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The Construction of Historical Memory in the Exegesis of Kor 16, 106

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Abstract

This article analyzes reports about the capture and torture of the companion ‘Ammār b. Yāsir and their later use in the exegesis of Kor 16, 106. It also shows why the reports were generated by different sectarian communities (Imamī Šī‘ites, Zaydites, Murǧī‘ites) in the different parts of the early Islamic empire (Kufa, Mecca, Medina, Basra, and Jazira) in the late first/seventh and early second/eighth centuries. Through a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the *isnāds* of reports, the article shows that it is possible to correlate information about the sectarian affiliations of reports’ transmitters with the contents of the reports and in the process shows why different communities remembered and transmitted the specific forms of the reports that they did. The article shows how literary Islamic sources are susceptible to a much more granular historical analysis than previously assumed.

Keywords

Islamic history, theology, *ḥadīth*, Qur’ānic exegesis, ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, Islamic law, historical memory

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Résumé

Cet article analyse les hadiths concernant la capture et la torture du compagnon ‘Ammār b. Yāsir et leur utilisation ultérieure dans l'exégèse de Kor 16, 106. Il montre aussi pourquoi les autres hadiths ont été produits par diverses communautés (chiïtes immites, zaydites, murǧi'ites) situées en différents endroits de l'empire islamique (Koufa, La Mecque, Médine, Bassorah et Ġazīra) à la fin du I^{er}/VII^e siècle et au commencement du II^e/VIII^e siècle. Par une analyse détaillée des *isnāds* des hadiths, l'article démontre qu'il est possible de mettre en rapport les données sur les transmetteurs de hadiths avec le contenu des hadiths et, de cette façon, montre pourquoi les différentes communautés gardaient le souvenir et transmettaient des formes bien spécifiques des hadiths. L'article démontre comment les sources islamiques permettent une analyse historique beaucoup plus fine qu'on ne l'estimait possible auparavant.

Mots-clés

histoire islamique, théologie, *ḥadīth*, exégèse coranique, ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, loi islamique, mémoire historique

Introduction

Almost all Islamic literary sources for the history of early Islam are composed of discrete reports preceded by an *isnād* (chain of transmission). These reports are found in books of hadith, biography, geography, genealogy, chronicles, exegesis, and much more. Yet, despite its ubiquity, scholarly attitudes towards the utility of an examination of *isnād* to establish historical truth vary widely.

Medieval and modern religious scholars of hadith view it as the most fundamental object of analysis for these scholars. The answer to the question of whether a given report is historically true or false depends in the most important ways on the analysis of its *isnād*. Hadith scholars combined a comprehensive comparative examination of the different versions of a text found in compilations of hadith with an analysis of the reputations of individual narrators found in the copious books of the *riǧāl* literature to establish the authenticity of text in question, usually in the service of some theological or legal end.¹

1 Jonathan Brown has done the most to highlight the importance of and clarify the underlying logic of medieval and modern hadith scholarship in Islamic civilization. See Jonathan A.C.

The approach of Islamic scholars of hadith contrasts with the attitudes of most Western scholars. Until recently, Western scholars have had severe doubts about the utility of the analysis of the *isnād* of a report in saying anything of historical importance about what its text says. The skepticism culminated in the dismissal of the entirety of the corpus of Islamic literary sources as useless for historical research of the earliest period.² This had the effect of encouraging historical scholarship in different directions, much of which has tended to avoid the literary sources altogether. Even those studies that have used the literary sources have tended to adopt methods of analysis that do not rely on the examination of *isnāds*.

With that said, the Western scholarly tradition on early Islam is not unanimous in its rejection of the analysis of the *isnād* as fruitful for historical research. Joseph Schacht, often thought of as a skeptic, actually re-introduced considerations of the *isnāds* in the dating of Islamic texts. Schacht did this in conjunction with a specific theory about how Islamic legal thought developed historically. The scholar of hadith literature, Gautier H.A. Juynboll further developed Schacht's methods, and his use of the *isnād* entailed a perfunctory use of the *riḡāl* literature to establish very basic facts about a narrator such as his death date and locale. More recently, scholars have pushed back against wholesale skepticism of the value of the *isnāds* as unjustified. These studies make persuasive arguments about the reliability of specific types of *isnād* analysis for the dating and geographic location of early Islamic texts.³

The present study is an extension and further development of these recent methods. It hopes to demonstrate not only that the circulation of reports can be reliably dated and geographically located by an analysis of *isnāds*, but also answers questions about why different theological groups in the earliest history of Islam would circulate a given report in the specific form that they did. Results of this type are absolutely essential to the study of the history of religious ideas, practices, and institutions in early Islam. This paper hopes to demonstrate the viability of this type of comprehensive analysis through a wide-ranging examination of reports about the torture of the famous companion 'Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37/657) and their relation to a single Qur'ānic verse, namely Kor 16, 106:

Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's legacy in the medieval and modern world*, New York, Oneworld Publications (« Foundations of Islam »), 2009.

2 See for example, famously, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: the making of the Islamic world*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

3 For a recent survey of this debate see Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: a Survey", *Arabica*, 52/2 (2005), p. 204-253.

Anyone who disbelieves in God after his having belief – except one who is forced, while his heart is at peace with faith (*muṭmaʿinnun bi-l-imāni*) – but anyone who has [willingly] opened his breast to disbelief, upon them is God's anger and for them is a tremendous punishment.⁴

The reports assert that though ʿAmmār capitulated to Quraṣī demands that he blaspheme God or the Prophet, the first part of Kor 16, 106, or what I call the coercion exemption clause exculpated him of his moral liability.

I will ultimately argue that the reports that regard ʿAmmār's torture as the historical explanation for Kor 16, 106 are improbable, because it is a poor fit with an early Medinan dating of Kor 16, 106, and a report transmitted by the first century Meccan scholars Muḡāhid and ʿIkrima coheres much better with both an early Medinan dating and the Qurʾānic passage in which Kor 16, 106 is located. I will show that the ʿAmmār torture explanation for Kor 16, 106 was most likely produced in the late first/seventh century because of a confluence of factors that have to do with things like the identity needs of different sectarian communities.

By the early second century, there were a very large number of reports circulating in the different cities of the empire on the fact and nature of ʿAmmār's torture. The majority of these reports make no connection between ʿAmmār's torture and the revelation of Kor 16, 106. I argue that these reports predate those that connect his torture with Kor 16, 106. This requires dating the many different reports found in Islamic sources. My dating of the reports will rely on a number of techniques that have recently been used with much fruit in the fields of hadith and early Islamic historiography.

The most recent scholarly development to resolve this problem relies on a close analysis of both the *isnāds* and the content of the reports in conjunction in order to establish a *terminus ante quem* for a given report. This methodological tool, named *isnād-cum-matn*, correlates textual variations of different versions of the same report with changes in an *isnād*. For example, if we notice that all of the versions of reports with A transmitting to B have one wording and A transmitting to C have a different wording, then we can establish a *terminus ante quem* of A's date death for the common elements of both sets of reports. The variation in the substance of the reports correlates with the variation in the *isnād*, and serves as a case of independent corroboration, and thus enables us to establish a date with confidence.⁵ Recent research on the methods of

4 The translation of this verse is mine.

5 Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler and Andreas Görke have used this method extensively with fruitful results. See Gregor Schoeler and Andreas Görke, "Reconstructing the Earliest *Sīra*

disseminating and transmitting textual knowledge in early Islamic history fits well the types of variations amongst different versions of the same text that we often find in historical reports.⁶

However *isnād-cum-matn* analysis, while especially powerful in dating the common elements of reports, can only work in cases when we have two or more versions of the same texts being transmitted along two or more *isnāds* that branch out at a given narrator. There are many texts that lack these features. In fact, most of the texts analyzed in this paper have single-transmission *isnāds*, meaning they were transmitted through one linear chain without branching out before ultimately being recorded in the published source. For these texts, I will rely on a number of different considerations to establish a date for the reports' production and dissemination. As a general starting point, I start with the assumption that the *isnāds* of the reports are historical, especially in cases where the originator of the report is neither the Prophet nor a companion. As we will see, the vast majority of the reports of 'Ammār's torture go back at most to a successor. This does not mean I accept all *isnāds* uncritically. I reject many reports or parts of *isnāds* on a case by case basis after consideration of a number of factors.

This study relies on the vast literature produced by Muslim scholars of hadith documenting, amongst other things, basic biographical information, sectarian affiliations, places of residence and the most prominent teachers and students of individuals named in the *isnāds* to determine the plausibility and likelihood of transmission between individuals.⁷

Establishing why a given sectarian community would preserve and circulate a specific form of the 'Ammār torture story requires the delineation of the sectarian affiliation of prominent narrators and the correlation of the content of

Texts: the *Hiġra* in the Corpus of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr", *Der Islam*, 82 (2005), p. 209-220; Harald Motzki, Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort and Sean W. Anthony, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*, Leiden-Boston, Brill (« Islamic history and civilization », 78), 2010.

6 On this see Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, ed. James E. Montgomery, transl. Uwe Vagelpohl, New York, Routledge (« Routledge studies in Middle Eastern literatures », 13), 2006.

7 *Riġāl* criticism, the discipline of hadith devoted to gathering and analyzing this data has been examined in two recent studies. See Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Hadith Criticism: the Taqdima of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill (« Islamic history and civilization », 38), 2001; Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive critics, Ḥadith literature, and the articulation of Sunnī Islam: the legacy of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal*, Leiden-Boston, Brill (« Islamic history and civilization. Studies and texts », 51), 2004.

the transmitted report with the purported sectarian ends it served.⁸ It is not surprising that many of the transmitters of some of the texts were Šī'ites. 'Ammār was a vociferous supporter of the fourth caliph, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), and died fighting on his side in the first civil war. Later Šī'ites would name him one of the four truly steadfast companions of the Prophet.⁹ Nor should it be surprising that Muṛǧī'ites, an early sectarian movement seemingly devoted to the restoration of Muslim political and religious unity, would be interested in disseminating a report originating with 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān (d. 36/656), the third caliph, recounting 'Ammār's torture, given the memory of the animosity between the two; a memory that had ramifications for sectarian identity formation in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Through this analysis I show the role of second/eighth century processes of sectarian identity construction in the formation and preservation of historical memory.

All of the reports on 'Ammār's torture, the connection to Kor 16, 106 notwithstanding, can be found in hadith, exegetical, biographical, and *sīra* sources. These reports can be divided into three categories:

- 1) Reports that note the circumstances of 'Ammār's torture without asserting any connection to the coercion exemption clause;
- 2) Reports that end up simply asserting that the coercion exemption clause was about 'Ammār;
- 3) Reports that narrate the circumstances of 'Ammār's torture and connect it to the coercion exemption clause.

As we move forward, the following basic facts about 'Ammār's biography should help in the analysis of the various reports about 'Ammār's torture. 'Ammār was an early convert to the Prophet's mission in Mecca. He is said to have participated in the military campaigns after the migration to the Medina. After the Prophet's death, he seems to have been a prominent member of the political elites in charge of governing a quickly burgeoning empire. He was

8 With this said, there is a possible danger of circularity. What if authorities ascribe sectarian affiliation based on the content of the report transmitted by a given narrator? This circularity is possible, but not likely, though it is an issue in need of further study. My sense of ascription of sectarian affiliation in the biographical dictionaries and the *riǧāl* works was that it was made on a basis of a number of factors, such as self-ascription and second-hand reports.

9 See Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shī'ī views on the Ṣaḥāba", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5 (1984), p. 143-175.

appointed by ‘Umar as governor of Kufa and is noted to have been a partisan of ‘Alī, ultimately dying on ‘Alī’s side at the battle of Şiffin in the first civil war.¹⁰

1 Torture Reports with no Reference to the Coercion Exemption Clause

Of the three categories of ‘Ammār reports, the reports that only attest to his torture without connecting it to the coercion exemption clause are both the most numerous and geographically diverse. We will begin with the Medinan reports.

One of these originates with ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (b. 23/643-644, d. 93/711-712 or 94/712-713),¹¹ the famous scholar based in Medina. ‘Urwa simply asserts that “‘Ammār used to be one of the oppressed (*mustaḍ‘afīn*) who was tortured in Mecca to make him recant his religion.”¹² The report is recorded with a single *isnād* by Ibn Sa‘d and al-Balāḍurī, both of whom have ‘Urwa as transmitting to Yazīd b. Rūmān (d. 130/748). We cannot therefore corroborate the historicity of the transmission through an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis. However, because of ‘Urwa’s centrality in the collection of reports constituting Muḥammad’s biography, his transmission activity has attracted much recent scholarly attention. Gregor Schoeler thinks that Yazīd’s version of ‘Urwa’s reports are not as faithful as Hišām b. ‘Urwa’s or Zuhri’s versions. He thinks that Yazīd often embellishes and rearranges ‘Urwa’s texts, but does not reject the transmission from ‘Urwa outright. Though Yazīd may have embellished some of Zuhri’s other texts, this, however, is not the case with our report. In fact, of all the ‘Ammār torture reports surveyed in this study this report asserts only basic facts about ‘Ammār’s torture with no embellishing detail. If we rely on Schoeler’s study

10 See Hermann Reckendorf, “‘Ammār b. Yāsir b. ‘Āmir b. Mālik, Abū ‘l-Yaḳẓān”, *ET*².

11 See Gregor Schoeler, “‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr”, *ET*².

12 Muḥammad b. Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Beirut, Dār Şādir li-l-ṭibā‘a wa-l-naṣr, 1957-1968, III, p. 248. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822), Ibn Sa‘d’s source for this report identifies the ‘oppressed’ (*mustaḍ‘afūn*) as those without a people or tribe in Mecca, whom the Qurayš used to torture in the sunbaked hot grounds of Mecca in the middle of the day. Here is the chain of transmission for the report:

‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (b. 23/643-644, d. 93/711-712 or 94/712-713, Medina) → Yazīd b. Rūmān (d. 130/747-748, Medina) → Mu‘āwiya b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Mirzad (n.d., Medina) → Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822, Medina/Baghdad).

Al-Balāḍurī records a longer version of this report directly from Yazīd b. Rūmān originating with ‘Urwa. See Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā l-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-ašraf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, Cairo, Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1987, I, p. 156.

and his consequent judgment of the basic reliability of 'Urwa → Yazīd transmissions, then we may date this text to the last third of the first/early eighth century, *i.e.* 'Urwa's lifetime.¹³

Another early single *isnād* Medinan report asserts that 'Ammār, along with others,¹⁴ was tortured to the point that he did not even know what he was saying.¹⁵ In yet another single *isnād* Medinan report, an unnamed eyewitness

13 See Gregor Schoeler, *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity*, ed. James E. Montgomery, transl. Uwe Vagelpohl, New York, Routledge («Routledge studies in classical Islam», 1), 2010, p. 119.

14 The other individuals mentioned in the report are: Ṣuhayb, Abū Fakīha, Bilāl, and 'Āmir b. Fuhayra. Ṣuhayb and Abū Fakīha are similarly described as being tortured to the point that they lost consciousness of what they were saying.

15 See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 248. The report goes on to assert that Kor 16, 110 was revealed regarding Bilāl and 'Āmir b. Fuhayra. Whether or not the report asserts that the same verse was revealed also about those who were tortured to the point of losing control over what they were saying, like 'Ammār, Ṣuhayb, or Abū Fakīha is not clear. Here is the chain of transmission for the report:

'Umar b. al-Ḥakam b. Ṭawbān (37/658-117/735, Medina) → 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Ṣuhayb (n.d., n.p.) → 'Uṭmān b. Muḥammad (n.d., Ḥiğāz) → Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822, Medina/Baghdad).

On 'Umar b. al-Ḥakam b. Ṭawbān, see al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta'riḥ al-kabīr*, VI, p. 147, n° 1978; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, v, p. 281; Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-naṣr wa-l-tawzī', 1984, VII, p. 382-383, n° 716. Ibn Sa'd locates 'Umar in a Medinan context, specifically identifying his family as clients (*ḥulafā'*) of the 'Awfī Anṣārīs, and noting that he was 80 when he died in 117/735. Very little biographical information exists on 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Ṣuhayb, other than the fact that one 'Abd Allāh b. Ğa'far b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān narrates from him. 'Abd Allāh was a Medinan who died in 170/787 and is noted to have narrated from 'Abd al-Ḥakīm, a fact which helps us both date and place 'Abd al-Ḥakīm. On 'Abd Allāh b. Ğa'far, see *ibid.*, v, p. 150-151, n° 295. On 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Ṣuhayb see 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl*, Beirut, Dār iḥyā' al-turāṭ al-'arabī, 1952, VI, p. 35, n° 187. In fact Ibn Sa'd himself, our source for this report on 'Ammār in another report, has 'Abd al-Ḥakīm transmitting to 'Abd Allāh b. Ğa'far who is then al-Wāqidi's immediate source. This report is also about the companion Ṣuhayb b. Sinān (d. 38/659, Medina). See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 228. We have no death date for 'Uṭmān b. Muḥammad. His *nisba*, al-Ḥiğāzī, implies where he lived. This is confirmed by the fact that the *riğāl* critics attribute a scholarly relationship between him and 'Abd Allāh b. Ğa'far. See Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta'riḥ al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Ḥān, Diyar Bakir, al-Maktaba l-islāmiyya, VI, p. 249-50, n° 2305; Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Ṭiqqāt*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Ḥān, Hyderabad, Mağlis dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-'Uṭmānī, 1393/1973, VII, p. 203-204; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dahabī, *al-Kāšif fi ma'rifat man lahu rīvāya fi l-kutub al-sitta*, ed. Muḥammad 'Awwāma and Aḥmad Muḥammad Nimr al-Ḥaṭīb, Jeddah, Dār al-qibla li-l-ṭaqāfa l-islāmi-Mu'assasat 'ulūm al-Qur'ān, 1992, II, p. 13, n° 3737.

recounts that, after seeing welts (*ḥabaṭ*) on ‘Ammār’s back, he asked him what they were. ‘Ammār replied, “This is from when the Qurayš used to torture me in the sunbaked hot grounds of Mecca (*ramaḍā’ Makka*).”¹⁶

A Basran report, originating with the famous Basran scholar Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/720),¹⁷ narrates the following about ‘Ammār’s torture:

The Prophet met ‘Ammār, while ‘Ammār was crying. [The Prophet] started to wipe [‘Ammār’s] eyes while saying: ‘the disbelievers captured you, drowned you, and you said such and such. If they return, do it again! (*fa-in ‘ādū fa-‘ud*)’¹⁸

16 See Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 248. Here is the chain of transmission for the report: Unnamed eyewitness → Muḥammad b. Ka’b al-Qurazī (d. 118/736, Medina) → al-Ḥārīt b. al-Fuḍayl (n.d., Medina) → ‘Utmān b. Muḥammad (n.d., Ḥiğāz) → Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822, Medina/Baghdad)

On Muḥammad b. Ka’b al-Qurazī see al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta’rīḥ al-kabīr*, I, p. 216-217, n° 679; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ḥarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl*, VIII, p. 67, n° 303; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, IX, p. 373-374, n° 691. All of these sources indicate that while Muḥammad b. Ka’b was from Medina, he lived in Kufa awhile, before returning home. None of these sources record the existence of a scholarly relationship between Muḥammad and al-Ḥārīt. The sources are virtually silent on al-Ḥārīt. For other reports in which al-Ḥārīt is a narrator in Ibn Sa’d, see Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 204; III, p. 59; and V, p. 93. While none of the *riḡāl* sources indicate a scholarly relationship, Ibn Sa’d has al-Ḥārīt transmitting one more report from Muḥammad b. Ka’b, through his son ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥārīt. This report is also on ‘Ammār, whom the report notes, was in the infantry (*raḡḡāla*) of ‘Alī’s army during the battle of Šiffin. In another report transmitted by ‘Abd Allāh from his father al-Ḥārīt, the companion Ḥuzayma b. Tābit (d. 37/658) refuses to take sides in the battle of Šiffin until he knows which side ‘Ammār will die on, referring to the famous hadith in which the Prophet prophesizes that the rebellious sect (*al-fīa al-bāḡiyya*) will kill ‘Ammār. As for the Sunnite *riḡāl* sources, Ibn Ḥibbān notes merely that he was a Medinan of Anṣārī extraction. See Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān, *Mašāḥir ‘ulamā’ al-amṣār wa-a’lām fuqahā’ al-aqtār*, ed. Marzūq ‘Alī Ibrāhīm, al-Manṣūra, Dār al-wafā’ li-l-ṭibā’a wa-l-naṣr wa-l-tawzī’, 1991, p. 219, n° 1082 and Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-ṭiḡqāt*, VII, p. 31; Ibn Ḥaḡar notes that he was simply a Medinan, Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, Beirut, Mu’assasat al-a’lamī li-l-maṭbū’āt, 1971, II, p. 156, n° 688. For ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥārīt b. al-Fuḍayl, see Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, p. 410-411. Ibn Sa’d records ‘Abd Allāh’s death date as 164/781.

17 On Ibn Sīrīn, see Toufic Fahd, “Ibn Sīrīn, Abū Bakr Muḥammad”, *ET*².

18 This report is recorded in three different sources, with slight textual variations between them. The one quoted above is found in Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 249 and also in al-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-aṣrāf*, I, p. 159, n° 350. For the third source, see Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq, *Sīrat Ibn Iṣḥāq: al-musammāt bi-kitāb al-Muḥtada’ wa-l-mab’at wa-l-maḡāzī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamid Allāh, Rabat, Ma’had al-dirāsāt wa-l-abḥāṭ li-l-ta’rīb, 1396/1976, IV, p. 172, n° 241. The textual variations are insignificant but since they correlate with the

An *isnād-cum-matn* analysis of this report allows us to establish the *terminus ante quem* of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn’s death date in 151/768. The *riġāl* and biographical sources record much material on the scholarly relationship between ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn and the source of this report, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn.¹⁹ This combined with the fact that the report is preserved in some of the earliest published sources and is transmitted through wholly Basran lines, and the fact that no transmitter attempts to link the report with a companion strengthens the likelihood that Ibn Sīrīn is truly the author of this report. That would mean this report was circulated by Ibn Sīrīn in Basra around the turn of the first/seventh century.

In contrast to the reports above, a single transmission Meccan report does not describe ‘Ammār’s torture but rather asserts that the verse Kor 29, 2, “Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be tested?”, was revealed about the time ‘Ammār was tortured in the cause of God (*yu‘addabu fī Llāh*).²⁰ This report has many of the same features

difference in who ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn transmits to, they establish a *terminus ante quem* of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn’s death date. Importantly the Ibn Sa’d and al-Balāḍurī versions are almost identical, consistent with the fact that both of have ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn transmitting to Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm. The Ibn Ishāq version orders the text a little differently and uses a couple of different words. Here are the chains of transmission:

Ibn Sa’d: Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/720, Basra) → ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn (d. 151/768, Basra) → Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Karābisī (d. 194/810, Basra);

Al-Balāḍurī: Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/720, Basra) → ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn (d. 151/768, Basra) → Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Karābisī (d. 194/810, Basra) → Ḥayyā b. Ayyūb (d. 234/849, Baghdad);

Ibn Ishāq: Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/720, Basra) → ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn (d. 151/768, Basra) → Yūnus [b. Bukayr] (d. 199/815, Kufa).

19 Ibn Sa’d specifically notes that ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn brought back material he had collected from Kufa and presented it to Ibn Sīrīn (*qad samī‘a bi-l-Kūfa ‘ilm kaṭīr fa-‘araḍahu ‘alā Muḥammad*). Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VII, p. 261-268. Al-Mizzī says the hadith scholar ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī claimed that ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awn heard material from Ibn Sīrīn in Basra. Yūsuf b. al-Zakī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, *Tahḍīb al-Kamāl fi asmā’ al-riġāl*, ed. Baššār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, Beirut, Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, 1980-1992, XV, p. 397, n° 3469. The other *riġāl* scholars simply count him as transmitting material from Ibn Sīrīn. See al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta’rīḥ al-kabīr*, v, p. 163, n° 512; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl*, v, p. 130, n° 605; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Ṭiqqāt*, VII, p. 3-4; Sulaymān b. Ḥalaf al-Bāġī, *al-Ta’dīl wa-l-taḥrīḥ li-man ḥarraġa ‘anhu l-Buḥārī fi l-Ġāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Rabat, al-Mamlaka l-maġribī, Wizārat al-awqāf wa-l-šū‘ūn al-islāmī, 1991, II, p. 937-938, n° 843.

20 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 250. Here is the chain of transmission for the report: ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (d. 113/732, Mecca) → Ibn Ġurayġ (d. 150/767, Mecca) → Ḥaġġāġ b. Muḥammad, Abū Muḥammad (d. 206/822, Syria)

as the Ibn Sīrīn report above. It is attributed to a scholar of first/seventh century Mecca, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (d. 113/732). The *riġāl* critics and biographers record a scholarly relationship between him and his student Ibn Ğurayġ and also a relationship between Ibn Ğurayġ and the person he transmits to, Ḥaġġāġ b. Muḥammad (d. 206/822).²¹ For some of the same reasons we accepted the attribution of the previous report to Ibn Sīrīn, I think we can accept the attribution to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd. This would have us date this report also to the first decade of the first/eighth century and locate it in Mecca.

1.1 *The Prophet Consoling Reports*

Of the reports about ‘Ammār’s torture that do not allude to Kor 16, 106, the most numerous record the Prophet’s address to ‘Ammār individually or to his family collectively while they were being tortured. These reports vary widely in their description of the details of the torture. We shall begin with the least diffusely transmitted reports and work our way to the most densely circulated ones.

Two of these reports are transmitted along a single *isnād* without ever branching out. These reports originate, respectively with ‘Abd Allāh b. Ğa’far b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 83/702), Umm Hānī’ (Fāḥita bt Abī Ṭālib) (d. ca 50s/670s). Here is the report that originates with ‘Abd Allāh b. Ğa’far b. Abī Ṭālib:

The Messenger of God walked past Yāsir, ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, and ‘Ammār’s mother while they were being harmed in God’s [cause] (*wa-hum yu’dūna fī Llāh*). The Messenger of God said: “Be patient, Oh Abū Yāsir and Yāsir’s family (*ṣabran yā Abā Yāsir wa-āl Yāsir*), for you have been promised heaven (*fa-inna maw‘idakum al-ġanna*).²²

21 Motzki accepts ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd as a source of Ibn Ğurayġ’s material. Motzki notes that Ibn Ğurayġ generally introduces his ‘Abd Allāh material with *sami’tu*. See Harald Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools*, transl. Marion H. Katz, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill («Islamic history and civilization», 41), 2002, p. 215-216, 71. The Ibn Sa’d report above has Ibn Ğurayġ quoting ‘Abd Allāh in the same way. This strengthens the plausibility for the transmission. For the Ḥaġġāġ b. Muḥammad-Ibn Ğurayġ relationship see the following: al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta’rīḥ al-kabīr*, II, p. 28, n° 2840; Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Ta’rīḥ Baġdād aw Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Āṭā’, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1997, VIII, p. 231-233, n° 4342; Ibn Ḥaġar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, II, p. 180-182, n° 381.

22 See ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī l-Dunyā, *al-Ṣabr wa-al-ṭawāb ‘alayhi*, ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf, Beirut, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1997, p. 42-43, n° 46. Here is the chain of transmission:

‘Abd Allāh b. Ğa’far b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 83/702, Mecca) → Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ğa’far (d. 145/763, Medina) → al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742, Medina) → ‘Aqīl b. Ḥālid (d. 144/762, Ayla) →

The *riġāl* and biographical sources do not record any type of scholarly relationship between the famous Madinan scholar Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) and either Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib or his father ʿAbd Allāh.²³ On its own, the *isnād* of the report does not inspire much confidence. But taken together with the Umm Hāniʾ report below and other Meccan reports, the circulation of the report in Mecca at the turn of the first/seventh century makes sense.

We have much more information about the *isnād* of the Umm Hāniʾ report. Here is the content of the report:

ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, his father, Yāsir, his brother ʿAbd Allāh b. Yāsir, and Summayya, his mother, were being tortured in God’s [cause] (*wa-hum yuʿaddabūna fī Llāh*). Then, the Prophet walked past them and said: “Be patient, O Yāsir’s family (*ṣabran yā āl Yāsir*), for indeed you have been promised heaven (*fa-inna mawʿidakum al-ġanna*).²⁴

Umm Hāniʾ is identified as Fāḥita bt Abī Ṭālib, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib’s sister.²⁵ The next narrator in the chain, Abū Šāliḥ, is identified as her freedman. The rest of the *isnād* is ubiquitous in Islamic sources for the transmission of material gathered by the famous genealogist Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 146/763, Kufa).²⁶ For these

Salāma b. Rūḥ (d. 197/813, Ayla) → Muḥammad b. ʿAzīz (d. 267/881, Ayla) → al-Faḍl b. Ġaʿfar b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 252/866, Baghdad)

- 23 On Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġaʿfar, see the following sources, none of whom make any indication of a relationship between him and al-Zuhrī: Ibn Saʿd, *al-Tabaqāt*, v, p. 329; al-Buḥārī, *al-Taʾrīḥ al-kabīr*, I, p. 363, n° 1150; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, II, p. 179, n° 606; al-Mizzī, *Tahdīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-riġāl*, III, p. 112-113, n° 454. On ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, see the following: al-Buḥārī, *al-Taʾrīḥ al-kabīr*, v, p. 7, n° 11; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, v, p. 21; Ibn Ḥaġar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, v, p. 149-150, n° 294.
- 24 See al-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-ašrāf*, I, p. 160, n° 353. Here is the chain of transmission: Umm Hāniʾ [Fāḥita bt Abī Ṭālib b. Abī l-Muṭṭalib] (d. ca 50s/670s, Mecca) → Abū Šāliḥ, *mawlā* Umm Hāniʾ (d. at the latest 95/714) → Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib al-Kalbī (d. 146/763, Kufa) → Hišām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib [al-Kalbī] (d. 204/819, Kufa, Baghdad) → ʿAbbās b. Hišām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib (n.d.)
- 25 See Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥaġar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Išāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawġūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwad, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmī, 1415/1994-1995, VIII, p. 256-247, n° 11572.
- 26 The *isnād* is very similar to one Ibn al-Kalbī uses to cite Ibn ʿAbbās’s exegesis. On the *isnāds* for the transmission of Ibn ʿAbbās’s *tafsīr*, see Isaiah Goldfeld, “The ‘Tafsīr of Abdullah b. ʿAbbās’”, *Der Islam*, 58 (1981), p. 129-130, 133-134.

reasons I am inclined to date the circulation of this report to Abū Šālih's lifetime, *i.e.* to the late first/early eighth century in Kufa.

In a third report, the Meccan Yūsuf b. Māhak reports:

The Prophet passed by 'Ammār, his father, and his mother while they were being tortured in the desert and said: "I give glad tidings to the family of 'Ammār, for indeed they have been promised heaven (*fa-inna maw'idakum al-ġanna*)."²⁷

This report is recorded in two sources, with Šu'ba narrating it to two different recipients. Importantly, the content of the two reports varies, thus establishing a *terminus ante quem* for the report to Šu'ba's date of death in 160/776. Given the fact that Yūsuf b. Māhak is reported to have transmitted material from Umm Hāni', it is likely that this report does originate with him in Mecca.

27 This report is found in two sources. See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 111, p. 249 and Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma'rifa al-Šaḥāba*, ed. 'Ādil b. Yūsuf al-'Azzāzī, Riyadh, Dār al-waṭan li-l-našr, 1998, v, p. 2813, n° 6663.

Ibn Sa'd: Yūsuf b. Māhak [al-Makkī] (d. 103/722 or d. 110/729 or d. 113/732 or d. 114/733, Mecca) → Abū Bišr [Ġa'far b. Iyyās] (d. 123/741 or 124/742 or 125/743, Basra) → Šu'ba b. al-Ḥaġġāġ (82-86/702-707-160/776, Basra) → al-Faḍl b. 'Anbasa (d. ca 200/816, Wasit).

Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī: Yūsuf b. Māhak [al-Makkī] (d. 103/722 or d. 110/729 or d. 113/732 or d. 114/733, Mecca) → Abū Bišr [Ġa'far b. Iyyās] (d. 123/741 or 124/742 or 125/743, Basra) → Šu'ba b. al-Ḥaġġāġ (82-86/702-707-160/776, Basra) → Muḥammad b. Ġa'far (d. 193/809, Basra) → Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855, Baghdad) → 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] (d. 290/903, Baghdad) → Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan (d. 359/970, Baghdad)

On Yūsuf b. Māhak see Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, p. 470-471; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl*, IX, p. 229, n° 961; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubulā'*, ed. Ḥusayn Asad and Šu'ayb Arna'ūṭ, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1993, v, p. 68-69, n° 24; Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, XI, p. 370-371, n° 722. The sources identify him as a *mawlā* in Mecca. Most say that Ġa'far b. Iyyās (Abū Bišr) narrated material from him but provide no anecdotal reports on the nature of the relationship. On Ġa'far b. Iyyās, see al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta'riḥ al-kabīr*, II, p. 186, n° 2141; 'Abd Allāh b. 'Adī, *al-Kāmil fi du'afā' al-riġāl*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Yaḥyā Muḥṭār al-Ġazāwī, Beirut, Dār al-fikr li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-našr wa-l-tawzī', 1988, II, p. 151-152; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dahabī, *Mizān al-i'tidāl fi naqd al-riġāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Baġāwī, Cairo, 'Īsā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1963-1964, I, p. 402-403, n° 1489. These sources assert that Šu'ba narrated from Abū Bišr, and Ibn 'Adī reports Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān said that Šu'ba did not trust Abū Bišr's narrations from the Meccan scholar, Muġāhid. This last statement implies that Šu'ba was very familiar with Abu Bišr's transmission activities, strengthening the probability of transmission between them.

A fourth Meccan report, with largely the same content, originated with the Meccan Abū Zubayr (d. 126/744), according to one *isnād*, and with the famous Meccan companion Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/698) in three other *isnāds*. Here is the content of the report recorded by Ibn Sa‘d, originating with Abū Zubayr:

The Prophet walked past ‘Ammār’s family while they were being tortured and said to them: “I give glad tidings to the family of ‘Ammār, for indeed, you have been promised heaven (*fa-inna maw‘idakum al-ġanna*).”²⁸

The *isnāds* of this report allow us to establish a *terminus ante quem* to Muslim b. Ibrāhīm’s death date in 222/837 through the *isnād-cum-matn* dating method. Muslim narrates to four different individuals with corresponding variation in the details of the content. One of the chains of transmission, recorded in the earliest published source (Ibn Sa‘d), has Abū Zubayr as the originator of the report. The other three transmissions have the companion Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh narrating to Abū Zubayr. Though Motzki argues that the Abū Zubayr—Ġābir scholarly relationship is historical, and thinks that Abū Zubayr’s Ġābir reports in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ* are authentic, the fact that the version of the *isnād* recorded in the earliest source has the report originating only with Abū

28 For this version of the report, see, Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 249. This report is also found in three other sources. See Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘ġam al-awsaṭ*, ed. Abū Ma‘ād Ṭāriq b. ‘Awaḍ Allāh b. Muḥammad and Abū l-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Muḥsin b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī, Cairo, Dār al-ḥaramayn, 1995, II, p. 141; Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma‘rifā al-ṣaḥāba*, p. 2813, n° 6663; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmī, 2002, III, p. 438, n° 5666. Here are the *isnāds*:

Ibn Sa‘d: Abū Zubayr, [Muḥammad b. Muslim] (d. 126/744, Mecca) → Hišām al-Dustawā‘ī (d. 153/770, Basra) → Muslim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 222/837, Basra)

Al-Ṭabarānī: Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697, Mecca) → Abū Zubayr, [Muḥammad b. Muslim] (d. 126/744, Mecca) → Hišām [b. Abī ‘Abd Allāh] al-Dustawā‘ī (d. 153/770, Basra) → Muslim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 222/837, Basra) → Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Muqawwim (n.d., Basra) → Aḥmad (d. 293/905, Baghdad)

Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī: Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697, Mecca) → Abū Zubayr, [Muḥammad b. Muslim] (d. 126/744, Mecca) → Hišām [b. Abī ‘Abd Allāh] al-Dustawā‘ī (d. 153/770, Basra) → Muslim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 222/837, Basra) → Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Muqawwim (n.d., Basra) → al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Hammād al-Ḥarrānī → Muḥammad b. ‘Alī

Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī: Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697, Mecca) → Abū Zubayr [Muḥammad b. Muslim] (d. 126/744, Mecca) → Hišām [b. Abī ‘Abd Allāh] al-Dustawā‘ī (d. 153/770, Basra) → Muslim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 222/837, Basra) → al-Sarī b. Ḥuzayma (d. 275/889, Nishapur) → Ibrāhīm b. ‘Iṣma l-‘Adl (d. 340/952, Nishapur)

Zubayr gives pause.²⁹ It is safer to date the report to Abū Zubayr's lifetime, at the turn of the first/seventh century in Mecca.

The basic structure of all of the Meccan reports is the same. Incidentally, compared to versions of the report whose *isnāds* indicate transmission outside of Mecca, the Meccan reports are more similar to each other than to reports that circulated outside of Mecca. It is hard to fathom this fact as either coincidental or the result of active fabrication and is strong evidence for the transmission of these reports in Mecca.

There do exist variations of reports outside of Mecca that have the Prophet consoling 'Ammār. For example, a Kufan report, with an *isnād* originating in the famous companion, Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652-653), has Abū Ḡahl thrusting a spear into Sumayya's thigh, 'Ammār's mother, till it reached her private parts, resulting in her death. In the report, 'Ammār says: "Oh Messenger of God! Our torture [or her torture] has become unbearable." The Messenger of God replied: "Be patient O Abū Yaqqān!³⁰ O God, do not punish any member of the family of Yāsir with the fire."³¹

At the outset, the transmission from Ibn Mas'ūd is unlikely. The early Baṣran *riḡāl* critic Šu'ba b. al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ explicitly denies that Abū Razīn heard any hadith from Ibn Mas'ūd.³² Note that although the basic structure of the reports is similar, in the sense that it has the Prophet consoling 'Ammār and his family while they were suffering, this Kufan report is missing the distinctive phrase found in all of the Meccan reports—the Prophet's promise of heaven to the tortured. It is probable that either Abū Rāzīn or a later narrator wanted to circulate this Meccan report in Kufa as originating from a specifically Kufan authority—the famous companion 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd. The *riḡāl* sources also identify Abū Razīn as having fought on the side of 'Alī in the battle of Šiffin.³³ This is consistent with the presence of 'Alids and 'Alid sympathizers either as the originators of the Meccan reports or involved in their transmission.

29 For his arguments, see Motzki, *Origins*, p. 208-210.

30 This is 'Ammār's nickname (*kunya*).

31 Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb fī ma'rifat al-aṣḥāb*, Beirut, Dār al-fīkr, 2006, II, p. 534. Here is the *isnād* for this report:

'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32/652-653, Kufa) → Abū Razīn [Mas'ūd b. Mālik al-Asadī] (d. 83/702 or 85/704 or 90/709, Kufa) → Abū Mu'āwiya al-Baḡlī ['Ammār b. Mu'āwiya l-Baḡlī] (d. 133/751, Kufa) → Abū Ṣaḥr [Ḥamīd b. Ziyād] (d. 189/805, Medina)

32 See Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. Waṣī Llāh b. Maḥmūd 'Abbās, Beirut, al-Maktab al-islamī, 1408/1987-1988, I, p. 240, n° 315 and Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Ṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḡāba*, VII, p. 126, n° 9929, where Šu'ba is quoted as explicitly denying that Abū Razīn heard hadiths from Ibn Mas'ūd.

33 See *ibid.*, VII, p. 126, n° 9929.

Another Kufan report, originating with ‘Amr b. Maymūn (d. 74/695, Kufa), asserts that the polytheists (*mušrikūn*) burned ‘Ammār with fire, and that the Prophet, as he was walking past ‘Ammār, while he was being tortured, passed his hand over his head, and said: “Become cold and a source of peace for ‘Ammār, O Fire, as you were for Abraham!”³⁴ The report ends with the Prophet predicting that the transgressing party will eventually kill ‘Ammār.³⁵ The *riḡāl* critics and biographers record the fact that Abū Balğ transmitted material from ‘Amr b. Maymūn, but note nothing else about their relationship.³⁶ Similarly, some *riḡāl* critics note that Abū ‘Awāna and other Basrans such as Šu‘ba b. al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ and Hušaym b. Bašīr also narrated from Abū Balğ.³⁷ This is a difficult report to date. At a minimum it is likely that Abū ‘Awāna was circulating it in Basra in the middle second/eighth century.

Another report, transmitted by Ibn Ishāq to two recipients with corresponding variation in the content, allows us to date its *terminus ante quem* to Ibn

34 This is a reference to the Qur’ānic verse where God commands the fire to be cool and a source of peace when Abraham’s disbelieving community threw him into it. See Kor 21, 69: “We said, ‘O Fire! be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!’”

35 The last phrase is a prominent independent hadith with sectarian implications. As it so happens, ‘Ammār was killed fighting for ‘Alī against Mu‘āwiya at the Battle of Šiffin. The hadith then, has the implication of identifying Mu‘āwiya’s side as wrongful in the conflict. On this, see Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and violence in Islamic law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 40. This report is found in two sources. See Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 248 and al-Balāḏurī, *Ansāb al-ašrāf*, I, p. 167-168, n° 397. Here are the chains of transmission for the report:

Ibn Sa’d: ‘Amr b. Maymūn al-Awdī (d. 74/695, Kufa) → Abū Balğ [Yaḥyā b. Sulaym b. Balğ] (n.d., Kufa) → Abū ‘Awāna, al-Waḏḏāḡ b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 176/793, Basra) → Yaḥyā b. Ḥammād (d. 215/830, Basra)

Al-Balāḏurī: ‘Amr b. Maymūn al-Awdī (d. 74/695, Kufa) → Abū Balğ [Yaḥyā b. Sulaym b. Balğ] (n.d., Kufa) → Abū ‘Awāna, Waḏḏāḡ b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 176/793, Basra) → Ḥalaf b. Hišām al-Bazzāz (d. 229/844, Kufa, Baghdad).

The content of the two reports varies insignificantly. Al-Balāḏurī’s version has a mere additional “O ‘Ammār! (*yā ‘Ammār*)” at the end.

36 See for example Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḡ wa-l-ta’dīl*, VI, p. 258, n° 1422; al-Mizzī, *Tahḏīb al-Kamāl fi asmā’ al-riḡāl*, XXII, p. 262, n° 4458.

37 Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil fi ḏu’afā’ al-riḡāl*, VII, p. 229-230, n° 2128; Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Maḡrūḡīn min al-muḥaddīṡīn wa-l-ḏu’afā’ wa-l-matrūkīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid, Mecca, Dār al-bāz li-l-našr wa-l-tawzī’, 1970, III, p. 113-114; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahḏīb al-tahḏīb*, XII, p. 41-42, n° 8331.

Ishāq's death date in the year 150/767 or 768.³⁸ In two versions of the report, Ibn Ishāq attributes the report to an unnamed member of 'Ammār's household. Here is the content of the longest version of the report:

A particular clan of the Banū Muğīra b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. Maḥzūm³⁹ tortured Sumayya, 'Ammār's mother for her conversion to Islam. She refused to change [her religion], so they killed her. The Messenger of God used to pass by 'Ammār, his mother, and his father as they were being tortured in the valley with the sunbaked stones of Mecca, and said: "Be patient, oh family of Yāsir, you have been promised heaven."⁴⁰

38 This report is found in three different sources. Two sources have Ibn Ishāq narrating it to Yūnus b. Bukayr, and one source has him narrating it to Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd. Importantly there are significant differences in narrative ordering and wording that correlate with the difference in the *isnād*. Moreover the two Yūnus b. Bukayr sources are almost identical. For the Yūnus b. Bukayr reports see 'Izz al-Dīn b. al-Aṭīr, *Usd al-ġāba fī ma'rīfat al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwaḍ and 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawġūd, Beirut, Dār al-ma'rifa, 1994, VII, p. 152, n° 7021; al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn*, III, p. 432, n° 5646. Here are the *isnāds* for these reports:

Ibn al-Aṭīr: a man from the household of 'Ammār b. Yāsir → Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767, Medina, Baghdad) → Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815, Kufa) → Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ġabbār al-'Uṭāridī (d. 272/886, Kufa) → Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣaydalānī → Abū Ṭāhir → Abū l-Ḥasan al-Naḡūr → Abū Bakr al-Marzūqī → Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Asākir → Abū Ġa'far 'Ubayd Allāh b. Aḥmad;

Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī: a man from the household of 'Ammār b. Yāsir → Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767, Medina, Baghdad) → Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815, Kufa) → Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ġabbār al-'Uṭāridī (d. 272/886, Kufa) → Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb, Abū l-'Abbās.

For the version with Ibn Ishāq narrating to Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd, see Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma'rīfat al-ṣaḥāba*, p. 3361, n° 7679.

Here is the *isnād*:

Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767, Medina, Baghdad) → Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd al-Zuhrī (d. 183/799, Baghdad) → Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (d. 228/843, Baghdad) → Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 287/900, Baghdad) → Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥasan (d. 359/970, Baghdad)

39 On the Banū Maḥzūm, see Martin Hinds, "Banū Makhzūm", *EI*².

40 See Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Usd al-ġāba*, VII, p. 152, n° 7021. The *isnād* of the report is cited above. See also Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Ibn Ishāq*, IV, p. 172, n° 239. This is a publication of three recent manuscripts that contain copious quotations from a lost recension of Ibn Ishāq's work of Prophetic biography (*sīra*). The two manuscripts from Qayrawān are recensions of the Kufan scholar Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815), while the Damascan manuscript is the recension of Razian scholar Muḥammad b. Salama (d. 191/807). The value of the work lies in the fact that it contains material that differs from the extant and enormously popular work of Ibn Hišām. On these points, see Ḥamid Allāh's introduction, pages ١٠١-١٠٢. However, it also contains some material that is not ultimately attributed to Ibn Ishāq, indicating that

This report is rather late and has an attention to detail (the name of the clan that tortured Yāsir's family) indicative of the handiwork of a historian, Ibn Ishāq. The examination of the *isnād* yields little useful information.

The evidence indicates that, in general, the 'Ammār torture report, which involved the Prophet consoling 'Ammār's family, was circulating in the last quarter of the first century in Mecca. The presence of prominent 'Alids ('Abd Allāh b. Ġa'far b. Abī Ṭālib and Umm Hāni') or individuals connected to them (Yūsuf b. Māhak) or to 'Alī himself (Abū Razīn) coheres well with the memory of 'Ammār as a staunch supporter of 'Alī. It makes sense that these would be the people interested in preserving and circulating memories of 'Ammār and his family's sacrifice in the cause of Islam. Without a correlative investigation of the *isnāds* and contents, we would not have been able to date either of these reports with any level of precision or to identify why particular individuals would be interested in preserving and circulating reports in the first place.

Before we begin our examination of the 'Ammār torture reports that connect it to the revelation of Kor 16, 106, there is one last category of 'Ammār torture reports with no connection to Kor 16, 106—the one's whose *isnāds* originate with 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān. The content of the 'Uṭmān reports is substantially similar to the Meccan reports analyzed above with one significant difference: 'Uṭmān is made the co-eyewitness along with the Prophet of 'Ammār's torture. Examination of the *isnād* and the content along with the ascriptions of sectarian identity of the narrators allow us to locate and date the report and glean why it may have been preserved and circulated by the Murǧīites of the early second/eighth century.

1.2 *The 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān Reports*

By far the *isnād* of the most widely recorded 'Ammār torture report originates with the companion and third caliph, 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān. This report most probably originates in Kufa. It reached the published sources through approximately seventeen chains of transmission (see figure 1: *isnāds* of the 'Uṭmān torture report). This raises the question as to why the 'Uṭmān version of 'Ammār's torture enjoy such popularity?

It is probable that the proto-Sunni impetus to conciliate the memory of the troubled relationship between 'Ammār and 'Uṭmān must have motivated the circulation of this specific report and its popularity. 'Uṭmān had apparently treated 'Ammār, along with other early Muslim converts of lowly origin, Abū

at least one of the narrators of Ibn Ishāq's material, Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815), added material of his own from other sources.

Ḍarr and Ibn Mas‘ūd, arrogantly when he was caliph.⁴¹ In addition, ‘Ammār is remembered as having actively fomented the discontent that ultimately culminated in ‘Uṭmān’s assassination. Given the growing proto-Sunni sentiment in the second/eighth and third/ninth century of attempting to clear all companions of mutual ill-will and the insistence on the equal legitimacy and piety of the first four caliphs, memories of conflict between the companions inspired the creation and circulation of reports that showed a firm basis of mutual respect amongst all the companions and especially those that were remembered to have been on opposite sides in the conflicts that roiled the early caliphate. For these reasons, I think the earliest part of the *isnāds* of the reports that allege ‘Uṭmān as the companion narrator and eyewitness of the report is fabricated. More precisely, it is probably the case that the report about the Prophet’s response to the torture of ‘Ammār and his family was already in circulation. Someone, perhaps one of the narrators in the *isnāds* of the ‘Uṭmān report, took the content of these reports and added ‘Uṭmān as the origin of the report. If this theory is correct, then dating the ‘Uṭmān report will yield also a *terminus ante quem* for the non-‘Uṭmān, generic version of the report, surveyed in the previous section. As it so happens, given the wide circulation of the ‘Uṭmān version of the report, we are able to use the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis to establish a quite early *terminus ante quem* for the report.

The earliest branching of the *isnād* of the ‘Uṭmān report occurs with ‘Amr b. Murra, who transmits the ‘Uṭmān report to al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl (d. 167/784) and al-A‘maš (Sulaymān b. Mihrān) (d. 147 or 148/764-765). The consistent differences between reports transmitted by al-A‘maš from ‘Amr b. Murra and those of al-Qāsim’s allow us to assign a *terminus ante quem* for a basic version of the report to ‘Amr b. Murra’s date of death, recorded variously as either 116/734 or 120/738. Here is one version of report transmitted by al-A‘maš (for the *isnād* see transmission 16 in figure 1):

‘Uṭmān said: I was with the Prophet when he walked by ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, his mother, and his father while they were being tortured. [The Prophet] said: ‘Be patient O family of Yāsir, for indeed you have been promised heaven!’⁴²

41 See Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: a Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 87-88 and 96.

42 See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, *Ta’rīḥ Madīnat al-Salām wa-ahbār muḥaddithihā wa-ḍikr quṭṭānihā l-‘ulamā’ min ḡayr ahlihā wa-wāridihā*, ed. Baššār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, Beirut, Dār al-Ḡarb al-Islāmī, 2001, XIII, p. 254. In addition to the fact that both versions (see transmission 17, diagram 1) of the report transmitted by al-A‘maš from

Al-Qāsim occurs most often in the *isnāds* of the ‘Uṭmān hadith, showing up in the *isnāds* of eleven hadiths out of a total seventeen hadiths. I will quote one of the three longest versions of the ‘Uṭmān report, because it brings out, most clearly, the sectarian motivations for putting the ‘Ammār torture report in the mouth of ‘Uṭmān. Here is the report recorded by the historian, Ibn Šabba (d. 262/878), who cites al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl as his source. It is probable that Ibn Šabba got the report from an intermediary that he does not cite. Given the dramatic expansions upon the shortest versions of this report transmitted by ‘Amr b. Murra to both al-Qāsim and al-A‘maš, I think that the earliest the expanded report was circulated was during al-Qāsim’s career. That would make the *terminus ante quem* to be his death date, 167/784. Here is the report:

‘Uṭmān called some of the companions of the Messenger of God together. ‘Ammār b. Yāsir was amongst them. ‘Uṭmān said [to them]: “I implore you by God, do you know that the Messenger of God used to prefer the Qurayš above all other people and he preferred the Banū Hāšim over all of Qurayš?” The people were silent. ‘Uṭmān said: If the keys of heaven were in my hands, I would have given it to the Banū Umayya, such that even the last one of them would enter [heaven], and by God they would be given to me, and I would have appointed them [in my government] in spite of all. ‘Ammār asked: “in spite of me?” He responded: “in spite of you”. ‘Ammār asked: “in spite of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar”?’ ‘Uṭmān got angry and leapt at and severely trampled him. The people jumped back away from him. Then he sent for the Banū Umayya and said: “O most despicable of God’s people, you have caused me to be angry at this man to the point that it was shown to me that I have destroyed him and myself.” He then sent for Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, and said: I should only have responded in kind when he said to me what he did and it would have been proper for me to do that against his force. Go to that man and offer him three choices:

‘Amr are substantially similar to each other and different from versions of the report transmitted by al-Qāsim from ‘Amr, al-A‘maš also transmits another version of the same hadith through an *isnād* that reaches him from an entirely different route (see transmissions 2, 3, and 4 in diagram 1). Significantly, these reports differ only in slight vocabulary from the ‘Amr → al-A‘maš versions and are similar to each other. This fact strengthens the fact of ‘Amr’s transmissions to al-A‘maš. Otherwise why would al-A‘maš bother to invent the tradition and transmit it with slight variations through two different *isnāds*? Here is the content of one version: “‘Uṭmān said: I heard the Messenger of God say to ‘Ammār, his mother, and his father: ‘Be Patient O family of Yāsir, you have been promised heaven.” For this report see, Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma‘rifat al-Šaḥāba*, p. 3361-3362, n° 7690 (narration 3, figure 1).

retaliation, monetary compensation, or pardon. ‘Ammār responded: “By God I will not accept a single choice, until I have complained to the Messenger of God about it.” They approached ‘Uṭmān. He said: “I shall tell you a story about him.” I was with the Messenger of God, who took me by my hand in the valley. We came upon his father, his mother, and him as they were being tortured. His father said: O Messenger of God, is all of fate as such? The Prophet said to him: Be patient, Yāsir. O God forgive the family of Yāsir, and it was done.⁴³

The report touches upon many of the themes in Muslim historiography on the events that culminated in the ‘Uṭmān’s assassination. One reason cited by ‘Uṭmān’s opponents in the run-up to his assassination was his favoritism towards his clan, the Banū Umayya, in making government appointments; something frankly acknowledged in the report. The claim that his actions are inconsistent with the way that Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, the two previous caliphs, governed is also acknowledged by the report, which was another allegation ‘Uṭmān’s opponents cited in their opposition to his caliphate.⁴⁴ In the report ‘Uṭmān physically assaults ‘Ammār. This aspect of the report coheres with reports of the maltreatment meted out by ‘Uṭmān to prominent companions of lowly tribal origin. ‘Uṭmān banished Abū Ḍarr al-Ġifārī, had Ibn Mas‘ūd beaten, and in one report also had ‘Ammār beaten.⁴⁵ Yet, while acknowledging what must have been perceived as ‘Uṭmān’s deficiencies, his favoritism towards the Banū Umayya and his assault on ‘Ammār, I would say that the gist of the report is conciliatory, in the sense of reconciling two prominent companions on opposite ends of a conflict that culminated in the first civil war in Sunni historical memory. The reconciliation is performed through a number of narrative devices, though it is ‘Uṭmān who shoulders most of the blame and overcomes it by acknowledging ‘Ammār and his family’s great sacrifice in the early days of Islam. ‘Uṭmān blames the Banū Umayya for his enmity towards ‘Ammār and acknowledges that it could lead to his and ‘Ammār’s undoing. Ultimately, in this specific version, ‘Uṭmān realizes his mistake and recounts the tale of ‘Ammār’s family’s torture to two other prominent companions Ṭalḥa

43 See ‘Umar b. Šabba, *Tā’rīḥ al-Madīna l-munawwara*, ed. Fahim Muḥammad Šaltūt, Qom, Dār al-fikr, 1410/1989-1990, III, p. 1098-1099.

44 See Martin Hinds, “The Murder of the Caliph ‘Uthmān”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3/4 (1972), p. 458-459.

45 See *ibid.*, p. 464-465.

and al-Zubayr.⁴⁶ The attribution of the report to ‘Uṭmān is contrived because it too neatly responds to the memory of the troubled relationship between the third caliph and ‘Ammār. The purpose of the report is to re-conciliate ‘Uṭmān to ‘Ammār, two towering and revered companions for Sunnis, by having him explicitly acknowledge ‘Ammār’s suffering for Islam.

There is other evidence, gleaned from the *isnāds*, that support this interpretation. The biographical dictionaries describe ‘Amr b. Murra and al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl, the most prominent narrators of this report, as Murğī’ites.⁴⁷ It is tempting to think that ‘Amr b. Murra and al-Qāsim’s interest in transmitting, and perhaps embellishing the report, may have stemmed from their Murğī’ite

46 Why does ‘Uṭmān recount the story to Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr specifically? This element too is connected to the history of the first civil war. Both Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr were participants in one of the battles of the civil war after ‘Uṭmān’s death, specifically against ‘Alī.

47 The three earliest narrators of most of these reports are Sālim b. Abī al-Ġa’d, ‘Amr b. Murra, and al-Qāsim b. al-Faḍl. The case with Sālim’s purported theological leanings is ambiguous. Ibn Sa’d ascribes a statement to Sālim’s father where, after describing his six sons, two of whom had Šī’ite leanings (*yatašayya’ān*), two of whom were Murğī’ites, and two of whom held the beliefs of the Ḥawārīğ, he notes that between them, they have completely opposed God! See Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VI, p. 292. For a repetition of the same sentiment see ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba, *al-Ma’ārif*, ed. Sarwat ‘Ukāsha, Cairo, Dār al-ma’ārif, 1969, p. 452 and al-Dahabī, *Sīyar*, v, p. 109, n° 44. The report does not clarify which heresy Sālim was guilty of. In contrast with the ambiguity surrounding Sālim’s political and theological views, ‘Amr b. Murra reportedly self-identified as a Murğī’ite. See Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Iḡlī, *Ma’rifat al-tiqqāt min riğāl ahl al-‘ilm wa-l-ḥadīṭ wa-min al-ḍu’afā’ wa-dīkr maḍāhibihim wa-aḥbārihim*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Alīm ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Bastawī, Medina, Maktabat al-dār, 1985, II, p. 185-186, n° 1408, where he declares, “I looked into these views, and I have not found a people better than the Murğī’ites. I am a Murğī’ite.” Šu’ba b. al-Ḥağğāğ, one of ‘Amr’s primary transmitters was asked, “Why do you transmit from ‘Amr b. Murra, when he was a Murğī’ite?”, to which he responded that ‘Amr was “the most trustworthy and knowledgeable of the people.” See Ibn Abī Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl*, VII, p. 148, n° 56. Ibn Qutayba lists ‘Amr b. Murra as one of the Murğī’ites, see al-Dahabī, *Mizān*, p. 625. Al-Dahabī quotes Muğīra b. Miqsam as describing ‘Amr as infatuated with the ideas of the Murğī’ites, Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān*, III, p. 288, n° 6447. See also Ibn Ḥağar, who is probably relying on these earlier sources himself, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, VIII, p. 90, n° 163. Al-Dahabī and Ibn Ḥağar relay the assessment of the hadith critic, Abū Dāwūd, who describes him simply as a Murğī’ite. See al-Dahabī, *Mizān*, III, p. 377, n° 6731. Van Ess classifies him as a quietist Kufan Murğī’ite who seems to have been on intimate terms with moderate Šī’ites, see Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1992, I, p. 179. Ibn Ḥağar’s citation of Abū Dāwūd has him specify al-Qāsim as a Basran Murğī’ite, Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, VIII, p. 296, n° 596. Van Ess classifies al-Qāsim as a Basran Murğī’ite, and characterizes the Basran Murğī’ites as generally anti-Šī’ite, see Ess, *Theologie*, II, p. 164-165.

theological leanings. The two distinguishing features of early Murǧī'ite thought were the idea that one ought to suspend judgment on whether or not 'Uṭmān and 'Alī deserved otherworldly blame for the conflicts that roiled their tenures as caliphs, and the positive affirmation of the legitimacy and righteous character of the first two caliphs.⁴⁸ According to Michael Cook's analysis, the earliest Murǧī'ite texts argued for these positions by invoking consensus and requiring autopsy to make judgments of blame. Since all Muslims approved of the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, an affirmative moral judgment of their tenures is established. This consensus breaks apart with the schisms that afflicted the tenures of 'Uṭmān and 'Alī. In the absence of consensus, only eyewitness or, as Cook calls it, autopsy, enables judgments of blame. In the absence of autopsy, no judgment can be made, and therefore judgment ought to be rightly deferred to God on the Day of Judgment. Since all we have are second hand testimonies about the conflicts during 'Uṭmān and 'Alī's time, the autopsy requirement for moral judgment fails, and we are therefore compelled to defer moral judgment on 'Uṭmān and 'Alī's culpability to God.⁴⁹ If we read al-Qāsim's version of the text in light of Murǧī'ite ideas, it is possible that the purpose is not only reconciliation, but also a demonstration of how moral judgment is impossible. While it may be the case that 'Uṭmān assaults 'Ammār, someone who suffered for Islam, it is also the case that he was goaded into it by his clansmen. Moreover the report makes 'Uṭmān contrite for his actions. The report frankly acknowledges 'Uṭmān's mistreatment, but does so in a way where the blame is diverted and contrition acknowledged. How can a reader of the report damn 'Uṭmān then to the fires of hell, even if he believed that 'Uṭmān was in the wrong?

It is clear that the report was constructed in response to theological controversies of the late first/early second century. Therefore, the attribution of the report to 'Uṭmān is clearly wrong. Yet, despite this, by way of an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis we are able to date it still to quite an early time, 'Amr b. Murra's lifetime, and locate it in a Kufan milieu. This means that the non-'Uṭmān versions

48 Recent scholarship asserts that the Murǧī'ism started out as a doctrinal attempt to grapple with the sectarian repercussions of the first civil war. On the difference between early and classical Murǧī'ism and the interpretation of early Murǧī'ite theological and political claims as aimed towards producing communal unity and integration in a fiercely sectarian atmosphere, see Michael Cook, *Early Muslim dogma: a source-critical study*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 29-32 and 43; Wilferd Madelung, "Murǧī'a", *EI*²; "The early Murǧī'a in Ḥurāsān and Transoxania and the spread of Ḥanafism", *Der Islam*, 59/1 (1982), p. 32; Khalil Athamina, "The Early Murǧī'a: Some Notes", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 35/1 (1990), p. 116; Saleh Said Agha, "A Viewpoint of the Murǧī'a in the Umayyad Period: Evolution through Application", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 8/1 (1997), p. 6.

49 See Cook, *Early*, p. 29-32.

None of the reports surveyed so far connect the torture incident to the revelation of the coercion exemption clause. In fact, one report connects ‘Ammār’s torture to a different verse entirely. In terms of chronology, the earliest reports hail from the middle of the first/seventh century. Most of the reports come from around the turn of the century, with some possibly originating in the first half of the second/eighth century. Geographically, the reports originated in the most important intellectual centers of the Empire—Mecca, Medina, Basra, and Kufa. All of them indicate that at the very minimum some people harmed ‘Ammār. The report from the Medinan scholar, ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, asserts merely the basic fact that ‘Ammār was tortured in Mecca. Other reports elaborate on methods of torture (drowning, by fire, etc.). Some assert the role of the Prophet in the purported incident. Others assert that ‘Ammār’s whole family was tortured. One of the reports discussed above involves the companion ‘Uṭmān b. ‘Affān. Further analysis of this report’s transmission history indicates the high probability of the contrived nature of some of its contents and provides clues about the motivations behind the construction, preservation and circulation of the ‘Ammār torture reports in early Islamic society. In terms of dating the variety of these reports—we have one firm conclusion—that the ‘Uṭmān reports are derived from the Meccan reports and certainly come after them. The Meccan reports, it is certain, were already circulating in the last quarter of the first/seventh century. From the perspective of content, none of the reports seem to be responding to legal and moral concerns surrounding the problem of coerced apostasy. With that said, we have yet to examine the reports that connect the apostasy verse, or more specifically the coercion exemption clause of the apostasy verse, with ‘Ammār’s torture. It is to this that we now turn.

Salafi, *Dār ihyā’ al-turāt al-‘arabī*, xxiv, p. 303.

Narration 3: Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ma‘rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, p. 3361-3362, n° 7690.

Narration 4: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīḥ Madīnat Dimāšq*, xliii, p. 371.

Narration 5: Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ Madīnat al-Salām wa-aḥbār muḥaddithihā wa-dīkr quṭṭānihā al-‘ulamā’ min ġayr ahlihā wa-wāridihā*, iv, p. 505-506.

Narration 6: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. ‘Ādil Muṣīd and Šu‘ayb Arnā‘ūt, Beirut, Mu‘assasat al-risāla, 1995, i, p. 492, n° 39.

Narration 7: Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Hayṭamī, *Buġyat al-bāḥiṭ ‘an zawā‘id musnad al-Ḥārīt*, ed. Ḥusayn Aḥmad Šālīḥ Bākiri, Medina, al-Ġāmi‘a l-islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna l-Munawwara-Markaz ḥidmat al-sunna wa-l-sīra l-nabawiyya bi-l-ta‘āwun ma‘a maġma‘ al-malik Fahd li-tibā‘at al-muṣḥaf al-šarīf, 1992, p. 923, n° 1016.

Narration 8: Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥaġar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya bi-zawā‘id al-masānid al-ṭamāniya*, ed. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Šaṭrī, Riyadh, Dār al-‘āšima, 2000, xvi, p. 295, n° 4002.

2 Reports Which Simply Assert the Connection between ‘Ammār’s Torture and the Coerced Apostasy Verse (Kor 16, 106)

A number of reports either explicitly link the coercion exemption clause to ‘Ammār, or allude to one of its distinctive phrases (*muṭma’innun bi-l-īmān*) in the course of recounting the events surrounding ‘Ammār’s capture and torture. Many of these reports seem to have originated and circulated in Kufa at the behest of a number of different scholars of varying theological persuasions. As we shall see, some of these reports are implicated in an on-going dispute between Batrite Zaydite and Twelver Šī‘ite theological factions on the correct stance to take against what both mutually recognized as an illegitimate ruling regime.

Two reports attributed alternatively to the Kufan authorities, Ġazwān (Abū Mālik, n.d.) and al-Ḥakam b. ‘Uṭayba (d. 113/732), simply assert that the coercion exemption clause was revealed about ‘Ammār.⁵¹ Significantly, both al-Ḥakam

Narration 9: Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā’* Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmī, 1988, 1, p. 140.

Narration 10: Ibn Šabba, *Tārīḥ al-Madīna l-munawwara*, III, p. 1098-1099.

Narration 11: al-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-aṣrāf*, I, p. 161-162, n° 360.

Narration 12: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīḥ Madīnat Dimašq*, XLIII, p. 368.

Narration 13: *ibid.*, XLIII, p. 369.

Narration 14: *ibid.*, XLIII, p. 370.

Narration 15: *ibid.*, XXXIX, p. 252.

Narration 16: Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ Madīnat al-Salām wa-aḥbār muḥaddithihā wa-ḍikr quṭṭānihā al-‘ulamā’ min ġayr ahlihā wa-wāridihā*, XIII, p. 254-255.

Narration 17: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīḥ Madīnat Dimašq*, XXXIX, p. 368.

- 51 For the al-Ḥakam report see ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Šayba, *Muṣannaḥ Ibn Abī Šayba fi l-aḥādīṭ wa-l-āṭār*, ed. Sa‘īd Laḥḥām, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1989, VII, p. 524, n° 14 and Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 250, who both cite the same exact *isnād*. Here is the chain of transmission:

Al-Ḥakam b. ‘Uṭayba (d. 113/732, Kufa) → Ġābir b. Yazīd b. al-Ḥārīṭ (d. 128/746, Kufa) → Isrā‘īl b. Yūnus (d. 160/777, Kufa) → Wakī‘ b. al-Ġarrāḥ (d. 196/812, Kufa).

For a modern summary biography of al-Ḥakam and description of his doctrine, see Ess, *Theologie*, I, p. 242-243, who classifies him as a Batrite Zaydite. Ibn Ḥaġar ascribes Šī‘ite inclinations to al-Ḥakam, though qualifies this by stating he did not use to profess it openly, Ibn Ḥaġar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahḍīb al-tahḍīb*, II, p. 373, n° 756. Al-Ḥakam also makes appearances in the Imāmī hadith criticism literature. Apparently he was known to have visited al-Bāqir’s circle. See al-Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Naġāšī, *Riġāl al-Naġāšī*, ed. Mūsā al-Šabbīrī al-Zanġānī, Qom, Mu‘assasat al-naṣr al-islāmī l-tābī‘a li-ġamā‘at al-mudarrisīn, 1416/1995-1996, p. 360, n° 966 and p. 112, n° 1099. Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī notes that he was a Sunnite jurist and records the accusation that he may have been a Murġī‘ite: al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, *Kitāb al-Riġāl*, ed. Muḥammad Šādiq Āl Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, Najaf, al-Maṭba‘a l-ḥaydariyya, 1972, p. 243, n° 163. Al-Šahīd al-Tānī l-Tāwūsī notes that he was

and his immediate narrator Ġābir are identified in Sunnite *riġāl* sources as harboring sentiments sympathetic to Šī'ism. On the other hand, Šī'ite sources note that al-Ḥakam was a Sunni jurist, record accusations that he was a Murġī'ite, or that he was a Batrite Zaydite.⁵² Taken together, these reports imply that Kufan scholars were connecting Kor 16, 106 to 'Ammār at the turn of the first century.

a Batrite: Šāhib al-Ma'ālim Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn and Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. Ṭawūs, *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭawūsī: al-mustahraġ min kitāb Ḥall al-iškāl li-l-sayyid Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Ṭawūs*, ed. Fāḍil al-Ġawāhīrī, Qom, Maktabat āyat Allāh al-'uzmā l-mar'ašī l-naġafī, 1411/2001, p. 166-167, n° 28. Ġābir b. Yazīd, for the most part has a poor reputation as a traditionist, and is held to be a believer in the theological doctrine of a special type of resurrection (*raġ'a*) in Sunnite works. See Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, II, p. 41-44, n° 75 and Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VI, p. 346. While al-Ḥakam, though acknowledged, got at most a warm reception in Šī'ite sources, Ġābir b. Yazīd was acknowledged as one of their own, though even here there is some reservation. He is regarded as a transmitter of both al-Bāqir and Ġa'far, and interestingly enough is noted to have written something on Qur'ānic exegesis and personal virtues/hagiography. See al-Naġāšī, *Riġāl al-Naġāšī*, p. 128-130, n° 332. For a recent treatment of Ġābir's scholarly activities and beliefs, see Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Tradition and survival: a bibliographical survey of early Shī'ite literature*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2003, p. 86-103. Specifically, on the nature of Ġābir's collection of scholarly material on both exegesis and virtuous qualities, he writes: "the main thrust of Ġābir's commentary on the Qur'ān was to prove that every praise and laudatory comment found there was directed towards 'Alī, his descendants and their followers and that their enemies were the butt of all Qur'ānic condemnations" (*ibid.*, p. 97). Isrā'īl has a good reputation amongst the Sunnite critics and seems simply to be acknowledged as a narrator of Ġa'far al-Šādiq, without further comments, with the Šī'ite critics. See Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, I, p. 229-231, n° 496; and Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn and Ibn Ṭawūs, *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭawūsī*, p. 165, n° 1899.

For the Ġazwān report see Ibn Abī Šayba, *Muṣannaḡ*, VII, p. 524, n° 12; and Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad b. Ġarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Ġāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, Cairo, Dār al-ḥiġr, 2001, XIV, p. 375. Here is the chain of transmission:

Ġazwān, Abū Mālik (n.d., Kufa) → Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 136/754, Kufa) → Huṣaym b. Bašīr (d. 183/799, Wāsiṭ).

Ibn Sa'd describes him as having an interest in exegesis but narrating few hadith (*šāhib tafsīr wa-qalīl al-ḥadīṭ*). See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VI, p. 295. This fact is confirmed by a cursory examination of the *Muṣannaḡ* of Ibn Abī Šayba. See Ibn Abī Šayba, *Muṣannaḡ*, III, p. 115, 429, 455; IV, p. 183, 571; VII, p. 56; VIII, p. 304, 347. The most prominent transmitter of his exegetical remarks is the early Kufan exegete al-Suddī, Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 127/745) and less so, Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, as in the above chain. Al-Ṭabarī's report has Huṣaym narrating to one Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm (d. 252/866, Baghdad).

52 On the Batrites, see Wilferd Madelung, "Batriyya or Butriyya", *ET*². See also *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin, de Gruyter (« Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients : Biehefte zur Zeitschrift "Der Islam". Neue Folge », 1), 1965, p. 49-51. The early Batrites are described as committed

That ‘Ammār would serve as an authority of some sort to Kufans of varying theological and political persuasions is not entirely surprising. ‘Ammār’s role as a Kufan governor under the caliphate of ‘Umar and his loyalty to ‘Alī’s side in the civil war made him appealing to a whole host of different communities. The memory of his partisanship for ‘Alī and his martyrdom at Šiffin made him favorable to both the more ideologically doctrinaire but politically quietist proto-Twelve-Imāmites of the period and the ideologically pragmatic but politically activist Batrite Zaydīs. The fact that he served as a governor of Kufa under ‘Umar *and* fought for ‘Alī made him an appealing figure for a Murǧī’ite project of political and theological integration and the Batrite Zaydite desire to temper and widen ‘Alid claims to political rule. The fact that he was a famous companion of the Prophet, a governor of Kufa, and a martyr in ‘Alī’s cause against Mu‘āwiyā’s Syrian army made him a good candidate for communities who would assert the relative merit of Kufa in Islamic religious culture. In these larger motivations we have an explanation for why a scholar such as al-Ḥakam would assert that a particular Qur’ānic verse was about ‘Ammār, specifically, and why it would be preserved and circulated by the Šī’ite Ġābir b. Yazīd, or in Kufa generally.

Unlike the reports attributed to al-Ḥakam and Ġazwān, whose main point was to merely assert the connection between ‘Ammār and the coercion exemption clause, two reports found in the Twelver source, *al-Kāfi*,⁵³ deploy the ‘Ammār incident and its connection to the coercion exemption clause in the context of a larger policy recommendation, advocating precautionary dissimulation over active resistance.⁵⁴ One of the reports originates with the sixth Twelver Imām, Ġa’far al-Šādiq (d. 148/766), and the other Ġa’far ultimately attributes to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. In the first report, Ġa’far asks, rhetorically, “what prevented Mayṭam⁵⁵ from engaging in precautionary dissimulation (*taqīyya*),

to the idea of the supreme excellence of ‘Alī as candidate for the Imām as immediate successor to the Prophet, over and above the other three caliphs. However, unlike other Imāmites, this did not mean the illegitimacy of the Imāmates of either Abū Bakr or ‘Umar.

53 For a useful general introduction to *al-Kāfi*, and its author, al-Kulaynī, see Wilferd Madelung, “al-Kulaynī (or al-Kulīnī), Abū Dja’far Muḥammad b. Ya’qūb b. Iṣḥāq al-Rāzī”, *ET*².

54 Significantly, al-Kulaynī classifies both of the hadiths under the chapter on precautionary dissimulation (*bāb al-taqīyya*).

55 The reference is to Mayṭam al-Tammār’s (d. 60/580) martyrdom, a prominent companion of ‘Alī, who refused to dissociate himself from ‘Alī or his cause on the pain of torture and death at the hands of ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d. 67/686), the governor of Kufa. Generally on Mayṭam, and specifically on his activity in transmission see Modarressi *Tabataba’i, Tradition*, I, p. 42-45.

when he knew the following verse was revealed about ‘Ammār and his companions: “except one who is forced, while his heart is at peace with faith.”⁵⁶ In the second report, Ġa‘far is asked about a speech of ‘Alī:

The people are transmitting that ‘Alī (upon him be peace) said on the *minbar* of Kufa: “O people, [when] you will be called upon to insult me, then insult me. Then you will be called upon to dissociate yourself from me. Do not dissociate yourselves from me.” Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Ġa‘far al-Šādiq] said: “People could not have lied more against ‘Alī.” Then he said. ‘Alī said only: “[When] you will be called upon to insult me, insult me. Then you will be called to dissociate from me, but I am on the religion of Muḥammad.” He did not say: “Do not dissociate yourselves from me.” The questioner asked him: “Do you not think he ought to choose death rather than dissociation?” He replied: “By God he is not obliged to do that. He should only do what ‘Ammār b. Yāsir did when he was forced by the people of Mecca, while his heart was at peace with faith and God revealed about him: ‘except one forced while his heart is at peace with faith.’” The Prophet said to him: “If they return, do it again, for God has

56 Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar al-Ġaffārī, Tehran, Dār al-kutub al-islāmī, 1377-1381/1957-1961], II, p. 220, n° 15. Here is the chain of transmission: Ġa‘far al-Šādiq (d. 148/766, Medina) → Muḥammad b. Marwān (n.d., n.p.) → Ġamīl [b. Darrāğ] (d. late 2nd/8th century, Kufa) → [Muḥammad] Ibn Abī ‘Umayr (d. 217/832, Baghdad) → Abū ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm, [Ibrāhīm b. Hišām] (n.d., Kufa/Qum) → ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm (*fl. ca* 307/920, Qum)
On ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm see Amīn Turmus al-Āmilī, *Ṭulāṭiyyāt al-Kulaynī wa-qurb al-isnād*, Qom, Mu‘assasat dār al-ḥadīṭ al-ṭaqāfi, 1417/1996-1997, p. 25 and 60-63. Al-Āmilī describes ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm as one of the Kulaynī’s primary sources for the *Kāfi*. For ‘Alī’s father, Ibrāhīm b. Hišām, see *ibid.*, p. 64-68 and the sources cited therein. On Ġamīl, see Modarressi Tabataba‘i, *Tradition*, p. 307-308. The identification of the immediate narrator of Ġa‘far’s statement, Muḥammad b. Marwān has been difficult to say the least. The modern Imāmī scholar al-Ḥūṭī records no less than fourteen different Muḥammad b. Marwān. Of these fourteen, three were identified by various scholars from within the Imāmī *riğāl* tradition as having been a transmitter of Ġa‘far’s: Muḥammad b. Marwān b. ‘Uṭmān, who is simply identified as a Medinan; Muḥammad b. Marwān al-Ḍuhli, who is identified as Basran who died in 161/778; and Muḥammad b. Marwān al-Baṣrī, who is identified as Basran. It is possible that the two Basrans are in fact the same individual, as the *riğāl* scholars identify both as having been of Kufan origin, but of Basran domicile. For these see Abū l-Qāsim b. ‘Alī Akbar al-Ḥūṭī, *Muḡam riğāl al-ḥadīṭ*, n.p., n.p., 1413/1992, xvii, p. 216-222. Also see, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Šabastari, *al-Fā‘iq fi ruwāt wa-aṣḥāb al-Imām al-Šādiq*, Qom, Mu‘assasat al-našr al-islāmī, 1418/1997-1998, III, p. 185-187, n° 3133-3135.

given you an excuse and commanded you to resort [to dissimulation], if they come back [to torture you].”⁵⁷

In this text, Ġa’far uses ‘Ammār’s act and its sanction by the coercion exemption clause as an argument for tempering the heroic impulses for martyrdom in the community and a general argument for a policy prudent dissimulation.

Ġa’far’s text is a complicated rejoinder to the contemporary Batrites of his and his father’s generation. A putative Batrite version of the text is preserved in a fourth/tenth century Sunnī source. We can infer that it is Batrite because

57 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, II, p. 219, n° 10. Here is the chain of transmission: Ġa’far al-Šādiq (d. 148/766, Medina) → Mas’ada b. Šadaqa (n.d., Basra) → Hārūn b. Muslim (*fl. ca 240/855, Samarrā*) → ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm (*fl. ca 307/920, Qom*)
The modern Imāmī scholar, al-‘Āmilī, offers this *isnād* specifically as a paradigmatic example of a short, three-tiered chain of transmission, which occurs often in al-Kulaynī’s *al-Kāfi*. See al-‘Āmilī, *Tulāṭīyyāt al-Kulaynī*, p. 33. On Mas’ada see Modarressi Tabataba’i, *Tradition*, p. 319-322. On Hārūn b. Muslim see *ibid.*, p. 92-99, the sources cited therein and al-Ḥaṭīb al-Bağḍādī, *Ta’rīḥ*, XIV, p. 22. See also Modarressi Tabataba’i, *Tradition*, p. 322 on the relationship between Mas’ada and Hārūn. Significantly the Imāmī *riḡāl* tradition records doubts on the Šī’ite *bona fides* of both Mas’ada and Hārūn. Al-Naḡašī states somewhat opaquely that Hārūn had a view on the issue of predestination (*ḡabr*) and anthropomorphism (*tašbīḥ*). The significance of this statement is not clear to me, though al-‘Āmilī attempts to vindicate Hārūn of the implications of al-Naḡašī’s statement. More significantly for our purposes, Mas’ada is described specifically as a Batrite. For some of these ascriptions in the Twelver-Imāmī *riḡāl* tradition see al-‘Āmilī, *Tulāṭīyyāt al-Kulaynī*, p. 114-117 and the sources cited therein. For the earliest ascription see, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Iḥtīyār ma’rifat al-riḡāl, al-ma’rūf bi-Riḡāl al-Kaššī*, ed. Mīr Dāmād al-Astarābādī and Mahdī al-Raḡā’ī, Qom, Mu’assasat āl al-bayt, 1404/1983-1984, II, p. 687-688. Al-Ṭūsī describes Mas’ada b. Šadaqa as a Sunnite and counts him as a transmitter of al-Bāqir, see his *Riḡāl al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Ġawād al-Qayyūmī l-Iṣfahānī, Qom, Mu’assasat al-našr al-islāmī, al-tābi’a li-ḡamā’āt al-mudarrisīn bi-Qum, 1415/1994, p. 146, n° 1609. I cannot make sense of the Batrī ascription for Mas’ada. From the perspective of the substance of the text, Ġa’far’s text is a rejoinder to a specifically Batrī rendition of ‘Alī’s speech circulated by a known Batrī, Salama b. Kuhayl, a contemporary of al-Bāqir. The Batrī rendition fits with Zaydite activism against an illegitimate regime. Mas’ada’s text does not fit this aspect of the Zaydite political project, and in fact dilutes it. For an analysis of Mas’ada’s putative sectarian affiliation by looking at the substance of the texts in which he is a transmitter, see Modarressi Tabataba’i, *Tradition*, p. 320, who provides evidence for both Mas’ada’s Sunnite and Šī’ite predilections. For a vindication of both the charges of Batrism and Sunnism by a comparative analysis of the judgments of a number of Imāmī and Sunnite *riḡāl* critics, see al-‘Āmilī, *Tulāṭīyyāt al-Kulaynī*, p. 124-130, who points out the categorization of Mas’ada as Ġa’far al-Šādiq’s transmitter is inconsistent with Batrism as a phenomenon prevalent in al-Bāqir’s time.

of the role of Salama b. Kuhayl (d. 121/739) in its transmission history; he is explicitly identified as a Batrite by Imāmī *riḡāl* sources.⁵⁸ Just as Ġa'far claimed, the text circulated by Salama has 'Alī declare:

Indeed when you will be offered the chance to insult me, slander me. If you are offered the chance to dissociate from me, *do not dissociate from me*, because I follow Islam (*fa-innī 'alā l-islām*). He should sacrifice himself (*fa-l-yamdud aḥadukum 'unqahu taqalathu ummuhu*).⁵⁹ If you dissociate from me, [then know] he gives up this world and the next.⁶⁰ Then he ['Alī] recited: "except for one forced while his heart is at peace with faith."⁶¹

58 See al-Ṭūsī, *Iḥtiyār ma'rifat al-riḡāl, al-ma'rūf bi-Riḡāl al-Kaššī*, II, p. 499-500. Al-Ṭūsī identifies the following as Batrī by name: Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, Salama b. Kuhayl, Abū l-Miqdām Ṭābit al-Ḥaddād, then proceeds to provide a definition of Batrism. See also, at another place, *ibid.*, II, p. 504-505, where al-Kaššī transmits a seemingly apocryphal account of some Batrīs' dispute with al-Bāqir and the origin of the their name. Van Ess classifies Salama as a Kufan Batrī colleague of al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, see Ess, *Theologie*, I, p. 243-244.

59 The literal translation of the phrase, *fa-l-yamdud aḥadukum 'unqahu taqalathu ummuhu*, would be something like: "let him extend his neck such that his mother would grieve for him".

60 I had to amend this part of the text. The original made little sense and must have gotten corrupted at some point in the manuscript tradition. Unfortunately, the editor seems not to have picked up on it. The phrasing of text found in al-Ḥakim's *al-Mustadrak* read: *fa-innahu lā dunyā lahu wa-la āḥira ba'da l-islām*. There are other versions of this text. I relied on the phrasing of a similar text found in the Šī'ite scholar al-Mufid's (d. 413/1022) *al-Irṣād*, which reads: *fa-in tabarra'ū fa-lā dunyā lahu wa-lā āḥira*. See Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Mufid, *al-Irṣād*, Beirut, Dār al-Mufid li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-našr wa-l-tawzī, 1993, I, p. 322.

61 See al-Ḥakim Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥakim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, ed. Yūsuf 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mar'ašlī, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'rifa, II, p. 358. Here is the chain of transmission:

Abū Ṣādiq, 'Abd Allāh b. Nāḡid (n.d., Kufa) → Salama b. Kuhayl (d. 121/739, Kufa) → Sufyān al-Ṭawrī (d. 161/778, Kufa) → Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥārīt b. Asmā' (d. 185/801, Syria) → Mu'āwiya b. 'Amr b. al-Muhallab (d. 214/830, Syria) → Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Naḍr al-Azdi (d. 291/904, Baghdad) → Abū Bakr b. Ishāq.

A similar text, without *isnād*, is cited in the Imāmī source, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Šarīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāḡa*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh, Qom, Dār al-ḡaḥā'ir, 1412/1991-1992, I, p. 105-106. The last part of the speech recorded in this source accords with a portion of the speech recorded in al-Ḥakim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, II, p. 358. Significantly, here, 'Alī is quoted as actually saying what Ġa'far belies—he permits his followers to insult (*sabb*) him, but forbids them from dissociating (*barā'ā*) from him. Kohlberg explains the

Here the practical import in the difference between the two texts seems to be whether dissociation from 'Alī is a *duty* when one's life is on the line, as implied by Ğa'far's statement, or merely a *dispensation*, as implied by the Batrite text. Both cite the coercion exemption clause. Ğa'far cites the specific example of 'Ammār as proof regarding what is to be done when one's life is on the line. Ğa'far's rejoinder to the Batrite text works on a couple of different levels. It both denies the particular wording of the Batrite text, and specifically asserts both the apostasy verse and its connection to 'Ammār to argue against a policy of activist resistance to the demand to dissociate from 'Alī. Rather Ğa'far says there is a duty to dissimulate, just as 'Ammār had done. While Batrites may have seen the history of 'Ammār's political affiliations as a demonstration of the possibility of supporting the first two caliphs and 'Alī, the Imāmites of Muḥammad al-Bāqir's and Ğa'far al-Ṣādiq's generation see his capitulation under Qurayšite persecution, and its Qur'ānic endorsement as supporting their politics of passive resistance. These reports give a sense of the role of the circulation of reports about 'Ammār's torture and its connection to Kor 16, 106 in Kufan religious circles in the first half of the second/eighth century.

3 Torture Reports which allude to the Coerced Apostasy verse (Kor 16, 106)

With one exception, the most widely circulated reports that connect 'Ammār's torture to the Kor 16, 106 do not do so explicitly.⁶² In fact, they allude to it by having 'Ammār respond to the Prophet's query about his potential renunciation of faith upon torture, with a distinctive phrase found in Kor 16, 106, "at peace with faith" (*muṭma'innun bi-l-īmān*). Some of these reports cannot be dated to earlier than the latter half of the second/eighth century, hence we will not examine them here. They can be found in the sources cited below.⁶³

distinction between 'Alī's commands as resulting from the fact that "dissociation from the Qur'ān is applied only to polytheists, and that dissociation from 'Alī is therefore tantamount to declaring him a polytheist." Kohlberg relies on later Imāmite scholars for this explanation. See Etan Kohlberg, "Barā'a in Shī'i doctrine", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 7 (1986), p. 154-156.

62 For the exception see al-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-ašraf*, 1, p. 160, n° 352.

63 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, XIV, p. 373-374; al-Balāḍurī, *Ansāb al-ašraf*, 1, p. 159-160, n° 351; Yaḥyā b. Sallām, *Tafsīr Yaḥyā b. Sallām*, ed. Hind Šalabī, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ilmī,

3.1 *Abū 'Ubayda Reports*

The most widely recorded of the reports that connect 'Ammār's torture to Kor 16, 106 has Abū 'Ubayda (n.d.), 'Ammār's grandson, in the chain of transmission. Abū 'Ubayda's account for the specific circumstances surrounding 'Ammār's capture and torture, and the allusion to the coercion exemption clause was one of the most popular in classical exegetical and legal literature. Because of its later fame, I shall engage in a much more detailed analysis of this report.⁶⁴

The earliest narrator that narrates to different individuals thus giving rise for an opportunity to engage in an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis is the Meccan-Ġazīran scholar, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Mālik (d. 127/745). The *isnāds* of the reports have 'Abd al-Karīm narrating to three different individuals: the famous Meccan scholar Ma'mar b. Rāšid (d. 154/771), and the Ġazīrans al-Furāt b. Salmān (d. 150/767) and 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Amr (d. 180/797). The content of the reports transmitted by the the two Ġazīrans, al-Furāt and 'Ubayd Allāh are very similar to each other, while there is a fundamental difference between them and all the versions of the report that go through Ma'mar. Here is one of the Ma'mar reports (figure 2, narration 8):

The polytheists took 'Ammār b. Yāsir, tortured him till he came close to saying some of what they wanted. He complained about it to the Prophet. The Prophet asked him: "How did you find your heart?" He replied: "At peace with faith." He said: "If they return, do it again!"⁶⁵

Here is one version of the al-Furāt report (figure 2, narration 6):

The polytheists took 'Ammār and did not leave him till he cursed the Messenger of God and mentioned something good about their gods. They then left him. When he came to the Prophet, *the Prophet asked: "What's the matter?" He replied: "Evil! By God, the polytheists would not release me till I slandered you and said something good about their gods."* The Prophet asked: "How did you find your heart?" He replied: I found my heart at peace with faith. He said: "If they return, do it again!"⁶⁶

2004, I, p. 92-93; Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Ismā'īl al-Būšīrī, *Ithāf al-ḥīra l-mahara bi-zawā'id al-masānid al-'ašara*, ed. Dār al-miškāt li-l-baḥṭ al-'ilmī, Riyadh, Dār al-waṭan li-l-našr, 1999, v, p. 262, n° 4639.

64 For the *isnāds* of this report see figure 2: *isnāds* of the Abū 'Ubayda reports.

65 Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Šan'ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muslim Muḥammad, Riyadh, Maktabat al-rušd li-l-našr wa-l-tawzī', 1989, I, p. 360.

66 Yaḥyā b. Sallām, *Tafsīr Yaḥyā b. Sallām*, I, p. 92.

Here is a version of the ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Amr report (figure 2, narration 3):

The polytheists took ‘Ammār and did not leave him till he cursed (*nāla min*) the Messenger of God and mentioned something good about their Gods. When he came to the Prophet, *the Prophet asked: “What’s the matter?” He replied: “Evil! By God, the polytheists would not release me till I slandered you and said something good about their gods.”* The Prophet asked: “How did you find your heart?” He replied: “At peace with faith.” He said: “If they return, do it again!”⁶⁷

None of the versions of the report transmitted through Ma‘mar contain the narrative element where the Prophet asks ‘Ammār “What’s the matter?”, but both of the texts of the two Ġazīran narrators from ‘Abd al-Karīm contain this narrative element. The *isnād-cum-matn* analysis, particularly strong in this case, fixes a *terminus ante quem* for the common elements of the Ma‘mar and Ġazīran versions to ‘Abd al-Karīm’s death date, 127/745.

We ought to note one other feature of the Abū ‘Ubayda reports. Three of the twelve narrations claim that the reports originate not with Abū ‘Ubayda, ‘Ammār’s grandson, but with his son, Muḥammad b. ‘Ammār b. Yāsir (*i.e.* Abū ‘Ubayda’s father). These versions were recorded in two of al-Bayhaqī’s works, and one of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Al-Bayhaqī gets one of his reports from al-Ḥākim. Given the fact that the only sources that record the *isnād* as originating with Muḥammad b. ‘Ammār are al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī’s collections, and that at least in one of al-Bayhaqī’s works, he cites al-Ḥākim as his immediate source, it is probable that al-Ḥākim extended the chain from Abū ‘Ubayda to Muḥammad. I therefore reject Muḥammad, ‘Ammār’s son, as the original narrator of this report.

If we discount the attribution to Muḥammad as a later development and the *isnād-cum-matn* procedure establishes Abū ‘Ubayda’s immediate narrator, ‘Abd al-Karīm, as a historical narrator of this report, that leaves us with the question of whether Abū ‘Ubayda is indeed ‘Abd al-Karīm’s source, as all of the chains of transmissions of this report document?

Let us look at the assessments of the *riġāl* critics on Abū ‘Ubayda and ‘Abd al-Karīm. We do not have much information about Abū ‘Ubayda himself and in fact the early *riġāl* critics record some disagreement about whether or not Abū ‘Ubayda and Salama b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, both putatively

67 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 249.

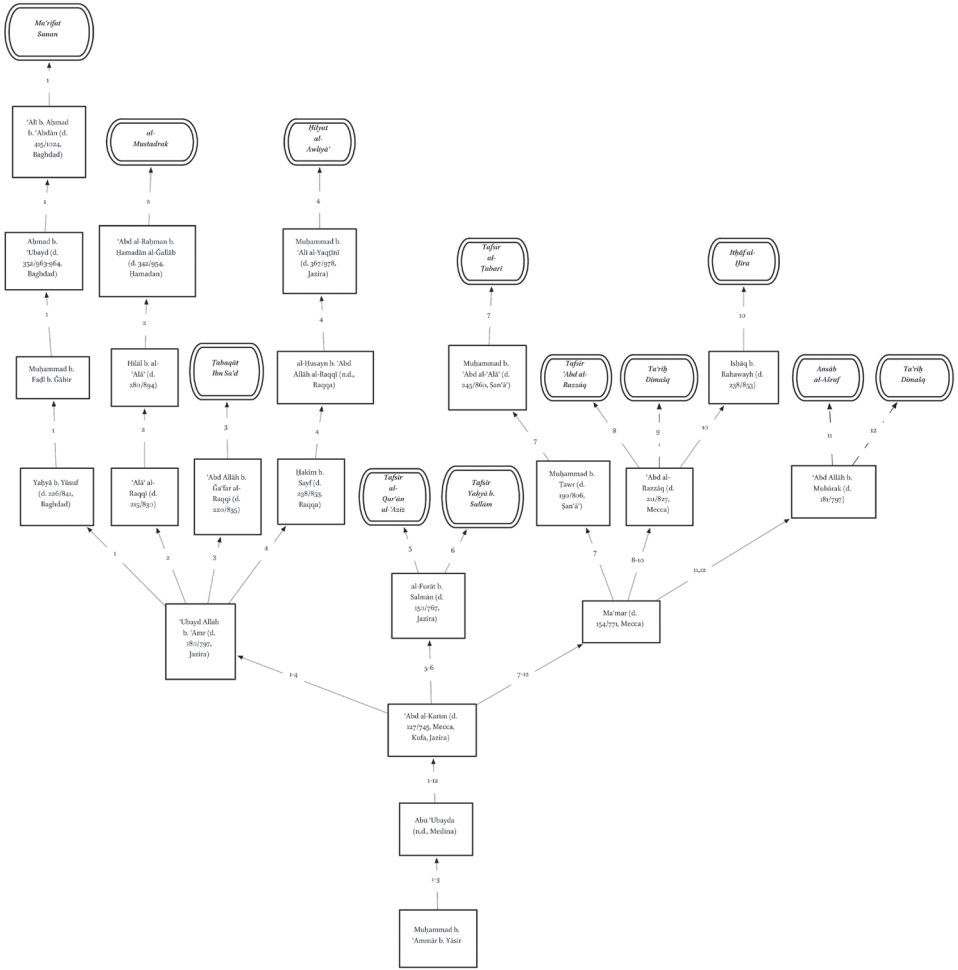


FIGURE 2 isnāds of Abū 'Ubayda reports⁶⁸

68 Here are the sources for the reports:
 Narration 1: Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Ma'rifat al-sunan wa-l-ātār*, ed. Sayyid Kasrawī Ḥasan, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmī, 1991, VI, p. 317, n° 5038.
 Narration 2: al-Ḥākīm al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn*, II, p. 389, n° 3362.
 Narration 3: Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, p. 249.
 Narration 4: al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, I, p. 140.
 Narration 5: Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Zamanīn, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘azīz*, ed. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ḥusayn b. ‘Ukāša and Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafā l-Kanz, Cairo, al-Fārūq al-ḥadīṭi li-l-ṭibā’a wa-l-naṣr, 2002, I, p. 284.
 Narration 6: Yaḥyā b. Sallām, *Tafsīr Yaḥyā b. Sallām*, I, p. 92.
 Narration 7: al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, XIV, p. 374-375.

‘Ammār’s grandsons are actually the same person.⁶⁹ The fact that there are a substantial number of hadiths that are transmitted through Abū ‘Ubayda through a variety of transmitters though, to my mind, considerably mitigates this doubt. Significantly, the *riġāl* critics do not explicitly record or allude by way of *nisba* to the place of Abū ‘Ubayda’s residence. We can infer that he must have been a Medinan, at least with respect to his transmission activity, through looking at who he narrated to and from. The narrators are predomi-

Narration 8: al-Šan‘ānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, I, p. 360.

Narration 9: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīḥ Madīnat Dimašq*, XLIII, p. 374.

Narration 10: al-Būšīrī, *Ithāf al-ḥīra l-mahara bi-zawā’id al-masānīd al-‘ašara*, p. 142, n° 35.

Narration 11: al-Balādu’rī, *Ansāb al-ašrāf*, I, p. 159, n° 349.

Narration 12: Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīḥ Madīnat Dimašq*, XLIII, p. 374.

- 69 Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports that his father thought that Abū ‘Ubayda was not named as such, meaning he either did not have a name other than his nickname (*kunya*) or it was not known and reports his father’s view that his hadith are to be rejected. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl*, IX, p. 405, n° 1944. Al-Buḥārī however seems to regard Abū ‘Ubayda and Salama to be two distinct people and even cites an eyewitness report implying that. He also records two separate entries for the individuals. For Salama, along with the citation of the eyewitness report, see al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta’rīḥ*, IV, p. 77, n° 2011. For the entry on Abū ‘Ubayda, see al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta’rīḥ al-kabīr*, p. 52, n° 449. To add to the confusion, in yet another place, al-Rāzī, on the authority of his father, reports that Abū ‘Ubayda was actually ‘Ammār’s son, not grandson. See ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb Bayān ḥaṭa’ Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Buḥārī fī Ta’rīḥihi*, Diyarbakir, al-Maktaba l-islāmiyya, n.d., p. 156-157, n° 735. The later hadith critics echo the confusion regarding the identity and ambivalence towards whether his hadith are reliable. Al-Mizzī and Ibn Ḥaġar, perhaps relying on al-Rāzī’s statement, report the possibility that Salama and Abū ‘Ubayda may be the same person, though al-Mizzī prefers the two-person view based on al-Buḥārī’s report. See al-Mizzī, *Tahdīb al-Kamāl fī asmā’ al-riġāl*, XXXIV, p. 61-63, n° 4-7498 and Ibn Ḥaġar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, XII, p. 144, n° 4-8568. The early *riġāl* critics probably also have in mind the paucity of material transmitted through Salama. He is found in only one hadith about ten etiquette practices which the Prophet proclaims are part of a human being’s nature (*fiṭra*). See Sulaymān b. al-Aš‘at al-Siġistānī Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Riyadh, Harf Information Technology, 2003, CD ROM, hadith #49, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Māġa, *Sunan Ibn Māġa*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #290, and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #17606 for the hadith. He is said to have transmitted it from his father, ‘Ammār. That ‘Ammār’s family may not have been well known is also confirmed by the fact that Ibn Ishāq, himself, narrates one account of the torture of ‘Ammār’s family from an unidentified male member of his family. For this, see Muḥammad b. Ishāq, *Sīrat Ibn Ishāq*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, Rabat, Ma’had al-dirāsāt wa-l-abḥāt li-l-ta’rīb, n.d., IV, p. 172, n° 239. It is possible that the unidentified member in this report is actually Abū ‘Ubayda.

nantly Medinan.⁷⁰ Moreover the relative differences in death dates of the individuals he transmits *from* as opposed to those he transmits *to* seem reasonable, thereby increasing the plausibility of his transmission activity. The fact that both Abū ‘Ubayda’s sources and his transmitters were predominantly Medinan also seems to strengthen the plausibility of his transmission activity. We can also infer the relative date of his transmission activity as occurring in the first quarter of the second/eighth century (*ca* 100/719-125/743).⁷¹ In one case, Abū ‘Ubayda transmits information about ‘Ammār not directly, or even from his father, but through a third party.⁷² Thus it is possible that Abū ‘Ubayda may

70 He transmits from the following five people: Ġābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/698, Medina), al-Rubayyī‘ bt Mu‘āḍ b. ‘Afrā’ (n.d., Medina), Ṭalḥa b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Awf (d. 97/716, Medina), Miqsam b. Bağra [the *mawlā* of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥārīt] (d. 101/720, Mecca), and al-Walīd b. Abī al-Walīd (n.d., Medina). He transmits to the following four people: Usāma b. Zayd (d. 153/770, Medina), Sa’d b. Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (d. 125/743, Medina), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ishāq b. ‘Abd Allāh (n.d., Basra), and Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Yasār (d. 150/767, Medina/Baghdad).

71 Interestingly, though Abū ‘Ubayda is ‘Ammār’s grandson, all of the reports he transmits as found in the some of the standard Sunnī collections of the late third and fourth centuries are about personalities and issues that do not seem to have a direct connection to ‘Ammār. Doing a narrator search in the software program *Mawsū‘at al-ḥadīṯ al-ṣarīf* on Abū ‘Ubayda yields 13 total hadiths, which can be grouped into five different groups. Briefly they are about a range of issues, with no unifying thematic, sectarian, or political concern. The hadiths are about the following topics: the validity of the practice of wiping one’s leather socks (*mashī ‘alā l-ḥuffayn*) and turban (*‘amāma*) (Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā l-Tirmidī, *Ġāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #95), the fact that one who dies defending his religion, property, self, or family, dies as a martyr (Aḥmad b. Šu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī, *Sunan al-Nasā‘ī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #4026 and #27; Abū Dā‘ūd Sulaymān b. al-Aš‘aṯ al-Siğīstānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #4142; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #1565); a report about the workings of a *muzāra‘a* contract (Aḥmad b. Šu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī, *Sunan al-Nasā‘ī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #3466; Abū Dā‘ūd Sulaymān b. al-Aš‘aṯ al-Siğīstānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #2942 and 452, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #20606 and #41), an apocryphal report about the Ḥawāriğ who will go deep into the religion to the point of leaving it (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #6741), and a physical description of the Prophet (al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #60).

72 See the report about information conveyed about the circumstances surrounding the Prophet’s marriage to Ḥadiğa in Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, Beirut, Dār al-fīkr, n.d., VII, p. 129. In this tradition Abū ‘Ubayda gets information about

merely have been reporting a tradition about ‘Ammār that he received through other unnamed sources. In other words, the fact that he was ‘Ammār’s grandson did not necessarily grant him insider access to information about ‘Ammār. On the whole, how does this information help assess the probability of transmission between Abū ‘Ubayda and ‘Abd al-Karīm? Dating Abū ‘Ubayda’s transmission activity to the first quarter of the second/eighth century and locating it in Medina implies at the very least the plausibility of contact with ‘Abd al-Karīm. Given the plausibility of Abū ‘Ubayda’s contact with ‘Abd al-Karīm, what can then be known about ‘Abd al-Karīm?

In general, ‘Abd al-Karīm gets high marks from the *riḡāl* critics.⁷³ Many of ‘Abd al-Karīm’s primary sources are prominent Meccans from the turn of the first century, such as ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ, Muḡāhid b. Ḡabr, and ‘Ikrima, whereas who he transmitted to are both Meccan and Kufan, such as Ma‘mar b. Rāšid, Ibn Ḡurayḡ, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, and Isrā’īl b. Yūnus.⁷⁴ Ultimately, ‘Abd al-Karīm seems to have settled somewhere in the Ḡazīra (northern Iraq/Syria), thus his *nisba*. Anecdotal evidence about ‘Abd al-Karīm’s transmission activity in Kufa found in biographical sources corroborates information gleaned from the presence of Kufan scholars in his chains of transmission. The fact that Abū ‘Ubayda transmitted mostly to and from Medinans while ‘Abd al-Karīm transmitted mainly to and from Meccans or Kufans though is not problematic in assessing the plausibility of the transmission between the two individuals. Mecca, because of its status as the pilgrimage center in the empire, was the meeting ground for scholars from all of the other regions, and the location of much inter-regional transmission activity. Many of the hadith recorded through ‘Abd al-Karīm are of strictly legal import, ranging from Prophetic

‘Ammār’s tradition, from the Medinan Muqsim, the *mawla* of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥārīṭ, who transmits from ‘Abd Allāh, who in turn transmits from ‘Ammār.

73 See al-Buḡḡārī, *al-Ta’rīḡ al-kabīr*, VI, p. 88, n° 1794, where he quotes the famous hadith scholar Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna as remarking that he had never seen anyone like ‘Abd al-Karīm. Al-‘Irāqī praises the precision of his transmission practice, saying that he only transmitted by saying “I heard” or “I asked”. While this is an exaggeration, as an analysis of how he’s quoted in the chains of transmissions of actual hadiths has him narrate often using the transmission formula of *‘an*, al-‘Irāqī’s assertion can be construed as making a relative judgment on the precision of ‘Abd al-Karīm’s transmission activity. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Ḡarḡ wa-l-ta’dil*, VI, p. 58-59, n° 310, who quotes Aḡmad b. Ḥanbal, Yahyā b. Ma‘īn, and al-Rāzī’s father as declaring ‘Abd al-Karīm, sound (*tiqqa*). For more judgments by the *riḡāl* critics, see Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahḡīb al-tahḡīb*, VI, p. 333-334, n° 717.

74 See *Kitāb Tahḡīb al-tahḡīb*, VI, p. 333-334, n° 717, for a list of narrators.

reports about proper *ḥağğ* practices,⁷⁵ to the legality of certain types of drinks,⁷⁶ to rules about sexual intercourse,⁷⁷ and Prophetic comment on different types of commercial practices.⁷⁸ Outside of Prophetic hadith, ‘Abd al-Karīm transmits the opinions of early Meccan juristic authorities like ‘Aṭā’ and Ṭāwūs to Meccan scholars like Ma‘mar and Ibn Ğurayğ.⁷⁹ Unlike the case with the narrators of the Kufan report connecting the coercion exemption clause to ‘Ammār, no overt political or sectarian motivation is detectable either internally in Abū ‘Ubayda’s ‘Ammār report, or in the hadith corpuses of Abū ‘Ubayda and ‘Abd al-Karīm, or in the information preserved about the two individuals in biographical and *riğāl* sources.⁸⁰ What can this analysis tell us about dating the report to Abū ‘Ubayda?

There are good reasons for dating the tradition to Abū ‘Ubayda’s lifetime, though these considerations do not approach the strength of results from the applications of the *isnad-cum-matn* procedure, which established a *terminus ante quem* of ‘Abd al-Karīm’s death date. Let’s start with the reasons for regarding the report as originating in Abū ‘Ubayda’s lifetime. First, we have found no good reason to doubt the attribution made to him in the chains of transmission. Second, an analysis of the hadiths and historical reports in which he is found as a transmitter has manifested a fairly plausible profile for a historical narrator. The chains of transmissions we have reflect that a diverse number of

75 Assuming the transmission ascriptions to ‘Abd al-Karīm to be true, of course, he seems to have taken an interest in collecting and transmitting material about *ḥağğ* ritual. See for instance the following hadiths al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #1601, 1602, 1730; Muslim b. al-Ḥağğāğ, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #2083, 2320; Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā l-Tirmiđī, *Ġāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith # 876, Aḥmad b. Šu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī, *Sunan al-Nasā‘ī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #2802, 2927, 3032.

76 See Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā l-Tirmiđī, *Ġāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #1810.

77 See *ibid.*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #127 and Abū Dā‘ūd Sulaymān b. al-Aš‘aṭ al-Siğīstānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #231.

78 See Aḥmad b. Šu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī, *Sunan al-Nasā‘ī*, in the Harf Information Technology CD ROM, hadith #3668 and #807.

79 ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ġazarī is a prominent transmitter in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ*. On this, and ‘Abd al-Karīm’s biography and narrator profile, see Motzki, *Origins*, p. 226-331.

80 This is my own impression after glancing through the corpus of hadiths transmitted through him. Interestingly, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī is quoted as approvingly saying that none of the following scholars was a theologian (*mutakallim*): ‘Abd al-Karīm, Ayyūb, and ‘Amr b. Dīnār. See Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī, *Kitāb Tahdīb al-tahdīb*, VI, p. 333-334, n° 717.

people narrate both from him and to him. Yet, despite this diversity, they all hail from the same region, the Ḥiǧāz, and in fact the vast majority comes from the same city, Medina. An analysis of the various death dates given for those from whom he purportedly narrated from and to also strengthens the plausibility of the profile. The relative differences between the death dates of his sources and who he transmits to are reasonable. But there is one reason against attributing it to Abū 'Ubayda. Some *riǧāl* critics cast suspicion on both Abū 'Ubayda's identity and the acceptability of his narrations. I think this is a weak reason because of the plausibility of his narrator profile that I outlined above.

The *isnad-cum-matn* procedure produces a *terminus ante quem* for the circulation of the shared elements of this report to the death date of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ǧazarī, 127/745. Though, not as reliable, our analysis of the plausibility of the transmission profile of Abū 'Ubayda, 'Ammār's grandson, produces a date of somewhere in the first quarter of the second century 100-125/719-743.

The main question that remains is which of the two broad sets of reports we have reviewed, dated, and located thus far comes first: the reports that merely describe 'Ammār's torture or the reports that connect the torture incident to the revelation of Kor 16, 106?

4 Suggested Chronology for the Reports

At a minimum it is safe to say that by the last quarter of the first century there was widespread belief that 'Ammār b. Yāsir was tortured during the Prophet's time by the Meccans. This much is agreed upon by all of the numerous versions of reports.

In order to answer the question of which reports came first—the one's that connect 'Ammār's torture to Kor 16, 106 or the one's that do not, let's review the most important results of our dating of the reports. We can divide them into three broad categories:

- 1) reports that simply assert how 'Ammār was tortured;
- 2) reports that have the Prophet witness 'Ammār's torture and promise him and his family heaven;
- 3) reports that either assert or allude to the connection between 'Ammār's torture and Kor 16, 106.

The first set of reports have been recorded in sources only through single *isnāds*. All but one of these reports originated in Medina, with the exception

originating in Basra. These reports stem from the turn of the first/seventh century. The earliest goes back to the important collector of reports, the Medinan 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr.

For the second set of reports, the *isnad-cum-matn* method produced a quite early *terminus ante quem* of the death date of 'Amr b. Murra in 120/738. The date for the circulation of this report is in fact definitively earlier, since 'Amr b. Murra transmits his report as originating with 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān, an attribution with a specific sectarian function. We know therefore that the content of the report is much earlier. Versions of the same report, recorded though in different single *isnād* versions, and without the attribution to 'Uṭmān were circulating in Mecca most probably around the turn of the first century.

The analysis of the third set of reports also dated them to the turn of the first century. Two single-*isnād* reports that simply asserted that Kor 16, 106 was about 'Ammār stem from Kufa. The reports that allude to a distinctive phrase found in Kor 16, 106, "at peace with faith" (*muṭma'innun bi-l-īmān*) date to the lifetime of Abu 'Ubayda, 'Ammār's grandson, which also happens to be around the turn of the century.

What is the relationship between these sets of reports? There are two possible ways of conceiving of the relationship. One is to see the connection to Kor 16, 106 as always a part of the historical memory of 'Ammār's torture, even if some reports do not explicitly make the connection or allude to it. This would require that we read the reports that do not allude or explicitly connect his torture to Kor 16, 106 as simply assuming the audience knows this.

The other way of thinking about the relationship between these reports is to regard the torture reports, without reference to Kor 16, 106, as coming before reports that connect it to the verse. I think this is the stronger explanation. Putting aside the Abū 'Ubayda reports, which merely allude to Kor 16, 106, the reports that explicitly connect 'Ammār's torture to the verse either explicitly cite it as support for an on-going dispute about political policy, as in the case of Ğa'far al-Šādiq, or is asserted by individuals known to have been a party to that dispute, as in the case of al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba. It is probable that Abū 'Ubayda, around the same time or perhaps upon hearing Kufan reports asserting the connection between Kor 16, 106 and his grandfather's torture, did not so much fabricate as much as circulate a more fleshed out and dramatic version of the story that he thought his grandfather must have been a part of. This would have added to his grandfather's prestige and therefore to that of his family, for to be connected to the revelation of a Qur'ānic verse was a point of honor and pride. Moreover, the very fact that 'Ammār's torture is offered up as a candidate for historical explanation for three different verses indicates not transmission

of eyewitness or even hearsay reports of some sort, but rather attempts on the part of late first century scholars to correlate Qur'anic verses with episodes from the life of the Prophet.

There is one final consideration, one that goes beyond the veil of the first century. The gist of the reports about 'Ammār's torture, and even Abū 'Ubayda's account alluding to the connection between the coercion exemption clause and 'Ammār's torture, imply a Meccan dating. Sumayya, 'Ammār's mother, is identified by Islamic sources as one of the first, if not the first, Muslim to have died as a martyr in the cause of Islam. His and his family's torture probably took place when the Meccans were torturing other Muslim converts that did not have full tribal protection because of their status as slaves or clients. All of this happens in Mecca.

There is disagreement amongst both pre-modern Muslim authorities and modern Islamicists on the dating of the verse, though I think there are very strong reasons to regard it as early Medinan. The Muslim authorities are split, though most regard it as Medinan.⁸¹ It is not clear why the Muslim authorities classified the verse as they did, though it seems likely that they probably relied on assessments of theme to infer a date. Islamicists are also split on the issue. Blachère thinks it is Meccan, Bell thinks it is Medinan.⁸² Both of

81 One report has Ibn 'Abbās regarding all but the last three verses of the chapter as Meccan. See Ġalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fi 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Markaz al-dirāsāt al-qur'ānī, Medina, Mağma' li-l-malik Fahd li-ṭibā'at al-muḥṣaf al-šarīf, 1426/1991-1992, I, p. 49. Al-Suyūṭī's immediate source is al-Naḥḥās's *al-Nāsiḥ wa-l-mansūḥ*. Other reports have Qatāda (d. 117/735) and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) say the entire chapter was Meccan. See *ibid.*, I, p. 50-51. Al-Suyūṭī's immediate source is al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*. Other reports say that Qatāda thought the all of surah 16 was Medinan. See al-Ḥarīṭ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *al-'Aql wa-l-fahm bi-l-Qur'ān*, ed. Ḥusayn al-Quwwatī, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1971, p. 395. Yet another report says that Qatāda thought the first forty verses of surah 16 was Meccan, while the rest was Medinan. See 'Uṭmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī, *al-Bayān fi 'add āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ġānim Qaddūrī Ḥamad, Kuwait, Markaz al-maḥṭūṭāt wa-l-turāṭ wa-l-waṭā'iq, 1994, p. 133-134. Another report has Ġābir b. Zayd holding the same opinion. For this see, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fi 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, I, p. 169. I thank the anonymous reviewers for some of these references.

82 Régis Blachère regards the chapter as from the third Meccan phase, Régis Blachère, *Le Coran, traduction selon un essai de reclassement des sourates*, Paris, G.P. Maisonneuve, 1947-1950, II, p. 349. Richard Bell does not classify entire chapters as either Medinan or Meccan, but individual passages and verses. He considers the coerced apostasy verse as early Medinan, Richard Bell, *The Qur'ān: Translated with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Surahs*, transl. Richard Bell, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1960, p. 259. The nineteenth century orientalist Theodor Nöldeke does not directly address the chronology of 16, 106, though he does think verses 111-125 are Medinan. See Theodor Nöldeke, Friedrich Schwally,

these authors rely on a combination of thematic and stylistic considerations. Sadeghi has recently done a very persuasive statistical analysis corroborating Mehdi Bazargan's style-based chronology, which implies a Medinan dating for the verse.⁸³ There are other strong reasons to regard the verse as Medinan. The verses surrounding Kor 16, 106 have to do with themes associated with the Medinan phase of the Prophet's mission: persecution and immigration. The verse itself refers to the phenomenon of changing beliefs, which is found in six other verses in the Qur'ān.⁸⁴ All of these verses are embedded in passages that speak of themes associated with Medina.⁸⁵ In addition, there exist other non-ʿAmmār related reports that give an entirely different narrative context for Kor 16, 106.⁸⁶ These reports did not gain nearly as much traction in the later scholarly traditions, but they all assume a Medinan context. The reports originating with the late first/seventh century Meccan scholars, Muḡāhid and ʿIkrima accord especially well with the passage in which Kor 16, 106 is found.⁸⁷

Given the strong reasons for regarding Kor 16, 106 as early Medinan and the existence of other non-ʿAmmār related reports that cohere better with Kor 16, 106's passage, how do we make sense of the ʿAmmār reports connected to

Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl, *The History of the Qur'ān*, ed. Wolfgang Behn, transl. Wolfgang Behn, Leiden-Boston, Brill (« Texts and studies on the Qur'ān », 8), 2013, p. 119-122. For a table comparing various chronological schemes, see Richard Bell and William Montgomery Watt, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh, University Press, 1970, p. 207.

83 See Behnam Sadeghi, "The chronology of the Qur'ān: a stylometric research program", *Arabica*, 58/3-4 (2011), p. 234. Sadeghi classifies the verse as occurring in block 148, group 6. Block 148 contains the following verses from surah 16, 33-40, 65-89, 106-119. Sadeghi at no point explicitly identifies blocks or groups as Meccan or Medinan. His aim was merely in testing the viability of one proposed chronology through a statistical analysis of stylistic features. We are not constrained by his aims. It is clear that the passages of group 6 are Medinan.

84 For the other verses, see Kor 3, 100; Kor 3, 106; Kor 2, 109; Kor 9, 66; Kor 9, 74; Kor 4, 137.

85 For a discussion of the formal features of the Medinan revelations, see Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'ān: a Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*, Washington, Georgetown University Press, 2003, p. 196-198. On a discussion of the terminology and theological figures specific to the different phases of the Qur'ānic revelations, see Bell and Watt, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, p. 118-120. See also Gerhard Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān", *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*.

86 These scholars are Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), Muḡāhid b. Ḡabr (d. 104/723), and ʿIkrima (d. 105/723-724). For the Muqātil report, see Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. Aḡmad Farīd, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmī, 2003, II, p. 239.

87 See Muḡāhid b. Ḡabr, *Tafsīr al-imām Muḡāhid b. Ḡabr*, ed. Muḡammad ʿAbd al-Salām Abū l-Nīl, Cairo, Dār al-fikr al-islāmī l-ḡadīṭa, 1989, p. 426; and al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, IX, p. 14, for the ʿIkrima report.

the verse? We can thus posit three stages in the growth of the ‘Ammār reports in general, and specifically the reports connecting the revelation of the apostasy verse to ‘Ammār. In the first stage, reports were generated that concretized a seemingly widely shared yet vague historical memory of the torture of ‘Ammār at the hands of Meccans. At the second stage, the memory of ‘Ammār’s torture is correlated with the coercion exemption clause of the apostasy verse. In the third stage, the historical reports about the nature and circumstances of ‘Ammār’s torture and the connection to the coercion exemption clause are asserted in a narrative that combines aspects of previous reports while alluding to the connection to the apostasy verse. What I have labeled the Abū ‘Ubayda account is born. The Abū ‘Ubayda account itself undergoes further elaboration, as narrative events summarily noted in the Ma‘mar recension are imaginatively elaborated by positing conversations between ‘Ammār and the Prophet in the later recensions. This picture of the development of the ‘Ammār torture tradition and its eventual linking to Kor 16, 106 fits well with recent scholarship of the “Qur’ānification” of the *sīra*.⁸⁸

5 Why did the ‘Ammār Reports Predominate?

If we eliminate the ‘Ammār story as the explanation for the circumstances surrounding the apostasy verse, we are left with two generic accounts of the circumstances. Though the Muqātil and Muḡāhid/‘Ikrima texts are recorded in some of the earliest extant exegetical works, their authors do not provide the sources for their texts. If we are forced to choose between the historical explanations recorded in the exegetical tradition surrounding the circumstances of Kor 16, 106, Muḡāhid’s account coheres best with Kor 16, 106’s Medinan, perhaps even early Medinan context, as can be inferred from the verses in Kor 16, 106’s immediate vicinity and its use of the distinctive disbelief-after-belief phrase.

Notwithstanding the putative historical context of Kor 16, 106, the question as to why the ‘Ammār explanation achieved dominance in the exegetical and legal literature remains. Here we may surmise two factors. First, the Muḡāhid tradition conveys fairly generic information. It does not provide names of specific people or even tribes. In contrast, the ‘Ammār tradition is about a specific

88 On this see Uri Rubin, “The life of Muḡammad and the Qur’ān: the case of Muḡammad’s hijra”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 28 (2003), p. 40-64. For a brief overview of the different types of relationships between the Qur’ān and the *sīra*, see Wim Raven, “Sīra and the Qur’ān”, *Encyclopedia of the Qur’ān*. I thank the anonymous reviewers for these references.

heroic personality in early Islamic history. It is easy to surmise why scholars would find the specific and dramatic more appealing than the generic, thus contributing to the overwhelming popularity of the ‘Ammār explanation in the scholarly traditions. Even more, the memory of ‘Ammār’s historical personality offended no early sectarian community. In fact, ‘Ammār’s early conversion, his slave/client status, and his suffering for the cause of the Prophet’s mission made him an especially appealing figure to all sectarian groups jockeying for the legitimacy of their respective theological and political commitments. He was specifically appealing to Batrite Zaydites, because, in some sense, he exemplified their doctrine. He was remembered as a fierce partisan of ‘Alī, while at the same time participating in ‘Umar’s government as governor of Kufa. For similar reasons, though not necessarily for his partisanship on behalf of ‘Alī in the first civil war, Murǧi’ites could use his example to advocate an agenda of communal integration. Because of his staunch support for ‘Alī during the civil war and his martyrdom at Šiffin, ‘Ammār would become one of the seven *truly* steadfast companions of the Prophet for the Šī’ites. More specifically, Ğā’far al-Šādiq used the memory of ‘Ammār’s capitulation when coerced under persecution and its validation by the Qur’ān to argue against the policy of heroic resistance, exemplified in Šī’ite memory by Mayṭam al-Tammār. No one community, whether in the formative or classical periods, had motivation to specifically contest the connection between ‘Ammār and the coercion exemption clause, and the Imāmi Šī’ites had very good reason to advocate it.