was in her waiting period and not supposed

to leave her own house. Umm Salama told her to go and tend to her father during the day, but to make sure that she would spend part of the night in her own house and thereby fulfill both obligations - to stay in her house and to tend to her father.\footnote{Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, Ḣad al-maʿād, vol. 5, p. 591 and p. 686.}

\section{2.12. Some Main Traits of Umm Salama}

\subsection{2.12.1. Studious}

According to early reports there were only seventeen persons from the tribe of Quraysh, who were acquainted with reading and writing at the time of advent of Islam. Al-Baladḫūri mentions ʿUmar, ʿAlī, Uthmān, Talḥa and Abū Salama.\footnote{Faruqi, Nisar Ahmed. Early Muslim Historiography. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyyati, 1979, p. 171.} Some women were also capable of writing, like Ḥafṣa, Umm Kulthūm, Shifa bint ʿAbd Allah and Umm Salama could read but not write.\footnote{Ibid, p. 172.} There are ample indications that later ʿA’isha, like Ḥafṣa and Umm Salama, had their own copies of the Qur’anic text.\footnote{Ibn Ḥanbal, \textit{al-Musnad}, vol. I, 6, p. 73, 95, 178, Nöldeke, \textit{Geschichte des Qorans}.} Ibn Abī Dāwūd reports that Umm Salama commissioned a scribe to write down a musḥaf for her and to tell her when he reached verse \footnote{Ibn Abī Dāwūd, \textit{Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif}, pp. 87-88.} [2.238]. When he did she told him to insert three words qualifying the middle prayer as “wa hiya salat-ul ‘aṣr”, because that is how she heard the Prophet recite that verse.\footnote{al-Bannā al-Sā`īṭī, Ahmad. \textit{Bulugh al-ʿamānī min asrār al-fath al-rabbānī}. Beirut: Dar Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 19, p. 309.}

\subsection{2.12.2. Observant}

Umm Salama was very observant, especially to emotional changes in the people around her. She noticed once that there was something troubling the Prophet. When she asked him, he replied that he had forgotten to donate the seven Dinars that he kept with him before nightfall.\footnote{[2.238] Attend constantly to prayers and to the middle prayer and stand up truly obedient to Allah.}
She narrated that one day the Prophet came to her home and appeared to be rather absentminded. She thought that he might be suffering from some pain so she asked him saying:

“I see you are absentminded. Are you suffering from some pain?” He said: “No. But I forgot the seven Dinars we got last night and have not spent for a good cause. I have forgotten them next to the bed.”  

Once she observed the Prophet praying two extra *raqʿa* after the *ʿAsr* prayer, whereas she remembered that he had prohibited this before. She wanted to ask him about it and sent a slave girl to ask him. As he was praying, he just waved his hand to her. After he finished he went and replied to Umm Salama, explaining that he received a delegation of Anṣārī women who had come to visit and ask some questions and they delayed him from performing the two *raqʿat* after the noon prayer, so he was making up for that.

### 2.12.3. Generous

Umm Salama’s generosity was demonstrated when she freed a male slave of Byzantine descent known as Safina al-Rumi, *min a’jam al-furs*, on condition that he serve the Prophet and see after all his needs as long as he lived. There is much disagreement about his given name, and even his epithet (*kunya*). Safina narrated: “Umm Salama freed me on condition that I serve the Prophet for as long as he lived.”

### 2.12.4. Conscientious

Umm Salama’s discretion was shown in certain incidents and in her avoidance to mention the Prophet’s secrets or any personal details that she knew the Prophet liked to keep private. One day some of the Companions visited the Prophet in her home. They asked her to tell them the Prophet’s secrets. She told them that his overt and covert behavior were exactly the same. As she felt guilty about disclosing that information, and was remorseful about saying what

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323 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 293.
324 *al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 2, p. 68.
she had, she told the Prophet about it when entered her chambers. He told her that she had done well.\footnote{Ibn Hanbal, \textit{al-Musnad}, vol. 6, p. 309}

\subsection*{2.12.5. Not Jealous}

Umm Salama had originally declined the Prophet’s proposal on the grounds that she was a jealous woman, however, it was the other wives who were jealous of her, especially ‘A’isha. On one occasion Umm Salama cooked for the Prophet and his guests. She sent the dish with a slave-girl to serve the guests. ‘A’isha entered with another dish and a pebble in her pocket, which she used to break Umm Salama’s dish into pieces. The Prophet said to his guests: “Your mother is jealous! Eat.” Then he collected all the pieces of the broken dish and returned those to ‘A’isha while returning ‘A’isha’s dish to Umm Salama.\footnote{al-Nasā’ī, \textit{Sahih Sunan al-Nasā’ī}, (3693).}

The Prophet’s prayers to soften Umm Salama’s heart and make the jealousy vanish from it may have been heard by Allah, as she befriended most of the other wives and did not cause fights between them. In fact the other wives often sought Umm Salama’s council in matters relating to their relationship with the Prophet. Often she would also speak to him on their behalf.\footnote{Ibid, (3689).}

In an incident, ‘A’isha sent a woman called Baṣīra to Umm Salama to ask her about $Ṣ$Afīya and whether she was pretty or not. Umm Salama perceptively realized that ‘A’isha was behind this and told Baṣīra that she was very pretty and nice and that the Prophet has fallen in love with her. ‘A’isha then put on a disguise and went to Ṣafiya’s house to check her out and see for herself. The Prophet was there and recognized her and later asked her what she thought of his new wife. ‘A’isha replied dismissively that there was nothing special about her and after all she was a Jewess among the many Jewesses. However she confided in Ḥafṣa that Ṣafiya was

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Ibn Hanbal, \textit{al-Musnad}, vol. 6, p. 309}
\item \footnote{al-Nasā’ī, \textit{Sahih Sunan al-Nasā’ī}, (3693).}
\item \footnote{Ibid, (3689).}
\end{itemize}
rather pretty. Umm Salama may have wanted to teach ‘A’isha a lesson by answering Baṣīra like that.

2.12.6. Courageous

Umm Salama’s courage becomes apparent not only when we read about her attempting to cross the desert to Medina with her child all by herself, which is a long journey of about 440 km of desolate, forbidding and inhospitable desert on the back of a camel, exposed to all kinds of dangers for days; but also because she never hesitated to fight for justice or boldly state her opinion when she felt it was necessary to do so. An example of this is her standing up to ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, whom all other women feared, because of his aggressive and strict behavior and his harshness towards women in both private and public life. According to Abbott, numerous narratives show that he was ill-tempered and physically attacked his wives, and wanted to confine women to their homes and to prevent them from continuing to attend mosques. He was however, unsuccessful in this and instead introduced segregated prayers, appointing a separate imām for each gender. He appointed a male imam for the women, in contrast to the Prophet’s precedent, who had appointed a woman, Umm Waraqa, to act as imām for her entire household, which included, as far as can be determined, both men and women. Moreover, after the Prophet’s death, both ‘A’isha and Umm Salama acted as imām for other women.

‘Umar prohibited the Prophet’s wives from performing Hajj (pilgrimage), yet another different approach from the Prophet’s practice. The prohibition was finally lifted in the last year of

his reign. It had upset all the Mothers of the Believers. According to Asma Afsaruddin: “ʿUmar was criticized for his authoritarian manner at times in his interactions with particularly the women around him. He tried to interfere in the Prophet's household when he perceived that the situation was somewhat lax there. The sources report that he attempted to convince Muhammad to impose certain restrictions on the movements of his wives; his importunate demand is listed as one of the occasions of revelation for the [33:53] “hijab verse”. It should be pointed out that hijab in this case does not refer to personal attire, as does the word in modern usage, but to a curtain or some other kind of barrier.”

According to the exegetes’ explanation of the reason for the revelation of this verse, 'Umar had urged the Prophet to shelter his wives from public view on account of the fact that both good and bad people entered his house. “ʿUmar’s entreaty appears to have been spiritually opposed by Muhammad’s wives, particularly by the aristocratic Umm Salama. But his vigilance was perceived by later exegetes as being “for the good of the Prophet's wives”, since the wisdom of his advice appeared to be confirmed by the revelation of 33:53.” In another version, 'Umar came to chastise his daughter Hafṣa for upsetting the Prophet. 'Umar proceeded to see the Prophet and found him depressed and therefore, asked about the cause of his troubles. Prophet Muhammad answered that his wives had been bothering him to provide for things that were beyond his ability or means.

333 Ibid, vol. 8, p. 150; see also Abbott, Aishah, p. 94.
334 [33.53] O you who believe! do not enter the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, not waiting for its cooking being finished-- but when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken the food, then disperse-- not seeking to listen to talk; surely this gives the Prophet trouble, but he forbears from you, and Allah does not forbear from the truth And when you ask of them any goods, ask of them from behind a curtain; this is purer for your hearts and (for) their hearts; and it does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Apostle of Allah, nor that you should marry his wives after him ever; surely this is grievous in the sight of Allah.
ʿUmar then told of his own experiences with his wife and of the advice he had given Ḥafṣa, adding that surely the Prophet could be firm with his wives. Apparently the Prophet was somewhat amused, knowing of ʿUmar’s violent behavior and his good spirits returned. But ʿUmar was not content to let matters rest there. He headed for Ḥafṣa’s house and on the way met Abū Bakr and told him of his conversation with the Prophet. Each of them went to warn his daughter not to ask her husband for things he could not afford but rather to let them, their own fathers, know of her needs. According to the different versions, ʿUmar either alone or accompanied by Abū Bakr, went to do the rounds of the whole harem, reprimanding each wife in turn until Umm Salama reproached him saying: "O ʿUmar, must you interfere even in the harem affairs? Whom then should we ask for our needs, if not the Prophet?" Umm Salama rebuked ʿUmar saying: “I am truly amazed at you ʿUmar, you have meddled and interfered in everything and now you have even come between the Prophet and his wives and are interfering in his household as well?” It has been reported that ʿUmar felt ashamed and was taken by surprise at her sharpness and therefore did not find a suitable reply and just left.\

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338 Sahih Bukhari, Narrated Ibn ‘Abbas: For one year I wanted to ask ʿUmar about the two women who helped each other against the Prophet but I was afraid of him. One day he dismounted his riding animal and went among the trees of Arak to answer the call of nature, and when he returned, I asked him and he said, "(They were) ‘Aisha and Ḥafṣa." Then he added, "We never used to give significance to ladies in the days of the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance, but when Islam came and Allah mentioned their rights, we used to give them their rights but did not allow them to interfere in our affairs. Once there was some dispute between me and my wife and she answered me back in a loud voice. I said to her, ‘Strange! You can retort in this way?’ She said, ‘Yes. Do you say this to me while your daughter troubles Allah’s Apostle?’ So I went to Ḥafṣa and said to her, ‘I warn you not to disobey Allah and His Apostle.’ I first went to Ḥafṣa and then to Umm Salama and told her the same. She said to me, ‘O ʿUmar! It surprises me that you interfere in our affairs so much that you would poke your nose even into the affairs of Allah’s Apostle and his wives.’ So she rejected my advice. There was an Ānṣārī man; whenever he was absent from Allah’s Apostle and I was present there, I used to convey to him what had happened (on that day), and when I was absent and he was present there, he used to convey to me what had happened as regards news from Allah’s Apostle. During that time all the rulers of the nearby lands had surrendered to Allah’s Apostle except the king of Ghassan in Sham, and we were afraid that he might attack us. All of a sudden the Ānṣārī came and said, ‘A great event has happened!’ I asked him, ‘What is it? Has the Ghassani (king) come?’ He said, ‘Greater than that! Allah’s Apostle has divorced his wives! I went to them and found all of them weeping in their dwellings, and the Prophet had ascended to an upper room of his. At the door of the room there was a slave to whom I went and said, “Ask the permission for me to enter.” He admitted me and I entered to see the Prophet lying on a mat that had left its imprint on
departed, while Umm Salama won the admiration and gratitude of the rest of the wives, who were too hesitant and timid to dare argue or debate with this fiery forceful man.\footnote{Ibn Sa’d, \textit{Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr}, vol. 8, pp. 129 and 137.}

\textbf{2.12.7. Cautious and Dignified}

Umm Salama did not like half-measures and preferred to err on the side of caution. When the Prophet allowed Suhayla Bint Sahîl (in a different version Sahla Bint Suhayl) to breastfeed her teenage adopted son, so that she could keep him as a member of her household without having to cover herself as she did in front of strangers, ‘A’ishah used this permission to ask her sisters and nieces to breastfeed the men with whom she wanted to mix. Umm Salama disapproved of this practice and said that breastfeeding was only for infants and adults should not be breastfed, be it directly or through expressing the milk in a container.\footnote{al-Bannâ al Sāʾīṭi, \textit{Bulūgh al-ʿāmāni}, vol. 16, p. 185.} Most of the Prophet's wives followed Umm Salama's reasoning in opposing the practice. ‘A’ishah however argued that if this was a license given to them by the Prophet, then they should make use of it.\footnote{Muslim, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim}, (1454). Abû Dâwûd, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abî Dâwûd}, (1815), al-Nasâ’î, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Nasâ’î}, (3118).}

There are certain aspects about this case which make it difficult to understand. In the version transmitted by al-Zuhri, it is stated that Sahla told Muḥammad that they used to regard Salîm as their son. The whole issue is further complicated by the fact that her husband, Abu Hudhayfa, married his sister Fatîma to Salîm, though it is impossible to determine whether this occurred before or after the events mentioned in this tradition. Evidence suggests that the Prophet did not intend this to be a precedent and that it was only used as such after isolating women was rigorously enforced. People then started emulating it in order to gain access to women who were kept in strict seclusion. In one version it is said that the Prophet laughed when...
Sahla remarked to him that Salīm was a grown man, which points to the fact that he might have taken the entire matter lightly.

There is another tradition, also transmitted by al-Zuhārī, to the effect that Muhammad’s wives regarded Sahla’s case as an exceptional one. In support of that, it has been narrated that the Prophet entered ‘A’īsha’s house and found a man there. When ‘A’īsha informed him that the man was her brother by suckling, the Prophet replied that she did not realize who was to be regarded as a brother, adding that suckling-relationship only came from hunger of infants.342

There is another tradition which may or may not have a connection with this incident concerning ‘A’īsha. Umm Salama objected to ‘A’īsha allowing a full grown slave to enter her presence. ‘A’īsha then mentioned Sahla’s case as a precedent. The sources mention that this precedent was used for other ulterior motives. A nomad came to the Prophet and told him that he took a second wife. His first wife then told him that she had suckled her. It is quite obvious that this was mainly a trick by the first wife to get rid of a rival. The Prophet replied that having suckled once or twice did not amount to an unlawful relationship.343 It is seems likely that the tradition was circulated later to prevent the abuse of suckling-relationships.344

2.12.8. Inquisitive

Umm Salama’s inquiring nature and interested curiosity are discussed often in history and Hadīth books. She was not afraid to ask about anything to understand better or to seek the wisdom behind issues. Once she asked the Prophet about some of the habits during Jahiliyya time with regard to mourning. She asked him whether applying kuḥl (kohl) on the eyes was permissible during mourning and whether the common practice of the Jahiliyya, whereby women

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342 By this he meant that the only genuine suckling-relationships were those acquired in infancy and that shows he disapproved of attempts to create artificial relationships between adults.


wore their shabbiest clothes and refrained from bathing till the mourning period was over, were permissible or not. She also asked him about al-Ḥijama when she desired to do that to herself, because she felt it would make her feel better. However the Prophet advised her to have someone else do it for her and suggested Abū Tība.

Most of the questions she asked the Prophet were later used as references to derive fiqh rulings, because of their value to the Muslim community as a whole and its women in particular. Another example was when she went on a pilgrimage with the Prophet and suddenly fell ill. She was desolate because she was unable to complete the rituals of the pilgrimage and asked the Prophet if there was any way she could still complete them. The Prophet advised her to perform the ṭawāf (circumbulation) of the holy Ka’ba riding rather than walking and urged her to do it in a wide circle to avoid being too close to the people and to prevent her camel from stepping on them or hurting them. The Prophet went to perform the morning prayers next to the Ka’ba while she mounted the camel and did as she was advised. She also asked about whether or not metamorphosed beings reproduced. Obviously this question was asked after the revelation of the verse about turning some humans into monkeys in punishment for not observing the sabbath.

To which the Prophet replied that they do not.

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346 Practice of alternative medicine method, also called ‘cupping’, in which a cup is applied to the skin and the pressure in the cup is reduced (by using change in heat or by suctioning out air), so that the skin is drawn into the cup.
349 [2.65] And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so We said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated.
2.12.9. Outspoken

Umm Salama was not shy and expressed herself even about rather private or embarrassing subjects. On one instance she asked the Prophet about “nocturnal emissions”. It was narrated that at one of the gatherings ‘A’isha asked the Prophet on behalf of a Muslim man about washing in the morning after awakening and finding some evidence of having ejaculated in the night without engaging in intercourse, nor remembering any dream or a vision. The Prophet told ‘A’isha that the man had to perform his ritual purity washing. Umm Salama then asked whether women experienced that as well and if so what they were required to do? The Prophet replied that women had the same experiences as men and should also perform the ritual purity.\footnote{al-Tirmidhī, Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhī, (98), Sahih Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 102, Muslim, Sahih Muslim, (313), Ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī, Sahih Sunan Ibn Mājah, (600)}

One other example would be when the Muhajirūn came to Medina and started to settle down there. They started intermarrying with the Anṣārī women. However the Muhajirūn were accustomed to different sexual practices than the Anṣār. One such practice was a particular position in intercourse, where the woman would kneel in front of her partner. Anṣārī women did not do that. One of the Muslims wanted to force his Anṣārī wife to accept this and to engage actively in such practice with him. The woman was too shy to ask the Prophet and went to Umm Salama and requested she ask on her behalf. Umm Salama asked the Prophet who recited verse [2:223]\footnote{2.223} however restricted this practice to one particular bodily opening (the vagina).\footnote{Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 6, p. 318.}

2.12.10. Humble

Despite being from an aristocratic, very powerful wealthy family, Umm Salama was humble. She did not refrain from serving the Prophet and his guests on her wedding day and

\footnote{[2.223] Your wives are a tilth for you, so go into your tilth when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves, and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that you will meet Him, and give good news to the believers.}
during her own wedding ceremony. She also took care of Umm al-Hasan’s (one of her slave girls) baby when she had sent her on an errand or to fetch something and the baby cried. Many a time she breastfed Umm al-Hasan’s baby to stop him from crying or because she thought he was hungry and shouldn’t wait till his mother returned.\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^4\) She taught her slaves and servants and cared for them, making sure they were well fed and comfortable. She instructed them in Hadīth and they later narrated these to the community.

2.12.11. Reflective

Umm thought a lot about various diverse issues and pondered them. She was not only practical and realistic, but she also busied herself thinking about emotions and changes therein. One day she overheard the Prophet repeatedly reciting a certain prayer saying: “Allah, changer of hearts, strengthen my heart with your religion.” She therefore asked him whether hearts do change. He replied that Allah had created all human beings and if he so wished he would make them have a change of heart. Hence, one should always ask Allah to strengthen one’s belief after finding it and to grant them mercy. After that she asked him to teach her a prayer she could use for herself. He taught her to say: “Allah, God of the Messenger Muhammad, forgive me my sins and make any rigidity in my heart disappear and save me from temptations as long as I live.”\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^5\)

2.12.12. Detail-oriented

Umm Salama never took things at face value without thinking about them and always asked for clarifications, particularly when she was not completely convinced. This included the smallest and most intricate details in issues which concerned her. One such issue was women and everything that pertained to them. Thus, she asked the Prophet many questions on various women-related topics. One was a question about attire and clothes. She asked about the length


of women’s clothes and how much of it should trail behind them. Obviously she was also concerned about cleanliness, because a trailing hem could pick up a lot of dust and dirt. The Prophet set it at *shibr* (the width of a hand). When she asked him if that was enough, because if the woman had to gather her hem for some reason then a hand-width would not be enough and she would have to reveal too much of herself, He replied: "A length of an arm and no more."\(^\text{356}\)

### 2.12.13. Counselling

Umm Salama was respected for her good advice and many of the Companions asked Umm Salama's advice because of her wisdom, knowledge, perception and common sense. The sources report that `Abd al-Rahmān Ibn `Auf went to seek her advice after becoming very rich and starting to fear that his wealth could lead him astray. She advised him to spend from his wealth in the cause of Allah and for the good of the poor and hungry.\(^\text{357}\) The Companions asked her about how the Prophet used to recite the Qur'an and she used to correct them by telling them what she had heard.\(^\text{358}\)

Once, a disagreement arose between Abū Hurayra and Ibn `Abbas about the waiting period of a pregnant widow, prior to getting remarried. They could not agree and sent for clarification from Umm Salama. She related the incident concerning Subay'a al-Aslamiyah. The Prophet instructed her to get married after her husband's death as soon as she had finished her post-natal bleeding.\(^\text{359}\) The sources report that even 'A'isha asked Umm Salama for clarification concerning the *nawafel* (additional supplement prayers). Thabit, Umm Salama's *mawla*, narrated that the Prophet used to pray two *raq'at* before noon prayer and the same amount before 'Asr. ‘A’isha was confused about whether these two additional *raq’at* were before or after ‘Asr and she


\(^{357}\) Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 6, p. 290.


\(^{359}\) Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (1485), al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, (945), al-Nasā’ī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, (3289), (3283), (3284) (3285) (3286) (3289) and (3291), al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr (572) with slight variations in the wording.
sent to Umm Salama asking for confirmation and clarification. Umm Salama replied saying they were before and it was only once that the Prophet performed them after 'Asr in compensation. Due to the knowledge Umm Salama amassed in the Prophet’s household, many Companions used to ask her for *fatwas* (legal opinions) in *fiqh* matters.  

### 2.13. Struggle for equality

Umm Salama once asked the Prophet about *Jihad* for women. He replied saying that the *Jihad* of women does not involve going to war or participating in battles as warriors, but their *Jihad* was performing Ḥājj and ‘Umra (the big and the small pilgrimage).  

According to another version Umm Salama narrated that the Prophet told her that performing the pilgrimage is the *Jihad* of those who are physically weaker. Yet women did participate in battles and were responsible for caring for the wounded, nursing them and giving water to warriors. Umm Salama once asked to join the Prophet as he prepared to go to battle. He replied that *Jihad* was not required of women. She retorted that she would like to go in order to tend to the wounded, carry water and offer it to warriors. He therefore allowed her to do so. Sources reveal that Umm Salama accompanied the Prophet on seven of his battles and military missions.


In the month of Sha’ban in the fifth year of *Hijra*, the Prophet learned that Banū al-Mustaliq were gathering forces to meet him in battle, lead by al-Ḥarith Ibn Abī Ḍirār. He decided to fight them. When Banū al-Mustaliq and their allies found out that the Prophet was coming out to meet them in battle with a large force they panicked and their allies dispersed. The Prophet meanwhile had reached a well belonging to Banū Khuza’a called as al-Muraisī. Sources report that he was

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362 Ibid, (2902).  
accompanied by both ‘A’isha and Umm Salama. This campaign ended with the incident of Ḥadīth al-Ifk. However, it is curious that the sources do not record Umm Salama’s opinion regarding this incident.

2.13.2. Ghazwat al Khandaq – Battle of the Trench

Also in the fifth year of Hijra, Umm Salama accompanied the Prophet on another battle along with ‘A’isha and Zaynab Bint Jaḥsh. Umm Salama narrated many Ḥadīths about the events of the battle and its details. One narration reports that during the height of battle the Prophet kept muttering: “The best of Khayr is that of the After-life. Allah forgive al-Muhajirūn and al-Anṣār.” Umm Salama accompanied the Prophet and did not leave his side during this Battle.

2.13.3. Ghazwat Banū Qurayza

The battle took place after the Battle of the Trenches also in the fifth year of Hijra. The Muslims attacked as a response to Banū Qurayza’s obvious support of Quraysh and their allies during that battle. It was reported that Umm Salama attended the battle against Banū Qurayzah.

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368 Wellhausen, Vakidi’s Kitab al Maghazi, p. 199.
2.13.4. Hudaibiya

Umm Salama also joined the Prophet on his journey to perform the pilgrimage in the sixth year of *Hijra*, which resulted in the Treaty of Hudaibiya.\(^{370}\) She was very wise and down to earth, which became apparent the day the Hudaibiya treaty was signed. The Prophet asked the Companions and all others who were with them to go shave, cut their hair and slaughter their sacrifices, but nobody listened to him because they thought that the treaty was unfair to the Muslims and they were disappointed from having been prevented from performing the pilgrimage. The Prophet asked them again to start sacrificing their animals, but again nobody listened. He entered Umm Salama’s tent being very upset and he related the events to her and how hurt he was that they would not obey him. He was feeling indignant. In utter disgust, he said to Umm Salama: "Thrice have I commanded the people to slaughter their animals and shave their heads. But look how listless and indolent they are!"

She intuitively comforted him saying: "O Prophet of Allah, you can't make these fifteen hundred men do what they don't want to do. Just do your own duty, which Allah has imposed on you. Go ahead and perform your own rites in an open place so that every one of them can see you."\(^{371}\) The Prophet realized the sense of this advice. He stepped out of the tent and saw that the sun had risen. He went up to the herd. Everybody was now watching him. Even the pagans of Mecca who had stayed there overnight saw him picking Abu Jahl's camel, which had a white, shining, silver nose-ring. He brought it out into the open, hobbled it and slaughtered it, pronouncing: "Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!" The Prophet took Umm Salama’s advice and the result was exactly as she had predicted. It has been reported that her wisdom was appreciated and acknowledged later. A saying "we have not known any other woman who offered advice and it


turned to be correct except for Umm Salama” is attributed to al-Juwaynī, the Imam of the Haramayn.372

Four women were present at Ḥudaibiya, Umm Salama, Umm ‘Umāra,373 Umm Hānī374 and Umm Amīr al Ashhaliyah.375

2.13.5. Ghazwat Khaybar

In the seventh year of Hijra, Umm Salama accompanied the Prophet on his expedition to Khaybar. Some of the sources mention that a woman came to the Prophet and expressed her wish to participate in the battle like the men. The Prophet allowed her to do so, on condition that she remain close to his wife Umm Salama and does exactly like her. Twenty women accompanied the troops into the Battle of Khaybar. Sixteen of them were named in the sources amongst them Umm Salama.376

2.13.6. Fath Mecca

The story about how Abū Sufyan Ibn al-Harith and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Umayya accepted Islam shows that Umm Salama participated in the events of Fath Mecca as well. Ibn Ishāq reported that these two men met the Prophet between Mecca and Medina at a place called Nabq al-‘Iqāb. They requested the permission to meet with him from Umm Salama. She asked the Prophet on their behalf saying, your paternal cousin and maternal cousin, who is also your brother in law, are requesting to see you. The Prophet denied his permission saying that his paternal cousin dishonored him, while his maternal cousin shamed and insulted him in Mecca. Abū Sufyan had already been to see his daughter Umm Ḥabība to intercede on his behalf with the Prophet but without any success. Umm Salama related the Prophet’s answer to them upon which one of them

373 Nusayba bint Ka’b al-Anṣariyah, was an early convert to Islam and the first female to fight in defense of the religion.
374 Fākhitah Bint Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet’s first cousin
376 Ibid, p. 283.
said: “If he does not grant us permission, I will take the hand of my companion here and we shall walk the earth until we die of hunger and thirst.” Umm Salama interfered and again interceded on their behalf. The Prophet took pity on them and received them. They declared that they have renounced their old faith and have joined the fold of Islam.377

2.13.7. Ghazwat al- Ṭa’if

In the eighth year of Hijra the Prophet went on a military expedition against the people of Ta’if. Sources report that he took two of his wives with him, Zaynab and Umm Salama. It has been reported that two tents were erected, one for each wife, and that the Prophet used to perform his prayers in the space between both tents.378 Once the Prophet entered Umm Salama’s tent and found her sitting with her brother ʿAbd Allah and an effeminate man (mukhannath). He overheard the effeminate man telling ʿAbd Allah, that if Allah granted them victory over the people of Ta’if tomorrow he should claim the daughter of Ghilān. He described her to him. The Prophet got very upset about this and prohibited the effemimates from entering his wives’ tents after that.379

The previous narrations show that during the lifetime of the Prophet she was a real partner to him, participating in his life in every way possible, even accompanying him on his battles, military excursions and missions. She was always ready to participate in action or render advice or report the events to those who had not participated in them. However after the Prophet’s death Umm Salama seems to have no longer participated in military events of any kind, neither to tend the wounded nor to offer water to the thirsty soldiers, based on the Qur’ānic

379 al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 55, Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, (2180).
injunction for the mothers of the believers to remain in their houses. However, she participated actively in the events around her from the shelter of her own home.

2.14. Special Position

While most Sunnī history books mention that ‘A’isha was the Prophet’s favorite wife, Umm Salama also occupied a special place in his heart. Sources report that he used to start with her house every evening and end in the house where he would be spending the night. In a very feminine and rather transparent explanation ‘A’isha narrates: “After performing his ʿAsr prayers, the Prophet would visit all his wives one by one and would start with Umm Salama, because she was the eldest (akbarahunna). He used to come to me last.”381 Sawda was the eldest of the wives and not Umm Salama, so this narration reveals how jealous she was of Umm Salama.

Although ‘A’isha claims in her list of privileges that she alone among the Prophet’s wives saw Angel Jibrīl, it is recorded in the Hadīth collection of Muslim that Umm Salama also saw him. Umm Salama’s account, like ‘A’isha’s, emphasizes that the angelic presence took the human form of Dihya al-Kalbī.382 Umm Salama asserts that she had no knowledge of the angel’s presence until after he had departed and she heard the Prophet explain his true nature.383 Umm Salama “saw” Jibrīl in much the same fashion as ‘A’isha did. The sources however, point out two critical differences: only ‘A’isha knew of the angel’s presence and, even if indirectly, was saluted by him.384

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380 [33.33] And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.
382 Or Dahya al-Kalbî.
383 Muslim, Şahîh Muslim, vol. 7, p. 144.
Another version of this event reports that Umm Salama was one of the very few who had seen Angel Jibrīl in the form he used to take while revealing some chapters or verses to the Prophet, namely a human form resembling the Companion Dihaya al-Kalbī. Once the Prophet was at Umm Salama's home and she heard voices. She went to see who was there. Afterwards the Prophet recited the verses that were just revealed to him and she muttered: "By Allah I thought that this was Dīḥaya until I heard him recite the new revelation." In yet a different version the Prophet asked Umm Salama later on whom she had seen, to ascertain whether or not she had seen the Angel Jibrīl or just his human form, and he did not correct her when she said it was Dīḥaya.

Ibn Sa'd's biographical dictionary contains two separate lists of attributes that explicitly distinguish ‘A’isha from the other wives to establish her as the favorite. However, these distinguishing qualities are related on the authority of ‘A’isha herself. According to Denise Spellberg this is "a device which appears to cede the wife of the Prophet control over the terms of her own praise." However, all the attributes are shared by Umm Salama, apart from being a virgin at the tome of her marriage to the Prophet.

Despite opposition to the orthodox narrative of his own Sunnī community, al-Baghdādī, a member of the Shafī‘ī law school, asserts that based on several traditions, there are four women deemed “the most excellent.” Thus he ranks Fāṭima and Khadija as the most exalted of all women, followed in order by ‘A’isha, Umm Salama and fourthly Hafṣa Bint ‘Umar. After naming these eminent women, al-Baghdādī, however, states that only “Allah knows best who is the most excellent.” He concludes with a saying that supports the preference of Muḥammad’s direct

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385 al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 6, p. 96, Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, (2451), with minor variations in the wording.
386 Ibn Ḥajar, Fath al-bārī, vol. 9, p. 5.
387 Spellberg, Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past, p. 29.
descendants over his wives: “All of the daughters of Muḥammad are more excellent than his wives.”

However, it was apparent that Umm Salama was among the favorites of the Prophet’s wives due to her wisdom, perception, sound judgment and other good qualities. Those qualities became evident in the treaty of Hudaibiya, as was previously shown, where her advice prevented a falling out between the Prophet and the Companions at a very crucial time.

The word “aym” was used by the Arabs as a title for widows and unmarried ladies. When Umm Salama’s husband, Abu Salama, died, the Muslim community bestowed the title ‘Aym al-ʿArab on her, to show her how much they respected and revered her.

2.15. Ḥadīth

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, Umm Salama narrated many ahādīth she heard from the Prophet. (See Annex 1 and 2 for the collection of her narrations.) In Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad she has a total of three hundred and seventy eight Ḥadīths, In the Sahihayn she has a total of twenty nine Ḥadīths, of which Bukharī and Muslim agreed on thirteen, while al Bukharī listed an additional three and Muslim an additional thirteen.

The great majority of questions posed to her dealt with the supposed utterances of the Prophet and with the details of both his public and private life. It is helpful to note that those interested in details about the Prophet’s life frequently used both ‘A’isha and Umm Salama to check and as a source of verification of the other’s proclamations. No doubt these two ‘Mothers of the Believers’ had many an occasion to add to, append, if not even contradict, each other’s words, particularly where ‘Alī and the members of his family were involved. Umm Salama was

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389 al-Suweidy, Fiqh al-Sahābiyât., p. 66.
portrayed in the Sunnī sources as decidedly and consistently pro-ʿAlīd, while ʿA’isha was portrayed in the Shīʿī sources as unquestionably and always anti-ʿAlīd. On such occasions some people with ulterior motives and hidden agendas used their own judgments or followed their own inclinations in giving preference to one version of Hadīth narrated by one or the other of the two ‘Mothers of the Believers’. There were, however, many matters on which their reports agreed. In the face of such agreement even Abū Hurayra could do no less than concede their superior knowledge, especially matters regarding women’s issues and the private behavior of the Prophet, despite the huge number of aḥādīth he narrated.

About eighty five people narrated Hadīth directly from Umm Salama. They included men and women, whom she taught in person, ʿUmar and Zaynab, her children narrated Hadīth from her, as well as her mawla called Nāfi’, Hind Bint al-Ḥarīth and Ṣafīya Bint Shayba and her other mawla ʿAbd Allah Ibn Rāfī’, Sunayna and Dumayra Umm al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Usāma Ibn Zayd Ibn Ḥarīthah, Kuraib the mawla of Ibn ʿAbbās, ‘Urwa Ibn al-Zubayr and Nāfi’ the mawla of Ibn ‘Umar.

Though all the wives of the Prophet possessed great knowledge, ‘A’isha and Umm Salama had no rivals when it concerned Hadīth. Mahmūd Ibn Labīd said, "The wives of the Prophet were treasuries of Hadīth but ‘A’isha and Umm Salamah had no equal." Marwan Ibn Ḥakīm enquired about problems and openly said, "Why should we ask others while the wives of the Prophet are among us?"

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393 al-Suweidy, Fiqh al-Sahabiyat, p. 68.
395 ʿWas also known as Abū Nuʿaym al-ʿAnsārī and was born during the lifetime of the Prophet, however, his status as a šāḥābī is disputed. Ibn Hibbān classifies him as a tābiʿī, while al-Bukhārī considers him a šāḥābī as per his biographical entry (1762) in al-Bukhārī, Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl. [d. 256 AH]. al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr. Beirut, 1962, vol. 7, p. 402.
396 Wellhausen, Vakidi’s Kitab al Maghazi.
397 Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, p. xxx
came to them to clarify certain issues and a huge group of ṭābiʿūn (followers of the companions) benefited from their advice. A detailed account of the aḥādīth narrated by Umm Salama will be dealt with in the following chapter.

2.16. Revelation

Sources report that the Prophet received some revelations in Umm Salama’s house.

Previous to that, this ‘privilege’ was solely and uniquely ‘A’isha’s. On one occasion verse [9:102] was revealed in her house. The verse in question is in reference to the repentance of the Anṣārī Abū Labāba (Marwān Ibn al-Munzīr). Marwān had chained himself to a pillar in the mosque as a form of repentance. He head earlier divulged the Prophet’s plans to raid Banū Qurayza. Marwān felt very guilty and decided to chain himself to a pillar in the mosque until Allah decides his fate. He announced that he would not leave this pillar until Allah accepted his repentance. Concerning Marwān’s betrayal the Prophet said: "Had he come to me, I would have interceded to Allah on his behalf, but now it is out of my hands and only Allah can accept his penance." It was during the night that Umm Salama heard the Prophet laugh out in delight. When she asked him why he was laughing, the Prophet told her that Abū Labāba has been pardoned and recited the verse to her. Umm Salama asked him straight away if she could rush out to the mosque and be the one to bring him the good news. The Prophet allowed her to do so. Abū Labāba was chained to the pillar for six days. His wife used to come to the mosque at prayer times to unchain him so he could perform his prayers and then chain him back to the pillar again. Umm Salama hurried to the mosque shouting joyfully: “Rejoice Abū Labāba, Allah has pardoned you.” The people who were in the mosque rushed towards him to unchain him, however he

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398 [9.102] And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one; may be Allah will turn to them (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
400 al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām, p. 313, al-Ḥifnī, Mawsūʿat umm al-mu’minīn, pp. 146-147.
stopped them saying: “By Allah, nobody will unchain me except the Messenger of Allah.” When the Prophet went to perform his morning prayers at the mosque, he unchained him.\textsuperscript{401} This shows a great deal of compassion on Umm Salama’s part.

Another revelation that the Prophet received in Umm Salama’s home is the second part of verse [33.33].\textsuperscript{402} According to the Sunnī Tafsīr (exegesis) of Ibn Kathīr\textsuperscript{403} those meant by verse [33:33] are the Prophet’s wives and the meaning of bayt means their dwellings. This is also supported by the next verse [33:34]\textsuperscript{404} asking them to recite what has been revealed of the Qurʿān inside their houses. There is a particular Ḥadīth, namely Ḥadīth al kisā‘ (the narration of the mantle) of which some versions honor Umm Salama in particular, by including her as a member of ahl al-bayt. The Ḥadīth\textsuperscript{405} was reportedly uttered by the Prophet in Umm Salama’s house on the occasion of a visit by his daughter Fatima accompanied by her two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and their father ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and will be dealt with in detail in chapter 3.

Most importantly, verses were not only revealed in Umm Salama’s house, but many verses were also revealed prompted by her questions. Umm Salama once asked the Prophet why the Qurʿān seems to be addressing men only, whereas women also converted to Islam, fought side by side with the men, migrated with them and sacrificed just as much as the men if not more. It was a few days later while she was combing her hair that she heard the Prophet reciting verse [33.35]\textsuperscript{406} from the minbar (pulpit).\textsuperscript{407}

\textsuperscript{401} al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Īslām, p. 313, al-Ḥifnī, Mawsūʿat umm al-muʿminīn, pp. 146-147.
\textsuperscript{402} [33.33] Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.
\textsuperscript{404} [33:34]
\textsuperscript{405} Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 6, p. 296.
\textsuperscript{406} [33.35] Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men
Another verse, namely [4:32] is also reported to have been revealed after Umm Salama asked the Prophet about why women only inherit half the amount that men do and whether this was because men were obligated to fight in battles while women were not. Verse [3.195] is reported to have been revealed after Umm Salama asked the Prophet why the emigration and hardship of the women were not mentioned in the Qurʾān.

In addition to the above narratives, which are mostly found in Sunnī sources, the Shiʿī sources have additional ones. A portion of verse [49.11] is said to have been revealed on account of ’A’isha and Ḥafṣa mocking Umm Salama. Ṣabāṭabāṭī reported that Umm Salama had tied a piece of white cloth around her waist in form of a belt and that the two ends were trailing behind her. ’A’isha and Ḥafṣa laughed about her and ’A’isha told Ḥafṣa: “Look at what is trailing behind her. It looks like a dog’s tongue.” In another version attributed to al-Ḥasan, this verse was revealed in response to ’A’isha mocking Umm Salama for being rather short.

who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.

Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, vol. 6, p. 301.

[4.32] And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask Allah of His grace; surely Allah knows all things.

[3.195] So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow; a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward.

[49.11] O you who believe! let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.


Ibid.

However in a different version, the verse is said to have been revealed in response to some of the wives mocking Safiyya for being a Jewess.414

With regard to verse [33.28],415 al-Tūsī reports that each of the wives had asked the Prophet for something. Umm Salama asked him for a new curtain to shield her home from pryig eyes. Maymūna, Umm Habība and Hafṣa asked him for new garments. Sawda asked for some velvet from Khaybar. ‘A’īsha was angry and jealous. Juwayriya asked for a headdress and Zaynab asked for kuhl (kohl).416

Differently from the Sunnī exegetes, not all the Shiī exegetes attribute the revelation of verse [3.195]417 to being a response to a question by Umm Salama. While al-Tūsī,418 Tabātabā’ī419 as well as al-Bayḍawī420 mention Umm Salama’s question, al-Ṭabarsī421 does not.

While the revelation of verse [33.35]422, is attributed to a question by Umm Salama in the tafsīr books of al-Bayḍawī,423 it is attributed to Asmā’ Bint ‘Umays instead by al-Ṭabarsī.424 However,

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415 [33.28] O Prophet! say to your wives: If you desire this world's life and its adornment, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing.
417 [3.195] So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow; a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward.
422 [33.35] Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.
according to al-Baydawi, verse [4.32] was revealed in response to Umm Salama wishing that she were a man, because men go to battle and receive a full share of inheritance.

While the *tafsir* by al-Tusi of Verse [33.33] is almost identical to the Sunnī *tafsir*, he adds that when Umm Salama asked the Prophet if she was one of *ahl al-bayt*, he replied in the negative.

### 2.17. Politics

#### 2.17.1. Fitna

During the rule of 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān, the way the Companion of the Prophet, 'Ammār Ibn Yāsīr, was treated, gave 'A'isha and Umm Salama ample opportunity for open disagreement and undisguised opposition. As mentioned before, 'Ammār was related to Umm Salama and his character and honesty is said to have been witnessed to by 'A'isha herself, despite his openly undisguised pro-'Alīd tendency. 'A'isha admitted that she heard Prophet Muhammad speak highly of him. 'Umar had appointed him to the governorship of Kūfa, but he was not stern enough to retain the office for long. He was, however, courageous enough to challenge 'Uthmān's use of Muslims' resources, which, according to al-Baladhuri, on this particular occasion took the form of misappropriating some jewels from the treasury. For his daring courage 'Ammār was publicly...
flogged until he was rendered unconscious and had to be carried to Umm Salama's house in that condition.\footnote{432 Ibid, vol. 4, p. 88.}

The Makhzūmite Hishām Ibn al-Walīd, brother of the more famous Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, protested 'Uthmān's inconsideration and overbearing and felt gravely insulted himself. He joined Umm Salama, in whose house the other Makhzūmites had gathered. 'Uthmān sent to ask her, "What is the meaning of this gathering?" Her reply to him was: "Put aside this behavior, O 'Uthmān, and do not order the people or force issues on them which they abhor."\footnote{433 Ibid, vol. 5, p. 8.} When 'A'isha heard of 'Uthmān's treatment of Āmmār, she was extremely angry. She took one of Muḥammad's hairs, a shirt and a sandal of his and, holding them up for all people to see, shouted: "How soon indeed you have forgotten the sunna of your Prophet, and these, his hair, shirt and sandal have not yet disappeared!" Sources report that 'Uthmān was angered to the point of speechlessness.

Yet he was nevertheless out-maneuvered and had to take refuge for the time being in the mosque. The people were impressed as well as astonished at the rapid turn of events, that they could say or do nothing much, but marvel and praise Allah. 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās, himself a victim of 'Uthmān's nepotism, for the latter had deposed him from governorship of Egypt in favor of his half-brother, 'Abd Allah Ibn Sa'd, better known as Ibn Abī Sarh, praised Allah the loudest.\footnote{434 Ibid, vol. 5, p. 48, 88.}

Meanwhile in Egypt, the events also took a turn for the worse if not the worst. Muḥammad Ibn Abī Hudhai'a broke out in open rebellion. He captured the government in the absence of Ibn Abī Sarh, and on his return forced him to escape to Palestine.\footnote{435 Ibid, Vol. 5, p. 61, 67.} The 'rebel' now did all he could to keep the resentment of the Egyptians alive and increasing against 'Uthmān. Sources claim that he even resorted to forging letters in the name of the Mothers of the Believers. The plural here is important and noteworthy, because it was known that 'A'isha was half-sister to
Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr and Umm Salama was related to ‘Ammār Ibn Yasīr, and that they were both known to be opposed to some of the Caliph’s actions. The content of these letters was effectively an appeal to Allah and to the Egyptians for liberation from the evil rule of ʿUthmān.

Umm Salama was very eloquent and many of her sayings survived in the sources. One particular situation necessitated eloquence as well as tact, namely when she wrote to advise ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAffān. Tayfūr reported that he heard from al-Qutaybi that Umm Salama wrote:

“My son, I see how your subjects have turned away from you and are avoiding your company. Do not deviate from the path that the Prophet initiated with love and do not re-ignite the flames that the Prophet had previously put out. Follow the example and role model of your two companions and predecessors, as they have justly organized the affairs of the community. As you are not ignorant, you should not apologize to excuse your faults or mistakes. You are not feeble to retreat. This is my advice to you – as a mother I am compelled to warn you. You have an obligation to obey Allah and an obligation to honor the pledge you made to your subjects.”

Tayfūr also reported that ʿUthmān replied to her: “You have spoken and I have understood. You have advised and I have accepted and it is my right that I listen to your advice. The people you have mentioned are ignorant fools and I have lowered myself to them so much that I have become like a pail lowered into a well. I have waited and been very patient with them as if it was a necessity for me to do so, to the extent that I have shown them nothing but righteousness and brotherhood in return for devilish evil. I have tried my utmost to approach them and appeal to them using all ties available to me, but to no avail. They splintered into three fronts

436 Abbott, Aishah, p. 117.
439 Ibid.
against me. Those whose silence is more penetrating than speech, those who pretended to be on my side, yet withheld the truth [and the offenders/rebels]. Amid those three fronts I am caught between sharp tongues, stony hearts and cutting swords. Allah is my only resort against the reasonable men who would not stop the fools, as well as the knowledgeable men who would not teach the ignorant. Eventually I and they will all be accountable to Allah, on the day they will not be able to speak nor be granted the expression of their plea.”

The letters are significant, because they show that Umm Salama was literate and corroborate the information that she was among the very few women who could read, as she would verify what the scribe had written, should she have used a scribe.

2.17.2. Battle of the Camel

The earliest extant written references to this incident are found in the third century AH collection of Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal. Unlike other references to ‘A’isha’s participation in the first civil war, these statements are attributed to ‘A’isha herself. She is the first authority to transmit them, which implies support for the matn (content) of the Ḥadīth. As mentioned briefly by Ibn Ḥanbal, ‘A’isha was on her way to the Battle of the Camel when she noticed the howling of dogs at a spring called al-Ḥaw’ab. The howling noises immediately remind her of the relatively vague words uttered by the Prophet more than twenty years earlier in the presence of all of his wives: “At which of you will the dogs of al-Ḥaw’ab howl?”

The Battle of the Camel is perhaps one of the earliest incidents after Ghadīr Khumm, where Sunnī and Shi’ī interpretations are very different with regard to certain details and yet agree on others, such as what constitutes appropriate female behavior. This becomes very apparent in the exchanges attributed to have taken place between ‘A’isha and Umm Salama. Umm Salama was portrayed as being a loyal supporter of ‘Alī and was considered to be the

441 Spellberg, Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past, p. 120.
Prophet’s favorite wife after Khadija by Shī‘ī Muslims.\textsuperscript{442} They denied this privileged status to ‘A’isha.\textsuperscript{443} Denise Spellberg writes: “The antagonism between Umm Salama and ‘A’isha personifies the clash of politics and gender in medieval Islamic debate. The specifics of the heated exchange between these two wives of the Prophet contained important referents to the more general limitations placed upon all Muslim women in the matter of politics.”\textsuperscript{444}

The oldest reference to the dispute between Umm Salama and ‘A’isha about the Battle of the Camel is by the Shī‘ī author al-Ya‘qūbī. At the time when ‘A’isha was about to depart, Umm Salama reminded her in a critical and disapproving way that “the support of the religion does not depend upon the exertions of women.”\textsuperscript{445} This perceived antagonism between ‘A’isha and Umm Salama reflects not just their differing personalities, but the political divisions rife within the Prophet’s own household especially after his death.\textsuperscript{446}

The next versions are found in the fourth century AH Sunnī works of al-Ṭabarī and Ibni ‘Abd Rabbīḥ. The exchange between Umm Salama and ‘A’isha is both personal and political. ‘A’isha is reminded by Umm Salama that she is disobeying the revealed command of Allah by setting off for battle instead of staying at home. Al-Ṭabarī reports that Umm Salama adds that she too would march if Allah had not forbidden the wives of the Prophet such actions in the Qurʾān. However, she says that she would have been on ‘Alī’s side, the Prophet’s son in law and the father of his grandchildren. Instead, Umm Salama sent her own son, Salama, to fight for ‘Alī’s cause, first at the Battle of the Camel and later at Šiffīn.

All the other Mothers of the Believers do not seem to have supported ‘A’isha, with the exception of Hafṣa, who was asked by ‘A’isha to accompany her and would have gone except

\textsuperscript{442} Ibid, p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{443} Ibid, p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{444} Ibid, p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{446} Spellberg, \textit{Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past}, p. 132.
that her own brother opposed it and talked her out of it. Al-Ṭabarī describes the day ‘A’īsha left for battle as a scene of highly charged emotion, named later as ‘the Day of Weeping’.447

The version by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih is slightly different. Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih reports about a series of letters exchanged between Umm Salama and ‘A’īsha with the same gist of events and basically the same criticism and disapproval by Umm Salama. ‘A’īsha is wrong to leave her home, an act forbidden all the wives of the Prophet in the Qur’ān. She is also criticized for allowing herself to play a role in political life. In her letter Umm Salama is supposed to have written: “If the Prophet knew that women were permitted to engage in battle, then he would have authorized you.”448 Umm Salama also allegedly accuses ‘A’īsha of splitting the Prophet’s community apart. Finally, similar to al-Ya’qūbī’s account, Umm Salama repeats that the support of the faith does not rest upon women. Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih alleges a written response by ‘A’īsha to Umm Salama where she ‘rudely’ reminds Umm Salama that her involvement in the problems of the community is her own business and that she needs no words of counsel from anyone. ‘A’īsha addresses Umm Salama in this letter simply as Umm Salama and signs the letter as ‘from the Mother of the Believers’ attempting to make Umm Salama feel inferior.

‘A’īsha does not even grant Umm Salama her basic honorary title and thanks her for her ‘lecture’ and comments as well as her presumed right to counsel her. ‘A’īsha wrote about her departure: “I make a distinction between two parties of disputing Muslims. If I stay, then it will not be because of any restriction [on your part]. If I leave, it will be concerning something about which I need explain no further.”449 However this written exchange is in all probability historical fiction or an embellishment of actual events at best. It seems that Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s detailed and sophisticated version of the presumed debate between Umm Salama and ‘A’īsha is most likely an

447 al-Ṭabarī, Ta’īkh al-rusul, vol. 1, 3101.
artificial version of an earlier, less detailed argument. Furthermore, with time more and more amplifications were added and put in Umm Salama’s mouth – or pen - to show that ‘A’isha was not acting as the Prophet would have wished and that she should be ashamed when meeting him later in heaven.

In a later version, namely in the fifth century AH book by the Shī‘ī author al-Mufid, yet more details are found. In his account, Umm Salama chastises ‘A’isha with a complete summary of what all is needed for a proper Islamic standard of female obedient behavior as signified by both the Qur’ān and the Prophet. The list includes veiling and for a woman not to believe herself to be vital for the support of the community of the faithful. In this version Umm Salama elaborates that if ‘A’isha were to be obedient to the Prophet’s commands, she would keep her gaze lowered, keep her eyes averted and remain in her home. Moreover, Umm Salama asks ‘A’isha, “What would you do if the Messenger of Allah met you on your journey?”

In al-Mufid’s version and in a striking contrast to ‘A’isha, Umm Salama represents the epitome of model behavior for a Muslim woman, and a role model for all women, a true Mother of the Believers. She does not go to battle regardless of her own strong feelings for the righteousness of ‘Alī’s cause and instead goes to him to offer him the services of her son in accordance with the Qur’ānic injunction to stay at home. “O Commander of the Believers,” she is to have said, "were it not disobeying Allah Almighty and you would not accept that from me, I would go with you. But here is my son, ‘Umar, Allah knows he is more precious to me than my soul, to go with you.” Staying home is shown to be appropriate for a God-fearing lady of high social standing.

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450 al-Mufid, Kitāb al-Jamal, p. 126.
Umm Salama next wrote Aisha, urging her to abstain from the wicked and unwomanly path that she, a Mother of the Believers, was then intending to follow. Al-Mufid's version allows Umm Salama, a widow of the Prophet Muhammad to articulate the devout and solid conviction that 'A'isha's behavior would not meet with the Prophet's approval and that woman's place was at her home and not on the battlefield. But 'A'isha, having already gone so far in her preparation for battle, would hardly be influenced by anything Umm Salama had to say to her. As mentioned earlier, in this version also, her brusque reply was addressed "From Aisha, the Mother of the Believers, to Umm Salama." A literal translation of the letter will not be able to communicate the sarcasm and insolence implied in the note. Professor Sprengling\textsuperscript{453} gives the following translation: "What an honor indeed to receive your sermon! How well I know your right to advise me! I am not making the 'Umra (Lesser Pilgrimage) as a casual visitor. An excellent point is a vantage point in which I distinguish between two parties of Muslims at variance with one another. If I stay put, it will not be because of any constraints. If I go away, then it will be for something about which I need not expatiate any further. Goodbye."\textsuperscript{454}

Ibn Sa'd's biographical dictionary contains many references to 'A'isha's regret for her actions in the Battle of the Camel. The majority of these traditions depict 'A'isha's despair. Remembering her actions during the first civil war, 'A'isha wishes that she were "completely forgotten", that she did not exist.\textsuperscript{455}

2.18. Umm Salama's House

In the same way as the men of the community took Muhammad as their model, so the women looked to his wives as an example of the right mode of living.\textsuperscript{456}

\textsuperscript{453} Abbott, Aishah, the Beloved of Mohammed, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{455} Spellberg, Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{456} Stern, Marriage in Early Islam, p. 126.
The houses of the Mothers of the Believers were erected on one side of the masjid (mosque) with their entrances possibly on to its court. In contrast to ‘A’isha’s house, which had an entrance to the masjid, Umm Salama had a screen, in order to form a barrier between her and the people. The mosque was a place for public assembly, which translates to very little privacy for the Mothers of the Believers.\footnote{Ibid, p. 114.}

There is a doubt whether Umm Salama sold her house or not. The later traditions about that, found in Ibn Sa’d’s Tabaqat are all transmitted by Ibn Abī Sabra, a mudallis (said to have supplemented traditions).\footnote{Ibid, p. 165.}

\section*{2.19. Death}

The sources disagree about the date of Umm Salama’s death. Some books set her death as having occurred in the year 59 of Hijra,\footnote{Ibn Sa’d, Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt, vol. 8, p. 96, Ibn Hajar, Al-Iṣāba, vol. 8, p. 42, al-Ṭabarī, Ta’rikh al-rusul, vol. 13, p. 72.} while others claim it was in year 60,\footnote{Al-Ṭabarī, al-Simt al-thamīn, p. 147.} or in year 61 AH\footnote{Ibn Hajar, Al-Iṣāba, vol. 8, p. 242, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 12, p. 457, Ibn al-Athīr, Usud al-Ghāba, vol. 5, p. 560.} and finally some set it to have occurred in year 62 of Hijra.\footnote{Ibn Hajar, Al-Iṣāba, vol. 8, p. 248.}

The most likely possibility is that the last estimate is the correct option. ‘Ubaid Allah Ibn al-Qībīṭiya narrated that al-Ḥarīth Ibn Abī Rabī‘ and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ṣafwān both went to see Umm Salama to ask her about a narration they heard concerning an army that would be defeated. This occurred in the reign of ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr.\footnote{Saḥḥ Muslim, (2882), Musnad al-Imām Ahmad, vol. 6, p. 290.} It indicates that Umm Salama was alive during the reign of Yazīd Ibn Mu‘awiya, when these three men are reported to have visited her to ask about the narration of the alleged army of ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr, which he was to lead against Yazīd.
Furthermore another narration corroborates this option, namely the one narrated in al-
Tabarî, who stated that al-Haytham Ibn ‘Addiy is said to have reported that the first the Prophet's
wives to die was Zaynab Bint Jahsh, who died during the reign of ‘Umar and the last one to pass
away was Umm Salama in the reign of Yazîd Ibn Mu’awiya in the year 62 of Hijra.\[464\] The sources
also report that Umm Salama cursed the people of Iraq upon hearing the news of al-Ḥusayn's
martyrdom in Karbalâ’.\[465\] In addition another narration claims that Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab went to
see Umm Salama to offer his condolences on the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn, which took place in
year 61 AH.\[466\] From the above it appears that her death transpired in year 62 AH or possibly late
in the year 61 AH after the battle of Karbalâ’.

The sources also disagree about the person leading the funeral prayers. Some history
books claim that it was Abû Hurayra,\[467\] while others claim it was Saīd Ibn Yazîd\[468\] and yet others
claim that it was her nephew ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abd Allah Ibn Umayya.\[469\] It appears that the correct
choice is that her nephew was the one to lead the funeral prayer as he was alive in the year 62 of
Hijra, while both Abû Hurayra and Saīd Ibn Yazîd had already passed away. A possible
explanation of the confusion could be that Umm Salama had fallen ill and had asked to have
either Abû Hurayra or Ibn Yazîd perform the funeral prayer. However, she recovered from her
illness, while these two companions died before she passed away.\[470\] What the history books
agree on however was that she was laid to rest by her sons, ‘Umar and Salama, as well as her

\[466\] al-Dhahabi, Siyar a'lām al-nubalā', vol. 2, p. 207.
\[469\] al-Ṭabarî, Ta'rikh al-rusul, vol. 13, p. 72.
nephew ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abd Allah Ibn Umayya as well as ‘Abd Allah Ibn Wahb Ibn Zam’a and was buried at al-Baqi’. ⁴⁷¹

2.20. Lack of Negative Traits

In the interests of balanced research, negative or critical commentaries on Umm Salama or any aspects of her behavior were especially sought. However, and that seems extraordinary, no such information was found in both Sunnī and Shīʿa sources. Despite of ‘A’isha’s image in the Sunnī sources as the Prophet’s favourite wife, many passages in these sources are very critical of her jealousy and her participation in the Battle of the Camel. Especially in the books of asbāb al-nuzūl, many verses of the Qurʾān were said to have been revealed about her behavior. These verses not only relate to the episode of hadīth al-ilk, but also to the honey episode mentioned above, as well as the one making fun of and belittling some of the other wives. The Shīʿa sources do not treat her kindly. In the case of Umm Salama, however, both Sunnī and Shīʿa sources show no negative record of any kind.

2.21. Chapter Conclusion

It is difficult to find small details about the daily lives of the wives of the Prophet, like how they occupied their days, what they preferred to eat or wear or how they looked like and any distinguishing features they might have had. In Bihār al-Anwār by Muhammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī, Umm Salama is described as being rather short with very long hair. According to al-Majlisī her hair was so long, that she had to tie the end of her braid to her anklet to avoid it trailing behind her in the dirt. Contrary to the myriad details found about her sadness upon the loss of Abū Salama, there is no mention of what she did after the Prophet’s death. After the Prophet’s death, the sources are silent about the Mothers of the Believers, in general. The stormy episodes

mentioned earlier, which were provoked and incited by some of the Mothers of the Believers stopped after Muhammad’s death, now that the main object of their jealousy was no longer with them. In matters of public conduct and policy, and apart from the episode of the Battle of the Camel, the Prophet’s widows generally are reported to have behaved in an exemplary fashion and were treated as a unit, being referred to collectively as the "Wives of the Prophet" or the "Mothers of the Believers." Though, without a doubt, those of them who had families and relatives went on visiting them and received visits, most of the sources describe almost no activities and claim that the ‘Mothers of the Believers’ basically stayed in their mosque apartments.472

There is also no information in the sources about Umm Salama’s opinions regarding major events during the rule of Abū Bakr or ‘Umar and most of all about the rule of ‘Uthmān or his subsequent murder other than the letter she is reported to have written. The sources remain silent about what is happening to her and what her position on all the various controversies that arose was. The sources appear to suggest that she was living in retirement and passing on her knowledge in prophetic narrations and matters of jurisprudence.

It is quite unbelievable though that a dynamic woman, such as Umm Salama, or ‘Aʾisha for that matter, who were politically and socially motivated and actively participated in all events – even battles - suddenly ceased to participate in any events or voice their opinions.

The next chapter will look at the narrations of Umm Salama to attempt an answer of the research questions posed in the first chapter of this study.

472 Abbott, Aishah, , p. 98.
Chapter Three – The Ḥadīth narrated by Umm Salama

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will look first at the versions of hadīth attributed to Umm Salama in works by Sunnī authors, and then at the Shīʿīte authors. The authenticity or veracity of the individual aḥādīth are not the focus of this study, as - owing to the nature and numerical size of the material - it would be impossible to verify each single version before using it, especially as the criteria are not agreed upon. Noth summarizes the problem saying that both Muslim scholars and Orientalists identified the existence of problematic issues with Ḥadīth. However, while Muslim scholars put the emphasis on proving forgery, the Orientalists place theirs on proving authenticity. In any case, the problem of authenticity has plagued the scholarly world for decades and has been discussed in the first chapter of this study with regard to the original sources in general.

With regard to the hadīth, however, as Hallaq put it, the authenticity in and of itself might just be a pseudo problem. Hallaq argues in his article, that within usūl al-fiqh the problem has been ‘solved’ by making a distinction between yaqīn (certainty) and zann (probability). Hallaq further states that the traditional Muslim scholars did not establish the veracity of Ḥadīth except in “merely probabilistic terms.” He also mentions that the main corpus of Ḥadīth used by the traditionists and from which the jurists derived the law is mainly constituted of aḥādīth aḥād. Hallaq summarises the search of Muslim scholars for truly mutawālih aḥādīth and concludes

475 Ibid, p. 81.
476 A report narrated by one person originally and later on became widely quoted and achieved a higher status
477 A report narrated by numerous persons with an identical text, which excludes any possibility of collaboration on a forgery.
that the "thorough search by a number of the most eminent traditionists and jurists of Islam could yield no more than eight or nine aḥādīth of the mutawāṭir type."  

Ibn al-Salah al Shahrazuri identified one as being "Acts are judged by intentions" 479, however Ibn Rajab argued that even this was based on an aḥādīth transmission. 480

Another problem of authenticity is the permission to transmit narrations by meaning (bil maʿnā) which allowed for variations in the wording and resulted in numerous versions of the core text of the same Hadīth. Furthermore, besides the transmission by meaning, traditions were transmitted orally from one narrator to the next and it is therefore only natural that some traditions were supplemented or would vary in the choice of wording and phrasing. As will be shown later on, in some cases the supplement was rather lengthy, so that it became difficult to identify what was the original original format.

The problem of narrations by meaning (bil maʿnā) was identified and discussed by many scholars, among them al- Nawawī (d. 676 AH), Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī (d. 643 AH), al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360 AH) and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463) 481 and will become apparent in the various different versions of the narration of Ḥadīth al-kisāʾ dealt with in this study. Hence, of necessity and limited by the scope of this study, the assumption will be made that the data set used includes narrations attributed to Umm Salama and they will be considered to be probable narrations and used in good faith, more so that many of them are included in what is considered to be the most respected canons of Sunnī and Shīʿī collections.

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478 Ibid, p. 86.
In this research, the methodological approach used by Barbara Stowasser in her article "The Mothers of the Believers in ḥadīth”\textsuperscript{482} will also be adopted. Stowasser analyzed narrations by and about women to show their ‘symbolic function’ within Sunnī Muslim reasoning and chose to take the validity of the narrations at face value, without delving into the authenticity issue. She argued that the very existence of these accounts shows that they must have been ‘accepted by at least a segment of the community of the faithful’ and are thus a valuable source of information.\textsuperscript{483}

3.2. Sunnī Data Set

The Sunnī data set (see Annex 1) includes narrations from 450 sources covering ḥadīth collections (such as the nine canonised collections, as well as different musnads, sahītas, āthār and musannaf collections), as well as history books (such as Tārīkh Baghdād or Dimashq), ḥadīth science books (gharīb al-ḥadīth, īlal, jarh wa taʿdīl), biographical dictionaries (tabaqāt) as well as different books of fiqh and ‘aqīda. The oldest source is attributed to al-Rabīʿ Ibn Habīb (d. 103 AH) and the most recent one is attributed to al-Shawkānī (d. 1255 AH). The sources were compiled by 248 different authors and the most prolific thirty contributors to this set are listed in the table below. It is interesting to note that 792 versions (about 18\%) are included in the collections collectively called al-ṣīhāḥ al-tisʿa (the nine authentic collections) and 467 versions (about 10\%) are included in the al-ṣīhāḥ al-sīlta (the six authentic collections).

\textsuperscript{483} Ibid, p. 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Number of Versions Contributed to the Set</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[d. 360 AH] al-Tabarān</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Bayhaqī [d. 458 AH]</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ḥanbal [d. 241 AH]</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nasaī [d. 303 AH]</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn ‘Asakīr [d. 571 AH]</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Ya‘lā al-Mūṣili [d. 307 AH]</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishāq Ibn Rahwiya [d. 238 AH]</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Tahāwī [d. 321 AH]</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Nuʿaym al-Asbahānī [d. 430 AH]</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn ‘Ab al-Barr al-Qurtūbī [d. 463 AH]</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Dāraquṭnī [d. 385 AH]</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Bukhārī [d. 256 AH]</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū ʿAwana al-ʾAsfāriyī [d. 316 AH]</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibn Abī Shayba [d. 235 AH]</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibn Ḥibbān [d. 354 AH]</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ḥusayn Ibn Masʿūd [d. 516 AH]</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Khāṭīb al-Baghdādī [d. 463 AH]</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Shāfiʿī [d. 204 AH]</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Tirmidhī [d. 256 AH]</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The different *ahādīth* versions were evaluated by the compilers and many were classified by them in the different collections from where they originated. There were four classifications namely *gharīb*,\(^{484}\) *mutawātīr*\(^{485}\) (with multiple chains of transmission), *ʿazīz*\(^{486}\) (rare) or *mashhūr*\(^{487}\) (well-known). The fifth group of *ḥadīth* were not classified, hence were coded as a “?” in the data set. The percentage of each group is depicted in the pie chart below.

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\(^{484}\) Gharīb is a tradition from only one Companion, technically, the narration which at some stage is narrated only by a single narrator - either in every stage of the isnād, or at a single point in the chain of narration.

\(^{485}\) Mutawātīr is applied to a tradition with so many transmitters that there could be no collusion, all being known to be reliable and not being under any compulsion to lie, technically, a narration which is narrated by such a large number of people that it is impossible that they have agreed on inventing a lie.

\(^{486}\) Azīz is used for a tradition coming from one man of sufficient authority to have his traditions collected when two or three people share in transmitting them, technically a narration which is narrated by no less than two narrators at every level of the isnād.

\(^{487}\) Mashhūr is a tradition with more than two transmitters, technically, a narration which is narrated by three people or more at every level of the isnād, but does not reach the condition of the mutawātīr.
Classification of Sunnī Hadīth Versions

From the pie chart it is clear that the largest group represented is that of the category classified by the compilers as mutawātir at 42%, followed by that of the mashhūr at 38%. The category of ḥadīth 'azīz comes in third place at 11%, followed by the ḥadīth gharīb at 8%. The versions that had no classification in the original sources comprise of a negligible 1% of the entire data-set. This means that only 20% of the versions included in the data set were considered by the conservative traditionists as questionable. As the remaining 80% of the data set constitute the bulk, the 20% considered by the compilers as uncertain will still be kept and used.

### 3.2.1. Analysis of the number of Sunnī versions

The different versions per ḥadīth were plotted in the chart below to show the frequency of occurrence of number of versions per single narration in this data set.
Figure 2 - Distribution of number of Sunni Ḥadīth Versions

The above chart shows that the majority of hadith narrations attributed to Umm Salama have between 1 and 5 versions (57%), there are 41% which have between 6 and 75 versions, and only 1% of the hadiths have more than 125 versions. The narrations with many versions imply that they were used frequently and perhaps used by jurists to derive certain legal rulings, as the different versions include more details in the text of the tradition itself. One such tradition will be analysed in a subsequent section of this chapter. Traditions with a small number of versions imply that either they were not used to derive legal rulings or that they are very clearly phrased without possibility of changing or adding any extra details. An avenue for future research could be to study the matn of the versions more closely to possibly identify a relationship between the topic of the tradition, its number of versions as well as its usage in terms of jurisprudence or theological issues.
Considering the numerous variations of traditions in this data set as a whole, it must be noted that the information contained in them, as used by the traditionists, referred to events that had occurred hundreds of years earlier and that this information had been passed on, usually, by word of mouth, from the Prophet’s immediate companions to the successors and from them to the succeeding generations. Hence, it must have been almost impossible to eliminate the personal element and bias completely, especially if one takes into consideration the constant political and legal controversies extant during that time.

3.2.2. Distribution of the Sunnī aḥādīth by collection dates

As the various versions of hadīth were grouped together from different collections, it was interesting to plot the frequency of the versions according to the time they were collected. As it is almost impossible to accurately date the time when a collection was actually written down and started to be used, the date of death of the author was chosen as a date, even if the collection itself was written down at an earlier stage. The chart below shows the statistical frequency of collections in fifty year intervals:
Figure 3 - Distribution of Sunnī Ḥadīth Version Dates by 50 year time intervals
The chart above displays some interesting results. It shows that for the first two hijri centuries, the collection and the activity of writing down hadīth was minimal. At less than 2% of the entire data set, the figure is indeed very low. This figure does not necessarily mean that there was no activity as such, but could also be interpreted as a lack of extant manuscripts or surviving collections. The period between 200 AH and 250 AH shows a huge jump, when almost 17% of the entire data set were collected and written down. The next fifty years show another slow down in hadīth collecting activities, which is then succeeded by another huge jump in activity for the next hundred year period up to the year 400 AH in which almost 40% of the entire data set were collected and documented. About 17% were collected and documented in the following century, after which the activity of collecting ahādīth slows down drastically and only sporadic activity can be recognised.

One of the interpretations of this particular pattern of frequency could be that the relationship between the increased activity of writing down and collecting hadīth in this fifty year period, following the death of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204 AH) relates to Schacht’s theory. Schacht believed that it is due to al-Shāfiʿī, who theorized (the till then implicit) concept of the Prophet’s authority, that hadīth gained such importance. Schacht writes: "It is one of the main results of the first part of this book, that Shāfiʿī was the first lawyer to define sunna as the model behaviour of the Prophet, in contrast with his predecessors for whom it was not necessarily connected with the Prophet, but represented the traditional, albeit ideal, usage of the community, forming their 'living tradition' on an equal footing with customary or generally accepted practice." Therefore based upon Shāfiʿī’s treatise, Schacht theorises that the great bulk of ahādīth originated in al-Shāfiʿī’s time and continued after that. He writes: "the most important result is that whereas the growth of legal traditions from the Prophet went over the whole period, it was particularly vigorous in the

fifty years between Shāfi‘ī and the classical collections, a result which can be ascribed to the joint influence of Shāfi‘ī and the traditionists.”

However, this is not the only potential possible interpretation as the *ahādīth* in general and specifically in this data set are not limited to legal traditions. The time period 200 - 300 AH is characterized by the emergence of many of the great collections such as Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razāq al-San‘ānī (d. 211 AH), Musnad al-Ḥamīdī (d. 219 AH), Musnad Ishāq Ibn Rahwiya (d. 238 AH), Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235 AH), Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), Sunan al-Dārimī (d. 255 AH), Sahīḥ al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH) to name a few. Furthermore, other books using and quoting or criticising *hadīth* as well as providing information about the narrators were also produced during that same period, such as al-Ṭabqāt al-Kubrā of Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230 AH), Gharīb al-ḥadīth of al-Harāwī (d. 224) and al-Nasikh wa-l-Mansūkh of al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224 AH).

Hence, it cannot be concluded that al-Shāfi‘ī’s influence on limiting the use to only prophetic traditions and the discontinuation of the use of the companions’ *akhbār* or sayings to derive legal rulings is the only factor. Furthermore, this distribution was done for the entire data set, which includes various versions of the same narration. Hence, a more accurate way would be to plot only the first version, which should shed some light of the historical development of each *hadīth* with all its different versions in terms of when it was recorded for the first time. This is done in the chart below.

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489 Ibid, p. 140.
The figure above again shows the period between 200-250 AH to have an increased activity at 36.25%, followed by a slowdown in activities and then another increase in the period between 350-400 AH with 23.26% of the entire data set. The distribution is roughly the same, if a bit more bunched up between 250–450 AH with spikes in the periods between 200-250 AH and 350-400 AH. Hence, it would be interesting to zoom in on these two specific periods and plot the number of first versions collected and written down using a shorter time interval, namely that of ten years. The following charts zoom in on these two periods respectively.
The above figure shows that there was activity on every yearly bucket, therefore signifying that over the 50 years, a significantly high level of activity was performed rather than concentrating on just one 10 year period. Furthermore, it shows increased activity around the dates of major and huge collections, such as the Muṣannaf of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211 AH), Aḥādīth ʿĀffān Ibn Muslim (d. 219 AH), Musnad al-Hamīdī (d. 219 AH), al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā of Ibn Saʿd (d. 230 AH) Juzʾ Yaʾlā Ibn ʿIbād (d. 230 AH), Muṣannaf Ibn Abi Shayba (d. 235 AH) Musnad Ishāq Ibn Rahwiya (d. 238 AH) Musnad ʿAbd Ibn Ḥamīd (d. 249 AH). Hence it can be assumed that the activity relates to collection of ḥadīth versions rather than forging them on a large scale.
Unlike the previous figure, the vast majority of activity seems to have been carried out between the years 350-360 AH when major and large collections, such as the Fawā’id Abī Muḥammad al-Fakihī (d. 354 AH), Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ἡibbān (d. 354 AH), al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, al-Awsaṭ and al- Ṣaghīr of al- Ṣabarānī (d. 360 AH) were compiled. On the other hand, collections such as both the Sunnan and ʿIllal of al-Dāraqutnī (d. 385 AH) in addition to Gharib al-Ḥadīth of al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388 AH) do not seem to provide much activity in the later frequency buckets. This could be an avenue for further research to determine why these collections did not show up in significance compared to the preceding collections. By then a consensus was reached on what was useable from the prophetic traditions, and what remained was to refine the criticism methods.

Another avenue for future research could be to compare this with the work of Scott C. Lucas,490 as he discusses (in part 1) the conceptual and historical framework for the study of Sunnī hadīth scholarship and (in part 2) the collective probity of the ṣaḥāba, the discipline of hadīth-transmitter

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criticism and provides a historical vision of the authoritative channels through which ḥadīth navigated in the two centuries between the life of the Prophet and the first major ḥadīth books.

3.2.3. Analysis of the historical development of one matn

The scope of this study does not permit an in-depth analysis of all the different traditions attributed to Umm Salama and their numerous versions (Annex 1 and 2). However, as an example, one ḥadīth will be analyzed using the 131 different versions of its matn. The ḥadīth chosen is ḥadīth #1 of the data set and the one referred to as ḥadīth al kisāʾ, as it is one that is common between both data sets and is also important to the Shiʿa. Furthermore the ḥadīth, though accepted as authentic by both Sunnī and Shiʿī scholars, its interpretation varies significantly. Shiʿites claim that the ḥadīth shows the sole members of ahl al-bayt to be the Prophet, Fāṭima, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, linking it to verse [33:33]491 as well as verse [3:61].492 According to al-Suyūṭī, who reported Jābir Ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Anṣārī, a Companion of the Prophet, as saying that the word ‘sons’ refers to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the word ‘women’ refers to Fāṭima, and the word ‘ourselves’ refers to the Prophet and ‘Alī. Thus, ‘Alī is referred to as ‘the self’ (nafs) of the Prophet.493 Most Sunnī scholars, though, reference this ḥadīth to verse [33:33] only. Madelung poses the question: ‘Who are the ‘people of the house’ in the verse of purification?’ He observes that the pronoun referring to them is in the masculine plural, while the earlier part of the verse is in the feminine plural. He concludes that the change of gender has obviously contributed to the various speculations, some of a legendary character, attaching the latter part of the verse to the five People of the Mantle (ahl al-kisāʾ). Despite the evident Shiʿite

491 [33.33] And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle. Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.
492 [3.61] But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.
significance, the majority of the reports quoted by al-Ṭabarānī, as will be demonstrated, support this interpretation. The analysis will follow at the end of the description of the various versions.

3.2.4. Description of the different versions of the matn of ḥadīth al-kisā’

3.2.4.1. The early versions

The oldest version of this ḥadīth was collected from “Aḥādīth ‘Affān Ibn Muslim” (d. 219 AH). The version is rather short and simply states that the Prophet asks Fāṭima to bring her husband and children and then he covers them all with his kisā’; from Fadak, and asks Allah to protect them. His prayer for them is almost identical to a part of the tashahhud recited in prayers. It continues with Umm Salama lifting the kisā’ to join in, but the Prophet pulling it away telling her that she is ʿala khayr (blessed).

The second version came from “Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba” (d. 235 AH) and it is noticeable that the simple first version gets supplemented with a few more details. Here the Prophet is in Umm Salama’s house (to emphasize her credibility in narrating this tradition) and a servant comes in announcing the arrival of Fāṭima and ‘Alī, upon which the Prophet asks Umm Salama to make way for his family members (ahl al-bayt) in a rather uncharacteristic request. They enter accompanied by al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. The Prophet hugs them and takes ‘Alī and Fāṭima’s hands, one in each of his and covers them all with a black cloak/mantle asking Allah to protect them and him from hellfire and declaring them as his ahl al-bayt. In this version Umm Salama is more timid and does not move towards the cloak but only asks: “What about me?” The Prophet answers: “you too,” which is also different from the previous version.


495 اَلْحَيَاتِ لِلّهِ، الْصِّلَاءَ وَالْطَّبِيَّاتِ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْهِ وَرَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ وَبُكْرَانَهُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْهِ وَعِلَى عَدَدِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ، أَشِهِدُ أَنَّ لَنَّ إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَشِهِدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَلِيْهِ صَلَاتٍ وَسَلَامٍ عَلَى سِنَنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سِنَنَا مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّى عَلَى سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ، وَلَعَلَّ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، كَمَا صَلَّى عَلَى سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ، وَلَعَلَّ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، كَمَا صَلَّى عَلَى سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سِنَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمٍ، وَلَعَلَّ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، كَمَا صَلَّى عَلَى سِنَنَا إِبْrahِيمٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سِنَنَا إِبْrahِيمٍ،
The third version was copied from "Musnad 'Isḥāq Ibn Rāhwiya (d. 238 AH) and is less detailed than the second one. However, we learn another detail that the Prophet takes his grandsons in his lap before he covers his entire family and himself with the cloak, leaving Umm Salama out.

3.2.4.2. The emergence of more detail in the matn

The next five versions are all mentioned in the book "Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥāba" by Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH). The first one in this group is much longer with more details. It starts with Fāṭima coming to visit, bringing food with her, upon which the Prophet asks her to bring her family. The Prophet was lying down, covered with a mantle from Khaybar (unlike the first version where the mantle was from Fadak), while Umm Salama was in the same room praying. Then verse [33:33]496 was revealed, which is the first time we get a link to the Qurʾān.

The genre of *asbāb nuzūl* al-Qurʾān (or in short *asbāb al-nuzūl*) would only become established much later, with Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī al-Naysābūrī's (d. 468 AH) "Kitāb asbāb nuzūl al-Qurʾān."497 Commentaries on the Qurʾān were already written and in circulation. Even though it is argued that al-Ṭabarī provided the first Sunnī exegesis using ḥadīth,498 there were some others earlier than his. It is generally accepted that the first one was by Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān Ibn Bashīr al-Azdī al-Khurāsānī al-Balḵī (d. 150 AH), even though it was highly criticized and considered to be filled with explanations on the Biblical elements in the

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496 "Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."


Qurʾān and frequent references to the *ahl al-kitāb*. Therefore, it is not unusual to link a tradition to the Qurʾān or to provide an explanation on the revelation of a certain verse.

From the rest of the *matn* we learn that after this revelation the Prophet covered his family members in the cloak and asked Allah to purify them, three times, using the same words as the revealed verse. Umm Salama then asks if she was included as well, to which she received the same answer as in the first version. The sixth version is much more detailed and has a dramatic introduction, where Shahr Ibn Hawshab narrates that when Umm Salama received the news that al-Ḥusayn was killed, she cursed the people of Iraq and then retold the story, which is a mixture of the previous versions with additional details. One detail would be that Fāṭima came carrying a dish, which she had cooked and which held gruel (ʿaṣīda) of some kind in it. Her father asks her to go bring her husband and sons.

The rest of the details are like the previous versions, with the grandchildren in their grandfather’s lap, and the mantle being from Khaybar, however the words of the *duʿā* are almost verbatim like verse [33:33]. Another new detail is that Umm Salama, upon asking whether she belongs to *ahl al-bayt*, is allowed to join into the *kisāʾ*, however after the Prophet had completed his *duʿā*. In the seventh version many of the details are omitted and it is almost identical to the second version, with one addition that the Prophet took his grandchildren in his lap. The *duʿā* made by the Prophet is, again like the second version.

The eighth version from this book is again very similar to the sixth version narrated by Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab. However, this time we learn a few new details. One detail about how Fāṭima and her family arrive. She is in the lead, holding one son by each hand, while ‘Alī follows them.

Another new detail about the *kisāʾ* is introduced, namely that it was used as a bedspread and

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belonged to Umm Salama, who was sitting on it. Again the du’a made by the Prophet is verbatim like verse [33:33] and again Umm Salama is allowed to join them all in the kisāʾ afterwards. The status of Umm Salama in these versions is raised through her inclusion into the mantle, which one might expect from Ibn Ḥanbal, who was known to be anti-ʿAbbāsid and anti-Shīʿa and the collection itself, “Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba”, is more of a polemical Sunnī work of the manāqib genre.

3.2.4.3. The versions of Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal

The ninth version is also a short one, similar to the second version, with the same du’a. The only added detail being that the Prophet kissed them all before covering them with his mantle. Again Umm Salama is included as a member of ahl al-bayt. The tenth version is almost identical with the one before, though one detail is omitted, namely the one about the kisāʾ, as in this version it is simply a cloth without any additional description of fabric or color. The eleventh version is identical to the first one, while the twelfth version is very similar to the sixth, but some new details are added. A detailed description of the position of the family-members is provided. We are told that Umm Salama was sitting on the kisāʾ; ʿAlī on the Prophet’s right, Fāṭima on his left, while both al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were in his lap. In this version also, Umm Salama is included in the kisāʾ after the supplications have been uttered by the Prophet. The thirteenth version is identical to previous versions, however, Umm Salama is again excluded from the kisāʾ and is told that she is blessed (ʿala khayr). The final one from Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal is very short without any details and ends like the previous version.

3.2.4.4. Al-Tirmidhī offers a different narrator

The fifteenth version, from Jamiʿ al-Tirmidhī (d. 256), is identical to the one before, with one added note that it is a saḥīḥ ḥasan ḥadīth and was also narrated by ʿAʾisha. This is an interesting addition, and was probably used to strengthen the tradition, as ʿAʾisha’s relationship with both Fāṭima and ʿAlī was reported to have been strained at best.
3.2.4.5. Abī Khaythama offers more information

The sixteenth version was collected from Tarīkh Ibn Abī Khaythama (d. 279) and does not mention the *kisāʾ* story at all and just mentions that verse [33:33] was revealed in Umm Salama's house. However, there is one new addition to the answer of Umm Salama's question about whether or not she belonged to *ahl al-bayt*. The Prophet replies that she is blessed (ʿ*ala khayr*) and adds that she is one of the wives of the Messenger of Allah. An added clarification explains that at the time of revelation there were five people present in the house, namely the Prophet, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

The seventeenth version, from the same collection, is very short and almost identical to the very first one, with an added portion of praising Allah in the supplication. The next version, also from the same collection is very similar to the previous one, with a few added details that the Prophet was in Umm Salama's house, when Fāṭima came with some food (*sakhīna*) she cooked. Fāṭima was asked by her father to get her family, and then they all sat down to eat together from the *sakhīna*. After that, the story of the *kisāʾ* is told and it is mentioned that it is a *kisāʾ khaybarī* and again the *duʿa* by the prophet is a verbatim form of verse [33:33]. Umm Salama again receives the answer that she is blessed (ʿ*ala khayr*). The last version from that collection is just a very short statement that the Prophet included Fāṭima, ʿAlī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn in the *kisāʾ* with himself and the rest is identical to the previous version.

3.2.4.6. The disappearance of ʿAlī

The twentieth version from "Gharīb al-ḥadīth, by Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿIsḥāq al-Ḥarbī (d. 285), is indeed an unusual one, for there is no mention at all of ʿAlī. The *kisāʾ* is also not mentioned and the *duʿa* by the Prophet is a new one, for this time he asks Allah to be the *mawlā* of those who take them as *mawālí* and the enemy of those who make them their enemy. This is curious

500 a thick soup with added flour, which is cheap to make and mainly food for the poor.
considering that the walāyah\textsuperscript{501} issue has always been closely linked to ‘Alī, especially by the Ghadīr Khumm\textsuperscript{502} hadith. The disappearance of ‘Alī from the matn could be explained by the political situation of that time, which could have given rise to anti-shī‘ite sentiments and magnified the need to hide the explicit mention of ‘Alī from the matn. In 247 AH, Caliph al-Mutawakkil was murdered and a period of disorder and chaos followed, where greater polarization of the sects happened. Shī‘ite dynasties were being established, such as the Ismā‘īlī Fāṭimid anti-Caliphate in Tunisia and the Būyids in Persia and Iraq.\textsuperscript{503} Hence, it is not surprising to eliminate a direct reference. However, it is implicitly known that ahl al-bayt would include him as the foster-son, son-in-law of the Prophet and the father of his grandchildren.

3.2.4.7. Short versions of al-Muṣiliki and al-Dulābī

The next four versions come from the Musnad of Abū Ya‘lā al-Muṣiliki (d. 307 AH). In the first two versions of these four, the details concerning the food are omitted and the rest is almost identical to the very first and oldest version of this set without the mention of Fadak.\textsuperscript{504}

\textsuperscript{501} The walāyah issue as it is interpreted by the Shi‘a is discussed at great length and in detail in Dakake, The Charismatic Community, pp, 46-48, 103-123.

\textsuperscript{502} Al-Ḥakim al-Naysabūrī and al-Nasā‘ī quote it as being: فمن كنت مولاه فعل مولاه ، اللهم َ! وال من والاه وعاد من عاداه


\textsuperscript{504} Fadak, a very fertile oasis, generating a lot of income, has a symbolic value, especially in Shī‘ism. It was not only the dispute around it - as Fāṭima’s inheritance from her father which was denied her by Abū Bakr - that made it interesting, but Fadak remained of interest for around two centuries after the Prophet’s death. During the caliphate of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, he used different regulations for Khaybar and Fadak. ‘Umar ruled that Fadak had to remain a ṣādaqa with ‘Alī and al-‘Abbās as its administrators. Mu‘āwiya confiscated the oasis and gave it to Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam first and then after he fell into disgrace to his sons ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-Malik. Caliph ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz returned Fadak to Fāṭima’s descendants to administer. Yazīd Ibn ‘Abd Malik again confiscated it and it remained until the Caliph Abū al-‘Abbās known as al-Saffāḥ again restored it to Fāṭima’s descendants. However, al-Manṣūr confiscated Fadak yet again and it is again returned under al-Maḥdī, only to be confiscated again by al-Hādī. Finally, in 210 AH al-Ma‘mūn returns it once again to Fāṭima’s descendants. From a legal perspective Fadak has illustrated the distinction between private and communal property and remained an acute reminder of the rights and duties associated with each one. Therefore it is not surprising to see it emerge and vanish throughout the different versions of the matn, more so because it relates to Fāṭima and her family.
Version (# 23) is a shorter version, very similar to the previous two but has a different supplication offered by the Prophet, namely the one using the words of verse [33:33] without making any reference to the verse. The last one is again a very short version without any details. Both, the twenty-fifth and sixth versions were collected by Abū Bishr al-Dulābī (d. 310 AH) in his book "al-kuny wa-l-asmā" and are both identical to the second version of the hadīth (including the servant). However, in the second version by Abū Bishr al-Dulābī a detail about the kisāʾ is added and defines it as a burda instead of the khamīṣa used in his first version, while in the second version the servant is female not male like previously. Furthermore both versions include a mention that the Prophet kissed and hugged his family members and they also both include the answer given by the Prophet to Umm Salama as an affirmation that she is included in ahl al-bayt.

The next four versions were also collected by Abū Bishr al-Dulābī, however in a different book titled "Al-dhurriya al-ṭāhira al-nabawiya". The first of these is identical to the first hadīth version and also includes a mention of the kisāʾ being from Fadak. In the next version Fadak is omitted, but the kisāʾ is described as being black and that the Prophet was wearing it then. The supplication offered by the Prophet changes from being almost identical to the tashahhud recited in prayers to an appeal to Allah to protect them and him from hellfire and declared them as ahl al-bayt. In the next version verse [33:33] is mentioned as being recited by the Prophet instead of the previous supplications.

3.2.4.8. The versions of al-Ṭabarî

The following six versions (# 30-35) were collected by al-Ṭabarî (d. 310 AH) in his Qurʾān commentary titled "Jāmiʿ al-bayān `an taʾwīl al-Qurʾān. In the first of these reference is made to verse [33:33], which is not surprising in a Qurʾān commentary. After that the story is told that the Prophet asked Umm Salama not to be disturbed. When Fāṭima came Umm Salama could not
forbid her from entering and seeing her father, so she allowed her in. Then al-Ḥasan came and was allowed to enter as well, as his mother and grandfather were inside together. Al-Ḥusayn came next and was also allowed in for the same reason. Surprisingly, there is no mention of ʿAlī, though al-Ṭabarī was accused by his Ḥanbalī opponents of having Shiʿī sympathies. The story continues that they all surrounded the Prophet and he put the kisāʾ he was wearing over them, declaring that they are ahl al-bayt and making a supplication which copies the wording of the verse verbatim. Al-Ṭabarī then writes that the verse was revealed on the occasion when they were all assembled on a rug (busāṭ). When Umm Salama asks about her position, she is told that she is blessed (ʿala khayr) with an added explanation by the author that the Prophet meant she was one of his wives. The richness in detail is expected, as al-Ṭabarī was not only a Qurʾān commentator, but also one of the akhbarīyyūn (a historian) most famous for his historical work Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk.

In the next version (# 31) al-Ṭabarī offers a briefer account, yet retains the reference that the verse was revealed in Umm Salama’s house while she was sitting at the door and then asked if she was one of the ahl al-bayt mentioned in the verse and was told that she is blessed (ʿala khayr) and one of the wives. This is followed by a reference that Fāṭima, ʿAlī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were inside the house then, but omitting the kisāʾ story entirely. In the following version al-Ṭabarī includes a version giving a new account of the event, namely that after the revelation of the verse, the Prophet invited ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and covered them with a cloak from Khaybar and said that those were his ahl al-bayt and made a supplication using the words of the verse. The next version (# 33) is totally different and includes many more details. The Prophet is at Umm Salama’s house and ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were all there

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as well. The new addition here is that Umm Salama cooked for them all, a dish made from boiled fatty meat, salt and flour (khazīra) and after they all ate together they had a nap and the Prophet covered them with a velvet cloak (ʿabā’a) and made the supplication using the same wording of the verse. The next version (# 34) omits the reference to the verse and surprisingly also leaves out Fāṭima. In this version the Prophet asks ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn to come to him and covers them with his garment (thawb) and says that those are his ahl al-bayt, without any supplication to follow. Umm Salama asks, differently from all previous versions, to be included inside the garment and is told that she belongs to the Prophet’s kin (ahl).

In the final version (# 35) collected by al-Ṭabarī we learn further details. In this version Fāṭima comes to visit, bringing with her some cooked food (ʿaṣīda) and offers it to her father, upon which he asks about her cousin and children and tells her to go get them from home.

Fāṭima goes and tells ‘Alī, to answer the Prophet’s call with his two sons. When the Prophet sees them approaching he takes a cloak (kisāʾ) that was on the bed and takes its four corners of it into his hand forming a kind of an umbrella that he places over all their heads and then raises his right hand to Allah saying the supplication using the same wording of the verse.

3.2.4.9. The versions collected by al-Ṭahāwī

The next six versions were collected by al-Ṭahāwī (d. 321 AH) in his collection titled “Mushkil al-ʾĀthār”. The first version (# 36) is very short and explains that the verse was revealed in Umm Salama’s house upon which she asked if she was one of the ahl al-bayt and was told she was blessed (ʿala khayr) and one of the wives. Furthermore it is mentioned that ‘Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were in the house. The next version (# 37) shows a new development in the matn, namely that ‘Amra al-Hamdāniya visited Umm Salama to ask her about a man who was killed and is loved and hated at the same time. An insertion explains that this means ‘Alī. The woman asks whether Umm Salama loved or hated him, to which she replies: “neither”, but then
continues explaining that verse [33:33] was revealed with only the four people described as *ahl al-bayt* (namely 'Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn) as well as angel Jibrīl, who makes the appearance into the *matn* here for the first time. Umm Salama also recounts that she asked if she was one of them and was told that she is blessed (*ʿala khayr*) and as another new detail the *matn* discloses that she would have liked it if the Prophet had said yes and confesses that she loved him more than anything that the sun rises and sets on. This version of the *matn* is the most emotional one so far.

The next version (# 38) from the same collection also introduces a new development. In addition to Jibrīl, now Mikāʾīl is also included. Furthermore Umm Salama is portrayed to have received the answer upon asking if she was included in *ahl al-bayt*, namely that she was one of the wives of the Prophet, with an added peace be upon him, which is also the first time. Here Umm Salama commented, saying that the Prophet did not say “you are one of the *ahl al-bayt*”.

The following version (# 39) is again identical to the very first version and also includes that the cloak came from Fadak. This is followed by a very similar short version omitting the Fadak reference. The next version reports the events after the death of al-Ḥusayn as in the similar versions before, with the only addition that the supplication, which is the exact wording of the verse, but repeated three times. The next version, also from the same collection is very short. The one after that (# 43) longer, as it includes details about the food that Fāṭima brought and is a combination of parts from previous versions.

3.2.4.10. Ibn al-Bukhturī’s versions

The forty-fourth version was collected by Abū Ja’far Ibn al-Bukhturī (d. 339 AH) in his “ʾĀmālī” and is similar to a combination of previous versions, including various details such as the *kisāʾ* being from Khaybar, Fāṭima bringing food, the revelation of the verse, and five people of the Prophet’s family inside the *kisāʾ*. In this *matn*, the Prophet repeats the supplication twice though,
not like the preceding version three times. The new addition here is that Umm Salama inserts her head into the *kisāʾ* before asking her question. The next version from the same collection omits the *kisāʾ* altogether, as well as the family members and just mentions the revelation of verse [33:33] in Umm Salama’s house and her asking if she belonged to them, receiving the previously used answer that she is blessed (**ʿala khayr**).

### 3.2.4.11. Ibn al-ʿArabī’s versions

The next two versions were collected by Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 340 AH) in his “Mu’jam”. In the first version the *matn* again mentions seven being in the house and includes both angels, Jibrīl and Mikāʾīl. The new addition to the *matn* is the specific answer Umm Salama receives to her question, namely that she is one of the *ahl al-bayt*, which shows that getting under the mantle was not necessarily an indication of being a member of *ahl al-bayt*. The following version omits the supplication by the Prophet and replaces it with him reciting the verse. Furthermore a new addition is introduced here regarding Umm Salama. According to this *matn*, she moves to get into the *kisāʾ* with them and the Prophet tells her to stay where she was (**makānakī**) yet adds that she was blessed (**ʿala khayr**).

### 3.2.4.12. Details provided by Ibn Ya’qūb al-ʿAṣamm’s version

The next version (№ 48) comes from the collection of *ḥadīth* by Muḥammad Ibn Ya’qūb al-ʿAṣamm (d. 346 AH). This version has some new details that enhance the dramatic effect.

According to this *matn* Umm Salama asks a slave to go out and get news. She obeys and comes back to report that al-Ḥusayn was killed. Umm Salama faints in shock and upon awakening she keeps repeating that they killed him, curses the people of Iraq and tells the story omitting the part of the *kisāʾ* and omitting Fāṭima’s presence and just mentioning the male members of her household, namely ʿAṭīf, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. Another new detail is that Umm Salama points to the bed (**sarīr** or sofa (**dukkān**)) and mentions that the Prophet was lying on that very same
piece of furniture when he asked for his *ahl al-bayt*. This version sets the time of narration at the time right after Karbalā‘. At this time of turbulent sad affairs, there is no place to mention food or any other details.

### 3.2.4.13. Versions collected by Abū Bakr al-Shafī‘ī and al-Ajurri

The next version comes from "al-Fawa‘id" by Abū Bakr al-Shafī‘ī (d. 354 AH) and is a short version similar to previous ones, where the verse was revealed in Umm Salama’s house and explaining that *ahl al-bayt* were only the Prophet, ‘Āli, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, excluding the Prophet’s wives.

The fiftieth version was collected by al-Ajurri (d. 350 AH) in his collection titled "al-shari‘a" and resembles the thirty-seventh versions with some minute changes, like omitting the part about the man who was killed and changing it to the man who was injured, asking whether he loved or not rather than whether he was loved or not. The rest is almost identical to that previous version narrating ‘Amra al-Hamdāniya’s visit to Umm Salama, including Umm Salama’s wish that the Prophet would have said yes and her declaration of love with the addition that the Prophet told Umm Salama that she was amongst the best of his women (*saliḥ nisā‘īhī*).

The next version from the same collection is like previous versions with the inclusion of Fāṭima bringing food and the declaration that those inside the *kisā‘* were five people. The following version is similar to the previous one, yet omitting the food part of the *matn*. The next version also by al-Ajurri is also very similar with the addition that Umm Salama raised the cloak to join in and the Prophet pulled it away and told her that she was blessed (‘*ala khayr*). However, the next version, from the same collection includes Umm Salama in the *ahl al-bayt*.

### 3.2.4.14. Al-Ṭabarani’s versions

The next twenty-six versions (# 54-77) were collected by al-Ṭabarani (d. 350 AH). They are mainly from his al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr, while the last one is from al-Mu‘jam al-Ṣaghīr and versions
(64-66) are from his al-Mu’jam al-Awsat. The first one is similar to the last one by al-Ajurri, yet omitting the food part of the *matn*. The next version is also very similar with the addition that Umm Salama raised the cloak to join in and the Prophet pulled it away and told her that she was blessed (‘*ala khayr*). However, the next version, from the same collection includes Umm Salama in the *ahl al-bayt*. The following version is the shortest one of the entire collection of versions omitting all other details except that the Prophet covered Fāṭima, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn with his cloak and recited verse [33:33]. In the next version there is no mention of the *kisā’*; yet the rest remains like previously, with the verse being revealed in Umm Salama’s house and the people it was revealed about.

The next version omits mentioning ‘Alī, yet includes Umm Salama in the *ahl al-bayt*. In the following version there is no mention of the cloak, yet the rest is similar to previous versions with the verse being revealed in Umm Salama’s house and the Prophet sending for Fāṭima and her family. The next version omits mentioning ‘Alī. In the next version ‘Alī is again not mentioned, while a new detail is added, namely that the Prophet asked for his grand children and placing them in his lap, one on each thigh, while Fāṭima was the one covering them with the cloak. When Umm Salama asked whether she was included she receives an answer in the affirmative. The following version is very short and only mentions the revelation of the verse with Umm Salama sitting at the door of her house and the previously familiar answer to her question about inclusion with her being blessed (‘*ala khayr*). The following version is again like the previous one, however it is supplemented by more details about Fāṭima visiting with her husband and children and the episode of the *kisā’*. In the next version Fāṭima is asked to bring her family and the rest of the version is identical to the very first version, with the *kisā’* being from Fadak. The next version omits the description of the cloak as well as any dialogue from Umm Salama.

The following version is identical to that previous one, with Umm Salama raising the cloak to be included and being told that she was blessed (‘*ala khayr*). The next version is narrated on
the authority of Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab, who (in a new additional detail) visits Umm Salama to offer his condolences. In this version Umm Salama does not curse the people of Iraq and just tells the version of the story where Fāṭima brings food and was told to go get her family. They are then all covered by the *kisāʾ*. In the following version, the previous version gets supplemented by a few details. The food is identified as a soup (*ḥisāʾ*), the family is made to sit on top of the *kisāʾ*, after which the Prophet takes its four corners into his hand and closes it around them, making the supplication to Allah using the wording of verse [33:33]. Umm Salama is not mentioned as having asked any questions in this version. Version (# 67) is out of the ordinary, in that it does not mention al-Ḥasan or al-Ḥusayn, but includes the Prophet kissing ‘Aī and Fāṭima after he covered them with a black cloak he was wearing.

The following version (# 68) from the same collection is very similar to previous ones, where Fāṭima brings food and is asked to bring her family. The new detail here is that the Prophet answers Umm Salama’s question saying that she is the Prophet’s wife (in the singular form). In the next version Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab (in another new detail) informs Umm Salama about the news of al-Ḥusayn. The curses are omitted and the rest is similar to previous versions. In the next version we receive two new additional details to the version with the servant announcing Fāṭima and her family. One is that the *kisāʾ* is black velvet and the other one is that Umm Salama cried out her question. The seventy-first version is a short one, where the Prophet includes his daughter’s family in his cloak and declares them to Allah as *ahl al-bayt* without any further supplications. Umm Salama is told that she is from the Prophet’s *ahl* as well in answer to her question.

In the next version (# 72), which includes Fāṭima bringing food, a few more details are added. Fāṭima holds each son on one hand, while ‘Aī is walking behind them. The Prophet puts his grandchildren in his lap and Umm Salama pulls his cloak from under herself, as she was sitting on it on the bed. The *matn* is a bit confusing as it returns to the food part after these details
and Umm Salama is depicted praying while the verse is revealed and the Prophet takes the *kisā’* to cover them and make his supplication with the wordings of the verse. It seems almost like a failed attempt at merging two separate versions into one or perhaps an error by a copyist or scribe. The next version is identical to version (#67) and version (#74) is also identical to (#70).

The next three versions are rather short and similar to previous ones with limited details offered and some of the details from the previously used story-lines omitted. Like in version (#76) Fāṭima brings something without mentioning what it is and there is no mention of the *kisā’*. In the final version from this collection, which includes the story-line with the servant announcing Fāṭima and her family, an important detail is inserted after Umm Salama is asked to make way for them, namely that she remains close by, this of course enables her to view the events so as to report them later.

3.2.4.15. Short and familiar *matn* versions

The next version (#78) comes from a collection of ḥadīth by Muḥammad Ibn Ja`far al-Anbarī (d. 360 AH) and is very similar to previous versions with many details, such as Umm Salama sitting on the *kisā’* and it being from Khaybar, with no new additions.

The next version was collected in “al-Kamil fi du`afā’ al-rija’il” by Abū Aḥmad Ibn ‘Addiy (d. 365). It is an unusually short version without mentioning who was covered by the *kisā’*, there was no supplication offered and just a statement that these unknowns were his *ahl al-bayt*.

The eightieth version was collected by Abū-I Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī (d. 369 AH) in his book “Akhlāq al-Nabiyy” and is similar to previous versions incorporating many details such as Fāṭima bringing food, the *kisā’* being from Khaybar, the entire family eating together, except for the revelation of the verse, despite the supplication offered by the Prophet being identical to the wording of the verse.
3.2.4.16. New details by Ibn Samʿūn al-Waʿiz’s versions

The next version (# 81) was collected in the “Āmālī” by Ibn Samʿūn al-Waʿiz (d. 387 AH). This version offers a new detail, namely that the Prophet was hanging his head in sadness and that Fāṭima brought him food. In addition, this version shows Fāṭima to have come with her sons and the Prophet asking her to get ‘Alī, after which they all ate together covered in the *kisā‘*, which is also a new addition, as in all previous versions the Prophet covers them after they eat. The version offers additional details about which hand the Prophet used to collect the *kisā‘* and close it over them, namely his left, while raising the right hand towards the sky and stating that these were his *ahl al-bayt* and following it with the supplication identical to the verse, however, the verse itself or its revelation are not mentioned. The supplication is supplemented with the Prophet adding that he would be an enemy to those who make enemies of them, be war to those whom they wage war against and be peace for those whom they make peace with. The double emphasis on war and enmity is a first in all the versions. The rest of the story-line continues as previously with Umm Salama asking whether she belonged to *ahl al-bayt* and being told that she is blessed (*ʿala khayr*).

3.2.4.17. Versions from 400–410 AH

The following version (82) comes from "Mu’jam al-Shuyūkh" by Ibn Jumayʿ al-Šaydawī (d. 402 AH) and is similar to previous versions, however, offering a new detail. To Umm Slama’s familiar question, she receives an answer telling her that she is both from his *ahl* and *khayr*, but they were more deserving or entitled (*aḥaq*). Furthermore the author adds that this *hadith* is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to the conditions of al-Bukhārī, though he has not included it. The next two versions were collected by Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405 AH) in his al-Mustadrak ‘alā-ʾl Ṣaḥīḥayn. The first one is a short one with little details offered, except that the verse was revealed in Umm Salama’s house after which the Prophet asked for ‘Alī, Fāṭima and their children and called them *ahl al-bayt*. There is no mention of Umm Salama saying anything afterwards. The second version tells
of Umm Salama seeing the Prophet taking a garment (thawb) rather than a kisāʾ and wrapping it around himself with ‘Ālī, Fāṭima and their children and reciting the verse. When Umm Salama attempted to join she was told to stay in her place (makānakā).

The eighty-fifth version in the aḥādīth of Muḥammad Ibn al-Muẓaffar (d. 410 AH) is also a previously used one. The only new addition is the Prophet’s answer to Umm Salama’s question of whether she is one of them. The Prophet tells her yes and an “in shā Allah” is added.

The next two versions were collected from Akhbār Asbahān and the one after that from Maʿrīfāt al-Ṣaḥāba, both by Abū Nuʿaym al-Asbahānī (d. 430 AH). The first one (# 86) offers the story of how Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab came to offer his condolences and is similar to the ones previously mentioned. However the kisāʾ is omitted and no details are offered about what Fāṭima brought with her.

In the next two versions the kisāʾ is not mentioned either and the two versions lack details and are restricted to the information that the verse was revealed in Umm Salama’s house with ‘Ālī, Fāṭima and their children being there and the Prophet saying that they are his ahl al-bayt.

The two versions differ, however, in the response to Umm Salama’s question. In the first version the Prophet tells her that she is the Prophet’s wife and blessed (ʿala khayr), while in the second version he tells her yes, ‘in shā Allah. The next two versions come from “al-ʾIʿtiqād ʾilā sabīl al-rashād” and “al-Suna n al-Kubrā” respectively, both by al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 AH). Both versions have few details. In the first one there is no mention of the kisāʾ, nor is a supplication included.

However, the author adds that this hadīth is sāḥīḥ and its narrators are all trustworthy (thiqāḥ). Furthermore, the author adds that this hadīth has other shawāhid (witnesses), meaning that it was narrated by another companion (Ṣaḥābī) and has other chains of narrations (isnād). The author also mentions that some teachers disapproved of the narration citing objectionable hadīth, while others accepted it. In addition the author offers an explanation as to the meaning of ahl al-bayt and states that the Prophet meant his wives or that his wives were included. The
ninetieth version is also short and mainly states that the Prophet covered ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn in a *kisāʾ* and recited the verse. The new addition here is that the Prophet added that this verse was revealed for these four.

### 3.2.4.18. New Details in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s and al-Wāḥidī’s versions

The next two versions were collected by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463) in his “Muwaḍḍīh ‘Awham al-Jamʿ wa-Tafrīq” and “Tārīkh Baghdād” respectively. The first version is very short and offers no details, other than verse [33:33] was revealed in Umm Salama’s house with her sitting at the door, while there were four people in the house, (ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Hasan and al-Ḥusayn). In this version Umm Salama asks a new question, namely: “Where am I?,“ [meaning where do I belong or what is my position]. However, she receives the familiar answer of you are blessed (ʿ*āla khayr*). In the second version more details are offered and it is the known story-line of Fāṭima bringing food and them eating together. The only new detail is that the *kisāʾ* was under the Prophet while he was in bed and that it was dark like ink.

The next version (93) was collected by al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH) in “Asbab al-nuzūl” and is very similar to the one above including the food topic. However there is a new addition here that Umm Salama added that the Prophet recited the verse twice, after which she inserted her head into the *kisāʾ* asking whether she was included and receiving the known answer of (ʿ*āla khayr*). Another addition is attributed to Umm Salama, the assertion that there were five people inside the *kisāʾ*, in addition to listing them. The five include the Prophet.

### 3.2.4.19. More details and information

The following two versions were collected by Ṭarrad al-Zaynī (d. 491 AH) in his ‘Āmārī. The first version is the one narrated by Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab. In this version the curses aimed at the people of Iraq are more detailed and include the accusation that they lured and tempted (al-Ḥusayn) and abandoned him, followed by the familiar story-line of Fāṭima bringing food and the
Prophet asking her about his sons. The author stops at this point saying: “the narrator mentions ḥadīth al kisā’ in its entirety and adds that he is the one who abbreviated it; however, which version he meant is unknown as there are several versions as seen from the above. The interesting new addition here is that the ḥadīth now has a name and is referred to as ḥadīth al kisā’, which indicates that it was widely known and quoted and signifies that by that time the ḥadīth had become canonised\(^{506}\).

The ninety-fifth version was collected from al-ʾĀmālī al-Khamīsiya by al-Shajarī (d. 499 AH) and is the basic short one about the verse being revealed in Umm Salama’s house. However, the author adds that there was an addition by Zayd Ibn al-Arqam defining the ahl al-bayt as those who were prohibited from receiving charity (ṣadaqa) after the Prophet’s demise and a further clarification that those meant were the clan (āl) of ʿAlī, those of ʿUqayl, those of Jaʿfar as well as those of al-ʿAbbās. The next two versions (96 and 97) were collected by al-Ḥusayn Ibn Masʿūd (d. 516 AH) from his “Maʿālim al-Tanzīl” and “Sharḥ al-Sunna” respectively. The first one is the short version about the verse being revealed in Umm Salama’s house without many details, though the author calls it ḥadīth al-kisā’. The second version is the familiar one with the servant. The new addition here is a detailed glossary of the terms used and a thorough description of the kisā’, namely that it was a khamiṣa which is a square kisā’ with two borders. Furthermore the author inserts an addition, that an abridged version of this ḥadīth is mentioned in Ṣahih Muslim. He also mentions that ʿA’isha also narrated this after the Prophet’s death.

3.2.4.20. Ibn ʿAsākir’s versions

The next 32 versions (# 98-125) were collected by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571 AH), who seems to have made an effort to collect all the different versions with the distinct story-lines. The first two were included in “Al-Arba’in fi manāqib Ummahat al-Muʾminīn”, while the remaining thirty were

included in his famous “Tārīkh Dimashq”. The first version is the familiar story-line with the verse being revealed in Umm Salama’s house and that it was revealed for *ahl al-bayt*, namely the Prophet, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Husayn. The author mentions that it was agreed upon that this is a ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth and adds that it was narrated, omitting Umm Salama, by Abū Saʿīd Saʿd Ibn Mālik Ibn Sinan al-Khudaṛī, who accompanied the Prophet and narrated many *ahādīth* from him and many people narrated citing him as their authority. The author gives a list of the narrators quoting him and sets his date of death at 74 AH and classifies his narration as a narration from a companion by a companion. Furthermore, the author explains that these people, for whom the verse was revealed, were inside the house at that time and closes with ‘and Allah knows best’ (*Allah a‘lam*).

It is interesting to note that Abū Saʿīd Saʿd Ibn Mālik Ibn Sinan al-Khudaṛī is from the Khazraj tribe, one of the Anṣār and is named as one of the main narrators of the ḥadīth known as ḥadīth Ghadīr al-Khumm. He is well regarded and it has been reported that he adopted Islam at a very early age, before reaching puberty. He is one of the seventeen companions reported to have attested to ‘Alī’s *walāya* based on the day of the Ghadīr al-Khumm, as well as joining ‘Alī’s forces in the battle of Nahrawān.

The next version is almost identical to a previous version (# 48), but includes a few dramatic details in terms of the curses leveled at the people of Iraq. Here Umm Salama is reported to have said: “they killed him, may Allah kill them, they killed him, may Allah humiliate them, shame them” before narrating how she saw the Prophet on that same bed, with the rest of the version as previously known. The next four versions are identical to previous versions with no additions or omissions. The following version (# 104) is a replica of a previous version (# 46) and includes seven inside the *kisāʾ*, namely Jibrīl and Mikāʾīl. Again the emotional addition of Umm Salama wishing that the Prophet would have included her in his *ahl al-bayt* is cited. The next version is also familiar, while the one after that (# 106) has a new detail. For the first time in all
the previous versions the Prophet is not inside the *kisāʾ*, but outside, while the four (‘Ālī, Fāṭima and their children) are inside. The rest is identical to previous versions, as are the following two versions.

In the next version (# 107) the plot is a bit distorted. The plot starts as previously with Fāṭima bringing food and being asked to get her family members. The Prophet is lying on the bed on a *kisāʾ* from Khaybar. Umm Salama is praying in the room and aware of the Prophet taking the *kisāʾ* from under himself and wrapping it around them, raising his hand to the sky and making the supplication with the exact wording as verse [33:33]. The *matn* continues saying that Umm Salama sticks her head into the house and asks her familiar question. This is of course logically flawed, as it was explicitly mentioned in the *matn* that she was praying in the same room, so as to enable her to narrate the events first hand as a witness. There was no mention that she left the room or the house at any point in time during the events taking place. The next version also narrates the food version, while the one following that (# 109) is the one where Shahr Ibn Hawshab comes to offer his condolences. The only omission is the cursing of the people of Iraq aspect, while the rest is identical to previous versions.

The next three versions also offer nothing new in terms of additions or omissions. Two of these are the short version about ‘Ālī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn being covered with the *kisāʾ*, while one is the Shahr Ibn Hawshab version. However, the next version (# 113) offers a new turn to the familiar story line. After the revelation of the verse, the Prophet asks Umm Salama to send for ‘Ālī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. When they arrive, the *matn* continues to offer a very detailed description of the position of every person. The Prophet circles ‘Ālī with his right arm, al-Ḥasan with his left, places al-Ḥusayn on his stomach, while Fāṭima is at his feet. Then he offers his supplication (with the exact wording of verse [33:33]) three times, while the *kisāʾ* is omitted entirely.
The next version (#114) is identical to version (#81) with the Prophet hanging his head with the added part in the supplication about war and fighting. The following version is the one with Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab reporting about Umm Salama’s reaction upon receiving the news of al-Ḥusayn’s death. It includes the curses and is almost identical to the previous versions; however, it has two new details. The first one being that Fāṭima came carrying both her young sons and the second being that after Umm Salama asks her question, the Prophet says yes and invites her to enter the kisā’ with them, however after he had ended his supplications.

The next five versions (#116–120) are all identical to previously mentioned versions. Version #121 returns with the detail that the kisā’ is from Fadak and mentions the supplication used in the very first version. The author mentions another version of the ḥadīth with the same matn, just a different supplication, both, however, very close to the wording of the tashahhud recited in prayers. The next three versions are also all identical to previous versions with different story lines. The following version (#125) offers the story line with Fāṭima bringing food, namely khazīra (a meat dish). There are two new details offered. The first one describes the time as being a cold night, while the second is about how the Prophet placed them around him after sharing the meal. He sat Fāṭima next to ‘Alī; al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn next to Fāṭima and sat facing them with one foot in ‘Alī’s and the other in Fāṭima’s lap, after which he covered them with the kisā’ from Fadak and continued with the supplication identical to the wording of the verse.

3.2.4.21. Final versions

The next three versions were collected in “ʾUsd al-ghāba fī maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba” by Ibn al-ʿAthīr (d. 630 AH). The first of these versions is a repeat from previous ones with no new details offered, while the second one includes a note by the author that this ḥadīth meets the conditions of Ṣaḥih Muslim, but he did not include it. The final version of Ibn al-ʿAthīr’s collection is also a familiar short version with the kisā’. The next two versions were collected from “Siyar aḥām al-
nubalāʾ” and “Tarīkh al-Islām al-kabīr” respectively, both by al-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH). Contrary to the last version collected by Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Dhahabī’s first version narrates that Fāṭima came very early in the morning before sunrise (ghadiya) carrying a pot with some kind of porridge (tharīd).

The rest follows the previous versions; however, this version also differs in how they all sat. According to this matn, the Prophet took the children in his lap, while ‘Alī sat on his right and Fāṭima on the left. However again we find the matn a bit confusing, as after this description we learn that the Umm Salama pulls the kisāʾ from under herself, as she was sitting on the bed and then the matn goes back to saying there was a pot with khazīra and they all sat around and ate from it, while Umm Salama was praying in the room. It seems that this was an amateurish attempt at merging two different versions of the same story-line. The next version (# 130) is a short one with the kisāʾ narration and an additional note by the author that this hadīth can also be found in different ways with a different isnād by Shahr Ibn Hawshab and two other chains leading back to Umm Salama.

The final version (# 131) was collected in “al-Maqṣad al-‘ali li-zawā’id Abī Ya’lā al-Muṣilī by al-Haythamī (d. 807) and is identical to previously mentioned ones. However, the author adds a note that this hadīth was also included in the collection of al-Tirmidhī, with a slight difference, namely the supplication offered by the Prophet. In this version the supplication offered by the Prophet is like the tashahhud recited in prayers asking for prayers and blessings (baraka) for his ahl al-bayt, while in al-Tirmidhī’s version the supplication omits the prayers.

3.2.5. Analysis

From the above description of the characteristics and differences in the various versions, we find that basically there are seven distinct story lines or plots. A plot is defined as being: “constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving
particular artistic and emotional effect.” Though the variations differ considerably, certain characteristics remain constant, namely a fairly constant frame story and a relatively variable enclosed content. All identifiable plots have some slight variations in the details, even if the main plot remains unchanged and the main characters (the Prophet, Umm Salama, Fāṭima, ‘Alī, al-Hasan and al-Ḥusayn) remain the same with some new characters (angels, namely Jibrīl and Mikā’il, as well as persons (such as Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab, ‘Amra al-Hamdāniya, a slave girl, a male or a female servant) being added in some versions. The first plot is the oldest and also the shortest, whereby the Prophet covers Fāṭima, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn with the kisāʾ he was wearing and makes a supplication to Allah.

This is the basic summary of the plot; however, the supplication itself varies in some versions of the same story-line. The second plot involves a servant announcing the visit of Fāṭima, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and most of the time this version of the plot then gets supplemented by the first plot. In the third plot Fāṭima brings a pot of food, which tends to vary from one version to the next, and is told to bring her family, after which the entire family sit down to eat, followed by the first story line. In the forth plot Shahr Ibn Ḥawshab visits Umm Salama to offer his condolences upon the death (martyrdom) of al-Ḥusayn. In some versions Umm Salama is said to have fainted, in others she curses the people of Iraq and then continues to tell the story of the kisāʾ as in the first plot. It is conceivable that Umm Salama herself narrated the different version after the battle of Karbalā’. The fifth plot involves the revelation of verse [33:33] in Umm Salama’s house. The variations include the addition or omission of the first plot, the addition of an explanation of who was in the house, as well as the presence of Jibrīl, which is kind of a superfluous addition, as it is known – and implicitly assumed – that Jibrīl is the one bringing the revelation. The sixth plot involves a woman asking about ‘Alī, whether he is to be loved or hated

and usually this story line is supplemented with the first one. The final story line involves Umm Salama sending a slave girl or servant out to obtain news. The girl comes back telling about the death (martyrdom) of al-Ḥusayn. This story line is usually enhanced by the first plot and sometimes the fifth. As seen some of the versions combine more than one plot. The next table shows the number of versions combining plots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of Plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No (76) 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (55) 42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 - Combination of Plots

As can be seen from the above table, there are seventy-six versions of ḥadīth al kisāʾ, namely 58%, that only have one single story line, while the remaining fifty-five versions, amounting to 42% combine more than one story-line in the same version of the ḥadīth. The table below shows the count of the different plots, identified above, in ḥadīth al kisāʾ.
The table above shows the distribution of the variant story lines. The first story line is the oldest one identified and is also the one found most frequently at 49 times (37.4%). The second story line is used eleven times at 8.4%, while the third one is told 24 times at 18.3%. The fourth storyline is narrated eleven times at 8.4%, while the fifth is found 32 times at 24.4%. The last two story lines are both found twice at 3%. Judging by the frequency, the first and oldest version is also the most commonly used, as it can also be found supplementing other storylines (which was not counted in this table). The count focused on how the storyline started.

Interestingly enough, though the first story line with *kisāʿ* is the most frequently used, the details differ. The *kisāʿ* itself, when it is described, has many different descriptions. In some versions the *kisāʿ* comes from Fadak, while in others it comes from Khaybar. To avoid naming
the location of where the *kisāʾ* originated, other descriptions have been used, such as that it is black, like ink, velvet or square. The following table shows the count of *kisāʾ* descriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of Kisāʾ Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(none) 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fadak, 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaybar, 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black, 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others, 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9 - Count of Kisāʾ Descriptions**

As can be seen from the table above, in 67% of the total versions there is no description mentioned. The highest frequency at 13% is found when the *kisāʾ* is described as a khaybarī one, followed by 10% when it is described as originating from Fadak. The remaining 10% are divided between the color black at 8% and other descriptions at 2%.

One can observe that there are a lot of different variables that kept creeping in onto the *matn* over time, as well as getting removed. However, despite this apparent confusion one can still easily identify the core message of the *ḥadīth*.

The most important issue for Umm Salama in this tradition is whether or not she was included in *ahl al-bayt* because of the implications of that for the Sunnī and Shīʿa disputes. For example, her exclusion cuts out the wives and by extension other children of the Prophet as well as the other children of ʿAlī by later wives. It also minimizes all the Prophet’s wives as less important than Fāṭima and her children, since they did not receive a special blessing, Qur’ānic or
otherwise. Hence, the versions where Umm Salama was included were counted and they amounted to 35 times, meaning almost 28% of the versions. That means that in the majority of the narrations, over two thirds, Umm Salama was not included in ahl al-bayt, which was restricted to the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭima, her husband ʿAlī and their children.

Furthermore, there are some noticeable common themes regarding the additions which will be discussed below:

3.2.5.1. Angels

The inclusion of Jibrīl and Mikāʾīl in the matn of some of the versions is not surprising, as angels have interested Muslim scholars throughout. Al-Ṭabarī, for example has quoted many traditions involving angels in relation to qur’anic verses in addition to other references to angels.⁵⁰⁸ Early Śūfis and late Muslim philosophers have also made frequent references to angels, as well as angels being well-liked and frequently used in popular traditions, literature and myths, hence it is not surprising to find them also being used by traditionists.

3.2.5.2. Numbers

The numbers seem to play a role in the matn, for there are frequent additions of numbers to emphasize something by having the Prophet repeat it twice or thrice and also in reference to the number of persons inside the house or inside the kīsa. The mention of numbers in relation with a topic is common in folk literature such as three sons, seven voyages, forty thieves, etc.⁵⁰⁹ In the versions of the ḥadīth al-kīsa one finds that most numbers are odd rather than even. The repetition of the supplication happens three times, there are five people in the house or under the cloak and when Jibrīl joins in and the number becomes even, Mikāʾīl has to join for it to be odd.

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again. This is probably based on the ḥadīth\textsuperscript{10} found in the Ṣaḥīḥayn, Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal, as well as al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dawūd and Ibn Māja stating that Allah is unique and likes odd numbers; hence, the believers should observe odd numbers.

Odd numbers can be seen in many religious references, like in fasting for three days overcomes legal problems,\textsuperscript{511} the five daily prayers, the five pillars of faith, the seven circumambulations, the seven runs between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwā, throwing seven pebbles at Minā, three separate washings of certain body parts in \textit{wudu} (ablutions), three pieces of cloth for the shroud, etc. The Qur‘ān also makes numerous references in odd numbers, such as the seven skies and the seven layers of the earth, as well as the recurrent the motif of seven in the story of Yūsuf in chapter 12.\textsuperscript{512}

3.2.5.3. Thoughts, Feelings and Wishes

In a few versions we see a dialogue, like between Umm Salama and Shahr Ibn Hawshab, we are also privy to the wishes of Umm Salama as in a slight implicit disappointment that the Prophet did not say: “you are one of the \textit{ahl al-bayt},” as in the version collected by al-Ṭāhāwī (d. 321 AH) for example. It seems like there is an invisible omniscient narrator giving out pieces of information to make things fall into place and to make more sense out of the narrative.

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\textsuperscript{510} إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَةَ مَنْ أُوتِيَتْ بِهِمُ الْقُرَآنُ} [2.196]

\textsuperscript{511} [2.196] And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit for Allah, but if, you are prevented, (send) whatever offering is easy to obtain, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination; but whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, he (should effect) a compensation by fasting or alms or sacrificing, then when you are secure, whoever profits by combining the visit with the pilgrimage (should take) what offering is easy to obtain; but he who cannot find (any offering) should fast for three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days when you return; these (make) ten (days) complete; this is for him whose family is not present in the Sacred Mosque, and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that Allah is severe in requiting (evil). as well as [5.89] Allah does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men out of the middling (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck; but whosoever cannot find (means) then fasting for three days; this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear; and guard your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His communications, that you may be Fateful.

Another example would be in Al-Ṭabarani’s version (77) where the servant announces Fatima and her family and an important detail is inserted, namely that Umm Salama remains close by, after being told to make way for the guests, to enable her to view the events so she can report them later. Beaumont discusses these types of literary tools in an article, borrowing from Gerard Genette’s Narrative Discourse. Beaumont describes how “Genette applied the terms used to describe the verb, tense, mood and voice, to the analysis of fictional narrative.” In addition, Beaumont applies Genette’s concepts to the matn or rather the khabar narrative in order to enhance the understanding of the distinctive features of the khabar narrative, showing that it is more multifaceted and complex than previously believed. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that there are some unexpected similarities with some fictional Western narratives. Beaumont believes that this method will shed light on the composition of the narratives. He asserts that when “direct speech is given [it] may only be used when the narrator was present at the scene”, otherwise only indirect speech may be used. This explains the insertion of Umm Salama remaining in the vicinity after being told to make way for the guests.

3.2.5.4. Canonization

In the version collected by al-Ḥusayn Ibn Masʿūd (d. 516 AH) in his “Sharḥ al-Sunna” he added that an abridged version of this hadīth is mentioned in Sahīh Muslim, by Muslim Ibn al-Hajjāj (d. 261 AH). Mentioning this means that an abridged version being in Sahīh Muslim bestows more credibility on his own version. Considering that this is the first mention of the kind,

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514 Ibid, p. 5.
516 Ibid, p. 31.
it can be assumed that by 500 AH “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” had already acquired an elevated position, if not on its way to becoming a formal canon.517

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517 When a religion starts to create theological arguments to further develop itself, it encompasses a wide variety of opinions, facts, figures and explanations. Slowly, there is a process where an agreed set of explanations, opinions and facts, usually in a text become understood as the standard for that particular branch of theology such as a ritual. This process is called as canonization and the canon is a standard or a criterion, which represents “the interaction of text, authority and communal identification” as mentioned by Brown in ‘The Canonization of al-Bukhari and Muslim - The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon.’ (p. 38) While historically, the study of canons and canonization mainly focused on Christian and Jewish scriptures and has by now become well accepted in the Christian and Jewish theological circles, the application of this concept to the Islamic theology is comparatively recent. Jonathan Brown has extended the thought of applying the methods and findings to Muslim scripture and texts, as many doctrines are not peculiar to Christianity, but have their parallels in other faiths, as noted by Menzies in “The Natural History of Sacred Books. Some Suggestions for a Preface to the History of the Canon of Scripture.” (p. 71). This innovative idea sheds a lot of light on the reasons of the high status, almost “untouchability”, of the Ṣaḥīḥ collections of Hadith. According to Menzies, the two essential conditions for the formation of any scriptural canon are, first “the existence of books which the nation is prepared to recognize as the norm of its religion;” and secondly, “the existence of a religious authority of sufficient power to prescribe to the nation what books it shall receive as the norm.” (Menzies, A. (1897), p. 83). If one applies these arguments to the Muslim scriptures, one finds, that while some canons are definitely fixed, without any possibility of additions or reductions afterwards – such as the Qur’an – “other texts remain more flexible initially and might receive successive extensions.” (Menzies, A. (1897), p. 92) such as the Hadīth corpus. The study of the prophetic traditions started as early as the 2nd century AH. The study of the “living tradition” of the Prophet and his sunna was very important to set the normative custom of the community. Furthermore the traditions later on accompanied the study of religious law or jurisprudence (fiqh), and became more and more an important and thoroughly promoted branch of Islamic religious scholarship. The study of sunna became so important that the Ahl al-Hadīth (or Aḥšāb al-Ḥadīth) became very powerful in society. They opposed the use of ra’y (human reasoning and personal opinion). They preferred the use of any prophetic tradition; even if it was only transmitted by a single individual (khabar al-wāhid). Schacht claims that the muḥaddithūn (translationists) were themselves responsible for circulating many traditions which claimed to go back to the Prophet. With the rise of power of Ahl al-Hadīth, the community was slowly becoming much more text oriented. Moshe Halbertal studied the relationship between canonization, authority and identity in what he terms as “text centered communities,” such as Judaism and Christianity whose members are bound together through a common commitment to canonical texts. Halbertal explains that a text centered community displays certain characteristics: (1) Expertise in the canonical text is a source of authority and prestige within the community (2) Study of the canonical texts is itself an act of devotion urged upon all (3) The text becomes a “locus of religious experience,” with those who pore over or imbibe it engaging in “a religious drama in and of itself.” (3) The canonical text defines the boundaries of the community; it is the only recourse and source for the justification of ideas. (Halbertal, M. (1997). People of the Book: Canon, Meaning and Authority, pp. 7-8) Halbertal’s explanation serves as a guide here and most of these characteristics apply to the Muslim community. The Ahl al-Hadīth most certainly showed expertise in gathering, transmitting and studying Hadīth. Their increased power was accompanied by prestige within the community. They urged the community to study the texts and their opposition to personal opinion was based on the fact that adhering to the traditions was an act of devotion to the Prophet and the religion. Lastly the acceptance of Ḥadīth did indeed define the boundaries of the community. This was discussed at great length by Abdelrahman in his thesis titled “The Development of the Mu’tazalite Usage of Prophetic Traditions.” Abdelrahman shows how the Mu’tazalites at first opposed the adherence to literal interpretations and usage of Ḥadīth and were more inclined towards this use of rational thinking and personal opinions, but with the passage of time.
changed their position and accepted Hadith more readily after having had very strict criteria for the evaluation of narrations. (Abdelrahman, 2008). The Development of the Mu'tazalite Usage of Prophetic Traditions. MA Thesis) Brown argues that the action of authorizing certain books draws lines that end up excluding other works. He also adds that canons have been understood as tools of inclusion and exclusion within a broader community. (Brown, (2007), p. 39). This supports the findings of Abdelrahman and explains to a great extent why the Mu'tazalites changed their position regarding Hadith, so as not to remain on the fringes of the community after having been its intellectual leaders earlier. This also supports Brown's claim that canons can also highlight inclusion and agreement more than exclusivity. (Brown, (2007), p. 40) In the case of the Hadith, it served as a tool of reconciliation (between Ahl al-Hadith and the Mu'tazalites), a medium for communication or for creating common ground between adversaries, as well as a means of exclusion. Brown argues that "scriptural canons thus form when certain sections of a community attempt to monopolize the true interpretation of a religious message shared by all its members, excluding those audiences that identify with the non-canonical." (Brown, J. (2007), p. 39) He further maintains that this was so because of the role of consensus (ijma') of the Muslim community. Once a text was agreed upon as authoritative, it forced various other sects to accept it as the only reliable and trustworthy means for religious discourse on the subject of Hadith and for discussing the Prophet's legacy. (Brown, (2007), p. 40) Another point raised by Menzies is that canonization sometimes grants a certain sacredness or purity on a certain text. (Menzies, A. (1897), p. 73) This also holds true in the case of the Sahihayn. However it was not until the fifth century AH that it became untouchable. (Brown, (2007), p. 64) At the beginning various critical works were written dealing with some of the inconsistencies of the Sahih Hadith by scholars such as al-Khattabi and Ibn Qutayba. However, by the fifth century AH criticism had to be veiled, such as that provided by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Despite this apparent adherence to the traditionalist methodology and consensus, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ is very critical of the previous work, especially that of Bukhārī and Muslim, who were the most highly regarded scholars at his time. Dickinson, who translated Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's Muqaddima, states: "With regard to the identity of what Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ calls "the well-known and well-respected compositions," Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ was vague. Of course, the Sahihs of Bukhari and Muslim are mentioned, as well as a number of other collections, but he seems to have wanted to avoid delineating a specific body of works." (Dickinson, E. (2002). "Ibn al-Salāḥ al-Shahrazuri and the Isnad.") However, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ criticizes them in a disguised way, such as: "The Hadith that Bukhārī and Muslim (God bless them) provide with an uninterrupted isnād in their books: these beyond a doubt represent the material they judged as sound. There is doubt about some of the "suspended" Hadith (muˈallaq); that is the Hadith with an isnād from the beginning of which one transmitter or more is omitted. The majority of these are in the book of Bukhārī; there are very few in the book of Muslim." (Ibn Al-Salah (2006). p. 13) He also adds, writing about tāḍīls: "There are very many Hadith of this kind in the two Sahihs and other well respected books ..." (Ibn Al-Salah (2006), p. 56) Perhaps his most obvious criticism is apparent in saying: "Bukhārī and Muslim did not include all of the sound Hadith in their Sahihs and they did not take it upon themselves to do that:" (Ibn Al-Salah (2006), p. 9) This supports the theory put forward by Brown that the status of canonized books is raised, and that small inconsistencies within the texts themselves or challenges from outside sources are overlooked because they could then undermine the definition of truth to which a community adheres. (Brown, (2007), p. 20) Furthermore this also corroborates the 'Principle of Charity' also mentioned by Brown, which supposes that people interpret texts in the best possible light. (Brown, (2007), p. 42) Halbertal argues that given a number of likely interpretations of any given canonical passage, the 'correct' one will be the one 'that supports the text's internal consistency and compatibility with accepted notions of truth or propriety.' (Halbertal, M. (1997), p. 28) Hence, canonising a legal or scriptural text not only bestows authority on it, but also requires a commitment of the community to make the best of it. From the above, it can be seen that Jonathan Brown's argument that canon and canonization also holds true for Muslim scriptures and text, especially the Sahihayn and the other collections considered Sahih forming the Muslim canon of Hadith, holds true. This also explains why al-Ḥusayn Ibn Masʿūd (d. 516 AH) makes it a point to add that an abridged version of this hadith is mentioned in Sahih Muslim. Mentioning this raises the status of his own collection, as it brings it closer to Sahih Muslim. This also supports the canonization process and shows that the community itself keeps on raising the status of the texts, such as by writing commentaries on them. Menzies argues that
3.2.5.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the variances in the versions could be attributed to a number of reasons. Some are due to the fact that oral transmission relied on memory and memory fails at times. As discussed in the first chapter of this study Muslims had a very strong oral tradition. Leder, however, argues that variations in riwāyat (readings) cannot generally be attributed to oral transmission. hadīth was taught in groups and pupils used to take notes or were dictated in lessons of hadīth, which also resulted in variant versions, as sometimes teachers did not allow students to write down anything and insisted on oral transmission only. The students wrote down what they learned as a memory aid when they went home, which also could have resulted in variant forms. Schoeler mentions Malik's Muwatta, which exists in various variants written by his students either through sama’ (hearing) or qirā'a (reading).

Furthermore variant riwāyat could have also come about by different versions given by the teacher during repeated lessons. In addition, working orally with a large number of students calls for some methods of keeping their attention. It is conceivable that some of the dramatic details were added to enhance the text for attention purposes. In any narrative the story can be enlarged or compressed without compromising its content. There are always parts in any story

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522 Ibid, p. 211.
that can be disregarded without damaging the narrative. There are also many ways of telling the same story.

The permission to transmit narrations by meaning (bil ma’nā) also allowed for variations in the wording and resulted in numerous versions of the core text of the same ḥadīth. This is one of the problems of the ḥadīth corpus as identified by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi523 amongst others. In many ways the ḥadīth study circles are akin to the storytellers (al-quṣṣāš), who used to sit in the mosque, surrounded by the people and used to tell stories of the ancients, the prophets and some myths and tales and were discussed in the first Chapter of this study. Ibn Qutaiba accused the quṣṣāš of elaborating and embellishing ḥadīth with unreasonable details.524 People, on the other hand, used to like the storytellers for their entertainment value, but rulers used to fear them because they could change public opinion against them and sometimes prohibited them from telling their stories,525 as discussed in the first chapter. The quṣṣās were used as propaganda tools in the time of ‘Alī and Mu‘awiya and were powerful.526 The muḥaddithūn (traditionists) restricted the storytellers, as any addition to the already vast corpus of Ḥadīth was undesirable.527

However, the many versions of the same ḥadīth, as discussed above, show that embellishments, dramatic enhancements and emotional tools were also used by the muḥaddithūn (traditionists) and were considered acceptable depending on the muḥaddith. Al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī stated that additions by a trustworthy transmitter (ziyādāt al-thiqa) do not constitute a flaw (ʿilla) in ḥadīth.528 With this particular matn, the additions and deletions enhance the content or shift the attention elsewhere from a detail or other, retaining the main message that ahl al-bayt

523 al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, Kitāb al-kīlāyah, p. 136
524 Ibn Qutaybah, tawil mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth, p. 279
525 al-Sabbāgh, Tarikh al quṣṣāš, p. 40.
526 Amin, Fajr al-Islām, p. 160
are rather special. With other ḥadīth versions, however, this is not the case, such as ḥadīth (97) which has nineteen versions and narrates that the Prophet used to like to fast three days every month. The problem lies in the fact that the fourteen versions do not agree on which three days they were.\textsuperscript{529} It appears that the disagreement on which days of the month he liked to fast is irrelevant to the core message, which is that the Prophet liked to fast three days a month, regardless of which they were. It becomes even more problematic, if one includes ḥadīth 99 with eleven versions, which narrated that the Prophet liked to fast on Saturday and Sunday to do the opposite of what the Polytheists did, and in some of its versions it is stated as to be different from ahl al-kitāb.

3.2.6. Study of Sunnī isnāds (chains of narration)

Having analysed one matn, the second part of the ḥadīth, namely the isnād also needs to be looked at closely. However, tackling the entirety of the isnād versions in this dataset would require much more space than the present project permits.

Jonathan Brown argues that: “for ahl al hadith, the isnād, the only lifeline to the Prophet's teachings and to an Islam unpolluted by the cosmopolitan religious atmosphere of the Near East, became a center of a cult of authenticity.”\textsuperscript{530} “The isnād for us is religion; were it not for the isnād whoever wanted could say whatever they wanted.” (Al-isnād 'indana dīn, lawlā al-isnād la-qāla man shā'a mā shā'ā)\textsuperscript{531} is a statement attributed to the muḥaddithūn. Looking at the isnād of the various versions of ḥadīth in the dataset, it is noticeable that for the first three links usually the

\textsuperscript{529} In the first and second version the days are named as Monday, Friday and Thursday, while the third, sixth, twelfth and thirteenth versions name them as Monday and Thursday, without any specifications as to the sequence. In the fourth version the days are named as Thursday and two Mondays, while the fifth, seventh, eighth and fourteenth version name them as Monday, Thursday and Monday again. The ninth version names them as Monday, Thursday and a day that has been forgotten, while finally the tenth and eleventh versions name them as Monday and two Thursdays.

\textsuperscript{530} Brown, The Canonization of al-Bukhari and Muslim, p. 45.

word ‘an (from / on the authority of), which is a vague phrase unlike akhbarana (he narrated to us or he reported to us) or amlāna (he dictated to us) which can be seen in the later links. When ‘an is used, there is no confirmatory proof that the two transmitters actually met. In earlier collections it seems to have been enough that the two transmitters were contemporaries. It would be interesting to look at the isnād terminology more closely, however, the scope of this study does not permit that and it might possibly be an avenue for future research.

In Fajr al Islam, Ahmad Amin argues that reports, conflicts and mutual accusations between the ṣaḥāba show that they themselves did not trust one another, nor did they take what was narrated by some of them for granted. ‘A’isha and Ibn ‘Abbās were reported to have criticized Abū Hurayra; a number of companions demanded evidence for the truth of reports passed on to them, ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb allegedly denied a report by Fāṭima Bint Qays. ‘Umar is also reported to have confined three companions to Medina to stop them from spreading traditions. ‘A’isha criticized Anas for transmitting traditions although he was only a child during the life of the Prophet. ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb called Abū Hurayra a liar, al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Alī called both Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn al-Zubayr liars. However, Ahmad Amin views the muḥaddithūn as essentially well meaning. He argues that the corruptions and fraud in Ḥadith literature is therefore not primarily premeditated, but rather the result of a flawed process of transmission. He places the problem primarily in the custom of riwaya b’il-ma’na (transmitting according to the sense) rather than by the exact words.

So in his view the transmission is the problem. Most Muslim scholars worked on the chains of transmission. One of the recent scholars, al-Albānī, who did not receive an ijaza (authorization) in Ḥadīth from any recognised scholar, studied many of the famous Ḥadīth books,

532 Amin, Fajr al-Islām, p. 216
including those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Sunan of al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dawud, al-Nasai’ī and Ibn Māja. In his works, al-Albānī identifies 990 aḥādīth considered authentic by most Muslim scholars, that he considers weak.535 His method is not new, as he uses the traditional method of Muslim scholarship, although his views certainly differ from those of many Muslim scholars.536 Al-Albānī systematically applied the rules of traditional Ḥadīth sciences, which focus on the quality of transmitters, to the collections of Ḥadīth, and discovered that numerous aḥādīth considered “authentic” up until his time may actually be “inauthentic”.537 He evaluated them again and found some to have an isnād that was ghayr muttassil (interrupted), while others included a known mudallis (person who suppressed faults in isnād). “Accordingly, al-Albānī does not feel compelled to interpret a ḥadīth, which, in his view, has an unreliable isnād, as interpretation is an aspect of authentification.” 538

Isnād-analysis cannot be mentioned without mentioning Joseph Schacht, who developed several ideas about isnād, including back-projection, the spread of isnād, family isnād, and the common link.539 The more obvious conclusions Schacht arrived at were that isnād tended to grow backwards, that the more perfect the isnād was, the later the tradition was, that family isnāds are no indication of authenticity, but rather a positive indication of it being forged and that traditions of companions were not even their own, but of the schools of thoughts of that time.540 In his view, the common link has the potential to shed light on the dating, authorship, and geographical origin of aḥādīth. He argued that the existence of a common link in an isnād is a strong indication of the

536 Ibid, p. 151.
537 Ibid, p. 172.
538 Ibid, p. 156.
540 Ibid, pp. 155-158, 184, 199.
fact that the isnād originated during the lifetime of the said common link. Another scholar who focused on isnād analysis is Juynboll, who argued that some transmitters were invented by other transmitters in order to function as key figures in isnād.

Juynboll also argues that no Companions could have served as a common link, because the earliest common links emerge only during the last quarter of the first century AH. However, Ozkan identifies some Companions who acted as transmitters, all of whom lived and died in the first century AH. Contrary to Juynboll’s argument, Ozkan shows that the propagation of ahādīth already happened in the generation of the Companions, not in that of the Successors. This is supported by Ahmad Amin’s argumentatis about the disputes amongst the companions.

Nevertheless, Juynboll modified on Schacht’s theory and introduced a few more technical terms such as the partial common link (pcl), which comes after the common link (cl), neither at the same time nor before. Furthermore, he identified the partial common link generally as a student of the common link and then linking further to others. In addition, Juynoll argues that the rijāl books and biographical dictionaries, mentioned in the first chapter of this study, list people as thiqāt, (reliable transmitters), who are often not trustworthy at all, on the contrary, they consist in general of names of unreliable, disputed narrators and even majhūl (unknown) transmitters. Juynboll defines the isnād-bundle as an isnād with “a single row or strand of mostly three, four or more names beginning with the Prophet or another ancient authority” and

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then a common link, where the names start fanning out in branches.” 547 Furthermore when the common link’s pupils have a number of pupils themselves and also branch out, they are called partial common link. At the end of the link one finds the collector. If a common link has a limited number of partial common links he then becomes a seeming common link. 548

It is interesting to note that the Sunnī set (see Annex 1) includes 192 Unknown links (about 4%), such as anonymous people called as a shaykh or a woman from such and such tribe. Furthermore, a remarkable 1323 times (about 28%), women are mentioned as transmitters in the isnād, which points to the important role played by the women of the early community in the transmission of traditions. Furthermore, in a transcript of a lecture delivered by Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi of Oxford University, on the role of women scholars in preserving and transmitting prophetic tradition in Islam he says: "Interestingly, there is no single Hadith which has been rejected from a woman on account of her being a fabricating liar. Imam Dhahabi affirms: “There are many men who have fabricated Hadith. However, no woman in the history of Islam has been accused of fabrication.” In light of this, if the intellectual integrity of anyone should be questioned, it should be that of men. Women have always truthfully conveyed religious knowledge." 549

Another notable observation, which corroborates Abbot’s argument about the existence of early written documentation, is found in hadith # 314, in the two versions. The chain of narrations mentions that ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ziyād Ibn Sam‘ān sent a written version of the hadith attributed to Umm Salama to Ibn Jurayj. One curious observation occured with hadith # 17, where three versions (namely 15, 19 and 20) included only the link named as Muḥammad throughout the entire isnād all the way to the last three links being ‘Urwa, Zaynab and Umm Salama.

Naturally tracing these traditionists will not just cause considerable difficulty, but will be impossible, as only their first name is given and not only that, but they all share the same one. An example of an isnād bundle from the Sunnī data set is found below showing ḥadīth #5 narrated by Umm Salama.
Figure 10 - Isnād-tree for ḥadīth 5
The example given is ḥadīth #5 from Annex 1. The *matn* of this ḥadīth is: The Prophet told ʿAlī that he was to him like Harūn was to Mūsā, however there were no more Prophets to follow. Here we can see that two separate strands with two different common links.

In one strand the common link is Ḥassān Ibn Ibhrāhīm, while in the other it is Yahya Ibn Salama Ibn Kahīl. A seeming common link is also there, namely al-Azraq Ibn ʿAlī. Looking more closely we find that the beginning of one strand includes two family- *isnād* portions, namely the link between Sa’d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and his son ʿĀmir as well as Kahīl Ibn Ḥasīn and his two grandsons Ḥammad Ibn Salama Ibn Kahīl and Yahya Ibn Salama Ibn Kahīl.

According to the biographical dictionaries Kahīl Ibn Ḥasīn narrated about two hundred and fifty *aḥādīth*. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal praised his transmission (*yutqin al-ḥadīth*). Aḥmad al-ʿAjīlī identifies him as one of the *tābiʿūn* who is trustworthy (*min al-thiqāt*), however he adds that he has slight shīʿite (*tashayyu*) tendencies, (which is not surprising considering the *matn* of this ḥadīth). Aḥmad al-ʿAjīlī adds that he narrated less than two hundred *aḥādīth*. Abū Ḥatim calls him *thīqa mutqīn* (accomplished and trustworthy), while Yaʿqūb Ibn Abī Shayba calls him *thīqa* despite of proven shīʿite tendencies (*tashayyu*). Ibn Sa’d mentions in his Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra that he was a very weak link (*daʿīfan jidan*). He was reported to have been born in 47 AH and to have died 121 AH.

Ḥassān Ibn Ibhrāhīm is reported to have been an ʿImām, a jurist and a *qādī* in Kūfa, as well as a trusted *muḥaddith*. Yahya Ibn Maʿīn accepts him (*la baʿsa bihi*), while al-Dāraquṭnī considers him trustworthy. Al-ʿUqaylī does not consider him strong (*qawī*), while Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal objected (*istankara*) to some of his narrations. He is reported to have died 186 AH.

This particular *isnād* bundle ends with a number of collectors such as Ibn Abī ʿAssem, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn ʿAsākir and al-Ṭabarānī.

The next example of the *isnād* bundle displays a different pattern, showing only one common link.
Figure 11 - Isnād-tree for ḥadīth 313
The *matn* of ḥadīth 313 says: The Prophet said that any woman whose husband was pleased with her would go to heaven after she died.

The judgment on this ḥadīth in most of the books is that it is a very weak ḥadīth due to the mentioning of two unknown (*majhūl*) persons in the chain. These are Musawir al-Ḥumayrī and his mother. Obviously if Musawir al-Ḥumayrī is unknown, then his mother must be as well. Furthermore Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār is considered a weak narrator who is not trustworthy; hence, the verdict on this ḥadīth is that it is rejected (*mardūd*).

As for the common link in this ḥadīth, namely Muḥammad Ibn Fuḍayl, the biographical dictionaries mention that he was from Kūfa. They classify him as acceptable (*ḥasan al-ḥadīth*) and mention that he had strong shīʿite tendencies (*tashayyu*). They add that he was one of the teachers of al-Sijistānī. Furthermore, the *rijāl* books mention that the authors of the Šīḥāḥ (without detailing which ones) have included *ahādīth* narrated by him in their collections. He is reported to have died in 194 or 195 AH.

### 3.2.7. Golden Chain for Umm Salama’s Sunnī narrations

Muslim scholars tried to make a comparative study of the various *isnād* versions used in the ḥadīth literature, to determine their value. Ḥadīth authorities have tried to identify the most reliable chain of transmission (*aṣaḥ al-asānīd*) on the basis of their own understanding (*ijtihād*) and investigation. The use of different criteria is the reason why they differ in their assessments and preference of one chain over another. It is said that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn al-Madīnī once met together with some other traditionists to debate which was the most authentic Sunnī *isnād*. One said that it was the *isnād* Shuʿba from Qatāda from Saʿīd from Amīr from Umm

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Salama. Curiously, this dataset did not have one single version of the *isnād* including this chain. Ibn al-Madīnī, on the other hand, believed it to be Ibn ʿAw from Muḥammad from Ḥubayda from ʿAlī. Ishāq Ibn Rahwiya is quoted to have said that the most reliable of all *isnād* is al-Zuhrī from ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn from his father al-Ḥusayn from his father ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. Ibn Ḥanbal is quoted to have declared that it was al-Zuhrī from Salīm from Ibn ʿUmar. Yaḥya Ibn al-Madīnī is quoted elsewhere to have considered the best *isnād* to be Sulaymān al-ʿUmarī from ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn from his father al-Ḥusayn from his father ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Ibn Yazīd al-Nakhaī from ʿAlqama Ibn Qays from ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd. Al-Bukhārī, however, was of the opinion that the best *isnād* was Malik from Nāfiʿ from Ibn ʿUmar. This *isnād* was dubbed the ‘Golden chain’. However, this *isnād* has been heavily criticised by Schacht, who opined that Malik was too young at the time of Nāfiʿ’s death and therefore could not have heard anything from him. Al-Azami on the other hand states that Malik was between twenty and twenty-seven years of at the time of Nāfiʿ’s death. As can be see, in general there is no agreement between the Sunnī scholars on one single best combination of muḥaddithūn.

### 3.2.7.1. Methodology for the determination of the Golden Chain for Umm Salama’s Sunnī narrations

The Sunnī dataset of this study was arranged in an excel sheet, where the columns represent the narrators and the rows are the individual versions of each ḥadīth to arrive at the the

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most authentic Sunnī isnād for Umm Salama’s narrations. As a first step an individual count of all unique narrators was performed to arrive at the number of each person’s narrations in the overall data set. Then the narrators with the highest frequency were selected and it was determined which ones could be possible candidates for the most recurrent chain in terms of ṭabaqāt (generations) based on the proximity to Umm Salama. In the next step the highest probable candidate was selected and all narrations of that candidate were extracted to a different sheet. In the fourth step the candidate’s place was fixed in a particular column, regardless of the length of the isnād. In the final step, the individual count of each narrator was performed to determine the one with the most frequent narrations from the first candidate. All the steps were repeated four times to determine the most recurrent chain of transmission for five narrators. In other words, through a progressive series of determining the highest frequency at every point in the narration chain, the highest frequency narrators were identified.

It was found that the most frequent chain, occurring forty-four times in the entire dataset was Mālik from Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Nawfal from ʿUrwa Ibn al-Zubayr from Zainab Bint Umm Salama from her mother Umm Salama. The second most frequent chain, occurring forty-one times is Mālik from Hishām Ibn ʿUrwa from his father ʿUrwa Ibn al-Zubayr from Zainab Bint Umm Salama from her mother Umm Salama. The third most frequent chain, occurring thirty times is Muḥammad Ibn Ḥarb from Muḥammad Ibn al-Walīd al-Zubaydī from al-Zuhrī from ʿUrwa from Zainab from her mother Umm Salama.

The individual narrators have been looked up in the various biographical dictionaries as follows:

Strangely enough the list of women traditionists in the Khulāṣa has many omissions, for example Umm Salama herself is omitted.

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559 Al-Khazraji, Khulāṣat Tahdhib al-Kamāl fi Asmā al-Rijāl
Zainab, daughter of Umm Salama is also classified as a trustworthy narrator and in most biographical dictionaries it is added that she was raised by the Prophet.

ʿUrwa Ibn al Zubayr is classified as trustworthy with an added note that he never participated in any of the *fitan*. Ibn Hajar classifies him as a famous trustworthy jurist (*faqīḥ*), while Ibn Saʿd has him categorized as trustworthy and safe (*maʿmūn*), adding that he narrated numerous (*kathīr*) *ahādīth*. Most of his narrations were from his maternal aunt ʿAʾisha.

Ibn Shahāb al-Zuhrī has been classified by many as the most knowledgeable narrator, pious jurist and accomplished reciter. Abū Ḥatim al-Razī prefers him over al-Aʾmash, while Ibn Ḥibbān praises him as the most knowledgeable man of his time with regard to any *matn*. He mentions that al-Zuhrī was contemporary to ten of the companions. Ibn Hajar mentions that there has been a unanimous agreement on his trustworthiness. Al-Suyūṭī calls him one of the pillars, whereas Ibn al-Jawzi claims that he was famous for *tadlis*.

**Hishām Ibn ʿUrwa** is declared as trustworthy by Abū Ḥatim al-Razī, while Ibn Ḥibbān adds that he was an accomplished pious reciter (*ḥāfīẓ mutqan wariʿ*). Al-Dāraquṭnī, al-Madīnī and Ibn Saʿd agree that he was trustworthy, while Ibn Hajar asserts that he was a jurist who might have engaged in unintentional *tadlis* (confusing narrators) in his old age. Al-Dhahabi, however, denies that he mixed up narrators or narrations in his old age and asserts that this never happened. It has been reported that Mālik did not like to narrate from him because of his Iraqi narrations. This is a strange attribution to Malik, since in this particular frequent *isnād* he narrates from him.

Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Nawfaḥ has been classified as trustworthy. Al-ʿUqaylī believes him to be more trustworthy than Hishām Ibn ʿUrwa Ibn al Zubayr, while Abū Ḥatim al-Razī believes he is equal to al-Zuhrī and Hishām Ibn ʿUrwa. Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Nasāʾī and Ibn Hajar classify him as trustworthy (*thiqā*), with an added note by Ibn Ḥibbān that he died in 117 AH. Ibn Saʿd also classifies him as trustworthy and adds that he narrated numerous (*kathīr*) *al-aḥādīth*. Ibn Maʿīn prefers him over Hishām Ibn ʿUrwa.
Muḥammad Ibn Ḥarb has been considerably difficult to trace. There are several men of the same name living around the same period. It has been impossible to pinpoint the correct traditionist meant here, though based on the other chains and their strength and trustworthiness; it has been assumed that the Muḥammad Ibn Ḥarb meant belongs to the ninth ṭabaqā. Six persons named as Muhammad Ibn Ḥarb, listed in three consecutive ṭabaqāt (namely 7, 8 and 9) were found. Three are listed in the ninth ṭabaqā. Five are classified as unknown (majhūl), while the last one from the ninth ṭabaqā is classified by al-Nasāʾī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Hajar as trustworthy (thiqā). Abū Ḥatim al-Razī accepts his aḥādīth, while Ibn Ḥanbal does not have any objections to him. It is believed to be the one meant in this isnād.

Muḥammad Ibn al-Walīd al-Zubaydī is considered by al-Bayhaqī, al-Nasāʾī, Ibn Hajar and Ibn Maʿīn as trustworthy. Abū Dawūd classifies his aḥādīth as free from error, while Ibn Ḥibbān adds that he was an accomplished reciter (ḥāfiz mutqan), who had a great knowledge of jurisprudence. Ibn Ḥanbal declared that he is thiqa and only narrates from other thiqāt. Ibn Saʿd calls him the most knowledgeable person in the Levant regarding fatāwa. Ibn Maʿīn prefers him over Sufyān Ibn ʿUyaina from amongst those who narrated from al-Zuhrī. He is reported to have died, aged seventy, in 148 AH.

In conclusion, all three golden chains leading back to Umm Salama include trustworthy narrators and hence it can be accepted that their narrations attributed to Umm Salama can be viewed as most likely authentic.
3.3. **Shīʿite Hadith**

3.3.1. **Introduction**

The Shīʿīte ḥadīth tradition differs from the Sunnī one and the collections started later around the end of the second century AH. This part of the chapter will deal with the Imāmī (Jaʿfarī or Twelver) Shīʿīte traditions only. In Sunnī Islam, reports were transmitted from the Prophet only, while reports from companions were deemed as *akhbār*. In Imāmī Shīʿite Islam, reports were transmitted from the Prophet as well as from the twelve Imāms. Of course the chain of transmission accepted by the two schools is not the same. Despite this difference in the authorities, the actual traditions recorded by Sunnī and Shīʿite sources have overwhelming similarities. The major difference is the Shīʿite's consideration of the extension of the Prophet in the Imāms and therefore their addition of the sayings of the Imāms to the strictly prophetic traditions.

For Shīʿite scholars, both the Prophet and the Imāms, hold quite a similar degree of authority. However, the Shīʿites make a distinction between the traditions, so that those transmitted from the Prophet are of greater authority than those of the twelve Imāms, but nevertheless all traditions are listed together according to subject matter, not according to narrator.

For the Sunnī scholars it was very important that the *isnād* between each of the narrators was clear and connected all the way to the Prophet. In Shīʿite hadīth scholarship, however, it did

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560 Kohlberg, "Shīʿī Hadīth.", p. 299.
563 Kohlberg"*Shīʿī Hadīth*", p. 300
564 Tabatabaʾī, *A Shīʿī Antology*, p. 16.
not matter much whether the *isnād* between an imām and the Prophet was complete, as the imāms were considered infallible and had inherited the Prophet's authority.⁵⁶⁵ In many cases though Shi‘īles would use reports narrated by companions in the same way as their Sunnī counterparts. However, certain companions were favored over others, mainly those who were documented to have supported 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. ‘Only traditions traced through ‘Alī’s family are accepted by Shi‘a’ is an incorrect statement, as numerous traditions are also transmitted through other sources.⁵⁶⁶ Umm Salama was undoubtedly one of the favorite authorities quoted, as she has been given the title ‘keeper of the books’, a very honourable title, concerning the documents owned by one imām and authorizing or declaring the next one.

Like the Sunni *ḥadīθ* tradition, Imāmī Shi‘ītes also have canonized collections. The four canonized collections differ from their Sunni counterparts in terms of compilation, presentation and organisation. In addition each one of the canonical collections has its own unique characteristics.⁵⁶⁷ The four books of the Shi‘īte canon are, al-Kāfī fi ‘ilm al-dīn by Muḥammad Ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 AH), man lā yāhdaruhu al-faqīḥ by Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381 AH), Tahdīḥ al-aḥkām and al-Istibšār fīmā ukhtilīfa min al-akhbār by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad Ibn Hasan al-Tūsī (d. 460 AH). In addition Biḥār al-Anwār by Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1111 AH) is perhaps the most voluminous collection in one hundred and ten printed volumes, three of which form the table of contents. Biḥār al-Anwār has been regarded as a comprehensive collection which also included all earlier collections as well as old manuscripts of *uşūl*.⁵⁶⁸ Even though Muḥsin al-Amin acknowledges its qualities, he opines that this collection needs revision, as it contains the good and the bad indiscriminately, and some interpretations of the traditions are often impulsive, rash

⁵⁶⁵ Brown, Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy, p. 125
⁵⁶⁶ Tabatabā’ī, A Shi‘īte Anthology, p. 15.
⁵⁶⁸ Brown, Hadith : Muhammad's Legacy, p. 133
or debatable. Versions from Biḥār al-Anwār constitute the majority of the Imāmī Shīʿī data-set (see Annex 2) as will be seen.

Also notable in the Shīʿīte collections of aḥāḏīṯ are the sayings of the fifth, sixth and seventh Imāms from whom the largest number of traditions have been recorded. These Imāms lived at the end of the Umayyad and the beginning of the ʿAbbāsid dynasties when central authority had weakened and the Imāms were able to speak more openly.

Like their Sunnī counterparts, Shīʿīte hadith scholars distinguish between mutawātīr and aḥāḍ reports. The majority of the aḥāḍīṯ, however, are aḥāḍ. The problem of authenticity is only of minor importance for Shīʿīte scholars as the reports going back to the Imāms do not need to be authenticated. Any problems of authentication and reliability of transmission did not arise until 260 AH, the time of the occultation of the last Imām, due to the chain of infallible imāms and while they were alive there was no need to worry about authenticity issues or forgeries. A partial revision of the corpus was performed in the second half of the tenth century AH. Twelver Shīʿīte ḥadith criticism also started around the eleventh century AH. It was very much like the Sunnī criticism, using evaluations of the transmitters.

Another difference between Sunnī and Imāmī Shīʿīte scholarship lies in the chains and channels of transmission and the isnād of the ḥadīṯ. The greater part of the ḥadīṯ corpus accepted by the Shīʿītes comes through the Imāms. Other differences are to be found in the topics of the aḥāḍīṯ. Some of these attribute to the Prophet a prediction foretelling the twelve

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570 Tabatabaʾī, A Shīʿī Antology, p. 9.
574 Brunner, "The Role of Hadith as Cultural Memory in Shiʿī history", p. 334.
575 Brown, Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy, p. 133
Imāms down to their very names. Furthermore Shīʿites accepts mursal (broken transmissions) as long as the last link is one of the imāms, linking the text to the Prophet. Distinct terms are used in that case, such as ‘an ‘abā’ihī (according to his forefathers) or ‘ajdādīhī (according to his ancestors), obviously emphasizing the family relationship. On the other hand, many of the Shīʿite traditions, contained in Twelver collections, can also be found in Sunnī collections, due to the respect and reverence shown to the family of the Prophet.577

3.3.2. Shīʿite Data Set

The Imāmī Shīʿite data set includes Umm Salama’s narrations from eighty-two sources covering hadīth collections (such as the four canonised collections in addition to Biḥār al-Anwār), as well as different sahīḥs, mustadrak and other collections, in addition to hadīth science books (rijāl and ḫillāl), exegesis (tafsīr) as well as different books of Shīʿite belief, manāqib and ‘aqīda. The oldest source is attributed to Salīm Ibn Qays al-Hilālī al-Kūfī (d. 80 AH) and the most recent one is attributed to Al-Shaykh Ḫusayn al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320 AH). The sources were authored by fifty-five different authors and the most prolific twenty contributors to the set (see Annex 2) are listed in the table below.

Table 2 - Most Prolofic Shīʿā Contributors to Imāmī data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Number of Versions Contributed to the Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majlisī [d. 111 AH]</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥakim al-Ḥaskānī [d. 490 AH]</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Shahr Ashūb al-Māzindarānī [d. 588 AH]</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

577 Brown, Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy, p. 140.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā al-Irbālī [d. 693 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī [d. 460 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAlī Ibn Yūnis al-Nabbāṭī al-Bayādī [d. 877 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Babawayh known as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq [d. 381 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Shaykh Husayn al-Ṭabarsi [d. 1320 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad Ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī [d. 328 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sayid ʿAlī Ibn Ṭawūs al-Ḥillī [d. 664 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Nuʿmān al-ʿUkbarī al-Baghdādī known as al-Mufid [d. 413 AH]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Abī-Ḥadīd al-Muʿtazalī [d. 656 AH]</td>
<td>ابن أبي الحديد المعتزلي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad Ibn al-Shaykh al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥur al-ʿĀmilī [d. 1104 AH]</td>
<td>محمد بن الشيخ الحسن بن علي الحري العاملي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sayid ʿAlī Ibn Mūsā Ibn al-Ṭawūs [d. 664 AH]</td>
<td>السيد علي بن موسى بن الطاووس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Shaykh Abī ʿAlī al-Faḍl Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī [d. 548 AH]</td>
<td>الشيخ ابي علي الفضل بن الحسن الطبرسي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrāt Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī [d. 352 AH]</td>
<td>فرث بن إبراهيم الكوفي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Fattāl [d. 508 AH]</td>
<td>محمد بن الحسن الفتال</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth mentioning that only 2% of all the versions of Umm Salama's narrations come from the canonised four collections. However, 35% of the versions were extracted from Bihār al-Anwār. The different versions were not classified. The different number of versions per hadith were plotted in the chart below to show their frequency of occurrence.
The above figure shows that the majority of narrations (about 71%) have between one and four versions, 22% have between 5 and 19 versions, 5% of the narrations have between 20 and 39 versions, and only 1.8% have more than 40 versions, with only one having 189 versions, namely *hadith al-kisā*.

As long as the Imām was available for questioning and consultation, there was no pressing need to collect or write down ḥadīth. The occultation of the Imām happened in two phases. The first phase called as the minor occultation (*al-ghaybatī-l-ṣughrā*) lasted about sixty-nine years starting from 260 AH to 329 AH. Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan al-ʿAskarī, the twelfth Imām, was hidden from the ʿAbbāsid caliphs after the death of his father al-ʿAskarī, the eleventh Imam.
According to Shi’ite belief, his location was only disclosed to a small number of his followers. Four of his father’s close associates became successive mediators or ambassadors (Sufarā’, singular safīr) between the Imām and his followers until the year 329 AH. The last Safīr announced on his death-bed in 329 AH that the Twelfth Imām had decided not to appoint another one and had entered into total occultation. This was the second phase called as the greater occultation (al-ghaybati-l-kubrā), which has continued until the present time.578 Hence, Shi‘īte collections were only needed after the great occultation of the Imām. The chart below shows the frequency of the versions according to the time they were collected in fifty year intervals:

The figure above shows that by the year 350 AH, only about 7% of the total number of versions had been collected, after which a surge in the activity is noticed with 6% being collected in the next 50 year period. By the year 1050 AH, 48% had been collected, after which another surge, at 38%, happened. This is explainable by the massive collections produced at that time and which combined the previous hadith works, such as “wasāʾil al-shīʿa ilā aḥādīth al-sharīʿa” by Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥassam al-ʿAmīlī (d. 1091 AH) and Biḥār al-Anwār by Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Majīṣī (d. 1111 AH).
3.3.3. Analysis of the historical development of selected versions of mutūn forming a distinct genre

The earlier sections elaborating on the canonization of Sunnī ḥadīth collections, pointing out common themes in narrations such as odd numbers or the inclusion of angels in the mutūn also applies to the Shīʿīte collections; however, the time frame is shifted to a later time, as Twelver Shīʿīte ḥadīth criticism started much later than its Sunnī counterpart.

An analysis of the matn of ḥadīth al kisāʾ, analogous to the one performed for the Sunnī versions, would be repetitive, as the 189 Shīʿīte versions display the same characteristics and identical storylines as the 131 Sunnī versions previously discussed. There are minor changes, with a few versions identifying the kisāʾ as a yamanī one and some other versions predicting and adding the names of the Imāms from ‘Alī’s bloodline to ahl al-bayt mentioned in this prophetic tradition. In addition to the seven distinct Sunnī plots found in ḥadīth al kisāʾ and already discussed earlier, the Shīʿīte ḥadīth versions have one additional plot, where the Prophet provides the names of the twelve imāms and includes them as a continuation of the ahl al-bayt. To give an idea about some of the mutūn in the Shīʿīte dataset, an assortment of some of the very distinctly Shīʿīte ahādīth have been selected for a historical analysis of the mutūn. Despite the seemingly unrelated mutūn, the selected ahādīth display common characteristics and can be said to form a distinctive genre illustrating the cultural elements and the local Persian influence on the development of Shīʿism.

Five mutūn were selected, namely ḥadīth 123 which has one solitary version, ḥadīth 124 with thirteen versions, ḥadīth 117 with five versions, ḥadīth 88 (eight versions) and ḥadīth 119 with one single version. The complete texts of the mutūn can be found in Annex (2).

3.3.3.1. First matn – Knowledge of the hidden

Ḥadīth # 123 is a narration attributed to Umm Salama, mainly praising ‘Alī and listing his ability to perform ‘super-human’ deeds. The complete translation of the matn can be found in
Annex (4). To summarize, the *matn* tells of an encounter between Khawla al-Ḥanafiyya, Talḥa and al-Zubayr where the two companions admit their inability to know the unknown (*al-ghayb*) to fulfil a condition to marry Khawla. Abū Bakr encourages ʿAlī to tell her what she wanted so she could marry him. ʿAlī tells her the secret of her birth and points to the evidence corroborating his words. She shows the proof of ʿAlī’s ability and ʿAlī accompanies her to Umm Salama's house where she stayed until he had proposed to her and asked for her people's approval and then married her.

In this *matn* there are myriad observations to be discussed. First of all the obvious antagonism to Talḥa and al-Zubayr is apparent by pointing out their limitations in comparison to ʿAlī, evidently for their refusal to give allegiance to ʿAlī and their role in the ‘Battle of the Camel’. In addition to that, the almost reconciliatory gesture towards Abū Bakr is noticeable, by allowing him a role in revealing ʿAlī’s exceptional abilities. The point of the exceptional abilities fits well with the general allegorical language and use of fantastic imagery following the example of the Persian literary heritage of the old masters as described by Nicholson.579

According to Field, there is a common proverb in Iran saying: "*Though I do not believe ʿAlī to be God, I believe that he is not far from being so.*)"580 In some Shīʿite traditions, as will be seen, a vast amount of myth and legend is present,581 which could also have its roots in the Zarathustra legend that includes a fantastic, demi-god.582 Reed argues that many Zoroastrian ideas were common with Islam,583 which could explain how and why the Shīʿite theory of the Imām’s divine rights fitted in and was influenced by the original Persian ideas.584

582 Ibid, p. 120
583 Field, *Persian Literature*, p. 33
3.3.3.2. Second *matn* – miracles involving a natural phenomenon

The theme of fantastic abilities and mystical events continues with the *matn* of *ḥadîth* #124 in which Umm Salama narrates that the Prophet fell asleep with his head in ‘Alî’s lap after some verses were revealed to him by Jibrîl. ‘Alî prayed while sitting down, so as not to neither disturb the Prophet, nor miss his prayers. Upon awakening, the Prophet asked Allah to make the sun go back so ‘Alî could perform his prayer properly and Allah granted him his wish. Again the theme of miracles and almost supernatural events colour this *matn*. There has been no historical documentation of the sun rising again at any point after setting; hence it can be safely assumed that this *matn* is more of a literary fiction, yet still in agreement with the elements of pure fantasy and speculation typical of Persian literature.585

3.3.3.3. Third *matn* – magical elements

*ḥadîth* # 117 continues the same trend of using the marvellous, magical and fantastic themes characteristic of popular Persian tales and folk legends.586 It gives an account, attributed to Umm Salama, of an almost fairy-tale, whereby Jibrîl in his human form gives al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn some gifts in Umm Salama’s house. The gifts are an apple, a quince and a pomegranate with magical qualities. They regenerate every time someone takes a bite from them and vanish inexplicably at a certain point in time. When Fâṭima died, the pomegranate vanished, when ‘Alî was killed the quince vanished and finally when al-Ḥusayn was martyred, the apple vanished. The *matn* continues to say that his grave smells of apples until this very day.

It becomes apparent that not only Alî’s abilities are praised extravagantly, but the "*divine honours*" accorded to him are extended to his sons and the other Imāms after them. As Professor Arnold mentions in his book "Preaching of Islam", this could relate to the presumed marriage of

al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī to Shahbani to one of the daughters of Yazdagird III, the last Sāsānid emperor.\textsuperscript{587} The story of this marriage between al-Ḥusayn and Šahrbānu allowed the Persians to see “heirs of their ancient kings and inheritors of their national traditions” in their descendants, and in this patriotic feeling may be found the explanation of the passionate and extreme devotion to ʿAlī and his family and could also be considered the first beginning of Shīʿism as a separate sect in Persia.\textsuperscript{588}

The Encyclopaedia Iranica, however, gives a different version, according to historical analysis this version is a legend. In Shīʿite belief, as well as in some of the Sunnī sources, Šahrbānu is mentioned as being the principal wife of the third Imām al-Ḥusayn and the mother of the fourth Imām, ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn.

Consequently the Imāms from the fourth onwards to the twelfth would be her progeny. However, none of the historians who documented the Muslim invasion of Persia could establish any relationship between the wife of al-Husayn and the royal family of Yazdgerd III. Furthermore, all “the specialists of Sasanian history, from Darmesteter to Christensen, not to mention Nöldeke or Spuler, unanimously state that no immediate member of the Sasanian king was captured by Muslim troops for the simple reason that, according to a number of Islamic sources in agreement, the royal family had been evacuated from the capital Ctesiphon well before the Arab invasion.”\textsuperscript{589} The article in the Encyclopaedia Iranica concludes that this legend grew due to doctrinal, ethnical and political terms and probably emerged from the ghulāt (radical) milieu.


\textsuperscript{588} Azad, Mohammad Akram Lari. \textit{Religion and Politics in India during the seventeenth Century}. New Delhi: Criterion Publications, 1990, p. 8

\textsuperscript{589} Amir-Moezzi, M. A., “ŠAHRBANU (lit. “Lady of the Land,” i.e., of Persia), said to be the daughter of Yazdegerd III (r. 632-51), the last Sasanian King., Encyclopaedia Iranica Online. (2005)
3.3.3.4. Fourth matn – celestial beings

In ḥadīth # 88 the matn tells of how Jibrīl came to visit the Prophet in Umm Salama's house asking for human mediation for an argument that had erupted between some angels of 'Iblīs's kin. The Prophet suggests ‘Alī and sits him on the rug and tucks him in between some pillows, all of which the angels brought with them from heaven. The angels take ‘Alī and fly to heaven to sort out the conflict.

The versions of this matn are replete with magical objects and celestial beings, akin to the tales of Persian folklore. In the first work to systematically characterize and describe a corpus of folktales, Propp identifies common themes within them, identifying 31 ‘narratemes’ (narrative units) that encompass the structure of many of the folktales. His standards are globally applicable to the entire genre of folktales. Propp breaks down various stories into ‘morphemes’ (analyzable chunks) and identifies a list of possible plots. Many of these have parallels to this genre of the distinctly Shī'ite mutūn.

Propp identifies elements that require the hero of the plot to choose an affirmative positive action, after which he leaves on a mission in which he is tested and challenged needing to prove heroic qualities. The hero responds to the test. The task set generally requires a great effort as well as overcoming many obstacles and typically includes much travel. More often than not he is given or acquires a magical item which helps him or fulfils a need in his life or with which he returns. The task is resolved and the hero is recognised and celebrated.

These distinctly Shī'ite mutūn all display some form of plots on Propp’s list, with the hero being ‘Alī or in other aḥādīth one of the Imāms. In Bihār al-Anwār by Muḥammad al-Bāqīr al-Majlisī many of these aḥādīth can be found, where interchangeably ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan or al-Ḥusayn assume the role of the aforementioned ‘hero’. It would be interesting to study the various mutūn

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found in all the collections of the Shīite hadīth with regard to their fantastic elements and their similarity to folklore, legends and fairytales of Persia, however this goes beyond the scope of this study and can be an avenue for future research.

3.3.3.5. Final matn - fairytale elements

Finally in the last matn of this genre, namely hadīth #119 Umm Salama sees the Prophet dressing al-Ḥusayn in a heavenly garment, not from this world, which Allah had gifted to al-Ḥusayn and was made from the wings of Jibrīl.

Similar to previous examples, this matn also retains the distinctive unique cultural coloration and fantasy characteristic of traditional Persian folktale literature. Following the earlier examples, these picturesque and fantasy-like plots include magical references and supernatural beings, also distinguishing Persian poetry and literature. Though not rationally acceptable, with the numerous depictions of djinn, magical abilities or objects, extraordinary talents and powers they are more often than not combined with actual people and geographical locations. However, this particular genre does not represent the majority of aḥādīth, but rather a distinctive one worth analyzing. As with the Sunnī aḥādīth, the various matn versions, where applicable, also add details from one version to another or enhance the dramatic emotional element to appeal to the public. Considering that hadīth transmission was essentially oral at its onset, the use of these tools is not surprising.

Goldziher attributes the Zanādiqa with introducing old Persian religious ideas and Manichaean doctrines into Islam, which resulted in their persecution, as they managed more or

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less adroitly to conceal these ‘foreign’ beliefs “under the veil of Islam”. Ibn al-Jawzî also accuses them of forging many ahâdîth and mixing them within the collections. Field, on the other hand, argues that the conquest of Persia was the most important one of all Muslim conquests, as it affected the Muslim Arabs on all levels. He opines that the Persian theologians gave clarity and firmness to Islamic doctrines and that the formulation and refinement of various theories and principles giving rise or strength to various sects was in Persia or due to Persian influence, such as the Twelver Shi`îtes, Mu’tazila, Ismā’îlî or even the Brethren of Purity. Contrary to Field’s argument, the Mu’tazila seem to have arisen in Baṣrâ and not in Persia, however, Mu’tazila most certainly have influenced Shi’ite thought and intellectual history as will be clarified in the next section.

3.3.4. The development of Imâmî intellectual history and al-Mufid

As shown, the fantastic element is very recurrent in Shi’ite collections and in the versions attributed to Umm Salama. This particular element has been greatly reduced by al-Mufid, who was the first of a line of scholars who helped establish a role for human reasoning in the elaboration of Imâmî doctrine. He was recognized as the leading spokesman for the Imâmîyya, a position that he held until his death. He played a very important role in the development of Imâmî intellectual thought and in shaping Imâmî theology (‘îlîm al-kalâm) into its current form, by combining traditions of the Imâms with certain rational elements of Mu’tazalite theology and

596 Field, Persian Literature, p. 33.
598 Ibid, p. 28.
Qurʾān interpretation and injecting a large dose of reason into the mix. Al- Mufid managed to renew the rational elements, however, not without controversy. Aspects of this controversy are recorded in some of the sources in which the traditionalists are referred to as the akhbārīyya and the rationalists as muʿtazila or kalāmiyya, while in later Shiʿī sources, they are called usūliyya. The approach of the rationalists relied mainly on general Qurʾānic principles and on widely transmitted (mutawātir) traditions, and excluded those traditions which did not provide certainty (ahād).

Al-Mufid also contributed to the legitimization of the role of the scholars in taking over some of the functions of the Imām during his occultation; he also adjusted Imāmī doctrine by offering solutions to problems that were frequently used by opponents to attack it, such as the internal contradiction of the necessity of an Imām, yet his absence (occultation). Furthermore he sifted out traditions attributing extraordinary abilities to the Imāms, from those he selected for his ḥadīth collections, rendering the Imāms to perhaps elevated human status rather than portraying them as almost divine. Al-Mufid, therefore, served as a bridge between the various contemporary competing ideologies, by incorporating Muʿtazalī principles to strengthen Imāmī doctrine and reducing some of the fantastic elements of it, which were deemed as ‘irrational’ by the opposition. Furthermore, he criticized a number of these fantastic elements concerning the Imāms’ divinely conveyed knowledge and the process of their creation as being highly

603 Bayhom-Daou, Shaykh Mufid, p. viii.
exaggerated by the ghulāt, including embellishments and distortions by exaggerators. He restricted the scope of the Imāms’ knowledge and denied their knowledge of the future and the hidden (al-ghayb), thereby reducing the number of possible points on which Imāmīs could be attacked. Furthermore, al-Mufid also found a rational justification for the ‘irrational’ longevity of the hidden Imām, by arguing that it was rationally impossible that anyone could remain alive in a grave endlessly by combining the original traditional Imāmī view with resurrection and eternal life as promised all believers.

Al-Mufid not only defended Imāmī positions, but also implicitly attacked Sunnī ones, such as the institution of ijma’, by pointing out that a real consensus should be of the entire ‘umma, which would necessarily include Shī‘a views, hence the consensus of all Sunnīs would be meaningless and not a real consensus, by excluding ‘Alī’s descendents and the ahl-al-bayt. In other words, al-Mufid moved Shī‘a religious discourse out of the determinism and anthropomorphism evident in a number of its traditions and into the stream of rational Mu’tazalite thought.

3.3.5. Study of Shī‘ite isnāds (chains of narration)

As mentioned earlier, the Shī‘ite part of the dataset (Annex 2) includes 970 versions grouped into 158 narrations attributed to Umm Salama, which were collected from Imāmī Shī‘a collections. As one might expect, only 370 versions, amounting to 38%, have a full isnād like those of their Sunnī counterpart. Hence an in depth analysis of the Shī‘ite isnād will not be productive, as generalisations cannot be made with certainty or accuracy. However, this corroborates Brown’s argument that in Shī‘ite ḥadīth scholarship, it was not of major importance

605 Ibid, p. 73.
606 Ibid, p. 69.
whether the isnād between an Imām and the Prophet was complete stating every link, due to the belief that the Imāms were considered infallible and had inherited the Prophet’s authority.609

3.3.6. Golden Chain for Umm Salama’s Shi‘ite narrations

As with the Sunnī part of the dataset of this study, the Shi‘ite part was also arranged in an excel sheet, where the columns represent the narrators and the rows are the individual versions of each ḥadīth. The same steps were performed as in the Sunnī section to arrive at an individual count of all unique narrators to determine the number of each person’s narrations in the overall data set. All the steps were repeated, like in the Sunnī part of the dataset to determine the most frequent chain.

The most frequently occurring chain in the Twelver Shi‘ite set has been found to occur twelve times and to be Mūsā Ibn Ja‘far [Imām al Qāzīm] from his father Ja‘far Ibn Muḥammad [Imām al- Ṣādiq] from his father Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī [imām al-Bāqīr] from his father ‘Alī Ibn al- Ḥusayn from his father ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. Out of these twelve chains, only four end with Umm Salama, one by way of her daughter Zainab, where ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib is omitted and al-Husayn narrates from Zainab. Seven out of these twelve versions end with ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib who narrates speaking on behalf of the Prophet or recounting an event from either Umm Salama’s house or the Prophet’s life, attributing the content of the matn to him and mentioning Umm Salama.

Looking into the probity of the narrators of this chain is a superfluous task, as the Imāms are above reproach and considered maṣūmūn (infallible). Unlike the Sunnī chains all ending with Umm Salama, the Shi‘ite ones do not. However, Umm Salama – when not featured in the isnād – is always featured in the matn.

609 Brown, Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy, p. 125.
3.4. Common Themes of Umm Salama’s Narrations from both sects

Though there are many differences between the Sunnī and Shī‘ite ḥadīth with regard to both matn and isnād, there are also many similarities. It was observed that forty-four of the ḥādīth of both sets are identical or at least the core of the matn is one and the same, even if some of the minute details vary slightly. These forty-four ḥādīth constitute 27.5% of Shī‘ite data and 13.3% of the Sunnī dataset respectively. Considering previous scholarship on the subject, it would be expected that the common versions would describe manāqib (praise) of either ‘Alī Ibn Abī Talib, Fāṭima or any of the ahl al-bayt.

Hence a closer look at the genre or topics of the common versions might shed some light on the similarities or differences of the Shī‘ite and Sunnī ḥādīth.

3.4.1. Genre of Umm Salama’s Narrations common to both sects

Using the genre criteria assigned to the various ḥādīth as found in Annex (3 and 4) and to be explained in detail in the next chapter, the genre of the common traditions was charted in the following figure.

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610 The genre of the matn adheres to the terms covering the totality of the Muslim faith or Islam as a religion which encompass the following eight categories: Ahl al-bayt – Belief (aqīda) – Conduct (muʿāmalāt) – Rituals (ʿibādāt) – duʿā’ – Qurʾān – Sīra – Virtuous deeds (Faḍā’il al-aʿmāl).
The above figure shows that the genre titled ‘conduct’ contributed the most ḥādīth to the common dataset at almost 30%, one third of all common traditions. This is not an unexpected finding, as both Sunnī and Shī‘ite communities look to the Prophet and the members of his household for guidelines to facilitate living together in a community. Furthermore Umm Salama was socially active and interested in her community. The behaviour patterns of each single individual contribute to making a society function smoothly or not, hence ‘conduct’ is indeed an important aspect.

The second largest category at about 20% was ‘belief’. This shows that the basic core beliefs are the same. Both Sunnis and Shī‘ites believe in the unity of God, the five pillars, the prophethood of Muḥammad and the main Islamic injunctions. The variations with regard to ‘Aīr’s
right to political leadership after the Prophet's death, the infallibility of the Imāms or the probity of the Companions do not constitute the core of the Sunnī belief system.

In third place we find the category of ‘ahl al-bayt’ at almost 16%. This is consistent with the commonly shared reverence of the Prophet’s immediate family and the ahl al-bayt between Sunnīs and Shi‘ītes. The fourth position at almost 13% is that of ‘Sira’, which is also consistent with the fact that both sects acknowledge the prophethood of Muḥammad and hence snippets from his life or sayings attributed to him would be of interest to both sects.

The fifth position at 11% is the category ‘Qur‘ān’ and that again is consistent with the fact that the Qur‘ān is the same book for both sects. The initial position of extremist Shi‘īte groups alleging that the Qur‘ān was tampered with or that a different copy of the Qur‘ān belonging to ahl al-bayt existed was later renounced. In the early days of the Sunnī - Shi‘īte split, the ‘Uthmān codex was considered to include falsification (tahrīf) either by excluding or by adding some words or phrases or both. Modaressi opines that before the two sects consolidated their final positions on various topics, there was a group of muḥaddithūn, whom he terms “bipolar”, who used to narrate from and to both sects. Modaressi further argues that these muḥaddithūn were engaging in unintentional taddīs (confusing parts of the matn or isnād or both), but with their activity helped to, what he terms as, "naturalize" portions of one sect's aḥādīth into the others. The most important statement, in my opinion, which Modaressi makes, is that "many of the ideas that were later labeled as Sunnite, Shi'ite, or the like were originally held by a different group or, at least in the early period before the sects took on their final shape, were shared by various

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613 Ibid, p. 6.
mainstream elements of Islamic society." This is corroborated by the identical mutūn of some of the common aḥādīth. Some Shi‘ītes still believe that the Qur‘ān was changed, however the mainstream Imāmīs do not support this view. As mentioned earlier, al-Mufid, as well as al-Sha‘īrī, al-Murtada‘ and Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī were amongst the Imām-Shī‘ī scholars who believed and promoted the opinion that "although the text of the Qur‘ān as we have it is incomplete, it does not contain any falsifications."

Returning to the categories of Umm Salama’s narrations common between both sects, the category of ‘rituals’ is at 9%. This is also expected as both sects perform the same rituals, albeit with minor differences. Breaking the fast in Ramadān, or the payment of the khums, are just two of such examples, where some minute details vary between both sects. Finally the last category of du‘a at 2% is of the least importance. However, as most people make their supplications asking for the same things like health, wealth or steadfastness in piety, it is conceivable to have the same versions of preferred du‘a phrases used by the Prophet represented in the corpus of both sects.

### 3.4.2. Common Topics of Umm Salama’s Narrations from both sects

The classification of ‘topics’ previously assigned to the various aḥādīth as found in Annex (3 & 4), and to be explained in detail in the next chapter, was used for the common traditions and was charted in the following figure.

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615 Ibid, p. 35
The largest category covered the topic titled superstition / predictions/ miracles at 23% of the common narrations, meaning over one fifth of the common set. The *ḥadīth* in this category deal with the prediction of al-Ḥusayn’s death in Karbalāʾ, the prediction that there will be a leader called al-Walīd, who will be like Pharaoh and that an army would come to threaten Medina, but would be annihilated.\(^{617}\) Other predictions include the Prophet saying that the awaited Mahdī will be a descendant of Fātima and supplications to deal with the evil eye.

One of the surprising common *ḥadīth* was one that fits the genre described above in the Shiʿite section. The *matn* tells how the Prophet was travelling in the desert when he came upon a tied up antelope and heard a voice calling out to him but could not see anybody but the antelope.

It turns out that it was the antelope that was talking to him and he could understand her telling him about nursing two babies and asked him to release her to nurse them and come back. She keeps her word and comes back and the Bedouin who had captured her also returns. The Prophet intercedes on her behalf and the Bedouin releases the antelope that runs away declaring that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad was his messenger.

It is interesting to note that there is only one version in the Sunnī dataset, as opposed to seven versions in the Shi'ite one. Popular belief attributes the *tasbih* (a form of praising Allah) mentioned in verse [17:44]618 to include all creatures, including animals and insects and not just angels and djinn as is mentioned in exegesis.

The next category of ‘Ali amounts to about 16% and consists mainly of *manaqib* ‘Ali, how the Prophet compared ‘Ali’s relationship with him to that of Harūn’s to Mūsā, how the Prophet asserts that ‘Ali is with the Qur’ān and the Qur’ān with ‘Ali until judgment day, and the declaration that whoever claimed to love the Prophet while hating ‘Ali was lying, in addition to *Hadīth al-Kisā*. This is understandable, as the Sunnī Muslims also revere ‘Ali, the fourth Rightful Caliph, the Prophet’s foster son and his son in-law. The next category at 14% covers narrations detailing aspects of the Prophet’s life, while the category of ‘women’s issues’ is in the next position at 9% and includes *ahādīth* dealing mainly with women such as advising them not to cry in mourning over a deceased loved one but rather say some du’as for the departed or asking them to veil in front of a male slave if has bought his freedom but still owed some of his price, as well as to veil in front of blind men, following the example of the Prophet's wives (Umm Salama and Maymūna), as the Prophet asked them to veil themselves, when a blind man visited them, because even though the man was blind, they could still see and finally when a woman experiences continuous

618 [17.44] The seven heavens declare [perform tasbih for] His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification; surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving.
bleeding other than menstruation, she should purify herself nevertheless and perform her prayers, the length of her usual menstruation is exempted from that.

The next position at about 7% is that of the Qurʾān. They include *ahādīth* mentioning how Umm Salama asked the Prophet why the Qur’an only addresses men and not women, so verse [33.35] was revealed in answer to her question, how the Prophet used to read the Opening (Sura 1) verse and the occasion of revelation of the verse showing that Abū Labāba’s repentance had been accepted. Obviously the *ahādīth* in these two sections (women’s issues and Qurʾān) contribute to a shared experience. In the section ‘Qurʾān’ the *ahādīth* either offer exegetical suggestions or provide *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions for revelations). Both disciplines are shared by both sects, even if some of the details vary. The *ahādīth* of the category titled ‘women’s issues’ provide the basis for the extraction of some *fiqhi* rulings for the category of jurisprudence dealing with women (*fiqh al-nisā’*), another shared discipline between both sects.

The next three categories, all at 5% are those named ‘charity’, ‘equality’ and ‘purity’. They include narrations promoting charity, or prohibiting the men and women who were impure due to not having performed their ritual purity washing after sexual intercourse and the menstruating women from entering the mosque.

In the final position eight categories titled ‘Aī’s family’, ‘conciliation’, ‘counsel’, ‘family relationship’, ‘fasting’, ‘good manners’, ‘marital relationship’ and ‘personal prayer’ all at an equal 2% adding up to a total of 16%. These narrations include *ḥadīth al-Kisā*; answer questions about why the Qurʾān does not address women, rinsing one’s mouth out after drinking milk, renewing one’s *wudu* (ablutions) after eating not being a necessity nor requirement and other such issues of shared interests about daily life concerns.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the commonalities between the *ahādīth* in both the Shī’ite and Sunnī corpus go beyond the reverence of *ahl al-bayt* or the praises of ‘Aī, al-Ḥusayn or al-Ḥasan. A closer look using a bigger dataset in the future could reveal more interesting
findings that could possibly bridge some of the conflict areas between both sects and lessen the chasm, same as Umm Salama did. She was revered by both Sunnis and Shiites, for her level-headedness and refusing to take sides in times of conflict.

Interestingly enough there is one hadith narrating that the Prophet asked ‘Alî to come to him with an animal skin to be used as parchment. ‘Alî obliged and they spent hours together, the Prophet dictating and ‘Alî writing the dictated information until the whole skin was covered. This prophetic tradition is found with two versions in the Sunni collection, but not in the Shiite one. This supports Modaressi’s argument about the ‘bipolar’ muḥaddithūn and invites a closer look at the aḥādīth supporting characteristics or peculiarities of one sect which are found in the other sect’s corpus. This could pave the way for understanding more about the criteria and patterns of taddis or the tools used to enhance forged aḥādīth rendering them slightly more supportive of controversial sectarian standpoints.

One of the unintended, yet important, findings of this research shows that there are many more commonalities rather than differences between Sunnis and Shi’a scholarship. While perhaps the minute details of a number of narrations differ, the core message is the same. Not only do the aḥādīth show common narrations, but so does the text of the tafsīr and some of the applications of the prophetic traditions in terms of fiqh rulings. A possible avenue for future research could be to focus on identifying the commonalities rather than focusing on the differences as an attempt to bridge or narrow the gap in perception between the two main Muslim sects.
Chapter Four - Umm Salama the Muḥadditha

The final chapter analyses whether or not a detailed application of certain standards can lead to a generalization with regard to the personality of a narrator as revealed through the narrations attributed to him/her. It is worth considering, that the traditions narrated by a person can be used as a means to analyze and study certain personality traits and characteristics of the narrator. This in turn can be used as a basis for evaluating the authenticity of the individual narrations. Previous scholarship concluded that there is a difference between narrations provided by men and those narrated by women with regard to subject and topic.619

Furthermore it is also conceivable that a muḥaddith’s personality and his or her responses to social needs as well as his or her interests could possibly influence the narrations he or she chooses to narrate based on two assumptions. The first assumption: despite it being desirable to narrate Prophetic sayings, a person would generally remember two extreme types of aḥādīth more easily; those that he agrees with and those that he totally disagrees with, is not totally comfortable with or which are foreign to his nature. An example for the second category from Umm Salama’s narrations would be the tradition about ‘Aʾishah using the license given to Sahla (or Suhayla) about breastfeeding adults and Umm Salama strongly disagreeing with that. Also, a person might emphasize some details and leave out others, which is permissible through transmitting hadīth bi-l maʿna. The second assumption is that he would choose to narrate the same extreme examples, those that agree with his personality and character traits, so as to aid in implementing their teachings more widely, because he thinks that they are excellent traits to be propagating and those that he finds objectionable so as to prevent their emulation.

This idea has been implied in connection with the ḥadīth re-evaluation project in Turkey, which was recently widely publicized in the media. According to Mernissi, (a feminist sociologist mainly concerned with Islamic Feminism and Muslim women's roles as well as human social behavior) Abū Hurayra, an important transmitter of ḥadīth, was a 'misogynist' who did not particularly like the Prophet's wives.\(^\text{620}\) He narrated aḥādīth dehumanizing women, which has its roots in the Jāhiliya mentality. Mernissi claims, that most women-unfriendly aḥādīth in circulation have Abū Hurayra as their main narrator.\(^\text{621}\) According to Mernissi, Abū Hurayra was stifled by the obligation to care for his rather difficult mother and hence, did not have a friendly disposition towards women.\(^\text{622}\) This seems to corroborate the initial argument that a muḥaddith's personality or interests affects or influences the aḥādīth he narrates or puts into circulation.

While Khaled Abou El Fadl agrees that most of the reports deemed women-unfriendly are narrated by Abū Hurayra, he, however questions the validity of such reports in the first place.\(^\text{623}\) Abou El Fadl opines that the chains of transmission include unreliable transmitters, hence, the authenticity of these traditions is suspect from the start.\(^\text{624}\) However, even if the narrations were falsely attributed to Abū Hurayra, there must have been a reason to choose him as a convenient person over other narrators, and one conceivable reason would be what was known of his character, preferences or interests.

Harald Motzki analyzed certain specific portions found within the Muṣannaf of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-San’ānī to determine whether or not the material found in the collection was authentic.

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\(^{621}\) Ibid, pp. 71-74.
\(^{622}\) Ibid, pp. 71-74.
\(^{624}\) Ibid, p. 205.
or forged and falsely attributed to the narrators. Motzki found that one of the portions analyzed showed two distinctive genres by the same narrator, which appear with nearly the same frequency. Motzki used this finding to draw conclusions about the reliability of the narrator and the authenticity of his sources. Furthermore, Motzki analyzed sub-groups within this portion and correlated the results with the biographical and bibliographical reports about the original narrators. In the case of narrations attributed to ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Motzki found that most of the traditions concerned his role as caliph, covering legal judgments, decrees and fatāwa (legal answers) on questions which were posed to the caliph and very rarely related to practices of a more private nature. This in itself is an interesting result, because it reverts back to the character of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and his main concerns as depicted in the original sources. Motzki uses this information to account for the veracity of the narrator and thereby his narrations. Using Motzki’s findings in reverse, this corroborates that the ‘personality’ and personal interests of a person – to some extent - can be determined by analyzing the traditions narrated by him. In addition Stern also stated that it was possible from traditions, which mention personal elements to acquire an idea of the kind of woman the narrator was and her character.

As was seen previously in chapter 1, Umm Salama narrated a large number of aḥādīth. It has been said that the total number she narrated was 378, though in this set the number differs, as certain aḥādīth were grouped together for having the same core matn. As mentioned, the data set for this study includes 331 sunnī and 158 shīʿī narrations that form the base of this part of the research. A test was carried out to determine whether or not these narrations by Umm Salama would disclose anything about her personality traits and characteristics and whether or

628 Stern, Marriage in Early Islam p. 8.
629 Sayyid al-Ahl, Ṭabaqāt al-Nisāʿ al-muhaddithāt, p. 22.
not what they disclosed matched with her character as depicted in the reconstruction of her life as presented in Chapter 2. Hence, the narrations were subjected to an in-depth analysis.

4.1. Methodology

After translating the meanings of the ḥadīth, they were grouped into frequently repeated topics using one word relating to the subject matter or the main theme of the narration. However, major topics were selected as general guiding principles. This means that when a ḥadīth covered more than one possible topic, only one main theme was selected. An example would be the ḥadīth about ritual purity washing for both spouses from one single container (sunnī ḥadīth 122). This ḥadīth was classified under the topic “marital relationship”, whereas it also could have been included under “purity”, or under “Sira”. Despite the potential multiple classification, ‘marital relationship’ here seems to have been the main aim showing how Umm Salama and the Prophet interacted as a couple and shared even the water to be used for ritual purity washing after having spent the night together and engaged in marital relations, although the ḥadīth is narrating an event from the Prophet’s life (Sira), and it also is concerned with ritual purity. The same methodology was applied to the other ḥadīth. The translation for the sunnī ones can be found in Annex (3), while the translation of the shīʿī narrations can be found in Annex (4). An avenue for future research could be to carry out the same or a similar exercise with multiple additional topics of ḥadīth as well as other narrators to determine whether the results change.

When choosing the classifications, it would have been most objective to adhere to the classification determined by jurists and used in the chapters and books of the šīḥāḥ collections of ḥadīth, such as for example Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, al-Kāfī or man la yaḥduruhu al-faqīh. However, due to the fact that the different ḥadīth versions were extracted from various diverse sources other than ḥadīth collections, such as biographical dictionaries, which are classified according to ṭabaqa (generation); history books, which are classified according to years or rulers,
as well as masānīd, which are classified according to narrator, in addition to ājzāʾ, fawāʾid and amāli, which are classified according to lesson subjects, this classification according to fiqhī classification was not entirely possible. Hence, a classification was adopted based on what was considered as the core topic of the matn, while adhering to the jurist’s choices as often and as close as possible. It was also necessary to have identical topics for both Sunnī and Shīʿa data sets to maintain consistency and allow cross comparison. Twenty-two categories were chosen for the topic of each narration as explained below.

1. ‘Ali - was chosen to be in a category of his own to make him more visible in Umm Salama’s narrations, as he is of key importance for Shīʿa Muslims, and is also venerated by Sunnī Muslims as their fourth Rightful Caliph, the Prophet’s foster son and his son in law. Furthermore there are quite a few Sunnī aḥādīth referring to the Prophet’s love of ‘Ali, emphasizing and praising his qualities, enjoining everyone to love him, akin to the walāʾ of the Shīʿa as discussed previously.

2. ‘Ali’s family - this classification was chosen deliberately to offset it from the classification of ahl al-bayt, as there are differences of opinions regarding the term ahl al-bayt. Some scholars use it to include Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib to distinguish them from the muhājirūn and anṣār, emphasizing the strong clan sense of the pre-Islamic Arabs, others include the Prophet's wives and all of his dependents, applying it to every person to whom a share in the šadaqa (charity) is forbidden, and also include their mawālī. Shīʿa generally apply the term to Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and their descendants, calling them also ahl al-kisāʾ and exclude the Mothers of the Believers as members of the Prophet’s household.

3. Charity – as one of key ethical concepts of the Qur’ān along with generosity\textsuperscript{631}, was chosen here and used to include narrations about the gifts extended to the poor, needy, orphans, travelers, destitute widows and slaves. This includes voluntary acts of generosity in terms of financial or monetary gifts as well as kind words or good treatment.

4. Conciliation – was chosen as a category to include the narrations dealing with mediation, dispute resolution, lowering tensions between parties by interpreting issues, providing assistance, exploring potential solutions and bringing about some kind of settlement, much like the role Umm Salama played in Hudaybiya.

5. Counsel – as a category includes all narrations giving advice, offering an opinion or a recommendation or providing a guide to a certain action or a particular type of conduct.

6. Equality – was chosen as a category to include the narrations supporting the Qur’ānic ideals of equality and social justice,\textsuperscript{632} emphasizing that all people within society have the same status. This shows not only the recognition of gender equality between women and men and an acknowledgement of women's rights, but also the equality between Arab and non-Arab races within Islamic society. It also includes the slaves as equal human beings.

7. Family relationship - includes the narrations dealing with family as a whole, and highlighting the duties and responsibilities due to family members such as visits in


\textsuperscript{632}Ibid, pp. 209-211.
general and condolence visits in particular. This is in addition to any conduct or behavior that leads to a healthy relationship between the family members.

8. Fasting - includes the narrations dealing with fasting as a ritual and the fasting of the month of Ramaḍān, one of the five pillars of Muslim faith.

9. Good manners - include the narrations of Umm Salama as a role model for the Muslims and display respect, care, kindness and consideration to fellow members of the community, involving treating people with respect and courtesy, and in making sure that other people feel comfortable in a variety of situations as well as some narrations about etiquette of eating, performing rituals and maintaining cleanliness.

10. Humor - was chosen as a category to include the narrations pertaining to celebrations or merriment, laughter and jokes, as an indication that life was not only about religion, seriousness, duties and revelations, but also included a lighter side.

11. Imāmī beliefs – includes mainly Shī‘a narrations that reflect parts of the Imāmī Shī‘a beliefs, for example about the Imāmā, about the belief that the three first Caliphs were usurpers as well as any beliefs to do with the qualifications and appointment for the leadership of the umma or distinctly Shī‘a beliefs such as taqqiyya or infallibility of the Imāms.

12. Marital relationship - includes the narrations about any aspect of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife.

13. Other - was chosen as a category to include single narrations that cannot be classified into any other category.

14. Personal prayer - was chosen as a category to include the narrations about appeals or invocations to Allah, preferred forms of these or examples to how the Prophet used to address Allah when making a duʿā’. 
15. Pilgrimage – includes all the narrations dealing with ḥajj as a ritual and as one of the five pillars of Islam, as well as narrations dealing with the lesser pilgrimage ʿumra.

16. Prayer - includes the narrations dealing with performing prayer alone or as part of a congregation as a ritual and as another core pillar of the five pillars of Islam.

17. Productivity - include the narrations showing how to avoid idle gossip and be productive in terms of being a useful, responsible member of the society. Despite the asceticism of the Prophet and the members of his household, their abstinence and austerity many of the wives engaged in spinning, sewing or other activities to fill their time and also to sell the items for charity.

18. Prophet’s life - includes the narrations about certain aspects of the Prophet’s life, his preferences and the way he performed certain rituals and other information.

19. Purity - was chosen as a category to include the narrations about ṭahāra, the state of heightened cleanliness, (be it symbolic or actual), that is associated with persons in the context of ritual worship. They include ṭuḥūṭ (ablution) as a ritual cleansing before prayer, other purifications especially after engaging in sexual intercourse, after menstruation or post-natal bleeding.

20. Qur’ān - includes the narrations dealing with the Qur’ān in terms of how the Prophet recited certain passages, or the questions Umm Salama asked that were answered through revelation of certain verses, as well as some of the explanations offered by the Prophet about certain verses.

21. Superstition/prediction/miracle - was chosen as a category to include the narrations dealing with supernatural qualities such as the evil eye or envy (ḥasad) and other superstitions; eschatological narrations; predictions about events taking place after
the Prophet’s death (for example al-Ḥusayn’s martyrdom in Karbalāʾ, ‘A’isha’s involvement in the Battle of the Camel) in addition to narrations about miracles attributed to the Prophet, 'Aīī and the Imāms.

22. Women’s issues - this classification was chosen to include various rulings on women’s clothing, marital status and conduct expected of women in particular with regard to modesty and privacy, other narrations covering all issues relating to women in terms of women’s conduct in general, divorce, engagement, marriage, widows and issues relating to menstruation and childbirth.

In addition to the classification into recurrent topics or themes, another classification was carried out based on the genre of the *matn*. While the classification under topic is broad and allows for different themes and also includes modern ideas (gender issues for example), the classification into genre was limited to the traditional terms covering the totality of the Muslim faith or Islam as a religion which encompass the following eight categories

1. *Ahl al-bayt* – used here to include the members of ‘Aīī’s family, his wife, children and their descendants.

2. Belief – used here to mean *`aqīda*, including all beliefs required by a Muslim, such as the belief in the unity of Allah, the angels, judgment day, previous prophets and previous revelations, in addition to certain strictly Imāmi beliefs relating to the Imāms.

3. Conduct used here in terms of *muʿāmalāt* and includes exchanges between people of any kind. It includes good conduct to be emulated as well as bad conduct to be avoided.

4. Rituals – used here to cover the *`ibādāt*, including prayer, fasting, ḥajj and zakāt.
5. *Du‘ā* - includes the supplications, appeals and invocations addressed to Allah.

6. Qur’ān - includes the narrations dealing with any aspect relating to the Qur’ān.

7. *Sīra* – includes the narrations dealing with any aspect from the life of the Prophet that did not fit into one of the other categories,

8. Virtuous deeds – meaning *faḍā’il al-a‘māl*. This classification includes narrations dealing with any supernumerary pious actions like extra prayers, or Qur’ān recitations as well as, special acts performed to secure extra rewards in the afterlife or to reduce or balance previous sins. This category was chosen deliberately distinguish these types of actions from the ritual prayers or other required rituals and charitable deeds.

The above mentioned categories were applied to all narrations which were then sorted by topic and genre. A list of the translated core matn of each of the narrations and their classification of the Sunnī *aḥādīth* are in Annex 3, and the same for the Shī‘a narrations are in Annex 4.
Figure 16 - Distribution of Umm Salama's aḥādīth by topic (%)
4.2. Distribution of Umm Salama's aḥādīth by topic

To be able to compare the two data sets, a combined chart was chosen to depict the Sunnī and the Shīʿa narrations by Umm Salama distributed by topics with the underlying assumption that the higher the percentage of the topic, the more important it is. The Qurʾān enjoined the Mothers of the Believers to report the revelations received in their houses.633

Looking at the above chart, we can see that the largest category for the Sunnī narrations covers the topic of the Prophet's life at 20%, followed by women's issues at 10% and superstitions/predictions/miracles at 8%. This means that according to the result of the Sunnī set, Umm Salama made it a point, two times out of ten, to inform her community about the minute details of the Prophet's life and the details of how he lived and worshipped. This shows that she was able not only to relate facts from the Prophet’s daily life to share it with the community, but that she was also attentive to the minute details of his mannerisms and behavior patterns, which were to be emulated or which provided a base for certain rulings in fiqh later on. Women's issues are her second concern after the Prophet's life for the Sunnī Umm Salama narrated one narration out of ten dealing with women and what might be of interest to them. As this category is one of Umm Salama’s main concerns a detail breakdown of the narrations will be analyzed in detail in a separate section.

Many of her questions to the Prophet relate to women’s issues in connection to purity and prayer, such as the permissibility of prayer when a woman is suffering from recurrent non-menstrual bleeding or is having certain women related health problems (Sunnī hadīth # 35). From the way Umm Salama asks these questions it is evident that she was selected by the women to

633 [33.34] And keep to mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and the wisdom; surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware.
put forth their concerns to the Prophet, when they were too shy or too embarrassed to ask him themselves. It can be concluded that Umm Salama enjoyed a position of trust and the women of the community had confidence in her to relate their concerns unadulterated and provide them with the right answer. The women of the community sometimes shied away from discussing issues of a very private nature and therefore Umm Salama responsibly spoke on their behalf to clarify certain issues. The āhādīth in this category deal with diversified topics such as permissibility of sexual intercourse in certain positions, whether or not women experience ‘nocturnal emissions’\textsuperscript{634} such as men do, the permissibility of women travelling to attend a condolence event for a deceased family-member and many such concerns.

In third place is the category superstition/prediction/miracle at 8%, which includes āhādīth that predict an event in the future. They relate mainly to the death of the Prophet’s grandson al-Ḥusayn in Karbalā’, the death of ‘Ammār Ibn Yāsir in battle, as well as narrating about one of the miracles, where the Prophet was travelling in the desert and came upon an antelope that talked to him and after he saved her two babies by allowing her to nurse them. The antelope repaid his kindness by saying that she declares that there is no God but Allah and that he was his messenger.

Unlike the Sunnī narrations, in the Shi‘a data set, the highest number of āhādīth are in the category superstition/ prediction/ miracles. The āhādīth in this category include similar ones to the Sunnī āhādīth, but also include many more, which deal with the extraordinary powers that the twelve Imāms possess. This explains why there is a higher percentage here than in the Sunnī data set. As previously established these predictions mainly deal with events that are supposed to happen in the future and after the Prophet’s death. Some of these events are probably due more to hindsight of the traditionists than to the Prophet’s foresight. In any case choosing the

\textsuperscript{634} Popularly termed as ‘wet dreams’
persona of Umm Salama, a respected and trustworthy wife of the Prophet, certainly bestows more credibility on such versions.

The Prophet's life comes next at 15%, which shows that events from his life are of similar importance to the Shi'a as they are to the Sunnis. This is understandable as both sects accepted his prophethood and that he was Allah's messenger. The third and fourth categories for the Shi'a data set are both equal at 13%. One is dealing with narrations concerning 'Ali and the second one deals with narrations about Imam beliefs. This is also understandable, as he is a key figure for the Shi'a, their first Imam and the father of the next two Imams, while the Imam beliefs define the sect as a whole. While this category is at 0% in the Sunni category, meaning that there are no narrations relating to Imam, the category 'Ali shows 3% for Sunni narrations and includes those listing the virtues of Ali or describing his special relationship with the Prophet. These results are expected, as Imam beliefs are very particular to the Shi'a and have no equivalent in the Sunni dogma, while 'Ali is also revered by the Sunni Muslims as the Prophet's foster-son, his son-in-law and the Muslims fourth Rightfully Guided Caliph.

The next highest category for the Shi'a data set is "other" at 8% and includes twelve single narrations that could not be classified into any of the other categories. For the Sunni dataset this category is at 3% and includes ten narrations covering manaqib and virtues of the Prophet, Abû 'Ubayda and 'Umar, as well as attributes and behavior of the 'ulamâ', issues concerning slaves who have bought their freedom back, the adoption of Abû Ḥuzayfa Ibn 'Utba Ibn Rabî'a and how that was dealt with after the revelation of the verses prohibiting adoption, a narration about the undesirability of making an oath, a narration about how Allah does not afflict anybody with an illness unless it is an atonement and cleansing of sins he had already committed, a narration about returning a precious item left in safekeeping for the fear of Allah, forgiving a murderer and reading sura 112 after peach prayer, another narration about intentions and finally one about visiting graves as they provide lessons to be learnt. In the Shi'a data set, the
narrations in this category are of a different nature, they concern Fadak and how the Prophet had granted the proceeds to his daughter Fāṭima, how Abū Bakr had denied her Fadak, even though he allowed all the Mothers of the Believers to remain in their houses and did not force them to receive charity by providing a stipend, a narration about Fāṭima leaving instructions to ʿAlī in the event of her death, that only Umm Salama, Umm Ayman and Fiḍa should know about her death and that she should be buried at night and that the location of her grave should remain undisclosed, another two narrations about Umm Salama praising Fāṭima and narrating how much she resembled her father in many characteristics and one defending her and her rights to an inheritance against ʿUmar, another narration about Umm Salama's reaction when she heard about ʿAʾisha's intention to participate in battle against ʿAlī, a narration about Umm Salama feeling blessed in her home, a narration about how Umm Salama wrote to ʿAlī to warn him about Talḥa and al-Zubayr, another narration about ʿAlī and Fāṭima are welcomed in heaven, another narration about how Talḥa and ʿUthmān said that it was not fair that the Prophet could marry the widows of the companions while the companions could not marry his widows, a narration about not prohibiting something which Allah had made lawful and finally a narration about how many aḥādīth uttered by the Prophet were written down and noted in books and how not every narrator is trustworthy, and declaring Umm Salama to be a trustworthy narrator. The difference in these topics classified under this category of "other", reflect the sectarian interests. While the Sunnī narrations are mainly of general issues and when specific, they deal with the manāqīb of the Prophet or the companions, the Shīʿa ones deal with particulars related to Fāṭima or are disparaging of some of the companions such as ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, as well as Talḥa and al-Zubayr. Umm Salama having had good relations with Fāṭima and ʿAlī and having nursed al-Ḥusayn lends herself as a good candidate for such narrations, raising the narrations to acceptable from being sectarian polemics.
The following thirteen categories from the Sunnī data set cover prayer, Qur’ān, marital relationship, charity, personal prayer (duʿāʾ), good manners, equality, pilgrimage, family relationship, counsel and purity and range between 6 and 3% which means that they are roughly of the same importance. The next seven categories of the Shiʿa data set include women’s issues, ‘Alī’s family, marital relationship, Qur’ān, charity, family relationship and personal prayer (duʿāʾ) also ranging between 6 and 3% also showing roughly of the same importance. One notices that there are five categories in common between both sects, namely family relationship, marital relationship, Qur’ān, charity and personal prayer (duʿāʾ), which is logical, as these are issues that are far removed from sectarian ideologies and concern Muslims as a whole regardless of their sectarian beliefs. The Qur’ān is the same book for both sects; charity is required by the Qur’ān from all able Muslims, marital relationships relate to the smallest unit of society, namely a married couple, the seed for a family which leads to family relationships and finally duʿāʾ is a Muslim’s personal dialogue with Allah. Hence, one can conclude that both sects thought similarly on these issues and gave it an almost equal weighting.

For the Shiʿa data set the next eight categories, namely conciliation, counsel, equality, fasting, good manners, humor, prayer, purity are equally at a negligible 1%, while for the Sunnī data set there are five categories, namely conciliation, fasting, ‘Alī’s family, humor and productivity ranging between 2% and 1%. Again there are similarities between both sects as there are three categories in common, namely humor, fasting and conciliation. Once more it is a reasonable result, as fasting is one of the pillars of faith for both sects, while conciliation and humor facilitate human interaction and peaceful coexistence.

Lastly there are two categories at zero % meaning that there are no narrations in this category for the Shiʿa dataset, namely pilgrimage and productivity, while there is only one category at zero for the Sunnī data set, namely Ịmāmī beliefs. There doesn’t seem to be any logical explanation why there are no narrations describing a preference of being productive in the
Shīʿa data set, other than perhaps that it was chosen badly and should have been included in the category ‘other’. One explanation for the lack of any narrations about pilgrimage in the Shīʿa data set could be that visiting the graves of the Imāms is considered a pilgrimage.

Shīʿa Muslims revere many saints and build mazārs (sanctuaries) for them that turn into places of pilgrimage.635 There are shrines in Iran where pilgrims go visit, such as for example the Shrine of Fāṭima al-Maʾsūma in Qum. Karbalāʾ is of special importance and is also known as Mashhad Ḥusayn as it was the site of the martyrdom and the burial place of al-Ḥusayn’s decapitated body. It became a Shīʿī pilgrimage site quite early on, only about four years after his martyrdom.636 It is especially around Āshūrā, also called as “the great day of mourning” that the Shīʿa go on pilgrimages to the sacred places, particularly to Karbalāʾ.637 Another favorite site for pilgrimage is al-Najaf, also known as Mashhad ‘Al, which is to al-Kūfa, where ʿAīf Ibn Abī Ṭālib was buried, before the town of al-Najaf existed.638

Kāẓimayn is another town in Iraq, where Shīʿī pilgrimage take place, as there are two Imāms buried there, namely the seventh Imām Mūsā Ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṣadīq, also called al-Qāẓim, as well as his grandson Muḥammad al-Jawād, the ninth Imām of the Twelvers.639 The two Imāms

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'Ālī al-Hādī and al-Ḥasan ʿAskarī are both buried in Sāmarrā. In addition, the Twelfth Imām, al-Mahdi, also known as the hidden Imam, is said to have disappeared there in a cleft honored later by the Sardāb Mahdī.640 Shīʿīs pray at the mosque there for his return. Abu ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad, the tenth Imām of the Twelvers, also known as al-Naqī and al-Hādī, the son of the ninth Imām, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī al-Riḍā is buried in Mashhad, which is another main centre of pilgrimage.641 Furthermore, the city of Qadamgā is yet another place of pilgrimage as the Eighth Imām, ʿAlī al-Riḍā allegedly stopped there and left “the imprint of his foot on a stone.”642 The Shīʿī shrine cities of ʿIrāq, namely Najaf, Karbalāʾ, Kāẓimayn and Sāmarrā, where the tombs of six of the twelve Imāms are located, are collectively called as ʿatabāt (thresholds), which is a short form for ʿatabāt ʿāliya or ʿatabāt muḥaddasa (the lofty or sacred thresholds)643, which serve almost as “a secondary qibla”644 and are main sites for pilgrimage, where Shīʿī pilgrims also go around the tombs and recite special prayers. Though the pilgrimage to Mecca is still important to the Shīʿī, and as established in the previous chapters the aḥādīth were collected and compiled at a later date, when most of these shrines were already in existence, the abundance of pilgrimage sites for Shīʿī pilgrims could be viewed as a reason for the lesser importance of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

A detailed and in-depth look at the perception and performance of pilgrimage in Shīʿī sources

goes beyond the scope of this study, however it is a possible avenue for future research and perhaps a comparison between the perception of pilgrimage as well as the importance of performing ḥajj in Mecca as described in Shīʿa sources and compared to Sunnī sources might offer interesting information and new insights.

To sum up, the commonalities between both data sets are more than their differences and the individuality becomes apparent in topics that are crucial to sectarian ideologies or dogma. The image of Umm Salama that emerges from her narrations is also consistent. She appears to have a fondness for family relations in general and for Ḍū al-ʿĀli’s family in particular, which is also consistent with the information gained from her biography, where it was shown that she had good relations with Fāṭima and an especially close bond with al-Ḥusayn. Furthermore her interest in presenting the details about the Prophet’s life show her loyalty to him on one hand, as well as her interest in providing her community with those details to facilitate and clear up matters in general and matters of worship in particular. Her concern for women’s issues and her egalitarian spirit is also consistent with the knowledge acquired from her biography. Though the category “conciliation” is small, that is also consistent with the image of Umm Salama acquired from her biography, that she was peace loving, avoided disagreements with the co-wives and opted for giving valuable advice to smooth over the conflict that arose in Ḥudaybiya. The categories of humor and productivity are negligibly small, however, they also provide some insight to a side of Umm Salama that rounds off her serious nature and dignified behavior, showing that she was able to loosen up and also display emotions. This is also consistent with her biography, especially the episode depicting her emotional dialogue with Abū Salama directly before his death.

The next step is corroborating the findings by assigning a genre to the ʿahdīth in the dataset, by choosing a category from among the branches of Islam (furūʿ al-dīn), limiting it to conduct (muʿāmalāt), rituals (ʿibādāt), belief (ʿaqīda), virtuous deeds (fadāʾil al-aʿmāl), duʿāʾ and Qurʿān, as well as Sira and ahl al-bayt.
4.2.1. Distribution of Umm Salama’s *ḥādīth* dealing with women's issues

One of Umm Salama's main interests is her concern with women's issues. A comparison of the detailed breakdown of this category between the Sunnī and Shīʿa data sets provides further insights.

In the Sunnī set, the largest concern at 22% is how the women dressed, issues of veiling, length of the dress or number of times the veil is wrapped around the head form the content of this category. The second largest concern is with their conduct at almost 15% followed by general issues at 12%, Widows and women's modesty are at an equal 10% followed by purity and issues concerning divorce.

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**Figure 17** - Distribution of Umm Salama's *ḥādīth* about women's issues (%)
In the Shīʿa set, the general issues are equal to issues relating to modesty at about 5%, while the rest of the categories are equal at 2%.

Interestingly, the Shīʿa set deals with issues regarding engagement and marriage, while there are no similar narrations in the Sunnī data set. The Sunnī data set, on the other hand, deals with issues concerning dressing and garments as well as issues related to divorce, while the Shīʿa data set does not. This seems to imply an attention to the outer and visible or tangible details for the Sunnīs and an attention to the implicit or emotional side as related to engagement and marriage on the Shīʿa side.

In conclusion, while women’s issues are of importance to both sects, the minute details and the main areas of concern differ slightly between the two sects.
4.3. Distribution of Umm Salama’s aḥādīth by genre

Figure 18 - Distribution of Umm Salama's aḥādīth by genre (%)
From the above figure we can see that the largest category for the Sunnī data set at 39% is conduct, as compared to the Shī‘a one which is *ahl al-bayt* at 34%, followed by conduct at 22%. Hence conduct is also very important to the Shī‘as, second only to their love for *ahl al-bayt.*

Rituals come second in the Sunnī data set at 19%, while in the third position is sīra at 15%, equal to the Shī‘a data set in fourth position after beliefs at 16%, only slightly higher. In fourth position of the Sunnī data set is belief at 10%, followed by Qur‘ān at 7%. The category Qur‘ān is almost the same at 6% for the Shī‘a set, followed by brutilats at 4%. The category of *du‘ā‘* is almost the same for Shī‘a and Sunnī respectively at 3 and 4%. The surprising finding was that the lowest category for the Sunnī set at 3% is the one concerning virtuous deeds, whereas it is at 0% for the Shī‘a set.

A check of some of the Shi‘ite ḥadīth collections, namely *man la yahdurahu al-faqīh*\(^\text{645}\), al-Ṭūsī’s *tahdhīb al-aḥḵām*\(^\text{646}\) and al-kāfī\(^\text{647}\) resulted in finding no separate chapter dealing with virtuous deeds. However, many chapter (abwāb) headings and titles start with the word faḍl (virtue), such as for example the virtue of charity, feeding the hungry, sheltering the traveler or similar issues. The initial observation after going through the narrations found within these chapters is that these issues are all mainly communal issues and concern more than one person, meaning that one person is performing the virtuous deed for others even if the reason is seeking a later personal divine reward, whereas the Sunnī genre of *fadā‘ il al-aʿmāl* deals with supernumerary pious actions like extra prayers, or Qur‘ān to secure the extra rewards in the afterlife that are all personal and are performed by the individual. This could relate to the early Shī‘ites being a persecuted minority and hence had more interest in looking out for the

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disadvantaged community members, as the social institutions, for example bāyt al-māl were organized and regulated by the sometimes ‘hostile’ state or governing body.

Furthermore, Dakake argues that Shīʿites view themselves as the particular “religious community guaranteed intercession and eventual salvation”,\(^{648}\) which has its roots in the promise that great suffering, as meted out to the early Shīʿa, is linked to recompense in the hereafter. Dakake argues further that shafāʿa (intercession) was always an important element of the Shīʿite religious perspective, and that the twelve Imāms will intercede on behalf of the Shīʿite community.\(^{649}\) Following from this argument one can conclude that the virtuous deed aḥādīth are of minor importance to the Shīʿa as they are quaranteed the Imāms’ shafāʿa and hence supernumerary pious actions, extra prayers, additional Qurʿān recitations or special devout acts performed to secure extra rewards are not badly needed.

In addition, the Shīʿa ḥadīth collections such as al-Kāfī, man la yahdarahu al-faqīh or tahdhīb al aḥkām all include sections about fadāʾil al-ziyāra, namely the visit of the graves of the Imāms. The aḥādīth in these chapters mainly say that visiting the graves of the Imāms will result in the visitor going to heaven in the afterlife and that asking for intercession of the Imāms at their graves brings guaranteed results.\(^{650}\) Interestingly one of the aḥādīth in that chapter mentions that visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is equal to performing both ʿumra and ḥajj.\(^{651}\)

An in-depth and comprehensive search in the Shīʿa ḥadīth collections in search of the genre of fadāʾil al-aʿmāl goes beyond the scope of this study and might be a possible avenue for future research to look closely at the use of virtuous deeds in Shīʿa scholarship. As mentioned

\(^{648}\) Dakake, *The Charismatic Community*, p. 137
\(^{649}\) Ibid, p. 172
\(^{650}\) See bab fadl ziyarat Abi Abd Allah al-Husayn Ibn Ali in vol 2 of tahdhīb al aḥkām, as well as in vol 2 of man lā yaḥḍuru- hu ʿl-faqīh
\(^{651}\) See *tahdhīb al Athār* by al-Ṭūsī, vol 6, chapter 17 (102) محمد بن أحمد بن داوود عن محمد بن الحسن عن محمد بن الحسن - (172) محمد بن أحمد بن داوود عن محمد بن الحسن عن محمد بن الحسن - (102) الصفار عن أحمد بن غيسي عن محمد بن سان عن الحسن بن المختار عن زيد الشحام عن ابن عبد الله - (232) محمد بن أحمد بن داوود عن محمد بن الحسن عن محمد بن الحسن - (102) قال: زيارة قبر الحسن (ع) تعال عشرين جفة، وافضل من عشرين عمرة وحجة.
previously Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī ‘accused’ the Ṣūfīs of forging the aḥādīth found in the genre called as virtuous deeds (fadā’il al-a’māl) due to their good and noble intention of promoting a return of the community to performing pious deeds, increasing extra and supernumerary prayers and readings of the Qur‘ān. Ibn al-Jawzī also refers to their good intentions when circulating forged narrations to promote virtuous deeds.  

ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib is often portrayed in both Shi‘ī and Sunnī traditions as perhaps even the first ascetic follower of Prophet Muḥammad and the Imāmī sources confer a special esoteric knowledge on him. Furthermore Imām al-Riḍā is regarded in Ṣūfī tradition as “a model of asceticism and in some orders he is identified as a link in a chain of authority for the transmission of mystical knowledge from the Prophet.” As Ṣūfīs are closely linked with Shi‘ītes, it would be interesting to explore their relationship with regard to virtuous deeds (fadā’il al-a’māl).

The Sunnī image emerging for Umm Salama shows her highest concern being with conduct (muʿāmalāt), followed by rituals (ʿibādāt), subsequently sīra and belief (aṣīda). Then she is concerned with Qur‘ān, followed by duʿāʾ and finally virtuous deeds (fadā’il al-a’māl) and ahl al-bayt equally.

The image of Umm Salama emerging from the Shi‘ī data set, places her highest concern with ahl al-bayt, followed by conduct, then belief and sīra, followed by the Qur‘ān, then subsequently rituals and duʿāʾ. The image shows Umm Salama as completely unconcerned with virtuous deeds. In both images one of Umm Salama’s greatest concerns is conduct, which is consistent with the image from her biography.

Umm Salama was well-known for her reason, eloquence, good memory and attention to detail. The Prophet followed her advice many times, for example during the Treaty of

Her reputation of being wise and her positive involvement in political affairs such as Hûdaybiyya, as well as the honorific given to her, namely 'Aym al-ʿArab', show how respected and revered she was.

A closer look at some of the Sunnî narrations provides some more insights. For example the category titled 'humor' includes a narration by Umm Salama (ḥadîth # 118) that the Prophet approved of trading. In addition an anecdote about Abû Bakr buying back Suwaybât for camel mares is mentioned about which the Prophet laughed. Another ḥadîth (# 119) shows that while the Prophet was at Umm Salama's house after Ramaḍân, one of the slave girls uncovered her hair, sang and played the tambourine and the Prophet asked to let her celebrate, as every community had a feast and this was the feast of this community. These ḥâdîth show that Umm Salama was able to laugh, enjoy jokes, remember them and share them as well with her community. This is important because life in the Prophet's household was rather ascetic and austere. Historical reports from the Prophet's various and numerous biographies show that meat rarely formed part of their diet and most of the available wealth went to charity and to help the poor and orphans. Despite of coming from an extremely wealthy and aristocratic family, the harsh and ascetic conditions in the Prophet's household did not make Umm Salama bitter, but she remained open to laughter and jokes with a friendly disposition.

Many of the ḥâdîth narrated by Umm Salama discourage extreme behavior. One example would be the ḥadîth (# 240) where the Prophet mentions two angels in heaven, one of whom was severe, while the other was lenient, and both are right, one is Jibrîl and the other is Mîkā’il. He added that there were two prophets, one of whom was severe, while the other was lenient, and both are right, one is Nûḥ and the other is Ibrâhîm. Then the Prophet mentions two of his companions, one of whom was severe, while the other was lenient, and both are right, one is

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654 Sayyid al-Ahl, Ṭabaqât al-Nisâ', p. 34
ʿUmar and the other is Abū Bakr. The narrations seem to suggest that in certain situations extreme behavior is acceptable, while normally the middle ground should prevail, especially as it echoes a verse from the Qurʾān.⁶⁵⁵

Other ahādīth cover a wide range of subjects denoting Umm Salama’s sense of justice and equality. In one of them (hadīth # 29 and # 40) Umm Salama asked the Prophet why the Qurʾān only addresses men and not women, so verse [33.35] was revealed in answer or why women only receive half the inheritance as compared to men (hadīth # 87). In another (hadīth # 78), the Prophet said that even if Fātima his daughter would steal, he would cut off her hand. In another (hadīth # 80), the Prophet told Abū Dharr to listen and follow the advice of even a slave from Abyssinia with amputated limbs, meaning that he could have an innate wisdom like anyone else. In another (hadīth # 79) the Prophet said that Hajj was the jihād of the weak, thereby not excluding anybody from the rewards of it. One other hadīth (# 84) narrates how the wives of the Prophet asked Umm Salama to speak to the Prophet on their behalf complaining that most of the gifts were delivered to ‘A’ishah’s house and asking for equality; and finally another hadīth (# 87) states that the Prophet used to pray in all his wives’ houses, thereby making them all equal.

A large number of ahādīth within different categories describe the feelings between spouses using the example of the Prophet and Umm Salama. They show that love, compassion and simple feelings were more important than desire or fulfilling a sexual need. One example (hadīth # 101) would be that the Prophet used to kiss his wives in general and Umm Salama in particular as she was the one narrating this ḥadīth, while fasting and also on his way to the mosque for prayer without renewing his ablution. In another one (hadīth # 124) he called her back

⁶⁵⁵ [2.143] And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you; and We did not make that which you would have to be the qiblah but that We might distinguish him who follows the Apostle from him who turns back upon his heels, and this was surely hard except for those whom Allah has guided aright; and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful to the people.
to bed for an embrace when she got up after realizing that her menses had started. And yet another one (ḥadīth # 124) shows that the Prophet used to perform his ritual purity wash from intercourse after fajr (dawn) and still fast that day, without any urgency to perform his ritual purity washing right after the act, but rather lingering and enjoying the aftermath of togetherness. This group of aḥādīth shows the beauty of a real relationship between a husband and wife and is in total accordance with the Qurʾān.656 Furthermore it shows the deep feelings between them and encourages loyalties and respect.

All these narrations add up to show Umm Salama to be a well balanced lady, easily combining facts and emotions together, able to unite the soft-heartedness of a mother and loving spouse with the pragmatic facts of tangible events and legal rulings without rendering them cold and clinical, adding up to a grounded pragmatic well-adjusted loyal and affectionate woman with a healthy dose of common sense. Despite her turbulent life, the upheavals she lived through in the early days of Islam, her two immigrations, to Abyssinia and Medina, and the hostility she encountered in both, Mecca and Medina, as shown in chapter 2 about her biography, as well as the loss of her first husband Abū Salama, she adjusted to the many changes very well and managed to comfortably merge the best of the different facets of her personality. They also show the depth of her belief and piety and her eagerness to memorize the Qurʾān, as well as her sense of precision, her zeal and enthusiasm in righting wrongs, as well as her courage in standing up for what she believes in strongly, as recorded in the episode with ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. In fact after the Prophet's death it was reported that Umm Salama was keeping an eye on all the Sahāba according to a saying of the Prophet: “There will be those who will no longer have me in mind

656 [30.21] And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.
after I die.” So Umm Salama used to voice her displeasure about events and would not spare anybody reprimands if she felt they were due as was shown earlier when she criticized ʿUthmān.

A few of the narrations show that she preferred disputes to be solved through peaceful means. All topics considered, the picture we see in both data sets is that of a pious woman with strength of character and depth of belief; a healthy dose of pragmatism and practical as well as helpful and resourceful. The differences in importance of the categories are mainly due to sectarian reasons, which put more emphasis on particular categories such as *ahl al-bayt* or Ḥāfīṣūna Imāmī beliefs in the case of the Shīʿa data set and on *ṣīra* or rituals (ʿibādāt) in the case of the Shīʿa the Sunnī data set. However the *ḥādīth* that are uncolored and unaffected by sectarian influences agree on the way Umm Salama is portrayed. These narrations fit in well with the overall analysis of the major categories. The *ḥādīth* also reflect her emotions and her need for having fulfilling and meaningful relationships with her immediate family members, as well as the members of her community.

To wrap up, we can safely deduce that Umm Salama possessed great wisdom and intuition to enable her to pinpoint events in the Prophet’s life that are important to relate to the community at large. They show that she had the ability to listen and be guided as well as memorize and retain what she heard and learned to offer guidance to her community. As is supported from the previous part of the research, this section maintains that Umm Salama possessed a well-balanced personality. She was dignified, helpful and compassionate, showed patience and loyalty and kept peaceful relationships with both her servants as well as members of her family and community. The most important distinguishable traits though are her pragmatism and common sense. All these findings agree with the information found in the the chapter of the biography of Umm Salama.

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Naturally Umm Salama is not expected to narrate certain traditions with regard to serious fighting in battles or other such activities that her position as a woman, mother and wife would not allow her to participate in. It is also expected that she has no narrations about issues or events which took place before she joined the Prophet's household. It must be emphasized that the Prophet had different and various activities which were attended by different people. For example Umm Salama would not be expected to narrate traditions related to the distribution of the spoils of war, while 'Umar for example could, as he was there.

Umm Salama was involved in al Ḥudaibiyah which started as a peaceful journey for to perform Ḥajj. Hence, the silence of the narrator with regard to certain topics is telling. One should not accept narrations by a narrator who seems to know every thing and narrates about all issues. The close look at the topics of narration may also help to develop a serious criterion for evaluating the soundness of a particular tradition and might even be the reason behind the early organization of the *ahādīth* collected in a Musnad form. Looking at the topics of narrations in the *masānīd*, to verify their suitability to the narrator and his personality could open the door for more investigation and might facilitate the search for other tools of *ḥādīth* verification which might be an avenue for future research.

Hence we can conclude that it is possible to arrive at the personality of a *muḥaddith* or a *muḥadditha* by looking at the narrations they relate. Detailed application of standards can indeed lead to generalization with regard to personality as revealed through narrations.

Having taken a closer look at some of the Sunnī narrations, the same will be done for the Shīʿa ones hoping to gain some more insights. From previous parts of this research, it was demonstrated that Umm Salama had a very good relationship with Fāṭima and 'Alī, who were reported to have been frequent visitors of her house. Furthermore the previous part of this study showed that Umm Salama helped care for al-Ḥusayn, or even breastfed him, due to Fāṭima’s frail
health, hence it is conceivable that Umm Salama would narrate such a big portion of ḥādīth about ʾahl al-bayt or that such narrations would be attributed to her.

The varied topics of ḥādīth in the category “other” include ḥādīth about the Battle of the Camel, taqiyya, and various details about Fāṭima. It is apparent here that the topics vary from the Sunnī collection and include distinctly Shī‘ite topics. The implications of the Battle of the Camel and its later use by the jurists of both sects to establish preferred behavior patterns for women, as well as to offset the Shī‘ite favorable view of Umm Salama’s abstinence from getting involved as opposed to the disapproval ʿA’isha’s conduct and has been discussed at length in the chapter of Umm Salama’s biography.

As for the subject of taqiyya (precautionary dissimulation), Kohlberg argues that the Shī‘ite Imāmī views on this subject went through considerable adjustments and developments. Kohlberg states that the first mentioning of the concept of taqiyya in Imami could be of attributed to Muḥammad al-Baqir (d. 114 or 117 AH) and his son Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (d. 148 AH) during the times of the cruel persecutions by the Umayyad or ʿAbbāsid political powers at the time.658 Obviously Umm Salama could not have engaged in nor advised to use taqiyya, as the concept was neither formulated nor existed in her time. Furthermore ʿAlī consented to the marriage of his daughter Umm Kulthūm to ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, which negates any taqiyya on ʿAlī’s part.

However, even the later attribution of such narrations to Umm Salama support the claim that it is possible to arrive at the personality of a muḥaddith or a muḥadditha by looking at the narrations they relate. Forgers and fabricators of narrations need to attribute their forged material to a narrator or an authority that would make them seem as authentic. In other words, such a narration could never be attributed to ʿAʿisha without raising concern, as her relationship with both Fāṭima and ʿAlī was reported to have been tense at best. Hence, despite the difference in the

categories of the topics found in the Shīʿite dataset, they still support the hypothesis claimed by this study.

Furthermore, they also include statements praising Fāṭima’s manners, and are in accordance to the information found in the history books, about Umm Salama taking in Fāṭima after her marriage to the Prophet, relieving Sawda from this responsibility or taking care of her children when Fāṭima had health issues, such as for example nursing al-Ḥusayn. The narrations incorporate accounts of a historical nature, detailing Fāṭima’s engagement to ‘Alī, describing their wedding and recounting how ‘Alī called for Umm Salama in times of need, such as when Fāṭima was delivering her children or after she died.

While these narrations explicitly praise *ahl al-bayt* and expound their merits, implicitly they do the same for Umm Salama, by raising her own status, which in turn reflects on her credibility. There is a positive relationship between reputation and credibility. The higher one’s status or the better one’s reputation, the more credibility one is considered to have. This holds especially true for the Arabs, who were bound by their honor and chivalry even in the days prior to Islam.

It can be concluded that after removing the distinctly Shīʿite themes the other categories essentially remain very similar. This also supports the initial hypothesis that the personality of the narrator is distinctive and can be deduced by looking at the narrations of that particular traditionist.

As mentioned previously, in the interests of providing a balanced image of Umm Salama, critical commentary on her was sought, but was not found in neither the Sunnī nor the Shīʿite sources.
4.4. Conclusion

To conclude, the events in Umm Salama’s life depicted in the original sources used in this study confirm the picture that emerges about her personality as portrayed by her narrations. This leads us to conclude that the content of the original sources, regardless of the edits performed due to political, social or sectarian reasons, as well as the content of the *mutūn* of the different *ahādīth* could be taken as representative of the truth or in other words as very close expressions of history *wie es geschehen ist* (as it happened) with adjustments of some possible edits.

The periods of unrest or strife, which resulted in tampering with the writing of history and the historiographical heritage, can be bridged by using different and varied sources which are independent of political agendas, such as books of eloquence or even grammar, where certain formulations and eloquent sentences were preserved, such as the previously mentioned correspondence between Umm Salama and ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān. These types of sources preserve fragments of original phrases used in letters or communications attributed to the historical characters and their realities, as seen by the example of Umm Salama’s correspondence with ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affān.

In trying to rewrite history, which is removed almost a century and half from today; no source should be neglected, as every minute detail helps in completing the overall full picture and assembling all pieces of the puzzle.

Furthermore the narrations attributed to Umm Salama, whether her own or falsely attributed to her, correspond to her own interests as shown from her biography which was reconstructed in chapter 2. Umm Salama displayed a keen social interest and answered many questions put to her by the members of her community. Her interest was used by certain group of scholars and expounded upon. In particular the jurists seem to have used the narrations
attributed to Umm Salama to deduce rulings for gender related issues. Her interest in women’s affairs and topics definitely helped in that.

Some of Umm Salama’s interests were also abused by other groups, as can be see clearly in the Shi‘ite corpus to depict an interest in distinctly Shi‘ite issues. Her affection for ‘Alī’s family members and her good relationship with both Fāṭima and ‘Alī allowed Shi‘ite scholars to expound this relationship and build on it. Furthermore her frequent contact with al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn in her own home, as well as her special relationship with al-Ḥusayn suggest her as a suitable medium to engage in narrating their praise.

This is akin to the practices nowadays where especially in journalism and media reports certain information is presented in a slanted way by either suppressing one part or another or omitting context and details or adding some, resulting in biased reporting.

This finding in and of itself is not a condemnation of the sources nor a negative assessment of their veracity, but rather a statement of the role the authors played in shaping the various genres at their time. The biographical dictionaries, historical works such as annals and chronicles, or even language books and works about eloquence each used the character of Umm Salama in their own way to support their own aims. A suitable example would be al-Ṭabarî. As a historian, who was also interested in exegises, he used Umm Salama’s inquisitiveness and her frequent questions about revelation and issues from the Qur‘ān. The various muḥaddithūn also used Umm Salama to their own ends. By manipulating the details of the matn attributed to her – as shown in detail with ḥadīth al kisā’ - they could manipulate the message of the hadīth, highlighting or eliminating details to emphasize certain points, as was evident by mentioning ‘Alī or eliminating him, mentioning Fadak or suppressing it. The dramatic details enhance the narration and fit well with storytelling as well as hadīth classes held orally to hold the attention of the students.
The personality of Umm Salama was also used, especially in comparison and contrast to the other wives of the Prophet. Quoting ʿAʾisha saying that Umm Salama was the eldest (ignoring Sawda in the process) lends itself perfectly to the contrast between these two wives of the Prophet, with the most exposure in hadith. Though ʿAʾisha narrated a much bigger corpus of hadith than Umm Salama, they shared a lot of common topics. ʿAʾisha however was depicted as the young and unrestrained wife as opposed to the dignified and self-controlled elder Umm Salama, who did possess a forceful personality that she restrained at certain times. Controversial topics, such as engaging in adult breastfeeding through her sisters for example, were attributed to ʿAʾisha, while disapproval and almost condemnation was attributed to Umm Salama, who – in other instances – was depicted as not shying away from asking pertinent and pointed questions about sensitive and delicate subjects, such as sexual intercourse, its positions and the like. ʿAʾisha’s participation in warfare showed her as an energetic unconventional independent woman who did not care much about restraints, while Umm Salama’s lively activism was within the framework of acceptable conventional norms. She was more concerned with communal and social issues, as well as issues of justice and gender equality, befitting the message of Islam, for equity and fairness for all.

ʿAʾisha, as the favorite wife of the Prophet [in most Sunnī sources], was allowed to get away with exceptional activities inconceivable to have come from any other wife. An avenue for future research could possibly be to follow up on this ‘favorite’ position and how it grew through time, when it started and which group of scholars promoted it. In contrast to ʿAʾisha, Umm Salama’s interventions were portrayed most of the time as translating a certain social concern or answering important questions that were of interest to the community at large or minorities within the community. Even the questions she asked, and which were answered through Qurʾānic revelations express the concern of the women of the community at large and their apprehension
of being overlooked or marginalized, when they have shared immigration, hardship and even warfare with the men.

An interesting comparison is also with the other wives, such as Maymūna Bint al-Ḥārith and Zaynab Bint Jahsh for example, who have hardly been assigned an active role in any political events or communal issues. Ḥafsa’s literacy has been highlighted by narrating her role in the collection of the Qurʾān.

One important factor which must have influenced the transmitters and historians was the change in social customs and opinions, particularly regarding to the position and independence of Muslim women. "The gradual withdrawal of women from public life no doubt resulted in a fair amount of supplementation and forgery on the part of the transmitters."659

From the above, and using the example of Umm Salama, we can conclude that it is highly likely and very probable that the ‘real’ personality and character traits of a muḥaddith are indeed reflected by the narrations of that particular muḥaddith, be they his or her own or fabricated and put into his or her mouth. Even fabrications had to match what was thought to be the ‘real’ personalities and their inherent interests and concerns. It would be inconceivable for example to attribute the praise of ahl al-bayt to ʿAʾisha or the concern about women issues to Sawda. Finally, having demonstrated that, it can be concluded that if any changes and amendments were performed on the texts of the original sources, it can be said that they had to be in line with the real characters and their original concerns.

659 Stern, Marriage in Early Islam, p. 19.
Conclusion

Owing to the nature of the material, it has been impossible to present a fully detailed exposition of every narration by Umm Salama. It is hoped that the work on this subject may be of some assistance to future scholars, who posses more knowledge and have access to wider material, and will succeed in establishing facts in the instances where it has only been possible to theorize.

The study started by investigating the original Islamic historical sources of both Shī'a and Sunnī scholarship, in addition to various other Islamic sources from different genres such as hadīth collections, belle lettrés, eloquence works, and manaqib (polemical praise) arriving at the conclusion that all sources, regardless of their sectarian origin or their political or social coloration need to be used to draw a complete picture that comes as close as possible to the objective truth, filling the voids left by political, sectarian and social motives.

The study revealed that there is a pressing need to re-evaluate the sources, as it became apparent that each genre uses the personality at hand (in this case Umm Salama) to promote a certain agenda or to foster a certain aim. It emerged, that there were various trends which have changed and evolved through time, for example the change in the role and participation of women in the public sphere. In the early period there was more concentration in many disciplines, such as history and exegesis, on using the Qur'ān as a final verification (example of al-Ṭabarī) and the asbāb al-nuzūl genre. Afterwards the trend moved to using hadīth collections in many genres such as annals, chronicles, biographical dictionaries and history compilations of events and histories of particular geographical locations (such as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī or Ibn ʿAsākir's works). It was observed that the canonical hadīth collections focused more on the main core matn of the different traditions, compiling abridged versions and omitting superfluous details, longer
versions and entertaining dramatic elements used prior to canonization by the storytellers, as well as earlier traditionists using mainly oral methods to teach *hadith*. Furthermore it emerged that the historians and various other authors of historical works compared the historical personalities and selected certain personalities to use (and sometimes abuse) the authentic kernel of their core characteristics to build upon and insert their own additions to promote their various interests.

Finally and most importantly the study revealed that the narrations attributed to one person can indeed reveal the genuine personality and characteristics of that particular person and his or her social, political or communal interests, as a reasonably consistent image of Umm Salama emerges in both Shi‘a and Sunnī sources. It does not matter much whether the narrations attributed to that person are authentic or forged. The reasons for that being that even forgeries were fabricated using the 'real' person's characteristics and interests to further certain causes and foster particular tendencies, specifically promoting orthodox or mainstream majority views.

It was interesting to observe the important role played by the women of the early community in the transmission of traditions. They were not only the original authority for a great deal of material relating to their own gender, but were also the medium through which a vast number of traditions referring to the *sunna* of the Prophet, a standard of behavior for the whole community, were transmitted.
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