

## THE HISTORICAL APPROACH BETWEEN IBN HISHĀM AND IBN SA'D IN SĪRAH NABAWIYYAH

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### Abstract

*Sīrah Nabawiyyah* has been the most widely used name for the traditional account of life and background of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). In the ninth century, Islamic literature and biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) were actively developed as a reflection on the needs of the Muslim community. Among the famous of the extant texts composed in the medieval Islamic genre is *Sīrah Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833 or 213/828) who rests mainly on his selection from the work of Ibn Ishāq and *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* by Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) who compiled it from the works of his predecessors, especially al-Wāqidī and al-Kalbī. There are some studies conducted by Muslim and western scholars on the background of Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa'd's works. However, the differences in the approach of writing *Sīrah Nabawiyyah* between them are hardly found. Thus, the present study aims to explore the style or pattern of historical approach applied by these two scholars on the biography of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). The study is qualitative, in which the researcher employed descriptive, comparative and source-critical approaches where it analyses and extracts the approach used by the authors in writing *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*. The study in its finding infers that there are two opposing patterns of historical approach employed by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa'd in writing *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*.

**Keywords:** Ibn Hishām, Ibn Sa'd, *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*, Biography, Prophet Muḥammad

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## Introduction

A reciprocal exchange of influence between the historical ideas, schools, approaches and methods is witnessed in the third Islamic century, particularly in the “journey in search of learning” (*rihla fi ṭalab al-‘ilm*). The evolution of historical writing among the Arabs started from two independent schools, the Hijaz school in Medina and the Iraqi school in Kūfa and Baṣra as viewed by Duri (1983). Other researchers such as Abu al-Haj (1990), Faizer (1995), Atassi (2009) and al-Bree (2011) often examined the works and historical approaches of the author of Muḥammad’s biography individually and existing studies are scarce that compare their style of historical approach in *Sīrah* writings. Thus, the significance of the present study seeks to explore the historical approach of Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa’d in their writing of the prophetic biography of Muḥammad.

The three cities: Medina, Kūfa and Baṣra, were the centres of cultural life in early Islamic generations. Medina has become the primary centre for the context of ḥadīth scholars where the usage of the transmission line of narrators (*isnād*) and criticism of narrators (*ruwwāt*) are covered extensively. Meanwhile, the focus interest of Iraqi school is in tribal perspectives and *ummah* topics. The continuation of *Sīrah* writing is pioneered by the first generation, including ‘Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr ibn Al-‘Awwām (d. 92AH), Āban ibn ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affān (d. 105AH/723AD), Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 114AH/732AD), Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Zuhrī (d. 124AH/741-2AD) and Shuraḥbīl ibn Sa’d (d. 123AH/740AD). During the second century until the early third century of Islam, *Sīrah* discourse is flourished by plausible historians such as Mūsa Ibn ‘Uqbah (d. 141AH/758AD), Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid (d. 153AH/770AD) and Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 151AH/768AD). Then, followed by Ziyād al-Bakkāī (d.183AH/799AD), al-Wāqidī (d. 207AH/822AD) and Ibn Sa’d (d. 230AH/845AD). During this period, Islamic historical writing has adopted a historical method based on themes and chronology; and includes the universal history. Around the middle of the second Islamic century, the collection of poetry, *akhbār* and ḥadīth has begun rigorously by the forerunner scholars, for example, *ruwwāt*, *akhbāriyūn* (transmitters or compilers of *akhbār*), philologists and genealogists.

## **Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mālik ibn Hishām ibn Ayyūb al-Ḥimyārī**

### ***His Biography***

He was born and raised in Baṣra with his family whom was known to be of Himyarite origin (Watt, n.d.). Then, he moved to Egypt and met Imām al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204AH/820AD) in which he recited a lot of Arabic poetry. In describing his knowledge, he was an outstanding Arab grammarian and genealogist. Guillaume (2012) acknowledged him as a philologist and was able to clarify rare and difficult vocabulary in notes of his own (*shawāhid*). He was also known as *al-‘Allāmah* (a scholar or expert), *al-Naḥwī* (a grammarian), *al-Akḥbārī* (a collector of *akḥbār*) by al-Dhahabī (1985). The author of *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, Ibn ‘Imād has called him *al-Adīb* (Arab litterateur), *al-Akḥbārī*, and a genealogist. These titles imply that he is knowledgeable and well-versed in the Arabic language and its sciences. He died in Fustat, Egypt on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Rabi‘ul Akhir 218 AH/833AD.

### ***His Teachers***

Other than Ziyād ibn Abdullah al-Bakkā‘ī (d. 183AH/799AD), a Kufan scholar, his teachers were Khalaf ibn Ḥayyan al-Aḥmar (d. 180AH/796AD), Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 183AH/798AD), Abū ‘Ubayda Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthannā (d. 211AH/826AD) and Sa‘īd ibn Aws ibn Thābit (d. 215AH/830AD). Both Yūnus and Abū ‘Ubayda were the students of the eminent Arab linguist, Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ (d. 770AD/154AH). The process of learning from sophisticated scholars in Arabic grammar (*naḥw*) and poetry has exerted Ibn Hishām to write down the biography of Prophet Muḥammad competently.

### ***His Works***

Besides his abridgement of Ibn Ishāq’s work, Ibn Hishām has written other books in various disciplines of knowledge spanning

*Sīrah*, history and genealogy of the Arabs chiefly about Yemen such as *Sharḥ Mā Waqa'a fī Ash'ār al-Siyar min al-Gharīb* and *al-Tījān li-Ma'rifah Mulūk al-Zamān* as mentioned by al-Suhaylī (2000). Also, he wrote a book entitled *Kitāb al-Tījān fī Mulūk Ḥimyar wa-al-Yaman* (The Book of Crowns concerning the Kings of Himyar and Yemen), which is transmitted by him as a work ascribed to Wahb ibn Munabbih. It is a collection of Biblical and ancient Arabian legends which dealt with the history of the Southern Arabs, the magnificent performance of their Kings and their migration. It also presents the earlier folklore about Yemenite legends in their glories and achievements. Duri (1983) suggests that the book was based on Wahb bin Munabbih's book entitled *Kitāb al-Mulūk al-Mutawwaja min Ḥimyar wa Akhbārihim wa Qisāsihim wa Qubūrihim wa Ash'ārihim* (The Crowned Kings of Himyar, Their Narratives and Tales, Tombs and Poems) and it is described as “a useful book” by Ibn Khallikan (d. 681AH). It appears that Ibn Hishām's main focus of attraction on the narratives of Yemenite was impregnated with the style of writing of Wahb ibn Munabbih who is a Yemenite scholar, and the probability of Ibn Hishām himself comes from the origin of Himyarite.

The biography of Ibn Hishām has drawn the attention of many Muslim scholars to interpret and criticise it in a careful and thorough examination. The most engaging authors are Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdul Raḥman al-Suhaylī (d. 581AH) who wrote a commentary on the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām in his book entitled *al-Rawḍ al-Unuf*. Al-Suhaylī also points out that Ibn Hishām has written a book that explained the intricate words in the poem, but, al-Suhaylī's words showed that he did not read the book by himself. Besides that, Abū Dharr al-Khushanī (d. 604 AH), in his book *al-Imlā' al-Mukhtaṣar fī Sharḥ Gharīb al-Siyar* explained the odd vocabulary and poetry in the writing of Ibn Hishām and provided some criticism on it.

### ***The content of Sīrah Nabawiyah of Ibn Hishām***

The principles used by Ibn Hishām in his analytical investigation of Ibn Ishāq's work has been emphasised by him in the foreword of the version of *Sīrah Nabawiyah*. The original version of *Sīrah*

compiled by Ibn Ishāq probably consisted of three parts: *Kītāb al-Mubtadā'*, or the history of the period between Creation and Muḥammad's call; *Kītāb al-Mab'ath*, or the mission of Prophet Muḥammad in the Makkan period of life; and *Kītāb al-Maghāzī*, or the military campaigns and raids of the Prophet in the Medinan period of life. Ibn Hishām commenced his writing with the story of Prophet Ismā'īl and removed all the materials on the previous prophets because he assumed that they did not present as the biography of Prophet Muḥammad. Furthermore, weak sections, particularly in *Mubatadā'*, were removed by Ibn Hishām. Stories that were not supported by the Qur'an and not mentioned by Prophet Muḥammad were discarded by Ibn Hishām as he aimed to do his work as succinctly as possible. He withdrew any texts which had nothing to do with the book and deemed too provocative to the Muslims. He omitted controversial poems which none of the experts of poetry were familiar with and removed the poems that are not confirmed by al-Bakkā'ī.

Kudelin (2010) notes that the impertinent verses and improper words in the mockeries either have been removed or abridged partially by Ibn Hishām who affirmed about it repeatedly in his text. He attempted to instigate the text to follow the method of ḥadīth scholars. After Ibn Hishām has revised the work, the historians and people seem to discern and embrace the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq favourably (Duri, 1983). It indicates that Ibn Hishām's style of historical approach in *Sīrah* surpassed his precursor, Ibn Ishāq.

### ***The Methodology of Ibn Hishām in Sīrah Nabawiyah***

Ibn Hishām, a scholar best known for his edition of the *Sīrah* or the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad of Ibn Ishāq (d. 150AH/767AD), has followed the recension of the text of al-Bakkā'ī in completing his work, *Sīrah Nabawiyah*. Al-Bakkā'ī was among the two most prominent students of Ibn Ishāq and was dictated by Ibn Ishāq (Kudelin, 2010). During the "journey in search of knowledge" (*riḥla fī ṭalab al-'ilm*) by Ibn Ishāq, al-Bakkā'ī presumably has got along with him until he "heard" the whole prophetic biography of the Prophet from Ibn Ishāq. Thus, the line of

transmission from Ibn Ishāq to al-Bakkā'ī is crucial as it is linked directly between Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām.

The second student of Ibn Ishāq, Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d. 199AH/815AD) whose book was called *Ziyādat Yūnus fī Maghāzī Ibn Ishāq* (Additions of Yūnus to Maghāzī of Ibn Ishāq) has inserted *aḥadīth* and other information significantly on his behalf. This writing made him a qualified author or an independent compiler of a new book. Nevertheless, he still took the text of Ibn Ishāq which made up a large portion of his book. To convince his listeners, he asserted that he heard “word for word” from the dictation of Ibn Ishāq. Al-Sakhāwī (d. 902AH) suggested that the recension of al-Bakkā'ī which was revised by Ibn Hishām produces a better text than the recension of Yūnus Ibn Bukayr (Duri, 1983).

In the text of *Sīrah*, Ibn Hishām marked the words “*qāla Ibn Ishāq*” (Ibn Ishāq said) directly to the passages which belong to the work of Ibn Ishāq, and the words “*qāla Ibn Hishām*” (Ibn Hishām said) to the passages of him accordingly. Sometimes, ancillary information was introduced by Ibn Hishām with his commentaries into the text, which is similar to scholarly notes of the Medinan school. For example, in exploring the account of the Prophet being wet-nursed by Ḥalīma, Ibn Hishām appeared as providing extra information on his interpretation of 28:12 of the Quran (Ahmad Sanusi, 2017). The intricate connection of the Quran and *Sīrah* in Ibn Hishām and other historians has been articulated by Ahmad Sanusi in his studies (Ahmad Sanusi, 2016). Furthermore, in remarking the Qur'an, Ibn Hishām tended to explain a difficult or vague word in a few words or one synonymous word; and analysing the anonymous (Raven, n.d.).

Besides that, Ibn Hishām appeared to elaborate his versions of *aḥadīth* and events at his tendency which is different from the work of Ibn Ishāq. He came out with the explanation of genealogy and linguistics in his narration. Due to the abridgement of the second and third part of Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrah*, Kudelin (2010) elucidates that Ibn Hishām has interrupted the narrative flow of the writing. Nonetheless, he did not break up the narration itself and often his writings were about modern understanding. He was very meticulous and utterly honest in his narration, which was the characteristics of preceding Muslim scholars. Despite replacing the idea of Ibn Ishāq

of the universal history of the Prophets with a history of Prophet Muhammad, he managed to preserve the peculiarities of the work and recorded the events of the life of Prophet Muḥammad in a coherent narrative. Thus, the “Prophetic Biography of Muḥammad” could be attributed to both scholars – Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām in their distinctive way (Kudelin, 2010).

Each related poetry was appended by Ibn Ishāq after the accounts of the larger battles. Ibn Hishām as a philologist has separated original poetry from fabricated mentioned by Ibn Ishāq, which was affected by contemporary political currents at that time, for example, the rivalry between Ansār and Quraysh (Duri, 1983). Ibn Hisham was inclined to put the occasional poetry altogether on a certain event, probably because he was worried that the narratives which he transmitted are contaminated with doubtful verse. For example, he listed out plenty of poems after the accounts of the battles of Badr and Uḥud. In many places, Ibn Hisham articulated his doubt about authorship. According to Raven (n.d.), al-Jumāhī criticised Ibn Ishāq at his unfamiliarity of poetry and his imprudent attitude in handling any poetry he discovered; and Ibn al-Nadīm censures that Ibn Ishāq has added poetry on request. According to Guillaume (2012), due to the lack of experience of Ibn Ishāq in poetry, he asserted that the critical observation of Ibn Hisham in the poetry of Sīrah as the utmost enhancement of him, particularly when Ibn Hishām corrected the mistake of Ibn Ishāq and assigned the verses to the appropriate author. Furthermore, the background of his teachers from the Iraqī school who were mostly proficient in poetry had a strong influence on the credibility and expertise of Ibn Hishām in poetry.

## **Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d ibn Manī‘**

### ***His Biography***

Ibn Sa‘d was born in Baṣra, 168 AH. Ibn Sa‘d was a great bibliophile and possessed great knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject. He is famous with the soubriquet of *Kātib al-Wāqidī* (Scribe of al-Wāqidī) as he worked for him as a literary assistant for some time. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī (2002) states: “He possessed vast learning,

knew a great number of traditions – for which he had a great thirst – narrated a good many of them, and collected a large number of books, particularly rare ones, and texts on *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*.” He was called as “an expert in the *akhbār* of the Companions and Successors” by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 438AH) in his *al-Fihrist*. Ibn Sa‘d spent his childhood and began to acquire his education in Baṣra, a great centre for learning ḥadīth at that time. Attraction to the charms of tradition has led Ibn Sa‘d to travel to Kūfa, Mecca and Medina where he studied under many authorities. Lastly, he went to Baghdād and attached himself with Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Wāqidī (d. 207 AH). He died in Baghdād, 230 AH when he was 62 years old.

### *Teachers and Students*

In Baṣra, he studied under Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik Abu al-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī (133AH-227AH), one of his main teachers who is the master of ḥadīth during his time; and ‘Affan ibn Muslim (d. 220AH), who is responsible for 712 reports and become the third most frequent referred after al-Wāqidī and Ibn Dukayn.

Then, he continued collecting his collection of ḥadīth and reports in Kūfah. He studied under many scholars including ‘Abd Allāh ibn Idrīs (d. 192AH) who is a prominent Kufan muḥaddith and Qur’ān reciter; and Abū Nu‘aym al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn (d. 219AH) who is one of the most important sources of Ibn Sa‘d after al-Wāqidī as he is responsible for 861 reports in the Ṭabaqāt (Atassi, 2009).

Under Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbī (d. 204AH/819AD), Ibn Sa‘d learnt genealogy. Ibn al-Kalbī was probably born in Kūfah around 120AH/737AD, and his work on genealogy, especially the history of Arab paganism, has been cited frequently by many scholars (Atallah, 2012). The present research confirmed that he played an eminent role in the history of Arab literature. Ibn al-Kalbī also provides a few chronological accounts that deals with the raids against the Byzantines during the Umayyad period and the conquests on the Byzantine front and North Africa, which presumably survived from his *Kitāb al-Ta’rīkh* or *Kitāb Ta’rīkh Ajnād al-Khulafā’* (Donner, 1998). Also, it is rare not to



consult an early Arabic book to al-Kalbī as the family of al-Kalbī is renowned in the field of genealogy.

In Medīna, he probably met Ma'n ibn 'Īsa (d. 198AH). In Baghdād, he attached himself with Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidī (130-207AH/ 748-823AD). In his writing, al-Wāqidī is noted as a chronological systematizer, in which he paid particular attention to the dates and offered an absolute date (*hijrī*) for an event. The content of his book, al-Maghāzī follows the school of Medīna strictly and is limited to the Medinan period. Despite his tendency to 'Alīd in his writing, the honesty of al-Wāqidī in his accounts is preserved from any factional partisanship (Duri, 1983). Notwithstanding al-Wāqidī is regarded as *matrūk* (discarded) by Ibn Ḥajar, the narrations of al-Maghāzī by al-Wāqidī were still selected by him; and asserted that al-Wāqidī had become the main reference source in Maghāzī's field (al-'Umari, 2004).

Once Ibn Sa'd has gained enough reputation in Baghdād as a *Muḥaddith* and historian, a group of students is captivated to study under him. Some of them were Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī (d. 279AH), who lent some of Ibn Sa'd's work in his *Futūh al-Buldān* and *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*; Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Dunya 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (d. 281AH), al-Ḥārith ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Usāma al-Baghdādī (d. 282AH) and al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Fahm al-Baghdādī (d. 289AH).

### ***His Works***

Of the writings of Ibn Sa'd, there are only three names of his works – *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Saghīr* and *Kitāb Akhbār al-Nabī* (Reports of the Prophet's life). Of these, the second smaller edition of *Ṭabaqāt* is mentioned by al-Nawawī (d. 676AH) and it is still in manuscript (Siddiqi, 1993). It is an abridged edition of the first. The third covers the information contained in the first two volumes of the first book, and it was passed to al-Ḥārith ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Usāma (d. 282AH) for further transmission. Thus, there is only one book undoubtedly which is mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm (1997).

*Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* was preserved and completed by Ḥusayn ibn Fahm (d. 289 AH), Ibn Sa‘d’s keen student of the biographies of the narrators and traditions. Nevertheless, it was completely planned and compiled by Ibn Sa‘d. Both of these two works, the *Ṭabaqāt* and *Kitab Akhbār al-Nabī* were combined into one book by Aḥmad ibn Ma‘rūf al-Khashsāb (d. 322AH) and he dictated it to his students. Then, Abū ‘Umar Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbās who is generally known as Ibn Ḥayyuwayh (d. 382AH) has edited the whole work of *Ṭabaqāt* without making any amendments, and this recension has become the basis of all extant manuscripts of the *Ṭabaqāt*.

As a compiler of biographical dictionary, Ibn Sa‘d used a lot of sources to produce the plethoric source of biographical information of ones especially of the Prophet. Most of his authorities were derived from al-Wāqidī and Ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbī (d. 204AH) in which he learnt genealogy and less from Ibn Ishāq, Abū Ma‘shar and Mūsā ibn ‘Uqba. Besides that, Ibn Sa‘d named his authorities in the prefaces of the *Ṭabaqāt* proper, which start with third volume of Sachau’s edition, such as Ma‘n ibn ‘Īsā (d. 198AH), Ibn Dukayn (d. 219AH) and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umara al-Anṣārī for the genealogy of the Ansar (Horovitz, 2002).

### ***The content of Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā***

The content of his *Ṭabaqāt* deals with the biography of the narrators which consisted mainly of the genealogies with short descriptions and dates of birth and death; some biographical matters; and their reliability’s critique and important opinions of the authorities are being included. The *Ṭabaqāt* consists of eight volumes. Horovitz (2002) summarises that the first two volumes contain narrations dealing with the life of Prophet Muḥammad. The introductory section covers the history of the former prophets. Then, the story of his childhood and his Mission of Prophethood. Then, the migration to Medina. The second part of the first volumes deals with the Medina period, which mentions the commands of the Prophet, his characteristics, mode of life and belongings. Then, the Prophet’s campaign or *Maghāzī* is dealt with in the first part of the second volume. In the second part of the second volume, it concludes the

personal biography of the Prophet with his illness, death, funeral and patrimony. The subsequent volumes contain the accounts of the most eminent legal experts in Medina, the Companions and Successors up to the author's time. Besides that, he presented the description of the legal activities performed by the Companions of the Prophet during his life. The personality of ḥadīth or *fiqh* transmitters was identified in the composition of Ṭabaqāt and was designed as a *tarājum* framework. In addition, the biographical information of his narrators is inserted in the Ṭabaqāt which practically shows that Ibn Sa'd has selected his narrators selectively and vigilantly.

### ***The Methodology of Ibn Sa'd in his Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā***

In his writing, Ibn Sa'd employed the method of ḥadīth scholars which was originally developed from the school of Medina. Ḥadīth scholars highlighted seriously on the *isnād* because it is the kernel of every ḥadīth. *Isnād* is a valid chain of transmission that supports the ḥadīth. The biographies of ḥadīth transmitters sometimes are referred to as *Asmā' al-Rijāl* and *'Ilm al-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* which were produced vastly in order to confirm the reliability or otherwise their narration of ḥadīth and the different classes of generation (Ṭabaqāt); and to explain and ascertain the attitude and personality of the ḥadīth transmitters (Mohammad Hashim, 2002).

So does Ibn Sa'd who placed the *isnād* in a specific narration, and the reader needs to judge the reliability and trustworthiness of the transmitters. In addition, the text in Ṭabaqāt contains phrases such as *ḥaddathanā* (he related to us), *anba'anā* or *akhbaranā* (he informed us) and *rawā* (he narrated) which shows the concern of Ibn Sa'd in *isnād*. Additionally, Horovitz (2002) found that Ibn Sa'd began his *maghāzī* with a collective *isnād*, and he did not indicate any other sources in his principal account for each of the campaigns or raids. Nevertheless, he introduced a special *isnād* in several *maghāzī* by appending individual reports to develop the principal account in several *maghāzī*. Briefly, the reliance of Ibn Sa'd on al-Wāqidī in his *Maghāzī* is similar to the reliance of al-Wāqidī on Ibn Ishāq as noted by Horovitz (2002). Ibn Sa'd also stated that the basis

of his work is based on al-Wāqidī without making any secret about it.

In his authorities, both kinds of *Ḥadīth Maqtū'* (narration attributed to Successors) and *Ḥadīth Mursal* (hadith in which the last narrator has been deleted, for example, the Companions) are being noticed in the Ṭabaqāt. However, it could be resolved by assessing the credibility and reliability of the ḥadīth and narrators (Rahman, Khan & Hifazatullah, 2012). The method of a historian which emphasised the element of time and the chronological order is also employed by Ibn Sa'd in his Ṭabaqāt. According to Duri (1983), the fundamental elements in assuring the accuracy of historical data are dates and *isnād*. These elements have been inserted by Ibn Sa'd who recorded the lifespans and death dates of the narrators and were consequently taken seriously by ḥadīth experts before the end of the second Islamic century, in which in later time, the study is known as *'Ilm Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* (Science of Criticism and Praise), a sub-discipline of the field of *Asmā' al-Rijāl* (Biography and Criticism of Ḥadīth Narrators).

Horovitz (2002) recognised that Ibn Sa'd placed any ancillary material assembled by him at the end of his principal account without interrupting it in every case. Any statement in his work is usually indicated by sources from which it is derived, and full text of various original documents including the number of poems he has borrowed from his predecessors was revealed by him. Besides that, he gave no personal observation or prejudice for or against anyone on the different figures of Islam in his articles since he was not involved in political activism; except on certain statements that was related with his narrative. Ibn Sa'd presented his work in a simple style and recorded only important things about them. Thus, as Sachau remarked, his objectivity is shown by the absence of any irrelevant material in his text (Siddiqi, 1993).

Ibn Sa'd planned a good organisation and systematic classification of his material into chapters. Especially, when he collected and dealt with a special chapter that consists of an abundance of ḥadīth material about the virtues and merits of the Prophet, and the proofs of his prophethood (*'Alāmat al-Nubūwwa*), which in later times became the archetype of the *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* literature (Duri, 1983). Essentially, the literature aimed to

verify the proofs of prophethood by providing a wide range of evidence such as Qur’anic verses, prophetic traditions and logical reasoning. According to Juynboll (n.d.), *Shamā’il* of al-Tirmidhī was the first work in the *Shama’il* style and was formed based on Ibn Sa‘d’s *Ṭabaqāt*. In addition, more thorough points were detailed by Ibn Sa‘d compared to Ibn Ishāq in some places, such as in the matter of the qualities and habits of the Prophet.

The following table shows the different historical approach employed by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa‘d briefly.

Table 1

*The different historical approach employed by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa‘d*

	<b>Ibn Hisham</b>	<b>Ibn Sa‘d</b>
<b>Framework</b>	<i>Sīrah</i> framework – related materials are collected focusing on the life of Prophet Muḥammad’s story	<i>Tarājum</i> framework - biography of ḥadīth narrators is compiled
<b>How additional information is inserted into the text</b>	Interrupted the narratives flow of writing by introducing his commentaries	Assembled at the end of principal account without interrupting the narratives
<b>Explanation on difficult words in remarking the Qur’an</b>	Tended to explain the difficult or vague word in a few words or one synonym word	Scarcely explain difficult words
<b>Focusing on</b>	Vocabulary and poetry	<i>Isnād</i> - transmission line of narrators

## Conclusion

By exploring the works and methodologies of Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa‘d, the present study identifies an idiosyncratic approach in their style of writing *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*, which has been summarised in Table 1. In fact, in Umami Kamila’s analysis, sometimes the fact presented by them appeared to contradict as well (Umami Kamila, 2016). For example, in the battle of Uḥud, the killer of Arṭa’ b. Syurahbīl has been recorded differently by Ibn Hishām and Ibn Sa‘d (Umami Kamila, 2016). The development of *Sīrah* literature of the ninth century appeared when a novel idea of *shamā’il* was introduced by Ibn Sa‘d in where the image of Muḥammad as a Prophet, statesman and military leader was emphasised turns into emphasising his lofty qualities and outward beauty. Decisively, we need to understand the methodology, historical ideas and the perspectives of the author who wrote it to distinguish historical accounts from mere stories. History will be mixed with belle-lettres legends if one does not endeavour to study the history enthusiastically. Thus, it is very important to understand the history and *Sīrah* so that any false accusation and misunderstanding could be avoided. The present study proposes that the reason behind the idiosyncratic approach is probably related to the influence of teachers and the origins of biographers. But since the nature of the narrative of *Sīrah Nabawiyyah* might have greater connection with the ethos and past political and social situation of the former biographers, it seems fruitful to suggest a further examination in scrutinizing the factors that lead to the distinctive approach between other biographers of *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*.

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