THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUCCESSORS (*AL-TĀBIʿŪN*) IN THE EARLY ḤADĪTH COLLECTIONS*

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Abstract

In the early generations of Islam, the Successors (*al-tābiʿūn*) played an important role by making significant contribution to the formation of Islamic sciences such as fiqh, ḥadīth, and tafsīr. Thus, it is not surprising to see various references to their opinions in the early examples of different Islamic literary genres. For example, early ḥadīth collections include a great number of traditions attributed to the Successors – which would later be called *al-ḥadīth al-maqṭūʿ* – alongside those attributed to the Prophet. This paper, focusing on the usages of *al-ḥadīth al-maqṭūʿ* in the early ḥadīth literature, is an inquiry into why the Successors' opinions constituted such an important part of ḥadīth collections. It argues that the veneration of the Successors is derived from the common recognition that they were better qualified to understand religious texts than later generations and that even their personal opinions were either based on the religious texts or at least consistent with them. The historical basis of this widely accepted recognition is the existence of an intimate and close teacher-student relationship between the Companions and the Successors, which made it possible for the latter to inherit the knowledge of the former.

Key Words: the Successors, *al-tābiʿūn*, ḥadīth, Sunna, *maqṭūʿ ḥadīth*

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Introductory Remarks about the Successors

Scholars of Islamic studies commonly acknowledge that the early generations of Muslims played a fundamental role in the establishment and early development of Islamic civilization. The Companions of the Prophet (*al-ṣaḥāba*), the Successors (*al-tābiʿūn*), and the Successors of the Successors (*atbāʿ al-tābiʿīn*) all contributed to the flourishing of a new religious world not only by providing the essential manpower for the territorial spread of the early Islamic caliphate but also by laying the foundations of the Islamic sciences, which would later become independent fields of study known as ḥadīth, fiqh, tafsīr, etc. Thus, it is not surprising to encounter a multitude of references to the views or sayings of these early Muslims in various genres of Arabic literature.

This article will attempt to demonstrate the significant contributions of one of the above-mentioned generations, the Successors, as reflected in the early ḥadīth literature and to provide answers as to why traditions coming from this generation constituted an important part of early ḥadīth collections. It will argue that Muslims' general conception of time, which places a greater value upon earlier generations, and ḥadīth scholars' belief in the consistency of the Successors' personal opinions with other reliable traditions, were the two main factors that granted this generation a respected status within the ḥadīth literature. However, before delving into this subject, it is worth defining a few key terms and touching upon the contributions of this generation of Successors to fields other than the ḥadīth.

Successors are described as Muslims who never personally met the Prophet Muḥammad but were able to meet at least one of the Prophet's Companions at some point during their lives.[1] Historically, the generation of Successors spans roughly from 60-125/680-741, a period politically dominated by Umayyad rulers. Throughout these years, the Successors were major actors in virtually all fields of Islamic scholarship. For example, the early formation of the legal schools in Kūfa and Medina was mostly due to the efforts of Successors such as ʿAlqama ibn Qays (d. 62/682) and Aswad ibn Yazīd in the former city, and Saʿīd ibn Musayyab (d. 93/712) and ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr (d. 94/713) in the latter. Ibrāhīm al-Nakhāʾī (d. 96/715) of Kūfa is also

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[1]   Abū l-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī* (ed. Naẓar Muḥammad al-Faryābī; Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Kawthar, 1994), II, 213.

associated with the early formation of Ḥanafī legal doctrine.[2] A group of jurists among the Successors in Medina was called the "seven jurists (*al-fuqahāʾ al-sabʿa*)," and their legal opinions were considered true representations of what is known as *ʿamal ahl al-Madīna* (common practices of the people of Medina).[3]

In theology, figures such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) argued for principles that would deeply influence later generations of the Sunnī majority. Al-Baṣrī also seems to have had a distinctive impact with his life and preachings upon early Muslim Sufis.[4] As for Qurʾānic exegesis, Saʿīd ibn Jubayr (d. 95/713) and Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 103/721), disciples of the famous companion ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687-8), were the two major authorities whose interpretation of verses received careful attention from subsequent *mufassir*s.[5] Tafsīr books, particularly ḥadīth-oriented ones, contain numerous references to the Successors' opinions along with the explanations of the Prophet and his Companions.[6]

The Successors' scholarly enterprises were not confined to the Islamic sciences but included fields such as historiography. ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr narrated historical accounts regarding the life and cam-

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[2] See Susan A. Spectorsky, "Tābiʿūn," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/tabiun-SIM_7259 (accessed 14 May 2013).

[3] For their identities and contributions to the development of the Medinan school of law, see Cengiz Kallek, "Fukahâ-i Sebʿa [al-Fuqahāʾ al-sabʿa]," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)* [*Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*], XIII, 214.

[4] For the opinions and influence of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see "Ḥasan al-Baṣrī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hasan-al-basri-COM_0273, (accessed 24 October 2013).

[5] In modern Turkish literature on Qurʾānic exegesis, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās is portrayed as the founder of the Meccan school of tafsīr, see Muhammed Fatih Kesler, *Mekke Tefsir Ekolü: Öncüleri ve Görüşleri* [*Pioneers and Opinions of the Meccan School of Tafsīr*] (Van: n.p., 1996), 23-50. Of course, his distinguished disciples who advanced the Meccan school belong to the generation of Successors.

[6] Ibn Abī Ḥātim's (d. 327/938) tafsīr, for instance, is replete with traditions coming from the Successors; see Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Idrīs Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm musnad^{an} ʿan Rasūl Allāh wa-l-ṣaḥāba wa-l-tābiʿīn* (ed. Asʿad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib; Mecca: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997).

paigns of the Prophet,[7] while Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) collected historical reports in an effort to systematically establish the Prophet's *sīra*.[8] Their works marked the beginnings of a Muslim historiographic tradition.

The Successors in Early Ḥadīth Collections

The Successors' most remarkable contribution, however, lies in the development of the early ḥadīth endeavor. In addition to being credited as the first generation to use the *isnād*s (chains of transmission) prior to actual ḥadīth texts,[9] most of the early systematic compilers of prophetic traditions belonged to this generation, including the famous Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī.[10] Moreover, recent studies have revealed that the specialists in early transmitter criticism (*al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*) all shared the common feature of being dedicated disciples of certain Successors.[11]

It is also noteworthy that the following generations recorded the sayings and deeds of the Successors alongside prophetic reports, using a very similar structure. In other words, the Successors were not only intermediaries in the transmission of reports pertaining to the

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7   ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr, the nephew of the Prophet's wife ʿĀʾisha, showed an obvious interest in the Prophet's *sīra* and reportedly compiled a book on the *maghāzī*, see ʿAbdal ʿAziz Duri, "al-Zuhrī: A Study on the Beginnings of History Writing in Islam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19/1 (1957), 1-12 (esp. 1-2).

8   Al-Zuhrī's reports concerning the Prophet's biography are collected in the following work: *al-Maghāzī al-nabawiyya* (ed. Suhayl Zakkār; Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1981). Evaluating al-Zuhrī's reports, Chase Robinson identifies him as a "historian by any fair definition of the term." For the historiography of both ʿUrwa and al-Zuhrī, see Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23-25. For Duri's reconstruction of al-Zuhrī's work, see Duri, *ibid.*

9   It has been almost a convention in ḥadīth works to refer to the words of the prominent successor Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/729), who dated the emergence of *isnād* to around the second half of the first century after *hijra*. See, for instance, Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muḥammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 79.

10   Fuat Sezgin, *Buhârî'nin Kaynakları* [*Sources of al-Bukhārī*] (Ankara: Kitabiyat Yayınları, 2000), 25-26.

11   Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), 127-128, 357-358.

Prophet Muḥammad, but they also became a source, or a final reference point, of early Muslim reports.

The inclusion of numerous reports ascribed to the Successors within large ḥadīth volumes made it necessary for later Muslim scholars to develop a special terminology that would allow them to distinguish between those reports belonging to the Prophet Muḥammad and those attributed to the Companions and Successors. To that end, prophetic traditions came to be called *al-ḥadīth al-marfūʿ*, whereas reports attributed to the Companions and Successors were termed *al-ḥadīth al-mawqūf* and *al-ḥadīth al-maqṭūʿ*, respectively.[12]

Maqṭūʿ traditions, or personal sayings and deeds of the Successors, appear both frequently and in various occurrences and contexts within the early ḥadīth literature. Here, a statistical consideration is in order. One of the most important early ḥadīth collections, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* by Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), contains 285 *maqṭūʿ*s out of 1720 traditions,[13] whereas his contemporary colleague Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) mentions 549 *maqṭūʿ*s out of 1068 traditions in his *Kitāb al-āthār*, at least 443 of which came from the well-known Kūfan *muḥaddith* Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʾī.[14] The fact that Mālik ibn Anas and Abū Yūsuf were distinguished for their knowledge on both Islamic law and the ḥadīth shows that the Successors' views played a significant role not only in the early ḥadīth literature but also in legal *ijtihād*s of the second/eighth-century jurists. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī's (d. 211/826-7) *al-Muṣannaf* includes only 4.000 *marfūʿ*s out of 18.000 traditions, meaning that almost 14.000 of the remaining

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[12]   See Abū ʿAmr Taqī al-Dīn ʿUthmān ibn Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī, *Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ wa-maḥāsin al-iṣṭilāḥ* (ed. ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān; Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1990), 193, 194, 196. The earliest author who made a clear definition of the term "*maqṭūʿ*" is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071): "*Maqṭūʿ*s are the reports, the *isnād* of which stop at Successors *(wa ammā l-maqṭūʿāt fa-huwa l-mawqūfāt ʿalā l-tābiʿīn)*," see Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādāb al-sāmiʿ* (ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ṣalāḥ ibn Muḥammad ʿUwayḍa; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2003), 356. For a detailed analysis of *maqṭūʿ* traditions see Mustafa Macit Karagözoğlu, *Maktû Hadis ve Delil Değeri* [*Maqṭūʿ Ḥadīth and Its Authority*] (MA thesis; Istanbul: İstanbul University, 2007).

[13]   Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ʿalā Muwaṭṭaʾ al-Imām al-Mālik* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1987), I, 7.

[14]   Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), 33.

traditions in his book stem from either the Companions or the Successors.[15] Finally, of Ibn Abī Shayba's (d. 235/849) *Muṣannaf*, which consists of 34.840 traditions, almost half, or 15.998, are *maqṭū*ʿs.[16]

Having demonstrated the wide use of *maqṭūʿ* reports in the early compilations, we can now pose the following central questions: What made the generation of Successors so important in the eyes of later Muslim generations? Why were their opinions transmitted alongside Prophetic traditions and included in early ḥadīth collections? Finally, why are the sayings and deeds of the Successors a subject of the science of ḥadīth?

The first thing that catches the researcher's eye regarding the veneration of this generation is the presence of some commonly cited Qurʾānic verses and prophetic traditions. For example, a Qurʾānic verse in al-Tawba (9:100) reads as follows: *The first and foremost (to embrace Islam and excel others in virtue) among the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who follow them in devotion to doing good, aware that God is seeing them – God is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them Gardens throughout which rivers flow, therein to abide for ever. That is the supreme triumph.*[17] *The first Emigrants and the Helpers* in this verse, i.e., *al-muhājirūn wa-l-anṣār*, were usually interpreted as the Companions, and those who *followed them in devotion to doing good* were interpreted as the Successors by many ḥadīth scholars.[18] Hence, the Successors were perceived as a group of people whose sincerity and devotion were praised in the Qurʾān.

The idea of the superiority of earlier generations to later ones also seems to have been supported by certain prophetic traditions. This sentiment is evident in the following ḥadīth: "*khayr al-nās qarnī thumma lladhīna yalūnahum thumma lladhīna yalūnahum (The best of mankind is my generation, and then those who follow them*

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[15]   Mirza Tokpınar, "el-Musannef [al-Muṣannaf]," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* [*Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*], XXXI, 236.

[16]   Arif Ulu, *Tâbiûnun Sünnet Anlayışı* [*Sunna Perception of the* Tābiʿūn] (PhD dissertation; Ankara: Ankara University, 2006), X.

[17]   Q 9:100 (Ali Ünal, *The Qurʾān with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English* [New Jersey: Tughra Books, 2006], 412).

[18]   For example see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth wa-kamiyyat ajnāsihā* (ed. Aḥmad ibn Fāris al-Sallūm; Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003), 202.

and then those who follow them)."[19] Virtually all the major Islamic prosopographical works contain references to these or similar religious texts that indicate the merits of the early Muslim generations.[20] We also have some reports in which the Successors themselves complain about Muslim society's gradual deterioration. On one occasion, for example, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī laments: "I remember a time among the Muslims when their men would shout (to remind their families) 'O family! O family! (Look after) your orphan! Your orphan! O family! O family! (Look after) your orphan! Your poor! Your poor! O family! O family! (Look after) your neighbor! Your neighbor!' Time has been swift in taking the best of you while every day you become baser."[21] Furthermore, Islamic eschatological traditions maintain that as the world approaches its end, unpleasant signs will emerge, such as the decrease of knowledge, the spread of miserliness, and people's indulgence in grave sins, all of which stand in sharp contrast to the shining days of the Prophet and his Companions.[22]

The emphasis on the merits of earlier generations, however, is not unique to Muslims but can also be found in other religious traditions in various forms. In Judaism, for instance, a special importance attached to customs (the *minhāj*) is a manifestation of reverence to the past and its people.[23] The *minhāj* receives such a special treatment

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[19]   Al-Bukhārī, "al-Shahādāt," 9 (bāb lā yashhadᵘ ʿalā shādat jawr idhā ushhida); Muslim, "Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba," 212 (bāb faḍl al-ṣaḥāba thumma lladhīna yalūnahum thumma lladhīna yalūnahum); al-Tirmidhī, "al-Fitan," 45 (bāb mā jāʾa fī l-qarn al-thālith).

[20]   For example see Abū ʿUmar Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Kitāb al-istīʿāb fī maʿrifat al-aṣḥāb* (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1917-1918), I, 6.

[21]   Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-mufrad* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 2007), 45.

[22]   With a brief look at the *fitan* and *malāḥim* (tribulations and great battles) chapters of ḥadīth collections, one quickly notices that the future is usually associated with social and physical deterioration. For an example in which some of the abovementioned signs are included, see Abū Dāwūd, "al-Fitan," 1 (bāb dhikr al-fitan wa-dalāʾilihᵢ).

[23]   "Originally, the term *minhāj* referred to a practice about which the law was unclear, perhaps where certain details were the subject of debate by the legal authorities. When it was observed that the people followed a particular interpretation or ruling, the practice of the people was decisive and this practice acquired full legal status." Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (New York:

that it is preferred even when it conflicts with a written law.[24] It is not surprising to notice evident similarities between the role of *minhāj* in Judaism and that of *ʿurf* and *ʿamal* in Islamic law, as they are both based on the veneration of earlier generations and their practices.[25]

Although this conception of time was one of the prominent factors that paved the way for the veneration of the Successors, it still does not explain the more specific issue of what led the early ḥadīth compilers to collect a multitude of *maqṭūʿ ḥadīth*s in their works. As mentioned above, the *maqṭūʿ* is a report whose text was not attributed to an authority higher than a Successor; as such, it does not carry legal authority as *marfūʿ* and *mawqūf* reports do. A close study of major ḥadīth collections reveals that the importance attached to *maqṭūʿ* reports primarily stems from the recognition that the Successors' opinions were reflective of, or compatible with, the original teachings of the Prophet. For ḥadīth collectors, even if a Successor did not formally elevate a legal statement to an authority higher than himself, it is still possible for the opinion to have a Prophetic origin, or at least to possess some relation to Prophetic traditions. Therefore, the Successors were not perceived as people isolated from their predecessors, but as heirs to religious knowledge inspired by the recent era of the Prophet Muḥammad. Three examples of the use of *maqṭūʿ* reports in ḥadīth collections will help us better understand this point.

Example One

In the first example, Abū Dāwūd, one of the most famous ḥadīth scholars of Baṣra, addresses the issue of accepting payment for prepaid harvests that have acquired damage prior to delivery:

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ الْمَهْرِيُّ وَأَحْمَدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ قَالَا أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ و حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مَعْمَرٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ عَنْ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ الْمَعْنَى أَنَّ أَبَا الزُّبَيْرِ الْمَكِّيَّ أَخْبَرَهُ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنْ بِعْتَ مِنْ أَخِيكَ تَمْرًا فَأَصَابَتْهَا جَائِحَةٌ فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ أَنْ تَأْخُذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بِمَ تَأْخُذُ مَالَ أَخِيكَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ.

Oxford University Press, 1995), 108.

24   Philip Birnbaum, *A Book of Jewish Concepts* (New York: Hebrew Pub. Co., 1964), 365-366.

25   I do not suggest that the *minhāj* and the *ʿurf* or *ʿamal* fully suit each other; but there is no doubt that their justification and implementation by legal authorities stem from very similar considerations. For *ʿamal*, see below.

… Narrated Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh: The Prophet said: "If you sell unharvested dates to your fellow Muslim and a *jāʾiḥa* destroys the crop, it is unlawful for you to ask for the price. By what right will you take your fellow Muslim's property?"[26]

Abū Dāwūd devotes the following chapter to determining the exact meaning of the term *jāʾiḥa*, and both of the ḥadīths he chooses to cite in this chapter are *maqṭūʿ*:

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ الْمَهْرِيُّ أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْب أَخْبَرَنِي عُثْمَانُ بْنُ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ عَنْ عَطَاءٍ قَالَ الْجَوَائِحُ كُلُّ ظَاهِرٍ مُفْسِدٍ مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ بَرَدٍ أَوْ جَرَادٍ أَوْ رِيحٍ أَوْ حَرِيقٍ.

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْب أَخْبَرَنِي عُثْمَانُ بْنُ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ لاَ جَائِحَةَ فِيمَا أُصِيبَ دُونَ ثُلُثِ رَأْسِ الْمَالِ. قَالَ يَحْيَى وَذَلِكَ فِي سُنَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

(Chapter Regarding the Meaning of *Jāʾiḥa*)

… ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732) said: *Jāʾiḥa*s are obviously ruinous instances of rain, cold wave, locusts, wind, or fire.

… Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd (d. 144/761) said: "That in which under a third of the capital-stock is lost is never a *jāʾiḥa*." Yaḥyā said: "This is the *sunna* of Muslims."[27]

Apparently, because there was ambiguity in how *jāʾiḥa* should be defined, Abū Dāwūd needed to cite the opinions of later authorities such as ʿAṭāʾ and Yaḥyā, both of whom belonged to the generation of the Successors. Abū Dāwūd was content with citing *maqṭūʿ* reports along with Prophetic traditions, almost in the same manner as them – i.e., with full *isnād*s from the Successors down to himself. Regardless of whether this is a correct explanation of what the Prophet meant by the term *jāʾiḥa*, what is important here is that, although these two reports initially appear to be personal sayings of ʿAṭāʾ and Yaḥyā, their context and content suggest that ḥadīth scholars noticed their close relationship with *marfūʿ* traditions. Although *maqṭūʿ* narrations were not accepted as a legal proof in Islamic law, they were still taken into account as clear guidelines to interpreting the Prophetic Sunna. The connection between the *maqṭūʿ* and the *marfūʿ* may not always be as obvious as it is in this example; yet, this does not affect

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26   Abū Dāwūd, "al-Buyūʿ," 58 (bāb fī waḍʿ al-jāʾiḥa).
27   Abū Dāwūd, "al-Buyūʿ," 59 (bāb fī tafsīr al-jāʾiḥa).

the approach generally taken by early ḥadīth scholars towards the Successors in their collections.

Example Two

The second – and more complex – example comes from Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, an earlier source of ḥadīth and Islamic law.

حَدَّثَنِي مَالِك عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْفَضْلِ عَنْ نَافِعِ بْنِ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْأَيِّمُ أَحَقُّ بِنَفْسِهَا مِنْ وَلِيِّهَا وَالْبِكْرُ تُسْتَأْذَنُ فِي نَفْسِهَا وَإِذْنُهَا صُمَاتُهَا

و حَدَّثَنِي عَنْ مَالِك أَنَّهُ بَلَغَهُ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ قَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ لَا تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ وَلِيِّهَا أَوْ ذِي الرَّأْيِ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا أَوْ السُّلْطَانِ

و حَدَّثَنِي عَنْ مَالِك أَنَّهُ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ الْقَاسِمَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَسَالِمَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ كَانَا يُنْكِحَانِ بَنَاتِهِمَا الْأَبْكَارَ وَلَا يَسْتَأْمِرَانِهِنَّ قَالَ مَالِكٌ وَذَلِكَ الْأَمْرُ عِنْدَنَا فِي نِكَاحِ الْأَبْكَارِ.

Narrated ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās that the Messenger of Allāh said: "A woman who has been previously married is more entitled to her person than her guardian, and a virgin must be asked for her consent for herself, and her consent is her silence."

And Yaḥyā narrated from Mālik that it reached him from Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab that he said: ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: "No woman is married but with the consent of her guardian, or someone of her family with sound opinion or the Sultan."

And Yaḥyā narrated from Mālik that it reached him that al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad (d. 107/725) and Sālim ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 107/725) were marrying off their daughters and they did not consult them.

Mālik said: That is the matter with us in the wedlock of the virgins.[28]

When looking at this example, it is important to remember that whenever a single ḥadīth contradicts common practices of the people of Medina (ʿamal ahl al-Madīna) Mālik tends to prefer the ʿamal over a single narration, as is the case in this chapter. In Mālik's view, the practice of the people of Medina is more reliable than a single narration in identifying the Prophet's original deeds, because the

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[28] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Mālik ibn Anas ibn Mālik ibn Abī ʿĀmir al-Aṣbaḥī, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, "al-Nikāḥ," 4-6 (bāb istiʾdhān al-bikr wa-l-ayyim fī anfusihimā). Translation of the text has been quoted from Imām Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* (translated by F. Amira Zrein Matraji, rev. Mahmoud Matraji; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), I, 748.

former was conveyed from one generation to another; whereas the latter was transmitted solely between individuals. For the purpose of this article, it is sufficient to note that in this example *maqṭūʿ* traditions were considered to be accurate representations of the *ʿamal*, the origin of which was assumed to date back to the Prophet. This specific usage of the *maqṭūʿ* report, as well as other references to the Successors throughout *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, clearly suggest that their opinions were more than individual reasoning, though not attributed to a higher authority with *isnād*.

Example Three

Another example of the use of *maqṭūʿ* comes from al-Bukhārī's *al-Adab al-mufrad*, a topical ḥadīth work devoted to Muslim traditions about good manners. After quoting prophetic reports that emphasize the significance of neighbours, al-Bukhārī narrates al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's opinion to determine the neighborhood area.

حدثنا الحسين بن حريث قال حدثنا الفضل بن موسى عن الوليد بن دينار عن الحسن: أنه سئل عن الجار فقال دارا أربعين أمامه وأربعين خلفه وأربعين عن يمينه وأربعين عن يساره.

Al-Ḥasan was asked about the [boundaries] of neighborhood, and he replied: Forty homes in the front, forty homes in the back, forty homes on the right side, and forty homes on the left.[29]

This *maqṭūʿ* report, clarifying the content of *marfūʿ* traditions, makes readers better understand the prophetic command and apply it in their lives. Having emphasized the extensive rights of a neighbor, al-Bukhārī uses a quotation from a Successor to address possible questions as to where the neighborhood physically ends.

Because *maqṭūʿ* traditions received a warm welcome from ḥadīth scholars, one might be curious as to what historical factors contributed to this reception. In other words, what historical facts served as the basis for the idea that the sayings and deeds of the Successors were compatible with Prophetic traditions? Early biographical accounts suggest that the answer lies in the close teacher-student relationships that existed between the Companions and the Successors, an arrangement that made it possible for the latter to inherit knowledge and wisdom from the former. The Companions living in Mecca and Medina, as well as those who were sent to cities such as Kūfa and

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29   Al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 37.

Baṣra established their own circles of learning, whose regulars were mostly from the generation of the Successors. The Successors not only received prophetic traditions from the Companions but also embraced their methods of reasoning. In fact, those students who were close to certain Companions were referred to as their *aṣḥāb* (companions), just as the Companions were called *aṣḥāb al-Nabī*. For instance, Zayd ibn Thābit (d. 45/665) in Medina, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652-3) and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) in Kūfa were among the Companions who had their own *aṣḥāb*.[30] Thus, it is possible that the transmission of religious knowledge via an uninterrupted chain of early generations was a significant factor that many ḥadīth scholars had in mind when selecting material for their collections.

For the same reason, it is not surprising that certain Successors are described as the most knowledgeable people about certain Companions' transmissions. For example ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad (d. 112/730), and ʿAmra bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 106/724) were experts on ʿĀʾisha's (d. 58/678) traditions.[31] Additionally, Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab mastered ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's (d. 23/644) verdicts and legal decisions so deeply that he was called "ʿUmar's transmitter" (*rāwiyat ʿUmar*).[32]

Conclusion

The Successors appear to be one of the major actors in the early ḥadīth literature, in parallel to their significance in other fields of the Islamic sciences. Figures such as ʿAlqama ibn Qays, Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhāʾī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī can be easily identified as the founders of a Muslim scholarly tradition. The Successors were not only transmitters of prophetic reports, but were also sources of Islamic tradition, as their own words were recorded within the literature. Their sayings and deeds became a subject of investigation alongside the Prophet's teachings. The Suc-

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[30] Halit Özkan, *Hicrî İlk İki Asırda Farklı Şehirlerde Amel Telakkisi Oluşumunda Sünnet ve Hadisin Yeri* [*ʿAmal Understandings of Fuqahāʾ al-amṣār at the Second Century of the Hijra*] (PhD dissertation; Istanbul: Marmara University, 2006), 105-108, 196-199.

[31] Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* (ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Muʿallimī; Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1941-1953), VII, 118.

[32] See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd ibn Manīʿ, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās; Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957-1968), V, 121.

cessors also introduced the use of *isnād* and transmitter criticism to the Islamic sciences, both of which became hallmarks of ḥadīth tradition.

The veneration of the Successors and their significance in early ḥadīth literature were basically derived from two factors: Muslims' general conception of time, where earlier generations are thought to be more virtuous and authoritative, and the common recognition that the Successors' personal opinions were at least consistent with more authoritative and authentic traditions. The historical basis of this recognition is the existence of an intimate teacher-student relationship between the Companions and the Successors. This historical background, along with the two aforementioned factors, has made it possible for later scholars to attribute a privileged status to the Successors in ḥadīth literature.

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