CHAPTER V
AL-DHĀHABI’S TĀRĪKH AL-ISLĀM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

As we know that al-Dhāhābi’s principal and longest work is his great general history entitled Tārīkh al-Islām (The History of Islam). This work, though well known and much referred to by both oriental and occidental scholars, has never yet been edited as a whole nor discussed at any length. The following parts of the Tārīkh al-Islām have hitherto been edited: (1) The biography of Ibn Rushd by J.E. Renan, Averroes el’Averroïsme, Appendice iv, 2nd edition, Paris, 1861. (2) The biography of Abū al-‘Alā al-Maarī, which is more copious than that of Ibn Khallikān and also following different sources, has been edited from the MS. of the British Museum, No. 1637 as an appendix to the Letters of Abū al-‘Alā of Ma‘arat al-Nūmān, by D.S. Margoliouth in the Anecdota Oxoniensia, Semitic Series (Oxford, 1898), pp. 129-37. (3) The biography of Umarā‘al-Yamānī is edited from the MS. of the British Museum, No. 1639, by H. Derenbourg in his Oumara du yemen, Sa vie et son auvre, tome ii, Paris, 1902, pp. 491-5. (4) Short excerpts are printed in the notes to the Dhayl tārīkh Dimashq of Ibn al-Qalānisi, ed. H.F. Amedro, Bayrut, 1908. Al-Dhāhābi’s Tārīkh al-Islām is printed together with his Tabaqāt al-Mašhāhir wa al-Kalām in 5 volumes at Cairo from 1367/1947 onwards by Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Qudsī. The entire book consists of 21 volumes. But al-Zirikli says that the book consists of 36 volumes. Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī says that the book consists of 20 volumes.

Šalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid opines that the book consists of 21 volumes. It was al-Dhahabi's most ambitious work. It is so large a work that the MS. tradition is very irregular. Though there are over 50 MSS, most of them represent only parts of the work, and among them they do not cover the whole text. The decades A.H.131-40, 231-60, 281-300 are still missing; the decades A.H.141-70, 261-80, are extent only in part. The MSS of Aya Sophia Nos. 3005-14 are autographs of the author. Now I like to evaluate and analysis al-Dhahabi's Tarīkh al-Islām in the following sections:

SECTION-"A"

The Manuscripts of the Tārīkh al-Islām

The Tārīkh al-Islām consisted of 21 volumes. But according to Hajji Khalifa (No.2220) it consists of 12 volumes and Ibn Shākir al-Kutubi 20 volumes. It contains a general history upto A.H.700/A.D 1300, and was finished by al-Dhahabi by the year 741/1340, i.e. seven decades. For an account of the MSS of Aya Sophia Nos. 3005-14 see the paper by Rashid al-Din Ahmad Khan. Ibn al-Mad, Shadrat al-Dhahabi (Bairut: al-Maktab al-Tujjarī n.d)vol.iv, P.155; al-Dhahabi, Tārīkh al-Islām, ed.Husām al-Dīn al-Qudsi (Cario: Maktaba al-Qudsī, 1367/1948)vol.i, PP.6-7.

years before his death, which struck one of the later al-Dhahabi specialists, Ibn Qādī Shuhba (d. 851/1447), who said, "It is strange that he (al-Dhahabi) stopped in his Tārīkh al-Islām at the year 700 A.H. and did not continue it to the year 740 A.H., as he did in his al-Ibar, for it was continued in his presence by both al-Yumini to his own time and al-Jazari. The work was discovered part by part by Kamāl al-Dīn b. Abd al-Wāhid b. Abd al-Karīm b. Al-Zamīli, who said "It is an illustrious book." His opinion was certainly not shared by one of the most prominent pupils of al-Dhahabi, 'Abd al-Wahhāb Tāj al-Dīn al-Subki, according to whom "It would be an excellent work, if it were free from a certain bias." The work exists in a number of manuscripts contained in different European and Oriental libraries. The hitherto known manuscripts containing parts of the work are as follows:


(1) Cambridge (Browne), vol. i, No. 182: the beginning, down to the
death of the Prophet(s).

(2) Faydullah, No. 1480; Vol. i, A.H. 1-11.

(3) Aya Sophia, No. 3005; Vol. ii, A.H. 1-29.


(5) Paris, No. 1580: vol. i, A.H. 1-40, (and not 1880 as given by
Brockelmann, Loc. cit., and Horovitz, Loc. cit).


(7) Tunis (Mosque of Zaytuna, Catalogue of B. Roy), No. 4830: vol. i
the life of Muḥammad and the political narrative of A.H. 3-10,
copied from the autograph.

(8) Aya Sophia, No. 3016: A.H. 41-120.

(9) Bodleian Library (Ury), No. 652: A.H. 41-130.

(10) Tunis (Mosque of Zaytuna, Catalogue of B. Roy), No. 4831: vol. vi,
A.H. 40-130.


(12) Kopruluzade, No. 1018 (thus on the first page; in the margin
outside, No. 1019): A.H. 81-110, the biographies of the decade
A.H. 100-110 are only given as far as ʻAbd al-Rahmān b. Jabir
b. Abdallah al-Anṣārī.

(13) Gotha (Pertsch), No. 1563: A.H. 143-5 (And not 1573, as given by
Brockleman, Loc. cit).

(14) British Museum, Or. 9256 (not yet catalogued): A.H. 151-70, from
the XVIth Class only the biographies from the letter Za to the
end are given, from the XVIIth Class only the general narrative and
biographies as far as Daud al-Tay, according to a note on fol. 110 it
is an autograph of al-Ṣafadī.

15) Strasbourg (Spitta), No. 12: A.H. 161-80, of which A.H. 161-70 is
incomplete.

16) Aya Sophia, No. 3006: A.H. 180-200: the beginning is

17) Cairo, vol. v, P. 21: A.H. 181-200: according to fol. 162 it is an
autograph dated in A.H. 726.

18) Bodleian Library (Ury), No. 659: A.H. 191-200.


20) Kopruluzade, No. 1017: Pt. xiii, A.H. 266-80; the title and the beginning
are wanting, the biographies of A.H. 271-80 only extend to Muḥammad b.
Yūsuf b. Isa.


22) Kopruluzade, No. 1019: Pt. xv, A.H. 301-50, without the biographies
of A.H. 341-50.

23) Paris, No. 1581: vol. vi, A.H. 301-400 (but according to Brocklemann
and Horovitz, Loc. cit., only till A.H. 370).

24) Gotha (Pertsch), No. 1564: vol. vii, A.H. 351-400; it breaks off among
the biographies of A.H. 399.


26) Aya Sophia, No. 3008: vol. xii, A.H. 351-400; it only contains the
biographies.
28) Aya Sophia, No. 3009: vol. xii (Sic 1), A.H. 401-50.
30) Umumiyya, No. 5015: A.H. 451-700 i.e. to the end of the work.
33) Aya Sophia, No. 3010: vol. xv, A.H. 501-50; the general narrative is complete, the biographies, however, extend only to A.H. 596.
34) Bodleian Library (Ury), No. 649: A.H. 531-80.
35) British Museum, Or. 5578: A.H. 551-70, copied from the autograph.
42) Bodleian Library (Ury) No. 654: A.H. 621-60.
44) Kopruluzade, No. 1018 (continuation of the MS quoted under No. 12): A.H. 656-70, the general narrative of A.H. 656 and the biographies of A.H. 661-80 are not contained.

45) Bodleian Library (Ury), No. 656: A.H. 661-700, the general narrative only to A.H. 680.


47) British Museum, No. 1641: Vol. xxii, A.H. 681-90, it only contains biographies.

48) Kopruluzade, No. 1020: Pt. xxxvi, A.H. 681-700, the biographies only from A.H. 686 onwards.

49) British Museum, Supplement, No. 486: A.H. 681-700, the general narrative from A.H. 691.

50) British Museum, Or. 7967 (not yet catalogued): four fragments containing biographies from A.H. 687-88, 690, 691-5, 691, corresponding to parts of British Museum, No. 1641 and British Museum, supplement, No. 486.

51) Seray, No. 2910: in twenty-three volumes.

52) Damadzade Qadi Askar Muhammad Murad, No. 1433: an unidentified volume of the work.

Kopruluzade, No. 1021, though denoted by a later hand as Tarikh al-Islam li al-Dhabab which title is preceded by the word dhayl by a still later hand, is no part of our work, but as seen from its concluding words - part of the Mukhtasar fi tarikh al-basbar of Abu al-Fida.

From the Mss. quoted above Aya Sophia, Nos. 3005-16 comprise parts of two copies: Nos. 3005-14 being parts of one copy and Nos. 3015-16 those of another copy. Nos. 3005-14 are autographs of al-Dhahabi himself and must therefore be considered in the first place for a possible edition of the Tārīkh al-Islām.

From the Mss hitherto known we can fairly well-reconstruct the whole Tārīkh al-Islām, except the decades A.H. 131-40, 231-60, 281-300. The decades A.H. 141-70 and 261-80 are extant only in part.

Like many other Arabic works on general history, al-Dhahabi's work was also continued by different later hands. We know of the following continuations of the Tārīkh al-Islām:

1. A continuation comprising the biographies of A.H. 701-40 by al-Dhahabi himself; it is in Leiden, No. 765.
2. A continuation by al-Yuninî (d. 726/1326); non-existing.
3. A continuation by al-Jazarî (d. 833/1429); non-existing.
4. A continuation by Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Iraqî (d. 806/1404); non-existing, it comprised A.H. 701-61.
5. A continuation of the work of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Iraqî by his son Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Iraqî (d. 826/1423), comprising A.H. 762-86; it is in Kopruluzade, No. 1051.

3. Ibid.

Owing to the voluminous character of the Târîkh al-Islâm, many abridged editions were made of it. As a matter of fact, there is hardly any other Arabic work on general history which has more mukhtasar than the Târîkh al-Islâm. These abridged editions were known even earlier than the great work itself and have always been in general use as concise and reliable works of reference. Some of them were made by al-Dhahabî himself and others by Ibn Qadî Shuhba, Ibn al-Šâmma and Ildukuz al-Ayyûbî. According to their subject matter, these compendiums are to be divided into two classes: (1) those containing both general narrative and obituary records, such as the Kitâb Duwal al-Islâm known as al-Târîkh al-Saghîr (Little History) and the Kitâb al-‘Ibar fi Ākhbâr man ‘abar (Ghabar) known as al-Târîkh al-Aswat or al-Mutawassît (Medium History) by the author himself, or (2) biographical compendiums, such as the Tabaqât al-Huffâz, Tabaqât al-Qurrah, and Sivar al-Nubalâ’ by al-Dhahabî himself.  

1. Cf. Hâjjî Khalîfa, Kashf al-Zunûn, Nos.951 and 2098; Spiesz, op.cit, P.71, Ammerkung I.
2. Spiesz, Op.cit, P.71, also quotes Kopruluzade, No.1189, as a continuation of the Târîkh al-Islâm by al-Sakhâwî (d. 902/1497), but, as its title shows (Wajîz al-Kalâm fi Dhayl Duwal al-Islâm), it is a continuation of the Duwal al-Islâm of al-Dhahabî.
3. For the compendiums of the Târîkh al-Islâm, see, Joseph De Somogyi’s paper in the Islamica, Leipzig (1932), pp.334-53. 0.Spiesz also mentions a Muntakhab al-Târîkh al-Kabîr, a MS of which is in Weli.
The more enumeration of these well-known works can testify the great literary value of their source, the Tarikh al-Islam.

We may suppose that such an important work was also translated into other oriental languages. At least the existence of a Persian translation was proved by Petis de la Croix, who at the end of his work, *Histoire du Grand Genghizcan* (Paris, 1710), enumerates his authorities on the history of the Mongols, among which he mentions a Persian translation of an extract entitled *Intikhab al-Salatin* from the *Tarikh al-Islam* of al-Dhahabi. This extract treats of the fourth class of the second order of the Kings", i.e. of the Mongol Kings, "The first of whom had been the great Chengiz Khan and the Kings of Persia of the race, the first of whom had been Hulaku, his grandson". According to Petis de la Croix, this book was written in 757/1536. This date is evidently wrong, because it is the year A.D. 1536 and not 1536 that corresponds to A.H. 757. Supposed that this Hijra-date is correct, this Persian translation had been made at a very early date after the death of al-Dhahabi. It must have comprised only that part of the Tarikh al-Islam which included the history of the Mongols, i.e. roughly the seventh century A.H. Unfortunately we know nothing particular of this translation of the Tarikh al-Islam, except the reference of Petis de la Croix. But even

No. 2449, it treats in three classes: (1) of the compendiums of Muḥammād and of the Tābiʿūn; (2) of the Ṣufka and ʿulamā; (3) of the ḥukama and Atibbā, including also the Greek philosophers, op. cit, P. 73.

this is significant of the great importance of al-Dhahabi's work. 

SECTION B

An Analysis of the Tārīkh al-Islām

As its title implies, the Tārīkh al-Islām treats of the history of Islam only: it begins with the genealogy of Muḥammad and does not deal with the earlier period of history. It therefore, does not follow the scheme of Arabic works on general history which start with the Creation, then proceed to the history of Adam, of the Prophets and of the ancient peoples (specially the Jews and the Persians), and then give the genealogy of Muḥammad and the history of Islam. This is the scheme adopted by al-Ṭabari and followed by Ibn al-Athīr, al-Maṣūdī, and other historians, and also by Ibn al-Jawzī; this latter expressly indicates in the title of his Kitāb al-Muntazam that it is a general history (Akhbār al-Mulūk wa al-ʿUmaām) and not merely an Islamic history.

Notwithstanding this, al-Dhahabi adopted the general scheme of the Kitāb al-Muntazam in his Tārīkh al-Islām. His work, like that of Ibn al-Jawzī, is also both a general history and a collection of biographies, with this essential difference, however, that he does not give the biographical records in the same chapter together with the general narrative as Ibn al-Jawzī does, but he

1. Brockelmann, GAL, Vol. ii, p. 67 mentions also a Turkish translation of the Tārīkh al-Islām in Berlin (Turkischer Katalog, No. 192). This is, however, the Turkish translation of another work on general history, the al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya of Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī (d. 774/1372).
entirely separates both parts from one another. Both the general narrative (al-ḥawādīth al-Ka‘īna) and the biographies (al-Mutawaffūn) are divided into classes (tabaqat) of ten years so that the whole work consists of seventy classes beginning with A.H.1 and ending with A.H.700. The classes of the general narrative come first, subdivided into the years of each decade, and followed as separate parts of the work by the classes of the biographies. These latter are equally subdivided into the years of each decade and completed generally by a separate chapter giving the biographies of those whose dates of death could not be stated exactly but can be approximately ranked into one decade (entitled Dhikru man tuwuffiya bāda sanatin... taqrībān wa ʾilā Sanatin...). The relation of the general narrative to the biographies is rather unequal, the former comprises one-sixth or one-seventh of the thick manuscript volumes and the remaining space is devoted to the biographies.

SECTION-'C'

General Narrative (Hawādīth) of it

In the general narrative al-Dhahabī follows the example of the former historians, subdividing with the words "Wa fīhā" ("and in this, Sc. year"). There is, however, a substantial difference between the subject matter of the general narrative of the first three centuries and that of the following four centuries. In the

1. In several manuscript volumes all the classes of the general narrative are grouped together and are followed by all the classes of the biographies.
first three centuries A.H. the records are very short, not detailed, and only give the gist of the matter. They can be styled a concise compendium of the Tārīkh al-Rusul wal-mulūk of al-Tabari, the general use of which was so common and well-known that al-Dhahabi considered it superfluous to give a detailed narrative of the events in this period. Usually there is a short enumeration of the more notable persons who died in the year in question - they are always recorded in full among the biographies - then there follows, as a rule, the mention of the leaders of the annual pilgrimage, though sometimes this is put to the end of the general narrative. Last are recorded the political events well known from al-Tabari.

Of a different character is the general narrative of the last four centuries (A.H. 301-700). The records are of considerable length, with constant references to the authority consulted by al-Dhahabi, which clearly shows his intention of writing a continuation of al-Tabari's work. For this reason the scheme of the general narrative of this second post-Tabari period of the Tārīkh al-Islām is different from that of the first period. First came the detailed records of political history, then follow, as a rule, those of local history and administrative affairs, those of Baghdad and Damascus are specially well recorded. Together with the latter are recorded the so-called ajāb or strange things, the curiosities and striking phenomena of the year and then the leaders of the pilgrimage from Baghdad and Damascus, followed by a short enumeration of the more notable persons who died in the year in question.

In drawing up this system al-Dhahabî entirely adopted that of Ibn al-Jawzî in his Kitâb al-Muntazam. Like his illustrious master, he also makes a point of quoting his authorities, whereby we can reliably state what sources he consulted in compiling his general narrative.

In order to present a clear account of the literary value of the Tarikh al-Islam we give a concise enumeration of the events which are either not recorded in Ibn al-Athîr’s al-Kāmil fi al-târikh or are recorded also from 1-300, also recorded in al-Tabarî. The additional authorities mentioned in the narrative of al-Dhahabî are put in parenthesis; where none are mentioned the possible authorities are likely to be either Ibn al-Jawzî or Sibt Ibn al-Jawzî.

(a) Political history:

A.H.301: al-Khâqâni was taken prisoner by the Caliph al-Muqtadir. Hallâj was imprisoned (more detailed than al-Tabarî,iii, P.2289). Abu Sâîd al-Jannâbi was murdered (Thâbit b.Sinân). Al-Mahdî’s army was sent to Egypt (al-Musabbihi).

A.H.302: Ibn al-Jassâs was captured (Ibn al-Jawzî, al-Tanûkhî).

A.H.305: al-Muqtadir received the legate of the Romans (Abû Bakr al-Šûlî).


1. The MSS. consulted are those of the British Museum and the Bodleian Library.


A.H. 326: the hands of Ibn Muqla were cut off (Thābit b. Sinān).


A.H. 333: al-Muʿīẓī′s meeting with Tuzun (al-Maṣūdī).


A.H. 339: The Black stone was taken back to Makka (al-Musabbiḥī).

A.H. 340: The Black Stone was put back to its old place in Makka (Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Nāfī al-Khuza'ī).


A.H. 343: Fight between Anujur b. al-Ikhshīd and Kāfūr.


A.H. 355: Sayf al-Dawla's fights and truce with the Romans.


A.H. 362: Al-Damastaq was taken prisoner.


A.H. 367: Fight between Hafteghin (هفتگین) and the ʿUbaydis.

A.H. 368: By order of al-Tai li Amr Allah honours were given to ʿAdud al-Dawlah (Ibn al-Jawzī).
A.H. 369: the legate of ʿAziz billah with ʿAḍud al-Dawlah; closer relations between the latter and al-Taʾi li Amr Allah (a Qaṣida by Abū Ishāq al-Ṣābi).


A.H. 388: some verses on the Buyides (Abū Mансūr al-Thāʿalibī).


A.H. 395: a detailed account on the end of the Samanid dynasty from the time of the conquest of Bukhara by Ilek Khān till their end which is put by al-Ḏahabī in this year (more detailed than Ibn al-ʿAthīr, vol.ix, pp. 133-4, Abū Tammām).


A.H. 403: burial of the daughter of Abū Nūḥ al-Ṭayyib. The carriage of wooden crosses was ordered by al-Ḥākim bi amr Allah for the Christians.

A.H. 405: al-Ḥākim's measures against women.


A.H. 410: Mahmūd b. Sabuktighin's campaign in India.


A.H. 413: damage to the Kāba done by some Egyptians (Hilāl al-Ṣābi, Ibn al-Ṭūrisī).


A.H. 418: Mahmūd b. Sabuktighin's campaign in India.

A.H. 420: reports on the Batinites in khurāsān, Quarrels between Mutazilites and Rafidis (Abū al-Ḥasan al-Zaynabī).


A.H. 433: promulgation of the so-called itiqad al-Qādirī in the dīwān.


A.H. 451: capture of Baghdād by al-Basāṣirī; flight of the Caliph al-Qāʾīm biʿamr Allah.

A.H. 464: Nizām al-Mulk's fight in Fāris.


A.H. 478: seize of Toledo by the Franks (more detailed than Ibn al-ʿAṯīr, vol. x, PP.92-3).


A.H. 495: fights of Sanjīl (St. Giles) (Sībṭ Ibn al-Jawzī).


A.H. 553 : fights with the Ghuzz in Khurāsān (Ibn al-Jawzī).


A.H. 575 : the Franks round Ramla. Tashteghin was invested with the khila, Report on the Mamlūkīs (al-Buzuri, al-Tamīmī).


A.H. 582: Taghteghin, brother of Salah al-Din at Macca (al-Buzurî).
The assassination of Ibn Bayson by the Ismailitis (‘Abd al-Laţîf al-
Baghdâdî).

A.H. 583: Fights of Salah al-Din (Ibn al-Shaddâd, al-Ammâd, al-
Jawanî, Sibnî Ibn al-Jawzî).

A.H. 584: Salah al-Din’s conquests in Syria (al-Ammâd, Sibî 
al-Jawzî). Meeting of the Sultan Tughrulshah and the Wazîr Jalâl 
al-Din b. Yûnus (al-Buzurî, Sibî Ibn al-Jawzî). Fights with the 

A.H. 586: Fights with the Crusaders (‘Abd al-Laţîf al-Baghdâdî, 
Hatîm).

A.H. 587: Fights with the Crusaders (Ibn al-Shaddâd, Sirat Salah 
al-Din, al-Buzurî).

A.H. 589: Hisn al-Jil redeemed by the Crusaders (Abû Shama, al-

A.H. 591: Rule of Muwayyad al-Din Muḥammad b. al-Qasâ’îb in 
Damascus (Abû Shama).


A.H. 594: Ibn al-Jawzî released from the prison of Wâsit and 
pardoned. Meeting of Bahâ al-Din and Ghiyâth al-Din (al-Buzurî).

A.H. 596: Clash of the armies of al-Malik al-Adîl and al-
Afdal (Ibn Wâsil, al-Buzurî).


A.H. 608: Muslim Victory at Toledo.


¹Cf. The more copious record of al-Nasawī, ed. Houdas, PP.38-42.

A.H. 626: the Crusaders took Jerusalem (Abū Shāma).


A.H. 628: fights in Maghrib between the Banū ʻAbd al-Mūmin and the Maghribis.

A.H. 629: advance of the Tātārs in Adharbayjān.


A.H. 633: advance of the Tātārs from Arbil to Mawṣil. Cordoba was taken by the Franks (Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Abbār).

A.H. 634: Pigeon-post from Rukn al-Dīn in Mawṣil to Shāraf al-Dīn in Baghdād. Trace between al-Kāmil and the Romans.

A.H. 635: The Tātārs in Daqūqā, their clash with Jalāl al-Dīn. Al-ʻAdil Sūltān of Egypt.

A.H. 639: fights with the Tātārs (Ṣād Allah).


A.H. 641: Victory of the Tātārs over the Saljūqs of Rūm.


A.H. 645 : The Sultan Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb took the fortress of al-Ṣābība (Ṣād al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥamāwīya). The fortress of Ṣḥāhīmas was taken from al-Aṣghraf by the Sultan Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb.


A.H. 657: advance of the Tatārs to Āmid and Harrān, their crossing of the Euṣphrates.


A.H. 662: Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāma's rule in Mashikān.

A.H. 663: Muslim Victory in Andalusia (Abū Shāma). The Tatārs attacked al-Bira, Hulākū's death was reported, his son Abnā became king of the Tatārs.

A.H. 664: Solemn exit of the Sultan from Egypt to Jerusalem (Sād al-Dīn: Tārīkh).


A.H.667: the Sultan received the begates of Boghā.

A.H.668: Campaign of the Sultan in Syria his encounter with Sarim al-Dīn Mubarak and the Ismailites. Fight with the crusaders in Tunis.

A.H.669: the Sultan’s campaign against Asqatas and Hisn al-Akrād. Al-Malik al-ʿĀzīz was captured in Cairo. Revolt of Idrīs in Makka. The crusaders in Tunis.

A.H.670: Campaign of the Sultan against the Kurks and the Tātārs (Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Fākhr). His expedition to al-Jīzā. The Tātārs in Harrān.


A.H.675: fights of Badr al-Din al-Atabaki with the Tatars in Palestine. The Sultan, after going to Derbend, defeated the Tatars (Qutb al-Din: Tarikh).


A.H.679: fights of Sunqir al-Ashghair with the Tatars.

A.H. 680: defeat of the Tatars at Ḥims.

A.H. 691: Victory of the Sultan over the Romans.

A.H. 692: the Sultan demanded the fortress of Bahna from the prince of Sis.


A.H. 694: Ghazan, the grandson of Hulakū embraced Islam.

A.H. 698: movement of the Shāfiite mutakallimūn.


A.H. 700: the Tatars in Syria.

As it may be seen, al-Dhahabi's special concerns are (1) the history of the Seljūqs, Ayyūbids and the Mongol invasion, (2) the internal development of Islam, especially the movement of the Batı-nites and the Shiites; (3) the Western Islam, a territory which was neglected by al-Ṭabarī and also by Ibn al-Ṭāhir to a certain
extent. As a whole, the Tārīkh al-Islām shows the tendency of al-Dhahabī to deal with the development of the whole of Islām though, as a matter of course, his records are more detailed for Syria and Egypt than for other Muslim territories.

(b) Local History:

Like his predecessors, Ibn al-Jawzī and Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī also takes a special interest in the events of local importance. But whereas the main concern of Ibn al-Jawzī is directed to the history of Baghdad and that of Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī to the local history of Damascus, al-Dhahabī, by making use of both these works, records the local chronicle of both Muslim cities. Not considering the many accounts concerning these cities which are contained in his political narrative, it is peculiarly between A.H. 301 - 700 that he regularly records the changes in the administration of both Baghdad and Damascus and sometimes also of other cities, mentioning the names of the new qādis, Wālis and amils which are also found mostly in the works of Ibn al-Jawzī and Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī, continuing them to his own time. These data are indispensable for the history of the administration of Baghdad and Damascus during the Abbāsids, Ayyūbids, and Mongols. Similarly he is also interested in the changes in the external shape of these cities; the construction and enlargement of mosques, suqs, schools, hospitals and other public buildings are, as a rule, carefully recorded. He does not neglect the internal life of the Muslim centres either. The disputes between the different sects of Islām, between Sunnites, Shiites and Rāfiḍis, as well as the seditions and robberies which
were very frequent during the period of the Abbasids, are always remembered in the Tārīkh al-Islām. And finally, we can obtain some data on the economic life of both cities in the records on high prices in consequence of drought or other plagues; the prices per ratle of the main commodities (bread, flour, meat) are usually indicated. Thus the Tārīkh al-Islām is an excellent work of reference on the local history of Baghdad and Damascus, specially for the later period to which the works of Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-Jawzī do not extend.

(c) 'Ajāib (wonderful events):

One of the main characteristics of our work is its sometimes very detailed records on strange events and curiosities of the several years. In regard to these so-called 'ajāib, al-Dhahabī proves a good disciple of both Ibn al-Jawzī and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, to whose works he constantly refers in his narrative. Firstly he always mentions the astronomical phenomena; the strange sidereal constellations or the appearance of comets. Then he records also meteorological phenomena like violent winds, heavy rains or droughts, and the famines which appeared as a consequence of the latter. He also makes it a point to describe earthquakes and the panic called forth by them. Thus he gives detailed records of the earthquakes of A.H.460 with reference to Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn al-Qalanisī and al-Ṣābūnī of A.H.551-2, with reference to Ibn al-Jawzī, and of A.H.565 with reference to al-ʿAmmād al-Kātib and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. His narrative is peculiarly detailed on the year A.H.597, when great famines and elementary
Plagues occurred in both Egypt and 'Irāq, while Syria was laid waste by a terrible earthquake. Al-Ṭahābī records all these events in a narrative of seven folio-pages on the authorities of ʿAbd al-Latīf and al-Baghdādī, Abū ʿShāma, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, and al-Buzuri, whereas Ibn al-Athīr devotes only some lines to the same events.

And finally, al-Dhahābī is fond of remembering all kinds of odd events which occurred in the several Muslim cities or provinces and which were "the fun of the fair" of those days. With the instinct of a modern journalist, al-Dhahābī, after relating the political and local events of the several years, does not leave without mention such oddities as the appearance in Nihāwānd of a man practising sorcery (A.H.499), the appearance of an elephant in Damascus (A.H.610), a man who had ten daughters (A.H.643), a Baghdad woman who gave birth to double twins (A.H.646), another woman who gave birth to twins (A.H.647), the sinking of seven islands on the authority of the Tārīkh of al-Muayyad ʿImād al-Dīn (A.H.660), or an elephant shaped lamb which was brought to the Sultan (A.H.663).

Thus the Tārīkh al-Islām is a repository of all sorts of curiosities and gives us an insight also into the events which interested "the man in the street" of Baghdad or Damascus.
Biographies in the Tārīkh

But it is chiefly for its biographical value that the Tārīkh al-Islām has always been referred to and appreciated. Following the example of the Kitāb al-Muntazam of Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī also gives obituary notices on the persons of some consequence who died in the respective years. These biographical records are far greater on an average six or seven times as large a part of Tārīkh al-Islām as the Ḥawādith, which only appear to be prefixed to them for the sake of completeness and for the preservation of the tārīkh character of the work. The predominance of the biographical matter of his work can best be seen from its division into classes (tabaqāt) of ten years, which is carried through not only in the biographical parts, but also in the general narrative, though, as a rule, the technical term tabaqāt was only applied to biographical collections, like the Tabaqat al-huffāz or the Tabaqat al-Qurrā' of the same author. Thus al-Dhahabī adopted the system of the tabaqāt works for his Tārīkh al-Islām and retained the chronological division of the subject-matter as a mere subdivision.

But, in contrast to the tabaqāt works, the biographies of the Tārīkh al-Islām include not only illustrious men of one madhhab only, like the Tabaqat al-Shafi‘iya or Tabaqat al-Hanbaliyya of different authors, nor prominent people of one vocation only like the biographical collections on poets or scholars, but all sorts of people belonging to all the four madhhabs of the Sunnite Islam or to...
the shiites, though as a matter of course, preference is given to the madhab of al-Dhahabi, the shafiites.

These biographical records include in alphabetical order all sorts of people, thus:

1. All the Caliphs and minor rulers as well, whose succession to the throne or death are generally remembered briefly also in the general narrative. A particular advantage of the Tarikh al-Islam is that the caliphs of the Spanish and Maghribi Islam are as well recorded as those of the East, among whom the biographies of the Ayyubid and Seljuk rulers specially deserve our attention.

2. The wazirs, generals and high officials (amirs, 'amils, walis).

3. The theologists and jurisconsults (qadis, faqih) of all the madhhab.

4. The scholars other than theologists.

5. The poets.

The biographies vary in length from the mere mention of names to the very detailed biographical records on the most celebrated people; these latter also narrate some episodes of their lives. The style of al-Dhahabi's records is the same as that of Ibn al-Jawzi's. First comes the full name of the deceased person ('alam, kunya, laqab), then follow the date and place of his birth, appearance, and short characterization (of the more important men only), the names of his masters and of those who studied with him and
reported on him, his career, the opinions of the leading authorities concerning him, an enumeration of his literary works, the date and place of his death, and possibly also the place of his burial. In the biographies of poets many quotations, even poems in full length, are frequently included in the records.

Al-Dhahabi, in compiling the biographies of the celebrities of seven centuries, rendered an invaluable service to posterity and in the first place to the scholars of Arabic literature and the history of Islam who so often need data regarding prominent figures of Muslim past. There is no better evidence of the great biographical value of the Tarikh al-Islam than the fact that some of the biographical abstracts made from it by al-Dhahabi himself were known earlier than the original works. If it has been necessary to edit the short recensions of the work: the Kitab duwal al-Islam, the Tabaqat al-Huffaz, or the Tajrid fi asma’al-Sahaba, it would undoubtedly be important to publish the Tarikh al-Islam too, either as a whole or at least its latter half treating the years A.H. 301-700, for which period we have no other work of the same kind, comprising in itself both the political history and the biographies of these four eventful centuries of Muslim history.

The sources of the Tarikh al-Islam

The Tarikh al-Islam, like many other Arabic works on general history, is a compilation of all sorts of data excerpted by its author from a vast number of sources. In reading the manuscripts of the work one has to acknowledge al-Dhahabi’s great versatility
in many branches of Arabic literature, specially in history, hadith, fiqh, and poetry. There is hardly any important work in these branches which was not consulted by him. In addition, he was careful in collecting his data concerning one even from all the sources available for him, which he always quoted conscientiously. Though, as we have been, he was reprimanded for a certain bias even by one his most famous disciples, yet his reliability becomes evident by reading the Tārikh al-Islām hand in hand with the sources referred to by him where this is feasible. Such a comparison proves his reliability in excerpting other works, which enables us to obtain trustworthy references to and extracts from works non-extent or data on authors unknown to us. Even if in reading the Tārikh al-Islām we came across such indefinite references as "wa qala ghayruhu" (and it was said by somebody else), these are not disturbing either, because the sources can well be deduced even in these cases from the context of the passage in question.

Thus the Tārikh al-Islām is an almost inexhaustible repository of earlier historical, biographical, and theological literature. In examining the authorities consulted by al-Dhahabī we can fairly well see which authorities were in common use at this time. First there were four sources of primary importance on general history.

(1) The Tārikh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk of al-Ṭabarī for the general narrative of the first three centuries A.H., the common use of which was so well-known that al-Dhahabī did not trouble to refer to it, and could forego the detailed record of the events of this period.
(2) The *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* of Ibn al-Athīr is his main source for the years A.H. 301-628 of the general narrative. His name is nearly always mentioned.

(3) The *Kitāb al-Muntaẓam wa multaqat al multazam fī akhbār al-mulūk wa l-Umām* of Ibn al-Jawzī was doubtless the most important source of al-Dhahabī, not so much on political history as on the local history of Baghdad, on the *ajaib* and on the biographical matter generally, and on the obituary notices on prominent Baghdad people specially for the period A.H. 302-597. We may justly call al-Dhahabī the most distinguished disciple of Ibn al-Jawzī, from whose work be borrowed the whole system of his *Tārīkh al-Islam*.

The importance attributed by him to the *Kitāb al-Muntaẓam* can be seen also from his constant references for A.H. 575-631 to a hitherto unknown continuation of it by a certain Abū Bakr Maḥfūz b. Mātūq b. Abī Bakr b. Umar al-Baghdādī b. al-Buzurī, who according to him, wrote a supplement to the *Kitāb al-Muntaẓam*.

(4) The *Kitāb mirāt al-Zāmān fī Tārīkh al-Āyān* of Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī was used (1) for the general narrative of the years A.H. 629-54, i.e. from the time on whose Ibn al-Athīr's work ends; (2) for the local history of Syria and specially of Damascus regarding which Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī is as reliable an authority as his grand father is on the local history of Mesopotamia and of Baghduad specially; (3) for the 'aja'īb, which occurred in Syria.
Concerning what may be styled the lesser authorities of al-Dhahabi, for the History of the Ayyubids he used most the Kitāb al-Rawdatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn of Abū Ṣahma and the Kitāb Mufarrij al-Kurūb fī akhbār Bani Ayyūb of Ibn Wāṣil. For the history of the Mongols he made use of the Sīrat al-Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Mangubīrti of al-Nasawi, and a hitherto unknown report of the famous Baghdad physician and Scientist Abd al-Latif al-Baghdaḍī, whose history and geography of Egypt are well known to scholars.

On the following pages we give an enumeration of the sources used by al-Dhahabi in the general narrative of his work, excluding al-Ṭabarī Ibn al-Āṯīr, Ibn al-Jawzī, and Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī. As for his biographies, it is almost impossible to give a short synopsis of al-Dhahabi's authorities, so many are his references and quotations. Besides the works also used for his general narrative, it is chiefly the great biographical collections of Ibn Najjār, Ibn 'Asākir, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdaḍī, Ibn Khallikān, and al-Samāni that he mentions most frequently in his obituary notices.

Our list gives evidence of the scientific value of the Tārīkh al-Islām, which has been considered an excellent symposium of Islamic lore by all the famous later authors. Thus Muhammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī in his Ḫuyūn al-Tawārīkh, al-Yāfi in his Mirāt al-Janān wa Ibrat al-Yaqzan, and al-'Aynī in his Ḳiqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh al-Zamān all drew a great deal on al-Dhahabi's work.


Ibn Bākūya al-Shîrāzî (d. 442/1050). A.H. 309.


Abû al-Fath al-Bustî (d. 401/1010), A.H. 392.

Al-Mukhtar Buṭlân (d. 455/1063), A.H. 446.

Ibn al-Tûrisî (al-Tûnisî; perhaps identical with Hilâl al-Ṣâbî), A.H. 413.

Al-Tamīmī A.H. 575.


Ibn Tumart (d. after 524/1130) A.H. 554.


Ḥātim, the poet. A.H. 586.

Al-Qadi Abu al-Husayn (certainly Abu al-Husayn al-Razi al-Hafiz al-Imam Muhammed b.'Abdallah b. Ja'far b. 'Abdullah b. al-Junayd, see Tab Huff, xii, 16. according to which he died in 348/959-60) A.H. 322.


Ibn Hauqal ( lived in the fourth century A.H.) A.H. 309.


Al-Daraquṭnî (d. 385/995) A.H. 306.


Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Sāʻī (d. 674/1275). A.H. 622, 625, 644, 647-8, 654 (Crusades, Mongols).

Ṣādallāh. A.H. 639 (Mongols).

Al-Sullamī (d. 412/1021) Tārīkh al-Ṣūfiyya (Perhaps identical with the anonymous work of the same title mentioned in Ibn Khall., No. 2246) A.H. 309, 311.

Al-Simnānī. Tārīkh. A.H. 317


Bahā al-Dīn Yūsuf b. al-Shaddād. A.H. 565.


Ibn Abī Tayy (d. 630/1232). A.H. 569, 571.


ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Ṭāhmd b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī (according to Ḥājjī Khalīfa, No. 7925, al-Asadābādī (d. 415/1024) A.H. 322.

ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231). A.H. 575, 582, 585, 597, 605 (Khabar al-Tātār), 617, 627.


Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Fākhr (Perhaps identical with al-Jazari, see above). A.H. 670.


Qūṭb al-Dīn (Perhaps the astronomer Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī who died in 710/1312). Tārīkh, A.H. 658-9, 666-9, 675 (Damascus).


Al- Muṣabbihī (d. 420/1029). A.H. 301, 335, 339 (Fatīmid).


Jamāl al-Dīn b. Maṭrūd (d. 649/1251-2), A.H. 648 (A Poem)


Al-Nadhr al-Zīltī, A.H. 401.

Al-Nadhr al-Zilṭī, A.H. 401


Hilāl b. al-Muḥāssin al-Ṣābī (d. 448/1056). A.H. 369, 381, 413.


An anonymous Tārīkh al-Qayrawānī (Perhaps by Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan b. Rashīq al-Qayrawānī who died in 463/1070-1) or by Abū ʿAbd al-Latīf al-Ḥasanī or by Ibrāhīm al-Rafīq, see Ḥājjī Khalīfa, No. 2285), A.H. 322.
An importance of his Tārīkh

Al-Dhahabī's Tārīkh al-Islām is an authority on the Mongol Invasion of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate. As scarcely ever has Islām experienced more tragical times and more hardships than during the Mongol invasion in the course of the 7th/13th Century. With the despite of the nomads, practitioners of the open air life, for sedentary occupations, the people of Chengiz Kān turned against and mercilessly destroyed the towns and works of civilization everywhere. Their disastrous campaign was only facilitated by the decomposition of the political unity of Islām at that time.

In Baghdād the 'Abbāsid Caliphate still subsisted but its splendour was on the wane; to the west of Baghdād, in Egypt, Palestine and a part of Syria, the Ayyūbids reigned, and in Asia Minore the Seljūqs while to the east of Baghdād the Turkish princes from Khīva had a rather insecure hold on the vast stretch of the Khwārizmian empire from the Ganges to the Tigris and from Turkistan to the Indian Ocean. This state of affairs was inviting to an enterprising invader of the sort of Chengiz Kān who in 615/218, crushed the Khwārizmian empire, while his grandson, Hulāghū Kān put an end to the 'Abbāsid Caliphate in 658/1258. The Western provinces of Islām, including Egypt, were, however, spared from the devastating fury of the Mongols by the Mamlūk Sultān's Victory over Kētbogha, Hulāghū's general, at 'Ayn Jālūt, Palestine in 659/1260. When in 699/1299-701/1301 his grandson Qazān failed in conquering Syria Islām was definitely safe from further Mongol
attacks.

Small wonder that the terrified Muslims regarded the Mongol invasion as a veritable scourge. In writing of the Mongols or Tatars as their primitive name was, they hardly ever omit the opposition al-malainu (the accused), and, referring to Chengiz Khan, they usually affix the phrase lā'ānahu Allāh (may All curse him) to his name.

No doubt this great horror of the Muslims alone accounts for the astonishing fact that in the hitherto edited texts of the vast Arabic historical and geographical literature, not excluding the very well-informed Yaqūt, we find practically no reference to their original home, tribal organization and customs. Much better are we informed about their campaigns against Islam, though, as a matter of course, scores of works, both Arabic and Persian are to be consulted to sketch a detailed narrative of them. There is however, one work containing a rather detailed record of the principal events of the Mongol invasion, and this is the hitherto unedited Tārīkh al-Islām of al-Dhahabi (673/1274 to 748/1348). He needs no introduction to Arabic scholars, so well-known and much used are his works on hadith and his historical compendium Kitāb Duwal al-Islām. His principal work, the Tārīkh al-Islām

combining both general and biographical history, finishes in 700/1300-1 and, therefore, includes the whole history of the Mongol invasion. The value of his narrative is enhanced by his careful gathering of all sorts of information pertaining to his subject, and by himself being an eye witness to the last phase of the Mongol invasion, Qāzān's attack on Damascus.

It is owing to al-Dhahabī's conscientious quotation of his authorities that we possess in his Tārīkh al-Islām the only report on Chengiz Khān's Tātārs that is extant in the hitherto known works of Arabic literature. Al-Dhahabī begins his of the appearance of Chengiz Khān's people in 605/1208-9 with a reference to the Khabar al-Tātār of al-Muwaffaq Abī al-Latif b. Yusuf. We meet with the same name in the narrative of the year 617/1220-1. From this curtailed name it clearly appears that we have to do with the celebrated Egyptian Physician and naturalist, Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muhammad Abī al-Latif b. Yusuf b. Muḥammad b.ʿAli b. Abī Sād al-Baghdādī, commonly known as Ibn al-Labbād (d. 629/1231-2).

He is noted for his description of Egypt entitled Kitāb al-Ifāda wa al-ʿItibār fī al-Umūr al-Mughāḥada wa al-Hawādith al-Muʿayyana bi and Mīṣr. We have a list of his 166 works, which is appended to the biography of him by Ibn Abī Uṣaybia (d. 668/1269-70) in his lexicon of Arabian physicians and naturalists, ʿUyūn al-Anbā fī Ṭabaqāt al-ʿAṭibbā. These are works, mostly lost, on geography, natural

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2. Edited separately by J. Mousley, Abdollatif Bagdadensis vita, auctore Ibn abi Osaiba, Oxford 1808; and for the list of his works see, Ibid, pp. 50-64.
history, and medicine, and include a history (Tārīkh)\(^1\), there is, however, no indication of any separate report by him on the Tatars as given by al-Dhahabi\(^2\). Perhaps his account formed part of one of his works lost which was luckily discovered by al-Dhahabi and inserted into his Tārīkh al-Islām. We have notwithstanding, some indications in 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdādi's autobiography included in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's biography of him, from which we may gather that on his travels he had met people from Central Asia and had even actually been among the Tatars. Thus we read in his autobiography that he had an intercourse with famous shaykhs from Baghdad, Khurāsān, Syria and Egypt\(^3\); that he travelled from Ḥalab into the Byzantine Empire and spent several years there; that after making journey in Egypt, Syria, and Maghrib he went on the 7th Dhu al-Qa‘da 625/8th October, 1228, to Erzerum, then in Rabī‘ al-Awwal 626/28th January-26th February, 1229 to Kimākh, in Jumada al-Ulā/28th March - 26th April, to Dairki\(^5\). Concerning Kimākh we read in Yāqūt (ed. F.Wastenfeld, vol. iv, p. 334) that it is a wide province on the frontier of China and its inhabitants are Turks living in tents; it is also the name of the Turkish people from which the tribe of the Qypchaq

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1. Ibid, P.56
2. We have no reference to such a report in the biography of him in al-Kutubī's Fawāt al-wafayāt, vol. ii, PP. 7-8 and none even in al-Dhahabi's biography of him in the Tārīkh al-Islām, MS of the Bodleian Library, Cat. i, 654, fols. 76-77 b.
4. Ibid, P.34.
had sprung. This indication furnishes evidence of his travel
in Mongolia, and it is doubtless owing to his observations and
experiences made on this and other journeys that we have his report
which al-Dhahabī inserted into his great work and saked from persis-
ting.

The report of ‘Abbād al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādi consists of or
was divided by al-Dhahabī into, two parts, which are included in
the records of the years A.H. 605 and 617. The possible date of its
composition must be put after 625/1227-8 because he repeatedly refers
to the ravage of Ispahan by the Tātārs which occurred in 625/1227-8.

The general panic called forth by the rumors about the advance
of Chengiz Khān's Tātārs in Central Asia is excellently characterized
by al-Dhahabī's introductory remark to the first part of ‘Abbād al-Laṭīf
al-Baghdādi's report. He says that "this is a report that eats up all (similar) reports, an item of news that rolls up other news, a
story that makes other stories to be forgotten, an accident in com-
parison to which other accidents appear slight, and a misfortune
that extents over the whole surface of the earth," This remark which
is certainly apt to rouse the reader's interest, is followed by a
short description of the Tātārs. First ‘Abbād al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādi states

and also the description of Kimakh in S. H. Manger, La Vie de

2. The first part of the report is in the MS of the British Museum,
No. 1640, from fol. 173, 1. 21 to fol. 173 b, 1. 18.
the language of the Tatars is similar to that of the Hindus because they live in their vicinity. Incorrect as this statement is, it is significative of the popular theory prevalent at that time which devoted all sorts of Northern and central Asiatic nomadic races with the common name of Tatars\(^1\). They live at a distance of four months from Tangut\(^2\). Anthropologically they are described as having broad faces, wide breasts, light buttocks, small members, brown complexion; they are agile and intelligent.

People know very little about them before meeting them, first because "they receive intelligence of them", that is why it is very difficult for any foreigner to spy out their conditions and secondly because they always conceal their intentions and surprise the foreign peoples with their attacks." The inhabitants of no town know of them before they enter it and no army before they meet it". Their women fight like their men, sometimes carrying even their babies round their necks. First a small troop would appear in a foreign town, then, all of a sudden, the mass of the Tatars break in upon them, all of a sudden, the mass of the Tatars break in upon them unexpectedly and mercilessly murder all the women and children, but spare the lives of the artisans and able bodied men, whom they take

1. For the similar Chinese conception of the Tatars see, C.D Ohsson, Hisaire des Mongols, 2nd ed., La Haye et Amsterdam, 1837-52, vol.i, p.93.
2. Tangut is, according to Yaqut (ed. F.Wustenfeld, vol.vi, p.880), "a town in Shāsh beyond (the river) Sayḥūn"; according to Hamdallah Qazwīnī, Nuzhat al-qulub, ed. G. Le Strange, Persian text, p.257, it is also "a country comprising many countries of the Fifth Zone, and called Qāshīn by the Mongols".
into their service. Most of their arms are arrows made by all
all of them. The points of the arrows are made of horn, iron, or
bone. Swords are used for stabbing rather than for beating. For
defence they use shields made of mole-skins and shins. Their
horses eat fresh and dry fodder and even foliage and wood that
they find. They use small and light saddles. Their nourishment
is the roasted flesh of any kind of animals.

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī finishes the first part of his
report stating that they kill without an exception and mercilessly
and it seems that they tend not so much to possession and wealth
as to destruction.

The second part of his report\(^1\) treats of the invasion of
the Tātārs into the West in A.H.617 and subsequent years. Though
this is no continuous narrative of the campaign of Chengiz Khān -
as a matter of course such a record can hardly be expected dur­
ing the campaign - it is very important for all that because he
refers to his stay at Erzerum in 618/1221-2, i.e. during the Tātār
advance in the Caucasus. Hence it appears that what he relates in
the second part was either experienced by him or told to him by eye-
witnesses, which is, in all probability, responsible for the many
episodes his narrative includes.

\(^1\) Cf. The MS. of the British Museum, No.1640, from fol.190 b,
1.6 to fol.192, 1.16.
‘Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi introduces the second part of his report with a characteristic remark: "Two groups were separated from the Tatars just as two tongues are separated (from each other) in Hell." We know from other authors also that the northern group advanced on Adharbayjan and Arran, then invaded Georgia; the southern group marched against Hamadan and Isfahan, and finally both groups united and advanced on Baghdad. The first group attacked Georgia by surprise, then, retreating on Sharwan, passed Derbend, and ravaged the territories of Qypchaq and Alan. At this juncture the report remembers the marriage of the Georgian king's sister to the son of the Seljuk of Erzerum, who embraced Christianity.

After praising the country of Qypchaq for its temperate climate, abundance in water, good soil, and many sheep, ‘Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi proceeds to the march of the southern group against Baghdad. The kurds were induced to attack Derbend while the Caliph concentrated all his troops on Baghdad. The ‘Abbasiid capital was, however, spared from the Tatar invasion because the Muslims received the Tatar legate, who was probably sent to Spy out the enemy's camp.


2. For a detailed record of this event, see, Ibn al-Athir, vol. xii, pp. 270-1, under the significant title Haditha shariba lam yujad mitluha, and F.Brosset, Histoire de la Georgie, St.Petersbourg, 1949-1857, vol.i, P.495, it is also related by al-Dhahabi in the narrative of the year A.H.621: See the MS. of the Bodleian Library, Cat., vol.i, No.654,fols.1b-2.
with such a military parade and ceremony in Arbit, in the wilāyat of Daqūqa, and last in Baghdad that his visit discouraged and frightened the Tātārs who, this time, desisted from attacking Baghdad. This record of the Tatar legate's reception is not known to us from other authorities in print. The invaders also failed to take Isfahān.

Then 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī relates some cases illustrative of the cruelty and devastation of the Tātārs, which he heard from eye-witnesses in Armenia, such records terrorized the civilized world so much that the mere name of Tatar has become odious in East and West alike. The particular cases 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī relates were evidently all collected by him during his stay in Armenia, Al-Malik al-Ashraf, the eldest of the Ayyūbids (reigned from 578/1182-3 to 635/1237-8), when asked about the Tātārs, said: "What shall I say of a people of which no prisoner has ever been taken, since they fight as long as they are either killed or save themselves?" And the king of Georgia stated that people never used to tell how many were killed by them in a country, but rather how many were left safe. Nīsābūr was also burnt down and completely destroyed, and 550,000 people were mercilessly massacred by them. The country of al-malāhidā and Farghana were also visited by them. They found a special pleasure in the gradual truncating

1. Al-malāhidā being a name of the Dahrihs, this passage refers to the environs of Alamūt and other fortresses of the Assassins in Iran.
of their victims, and are told to have even drunk the blood of two children of a woman. The Tātārs success was mainly due to the circumstance that their enemy, the Sultan Khwārizmshāh Muḥammad b. Tukush (reigned from 589/1193 to 596/1200) was "a thief and a burglar, his army was a rabble without care and organization: most of them were infidel Turks or ignorant Muslims. He does not know even the best soldiers in the ranks, and his officers are accustomed to brutality only". They were attacked by the Tātārs, "the sons of one father, one word, and one heart, with one chief whom they obey". After referring to their visit in Iṣfahān, Ḥabd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī concludes his report remarking that no enemy could ever have been more hostile than the Tātārs, who had no religion and no reason. Even their animals are of a bad sort.

A report of Ḥabd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī is no connected account of the Tātārs, yet it fully deserves our attention as the narrative of a trustworthy author and the only literary record in Arabic descriptive of the Tātārs. His authority is also referred to by al-Dhahabī in recording the defeat of the khwārizmians at khilāf in A.H.627. The other authorities of al-Dhahabī for chengiz Khān's campaign are Ibn al-Athīr, Sibt Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Wāṣil, al-Nasawī, and a certain al-Muwayyad ʿImād al-Dīn, who wrote his Tārīkh supplementing al-Nasawī's work.

1. Cf. The MS. of the Bodleian Library, Cat. i, 654, fols. 7b-8b.
2. Cf. The MS. of the British Museum, No. 1640, fol. 182, 1.14
In the further record of the Tārīkh al-Islām we can follow the Tatar advance into Central Asia, Iran, and the Caucasus until the fatal year of Muslim history, 656/1258, when Baghdād was captured and plundered by Hūlāghū Khān. Into his narrative, based partly on the authority of a certain Ibn al-Kāzarūnī, al-Dhahabī inserted a qasida by Taqī al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Yusr on the destruction of Baghdad. More or less detailed reports inform us also of the subsequent campaigns of the Tātārs, thus of Hūlāghū Khān's invasion of Syria in 658/1260, of their battle on the Euphratus in 671/1272-3, of their fight with Badr al-Dīn al-Ātābakī in Palestine in 675/1276-7, and their defeat at Derbend in the same year, until we came to the end of the Tārīkh al-Islām, where we find a continuous and very detailed description of the Tātārs' second invasion of Syria and destruction of Damascus in 699-700/1299-1301. This concluding narrative is particularly

1. Cf. The MS. of the Bodleian Library, Cat. i, 654, fols 248-250 under the title Kā'īnāt Baghdād.
2. Ibid, fol. 249 b, 1.3.
3. For its text and English translation, see Joseph De Somogy "A Qaṣīda on the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies (1933), PP. 41-8.
5. Cf. The MS. of the Bodleian Library, Cat. i, 656, fol. 57b.
6. Ibid, fols. 60b -61.
7. Cf. The MS. of the British Museum Or. 1540, fols 123-134.
interesting because, well-known as this event is from the *Khiṭaṭ* of al-Maqrīzī and other sources, it is related by al-Dhahabi with the vivacity of an eye-witness who himself experienced the whole campaign against his city. With the exception of the testimony of a certain Dhau b. Sabāḥ al-Zubaydī, who witnessed the battle of Hims, we find no references to other sources in this narrative which is all the more remarkable as otherwise be regularly quotes his authorities throughout his work. For the general historian this concluding narrative is important for three reasons. First, it clearly appears from it that but for the rivalry between the Mamlūk Sulṭān of Egypt and his governor in Damascus the Tātārs would have never ventured upon such an attack on the most important city of Islām after the fall of Baghdād. Then, it is evident from this report that the failure of the Tātār attempt was due to the heroic defence of the commander of the citadel, Arjawāsh, and not to the


2. Cf. The MS. of the British Museum Or. 1540, fol.124, l.13.
military power of the Mamluks, which proved entirely inefficient after their defeat in the Wadi al-khaznadār on the 28th Rabīʿ al-Awwal 699/23rd December, 1299. Last, al-Dhahabi emphasizes the circumstance that, though the Tātārs favoured the non-Muslims, they were not hostile to the Muslims for all that. They proclaimed that their rules was a Muslim, and there can be no doubt that but for their atrocities they would have easily gained possession of Syria.

Moreover, al-Dhahabi's narrative is a very good sketch of the life of Damascus during the Tātār seize. It is of good use to anybody who is interested in the eventful past of this old city. We learn from it the names of the persons filling the posts at that time. In very lively tones our author depicts the general panic called forth by the cruelties of the Tātārs, and the relief felt at their withdrawal. He regularly records also on the rise in the prices of victuals and saddle-horses occasioned by the stringency during the assault.

Thus, the Tāriḵ al-Islām contains valuable material for the history of the Mongol invasion of the Caliphate. The fact that al-Dhahabi's narrative, as a whole, corroborates and in details, supplements our information obtained from other sources, testifies to his trustworthiness in gathering and quoting his references.
For this reason his great work can justly be considered as an important authority on this tragic period of the history of Islam.

Hardly ever has Islam survived a more disastrous and more mournful event than the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols of Halaghu Khan in the middle of the month of al-Muḥarram of the year 656/ January, 1258. The Mongol conqueror, after having subdued the Assassins, turned against the capital of the 'Abbasids and captured it without any resistance. The fall of the 'Abbasid Caliphate was followed by a veritable reign of terror which lasted for forty days. Baghdad was plundered during this dismal period, its entire population was massacred mercilessly with the exception of the Christians, the co-religionists of Halaghu Khan's wife and father. The Caliph al-Mustasim and his sons fell victims to the fury of the enraged conqueror, who put them to death. And to complete the disaster, a great conflagration destroyed many ports of the city.

But all the more remarkable is the fact that we possess only very scanty accounts of this veritable martyrdom of Islam in Arabic literary sources. The most reliable author on the history of the 'Abbasids, Ibn al-Athir, closes his al-kamil fī al-Tārīkh as

early as the year 628/1230-1. Among the later historians "neither Abū al-Faraj nor Abū al-Fidā' affords much information on this subject. Indeed, of the Mongol seize in the seventh century A. H. we know for less than we do, thanks to Ṭabarī, of the first seize in the time of the caliph Alī in the Second century A. H."^1

So far as Arabic literature is concerned^2, we possess only three descriptions of some length of these disastrous days of the history of Islam. One is by Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (d. 701/1301-2) who wrote his famous Kitab al-Fakhri fi Adib al-Sultaniyya wa dowal al-Islāmiyya, at the end of which he describes the Mongol seize. The second is by Ibn al-Furat, who lived one century later (d.807/1404-5), and records the same event in his hitherto unedited Tārīkh al-Duwal wa al-Mulūk. The third is by al-Dhahabi's (d. 748/1348), who in his voluminous Tārīkh

1. Ibid, P. 340
2. As for Persian literature, the following historical works contain narratives of this event:(1) The Tabaqāt al-Nāsirī, written shortly after 656/1258, is a contemporary authority on the times of Hulāghū; (2) the Jami' al-Tawārīkh, Rashīd al-Dīn's well-known work, finished in 710/1310-11, provides a fairly clear account of the seize operations;(3) the history of Waṣṣaf, the historiographer of Ghazān, the Ilkhān of Persia, written in 700/1300-1, contains only the data related also by Rashīd al-Dīn. Cf.- Le Strage, op.cit, PP. 340-1.
al-Islām devotes a separate chapter to the fall of Baghdad, which not only gives a detailed account of the event, but also includes a qasida lamenting the decline of the glorious city.

The author of the qasida mentioned above as called by al-Dhahabī is Taqī al-Dīn Ismā’īl b. Abī al-Yusr. His name is not to be found in any European bibliographical work on Arabic literature, because no literary work bearing this name has come down to us. In oriental bibliographical works on Arabic literature we only find two references to this author. The one is contained in the Fawā'īl al-Wafayāt of Muḥammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1362-3), the continuator of Ibn Khallikān’s Wafayāt al-Āyān. At the beginning of his work al-Kutubī gives a short biographical account on the author of our qasida. His name is accordingly Taqī al-Dīn b. Abī al-Yusr Ismā’īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Abī al-Yusr, “musnid al-Shām”. His uncle was a scribe of the chancery of the Ayyūbid Nūr al-Dīn, and he himself was scribe to al-Nāṣir Dā’ūd, who was also a good poet. He is characterized by al-Kutubī as being “distinguished in letter writing,

2. Cf. The MS. of the Bodleian Library (Ury), No. 654, fols. 248-50, under the title Kāīna Baghdaḍ.
excellent in poetry and very eloquent in speaking". He was charged with the prince's Chancery, with the superintendence of the cemetery, and with other administrative affairs.

Al-Kutubi's record is supplemented by a reference in al-Suyuti's continuation of the *Tabaqat al-Huffaz* of al-Dhahabi, where we read that it was from a certain Ibn Abī al-Yusr that the grammarian Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṣabbās b. Abī Bakr b. Jāwān (d. 674/1275-6) learnt. As this scholar lived at the time of al-Nāṣir Dāud, this reference undoubtedly relates to our author, not to his father, who bore the same name of Ibn Abī al-Yusr. The author's excellent qualities as recorded by al-Kutubi, and in particular his talent for poetry, were certainly well-known in his own time. Al-Kutubi quotes some lines from his poetical works, but does not mention any independent anthology or other work by him. This is probably due to the circumstances that his poems were read only by a limited number of courtiers and scholars in Damascus. In view of this, it is fortunate that al-Dhahabi, who lived about half a century later, could still recover a qasida by him and preserved it in his *Tarikh al-Islām*, in the narrative of A.H.656. The qasida was composed by him on the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols. The poem is owing to al-Dhahabi's conscientious citation of his sources remains as the only work known to be extent of Taqī al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Yusr. Considering the care shown by

1. Cf. Ed. Wustenfeld, xxi, 3
al-Dhahabî in quoting and copying his authorities, there can be no doubt that this poem also was rendered by him as accurately as possible.

Among the MSS. of the Târîkh al-Islâm we possess two volumes containing our Qasida. One is in the Bodleian Library, No. 654 in the catalogue of Ury. In this MS., which was written by a hand later to al-Dhahabî, the qasîda is contained on foll. 249-9b. The other MS. is in Istanbul in the Aya-Sophia library No. 3013, and has not been yet catalogued. As, according to Professor O. Spiesz, who has been this MS., it is an autograph of al-Dhahabî himself 1, it is from this latter MS. the following lines of the qasîda 2 have been copied:

"The fast-flowing tears give tidings of (the fate of) Baghdad, why your stay, when the lovers have departed? Ye pilgrims to al-Zawra' go not forth; for in that sanctuary and abode is no inhabitant...
Truly the Day of Judgement has been held in Baghâd, and her term, when to prosperity succeeds adversity."


As regards the contents of the *qasida* it can be divided into three nearly equal parts. The first part (11.1-6) after a short invocation, describes *Baghdād* as a verated centre of religion which was laid waste by the enemies of *Islam*, who are accused of promoting Christianity (1.6). The second part (11.7-14) poetically describes the sack and plundering of the once rich city and the slaughter of its inhabitants, and hints that those terrois are a punishment inflicted by *Allah* for the heedlessness of His people (11.13-14). The third part (11.15-21) is a mournful final accord which is not unlike the "Lasciate ogni speranza" of *Dante*: there is no hope left after the fall of the *'Abbāsids*, under whose rule the city flourished and the sciences were cultivated; even the poet himself had not hoped to remain alive after that veritable day of Judgement (1.21).

Our poem is consequently a funeral ode and belongs to a special class of *qasida*. In their development all the earliest varieties of Arabic poetry assumed the *qasida*-form and the *dirge* (*masthiyya*) also shared in this process. The sentiments felt at the death of the beloved were first expressed by the simple unpoetical *niyāha*, then by say' verses of which there developed short metric sayings of some length and finally the perfect *marthiyya* in the metric varieties of the *qasida*. The *qasida* consequently belongs to the class of the *marthiyya-qasida*.

But whereas the marthiyya, as a rule, laments the loss of a prominent person or a tribe, enumerating his or its qualities, our qasida is a typical example of a funeral ode lamenting the fall of a city like Baghdad. Our poem, nevertheless, has all the necessary requisites and characteristic features common to every qasida. Short as it is consisting only of twenty one double verses - it is a fine piece of post classical Arabic poetry written in elegant language, and in the basit metre, the solemn rhythm of which is specially suited to the dirge.

But, in addition to these common characteristics of the Qasida, our poem also shows some peculiarities shared by the marthiyya-qasidas only:

1. The absence of the nasib. whereas in the ordinary qasida opening nasib is an essential requisite, it never occurs in the marthiyya-qasida, since the object of the funeral ode is quite different. Instead of the nasib there are some constant formulae with which a marthiyya begins. Thus the poet sometimes refers to the tears shed on a tragic event, which is also to be seen in our qasida referring to the tears of those who lament the fall of Baghdad.

1. Ibid, pp.327-30, where we read that according to Ibn Rashiq in his Umda, he could not find any nasibs in the marathi with the exception of a qasida by Durayd b.al-Śimma. But even this exception is explained by the circumstance that this poem was written one year after the death of the lamented person, when the blood-ransom for his sake had been fulfilled already, so that the poet could employ a nasib to express his other feelings with the deceased person.
2. The repetition of the name of the lamented person, which is represented here by some poetical names of Baghdad, as al-Zawra' and Tāj al-Khilāfa.

3. The repetition of the same phrase at the beginning of several consecutive double verses. This had been regarded from the beginning as a peculiarity of the niyaha and, retained through its later poetical development, it was also used in the period of decadence as an archaistic rhetorical trick employed not only in the marthiyya qasida but also in other classes of qasīdas. Thus we see in our qasida the four fold repetition of the phrase wa kam (and how many).

With these characteristic features our qasida is a fine marthiyya-qasida from the period of decadence of Arabic literature. It is worthy of our attention for two reasons:

Firstly, it is the only hitherto known work of Taqī al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Yusr and a specimen of post-classical Arabic poetry written in the refined style of the court poets.

1. Ibid, pp. 313-4.
2. Ibid, pp. 314-20
Secondly, it is to our knowledge the only poem lamenting the fall of Baghdād and is an excellent poetical expression of the contemporary sentiment felt at the fall of the ‘Abbāsids and at the tragedy of their capital. Despite the decadence of the last Abbasids, their prestige was still so great throughout the Muslim world that even the court-poet of the then flourishing Ayyābid dynasty, in Damascus could not help lamenting that with them the splendour of Islām had passed away and that after the capture of the Prophet's family he could not hope either to remain alive. His presentiment was justified, because one generation later, in 699-700/1299-1301, his own city, Damascus, and the Ayyūbid empire were invaded by the same Mongols who, after destroying the "Crown of the Caliphate", Swept over all the Muslims Orient.