

MAQÂTIL LITERATURE IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM*

Works of a more or less biographical nature or content are firmly established in the historiographical literature of the first four centuries of Islam. Apart from collections such as the *fadâ'il*, *khasâ'is* or *manâqib* literature, the early Shî'ite *maqâtîl* books may be mentioned here. *Maqtal* and its plural *maqâtîl* (unnatural death, assassination)¹ feature in the titles of a considerable number of literary works of the medieval period. They represent a branch of *akhbâr* literature, which eventually became part of hagiographies not only in the Arabic language, but also in Persian, Turkish and Urdu.² According to medieval sources, *maqâtîl* literature seems to have been quite extensive and widespread—particularly, but not exclusively—among the later Imâmî Shî'ites.

In spite of this, modern scholars have given little attention to this genre so far. One may quote Ferdinand Wüstenfeld's "*Der Tod des Husein ben 'Alî und die Rache*" (published in 1882), a translation of one of the oldest surviving *maqtal* books into German; Rudolph Strothmann's book "*Die Zwölfer-Schî'a*" (1926), in the second part of which he deals with a relevant monograph of 'Alî ibn Mûsâ at-Ṭâ'ûsî (d. 664/1266) entitled "*al-Luhûf* [or: *al-Malhûf*] *'alâ qatlâ 't-tufûf*";³ and James Bellamy's article (1984) on the "*Kitâb Maqtal Amîr al-mu'minîn, 'Alî*" of Ibn Abî 'd-Dunyâ (d. 281/894). Two books deal with the *maqâtîl* genre in more detail: an informative study by Muḥammad Mahdî Shamsaddîn, a Shî'ite Lebanese, published in 1981 under the title "*Anşâr al-Husayn*", and the meticulous and better known survey of the Russian orientalist Stanislav Prozorov, "*Arabskaya istoričeskaya literatura ... Shiitskaya istoriografiya*"

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¹ a) in Classical Arabic: "*a [vital] place in a man [or an animal, i.e.] where a wound causes death*" (Lane VIII:2984); b) battle (e.g. "*arsala ilayya Abû Bakr ... maqtal^a ahl al-Yamâma*" (Wensinck V:304); *maqala*: great battle (Wensinck V:304); c) [case of] a [violent] death; assassination; murder.

² *EI*² III: 374; Rypka 529; concerning later works in Persian and Urdu, see also Storey I:207-235; about recitations and accounts from the *maqâtîl* literature used in mourning-assemblies in Modern Persia and Turkey, see Müller, esp. 101, and Mélikoff, I.: *Le drame de Kerbela dans la littérature épique turque*. In: *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* (Paris) 34 (1966), 133-148. Shubbâr, *Adab at-Ṭaff*, is an interesting modern collection of elegies on the martyrs of Karbalâ².

³ "*The Deeply Distressed at those killed at Ṭaff*". According to Ṭihriânî, the title *Luhûf* is better known as *Malhûf* (cf. Kohlberg 42 and abbr. 86).

(1980). The latter work provides systematic information about various *maq̄tal* works and their authors, and introduces a considerable amount of new material. The most recent publication, which partly touches on the subject of *maq̄til*, is Etan Kohlberg's excellent book (1992) on the above mentioned medieval scholar aṭ-Ṭa'ūsî. In standard works on Arabic and Islamic studies, as far as I can see, *maq̄til* literature is referred to only briefly or not at all.⁴

I first came across this kind of literature while analyzing the sources of one of its later testimonies, Abû 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahânî's "*Kitâb Maq̄til aṭ-Ṭâlibiyyîn*".⁵ During my research, I was astonished to see the multitude and variety of older literary material referring explicitly to violent deaths and assassinations and describing these events, for the most part, precisely and in detail. From the modern point of view and with our cultural background this may seem to be a rather peculiar subject for literary works; to some readers it may seem strange and perhaps even disquieting. The value of studying this genre is, however, not affected by this evaluation. In this article I shall attempt to demonstrate what is to be understood by medieval *maq̄til* literature and to throw some light upon its development during the first four centuries of Islam. In doing so, I hope to be able to describe this apparently almost forgotten genre more exactly, to establish a periodization of its development in medieval Islam, and finally to give a short outline of how these early materials were adopted into later works.

I

Medieval Arabic *maq̄til* literature programmatically refers to politico-religious events in early Islam and to biographical data on certain figures involved. Thematical foci are the violent death(s) of one or of various prominent individuals. In addition, these works contain copious genealogical material, information about the historical events which led

⁴ The *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, for example, refers to it, according to the Index of 1991, only once, i.e. in the article on *hikâya* under *The narrative genres of Turkish literature and folklore*. There the surely too narrow interpretation is to be found "As an example of technical terms used for specific genres of narrative literature there should also be mentioned *maq̄tal* which means, in the tradition of *Shi'î* circles, the account of the death of *Ḥusayn* at *Karbalâ*" (cf. *EI*² III:374).

⁵ Concerning its various editions, cf. *Quellenunters.*, 11-13. Two reprints of Aḥmad Ṣaqr's edition are to be added there: Teheran 1970² and (with a new page-numbering) Beirut 1987³.—Meanwhile also Persian translations have been published: *Farzandân-i Abû Ṭâlib. Tarjama-i Jawâd [Ibn Abî 'l-Ḥasan] Fâḍil [Larijânî]*. Part I-III. Teheran (Kitâb-furûshî wa-ĉâpkhâna-i 'Alî Akbar 'Ilmî), 1339^{sh}/1960. And: *Sargudhasht-i kushtashudagân az farzandân-i Abû Ṭâlib. Tarjama-i Maq̄til aṭ-Ṭâlibiyyîn, ta'rif-i Abû 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahânî. Tarjama az Sayyid Hâshim Rasûlî Maḥallâtî. Muqaddima wa-taṣṭih az 'Alî Akbar Ghaffârî*. Teheran (Kitâb-furûshî-i Ṣadûq), 1349^{sh}/1970.

to, or which are closely connected with, the death. They describe the attitudes of persons, groups or sects which took part in the clashes; in the style of *adab* they sometimes include poems—mostly elegies—on the murdered individual and, especially in the case of later *maqṭal* books, numerous “miracles” as well.

The first collections, concentrated on one particular *maqṭal*, obviously date back to the first half of the 2nd/8th century.⁶ However, it can be assumed that already by the end of the 1st/7th century real efforts were being made by certain Muslims to obtain knowledge about historical events crucial to the ‘Alid movement, and to gather the various pieces of information from eyewitnesses of these events or contemporaries. This type of historiographical research developed mainly amongst those adherents of Islam, who believed that after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad the leadership of the Islamic community rightly belonged only to his cousin and son-in-law, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and furthermore only to Muḥammad’s immediate descendants, originating from the marriage of ‘Alī with Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet (‘Alids). After the assassination of ‘Alī, several attempts were made by ‘Alid pretenders or their followers to enforce their claims against those in power. But all of these revolts failed; moreover, they usually ended in a blood-bath and the murder of the insurgents. It is understandable that the reports (*akhbār*) on these ‘Alid uprisings, on the martyrdom of the leaders who lost their lives in the battles, became particularly important for Shī‘ites and contributed, to a considerable degree, to the development of a particular Shī‘ite “self-awareness”. These, more or less, historical reports, especially those on the death of the Prophet’s grand-son, al-Ḥusayn, during the Battle of Karbalā’ in 680, were recounted or recited as poems during mourning-assemblies, which were held in the houses of Kufan Shī‘ites and at Karbalā’ soon after this event, around the tomb of al-Ḥusayn in commemoration of his death.⁷ However, biographical infor-

⁶ H. Müller remarks in her study on the Persian passion-play (*ta‘ziya*) quite rightly “... daß eine spezielle Untersuchung mit literaturwissenschaftlichen Methoden auch über die Entstehung und historische Entwicklung des persischen Volksdramas Aufschluß geben könnte. Grundlage einer solchen Arbeit müßte ein ausgedehntes Studium auch der Trauerelegien um Ḥusain und der gesamten Maqātil-Literatur sein”. But the following statement “Diese Gattungen haben ihren Ursprung in der Safawidenzeit, und manches läßt die Vermutung zu, daß die Verfasser der ta‘ziya aus dem Fundus dieser volkstümlichen religiösen Dichtung geschöpft haben” (Müller 92) is with regard to the time of their origin much too late and in the case of her supposition about the later usage of these literary materials, probably too hesitant. However, her opinion underlines once again, and from another point of view, the interest of the *maqātil* genre as well as the necessity of consideration of its much earlier roots.

⁷ The core of these assemblies was formed by the so-called *tawwābūn*, penitents, i.e. people who intended to atone for and take revenge for the betrayal perpetrated on al-Ḥusayn. See also al-Haidari 18.

mation on the descendants of the Prophet was also of great interest to other Muslims, who, wishing to be loyal, did not regard themselves as a part of the Shīʿite minority, yet held the family of the Prophet in high esteem.⁸

Obviously the main topics of *maqātil* works concern 1. the deaths (i.e. assassination, in battle, etc.) of members of the Prophet's family. 1a. The books entitled "*Maqatal al-Ḥusayn*" should be mentioned first as the death of the Prophet's younger grandson in the battle at Karbalā' has been the favorite literary subject of the Shīʿites from the very beginning. 1b. Other works deal with the assassination of the fourth Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in Kufa in 661 or the death of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī who is said to have been poisoned in Medina in 669, etc. 2. A closer look at the medieval sources, however, allows us to detect three further groups of themes, divided into: 2.1. reports (*akhbār*) relating to persons who died a violent death in a) pre-Islamic times, or b) during Muḥammad's life-time and the first decades of Islam, respectively—such as the *Maqatal 'Adī ibn Zayd*⁹ and *Maqatal 'Abdallāh ibn Sahl*¹⁰; 2.2. works (*kutub*) which concern events during the reign of the Rightly-guided Caliphs, which were not directly connected with the 'Alid movement but involved the death of a prominent person—such as the assassination of the third Caliph in 656, or the death of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, the son of the second Caliph and 'Alī's young governor in Egypt, who was defeated and killed in 38/658 by 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ when he conquered Egypt for Mu'āwiya.¹¹ 2.3. In addition to this there are works which concern the deaths of certain individuals who played an active role in the historical development of Iraq in Umayyad times, such as works on the "*Maqatal Ḥujr ibn 'Adī*" and others that will be mentioned later in connection with the author Abū Mikhnaf.

Historical *akhbār* commonly subsumed under the term *maqātil*, and literary-historical information about this genre, occur *primarily* in four kinds of medieval texts: I. a) the above-mentioned, genuine *maqātil* books themselves, i.e. Shīʿite monographs, where the term *maqatal* or *maqātil* occurs in the title (*Kutub al-Maqātil*). Apart from this, they are to be detected b) in other Shīʿite *akhbār* works particularly concerned with this

⁸ This tendency, which developed among Sunnites, is called *tashayyū' ḥasan*. It means in later times not only a good and moderate leaning towards the family of the Prophet but Shīʿism in general. For further information see Momen, *An Introduction to Shīʿi Islam*, New Haven and London 1985, p. 96.

⁹ It is reported by Abū 'Ubayda in his account on *The Day of Dhū Qār*, a battle between several Arabian tribes in 610 near the later Kufa. 'Adī's death is given there as the occasion for that fight. Cf. *The Nakā'id of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq*, Ed. by A.A. Bevan, Vol. II (Leiden 1908-9), pp. 638-648.

¹⁰ cf. Wensinck V:304.

¹¹ cf. *ET* I:459.

subject;¹² II.a) (Sunnite) universal histories and chronicles (*Kutub at-Taʿrîkh*); b) genealogical works (*Kutub al-Ansâb*), especially those written by Shīʿites about the descendants of Abû Ṭâlib (*Ansâb at-Ṭâlibiyyîn*);¹³ III. The well-known bio-bibliographical works (*Kutub ar-Rijâl*); and, IV. (although to a lesser degree) works of *belles lettres* (*Kutub al-Âdâb*).

Tidings of, as it were, “pre-Islamic *maqâtîl*” can also be found in old-Arabic *qaṣʿidas* and the *Ayyâm al-ʿArab* where battles of the Arabian tribes and individual fights naturally play an important role. But these reports occur here only as bits of information within a larger thematical context.¹⁴ “Pre-Islamic *maqâtîl*” are furthermore referred to in at least one medieval work explicitly, i.e. Abû ʿl-Faraj al-Isfahânî’s “*Kitâb al-Aghânî*”.¹⁵

¹² An interesting Zaydite manuscript is preserved in the *Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin*. The work, entitled “*Akhbâr Fakhh wa-khabar Yahyâ ibn ʿAbdallâh*”, is ascribed to Aḥmad ibn Sahl ar-Râzî (he was still alive in the first quarter of the 4th/10th century). It seems that it represents an original and independent Zaydite tradition in the transmission of *maqâtîl* material which was, until now, little known. See Jarrâr, Maher “*Lights on an Early Zaydite Manuscript*”. In: *Asiatischen Studien XLVII* (1993), 279-297. Cf. also Schoeler, Gregor: *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland. Arabische Handschriften*, Teil II: Wiesbaden 1991, pp. 106-108.

¹³ Especially valuable in this regard: (1) Abû Naṣr al-Bukhârî, Sahl ibn ʿAbdallâh ibn Dâʿûd ibn Sulaymân ibn Abân ibn ʿAbdallâh (alive in 341/592-3): *Sirr as-silsila al-ʿalawîyya*. Ed. Muḥammad Ṣâdiq Âl Baḥr al-ʿUlûm. Najaf 1382/1962. (2) Ibn ʿInaba ad-Dâʿûdî, Aḥmad ibn ʿAlî ibn al-Ḥasan (ibn Muḥannâ Ibn ʿInaba ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlî ibn Abî Ṭâlib), al-Ḥasanî (d. in 828/1424): *Umdat at-Ṭâlib fi Ansâb Âl Abî Ṭâlib*. Ed. Lazâr Riḍâ. Beirut (Dâr Maktabat al-Ḥayât), no year. (3) Ibn Ṭabâṭibâ, Ibrâhîm ibn Nâṣir, Abû Ismâʿîl (5th century): *Muntaqilat at-Ṭâlibiyya*. Najaf (al-Maṭbaʿa al-Ḥaydariyya), 1388/1968.

¹⁴ With regard to the text-basis, strictly speaking, these reports do not seem to fit in the framework of our investigation of the medieval period. Nevertheless, the fact that the topos of “violent death(s)” was already present—at least subliminally—in pre- and early Islamic Arabic literature, makes it clear to us that even the very beginnings of the medieval—and later mostly religiously motivated—*maqtal* works have not developed merely from scratch. But the information we have today, in this regard, is very scanty, and the subject needs further investigation before it is possible to say anything conclusive.

¹⁵ I would like to thank H. Kilpatrick (Lausanne) for her detailed information and advice with regard to some *akhbâr* in Abû ʿl-Faraj al-Isfahânî’s “*Kitâb al-Aghânî*” which concern pre- (or early) Islamic *maqâtîl*; cf. *Aghânî* V:34, VIII:180, X:14, XI:75, 82, 94, 204, (XII:94), 209, XV:76, XV:298, XVI:56, XVI:266, XVII:179, XXIII:132, (322, 349). The relevant reports given here are sometimes “entitled” by the author as *maqtal* (or *sabab qatl*) *fulân*. At first glance and with the knowledge of medieval *maqâtîl* “works” in mind, one may expect pre-Islamic text-sources with an explicit relationship to the subject or, possibly, a direct pre-Islamic root of the medieval *maqâtîl* genre to be behind the quotations belonging to these “titles”. But in this respect this should not necessarily be assumed for the following reasons: 1. *akhbâr* which concern in medieval texts *expressis verbis* the “pre-Islamic *maqtals*” are found almost solely in Abû ʿl-Faraj’s “*Aghânî*”. Other medieval works do not provide us with such tangible clues furnishing evidence of a pre-Islamic *maqâtîl* genre in the narrow sense of the word. 2. Even in the “*Aghânî*”, pre-Islamic *maqtals* occur only as smaller individual pieces of information or in the context of a more common historical account, respectively. They are never found as longer

II

As in many other cases of medieval Arabic literature, only a few of the oldest *maqtal* works survived as authentic or independent manuscripts; most of them have probably been lost for ever. But already in the 2nd and, especially, in the 3rd century of Islam, the existence of numerous individual *maqtal* works should be acknowledged: medieval bio-bibliographical dictionaries have preserved abundant corresponding “work”-titles and valuable details about their collectors or writers, their sources, ways of transmission, etc. This fact remains important, even if we bear in mind that the majority of these *kutub* quoted by title do not describe “books” in the sense of literary works, which were finally redacted by their “authors” and published—what was referred to in Classical Greek as *syngrammata*.¹⁶

Digression:

In accordance with the fact that *kitâb*, until the beginning of the 3rd century, primarily means “something written”,¹⁷ these “work”-titles mainly represent (a) written collections, compiled and used as “mnemonic aids” by scholars for their lectures, or (b) lecture-notes, or copies of those writings made by students. Often these texts were brought into a fixed written form, and eventually published, by a scholar/author’s student or his student’s student.¹⁸ This type of lecture-notes is called in Greek *hypomnêmata*.

passages or fragments, for example, which would speak in favour of an already existing account used as a source. 3., and this is certainly the most important point: especially in the context of the “*Aghânî*”, we have to bear in mind the personal literary experience of the given author and his stylistic devices: recent research has shown that Abû ʿl-Faraj had very probably already started to prepare the “*Aghânî*” when, in his younger years, he was writing his “*Maqâtil at-Tâlibiyyîn*”, or, at least, that he definitely had finished the “*Maqâtil*” when he was compiling the “*Aghânî*”. Consequently we have good reason to suppose Abû ʿl-Faraj’s occasional usage of the term *maqtal* in connection with quotations of “pre-Islamic” deaths in the “*Aghânî*” to be a result of his literary practice in compiling his earlier book, the “*K. Maqâtil at-Tâlibiyyîn*”. However, the analysis of the *isnâds* relating in the “*Aghânî*” to these reports, testifies to the famous philologist Abû ʿUbayda (d. 210/825) as the most significant *common link*. His works, especially the “*Naqâʿid Jarîr wa-ʿl-Farazdaq*” and the “*K. al-Ayyâm*”, have been proved to be an important “*real source*” for numerous passages in the “*Aghânî*” (cf. also Fleischhammer 86, Nr 47), a fact which underlines our assumption in regard to the pre-Islamic *maqâtil* in the *Ayyâm al-ʿarab* literature (cf. fn. 14).

¹⁶ Recently the terms *syngramma* and *hypomnêma* have been introduced into Islamic studies in order to describe the various kinds of writings or the different (written) character of texts in medieval Arabic literature more precisely (cf. Schoeler, *Weiteres* 41 and *Schreiben* 22 ff). They will also be used here in that way.

¹⁷ Sellheim, *Materialien* I:34.

¹⁸ On the question of oral and written transmission, cf. the series of four articles by G. Schoeler in *Der Islam* 62 (1985) 201-230; 66 (1989) 38-67 and 213-251; 69 (1992) 1-43.

However, this does not exclude the possibility that amongst the *kutub* mentioned with a title are compilations which (a) concern exclusively a special literary subject, and (b) seem to have been put by their authors into a literary form which is characterized by a relatively well thought-out concept in the presentation of the material, i.e. worked out by them to a considerably larger degree than is usual in the case of *hypomnēmata*. Such *kutub* were compiled, or rather: composed, and written down by the given scholars, and also—as usual—transmitted (by themselves and furthermore by their students) through lectures. I will call this type of writings: *Verfasserwerke*, literary compositions.¹⁹

According to the “living” character of written works transmitted in lectures,²⁰ the term “literary composition” shall describe a kind of medieval Arabic text, which cannot without ambiguity be characterized as *hypomnēmata* (writings for private purposes, lecture-notes) or *syngrammata* (real books), as it represents something in between. The fact that a considerable number of *kutub* were known already in medieval times as a certain scholar’s literary product, and explicitly ascribed to him, speaks in favour of this.

In this context, attention may be drawn to the fact that in the case of works which may be classified as *Verfasserwerke*, there is also a corresponding phenomenon in Greek literature, i.e. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*²¹: On the one hand, this work seems to have been considered as a plain collection of “lectures” (*Vorlesungsschriften*) but, on the other hand, it is a corpus of writings well thought-out in style and content, written down by its author, and even published to a certain extent, i.e. within his teaching sessions and through his lectures.²² Returning to the system of teaching and transmission in medieval Islam and its peculiarities, we find a quite similar situation, especially with regard to the circumstances of publication (a significant criterion of “real books”!). At the end of the 3rd/9th and during the 4th/10th centuries, this category of authorized lecture-books or literary compositions (*Verfasserwerke*) was relegated to the same status as other lecture-notes or written memory-aids, as the development towards literary books (*syngrammata*) became generally more and more

¹⁹ The way I use the term *Verfasserwerk* slightly differs from that of G. Schoeler (*Schreiben* 30, in accordance with Sellheim, *Materialien* I:41), who understands it to be a synonym of *syngramma*. It rather corresponds to the interpretation of J. Fück, who states that “*der Begriff des Buches als einer durch formale Besonderheiten der Sprache, des Stils und der Kompilationsform unlösbar mit der Individualität eines Schriftstellers verknüpften Einheit*” could not yet develop under circumstances of the system of transmission in medieval Islam; “*nur im Umfang und in den Gesichtspunkten ihrer Verarbeitung konnte der Verfasser sein selbständiges Urteil und seine persönliche Überzeugung bekunden*”. Cf. Fück 5 ff; furthermore Schoeler, *Schreiben* 23; and *Quellenunters*, 34 pp.

²⁰ This “living” character of medieval Arabic texts ascribed to a specific author but transmitted in lectures, has been demonstrated recently by S. Leder in his convincing investigation of *Das Korpus al-Haitam ibn ‘Adī (st. 207/822). Herkunft, Überlieferung, Gestalt früher Texte der aḥbār-Literatur*. Frankfurt a.M. 1991.

²¹ Cf. Jaeger, Werner Wilhelm: *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles*. Berlin 1912; esp. 31 pp., 39 p., 44 p., 96, 112 p., 124, 126, 128-130, and his *Aristoteles. Grundlagen einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*. Berlin 1923, esp. 172 pp., 201.

²² Jaeger, *Studien* 137-138, 143-144, 146-147.

acceptable, and the edition of real books became usual for publication. From that time on, the lectures given by scholars during their *maǰālis* (sessions) or *ḥalaqāt* (circles) seem also not to have been used as extensively for publication as they had been previously. Rather, they started to become teaching courses, i.e. lectures in our modern sense of the word. In my opinion, the development sketched above is valid for medieval historico-biographical works and solves some problems in their literary-historical evaluation, especially in the case of such *kutub* where characteristics of both *hypomnēma* and *syngramma* can be detected; it may be helpful also for the description of certain *maqātil* compilations under investigation here.

Which are the *maqātil* works and authors known to us? After the examination of several medieval as well as modern, mainly Shīʿite *rijāl*-books and *fahāris* (by Ibn an-Nadīm, Ṭūsī, Najāshī, Kashshī, Ibn Saʿd, Ṭihranī, Ziriklī) and with further consideration of some important historical works (of Balādhurī, Ṭabarī, Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī etc.), it is possible to establish at least 32 authorities from the first four centuries to whom one or more genuine *maqātil* works or *maqātil* compilations (*kutub!*) have been explicitly ascribed. Among these are 19 scholars known as compilers or authors of a “*Kitāb Maqātil al-Ḥusayn*”; nine are said to have composed a “*K. Maqātil Amīr al-muʿminīn, ʿAlī*”, five a “*K. Maqātil ʿUthmān*”, three a “*K. Qātil (Fī amr) al-Ḥasan*”; two a “*K. Maqātil Ḥuj ibn ʿAdī*” and a “*K. Maqātil Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr*”, respectively. Eight other titles of works are referred to only once; they mainly concern deaths of famous persons in Iraq, and most of them are ascribed to Abū Mikhnaf. Nine historians are known as authors of a compilation concerning the assassinations of several ʿAlids (*maqātil*).

Only some of the more interesting authorities or important scholars can be dealt with here²³ :

1. The oldest person who is explicitly mentioned as an authority for *maqātil* material can be identified as: al-Aṣbagh ibn Nubāta al-Mujāshīʿī.²⁴ He is known as a member of the inner circle surrounding ʿAlī (*min khāṣṣat amīr al-muʿminīn*) and as the leader of his police force (*ṣāhib ash-shurṭa*). Furthermore we are informed that he transmitted from the second Caliph ʿUmar, from the Prophet’s grandson al-Ḥusayn and especially from ʿAlī (in particular ʿAlī’s written legacy to his son Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyya and the instructions by which ʿAlī

²³ It would be too time-consuming to mention all the names; but I would like to refer to my data-based computer list, which contains the relevant information in detail and which is, of course, available for further investigations.

²⁴ Abū ʿl-Qāsim, al-Aṣbagh ibn Nubāta al-Mujāshīʿī al-Kūfī—cf. Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 37f; Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 34; Kashshī 96 (Nr. 42); Najāshī 6; Ibn Ḥazm 231; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* I:362; Ṭabarī I:3249 (36 H); Ṭihranī, *Dharīʿa* XXII:24; U. Sezgin 205.

appointed Mâlik al-Ashtar as governor of Egypt). The date of al-Mujâshiʿî's death is not known, but according to the *rijâl* books, he must have survived ʿAlî by many years. Particularly interesting is the reference to a collection entitled “*Kitâb Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*”²⁵ which is ascribed to al-Mujâshiʿî. However, even if Ṭihirânî states: “*aqûlu: wa-ʔẓ-ẓâhir, annahu min awwal kutub al-Ḥusayn, wa-kitâbuhu aṣḥab kutub al-maqâtil*”;²⁶ according to the results of recent investigations in early Arabic literature, we may suppose that al-Mujâshiʿî should be seen only as an important narrator of *maqâtil* material, who—as an eyewitness, or at least a contemporary of these events—was regarded by the Shîʿites of that time as a trustworthy and significant authority. Labelling the reports transmitted by him as a *kitâb* seems to me to be almost certainly a product of later Shîʿite *rijâl* books.

2. Another early “work” is ascribed to ʿUbaydallâh ibn Abî Râfiʿ al-Madanî.²⁷ He is known in the literature as ʿAlî's secretary (*kâtib*); he transmits from him directly but also through the intermediaries of his father and his grand-father. ʿUbaydallâh ibn Abî Râfiʿ must have died after 100 H (= 718). Apart from collections about “*The Battles of the Camel, Ṣiffîn and Nahrawân*” and “*The Affairs of ʿAlî*”, he evidently prepared a compendium later known as “*Kitâb Tasmîyat man shahida maʿa Amîr al-muʾminîn, ʿAlî*”.²⁸ In the fashion of early *dîwâns*, it could have been a written list of names of persons who had taken part in (*shahida*) and died during ʿAlî's battles. This small collection, as yet, does not represent a genuine *maqṭal* work, but we have good reason to suppose it to contain a considerable number of *akhbâr* on *maqâtil*. However, even if we bear in mind ʿUbaydallâh ibn Abî Râfiʿ' s profession as a scribe, this *kitâb* was certainly not more than a small text with a relatively loose character (*hypomnêma*).

3. For the first half of the 2nd/8th century, Jâbir ibn Yazîd ibn al-Ḥârith al-Juʿfi (d. in 128/745-6)²⁹ is an important figure. He was of Kufan origin, but his academic peregrinations (*talab al-ʿilm*) had taken

²⁵ The transmission of al-Mujâshiʿî's *ḥadîth* can be traced to the middle of the 10th century within later Shîʿite collections or larger compilations, respectively (cf. Ṭûsî, *Fihrist* 37): in the transmission of ad-Dûrî ʿan Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿîd ʿan Aḥmad ibn Yûsuf al-Juʿfi ʿan Muḥammad ibn Saʿîd an-Nakhâʿî ʿan Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ʿan Abî ʔl-Jârûd ʿan al-Aṣḥab, *wa-dhakara ʔl-ḥadîth bi-tûlihi*.

²⁶ Ṭihirânî, *Dhariʿa* XXII:24.

²⁷ Ṭûsî, *Rijâl* 47; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhîb* VII:10 (“*thiqa*”); *Ṣiffîn* 471.

²⁸ Ṭûsî, *Rijâl* 47.

²⁹ Abû ʿAbdallâh, Jâbir ibn Yazîd ibn al-Ḥârith ibn ʿAbd Yâghûth ibn Kaʿb al-Juʿfi: cf. Ṭûsî, *Fihrist* 45; Ṭûsî, *Rijâl* 111, 163 (follower of the Imâms al-Bâqir and aṣ-Ṣâdiq); Najâshî 94; Kashshî 169-174 (Nr. 87); Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhîb* II:46-51, *GAS* I: 307; Prozorov 46-48 (Nr. 1); U. Sezgin 133 pp. 202.

him as a young man to Medina.³⁰ He is known as a historian and Qurʾān-commentator. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), in his *al-Muntaẓam*, refers to him as a member of the *rāfiḍiyya* and the *ghulāt*.³¹ He is generally classified as among the most important Shīʿite scholars³² and as one of the earliest authors of numerous monographs.³³ Various fragments of his “*K. Šiffīn*”, for example, are preserved in the corresponding book of Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. 212/827-8).³⁴ Two titles of *maqṭal* books ascribed to him have also survived: a “*Maqṭal Amīr al-muʾminīn, ʿAlī*” and a “*Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*”.³⁵ Given al-Juʿfī’s scholarly activities and his reputation as one of the earliest Shīʿite “authors”,³⁶ it can be assumed that both these texts not only had a fixed written form, but may also be considered as original works composed and written down by the author himself (*Verfasserwerke*).

4. A famous Shīʿite historian and author of a large number of books about *futūḥ*, *akḥbār*, *tarājim* and *aḥwāl*, Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā al-Azdī, better known as Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/775) was active up till the middle of the 2nd/8th century.³⁷ According to the extant material, he may be considered as the most prolific author of *maqṭal* books in the early period.³⁸ The titles of at least 13 monographs ascribed to him refer *expressis verbis* to a *maqṭal*. Among them we find relatively well-testified *kutub*, such as the ones (1) about the religio-political history of the early ʿAlid movement, i.e. the assassinations of ʿAlī,³⁹ the deaths of al-Ḥusayn,⁴⁰ al-

³⁰ Kashshī 189.

³¹ cf. Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 111.

³² Najāshī 92, marginal gloss.

³³ GAS I:307; Halm 14; Prozorov 46-48.

³⁴ Cf. *Šiffīn* 156, 167, 169, 174, 179, 202-204, 230, 236-239, 241, 243-245, 250, 272, 273, 293, 295, 298, 301, 313, 315, 340, 343, 371, 357, 479, 480, 500, 504, 554, 556, 559.

³⁵ Najāshī 94: (1) *rawā hādhihi ʿl-kutub* (scil. *maqātil*): al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿAmmī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muʿallā: Muḥammad b. Zakariyāʾ al-Ghallābī. (2) *wa-akḥbaranā: Ibn Nūḥ: ʿAbdaljabbār ibn Shīrān: Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmmār: abīhi: ʿAmr ibn Shamir: Jābir bi-hādhihi ʿl-kutub*. See also Prozorov 47.

³⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* II:50; Prozorov 46.

³⁷ In addition to GAS I:308 and the literature mentioned there, see Ṭīhrānī, *Dharīʿa* 22:22; Ṭīhrānī, *Muṣaffā* 282; Prozorov 53f and, above all, U. Sezgin’s book on Abū Mikhnaf.

³⁸ In the sense of *Verfasserwerke*.

³⁹ Najāshī 224; Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 60, 114 (Nr. 34).

⁴⁰ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 155; Najāshī 224 (“*Qatl al-Ḥusayn*”); Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 60. See also Wüstenfeld’s translation, *Der Tod des Husain*, and Baumgartner, Alexander: *Geschichte der Weltliteratur. I: Die Literaturen Westasiens und der Nilländer*. Berlin 1913, pp. 420-422. In the Arabic world, especially in the case of Abū Mikhnaf’s “*Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*”, there have been in recent years various attempts at reconstruction from later sources. For example, mention can be made of a compilation of texts preserved in Ṭabarī’s *Chronicle: Istishhād al-Ḥusayn li-ʿl-Imām Abī Jaʿfar, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī*. Ed. as-Sayyid al-Jumaylī. Beirut (Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī), 1406/1985¹; and, obviously on the same basis: *Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn wa-maṣraʿ ahl baytihi. Al-mushtahir bi-maqṭal Abī*

Ḥasan⁴¹ and Zayd ibn ʿAlī⁴²; (2) furthermore works (2.a) about violent deaths during the reign of the Caliphs ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, such as “*Maqṭal ʿUthmān*”,⁴³ “*Maqṭal Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ*”,⁴⁴ “*Maqṭal Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr wa-ʿl-Ashtar wa-Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa*”.⁴⁵ Among Abū Mikhnaf’s books there are also works (2.b) about unnatural deaths in Umayyad times, i.e. “*Maqṭal Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī*”,⁴⁶ “*Marj Rāhiṭ wa-bayʿat Marwān wa-maṭṭal ad-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays al-Fihri*”,⁴⁷ “*Maqṭal ʿAbdallāh ibn az-Zubayr*”,⁴⁸ “*Maqṭal Ibn al-Ashʿath*”,⁴⁹ and “*Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab wa-maṭṭaluhu bi-ʿAqr*”.⁵⁰ Abū Mikhnaf may therefore be regarded as the only

Mikhnaf. Qom (Muʿassasat al-Wafāʾ), 1368^{sh}/1409^l [= 1989]. But by taking into account the circumstances of the literary situation in medieval Islam, which was connected with the peculiarities of the system of teaching and characterized by the interaction of oral and written language in the transmission of texts, these “reconstructions” have to be viewed with great suspicion.

⁴¹ Najāshī 225; U. Sezgin 114 (Nr. 39).

⁴² “*K. (Maqṭal) Zayd ibn ʿAlī*”, cf. U. Sezgin 61, 101 (Nr. 9).

⁴³ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 155 (“*K. Maqṭal ʿUthmān*”); Najāshī 224 (“*K. Qat ʿUthmān*”); cf. also Prozorov 53 (“*K. ash-Shūrā wa-maṭṭal ʿUthmān*”) and U. Sezgin 62, 102 (Nr. 144). It is largely used by Balādhurī in his account “*Ruʿyā ʿUthmān wa-maṭṭaluhu*” in *Ansāb* V: 82-105 and Ṭabarī I: 2776-2788.

⁴⁴ cf. Prozorov 54. Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, governor of Kufa under the caliphate of ʿUthmān, was driven out by its inhabitants and killed in 34/654-5 (*EP*² I:695); *Aghānī* XI:31.

⁴⁵ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 155; Najāshī 225; Prozorov 54; U. Sezgin 106. Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, ʿAlī’s governor in Egypt was killed in 38/658. Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith an-Nakhāʿī known as “al-Ashtar” (“the man with the inverted eyelids”), a warrior and one of ʿAlī’s most persistent agitators against ʿUthmān, was allegedly poisoned in 37/658 on the way to Egypt, on the instigation of Muʿāwiya after the battle of *Ṣiffīn* (see also *EP*² I:704). Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa: in 35 H assigned by ʿAlī as governor of Egypt; after a battle near al-ʿArīsh against Muʿāwiya, who was on the way to *Ṣiffīn*, he was imprisoned in Damascus and poisoned there in 36/657 (*Ziriklī* VI:79).

⁴⁶ Najāshī 225; Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 107; Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī al-Kindī was one of the earliest Shīʿite agitators. He fought for ʿAlī at the *Battle of the Camel* and at *Ṣiffīn* and became the moving spirit in all ʿAlid activities in Kufa, particularly by inviting al-Ḥusayn to take command of his followers there. But Ziyād, the governor of Kufa, arrested him, and sent him to Muʿāwiya in Syria, who executed him near Damascus. His death opens the Shīʿite martyrology (*EP*² III:545).

⁴⁷ Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 99. Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk was governor in Kufa, later in Damascus; head of the Qays and supporter of ʿAbdallāh ibn az-Zubayr. He was killed in 64/684 in a great battle near *Marj Rāhiṭ* between the Arabian tribes of Qays and Kalb (*EP*² II:889 and IV:544-46).

⁴⁸ Used for the account in *Ansāb* V:355 and Ṭabarī II:847, 850, 1051; cf. also Prozorov 54 and the further quotations of it given there. ʿAbdallāh ibn az-Zubayr was a Quraishite leader. After Muʿāwiya’s death he declared himself Caliph, but al-Ḥajjāj (the commander of Caliph ʿAbdalmalik’s troops) was able to overcome him in a battle near Mekka, at which ʿAbdallāh ibn az-Zubayr was killed (*EP*² I:54).

⁴⁹ Ṭihriṇī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:22; cited in Ṭabarī II:1094. ʿAbdarrahmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ashʿath became famous through his insurrection against al-Ḥajjāj in 80-82/699-702. He was killed and his severed head was sent to al-Ḥajjāj who had asked for it (*EP*² III:715-719).

⁵⁰ Cited as fragments in Ṭabarī II:1110-1138; see also Prozorov 54. Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab: governor of Iraq under the Caliph ʿUmar II, led a dangerous insurrection against the Caliph and was killed in 102/720 (*EP*² I:12).

author among early historiographers to have been substantially interested in non-ʿAlid *maqātil*. This latter group of works is mostly preserved as fragments in Ṭabarī's *Chronicle*, as U. Sezgin and S. Prozorov have shown.

5. From the second half of the 8th and the first decades of the 9th century some famous Shīʿite historians, and authors of literary compositions, must be mentioned: Muḥammad al-Wāqidī (748-822),⁵¹ Hishām al-Kalbī (d. in 819, author of five *maqtal* books),⁵² Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. in 827),⁵³ ʿAlī al-Madāʿinī (d. in 850),⁵⁴ Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Qummī (d. middle of the 9th century)⁵⁵ and Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ath-Thaqafī (d. in 896).⁵⁶

6. I would also like to mention a little known author whose lost work clearly does not follow the usual pattern of Imāmī-Shīʿite *maqtal* works: Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Karkhī (d. in 868).⁵⁷ He was of Persian origin and is included amongst the *ghulāt*; he was a companion of the Imāms Muḥammad al-Jawād (d. in 835) and ʿAlī al-Hādī (d. in 868) and a follower of the *khattābiyya*. The *khattābiyya* was a conglomerate of various Shīʿite sects named after Abū ʿl-Khaṭṭāb,⁵⁸ a Muslim heresiarch and possibly the earliest representative of the Ismāʿīlite doctrine. Abū ʿl-Khaṭṭāb was initially one of the chief agitators of the Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq; but he fell into "error", and began to teach that the Imāms were prophets or even of divine nature; he was therefore repudiated and denounced by aṣ-Ṣādiq. During an assembly of Abū ʿl-Khaṭṭāb's followers in the mosque of Kufa, he was attacked by the governor's troops, arrested, executed and crucified. Later his head was sent to the Caliph al-Manṣūr and impaled by the gate of Baghdad for three days.

⁵¹ GAS I:294-297; in addition, Ṭihirānī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:28 ("Maqtal al-Ḥusayn") and Ṭihirānī, *Musaffā* 421.

⁵² GAS I:268-271. "K. Maqtal Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī" (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73; K. Maqtal ʿUḥmān" (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); "K. Maqtal Amīr al-muʾminīn, ʿAlī (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); "K. Maqtal al-Ḥusayn" (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); "K. Maqtal Rāshid wa-Maytham wa-Jarīr ibn Mashhar" (Najāshī 306).

⁵³ GAS I:313. "K. Maqtal al-Ḥusayn" (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 200, Najāshī 302).

⁵⁴ GAS I:314. "K. Maqtal al-Ḥusayn" (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 95); as source of Abū ʿl-Faraj's "Maqātil", cf. *Quellenunters.*, 147.

⁵⁵ "K. Maqtal al-Ḥusayn" Najāshī 250: *akhbaranī*: ʿidda min aṣḥābinā ʿan: ibnihi Aḥmad ʿan: abīhi (scil. Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā) *bi-kutubihī*.

⁵⁶ GAS I:321; Prozorov 149-151. "K. Maqtal ʿUḥmān" (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 5; Prozorov 150); "K. Maqtal Amīr al-muʾminīn" (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 5; *Irshād* I:295; Prozorov 150; U. Sezgin 114); "K. Maqtal al-Ḥusayn" (Ṭihirānī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:23; Prozorov 150).

⁵⁷ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 154; Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 423, 493; Najāshī 247; Kashshī 478; Prozorov 114-115.

⁵⁸ *EP* I:134.

His death is the subject of al-Karkhī's work known by the title "*Maqṭal Abī ʿl-Khaṭṭāb*".⁵⁹

7. From the second half of the 9th until the middle of the 10th century, quantitatively speaking an increase in authors of *maqṭal* works (exclusively Imāmites and mostly of Persian origin) can be observed. The centres of scholarly interest in this field shifted, to a certain extent, from Iraq (Kufa, Basra, Baghdad) to the Shīʿite strong-holds in Persia (Qom, Iṣfahān). From now on relevant writings concentrate almost exclusively on the deaths of al-Ḥusayn and ʿAlī. Consistent with the general development of Arabic literature at that time,⁶⁰ the materials of single *maqṭals* were included in larger Shīʿite compilations concerning the deaths of various descendants of Abū Ṭālib: 7.1. We may mention, once more, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Madāʿinī (d. in 235/850) with a "*K. (Asmāʾ) man qūtila min at-Ṭālibiyyīn*",⁶¹ and 7.2. his student, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz (d. in 258/872),⁶² to whom a work, probably with the same title, is ascribed. The latter's manuscript (*kitāb*, *khatt*), almost certainly a *review*⁶³ of al-Madāʿinī's compilation, was used extensively by Abū ʿl-Faraj.⁶⁴ 7.3. Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ath-Thaqafī (d. in 238/896) with his "*K. Man qūtila min Āl Muḥammad*"⁶⁵ and 7.4. Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥamza al-ʿAlawī (d. in 287/900),⁶⁶ who has to be considered as the first author of a work entitled "*K. Maqātil at-Ṭālibiyyīn*".⁶⁷ 7.5. Aḥmad ibn ʿUbaydallāh ath-Thaqafī (d. in 314/926)⁶⁸ compiled a collection which later became famous as "*K. al-Mubayyida*" [or: "*K. fī Maqātil at-Ṭālibiyyīn*"].⁶⁹ 7.6. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Hamdānī (d. in

⁵⁹ Cf. Najāshī 247; Prozorov 114. He wrote also a "*K. Manāqib Abī ʿl-Khaṭṭāb*" (Najāshī 247; Ṭihriānī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:22; Prozorov 114).

⁶⁰ Cf. *Quellenunters*, esp. 37.

⁶¹ Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 101; one of the "main real sources" used by Abū ʿl-Faraj in the compilation of his "*Maqātil*" (*Quellenunters*, 147). As to the terminology used in *isnād* analysis, see my article *Source-criticism*.

⁶² GAS I:318f; Prozorov 116-118, *Quellenunters*, 118-121.

⁶³ I use the term *review* (*Rezension*) according to Fleischhammer 27.

⁶⁴ Proven by the source-analysis of Abū ʿl-Faraj's "*Maqātil*" (*Quellenunters*, 119).

⁶⁵ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 5; Prozorov 150; see also abbr. 56.

⁶⁶ GAS I:322, Prozorov 151-153, *Quellenunters*, 190-192.

⁶⁷ Najāshī 245; Ṭihriānī, *Dhariʿa* XXI:377; Prozorov 34. His book (*Verfasserwerk*) is to be classed as a significant "older source which can be proved to have been written", directly used by Abū ʿl-Faraj for his "*Maqātil*" (cf. *Quellenunters*, 191).

⁶⁸ Ibn an-Nadīm 148; *Taʿrīkh Baghdād* IV:252-253; *Aghānī* VI:157 (n. 158); Ziriklī I:160; *Irshād* I:223-228; Ṭihriānī, *Dhariʿa* XIX: 57, XXI:376; Prozorov 179-183; *Quellenunters*, 131-135.

⁶⁹ "The people wearing white", meaning the ʿAlids, in contrast to the black-clad ʿAbbāsids. Cf. Ibn an-Nadīm 148; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān* I:20; *Taʿrīkh Baghdād* IV:252; Ziriklī I:160; Ṭihriānī, *Dhariʿa* XIX:57 and XXI:376. This collection (*hypomnēma*!) is extensively used by Abū ʿl-Faraj (*Quellenunters*, 134).

333/944)⁷⁰ is, besides other works containing *maqātil* materials, credited with a “*K. Man shahida ma‘a Amīr al-mu‘minīn, ‘Alī’*”.⁷¹ 7.7. Finally we have Abū ‘l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. in 356/967)⁷² and his famous “*K. Maqātil at-Ṭālibiyyīn*”.⁷³

III

With Abū ‘l-Faraj’s book, medieval Arabic *maqātil* literature reached its culmination. His work is to be considered not only as the most important surviving text in this respect, but also as a unique historico-biographical encyclopaedia of Ṭālibid history during the first three centuries.⁷⁴ It consists of more than 300 biographies of members of the Prophet’s family in the line of Muḥammad’s uncle Abū Ṭālib, who were killed (*qutla ṣabran*) during a period starting with the Prophet and ending with the date of the book’s completion, given by Abū ‘l-Faraj as 313 H (= 928).⁷⁵ The first part covers the time of the Prophet (till 632), the Rightly-guided Caliphs (632-661) and the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750); the second and considerably larger part is devoted to the reign of the ‘Abbāsids until the year 928. Abū ‘l-Faraj starts his book with the biography of Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib; at the end he presents a list of 70 Ṭālibids who were killed during the reign of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (who ruled from 908 till 932) by relatives, bedouins or Qarmāṭians, or who met a violent death due to non-governmental activities.

The biographies are presented in chronological order disregarding the position of a particular Ṭālibid within his family, or his significance (for example as a scholar, transmitter or poet).⁷⁶ They are summarized in articles named after the Ṭālibid concerned. The systematic and recurring pattern of such an article includes (a) an introduction to the personality of the Ṭālibid under discussion: his name, genealogy and birth-date; a description of his characteristics and personal peculiarities (for example, his clothing, physical nature etc.); his possible significance as a scholar

⁷⁰ GAS I:182; Prozorov 198-201; *Quellenunters.*, 127-131.

⁷¹ Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 29; Najāshī 69; Prozorov 199. His books (*Verfasserwerke*) were a significant, direct written source for Abū ‘l-Faraj (cf. *Quellenunters.*, 127-131).

⁷² This year has been widely accepted as his death-date. Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Munajjid argues in his introduction to the edition of Abū ‘l-Faraj’s “*K. Adab al-ghurabā’*” (Beirut 1972) in favour of a date after 362/972. Ibn an-Nadīm, a contemporary of Abū ‘l-Faraj, states that he died after 360/970 (*Fihrist* 115).

⁷³ Cf. abbr. 5.

⁷⁴ *Dā‘irāt al-ma‘ārif*. Ed Fu‘ād Afrām al-Bustānī. Beirut 1964, V:37; *EI*² I:118; *EIran* I:283; Kilpatrick 406; *Majallat al-Azhar* (Cairo 1368/1948-9) XX:672; *Quellenunters.*, 5.

⁷⁵ *Maqātil* 4.

⁷⁶ For the following passages, cf. *Quellenunters.*, 13.

or transmitter; finally short remarks on his death. This introduction is followed by (b) the *maqtal*-report itself, i.e. a chronological account of the clash or other circumstances leading to his death (for example, captivity), as well as detailed information about his death itself (cause, type of wound, age, place of burial etc.). In the case of greater uprisings, information about other Ṭālibid participants is given at the end of the report. (c) Usually an elegy (*marthiya*) relating to the particular Ṭālibid concludes the article, but sometimes it is already cited at a convenient place before.

Abū ʿl-Faraj's book includes, with the exception of one case, only biographies of Ṭālibids,⁷⁷ who (1) according to *objective* criteria, rebelled against the government and were killed; died in battles; were imprisoned and died; were afraid of the government's power, lived underground or had to flee to remote parts of the Islamic empire and died without being able to return to society; or were caught while they were trying to escape and died in prison; (2) according to the author's *subjective* criteria: who behaved in a praiseworthy manner; were of the right belief (*sadīd al-madhhab*): did not deviate from the customs of their people and the traditions of their forbears (*madhāhib aslāfihī*); and did not wreak havoc by their flight.

In accordance with the information to be found in the bibliographical literature, the *isnād*-analysis of the "*Maqātil*"⁷⁸ leads us to the conclusion that Abū ʿl-Faraj received the material used for his book from probably 53 direct informers/teachers, most of whom were from Kufa and Baghdad. 10% of them were members of the family of the Prophet. The examination of the "sources" of his book reveals a large number of writings used by Abū ʿl-Faraj either directly (i.e. books of his teachers and other manuscripts available to him) or more often through the mediation of one or more transmitter(s) (i.e. as copies or *reviews* of older writings or as material he received through his teachers' lectures). Among the most important books which Abū ʿl-Faraj used directly, we find, for example, the "*K. Man shahida maʿa Amīr al-muʿminīn, ʿAlī*" written by his teacher, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥamdānī (d. in 944; cited 120 times).⁷⁹ Another older work, i.e. the "*K. man qutila min at-Ṭālibiyyīn*" by Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz (d. in 872; cited 29 times), Abū ʿl-Faraj received as a manuscript and also used directly.⁸⁰ The most important older authorities to whom Abū ʿl-Faraj refers

⁷⁷ *Maqātil* 4; *Quellenunters.*, 24.

⁷⁸ The results of this analysis are presented in detail in *Quellenunters.*, 110-230.

⁷⁹ Najāshī 69; *GAS* I:182 and Prozorov 199 (Nr. 13). This work of al-Ḥamdānī is to be added to *Quellenunters.*, 127 as a further important written source used by Abū ʿl-Faraj directly.

⁸⁰ *GAS* I:318; *Quellenunters.*, 118-121.

directly are ʿUmar ibn Shabba (d. 876; cited 311 times),⁸¹ Yaḥyâ ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAlawî al-ʿAqîqî (d. 890; cited 94 times);⁸² Abû Mikhnaf (d. 775; cited 57 times)⁸³ and al-Madâʿinî (d. ca. 850; cited 50 times).⁸⁴ Their writings, as well as the texts ascribed to some other significant authorities who also lived as early as the end of the 8th and until the middle of the 9th centuries, can be considered partly as works in the sense of *hypomnēmata*, partly even as *Verfasserwerke*. These writings have to be classified as the *real sources* of Abû ʿl-Faraj for the compilation of his book, last but not least because of the fact that the relevant works of his direct informers and teachers rely on them too. Among these *older, real sources* we find various well-known *maqṭal* books but also a considerable number of works and collections (such as the ones by the above-mentioned ʿUmar ibn Shabba), which obviously deal with early Shīʿite history only in a more general way.

In compiling his “*Maqātil at-Ṭālibiyyîn*” Abû ʿl-Faraj’s intention was to do more than that which a transmitter or an anonymous copyist of older historico-biographical *akhbâr* usually did and perhaps even more than his predecessors, identified as collectors or authors of the now lost *maqātil* compilations (*hypomnēmata* or *Verfasserwerke*), did: he wrote a real book (*syngramma*) with a well thought-out concept, a fixed and systematical order in the presentation of the material, and last but not least with a preface and a conclusion. Recently G. Schoeler has quite rightfully opined that Abû ʿl-Faraj obviously achieved in the *maqātil* material what Ibn Hishâm had done for Ibn Ishâq’s biography of the Prophet, at-Ṭabarî for the bulk of historical *akhbâr*, and he himself—Abû ʿl-Faraj—for the tidings of poets and musicians.⁸⁵ This judgement is underlined by the fact that Abû ʿl-Faraj’s book concludes the period of flourishing historiographical activities in this special field. It even seems that after him the *maqātil* disappeared as a relatively independent genre of historico-biographical literature in Arabic. For example, al-Muffid’s (d. 413/1022) famous book “*al-Irshâd*” is already much more of an ordinary history of the twelve Imâms and a description of the miracles which each of them performed as evidence of his Imâmate; there the *maqātil* do not play such a central role any more. Subsequent *maqṭal* works in Arabic⁸⁶ are concerned almost exclusively with the martyrdom of al-

⁸¹ GAS I:345; *Quellenunters*, 220-225.

⁸² GAS I:237; *Quellenunters*, 226-228.

⁸³ GAS I:308; *Quellenunters*, 181-184.

⁸⁴ GAS I:314; *Quellenunters*, 147-148.

⁸⁵ ZDMG 142 (1992) 2, 412.

⁸⁶ Among the more important of later medieval works in Arabic are: (1) *Muthîr al-aḥzân* of Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥillî, better known as Ibn Namâ (d. in 645/1247), edited in Teheran 1890. (2) *al-Luhûf* [or *al-Malhûf*] *ʿalâ qatlâ ʿt-tufûf* of ʿAlî ibn Mûsâ, Raḍî

Ḥusayn and his companions at Karbalâ²; the perspective here is hagiographical rather than historical.

Nevertheless, the Arabic *maqâtîl* collections and books of the first four centuries of Islam formed the basis for numerous literary works in Persian which were to develop first under the Şafavid dynasty. They also influenced Shî'ite hagiographical literature in Turkish and Urdu. A considerable number of these later works have survived as manuscripts and are listed in modern Western and Oriental bio-bibliographical surveys.⁸⁷ For the most part they have titles like "*Rauḍat ash-shuhadâ*" or "*Ḥadîqat ash-shuhadâ*". The book of Ḥusayn Wâ'iz Kâshifî (d. in 910/1504-5), entitled "*The Garden of the Martyrs*", is regarded as one of the most famous works in Persian.⁸⁸

How in modern times the *maqâtîl* have been performed and recited as elegies is shown by the mourning assemblies in Iran and other dominantly Shî'ite areas in a most impressive way. These assemblies, called in Persian *rauza-kh^wânî* or *marthiya-kh^wânî*,⁸⁹ are part of the devout Shî'ite's highly emotional commemoration of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom and play an essential part in his religious edification. Moreover, the early *maqâtîl* materials are also an important literary source for Shî'ite passion-

ad-Dîn Ibn Ṭâ'ûs (d. in 664/1266). It has appeared in various editions; Saidâ (Maṭba'at al-'Irfân), 1347/1929, and was translated several times into Persian. (3) *Maqal al-Ḥusayn* of Abû 'l-Mu'ayyad al-Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad al-Makkî, known as Akḥṭab al-Khwârizm (d. in 568/1172), printed in 2 vol., Najaf (Maktabat az-Zahrâ²), 1367/1948. This book was not available to me but cf. *Anşâr* 26. (4) The *Bihâr al-anwâr* of Muḥammad ibn Bâqir al-Majlisî (d. in 1111/1699) is certainly the last great compendium especially concerned with *maqâtîl*.

⁸⁷ Browne IV:28 and 177-238; Storey I:207-235; Ṭihriânî, *Dharî'a* XXII:22-35.

⁸⁸ The work was first printed in Lahore 1287 H and, according to Halm 181, again in Teheran 1334^{sh}/1956. Available to me: *Rauḍat ash-shuhadâ. Min taṣnîf maulânâ maulawî Ḥusayn Wâ'iz-i Kâshifî. Bi-ḥtimâm 'Alî Bahâ'î Sharaf 'Alî*. (Lith.) Bombay (Maṭba'at Muḥammadî), ca. 1870 A.D. It has been translated, with additions, by the Turkish poet Fuẓûlî; cf. Rieu, Charles: *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*. Vol. I. London 1879 [reprint 1966], 152, as well as Browne III:441; see also Storey I:212.

⁸⁹ As to *rauza-kh^wânî* and *marthiya kh^wânî* reference is made to Neubauer, *Muḥarram-Bräche*, 259-262, and the literature given there. An Arabic *rauḍa*-celebration in Najaf, Iraq is on record: *Uṣṭuwânât şaut Karbalâ². Maqal sayyidinâ 'l-Ḥusayn li-Shaykh 'Abd az-Zahra al-Ka'bi. Majâlis at-ta'ziya fi 'n-Najaf al-ashraf fi dhikrâ 'Ashûrâ²*. 2 records (15 cm, 33 R.P.M.), made by FLAKS, Beirut (1971?). I would like to thank W. Ende for drawing my attention to these records. Two recently published Arabic books give an interesting insight into the subject: (1) *Nahj ash-shahâda li-sayyid ash-shuhadâ² al-imâm al-Ḥusayn wa-ahl baytihi wa-anşârihi al-abrâr*. Ed. as-Sayyid Murtaḍâ as-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥusaynî. Beirut (Mu'assasât al-Wafâ²), 1404/1984¹; and (2) *ash-Shaykh Kâzim Ḥam(a)d al-Ihsâ'î an-Najafî: Min Majâlis 'Ashûrâ². Majmû'at khuṭab wa-majâlis ulqiyat fi 'l-khalîj wa-duwal ukhrâ bi-dhikrâ 'Ashûrâ² wa-ba'd al-munâsabât ad-diniyya*. Beirut (Mu'assasat al-Balâgh), 1411/1991¹.

plays (Arab.: *taʿziya*, Pers.: *ʿazâ-dârî*),⁹⁰ which have adapted this kind of narrative literature into dramatic performance.

Conclusions

On the basis of these findings, we are able to establish four stages of development of medieval *maqâtil* literature.

I. The first or pre-literary stage: The topos of *maqtal*, the “violent death” (of a person who died in a battle between the Arabian tribes or during the political-religious conflicts in early Islam), played in all probability a role in old Arabic and early Islamic literature.

Starting with the last third of the 1st/7th until the first decades of the 2nd/8th century, persons with a special interest in politico-religious motivated *maqatals* gathered various primary information (*akhbâr*, *ahâdîth*) from eye- or “ear-”witnesses of these events. These reports were especially narrated within the ʿAlîd family and among Shîʿites. They were transmitted almost exclusively orally.

II. The second stage, starting with the first half of the 2nd/8th century until the beginning of the 3rd/9th century. Early Shîʿite historians started to compile, on the basis of these different pieces of information, collections concerning one special *maqtal*. Medieval scholars already knew such works by, or identified them with, the name of their collectors or the name of a later “transmitter”, who himself had compiled a relevant collection but used mainly the material of his predecessor/teacher as a source. Most of these early collections had a loosely written character and were used for private purposes within the ʿAlîd family. However, they formed the literary basis supporting transmission in Shîʿite lectures. These early writings may be described as *hypomnêmata*. By that time, there were already certain written *maqtal* works which are to be considered as books in the sense of *literary compositions* (*Verfasserwerke*), composed and written down by historians, who—given the peculiarities of the system of transmission in medieval Islam—are acknowledged as real authors. On this basis, the *maqâtil* material can be regarded as a literary subject of medieval Arabic historiography which became fixed in written form at a very early time.

III. The third stage, starting with middle of the 2nd/8th until the first third of the 4th/10th century. With the rapid upsurge in writing during

⁹⁰ Cf. Calmard 176, and the bibliography given there. See also Ende, *Flagellations* 20, abbr. 3, where he refers to the most important recent works among the bulk of studies in Western languages on *taʿziya*; Halm 181 and Rypka 527. On *taʿziya* in Arabic in Iraq, see Müller 68.

the second half of the 8th and the first part of the 9th centuries, materials of single *maqtal* reports were also incorporated in larger compilations. On the one hand, there are the works of Shî'ite authors, above all the so-called *Kutub al-Maqâtil* which deal with this subject exclusively. On the other hand, there are more common Shî'ite historical, genealogical or biographical books and well-known Sunnite chronicles, which also processed and preserved numerous *maqtal* reports. This period of a flourishing *maqâtil* literature, concentrating mainly on the historical *akhbâr*, reaches its culmination with Abû 'l-Faraj's book "*Maqâtil at-Tâlibiyyîn*".

IV. The fourth stage, starting with middle of the 4th/10th century. After Abû 'l-Faraj, the *maqâtil* as an independent genre of historico-biographical literature in Arabic almost came to an end. Later works which concern them are hagiographies rather than historiographies. During the 16th century A.D., i.e. under the Şafavid dynasty, the *maqâtil* literature was revived in Persian, whence it has influenced Shî'ite narrative literature in Turkish and Urdu as well as the performance of Shî'ite mourning-assemblies and passion plays.

University of Halle (Saale)

SEBASTIAN GÜNTHER

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