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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 *faḍā'il*, *khaṣā'iṣ* or *manāqib* literature, the early Shī'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 Shī'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-Schi'a*" (1926), in the second part of which he deals with a relevant monograph of 'Alî ibn Mûsâ aṭ-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 Shī'ite Lebanese, published in 1981 under the title "*Anṣâr al-Husayn*", and the meticulous and better known survey of the Russian orientalist Stanislav Prozorov, "*Arabskaya istoričeskaya literatura ... Shiitskaya istoriografiya*"

* This article is one of the results of a sabbatical term which I had the opportunity to spend at Freiburg University. For this generous invitation I would like to thank Professor Werner Ende (Freiburg). A first version of the paper was presented at the 16th Congress of the U.E.A.I. held 27.08.-02.09.1992 in Salamanca/Spain.

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); *maqatala*: 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 aṭ-Ṭaff*, is an interesting modern collection of elegies on the martyrs of Karbalâ².

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

(1980). The latter work provides systematic information about various *maqatal* works and their authors, and introduces a considerable amount of new material. The most recent publication, which partly touches on the subject of *maqātil*, is Etan Kohlberg's excellent book (1992) on the above mentioned medieval scholar aṭ-Ṭaʿūsī. In standard works on Arabic and Islamic studies, as far as I can see, *maqātil* 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, Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's "*Kitāb Maqātil aṭ-Ṭālibiyyīn*".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 *maqātil* 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 *maqātil* 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 *hikāya* 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 maqatal which means, in the tradition of Shīʿī circles, the account of the death of Husayn at Karbalāʾ*" (cf. *EP* III:374).

⁵ Concerning its various editions, cf. *Quellenunters.*, 11-13. Two reprints of Ahmad Saqr's edition are to be added there: Teheran 1970² and (with a new page-numbering) Beirut 1987³. — Meanwhile also Persian translations have been published: *Farzandān-i Abū Ṭālib. Tarjama-i Jawād [Ibn Abī ʿl-Ḥasan] Fâḍil [Larijāni]*. Part I-III. Teheran (Kitāb-furūshī wa-ḥāpkhāna-i ʿAlī Akbar ʿIlmī), 1339^{sh}/1960. And: *Sargudhasht-i kushitashudagān az farzandān-i Abū Ṭālib. Tarjama-i Maqātil aṭ-Ṭālibiyyīn, taʿlīf-i Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. Tarjama az Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī Maḥallātī. Muqaddima wa-taḥḥīḥ az ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffāri*. Teheran (Kitāb-furūshī-i Ṣadūq), 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 Trauerlegien um Husain 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 Shī'ite minority, yet held the family of the Prophet in high esteem.⁸

Obviously the main topics of *maqâtîl* works concern 1. the deaths (i.e. assassination, in battle, etc.) of members of the Prophet's family. 1a. The books entitled "*Maqatal al-Husayn*" should be mentioned first as the death of the Prophet's younger grandson in the battle at Karbalâ' has been the favorite literary subject of the Shī'ites from the very beginning. 1b. Other works deal with the assassination of the fourth Caliph 'Alî ibn Abî Tâlib in Kufa in 661 or the death of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alî 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 (*akhbâr*) 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 'Adî ibn Zayd*⁹ and *Maqatal 'Abdallâh 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 Abî Bakr, the son of the second Caliph and 'Alî's young governor in Egypt, who was defeated and killed in 38/658 by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ when he conquered Egypt for Mu'âwiya.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 Hujr ibn 'Adî*" and others that will be mentioned later in connection with the author Abû Mikhnaf.

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

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

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

¹⁰ cf. Wensinck V:304.

¹¹ cf. *EF* I:459.

subject;¹² II.a) (Sunnite) universal histories and chronicles (*Kutub at-Taʿrikh*); b) genealogical works (*Kutub al-Ansāb*), especially those written by Shīʿites about the descendants of Abū Ṭālib (*Ansāb at-Ṭālibiyyīn*);¹³ III. The well-known bio-bibliographical works (*Kutub ar-Rijāl*); and, IV. (although to a lesser degree) works of *belles lettres* (*Kutub al-Ādāb*).

Tidings of, as it were, “pre-Islamic *maqātil*” can also be found in old-Arabic *qaṣīdas* and the *Ayyām 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 *maqātil*” are furthermore referred to in at least one medieval work explicitly, i.e. Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī’s “*Kitāb al-Aghānī*”.¹⁵

¹² An interesting Zaydite manuscript is preserved in the *Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin*. The work, entitled “*Akhbār Fakhh wa-khabar Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbdallāh*”, is ascribed to Aḥmad ibn Sahl ar-Rāzī (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 *maqātil* material which was, until now, little known. See Jarrār, 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) Abū Naṣr al-Bukhārī, Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Dāʿūd ibn Sulaymān ibn Abān ibn ʿAbdallāh (alive in 341/592-3): *Sirr as-silsila al-ʿalawiyya*. Ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Āl Baḥr al-ʿUlūm. Najaf 1382/1962. (2) Ibn ʿInaba ad-Dāʿūdī, Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan (ibn Muḥannā Ibn ʿInaba ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib), al-Ḥasanī (d. in 828/1424): *ʿUmdat at-Ṭālib fi Ansāb Āl Abī Ṭālib*. Ed. Lazār Riḍā. Beirut (Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt), no year. (3) Ibn Ṭabāṭibā, Ibrāhīm ibn Nāṣir, Abū Ismāʿīl (5th century): *Muntaqilat at-Ṭālibiyya*. 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—*maqātil* 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 *akhbār* in Abū ʿl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī’s “*Kitāb al-Aghānī*” which concern pre- (or early) Islamic *maqātil*; cf. *Aghānī* 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 *maqātil* (or *sabab qatl*) *fulān*. At first glance and with the knowledge of medieval *maqātil* “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 *maqātil* 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. *akhbār* which concern in medieval texts *expressis verbis* the “pre-Islamic *maqātils*” are found almost solely in Abū ʿl-Faraj’s “*Aghānī*”. Other medieval works do not provide us with such tangible clues furnishing evidence of a pre-Islamic *maqātil* genre in the narrow sense of the word. 2. Even in the “*Aghānī*”, pre-Islamic *maqātils* 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 *maqṭal* 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 *maqṭal* 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 *kitāb*, 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 *hypomnēmata*.

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 “*Aghāni*”, we have to bear in mind the personal literary experience of the given author and his stylistic devices: recent research has shown that Abū ʿl-Faraj had very probably already started to prepare the “*Aghāni*” when, in his younger years, he was writing his “*Maqātil at-Tālibiyyin*”, or, at least, that he definitely had finished the “*Maqātil*” when he was compiling the “*Aghāni*”. Consequently we have good reason to suppose Abū ʿl-Faraj’s occasional usage of the term *maqṭal* in connection with quotations of “pre-Islamic” deaths in the “*Aghāni*” to be a result of his literary practice in compiling his earlier book, the “*K. Maqātil at-Tālibiyyin*”. However, the analysis of the *isnāds* relating in the “*Aghāni*” to these reports, testifies to the famous philologist Abū ʿUbayda (d. 210/825) as the most significant *common link*. His works, especially the “*Naqāʿid Jarir wa-ʿl-Farazdaq*” and the “*K. al-Ayyām*”, have been proved to be an important “*real source*” for numerous passages in the “*Aghāni*” (cf. also Fleischhammer 86, Nr 47), a fact which underlines our assumption in regard to the pre-Islamic *maqātil* in the *Ayyām al-ʿarab* literature (cf. fn. 14).

¹⁶ Recently the terms *syngramma* and *hypomnēma* 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 *syngammata* (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 (*syngammata*) 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 *syngamma*. 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-Haiṭam 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 *majālis* (sessions) or *halaqāt* (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, Zirīklī) 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 *maqtal* works or *maqātil* compilations (*kutub!*) have been explicitly ascribed. Among these are 19 scholars known as compilers or authors of a “*Kitāb Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*”; nine are said to have composed a “*K. Maqtal Amīr al-muʿminīn, ʿAlī*”, five a “*K. Maqtal ʿUthmān*”, three a “*K. Qatl (Fī amr) al-Ḥasan*”; two a “*K. Maqtal Ḥuj ibn ʿAdī*” and a “*K. Maqtal 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 *maqtal* material can be identified as: al-Aṣḥbagh 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-Aṣḥbagh ibn Nubāta al-Mujāshīʿī al-Kūfī—cf. Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 37f; Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 34; Kashshī 96 (Nr. 42); Najāshī 6; Ibn Hazm 231; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb* I:362; Ṭabarī I:3249 (36 H); Ṭihranī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:24; U. Sezgin 205.

appointed Mālik al-Ashtar as governor of Egypt). The date of al-Mujāshīʿī's death is not known, but according to the *rijāl* books, he must have survived ʿAlī by many years. Particularly interesting is the reference to a collection entitled “*Kitāb Maqṭal al-Husayn*”²⁵ which is ascribed to al-Mujāshīʿī. However, even if Ṭīhrānī states: “*aqūlu: wa-ʿz-zāhir, annahu min auwal kutub al-Husayn, wa-kitābuhu aṣḥab kutub al-maqātil*”;²⁶ according to the results of recent investigations in early Arabic literature, we may suppose that al-Mujāshīʿī should be seen only as an important narrator of *maqātil* material, who—as an eyewitness, or at least a contemporary of these events—was regarded by the Shīʿites of that time as a trustworthy and significant authority. Labelling the reports transmitted by him as a *kitāb* seems to me to be almost certainly a product of later Shīʿite *rijāl* books.

2. Another early “work” is ascribed to ʿUbaydallāh ibn Abī Rāfiʿ al-Madanī.²⁷ He is known in the literature as ʿAlī's secretary (*kātib*); he transmits from him directly but also through the intermediaries of his father and his grand-father. ʿUbaydallāh ibn Abī Rāfiʿ must have died after 100 H (= 718). Apart from collections about “*The Battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn and Nahrawān*” and “*The Affairs of ʿAlī*”, he evidently prepared a compendium later known as “*Kitāb Tasmiyat man shahida maʿa Amir al-muʾminīn, ʿAlī*”.²⁸ In the fashion of early *dīwāns*, it could have been a written list of names of persons who had taken part in (*shahida*) and died during ʿAlī'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 *akhbār* on *maqātil*. However, even if we bear in mind ʿUbaydallāh ibn Abī Rāfiʿ' s profession as a scribe, this *kitāb* was certainly not more than a small text with a relatively loose character (*hypomnēma*).

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

²⁵ The transmission of al-Mujāshīʿī's *ḥadīth* can be traced to the middle of the 10th century within later Shīʿite collections or larger compilations, respectively (cf. Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 37): in the transmission of ad-Dūrī ʿan Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ʿan Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Juʿfi ʿan Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd an-Nakhāʿī ʿan Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ʿan Abī ʿl-Jārūd ʿan al-Aṣḥab, *wa-dhakara ʿl-ḥadīth bi-ṭūlihi*.

²⁶ Ṭīhrānī, *Dhariʿa* XXII:24.

²⁷ Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 47. Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* VII:10 (“*thiqa*”); *Ṣiffīn* 471.

²⁸ Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 47.

²⁹ Abū ʿAbdallāh, Jābir ibn Yazīd ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAbd Yāghūth ibn Kaʿb al-Juʿfi: cf. Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 45; Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 111, 163 (follower of the Imāms al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq); Najāshī 94; Kashshī 169-174 (Nr. 87); Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* 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. Ṣiffīn*”, 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-muʿminīn, 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*, *tarājīm* 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. *Ṣiffīn* 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-akhbaranā: 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 (“*Qatīl al-Ḥusayn*”); Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 60. See also Wüstenfeld’s translation, *Der Tod des Ḥusain*, 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 aṭ-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 ‘Alī⁴²; (2) furthermore works (2.a) about violent deaths during the reign of the Caliphs ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, such as “*Maqṭal ‘Uthmān*”,⁴³ “*Maqṭal Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ*”,⁴⁴ “*Maqṭal Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr wa-‘l-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 Hujr ibn ‘Adī*”,⁴⁶ “*Marj Rāhiṭ wa-bay‘at Marwān wa-maṭṭal ad-Daḥḥāk ibn Qays al-Fihri*”,⁴⁷ “*Maqṭal ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr*”,⁴⁸ “*Maqṭal Ibn al-Ash‘ath*”,⁴⁹ and “*Yazīd ibn al-Muḥallab wa-maṭṭaluhu bi-‘Aqr*”.⁵⁰ Abū Mikhnaf may therefore be regarded as the only

Mikhnaf. Qom (Mu‘assasat al-Wafā‘), 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 ‘Alī*”, cf. U. Sezgin 61, 101 (Nr. 9).

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

⁴⁴ cf. Prozorov 54. Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ, governor of Kufa under the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, was driven out by its inhabitants and killed in 34/654-5 (*EP* I:695); *Aghāni* XI:31.

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

⁴⁶ Najāshī 225; Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 107; Hujr ibn ‘Adī al-Kindī was one of the earliest Shī‘ite agitators. He fought for ‘Alī at the *Battle of the Camel* and at *Ṣiffin* and became the moving spirit in all ‘Alid 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 Mu‘āwiya in Syria, who executed him near Damascus. His death opens the Shī‘ite martyrology (*EP* III:545).

⁴⁷ Prozorov 53; U. Sezgin 99. Ad-Daḥḥāk was governor in Kufa, later in Damascus; head of the Qays and supporter of ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr. He was killed in 64/684 in a great battle near *Marj Rāhiṭ* between the Arabian tribes of Qays and Kalb (*EI*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. ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr was a Qurayshite leader. After Mu‘āwiya’s death he declared himself Caliph, but al-Ḥajjāj (the commander of Caliph ‘Abdalmalik’s troops) was able to overcome him in a battle near Mekka, at which ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr was killed (*EP* I:54).

⁴⁹ Ṭīhrānī, *Dhari‘a* XXII:22; cited in Ṭabarī II:1094. ‘Abdarrahmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ash‘ath 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-Muḥallab: governor of Iraq under the Caliph ‘Umar II, led a dangerous insurrection against the Caliph and was killed in 102/720 (*EP* 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 *maqṭal* books),⁵² Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. in 827),⁵³ ʿAlī al-Madāʾinī (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 *maqṭal* 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 *khawṭābiyya*. The *khawṭābiyya* was a conglomerate of various Shīʿite sects named after Abū ʿl-Khawṭāb,⁵⁸ a Muslim heresiarch and possibly the earliest representative of the Ismāʿīlite doctrine. Abū ʿl-Khawṭāb 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-Khawṭāb'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 (“*Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*”) and Ṭihirānī, *Muṣaffā* 421.

⁵² GAS I:268-271. “*K. Maqṭal Hujr ibn ʿAdī*” (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73; *K. Maqṭal ʿUthmān*” (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); “*K. Maqṭal Amīr al-muʾminīn*”, ʿAlī (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); “*K. Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*” (Najāshī 306, Prozorov 73); “*K. Maqṭal Rāshid wa-Maytham wa-Jarīr ibn Mashhar*” (Najāshī 306).

⁵³ GAS I:313. “*K. Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*” (Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 200, Najāshī 302).

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

⁵⁵ “*K. Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*” Najāshī 250: *akhbaranī*: ʿidda min aṣḥābinā ʿan: ibnihi Aḥmad ʿan: abihi (scil. Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā) *bi-kutubihī*.

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

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

⁵⁸ *ET*² 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 qutīla min aṭ-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, khaṭṭ*), 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 qutīla 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 aṭ-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. fi Maqātil aṭ-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; Ṭīhrānī, *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; Ṭīhrānī, *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; *Taʾriḫ Baghdād* IV:252-253; *Aghānī* VI:157 (n. 158); Ziriklī I:160; *Irshād* I:223-228; Ṭīhrānī, *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; *Taʾriḫ Baghdād* IV:252; Ziriklī I:160; Ṭīhrānī, *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; *Iran* 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 *maq̄tal*-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 Ṭ-Ḥaraj'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 aslāfihi*); 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 Ṭ-Ḥaraj 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 Ṭ-Ḥaraj 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 Ṭ-Ḥaraj used directly, we find, for example, the "*K. Man shahida ma'ā Amīr al-mu'minīn, 'Alī'*" written by his teacher, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥamdānī (d. in 944; cited 120 times).⁷⁹ Another older work, i.e. the "*K. man qatila min aṭ-Ṭālibiyyīn*" by Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz (d. in 872; cited 29 times), Abū Ṭ-Ḥaraj received as a manuscript and also used directly.⁸⁰ The most important older authorities to whom Abū Ṭ-Ḥaraj 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 Ṭ-Ḥaraj directly.

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

directly are ʿUmar ibn Shabba (d. 876; cited 311 times),⁸¹ Yahyâ ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAlawî al-ʿAqîqî (d. 890; cited 94 times);⁸² Abû Mikhnaf (d. 775; cited 57 times)⁸³ and al-Madâʾinî (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 ʿI-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-Ṭālibiyyin*” Abû ʿI-Faraj’s intention was to do more than that which a transmitter or an anonymous copyist of older historico-biographical *akhbār* 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 ʿI-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 *akhbār*, and he himself—Abû ʿI-Faraj—for the tidings of poets and musicians.⁸⁵ This judgement is underlined by the fact that Abû ʿI-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-Mufid’s (d. 413/1022) famous book “*al-Irshād*” 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) *Muthir al-ahzân* 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 qatla ʿI-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 "*Ḥadiqat 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'wâni* or *marthiya-kh'wâni*,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 Tâ'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. *Ansâr* 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; Tihriani, *Dhari'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-shuhadâ². Min taṣniḥ 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 Fuzûlî; 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'wâni* and *marthiya kh'wâni* reference is made to Neubauer, *Muḥarram-Brâche*, 259-262, and the literature given there. An Arabic *rauḍa*-celebration in Najaf, Iraq is on record: *Uṣṣuwânât ṣaut Karbalâ². Maqal sayyidinâ 'l-Ḥusayn li-Shaykh 'Abd az-Zahra al-Ka'bi. Majâlis al-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-anṣârîhi al-abrâr*. Ed. as-Sayyid Murtaḍâ as-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥusaynî. Beirut (Mu'assasât al-Wafâ²), 1404/1984¹; and (2) *ash-Shaykh Kâzîm Ḥam(a)d al-Iḥsâ'î an-Najafî: Min Majâlis 'Ashûrâ². Majmû'at khuṭab wa-majâlis ulḥiyat fi 'l-khalîj wa-duwal ukhrâ bi-dhikrâ 'Ashûrâ² wa-ba'ḍ al-munâsabât ad-diniyya*. Beirut (Mu'assasat al-Balâgh), 1411/1991¹.

plays (Arab.: *taʿziya*, Pers.: *ʿazā-dāri*),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 *maqātil* 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 *maqtals* gathered various primary information (*akhbār*, *aḥādīth*) from eye- or “ear-”witnesses of these events. These reports were especially narrated within the ʿAlīd family and among Shīʿites. 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 Shīʿite 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 ʿAlīd family. However, they formed the literary basis supporting transmission in Shīʿite lectures. These early writings may be described as *hypomnēmata*. 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 *maqātil* 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 *maq̄tal* reports were also incorporated in larger compilations. On the one hand, there are the works of Shīʿite authors, above all the so-called *Kutub al-Maq̄til* which deal with this subject exclusively. On the other hand, there are more common Shīʿite historical, genealogical or biographical books and well-known Sunnite chronicles, which also processed and preserved numerous *maq̄tal* reports. This period of a flourishing *maq̄til* literature, concentrating mainly on the historical *akhbâr*, reaches its culmination with Abû ʿl-Faraj's book "*Maq̄til at-Tâlibiyyîn*".

IV. The fourth stage, starting with middle of the 4th/10th century. After Abû ʿl-Faraj, the *maq̄til* 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 *maq̄til* literature was revived in Persian, whence it has influenced Shīʿite narrative literature in Turkish and Urdu as well as the performance of Shīʿite mourning-assemblies and passion plays.

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