

MUSLIM WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP OF ḤADĪTH AND WESTERN SCHOLAR REACTION: A Study on Fuat Sezgin's Approach to Ḥadīth Scholarship

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Abstract

The following article is analyzing both Fuat Sezgin's approach to Western scholarship of ḥadīth and the views of some non-Muslim scholars, which give either support or criticism against him. Some questions have been discussed; to what extent is Fuat Sezgin influenced by Western methods of ḥadīth research and to what extent does he argue against the methods of non-Muslims? To what extent does he persist on arguing the reliability of ḥadīth literature? To what extent does he base his argument on Muslim ḥadīth literature? To what extent does he digress from the classical methodology of ḥadīth research?

The following pages show that Sezgin has been familiar with non-Muslim scholarship of ḥadīth research. Yet instead of following Western scholars' approaches and premises on the early ḥadīth literature, he severely criticized them and decided to follow the mainstream of Muslim scholars' belief in the historicity of ḥadīth transmission and collection. Fuat Sezgin focused his criticism on Goldziher's historical claims. If one classifies Western discourse of ḥadīth literature, Sezgin and Azmi can be located in the same line for their similar approach and way of handling the early literature of Islam. Both Sezgin and Azmi have been involved in the discussion on the reliability of early Islamic transmission. However, in contrast to Muslim scholars, who generally believe that the process of ḥadīth transmission

during the first century was mainly oral, they insist on arguing that many ḥadīths were, in fact, recorded in writing from the earliest times.

Keywords: ḥadīth, isnād, authenticity, transmission, literature, collection

A. Introduction

It is self evident that ḥadīth is an unavoidable source of Islamic authority and has been used as the principal source of Islamic thought from its very genesis. However, since the 19th century, questions about the authenticity, originality, authorship, provenance and the correctness of ḥadīth have appeared, and they have become of central importance to the study of Islam, especially to those concerned with Islamic law. These questions arose from Western scholars and Muslim scholars alike. Gustav Weil, for example, suggested that a European critic is required to reject at least half of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹ The first serious challenges to the authenticity of Muslim ḥadīth literature by Western scholars began with Alois Sprenger,² who expressed his skepticism about the reliability of ḥadīth as a historical source. This attitude was followed by William Muir, who also maintained a critical attitude toward the authenticity of ḥadīth.³ European scholarship of ḥadīth culminated in the work of Ignaz Goldziher, whose work was unquestionably the most important critique of ḥadīth in the nineteenth-century. Goldziher was the first scholar to subject the ḥadīth to a systematic historical and critical study.⁴ Instead of considering ḥadīths as reliable sources for the rise of Islam, he regard them as invaluable source for the beliefs, conflicts and concerns of the later generations of Muslims and put the ḥadīths into circulation.

¹ Gustav Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, vol. 2, (Mannheim, 1846-62), p. 291.

² Alois Sprenger, "On the Origin and Progress of Writing Down Historical Facts among the Musulmans," *Journal and Proceeding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1856), vol. 25, pp. 303-29, 375-81; "Die Sunna" in Alois Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammod*, (Berlin, 1861-1865), pp. lxxvii-civ.

³ William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet and the History of Islam to the Era of Hegira*, 4 vols. (London, 186; reprint. Osnabruck, 1988). First serialised in *Calcutta Review*, vol. 19 (January-June, 1853).

⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1889-1890), trans. S. M. Stern as *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols. (London, 1967).

Goldziher's skepticism was adopted by Leone Caetani and Henri Lammens who were of the opinion that almost all the traditions about the Prophet's life were apocryphal.⁵ Other scholars who refused *ḥadīth* as authentic materials for the historical reconstruction of the time of the Prophet and the first Islamic century are John Wansbrough,⁶ Patricia Crone and Michael Cook.⁷

Although in Western scholarship Goldziher's *Mubammedanische Studien* was considered to be the first milestone among Western efforts to depict the history of *ḥadīth*, he met with criticism from Muslim scholars.⁸ In western scholarship, Goldziher's book, published in 1890, was not followed by similar studies and remained unrevised in any significant way until Joseph Schacht's *Origins of Mubammadan Jurisprudence* appeared in 1950. Schacht dealt especially with legal tradition and its development.⁹ His thesis that *isnāds* have a tendency to grow backwards and his "common link theory" have influenced the Western scholars who came after him. Like Goldziher, he assumed that few if any *ḥadīths* originated with the Prophet. He believed, however, that it was possible by careful study to arrive at a rough estimate of when a particular *ḥadīth* was put into circulation. Schacht's approach has been adopted by J. van Ess¹⁰ and has been revived in a large scale by G. H. A Juynboll, even though he differs from Schacht in

⁵ L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. 1, (Milan, 1905), pp. 28-58, 121-43, 192-215 and passim; H. Lammens, "Qoran et tradition. Comment fut composée la vie de Mahomet", in: *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1 (1910), pp. 27-51, quoted by Harald Motzki, *The Biography of Muḥammad. The Issue of the Sources*, (Brill, 2000), p. xii.

⁶ J. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu, Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, (Oxford, 1978).

⁷ P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, (Cambridge 1977).

⁸ Muṣṭafā. M. Azmi. *Studies in Early ḥadīth Literature with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*, (Beirut, 1968). This book has been translated into Arabic with the title *Dirāsāt fī l-ḥadīth al-nabawī wa-tārīkh tadwīnīhi*, (Beirut, 1968); Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī. *Al-sunna wa-makānatubā fī l-tasbrri' al-islāmī*, (Cairo, 1961), pp. 365-420.

⁹ Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Mubammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford, 1950).

¹⁰ Joseph van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīth und Theologie. Studien zum Entstehen pr destinationischer berlieferung*, (Berlin/New York, 1975).

several significant points.¹¹ Both Schacht and Juynboll are of the opinion that the common link is the fabricator of *ḥadīth*.¹² Schacht's premises and methods of investigation as well as Juynboll's method of dating a *ḥadīth* by analyzing only the *isnāds* have been subjected to criticism.¹³ Perhaps the most significant challenges to their conclusions may be found in Harald Motzki's works.¹⁴ Unlike Schacht and Juynboll, Motzki is inclined to regard the common links not as the fabricators of *ḥadīths* as Schacht and Juynboll do, but rather as the first systematic collectors of traditions who transmitted the *ḥadīths* in regular classes of students out of which an institutionalized system of learning developed.¹⁵ Opposition to Schacht's and Goldziher's assumptions about the *ḥadīths* may also be found in the works of M. Sibā'ī, N. Abbott, M. M. Azami and F. Sezgin. They argue for an early and continuous practice of writing down *ḥadīth* in Islam. In their opinion the Companions of the Prophet kept written records of *ḥadīths*, and most of these *ḥadīths* were transmitted in written form until the time they were compiled in the canonical collections.¹⁶ Motzki and Schoeler have also pointed out,

¹¹ G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth*, (Cambridge 1983); *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth*, (1996).

¹² Schacht, *Origins*, pp. 171-2. Juynboll, "Some-*isnād* analytical methods".

¹³ Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma. A Source Critical Study*, (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 109-11 and "Eschatology and Dating of Traditions", in *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies*, I (1992), pp. 23-47.

¹⁴ Harald Motzki, "Quo vadis, *Ḥadīth* Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G. H. A. Juynboll: "Nafi", the *mawlā* of Ibn 'Umar, and his Position in Muslim *ḥadīth* Literature" in *Der Islam* 73 (1996), pp. 40-80 and 193-229; "The *Muṣannaḥ* of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī as a Source of Authentic *Aḥādīth* of the First Century A.H. in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 50/1 (1991), pp. 1-21; *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz. Ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1991; "Der *Fiqh* des Zuhri: die Quellenproblematik" in *Der Islam* 68 (1991), pp. 1-44.

¹⁵ Motzki, "Quo Vadis", p. 45; "Der Prophet und die Schulden. Eine *ḥadīth* - Untersuchung auf dem Prüfstand" in: *Der Islam* 77 (2000), p. 9. "Methoden zur Datierung von islamischen Überlieferungen", (Nijmegen 2001), pp. 10-12.

¹⁶ Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1976); M. M. Azami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature: With a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*, (1968. 3rd ed. Indianapolis 1992); Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band I: Qur'ānwissenschaften, Ḥadīth, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik bis ca. 430 H.*, (Leiden, 1967).

what Schacht and Juynboll denied, that some *ḥadīths* can be dated to the first century. However, whether or not they can be ascribed to the Prophet, they could not prove.¹⁷

In the following pages, Fuat Sezgin's approach to Western scholarship of *ḥadīth* is analyzed. Similarly, the views of some non-Muslim scholars, which give either support or criticism against him will also be touched upon. To what extent is Fuat Sezgin influenced by Western methods of *ḥadīth* research and to what extent does he argue against the methods of non-Muslims? To what extent does he persist on arguing the reliability of *ḥadīth* literature? To what extent does he base his argument on Muslim *ḥadīth* literature? To what extent does he digress from the classical methodology of *ḥadīth* research?

The following pages will show that Sezgin has been familiar with non-Muslim scholarship of *ḥadīth* research. Yet instead of following Western scholars' approaches and premises on the early *ḥadīth* literature, he severely criticized them and decided to follow the main stream of Muslim scholars' belief in the historicity of *ḥadīth* transmission and collection. Like Azmi who severely attacked Joseph Schacht's methods and conclusions on early *ḥadīth* literature, Fuat Sezgin focused his criticism on Goldziher's historical claims. If one classifies Western discourse of *ḥadīth* literature, Sezgin and Azmi can be located in the same line for their similar approach and way of handling the early literature of Islam. Both Sezgin and Azmi have been involved in the discussion on the reliability of early Islamic transmission. However, in contrast to Muslim scholars, who generally believe that the process of *ḥadīth* transmission during the first century was mainly oral,¹⁸ they insist

¹⁷ For traditions dated in the first century cf. Harald Motzki, "The Prophet and the Cat: On Dating Mālik's *Muwatta* and Legal Traditions" in *JSAT* 22 (1998) p. 18-83; *Die Anfänge*; "Der Fiqh des Zuhri, p. 1-44"; "The *Muṣannaf*, p. 1-21; "The Prophet und die Schuldner"; Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen berlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*, (Berlin 1996).

¹⁸ Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, I, (Cairo 1310/1893), p. 159; Ibn Ḥajar, *Hady al-sāri*, (Cairo 1383/1964), p. 17; *Fath al-bārī*, I, p. 218; Hajji Khalifah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, I, (Turkey 1941), p. 637; al-Kattānī, *Risāla mustaṭrafā*, Damascus 1964, p. 3; Abū Zahw, *al-Ḥadīth wa-l-muḥaddithūn*, (Cairo 1958), p. 127; al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufaṣṣirūn*, I, (Cairo, 1961), pp. 140-141; Rashīd Riā, *al-Manār*, X, p. 768; Abū Rayya, *Al-wā'ala al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya*, (Lebanon, 1964), p. 207; Sidqi, "al-Islam huwa al-Qur'an waḥdahu" in *al-Manār*, p. ix, 515; Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, p. 210.

on arguing that many *ḥadīths* were, in fact, recorded in writing from the earliest times.

B. Fuat Sezgin's Core Ideas

The core of Sezgin's historical reconstruction of early *ḥadīth* literature is that the classical *ḥadīth* collections, which were compiled in the third century, are the result of a reliable process of transmission or the continuation of written activity that had already been practiced by the *ṣaḥāba* since the time of the Prophet.¹⁹ It is here that Sezgin's point of view starts to differ from that of Goldziher. Goldziher does not reject the possibility that the Companions tried to preserve the Prophet's words and deeds in the so-called *ṣaḥīfas*, and that the use of *isnād* began when these Companions passed on to the next generation of Muslim what they had heard and recorded.²⁰ Goldziher maintained, however, the possibility that those *ṣaḥīfas* might be "the inventions of later generations used to provide justification for later *ṣaḥīfas* against opposition hostile to the writing down of *ḥadīth*,"²¹ and that the invention of *ḥadīth* also began very early. Having made several observations on *ḥadīth* materials, Goldziher came to the conclusion that the *ḥadīth* reflects later development and cannot be used as a historical documentation for the time of the Prophet.²² To undermine Goldziher's claims, Sezgin cited reports from some early Muslim sources, such as *ʿIlal* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844-5), *Tārīkh* of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Taqdīm* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) *Taqyīd al-ʿilm* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī (d. 403/1012-3), *Jāmi' bayān al-ʿilm* of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (463/1070-1), *al-Muḥaddith al-fāsil* of al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/971) and others. However, Sezgin neither discusses the historicity of the reports nor shows any interest in the fact that his sources are contemporaneous with the classical *ḥadīth* collections.

¹⁹ Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 53-233; *Bu āri'nin kaynakları hakkında araştırmalar*, (Istanbul, 1956).

²⁰ Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, p. 9.

²¹ Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, p. 22. Cf. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, p. 52.

²² Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, (Halle 1889-90), p. 19.

The evolution of *ḥadīth* literature, according to Fuat Sezgin, took place in the following phases:

- 1) *Kitābat al-ḥadīth*, the writing down of the *ḥadīth* in the time of the *ṣahāba* (Companions) and of the 'early *tābi'ūn* (Successors) in the so-called *ṣahīfās*.
- 2) *Tadwīn al-ḥadīth*, collating the scattered records of *ḥadīth* in the last quarter of the first, and in the first quarter of the second century.
- 3) *Taṣnīf al-ḥadīth*, the arrangement of *ḥadīths* by content in subdivided chapter from 125 A.H. onwards. Towards the end of the second century, *ḥadīths* were arranged according to the names of Companions, in books called *kitāb al-musnad*. In the third century the systematic books were edited and written. In the modern literature these are called the canonical collections.²³ This view of the evolution of *ḥadīth* literature, Sezgin continues, is based on information on continuous written transmission since very early times, and on the examination of such materials. This can be seen from the fact that when the authors (*muḥaddithūn*) of that time passed their works on in oral form, they took over written record from each other.²⁴

Basing his argument on Muslim literature, Sezgin consistently makes his historical assessment about the collection of *ḥadīth*. Similar to what Muslim generally believed, Sezgin says that some Umayyad rulers, amongst whom is the famous 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aẓīz (d. 97/717-101/720), ordered that materials of *ḥadīth* be collected in an official manner, fearing that (some of) it might be lost.²⁵ The ones who undertook the collection at 'Umar's behest were Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Ḥazm (d. 120/737) and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhūrī (d. 124/

²³ Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol I, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 55. translation is mine.

²⁴ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 55

²⁵ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, (1297), p. 389; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VIII, p. 480; Dārimī, *Sunan*, (Cawnpore, 1293), p. 68; Bukhārī, I, 31; Goldziher, *Mub. Stud*, II, p. 210. W. Muir, *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam* I, XXXII, quoted by Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 56.

742). “*anwal man dawwana’l-ḥadīth al-Zuhrī*”.²⁶ Sezgin again goes on saying that the information about the first writings on various fields, about the evolution of *isnāds* and about the scrutiny of the chains of transmission of *ḥadīth* convince us that literary activity in the time of al-Zuhrī was already mature, and that al-Zuhrī played an important role in compiling the *ḥadīth*.²⁷

Sezgin regards the *taṣnīf al-ḥadīth* (the arrangement of *ḥadīth* by content), which began in 125 A.H. as a further development of the monographic descriptions of Umayyad time.²⁸ To corroborate his notion, Sezgin mentions as the oldest *muṣannifūn* such names as Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767)²⁹ in Mekka, Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (153/770) in Yaman, Hishām b. Ḥassān (d. 148/765), Sa‘īd b. Abī ‘Arūba in Baṣra and Sufyān al-Thawrī in Kūfa. He also mentions *al-Jāmi‘* of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 153/770), *K. al-Manāsik* of Qatāda and *al-Jāmi‘* of Rabi‘ b. Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī (d. 160/776) as the oldest preserved works of this period.

Referring to classical Muslim *ḥadīth* critics, Sezgin lists eight methods in which transmission of *ḥadīth* took place: *Samā‘*, *Qirā‘a*, *Ijāza*, *Munāwala*, *Kitāba* or *Mukātaba*, *i‘lām al-rāwī*, *Waṣīyya* and *Wijāda*.³⁰ Sezgin believes that only the first two methods (*samā‘* and *qirā‘a*) involved committing to memory, whereas the others, and often in practice even *samā‘* and *qirā‘a*, involved written materials.³¹ Sezgin further claims that these methods of transmission were applied from the very early days of Islam, and with the help of preserved materials it can, according to him, be established, that from the beginning an exclusively written basis for the transmission was involved and that the names of the authors are contained in the *isnāds*.³² To corroborate his view about the customary practice of *kitāba* (writing), besides *samā‘*

²⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm* I, 73; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath* I, 174; Suyūfī, *Tamwīr al-ḥawālīk* I, 6, quoted by Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 57.

²⁷ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 57.

²⁸ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, 58.

²⁹ For a discussion on Ibn Jurayj, see the following pages.

³⁰ See the foregoing discussion.

³¹ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, pp. 58-62; Cf. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, p. 22.

³² Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 60.

and *qirā'a*, in early transmission of *ḥadīth*, Sezgin picks up some clues from books, such as: *Iṣāba* of Ibn Ḥajar, *ʿUlal* of Tirmidhī, *Ṭabdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar, *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd, *Jāmi' bayān al-ʿilm* of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. For example, a few Companions are reported to have handed down the letters of the Prophet. 'Amr b. Ḥazm b. Zayd is reported to have transmitted the letters written by the Prophet to him about *farā'id*, *ṣakāt*, and *diyāt*, which, according to Sezgin, were later included in *ḥadīth* collections.³³ 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ukaym al-Juhanī, later transmitted the letter of the Prophet to his tribe, the Juhayna.³⁴ The Successor, Baṣhīr b. Nahīk asked Abū Hurayra whether or not he was allowed to hand down the writings under his own name, which he had copied from the latter. Abū Hurayra agreed.³⁵ Sezgin quotes also some sources suggesting that the activity of writing took place in every generation.³⁶

Sezgin's views that *ḥadīth* collection is the result of continuous written activity did not, however, convince his Western counterparts. Juynboll, reiterating Goldziher's claim, says that a manuscript or a papyrus could have been forged by later authorities because there was a large fabrication of *isnāds*.³⁷ Juynboll may be correct in his view that Sezgin does not seem to have any qualms about the genuineness of the texts he presents³⁸. Juynboll, however, does not go through the texts, which Sezgin presented. Juynboll criticism of Sezgin's claim is too general. To most Western scholars, Sezgin's historical reconstruction is exclusively based on sources, whose authenticity is debatable or even doubtful. His arguments, therefore, are circular.³⁹

Another core of Sezgin's view is that the *isnād* indicates written texts, and on no account indicates purely oral transmission. The *isnād* mentions the author and the authorized transmitters of books.⁴⁰ Sezgin

³³ *Iṣāba*, II, p. 1264, quoted by Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 61.

³⁴ Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *ʿUlal*, I, p. 52; Ibn Ḥajar, *Ṭabdhīb* V, p. 323.

³⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿUlal*, I, p. 43; Ibn Ḥajar, *Ṭabdhīb*, I, p. 470, quoted by Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 61.

³⁶ He mentions some names involved in the activity of writing in every generation, see *Geschichte*, pp. 63-75.

³⁷ Juynboll, *Muslim tradition*, p. 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁰ *Geschichte*, p. 79.

simply believes what is stated in the *isnād*. This leads him to receive unquestionably the sources he quotes, and he simply ascribes actual texts to the names attached to them in *isnāds* without having any doubts as to the authenticity of *isnāds*.

Sezgin reiterates that a comparison between oldest preserved *ḥadīth* books with later *ḥadīth* collections, proves not only that *isnād* indicates selected from excerpts, but above all establishes that the arrangement of materials and chapter division of later compilations go back to quoted older books.⁴¹ To put it in another way, *isnād*, by virtue of the mutual relation of sources, brings us back to the time of the names quoted.

To establish the mutual relation of sources, Sezgin quotes al-Bukhārī as example: “*Ḥaddathbanā ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad qāla ḥaddathbanā ‘Abd Razzāq qāla akbbaranā Ma‘mar ‘an Hammām ‘an Abī Hurayra...*”⁴² In this *isnād* every name is well known. They are writers of books, except Abū Hurayra, but he has written documents as well. No book is preserved from ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Musnaḍī⁴³ (d. 229/843), but we have books of Abd Razzāq (d. 211/826) and of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 155/771) and of Hammām b. Munabbih (d. 130/747). All *ḥadīths* with this *isnād* can be found in Abd Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ* and in Hammām’s *Ṣaḥīḥa*, and partly in Ma‘mar’s *Jāmi‘*.⁴⁴ It is probable, Sezgin continues, that al-Bukhārī made use directly of Hammām’s *Ṣaḥīḥa* transmitted by the people named in the *isnād* or that he used the book of his master (‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad), who directly borrowed the text from the *ṣaḥīḥa* or from ‘Abd Razzāq’s book, whose direct or indirect sources are the *Ṣaḥīḥa* of Hammām.⁴⁵ This phenomenon, that *ḥadīths*, and other traditions from old sources, appear in later works with long *isnāds* becoming longer and longer were known to classical Islamic scholars already. Because the time gap between them and the

⁴¹ *Geschichte*, p. 80.

⁴² Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 81.

⁴³ Sezgin mentions that al-Bukhārī has quoted his books in 197 places. Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 81.

⁴⁵ Fuat Sezgin, *Ḥadīs musanneḥatinin mebdēi* in: *Türkiyat* 12/1955/124-127, quoted in *Geschichte*, 82.

sources was not so big, they knew the sources, and they could identify books by recourse to the names in *isnāds*.⁴⁶ Therefore, they gave us only rarely and rather incidentally clues regarding older sources. Sezgin argues, therefore, that we have to find a way to recognize the dependence of sources through the *isnāds* in the books. We can then detect in later books fragments of early Islamic literature that have been lost. Thus, although early manuscripts have scarcely survived, Sezgin argues that early texts can be reconstructed from the later compilations that must have used them as written sources. With regard to the reliability of the *isnād*, Sezgin states that in order to be able to establish the first sources of Islamic literature, one has, first of all, to abandon the old prejudice that it was only in the second and the third century that the *isnād* came into being and the names of transmitters are invented.⁴⁷ It is by this generalization that Sezgin failed to convince his Western counterparts.⁴⁸

C. Reaction to Sezgin's Views

Sezgin's theses on the continuous practice of writing and the reliability of *isnād* received both criticism and support from both Muslim⁴⁹ and non-Muslim scholars. The support from Muslim scholars can be found in the works of M. Z. Siddiqi,⁵⁰ Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah,⁵¹ Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī,⁵² Muḥammad 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb,⁵³ M. Mustafa Azmi,⁵⁴

⁴⁶ *Geschichte*, p. 82.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴⁸ Harald Motzki, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz. Ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1991, pp. 37-38. Cf. The english version of the book "The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence. Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools, Leiden 2002, p. 36.

⁴⁹ For the discussion on a Muslim critic see the discussion on Abū Rayya below.

⁵⁰ *Ḥadīth Literature, Its Origin, Development & Special Studies, the Islamic Texts Society* (Cambridge, 1993).

⁵¹ *Ṣaḥīfat Hammām ibn Munabbih*, 5th ed. (Luton, 1961).

⁵² *Al-Sunna wa-makānatubā fī l-tasbīr' al-islāmī*, (Cairo, 1961).

⁵³ *Al-Sunna qabla l-tadwīn*, (Cairo, 1963).

⁵⁴ *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, (Beirut, 1968); *On Schacht's Origins of Mubammadan Jurisprudence*, (Riyadh: King Saud University, 1985); *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, (American Trust Publications, 1992). For more about Azmi see below.

and ‘Abd al-‘Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Muṭ‘īnī.⁵⁵ Their methods and sources are similar to that of Sezgin.⁵⁶ Ḥamīdullah has published the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammām ibn Munabbih, supposedly the oldest preserved *ḥadīth* work. This is not an autograph, however, and therefore, to some Western scholars, especially to those who adhere to Schacht’s “common link” concept,⁵⁷ there is no guarantee that the real author is Hammām ibn Munabbih.⁵⁸ For the sympathizers of Schacht, the text might have been fabricated by ‘Abd Razzāq (d. 211/827) or Ma‘mar (d. 153/770) who appear in the *isnād* before Hammām,⁵⁹ for the common link of all preserved text is ‘Abd Razzāq.⁶⁰ This claim does not seem convincing, because it is based more on hypothetical speculation than on an analytical study of both *matn* and *isnād*. It may be difficult to prove that ‘Abd Razzāq, the common link, has really received the information from his informants, but this fact does not justify the claim that all the texts were invented by ‘Abd Razzāq. Until the contrary is proven, the possibility that ‘Abd Razzāq’s claim to have received a text from a given informant is true cannot be excluded *a priori*.

A non-Muslim scholar, who gives support to Sezgin’s methods and conclusions is Nabia Abbott. Her approach to *ḥadīth* is unique in that she is a non-Muslim scholar, but her methodology and conclusion is very similar to that of the Muslim scholars. Like Sezgin, Abbott argues for the existence of literary activities among Arabs even in pre-Islamic times, and for the continuous practice of writing *ḥadīth* since the time of the Prophet.⁶¹ Abbott edited a small collection of *ḥadīths* from a series of papyrus fragments, some of which she ascribed to al-

⁵⁵ *Al-Shubbat al-thalāthūn*, (Cairo, 1999).

⁵⁶ Cf. Motzki, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz*, p. 38; see also the English version of the book, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁷ See below the discussion on the concept of common link.

⁵⁸ Motzki, *Die Anfänge*, pp. 38-39; *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 37-37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39; *The Origins*, pp. 37-8.

⁶⁰ Ḥamīdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Motzki, *The Origins*, p. 38.

⁶¹ Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, II Quranic Commentary and Tradition*, pp. 5-73. Another support from non-Muslim scholar comes from J. Goldfeld. He suggests that Sezgin’s findings are a “masterly introduction to *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* (which) serve as a new basis for Orientalistic research.” Goldfeld, “The Tafsir of Abd Allah i. Abbas.” In *Der Islam* 58 (1981), pp. 125-35.

Zuhri as author.⁶² But whether or not the texts truly originated with al-Zuhri remains debatable.⁶³

Having analyzed the documents and compared them with later *ḥadīth* collections, Abbott concluded that oral and written transmission went hand in hand almost from the beginning, that the traditions of the Prophet as transmitted by the Companions and Successors were, as a rule, scrupulously scrutinized at each step of the transmission.⁶⁴ This process is supposed not to have left many unsound *ḥadīths*, but the facts do not support this as even early Muslim scholars, especially the collectors of the second and third century recognized that more unsound *ḥadīths* existed than sound ones. Massive forgery did happen in early Islam. In this context Abbott suggests that it was the *isnāds* that proliferated, not the contents.⁶⁵ Abbott, however, does not suggest that *ḥadīths* found in the canonical collections are completely authentic. However, they contain, in Abbott's view, genuine core of Muhammad's, his Companions' and his Successors' sayings and deeds, which were recorded by al-Zuhri and his contemporaries who in turn received them from their predecessors.⁶⁶

Sezgin's and Abbott's view that *ḥadīth* and *āthār* were transmitted both scrupulously and in written form from the beginning was rejected by many Western scholars. Some of them insisted that the early transmission was mainly oral, others (following Schacht) went so far to reject the idea that there was any transmission of *ḥadīths* in the first Islamic century at all. G. Schoeler and H. Motzki advocate a position between the two extremes. Schoeler rejects Sezgin's thesis that early transmission was substantially written, i.e. transmitted in the form of book, but he also criticizes the claims of Sezgin's opponents as too

⁶² Motzki, *Die Anfänge*, p. 39; *The Origins*, p. 37.

⁶³ Motzki, *The Origins*, p. 38. See also Wansbrough's review of Abbott's book, "Nabia Abbott: Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri. Vol. 2: Quranic Commentary and Tradition, Chicago 1967, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31 (1968), pp. 613-616. For another criticism of Abbott's general conclusion see Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁴ Abbott, *Studies*, II, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Abbott, *Studies*, II, pp. 65-72.

⁶⁶ Abbott, *Studies*, II, p. 83.

one-sided. He argues that oral and written transmissions existed side by side independently and sometimes were connected to one another in different ways.⁶⁷ After scrutinizing the character of transmission in early Islam, Schoeler concludes, though he does not generalize, that already in the second half of the first century, the Successors like ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr concerned themselves with gathering reports about the Prophet, and they often possessed notes to back up their memory.⁶⁸

Like Sezgin and Abbott, and unlike Goldziher, Schoeler does not interpret the saying of early scholars “*mā ra’aytu fī yadīhi kitāban qaṭṭu*” (I never saw a book or something written in his hands), “*lam yakun labū kitāb, innamā kāna yahfaẓu*”⁶⁹ (he had no book, but used memory to preserve it) to mean that early scholars did not write down the traditions they received. It merely means that authorities (*shaykhs*) memorized their material and did not use scripts during their public lectures.⁷⁰ Schoeler argues that students often recorded the material during its presentation or wrote it down later from memory or copied

⁶⁷ Gregor Schoeler, *Character und Authentie der muslimischen berlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*, (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); see also the review of the book by Herbert Berg in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 119 (1999), pp. 314-317 and Schoeler’s response to it in *Arabica* 48 (2002), 360-366, “Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen berlieferung” in *Der Islam* 62 (1985): 201-30; “Weiteres zur Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung...” in *Der Islam* 66 (1989): 38-67 “Mündliche Thora und Ḥadīth...” in *Der Islam* 66 (1989): 213-51; “Schreiben und Ver ffentlichen...” in *Der Islam* 69 (1992): 1-43; “Mūsa b. ‘Uqbas Maghāzī” in Harald Motzki (ed.) *The Biography of Muhammad. The Issue of the Sources*, 2000, pp. 67-90.

⁶⁸ Schoeler, *Character und Authentie*, p. 166-167.

⁶⁹ This dictum is transmitted by early scholars in different fields, such as Sa’id b. abī ‘Arūba, d. 773 AD. (al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i’tidāl*, II, p. 153), Wakī’ b. al-Jarrāh, d. 812 AD. (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabdīb*, xi, p. 129) in the field of *ḥadīth*; Sufyān al-Thawrī, d. 778 AD. (Ibn Ḥajar, IV, p. 113) in the field of *fiqh*; Khalaf al-Aḥmar, d. 769 AD. (Abū Nūwās, *Dīwān*, p. 311), Ḥammād al-Rāwīya, d. 771 AD. (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fibrīst*, p. 12) in the field of philology. Cf. Gregor Schoeler, “Die Frage...” in *Der Islam*, p. 206.

⁷⁰ Schoeler, “Die Frage”, p. 206. Abbott, quoting *al-Kifāya* of al-Khaṭīb, argues that “Scholars who were not likely to be seen writing down traditions nor with a book in hand would have been the illiterate or semiliterate and the blind or nearly blind” (Abbott, *Studies*, vol. ii, p. 61). Sezgin argues against Goldziher who interprets the dictum of contemporary of Wakī’ (d. 196/811) “*ra’aytu Wakī’an wa-mā ra’aytu bi-yadīhi kitāban qaṭṭu innamā huwa yahfaẓuhū*” that Wakī’ avoided using books and papers. According to Sezgin Wakī’ had written books and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal used the *Muṣannaḥ*

it from a written source in the possession of other students of the *Shaykh*.⁷¹ However, Schoeler realizes that written material can be as easily fabricated as the oral one.⁷² Unlike Sezgin, however, he suggests that written and oral materials are complimentary rather than mutually exclusive (*scheinen sich eher zu ergänzen als sich gegenseitig auszuschließen*).⁷³

Schoeler's thesis received significant support from some of the works of Harald Motzki.⁷⁴ At the same time, the latter's works are probably the most significant non-Muslim critique of Goldziher and Schacht's theories about the development of *ḥadīth*. By virtue of this fact, Motzki's ideas and methods, although they differ from those of Sezgin, attract our attention here. Motzki focuses on the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826). The edition of this work contains composite transmissions, but ninety percent of the material goes back to Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Dabārī (d. 285/898).⁷⁵ His transmission implies, according to Motzki, a written text.⁷⁶ Using a "tradition historical" (*überlieferungsgeschichtlich*) approach⁷⁷ in his analysis on the *Muṣannaf*, he argues against the tenability of some of Goldziher's and Schacht's claims concerning the development of early Islamic jurisprudence and

of Wakī' as, according to Sezgin, it is also known by Goldziher. Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 70; Goldziher, *Mub. Stud.*, II, p. 197; Goldziher ZDMG 50 (1896), p. 469.

⁷¹ Schoeler, "Die Frage...", p. 208.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 226. He quotes Van Ess, who argues that early writing is no guarantee for the genuineness. See Van Ess, *Zwischen Hadith und Theologie*, p. VII. He quotes also Goldfeld who says that written transmission could not avoid insertion, tendentious change and revision. Goldfeld, "The Tafṣīr of 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās", pp. 126 and 135. See also Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, p. 95.

⁷³ Schoeler, "Die Frage", p. 224. Cf. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, p. 35.

⁷⁴ Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*; "The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī as a Source of Authentic *Aḥādīth* of the First Century A.H.," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991), pp. 1-21.

⁷⁵ Motzki, *The Origins*, pp. 57, 68.

⁷⁶ Motzki, "The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd Razzāq", p. 2.

⁷⁷ This approach, which examines the material of a particular transmitter is, according to Motzki, familiar in Western Islamic scholarship since J. Wellhausen's work "Prolegomena zur ältesten Geschichte des Islams," *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, vol. 6 (Berlin 1899). Cf. Motzki *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, xii.

legal traditions. Motzki concludes from his investigation of the structures of the *Muṣannaf* that the materials of ‘Abd Razzāq, which he claims to have received from his four main authorities (Ma‘mar, Ibn Jurayj, al-Thaurī and Ibn ‘Uyayna) are genuine on the sense that they are not fabricated by ‘Abd Razzāq, but really derive from the four authorities named.⁷⁸ He then investigates one of ‘Abd Razzāq’s sources in detail, the transmission of the Meccan scholar Ibn Jurayj, which covers about one third of the *Muṣannaf* and which consist of about 5.000 *ḥadīths*. 39 percent of Ibn Jurayj’s material allegedly comes from ‘Aṭā b. abī. Rabāḥ, seven percent from ‘Amr b. Dīnār, six percent from Ibn Shihāb, five percent from Ibn Tāwus, four percent from Abū Zubayr, three percent from ‘Abd Karīm, two percent from Hishām b. ‘Urwa and two percent from Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd, between one point five and one percent each from Ibn Abī Mulayka, Musa b. ‘Uqba and ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb. Another group of ten names compose seven percent, each only between one and nought point five percent. The remaining 20 percent come from 86 people, each with very few texts. One percent is the personal legal opinion of Ibn Jurayj.⁷⁹ For Motzki, this strange distribution of authorities implies that fabrication is improbable. Suppose that Ibn Jurayj is a forger, it is implausible that he would have accredited his material to his authorities in such a complicated way. He could have more easily mentioned one, two or a few older *fuqahā’* for all his texts. Motzki suggests, therefore, that the names of informants indicate real sources. The implausibility of fabrication is, for Motzki, corroborated by the fact that each of Ibn Jurayj’s major sources seems to have an individual character. The sources reveal much diversity: (1) Variance in form. For example, the use of *ra’y* is unevenly distributed. (2) Variance in the relationship between Ibn Jurayj’s informant and the latter’s main authority and the numbers of accounts transmitted from

⁷⁸ Motzki’s source analytical and tradition historical approach leads him to establish the historicity of relationship between ‘Abd Razzāq and his alleged main authorities independent from biographical dictionaries. His conclusion on the relationship, however, coincides with what biographical dictionaries are telling about. See Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 62-71.

⁷⁹ Motzki, “The *Muṣannaf*”, p. 6, for detailed elaboration of Ibn Jurayj’s sources see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 204-233.

him. The relationship may be pupil/teacher, e.g. in the case of ‘Aṭā’ b. abī Rabāḥ and Ibn ‘Abbas, son/father as in the case of Ibn Tāwūs and Tāwūs, or *mawlā*/patron, as in the case of Nāfi‘ and Ibn ‘Umar. (3) Strong variance in the proportions of traditions from the Prophet, the *ṣaḥāba* and the *tābi‘ūn*. (4) Variance in the use of the *isnād*. In some sources *isnāds* are rare, in others frequent (5) Great variance in the terminology of transmission, that is, how Ibn Jurayj presents his sources. He for instance never uses the word “‘an” when he quotes Ibn Mulayka, whereas in 60 to 80 percent of his transmissions from Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd, Mūsa b. ‘Uqba and ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb he uses the term “‘an”. This fluctuation can also be found in his usage of the term “*sami‘tu*”.⁸⁰ For Motzki, all these variances argue against the possible assumption that Ibn Jurayj fabricated the texts or projected them to older authorities. A last argument put forward by Motzki to confirm his conclusion on the reliability of Ibn Jurayj’s material in the *Muṣannaḥ* is the fact that Ibn Jurayj does not always mention his informants. Eight percent of his material is anonymous. This he also takes as an indication that Ibn Jurayj did not fabricate his informants. Motzki asks:

“Why does he cite Nāfi‘, Ibn Shihāb and even his teacher ‘Aṭā’ indirectly or anonymously, although he was in contact with them and otherwise always passes on their teachings and traditions directly? For what reason does he transmit *ḥadīths* of the Prophet which for a continuous *isnād* lack only the link before himself, which would be so easy to fabricate, and traditions of the Prophet completely without informants, although he was familiar with a number of a good *isnāds*?”⁸¹ In sum, the theory of “back projection”, championed by Schacht does not apply in the case of Ibn Jurayj’s transmission.

Motzki does not stop with Jurayj’s materials. He goes further in examining materials by Ibn Jurayj’s most frequently cited sources, i.e., ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 115/733) and ‘Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/743-4). Motzki bases his argument on what he calls “extrinsic and intrinsic formal criteria of authenticity”. By extrinsic criteria he means the

⁸⁰ Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, pp. 234-36; “The *Muṣannaḥ* of ‘Abd Razzāq...”, pp. 7-8.

⁸¹ Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, p. 243.

existence of different genres of texts and their frequency. The materials ascribed to both informants can be classified in different genres, that is, *responsa*⁸² and *dicta*⁸³ of ‘Aṭā’, and ‘Amr, which appear in very different proportions,⁸⁴ To confirm his hypotheses that the relationship between Ibn Jurayj and ‘Aṭā’ is historical, Motzki scrutinizes how Ibn Jurayj presents ‘Aṭā’s materials. He eliminates six intrinsic criteria of authenticity. The criteria refer to (1) the existence of Ibn Jurayj’s opinions. This means that he did not feel that it was necessary to project his own opinion backwards to an older authority. (2) Ibn Jurayj’s commentary on ‘Aṭā’s statements. Motzki considers it is implausible that Ibn Jurayj invented a text, then attributed it to ‘Aṭā’, and later criticized it or commented on it. (3) Ibn Jurayj’s indirect transmissions from ‘Aṭā’. If he were a forger, he could have easily quoted ‘Aṭā’ directly without having to use a third person. (4) Ibn Jurayj’s occasional expression of uncertainty about ‘Aṭā’s wording. This for Motzki indicates the truthfulness of Ibn Jurayj’s materials. (5) Ibn Jurayj’s record of ‘Aṭā’s variant traditions. (6) Records of the deficiencies of ‘Aṭā’, who occasionally express his uncertainty and ignorance, presents contradictory opinions and changes of mind. If Ibn Jurayj had been a forger, then he would not have reported these weaknesses.⁸⁵ All the “extrinsic and intrinsic formal criteria” for Motzki argue against the theory that Ibn Jurayj projected material back to earlier authorities. That is to say, Ibn Jurayj’s transmission of ‘Aṭā’s material contained in the *Muṣannaḥ* of ‘Abd Razzāq is historical.

Motzki goes even further in examining ‘Aṭā’s materials. ‘Aṭā’ refers to some *ṣaḥāba*, such as Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī, ‘Ā’isha, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Mu‘āwiya and others. Again his “variance” argument argues against the assumption that ‘Aṭā is a forger. ‘Aṭā’s transmission from Ibn ‘Abbās, for example, represents half of all his traditions from the *ṣaḥāba*. Motzki further observes that ‘Aṭā’ nevertheless refers to Ibn

⁸² By *responsa*, Motzki means answers of ‘Aṭā’ on questions of Ibn Jurayj or anyone else, named or unnamed.

⁸³ By *dicta*, he means statements of ‘Aṭā’, which are not preceded by a question.

⁸⁴ For the variance of genres see Motzki, *The Origins*, pp. 79-81.

⁸⁵ Motzki, *The Origins*, pp. 83-93; “The *Muṣannaḥ*”, pp. 11-12.

‘Abbās infrequently; when he does it, he does not mean to give his own opinion more weight; ‘Aṭā’ sometimes cites Ibn ‘Abbās indirectly though he could have always cited him directly; he does not always agree with Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Aṭā’s Ibn ‘Abbās material varies in genre and style; he does not quote any prophetic *ḥadīth* from Ibn ‘Abbās although the canonical *ḥadīth* collections abound with them. All this indicates in Motzki’s eyes the genuineness of ‘Aṭā’s Ibn ‘Abbās material.⁸⁶ As for ‘Aṭā’s few traditions from other *ṣaḥāba* Motzki suggests that ‘Aṭā’ either really heard and met them or transmits traditions heard from informants (not always given by him) or current at the time.

Most interesting is Motzki’s analysis of ‘Aṭā’ *ḥadīths* from the Prophet, which are rare in his material. He examines several traditions and their variants preserved in other collections in order to date them. One example of his studies is the legal maxim “*al-walad li’l-firāsh wal-li’-ābir al-ḥajar*”. This maxim is to be found not only in the *Muṣannaḥ* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq but also in the *Muwatta’a* and other early and later collections. The variant of the maxim in Mālik’s *Muwatta’a* and all early variants of the long version have the *isnād* “Ibn Shihāb (al-Zuhri) from ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr from ‘Ā’isha”. There is also short version with the *isnād* “Al-Zuhri from Ibn al-Musayyab and Abū Salama from Abū Hurayra” From the different variants it is possible to infer that, al-Zuhri is a common link in the *isnāds* of the texts. Referring to al-Zuhri’s and ‘Aṭā’s transmissions and references to the maxim, Motzki is sure that the maxim was known by the first decade of the second century. Motzki’s dating of the maxim does not stop here. Because ‘Aṭā’ generally did not transmit from Ibn Shihāb, yet sometimes from ‘Urwa, and because ‘Urwa is the informant of the common link al-Zuhri for the maxim “*al-walad li’l-firāsh*”, Motzki considers the death of ‘Urwa (d. 92/711) as the *terminus ante quem* for the existence of the maxim. This means that not only the maxim but also the long version of this tradition was already in circulation in the second half of the first century A.H.. Motzki does not even rule out the possibility that the maxim was known earlier, and goes back to the Prophet himself.⁸⁷ This dating differs

⁸⁶ Motzki, *The Origins*, pp. 117-120, 140-147; “The *Muṣannaḥ*”, p. 13-14.

widely from that of Schacht, who dates the maxim to the second quarter of the second century. It also contradicts Schacht's theory that traditions from Companions and Successors are generally earlier than those from the Prophet and that there is no tradition from the Prophet which could be regarded as authentic.⁸⁸

Motzki's conclusion that Ibn Jurayj's transmission contained in the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq is reliable does not mean that he generally precludes the possibility of fabrication of traditions, but only that he thinks it possible to distinguish between genuine and spurious traditions.⁸⁹ Motzki's "variance" argument has not gone unchallenged. As Herbert Berg argues that the variance "may exist because of theological agenda of one or more of the texts' redactors or tradents" it may also "be a product of a less deliberate manipulation of the material in the *Muṣannaf*".⁹⁰ This argument, however, as Berg admits is purely hypothetical, and not based on the analysis of the *Muṣannaf*.

Motzki's judgment on the *isnāds* contained in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf*, which he bases on the diversity of *isnāds* and *matns*, is in harmony, to a great extent, with the information given by Muslim scholars in biographical dictionaries. Whereas Sezgin and most Muslim scholars, if not all, mainly base their judgment on *isnāds* upon biographical dictionaries, Motzki mainly bases his judgment on an analysis of *isnāds* and *matns* found in the collections of traditions.

D. Concluding Remark

Unlike most Muslim scholars who believe that the process of transmission of *ḥadīths* in the first century was mainly oral, Fuat Sezgin, like Nabia Abbott, advocate the view that many *ḥadīths* were transmitted in writing from very early times onwards. In another words, the classical *ḥadīth* collections, which were compiled in the third century, are the result of a reliable process of transmission or the continuation of written activity that had already been practiced by the *ṣaḥāba* since the time of the Prophet. Sezgin cited reports from some early Muslim

⁸⁷ Motzki, "The *Muṣannaf*", pp. 16-18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20; Cf. Joseph Schacht, *Origins*, p. 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, p. 113.

sources, such as *ʿIlal* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/844-5), *Tārīkh* of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Taqdīm* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) *Taqyīd al-ʿIlm* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī (d. 403/1012-3), *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (463/1070-1), *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāṣil* of al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/971) and others. However, Sezgin neither deeply discusses the historicity of the reports nor shows serious interest in the fact that the sources are contemporaneous with the classical *ḥadīth* collections. Moreover, Sezgin is of the opinion that the *isnād* indicates written texts, and on no account indicates purely oral transmission. The *isnād* mentions the author and the authorized transmitters of books. Sezgin simply believes what is stated in the *isnād*. This leads him to receive unquestionably the sources he quotes, and he simply ascribes actual texts to the names attached to them in *isnāds* without having any doubts as to the authenticity of *isnāds*. With regard to the reliability of the *isnād*, Sezgin states that in order to be able to establish the first sources of Islamic literature, one has, first of all, to abandon the old prejudice that it was only in the second and the third century that the *isnād* came into being and the names of transmitters are invented. It is by this generalization that Sezgin failed to convince his Western counterparts and the latter accuse them of resorting to mere ascription and circular argument.

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