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Political Authority, the Marāsim of Muʿāwiyah, and the Construction of Religious Knowledge in Early Islam

Otoritas Politik, Marāsim Muʿāwiyah, dan Pembentukan Pengetahuan Keagamaan pada Awal Islam

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Abstract: *This article examines the relationship between political authority and religious knowledge in early Islam through reports concerning four marāsim attributed to Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. While previous studies have explored his political consolidation and the historical reliability of related reports, the interaction between these directives, the circulation of religious narratives, and the regulation of opposition requires closer examination. Using qualitative historical and textual analysis, the study critically compares accounts in historical, hadith, and biographical literature. It combines Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī's iʿādat al-naẓar, understood as a critical reconsideration of historical reports, with Michel Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, discourse, and disciplinary power. Source criticism is employed to distinguish reported directives from subsequent interpretations, while Foucauldian analysis explores their possible political and epistemic functions without establishing their historical authenticity. The analysis suggests that reports about the marāsim portray interrelated efforts to privilege certain narratives, restrict opposing voices, and shape the conditions under which religious claims acquired authority. These findings do not establish that all attributed directives were implemented or that they directly caused hadith fabrication. Rather, the article shows how critically assessed historical reports can illuminate the contested relationship between political power and the circulation and legitimation of religious knowledge.*

Keywords: Muʿāwiyah; Marāsim; Political authority; Religious knowledge; Michel Foucault

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Abstrak: *Artikel ini mengkaji hubungan antara otoritas politik dan pengetahuan keagamaan pada masa awal Islam melalui laporan mengenai empat marāsim yang dinisbatkan kepada Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Kajian terdahulu telah membahas konsolidasi kekuasaannya dan keandalan riwayat yang berkaitan dengannya, tetapi hubungan antara kebijakan yang dilaporkan, peredaran narasi keagamaan, dan pengaturan oposisi masih memerlukan pembahasan lebih lanjut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan sejarah kualitatif dan analisis teks dengan membandingkan laporan dalam literatur sejarah, hadis, dan biografi perawi. Pembacaan ulang kritis (iʿādat al-naẓar) Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī dipadukan dengan konsep power/knowledge, wacana, dan kekuasaan disipliner Michel Foucault. Kritik sumber digunakan untuk membedakan isi laporan dari penafsiran yang muncul kemudian, sedangkan pendekatan Foucault digunakan untuk membaca kemungkinan fungsi politik dan epistemiknya, bukan untuk menetapkan autentisitas riwayat. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa laporan mengenai marāsim menggambarkan upaya yang saling berkaitan untuk mengutamakan narasi tertentu, membatasi suara oposisi, dan memengaruhi proses pembentukan otoritas pengetahuan keagamaan. Temuan ini tidak membuktikan bahwa seluruh dekret tersebut benar-benar dilaksanakan atau secara langsung menyebabkan pemalsuan hadis. Artikel ini memperlihatkan bagaimana pembacaan kritis atas laporan sejarah dapat menjelaskan hubungan yang diperdebatkan antara kekuasaan politik, sirkulasi riwayat, dan legitimasi pengetahuan keagamaan.*

Kata Kunci: Muawiyyah; Marasim; Otoritas politik; Pengetahuan keagamaan; Michel Foucault

Introduction

Studies of the relationship between political power and religious authority have become central to contemporary Islamic historiography. A number of contemporary scholars have approached classical Islamic historical sources by examining the social, political, and intellectual contexts in which they were composed and transmitted, rather than treating these sources simply as transparent records of past events. This shift has contributed to critical historiography, which views historical texts as sites of discursive contestation where political authorities, religious scholars, and social groups negotiated legitimacy through knowledge production. From this perspective, history is not merely a record of past events but also a representation shaped by power relations that influence how societies construct, interpret, and remember their past.[1]

This perspective is particularly relevant to early Islamic history, especially the transition from the Rashidun Caliphate to the Umayyad Dynasty. This period witnessed the emergence of dynastic rule and changes in the relationship between political authority, legal institutions, hadith transmission, and collective memory. Thus, Umayyad history should be critically examined within its political, social, and intellectual contexts, revealing how historical narratives shaped religious knowledge, legitimacy, and orthodoxy.[2]

Within hadith studies, the influence of political factors on the transmission and codification of prophetic traditions remains a significant scholarly debate. Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht argued that many hadiths reflected later legal, theological, and political developments rather than originating directly from the Prophet's lifetime. Although their views have been challenged by Muslim and Western scholars, they stimulated extensive research into the relationship between sociopolitical contexts and hadith development. Studies of isnad and *matn* further demonstrate that assessing hadith authenticity requires attention to the historical contexts of transmission, contestation, and codification. Thus, the hadith corpus reflects not only textual preservation but also broader intellectual, political, and institutional developments.[3]

One significant historical case linking political authority and hadith transmission concerns Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Early Muslim sources, including reports attributed to ʿAlī al-Madīnī, describe policies restricting reports on ʿAlī's virtues while promoting narratives emphasizing ʿUthmān. Reports cited by al-Mālikī similarly describe incentives for transmitting counter-narratives. Al-Mālikī interprets these policies as creating political incentives that influenced the production and circulation of religious reports during the Umayyad period.[4] In order to legitimize and maintain power, prophetic traditions (*hadith*) were often fabricated and used as a primary instrument in the implementation of legal policies. Babul Ulum (2014) refers to this phenomenon as political hadiths of al-Muawiyah. Consequently, during the early stages of hadith compilation (*tadwin al-sunnah*), disputes frequently arose concerning whether the Prophet had prohibited the writing of hadith or whether such prohibition came from the companions after his death. This process was eventually realized during the era of the Tabi'in, particularly through the efforts of figures such as al-Zuhri. Ma'mar reports al-Zuhri's statement: "We used to dislike writing knowledge until the rulers forced us to do so."[5] This statement reinforces the notion that Islamic history is deeply intertwined with political history, and, as Azra suggests, with the history of rulers. However, rulers' support for the compilation and transmission of religious knowledge does not, in itself, demonstrate the manipulation or fabrication of hadith. A clear distinction should therefore be made between support for codification, control of transmission, selective promotion of particular narratives, and fabrication, as each represents a different form and degree of political involvement in the production and transmission of religious knowledge.[6] These interventions in the transmission of religious knowledge cannot be separated from the broader political conflict that characterized Muʿāwiyah's rise to power.

The political rivalry between Muʿāwiyah and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib provides an important context for examining the relationship between political legitimacy and

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religious discourse. The dispute over the killing of ʿUthmān became a central issue in their political confrontation and was subsequently interpreted in different ways within Islamic historiography. These competing historical narratives provide a basis for investigating how political authority and religious claims interacted during the transition to Umayyad rule.[7] Abu Rayyah describes the conflict between the two figures as a clash of "old Meccan aristocracy,"[8] or a class conflict between the *mustakbirin* (elite class) represented by Muʿāwiyah and the *mustad'afin* (oppressed class) represented by Alī. This class conflict was not merely political but also religious in nature.

This contest over political and religious legitimacy also provides a broader context for understanding Muʿāwiyah's subsequent consolidation of power, which Rustan (2020) examines through the transformation of early Umayyad authority. However, its predominantly historical approach leaves relatively unexplored the ways in which political policies functioned as mechanisms for regulating religious discourse. Lubis (2025), by contrast, offers a more focused analysis of the *marāsim*, but its emphasis remains on the textual and historical dimensions rather than the relationship between power and knowledge.[9] Safitri (2025) contributes to this discussion by examining the reception of reports transmitted by narrators associated with Muʿāwiyah. However, the study primarily addresses theological and pedagogical implications without systematically examining these reports through the concept of disciplinary power. These limitations indicate a gap in the existing literature: the *marāsim* have not been sufficiently examined as interconnected discursive practices through which political authority, religious knowledge, and opposition were simultaneously constructed and regulated. This study addresses this gap through a Foucauldian analysis of power/knowledge and disciplinary power.[10] While previous studies focus either on political conflict or administrative transformation, they pay limited attention to the role of *Muʿāwiyah's marāsim* as legal instruments shaping religious authority.

Beyond studies on political conflict and hadith discourse, several scholars have also examined the broader institutional transformation of the Umayyad state. Yet they leave significant room for further investigation regarding Muʿāwiyah's political policies through *marāsim* (state decrees). I. Darmawan argues that the transformation from the *khilāfah* system to a monarchical form of government was accompanied by the establishment of new political institutions that strengthened the centralization of state power.[11] Similarly, N. A. Ekaviana explains that the event of *ʿĀm al-Jamāʿah* and the transfer of authority from Hasan ibn ʿAlī to Muʿāwiyah marked the beginning of a new political configuration that reshaped the relationship between the government and opposition groups.[12] From an institutional perspective, MAG Sangmurdiyono demonstrates that bureaucratic and administrative reforms served

as strategic instruments for consolidating state authority through the strengthening of governmental structures and economic policies. Meanwhile, Muhammad R. Muttaqin maintains that the development of Qurʾānic exegesis *(tafsīr)*, ḥadīth studies, Arabic linguistics, and administrative sciences during the Umayyad period evolved alongside political dynamics that contributed to the formation of religious authority.[13] Nevertheless, these studies primarily focus on political, administrative, and civilizational developments and have not specifically examined the role of *marāsim* as instruments of state policy in shaping religious authority, constructing Islamic historiography, and influencing the development and transmission of the *ḥadīth* tradition. This gap constitutes the central focus of the present study, which seeks to analyze how Muʿāwiyah's *marāsim* contributed to the formation of religious authority and Islamic historiography during the formative period of the Umayyad dynasty.[14]

This study brings Michel Foucault's perspective on power/knowledge and counter-history into dialogue with Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī's approach of *iʿādat al-naẓar* to examine reports concerning the *marāsim* attributed to Muʿāwiyah. These approaches serve different but complementary purposes. Al-Mālikī's approach encourages critical reconsideration of historical reports and established interpretations, while Foucault's framework helps explain how political authority influences the circulation, acceptance, and marginalization of religious narratives. Rather than treating the *marāsim* as isolated political directives or assuming their historical authenticity, this study examines how the reported policies may have functioned within broader struggles over political legitimacy and religious authority. Its contribution lies in connecting the critical examination of historical reports with an analysis of the relationship between political power and the construction of religious knowledge in early Islam.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative library research using historical and textual analysis to examine reports concerning four *marāsim* attributed to Muʿāwiyah and their relationship to religious authority in early Islam. The historical corpus comprises classical works of historiography, hadith, and narrator biography, including *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl, and Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*. These works are examined as transmitted sources whose accounts require critical assessment rather than as direct or uniformly reliable records of the events described. Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī's *Marāsim Muʿāwiyah al-Arbaʿah wa Athāruhā fī al-Ḥadīth wa al-ʿAqāʾid* serves as a modern interpretive study and a starting point for identifying the reported decrees. Other secondary sources include contemporary scholarship on Islamic historiography, hadith criticism, political authority, and Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge.

The sources were selected according to their relevance, chronology, provenance, and direct connection to the four *marāsim*. Source criticism was conducted by examining the provenance, transmission context, textual consistency, chronology, and historical context of each report. Relevant accounts were then compared across different historical, hadith, and biographical sources to identify similarities, differences, omissions, and variations in their transmission and interpretation. Following Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī's approach of *Iʿādat al-Naẓar fī al-Riwāyāt al-Tārīkhiyyah* (reconsidering historical narratives), the reports were not treated as neutral records or as equally reliable evidence. Rather, they were critically reread within their socio-political contexts to distinguish the historical content of the reports from later interpretations and to identify the conditions under which particular narratives gained prominence.

The findings were subsequently categorized according to the forms of political involvement reflected in the sources, particularly support for codification, control of transmission, selective promotion of narratives, and fabrication where supported by sufficient evidence. These categories were treated as analytically distinct rather than as equivalent forms of political intervention. Finally, the four *marāsim* were analyzed through Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, discourse, disciplinary power, and regime of truth.[15] Source criticism provides the basis for assessing the historical status and limitations of the reports, while Foucault's framework is used to examine how the narratives describe relationships between political authority, religious discourse, and the circulation and legitimation of knowledge.

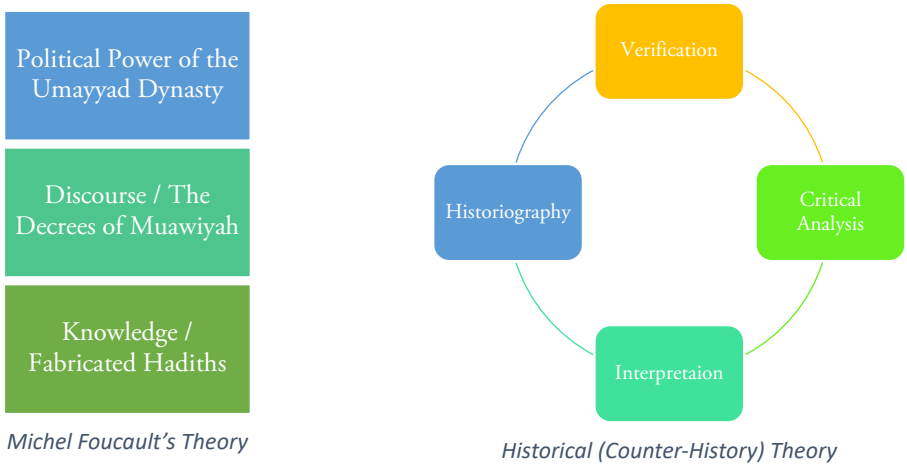
Second, these materials were critically compared by identifying agreements, disagreements, and methodological differences among classical and contemporary scholars, including Hasan Farhan al-Maliki, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aʿẓamī, Harald Motzki, Jonathan Brown, and G. H. A. Juynboll. Third, the findings were organized into thematic categories corresponding to the principal *marāsim* issued by Muʿāwiyah. Finally, each theme was interpreted through a Foucauldian perspective to analyze how political authority functioned as a mechanism for regulating religious discourse, constructing epistemic authority, and producing accepted religious knowledge within early Islamic society.

Accordingly, this study does not attempt to determine the theological correctness of competing historical traditions. Rather, it investigates the historical processes through which political power participated in shaping religious discourse, influencing the transmission of hadith, and constructing the epistemological foundations of religious authority in early Islamic historiography

This study has several limitations. First, it is entirely based on library research and relies on historical and textual sources rather than empirical data. Second, the analysis is limited to four *marāsim*, which are organized into five subsections, as the

fourth subsection examines the subsequent impact of the third subsection. These *marāsim* are associated with Muʿāwiyah and therefore are not intended to represent all aspects of Umayyad political authority. Third, this study does not empirically examine the direct impact of these *marāsim* on the development of hadith. These limitations provide opportunities for future research to broaden the range of sources and to investigate more comprehensively the relationship between political authority, *marāsim*, and the historical development of hadith.

"Theoretical Analysis Design"



Michel Foucault's concept of counter-history provides an analytical framework for examining how power and knowledge shape dominant historical narratives. Rather than viewing history as neutral, Foucault emphasizes how political authority can determine which narratives are legitimized while alternative voices are marginalized. In this study, the framework is used to analyze Muʿāwiyah's *marāsim* not merely as historical directives, but as discursive practices through which political legitimacy, religious knowledge, and the disciplining of opposition were constructed. Foucault's approach is complemented by Hasan Farhan al-Maliki's concept of *iʿādat al-naẓar*, which encourages critical reconsideration of established Islamic historical interpretations through renewed engagement with historical sources. Thus, Foucault helps reveal the relationship between power, discourse, and dominant narratives, while al-Maliki provides an internal Islamic perspective for reassessing inherited interpretations. Together, these approaches enable the study to critically examine how political authority and religious knowledge were constructed and contested in the early Umayyad period.

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Content of Muʿāwiyah's Decrees

A. Prohibition of Narrations on the Virtues of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib

كتب معاوية نسخة واحدة إلى عماله بعد عام الجماعة

(أن برئت الذمة ممن روى شيئا من فضل أبي تراب وأهل بيته)[١٦]

According to the historical report cited in this study, Muʿāwiyah is said to have issued a directive to his officials after the Year of Unity (ʿĀm al-Jamāʿah), declaring his disavowal of those who transmitted reports concerning the virtues of Abū Turāb (ʿAlī) and his family.[17]

Some historical reports associate this policy with the subsequent practice of preachers delivering sermons from the pulpit in which ʿAlī and his family were insulted, cursed, or publicly disassociated. A governor from the Marwānid family who served in Medina was reportedly said to have ordered Sahl ibn Saʿd to insult ʿAlī and instructed others to do the same, as narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.[18] Likewise, a report transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and also recorded in *Musnad Aḥmad* states that al-Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah, who served as governor of Kufa, was reported to have spoken against ʿAlī in his sermons and to have appointed preachers who did likewise.[19]

Several later historical accounts associate the early Umayyad period with practices of publicly criticizing ʿAlī and restricting the political influence of his supporters. These accounts, however, require examination according to their chronology, provenance, and relationship to the directives attributed to Muʿāwiyah. This pattern of hostility continued across generations until the reign of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, who eventually abolished such practices by modifying the closing formula of Friday sermons. Ibn al-Athir reports that Muawiyah and his supporters openly insulted Alī from the pulpit, while Ibn Hajar notes that the Umayyad faction institutionalized the cursing of Alī as a "tradition" (*sunnah*).[20]

Some historical accounts describe the persecution of supporters of ʿAlī in Kufa and other regions during the Umayyad period. These incidents provide relevant political context, although their direct connection to the particular directive attributed to Muʿāwiyah remains to be established. The regime appointed Ziyad ibn Sumayyah as governor of Kufa and Basra, where he carried out harsh measures against Ali's supporters, including executions, amputations, exile, and crucifixion.[21] One example is Misda' Abu Yahya al-Mu'arraqab, whose heel was reportedly severed by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (or Bishr ibn Marwan) for refusing to curse Alī.[22]

Al-Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani also mention that another consequence of Muʿāwiyah's decree was systematic killing. They report that Ali ibn Rabbah al-Misri, a trustworthy Tabi'i and hadith transmitter, changed his name from "Alī" to "Ulay"

out of fear of being killed.[23] Ali al-Muqri even states that during the Umayyad period, newborns named "Ali" could be executed. Another case is Atiyah al-'Awfi, who was flogged 400 times and had his hair and beard shaved by order of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf for refusing to insult Ali ibn Abi Talib.[24]

The author further suggests that the legacy of this decree may persist in contemporary sectarian perceptions, particularly in associating admiration for ʿAlī with particular sectarian identities. This context underscores the importance of revisiting historical narratives through a critical and holistic approach. Historical inquiry should integrate textual evidence, transmission criticism, historical context, and critical reasoning rather than treating reports as neutral representations of the past. Accordingly, historical reports must be examined according to their provenance, transmission, textual context, and socio-political circumstances. Following the approach of *Iʿādat al-Naẓar*, this study reexamines established narratives while considering how power shaped their production, circulation, legitimation, and marginalization of competing interpretations.[25]

Hasan Farhan al-Maliki interprets Muʿāwiyah's prohibition on transmitting the virtues of ʿAlī as evidence of political intervention in the circulation of religious knowledge, particularly to marginalize pro-Alid traditions. By contrast, Muhammad Mustafa al-Aʿẓamī cautions against equating political conflict with organized hadith fabrication, emphasizing the role of *isnād* criticism and scholarly transmission in preserving prophetic traditions.[26] Rather than adopting either position uncritically, this study focuses on the decree as evidence of political authority's attempt to regulate religious knowledge. From a Foucauldian perspective, the central issue is how power shaped the conditions through which certain traditions were circulated, legitimized, and recognized as authoritative.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the decree can be seen as a disciplinary mechanism through which political authority sought to regulate religious knowledge. By restricting the transmission of traditions about ʿAlī's virtues, the Umayyad authorities may have influenced which narratives circulated more widely. Such practices may have contributed to a particular "regime of truth," although they do not prove that political policy directly became religious orthodoxy. Historical indicators, including restrictions on pro-Alid transmitters, variations in transmission, and the marginalization of certain narratives, suggest a longer process in which political authority interacted with the development of religious authority. Thus, the decree may be understood as one stage in the broader regulation of religious discourse.

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B. Critical Evaluation of Transmitters Associated with ʿAlī

وكتب معاوية إلى عماله في جميع الآفاق ألا يجيزوا لأحد من شيعة علي وأهل بيته

A further report attributes to Muʿāwiyah a directive instructing officials not to accept the testimony of individuals identified as supporters of ʿAlī and his family. The historical status of this directive and the extent of its implementation require separate examination.[27]

According to Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī, narrations concerning the virtues of the Prophet's family appear relatively limited in the historical record, particularly those associated with figures such as al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar, al-Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah, Maytham al-Tammār, Rāshid al-Hijrī, Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī, and Abū Ṭufayl ʿĀmir ibn Wāthilah. He also notes the limited number of reports attributed to some early Companions compared with younger Companions. Al-Mālikī argues that reports associated with ʿAlī were often classified as weak and their transmitters subjected to *jarḥ*. These observations represent al-Mālikī's interpretation, not a quantitative conclusion of this study, which does not establish a comparative hadith corpus.[28]

Ibn Hajar appears to have critically addressed this tendency, noting that narrators associated with anti-Alī sentiments (*nasibi*)[29] were often regarded as trustworthy, while *Shi'a* narrators were frequently weakened.[30] This observation becomes more significant when contrasted with a well-known prophetic tradition regarding Alī: "No one loves you except a believer, and no one hates you except a hypocrite."[31]

Ibn ʿAqīl ibn Yaḥyā argues that political rulers influenced the transmission of religious knowledge by promoting certain transmitters and, in some cases, fabricating hadiths. He associates this process with the rise of Nāṣibī-oriented views and their subsequent doctrinal influence. However, these claims represent Ibn ʿAqīl's interpretation rather than a direct finding of this study and therefore require critical evaluation through source provenance, transmission analysis, and historical context.[32]

To illustrate this argument, Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Aqil ibn Yahya identifies several narrators who were criticized (*jarh*) due to their association with Alī and the Ahl al-Bayt. Among them are:

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah al-Tamimi

A loyal follower of Ali ibn Abi Talib, al-Asbagh received mixed evaluations from hadith critics. Yahya ibn Ma'in considered his hadith unreliable,[33] while 'Amr ibn 'Ali stated that major scholars did not transmit from him.[34] Abu Nu'aym reported accusations of fabrication against him.[35] Ibn Hibban argued that his strong affection for Ali led to his marginalization.[36] However, al-'Ijli regarded him as a trustworthy Kufan Tabi'i,[37] although Ibn Sa'd acknowledged both his *Shi'i* affiliation and the weakening of his narrations.

Al-Harith ibn ʻAbdillah al-Aʼwar al-Hamdani

Ibn Hibban described him as excessively inclined toward Shi'ism and weak in hadith transmission.[38] However, Ibn ʻAbd al-Barr argued that accusations against him were rooted in doctrinal differences rather than factual dishonesty. Al-Nawawi stated that his weakness was widely agreed upon, yet other scholars such as al-Dhahabi reported that some authorities, including Yahya ibn Maʼin and Abu Dawud, considered him reliable and recognized his expertise in jurisprudence and inheritance law.[39]

Further defense of al-Harith's reliability was presented by Sayyid Alwi ibn Shihab, who cited several Companions and Tabi'in who affirmed his credibility, including al-Hasan ibn Ali, al-Husayn ibn Ali, Muhammad ibn Sirin, and others. Al-Harith was also known as a respected religious figure in Kufa and held administrative responsibilities during the time of Uthman ibn ʻAffan.[40]

Abu Tufayl ʻAmr ibn Wathilah

Considered by Imam Muslim to be the last surviving Companion, Abu Tufayl was regarded by Ibn Hajar as a trustworthy transmitter, although he was known for his inclination toward Alī (*tasayyu*').[41] He was opposed by the Khawarij due to his loyalty to Ali and his family. His commitment is illustrated by his role in rescuing members of the Banu Hashim who were imprisoned by ʻAbdullah ibn al-Zubayr.[42] Despite his status, some narrators associated with him were also weakened due to their affiliation with Alī.[43]

To further support Ibn Hajar's observation that narrators aligned with ruling elites were often declared trustworthy, the author presents several contrasting figures:

Umar ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas

Regarded as a reliable transmitter by some scholars, despite his role as commander of the forces involved in the killing of al-Husayn ibn Ali.[44]

Marwan ibn al-Hakam al-Umayy

It is mentioned in the introduction of Fath al-Bari that he was the one who killed Talhah, a companion, with his spear during the Battle of the Camel and incited the fighting between the two sides at that time. It is narrated by Ibn Asakir in his historical work that the Prophet Muhammad cursed Marwan and his father; it is told that when the Prophet was approached by parents who wanted him to perform *tahnik* for their child, he refused to do so for Abi al-Ash and said that this child is a lizard, son of a lizard, or in another wording, accursed, son of the accursed, as reported in a hadith narrated by Imam al-Hakim in his Mustadrak.[45]

Hariz ibn ʻUthman al-Himsi

Ibn Hajar, in the introduction to Fath al-Bari, stated that he is well-known as belonging to the Tābiʿīn; he was regarded as trustworthy (*thiqah*) by Imam Ahmad,

Yahya ibn Maʿin, and other scholars who affirmed his reliability. However, al-Fallās said that he used to disparage ʿAlī ibn Abi Ṭālib.[46]

- Abu Hatim said: "I do not know anyone in Syria whose hadith is stronger than that of Hariz ibn Uthman, and I do not trust those who accuse him of hating Alī ."[47]
- Al-ʿIjli said: He is a trustworthy (*thiqah*) man from Syria, but he used to disparage Alī.[48]
- Ibn Hibban said: He used to curse ʿAlī ibn Abi Ṭālib seventy times in the morning and seventy times in the evening. When he was asked about this behavior, he replied: "He (ʿAli) is the one who killed my forefathers." It is also reported that he invited others to follow his sect.[49]

Hasan Farhan al-Maliki argues that political affiliation occasionally influenced the exclusion of certain transmitters associated with the supporters of ʿAlī. In contrast, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī generally portray *jarḥ wa taʿdīl* as an autonomous scholarly discipline[50] governed by methodological criteria of reliability (*ʿadālah*) and precision (*ḍabṭ*), rather than political loyalty. More importantly, Harald Motzki demonstrates that *isnād* criticism evolved through sophisticated scholarly practices that cannot be reduced to political interests alone. This study does not deny the methodological rigor of classical hadith criticism; rather, it argues that the socio-political context within which narrator evaluation developed also deserves analytical attention.[51] A Foucauldian reading therefore highlights how relations of power could influence the social recognition of epistemic authority without reducing the entire discipline of *jarḥ wa taʿdīl* to political manipulation.

The marginalization of pro-Alid transmitters can be analyzed through Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, which highlights how political and scholarly authority may shape epistemic legitimacy. From this perspective, *jarḥ wa taʿdīl* was not merely a technical evaluation of transmitters but could also influence who gained authority in the production of religious knowledge. However, this does not necessarily prove direct Umayyad control over the process. Therefore, the evidence should be considered alongside the perspectives of al-Aʿẓamī and Motzki to distinguish between technical criteria for evaluating transmitters and possible political influences on the formation of epistemic legitimacy.

While al-Maliki critically reassesses the reliability of certain transmitters associated with the Umayyad political context, al-Aʿẓamī emphasizes the historical reliability of early Muslim hadith transmission and challenges overly skeptical assessments of the tradition. Motzki, meanwhile, adopts a differentiated historical-critical approach that neither accepts nor rejects transmitted reports wholesale, but evaluates them through *isnād*-cum-*matn* analysis and source criticism. From a Foucauldian

perspective, these contrasting approaches also reflect different ways of constructing and legitimizing religious knowledge: the question is not only whether a transmitter is reliable, but also which criteria, authorities, and discursive practices determine that reliability. This is particularly relevant to the concept of *ʿadālat al-ṣaḥābah*, since judgments concerning individual transmitters are embedded within broader assumptions about who is authorized to transmit religious knowledge and whose testimony is recognized as credible. Thus, rather than assuming that the marginalization of particular transmitters was necessarily the result of political intervention, this study examines how political affiliation, scholarly criteria, and practices of authentication interacted in shaping the boundaries of legitimate religious knowledge.

C. Narratives Concerning the Virtues of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān and Claims of Hadith Fabrication

وكتب إليهم أن انظروا من قبلكم من شيعة عثمان ومحبيه وأهل ولايته والذين يروون فضائله ومناقبه فادنوا مجالسهم وقربوهم وأكرموهم واكتبوا لي بكل ما يروي كل رجل منهم اسمه واسم أبيه وعشيرته.

In a subsequent decree, Muʿāwiyah instructed his officials to identify among their communities the followers and supporters of Uthman, those who held positions during his time, and those who narrated his virtues and merits (*manaqib*). He ordered them to attend their gatherings, draw close to them, honor them, and report back the names of those who transmitted narrations about Uthman, including their lineage and tribal affiliations.

Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī argues that some hadith reports concerning the virtues of ʿUthmān were classified by hadith scholars as fabricated (*mawḍūʿ*). He distinguishes between the political dimension of the ʿUthmāniyya, associated in some historical accounts with figures such as al-Mughīra, Ziyād, ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād, and Samura ibn Jundub, and its doctrinal dimension, represented by scholars and sympathizers strongly supportive of ʿUthmān. According to al-Mālikī, some reports from this milieu reflect sectarian loyalty and may indicate fabrication or circulation of traditions supporting ʿUthmān and opposing ʿAlī's supporters. These claims remain historiographical interpretations requiring comparison with primary sources, transmission contexts, and alternative accounts.[52]

Al-Nawawi, in his Sharh Sahih Muslim, classifies hadith fabricators into two general categories. First, those who deliberately fabricate statements and attribute them to the Prophet, such as heretical groups (*zanadiqah*) or certain ascetics who invented narrations concerning virtues and religious motivations (*fadha'il wa raghā'ib*) due to

blind partisanship or worldly interests. Second, those who do not fabricate entirely new texts but manipulate existing hadiths for example, by altering weak narrations to resemble authentic ones, reversing chains of transmission, or adding transmitters to elevate their status.[53]

According to Abū Rayyah, the relatively late systematic documentation of hadith during the first century Hijri contributed to the circulation of reports whose authenticity was later questioned. He specifically discusses certain reports associated with figures such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Wahb ibn Munabbih, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām and relates some of them to Isrāʾīliyyāt traditions. However, these attributions should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, as Muslim scholars have differed in evaluating the transmission, reliability, and character of such reports.[54] Debates over the authenticity of hadith have emerged among both Muslim and Western scholars, who generally agree that political and sectarian conflicts were major contributing factors.[55] However, they differ regarding the timeline of such developments. Mahmud Abu Rayyah argues that fabrication began during the later period of Uthman's rule and expanded significantly during the conflict between Ali and Muawiyah.[56] In contrast, some Western scholars locate the "fitnah" during the time of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr (72 H), while others associate it with the death of Caliph al-Walid ibn Yazid (126 H).[57]

Ignaz Goldziher argues that hadith fabrication began in the earliest period of Islam, even before formal codification under Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz. He cites Muʿāwiyah 's letter to his governors as evidence. Al-Tabari further reports that Muawiyah instructed Mughirah ibn Shu'bah not to cease criticizing Ali, to show sympathy toward Uthman, to highlight the faults of Ali's followers, and to isolate them socially.[58] Such directives challenge the theological doctrine that all Companions were just and incapable of fabricating statements about the Prophet. [59] The directive cited above indicates, at the level of the historical report, an effort to promote narratives concerning the virtues of ʿUthmān. Al-Mālikī and other critical scholars interpret such political encouragement as a possible factor in the circulation of partisan reports. Nevertheless, the identification of a particular hadith as fabricated requires independent examination of its transmission and textual evidence. The statement of al-Barāʾ ibn ʿĀzib, "you do not know what we introduced after him," should be understood within its historical context. In his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ibn Ḥajar interprets the statement as referring to the conflicts and other events that occurred after the Prophet's death, while al-Qasṭallānī similarly relates aḥdathnā to subsequent fitna and also considers it an expression of humility. Therefore, this report should not be treated as direct evidence of hadith fabrication. Rather, it provides evidence of the historical changes and conflicts that followed the Prophet's death and should be interpreted through its textual and historical context.[60]

Goldziher's position is contested by Muhammad Mustafa al-Aʿẓamī, who interprets Muʿāwiyah's letter as evidence of political competition rather than necessarily hadith fabrication. Al-Aʿẓamī emphasizes early written hadith materials and transmission practices. However, such evidence does not by itself exclude later modification, selection, or expansion, leaving broader questions of authenticity open to further examination.[61] This debate has become central to discussions of early hadith authenticity among Muslim and Western scholars. Early transmission relied heavily on oral methods and isnad formulas such as *ḥaddathanā*, *sami'tu*, and *akhbaranā*, which indicated continuity (*ittisal*). However, scholars such as Joseph Schacht and G. H. A. Juynboll challenged this framework through socio-historical approaches, including common-link theory. These debates demonstrate methodological diversity in theological, textual, historical, philological, sociological, and critical approaches.

Rather than relying solely on coercion, the Umayyad state exercised productive power by shaping religious discourse through the circulation of selected hadiths and marginalization of competing traditions. This interpretation echoes Goldziher's view that political conflict influenced hadith formation, while Brown emphasizes scholarly criticism, communal memory, and isnad evaluation. Building on both, this study argues that political authority was one interacting force shaping which religious narratives gained authority and legitimacy.

D. Dissemination of Hadiths on the Virtues of Abu Bakr, Umar, and Other Companions as Counter-Narratives to the Virtues of Alī

A further report attributed to Muʿāwiyah describes an alleged effort to encourage the transmission of reports concerning the virtues of the Companions and the early caliphs. The report presents this measure as being connected to the circulation of traditions concerning ʿUthmān and to opposition toward traditions associated with ʿAlī. The relevant passage states:

ثم كتب إلى عماله أن الحديث في عثمان قد كثر وفشا في كل مصر وفي وجه وناحية، فإذا جاءكم كتابي هذا فادعو الناس إلى الرواية في فضائل الصحابة والخلفاء الأولين، ولا تتركوا خبرا يرويه أحد من المسلمين في أبي تراب إلا وتأتوني بمناقض له من الصحابة فإن هذا أحب إلي وأقر لعيني وأدحض لحجة أبي تراب وشيعته.

The decree continued Muʿāwiyah's earlier directive to promote the virtues of the Companions and early caliphs, particularly Abu Bakr and Umar. It also instructed officials to counter reports praising Abu Turab (Ali) with narratives highlighting other Companions, aiming to weaken the arguments of Ali and his followers.

According to the report cited by al-Maliki, the impact of this decree is evident in the emergence of counter-hadiths to well-known narrations about the virtues of Ali. For example, the authentic hadith:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عليه وسلَّمَ لِعَلِيٍّ: أَمَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِن مُوسَى[62]

According to Hasan Farhan al-Maliki, this hadith was countered by a fabricated narration attributed to Ibn ʿAbbas in Tarikh Baghdad:

عن قزعة بن سويد ، عن أبي مليكة ، عن ابن عباس ، قال رسول الله (ص) : أبو بكر وعمر مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى.[63] ٦٤

Another example is the authentic narration reported by Imam Muslim

والذي فَلَقَ الحَبَّةَ، وبَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ، إنَّه لَعَهْدُ النبيِّ الأُمِّيِّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عليه وسلَّمَ إلَيَّ: أنْ لا يُحِبَّنِي إلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ، ولا يُبْغِضَنِي إلَّا مُنافِقٌ.٦٥

This was countered by a narration attributed to the *nawasib*:

والذي خلق الحبة وبرأ النسمة، لا يحبهما إلا مؤمن تقى، ولا يبغضهما إلا فاجر رديَّ.

This latter narration is transmitted through several classical sources, including al-Ājurrī, Ibn ʿAsākir, and Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, through the chain of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿUmayr. Its textual reliability, however, requires further examination based on several criteria of *matn* criticism. These include the linguistic coherence of the wording, the semantic consistency of the report, the historical development and variation of its textual versions, and comparison with reports transmitted through more established chains.[66]

Hasan Farhan al-Maliki argues that the impact of this decree persists into modern times, particularly within contemporary Salafi discourse. It is reflected in narratives that acknowledge the existence of hadiths concerning the virtues of Ali but deny their superiority over Abu Bakr and Umar, or in claims that *Shi'a* groups have misused such hadiths leading to a general aversion toward narrations highlighting Ali's virtues among certain groups.

The juxtaposition of these reports illustrates how narratives concerning the virtues of prominent Companions could acquire competing political and theological meanings. From a Foucauldian perspective, their circulation raises questions about the selection, authorization, and contestation of religious knowledge. However, textual resemblance or thematic opposition between reports does not, by itself, establish a

historical relationship of deliberate fabrication or demonstrate that either report was produced under a particular political directive.

E. Removal from Official Registers and Denial of Economic Rights

The fourth *marāsim*, attributed to Muʿāwiyah, describes measures allegedly taken against supporters of ʿAlī and his family. These measures included removing them from official records, withholding financial support, and taking punitive action against those suspected of supporting the Alid cause. The relevant passage states:

ثم كتب إلى عماله نسخة واحدة إلى جميع البلدان انظروا إلى من قامت عليه البينة أنه يحب عليا وأهل بيته فامحوه من الديوان واسقطوا عطاءه ورزقه. من اتهمتوه بمولاة هؤلاء القوم فنكلوا واهدموا داره.

Muʿāwiyah issued another directive to his officials across all regions, instructing them to identify individuals proven to love ʿAlī and his family, remove their names from official registers, and cut off their stipends and financial support. Those suspected of loyalty to this group were to be punished and have their homes destroyed.[67] From a Foucauldian perspective, this policy illustrates disciplinary power through surveillance, classification, and economic sanctions, transforming political loyalty into an object of administrative control. By identifying and categorizing supporters of ʿAlī, the regime encouraged individuals to regulate their own political expressions in anticipation of punishment.

The consequences were reportedly severe in Kūfa, where followers of ʿAlī faced political pressure and some hadith transmissions were kept confidential. These reports may suggest that political pressure affected the circulation of traditions concerning ʿAlī. However, whether such pressure directly caused these traditions to become *gharīb* requires further comparison of their transmission chains.

During the later Umayyad period, particularly under ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, similar forms of political pressure are reported in connection with al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. The case of ʿAlī ibn Asmaʿī, who reportedly received an administrative position and a daily allowance from al-Ḥajjāj, illustrates how political authority could operate through both patronage and reward.[68] However, this later case should not be assumed to represent a direct continuation of Muʿāwiyah's policy without further historical evidence. Rather, it may indicate a broader pattern of political regulation that developed in different forms during the Umayyad period. Al-Shaʿbī's statement reflects the tension between religious affiliation and material interests within this later political context. Al-Shaʿbī's statement, "If we love ʿAlī, we lose our worldly

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livelihood; if we hate him, we lose our religion," captures the resulting tension between religious conviction and material survival.[69]

Conclusion

This study has examined the relationship between political authority and religious knowledge in early Islam through historical reports concerning four marāsim attributed to Muʿāwiyah. The analysis suggests that these reports describe several interconnected forms of political intervention, including the selective promotion of religious narratives, restrictions directed at political opponents, and the use of administrative and economic sanctions. Read through Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge and disciplinary power, these accounts illuminate how political authority could influence the circulation and recognition of religious knowledge. At the same time, the reported directives do not independently establish the fabrication of particular hadiths or demonstrate that every attributed policy was implemented. By combining critical reconsideration of historical reports with an analysis of political and epistemic authority, this study contributes to understanding how competing religious narratives were constructed, circulated, and contested during the early Umayyad period.

This study has several limitations. First, it relies primarily on textual and historical sources and therefore does not provide direct empirical evidence concerning the experiences of individuals living under Umayyad rule. Second, the classification and interpretation of the four *marāsim* depend partly on the revisionist reading of Ḥasan Farḥān al-Mālikī, whose reconstruction of the historical reports requires comparison with earlier and later sources. Third, some reports concerning the *marāsim* have been preserved in sources compiled at later periods, making their historical reconstruction dependent on critical evaluation of their transmission and textual contexts. Fourth, the Foucauldian framework provides an interpretive analysis of power and knowledge rather than definitive evidence of the personal intentions of Muʿāwiyah or individual Umayyad officials. These limitations require caution in generalizing the findings to the entire Umayyad period.

Future research could extend this study through systematic comparison of proʿAlid and anti-ʿAlid traditions across different regions, particularly Kūfa, Baṣra, Syria, and Medina. Further studies could also examine the relevant rijāl literature more comprehensively to trace how political affiliation influenced the evaluation of transmitters and the acceptance of their reports. In addition, comparative research across different Islamic dynasties could clarify whether the relationship between political authority, hadith transmission, and the construction of religious truth identified in this study represents a specifically Umayyad phenomenon or a broader pattern in the history of Islamic knowledge.

Endnotes

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17. The history of insulting Ali ibn Abi Talib is even found in the *Kutub al-Sittah* (the six major hadith collections): *Sahih al-Bukhārī*: Volume 5, page 18, hadith no. 3703, *Sahih Muslim*: Volume 4, page 1874, hadith no. 38, *Sunan Abu Dawud*: Volume 7, pages 46–47, hadith no. 4650, *Jāmi al-Tirmidhi*: Volume 6, page 86, hadith no. 3724, *Sunan al-Nasā'i al-Kubra*: Volume 7, page 410, hadith no. 8342, Sunan Ibn Majah: Volume 1, page 45, hadith no. 121.

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20. قال الحافظ ابن حجر في معترفاً بسُنّة بني أُميّة بلعن وسبّ أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) على المنابر بعد أن ذكر الخوارج وما فعلوه معه(عليه السلام): ((ثمّ كان من أمر عليّ ما كان، فنجمت طائفة أخرى حاربوه، ثمّ اشتد الخطب فتنقصوه واتّخذوا لعنه على المنابر سُنّة))(فتح الباري). ومن الواضح أن تلك الطائفة إنّما هي طائفة معاوية اللعين. ج ٧ ص ٧١
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58. لا تتحمّ عن شتم علي وذمه والترحم على عثمان والاستغفار له والعيب على أصحاب علي والاقصاء لهم وترك الاستماع منهم. تاريخ الطبري (١٨٨/٤)
59. ومعنى عدالة الصحابة: " أنهم لا يتعمدون الكذب على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، لما اتصفوا به من قوة الإيمان، والتزام التقوى، والمروءة، وسمو الأخلاق والترفع عن سفاسف الأمور. ʿImād al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ismāʿīl Al-Shirbīnī. *ʿAdālat al-Ṣaḥābah Raḍiya Allāhu ʿAnhum fī Ḍawʾ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah wa Dafʿ al-Shubuhāt*. Dār al-Īmān li-al-Ṭibāʿah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 2006, 17.
60. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4170 and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qasṭallānī, *Irshād al-Sārī li-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4170.
61. Geneologi Hadits Politis Muawiyat, 88.
62. متفق عليه عن سعد بن أبي وقاص. واللفظ للبخاري
63. Imam al-Dhahabi, in Mizan al-I'tidal in the biography of Qaz'ah ibn Suwaid, stated: The text (*matn*) of this hadith is fabricated; therefore, Qaz'ah here is considered to be the one who fabricated this hadith.
64. There is a contradiction in the meaning of the hadith in that opposing narration: Prophet Moses is paired with only one person, namely Prophet Aaron, whereas Prophet Muhammad is paired with two people Abu Bakr and Umar. This is clearly inconsistent, because the special status or position of Aaron is intended for only one person; moreover, in terms of kinship, both Moses and Aaron, as well as Muhammad and Ali, are cousins.
65. Abu al-Husain Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj al-Qusyairi al-Naisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya'; 1955) Juz 1 Hal 86 No. Hadits 131.
66. In another narration: "مؤمن تقي، مؤمن فاضل"، "فاجر ردي، شقي مارق، فاجر بذيء، منافق ردي، فاجر شقي، فاجر غوي".
67. Marasim Muawiyah, 8
68. Salahuddin bin Khalil bin Aybak bin Abdillah as-Shafadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya' Al-Turats; 2000) Jilid 19, 128.
69. Al-Atbul Al-Jamil, 96.

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