

Article

Untangling the “Unwritten Documents” of the Prophet Muḥammad. An *Isnād-cum-Matn* Analysis of Interwoven Traditions

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Abstract: Since the earliest studies of Islam by non-Muslims were carried out, variant traditions (*alḥādīth*) have been regarded as a proof of forgery or editing within the *ḥadīth* material. Early studies have shown that variances are the result of different processes, some intentionally and others mistakenly; some caused by editing processes, while others through the process of transmission across the first centuries of Islam. During the transmission process, or the genesis of a tradition, accounts are constantly shaped and adjusted. The use of topoi forms a part of this process as well as the inclusion of motifs in different accounts. The present article will explore one of these motifs, specifically, the instruction of the Prophet Muḥammad, on his deathbed, to bring him writing materials so that he could prepare a document for his community. This motif appears in a number of accounts with different settings, characters and details on the nature of the document itself. This article examines whether there exists a direct relationship between the different accounts and, if so, what does this mean. Through this study, we will see that additional motifs have been added to this tradition during its transmission process and that some of these motifs can be attributed to regionalisation or specific transmitters.

Keywords: Prophet Muḥammad; Islam; *sīra*; *ḥadīth* transmission; history



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1. Introduction

Contradictory stories or discrepancies within traditions sit at the heart of discussions about the usefulness of the Islamic tradition (*ḥadīth* pl. *alḥādīth*) material as a source of information on the early centuries of Islam. The discrepancies have led scholars to develop the science of *ḥadīth* criticism and new methodologies and theories to study the *ḥadīth* material. This was especially important for those traditions in which a *sunna* (custom) of the Prophet Muḥammad was described, because his behavior and sayings form instructive examples of the ideal Islamic way of life for Muslims. Contradictions also appear in biographical accounts of his life that deal with specific events. One of those events, about which a number of conflicting narratives exist, takes place towards the end of the Prophet's life and is framed as his final illness.

The narratives are centred around Muḥammad's command to bring him writing materials in order to pen a document (*kitāb*) for his community. The wider details of the tradition, such as who was present and other minor details, differ. Nevertheless, the final result is the same: Muḥammad foregoes his original instruction and the document remains unwritten. The setting and almost identical wording of the instruction indicate that the narratives are derived from a common source. Although the exact nature of the document remains unknown, some narratives do allude to its content.

It is precisely this lack of clarity about the content that has led to heated Sunni-Shī'ī contestations over the centuries. Examples of those discussions can be found within the works of classical *ḥadīth* scholars, such as Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) and Ibn Ḥajar (852/1448).¹ Even today, lively debates continue on the internet.² The discussions focus on

the purpose and content of the document, but often also discuss the variant narratives in which Muḥammad's request is embedded. While the narratives typically state the purpose of the document, which is to serve as guidance for Muḥammad's community, its content remains unknown because the Prophet eventually refrains from writing it. This ambiguity allows for diverse interpretation of the document's content and import. For example, that it would be instructive with regards to the succession to the Prophet, provide specific guidelines for his fellowship, or serve as a test for his community.³ Ibn Kathīr, therefore, complains:

"[t]his *ḥadīth* has served to feed the imaginations of certain foolish persons, who advocate improper innovative practices. These adherents of the *shī'a* and others, all claimed that the Messenger of God⁴ wished to write in the document [. . .] what they purpose in their own statements. [. . .] Whatever the Messenger of God wished to write came previously in those *ahādīth* that lend themselves to clear and unambiguous interpretation."⁵

Ibn Kathīr here refers to the different interpretations, both by the ambiguity in this tradition and its variant narratives.

The present article will not go into the various discussions that were triggered by this ambiguity, but instead focus on the development of the narratives in the *ḥadīth* material. The *ahādīth* will be studied using the *isnād-cum-matn* (ICM) analysis developed by Harald Motzki and Gregor Schoeler.⁶ This method is based on the fact that a *ḥadīth* usually consists of a text (*matn* pl. *mutūn*) and a chain of transmitters (*isnād* pl. *asānīd*), which claim to represent the transmission path between the first narrator of the story and the collection into which this tradition culminated. The number of people in a chain varies from source to source and can range from four to five people in the earliest collections of the third Islamic century to fourteen or more people in the later collections of the eighth century.⁷

Two problems are here highlighted within the Islamic tradition material: First, that the available collections date from a period that is at least two hundred years later than the time they describe. The question then is whether the event described took place in the way described or at all? The second problem is that the chain of transmitters represents a transmission process in which changes inherently take place. What we have at our disposal is the end result, being texts that the author of the collection claims to have received via the persons in the accompanying chains. The conflicting information in the narratives on Muḥammad's unwritten document is indicative of the fact that the material has been edited. To answer the question of who is responsible for each part of the account, we need to look beyond the versions in the collections. On the basis of these collections, we can only study the conscious and unconscious choices collectors have made in the material they present. An example of this type of analysis is the discussion of Gurdofarid Miskinzoda. She shows that the narratives were linked to the discussions about the succession of the Prophet and the status of other writings with guidelines for the community in addition to the Qur'ān, and how the position of the collectors developed.⁸

The ICM analysis is aimed at the period before the *ḥadīth* collections. It compares textual variations between traditions with overlapping *asānīd*, i.e., the traditions have a number of people in common. If the *asānīd* represent the actual transmission path of a tradition, in case of overlap, part of the text should be the same. If there is textual overlap without the chains, which have a similar overlap, then one of the *asānīd* is (partly) forged or erroneous.⁹ However, if traditions report the same topic, but do not overlap in the chains nor are they comparable in terms of word usage and structure of the text, then we are dealing with two separate tradition complexes, i.e., two separate stories describing the same event. The following ICM analysis of the traditions of Muḥammad's unwritten document will show to whom the earliest version of a narrative can be attributed and which parts that basic narrative consisted of. Furthermore, it will show how the narrative evolved and how, over time and across specific regions, other textual motifs have been added and omitted, creating new narratives.

2. Isnād-cum-Matn Analysis Applied

Based on the *asānīd*, the traditions in which the motif appears can be divided in five groups. The first group contains traditions ascribed to the famous Qurʾān scholar and Companion of the Prophet, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās (d. 67/686–7). The majority of the traditions (35) belong to this group. The second group¹⁰ is ascribed to the Companion Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 78/697) and contains seven traditions. The third group, consisting of two traditions, is traced back to the Companion and second caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644). The fourth group, with five traditions, is ascribed to Muḥammad’s nephew and son-in-law, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), and the last group with the second largest number of traditions (15)¹¹ is traced back to ʿĀʾisha (d. 58/678), said to have been Muḥammad’s favourite wife and daughter of the first caliph Abū Bakr. All of the alleged first transmitters of these traditions belonged to the circle of Muḥammad’s intimates and the *sīra* material describes their frequent interaction with the Prophet.

The ICM analysis begins with a brief biography of the individuals to whom the traditions are attributed per group. To obtain an overview of which people have handed down the tradition according to the *asānīd* and to identify common transmitters per group, the *asānīd* have been drawn in a figure. The earliest common transmitter, the so-called common link, is by way of hypothesis assumed to be the distributor of the tradition in question. Subsequently, the *mutūn* of the traditions within a given group are first compared with each other and then with the groups discussed earlier.

2.1. Group 1: The Ibn Abbās Narrative

The first group of the traditions is traced back to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās. Ibn ʿAbbās was related to the Prophet through his father al-ʿAbbās, the brother of Muḥammad’s father ʿAbd Allāh, and his mother, who was the sister of the Prophet’s wife Maymūna.¹² At the time when the story is set, the death of the Prophet, he was still young, between ten and fifteen years old.¹³ Ibn ʿAbbās is one of the most controversial Companions of Muḥammad within scholarly debates. In Muslim scholarship, he is revered as one of the greatest Qurʾān exegetes and his name appears in the *asānīd* of countless traditions on the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁴ In non-Muslim scholarship, the authenticity of the ascription of the majority of these traditions is criticized. Herbert Berg and Claude Gilliot argue that Ibn ʿAbbās should be regarded as a symbolic figure to authenticate the information in the tradition.¹⁵

Figure 1 is a simplified representation of the chains showing only the earliest generations of transmitters.¹⁶ The common link according to Figure 1 would be Ibn ʿAbbās.¹⁷ In order to determine whether these traditions are indeed from Ibn ʿAbbās, the texts (*mutūn*) of the traditions will be compared. The textual analysis revealed six different versions of the tradition about the unwritten document, which correspond to the numbers indicated in Figure 1. Three of them go back to Saʿīd b. Jubayr (d. 94/714), a Kufan scholar of the Qurʾān, jurisprudence and Ḥadīth, who, according to Muslim biographies, was a student of Ibn ʿAbbās.¹⁸

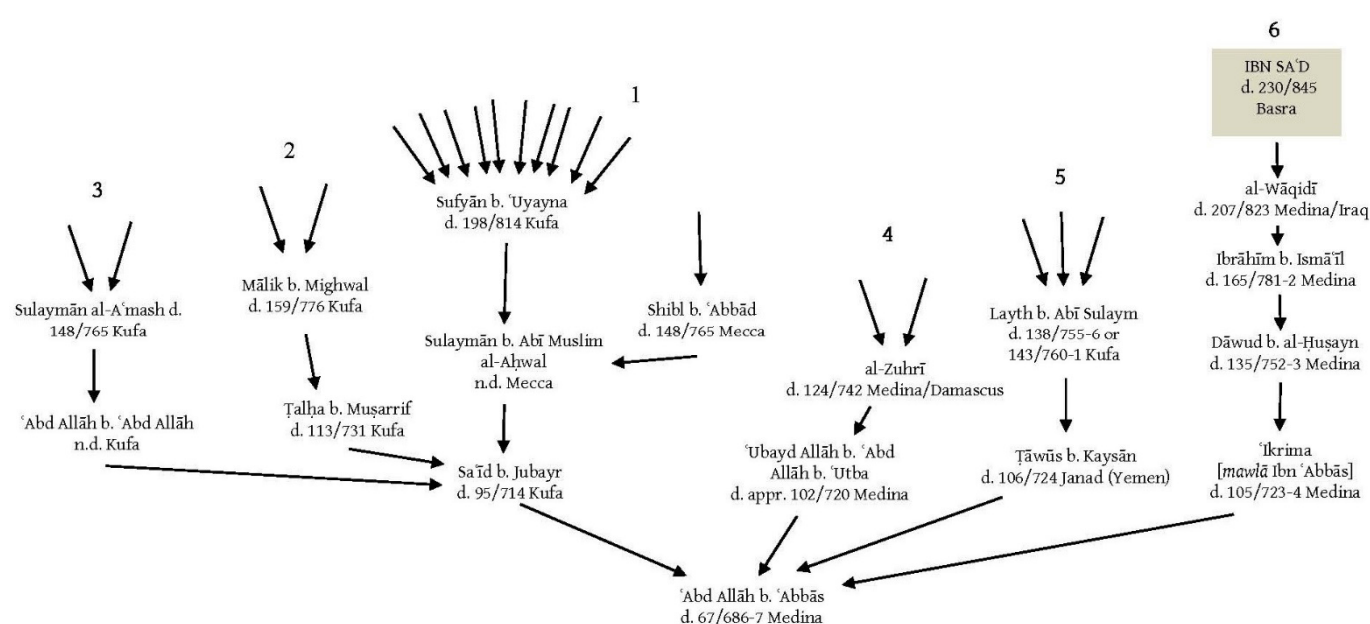


Figure 1. The *isnād* bundle of the Ibn 'Abbās traditions.

2.1.1. Ibn 'Abbās version 1—Sufyān b. 'Uyayna

The Ibn 'Abbās version 1 of Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/814), the first transmitter common to all *asānīd* in this subgroup, from Sulaymān b. Abī Muslim (n.d.), appears most often in the Islamic *ḥadīth* collections. A reconstruction of Sufyān's text¹⁹ based on the thirteen²⁰ traditions I found is:

[...] on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, he said:²¹ “Thursday, what a Thursday!” (Then Ibn 'Abbās wept so hard that his tears wet the pebbles. Sa'īd or someone else asked Ibn 'Abbās, “What about Thursday?”)²² The pain of the Prophet became severe, so he said, “If you bring me (*i' tūnī*) [something]²³, then I will write a document for you (*lakum*), after which you will never go astray.” People began to argue with each other, although a dispute in front of a prophet is improper. They said, “What is the matter with him? Is he talking deliriously? Ask him for an explanation.” (So they went back to him, repeating those remarks to him,)²⁴ and the Prophet replied, “Leave me alone! The state I am in is better than that for which you are calling me.” He instructed (for them)²⁵ three things, “Expel the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula, give the quantity of water sufficient to pass therewith from one watering-place to another to the delegations, as I used to do.” [Sulaymān remarked], “Either Sa'īd said nothing about the third one intentionally, or he said it and I have forgotten it.”

Ibn 'Abbās' exclamation on “Thursday”, at the beginning of the tradition, places the subsequent event on this day. Muḥammad is in a room with several people. He is very sick at the time and wants to prepare a document to guide the people (“for you”: *lakum*). In fact, he appears to be so sick that people think he is delirious. The debate that arises after his request becomes too much for him and he asks everyone to leave without having written the document. At the end, it is said that Muḥammad commanded three things, only two of which are mentioned. This implies that he wanted to record these three commands in the document.²⁶

2.1.2. Ibn 'Abbās Version 2—Mālik b. Mighwal

The second Ibn 'Abbās version that is traced back to Sa'īd b. Jubayr, according to the *asānīd*, is from Mālik b. Mighwal (d. 159/776) via Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif (d. 113/731), both of

whom were from Kufa. This version is shorter than Sufyān's, but similarly begins with Ibn 'Abbās' exclamation on Thursday.

[...] on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, he said²⁷: "Thursday, what a Thursday!" Then I [Sa'īd b. Jubayr] looked at his tears running down his cheeks as if they were a string of pearls. He said: The Messenger of God said: "If you bring me (*i' tūnī*) a shoulder blade and an inkpot (or a tablet and an inkpot)²⁸, then I will write for you a document, after which you will never go astray." They said, "The Messenger of God was talking deliriously."²⁹

The cry motif is present in both Ibn 'Abbās versions, but has been formulated differently. The comparison of the tears with pearls can only be found in version 2 of Mālik b. Mighwal from Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif. Muḥammad's instruction to bring writing materials and the reason for that are the same. The only reference to the discussion that then takes place in Ibn 'Abbās version 1 of Sulaymān al-Aḥwal is that they (several persons) say that Muḥammad was delirious. This is also the end of the story in this second Ibn 'Abbās version; the threefold command motif of version 1 is completely missing. The comment about the delirium is the only indication that this story is set during the Prophet's illness.

2.1.3. Ibn 'Abbās Version 3—Sulaymān al-A'mash

The third version of Sa'īd b. Jubayr, according to the *asānīd*, comes from the Kufan scholar Sulaymān al-A'mash (d. 148/765) via his fellow townsman 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh [al-Rāzī] (n.d.). Two slightly different accounts have been preserved by Ibn Sa'd and al-Ṭabarānī. Ibn Sa'd's account is³⁰:

[...] on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, he said: The Prophet became sick on Thursday, so he, i.e., Ibn 'Abbās, began to cry and say, "Thursday, what a Thursday!" The pain of the Prophet became severe, so he said, "If you bring me an inkpot and a piece of paper³¹, then I will write for you a document after which you will never go astray." He said: Some of those who were with him said that the Prophet is certainly talking deliriously. He said: It was said to him (=Prophet), "Shall we not bring you what you asked for?" He replied, "Or after what?" He said: So he did not summon it.

Al-Ṭabarānī's tradition is a shortened version of this:³²

[...] on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, may God be pleased with them: When it was Thursday, what a Thursday! Then he cried and said: The Messenger of God said, "If you bring me (*i' tūnī*) a piece of paper and an inkpot, then I will write for you a document after which you will never go astray." They said, "The Messenger of God is talking deliriously." Then they said nothing and he (=Prophet) said nothing. They said, "Shall we not bring [it] to you later?" He replied, "After what?"

Although both traditions share similarities with the first two discussed Ibn 'Abbās versions, both attributed to Sa'īd b. Jubayr, they are distinct from one another. The two traditions contain the same deviant motifs, which is why they are considered one version.³³ Like Ibn 'Abbās versions 1 and 2, version 3 begins with the exclamation motif and the cry motif. However, no description is given of the crying and this version is clear about the writing material, a piece of paper and an inkpot. Again, Muḥammad is thought to be delirious. The question they then ask the Prophet and his answer are unique to version 3, although they seem to be a vague echo of version 1. As in version 2, the threefold command is missing.

The unique motifs of each version can be provisionally attributed to the partial common links from Figure 1, Sufyān b. 'Uyayna for Ibn 'Abbās version 1, Mālik b. Mighwal for version 2, and Sulaymān al-A'mash for version 3.

The motifs the three Ibn 'Abbās versions have in common can be tentatively attributed to the first transmitter common to these versions, Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/714):

1. The exclamation of Ibn 'Abbās "Thursday, what a Thursday!";

2. The crying of Ibn ‘Abbās (even if the three versions differ in the details);
3. Muḥammad’s instruction for writing materials (even though the three versions differ in the materials listed);
4. The reason for his instruction: to write a document for them after which they will not go astray.
5. People who wonder if Muḥammad is delirious.

Only Ibn ‘Abbās version 1 explicitly states that Muḥammad is seriously ill, as well as one tradition of version 3, while version 2 and the other tradition from version 3 state this implicitly through the question of whether he is delirious. The use of a plural form in the conjugation of the verb (“*i’ tūnī*”) indicates that several people are present during this event. The presence of several people and the motif of Muḥammad’s illness can therefore also be attributed to Sa‘īd b. Jubayr.

2.1.4. Ibn ‘Abbās Version 4—Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī

Ibn ‘Abbās version number 4, according to the *asānīd*, does not come from Sa‘īd b. Jubayr but from the famous Medinan *ḥadīth* scholar and jurist Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) via ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Utba (d. appr. 102/720), who also lived in Medina. The vast majority of this group of traditions comes from the Yemenite scholar ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211/826) (see Appendix B). His nine traditions are very similar, making it possible to make a reconstruction of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s text:³⁴

‘Abd al-Razzāq—Ma‘mar on the authority of al-Zuhrī on the authority of ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh (b. ‘Utba) on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: When the Messenger of God reached the point of death, during which there were men [present] in the house, among whom was ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the Prophet said, “Now then! I shall write for you a document after which you will not (never)³⁵ go astray.” ‘Umar said, “The Messenger of God became overpowered by the pain and you have the Qur’ān. The book of God is enough for us.” The people in the house disputed and quarrelled. Some of them said, “Make them let him (/the Messenger of God)³⁶ write a document for you after which you will not go astray.” Some of them said what ‘Umar said. When the nonsense (/noise)³⁷ and the disagreement intensified in front of the Messenger of God, the Messenger of God said, “Go away.”

‘Ubayd Allāh (/‘Abd Allāh)³⁸ said: Ibn ‘Abbās used to say, “The most terrible disaster is that their disagreement and their noise came between the Prophet and him writing that document.”

In addition to ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s version from Ma‘mar, there is a second Ma‘mar version from his fellow townsman Hishām b. Yūsuf (d. 197/813).³⁹ The biggest differences from ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s text are *al-nabī* (the Prophet) instead of *rasūl Allāh* (the Messenger of God), the omission of the preposition *ghalabahu al-waj‘* (the pain overpowered him) instead of *ghalaba ‘alayhi al-waj‘* and the Prophet saying “Go away from me” (*qūmū ‘annī*) instead of “Go away” (*qūmū*). In addition, there are three traditions from Yūnus b. Yazīd from al-Zuhrī, which are very similar to ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s text, but, like Hishām’s version, nevertheless contain unique formulations⁴⁰, making it possible to ascribe Ibn ‘Abbās version 4 to al-Zuhrī and to date it to the first quarter of the second Islamic century.

In version 4 of al-Zuhrī, the beginning with Ibn ‘Abbās’ tear motif and Thursday’s exclamation is missing, but a similar emotional statement returns at the end, in which Ibn ‘Abbās speaks of a disaster. Like the first three versions, the event takes place during Muḥammad’s disease. Although the Prophet expresses the same desire to write a document for his community, there is no mention of writing materials. For the first time, one of the people present is mentioned by name, ‘Umar, the second caliph of the Islamic empire and the one who was involved in appointing Abū Bakr as the first caliph after the death of the Prophet.⁴¹ He is the one who makes the call not to obey the Prophet’s wish. His argument is that no second document is needed besides the Qur’ān.⁴² The discussion in Ibn ‘Abbās version 4 is more drawn out by mentioning ‘Umar’s counter argument. Ibn

‘Abbās’ statement at the end on the disaster makes it clear that the Prophet did not write the document. Also in version 4, the only reference to the content of the document is given in the Prophet’s request, to not let his community go astray. No further information on its content is provided.

The following motifs can be tentatively attributed to al-Zuhrī, as they appear only in his accounts: the disaster motif, the omission of writing materials, ‘Umar’s presence and his argument regarding the Qur’ān. That would also mean that the motifs that al-Zuhrī’s version has in common with Sa‘īd b. Jubayr’s other three versions could possibly come from Ibn ‘Abbās, as he is the only transmitter common to all traditions. These are: the setting of the story during the Prophet’s illness, his desire to write a document for the people (“you”) to not let them go astray, the quarrelling over the Prophet’s request, the idea that Muḥammad’s illness is the cause of his request, Muḥammad not writing the document, and finally, the emotional outburst of Ibn ‘Abbās (in the versions of Sa‘īd b. Jubayr expressed with tears and the Thursday exclamation, in that of al-Zuhrī with the disaster motif). However, there are two other versions attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās that we must include in the comparison before any more definitive statements can be made about the attribution of the motifs to individuals.

2.1.5. Ibn ‘Abbās Version 5—Layth b. Abī Sulaym

Ibn ‘Abbās versions 5 and 6 are not as widely preserved in the *ḥadīth* collections as the first four versions. Version 5 comes in three traditions, which can be found in the collections of Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ṭabarānī. The common link according to the *asānīd* is the Kufan traditionist Layth b. Abī Sulaym (d. 138/755 or 143/761) (see Figure 2). All three traditions are much shorter than the versions discussed above and differ from each other.

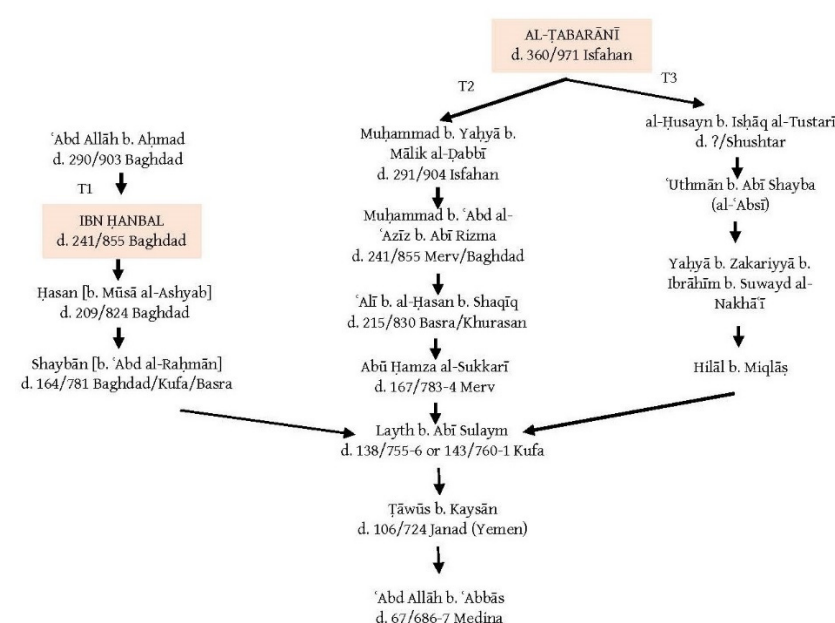


Figure 2. The *isnād* bundle of the Ibn ‘Abbās-traditions from Layth.

Version T1 Ibn Ḥanbal:⁴³

When the Messenger of God reached the point of death, he said, “If you bring me a shoulder blade, then I will write for you on it a document [so that] two men from among you do not disagree after me.” He said: The people (*qawm*) began to shout. The woman said, “Woe unto you! [It is] the command of the Messenger of God!” (*wayḥakum ‘ahd rasūl Allāh*).

Version T2 al-Ṭabarānī:⁴⁴

The Messenger of God called for a shoulder blade. He said, “If you bring me a shoulder blade, then I will write for you a document [so that] after me you never disagree.” There was a stir (*laghaṭ*) among the people who were with him. A woman among those in

attendance said, “Woe to you! [It is] the command of the Messenger of God!” One of the people said, “Be quiet! You have no knowledge!” (*lā ‘aql laki*). The Prophet said, “You have no understanding!” (*antum lā ahlām lakum*).⁴⁵

Version T3 al-Ṭabarānī:⁴⁵

The Messenger of God said, “If you bring me a shoulder blade and an inkpot, then I will write for you a document on which two men will not disagree.” He said: They delayed (*fa-abṭi’ū*) the shoulder blade and the inkpot and God took him (*fa-qabadahu Allāh*).

Although the three traditions differ from each other, they still have a few characteristics in common, which makes them classifiable under the same version. All three mention a shoulder blade as writing material, which is unique for this Ibn ‘Abbās version 5. Furthermore, unlike the Ibn ‘Abbās versions 1–4, the purpose of the document is to avoid disagreement between two men. Since this is mentioned in two traditions (T1 and T3), I also consider this a peculiarity of the Ibn ‘Abbās version from Layth. The same applies to the noise or shouting after the request of the Prophet and the correction of those present by the (unknown) woman (both present in T1 and T2). Two traditions (T1 and T3) indicate that this event took place just before the death of the Prophet.⁴⁶ Of the other elements in the text that only appear in one tradition, it is not clear whether they come from the transmitters above Layth in Figure 2 or if they come from variations in the transmission by Layth. Only the textual elements appearing in two or all three of the traditions can be attributed to the common link of this group, Layth b. Abī Sulaymān.

2.1.6. Ibn ‘Abbās Version 6—Ibn Sa’d

The last Ibn ‘Abbās version can be found in one tradition in Ibn Sa’d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* with the Medinan *isnād* Muḥammad b. ‘Umar [al-Wāqidī] (d. 207/823) -> Ibrāhīm b. Ismā‘īl b. Abī Ḥabība (d. 165/781–2) -> Dāwud b. al-Ḥuṣayn [al-Qurashī al-Umawī] (d. 135/752–3) -> ‘Ikrima [al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī], a *mawlā* of Ibn ‘Abbās who died in 105/723–4 -> Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 67/686–7).⁴⁷ The text of the traditions is:

[. . .] on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet said during his illness what he died of, “If you bring me an inkpot and a piece of paper, then I will write for you a document after which you will never go astray.” ‘Umar said, “Who belongs to so-and-so and so-and-so of the cities of the Byzantines? The Messenger of God is not dead until we conquer them and if he dies, we will wait for him as the Banū Isrā’īl waited for Moses!” Zaynab, the wife of the Prophet, said, “Do you [people] not listen to the Prophet charging you?” They shouted (*laghaṭū*) and so he [the Prophet] said: “Get out!”. When they left, the Prophet was taken on the spot (*qubiḍa al-nabī makānahu*).

As in the other Ibn ‘Abbās versions, the event takes place during the Prophet’s illness, but in this version, it happens even during the last moments of his life. In the last sentence, we are told that the Prophet passed away while those present are still leaving the place. The same time and the same verb (although active form *qabada* instead of the passive form *qubiḍa* in Ibn Sa’d’s tradition) was mentioned in tradition T3 of Ibn ‘Abbās version 5. The writing materials mentioned, inkpot and a piece of paper, previously appeared only in both traditions of Ibn ‘Abbās version 3 of Sulaymān al-A‘mash, one of them from the work of Ibn Sa’d (tradition SA1) and in one tradition (S2) of Ibn ‘Abbās version 1, also part of Ibn Sa’d’s work. Tradition S2 is the only one among the traditions of Ibn ‘Abbās version 1 that contains the combination of inkpot and a piece of paper. If we combine this departure from the other version 1 traditions with the fact that all three Ibn ‘Abbās traditions that mention inkwell and a piece of paper as writing materials are included within the same section of Ibn Sa’d’s work, he seems to be the one responsible for the unity of writing materials within these three Ibn ‘Abbās traditions. Yet he also mentions two other traditions from Ibn ‘Abbās, one with different writing materials and one without writing materials. It is therefore not possible to determine with certainty to whom the deviating formulations belong.⁴⁸

As in Ibn ‘Abbās version 4 of al-Zuhri, it is ‘Umar who responds to the Prophet’s request. His arguments for not responding to the request, however, have nothing to do with objecting the *writing* of the document as in version 4, but with rejecting the *death* of the Prophet. The first reference to the cities of the Byzantines is anachronistic in the context of this story, as the conquests of Byzantine cities did not take place until the caliphate of ‘Umar (r. 13–23 AH/634–644 CE).⁴⁹ ‘Umar’s rejection of the death of Muḥammad in the second part of the sentence comes from another tradition in which ‘Umar makes a similar comparison with Moses during a speech after the Prophet’s death.⁵⁰ Since none of the other Ibn ‘Abbās traditions contain a similar rejection by ‘Umar, the Moses motif is taken from another tradition and placed in the unwritten document narrative rather than vice versa.

The story continues with the Zaynab motif. She seems to be responding to ‘Umar’s statement, but the use of the plural form in the verb (*tasma‘ūnī*) and the suffix (*ilaykum*) makes it clear that she is addressing several persons. Since the sentence about the arguing is placed after her comment, the arguing appears to be due to her comment rather than the other way around, as we saw in tradition T1 of version 5. The last part of this tradition about the quarrelling and the Prophet who sends them away is familiar again and appears in different Ibn ‘Abbās versions. This is where the story ends, and while the purpose of the document is apparent from the Prophet’s request, further information on its content is lacking.

2.1.7. Conclusion Ibn ‘Abbās Traditions

The textual analysis of the traditions on the unwritten document attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās showed that there are six different versions that differ to a greater or lesser degree from each other. This confirms the branches that the *isnād* bundle shows in Figure 1. Each version contains one or more motifs that only appear in that particular version. These characteristic motifs can thus be attributed to the common link of that particular version (see Table 2).

In addition, however, the six versions also contain a number of common motifs that are explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the texts. The first is the time of the event: The Prophet is very sick. It is unclear on which day the event takes place. According to the first three versions, this is on Thursday, as appears from the exclamation of Ibn ‘Abbās. Versions 4, 5 and 6 do not mention a specific day, but state that Muḥammad is about to die, with versions 5 and 6 even indicating that he dies on the same day.⁵¹ Miskinzoda’s observation that most traditions agree on Thursday and some on Monday,⁵² has to be adjusted. The dating of this event on Thursday in versions 1–3 must be attributed to Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, the common link of versions 1–3. While Sa‘īd b. Jubayr’s traditions are indeed the most common in the collections and consequently, his version seems to be the most accepted, this should be counted as one version, as they all come from the same transmitter. The importance of the difference in dating is the degree of drama in which the event is placed. When placed during the Prophet’s illness, there is still hope for a second opportunity for the Prophet to write the document. However, when placed on his day of death, then the chance of another opportunity is lost. The internal dating of the event of Ibn ‘Abbās versions 5 and 6 to the day of death enhances the drama of the event.

The second motif is the presence of several people, although this is not explicitly stated in most versions, but is indicated by means of the plural form of person suffixes and verb conjugations (f.e. *i’ tūnī* and *lakum*).

The third motif is the Prophet’s instruction to bring writing materials so that he can write a document for them after which they will not go astray. This is the only sentence that appears almost verbatim in all traditions, except for the type of writing materials. The materials vary per version and sometimes even within the traditions of one version.⁵³ Only version 5 is slightly different in that the purpose of the document is to avoid disagreement. This deviation must therefore be attributed to Layth b. Abī Sulaymān, the common link of this subgroup of traditions. The last common “motif” is that none of the versions refers to a written document as the end result nor to the content of the document that the

Prophet intended to prepare. The threefold command of the Prophet in version 1 of Sa'īd b. Jubayr, which seems to refer to the content of the document, is not confirmed by his other two versions (Ibn 'Abbās versions 2 and 3) and must therefore be attributed to Sufyān b. 'Uyayna and dated to the last quarter of the second Islamic century, as he died in 198 AH. Ibn 'Abbās version 4 is the only one that explicitly states that the document is not written. Al-Zuhri indicates with an additional *isnād* for this statement that 'Ubayd Allāh heard this from Ibn 'Abbās and that the latter made this statement more often (*kāna Ibn 'Abbās yaqūlu*). The explicit mention that the document was not written must therefore be attributed to al-Zuhri.

The only transmitter common to all versions is Ibn 'Abbās. The common motifs should therefore be attributed to him. Given the discussion in non-Muslim scholarship about the authenticity of attribution of traditions to Ibn 'Abbās, we must ask whether the common motifs may not originate from Ibn 'Abbās, but perhaps from Sa'īd b. Jubayr? Further, are versions 4, 5 and 6 attributed to another informant to give more authority to the attribution to Ibn 'Abbās by a spread of *asānīd*? Both options do not seem likely here. Versions 4, 5 and 6 contain its own characteristics. They differ more from each other and from versions 1, 2 and 3, while the latter are more similar in content, sometimes almost verbatim. The greater degree of similarity corresponds to the information from the chains of transmission, as the chains of versions 1–3 have one transmitter more in common, i.e., Sa'īd b. Jubayr, than the other three versions. The larger deviations in versions 4, 5 and 6 indicate that they are derived from other transmitters, which is visible in their *asānīd*. Yet, all six versions contain a common core. If the discrepancies are explained by a difference in the transmitters mentioned in the *asānīd*, then a common transmitter—in this case the only transmitter all *asānīd* have in common (Ibn 'Abbās)—should also provide similar information in all versions: the above discussed common narrative motifs.

Beside the motifs that appear in all six versions of Ibn 'Abbās, there are also a few that only appear in several Ibn 'Abbās versions. Can they also be ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās? Despite the aforementioned variation in writing material, the inkpot occurs in four Ibn 'Abbās versions (versions 1, 2, 4 and 6) and in one of the three traditions of version 5. Versions 1, 4, 5 and 6 mention discord (*tanāzu* or *ikhtilāf*) or uproar (*laghaṭ*) after the Prophet's request. In several versions, the Prophet orders those present to leave (versions 1, 4 and 6). In versions 1–3 and 4 it is suggested that Muḥammad's illness is the cause of his request (formulated in versions 1–3 as delirious and in version 4 as overcome by pain). These motifs are very likely also from Ibn 'Abbās, as they are supported by different versions.

'Umar is mentioned in two versions (4 and 6). Since version 6 consists of only one tradition, it is difficult to determine from whom or from what time the 'Umar motif originates. A striking similarity between the *asānīd* of versions 4 and 6 is that it circulated in Medina in the earliest generations of transmitters. Since the other Ibn 'Abbās versions (1–3 and 5), of which the earliest transmitters were not from Medina (except Ibn 'Abbās), do not mention 'Umar, the 'Umar motif cannot be ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās. 'Umar may have been added to the Medinan versions as well as suppressed in the (mainly) Kufan versions.⁵⁴ Another interesting motif is that in version 1 the Prophet rebukes those present for having the idea that he is delirious, while in versions 5 and 6 a woman (identified as Zaynab, the wife of the Prophet, in version 6) rebukes them for not obeying the Prophet's command. It is also impossible to say whether this comes from Ibn 'Abbās.

The aforementioned similarities between the different Ibn 'Abbās versions are all based on substantive similarities. Except for the sentence containing the Prophet's request and a few single words, these motifs are discussed and worded differently in each version. This points to an oral tradition in the first few generations. Above the common links of the different versions (Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, Mālik b. Mighwal, Sulaymān al-A'mash, al-Zuhri and Layth b. Abī Sulaym) there is greater similarity between the structure and wording of these narrative versions, suggesting a transition to written transmission or transmission through dictation sessions. If we look at the first few generations of transmitters, it is

striking that the Ibn ‘Abbās versions mainly circulated in Iraq and the Hijaz (see Table 1). The Ibn ‘Abbās versions do not discuss the contents of the unwritten document (except in additions of later transmitters) and only inform us on its purpose: to provide guidance to the followers of Muḥammad.

Table 1. The unique motifs of the Sa‘īd b. Jubayr versions.

Version 1 Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 198/814)	Version 2 Mālik b. Mighwal (d. 159/776)	Version 3 Sulaymān al-A‘mash (d. 148/765)
The tears wet the pebbles	The comparison of the tears with pearls	No description of the crying
Different writing materials: a piece of paper, shoulder blade or document	Two different writing materials: shoulder blade or tablet	One kind of writing material: a piece of paper
Description of the disagreement and dispute among the people		The question to Muḥammad whether they should bring it later
Muḥammad’s command to leave him alone and his remark on his state.		Muḥammad’s counter question: After what?
Threefold command		

Finally, what is striking about all these traditions is that none of them places Ibn ‘Abbās explicitly in the space where the Prophet and the group of unknown persons are located. According to the *asānīd*, he tells about this event and, according to some versions, seems emotionally affected by it, but in each version, Ibn ‘Abbās relates the story in a third person objective point of view. The contrast of the almost detached description of the main event with Ibn ‘Abbās’ emotional outburst in the introduction is enhanced in some traditions of version 1⁵⁵ and almost all traditions of version 2 by the first-person point of view of Sa‘īd b. Jubayr. The first and second person are only used when somebody speaks. The mainly third-person point of view separates Ibn ‘Abbās from the quarelling. In the next part, we will look at the extent to which the traditions about the unwritten document ascribed to Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh match the Ibn ‘Abbās versions.

2.2. Group 2: The Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh Narrative

The following group of traditions that reflect the motive of Muhammad’s request for writing materials for a document he intends to prepare for his community have been attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās’ contemporary Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh. Jābir, like Ibn ‘Abbās, was one of the Prophet’s Companions. He died in 78/697 at the age of 94, meaning that he was older than Ibn ‘Abbās when Muḥammad died. Jābir belonged to the tribe of the Khazraj, one of the two Arab tribes who lived in Yathrib (later called Medina) before the arrival of the Prophet. Together with his father, he would have attended the second ‘Aqaba meeting with Muḥammad, shortly before his *hijra*, where Jābir swore allegiance to Muḥammad and converted to Islam together with his father. Although he was not present at the first two famous battles of Badr and Uḥud, he participated in numerous other battles of the Prophet. Various reports describe regular contact between Muḥammad and Jābir’s family. A critical note from Kister on Jābir’s tradition material is that traditions were attributed to him that did not always adhere to the correct rules of *ḥadīth* transmission. For example, the famous scholar al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is said to have reported directly from Jābir without being a student of his.⁵⁶

Group 2 includes seven traditions, all of which go back to Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh through the Meccan traditionist Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Tadrus al-Qurashī (d. 128/746). While, according to the *asānīd*, the traditions of Ibn ‘Abbās circulated mainly

in Kufa and Medina in the first generations, the traditions of Jābir seem to have circulated mainly in Basra and Mecca during this period (see Figure 3).

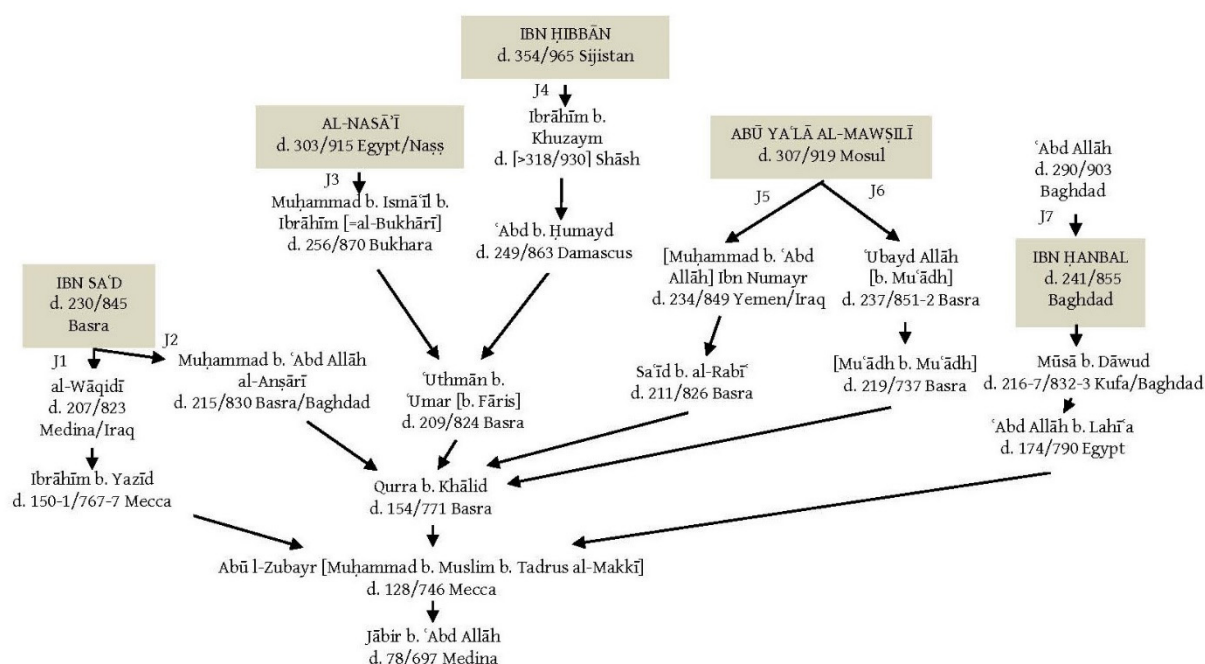


Figure 3. The *isnād* bundle of Abū l-Zubayr's traditions from Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh.

The first thing that strikes one about these seven traditions is that they are all short: the focus is on the Prophet's instruction to get writing materials. Five of the seven traditions look very much alike and are, according to the *asānīd*, from Qurra b. Khālīd, who lived in Basra. The text of these traditions is:⁵⁷

[...] on the authority of Abū l-Zubayr on the authority of Jābir, he said (/that)⁵⁸ at his death, the Messenger (/Prophet)⁵⁹ of God called for a piece of paper to write on it a document for his community (*li-ummatihi*) [so that] they will not go astray nor be led astray. In the house was noise and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb spoke, so he (the Prophet)⁶⁰ relinquished it (the document or the piece of paper).

The other two Abū l-Zubayr traditions, J1 and J7,⁶¹ differ slightly from Qurra's version.⁶² In J1 the reference to 'Umar is missing, i.e., "they shouted in front of him" (*laghaṭū 'indahū*) instead of "there was noise and 'Umar spoke" (*laghaṭ wa-takallama 'Umar*), but since 'Umar's presence is confirmed in J7, i.e., "'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was opposed to it" (*fa-khālafa 'alayhā 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb*), we can most probably attribute the omission or suppression of 'Umar's name to Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd.⁶³ The noise motif is completely missing in J7 and has been replaced by the aforementioned phrase that 'Umar was opposed to it. Mūsā b. Dāwud or 'Abd Allāh b. Lahī'a must have been responsible for this.⁶⁴

The common motifs in all traditions can be attributed to Abū l-Zubayr (d. 128/746), the common link of the *asānīd*, and dated to the first quarter of the second Islamic century. Abū l-Zubayr's narrative is very similar to the Ibn 'Abbās versions. The event takes place towards the end of the Prophet's life. Muḥammad orders writing materials to write a document, but due to noise around him, he abandons it. Moreover, from the version of Abū l-Zubayr we do not learn anything about the content of the document and only the purpose is described. However, there are also clear differences from the Ibn 'Abbās versions.

Unlike the Ibn 'Abbās versions, Abū l-Zubayr's version is lacking any mention of the Prophet's illness. The Prophet's command is formulated differently: "the Prophet/Messenger of God called for" (*da'ā al-nabī/rasūl Allāh bi-*) instead of the characteristic "bring me" (*i' tūnī bi-*). Although the piece of paper (*ṣahīfa*) also appears as a variant in some Ibn 'Abbās versions, for example in version 6 and some traditions of version 1, in the Abū l-Zubayr

version the inkpot is missing. The difference between the direct speech of the Prophet's command in the Ibn 'Abbās versions and the indirect speech in the Abū l-Zubayr version extends to the group for whom the document is intended, i.e., "you" (*lakum*) in the former and "his community" (*li-ummatihi*) in the latter. The Abū l-Zubayr version identifies the location of the event, while this remains unknown in the Ibn 'Abbās versions, except that of al-Zuhri, who mentions "the people of/in the house disagreed" (*fa-khtalafa ahl al-bayt*). Finally, the Abū l-Zubayr version explicitly states that the Prophet gave up the idea of writing a document "he abandoned it" (*rafaḍahu/-ha*). Only in one tradition of Ibn 'Abbās version 3 and version 4 of al-Zuhri does a similar motif occur, respectively, "So he did not summon it" (*fa-lam yad'u bihi*) and "Ibn 'Abbās used to say, 'The most terrible disaster is that their disagreement and their noise came between the Prophet and him writing that document'" (*kāna Ibn 'Abbās yaqūlu: inna al-raziyya kull al-razāyā mā ḥāla bayna rasūl Allāh wa-bayna an yaktuba lahum dhālika l-kitāb min ikhtilāfihim wa-laghaṭihim*).

It is striking that these two characteristic motifs of al-Zuhri's Ibn 'Abbās version (see Table 2) are far part of Abū l-Zubayr's version, even though the wording is different. A third characteristic can be added to this, since another similarity that al-Zuhri's version shares with Abū l-Zubayr's version is that 'Umar is mentioned (as does Ibn 'Abbās version 6). Ibn 'Abbās version 4 (and 6) circulated in Medina and this regional proximity is probably the cause of the similarities. Abū l-Zubayr (d. 128/746) and al-Zuhri (d. 127/742) were contemporaries, lived in the same area, the Hijaz, and both transmitted traditions from each other.⁶⁵ Yet the list of differences also shows that the version of Abū l-Zubayr is a separate version and does not show the characteristics of the Ibn 'Abbās traditions. This seems to indicate that the attribution to two different informants is correct. Whether those informants are indeed Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh cannot be established definitively. What speaks for the reliability of the attribution is that both were in close contact with the Prophet, although they do not emerge as active participants in the story. Both Ibn 'Abbās' and Abū l-Zubayr's versions provide an outsider's view of the event. While the Ibn 'Abbās versions show a change of perspective, Abū l-Zubayr's version is told entirely from a third person point of view, suggesting a greater distance between the narrator and the event. The common core of the stories indicates a common source: either the actual event or a well-known story on the unwritten document circulating in the Hijaz and Iraq in the second half of the first Islamic century, with the 'Umar motif possibly being part of the Hijazi stories.

Table 2. The unique motifs of Ibn 'Abbās versions 1–6.

Version 1 Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/814)	The tears wet the pebbles; different writing materials (a piece of paper, shoulder blade or document); description of the disagreement and dispute among the people; Muḥammad's command to leave him alone and his remark on his state; threefold command
Version 2 Mālik b. Mighwal (d. 159/776)	The comparison of the tears with pearls; two different writing materials (shoulder blade or tablet)
Version 3 Sulaymān al-A'mash (d. 148/765)	No description of the crying; one kind of writing material (a piece of paper); the question to Muḥammad whether they should bring it later; Muḥammad's counter question: After what?
Versions 1–3 Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/714)	The exclamation of Ibn 'Abbās "Thursday, what a Thursday!"; the crying of Ibn 'Abbās (even if the three versions differ in the details); people who wonder if Muḥammad is delirious

Table 2. Cont.

Version 4 Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (d. 124/742)	Ibn ‘Abbās speaks of a disaster; no writing materials mentioned; ‘Umar’s presence; ‘Umar makes the call not to obey the Prophet’s wish; ‘Umar’s argument that no second document is needed besides the Qur’ān; counter argument; the people of/in the house (<i>ahl al-bayt</i>)
Version 5 Layth b. Abī Sulaymān	Shoulder blade as writing material; purpose document is to avoid disagreement (between two men); noise or shouting after the request of the Prophet; the correction of those present by a woman
Version 6 al-Wāqidi—‘Ikrima	‘Umar’s rejection of the death of Muḥammad; reference to the cities of the Byzantines; Zaynab, the Prophet’s wife, corrects those present

2.3. Group 3: The ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb Narrative

The Hijazi occurrence of the ‘Umar motif is also evident in the traditions of group 3 attributed to the Companion and second caliph of the Muslim empire ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644). ‘Umar had close ties to the Prophet, which were confirmed by Muḥammad’s marriage to ‘Umar’s daughter Ḥafṣa. According to Islamic tradition, ‘Umar played a major role in the appointment of Abū Bakr as leader of the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. Immediately following the death of the Prophet, the religious community Muḥammad had established a decade earlier started to fall apart. Separately, several groups of Muslims in Medina gathered to discuss their future course. During one of these debates, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb took the hand of Abū Bakr and swore allegiance to him, shortly followed by the other men present in the hall. The next day, Abū Bakr’s leadership was announced in Medina.⁶⁶ Abū Bakr later appointed ‘Umar as his successor, and ‘Umar became caliph of the Muslim empire after Abū Bakr’s death.

Group 3 contains only two traditions, preserved in the collections of Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarānī,⁶⁷ and the common link according to the chains of transmission is Hishām b. Sa’d (d. 160/776–7) from Medina, who belonged to the tribe of the Quraysh. *Ḥadīth* authorities such as Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 158/775) labelled him a weak transmitter (*laysa bi-muḥkim li-l-ḥadīth/laysa bi-dhāk al-qawī/ḍa‘īf*).⁶⁸ This may also be the reason why few traditions have been preserved in the *ḥadīth* collections. Al-Ṭabarānī remarks that only Hishām relates these traditions from his informant Zayd, and only Mūsā, who received the tradition from Hishām according to his *isnād*, from Hishām, and that the same applies to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Khalaf (see Figure 4). Al-Ṭabarānī’s comment indicates that he had no variants of this tradition in his day. He was apparently unfamiliar with al-Wāqidi’s tradition.⁶⁹

Ibn Sa’d’s tradition goes back to Hishām through al-Wāqidi, while that of al-Ṭabarānī goes back to him through Mūsā b. Ja‘far b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib (al-Ja‘farī)⁷⁰. According to both *asānīd*, the tradition is handed down through a chain of members of the same family.⁷¹ Hishām b. Sa’d received the tradition from his guardian Zayd b. Aslam (d. 136/754), who got it from his father Aslam al-Qurashī al-‘Adawī who was a client (*mawlā*) from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. All are from Medina. The text of Ibn Sa’d’s tradition from Hishām b. Sa’d is:

[...] on the authority of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, he said: We were with the Prophet, and between us and between the women was a curtain (*ḥijāb*). The Messenger of God said, “If you cleanse me with seven water skins and bring me a piece of paper and an inkpot then I will write for you a document after which you will never go astray.” The women said: “Bring the Messenger of God what he needs.” ‘Umar said: I said, “Be quiet. You are his companions. When he (i.e., Muḥammad) is sick, you squeeze your eyes and when he is healthy you take his neck!” The Messenger of God said, “They are better than you (*minkum*)!”

The bold phrases are identical to al-Ṭabarānī's tradition and his tradition is largely similar in content. The main difference from Ibn Sa'd's tradition is that the event is explicitly placed at the time of the Prophet's illness, "when the Prophet was ill" (*lammā maraḍa al-nabī*), which in Ibn Sa'd's tradition can be implicitly inferred from the penultimate sentence. The seven water skins are missing.⁷² The Prophet repeats his command one more time, because the persons present ("we") preferred not to do so (*fa-karihanā dhālika ashadd al-karāha*). In both traditions the women are behind a partition, which is described as *ḥijāb* by Ibn Sa'd and as *sitr*⁷³ by al-Ṭabarānī. In al-Ṭabarānī's tradition, the women ask those present if they have not heard what the Prophet asked (*a-lā tasma'ūna mā yaqūlu rasūl Allāh?*).⁷⁴ The similarities in formulation and content can be attributed to the common link Hishām b. Sa'd, and therefore dated to the middle or the second quarter of the second Islamic century. Since there are only two traditions, it is not clear which of the differences in the two traditions are from Hishām and which are from later transmitters.

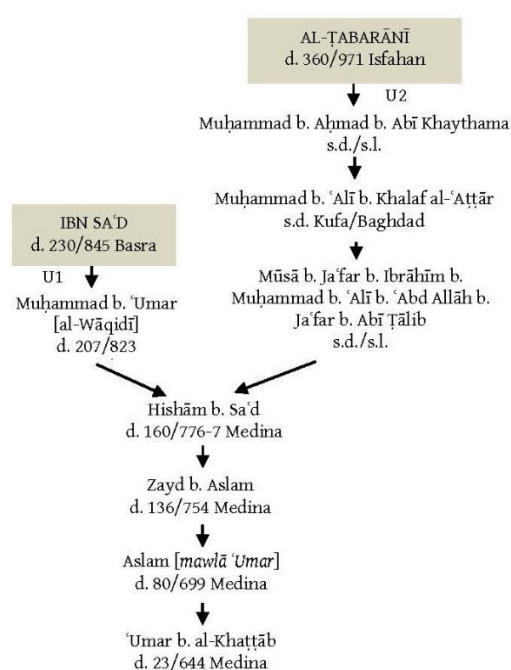


Figure 4. The *isnād* bundle of Hishām b. Sa'd's traditions from 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

The event in the traditions of Hishām b. Sa'd, like the Ibn 'Abbās versions, is linked to the Prophet's illness (explicitly in al-Ṭabarānī's tradition U2 and implicit in Ibn Sa'd's tradition U1). The Prophet's command is formulated differently in the two traditions: "bring me" (*i' tūnī bi-*) in U1 is similar to the Ibn 'Abbās versions and "summon for me" (*ud' ū lī bi-*) in U2 resembles Abū l-Zubayr's version from Jābir, i.e., "the Prophet/Messenger of God called for" (*da' ā al-nabī/rasūl Allāh bi-*). The writing material Muḥammad asks for, a piece of paper and an inkpot (*bi-ṣaḥīfa wa-dawāh*), and the stated purpose of the document, "after which you will never go astray", are more like the Ibn 'Abbās versions by mentioning the inkpot (which is missing in the version of Abū l-Zubayr) and the use of the indirect speech "for you" ("for your *umma*" in the version of Abū l-Zubayr). It is even identical to Ibn 'Abbās version 3 of Sulaymān b. al-A'mash and Ibn 'Abbās version 6 of Ibn Sa'd through 'Ikrima. The presence of several persons is not explicitly stated, but can be derived from the plural form of person suffixes and verb conjugations, all second person plural masculine, i.e., the aforementioned "bring me" or "summon for me", "for you" (*lakum*), "you will not go astray" (*lā taḍillū*), "than you" (*minkum*).

Contrary to the versions of Ibn 'Abbās and Abū l-Zubayr, there is no uproar or discord among the persons present, except for the discussion between 'Umar and the women. Neither the location of the event nor the content of the document is discussed. In fact, the

document is no longer mentioned in the story at all. Hishām's version focuses on 'Umar's derogatory statement about the women behind the curtain and Muḥammad's rebuke by. According to this version, 'Umar is angry with the women for urging those present to carry out the Prophet's command, yet he does not appear to give them time to comply with his (the women's question immediately follows the Prophet's request). Muḥammad's reprimand would then have to be directed against 'Umar. However, it is also addressed to other people, which would only make sense if a discussion took place amongst them. This shows that Hishām's version is a secondary version. In Hishām's version a switch is made to a first-person perspective: 'Umar, the alleged narrator of this tradition, relates the event from his point of view (f.e., "we were", "between us", "I said"). In contrast with the versions of Ibn 'Abbās and Abū l-Zubayr, he is an active participant in the event.

The noise or discord motif occurs in both Ibn 'Abbās' and Abū l-Zubayr's versions, but the 'Umar motif only in those of Hijazi origin, versions 4 and 6 of Ibn 'Abbās and the version of Abū l-Zubayr. The Medinan origin of the two traditions of Hishām, who is from Medina himself and provides a Medinan *isnād*, is consistent with the regional occurrence of the 'Umar motif. Is Hishām's version derived from Ibn 'Abbās' or Abū l-Zubayr's? So far, Hishām's version has more similarities to that of Ibn 'Abbās than that of Abu l-Zubayr, such as that no location is mentioned, nor that Muḥammad is about to die, and the wording of the Prophet's command. One part has not yet been discussed: the women motif.

The women motif occurs in both of Hishām b. Sa'd's traditions from 'Umar and can therefore be traced back to him and dated to the second quarter or the middle of the second Islamic century, since Hishām died in 160/776–7. We have already encountered the (one) woman motif in two other versions: Ibn 'Abbās versions 5 and 6. In two of the three traditions of Ibn 'Abbās version 5 of Layth b. Abī Sulaym, a woman rebukes the people present for shouting instead of following the command of the Prophet. Although what she says is different from Hishām's version, it conveys the same sentiment: a rebuke for not following the Prophet's command ("Woe unto you! [It is] the command of the Messenger of God!" (*wayḥakum 'ahd rasūl Allāh*)).

The woman motif in Layth's traditions can be dated to the second quarter of the second Islamic century, since Layth died in 138/755–6 or 143/760–1. In Ibn 'Abbās version 6, the woman is identified as Zaynab, one of the Prophet's wives. Although her reprimand follows a statement by 'Umar, she addresses several people, revealing that part of the story is missing from this tradition. The woman motif in this tradition is more difficult to date, because there is only one tradition of it. It is part of Ibn Sa'd's work in which he collected nine traditions about the unwritten document.⁷⁵ Of these nine traditions, two contain the woman motif, for which Ibn Sa'd both times lists his teacher al-Wāqidi as informant. However, of these nine, Ibn Sa'd traces four traditions back to al-Wāqidi, two of which do not contain the woman motif. It is therefore unlikely that Ibn Sa'd or al-Wāqidi included the woman motif in these two traditions. That would put the dating of the women motif in Ibn 'Abbās version 6 with al-Wāqidi's informant, Ibrāhīm b. Ismā'il, who died in 165/781–2, i.e., to the same period as Hishām's. The woman motif (either one or more women) thus seems to have been introduced into the story of the unwritten document in the second quarter of the second Islamic century. Unlike the 'Umar motif, the woman motif is not restricted to any particular region (Layth and his informant Ṭāwūs are not from Medina, but from Kufa and Janad (Yemen), respectively), but occurs only in traditions that were not widespread, indicating that they were not widely accepted.

2.4. Group 4: The 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib Narrative

The traditions of the penultimate group are all traced back to Muḥammad's nephew 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the fourth caliph of the Muslim empire. The Islamic tradition material describes a strong bond between Muḥammad and his nephew 'Alī that began before Muḥammad's prophethood and continued until the latter's death. 'Alī was one of the first converts and married Fāṭima, the Prophet's daughter. When Muḥammad died, 'Alī led the preparation of his body for burial.⁷⁶ Because of this, he did not take part

in the discussions about succession of the Prophet. The debates on the day the Prophet died, and the way in which Abū Bakr became the leader of the community, show that Muḥammad had not or—at that time—yet arranged his succession, or that any indication Muḥammad might have given during his life was not followed up. The succession of Muḥammad and the leadership of the Islamic community would become one of the main factors causing a schism in the religious community, leading to the distinction between Sunnī and Shīʿī⁷⁷ Islam. The majority of the Shiites (Twelver and Ismāʿīlī Shiites) do not recognize the legitimacy of Abū Bakr's reign and claim that Muḥammad had appointed his nephew ʿAlī as his successor and that only descendants of ʿAlī and (according to the majority of the Shiites) his wife Fāṭima had the right and the qualifications to lead the Islamic community.

The five⁷⁸ traditions ascribed to ʿAlī are all from ʿUmar b. al-Faḍl al-Sulamī or al-Ḥarashī, who lived in Basra (see Figure 5). The biographical works do not mention his date of death. According to al-Mizzī, he narrates of four persons and eight persons of him,⁷⁹ which seems to indicate that he was not a prolific transmitter. Inferred from the dates of death of the two persons in the chain who transmit from him, he likely died in the second half of the second Islamic century. Even less is known about his informant, Nuʿaym b. al-Yazīd. According to al-Mizzī and Ibn Ḥajar, he only narrates from ʿAlī and only ʿUmar b. al-Faḍl transmits from him. Ibn Ḥajar considers him *majhūl* (an unknown transmitter).⁸⁰

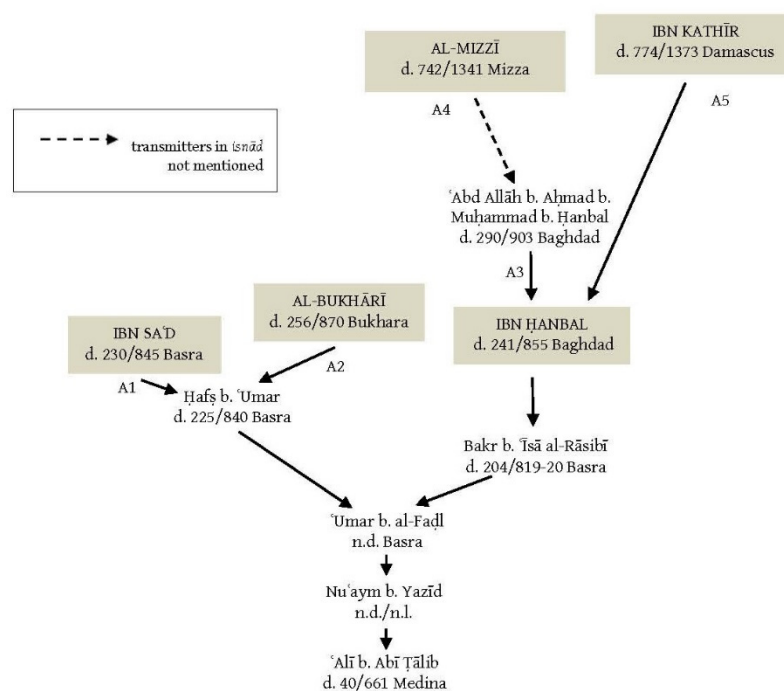


Figure 5. The isnād bundle of ʿUmar b. al-Faḍl's traditions from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

Two slightly different versions of the narrative can be distinguished in the five traditions. The text of the first version in traditions A1 and A2 from Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī is:

[...] ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib informed us that the Prophet (A1)/Messenger of God (A2) said when he became heavy [in sickness], “ʿAlī, if you bring me a plate (*ṭabaq*) then I will write on it what would prevent my community after me⁸¹ from going astray.” He (ʿAlī) said: “I was afraid that his soul would depart (before I return), so I said, ‘I can memorise better from my forearm than from a piece of paper’.” He (ʿAlī) said: “His head was between my forearm and my upper arm. He (Muḥammad) started to bequeath the prayer, the *zakāh* (almsgiving) and what your right hands own (=slaves).” He (ʿAlī) said: “[Muḥammad continued] thus until his soul departed. He ordered the *shahāda* (creed) that there is no god but

God and that Muḥammad is his servant and his Messenger (in A1: until his soul departed). Whoever witnesses them is forbidden to the fire.”

The second variant from Ibn Ḥanbal⁸² is similar in content but ends with Muḥammad’s first three commands, that is, up to and including “what your right hands own”. Other differences include the indirect speech of the Prophet’s request, the omission of the explanation on how to memorize better from the forearm and the use of synonyms in certain places.⁸³ Since there are only two variants of the tradition from ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl, it is unclear whether ‘Umar himself related the tradition in two ways or who is responsible for adding or leaving out the last parts. However, for comparison with the previously discussed versions of this story, this does not matter, because the last part of the story is unique to ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl’s version from ‘Alī.

The version of ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl is the most different version up till now. Although the setting is the same with Muḥammad being critically ill and asking for writing material to prevent his community from going astray, for the first time only one person is present, Muḥammad’s nephew ‘Alī, and Muḥammad directs his request only to him. Despite the family relationship to Muḥammad and the close connection they are said to have, none of the other versions lists ‘Alī as one of those in attendance. The persons generally remain unknown except for ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who appears only in Hijazi versions, and Zaynab in one tradition.⁸⁴

The material that Muḥammad wants to write on, *ṭabaq* (a thin plate or bone),⁸⁵ is also a new element in this story. For the first time, we learn what Muḥammad intended to write, namely two (A3, A4 and A5) or three (A1 and A2) of the five pillars of Islam, and slaves. We have encountered the motif of the threefold command earlier in Ibn ‘Abbās version 1 of Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 198/814), i.e., expulsion of the polytheists, an instruction for dealing with delegations, and a third, forgotten, command. It was *implied* that the threefold command was the content of the document. In the version of ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl, the link is made explicit by ‘Alī telling Muḥammad that he can better memorize what Muḥammad wants to write down. After all, ‘Alī is afraid that Muḥammad will be dead before he returns with the requested writing material. Since ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl is a contemporary of Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna, the addition of the threefold command motif to the story of the Prophet’s unwritten document—even though the command itself is different—can be dated to the second half of the second Islamic century. Both lived in Iraq, Sufyān in Kufa and ‘Umar in Basra, which means that the threefold command can also be linked to a certain region.

However, this does not necessarily mean that this motif was put into circulation by ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl. The threefold command in ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl’s version from ‘Alī is very similar to a tradition whose common link appears to be Qatāda b. Di‘āma, a legal scholar from Basra who died in 117/735.⁸⁶ In this tradition, which takes place just before the death of the Prophet, the Companion Anas b. Mālik or Muḥammad’s wife Umm Salama⁸⁷ says:

“The general testamentary statement made by the Messenger of God, when his death approached was, ‘(Uphold) prayer; and (care for) what you right hands possess’, until his chest began to gurgle as he spoke, and his tongue could scarcely express it.”⁸⁸

While an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis of these traditions is interesting and may show whether Qatāda b. Di‘āma is the common link of the traditions and thus the earlier source for this motif, it goes beyond the purpose of this article. Suffice it to conclude that there is an interdependence between the traditions from Qatāda b. Di‘āma and the ones from ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl. Ibn Kathīr noticed the same similarity, for he placed Ibn Ḥanbal’s tradition from ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl in the midst of the traditions from Qatāda. Ibn Kathīr notes that Ibn Ḥanbal is the only one who gives it like this (*tafarrada bihi Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] min hādihā l-wajh*).⁸⁹ ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl’s version from ‘Alī is thus most probably a mix of a number of motifs from different traditions. Just as he seems to have adopted and edited the section on the testamentary statement, so did he adopt and edit the tradition about the unwritten document of the Prophet. A third clue to his adaptation of this tradition is that the position

in which Muḥammad dies—with his head between ‘Alī’s forearm and upper arm—is very similar to the tradition attributed to Muḥammad’s favorite wife ‘Ā’isha. In it she tells that the Prophet died with his head between her chest and her chin.⁹⁰

The reason for creating an ‘Alī version of this tradition may have to do with the time period and region in which ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl grew up. Although we are not sure when ‘Umar was born and died, he likely witnessed the change of power in the Islamic empire in the middle of the second Islamic century. The Umayyad dynasty, who had ruled the empire after the death of caliph ‘Alī, were overthrown by the ‘Abbāsids with the help of Shī‘ī Muslims on the promise that a descendant of ‘Alī would be proclaimed caliph. Their disappointment with the ‘Abbāsīd-appointed caliph resulted in a hostile attitude of the Shī‘īs towards the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs.⁹¹ Many followers of ‘Alī could be found in the area where ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl lived. Although Basra was not completely pro-‘Alid like Kufa—it was largely Sunnī—there were also supporters of ‘Alī.⁹² While the version of ‘Umar does not address the issue of succession from the Prophet, it does underscore ‘Alī’s closeness to the Prophet and in this sense displays a pro-‘Alid tendency.

Besides these differences from the previously discussed versions of Ibn ‘Abbās, Abū l-Zubayr and Hishām b. Sa‘d, there is another striking difference. There is no opposition to obeying the Prophet’s instruction for writing material. Although ‘Alī does not follow the instruction to the letter (he memorizes them), he ensures that Muḥammad’s words are preserved. The mention of ‘Alī’s good memory assures the reliability of the commands and a reason is provided for not obeying the order: ‘Alī is afraid that Muḥammad will die before his return. We will also encounter this lack of opposition in the discussion of the next narrative.

2.5. Group 5: The ‘Ā’isha bt. Abī Bakr Narrative

The last group of traditions, revolving around the Prophet’s instruction to get writing materials, is ascribed to ‘Ā’isha (d. 58/687), the favourite wife of the Prophet Muḥammad and the daughter of Abū Bakr, the first caliph of the Islamic empire after the death of Muḥammad. According to the Islamic *ḥadīth* material, the Prophet married her a few years before the *hijra* after the death of his first wife Khadīja. At the time, ‘Ā’isha was still very young. Although ‘Ā’isha was not his only wife and their marriage to the Prophet may also have been concluded from a political point of view to strengthen ties with Abū Bakr, she continued to hold a special position among Muhammad’s wives. Contrary to ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl’s version from ‘Alī of discussed above, the common belief is that the Prophet died in her arms, after which he was buried in her apartment.⁹³

All the traditions in this group are attributed to the Ibn Abī Mulayka, who, like ‘Ā’isha and Abū Bakr, belonged to the Taym clan within the tribe of the Quraysh. Ibn Sa‘d considers Ibn Abī Mulayka a reliable (*thiqa*) transmitter, belonging to the second generation in Mecca, who narrated many *aḥādīth* (*kathīr al-ḥadīth*), including traditions from ‘Ā’isha and Ibn ‘Abbās. He died in Mecca in 117/735.⁹⁴

Two slightly different versions can be distinguished within the ‘Ā’isha traditions.

The reconstruction of ‘Ā’isha version 1 is:⁹⁵

[. . .] on the authority of ‘Ā’isha, she said: The Messenger of God said to me during his illness of which he died, “If you call (*ud’ī/ud’ū*)⁹⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr for me, then I will write a document for Abū Bakr on which no one after me disagrees.” Then he said, “Leave it/him (*da’ihī*)⁹⁷. God forbid, that the believers disagree about Abū Bakr.”

The common link of version 2 is the Kufan scholar Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr (d. 194/810). His reconstructed text is:⁹⁸

[. . .] on the authority of ‘Ā’isha, she said: When the Messenger of God became heavy in sickness, he said to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr, “Bring me a shoulder blade so that I can write a document for Abū Bakr on which no one disagrees.” When ‘Abd al-Raḥmān started to get up, he said, “God and the believers forbade disagreeing about Abū Bakr.”

The most striking differences between the two versions are the role of ‘Ā’isha, the writing material and the wording of the last sentence. In version 1, the Prophet’s request is

addressed to ‘Ā’isha (AA2, AA4, AA7)(*ud’ī*) or to a group of unknown persons (*ud’ū*)⁹⁹, who must get her brother ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, while in version 2 from Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr, her brother is already present and Muḥammad directly instructs him to get writing materials. In version 1, ‘Ā’isha takes an active role and the story is told from a first-person perspective, while in version 2 she is (only) the source of the account and she relates the tradition from the third-person point of view.

In version 1, the Prophet’s request does not include any reference to writing material, while in version 2 he asks for a shoulder blade. After the request, Muḥammad tells ‘Ā’isha in version 1, “Leave it/him” (*da’thi*), which is missing in version 2. In version 2 it is said that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān stands up (*dhahaba ‘Abd al-Raḥmān li-yaqūma* or *qāma ‘Abd al-Raḥmān*)¹⁰⁰ and this is again missing in version 1. The last sentence looks similar in the translation, but is worded differently. Version 1 has *ma’ādha Allāh an yakhtalifa al-mu’ minūna* (God forbids that the believers disagree), while version 2 has *abā Allāh wa-l-mu’ minuna an yukhtalifa* (God and the believers forbade disagreeing).

Both ‘Ā’isha versions take place during the last days of the Prophet’s illness. In version 1, this is referred to as “during the disease he died from” (*fī maraḍihi alladhī māta fihī*) and in version 2 as “when he became heavy in sickness” (*lammā thaqula*). The former expression is identical to that of Ibn ‘Abbās version 6 from Ibn Sa’d, but it is such a general wording that it cannot be seen as evidence of interdependent transmission. The latter is unique to Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr’s version 2 from ‘Ā’isha. In both ‘Ā’isha versions, the Prophet addresses one person, similar to the ‘Alī narrative discussed above. Muḥammad wants ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, the son of Abū Bakr and a full brother of ‘Ā’isha¹⁰¹, to write a document for Abū Bakr. Both ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Abū Bakr have not been mentioned as participants in the story about the unwritten document of the Prophet in any of the discussed versions, and their appearance is therefore unique to the ‘Ā’isha versions. Similar to the ‘Alī version of ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl, the people present, ‘Ā’isha or ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr, do not dispute the Prophet’s instruction.

For the first time ever, the document is not intended for the community—mentioned explicitly in some versions, “*li-ummati*” (for my community), and implicit in others, “*lakum*” (for you)—but for one person. The purpose of the document is to avoid disagreement. We encountered this before in Ibn ‘Abbās version 5 of the Kufan transmitter Layth b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 138/755–6 or 143/760–1). Since both Layth and the common link of ‘Ā’isha version 2, Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr, and the possible common links of ‘Ā’isha version 1, Muḥammad b. Abān al-Ja’fī (d. 175/792) or ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Rufay’ (d. 130/787–8),¹⁰² (‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Adī 1997) lived in Kufa, the disagreement motif appears to have regional origins. The disagreement, in both ‘Ā’isha versions, concerns a dispute over Abū Bakr, as shown in the last sentence, “God and the believers forbade disagreeing about Abū Bakr”. Not only God, but also the “the believers” reject it, thereby implying that disagreement equals non-belief. Given the time at which this story takes place, just before the death of the Prophet, this seems to refer to the disagreement that arises over Abū Bakr’s succession of Muḥammad as leader of the Muslim community.

A second similarity to Ibn ‘Abbās version 5 of Layth b. Abī Sulaymān is the shoulder blade mentioned in ‘Ā’isha version 2 of Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr, which shows the interdependency of the traditions of Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr and Layth b. Abī Sulaymān. According to al-Mizzī, Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr transmits from Layth, which corresponds to the findings of the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis.¹⁰³ The shoulder blade motif in Abū Mu‘āwiya al-Ḍarīr’s version from ‘Ā’isha is therefore most likely from Layth. Something else seems to have happened with the disagreement motif. Except for Ibn ‘Abbās version 5 of Layth, we only encountered the disagreement motif with Ibn Abī Mulayka, where it is part of the basic narrative. According to al-Mizzī, one of Layth’s informants is Ibn Abī Mulayka¹⁰⁴ and therefore the latter is very likely the source of Layth’s disagreement motif.

However, there is even more to the ‘Ā’isha narrative. The similarities of both ‘Ā’isha versions indicate that they are from the same source, Ibn Abī Mulayka (d. 117/735), according to Figure 6. The common motifs of the two ‘Ā’isha versions thus date to the

end of the first or the beginning of the second Islamic century. The *ḥadīth* material contains several traditions that are attributed to Ibn Abī Mulayka and that take place during the Prophet's illness. From these traditions a clear picture emerges in which the Prophet prefers Abū Bakr over others in different settings. Various phrases from the 'Ā'isha narrative are also present in these traditions, such as "during his illness of which he died" (*fī maraḍihi alladhī māta fīhi*), "call Abū Bakr for me" (*ud'ūh lī (Abī Bakr)*)¹⁰⁵, "God and the believers forbid that" (*ya' bā Allāh dhālika wa-l-mu' minūna*).¹⁰⁶ Ibn Abī Mulayka narrates from Ibn 'Abbās¹⁰⁷ and thus appears to be the one who combined the motif of the unwritten document with the motif of the disagreement over Abū Bakr, just as he may have done with other motifs.

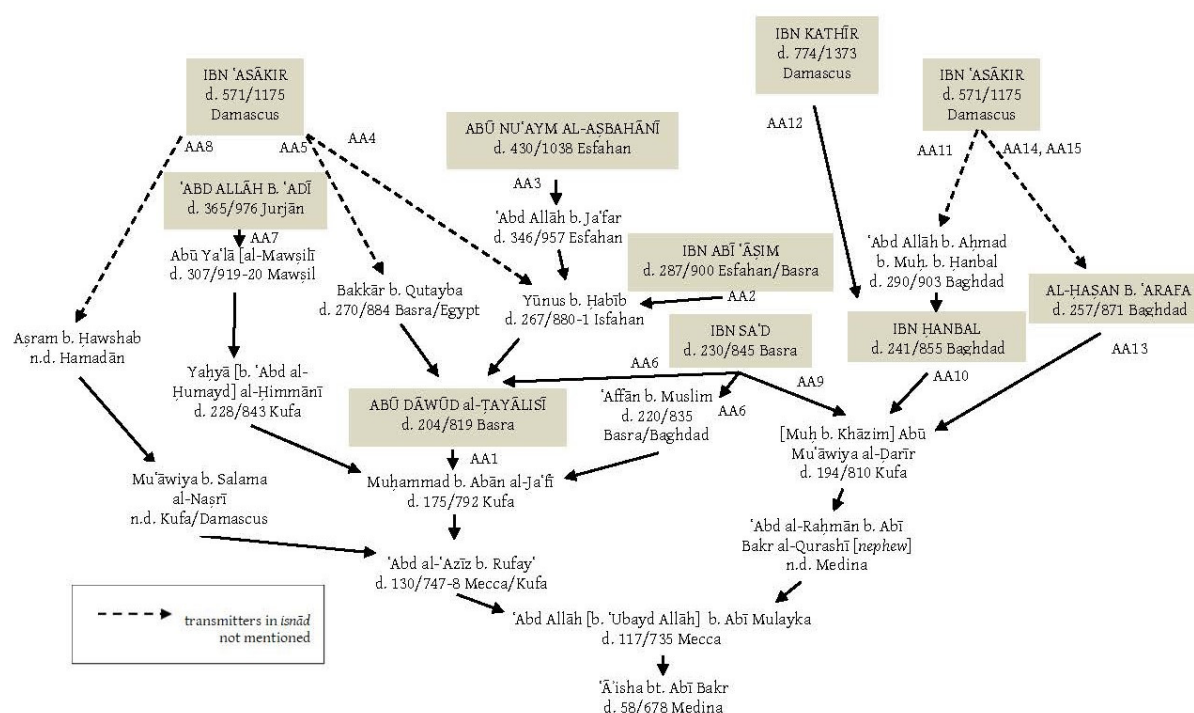


Figure 6. The *isnād* bundle of Ibn Abī Mulayka's traditions from 'Ā'isha bt. Abī Bakr.

3. Conclusions

The ICM analysis of the unwritten document narratives has shown that there are roughly five different narratives in the narrative material about the unwritten document that Muhammad intended to write during his illness. By attributing those narratives to companions of the Prophet, they appear to be separate narratives, but the similarity in setting and in the Prophet's request suggests that there might be a connection between the traditions. The ICM analysis helped to entangle the interwoven tradition complexes. By comparing the chains of transmission with the texts, it was possible to date the different narratives, identify the oldest kernel of each narrative and to determine who is responsible for certain parts in the account. By separating the earliest core and later motifs, it is possible to make much more precise statements about possible historical elements of these *sīra* stories.

One of the earliest versions is ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās. The event takes place when the Prophet is very sick. Several persons are present when he asks for an inkpot and something to write on to prepare a document for his people after which they will not go astray. What he wants to write remains unknown, because after his request a commotion arises among those present, since they think the request was caused by his illness. At one point the Prophet orders them to leave. The earliest transmission of this basic narrative was probably oral and circulated in the first few generations mainly in Iraq and the Hijaz. A second,

distinctive narrative, attributed to Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, was circulating in the same region. The common core of these two stories points to a common source that can be dated at least to the second half of the first Islamic century—the actual event or a well-known story on the unwritten document. Although the attribution to Ibn ‘Abbās and Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh could not be confirmed, the characteristic features of both versions indicate that it cannot be excluded. Ibn ‘Abbās and Jābir were Companions of the Prophet and had access to him.

Unlike later versions of the story, their texts relate the story itself in an almost detached way (except for the emotional context in which four Ibn ‘Abbās versions are placed). Further remarkable elements of these earliest versions are the opposition to the writing of the document, even accusing the Prophet of being delirious, the lack of clarity about its content and the Prophet’s abandonment of writing the document. These ambiguous elements, which can be dated to at least half a century after the death of the Prophet, speak for an actual event rather than a story. The later additions revealed by the ICM analysis fill in the gaps in this narrative or explain ambiguities. For example, later transmitters of the Ibn ‘Abbās narrative added their own details. Some of these can be traced back to certain narrators, such as the dating on Thursday, while others are of regional origin. An example of the latter is the identification of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as one of those present. The ‘Umar motif is part of traditions of Hijazi origin and the earliest dateable occurrence is the first quarter of the second Islamic century, based on Ibn ‘Abbās version 4 from al-Zuhri (d. 124/742) and the Jābir traditions from Abū l-Zubayr (d. 128/746). Because al-Zuhri and Abū l-Zubayr transmit from each other and their versions contain similarities, there seems to be interdependency in the transmission, which speaks for inclusion of the ‘Umar motif in Hijazi traditions instead of suppression of the ‘Umar motif in Iraqi traditions. Another later addition is the woman (or women) motif. It seems to have been introduced into the story of the unwritten document in the second quarter of the second Islamic century. Unlike the ‘Umar motif, the woman motif is not restricted to any particular region but occurs only in traditions that were not widespread, indicating that they were not widely accepted. Half a century later, in the second half of the second Islamic century, the threefold command motif is introduced into the story. The introduction of the motif also originated in a specific region, in Iraq in the vicinity of Basra and Kufa.

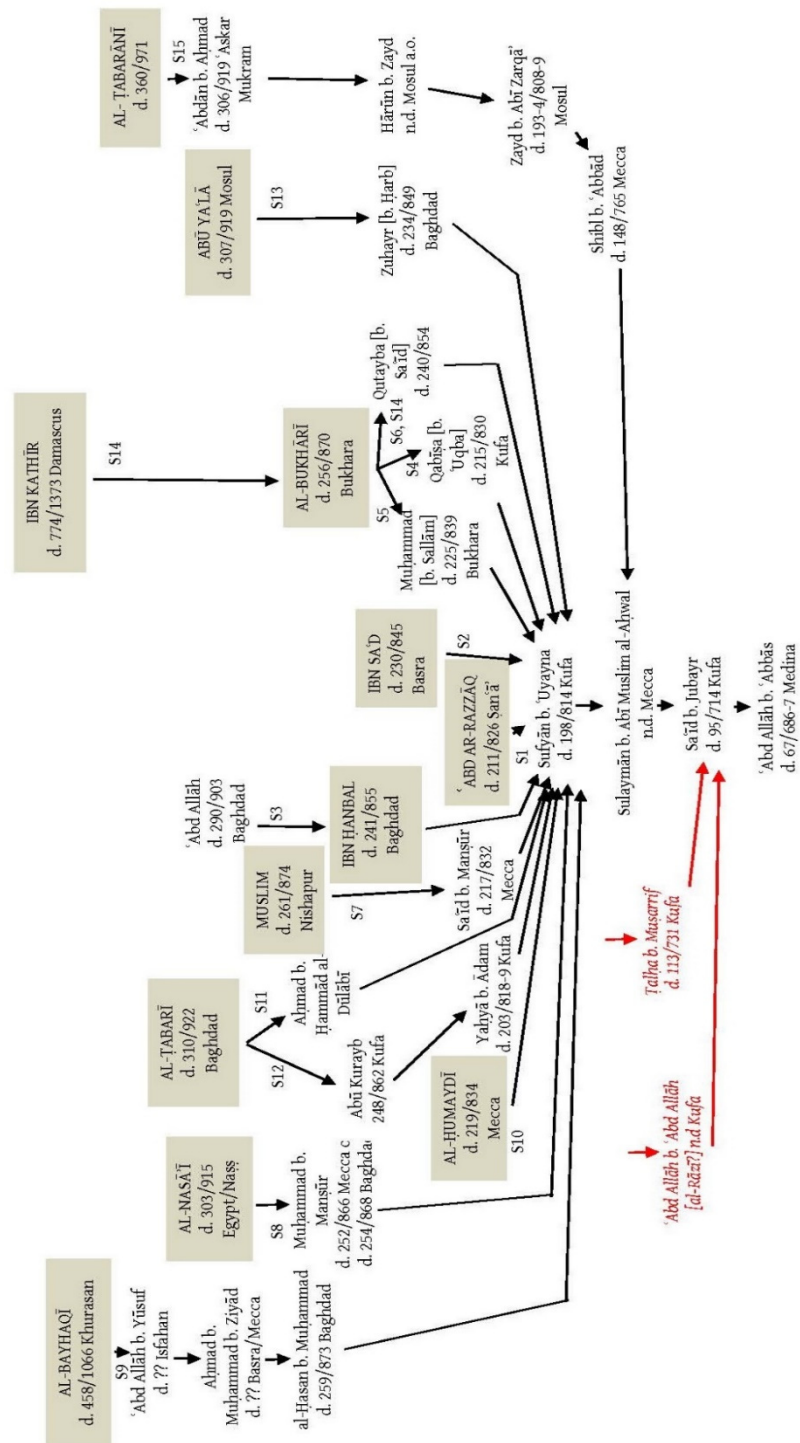
The two most deviating narratives are those of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and ‘Ā’isha. Both narratives consist of combinations of motifs from different stories, including that of the unwritten document. The document story is used to spotlight one person, ‘Alī and Abū Bakr, respectively. Both narratives are related to the discussion of the succession of the Prophet, which may be why both narratives not only refer to the content of the document but also contain no opposition to Muḥammad’s wish to write it. Although the ‘Alī narrative does not explicitly address the issue of succession like the ‘Ā’isha narrative, it does underscore ‘Alī’s closeness to the Prophet and in this sense displays a pro-‘Alid tendency. The narrative probably originated in a period and region of pro-‘Alid support. The ‘Ā’isha narrative emerged earlier, towards the end of the first or the beginning of the second Islamic century. After the Ibn ‘Abbās narrative it is the most common narrative in the *ḥadīth* collections. While the storyline of the earliest versions of the unwritten document is still visible in the ‘Alī narrative, in the ‘Ā’isha narrative it has been snowed under by motifs from other traditions. However, that is an interwoven tradition complex that still has to be untangled.

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Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Figure A1. Cont.



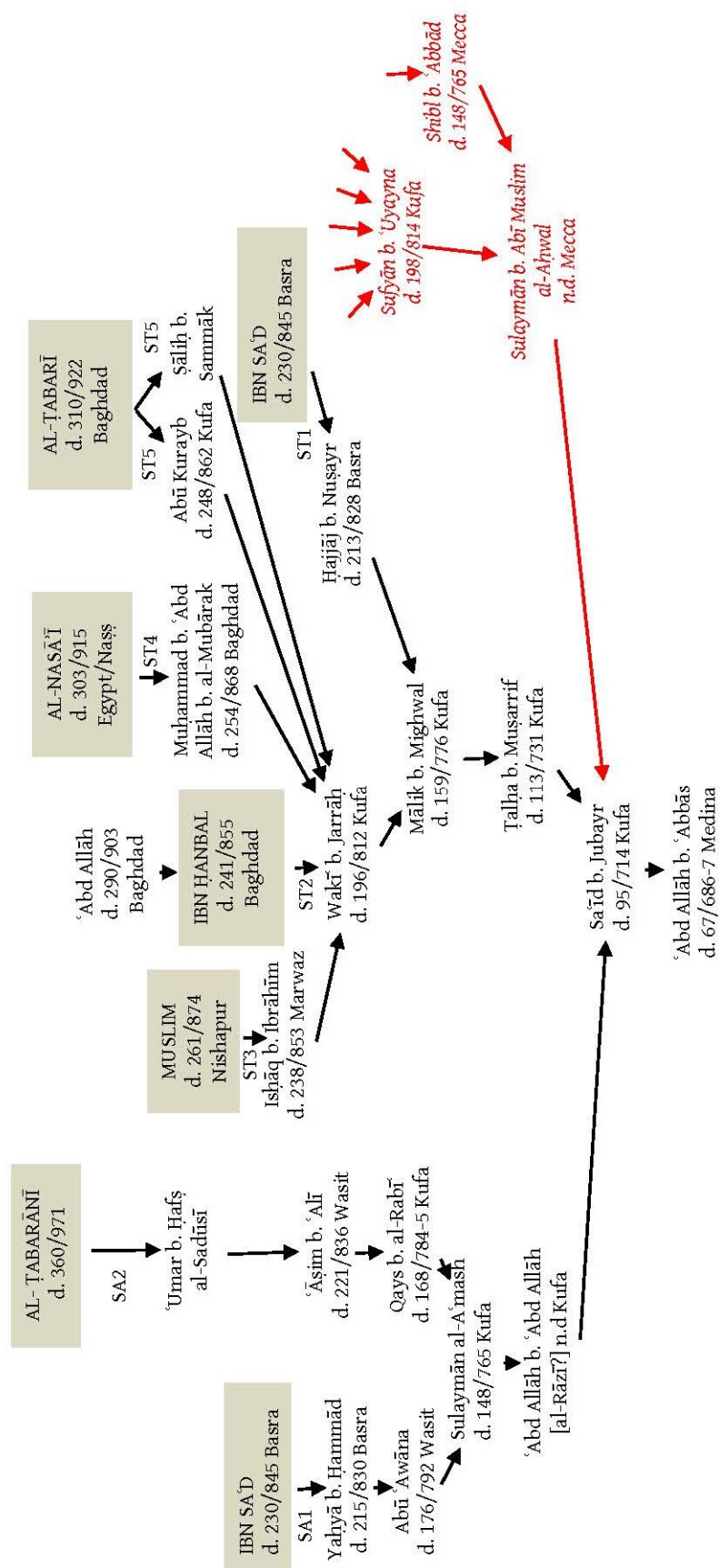


Figure A1. Isnād Bundle of the Ibn 'Abbās Traditions from Sa'īd b. Jubayr.

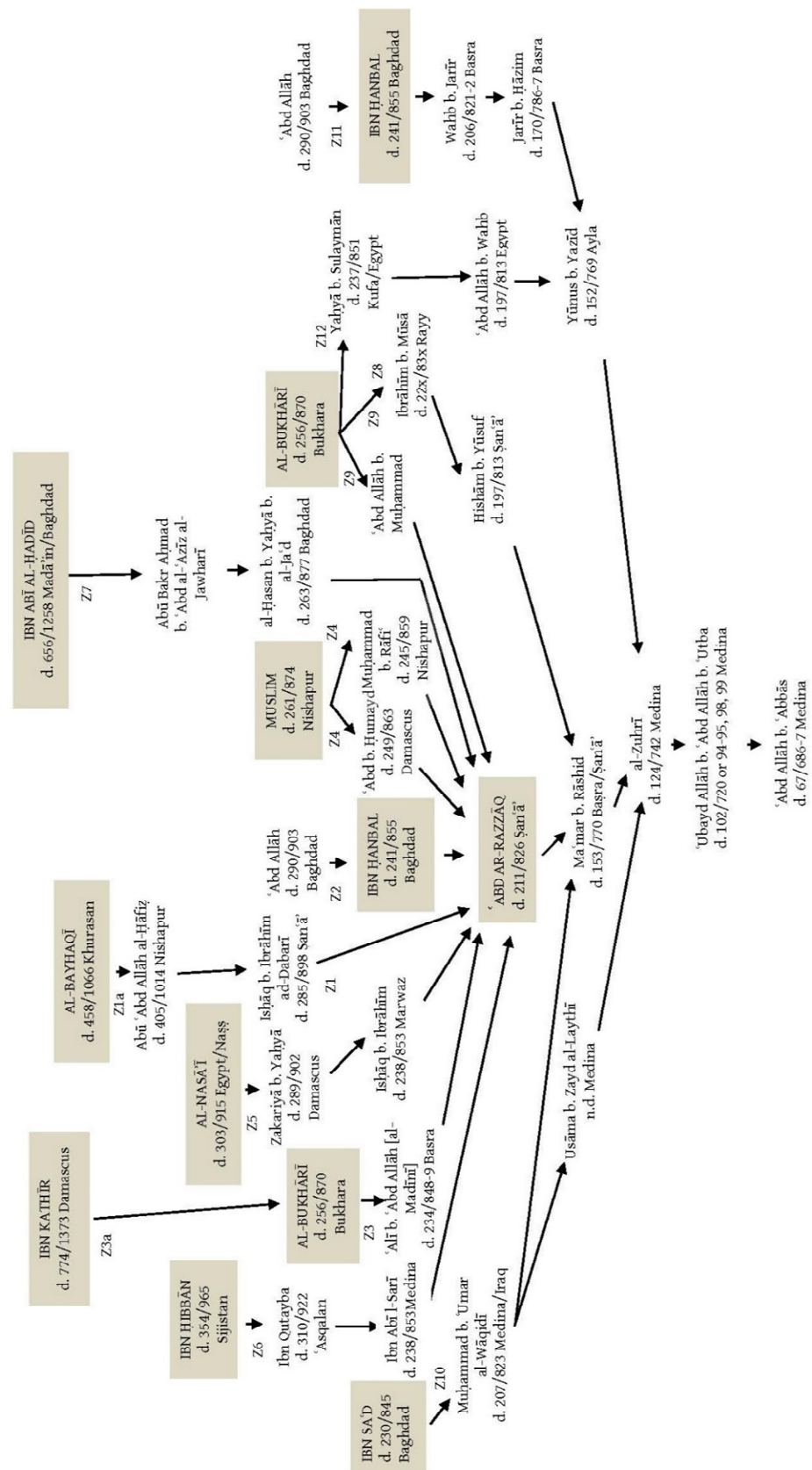


Figure A2. Isnād bundle of the Ibn ‘Abbās traditions from al-Zuhrī.

Notes

- ¹ In order to be able to date the traditions, the year is mentioned in which the person died according to the *hijrī* era (the first year) and according to the C.E. era (the second year). (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 451; (Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī 1960), VIII: pp. 132–35 no. 4431–4432 (*al-ḥadīth al-khāmis*), <https://al-maktaba.org/book/1673/4372> (accessed on 27 April 2021). Examples of internet discussions in English and Arabic in forums, general websites and YouTube, are: English sites: <https://islam.stackexchange.com/questions/12072/what-is-the-calamity-of-thursday> (accessed on 27 April 2021); <https://www.imamreza.net/old/eng/imamreza.php?id=12957> (accessed on 27 April 2021); <http://www.shiapien.com/comprehensive/pen-and-paper/preface.html> (accessed on 27 April 2021); <https://allaboutshias.com/calamity-of-thursday/> (accessed on 27 April 2021); <https://www.islamicinsights.com/religion/clergy-corner/the-unwritten-will-and-the-calamity-of-thursday.html> (accessed on 27 April 2021).
- ² Arabic site: <https://salafcenter.org/2854/> (accessed on 27 April 2021); and on YouTube by searching حديث يوم الخميس: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB+%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B3 (accessed on 27 April 2021).
- ³ See the sources in the previous two footnotes. Furthermore, examples of wiki sites with Sunni and Shiʿi positions are: https://en.wikishia.net/view/Hadith_al-Dawat_wa_l-Qirtas (accessed on 27 April 2021); https://religion.wikia.org/wiki/Hadith_of_the_pen_and_paper (accessed on 27 April 2021).
- ⁴ To enhance the flow of this study, which would otherwise be unnecessarily dense, I have omitted all eulogies that appear in some texts and translations after the names of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions, and after God.
- ⁵ The translation is from (Ibn Kathīr 2000), IV: p. 327.
- ⁶ (Motzki 1996; Schoeler 1996). Although they were not the first to combine an analysis of the text part with an analysis of the chains, they developed the method in its current form. Since then, many publications have appeared with and about this method.
- ⁷ This is just an example based on the traditions from this article. The number of narrators differs per tradition and may be more or fewer than the numbers listed here.
- ⁸ See (Miskinzoda 2014).
- ⁹ This is a very basic description of the ICM analysis offered for the purpose of brevity. The actual application is more complex and takes into account all possible scenarios, including variation in method of transmission (oral, written, oral based on notes), adaptations by the author of the collection, the possibility of multiple versions of a transmitter, etc. See, however, the limits of the ICM analysis in (Görke 2011).
- ¹⁰ The sequence of the groups is based on the content, as will become clear in the following part of the article.
- ¹¹ More traditions of ʿĀʾisha can be found in the *ḥadīth* collections, but they either do not have a complete *isnād* or come from later collections in which the tradition from an earlier collection is quoted identically.
- ¹² (Gilliot 2012), consulted online on 27 October 2020; (Ibn al-Kalbī 1966), I: Figures 4 and 6.
- ¹³ (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: p. 178; (Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī 2001), II: p. 365. Gilliot considers the diversity in ages an “age trick” to extend the rather short period of contact with the Prophet (Gilliot 2012).
- ¹⁴ See, for example (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: pp. 176–78 no. 3345; (Al-Dhahabī 2007), I: pp. 33–34 no. 18 (*al-Ṭabaqa al-ūlā*); (Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī 2001), II: pp. 364–66. Ibn Saʿd cites many traditions that praise Ibn ʿAbbās’ wisdom, see (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: pp. 278–84.
- ¹⁵ See, for example, (Berg 2004, p. 142; Berg 2011; Gilliot 2012; Pregill 2017, p. 104).
- ¹⁶ The top lines indicate how many different people subsequently reported the narration of the last transmitter, according to the *asānīd*.
- ¹⁷ This seems circular because the selection criterion is traditions ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās. However, a common link is usually not found at the level of the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, but at the Successor levels or later as the other figures in this article show. See also, for example, the various figures in the articles by Harald Motzki, Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort and Sean Anthony in (Motzki 2010), pp. 208, 383 or 413. See, however, Figure 2 with Anas b. Mālik as common link, (Motzki 2010), p. 294.
- ¹⁸ (Motzki 2012), consulted online on 14 January 2021. The complete figure with the *asānīd* of the Ibn ʿAbbās traditions from Saʿīd b. Jubayr is included in Appendix A.
- ¹⁹ When the majority of the traditions mention a particular phrase, it is considered part of the Sufyān tradition. The parts in round brackets appear in only a few traditions, but are confirmed by various narrators from Sufyān. The other traditions omit this phrase. An overview of all the differences between these traditions can be found at <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021).
- ²⁰ There are fourteen traditions of Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, but since Ibn Kathīr’s tradition S14 quotes al-Bukhārī from Qutayba and is identical with tradition S6, it is not counted as a separate tradition. (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 450, and (Al-Bukhārī n.d.), VI: p. 11 (*Kitāb al-maghāzī—Bāb maraḍ al-nabī wa-wafātihī*) (S6). The other traditions are from: (ʿAbd al-Razzāq 1983), VI: p. 57 no. 9992 (S1); (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: p. 187 (S2); (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), I: p. 292 no. 1940 (S3); (Al-Bukhārī n.d.), IV: p. 85 (*Kitāb al-waṣāya: Bāb hal tustashfaʾu ilā ahl al-dhimma wa-muʾāmalatihim*) (S4) and pp. 120–21 (*Bāb ikhrāj al-yahūd min jazīrat al-ʿArab*) (S5); (Muslim 2012), III: p. 86 no. 1637–20 (S7); (Al-Nasāʾī 1991), III: p. 434, no. 3/5854 (S8); (Al-Bayhaqī 2008), VII: pp. 181–82 (S9); (Al-Ḥumaydī 1988), I: pp. 241–42 no. 526 (S10); (Al-Ṭabarī 2010), III: p. 249 (S11, S12); Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī 1984–1994, IV: pp. 298–99 no. 2409 (S13). In

this article, the numbering of the traditions and the order of the sources are based on the overlap in the *asānīd* and the similarities in the *mutūn*.

The following text is adapted from the translation of Ismail K. Poonawala in (Al-Ṭabarī 1990), pp. 174–75.

This sentence is part of traditions S1, S3, S4, S5 and S7.

In inkpot, piece of paper (*dawāh wa-ṣaḥīfā*), a shoulder blade (*katif*) and a document (*kitāb*) are mentioned as different writing material in some traditions, while others do not mention writing material at all.

The sentence appears in traditions S2, S3, S6, S8, S10 and S11.

A suffix is added in traditions S5, S6, S7, S8, S10 and S13.

The transmitter of tradition S15 of al-Ṭabarānī is, according to the *isnād*, not from Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna but from Shibl b. ‘Abbād, a fellow townsman of Sufyān’s informant Sulaymān b. Abī Muslim. This tradition is shortened by al-Ṭabarānī and consists of one sentence only. The first part is identical to the other Sufyān texts from Sulaymān, but the second part is slightly different: *yawm ishtadda fīhi waj’ al-nabī* instead of (*yawm*) *ishtadda bi-rasūl Allāh waj’ uhu*. The use of a different preposition and the word prophet indicates that this tradition may not be from Sufyān, but this cannot be established with certainty as it is a tradition of which only the first sentence is mentioned. (Al-Ṭabarānī n.d.), XII: p. 50 no. 12507.

The following text is a translation of the reconstructed text of Wākī b. Jarrāḥ from Mālik b. Mighwal based on four nearly identical traditions from the works of Ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim, al-Nasā’ī and al-Ṭabarī. See (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), I: p. 461 no. 3335 (ST2); (Muslim 2012), III: p. 86 no. 21-(000) (ST3); (Al-Nasā’ī 1991), III: p. 435 no. 1/5857 (ST4); (Al-Ṭabarī 2010), III: p. 249 (ST5).

This is the only phrase where all four traditions deviate from each other, *bi-l-lawḥ wa-l-dawāh aw al-katif* (ST2), *bi-l-katif wa-l-dawāh (aw al-lawḥ wa-l-dawāh)* (ST3), *bi-l-lawḥ wa-l-dawāh wa-l-katif wa-l-dawāh* (ST4) and *bi-l-lawḥ wa-l-dawāh – aw bi-l-katif wa-l-dawāh* (ST5).

Tradition ST1 from Ibn Sa’d is slightly different from the other traditions. The main differences from Wākī’s text are *wa-ka’ annī anzuru ilā* instead of *thumma nazartu ilā*, *khaddīhi* instead of *khaddayhi*, and it does not contain the uncertainty about the writing material and only states *bi-l-katif wa-l-dawāh*. See (Ibn Sa’d 1997), II: p. 187.

(Ibn Sa’d 1997), II: p. 187 (SA1).

Miskinzoda points to the problematic nature of the mentioned writing materials and the type of material referred to as *ṣaḥīfa*. See, (Miskinzoda 2014), p. 236 footnote 16.

(Al-Ṭabarānī n.d.), XI: p. 308 no. 12261 (SA2). In the *isnād* is mentioned ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd Allāh, but that is a mistake. He is ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Rāzī, which is confirmed by the similarities between the two traditions SA1 and SA2.

It is likely that the discrepancies between the two traditions are due to an oral transmission or to transmission based on notes.

(‘Abd al-Razzāq 1983), V: pp. 438–39 no. 9757 (Z1); (Al-Bayhaqī 2008), VII: pp. 183–84 (Z1a); (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), I: pp. 436–37 no. 3110 (Z2); (Al-Bukhārī n.d.), VI: pp. 11–12 (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī – Bāb maraḍ al-nabī wa-wafātili* [. . .]) (Z3); (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 451; (Muslim 2012), III, pp. 86–87 no. 22-(000) (Z4); (Al-Nasā’ī 1991), III: p. 433 no. 1/5852 (Z5); (Ibn Ḥibbān 1997), XIV: pp. 562–63 no. 6597 (Z6); (Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd 1987), VI: p. 54 (Z7).

The words in round brackets are additions to some of the traditions, while others do not mention them. A “/” indicates that in some traditions the preceding word is replaced by the word between round brackets. It is possible that both options come from ‘Abd al-Razzāq. The full list of variations among al-Zuhri’s traditions is available at <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021). This also shows that tradition Z7 of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd is very different from the other ‘Abd al-Razzāq traditions and therefore appears to have been adjusted by one of the transmitters above ‘Abd al-Razzāq in the *isnād* (see Appendix B). The word *abadan* is present in traditions Z1a, Z2, Z3a, Z5 and Z6.

The words *rasūl Allāh* appear in traditions Z1, Z1a and Z4.

Laghaṭ is used instead of *laghw* in traditions Z5 and Z6. Z7 from Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd combines both: *al-laghaṭ wa-l-laghw*.

Z1 and Z1a both mention ‘Abd Allāh instead of ‘Ubayd Allāh.

See (Al-Bukhārī n.d.), IX: p. 137 (*Kitāb al-i’tisām bi-l-kitāb wa-l-sunna—Bāb karāhiyat al-khilāf*) (Z8). Al-Bukhārī quotes another tradition with a double *isnād* Hishām—Ma‘mar and ‘Abd al-Razzāq—Ma‘mar, (Al-Bukhārī n.d.), VII: pp. 155–56 (*Kitāb al-ṭibb—Bāb qawl al-marīḍ qūmū ‘annī*). The *matn* is very similar to the above text from ‘Abd al-Razzāq. I therefore mainly focus on the tradition Z8.

Unique elements are, for example, *ḥaḍarat al-wafāh* instead of *ḥaḍara*, *qūmū ‘annī* (similar to the text of Hishām in tradition Z8 and in contrast to the (reconstructed) text of ‘Abd al-Razzāq), or *ghalabahu al-waj’* (similar to the text of ‘Abd al-Razzāq and in contrast to the text of Hishām). The complete list of differences is available on <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021).

In al-Bukhārī’s tradition Z3 from ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh from ‘Abd al-Razzāq all references to ‘Umar’s part in this story are omitted. Since other traditions of ‘Abd al-Razzāq and al-Bukhārī do mention ‘Umar, ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh alone can be responsible for this omission. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh is ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī, a very well-known scholar of defects in traditions and *asānīd*. See (Al-Mizzī 1998), V: p. 270 no. 4685.

Miskinzoda refers in a footnote to the discussion about the status of prophetic *aḥādīth* in relation to the Qur’ān, within which similar statements about the Qur’ān as present in al-Zuhri’s tradition are common (Miskinzoda 2014), p. 238 footnote 25.

- (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), I: p. 383 no. 2680.
- (Al-Ṭabarānī n.d.), XI: p. 27 no. 10961.
- (Al-Ṭabarānī n.d.), XI: p. 27 no. 10962.
- T3 even describes at the end that the Prophet died.
- (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: pp. 188–89.
- Of the nine reported traditions in the paragraph, five go back to Ibn ʿAbbās. The writing materials mentioned in these traditions are successively: inkpot and a piece of paper (version 3); inkpot and a piece of paper (deviating version 1); shoulder blade and inkpot (version 2); none (version 4); inkpot and a piece of paper (version 6). See (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: pp. 187–89.
- See, for example, (Egger 2018), p. 38.
- See, for example, (Ibn Hishām 1998), IV: p. 270. The tradition from al-Zuhrī—Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab—Abū Hurayra relates how ʿUmar does not want to accept Muḥammad’s death and says that like Moses he will return after forty days. A translation of the tradition is available in (Guillaume 1978), p. 682. See also, (ʿAbd al-Razzāq 1983), V: p. 434, in which the comparison with Moses is also present as well as ʿUmar’s exclamation that he hopes the Prophet lives until the hands of all hypocrites are been cut off. Miskinzoda makes the connection with a statement made during a council of war as described by Uri Rubin. However, given the similarity in terms, I think it comes from other traditions about the death of the Prophet. See (Miskinzoda 2014), pp. 240–41.
- Although the Prophet died on Monday according to Islamic tradition, none of the traditions Ibn ʿAbbās versions 5 and 6 place the event explicitly on that day. Moreover, none of the other versions yet to be discussed mention Monday as the day the event occurred. In my article I will therefore not equate the day of death with Monday. Of course, it is possible that the day was so widely known that further specification was not required. The *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays* contains a tradition attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās that explicitly describes Monday as the day of death and the day of the event with the document. This narration, however, differs significantly in content from the other Ibn ʿAbbās traditions. Although it contains certain phrases from various Ibn ʿAbbās versions, they are placed in a new context, and other Ibn ʿAbbās characteristics are missing. According to the *isnād* at the beginning, Abān b. Abī Ayyāsh (d. 138/755 or later) narrates the story of Sulaym who relates a conversation in the house of Ibn ʿAbbās about the death day of the Prophet. Ibn ʿAbbās starts to cry (*fa-bakā* Ibn ʿAbbās = versions 1 and 2) and tells that the Prophet had died on Monday (*yawm al-ithnayn wa-huwa l-yawm alladhī qubīḍa fīhi*). In addition to his immediate family, thirty other companions were present. The Prophet says: If you bring me a shoulder blade (=version 2, ≈version 5, and ≈1 tradition of version 1), then I will write on it for you a document [so that] after me you will not go astray nor disagree (≈version 5). Somebody (*farʿūn*) argues that the Prophet is talking deliriously (= version 2). The Prophet becomes angry and rebukes them for disagreeing with him when he is alive. He wonders what happens when he dies. He then abandons writing the document. The dating of the event to Monday deviates from all other Ibn ʿAbbās traditions, as well as the details on the people present and the formulation of the Prophet’s rebuke. The similarities with Ibn ʿAbbās versions 1, 2 and 5 seem to indicate that the author of this traditions knew those versions. Since there is no other variant of this tradition, dating it is not possible. The tentative conclusions that can be drawn from the matn analysis is that the author seems to be familiar with the version(s) of Saʿīd b. Jubayr, in particular the versions from Mālik b. Mighwal and Layth b. Abī Sulaym, and that the similarities are to be found in those traditions which were passed down in Kufa in the earliest generations (versions 2 and 5). See (Sulaym b. Qays n.d.), p. 324 no. 27 (accessed on 27 June 2021).
- (Miskinzoda 2014), p. 233.
- See, for example version 1.
- In this regard, versions 1–3 count as one version since they are all transmitted by Saʿīd b. Jubayr. Consequently, two versions mention ʿUmar (versions 4 and 6) and two do not (versions 1–3 and 5). The Sulaym tradition mentioned in footnote 52 actually supports the suppression of the name of ʿUmar in the Kufan versions if my speculation of a Iraqi origin of the Sulaym tradition is correct. After the story of the document event, Sulaym and Ibn ʿAbbās talk about the person who opposes the Prophet’s command. At the insistence of an attendant, Ibn ʿAbbās confesses that this person is ʿUmar. He asks those present not to mention ʿUmar’s name, because ʿUmar is loved in the community (*umma*).
- Ibn ʿAbbās version 1 from Sufyān b. ʿUyayna: S1 (*qāla lī Ibn ʿAbbās, fa-qultu yā Ibn ʿAbbās*), S3 (*qulnā yā Ibn ʿAbbās*), S5 (*qultu yā Abā ʿAbbās*), S7 (*fa-qultu yā Ibn ʿAbbās*). Ibn ʿAbbās version 2 from Mālik b. Mighwal: ST1 (*wa-kaʿ annī anzūru*), ST2+ST5 (*thumma nazartu*), ST3 (*ḥattā raʿaytu*).
- The biographical information is from (Kister n.d.), XII p. 230, consulted online on 22 February 2021.
- The text is a reconstruction of Qurra’s text based on the following traditions: (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: p. 187 (J2); (Al-Nasāʾī 1991), III: p. 435 no. 1/5856 (J3); (Ibn Ḥibbān 1973–1983), VII: p. 342 (J4); Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī 1984–1994), III: pp. 393–95 no. 1871 (J5) and no. 1869 (J6).
- Anna* is used instead of *qāla* in traditions J3, J4 and J5.
- Al-nabī* appears instead of *rasūl Allāh* in traditions J4 and J6.
- J2 and J5 include *al-nabī* and J5 *rasūl Allāh*. Since the latter is present in only one tradition, it is not mentioned in the reconstructed text.
- (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: p. 188 (J1); (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), III: p. 424 no. 14738 (J7).

- 62 An overview of all the differences between the Abū l-Zubayr traditions from Jābir is available at <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021).
- 63 Since Ibn Saʿd includes in the same chapter another tradition from al-Wāqidī that also mentions ʿUmar, i.e., Ibn ʿAbbās version 6, it is unlikely that Ibn Saʿd or al-Wāqidī would have forgotten or suppressed ʿUmar’s name in any other tradition. The only person left in the *isnād* is Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd and thus the person most likely responsible for the omission of ʿUmar’s name.
- 64 The same reasoning applies to the attribution of the substitution to Mūsā b. Dāwud or ʿAbd Allāh b. Lahīʿa as in the preceding footnote.
- 65 Al-Mizzī mentions al-Zuhri in the list of persons transmitting from Abū l-Zubayr and Abū l-Zubayr among those transmitting from al-Zuhri. Strangely enough, these names are missing from the lists of their informants. See, (Al-Mizzī 1998), VI: pp. 503–4 no. 6193 (Abū l-Zubayr) and pp. 507–10 no. 6197 (al-Zuhri).
- 66 See, for example, Ibn Ishāq’s description of the meeting in the hall of Banū Saʿida. (Guillaume 1978), pp. 683–87.
- 67 (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: p. 188 (U1); (Al-Ṭabarānī 1995), V: pp. 287–88 no. 5338 (U2), <https://al-maktaba.org/book/28171/5631#p1> (accessed on 13 April 2021).
- 68 See (Al-Mizzī 1998), VII: pp. 402–3 no. 7172.
- 69 Al-Ṭabarānī lists two other traditions with the same *isnād* in his work *al-Muʿjam al-Awsaṭ*, which also deal with the sickness and death of the Prophet. He adds the same remark as with tradition no. 5338: *lā yarwī hādhayn al-ḥadīthayn ʿan Zayd b. Aslam illā Hishām b. Saʿd, wa-lā ʿan Hishām illā Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Jaʿfarī, tafarrada bi-himā Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Khalaf al-ʿAṭṭār*. See (Al-Ṭabarānī 1995), V: pp. 288–89 nos. 5338, 5339. The remark after no. 5338 is “*lam yarwi hādā l-ḥadīth ʿan Zayd b. Aslam illā ʿAbī b. ʿAbd Allāh, tafarrada bihi: Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Khalaf*”.
- 70 Al-Haythamī considers him a weak transmitter (*wa-huwa ḍaʿīf*). See (Al-Haythamī 1988), IX: p. 40 (*Bāb fī-mā tarakahu*).
- 71 (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: p. 188; (Al-Ṭabarānī 1995), V: pp. 287–88 no. 5338.
- 72 This motif comes from another tradition that also takes place at the time of the Prophet’s illness, in which the Prophet asks to throw water from seven skins on him (or: seven times water from a skin). See, for example, (ʿAbd al-Razzāq 1983), V: p. 430 or (Guillaume 1978), p. 679.
- 73 A *sitr* is “[a]nything by which a person or thing is veiled, concealed, hidden, or covered; a veil; a curtain; a screen; a cover”. (Lane 1984), I: p. 1304.
- 74 The full list of differences is available at <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021).
- 75 (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: pp. 187–89. Except for one tradition, all these different versions have been discussed above. The last tradition is discussed in the next part.
- 76 See (Gleave 2008), consulted online on 26 March 2021.
- 77 Shīʿī is the adjective of Shīʿa which is short for *shīʿat ʿAlī*, the party of ʿAlī.
- 78 (Ibn Saʿd 1997), II: pp. 187–88 (A1); (Al-Bukhārī 1986), p. 44 no. 156 (*Bāb* 82) (A2); (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), I: p. 113 no. 696 (A3); (Al-Mizzī 1998), V: p. 380 no. 4883 (A4); (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 473 (A5). This tradition is also present in Shīʿī *ḥadīth* collections, but as no full *isnād* is given, they cannot be used to date this tradition with the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis. Therefore, I have not included them in my selection.
- 79 See (Al-Mizzī 1998), V: pp. 379–80 no. 4883.
- 80 (Al-Mizzī 1998), VII: p. 357 no. 7059; (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī 1971), VII: p. 413 no. 5053.
- 81 The words “after me” (*baʿdī*) are not mentioned in A2.
- 82 The traditions in the collections of al-Mizzī and Ibn Kathīr are from Ibn Ḥanbal.
- 83 The full list of differences is available at <https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xsv-bg4x> (accessed on 23 July 2021).
- 84 Since Zaynab only appears in one tradition (Ibn ʿAbbās version 6), her name is a later addition.
- 85 (Lane 1984), II: p. 1826.
- 86 On Qatāda b. Diʿāma, see (Juynboll 2007), p. 438. Juynboll is highly suspicious of traditions from Qatāda, in particular those traced back to Anas b. Mālik.
- 87 The *mutūn* of these traditions are similar, but are from Qatāda traced back to Anas b. Mālik, or to Umm Salama via Safīna. See (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: pp. 472–74.
- 88 The translation is from (Ibn Kathīr 2000), IV: p. 342.
- 89 Although there are also two similar traditions of Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī, Ibn Kathīr’s statement is correct in that the tradition of Ibn Ḥanbal differs from that of the other two, making it one of a kind.
- 90 See, for example, (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 471.
- 91 (Egger 2018), pp. 76–77.
- 92 (Pellat and Lang 2015), consulted online on 6 April 2021.
- 93 (Afsaruddin 2011), consulted online on 13 April 2021; (Watt 1960), I: pp. 307–8.

- (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: pp. 199–200 no. 3392; (Ibn Sa‘d 1997), VI: p. 24 no. 1547.
- The translation is based on the texts of the following traditions: (Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī 1904), p. 210 no. 1508 (AA1); (Ibn Abī ‘Āsim 1980), II: p. 555 no. 1163, <https://al-maktaba.org/book/5930/1161> (accessed on 20 April 2021) (AA2); (Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣbahānī 1997), p. 142 no. 171, <https://al-maktaba.org/book/8237/294#p1> (AA3) (accessed on 20 April 2021); (Ibn ‘Asākir 1995–2000), XXX: pp. 267–68 no. 6433 (AA4) and p. 268 no. 6434 (AA5); (Ibn Sa‘d 1997), III: p. 134 (AA6).
- “Ud‘ī” is present in traditions AA2, AA4 and AA7, while “ud‘ū” is mentioned in AA1, AA3, AA5 and AA6.
- The suffix *-hu* can refer to the document (*kitāb*) as well as to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr.
- The translation is based on the texts of the following traditions: (Ibn Sa‘d 1997), III: p. 134 (AA9); (Ibn Ḥanbal 1993), VI: p. 53 no. 24254 (AA10); (Ibn ‘Asākir 1995–2000), XXX: p. 268 no. 6435 (AA11); (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV, p. 452 (AA12); (Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Arafa al-Baghdādī 1985), p. 42 no. 3, <https://al-maktaba.org/book/9313/3#p1> (AA13) (accessed on 20 April 2021); (Ibn ‘Asākir n.d.), pp. 82–83, <https://al-maktaba.org/book/5713/71#p4> (AA14) (accessed on 13 April 2021); (Ibn ‘Asākir 1995–2000), XXX: pp. 268–69 no. 6436 (AA15).
- The verb is in the imperative masculine plural, which means that at least a group with a number of men was addressed, but that may have included (grammatically) ‘Ā’isha as well. The last sentence in almost all traditions begins with an imperative feminine singular (*da‘īhi*), making ‘Ā’isha the one to be spoken to.
- The sentence “*dhaḥaba ‘Abd al-Raḥmān li-yaqūma*” is present in traditions AA10–12 and “*qāma ‘Abd al-Raḥmān*” in AA13–16.
- See (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: p. 377 no. 3757, who remarks that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān is the full brother (*shaqīq*) of ‘Ā’isha.
- It is difficult to determine who the common link of ‘Ā’isha version 1 is. Traditions AA1–AA5 are from the same transmitter, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī and should therefore be regarded as one account. AA6 is a combined tradition of Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī and ‘Affān b. Muslim with different formulations. AA7 appears to be a combination of the ‘Ā’isha narrative with other traditions, a.o. from the Ibn ‘Abbās narrative. AA8 is more like AA1–AA5 and could possibly come from ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Rufay‘. It is especially important that all three lived in Kufa. (‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Adī 1997), VII: p. 297, <https://al-maktaba.org/book/12579/3507#p9> (AA7) (accessed on 13 April 2021); (Ibn ‘Asākir 1995–2000), XXX: p. 267 no. 6432 (AA8).
- (Al-Mizzī 1998), VI: p. 291 no. 5762.
- (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: p. 200 no. 3392.
- In some versions the Prophets calls for Abū Bakr and in others Abū Bakr and his son.
- See, for example, (Ibn Sa‘d 1997), II: p. 173; (Ibn Kathīr n.d.), IV: p. 452. There are also other traditions ascribed to ‘Ā’isha which, according to the asānīd, do not come from Ibn Abī Mulayka and which contain similar phrases. Another ICM analysis must be performed to unravel the interdependence of these traditions. See, for example, (Ibn Sa‘d 1997), III: pp. 133–34.
- (Al-Mizzī 1998), IV: p. 200 no. 3392.

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