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The History of al-Tabari  
An Annotated Translation

Volume XVIII

Between Civil Wars:  
The Caliphate of Mu<sup>c</sup>awiyah  
A.D. 661-680/A.H. 40-60

The History of al-Tabari

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# The History of al-Tabari

(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)

Volume XVIII

## Between Civil Wars: The Caliphate of Mu'awiyah

translated and annotated

by

Michael G. Morony

University of California, Los Angeles

State University of New York Press

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## Acknowledgements

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

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## Preface

The History of Prophets and Kings (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muhuk*) by Abu Jacfar Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari (839-923), here rendered as the *History of al-Tabari*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

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

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

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

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

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings

and subheadings as they appear in al-Tabari's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

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

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

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

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

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

EHSAN YAR-SHATER

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## Translator's Foreword

The reign of Mu`awiyah b. Abi Sufyan as Caliph occupied the two decades between the first and second civil wars among Muslims in the seventh century. Tabari's account of this period is comparatively thin. He covers it in half the space he devoted to the first civil war and in the same amount of space that he gave to the three-year reign of Mu`awiyah's son and successor, Yazid. In addition, Tabari's selection of events overwhelmingly concentrates on Iraq and Khurasan during these years, and his information is drawn mainly from Iraqi sources.

Over sixty percent of this section comes from the earlier works of Abu Mikhnaf and `Umar b. Shabbah. The works of Abu Mikhnaf are quoted mainly via Hisham b. Muhammad al-Kalbi and are used especially for the events at al-Kufah, the Kharijites, and the affair of Hujr b. `Adi. `Umar b. Shabbah's *Book of Information About the People of al-Basrah* (*Kitab akhbar ahl al-Basrah*) is quoted directly by Tabari not only for events at al-Basrah, but also for events in Syria and the Hijaz.

Except for Ziyad's inaugural speech at al-Basrah in 665 and parallel passages in C. E. J. Whitting's translation of Ibn Tabataba's *Kitab al-Fakhri* (London, 1974), the material in this volume has not been available in English before. However, the section on Mu`awiyah in Baladhuri's *Ansab al-Ashraf* was translated into Italian by Giorgio Levi della Vida and Olga Pinto as *Il Califfo Mu`awiya I, secondo il "Kitab Ansab al-Asraf \*"* (Rome, 1938). Special thanks go to Abdullah al-Askar who helped to check this translation.

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## The Events of the Year 140(cont'd) [1] (May 17, 660-May 6, 661)

### The Rendering of Allegiance To al-Hasan b. `Ali

In the year 40 (May 17, 660-May 6, 661), allegiance was rendered to al-Hasan b. `Ali for the Caliphate. The first to render allegiance to him is said to have been Qays b. Sa`d who said to him, "Hold out your hand, and I will pledge allegiance to you on condition [that you follow] the Book of God, Almighty and Great, and the example (*sunnah*) of His Prophet, and fight the violators."<sup>1</sup> Al-Hasan answered him, "... on condition [that I follow] the Book of God and the example of His Prophet, for that includes every stipulation." So Qays rendered allegiance to him and was silent, and the people (also) pledged their allegiance to him.

(According to) `Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Mattawayhi<sup>2</sup> al-Marrudhi<sup>3</sup> his father Sulayman `Abdallah Yunus al-Zuhri:<sup>4</sup>

1. *Al-muhillun* were originally a group of pre-Islamic tribes west of al-Madinah whose members attacked caravans during the sacred truce months. See *Jahiz, Hayawan*, VII, 216-17; Ya`qubi, *Ta'rikh*, I, 314-15; and Bukhari, *Sahih*, VI, 12. This became a term for those who permitted shedding blood, especially the blood of members of Muhammad's family.
2. Cairo reads: "Shabbawayhi." `Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Shabbawayh al-Marruzi was a well-known authority on hadith. There is no manuscript authority for the reading, Mattawayhi, at least in this passage.
3. Al-Marrudh was the popular pronunciation of Marw al-Rudh, "Marw of the River," a city in eastern Khurasan on the Murghab River approximately 160 miles upstream from Marw. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 404-5.
4. Muhammad b. Muslim b. `Ubaydallah b. `Abdallah b. Shihab al-Zuhri (ca.

(Footnote continued on next page)

`Ali put Qays b. Sa`d in charge of his Iraqi advance forces (marching) toward Adharbayjan,<sup>5</sup> and in charge of Adharbayjana's territory.<sup>6</sup> He also put him in charge of the Shurtat al-Khamis<sup>7</sup> which the Arabs instituted. This was a force of forty thousand men who pledged allegiance to `Ali until death. Qays continued to postpone that expedition until `Ali was killed and the people of Iraq chose al-Hasan b. `Ali as Caliph. Al-Hasan did not favor<sup>8</sup> fighting, but intended to take for himself what he could from Mu`awiyah and then join the community. He knew that Qays b. Sa`d did not agree with his point of view, so he dismissed him and appointed `Abdallah b. `Abbas<sup>9</sup> as commander. When `Abdallah b. `Abbas learned what al-Hasan intended to take for himself, he wrote to Mu`awiyah asking him for a guarantee of safe-conduct with the added condition that he be allowed to keep the wealth which he had acquired. So Mu`awiyah stipulated that for him.

(According to) Musa b. `Abd al-Rahman al-Masruqi<sup>10</sup> `Uthman b. `Abd al-Hamid (or Ibn `Abd al-Rahman) al-Majazi al-Khuza'i<sup>11</sup> Abu `Abd al-Rahman Isma`il b. Rashid: The people pledged their allegiance to al-Hasan b. `Ali as Caliph. Al-Hasan then left with them and stayed at al-Mada'in.<sup>12</sup> He sent Qays b. Sa`d (forward) in charge of his vanguard with twelve

*(Footnote continued from previous page)*

50-124 [670-742]) lived at al-Madinah until about 700, then settled in Damascus about 720. See A. A. Duri, "Al-Zuhri," I-12. Al-Zuhri's account tends to be unfavorable towards al-Hasan. For a more favorable account see Baladhuri, *Ansab*, IVA, 138.

5. Adharbayjan is the province in northwestern Iran. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 159-71.

6. C reads: "Of Isbahan," a city in western Iran. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 202-7.

7. C reads: "shurtah of the army." This "Thursday shurtah" was an elite force or bodyguard. *Shurtah* (pl. *shurat*) was also the term for the police force in Muslim Arab garrison cities. See *EI1*, s.v. Shurta.

8. C reads: "intend."

9. `Abdallah b. `Abbas (d. 68[697/8]) was a cousin of Muhammad and had been governor of al-Basrah from 36(656/7) until 38 (658/9) when he had broken

with `Ali. See *EI2*, s.v. `Abd Allah b. al-`Abbas.

10. O reads: al-Khuza`i.

11. C reads: "al-Harrani," from Harran, a town in upper Mesopotamia. See *EI2*, s.v. Harran, and Le Strange, *Lands*, 103.

12. Al-Mada`in, "the cities", was the former Sasanian metropolis and winter capital on both sides of the Tigris River below Baghdad. See *EI1*, s.v. al-Mada'in.

thousand men. Mu`awiyah also advanced with the Syrians and camped at Maskin.<sup>13</sup> While al-Hasan was at al-Mada'in someone in the army announced, "Qays b. Sa`d has surely been killed, so flee!" So they fled, having plundered the pavilion of al-Hasan, even fighting him for a carpet that was under him. Al-Hasan left and stayed at the White Palace<sup>14</sup> in al-Mada'in. At that time the paternal uncle of al-Mukhtar b. Abi' `Ubayd,<sup>15</sup> Sa`d b. Mas`ud, was the governor of al-Mada'in. Al-Mukhtar, who was a young boy, asked him, "Would you have wealth and honor?" When Sa`d asked him what he meant, al-Mukhtar said, "Put al-Hasan in fetters and use him to ask Mu`awiyah for a guarantee of safe-conduct."<sup>16</sup> Sa'd responded, "God's curse upon you! Shall I fall upon the son of the daughter of God's Messenger and put him in fetters! What an evil man you are."<sup>17</sup>

When al-Hasan saw that rule was beyond his grasp, he sent to Mu`awiyah seeking peace, and Mu`awiyah sent `Abdallah b. `Amir<sup>18</sup> and `Abd al-Rahman b. Samurah b. Habib b. `Abd Shams<sup>19</sup> to him. When they came to al-Hasan at al-Mada'in, they granted him what he wished and arranged peace with him on condition that, among other things, he be allowed to take five million (dirhams) from the treasury of al-Kufah.<sup>20</sup> Al-Hasan

13. Maskin was the district along the Dujayl Canal west of the Tigris River above Baghdad. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 51.

14. The White Palace was the former Sasanian royal residence in that part of al-Mada'in called al-Madinah al-`Atiqah, "the Old City," (i.e., Ctesiphon) by the Arabs. It remained in use until its demolition was begun by the Caliph al-Mansur (136-58/754-75), and then it remained in ruins until it was completely demolished by Caliph al-Muktafi (289-92/902-8) in about 290(903). Al-Muktafi had the materials used to build the Taj Palace in Baghdad. See *EI*, 1 s.v. al-Mada'in.

15. Al-Mukhtar b. Abi' `Ubayd (d. 67[687]) was to lead a Shi`i rising in al-Kufah, 66-67(685-87). See Kharbutli, *Al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi*, and `A. A. `Abd Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 25-76.

16. O reads: "bring him to Mu`awiyah."

17. C reads: "what an evil man that would make me."

18. `Abdallah b. `Amir (5-59/626-80) was a native of Mecca who had conquered Fars and Khurasan as governor of al-Basrah, 29-35(649-55) See *EI*2, s.v. `Abd Allah b. `Amir.

19. `Abd al-Rahman b. Samurah (d. 50[670]) was a native of Mecca, conquered Sijistan under `Abdallah b. `Amir, 31- 35(651-55) and joined Mu`awiyah in Syria after the Battle of the Camel in 36(657) See C. E. Bosworth, *Sistan under the Arabs*, 17-22; and *EI2* s.v. `Abd al-Rahman b. Samura.

20. Al-Kufah was the Muslim Arab garrison city (*misr*) and provincial capital on the Euphrates River near modern Najaf. See *EI2*, s.v. al-Kufah.

then rose among the people of Iraq saying, "O people of Iraq, three things make me glad to be rid of you: your killing of my father, your stabbing of me, and your plundering of my possessions." The people submitted to Mu`awiyah, and, when Mu`awiyah entered al-Kufah, the people rendered allegiance to him.

(According to) Ziyad b. `Abdallah`Awanah<sup>21</sup> gave an account similar to that of al-Masruqi`Uthman b. `Abd al-Rahman. He added to it: Al-Hasan wrote to Mu'awiyah concerning peace and asked for a guarantee of safe-conduct. When he told al-Husayn<sup>22</sup> and `Abdallah b. Ja`far<sup>23</sup> about it, al-Husayn said to him, "I implore you, by God, not to believe the story of Mu`awiyah but to believe the story of `Ali" Al-Hasan retorted, "Shut up! I know more about the matter than you do." Now when the letter of al-Hasan b. `Ali reached Mu`awiyah, the latter sent `Abdallah b. `Amir and `Abd al-Rahman b. Samurah, who came to al-Mada'in, and granted al-Hasan what he wanted. Al-Hasan then wrote to Qays b. Sa`d, who was in charge of his vanguard with twelve thousand men, ordering him to submit to Mu'awiyah. At that, Qays b. Sa`d rose among the people saying, "O people, choose [between] submitting to a leader of error or fighting without a leader." They replied, "No, we choose instead to submit to a leader of error." So they rendered allegiance to Mu`awiyah and Qays b. Sa`d left them. Al-Hasan had already made peace with Mu'awiyah on condition that he concede to him what was in his treasury plus the revenue (*kharaj*)<sup>24</sup> of Darabjird<sup>25</sup> and that `Ali not be reviled in his hearing. So he took what was in his treasury at al-Kufah which amounted to five million dirhams.

21. `Awanah b. al-Hakam al-Kalbi (d. 147[764] or 153 [770]) was a blind Kufan narrator who composed two historical works on the life of Mu`awiyah and the Banu Umayyah. See *EI2*, s.v. `Awana b. al-Hakam al-Kalbi.

22. Al-Husayn b. `Ali (4-61[626-80]) was al-Hasan's younger brother. See *EI2*, s.v. Al-Husayn b. `Ali.

23. `Abdallah b. Ja`far b. Abi Talib (d. 80[699] or 85[704]) was a nephew of `Ali. See *EI2*, s.v. `Abd Allah b. Dja`far.

24. *Kharaj* was a form of tax or tribute. See D. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax*, 12-13; and F. Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation* index.

25. Darabjird is a city and district in eastern Fars. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 288-9.