

ABBAN BIN USMAN'S "AL-MAGHAZI": METHODOLOGY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Abban Bin Usman is deemed to be the first of all the biographers of the life and mission of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He was the son of the 3rd caliph, Usman Bin Affan' (RA) and, as such, he had a golden chance of getting more and the most authentic and reliable details relating to the life and Prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Ghazawat. Thus he had acquired a good deal of proficiency in the art of 'Seerat-writing'. He was known as a renowned scholar of Hadith as well as Fiqa among the Tab'een (disciples of the companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW). It is, therefore, acknowledged that the very first book regarding the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Ghazawat was compiled and composed by him and the same was, later on, narrated by 'Mugheera Bin Abd-ur-Rahman'.

Keywords: Seerat, Seera or sear. The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Maghazi. Jihad, Ghazwat. Jihad, Hadith. Anything (saying and practices) referred to the Holy Prophet.

ABBAN BIN USMAN

He was Abban bin Usman bin Affan bin Abdul A'ass bin Umia bin Abd-e-Shams (105 H). He was a learned scholar of Hadith, Fiqa and Maghazi⁽¹⁾, had memorised all the decisions and Fatawas (written verdicts) given by his father Hazrat Usman during his rule.⁽²⁾ He remained for seven years (76H to 83H) as Governor of Madina with the office of extra portfolio responsible for Haj (pilgrimage of Baitullah Sharif) arrangements.⁽³⁾

He got education from his father while his disciples were Muhammad bin Shahab Al-Zuhri, Abu-Zanad, Mughaira bin Abdur Rehman and Abdur Rehman bin Mughaira.⁽⁴⁾

Mughaira bin Abdur Rehman Al-Makhzomi had the book "Almaghazi" of Abban bin Usman which he taught and persuaded to his descendants and disciples. Ibne Sa'ad quoting Mughaira's son saying:

"Yahya bin Mughaira, narrates from his father that he had nothing in written except the "Maghazi" of the Prophet which he obtained from Abban bin Usman and was frequently read before them, with advice to learn the same"⁽⁵⁾

Ibne Sa'ad (writer of Al-Waqidi) narrating Yahya bin Mughaira bin Abdur Rehman saying:

"He (Mughaira bin Abdur Rehman) was qalil-ul-Hadith (one whose narratives are less) however as he was educated on Maghazi by Abban bin Usman and when being well educated on that was advised to educate others on the subject."⁽⁶⁾ Technically speaking, the Maghazi which Mughaira had related to Abban was not in form of a book, but a collection of information about the Seerat.⁽⁷⁾

Though Abban bin Usman was the first man who made available an aggregate collection of materials on Maghazi and his name has been frequently used for certification of Hadith, yet Ishaque, Waqidi and Ibne-Saad have totally ignored him (Abban) in the portions of relating to Sirat, in their books.

The Caliph Sulaiman bin Abdul Malik after performing his Hajj in 82 H, then while he in company of Abu-Baker bin Abu Abdullah bin Ahmad, Amer bin Usman and Abban bin Usman (the Administrator), was visiting the sacred places of Madina, requested Abban for the compilation of a book on Seerat and Maghazi of the prophet for him.

In response, while Abban affirmatively informed the Caliph about the compliance of his order, admitted the fact that he on the subject had a good deal of legend, in writings of firm and reliable narrators in his possession, which reveals also that Abban bin Usman had compiled his book on Seerat much earlier than 82 H.⁽⁸⁾

CONCLUSION

1. Abban Bin Usman is deemed to be the most truthful, reliable and trustworthy narrator of the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) as well as the events relating to the life and prophetic engagements of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Ghazawat fought by him against the infidels.
2. He was the first person who had composed and compiled a valuable collection regarding the events of the Ghazawat.
3. It is quite astonishing that the 'Seerat-writers' of the preliminary stage have seldom copied or recorded Abban's narratives as compared to other scholars of Madina. However, they have frequently referred to him in connection with the authentication of the narrators as well as the narratives, etc.

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