KİTAP DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ

Harald Motzki. *Reconstruction of a Source of Ibn Ishaq's Life of the Prophet and Early Qur'an Exegesis: A Study of Early Ibn 'Abbas Traditions.* New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2017. v + 144 pages.

Muhammed Enes Topgül
Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi
enes.topgul@marmara.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0003-3077-2610
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It has been the prevalent idea among orientalists that Islamic historical and religious literature appeared from the early-third century A.H. onwards and reflected the political and religious divisions in the Islamic community. In this book, Motzki goes against this idea and suggests that that early Islamic literature can be dated to the end of the first and the beginning of second centuries A.H. Motzki develops this thesis by studying Ibn 'Abbas' traditions that have been considered suspect by the Western researchers for he lived with the Prophet Muhammad for a limited time. He attempts to reconstruct the source of Ibn 'Abbas and underlines the role of the narrator (*rāwī*) named Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad. Motzki presents his method as the attempt "to reconstruct the material that an author has taken over from an earlier author or informant, submit its peculiarities to a critical examination, and compare such peculiarities with those of the material of other informants" (p. 16). As a matter of fact, this method that Motzki calls *isnad-cum-matn method* resembles the procedure of comparison (*mu'ārada*) that was used by hadith scholars of the second and third centuries. However, while the hadith scholars implemented *mu'ārada* to determine hidden defects in the hadith and to evaluate the reliability of narrators, Motzki uses his own method to determine the earliest date of tradition.

Ibn Hisham does not mention the names of informants of Ibn Ishaq in his book, but in the latest sources, reaching Ibn 'Abbas with comple-

te isnads. This situation necessitated referring the theses of Schacht and Juynboll (pp. 34-5). The author who evaluates the traditions of Quraysh and al-Walid which came from Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad claims the following: 1. Muhammad is an actual informant of Ibn Ishaq, 2. He invoked Sa'id b. Jubayr or 'Ikrima, 3. He is mentioned as "*mawlā* (non-Arab slave) of Zayd b. Thabit," and 4. His isnad possibly extended sometimes back to Ibn 'Abbas (p. 37). In order to eliminate vagueness in a tradition that Ibn Ishaq mentioned to his informant as *haddathanī ba'd ahl al-'ilm*, the author refers to other sources and determines that this narrator is Muhammad based on the statements of the disciples of Ibn Ishaq. The statement in Ibn Kathir's *isnad* "*shaykh min ahl Misr yuqālu lahū Muhammad b. Abī Muhammad*" is additional evidence. Although the narrator is mentioned as the *mawlā* of Zayd b. Thabit, he did not attribute his tradition to Zayd because he was very young in age when Zayd was alive. Motzki concludes that Muhammad died before 110 A.H. based on the beginning of the hadith learning periods of Yunus b. Bukayr and Ibn Ishaq and their deaths (p. 48-9). As far as it can be understood, while Motzki determines *isnad*s that mention the narrator in Ibn Hisham's book, he investigates *isnad*s which Ibn Ishaq called "qāla ve balaganī," the places where the narrator mentioned as "*mawlā* of Zayd b. Thabit" and the traditions which have a certain theme, then refers to other sources that include these statements. He is taking into consideration repetitive *isnad* patterns such as "'Ikrima or Sa'id b. Jubayr 'an Ibn 'Abbās" (p. 53) and the words and actions of certain people in the traditions while mentioning Qur'an verses. That is, the text forms reveal the giving pointed results ability of *isnad-cum-matn* method (p. 54).

According to Motzki, even if the source of the traditions about the Jewish people in Medina is Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad, Ibn Hisham did not mention him so as not to interrupt the tradition by constantly mentioning the same *isnad* pattern (p. 54). Also, in *Sīra* of Ibn Hishām, the traditions which mention the hostility of Jewish people towards the Prophet Muhammad from Ibn Ishaq coincide with the *isnad*s that Muhammad is mentioned as the source of Ibn Ishaq (p. 68). In the textual part of the *isnad-cum-matn* method, it is determined that the traditions of Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad: i) report about a situation from the life of the Prophet, mostly with the names of the persons involved; and ii) designate the verses revealed by God concerning these persons, their words or deeds (p. 73). Besides *isnad*s, the structural characteristics of the texts can be ascribed to Muhammad as evidence against the argument that Ibn Ishaq was himself the original author of the text. Even though Juynboll sees Ibn Hisham as a true common link, not even Ibn Ishāq, the *isnad-cum-matn* method shows that

Ibn Ishaq is not a common link, Muhammad is his source and Muhammad has his sources too (p. 74, 75).

The situation of Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad outside *Sīra* sources is examined in the frame of al-Tabari's *Jāmi'*. The doubts of Schöller and Juynboll are answered specific to al-Tabari traditions. According to the author, nothing suggests that al-Tabari forged the *isnad*s. And the situation of the traditions that are not made up is due to the differences in the traditions from different disciples. Another piece of evidence on this subject is that the disciples of Ibn Ishaq mention Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad in *isnad*s. The author detects that al-Tabari actually reached Yunus b. Bukayr with Waki' and did not copy the text from al-'Utaridi because this version of the tradition is different from al-'Utaridi's tradition in terms of *isnad* and *matn* (p. 82). After all, the differences in *isnad*s show that al-Tabari did not correct the traditions that referred to Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad systematically (p. 92). The comparisons which have aimed to show that al-Tabari's Ibn Ishaq tradition comes with a different *isnad* than that of Ibn Hisham. According to Motzki, the two traditions in al-Tabari prove that it misses some traditions about the prophet's life while Ibn Hisham summarized the book of Ibn Ishaq (p. 99). Schöller's theory that these *isnad*s first came into being under al-Shafi'i's influence appears to be untenable since these *isnad*s were used already by Yunus and Salama, all the way back to Ibn Ishaq (p. 100).

Even though it is not known that the tradition of Ibn Ishaq about al-Nadr is from Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad or al-Kalbi, the different information from his disciples have made us think that he sometimes gives the other one's name (p. 103). The traditions of al-Kalbi which is in harmony with the tradition of Ibn Ishaq from Muhammad (p. 111) shows us Schöller's claim that Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad in the isnads of al-Tabari is al-Kalbi, is falsified (pp. 114-15). That is, Muhammad is not a fictive isnad label, but rather one of Ibn Ishaq's real sources (p. 115).

Then, was Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad a source of the Prophet's life? According to Motzki, when al-Kalbi and Mujahid traditions are compared, it can be thought that these three names got similar traditions from unknown earlier sources (p. 124). In the end, the study enables a better understanding of the sources of the Prophet's life and some weaknesses of Ibn Hisham's book. Also, it showed a group of traditions in Ibn Hisham's book can be dated near the first century A.H., and it developed our knowledge of the sources of prophetic biography and their backgrounds (pp. 127-28).

The strongest part of the work is the interpretation of the results obtained from a sample set of traditions on the history of prophetic traditions.

For example, according to Motzki, it is not possible that Ibn Ishaq forged a weak *isnad* in the second quarter of the second century A.H. This is because, if he created an *isnad*, he would have picked either Sa'id b. Jubayr or 'Ikrima. According to the author, this isnad was better for a scholar of the second half of the first century when the reporters of the pieces of information about the Prophet were not exactly recorded in writing (p. 72). Another evaluation is made in the tradition of Ibn Ishaq story about how al-Nadr went to and obtained the information from Jewish people. The author examines al-Kalbi's and Muhammad's versions of the Ibn Ishaq tradition and concludes that the two traditions are different. The texts of Ibn Ishaq's disciples are not different. This is likely to stem not from the disciples having copied from each other and leaving this out of the *isnad*, but rather from the fact that in the generation of Ibn Ishaq's disciples, the writing-down of orally-transmitted texts was much more prominent than in the previous generation (p. 111).

There are some aspects of the work which are weak. First of all, it is very strange that the author never mentions historians' practice of collective *isnad* (known as *talfīq al-isnad*) in the book. While the hadith scholars evaluate the traditions from each narrator independently and record the wordings belonging to them carefully, the historians mention more than one name in the *isnad* while giving the information they got from many narrators and presenting the texts from them in a more complicated way. Many of Ibn Ishaq's *isnad*s, which are handled in Motzki's work, show the traces of the differences in *isnad* use, which is the most basic debates of the historians and the hadith scholars in the second and third centuries (for example see p. 62). If Motzki can focus on the difference between the hadith scholars and the historians as regards the use of isnad, he could have formulated more reasonable explanations about complete *isnad*s and incomplete *isnad*s. Some expressions in the book give the impression that there is no thought given to the meanings of *isnad*'s nature and expressions (*sīgha*). For example, according to the author, *isnad* "indicates from whom the source's author received the text, and in turn, from whom the informant has the text, etc., down to the alleged first narrator of the text" (p. 17). However, there is no distinction between expressions of "haddathanā" or "akhbaranā" which indicate apparently to the text and expression of "'an" which is not clearly indicate the text. Some comments in the work are properly justified. For example, the author's claim that a certain narrator, whose father is named "Abu Muhammad," is not Arab (p. 48) needs proof. Similarly, in order to prove that Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad got the information about Jewish people from Jewish people, he said that Zayd b. Thabit grew up in a Jewish environment in Medina and went to their

schools and this situation affected his *mawlā* Muhammad (p. 74), which is an extreme interpretation. Moving from examining isnad patterns containing doubts, the possibility of Muhammed's composing the traditions he got from his two informants (p. 116) should be supported with other proofs.

In the work, there are some editorial problems relating to the correct transliteration of the Arabic phrases. (For example, "muhājir" as "muhājar" (p. 67), "qālā jamī 'an" as "qāla jamī'an" (p. 89), "'unuqaka" as "'unqaka" (p. 93), "rajazahu" as "rajzahu" (p. 117), "talāwa" as "tulāwa" (p. 118), "rawaynā or ruwwiynā" as "ruwiyanā" (p. 119, fn. 263).) Some of these types of errors are about the correct determination of the narrators' names. For example, the name written as "Ibn Rāhweyh" (p. 116) should be "Ibn Rāhawayh" or "Ibn Rāhūyah." The person who is mentioned as "Ghundar b. Ja'far" (p. 3) is actually Muhammad b. Ja'far, who has a nickname of "Ghundar." One name is written in two forms as "Salâm b. Mishkam" (p. 53) and "Sallâm b. Mishkam" (p. 63, 64, 127). And sometimes, there is no writing standard like these writings: "mundhu bid'in wa-arba'īn" (p. 83) and "mundhu bid' wa-arba'īn" (p. 86). As an example of the problems regarding the wrong transliteration of Arabic expressions, the wrong mentioning of two verses can be given. Two German words have been ignored in the translation of the work: on page 119, "Koran" and on page 124, "Sa'īd b. Jubayr und 'Ikrima."

The author misses the nature of the sīgha "ḥaddathanā" which directly refers to the text and translates "ḥaddathanā" and "'an" as "transmitted to us" (p. 25, 29). In the work, the translation of the expressions of belāg style is wrong. As a matter of fact, the expression of "fīmā belaganī" is translated incorrectly as "according to my information" (p. 51) and "balaghanī 'an" is translated incorrectly as "I heard from" (p. 88).

Some of the death dates in the book are inaccurate. The death of Ibn Shabba is 262/876, not 226/840-1 (p. 9); the death of Ibn Kathīr is 26 Shaban, 774 not 775/1387 (p. 27, fn. 13); the death of Abū Nu 'aym is 20 Muharram 430/22 October 1038, not 429/1038 or 430/1038-9 (p. 30, 111).

It is unfortunate that there is no index at the end of the book.