Name: J. J. Little

College: Pembroke College

Thesis title: The Hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s Marital Age: A Study in the Evolution of Early Islamic Historical Memory

Degree: DPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Note to reader: This is the abridged version of the thesis. For the unabridged version, contact the author: JJLittle1917@gmail.com
Acknowledgements

I owe thanks to my family, for supporting me through all of my endeavours; my friends and colleagues, for the good times and the great classic hits; Ian D. Morris, for inspiring me to go to Oxford in the first place; Saqib Hussain, Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh, Marco Brandl, Belal Abu-Alabas, and Nadia Jamil, for clarifying various textual points; Syed Jaffer Abbas and Omar Mohammed, for helping me locate and access certain hadiths; ʿAlī Jabbār, for his generous assistance in helping me access and understand Šīʿī works and references; Javad Hashmi, for very kindly reading a draft of this thesis and providing feedback; and Mahā Ḥ., for her enormous generosity in helping me to double-check all of my transliterations. I also owe thanks to Yasmin Amin, whose work and insights revolutionised my thesis. I further owe thanks to Christian Sahner, Behnam Sadeghi, Pavel Pavlovitch, and Nicolai Sinai, the examiners for my Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, and Viva, for their excellent feedback. Finally, I owe special thanks to my supervisor, Christopher Melchert, whose generosity knows no bounds and whose feedback was helpful every step of the way.
## Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ii

Contents .......................................................................................................................... iii

Abstract ............................................................................................................................ 1

Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 2

Literature Review .............................................................................................................. 2

Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-ʿAlbānī (1985) ...................................................................... 3
T. O. Shanavas (2002) ....................................................................................................... 4
Gautier Juynboll (2007) .................................................................................................... 5
Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid (2009) .................................................................................. 6
Hussein Abdul-Raof (2012) ............................................................................................. 9
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʿIdlibī (2013) ............................................................................................ 10
Asma Afsaruddin (2013) .................................................................................................. 11
Yasmin Amin (2016) ......................................................................................................... 13
J. J. Little (2016 ff.) ........................................................................................................... 14
Outline of the Present Work ............................................................................................ 16

Chapter 1: Methods & Debates ....................................................................................... 17

Dating by Ascription Type ............................................................................................... 21
Arguments from Silence .................................................................................................. 25
Dating by the “Common Link” ......................................................................................... 32

Motzki et al.’s ’Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis .................................................................... 34
Melchert’s Criticism of Motzki et al. .............................................................................. 38
Little’s Criticism of Motzki et al. .................................................................................... 41
Little’s Defence of the ’Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis .......................................................... 51
Little’s Refined ’Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis ................................................................... 55

The Relationship between CLs and Their Hadiths ......................................................... 58
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 71

Chapter 2: An ’Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis of the Hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s Marital Age 73

‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Bağawī (d. 317/929-930) .............................................. 73
‘Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-‘Uṭāridī (d. 272/886) ......................................................... 75
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saʿīd b. Yaḥyá al-ʿUmay (d. 249/863)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿIshāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿabī Manī (d. post-216/831)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. 211/827)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqīdī (d. 207/823)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. Bīr (d. 203/818-819)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbū ʿUsāmah Ḥammād (d. 201/817)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufyān b. ʿUaynah (d. 198/814)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakiʾ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 196-197/812)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbū Muʿāwiya al-Ḍārīr (d. 194-195/809-811)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAlī b. Mushir (d. 189/804-805)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. 188/804)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān (d. 187-188/803-804)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān (d. 178/794-795)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbtār b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šarīk b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 177-178/793-795)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ḥammād b. Salamah (d. 167/784)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuhayb b. Kālid (d. 165/781-782)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād (d. 164/780-781 or 174/790-791)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufyān al-Ṭavrī (d. 161/777-778)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus (d. 160-162/776-779)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maʾmar b. Rāṣid (d. 152-154/769-771)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-ʿAʾmaš (d. 147-148/764-766)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿIsmāʾīl b. ʿabī Kālid (d. 146-146/763-764)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbū Ḥujayyah al-ʿAlāʾ (d. 145/762-763 or later)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUqayl (d. post-140/757-758)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿIsmāʾīl b. Jaʿfar (d. pre-148/765)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbū ʿIshāq al-Sabīʾi (d. 127-128/744-746)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: A Critical Analysis of the Origins of the Hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s Marital Age

Recapitulation of the ‘Isnād-Cum-Matn’ Analysis

Dating by Ascription Type

Form Criticism

Form Criticism and ‘Isnāds’

Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the ‘Isnāds’

Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Madinan Collections

Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Kufan Collections

Interim Summary and Entailments: Hišām as the Originator of the Marital-Age Hadith

A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Marital-Age Hadith’s Context

A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Origins of the Marital-Age Hadith’s Specific Content

Chapter 4: The Spread and Diversification of the Hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s Marital Age

Origin and Growth in Iraq

Spread to Yemen

Spread to Makkah
Spread to Northern Mesopotamia ................................................................. 286
Spread to Egypt ............................................................................................. 287
Spread to the Levant ...................................................................................... 288
Spread to Persia .............................................................................................. 290
Spread to Khurasan ....................................................................................... 291
Spread to Transoxania .................................................................................. 292
Spread to the West .......................................................................................... 292
Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 293

Chapter 5: The Canonisation and Criticism of the Hadith of `A`ishah’s Marital Age in Sunnism ........................................................................................................ 295

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date (Hijri/Umri)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Buḫārī (d. 256/870)</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim (d. 261/875)</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn `abī Kayṭamah (d. 279/892-893)</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915-916)</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>Abū </code>Awānah (d. 316/929)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn al-Munḍir (d. 318/930)</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-`Uqayli (d. 322/933-934)</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ḥībbān (d. 354/965)</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995)</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014)</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>Abū Nu</code>aym (d. 430/1038)</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn `Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071)</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Baḡawī (d. 516/1122)</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Qudāmah (d. 620/1223)</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 774/1373)</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badr al-Dīn al-`Aynī (d. 855/1451)</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 6: Broader Implications for Hadith and Hadith Studies .................. 313

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Modern Methods and Debates</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Hadith and History</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 322

Bibliography ...................................................................................................... 326
Abstract

This DPhil thesis explores the origins and development of one of the most famous traditions within the Islamic Hadith corpus: the hadith of ‘Ā’išah bt. ʾabī Bakr’s marriage to the Prophet at a young age. To this end, I surveyed all of the modern literature pertaining to the great debate over whether—or to what extent—we can date hadiths and their content, culminating in a defence of a specific—rigorous and systematic—version of the ʾisnād-cum-matr̄ analysis. Thereafter, I collated every available version of every hadith pertaining to this topic and subjected them all to an ʾisnād-cum-matr̄ analysis, which allowed me to reconstruct the underlying urtexts or redactions of various earlier tradents (mostly operating from the mid-to-late 8th Century CE), known as “common links”. I then subjected these common-link redactions to various form-critical, geographical, and historical-critical analyses, which produced a striking conclusion: all versions of the marital-age hadith likely derive a single archetype or ur-hadith. This ur-hadith appears to have been created and disseminated by the Madinan tradent Hišām b. ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr (d. 146-147/763-765) after he moved to Iraq towards the end of his life, probably as a reaction to local proto-Šīʿī polemics against his great-aunt, ‘Ā’išah. Following on from this, I traced the spread and diversification of the hadith across the early Abbasid Caliphate, including the way in which some Hadith scholars reworked its content and/or replaced the original isnād with local and/or familial isnāds, thereby naturalising it in their respective regions. Thereafter, I explored the reception of the hadith by the proto-Sunnī Hadith critics, who rejected or criticised some versions, but accepted others, seemingly without a thorough or systematic investigation of their provenance and transmission. Finally, I explored the broader implications of all of this, including the ways in which my findings variously confirm or disconfirm the conclusions and predictions of other scholars, concerning the authenticity of the marital-age hadith in particular and the historical development of Hadith in general. In short, this thesis tracks the provenance and development of a famous and widespread hadith, from its genesis in the sectarian milieu of mid-8th-Century Iraq, to its spread and diversification across the early Abbasid Caliphate, to its canonisation at the hands of the proto-Sunnī Hadith critics.
Introduction

The ‘hadith’ (ḥadīṯ) of the marital age of ‘Āʾišah bt. ʾabī Bakr (d. 57-58/677-678), the young wife of the Islamic prophet Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 11/632), is arguably the most well-known hadith beyond Muslim societies and communities. Many versions of this hadith exist throughout the Islamic Hadith corpus, such as the following version recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ the famous hadith-collector Muḥammad b. ʾIsmāʿīl al-Buḵārī:

Muḥammad b. Yūsuf related to us: “Sufyān related to us, from Hišām, from his father, from ‘Āʾišah, that the Prophet married her when she was a girl of six years, and she was taken to him when she was a girl of nine, and she lived with him nine [years].”

The goal of this dissertation is to trace the origins and development of this hadith, with the ultimate goal of evaluating the authenticity of the historical memory contained therein. Such a project necessarily entails navigating the methodological debates within Hadith Studies and the field of Islamic origins more broadly—in particular, the great debate over whether—or to what extent—we can use ʾisnāds to date hadiths. Consequently, I evaluate and attempt to synthesise Joseph Schacht et al.’s Revisionist model of Hadith development and his methods of dating Hadith with Harald Motzki et al.’s ʾisnād-cum-matn analysis, in order to reconstruct the history of the hadith in question. On the basis of this reconstruction, I conclude herein that the hadith of ‘Āʾišah’s marital age was first put into circulation by her great-nephew Hišām b. ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr in Kufah between 754 and 765 CE—probably as a response to proto-Šīʿī polemics and hostility directed towards ‘Āʾišah.

Literature Review

Much has been written about this hadith, but very little of it is relevant to my specific research goals: my interest here is not the various Islamophobic polemics and Islamic

---

apologetics that notably surround the hadith, nor the sociological reflections on these debates by Religious Studies academics. Instead, what follows is a summary of some of the serious or notable assessments regarding the hadith’s authenticity. This summary is by no means exhaustive, but any literature review of the authenticity-debates over this hadith will rapidly hit the point of diminishing returns, as most of the participants repeat the same claims over and over: the proponents of authenticity cite the numerous independent ʾisnāds supporting the hadith and the fact that they mostly derive from ‘Āʾišah herself, whilst the proponents of inauthenticity attack the reliability of the tradents in the ʾisnāds for the hadith (especially the common link Hišām) and cite implicit contradictions vis-à-vis the chronologies of other reports (entailing that ‘Āʾišah must have been older).

Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-ʾAlbānī (1985)

In his 1985 monograph ʾIrwāʾ al-Ḡalīl fī TaḵrijʾAḥādīṯ Manār al-Sabīl, the prominent Salafite Hadith scholar Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-ʾAlbānī concluded that the hadith relating “that ʿĀʾišah was married when she was a girl of six” is “sound” (ṣaḥīḥ). No real argumentation is given therefor, however, beyond the citation of multiple lines of transmission from Hišām.

---

2 That is not to say that such research is not worthwhile; but it is not the focus of the present work.

3 I thus disregard those authors who gloss over the question of authenticity. For example, Nabia Abbott, ʾAishah, the Beloved of Mohammed (Chicago, USA: Chicago University Press, 1942), 2 ff., merely regurgitated the narrative recorded in certain hadiths, including her engagement at age six (ibid., 4) and her consummation of the marriage three years later; the extent of Abbott’s analysis was a comment that ʿĀʾišah, “at the most, could not have been over ten years old” (ibid., 7). Even Denise A. Spellberg, Politics, gender, and the Islamic past: the legacy of ʿĀʾisha bint Abi Bakr (New York, USA: Columbia University Press, 1994), 39-40, 47, who notes the propaganda function of this hadith, does not really deal with the question of authenticity; instead, she seems to assume the essential historicity of the historical memory contained therein: “As a historical persona, 'Aisha had an edge over her co-wives manifest in her youth and virginity” (ibid., 47). The closest we get is a brief and vague statement that the reports of ʿĀišah’s marital age “suggest the variability of 'Aisha’s age in the historical record” (ibid., 40), although the relevant endnote (ibid. 204, n. 54) only seems to deal with her varying dates of birth and death.

In a 1999 article in *The Minaret* magazine, the Muslim author T. O. Shanavas argues that “the age of Ayesha has been erroneously reported in the hadith literature”, on the basis of a conflicting chronology inferable from certain other hadiths. In addition to these external considerations, Shanavas attacks the hadith on its own merits, in the following way: (1) the ʾiṣnāds of most versions of the hadith converge upon a single tradent named Hišām; (2) despite Hišām’s having lived in Madinah for most of his life, no other Madinans (including Mālik) transmitted this hadith; (3) according to Yaʿqūb b. Ṣaybah (as cited by Ibn Ḥajar), Hišām’s reporting became unreliable after he moved to Iraq; (4) Mālik (as cited by Ibn Ḥajar) refused to accept reports from Hišām after he moved to Iraq; and (5) according to al-Ḏahabī, Hišām’s memory declined in old age. From these points, Shanavas concludes that Hišām mistakenly invented this hadith in his old age after his transition from Madinah to Iraq, and hence, that “his narrative of Ayesha’s marriage and age are unreliable.”

Shanavas’ appeals to conflicting chronologies are not very convincing. The chronology of Prophetic biography (*sīrah/maḡāzī*) is notoriously incoherent and artificial, and in general, this material is extremely dubious as a historical source for Muḥammad and his contemporaries: the sources in question are (1) non-contemporaneous and postdate the life and times of the Prophet by a century or more, (2) punctuated by magic and miracles, (3) underpinned by Judaeo-Christian themes and motifs and other such artificial literary structures, (4) incoherent in terms of content, (5) diffused with anachronistic doctrines and propaganda retrojected by later competing parties, (6) contradictory with earlier non-Muslim sources in several key respects, and (7) substantially inferred from the Quran (which is to say, exegetical speculation disguised as biography). Adducing a chronological contradiction from such a mess to cancel out the specific hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age thus seems dubious, especially given the conflicting consummation-ages—twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, eighteen, nineteen, etc.—that could be inferred therefrom.

---

8 | See the references given in Ch. 1.
Moreover, Shanavas’ claim that no Madinans narrated this hadith is also ostensibly wrong—in a few ‘isnāds we can find tradents such as Ibn Šīhāb al-Zuhrī and Yaḥyá b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥāṭīb.9 Despite this overgeneralisation, Shanavas makes an excellent point regarding the striking paucity of Madinans in the transmission of this hadith, and his identification of Hišām—and specifically, Hišām in Iraq—as its originator is plausible. Shanavas’ appeal to Hišām’s senility as an explanation for the genesis of this hadith is not very convincing, however; such “conditional appraisals” within the biographical-dictionaries (‘X was reliable until Y occurred’) were often retrospective attempts to rationalise perceived disparities in the quality of a given tradent’s transmissions, rather than accurate historical memories of senility, etc.10 Shanavas’ reliance upon one such conditional appraisal (“when he was old, Hisham’s memory suffered quite badly”) to account for the hadith in question is thus dubious—especially given its salient propaganda value.11

Gautier Juynboll (2007)

In his 2007 Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth, Gautier Juynboll claimed that the tradition of ‘Āʾišah’s marital age contained a kernel of historical truth, despite the additions by various later tradents:

‘Āʾisha may also be assumed to have said (paraphrase):

- “The Prophet married me when I was six years old and he consummated the marriage when I was nine”,

cf. Mz., XI, no. 15956, XII, nos. 16809, 16871, 16881, 17066, 17106, 17249, 17751 (kh, 63/44, m, II, pp. 1038 f, d, s, q, Ṭay., no. 1454, IS VIII, pp. 40-3#, Ḥum., no. 231, IH., VI, pp. 118, 280). ‘Āʾisha’s statement is transmitted in a great variety of different wordings for which the early fuqahāʾ and their respective PCLs may be held responsible. For a survey of these wordings, see IS and m. In the MC dealing with ‘Āʾisha’s marriage to the Prophet there is one tradition in which the month in which the marriage was concluded is mentioned as Shawwāl, see Thawrī under no. 16355.12

9 These ascriptions are implausible (see chs. 2-3 of the present work), but Shanavas fails to demonstrate this.
11 See Chapter 3 of the present work.
12 Juynboll, Encyclopedia, 75.
Juynboll seems to have failed to consistently apply his own methodology here,\(^\text{13}\) for Hišām is the clear “common link” of this tradition—a parental “single strand” links him to ‘Ā’išah, whilst the independent transmissions via the likes of al-‘A’maš and ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq are clearly “dives”. *Pace* Juynboll himself, a straightforward Juynbollian analysis should conclude that this tradition was put into circulation by Hišām.\(^\text{14}\)

**Muḥammad Šāliḥ al-Munajjid (2009)**

In a 2009 *fatwá* on ‘certainty regarding the age of the Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’išah’ (published on his IslamQA website), the Salafite scholar Muḥammad Šāliḥ al-Munajjid—or someone under his general supervision—argued that the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age is undeniably “sound” (*ṣaḥīḥ*).\(^\text{15}\) After quoting a question from a lay-believer concerning the age of ‘Ā’išah at the time of her marriage, al-Munajjid (or whoever) responded thus:

> The determination of the age of ‘Ā’išah at the time of the engagement of the Prophet to her at “six years”, and at the time of the marital consummation with her at ‘nine years’, is not [open to] independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) for the scholars to judge its correctness from its incorrectness. On the contrary, it is a historical transmission solidly established by that which assures its soundness and [makes a] necessity of assenting to it.\(^\text{16}\)

Two broad arguments are then outlined by al-Munajjid to substantiate this claim, the first comprising ten points and the second five points. The first is concerned with establishing the authenticity of the marital-age hadith, and largely consists of citations and descriptions of the different versions thereof:

---

\(^{13}\) See Chapter 1 of the present work.


1. This information derives from the explicit statement of no less than the subject of the issue herself (qawl ṣāḥibat al-ša’n nafsi-hā), ‘Ā’īšah (rather than from the speech of someone about her or the description of some historian or traditionist), in an autobiographical hadith recorded by al-Buḫārī and Muslim.

2. This transmission (riwāyah) from ‘Ā’īšah was transmitted in the soundest of books after the Quran, namely, the collections of al-Buḫārī and Muslim.

3. This transmission (riwāyah) came from ‘Ā’īšah from a number of transmission-paths (ṭuruq), and not from a single transmission-path, contrary to that which is proclaimed by some of the ignorant—namely:

3.1. The famous transmission-path (al-ṭariq al-mašhūrah) is that from the transmission (riwāyah) of Hišām b. 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr, from his father 'Urwah, from ‘Ā’īšah; this is amongst the soundest of the transmissions (min 'aṣaḥḥ al-riwāyāt); 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr was the most knowledgeable of people concerning ‘Ā’īšah, because she was his maternal aunt.

3.2. Another transmission-path (ṭariq) from the transmission (riwāyah) of al-Zuhrī, from 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr, from ‘Ā’īšah, is recorded by Muslim.

3.3. Another transmission-path (ṭariq) from the transmission (riwāyah) of al-'A‘maš, from 'Ibrāhīm, from al-'Aswad, from ‘Ā’īšah, is transmitted by Muslim.

3.4. Another transmission-path (ṭariq) from Muḥammad b. 'Amr, from Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥātim, from ‘Ā’īšah, is transmitted by 'Abū Dāwūd.

3.5. The contemporary Salafite scholar 'Abū ʿIsḥāq al-Ḥuwaynī has collected the names of those who corroborated (al-mutābiʿīn) 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr, and they were: al-'Aswad b. Yazīd, and al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. 'abī Bakr, and ‘Amrah bt. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥātim.

3.6. Likewise, he collected the names of those who corroborate (al-mutābiʿīn) Hišām b. 'Urwah in the transmission (riwāyah) of this hadith, and they were: Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī and 'Abū Hamzah Maymūn, the mawlā of 'Urwah.

3.7. Then he named the transmitters from Hišām b. 'Urwah amongst the people of Madinah (at which point, al-Munajjid emphasises to the reader that this hadith was amongst those transmitted by Hišām in Madinah as well), and

3.8. And amongst the people of Makkah: Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah.


3.10. And amongst the people of Basrah: Ḥammād b. Salamah, and Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Wuhayb b. Ḫālid, and others.

3.11. At this point, al-Munajjid directs the reader to two online video-lectures by al-Ḥuwaynī on this subject, before clarifying that all of this enumeration is necessary to repudiate the specious argumentation ( tanggal) of some of the ignorant, who argue that (1) Hišām b. ‘Urwah was alone in his transmission and (2) that Hišām was senile in his old age. However, the truth is that this accusation (tuhmah) was articulated by no-one but ‘Abū al-Hasan b. al-Qatṭān in his Bayān al-Wahm wa-al-ʾĪhām, in which he was mistaken.

3.12. al-Munajjid then quotes al-Ḍahabī from his Mizān to the effect that, even though Hišām’s memory diminished somewhat in his old age, he never become senile or confused (despite the report of Ibn al-Qatṭān to the contrary).

4. Likewise, the story of the marriage of the Prophet to ʿĀʾišah when she was nine years old was transmitted by people other than ʿĀʾišah, amongst those who were her contemporaries (mimman ʾadrakū-hā) and were more knowledgeable than others regarding her:

4.1. Ibn Ḥanbal transmitted a hadith in his Musnad, from Muḥammad b. Bišr, from Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, from ‘Abū Salamah and Yaḥyá, who narrated about how Ḫawlah bt. Ḧakīm advised the Prophet to marry ʿĀʾišah—a hadith including the elements about ʿĀʾišah’s age.

5. This is what ʿĀʾišah related about herself, and the transmitters related it from her; this was agreed upon by the historians who wrote biographies of ʿĀʾišah, between which there is no disagreement concerning that. This matter was not the object of independent reasoning (ijtihād), for, after a person has spoken directly about themself (as ʿĀʾišah did), there is no room for anyone’s independent reasoning (ijtihād).
Thereafter, al-Munajjid (or whoever) proceeds to cite indirect, chronological evidence to support this hadith (i.e., reports or statements about ‘Ā’išah birth-date, death-date, and age at death that are consistent with the hadith), thereby inverting the common strategy employed by Muslim skeptics of the same hadith.

Some of al-Munajjid (or whoever)’s argumentation is particularly weak—for example, he cherry-picks the quote from al-Dhahabī in which he rationalises or excuses Hišām’s senility, downplaying numerous contrary reports recorded elsewhere by both al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar. Additionally, in citing expedient reports and statements about ‘Ā’išah’s birth-date, death-date, and age at death in the (mostly late) “historical sources”, al-Munajjid (or whoever) is simply begging the question against skeptics: such reports and statements are consistent with having been generated or contaminated by precisely the marital-age hadith, and thus cannot simply be assumed to be independent corroboration therefor. Such a suspicion is supported by recent scholarship on the provenance of biographical data in rijāl works, which suggests that the birth-dates, death-dates, and ages of early figures were actually inferred from ’īsnāds, rather constituting some kind of independent set of information with which to evaluate ’īsnāds.¹⁷

In general, however, al-Munajjid makes a good point: contrary to the criticisms of some Muslim modernists and progressives (who wrongly assume that the ’īsnāds of this hadith all converge upon Hišām), the marital-age hadith is supported by more than four independent ’īsnāds and is thus at least mašhūr, if not mutawātir. It is difficult to see how anyone taking a sanguine approach to Hadith and other early Islamic sources could resist such evidence—only a skeptic invoking some kind of Schachtian spread of ’īsnāds is in any position to reasonably differ with al-Munajjid on this matter and overcome his objections.

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2012)

In his 2012 monograph Theological Approaches to Qur’anic Exegesis, Hussein Abdul-Raof reiterated the common appeal to chronological discrepancies described above,

¹⁷ See the references given in the section on Brown’s criticism of Juynboll in ch. 1 of the present work.
arguing that ʿĀʾišah may have actually been engaged at age fourteen and married at age eighteen. Furthermore, Abdul-Raof is seemingly under the impression the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age was exclusively transmitted via Hišām, and adduced the aforementioned biographical reports alleging his unreliability after he moved from Madinah to Iraq. Abdul-Raof also notes the seeming absence of Madinan tradents in the hadith, and the telling absence of the hadith from the Muwaṭṭa’ of Mālik. That said, Abdul-Raof ends by citing a counter-opinion affirming Hišām’s reliability, rendering his stance on the hadith’s authenticity somewhat ambiguous.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʾIdlibī (2013)

In 2013, the Sunni theologian and traditionist Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. ʾĀḥmad al-ʾIdlibī argued that the hadith-tradition of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age—exemplified in the versions recorded by al-Buḵārī, Muslim, and Ibn Ḥanbal—does not contain a genuine historical memory, insofar as her age is concerned. His analysis was nuanced: al-ʾIdlibī acknowledged that the ʾisnād(s) underpinning these hadiths are ṣaḥīḥ (per traditional Islamic scholarship), and rejects the erroneous charge that Hišām alone transmitted (tafarrada) it. Instead, he argued that the hadith contradicts a chronology inferable from various other reports, which imply that ʿĀʾišah was married at age fourteen and cohabited at age eighteen. Consequently, al-ʾIdlibī concluded that the matns of the marital-age hadith contain an error (wahm), which he attributes to the potential forgetfulness (nisyān) of ʿĀʾišah herself, in her old age. In short, the hadith is ṣaḥīḥ in

---

19 Ibid., 217.
20 Ibid.
23 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
terms of transmission but šādd in terms of content, because it conflicts with established historical evidence (li-l-qarā‘in al-ta‘rīkiyyah al-ṭābitah).

As noted already, the chronology of the sirah and related material is notoriously incoherent and spurious, and the criticisms above apply here also. As for his internal analysis of the hadith in question, al-‘Idlibī was constrained by his trust in ‘isnāds: in the absence of the Schachtian notion of spreading ‘isnāds, he was forced to conclude that the hadith—with its multiple, seemingly-independent ‘isnāds—must derive from ‘Ā’ishah herself and, hence, that the erroneous content therein must originate with her.

Asma Afsaruddin (2013)

In her 2013 article “Ā’iṣa bt. Abī Bakr’ in the third edition of Brill’s Encyclopaedia of Islam, Asma Afsaruddin seems to imply that the dominant version of the marital-age hadith is erroneous, and that ‘Ā’iṣah was actually engaged at age nine and cohabited at age twelve:

‘Ā’iṣah entered the prophet Muḥammad’s home as his wife about three years before the hijra (migration) to Medina, when she was around six or seven years of age, according to most sources. She had previously been promised in marriage to a young relative of hers named Jubayr b. Muṭ‘im, whose family was still pagan. When the prophet Muḥammad, through the good offices of his aunt Khawla bt. Ḥakīm, expressed interest in ‘Ā’iṣah after the death of his wife Khadija, in 619, Abū Bakr consulted with the boy’s family. By that time, Jubayr’s parents were against the idea of their son marrying into a Muslim family and the engagement fell through. ‘Ā’iṣah’s marriage to the Prophet was not consummated until approximately three years later, when she was either nine or ten years old, as the majority of sources report (Ibn Sa‘d, 8:58–62; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, 8:139). However, according to the chronology of Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) she would have been nine at her marriage and twelve at its consummation (Wafayāt al-‘a’yān, 3:16), a chronology also supported by a report from Hishām b. ‘Urwa recorded by Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230/845; al-Ṭabaqāt, 8:61).

---

24 Ibid., p. 6.
Afsaruddin offers two pieces of evidence for this possible revision, although neither are particularly convincing in and of themselves: an alternative chronology inferred from a late source (see above), and a single version that contradicts nearly all other versions of the hadith.


In a 2015 interview with Ernie Rea on the BBC, Jonathan Brown predicted that a Motzkian ‘isnād-cum-matn analysis of the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age would likely demonstrate the authenticity of the historical memory contained therein:

Brown: “I think it’s an authentic report – in fact, I think the scholar whose work does represent the state of the field in Western scholarship on hadith—the German scholar Harald Motzki—if you were to take his methods of dating hadiths, I think you could date that report of Aisha back to actually about the time of Aisha.”

Rea: “A contemporary report, you’re saying?”

Brown: “Yeah, I think that’s accurate. I think even from a non-Muslim perspective it’s a good argument that that goes back to Aisha.”

In a more recent (2018) online address, Brown asserts that this hadith is “incredibly widely transmitted,” and also implies that no plausible “agenda” for fabricating such a hadith is discernible. Brown further asserts that even if Hišām (the common link) is discounted, a “sahih isnad” still remains (via al-Zuhrī instead). Finally, Brown claimed that “all” of the “variant matns” of this tradition “perfectly” line up with “specific isnads,” and subsequently elaborated:

Given the massive evidence for a common link and the perfect distribution of matn variances along isnad variances, I think using Motzki’s isnad-cum-matn analysis would conclude that, even for Western scholars using the historical critical method, this report could be dated back to the late 600’s CE – to Aisha’s own lifetime.

28 Id., published as a public comment on his Facebook webpage (10th August/2018): https://www.facebook.com/jonathanacbrown/posts/10156584464609850?comment_id=101565857
This is precisely the task undertaken in Chapter 2 of the present work, where Brown’s prediction is put to the test. On the basis of the ʾisnād-cum-matn analysis undertaken therein, it looks as though Brown’s prediction was wrong: the results indicate that the marital-age hadith cannot be reconstructed as far back as her primary student ʿUrwah, nor his student al-Zuhrī. The reconstruction ostensibly terminates at Hišām, two generations after ʿĀʾišah.

Yasmin Amin (2016)

In a paper presented at the 2016 BRAIS Conference in London, Yasmin Amin argues—in a similar vein to Shanavas—that the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age is dubious; on the basis of a conflicting chronology inferable from reports recorded in certain “Islamic history books, Sīra works, and biographical dictionaries”, Amin concludes that ʿĀʾišah “was at least nineteen years old at the time of her marriage.” In addition to these external chronological considerations, Amin supersedes Shanavas in identifying Iraq as the place where Hišām created this hadith: beyond the reports concerning Hišām’s unreliability and senility in Iraq, Amin also identified the Iraqi background of most of his tradents, the dubious reputations of some among them, and, perhaps most striking of all, the absence of this hadith in the earliest Madinan collections (such as the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of Ibn ʿIsḥāq, the Muwaṭṭa’ of Mālik, and the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of al-Wāqidī).

In explaining the genesis of this hadith, Amin initially suggested a scribal error and a consequent scribal rationalisation, in conjunction with her other arguments about ʿĀʾišah’s true marital age.

29 Yasmin Amin, ‘Age is just a number or is it? ʿAʾisha’s age between Hadīth and History’ – paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of the British Association for Islamic Studies, Panel 3: Historical and Literary Approaches to Ḥadīth, the British Association for Islamic Studies, London (11th/April/2016), 1.
30 Ibid., 2-3. In addition to her paper and presentation, Amin has elaborated her views to me via private correspondence (beginning in November of 2017).
31 Ibid., 9.
In addition to this hypothesis, Amin has suggested a tentative alternative: given certain indications of nine as the ideal marital age within Zoroastrian culture, and given the ex-Sasanid character of Iraq and the Persian backgrounds of many of the Iraqi tradents of the hadith in question, it is possible that ‘Ā’išah’s marital age was revised to conform to a lingering Zoroastrian or Persian tradition. On this view, the fabricator of the hadith was either a paid-off Hišām or one of the Persian tradents.

A drawback of Amin’s initial research was her small sample size: her analysis of the isnāds of the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age was limited to a handful of versions recorded by al-Buğārī, in which dives around Hišām—and their telling provisional provenance—cannot be detected. Amin’s appeals to the chronology of the sirah and Hišām’s failing memory are also questionable (given the reservations outlined above), but her other points are extremely prescient: the near-total predomination of Iraqi tradents below Hišām is striking and, together with the silence of the earliest Madinan collections, certainly suggests an Iraqi provenance for the hadith. In this respect, Amin’s conclusions—and to some degree, those of Shanavas and Abdul-Raof—find dramatic confirmation in my own research. I differ principally in my explanation of the motive or cause behind Hišām’s creation, which I now see as sectarian (i.e., proto-Sunnī, anti-Šī‘ī propaganda) rather than cultural (i.e., some kind of Persian or Zoroastrian influence).

J. J. Little (2016 ff.)

For several years, I have been considering the possibility that the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age might be inauthentic. This hypothesis was explored more formally in my Masters dissertation at the University of Oxford (2016-2018), in which I initially


33 This hypothesis was conveyed to me via personal correspondence (in November of 2017).

34 The main problem with this hypothesis is the fact that Hišām—the proposed originator of the hadith in question—was not a mawla with a Persian or Zoroastrian heritage, and although Amin suggests the possibility that he was commissioned to fabricate the hadith by some unknown agent intent on formally integrating their indigenous customs and ideals into Islam, I am not aware of any evidence that Hišām was buyable in this way. Still, there may be a version of this idea—as an influence on Hišām rather than a motive per se—that is salvageable; see Chapter 3 of the present work.
posited a Madinan and Zubayrid context for the hadith’s creation, with Hišām, al-Zuhrī, and their master (and father, in the case of the former) ‘Urwah. My reasoning ran as follows.

Early Muslim political claimants in the first and second fitnahs seem to have derived legitimacy from their female familial connections to Muḥammad—and ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, nephew of ‘Āʾišah and leader of the Zubayrid faction in the second fitnah, was no exception. Thus, it seems likely that the Zubayrids would have been under pressure, or were at least incentivised, to emphasise the importance of ‘Āʾišah to bolster the Zubayrid cause—and, given that they were wont to fabricate or interpolate reports in their favour, it is plausible that they did so in this regard also. This could explain the initial appearance of reports about the uniqueness of ‘Āʾišah and her status as the favourite wife of the Prophet. On this view, one of the ways that these propagandists emphasised the specialness of ‘Āʾišah was by trumpeting her distinctive status as Muḥammad’s only virgin wife—an emphasis that would have been accentuated by the circulation of reports concerning her young marital age. It is thus unsurprising that the hadith in question is associated overwhelmingly with a locus of Zubayrid tradents—namely, Hišām and his father ‘Urwah, the latter of whom was the brother of ‘Abd Allāh and the nephew of ‘Āʾišah.35

In November of 2017, however, I was swayed by Amin’s argument for an Iraqi provenance, rather than a Madinan one, or in other words: the hadith was probably created by Hišām in early Abbasid Iraq, not ‘Urwah in Zubayrid Madinah. This poses a problem of relevancy for my initial Zubayrid hypothesis. The need for a hadith like this would have been greatest during the Zubayrid rebellion, which ended when Hišām was still a child—it would make more sense coming from ‘Urwah in Madinah under the Zubayrids, rather than Hišām in Iraq under the Abbasids. That said, there is a precedent for the fabrication of pro-Zubayrid hadiths by later sympathisers, i.e., “later attempts to redeem the memory of their lost cause as a just one.”36 On the other hand, Hišām’s hadith is somewhat indirect for such a cause—this does not preclude a pro-Zubayrid motive, but it does seem less plausible in the light of the hadith’s more direct utility for legitimising ‘Āʾišah in her own right. In other words, the intended pro-

35 For more on all of this see, see Chapter 3 of the present work.
Zubayrid message or implications of this ʿĀʾišah-validating hadith would only be immediately obvious during the Zubayrid rebellion, i.e., a rebellion led by ʿĀʾišah’s family. By contrast, who by the Abbasi period would connect the dots between ʿĀʾišah being good with the Zubayrids being good by association? And if the connection would no longer be obvious, why then would someone fabricate this hadith for that purpose? If the marital-age hadith indeed originated with Hišām in Abbasid-era Iraq (as opposed to originating with ʿUrwah in Zubayrid-era Hijaz), then a retrospective Abbasid-era pro-Zubayrid political motive seems like a stretch.

Once again, there are many others who have commented upon this issue—but since they tend to repeat points already raised by those cited already, I have opted, for the sake of brevity, to omit them.

**Outline of the Present Work**

The present work explores the origins and development of the marital-age hadith through six chapters: **firstly**, a preliminary summary of the relevant methodological debates in Hadith Studies, culminating in a defence of at least a version of the ʾisnād-cum-matn analysis; **secondly**, a comprehensive ʾisnād-cum-matn analysis of the hadith, including a systematic reconstruction of its earlier redactions and an identification of those responsible therefor; **thirdly**, a combined form-critical, geographical, and historical-critical analysis of the origins of the hadith, identifying its probable provenance in the sectarian milieu of mid-8th-Century Iraq; **fourthly**, a summary of the hadith’s spread and diversification across the Abbasid Caliphate, accounting for the provenance of all of the extant versions thereof; **fifthly**, a summary of the hadith’s reception by Sunnī Hadith scholars, including both criticisms of some versions thereof and its overall achievement of canonical status; and **sixthly**, a summary of the broader implications of all of this research for both the modern methods and debates in Hadith Studies, on the one hand, and early Islamic history and the development of Hadith, on the other.
Chapter 1: Methods & Debates

That Hadith are unreliable—that any given *matn* cannot be taken at face value as an accurate datum from the 1st Islamic Century, and that any given *ʾisnād* cannot be taken at face value as an accurate record of a *matn*’s provenance—cannot be seriously contested, for multiple reasons. **Firstly**, there is an overwhelming prior probability based upon the ubiquity of fabrication and pseudepigraphy in Late Antique and Mediaeval religio-historical (pagan, Jewish, and Christian) ascriptions.37 **Secondly**, there is the high frequency of contradictions within the Hadith corpus,38 which necessitates the occurrence of a huge amount of fabrication, interpolation, and/or mutation and, therefore, skepticism towards any given hadith.39 **Thirdly**, there is the ubiquity of fabrication and interpolation—both reported and demonstrable—in the Hadith corpus,40 which again casts doubt upon the rest of the corpus.41 **Fourthly**, there is the rapid, extreme mutation and growth of reports that evidently took place over the course of a century or more of oral transmission,42 which means that any given *matn*—regardless of the *ʾisnād*—is likely at best heavily distorted and at worst obliterated beyond its original form.43 **Fifthly**, there is the belated emergence of Hadith as a genre

---


43 For this point, see Cook, *Muhammad*, 67, but much more forcefully argued in Crone, *Roman, provincial, and Islamic law*, 31-34, and *ead.*, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 126, n. 3. For a similar point, see Robert G. Hoyland, ‘Writing the
and corpus, largely during the 8th and 9th Centuries CE, which straightforwardly precludes the authenticity of most ascriptions to the 7th Century CE. This chronology is the core of what we can call the Revisionist model of Hadith development (along with the premise that Hadith underwent a process of progressive retrojection, from Followers, to Companions, to the Prophet), which is inferable from and corroborated by multiple, independent points of evidence, including: dissonant reports attesting to early, generic notions of sunnah (as opposed to a specifically Prophetical one), and early, vague notions of Prophetical sunnah (as opposed to one concretely embodied by Hadith); dissonant reports attesting to the origins of the 'Isnād during the second fitnah, and the spread and generalisation of the 'Isnād and Hadith during the middle of the 8th Century CE; the suspicious abundance of early long-lived tradents (which makes sense in light of the belated rise of 'Isnāds); the fact that most of the earliest “common links” operated during the 8th Century CE (which makes sense in light of the belated rise of 'Isnāds); the scarcity of Hadith in the earliest Islamic documents; the ascription-pattern of early Islamic epistles (which are almost all attributed to Followers, just as this model predicts); the reported and inferable massive growth of Hadith during the 8th and 9th Centuries CE; the inferable and observable belated use of Hadith, and especially Prophetical Hadith, in early Islamic jurisprudence; the relative paucity of Prophetical Hadith in the earliest Hadith collections, versus their numerosness in the later Hadith collections; and the existence of both non-Prophetical and Prophetical versions of the same hadiths.

These general conclusions are primarily the result of the work of Ignáz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, Gautier Juynboll, Michael Cook, and Patricia Crone, although many others have contributed relevant evidence therefor. For all of these reasons (and indeed, for any one of them), skepticism obtains: any given matn was likely created

---


long after the relevant events and/or distorted in the course of transmission, and any
given ‘Isnād was likely created long after anyone could remember the actual
transmission-history of the matn in question.

There was quite a range of specific mechanisms or processes involved in the creation
and alteration of Hadith, which are often attested even in traditional Islamic
scholarship. The matns of hadiths were variously: crafted by oral storytellers and
preachers—who valued education, edification, and entertainment above all else—
from a common stock of material (and reformulated through successive retellings)\(^46\);
inferrred into the mouths of early authorities by later jurists, theologians, and exegetes
(and updated in the same way according to changing doctrines and understandings)\(^47\);
speculated into being, or created through honest guesswork\(^48\); formulated by sectaries,
regionalists, and others as symbolic or ideal expressions of correct doctrine (i.e., as a

esp. ch. 9; Andrew L. Rippin, ‘The Function of Asbāb al-Nuzūl in Qur’ānic Exegesis’, *Bulletin of the School
Authenticity* (New York, USA: Routledge, 2011 [originally published in 1996]), 12 and ch. 2, esp. 74, 79;
but for much of the Sunnī Hadith canon (including the Ṣāḥīḥ). There has been a tendency to equate
these storytellers with the ḥusnās of later Islamic memory, but this is clearly a mistake, since the ḥusnās
were not storytellers per se; cf. Lyall R. Armstrong, *The ḥusnās of Early Islam* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2017), passim.


\(^{48}\) This was explicitly proposed by Robinson in his aforementioned 2018 presentation.
kind of convention)\textsuperscript{49}; and (mendaciously) fabricated and interpolated by propagandists and apologists for all manner of political, sectarian, regional, and other causes (whether for personal gain or the greater good).\textsuperscript{50} Meanwhile, the \textit{ʾisnāds} for these \textit{matns} were variously: inferred into being (for example, on the basis of sectarian or regional scholarly lineages, or on the basis of family genealogies)\textsuperscript{51}; produced through simple guesswork or speculation (i.e., based on what \textit{might} or \textit{could} have happened)\textsuperscript{52}; articulated as symbolic or ideal expressions of the communal or scholarly lineage for correct doctrines (especially along sectarian or regional lines)\textsuperscript{53}; and (mendaciously) fabricated for all manner of reasons—to defend a school, sect, or the like; to attack another school, sect, or the like; to provide the fabricator with a shorter \textit{ʾisnād}; to bolster an existing \textit{matn} or corroborate an existing \textit{ʾisnād}; to justify a revised or corrected \textit{matn}; to provide the fabricator with a novel \textit{ʾisnād}; and so on.\textsuperscript{54} Existing \textit{ʾisnāds} were also altered or interpolated, whether through dishonesty, inference, or some other process: skipping contemporaneous sources in favour of directly citing the sources of these sources, or even older sources; omitting or dropping undesirable tradents, or replacing them with suitable alternatives; adding tradents in order to bridge gaps in transmission, or to supplant the initial source with an even earlier source; and so on.\textsuperscript{55}

The relative weight of these various processes or mechanisms is still up for debate, but the general falsity of Hadith entails that some combination thereof—or something like them—must have been at play in the formation of the extant corpus during the 8th and 9th Centuries CE. Regardless, skepticism obtains regarding Hadith: as it stands,


\textsuperscript{50} See especially Goldziher (trans. Barber & Stern), \textit{Muslim Studies}, II, passim, and Schacht, \textit{Origins, passim}.

\textsuperscript{51} See Caetani, Robson, Birkeland, Berg, and Reinhart, cited above. Also see Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), \textit{The Biography of Muhammad}, 67, and Görke et al., 'First Century Sources', 28.

\textsuperscript{52} This is already plausibly encompassed in Robinson's proposal, but for a more explicit statement to this effect, see Harald Motzki (trans. Frank Griffel & Paul Hardy), 'Whither Hadith Studies?'; in Harald Motzki, \textit{Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Mağhazi Ḥadith} (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 52.

\textsuperscript{53} This seems like a corollary of what was mentioned or suggested above by Goldziher, Schacht, and Brown, and comes across strongly in Birkeland and Berg (in his summary of Gilliot).


\textsuperscript{55} See Schacht, Cook, Crone, and Juynboll, cited above.
any given hadith (ṣaḥīḥ or otherwise) should be presumed to be inauthentic or unreliable, until the contrary can be demonstrated.

Can the contrary ever be demonstrated? Of course. The Criterion of Dissimilarity has always been used even by skeptics of Hadith to identify early or archaic material preserved in some matns (regardless of their ʿisnāds), as have early, independent, corroborating non-Muslim sources. But absent archaic-looking matns or independent corroboration (both of which are rare), is there any way to establish that a given hadith predates the time of the earliest extant collection in which it appears? In particular, can ʿisnāds be used, in any way, to date hadiths? Again, the answer is obviously yes: skeptics have long used ʿisnāds to date Hadith, in the following ways.

**Dating by Ascription Type**

It is not uncommon, when one encounters a doctrine expressed in a Prophetical hadith, to find the same doctrine expressed in a Companion hadith and/or a Follower hadith as well. In many instances, the matn (or a key wording therein) is the same, and sometimes, even the ʿisnād is the same—the only difference being the level at which the ʿisnād stops (i.e., with a Follower, or a Companion, or the Prophet). In other words, it is common to find the same doctrines, and even the same hadiths, with differing levels of ascription.

There are two ways to explain this phenomenon: either the hadiths are all genuine, with Followers expressing views and phrases inherited from the Companions, and Companions expressing views and phrases inherited from the Prophet, with instances

---

56 For example, concerning the Sahīfat Yathrib, see: Patricia Crone & Michael A. Cook, Hagarism: The making of the Islamic world (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 7; Crone, Slaves on Horses, 7; ead., Roman, provincial and Islamic law, 32. For another example, concerning archaic notions of hijrah, see ead., ‘The First-Century Concept of Hiǧra’, Arabica, Tome 41, Issue 3 (1994), 352-387. For a final example (employing the Criterion of Embarrassment in particular), concerning early failed prophecies, see Shoemaker, The Death of a Prophet, 172-176.

57 Crone & Cook, Hagarism, ch. 1; Cook, Muhammad, 73-74; Crone, Slaves on Horses, ch. 1; etc.

58 E.g., Goldziher (trans. Barber & Stern), Muslim Studies, II, 148-149 (incl. n. 3); Schacht, ‘Revaluation’, 147; id., Origins, passim; Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, ch. 11; Juynboll, Muslim tradition, passim; Cook, ‘Magian Cheese’, passim; Crone, Roman, provincial and Islamic law, 29, 124 (nn. 67-68); Juynboll, ‘Islam’s first fuqahā’, passim; Melchert, ‘Basra and Kufa’, in Sadeghi et al. (eds), Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts, 178; Görke, ‘Authorship in the Sīra literature’, in Behzadi & Hameen-Anttila (eds.), Concepts of Authorship in Pre-Modern Arabic Texts, 73. Also see the numerous examples exposed by the ICMA, cited below.
of each having been preserved; or else doctrines and even specific wordings have undergone multiple retrojections back to different levels of authority.

Various debates have arisen over this issue, but these can be bypassed by simply reiterating the relevant established background knowledge on the evolution of Hadith types and then applying the Criterion of Dissimilarity. Firstly, our background knowledge: Hadith are absent from the earliest Islamic epistles and other plausible Umayyad-era ascriptions, where only Quranic citations and vague invocations of *sunnah* predominate; Follower Hadith overwhelmingly predominate in *fiqh* and collections from the middle of the 8th Century CE; Companion Hadith predominate in *fiqh* at the turn of the 9th Century CE; and Prophetical Hadith overwhelmingly predominate in *fiqh* and collections from the 9th Century CE onwards. Moreover, the prioritisation of Prophetical Hadith over all other types of as a source of doctrine was formalised in the legal theory of al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820), which became generalised rapidly over the course of the 9th Century CE. In other words, the citational patterns of Hadith in the 8th and 9th Centuries CE reveal a broad tendency in terms of preference, from Follower Hadith, to Companion Hadith, to Prophetical Hadith. Moreover, in conjunction with the initial absence of Hadith altogether, this is consistent with the successive emergence (i.e., creation) of Hadith types, or in other words, the progressive retrojection of Hadith—first to Followers, then to Companions, then to the Prophet, as a general tendency.

With all of that in mind, we can now turn to the Criterion of Dissimilarity, which is a staple of modern historical research. The principle is simple: a report that clashes with the orthodoxy or standards of the preservers or collectors of the report is unlikely to have been created by them—for, had they created it, they probably would have done

---


60 Schacht, ‘Revaluation’, *id., Origins, passim; Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, passim; Juynboll, Muslim tradition, esp. ch. 1; Crone & Hinds, God’s Caliph, esp. ch. 5; Juynboll, ‘The development of sunna’, Christopher Melchert, ‘Traditionist-Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law’, *Islamic Law and Society*, Volume 8, Number 3 (2001), 383-406.


62 Again, see all of the above (other than El Shamsy, who rejects this explanation, as discussed below).
so in accordance with said orthodoxy or standards. Likewise, when two reports conflict, with one being consistent with the orthodoxy or standards of the preservers or collectors thereof, and the other conflicting therewith, the latter is more likely to be authentic: the latter is unlikely to have been created by the bearers of orthodoxy and standards and thus probably predates them, whereas the former is consistent with having been created in accordance with the emerging or established standard or orthodoxy. In other words, it is more likely that an adherent of an orthodoxy or standard would create the report in accordance therewith than that they would create a report conflicting therewith.\textsuperscript{63}

All of this has important implications for both the \textit{relative} and \textit{absolute} dating of Hadith, based on ascription types. To begin with, it generates a relative dating specifically for parallel versions of the same hadith (which is just to say, it allows us to adjudicate in certain specific cases between \textit{variants} of the same text): when one version of a hadith is ascribed to a later authority, and another version is ascribed to an earlier authority, the former is more likely to represent the original version of the hadith—i.e., more likely to be earlier—than the latter. The reason is simple: the general tendency in early Islamic approaches to Hadith is to prefer earlier and earlier authorities, to the point that the proto-Sunni Hadith partisans, traditionists, and Hadith critics (operating from around 800 CE onwards) who preserved most of the extant Hadith corpus explicitly prized Prophetical hadiths over Companion hadiths, and Companion hadiths over Follower hadiths. There was thus a long-term, systemic incentive to retroject hadiths back to earlier authorities (and conversely, a pressure against reattributing hadiths from earlier authorities to later authorities), such that the Follower version of a hadith is more likely to be earlier than the Companion or Prophetical version, and the Companion version is more likely to be earlier than the Prophetical version (all else being equal). Or, as Schacht famously put it: “in general we can say: the more perfect the \textit{isnād}, the later the tradition.”\textsuperscript{64}

Exactly the same reasoning applies to hadiths with parallel \textit{munqāṭi’}/\textit{mursal} and \textit{muttaṣil} versions, or in other words: the version of a given hadith with a broken or

\textsuperscript{63} For example, see Christopher Melchert, \textit{Ahmad ibn Hanbal} (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 28.

discontinuous ‘isnād is more likely to reflect the original—i.e., to be earlier—than the version with an unbroken or continuous ‘isnād. Once again, there was a tendency—culminating in al-Šāfiʿī and the Hadith critics—to prefer ittiṣāl, making it much more likely that a mursal or munqaṭī hadith was updated or interpolated into a muttaṣil hadith, rather than vice versa. As Schacht again famously put it, “mursal traditions are, generally speaking, older than traditions with full isnāds.”

The Criterion of Dissimilarity also provides a kind of absolute dating, based on when certain Hadith types were sought after, and when they lost force. Provisionally, we can date Follower hadiths recorded in later works back to the 8th Century CE at least (since we would not expect anyone to bother creating Follower hadiths any later), and we can date Companion hadiths recorded in later works back to the turn of the 9th Century CE at least (since we would not expect anyone to bother creating Companion hadiths any later), but we cannot—all else being equal—date Prophetical hadiths any earlier than the works in which they are cited (since the incentive or pressure to create Prophetical hadiths existed all the way up until the time of the works in question). In other words, as a rule of thumb,66 Follower hadiths predate c. 800, Companion hadiths predate c. 820, and Prophetical hadiths could be as late as whatever work they appear in.67

The same reasoning applies to munqaṭī or mursal hadiths: they probably date to the turn of the 9th Century CE at the latest, since anyone creating a hadith any later than that would not be expected to create one with an ‘isnād that would be automatically rejected or disparaged. As Crone put it: “Similarly, a perfect isnād is likely to be later than an imperfect one. After all, the better a tradition conforms to the criteria evolved in the time of Shāfiʿī, the more likely it is to date from the time in which these criteria were evolved.”68 As with parallel hadiths with different levels of ascription, so too with parallel hadiths with broken and unbroken ‘isnāds.

66 Cf. Gerald R. Hawting, ‘The role of the Qurʾān and hadith in the legal controversy about the rights of a divorced woman during her ‘waiting period’ (ʿidda)’, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Volume 52, Issue 3 (1989), 430-445, who argues that, in one particular early debate, a Prophetical hadith is inferably earlier than a conflicting (i.e., counter) Companion hadith.
67 Cf. the summary in Juynboll, ‘Some isnād-analytical methods’, 369, which he describes as being “in order of absolute chronology”, even though he fails to add dates.
68 Crone, Roman, provincial and Islamic law, 29.
Arguments from Silence

It is well-known that hadiths that appear in extant collections (say, in the 9th and 10th Centuries CE) frequently fail to be cited in earlier reported and extant doctrinal debates (say, in the 8th Century CE), even when said hadiths have some direct bearing on the debate in question. If the extant hadiths had existed all along (as purported by their ʿisnāds), then it is reasonable to expect that they would have been cited in the relevant debates. Thus, the non-citation of such hadiths is evidence for their initial non-existence, and for the creation thereof at some point between the initial debates and the extant collections. As Schacht put it: “The best way of proving that a tradition did not exist at a certain time is to show that it was not used as a legal argument in a discussion which would have made reference to it imperative, if it had existed.”69 This is Schacht’s famous argumentum e silentio, which he used to pinpoint the growth of Hadith over the course of the 8th and 9th Centuries CE.

Perhaps the most systematic criticism of this method came from Harald Motzki, who enumerated several reasons for doubting the validity of conclusions derived thereby:

1. Not all the texts that Schacht compares are elements of a legal discussion which would necessarily demand the naming of all usable traditions. 2. A number of compilations are only textual selections. 3. The volume of the surviving sources is only a fraction of the originally existing stock. 4. Given the relatively prolonged regionally separated development of jurisprudence and Tradition, which—as Schacht himself assumes and this work will show—still prevailed in the first half of the second/eighth century, the lack of a text in a regional source says little as long as we have no contemporary sources from the other centers.70

There are several problems here. Firstly, Motzki turns Schacht's appeals to probability into a rigid principle or deduction, requiring only the observation of the possibility to the contrary to refute: thus, Motzki speculates that traditionists or jurists may not have cited all of the Hadith that they knew, as if this constitutes a reason to reject Schacht's conclusion. This is at best uncharitable: Schacht's arguments from silence are

---

69 Schacht, Origins, 140.
reasonably understood as hypotheses posited to explain the peculiarities of the evidence, not deductions. Consider the following example:

**Tradition originating between “Ibrāhīm Nakhaʿī” and Ḥammād**


Schacht can be reasonably understood here to be positing the growth of Hadith as the explanation for the peculiarity of Ḥammād transmitting “Not X” from ʾIbrāhīm (possibly a stand-in for “ancient Iraqi doctrine”), but also transmitting “X” from the Prophet: this can be explained by the creation of the latter as a counter to the former, i.e., subsequent to the former. This would explain why ʾIbrāhīm or the early authorities of Kufah were seemingly ignorant of—or seemingly defied—an explicit Prophetical hadith to the contrary that was circulating in Kufah (viz., because the hadith did not yet exist), and would also conform with the general pattern of the evolution of ascription types (with Follower Hadith appearing earlier and Prophetical Hadith appearing later). In short, this is a matter of probability: Motzki merely observing that other explanations are possible does not suffice as a refutation thereof.

There is however an important caveat here, noted by Crone long before Motzki: it is not unreasonable to expect that early traditionists or jurists would have disregarded inexpedient hadiths:

Polemical authors do however often ignore evidence which they dislike, sometimes asserting that no traditions contrary to their own opinion exist at all – an assertion with much the same import as the ‘no doubt’ of modern scholars. The absence of a well known tradition accordingly carries little weight when the tradition goes against the author’s views.72

---

In other words, the non-citation of an inexpedient hadith is arguably not telling as to whether it existed at the time. This is an important restriction on such arguments from silence.

Another problem with Motzki’s criticism of Schacht’s arguments from silence is the implausibility of his counter-scenario: it is certainly possible that an early jurist or traditionist in a debate might not have cited a hadith that would have constituted stronger evidence for his position or won them the argument, even though they knew the hadith. It is possible—but is it probable? For example, if a Prophetical hadith (later cited by al-Šaybānī) was circulating amongst the authorities of Kufah before ’Abū Ḥanīfah, is it plausible that ’Abū Ḥanīfah would not have known about it? And if he had known about it, is it plausible that he would have passed over a Prophetical precedent for his position in favour of a mere Follower precedent (in this case, from al-Ša’bī)? It is certainly possible, but it does not seem probable, especially given the common invocation of sunnat al-nabiyy already at that time. Schacht’s explanation—that the hadith was created at some point between ’Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Šaybānī—thus seems reasonable.

Schacht’s case for the early non-citation of expedient Hadith (contrasted with their later citation) as evidence for their growth is further strengthened in some cases by the fact that there are explicit contemporaneous declarations about the absence of any other hadiths on a given matter, and explicit contemporaneous observations that expedient hadiths would have been furnished had they existed:

The evidence collected in the present chapter has been chosen with particular regard to this last point, and in a number of cases one or the other of the opponents himself states that he has no evidence other than that quoted by him, which does not include the tradition in question. This kind of conclusion e silentio is furthermore made safe by Tr. VIII, 11, where Shaibānī says: ‘[This is so] unless the Medinese can produce a tradition in support of their doctrine, but they have none, or they would have produced it.’

---

73 For the development of sunnah, see: Schacht, Origins, part I, ch. 7; Juynboll, Muslim tradition, ch. 1; Crone & Cook, God’s Caliph, ch. 5; Juynboll, ’The development of sunna’.
74 Schacht, Origins, e.g., 143.
75 Ibid., 140.
In short, Schacht’s explanation of such instances of silence are frequently reasonable, and cannot be overturned merely by speculating that some jurists and traditionists were keeping hidden aces up their sleeves.

A further issue with Motzki’s criticism concerns his observation that the failure of an early writer (say, in Madinah) to cite an expedient hadith recorded in later sources but ascribed to a different region (say, Kufah) does not imply the non-existence of the hadith in question at the time of said writer. This criticism is completely reasonable, but also redundant, given that Crone already articulated it several years earlier:

The main shortcoming of this method, however, is that it cannot be properly used until it is too late. Given the voluminous nature of Shāfi‘ī’s works, the absence of a particular tradition may well be taken to show that it was still unknown in his time; but the development of Ḥadīth after Shāfi‘ī is of limited importance for the evolution of substantive law, and before Shāfi‘ī the literature is too scanty and above all too local in character for silences to count. The fact that Mālik fails to cite or argue against Iraqi traditions on a particular subject evidently does not mean that the Iraqi traditions did not yet exist. It is true that the lawyers of the old schools had begun to take note of each others’ traditions a good deal before they were forced to adopt a common stock of Prophetic traditions and that polemics between them can occasionally be used to establish negative points; but in general other people’s traditions still were not sufficiently compelling for this to be the case. Mālik’s work can perhaps be used to show that certain Medinese traditions still did not exist in Medina. But before Mālik the argument from polemical silence can rarely be used at all.  

In fact, Schacht himself had already acknowledged this limitation with his method at the outset, as in the following:

*Tradition originating between Auzā‘ī and Mālik*

See above, p. 70. It is stated there that Abū Yūsuf does not yet know a tradition from the Prophet, although Mālik, his contemporary, does. Whereas this calls for caution in the use of the argument *e silentio*, it also shows that the tradition was not yet widely known in the time of Mālik.

By contrast, many of Schacht’s examples of the growth of Hadith are of (for example) earlier Madinans failing to cite expedient hadiths known to later Madinans, when the

---

77 Schacht, *Origins*, 142.
hadiths in question purport to derive via the peers of the earlier Madinans, or even from these earlier Madinans themselves.\(^78\)

Another criticism by Motzki is his appeal to lost sources,\(^79\) which is understandable: if the silence being appealed to in a Schachtian argument is the non-citation of an expedient hadith by merely one debater or polemicist, it is easy to imagine various alternative explanations therefor. For example, the debater or polemicist could have failed to incorporate a useful hadith simply by accident,\(^80\) or else omitted it due to space constraints, or because they rejected the hadith as unreliable,\(^81\) or because they hated the transmitter, etc. It is only when numerous sources all omit a hadith that we can reasonably preclude such idiosyncrasies overall, leaving the non-existence of the hadith as the probable explanation. In other words, it is only a deafening silence that counts.

Some of these confounding factors can be accounted for, or do not always apply. For example, if someone fails to cite an expedient hadith from someone else whom they reportedly hated, but they otherwise transmitted numerous hadiths from that person, then their hatred therefor cannot be invoked as an explanation for their non-citation of that particular hadith. Likewise, if someone fails to cite a superior hadith but still cites an inferior hadith for a doctrine or point, then space constraints or similar considerations cannot be invoked—we would still expect a polemicist or debater to cite the better hadith, if it was available to them at the time. Likewise, if early users of Hadith precisely accepted or rejected Hadith based upon their expediency (as was indeed the case in the early regional schools), then rejection of the authenticity of an expedient hadith—as an explanation for someone's failure to cite it—does not seem very plausible.

However, there is always the chance of some kind of accident having occurred, such as someone simply forgetting to cite an expedient hadith. Therefore, it may be the case that a single non-citation of an expedient hadith is only weak evidence for the non-

\(^78\) Also see Crone, Roman, provincial, and Islamic law, 30, 123 (n. 64).
\(^79\) Likewise, Ansari, ‘Authenticity’, 58: "he might have known a tradition, but owing to the fact that not the entire quantity of traditions known to the jurists has come down to us, especially of the jurists of the relatively early period of Islam, there is no mention of those traditions in the works presently available to us, even though those traditions might once have existed.”
\(^80\) Likewise, ibid.: “the person concerned might have heard and then forgotten the tradition in question”.
\(^81\) Likewise, ibid.: "he might have heard that tradition, but might not have considered it authentic".
existence of the hadith at that time, whereas multiple or numerous non-citations would be strong evidence therefor.

And yet, the silences themselves are numerous, even if each instance of a silence is often only a single source failing to cite an expedient hadith. In other words, we would have to posit that early jurists and others repeatedly forgot to cite expedient hadiths in their debates and polemics, which seems like a stretch. Schacht’s explanation thus seems preferable (when the other confounding factors are accounted for), or as he put it: “the well-known incompleteness of our sources does not invalidate the general conclusions.”

Even if we concede for the sake of argument that the probability of the mere non-citation of an expedient hadith versus its non-existence is intrinsically equal or undetermined, there are extrinsic factors favouring the latter over the former: the pattern identified by Schacht is consistent with the growth of Hadith over the course of the 8th and 9th Centuries CE, which is corroborated by reports about the massive growth of Hadith at that time, the absence of Hadith in the earliest Islamic documents and plausible ascriptions, etc. To put it another way, the Revisionist model entails that Hadith must have grown in large numbers during the 8th and 9th Centuries CE, and the silences or non-citations identified by Schacht are consistent with such a growth. Thus, Schacht’s growth explanation in any given instance is corroborated in general by other evidence attesting to the massive growth of Hadith in the same time period, giving us a reason to prefer Schacht’s explanation over the alternatives.

Moreover, occasional examples of traditionists and jurists failing to cite expedient and proximate Hadith that can be shown to have existed at that time on some other grounds (of which there are assuredly some) do not affect the general expectation, which is to say: we are still justified in general in our expectation that traditionists and jurists would have cited expedient hadiths circulating in their circles, given all of the considerations outlined above. Schacht himself made a similar point:

The evidence must, in the nature of things, be cumulative, and whilst care has been taken to verify the presence or absence of the traditions in

---

82 I owe thanks to Mahā Ḥ. for alerting me to this point.
83 Schacht, Origins, 140. Emphasis mine.
84 E.g., Juynboll, Muslim tradition, 29; Crone & Hinds, God’s Caliph, 71; Hoyland, In God’s Path, 137.
85 E.g., Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, passim; Juynboll, Muslim tradition, 38-39; Crone & Hinds, God’s Caliph, ch. 5.
question in or from the sources available, an occasional oversight or the well-known incompleteness of our sources does not invalidate the general conclusions.\footnote{Schacht, Origins, 140.}

In short, when a hadith that later claims to derive from the notables of a given region is not cited by an earlier jurist or polemicist in the same region, even though the hadith would have been expedient for them as a justification or defence of their doctrine, it is reasonable to infer, at least provisionally, that the hadith did not yet exist (at least as later claimed).

An addition to all of the above, a further criticism has been articulated by Ahmed El Shamsy,\footnote{El Shamsy’s other criticisms against the Revisionist model more broadly, such as his appeal to parsimony and to Motzki’s scholarship, are automatically dealt with in the sections on Motzki and Brown, below.} directed against Schacht and others who “sought to explain the apparent fact that prior to this time [i.e., c. 800 CE], Muslim jurists disregarded Hadith that later on were widely accepted.”\footnote{El Shamsy, Canonization, 7.} According to El Shamsy, this explanation only works by assuming, in an anachronistic or even essentialist fashion, that early jurists were like later jurists:

And far from representing an exercise of “imaginative nerve,” as Crone called it, interpreting the initial marginality of Hadith in law as evidence of their nonexistence at that time displays a curious lack of imagination: it assumes that Hadith reports, if available, could be used only in the way that classical jurists used them, namely, as one of the primary canonical sources of the law. This approach thus reads an essentialized notion of Islamic law, developed on the basis of later literature, back into the early Islamic period and solves the resulting dissonance by postulating the wholesale invention of prophetic traditions.\footnote{Ibid., 8.}

Against such a view, El Shamsy proposes his own, more “convincing” explanation for “the “sudden” integration of Hadith into law from the second/eighth century onward”—namely, “their new significance and role – that is, their canonization.”\footnote{Ibid., 9.} In other words, most of the extant Hadith corpus—or perhaps, at the very least, most of the extant Prophetical canon—existed all along, but it was only after the spread of al-\v{S}āfī’i’s legal theory (in which the overriding authority of Prophetical Hadith was
'canonised') that a systematic effort was made to collect and cite Prophetalical hadiths. Naturally, this would invalidate most Schachtian arguments from silence.

Pace El Shamsy, Schachtian arguments from silence—and the Revisionist model of Hadith development more broadly—do not require an anachronistic or essentialist view of early jurists in order to infer or posit the initial non-existence of Hadith (or certain types of Hadith). On the contrary, the expectation that, for example, expedient Prophetical hadiths should have been cited in 8th-Century works and compositions follows from our established background knowledge of their general veneration even at that time. We have ample evidence that *sunnah* was a concept that existed all along (probably even in pre-Islamic Arabia), and that the notion of *sunnat al-nabiyy* in particular became popular during the Umayyad period. Are we really to believe that early Muslims invested their great men (and the Prophet in particular) with *general authority* or *exemplary status* all along (or in the Umayyad period in particular), and that literally thousands upon thousands of opinions and precedents were recorded from the Prophet, then from the Companions as well, then from the Followers as well, and circulated amongst major figures in all the major centres, but that early caliphs, governors, judges, jurists, theologians, and rebels (unto the middle of the 8th Century CE) disregarded most or even all of them in their proclamations or work? This seems most unlikely. Once again, the simple explanation in general, at least in the case of intra-regional failures to cite expedient hadiths, is that the hadiths in question did not yet exist.

**Dating by the “Common Link”**

It is well known that many hadiths have “common links” in their *'isnāds*, which is to say: when all of the *'isnāds* of all of the different versions of a given hadith are

---

91 Ibid., e.g., 223.
93 Additionally, Pavlovitch comments (via personal correspondence): “If we take the *kalala* traditions as an example, it would be absurd to posit that hundreds of often contradictory traditions about the meaning and legal implications of this term had been in circulation in the first century for no imaginable purpose, only to be suddenly recovered by vying parties of second-century jurists, piecemeal in different times and different centers of learning throughout Iraq and the Hijaz.”
compared or overlaid against each other, it is often the case that most of the 'ʾisnāds converge on a common source—usually someone operating in the first two Islamic centuries. This phenomenon has given rise to perhaps the greatest methodological debate in the field of Hadith Studies over the last half-century: can a hadith be traced back to its common link, and thereby be dated to their lifetime?

I have opted to summarise most of the relevant dialectic chronologically, as follows: Schacht’s common link analysis; Cook’s criticism of Schacht; Juynboll’s refined common link analysis; Cook and Juynboll’s criticisms of each other; Motzki’s criticism of Juynboll; Motzki’s criticism of Cook; Powers’ criticism of Cook; Görke’s criticism of Cook; Brown’s criticism of Juynboll; Motzki et al.’s ‘ʾisnād-cum-matn’ analysis; Melchert’s criticism of Motzki et al.; my own criticisms of Motzki et al.; and finally, my own refined ‘ʾisnād-cum-matn’ analysis. Thereafter, I address the deeper—and equally-vexed—question of the exact relationship between a common link (henceforth, CL) and their hadith.

Note to reader: this chapter was originally much longer and more detailed, but due to the constraints of the word limit, it has been heavily abridged. In particular, the CL dialectic up until the ICMA have been removed. For an approximation of the material therein, see:

- Cook, Early Muslim Dogma (1981), ch. 11.
- Crone, Roman, provincial and Islamic law (1987), 30.
• Reinhart, ‘Juynbolliana, Gradualism, the Big Bang, and Ḥadīth Study in the Twenty-First Century’ (2010).

The full, unabridged original (including sections on Schacht, Cook, and Juynboll, not to mention extensive supplemental evidence for the relevant debates) is available for the reviewers as an annex. It should be noted that the rest of the dissertation assumes the original chapter, not the abridgement.

**Motzki et al.’s ’Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis**

Is there any reason, generally speaking, to accept PCLs and CLs as historical, rather than as products of spreading ‘Isnāds or successive dives? Proponents of the CL analysis have usually adopted two approaches in this regard: firstly, they attempt to minimise the threat of spreading and diving in ‘Isnād by appealing to a lack of testimonial evidence therefor; and secondly, they appeal to some kind of additional evidence to corroborate the claims of ‘Isnāds concerning the PCL and CL provenance of given hadiths. The first appeal is hopeless in light of the vast testimonial evidence concerning the ubiquity of fabrication, interpolation, and other kinds of dishonesty or unreliability in Hadith in the 8th and 9th Centuries CE, but the second has promise. In particular, proponents of the CL analysis have appealed to the patterns of matns to corroborate the common ascription of ‘Isnāds to PCLs and CLs, thereby combining a CL

---

94 See above, in the section on Motzki’s criticism of Cook.
analysis with a textual analysis—a synthesis known as the 'isnād-cum-matn analysis (henceforth, ICMA).

One of the earliest forerunners to this approach was Jan Kramers in his 1953 article 'Une tradition à tendance manichéenne', who noted that the different versions or “redactions” of a certain hadith “can be separated into several groups in each of which the texts are specifically related. The isnāds, moreover, confirm that each of these groups possessed different lines of tradition.”95 In other words, similar “redactions” seem to cluster around specific tradents, per their 'isnāds.

Another forerunner to this approach was Josef van Ess in his 1975 Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie, but his method bore the brunt of Cook’s criticisms in Early Muslim Dogma and died prematurely.96 In particular, Cook argued against the attribution of particular wordings to particular tradents, or our ability to reconstruct the wordings of particular tradents, given the omnipresent threat of contaminations and borrowings between tradents at any level.97

And yet, some proponents of the ICMA—or forerunners thereof—persisted. Thus, Juynboll observed (in 1989) “the undeniable individuality of each bundle, with the cl’s particular wording,”98 and further noted (in 1983): “Often we find in the fanning out of an isnād after a common link one or more partial common links, who are responsible for an idrāj, deletion, simplification or other alteration.”99 In other words, Juynboll observed that PCLs are often ascribed distinctive sub-traditions (vis-à-vis each other), and that the broader traditions ascribed to CLs are likewise often distinctive (vis-à-vis those of other CLs with related traditions).100 However, Juynboll never integrated this

96 Motzki, 'Dating Muslim Traditions', 250.
97 Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, 112.
98 Juynboll, 'Some isnād-analytical methods', 382.
99 Id., Muslim tradition, 216.
insight into his method systematically, such that his CL analysis remained ‘isnād-focused and reliant on his authenticity criterion of dense transmission.\(^{101}\)

The ICMA was finally formalised in the mid-to-late 1990s in a series of articles and books by Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler, and Andreas Görke,\(^{102}\) who sought thereby to verify the historicity of (at least parts of) some ‘isnāds and date (at least parts of) some matns back to early Muslim tradents. Motzki summarised this method as follows:

The aim of the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis is to trace the transmission history of a tradition by comparing their variants contained in the different compilations of traditions available. The method makes use of both the text (*matn*) and the chain of transmitters (*isnād*).\(^{103}\)

The argumentation behind this method is fairly straightforward: “a correlation between *isnād* variants and *matn* variants of a tradition” would be likely “if they were part of a real transmission process”, and conversely “unlikely to be the result of systematic forgery”\(^{104}\). In other words, “a correlation between the different branches and strands of the *isnād* bundle belonging to a tradition” and “the different variants of its *matn*”\(^{105}\) is best explained by these hadiths reflecting accurate transmission, at least as far back as the correlation obtains.\(^{106}\)

---

\(^{101}\) As evident in Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, intro.


\(^{104}\) Id., ‘Dating Muslim Traditions’, 250.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 250-251.

Motzki et al.'s ICMA is thus a refined or more rigorous version of Juynboll’s CL analysis, incorporating matns to evaluate whether an ascription is genuine. In other words, where Juynboll usually only appealed to corroborating ʾisnāds to authenticate an ascription back to an earlier tradent, Motzki et al. also appealed to correlating patterns in matns as an independent means to corroborate the ascription. In doing so, Motzki et al. dispensed with Juynboll’s inherent suspicion of SSs, since even a SS can be validated by being corroborated by other strands in transmitting a distinctive matn from a putative PCL or CL. Motzki et al. also dispensed with Juynboll’s criterion of three direct citations:

Unlike Juynboll’s pure isnād-analysis, an isnād-cum-matn analysis – particularly when a tradition complex is as widely attested as the scandal story and when the relevant reports display as long and elaborate texts as in this case – can come up with safe assumptions about the existence of a genuine CL, even if only two transmission lines link the CL with two different transmitters of whom the texts show that their transmissions are independent of each other.

Instead of appealing to numbers, Motzki et al. appeal to corroborating patterns in the matns—in particular, when the matns form a series of clusters that match the PCLs and CLs depicted by the ʾisnāds of the relevant hadith. In this respect, the ICMA is reminiscent of textual criticism, as Schoeler notes:

For assessing the isnāds, suffice it to say here that their correctness—including the correctness of the common link that they display—is not just simply accepted, but rather tested in the investigation against the texts (mutān). The analysis of the texts is done analogously to the investigation of manuscripts whose interdependence is to be ascertained: interdependencies are determined from the structure (abbreviations, additions, gaps) and wording of these texts. If the text analyses show that

---


Görke et al., ‘First Century Sources’, 36. Also see the other sources just cited.
the isnāds correctly indicate the interdependencies and that all of the present versions indeed lead back to a common archetype—the common link of the isnāds—then—and only then—can it be regarded as proved that the tradition was disseminated by the transmitter who turned out to be the common link.\(^\text{110}\)

Of course, unlike textual criticism, the ICMA deals heavily with oral transmissions, and is accordingly better described as “tradition criticism”: most of the differences in matns are understood to be the product of paraphrase, mishearing, memory distortion, or elaboration, as opposed to scribal errors.\(^\text{111}\) This brings up a crucial point: the ICMA requires the occurrence of mutagenic, paraphrastic, or error-ridden oral transmission in Hadith. Without matn-variations, correlations between matn-variations and ʾisnāds would not be possible; and without non-verbatim transmission, there would be no matn-variations. Proponents of the ICMA as a viable methodology for dating Hadith thus commit themselves—at minimum—to the view that al-riwāyah bi-al-maʾná was the norm in early Hadith transmission. This is precisely why “a real transmission process” predicts “a correlation between isnād variants and matn variants of a tradition”, as Motzki put it: the ubiquity of non-verbatim oral transmission would mean that each student of a master would transmit his Hadith in their own (unique or idiosyncratic) wordings, and each of their students in turn would do the same, such that if later writers accurately recorded both the matn and ʾisnād, we would expect particular wordings to correlate with particular tradents.

**Melchert’s Criticism of Motzki et al.**

All of this yields an apparent paradox, as Christopher Melchert has observed: the ICMA supposes simultaneous precise and imprecise transmission.\(^\text{112}\) It requires imprecision in the transmission of matns, such that variants can arise in the first place; but it also

\(^{110}\) Schoeler, 'Méthodes et Débats', 360-361.

\(^{111}\) The difference is usually easy to spot. For example, when jumaymah occasionally becomes ḥumaymah in some variants, we have an obvious scribal error: jīm and ḥāʾ are much easier to confuse in writing than in hearing. Conversely, when nakaḥa becomes tazawwaja, it seems likely that this is the result of a paraphrase: these words look nothing alike in writing (making a scribal error unlikely), yet refer to the same concept (which is expected for a paraphrase).

\(^{112}\) This problem has been expressed to me by Melchert several times in person, but seemingly not in print.
requires precision in the transmission of these variants (i.e., their accurate preservation henceforth), such that they can survive forthwith to give the extant appearance of their correlation with the tradents responsible therefor. If transmission was precise (such that variants could be preserved), then how could variants arise in the first place? And if transmission was imprecise (such that variants could arise), how could variants survive unscathed (without being replaced by new alterations that could obscure any appearance of correlation)?

Let us illustrate with a hypothetical example. Suppose that a CL passed on a hadith to three PCLs (PCL₁, PCL₂, and PCL₃), each of whom in turn passed it on to three further students. The CL’s original matn comprised the element “A”, but because of imprecise transmission, PCL₁ changed the matn to “AB”. In turn, each student paraphrased this hadith in their own right, resulting variously in “AB1”, “AB2”, and “AB3”. Meanwhile, PCL₂ changed the CL’s original matn (“A”) into “AC” (again thanks to imprecise transmission), and his three students in turn further changed this altered version into “AC4”, “AC5”, and “AC6”, respectively. Finally, PCL₃ changed the CL’s original matn (“A”) into “AD”, and his three students further changed this into “AD7”, “AD8”, and “AD9”. All of this would yield a nice match between the matns and the ʾisnāds, with particular wordings correlating with particular tradents: the “B” element would correlate with PCL₁, the “C” element would correlate with the second PCL₂, and the “D” element would correlate with PCL₃, with the matns of the cluster of students around a given PCL being more similar to each other than to those in the other PCL clusters.

For this to work, however, each PCL has to be precise with his retaining of “A” from the CL (such that these hadiths can even be recognised as variants of the same tradition, sharing a common origin), yet simultaneously imprecise in his respective addition of “B”, “C”, or “D” (such that there can be particular wordings to correlate with the PCLs in the first place). Likewise, each student has to be precise in retaining both the original element from the CL and the addition of their PCL-source (such that the clusters of transmissions from each PCL are internally similar yet different from the other clusters), and so on, so forth (for however many generations this transmission occurs).

Why would we expect this happen? Why would the imprecise transmission allowing a PCL to change “A” into “AB” also not allow “A” to be completely replaced by “B”, or “AB” to be replaced by “A1” (losing “B” along the way)? Moreover, if matns were being
transmitted imprecisely (such that variants could arise in the first place), why would we not expect the ‘ʾisnāds to be altered concurrently? Is it plausible to imagine that transmitters devoted rigour to their memorisation of the ‘ʾisnād, only to slack off into paraphrase, elaboration, or error when it came to the matn?

Even putting all of that aside, Melchert’s main criticism of the ICMA arises from the observation that it is possible that fabrication, interpolation, or accidental false ascription—i.e., spreading ‘ʾisnāds or successive dives—could actually produce the kind of pattern sought by the ICMA. Melchert’s main objection is thus straightforward: the assumption of the ICMA that apparent ‘ʾisnād-matn correlation is the product of genuine transmission is at best ad hoc, since the evidence is actually equivocal. Whether a seeming ‘ʾisnād-matn correlation is the product of false ascription or genuine transmission is thus a matter of probability rather than possibility, since either mechanism could theoretically produce the same pattern of evidence.

For a hypothetical example, suppose that a tradent (T₁) created his own distinctive version of a matn and falsely ascribed it to an earlier figure (T₄); then another tradent (T₂) came along, obtained this distinctive matn from T₁, and suppressed T₁ from the ʾisnād by directly citing T₄ as his source instead; then along came yet another tradent (T₃), who received the matn from either T₁ or T₂ and likewise omitted his direct source in favour of citing T₄ as his source. The result would be three tradents (T₁, T₂, and T₃) who cite the same distinctive matn from the same source (T₄), such that a particular wording (the shared matn) would appear to correlate with a common source. Rather than being explained as a product of genuine transmission (i.e., T₁, T₂, and T₃ all accurately preserving both the distinctive matn and its origin with T₄), such a pattern would instead be the product of an initial false creation and successive borrowings and suppressions (i.e., between T₁, T₂, and T₃). Thus, even the ICMA seemingly cannot evade the threat of spreading ‘ʾisnāds or successive dives, despite having been developed to overcome precisely this problem.

---

113 This problem—in addition to being expressed to me several times in person—is alluded to in Christopher Melchert, ‘Harald Motzki with Nicolet Boeckhoff-van der Voort and Sean Anthony, Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth’, Journal of Semitic Studies, Volume 57, Issue 2 (2012), 438. Also see Shoemaker, The Death of a Prophet, 84-86, 300 (nn. 55-56).

114 By ad hoc, I simply mean a “just so” story, i.e., a hypothesis that merely explains the evidence that it was designed or adduced to explain, lacking independent corroboration, such that it remains unjustified vis-à-vis any number of alternative possible explanations for the same evidence. This is not to be confused with ad hoc auxiliary hypothesis, meaning, a secondary hypothesis that is adduced or devised to explain away evidence that would otherwise falsify an initial hypothesis.
**Little's Criticism of Motzki et al.**

To Melchert's criticisms of Motzki *et al.*'s ICMA, I add several of my own, most of which pertain to specific versions or applications of the ICMA, in contrast to the general problems outlined above.

To begin with, the early iterations of Motzki’s ICMA had a different emphasis to that outlined above: rather than focusing on the recurring correlation of particular wordings with particular tradents, Motzki mostly argued on a case-by-case basis that particular *matns* must share a common ancestry rather than mutual dependence, and that their inferable common source was the CL explicitly depicted in their *ʿisnāds*. In particular, Motzki mostly appealed to a kind of textual-critical expectation of the retention of information in transmission: if X tradent borrowed from Y tradent, and Y’s version has Z wording or detail, then X’s consequent version ought to contain Z as well; therefore, if X’s version lacks Z, it follows that X likely did not borrow from Y, and that the otherwise close similarities between X and Y must be explained by common descent. If, in such a situation, X and Y both cite a putative CL, it is taken to be likely that the common-ancestor version behind both X and Y’s versions is the CL’s version, such that the CL is genuine.\footnote{E.g., Motzki (trans. Griffel & Hardy), ‘Whither Hadith Studies?’, in Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions*, 119; *id.*, ‘The Prophet and the Cat’, 33, 43-46; *id.*, ‘The Murder of Ibn Abī l-Huqayq’, in Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muhammad*, 184, 186-188, 195, 204, 212, 221, 223; Andreas Görke, ‘The Historical Tradition about al-Hudaybiya: A Study of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr’s Account’, in Harald Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2000), 247, 258-259; Motzki (trans. Adrianova & Reid), ‘The Prophet and the Debtors’, in Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions*, 149, 151-152, 154, 170; *id.* (trans. Sonja Adrianova & Vivien Reid), ‘Al-Radd ‘Ālā l-Radd: Concerning the Method of Hadith Analysis’, in Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 211-222, 226; *id.*, ‘The Origins of Islamic Exegesis’, in Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions*, 239, 256-257; Mitter, ‘Origin and Development’, in Bernards & Nawas (eds.), *Patronate and Patronage*, 87 (n. 70), 114, 126, 130-131; Nicolet Boekhoof-van der Voort, ‘The Raid of the Hudhayl: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri’s Version of the Event’, in Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 307, 362; Harald Motzki, ‘Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael at Mecca: A Contribution to the Problem of Dating Muslim Traditions’, in Andrew L. Rippin & Roberto Tottoli (eds.), *Books and Written Culture of the Islamic World: Studies Presented to Claude Gilliot on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015), 370, 374-375.} Motzki’s reasoning arguably makes sense from the turn of the 9th Century CE onward, when—as we will see—most transmitters sought to more or less retain the
information that they had received, and when the rising reliance on written notes was facilitating greater accuracy in Hadith transmission in general. In such a situation, absent an identifiable motive to alter or omit information, it does seem unexpected that a tradent borrowing from another would lose details contained in the latter's matn. However, the same cannot be said for earlier ‘transmitters’ of Hadith (in the first Islamic century and a half at least), who not only operated in an era of loose, paraphrastic oral transmission (which allowed for the transformation and loss of information), but evidently felt free to alter or even recreate reports. In such a situation, omissions and especially variations in content between two matns would by no means preclude mutual dependency, since paraphrasing, interpolation, or simple memory distortion or error could easily result therein, in an instance of borrowing. In general, it is certainly true—based on the findings of the last few centuries of textual criticism—that information or content is more likely to accrue than be lost, such that the more elaborate version of two competing texts is usually taken to be the later (i.e., embellished) form. However, that does not mean that a tradent will accurately retain all elements and details when they receive and transmit a hadith, especially in an oral context. In other words, standard textual-critical reasoning is not always applicable to oral transmission, especially when paraphrasing, memory distortion, and contamination are common. Thus, Motzki’s appeal to the omission of wordings or details as a means to establish the independence of matns is unconvincing, at least regarding transmission before the turn of the 9th Century CE.

In short, Motzki had an unreasonably strict notion of what borrowing or mutual dependency would look like. For example, when evaluating the relationship between two PCLs—Zakariyya’ b. ’abī Zā’idah (d. 149/766-767) and Yūsuf b. ‘Isḥāq (d. 157/773-774)—within the broader tradition of the CL ’Abū ‘Isḥāq (d. 127-128/744-746), Motzki noted that the respective PCL redactions are substantially “similar in structure and choice of words”, but that one of them “is shorter or uses other words” in “some places”, which led him to conclude: “The differences between the two versions are such that any dependence on each other is not probable. What they have in common must therefore go back to a common source.” Why? If the differences

---

116 See the section below, concerning Little’s defence of the ICMA; and, also, the conclusion in ch. 2.
117 See the references given at the outset, esp. Crone and Yanagihashi.
118 E.g., Pavlovitch, Formation, 37-39.
between Zakariyyāʾ and Yūsuf’s redactions are so minor, surely a borrowing by one from the other, in the era of oral paraphrasing, could produce the same level of similarity and divergence? Why then does Motzki exclude such a scenario?

After enumerating such differences between all four of the PCLs within this tradition from ʾAbū ʾIshāq, Motzki further concluded:

Our comparison of matns, ascribed to different transmitters who all relate on the authority of Abū Ishāq, has brought to light that all of them are independent from each other and must go back to a common source which, according to the isnāds, must be Abū Ishāq. Stated differently: The conclusion reached by the analysis of the isnād bundle that there is a common link is corroborated by the matn analysis; additionally, the isnād analysis shows that this common link is Abū Ishāq. The common link is not artificially created by the so-called “spread of isnāds”.120

Why? Motzki believed that the relevant level of difference between the PCLs must have arisen in the course of transmission from the CL to the PCLs, but why could the same level of difference not have arisen between the putative PCLs? Moreover, what if several (anonymous or suppressed) intermediary borrowings separated the borrowing from its original source—surely the two resulting versions (the borrowing and the original, both now claiming a common, earlier source) would notably diverge, despite being the product of mutual dependency rather than common descent? Furthermore, what if an outright storyteller—someone who habitually radically reworked reports—was involved somewhere along the way? Again, Motzki’s appeal to differences between matns does not seem like a strong basis for establishing independence.

Motzki further stated, in regards to the tradition of ʾAbū ʾIshāq:

A striking phenomenon is that, on the one hand, the versions of Isrāʾīl and Sharīk resemble each other and, on the other hand, the same is true of the versions of Yūsuf b. Ishāq and Zakariyyāʾ b. Abī Zāʾida. If my conclusion is correct that the four versions must go back, independently from each other, to a common source, then the difference between the two types of stories (or the correspondence between two of each) must be explained by supposing that Abū Ishāq related the story in at least two different ways.121

---

120 Ibid., 187.
121 Ibid., 188.
Why could we not instead infer (in the given case) that ʾIsrāʾīl and Šarīk borrowed from each other, on the one hand, and Yūsuf and Zakariyyāʾ borrowed from each other, on the other? How does Motzki preclude borrowing amongst the PCLs, in such a situation?

In short, Motzki seems only to have allowed for borrowing in the case of identical or near-identical matns, as he indicated in his evaluation of two seemingly-independent transmissions (Ibn Hišām—al-Bakkāʿī and al-ʿUṭāridī—Ibn Bukayr) from a putative CL (Ibn ʾIsḥāq):

To arrive at more certainty as to whether we are concerned in this concrete case with such a deceptive manoeuvre, we need to examine the texts of the relevant transmissions. If a “spread of isnāds” were the case, then Ibn Hisham’s and al-ʿUṭāridī’s versions of the narration must to a large extent be identical.122

This only makes sense if borrowing and suppression—the spread of isnāds or diving—only occurred via precise or verbatim oral transmission, or else through the precise copying of written texts. However, if it also occurred between heavy-handed redactors, or via paraphrastic or sloppy oral transmission, or between storytellers, then there is no reason to expect that “the narration must to a large extent be identical” in such an instance. Again, Motzki’s standard for establishing borrowing seems unreasonably high.123

Worse still, Motzki’s assertions of the independence of matns sometimes degenerate into little more than tautologies, as in the following instance: “The differences between the two versions are so many and sometimes so substantial, that it is not conceivable that al-Rūyānī’s text is based on that of al-Bukhārī or vice versa.”124

---


123 This is at least a step up from Motzki’s tendency elsewhere to interpret all levels of variation as consistent with genuine transmission, as noted in Melchert, Motzki, Harald. The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence, 408: “Motzki continually talks about “demonstrating” that particular hadith reports are historically reliable, but one begins to wonder how many of his affirmations actually falsifiable. When two transmitters quote someone the way, it shows that they have a common source; if differently, that transmissions are satisfactorily independent.”

All that “so” means here is ‘at the right level’, which means that Motzki is merely stating: “it is not conceivable that al-Rūyānī’s text is based on that of al-Bukhārī or vice versa”, because the differences between the two versions are of the “it is not conceivable that al-Rūyānī’s text is based on that of al-Bukhārī or vice versa” level of numerousness, and of the “it is not conceivable that al-Rūyānī’s text is based on that of al-Bukhārī or vice versa” level of substantialness. In other words, the versions exhibit a ‘they must share common ancestry’ level of difference, so they must share common ancestry. In such instances of vacuity, we are left with no inkling as to the criterion for mutual dependency versus common ancestry, i.e., the criterion for what quantity or quality of variation would be sufficient therefor.

In short, Motzki seemed to think that there is some kind of clear or discernible level of variation between matns that precludes dependence and thus entails common ancestry, but failed to outline a sound criterion therefor: his assertions of the independence of matns were at best unjustified and at worst tautologies.

There are also problems with Motzki’s application of the ICMA, not just the version he was employing. For example, in his 1998 article ‘The Prophet and the Cat’, Motzki analysed a hadith about the ritual purity of cats and concluded that ʾIsḥāq b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 132-134/749-752),125 ʿIkrimah (d. 104-107/722-726),126 and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿabī Qatādah (d. 95/713-714)127 were all genuine CLs who disseminated different versions of the hadith, before further concluding that their ultimate common source, the Companion ʿAbū Qatādah (d. 54/673-674), was also a genuine CL.128 Of course, as has been noted already,129 ʿAbū Qatādah is not a CL in the usual sense (i.e., a common source whose distinctive redaction was received by multiple relatives and students): he is a common character in reports ascribed to three of his relatives and one of his students. In other words, ʿAbū Qatādah cannot be a CL: only his relatives and students, each of whom allegedly transmitted their own recollection of an event (i.e., their own report), could logically be CLs (i.e., each for their own distinctive redaction). And yet, most of

---


125 Motzki, ‘The Prophet and the Cat’, 47 ff., 53.
126 Ibid., 58.
127 Ibid., 70.
128 Ibid., 64. Technically, this would make ʾIsḥāq, ʿIkrimah, and ʿAbd Allāh PCLs. Then again, if ʿAbū Qatādah is technically not a CL, such an emendation would be unnecessary.
129 See the section on Brown’s criticism of Juynboll, above.
the relevant hadiths—’Iṣḥāq’s redaction; the SSs of al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Muḵallīṣ130 unto ʿAbd Allāh; and al-Ṭaḥāwī’s SS to Kaʿb—share the same elemental sequence:

1. ʿAbū Qatādah
2. ablutions
3. a cat appears
4. the cat is allowed to drink from a water vessel
5. objection/amazement
6. ʿAbū Qatādah cites the Prophet’s precedent

This is despite the fact that most of these hadiths are supposed to be the words and recollections of multiple different people: Kabšah, the wife of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿabī Qatādah (in ’Iṣḥāq’s version); ʿAbd Allāh himself (in the SSs of al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Muḵallīṣ); and Kaʿb b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (in al-Ṭaḥāwī’s SS). Why would the independent recollections—the independent reports—of three different witnesses to a common event share the same form?

Motzki argues that all of these reports are witnesses to the same event—thus, the common form simply reflects a broadly-accurate memory of the same sequence of events, witnessed simultaneously by multiple people.131 This is certainly possible, but is it probable, let alone the most probable explanation for this kind of evidence? Anyone familiar with the work of Noth, Crone, and Roohi will immediately recognise an alternative explanation for such a pattern of evidence: stories and narrative material were constantly borrowed and remixed by early Muslim storytellers, such that the common elemental sequence featuring ʿAbū Qatādah might simply reflect a reused schema or template, rather than independent recollections of the same event.132 Such a scenario is all the more plausible if the hadith indeed originated

130 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muḵallīṣ (ed. Nabīl Saʿd al-Dīn Jarrār), al-Muḵallīṣiyāt wa-ʾAjzāʾ ʿUkrā, vol. 3 (Qatar: Wizārat al-ʾAwqāt wa-ʾal-Šuʿūn al-ʾIslāmiyyah, 2008), p. 373. The reader should note that Motzki seems to have been unaware of this SS. However, for the sake of completeness (and to present the strongest possible case for Motzki), I have included this ‘corroborating evidence’ in my analysis. For the rest of the sources in question, see Motzki’s bibliography.

131 Motzki, ‘The Prophet and the Cat’, 63-64, 72.

132 Noth & Lawrence, The Early Arabic Historical Tradition, 2nd ed.; Crone, Meccan Trade, ch. 9; Ehsan Roohi, ‘Between History and Ancestral Lore: A Literary Approach to the Sīra’s Narratives of Political Assassinations’, Der Islam, Volume 98, Issue 2 (2021), 425-472; id., ‘A Form-Critical Analysis of the al-
amongst the relatives and descendants ʾAbū Qatādah, since informal borrowings and contaminations are completely expected in the context of family members learning family lore from each other.

Some kind of borrowing or common narrative origin (as opposed to an origin in a common experience of an event) becomes even more likely when it is noticed that nearly all of these hadiths describe how ʾAbū Qatādah allowed the cat to drink in the same way: he “inclined” (ʾaṣḡá) the vessel containing the ablution water. What are the odds that independent recollections would happen to include the same non-essential detail regarding how the cat gained access to the water, and that they would moreover use the same verb in describing this? There are thus form-critical grounds for suspecting that the CL hadiths about ʾAbū Qatādah are not independent of each other: rather than a match between a single, inferable ur-redaction (embodied in all the extant versions) and a CL (ʾAbū Qatādah), we instead have a mismatch between a single, inferable ur-redaction (embodied in all the extant versions) and two or three allegedly-independent recollections of a single event featuring a common figure (ʾAbū Qatādah).

However, this kind of deeper, form-critical evaluation is not even necessary in the first place, since the attribution of the aforementioned SSs to the putative CLs ʿAbd Allāh and Kaʿb are doubtful even on standard ʾisnād-cum-matn grounds: some of these SSs are more similar to certain transmissions from ʾĪṣḥāq than they are to each other, sharing particular elements and wordings. In this respect, Motzki already conceded that Ibn Ḥanbal’s SS via Muʿammar unto ʿAbd Allāh is “a mixture of borrowings from several different traditions”,133 and that al-Ṭaḥawī’s SS unto Kaʿb is “modeled on” other ascriptions to Kabšah and ʿAbd Allāh, given the presence of distinctive wordings in the suspect hadiths that are present in seemingly unrelated hadiths.134 (On the same grounds, al-Muṣṭafī’s SS back to ʿAbd Allāh, which shares extensive wordings with ʾĪṣḥāq’s recension, must be discarded as a borrowing.) However, according to Motzki, the remaining two ascriptions to ʿAbd Allāh—namely, al-Bayhaqī’s SS via al-Ḥajjāj and Qatādah, and his other SS via Hammām and Yaḥyā—have matns that are fundamentally similar: “In both texts, the behavior of Abū Qatāda is described in few

---

134 Ibid., 70-71.
words. The content is, on the whole, the same.” Moreover, given that these two ascriptions to ʿAbd Allāh differ notably in wording when they cite the Prophet, Motzki infers that they cannot be borrowed from each other, from which it follows that they must share a common source. Furthermore, since both hadiths do indeed cite a common source (ʿAbd Allāh) in their ʿisnāds, this cited common source is likely the actual common source for the two hadiths:

The differences between both texts show that they are not dependent on each other. It is not very probable that the text of Qatāda had the matn of Yahyā as a model or the other way around. If so, how can the substantial similarities of both texts be explained? It seems most appropriate to think that they are derived from a common source and that the differences are due to the transmission process (i.e., oral, or based on written notes). Who could be that source? The most likely candidate is ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Qatāda to whom, according to the ʿisnāds, both transmitters refer as their informant.

In this regard, Motzki has both exaggerated his findings and overlooked key evidence. To begin with, the similarity between al-Bayhaqi’s two ascriptions to ʿAbd Allāh is extremely superficial: whilst it is certainly interesting that both omit the ʿtawwāfīn element present in ʿIshāq’s redaction,136 the version from al-Ḥajjāj—Qatādah contains noticeably more elements than the version from Hammām—Yahyā, and in general, the two matns share no distinctive wordings vis-à-vis the transmissions from ʿIshāq. Moreover, the al-Ḥajjāj—Qatādah version has the sequence kāna ʿabū qatādah yuṣği al-ʾināʾ li-l-hirr fa-šaribat ʿumma yatawaḍḍaʾu bi-hi, which is extremely similar to ʿAbd al-Razzāq and al-Bayhaqi’s transmissions from ʿIshāq: the former has fa-ʾaṣḡāʾ ilay-hā al-ʾināʾ allaḏī fī-hi wuḍūʿu-hu fa-šaribat ʿumma tawaḍḍaʾa bi-faḍlī-hā, and the latter has fa-ʾaṣḡāʾ ilay-hi al-ʾināʾ fa-šariba ʿumma tawaḍḍaʾa bi-faḍlī-hi. In this respect, al-Bayhaqi’s SS to ʿAbd Allāh is much more similar to certain transmissions from ʿIshāq than it is to al-Bayhaqi’s parallel SS unto ʿAbd Allāh, which lacks most of the relevant wordings. Conversely, the Hammām—Yahyā version has the sequence wa-qāla ʿinna rasūl allāh qāla laysat bi-najas, which is extremely close to some versions of ʿIshāq’s redaction (e.g., Mālik’s qāla ʿinna rasūl allāh qāla ʿinna-hā laysat bi-najas), but completely absent in al-Bayhaqi’s parallel SS. Once again, the ascriptions to ʿAbd Allāh

135 Ibid., 67.
136 Ibid., 68.
are much more similar to certain transmissions from ʾIshāq than they are to each other, which is consistent with the occurrence of borrowing: certainly, they cannot be said to derive in common from ‘Abd Allāh, which means that ‘Abd Allāh cannot be identified as a probable CL.

Curiously, Motzki at one point considered the possibility that al-Bayhaqi’s SSs unto ‘Abd Allāh via al-Ḥajjāj—Qatādah and Hammām—Yahyá were actually the product of borrowings from ʾIshāq or his students:

...the alleged transmitters of the two versions—Hammām and al-Ḥajjāj—could have created them after the model of the ḥadīth of Ishāq b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ʿAbī ʿAlī and changed the isnād. This objection does raise a question as well: if one assumes, for the sake of argument, that this really happened, how did they arrive at the same name for the informant? By chance? Or did they make this forgery together?137

There are several obvious answers to this question. Firstly, there were various pressures for independent Ḯisnāds during the 8th Century CE, so if some Iraqians at the time sought local, alternative paths of transmission back to ʿAbū Qatādah, and some of their local predecessors were known to have transmitted from ‘Abd Allāh b. ʿAbī ʿAlī Qatādah, he would have been an obvious choice for such retrojections. Secondly, ʾIshāq cited the wife of ‘Abd Allāh as his source, so it is only natural that ‘Abd Allāh himself would jump out as an obvious alternative source. Thirdly, an initial dive to ‘Abd Allāh could spawn parallel dives thereto, either deliberately (i.e., attempts to update or improve the initial dive) or accidentally (i.e., someone could simply mix up the initial dive to ‘Abd Allāh with a version of ʾIshāq’s ḥadīth). We can thus safely put aside any incredulity regarding the existence of multiple SSs unto ‘Abd Allāh, as if this could only be explained by his having been an actual CL—on the contrary, the simultaneous or successive creation of parallel ascriptions to him is very easy to envisage, without invoking amazing coincidences or mendacious collaboration.138

Of course, this still leaves the issue of the unique wording of the citation of the Prophet’s precedent in al-Bayhaqi’s transmission from al-Ḥajjāj—Qatādah, which differs not just from his parallel SS unto ‘Abd Allāh, but also from ʾIshāq’s redaction. According to Motzki, this unusual wording (“I am only doing what I saw the Messenger

137 Ibid., 67-68.
138 For more on this, see Schacht, Cook, and Juynboll, cited variously above.
of God do”) cannot have been derived from the common wording shared by the Hammām—Yaḥyá version and ʾIshāq (“Verily the Messenger of God said: “Verily it is not impure“”). Not a shred of argumentation is given in support of this contention, however: it is simply asserted. Contra Motzki, it is easy to envisage such a change occurring (especially during the 8th Century CE, when paraphrastic oral transmission still lingered), since it transforms ʾAbū Qatādah’s vague citation of something the Prophet said (i.e., without necessarily indicating that ʾAbū Qatādah himself heard it directly from the Prophet) into an act that ʾAbū Qatādah himself witnessed. A similar motive can explain why some versions of ʾIshāq’s redaction have ʾAbū Qatādah explicitly state, “Verily I heard the Messenger of God say...”: this can be understood as an alternative solution to the same ambiguity.

Finally, we have ʿIkrimah’s mawqūf hadith (in which no Prophetical precedent is cited), which certainly does not share the same elemental structure as the marfūʿ hadiths of the CL ʾIshāq and his borrowers—might we thus have two independent witnesses to a common event, as Motzki suggests?139 Again, it is certainly possible—but there are reasons to be skeptical. Firstly, ʿIkrimah’s hadith can be read as vaguely reporting a continuous or general custom of ʾAbū Qatādah’s, rather than a specific event: “ʾAbū Qatādah used to (kāna) lower (yudnī) the vessel [containing water for ablutions] for a cat and it would lap (yaliḡu) therefrom, then he would perform ablutions (tumma yatawaḍḍaʾu) with the leftovers.” By contrast, ʾIshāq’s hadith reports a specific event, which means that ʾIshāq and ʿIkrimah do not attest to the same event per se. Moreover, even if they are supposed to refer to the same event, ʾIshāq’s hadith seems decidedly secondary, given that it is much more detailed and specific and adds a statement from the Prophet. It is thus at the very least highly plausible that ʾIshāq’s hadith represents an elaborated and improved version of ʿIkrimah’s hadith, calling into question Motzki’s conclusion that they represent independent recollections of a common event.

In short, the early version of the ICMA articulated by Motzki relied upon a certain kind of textual-critical reasoning—to establish the independence of texts—that often cannot be applied to the oral context of Hadith; Motzki’s arguments for the independence of texts often devolved into mere tautologies; and Motzki’s application

139 Motzki, ‘The Prophet and the Cat’, 63-64.
of the ICMA was sometimes inconsistent and idiosyncratic, as when he disregarded clear textual relationships between hadiths. Even if the ICMA in general can be salvaged, many of Motzki’s specific historical conclusions will have to be rejected.

**Little’s Defence of the ‘Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis**

Despite all of this, an important consideration still remains in favour of the ICMA: the *matns* attributed to particular PCLs and CLs are usually more similar to each other than to the *matns* attributed to other PCLs and CLs. Whilst it is possible that this kind of pattern could obtain via widespread and frequent borrowings, suppressions, and paraphrases (of the sort described above), Herbert Berg—following Motzki—argues that such an outcome *overall* seems quite unlikely: fabrications, interpolations, and paraphrases could go in any direction and produce all kinds of evidence, yet this particular pattern shows up again and again. By contrast, genuine transmission would consistently produce this kind of pattern, according to Berg:

Motzki’s argument, however, is valid. If revisionists see no value whatsoever in the contents of the *isnāds*, then the observed correlations between the texts and those *isnāds* requires some alternative explanation. Organic growth and mass fabrication would likely favor randomness, not correlations.

Be that as it may, there is an obvious solution to Melchert’s first criticism (*viz.*, that the ICMA paradoxically requires simultaneous precise *and* imprecise transmission), in light of the usual chronology involved with putative CLs and PCLs. The transmission of Hadith was loose or sloppy during the mid-to-late 8th Century CE, when the CLs passed on their hadiths to their immediate PCLs; then transmission saw a marked increase in precision at the turn of the 9th Century CE, when these PCLs passed on their hadiths to their students (including junior PCLs); and henceforth, variations (at the hands of

---

140 See Juynboll, Motzki, and Mitter, cited above, in the section on Motzki et al.’s ICMA.

these students and later scribes) were extremely minor.\textsuperscript{142} In other words, initial imprecision (on the part of the CLs and their PCLs) allowed for variation to arise in the first place (reflecting the respective idiosyncrasies of each PCL), then subsequent increasing precision (on the part of the students of the PCLs, including junior PCLs) allowed for these variations to be preserved forthwith, etc.

In addition to explaining the common pattern of evidence found by numerous ICMAs (minimal variation \textit{within} PCL clusters, but substantial variation \textit{between} PCL clusters), this inferable progression from imprecision to precision at the turn of the 9th Century CE (when the senior PCLs were transmitting to their students) coincides with both the generalised acceptance of the recording of Hadith in writing (or at least in personal notes)\textsuperscript{143} and a transition in ‘\textit{isnāds} from generic citations (‘\textit{an}) to verbatim quotations (\textit{ḥaddaṭa-nā}, etc.)\textsuperscript{144} As it happens, Motzki and others have already made this connection, at least in passing.\textsuperscript{145}

This general pattern also provides a tentative solution to Melchert’s second criticism (\textit{viz.}, the possibility that spreading ‘\textit{isnāds} could produce apparent ‘\textit{isnād-matn correlation}): the hypothesis of genuine and increasingly-reliable transmission makes better sense \textit{in general} as an explanation for the evidence in question. In other words, as an \textit{explanatory postulate}, the distinctive sub-traditions clustered around PCLs can be understood to reflect the respective redactions of said PCLs, and the underlying tradition shared by the PCLs can be understood to reflect the preceding redaction of the CL, against the backdrop of increasing precision in transmission due to the concomitant rise and generalisation of writing. Put differently, if the recurring


textual pattern of the PCLs and the CLs reflected genuine transmission, then it would have to be an increasingly precise form of transmission (in order to actually explain the pattern); and if indeed transmission was becoming more precise, it would have to be due to something like the rise and generalisation of writing; and as it happens, we have evidence for the spread and predomination of writing in exactly the right time period. Moreover, if transmission was becoming more precise, we would expect to see other signs thereof, i.e., signs of a general increase in precise quotation-practices, or tradents paying closer attention to memorising and transmitting the wordings of hadiths; and as it happens, the rise and spread of tradents reproducing the transmission-terminology of their teachers (for example, ḥaddata-nā, as opposed to a vague ‘an) is consistent therewith, and occurred at around the same time as the generalisation—or general acceptance—of the writing of Hadith.146

In short, the hypothesis of widespread genuine transmission in conjunction with increasing rigour or precision coincides with—i.e., is corroborated by—the rise of precise transmission-terminology in ‘isnāds and the rise and predomination of written transmission. Thus, the best overall explanation for the pattern in question (i.e., the recurring correlations between particular wordings and specific tradents) is widespread genuine—and increasingly accurate—transmission, at least from around the time of the CLs and PCLs onward. In other words, the best overall explanation for this pattern is that the idiosyncrasies or particularities of CLs and PCLs were accurately recorded by subsequent tradents, which means that their redactions can be reconstructed—at least whenever this correlation holds.

This also allows us to sidestep the problem I outlined with Motzki’s approach (i.e., the lack of a clear and sound criterion of establishing textual independence and common ancestry): the only criterion needed for a given set of matns to be explained as genuine transmissions from a PCL is that they are more similar to each other vis-à-vis those ascribed to others (i.e., that the PCL sub-tradition is distinctive), such that the matns in question can be explained as reflections of the redaction (i.e., the idiosyncrasies or particularities) of the PCL. By contrast, if the sub-traditions of PCLs

146 Again, see Melchert, cited above. Of course, tradents sometimes failed in this respect (or lied), since we can infer in plenty of instances (by comparing variants) that a ḥaddata-nā remembered by one tradent is remembered as an ‘ukbara-nā by another. The important part is not that they remembered 100% accurately, however, but that they began to attempt to remember accurately. Or, to be more precise, the evidence is consistent with such an attempt, as a general tendency; cf. Melchert, op cit., who sees this trend as a reaction against the rise the writing.
are not distinctive (i.e., the transmissions from them are not more similar to each other vis-à-vis those ascribed to others), then no appeal can be made to a general preservation of the particular wording of the PCLs.

Of course, my defence of the ICMA has severe consequences: if variation was generally insignificant from post-PCL students to subsequent students or later copyists, minor from the PCLs to their students, and major from the CLs to their PCLs, then it is reasonable to expect that such variation was greater still from the Followers to the CLs, and greater still yet from the Companions to the Followers, and so on.\footnote{For a similar point, see Cook, \textit{Muhammad}, 66-67; Crone, \textit{Meccan Trade}, 223-224.} This general progression from imprecision to precision is consistent with Crone’s view on extreme and rapid mutation in the oral traditions of the 1st Islamic Century, undermining any expectation that the CL’s redaction (in the event that this can even be reconstructed from the various paraphrases of their PCLs) accurately reflects a report or memory passed on from a predecessor.\footnote{E.g., Motzki (trans. Griffel & Hardy), ‘Whither \textit{Hadith Studies}’?, in Motzki, \textit{Analysing Muslim Traditions}, 91; \textit{id.}, ‘The Murder of Ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq’, in Motzki (ed.), \textit{The Biography of Muhammad}, 187-188, 192; \textit{id.} (trans. Adriano & Reid), ‘The Prophet and the Debtors’, in Motzki, \textit{Analysing Muslim Traditions}, 143, 161. Also see \textit{id.}, \textit{Reconstruction}, 13, where Motzki noted some evidence for heavy legendary development during the 1st Islamic Century.} Even the CL’s cited ‘\textit{ʾisnād}’ seems questionable, since even ‘\textit{ʾisnāds}’ could in principle be subject to mutation.

In short, my solution to the problem of the seemingly-paradoxical simultaneous need for precise and imprecise transmission on the part of the ICMA—the tendency of Hadith transmission to increase in accuracy over time, as corroborated by other points of evidence—is a pyrrhic victory, in terms of the prospect of reconstructing any kind of pre-CL version of a hadith.

Little’s Refined 'Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis

It should by now be clear that past executions of the ICMA contain imperfections that must be jettisoned: the reconstructed redaction of a CL cannot simply be treated as an accurate transmission from the preceding generation (in light of early rapid mutation); and mere differences between matns are insufficient to establish common ancestry, as opposed to direct or mutual borrowing. (Again, it is the general correlation of particular elements with particular tradents, rather than merely similarities or differences between matns, that is best explained as the result of genuine transmission from said tradents.) In other words, only a more skeptical or rigorous version of the ICMA seems sustainable, in light of the problems outlined above.

To begin with, PCLs and CLs are confirmed as genuine if they are associated with a distinctive tradition or sub-tradition within the relevant set of Hadith material, and whatever elements or wordings are shared in common within the tradition or sub-tradition can be reasonably identified as reflecting their underlying redaction.150 SSs are arguably still suspect (especially lengthy ones and those that claim to derive via famous figures), but that suspicion can be set aside or mitigated if the SS is corroborated by other strands in transmitting a distinctive matn from a putative PCL or CL.151

This version of the ICMA is also clearly falsifiable: if a close correlation between matns and a common ascription to a key figure is indicative of genuine transmission, then a lack of correlation there-between is indicative of erroneous or false ascription. For example, if the matns attributed to a putative PCL are more similar to matns ascribed to other PCLs than to each other, this is consistent with the putative PCL in question being a spider (i.e., the target of multiple, independent false ascriptions),152 or with most of the transmissions from a PCL having been contaminated by various different sources.

151 Pavlovitch, Formation, 31.
Similarly, if a set of *matns* are extremely similar to each other (e.g., they comprise a distinctive PCL sub-tradition), but the *'isnād* attached to one of them claims therefor a completely different provenance (e.g., a SS independent from the relevant PCL), it is highly unlikely that identical or similar wordings and combinations of elements would obtain independently (especially given the early ubiquity of paraphrastic transmission). Therefore, the best explanation for such evidence is the occurrence of false ascription: the tradent has taken a distinctive *matn* and given it a new, independent *'isnād* (i.e., it is a dive), or else an old *matn* has been replaced by a new *matn* borrowed from somewhere else (i.e., total contamination), whilst its original *'isnād* has been retained.153

Contaminations or minor borrowings are also detectable by the ICMA: if a specific wording or element associated with a particular PCL shows up randomly in a *matn* attributed to a different tradent, and none of the other transmissions from this tradent exhibit this wording or element, this is best explained by the PCL's version having contaminated or influenced the other.154 Conversely, this analysis also exposes additions, omissions, and other such alterations: if only one PCL has a particular wording or element in their *matn*, for example, then this is best explained as an alteration on their part; if the particularity had originated with the CL, then it is reasonable to expect that at least some of the other PCLs would have transmitted the


wording or element as well.\textsuperscript{155} This also applies to the raising of 'isnāds,\textsuperscript{156} and other kinds of 'isnād-related improvements.\textsuperscript{157}

Of course, it is certainly possible that a feature confined to only one tradent still derives from their PCL or CL source, whose particular rendition of the hadith on one occasion just happened not to be preserved anywhere else.\textsuperscript{158} However, this alternative explanation seems generally less preferable, for three reasons: (1) the odds of only one tradent preserving extra elements or details, at least when several others received the same report from the same source, must surely be low, and becomes lower still when the addition in question is absent from independent transmissions at multiple registers (i.e., absent not just from parallel transmissions from the source, but from parallel transmissions from the source’s source); (2) it is simpler (i.e., more parsimonious) to posit a single interpolation, versus multiple omissions; and (3) as a general rule, the accrual of material in transmission is the norm, which again makes an interpolation scenario more likely than an omission scenario, all else being equal.\textsuperscript{159}

In short, the ICMA “allows [us] to determine when and with whom certain variants originated and branched off from the main transmission tree, whereas the common ancestry of the variants is fully accounted for.”\textsuperscript{160} All of this also follows from the basic
premises or postulates of my ICMA, in any case: the ICMA only works in the first place by explaining the correlation of particular *matns* with particular PCLs and CLs as being the result of the accurate recording of the provenance of alterations, with the rate of alterations decreasing over time in proportion to the rise of rigorous and especially written transmission. To even identify an ascription to a PCL or CL as genuine, therefore, we must posit their responsibility—whether by paraphrasing, sloppiness, error, or dishonesty—for a particular wording or element. In other words, we must identify unique wordings or elements associated with specific tradents as alterations, interpolations, and insertions on their part—this is the only way to beat Cook’s spread of ‘*ʾIsnāds*’.

Finally, it should be reiterated that none of this precludes the general unreliability of Hadith—on the contrary, “this method does not require general presumptions about authenticity”, as Motzki clarified.

**The Relationship between CLs and Their Hadiths**

Even if the ICMA—at least as a corroborated explanatory postulate—allows us to trace hadiths back to CLs, an important question remains: *what exactly is a CL?* Are they the creator, fabricator, formulator, redactor, collector, or first influential transmitter of the hadith, or some combination thereof? In other words, what is the specific relationship between a CL and their hadith, beyond the fact that they transmitted the hadith to some PCLs?

Most of the relevant scholars seem to agree that most CLs belong to the 8th Century CE. Consequently, most of the relevant scholars agree that the CL is *at minimum* responsible for formulating the common or approximate *wording* or *gist* underlying all of the extant redactions of their given hadith. The reason therefor has been mentioned

---

161 We must thus dispense with certain hyper-sanguine attempts to attribute such variants all the way back to the Prophet or the Companions, of the sort mentioned in Christopher Melchert, ‘Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and Traditional Hadith Criticism’, in Elisabeth Kendall & Ahmad Khan (eds.), *Reclaiming Islamic Tradition: Modern Interpretations of the Classical Heritage* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 45-46. Such explanations are simply not corroborated by the chronology of writing and transmitter-terminology discussed above.


163 See above, in the section on Brown’s criticism of Juynboll.
already: mutagenic, sloppy, or paraphrastic oral transmission predominated at precisely the time when most of the CLs were operating. In other words, the transmission of religio-historical information was largely oral and paraphrastic until the end of the 8th Century CE (even after the rise of private notes), which means that even if some version of a hadith can be reconstructed back to a CL and be shown to derive from even earlier information, we should assume that this version represents their formulation (i.e., their paraphrase), rather than that of an earlier figure.

That this is so is actually a postulate, or a corollary of a postulate, in my refined ICMA (i.e., it needs to be supposed at the outset to make sense of the recurring patterns of the CLs and the PCLs, discussed above), but independently thereof, we still have the research of Crone et al. on early rapid mutation in the Islamic oral tradition, along with various reports attesting to the belated rise and predomination of written transmission. To this can be added our established background knowledge concerning oral traditions and historical memory in oral cultures (thanks to the past century of anthropological research), according to which, paraphrasing, remixing, and mutation are the norm. Finally, consider the fact that, even on a Motzkian approach, we would often not be able to reconstruct the wording of the underlying redaction of a CL if we only had any one of the varying paraphrases or remixes thereof by their PCLs: it is only by comparing the different PCL redactions that the original core(s) from the CL can be ascertained—and even then, usually only approximately. That being so, we should expect the CL’s redaction to be no different—or even worse, given the tendency for transmission-methods to improve over time—in this regard: just as the PCLs altered the matns that they received from the CL, so too must the CLs have altered their received matns (if not to an even greater degree, being earlier), in the event that they even received their matns from earlier sources.

Thus, Juynboll described the CL as follows, in relation to their hadith: “In other words: the saying which he claims was uttered by the prophet is in reality his own, or if

---

164 See the references cited at the beginning of the present chapter.
165 See Cook, Schoeler, and Melchert, cited above (in the section on Little’s defence of the ’ismād-cum-matn analysis).
166 For a summary of the relevant scholarship, see Bart D. Ehrman, Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior (San Francisco, USA: HarperOne, 2016).
somebody else's) he was the first to put it into so many words.”168 In subsequent
descriptions, Juynboll inferred that the CL of a given hadith “may be held responsible
for the matn (i.e. the text) of the tradition—at least of its protoversion”,169 or in other
words, “for the proliferation of the text (matn) of the report or tradition, or in any case
for the transmission of that matn’s most ancient wording”,170 or in other words, for
“the authorship of (the wording of) that tradition”.171 In this respect, Motzki et al. are
in agreement with Juynboll, as Reinhart observes: “But, he says, and even Motzkians
agree, the wording was probably constructed by the CL.”172 Thus, in a response to
Irene Schneider, Motzki stated:

When Schneider speaks of the possibility that the common link did not
create the transmission out of the blue, but instead processed older
material, it corresponds precisely with my own idea of a collector. It goes
without saying that the material was not handed down word-for-word
in oral transmission, and that information could be combined,
shortened, expanded and changed, as still happened later in the
transmission process.173

Similarly, according to Görke:

The question whether a tradition was invented or merely transmitted by a
common link is more difficult to answer. Historical probabilities might be
adduced, but if we argued on that basis we would not need the common link
at all. The question is whether the two concepts can be separated only by
studying the variants themselves. We might escape this problem if we say
that the common link is the person who is responsible for the tradition
in the form we have it. He may have used earlier materials, but he is
the one who gave the tradition a certain form in which it was then
transmitted.174

For example, when evaluating an apocalyptic hadith that is traceable back to the
Basran CL Qatādah in terms of the ʿisnāds, but traceable back a generation earlier in

---

171 Id., ‘(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science’, Islamic Law and Society, Volume
8, Number 3 (2001), 306.
173 Motzki (trans. Adrianovska & Reid), ‘The Prophet and the Debtors’, in Motzki, Analysing Muslim
Traditions, 134. Emphasis mine.
terms of the historical content of the *matn*, Görke—here responding to Cook’s study of eschatological hadiths—postulates that Qatādah is the *formulator* of the extant hadith:

While Qatādah (60/680 to 117/735) lived a little too late to have invented this tradition, Mujāhid (21/642 to 100/718 or 104/722) could well have done so. But as only al-Ṭabarānī records the *isnād* going back to Mujāhid we might dismiss it as a later dive or a case of spreading. We would have to conclude that Qatādah is responsible for the tradition in the form we have it.175

Likewise, Jens Scheiner describes the rôle of a CL—the Syrian traditionist Baqīyyah b. al-Walid—in relation to a particular hadith as follows: “Baqīyya’s function as a common link makes him the first systematic collector of this tradition and the one responsible for its wording.”176 Similarly, Stijn Aerts states:

In regard to the remaining possible interpretations, I tend toward a middle position (and herein I follow Schneider); viz., it may well be the case that the CL did not create the tradition from scratch but used existing narrative materials, then shaped and transformed them in such a way that they met the needs of his time. The CL, thus, is neither a faithful transmitter nor (necessarily) an outright forger.177

For a final example, Motzki—in a scenario where he inferred that the CL (in this case, al-Zuhri) had genuinely received his information from prior sources—cautioned the following:

This statement should not be understood to mean that I claim that al-Zuhri’s accounts are literally taken over from his informants and that all the details of the two accounts necessarily derive from them; this does not seem very probable in view of the mainly oral character of the transmission in al-Zuhri’s time.178

Indeed, in light of this and in light of instances in which *multiple* distinctive redactions can be traced back to CLs, Motzki *et al.* argued that we cannot trace a single, fixed

---


redaction back to the CL (or at least, the early ones): they probably altered their hadiths in successive retellings.\textsuperscript{179}

So far, so good—all of the relevant scholars seem to be in agreement. But a deeper question still remains: should we regard the CL as some kind of transmitter, or some kind of fabricator? There is actually quite a range of plausible scenarios—a whole spectrum of rôles for the CL, from “faithful transmitter” to “outright forger”—to consider:

- **Scenario 1**: The CL transmitted their own paraphrase or remix of a pre-existing (i.e., already-formalised) report, and accurately cited their immediate source(s) therefor.
- **Scenario 2**: The CL transmitted their own paraphrase or remix of a pre-existing (i.e., already-formalised) report, but lied, erred, or otherwise misled in their citation of their immediate source(s) therefor.
- **Scenario 3**: The CL took pre-existing, informal information (gossip, rumours, legends, stories, etc.), formulated it into a report with their own wording, and accurately cited their immediate source(s) therefor.
- **Scenario 4**: The CL took pre-existing, informal information (gossip, rumours, legends, stories, etc.), formulated it into a report with their own wording, but lied, erred, or otherwise misled in their citation of their immediate source(s) therefor.
- **Scenario 5**: The CL formulated their own conclusion, preference, or opinion into a report, and lied, erred, or otherwise misled in their citation of prior source(s) therefor.

According to Schacht, the hadith “was put into circulation” by its CL,\textsuperscript{180} who was “the original promoter” thereof,\textsuperscript{181} such that the hadith “originated in the time of” the CL.\textsuperscript{182}


\textsuperscript{180} Schacht, *Origins*, 171.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 172.
More specifically, the CL “must be responsible for the creation of this tradition and the fictitious higher part of the isnād,” or in other words, the CL “provided his tradition with an isnād reaching back to an authority such as a Companion or the Prophet.” Schacht thus rejected scenarios 1 and 3, and in light of his view that the formal transmission of reports only arose around the same time as the CLs (i.e., around the middle of the 8th Century CE), he probably also rejected scenario 2. This leaves only scenarios 4 and 5: either the CL “created” their hadith—as a formal ascription back to an earlier source—ex materia (scenario 4), or they “created” it ex nihilo (scenario 5). Schacht is usually thought of as suggesting the latter, and at times he did, as in his view that “the main body of decisions ascribed to” the Kufan Follower ʾIbrāhīm al-Naḵaʿī “is to a great extent pure raʾy, often expressing systematic thought.” (In other words, later Kufan jurists put their own raʾy into the mouth of an earlier authority, which seems like straightforward ex-nihilo creation.) Similarly, Schacht argued that the creation of Hadith by jurists and traditionists “partly also represented the means by which definite changes in the accepted doctrine of a school were proposed and supported.” (In other words, when some jurists or traditionists disagreed with a prevailing view, they would express their disagreement in the form of a hadith, which again seems like ex-nihilo creation.) But Schacht often spoke of ex-materia creation as well, as in the following instance: “The isnāds of the Medinese version have a common link in the traditionist Ibn Abī Dhiʾb. But this shows only the origin of the Medinese tradition and not of the legal maxim.” More broadly, Schacht documented various examples of Iraqi qiyās, Iraqi istihṣān, and Madinan qiyās reappearing as Hadith, and further stated in regards to Madinan appeals to raʾy: “This old raʾy, which was originally to a great extent anonymous, as the consensus of Medina of which it formed a part was anonymous, was frequently ascribed to individual ancient

183 Ibid., 158.
184 Ibid., 171.
185 Either way, “created” and “creation” are Schacht’s preferred terms, as in ibid., 155, 158-159, 163, 165-167, 171, 248, 253-254, 260. By contrast, he only mentions “fabrications” (ibid., 163), “forgeries” (ibid., 4), and “forged traditions” (ibid., 250) once each.
186 Ibid., 105.
187 Ibid., 66.
188 Ibid., 181.
189 Ibid., 106 ff.
190 Ibid., 111 ff.
191 Ibid., 117-118.
authorities.” In other words, the informally-transmitted opinions of past authorities, which undergirded the vague sense of local consensus in Madinah, were likewise transformed into formal reports (i.e., Hadith were created *ex materia*).

Juynboll took a similar view to Schacht, as we have already seen: the CL is the “originator” of their hadith (as a formal ascription back to an earlier source), but may have drawn upon pre-existing material in the process. For example:

The single strand from the cl down to the prophet does not represent the transmission path taken by a prophetic saying, a path which has a claim to (a measure of) historicity, but is a path invented by the cl in order to lend a certain saying more prestige by means of the first and foremost authentication device of his days: the *isnād marfūʿ*.

In other words: *the saying which he claims was uttered by the prophet is in reality his own, or (if somebody else’s) he was the first to put it into so many words.*

All of this illustrates an important point: most of the major skeptics in Hadith Studies have agreed *all along* that at least some of the material comprising the extant Hadith corpus derives, in one form or another, from the 1st Islamic Century, and even from the Prophet himself. In this respect, therefore, the CL debate is really over *formal and accurate transmission*, i.e., whether we can trust the SS preceding the CLs, such that they can be relied upon to backdate the content of the CL’s *matn* to a particular Follower, or a Companion, or even the Prophet. As we have already seen, Schacht and Juynboll answer this question in the negative: the SSs preceding the CLs were likely invented by them, so even if they did create their hadiths *ex materia*, we cannot know (all else being equal) how far back this material goes. Furthermore, absent some kind

---


193 In *Muslim tradition*, in general, Juynboll favoured the terms “fabrication” and “forgery” (and their derivatives). In his treatment on “The common-link theory of J. Schacht” in particular, however, Juynboll described the CL as “the probable originator” of their hadith (*ibid.*, 207), or as being “responsible” therefor (*ibid.*, 217). Likewise, in *Encyclopedia* (e.g., ix, xvii, xx-xxi), Juynboll repeatedly used the term “originator” to describe the CL. By contrast, the terms “fabricator” and “forger” (and their derivatives) almost never appear in this work.


of special evidence or consideration,\textsuperscript{196} an \textit{ex-materia} creation cannot be distinguished from an \textit{ex-nihilo} creation, which means that, in practice, the content of a hadith cannot be dated any earlier than its CL (once again, all else being equal).\textsuperscript{197}

By contrast, Motzki \textit{et al.} preferred to interpret CLs as broadly accurate transmitters of material from their informants amongst the senior (i.e., older) Followers and junior (i.e., younger or longer-surviving) Companions, even if they reworded this received material:

\begin{quote}
It is better to look upon the common links as the first great collectors and professional teachers of knowledge in general and of traditions about persons living in the first century of Islam in particular.
This makes it easier to understand the single strand below the common link as well. It is the \textit{isnād} given by a first systematic collector.\textsuperscript{198}
\end{quote}

In other words, according to Motzki, Schacht and Juynboll’s explanation of the evidence is \textit{ad hoc}, since a CL and their preceding SS can be explained differently, as a collector rather than a creator. Consequently, Motzki concluded: “There is no reason to reject \textit{a priori} the claim of the common link that he received the tradition or the information on which it is based from the person he names.”\textsuperscript{199}

In light of all that we have covered thus far, it may be obvious that this criticism does not stand up to scrutiny: Schacht and Juynboll’s interpretation of the CL is not \textit{ad hoc},\textsuperscript{200} and we have good reason to suspect and reject the SSs that precede most CLs. As was noted at the outset, we have various points of evidence (reports of mass-fabrication, the absence of Hadith in the earliest documents and plausible ascriptions, etc.)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{196} For example, some kind of obvious archaism preserved in the \textit{matn}, or the survival of an earlier, pre-hadith version of the \textit{matn}, or something that would be subject to Criterion of Dissimilarity. Similarly, see Motzki (trans. Adrianovska & Reid), ‘The Prophet and the Debtors’, in Motzki, \textit{Analysing Muslim Traditions}, 170. Conversely, an \textit{ex-nihilo} creation could be inferred by taking into account the broader context of the CL, or from silence or the non-citation of the hadith in earlier sources, or from the suspicious convenience of a \textit{matn} for a specific aim, etc. Similarly, see \textit{id.}, ‘The Collection of the Qur’an’, 30; Aerts, ‘The Prayers of Abū Muslim and al-Ma’mūn’; \textit{id.}, ‘Pray with Your Leader’.
\item \textsuperscript{197} For a similar point, again see Juynboll, \textit{Muslim tradition}, 71.
\item \textsuperscript{199} \textit{id.}, ‘The Collection of the Qur’an’, 30.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Although Juynboll’s interpretation of SSs in general does seem \textit{ad hoc}, as noted already; see above, in the section on Motzki’s criticism of Juynboll.
\end{itemize}
suggesting that most Hadith—or at least, the first big wave of Hadith—came into being during the 8th Century CE, which is exactly when most of the CLs were operating: this already gives as a reason to think that the CLs were creators of Hadith.

Moreover, the Revisionist chronology of the ʾisnād in particular generates a significant skeptical entailment, as was again noted at the outset: if Muslims (including senior Companions, junior Companions, and senior Followers) did not mention or record sources in the transmission of historical and religious information until 685 CE or later, and then only did so partially or sporadically until 718 CE or later (such that the transmission of such material unto the CLs was largely informal and undocumented), then most ʾisnāds purporting to extend all the way back into the 1st Islamic Century (via senior Followers, junior Companions, and senior Companions) must be inauthentic in that respect. In addition to having attained something approaching a consensus in modern Hadith Studies, this Revisionist chronology of the ʾisnād was also accepted by Motzki in particular. The skeptical entailment therefrom is thus binding upon most proponents of any form of CL analysis.

Nevertheless:

Motzki thinks it is possible that common links were able to at least partly remember the person from whom they heard something concerning a tābiʿ, šaḥābi or the Prophet, or that they wrote down the name(s) of their informant(s) together with the information received from them.

---

201 See the works of Schacht, Juynboll, Cook, Crone & Hinds, et al., cited at the outset.
202 This seems to have been Schacht’s approach to the matter, as noted already in the section on him. Similarly, see Juynboll, *Muslim tradition*, 73.
204 Görke et al., ‘First Century Sources’, 45.

Furthermore, Motzki speculated that the CLs or “collectors”—as late Followers and Followers of the Followers, operating in the era when the demand for ʾisnāds was spreading—could have asked their sources (i.e., the senior Followers, or even some junior Companions) for their sources, such that some ʾisnāds could validly extend back into the 1st Islamic Century (i.e., back to some earlier Companions):

It is conceivable, in view of the chronology of the birth of the ʾisnād, that the collector asked his informant for the source of his tradition and was told the name or, at least, some name.205

It is indeed reasonable to think that this happened in at least some cases, given that instances of ʾisnād-use, or some demands for sources, were occurring already in the 680s and 690s CE: the aforementioned skeptical entailment applies to most ʾisnāds, not all of them.

But even if we posit that the CLs (or “collectors”, as Motzki would have it) operating in the 8th Century CE were able to remember exactly from whom they had received a given datum, Motzki himself questions whether these sources in turn were able to remember their own sources, in an era when “bookkeeping was not yet done as regards from whom precisely which information about the Prophet was received.”206 Likewise (in a response to Schneider):

The possibility of going beyond the common link in a methodologically safe manner does not by any means necessarily indicate that the tradition is therefore authentic, i.e., that it goes back to the Prophet, as Schneider alleges I imply. One cannot even be certain that it really originates from the person whom the informant of the common link named as his source. In this case – as in the case of the common link – several possibilities have to be considered: Text or textual elements could indeed have been taken over from the person mentioned; they could have originated from other persons; they could have been created by the informant of the common link; or it could be a combination of the possibilities mentioned.207

Alternatively, the CL may not even have bothered to ask their informant in the first place, as Motzki again acknowledged: “But it is equally possible that the collector did

---

206 Id., Reconstruction, 72.
not make this enquiry of his informant. He simply inserted the name that to him seemed most likely. Put simply, “the first three quarters of the first/seventh century” are “the phase of the anonymous and unknown living exegetical tradition”, as Motzki noted in a study of exegetical Hadith in particular.

More importantly, Motzki himself already conceded that “the supplying of an isnād” only became common after the “beginning” of the 2nd Islamic Century (i.e., after 718-719 CE), which is after the senior Followers and junior Companions (not to mention the senior Companions) were already dead. Thus, Motzki’s concession to the Revisionist chronology of the ‘isnād—a chronology for which there are multiple, independent points of evidence—still entails that most ‘isnāds purporting to extend back to the Companions must be false or at least unreliable in that respect. In other words, even if the CLs had wanted to ascertain exactly from whom their informants had received their material in turn, it was too late to ask: by the time that most of them began to systematically provide sources, or to respond to the spreading demand for sources, these informants were already dead.

Moreover, even the ascriptions of CLs back to their immediate sources (usually senior Followers) are in doubt. For example, the CL may simply have erred, or cited an ideal source rather than their actual source, or lied and cited a source—or a sequence of sources—that were expedient at a given time, as Görke has noted: “if the common link was the inventor of the ḥadīth, he might well change the isnād according to his audience’s expectations.” Likewise, Motzki acknowledged that “early collectors” (i.e., CLs) may have “mixed in traditions of their own with the genuine ones, adding fictitious asānīd”. For example, in his reconstruction of a hadith back to the CL Saʿīd b. Jubayr, Motzki conceded that “it is also possible that Saʿīd himself composed the story on the basis of various pieces of information circulating after Ibn ‘Abbās’ death

---

208 Id. (trans. Griffel & Hardy), ‘Whither Hadith Studies?’, in Motzki, Analysing Muslim Traditions, 52. Similarly, see id., Reconstruction, 73.
210 Id. (trans. Katz), Origins, 241. In summarising his own work, Motzki (Reconstruction, 73) later reiterated: “the custom of asking one’s teachers about their informants arose at the end of the 1st century H, and then slowly spread in the course of the 2nd century H. In Mekka, asking about an isnād didn’t begin until the start of the 2nd century, in Iraq even later.”
211 For a similar point, see Juynboll, Muslim tradition, 71-73; id., ‘Nāfi’, 209-210, 222.
and then attributed his narrative to his former teacher in order to give it more authority.” 214 Elsewhere, he further acknowledged:

Motzki does not rule out the possibility that a common link no longer knew whom he had received the tradition from and simply named a person who seemed to be the most probable source. 215

Ordinarily, there is no way to know whether the pre-CL SS is genuine: “Verification becomes impossible at this stage” 216 and “we cannot prove that the common link really received the tradition from the person he names as his informant”, 217 at least on the basis of ʾisnāds. 218 Therefore, at minimum, the ascription of the CL to their immediate source is suspect, 219 whilst any further authorities cited farther back in the ʾisnād should certainly be presumed to be the result of inference, guesswork, idealisation, error, lying, or some other form of false creation. Moreover, given the primarily oral and informal character of transmission up until the CLs of the 8th Century CE, it seems highly questionable that they could have remembered specific sources for specific data even if they had tried, or in other words: even their immediate cited sources should be doubted. Once again, the entire SS preceding the CL becomes dubious, or as Shoemaker put it: “An inherent skepticism pertains to the list of transmitters preceding the common link”. 220

In short, it is generally agreed that the CL is the formulator of the extant underlying wording or gist of their hadith (i.e., that which can be discerned beneath the various PCL redactions), and that the CLs were amongst the first systematic disseminators of Hadith and citers of ʾisnāds. Given various considerations, however, the SSs that usually precede the CLs cannot be trusted: we have good reason to doubt their motivation or even their ability to accurately cite from whom they had received a given datum

215 Id. et al., ‘First Century Sources’, 45.
216 Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muhammad, 16.
220 Shoemaker, The Death of a Prophet, 83.
(assuming *ex-materia* creation in the first place), and even more reason to doubt that they knew, or were able to discover, from whom in turn their predecessors had received their data (again, assuming *ex-materia* creation). Moreover, an *ex-materia* creation by a CL cannot ordinarily be distinguished from an *ex-nihilo* creation, to begin with. Generally speaking, therefore, the ICMA cannot get us back beyond the CLs, which means in practice that we cannot usually reach back beyond 718 CE.\(^221\) Apo\-pos all of these considerations, Pavlovitch suggests that “the end of the first century is the earliest point in time at which we may posit the existence of primitive *isnād* transmission. For this reason, even if one were to undertake a meticulous *isnād-cum-matn* analysis of the traditions that in a way or another signal the onset of the *isnād*, one would hardly be able to cross below the threshold of c. 100/718.”\(^222\)

Finally, it should be reiterated that even if we could know that a CL had created a hadith *ex-materia* or, better yet, had merely reworded or redacted a story or report received from an earlier authority, we would still not be able to trust that their redaction thereof accurately reflected the earlier material or report. The implications of Crone’s research seem inescapable: the 1st Islamic Century was a time of extreme, rapid mutation, distortion, and growth in historical memory and oral tradition, which calls into question the veracity of anything transmitted by the CLs (or at least, the earliest ones, operating in the early 8th Century CE). In other words, “even if they had a starting point in something the Prophet actually said or did,” Hadith have “undergone so many changes in the course of transmission that unless the contrary can be shown, they are best treated as evidence for the debates in which they were used rather than for the views of the figures to whom they were traced.”\(^223\) This would be the case even if the *ʾisnād* is genuine and even if all of the transmitters were honest, as Hoyland points out:

That is the problem with *isnad* criticism. The same tradition may be transmitted with impeccable *isnads* and still drift wholly away from its original meaning. No one need have cheated; each authority may have transmitted the report faithfully, as they understood it. But by the time it is found in texts that are available to us, often two centuries or so after its

\(^{221}\) Of course, our reaching back to ‘Urwah in some instances, as argued by Schoeler and Görke, is a notable exception. In such instances, we can at least reach back to the end of the 1st Islamic Century, or in other words, to around 700 CE.

\(^{222}\) Pavlovitch, *Origin*, 40.

\(^{223}\) Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 126, n. 3.
genesis, it may have changed almost beyond recognition. This is the principal problem, transformation of a tradition's content in the course of transmission, and not systematic forgery.\footnote{Hoyland, ‘Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad’, 587.}

(Hoyland speaks of two centuries in this instance, but the worst of the damage was done in the first century of transmission, as Crone emphasised.\footnote{Crone, Slaves on Horses, 6.}) Thus, even if the SS preceding the CL can be believed, the CL’s \textit{matn}—as an accurate rendition of what came therefrom—cannot be trusted. Once again, the buck stops with the CL.

\section*{Conclusion}

Even if all Hadith are ultimately fabricated, interpolated, or otherwise ahistorical as formal ascriptions, they can still be subjected to various forms of dating. In particular, any given hadith can be dated by:

\textbf{External Corroboration:} if the content of a hadith is corroborated by an earlier source (usually, a Christian literary source, attesting to early Muslim beliefs and practices), then this content at least can be inferred to have been circulating amongst Muslims since the date of this earlier source.

\textbf{Archaic Content:} if the content of a hadith goes against the grain of the group that transmitted and preserved it, then—based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity—the hadith can be dated to before that group (or at least, to before that group received it).

\textbf{Ascription Type:} a version of a hadith ascribed to a later authority is likely earlier than a version ascribed to an earlier authority. Likewise, a \textit{mursal} or \textit{munqaṭī} version of a hadith is likely earlier than a \textit{muttaṣil} version. Additionally, a Companion hadith—based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity—probably dates back to the beginning of the 9th Century CE at the latest, whilst a Follower hadith probably dates back to the mid-to-late 8th Century CE at the latest.
**Unexpected Silence**: if it is reasonable to expect that someone would have cited a hadith (because it was extremely germane to their interests, or useful for them in a debate, and supposedly circulated amongst prominent people in their town, or even amongst their own teachers), but they failed to cite the hadith, then it is reasonable to infer, at least tentatively, that the hadith did not yet exist as such.

**ICMA**: if a hadith-tradition comprises a series of putative PCLs and a CL, and the *matns* ascribed to each PCL tend to be more similar to each other than they are to those of other PCLs, but all of them share an underlying, distinctive core, this can be reasonably explained by positing these key figures to be actual PCLs and CLs, whose distinctive redactions can be reconstructed.
Chapter 2: An ‘Isnād-Cum-Matn Analysis of the Hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s Marital Age

Note to reader: this chapter was originally much longer and more detailed, but due to the constraints of the word limit, it has been heavily abridged. In particular, junior PCLs or sub-PCLs have been collapsed into the sections on senior PCLs or CLs. Moreover, highly detailed footnotes listing the similarities and differences between different reports have been removed. The full, unabridged original chapter (including sections on junior PCLs or sub-PCLs and more detailed footnotes) is available for the reviewers as an annex. It should be noted that the rest of the dissertation assumes the original chapter, not the abridgement.

In light of the preceding chapter, an ‘isnād-cum-matn analysis (ICMA) of the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age—the reconstruction and dating of earlier versions of the hadith—becomes feasible. The tradition will be analysed one sub-tradition at a time, in order of the putative PCLs, CLs, and authorities with which each is associated: beginning with the latest and working backwards to the earliest, unto ‘Ā’išah herself.

‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Baḡawī (d. 317/929-930)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Baghdadian tradent ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Baḡawī (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwah), recorded by ‘Abū Nu‘aym226 and Ibn ‘Asākir.227 These two reports are more similar to each other than they are to every other version of the marital-age hadith, sharing as they do a highly distinctive elemental sequence and format: a discussion between al-Hayṭam b. ‘Adī and Hišām b. ‘Urwah about Ḍadijah, Sawdah, and ‘Ā’išah. The second

half of both reports is admittedly extremely similar to a report recorded by Ibn Saʿd and ascribed to Muḥammad b. ʿAmr,228 such that all three reports must clearly derive from a recent common ancestor vis-à-vis all the rest—but the two ascribed to al-Baḡawi are consistently more similar to each other than they are to the third, which is consistent with both of them descending from an even more recent common ancestor (vis-à-vis Ibn Saʿd's report). This matches their common ascription to al-Baḡawi, or in other words: al-Baḡawi is likely a genuine PCL, whose distinctive redaction is reflected in the first two reports.

ʿAbū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir's reports are largely identical, with only a few variants (mostly minor additions or omissions) between them. This is consistent with the hadith's having been transmitted from al-Baḡawi to his students (and from them unto ʿAbū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir) in writing, which matches the predominance of written transmission in the relevant time period (i.e., the 10th-12th Centuries CE). Consequently, the relevant section of al-Baḡawi's urtext—the part pertaining to al-Hayṭam and Hišām's discussion—survives mostly intact:

The deeper relationship between al-Baḡawi's redaction and the report recorded by Ibn Saʿd is addressed below.229

---


229 See the section on Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, below.
I have collated five reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent 'Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-ʿUṭāridī (situated within the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. 'Amr), four of which appear to be abridgements: the version recorded by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī only comprises the opening element thereof; one of the versions recorded by al-Bayhaqī lacks some medial elements and the final elements; another version recorded by al-Bayhaqī (in the same work, but in a different chapter) only comprises the final elements; and yet another version recorded by al-Bayhaqī (in a different work) is actually the unabridged (or less-abridged) version of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī’s version, missing only some final elements. Fortuitously, two full versions are recorded by Ibn al-Sammāk and Maymūn b. 'Iṣhāq, which are corroborated in each section by at least one of the abridged versions, such that every part of the hadith is attested at least thrice (save the very final element). When abridgements are accounted for, these texts are largely identical. There are numerous textual variations between them, but these tend to be very minor, and obviously the product of scribal errors: additional or missing conjunctions, particles, and prepositions, abbreviated or elaborated names, verbs given in different tense or person, outright misspellings, and a few added or omitted words here and there. There is also some confusion as to who is narrating some versions, although the narration is always coherent. Despite all this, the majority of the corresponding texts are still identical, and textual variants are mostly isolated in one or another version, such that an urtext is easily discernible for the most part:

\[\text{\footnotesize (References omitted)}\]
العذاريدي هو الأكثر مسؤولية على مصطلحات النص: النصوص المنسوبة إليه — النصوص التي تم التعرف عليها عند إعادة ترتيب النص — هي أكثر كثافة من النصوص الأخرى داخل ممارسة المراجع التي يتم فيها إعادة ترتيب النص.
Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (see below). This is strengthened by the fact that two of the sources—Ibn al-Sammāk and Maymūn b. ʿIshāq, who also happen to provide unabridged versions of the report—corroborate each other in transmitting directly from al-ʿUṭāridī, or in other words: al-ʿUṭāridī is converged upon directly by two extant collectors, rather than just the SSs of much later collectors. In light of all of this, al-ʿUṭāridī is likely to be a genuine PCL.

The transmission from al-ʿUṭāridī to his students and unto the extant collections was clearly written rather than oral, given that the extant versions are largely identical (which belies oral paraphrasing), and given also the scribal character of most of the variations that arose in the course of this transmission from al-ʿUṭāridī.

Saʿīd b. Yaḥyá al-ʿUmawī (d. 249/863)

I have collated six reports ascribed to the Baghdadian tradent Saʿīd b. Yaḥyá al-ʿUmawī (situated within the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr), five of which appear to be abridgements: the version recorded by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī focuses on ʿĀʾišah and only comprises the opening element, a fragment of the second element, part of the third element, and two small medial elements236; the first version recorded by al-Ṭabarānī also focuses on ʿĀʾišah and comprises the first three elements and two medial elements237; the second version recorded by al-Ṭabarānī focuses on Sawdah and only comprises part of the first element and the medial elements related to Sawdah238; the version recorded by Ibn ʿabī ʿĀṣim focuses on Sawdah in exactly the same way239; and the version recorded by Hišām b. ʿAmmār only comprises the final elements, focusing on ʿĀʾišah.240 Fortuitously, a full version of the hadith is recorded by al-Ṭabarī,241 which is corroborated in each section by at least one of the abridged versions, such that every part of the hadith is attested at least thrice (save one medial element).

236 Ḥākim, Mustadrak, III, pp. 442-443, # 2742.
238 Ibid., XXIV, pp. 30-31, # 80.
239 Ibn ʿabī ʿĀṣim (ed. Jawābirah), Ḥādīth, V, pp. 413-414, # 3061.
When abridgements are accounted for, these texts are largely identical. Still, there are numerous textual variations between them, such as the usual additional, missing, or variant conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and so on, and also a few additional or omitted words of substance. There are also quite a few instances of paraphrasing, and quite a few outright mistakes and misspellings as well. All of the extant versions are plagued by confused narrator perspectives, writing, or copying of this lengthy hadith, a transmitter forgot what was happening or who was speaking in the story—usually towards the middle or the end. This usually occurs when either Ḥālilah or ‘Ā‘īsah suddenly begins narrating the story, although the point at which confusion arose and errors obtained—varies from one version to the next.

And yet, despite all of this, the different versions of this hadith are largely identical (when abridgements are accounted for), yielding the following urtext:

Can this urtext (with the caveat that the middle section is poorly attested) be attributed to Saʿid b. Yahyā al-ʿUmawī, the putative PCL therefor according to all of the relevant ḫṣīḏāds? It seems likely: on the whole, all of the versions of this hadith (whence the urtext was derived) are more similar to each other than they are to the other versions of the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr. In other words, they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition, which is consistent with Saʿid’s redaction’s having been preserved, broadly speaking.

Abridgements aside, this hadith as a whole was transmitted fairly accurately from Saʿid: most of the wording of most of elements are identical, as was noted already. This is indicative of mostly written transmission, as are the various mistakes and misspellings scattered throughout—these are consistent with being scribal errors.
That said, there are still many instances of paraphrasing between the extant versions, which suggests a lingering oral component in the transmission.

ʿIsḥāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Mervian tradent ʿIsḥāq b. ʿIbrāhīm al-Ḥanẓali (better known as Ibn Rāhwayh), recorded by Ibn Qutaybah242 and al-Dīnawarī.243 There are several differences between these two reports, but most are minor additions, omissions, and substitutions and do not affect the meaning. The only potentially significant variant is the following: Ibn Qutaybah names the source and narrator of the hadith as al-Ḥasan, where al-Dīnawarī specifies him to be al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy. The ambiguous citation in the former could lead one to mistakenly believe that the source and narrator of the hadith is the prominent Basran Qadarī Follower al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), rather than the prominent Kufan Zaydī theologian and traditionist al-Ḥasan b. Śāliḥ b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786).244

Differences aside, these two reports are largely identical, and are moreover much more similar to each other than they are to any other version of the marital-age hadith. As such, they clearly embody a distinctive tradition, which is consistent with their reflecting in common the underlying redaction of their cited source, Ibn Rāhwayh. Consequently, Ibn Rāhwayh is likely a genuine PCL, to whom the following urtext can be attributed:


244 Suleiman Ali Mourad, Early Islam Between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 76.
The uniformity of the two extant derivations from Ibn Rāhwayh's redaction is consistent with its having been transmitted in writing, or at least with the aid of written notes (allowing a minor element of paraphrasing), from Ibn Rāhwayh to his students. This is consistent with the predomination of written transmission in the relevant time-period (i.e., the early-to-mid 9th Century CE).

al-Ḥajjāj b. ’abī Manīʾ (d. post-216/831)

I have collated four reports ascribed to the Levantine tradent al-Ḥajjāj b. ’abī Manīʾ al-Ruṣāfī (ostensibly situated within the broader tradition of al-Zuhri), recorded by al-Bayhaqī245 and Ibn al-Ṭabarī.246 These four reports reduce to two PCL sub-traditions, which in turn embody a common distinctive tradition vis-à-vis all other versions of the marital-age hadith. This is consistent with their common ascription to al-Ḥajjāj, meaning that al-Ḥajjāj is probably a genuine PCL. In fact, these two reports are mostly identical, aside from a few additions, omissions, and substitutions, such that al-Ḥajjāj's urtext is easy to discern:

\[
\]

The precise preservation of this hadith is consistent with its having been transmitted from al-Ḥajjāj to his students, and from them unto the extant collections, in writing, which fits well enough with the relevant time periods: al-Ḥajjāj operated unto the middle of the 9th Century CE, when written transmission predominated.

ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. 211/827)

I have collated six reports ascribed to the Yemenite tradent ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām, recorded by Muslim,247 Ibn ʿabī al-Dunyā,248 al-Dabarī,249 Ibn ʿabī ʿĀṣim,250 al-Nasāʾī,251 ʿAbū Awānah,252 al-Ṭabarānī,253 Ibn Mandah,254 ʿAbū Nuʿaym,255 and al-Bayhaqī.256 Most of these reports agree upon the same gist and even much of the same wording, and all of them are more similar to each other than to all the other versions of the marital-age hadith, such that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition. This is consistent with all of these reports preserving an underlying recension from their stated common source, ʿAbd al-Razzāq. It is thus likely that ʿAbd al-Razzāq is a genuine PCL, and that this sub-tradition derives from him.

When it comes to reconstructing the specific wording of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's redaction, however, there are some serious problems. There are of course numerous variants in the six reports, including rearranged, added, omitted, and substituted words, all of which are consistent with paraphrastic transmission. More troubling is the pattern of variants: most of them are doubly attested (i.e., present in two reports), but seemingly at random. In other words, most of the variants are not confined to only one version, which seems unlikely if the variants in question were the product of the respective tradents thereof: it is not very likely that two tradents would make exactly the same change to their versions independently, and even less likely that this would occur over and over.

247 Muslim (ed. Fāryābī), ʿSahih, I, p. 642, # 71/1422.
252 ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿIṣṭaḥāna (ed. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʾIṣtaḥāna), al-Ṭabarānī, XI, p. 385, # 4709.
There are two solutions to this puzzle: either there was frequent contamination between the different transmissions from ‘Abd al-Razzāq, rendering the precise reconstruction of his urtext largely impossible (since corroborating wordings might actually be borrowed from each other); or alternatively, ‘Abd al-Razzāq reworded his version through successive retellings, such that there is no coherent or fixed urtext to reconstruct in the first place. The gist of the ‘original’ redaction remains the same regardless, but (in the first scenario) some key details are thrown into question: did ‘Abd al-Razzāq cite Hišām as one of his sources, or did he not? Did he relate that Ā’īšah was engaged to marry the Prophet when she was six, or six or seven, or seven? Even more troubling (in the second scenario) is the prospect that ‘Abd al-Razzāq changed a key detail in his hadith over time. The addition or omission of Hišām could be explained away as mere abridgement, but the alternating ages cannot: was Ā’īšah six, or six or seven, or seven?258

In the first scenario, there is still some prospect of reconstructing a speculative urtext, based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity: unusual and undesirable textual variants are more likely to belong to the original and less likely to be the product of contamination, since it is more likely that an obscure or undesirable version was updated in accordance with a common, popular, or ideal version, rather than vice versa.259 On this basis, the following approximation obtains:

\[\ldots \text{ma’amar} \text{un ‘an al-zuhriyyi ‘an ‘urwat} \text{[wa-hišām bn ‘urwat ‘an ‘abī-hi]} \text{qāla nakāḥa al-nabiyya ‘a’isat wa-hiya bintu sittu sanawatn ‘aw sab n wa-}\]
\[\text{zuffat ‘ilay-hi wa-hiya bintu tis}[\text{[nin]} \text{[wa-lu’abu-hā ma’a-hā wa-māta}\]
\[\text{an-hā wa-hiya bintu tamānī ‘ašrat} \text{.}\]

Alternatively, in the second scenario, we can discern several distinct drafts of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s hadith. In the earliest version (partially and variously recorded by al-Dabarī,257 The geography of the tradents is consistent with this: all of those who transmitted from ‘Abd al-Razzāq (bar al-Dabarī) operated primarily in Iraq and the East, such that they could easily have met and influenced each other’s versions.

258 It might be claimed that “six” and “seven” were each just abbreviations of “six or seven”, but if so, this still seems extremely sloppy or dishonest on ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s part—in either instance, he would be giving the impression of precision or certainty on a historical datum that he knew to be uncertain.

259 Thus: the vague ‘an is likely the original, rather than the specific ‘akbara-nā; the ascription to ‘Urwh is likely the original, rather than the ascription via ‘Urwh to Ā’īšah; the rare nakāḥa and sanawa‘n are likely the original, rather than the common tazawwaja and sinin; the uncertain sitt ‘aw sab is likely the original, rather than the certain sitt or sab’, respectively; and finally, zuffat is rare in the broader tradition as a whole, so it is plausibly the original (rather than the isolated variants ‘uhdiyat and duftu) here.
al-Nasāʾī, and ʿAbū ʿAwānah), 260 Hišām was probably included in the ʿIsnād, ʿĀʾišah was probably absent from the ʿIsnād (making it munqatī), the first verb was probably the rare nakāḥa, and ʿĀʾišah's marital age was probably uncertain (sitt sanawāt ʿaw sabʿ), as in the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...maʿmar } & \text{un } \text{i al-zuhriyyī } \text{an } \text{i urwat } \text{a wa-hišām } \text{bni } \text{i urwa } \text{a i ʿabī-hi qāla nakāḥa al-nabiyyī } \text{aʿīsāt } \text{wa-hiyya bint } \text{u sitt } \text{sanawāt } \text{aw sab } \text{a wa-zuffat ilay-hi wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tis } \text{in } \text{wa-luʿabu-hā maʿa-hā wa-māta ʿan-hā wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tāmānī ʿaṣrātā.}
\end{align*}
\]

In a subsequent iteration (recorded by ʿAbū ʿAwānah), 261 ʿAbd al-Razzāq omitted Hišām from the ʿIsnād and further raised it from ʿUrwah to ʿĀʾišah, whilst also substituting the uncommon nakāḥa for the common tazawwaja, as in the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...maʿmar } & \text{in } \text{i al-zuhriyyī } \text{an } \text{i urwat } \text{a ʿāʾišat } \text{a anna al-nabiyyī tazawwaja-hā wa-hiyya bint } \text{u sitt } \text{sanawāt } \text{aw hiyya bint } \text{u sab } \text{a wa-zuffat ilay-hi wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tis } \text{in } \text{wa-luʿabu-hā maʿa-hā wa-māta ʿan-hā wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tāmānī ʿaṣrātā.}
\end{align*}
\]

In a final iteration (recorded by Muslim, and in Ibn ʿabī al-Dunyā's version from the PCL Ibn ʿAskar), 262 ʿAbd al-Razzāq further refined the hadith by removing the ambiguity surrounding ʿĀʾišah's marital age and specifying seven in particular, as in the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...maʿmar } & \text{un } \text{i al-zuhriyyī } \text{an } \text{i urwat } \text{a ʿāʾišat } \text{a anna al-nabiyyī tazawwaja-hā wa-hiyya bint } \text{u sab } \text{a sinin } \text{wa-zuffat ilay-hi wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tis } \text{in } \text{wa-luʿabu-hā maʿa-hā wa-māta ʿan-hā wa-hiyya bint } \text{u tāmānī ʿaṣrātā.}
\end{align*}
\]

Finally, ʿAbd al-Razzāq's student al-Dabarī alternatively specified the first element as sitt, and Ibn Mandah or ʿAbd al-Razzāq (ʾAḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād or ʾAḥmad b. Maṣūr) took this and further rephrased the entire

\[260\] The raising in ʿAbū ʿAwānah and the ʿanna al-nabiyy tazawwaja-hā are both secondary, and the tuwufiya is a unique variant in his transmission, so all must be disregarded for this redaction; the sinīn and sanah in al-Nasāʾī are absent in the other two, and should be disregarded accordingly; the ʿudhiyat in al-Dabarī is unique to him; and finally, the specific sitt in al-Dabarī seems secondary, vis-à-vis the vague sitt sanawāt ʿaw sabʿ.

\[261\] However, tuwufiya is unique to ʿAbū ʿAwānah, and has been emended to māta accordingly.

\[262\] Ibn ʿabī al-Dunyā—Ibn ʿAskar omits ilay-hi, present in all other versions of this hadith. The two other versions of Ibn ʿAskar omit anna and reorganise the first element: Ibn ʿabī Āṣim has tazawwaja-hā al-nabiyy, and al-Ṭabarānī has tazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh.
hadith into an autobiographical quotation from ʿĀʾišah (substituting al-nabiyy for rasūl allāh and the z-f-f root with the d-f-ʿ root, and omitting the ‘dolls’ element in the process).

On either scenario, the following wording probably derives from ʿAbd al-Razzāq, as his original formulation (before it was altered and contaminated by successive tradents) or earliest discernible formulation (before he himself altered in successive retellings):


In the first scenario, where the tradents from ʿAbd al-Razzāq are responsible for the major variants within this sub-tradition, most of the variants in the first element (substituted words, rearranged sentences, changed details) are consistent with oral paraphrasing, even as the overall uniformity of the other three elements is consistent with written transmission; this might point to parallel or partial oral and written transmission at this time, from ʿAbd al-Razzāq to his students, and between these students. In the second scenario, where ʿAbd al-Razzāq himself is responsible for the major variants within this sub-tradition, most of these variants are consistent with oral paraphrasing on the part of ʿAbd al-Razzāq, combined with fairly precise written transmission on the part of his tradents, or in other words: ʿAbd al-Razzāq transmitted his hadith orally (and paraphrased it in successive retellings), whereas most of his students preserved it in writing. Even then, there may have been a few instances of paraphrasing on the part of these students: al-Dabarī seems to have paraphrased zuftat as ʿuhdiyat, and possibly also reduced sitt sanawāt ʾaw sab to sitt; ʿAbū ʿAwānah or his source al-Ṣagānī seems to have paraphrased māta as tuwuffiya; and Ibn Mandah or one of his sources rephrased the entire hadith (see above). By contrast, the occasional additions or omissions in the different transmissions can be explained by occasional scribal errors, either by the aforementioned tradents or later copyists of the relevant collections.

263 Specifically: the added sinīn in both Muslim and al-Nasāʾī; the missing ʿan-hā in Ibn ʿAskar; and the added sanah in al-Nasāʾī.
Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqīdī (d. 207/823)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Madinan tradent Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqīdī (from ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Maymūn, from Ḥabīb al-ʿAwar), recorded by Ibn Saʿd264 and al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī.265 These two reports are more similar to each other than they are to all the rest, and are in fact largely identical, aside from a few additions, omissions, and other minor differences. As such, these two reports constitute a distinctive sub-tradition, which is consistent with their reflecting the particular redaction of their common source, al-Wāqīdī. Consequently, al-Wāqīdī is probably a genuine CL, to whom the following urtext can be attributed:

The extremely high rate of similarity between the two extant reports of this hadith is consistent with its having been transmitted in writing from al-Wāqīdī to his students, which fits not just the general time period involved (i.e., the early 9th Century CE

---

264 Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 54.
265 Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 21, # 6883. For the rest of the ʿisnād, see ibid., p. 20, # 6881.

86
onward, when written transmission predominated), but with the fact that al-Wāqidi was an early composer of texts (ṣāhib al-tašānīf wa-al-maḡāzī), Ibn Sa’d was his personal scribe (kātib), and al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj transmitted from him a recension of his al-Mubtada’ wa-al-Maḡāzī.

Muḥammad b. Biṣr (d. 203/818-819)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent Muḥammad b. Biṣr (situated within the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr): one recorded in the Musnad of Ibn Rāhwayh, and the other in the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal (as composed or transmitted by his son ‘Abd Allāh). There are numerous differences between these two versions: additional or missing conjunctions, particles, and prepositions, transpositions, outright misspellings, the addition or omission of words and sentences, and most of all, paraphrases (including both substitution with synonyms and elaborations). Both versions are also characterised by confusion in the narrator’s point of view (whether due to interpolation or editorial correction, or paraphrastic or scribal error), but in different places.

Despite all of this, these two reports are more similar to each other than to any others within the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (see below), sharing the same elements in the same order, and many novel wordings as well, such that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition. The absence of more versions of this sub-tradition makes it harder to adjudicate between the textual variants preserved in the two that we do have, but most of the underlying redaction can still be discerned:

ḥaddāta-nā muḥammad bn ‘amrīn w ḥaddāta-nā ḍabū salamata wa-yahyā [bn ‘abd al-raḥmān bn ḥāṭib] qālā lammā halakat kadijat jā’at ḱawlat bi bintin ḍakimīn irma’atu ‘utmānīn bn maẓ‘ūnīn [’ilā rasūl allāh qālat]/[qālat yā rasūl allāh] ’a-lā tu zawwija [fa-]qāla man qālat ‘in ši’ta bikra’n wa-‘in

---

266 Dahābī (ed. ’Arna’ūṭ et al.), Siyar, IX, p. 454.
267 Ibid., X, p. 664.

87
قَالَ الَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنِيٌّ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ، وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا أَنَّهُ مَعْنَيَاتٌ لاَ يَنْتَفِعُهَا مَعْنَىٰهُ.
The attribution of this (approximate) redaction to Muḥammad b. Bišr is reasonable: the two reports under consideration evidently share a close recent textual ancestor to the exclusion of all others within the broader tradition of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, which matches the attribution in the ‘isnāds of both to the PCL Muḥammad b. Bišr. This attribution is strengthened by the fact that at least one of the extant sources preserving this hadith—Ibn Rāhwayh—transmits directly from Muḥammad b. Bišr, rather than via some SS from a distant remove.

The transmission of this hadith from Muḥammad b. Bišr to his students Ibn Rāhwayh and Ibn Ḥanbal (and possibly from Ibn Ḥanbal to his son ‘Abd Allāh) was sloppy, and probably substantially oral: most of numerous variants that arose between the extant versions like paraphrases and elaborations (rather than scribal errors), which is characteristic of oral transmission. That said, the general outline and much of the wording of the original elements was accurately preserved, which precludes free oral remixing and may indicate the parallel use of written notes to aid memorisation (e.g., recording rough outlines or summaries).

’Abū ’Usāmah Ḥammād (d. 201/817)

There are two distinct sets of hadiths ascribed to the Kufan tradent ’Abū ’Usāmah Ḥammād b. ’Usāmah (both situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwah),
the first of which comprises two reports, recorded by Ibn 'abī Šaybah\textsuperscript{271} and al-Buḵārī.\textsuperscript{272} Both of these reports comprise the same unique sequence of elements (not to mention a rare verb) \textit{vis-à-vis} all other iterations of the marital-age hadith,\textsuperscript{273} which means that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition. This matches their common ascription to 'Abū 'Usāmah, which means that he is likely a genuine PCL whose distinctive redaction is reflected thereby. The rate of variation between these two reports is substantial relative to their shortness, but in absolute terms, consists only of a few additions, omissions, and substitutions. Consequently, the underlying redaction of 'Abū 'Usāmah is substantially reconstructable, as follows:

\begin{quote}
...hišām\textsuperscript{in} 'an 'abī-hi qāla tuwuffiyat ḳadījat\textsuperscript{in} qabl\textsuperscript{in} ['an yakruja/makraj]\textsuperscript{j}] al-nabīyy\textsuperscript{y} 'iīlā al-madīnat\textsuperscript{a} bi-[talāṭ\textsuperscript{a} sinīn\textsuperscript{a} fa-labita] sanatayn\textsuperscript{a} 'aw qarīb\textsuperscript{a} min ḳālika [tumma/wa-] nakāha 'ā'īšat\textsuperscript{a} wa-hiya bint\textsuperscript{a} sitt\textsuperscript{a} sinīn\textsuperscript{a} [tumma/wa-] banā bi-hā wa-hiya bint\textsuperscript{a} ṭis\textsuperscript{a} [sinīn\textsuperscript{a}].
\end{quote}

In light of the extremely short distance between 'Abū 'Usāmah and the extant sources (Ibn 'abī Šaybah having transmitted from him directly, and al-Buḵārī being separated from him by a single intermediary), and in light also of the relevant time period (the early 9th Century CE, when the written transmission of Hadith was just attaining hegemony), the variants are probably the product of oral paraphrasing (rather than scribal error), but of a fairly constrained kind (perhaps based on some written notes).

The second hadith associated with 'Abū 'Usāmah was recorded by Muslim,\textsuperscript{274} 'Abū Dāwūd,\textsuperscript{275} 'Abū Ya'lá,\textsuperscript{276} Ibn Ḥibbān,\textsuperscript{277} 'Abū Nuʿaym,\textsuperscript{278} al-Bayhaqī,\textsuperscript{279} and Ibn al-Muhtadī bi-Allāh.\textsuperscript{280} Some of these reports are evidently abridgements, but where corresponding wordings are available, they all closely match each other, bar the first version cited by 'Abū Dāwūd (which seems to be partially his own summary and partially a mixture of transmissions from different sources). The set of elements

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{271} Ibn 'abī Šaybah (ed. 'Usāmah), \textit{Muṣannaf}, XI, p. 341, # 34894.
\textsuperscript{272} Buḵārī, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, I, p. 767, # 3944.
\textsuperscript{273} I.e., the sequence outlined above, and the verb nakāha.
\textsuperscript{274} Muslim (ed. Fāryābī), \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, I, p. 642, # 69/1422.
\textsuperscript{275} 'Abū Dāwūd (ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd), \textit{Sunan}, IV, p. 284, # 4933-4934, 4936.
\textsuperscript{276} 'Abū Ya'lá (ed. 'Asad), \textit{Musnad}, VIII, p. 301, # 4897/541.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibn Ḥibbān (ed. 'Arna'ūṭ), \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}, XVI, p. 9, # 7097.
\textsuperscript{278} 'Abū Nu'aym (ed. Šāfiʿī), \textit{al-Musnad al-Mustaḵraj}, IV, pp. 86-87, # 3310.
\textsuperscript{279} Bayhaqī (ed. Turkī), \textit{al-Sunan al-Kubrā}, XIV, p. 109, # 13774; \textit{ibid.}, p. 544, # 14583; \textit{ibid.}, XXI, pp. 130-131, # 21025.
\end{flushright}
comprising these reports are not unique (having substantial overlap with those comprising the sub-tradition of Ḥammād b. Salamah, and being the same as those comprising the sub-tradition of ‘Alī b. Mushir), but the sequence thereof is,281 not to mention in combination with some rare wordings.282 Consequently, it is clear that these reports reflect a distinctive sub-tradition, which matches their common ascription to ’Abū ’Usāmah. He is thus likely a genuine PCL, whose distinctive redaction is reflected thereby, despite the presence of a few variants (mostly substitutions and omissions) scattered throughout each of the relevant reports.

And yet, there is a difficulty in pinpointing the original wording of ’Abū ’Usāmah’s redaction: several of these reports are equipped with dual ’isnāds, resulting in a chaotic jumble of converging strands and potential PCLs. As such, it is difficult to pinpoint which strands are meant to indicate the actual transmission-paths of the content of a given report, and which are being mentioned simply to indicate the paths of similar (but unquoted) content. There are also no consistent sub-redactions within this set of reports (of the kind that allowed us to previously distinguish the redactions of ’Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān and al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī),283 with recurring variants seemingly distributed at random (which could point to ubiquitous contamination between the relevant tradents). As such, wordings introduced by PCLs and tradents after ’Abū ’Usāmah cannot be easily pinpointed and weeded out of the available set, resulting in more uncertainty in ’Abū ’Usāmah’s hypothetical redaction.

Still, these reports are largely identical, which means that most of ’Abū ’Usāmah’s underlying redaction can be readily discerned (even if many specific wordings remain uncertain), as follows:


---

281 Most notably, the ‘Alī b. Mushir sub-tradition has the ‘consummation’ element at the end.
282 E.g., most of the reports ascribed to ’Abū ’Usāmah have the unusual wording li-sitt sinīn, where those ascribed to ‘Alī b. Mushir have the usual wa-ʾanā ibnah/bint sitt sinīn.
283 See the relevant sections, above.
Again, the generally precise preservation of this hadith (with very few instances of paraphrasing) is consistent with its having been transmitted in writing from ʿAbū ʿUsāmah to his students in the early 9th Century CE.

Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah (d. 198/814)

I have collated five reports ascribed to the Kufo-Meccan tradent Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ʿUrwah), recorded by al-Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān (in his recension of al-Šāfiʿī),284 Bišr b. Mūsā (in his recension of al-Ḥumaydī),285 and al-ʿĀjurrī.286 Most of these ascriptions to Sufyān do appear to belong to the same vague sub-tradition vis-à-vis most other transmissions from Hišām b. ʿUrwah, but they are not unique: the same basic elemental sequence, including the detail of ʿĀʾišah being married at “seven” or “six or seven”, can be found in ascriptions to other putative PCLs, such as Ḥammād b. Zayd, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, and Wākiʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ. For example, Bišr’s transmission from Sufyān287 and one of al-Rabīʿ’s transmissions from Sufyān288 share an uncertainty over “six or seven”, but in this respect, they are more similar to IbnʿAbd al-Barr’s transmission from Jarīr289 than they are to the other transmissions from Sufyān. Meanwhile, another of al-Rabīʿ’s transmissions from Sufyān, which includes a lengthy final element about dolls and shy friends,290 is in that respect more similar to Ibn Wahb’s transmission from Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād and Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.291

284 Šāfiʿī (ed. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib), ‘Umm, VI, pp. 45-46, # 2210; ibid., p. 429, # 2462; ibid., X, p. 141, # 147.
290 Šāfiʿī (ed. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib), ‘Umm, X, p. 141, # 147.
This problem is only compounded when it is realised that three of the above-cited transmissions from Sufyân actually derive from the same duo, al-Rabîʿ and al-Šâfiʿî, yet differ from each other more than they differ from the rest: one has the unusual wording of nakaḥa (where all the rest have tazawwaja) and sittʿaw sabʿ (where most of the others just have sabʿ), whilst another has the lengthy addendum about dolls and shy friends (absent in the rest). Either al-Rabîʿ and al-Šâfiʿî were sloppy or forgetful (such that they accidently distorted or contaminated the hadith in different citations thereof), or else they (deliberately) interpolated it at different times in different ways. Indeed, in the case of the ‘dolls’ element, al-Šâfiʿî or al-Rabîʿ has combined two originally-separate hadiths from Sufyân, from Hišām, which remain discrete in the transmissions of Sufyân’s other students.292

Al-Rabîʿ and al-Šâfiʿî’s idiosyncratic citations aside, it is still at least plausible that Sufyân transmitted a version of this hadith, and that this version is partially preserved across the extant ascriptions to him, but this cannot be demonstrated as with other PCLs: there is no distinctive wording that correlates with his name, which raises the spectre of contamination or spreading ʾisnāds. Thus, the following approximation can be synthesised from these ascriptions,293 but cannot be attributed to Sufyân with confidence:


Even this might need to be revised, given that al-ʿÂjurrī’s version (transmitted via Ibn ʿabī ʿUmar) depicts ʿĀʾišah being described in the third person (hiya, etc.), in contrast to the first-person perspective recorded by al-Rabîʿ—al-Šâfiʿî and Bišr—al-Ḥumaydî (ʾanā, etc.). Since the former seems more archaic than the latter, we might regard the third-person perspective as the original, although this would entail that al-Šâfiʿî and al-Ḥumaydî reworded their respective versions into autobiographical narrations from ʿĀʾišah (or else that Sufyân himself did so in successive retellings of his hadith).

292 E.g., Ḥumaydî (ed. Dārānī), Musnad, I, p. 289, # 262.
293 By discarding the isolated ʾanna and daḵalat ʿailay-hi in ʿAjurrî, the isolated nakaḥa-ni al-nabīyy in Šāfiʿî # 2210, and the isolated ‘dolls’ element in Šâfiʿî # 147. Additionally, the vague sittʿaw sabʿ in both Šâfiʿî # 2210 and Bišr—Ḥumaydî has been preferred over the specific sabʿ in the rest.
In short, the ascriptions to Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah do not constitute a distinctive sub-tradition vis-à-vis ascriptions to all other PCLs, and are even quite divergent from each other in some respects, such that a redaction clearly deriving from Sufyān cannot be ascertained. He may be responsible for some of the wordings preserved across these ascriptions, but this is by no means certain.

Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 196-197/812)

I have collated four reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, recorded by Ibn Saʿd (twice),294 Ibn Rāhwayh,295 and Hannād.296 It should be immediately clear that there is no distinctive sub-tradition clustered around Wakīʿ specifically: even the two broadly-similar ascriptions (recorded by Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Rāhwayh) are just as similar as ascriptions to some other PCLs, such as Ḥammād b. Zayd, Jarīr b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, and Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah. Thus, even if Wakīʿ actually transmitted some or all of these reports from his alleged sources, it cannot be demonstrated with the present evidence: there is no particular redaction or wording that can be attributed to him.

Of the three ascriptions to him that purport to derive from Hišām, Ibn Saʿd’s version is the most likely to be genuine: in addition to being vaguely corroborated in its elemental outline by numerous other transmissions from Hišām (unlike Hannād’s version), it also contains uncertainty in the core wording (sitt sinīn ‘aw sab’) and a munqatīʾ ascription (to ‘Urwah, rather than ‘Āʾišah), which makes it seem more archaic than Ibn Rāhwayh’s (unambiguous and muttaṣil) version. In other words, the following has the strongest claim to derive from Wakīʿ:

...hišām1 bn1 ‘urwat4 ‘an ‘abi-hi ’anna al-nabiyya tazawwaja ‘āʾišat9 wa-hiya ibnat6 sitt8 sinin7 ‘aw sab10 wa-banâ bi-hâ wa-hiya ibnat11 tis12

Again, however, the ascription of this hadith to Wakīʿ cannot be confirmed, absent corroborating transmissions all embodying a distinctive sub-tradition. In other words,

297 Based on Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 41.
absent the inferable presence of an underlying redaction that can be attributed to Wakī', there is always the threat that an ascription is the product of contamination and/or spreading ʾisnāds.

That said, it should be acknowledged that the line ‘anna al-nabiyy tazawwaja ʿāʾišah wa-hiya ibnah, present in both of Ibn Saʿd’s ascriptions to Wakī’ (unto both Hišām b. ʿUrwah and Sufyān al-Ṭawrī), is unique in the marital-age tradition more broadly. This could be explained as reflecting Wakī’’s particular wording, but could equally be the result of Ibn Saʿd’s own particular wording, especially considering that he lists the two hadiths one after the other: he may simply have worded both in the same way because he wrote them down at the same time. This is complicated by the fact that the nearest similar wording in the relevant corpus is found in an alternative transmission from Sufyān recorded by al-Ṭabarānī: ‘anna al-nabiyy tazawwaja ʿāʾišah wa-hiya bint.298 This could be a sign that Wakī’ accurately preserved a wording from Sufyān (in common with what al-Ṭabarānī preserved), which was then recorded by Ibn Saʿd—although this would imply that the same wording was then inserted, by Ibn Saʿd or Wakī’ himself, into Wakī’’s transmission from Hišām. Alternatively, al-Ṭabarānī’s version is contaminated or borrowed from Ibn Saʿd or Wakī’’s versions (just as it was clearly contaminated by the ‘Abū Muʿāwiyah sub-tradition in terms of its elemental outline), which again leaves us without a definite answer.

ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah al-Ḍarīr (d. 194-195/809-811)

I have collated fourteen relevant transmissions from the Kufan tradent and putative PCL ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah, but not all of them reflect the same sub-tradition of the marital-age hadith: one transmission recorded by Ibn Rāhwayh has ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah citing Hišām as his source,299 where all the rest have him citing al-ʿAʾmaš; and even amongst the latter, there appear to be two distinctive sub-traditions. The first of these (henceforth, sub-tradition # 1) is unique, being much more similar to each other than to any other versions of the marital-age hadith: ʿĀʾišah was married at nine, and the

---

298 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafi), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 23, # 56.
Prophet died when she was eighteen. The second (henceforth, sub-tradition #2) ostensibly resembles the sub-traditions of Wuhayb, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, and especially ʿIṣrāʾīl: ʿĀʾišah was married at six/seven, the marriage was consummated when she was nine, and the Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Sub-tradition #2 is deeply problematic, for several reasons. Firstly, it is more similar (in terms of elemental sequence) to the sub-tradition of ʾIsrāʾīl (see below) than to all the rest within the broader marital-age tradition, which implies that both share a recent common ancestor vis-à-vis the rest—yet the `isnāds contradict this. Secondly, sub-tradition #2 claims descent via exactly the same `isnād as sub-tradition #1 (ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah—al-ʿAʿmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʿAswad—ʿĀʾišah), which seems rather odd: is it realistic to envisage two contradictory versions of the same hadith being transmitted from exactly the same sequence of tradents? Since the `isnāds are identical, how did the contradiction arise in the first place? The obvious resolution (if we stay within the constraints of the `isnāds) would be that ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah himself changed the hadith in successive retellings, transmitting one version to one set of students and another to another.

That said, the attribution of sub-tradition #2 to ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah is by no means assured, since it only has three dubious attestations, two of which converge on the PCL Yahyā b. Yaḥyā, and the other of which is recorded by al-Ṭabarānī. Although both reports share the same elemental sequence, the first line of al-Ṭabarānī’s version has a different syntax than Yahyā’s, and (more importantly) differs in the first element on a key detail: ʿĀʾišah is married at seven, rather than six. Moreover, none of the four sources cited by al-Ṭabarānī as transmitting sub-tradition #2 from ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah—namely, Ibn Numayr, Yaḥyā al-Ḥimmānī, Hannād, and ʾIbrāhīm—are cited anywhere else in the entire Hadith corpus—in any parallel or corroborating transmissions—as

---


303 Where Y. has tazawwaja-ḥā rasūl allāh, Ṭ. has ʾanna rasūl allāh tazawwaja-ḥā.

304 Where Y. has sitt, Ṭ. has sabʿ.
having done so. In fact, Ibn Numayr is elsewhere cited as a transmitter of sub-tradition #1 from ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah, not sub-tradition #2; and Hannād is elsewhere cited as having transmitted from ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah—Hišām—ʿUrwaḥ—ʿĀʾišah, rather than ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah—al-ʿA’maṣ—ʿĪbrāhīm—al-ʿAswad—ʿĀʾišah. It cannot be discounted that we are dealing with some kind of dive.

In short, both of the attestations of sub-tradition #2 are highly suspect, which is to say: not only can it not be positively traced back to ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah, we have reason to positively doubt that any iteration thereof is authentic. Ibn Rāhwayh’s ascription (that ‘Āʾišah was married at six and consummated in marriage at nine) via ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah—Hišām—ʿUrwaḥ—ʿĀʾišah is also completely uncorroborated, and thus also cannot be traced back to ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah. This leaves us with the following, i.e., sub-tradition #1, with is multiply attested from ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah. That this sub-tradition truly derives from ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah seems very likely: these versions are generally much more similar to each other than to any others within the broader marital-age tradition (bar a single stray ascription), which matches their common ascription to ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah. Moreover, three of the extant collections transmit from ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah directly. There is thus little doubt that ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah is a genuine PCL.

There are some issues in reconstructing ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah’s redaction, however: the transmissions from him display numerous variants, including omitted, added, and substituted words. Such variation is of course common, but the frequency thereof in such short texts is striking: some are clearly attributable to scribal error, but others seem indicative of mild oral paraphrasing. Even more striking is the instance of extreme paraphrasing or interpolation by Ibn ʿabī ʿĀṣim or his source Ibn Numayr, who omitted the first element of the hadith and reworded the second into an autobiographical quotation from ‘Āʾišah. Meanwhile, al-ʿĀjurri, or someone in his isnād unto ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah (namely, ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad or Muḥammad b. al-Muṭṭanná), or possibly even a later scribe, was obviously bothered or confused by ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah’s text (which has ‘Āʾišah being engaged for marriage at age nine, rather than

305 By ‘Abū al-Maymūn, cited above; and in a strange form, by Ibn ‘abī ʿĀṣim, also cited above.
307 Cf. ʿUqaylī (ed. Sarsāwī), Ḍuʿafāʾ, V, p. 473, # 1/5735. By contrast, Ṭabarānī (ed. Ṣalafi), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 23, # 56 and the ascriptions to ʿAbtār (see below) are less similar: both have the same distinctive elemental sequence, but the former has wa-makāṭat ḍinda-hu tisʿ and the latter have wa-ṣāḥibtu-hu tisʿ, contrast to the usual wa-mātaʾ an-hā wa-hiya bint ṣamān[ī]y]’ uṣrah in this sub-tradition.
the usual six or seven). Accordingly, they added a clarificatory comment into the middle of the hadith:

The Messenger of God married her when she was a girl of nine—meaning, the time of his consummation of marriage with her [occurred] when she was a girl of nine (yaʿnī waqt dukūli-hi bi-hā wa-hiya bint tis)—and he died when she was a girl of eighteen years.\(^{308}\)

This is not necessarily an interpolation per se, since the yaʿnī can be understood to openly signify the editorialising of a tradent or scribe; the only problem is that the tradent or scribe in question is not indicated, which could give the false impression that ʾAbū Muʿāwiya himself made this comment.

Finally, there is a significant mistake or interpolation in Ibn Rāhwayh’s version, which has sitt instead of the usual tis’. This may be the product of sloppy transmission by Ibn Rāhwayh: he may have read or heard tazawwaja and expected a sitt to follow (per the common version of the marital-age tradition more broadly), and wrote sitt accordingly. Alternatively, this may be an emendation by Ibn Rāhwayh, who thought he was correcting an error by ʾAbū Muʿāwiya. Either way, Ibn Rāhwayh himself (rather than some later scribe) was probably responsible for the change, since a subsequent collection ascribes this exact variant to him.\(^{309}\)

It thus seems as though the transmission of this text from ʾAbū Muʿāwiya to his students involved some sloppy paraphrasing, even if the gist and much of the same wording was still preserved. On that note, a common underlying text is still clearly discernible:

\[
\]

This may not be the urtext of the hadith (since some of the aforementioned oral variation may hark back to ʾAbū Muʿāwiya himself, such that there is no urtext per se),

---


\(^{309}\) ʾAbū Nuʿaym (ed. Šāfiʿī), al-Musnad al-Mustakraj, IV, p. 87, # 3313: “And Ibn Rāhwayh said: “...when she was a girl of six...”” Oddly, ʾAbū Nuʿaym also attributes sab to ʾĀhmad (b. Ḥanbal), despite my 1895 edition of his Musnad clearly stating tis’.
but it does at least represent a wording from 'Abū Mu‘āwiyah, or in other words, his redaction.

‘Alī b. Mushir (d. 189/804-805)

I have collated six reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent ‘Alī b. Mushir (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwhah), recorded by al-Dārimī, Buṭrūq, Ibn Mājah, Abū ‘Awānah, al-Bayhaqī, and Ibn al-Ṭabarī. All of these reports are more similar to each other than to all the rest, which is consistent with their embodying a common tradition from their cited source. ‘Alī is thus likely a genuine PCL, to whom the following urtext can be attributed:


The handful of minor variations between the extant transmissions of this hadith are mostly consistent with being mere scribal errors. This, in combination with the otherwise extremely precise preservation of the texts, suggests that the transmission of this hadith from ‘Alī to his students occurred in writing.

311 Buṭrūq, Šaʿhiḥ, I, p. 767. The same hadith appears in two other places in abbreviated form, with relevant parts excerpted according to bāb: ibid., III, pp. 1080-1081. Since the ʿinsād and the available wording of these two are identical to the first, they clearly are just abbreviations or exceptions, which is why I have not included them as different versions or variants in the proceeding analysis.
312 Ibn Mājah (ed. ‘Abd al-Bāqī), Sunan, I, pp. 603-604, # 1876.
Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. 188/804)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ʿUrwah), recorded by Ibn ʾabī al-Dunyā, Ibn ʾabī Dāwūd, and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr. These three ascriptions (two of which converge on the PCL ʾAbū ʾKayṭamah) are not strikingly more similar to each other than to those found in other transmissions, but they are still extremely similar: both have ʿĀʾišah speaking in the first person; both have tazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh; both have sabʿ sinīn (although one version is uncertain and adds sitt as well); both have banā bī; and both have tisʿ sinīn. Other than the uncertainty over sitt ʾaw sabʿ sinīn, the only difference between these two reports is that ʾAbū ʾKayṭamah’s version may have had ibnah in two places, where Ibn ʾabī Dāwūd has bint.

It is thus still plausible that these two hadiths reflect Jarīr’s redaction, even if such an attribution is not certain (as it would be if they shared a distinctive or unique wording vis-à-vis all other versions of the marital-age hadith). That being so, the following redaction obtains:

[ʾakbara-nā] hišāmū bnʿ urwatā anʾabī-hi ʾan ʿāʾišatā qālat tazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh wa-ʾanā bintt ʾaw sabʿ sinīn wa-banā bī wa-ʾanā bint tisʿ sinīn.

The general uniformity of the preservation of this hadith (aside from the difference over sitt ʾaw sabʿ sinīn) is consistent with its having been transmitted in writing from Jarīr to his students.

---


317 Ibn ʾabī Dāwūd (ed. Ḥusayn), Musnad ʿAʾīshah, p. 64, # 34.


319 Since Ibn ʾabī Dāwūd’s version has a kind of collective ʾisnād, there is no specific ʾisnād for this particular hadith that can be compared to the wording in ʾAbū ʾKayṭamah’s version. Thus, if there were some differences between the ʾisnāds of these two versions, we can no longer detect them.
ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān (d. 187-188/803-804)

I have collated eight reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ʿUrwah), variously recorded by Ibn ʿabī Ṣaybah,320 Muslim,321 al-Balāḍurī,322 al-Nasāʾī (in two versions)323, Ibn al-Jārūd,324 Ibn ʿabī Dāwūd,325 al-Ṭabarānī,326 and ʿAbū Nuʿaym.327 At first glance, most of these transmissions from ʿAbdah do not seem to be more similar to each other than other hadiths within the broader Hišām tradition: there are several other PCL sub-traditions (Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān, Ḥammād b. Zayd, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, and Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah)328 and a few SS transmissions329 that also comprise the same two elements in the same order (marriage, consummation). On closer inspection, however, most of these other transmissions have Ṭāʾišah being married at seven or six or seven,330 whereas all of those from ʿAbdah have her being married at six. On this key detail, then, the transmissions from ʿAbdah are more similar to each other than to the rest, which is consistent with his redaction’s having been broadly preserved in the relevant transmissions.

There are some difficulties in the reconstruction of ʿAbdah’s redaction, however, given the variation that exists between the extant transmissions from him: in addition

---

320 Ibn ʿabī Ṣaybah (ed. ‘Usāmah), Muṣānnaf, XI, p. 316, # 34516.
321 Muslim (ed. Fāryābī), Ṣaḥīh, I, p. 642, # 70/1422. Muslim gives another ʿisnād for this hadith (Yahyā b. Yahyā—ʿAbu Muʿāwiyah—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah), but as he says, the wording of the hadith (al-lafẓ) is Ibn Numayr’s.
327 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafi), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 21, # 48.
328 See elsewhere, in the present chapter.
330 Moreover, the few that do have ʿĀʾišah marrying at six (as in ʿAbdah’s version) have other notable divergences: Ibn al-Muhtadī bi-Allāh and ʿAbū Nuʿaym’s versions both have li-sitt, rather than the usual ḥal clause; and al-Ṭabarānī’s version has an embellishment about the chronology. Only Saʿīd b. Manṣūr’s version remains extremely similar to ʿAbdah’s.
to a relatively high rate of added, omitted, and substituted words, one version (al-Nasāʾī) adds a short element about dolls, and others (converging on the PCL Hārūn b. Ḫishāq) add a long element about dolls. Thus, even though all of the transmissions from ʿAbdah retained the core gist that ʿĀʾišah was married at six and consummated in marriage at nine, there was considerable instability when it came to the exact wording thereof. This is consistent with paraphrasing, which makes it probable that the transmission of this hadith from ʿAbdah to his students occurred orally.

Most of the long ‘dolls’ element in the version of the PCL Hārūn is uncorroborated by all the other transmissions from ʿAbdah, such that Hārūn himself is probably responsible for adding the element into his version. The first part of Hārūn’s ‘dolls’ element (wa-kuntu ’al’abu bi-al-banāt) is corroborated by both of al-Nasāʾī’s versions, however, which means that we have two transmissions from ʿAbdah that incorporate the short ‘dolls’ element (Hārūn and al-Nasāʾī), and three that lack it (Ibn ʿabī Šaybah, Muslim, and al-Balāḏūrī). It could be the case that ʿAbdah’s original hadith incorporated the short ‘dolls’ element, although this raises the question of why three of those who transmitted from him omitted it.

There are two plausible explanations for all of this, and two corresponding ways in which the original redaction(s) could be reconstructed. Firstly, ʿAbdah never transmitted the ‘dolls’ element, which means that it obtained in Hārūn and al-Nasāʾī’s versions via some combination of tadlīs on the part of both Hārūn and al-Nasāʾī or his source Muḥammad b. Ḫādīm. Such a supposition would yield the following redaction from ʿAbdah:


The other option is that ʿAbdah transmitted two different versions of his own hadith: one containing the ‘dolls’ element (to Hārūn and Muḥammad), and one without it (Ibn ʿabī Šaybah, Ibn Numayr, and ʿAmr b. Muḥammad). Such a supposition yields the following redactions from ʿAbdah:

...hišām ʿan ʿabī-hi ʿan ʾāʾišat-qālat ʿazawwaja-nī rasūlu allāhī wa-ʾanā bintu sittu sininu wa-banā bī wa-ʾanā bintu tisu sininu.
...hišām an ʿabī ʿan ʿāʾišat qālat tazawwaja rasūl allāh waʾanā bint ʿalayya wa-daḵala [bī/ alayya] waʾanā ibnāt ʿusūsī sinīn wa-kuntu ʿalʿabu bi-al-banāt!

Even if he did, however, it seems probable that the version without the ‘dolls’ element represents his original formulation or transmission, given that the general tendency in the transmission of traditions is the accrual rather than loss of content. In other words, it is at least plausible that ‘Abdah’s inclusion of the ‘dolls’ element reflects a secondary addition to his hadith, borrowed from or contaminated by another famous hadith from Hišām.

Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795)

I have collated four reports ascribed to the Basran tradent Ḥammād b. Zayd (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwah), recorded by Ibn Saʿd, ʿAbū Dāwūd, ʿAbū ‘Awānah, and al-Ṭabarānī. These reports do appear to belong to the same sub-tradition vis-à-vis most other transmissions from Hišām b. ‘Urwah, but they are not unique: one of al-Rabī’ al-Murādī’s transmissions from Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah has an extremely similar wording, as does Ibn ʿabī Dāwūd’s transmission from Jarīr b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamid. Still, most versions of this sub-tradition explicitly depict Ḥammād b. Zayd as their source, which matches the fact that the matns therein inferably share a recent common ancestor vis-à-vis all other versions of the broader Hišām tradition. The underlying urtext thus probably derives from Ḥammād, or in other words: Ḥammād is probably a genuine PCL, whose wording has been preserved in this sub-tradition.

Still, there are some notable variations between the extant versions, mainly comprising some substituted, added, and omitted words. There is also a major difference in ʿAbū ‘Awānah’s version: following the usual two elements associated with

332 ʿAbū Dāwūd (ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd), Sunan, II, p. 239, # 2121
334 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafī), al-Muʿjam al-Ḵabīr, XXIII, p. 21, # 45.
335 Ṣāfī (ed. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib), ‘Umm, VI, p. 429, # 2462.
336 Ibn ʿabī Dāwūd (ed. Ḥusayn), Musnad ʿĀʾišah, p. 64, # 34.
Ḥammād, there is an elaborate account by ‘Āʾišah about her experiences on the day of her marital consummation (featuring women from the Ḥanāfīs, a swing, a fever and hair loss, and a marital preparation), followed by a description of how she continued to play with dolls with her shy friends. This particular combination of elements is actually unique: most of them can be found in the sub-traditions of ʿAlī b. Mushir, Ḥammād b. Salamah, ʿAbū ʿUsāmah, and Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir, but not the ‘dolls’ element; and whilst numerous transmissions and sub-traditions emanating from Ḥišām b. ‘Urwah contain the ‘dolls’ element, none of them also contain all the other aforementioned elements. Since none of the other transmissions from Ḥammād b. Zayd contain these elements, and since these elements are akin to those found in other sub-traditions, it seems clear that ʿAbū ʿAwānah (or Ibn ʿabī al-Ḥunayn, or Šihāb b. ʿAbbād, or a now-suppressed tradent) has contaminated his transmission from Ḥammād b. Zayd—combining and paraphrasing a distinctive set of elements from one or two other hadiths about ʿĀʾišah’s marriage and adding them into Ḥammād’s version.

When all of these variants are accounted for, the following urtext from Ḥammād b. Zayd obtains:

...hišām ibn ṣalām b. ʿaṣār al-ʾanṣār wa-ʿanā qālat ʿazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh wa-ʿanā [bint/ibnat]u sabʿi sinān wa-bānā bī wa-ʿanā bintu tisʿi.

Most of the variants within this sub-tradition are very minor, which is consistent with occasional scribal errors or mild paraphrasing. Most of the text was preserved quite precisely, which is consistent with the hadith’s having been transmitted partially or fully in writing, from Ḥammād to his students.

Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān (d. 178/794-795)

I have collated several reports ascribed to the Basran tradent Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān that bear consideration (in regards to the broader marital-age tradition of Hišām b.
ʿUrwah), variously recorded by Ibn Saʿd, al-Nasāʾī, ʿAbū ʿAwānah, and Ibn ʿAdī. Some of these hadiths contain the ‘dolls’ element, and some even lack the ‘marital-age’ elements altogether. If Jaʿfar did indeed transmit a hadith from Hišām comprising the ‘dolls’ element, he seems to have done so independently of his putative transmission of the marital-age elements therefrom: only Ibn Saʿd depicts the two as having been transmitted together, and even then, the marital-age elements in his version do not match the other ascriptions thereof to Jaʿfar. If the reports that are exclusively about the dolls are thus put aside, along with Ibn Saʿd’s contaminated or borrowed version, we are actually left with a distinctive sub-tradition: the matn ascribed to Jaʿfar by both al-Nasāʾī and ʿAbū ʿAwānah are more similar to each other than to all other versions of the marital-age tradition more broadly, which is consistent with both ascriptions reflecting Jaʿfar’s particular redaction.

There are some differences between these two ascriptions, in the form of a few added/omitted and substituted words, and they also differ slightly in the 'isnād (i.e., in how they quote Jaʿfar). However, these are all minor, and could be the result of either scribal errors or extremely mild paraphrasing. As such, Jaʿfar’s redaction is discernible, despite some uncertainty in the exact wording:

...hišām ibn 'urwat ‘an 'abī-hi ‘an 'ā'īsat qālat tazawwaja-nī |[rasūl allāhi]/[al-nabiyyu]| li-sab'[sn] [sinīn] wa-dākala ['alayya/bī] li-tis'sinīn

ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795)

I have collated three reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent ʿAbū Zubayd ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim (situated within the broader tradition associated with ʿAbū ʿIshāq), recorded by al-Nasāʾī, ʿAbāʾīnī, and al-Bayhaqi. These three reports clearly constitute a

---

341 Nasāʾī (ed. Ṭâyār et al.), Sunan, p. 772, # 3257.
342 ʿAbāʾīnī (ed. Salafī), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, pp. 22-23, # 53.
distinctive sub-tradition: they are all more similar to other—at least in terms of their core elements—than all other versions of the marital-age hadith more broadly,344 which is consistent with all three deriving from and reflecting ‘Abṣṭar’s particular redaction. There are three relatively minor differences between these versions: the first is an error in a name345; the second could be the product of paraphrase, interpolation, or scribal error346; and the third seems like a paraphrase.347 Al-Bayhaqi’s version exhibits two of these three variants, and further includes a lengthy final element about the meaning of the words kawṭar and buṭnān. Given the absence of this element in the other two, it is likely an interpolation, which implies dishonesty or extreme sloppiness on the part of someone in al-Bayhaqi’s ‘isnād.

The general uniformity of this hadith’s preservation (aside from the paraphrase and interpolation in al-Bayhaqi’s version) is consistent with its having been transmitted in writing from ‘Abṣṭar to his students (or at least, to Qutaybah and Saʿīd b. ‘Amr). Consequently, ‘Abṣṭar’s urtext is readily discernible across the three extant ascriptions:

...muṭarrifin ‘an ‘abi ’ishāq ‘an ‘abi ’ubaydat qāla qālat ‘ā’iṣat tazawwaja-
ni raṣūl=allāh li-ṭis’ sihīn wa-ṣahibtu-hu tīṣ.

Šarīk b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 177-178/793-795)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent Šarīk b. ‘Abd Allāh (situated within the broader tradition associated with ‘Abū ’Isḥaq), both of which are recorded by al-Ṭabarānī.348 There are marked differences between these two versions, in terms of their ascription (‘Abd Allāh b. Masʿūd vs. Āʾiṣah), the core detail of the first element (sitt vs. sab‘), the verb in the second element (daḵala vs. baḵā), and even—in the case of the first hadith—a whole extra element (wa-qubida wa-hiya bint ūmān ‘aṣrāḥ). In fact, the first version is more similar to certain specific transmissions from ‘Isrā’il than

344 In addition to comprising the rare combination of ‘married at nine’ and ‘the Prophet’s death’ (in terms of elements), all three exhibit the unique phrase wa-ṣahībhu-hu tīṣ.
345 B. has ‘abi ’ubayd, where the other two have ‘abi ’ubaydah.
346 T. has ‘an ’ā’iṣah qālat, where the other two have qāla qālat ‘ā’iṣah.
347 B. has wa-‘anā bint tīṣ, where the other two have li-tīṣ.
348 Šabarānī (ed. Salaﬁ), al-Mujam al-Kabīr, X, p. 184, # 10279 [this edition should be emended (to include the missing line wa-qubida wa-hiya bint) in light of the 1984 Wizarat al-ʿAwqaf wa-ṣulʿun al-Diniyyah, al-Jumhūriyyah al-ʿIraqīyyah edition (also at # 10279)]; ibid., XXIII, p. 23, # 54.
it is to the second version, whilst the second version is in turn more similar to any other version of the marital-age hadith that comprises only the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements, especially those with the keywords sab’ and baná—in particular, the redactions of Jarîr and Ḥammâd b. Zayd, both from Hišām. In other words, the two ascriptions to Šarîk are not more similar to each other than they are to other versions of the marital-age hadith more broadly. Indeed, one of the transmitters of the first ascription to Šarîk, Yahyá b. ’Âdam, elsewhere transmitted an extremely similar hadith from ’Isrâ’il (recorded by al-Tirmiḏî), which is consistent with someone (including Yahyá himself) having taken what Yahyá transmitted from ’Isrâ’il and retributed it to Šarîk, in order to corroborate ’Isrâ’il’s transmission from ’Abû ’Ishâq. Whatever the motive and whoever the culprits, Šarîk looks like a spider, i.e., the convergence of successive dives with disparate matns: the ascriptions from him do not reflect any discernible redaction that can be traced back to him.

’Abû ’Awânah al-Waḍḍâḥ (d. 176/792)

I have collated two faḍā’il reports with marital-age elements ascribed to the Iraqi tradent ’Abû ’Awânah al-Waḍḍâḥ (who spent time in Wasit but ended up in Basrah), recorded by Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarânî. These two reports are more similar to each other than they are to all others (including related faḍā’il reports) and therefore constitute a distinctive sub-tradition, which is consistent with both reflecting ’Abû ’Awânah’s particular redaction of the relevant pool of faḍā’il material. That said, there are still numerous differences between the two, in the form of added, omitted, and substituted words. Some of these are probably due to scribal errors (such as yašhad versus tašhad, which share the same consonantal rasm), but others (such as li-tis‘ sinîn versus wa-‘anâ bint tis‘ sinîn, or mariḍa rasûl allāh marḍata-hu versus mariḍa rasûl

---

350 See the relevant sections (above and below), and esp. Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 42; Ibn ābî Dāwûd (ed. Ḥusayn), Musnad ’Āʾishah, p. 64, # 34; Ŧabarânî (ed. Salaﬁ), al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr, XXIII, p. 21, # 45.
351 Tirmiḏî (ed. Sâmarrâ’î et al.), ‘Ilal, p. 169, # 296, which shares ‘an ‘abd allâh, sitt sinîn, daḵala, tis‘ sinîn, and qubiḏa.
352 Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 44.
353 Ŧabarânî (ed. Salaﬁ), al-Mu’jam al-Kabîr, XXIII, pp. 29-30, # 74.
allāh fi baytī fa-marrāḍtu-hu fa-qubiḍa) are consistent with paraphrasing, which would suggest some orality in the transmission of this hadith. Despite this, the gist of the hadith seems well preserved, retaining the same elements in the same order. This would suggest that the oral transmission of this hadith was sloppy but not wild or free, and may be indicative of the parallel use of written notes (i.e., used as a reminder of the basic outline of the hadith). Either way, the two reports agree in the majority of their wording, such that most of 'Abū ‘Awānah’s particular redaction is readily discernible:

...ʿabd al-malik b. ʿumayr ʿan ‘āʾišā bint ʿāʾišah ʿan ʿāʾišah ʿan ʿāʾišah ʿan ʿāʾišah. 354

Interestingly, the 'ısnaḍ of this hadith is munqaṭi, since 'Abd al-Malik b. ‘Umayr (who operated during the middle of the 8th Century CE and died in 136/754) was not remembered as having transmitted directly from ʿĀʾišah. 354 This is consistent with the hadith’s having been formulated in the 8th Century CE (for example, by 'Abū ‘Awānah), when munqaṭi hadiths were still acceptable.

Ḥammād b. Salamah (d. 167/784)

ʿAḥmad, ṾAbū Yaʿlá, ṾAbū ‘Awānah, al-ʿĀjurri, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayhaqī, and Ibn al-Ṭabarānī. The amount of variation between these transmissions from Ḥammād b. Salamah is staggering: some of them have different elemental sequences; some of them add or omit elements present in the others; some of them rearrange the order of words within shared elements; some of them differ slightly in their ʿIsnāds; and finally, all of them add, omit, and substitute words and even whole lines within shared elements.

Despite all of this, it seems likely that Ḥammād was a genuine PCL who transmitted some combination of these elements to some of his students—but what exactly did he transmit? The problem here is not that a distinctive sequence or wording cannot be attributed to him, but rather, the opposite: multiple, different sequences and particular wordings are attested for him. To make matters worse, these distinctive elements and wordings are not coterminous, which is to say: one version may share a distinctive wording with another, which in turn shares a distinctive sequence of elements with another, which in turn shares a distinctive wording with yet another, and so on. This means either that there was a storm of alteration and contamination occurring between Ḥammād’s students, and/or that Ḥammād changed the hadith in the course of successive retellings. In light of the oral mode of transmission that still predominated in the generation of Ḥammād, the latter scenario at least seems highly plausible. That being so, the reconstruction of a single redaction from him is out of the question. Instead, only discrete units of Ḥammād’s hadith (i.e., elements, or sets of elements), transmitted at different times in different combinations, can be identified. Some of these may be the product of later alteration and contamination between

---

360 There are actually two versions of this hadith in two of the works of Ibn Ḥanbal (both actually composed by his son ʿAbd Allāh), with slight differences: Musnad, VI, p. 280, and (ed. ‘Abbās), Ilal, III, p. 243, # 5073. In addition to slight differences in the wording of the ʿIsnād, the version in the latter has muḥajammah and sabʾ sinīn ‘aw sitt sinīn, where the former has mujammamah and sabʾ sinīn; muḥajammah is gibberish born from a scribal or typographical error, but sabʾ sinīn ‘aw sitt sinīn has a better claim to reflecting the original than sabʾ sinīn, based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity. Finally, second version has jāʾat-nā, where the first has the usual jāʾat-nī.

361 ṾAbū Yaʿlá (ed. ‘Asad), Musnad, VIII, p. 74, # 4600/244.


Ḥammād’s students, but much of it likely goes back to him—after all, they often comprise distinctive wordings and sequences, which is consistent with their common ascriptions to Ḥammād reflecting his various particular wordings and formulations.

To begin with, Ḥammād sometimes prefaced his hadith with a narrative about ʿĀʾišah being shown to the Prophet in silk in a dream, which began as follows:

...hišām bni ʿurwat ʿan ʿāʾišat ʾanna rasūl allāh qāla ḥāfira ilā jāriyat fī saraqat min ḥarīr ...

Thereafter, he sometimes added the following element:

...baʿd wafāt ʾaḍiyyat ...

Thereafter, he would sometimes conclude this narrative with the following line:

...narrabayn lay kālī.

Other times, rather than just stipulating that the scenario occurred twice or thrice, he would actually narrate the second occurrence, as follows:

...umm aʿūtītu bi-jāriyat fī [saraqat min] [ṣurrāt] ḥarīr fa-kašāftu-hā fa-ʿiḍā hiya ʾanti fa-qulta in yaku[n] hādā min ʿind allāh yumdi-hi.

On some occasions, he may even have repeated this element a third time (although this is only attested in one report, such that the wording is uncorroborated), as follows:

[...umm aʿūtītu bi-jāriyat fī saraqat min ḥarīr fa-kašāftu-hā fa-ʿiḍā hiya ʾanti fa-qulta in yaku[n] hādā min ʿind allāh yumdi-hi.]
the preliminary narrative about dreams and silk altogether—he would begin the hadith with the following ʾIsnād:

...hišām bni ʿurwat ʾan ʿabī-ḥi ʾan ʿāʾišat qālat...

Thereafter (regardless of whether he had prefaced the hadith with the narrative about dreams and silk), he would usually begin the main (marital-age) hadith as follows:

...azawwaja-nī rasūl Allāḥ...

Thereafter, Ḥammād would often mention Kadijah’s death, usually in the following way:

...mutawaffā kadijat...

At other times (according to two attestations), he would instead mention it in the following way:

...baʿda wafāt kadijat...

At other times (according to two attestations), he would proceed without mentioning it at all. Either way, he would usually (but not always, per three attestations) continue:

...atra makraji-ḥi ’ilā al-madīnat bi-sanatayn ʾaw talāt...

Thereafter, he would usually mention the Hijrah, as follows:

...waʿ-anā [bint/ibn]at sittin ʾaw sabʾin sinin...

Or, alternatively:

...waʿ-anā [bint/ibn]at sabʾin sinin ʾaw sittin sinin...

Thereafter, he would usually mention the Hijrah, as follows:
Alternatively, he would make no mention of the Hijrah and instead move straight to ʿĀʾīshah's marital consummation, probably as follows:

\[\text{...wa-banā bī wa-'anā [bint/ibnat] u tis'ī sinī...}\]

Thereafter (regardless of whether he mentioned the Hijrah or ʿĀʾīshah's marital consummation), he would continue with a mention of ʿĀʾīshah's playing on a swing as a girl with shoulder-length hair, probably as follows:

\[\text{...ā'ā-nī niswat u wa-'anā 'al'abu 'alá 'urjūhatu wa-'anā mujammamat...}\]

Alternatively, he may have reordered the wording, although this is poorly attested (i.e., by only two reports, with markedly different wordings). Either way, he would then continue with mention of ʿĀʾīshah's marital preparation, often beginning with the following:

\[\text{...a-dahabna bī...}\]

Thereafter, he would continue (or alternatively, begin the element) with the following:

\[\text{...a-hayya'ha-nī wa-ṣan[n]a'na-nī...}\]

Thereafter, he would usually conclude the hadith with the following:

\[\text{...summa 'atayna bī rasūlā allāh [fa-banā bī wa-'anā [bint/ibnat] u tis'ī sinī.}\]

(Sometimes, he may have omitted fa-banā bī, as attested in two instances.) But sometimes (when he had already mentioned ʿĀʾīshah's marital consummation near the beginning of the hadith), he would instead conclude with the following shorter ending (attested twice):

\[\text{...wa-'ahdayna-nī 'ilā rasūlā allāh.}\]
The ordering these elements was not random: the narrative from the Prophet about ʿĀʾišah being presented to him in a dream in silk (when present) always came at the beginning of the hadith; the ‘Ḵadījah’s death’ element (when present) was always made near the beginning of the aforementioned narrative (after the first instance of ḥarīr), and/or near the beginning of ʿĀʾišah’s autobiographical narrative (after tazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh); the ‘Hijrah’ element (when present) always came immediately after the ‘married at six/seven’ element; the ‘swing’ element, the ‘hair’ element, and the ‘marital preparation’ element were always present, and always in that order (although the first two were sometimes a bit intermingled); and the ‘consummated in marriage at nine’ element always came either directly after the ‘married at six/seven’ element (in lieu of the ‘Hijrah’ element), or (when the ‘Hijrah’ element was included) at the very end of the hadith.

The ordering principle behind this pattern is easy to discern: the elements comprising (the various redactions of) Ḥammād’s hadith—whenever they happened to be present—were ordered chronologically. The exception thereto is the ‘consummated in marriage at nine’ element, which was sometimes paired directly with the ‘married at six/seven’ element (and always at the expense of the ‘Hijrah’ element, for some reason), presumably because they were related thematically.

There is less order (which is to say, no real order) when it came to the inclusion or omission of sub-elements, i.e., the inclusion or omission of specific wordings within some of the elements of the hadith. This was the case principally with the ‘marital preparation’ element: sometimes ḏahabna bī was included, and sometimes not; sometimes hayya’na-nī was included, and sometimes not; and sometimes șan[n]a’na-nī was included, and sometimes not. Additionally, the word sinīn was sometimes included and sometimes excluded, in both the ‘married at six/seven’ element and the ‘consummated in marriage at nine’ element, and fa-banā bī was sometimes omitted from the latter as well.

Less common (or at least, less detectable, absent more corroborating transmissions) are paraphrastic substitutions, of which the main examples are mutawaffā kadijah versus ba’da wafāt kadijah, ibnah versus bint (along with the addition or omission of sinīn), and țumma ʿatayna bī rasūl allāh versus wa-ʿahdayna-nī ʾilā rasūl allāh. For the most part, wordings were variously added or subtracted, but not substituted.
In short, the inclusion of many elements was random, and the inclusion therein of specific sub-elements or particular wordings was random; but the ordering thereof was not random, and the specific wordings themselves were not random. The latter point is of particular interest: for example, the marital-age element may have comprised ḏahabna bī + hayyaʾna-nī + ᵃn[祆]aʾna-nī, or ḏahabna bī + ᵃn[祆]aʾna-nī + hayyaʾna-nī, or just hayyaʾna-nī + ᵃn[祆]aʾna-nī, but seemingly not paraphrases or substitutions thereof.

All of this is consistent with Ḥammād’s having memorised a set of wordings tied to particular concepts or episodes, which he variously included or excluded—usually in chronological order—in successive retellings. Ḥammād’s version of the marital-age hadith was thus a kind of fluid construct, in which a range of (mostly fixed) wordings functioned as optional or interchangeable building blocks. In this respect, Ḥammād comes across as somewhat of a storyteller, rather than a simple tradent.

**Wuhayb b. Ḵālid (d. 165/781-782)**

I have collated three reports ascribed to the Basran tradent Wuhayb b. Ḵālid (situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ʿUrwah), recorded by Ibn Saʿd,367 al-Buḫārī,368 and al-Ṭabarānī.369 These three texts (two of which converge upon the PCL ʿAffān) are more similar to each other than either is to any other version of the marital-age tradition (with the same set of elements in the same order, with the same distinctive wording), such that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition and must share a recent common ancestor vis-à-vis all the rest. This matches the ʾisnāds, which depict Wuhayb as the PCL for this sub-tradition. The attribution of the urtext of this hadith to Wuhayb thus seems probable.

There is a wrinkle here, however: al-Ṭabarānī’s transmission from Wuhayb via ʿAffān is actually identical to al-Buḫārī’s transmission from Wuhayb via Muʿallá, when it comes to the wording of the constitutive elements of the hadith. In other words, when it comes to the wording of the elements, al-Ṭabarānī’s version is more similar to al-

369 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafī), *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, XXIII, p. 21, # 47.
Buḳārī’s version than Ibn Saʿd’s, despite Ibn Saʿd likewise transmitting from ‘Affān. This is consistent with Ibn Saʿd’s being uniquely sloppy within this sub-tradition, but it is also consistent with al-Ṭabarānī’s version’s having been contaminated by al-Buḳārī’s, or even having been borrowed therefrom and given a false, alternative ‘īsnād (via ‘Affān rather than Muʿallā).

Of course, there is still a major difference between al-Buḳārī’s version, on the one hand, and Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s, on the other: the former adds an important statement from Wuhayb that is absent in the other two, clarifying that the third element is an editorial comment or addendum. To illustrate this difference, consider the following translation of Ibn Saʿd’s version:

‘Affān b. Muslim reported to us: “Wuhayb reported to us: “Hišām b. ‘Urwah reported to us, from his father, from ‘Āʾišah, that the Messenger of God married her when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years, and she was with him nine years.””

Likewise, consider the following translation of al-Ṭabarānī’s version:

Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās al-Muʿaddib related to us: “‘Affān b. Muslim al-Ṣaffār related to us—he said: “Wuhayb b. ʿAffār related to us—He said: “Wuhayb related to us, from his father, from ‘Āʾišah, that the Prophet married her when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years, and she was with him nine years.””

In both of these versions, the final element is presented as if it is part of the same package of information as the rest, deriving together from the same set of sources back to ‘Āʾišah. By contrast, consider al-Buḳārī’s version (emphasis mine):

Muʿallā b. Ṭasad related to us: “Wuhayb related to us, from Hišām b. ‘Urwah, from his father, from ‘Āʾišah, that the Prophet married her when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years.

Then Hišām said: “And I was informed that (fa-qāla hišām wa-ʿunbiʾtu ‘anna-hā) she was with him nine years.”

The difference is striking: in al-Buḳārī’s version, it is recorded that the third element was an unsourced addendum by Hišām. Even if the third element also derived from
Urwh, the fact that Hišām presents it as an addendum (rather than simply narrating it along with the rest) suggests that this element was not originally transmitted in the same package of information as the other two, or in other words: at minimum, Hišām is combining information from different reports from his father. That said, there is reason to suspect that Hišām is actually not being depicted as saying that he received the third element from Urwh. For the first two elements, Hišām is explicitly depicted as having claimed to receive them from his father, from Ā’išah; but for the final element, he vaguely states that “I was informed”, in the passive. This would be odd if the informant in question was simply Urwh, who was explicitly cited as the source for the preceding two elements: why not simply say, “my father said” (qāla ʾabī), or “he said” (qāla), or similar?  This suggests that Hišām obtained this element from someone other than his father, i.e., an anonymous source.

There is thus a major difference between Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s versions, on the one hand, and al-Buḵārī’s, on the other: the first two make it seem as though the third element in this hadith (kānat ʿinda-hu tisʿ sinīn) was part of the same report—from the same line of transmission—as the third element, whereas the latter makes it clear that the third element is an addendum or comment from some other source. Al-Buḵārī’s version is clearly the archaic one, in light of the Criterion of Dissimilarity: it is much more likely that an addendum from a majhūl was smoothed over and incorporated into the rest of the hadith, rather than vice versa. This is similar to the well-known phenomenon of the “incorporation of marginalia” in the copying of manuscripts, which is to say: this sort of thing happened all the time in the transmission of texts. Since both of the versions that lack Hišām’s clarification claim to derive from Affān, he is the obvious culprit behind the suppression thereof: where Muʿallá accurately transmitted Wuhayb’s recounting of Hišām’s addendum to al-Buḵārī, Affān made it seem as though the addendum was simply part of the same narration as the rest of the hadith, which he then transmitted to both Ibn Saʿd and Muḥammad b. al-ʿAbbās (which the latter in turn passed on to al-Ṭabarānī).

370 For comparison, see the redactions of Ḥammād b. Salamah, Abū Usāmah, Muḥammad b. Bīr, Saʿīd b. Yahyā, and ʾAḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAbbār (in the relevant sections, above), where the previously-cited source is reintroduced or cited again with a simple qālat or qālat fulān.

However, the fact that al-Ṭabarānī’s version is otherwise identical to al-Buḵārī’s in wording is still highly suspect, for it looks as though the former (or his source, Muḥammad) may have borrowed the latter’s matn and supplied it with an alternative line of transmission: via ‘Affān (who may have been known as a transmitter of this hadith, thanks to Ibn Sa’d), rather than Mu’allá. Alternatively, al-Ṭabarānī or Muḥammad may really have received a version of this hadith from ‘Affān, but updated the wording according to that in the version of the great al-Buḵārī.

If either of those scenarios is correct, then why did al-Ṭabarānī or Muḥammad not also borrow Hišām’s statement? The answer is simple: doing so would have created a weaker or less desirable hadith, i.e., one with an element from a majhūl. Thus, even if al-Ṭabarānī or Muḥammad borrowed from al-Buḵārī’s version, or updated the wording of a genuine transmission from ‘Affān to accord to the exact wording of al-Buḵārī’s version, we would still have a reason to expect that they would omit Hišām’s statement.

Since this scenario is at least plausible, we cannot treat al-Ṭabarānī’s version as a corroboration for Ibn Sa’d’s transmission from ‘Affān: al-Ṭabarānī’s version is suspect, and must be removed from the equation accordingly. This leaves us with only two transmissions from Wuhayb: Ibn Sa’d, via ‘Affān; and al-Buḵārī, via Mu’allá. Can we still reconstruct Wuhayb’s urtext therefrom, or could some kind of borrowing underly the remaining two versions as well? Since al-Buḵārī retains Hišām’s statement, he cannot have borrowed his version from Ibn Sa’d, who lacks it—otherwise, we would have to posit that al-Buḵārī inserted Hišām’s statement into the hadith, which seems unlikely. (Likewise, if al-Buḵārī indeed received his version from Mu’allá, it does not seem likely that Mu’allá borrowed it from Ibn Sa’d, for the same reasons.) Again, al-Buḵārī’s version likely represents the original outline (though not necessarily the exact wording) of this sub-tradition, per the Criterion of Dissimilarity. In light of that fact, and in light of the fact that an interpolated version of the sub-tradition is recorded by Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845), the original must be earlier still.

The attribution of this sub-tradition back to Wuhayb is thus at least plausible, even if the match between the ʾisnāds and the matns is not as precise as it first appeared. The texts are still consistent with descending from a recent common ancestor (who

---

372 I.e., when it appeared that the ʾisnāds accurately tracked the sub-tradition of ‘Affān within the broader sub-tradition of Wuhayb; see the section on ‘Affān, above.
must have been operating prior to Ibn Sa’d), which matches the depiction of Wuhayb as the PCL thereof in the ʾisnāds.

There is of course variation between Ibn Sa’d and al-Buḵārī’s ascriptions to Wuhayb, but these are mostly few and minor (i.e., four instances of substituted words), with the exception of the omission of Hišām’s statement in Ibn Sa’d’s version. The minor variants could be chalked up to occasional mild paraphrasing or simple scribal errors, but the major variant is consistent with interpolation on the part of either Ibn Sa’d or his source ʿAffān.

Accordingly (and by taking the Criterion of Dissimilarity into account), the following redaction can be plausibly reconstructed back to Wuhayb:

\[
\ldots\text{hišām}^i \text{bn}^i \text{ʿurwat}^a \text{ʿan } \text{ʿabī}-\text{hi } \text{ʿan } \text{ʿāʾišat}^a \text{anna } ([\text{rasūla allāh}] / [\text{al-nabiyye}]^i) \text{tazawwajah-ḥā wa-hiya \text{[ibn}^a/bint^a \text{] sitt}^i \text{sinin}^j \text{wa-banā bi-ḥā chair [ibn/bint]}^a \text{[sitt}^i \text{sinin}^j \text{] fa-qāla hišām}^a \text{un wa-ʿunbiṭu } \text{ʿanna-hā kānat}^a \text{inda-hu tis}^a \text{sinin}^j^x.\]
\]

The sequence of elements and most of the wordings therein have been accurately preserved, which is consistent with the hadith’s having been transmitted (at least in part) in writing, from Wuhayb to his students. Al-Buḵārī, Mu’allá, and Wuhayb come across as particularly reliable, given their accurate preservation of Hišām’s clarificatory statement concerning the third element (vis-à-vis Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarānî’s versions).

**al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786)**

I was only able to find one transmission of the tradition of the Kufan Zaydī theologian and traditionist al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy within the extant Hadith corpus: the report recorded by Ibn Rāhwayh (reconstructed).\(^{373}\) Given that the attribution of this hadith to al-Ḥasan relies upon a SS, said attribution cannot be confirmed, which is to say: the evidence does not allow us to affirm that al-Ḥasan was a genuine CL. Moreover, even if it were the case that this hadith ultimately originates as the saying of al-Ḥasan (which

---

\(^{373}\) \text{See the section on ʾIshāq b. Rāhwayh, above.}
is certainly plausible),\textsuperscript{374} we would have no way of knowing exactly which extant wordings belong to the original, and which are the product of later error, contamination, or interpolation.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ’abī al-Zinād (d. 164/780-781 or 174/790-791)

I have collated five reports ascribed to the Madino-Baghdadian tradent ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ’abī al-Zinād (mostly situated within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwah), recorded by Ibn Saʿd,\textsuperscript{375} ’Abd Allāh b. ʾAḥmad (in his recension of the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal),\textsuperscript{376} al-ʾAṣamm (in his recension of the Jāmiʿ of Ibn Wahb),\textsuperscript{377} and al-Ṭabarānī.\textsuperscript{378} Al-Ṭabarānī’s first version (recorded in his al-Mu’jam al-ʾAwsat) should be discarded immediately, on several grounds: firstly, it comprises a combination of elements (in particular, about the Prophet’s death) that is uncorroborated by any other transmission from Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād; secondly, the ’īsnād has Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād transmitting from his father, where all the rest have him transmitting from Hišām; and thirdly, the combination of elements therein is more similar to the sub-tradition of Sufyān al-Ṭawrī (i.e., a different PCL) than to the other transmissions from Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād, and the key wordings therein (‘udkiltu ʿalay-hi and wa-makaṭtu ʿinda-hu tisʿan) are identical to those in the redaction by Sufyān’s PCL-student al-ʿAḥwaṣ b. Jawwāb in particular, a version which was recorded by none other than al-Ṭabarānī himself.\textsuperscript{379}

For all of these reasons, al-Ṭabarānī’s first version is likely the product of contamination and/or interpolation.

Al-Ṭabarānī’s second version (recorded in his al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr) suffers from a similar problem, but on a much smaller scale: the ascription to Hišām and the

\textsuperscript{374} After all, why would Ibn Rāḥwayh or Yaḥyā, both of whom were traditionists operating in the era when Companion or Prophetical hadiths were prized above all else, have bothered to invent the saying of an 8th-Century traditionist?

\textsuperscript{375} Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{376} Ibn Ḥanbal (ed. Ğamrawi), Musnad, VI, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{377} Ibn Wahb (ed. ’Abd al-Muṭṭalib & Mazyad), Jāmiʿ, pp. 154-155, # 260.

\textsuperscript{378} Tabarānī (ed. Ṭāriq & Ḥusaynī), al-Mu’jam al-ʾAwsat, VII, p. 94, # 6957; id. (ed. Salafi), al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 21, # 46.

\textsuperscript{379} Id. (ed. Ṭāriq & Ḥusaynī), al-Mu’jam al-ʾAwsat, II, p. 301, # 2042.
combination of elements therein are corroborated by other transmissions from Ibn 'abī al-Zīnād, but the wording of the second element (wa-'udkīltu 'alay-hi wa-'anā bint tīs' sinīn) happens to be identical with al-Ṭabarānī's first version (in al-Mu'jam al-' Awsāf) and, by extension, the redaction of al-'Aḥwas. This is consistent with minor contamination, wherein the wording of one particular element has been replaced by the analogous wording from a different transmission. Since this happened twice in the works of the very same collector (and the 'īsnāds claim independent paths, via different regions, back to Ibn 'abī al-Zīnād), the collector himself is likely responsible for the contamination: whether through error, mendacity, or some other motive, al-Ṭabarānī altered the wording in at least one of his transmissions from Ibn 'abī al-Zīnād. Perhaps he did so under the influence of the first contaminated or interpolated version (in al-Mu'jam al-' Awsāf), for which he was not himself responsible—or perhaps he was responsible for contamination or interpolation of both versions (in al-Mu'jam al-' Awsāf and al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr alike).

There is also a problem in al-'Aṣamm's version, viz., the dual ascription: his transmission claims to derive via both Saʿīd b. 'Abd al-Rahmān and 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'abī al-Zīnād, with both receiving the hadith in turn from Hišām. In addition to the ascription to Saʿīd being completely uncorroborated (both in the other ascriptions to Ibn 'abī al-Zīnād, and in other transmissions from Hišām more broadly), Saʿīd was reportedly born in 157/773-774 (as recorded in the 'Ākbār al-Quḍāh of Wakīʿ).\(^{380}\) a decade after the death of Hišām. If so, he cannot have transmitted this hadith directly from Hišām, which means that the 'īsnād in question is munqaṭiʿ in that respect.

Despite all of that (and with al-Ṭabarānī's first version removed from the equation), these reports are more similar to each other than to other versions of the marital-age in certain key ways: two of them share the unusual element mutawaffā kadijah, and three of them share the element about 'Āʾišah's dolls and her shy friends. More importantly, all three of these 'dolls' elements begin with the d-k-l root, then 'Āʾišah's saying that she would 'al'abu, then a statement about her friends, which is unique out of all versions of the marital-age hadith that incorporate the 'dolls' element.\(^{381}\)

---


That said, al-ʾAṣamm’s version of the ‘dolls’ element is in another respect more similar to the ‘dolls’ element that appears in one of versions of the marital-age hadith recorded in al-Rabī’ al-Murādī’s recension of al-Šāfiʿī’s works: both have the line *fa-ʾiḍā raʿayna rasūl allāh*, to the exclusion of all other related versions of the marital-age hadith.\(^{382}\) Since al-ʾAṣamm received his version from Egyptians, and since al-Šāfiʿī and al-Rabī’ both operated in Egypt, this cannot be a coincidence: some kind of contamination evidently took place between Egyptian tradents of different versions of the marital-age hadith around the turn of the 9th Century CE. Still, in most other respects, al-ʾAṣamm’s version is more similar to other transmissions from Ibn ’abī al-Zinād: in addition to the aforementioned, his version also shares both *istahyayna* and *rubba-mā* with al-Ṭabarānī’s second version, to the exclusion of all other relevant versions.

Thus, it is still plausible that the relevant reports preserve a distinctive redaction from Ibn ’abī al-Zinād, even if the preservation in question was highly imperfect: the variation between these reports is substantial, including the addition or omission of whole elements. Even where the same elements are retained, there are numerous variants, including additions, omissions, and, above all, substitutions and paraphrases. All of this suggests that Ibn ’abī al-Zinād’s redaction was transmitted to his students not just orally, but rather freely or sloppily. Despite this, the outline and at least some of the wording of Ibn ’abī al-Zinād’s redaction can be recovered from the available transmissions, although much of it is poorly attested (by only two of the four reports), and some parts are largely reconstructable altogether:

...hišām\(^1\) bn\(^1\) ‘urwat\(^3\) ‘an ‘abī-hi ‘an ‘āʾišat\(^3\) qālat ṭawawaja-ni rasūl\(^u\) allāh wā-ʾanā bint\(^u\) sitti sinin- [mutawaffá ḫadijat\(^u\)] wa-daḵala bī wa-ʾanā [bint/ibnat]\(^u\) tis\(^1\) sinin fa-daḵaitu [[ʿalā rasūl\(^1\) allāh]]/[ʿalay-hi] wā-ʾanā ‘al’abu bī-al-banāt\(^u\) wa-kāna li šawāḥibu yal’abna ma’ī [[fa-yadkulu fa-yaqru fa-yaxru fa-yaqru min rasūlu allāhu]]/[fa-ʾiḍā raʿaynā rasūlu allāh\(^1\) istahyayna wa-taḵamma’na fa-rubba-mā ḫaraja rasūlu allāhu]/[fa-rubba-mā istahyayna min rasūlu allāhu]/[fa-yusarrihu-hunna ḫayyayn]

The muddled penultimate section of the ‘dolls’ element probably contained the verb *istahyayna*, the *q-m-ʿ* root, the preposition *min*, the wording *fa-rubba-mā*, and the *k-r-j*

\(^{382}\) Compare Šāfiʿī (ed. ’Abd al-Muṭṭalib), *Umm*, X, p. 141, with all of the other references above.
root, since each is attested twice. The ordering and specifics differ in each version, however, rendering the original impossible to reconstruct.

**Sufyān al-Ṭawrī (d. 161/777-778)**

The reports ascribed to Sufyān al-Ṭawrī are somewhat messy, so some disentanglement is in order. Firstly, there are seven that reside within the broader tradition of Hišām b. ‘Urwh, recorded by al-Buḵārī,383 Abū ‘Awānah,384 Ibn Hibbān,385 al-Ṭabarānī,386 and Abū Nu‘aym.387 All of these reports (most of which converge on the PCLs Qabīṣah, al-ʾAḥwas, and al-Firyābī) are more similar to each other than they are to all other versions of the marital-age hadith, such that they definitely constitute a distinctive sub-tradition: this is consistent with their reflecting Sufyān al-Ṭawrī’s particular redaction of the marital-age hadith. There is still considerable variation between these ascriptions, however, including a difference in their ʾisnāds, a difference in narrative perspective, and several substituted words. Based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity, al-Buḵārī’s munqaṭṭiʿ version of the hadith from Qabīṣah is more likely to represent Sufyān’s original than the muttasīl ascriptions of the other two PCLs, which would imply that both al-ʾAḥwas and al-Firyābī raised their respective versions. Given that their muttasīl ascriptions are worded differently,388 they may have done so independently, in response to the common pressure against broken or imperfect ʾisnāds.389 Additionally, the first-person point-of-view in al-ʾAḥwas’s version is definitely secondary, compared to the third-person narrations about ʾĀʾišah in the versions of al-Firyābī and al-Buḵārī—Qabīṣah: this is again consistent with interpolation, although it could be the product of very liberal paraphrasing. The remaining variants are also consistent with paraphrasing, which in turn suggests that

---

383 Buḵārī, Ṣahīḥ, III, pp. 1076, 1081.
388 F. has ṣan ʿabī-ḥi ʿan ʿāʾišah ṣanā, whereas A. has ṣan ʿabī-ḥi ʿan ʿāʾišah qālat.
389 Similarly, Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muḥammad, 58.
the hadith was transmitted orally from Sufyān to his students: the gist was retained fairly accurately, even if some of the wordings (along with the ascriptions in two cases, and the narrator’s perspective in one case) changed along the way. Some of the wording is thus tentative, but the following redaction can be attributed to the PCL Sufyān al-Ṭawrī:

...hišām1 bn1 ‘urwat2 ‘an ‘urwat3 tazawwaja al-nabiyyu4 ‘ā’išat5 wa-hiya [ibnat/bint]6 sitt7 wa-udkīlat7 alay-hi wa-hiya [ibnat/bint]6 tis7t was-makātatt ‘inda-hu tis8u.

In addition to all of the above, I was also able to find three reports ascribed to Sufyān al-Ṭawrī that ostensibly reside within the broader tradition of ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq, recorded by Ibn Saʿd390 and al-Ṭabarānī.391 These three ascriptions do not constitute a distinctive sub-tradition vis-à-vis other versions of the marital-age hadith: Ibn Saʿd’s version is more similar to ʾIsrāʾīl’s redaction (in terms of elemental outline)392 and a certain transmission from ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah (in terms of specific wording)393; al-Ṭabarānī’s first version comprises a combination of elements that jars with all other transmissions from Sufyān, but which also closely matches the distinctive wording of the second half of al-ʿAḥwaṣ’s redaction (from Sufyān, from Hišām) in particular394; and al-Ṭabarānī’s second version likewise comprises a combination of elements that jars with all other transmissions from Sufyān and Qabīṣah alike, but which likewise closely matches some of the distinctive wording of both Qabīṣah and al-Firyābī (from Sufyān, from Hišām).395 In other words, there is no distinctive redaction from Sufyān from ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq discernible here: in addition to being extremely disparate vis-à-vis each other (in terms of elements), each of these three ascriptions is more similar to other transmissions, including other transmissions from Sufyān from Hišām b. ʿUrwaḥ. This is consistent with all three of these ascriptions being the product of some kind of borrowing or contamination, through error (e.g., accidently mixing Sufyān’s ascription to Hišām with ʾIsrāʾīl’s ascription to ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq) and/or some kind of deliberate reattribution and

391 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafī), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 23, # 55; ibid., # 56.
392 See the section on ʾIsrāʾīl, below.
394 In particular, ʿudkīltu and makoṭṭu.
395 In particular, wa-makaṭāt ‘inda-hu tis’. 
diving (e.g., to provide 'Isrā'il's ascription to 'Abū 'Ishāq with some kind of corroboration). Either way, it does not seem like Sufyān transmitted a version of the marital-age hadith from 'Abū 'Ishāq.

Finally, there are four additional reports ascribed to Sufyān al-Ṭawrī that appear to be versions of the marital-age hadith, recorded by al-'Ijlī, Ibn 'abi Āşim, and al-Ṭabarānī. All of these hadiths (three of which derive from the PCL Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan) are the product of substantial contamination or interpolation, and cannot be attributed to Sufyān. The version from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan has an 'isnād (Saʿd b. ʾIbrāhīm—al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad) that is completely uncorroborated by any other ascription of the marital-age hadith to Sufyān, and a set of elements that is only corroborated by a version (al-'Ijlī's) that has a different 'isnād (ʾIsmāʾīl b. ʿUmayyah—'Abd Allāh b. 'Urwa). In turn, the version of al-'Ijlī (from 'Abū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī) is an obvious corruption of an extremely widely transmitted hadith from Sufyān about Šawwāl that otherwise—in every other version, of which there are dozens and dozens—lacks the marital-age elements. In other words, al-'Ijlī’s version is a pre-existing and well-known hadith from Sufyān that has been contaminated (at the hands of al-'Ijlī himself or, more likely, his immediate source, 'Abū Dāwūd) by the marital-age hadith, whilst Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan’s version is a similar contamination (or borrowing) compounded by a further error or interpolation in the 'isnād, whereby the original ascription (via ʾIsmāʾīl—'Abd Allāh) has been replaced by a false ascription (via Sa’d—al-Qāsim). To top this all off, the 'isnād in al-'Ijlī’s version is munqaṭi’, since it is missing 'Urwa between 'Abd Allāh and 'Āʾīšah—but this is plausibly the product of scribal error, whereby a scribe skipped 'an 'urwa by mistaking it for the preceding bn 'urwa (similar to homeoteleuton).

In short, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī was a genuine PCL who transmitted his own distinctive redaction of the marital-age hadith, on the authority of Hišām b. ʿUrwa, to at least three students: Qabīṣah, al-Firyābī, and al-ʾAḥwaṣ. Thereafter, in two instances, Sufyān’s hadith was contaminated or interpolated and reattributed from Hišām to 'Abū 'Ishāq, whilst in a third instance, Sufyān’s name was recruited into an existing

398 ʾṬabarānī (ed. Salafī), al-Muḥjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 22, # 52; ibid., p. 28, # 69.
399 Juynboll, Encyclopedias, 642, col. 2.
400 Specifically, the sub-tradition of 'Abdah, which shares extremely similar wordings therewith.
ascription to ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq. Finally, in two instances, a completely different hadith about ʿĀdāwi—transmitted by Suḥyān to numerous students, on the authority of ʿĪsmāʿīl b. ʿUmayyah—was contaminated or interpolated in two instances with elements from the marital-age hadith, one of which was also reattributed from ʿĪsmāʿīl to Saʿd b. ʿIbrāhīm.

I have collated eight reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus (situated within the broader tradition associated with ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq), recorded by Ibn Saʿd,401 Ibn Mājah,402 al-Ṭirmiẓī,403 al-Balāḍūrī,404 al-Nasāʾī,405 al-ʿUqaylī,406 and al-Ḵaṭīb al-Baḍāḍī.407 Several of these ascriptions converge three PCLs: including al-ṭaḏl b. Dukayn, ʿAbū ʾAḥmad al-Zubayrī, and Yaḥyā b. ʿĀdām.

Most of these reports are more similar to each other than all other versions of the marital-age hadith (bar one or two related SSs), such that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition: this is consistent with said reports reflecting an underlying redaction from ʿĪsrāʾīl, and with ʿĪsrāʾīl being a genuine PCL. A notable exception is the first report recorded by al-ʿUqaylī, the matn of which contradicts every other ascription to ʿĪsrāʾīl and looks like it instead belongs to the distinctive sub-tradition of the PCL ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah.408

Another highly problematic report amongst the ascriptions to ʿĪsrāʾīl is Ibn Saʿd’s transmission from al-Ṭawqīḍī: the matn clearly belongs to the same sub-tradition as the rest, but the isnād contradicts them all by depicting ʿĪsrāʾīl’s immediate source as al-ʿAʾmaš, rather than ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq. To compound matters, this version has ʿĀʾīšah narrating in the first person, rather than being described in the third person (as in every other transmission from ʿĪsrāʾīl). This is clearly a grave error or falsification on the part of Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭawqīḍī, or some now-suppressed tradent.

401 Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 41-42.
402 Ibn Mājah (ed. ʿAbd al-Bāqī), Sunan, I, p. 604, # 1877.
403 Ṭirmiẓī (ed. Sāmarrāʾī et al.), Ḫalīl, p. 169, # 296.
405 Nasāʾī (ed. Šalabī), al-Sunan al-Kubrā, V, p. 171, # 5350.
408 See the section on ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah, above.
Putting aside al-ʿUqaylī’s contaminated or borrowed transmission from Mālik b. Sulaymān, and the false `Isnād and altered point of view in Ibn Saʿd’s transmission from al-Wāqidi, there are still numerous variants across the `Isrāʾīl sub-tradition, including added, omitted, and especially substituted words, and even differences in the earliest segment of the `Isnād. Most of this variation is consistent with frequent paraphrasing (giving rise to banā and daḵala, for example, and māta, tuwuffiya, and qubiḍa), which in turn suggests that the transmission of this hadith from `Isrāʾīl to his students was primarily oral. The gist of `Isrāʾīl’s redaction was still accurately preserved (save in one instance),409 but the exact wording thereof is extremely difficult to pinpoint, along with the original `Isnād. The versions preserved by al-Tirmiḏī, Ibn Mājah, and al-Ḵaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (the latter two both on the authority of ‘Abū ‘Aḥmad) all have `Isrāʾīl transmitting from ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—‘Abū ‘Ubaydah—Ibn Masʿūd, whereas the redaction of al-Faḍl and one of the versions recorded by al-ʿUqaylī (# 5736) only have ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—‘Abū ‘Ubaydah, and yet another version recorded by Ibn Saʿd has ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—Muṣʿab b. Saʿd. Based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity, an original ascription to ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—‘Abū ‘Ubaydah was probably raised or interpolated into ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—‘Abū ‘Ubaydah—Ibn Masʿūd, arising in two or three transmissions either synchronously (as an obvious move in response to the rising demand for muttaṣil hadiths, since Ibn Masʿūd was the famous father of ‘Abū ‘Ubaydah410) or through contamination (as some tradents borrowed the superior ascription from others).

This leaves ‘Abū ‘Iṣḥāq—Muṣʿab b. Saʿd, which at first glance seems dubious: it is only attested in one source (Ibn Saʿd), which would suggest that the ascription was the product an error or interpolation after ‘Iṣrāʾīl (for which Ibn Saʿd or his immediate source, ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb b. ‘Aṭāʾ, must be responsible). On the other hand, Muṣʿab was valued as a source by Kufans in particular (since his father was the founder of Kufah), which makes it more likely that ‘Iṣrāʾīl (a Kufan) would have created an ascription to him (to provide the hadith with a further Kufan pedigree), rather than Ibn Saʿd or ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb (both of whom were Basro-Baghdadians).

That aside, an approximate wording of ‘Iṣrāʾīl’s redaction can still be discerned across the surviving sub-tradition, as follows:

409 Namely, where Ibn Mājah has sab’, for which he himself, or his immediate source ‘Aḥmad b. Sinān, is probably responsible.
410 Similarly, Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muḥammad, 58.
Again, the gist has been preserved, but the exact wording has not. This is consistent with 'Isrā'īl’s having reworded the hadith in successive retellings (such that there is no single, underlying redaction per se), and/or his students’ having paraphrased from him. Either way, the *ma'na* can be reconstructed, but not the *lafẓ*.

**Ma'mar b. Rāšid (d. 152-154/769-771)**

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Basro-Yemenite tradent Ma’mar b. Rāšid (ostensibly situated within the broader traditions of both Hišām and al-Zuhrī), recorded by ‘Abd al-Razzāq (reconstructed)\(^{411}\) and Ibn Sa’d.\(^{412}\) These two reports are complicated. On the one hand, they exhibit some striking similarities: both of them cite both Hišām and al-Zuhrī; they share the wording *nakaḥa al-nabīyy ʿāʾišah wa-hiya*, including the rare verb *nakaḥa*; and they share the wording *sanawāt ʿaw sabʿ*, including the rare word *sanawāt*. As such, there must be some kind of common ancestry or mutual dependency here, which is to say: both of these reports, at least in these respects, clearly constitute a distinctive sub-tradition, which matches their common ascription to Ma’mar, and is thus consistent with both reflecting his particular redaction.

On the other hand, there are huge discrepancies between these two reports: ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version is ascribed via Hišām and al-Zuhrī to ‘Urwah, where Ibn Sa’d’s is ascribed only to Hišām and al-Zuhrī; ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version has ʿĀʾišah’s marriage occurring at six or seven, where Ibn Sa’d’s version has it at nine or seven; and ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version has three whole elements that are absent from Ibn Sa’d’s. More importantly, the presence of these additional elements in ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s ascription to Ma’mar makes it more similar in that respect to various other transmissions from

\(^{411}\) See the section on ʿAbd al-Razzāq, above.

Hišām, than to Ibn Saʿd’s parallel transmission from Maʿmar. Conversely, the inclusion of “nine” in the ‘marriage’ element in Ibn Saʿd’s version makes it more similar in that respect to the various transmissions from al-ʿAʿmaš, than to ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version. At minimum, therefore, these ascriptions to Maʿmar appear to be heavily interpolated or contaminated.

Thus, if we accept that these two reports in some way reflect Maʿmar’s distinctive redaction (given the unique or rare elements they have in common), only a fragment of ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version, in conjunction with Ibn Saʿd’s (and in light of the Criterion of Dissimilarity⁴¹³), can be attributed to Maʿmar, as follows:

\[
\text{...al-zuhriyy}^1 \text{ wa-hišām}^1 \text{ bn' } \text{urwat}^a \text{ qālā } \text{naka } \text{ḥa al-nabiyy}^a \text{ 'āʾišat}^a \text{ wa-hiya }\text{ bint/ibnat}^a \text{ [tis'/sitt]}^a \text{ sanawāt}^a \text{ 'aw } \text{ sab'}^a^1 \text{...}
\]

Based on the textual-critical principle of lectio difficilior potior, the highly unusual tisʿ is more likely to be the original wording than the conventional sitt.

Needless to say, if this hadith indeed derives from Maʿmar (which is certainly plausible), it was transmitted from him to students in an incredibly sloppy fashion (which would be consistent with paraphrastic oral transmission), if not involving outright interpolation. In particular, ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s version ended up comprising a sequence of elements (marriage, consummation, dolls, death) that is completely uncorroborated by any other version of the marital-age hadith, but which individually appear in various transmissions from Hišām, al-ʿAʿmaš, and ʿAbū ʿIsḥāq.⁴¹⁴ This is consistent with ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s having combined a short statement inherited from Maʿmar with elements taken from other, miscellaneous transmissions from Hišām.⁴¹⁵

---

⁴¹³ I.e., applied to the discrepant ʾIsnāds.

⁴¹⁴ The ‘death’ element appears in Ibn Bukayr’s transmission from Hišām, ʿAbū Muʿāwiya’s transmission from al-ʿAʿmaš, and ʿIsrāʾīl’s transmission from ʿAbū ʿIsḥāq; and the ‘dolls’ element appears in numerous transmissions from Hišām.

Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-ʾAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766)

I have collated five relevant reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent and putative CL Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-ʾAʿmaš, variously recorded by ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah (reconstructed),416 Ibn Saʿd,417 Ibn Qutaybah,418 and ʾAbū ʿAwānah (twice).419 The version recorded by Ibn Saʿd and the second version recorded by ʾAbū ʿAwānah can both be dismissed at the outset: both are false ascriptions, as has been shown already.420 This leaves us with only three ascriptions: the reconstructed version of ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah, the version recorded by Ibn Qutaybah, and the first version recorded by ʾAbū ʿAwānah. As it happens, all three are more similar to each other than to most other versions of the marital-age tradition, sharing the distinctive elemental sequence of (1) ʿĀʾišah being married (i.e., engaged for marriage) at nine and (2) a mention (directly or indirectly) of the Prophet’s death. They are not the only versions within the broader marital-age tradition that share this distinctive sequence, however. There are three other versions with different ascriptions that exhibit similar elements: one recorded by al-Ṭabarānī (with an ʾisnād that ends with Sufyān—ʾAbū ʿIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah),421 one recorded by al-ʿUqaylī (with an ʾisnād that ends with ʾIsrāʾīl—ʾAbū ʿIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah—Ibn Masʿūd),422 and one that can be reconstructed back to ʿAbṭar (with the ʾisnād Muṭarrif—ʾAbū ʿIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah—ʿĀʾišah).423 In other words, the distinctive textual sub-tradition in question does not neatly line up with a common ascription.

The first two reports (from al-ʿUqaylī and al-Ṭabarānī) are both false ascriptions (as has again been shown already), and can be dismissed accordingly: al-ʿUqaylī’s version contradicts every other ascription to ʾIsrāʾīl, and the matn looks like it was borrowed directly from ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah’s version; meanwhile, al-Ṭabarānī’s version contradicts every other ascription to Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, but matches some of the particular wordings

416 See the section on ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah, above.
420 See the sections on Jarīr and ʾIsrāʾīl, above.
422 See the sections on Jarīr and ʾIsrāʾīl, above.
423 See the section on ʾAbṭar, above.
therein (vis-à-vis all other versions of the marital-age tradition more broadly), such that it looks like a corruption thereof.\textsuperscript{424}

This leaves only Ṭabar’s redaction as a point of comparison with the three remaining ascriptions to al-ḥA’maš (ʻAbū Mu‘āwiyah, Ibn Qutaybah, and Ṭabar ʻAwānah), and here a curious pattern arises: the versions of Ibn Qutaybah and Ṭabar ʻAwānah are much more similar to each other than to all the rest, but are also more similar—at least in terms of the matn—to Ṭabar’s version than to Ṭabar Mu‘āwiyah’s. In the first case, the versions recorded by Ibn Qutaybah and Ṭabar ʻAwānah both quote ʻĀ’išah in the first person, share a similar wording in the first element (despite a corruption in one and an editorial comment inserted into the other),\textsuperscript{425} and share exactly the same wording in the second element.\textsuperscript{426} In the second case, the versions of Ibn Qutaybah, ʻAbū ʻAwānah, and Ṭabar all quote ʻĀ’išah in the first person and share a similarly-worded final element, in contrast to the corresponding element in Ṭabar Mu‘āwiyah’s version.\textsuperscript{427}

Clearly, the versions of Ibn Qutaybah, ʻAbū ʻAwānah, and Ṭabar are more closely related to each other than they are to Ṭabar Mu‘āwiyah’s version, which means that there is a problem in their ascriptions: where Ṭabar cited the ‘Isnād Muṭarrīf—ʻAbū ʻIshāq—ʻAbū ‘Ubaydah—ʻĀ’išah, all the rest cite the ‘Isnād al-ḤA’maš—ʻIbrāhīm—al-ʻAswad—ʻĀ’išah. In other words, Ṭabar’s matn entails a close relationship with the versions of Ibn Qutaybah and ʻAbū ʻAwānah vis-à-vis ʻAbū Mu‘āwiyah’s, but his ‘Isnād depicts a much more distant relationship vis-à-vis all three. Clearly, Ṭabar received his matn from an ultimate source in common with Ibn Qutaybah or ʻAbū ʻAwānah and then replaced the original ‘Isnād (al-ḤA’maš—ʻIbrāhīm—al-ʻAswad—ʻĀ’išah) with the ‘Isnād associated with the hadith of his senior Kufan contemporary ʻIsrā’il,\textsuperscript{428} whilst incorporating his own Kufan master Muṭarrīf therein (Muṭarrīf—ʻAbū ʻIshāq—ʻAbū ‘Ubaydah—ʻĀ’išah). This explains why Ṭabar’s matn is extremely close to the versions of Ibn Qutaybah and ʻAbū ʻAwānah, whilst at the same time, his ‘Isnād is the same as that cited by ʻIsrā’il in his version.

\textsuperscript{424} See the sections on Sufyān al-Ţawrī, above, and ʻAbū ʻIshāq al-Sabī‘i, below.

\textsuperscript{425} Both of them have tazawwaja-nī rasūl allāh wa-ānā bint, but the tis’ in Ibn Qutaybah has been corrupted into a sab’ in ʻAbū ʻAwānah, and the former also adds a sinīn that is absent in the latter. Finally, a tradent or scribe (obviously bothered or confused by the unusual tis’) has inserted turīdu dāḵala bī into Ibn Qutaybah’s version.

\textsuperscript{426} Both of them have wa-kantu ‘inda-hu tis’\textsuperscript{420}.

\textsuperscript{427} Ibn Qutaybah and ʻAbū ʻAwānah both have wa-kantu ‘inda-hu tis’\textsuperscript{420}, and Ṭabar has wa-ṣaḥībatu-hu tis’\textsuperscript{420}, where ‘Abū Mu‘āwiyah has wa-māta ‘an-hā wa-hiya bint ūmān[fy] ašrah.

\textsuperscript{428} See the section on ʻIsrā’il, above.
With all of that out of the way, we can now focus on the remaining ascriptions to al-ʾAʿmaš, recorded by ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah, Ibn Qutaybah, and ʾAbū ʿAwānah. All three—when scribal errors and editorial comments are accounted for—clearly embody a common, distinctive tradition, which matches their common ascription to al-ʾAʿmaš. However, a problem remains: the versions of Ibn Qutaybah and ʾAbū ʿAwānah are much more similar to each other than they are to ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah’s version, as has been noted already. How is this to be explained? It might be posited that ʾAbū ʿAwānah and Ibn Qutaybah’s versions are so similar because both have (broadly) accurately preserved the words of al-ʾAʿmaš, where ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah has strayed therefrom. However, this explanation is contradicted by the fact that the wording in ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah’s version (in which ʿĀʾišah is referred to in the third person) seems more archaic—and thus more likely to reflect the original—than the versions of ʾAbū ʿAwānah and Ibn Qutaybah (in which ʿĀʾišah speaks in the first person).

Alternatively, it might be posited that al-ʾAʿmaš narrated his hadith in two different ways: once with ʿĀʾišah as the object of the narration (recorded by ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah), and once with ʿĀʾišah herself as the narrator (recorded by both Ibn Qutaybah and ʾAbū ʿAwānah). This is certainly plausible: Hišām did the same thing with his hadith, as will be seen below.429

Alternatively, this could be explained by positing that the versions of Ibn Qutaybah and ʾAbū ʿAwānah share a more recent common ancestry or dependency vis-à-vis ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah’s version, despite the fact that all three claim independent lines of transmission back to a common source (i.e., al-ʾAʿmaš). This would mean that someone in the ʾIsnād of either Ibn Qutaybah or ʾAbū ʿAwānah’s version borrowed from someone in the other ʾIsnād and then suppressed this dependence. Even if this scenario is preferred, however, we would still be left with two distinct ascriptions to al-ʾAʿmaš: the version of ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah, and whichever of the other two is the original therebetween. As always, there is the possibility that even the original in question was a dive—for example, one designed to update ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah’s version. Indeed, the fact that both Ibn Qutaybah and ʾAbū ʿAwānah’s versions are supported by lengthy SSs back to al-ʾAʿmaš is suspect: given the immense stature of al-ʾAʿmaš (a madār of Kufah, no less), it is odd that only a single PCL of his survived, and that the other transmission(s)

429 See the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwaḥ, below.
from him occurred in isolation for several generations. Despite this, it remains at least plausible that al-ʿAʿmaš was a genuine CL, whose distinctive redaction of the marital-age hadith is reflected in the tradition embodied by the redactions of ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah and at least one other.

Even if the tradition embodied in the reports of ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah, Ibn Qutaybah, and ʿAbū ʿAwānah derives from the distinctive redaction of al-ʿAʿmaš, the wording thereof—in light of the meagre and somewhat questionable evidence available—remains highly uncertain:


Needless to say, if al-ʿAʿmaš was a genuine CL, then his hadith appears to have been transmitted via oral paraphrase, with notable changes in wording (e.g., from “he died when she was eighteen years old” to “I was with him for nine years”) and a major change in narratorial point of view.

**Hišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765)**

I have collated twenty-three reports ascribed to the Madinan tradent and putative CL Hišām b. ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr, recorded by Maʿmar b. Rāšid (reconstructed), Sufyān al-Ṭawrī (reconstructed), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād (reconstructed), Wuhayb b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (reconstructed), ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān (reconstructed), Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (reconstructed), ʿAlī b. Mushir

---

430 See the section on Maʿmar, above.
431 See the section on Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, above.
432 See the section on ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād, above.
433 See the section on Wuhayb, above.
434 See the section on ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān, above.
435 See the section on Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, above.
436 See the section on ʿAbdah, above.
437 See the section on Jarīr, above.
Before proceeding, some caveats are in order. Firstly, the redaction of the PCL Ḥammād b. Salamah is highly tentative, given the great variation in his transmissions to his students. In other words, it is questionable whether he ever transmitted the hadith in the exact form given here—although he likely did transmit each of the constituent parts thereof, at different times and in various combinations. Secondly, the reports underpinning my reconstruction of the redaction of the PCL Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd do not constitute a distinctive sub-tradition, which weakens said reconstruction. Thirdly, the reports underpinning my reconstruction of the redaction of the PCL Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah are in some respect more similar to other reports than to each other, which undermines the identification of Sufyān as a PCL in the first place and renders my reconstruction of his redaction speculative at best. Fourthly, Ibn Saʿd’s ascription to Wakīʿ is just one out of four disparate ascriptions thereto, although it still has the best claim thereof to being genuine. Fifthly, Ibn Rāhwayh’s ascription to ’Abū Muʿāwiyah (to Hišām) is uncorroborated, and indeed, does not match the numerous other ascriptions thereto (to al-ʿAʿmaš). Sixthly, it should be acknowledged that there is mention (by Ibn Wahb) of a parallel transmission from Hišām by Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, alongside that of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘abī al-Zinād; however, as has been noted already, this is (1) uncorroborated by any other transmissions from Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād, (2) uncorroborated by any other transmissions full stop, and (3) contradicts the report

439 See the section on ‘Alī b. Mushir, above.
440 See the section on Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah, above.
441 See the section on ‘Abū ’Usāmah, above.
446 Tabari (ed. de Goeje), *Annales*, IV, p. 1770.
448 See the section on al-BAḡawī, above.
that Saʿīd was born after Hišām died. Seventhly (and finally), ‘Abū ‘Awānah’s ascription (via an Eastern SS) back to Yahyá b. Zakariyyá’ is (1) completely uncorroborated and (2) lacks a matn, rendering it completely unusable in this analysis.

Even a cursory examination of this collection of reports and PCL redactions immediately reveals striking disunity there-between: the variation at the elemental level is often extreme, with some reports or redactions sharing little in common. Moreover, there is noticeable instability even in the wording of the common element of ‘Āʾišah’s marital engagement (i.e., her nikāḥ/tazawwuj): Hišām is variously said to have reported that ‘Āʾišah was married at age ‘six’, ‘six or seven’, ‘seven’, or ‘seven or nine’. Who is responsible for this textual chaos: Hišām, his students, or later tradents?

The answer seems to be: all of the above. In the first case, most of these reports constitute several distinct sub-traditions, i.e., clusters of corroborating ascriptions to Hišām that share a similar set of elements. This is consistent with Hišām himself having told and retold the hadith in different ways at different times, with each distinctive iteration’s having been preserved by a different set of students.

In the second case, several of Hišām’s direct students were alone in their transmission of a particular element or addition: Maʿmar alone transmitted the uncertain ‘nine or seven’ version of the ‘marriage’ element, and plausibly omitted (or even conflated therewith) a discrete ‘consummation’ element; ‘Abū ‘Usāmah alone added an elaborate element about Ḥadijah’s death (which appears in various forms in other hadiths from Hišām452) to the common, simple version of Hišām’s marital-age hadith; Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād alone interspersed the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements with an element about Ḥadijah’s death, and further added a lengthy ‘dolls’ element at the end (evidently taken from another well-known hadith of Hišām’s); Ḥammād b. Salamah alone added an elaborate narrative about a dream-vision about ‘Āʾišah (which appears elsewhere in various forms as a separate hadith from Hišām453), and frequently rearranged other elements and alternated their wordings; and finally, ‘Alī b. Mushir alone transmitted various details in the ‘Hijrah’ and ‘marital preparation’ elements. All of this is consistent with contamination, elaboration, interpolation, 452 Juynboll, Encyclopedia, 193, col. 2; also see ‘Abd al-Razzāq (ed. ‘Aẓami), Muṣannaf, VII, p. 492, # 14003.

and/or major errors or sloppiness on the part of these students of Hišām, resulting in elemental divergences in their respective redactions. Moreover, even where elements are shared, many students of Hišām transmit particular wordings or formulations thereof, which is consistent with their having paraphrased what they received from Hišām. In light of all this, it is hard to take seriously Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj’s assertion that the students of Hišām were “precise memorisers of his Hadith” (al-ḥUFFāż al-mUTqinīn li-ḥadīṭi-hī), who transmitted his Hadith “with agreement amongst them regarding most of it” (ʿalā al-ittifāq min-hum fīʾakṭari-hī). On the contrary, many of his students—most of whom were later regarded as ṭIQāt—appear to have distorted their respective transmissions.

In the third case, in reports that only reach back to Hišām via SSs, there are notable instances of isolated elements and aberrations: al-Baḡawī’s SS alone transmitted a certain elaborate combination of elements (including material on Ḵadījah, Kawlah, and Sawdah); al-Ṭabarī’s SS alone transmitted Hišām’s letter from ʿUrwah with a preface about Ḵadījah’s death; al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī’s SS alone transmitted Hišām’s letter from ʿUrwah with an addendum about ʿĀʾišah’s death; and al-Ṭabarānī’s SS alone transmitted certain chronological elaborations in both the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements. These variants could be the fault of the direct students of Hišām cited in the relevant SSs, or could instead be the fault of later tradents.

In light of all of the above, which wordings, elements, or gists can be traced back to Hišām himself? The best way to proceed in analysing all of this material is to deal with each of the distinctive sub-traditions associated with Hišām individually and successively, from the simplest to the more complex.

Version 1: marriage, consummation.

The reports of Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān, Ḥammād b. Zayd, ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah, Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Rāḥwayh, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ṣāʾīḡ, and ʿAbū Nuʿaym comprise an elemental sequence that is almost always associated with Hišām, such that they constitute a distinctive sub-tradition with a common source. The

---

454 See below.
455 Muslim (ed. Fāryābī), Ṣaḥīḥ, I, pp. 3-4. For an alternative translation, see Juynboll, ‘Muslim’s introduction’, 269-270.
reports of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ’abī al-Zinād and ‘Abū Usāmah can also be included in this set, since they are most likely variations thereof. Even aside from the elemental additions in Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād and ‘Abū Usāmah’s redactions, there are numerous differences in wording between all of these reports, most of which are minor additions, omissions, and substitutions, but some of which affect the ascription (i.e., munqāṭiʿ vs. muttaṣīl), the narrative point of view (i.e., biography vs. autobiography), and even the basic meaning thereof (i.e., ‘six’ vs. ‘six or seven’ vs. ‘seven’). As such, a single urtext cannot be reconstructed, and probably never existed: as noted already, Hišām seems to have modified his hadith (including Version 1) in successive retellings. Still, the multiple attestation of particular wordings allows us to reconstruct sub-versions of Version 1, which is to say, at least some of Hišām’s formulations thereof.

To begin with, this hadith likely began as munqāṭiʿ (as attested by ‘Abū Usāmah and Ibn Saʿd—Wakīʿ, and in conjunction with the Criterion of Dissimilarity), meaning that it probably originated as a story about ʿĀʾišah rather than from ʿĀʾišah. However, since none of the Version 1 reports record Hišām’s direct wording in the ‘isnād (i.e., none of them quote him as saying, “my father said”, or similar), the exact form of this original ascription remains speculative (e.g., qāla ʾabī): we can infer that he narrated the hadith as a saying of his father’s, but not how he narrated it as such.

Thereafter, Hišām himself seems to have raised the hadith explicitly back to ʿĀʾišah, and further rephrased the matn into her direct, autobiographical speech: this is by far the most common form of Version 1. Although some iterations of this raised version are doubtless the product of interpolations by Hišām’s students...

---

456 The reason for this is simple: of all the sub-traditions from Hišām under consideration, it would have been easiest for Version 1 to be transformed into both ‘Abū Usāmah and Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād’s redactions, through the addition of one (in the case of ‘Abū Usāmah) or two (Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād) elements. By contrast, the transformation of Versions 2, 3, or 3 into either would have required not just the addition of elements, but the omission of elements.

457 Ibn Saʿd—Wakīʿ and ‘Abū Usāmah both have Hišām—Urwah, where all the rest have Hišām— ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah all have ʿĀʾišah being described in the third person (i.e., -hāj/ʿāʾišah and hiya), where all the rest have her narrating the hadith herself, in the first person (i.e., -nī and ʾanā).

458 Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād, ‘Abdah, ‘Abū Usāmah, Ibn Rāhwayh—‘Abū Muʿāwiyah, Muḥammad al-Ṣañāʾī—Ismaʿīl, and ‘Abū Nuʿaym—Yahyā all have sitt; Jarīr, Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah, and Ibn Saʿd—Wakīʿ all have both sitt and sab; and Jaʿfar and Ḥamād b. Zayd both have sab.

(contaminated by the raised versions of others, or simply as the obvious means of lending more legitimacy to the report, in response to the general, increasing demand for *muttaṣil* ascriptions), it is simpler to suppose that most of these are accounted for by Hišām himself having transmitted it as such. As above, the relevant reports do not record Hišām’s direct wording in the ‘*isnād*, again leaving us to speculate on the exact form (e.g., ‘*aḵbara-nī ‘abī ‘an ‘āʾišah qālat*).

Things are generally clearer in regards to the *matn*: in the first element of Version 1, Hišām almost always used the verb *tazawwaja* and the noun *rasūl allāh*; this was almost always followed by a ḥāl clause specifying ‘Āʾišah’s age, in which Hišām alternated between *ibnah* and *bint*, and between *sitt, sitt ‘aw sab’,* and *sab’; and Hišām almost always concluded this clause (and thereby the first element) with *sinīn*.

The second element of Version 1 is even more straightforward: Hišām almost always introduced it with a *wa-*, followed by the verb *baná*, followed by a *bi-* with an attached pronoun; this was almost always followed by a ḥāl clause specifying ‘Āʾišah’s age, in which Hišām alternated between *ibnah* and *bint*, always included *tisʾ*, and alternated in adding or omitting *sinīn* at the end.

Thus, whilst a single urtext cannot be reconstructed, several of Hišām’s redactions—several distinct formulations of Version 1—can still be identified, the most archaic of which probably looked something like the following:

\[
[qāla \ ‘abī]^{461} \text{tazawwaja rasūl allāh ‘āʾišat} \text{wa-hiya \ [bint/ibnat]u sitt sinīn} \text{aw sab’ \ wa-banā bi-ha wa-hiya \ [bint/ibnat]u tis’[n] sinīn].
\]

Given that Version 2 evolved out of Version 1 (see below), and given that Version 2 combined a *munqaṭiʿ* ascription with a ‘marriage’ element containing only *sitt*, there must once have also been a version of Version 1 that combined a *munqaṭiʿ* ascription with a ‘marriage’ element containing only *sitt*, like the following:

\[
[qāla \ ‘abī]^{462} \text{tazawwaja al-nabīyy}^{u} \ ‘āʾišat}^{u} \text{wa-hiya \ [ibnat/bint]u sitt[n]} \text{sinīn}^{u} \text{wa-[[banā bi-ha]/[’udkilat ‘alay-hi]] wa-hiya \ [ibnat/bint]u tis’[n]} \text{sinīn].
\]

---

461 Speculative.
462 Speculative.
There may also have been a *munqaṭī‘* version with a ‘marriage’ element containing only *sabʿ*, but no iteration of such has survived.

At a later phase, Hišām formulated a raised version of this hadith, as follows:

\[
\text{[’akbara-ni ’abi]}^{463} \text{’an ’ā’išat} \text{ qālat } \text{tazawwaja-ni } \text{rasūl } \text{allāh } \text{wa’-anā } \text{bint/ibnat} \text{ u } \text{sitt } \text{sinīn} \text{ ’aw sab’īn } \text{wa-banā } \text{bī } \text{wa’-anā } \text{[bint/ibnat]} \text{ u } \text{tis’[n]} \text{[sinīn]}. \]

At times, Hišām specified ‘Āʾišah’s marital age to have been seven:

\[
\text{[’akbara-ni ’abi]}^{464} \text{’an ’ā’išat} \text{ qālat } \text{tazawwaja-ni } \text{rasūl } \text{allāh } \text{wa’-anā } \text{bint/ibnat} \text{ u } \text{sab’i sinīn } \text{wa-banā } \text{bī } \text{wa’-anā } \text{[bint/ibnat]} \text{ u } \text{tis’[n]} \text{[sinīn]}. \]

Most of the time, however, Hišām specified ‘Āʾišah’s marital age to have been six:

\[
\text{[’akbara-ni ’abi]}^{465} \text{’an ’ā’išat} \text{ qālat } \text{tazawwaja-ni } \text{rasūl } \text{allāh } \text{wa’-anā } \text{bint/ibnat} \text{ u } \text{sittu sinīn } \text{wa-banā } \text{bī } \text{wa’-anā } \text{[bint/ibnat]} \text{ u } \text{tis’[n]} \text{[sinīn]}. \]

**Version 2: marriage, consummation, together nine years.**

The second set of reports ascribed to Hišām comprise the following elements: ‘Āʾišah was married at six, consummated in marriage at nine, and was married to the Prophet for nine years. These were recorded by Suwayne al-Ţawrī, Wuhayb b. Kālid, and ‘Aḥmad al-‘Uṭāridī. There is the problem with al-‘Uṭāridī’s transmission, however: his version states that the Prophet died when ‘Āʾišah was eighteen years old (*wa-māta rasūl allāh wa-‘ā’išah ibnat ʿamānī ʿašrah sanah*), whereas the other two state that ‘Āʾišah lived with the Prophet for nine years (*makaṭat/kānat ʿinda-hu tis’ [sinīn]*). Although representing basically the same proposition (such that we can count all three exemplifying the same element), al-‘Uṭāridī’s wording diverges noticeably from the other two. More importantly, al-‘Uṭāridī’s wording is much more similar to the corresponding element in numerous other reports (for example, the redaction of ‘Abū

---

463 Speculative.
464 Speculative.
465 Speculative.
Muʿāwiyah, from al-ʾAʾmaš⁴⁶⁶ than it is to that found in the two other attributions of this element to Hišām. Even when the combination of this ‘death’ element with the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements is taken into account, al-ʾUṭāridī’s version is noticeably more similar to Muslim’s transmission from ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah⁴⁶⁷ and, to a lesser extent, al-ʾPaḍl b. Nuʿaym’s redaction (from ʾIsrāʾīl, from ʾAbū ʾIshaq) and certain sub-versions descended from ʿAbd al-Razzāq’s redaction (from Maʿmar, from both Hišām and al-Zuhrī).⁴⁶⁸ It is thus extremely likely that al-ʾUṭāridī’s version is at the very least contaminated, whether at his hands or by his source Ibn Bukayr.

Additionally, al-ʾUṭāridī’s version contains a sub-clause about ʾKhadijah’s death in the middle of the ‘marriage’ element, which is uncorroborated most other transmissions from Hišām, and differs in wording from those few transmissions from Hišām that do mention ʾKhadijah’s death. This is consistent with the sub-clause in al-ʾUṭāridī’s version being contaminated (probably by another hadith from Hišām⁴⁶⁹), either by al-ʾUṭāridī or his source Ibn Bukayr.

Despite all of this, the archaic munqaṭṭiʿ ascription in al-ʾUṭāridī’s transmission suggests that the original version of the report—a hypothetical, pre-interpolated or pre-contaminated version—indeed derives from the 8th Century CE, which is consistent with an ultimate origin with Hišām. Even if that is the case, however, there is no way to know whether the original version belonged to Version 1 or Version 2 of Hišām’s hadith, rendering it useless in the present analysis.

This leaves us with the redactions of Sufyān al-Ṭawrī and Wuhayb, but here we are on more solid ground: in addition to sharing the same elements, with similar wordings, in the same order, these two reports are more similar to each other than to all other versions of the marital-age hadith. We thus have a distinctive sub-tradition that matches a common ascription, which is consistent with both reports in question reflecting a distinctive redaction from Hišām. The variation between them is noticeable, but usually not at the expense of meaning, and is consistent with controlled paraphrasing (i.e., the sort of thing usually envisaged by al-riwāyah bi-al-maʿná).

There are two notable differences, however. Firstly, Sufyān’s version has a munqaṭṭiʿ ascription where Wuhayb’s is muttaṣil, which is consistent with the latter’s having

⁴⁶⁶ See the section on ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah, above.
⁴⁶⁷ Muslim (ed. Fāryābī), Ṣaḥīḥ, I, p. 642, # 72/1422.
⁴⁶⁸ See the section on ʾAbd al-Razzāq, above.
⁴⁶⁹ See the comment above, concerning ʾAbū ʾUsāmah.
been raised (by either Wuhayb or Hišām). Secondly, Wuhayb's version includes a comment from Hišām indicating that the third element is actually an addendum from an unspecified source (i.e., other than ʿUrwah); the absence of this comment from Sufyān’s version is consistent either with Sufyān omitting it, or with Hišām’s having simply fully absorbed the element into his ascription to ʿUrwah in subsequent retellings. Either way, Hišām’s comment (as recorded by Wuhayb) reveals how Version 2 evolved out of Version 1, through the incorporation of a new element taken from some other source.

In light of all this, the following ur-redaction of Version 2—an approximation distilled from the extant redactions of Sufyān and Wuhayb, in conjunction with the Criterion of Dissimilarity—can be attributed to Hišām:

\[
[qāla ʾabī]^470  
\text{azawwaja al-nabiyya} \text{ ʿāʾišat}^4 \text{ wa-hiyya ibrat/bint[^]} \text{ sitt[\]}^4 \text{ sinin[^]}  
\text{ wa-[([banā bi-hā]/[ʾudkilat ʾalay-hi])} \text{ wa-hiyya ibrat/bint[^]} \text{ tis[^]}^4 \text{ sinin[^]}  
\text{ wa-ʿunbiʾtu ʿanna-hā [kānat/makāṭat] ʿinda-hu tis[^]}^4 \text{ sinin[^]} \text{ }.
\]

As should be clear, the exactly wording of Hišām’s redaction remains unclear, but the gist at least—along with some of the wording—is recoverable.

**Version 3: ʿUrwah's letter**

The third set of reports ascribed to Hišām take the form of a letter composed by ʿUrwah and addressed to a Marwanid caliph, in which the marriage and consummation of ʿĀʾišah are mentioned. These were recorded by al-Ṭabarī and al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Despite only reaching back to Hišām via lengthy SSs, these two reports are far more similar to each other (sharing not just a letter form, but the same core sequence and many specific wordings) than they are to all other versions of the marital-age hadith, which—in conjunction with their common ascription to Hišām—is consistent with both reflecting a common redaction from Hišām. Again, a distinctive sub-tradition correlates with a particular source.

---

\(^{470}\) Speculative.
However, the level of variation between these two extant redactions of this letter is far greater than any we have encountered in the transmissions of Versions 1 and 2 of Hišām’s hadith: al-Ṭabarī’s version is addressed to Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, where al-Ḥākim’s version is addressed to Caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik; al-Ṭabarī’s version begins with a comment to the recipient and information about Қadījah’s death, all absent in al-Ḥākim’s version; and al-Ḥākim’s version ends with information about ʿĀʾišah’s death, absent in al-Ṭabarī’s version. Moreover, even where the two versions share the same elemental sequence (ʿĀʾišah’s marriage; Қadījah’s death; the Prophet’s dream-vision of ʿĀʾišah; ʿĀʾišah’s marriage at age six; ʿĀʾišah’s marital consummation, after the Hijrah, at age nine), their wordings are plagued by additions, omissions, and substitutions, all of which is consistent with fairly sloppy or loose paraphrasing.\footnote{This is extremely ironic: of all the reports under consideration, an alleged letter surely had the best chance of being transmitted reliably, either directly in writing, or through reading out the letter—either way, not purely orally or from memory. And yet, this alleged letter is one of the worst-preserved reports in the set under consideration: the only question is whether Hišām or his students were responsible for the lion’s share of this distortion.}

Still, an outline or approximation of the original letter—which is to say, Hišām’s redaction—can be reconstructed, even if much of the wording is uncertain and some elements are dubious:

\[
\]

\footnote{In light of this, the comment in Anthony, Muhammad, 103, that the “exact wording” of such letters “likely” does “not survive” due to “the vagaries of their transmission”, seems like an understatement: whole elements have been added or omitted.}

\footnote{Speculative.}
Sean Anthony has recently argued for a general acceptance of such letters all the way back to ‘Urwah, based on two main sets of “internal features”.\footnote{Anthony, \textit{Muhammad}, 103.} Firstly (following the research of Görke), the letters are unmiraculous and unembellished,\footnote{Also see Görke, ‘Prospects and Limits’, in Boekhoff-van der Voort \textit{et al.} (eds.), \textit{Transmission and Dynamics}, 146; id. \textit{et al.}, ‘First Century Sources’, 20-21.} which is consistent with their reflecting “an early, even relatively primitive, sampling of the historical memory of Medinan elites”, which is in turn consistent with ‘Urwah’s authorship.\footnote{Anthony, \textit{Muhammad}, 103-104.} Secondly, ‘much of the letters’ contents evoke themes and stories potentially conducive to a Zubayrid-Umayyad reconciliation, or at least reflecting their shared interests” (in contrast to later Abbasid interests), which is again consistent with ‘Urwah’s authorship.\footnote{Ibid., 104-105.} Thus, the best explanation for the evidence—for the existence of these letters ascribed to ‘Urwah, in light of the particularities of their content—is that most of them are (broadly) accurately preserved letters composed by ‘Urwah himself.

There are several problems with this argumentation. Firstly, Anthony faces a contradiction: he cites Görke’s analysis on the unmiraculous and unembellished content of these letters to show that they reflect an “early” or “primitive” layer (i.e., relative to later layers of tradition, which are full of miracles and embellishments), yet it was none other than Görke who observed, in an ICMA of ‘Urwah’s hadith about al-Ḥudaybiyyah, that ‘Urwah’s original formulation thereof was already diffused with miracles and embellishments.\footnote{Görke, ‘The historical tradition about al-Ḥudaybiyyah’, in Motzki (ed.), \textit{Biography}, 260-262.} In other words, the letters and the hadith belong to the same layer of tradition (i.e., ‘Urwah’s era and material); the letters are unmiraculous and unembellished, and the hadith is miraculous and embellished; but the lack of miracles and embellishments in the letters is supposed to indicate that they belong to an early layer \textit{vis-à-vis} later, miraculous, embellished layers—in which case, they should belong to a different layer from the miraculous, embellished hadith. How is this contradiction be resolved? Anthony might conclude (contra Görke) that the hadith cannot be traced back to ‘Urwah, since it is miraculous and embellished, and
thus must belong to a later layer than the letters—but Anthony in fact seems to accept Görke’s conclusions thereon.\textsuperscript{478} Consequently, Anthony is committed either to rejecting 'Urwah’s authorship of the letters (since the letters clearly do not belong to 'Urwah’s layer of tradition, being as it was full of miracles and elaborations), or to conceding that an absence of miracles and embellishments is not indicative of belonging to an early layer—in which case, Anthony’s first argument for the general authenticity of these letters' collapses.\textsuperscript{479}

Moreover, alternative explanations for the absence of miracles and elaborations in these letters can speculated, further revealing Anthony’s explanation therefor to be \textit{ad hoc}. For example, it could simply be a matter of \textit{genre}: these letters are \textit{prosopographical} and \textit{exegetical}, clarifying specific historical questions; by contrast, miracles and embellishments are more expected in the \textit{narrative} and \textit{edifying} context of Hadith, which, in this early period, were only just becoming distinguished from popular, oral storytelling and preaching. In fact, we might actually \textit{invert} Anthony’s schema: surely the era of the greatest miraculous embellishment was the 1st Islamic Century, when early, victorious Muslims were riding on an apocalyptic high, and their whole world seemed God-infused? Moreover, surely the oral storytellers and preachers of the early period, who so profoundly shaped early Islamic historical memory,\textsuperscript{480} were the most prolific in embellishing stories with miracles? In other words, why could we not see the lack of miracles and embellishments in the letters ascribed to 'Urwah as being indicative of a later layer of the tradition (i.e., as the product of more sober, professional traditionists, in contrast to early storytellers)? This is of course quite speculative, but the point is: Anthony’s interpretation seems \textit{ad hoc}, and would need to be justified against such a counter-view.

As for Anthony’s second argument, this too is problematic. Firstly, it would not follow, even if “much of the letters’ contents evoke themes and stories potentially conducive to a Zubayrid-Umayyad reconciliation, or at least reflecting their shared

\textsuperscript{478} Anthony, \textit{Muhammad}, 104, n. 6. When Anthony very generously sent a draft of this chapter to me in January of 2019, this footnote was absent—its subsequent appearance, in the published version of his book, is thus possibly a response to my having pointed out to him all of these issues, including the specific Görke reference. However, Anthony’s caveat in this footnote seems insufficient to me: \textit{acknowledging} the contradiction (i.e., that 'Urwah’s other material already contained embellishments and miracles) is not the same thing as \textit{resolving} the contradiction.

\textsuperscript{479} See also Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), \textit{The Biography of Muhammad}, 7.

interests”, that the letters can be traced all the way back to ‘Urwah: such themes and interests would fit equally well with the Marwanid period more broadly, and with the milieux and interests of al-Zuhri and Hišām in particular.

Of course, this is to say that, historically, ‘Urwah did not write letters to the Marwanids. The fact that three of ‘Urwah’s students (including his son) ascribed letters to him is most easily explained by the fact that ‘Urwah was broadly remembered as having sent some letters in the first place—otherwise, why would such ascriptions be plausible? However, it does not follow therefrom that any of those original letters have survived, i.e., that any of the surviving letter-ascriptions to ‘Urwah are the actual letters he composed.481

Finally, even if a compelling case can be made for the general authenticity of the letters, which specific wordings and elements therein can be identified as actually going back to ‘Urwah, versus later additions and alterations by (for example) Hišām and even later tradents? As we have already seen, this is not a hypothetical problem: the extant redactions of Version 3 of Hišām’s marital-age hadith exhibit substantial discrepancies, and if such variation could occur merely between Hišām and his students, it is reasonable to expect that the level of variation that occurred between ‘Urwah and Hišām must have been quite serious indeed.482

**Version 4: ‘Ā’išah’s elaborate anecdote**

The fourth set of reports ascribed to Hišām comprise of an elaborate, autobiographical narration by ‘Ā’išah, in which she mentions her marriage, the Hijrah, her shoulder-length hair, her playing on a swing, her being prepared for marriage, and her marital consummation. These were recorded by Ḥammād b. Salamah, ‘Alī b. Mushir, and ‘Abū ʿUsāmah Ḥammād. In general, these three reports are much more similar to each other than to all other versions of the marital-age hadith,483 with one exception: the redaction of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (which supposedly derives from an independent

481 Also see Shoemaker, ‘In Search of ‘Urwa’s Sīra’, 282.
482 Also see Görke et al., ‘First Century Sources’, 21, who acknowledge that the letters were transmitted orally and paraphrastically.
483 Even the closest report (aside from the redaction of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr), which is an interpolated transmission from Ḥammād b. Zayd (see above), differs noticeably from these three in its inclusion of the ‘dolls’ element and in its omission of the ‘hair/illness’ element.
source) is specifically more similar to ‘Ali’s transmission from Hišām, which is a sure sign of borrowing or major contamination. However, given that ‘Ali’s version is in certain respects more similar to these other two transmissions from Hišām (i.e., in only comprising the ‘Ā’išah story; in lacking the ‘adqayn detail in the ‘swing’ element; and in lacking the element of Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah altogether), the simplest stemma thereof places Muḥammad b. ‘Amr as an outgrowth from ‘Ali’s version or a close common ancestor with ‘Ali’s version, with both in turn descending from a more distant common ancestor alongside the versions of ‘Abū ‘Usāmah and Ḥammād. (For more on this, see below.) Since this inferable common source matches the common ascription to Hišām given by ‘Abū ‘Usāmah, ‘Ali, and Ḥammād, it is reasonable to conclude that this distinctive sub-tradition—Version 4—also derives from Hišām.

An obvious problem still remains, however: Ḥammād’s redaction differs markedly from those of ‘Ali and ‘Abū ‘Usāmah. Even when the narrative about the Prophet’s dream-vision of ‘Ā’išah is removed (since Ḥammād obviously joined together two discrete hadiths, as even the fa-qālat ‘ā’išah separating the two indicates), the elemental sequence of the remaining hadith differs in a key respect (i.e., in the location of the ‘hair’ element. Even when this is set aside, the specific wordings of Ḥammād’s elements differ noticeably from those of ‘Ali and ‘Abū ‘Usāmah. Clearly, the versions of ‘Ali and ‘Abū ‘Usāmah are more closely related to each other than to Ḥammād—but why? This could be explained by positing that either ‘Ali or ‘Abū ‘Usāmah borrowed from the other, but given the great variety in Ḥammād’s transmissions to his students (discussed already), it is plausible that Ḥammād himself was responsible for much of the divergences in his version(s). Additionally, Hišām may simply have told this hadith in different ways at different times, with ‘Abū ‘Usāmah and ‘Ali hearing it together in one instance, and Ḥammād hearing it a different way in another instance. As it happens, the biographical data concerning these tradents corroborates such a supposition: ‘Ali and ‘Abū ‘Usāmah were both Kufan, whereas Ḥammād was Basran, which is consistent with Hišām’s having related this hadith in different ways in different places.

As such, there is likely not a single, underlying redaction of Version 4 that can be traced back to Hišām: at the very least, there were probably two—one disseminated in Kufah, and one disseminated in Basrah. Of these, the Kufan version is the best.

484 For more on this, see the section on Ḥammād b. Salamah, above.
represented, thanks to the redactions of ‘Alī and ʿAbū ʿUsāmah; but even this version is difficult to reconstruct, due to numerous divergences in wording and even—in one case—elemental sequence between these two. Still, in those places where at least two of these three (ʿAlī, ʿAbū ʿUsāmah, and Ḥammād) agree on an elemental sequence or wording, it is reasonable to infer that we have thereby an echo of something that Hišām related to his students. Thus, whilst no single, coherent (say, Kufan or Basran) sub-redaction of Version 4 from Hišām can be reconstructed, the following wordings and sequence can at least be traced back to him:

Again, Hišām may never have articulated Version 4 in exactly this way—but he likely articulated most of the constitutive elements and wordings that way, at different times and in different places.

The version of Maʿmar

There are three other versions of the marital-age hadith ascribed to Hišām, all of which are isolated and problematic. The first is the redaction of the PCL Maʿmar, as previously reconstructed from the redaction of ʿAbd al-Razzāq and a report from Ibn Saʿd. There are three issues here. Firstly, the report is ascribed to both Hišām and al-Zuhri, and it is not clear which was intended to be the actual source, and which is just being invoked for having allegedly said something vaguely similar. Secondly, this report

---

485 Speculative.
486 See the section on Maʿmar, above.
comprises a mere statement ascribed to Hišām and al-Zuhri, rather than a report from ʿUrwah, unlike every other transmission from Hišām and al-Zuhri. Thirdly, the matn of the report is extremely divergent from all of the other transmissions from Hišām (not to mention al-Zuhri), since it only comprises the ‘marriage’ element. Of course, this could simply be a limitation of my ICMA and the available evidence: since Maʿmar’s redaction was reconstructed from only two reports (from ʿAbd al-Razzāq and Ibn Saʿd), and one of them (the version recorded by Ibn Saʿd) is quite short, only a short matn can be traced back to Maʿmar. In other words, it is possible that Ibn Saʿd’s version is actually an abridgement, and that the original was longer and, thereby, more similar to other transmissions from Hišām. However, the aberrant wording of that which can be traced back to Maʿmar—in conjunction with the Criterion of Dissimilarity and principle of lectio difficilior potior—remains: where every other transmission from Hišām has him report that ʿĀʾišah was married (tazawwaja, nakaḥa) at age six or seven and consummated in marriage (baná, daḵala) at nine, this version has him state that ʿĀʾišah was married (nakaḥa) at nine or seven, thereby conflating or confusing the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements.

For all of these reasons, Maʿmar’s version cannot be attributed to Hišām: if Hišām did transmit a version of his hadith to Maʿmar, the latter seems to have corrupted it quite badly. This is actually not unexpected: according to the later Hadith critic Yaḥyá b. Maʿīn, Maʿmar’s transmissions from Hišām were “inconsistent” (muḍṭarib) and “full of errors” (kaṭir al-ʾawhām).487

That said, it is questionable whether Maʿmar even received this hadith directly from Hišām: the poor state thereof is consistent with its having passed through considerable mutation (such that even the core element has been altered), meaning that it may have passed through several hands before reaching Maʿmar. Thus, where every other PCL transmission from Hišām has only suffered from his reformulations and the alterations of the PCL (whose distinctive redaction was henceforth preserved fairly accurately, in most cases), Maʿmar’s version may have undergone a more protracted process of alteration via some intermediary tradent(s). Of course, this would mean that Maʿmar has obscured his true source by suppressing an intermediary—or several—between him and Hišām, but again, this is not unexpected: according to the later Hadith scholar

487 Cited in Dahabī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VII, p. 11.
Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, “he used to deceive” (ʾinna-hu yudallisu) in his ʿisnāds (i.e., suppress sources).\(^{488}\)

Finally, it is worth noting that the Arabic words for ‘seven’ (سبع) and ‘nine’ (تسع) share a similar-looking consonantal skeleton or rasm (namely، تسع)، which could be confused with each other in the reading or copying of unvowelled and undotted writing. In other words, we might have a scenario in which Maʿmar (or a now-suppressed intermediary) acquired his version of the tradition from an ambiguous transcription (rather than a direct transmission from Hišām or an intermediary), or else forgot what he had once memorised and had to resort to personal notebooks written in rudimentary Arabic.\(^{489}\)

However, this does not explain the absence of a distinct ‘consummation’ element in Maʿmar’s version of the hadith, in light of which, some kind of more intensive confusion or conflation—of the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements—seems more likely.

**The version of al-Bağawi from al-Hayţam**

The second isolated and problematic version of the marital-age hadith ascribed to Hišām is the discussion that reportedly occurred between him and al-Hayţam, in which Hišām related information about the Prophet’s wives and children from his father.\(^{490}\)

The munqāṭṣ ascription of this report makes it seem archaic, which means that, at the very least, it probably does originate as early as al-Hayţam. There is a problem with the content thereof, however: most of Hišām’s statements therein are near-identical to a report recorded by Ibn Saʿd.\(^{491}\)

Since this report is similarly archaic-looking (again, with a munqāṭṣ ascription), it cannot be ruled out that al-Bağawi’s hadith was straightforwardly ripped therefrom, either by al-Bağawi himself, or by his source al-ʿAlā b. Mūsā, or even by al-Hayţam. As it happens, al-Bağawi was reportedly “weak” (daʿīf),\(^{492}\) whilst al-Hayţam was reportedly “abandoned in Hadith” (matrūk al-hadīṯ), “a liar” (kaḍḍāb), and “passed over” (sakatū ʿan-hu) by other traditionists.\(^{493}\)

---


\(^{489}\) I owe thanks to Christopher Melchert for pointing out this possibility.

\(^{490}\) See the section on al-Bağawi, above.

\(^{491}\) Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 39.


\(^{493}\) Dahābī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, X, pp. 103-104.
The version of al-Ṭabarānī from ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad

The third isolated and problematic version of the marital-age hadith ascribed to Hišām is recorded by al-Ṭabarānī. There are two problems here. Firstly, this report only reaches back to ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad via a SS, such that he cannot be considered a confirmed PCL. Secondly, the matn thereof is markedly divergent from most other transmissions from Hišām, with uncorroborated chronological elaborations in both the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements. Ḥammād b. Salamah’s transmission from Hišām does have a similar elaboration in the ‘marriage’ element, but his redaction belongs to Version 4; and al-Ṭabarī and al-Ḥākim do have a similar elaboration in the ‘consummation’ element, but their redactions belong to Version 3. In other words, the only transmissions from Hišām with similar elaborations belong to different versions, and none share both elaborations simultaneously. Al-Ṭabarānī’s report thus stands out as interpolated or fabricated: it looks as though someone took an iteration of Version 1 and updated it—based on a chronology of ‘Āʾišah’s life that had been synthesised from various different hadiths—to be more chronologically precise.

Who then was responsible for fabricating or interpolating this hadith? As it happens, various Hadith critics identified two of the tradents cited in the ’Isnād thereof as unreliable: firstly, Yaʿqūb b. Ḥumayd was “nothing” (laysa bi-šayʾ), according to Ibn Maʿīn and al-Nasāʾī; “unreliable” (laysa bi-ṭiqah), according to Ibn Maʿīn; and “weak in Hadith” (daʿif al-ḥadīṯ), according to ’Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī; and secondly, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad was “abandoned in Hadith” (matrūk al-ḥadīṯ), according to ’Abū Ḥātim; “rejected in Hadith” (munkar al-ḥadīṯ), according to al-Dāraquṭnī; “a possessor of rejected and false hadiths” (ṣāḥib manākīr wa-bawāṭīf), according to ’Abū Nuʿaym; and “one of those who transmitted fabricated hadiths from reliable

496 Cited in Ibn ‘Abī Hātim, Jarḥ, IX, p. 206.
497 Cited in ibid.
500 ’Abū Nuʿaym (ed. Ḥamādah), Duʿafāʾ, p. 94, # 107.
tradents (*yarwī al-mawḍūʿāt ‘an al-ʿaṭbāt*); indeed, “he brought forth (*yaʾtī*) from Hišām b. ‘Urwh hadiths that Hišām never, ever transmitted (*mā lam yuḥaddīt bi-hi hišām qaṭṭ*),” according to Ibn Ḥibbān. Given the chronological interest of the Hadith, and given that an interest in precise dating is generally a feature of later rather than earlier scholarship, it seems to me that the culprit is more likely Yaʿqūb than ‘Abd Allāh. That said, there is no reason for us to be constrained by the judgements and sensibilities of the Hadith critics: the true culprit could well have been al-Tustari, or perhaps even al-Ṭabarānī.

**Addendum: the dolls hadith**

Hišām is also the CL for a widely-transmitted hadith concerning ‘Āʾišah’s playing with dolls with her friends, and it is possible that he sometimes combined this hadith with the marital-age hadith in some instances. Most transmissions of the marital-age hadith from Hišām that contain a ‘dolls’ element have been exposed as having been interpolated or contaminated in that regard *subsequent* to Hišām, however, leaving only the redactions of the PCLs Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād and ‘Abdah b. Sulaymān—which differ considerably from each other—as evidence for Hišām’s combination of these two reports.

**ʾIsmāʾīl b. ʿabī ʿKālid (d. 146/763-764)**

I have collated nine reports constituting the *faḍāʾil* tradition ascribed to the Kufan tradent and putative CL ʾIsmāʾīl b. ʿabī ʿKālid: five unabridged versions in the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn ʿabī Šaybah, the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Ṭabarānī, al-Ṭabarānī’s *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, the

---

503 See the sections on ʿAbū ʾKāyīmah Zuhayr, Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Maʿmar b. Rāšid, above.
Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī,507 and the Ḥujjah of ʿĪsāʾīl al-ʿAṣbahānī,508; and four abridgements or references in the Taʿrīḵ of al-Buḵārī.509 All of these versions are ascribed unto ʿĪsāʾīl via SSs, making him a potential spider. Moreover, the texts (of the unabridged versions) are extremely similar, despite the hadith’s being rather long—this is unexpected given the usual rates of mutation exhibited by CLs and PCLs in transmission from the middle of the 8th Century CE to the beginning of the 9th Century CE.510 In other words, this tradition as a whole looks suspiciously homogenous, in addition to being suspiciously transmitted via SSs alone. The situation worsens considerably when matns are taken into account: al-Buḵārī and ʿĪsāʾīl al-ʿAṣbahānī both claim to transmit a variant of this hadith from the putative PCL Marwān b. Muʿāwiyah (via SSs), but their matns (or at least, what is available thereof) are more different from each other than either is to allegedly more distant versions. Where al-Buḵārī has daḵala ʿabd allāh, ʿĪsāʾīl al-ʿAṣbahānī has the more standard ʿabd allāh bn ṣafwān wa-ʿākar maʿa-hu ʿatayā: the use of daḵala in the former is more similar to two other versions (also recorded by al-Buḵārī) ascribed to two other transmitters from ʿĪsāʾīl b. ʿabī ʿUmayl).511 whereas the use of ʿatayā, the syntax, and the inclusion of wa-ʿākar maʿa-hu in the latter are all more similar to several other versions ascribed to other transmitters from ʿĪsāʾīl b. ʿabī ʿUmayl. The same goes for the putative PCL ʿAbī ʿSihāb: al-Buḵārī has daḵala (which is more similar to al-Buḵārī’s other variants), where al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī has ʿatā (which is more similar to the usual ʿatayā in most other versions). In other words, the attribution of this hadith to ʿĪsāʾīl b. ʿabī ʿUmayl is based entirely on SSs, and even the convergence of some of some of these (in two instances)

507 Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, pp. 29-30, # 6899.
510 For a similar point (albeit concerning ascriptions to Followers and Companions), see Mitter, ‘Origin and Development of the Islamic Patronate’, in Bernards & Nawas (eds.), Patronate and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam, 77, n. 32.
511 I.e., the versions transmitted from Saʿīd b. Sulaymān and ʿĀlīm b. ʿYūnūs; see above.
on putative PCLs display major textual inconsistencies (where the abridgement allows for such comparisons): particular wordings do not correlate with particular tradents. We thus probably have some borrowing and suppression occurring in the 'isnāds: some of the extant versions were probably obtained from late transmitters of the others and supplied with false, alternative 'isnāds back to 'Ismā‘īl b. 'abī Ḵālid. Otherwise, some major contamination has occurred between the relevant tradents.

And yet, for all that, the tradition as a whole at least plausibly derives from 'Ismā‘īl, even if the precise wording is in question: the hadith is at least as old as Ibn 'abī Šaybah (d. 235/849), and since the era of the creation or formulation of most hadiths (on the Revisionist view) coincides with the lifetime of 'Ismā‘īl (i.e., the middle of the 8th Century CE), it makes sense to suppose that this particular hadith origins with him. This hypothesis becomes even more plausible given that the hadith fits the polemical context of 8th-Century Kufah (as a proto-Sunnī defence against proto-Šī‘ī criticisms of 'Ā‘īşah) and, as it happens, 'Ismā‘īl was both Kufan and a proto-Sunnī: “He was not attributed with Shi‘ism (lam yunbaz bi-tašayyu’), nor any other innovation (wa-lā bid‘ah),” as al-Ḍahabī put it.512 Thus, on historical-critical grounds, the underlying redaction of the hadith can still be plausibly attributed to 'Ismā‘īl. This is strengthened by the originally-munqaṭi‘ ascription of this hadith (see below), which again points to an 8th-Century provenance.

Moreover, in general or overall, the ascriptions to 'Ismā‘īl are much more alike than all other relevant hadiths: this gives us a reason to think that the hadith as a whole embodies his distinctive redaction, even if some contamination, borrowing, interpolation, and/or occurred amongst his students and later transmitters. Still, the situation is not as neat or clear as with other CLs, where the PCLs constitute distinctive bundles, etc.

The 'isnāds of this hadith are problematic in other respects, however. Everyone agrees that 'Ismā‘īl claimed to have received his 'isnād from a certain ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘abī al-Ḍahḥāk, but who was he? Even after a search of the Islamweb and Shamela electronic databases, all mentions of him—and all information about him—appear to derive entirely from this very hadith and its 'isnād. He appears in no other 'isnāds, and no prosopographer has any further information about him—only what is inferable

512 Ḍahabī (ed. 'Arna‘ūṭ et al.), Siyar, VI, p. 177.
from this *ʾIsnād*. In other words, ʿIsmāʿīl’s immediate source for this hadith is a *majhūl*, which is consistent with ʿIsmāʿīl’s inventing a source on the spot for a *fadāʾil* hadith that he himself had cobbled together from elements obtained from his contemporaries in early Abbasid Iraq.

The problems with the *ʾIsnāds* of this hadith only worsen thereafter. Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī seemingly depicts “ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk” (sic) as the source or narrator of the hadith, but this is probably a scribal error: an earlier source (as in every other version) was probably dropped from the text in the same way as the “ʿabi” in “ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Ḍaḥḥāk”, by some sloppy copyist or editor of the manuscript. That aside, then, who then did (the plausibly fictitious) ʿAbd al-Raḥmān transmit from, according to ʿIsmāʿīl? Most versions depict him transmitting directly from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Judʿān, with one exception: in al-Ṭabarī’s *Taʾrīḵ*, Ibn ʿabī al-Ḍaḥḥāk transmits from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad via rajul min qurayš (i.e., another *majhūl*). Since this is absent from most other versions, and even from another manuscript of al-Ṭabarī, this may be another error. Probably, rajul min qurayš was meant to refer to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, whom a confused scribe (aware of alternative transmissions of this hadith that explicitly name ʿAbd al-Raḥmān) readded into the *ʾIsnād*.

Who then was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Judʿān? Once again, we have a tradent about whom the prosopographical sources possess no data other than that found in the handful of *ʾIsnāds* in which he appears. According to al-Buḵārī, he transmitted one hadith (about ʿĀʾišah’s nine *ḵiṭāl*) to Ibn ʿabī al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and another hadith (about Ibn ʿUmar saying *udḵul bi-salām*) to ʿAbū Jaʿfar al-Farrāʾ. According to Ibn Ḥībbān, he also transmitted one hadith (about how the *mustašār* is a *muʿtaman*) to Dāwūd b. ʿabī ʿAbd Allāh, and my own search of Hadith databases has yielded a

---


515 See the clue in Buḵārī, cited below.

516 The one exception is telling: Buḵārī (ed. Kān), *al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr*, V, p. 345, # 1096, seemingly has to surmise that he was from the Qurayš (ʿarā-ḥu al-qurayšīyy).


second hadith (about a waṣīfah who 'abṭa‘at) likewise transmitted to Dāwūd.\(^{519}\) Finally, according to al-Mizzī (on the authority of al-Nasāʾī), he also transmitted something to al-Zuhrī under the name ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad,\(^{520}\) although no indication of the hadith is given, and I have thus far failed to find any earlier source where al-Nasāʾī mentions this, nor any hadith in which someone called al-Zuhrī\(^{521}\) transmits from anyone called ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘abī Salamah.\(^{522}\) That aside, then, Ibn Judʿān seemingly only transmitted to three people, in the entire Hadith corpus: Ibn ‘abī al-Ḍaḥḥāk (a majhūl cited by ʾIsmāʿīl, a Kufan),\(^{523}\) ʾAbū Jaʿfar al-Farrāʾ (a Kufan),\(^{524}\) and Dāwūd b. ‘abī Abd Allāh (yet another Kufan).\(^{525}\) Ibn Judʿān is thus also on the verge of being majhūl, being cited by only two known Kufans and a majhūl.\(^{526}\) It is thus conceivable that he is someone who was invented by a Kufan (most likely ʾIsmāʿīl), only to be borrowed in two or three other Kufan ʾisnāds. Of course, he may simply have been an extremely obscure figure.

Be that as it may, Ibn Judʿān is depicted as the source of this hadith in most versions, relating about rather than from ‘Āʿīšah and her two interlocutors.\(^{527}\) The original version of the hadith was thus munqatī’ (since Ibn Judʿān is not presented as a witness, nor as citing a witness), in addition to containing one definite majhūl (Ibn ‘abī al-Ḍaḥḥāk) and another conceivable majhūl (Ibn Judʿān).

And yet, there are still more problems with the ʾisnāds: in the earliest extant version of this hadith, recorded by Ibn ‘abī Saybah, the source of the story is not Ibn Judʿān, but rather, some unnamed earlier source: “It was related to us that (ḥuddiṭnā ‘anna) ‘Abd

---

\(^{519}\) Cited in the Musnad of ‘Abū Ya’lā, al-Ṭabarānī’s al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, and the Ḥilyah of ‘Abū Nu‘aym, with all three converging in their ʾisnāds upon Wakī’—Dāwūd—Ibn Judʿān—his grandmother (or in one version, some other unnamed tradent)—Umm Salamah—the Prophet.

\(^{520}\) Mizzī (ed. Maʿrūf), Tahḏīb al-Kamāl, XVII, p. 395, # 3951.

\(^{521}\) Probably Yaʿqūb b. Muḥammad al-Zuhrī, rather than Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī; see the following reference.


\(^{523}\) See above.


\(^{525}\) This is implied in Ibn Ḥībbān (ed. Kān), Tiqāt, VI, p. 283 (where it is mentioned that Dāwūd transmitted to Wakī’ and al-kūfiyyān), and made explicit in Kaṭib (ed. Ṣahrī), GŪnyāyā, p. 183.


\(^{527}\) In al-Buḵārī (from both al-Muṭammal and ‘Aḥmad), al-Ṭabarānī, and ʾIsmāʾīl al-ʾAṣbahānī. Probably also in al-Buḵārī—Muḥammad b. Bišr, as recorded in al-Mizzī. For all of these, see above.
Allāh b. Ṣafwān and another with him came to ‘Ā’išah,” as Ibn Judʿān is made to say. Incredibly, this means that Ibn ’abī Šaybah’s version derives from a definite majhūl (Ibn ’abī al-Ḍaḥḥāk), from a conceivable majhūl (Ibn Judʿān), from yet another majhūl! This could be an error by Ibn ’abī Šaybah or some later scribe, or it could reflect the very earliest version of the hadith; either way, those who transmitted this hadith from Ibn ’abī Šaybah emended their versions to remove this particular ambiguity: al-Buḵārī simply has Ibn Judʿān as the source of the hadith,528 whereas al-Ṭabarānī (or an intermediary between him and Ibn ’abī Šaybah) turned the unnamed majhūl into ‘Ā’išah herself (see below). Interestingly, in al-Mizzi’s quotation of al-Buḵārī, the ‘isnād has likewise been raised unto ‘Ā’išah: “‘Ā’išah reported this to us (ʾakbarat-nā ‘ā’išah bi-hāḏā),” as Ibn Judʿān is made to say.529 Thus, where al-Buḵārī seemingly emended Ibn ’abī Šaybah to remove an unnamed majhūl from behind Ibn Judʿān, al-Mizzi (or some intermediary in the many centuries between him and al-Buḵārī) then re-extended the ‘isnād back behind Ibn Judʿān, this time explicitly back to ‘Ā’išah.

In one version recorded by al-Buḵārī, however, the source of the hadith has been transformed into a completely different person: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Judʿān has become ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Jubayr b. Muṭʿīm, presumably at the hands of one of the intermediaries between al-Buḵārī and ‘Ismāʿīl (i.e., Saʿīd b. Sulaymān or ‘Abbād b. ‘Awwām).530 As it happens, Jubayr b. Muṭʿīm was remembered as someone to whom ‘Ā’išah was initially engaged (as in the tradition of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr—see below), so this change is probably not a coincidence: what we have here is the grandson of ‘Ā’išah’s ex-fiancé attesting to her virtues.531 It is easy to imagine a storyteller or tradent delighting in such a connection, or thinking that such a connection adds weight to the story: even the family of ‘Ā’išah’s ex related her virtues, after all. Despite such an appeal, this version never caught on. Moreover, this grandson was probably invented by whoever was responsible for the alteration of the relevant

528 Buḵārī (ed. Ḵān), al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr, III, p. 345, # 1096.
530 Buḵārī (ed. Ḵān), al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr, III, p. 345, # 1096; also see Mizzi (ed. Maʿrūf), Tahdhib al-Kamāl, XVII, p. 394, # 3951.
531 Buḵārī (ed. Ḵān), al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr, III, p. 345, # 1096; also see Mizzi (ed. Maʿrūf), Tahdhib al-Kamāl, XVII, p. 394, # 3951.

When the urtext of this hadith is collated and compared, the following urtext (albeit with some uncertain wordings) obtains:


533 Ṣubḥānī (ed. Ẓaḥrī), al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 31, # 77.

534 Ibn ‘abī Ṣaybah (ed. ʿUsāmah), Muṣannaf, X, pp. 527-528, # 32877.

Again, however, some of the corroborated wordings underpinning this reconstructed urtext may be the result of contamination or borrowing, given the problems mentioned above.

There is no question about pushing this hadith back into the Umayyad period; in the best-case scenario, it can be reconstructed as far back as 'Ismā'īl, operating in the first decade or so of Abbasid Kufah. Since 'Ismā'īl’s sources are a string of definite and conceivable majhūlūn, it is plausible (if indeed he was the hadith’s creator) that he invented Ibn ʾabī al-Ḍāḥḥāk (and possibly even Ibn Judʿān) on the fly when he first formulated the narrative. Moreover, the fact that this narrative contains the distinctive elemental sequence usually associated with 'Ismā'īl’s contemporary Hišām b. Urwah (‘Ā‘īšah’s being married at seven and consummated in marriage at nine), along with the fact that Hišām just so happened to be in Kufah at exactly the same time, is consistent with 'Ismā'īl’s having borrowed these elements from Hišām when he cobbled together his faḍā’il hadith.

In short, I cannot disagree with al-Dāraquṭnī’s judgement on the matter: “'Ismā’īl b. ʾabī Kālid transmitted this hadith, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. ʾabī al-Ḍāḥḥāk, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Juḍ'ān, from 'Ā‘īšah, but there is nothing sound about it (wa-laysa fi-hā šay' šaḥīḥ).”\footnote{536}

Addendum: related faḍā’il hadiths

‘Ismā’īl’s list of special attributes bestowed upon ‘Ā’išah was not the only one circulating in Kufah in the early Abbasid period: al-Ṭabarānī also recorded a list of seven special attributes, supported by a distinctively Kufan SS (‘Abū Ḥanīfah—al-Šaybānī—al-Ša’bī—Masrūq) unto ‘Ā’išah,537 and al-Ｄaraqidī recorded an additional, similar Kufan SS (‘Abū Ḥanīfah—‘Awn—al-Ša’bī) for the same hadith.538 This hadith shares five elements with ‘Ismā’īl’s, often with very similar wordings: ‘Ā’išah was the only virgin wife; revelations came whilst ‘Ā’išah was alone with the Prophet in a blanket; ‘Ā’išah was the most-beloved; a revelation exonerated ‘Ā’išah, at a time of communal strife; and ‘Ā’išah was present when the Prophet died.

Meanwhile, another list of nine special attributes—which also compares ‘Ā’išah to Mary—is ascribed via two Baghdadian-Kufan SSs (Bišr b. al-Walīd—‘Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar—al-Šaybānī, on the one hand; and ‘Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Sūsī—‘Abū Badr Šujā‘—Ḥafṣ al-Ḥalabī, on the other) unto a putative Basran CL named ‘Ali b. Zayd b. Juḍ‘ān, who allegedly received this list from ‘Ā’išah via a relative.539 The similarities are striking: with ‘Ali’s hadith and ‘Ismā’īl’s, we have two lists of ‘Ā’išah’s special attributes, both transmitted from Kufans, both comprising nine attributes, both comparing her to Mary, and both claiming to derive via someone called Ibn Zayd b. Juḍ‘ān. They even share five out of nine elements, often with very similar wordings: the angel brought ‘Ā’išah’s image; ‘Ā’išah was the only virgin wife; ‘Ā’išah was present when the Prophet died; revelations came whilst ‘Ā’išah was alone with the Prophet in a blanket; and a revelation exonerated her.

Meanwhile, yet another list of ten special attributes is recorded by Ibn Sa’d and ascribed via a Basro-Madinan SS (Ḥajjāj b. Nuṣayr—Īsā b. Maymūn—al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad) unto ‘Ā’išah,540 which shares with ‘Ismā’īl’s hadith an introduction in which someone is prompted by ‘Ā’išah to ask her about her special attributes, along with five other elements: ‘Ā’išah was the only virgin wife; a revelation exonerated

---

537 Ṭabarānī (ed. Salafi), al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 30, # 75.
538 Daraquṭnī, ‘Ilal, XV, p. 166.
540 Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 43-44.
ʿĀʾishah; Gabriel brought ʿĀʾishah's image; revelations came whilst ʿĀʾishah was alone with the Prophet; and ʿĀʾishah was present when the Prophet died, and he was buried in her house.

Finally, as we have already seen, yet another list of special attributes was transmitted by the Kufan CL ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792), on the authority of his Kufan predecessor ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr, from ʿĀʾishah. All six of the attributes in ʿAbū ʿAwānah’s hadith are shared by ʿIsmāʿīl’s hadith: ʿĀʾishah was married at age six; the angel brought ʿĀʾishah’s image; ʿĀʾishah’s marriage was consummated at age nine; ʿĀʾishah alone saw Gabriel; ʿĀʾishah was the most-beloved; and ʿĀʾishah was present when the Prophet died.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ʿAbū Ḥanīfah</th>
<th>ʿAlī b. Zayd</th>
<th>ʿAbū ʿAwānah</th>
<th>Ibn Saʿd</th>
<th>ʿIsmāʿīl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven attributes</td>
<td>Nine attributes</td>
<td>Attributes [no specified number]</td>
<td>Ten attributes</td>
<td>Nine attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison to Mary</td>
<td>Comparison to Mary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1] She was the most-beloved</td>
<td>[1] The angel Gabriel brought her image to the Prophet</td>
<td>[1] She was married at seven</td>
<td>[1] She was the Prophet's only virgin wife</td>
<td>[1] An angel brought her image to the Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2] Her father was the most-beloved</td>
<td>[2] She was the Prophet’s only virgin wife</td>
<td>[2] An angel brought her image to the Prophet</td>
<td>[2] She was the only daughter of emigrants whom the Prophet married</td>
<td>[2] She was married at seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3] She was the Prophet’s only virgin wife</td>
<td>[3] She was with the Prophet when he died</td>
<td>[3] The marriage was consummated at nine</td>
<td>[3] God exonerated her</td>
<td>[3] The marriage was consummated at nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[4] The revelation came whilst she was with</td>
<td>[4] She alone saw Gabriel</td>
<td>[4] The Prophet was buried in her house</td>
<td>[4] Gabriel brought her image to the Prophet from Heaven, in silk,</td>
<td>[4] She was the Prophet’s only virgin wife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

541 See the section on ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ, above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Version 1</th>
<th>Version 2</th>
<th>Version 3</th>
<th>Version 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>She stayed with the Prophet for two days and nights per week</td>
<td>The angels surrounded her house</td>
<td>She was the most-beloved, and her father was the most-beloved</td>
<td>She used to wash whilst sharing a single vessel with the Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A revelation exonerated her, when a group almost destroyed her</td>
<td>The revelation came whilst she was with the Prophet when he died, with the angels</td>
<td>The Prophet used to pray whilst she was lying in front of him</td>
<td>She was the most-beloved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>She was with the Prophet when he died</td>
<td>She was the daughter of the Prophet’s successor and friend</td>
<td>The revelation came whilst she was alone with the Prophet</td>
<td>A revelation exonerated her, when the community was almost destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A revelation exonerated her</td>
<td>The Prophet was resting against her when he died</td>
<td></td>
<td>She saw Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>She was created good, and blessed</td>
<td>The Prophet died on the night that would have been her round</td>
<td></td>
<td>She was with the Prophet when he died, with the angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He was buried in her house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hadith recorded by Ibn Sa'd cannot be subjected to an ICMA, since I was able to find no parallel transmissions thereof. Additionally, the alleged Basran provenance of the hadith is less expected than a Kufan origin (see below), which raises the possibility that the hadith is a Basran dive.

The hadith transmitted via 'Abū Ḥanīfah likewise cannot be subjected to an ICMA, since I was only able to find a single matn and two differing isnāds therefor. Based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity, however, we can infer which of these isnāds is earlier.
than the other: where one version has al-Šaʿbī—Masrūq—ʿĀʾišah, the other has omitted the superfluous tradent Masrūq (since al-Šaʿbī was remembered as having transmitted from ʿĀʾišah directly). In other words, the latter has a shorter ʾisnād, whilst retaining connectedness therein—and, given that traditionists came to prize the shortest possible ʾisnāds, it more likely that the longer ʾisnād was shortened by a tradent in the course of transmission, rather than vice versa. In short, the less elegant or economical ʾisnād—the ʾisnād that accords less to later ideals and preferences—is more likely to be the original.

Something can also be said about the probable provenance of this hadith. The fact that it reduces in both ʾisnāds to a string of early Kufans is consistent with the hadith’s having originated in Umayyad-era or early Abbasid-era Kufah, as indeed is the content: Kufah was the centre of Shi’ism in the 8th Century CE, which would make Kufah the place where proto-Sunnīs had the greatest need for faḍāʾil of ʿĀʾišah at that time. In other words, the hadith is exactly the sort of thing that we would expect to be created by proto-Sunnī Kufans in the 8th Century CE—and, given other evidence concerning the mass-creation of Hadith in this period,542 we have all the more reason to suspect the falsity of the hadith’s ascription all the way back to ʿĀʾišah. Again, I must concur with al-Dāraquṭnī’s judgement on the matter:

ʾAbū Ḥanīfah transmitted this hadith, but it varied from him (wa-iktalafa ‘an-hu): ‘Abd Allāh b. Buzay’ transmitted it, from ʾAbū Ḥanīfah, from al-Šaybānī, from al-Šaʿbī, from Masrūq, from ʿĀʾišah; but ʾIshāq al-ʾAzraq contradicted him (wa-kālafa-hu); he transmitted it from Ṣafī al-Šaʿbī, from ʿĀʾišah. There is nothing sound about it (wa-laysa fi-hā ṣay ṣayḥiḥhu).543

More can be said about the hadith transmitted via Ṣafī b. Zayd, of which there are seven versions (discounting duplicates), with SSs that converge upon two putative PCLs: the Baghdadian tradent Bišr b. al-Walīd (d. 238/853),544 and the Baghdadian tradent ʾAḥmad b. Yahyā al-Sūsī (d. 263/876).545 As it happens, the versions attributed via each PCL are more similar to each other than they are to those attributed via the other PCL: where all the Bišr versions have Ṣafī b. Zayd relating the hadith from his grandmother

542 See the previous chapter of the present work.
543 Dāraquṭnī, ‘Ila, XV, p. 166.
(jaddah), all the ‘Aḥmad versions have him relating it from either his mother (‘umm) or his father (‘ab); where all the Bišr versions have mā ‘uṭiyat-hā, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have lam tūṭ-i/huṭi/huṭi-hinna; where all the Bišr versions have imrā‘ah, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have al-nisā‘; where all the Bišr versions have rāḥati-hi, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have kaffi-hi; where all the Bišr versions have alnisā‘, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have lam yatazawwaj; where all the Bišr versions have ‘in kāna al-wahy la-yanzilu, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have ‘anā; all the Bišr versions lack fi al-qur‘ān, which is present in all the ‘Aḥmad versions; where all the Bišr versions have kāna yanzilu al-ḥy la-yanzilu, all the ‘Aḥmad versions have yanzilu al-ḥy; and so on.

In other words, an analysis of the matns of these hadiths yields two clusters of reports that each derive from a recent common ancestor, both of which in turn share an ultimate common ancestor; and as it happens, this is exactly what the ‘isnād bundle depicts, with two PCLs (Bišr and ‘Aḥmad) and a CL (ʿAlī b. Zayd). We thus have a reason to accept that the original version derives from ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān, a Basran traditionist (or possibly, a Meccan who moved to Basrah), who died 131/748-749.

Thus, (the underlying redaction of) the hadith can seemingly be traced at least as far back as someone operating in Basrah during the late Umayyad period.

This has significance for ‘Ismā‘īl’s hadith: ‘Alī was operating in Iraq before Hišām settled in the region and, as it happens, ‘Alī’s version of the faḍā‘il hadith lacks the marital-age elements associated with Hišām; by contrast, ‘Ismā‘īl was operating in Iraq for a decade or more longer than ‘Alī, conterminously with Hišām, and, as it happens, ‘Ismā‘īl’s version of the faḍā‘il hadith incorporates the marital-age elements associated with Hišām. In other words, ‘Alī’s hadith can be understood to reflect an earlier phase of the faḍā‘il material about Ḥaḍīth in Iraq, before the arrival of Hišām and his dissemination of the marital-age elements. Meanwhile, ‘Ismā‘īl’s hadith can be understood as an updated version of ‘Alī’s hadith (or the material embodied therein), retaining most of the elements and the attribution of the hadith via a certain Ibn Zayd b. Judʿān, but incorporating some other elements, including two from Hišām.

Ibn ‘Adī (ed. Sarsāwī), Kāmil, VIII, p. 137, # 1354, states that he was makkiyy, nazala al-baṣrah, but ‘Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Manjuwayh al-‘Aḥshāhānī (ed. ‘Abd Allāh al-Layṭī), Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 2 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1987), p. 56, # 1138, states that he was al-baṣriyy, wa-yuqālu al-makkiyy nazala al-baṣrah, seemingly regarding his Meccan origin with some doubt. Most of the time (e.g., in the various reports cited by Ibn ‘Adī), he is simply called Basran. Likewise, Dahābī (ed. ‘Arna‘ūṭ et al.), Syar, V, pp. 206-208, only calls him al-baṣriyy.
There are several problems with the attribution of ʿAlī b. Zayd’s hadith all the way back to him, however. Firstly, ʿAlī was operating in Basrah, yet the hadith (with its defence of ʿĀʾišah, evidently against proto-Šīʿī criticisms) better fits a Kufan context—and, as it happens, all versions of this hadith (not to mention related hadiths, like those of ʿİsmāʿīl and ʿAbū Ḥanīfah) derive via Kufans. This is consistent with the hadith’s originating in Kufah, not Basrah.

Secondly, ʿAlī b. Zayd was reportedly a Šīʿī,\(^547\) which is extremely suspicious: this is the sort of hadith that we would expect a Šīʿī to reject, not disseminate. This makes it look like someone ascribed the hadith via ʿAlī b. Zayd post facto, to give the hadith more legitimacy or polemical utility against Šīʿīs (i.e., as a kind of Trojan horse).

Finally, the two PCL sub-traditions comprising the broader tradition are extremely similar (indeed, mostly identical) in wording, which would suggest a very recent ultimate common ancestor for both sub-traditions—yet the ‘isnāds depict a century or more of transmission between the CL and his two PCLs, i.e., a very distant ultimate common ancestor.\(^548\) To put things into perspective, there are far more differences and paraphrases between Ibn Ṭāfiq (d. 238/853) and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855)’s respective transmissions of the Ḵawlah hadith directly from Muḥammad b. Bišr (d. 203/818-819)\(^549\) than there are between Bišr (d. 238/853) and ‘Aḥmad (d. 263/876)’s respective transmissions of this faḍā’il hadith all the way back from ʿAlī b. Zayd (d. 131/748-749). Not only did the former transmission (from Ibn Bišr to both Ibn Ṭāfiq and Ibn Ḥanbal) take place for only half a century, it also occurred from the turn of the 9th Century CE onwards, when the transmission and preservation of Hadith in writing was becoming normalised. By contrast, the latter transmission (from ʿAlī to both Bišr and ‘Aḥmad) occurred for a century or more, beginning in an era of heavy paraphrastic transmission (i.e., the middle of the 8th Century CE). The implication is clear: if Bišr and ‘Aḥmad’s ‘isnāds were genuine, such that their respective versions truly derived via a century of transmission (from the end of the Umayyad period to the

---


\(^548\) Thus, we have Bišr b. al-Walīd (d. 238/853) the Baghdadian, from ʿAbū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar (fl. late 8th C. CE) the Kufan, from Sulaymān al-Šaybānī (d. 129-142/746-760) the Kufan, from ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān (d. 131/748-749) the Basran; and ‘Aḥmad b. Yahyā al-Sūsī (d. 263/876) the Baghdadian, from ʿAbū Badr Šuʿāʿ b. al-Walīd (d. 204-205/819-821) the Kufo-Baghdadian, from Ḥafṣ al-Ḥalabī, a mawlá of the Sakūn (and a majhūl), from ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān (d. 131/748-749) the Basran.

\(^549\) See the section on Muḥammad b. Bišr, above.
middle of the 9th Century CE), then it would be reasonable to expect far greater divergences between their respective versions.\textsuperscript{550}

We thus have multiple reasons to reject the ascription of this hadith back to 'Alī b. Zayd, which also robs us of the neat chronology outlined above (\emph{vis-à-vis} 'Ismā'īl's version). The attribution of the two versions of the hadith to Bišr and 'Aḥmad respectively still seems secure, but from thereon backwards, the matns imply a much more recent common ancestor than 'Alī, and non-Šī'ī Kufan one at that. From Bišr and 'Aḥmad backwards, the relevant '\textit{ｉｓｎ\=ａｄ}s' cannot be trusted.

The aforementioned chronology is salvageable, however, provided we assume that Bišr's transmission from 'Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (fl. late 8th C. CE) is genuine, and that the latter's transmission from 'Abū 'Iṣḥāq Sulaymān b. 'abī Sulaymān al-Šaybānī (d. 129-142/746-760) is genuine. If some earlier version of this hadith does indeed derive from al-Šaybānī, as Bišr claimed, then we would still have a version of the \textit{ｆａḍāʾil} hadith slightly earlier than 'Ismā'īl's, and plausibly from the late Umayyad period as well: al-Šaybānī was reportedly born when Companions such as Ibn 'Umar and Jābir were still alive (i.e., the 690s CE at the latest), and died in 129/746-747, or 138/755-756, or 139/756-757, or 142/759-760,\textsuperscript{551} all of which places him at least slightly earlier than 'Ismā'īl (d. 146/763-764). Thus, if some version of the hadith goes back to al-Šaybānī, it can still be understood as an earlier version than 'Ismā'īl's, which may also explain the absence of Hišām's distinctive elements therefrom. (Unlike in the case of 'Alī b. Zayd, however, al-Šaybānī may have lived long enough to meet Hišām in Iraq, so the chronology is not as neat as before.)

Why should we believe that some version of the hadith does indeed go back to al-Šaybānī? There are several reasons, all of which are admittedly weak. Firstly, al-Šaybānī is cited in Bišr's '\textit{ｉｓｎ\=ａｄ}' therefor. Secondly, al-Šaybānī was Kufan, which matches the probable context of the hadith's creation. Thirdly, al-Šaybānī is also cited in the '\textit{ｉｓｎ\=ａｄ}' for the earlier version of the two \textit{ｆａḍāʾil} hadiths ascribed via 'Abū Ḥanīfah (see above), which is consistent with his being the disseminator of several different

\textsuperscript{550} For a similar point (albeit concerning ascriptions to Followers and Companions), again see Mitter, cited above.


164
versions of the hadith: one via al-Ša‘bī and Masrūq unto ʿĀʾišah, and another via ʿAlī b. Zayd and his relative unto ʿĀʾišah.

But all of that is *ad hoc*: the attribution of Bišr’s version of the hadith to al-Šaybānī may simply be the product of a Kufan retrojection to a suitable local authority, and the appearance of al-Šaybānī in the *ʾisnād* of a similar hadith may simply be the product of later borrowing and suppression or error amongst the transmitters and redactors of these hadiths. All we can say for sure is that the *faqāʾil* hadith probably originated in Kufah, somewhere between middle and the end of the 8th Century CE.

There is however a final consideration that strengthens the idea that ʾIsmāʿīl’s version of the hadith is later than the other two attributed to ʾAbū Ḥanīfah and ʿAlī b. Zayd: ʾIsmāʿīl’s is noticeably more elaborate, framing the exposition of ʿĀʾišah’s nine special attributes in a discussion that arose when ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣafwān and someone else visited ʿĀʾišah. In other words, we have a clear instance of what Schacht described as the insertion of “spurious circumstantial details”, intended “to provide an authentic touch” to a fabricated hadith.552 (Incidentally, the employment of such techniques by ʾIsmāʿīl makes him come across as more of a storyteller than a simple tradent.) Since elaboration (rather than abbreviation) is the norm in the transmission of traditions, such that details in reports accumulate over time, the more detailed version of any set of reports is more likely to reflect a later formulation, whereas a simpler version is more likely to reflect an earlier formulation, generally speaking—this is the textual-critical principle of *lectio brevior potior*.553 We thus have another reason to think that ʾIsmāʿīl’s version of the *faqāʾil* hadith about ʿĀʾišah is later than those ascribed to both ʾAbū Ḥanīfah and ʿAlī b. Zayd. And, if this version attributed to ʾIsmāʿīl was indeed formulated later than the other two, and this version attributed to ʾIsmāʿīl truly derives from ʾIsmāʿīl (d. 146/763-764), then it follows that the other two versions must be earlier still—plausibly earlier than Hišām’s settlement in Iraq (c. 754 CE). Provided all of that stands, we again have a chronology that explains the absence of the distinctive marital-age elements in the two hadiths ascribed via ʾAbū Ḥanīfah and ʿAlī b. Zayd, and the presence of said elements in the hadith of ʾIsmāʿīl: the former two were formulated before the spread of Hišām’s distinctive marital-age elements in Kufah, whereas the latter was formulated thereafter, incorporating these newly-available elements.

Finally, a form-critical analysis of all of these faḍāʾil hadiths together can yield some deeper conclusions about their pre-history (i.e., beyond their ʾisnāds). As we have seen, their matns exhibit a huge amount of overlap in terms of elements and even wordings, which cannot be a coincidence: all of these hadiths must share some kind of common origin. If it is ruled out that ʿĀʾishah herself went around constantly declaring contradictory and ever-changing lists of her own (six, or seven, or nine, or ten) virtues, the heavy overlap between these hadiths has to be explained by widespread borrowing and contamination on the part of those involved in their formulation or dissemination, and/or by the fact that these hadiths represent various combinations of a common pool of faḍāʾil material that was circulating at least as early as the middle of the 8th Century CE. This kind of creation and remixing of material immediately suggests the agency of popular, oral storytellers and preachers in the dissemination of these hadiths.554

Since the material is attested most densely for Kufah and perfectly fits a Kufan context, it seems probable that it originated in Kufah in particular. Consequently, the claims of two of the hadiths in question—that ascribed to Ibn Judʿān, and that recorded by Ibn Saʿd—to derive via independent Basran and Basro-Madinan lines of transmission back to ʿĀʾishah must be discarded: the shared elements and wordings cannot have arisen independently and must share a single source, and if that source was the storytellers and preachers of Kufah, such ʾisnāds—which ultimately or completely bypass Kufan sources—must be false.

ʿAbū Ḥujayyah al-ʾAjlaḥ (d. 145/762-763 or later)

I have collated four reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent and putative CL ʿAbū Ḥujayyah al-ʾAjlaḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Kindī, recorded by Ibn Saʿd,555 Ibn Rāhwayh (twice),556 and al-Ṭabarānī.557 These reports (all of which derive from Kufan SSs) are extremely divergent: Ibn Saʿd’s version lacks the full ‘marriage’ element, and the ‘consummation’ element altogether; the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements in

---

554 For more on the early storytellers, see the previous chapter of the present work.
555 Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, 40.
Ibn Rāhwayh’s version (especially the relatively uncommon daḵala bi-hā in the latter) are more similar to those in various transmissions from the Kufan tradents ʾIsrāʾīl and Šarīk, both on the authority of ʾAbū ʾĪṣāq, than they are to al-Ṭabarānī’s version; and both Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s versions are together more similar, at a very general level, to the tradition of the Kufan CL Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (in particular, concerning ʿĀʾišah’s engagement to Jubayr). Still, the short account of ʿĀʾišah’s engagement to Jubayr shared by Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s reports is distinctive, which is consistent with their common ascription to al-ʾAjlaḥ: this part of the hadith at least plausibly derives therefrom, despite considerable variation in the wording of the extant versions. The genesis of the original form of this hadith as early as al-ʾAjlaḥ is also consistent with the munqaṭiʿ ascription shared by Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s versions, against which Ibn Rāhwayh’s version stands out as secondary.

What then was the original form of this hadith? Did al-ʾAjlaḥ include therein a mention of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age, or are these later accretions, contaminations, or interpolations? At first glance, it might seem as though the first scenario is beyond dispute—after all, two of the three transmissions from al-ʾAjlaḥ manifest such. And yet, as noted already, Ibn Rāhwayh’s version (1) is muttaṣil (which already makes it seem secondary), (2) lacks the distinctive account of ʿĀʾišah’s engagement to Jubayr (which is the only component that makes an origin with al-ʾAjlaḥ seem likely in the first place), and (3) is much more similar to other transmissions than to either Ibn Saʿd and al-Ṭabarānī’s versions, all of which makes it seem all the world like Ibn Rāhwayh or (more likely) one of his Kufan sources (Yaḥyá b. ᾱdam or ʿAbū Bakr b. ʿAyyāš) completely replaced al-ʾAjlaḥ’s original matn with one borrowed from another Kufan source, and improved the ascription (from munqaṭiʿ to muttaṣil) along the way. As it happens, even traditional Islamic Hadith scholarship was suspicious of Ibn Rāhwayh’s version, with none other than al-Ṭabarānī commenting thereon: “No one transmitted this hadith from al-ʾAjlaḥ except for ʿAbū Bakr b. al-ʾAjlaḥ, nor from ʿAbū Bakr except for Yaḥyá b. ᾱdam. ʾĪṣāq b. Rāhwayh transmitted it in isolation (tafarrada bi-hi).” As Melchert

---

559 ʾTabarānī (ed. Salafi), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, X, p. 184, # 10279.
560 See below, in the section on Muḥammad b. ʾAmr.
notes, for the Hadith critics, such *tafarrud* “is usually a sign that something is wrong.”

This leaves us with Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarānī’s reports, and the following question: is the former (in which any mention of ‘Ā’iṣah’s age is absent) abridged, or is the latter (which includes full versions of the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements, along with a comment on the period there-between) interpolated? Based on the principle of *lectio brevior potior*, the latter scenario is more likely: al-ʾAjlaḥ’s original formulation probably did not mention ‘Ā’iṣah's marital age, which means that al-Ṭabarānī’s version represents yet another instance of the marital-age hadith contaminating an initially-unrelated hadith.

Consequently, only the following approximate wording can be traced back to the Kufan CL al-ʾAjlaḥ:


Given the major variation in wording between the extant derivations from al-ʾAjlaḥ (recorded by Ibn Sa’d and al-Ṭabarānī), most of his original formulation remains unclear, leaving us with little more than a gist. This is consistent with the loose or sloppy paraphrastic transmission of this hadith from al-ʾAjlaḥ to his students, which fits well with the relevant time-period (i.e., the mid-to-late 8th Century CE, before the predomination of written transmission).

**Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763)**

I have collated eight reports ascribed to the Madinan tradent and putative CL Muḥammad b. ʿAmr b. ʿAlqamah al-Layṭī (usually on the authority of ʿAbū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and/or Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān), recorded by Muḥammad b. Biṣr

---

The level of variation between some of these reports is astonishing, although this is to some degree misleading: the reports of Ibn Rāhwayh and ʾAbū Dāwūd are clearly just abridged versions of the long tradition shared by Muḥammad b. Bišr, Saʿīd b. Yaḥyá, and ʾAḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, since what little content there is in the former lines up closely to the corresponding content in the latter. As such, we have five reports from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr that line up fairly well and clearly embody a distinctive tradition, being more similar to each other than to all other versions of the marital-age hadith; and three other reports, recorded by Ibn Saʿd, al-Balāḏurī, and ʾAbū Yaʿlá, that diverge sharply therefrom and from each other.

The version recorded by Ibn Saʿd is the most similar to the common tradition shared by most of the other transmissions from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, sharing therewith multiple elements: Ḵawlah arranges the Prophet’s marriages to Sawdah and ʿĀʾišah; ʿĀʾišah is married at age six; and her marriage is consummated after the Hijrah. Still, most of the elements in the common tradition are absent from Ibn Saʿd’s version, and even the corresponding elements are mostly worded very differently. Moreover, Ibn Saʿd’s version is actually more similar to a section of al-Baḡawī’s transmission from Hišām b. ʿUrwa than it is to the common tradition from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, as was noted previously. However, both Ibn Saʿd’s version and the relevant section in al-Baḡawī’s report are broadly more similar to other transmissions from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr than to other transmissions from Hišām, and Ibn Saʿd’s version is attested earlier in any case, all of which makes it more likely that Ibn Saʿd’s version is (1) the original and (2) ultimately originated with something that Muḥammad b. ʿAmr actually said. Moreover, the ascription in Ibn Saʿd’s version is munqatī, which is consistent with an early origin. Still, the wording in Ibn Saʿd’s version is far removed from the common tradition, which is consistent with its having undergone extreme mutation in the

563 See the section on Muḥammad b. Bišr, above.
566 See the section on Saʿīd b. Yaḥyá, above.
567 See the section on ʾAḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, above.
568 ʾAbū Dāwūd (ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd), Sunan, IV, p. 285, # 4937.
570 ʾAbū Yaʿlá (ed. ʾAsad), Musnad, VIII, pp. 132-133, # 4683/317.
course of transmission. It is perhaps not a coincidence that Ibn Saʿd’s version derives via al-Wāqidī, an infamous kaddāb.\textsuperscript{571}

The version recorded by al-Balāḏūrī also shares several elements with the common tradition of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (namely, in mentioning ʿĀʾišah’s marital consummation, her playing with her friends, the post-Hijrah context, and the Prophet’s parallel marriage to Sawdah). However, there are two additional elements in this report; the order of even the shared elements is different; and the wording of even the shared elements is extremely divergent. At the very least, this is consistent with extreme mutation. Moreover, the ascription is unusually munqaṭī', being the unsourced statement not of a Follower about ʿĀʾišah, but of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr himself about ʿĀʾišah. We could take this to mean that this report reflects not a hadith per se, but simply a biographical summary by Muḥammad b. ʿAmr. However, one of the additional elements in this report is identical to one of the elements comprising the distinctive sub-tradition emanating from the redaction of ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah,\textsuperscript{572} which is consistent with contamination or interpolation. In other words, given the lack of corroboration for al-Balāḏūrī’s report, we have no way of knowing which parts thereof are the product of contamination, interpolation, and/or mutation, and which parts ultimately derive from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr.

The version recorded by ʾAbū Yaʿlá is perhaps the most divergent of all, since it only comprises three elements, the first two of which (i.e., ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’) are more similar to the common version of Hišām b. ʿUrwah—in fact, they are nearly identical to the relevant elements in the sub-tradition of Wuhayb,\textsuperscript{573} and even more so to an Egypto-Madinan SS reaching back to ʾAbū Salamah.\textsuperscript{574} Meanwhile, the third element in ʾAbū Yaʿlá’s version (zawwaja-hāʾiyyā-hu ʾabū bakr) is very similar to a wording (zawwaja-hāʾiyyā-hu) that appears only in Ibn Ḥanbal’s redaction of Muḥammad b. Bišr’s redaction of Muhammad b. ‘Amr’s tradition.\textsuperscript{575} Moreover, the ascription in ʾAbū Yaʿlá’s version is explicitly muttaṣil (explicitly reaching all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself), where several of the other versions (Muḥammad b. Bišr and Ibn Saʿd, and perhaps al-Balāḏūrī) are munqaṭī’ or at least only implicitly muttaṣil,

\textsuperscript{571} For more on al-Wāqidī and his reputation, see Chapter 3 of the present work.
\textsuperscript{572} See the section on ‘Abū Muʿāwiyah, above.
\textsuperscript{573} See the section on Wuhayb, above.
\textsuperscript{574} Namely, Nasāʾī (ed. Ṭayyār \textit{et al.}), \textit{Sunan}, p. 794, # 3379.
\textsuperscript{575} Ibn Ḥanbal (ed. Ḥamrāwī), \textit{Musnad}, VI, pp. 210-211.
evidently reflecting the original form of the hadith. All of this makes ’Abū Ya’lā’s version seem not just abridged, but interpolated, contaminated, or simple cobbled together. Certainly, it cannot be traced back to Muḥammad b. ʿAmr.

This leaves us with the five reports, all reflecting (albeit in abridged form, in two cases) the common tradition of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr: those recorded by Muhammad b. Bišr, Ibn Rāhwayh, Saʿīd b. Yahyá, ‘Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār, and ‘Abū Dāwūd. There can be no doubt that the gist of this hadith derives from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, as alluded to already: the distinctive tradition embodied in these reports matches their common ascription thereto, which is consistent with their reflecting his particular redaction(s) of the marital-age hadith. However, there are some notable divergences between the redactions of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s students, in terms of the elemental sequence: where the extant (reconstructed) redactions of Muḥammad b. Bišr and Saʿīd b. Yahyá place the ‘marriage’ element at the end of the narrative about ʾAbū Bakr’s cancellation of ʿĀʾišah’s engagement to Jubayr, that of ‘Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār places it at the beginning of ʿĀʾišah’s discrete, elaborate, autobiographical narrative about the circumstances of her marital consummation. Moreover, Saʿīd’s redaction intermingles the ‘consummation’ element with the ending about Saʿd bringing food; Muḥammad b. Bišr’s redaction sandwiches the Saʿd ending completely within the ‘consummation’ element; and ‘Aḥmad’s redaction and (ostensibly) Ibn Rāhwayh’s version break up the ‘consummation’ element, placing half in the middle of the ‘swing’ element, and half in-between the ‘preparation’ element and the Saʿd ending. Additionally, the redactions of Muḥammad b. Bišr and Saʿīd place the first half of the ‘preparation’ element before the ‘swing’ element, whereas ‘Aḥmad’s redaction places it after.

Even aside from elemental sequence (and when abridgements are accounted for), there are numerous divergences in wording between the extant redactions of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, including omissions, additions, and substitutions. There are also some notable discrepancies in the ḵisnād of this hadith. Firstly, who did Muḥammad b. ʿAmr cite as his source? Muḥammad b. Bišr has him cite both ʾAbū Salamah and Yahyá, where Ibn Rāhwayh, Saʿīd, ‘Aḥmad, and ʾAbū Dāwūd have only Yahyá. The ascription to ʾAbū Salamah could thus simply be an addition by Muḥammad b. Bišr, although the fact that it is shared by Ibn Saʿd (whose version is otherwise hopelessly mutated) could indicate that, at certain times, Muḥammad b. ʿAmr himself gave his tradition a dual ascription. In fact, Ibn Saʿd and Muḥammad b. Bišr corroborate each other on a second
key point in the 'ʾ isnād, which has been alluded to previously: both of them have Muḥammad b.ʾAmr citing both ’Abū Salamah and Yaḥyā as the ultimate sources for his tradition (i.e., a munqatīʿ ascription)—based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity, this must surely be the original version of the tradition. However, Ibn Rāhwayh, Saʿīd, ʿAḥmad, and ’Abū Dāwūd all corroborate each other not just in citing only Yaḥyā, but in having Yaḥyā transmit from ʿĀʾišah (i.e., a muttaṣīl ascription). (Ibn Rāhwayh’s addition thereto of Sawdah can immediately be dismissed as an error, since in every other version, the relevant element is part of ʿĀʾišah’s narration.) All of this is consistent with Muḥammad b. ʾAmr himself having transmitted his tradition with two different ascriptions: first he transmitted it as simply the statement of ʾAbū Salamah and Yaḥyā, and then he omitted ’Abū Salamah and also raised it all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself. Even this raised version is still partially munqatīʿ, however: in the first half at least, the narrative speaks about ʿĀʾišah in the third person and covers events where she was not present. Both versions could be considered muttaṣīl in their second halves, however, since ʿĀʾišah (who was remembered as having transmitted to both ’Abū Salamah and Yaḥyā) is there introduced as a source and narrator.

Despite all of this, much of Muḥammad b. ʾAmr’s original wordings survive, thanks to the survival of three full redactions and two abridged redactions of his students and the students of his students. Of course, many wordings remain uncertain, and it seems likely that Muḥammad b. ʾAmr himself paraphrased his hadith in the course of successive retellings, such that that there is no single original redaction that can be reconstructed. Still, the following wordings and sequence can at least be traced back to Muḥammad b. ʾAmr, even if he never articulated his hadith in exactly this way in a single instance:

السنام: "السّنام"، "السنام"，
The students of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr preserved the gist of this lengthy hadith quite accurately (abridgements aside), and many wordings as well—this would suggest a written transmission. However, the extensive divergences in wording between the redactions of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s students, not to mention divergences in the order of elements, suggest paraphrastic oral transmission. In other words, in the course of transmission from Muḥammad to his students, his tradition evidently underwent substantial but constrained paraphrasing. All of this is consistent with some kind of combined oral and written transmission, as if paraphrasing occurred alongside a basic written outline of the hadith.

The structure of hadith’s narrative and content has important implications for its prehistory and provenance. The hadith begins with an omniscient narrator describing the death of Ḳadijah, and Ḳawlah’s suggestion to the Prophet that he should remarry; Ḳawlah then visits ʿAbū Bakr to bring him the Prophet’s proposal of marriage to ‘Āʾišah, and at this point, the omniscient narrator leaves Ḳawlah and follows ʿAbū Bakr as he visits and speaks to the pagan family of Jubayr about cancelling ‘Āʾišah’s prior engagement thereto; thereafter, the omniscient narrator follows ʿAbū Bakr back to Ḳawlah, who is instructed to relay the news to the Prophet—at which point, the Prophet comes and marries her.\(^{576}\) (In some versions, the omniscient narrator then specifies that ‘Āʾišah was six years old at the time.) Thereafter, the omniscient narrator follows Ḳawlah as she visits Sawdah to bring her the Prophet’s proposal of marriage, and after a discussion with Sawdah’s venerable father, the match is approved and the news is relayed to the Prophet—at which point, the Prophet comes and marries her.\(^{577}\) Finally, the omniscient narrator recounts how Sawdah’s brother was still at that time an intransigent pagan, who later converted to Islam and regretted not celebrating this wedding at the time.

At this point, there is a definite shift in the hadith: ‘Āʾišah is explicitly introduced as the narrator (qālat ‘āʾišah), and henceforth recounts in great detail the events leading up to her marital consummation: how her family emigrated to Madinah and settled in al-Šunb, amongst the Banū al-Ḥāriṭ b. al-Ḳazraj; how men and women from the ‘Anṣār were present when the Prophet came to marry her; how she was playing on a swing

\(^{576}\) ...fa-jaʿa fa-[zawwaja/ʾankaḥa/malaka]-hā....
\(^{577}\) ...fa-jaʿa [rasūl allāh] fa-zawwaja-hā....
between two palm trees when her mother came for her; how she had shoulder-length hair at the time; how her face was washed; how she was out of breath; how she was led into a house, where the Prophet was waiting, and some men and women congratulated her; how the men and women departed, and the Prophet consummated his marriage to her; how Sa‘d b. ‘Ubādah brought her food; and, finally, how she was nine years old at the time.

It is clear that Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s hadith is actually two distinct narratives that have been stitched together: one from an omniscient narrator (who is perhaps meant to be Yahyá), who follows Ḵawlah around as she arranges the Prophet’s marriages to both ‘Ā’išah and Sawdah, and who also switches to following ‘Abū Bakr at one point; and one from ‘Ā’išah, who narrates her own marital consummation in excruciating detail. There is no way that ‘Ā’išah could be the narrator in the first section: the events mostly occur in her absence, and she is described therein in the third person. Thus, at minimum, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s hadith comprises two distinct narrations. Indeed, the presence of qālat ‘ā’išah between the two sections even remains as a kind of stitch line, showing where the two initially-discrete narratives were joined together.

The initial discreteness of the two narratives can also be discerned in a subtle tension therebetween: in the first narrative, the Prophet comes and marries ‘Ā’išah immediately after ‘Abū Bakr’s successful cancellation of her prior engagement to Jubayr (i.e., in Makkah, before the Hijrah); but in the second narrative, ‘Ā’išah is married in Madinah, after the Hijrah. Of course, this discrepancy is explained away in light of the second narrative: ‘Ā’išah was merely engaged to the Prophet in Makkah, and it was only in Madinah that their marriage was consummated. And yet, there is no hint in the first narrative of a prolonged engagement, no hint that ‘Ā’išah’s marital consummation was delayed for years: only the second narrative would lead us to read such into the first. Moreover, ‘Ā’išah’s marriage to the Prophet is described in identical terms to his marriage to Sawdah, which is usually understood to have been consummated soon afterwards (i.e., in Makkah, before the Hijrah). Given the parallel language used for ‘Ā’išah and Sawdah (not to mention the fact that ‘Ā’išah is depicted here is being married before Sawdah), we would naturally assume that both ‘Ā’išah and

---

Sawdah were fully married to the Prophet (i.e., consummated) in Makkah, before the Hijrah. At the very least, the first narrative seems ignorant of the second, which is consistent with both reflecting independent—or originally-independent—streams of marriage tradition pertaining to ʿĀʾīšah.

If Muḥammad b. ʿAmr indeed combined two separate narratives into a single hadith, whence came said narratives? Did he simply take two reports from the same source (e.g., Yahyá) and combine them into one, or did he instead combine two different reports from two different sources? As it happens, several of the elements comprising the first narrative can be found in other hadiths, including one disseminated by the Egyptian CL al-Layţ b. Saʿd (d. 175/791), citing an Egypto-Madinan SS back to ʿUrwah579; one recorded by Ibn Saʿd, citing an Iraqi SS back to Kufan Follower ʿAtiyyah al-ʿAwfī580; and one recorded by Ibn Saʿd, citing a Kufan SS back to Ibn ʿAbbās.581 It is thus possible that Muḥammad b. ʿAmr constructed the first narrative in his hadith out of a set of existing elements, some of which survive independently in hadiths such as those just cited. However, since all of these reports—at least in their extant forms—postdate Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, the direction of causation could be reversed: it is possible that the spread of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith spawned spinoff traditions, such as those just cited. Alternatively, it may be the case that all of these hadiths, including Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith, reflect common tradition that was circulating even earlier than Muḥammad b. ʿAmr. At this stage, little more can be said thereon.

By contrast, the origin of the second narrative comprising Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith can be pinpointed fairly precisely: there is little doubt that it was borrowed from Version 4 of Hišām b. ‘Urwah’s marital-age hadith, either directly from Hišām, or from one of Hišām’s students, such as ʿAbū ʿUsāmah, Ḥammād b. Salamah, or ʿAlī b. Mushir. There are several reasons to think this. Firstly, the redactions of ʿAbū ʿUsāmah, Ḥammād, ʿAlī, and Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (i.e., his second narrative) are all markedly more similar to each other than to all other versions of the marital-age hadith: in all of them, ʿĀʾīšah recounts how, after her emigration to Madinah, a woman came to her 579 Bukārī, Saḥīh, III, p. 1065; Bayhaqī (ed. Turkī), al-Sunan al-Kubrā, XIV, p. 256, # 14031; ʿUbayd Allāh b. Baṭṭah al-ʿUkbarī (ed. Riḍā Muʿṭi ʿet al.), al-ʾIbānah al-Kubrā, vol. 9 (Riyadh, KSA: Dār al-Rāyah, n. d.), p. 675, # 184.
581 Ibid., p. 39.
whilst she was playing on a swing, when she had shoulder-length hair; she was cleaned and beautified; and she was consummated in marriage at age nine. This immediately implies that all four redactions constitute a common tradition and share a more recent common ancestor vis-à-vis all other versions of the marital-age hadith—a recent common ancestor comprising all of these inherited elements. This already fits awkwardly with the claim of the relevant ‘īsnāds that ‘Ā‘īšah, operating in the distant depths of the 7th Century CE, is the source for (i.e., the formulator of) this textual recent common ancestor: given the rates of mutation established for the 1st Islamic Century already, a much more recent source therefor would be expected. 582 This problem is immediately solved if Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s claim to an alternative path back to ‘Ā‘īšah is disregarded: the other three ‘īsnāds all cite Hišām as their common source, who—chronologically—fits perfectly as the formulator of the textual recent common ancestor of this distinctive tradition.

However, an even stronger case can be made. In terms of elemental sequence and specific wording, the redactions of ’Abū ’Usāmah and ‘Alī are much closer to each other than they are to either Ḥammād’s or Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s. 583 At the same time, the redactions of ’Abū ’Usāmah, ’Alī b. Mushir, and Muḥammad b. ’Amr are much closer to each other than they are to Ḥammād’s. 584 This implies that the redactions of ’Abū ’Usāmah, ‘Alī, and Muḥammad b. ’Amr all share an even more recent common ancestor vis-à-vis Ḥammād’s, despite the fact that Muḥammad b. ’Amr claimed a more distant common source vis-à-vis ’Abū ’Usāmah, ‘Alī, and Ḥammād. Since the differences between ’Abū ’Usāmah, ‘Alī, and Ḥammād’s redactions are partially explained by their common source, Hišām, having transmitted the hadith in different ways in different places (see above), this means that Muḥammad b. ’Amr’s redaction is not just broadly similar to a tradition emanating from Hišām, but is most similar to a specific sub-tradition emanating from Hišām. The simplest explanation for this pattern is that

582 Similarly, see Mitter, cited previously.
583 E.g., both have wu’īktu and ša’[a]frij, absent in the others; both have ’atat-nī ’ummī ’umm rūmān, where Muḥammad has jā’at-nī ’ummī and Ḥammād has jā’a-nī niswah; both have wa-ma’ī šawāhib[i/āt], absent in the others; both have fa-saraṣat bī, etc., absent in the others; both have fa-’idā niswah min al-’ansār, where Muḥammad has fa-’itama’a ‘ilāy-hi riǧāl min al-’ansār wa-nisā’, and Ḥammād has nothing; both have the ’ansār bestowing bārakah, where Muḥammad has ‘Ā‘īšah’s mother invoke bāraka allāh, and Ḥammād has nothing; both have duḥ, absent in the others; etc.
584 E.g., all three have jumaymah, where Ḥammād has mujammamah; all three have ‘Ā‘īšah’s mother (’ummī or ’umm rūmān), where Ḥammād has plural, anonymous women (niswah); all three mention a bāb, absent in Ḥammād; all three have nafṣṭ, absent in Ḥammād; all three mention the ’ansār, absent from Ḥammād; all three mention blessings (i.e., variants of the b-r-k root), absent in Ḥammād.
Muḥammad b. ‘Amr borrowed a specific iteration of Hišām’s Version 4 hadith, out of a range of iterations thereof.

That said, in three instances, the redactions of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr and ‘Alī are more similar to each other than either is to the other two,⁵⁸⁵ even though ‘Alī and ‘Abū Usāmah’s redactions are still generally more similar to each other. This is easily explained by ‘Ali’s redaction’s having been contaminated by the spreading hadith of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (following Muḥammad’s initial borrowing from Hišām); after all, most of the relevant tradents (i.e., ‘Alī b. Mushir and Muḥammad’s students—Muḥammad b. Bišr, Yaḥyá b. Saʿīd, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Idrīs, et al.) were operating in Kufah at the same time. That said, if ‘Ali’s version was indeed influenced by Muḥammad’s version, it seems odd that the elaborations and details in the latter are absent from the former. However, there is actually no need to posit a secondary contamination, since the pattern of evidence is consistent with only a single instance of borrowing by Muḥammad b. ‘Amr. If Hišām alternated his hadith in successive retellings (as has been argued already), then the pattern of similarities and differences can be explained as follows:

- **Firstly,** Hišām formulated Version 4, which was originally more similar to Ḥammād’s redaction, and which Ḥammād received (and paraphrased to some degree). Given that Ḥammād’s redaction is much simpler than the rest,⁵⁸⁶ it makes sense that his would reflect an earlier phase (i.e., a less elaborated version) of Version 4.

- **Secondly,** Hišām transmitted a more elaborate iteration of Version 4 containing the wordings shared by the redactions of both Muḥammad b. ‘Amr and ‘Alī, which Muḥammad b. ‘Amr borrowed and subsequently paraphrased in his own retellings—thus, the appearance of certain novel features in his redactions.⁵⁸⁷ The greater degree of paraphrase in Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s version (compared to those of ‘Ali and ‘Abū Usāmah) is only to be expected, given that he belonged to an earlier generation.

---

⁵⁸⁵ Both Muḥammad and ‘Alī have the line nazalnā fī banī al-ḥārit bn al-ḵazraj; Muḥammad has masaḥat wajhī bi-šay’ min mā’ and ‘Alī has šay’ bi-masaḥat bi-hi wajhī, and both have ‘anḥaju.⁵⁸⁶ Not just in terms of elements, but also in terms of some details within elements—notably, the vague niswaḥ. ⁵⁸⁷ E.g., al-ṣunḥ in the ‘Hijrah’ element; ‘adqayn in the ‘swing’ element; the entire element of Saʿd’s bringing food; etc.
• **Thirdly,** Hišām transmitted another—still elaborate—iteration of Version 4 containing *both* the wordings shared by the redactions of both Muḥammad b. ‘Amr and ‘Alī *and* the wordings shared by the redactions of ‘Alī and ’Abū ‘Usāmah, which ‘Alī inherited and transmitted to his students.

• **Fourthly,** Hišām transmitted a slightly different—but still elaborate—iteration of Version 4 (i.e., one that was still very close to that which he transmitted to ‘Alī) to ’Abū ‘Usāmah. **Alternatively** (and this is probably the simpler explanation), Hišām transmitted the same iteration to both ‘Alī and ’Abū ‘Usāmah, and the latter simply omitted the three wordings shared by both Muḥammad b. ’Amr and ‘Alī in the course of his own paraphrasing.

Regardless of which specific scenario we opt for, the bottom line is this: Muḥammad b. ’Amr's redaction is most similar to specific sub-versions of Version 4 of Hišām’s marital-age hadith, which is most easily explained in general by his redaction being a derivation therefrom. If Muḥammad b. ’Amr's redaction and Hišām’s Version 4 coequally descended (via Yahyá and ‘Urwah, respectively) from ‘Ā’išah, without the occurrence of any contamination, then Muḥammad b. ’Amr's redaction should be the outlier *vis-à-vis* the various transmissions from Hišām, since the latter transmissions would all share a more recent common source. Instead, Muḥammad b. ’Amr's redaction seems to reflect one out of a range of sub-versions emanating from Hišām.

Muḥammad b. ’Amr did not simply copy and paste a version of Version 4 of Hišām’s hadith, however: in addition to paraphrasing what he received, he sometimes relocated the ‘marriage’ element therefrom into the first narrative in his composite hadith, at the end of the section dealing with ‘Ā’išah’s engagement to the Prophet.\(^588\) This makes chronological sense: since Hišām’s hadith focuses upon the marital consummation, and the first narrative in Muḥammad b. ’Amr’s hadith focuses on marital engagement, it makes sense that Muḥammad b. ’Amr would relocate the one element in Hišām’s hadith pertaining to the marital engagement to the section in the first narrative dealing with that issue. Still, in some instances (perhaps reflecting the earliest phase of his transmission of this composite hadith), Muḥammad b. ‘Amr

\(^588\) Attested by Muḥammad b. Bišr and Saʻīd b. Yahyá; see the relevant sections thereon, above.
retained the 'marriage' element in its original position, in the second narrative within his composite hadith.\textsuperscript{589}

Finally, the last element in Muḥammad b. ‘Amr's hadith, concerning Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah's bringing of some food to ‘Ā’īšah after her marital consummation, can be found in various forms in several reports recorded by Ibn Sa’d, citing numerous Madinan SSs back to early Madinan authorities. Thus, the Madinan Followers 'Abū Bakr b. ʿHzam,\textsuperscript{590} ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatādah,\textsuperscript{591} and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zurārah\textsuperscript{592} each reportedly narrated about the bowl (jafnah) of Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah; the Madinan Follower ‘Umārah b. Ǧaziyyah and a certain 'Amr b. Yahyā\textsuperscript{593} both reportedly narrated about the content of Sa’d’s bowl, and how he would dispatch it (yabʿatu bi-hā) to the Prophet whenever he made his rounds (dāra)\textsuperscript{594}; and the early Madino-Syrian traditionist Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī reportedly also mentioned how the bowl of Sa’d used to make the rounds with him,\textsuperscript{595} as did the Madinan Companion (and wife of the Prophet) 'Umm Salamah.\textsuperscript{596} All of this is consistent with the element of Sa’d’s bowl’s being in circulation in Madinah in the 8th Century CE, and with Muḥammad b. ‘Amr's having incorporated this element into his composite hadith. However, absent a dedicated ICMA of these hadiths, this conclusion remains speculative.

‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uqayl (d. post-140/757-758)

\textsuperscript{589} Attested by ‘Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Јabbār; see the relevant section thereon, above.


\textsuperscript{593} In contrast to the others, I was not able to identify ‘Amr b. Yahyā.


The prominent Andalusian Mālikī jurist and Hadith scholar Yūsuf b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) recorded the following in his *al-Tamhīd li-mā fī al-Muwatta’ min al-Maʿānī wa-al-‘Asānīd*:

‘Abd al-Wāriṭ related to us: “Qāsim related to us: “ʾAbd Allāh b. Zuhayr related to us—he said: “Mūsá b. ʾIsmāʾil related to us—he said: “Ḥammād b. Salamah related to us....”” [And] ʾAbd Allāh b. Zuhayr [also] said: “My father related to us—he said: “Jarīr related to us....”” They [i.e., Ḥammād and Jarīr] said: “Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah reported to us, from his father, from ʾĀʾišah, who said: “The Messenger of God married me when I was a girl of six or seven years, and consummated the marriage with me when I was a girl of nine years.””

And [it is reported] in the transmission of al-ʾAswad, from ʾĀʾišah, that the Messenger of God married her when she was a girl of nine years, whilst ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUqayl said: “The Messenger of God married her when she was a girl of ten years (*tazawwaja-hā rasūl allāh wa-hiya ibnat ʿašr sinīn*).”

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr’s summary of hadiths features some familiar transmissions, but to these he adds the statement of a certain ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUqayl, who would seem to be the Madinan Follower ʾAbū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUqayl/ʿAqīl b. ʾabī Ṭālib al-Hāšimi (d. post-140/757-758), who was remembered as having transmitted Hadith to Ḥammād b. Salamah, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, and Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah, amongst others. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad’s statement is striking, since he places ʾĀʾišah’s marital engagement (*tazawwuj*) at age ten, rather than the usual six or seven, or even the unusual nine. This could be the product of simple error, or it could reflect a lingering, alternative tradition of ʾĀʾišah’s marital age. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell: even the attribution of this statement to ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad cannot be confirmed, since I was unable to find a single other reference thereto, besides Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr’s. Moreover, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr does not even provide an *ʾisnād* for this statement back to ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad, which only compounds the matter. Suffice to say, ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad cannot be considered a credible tradent or source within the broader marital-age tradition.

---

598 Ḍahabī (ed. ‘Arnaʿūt et al.), *Siyar*, VI, pp. 204-205.
ʾIsmāʿīl b. Jaʿfar (d. pre-148/765)

I was able to find a single report ascribed to the ʾIsmāʿīlī imam ʾIsmāʿīl b. Jaʿfar (who lived in Madinah), recorded as follows by the eminent Twelver traditionist Muḥammad b. Yaʾqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328/939-940) in his al-Furūʿ min al-Kāfī:


He [i.e., ʿAbū ʾAyyūb] said: “I said: “And is his authority [over himself] permissible?””

He [i.e., ʿAbū ʾAyyūb] said: “Then he said: “Verily the Messenger of God consummated his marriage with ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of ten years (ʾinna rasūl allāh daḵala bi-ʾāʾišah wa-hiya bint ʿašr sinīn), and a girl’s marriage cannot be consummated until she is a woman, so when a boy attains ten years, his authority [over himself] is accepted and his testimony is accepted.””

The same hadith is recorded by the eminent Twelver traditionist Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) in his Tahḏīb al-ʾAḥkām. Ṭūsī's statement is striking, since he places ʿĀʾišah's marital consummation (duḵūl) at age ten, rather than the usual nine. The only other reference to such a late marital-consummation age that I have found is the following biographical summary by the Basro-Egyptian scholar ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hišām (d. 213/828-829 or 218/833), which he appended to his recension of the famous Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of Muḥammad b. ʾIsḥāq:

The Messenger of God married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾišah bt. ʾabī Bakr al-Šiddiq in Makkah, when she was a girl of seven years (wa-hiya ibnat sabʿ sinīn), and consummated the marriage with her (wa-banā bi-hā) in Madinah, when she was a girl of nine years or ten (wa-hiya bint tisʿ sinīn ʿaw ʿašr). The Messenger of God did not marry any virgin except her (wa-lam yatazawwaj rasūl allāh bikram ʿayra-hā). Her father ʾAbū Bakr gave her in marriage to him, and the Messenger of God fixed a 400-dirham dowry for her.


This could be the product of simple error, or it could reflect a lingering, alternative tradition of ‘Āʾišah’s marital age. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell: even the attribution of this statement to ʿĪsāʾīl cannot be confirmed, since I was unable to find a single other reference thereto, besides al-Kulaynī’s and al-Ṭūsī’s. Moreover, there is a positive reason to doubt the authenticity of this ascription, given its broader context in early Shi’ism: the report plausibly reflects later intra-Shī polemics. Some light thereon is shed by the eminent Persian Twelver Shī Hadith-scholar ‘Allāmah Majlisī (d. 1110/1698) in his Mir‘āt al-‘Uqūl fī ‘Akbār ‘Āl al-Rasūl, who commented regarding this report:

Sound (ṣaḥīḥ). Perhaps their recounting of this saying—founded upon invalid analogy—from ʿĪsāʾīl was for proof of the nullity of his fitness for the Imamate.602

In other words, this hadith was understood to have theological or sectarian implications: ‘Allāmah Majlisī, al-Ṭūsī, and al-Kulaynī were all Imamite or Twelver Shī’is, whose sect or tradition diverged from the ʿĪsāʾīlīs over whether the Imamate had passed from Ja’far al-Ṣādiq to his older son ʿĪsāʾīl (as the ʿĪsāʾīlīs believed) or his younger son Mūsá (as the ʿĪsāʾīlīs and Twelvers believed). Given that Shī Imams were supposed to be infallible, and given that ʿĪsāʾīl had supposedly engaged in invalid legal reasoning (according to ‘Allāmah Majlisī), this hadith constituted evidence for the Twelver view against the ʿĪsāʾīlī view. This would explain why Twelver Hadith collections recorded such a dictum from ʿĪsāʾīl in the first place, as ‘Allāmah Majlisī suggested, but it also raises the possibility that the report is a polemical fabrication.

Given all of the above (especially the lack of corroboration), this report cannot be attributed to ʿĪsāʾīl b. Ja’far: he is not a credible tradent or source within the broader marital-age tradition.

I have collated seven reports ascribed to the Kufan tradent and putative CL ʾAbū ʾIshāq ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sabīʿī, variously recorded by ʾIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus (reconstructed), ʿAbtār b. al-Qāsim (reconstructed), Ibn Saʿd, and al-Ṭabarānī (who recorded four). As we have already seen, there are serious problems in these ascriptions to ʾAbū ʾIshāq. Firstly, the three ascribed via the seeming PCL Sufyān al-Ṭawrī are not more similar to each other than they are to transmissions from other sources: Ibn Saʿd’s transmission from Sufyān looks like it was contaminated by a transmission from ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah and/or borrowed from ʾIsrāʾīl’s redaction; the elemental composition of al-Ṭabarānī’s first transmission from Sufyān contradicts every other transmission therefrom, and some of the specific wording therein looks like it was borrowed from—or contaminated by—the redactions of Qabīṣah and al-Firyābī (both from Sufyān, from Hišām b. ‘Urwah); and the elemental composition of al-Ṭabarānī’s second transmission from Sufyān similarly contradicts most other transmissions therefrom, and some of the specific wording therein likewise looks like it was borrowed from—or contaminated by—the redactions of Qabīṣah and al-Firyābī (both from Sufyān, from Hišām b. ‘Urwah). There is thus no redaction of the tradition of ʾAbū ʾIshāq that can be attributed to Sufyān, which is to say, he is not a credible PCL therefor (i.e., he looks like a spider).

Secondly, the two reports ascribed via the seeming PCL Šarīk b. ʿAbd Allāh are not more similar to each other than they are to transmissions from other sources: they differ in terms of ascription (Ibn Mašūd vs. ʿĀʾišah), the core detail of the first element (sitt vs. sabʿ), and the verb in the second element (daḵala vs. baná); they even differ in terms of elemental composition, with the second report lacking the ‘death’ element altogether. Moreover, the second report is more similar to various transmissions from Hišām b. ‘Urwah, and the first is more similar to certain, specific transmissions from ʾIsrāʾīl—and, as it happens, one of its transmitters (Yaḥyá b. ʿÂdam) also ostensibly transmitted the hadith of ʾIsrāʾīl, with a nearly-identical matn. There is thus no

---

603 See the section on ʾIsrāʾīl, above.
604 See the section on ʿAbtār, above.
605 Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 41.
606 ʿAbtār (ed. Salafi), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, X, p. 184, # 10279 [this edition should be emended (to include the missing line wa-qubida wa-hiya bint) in light of the 1984 Wizārat al-ʿAwqāf wa-al-Shuʿūn al-Diniyyah, al-Jumhūriyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah edition (also at # 10279)]; ibid., XXIII, p. 23, ## 54-56.
607 For all of this, see the section on Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, above.
redaction of the tradition of ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq that can be attributed to Šarīk, which is to say, he is not a credible PCL therefore (i.e., he looks like a spider). 608

Thirdly, the redaction of ʿAbṭar is much more similar to the tradition of al-ʿAʾmaš than it is to the other transmissions from ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq,609 bar one—and even this one, recorded by al-Ṭabarānī, from Ḥafṣ, from Qabīṣah, from Sufyān, is more similar in wording to transmissions from Qabīṣah and al-Firyābī, from Sufyān, from Hišām b. ʿUrwa (as noted already). Thus, ʿAbṭar’s redaction was likely borrowed from or contaminated by tradition of al-ʿAʾmaš, whilst the only other ascription to ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq that is similar is clearly a corruption of Qabīṣah’s transmission from Hišām b. ʿUrwa.

All of this leaves only ʿIsrāʾīl’s ascription to ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq, which we have no reason to accept: it is possible that ʿIsrāʾīl genuinely received his hadith from ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq, but it is equally possible that he simply paraphrased and reattributed Version 2 of Hišām b. ʿUrwa’s hadith—or Version 1, in combination with the ‘death’ element taken from the hadith of ʿAbū Muʿāwiyyah—thereto. Certainly, we have no distinctive redaction that correlates with ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq: the ascriptions to him are extremely disparate and mostly similar to transmissions from other sources, which makes ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq look like a Juynbollian spider.

Only one of these parallel transmissions from ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq—one of the conflicting ascriptions via Šarīk, recorded by al-Ṭabarānī—even matches the elemental sequence and details of some of the transmissions from ʿIsrāʾīl, such that they could conceivably embody a common tradition from ʿIsrāʾīl together. However, this parallel transmission derives via a lengthy SS and—as noted already—derives via a transmitter of ʿIsrāʾīl’s version, Yaḥyá b. ʿĀdam, who is credited in an earlier source with a nearly-identical matn. This is exactly what it would look like if Yaḥyá or a later tradent reattributed his transmission from ʿIsrāʾīl to Šarīk, which is to say: this ascription to Šarīk looks like a Juynbollian dive. Given such suspicious circumstances, ʿIsrāʾīl’s ascription to ʿAbū ʾIsḥāq cannot be corroborated thereby.

Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741-742)

608 For all of this, see the section on Šarīk, above.
609 See the section on al-ʿAʾmaš, above.
I have collated five reports ascribed to the Madino-Syrian tradent and putative CL Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Šihāb al-Zuhrī, variously recorded by Maʿmar (reconstructed),610 al-Ḥajjāj b. ‘abī Manīʿ (reconstructed),611 and Ibn Saʿd (twice).612 Given the potential match between ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s redaction of Maʿmar’s redaction, on the one hand, and one of Ibn Saʿd’s reports, on the other, I have opted to cite the pre-reconstructed ascriptions via Maʿmar as well, recorded by ‘Abd al-Razzāq (reconstructed)613 and Ibn Saʿd.614 At first glance, there seems to be some promise in this cluster of reports: three of them share the elemental combination of ‘marriage’, ‘consummation’, and ‘death’, giving the impression of a distinctive sub-tradition. Upon closer examination, however, there are serious problems therewith. Firstly, there are major differences in the ascriptions of these reports: both transmissions from Maʿmar have him cite both Hišām and al-Zuhrī, but only ‘Abd al-Razzāq has them cite ‘Urwah in turn; Ibn Saʿd has Muḥammad b. ‘Umar cite both Kaṭīr b. Zayd, from al-Muṭṭalib b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥanṭab, and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, from al-Zuhrī; and both Ibn Saʿd and al-Ḥajjāj cite just al-Zuhrī. In other words, all of these reports are munqatiʿ, but in different ways: one has an ascription to ‘Urwah; two have dual ascriptions, to both al-Zuhrī and someone else; and two have ascriptions just to al-Zuhrī. It is thus unclear whether the transmissions from Maʿmar are even meant to convey a matn from al-Zuhrī rather than Hišām, or whether Ibn Saʿd—Muḥammad b. ‘Umar is meant to convey a matn from al-Zuhrī rather than al-Muṭṭalib.

Moreover, the core elements of these reports are unusually divergent—for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Abd al-Razzāq, from Maʿmar</th>
<th>Ibn Saʿd, from Ibn Ḥumayd, from Maʿmar</th>
<th>Ibn Saʿd, from Kaṭīr, from Jaʿfar</th>
<th>al-Ḥajjāj, from Ūbayd Allāh</th>
<th>Ibn Saʿd, from Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, from Muḥammad &amp; Kaṭīr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nakaḥa al-nabiyy ‘āʾišah</td>
<td>nakaḥa al-nabiyy ‘āʾišah</td>
<td>malaka rasūl allāh ‘uqdah</td>
<td>tumma tazawwaja</td>
<td>tumma tazawwaja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘āʾišah</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘āʾišah [baʾda kadijah] wa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘āʾišah bint ‘abī bakr al-șiddīq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

610 See the section on Maʿmar, above.
611 See the section on al-Ḥajjāj b. ‘abī Manīʿ, above.
613 See the section on ‘Abd al-Razzāq, above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wa-hiya bint sitt sanawāt ‘aw sab’</th>
<th>wa-hiya ibnat tis’ sanawāt ‘aw sab’</th>
<th>wa-hiya ibnat sitt sinin</th>
<th>wa-hiya [bint/ibnat] sitt sinin</th>
<th>wa-hiya ibnat sitt sinin</th>
<th>bi-makkah</th>
<th>bi-makkah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Likewise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Abd al-Razzāq, from Ma’mar</th>
<th>Ibn Sa’d, from Ibn Ḥumayd, from Ma’mar</th>
<th>Ibn Sa’d, from Katīr, from Ja’far</th>
<th>al-Ḥajjāj, from ‘Ubayd Allāh</th>
<th>Ibn Sa’d, from Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, from Muḥammad &amp; Katīr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-zuffat ‘ilay-hi</td>
<td>wa-jama’a-hā</td>
<td>ūmma ‘inna rasūl allāh banā bi- ‘ā’išah</td>
<td>wa-banā bi-hā</td>
<td>bi-al-madinah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wa-hiya bint tis’ [sinin]</th>
<th>wa-hiya ibnat tis’ sinin</th>
<th>wa-‘ā’išah yawma banā bi-hā [rasūl allāh] bint tis’ sinin</th>
<th>wa-hiya ibnat tis’ sinin</th>
<th>bi-šawwāl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| ‘alā ra’s ūmāniyāt `ašhūr min al-muhājar |
Of course, this level of variation could just be chalked up to the extremely loose or sloppy paraphrastic transmission that predominated in the early-to-mid 8th Century CE, when al-Zuhri would have transmitted to his students.

However, there is a deeper problem: in addition to being extremely divergent in their core elements, some of these reports are more similar to transmissions from authorities, in terms of specific wording and elemental composition, than they are to each other. Thus, the wording of the ‘death’ element in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s transmission from Ma’mar—which is uncorroborated by Ibn Sa’d’s transmissions from Ma’mar—is much more similar to (in fact, nearly identical to) the corresponding element in ‘Abū Mu‘awiyyah’s hadith and several false transmissions from ‘Abū Mu‘awiyyah and ‘Abū ‘Isḥāq. Meanwhile, the ‘death’ elements in Ibn Sa’d’s transmissions from both Kaṭīr and Muḥammad b. ‘Umar are more similar to certain transmissions from ‘Abū Mu‘awiyyah and especially ‘Isrā’īl. Finally, Ibn Sa’d’s dual transmission (via Muḥammad b. ‘Umar) from both al-Zuhri and al-Muṭṭalib is strikingly similar, in terms of broad outline and sequence, to the following parallel transmission from al-Zuhri, which can be reconstructed back to al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870):

615 See the section on ‘Abū Mu‘awiyyah, above.
Ibn Sa’d and al-Zubayr’s reports share the same distinctive skeleton in their matns, and although this skeleton is not unique,

\[620\] it is at least plausible that it derives from al-Zuhri—certainly, Ibn Sa’d’s secondary ascription to al-Muṭṭalib can be discarded. However, the skeleton shared by al-Zubayr and Ibn Sa’d’s reports—that which can be plausibly ascribed all the way back to al-Zuhri—is the following:

\[

In other words, Ibn Sa’d’s version lacks the element about ‘Āʾišah’s death, and al-Zubayr lacks any mention of ‘Āʾišah’s age at marital engagement, marital consummation, and the Prophet’s death: this is consistent with al-Zuhri’s simple, original formulation’s having been contaminated, updated, or elaborated in the century of transmission between him and the extant recorders thereof (i.e., Ibn Sa’d and al-Zubayr). At the very least, all of this is consistent with Ibn Sa’d’s report’s being interpolated, such that it cannot be used to reconstruct a version of the marital-age hadith back to al-Zuhri.\[621\]

This leaves us with only four reports, which together exhibit an unusual level of divergence in both elemental composition and specific wording, and some of which are more similar in wording to other hadiths. Certainly, they do not constitute a distinctive sub-tradition within the broader marital-age hadith-tradition, which means that there is no particular redaction that can be correlated with and attributed to al-Zuhri. All of this is consistent with al-Zuhri’s being a Juynbollian spider, but this comes as no surprise. After all, in light of the kind of oral transmission that predominated in the 8th Century CE, it is only to be expected that any genuine traditions about ‘Āʾišah’s marriage (but not her age) deriving from al-Zuhri would be subject to updating by tradents with access to more detailed or specific information thereon (as seems to have happened with the skeleton shared by Ibn Sa’d and al-Zubayr, and may have occurred also in the case of al-Hajjāj’s report). Likewise, given al-Zuhri’s towering status in both legal and biographical Hadith, it is not surprising that he would be the target of at least

\[620\] See the section on ‘Amrah, below.

\[621\] For more on this, see also the section on ‘Amrah, below.
a few dives, as some transmitters of Hišām’s hadith and others sought alternative or parallel paths of transmission therefor. Either way, al-Zuhrī is not a credible CL in the marital-age tradition—instead, he looks like a spider.

Qatādah b. Diʿāmah (d. 177-178/735-736)

I was able to find a single report ascribed to the Basran traditionist Qatādah b. Diʿāmah, recorded by al-Ṭabarānī. This transmission is completely isolated, with only a SS stretching all the way back from al-Ṭabarānī to Qatādah. There can thus be no correlation between a putative CL and a distinctive sub-tradition in such a situation—Qatādah is not even a Juynbollian spider. In other words, even the transmission of this hadith from Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar to al-Ṭabarānī cannot be confirmed, let alone from ʿAḥmad to Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, let alone from Zuhayr to ʿAḥmad, let alone from Saʿīd to Zuhayr, let alone from Qatādah to Saʿīd. Even if the hadith has some kind of transmission-history before al-Ṭabarānī, we have no way of knowing how far back any given part of the wording goes, absent corroborating transmissions.

That said, a fragment of this hadith is also cited by the Baghdadian Hadith critic Ibn ʿabī Ḵayṭamah (d. 279/892-893) in his *al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr*, independently of al-Ṭabarānī and Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar:

> And Qatādah said: “Ḵadijah died three years before the Hijrah.” ʿAḥmad b. al-Miqdām related that to us, from Zuhayr b. al-ʿAlāʾ, from Saʿīd, from Qatādah: “Then the Messenger of God married ʿĀʾišah around the time of the death of Ḵadijah (*tumma tazawwaja rasūl allāh ʿāʾišah mutawaffā Ḵadijah*).”

Although at first glance this suggests that the hadith can be traced at least as far back as the Basran tradent ʿAḥmad b. al-Miqdām (d. 251/865 or 253/867), the fragment in question contains no reference to ʿĀʾišah’s marital age, which could indicate that the relevant elements were absent from the original ascription to Qatādah. Absent parallel transmissions (or at least a full citation of Ibn ʿabī Ḵayṭamah’s version), we are again

---

left with uncertainty—all that we can say for sure is that some version of this hadith can be traced as far back as ’Aḥmad, even if most of the features of his original redaction cannot be identified.

In terms of elemental composition, this hadith does not match any other single version of the marital-age hadith. In terms of specific elements, however, there are plenty of matches (beyond the generic ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements):

- al-Ḥajjāj b. ’abī Manī’s hadith shares therewith (1) mention of Ḥadijah’s death in the ‘marriage’ element, (2) hiya imra’atu-ka in the ‘angelic message’ element, (3) “six” in the ‘marriage’ element, (4) bi-makkah in the ‘marriage’ element, and (5) the ‘virgin’ element (albeit differently worded).  

624 See the section on al-Ḥajjāj b. ’abī Manī, above.

- Ibn Ḥišām’s own biographical summary shares therewith (1) “Āʾišah bt. ’abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq” (i.e., a fuller version of her name), (2) bi-makkah in the ‘marriage’ element, (3) bi-al-madinah in the ‘consummation’ element, and (4) the lam + imperfect verb version of the ‘virgin’ element.


- Ibn Sa’d’s transmission from al-Zuhri and al-Muṭṭalib shares therewith (1) “Āʾišah bt. ’abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq” (i.e., a fuller version of her name), (2) bi-makkah in the ‘marriage’ element, (3) “six” in the ‘marriage’ element, (4) bi-al-madinah in the ‘consummation’ element, and (5) the tuwufiya version of the ‘death’ element.


- Ibn Ḥanbal’s transmission (via ’Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī) from Ibn ’abī al-Zinād shares therewith (1) “six” in the ‘marriage’ element, (2) bi-makkah in the ‘marriage’ element, (3) mention of Ḥadijah’s death at the end of the ‘marriage’ element, and (4) bi-al-madinah in the ‘consummation’ element.

627 Ibn Ḥanbal (ed. Ḥamāwī), Musnad, VI, p. 118.

- al-Ṭabarî’s transmission (via Ibn Sa’d) from Ibn ‘Abbâs shares therewith (1) “Āʾišah bt. ’abī Bakr” (i.e., a fuller version of her name), (2) qabla al-hijrah in the ‘marriage’ element, (3) the tuwufiya version of the ‘death’ element, and (4) the lam + imperfect verb version of the ‘virgin’ element.

628 Ṭabarî (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV, pp. 1770-1771.
• al-Warjlānī’s transmission from Jābir shares therewith (1) “six” in the ‘marriage’ element, (2) the rare verbal form ibtanā in the ‘consummation’ element, (3) the ‘virgin’ element (albeit differently worded), and (4) the tuwuffiya version of the ‘death’ element.

Thus, in addition to relying upon a mere SS, al-Ṭabarānī’s ascription to Qatādah curiously exhibits recurring overlaps in content with several other hadiths—and, as it happens, most of them are connected to Basrah: Ibn Ḥišām and Ibn Sa’d both originated in Basrah; ‘Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī was a prominent Basran traditionist; al-Warjlānī claimed a Basran SS back to Jābir; and, of course, al-Ṭabarānī claimed a Basran SS back to Qatādah. Moreover, the ‘angelic message’ element (including the similar wording hāḏīhi imrā’atu-ka) constitutes a well-known hadith that was disseminated by Hišām b. ‘Urwah and transmitted by the notable Basran traditionist Ḥammād b. Salamah, among others. In light of all of this, it is at the very least plausible that the ascription to Qatādah was cobbled together out of various biographical elements about ‘Āʾišah that were circulating in Basrah—and Iraq more broadly—at the beginning of the 9th Century CE. Certainly, there are no grounds for identifying Qatādah as a credible source for any version of the marital-age hadith.

‘Amrah bt. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 98/716-717 or 106/724-725)

I was able to find a single report ascribed via the Madinan Follower ‘Amrah bt. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to ‘Āʾišah, recorded by Ibn Sa’d. This transmission is completely isolated, with only a SS stretching all the way back from Ibn Sa’d to ‘Amrah. There can thus be no correlation between a putative CL and a distinctive sub-tradition in such a situation—‘Amrah is not even a Juynbollian spider. Moreover, this report shares the same distinctive structure and content as the statements of various biographical

---

629 Yūsuf b. ʿIbrāhīm al-Warjlānī (ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī), Kitāb al-Tartīb fī al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Ḥadīth al-Rasūl (Muscat, Oman: Maktabat Musqat, 2003), p. 326, # 750. Cf. ibid., p. 238, # 528, which has māta instead of tuwuffiya.
authorities—namely: an ascription to both al-Zuhārī and al-Muṭṭalib b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥanṭab, recorded by Ibn Sa’d; an ascription to al-Zuhārī recorded by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (reconstructed); a statement in the Ta’rīḵ of al-Ṭabarī; and an ascription to al-Wāqīdī recorded by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Since the matn of al-Ṭabarī’s biographical summary and that of al-Ḥākim’s transmission from al-Wāqīdī are nearly identical, they must be closely related via written transmission: either al-Ḥākim’s transmission was copied from al-Ṭabarī’s biographical summary, or both were copied from a common suppressed source, or al-Ṭabarī copied al-Wāqīdī’s biographical summary. Given the accurate written preservation of al-Ḥākim’s transmission of al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj’s recension of al-Wāqīdī’s al-Mubtada’ wa-al-Maḡāzī elsewhere, and given that al-Wāqīdī was also a major source for al-Ṭabarī (including in the relevant section of al-Ṭabarī’s work), the last scenario seems most likely. Consequently, we can provisionally treat the urtext behind al-Ṭabarī’s biographical summary and al-Ḥākim’s transmission as al-Wāqīdī’s composition (i.e., al-Wāqīdī’s own biographical summary).

In light of this, we are left with the following reports and statements: Ibn Sa’d’s transmission, from al-Wāqīdī, from al-Zuhārī and al-Muṭṭalib; al-Zubayr’s transmission from al-Zuhārī; Ibn Sa’d’s transmission, via al-Wāqīdī, from ʿAmrah; and (provisionally) al-Wāqīdī’s own biographical summary. For a clearer comparison, consider the following breakdown of the elements and wordings of the statements and reports in question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibn Sa’d, from al-Wāqīdī, from al-Zuhārī &amp; al-Muṭṭalib</th>
<th>al-Zubayr, from al-Zuhārī</th>
<th>Ibn Sa’d, from al-Wāqīdī, from ʿAmrah</th>
<th>al-Wāqīdī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[wa-]ʿāʾišah bint ʿabī bakr ʿummūhā ʿumm rūmān bint ʿumayr bn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

632 Ibid., pp. 156-157.
633 See the section on Ibn ʿIshaḥ al-Zuhārī, above.
634 Ṭabarī (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV (series III), p. 2439.
635 Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 20, # 6881.
636 Ṭ. adds wa-; Ḥ. adds rasūl allāh; and Ṭ. has ibnah where Ḥ. has bint.
637 See the section on Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqīdī, above.
638 In fact, al-Wāqīdī is cited in the very next sentence of al-Ṭabarī’s biographical dictionary (loc. cit.), following the information on ʿĀʾišah: “Ibn ʿUmar said....”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ṭūmma tazawwaja 'alā 'atari-ḥā ʾā'īšah bint 'abī bakr al-ṣiddiq bimakkah</th>
<th>'anna rasūl allāh tazawwaja ʾā'īšah bint 'abī bakr</th>
<th>tazawwaja-ni rasūl allāh</th>
<th>tazawwaja-hā rasūl allāh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wa-hiya ibnat sitt sinin</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanah 'ašr min al-nubuwwah</td>
<td>[sanah 'ašr min al-nubuwwah</td>
<td>sanah 'ašr min al-nubuwwah</td>
<td>sanah 'ašr min al-nubuwwah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qabla al-hijrah bi-ṭalāṭ sinin</td>
<td>qabla al-hijrah li-ṭalāṭ sinin</td>
<td>qabla al-hijrah bi-ṭalāṭ sinin</td>
<td>wa-'anā ibnat sitt sinin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-banā bi-hā wa-'a’rasa bi-hā</td>
<td>wa-'a’rasa bī</td>
<td>wa-'a’rasa bī</td>
<td>wa-'arrasa bī-hā [rasūl allāh]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-al-madinah</td>
<td>bi-al-madinah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-hiya ibnat tis’ sinin</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
<td>fi ṣawwāl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'alā ra’ṣ ṭamāniyāh</td>
<td>'alā ra’ṣ ṭamāniyāh</td>
<td>'alā ra’ṣ ṭamāniyāh</td>
<td>'alā ra’ṣ ṭamāniyāh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ašhur min al-muhājar</td>
<td>'ašhur min al-muhājar</td>
<td>'ašhur min al-hijrah</td>
<td>'ašhur min al-hijrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-tuwuffiya ‘an-hā wa-hiya ibnat ṭamāniyāh ‘ašrah sanah</td>
<td>wa-kuntu yawma daḵala bī ibnat tis’ sinin</td>
<td>wa-kānat yawma ibtanā bi-hā [bint/ibnah] tis’ sinin</td>
<td>wa-tuwuffiyat ʾā’īšah laylat al-ṭulāṭā li-sab’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All four reports and statements share the same structure or elemental sequence, and much of the same wording: (1) The Messenger of God married ʿĀʾishah bt. ʿabī Bakr, (2) during Šawwāl, (3) in the tenth year of the Prophethood, (4) three years before the Hijrah; and (5) he arranged her wedding feast, (6) during Šawwāl, (7) at the beginning of eight months since his emigration. Two of them add: (5.5) in Madinah. Additionally, two of them add: (8) and she was, on the day that he consummated the marriage with her, a girl of nine years. Clearly, these four reports are closely related—in fact, they much more similar to each other than they are to any other version of the marital-age hadith.

There are two common denominators in the ʾiṣnāds for these matnās: al-Zuhrī, who is the source cited for two of them; and al-Wāqīdī, who is a transmitter in two of them, and the source in another (i.e., his own biographical summary). There are two ways to explain this correlation (within the framework of an ICMA): either the common skeleton of these reports derives from a formulation by al-Zuhrī, which was inherited by al-Wāqīdī and then variously elaborated and reattributed (including via ʿAmrah); or the common skeleton derives from al-Wāqīdī himself and was variously reformulated and retrojected back to al-Zuhrī and others. Given al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s independent transmission from al-Zuhrī, I am inclined to accept the first scenario—but the possibility that al-Zubayr borrowed (directly or indirectly) from al-Wāqīdī cannot be discounted. That said, al-Zubayr’s report lacks some key elaborations (i.e., specific biographical details) present in all of al-Wāqīdī’s versions, which we would not expect al-Zubayr to have omitted (given his interests as a biographer); consequently, it seems reasonable to infer that al-Zubayr’s report represents an independent transmission from al-Zuhrī, free from al-Wāqīdī’s alterations (including references to ʿĀʾishah’s marital age).639 Consequently, the ascription to ʿAmrah—which contains these additions associated with al-Wāqīdī—represents a secondary stage of the distinctive

---

639 For more on this, see also the section on al-Zuhrī, above.
tradition originating with al-Zuhri (i.e., his own words), thus precluding its authenticity.

In short, Ibn Sa’d’s transmission via ‘Amrah probably originated as a biographical summary by al-Zuhri, which lacked any reference to ‘Ā’išah’s marital age; this summary was inherited and variously updated by al-Wāqidī, who inserted references to ‘Ā’išah’s marital age therein; then an iteration of al-Wāqidī’s updated version was ascribed via ‘Amrah back to ‘Ā’išah.

’Abū Salamah (d. 94/712-713 or 104/722-723)

I have collated two reports ascribed to the Madinan Follower ’Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, recorded by Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (reconstructed)640 and al-Nasāʾī641. There are numerous problems with these two reports. Firstly, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr cites both ’Abū Salamah and Yahyá b. Abd al-Raḥmān as his source, which makes it unclear which of the two was supposed to be the actual source for the matn. Secondly, there is a discrepancy in the ascriptions, since al-Nasāʾī’s report reaches all the way back to ‘Ā’išah, whereas Muḥammad b. ‘Amr only reaches back to ’Abū Salamah (and Yahyá); even if we prefer the raised version of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s hadith in this regard, the problem only gets worse, since the raised version only cites Yahyá, from ‘Ā’išah, without any mention of ’Abū Salamah. Thirdly, the matns of these two reports are amongst the most dissimilar in the relevant corpus: al-Nasāʾī’s is extremely short, comprising only the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements, whereas Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s is a lengthy, disjointed narrative, comprising a multitude of elements. Moreover, where al-Nasāʾī has the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements directly coupled, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr usually has them dispersed across his vast narrative. In fact, in terms of elemental composition and sequence, al-Nasāʾī’s report is much more similar to Version 1 of Hišām’s hadith. In terms of specific wording, however, it is most similar to the corresponding elements in Wuhayb’s redaction of Version 2,642 and to those in ’Abū Ya’lá’s dubious transmission from Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, from Yahyá, from

640 See the section on Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, above.
641 Nasāʾī (ed. Ţayyār et al.), Sunan, p. 794, # 3379.
642 See the section on Wuhayb, above.
‘Ā’išah.\footnote{Abū Ya’lā (ed. ‘Asad), \textit{Musnad}, VIII, pp. 132-133, # 4683/317. Also see the section on Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, above.} Regardless, these two reports are amongst the most disparate in the marital-age tradition, and certainly do not embody a distinctive sub-tradition that can be correlated with a common ascription to ‘Abū Salamah. Consequently, ‘Abū Salamah looks like another example of a Juynbollian spider, and certainly cannot be counted as a genuine CL for this hadith-tradition.

\textbf{Jābir b. Zayd (d. 93/711-712 or 103/721-722)}

I was able to collate two reports ascribed to the Basran Follower ‘Abū al-Ša‘tā’ Jābir b. Zayd: one recorded by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī,\footnote{Ḥākim, \textit{al-Mustadrak ‘alá al-Ṣaḥīḥayn}, VII, p. 19, # 6879.} and another recorded twice, in two slightly different versions, by al-Warjlānī.\footnote{Warjlānī (ed. Sālimī), \textit{al-Tartīb fī al-Ṣaḥīḥ}, p. 238, # 528; \textit{ibid.}, p. 326, # 750} At first glance, these two/three reports appear to embody a common, distinctive tradition: both/all of them contain the elements of ‘Ā’išah’s marital engagement and consummation, the Prophet’s death, and ‘Ā’išah’s death during the reign of Mu‘āwiyah. In this respect, these reports are more similar to each other than they are to all the rest, which is consistent with their embodying the distinctive, underlying redaction of their common source, Jābir b. Zayd.

However, there are several problems with these reports. Firstly, they contradict each other on a basic detail: al-Ḥākim’s report has ‘Ā’išah’s marriage occurring at age seven, where al-Warjlānī’s reports have it at age six. However, this could be chalked up to the early, sloppy transmission that these reports had to have undergone in the time between Jābir and the extant sources preserving them, if indeed they originated with Jābir.

Secondly, in certain key respects, al-Warjlānī’s reports are more similar to other reports. For example, as we have seen already, al-Warjlānī’s reports share a lot of material with the hadith ascribed to Qatādah: “six” in the ‘marriage’ element; the rare verbal form \textit{ibtaná} in the ‘consummation’ element; the ‘virgin’ element (albeit differently worded); and—in the case of one of al-Warjlānī’s reports—the \textit{tuwuffiya}
version of the ‘death’ element. This makes it seem like al-Warjlānī’s reports are contaminated or interpolated, if not outright cobbled together from disparate sources.

Thirdly, it is well-known that al-Warjlānī borrowed extensively from Sunnī Hadith sources in his creation of his Musnad, systematically (falsely) ascribing such material via the early imams of his Ibadite sect: al-Rabī’ b. Ḥabīb, from ʿAbū ʿUbaydah Muslim, from Jābir b. Zayd. In other words, there are immediate source-critical grounds for suspecting that al-Warjlānī’s versions are the product of some kind of borrowing and retrojection (i.e., Ibadite dives), rather than genuine transmission all the way back to the Ibadite leaders of 8th-Century Basrah. Indeed, it is possible that al-Warjlānī directly borrowed from the work of al-Ḥākim (or from one of al-Ḥākim’s sources for his version of the hadith in question), along with sources, in his creation of the two relevant hadiths in his collection.

If al-Warjlānī’s report was borrowed from al-Ḥākim’s report (or a source of the latter’s), however, then suspicion falls upon the latter in turn: the core of al-Ḥākim’s report is an elemental sequence matches the distinctive sub-tradition of ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus above all others (in particular, those transmissions from him that include the qubiḍa wording), which immediately suggests that the matn of al-Ḥākim’s report derives therefrom. This is only compounded by the fact that al-Ḥākim’s matn includes a chronological addendum—the specification that ʿĀʾišah died in the year 57 AH, during the reign of Muʿāwiyah—that again makes it look like a secondary construction vis-à-vis the transmissions of ʿIsrāʾīl. To this can be added the fact that most versions of the marital-age hadith that include the ‘death’ element (especially, the traditions of ʿIsrāʾīl and al-ʿA’maš) derive from Kufans citing Kufan sources, which strongly suggests that the elemental combination in question (“ʿĀʾišah was married when she was a girl of X years’ and ‘the Prophet died when she was a girl of eighteen’) derives from Kufah. This would imply that al-Ḥākim’s version, which claims a lengthy Hamadhanian and

---

646 See the section on Qatādah, above.
647 E.g., Ersilia Francesca, ‘The Concept of sunna in the Ibāḍī School’, in Adis Duderija (ed.), The Sunna and Its Status in Islamic Law: The Search for a Sound Hadith (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 109: “The material is almost the same as that reported by Sunnis: most of the traditions transmitted by al-Rabī’ are reported in Sunnī collections by other Sunnī authorities with the same wording, or with slight differences; the isnād of the two first parts is as follows: al-Rabī’ b. Ḥabīb—Abū ʿUbayda—Jābir b. Zayd—a companion—Prophet. The companions are mainly: Ibn ʿAbbās, Abū Hurayra, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, Anas b. Mālik, ʿĀʾisha.”
648 See the section on ʿIsrāʾīl, above.
Levantine SS (in fact, a Levantine family 'isnād) back to a Basran source, is a false ascription, or in other words: al-Ḥākim’s version looks exactly like a Levantine dive.

In short, we lack credible, independent transmissions unto Jābir b. Zayd, which precludes the attribution of any version of the marital-age hadith to him: he cannot be established as a CL. Moreover, there is reason to suspect that the core of both transmissions derives from the distinctive sub-tradition of 'Isrā’il.

‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. 93-95/711-714 or 101/719-720)

I was able to collate six reports ascribed to the Madinan Follower ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām, four of which were recorded by his son Hişām (reconstructed),649 one of which was recorded by ‘Abd al-Razzāq (reconstructed),650 and one of which was recorded by al-Ṭabarānī.651 Two of these reports need to be discarded immediately, since they have already been shown to be the product of contamination, interpolation, error, or fabrication. Firstly, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s version is plausibly contaminated or interpolated, and there is reason to think—based on a parallel transmission from Ma‘mar—that Ma‘mar’s original formulation lacked any reference to ‘Urwah at all.652 Secondly, al-Ṭabarānī’s hadith comprises a matn that was likely borrowed from Sufyān al-Ṭawrī’s redaction of Hişām’s Version 2 hadith (or al-‘Aḥwaṣ b. Jawwāb’s redaction thereof in particular), and an altered version of the usual Ibn ’abī al-Zinād ‘isnād (in which Hişām has been replaced by ’Abū al-Zinād).653

This leaves us with only four different ascriptions by Hişām back to his father ‘Urwah, which amounts to four isolated transmissions of four different versions of the marital-age hadith. There is thus no question of ‘Urwah being established as a CL: absent independent corroboration, he cannot even rise to the level of a Juynbollian spider. Moreover, the fact that Hişām claimed the same source (‘Urwah or ‘Urwah—‘Ā’iṣah) for four (and possibly more) markedly different versions of the same hadith is highly suspect: whilst it is certainly possible that he simply received and passed on

649 See the section on Hişām b. ‘Urwah, above.
650 See the section on ‘Abd al-Razzāq, above.
652 See the section on Ma‘mar, above.
653 See the section on Ibn ’abī al-Zinād, above.
each of them from his father, such evidence is also consistent with Hišām’s having created and/or reworked the hadiths himself in successive retellings, incorporating different elements from a broader pool of material at various points. There is even direct evidence for this in the case of Version 2 of Hišām’s hadith, which demonstrably arose through the addition of the ‘death’ element—taken from some other source—to Version 1.654

In short, the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age cannot be traced back to ‘Urwah, at least on the basis of an ICMA.

**Ḥabīb al-’Awar (d. early 8th C. CE)**

I was able to find a single report ascribed to the early Madinan traditionist Ḥabīb al-’Awar, recorded by al-Wāqidī (reconstructed).655 This transmission is completely isolated, with only a SS stretching back from al-Wāqidī to Ḥabīb. There can thus be no correlation between a putative CL and a distinctive sub-tradition in such a situation—Ḥabīb is not even a Juynbollian spider. In other words, even the transmission of this hadith from ‘Abd al-Wāhid to al-Wāqidī cannot be confirmed, let alone from Ḥabīb to ‘Abd al-Wāhid. Even if the hadith has some kind of transmission-history before al-Wāqidī, we have no way of knowing how far back any given part of the wording goes, absent corroborating transmissions. Moreover, the ending of the hadith—the short series of statements about the year of ‘Ā’išah’s birth, the year of her marriage, her age at marriage, and the relative chronology of ‘Ā’išah and Sawdah’s marriages—seems oddly chronologically-detailed for an early figure like Ḥabīb, but fits perfectly with the interests al-Wāqidī, a leading biographer and antiquarian. It is thus plausible that the ending of the hadith is an addendum or interpolation by al-Wāqidī, assuming that the rest of the narrative—which is precisely narrative, rather than chronology—derives from some earlier source (presumably a Madinan storyteller, who may or may not have been ‘Abd al-Wāhid, or even Ḥabīb).

---

654 See the section on Hišām, above.
655 See the section on Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, above.
al-ʾAswad b. Yazīd (d. 75/694-695)

I was able to collate two reports ascribed to the Kufan Follower al-ʾAswad b. Yazīd al-Naḵaʾī (both on the authority of ʿĀʾišah), recorded by al-ʾAʿmaš (reconstructed)656 and al-Ṭabarānī.657 These two reports embody completely disparate traditions—in fact, they have almost nothing in common, beyond the verb tazawwaja: al-ʾAʿmaš’s report has ʿĀʾišah being engaged in marriage at nine, where al-Ṭabarānī’s report has it at six; al-ʾAʿmaš’s report is a short set of statements about ʿĀʾišah’s marital age and the length of her marriage, whereas al-Ṭabarānī’s report is an elaborate narrative about the ʾifk; and al-Ṭabarānī’s report includes elements and details pertaining to ʿĀʾišah’s physical maturation, her self-image, the Hijrah, and her being brought to the Prophet at age nine, all of which are absent from al-ʾAʿmaš’s report. In other words, these two reports are amongst the most dissimilar in the entire relevant corpus—they certainly do not embody a common tradition that could be identified as reflecting the distinctive redaction of their putative common source, al-ʾAswad.

Additionally, al-Ṭabarānī’s version is suspect on other grounds: no other version of the famous ʾifk narrative contains any mention of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age, which immediately suggests that al-Ṭabarānī’s version has been interpolated or contaminated in that regard.658 As it happens, one the transmitters thereof, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, was accused of transmitting objectionable hadiths (ʾaḥādīṯ manākīr or ʾaḥādīṯ munkarah) from unknown sources (al-majhūlīn), and of having been an interpolator of some sort (kāna yudallisu)659; and another, ʿAbū Saʿd al-Baqqāl, was outright weak (ḍaʿīf) or rejected (matrūk or munkar) in Hadith, according to some authorities.660 However, absent a comparison with parallel transmissions, little more can be said thereon.

In short, al-ʾAswad is not a credible CL for the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age; instead, he looks like a spider.

656 See the section on al-ʾAʿmaš, above.
658 Likewise, Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muḥammad, 107, who argues that this version was fashioned out of an ʾifk tradition from al-Zuhrī (i.e., one that lacked any reference to ʿĀʾišah’s marital age).
ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 67-68/687-688)

I was able to find a single report ascribed to the Meccan Companion ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, recorded by al-Ṭabarī. This transmission is completely isolated, with only a SS stretching back from al-Ṭabarī to Ibn ʿAbbās. There can thus be no correlation between a putative CL and a distinctive sub-tradition in such a situation— Ibn ʿAbbās is not even a Juynbollian spider. In other words, even the transmission of this hadith from al-Ḥārīt to al-Ṭabarī cannot be confirmed, let alone from Ibn Saʿd to al-Ḥārīt, let alone from Hišām to Ibn Saʿd, let alone from Muḥammad to his son Hišām, let alone from 'Abū Ṣāliḥ to Muḥammad, let alone from Ibn ʿAbbās to 'Abū Ṣāliḥ. Even if the hadith has some kind of transmission-history before al-Ṭabarī, we have no way of knowing how far back any given part of the wording goes, absent corroborating transmissions.

In addition to being uncorroborated, the matn of this hadith is also suspiciously detailed—and, as it happens, the hadith’s isnād depicts it as having been ‘transmitted’ by a sequence of leading biographers and genealogists, including Muḥammad al-Kalbī and his son Hišām. It could simply be the case that those with such interests were drawn to—and thus transmitted—detailed biographical reports, but it may also be the case that such reports are the product of the biographers and genealogists. In other words, it is plausible that this report is actually a summary or synthesis of biographical information about ʿĀʾišah derived from various other reports (or the biographical or prosopographical literature more broadly), which was then retrojected back to Ibn ʿAbbās. In particular, the constitutive elements of (and often the exact wordings in) this report are often found in other reports and statements associated with the biographers Ibn Saʿd and al-Wāqīdī.

---


662 The genealogy is present in al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿabī Manīʾ’s redaction (see the relevant section, above), and in numerous other biographical, prosopographical, and genealogical sources; the phrase qabla al-hijrah bi-talāq is present in the reports associated with Ibn ʿUthmān (see the relevant section, above), and in al-Wāqīdī’s biographical summary (see the section on ʿAmrah, above); the exact phrase wa-hiya ibnāt sabʿ sinīn is present in Ibn ʿUthmān’s biographies (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 41, and Ibn Hišām (ed. Wüstenfeld), Das Leben Muhammed’s, p. 101, amongst other sources; the distinctive verb jamaʿa (as used in the ‘consummation’ element) is present in Ibn ʿUthmān’s biographies (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p.
Either way, Ibn ‘Abbās is not a credible CL for the hadith of ‘Āʾišah's marital age.

‘Āʾišah bt. ‘abī Bakr (d. 57-58/677-678)

At first glance, the marital-age hadith appears to have innumerable ’isnāds reaching all the way back to its subject: ‘Āʾišah bt. ‘abī Bakr, who was a famous Companion, an emigrant (muhājirah) to Madinah, and one of the Mothers of the Believers (ʾummahāt al-muʾminīn). However, this veritable forest of ’isnāds is illusory: through an ICMA and the systematic application of the Criterion of Dissimilarity, most of these ascriptions to ‘Āʾišah have proved to be the product of raising (rafʿ). Time and again, the original redactions of numerous PCLs and CLs within the broader tradition have been exposed as munqaṭṭi’, including the following:

- ‘Abd al-Razzāq (d. 211/827), who originally only cited Hišām and al-Zuhri, from Urwah, as his source for his redaction of the marital-age hadith.
- Ḥišām b. Urwah (d. 146-147/763-765), who originally only cited his father as his source for Versions 1-3 of his marital-age hadith.

42; the ‘Hijrah’ element can be found in numerous sources; the inclusion of fī šawwāl in the ‘consummation’ element is present in Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 156-157 (i.e., al-Wāqīḍi’s redaction of al-Zuhri’s biographical summary); the tuwuffiya version of the ‘Prophet’s death’ element is present in Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 42, 156-157, and Balāḏurī (ed. Zakkār & Ziriklī), Jumal min ʾAnsāb al-ʾAšrāf, II, p. 39, and various other sources; and, finally, the exact phrase wa-lam yatazawwaj rasūl allāh bī ḡayra-hā is present in Ibn Hišām (ed. Wüstenfeld), Das Leben Muhammed’s, p. 1001.

663 See the section on ‘Abd al-Razzāq, above.
664 See the section on Ḥišām, above.
665 See the section on Ṣimāʾil, above.
666 See the section on ‘Isrāʾīl, above.
• ‘Abū Ḥujayyih al-ʾAjlaḥ (d. 145/762-763 or later), who originally only cited Ibn ’abī Mulaykah as his source (and whose original formulation lacked the marital-age elements in any case).667

There are nevertheless some hadiths that claim to reach all the way back to ‘Āʾišah (i.e., hadiths for which no direct evidence of raising survives), but these are beset by other problems. Firstly, there are several that have been exposed as contaminated or interpolated versions of hadiths that originally lacked the marital-age elements altogether, such as the following:

• Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʾAsadi (d. turn of the 9th C. CE)’s hadith, with the ’isnād Sufyān al-Ṭawrī—Sa’d b. ʿIbrāhīm—al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad—ʿĀʾišah, is an obvious corruption of well-known hadith about Šawwāl that is traceable back to the CL Sufyān, whose original formulation thereof lacked any mention of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age, and was ascribed to ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʿUmayyah—ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUrwhāt—ʿĀʾišah.668

• al-ʾIjlī (d. 261/874-875)’s hadith, with the ’isnād ʿAbū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī—Sufyān al-Ṭawrī—ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʿUmayyah—ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUrwhāt—ʿĀʾišah, is another obvious corruption of Sufyān’s Šawwāl hadith, but only of the matn.669

• al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)’s hadith, with the ’isnād ʿAbdān b. ʿAḥmad—Zayd b. al-Ḥaṛrīs—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Muḥāribī—ʿAbū Sa’d al-Baqqāl—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-ʾAswad—al-ʾAswad, which purports to record ʿĀʾišah’s retelling of the ’ifk narrative to al-ʾAswad, is obviously contaminated or interpolated, since every other version of the ’ifk hadith lacks any mention of her marital age.670

Moreover, there are several ʿĀʾišah-ascribed versions of the marital-age hadith that seem to have been constructed out of other versions of the same hadith, such as the following:

---

667 See the section on al-ʾAjlaḥ, above.
668 See the section on Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, above.
669 See the section on Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, above.
670 See the section on al-ʾAswad, above.
• Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763)’s hadith, on the authority of ʿAbū Salamah and Yahyá, and in which ʿĀʾišah is introduced halfway through as a source and narrator, probably borrowed its elaborate marriage narrative from Hišām’s Version 4 hadith.671

• ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795)’s hadith, with the ’isnād Muṭarrif—ʿAbū Ḯishāq—ʿAbū Ubaydah—ʿĀʾišah, has a matn likely borrowed from the tradition of al-ʿA’maš.672

• al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915-916), with the ’isnād Muṭarrif—ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah—ʿĀʾišah, has a matn plausibly borrowed from an iteration of Hišām’s Version 1 hadith (especially Wuhayb’s redaction), or possibly ’Abū Ya’lá’s dubious transmission from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr.673

• al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)’s hadith, with the ’isnād ʿAbū al-Ḥaḍramī—ʿAbū Kurayb—Muʿāwiyyah b. Hišām—Sufyān al-Ṭawrī—ʿAbū Ḯishāq—ʿAbū Ubaydah—ʿĀʾišah, is probably a corruption of either Qabiṣah or al-Firyābī’s redactions of Sufyān’s redaction of Hišām’s Version 2 hadith, in which the early segment of the original ’isnād (Hišām—ʿUrwa) has been replaced by (a raised version of) that of ʾIsrāʾīl’s hadith (ʿAbū Ḯishāq—ʿAbū Ubaydah—ʿĀʾišah).674

• al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)’s hadith, with the ’isnād al-Ḥaḍramī—Yaḥyá al-Ḥimmānī—Šarīk—ʿAbū Ḯishāq—ʿAbū Ubaydah—ʿĀʾišah, has a matn likely borrowed from either Jarīr or ʿUmmād b. Zayd’s redactions of Hišām’s Version 1 hadith.675

• al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)’s hadith, with the ’isnād Muḥammad al-Marwazī—Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm—Bakr b. Yūnus—Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād—ʿAbū al-Zinād—ʿUrwa—ʿĀʾišah, has a matn likely borrowed from Sufyān al-Ṭawrī’s redaction of Hišām’s Version 2 hadith (or al-ʿAḥwaṣ b. Jawwāb’s redaction thereof in particular), and an altered version of the usual Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād ’isnād (in which Hišām has been replaced by ʿAbū al-Zinād).676

671 See the sections on both Muḥammad b. ʿAmr and Hišām, above.
672 See the sections on al-ʿA’maš and ʿAbū Ḯishāq, above.
673 See the section on ʿAbū Salamah, above.
674 See the sections on Sufyān al-Ṭawrī and ʿAbū Ḯishāq, above.
675 See the sections on Šarīk and ʿAbū Ḯishāq, above.
676 See the section on Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, above.
All of this leaves only the following hadiths ascribed to ʿĀʾišah:

**Hišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765)**

Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage at six
- Hijrah
- Illness, hair
- Swing
- Marital preparation
- Consummation at nine

**Sulaymān al-ʾAʾmaš (d. 147-148/764-766)**

ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage at nine
- [Together nine years] / [Prophet died when she was eighteen]

**ʾAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792)**

ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr—ʿĀʾišah
- Special attributes: marriage at six/seven
- Angel brought image
- Consummation at nine
- Seeing Gabriel
- Most-beloved
- Illness
- Angels

**Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845)**

Muḥammad b. ʿUmar reported—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Rijāl—ʿAbū al-Rijāl—ʿAmrah bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage, during Šawwāl, in the tenth year of the Prophethood, three years before the Hijrah, at age six
- Hijrah, wedding feast, during Šawwāl, eight months after the Hijrah, at age nine

**ʾAbū Nuʿaym (d. 430/1038)**

- Marriage at six
- Prophet seeks consummation
- ʿĀʾišah is fattened up by her parents

---

677 See the section on Hišām, above.
678 See the section on al-ʾAʾmaš, above.
679 See the section on ʾAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ, above.
There are numerous problems with this set of reports. Firstly, Hišām’s hadith is suspect: his original formulations of Versions 1-3 of his hadith were all munqaṭi’, so why would Version 4 be any different? Moreover, Hišām’s hadiths are consistent with being the product of Hišām’s own elaborations in successive retellings—indeed, there is direct evidence for the creation of Version 2 out of Version 1.\footnote{682 See the section on Hišām, above.} If Version 4 is likewise merely an extremely elaborated version of Version 1 (as indeed seems plausible), it cannot be treated as an independent transmission back to ʿĀʾišah.

Secondly, al-ʾAʿmaš’s hadith (the authenticity of which is questionable) is extremely divergent in its core element from all the rest, depicting ʿĀʾišah as being married (i.e., engaged) at nine rather than six or seven.

Thirdly, ʾAbū ʿAwānah’s hadith is much more similar overall to other faḍāʾīl hadiths about ʿĀʾišah (most of which lack the marital-age elements) than it is to other versions of the marital-age hadiths ascribed to ʿĀʾišah: this is consistent with his hadith’s being yet another iteration of the common stock of faḍāʾīl material that was circulating in Iraq in the 8th Century CE, or with its being a remix or updated version of earlier faḍāʾīl reports that lacked any mention of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age.\footnote{683 See the section on ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʾabī Ḵālid, above.}

Fourthly, Ibn Saʿd’s hadith is much more similar in structure and content to the statements of various biographical authorities—including statements that lack the marital-age elements altogether—than it is to other versions of the marital-age hadith, which is consistent with the hadith’s having been fashioned therefrom.\footnote{684 See the section on ʿAmrah, above.}

Fifthly, ʾAbū Nuʿaym’s hadith appears to be completely isolated: I have been unable to find a single other transmission thereof in the entire extant Hadith corpus, which means that it reaches from ʾAbū Nuʿaym (fl. c. 1000 CE) all the way back to ʿĀʾišah (d. 57-58/677-678) via a SS. Moreover, the content differs markedly from every other version of the marital-age hadith: the only thing they have in common is the ‘marriage at six’ element, which could easily be the product of an interpolation or contamination that occurred at any point in the three centuries separating hadith’s alleged point of origin with its extant preservation. As it happens, one of this hadith’s tradents, Muḥammad b. Ḵumayd al-Rāzī (d. 248/862-863), was widely regarded not just as unreliable, but as specifically someone who transmitted unusual hadiths (ṣāḥib...
As always, however, the judgements of the early Muslim Hadith critics are not necessarily to be relied upon in these matters.

In short, these five ascriptions to ʿĀʾišah are not just extremely disparate (which we would actually expect in the case of genuine early provenance), but are in fact respectively more similar to transmissions from other sources and authorities than they are to each other, which is consistent with their being a product of contamination thereby, or borrowing therefrom. As such, these five reports do not constitute a distinctive tradition vis-à-vis other iterations of the same material, such that they cannot be said to reflect an underlying redaction attributable to ʿĀʾišah herself. In other words, pace Juynboll and Brown, the marital-age hadith cannot be traced back to ʿĀʾišah: she is not a credible CL, or in other words, she looks like a spider. Whilst it is certainly possible that the marital-age hadith originated with ʿĀʾišah, this cannot be demonstrated with an ICMA, at least on the basis of the available evidence.

Conclusion

Through the application of a critical, rigorous, and systematic version of the ICMA, the basic principles of textual criticism more broadly, and the Criterion of Dissimilarity (along with occasional instances of source-, form-, and historical-critical analysis, whenever an ICMA proved inapplicable), the following results obtained in regards to the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age:

- The majority of the relevant reports form mutually-similar clusters vis-à-vis other reports and thus constitute distinctive traditions and sub-traditions (i.e., possessing particular elemental sequences and wordings in common, vis-à-vis most other versions).
- The majority of these clusters/traditions correlate with particular tradents (i.e., commonly-cited sources).
- In such cases, as a general tendency, the rate of variation between parallel ascriptions to common sources increases in proportion to the antiquity of the

---

685 Ẓahabī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, XI, p. 503.
source. In other words, there is a correlation, in such cases, between the dates of common sources (i.e., the time-periods in which transmission apparently occurred) and the rate of variation.

- The absolute dating of this apparent transition from a high rate of variation to a low rate of variation (i.e., the relevant time-periods of transmission, based on dates of the relevant tradents) correlates, broadly speaking, with our established background knowledge on the general transition from the oral to the written transmission of Hadith.

The best general explanation for these data is that the particular wordings of earlier tradents—the CLs and their PCLs—were (at least broadly) accurately recorded by subsequent tradents, with each successive generation becoming more precise in its transmission (due above all to the ongoing rise of written transmission). Thus, the distinctive redactions of CLs were (to at least some degree) accurately recorded by their PCLs, whilst the distinctive redactions of these PCLs were (to a much greater degree) accurately recorded by their students in turn. Consequently, earlier redactions the marital-age hadith—the distinctive formulations of PCLs and CLs—can be identified and, to varying degrees, reconstructed.

In practice, this reveals that it was the norm for tradents operating in the middle of the 8th Century CE (visible to us as CLs) to substantially reword their reports in successive retellings, and for tradents operating at the turn of the 9th Century CE (visible to us as PCLs, or senior PCLs in particular) to noticeably modify what they received; it was only during the 9th and especially the 10th Century CE that precise transmission obtained. (Conversely, if this pattern is extrapolated backwards, transmission in the 7th Century CE must have been extremely mutagenic and volatile.)

The changes that occurred in the course of transmission often go far beyond mere paraphrasing: tradents will transmit different versions of their hadiths (with differences in details and even elements) at different times; tradents will add details and even elements into what they received from their sources, absent from the transmissions of co-tradents; the distinctive wordings of some tradents will randomly appear in ascriptions to others; the entire redactions of some tradents will reappear with alternative ʾisnāds; the ʾisnāds cited by some tradents from certain sources will differ—in part or even in whole—from the ʾisnāds cited by their co-tradents for the
same redactions from the same sources; and of course, sometimes simple spelling errors occurred in the written transmission of hadiths.

In short, whilst an ICMA of the marital-age hadith reveals a general tendency for successive tradents to accurately record some data (at least from the CLs and the PCLs unto the extant sources), it simultaneously reveals a vast amount of accretion, error, contamination, interpolation, borrowing, and false ascription. Moreover, whilst the full-blown creation of new ʾIsnāds for matns turned out to be relatively uncommon (at least amongst PCLs and later tradents), the alteration of existing ʾIsnāds turned out to be fairly common: time and again, we encountered raisings and other such ʾIsnāḏ-related improvements.

Still, the overwhelming majority of the putative PCLs and CLs within the marital-age hadith turned out to be genuine sources whose distinctive redactions were identifiable and (to some degree) reconstructable. Such positive results only held as far back as the middle of the 8th Century CE, however: from thereon backwards, the evidence was either insufficient or outright inconsistent with genuine, early transmission. Thus, whilst an ICMA allowed us to attribute various different versions of this hadith to figures as early as Sulaymān al-ʾAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766) (debatably), Hišām b. ʿUrwaḥ (d. 146-147/763-765), and Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763), nothing could be attributed to anyone earlier, including ʾAbū ʾIshāq al-Sabīʿī (d. 127-128/744-746), Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741-742), ʿUrwaḥ b. al-Zubayr (d. 93-95/711-714 or 101/719-720), and ʿĀʾišah bt. ʿabī Bakr (d. 57-58/677-678).
Chapter 3: A Critical Analysis of the Origins of the Hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s Marital Age

When and where did the idea of ʿĀʾišah’s marriage to the Prophet at a young age originate? Is there any reason to think that the extant reports conveying this idea can be traced all the way back to an actual statement by ʿĀʾišah herself; or are there instead indications that such reports reflect a later phase of Islamic history; or can nothing be said thereon, one way or the other?

When I first began to seriously analyse this hadith, it appeared to me to be a product of Zubayrid Madinah: the overwhelming majority of the ʾisnāds therefor converge on the Madinan and Zubayrid traditionist Hišām b. ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 146-147/763-765), citing the authority of his eminent Follower father (d. 93-101/711-720); three ʾisnāds also converge on the Madinan traditionist Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Šihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741-742), likewise citing the authority of ‘Urwa; one ʾisnād also reaches back to the Madinan traditionist ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād (d. 164/780-781 or 174/790-791), from his Madinan father (d. 130/748), likewise citing the authority of ‘Urwa; eight ʾisnāds also converge on the Madinan traditionist Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (d. 144-145/761-763), on the authority of the Madinan Followers ʿAbū Salamah b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/712-713, or 104/722-723) and Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥāṭib (d. 104/722-723); an Egypto-Madinan SS (cited by al-Nasāʾī) similarly reaches back to ʿAbū Salamah, on the authority of ʿĀʾišah herself; two ʾisnāds also converge on the Madinan traditionist Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqīdī (d. 207/823), citing the authority of the Madinan tradent ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Maymūn, who in turn cited the authority of the Madinan tradent Ḥabīb al-Aʿwar; and finally, a Madinan SS (cited by Ibn Saʿd) reaches back to the Madinan Follower ʿAmrah bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 98/716-717, or 106/724-725), citing the authority of ʿĀʾišah herself.

I was not so hasty as Juynboll and Brown to identify ʿĀʾišah as the ultimate source for all of these Madinan transmissions, for two reasons. Firstly, the original formulations of most of the aforementioned traditionists were munqatū or mursal (despite the subsequent raisings and improvements of some of their students), being

---

686 Juynboll, Encyclopedia, 75, col. 1; Brown, in Rea, ‘Hadith’.
ascribed to the Followers of Madinah (ʿUrwah, ʿAbū Salamah, Yahyá, and Ḥabīb); only two SSs (via ʿAbū Salamah and ʿAmrah) explicitly claimed to reach all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself. This is consistent with the ʿĀʾišah story's vaguely circulating in Madinah in the second half of the 1st Islamic Century (i.e., after her death in 57-58/677-678), the origin of which could be any one of the aforementioned Followers.

Secondly, the hadith was suspiciously useful for the Zubayrid political cause: early Muslim political claimants in the first and second fitnāhs seem to have derived legitimacy from their female familial connections to Muḥammad, and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, nephew of ʿĀʾišah and leader of the Hijaz-based Zubayrid faction in the second fitnah (c. 60-73/680-692), was no exception.687 As such, the Zubayrids must have been under pressure to emphasise the importance of ʿĀʾišah in order to bolster the Zubayrid cause—and, given that they were wont to fabricate or interpolate reports in their favour,688 it is only to be expected that they did so in this regard. This would explain the initial appearance of reports about the uniqueness of ʿĀʾišah and her status as the favourite wife of the Prophet, for example.689 Following this, one of the ways that these propagandists could have emphasised the specialness of ʿĀʾišah was by trumpeting her distinctive status as Muḥammad’s only virgin wife—an emphasis that would have been accentuated by the circulation of reports concerning her young marital age.690 It is thus unsurprising that the marital-age hadith is associated overwhelmingly with a locus of Zubayrid-connected Madinan notables: ʿUrwah was himself a Zubayrid, being the brother ʿAbd Allāh; ʿAbū Salamah and ‘Urwah were remembered as having transmitted from each other691; Yaḥyá was remembered as having transmitted from ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr and to ‘Urwah692; Ḥabīb was reportedly the mawlá of ‘Urwah,693 as was ‘Abd

687 Peter Webb, Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 197-201. It is also worth noting that ʿĀʾišah was reportedly known as ʿUmm ʿAbd Allāh on account of her nephew, whom she reportedly loved more than any other, save the Prophet and her parents. See Spellberg, Politics, gender, and the Islamic past, 40-41; Abbott, Aishah, 64-65.


689 See the references in Wensinck, Handbook, 13-14.

690 For an elaboration on this function, see below.


al-Wāḥid694; al-Zuhrī was one of the most prolific students of ʿUrwah; Muḥammad b. ʿAmr transmitted from both ʿAbū Salamah and Yaḥyá695; and Hišām was the son of ʿUrwah. Thus, if ʿUrwah (for example) had created the marital-age hadith in order to bolster the Zubayrid cause, it would have been easy for it to spread (at a time when citing sources was not yet a norm) amongst his Madinan contemporaries and students, before ultimately being raised (at least by some later students) all the way back to ʿĀʾišah.

In short, the political utility of this hadith for the Zubayrids, in conjunction with its common ascription to a coterie of Zubayrid-connected Madinan Followers and their students, in conjunction with the known tendency of propagandistic fabrication and interpolation amongst supporters of the Zubayrids, along with the fact that the earliest versions of the hadith were evidently not ascribed all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself, all provide grounds for concluding that the marital-age hadith originated in Zubayrid Madinah, rather than with a genuine statement or anecdote from ʿĀʾišah herself. Of course, it is possible that the Zubayrids merely exploited an expedient genuine memory for their cause—but such a supposition cannot be justified vis-à-vis a fabrication scenario.

And yet, even this scenario proved to be overly optimistic. After a year of preliminary analysis, I was decisively converted to Yasmin Amin’s position on this matter: the marital-age hadith probably originated even later—with Hišām and his contemporaries, in early Abbasid Iraq.696

Recapitulation of the ʾIsnād-Cum-Matn Analysis

In the preceding chapter, an ICMA revealed that most versions of the marital-age hadith can be traced back—in one form or another—to the following CLs, whose

695 Dahabī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyār, VI, pp. 136-137.
696 I owe thanks to Belal Abu-Alabbas for alerting me to Amin’s position; and Amin herself, for generously taking the time to impart to me her insights on the significance of Hišām’s Iraqi students and the silence of Mālik and Ibn ʿIshāq, along with her own hunches regarding Hišām’s motives.
redactions could be reconstructed at least in terms of gist, and often in terms of specific wording:

**‘Isḥāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853) [Khuraisan]**
Yahyā b. ‘Ādām [Kufan]—al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy [Kufan]:
He saw a twenty-one-year-old grandmother; the minimum age of pregnancy is nine; ‘Aʾīṣah’s marriage was consummated at nine.⁶⁹⁷

**al-Ḥajjāj b. ‘abī Manī‘ (d. post-216/831) [Levantine]**
Married ‘Aʾīṣah; after Kadijah; shown in a dream; married in Makkah at six; consumption; Hijrah; nine; ‘Aʾīṣah’s genealogy; virgin; ‘Abū Bakr’s name.⁶⁹⁸

**al-Wāqīdi (d. 207/823) [Madinan]**
‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Maymūn [Madinan]—Ḥabīb [Madinan]:
Kadijah’s death; ‘Aʾīṣah shown by angel; Prophet’s interactions with ‘Aʾīṣah’s family; ‘Aʾīṣah’s birth; ‘Aʾīṣah’s marriage at six; marriage to Sawdah.⁶⁹⁹

**Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (d. turn of 9th C. CE) [Kufan]**
Marriage at six; consummation at nine; consummation in Šawwāl; [she was the preferred wife; she preferred women to be consummated in Šawwāl].⁷⁰⁰

**‘Abṭar b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795) [Kufan]**
Muṭarrif [Kufan]—‘Abū ‘Isḥāq [Kufan]—‘Abū ‘Ubaydah [Kufan]—‘Aʾīṣah [Madinan]:
Marriage at nine; together nine years.⁷⁰¹

**’Abū ‘Awānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792) [Wasitian-Basran]**

---

⁶⁹⁷ See the section on ‘Isḥāq b. Rāhwayh in ch. 2.
⁶⁹⁸ See the section on al-Ḥajjāj b. ‘abī Manī‘ in ch. 2.
⁶⁹⁹ See the section on Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan in ch. 2.
⁷⁰⁰ See the section on Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan in ch. 2.
⁷⁰¹ See the section on ‘Abṭar in ch. 2.
ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmār [Kufan]—ʿĀʾishah [Madinan]:

Special attributes: marriage at six/seven; angel brought image; consummation at nine; seeing Gabriel; most-beloved; illness; angels.

ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnūs (d. 160-162/776-779) [Kufan]

ʿAbū ʿIshāq [Kufan]—ʿAbū ʿUbaydah [Kufan]:

ʿĀʾishah was married at six; consummation at nine. Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Ṣulaymān al-ʿAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766) [Kufan]

ʿIbrāhīm [Kufan]—al-ʿAṣwād [Kufan]—ʿĀʾishah [Madinan]:

Marriage at nine; [together nine years]/[Prophet died when she was eighteen].

Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765) [Madinan]

ʿUrwah [Madinan]:

ʿĀʾishah was married at six or seven; consummation at nine.

Anonymous:

The Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765) [Madinan]

ʿUrwah [Madinan]:

ʿUrwah wrote to [al-Walīd b.] ʿAbd al-Malik; [Kadijah’s death]; ʿĀʾishah’s marriage, after Kadijah’s death; mean-vision of ʿĀʾishah; marriage at six; consummation, after the Hijrah, at nine; [ʿĀʾishah’s death].

---

702 See the section on ʿAbū Ṭawāfīḥ al-Wāṣqāḥ in ch. 2.
703 See the section on ʿIsrāʾīl in ch. 2.
704 See the section on al-ʿAʿmaš in ch. 2.
705 See the section on Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
706 See the section on Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
707 See the section on Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
Hišām b. ʿUrwah (d. 146-147/763-765) [Madinan]

ʿUrwah [Madinan]—ʿĀʾišah:
Marriage at six; ʿHijrah; Illness, hair; swing; marital preparation; consummation at nine.⁷⁰⁸

ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabī Ḵālid (d. 146/763-764) [Kufan]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Ḍaḥḥāk [unknown]—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad [unknown]:
ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣafwān and someone else came to ʿĀʾišah, who mentioned her nine special attributes; angel brought image; marriage at seven; consummation at nine; virgin; revelation in blanket; most-beloved; Quranic revelation and communal destruction; seeing Gabriel; the Prophet's death and the angel.⁷⁰⁹

Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763) [Madinan]

Yaḥyā [Madinan] & ʿAbū Salamah [Madinan]:
Kawlah convinces the Prophet to propose to ʿĀʾišah and Sawdah; Kawlah brings word to ʿUmm Rūmān and waits for ʿAbū Bakr; ʿAbū Bakr questions the validity of the proposal, but the Prophet assures him; ʿUmm Rūmān informs Kawlah of a prior engagement with al-Muṭʿim's son; ʿAbū Bakr visits al-Muṭʿim and his wife, who call off the engagement on religious grounds, to ʿAbū Bakr's relief; ʿAbū Bakr sends for the Prophet and engages ʿĀʾišah to him; she is age six. Kawlah then goes to Sawdah, and passes on the proposal to her venerable father, who approves the match; Sawdah's father sends for the Prophet and engages her to him; Sawdah's brother disapproves, but later regrets having done so.

—ʿĀʾišah [Madinan]:
ʿHijrah; women; swing; shoulder-length hair; marital preparation; marital consumption; Saʿd brings food; nine.⁷¹⁰

Numerous versions—whether SS ascriptions to isolated figures or transmissions from putative CLs—were also exposed as the clear product of error, contamination,

⁷⁰⁸ See the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
⁷⁰⁹ See the section on ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabī Ḵālid in ch. 2.
⁷¹⁰ See the section on Muḥammad b. ʿAmr in ch. 2.
interpolation, and false ascription, including the CL redactions of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim, Hišām b. ʿUrwah (in the case of his Version 2 hadith, at least), and Muḥammad b. ʿAmr. Many other versions—especially SS ascriptions to isolated figures—were not as definitive, but still exhibited suspicious signs of secondary construction; thus, out of the SS ascriptions to isolated figures, only the following one was not positively cast into doubt on specific textual or contextual grounds (whilst still being uncorroborated):

ʾAbū Nuʿaym (d. 430/1038) [Isfahanian]

Marriage at six; Prophet seeks consummation; ʿĀʾišah is fattened up by her parents.\

As we concluded in the previous chapter, no version of the marital-age—including the CL redactions and SS ascriptions just cited—can be traced back to anyone operating before the middle of the 8th Century CE, at least on the basis of an ICMA. However, this raises an important question: is it possible to move beyond an ICMA and evaluate the hadith on other grounds? In other words, can we take the results of our ICMA and subject them to further analysis, in order to gain deeper insights into the transmission and origins of the hadith in question?

**Dating by Ascription Type**

One consideration is the different levels of ascription exhibited by these various reports: where some of them claim to reach all the way back to a Companion (ʿĀʾišah), others only claim to reach back to a Follower (Jābir, ʿAbū ʿUbaydah, and ʿUrwah), or even convey the statements of later figures (Ḥabīb, Ibn Šīḥāb al-Zuhrī, and al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy). Based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity, we would generally expect those ascribed to later figures to reflect an earlier stage than those ascribed to earlier figures.

---

711 ʾAbū Nuʿaym (ed. Ḣasan), Taʿrīḵ ʿAṣbāhān, I, p. 233.
However, this does not get us very far, at least in this context: even hadiths that have preserved archaic ascriptions could still be interpolated or contaminated in terms of content. Moreover, a relative chronology does not help us establish an absolute dating: even if we now have reason to believe that Hišām’s (Follower-ascribed) version predates al-ʾAʿmaš’s (Companion-ascribed) version, for example, we are still left without any specific notion of the time-span and time-periods involved.

**Form Criticism**

Another potential avenue of analysis is form criticism: the identification and comparison of the narrative components of *matns* (i.e., regardless of their *ʾisnāds*), with the aim of identifying earlier forms thereof. Such an analysis immediately suggests that all versions of the marital-age hadith—all hadiths containing the ‘marriage’ and/or ‘consummation’ elements—must in that respect share a common origin, either as parallel recollections of an actual event, or various offshoots of an ur-story. The traditional explanation would of course be that ‘Āʾišah was actually engaged and consummated in marriage at a young age, and that this event was described and transmitted as a hadith accordingly—thus, a genuine historical memory undergirds the common form of the hadith. However, even putting aside the failure of the preceding ICMA to correlate any particular redaction with ‘Āʾišah, and putting aside also the fact that most versions of the hadith did not originally claim ‘Āʾišah as their source in the first place, this is not a satisfactory explanation: the age range given for ‘Āʾišah’s marital engagement (*tazawwuj, nikāḥ*) is six, six or seven, seven, nine and (in the case of one extreme outlier) ten, so it cannot simply be the case that an actual event was accurately remembered and reported. Moreover, both the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements are usually worded in a fairly specific way (i.e., sharing common verbs and ḥāl structures), which is suspect: there are many ways that the relevant information could have been expressed in Arabic,⁷¹² yet a common formula prevails in the relevant reports:

---

⁷¹² There are numerous alternative ways of expressing this information, including alternative verbs, alternative verbal forms, and alternative syntax. Rather than creating a list of hypothetical examples, it
suffices to catalogue the actual examples that exist within the variants of the broader marital-age tradition.

Firstly, in terms of alternative verbs for the 'marriage' element: Ṭabarānī (ed. Salaḥ), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 26, # 62 (cf. the section on al-ʿAjlāh in ch. 2) has fa-zawwaǰa-hā rasūl allāh; al-Ḥaḡwī’s redaction (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-ḥaqqatab ‘alay-hi ‘aʾīṣah (with Kaḥlah as the subject); Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 42 (cf. the section on al-Zuhrī in ch. 2) has malaka rasūl allāh ‘uqdat ‘aʾīṣah; Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 42 (cf. the sections on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa and al-Zuhrī in ch. 2) has nakha-ha al-nabīyya ‘aʾīṣah; ’Abd al-Razzāq’s redaction (cf. the sections on Ma’mar, Ḥišām b. ’Urwa, and al-Zuhrī in ch. 2) has nakha-ha al-nabīyya ‘aʾīṣah; Šāfi’ī (ed. ’Abd al-Muṭṭalib), ʿUmān, VI, pp. 45-46, # 2210 (cf. the section on Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah in ch. 2) has nakha-ha ni al-nabīyya; Muḥammad b. Bīrā’s redaction (cf. the sections on Muḥammad b. Amr and Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has fa-zawwaǰa-hā [min rasūl allāh]/[iyyā-hu]; ’Abū ‘Usāmah’s first redaction (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has [timmā/wa-] nakha-ha ‘aʾīṣah; ’Abū ‘Awānah’s redaction (cf. the preceding discussion, and the section on ’Ismāʾīl b. ’abī Kaḥīl in ch. 2) has malaka-ni rasūl allāh; and Ḥišām’s Version 3 hadith (cf. his section in ch. 2) has wa-nakha-ha ‘aʾīṣah and possibly nakha-ha rasūl allāh.

Secondly, in terms of alternative verbs for the 'consummation' element: Wārjānī (ed. Šālimī), al-Tartīb fi al-Ṣaḥḥā, p. 238, # 528; ibid., p. 326, # 750 (cf. the section on Jābir b. Zayd in ch. 2) has wa-ibṭanā bi-hā; Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 20, # 6881 (cf. the sections on al-Zuhrī and Ḥamrah in ch. 2) has wa-ʾarrasā bi-hā and ibṭanā bi-hā; Ṭabarānī (ed. Salaḥ), al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, XXIII, p. 19, # 40 (cf. the section on Qatādah in ch. 2) has yimmā ibṭanā bi-hā; Ṭabarānī (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV, pp. 1770-1771 (cf. the section on Ibn Abīsī in ch. 2) has wa-jamaʾaʾ ilay-hā; Ṭabarānī (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV, (series III), p. 2439 (cf. the sections on al-Zuhrī and Ḥamrah in ch. 2) has wa-ʾarrasā bi-hā and ibṭanā bi-hā; ’Abd al-Razzāq (ed. ‘Aẓamī), Maṣṣanāf, VI, p. 162, # 10349 (cf. the section on ’Abd al-Razzāq) has wa-ʿahḍiyat ilay-hā; Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 39-40 (cf. the section on ’Amrah) has wa-arṣa bi-hā; Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 42. (cf. the section on al-Zuhrī in ch. 2) has wa-jamaʾaʾa-hā; ’Abd al-Razzāq’s redaction (cf. the sections on Ma’mar, Ḥišām b. ’Urwa, and al-Zuhrī in ch. 2) has wa-jamaʾaʾa-hā; Ḥišām’s redaction (cf. her section in ch. 2) has wa-ʿahḍiyat ilay-hā; and ’Ismāʾīl b. ’abī Kaḥīl’s redaction (cf. his section in ch. 2) has wa-ʿahḍiyat ilay-hā.

Thirdly, in terms of alternative syntax for either element: ’Abū Nuʿaym (ed. ʿAẓzāz), Maʿrifat al-Ṣaḥḥābāh, I, p. 3208, # 7375 (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has li-sīt sinin; Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 19, # 6879 (cf. the section on Jābir b. Zayd in ch. 2) has wa-la-ha sab sinin and wa-la-ha tis sinin; Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 19, # 6880 (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-kānāt ‘aʾīṣah yawma nakha-ha rasūl allāh bint sīt sinin; Ḥākim, Mustadrak, VII, p. 20, # 6881 (cf. the sections on al-Zuhrī and Ḥamrah in ch. 2) has wa-ʾarrasā bi-hā rasūl allāh fi sawwāl ʾalā raʾsa ʾaʾīṣah yawma nakha-ha rasūl allāh bint sīt sinin; Ḥišām’s redaction (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-ḥaqqatab ‘alay-hi ‘aʾīṣah bint ibnahan ’abī bakr fa-banā bi-sawdah wa-ʾaʾīṣah fī yawma wa-sawdah bi-bint sīt sinin; Ṭabarānī (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV, p. 1770 (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-ʾaʾīṣah yawma-ʾid ibn sīt sinin; Ṭabarānī (ed. de Goeje), Annales, IV (series III), p. 2439 (cf. the sections on al-Zuhrī and Ḥamrah in ch. 2) has wa-ʾaʾīṣah wa-sawdah bi-bint sīt sinin; Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 39 (cf. the sections on Muḥammad b. Amr and Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-ḥaqqatab ‘alay-hi ‘aʾīṣah bint ‘abī bakr fa-tazawwaǰa-humā fa-banā bi-sawdah bi-makkah wa-ʾaʾīṣah yawma-ʾid bint sīt sinin; Ibn Sa’d (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, pp. 39-40 (cf. the section on ’Amrah) has wa-arṣa bi-hā fi sawwāl ʾalā raʾsa ʾaʾīṣah yawma nakha-ha rasūl allāh bint sīt sinin; ’Abū ‘Usāmah’s second redaction (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has li-sīt sinin; Ibn Bukayr (ed. Zakḵār), al-Siyar wa-al-Magāżī, p. 255 (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has wa-ʾaʾīṣah yawma-ʾid bint sīt sinin; Ja’far b. Sulaymān’s redaction (cf. the section on Ḥišām b. ’Urwa in ch. 2) has li-sab sinin and li-tis sinin; Abṭār’s redaction (cf. the sections on al-ʾAʾmah and ’Abū ʾIshāq in ch. 2) has li-tis sinin; and ’Ismāʾīl b. ’abī Kaḥīl’s redaction (cf. his section in ch. 2) has li-sab sinin and li-tis sinin.

However, as is indicated in each case (by the “cf.” reference to an ICMA in the preceding chapter), these actual variants are almost always secondary rewordings (i.e., the wordings of offspring or outgrowths of traditions, such as PCL redactions, or obvious divers with elemental combinations taken from other sources). By contrast, most of the earliest CL redactions (namely, Ibn Ḥāwayḥ’s ascription to al-Ḥasan; ’Isrāʾīl’s redaction; al-ʾAʾmah’s redaction; and Versions 1, 2, and 4 of Ḥišām’s hadith) adhere to the usual tazawwaǰa verbal sentence and consequent ḥāl clause for the ‘marriage’ element, and the usual banā or daḵala verbal sentence and consequent ḥāl clause for the ‘consummation’ element, whenever they have either element. The notable exceptions are the redactions of ’Abū ‘Awānah al-
Waḍḍāḥ and ‘Ismā‘īl b. ‘abī Ḳālid, along with Hišām’s Version 3 hadith, all of which exhibit some non-standard wordings; but as we saw previously, there are reasons to think that ‘Abū ‘Awānah and ‘Ismā‘īl’s redactions are secondary constructions that incorporate the distinctive sequence of Hišām’s Version 1 hadith. This leaves Hišām’s Version 3 hadith, which cites exactly the same source as his other three formulations ascribed to the same source.

In short, the tendency of the marital-age tradition as a whole—from earlier redactions to later redactions—is from unity to diversity, implying a common ur-story.
Even the rare ‘ten’ variants otherwise conform to the structure and wordings of the more common variants, as do the unusual ‘nine’ variants. This suggests not merely that they share a common origin, but that they share a common narrative origin: all of them likely stem from some kind of ur-story.

What did this ur-story look like, and who formulated it? It could be none other than an authentic statement of ‘Ā’iṣah’s (despite the limitations of the extant ‘Isnād), but
given that the original clearly described her in the third-person (with all first-person versions being secondary rewordings),\(^{713}\) this seems improbable. Instead, the original speaker in this ur-story must be some later figure, even if they were using information that genuinely derived from Ḥāʾishah—for example, her nephew ʿUrwah, or his son Hišām. Either way, this inferable ur-story or ur-hadith would need to be something with which we could account for the rise of the aforementioned fundamental variants within the marital-age hadith-tradition. As it happens, two viable candidates for such an ur-story (or at least, for being a close reflection thereof) exist amongst the available reports, one of which is an extant report, and the other of which is a reconstructed CL redaction (though also still represented by extant transmissions). The first is the following ascription to both al-Zuhrī and Hišām, recorded by Ibn Saʿd:

\[
\text{Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd al-ʿAbdī reported to us: “Maʿmar related to us, from al-Zuhrī and Hišām b. ʿUrwah, who [both] said: ‘The Prophet married Ḥāʾishah when she was a girl of nine years or seven (nakaḥa al-nabiyy ʿāʾišah wa-hiya ibnat tisʿ sanawāt ʾaw sab’).”}^{714}
\]

Although this report diverges substantially from the only other parallel transmission from Maʿmar, from al-Zuhrī and Hišām (viz., the redaction of ʿAbd al-Razzāq), it has the best claim out of the two to accurately reflecting Maʿmar’s original redaction (based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity).\(^{715}\) In addition to being the putative statement of two virtual Followers-of-the-Followers (thus making it seem extremely archaic), this report is striking due to its vague equivocation over Ḥāʾishah’s marital age: nine or seven. If indeed this reflects the ur-story (i.e., if the ur-story happens to survive via this version), it would explain the rise of the most fundamental variants within the marital-age hadith-tradition: the proposition that Ḥāʾishah’s marriage (tazawwuj, nikāḥ) occurred at age seven and that her marital consummation (bināʾ, dukūl) occurred at age nine; and the proposition that Ḥāʾishah’s marriage (tazawwuj, nikāḥ) occurred at age nine. In other words, this is consistent with the two rival ages (seven versus nine) for the same event (the marriage) given in the ur-story’s having been split into discrete ages for two separate events in most subsequent iterations of the hadith-tradition (e.g., the redaction of Hišām): seven at the time of the marital engagement, and nine at the

\(^{713}\) See the previous chapter of the present work.

\(^{714}\) Ibn Saʿd (ed. Brockelmann), Biographien, VIII, p. 42.

\(^{715}\) See the section on Maʿmar in ch. 2.
time of the consummation of the marriage. Not all subsequent versions adhered to this common division, however: in some cases (e.g., the redaction of al-ʿAʿmaš), the marital age of ʿĀʾišah continued to be identified as nine.

The main weakness of this report as (an accurate reflection of) the ur-story is that it fails to explain the rise of the most common variant of all: the proposition that ʿĀʾišah was married at six and consummated at nine. By contrast, the second candidate for the ur-story can explain all of the relevant variants (six, seven, and nine)—namely, the Version 1 hadith of Hišām b. ʿUrwah, on the authority of his father:

The Messenger of God married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of six or seven years, and consummated the marriage with her (banā bi-hā) when she was a girl of nine years.716

This reconstructed redaction is the putative statement of a Follower, which is again consistent with its being archaic. Moreover, its being the ur-story (or a close reflection thereof) would explain all of the major variants of the marital-age hadith: ‘marriage at six’ and ‘consummation at nine’; ‘marriage at six or seven’ and ‘consummation at nine’; and ‘marriage at seven’ and ‘consummation at nine’.717 In other words, it is easy to envisage some tradents improving or updating the vague, initial version of the hadith (‘six or seven’) into more specific versions, choosing specifically either ‘six’ or ‘seven’. Alternatively, it is easy to envisage simple error or poor memory resulting in the loss of either ‘six’ or ‘seven’, leaving only the other (specifically ‘six’ or specifically ‘seven’) in the transmissions in question. Either way, Hišām’s Version 1 hadith easily accounts for most of the fundamental variation in question.

Hišām’s Version 1 hadith can also account for the rise of the ‘marriage at nine’ variant, in at least three ways. Firstly, poor memory or some other form of garbled transmission could easily result in the conflation or merging of the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements, resulting in a version of the hadith with ‘marriage at nine’ rather than ‘marriage at six/seven’ and ‘consummation at nine’ (as in the redaction of al-ʿAʿmaš). Secondly, poor memory or some other form of garbled transmission could easily result in the conflation or merging of the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’

---

716 See the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
717 Only the super-rare and typically late ‘marriage at ten’ (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr), ‘consummation at ten’ (al-Kulaynī) and ‘consummation at nine or ten’ (Ibn Hišām) variants would remain unexplained.
elements but the retention of the ages ‘seven’ and ‘nine’, resulting in the ‘marriage at nine or seven’ (as in the aforementioned ascription to Ma’mar). Thirdly, as has been noted already,\textsuperscript{718} the Arabic words for ‘seven’ (سبع) and ‘nine’ (تسع) share a similar-looking consonantal skeleton or rasm (namely, تسع, تسع), which could be confused with each other in the reading or copying of unvowelled and undotted writing. It is thus plausible that a version of Hišām’s Version 1 hadith with ‘seven’ was misread as ‘nine’, and that the ‘marriage’ and ‘consummation’ elements (both being read as occurring at ‘nine’) were again conflated or merged into a single ‘marriage at nine’ element (as in the redaction of al-ʾAʿmaš). Additionally, an uncertain rasm, in conjunction with some other garbled form of transmission (of the sort outlined above), could produce an uncertain ‘marriage at nine or seven’ variant (as in the aforementioned ascription to Ma’mar).

In short, Hišām’s Version 1 hadith, out of all extant versions of the marital-age hadith, best answers the classic textual-critical question of utrum in alterum abiturum erat (“Which would have been more likely to give rise to the other?”)\textsuperscript{719} It is of course still possible that the fundamental variation in question—marital engagement at six and marital consummation at nine; marital engagement six or seven and marital consummation at nine; marital engagement seven and marital consummation at nine; marital engagement at nine; and marital engagement at nine or seven—arose through deliberate alterations or rewordings, either by the original formulator of the ur-story, or by subsequent tradents. For example, we could imagine a scenario in which someone—even ʿĀʾišah herself—repeated the same formula (in terms of verbs and syntax) but changed the details in successive retellings. Thus, whilst there would be an ur-story in terms of general outline (i.e., the formula reused in the successive retellings), there would not be an ur-story in terms of an ultimate, direct ancestor of all extant variants.

However, there is no reason to posit hypothetical successive redactions (i.e., new entities) to explain the extant variation: the existing material—or at least, a redaction that survives within the extant material—already suffices. Moreover, in the case of the scenario of a later tradent’s rewording the hadith (e.g., al-ʾAʿmaš and his ‘married at

\textsuperscript{718} Again, see the section on Hišām b. ‘Urwah in ch. 2.
there is no reason to suppose a deliberate alteration (absent a discernible motive), which leaves only accidental or incidental alteration. In such a case, however, we would still need to explain how such an accident could occur, which is precisely what the posited ur-story provides: the confusion of ‘seven’ with ‘nine’, or the conflation of two elements, are exactly how such an error would occur.

In short, on form-and textual-critical grounds, Hišām’s Version 1 hadith is uniquely consistent with being the ur-story behind the marital-age hadith-tradition more broadly, since it could have plausibly—in light of the common pressures and problems of transmission—given rise to nearly all other versions, in a way that is not true for any other extant version.

Form Criticism and ’Isnāds

Form criticism can also be combined with the evidence of ’Isnāds (i.e., beyond the scope of an ICMA, which narrowly focuses on correlating particular redactions with putative PCLs and CLs): as we already saw in the preceding chapter, a form-critical analysis in combination with a geographical analysis of the relevant ’Isnāds revealed that the ḍāʾil hadiths of ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ and ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabī Қālid are likely just different iterations of a common pool of storyteller and preacher material circulating in 8th-Century Kufah. Moreover, the fact that both share the two elements associated with Hišām’s distinctive Version 1 hadith, in conjunction with the survival of closely-related ḍāʾil reports that lack said elements altogether, suggests that ʿAbū ʿAwānah and ʿIsmāʿīl’s redactions represent secondary iterations of the relevant ḍāʾil material, under the influence of Hišām’s hadith. Form criticism can also be used to expose the unreliability of specific ’Isnāds at a certain level, as in the case of the redactions of ʿIṣrāʾīl and al-ʿAʿmaš: both share the distinctive elemental combination of “ʿAišah was married when she was a girl of X years’ and ‘the Prophet died when she was a girl of eighteen’, even if they differ on some details (for example, her specific marital age, and whether her marriage was distinct from her marital consummation). As such, both must share a common origin,

---

720 Again, bar the three rare and late ‘ten’ variants.
yet each claims an independent *ʾisnād* back to (i.e., purports to be the words of) a different early figure: ’Abū ‘Ubaydah and ‘Āʾīshah, respectively. This immediately suggests that at least one of the two *ʾisnāds* in question are false, or at least misleading: they do not disclose their common source, which is consistent with their being dives.

Similar form-critical considerations apply to Hišām’s Version 1 hadith, ’Isrāʾīl’s hadith, and most other versions of the marital-age hadith more broadly: their common form—the distinctive combination of the ‘marriage at six/seven’ and ‘consummation at nine’ elements—implies a common origin (as noted above), yet many of their *ʾisnāds* claim independent SSs—sometimes in different regions—back to different early figures, such as Qatādah b. Diʿāmah (d. 117-118/735-736) in Basrah, Jābir b. Zayd (d. 93/711-712 or 103/721-722) in Basrah, ’Urwh b. al-Zubayr (d. 93-95/711-714 or 101/719-720) in Madinah, ’Abū ’Ubaydah (d. 81/700-701) in Kufah, ’Abd Allāh b. ’Abbās (d. 67-68/687-688) in Makkah, and ’Āʾīshah bt. ‘abī Bakr (d. 57-58/677-678) in Madinah. This again immediately suggests—even putting aside all of the specific textual and historical problems outlined in the preceding chapter—that most of the relevant *ʾisnāds* are false or misleading, which is consistent with their being dives or retrojections of various kinds. Of course, at least one of these surviving ascriptions could be the original—but if so, which one? As noted already, Hišām’s Version 1 hadith has the strongest claim out of any iteration of the marital-age hadith to being the progenitor of the tradition as a whole.

**Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the *ʾIsnāds***

Of course, just because Hišām’s Version 1 hadith looks exactly like the ur-story behind the marital-age hadith-tradition as a whole, that does not mean that Hišām himself was responsible for it: it is conceivable that Hišām simply passed on the report from ’Urwhah, and even that ’Urwhah in turn merely passed on what he had heard from ’Āʾīshah. There are strong reasons to doubt this, however. In particular, there are clear indications that this hadith arose in Iraq in the early Abbasid period, rather than earlier in Madinah.
The earliest figures to whom versions of the marital-age hadith can be attributed—the CLs operating between 750 and 800 CE—were all tradents operating in Iraq:

- **Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan** (d. turn of 9th C. CE), who added marital-age elements into the Šawwāl hadith of Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, was Kufan.⁷²¹
- **ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim** (d. 178/794-795), who combined a sub-tradition from al-ʿA’maš with a Kufan SS back to ʿĀʾišah, was Kufan.⁷²²
- **ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ** (d. 176/792), who incorporated marital-age elements into his redaction of the faḍāʿil of ʿĀʾišah and cited a Kufan source (ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr) therefor, spent time in Wasit and ended up in Basrah.⁷²³
- **ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus** (d. 160-162/776-779) was Kufan,⁷²⁴ and cited a Kufan SS.
- **Sulaymān al-ʿAʿmaš** (d. 147-148/764-766) was Kufan,⁷²⁵ and also cited a Kufan SS back to ʿĀʾišah.
- **ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabī Ḵālid** (d. 146/763-764), who incorporated marital-age elements into his redaction of the faḍāʿil of ʿĀʾišah, was Kufan.⁷²⁶

Even the Madinan CLs **Hišām b. ʿUrwah** (d. 146-147/763-765) and **Muḥammad b. ʿAmr** (d. 144-145/761-763), who at first glance appear to defy this tendency, actually conform thereto. Firstly, every single tradent who (allegedly or actually) directly received a version of the marital-age hadith from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr—including doubtful tradents, alleged tradents, and PCLs whose transmission therefrom can be confirmed—was Iraqi:

- **Yahyá b. Zakariyyā’** (d. 183-184/799-800), who allegedly (but improbably) transmitted a short marital-age hadith from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, was Kufan.⁷²⁷

---

⁷²¹ Buḵārī (ed. Қān), al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr, I, p. 67, # 152.
⁷²² Ḍahābī (ed. ʾArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VIII, pp. 227-228.
⁷²³ Ibid., pp. 217-222.
⁷²⁴ Ibid., VII, pp. 355-360.
⁷²⁵ Ibid., VI, pp. 226-249
⁷²⁶ Ibid., pp. 176-178.
⁷²⁷ Ibid., VIII, pp. 337-341.
• ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʾAjlaḥ (fl. turn of 9th C. CE), who allegedly transmitted a biographical summary about ʿĀʾišah from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, was Kufan.728
• ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān (d. 187-188/803-804), who transmitted a highly abridged version of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith, was Kufan.729
• ʿAbd Allāh b. ʾIdrīs (d. 192/808), who transmitted a version of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith to ʾAbd al-Jabbār (a Kufan PCL whose distinctive redaction can be reconstructed), was Kufan.730
• Yahyā b. Saʿīd (d. 194/809-810), who transmitted a version of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith to his son Saʿīd b. Yahyā (a Baghdadian PCL whose distinctive redaction can be reconstructed), was a Kufan who moved to Baghdad.731
• Muʿāḍ b. Muʿāḍ b. Naṣr (d. 196/811), who transmitted a highly abridged version of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith, was Basran.732
• Muḥammad b. Bišr (d. 203/818-819), a PCL whose distinctive redaction can be reconstructed, was Kufan.733
• Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd al-Ṭanāfīsī (d. 203-205/818-821), who ostensibly transmitted an unusual version of Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s hadith to al-Wāqidī, was a Kufan who spent time in Baghdad.734

This may at first seem puzzling: why was every single (alleged and actual) student who transmitted a version of the marital-age hadith from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr Iraqi, when Muhammad himself was Madinan? The answer is provided by al-Ḍahabī: “Muḥammad b. ʿAmr died in the year 145 [i.e., 762-763 CE] or 144 [i.e., 761-762 CE]. He transmitted Hadith (wa-qad ḥaddaṭa) in Iraq.”735 In other words, Muhammad b. ʿAmr was known to have spent time in Iraq and transmitted Hadith there—and, given that this datum is given by al-Ḍahabī directly after his specification of Muḥammad’s death-date, it seems implied that this occurred towards the end of his life. Indeed, such is explicitly recorded by al-Kalābāḏī, citing the statement of a certain Saʿd b. ʿĀmir: “Muḥammad b. ʿAmr

729 Ḣahabī (ed. ʾArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VIII, p. 511.
731 Ḣahabī, pp. 139-140.
732 Ḣahabī, pp. 54-56.
733 Ḣahabī, pp. 265-266.
734 Ḣahabī, pp. 436-438.
735 Ḣahabī, VI, p. 137.
came to us—meaning, to Basrah—two times: he came in the year 137 [i.e., 754-755 CE], and he came a second time in the year 144 [i.e., 761-762 CE].” (That said, nearly all of the transmitters of the marital-age hadith from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr were Kufan, not Basran.) All of this is consistent with Muḥammad b. ʿAmr’s having only transmitted the hadith in Iraq at the end of life, not his hometown of Madinah—otherwise, we would reasonably expect it to be transmitted by at least one early Madinan source or PCL.

However, there are textual-critical grounds for inferring that Muḥammad b. ʿAmr borrowed the marital-age elements in his hadith from a version of Hišām b. ʿUrwah’s Version 4 hadith, and Hišām was also Madinan—surely this would suggest that Muḥammad obtained the hadith in Madinah, despite the odd absence of any Madinan transmissions thereof from him? In fact, even Hišām b. ʿUrwah appears to have overwhelmingly transmitted (all four versions of) his hadith in Iraq, as can be seen from the regional provenance of the overwhelmingly majority of his (alleged and actual) relevant students:

- **Sufyān al-Ṭawrī** (d. 161/777-778), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 2 hadith from Hišām, was a Kufan who died in Basrah.738
- **Wuhayb b. Ṭalid al-Karābīsī** (d. 165/781-782), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 2 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.739
- **Ḥammād b. Salamah** (d. 167/784), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 4 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.740
- **ʾIsmāʿīl b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Ḵūlqānī** (d. 173-174/789-791), who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was a Kufan who moved to Baghdad.741

---


737 See the sections on Muḥammad b. ʿAmr and Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.


739 Ibid., VIII, pp. 223-226.

740 Ibid., VII, pp. 444-456.

741 Ibid., VIII, pp. 475-476.
• Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī (d. 178/794-795), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.\textsuperscript{742}

• Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.\textsuperscript{743}

• Yahyá b. Zakariyyāʾ (d. 183-184/799-800), who reportedly transmitted an unspecified version of the marital-age from Hišām, was Kufan.\textsuperscript{744}

• ’Abān b. Yazid al-ʿAṭṭār (fl. turn of 9th C. CE), who transmitted a redaction of the Version 3 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.\textsuperscript{745}

• ‘Abd Allāh b. Muʿāwiyyah (fl. turn of 9th C. CE), who transmitted a redaction of the Version 3 hadith from Hišām, was Basran.\textsuperscript{746}

• ‘Abdah b. Sulaymān al-Kilābī (d. 187-188/803-804), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Kufan.\textsuperscript{747}

• Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḍabbī (d. 188/804), a PCL who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was a Kufan of Eastern origin.\textsuperscript{748}

• ‘Alī b. Mushir (d. 189/804-805), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction of the Version 4 hadith from Hišām, was a Kufan who became the qāḍī of Mosul.\textsuperscript{749}

• ’Abū Muʿāwiyyah Muḥammad b. ʿAẓīm al-Ḍarīr (d. 194-195/809-811), who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Kufan.\textsuperscript{750}

• Wakiʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 196-197/812), who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Kufan.\textsuperscript{751}

• Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah (d. 198/814), a PCL who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was a Kufan who spent time in

\textsuperscript{742} Ibid., pp. 197-200.

\textsuperscript{743} Ibid., VII, pp. 456-466.

\textsuperscript{744} Ibid., VIII, pp. 337-341.

\textsuperscript{745} Ibid., VII, pp. 431-433.

\textsuperscript{746} Buḵārī (ed. Kan), al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr, V, p. 209, # 663.

\textsuperscript{747} Ḍahābī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyār, VIII, p. 511.

\textsuperscript{748} Ibid., IX, pp. 9-18.

\textsuperscript{749} Ibid., VIII, pp. 484-487.

\textsuperscript{750} Ibid., IX, pp. 73-78.

Makkah (from 122/739-740 to 126/743-744), then returned to his hometown of Kufah, then travelled to Yemen twice (in 150/767 and 152/769), and finally settled in Makkah (from 163/779-780 until his death).\(^{752}\)

- **Yūnus b. Bukayr b. Wāṣil** (d. 199/814-815), who ostensibly transmitted an altered version of Hišām’s (Version 1 or 2) hadith, was Kufan.\(^{753}\)

- **ʾAbū ’Usāmah Ḥammād b. ’Usāmah** (d. 201/767), a PCL who transmitted two distinctive redactions—of Version 1 and Version 4, respectively—of the marital-age hadith from Hišām, was Kufan.\(^{754}\)

- **al-Hayṭam b. ʿAdī al-Ṭāʾī** (d. 207/822-823), who ostensibly transmitted a discussion between himself and Hišām in which the latter related information about ‘Āʾišah’s marriage on the authority of Urwah, was Kufan.\(^{755}\)

- **Yahyá b. Hášim al-Ḡassānī** (d. 225/839-840), who ostensibly transmitted a redaction of the Version 1 hadith from Hišām, was Kufan.\(^{756}\)

Time and again, the relevant ‘İsnâds give the impression that Hišām transmitted the marital-age hadith in Iraq (above all, in Kufah), not his hometown of Madinah. Once again, the Islamic biographical sources provide an answer for this oddity: Hišām reportedly moved from Madinah to Iraq towards the end of his life, where he joined the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775 CE). It is reported that he first moved to Kufah (perhaps meaning the temporary Abbasid capital of al-Ḥāšimiyyah, which was close to Kufah), before moving with the Abbasids into their new capital of Baghdad, where he died in 146/763-764 or 147/764-765.\(^{757}\) Thus, in the last few years of his life (perhaps for a whole decade), Hišām appears to have mass-disseminated four different versions of the marital-age hadith to a plethora of Iraqi students, especially Kufans.

---


\(^{753}\) Daḥabī (ed. ‘Arnaʿūṭ et al.), Sīyar, IX, pp. 245-246.


There are only four putative instances of Madinan students—or students in Madinah—having transmitted the marital-age hadith from Hišām, or in other words, four apparent exceptions to the overwhelming Iraqi tendency observed above:

- **Maʿmar b. Rāšid** (d. 152-154/769-771), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive and strange redaction of the marital-age hadith from Hišām, was a Basran who moved to the Levant to study with Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī during the Marwanid period (during the early-to-mid 8th Century CE), then to the Hijaz for a time (during the middle of the 8th Century CE), before finally settling in Yemen for the last twenty years of his life (c. 750-771 CE).\(^{758}\)

- **ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṿabī al-Zīnād** (d. 164/780-781 or 174/790-791), a PCL who transmitted a distinctive redaction—in fact, an interpolated or contaminated version—of (Version 1 of) the marital-age hadith from Hišām, was a Madinan who still resided in his hometown around 762-764 CE (when he was punished by the local qāḍī) and soon afterwards (when he was appointed the head of the local tax bureau), and eventually moved to Baghdad (where he died).\(^{759}\)

- **Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān** (d. 172/788-789 or 194-196/809-812), who allegedly transmitted a version of the marital-age hadith from Hišām, was a Madinan who moved to Baghdad, where he was appointed as a local qāḍī by an Abbasid caliph.\(^{760}\)

- **ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. ʿUrwah** (fl. turn of 9th C. CE), who allegedly transmitted an unusual version of (Version 1 of) the marital-age hadith from Hišām, was Madinan.\(^{761}\)

The last two cases can be dismissed without much consideration. In the first case, Saʿīd is cited alongside Ibn ʿabī al-Zīnād in only a single report, rendering his alleged transmission of the marital-age hadith from Hišām completely uncorroborated; and in

---

\(^{758}\) Harald Motzki, “ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī”, in Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, & Everett Rowson (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2018), online edition.


\(^{760}\) Wakīʿ, Ṭabār al-Quḍāh, III, pp. 264-265; Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭahdīb, IV, pp. 55-56.

\(^{761}\) Ibn al-Jawzī (ed. ʿAbd Allāh), Ḍuʿafāʾ, II, p. 141, # 2116.
any case, he was reportedly born (157/773-774) after Hišām died (146-147/763-765). In the second case, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad is cited as a transmitter from Hišām only via a SS, and the version ascribed to him diverges markedly from every other transmission of the marital-age hadith from Hišām, such that the ‘isnād and matn alike are completely uncorroborated and suspect; this is consistent with the ascription to ‘Abd Allāh’s being a dive (in particular, an instance of an updated or improved version of the matn’s being retrojected back to a common source via a new path).

The case of Maʿmar is a bit more complicated. On the one hand, the relevant chronological and geographical entailments are clear: if Maʿmar heard his version of the marital-age hadith directly from Hišām, then this transmission must have occurred during the former’s stint in Madinah during the middle of the 8th Century CE (i.e., around 750 CE), when the latter still resided there. In other words, by the time that Hišām moved to Iraq, Maʿmar was long gone, having passed through both Syria and Madinah en route to Yemen; thus, Maʿmar can only have obtained his hadith directly from Hišām in Madinah. On the other hand, the version of the marital-age hadith that can be positively attributed to Maʿmar is extremely divergent on a fundamental level from every other transmission from Hišām, which is consistent with his having obtained it indirectly from Hišām. In other words, the unusually garbled state of Maʿmar’s version precisely gives us a reason to doubt that he obtained it directly from Hišām, in contrast to every other PCL and confirmed student thereof (who are all corroborated in at least the core elements of their versions). This is not to say that alternative explanations cannot be proposed for Maʿmar’s garbled version (e.g., simple poor memory in his part), but the point is this: the evidence is consistent with some kind of sloppy, indirect transmission (e.g., from distant Iraq), which casts doubt over Maʿmar’s transmission. (That said, if Maʿmar periodically returned to his hometown of Basrah, as some have suggested, then it is plausible that he picked up his version of the hadith directly therefrom, at some point after Hišām’s death.) Consequently, the

---

762 For all of this, see the section on Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād in ch. 2.
763 For all of this, see the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2; for varieties of dives in particular, see Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, xxii ff., esp. xxvii.
764 Such is the view of Sean Anthony, expressed via personal correspondence. I owe thanks to Anthony for pointing out this chronological problem to me.
765 See the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
chronological and geographical limitations of Ma’mar and Hišām’s relationship are not binding in regards to this hadith: if it cannot be established that Ma’mar directly received his hadith from Hišām, then the fact that Ma’mar only ever directly received hadith from Hišām during his stint in Madinah (enroute to Yemen) is irrelevant.767

The strongest counter-example to the Iraqi tendency of the evidence is the case of Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād, a PCL to whom a distinctive redaction of Hišām’s hadith can be attributed. Although Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād certainly appears to have altered (i.e., interpolated or contaminated) his version with a ‘dolls’ element and perhaps also a clause referencing Ḵadījah’s death, the core elements therein are corroborated by many other transmissions from Hišām,768 in a way that is not true for Ma’mar’s version. The evidence is thus less equivocal: if all else were equal, we might simply assume that Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād received this hadith from Hišām in Madinah.

That said, Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād was a Madinan who moved to Baghdad, so at first glance, there would seem to be no problem: the evidence would still be consistent with Hišām’s mass-dissemination of his hadith in Iraq (and specifically, with Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād’s having received it in Baghdad), not Madinah. However, there are chronological considerations that militate against such an interpretation: the relevant ʾisnāds depict Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād transmitting to the Madinan tradent al-Wāqīdī,769 which immediately suggests that Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād transmitted his version of the marital-age hadith in Madinah (i.e., before he moved to Baghdad), which would in turn imply that Hišām transmitted his hadith in Madinah (i.e., before he moved to Iraq). As it happens, al-Wāqīdī—like both Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād and Hišām—was a Madinan who moved to Baghdad, which would again render the evidence equivocal: it would seem to be plausible that Hišām transmitted his hadith to Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād after both of them had moved to Baghdad, and that Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād in turn transmitted his version of the hadith to al-Wāqīdī when he too moved to Baghdad. However, Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād

---

767 Of course, all of this assumes that a redaction can be attributed to Ma’mar in the first place, which is actually not beyond question: cf. the highly divergent character of the only two ascriptions to him, in his section in ch. 2.

768 See the sections on both Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād and Hišām in ch. 2.

769 Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād is also depicted as having transmitted versions of his hadith to Saʿīd b. ʾabī Maryam and Ibn Wahb, both of whom were Egyptian—but this evidence is equivocal, since both could have obtained their versions from Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād in either Madinah or Baghdad. E.g., Juynboll, Muslim tradition, 44: “When we scrutinize, for example, Ibn Wahb’s ʾīsāmī, it appears that a large percentage of the ʾisnāds is Iraqi judging by the provenance of the transmitters at the Successors’ level or the one following that."
reportedly died in Baghdad in either 164/780-781 (according to al-Dāraqūṭnī)\textsuperscript{770} or 174/790-791 (according to every other authority),\textsuperscript{771} whilst al-Wāqidī only moved there in 180/796-797.\textsuperscript{772} Thus, if al-Wāqidī received his version of the hadith directly from Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, then this must have occurred when Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād was still in Madinah; and if Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād in turn received his version of the hadith directly from Hišām, and Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād already possessed the hadith before he moved from Madinah to Baghdad, then it would follow that Hišām in turn must have transmitted it to Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād before he moved from Madinah to Baghdad. In short, the fact that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād was a genuine PCL of Hišām’s, in conjunction with the fact that al-Wāqidī genuinely transmitted a version of Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād’s hadith, in conjunction with the chronology of al-Wāqidī’s life reported in the Islamic biographical sources, reasonably leads to the conclusion that Hišām was already disseminating the marital-age hadith before he moved from Madinah to Iraq.

However, matters are not as straightforward as they might seem. To begin with, the ICMA technically does not guarantee direct transmission, only ultimate transmission: it can establish that several tradents all accurately preserved (at least in part) the distinctive redaction of a common source, without necessarily ruling out the occurrence of borrowing, interpolation, error, and so forth in the course of the transmission of said redaction from said common source to said tradents.\textsuperscript{773} Thus, whilst al-Wāqidī certainly transmitted a version of the marital-age hadith to his secretary Ibn Saʿd, and whilst this hadith certainly originated—in one form or another—with Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, it is not at all assured that al-Wāqidī received this hadith directly from his cited source. Of course, ordinarily, we would have no grounds to suspect any problems like this, such that it would not be unreasonable to presume—in the case of a student transmitting the distinctive redaction of a PCL who was known to be one of their masters—direct transmission. In the case of al-Wāqidī in particular, however, there are reasons to doubt. Firstly, al-Wāqidī was infamous even amongst

\textsuperscript{770} Dāraqūṭnī (ed. ‘Arabi), Taʿlīqāt, p. 158, # 191.

\textsuperscript{771} Dāhābī (ed. ‘Arnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VIII, p. 170. The same date is also recorded in the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Saʿd, the Ṭabaqāt of Ḥāfiz b. Ḥajjāj, the Majrūḥīn of Ibn Ḥibbān, and the Taʾrīḵ Baḡdādī of al-Ḵaṭīb al-Baḡdādī.


\textsuperscript{773} For example, consider all the instances of raisings documented in ch. 2: sources would often accurately record the CL and much of their distinctive \textit{matn}, whilst also interpolating the ‘\textit{isnād}.’
traditionists for being an interpolator, a fabricator, or otherwise extremely unreliable: al-Nasāʿī declared that “he was unreliable” (laysa bi-ṭiqah); Ibn Maʿīn declared that “al-Wāqidi is nothing” (laysa al-wāqidiyy bi-ṣay); Ibn al-Madīnī reported that “al-Wāqidi had twenty-thousand hadiths that I never heard [from anyone else]”, leading him to declare that “he is not to be transmitted from” (lā yurwá ʿan-hu); al-Buḵārī reported that both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Numayr “rejected him” (taraka-hu) in Hadith; ‘Abū Zurʿah reported that both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Numayr “rejected him” (taraka-hu) in Hadith; ʾAbū Zurʿah reported that both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Numayr “rejected him” (taraka-hu) in Hadith; ʾIsḥāq declared that “he was amongst those who would fabricate Hadith (mimman yaḍaʿu al-ḥadīṯ); and finally, al-Nasāʿī listed al-Wāqidi amongst “those famous for the fabrication of Hadith” (al-maʿrūfūn bi-wāqidi ṣal-ḥadīṯ).

Of course, the judgements of Mediaeval Hadith critics should not be accepted uncritically, but in this particular instance, their judgements can be corroborated. In the preceding ICMA, we discovered that none other than al-Wāqidi seems to have contaminated, interpolated, or falsely-ascribed every single other version the marital-age hadith that he transmitted.

In other words, the conclusion that Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād disseminated the marital-age hadith in Madinah, and therefore that Hišām likewise disseminated the hadith in Madinah, rests upon the testimony of a tradent who not only was known amongst his contemporaries and successors to be a liar in Hadith, but whom we have repeatedly implicated in the interpolation and false ascription of versions of the marital-age hadith specifically. The basis for Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād and thus Hišām’s Madinan transmission of the marital-age hadith would thus appear to be extremely tenuous indeed.

Even putting al-Wāqidi aside, however, there is still a chronological factor in favour of Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād’s having received the hadith from Hišām in Madinah: Ibn ʾabī al-

---

774 For all of these judgements (as well as a smattering of positive appraisals), see Ḍahabī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, X, pp. 457-469.
776 See the sections on ʿIsrāʾīl, al-Zuhrī, Habib, and ʿAmrah in ch. 2. Other modern studies have also repeatedly exposed al-Wāqidi as a fabricator, interpolator, and borrower of hadiths; see Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muhammad, 12-13, 18; id., ‘Méthodes et Débats’, 365-366; Görke, ‘The relationship between maghāzī and ḥadīṯ’, 179-180; Motzki, Reconstruction, 14.
Zinād was reportedly punished by a certain qāḍī, and the qāḍī in question was appointed in 760–761 CE and reappointed in 761–762 CE. This entails that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād was still in Madinah in 760–762 CE—and, given that he was subsequently appointed as the head of the local tax bureau, he must have remained in Madinah for at least another year. In the best-case scenario, this leaves an extremely small window of time for Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād to have moved to Baghdad and heard from Hišām before the latter’s death (763–765 CE); ordinarily, we would simply assume that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād received hadiths from Hišām in Madinah, before latter’s departure therefrom.

Still, the fact that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād is the only credible Madinan transmitter of Hišām’s hadith (amidst a sea of Iraqi transmitters), despite Hišām’s lifetime of teaching and transmission in Madinah, is extremely suspect. This suspicion is compounded by the fact that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād moved to Iraq, or in other words: the only credible Madinan transmitter of Hišām’s hadith just so happens to have moved to the very region where every single other credible transmitter of the same hadith was operating. All of this seems extremely improbable on the view that Hišām was already disseminating his hadith in Madinah, and highly probable on the view that Hišām only began to disseminate his hadith in Iraq. We thus have strong grounds for suspecting that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād did not hear the marital-age hadith directly from Hišām (i.e., in Madinah), but instead, obtained it when he moved to Iraq (i.e., soon after Hišām’s death), just like every single other credible transmitter and PCL thereof. In other words, it is plausible—in light of the specific historical and geographical context of this hadith and its transmission—that we have here an instance of the spread of ʾisnāds (in this case, tadlīs): since Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād heard other hadiths from Hišām, and since it went “against the grain to transmit from a mere contemporary”, it is plausible that Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād heard the hadith from an Iraqi student of Hišām’s when he moved to Baghdad and simply passed it off—whether explicitly or implicitly—as a direct transmission from Hišām. In other words, just as suspicion surrounds al-Wāqidi’s claim to have received the hadith directly from Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, so too does suspicion surround Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād’s claim to have received the hadith directly from Hišām: in

---

778 Cook, Early Muslim Dogma, 109.
both cases, we have Madinans who moved to Iraq purportedly receiving an overwhelmingly Iraq-associated hadith in Madinah. The parallel with al-Wāqidī holds in another regard: Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād was likewise remembered as being unreliable by fellow traditionists, though certainly not to the same degree as al-Wāqidī. Thus, on the one hand: al-‘Ijlī declared that Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād was “reliable” (tiqah); Ibn al-Jawzī reported that Mālik “declared him to be reliable” (waṭṭaqa-hu); Ibn al-Madīnī declared that the hadiths “that ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘abī al-Zinād transmitted in Madinah are authentic (ṣaḥīḥ),” even if “that which he transmitted in Baghdad was corrupted (‘afsada-hu) by the Baghdadians; and Ibn Ma‘īn declared that “ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ‘abī al-Zinād was the most reliable person (‘atbat al-nās) regarding Hišām b. ‘Urwa.” On the other hand: Ibn Ḥanbal declared that “‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘abī al-Zinād was such and such (kaḏā wa-kaḏā) (i.e., mediocre), and that he was “muddled [in his transmission] of Hadith” (muḍṭarib al-ḥadīṯ); Ṣāliḥ Jazarah declared that “he transmitted things from his father that were transmitted by no one else” (i.e., suspiciously); Ibn ‘Adī declared (regarding a specific hadith), “I am not aware of [anyone who] transmitted this hadith from Hišām, other than Ibn ‘abī al-Zinād” (again, suspiciously); and Ibn Ḥībbān declared:

He was amongst those who would transmit mixed-up hadiths in isolation from reliable tradents (kāna mimman yanfaridu bi-al-maqlūbāt ‘an al-‘atbāt), due to the poor state of his memorisation (wa-kāna dālika min sū’ ḥifzī-hī) and the frequency of his erring (wa-kaṭrāt kaṭa‘i-hī). Argumentation cannot rest upon a report of his (fa-lā yajūzu al-ḥtiṭijā bi-kaḥari-hī), when he transmits a hadith in isolation (‘iḏā infarada); but as for that which is corroborated by [other] reliable tradents (fa-‘ammā fi-mā wāfaqa al-ṭiqāt), he is [in such cases] trustworthy in transmission [and can be] relied upon in argumentation (fa-huwa šādiq fī al-riwāyāt yaḥtajju bi-hī).
Others went further: Ibn Ma’in declared that “he is nothing” (layṣa bi-shay)\textsuperscript{788}; Ibn Mahdī,\textsuperscript{789} Ibn Ma’in,\textsuperscript{790} and al-Nasā’\textsuperscript{791} all declared that he was “weak” (ḍa‘īf); ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī reported that “our companions deem him to be weak” (kāna ‘inda ‘aṣḥābī-nā ḍa‘īfān)\textsuperscript{792}; al-Rāzī declared that “he cannot be relied upon in argumentation” (lā yaḥtaju bi-hi)\textsuperscript{793}; Ibn Ma’in similarly declared that “his hadith are not to be relied upon in argumentation” (lā yakna ʿinda ‘aṣḥābi-nā ḥadīthān)\textsuperscript{794}; al-Fallās reported that “ʿAbd al-Raḥmān [b. Mahdī] would not transmit Hadith from (lā yuḥadditu ‘an) ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ’abī al-Zinād”\textsuperscript{795}; and Ibn Mahdī declared, “I am astounded (ʾinnī la-ʿa’ jabu) by those who count Fulayḥ and Ibn ’abī al-Zinād amongst the traditionists (fī al-muḥaddīṭīn)”\textsuperscript{796}

Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, Ibn al-Madīnī declared that “his Hadith in Madinah were close [to being reliable] (muqārib), whereas those that he transmitted in Iraq were muddled (muḍṭarib)”\textsuperscript{797} Similarly, both al-Fallās and al-Sājī declared that “there is weakness in him” (fī-hi ḍa‘f): that which he transmitted in Madinah is more authentic (aṣaḥḥ) than that which he transmitted in Baghdad”\textsuperscript{798}

Once again, the judgements of Mediaeval Hadith critics should not be accepted uncritically—but once again, the suspicious historical and geographical patterns of the evidence happen to be congruent with the observations of some Hadith critics: that Ibn ’abī al-Zinād was sometimes unreliable, or even generally unreliable. More importantly, he is said to have become unreliable specifically when he moved to Baghdad, so if indeed he obtained his version of the marital-age hadith when he moved thereto (as the overwhelming Iraqi tendency of the evidence would suggest, along with the suspicious absence of any other credible Madinan sources, not to mention the amazing coincidence that Ibn ’abī al-Zinād just so happens to have moved to Iraq), his suppression or omission of an Iraqi intermediary source would be congruent with such reports.

\textsuperscript{788} Ibn ʿAdī (ed. Sarsāwī), Kāmil, VII, p. 138, # 10528-10529.
\textsuperscript{789} Dahābī (ed. ʿArnaʾūṭ et al.), Siyar, VIII, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{790} Ibn ʿAdī (ed. Sarsāwī), Kāmil, VII, p. 138, # 10526-10527.
\textsuperscript{791} ʿAbd Allāh, Taʾrīḵ Madīnat al-Salām, XI, pp. 497-498, # 5312.
\textsuperscript{792} Kāmil, VII, p. 138, # 10532.
\textsuperscript{793} Kāmil, VII, p. 138, # 10530.
\textsuperscript{794} ʿAbd Allāh, Taʾrīḵ Madīnat al-Salām, XI, p. 496, # 1869.
\textsuperscript{795} ʿAbd Allāh, Taʾrīḵ Madīnat al-Salām, XI, p. 497-498, # 5312.
\textsuperscript{796} ʿAbd Allāh, Taʾrīḵ Madīnat al-Salām, XI, p. 496, # 5312.
That said, none of the transmissions from Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād actually claim that he explicitly or directly received the hadith from Hišām in the first place—in every instance, a student is reported as saying something to the effect of, “ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād reported to us, from (ʿan) Hišām...”\(^{799}\) The generic “from” is famously ambiguous in Hadith transmission, being consistent with either direct or indirect transmission. Thus, even the \textit{prima facie} evidence of the ʾisnāds turns out to be equivocal on the issue of Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād’s transmission from Hišām.

In sum, Hišām—in some cases plausibly, in most cases probably—variously transmitted four different versions of the marital-age hadith to thirteen Kufan tradents and six Basran tradents. This evidently occurred when he moved to Kufah (or close to Kufah) and then to Baghdad, in the last decade of his life, between 754 and 765 CE. By contrast, the evidence that Hišām already possessed and was disseminating this hadith in Madinah is extremely dubious: (1) a single attestation of the Madino-Baghdadian tradent Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (appearing in an isolated variant within the transmissions of another tradent), who was reportedly born after Hišām died; (2) a SS ascription of a markedly divergent—unusually-detailed and secondary-looking—\textit{matn} to the Madinan tradent ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad; (3) a fundamentally divergent and uncorroborated transmission from the itinerant Basran tradent Maʿmar b. Rāšid (who met Hišām in Madinah but may have returned home several times), which is consistent with being a garbled, indirect transmission from Hišām; and (4) the transmission of the Madino-Baghdadian PCL ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Zinād, who just so happens to have moved to Baghdad. This is exactly what it would look like if Hišām only disseminated the marital-age hadith in Iraq, and if the—inevitable or predictable—secondary process of \textit{tadlis} and spreading ʾisnāds generated a few stray instances of pseudo-Madinan ascription (i.e., the superficial appearance of Madinan transmission). Put differently, what are the odds that the only two remotely-plausible instances of Madinan transmission (i.e., Maʿmar and Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād) would just so happen to be (1) the uncorroborated, highly-garbled transmission of an itinerant tradent (which is consistent with indirect transmission) and (2) the transmission of a Madinan who moved to Iraq (which is consistent with his having obtained the hadith there)? The paucity of credible Madinan transmitters from Hišām, and the complete

\(^{799}\) See the citations given in the section on Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād in ch. 2.
absence of any credible *unambiguously-Madinan* transmitters from Hišām, is simply unexpected on the view that Hišām already possessed and was disseminating this hadith in Madinah, but completely in line with the view that he only disseminated this hadith in Iraq. In short, the evidence of the *ʿisnāds*—when viewed altogether—is best explained by positing that Hišām only began to transmit the marital-age hadith in Kufah (or in al-Hāšimiyyah, close to Kufah).

**Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Madinan Collections**

Perhaps the strongest corroborating evidence for the Iraqi provenance of the marital-age hadith is its absence from the earliest Madinan legal collections and biographies of the Prophet, despite the prominence and abundance of Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, Hišām, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhri, Urwah, ʿAbū Salamah, ʿĀʾišah, and others as alleged Madinan authorities therein. Crone famously warned against arguments from silence regarding Hadith before the time of al-Šāfiʿī, given that “the literature is too scanty and above all too local in character for silences to count.”  

However, this is a warning against early inter-regional comparisons, whereas our given example is *intra*-regional: we would reasonably expect the local collections to contain local hadiths from local authorities. Thus, as Crone herself put it: “Mālik’s work can perhaps be used to show that certain Medinese traditions still did not exist in Medina.”

To begin with, it is striking that the early Mālikī school of Islamic jurisprudence—an outgrowth of the 8th-Century Madinan legal tradition—never cited the marital-age hadith, even when it would have been expedient in the justification of their doctrines on child marriage. As Baugh observes:

> Early Mālikī jurisprudential writings do not reference the story of ʿĀʾiša’s marriage to the Prophet during discussions of prepubescent marriage.

---

Rather, there is consistent reliance on both Medinan practice and the ayyim/bikr report related from Mālik.\(^{802}\)

Consider for example the absence of any version of this hadith in the premiere extant collection(s) of early Madinan legal material: the extant recensions of the Kitāb al-Muwatṭa’ of Mālik b. Ṭāḥaf (d. 179/795).\(^{803}\) Although Mālik did not necessarily reflect the totality of the Madinan milieu,\(^{804}\) (1) he devoted an entire chapter of his Muwatṭa’ to marriage and at least two entire sections therein to the (contested and debated issue of) the marriage of virgins and young girls, (2) was perfectly happy to adduce Prophetical reports that he himself rejected (in the context of the marriage of virgins, no less),\(^{805}\) and (3) was also a prolific student of Hišām, al-Zuhrī, and other notable Madinan transmitters of ‘Āʾishah’s reports.\(^{806}\) As such, the failure of Mālik to cite this hadith suggests not merely that Mālik rejected it, but that it was not circulating in Madinah at that time.\(^{807}\) This is especially so given that the marital-age hadith has important and expedient legal ramifications, and thus would surely have demanded inclusion into a dedicated Madinan collection of Madinan legal Hadith.

---


\(^{803}\) Thus, a search of the chapters on marriage (especially the sections pertaining virgins) in the recensions of al-Šaybānī, Yaḥyá, ‘Abū Mu‘āṣab, Suwayd, Ibn al-Qāsim, and Ibn Bukayr yielded nothing.


\(^{806}\) By my count (using the Sunnah.com digital database), Hišām is cited 108 times in Yahyá’s recension of Mālik’s Muwaṭṭa’, whilst Motzki (trans. Paoli & Reid), ‘The Jurisprudence of Ibn Shihāb al-Ẓuhrī’, in Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Tradition*, 18, estimated that al-Zuhrī constitutes 21% of Mālik’s citations (which is more than any other source).

\(^{807}\) Shanavas, ‘The Myth of a Proverbial Age’, 21, makes a similar point.
Mālik’s non-citation of the marital-age hadith, on the view that the hadith arose in Iraq, is consistent with the following report from the Baghdadian Hadith critic ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṭirās (d. 283/896):

It reached me that Mālik was angry (naqama) at Hišām b. ʿUrwah [due to] the Hadith [that he transmitted] to the people of Iraq, which he would not accept (wa-kāna lā yarḍā-hu).808

In another report, Mālik’s alleged hostility towards Hišām—due to his departure from Madinah to Iraq—is framed in an anecdote about a dream:

ʿAlī b. al-Madini said: “Yahyá b. Saʿiḍ [al-Qaṭṭān] said: ‘I saw Mālik b. ʿAnas during [my] sleep, so I asked him about Hišām b. ʿUrwah, whereupon he said: “As for that which he related when he was in our proximity [i.e., Madinah], he—i.e., it was as though he—declared it to be sound (yuṣḥḥhu-hu), and that which he related after he departed from our proximity [i.e., to Iraq], it was as though he declared it to be weak (yuwahhinu-hu).”’”809

All of this is consistent with Mālik’s having only transmitted from Hišām hadiths that Hišām transmitted in Madinah, as opposed to hadiths that he only began to disseminate after he moved to Iraq—including the marital-age hadith. In other words, if Mālik only transmitted Hišām’s Madinan hadiths, and Mālik did not transmit Hišām’s marital-age hadith, this is evidence that Hišām’s marital-age hadith was not one of his Madinan hadiths. As Baugh again observes: “The report of ‘ʿA’isha, like other reports of Hishām ibn ‘Urwa from the Kufan period of his old age, was not included by Mālik in the Muwaṭṭa.”810

The marital-age hadith is also absent from the Mudawwanah of the proto-Mālikī Qayrawanian jurist Saḥnūn b. Saʿiḍ al-Tanūḵī (d. 240/854), a compilation of Madinan legal transmissions and opinions not just from Mālik (e.g., from Hišām, from ‘Urwhah, from ‘ʿAfiṣah), but also from early Madinan authorities more broadly, including Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, Ibn Śihāb al-Zuhrī, ‘Urwhah, and others. Even in the sections pertaining to marriage and especially child marriage, no version of the marital-age hadith—whether

---

808 Dahābī (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VI, p. 35.
809 Ibn Ḥajar, Tahḏīb al-Tahḏīb, XI, p. 50.
810 Baugh, Minor Marriage, 122.
from Hišām or from any of the other Madinan authorities to which it is ascribed—can be found.811

To my knowledge,812 the earliest Mālikī work to cite any version of the marital-age hadith is al-Maʿānī al-Mağhab ‘Ālim al-Madīnah, which was composed by the Baghdadian Mālikī jurist ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Alī al-Qaḍī (d. 422/1031), nearly three centuries after the hadith’s initial mass-dissemination in Iraq. Thus, in his chapter on marriage (kitāb al-nikāḥ wa-ʿabwābi-hi wa-al-ṭalāq wa-mā yataʿallaqu bi-hi), in the section pertaining to child marriage (fī tazwīj al-ʿab ibnata-hu al-bikr al-ṣaǧīrah), ‘Abd al-Wahhāb wrote the following:

And [it is permissible] for the father to marry off his prepubescent virgin daughter (wa-li-l-ʿab ʿinkāḥ ibnata-hu al-bikr al-ṣaǧīrah), without [there being any scholarly] disagreement [on the matter] (min ġayr kilāf). And the basis thereof (wa-al-ʿasl fī-hi) is His (the Sublime’s) statement, “and marry the unmarried females amongst you” [Q. 24:32], and His (the Sublime’s) statement, “verily, I want to marry you to one of my two daughters, [one of] these two” [Q. 28:27], and His statement, “and [as for] those amongst your women who have despaired of menstruation: if you doubt, then their [post-marital] waiting period is three months; and [likewise for] those who have not [i.e., never] menstruated” [Q. 65:4]. Thus, He established for the female who has not attained puberty (allatī lam tabluḡ) a [post-marital] waiting period, and the [post-marital] waiting period is not necessary except [in the instance of] the separation of a valid [i.e., consummated] marriage (nikāḥ saḥīḥ). And [it is also permissible] because the Messenger of God married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of six and consummated the marriage with her (wa-banā bi-hā) when she was a girl of nine, and [also because] it was transmitted that he married off (zawwaja) his two daughters to ʿUṯmān without consulting them (wa-lam yastašir-humā). There is no disagreement on this matter (wa-lā kilāf fī-hi).813

It is fitting that the first Mālikī jurist to use the marital-age hadith happens to have been an Iraqi, but regardless, the key point is this: the absence of this hadith from the early Mālikī legal tradition—exemplified by its belated entry therein, around the turn of the 11th Century CE—is straightforwardly inconsistent with the notion that the hadith was being transmitted in Madinah already during the 8th Century CE. If leading legal


812 Based upon my search of the Shamela database.

authorities and transmitters of legal hadiths in Madinah—including Ibn ’abī al-Zīnād, Hišām, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr, Ibn Šīhāb al-Zuhrī, ’Abū Salamah, Yahyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, ’Urwh, and ‘Āʾišah—were truly disseminating versions of the marital-age hadith during the 7th and 8th Centuries CE (as most of the relevant ‘isnāds would have us believe), we would reasonably expect at least some versions thereof to appear in the Madinan legal collections—and Mālikī collections of Madinan legal material—of the 8th, 9th, and 10th Centuries CE. This is especially so given the legal utility of the marital-age hadith for specific, early Madinan and Mālikī doctrines regarding child marriage—yet the Madinans and the Mālikīs failed to cite the hadith for centuries. The absence of any version of the marital-age hadith in the earliest compendia of Madinan legal Hadith is thus strong evidence against the notion that the hadith in question was circulating in Madinah already in the 7th and 8th Centuries CE, which corroborates the hypothesis of Iraqi origin. If the Madinans and early Mālikīs knew of the marital-age hadith at all (as they surely must have by at least the middle of the 9th Century CE, when it was spreading all across the Abbasid Caliphate), they presumably experienced it as a foreign import (from Iraq or elsewhere), not a local resource that they had possessed all along—thus, its continued absence from the Madino-Mālikī legal tradition until the turn of the 11th Century CE, when a Mālikī from Iraq finally recruited it to support the Madinan position that a father can arrange the marriage of his virgin daughter without her permission or consent. Thereafter, the marital-age hadith became a standard proof for this doctrine within the classical Mālikī tradition.814

The silence of the earliest collections of Madinan legal Hadith is matched by the silence of the earliest Madinan collection of biographical Hadith—namely, the famous Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of the influential Madinan traditionist and biographer Muḥammad b. ʿIṣḥāq b. Yasār (d. 150-153/767-770). The original version of this biography lacked any mention of ʿĀʾišah’s young marital age, despite the fact that Ibn ʿIṣḥāq otherwise transmitted from Hišām b. ’Urwh, various other sons of ’Urwh, other Zubayrds,

Zubayrid clients, students of 'Urwah, and ultimately 'Āʾishah herself.\textsuperscript{815} Ibn 'Isḥaq's failure to acquire this hadith from Hišām after they had both migrated to Baghdad is understandable (given the enmity that arose between the two in Madinah, prior to their respective departures),\textsuperscript{816} but his failure to acquire it beforehand from Hišām and a multitude of other Madinan and Zubayrid authorities is hard to explain if the hadith was actually circulating in Madinah. This is especially so given that the hadith is of great biographical importance (being the marriage of the Prophet to his favourite wife, no less), and thus would surely have demanded inclusion into a dedicated Madinan collection of Prophetic biography. Ibn 'Isḥaq's Kitāb al-Maḡāzī is thus another early Madinan collection that should have cited this hadith but did not, and the later editors and transmitters had to add this hadith therein themselves as a supplement in their recensions of his work: the Basro-Egyptian redactor 'Abd al-Malik b. Hišām (d. 213/828-829 or 218/833)—who received a version of the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī from Ibn 'Isḥaq's Kufan student Ziyād al-Bakkāʾī (d. 183/799-800)—referred to the hadith in his own biographical summary of 'Āʾishah's marriage (i.e., amongst his explicit addenda),\textsuperscript{817} whilst Ibn 'Isḥaq's Kufan student and redactor Yûnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/814-815) cited


\textsuperscript{817} Ibn Hišām (ed. & trans. Guillaume), The Life of Muḥammad, 792. He even cites Ibn 'Isḥaq (i.e., Ibn Hišām—al-Bakkāʾī—Ibn 'Isḥaq—Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Zubayr—Urwah—'Āʾishah) for his data on other wives (e.g., ibid., 793), but not for 'Āʾishah.
the hadith on the authority of Hišām b. ʿUrwaḥ (again, as an explicit addendum).818 In other words: not only was the marital-age hadith absent from the original Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of Ibn ʿIshāq, it was explicitly added to this collection of Madinan material by Iraqians.819

The marital-age hadith is also absent from the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of al-Wāqidī (another collection of Madinan material), which may at first seem odd: we have already established that al-Wāqidī transmitted several different versions of the marital-age hadith to his secretary Ibn Saʿd in Baghdad, so it would not have been surprising if he had inserted at least one such version into his own Kitāb al-Maḡāzī as well. It could be posited that the material constituting the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī was already relatively fixed or closed by the time that al-Wāqidī moved to Baghdad, in which case, its silence would be meaningful: if the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī is a dedicated Madinan collection of material, and the marital-age hadith is absent therefrom, then this would be further evidence that the hadith was not circulating in Madinah during the 8th Century CE, not to mention that al-Wāqidī in particular only obtained the hadith after he moved to Baghdad. That said, the silence of this work may not be meaningful: unlike Ibn ʿIshāq’s work, al-Wāqidī’s (or at least the extant redaction thereof) truly lives up to its name, being much more focused on the raids and battles of the Prophet. It is thus less surprising—and less interesting—that al-Wāqidī (in contrast to Ibn ʿIshāq) failed to cite the marital-age hadith: it was less germane to his interests, at least as far as his extant Kitāb al-Maḡāzī was concerned.820

Finally, it is worth noting that another Madinan collection of biographical Hadith has just been rediscovered and published (as of October, 2021): the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of the influential Madinan biographer and traditionist Mūsā b. ʿUqbah (d. 141-142/758-760), a client of the Zubayrids’ who was remembered as having transmitted from such Madinan notables as Ibn Ṣihāb al-Zuhrī, ʿAbū Salamah, and ʿUrwaḥ.821 Given the biographical importance of the marital-age hadith and given Mūsā’s teachers, it is reasonable to expect that he should have cited the hadith, if indeed it was circulating

---

818 Ibn Bukayr (ed. Zakkār), Siyar, p. 255.
819 I owe thanks to Yasmin Amin for pointing out the example of Ibn Bukayr.
820 The marital-age hadith is likewise absent from Sulaymān b. Ṭārkān al-Taymī (ed. Riḍwān al-Haṣrī), Sīrat Rasūl Allāh (Riyadh, KSA: Markaz al-Mallik Fayṣal li-al-Buhūṭ wa-al-Dirāsāt al-ʾIslāmiyyah, 1443 AH), a Basran work that is exclusively focused on the Prophet’s raids. I owe thanks to Pavel Pavlovitch for this reference.
in Madinah during the 7th and 8th Centuries CE: as above with Ibn ’Ishāq, so too with Mūsā.

Unfortunately, I do not yet have access to this work, but its importance cannot be overstated: it is rare indeed that a historian is presented with an opportunity to test the novel predictions (or in the case of past occurrences, retrodictions) generated by their hypotheses. If Mūsā’s biography cites the marital-age hadith but exhibits no further signs of tampering or later redaction, then the hypothesis outlined thus far will be seriously weakened: if Mūsā possessed a version of the marital-age hadith on a Madinan authority, spent most of his life in Madinah, and died before Hišām, then it would reasonably follow that he obtained his version in Madinah, and that the hadith was already circulating in Madinah in the middle of the 8th Century CE (i.e., independently of Hišām’s activities in Iraq). The silence of all other Madinan sources and the absence of unambiguously-Madinan CLs and PCLs would still need to be explained, but at that point, the hypothesis of Madinan origins and the hypothesis of Iraqi origins would be on a much more equal footing: both would be supported by strong pieces of evidence, whilst simultaneously conflicting with other strong points of evidence. Both hypotheses would thus have to explain away some of the evidence, for which purpose *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses would need to be devised: this would leave both hypotheses in the awkward position of having to make additional, unevidenced assumptions (unless or until independent confirmation could be furnished for a given auxiliary hypothesis).

Conversely, if Mūsā’s biography follows every other early Madinan source in failing to cite the marital-age hadith, this would make their collective silence all the more deafening—strengthening the evidence that the marital-age hadith was not circulating in Madinah during the 7th and 8th Centuries CE. In short, my hypothesis predicts (all else being equal) that the marital-age hadith should be absent from Mūsā’s *Kitāb al-Maḡāzī*—a prediction that should be verifiable by the time that you read this.

In sum, the absence of the marital-age hadith from *all early Madinan sources and early dedicated collections of Madinan material*—despite (1) its claiming to derive from the great masters of Madinah, whose transmissions were copiously recorded in these sources; (2) its specifically embodying their legal stances on topics they explicitly addressed (in the case of the legal sources) and biographical details of the sort they liked to adduce (in the case of the biographical sources); and (3) its ubiquitous citation
in these same contexts and for these same interests in later sources—is extremely unexpected, which is to say, highly unlikely on the hypothesis of a genuine Madinan origin. This collective silence is thus strong evidence for the absence of the marital-age hadith in Madinah during the 8th Century CE.

**Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Kufan Collections**

Although most versions of the marital-age hadith—including those from Iraqi CLs—claim to derive via Madinan SSs and/or from Madinan sources, three of the earliest CLs cited Kufan SSs:

- The Kufan CL ʿAbṭar b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795) also cited the Kufan traditionist Muṭarrīf b. Ṭarfī (d. 133/750-751 or 141-143/758-761), from ʿAbū Ḥishāq, from ʿAbū ʿUbaydah, from ʿĀʾišah.
- The Wasitian-Basran CL ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792) cited the Kufan Follower and qāḍī ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ṭumayr (d. 136/754), from ʿĀʾišah.
- The Kufan CL ʿIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus (d. 160-162/776-779) cited the Kufan traditionist ʿAbū Ḥishāq Amr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sabīʿī (d. 127-128/744-746), from the Kufan Follower ʿAbū ʿUbaydah ʿĀmir b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 81/700-701).
- The Kufan CL Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-ʾAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766) cited the Kufan Follower ʿIbrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Naḥṣī (d. 96/714), from the Kufan Follower al-ʾAswad b. Yazīd (d. 75/694-695), from ʿĀʾišah.

Thus, even if the Madinan origin of the marital-age hadith is in doubt, the possibility remains that it can be traced back to the early 8th Century CE in Kufah, if not earlier.

There are several reasons to doubt that the marital-age hadith goes back any earlier than the middle of the 8th Century CE even in Kufah, however. Firstly, as we have already seen, ʿAbṭar’s hadith was likely borrowed from the tradition of al-ʾAʿmaš, and can be set aside accordingly. Secondly, as we have already seen, ʿAbū ʿAwānah’s ʾaḍāʾʿil hadith plausibly reflects a secondary reworking of the relevant ʾaḍāʾʿil material, from
which the marital-age elements were initially absent. Thirdly, in terms of ascription, al-ʿAʿmaš’s hadith (which explicitly and continuously reaches all the way back to ʿĀʾišah) is superior to Hišām’s (which originally only reached back to ʿUrwah), making it seem secondary. Fourthly, all of these Kufan ascriptions—like every other version of the hadith more broadly—are consistent with being outgrowths of Hišām’s version (via the ordinary mechanisms of erroneous or sloppy transmission, in conjunction with the common occurrence of secondary false ascription).

To all of the above can be added the following consideration: as with the Mālikīs, the Kufan versions of the marital-age hadith are never cited by the early Ḥanafī school of Islamic jurisprudence, despite its being an outgrowth of the 8th-Century Kufan legal tradition, and despite the hadith’s potential utility as a justification for Ḥanafī doctrines relating to child marriage. Thus, the hadith is absent from all of the extant writings of and transmissions from the leading Kufan jurists ʿAbū Ḥanifah al-Nuʿmān b. Ṭābit (d. 150/767), ʿAbū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. ʿIbrāhīm (d. 182/798), and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaybānī (d. 189/804-805), not to mention all of their early followers. Thus, as Baugh again observes: “It cannot be overlooked that al-Ṭaḥāwī does not mention the hadith of ʿĀʾišah here or in the Ikhtilāf.”

Likewise: “Much of al-Jaṣṣāṣ’s argument is built on the arguments of al-Ṭaḥāwī, and al-Shaybānī before him; none of these relies on the hadith of ʿĀʾiša.” In short, “the Ḥanafī position definitely allowed prepubescent marriage but it was never justified by this hadith.”

An alleged exception to this overwhelming Kufan legal silence is the extant Kitāb al-ʾAṣl ascribed to al-Ṣaybānī, who allegedly cited the marital-age hadith therein—in the chapter on marriage (kitāb al-nikāḥ), in the section pertaining to child marriage (bāb nikāḥ al-ṣaḡīr wa-al-ṣaḡīrah)—as follows:

It reached us (balağa-nā) from the Messenger of God that he married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾišah when she was a prepubescent girl (ṣaḡīrah), a girl of six years, and consummated the marriage with her (wa-banā bi-hā) when she was a girl of nine years; she was with him nine [years].

---

If indeed al-Šaybānī—one of the founders of the Ḥanafī school—had cited the marital-age hadith in his jurisprudence, it would be reasonable to expect that the subsequent Ḥanafī tradition, in which earlier works were continuously cannibalised and elaborated in later works, would have mentioned this fact. Instead, the Ḥanafī tradition failed to cite this hadith for centuries, which immediately suggests that the citation in the extant ʿAṣl is a later interpolation, or that the extant ʿAṣl as a whole is actually a text that was reworked centuries after al-Šaybānī. This hypothesis has been corroborated by Hocine Benkheira, who argues that the ʿAṣl was reworked and revised (“remanié et révisé”) long after (“longtemps après”) the time of al-Šaybānī, on the basis of the appearance therein of a hadith that is otherwise mysteriously absent in the works of Mālik and especially al-Šāfiʿī—a hadith that otherwise only appeared late (“tardive”) in the Ḥanafī tradition.826

The Transoxanian Ḥanafī jurist Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad al-Sarakṣī (d. 483/1090) also attributed the use of the marital-age hadith to the earlier Ḥanafī jurist Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 248/862-863), in the following passage of his famous ʿal-Mabṣūt:

Our masters (mašāyiḵu-nā) disagreed regarding the minimum age (ʿadhā al-muddah) by which the determining of the puberty of the prepubescent girl is permissible (yajūzu al-ḥukm fī-hā bi-bulūḡ al-ṣaḡīrah). Thus, Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī used to set it at nine years, because the Prophet consummated his marriage (banā) with ʿĀʾishah when she was a girl of nine years, and [it is] obvious (al-zāhir) that he consummated the marriage with her after [she had attained] puberty (baʿda al-bulūḡ). Moreover, ʿAbū Muṭṭī al-Balkī had a daughter who became a grandmother when she was a girl of nineteen years, such that he said: “This girl has put us to shame!” And amongst our masters are those who set it at seven years because of his [i.e., the Prophet’s] saying: “Command them to [uphold] the prayer, when they reach [the age of] seven.”827

Given that Ibn Muqātil’s use is unattested in the Ḥanafī tradition prior to al-Sarakṣī (i.e., in the approximately two centuries separating the two), the ascription is dubious; moreover, al-Sarakṣī does not actually quote Ibn Muqātil’s own words in this regard, which is consistent with his description of Ibn Muqātil’s use of the marital-age hadith’s being the product of al-Sarakṣī’s own inferences or speculation.

As far as I am aware,\(^{828}\) the earliest definite use of the marital-age hadith within the Ḥanafi tradition occurred in \textit{al-Nutaf fī al-Fatāwā}, which was composed by the Transoxanian Ḥanafi jurist ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Suḡdı (d. 461/1068-1069), nearly three centuries after the hadith's initial mass-dissemination in Iraq. Thus, in a discussion on the age at which Islamic rituals become obligatory, al-Suḡdı wrote the following:

And as for prayer, [children] are commanded to [uphold] it at seven years, and they are beaten [into doing] it at ten.
And as for fasting, [children] are commanded to [uphold] it at ten, and they are beaten [into doing] it at twelve.
And as for [being] alone in sleep, [children] are separated into boys and girls [on the one hand], and fathers and mothers [are separated] from them [as well], at six; and that is because the Messenger of God married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her (baná bi-hā) at nine.
And, at fifteen, pens are upon them [i.e., they are subject to the rulings of jurists].\(^{829}\)

Following al-Suḡdı (in fact, beginning with his student al-Saraḵšī), the marital-age hadith became a standard proof within the classical Ḥanafi tradition for various marriage-related doctrines—in particular, that fathers can arrange the marriages of their prepubescent children; that girls can be consummated in marriage when they attain physical maturity; and that nine is the minimum age at which puberty can occur in girls.\(^{830}\)

Of course, the Ḥanafis must have been aware of the marital-age hadith for centuries before they finally started to use it—indeed, their early Kufan forebears could not have failed to notice its proliferation amongst the traditionists and Hadith-oriented jurists of their hometown at the end of the 8th Century CE. Thus, as with the Mālikis, a distinction can be made between the initial non-use of the hadith on the one hand, and its prolonged non-use on the other. The latter can be easily explained by the former, as

\(^{828}\) Again, based upon my search of the Shamela database.


a consequence of inertia or a kind of legal traditionalism or conservatism: the founders of the legal school did not use the hadith in their authoritative works, so their early followers simply followed suit. By contrast, the former is much harder to explain on the view that the Kufan versions of the marital-age hadith genuinely derive from their alleged sources—in particular, ʾIbrāḥīm al-Naḵaʾī (d. 96/714), ʾAbū ʿUbaydah Ṭāhir (d. 81/700-701), and al-ʿAswād b. Yāziḍ (d. 75/694-695). The early Kufan legal tradition venerated the local Companion ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd and his students (ʿaṣḥāb) above all others as sources of legal doctrine and, as it happens, al-ʿAswād was the student of Ibn Masʿūd and ʿAbū ʿUbaydah was the son of Ibn Masʿūd. Moreover, amongst the Followers, the early Kufan legal tradition venerated none other than ʾIbrāḥīm al-Naḵaʾī above all others as a source of legal doctrine, such that his opinions and transmissions comprise the bulk of the reports cited in both the Kitāb al-ʿĀṭār of ʿAbū Yūṣuf and the Kitāb al-ʿĀṭār of al-Šaybānī. Thus, if these leading authorities amongst the Followers of Kufah had truly transmitted versions of the marital-age hadith to their local students, such that the marital-age hadith was already circulating in Kufah during the early 8th Century CE, we would reasonably expect that the Kufan jurists and jurist-collectors of the mid-to-late 8th Century CE would have cited or mentioned it in their various legal writings and compendia, especially given the utility of the hadith for some of their marriage-related legal doctrines. Consequently, the absence of the marital-age hadith (which had utility as a justification for certain Kufan legal doctrines) from the early Kufan legal tradition (which venerated the Kufan Followers who allegedly transmitted the hadith) is unexpected on the view that the ascriptions of the Kufan CLs ʾIsrāʾīl and al-ʿAṁaš to the Followers of Kufah are genuine. The absence of any version of the marital-age hadith from the early Kufan legal tradition is consistent with the hadith’s being a mid-8th-Century innovation amongst the traditionists of Iraq in particular, such that it only took off amongst subsequent Hadith-oriented jurists (such as al-Šāfīʿi), rather than the indigenous, mainstream, rationalist-inclined jurists of Kufah (such as ʿAbū Ḥanīfah, ʿAbū Yūṣuf, and al-Šaybānī), who never possessed the hadith to begin with.

---

832 Ibid., 32-33, 86-87, 105, 233 ff.
833 Ibid., 86.
The only hint at an early Kufan legal use of the marital-age hadith (i.e., beyond the Hadith-oriented jurists) is the following ascription of the Khurasanian CL Ibn Rāhwayh (d. 238/853), via the Kufan tradent Yahyá b. ‘Ādam (d. 203/818), to the Zaydi Kufan theologian and traditionist al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786):

Yahyá b. ‘Ādam reported to us, from al-Ḥasan [b. Ḥayy], who said: “I saw a grandmother [who was] a girl of twenty-one years.”

He said: “And the minimum of the ages [at which] the pregnancy of a woman [can occur] is nine years (wa-ʾaqall ’awqāt [al-]ḥamil [al-marʾah] tis’ sinin), which is the earliest time [at which there can be] sexual intercourse (wa-huwa ʾawwal waqt/ʾawqāt al-wat). The Messenger of God consummated his marriage (daḵala) with ‘Āʾišah when she was a girl of nine.”834

Ibn Rāhwayh’s ascription to al-Ḥasan is uncorroborated, but even if it is authentic, it does not change the unexpected silence of the dominant proto-Ḥanafi faction of Kufah, which was obsessed with 'Ibrāhīm and the students of Ibn Masʿūd: if 'Ibrāhīm and the students of Ibn Masʿūd had truly disseminated versions of the marital-age hadith in Kufah, it would be reasonable to expect that these specific versions would have been cited by proto-Ḥanafi jurists and collectors.

In short, (1) the absence of the marital-age elements from most versions of the 8th-Century Kufan faḍāʾil material on ‘Āʾišah, (2) the perfect 'isnād cited by al-'Aʿmaš, (3) the consistency of all Kufan versions with being outgrowths of Hišām’s version, and above all (4) the absence of the marital-age hadith from the early Kufan—or specifically, the proto-Ḥanafi—legal tradition all cast serious doubt on the Kufan versions of the marital-age hadith, which claim derive from or via the Followers of Kufah. On the contrary, this evidence is consistent with the marital-age hadith’s being a recent (mid-8th-Century) innovation amongst the traditionists of Kufah, or in other words: even in Kufah, the marital-age hadith cannot be traced back to—indeed, is positively unlikely to derive from—the early 8th Century CE.

---

834 See the section on Ibn Rāhwayh in ch. 2.
Interim Summary and Entailments: Hišām as the Originator of the Marital-Age Hadith

All of the evidence surveyed thus far points to mid-8th-Century Kufah as the starting point of the marital-age hadith: several versions can be traced back to a series of Kufan CLs operating in the mid-to-late 8th Century CE, but there are strong reasons to doubt the ascriptions of these CLs back to their respective sources, including Kufan sources (in the case of 'Abū ‘Awānah, 'Isrāʾīl, and al-'A’maš), Madinan sources (in the case of Hišām and Muḥammad b. ‘Amr), and others (in the case of 'Ismā’il b. ʾabī Ḫālid). (This also applies to every SS ascription and spider within the hadith-tradition, all of which are either probably or at least plausibly dives.) Where then did the marital-age hadith come from, and why did it suddenly explode in Kufah in the mid-to-late 8th Century CE?

We have already seen that Muḥammad b. ‘Amr probably borrowed his version from Hišām's Version 4 hadith, that al-'A’maš's ascription looks secondary compared with Hišām's, and that Hišām's Version 1 hadith is consistent with being the ur-story behind virtually all other versions of the marital-age hadith more broadly—and, as it happens, Hišām's versions of the hadith far and away the most widely-disseminated and influential out of all the CL redactions. All of this is consistent with (i.e., is actually explained by) the hadith's having originated with Hišām when he moved to Kufah, or in other words: Hišām falsely ascribed a report about ‘Ā’išah to his father, and elaborated the report in successive retellings; Hišām’s hadith rapidly proliferated amongst the traditionists of Iraq; and some of his Kufan contemporaries borrowed—and in some cases altered or garbled—his hadith and reattributed it to other early authorities. In practice, this would mean that every extant CL, including al-Ḥajjaj b. 'abī Manī’ (d. post-216/831), al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (d. turn of 9th C. CE), 'Abṭar (d. 178/794-795), 'Abū ‘Awānah (d. 176/792), 'Isrāʾīl (d. 160-162/776-779), al-'A’maš (d. 147-148/764-766), 'Ismā’il (d. 146/763-764), and Muḥammad b. ‘Amr (d. 144-145/761-763), directly or indirectly acquired their hadiths—or the marital-age elements therein—from Hišām (d. 146-147/763-765). In addition to variously explaining or being consistent with all of the evidence surveyed thus far, this is completely feasible in terms of chronology and geography: all of the
earliest CLs (i.e., al-ʿAʿmaš, Ṣīmāʿīl, and Muḥammad b. ʿAmr) were operating at the same time (c. 754-765 CE) and in the same place (i.e., Iraq) as Hišām; and every later CL (e.g., al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿabī Manīʿ) operated at times (e.g., the early 9th Century CE) and in places (e.g., the Levant) where transmissions from the earlier CLs were spreading.

If indeed Hišām (after his move to Kufah) was the ultimate source of all extant versions of the marital-age hadith, an obvious question arises: did Hišām create the ur-story (i.e., the Version 1 hadith) out of thin air (ex nihilo), or did he obtain the key information therein (without acknowledgement) from some other source (ex materia)? If the latter scenario occurred, Hišām must have picked up the material from an obscure source in Kufah, based on similar e silentio considerations to those outlined above: if Hišām’s (hypothetical) suppressed informant had been influential, then it seems reasonable to expect that they would constitute a CL in their own right, whose redaction could fulfill the textual-critical criterion of utrum in alterum abiturum erat. Since no other extant CL redaction fulfills this requirement, we are left with two plausible options: either Hišām was the first influential traditionist to pick up, formulate, and disseminate some obscure information that already existed in Kufah at the beginning of the Abbasid period, or he himself was the creator of that information. Given that the latter scenario is simpler (since it does not require the supposition of additional tradents), it seems preferable to the former, which is to say: the more probable scenario is that Hišām created the hadith whole-cloth when he moved to Kufah.

A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Marital-Age Hadith’s Context

If indeed Hišām created the marital-age hadith when he moved to Kufah, an obvious follow-up question arises: why? Was this the result of some kind of error, or was it an instance of deliberate false creation—and if the latter be the case, what was Hišām’s motive? Of course, our ability to answer this secondary question of Hišām’s psychology has no bearing at all upon the preceding argumentation regarding the hadith’s origin—even if no explanation for Hišām’s act or motive was forthcoming, the evidence for the hadith’s belated creation would remain. That said, several factors can be—and have been—adduced explain Hišām’s creation of this hadith.
To begin with, even Mediaeval Hadith critics recognised that Hišām became unreliable—or at least much less reliable—when he moved to Iraq. In addition to the ascriptions to Mālik cited already (from Ibn ʿKīrāš and Yahyá b. Saʿīd), the following is reported from Ibn ʿKīrāš:

He [i.e., Hišām] came to Kufah three times.

During [the first] visit, he would say therein, “My father related to me, saying: ‘I heard ʿĀʾišah...”

[He came] a second time, then he would say, “My father reported to me, from ʿĀʾišah...”

He came a third time, then he would say, “[from] my father, from ʿĀʾišah...”, meaning that he had omitted intermediary tradents in his transmission (yursilu) from his father.  

Similarly, the following is reported from the Basran Hadith critic Yaʿqūb b. Šaybah (d. 262/875):

Hišām was reliable (ṯabt). There was nothing objectionable about him (lam yunkar ʿalay-hi) until after he went to Iraq, whereupon he transmitted widely (inbasāta fī al-riwāyah) and [in the process] omitted intermediary tradents in his transmission (ʿarsala) of things from his father. [He did this with Hadith] that he had heard from [people] other than his father (mimmā kāna samiʿa-hu min ʾgayr ʿabī-hi) [and ascribed them directly] to his father (ʿan ʿabī-hi).

The later Hadith scholar and prosopographer al-Ḏahabī tried to downplay the problems that arose in Hišām’s transmission towards the end of his life, chalking them up to mere bad memory:

Hišām b. ʿUrwah: one of the luminaries (ʿahad al-ʾaʾlām); a proof (hujjah); a leading scholar (ʾīmām). However, in old age (lākin fi al-kibar), his memory diminished (tanāqṣa ḥifzu-hu), although he was never confused (lam yaḵtalīṭ ʿabadon), and it deserves no attention that Ṭāḥā b. Ṣulaymān b. ʿAbī Ṭāhā b. Ṣulaymān said of him that he and Suhayl b. Ṣāliḥ became confused (iḵtaltāta) and changed (taḡayyarā). Yes, the man changed a little (taḡayyara qalīl), and his memory was not the same as it was during [his] youth (lam yabqa ḥifzu-hu ka-huwa fi ḥāl al-šabībah), so he forgot some of that which he had memorised (nasiya baʿḍ maḥfūzi-hi), or erred

---

835 Ḏahabī (ed. Ṣarḥ ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VI, p. 35.
836 Ibid. Also see ibid., p. 46.
(wahima)—so what? Is he immune from forgetfulness (‘a-huwa maṣūm min al-nisyān)??37

Al-Ḏahabī may even have blamed Hišām’s Iraqi students for the problems in the Hadith that he transmitted in Iraq, as in the following:

In the Hadith of the Iraqians from Hišām b. ʿUrwah, there are errors (ʾawḥām) that have been transmitted, just as there are errors (ʾawḥām) in their Hadith from Maʿmar.38

Other Hadith scholars were less apologetical, however—thus, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, one of the greatest Hadith scholars within the Sunnī tradition, candidly described Hišām’s omission of tradents in transmission (ʿirsāl) as a lesser form of Hadith-related deception (tadlīs):

Hišām b. ʿUrwah b. al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām; a famous junior Follower. ʿAbū al-Ḥasan b. al-Qaṭṭān mentioned him in that regard [i.e., in the context of inaccurate transmission], which al-Ḏahabī denounced. Verily, the famous account about him [i.e., Hišām] is that he came to Iraq three times. During the first [visit], he related from his father then clarified [that it was] heard directly from him. During the second [visit], he related numerous [hadiths from his father], yet never clarified the transmission (laṃ yuṣarriḥ al-qīṣṣah), which necessitates that he related from him with which he had not heard from him (wa-hiya taqtaḍī ʾanna-hu ḥaddaṭaʾ an-hu bi-mā laṃ yasmaʾ-hu min-hu). This is [a form of] deception (al-tadlīs).39

Regardless of whether it was intentional or the product of declining memory in old age, the relevant reports all agree: Hišām began to falsely ascribe reports directly to his father when he moved to Iraq. Thus, the Islamic biographical sources are at least broadly consistent with all the evidence that Hišām created the marital-age hadith—and falsely ascribed it to his father—when he moved to Kufah: this was not an isolated incident.40 Indeed, there is even a specific indication that the marital-age was

---

37 Dahabī (ed. Bijāwī), Mīzān, IV, p. 301.
38 Dahabī (ed. ‘Arnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, VI, p. 46.
40 Of course, ʿirsāl and tadlīs are neither wadʾ nor kaḍib, and it is the former that Hišām is accused of in the relevant reports, whereas I am effectively accusing him of something closer to the latter. Thus, I am not saying that the Islamic biographical sources explicitly recall that Hišām fabricated hadiths when he moved to Iraq—I would not expect someone of his venerated and pivotal status to be accused of such in the first place, regardless of his actual reliability. Rather, I am saying that the Islamic biographical
regarded by some traditionists as belonging to Hišām’s dubious (i.e., Iraqi) transmissions, in the form of a defensive comment that appears in the version of the marital-age hadith recorded in (Bišr b. Mūsá’s recension of) the Musnad of al-Ḥumaydī:

Al-Ḥumaydī related to us—he said: “Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah related to us—he said: “Hišām b. ‘Urwa related to us—and [this] was from among the reliable of [those hadiths] that he transmits (wa-kāna min jayyid mā yarwī)—from his father, from ‘Ā’ishah, who said: “The Messenger of God married me when I was a girl of six years or seven years and consummated the marriage with me when I was a girl of nine.””

Whether the comment was made by Bišr, al-Ḥumaydī, or Sufyān, it is quite revealing: the marital-age hadith was clearly in question (presumably given the notoriety of Hišām’s Iraqi Hadith), prompting a transmitter thereof to defensively assert that this particular hadith was actually one of the good ones. In light of all of the evidence surveyed thus far, however, we can see that the transmitter in question was wrong: Hišām likely created the marital-age hadith when he moved to Kufah, which is consistent with the doubts cast upon his Iraqi transmissions more broadly. If al-Ḍahabī in particular is to be trusted, then we might simply conclude that this occurred by accident: Hišām began to falsely ascribe hadiths to his father when he moved to Iraq simply because he was old.

There is reason to doubt all of these reports, however: “conditional appraisals” by Hadith critics (‘X was reliable until Y occurred’) were often retrospective attempts to rationalise perceived disparities in the quality of a given tradent’s transmissions, rather than accurate historical memories of changes in life circumstance. Mālik’s hostility to Hišām’s emigration seems plausible enough (given the common regional rivalries of the day, and Mālik’s Madinan chauvinism in particular), but Hišām’s poor memory in old age, and even the distinction between his Madinan and Iraqi transmissions, is in doubt.

That said, conditional appraisals were attempts to rationalise obvious disparities in the material transmitted by a given tradent, so even if the specific rationalisation is

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[841] Ḥumaydī (ed. Dārānī), Musnad, I, p. 273, # 233.
\item[842]  This point is also made in Shanavas, 'The Myth of a Proverbial Age', 21-22.
\item[843]  Dickinson, Development, 99.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
suspect (e.g., poor memory in old age, or a change that occurred in Iraq), the underlying observation that prompted such a rationalisation in the first place remains valid: Hišām noticeably falsely ascribed some hadiths to his father. Moreover, even if Hišām had falsely ascribed Hadith to his father all of his life (i.e., in Madinah), it is plausible that such activities only became salient when he moved to Iraq and began to transmit Hadith that he had never transmitted before (i.e., that his Madinan students had never heard of).

Still, even if Hišām’s creation of the marital-age hadith in Kufah is corroborated by a general memory of his dissemination of false ascriptions in Iraq, we are still left without a specific reason or motive therefor. In order to answer this deeper question, it is helpful to first answer a secondary question: what was the marital-age hadith used for? If the marital-age hadith had utility for a specific cause or interest soon after Hišām, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Hišām himself would have recognised the same utility—which could explain why he created the hadith in the first place.

One of the earliest uses of the marital-age hadith was in Islamic jurisprudence, in a way that we have encountered already: the hadith was widely understood to justify the right of a father to arrange the marriage of his (in some cases prepubescent, in other cases virgin) daughter without her consent. Other than possibly al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (who reportedly cited the marital-age hadith to justify nine as the minimum age of marital consummation), the earliest legal use of the hadith occurred with the early Hijazo-Egyptian jurist—and supporter of the Hadith partisans (ʾašḥāb al-ḥadīṭ)—Muḥammad b. ʾIdrīs al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820), whose famous Kitāb al-ʾUmm survives via the recension of his Egyptian student al-Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān al-Murādī (d. 270/884). (In conformity with the thesis outlined already, al-Šāfiʿī received his version of the marital-age hadith from Sufyan b. ʿUyaynah in Makkah, who received it in turn from Hišām in Kufah.) Al-Šāfiʿī cited this hadith to justify two similar legal doctrines: the right of a father to marry off his prepubescent daughter without her consent, and the right of a father to marry off his virgin daughter (i.e., including pubescent or post-pubescent girls) without her consent.\(^844\) In the first case, al-Šāfiʿī wrote the following:

If someone says, “Why do you claim that fathers can marry off minors (al-’ābā’ yuzawwijūna al-ṣīğār),” it is said [in response to them]: ‘Abū Bakr married off (zawwaja) ʿĀʾišah to the Messenger of God when she was a girl of six or seven, and the Prophet consummated the marriage with her (banā bi-hā) when she was a girl of nine. Thus, the two conditions (al-ḥālān), which are that there was marital engagement (al-nikāḥ) and marital consummation (al-duḵūl) with the two of them, were [in effect] when ʿĀʾišah was [still] a minor (ṣaḡīrah) from amongst those who have no authority over themselves (mimman lā ʾamr a-la-hā fī nafsi-hā). More than one Companion of the Messenger of God married off (zawwaja) his daughter as a minor (ṣaḡīrah).\textsuperscript{845}

For al-Šāfiʿi, the marital-age hadith justified the right of fathers to arrange marriages for their prepubescent daughters (i.e., without their consent); in this respect, al-Šāfiʿi’s position was uncontroversial within early Islamic jurisprudence, since even the jurists of Kufah and their Ḥanafī descendants agreed thereon (even though they initially did so on different baseis than the marital-age hadith).\textsuperscript{846} However, al-Šāfiʿi (in contrast to the Kufans and Ḥanafīs) also extended this paternal right to pubescent or post-pubescent daughters, as long as they are still virgins:

Al-Šāfiʿi said: “Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah reported to us, from Hišām b. ʿUrwah, from his father, from ʿĀʾišah, who said: “The Prophet married me when I was a girl of six or seven and consummated the marriage with me when I was a girl of nine.””

[There is] doubt from aš-Šāfiʿi [on ʿĀʾišah’s exact age of marital engagement].

Al-Šāfiʿi said: “Although it was part of the sunnah of the Messenger of God that jihād is [incumbent] upon the boy of fifteen years; and Muslims adopted that in the ḥudūd; and God judged that concerning orphans and said, “...until they reach marriage, then if you observe in them mental maturity...”; and [a child] does not have authority over himself (lam yakun la-hu al-ʾamr fi nafsi-hī), except for the boy of fifteen years and the girl of fifteen years, unless he attains puberty (ʾan yabluğa al-ḥulum) or [she becomes a] menstruating girl (al-jāriyah al-māḥīd) before that, [at which point] they have authority over themselves (yakūnu la-humāʾ amr fiʾanfushimā); [nevertheless, despite all of this,] ʿAbū Bakr's marrying off (ʾinkāḥ) of ʿĀʾišah to the Messenger of God as a girl of six years and his [i.e., Muḥammad’s] consummation of the marriage (banāʾu-hu) with her as a girl of nine proved (dalla) that the father has more right over the virgin than herself (al-ʿab ʾaḥaqq bi-al-bikr min nafsi-hā). And, were [it the case that] when she attains puberty as a virgin (ʾidā balağat bikrūn) she has more right over herself than he (kānat ʾaḥaqq bi-nafsi-hā min-hū), then it would be [the

\textsuperscript{845} Šāfiʿi (ed. Abd al-Muṭṭalib), 'Umm, VIII, p. 365, # 3224.

\textsuperscript{846} Baugh, Minor Marriage, 79, 96-97, 100, 102, 163-164, 184, 190-191.
case] that it is not permissible (ʾallā yajūza) for him [to force such decisions] upon her until she reaches puberty (ḥattā tabluṯa) and it would [also be the case] that [such decisions can occur] with her permission (bi-ʾiḏni-hā).

In other words, al-Šāfiʿī acknowledged that there is evidence from the sunnah that boys and girls gain authority over themselves or attain legal majority at age fifteen or puberty (if puberty occurs earlier than age fifteen), but nevertheless insisted that a father has legal power over his virgin daughter and can marry her off regardless (i.e., without her consent), on the basis of the marital-age hadith. Al-Šāfiʿī then incredulously pointed out that, if being a pubescent virgin conferred full legal majority, that would entail that her father would not be able to marry her off without her permission—a conclusion that al-Šāfiʿī evidently rejected. Thus, in a later passage, al-Šāfiʿī reiterated:

Her father [i.e., Ṣibāḥ Bū Ḥanbal] married her off to him (zawwaja-hu ʾiyyā-hā), so that proved (dalla) that the father of the virgin has more right to her marriage than herself (ʾabā al-bikr ʾaḥaqq bi-ʾinkāḥi-hā min nafsi-hā), because a girl of seven years and [likewise one of] nine has no authority over herself (lā ʾamr la-hā fī nafsi-hā). No one other than fathers can marry off a virgin until she attains puberty (laysa li-ʾaḥad ḣayr al-ʾābāʾ ʿan yuzawwiḏū bikrroman ḥattā tabluṯa) and attains authority over herself (yakūnu la-hā ʾamr fī nafsi-hā).

Once again, al-Šāfiʿī interpreted the marital-age hadith as proof that a father can marry off his virgin daughter without her permission, affirming that the rights of the father trump those of his virgin daughter in this regard.

Al-Šāfiʿī’s use of the marital-age hadith (to justify the right of fathers to arrange marriages for their daughters under certain conditions) was widely adopted by other Hadith-partisan jurists (such as Ibn Ḥanbal), and was thereafter inherited by the legal traditions that evolved out of the Hadith partisans—namely, the Šāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī schools. Eventually, even the Mālikīs (who evolved out of the early Madinan legal tradition) and the Ḥanafīs (who evolved out of the early Kufan legal tradition) adopted the marital-age hadith to justify the same or similar legal doctrines. All of this provides a potential clue as to Hišām’s motive for the creation of this hadith: if jurists

---

847 Ibid., VI, p. 46, # 2210.
848 Ibid., p. 429, # 2462.
849 See Baugh, Minor Marriage, passim.
from al-Šāfiʿī onward commonly saw a justification for the rights of fathers to arrange marriages for their daughters in the marital-age hadith, then it is conceivable that Hišām himself saw the same potential therein and created the hadith for that exact purpose in the first place.

However, an even earlier use of the marital-age hadith can be identified: ʿĀʾišah’s being married at a young age was cited in propagandistic lists of her distinguishing qualities or virtues (faḍāʾil). We have encountered this use of the marital-age elements already—for example, in the faḍāʾil hadith of the Wasitian-Basran CL ʿAbū ‘Awānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792) (who spent a lot of time in Kufah and mostly transmitted from Kufan authorities), on the authority of the Kufan qāḍī ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr (d. 136/754):

...from ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr, from ʿĀʾišah [that] she said: “I was given characteristics that no other woman was given: [the Messenger of God] married me when I was a girl of six/seven years; the angel brought him my image in his hand, then he gazed upon it; he consummated the marriage with me at/when I was a girl of at nine years; I saw Gabriel, and no woman saw him except for me; I was the most-beloved of his wives to my father was the most-beloved of his companions to him; the Messenger of God fell ill [in my house and I nursed him; then he died] when no one was present except for me and the angels.”

Likewise, consider the faḍāʾil hadith of the Kufan CL ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabi ʿĀlī (d. 146/763-764), on the authority of a sequence of two unknown or ambiguous tradents named ʿAbd al-Raḥmān:

...from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabi al-Ḍaḥḥāk, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Ṭayyib b. Ḥudayn, [who said] [that] ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣafwān and another with him came to ʿĀʾišah, and ʿĀʾišah said: “O so-and-so, have you heard the talk of Ḥafṣah?” He said [to her]: “Yes, O Mother of the Believers.”

---


851 See the section ʿAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ in ch. 2.
ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣafwān said to her: “And what is that?” She said: “There are nine attributes in me that are not in any other woman, except for that which God bestowed upon Maryam bt. ʿImrān. But by God, I am not saying this [pridefully] [to exalt myself] over any of my companions!” He said to her: “And what are they?” She said: “[1] The angel descended with my image; [2] the Messenger of God married me at seven years; [3] I was led to him as a bride at nine years; [4] he married me as a virgin, without any other man sharing me with him; [5] the revelation used to come to him when he and I were in a single blanket; [6] I was amongst the most-beloved of people to him; [7] a passage from the Quran concerning me was sent down when the community almost perished; [8] I saw Gabriel, and none of his wives saw him except me; and [9] he died in my house when no one was with him except the angel and I.”

The very fact that the marital-age hadith was incorporated into such fadāʾīl reports as early as the middle of the 8th Century CE automatically proves that ʿĀʾišah’s marriage at a young age was regarded as some kind of fadīlah at that time, even if this early use was rapidly eclipsed by the hadith’s subsequent legal use.852 The likely reason therefor has already been identified by Denise Spellberg: ʿĀʾišah’s marriage at a young age reinforced her status as a virgin at marriage, which in turn constituted one of her major distinctive attributes (in early Islamic society) vis-à-vis her fellow wives, which in turn served as a justification for the claim that ʿĀʾišah was the Prophet’s favourite wife. As Spellberg notes, ʿĀʾišah became—certainly, by the middle of the 8th Century CE—a popular exemplar and symbol for proto-Sunnīs (as both the daughter of ʿAbū Bakr and a wife of the Prophet’s),853 and conversely, a popular villain among proto-Šīʿīs (due to her political opposition towards ʿAlī during the first fitnah).854 Consequently, retrospective depictions of ʿĀʾišah reflected “emerging Sunni and Shi’i concerns about political succession and communal identity,”855 and thus served as a vehicle for sectarian polemics: proto-Sunnīs asserted that ʿĀʾišah was the Prophet’s favourite woman and ʿAbū Bakr his favourite man, whilst proto-Šīʿīs made analogous assertions about Fāṭimah and ʿAlī.856 In this context, ʿĀʾišah’s alleged virginity was polemically

852 Indeed, so rapidly was this proto-Sunnī association eclipsed that the hadith was transmitted even by some proto-Šīʿī or “soft Šīʿī” (mutašayyiʿ) tradents early on, such as Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-ʿAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766) [although his transmission is not beyond question], Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān (d. 178/794-795),ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. 211/827), and al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (d. 218-219/833-834). Still, its initial proto-Sunnī use is clearly evidenced and cannot be denied.
853 Spellberg, Politics, gender, and the Islamic past, 4-5, 8, 28, 32 ff.
854 Ibid., 5-6.
855 Ibid., 28.
856 Ibid., 32-37. Also see Abbott, Aishah, 48-49.
useful as a “special attribute” distinguishing her from the Prophet’s other wives and, to that end, the emphasis on her young marital age served to “reinforce ‘A’isha’s pre-menarcheal status and, implicitly, her virginity.” This explains the incorporation of the marital-age hadith into proto-Sunni faḍāʾil reports about ‘Ā’ishah, the promulgation of which “reflect a posthumous attempt to present the Prophet’s wife as more than just another wife”.

Moreover, the fact that the relevant pool of faḍāʾil material is associated above all with Kufah is surely no coincidence: Kufah was the centre of Shi’ism during 7th and 8th Centuries CE, and thus the region in which proto-Sunnīs had the greatest need to defend ‘Ā’iṣah.

All of this yields a much more plausible motive for Hišām’s creation of the marital-age hadith: to bolster the proto-Sunni defence of ‘Ā’iṣah. This coheres well with Hišām’s specific background: as the grand-nephew of ‘Ā’iṣah, Hišām was strongly incentivised—not to mentioned well-placed, as an established tradent of ‘Urwah’s stories about ‘Ā’iṣah in general—to create expedient hadiths to augment the proto-Sunnī effort and defend a kinswoman. It also explains why he only created the hadith when he moved to Kufah: Hišām was reacting to the polemical pressures of his new environment, the centre of early Shi’ism.

Interestingly, the marital-age hadith is not the only one of Hišām’s hadiths that could bolster ‘Ā’iṣah’s status as a virgin at marriage, or that could serve as ammunition for her status as the Prophet’s favourite wife more broadly: Hišām is also the ostensible CL for a hadith about ‘Ā’iṣah’s playing with dolls after her marriage (thus reinforcing her youthfulness), and another hadith in which ‘Ā’iṣah’s virginity is directly implied.

---

857 Spellberg, *Politics, gender, and the Islamic past*, 39-40. Also see Ali, *Sexual Ethics*, rev. ed., 191: “When the early biographical sources talk about Aishah, they do so in the context of her role in early Muslim history. She was a contentious figure in factional struggles for power, prestige, and legitimacy; stories told about her might denigrate or, as in the hadith sources Sunnis rely on, celebrate her merits, including her purity. The sources link youth, virginity, and purity; it is certainly possible that her youth was exaggerated to strengthen her claims to purity and, therefore, to merit.”

858 Ibid., 47.

859 Shi’ism emerged in Kufah, which was the location of ‘Ali’s de facto capital during the first fitnah, al-Muktār’s rebellion during the second fitnah, Zayd b. ‘Ali’s rebellion during the Marwanid period, ‘Abd Allâh b. Mu‘āwiyyah’s rebellion during the third fitnah, etc. E.g., see Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 20, 24, 70-71, 99.

860 8th-Century Kufah was also home to a group who accepted only the first two caliphs as legitimate, described in Christopher Melchert, ‘The Rightly Guided Caliphs: The Range of Views Preserved in Ḥadīth’, in Saud al-Sarhan (ed.), *Political Quietism in Islam: Sunni and Shi’ī Practice and Thought* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 64-65. As Melchert pointed out to me, it is plausible that such a group would also have been receptive to upgrading ‘Ā’iṣah’s status.

to be a positive distinguishing quality *vis-à-vis* the Prophet's other wives.\textsuperscript{862} The hadith about dolls could also be one of Hišām's Kufan creations,\textsuperscript{863} but the more overt hadith about ʿĀʾišah's virginity was only transmitted from Hišām by Syrians and Madinans,\textsuperscript{864} which suggests that Hišām was already disseminating this hadith in Madinah. Consequently, Hišām's creation of the marital-age hadith should be understood as an attempt to *bolster* or *reinforce* a claim already expressed in one of his hadiths—this other perhaps ultimately reflecting Zubayrid-era polemics.\textsuperscript{865}

In short, a historical-critical analysis of the emergence of the marital-age hadith—an appraisal of the historical and polemical context and early use thereof—reveals that the most plausible reason for its creation is the following: Hišām created the hadith in Kufah in response to proto-Šīʿī polemics against his great-aunt. The hadith served to augment ʿĀʾišah's status as a virgin at marriage, which in turn constituted one of her unique attributes (from the point of view of early Islamic society), which in turn served as a basis for her status as the Prophet's favourite wife. Consequently, as early as Hišām's Kufan contemporary 'Īsmāʿīl b. 'abī Ḵālid, the marital-age hadith was incorporated into proto-Sunnī *faḍāʾil* hadiths about ʿĀʾišah, evidently serving as ammunition in the sectarian disputes of 8th-Century Kufah.\textsuperscript{866} This early polemical use of the marital-age hadith was rapidly overshadowed by its legal use, however, and from the turn of the 9th Century CE onward, it became a standard proof in Islamic jurisprudence—at first just in the Šāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī schools, and later in the Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools as well—for the right of fathers to arrange marriages for their virgin and/or prepubescent daughters.


\textsuperscript{863} The overwhelming majority of the transmitters from Hišām are Kufan or (to a lesser extent) Basran, but there are one or two transmitters who appear to be unambiguously-Madinan—namely: 'Abd al-Rahmān b. ʿAbd Allāh; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad; and 'Anas b. ʿIyāḍ. The precise way in which this hadith fits into the picture with the marital-age hadith will have to await future research.

\textsuperscript{864} Namely, by Sulaymān b. Bilāl and a string of Madinan tradents, on the one hand, and 'Imrān b. 'abī al- Ḥadīl and a string of Syrian tradents, on the other.

\textsuperscript{865} See the discussion and references given at the beginning of the present chapter.

\textsuperscript{866} Interestingly, according to Henri Lammens, 'Fāṭima', in Martijn T. Houtsma, Arent J. Wensinck, Thomas W. Arnold, Willi Hefening, & Évariste Lévi-Provençal (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islām: A Dictionary of the Geography, Ethnography and Biography of the Muhammadan Peoples, Volume II: E—K* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E. J. Brill Ltd., 1927), 85, col. 1, the spread of the marital-age hadith prompted some Šīʿīs to assert that Fāṭimah had been married at age nine as well, although this could be an independent development; see below.
A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Origins of the Marital-Age Hadith's Specific Content

All of this leaves us with a final question: why did Hišām choose the ages of “six or seven” for ʿĀʾišah's marital engagement and “nine” for her marital consummation? After all, any early age would have sufficed for his purposes (to highlight her virginal status at marriage): why those ages in particular; why a distinction between the marital engagement and consummation; and why the vagueness over the former in particular? Part of the answer seems to lie in an aspect of the chronology of the Prophet’s life that was already established as early as al-Zuhrī, to whom the following report can be plausibly traced:

The Messenger of God married ʿĀʾišah bt. ‘abī Bakr during Šawwāl, in the tenth year of the Prophethood, three years before the Hijrah; and he arranged her wedding feast [in Madinah], during Šawwāl, at the beginning of eight867 months after [his] emigration [to Madinah].868

In other words, in the biographical material that was circulating in Madinah during the early-to-mid 8th Century CE, it was already believed that there was an approximately three-year delay between ʿĀʾišah’s marital engagement and consummation. Thus, if any given age was stipulated or inputted for either event, this pre-established relative chronology would automatically generate a corresponding age—an absolute chronology—for the other event as well. However, given the slight vagueness in this relative chronology (i.e., the lack of precise dates or an exact number of months overall), the automatically-generated age would necessarily be approximate. We thus have a straightforward explanation for both the distinction between ʿĀʾišah’s marital engagement and consummation and the vagueness of the age given for the former within Hišām’s original hadith: the hadith’s starting point was the stipulation that ʿĀʾišah’s marital consummation occurred at age nine, which automatically entailed the vague “six or seven” for her marital engagement. In short, by stipulating that ʿĀʾišah’s

867 Or possibly “eighteen”, per a transmission from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār; however, given that most other (albeit unsourced) iterations of this material have “eight”, this seems preferable.
868 See the sections on al-Zuhrī and ʿAmrah in Chapter 2 of the present work.
marital consummation occurred at nine and by taking into account a relative chronology that was already established amongst the biographical authorities of his Madinan hometown, Hišām created the marital-age hadith.

This leaves a final question: why did Hišām choose “nine” for ʿĀʾišah’s age at her marital consummation? We will probably never know for sure, and to a certain extent, it was arbitrary: twelve-to-fourteen was the usual minimum age of marriage in ancient societies, so any age up to that point would have sufficed to assure a listener or reader that ʿĀʾišah’s marriage was indeed consummated when she was still a virgin (i.e., that she had never been consummated in any marriage previously). That said, there are several interesting potential sources of inspiration that can be adduced for Hišām’s choosing of “nine” in particular. To begin with, there is some evidence that girls in the Hijaz would reach menarche at the age of nine during the first few Islamic centuries, and thus, that they could—and would—be married at that age. Thus, al-Bayhaqi recorded the following from al-Šâfi’ī, who grew up in the Hijaz during the mid-to-late 8th Century CE:

> Amongst that which ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāfiẓ [al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī] authorised me to transmit from him [is the following]: from him, from ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās al-ʾAṣamm, from al-Rabī’, from al-Šâfi’ī, who said: “The earliest women to menstruate of whom I have heard (ʾaʿjal man samʿitu bi-hi min al-nisāʾ yaḥīdna) are the women of Tihāmah [i.e., coastal Hijaz]. They menstruate at nine years.”

To this can be added the following legal maxim disseminated by the Syrian CL Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dimaṣqī (fl. 9th C. CE), citing a Syro-Basran SS back to the Prophet:


---

869 See Chapter 6 of the present work.
This very same maxim is also attributed to none other than ‘Āʾišah, usually without an 'Isnād, but with an 'Isnād—a Kufo-Mesopotamian SS—in at least one instance, recorded in the Masā’il of Ḥarb b. ‘Ismā’īl al-Kirmānī:


Although this legal maxim is less direct than the statement from Āl-Šāfiʿī, the plausible intended meaning is spelled out by al-Bayhaqi: “She means (and God knows best): She has menstruated (fa-ḥādat), so she is a woman (fa-hiya imraʾah).” Taken together, all of this could be interpreted as evidence—directly and indirectly—that Hijazian girls would usually reach menarche at age nine during the 7th and 8th Centuries CE, which could have served in turn as the inspiration for the marital-age hadith. In other words, it is possible that Hišām simply drew upon the traditional minimum age of marital consummation in his native Hijaz in the construction of his hadith.

There are several problems with such a historical reconstruction, however. Firstly, the ascriptions unto the Prophet and ‘Āʾišah are isolated SS transmissions, which cannot be positively traced back to their alleged sources, which means that they cannot be established as early. Secondly, the Prophetical version of the legal maxim is plausibly a secondary raising thereof, in comparison to the version ascribed to ‘Āʾišah. Thirdly, the direction of causation could easily be reversed here, with the legal maxim and Āl-Šāfiʿī’s statement about Hijazian girls both actually deriving from (i.e., having been extrapolated from) the marital-age hadith (of which Āl-Šāfiʿī was a transmitter). Fourthly, nine as the average age of menarche in the early Hijaz seems rather low in comparison to the global historical average (twelve-to-fourteen) and is thus questionable, raising the possibility that these particular reports reflect later legal

---


875 This lower age is especially suspect given the relatively harsher conditions of pre-Islamic Hijaz, which would predictably delay the onset of menarche and puberty more broadly. See Chapter 6 of the present work.
ideals rather than historical realities. Fifthly, these reports are somewhat in tension with another series of reports from various early sources that seem to embody surprise at the occurrence of menarche and marital consummation at age nine:

- According to a transmission from al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820), he reported: “In Ṣanʿā’, I saw a grandmother [who was] a girl of twenty-one years: she menstruated as a girl of nine and gave birth as a girl of ten, and [her] daughter [likewise] menstruated as a girl of nine and gave birth as a girl of ten.”

- According to a transmission from the Kufan jurist al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786), he reported: “I know of a neighbour of ours who became a grandmother as a girl of twenty-one years.”

- According to al-Saraḵṣī, the Khurasanian proto-Ḥanafī jurist ’Abū Muṭī al-Ḥakam b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Balkī (d. 199/815) "had a daughter who became a grandmother when she was a girl of nineteen years, such that he said: “This girl has put us to shame!”"

- According to a transmission from the Basran traditionist ʿAbbād b. ʿAbbād al-Muhallabī (d. 181/797), he reported: “I encountered amongst us—meaning, the Mahālibah—a woman who became a grandmother when she was a girl of eighteen years: she gave birth to a girl at nine years, and then her daughter [in turn] gave birth at nine years. Thus, she became a grandmother when she was a girl of eighteen years.”

Of course, the veracity of these various ascriptions could also be questioned (especially given that most are isolated transmissions), but the key point is this: the very fact that various figures—whether those cited in the reports or later tradents—deemed such occurrences worth remarking upon indicates that they were remarkable in the first place, which is in turn consistent with their being rare occurrences. In other words, these reports read as expressions of surprise or amazement, which undermines the notion that such occurrences were common in the early Hijaz. If girls in the Islamic

877 Ibid., p. 433.
878 Saraḵṣī, Mabsūṭ, III, p. 149.
heartland of Hijaz ordinarily reached menarche—and thus frequently consummated marriage—at age nine, why would there be so many reports expressing surprise or amazement at instances—even successive instances—of marital consummations and consequent births at or around age nine? If the previously-cited reports (from al-Šāfiʿī, ʿĀʾišah, and Prophet) were accurate, this sort of thing should have been a familiar occurrence to early Muslims. All of this undermines the notion that girls in the early Hijaz would usually reach menarche at age nine, which militates against its having inspired the marital-age hadith.

A second potential source of inspiration for the specific content of the marital-age hadith is the legal and religious traditions of the Sasanid Persian Empire, in which “nine” appears as an ideal age for marriage. Thus, according to Touraj Daryaee (summarising marriage-related material in “Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts”):

*Once a girl reached the age of nine it was believed that she had to be married, and a boy when he was fifteen. This was the ideal age for humans, and at the end of the world they would dwell in heaven at the same age.*

Meanwhile, according to Baugh:

Although investigation into Sasanian-era (224–651 CE) child marriage practices unearths scant information, the age of twelve is again important for girls. According to the Avesta, the age of majority was clearly set at fifteen for boys as well as girls; *Middle Persian civil law allowed marriage at age nine*, provided that consummation wait until age twelve. In the case of physical maturity, *one juristic opinion suggests the marriage can be consummated at the age of nine years for the girl*. Under this system, if she reached the age of fifteen and refused marriage, “she had committed a capital sin,” while if her father or guardian failed to arrange a marriage for her at that age, he too had sinned.

Moreover, as it happens, the Sasanid Empire encompassed Iraq, even locating its capital at Ctesiphon, extremely close to Kufah. Thus, in the very region where Hišām seems to have created and disseminated a hadith depicting ʿĀʾišah as having been

---

880 I owe thanks to Jonathan A. C. Brown for this interpretation of such reports.
881 This connection has already been made by Amin, as noted in the Introduction to the present work.
consummated in marriage at age nine, there recently predominated an empire in which the dominant religious and legal traditions contained ideals or prescriptions for marriage or marital consummation at age nine (even if this was a minority position therein). It is thus entirely possible that Hišām was influenced by some kind of lingering Zoroastrian or Persian tradition in Iraq in his choice of nine for the marital-age hadith. However, the means or mechanism of cultural transmission that would be required here are not ideal for this hypothesis: Hišām did not have recent Persian heritage and did not grow up in a directly post-Sasanid environment, so the most obvious transmission channels would appear to be absent. Still, it is easy enough to imagine Hišām encountering this marital ideal amongst the Muslims of Iraq (many of whom married Persians or were themselves mawālī) and incorporating it in a hadith that he sought to disseminate amongst them.

A third potential source of inspiration was none other than the community to whom Hišām was responding: the proto-Šīʿīs of Kufah. The extant Twelver Hadith collections and legal works are replete with transmissions—almost always via Kufan tradents—from their imams on the subject of marriage or sex with girls at age nine, and although these sources are certainly much later, a preliminary ICMA would suggest that at least some redactions of this material can be traced back to figures operating in the middle of the 8th Century CE. Thus, the following can be tentatively traced all the way back—via a network of Kufan tradents—to the proto-Šīʿī imam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir (d. 114/732-733 or 117/735):

[A man should] not cohabit with a girl until she has reached nine years or ten years [of age] (lā yaddkul bi-al-jāriyah ḥattā yaʿtiya la-hā tisʿ sinīn ʿaw ʿašr sinin).

One version (again, transmitted by Kufans) even ascribes this position—albeit narrowing the age range down to ten—all the way back to ʿAlī b. ʿabī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), although this is certainly secondary (i.e., interpolated, elaborated, and raised) vis-à-vis the other versions:

---

[It was transmitted] from him [i.e., Muḥammad b. ‘abī Ḥālid], from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā [a Kufan], from Ḥiyāṯ b. ʾIbrāhīm [a Kufan], from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, from his father [al-Bāqir], from ‘Ali [b. ‘abī Ṭālib], who said: “A girl [should] not be sexually penetrated [by a man] at less than ten years [of age] (lā tūṭaʾu jāriyah li-ʾaqall min ʿašr sinīn). If he does that and she is damaged [thereby], he will be liable [therefor] (fa-in faʿala fa-ʾibat fa-qad ẓāmin).”

By contrast, in a similarly-raised version (again, unto ‘Alī), the age range has instead been narrowed down to nine:

[It was transmitted] from him [i.e., Muḥammad b. ‘abī Ḥālid], from Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā [a Kufan], from Ṭalḥah b. Zayd, from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, from ‘Alī [b. ‘abī Ṭālib], who said: “Whoever marries a virgin and then consummates the marriage with her [when her age is] less than nine years (man tazawwaja bikrān fa-daḵala bi-hā fiʾaqall min tisʿ sinīn), [in such a way that] she is damaged [thereby] (fa-ʾibat), is liable [therefor] (dāmina).”

Likewise, a series of (again, mostly Kufan) transmissions from the proto-Šīʿī imam Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (Madinan, d. 148/765) narrow this age range down to nine, as in the following:

• “Whoever has sex with his wife before [she has reached the age of] nine years (man waṭiʿa imraʾata-hu qabla tisʿ sinīn) [in such a way that] she is damaged [thereby] (fa-ʾaṣāba-hā ʿayb) is liable [therefor] (fa-huwa ẓāmin).”

• “If a man marries a girl when she is prepubescent (ʾiḏā tazawwaja al-rajul al-jāriyah wa-hiya ṣaġirah), he [should] not consummate the marriage with her until she reaches nine years [of age] (fa-lā yadḵulu bi-hā Ḥattā yaʿtiya la-hā tisʿ sinīn).”

• “If a man proposes marriage to a girl (ʾiḏā kaṭaba al-rajul al-marʿah) and then consummates the marriage with her before she has reached nine years [of age] (fa-daḵala bi-hā qablaʾan tablūga tisʿ sinīn), they are to be separated (furriqa

---

885 Ṭūṣī (ed. Ġaffārī), Tahdīb al-ʾAḥkām, VII, p. 473.
886 Ibid.
887 Ibid; Ṣadūq (ed. Ġaffārī), Kīsāl, II, pp. 420-421.
bayna-humā), and she will never be lawful for him ever again (wa-lam tahilla la-hu 'abad).

Finally, in another clear instance of secondary reworking, a version of one of these reports was even raised all the way back to the Prophet:

[It was transmitted] from him [i.e., Ḥumayd b. Ziyād, a Kufan], from Zakariyyā’ al-Mu’min—or, possibly, there was a tradent between him [i.e., Ḥumayd] and between him [i.e., Zakariyyā’]; I only know what he [i.e., Ḥumayd] related to me—from ‘Ammār al-Sijistānī, who said: “I heard ’Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Ja’far al-Ṣādiq] say to a mawlā of his: “Go and tell the qāḍī: “The Messenger of God said: “The [earliest] point [at which] a woman [can be] consummated in marriage by her husband is as a girl of nine years (ḥadd al-marʾah ʾan yadḵula bi-hāʾ alá zawji-hā ibnat tis’ sinīn).”"

Of course, all of this is traced back to figures—the proto-Šī‘i imams—who primarily lived in Madinah; but, as has been noted already, practically all of these reports and ideas were disseminated and transmitted amongst the proto-Šī‘is of Kufah during the 8th Century CE. In other words, the very community to whom Hišām was plausibly responding with his hadith about ‘Āʾišah’s marital consummation at age nine appear to have already been adhering to or promulgating legal traditions and ideals about “nine” (or in some cases, “nine or ten”) as the minimum age of marital consummation for girls, seemingly independently of any ‘Āʾišah precedent. Once again, we have a clear potential source of inspiration for Hišām’s hadith: he was simply using the doctrines or ideals of the proto-Šī‘is of Kufah against them.

A fourth potential source of inspiration comes from the biography of Hišām himself. According to a report recorded by al-ʿUqaylī, Hišām married his wife, Fāṭimah bt. al-Munḍir, when she was a girl of nine years:


889 Ibid., p. 258
890 Ibid., p. 240.
891 Of course, if the marital-age hadith were genuine, it would be reasonable to suppose that this proto-Šī‘i doctrine ultimately originated with the historical precedent it records; on such a view, it would further be plausible to suppose that the imams omitted mention of this precedent simply due to their animosity towards ‘Āʾišah. However, since we have strong reasons to doubt the historicity and even early provenance of the marital-age hadith, the direction of influence can actually be reversed.
“And how do you know that?” He said: “Wuhayb b. Ḫālid said [it] to me.” So, I said to Wuhayb: “How do you know that?” He said: “Mālik b. ʾAnas said [it] to me.” So, I said to Mālik b. ʾAnas: “How do you know that?” He said: “Ḥišām b. ʿUrwah said [it] to me.”” He [i.e., Sulaymān] said: “I said to Hišām b. ʿUrwah: “And how do you know that?” He said: “He [purportedly] related [hadiths] from my wife, Fāṭimah bt. al-Muḥtarīr. [However,] we consummated our marriage when she was a girl of nine years (daḵalat ‘alayya wa-hiya bint tisʿ sinīn), and he has never seen her [since that time, nor will he ever see her] until she meets God.””

If this report is true, it is entirely plausible that Hišām modelled the marital-age hadith upon his own direct experience: since his own marriage was consummated with a bride who was nine, he simply drew upon this when creating a statement emphasising ‘Āʾišah’s young age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet. That said, the veracity of this report—including the specific claim of Fāṭimah’s age at the time of her marital consummation—has been contested, as in the following from al-Ḵaṭīb al-Bağdādī:

This is a false story (ḥikāyah bāṭilah). Sulaymān al-Šāḏakūnī was not reliable (laysa bi-ṭiqaḥ). Fāṭimah was only taken to Hišām [as a bride] when she was a girl of twenty and some years. Indeed, she was older than him by about nine years.

Still, the possibility remains that the first report—about Hišām’s consummating his marriage with Fāṭimah when she was nine—is genuine, and further, that Hišām drew upon this personal experience in his creation of the marital-age hadith. That said, it is equally possible that the direction of influence is the reverse, and that this story of Hišām’s marriage was instead modelled upon the hadith in question.

In short, there are at least four possible sources of inspiration for Hišām’s choice of nine as ‘Āʾišah’s age of marital consummation: he may have drawn upon the traditional minimum age of marriage in his native Hijaz (although this is highly questionable); he may have drawn upon an old Sasanid tradition or ideal about marital consummation at age nine, lingering amongst his interlocutors or audience in Iraq; he may have polemically drawn upon the common doctrine of his proto-Šīʿī foes in Kufah.

893 Again, if the marital-age hadith were genuine, it would be reasonable to suppose that Hišām’s marriage to his own wife was influenced thereby; but again, given all that we have covered, the direction of influence can be reversed.
concerning nine as the minimum age of marital consummation, using it against them in his depiction of ʿĀʾišah's young age at marriage; and he may simply have drawn upon his own experience of marrying a girl nine years of age (although this biographical datum is heavily contested). And, of course, these four possibilities are not mutually exclusive—several or even all could have been at play simultaneously. We thus have ample explanations for Hišām's choice of nine as ʿĀʾišah's age of marital consummation, which, in conjunction with an established relative chronology of ʿĀʾišah's marriage, can further explain the origins of all of the specific content of Hišām's hadith.

**Conclusion**

The preceding chapter's ICMA allowed us to narrow down the marital-age hadith-tradition to a series of CLs ranging from the middle of the 8th Century CE to the middle of the 9th Century CE, whilst eliminating virtually every other version as a probable or definite dive. The present chapter took these results as its starting point and applied thereto a number of further analyses:

- **Dating by Ascription Type**: a comparison of the levels of ascription of the reconstructed CL redactions revealed that some only claim to derive from Followers, whilst others claim to reach all the way back to Companions. Based on the Criterion of Dissimilarity (in conjunction with established background knowledge on early Hadith culture), the Follower ascriptions are likely more archaic than the Companion ascriptions, which makes the latter versions of the marital-age hadith seem like secondary developments in general.

- **Form Criticism**: a comparison of the CL redactions and other versions of the marital-age hadith revealed a common form, which implies that the tradition as a whole derives from a single ur-story. The most viable candidate for (an accurate reflection of) such an ur-story turned out to be the redaction of Hišām b. ʿUrwah, since his particular wording can explain the rise the variants in the cores of virtually all extant versions of the marital-age hadith.
• **Form Criticism and ʾIsnāds:** the common form’s entailment of a common source also contradicts many of the relevant ʾisnāds, which depict said common form as the utterance of various different early figures, even in completely different regions. This contradiction holds true not just for particular elemental combinations within the marital-age hadith-tradition, but for the fundamental elemental combination as well. This implies that most of the relevant ʾisnāds are false or at least misleading, since they fail to disclose their common sources. This is consistent with most of the relevant versions of the marital-age hadith’s being dives.

• **Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the ʾIsnāds:** a geographical analysis of the relevant tradents reveals that all of the earliest CLs were Iraqi (especially Kufan), except for two Madinans who just so happened to have moved to Iraq. Moreover, all of the credible transmitters from these two Madinans were Iraqi (especially Kufan), except for a Madinan who just so happens to have moved to Iraq, who in turn transmitted to another Madinan who just so happens to have moved to Iraq. All of this is consistent with the marital-age hadith’s having originated in Iraq (in particular, in Kufah), and unexpected on the view that it derives from early, major figures in Madinah.

• **Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Madinan Collections:** the marital-age hadith is completely absent from all of the earliest Madinan legal collections and biographies of the Prophet, despite the prominence and abundance of the alleged Madinan sources of the hadith in such works, and despite the hadith’s utility for the composers thereof. This is consistent with the marital-age hadith’s having originated in Iraq, and unexpected on the view that it derives from early, major figures in Madinah.

• **Geography and Arguments from Silence: The Evidence of the Earliest Kufan Collections:** certain versions of the marital-age hadith are absent from the earliest Kufan legal collections, despite the prominence and abundance of the alleged Kufan sources of the relevant hadiths in such works, and despite the hadith’s utility for the composers thereof. This is consistent with the marital-age hadith’s having originated amongst the traditionists and Hadith-oriented jurists of mid-8th-Century Iraq in particular (as distinct from the mainstream,
rationalist-inclined jurists of Kufah), and unexpected on the view that it derives from early, major figures in Kufah.

- **Interim Summary and Entailments: Hišām as the Originator of the Marital-Age Hadith:** most of the evidence points to Kufah in the middle of the 8th Century CE, and Hišām in particular, as the starting point of the marital-age hadith. Although it is possible that Hišām borrowed the content of the hadith from an obscure Iraqi contemporary, it is simpler to suppose that he formulated it *ex nihilo.*

- **A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Marital-Age Hadith’s Context:** Hišām was remembered as having falsely or misleadingly ascribed reports to his father when he moved to Iraq, which is at least broadly consistent with his having created the marital-age hadith in Kufah. Based on the relevant historical and polemical context and the earliest discernible use of the marital-age hadith, it was most likely created by Hišām to bolster ʿĀʾišah’s unique status as a virgin at marriage (which in turn bolstered her claim to being the Prophet’s favourite wife), in response to the hostile, Šīʿī-dominated environment of Kufah in the middle of the 8th Century CE.

- **A Historical-Critical Analysis of the Origins of the Marital-Age Hadith’s Specific Content:** in creating his hadith, Hišām was likely influenced by an established relative chronology of the Prophet’s marriage to ʿĀʾišah, and may also have drawn upon the traditional minimum age of marriage in his native Hijaz, a lingering Sasanid tradition or ideal in Iraq, the legal doctrine of the proto-Šīʿīs of Kufah, and/or his own personal marital experience.

In short, the best explanation for the evidence overall—the hypothesis that explains or is consistent with *all of the evidence together*—is that Hišām b. ʿUrwah created the marital-age hadith when he moved to Kufah in the early Abbasid period (specifically, between 754 and 765 CE), as a response to his new polemical environment. The hadith rapidly spread and diversified amongst Hišām’s contemporaries and students in Iraq and thereby acquired several independent ṣīnāds, whilst also gaining currency amongst both proto-Sunnī propagandists and Hadith-oriented jurists. In time, the hadith even gained local dives in other provinces, although the original source thereof remained clearly visible: even within the extant forest of ṣīnāds supporting the
marital-age hadith as a whole, Hišām—the most frequently or densely cited source thereof—towers over the rest as a veritable super-CL.
Chapter 4: The Spread and Diversification of the Hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s Marital Age

Having thus argued that the hadith of ‘Ā’išah’s marital age originated with Hišām b. ‘Urwah in Kufah at the beginning of the Abbasid period, we are now in a position to provide an overarching summary of its spread and diversification therefrom. This is in effect a restatement of the conclusions reached in the preceding two chapters of the present work, but presented in a more straightforward chronological and geographical order, with some implications spelled out more clearly, in such a way as to account, directly or indirectly, for all of the extant manifestations of the marital-age hadith.

Origin and Growth in Iraq

When the prominent Madinan traditionist Hišām b. ‘Urwah (d. 146-147/763-765) moved to Kufah (or to al-Hāšimiyyah, the nearby provisional capital of the Abbasids) during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (754-775 CE), he became known for certain forms of false ascription or omission in citing sources (ʿirsāl and tadlīs). Thereafter, probably in response to proto-Šīʿī polemics against ‘Ā’išah in particular, he began to disseminate a short report about ‘Ā’išah’s marriage to the Prophet at a young age: the marriage was contracted when she was six or seven and consummated when she was nine. He initially only ascribed this report to his father, but over the course of successive retellings, he also explicitly ascribed it all the way back to ‘Ā’išah herself. He also updated the content of the report, at times adding a statement about how long ‘Ā’išah and the Prophet lived together, and at other times developing an elaborate narrative, from ‘Ā’išah's own perspective, about her circumstances on the day of her marital consummation. Much of this content also made its way into a letter he transmitted from—or ascribed to—his father. Hišām disseminated all of these different iterations of his hadith to numerous Kufan and Basran students, many of whom went on to become the leading traditionists of Iraq in the late 8th Century CE. Most of these traditionists at least reworded what they had received, and some—such
as ʿAbū ʿUsāmah, Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād, Ḥammād b. Salamah, and ʿAlī b. Mushir—in incorporated additional elements into their versions, often derived from Hišām’s other hadiths. Such insertions or additions also sometimes occurred amongst the students of Hišām’s students, many of whom also raised their versions (transforming an ascription to ʿUrwhah into an ascription via ʿUrwhah to ʿĀʾišah).

Three of Hišām’s Iraqi contemporaries borrowed or incorporated his hadith into their own formulations. To begin with, the Kufan proto-Sunnī propagandist ʿIsmāʿīl b. ʿabī Ḵālid (d. 146/763-764) incorporated the simple version of Hišām’s hadith into his iteration of a common pool of faḍāʾil material about ʿĀʾišah that was circulating in Kufah in the 8th Century CE, which he ascribed via ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ʿabī al-Ḍaḥḥāk (a definite majhūl) to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. Ḫudʾān (a near-majhūl). ʿIsmāʿīl disseminated this hadith to multiple Kufan and Wasitian students and, in the process, his original ascription was variously altered and improved, usually being raised back to ʿĀʾišah herself in one way or another.

At the same time, Muḥammad b. ʿAmr (d. 144-145/761-763), a fellow Madinan emigrant to Iraq, incorporated the elaborate version of Hišām’s hadith practically wholesale into a longer, synthetic narrative about ʿĀʾišah and Sawdah’s marriages to the Prophet, combining it with several other relevant narratives that seem to have been circulating in Madinah already. Muḥammad ascribed this synthetic narrative to his Madinan masters Yahyá and ʿAbū Salamah and disseminated it to various Iraqi students, mostly Kufans.

Meanwhile, Sulaymān al-ʾAʿmaš (d. 147-148/764-766), one of the leading traditionists of Kufah in the middle of the 8th Century CE, but also a “deceiver” (mudallis) who was accused of corrupting (ʾafsada) the Hadith of Kufah, borrowed a version of the hadith, which he (or some now-suppressed intermediary) altered in a fundamental way: instead of ʿĀʾišah’s marriage being contracted at six or seven and consummated at nine, ʿĀʾišah’s marriage is simply stated as occurring at age nine, thereby conflating or compressing Hišām’s original. To this, al-ʾAʿmaš added a statement about how long ʿĀʾišah and the Prophet lived together, or her age at the time of his death. Al-ʾAʿmaš ascribed this hadith via the leading Kufan Followers ʾIbrāhīm al-Naṣaʾī and al-ʾAswad b. Yazīd back to ʿĀʾišah and transmitted it to several Kufans.

students, the most prolific of whom was ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah al-Ḍarīr (d. 194-195/809-811).

A generation later, ʾIsrāʾīl b. Yūnus (d. 160-162/776-779), a notable Kufan traditionist who was nevertheless regarded by some as “not strong” (laysa bi-al-qawīyy) and even “weak” (daʿīf), seems to have combined the simple version of Hišām’s hadith and half of al-ʿAʾmaš’s version. ʾIsrāʾīl ascribed this synthetic hadith via his grandfather, the eminent Kufan traditionist ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq al-Sabīʿī, to the notable Kufan Follower ʾAbū ʿUbaydah, and possibly also the Madino-Kufan Follower Muṣʿab b. Saʿd. ʾIsrāʾīl transmitted this hadith to multiple Iraqi students, some of whom variously raised it back to ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (i.e., ʾAbū ʿUbaydah’s father) and ʾĀʾišah, and one of whom (probably al-Wāqidī, an infamous “fabricator” or kaḍḍāḥ) replaced the original ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah ʾisnād with al-ʿAʾmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʾĀʾišah.

The marital-age hadith may also have been cited in a legal opinion by the Kufan Zaydī theologian and traditionist al-Ḥasan b. Ḥayy (d. 169/785-786), although this cannot be confirmed.

Meanwhile, the Basran traditionist ʾAbū ʿAwānah al-Waḍḍāḥ (d. 176/792) ascribed another iteration of the aforementioned Kufan faḍāʾil material via the Kufan qāḍīʾAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr back to ʾĀʾišah, which he transmitted to his students in Basrah.

At around the same time, the Kufan traditionist ʾAbṭar b. al-Qāsim (d. 178/794-795) borrowed al-ʿAʾmaš’s distinctive version of the marital-age hadith and ascribed it, via his Kufan master Muṭṭarīf b. Ṭarīf, to the same sources cited by ʾIsrāʾīl and his students: ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah—ʾĀʾišah. ʾAbṭar may thus have combined al-ʿAʾmaš’s matn with ʾIsrāʾīl’s ʾisnād, although it is equally possible that ʾIsrāʾīl and ʾAbṭar simply created their ascriptions independently, given that the “ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq—ʾAbū ʿUbaydah—ʾĀʾišah” relationship was already established and respected in Kufan circles.

It was plausibly also in Kufah that the marital-age hadith was incorporated into a version of the famous ḵfkh narrative and falsely ascribed via a Kufan SS back to ʾĀʾišah, possibly at the hands of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Muḥāribī (d. 195/810-811), who was remembered as a “deceiver” (muḍallīs) and a transmitter of dubious hadiths (ʾaḥādīṯ manākīr or ʾaḥādīṯ munkarah).

897 Ibid., IX, p. 137.
Meanwhile, the Kufan traditionist ʿAbū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī (d. 203/818 or 206/821-822) interpolated a well-known hadith disseminated by Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, from ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʿUmayyah, from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUrwah, from ʿĀʾišah, about her preferred day for marriages, merging it with the matn of the simple version of Hišām’s hadith. At the same time, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (d. turn of 9th C. CE), a Kufan traditionist regarded by some as “nothing” (laysa bi-šayʾ) and “excessive in error” (fāhiṣ al-ḵaṭaʾ), went further by not just merging Sufyān’s hadith with Hišām’s, but also replacing Sufyān’s original ʾisnād (ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʿUmayyah—ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah) with another (Sa’d b. ʾIbrāhīm—al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad—ʿĀʾišah). Meanwhile, two other Kufan traditionists (plausibly including Wakī’ b. al-Jarrāḥ) also altered Sufyān’s actual marital-age hadith by replacing the original ʾisnād (Hišām—ʿUrwah) with another (ʿAbū ʾIsrāʾīl—ʿAbū ʿUbaydah), in one case also involving some kind of borrowing or contamination (from al-ʾAḥwās’s particular transmission of Sufyān’s original marital-age hadith).

Meanwhile, some Kufans—plausibly Yaḥyá b. ʾĀdam (d. 203/818) and Yaḥyá al-Ḥimmānī (d. 225/839-840 or 228/842-843), the latter of whom was regarded by some as “unreliable” (laysa bi-ṭiqah) and “weak” (ḍaʿīf)—ascribed two different versions of the marital-age hadith (one derived from ʿIsrāʾīl’s version and the other from either Jarir or Ḥammād b. Zayd’s redactions of Hišām’s version) back to the notable Kufan traditionist Šarīk, from ʿAbū ʾIsrāʾīl, from ʿAbū ʿUbaydah—one all the way back to ʿĀʾišah, and the other all the way back to Ibn Masʿūd.

At the same time, an Iraqi—an plausibly the Kufan biographer, genealogist, and antiquarian Hišām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204-206/819-822), who was condemned as “unreliable” (laysa bi-ṭiqah) and “abandoned in Hadith” (matrūk al-ḥadīṯ)—ascribed a biographical summary of ʿĀʾišah via his Kufan father and a Basran Follower back to Ibn ʿAbbās, seemingly assembled from the miscellaneous reports and statements of biographical and prosopographical authorities like Ibn Sa’d and al-Waqidi. Meanwhile, al-Waqidi himself (d. 207/823), a notorious “fabricator” (kaḍḍāb), interpolated or fabricated several different versions of the marital-age hadith: he likely replaced the ʾisnād of ʿIsrāʾīl’s hadith with that of al-ʾAʿmaṣ’s (noted already); he

899 Ẓahabī (ed. ʾArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, X, p. 534.
900 Ibid., pp. 101-102.
probably interpolated a narrative from the Madinans ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Maymūn and Ḥabīb; he likely interpolated a biographical summary from Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī in two different ways, one of which he reattributed—via a Madinan SS—to ʿĀʾišah; and he plausibly omitted an intermediary source between himself and Ibn ʿabī al-Zinād.

A generation later, someone in Basrah—possibly ʿAḥmad b. al-Miqdām (d. 251-253/865-867) or his master Zuhayr b. al-ʿAlāʾ (fl. turn of the 9th C. CE)—assembled a relatively detailed biographical summary of ʿĀʾišah from various iterations of the marital-age hadith and related reports that were circulating in Basrah—and Iraq more broadly—at the beginning of the 9th Century CE, which they ascribed via Saʿīd b. ʿabī ʿArūbah to Qatādah (both of whom were leading Basran traditionists and authorities of the early-to-mid 8th Century CE).

Finally, around the turn of the 9th Century CE, two Kufan transmitters of a hadith about ʿĀʾišah’s marital engagement—disseminated by the Kufan traditionist ʿAbū Ḥujayyāh al-ʾAjlaḥ (d. 145/762-763 or later), on the authority of the Meccan Follower Ibn ʿabī Mulaykah—interpolated their respective versions thereof with elements taken from Hišām’s marital-age hadith. However, given that this occurred independently, each Kufan interpolator drew upon a different version of Hišām’s hadith (resulting in differences in wording), and one of them went further by explicitly raising his version all the way back to ʿĀʾišah.

**Spread to Yemen**

The marital-age hadith ostensibly spread to Yemen via the peripatetic Basran traditionist Maʿmar b. Rāšid (d. 152-154/769-771), who claimed to have received it from both Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī (implausibly) and Hišām (plausibly). This could have occurred in the Hijaz, when Maʿmar (who would eventually end up in Yemen) and Hišām (who would eventually end up in Iraq) seemingly coincided in time and place. However, given that the only version of the hadith that can be positively assigned to Maʿmar via the ICMA differs markedly from every other transmission from Hišām, it is plausible that Maʿmar did not receive it directly from Hišām, but instead via indirect means (e.g., from someone else’s notes or summary)—thus, its garbled state. Consequently, the exact place and time of Maʿmar’s acquisition of his version of the
hadith remains uncertain. In fact, Maʿmar’s version of this hadith was seemingly not even a ‘hadith’ at all, being instead a statement ascribed to Hišām. To compound matters, Maʿmar falsely ascribed this statement to al-Zuhrī as well. As it happens, Maʿmar was deemed by some to have “erred” (ḡaliṭa) in some of his transmissions from al-Zuhrī; to be “muddled” (muḍṭarib) and “full of errors” (kaṭir al-ʾawhām) in his transmissions from Hišām; and to be a mudallis in general.901

Thereafter, the Yemenite traditionist ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. 211/827), who was accused by some of being “not strong” (laysa bi-al-qawiyyy) and even a “fabricator” (kaḍḍāb),902 interpolated the version of this hadith that he received from Maʿmar, adding therein elements taken from other transmissions from Hišām, ‘Abū Muʿāwiyah, and/or Waki b. al-Jarrāḥ. ʿAbd al-Razzāq also raised this composite hadith in successive retellings, changing it from an ascription to ‘Urwah to an ascription via ‘Urwah to ‘Āʾiṣah.

Spread to Makkah

A version of the Kufan traditionist ʿIsmāʾil b. ʿabī Ǧālid’s faḍāʾil hadith may have been brought to Makkah by his student Marwān b. Muʿāwiyah (d. 193/808-809), a Kufan who died in Makkah. More definitely, Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah, a Kufan who received a version of the marital-age hadith from Hišām in Kufah, brought it with him when he settled in Makkah in 163/779-780, where he disseminated it to several Meccan students (including Ibn ʿabī ʿUmar, al-Ḥumaydī, and al-Šāfiʿī). Other transmissions from Hišām also came to Makkah from Iraq: with the Khurasanian traditionist Saʿīd b. Manṣūr (d. 226-229/840-844), from the Kufo-Baghdadian traditionist ʿIsmāʾil b. Zakariyyaʾ (d. 173-174/789-791); with the Baghdadian traditionist Muḥammad b. ʿIsmāʾil al-Šāʾig (d. 276/889); and with the Khurasanian traditionist ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 286-287/899-900), from his Basran teachers al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Minhāl (d. 216-217/831-832) and ʿĀrim b. al-Faḍl (d. 224/838-839). ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz also brought

902 Ibn ʿAdī (ed. Sarsāwī), Kāmil, VIII, p. 448, # 12967; Dahabi (ed. ʿArnaʿūṭ et al.), Siyar, IX, pp. 571, 574.

It was plausibly also in Makkah that the Madinan traditionist Yaʿqūb b. Ḫumayd b. Kāsib (d. 240-241/854-856), who was variously condemned as “nothing” (laysa bi-šayʾ), “unreliable” (laysa bi-ṭiqah), and “weak in Hadith” (ḍaʿīf al-ḥadīṯ), created a noticeably more detailed version of Hišām’s simple hadith, which he projected back to Hišām via their Madinan intermediary ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. ʿUrwah.

**Spreads to Northern Mesopotamia**

The marital-age hadith spread to Northern Mesopotamia—here meaning the region of al-Jazīrah and the cities of Anbar, Mosul, Raqqah, and Harran, along with the Anatolian city of Mopsuestia—numerous times, virtually always from nearby Iraq. To begin with, Hišām's Kufan student ʿAlī b. Mushir (d. 189/804-805) was appointed the qāḍī of Mosul, where he transmitted his redaction of Hišām’s elaborate version of the hadith to Suwayd b. Saʿīd al-ʾAnbārī (d. 240/855). Over the subsequent decades, other versions of the hadith also travelled north from Iraq: Muʾammal b. al- Faḍl al-Ḥarrānī (d. 229/843-844) seemingly transmitted a version of ʾIsmāʿīl’s hadith; Muḥammad b. ʿĀdam al-Maṣṣīṣī (d. 250/864-865) received a version of Hišām's hadith from the latter’s Kufan student ʿAbdah b. Sulaymān; both ʾAḥmad b. Ḥarb al-Mawṣili (d. 263/876-877) and ʿAlī b. Ḥarb al-Mawṣīlī (d. 265/879) transmitted versions of ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah’s redaction of al-ʿA’maš’s hadith (in the second case, plausibly involving interpolations in the matn); al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Ḥarrānī (d. 318/930) transmitted versions of ʿAbū ʿUsāmah and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī’s redactions of Hišām’s hadith; and ʿAbū Ya’lā ʾAḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Mawṣīlī (d. 307/919-920) collected several Iraqi transmissions from Muḥammad b. ʿAmr and Hišām in his *Musnad.*

---

903 See the section on Hišām b. ʿUrwah in ch. 2.
The spread of the marital-age hadith from Iraq to Northern Mesopotamia thus mostly occurred in a fairly straightforward and transparent fashion, without major interpolations or fabrications, except for two instances. In the first instance, Kaṭīr b. Hišām al-Raqqī (d. 207-208/822-824), or possibly his cited source Ja’far b. Burqān al-Raqqī (d. 154/770-771), seems to have falsely reattributed the hadith of ʾIsrāʾīl—plausibly also incorporating an element from ʾAbū Muʿāwiyyah’s version—back to Ibn Śihāb al-Zuhri. (As it happens, Ja’far was widely regarded as unreliable specifically in his transmissions from al-Zuhri,\textsuperscript{904} and even Kaṭīr was reportedly error-prone.\textsuperscript{905}) In the second instance, Ḥafṣ b. ’Umar al-Raqqī (d. 280/893-894) seems to have combined a hadith he received from Qabīṣah (from Sufyān, from Hišām, from ʿUrwah) with the matn of ʾAbū Muʿāwiyyah’s version and the ʾisnād associated with ʾIsrāʾīl’s version and certain other false ascriptions to Sufyān (i.e., Sufyān—ʾAbū ʾIrṭaq—ʿAbū ʿUbaydah). (As it happens, Ḥafṣ was deemed by al-Ḏahabī to be “imprecise” (laysa bi-mutqin).\textsuperscript{906})

**Spread to Egypt**

The marital-age hadith came to Egypt with the students of the Madino-Baghdadian traditionist Ibn ’abī al-Zinād (d. 174/790-791), who disseminated his version thereof in Baghdad after he acquired it from Hišām (probably in Baghdad, and probably indirectly, which is consistent with the reports that he became unreliable specifically when he moved to Iraq). Ibn ’abī al-Zinād transmitted his redaction of the hadith to two Egyptian students, ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/813) and Saʿīd b. ʿabī Maryam (d. 224/838-389), each of whom passed it on to his own Egyptian students in turn. In the process, however, Ibn Wahb (a known mudallis\textsuperscript{908}) or possibly his student Muḥammad b. ’Abd Allāh b. ’Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 268/882) added the Madino-Baghdadian traditionist Saʿīd b. ’Abd al-Raḥmān into the ʾisnād as a co-transmitter with Ibn ’abī al-Zinād from Hišām.

\textsuperscript{904} Ibn ’abī Ḥātim, Ḣarḥ, II, pp. 474-475.
\textsuperscript{905} Ibn Ḥibbān (ed. Kān), Ṭiqāṭ, IX, p. 26: “he errs and contradicts [the transmissions of others] (yuṯṭiʿu wa-yuṯṭilīfu).”
\textsuperscript{906} ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (ed. Ṭabīb), Siyār, XIII, p. 406. However, al-Ḏahabī (ibid.) preceded this with the claim that “he was in essence sincere (huwa ṣādiq fi naṣī-hi).”
\textsuperscript{907} For example, to the Basran traditionist Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī.
\textsuperscript{908} Ibn Saʿd (ed. Sachau), Biographien, VII, part 2, p. 205.
At around the same time, the prominent Hadith-partisan jurist Muḥammad b. ʾIdrīs al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820) also brought Hišām's hadith with him when he came to Egypt from Makkah, where he had received it from Sufyān b. ῾Uaynah. Al-Šāfiʿī transmitted his version to his Egyptian student al-Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān al-Murādī (d. 270/884), but in the process, some core details were altered: al-Rabīʿ recorded it from al-Šāfiʿī once with “six or seven” and twice with “seven”. Moreover, al-Rabīʿ recorded one version from al-Šāfiʿī with an additional ‘dolls’ element, with wordings suspiciously similar to Ibn Wahb's transmission from Ibn ʾabī al-Zinād: evidently, some contamination occurred between these Egyptian contemporaries.

An unusual version of the marital-age hadith (“nine or ten”)—in the form of a biographical summary about ʿĀʾišah without an ʾisnād—was also recorded by the Basran biographer ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hišām (d. 213/828-829 or 218/833) in his Kitāb al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah, which he brought with him when he settled in Egypt. Ibn Hišām’s Sīrah was a recension of the Kitāb al-Maḡāzī of Muḥammad b. ʾIshāq (d. 150-153/767-770), but Ibn Hišām did not cite Ibn ʾIshāq as his source for this biographical summary, nor any other source; presumably, it was Ibn Hišām’s own assemblage of information—perhaps from multiple sources—that he acquired in Basrah.

The obscure Egyptian traditionist ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʾabī Maryam (fl. 9th C. CE) also received a version of the marital-age hadith from the Khurasanian and Levantine traditionist Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī, from his Kufan master Sufyān al-Ṯawrī, from Hišām.

An unusual version of the hadith (ascribed to Qatādah—see above) was also transmitted by the obscure Baghdadian traditionist Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʾAʿyan (d. 293/905-906), who received it from Basran sources and presumably took it with him when he settled in Egypt.

Finally, there was a single, notable fabrication in Egypt: ʾAḥmad b. Saʿd b. al-Ḥakam b. ʾabī Maryam (d. 253/867), or possibly his uncle and cited source Ibn ʾabī Maryam, borrowed the matn of the simple version of Hišām’s hadith (probably Wuhayb’s redaction) and falsely ascribed it via an Egypto-Madinan SS back to ʿĀʾišah.

Spread to the Levant

288
The marital-age hadith came to the Levant with the Khurasanian traditionist Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī (d. 212/827), who received a version of Hišām’s hadith from the latter’s Kufan student Sufyān al-Ṭawrī and settled thereafter in the Palestinian city of Caesarea, where he disseminated it to some local traditionists. Not long afterwards, the notable Damascene traditionist Hišām b. ‘Ammār (d. 245/859) recorded a version of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s hadith in his own collection, which he obtained from the Baghdadian Saʿīd b. Yaḥyā al-ʿUmawī (who in turn received it from his Kufan father, one of Muḥammad’s students). Sometime after that, the Baghdadian traditionist ʿAbū ʿUmayyah Muḥammad b. ʿIbrāhīm (d. 273/886) may also have brought ʿAlī b. Mushir’s redaction of Hišām’s elaborate version of the marital-age hadith—which he received from ʿAlī’s Kufan student ʿIsmāʿīl b. al-Ḵalīl—with him when he settled in Tarsus. At around the same time, ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah’s hadith also spread to the Levant via his Kufan student Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Numayr, who in turn transmitted it to the prominent Damascene chronicler ʿAbū Zurʿah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr (d. 280-281/893-895), who recorded it in his Taʾrīḵ. Finally, several centuries later, an unusual version of Hišām’s hadith (framed as a conversation between him and his Kufan student al-Hayṭam b. ʿAdī al-Ṭāʾī) spread via a succession of Baghdadian and Eastern tradents to the famous Damascene chronicler ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAsākir (d. 519/1125), who recorded it in his Taʾrīḵ Madīnat Dimašq.

Meanwhile, at some point in the early-to-mid 9th Century CE, the Aleppine traditionist al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿabī Manīʿ (d. post-216/831) updated or elaborated a relatively detailed biographical summary of ʿĀʾišah that he may have received from his local uncle ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿabī Ziyād al-Ruṣāfī, perhaps ultimately deriving from Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhri—adding therein the elements of the simple version of Hišām’s hadith. (Of course, it is also possible that al-Ḥajjāj assembled the summary himself from the biographical material that was flowing into the Levant from Iraq and completely falsely ascribed it via his uncle to al-Zuhri.)

Finally, it was plausibly also in the Levant, possibly with the Damascene traditionist ʿAbū Mushir ʿAbd al-ʿA’lā b. Mushir (d. 218/833), that a version of ʿIsrāʾīl’s hadith was elaborated and reattributed via a local Levantine familial ʿisnād back to the Basran Follower Jābir b. Zayd.
Spread to Persia

Easterners came to dominate Hadith scholarship in the 9th Century CE to such an extent that, alongside Baghdadians, they predominate in the later segments of most 'isnāds of the marital-age hadith, or else as the compilers of the collections in which versions of the hadith are extant. As part of this process of domination, the marital-age hadith spread to Persia—meaning above all the regions of al-Jībāl and Fārs—by many routes. One of the earliest instances thereof occurred with Ḥasan b. Mūsā (d. 209/824-825), who received a redaction of the elaborate version of Hišām’s hadith from Ḥammād b. Salamah in Basrah and presumably took it with him to Rayy, where he died. Likewise, the Baghdadian traditionist al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj (fl. 9th C. CE) brought al-Wāqidi’s ascription to Ḥabīb (along with his al-Mubtada’ wa-al-Maḏāzi more broadly) with him from Baghdad when he settled in Isfahan, where he transmitted it to a local student. Soon afterward, several Persians (and a Basran who settled in Persia) recorded multiple versions of the marital-age hadith in their extant Hadith collections: Muḥammad b. Mājah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273/887), who received one version from a Mesopotamian and another from a Wasitian, both recorded in his Sunan; Yūnus b. Ḥabīb al-ʾAḥbahānī (d. 267/880-881), who transmitted a version as part of his recension of the Musnad of his Basran master ʿAbū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī; Yaʿqūb b. Sufyān al-Fasawī (d. 277/890-891 or 280-281/893-895), who received several versions from Kufan, Basran, and Aleppine sources, all of which he recorded in his Taʾrīḵ; and Ṭḥamad b. ʿabī ʿĀṣim (d. 287/900), a Basran traditionist who was appointed the qāḍī of Isfahan and who received several versions from Iraqi sources, all of which he recorded in his al-ʿĀḥād wa-al-Maḏānī. Many versions of the hadith, including from some of these earlier collectors, were also recorded by later mega-compilers like ʿAbū Nuʿaym Ṭḥamad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʾĪsfahānī (d. 430/1038).

Finally, it was plausibly in Rayy that Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd (d. 248/862-863), a local traditionist who was variously condemned as “unreliable” (layṣa bi-ṭiqah and ḣayr ṭiqah), “rejected in Hadith” (munkar al-ḥadīṯ), and “possessing strange hadiths” (ṣāḥib ʿajāʾib),909 created a strange version of the marital-age hadith (recounting how

---

ʿĀʾišah was fattened up by her parents for her marital consummation), which was projected back to ʿĀʾišah via a Mervian familial isnād.

**Spread to Khurasan**

The Eastern domination of Hadith scholarship also brought the marital-age hadith into Khurasan, via numerous routes. One of the earliest instances thereof seems to have occurred with Yaḥyá b. Yahyá al-Naysábūrī (d. 226/840-841), who travelled from Naysabur to Kufah and obtained a version from ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah, which he brought with him when he returned home and disseminated to his local students. In the process, however, Yahyá altered or contaminated ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah’s hadith, combining it with elements taken from the simple version of Hišām’s hadith. The latter also arrived in Khurasan around the same time with Muḥammad b. al-Naḍr al-Marwazī (d. 239/853-854), who obtained it from Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān when he visited Basrah. ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s version of the hadith also came to Khurasan over the ensuing decades, as various Khurasanian traditionists travelled to Yemen, obtained the hadith from ‘Abd al-Razzāq, and took it back home with them: Muḥammad b. Rāfī’ al-Naysábūrī (d. 245/860), Muḥammad b. ʿĪsāq al-Ṣaḡānī (d. 270/883), and Fayyāḍ b. Zuhayr al-Nasāʿī (d. post-250/864-865). A version of ʿIsmāʿīl’s hadith also made its way there via ʿAḥmad b. Yūnus al-Naysábūrī (d. 263-264/876-878), who seems to have received it in Kufah (or possibly al-Madāʾin) from ʿAbū Šīhāb ʿAbd Rabbi-hi and brought it home with him.

Numerous versions of the marital-age hadith were also preserved in the extant Hadith collections of various leading Khurasanian traditionists: the Musnad of ʿĪsāq b. Rāhwayh al-Marwazi (d. 238/853), from various Kufan sources; the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim b. al-Ḥaǧjāj al-Naysábūrī (d. 261/875), from various Eastern and Iraqi sources (involving some notable instances of contamination or interpolation); the Taʾrīkh of ʿAḥmad b. ʿabī Ḥaḏr Zuhayr al-Naysábūrī (d. 279/892), from a Basran source; the Musnad of ʿAbū ʿAwānah Yaʿqūb b. ʿĪsāq al-ʿIsfarāyīnī (d. 316/929), from various Egyptian, Levantine, Iraqi, and Eastern sources; and the Mustadrak of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysábūrī (d. 405/1014), from various Eastern sources. Many
versions of the hadith, including from some of these earlier collectors, were also recorded by later mega-compilers like ʿAḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066).

**Spread to Transoxania**

The marital-age hadith also spread to Transoxania, in at least four notable instances: firstly, with ʿAbd b. Ḥumayd al-Kaššī (d. 249/863-864), who obtained a version from ʿAbd al-Razzāq when he visited Yemen; secondly, with ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī al-Samarqandī (d. 250/864-865 or 255/869), who obtained ʿAlī b. Mushir’s redaction of Hišām’s elaborate version of the marital-age hadith from ʿIsmāʾīl b. ʿAlī when he visited Kufah, which he recorded in his *Musnad* or *Sunan*; thirdly, with Muḥammad b. ʾIsmāʾīl al-Buḵārī (d. 256/870), who obtained several different redactions of Hišām’s hadiths from various Kufan, Basran, and Perso-Palestinian sources (all recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*), and several different versions of ʿIsmāʾīl’s hadith from various Iraqi sources (all recorded in his *al-Taʾrīḵ al-Kabīr*); and fourthly, with Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965), a Sijistanian traditionist who was appointed the qāḍī of Samarqand and who obtained two versions of Hišām’s hadith from a Khurasanian source and a Mesopotamian source respectively, both tracing back to Hišām’s Kufan students, which Ibn Ḥibbān recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

**Spread to the West**

Eventually, several versions of the marital-age hadith also made it to West, here meaning North Africa (including ʾIfrīqiyyah and al-Maḡrib) and the Iberian Peninsula (i.e., al-ʾAndalus). It is striking that, despite the heavy dependence of West—the stronghold of Mālikism—upon the legal tradition and Hadith of Madinah, Westerners seem to have virtually always obtained their versions of the marital-age hadith, directly or indirectly, from Iraqi sources. For example, the Hadith critic ʿAḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿIjlī (d. 261/874-875), who settled in Tripoli and preserved a version of the hadith in his *Taʾrīḵ al-Ṭiqāt*, came from Kufah and received his version from a Kufan
source: ʾAbū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī, whose interpolation of a well-known hadith from Sufyān al-Ṭawrī has been discussed already. Likewise, the Andalusian jurist and Hadith scholar Yūsuf b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abd al-Barr al-Qurṭubī (d. 463/1071) recorded several versions of the hadith in his Kitāb al-Istīʿāb and his Tamhīd, all ultimately tracing back to Hišām’s Basran and Kufan students and to the Kufan ʾAbū Muʿāwiyah.⁹¹⁰ That said, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr also ascribed an unusual statement (“The Messenger of God married her when she was a girl of ten years”) to the junior Madinan Follower ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUqayl/ʿAqīl (d. post-140/757-758), but did so without citing any sources (Madinan or otherwise)—in fact, this statement appears to be uncorroborated in all other Islamic literature, including legal works and Hadith collections.

A century later, the Ibadite Hadith scholar Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm al-Warjlānī (d. 570/1174-1175), as part of his general project of systematically creating an Ibadite Hadith corpus, cobbled together a relatively detailed biographical summary of ʿĀʾišah from earlier prosopographical sources and/or hadiths, which he ascribed via a suitable sequence of Ibadite imams back to the Basran Follower Jābir b. Zayd. (In this respect, al-Warjlānī may have drawn upon the previous Levantine ascription to Jābir, discussed above.)

Conclusion

The hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age rapidly proliferated after its genesis in early Abbasid Iraq, spreading north to the rest of Mesopotamia, west to the Levant, Egypt, and beyond, south to Makkah and Yemen, and east to Persia, Khurasan, and Transoxania, all within the space of a century and a half. The hadith underwent considerable mutations and reworkings during the first few decades of its existence in Iraq, receiving multiple (usually local or familial) ʾisbnāds in the process. This might be taken to imply a considerable amount of mendacity on the part of Iraqi traditionists, but it should be reiterated that most of this occurred during the mid-to-late 8th Century CE, before the predomination of the Hadith critics (nuqqād al-ḥadīṯ) and their literalist, historicist attitude towards Hadith. Thereafter (above all, in the 9th and 10th Centuries

CE), it mostly spread transparently, with only minor rewordings and interpolations—but not always: in several regions and cities (specifically, the Levant, Raqqah, Rayy, and Ouargla), local traditionists (often with bad reputations already) combined the marital-age hadith with their own local reports or created their own versions of the hadith with local and familial ḍārsnāds.

Once again, the general absence of Madinah from this picture is striking: in the 9th and 10th Centuries CE (i.e., the era of stable and transparent Hadith transmission), Madinans are completely absent. Madinans only appear in the earliest segments of various retrojections and dives, which is to say, as tradents and authorities in the segments of ḍārsnāds covering the 7th and 8th Centuries CE (i.e., the era of false ascription, legendary transmission, mutation, and instability). Certainly, no early Madinan legal work or Hadith collection recorded any version of the marital-age hadith, from Madinan sources or otherwise. Once again, it seems clear that the true birthplace of the hadith was Iraq, not Madinah.
Chapter 5: The Canonisation and Criticism of the Hadith of ‘Āʾišah’s Marital Age in Sunnism

The hadith of ‘Āʾišah’s marital age was put into circulation by several of the leading traditionists of Iraq in the mid-to-late 8th Century CE and transmitted by many of their illustrious students, making the acceptance of this hadith by the proto-Sunnī Hadith critics (nuqqād al-ḥadīṭ) of the 9th Century CE practically inevitable. In fact, it is probably more accurate to say that the Hadith critics simply inherited the hadith, being the main students (e.g., al-Buḫārī) of the main students (e.g., al-Firyābī) of the main students (e.g., Sufyān al-Ṭawrī) of the creators thereof (e.g., Hišām). The Hadith critics explicitly saw themselves as the scholarly successors to the likes of Hišām, so unless they were confronted by flagrant contradictions between his hadiths and those of their other great forebears, or else by a recurring lack of corroboration for his ascriptions, they would accept Hišām’s material by default. Of course, even when Hišām’s transmissions were contradicted or suspiciously uncorroborated, this was downplayed or rationalised as a relatively minor foible—tadlīs and ‘irsāl, or even mere wahm, as opposed to waḍ‘ and kaḏib. He always remained al-ʾimām al-ṭiqah šayk al-ʾislām in the Sunnī Hadith tradition.911

As it happens, there are some notable contradictions both within and between Hišām’s version of the marital-age hadith and those ascribed to his equally-venerated contemporaries Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī, Muḥammad b. ʿAmr, ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq, and al-ʾAʿmaš, in which ʿĀʾišah’s age at her marital engagement (nikāḥ, tazwīj, tazawwuj) is variously given as six, six or seven, seven, and nine. However, these contradictions were almost never addressed by the Hadith critics, who seem to have accepted most of these versions—above all, those of Hišām, al-ʾAʿmaš, ʾIsrāʾīl (from ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq), and ʿAbd al-Razzāq (from al-Zuhrī)—as ‘sound’ (šāhiḥ). Evidently, these contradictions were usually not regarded as flagrant, and rarely warranted comment or explanation.

Still, some contradictions and discrepancies (especially in the ‘Isnāds) were felt to require explanation and adjudication, and not all versions of the hadith derived from

911 For more on the methods of the Hadith critics, see the section on Motzki’s criticisms of Cook in ch. 1, and the references given therein. For more on the excuses and rationalisations surrounding Hišām, see the historical-critical analysis in ch. 3 of the present work and the references given therein.
predecessors as esteemed as Hišām—thus, there were some instances in which the Hadith critics criticised or rejected specific transmissions of the marital-age hadith.

What follows is a summary of notable instances of proto-Sunnī and classical Sunnī scholars authenticating and/or criticising various versions of the marital-age hadith.

**al-Buḵārī (d. 256/870)**

The leading Transoxanian Hadith critic Muhammad b. ʾIsmāʿīl al-Buḵārī (d. 256/870) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*:

Farwah—ʿAlī b. Mushir—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage at six; Hijrah; illness, shoulder-length hair; swing; marital preparation; consummation at nine.

‘Ubayd—Abū ʿUsāmah—Hišām—ʿUrwah:
- ʿĀʾišah married at six; consumption at nine.

al-Firyābī—Sufyān al-Ţawrī—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage at six; consummation at nine; together nine years.

Muʿallá—Wuhayb—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage at six; consummation at nine; together nine years.

Farwah—ʿAlī b. Mushir—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage; marital preparation.

Qabīṣah—Sufyān al-Ţawrī—Hišām—ʿUrwah:
- ʿĀʾišah was married at six; consummation at nine; together nine years.

Farwah—ʿAlī b. Mushir—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:
- Marriage; marital preparation.
Although al-Bukhari never explicitly expressed a judgement on any of these hadiths, their inclusion in his *al-Jami‘ al-Shahih* strongly implies that he regarded them to be *shahih*, even though two of them are technically *mursal* or *munqa‘i*.

By contrast, an explicit judgement has been recorded from al-Bukhari regarding a defect ('illah) in some versions of the hadith, as recorded by his student—and fellow Hadith critic—Muhammad b. `Isa al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892):

> Yahyá b. `Akta’am related to us: “Yahyá b. ‘Adam related to us: “‘Isra‘il related to us: “‘Abu ‘Ishaq related to us, from ‘Abu ‘Ubaydah, from ‘Abd Allâh [b. Mas‘ûd], who said: “The Messenger of God married ‘A‘išah when she was a girl of six years, consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years, and died when she was a girl of eighteen.””””


In other words, al-Bukhari deemed to be erroneous those versions of ‘Isra‘il’s hadith that had been raised all the way back to ‘Abd Allâh b. Mas‘ûd, rejecting them in favour of the unraised versions ascribed only to ‘Abû ‘Ubaydah and also those that were raised all the way back to ‘A‘išah.

**Muslim (d. 261/875)**

The leading Khurasanian Hadith critic Muslim b. al-Ḥajjâj al-Naysabûrî (d. 261/875) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his *al-Jami‘ al-Shahih*:

> ‘Abû Kurayb—‘Abû Usâmah—Hišâm—‘Urwah—‘A‘išah:

> Ibn ’abî Šaybah—‘Abû Usâmah—Hišâm—‘Urwah—‘A‘išah:

Marriage at six; consummation at nine; Hijrah; illness, shoulder-length hair; swing; marital preparation.

---

912 Tirmidhi (ed. Sâmarrâ’i *et al*.), *‘Ihal*, pp. 169-170.
Yaḥyá b. Yaḥyá—’Abū Muʿāwiyyah—al-ʾAʿmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʿĀʾīšah:
Marriage at six; consummation at nine.

ʿAbd b. Ḥumayd—ʿAbd al-Razzāq—Maʿmar—al-Zuhrī—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾīšah:
Marriage at seven; consummation at nine; her dolls were with her; Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Marriage at six; consummation at nine; Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Although Muslim never explicitly expressed a judgement on any of these hadiths, their inclusion in his al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ strongly implies that he regarded them to be ṣaḥīḥ, even though one of them (“seven”) contradicts the others (“six”). That said, it is plausible that Muslim regarded some of these hadiths to be sounder than others, and that he arranged them in descending order of soundness.⁹¹³

**Ibn ʾabī Ḵayṭamah (d. 279/892-893)**

In his al-Taʿrīḵ al-Kabīr, the Baghdadian Hadith critic ʾAbī Ḵayṭamah Zuhayr (d. 279/892-893) adjudicated between a version of the hadith and another, in a broader discussion on the chronology of Ṭadijah’s death, ʿĀʾīšah’s marriage, and the Hijrah:

Someone other than Ibn ʾIsḥāq said: “Ṭadijah died five years before the emigration of the Messenger of God.”

And it is [also] said: “four [years] before the marital engagement (tazwīj) of ʿĀʾīšah.” Al-ʾAṭram reported that to us, from ʿAbū ʿUbaydah.

And Qatādah said: “Ṭadijah died three years before the Hijrah.” ʾAbī Ḵayṭamah b. al-Miqdām related that to us, from Zuhayr b. al-ʿAlāʾ, from Saʿīd, from Qatādah: “Then the Messenger of God married (tazawwaja) ʿĀʾīšah around the time of the death of Ṭadijah.”

⁹¹³ Juynboll, ʿ(Re)Appraisalʿ, 316.
Mūsá b. ’Ismā’īl related to us—he said: "Ḥammād b. Salamah related to us—he said: "Ḥišām related to us, from ʿUrwhah, from ʿĀʾišah—she said: "The Messenger of God married me after the death of ʿArwah, two or three years before his escape to Madinah, when I was a girl of six years or seven."

That which was said by 'Abū ʿUbaydah is the correct [version] (al-ṣawāb), because she [i.e., ʿĀʾišah] said: "he consummated the marriage with me when I was a girl of nine."914

In regards to the chronology around ʿArwah’s death, Ibn ʿabī Kaṭmah seemed to prefer a hadith ascribed to 'Abū ʿUbaydah over the relevant versions of Hišām’s marital-age hadith.

al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915-916)

In his al-Sunan al-Kubrá, the Khurasanian Hadith critic ’Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915-916) recorded and adjudicated between conflicting ascriptions to 'Abū ʿIṣḥāq, as follows:

Qutaybah b. Saʿīd reported to us—he said: "‘Abṭar related to us, from Muṭarrīf (who is Ibn ʿṬarīf al-Kūfī), from 'Abū ʿIṣḥāq, from 'Abū ʿUbaydah, who said: "‘Āʾišah said: “The Messenger of God married me at nine years and I was in his company for nine.”"

’Isrāʾīl differed with him (kālafa-hu) regarding his ḫisnād and his matn:
’Iṣḥāq b. ʿIbrāḥīm b. Rāḥwayh reported to us—he said: "Yaḥyā b. ʿĀdām reported to us—he said: "’Isrāʾīl related to us, from ’Abū ʿIṣḥāq, from ’Abū ʿUbaydah, from his father, who said: "The Messenger of God married ‘Āʾišah when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine."

’Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān [al-Nasāʾī] said to us: "Muṭarrīf b. ʿṬarīf al-Kūfī is more reliable (aṭbat) than ’Isrāʾīl, and his hadith is more likely to be correct (ašbah bi-al-ṣawāb). God knows best."915

In short, al-Nasāʾī judged the mursal or munqaṭṭi version ascribed via Muṭarrīf to ’Abū ʿIṣḥāq to be more reliable than the muttaṣil version ascribed via ’Isrāʾīl to ’Abū ʿIṣḥāq.

Abū ‘Awānah (d. 316/929)

The Khurasanian Hadith critic Abū ‘Awānah Ya‘qūb b. ʾIšāq al-ʾIsfarāyīnī (d. 316/929) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his al-Musnad al-Shāhīḥ al-Muṣarrāt ‘alá ʾĀʾishah Muslim:

al-Rabī‘—al-Šāfi‘ī—Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾishah:
Abū ʿUmayyah—ʾIsmā‘īl—ʿAlī b. Mushir—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at six; Hijrah; illness, shoulder-length hair; swing; marital preparation; consummation at nine.

“[Something] close to the hadith of ʿAlī b. Mushir.”

Ibn ʾabī al-Ḥunayn—Šihāb b. ʿAbbād—Ḥammād b. Zayd—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at seven; consummation at nine; women came to her; she was on a swing; fever and hair; prepared for marriage by women; hair; she still played dolls with her shy friends.

Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ḡazzī—al-Firyābī—Sufyān al-Ṭawrī—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at six; consummation at nine; together nine years.

al-Ṣaḥānī—Muslim b. ʾIbrāhīm—Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at seven; consummation at nine.

Abū ʿUmayyah—Manṣūr b. ʾSuqayr—Abū ʿAwānah—al-ʾAʿmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at seven; together nine years.

ʿAlī b. ʾHarb—Abū Muʿāwiyah—al-ʾAʿmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʿĀʾishah:
al-Ṣaḥānī—Saʿīd b. Sulaymān—Abū Muʿāwiyah—al-ʾAʿmaš—ʾIbrāhīm—al-ʾAswad—ʿĀʾishah:
Marriage at seven; Prophet died when she was eighteen.
Ibn ‘abī al-Dunyā—‘Abū Ḫayṭamah—Jarīr—al-‘A’māš—‘Ībrāhīm—al-‘Aswad—‘Ā’išah:
Marriage at six or seven; consummation at nine; she still played dolls with her shy friends.

al-Ṣaġānī—‘Abd al-Razzāq—Ma’mar—al-Zuhrī—‘Urwah—‘Ā’išah:
Marriage at six or seven; consummation at nine; her dolls were with her. Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Muḥammad b. ‘Ismāʿīl al-Ṣā’īg—‘Affān b. Muslim—Ḥammād b. Salamah—Hišām—‘Urwah—‘Ā’išah—Prophet:
Girl in silk, Kadijah’s death, the girl was ‘Āʾišah; marriage, Kadijah’s death, six or seven; consummation at nine; swing; shoulder-length hair; marital preparation.

Although ‘Abū ‘Awānah never explicitly expressed a judgement on any of these hadiths, their inclusion in his al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ—intended as a collection of independent transmissions of the hadiths recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim—strongly implies that he regarded them to be Ṣaḥīḥ, even though they conflict on certain details (e.g., “six” vs. “seven” vs. “nine”).

Ibn al-Munḍir (d. 318/930)

The Khurasanian jurist Muḥammad b. ‘Ibrāhīm b. al-Munḍir (d. 318/930), an early follower of al-Ṣāfī, recorded the following in his al-‘Iṣrāf ‘alá Maṣāḥib al-‘Ulamā’:

It is established (tablata) that the Messenger of God married ‘Ā’išah when she was a girl of seven years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years.916

In other words, Ibn al-Munḍir implies that the marital-age hadith (evidently here referring to a version from Hiṣām) was widely accepted as sound by his contemporaries.

**al-ʿUqaylī (d. 322/933-934)**

The Meccan Hadith critic Muḥammad b.ʾAmr al-ʿUqaylī (d. 322/933-934) recorded the following in an entry in his Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafāʾ:

Mālik b. Sulaymān al-Harawī.

[There is] some doubt regarding his Hadith (fi ḥadīthi-hi nasr).

Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Balkī related to us—he said: “Mālik b. Sulaymān al-Harawī related to us—he said: “ʾIsrāʾīl related to us, from ’Abū ’Ishāq, from ’Abū ’Ubaydah, from Ibn Masʿūd, who said: “The Prophet married ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of nine and died when she was a girl of eighteen.””

[ʿAlī b.] ’Abd al-ʿAzīz related this to us—he said: “ʿAbd Allâh b. Rajāʾ related to us—he said: “ʾIsrāʾīl related to us, from ’Abū ’Ishāq, from ’Abū ’Ubaydah, who said: “The Prophet married ʿĀʾišah when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years. The Prophet died when she was a girl of eighteen.””

And the hadith of ’Abd Allâh b. Rajāʾ is better (`awlā).917

In other words, according to al-ʿUqaylī, ‘ʿAbd Allâh b. Rajāʾ’s (mursal or munqaṭṭi’) ascription via ’Isrāʾīl is more reliable than Mālik b. Sulaymān’s (muttaṣil) ascription thereby.

**Ibn Ḥībbān (d. 354/965)**

The Sijistanian Hadith critic Muḥammad b. Ḥībbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his Ṣāḥīḥ:

al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān—ʾIbrāhīm b. Saʿīd—ʿAbū ʿUsāmah—Hiṣām—ʿUrwha—ʿĀʾišah:

---

917 ‘Uqaylī (ed. Sarsāwī), Ḍuʿafāʾ, V, pp. 473-474, # 1755.
Marriage at six; consummation at nine. Hijrah: illness, shoulder-length hair. Swing.

Marital preparation.

ʾAbū ʿArūbah al-Ḥarrānī—Zakariyyāʿ—al-Firyābī—Sufyān—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:

Marriage at six; consummation at nine; together nine years.

Although Ibn Ḥibbān never explicitly expressed a judgement on any of these hadiths, their inclusion in his Šaḥīḥ strongly implies that he regarded them to be šaḥīḥ.

al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971)

The Palestinian Hadith critic Sulaymān b. ʿAḥmad al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) commented on two versions of the marital-age hadith, the first of which was the following:

ʾAḥmad b. Zuhayr related to us—he said: “ʿUbayd Allāh b. Saʿd al-Zuhrī related to us—he said: “ʿAbū al-Jawwāb related to us—he said: “Sufyān al-Tawrī related to us, from Hišām b.ʿUrwah, from his father, from ʿĀʾišah, who said: “The Messenger of God married me when I was a girl of six and I was taken to him when I was a girl of nine, and I lived with him nine [years].”

No one transmitted (lam yarwi) this hadith from Sufyān except for ʾAbū al-Jawwāb.918

In other words, ʾAbū al-Jawwāb was isolated or uncorroborated in his transmission of this hadith from an eminent authority, making him suspect. However, given the survival of parallel transmissions of this hadith—with the same elements and often very similar wordings—from Sufyān’s other students (Qabīṣah and al-Firyābī), recorded in several notable collections already before the time of al-Ṭabarānī (including the works of al-Buḵārī, ʾAbū ʿAwānah, and Ibn Ḥibbān), it is unclear what al-Ṭabarānī meant in this instance.

Al-Ṭabarānī also recorded the following:

Mūsá b. Hārūn related to us: “ʾIsḥāq b. Rāhwayh related to us: “Yaḥyá b. ʿĀdam reported to us: “ʿAbū Bakr b. ʿAyyāš related to us, from al-ʾAjlaḥ, from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿabī Mulaykhah, from ʾĀʾišah, that the Prophet married her when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years.””

No one transmitted (lam yarwi) this hadith from al-ʾAjlaḥ except for ʾAbū Bakr b. ʿAyyāš, nor [did anyone transmit it] from ʾAbū Bakr except for Yaḥyá b. ʿĀdam. ʾIsḥāq b. Rāhwayh transmitted it in isolation (tafarrada bi-hi). 919

Unlike al-Ṭabarānī’s previous comment, this one makes perfect sense: the transmission of this version of this hadith from al-ʾAjlaḥ to Ibn Rāhwayh is uncorroborated; both of the other two extant transmissions from al-ʾAjlaḥ mention that ʾĀʾišah was initially engaged to Jubayr b. Muṭʿim, and both are also unraised (i.e., do not explicitly reach all the way back to ʾĀʾišah herself). Thus, it would seem that al-Ṭabarānī regarded Ibn Rāhwayh’s transmission from al-ʾAjlaḥ with suspicion (and rightly so). 920

al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995)

In the ʾIlal of ʿAbd ʿUllah b. ʿAbd al-Muḥammad al-Barqānī (d. 425/1033-1034), a collection of questions posed to and answers given by his master, the Baghdadian Hadith critic ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995), the following is recorded:

He [i.e., al-Dāraquṭnī] was asked about the hadith of ʾAbū ʿUbaydah, from ʿAbd Allāh [b. Masʿūd]: “The Prophet married ʾĀʾišah when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years.” Then he [i.e., al-Dāraquṭnī] said: “ʾIsrāʾīl and Yūnus b. ʾabī ʾIsḥāq [both] transmit it, from ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq, from ʾAbū ʿUbaydah, from ʿAbd Allāh [b. Masʿūd], as a marfūʿ. Others transmitted it, from ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq, from ʾAbū ʿUbaydah, as a mursal. The mursal [version] is more likely (ʾašbah).” 921

In other words, al-Dāraquṭnī declared the unraised version of the hadith ascribed to ʾAbū ʾIsḥāq, from ʾAbū ʿUbaydah, to be more reliable—or, more specifically, better

919 Ibid., VIII, p. 108, # 8116.
920 See the section on al-ʾAjlaḥ in ch. 2.
preserved or more likely to reflect the original—than the raised version, which reaches all the way back to Ibn Mas‘ūd.

Al-Barqānī also recorded the following judgement from al-Dāraquṭnī, after a discussion of various faḍā’il hadiths about ‘Ā’īshah:


Clearly, al-Dāraquṭnī rejected ‘Ismā‘īl’s version of the marital-age hadith as weak or fabricated.

**al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014)**

The Khurasanian Hadith critic Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his *al-Mustadrak ‘alá al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*:


*Kawlah convinces the Prophet to propose to ʿĀʾišah and Sawdah; Kawlah goes to ʿAbū Bakr; ʿAbū Bakr sends for the Prophet and engages ʿĀʾišah to him; ʿĀʾišah is seven.*

Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb—ʿAḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār—ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿIdrīs—Muḥammad b. ʿAmr—Yaḥyā—‘Āʾišah:

*Kawlah convinces the Prophet to propose to ʿĀʾišah and Sawdah.*


*ʿĀʾišah was married at seven; consumption at nine; Prophet died when she was eighteen; she died under Muʿāwiyah, in the year 57.*

---

Ibn Bālawayh—‘Ibrāhīm b. ‘Ishāq—Muṣ'ab b. ‘Abd Allāh—‘Abd Allāh b. Mu‘āwiya—Hiṣām:

‘Urwah wrote to al-Walīd; marriage, after Kadījah’s death; dream-vision of ‘Āʾišah;
marriage at six; consummation, after the Hijrah, at nine; ‘Āʾišah’s death.

Ibn Baṭṭah—al-Ḥasan b. al-Jahm—al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj—al-Wāqīdī:

‘Āʾišah’s genealogy; marriage, during Sawwāl, in the tenth year of the Prophethood,
three years before the Hijrah; wedding, during Sawwāl, eight months after the Hijrah;
consummation at age nine.

Ibn Baṭṭah—al-Ḥasan b. al-Jahm—al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraj—al-Wāqīdī—‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Maymūn—Ḥabīb:

Kadījah’s death; ‘Āʾišah shown by angel; Prophet’s interactions with ‘Āʾišah’s family;
‘Āʾišah’s birth; ‘Āʾišah’s marriage at six; marriage to Sawdah.


‘Abd Allāh b. Ṣafwān and someone else came to ‘Āʾišah, who mentioned her nine special attributes;
angel brought image; marriage at seven; consummation at nine; virgin;
revelation in blanket; most-beloved; Quranic revelation and communal destruction;
seeing Gabriel; the Prophet’s death and the angel.

Although al-Ḥākim did not explicitly express judgements on most of these hadiths, their inclusion in his Mustadrak, which was supposed to supplement the Šaḥīḥayn of al-Buḵārī and Muslim, strongly implies that he regarded them to be šaḥīḥ, despite the fact that some versions contradict each other (e.g., “six” vs. “seven”).

In some instances, however, al-Ḥākim explicitly offered judgements on the hadiths that he cited. For example, regarding the version of Muḥammad b. ‘Amr’s hadith that he received from Maḵlād b. Jaʿfar, al-Ḥākim commented: “This is a sound (šaḥīḥ) hadith according to the criterion (šart) of Muslim, although neither of them [i.e., al-Buḵārī and
Muslim] cited it (lam yakrijā-hu).”\(^{923}\) In other words, even though neither al-Buḵārī or Muslim included this particular version in their collections, it was still deemed by al-Ḥākim to fulfil the soundness-criteria of Muslim.

Similarly, after citing a version of ʿIsnād’s faḍā’il hadith about ʿĀ’išah that he received from Ibn Bālawayh, al-Ḥākim commented: “This is a hadith [that is] sound (sahih) [in terms of] the isnād, although neither of them [i.e., al-Buḵārī and Muslim] cited it (lam yakrijā-hu).”\(^{924}\) In contrast to al-Dāraquṭnī, it seems like al-Ḥākim accepted ʿIsnād’s hadith.

‘Abū Nuʿaym (d. 430/1038)

The Persian Hadith critic ʿAbū Nuʿaym ʿAḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿĪṣahānī (d. 430/1038) recorded the following versions of the hadith in his al-Musnad al-Mustakraj ‘alā Ṣāḥih Muslim:

Muḥammad b. ʿIbrāhīm—al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad—Muḥammad b. ʿUṭmān—ʿAbū ʿUsāmah—Hišâm—ʿUrwah—ʿĀʾišah:

′Abū Bakr al-Ṭalḥi—ʿUbayd b. Ġannām—Ibn ʿabī Šaybah—ʿAbū ʿUsāmah—Hišâm—ʿUrwah—ʿʿāʾišah:

Marriage at six; consummation at nine; Ḥijrah; illness, shoulder-length hair; swing; marital preparation.


ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad—ʿAbū Yaḥyá al-Rāzī—Hannād—ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿʿāʾišah:

Ibn Ḥayyān—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥasan—Ḥārūn b. ʿIṣḥāq—ʿAbdah—Hišām—ʿUrwah—ʿʿāʾišah:

Marriage at six; consummation at nine; she still played dolls with her shy friends.

\(^{923}\) Ḥākim, Mustadrak, III, p. 443.

\(^{924}\) Ibid., VII, p. 30.

Marriage at seven; consummation at nine; her dolls were with her; Prophet died when she was eighteen.

Although ʾAbū Nuʿaym never explicitly expressed a judgement on any of these hadiths, their inclusion in his al-Musnad al-Mustakraj—intended as a collection of independent transmissions of the hadiths recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim—implies that he regarded them to be ṣaḥīḥ, even though they conflict on a core detail (i.e., “six” vs. “seven”).

**Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071)**

The Andalusian jurist and leading Mālikī Hadith scholar Yūsuf b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Barr al-Qurṭubī (d. 463/1071) recorded the following in his Kitāb al-Istīʿāb:

She [i.e., ʿĀʾīshah] was a girl of six years, [although] it is [also] said: “…girl of seven...” And he consummated the marriage with her in Madinah, when she was a girl of nine: I do not know of them [i.e., the scholars] having disagreed thereon (lāʾaʿalamu iktalafū fī dālika).⁹²⁵

In other words, whilst the scholars—presumably meaning Sunnī scholars—disagree on whether ʿĀʾīshah’s marital engagement occurred at six or seven, the part about her marital consummation at nine is universally accepted. This implies that the marital-age hadith in general—above all, the version of Hišām—was widely regarded as sound.

**al-Baḡawī (d. 516/1122)**

The Khurasanian Hadith scholar al-Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd al-Baḡawī (d. 516/1122) recorded many versions of the marital-age hadith in his Šarḥ al-Sunnah, some of which

---

⁹²⁵ Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (ed. Bijāwī), Istīʿāb, part 4, p. 1881, # 4029.
he commented upon. For example, after citing a version deriving from al-Šāfiʿī, from Sufyān b. ʿUaynah, from Hišām, from ‘Urwah, from ‘Āʾišah, which included the ‘dolls’ element, al-Bağawī commented:

This is a hadith whose soundness is agreed-upon (muttafaq ‘alá siḥhati-hi). Muḥḥammad [al-Buḫārī] cited it (‘akraja-hu) from Muḥammad b. Yusuf [al-Firyābī], from Sufyān [al-Tawrī], and both of them [i.e., al-Buḫārī and Muslim] cited it (‘akrafa-hu) via [other] paths of transmission (ṭuruq) from Hišām.926

Already with al-Bağawī, the phrase “agreed-upon” (muttafaq ‘alay-hi) had clearly acquired its classical Hadith-scholarly technical meaning: that the hadith in question had been cited by both al-Buḫārī and Muslim in their Ṣaḥīhayn.

After citing ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s version of the marital-age hadith, al-Bağawī also commented: “This is a sound (ṣaḥīḥ) hadith, and with this 'isnād.”927

Finally, after citing ‘Alī b. Mushir’s redaction of Hišām’s hadith, al-Bağawī also commented: “This is a sound (ṣaḥīḥ) hadith.”928

Ibn Qudāmah (d. 620/1223)

The Levantine jurist and leading Ḥanbalī scholar ‘Abd Allāh b. ʿAḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah (d. 620/1223) recorded the following in his al-Muĝni:

‘Āʾišah said: “The Prophet married me when I was a girl of six and consummated the marriage with me when I was a girl of nine.” [This hadith is] agreed upon (muttafaq ‘alay-hi).929

Once again, the authority of the Ṣaḥīhayn was appealed to in order to establish the soundness of the marital-age hadith (in this case, evidently Hišām’s simple version).

926 Baḡawī (ed. ‘Arnaʿūt), Šarḥ al-Sunnah, IX, p. 35.
927 Ibid., p. 36.
928 Ibid., XII, p. 136.
Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 774/1373)

The famous Levantine Hadith scholar, exegete, and biographer ʾIsmāʿīl b. ʿUmar b. Kaṭīr (d. 774/1373) recorded the following in his al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah, after citing a transmission from Hiṣām, from his father ʿUrwah:

This which was said by ʿUrwah is [a hadith with an ʾisnād that is] discontinuous (mursal) in appearance [in this] context, as we established earlier, but it is as good as [a hadith with an ʾisnād that is] continuous (muttaṣil) in reality. His statement [that] “he married her when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine” is that concerning which there is no difference of opinion between the people [of knowledge] (lā kilāf fī bayna al-nās); it has been firmly established (qad ṭabata) in the sound [sources] (al-ṣiḥāḥ) and others.930

Clearly, Ibn Kaṭīr regarded even the mursal or munqatḥ versions of Hiṣām’s hadith to be ṣahīḥ. More broadly, the soundness of Hiṣām’s hadith was clearly seen as a matter of consensus between Sunnī scholars.

Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451)

The Syro-Egyptian jurist Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAḥmad al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451), a leading Ḥanafī scholar, recorded the following in his al-Bināyah Šarḥ al-Hidāyah:

The hadith of ʿĀʾišah is famous (mašhūr) and close to being universally-transmitted (qarīb ʾilā al-tawātur); verily he [i.e., the Prophet] married her [i.e., ʿĀʾišah] when she was a girl of six years and consummated the marriage with her when she was a girl of nine years, and she was with him nine years.931

In this instance, mašhūr may be meant in the technical sense of classical Hadith scholarship: that the given hadith is widely-transmitted, but not to the level of

931 Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī (ed. Šaʿbān), Bināyah, V, p. 90.
That this is so is indicated by al-ʿAynī’s subsequent, explicit statement that the marital-age hadith (here clearly meaning the versions of Hišām and/or ʿIsrāʾīl) is nearly mutawātir. Either way, al-ʿAynī clearly regarded the hadith to be ṣaḥīḥ.

Conclusion

After its origins and proliferation in Iraq and consequent spread across the Abbasid Caliphate, the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marital age was subjected to the evaluations of the emerging Hadith critics (nuqqāḍ al-ḥadīṯ) within the broader proto-Sunnī Hadith-partisan movement (ʿaṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ). Given that most of the leading Hadith critics were the students of—or in scholarly and identitarian continuity with—the early major transmitters (and creators) of the marital-age hadith, it is not surprising that the hadith in general ended up being unanimously accepted as ‘sound’ (ṣaḥīḥ). Not all versions of the hadith were rubberstamped as such, however: the proto-Sunnī Hadith critics and later Sunnī Hadith scholars alike were confronted with a profusion of different—sometimes conflicting—transmissions and iterations thereof, forcing them to adjudicate therebetween. Thus, whilst the hadiths of Hišām, al-ʿAʾmaš, ʿIsrāʾīl (from ʿAbū ʿIsḥāq), and ‘Abd al-Razzāq (from al-Zuhrī) were generally accepted as ṣaḥīḥ, some specific transmissions from ʿIsrāʾīl and ʿAbū ʿIsḥāq more broadly—specifically, those ascribed all the way back to Ibn Masʿūd—were identified as ‘raised’ (i.e., having been subject to rafʿ), and there was disagreement as to whether or not ʿIsmāʾīl’s fadāʾīl hadith was ṣaḥīḥ. Overall, there seems to be little consistency or systematicity in the evaluations of the Hadith critics: instances of rafʿ, ʾidrāj, sariqah, and kaḏib in numerous other versions of the hadith either went unnoticed or were positively accepted, even when they should have been obvious (i.e., by simply comparing the versions).932 All of this is consistent with Melchert’s observation that early Hadith critics relied upon “intuition” and “a case-by-case, seat-of-the-pants approach to determining what was

---

932 In particular, the various raisings of Hišām, his students, and their students, including ʿAbd al-Razzāq, unto ʿĀʾišah; the raisings of ʿIsrāʾīl’s version, and other ascriptions via ʿAbū ʿIṣḥāq, unto ʿĀʾišah; the insertion of extraneous elements into various transmissions from Hišām; the interpolations of ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah’s hadith, including the “seven” versions and Yahyá b. Yahyá’s false ascription; ʿAbṭār’s borrowing from ʿAbū Muʿāwiyah and false ascription via ʿAbū ʿIṣḥāq; etc. For all of these, see Chapter 2 of the present work.
sound and what was not.” Alternatively (or perhaps additionally), the Hadith critics were deeply committed to the general reliability of their traditionist forebears, resulting in widespread—though probably synchronous or independent—motivated reasoning in their evaluations. To put it simply, the Hadith critics were collectively motivated to accept the dubious transmissions of the likes of Hišām, resulting in an uneven or inconsistent application of their method. Either way, most of the fabrication, interpolation, and distortion in the marital-age hadith went unregistered or was simply ignored.

933 Melchert, Ahmad, 56.
934 For some similar ideas (i.e., a general tendency to downplay the problems with tradents), see Juynboll, Muslim tradition, ch. 5.
Chapter 6: Broader Implications for Hadith and Hadith Studies

Having thus intervened in the methodological debates of Hadith Studies, pinpointed the probable origins of the hadith of ʿĀʾīšah’s marital age, reconstructed its growth and spread across the Abbasid Caliphate in minute detail, and tracked its reception by the early Hadith critics, we are now in a position to reflect on the broader implications of all of this for Hadith and Hadith Studies. In other words: what is the significance of this research? Why should we care?

Implications for Modern Methods and Debates

To begin with, I have shown that some iterations of the ICMA are vacuous, arbitrary, or otherwise unsound, especially when it comes to establishing the independence of texts. To solve this problem, I proposed or identified a more rigorous and defensible version of the method, appealing to the distinctiveness of PCL and CL traditions and our established background knowledge on the rise of writing and rigour in the transmission of Hadith. The present study has thus contributed to refining a key methodology within the field of Hadith Studies, in addition to a large set of relevant, corroborating data: time and again, my analysis of PCL and CL traditions within the marital-age material or corpus revealed recurring correlations, with particular wordings usually lining up with particular tradents. (I found this to be the case even with hadiths with short matns, thereby confirming Motzki’s suggestion that the ICMA can also be applied to such material, not just hadiths with lengthy matns.935) I have also shown that the results of ICMAs should always be subjected to further form-critical and geographical analyses, lest the ultimate character and provenance of hadiths be overlooked: false ʾisnāds may be exposed thereby, and insights about the common origins or ur-forms of hadiths can be revealed even in the absence of ʾisnāds.

My findings are also relevant to the general theories and models of specific scholars. For example, the results of my ICMA—in particular, the tendency for variation to decrease over time in Hadith transmission—are broadly consistent with the theses of both Schoeler and Yanagihashi regarding the general development of Hadith culture and transmission: in the first case, that major reworkings (in the middle of the 8th Century CE) gave way to lesser reworkings (at the turn of the 9th Century CE), which gave way to mere paraphrasing (in the 9th Century CE) and finally verbatim transmission (above all in the 10th Century CE); and, in the second case, that the alteration even of fundamental aspects of hadiths was common and therefore probably accepted amongst earlier traditionists (during the 8th Century CE), but not later traditionists (during the 9th and 10th Centuries CE).

The results of my form-critical, geographical, and historical-critical analyses also have a bearing on debates about the role of CLs: in the case of the marital-age hadith at least, the earliest CLs (operating from the mid-to-late 8th Century CE) appear to have mostly created their respective versions from their own minds and/or by borrowing and reworking the material of their contemporaries, rather than accurately—or even inaccurately—transmitting material from their cited sources or predecessors. In this respect, my findings corroborate Schacht and Juynboll more than Motzki et al.

The results of all of these analyses also have a bearing on debates about the general authenticity of Hadith and the presumption of skepticism. For example, according to Najam Haider, the last few decades of ICMAs have shown that “most traditions are reliably dateable to the early 2nd/8th century” and that “traditions were being recorded without wholesale fabrication in the early 2nd/8th century Muslim world”, such that “the burden of proof with respect to these texts falls on those who claim fabrication.” On the basis of my findings at least, and even on a careful reading of past ICMAs, this assessment needs to be seriously modified: whilst it is true that most hadiths can be presumed to derive from sources operating in the middle of the 8th Century CE (i.e., the early 2nd Century AH), many can be shown to be later borrowings or dives, and almost all can be shown to have undergone reworking or

936 Schoeler (trans. Vagelpohl), The Biography of Muhammad, passim.
937 Yanagihashi, Studies, passim.
938 For this debate, see Chapter 1 of the present work.
940 Ibid., 315.
941 Ibid., n. 31.
alteration in the course of transmission, at least from the middle of the 8th Century CE to the middle the 9th. In other words, whilst there is a general tendency for post-CL traddents to accurately record some data from their cited sources, and whilst the full-blown creation of new ‘isnāds for matns is relatively uncommon after the middle of the 8th Century CE, accretions, errors, contaminations, interpolations, raisings, and other alterations were all extremely common until at least the 9th Century CE, which means that the extant form of any given hadith cannot be assumed to accurately represent the original formulation of a CL or 8th-Century source in any given instance. Thus, whilst most hadiths can be presumed to derive from sources operating in the middle of the 8th Century CE, their extant forms should also be presumed to be reworked or altered.

My survey of the reception of the marital-age hadith by the proto-Sunni Hadith critics also exposes a general lack of systematicity or consistency in their evaluations of variants and transmissions, which is in turn consistent with Melchert’s suggestion that they approached Hadith in an ad hoc and intuitive fashion.

My general findings are also relevant to the more specific conclusions of some scholars—most notably, past assessments regarding the authenticity of the marital-age hadith: not only can the hadith not be attributed all the way back to ‘Āʾišah, there are strong reasons to suspect that it was created later, contra al-ʿAlbānī, Juynboll, al-Munajjid, and Brown. Conversely, my findings—above all, the indications of an Iraqi provenance—corroborate the conclusions of a string of researchers and scholars from the last few decades, including Shanavas, Abdul-Raof, and Amin. My findings also confirm Schoeler’s specific conclusion that a certain version of the ‘ifk hadith is interpolated, and conflict with Anthony’s specific conclusion that the ‘letter’ version of Hišām’s marital-age can traced back to ‘Urwah, not to mention that such letters can be trusted in general.

Implications for Hadith and History

My general findings also have at least three consequences for the history of Hadith and early Islam more broadly. Firstly, if my critical analysis of the origins of the marital-age

---

942 For the views of all of these figures, see the Intro. of the present work.
943 For both of these, see Chapter 2 of the present work.
hadith and reconstruction of its development are correct, I have shown, in fairly minute
detail, how a false hadith could arise, spread, diversify, and attain universal acceptance
within early Sunnī Hadith scholarship. In other words, even a near-\textit{mutawātir} hadith
can be, and can be shown to be, inauthentic, in very concrete and specific ways,
accounting for all extant versions, variants, and transmissions.\footnote{For some notable earlier attempts of this kind, see Juynboll, \textit{Muslim tradition}, ch. 3; \textit{id.}, \textit{'(Re)Appraisal'}, 322 ff.}

Secondly, in the course of my ICMA, as I concurrently consulted Sunnī biographical
dictionaries and other tradent-related prosopographies every step of the way,\footnote{This data was originally included in ch. 2 of the present work, but had to be omitted due to limitations of space. However, my findings can be easily reproduced, by comparing the results of my ICMA regarding any specific tradent to the Hadith-critical judgements thereof in the \textit{rijāl} works.} I found very little correlation between traditional Sunnī gradings of specific tradents, on
the one hand, and the observable or demonstrable quality or state of their transmissions, on the other: alleged \textit{tiqāt} sometimes transmitted accurately and
sometimes not; alleged \textit{sāliḥūn} sometimes transmitted accurately and sometimes not;
alleged \textit{duʿafāʿ} sometimes transmitted accurately and sometimes not; and so forth. Of
course, this is not to say that there was no correlation at all: for example, al-Wāqidī was
generally regarded as a \textit{kāḍḍāb} by later Hadith critics and, as it happens, all of his
versions of the marital-age hadith are fabricated, interpolated, or otherwise highly
suspect. In general, however, a tradent’s being judged \textit{tiqah} or \textit{tabt} did not actually
predict that their transmissions would be accurate—more often than not, their
transmissions were interpolated, contaminated, or otherwise distorted, ranging from
changes to the ʾ\textit{isnād} to changes to the details and even the constitutive elements of
the \textit{matn}.

Thirdly and finally, my general findings have an obvious implication for the
historical Muḥammad: there is no longer any reason to think that Muḥammad married
‘Āʾišah—and consummated the marriage with her—when she was a young girl. In this
respect, my research is actually superfluous: even if the marital-age hadith can be
traced back to ‘Āʾišah (i.e., actually reflects her own words), there are strong reasons
to doubt its authenticity (i.e., that ‘Āʾišah was accurately self-reporting on the matter).
This is not because of conflicting chronologies or any of the other considerations
commonly adduced in this regard, but much more simply, because it is extremely
unlikely that ‘Āʾišah would have known—or even could have known—her own age. This

\footnote{For some notable earlier attempts of this kind, see Juynboll, \textit{Muslim tradition}, ch. 3; \textit{id.}, \textit{'(Re)Appraisal'}, 322 ff.}

\footnote{This data was originally included in ch. 2 of the present work, but had to be omitted due to limitations of space. However, my findings can be easily reproduced, by comparing the results of my ICMA regarding any specific tradent to the Hadith-critical judgements thereof in the \textit{rijāl} works.}
is because ʿĀʾišah, in her formative years, grew up in a society that was still stateless (or only just beginning to acquire a state, through the efforts of Muḥammad)\textsuperscript{946} and certainly lacked a bureaucracy and bureaucratic culture,\textsuperscript{947} not to mention a scholarly or literary tradition.\textsuperscript{948} Such societies usually pay little heed to dates of birth and age (since they serve no real function) and lack the means to record such data in any case (i.e., birth certificates, government records, personal diaries, etc.). This has been found time and again in rural, tribal, and nomadic societies around the world, including: certain Native American societies in the United States at the beginning of the 19th Century\textsuperscript{949}; the Ababda of Egypt at the beginning of the 19th Century\textsuperscript{950}; the Samoyeds of Siberia at the beginning of the 20th Century\textsuperscript{951}; the bedouins of the Negev in the early 20th Century\textsuperscript{952}; the Amhara of Ethiopia as of 1995\textsuperscript{953}; the rural population of Papua New Guinea as of 2002\textsuperscript{954}; the Tarahumara of Mexico as of 2015\textsuperscript{955}; the general

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For the stateless condition of the Hijaz at the time, see, for example, Crone, \textit{Meccan Trade}, 145-147, 236.
\item For the belated rise of such a tradition (i.e., over the subsequent two centuries), see Jonathan E. Brockopp, \textit{Muhammad’s Heirs: The Rise of Muslim Scholarly Communities}, 622–950 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
\item Henry R. Schoolcraft, \textit{Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Collected and prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Part III} (Philadelphia, USA: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1853), 238: “As the Indians do not know their age, we cannot tell the exact time or age of bearing children”.
\item Frédéric Cailliaud, ‘Travels in the Oasis of Thebes and El Dakel’, in \textit{New Voyages and Travels}, Volume 7 (London, UK: Richard Phillips & Co.), 47: “They never know their own age: when questioned, their answer is, "I was born some years before or after such a pacha, such a catastrophe," &c.”
\item Helmut V. Muhsam, \textit{Beduin of the Negev: Eight Demographic Studies} (Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1966), 37: “the beduin themselves do not know their age.”
\item Reidulf K. Molvaer, \textit{Socialization and social control in Ethiopia} (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 89: “Few Amhara children know their date of birth.”
\item Deborah Carloy, \textit{Mama Kuma: One Woman, Two Cultures} (St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 2002), 160, n. 2: “Most village-born New Guineans do not know their date of birth.”
\item Alfonso Paredes & Fructuoso Irigoyen Rascón, \textit{Tarahumara Medicine: Ethnobotany and Healing Among the Rarámuri of Mexico} (Norman, USA: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 96: “few persons know their date of birth unless they were born during a holiday. After a couple of years have passed, parents seem to have forgotten the birth dates of their offspring.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
population of the Solomon Islands as of 2016\textsuperscript{956}; the Khasi of Bangladesh as of 2018\textsuperscript{957};
the general population of northern Benin as of 2018\textsuperscript{958}; the rural population of Somalia as of 2018\textsuperscript{959}; and many others.\textsuperscript{960} If even modern pre-bureaucratic and pre-literary societies do not—or indeed cannot—keep track of dates of birth and ages, this is all the more reason to think that ʿĀʾišah and her contemporaries in early 7th-Century Hijaz did not or could not as well. That this was so is strengthened by the belated rise of dating—and any interest in dating—in early Muslim society, which can be demonstrated in at least three ways. Firstly, it was only after the Great Conquests that a consistent (Hijrah-based) calendar and chronology was adopted amongst the Arabs and Muslims—and even then, it was adopted gradually and sporadically.\textsuperscript{961} Secondly, early authorities on the life of Muḥammad and Islamic history more broadly made little-to-no effort to date their reports or arrange them in chronological order—it was only from middle of the 8th Century CE onward that such efforts were made, at least with any kind of consistency.\textsuperscript{962} Thirdly, the birth-dates and even death-dates of early traditionists (operating in the 7th and even the 8th Century CE) had to be inferred by later Hadith-oriented prosopographers based on positions in ‘\textit{isnāds}, given that such data was simply often not known or not recorded in earlier times.\textsuperscript{963} Once again, an \textit{a fortiori} argument applies: if the post-Conquest Arabs and Muslims, the early


\textsuperscript{957} Rekha Pande & Theo van der Weide, \textit{Handbook of Research on Multicultural Perspectives on Gender and Aging} (Hershey, USA: IGI Global, 2018), 144: “Most of the participants did not know their date of birth and therefore did not know their age.”

\textsuperscript{958} Erdmute Alber, \textit{Transfers of Belonging: Child Fostering in West Africa in the 20th Century} (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2018), 213, n. 34: “Many older people in northern Benin do not know their date of birth and therefore cannot say exactly how old they are.”

\textsuperscript{959} Carol Bohmer & Amy Shuman, \textit{Political Asylum Deceptions: The Culture of Suspicion} (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 43: “In Somalia and other African countries, people born or married in rural areas are unlikely to have birth certificates; many of them do not even know their date of birth.”


authorities on Islamic history, and even early traditionists generally had no interest in dates, dating, and chronology, this is all the more reason to think that the earliest Muslims likewise lacked such interests. It is thus extremely unlikely that ʿĀʾišah and her contemporaries would have known her age: it was not the sort of thing that people in such conditions usually cared about, nor was it something that they had any realistic means of recording. Even if ʿĀʾišah in general possessed an extraordinary memory (as is sometimes claimed), this would be of no avail for data that she likely never memorised in the first place. The hadith of ʿĀʾišah's marital age—including the assertion that her marriage was consummated when she was nine—is thus necessarily the product of speculation or guesswork, whether by ʿĀʾišah or someone later.964

If indeed ʿĀʾišah was married to Muḥammad as a virgin, it is more likely that she was twelve-to-fourteen years old at the time of her marital consummation, at least on the basis of general historical prior probability.965 This was reportedly the average age-range for menarche and, consequently, the average and/or minimum age of marriage for girls in Ancient and Mediaeval societies around the world, including Egypt,966 the Near East,967 Crete,968 Greece,969 the Roman Empire,970 Roman-era Jewish

964 The notion that the hadith authentically goes back to ʿĀʾišah but is still erroneous was also expressed by al-ʿIdlibī, albeit on different grounds; see the Intro. of the present work.

965 By contrast, we have no reliable data on early 7th-Century Arabian marital trends, given all of the source problems outlined in Chapter 1 of the present work. See also the discussion in Chapter 3 of the present work concerning a relevant report. Cf. Anthony, Muhammad, 115: "Based on the available data, it appears that ʿĀʾishah's age at her first marriage was not an extreme outlier in the seventh-century Hijāz." Anthony’s "data" (ibid., n. 39) in fact comprises a single questionable datum: an unsubstantiated report about ʿAfṣah bt. ʿUmar's first marriage.

966 Charles Freeman, Egypt, Greece and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 88: "Marriage took place for women at the onset of puberty, between 12 and 14".

967 Milton Eng, The Days of Our Years: A Lexical Semantic Study of the Life Cycle in Biblical Israel (New York, USA: T & T Clark International, 2011), 55: "Puberty is marked by the onset of menstruation, usually in the girl's twelfth year. At age 16 or even less, the typical woman is married and begins bearing children."

968 Ronald F. Willetts, The Law Code of Gortyn (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1967), 10: "The age of puberty in females may have generally been considered to be twelve in the light of that passage of the Code which gives the marriageable age of an heiress as twelve."

969 Aristotle (trans. D’Arcy W. Thompson), The Works of Aristotle: Works translated into English under the editorship of W. D. Ross, Volume 4: Historia Animalium (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1910), vii-viii: "When twice seven years old, in the most of cases, the male begins to engender seed; and at the same time hair appears upon the pubes, in like manner, so Alcmaeon of Croton remarks, as plants first blossom and then seed. […] At the same age in the female, the breasts swell and the so-called catamenia commence to flow; and this fluid resembles fresh blood." Don P. M. Weerakkody, ‘Demography’, in Nigel Wilson (eds.), Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece (New York, USA: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 214, col. 1: "early marriage for women" occurred in their "mid- to late teens".

970 Heather M. Prescott, ‘VI.8 ~ Adolescent Nutrition and Fertility’, in Kenneth F. Kiple & Kriemhild C. Ornelas (eds.), The Cambridge World History of Food, Volume 2 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1454, col. 1: "Reviews of Greek and Roman textbooks, for example, indicate that the
average age of menarche in the ancient world was about 13.5 years”. Ibid., 1454, col. 2: “Roman law linked the age of marriage with the age of puberty, which was believed to be 14 for boys and 12 for girls”. Christopher Kelly, The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107: in Roman Egypt, “women married early; on average at just under 20 years”. Ibid.: in the Western provinces, there was “an average age at first marriage in the late teens or early 20s”. Saskia Hin, The Demography of Roman Italy: Population Dynamics in an Ancient Conquest Society 201 BCE–14 CE (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 151: “Ancient [Greek and Roman] authors suggest that average age at menarche was around 14.” Ibid., 175: the average age of marriage for women was “mid-teens”.


972 Baugh, Minor Marriage, 28: “Byzantine law required that a girl attain the age of thirteen before contracting a marriage.”

973 Ibid., 28-29: “Although investigation into Sasanian-era (224–651 CE) child marriage practices unearths scant information, the age of twelve is again important for girls. According to the Avesta, the age of majority was clearly set at fifteen for boys as well as girls; Middle Persian civil law allowed marriage at age nine, provided that consummation wait until age twelve.” For a notable minority or alternative Sasanid tradition about marital consummation at age nine, see Chapter 3 of the present work.

974 Ps.-Huang Ti (trans. Ilza Veith), Huang Ti Nei Ching Su Wen: The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine (Berkeley, USA: University of California Press, 2002), 98-99: “When she reaches her fourteenth year she begins to menstruate”. Given that this lines up with data from around the world, it should not be rejected as a mere trope of “numerical concordances” and “parallelism” (pace Veith, in ibid., 20).


976 B. Datta & D. Gupta, ‘The age at menarche in ancient India as compared to the data from classical Greece and Rome’, Pediatric Research, Volume 15, Number 1 (1981), 83: “Almost all of the legislators in their writings pointed out that the age of menarche was at 12 although full completion of puberty took place at age 16.” Krishna C. Sagar, Foreign Influence on Ancient India (New Delhi, India: Northern Book Centre, 1992), 290: “during the Mauryan period... girls were being married at the age of 14 or 15.”

lifestyles and access to better diets), “the average age at which the majority of the female population entered their fertile phase could have been substantially higher.”\textsuperscript{978} Mutatis mutandis, ʿĀʾišah, a girl growing up under the stresses of the Hijrah, the conflict with Makkah, and the general impoverished conditions and resources of early 7th-Century Hijaz, probably also reached menarche at or after age fourteen. Thus, if the Arab society of the Hijaz followed the general global pattern of marrying off girls following menarche, it is probable that that ʿĀʾišah was at least fourteen years old—and plausibly even older—at the time of her marital consummation with Muḥammad.

Of course, all of this is extremely probabilistic and tentative, but as is so often the case with modern attempts to reconstruct the earliest phase of Islamic history, such uncertainty cannot be avoided. In other words, there is nothing exceptional about this particular case: in light of the profound problems of the Islamic literary sources and the limitations of the available methods of analysis, our understanding of the life and times of Muḥammad and his followers necessarily remains extremely provisional.

Conclusion

The hadith-tradition of ʿĀʾišah bt. ʿabī Bakr's marital age is a widely-transmitted family of some 200+ reports that can be found all across the Islamic—in particular, the Sunnī—literary corpus, above all in Hadith, historical, and legal collections. Most versions of the hadith state that ʿĀʾišah (d. 57-58/677-678) was betrothed to the Prophet Muḥammad (d. 11/632) at the age of six or seven and that her marriage was consummated at the age of nine, although some versions instead state that she was betrothed at nine. The majority have 'īsnāds that reach all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself, almost always via a string of Madinan or Kufan intermediaries; a few reach instead back to her Hijazo-Kufan contemporary, ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (d. 32-33/652-654), always via a string of Kufan intermediaries; quite a few only reach as far back as ʿĀʾišah's students amongst the Followers (tābiʿūn), above all, her Madinan nephew ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 93-101/711-720) and her Kufan student ʿAbū ʿUbaydah ʿĀmir b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 81/700-701), respectively via Madinan and Kufan intermediaries; and a small handful claim different regional genealogies or sources altogether.

On the basis of a critical, consistent, and falsifiable version of the 'īsnād-cum-matn analysis (ICMA), applied to all of these extant versions, several underlying redactions of the hadith can be reconstructed and traced back to a series of common links (CLs) operating from the middle of the 8th Century CE to the middle of the 9th, one of the earliest—and certainly the most prolific—being the Madino-Iraqian traditionist Hišām b. ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 146-147/763-765). By contrast, the hadith cannot be credibly traced all the way back to ʿĀʾišah herself, nor even to her students and immediate successors—at least not on the basis of an ICMA.

In fact, the notion that the hadith derives from any major figure in 7th- or 8th-Century Madinah, or that it predates the middle of the 8th Century CE even in Iraq, is flatly contradicted by the available evidence, on several points. Firstly, all of the earliest Madinan legal and biographical works—which are generally overflowing with transmissions from ʿĀʾišah, ʿUrwa, Hišām, and all of the other early alleged Madinan sources for the marital-age hadith, and for which the marital-age hadith would have been expedient—uniformly fail to cite it, which is straightforwardly inconsistent with its early circulation in Madinah at the hands of ʿĀʾišah et al. Secondly, all of the earliest
CLs for this hadith are Iraqi or moved to Iraq (including Hišām), and in general, Iraqians overwhelmingly predominate in its early transmission and dissemination. Thirdly, the earliest Kufan legal collections—which are generally overflowing with transmissions from the alleged early Kufan transmitters of the marital-age hadith, and for which the marital-age hadith would have been expedient—likewise uniformly omit all mention of the hadith, which is straightforwardly inconsistent with its earlier circulation amongst the Companions and Followers of Kufah. All of this strongly suggests that the hadith originated amongst the traditionists of Iraq during the middle of the 8th Century CE, lacking earlier roots in Iraq and Madinah alike, or in other words: Hišām and the other early CLs in Iraq falsely ascribed their respective redactions of the hadith back to their Madinan and Kufan predecessors. In Hišām’s case, this occurred after he moved from Madinah (where he left no credible trace of the hadith) to Kufah and then Baghdad (where he transmitted the hadith to a vast array of students), during the early Abbasid period.

Hišām’s status as a veritable super-CL in the transmission of the hadith—far overshadowing even his fellow CLs—immediately marks him out as a plausible candidate for the hadith’s ultimate originator, which is consistent with the more archaic-seeming character of his original, simple redaction (being an ascription to a Follower rather than a Companion). This is corroborated by the striking way in which Hišām’s simple version is the strongest candidate for reflecting or being the ur-hadith that inferably lies behind all extant iterations of the hadith-tradition as a whole: his version alone can explain the rise of (i.e., could plausibly give rise to) virtually every other variant. To all of this can be added the fact that Hišām had the strongest motive of all of the CLs to create such a hadith, since it served as ammunition not just for the proto-Sunnī cause, but for the defence of his family in particular, against proto-Šī‘ī attacks on ʿĀʾišah: her young age at marriage served to highlight or emphasise her virginity, which in turn served as her most striking unique characteristic vis-à-vis the Prophet’s other wives, which in turn justified the proto-Sunnī claim that she was the Prophet’s favourite wife. All of this perfectly matches the abovementioned circumstances of Hišām’s creation of the hadith: it occurred after he moved from Madinah to Kufah, which was then the centre of Shi‘ism. In short, on the basis of a combined form-critical, geographical, and historical-critical analysis, it seems likely
that the marital-age hadith emerged in the polemical and sectarian milieu of early Abbasid Iraq.

As the hadith diversified in Iraq and spread to the other provinces of the Abbasid Caliphate, it acquired a number of false, secondary, divergent ḍānṣīd̄s, as some traditionists across the empire concocted, inferred, or perhaps even accidently created alternative—usually local and/or familial—paths of transmission for their own versions. Despite this, most regions of the empire openly received their versions of the hadith from Iraqians or those who explicitly received it from Iraqians, or in other words: Iraqians were the chief agents of the hadith’s transmission in the historical or verifiable era of the late 8th and early 9th Centuries CE, whilst Madinans are only present in the legendary or ascribed-to era of the 7th and early 8th Centuries CE, in terms of where they appear in the relevant ḍānṣīd̄s.

Because the marital-age hadith was disseminated by the leading Iraqi traditionists of the mid-to-late 8th Century CE, its acceptance by the subsequent proto-Sunnī Hadith critics of the 9th Century CE was practically inevitable: the latter venerated the former and saw themselves as a continuation of the same scholarly and communal tradition, and simply inherited their transmissions. Thus, although some versions of the marital-age hadith—above all, those with conflicting contents and/or those transmitted by less famous or less respected sources—were subject to scrutiny and criticism, many versions were judged to be ‘sound’ (ṣaḥīḥ), usually without any explanation and always without any kind of real argumentation.

Some of these findings have broader implications for both the modern methods and debates of Hadith Studies, on the one hand, and the history of Hadith and early Islam, on the other. In the first case, the present work has variously: refined and defended the ICMA; demonstrated the necessity of subjecting the results of any ICMA to a further geographical and form-critical analysis; contributed a large body of evidence for the hypothesis that Hadith transmission evolved from earlier imprecision to later precision; contributed a large body of evidence for the hypothesis that the alteration and interpolation of hadiths was common until at least the early 9th Century CE; and contributed further evidence for the hypothesis that the proto-Sunnī Hadith critics were unsystematic or inconsistent in their evaluations of Hadith, plausibly relying on intuition and/or a general veneration for their hallowed forebears. In the second case, the present work has variously: demonstrated how even a near-mutawāt̄ir hadith
could have arisen and spread during the 8th Century CE; demonstrated—albeit implicitly—that the reliable reputations of at least 8th- and 9th-Century tradents do not reliably predict actual reliability in transmission; and finally (and most obviously), demonstrated that the hadith of ʿĀʾišah’s marriage to Muḥammad as a child is likely an 8th-Century polemical creation. Even if the hadith truly derived from ʿĀʾišah herself, however, it would probably still be false: given the conditions of Hijazian society at the time, it is highly unlikely that ʿĀʾišah or anyone else would have—or even could have—known her age at the time of her marriage, especially decades after the event. On the basis of general historical probability, it is more likely that ʿĀʾišah’s marriage was consummated when she was twelve-to-fourteen years old, if not older, although, as with so many other aspects of early Islamic history, there is currently no way to know for sure.
Primary Sources

'Ābanūsī, Muḥammad b. 'Aḥmad b. al- (ed. Ḳālīl Ḥasan Ḳammādah), al-Maṣyakḥah, 2 vols. (Riyadh, KSA: King Saud University, 1421 A.H.).


— (ed. Fārūq Ḳammādah), Kitāb al-Ḍu’afā’ (Damascus, Syria: Dār al-Qalam, 2010).


—, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3 vols. in 1 (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000).


فيروبي، جافر بن محمد بن عبد الوهاب بن نادر، *فواذِد فيروبي* (بومباي، الهند: دار الأعلام، 1992).

هكيم بن نسابة، محمد بن عبد الله (الدال)، *الدال بن العبد* (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1983).

---


---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1993).

---


---


---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 2004).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 2005).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 2001).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 2000).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1999).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1998).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1997).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1996).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1995).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1994).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1993).

---


---


---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1990).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1989).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1988).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1987).

---

*الدوامِة* (الدوامِة) (دار الأبحاث الاستعمارية، الإسكندرية، مصر: دار الأعلام، 1986).


Maymūn b. ʾĪsāq al-Šawwāf, *al-Juʿ* fi-hi min Ḥadīth ‘Abī ʾUmar al-ʿUṯāridīyy wa-Ǧayri-hi, Hadith, available online at the Mawsūʿat al-Ḥadīth website: https://hadith.maktaba.co.in/single-book/1304/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A1-%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%87/78041/42


Secondary Sources

Amin, Yasmin, ‘Age is just a number or is it? ‘Aʾisha’s age between Hadith and History’ – paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of the British Association for Islamic Studies, *Panel 3: Historical and Literary Approaches to Hadith*, the British Association for Islamic Studies, London (11th April/2016), 1-9.


—, The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2000).


Birkeland, Harris, Old Muslim Opposition against Interpretation of the Koran (Oslo, Norway: I Komrnisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1955).


Bohmer, Carol, & Amy Shuman, Political Asylum Deceptions: The Culture of Suspicion (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).


Carrier, Richard C., On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason to Doubt (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014).

Carlyon, Deborah, Mama Kuma: One Woman, Two Cultures (St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 2002).

—, Roman, provincial and Islamic law: The origins of the Islamic patronate (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
Datta, B., & D. Gupta, 'The age at menarche in ancient India as compared to the data from classical Greece and Rome', Pediatric Research, Volume 15, Number 1 (1981), 83.


—, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007).


—, ‘Nāfiʿ, the mawlā of Ibn ʿUmar, and his position in Muslim Ḥadīth Literature’, *Der Islam*, Volume 70 (1993), 207-244.


—, ‘(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science’, *Islamic Law and Society, Volume 8, Number 3* (2001), 303-349.


—, ‘The date of the great fitna’, Arabica, Volume 20, Fascicule 2 (1973), 142-159.


Moin, Mumtaz, Umm al-Muʿminīn ʿĀʾishah Ṣiddiqah: Life and Work (Karachi, Pakistan: Royal Book Company, 1979).
Molvaer, Reidulf K., Socialization and social control in Ethiopia (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995).

340
in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 125-208.


Mourad, Suleiman Ali, Early Islam Between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan Al-Ḥāṣirī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006).


Pande, Rekha, & Theo van der Weide, Handbook of Research on Multicultural Perspectives on Gender and Aging (Hershey, USA: IGI Global, 2018).


