Who were the governors of ʿUthmān?

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Who were the governors of ʿUthmān?

The historians talk a great deal about ʿUthmān’s alleged favouritism (or nepotism) towards his relatives and say that they held the reins of power during his khilāfah, to such an extent that they provoked many people against him and they revolted in protest at his giving power to his relatives.¹ The relatives of ʿUthmān whom he appointed to positions of authority were:

1. Muʿāwiyyah
2. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ
3. Al-Walīd ibn ʿUqbah
4. Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ
5. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir

These five whom ʿUthmān appointed as governors were related to him, and according to their claims this is a cause for criticism. Let us look first at the names of all the governors of ʿUthmān. They were:

1. Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī
2. Al-Qaʿqāʿ ibn ʿAmr
3. Jabir al-Muzanī
4. Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah
5. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid ibn al-Walīd
6. Abū al-Aʿwar al-Sulamī
7. Ḥakīm ibn Salamah
8. Al-Ashʿath ibn Qays

¹ Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayhā, p. 159
9. Jarīr ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Bajalī 
10. ʿUyaynah ibn al-Nahhās 
11. Mālik ibn Ḥabīb 
12. Nasīr al-ʿAjalī 
13. Saʿīb ibn al-Aqraʿ 
14. Saʿīd ibn Qays 
15. Salmān ibn Rabīʿah 
16. Khunays ibn Hubaysh 
17. Aḥnaf ibn Qays 
18. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Rabīʿah 
19. Yaʿla ibn Munayyah1 
20. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr al-Ḥaḍramī 
21. ʿAlī ibn Rabīʿah ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā 

These were all the governors of ʿUthmān ʿlām and if we examine this list statistically, we will find that there were sixteen governors [appointed at one time]. Would it not be reasonable to suggest that five men from Banū Umayyah were qualified to be governors, especially since we know that Rasūl ʿlām used to appoint men from Banū Umayyah to do work for the state more than men from other tribes? Moreover, these governors were not all appointed at the same time, rather ʿUthmān ʿlām appointed Walīd ibn ʿUqbah, then he dismissed him and appointed Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ in his stead, so it was not the case that all five were appointed at the same time. Before ʿUthmān ʿlām died, he dismissed Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ too and when ʿUthmān ʿlām died there were only three governors who were from Banū Umayyah: Muʿāwiyyah, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ and ʿAbd-Allāh ibn ʿĀmir ibn Kurayz. ʿUthmān ʿlām dismissed Walīd ibn ʿUqbah and  

1 His full name was Yaʾlā ibn Umayyah ibn Abī ʿUbaydah al-Tamīmi. Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 3/100
Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, but from which province did he dismiss them? From Kūfah, from which ʿUmar had dismissed Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās, Kūfah which never approved of any governor. The fact that ʿUthmān dismissed these governors does not reflect any criticism of them, rather it is a criticism of the city over which they had been appointed.¹

Banū Umayyah were employed by the Rasūl of Allah during his lifetime, and subsequently by those who cannot be accused of favouring them because of blood-ties, namely Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. We do not know of any tribe of Quraysh that had more people employed by the Rasūl of Allah than Banū ʿAbd Shams, because they were numerous and they were known to be people of leadership quality and status. The Rasūl employed ʿItāb ibn Usayd ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ as governor of Makkah, Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb over Najrān, Khālid ibn Saʿīd in charge of the zakāh of Banū Madhjah, and Abān ibn Saʿīd in charge of some campaigns then as governor of Bahrain. So ʿUthmān only appointed people of the same nature and clan as Rasūl did and as Abū Bakr and ʿUmar did after him. Abū Bakr appointed Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān in charge of the conquests in Syria, and ʿUmar left him in that post, then after Yazīd died he appointed his brother Muʿāwiyah.²

The question that arises here is: did they prove that they were suited to the job or not? We will see below the testimony of the scholars about these governors who were appointed by ʿUthmān.

ʿUthmān was a Rightly Guided Khalīfah whose example is to be followed, and his actions are a precedent that may be used as guidelines for the ummah. Just as ʿUmar set a precedent for the khulafāʾ who came after him to refrain from appointing relatives in the running of affairs, ʿUthmān set a precedent for the khulafāʾ who came after him to appoint relatives if they are qualified. The one who studies the life of ʿUthmān will have no doubt that they were all

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¹ Ḥuqbah min al-Tarīkh, p. 75
² Minhāj al-Sunnah 3/175, 176
qualified administrators, and whatever ‘Uthmān is criticised for is in fact within the limits of permissibility.¹

The governors whom ‘Uthmān appointed from among his relatives are proven to have been qualified and capable in running the affairs of their provinces. Allah granted many conquests at their hands, and they treated the people justly and kindly. Some of them had been appointed as governors previously, during the reigns of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.² Let us look at what the scholars have to say about these governors.

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¹ Al-Asās fi al-Sunnah wa Fiqhiha, by Sa‘īd Hawa, 4/1675
² Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fi al-_fitnah, 1/417
The biographers state that this noble Šaḥābī had many good qualities, of which we will mention a few:

**Praise for Muʿāwiyah in the Holy Qurʿān**

Muʿāwiyah took part in the campaign of Ḥunayn, and Allah says:

\[\text{وَعَلَی الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ وَاَنْزَلَ جُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعذَّبَ الَّذِیْنَ کَفَرُوْا وَذٰلِکَ جَزَآءُ الْکٰفِرِیْنَ}\]

Then Allah did sent down His Sakīnah (calmness, tranquillity and reassurance) on the Rasūl (Muḥammad), and on the believers, and sent down forces (angels) which you saw not, and punished the disbelievers. Such is the recompense of disbelievers.¹

Muʿāwiyah was one of those who were present at the Battle of Ḥunayn, so he was one of the believers upon whom Allah sent down his Sakīnah, along with Rasūl.²

**Praise from the Sunnah**

Rasūl prayed for Muʿāwiyah, such as when he said:

\[\text{O Allah, make him a guide}^3 \text{ and one who is guided}^4 \text{, and guide others through him.}^5\]

And he said:

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1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 26
2 Marwiyāt Khalīfah Muʿāwiyah fi Ṭarīkh al-Ṭabarī, by Khālid al-Ghayth, p. 23
3 i.e. a guide for people, or one who directs others to do good.
4 i.e. guided himself.
5 Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī, by al-Albānī, 31236 (3842).
O Allah, teach Mu‘āwiyah literacy and numeracy, and protect him from punishment.¹

And the Rasūl of Allah  said:

The first army of my ummah that will campaign by sea, Paradise will be their due.”² Umm Ḥarām said that she asked: “O Rasūl of Allah , will I be among them?” He said: “You will be among them.” Then Rasūl said: “The first army of my ummah to attack the city of Caesar³ will be forgiven.” I - meaning Umm Ḥarām - asked: “Will I be among them, O Rasūl of Allah?” He said: “No.”⁴

Muhallab⁵ said:

This ḥadīth is praising Mu‘āwiyah, because he was the first one to lead a campaign by sea.⁶

¹ Mawārid al-Zamʿān, 7/249. Its isnād is ḥasan (2278).
² Fath al-Bārī, 6/121
³ The city of Caesar: i.e., Constantinople.
⁴ Al-Bukhārī, no. 2924
⁵ al-Muhallab ibn Ahmad al-Andalusi, the author of Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, d. 435 A.H.
⁶ Fath al-Bārī, 6/120
Scholars’ praise for Mu‘āwiyah

Praise from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās

It was said to Ibn ʿAbbās:  

Can you speak to the Amīr al-Mu’minīn Mu‘āwiyah, because he prays Witr with only one rak‘ah? He said: “He is a faqīh.”

There is not enough room to mention all the fiqhi issues that were narrated from Mu‘āwiyah, but here follows a few of them:

- It was narrated that he prayed Witr with one rak‘ah.

- It was narrated that he prayed for rain (īstisqa’) by virtue of someone who appeared to be righteous.  

- Half a sā‘ of wheat is sufficient as zakāt al-fitr.

- It is mustaḥab to perfume the body when wanting to enter iḥrām.

- It is permissible to buy and sell the houses of Makkah.

- A husband and wife may be separated because of impotence.

- A divorce uttered by a man who is drunk counts as such.

- A Muslim should not be killed in retaliation (qiṣāṣ) for a kāfir.

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1 op. cit., 7/130
2 Al-Mughnī by ibn Qudāmah, 3/346
3 Zād al-Ma‘ād, 2/19
4 Al-Mughnī, 5/77
5 op. cit., 6/366
• A killer may be detained until the son of his victim reaches maturity (and can decide what should be done).¹

Praise from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak for Muāwiyah

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak said:

Muʿāwiyah is a test for us (i.e., we test people by how they think of Muʿāwiyah). Whoever regards him in a disrespectful manner we would accuse him of being against the Ṣaḥābah.²

Praise from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

Imām Aḥmad was asked:

What do you say - may Allah have mercy on you - about one who says: I do not say that Muʿāwiyah is the scribe who wrote down the waḥī (revelation) and I do not say that he was the maternal uncle of the believers, because he seized power by the sword?³ Abū ‘Abd Allāh said: “This is a reprehensible view; the people who hold such a view should be shunned and the people should be warned against them.”⁴

Praise from al-Qāḍi ibn al-ʿArabi for Muʿāwiyah

Ibn al-ʿArabi spoke of attributes that were combined in Muʿāwiyah ʿaṣāṣ, among which he mentioned:

Protecting the Muslim ummah in general, guarding the border posts, strengthening the army, prevailing over the enemy, and dealing with people justly and kindly.⁵

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¹ Marwiyāh Khalīfah Muʿāwiyah fi Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, by Khālid al-Ghayth p. 28
² op. cit., p. 29
³ ibid.
⁴ Al-Sunnah by al-Khallāl, ed. by ʿAtiyah al-Zahrānī, 2/434
⁵ Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, p. 210
Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb commented on this text by noting:

Muʿāwiyah’s care and concern to protect the ummah from its enemies was so great that he sent word to the king of Byzantium, threatening him, when he was in the midst of fighting with ‘Alī at Ṣiffīn, when he heard that the king of Byzantium was approaching the border with a huge army.¹

Concerning that Ibn Kathīr said:

The king of Byzantium had great hopes of attacking and defeating Muʿāwiyah after having instilled fear in him and humiliating him, and routing his troops. When the king of Byzantium saw that Muʿāwiyah was preoccupied with fighting ‘Alī, he approached some cities (on the border) with a huge army, filled with hope of victory. But Muʿāwiyah wrote to him saying: “By Allah, if you do not stop and go back to your own land, O cursed one, I shall reconcile with my cousin and we will unite against you, and I shall certainly expel you from all of your land; I shall keep pursuing you, and the earth, vast as it is, will be straitened for you.” At that, the king of Byzantium was afraid, and he sent word seeking a peace treaty.²

Praise from Ibn Taymiyah for Muʿāwiyah

Ibn Taymiyah said concerning him:

It is proven in mutawātir reports that Muʿāwiyah was appointed to a position of authority by Rasūl as he appointed others, and he fought in jihad with him. Rasūl regarded him as honest and trustworthy; he used to write down the waḥī for him and he never had any doubts concerning his writing down of the waḥī. He was appointed as a governor by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was one of the best judges of character. Allah caused truth to be uttered on his lips and to fill his heart and he never accused him of anything with regard to his governorship.³

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¹ Marwiyāh Khalīfah Muʿāwiyah, p. 31
² Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/119
³ Al-Fatāwa, 4/472; al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 88122; Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’: 3/129
Praise from Ibn Kathīr

Ibn Kathīr said concerning him:

All the Muslims unanimously agreed to swear allegiance to him in 41 A.H, and he remained in charge throughout this period until the year in which he died. Throughout this period jihad was ongoing in the lands of the enemies, and the word of Allah remained supreme, and booty was coming to him from the ends of the earth; the Muslims were at ease, enjoying justice, tolerance and goodwill.

He also said:

He was forbearing\(^1\), dignified, a leader, prominent among people, noble, just, and a man of chivalry.\(^2\)

He also said:

He was a man of good conduct, forgiving, tolerant and overlooking the mistakes of others, may Allah have mercy on him.\(^3\)

His narration of ḥadīth

Mu‘āwiyah \(\text{مُعاويَةُ}\) is regarded as one of those who had the honour of narrating ḥadīth from the Rasūl of Allah \(\text{رسول الله} \) the reason being that he stayed close to the Rasūl of Allah after the conquest of Makkah, because he was his brother-in-law and his scribe. Mu‘āwiyah narrated one hundred and sixty three (163) aḥādīth from the Rasūl of Allah \(\text{رسول الله} \), four of which were narrated by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim; al-Bukhārī alone narrated a further four and Muslim five.\(^4\) Mu‘āwiyah’s conduct towards the people during his governorship was among the

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1 Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and Abu Bakr ibn Abī Āsim wrote books about the forbearance of Mu‘āwiyah.
2 Al-Bidāyah warn-Nihāyah, 8/118
3 op. cit., 8/126
4 Marwiyyāh Khalīfah Mu‘āwiyah fi Tarīkh al-Ţabarī, p. 33
best of any governor, which made the people love him. It is proven in al-Ṣaḥīḥ that Rasūl  said:

The best of your leaders - or rulers - are those whom you love and who love you, and you pray for them and they pray for you; the worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, and you curse them and they curse you.¹

I will conclude my discussion of Mu‘āwiyah  by noting what was said about him by al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī:

ʿUmar made him the governor of all the provinces of Syria and ʿUthmān approved of his governorship. Indeed, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq appointed him because he was the heir of his brother Yazīd, and Yazīd had appointed him to succeed him. ʿUmar then approved of his position because he had been a governor during Abū Bakr’s reign, as Yazīd had passed the position on to Mu‘āwiyah, and ʿUthmān approved of and confirmed ʿUmar’s decision. Look at this series of approvals and how strong it is.²

It was proven that the Rasūl of Allah  appointed him as a scribe, so he had a track record of working for the Islamic state that no one else, before or after him, had. He was appointed by the Rasūl of Allah  and by the three khulafā’ who came after him, and Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, the grandson of the Rasūl of Allah  made a peace deal with him and approved of his becoming khalīfah.³

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¹ Muslim, Kitāb al-lmārah, no. 65 (1855)
² Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, p. 83
³ Al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah Fajr al-Islam wa al-Aṣr al-Rāshidīn, 2/216
ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir ibn Kurayz

His full name was ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir ibn Kurayz ibn Rabī’ah ibn ʿAbd Shams ibn ʿAbd Manāf ibn Qusay al-Qurashī al-ʿAbshamī. He was born at the time of the Rasūl of Allah in 4 A.H. When Rasūl performed ṣaḥrah in 7 A.H to make up for the ṣaḥrah that he had not been able to complete previously, he entered Makkah and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was brought to him. Ibn Ḥajar said:

He smacked his lips and yawned, and the Rasūl of Allah spat into his mouth and said: “Is this the son of the Sulamī woman?” They said: “Yes.” He said: “He looks like us.” He spat into his mouth and sought refuge with Allah for him, and the child swallowed the saliva of Rasūl. He said: “He will be a finder of water.”, and he did not dig in any land but water appeared to him.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was not appointed to any administrative or military post until he became governor of Baṣrah in 29 A.H/649 CE. He was the nephew (son of maternal uncle) of the khalīfah ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, because the mother of ʿUthmān was Arwa bint Kurayz ibn Rabī’ah, and the mother of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was from Banū Sulaym.

When he was appointed governor of Baṣrah, he was twenty four or twenty-five years old. He remained governor of Baṣrah until the khalīfah ʿUthmān was killed, when he gathered a huge army and took whatever wealth he had with him, and marched to Makkah where he joined Zubayr. Then he came back to Baṣrah and was present at the Battle of the Camel, but he was not present at the battle of Ṣiffīn, even though al-Qalqashandī said that he was on Muʿāwiyah’s

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1 Al Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/91
2 Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, 5/272
4 Al-Tabaqāt, 5/31; Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, 5/27
5 Al-Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah, 8/91
side in the arbitration at Ṣiffīn. During the khilāfah of Muʿāwiyah, he was appointed as governor of Baṣrah for three years, then he was dismissed. He settled in Madīnah, and died there in 57 A.H.

According to a report narrated by Ibn Qutaybah, he died in Makkah and was buried in ʿArafāh in 59 A.H. Ibn Saʿd praised him, saying:

‘Abd Allāh was noble and generous; he had a lot of wealth and children and he loved development.

Ibn Ḥajar said concerning him:

He was very generous, brave and courageous. He was regarded as one of the most generous people of Baṣrah, and as one of the most generous of the Muslims.

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir left his mark during the conquests; he managed to dash the hopes of the Persians completely, when he demolished the last hopes of ancient Persian aspirations. That was when he finished off the last of their kings, Yazdagird ibn Shahriyān ibn Kisra and Kharazād Mahr the brother of Rustam, who led the Persian opposition against the Muslims.

In addition to his genius in military matters, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir also took an interest in Islamic knowledge. It is narrated that he narrated a ḥadīth from Rasūl Allah. Ibn Qutaybah said: He only narrated one ḥadīth from the Rasūl of Allah, but it was not narrated in any of the six books. As for the ḥadīth which

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1 Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, p. 128
2 Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā’, 3/21
3 Al-Maʿārif by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 321
4 Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, p. 129
5 Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, 5/272
6 Subh al-Aʿshi fi Sināʿat al-Insha’ by Abu al-ʿAbbās al-Qalqashandī, 1/450,451
7 Al-Maʿārif p. 321
8 ibid.
he narrated, it was narrated by Ibn Qāni’ and Ibn Munduh via Musʿab al-Zubayrī: My father narrated to me from my grandfather Musʿab ibn Thābit, from Ḥanzalah ibn Qays, from ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Āmir, that the Rasūl of Allah said:

Whoever is killed defending his wealth is a martyr.¹

His economic developments in Baṣrah

A number of economic developments in Baṣrah are connected to the name of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir, and they are no less important than his brilliant military achievements that are represented in his numerous victories over the Magians, his pursuit of their remnants and his destruction of all Yazdagird’s hopes. His economic reforms are represented in his concern about the market of Baṣrah, as he bought (the land for) this marketplace with his own wealth and gave it to the people of the city.²

The market was in the middle of Baṣrah, based on the evidence mentioned by Khalīfah ibn Khayyyāt that the market stood on the banks of the river which is in the middle of Baṣrah. This was an excellent choice, because it made the market an important centre in the middle of the city.

Perhaps the most important of his developments in Baṣrah was in the field of irrigation, as Ibn ‘Āmir was deeply concerned with this issue. Ibn Qutaybah stated that Ibn ‘Āmir dug two channels in Baṣrah, one in the east and another that was known as Umm ‘Abd Allāh and was named after the mother of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir.³ ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir ordered Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān to dig a channel in

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¹ Al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak, 3/639 (6753). Its isnād is ḍaʿīf (weak), but there is supporting evidence on this topic.
² Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, 5/73; Mujallah al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī is the main source for my biography of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir, where I benefited from the work of Professor Muḥammad Hamādī, may Allah reward him with good.
³ Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, Muḥammad Hamādī, p. 134
Abillah, as Ziyād had been appointed in charge of the diwan and the bayt al-māl by ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir, and he would leave him in charge of Baṣrah in his stead when he went out on conquests.\(^1\)

Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt stated that Ziyād dug the channel in Abillah until it reached the foot of the mountain, and the one who dug it for Ziyād was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakrah.\(^2\) When the water began to flow, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān spurred on his horse (racing the water) until the water nearly beat him.\(^3\) ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir also dug a cistern that was named after his mother, which was the cistern of Umm ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir in Baṣrah.\(^4\) Al-Balādhurī mentioned that ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir dug a channel and he appointed his freed slave Nāfidh to dig it, so it was named after him and became known as Nahr Nāfidh (the channel of Nāfidh).\(^5\)

There was also the channel of Murrah, which Ibn ‘Āmir ordered Murrah, the freed slave of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq to dig, so it was named after him\(^6\) And there was the channel of al-Asāwirah which ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir dug for them. Al-Balādhurī mentions the bridge of Qurrah in Baṣrah, and said: The bridge of Qurrah was named after Qurrah ibn Hayyān al-Bāhili. There was an ancient channel there, and then it was bought by the mother of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir,\(^7\) who gave it in charity as a source of water for the people of Baṣrah.\(^8\)

From the above it is clear that ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir was concerned with digging channels so that agriculture, which is the foundation of economic life, would flourish, in addition to Baṣrah’s strategic location with regard to trade routes and

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\(^{1}\) Futūḥ al-Buldān by al-Balādhurī, p. 351
\(^{2}\) Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāṭ, 1/142
\(^{3}\) Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 351
\(^{4}\) Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir, p. 134
\(^{5}\) Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, p. 135; Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 354
\(^{6}\) Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, p. 136; Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 354
\(^{7}\) Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, p. 136
\(^{8}\) Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 353,354
its military importance as a base for the Islamic conquests in the east. We may note how keen ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was to implement reforms from his words: If I had the opportunity, I would develop the land to such an extent that a woman could go out on her mount, coming to water and a market every day until she reached Makkah.¹

In fact, his developments were no less important than the conquests that he achieved in the east. Baṣrah was the khilāfah’s military base in its conquests of the east. Dr. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī noted that the widespread conquests led to an increase in income for Baṣrah and the spread of economic prosperity in the city, which encouraged merchants and businessmen to flock there, thus civil life developed quickly in Baṣrah.²

The financial situation in the province of Baṣrah was in very good shape as the result of the far-reaching conquests in the east, plus the economic and trade activity in Baṣrah and its stability and security. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was a humble man whose door was open to all people, to such an extent that he rebuked his gatekeeper and told him not to lock the gate by night or by day.³ In fact, Ibn ʿĀmir became very well known in Baṣrah. Ibn Saʿd said:

> The people used to say: “Ibn ʿĀmir said such and such, and Ibn ʿĀmir did such and such,”⁴ as the result of his developments and his good conduct, so the people loved him more and more.⁵

Ibn ʿĀmir remained governor of Baṣrah until the khalīfah ʿUthmān ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was murdered.⁶

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¹ Al-Maʿārif by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 321
² Al-Tanzīmāh al-Ijtimāʿiyyah wa-lqtiṣādiyyah, p. 30, 31
³ Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabi, no. 21, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir, Muḥammad Hamādi, p. 138
⁴ Al-Tabaqāt, 5/33
⁵ Majallāh al-Muʿārikh al-ʿArabī, no. 21, ʿAbd-Allah ibn ʿĀmir, Muḥammad Ḥamādi, p. 138
⁶ Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/91
ʿAbd Allāh ibn Āmir was one of the governors of ʿUthmān ʾrāʾfī. He is the one who dug the channels of Baṣrah, and was the first one to build cisterns in ‘Arafāt and bring water to them. ¹ He is the man who did so many good deeds and was so loved by the people that no one can deny it, as Ibn Taymiyah said. ²

Al- Dhahabi said concerning him:

He was one of the great Arab leaders and one of the most courageous and generous, and he was kind and forbearing. ³

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¹ ibid.
² Minhāj al-Sunnah, 3/189,190
³ Siyar Aʾlām al-Nubalāʾ, 3/21
Walīd ibn ʿUqbah

His full name was Walīd ibn ʿUqbah ibn Abī Muʿīṭ ibn Abī ʿAmr ibn Umayyah ibn ʿAbd Shams ibn Ṭāhā ibn Abī ʿAmr ibn Umayyah ibn Ṭāhā ibn Abī ʿAmr ibn Umayyah ibn ʿAbd Shams ibn ʿAbd Manāf, the amīr Abū Wahb al-Umawī. He was a companion of Rasūl  but not for long. He was the half-brother of ʿUthmān through his mother.

Walīd ibn ʿUqbah was one of the men employed by the Islamic state at the time of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar , who chose trustworthy and qualified men to work for the state. That was one of the main causes for the rapid and large-scale spread of Islam during their reigns. He was regarded as trusted and reliable by both of these two khulafā’, one of those to whom important tasks could be entrusted, because they saw that he was qualified and that his faith was sincere.

The first task he undertook during the khilāfah of Abū Bakr was when he was entrusted with secrets in the exchange of correspondence between the khalīfah and his commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd during the battle of al-Madhār against the Persians in 12 A.H. Then he sent him with reinforcements to his commander ʿIyād ibn Ghanam al-Fihrī. In 13 A.H, Walīd was appointed by Abū Bakr to collect zakāh from the tribe of Qaḍāʿah, then when Abū Bakr decided to conquer Syria, Walīd was equal in his view to ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ in respect, trustworthiness and honour. He wrote to ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ and Walīd ibn ʿUqbah calling them to lead the troops in jihād. Ibn al-ʿĀṣ marched under the banner of Islam to Palestine, and Walīd ibn ʿUqbah led his troops to the east of Jordan.

Then in 15 A.H, during the khilāfah of ʿUmar, we see Walīd ibn ʿUqbah

1 Siyar A’lām al-Nubulā’, 3/412,413
2 Faṣl al-Khitāb fi Mawāqif al-Aṣḥāb, by Muḥammad Ǧāliḥ al-Gharsi, p. 78
3 Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 4/168
4 op. cit., 4/194
5 Faṣl al-Khitāb fi Mawāqif al-Aṣḥāb, p. 78
serving as governor of the tribe of Banū Taghlib and the Arabs of al-Jazīrah.\(^1\) During this governorship he guarded the backs of the Mujāhidūn in Syria lest an attack come from behind. When he was appointed governor of that region which was still full of Christians, Walīd took the opportunity as part of his jihād effort and administrative work to call people to Allah using wisdom and beautiful preaching, to encourage the Christians of ʿIyād and Taghlib to enter Islam.\(^2\)

It is this remarkable past that Walīd brought to the khilāfah of ʿUthmān \(^3\) ʿUthmān, so he appointed him as governor of Kūfah and he was one of its best governors, ruling it with justice and kindness. During the period of his governorship of Kūfah, his armies would march to the eastern horizons, conquering the land, as was testified in his absence by one of the greatest of Muslim judges that history has ever known in terms of his knowledge, virtue and fairness, the great Tābiʿi Imam al-Shaʿbī.\(^4\)

He praised his military campaigns and his governorship when he said, when the campaigns of Maslamah ibn ʿAbd al-Malik\(^5\) were mentioned to him: If only you had seen Walīd and his campaigns and his governorship, for he would go out on campaign and reach such and such a place, and he never fell short or was accused of falling short by anyone until he was dismissed from his post.\(^6\)

Walīd \(^7\) was one of the most beloved of people to the people, and one of the kindest to them. For five years there was no gate at his house.\(^8\) ʿUthmān \(^9\) ʿUthmān said:

\[
\text{I did not appoint al-Walīd because he is my brother, rather I appointed}
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\(^1\) Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/28, 29

\(^2\) Faṣl al-Khitāb fī Mawāqīf al-Aṣḥāb, p. 78

\(^3\) Faṣl al-Khitāb fī Mawāqīf al-Aṣḥāb, p. 78

\(^4\) Maslamah ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, one of the leaders of conquest, d. 120 A.H.

\(^5\) Al-Tamhīd wa al-Bayān, p. 40

\(^6\) Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/251
him because he is the son of Umm Hakīm al-Baydā’, the paternal aunt of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ, and the twin sister of his father. Appointing someone as a governor is done at the discretion of the khalīfah. ‘Umar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz dismissed Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās and appointed someone of lesser status in his place.¹

The one who studies the life of this great Ṣaḥābī and hero of Islam who was trusted by these three Rightly Guided Khulafā’ will have no doubt that he was definitely qualified to be a governor. Rather the doubts were stirred up because of what was said concerning the reason for the revelation of a verse in which they alleged that he was described as a fāsiq (sinner) and because of the accusation that he was a wine-drinker. These are matters which need further discussion, and we shall examine these two issues here.²

Is it proven that the verse “If a fāsiq comes to you” was revealed concerning him?

Allah says:

بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوْا عَلٰی مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِنَبَاٍ فَتَبَیَّنُوْٓا اَنْ تُصِیْبُوْا قَوْمًا نٰدِمِیْنَ

O you who believe! If a fāsiq comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done.³

The narrators transmitted a story concerning this verse which says that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ sent Walīd ibn ʿUqbah I to Banū al-Muṣṭaliq to collect zakāh, and he reported that they had apostatised and refused to pay the zakāh. That was because they had come out to meet him and he grew alarmed and did not know

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1 Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, p. 86
2 Faṣl al-Khitāb fī Mawāqif al-Aṣḥāb, p. 79
3 Sūrah Al-Ḥujārāt: 6
what they were up to, so he left and reported that they had apostatised. The Rasūl of Allah sent Khālid ibn al-Walīd to them and told him to find out what they were doing. They told him that they were adhering to Islam, and this verse was revealed.¹

There are numerous reports concerning this but the story has no sound, mowsūl (uninterrupted) isnād.² The least that can be said about the isnād of this story is that it is daʿīf (weak). Even if they accept weak isnāds with regard to encouraging good deeds that do not make a forbidden thing permissible or make a permissible thing forbidden, we cannot accept a weak isnād in the story of Walīd, because that is making a forbidden thing permissible, which is describing a man who was a companion of the Rasūl - if only for one day - as a fāsiq. How can we accept the weak isnād when the verse itself enjoins establishing proof before accepting reports? This verse forms the foundation for the entire science of collecting and verifying reports.³

The story of Walīd ibn ʿUqbah and what they attributed to him cannot be accepted unless it is sound in both isnād and matn (text), because they are describing him as an evildoer, and this is an accusation which cannot be easily accepted even if it is made against an ordinary man in the modern age, fifteen hundred years later, so how can we take these reports lightly if they are accusing a man who lived at the time of Rasūl and the time of the Rightly Guided Khulafā’, and they entrusted important tasks to him?

This story represents part of the early history of Islam and parts of the story have to do with matters of ʿaqīdah. Such reports of Islamic history cannot be taken lightly, as may be the case with reports on civil developments. Moreover, Walīd ibn ʿUqbah was one of those who became Muslim after the conquest of Makkah and aspersions are often cast on the Islam of this group. Some historians

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¹ Al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah Fajr al-Islam, 2/176
² Al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah Fajr al-Islam, 2/176
³ op cit., 2/182
claim that they became Muslim reluctantly and that faith did not truly enter their hearts. This is a claim that is undoubtedly false.\footnote{op. cit., 2/173} The narrators added things to the story of Walīd ibn ʿUqbah\footnote{ibid.} motivated by political or sectarian whims and desires, and they introduced fabricated material into this story. The narrators competed in proving their ability to fabricate material and demonstrate their talents in the area of fiction.\footnote{Musnad Ahmad, 4/32}

What undermines the report about Walīd ibn ʿUqbah\footnote{ibid.} being sent to collect the zakāh of Banū al-Muṣṭāliq and contradicts it is the ḥadīth which has a sound, uninterrupted isnād composed of trustworthy men, which states that at the time of the conquest of Makkah, Walīd ibn ʿUqbah\footnote{ibid.} was a young man, and Rasūl\footnote{ibid.} would not have sent a man of his age as an agent. It was narrated from Fayād ibn Muḥammad al-Raqqī, from Jaʿfar ibn Barqān from Thābit ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Kilābī, from ʿAbd Allāh al-Hamadhānī (Abū Mūsā) that Walīd ibn ʿUqbah\footnote{ibid.} said:

> When the Rasūl of Allah\footnote{ibid.} conquered Makkah, the people of Makkah started to bring their children to him and he patted their heads and prayed for them. I was brought to him, and I had been perfumed with khulūq, and he did not pat me on the head, and the only thing that stopped him from doing that was the fact that my mother had perfumed me with khulūq, so he did not touch me because of the khulūq.\footnote{Musnad Ahmad, 4/32}

This story was taken too far due to sectarian whims and desires. Walīd was Umawī, a relative of ʿUthmān. The one who inserted the name of Walīd into the story about the reason for the revelation of the verse was a Shīʿī Rāfiḍī by the name of Muḥammad ibn al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī, of whom Ibn Ḥajar said:

> He is regarded as one of the Shīʿah of Kūfah.
Ibn Ḥajar said:

There were two liars in Kūfah, one of whom was al-Kalbī, and the other was al-Suddī.¹

He chose him for this story because it had to do with the collection of zakāh and Walīd collected zakāh from the tribe of Qudā‘ah at the time of Abū Bakr, and he collected zakāh from the tribe of Taghlib in al-Jazīrah at the time of ʿUmar. The books of the Shī‘ah criticise ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān on the basis of the story of Walīd.²

We do not deny that the verse was revealed in the context of the story of Banū al-Mustaliq, but what we do deny is that Walīd is the one who is described as a fāsiq in the verse, because the wording: “If a fāsiq comes to you” is indefinite, which indicates that it is general in meaning and does not refer to a specific case, because if the indefinite is used in a conditional phrase, it is general in meaning.

The punishment of Walīd ibn ʿUqbah for drinking wine

With regard to the ḥadd punishment of Walīd for drinking wine, it is proven in al-Ṣaḥīḥayn that ʿUthmān punished him thus after the witnesses testified against him. But this is not a reason to pick on ʿUthmān, rather it is one of the virtues of ʿUthmān that he carried out the ḥadd (punishment) on him and dismissed him from his post in Kūfah. Al-Bukhārī narrated this incident under the chapter heading The Virtues of ʿUthmān.³

ʿAlī said:

When you criticise ʿUthmān, it is like someone who stabs himself in order

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1 Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/179
2 op. cit., 2/180
3 Al-Bukhārī, kitāb Manāqib ʿUthmān
to kill someone behind him. What fault is it of ʿUthmān’s if he carried out the ḥadd punishment on a man because of his deeds and dismissed him from his post? What fault is it of ʿUthmān for what he did following our advice?

Moreover, this did not happen only during the reign of ʿUthmān; there was a precedent at the time of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, as it was stated that Qudāmah ibn Madhʿūn, who had met Rasūl, drank alcohol when he was ʿUmar’s governor in Bahrain, and he carried out the ḥadd on him and dismissed him.

Some historians stated that there was no proof that Walīd ibn ʿUqbah drank wine. Al-Ḥāfiẓ said in al-Iṣābah:

It was said that some of the people of Kūfah ganged up on him and testified against him unlawfully.

This was also referred to by Ibn Khaldūn who said:

Rumours - against the agents of ʿUthmān - stirred up by the troublemakers continued to spread, and Walīd ibn ʿUqbah, who was the governor of Kūfah, was accused of drinking wine, and a number of them bore witness against him, so ʿUthmān imposed the ḥadd on him and dismissed him.

Al-Ṭabarī narrated some further details:

the sons of Abū Zaynab, Abū Muwarra’ and Jundub ibn Zuhayr broke into

1 Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/278
2 Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fiṣāḥ, 1/421
3 Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, p. 93
4 Al-Iṣābah, 3/638
5 Tarīkh Ibn Khaldūn, 2/473; Faṣl al-khitāb fi Mawāqif al-ʿAṣḥāb, p. 81
the house of Ibn al-Haysamān and killed him. The Ṣaḥābī Abū Shurayḥ al-Khuzāʿī and his son, who were neighbours of Ibn al-Haysamān, testified against them concerning that and Walīd executed them in retaliation (qiṣāṣ). Their fathers took it upon themselves to plot against Walīd, so they started to watch his movements. Abū Zubayd the poet came to visit him; he was a (former) Christian, one of his maternal uncles from Banū Taghlib, who had become Muslim at the hands of Walīd. The guest was accused of drinking wine, and some of the foolish people started accusing Walīd because he was very close to Abū Zubayd.

Thus Abū Zaynab and Abū Muwarra’ found their opportunity; they went to Madīnah and came to ʿUthmān, testifying that Walīd had drunk wine and that they had seen him vomiting the wine. ʿUthmān said:

He would not have vomited the wine unless he had drunk it.

Walīd was brought from Kūfah and he swore an oath to ʿUthmān and told him about them, but ʿUthmān said:

We will carry out the ḥadd punishment (enjoined by) Allah and let the one who bears false witness dwell in Hell; be patient, O my brother.

Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb said:

As for the additional material that is narrated in the report of Muslim, that someone came to Walīd when he had prayed fajr with two rakʿahs and he said: “Do you want more?” - and according to some of the reports narrated by Aḥmad, he had prayed four rakʿahs - nothing was proven from the testimony of witnesses. These are the words of Ḥuḍayn the narrator of the story, but Ḥuḍayn was not one of the witnesses and he did not narrate it from any witness or from any known person. He was not in Kūfah at the

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1 Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/277
This was ʿUthmān’s governor in Kūfah, Walīd ibn ʿUqbah, the mujāhid and conqueror, the just man who was wronged, who did all he could for the ummah of good works, then he saw with his own eyes how the evildoers mistreat the righteous and how their false accusations affect them. So after the murder of ʿUthmān, he isolated himself from the hustle and bustle of society in a piece of land that had been allocated to him, fifteen miles from the city of al-Riqqah in al-Jazīrah where he had striven in jihad and called people to Islam during the khilāfah of ʿUmar. He kept away from all the wars that took place during the times of ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah until he died in his land, and was buried there in 61 A.H. And it was said that he died during Muʿāwiyah’s reign.

1 Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, p. 96, 97
2 op. cit., p/ 94
3 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/216
Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ

His full name was Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ ibn Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn ‘Abd Manāf, al-Qurashī al-Umawī.\(^1\) Abu Ḥātim said:

He was a companion of the Rasūl and he was governor of Kūfah after Walīd ibn ’Uqbah. He was one of the most eloquent men of Quraysh, hence ʿUthmān chose him as one of those whom he appointed to write down the Qur’ān. It was narrated that Anas ibn Mālik said: “… ʿUthmān ordered Zayd ibn Thābit, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr, Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ and ‘Abd al- Raḥmān ibn al-Hārith ibn Hishām to make copies of it (the manuscript) in Musḥafs.”

ʿUthmān said to the three Qurashī men:

If you and Zayd ibn Thābit differ concerning anything in the Qur’ān, write it in the dialect of Quraysh.\(^2\)

The Arabic of the Qur’ān was based on the dialect of Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, because it was the closest to the speech of the Rasūl of Allah. He was a companion for seven years. His father was killed as a mushrik at the Battle of Badr by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.\(^3\)

Let us read these reports which point to the strength of his faith:

It was narrated that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said to Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ: “I did not kill your father; rather I killed my maternal uncle al-ʿĀṣ ibn Hishām.” Saʿīd said: “Even if you had killed him, you would have been in the right, and he would have been in the wrong.”

ʿUmar was amazed at his response. During the days of his governorship in

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1 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/87
2 Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Fadāʿil al-Qurʿān, no. 4987
3 Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islām, 2/211
Kūfah, he attacked Tabaristan and conquered it, and he attacked Jarjān; in his army were Ḥudhayfah and other Ṣaḥābah.¹

He was famous for his kindness and generosity, to such a point that a beggar asked him for something at a time when he did not have anything, but he wrote down what he wanted to give him, and put it in writing.² He loved to unite the Muslims and hated fitnah, from which he would flee. ʿUthmān appointed him governor of Kūfah after Walīd ibn ʿUqbah. He came to Madīnah on one occasion, and when he returned, the troublemakers had rallied their troops and prevented him from entering the city, so he went back and stayed in Madīnah. Among those who prevented him from returning to his province were the killers of ʿUthmān, but despite that he stayed away from the Battle of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, and he urged those who were involved in the Battle of the Camel not to go out and fight.³

This was his manner of conduct: generosity, courage, righteousness, jihad, and eloquence that was most akin to the eloquence of the Rasūl of Allah ⁴

He dictated to Zayd ibn Thābit this Musḥaf that we still read today. Think about these attributes that are proven in šaḥīḥ reports, and compare them with the bad qualities that are mentioned in reports that have no basis. Think about those who fabricated and spread those bad reports, and you will realise that they are fabrications, because they combine contradictory qualities in one man: generosity and miserliness, righteousness and evildoing, knowledge and ignorance, going out for jihād and reluctance to go out. It is impossible for these characteristics to be combined in one person.⁴ The reporters claim, without any isnād, that when Saʿīd was appointed governor of Kūfah after Walīd, some of the slaves said in rajaz (rhyming verse):

1 ibid.
2 Al-Isābah, 3268
3 Al-Ṭabaqāt, 5/34
4 Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/212
Woe to us! Walīd has been dismissed.
And Saʿīd, who is going to starve us, has been appointed.
He will decrease our stipends and not increase them.¹

This is a fabrication, an undoubtedly made-up story.² Because the slaves in 30 A.H - i.e., the prisoners of war who had become slaves - could not speak Arabic well, let alone compose poetry, and because Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ 了解到 was well known for his generosity and righteousness, and he could not be described as someone who would starve people. If the people and poets praised Walīd for his generosity, then Saʿīd set an example by his generosity.³ He was described as a vessel of honey, and al-Farazdaq wrote poetry praising the generosity of Saʿīd 了解到.

If the slaves came up with these lines of rajaz verse at the beginning of Saʿīd’s 了解到 governorship in Kūfah, how could they have known his policies or whether he had come to starve the people or give them their fill? What is strange is that the narrators mention this report in a context that contradicts itself, as they said:

ʿUthmān appointed Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ as governor of Kūfah and he came to them and was fair to them, but some of the slaves said (these lines of rajaz verse).⁴

How could he be fair and yet be described as causing the slaves to starve? There was an abundance of food with enough for everyone and more, and his fair governorship would ensure that this goodness reached everyone.⁵

May Allah have mercy on the classical historians, for they thought highly of their readers and they compiled contradictory reports in their books, thinking that

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¹ Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/279
² Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/212
³ Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/279
⁴ Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/213
⁵ Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/213; al-Ṭabaqāt, 5/32
their readers throughout the ages would be able to distinguish the sound reports from the suspect ones. Their excuse was that they were writing for the people of their own era, and they did not realise that the coming centuries would be filled with people who would not be able to distinguish between reports.  

In his biography of Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ṣamʿān, Ibn Saʿd narrated without an isnād: They said:

> When Saʿīd came to Kūfah as a governor, he came as a young man who had lived a life of luxury and had no prior experience. He said: “I will not ascend the mimbar until it has been purified,” and he issued orders that it be washed. Then he said from the mimbar: “All of this Sawād is a garden belonging to some young men of Quraysh,” and they complained to ʿUthmān.  

This report is not sound because it has no isnād, and because Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ ʿAbd al-Ṣamʿān, who led armies of jihād and conquest, was not as they described. Moreover, Ibn Saʿd narrated this alleged statement of Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ṣamʿān from Ashtar Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith when he prevented Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ ʿAbd al-Ṣamʿān from entering Kūfah after many years of his being its governor, when Ashtar said:

> This Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ had come to you claiming that this sawād is a garden belonging to some young men of Quraysh, but al-Sawād is the place where you were born the place where you settled and the place where you and your fathers acquired ḥayʾ (booty).

Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith, who was known as Ashtar, was a man of fitnah. He was one of the leaders of the rebels who besieged ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān and killed him. It is no wonder that these people fabricated words to stir up hatred. Even if these words were uttered, those who said them were those who rebelled against the khilāfah, because they understood it in this negative manner because the governors in

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1 op. cit., 2/214  
2 op. cit., 2/214  
3 op. cit., 2/214
Iraq - especially Kūfah - were all from Quraysh, and tribalism is obvious in these words.¹

Imām al-Dhahabī said concerning him:

He was a noble and generous governor, praiseworthy, forbearing, dignified, decisive and wise, a man who was fit to be a governor.²

As for the rebels and those who criticised ʿUthmān for appointing Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ as governor of Kūfah and claimed that he behaved in such a way that it led the people of Kūfah to expel him³, the mere fact that the people of Kūfah expelled him is not indicative of any fault that would justify such an action. The one who knows anything about Kūfah and its ways will be aware of its constant complaints against its governors with no sharʿī justification, complaints that were made for the silliest reasons.

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said of them:

I am very tired and no longer know what to do with the people of Kūfah; they are not pleased with anyone and no one is pleased with them; they are not good to any governor and no governor could be good for them.⁴

According to another report he said:

I am tired of the people of Kūfah. If I appoint a lenient man over them they will take advantage of him, and if I appoint a strict man over them they will complain about him.⁵

1 ibid
2 Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā’, 3/447
3 Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/279
4 Al-Maʿrifah wa al-Tarīkh by al-Fasawī, 2/754
5 Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fitnah, 1/423
In fact, he prayed against them and said:

O Allah, they have made me confused so make them confused.¹

Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ was a wise man who said:

My visitor has three rights over me: when he comes in, I should welcome him; when he sits down I should make room for him; and when he speaks I should listen to him.

And he said to his son:

O my son, do favours for the sake of Allah, if you initiate it without being asked, but if a man comes to you blushing or one who is uncertain comes to you, not knowing if you will give him anything or not, by Allah, even if you gave him all of your wealth, you would not be able to suffice him.

And he also said:

O my son, do not joke with a noble man lest it cause him to despise you, or with an ignoble man lest it cause him to lose respect for you.

One day a righteous woman entered upon him when he was the governor of Kūfah, and he showed her respect and treated her kindly. She said:

May Allah cause you never to need any ignoble man, for a noble man always remembers the favours of others, and if a blessing is taken away from a noble man, may He make you the cause of it being restored to him.

When Saʿīd was dying, his sons gathered and he said to them:

Let my companions not miss anything except my presence, and uphold ties

¹ Al-Minhūj by ibn Taymiyah, 3/188
with them as I used to do. Keep giving them what I used to give them, and
give them enough so that they have no need to ask from others, for when
a man needs something he will be in a state of anxiety and will tremble
for fear that his request may be rejected. By Allah if a man is tossing and
turning in his bed, thinking of you as the one who could fulfil his need, that
is a greater favour to you than what you give him (i.e. he is doing you the
greater favour by thinking positively of you).

Then he gave them a great deal of other advice. He died in 58 A.H, or it was said
that he died in 57 A.H or 59 A.H.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/90
When mentioning the name of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī al-Sarḥ and ʿUthmān’s appointing him as governor of Egypt, the historians usually say:

Uthmān appointed as governor of Egypt ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī al-Sarḥ, his brother through breastfeeding.¹

What is meant by the phrase “his brother through breastfeeding” is an implicit accusation on the part of some historians that ʿUthmān appointed him as governor of Egypt because of this bond of brotherhood. But what this historian said is not correct.

In order to refute these people and their implicit criticism against the khalīfah ʿUthmān ibn ‘Affān, we will discuss the conduct of this knight of the tribe of Banū ‘Āmir ibn Lu'ayy, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sa’d. He had a great deal of experience and was very familiar with Egypt and the surrounding countries because he had taken part in the conquest of those regions with the army of ʿAmr, and because he had been appointed governor of some of those provinces at the time of ʿUmar, when he was governor of Upper Egypt.³

He was also its governor at the beginning of ʿUthmān’s khilāfah. This qualified him to become the governor of all of Egypt, as he was the best of the candidates for that post after ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, due to his experience. It seems that ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sa’d was able to control the kharāj of Egypt until it became greater than the kharāj that had been collected at the time of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ. The reason for that may be that ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sa’d followed a different strategy of expenditure than ʿAmr, so the kharāj money that was

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¹ Al-Kāmil by Ibn al-Athīr, 3/88
² Faṣl al-Khitāb fī Mawāqif al-Aṣḥāb, p. 77
³ Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fī al-Fitnah, p. 418
available in Egypt increased.¹

During his governorship, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd engaged in jihād in a number of places and achieved conquests that were of great importance. Among his campaigns was his campaign of conquest in North Africa in 27 A.H, during which he killed its king Jarjīr. He was accompanied by a number of Ṣaḥābah during those conquests, such as ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ and others. The campaign ended with a peace treaty with the Patriarch of North Africa who agreed to pay jizyah to the Muslims.²

Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ returned to North Africa and laid a strong foundation for Islam in the region in 33 A.H.³ Another of the most important actions of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ was his campaign in Nubia which was known as Ghazwat al-Asāwidah or Ghazwat al-Habashah by some historians. This campaign took place in 31 A.H, during which there was intense fighting between the Muslims and the Nubian troops, and a number of the Muslims were killed due to the Nubians’ skill in archery. This campaign ended with a peace treaty which ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd signed with the Nubians, and imposed a limited form of jizyah on them.⁴

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd is rightfully regarded as the first Muslim leader who was able to penetrate Nubia, fight its people and impose the jizyah on them, and during his governorship relations between the Nubians and the Muslims remained stable.

Another of the most important military achievements of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd was the campaign of Dhāt al-Sawārī, in which the Muslims defeated the Byzantines. The governorship of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd in Egypt was generally well thought of by the Egyptians, and they did not see anything that they disliked. Al- Maqrīzī says of him:

¹ ʿAl-Wilāyah ʿalā al-Buldān, 1/180
² Futūḥ Miṣr wa Akhbāruha, p. 183; ʿAl-Wilāyah ʿalā al-Buldān, 1/180
³ ʿAl-Nujām al-Zahirah, 1/80
⁴ ʿAl-Wilāyah ʿalā al-Buldān, 1/181; Futūḥ Miṣr wa Akhbāruha, p. 188
He remained governor throughout the khilāyah of ‘Uthmān and was well thought of as a governor.¹

Al-Dhahabī said of him:

He never transgressed any limits or did anything for which he could be criticised. He was one of the wisest and most generous of men.²

The province of Egypt was initially quiet and stable, until the troublemakers such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ managed to get there and start to incite the people. They and those who were influenced by them played a major role in the murder of ‘Uthmān I and the situation in Egypt itself became very unstable as the result of the expulsion of its legitimate governor and the usurpation by others in illegitimate ways. During that period they managed to spread hatred in people’s hearts against their khalīfah ‘Uthmān I as the result of the plots that they fabricated based on the lies that they spread.³

We shall discuss this below, with the help of Allah. When fitnah emerged as the result of ‘Uthmān’s murder, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa‘d withdrew and settled in ‘Asqallān or Ramlah in Palestine. Al-Baghawī narrated with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād that Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb said:

Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ went to al-Ramlah in Palestine, and one day he said at dawn: “O Allah, make the last of my deeds fajr (ṣalāh). He did wuḍū’ and prayed, then he said the salām to his right and was about to say the salām to his left when Allah took his soul.⁴

¹ Al-Khatat, 1/299
² Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, 3/34
³ Al-Wilāyah ‘alā al-Buldān, 1/186
⁴ Al-Iṣābah no. 4711; Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, 3/35
Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam and his father

Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was one of the closest of ʿUthmān’s relatives to him, and one of those who had the strongest connection to the centre of the khilāfah and was in the midst of the events that led to the destruction of Muslim unity at the time of ʿUthmān. He was like the keeper of state secrets, or the ring bearer of the king. Marwān was certainly not the only advisor of the khalīfah, as he used to consult the senior and junior Ṣaḥābah, and he was not isolated from the wisest people in Muslim society. Moreover, Marwān was not the advisor who had control of the state in his hand; rather he was no more than a scribe of the khalīfah, a job whose importance is based on closeness to the khalīfah and his seal.

The claim that he was the cause of ʿUthmān getting into trouble and inciting people against him so that the khilāfah would pass to Banū Umayyah is an assumption for which there is no evidence. The khilāfah did not pass to Banū Umayyah until after a great deal of trouble in which Marwān played no major role. Moreover, ʿUthmān was not a weak character who could be controlled by a scribe to the extent that some narrators imagined.

Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam is not to be blamed for the fact that he did not reach puberty during the lifetime of the Rasūl of Allah, according to scholarly consensus; at most he was ten years old or thereabouts, but he was a Muslim who used to read Qurʾān and learn his religion. Before the turmoil arose, he was not known for anything for which he could be criticised, and ʿUthmān is not to be blamed for appointing him as his scribe.

As for getting caught up in the turmoil, that happened to others who were better than Marwān. Moreover, the report about the Rasūl expelling his father is ḍaʿīf (weak) in both isnād and text. It was examined by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn ʿAffān, by Sādiq ʿArjūn, p. 117; Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayh, by Hamdi Shahīn, p. 160; Minhāj al-Sunnah, 3/197.
Taymiyah, who explained why it is weak. It is known that Marwān ibn al- Ḥakam was very knowledgeable and just. He was one of the leaders of the youth of Quraysh and he became prominent at the time of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān.

Imām Mālik testified that he was a faqīh, and quoted his judgements and rulings as evidence in many places in al-Muwaṭṭa’, as is narrated in other books of Sunnah that were in circulation among the A’immah of the Muslims who followed those rulings. Imām Aḥmad said:

> It was said that Marwān was a good judge, and he used to base his opinions on cases judged by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

Marwān was one of the most knowledgeable of people about the Qur’ān, and he also narrated some ḥadīth, as he narrated from some of the most famous Ṣaḥābah, and some of them narrated from him, as did some of the Tābi‘īn.

He was keen to learn the Sunnah and act upon it. Al-Layth ibn Sa‘d - the faqīh of Egypt - narrated with his isnād:

> Marwān attended a funeral, and when the funeral prayer had been offered, he departed. Abū Hurayrah said: “He has acquired one qirāt and been deprived of one qirāt (i.e., of reward, as stated in a ḥadīth). Marwān was told about that and he came running such that his knees became uncovered, and he sat until he was given permission to enter.

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1 Minhāj al-Sunnah, 3/195,196
2 Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayhā, p. 169
3 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/260
4 ibid. ibid; al-Musnad no. 4453- 4650
5 Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayhā, p. 200; al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/260
6
In the Introduction to *Fatḥ al-Bārī* it says:

Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ ibn Umayyah, the paternal cousin of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān; it was said that he had seen RasūlAllah ﷺ; if it is proven, no attention should be paid to those who spoke against him.¹

Ibn Kathīr said:

He is a Sahābī according to many, because he was born during the lifetime of RasūlAllah ﷺ.²

Marwān was governor of Madīnah for Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ː, and he was very strict towards evildoers, waging war against all signs of extravagance and promiscuity.³ He was just towards his people, and was very careful to avoid showing favouritism towards his relatives or those among them who tried to take advantage of his position.

His brother ʿAbd al-Raḥmān slapped a freed slave of the people of Madīnah who was working as a wheat-seller during the period when Marwān was governor of Madīnah, and the wheat-seller complained to Marwān. He had his brother ʿAbd al-Raḥmān brought to him, and he made him sit before the wheat-seller and said to him: “Slap him.” The wheat-seller said: “By Allah, I did not want this, all I wanted was to tell him that he has a governor over him who will support me against him; I forgive you.” He said: “I will not accept that from you; take your right.” He said: “By Allah, I will not slap him, but I give it to you; by Allah, I will not slap him.” Marwān said: “By Allah, I will not accept that. If you want to forgive him, either forgive him as a favour to him or for the sake of Allah.” He said: “I forgive him for the sake of Allah.” ʿAbd al-Raḥmān spoke words of poetry criticising his brother

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¹ *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 2/164; *Abātīl yajib an tuhma min al-Tarīkh*, p. 254

² *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, 8/259

³ *Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā alayhā*, p. 200
Marwān for that.¹

This bright picture of Marwān’s knowledge, justice, understanding and religious commitment is very different from the hateful picture presented by most historians and narrators who tried hard to distort the image of this man’s life. When he was dying they also tried to distort it, and claimed that his wife Umm Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyyah suffocated him with a pillow or poisoned him because he had insulted her son - as they claim - in front of a number of people.

This story - in addition to containing some contradictory elements - seems at first glance to be a myth fabricated by some old woman, but people started repeating it, either for the sake of empty talk or to try to damage the reputation of a noble family out of envy because of the high level of glory that they had achieved.²

Was his death natural or did he die of the plague, or was he suffocated by his wife? The contradiction between the reports indicates that the truth is not known. The reports which state that his wife is the one who killed him, either directly or by delegating someone else to do it (namely her slave woman) is not acceptable or reasonable, because this wife was a noble woman from the tribe of ʿAbd Shams, and her husband was related to her, and he was a khalīfah. So she was the wife of a khalīfah and the mother of a khalīfah (namely Mu‘āwiyyah ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyyah), and this is something that a noble woman would never do.

Moreover, we do not see any consequences of this assassination - there was no internal fight in the family, no demand for vengeance, and Khālid retained his status before ʿAbd al-Mālik. So there was no sufficient motive for the crime of murder.³ It was narrated from several scholars that he said:

The last words that Marwān spoke were:

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¹ Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayhā, p. 200
² ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, by Dr. al-Rīs, p. 12
³ Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah al-Muftarā ʿalayhā, p. 201
Paradise is due to the one who fears the Fire. Engraved on his ring were the words Glory be to Allah.

Or it was said:

I believe in the Almighty, the Most Merciful.¹

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

The reports which criticise Walīd and Marwān ibn al-Hakam are false.²

1 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/262
2 Al-Manār al-Munīf p.117; Faṣl al-Khitāb fi Mawāqif al-Aṣḥāb, p. 77
Did ʿUthmān show favouritism to any of his relatives at the expense of the Muslims?

If ʿUthmān had wanted to show favouritism to any of his relatives at the expense of the Muslims, his stepson Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfah would have been the most likely candidate for favouritism, but the khalīfah refused to appoint anyone to any position for which he was not qualified. That was not because he disliked him, otherwise he would not have helped him out at his own expense or provided him with a mount and supplies when he asked for his permission to go to Egypt.

As for appointing young men, ʿUthmān had the best example in the Rasūl of Allah. He prepared an army to fight the Byzantines at the end of his life, and appointed Usāmah ibn Zayd in charge of it. When Rasūl passed away, Abū Bakr insisted that the army continue, but some of the Ṣaḥābah wanted to replace Usāmah with an older leader, and they asked ʿUmar to speak to Abū Bakr about that. Abū Bakr got angry when he heard this suggestion and said to ʿUmar:

O ʿUmar, the Rasūl of Allah appointed him and you are telling me to dismiss him?

ʿUthmān himself responded to this issue in front of a group of the Ṣaḥābah, when he said:

I have not appointed anyone but one who is mature, adult and qualified. These are the people for whom they worked, so ask them about them; these are the people of the city from which they came. Those who come before me appointed people who were younger than them. People said about the

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1 Taḥqīq Mawāqif fi-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fitnah, 1/247
2 op. cit., 1/247; Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/416
3 Taḥqīq Mawāqif fi-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fitnah, 1/427; Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/416
4 Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī, 5/46
Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said: what they said about me when he appointed Usāmah, is it not so?” They replied: “Yes.” The people do not know what they are talking about.¹

‘Alī said:

‘Uthmān did not appoint anyone but men who were of good character and just, and the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ appointed ‘Itāb ibn Usayd as governor of Makkah when he was twenty years old.²

At the time of ‘Uthmān ﷺ, the governors of the regions were not ignorant about matters of sharī‘ah, and they were not negligent about Islam. Even if they committed some sins, they still did a great job, and their sins are a personal matter which affected them only and had no effect on the Muslim society. We have studied the legacy of these governors and their deeds, and we have found that it is of great benefit for Islam and the Muslims. Hundreds and thousands of people were guided to Islam at the hands of ‘Uthmān’s governors, and because of their conquests huge swaths of land were added to the Muslim state.

Even if they had not had religious commitment and courage that motivated them to engage in jihād, they would not have led their armies to jihād in which there is the possibility of death and leaving behind a worldly life of ease and pleasure. We have studied the biographies of these governors, and we have found that each one of them had one or more conquests to his name in the regions neighbouring his province, in addition to the virtues that qualified them for these positions of leadership.³

The one who examines the sound reports about the events of history and studies the biographies of the men whose help ‘Uthmān sought and the beautiful legacy of their jihād in the history of da‘wah, and the results of their good management in the prosperity and tranquillity of this ummah cannot but express

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¹ op. cit., 5/355
² Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, 8/178
³ Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah Fajr al-Islam, 2/112
his admiration and pride the more he examines this era of Islamic history.¹

ʿUthmān and his governors were preoccupied with fighting the enemy, striving against them and repelling them, but that did not prevent them from expanding the territory of the Islamic state and carrying its influence into new lands. The governors had a direct impact on the events of turmoil, as accusations were made against them saying that they had transgressed against the people, but there was no proof for these accusations. ʿUthmān was accused of appointing his relatives, but we have refuted this accusation.

Thus we can see that ʿUthmān did not spare any effort to do that which was in the best interests of the ummah by appointing those who were qualified. Nevertheless, ʿUthmān and his governors were not spared the accusations made against them by troublemakers at that time, just as ʿUthmān was not spared the unfair accusations of many researchers whose research methods are poor, especially modern researchers who have issued judgements based on poor research or specific events for which they did not rely on authentic sources, and quoted weak Rāfiḍī reports and reached false and unfair conclusions about the Rightly Guided khulafāʾ ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, such as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in his book al-Fitnat al-Kubrā, Rāḍī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm in al-Nizām al-Idārī wa al-Ḥarbī, Subhi al-Ṣāliḥ in al-Nuzum al-Islamiyyah, Mawlawī Ḥusayn in al-Idārah al-ʿArabiyyah, Ṣubḥī Mahmasānī in Turāth al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāṣhidīn, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in his book al-ʿAdālah al-Ijtimāʿiyyah, Muḥammad al-Mulhim in Tarīkh al-Bahrain fi al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijrī, Badawī ʿAbd al-Laṭīf in al-Aḥzāb al-Siyāsiyyah fi Fajr al-Islam, Anwar al-Rifāʿi in al-Nuzum al-Islamiyyah, Muḥammad al-Rayyis in al-Nazariyāt al-Siyāsiyyah, Abī Ḥusnī al-Kharbūṭī in al-Islam wa al-Khilāfah, Abū al-Aʿlā al-Mawdūdī in al-Mulk wa al-Khilāfah and Sayyid Quṭb in al-ʿAdālah al-Ijtimaʿiyyah.

ʿUthmān was indeed the khalīfah who was wronged, as his earliest opponents fabricated lies against him and later historians did not deal fairly with him.²

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¹ Hāshiyat al-Muttaqi min Minhāj al-ʿītādī, p. 390
² Al-Wilāyah al-ʿālā al-Buldān, 1/222-223