

AL-WAQIDI'S "AL-MAGHAZI": ITS METHODOLOGY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Muhammad bin Umar Al-Waqidi was a famous hadith scholar, historian and a writer of Prophetic biography (Seerat). His extraordinary memory and profound knowledge were appreciated and recognized by all. As a hadith scholar, he was regarded as rejected (Matrook) and unreliable (Za'eef). But he was considered as a prodigious scholar of prophetic biography (Seerat) and military expeditions (Maghazi). The succeeding generation of scholars benefited from his subtle erudition. The following research paper sheds light on Waqidi's methodology as followed in his "Kitab-ul-Maghazi".

Keywords: Seerat, Seera or sear, Maghazi, Hadith

INTRODUCTION

Al-Waqidi

Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Umer bin Waqidi Al-Aslami Madani (H 207) was a celebrated scholar of Hadiths, Fiqah, Tafsir Sear-o-Maghazi and history.⁽¹⁾

Waqidi though was an authority in Sear-o-Maghazi, yet the scholars of Hadith called him weak in hadith, and had used harsh words about him.

Al-Zahbi says:

“Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (H 241) called him a liar for altering the Ahadiths and attributing the narratives of nephew of Zuhri to one Maumer.

Yahya bin Mueen called him Unreliable, and ordered not to copy any of his hadith. Imam Bukhari (H 256) and Abu Hatim (H 327) said: his writings is abandoned.

Abu Hatim and Imam Nisae'e asserted him as fabricator in hadiths. Al-Dar Qutni (H 285) called him (Waqidi) weak in Hadiths.

Ibne Al-Jaouzi (H 597) and some of other narrators had elucidated him as deceiver, as he, to deceive others used to adjudge himself as Muhammad bin Abi Shimla. While Ali bin Madeni thinks about him a person, deducting Ahadiths"⁽²⁾

It is strange and surprising enough that in the contrary of such opinions, almost of all the historians acknowledge him a chief in the Sirat-o-Maghazi. Moreover the authors of Ansab (Genealogies) Akhbar (narratives, stories, events and other information) Rijal (biographies of the narrators) Tabqat (orders, stages of narrators) and hadis were remained necessitous for the completion of their books, and his narratives, if had described by his pupil Muhammad bin Saad (H 230) were blindly accepted.⁽³⁾

Khatib Bughdadi writes as:

“He was highly ranked for knowledge in events and history, and was the one among the persons, rumored much in East and in the West. Waqidi books in different sciences, like Sear-o-Maghazi, Tabqat, Fiqa, Hadith and historical events in the Holy Prophets life and after death and the presence of differences in opinions between the religious scholars, all that were, by the well informed, gradually shifted to their respective cities. However he (Waqidi) was known a liberal, generous and gracious man”⁽⁴⁾

Ibrahim bin Ishaque Al-Herbi (285-H) says:

“Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (H 241) would summon from Ibne Sa'ad two portions of Waqidi's narrated Ahadiths on each Friday, read them, answer them and return to Ibne Sa'ad and would summon two other portions the sam.”⁽⁵⁾

Ibrahim bin Ishaque Herbi says that Waqidi among the Muslims, was a great literary guardian, the most learned man of Islamic affairs and knew nothing about the period of Pre Islamic age.

Waqidi's book of Al-Maghazi is in three volumes, from beyond hijra till the demise of the Prophet had been described, indicates this fact that his book represents Maghazi only"⁽⁶⁾

In the outset of his book Waqdee after discussing the important certificates, the arrival of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) at Madina and all the ghazawat date wisely, briefly had been discussed. Thereafter he ascertaining the number of crusades fought, separating Ghazawat (war led by the Holy Prophet himself) from Seraya (war led by someone else than the Holy Prophet, followed by

the methodically description of those assistants appointed by the Prophet in his absence from Madina.

Waqidi maintained the practice to mention date wise departure from and arrival at Madina of the Islamic Army and to discuss with regularity, the number of crusades they participated in and with the causes responsible for the ghazawat, the event happened and the result ensued therein etc.

In the beginning of some lengthy chapters of his book, he usually refers to a collective certificate, which in reality represents and is a reference to an aggregated form of numerous narratives.

Moreover, the names of the persons who were martyred, killed, including the names of those infidels they personally participated in the crusade, and the Islamic banners used with their colors had been also mentioned by him.⁽⁷⁾

In his book, he uses and explains the Quranic verses in support of certain events, and thus the book may be ranked as an important source of Prophetic letters.⁽⁸⁾

Waqidi, besides discussing the problems relating to Fiqa (jurisprudence) had fully guarded details of the pacts made by the Prophet⁽⁹⁾ and also had mentioned to the four boundaries of various places with their distances from each other, in his book.⁽¹⁰⁾

This fact cannot be denied that there is some repetition of events in “Al-Maghazi” of Waqidi for instance, the seraya commanded by Qutba bin Aamir, for khas-am had been twice described. Likewise, we once again come across with the same controversy, in the description of Muslim martyrs and infidels killed, during the crusade of the conquer of Mecca⁽¹¹⁾. Nevertheless where the arrangement of historical materials is considered Waqdee takes a clear lead over the forerunner compilers in the field and his literacy composition can be classed as one of the classified, well composed and properly arranged book of history.⁽¹²⁾

FINDINGS

1. Waqidi has brought together the military expeditions, delegations and letters and arranged them in their chronological order.
2. He narrates the events in brief and then provides their details.
3. Waqidi is regarded as unreliable Hadith Scholar as he has been criticized by the majority of Scholars.
4. In his history and Seerat he follows a methodology which is different from that of Hadith Scholars.

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