THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF ABŪ BAKRA:
MAWLĀ OF THE PROPHET, OR POLEMICAL TOOL?

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Scholars have long recognized the important contributions of the *mawālī* (sg. *mawlā*) to Islamic civilization, while also acknowledging that the term *mawlā* is incredibly complex. The term is usually translated as client or freedman, but it can also mean kinsman, ally, patron, convert, and non-Arab Muslim; it often means many of these things at once. In trying to untangle this confusing mass of meanings, some scholars have investigated the development of the legal system of clientage (*walā'*) or have shown how clientage led directly to the *mamlūk* military system.[1] Others have traced the participation of the *mawālī* in Islamic scholarship, in fields such as ḥadīth, grammar, and jurisprudence.[2] However, few have attempted to elucidate the social status of the *mawālī* in the early Islamic period,[3] to see how developments in *walā'* reflected developments in other social institutions such as genealogy and slavery, or to see how the sources use the term *mawlā* to comment on the ideological conflicts of their contemporary societies. It is these social aspects of early Islamic *walā'* that will be investigated in this article.

The focus of my investigation is a man named Abū Bakra, who is historically remembered as a *mawlā* of the Prophet Muḥammad. However, I argue that Abū Bakra was not actually a *mawlā* of the Prophet—indeed, that he was not a *mawlā* at all. It may seem strange to treat a non-*mawlā*

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[1] See for instance Crone, *Roman Provincial and Islamic Law*; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*; Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*; and Mitter, *Das frühislamische Patronat.*

[2] See for instance Motzki, "The Role of Non-Arab Converts"; and Bernards and Nawas, "A preliminary report of the Netherlands Ulama Project (NUP)." Bernards and Nawas have published a number of articles from the findings of the NUP, listed in the Bibliography.

[3] The major exceptions are Maḥmūd Miqdād's *Al-Mawālī fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* and Jamal Juda's "Die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Mawālī in frühislamischer Zeit."

in an article on early Islamic *walāʾ*, but Abū Bakra's situation is illuminating for two reasons. First, Abū Bakra was a freed slave; he was manumitted along with a handful of other men during the Prophet Muḥammad's siege of al-Ṭāʾif in the year 630. The manumission of a slave was a primary means of forging a *walāʾ* bond from pre-Islamic times down through the early modern period, and classical Islamic law dictates that manumission automatically creates a *walāʾ* bond.[4] However, in the earliest Islamic period it was sometimes possible to manumit a slave without creating a *walāʾ* bond,[5] and I argue that Abū Bakra illustrates a unique kind of non-*walāʾ* manumission that was practiced during the earliest Islamic conquests. Thus, as the representative of an entire group of slaves freed during the siege of al-Ṭāʾif, Abū Bakra acts as a window into a wider social phenomenon of non-*walāʾ* manumission. Second, although I argue that Abū Bakra was actually not a *mawlā*, the fact remains that many historical sources portray him as a *mawlā* of the Prophet. Thus, investigating his case can help us understand why someone might be remembered as a *mawlā*, what ideological import *walāʾ* can have, and what the sources accomplish by back-projecting *mawlā* identity. Here again it is not just Abū Bakra as an individual that is important, but his place in society, especially his relationship with his close kinsmen. Through Abū Bakra and his family ties, we see how *mawlā* identity was used to criticize the Umayyad conception of genealogy.

In keeping with these two aspects of Abū Bakra's importance, this article consists of two sections. The first section is historical: it brings forth evidence that challenges Abū Bakra's *mawlā* status and problematizes the relationship between manumission and *walāʾ* during the earliest Islamic conquests. I argue that, rather than becoming a *mawlā* of the Prophet, he became a *ṭalīq allāh* ("one set loose by God") whose care was entrusted to the Muslim *umma* at large. The second section is historiographical: it demonstrates why Abū Bakra has been remembered in most sources as a *mawlā* of the Prophet. Although some innocent or accidental back-projection is plausible, I argue that Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity is also used as an ideological weapon in the campaign to malign the Umayyads. These sources

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[4] The classical stance is summed up in the hadith: "*walāʾ* belongs to the manumitter" (*al-walāʾ li-man aʿtaqa*). This hadith has been interpreted to mean not only that the manumitter is the sole person who can legally get a *walāʾ* bond with his freed slave, but also that manumission always and necessarily forges a *walāʾ* tie between former master and slave.

[5] As discussed in Crone, *Roman Provincial and Islamic Law*, 67–68; and especially in Mitter, "Unconditional Manumission." This article will return below to the topic the *sāʾiba*, or slave manumitted without incurring a *walāʾ* bond.

contrast Abū Bakra's *mawlā* status with the opportunistic "Arabism" of his own relatives, thereby criticizing the Umayyad manipulation of kinship ties. Through this discussion, I hope to highlight the crucial but under-appreciated fact that the term "*mawlā*" is not merely a descriptive term or a legal designation, but that it could be a potent polemical tool.

A brief overview of Abū Bakra's biography will provide a sense of context and orientation for the following analysis. His name is usually given as Nufayʿ ibn Masrūḥ.[6] He was a slave born in the household of al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada al-Thaqafī, a well-to-do physician of al-Ṭāʾif. His father was a slave of al-Ḥārith's, an Abyssinian man named Masrūḥ. His mother, Sumayya, was a slave woman and prostitute also belonging to al-Ḥārith; she was also the mother of the Umayyad governor Ziyād ibn Abīhi. During the siege of al-Ṭāʾif in the year 630, the Muslim army announced that any slave who escaped from their masters and joined the cause of Islam would be freed. At this point, Nufayʿ and a handful of other slaves joined the Muslims;[7] Nufayʿ rappelled down from the high wall of al-Ṭāʾif on a pulley, thus earning his famous moniker, Abū Bakra, which means "father of the pulley." Later, during the caliphate of ʿUmar, Abū Bakra moved to Basra along with several of his family members. There he became embroiled in a widely-recounted incident involving the governor of Basra, al-Mughīra ibn Shuʿba. Abū Bakra and three other men, including his half-brothers Nāfiʿ and Ziyād, accused al-Mughīra of engaging in fornication; however, Ziyād retracted his accusation at the last minute, and Abū Bakra was found guilty of *qadhf* (false accusation or slander) and beaten eighty lashes. This *qadhf* episode understandably created a rift between Abū Bakra and Ziyād. Abū Bakra appears to have shunned any association with politics, and he was among those who withdrew from combat and refused to take sides in the Battle of the Camel in 656. He had several children and many grandchildren, his progeny becoming some of the wealthiest and most prominent men of Basra. He died in the year 671 or 672 and was prayed over by his friend and fellow Companion Abū Baraza.[8]

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[6] His name is sometimes given as Nufayʿ ibn al-Ḥārith. The details of Abū Bakra's parentage will be discussed in the historiographical section below.

[7] Though the original siege of al-Ṭāʾif was abortive, Muḥammad and the Muslims defeated the Thaqīf tribe and accepted their conversion a few months later, after the battle of Ḥunayn. Given that the slaves who came down during the siege converted to Islam several months before their Thaqafī masters, they would have been superior to their former masters in terms of *sābiqa*, the prestige gained through early conversion to Islam.

[8] Fatima Mernissi's feminist re-interpretation of early Islamic history presents Abū Bakra in a rather different light (*The Veil and the Male Elite*, 49–60). Her focus is on Abū

Unconditional Manumission in an Arabian Milieu

The first episode in Abū Bakra's life that deserves closer examination is his escape from al-Ṭā'if and subsequent manumission. Although the sources vary widely in their treatment of this event—most *Tārīkh* works barely mention it, whereas al-Wāqidī spends a full page discussing its details— most sources seem to take for granted that Abū Bakra became a *mawlā* of the Prophet as a result of his manumission at al-Ṭā'if.[9] Yet this largely implicit conferral of *walā'* through manumission is highly problematic. One problem is the simple fact that none of the other slaves who came down during the siege of al-Ṭā'if has been remembered as a *mawlā* of the Prophet. Most of these other slaves are anonymous or largely for- gotten to history, but even those that do receive some treatment in the early sources are never considered *mawālī* of the Prophet.[10] There is also the fact that Abū Bakra is much more closely associated with his mas- ter's tribe of Thaqīf than Muḥammad's tribe of Quraysh.[11] However, this article will focus on an even more pressing problem: the phrase used to describe Abū Bakra's post-manumission status in most sources is not actually "*mawlā rasūl allāh*" (*mawlā* of the messenger of God), but rather "*ṭalīq allāh wa-ṭalīq rasūlihi*" (the one set loose by God and His apostle).[12] The source authors themselves do not pay much attention to this unique

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Bakra's association with the hadith: "Those who entrust their affairs to a woman will never know prosperity." Here he is presented as a lying, wealth-loving, woman-hating villain. However, it remains that the sources actually present Abū Bakra as pious, almost ascetic in his renunciation of the *dunyā*, and an all-around good guy.

 [9] Only al-Balādhurī explicitly connects Abū Bakra's manumission with his *walā'* (*Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 490: "*fa-a'taqahu fa-ṣāra mawlā rasūl allāh*"). The other sources imply this con- nection, but they do not state it outright.

 [10] For example, al-Azraq, a Byzantine slave belonging either to al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada or to his father Kalada—and married to Abū Bakra's mother Sumayya—descended from the citadel along with Abū Bakra. He is not known as a *mawlā* of the Prophet in a single early historical or bibliographical source; indeed, he and his sons seem to have claimed an Arabic heritage and intermarried with the Umayyads. See for instance al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, 3:931–32; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3.1:174; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 490; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 55–56 (where he claims that the Azāriqa Kharijite sect was named after al-Azraq); and Tabari, *Tārīkh*, ser. 3, vol. 4, 2315.

 [11] One report even says Abū Bakra was a *mawlā* of al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada (Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:208). In any case, a *mawlā* gets a bond of *walā'* with his manu- mitter but also gets a place in his manumitter's tribe. If Abū Bakra had truly been a *mawlā* of the Prophet, he should have exhibited a much stronger social bond to Muḥammad's family and tribesmen.

 [12] Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7.1:9; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:212–13; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, 3:366. According to 'Umar ibn Gharāmah al-'Amrawī, the editor of Ibn 'Asākir's *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, two versions of this account are also found in the

phrase, but I argue that it preserves a glimmer of historical memory that Abū Bakra did not incur *walā'* with the Prophet or anyone else by dint of his manumission at al-Ṭā'if.

The context for the use of this peculiar phrase is as follows: when al-Ṭā'if surrendered to the Muslim army, a delegation of Thaqafīs asked Muḥammad to return Abū Bakra to them, explaining that they had become Muslims and should thus rightfully get their former slave back. Muḥammad rebuffed the Thaqafīs by saying: "*huwa ṭalīq allāh wa-ṭalīq rasūlihi.*"[13] One author, Ibn Saʿd, provides an alternate *khabar* that completely alters the problematic phrase; in this report, Abū Bakra himself responds to the Thaqafīs who wanted to reclaim him by saying: "I am Masrūḥ (sic), the *mawlā* of the Messenger of God." However, in this account, the setup story has been altered as well: rather than hoping to reclaim him as their slave, the Thaqafī tribesmen hope to "adopt" (*iddaʿā*) him.[14] Thus, the context of the *khabar* has been changed from one of slavery and freedom to one of genealogy and adoption, topics that will be covered in the second half of this article. Moreover, Ibn Saʿd provides two more *khabar*s with the usual "*ṭalīq allāh*" phrasing, and the presence of the word "*mawlā*" in the altered *khabar* serves to highlight the strangeness of the phrase "*ṭalīq allāh*" in the other accounts, rather than to disguise it.

As for the word *ṭalīq*, the Quran makes no reference to it or to its plural *ṭulaqā'*. However, the term *ṭulaqā'* is found in the historical sources with a very specific meaning. Here, it is used to refer to the Qurashīs who capitulated and converted during the Muslim conquest of Mecca. These conquered Qurashīs should legally have been the war captives of the Prophet, but he chose to release rather than to enslave them. As C. E. Bosworth explains, the term *ṭulaqā'* "was subsequently used opprobriously by opponents of the Meccan late converts, such as enemies of

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Dār al-Fikr edition of Ibn Ḥanbal's, *Musnad*, 6:168–169. I was unable to verify the existence of these accounts in any edition of the *Musnad* available to me.

[13] Al-Wāqidī and Ibn Hishām provide a slight variant in their accounts: the Thaqafīs ask for all of their slaves back, and Muḥammad responds by saying, "*hum ʿutaqā' allāh*" (they are the manumitted ones of God). I believe that this phrase is a gloss, as the word *ʿatīq* (pl. *ʿutaqā'*) is the more common word for "freedman," and also because the Thaqafīs of al-Ṭā'if were generally known as *al-ʿutaqā'* (see below, footnote 15). In any case, this alternative phrase still seems to imply that these "freedmen of God" did not become the *mawālī* of their former masters. Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, 3:931–32; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 1:485.

[14] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7.1:9; the same account is also found in the much later Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:213–14.

the Umayyads."[15] On the one hand, I believe we can discount the possibility that the sources are drawing a purely rhetorical comparison between Abū Bakra and the Meccan Qurashīs, as the implications of the term are completely different in these two cases. In contrast to the ambivalent situation of the Meccans, the context for Abū Bakra's designation as a *ṭalīq* is overwhelmingly positive; it is a badge of freedom from slavery and possibly even a badge of spiritual superiority over the Thaqafīs who converted after him. On the other hand, I do believe that the Meccan situation can provide a clue to the meaning of the term *ṭalīq* in the Ṭāʾifī case: it does not seem to entail *walāʾ*. Certainly, no source ever argues that the Qurashī *ṭulaqāʾ* became Muḥammad's *mawālī*. Similarly, because Abū Bakra was manumitted by God (with Muḥammad acting simply as the agent for this manumission), he did not entail any socially meaningful *walāʾ* bond.

Additional clues about the phrase "*ṭalīq allāh*" can be found in early Islamic poetry. There are three poems that utilize the phrase, all dating before the early ninth century. While these few poems do not address Abū Bakra's case directly, they do shed light on how the phrase was used and understood. The first poem concerns a man named Imām ibn Aqram al-Numayrī, who was arrested by al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714) and some other members of Abān ibn Marwān's police squad in Balqāʾ. Imām managed to escape from prison using his own cunning, at which point he reportedly recited a poem declaring himself a *ṭalīq allāh* and ridiculing the ugly faces of the police who had incarcerated him.[16] Here Imām uses *ṭalīq allāh* to refer to his escape from jail, not from slavery; as such, it does not teach us much about the workings of slavery, manumission, and *walāʾ* in

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[15] Bosworth, "Tulaḳāʾ," *EI²*. According to Ibn Manẓūr, the Qurashīs of Mecca were known as *ṭulaqāʾ* while the Thaqafīs of al-Ṭāʾif were known as *ʿutaqāʾ*; the former designation was slightly more honorable than the latter (*Lisān al-ʿArab*, 10:227). I believe this distinction might have led al-Wāqidī and Ibn Saʿd to designate the freedmen of al-Ṭāʾif as "*ʿutaqāʾ*" rather than "*ṭulaqāʾ*" in their accounts, see footnote 13 above.

[16] The one set loose by God was given no favors   *ṭalīqu llāhi lam yamnun ʿalayhī*
By Abū Dāwūd or Ibn Abī Kathīr   *abū dāwūda wa-bnu abī kathīrī*
Or al-Ḥajjāj, with eyes like a stork   *wa-lā l-ḥajjāju ʿaynay binti māʾī*
Who turns up her gaze, fearing hawks.   *tuqallibu ṭarfahā ḥadhara ṣ-ṣuqūrī*
Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 2:158; Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, *Al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw*, 64; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyīn*, 1:386. Sibawayhi and Khalīl ibn Aḥmad use this poem as an example of *shatm* (slander), which takes the *manṣūb* case—hence the use of *ʿaynay* rather than *ʿaynā*. They indicate that this entire description stands for "apes' faces." However, al-Jāḥiẓ gives another explanation. He says that al-Ḥajjāj had small eyes (*ukhayfash*) with red, infected eyelids (*munsaliq al-ajfān*), and that all water birds (such as the stork in this description) also have small, ugly infected, eyes. Ibn ʿAsākir provides a slightly different text with a moderately different interpretation in his *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 9:217.

early Islamic society. However, it does express the idea that Imām's incarceration was unjust, while his escape was ordained by God. This theme of justice is also conveyed by the second poem, a short teaching tool in simple verse (*rajaz*). This poem was recited by the Kufan grammarian Ibn al-Aʿrābī (d. ca. 846) to illustrate the meaning of the word *bahz* (a violent blow). The poet begins, "I am a *ṭalīq allāh*," and it goes on to explain how he had been saved from the beatings of a harsh master.[17] In this poem, it appears that the *ṭalīq allāh* was some kind of freed slave or war captive, like Abū Bakra; though it is not explicit, it also seems that "*ṭalīq allāh*" here is a gloss for "Muslim." Thus, like the poem above, this poem highlights the injustice of mistreating a fellow Muslim, whose freedom from a brutal enslavement was sanctioned by God.

Both of these poems give us some idea of the overall meaning of "*ṭalīq allāh*" and thus illuminate Abū Bakra's case. First, we see that the phrase *ṭalīq allāh* is different from the Quranic phrase and common name ʿ*abd allāh* ("slave of God," i.e. Muslim), which does not imply slavery in the mundane sense, but rather serves to express absolute subservience and submission to God. On the other hand, the phrase *ṭalīq allāh* does provide the justification for social freedom (whether from jail or bondage), as well as carrying the meaning of "Muslim." Second, we see in both poems that the phrase is laden with notions of socio-religious justice and injustice— these poems are recited after some unjust act has been perpetrated, and the poet highlights that injustice by calling himself a *ṭalīq allāh*. These two elements seem to hold true for Abū Bakra as well: his social freedom was inextricable from his conversion to Islam, and his former master's request to re-enslave him was unjust. Finally, these poems also show us that the *ṭalīq allāh* was a character familiar to early Islamic poetry, but that the figure died out sometime in the early ʿAbbāsid period. The death of the poetic *ṭalīq allāh* may also indicate the disappearance of the socio-historical *ṭalīq allāh* in this same general time period.

There is a third "*ṭalīq allāh*" poem that goes in a different direction. It is a panegyric (*madīḥ*) written by the ʿAbbāsid court poet Marwān ibn Abī

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[17] I am the one set loose by God, for the son of Hurmuz   *anā ṭalīqu llāhi wa-bnu hurmuzī*
Rescued me from a ruthless master,   *anqadhanī min ṣāḥibin musharrizī*

Vehement against the people, felling, striking.   *shiksin ʿala l-ahli matallin mibhazī*

Al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lugha*, 4:402–3; Ibn Sīda, *Al-Muḥkam wa-al-Muḥīṭ*, 4:238–39. Ibn Sīda adds a fourth line to the poem: "if he comes near me with the rod, it will not be held back" (*in qāma naḥwī bi-l-ʿaṣā lam yuḥjazī*).

Ḥafṣa (d. 797) in praise of the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 775–785). After lauding the caliph's character and uprightness, Marwān asks the rhetorical questions: "The one set loose by God, who is his manumitter? / The one killed by God, who is his killer?" (*ṭalīq allāh man huwa muṭliquh / qatīl allāh man huwa qātiluh*).[18] In this case, the answer to both of these rhetorical questions is the caliph al-Mahdī himself, as the bastion of Islam and upholder of God's statutes.[19] However, this question is also important from a social, historical, and non-rhetorical standpoint: if God (or Islam) is the ultimate manumitter of the *ṭalīq allāh*, who is in charge of his social welfare? Who *in society* bears the responsibility for his manumission and subsequent care? Though it by no means conclusive, some evidence does exist that the *ṭalīq allāh* became the communal responsibility of the entire *umma*, rather than becoming the *mawlā* of any individual patron.

The main support for this argument about the communal responsibility for the *ṭalīq allāh* is the strong resemblance between the idea of the *ṭalīq allāh* and the idea of the *sāʾiba*. In Islamic law, a *sāʾiba* is a freed slave who does not become a *mawlā*; *tasyīb* is the practice of freeing a slave without subsequently creating a *walāʾ* bond, which Ulrike Mitter calls "unconditional manumission."[20] Before exploring the similarities between the *ṭalīq allāh* and the *sāʾiba*, however, it must be noted that the two terms are not identical. The main difference between them is that the *sāʾiba* is manumitted by his master, whereas the *ṭalīq allāh* is manumitted by God Himself, or by his conversion to Islam. Moreover, the two ideas are never explicitly connected in the sources: the sources that discuss *tasyīb* never mention the phrase *ṭalīq allāh*, nor is Abū Bakra ever described as a *sāʾiba*. The reason for this lack of overlap is that the terms inhabit two different spheres. On the one hand, *tasyīb* is a legal issue. Though most jurists reject the institution outright,[21] scholars of the seventh and eighth century debated whether the institution was allowed. Even the scholars who did accept the institution were only concerned with the legal right of inheritance from the *sāʾiba* and the legal responsibility of paying blood money for him. On

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[18] Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa, *Shiʿr*, 95.

[19] While the ultimate answer to the rhetorical question is God Himself, Marwān's point here is to laud the caliph's role in upholding God's order, as evidenced by the next line of poetry: *fa-innaka baʿd allāh la-al-ḥakam alladhī / tuṣābu bihi min kull ḥaqq mafāṣiluhu.* Ibid.

[20] Mitter, "Unconditional Manumission."

[21] Their rejection of *tasyīb* was justified using the *"walāʾ* belongs to the manumitter" hadith and the Quranic injunction against releasing a camel as a *sāʾiba* (5:103), i.e. letting it wander alone into a pasture without a caretaker and without restraints.

the other hand, we have seen that the *ṭalīq allāh* is a historical and literary figure who highlights notions of freedom and justice, rather than notions of inheritance and blood money. Even for Abū Bakra, for whom we have a good sense of social setting and historical context, the intricacies of his legal status are never discussed, nor is it ever debated whether his status as a *ṭalīq allāh* is legally permissible.

Despite these differences, a crucial similarity remains between the two concepts, in that they both involve manumission without *walāʾ*. It is noteworthy that the one major scholar who did accept *tasyīb*, Mālik ibn Anas, gave legal responsibility for the *sāʾiba* to the community of Muslims at large.[22] Mālik's school propagated the sunna of Medina; the school of Medina reflected the needs of a relatively small and homogenous community, one predominantly populated by fully-Islamicized Arabian tribesmen. Such a community could accommodate the care of a small number of foreigners, *sāʾiba*s, and other rootless people.[23] Abū Bakra and the other freed Ṭāʾifī slaves were products of a similar Arabian milieu that could incorporate outsiders into the community without necessarily needing individual ties of patronage. And, as both the *sāʾiba* and the *ṭalīq allāh* depended on having a small and relatively homogenous community that could accommodate a small number of rootless people, both were replaced by the more systematic legal and social institution of *walāʾ* as Islamic society expanded into Iraq and became more diverse.

The sources do provide a dim glimmer of evidence about how such a communal responsibility might have worked, and what actually became of Abū Bakra and his fellow "freedmen of God." Al-Wāqidī, the only author

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[22] For instance, Mālik says: "Jews and Christians do not get *walāʾ* [over Muslim slaves]; the *walāʾ* of a Muslim slave [owned by a Jew or Christian] goes to the society of Muslims" (*jamāʿat al-muslimīn*). Mālik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, 2:786 (book 38, section 13, hadith #25).

[23] On the other hand, Basra and Kufa were outposts in the middle of diverse non-Muslim populations. The Muslim populations of these cities were too small, and the number of war captives and foreign slaves too high, to integrate outsiders into the community without a real system in place. The institution of *walāʾ* was needed to maintain order and to preserve the hegemony of the Muslim soldiers over the surrounding populations. There is a similar difference between Mālik's Medinan school and other Iraqi schools of law in the treatment of *kafāʾa*, or marriage equality (a woman must marry a man of her own social station or higher). Mālik is not overly concerned with the issue of *kafāʾa*, for his community was relatively homogenous and made up of well-known, familiar tribal elements; the Iraqi schools, especially the school of the Kufan Abū Ḥanīfa, uphold intricate criteria of *kafāʾa*, which was important in maintaining some sense of social order in a diverse community. See Farhat Ziadeh, "Equality (*kafāʾah*) in the Muslim Law of Marriage."

who lists each of the freed slaves of al-Ṭāʾif by name, gives this detailed information: [24]

> The Messenger of God manumitted all of these, and gave each one of them to a Muslim to provide for him and look after him. Abū Bakra went to ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ; al-Azraq went to Khālid ibn Saʿīd; Wardān went to Abān ibn Saʿīd; Yuḥannas al-Nabbāl went to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān; Yasār ibn Mālik went to Saʿd ibn ʿUbāda; and Ibrāhīm ibn Jābir went to Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr. The messenger of God ordered them to read them the Quran and teach them the proper ways (*sunan*).

From this account, it seems that Muḥammad, as the head of the *umma*, divided up the social and religious responsibility for these patronless freedmen among individual members of the *umma* as he saw fit. He did not forge any *walāʾ* bonds between the freedmen and their caretakers, but rather set up a temporary arrangement for the integration of these freedmen into the *umma*.[25]

The evidence presented here leads me to believe that Abū Bakra did not become a *mawlā* of the Prophet at the crucial moment of his manumission, but that he rather fell under the care of the Muslim community as a *ṭalīq allāh wa-ṭalīq rasūlihi*. It seems that this designation soon fell into disuse, and later scholars back-projected the more familiar social status of *mawlā* onto Abū Bakra. This back-projection is probably due in part to an application of the *"walāʾ* belongs to the manumitter" *ḥadīth* to Abū Bakra's case, as well as to his association with a heterogeneous Basran milieu that did not understand the Arabian idea of the *ṭalīq allāh*. However, I argue that this back-projection of *mawlā* identity was not completely innocent, that it was more than a simple attempt to render Abū Bakra's social and legal status more comprehensible to a later audience. I argue that Abū Bakra has been remembered as a *mawlā* of the Prophet largely in order to critique the Umayyads' obsession with and manipulation of *nasab*. It is to these arguments that I now turn.

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[24] Al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, 3:932. Ibn Saʿd, who was al-Wāqidī's student and scribe, summarizes this account in his *Ṭabaqāt*, 2.1:114: "[The prophet] gave each one of them to one of the Muslims, to take care of him" (*wa-dafaʿa kull rajulin minhum ilā rajulin min al-muslimīn yamūnahu*).

[25] The situation can perhaps be compared to a modern-day example, to clarify this distinction between individual and communal responsibility. It seems similar to when the members of some organization (school, church, etc.) are asked to host out-of-towners who are visiting that organization or are otherwise affiliated with it. While individual organization members end up hosting individual out-of-towners, it is the organization itself that is the reason for their coming together. The situation may have an individual element to it, but the ultimate framework is a communal or organizational one.

Good Brother, Bad Brother: Abū Bakra as a Foil to Ziyād ibn Abīhi

Ziyād and Nāfiʿ and Abū Bakra	*inna Ziyād wa-Nāfiʿ wa-Abā*
Are terribly amusing to me.	*Bakra ʿindī min aʿjab al-muʿjib*
Three men created in one woman's womb,	*Inna rijāl thalātha khuliqū*
Yet with different genealogy:	*min raḥm unthā mukhālfī al-nasab*
One a Qurashī, or so he says; one a *mawlā*;	*dhā qurashīyun fī-mā yaqūlu wa-dhā*
And one who claims an Arab to be.	*mawlā wa-hādhā bi-zaʿmihi ʿArabī* [26]

Abū Bakra's family situation is quite complicated; it is bound up with several important concepts that were developing during the early Islamic period, such as the "the child belongs to the bed" (*al-walad li-al-firāsh*) dictum,[27] the status of the *umm al-walad*,[28] and new understandings of genealogy and ethnicity. However, all of the sources are deeply interested in Abū Bakra's relationship with one particular family member: his notorious half-brother Ziyād ibn Abīhi. I argue that Abū Bakra is used in the historical sources as a foil to Ziyād, and that his historical persona as a *mawlā* of the Prophet is inextricable from this polemical role.

There is ample evidence that Abū Bakra and Ziyād are ideologically bound together in the sources, with Abū Bakra playing the hero and Ziyād playing the villain. For instance, al-Balādhurī transmits a colorful account in which Anas ibn Mālik and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī pay a visit to Abū Bakra, who is laid up by a bad case of sciatica. Anas asks Abū Bakra why he is so angry with Ziyād, wondering whether his grudge concerns a matter of this world or the next. Anas insists that Abū Bakra should not begrudge Ziyād anything concerning this world, for Ziyād has bestowed high positions and

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[26] A poem by Khālid al-Najjārī, cited in Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 5:26.

[27] This dictum states that, in any case of disputed paternity, a child is automatically attributed to his mother's legal husband or master. According to this dictum, Abū Bakra would have been taken as the legal son of his mother's master, al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada al-Thaqafī. As such, he would have been treated as a full member of the Thaqīf tribe, rather than as a slave of mixed heritage. However, at the time of Abū Bakra's birth, the *walad li-al-firāsh* dictum still seems to have been in its developmental stages. See Uri Rubin, " 'Al-Walad li-l-Firāsh.' "

[28] The *umm al-walad* is a slave woman who bears a child to her master. She cannot be sold, and she is freed upon her master's death. The child of an *umm walad* is legally free, even if there was some social stigma attached to being the child of an *umm walad* in the earliest Islamic society. In later times, Sumayya would have been treated as an *umm walad* and all her children would have been considered free. See J. Schacht, "Umm al-Walad," *EI²*.

wealth upon Abū Bakra's children. "And if it is for something concerning the next world," says Anas, "by God, he strives to do what is right" (*innahu la-mujtahid*).[29] Abū Bakra responds: "Oh really, does he strive to do what is right? The Kharijites of Ḥarurāʾ also claim that they strive to do what is right." With one flip comeback, Abū Bakra has reduced his half-brother to the same level as a band of dangerous Kharijite fanatics.

Additionally, almost all the sources refer to the aforementioned *qadhf* episode, in which Ziyād recanted his accusation of fornication against al-Mughīra ibn Shuʿba, and Abū Bakra consequently received the *ḥadd* punishment for slander. Given that he was found guilty of *qadhf* by no less a figure than ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, one might assume that Abū Bakra would come out of this affair with his reputation tarnished. Yet most of the historical sources—including al-Ṭabarī, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Balādhurī, and Ibn Saʿd—depict the entire event from Abū Bakra's point of view. That is, in their accounts Abū Bakra actually witnesses al-Mughīra's fornication, and he receives confirmation from his three fellows that they also witnessed the event and could identify the perpetrators. Al-Balādhurī even inserts into his *qadhf* account a Quranic reference to Abū Bakra as one of "those who walks upon the earth in humility" (*alladhīna yamshūna ʿalā al-arḍi hawnan,* Q 25:63), and he declares Abū Bakra a "righteous, pious man."[30] Moreover, when ʿUmar moves to beat an unrepentant Abū Bakra a second time, al-Balādhurī has Abū Bakra yell: "I will not repent from the truth!" expressing the injustice of his punishment and even evoking a Ḥallāj-like sacrifice in the name of Truth.[31] Similar examples of clashes between the two abound in the sources. However, the primary aim of this article is to discover how Abū Bakra's *mawlā* status in particular was used to condemn Ziyād and the Umayyads.

At this juncture, we must remember the incident that cemented Ziyād's notoriety in Islamic history: his *diʿwa*, or his "acknowledgment" of Abū Sufyān as his father. Ziyād's biological father was almost certainly a Byzantine slave belonging to al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada, named ʿUbayd—that is, Ziyād was first a slave and then a *mawlā* of al-Ḥārith's. But when the caliph Muʿāwiya wanted to secure Ziyād's loyalty as governor of Basra, Muʿāwiya suggested that his own father, the powerful Qurashī nobleman

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[29] I have translated *mujtahid* in a slightly tortuous manner, hoping to convey both the idea of "striving" and the idea of "independent judgment."

[30] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 490–91 (for the Quranic verse), 492 (for the "righteous, pious man").

[31] Ibid., 492.

Abū Sufyān, was actually Ziyād's father as well. Overnight, Ziyād dropped his *mawlā* status and became an Arab tribesman and half-brother of the caliph. The sources universally condemn this act; they blame Muʿāwiya and Ziyād equally for committing this travesty, and they use the incident as evidence that the Umayyads cared more for mundane power than religious righteousness. On the other hand, according to some sources, Abū Bakra reveled in his identity as *mawlā* of the Prophet, insisted that his children call him "the son of Masrūḥ," and flatly refused any attempt to claim him as an "Arab." By examining the sources that portray Abū Bakra in this way, we can learn more about where and when this *mawlā* versus *diʿwa* theme originated.

First, it is worth noting that genre is an important factor in tracing this development; the information we are seeking is found primarily in biographical dictionaries and ḥadīth literature. Works of *Maghāzī/Futūḥ* (conquest narratives) and *Tārīkh* (annalistic history) are not particularly helpful for this investigation. On the one hand, *Maghāzī/Futūḥ* works are interested in Abū Bakra's manumission at the siege of al-Ṭāʾif, but they are not interested in his subsequent career or relationship with Ziyād. On the other hand, *Tārīkh* works are *only* interested in Abū Bakra's interactions with political leaders, and they care little or nothing for his social identity. This genre bias is best exemplified by al-Balādhurī, who provides ample evidence of Abū Bakra's ideological role in his biographical dictionary *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* but mentions nothing of Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity or his relationship with Ziyād in his conquest chronicle *Futūḥ al-Buldān*. Perhaps if al-Ṭabarī, al-Yaʿqūbī, Ibn Ḥabīb, Ibn Isḥāq and others had written works of biography and ḥadīth rather than *Tārīkh* and *Maghāzī*, there would be an overabundance of historiographical material regarding Abū Bakra's ideological role. However, as it stands, the material in extant biographical dictionaries and ḥadīth compendia must suffice.

When it comes to biographical dictionaries, Ibn Saʿd (d. 845) and later al-Balādhurī (d. 892) are particularly keen on contrasting Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity with Ziyād's *diʿwa*. We have already seen that Ibn Saʿd provides a telling alternative to the *ṭalīq allāh* accounts discussed above. In this alternative account, the impertinent request made by the Thaqafīs is not to re-enslave Abū Bakra, but to adopt him; the same verb is used here (*iddaʿā*) that is used when Ziyād "acknowledges" Abū Sufyan. Rather than accepting their request—as Ziyād accepted Muʿāwiya's request—Abū Bakra simply says, "I am *mawlā* of the Messenger of God." Here *walāʾ* is propped up as the antithesis to *diʿwa*, and Abū Bakra's noble pride in his (supposed) connection with the Prophet is contrasted with Ziyād's wicked pride in his new genealogy.

Ibn Saʿd also transmits an account in which a dying Abū Bakra exhorts his daughter to mourn him as "Ibn Masrūḥ."[32] He ends his account by saying: "Ziyād had brought the children of Abū Bakra close to him, and honored them, and given them land grants and government positions, so that they wound up with a terribly great amount of earthly interests and claimed that they were Arabs and the sons of Nufayʿ ibn al-Ḥārith al-Thaqafī."[33] Here we see that Ziyād's ignoble influence even spread to Abū Bakra's own children. Against a sea of people ditching their foreign backgrounds and claiming Arab lineages—including his own brother and sons—Abū Bakra stands out as a beacon of piety because he refuses to do precisely that.

The second source that uses Abū Bakra's *mawlā* status to condemn Ziyād is *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, written by Ibn Saʿd's student al-Balādhurī. Al-Balādhurī's stance towards Abū Bakra's social identity is instantly clear, as he locates Abū Bakra's biography in a section titled "*Mawālī* and Servants of the Messenger of God." Al-Balādhurī is also the only author who states outright that Abū Bakra became a *mawlā* of the Prophet upon his manumission. He then conveys an account that combines several of the elements we have seen in Ibn Saʿd's work, on the authority of al-Wāqidī: "Nufay Abū Bakra was the *mawlā* of the Prophet, a pious and upright man. His sons said: 'Nufayʿ ibn Ḥārith al-Thaqafī,' but Abū Bakra denounced that and said to his daughter at the time of his death: 'mourn me as Ibn Masrūḥ al-Ḥabashī.'" Finally, al-Balādhurī transmits yet another vividly anti-Ziyād account, in which Abū Bakra tells one of Ziyād's sons that his father has committed three sins in Islam: 1) rescinding his witness against al-Mughīra, 2) accepting the *diʿwa*, and 3) intending to stay with his new "sister," the wife of the Prophet Umm Ḥabība bint Sufyān, on the upcoming *ḥajj*. Here treachery, *diʿwa*, and scandal against the Prophet are all rolled up into one diatribe, put in the mouth of Abū Bakra.

As for the provenance of Ibn Saʿd's and al-Balādhurī's accounts, we must content ourselves with hints and suggestions rather than hard proof. Unfortunately, al-Balādhurī prefers the collective *isnād* "they said" (*qālū*) to more precise *isnād*s; thus, we cannot trace the provenance of the accounts in question. Ibn Saʿd attributes the bulk of his account to the Medinese scholar Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Asadī (d. 785).[34] There must have been several transmitters in between al-Asadī and Abū Bakra—they

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[32] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7.1:9.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 1:258–59.

died more than a century apart—but we receive no information on these transmitters. Our best clue from Ibn Saʿd is found in the *isnād*s of his *ṭalīq allāh* accounts, as well as the third account that changes the wording to "*mawlā rasūl allāh*." The *isnād* for the latter account is: Abū ʿĀmir al-Aqadī (d. ca. 820),[35] from al-Aswad ibn Shaybān (d. 781),[36] from Khālid ibn Sumayr (n.d.).[37] From this *isnād*, it seems that the *khabar* dates to the early- or mid-eighth century, assuming that Khālid ibn Sumayr died between twenty and forty years before al-Aswad ibn Shaybān. Thus, Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity was being trumpeted during the late Umayyad period at the latest. Moreover, the *isnād* for this *khabar* is entirely Basran, while both transmissions of the *ṭalīq allāh* account are predominantly Kufan.[38] It is possible that the Basrans took special pride in Abū Bakra's anti-Ziyād stance as a kind of "hometown hero," or even that it was in Basra in particular that *mawlā* came to mean the antithesis of Arab.[39]

However, we cannot take a Basran milieu as the sole reason that Abū Bakra was viewed as a *mawlā* and used as an anti-Umayyad vehicle. The Basran intellectual scene was diverse, and while some Basrans may have taken an anti-Umayyad stance, there was also a current of ʿUthmānī thought running through Basra.[40] A pro-ʿUthmānī stance might have

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35 Ibid., 4:254–55.

36 Ibid., 1:319.

37 Ibid., 2:274–75.

38 The *isnads* for the *ṭalīq allāh* accounts are: 1) Al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn (d. 834, Kufan; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 5:250–55), from Abū al-Aḥwaṣ (d. 795, Kufan; ibid., 3:112), from Mughīra ibn Miqsam (d. ca. 750, Kufan; ibid., 6:386–87), from Shibāk (n.d., Kufan; ibid., 3:131), from an unnamed Thaqafī man; and 2) Yaḥyā ibn Ḥammād (d. 830, Basran; ibid., 7:27–28), from Abū ʿAwāna (d. 791, Wāsiṭī; ibid., 6:714–17), from Mughīra, from Shibāk, from ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī (d. ca. 725, Kufan; ibid., 3:339–42).

39 Jamal Juda devotes much attention to the regional differences in *walāʾ* between Kufa and Basra. For instance, he finds finds that *walāʾ al-tibāʿa* (*walāʾ* of conversion) was found predominantly in Syria and Basra, whereas *walāʾ al-ʿitāqa* (*walāʾ* of manumission) was found in Hijaz and Kufa. He argues that Kufan and Medinan legal schools did not put much worth on *nasab*, but rather advocated the idea that all believers were equal (c.f. Ziadeh's findings in "Equality (*kafāʾah*) in the Muslim Law of Marriage," see footnote 22). On the other hand, in Basra, where the north Arabian tribes set the tone, tribal pedigree was more highly valued and the Persian ethnic minority more despised. Juda finds the roots of the Shuʿūbiyya movement in Basra. However, his theories need more investigation and evidence. For instance, he argues that the pride in famous *mawālī* such as Salmān al-Fārisī, and the negative view of the Umayyads, is a viewpoint found primarily in the Kufan sources. But the concomitant pro-*mawlā* and anti-Umayyad currents in Abū Bakra's biography seem to have emerged in Basra. (See Juda, "Aspekte," vi–xi, 76–86, 163–71, and 189–93.) For the most thorough discussion of early Islamic Basra, including its ethnic makeup, its intellectual currents, and its political trends, see Pellat, *Le Milieu Baṣrien*.

40 See Pellat, *Le Milieu Baṣrien*, 188–94.

encouraged certain scholars to downplay or even deny Abū Bakra's *mawlā* status, and thus to blunt his polemical anti-Umayyad edge. For instance, the famous Basran *muḥaddith* and 'Uthmānī sympathizer, Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ (d. 855), considers Abū Bakra to be a full Thaqafī tribesman, the son of al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[41] While his pro-'Uthmānī outlook may have contributed to his treatment of Abū Bakra, I believe the most important factor in Khalīfa's outlook is his specialty in ḥadīth. Indeed, it seems that *all* the later ḥadīth compilers of the ninth century who have anything to say on the matter of Abū Bakra's identity—including Ibn Abī Shayba, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, and Muslim—consider Abū Bakra a Thaqafī Arab rather than a *mawlā* of mixed heritage.[42] I attribute the *muḥaddithūn*'s position on Abū Bakra's parentage to a back-projection of the *al-walad li-al-firāsh* dictum. They do not cite this reasoning, but simply declare Abū Bakra's name as Nufayʿ ibn al-Ḥārith, without acknowledging the historical accounts to the contrary or even acknowledging that his paternity was disputed. Their concern with ḥadīth and their interest in determining the soundest ones seems to have led them to back-project this famous dictum onto Abū Bakra. They also largely avoid (though they do not deny outright) the fact that Abū Bakra was manumitted during the siege of al-Ṭā'if, perhaps in order to avoid having to make a choice between two Prophetic maxims: the child belongs to the bed (*al-walad li-al-firāsh*) versus *walā'* belongs to the manumitter (*al-walā' li-man aʿtaqa*).

Despite their back-projection of the *firāsh* dictum onto Abū Bakra, all of these *muḥaddithūn* actually transmit one particular ḥadīth that uses Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity to denounce Ziyād. In its most basic form, this ḥadīth reads: "whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the Garden will be forbidden to him" (*man iddaʿā ilā ghayr abīhi, wa-huwa yaʿlamu annahu ghayr abīhi, fa-al-janna ʿalayhi ḥarām*).[43] The

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    [41] Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ṭabaqāt*, 125 and 430. For Khalīfa's politics and scholarship, see S. Zakkar, "Ibn Khayyāṭ al-Uṣfurī, Khalīfa," *EI²*.

    [42] Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, 4.2: 112–13; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-Asāmī wa-al-Kunā*, 30; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Kunā wa-al-Asmā'*, 16. For Ibn Abī Shayba, as well as several other scholars, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:202. Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Bukhārī were students of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, and they may have gotten their view on the matter directly from him. It is hard to say whether these ninth-century *muḥaddithūn* were making a social or political comment on "Arabism" by back-projecting the *al-walad li-al-firāsh* dictum onto the earliest period, or whether they had simply adopted a stricter interpretation of ḥadīth than had previously been practiced.

    [43] Uri Rubin discusses this hadith in connection with Ziyād's *diʿwa* and the *firāsh* dictum ("'Al-Walad li-l-Firāsh,'" 15–23). As he points out, there are several variations of Muḥammad's actual utterance in this hadith. For instance, one variant has the Prophet

text of the ḥadīth in this simplest form can be taken as a general maxim without any specific context.[44] But we are not interested in the ḥadīth's timeless core. We are interested precisely in its context, accrued through textual additions and through association with certain people and events. By investigating how this ḥadīth became imbued with context, we can discover how it took shape as an ideological tool.

The ḥadīth gains its initial sense of context through its *isnād*, as almost all versions of this ḥadīth are transmitted by the Companion Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ. Saʿd had intervened in a paternity dispute on behalf of his brother ʿUtba, who claimed to have fathered a son by someone else's slave girl. The Prophet decided the boy's legal paternity in favor of the slave girl's master rather than ʿUtba—even though the child resembled ʿUtba—based on the *firāsh* dictum. Thus, the original context of the ḥadīth seems to have revolved around ʿUtba ibn Waqqāṣ's paternity dispute.[45] But through a series of additions and interpolations—and then outright tampering— the ḥadīth also becomes associated with Abū Bakra. When Abū Bakra enters the scene, the entire context of the ḥadīth changes from one of disputed paternity into one of anti-Umayyad polemic.

In order to elucidate this development, I have collected twenty versions of the ḥadīth from various canonical and non-canonical ḥadīth collections, and I have divided them into groups based on similarities in text and transmission (*matn* and *isnād*). The groups have been represented in Table 1. I will give an overall analysis of the changes in the *matn*s, followed by a summary of what the *isnād*s tell us about provenance of these variations. Through an internal analysis of both *matn* and *isnād*, we can get some picture of how Abū Bakra's role in this ḥadīth evolved.

add that "he who claims a false *mawlā*" will also be barred from Paradise. In another permutation, he also adds the *firāsh* dictum to the mix. There are several other, more complicated variations, but I am concerned with the one that contains only the most basic dictum: "He who claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the Garden will be forbidden to him." This is the only version associated with Saʿd and Abū Bakra.

[44] See Rubin, "'Al-Walad li-l-Firāsh,'" 7. He points out that the *firāsh* dictum can also be taken as a contextless *mathal* (maxim).

[45] Or perhaps the context is meant to refer to Saʿd himself, who asked the Prophet whether he should be called Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (as he is most commonly known), or Saʿd ibn Mālik (his actual name). The Prophet said: "You are Saʿd ibn Mālik ibn Uhayb (or Wuhayb) ibn ʿAbd Manāf ibn Zuhra, and may God curse whoever says otherwise." See Hawting, "Saʿd b. Abī Waḳḳāṣ," *EI²*, which mentions this tradition without citation.

Table 1: Variations of the *"Man Iddaʿā"* Hadith

	Hadith 1	Hadith 2	Hadiths 3–4	Hadiths 5–7	Hadiths 8–12	Hadiths 13–16	Hadiths 17–19	Hadith 20
isnād	Mandal ibn ʿAlī (d. ca. 784)	Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778)	Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUlayya (d. 809)	Abū Muʿāwiya (d. ca. 810)	Shuʿba ibn Ḥajjāj (d. 776)	Maʿmar ibn Rāshid (d. 769–70)	Hushaym ibn Bashīr (n.d.)	Yazīd ibn Zurayʿ (d. 798)
	Mūsā al-Juhanī (d. 762)	ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal (d. ca. 759)	ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal	ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal	ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal	ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal	Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (d. ca. 760)	Ḥabīb ibn Shahīd (d. 763)
	Muṣʿab ibn Saʿd (d. 722)	Abū ʿUthmān al-Nahdī (d. ca. 715)	Abū ʿUthmān	Abū ʿUthmān	Abū ʿUthmān	Abū ʿUthmān	Abū ʿUthmān	Ibn Sīrīn (d. 728)
matn	[Saʿd said]; I heard the Messenger of God say: whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, God forbids the Garden to him.	[Saʿd said]; I heard the Messenger of God say: whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the Garden is forbidden to him.	[Saʿd said]: My two ears heard and my heart heeded from Muhammad that whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the Garden will be forbidden to him. I met Abū Bakra and told him, and he said: my two ears and my	Saʿd and Abū Bakra, both of them said: my two ears heard and my heart heeded from Muhammad that whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the Garden will be forbidden to him.	I heard Saʿd (he was the first to shoot an arrow in God's cause) and Abū Bakra (he came down to the Prophet from the citadel of al-Ṭāʾif) saying: we heard the Messenger of God say: whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, the	Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and Abū Bakra said: we heard the Messenger of God say: whoever claims a false father, knowing that he is not his father, God forbids the Garden to him. ʿĀṣim said: you have heard from two people in whom you have	When Ziyād acknowledged [Abū Sufyān as his father], I met Abū Bakra and said: what is this that you have done? For I heard Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ saying: my ear heard from the Messenger of God: whoever claims a father in Islam that is not his father,	Ziyād said to Abū Bakra: "Don't you see that the Commander of Believers wants me for this and that? I was born on the bed of ʿUbayd and so I attribute my paternity to him, for I know that the Messenger of God said: whoever claims

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Hadith 1	Hadith 2	Hadiths 3–4	Hadiths 5–7	Hadiths 8–12	Hadiths 13–16	Hadiths 17–19	Hadith 20
matn			heart also heard [that] from Muḥammad.		Garden will be forbidden to him.	high esteem. Abū ʿUthmān said: Certainly! The one was the first to shoot an arrow in God's cause. The other came down to the Prophet during the siege of al-Ṭāʾif along with twenty-three slaves.	knowing that he is not his father, the Garden will be forbidden to him. Abū Bakra said: I heard [that] from the Messenger of God.	a false father, let him occupy his seat in hell." Then the following year came, and he had falsely adopted him.

Looking at the table, we can see that Ḥadīths 1 and 2 have completely divergent *isnād*s but similar *matn*s.[46] Both texts are quite short, containing the "*man idda'ā*" maxim and nothing else. Also, Abū Bakra is nowhere to be found—Sa'd is the sole transmitter.[47] It is hard to say that either of these two simplest versions represents the original version of the ḥadīth, but they do demonstrate that this ḥadīth was transmitted in at least two forms without Abū Bakra. Abū Bakra makes an appearance in all the other ḥadīths, but his initial appearance is clearly as a supplement or addition. In Ḥadīths 3–4, transmitted by Ismā'īl ibn 'Ulayya, the language is slightly more distinctive ("my two ears heard and my heart heeded . . ."), but more importantly, Abū Bakra chimes in at the end of the ḥadīth to corroborate Sa'd's words.[48] Sa'd is still presented as the primary transmitter, and Abū Bakra's confirmation comes as something of an afterthought.

Ḥadīths 5–7, transmitted by Abū Mu'āwiya, are similar to Ibn 'Ulayya's ḥadīths, except that Abū Bakra has now been integrated into the original transmission of the ḥadīth, rather than being tacked onto the end of the account.[49] However, the change is not completely seamless, as the phrase "both of them" (or "each one of them") intervenes to indicate that some kind of combination of accounts has occurred.

The most representative batch of ḥadīths, Ḥadīths 8–12, is associated with Shu'ba ibn Ḥajjāj. Several of the ḥadīths in Shu'ba's group contain extra information both after Sa'd's name ("he was the first to shoot an arrow in God's path") and Abū Bakra's name ("he came down to the Prophet during the siege of al-Ṭā'if").[50] The wording of Ḥadīth 8 in this

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[46] Hadith 1: al-Bazzār, *Al-Baḥr al-Zakhakhār*, 3:363. Hadith 2: 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 9:51 (hadith #16314).

[47] The text of Hadith 2 refers to Sa'd as "Abā Mālik," which is an error either of the original manuscript or of the edition. It should read "Ibn Mālik."

[48] Hadith 3: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:56, (hadith #1504). Hadith 4: ibid., 3:77 (hadith #1553). The *matns* of both variations are identical, but the *isnāds* are slightly different. Hadith 3 actually has a transmitter named Ibrāhīm in between 'Āṣim and Ibn 'Ulayya. I was unable to identify this Ibrāhīm with any certainty. The famous Kufan transmitter Ibrāhīm al-Nakhā'ī (d. ca. 717) is much too early. Ibn Ḥajar lists a spate of men named Ibrāhīm who lived in Basra and/or who lived at about the right time to transmit this hadith, but none of these is given a death date or is known to have transmitted hadiths to Ibn 'Ulayya. The closest fit is the Jordanian Ibrāhīm Ibn Sulaymān ibn Wazīr, who was known to transmit from 'Āṣim al-Aḥwal (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 1:118–19).

[49] Hadith 5: Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 8:516 (hadith #26507). Hadith 6: Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4.1:46–47 (hadith #229). Hadith 7: Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 2:870 (hadith #2610). Ibn Māja's version reads "each one of them said" (*kull wāḥid minhumā yaqūlu*) rather than "both of them said" (*kilāhumā yaqūlu*).

[50] Hadith 8: al-Dārimī, *Musnad*, 4:1889–90 (#2902). The description of Abū Bakra reads: *tadallā min ḥiṣn al-ṭā'if ilā rasūl allāh s.a.w.* Hadith 9: al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:430 (Book 59,

group makes it clear that Shuʿba himself added this interjection, which makes sense in the context of oral transmission and teaching circles, in that he would want to clarify the identity of these Companions.[51] In fact, Shuʿba's information goes beyond simple identification, expressing praise for these two Companions' superior virtue and achievements. Moreover, now Abū Bakra and Saʿd are treated together as a seamless group, almost as though they both heard the Prophet saying this ḥadīth in the same session. Ḥadīths 13–16, transmitted by Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, also have extra information identifying Saʿd and Abū Bakra;[52] but these explanations that were previously attributed explicitly to Shuʿba are now put in the mouth of the Successor transmitter, Abū ʿUthmān al-Nahdī. That is, the positive assessment of these two Companions has been woven into the context of the ḥadīth, rather than being presented as an addition made several generations later.

In Ḥadīths 17–19, we find a group of ḥadīths with an unusual *isnād*; almost all other ḥadīths have ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal as their second transmitter after Abū ʿUthmān, but this one has Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ.[53] The obvious new element in the *matn* is the setup story, the purported reason for Abū Bakra's connection with this ḥadīth. Abū Bakra's involvement is no longer only implicitly associated with Ziyād, as the connection has now been made quite explicit. However, the text of this ḥadīth still implies that the original transmitter was Saʿd rather than Abū Bakra. Here, it seems

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hadith #616). Here Abū Bakra's description is: *tasawwara ḥiṣn al-ṭāʾif fī nās fa-jāʾa ilā al-nabī s.a.w.* Hadith 10: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:53 (hadith #1497). Its description of Abū Bakra is identical to that of the previous hadith. Hadith 11: al-Dārimī, *Musnad*, 3:1645–46 (hadith #2572). Hadith 12: Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:210.

[51] Hadiths 11 and 12 do not contain the extra information about Saʿd and Abū Bakra. Perhaps Shuʿba only added the extra information when asked to do so in a teaching circle; or perhaps his students were unsure whether it was necessary to include Shuʿba's explanations in their transmissions of the hadith.

[52] Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, d. 769–70, Basran and Yemeni; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 6:363–65. Hadith 13: ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 9:49–50 (hadith #16310). Abū Bakra is described thus: *nazala al-nabī s.a.w. wa-huwa muḥāṣir li-ahl al-ṭāʾif bi-thalātha wa-ʿishrīn min raqīqihim—ḥasibtuhu qāla: fa-aʿtaqahum rasūl allāh s.a.w.* Hadith 14: al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5:430 (book 59, hadith #616). Here the description of Abū Bakra is: *nazala al-nabī s.a.w. thālith thalātha wa-ʿishrīn min al-ṭāʾif.* Hadith 15: Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:210–11. The additional information on Abū Bakra reads: *kharaja ilā rasūl allāh s.a.w. fī ʿishrīn ʿabdan min raqīq al-ṭāʾif. fa-ḥasaba annahu qāla: fa-aʿtaqahum rasūl allāh s.a.w.* Hadith 16: ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 9:50 (hadith #16313). This last hadith stops with ʿĀṣim's words to Abū ʿUthmān al-Nahdī, without recording Abū ʿUthmān's reply.

[53] Hadith 17: Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, v. 4, pt. 1, p. 46 (Hadith #228). Hadith 18: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, 3:32 (hadith #1454). Hadith 19: Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 19:176.

apparent that Abū Bakra's connection with the ḥadīth only came about because of Ziyād's *di'wa* and Abū Bakra's association with Ziyād.

Finally, the anomalous Ḥadīth 20 can be easily dismissed as "unauthentic,"[54] but it is nevertheless illustrative of the use of Abū Bakra as a polemical tool. It has a highly suspicious *isnād*—it does not have Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī as its Successor transmitter, substituting instead the famous Ibn Sīrīn[55]—and its *matn* has been made into a transparent vehicle for polemic. Now all the gloves are off and all attempts at subtlety are thrown to the wind. Not only are Ziyād and Abū Bakra shown having a direct interaction that has been preserved in no other historical source, but Ziyād incriminates himself by claiming to have heard the Prophetic ḥadīth with his own ears. Abū Bakra appears as the sole Companion transmitter, with no mention of Sa'd at all. While no one would accept this ḥadīth as authentic, it represents the final stage of the development— up till now a rather subtle development—of Abū Bakra as a mouthpiece against Ziyād.

As for the *isnād*s, the first thing that stands out is that almost all of them have Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī (d. ca. 715) as their Successor transmitter.[56] Abū 'Uthmān was a friend of Abū Bakra's, and he reportedly transmitted the following account: "Abū Bakra, the *mawlā* of the Messenger of God, said: if the people insist on giving me a fatherly attribution, then let them call me Nufay' ibn Masrūḥ" (*akhbaranā Abū Bakra mawlā rasūl allāh s.a.w.: fa-in abā al-nās illā an yansibūnī, fa-anā Nufay' ibn Masrūḥ*).[57] This may mean that Abū 'Uthmān himself was responsible for creating Abū Bakra's identity of *mawlā* of the Prophet, in which case this *mawlā* versus *di'wa* theme was a development of the early- to mid-Umayyad period. Moreover, this latter saying of Abū 'Uthmān's indicates that the original meaning of the ḥadīth was indeed that Abū Bakra stood in judgment of Ziyād *as a mawlā of the Prophet*. That is, the meaning of this ḥadīth was changed (or one might say completely lost) by the back-projection of the *firāsh* dictum by the *muḥaddithūn* of the ninth century.

The next generation in most of the *isnād*s shows a split between two Basran scholars, 'Āṣim al-Aḥwal (d. ca. 759)[58] and Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā'

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[54] This is not a controversial stance—this version of the hadith does not appear in any proper hadith collections, but rather in Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* 19:174.

[55] The isnād continues up to Ḥabīb ibn Shahīd (d. 762–63, Basran; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 1:650), and then on to Yazīd ibn Zuray' (d. 798, Basran; ibid., 7:149–50).

[56] Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 4:135–36.

[57] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 62:205.

[58] Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 3:318–19.

(d. ca. 760).[59] ʿĀṣim transmits the great majority of the ḥadīths, and all his ḥadīths have generally the same layout and information. ʿĀṣim may himself may be responsible for Abū Bakra's inclusion in this ḥadīth, rather than Abū ʿUthmān; for in a traditional *isnād* analysis, ʿĀṣim would be considered the "common link," while Abū ʿUthmān is part of the more dubious "single strand."[60] However, it remains that ʿĀṣim's traditions are rather subtle (never mentioning Ziyād for example), whereas Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ seems to have been particularly interested in using Abū Bakra to condemn Ziyād. It is hard to pinpoint any particular reason why Khālid may have done this; however, he was a student of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728),[61] and H. P. Raddatz calls him an early Muʿtazilī.[62] As we have already seen from the "Ziyād is as bad as a Kharijite" story, Abū Bakra himself was also connected (if somewhat obliquely) with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.[63] Moreover, Abū Bakra exemplifies the early ideal of *iʿtizāl*, both in terms of worldly renunciation and political neutrality in the first civil war.[64] Perhaps it was an early ascetic, proto-Muʿtazili current within Basra, associated with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, that particularly co-opted Abū Bakra's social identity for their own ideological needs.

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[59] Ibid., 2:295–97.

[60] A good introduction these terms and the scholarly debates surrounding them can be found in Harald Motzki, ed., *Ḥadīth*, xxxviii–xli, and the sources cited therein. See also the corpus of G. H. A. Juynboll, especially his articles: "Some Isnād-Analytical Methods," and "Nāfiʿ, the Mawlā of Ibn ʿUmar."

[61] Khālid transmitted hadiths both from al-Ḥasan and his brother Saʿīd ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 2:296.

[62] Raddatz, "Sufyān al-Thawrī," *EI²*. Raddatz counts him in the same group as Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ and ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd. However, I have been unable to find any reference to Khālid's Muʿtazilī leanings in any biographical dictionaries, including Muʿtazilī biographical dictionaries. He also does not appear anywhere in Josef van Ess's masterpiece *Theologie und Gesellschaft*.

[63] For example, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī transmitted the following anti-*fitna*, pro-reconciliation hadith on the authority of Abū Bakra: "Once while the Prophet was making an address, al-Ḥasan [ibn ʿAlī] came and the Prophet said: 'this [grand]son of mine is a sayyid, may God make peace between two groups of Muslims through him.'" Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9:174 (book 88, hadith #225). Additionally, al-Ḥasan supposedly said: "No one better ever lived in Basra than Abū Bakra and ʿImrān ibn Ḥuṣayn" (Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4:5). Whether or not any of the interactions between Abū Bakra and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī actually took place, some ideological connection (real or fictional) exists between the two figures.

[64] For the development of the term *iʿtizāl*, see Stroumsa, "The beginnings of the Muʿtazila reconsidered." Abū Bakra is not treated in works on Muʿtazilism, nor is he an ascetic (*zāhid/nāsik*) proper—he had legions of children, after all. But his life story does fit into the pattern of other austere Basran pietists such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. For this ascetic strain in early Basran history, see Pellat, *Le Milieu Baṣrien*, 93–108.

In the *isnād*s containing both Abū ʿUthmān and ʿĀṣim al-Aḥwal
(Ḥadīths 2 through 16), we see that the third tier of transmitters put their
own unique stamp on the ḥadīth—with tweaks and additions for the sake
of clarity and teaching—but that they already had the basic Abū Bakra
form of the ḥadīth from the previous generation. Of these versions, only
the transmission of Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778) does not include Abū Bakra.
Perhaps al-Thawrī himself, who had pro-ʿUthmānī tendencies, omitted
the reference to Abū Bakra.[65] While this is conjectural, what can be said
for certain is that most of the transmitters of this generation are once
again Basran. In fact, Shuʿba ibn Ḥajjāj (d. 776) moved to Basra specifically
to study with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.[66] The only prominent Kufan transmitter
is Abū Muʿāwiya (d. ca. 810), who was "the vocal leader of the Murjiʾa
in Kufa in that period."[67] It cannot be said with any certainty, but per-
haps Abū Muʿāwiya's Murjiʾism led him to champion Abū Bakra's cause.
The Murjiʾism of the Umayyad period was associated with "struggle for
equality of the new non-Arab converts to Islam,"[68] and Abū Bakra also
supposedly refused to join in with the Umayyads in cursing ʿAlī, another
hallmark of the early Murjiʾa.[69] Finally, we find evidence that even in this
fairly late generation, the context of the ḥadīth was still one of Abū Bakra
as a *mawlā*. For Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUlayya (d. 809), transmitter of two of our
ḥadīths, reportedly said: "Abū Bakra's father was not known, and when
the companions of the Messenger of God would revile him for that, he
would say 'if you do not know their fathers, they are your brothers in
religion'" (Q 33:5). Ibn ʿUlayya's death date is half a century before Khalīfa
ibn Khayyāṭ's (in 855). This might be an indication that the *firāsh* dictum
was just gaining wide acceptance among *muḥaddithūn* at the beginning of
the ninth century. Or perhaps it simply shows a new development in the
thinking of the *muḥaddithūn*, who now prioritize Prophetic dictums over
other types of historical accounts. In the end, for the third generation of
transmitters, we see faint patterns under the surface about who was (and

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[65] Raddatz, "Sufyān al-Thawrī," *EI²*.

[66] Juynboll, "Shuʿba b. al-Ḥadjdjādj," *EI²*.

[67] Nimrod Hurvitz, *The formation of Hanbalism*, 48.

[68] Madelung, "Murdjiʾa," *EI²*.

[69] Ibid. In several accounts, the Umayyad governor of Basra, Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt, reviles
ʿAlī from the pulpit and adjures his audience in the name of God to declare his words
truthful or untruthful. Abū Bakra declares Busr's words untruthful and is beaten almost to
the point of death. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 18:15–17; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 492.

was not) interested in transmitting Abū Bakra as part of this tradition, but we do not find many hard-and-fast conclusions.

Finally, let us look at the two ḥadīths with the abnormal *isnād*s, Ḥadīths 1 and 20 in the table above. In the first version, it is no surprise to see a ḥadīth transmitted by Muṣ'ab ibn Sa'd on the authority of his celebrated father, without any mention of Abū Bakra. However, the *isnād* of Mus'ab's ḥadīth continues on through a chain of Kufan transmitters,[70] again giving credence to the idea that it was predominantly a subset of Basrans who were interested in Abū Bakra's polemical role as a *mawlā*. As for the last ḥadīth, the one transmitted by Ibn Sīrīn, the authenticity of this *isnād* is extremely dubious. The famous Basran Ibn Sīrīn (d. 728) was another companion of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's,[71] which provides some connection to the previous transmissions. However, the third generation transmitter, Yazīd ibn Zuray' (d. 798), was a Basran *muḥaddith* known to have 'Uthmānī tendencies;[72] he was also a teacher of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, who we have seen does not take Abū Bakra as a *mawlā*. It is difficult to glean much information from this unique, seemingly contradictory (though once again thoroughly Basran) *isnād*.

Though it is hard to provide an exact chronology for when Abū Bakra first appeared in this ḥadīth, or to pinpoint who exactly was responsible for his appearance, it is important to notice that the development did indeed take place. It seems to have happened sometime in the first or second generation of transmitters, taking 'Āṣim al-Aḥwal's death date of 759 as a *terminus ante quem*. This corresponds with the dates we found in Ibn Sa'd, pointing to a late-Umayyad date at the very latest. The development also seems to have arisen predominantly in Basran circles, particularly in circles associated with the theologian, ascetic, and Umayyad critic al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Finally, it is worth noting that even in the third generation of transmission, the underlying context of the ḥadīth still hinged on the notion that Abū Bakra was a *mawlā*. It was only the compilers of the mid-ninth century, it seems, that lost the real thrust of the Abū Bakra ḥadīth by changing his social identity through their application of the *firāsh* dictum.

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[70] Mūsā ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Juhanī, d. 762 (Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, 6:464); Mandal ibn 'Alī al-'Anazī, d. ca. 784 (ibid., 6:410–12).

[71] Fahd, "Ibn Sīrīn, Abu Bakr Muḥammad," *EI²*.

[72] Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7.2:44.

Conclusions

Throughout this discussion, Abū Bakra has proved himself to be more than just an interesting character with a colorful personal history. Rather, he sheds light on multiple phenomena, from early Islamic social history, to ideological developments of the Umayyad period, to historiography. In the first place, Abū Bakra exemplifies a particular kind of manumission practiced during Muḥammad's *maghāzī* in Arabia. He illustrates that slaves who defected from non-Muslim territory and joined Muḥammad were not necessarily manumitted according to the normal channels—for Muḥammad had neither purchased such slaves nor captured them—but could be manumitted in the name of God and Islam. Thus, rather than becoming the individual *mawālī* of the Prophet, the slaves of al-Ṭā'if seem to have become the communal responsibility of the entire *umma*. In this way, the historical and literary designation *ṭalīq allāh* was similar to the early legal category of the *sā'iba*. However, such categories only functioned properly in an Arabian milieu, and as Islamic society expanded and developed, these categories were replaced by the more systematic practice of classical Islamic *walā'*.

But perhaps more importantly, Abū Bakra illustrates some of the difficulties that must be overcome in studying the early Islamic *mawālī*. For one thing, *mawlā* identity can be innocently back-projected onto non-*mawālī* freedmen using the classical "*walā'* belongs to the manumitter" dictum. Or the exact opposite can occur, when slave origins and non-tribal identity are erased by a back-projection of the *firāsh* dictum. Moreover, Abū Bakra shows us that we cannot unthinkingly accept *mawlā* as an objective term. For not only is the term multifaceted and malleable, it is also often ideologically loaded. In this case, Abū Bakra's *mawlā* identity is a polemical weapon, forged sometime during the Umayyad period, and wielded against the concept of *di'wa*. Indeed, it would be fruitful to see how the sources use the term *mawlā* to convey different ideological messages in different situations and across different genres. For the time being, however, let it simply be said that when studying *mawālī* in the early Islamic period, care must be taken to unravel the ideologically-charged language, polemic, and subtle sermonizing from the historical facts.

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