THE ORIGINS OF CRITICISMS ON CALIPH ʿUTHMAN B. ʿAFFAN'S POLICY OF APPOINTING GOVERNORS AND HIS GENEROSITY TOWARDS HIS OWN RELATIVES

AS ORIGENS DAS CRÍTICAS À POLÍTICA DO CALIFA ʿUTHMAN B. ʿAFFAN DE NOMEAÇÃO DE GOVERNADORES E SUA GENEROSIDADE PARA COM OS SEUS PRÓPRIOS PARENTES

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Abstract

This study examines the accusations directed against the third caliph, ʿUthman b. ʿAffan, alleging that he appointed his relatives to governorships on the basis of kinship rather than merit. The criticisms also claim that he granted substantial financial assistance to his relatives and disregarded the advice given to him in opposition to these practices. The research explores the origins of these allegations and emphasizes that they largely stem from Shiʿi groups and are therefore biased. Our analysis shows that ʿUthman observed balance and merit in his appointments, and that the financial assistance he provided to his relatives came from his personal wealth, with no relation to the state treasury. The article concludes that these criticisms were shaped by the politico-religious environment that emerged after ʿUthman's rule, and that they continue to serve as arguments for various oppositional movements today.

Keywords: ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan. Governors. Political Management. Nepotism. Appointment Policy.

Resumo

Este estudo examina as acusações dirigidas contra o terceiro califa, ʿUthman b. ʿAffan, alegando que ele nomeou seus parentes para cargos de governadores com base no parentesco e não no mérito. As críticas também afirmam que ele concedeu assistência financeira substancial a seus parentes e desconsiderou os conselhos que lhe foram dados em oposição a essas práticas. A pesquisa explora as origens dessas alegações e enfatiza que elas provêm em grande parte de grupos xiitas e, portanto, são tendenciosas. Nossa análise mostra que ʿUthman observou equilíbrio e mérito em suas nomeações, e que a assistência financeira que prestou a seus parentes veio de sua riqueza pessoal, sem qualquer relação com o tesouro do Estado. O artigo conclui que essas críticas foram moldadas pelo ambiente político-religioso que surgiu após o governo de Uthman e que continuam a servir como argumentos para vários movimentos de oposição atualmente.

Palavras-chave: Uthman ibn Affan. Governadores. Gestão Política. Nepotismo. Política de Nomeações.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the issue of Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān's appointment of his relatives to positions of authority within the context of the Great Fitna. This matter has often been raised as a point of contention, yet rarely subjected to an independent scholarly investigation. Among the most notable works addressing this topic is ʿAlī al-Ṣallābī's *ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān: His Personality and Era*, which discusses the competence of the governors appointed by ʿUthmān from among his kin. Similarly, ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Shaykh, in *ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān: The Modest and Generous*, evaluates their qualifications and responds to financial allegations. Ṣādiq ʿArjūn, in his literary-styled work *ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān*, also touches upon the matter, while Aḥmad Rātib ʿArmūsh, in *The Fitna and the Battle of al-Jamal*, highlights the role of the Sabaʾiyya movement based on the accounts of Sayf ibn ʿUmar.

This study analyzes the allegation concerning ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān's relatives through three main axes:

1. Historical Origins of the Allegation – tracing its roots and early narratives.
2. ʿUthmān's Relationship with His Relatives and His Policy Toward Them – examining his governance approach and administrative decisions.
3. Perspectives of Orientalists and Contemporary Arab Scholars – assessing modern interpretations and critiques.

The study concludes with a set of findings that synthesize the historical evidence and scholarly discourse.

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān is regarded by Ahl al-Sunna—who constitute the majority of Muslims—as one of the closest Companions to the Prophet Muḥammad. It is narrated from Ibn ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he said: "In the time of the Prophet, we did not consider anyone equal to Abū Bakr, then ʿUmar, then ʿUthmān." (Bukhārī, 2002) Imām Aḥmad also stated regarding those who say "Abū Bakr and ʿUmar" and remain silent—without mentioning ʿUthmān—that such a person does not possess complete adherence to the Sunna. (Hallāl, 2007) In another context, he remarked that whoever gives precedence to ʿAlī over ʿUthmān is liable to be deemed an innovator, for the Companions of the Messenger of Allah themselves accorded ʿUthmān priority in merit.

According to historical reports, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān was a beloved and respected figure even during the pre-Islamic era. He was among the noblest of Quraysh and held considerable prestige. The Prophet said concerning him: "Shall I not feel shy before a man before whom even the angels feel shy?" (Muslim, 1991) These narrations about his character provided a foundation upon which later historians constructed a historical narrative, portraying him as a distinguished and revered personality.

2 THE ORIGINS OF THE ALLEGATION

The Prophet Muḥammad gave glad tidings to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān of Paradise and martyrdom, linking this promise to a severe trial that he would face shortly before his death. It is narrated that a group of men came to the Prophet, entering one by one, and he granted them permission and gave each the glad tidings of Paradise. When ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān sought permission to enter, the Prophet said: "Go and admit him, and give him the glad tidings of Paradise after a severe trial." The narrator continues: "I went to him and said: Enter, and receive the glad tidings of Paradise after a severe trial. He kept repeating: O Allah, grant patience, until he sat down." (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 1999).

Ibn ʿUmar also reported: "The Messenger of Allah mentioned a forthcoming tribulation. A man passed by, and the Prophet said: 'This veiled man will be killed on that day unjustly.' I looked, and it was ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān." (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 1983).

This raises a critical historical question: Were the tribulations that occurred during the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān the result of a widespread religious apostasy, similar to what transpired during the era of Abū Bakr? Or were they instead rooted in the economic decline and financial strains that affected the Islamic state at that time?

In reality, the matter is far more complex than reducing it to a single cause. The phenomenon of apostasy was indeed a pivotal event in Islamic history, necessitating strict measures from the first caliph. Abū Bakr imposed restrictions on the apostates, forbidding their participation in conquests until his death. This policy of exclusion continued under the second caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. However, once the state grew stronger, ʿUmar sought to employ this group in military campaigns and assign them certain ranks within the army, though without granting them leadership positions.

They responded eagerly to the call of jihād, motivated by a desire to atone for their past actions, and became among the most active participants in the conquests of Persia. Nevertheless, this group remained on the margins of society. As al-Shaʿbī aptly described them: "They were the filler among the people." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

When ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān assumed the caliphate, the passage of time had allowed the former apostates to integrate fully into society. In an effort to reform them, ʿUthmān decided to employ them in public service. However, the reality was that their inclusion did not bring about the improvement he had hoped for. Instead, it opened the door to ambition and corruption, ultimately leading them to revolt against him. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

ʿUthmān himself remarked about their conduct: "I and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb were like a man who fattened his dog, only for it to scratch him with its teeth and claws." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

Al-Kalāʿī states that ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān sought to win over some of the former apostates by granting them offices and positions, hoping to achieve what ʿUmar had once intended when he employed them. Yet, from among this group the tribulation began. (al-Kalāʿī, 1997).

This does not mean that religious apostasy, in the sense witnessed during the era of Abū Bakr, had reappeared among them. Rather, their relapse into sedition and their return to fomenting unrest suggest that a transformation was taking place within society—one that provided the fitna with a fertile environment and a social base. Notably, among the names accused of involvement in the killing of ʿUthmān are men belonging to tribes that had previously been counted among the apostates, such as: Sūdān ibn Ḥumrān al-Sukūnī, Qutayrah ibn Fulān al-Sukūnī, and Ḥakīm ibn Jablah al-ʿAbdī. (al-Ṣallābī, 2009).

From an economic perspective, historical evidence confirms that the era of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān was among the most prosperous periods, marked by abundance of wealth and general affluence. The testimony of al-Ḥasan serves as a compelling proof in this regard. He stated: "I witnessed the time of ʿUthmān—despite what people criticized him for—and scarcely did a day pass without the people sharing in some form of goodness. They were told: O community of Muslims, go forth to receive your stipends, and they would take them in full. Then they were told: Go forth to receive your provisions, and they would take them in full. Then they were told: Go forth to receive butter and honey. The stipends were flowing, the provisions abundant, the enemy kept at bay,

relations among the people were good, prosperity was widespread, no believer feared another, and whoever met his fellow Muslim found him to be a brother." (Ibn Kathīr, 1997).

Yet the spread of prosperity and abundance does not necessarily indicate that the community had reached the pinnacle of stability and security. On the contrary, it may lead to complacency and ingratitude, as well as increased restlessness among those whose souls had not been firmly nurtured in spiritual discipline. This concern weighed heavily on the mind of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, who foresaw in it a potential gateway to sedition. He explicitly addressed this in his first sermon after being pledged allegiance, and again in his final sermon before his martyrdom. In his inaugural address, he declared: "Take lesson from those who have passed away. Where are the sons of this world and its companions who stirred it, built it, and enjoyed it for long? Did it not cast them out? Cast away the world where Allah has cast it, and seek the Hereafter." (Ibn Kathīr, 1997).

And in his concluding words near the end of his life, he said: "Indeed, this world perishes while the Hereafter remains. Do not let the transient deceive you, nor distract you from the eternal. The ultimate return is to Allah. Fear Allah, for His fear is a shield against His punishment. Hold fast to your unity and do not become divided into factions." (Ibn Kathīr, 1997).

The expansion of Islamic conquests and the abundant resources that these newly incorporated lands yielded significantly contributed to the rise of prosperity and general well-being. It is also essential to note that ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān permitted the Companions to migrate from Medina after ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had previously prohibited such movement. Consequently, the Companions dispersed throughout the conquered territories. When they encountered the worldly comforts of these regions—and when people there saw them—many individuals with no prior merit in Islam began to follow them. This marked the first sign of weakness to enter the Muslim community and the earliest form of social unrest among the general populace. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

Moreover, ʿUthmān went further by proposing that the Companions exchange their properties in the Ḥijāz for estates and lands in Iraq and Persia. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987). For the Companions, this represented a significant opening toward new horizons across the Islamic realm.

Thus, a large-scale migration unfolded toward Iraq—particularly Kūfa and Baṣra—as well as toward Persian territories. It is likely that ʿUthmān intended this dispersion to serve as a means of extending the light of Prophethood into the conquered lands through the presence of the Companions. However, the outcome diverged from his intentions. The transformation of the social fabric—due to the integration of non-Arab populations in the conquered regions, the diversity of ethnic groups across the vast Islamic domain, and the departure from the purity of the early community—spread rapidly. New social strata emerged, harboring ill intentions toward the Islamic state. This opened the door for the masses to become emboldened, prompting ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar to remark: "People reproached ʿUthmān for matters which, had ʿUmar done them, they would not have reproached him for." (al-Mizzī, 1980).

Ibn Khaldūn summarizes this phenomenon in accordance with the principles of social science, stating: "When the conquests were completed, and political authority for the community became fully established, the Arabs settled in the garrison cities—at the frontiers between them and the surrounding nations—such as Baṣra, Kūfa, al-Shām, and Egypt. Those who were distinguished by close companionship with the Messenger of God, and by adherence to his guidance and manners, were the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār from Quraysh and the people of the Ḥijāz. As for the rest of the Arabs—Banū Bakr ibn Wāʾil, ʿAbd al-Qays, the tribes of Rabīʿa, al-Azd, Kinda, Tamīm, Quḍāʿa, and others— only a few among them had enjoyed such companionship, though they had played a significant role in the conquests. They regarded this as a source of distinction for themselves, even while their more virtuous members acknowledged the superiority of those with earlier precedence among the Companions and recognized their rightful status.

Yet, when the overwhelming awe of Prophethood began to recede, and the memory of those extraordinary circumstances—marked by the descent of revelation and the coming of angels—faded somewhat; and when the enemy had been subdued and political authority had grown powerful, the latent impulses of the pre-Islamic ethos began to reawaken. They found leadership placed in the hands of the early warriors and the Anṣār from Quraysh and others, and their souls recoiled from this. This coincided with the era of ʿUthmān, during which they openly criticized his governors in the provinces, censuring them for even the slightest actions, accusing them of negligence in fulfilling duties, and demanding their removal and replacement. Their objections against ʿUthmān

intensified, and such discourse spread widely among their followers, who rallied around claims of injustice committed by the governors in their regions." (Ibn Khaldūn, 1981).

Thus, Ibn Khaldūn maintains that the Bedouin reverted to their inherent dispositions—tribal partisanship, pre-Islamic attitudes, clannishness, and harshness—once the affairs of the Islamic state had stabilized. This regression, in his view, corrupted their temperament and stirred within them a restless inclination toward rebellion, one that made no distinction between truth and falsehood. ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān explicitly identified these groups as one of the components fueling the sedition. During the period of his siege, he declared: "They have attacked us in the very vicinity of the Messenger of God—his sanctuary, and the land of migration. The Bedouin have rallied to them, and they are like the confederates on the Day of the Confederates." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

The governor of Kūfa, Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, also wrote to ʿUthmān, stating: "The situation of the people of Kūfa has become unsettled. Those of noble lineage, established households, early precedence, and long-standing service have been overpowered. The dominant elements in those lands are latecomers who have attached themselves to the region, and Bedouin who have recently joined, to the point that no regard is shown to a man of honor." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

Historians report that the Bedouin class produced a group of particularly problematic individuals known as al-Qurrāʾ ("the Readers"). These men exhibited an intense inclination toward religiosity combined with limited understanding of jurisprudence and religion. This imbalance generated a form of zealous piety devoid of knowledge or insight. They became deluded into believing that they were among the learned, even among those qualified to deliberate on the affairs of the Muslim community. The instigators of the sedition exploited them, manipulating their rigid sense of religious fervor and drawing them into the turmoil. Many of them ultimately gravitated toward the Khārijite movement. (ʿĀqil, 1997).

In analyzing the course of events, Ibn Khaldūn concludes that the overwhelming force of the sedition eventually influenced even some of the Companions in Medina, prompting them to begin reproaching ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. He states: "News of this—namely, the rumors spread by the instigators of sedition in the provinces—reached the Companions in Medina. They became suspicious of it and began to discuss the removal of ʿUthmān." (Ibn Khaldūn, 1981).

Indeed, they did so. Their initial reproaches concerned matters related to his preference for his relatives and his granting them positions of authority and generous stipends. ʿAlī "would speak to him, advise him, and at times address him sternly regarding Marwān and his kin." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987). Al-ʿAllāma al-Māliqī notes: "They did not imagine that the matter would escalate to his killing; they assumed it would remain a matter of reproach." (al-Māliqī, 2015).

Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān said: "O God, curse the killers of ʿUthmān, those who marched against him, and those who harbored hatred toward him. We used to reproach him and he reproached us. When did it ever happen that he reproached us and we did not reproach him? They took this as a ladder to climb toward sedition." (Ibn al-Athīr, 1995).

Ibn Kathīr likewise reports: "In Egypt there was a group who harbored hatred toward ʿUthmān and spoke of him in vile terms. They resented him for dismissing a number of eminent Companions and appointing in their place individuals whom they deemed unfit for leadership." He continues: "A faction of the sons of the Companions in Egypt arose, inciting the people to fight him and denounce him. The most prominent among them were Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr and Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa." (Ibn Kathīr, 1997).

These reports must be approached with caution, as their full reliability cannot be definitively established. Nevertheless, such turbulent circumstances often provide fertile ground for the emergence of sedition, especially when certain influential figures exploit the intellectual vulnerability of the masses to stir unrest. Among the most prominent of these figures is ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sabaʾ, whom several historians describe as a Jew from Yemen who outwardly embraced Islam during the caliphate of ʿUthmān. He is said to have promoted an extreme form of devotion to ʿAlī, propagating doctrines such as the return (*rajʿa*) and the divine designation (*waṣāya*) of ʿAlī. He exerted considerable influence in Egypt, where he corrupted the populace and incited them against ʿUthmān. (ʿAwḍa, 2006).

Ibn Qutayba states: "The Sabaʾiyya among the Rāfiḍa are attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sabaʾ. He was the first among the Rāfiḍa to fall into disbelief, and he claimed: 'ʿAlī is the Lord of the worlds.'" (Ibn Qutayba, 1992).

Many scholars consider Ibn Sabaʾ to be one of the principal catalysts of the sedition. (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005). He was among the earliest to criticize the relatives of

ʿUthmān from the Umayyad clan. He incited the people of Egypt against their governor, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, alleging that he was among the wealthiest and most privileged individuals. This agitation ultimately contributed to ʿUthmān's decision to dismiss him. (Ibn Abī al-ʿIzz, 2004).

Shiʿī doctrine shares certain principles with the ideas attributed to Ibn Sabaʾ—at least regarding the veneration of ʿAlī, the concept of divine designation (*waṣāya*), and the disparagement of the first two caliphs. Some Shiʿī scholars have acknowledged the historical existence of Ibn Sabaʾ and the innovations attributed to him, though they deny that the origins of Shiʿism are rooted in Jewish influence. (al-Ṭūsī, 2005). As Muḥammad Abū Zahra states: "In the midst of these upheavals, the Shiʿī doctrine emerged, although the Shiʿa—and others with them—claim that it extends back to the time of the Prophet's death." (Abū Zahra, 1971).

The belief of Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamāʿa regarding ʿUthmān and the Companions has remained firm and unchanged, whereas such criticisms continued to appear in the writings of the Rāfiḍa. Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, for instance, criticized ʿUthmān for appointing his relatives to positions of authority and distributing public funds to them. He cited his appointment of al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba, Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Sarḥ, Muʿāwiya, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir, along with accusations of immorality and betrayal. (al-Ḥillī, n.d.).

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, in his commentary on *Nahj al-Balāgha*, writes concerning ʿUthmān: "He placed the Banū Umayya upon the necks of the people, granting them governorships and large estates. Ifrīqiya was conquered during his rule, and he took all of its *khums* (fifth) and gifted it to Marwān. He gave ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Sarḥ all that God granted him from the conquest of Ifrīqiya in the Maghrib. He gave Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb two hundred thousand from the public treasury. Abū Mūsā brought him vast sums from Iraq, and he distributed all of it among the Banū Umayya." (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1996).

Qummī al-Shīrāzī continues: "ʿUthmān introduced several innovations, among them his appointment of individuals to govern the Muslims who were neither trustworthy nor knowledgeable, favoring kinship ties over the sanctity of religion. He appointed al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba, from whom acts of drunkenness and corruption became manifest, and he appointed Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ over Kūfa… They said: ʿUthmān sought to honor his

brother at the expense of the humiliation of the community of Muḥammad and his family." (Qummī, 1998).

What becomes evident from their writings on the era of ʿUthmān is that their strongest and most persistent criticism concerns his appointment of relatives and his generous financial allocations to them. They consistently place this issue at the forefront of their discussions about him. They were unable to depart from this framework even in works spuriously attributed to Sunni scholars. In the book *al-Imāma wa-l-Siyāsa*, falsely ascribed to Ibn Qutayba (may God have mercy on him), an entire chapter is devoted to what people allegedly condemned in ʿUthmān. The author claims that the noble Companions wrote to him listing matters in which he supposedly contravened the Prophet's practice, and the first of these was their objection to his preference for his relatives from Banū Umayya and his appointment of them despite their alleged lack of competence or experience. (al-Dīnawarī, 1990).

The book is replete with disparagement of the Companions, and numerous scholarly studies have concluded that it was authored by a Rāfiḍī writer who falsely attributed it to Ibn Qutayba. (Usaylān, 1984; al-ʿAlānī, 1991).

The rebels against ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān objected to several matters, including his compilation of the Qurʾān and the burning of other codices, the addition of a second call to prayer on Friday, and his performing the prayers in full at Minā. However, the issue that most strongly fueled the sedition was the claim that he favored his relatives from the Umayyad clan. This accusation was exploited by agitators seeking political change. Some scholars, such as Ibn Ḥajar, held that his appointment of relatives was the direct cause of his assassination, noting that the governors of the major provinces were among his kin—such as Muʿāwiya in al-Shām and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd in Egypt. (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 1991). These constitute the foundations of the suspicion surrounding the matter of ʿUthmān's relatives. It is therefore necessary to outline the nature of his relationship with them in what follows. In particular, the discussion must address:

3 THE NATURE OF ʿUTHMĀN IBN ʿAFFĀN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS RELATIVES AND HIS POLICY TOWARD GOVERNORS

ʿUthmān was widely known in his community for his affection toward his relatives and his strong commitment to maintaining family ties. ʿAlī testified to this, saying: "He was the most dutiful among us in maintaining kinship bonds and the most God-fearing." (Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 2002). His deep attachment to his kin was even mentioned in the traditions of the People of the Book. It is reported with a sound chain of transmission that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb "summoned the bishop and asked him: 'Do you find us mentioned in your scriptures?' He replied: 'We find your descriptions and deeds, but not your names.' ʿUmar asked: 'And how do you find me described?' He said: 'A horn of iron.' ʿUmar asked: 'What is a horn of iron?' He replied: 'A stern ruler.' ʿUmar said: 'God is Most Great.' He then asked: 'And the one after me?' The bishop replied: 'A righteous man who favors his relatives.' ʿUmar said: 'May God have mercy on Ibn ʿAffān.'" (Ibn ʿAsākir, 1995).

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān defended himself by clarifying that his care and support for his relatives came from his personal wealth prior to the caliphate, and that he never used the Muslims' treasury for such purposes. He stated: "I love my family and give to them from my own wealth. I do not deem lawful the wealth of the Muslims. I used to give to them during the time of the Messenger of God, and during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

ʿUthmān regarded his generosity toward his relatives as a legitimate religious duty, following the example of the Prophet Muḥammad. While Abū Bakr and ʿUmar refrained from giving to their kin out of a sense of pious restraint, ʿUthmān believed that such giving was itself an act of piety. He said: "The Messenger of God used to give to his relatives, and I am a man among a clan burdened by need and limited means. Thus, I extended my hand to some of the wealth, believing it to be my right. If you see in this an error, then correct it." (Ibn al-Athīr, 1995). In doing so, the Caliph effectively placed both himself and his wealth under the collective authority of the Muslim community.

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān relied on his relatives and tribal kin from the Umayyad clan in matters of governance and military expansion. However, this reliance was not a form of blind favoritism stemming from weakness; rather, it was an investment in the loyalty

they naturally held toward him, combined with the competence found among many of them. The Prophet was asked whether a man's love for his own people constituted tribalism. He replied: "No. Tribalism is that one supports his people in wrongdoing." (Ibn Abī Shayba, 1989).

Al-Ṭabarī reports that ʿUthmān had promised his governor, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī al-Sarḥ, one fifth of the spoils from the conquest of Ifrīqiya. When Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ sought to claim what had been promised, the conquerors objected and sent a message to ʿUthmān. He replied: "If you approve, then it is valid; but if you disapprove, then it is revoked." They rejected it. ʿUthmān then wrote to Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ instructing him to return the *nafl* (extra share) and to resolve the matter, and ordered him to appoint a deputy acceptable to the people. Ibn Abī al-Sarḥ complied and returned to Egypt. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

The tribe to which Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān belonged—the Umayyads—held a prominent share in matters of governance and administration. This prominence was not exclusive to the caliphate of ʿUthmān; rather, the first to entrust them with positions of authority was the Prophet himself. (Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, 1987). This did not arise arbitrarily: the Umayyads were numerous, and they possessed long-standing experience in political leadership, a quality found among both their elders and their youth.

Ibn Taymiyya states: "The Prophet employed members of Banū Umayya during his lifetime, and they were also appointed by those who succeeded him—Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and ʿUmar (may God be pleased with them)—neither of whom could be accused of favoritism toward them. We do not know of any Quraysh tribe that had more officials appointed by the Messenger of God than Banū ʿAbd Shams, for they were numerous and possessed honor and leadership." (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005).

From a statistical perspective, when examining the Umayyads upon whom the Prophet Muḥammad relied, it becomes evident that he appointed several prominent figures from among them. These included: ʿAtāb ibn Asīd as governor of Mecca at the age of twenty-five; Abū Sufyān over Najrān; ʿUthmān ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ over al-Ṭāʾif; Khālid ibn Saʿīd over the region between Najrān and Zabīd; ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd over the villages of Khaybar and Tabūk; and Abān ibn Saʿīd over Bahrain. He also appointed Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān and Abān ibn Saʿīd as scribes of revelation. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

The number of Umayyad governors relative to the total number of provinces during his lifetime indicates that the Prophet placed exceptional trust in them and relied

upon their service. Historical records do not report that any of these appointees betrayed their responsibilities. For this reason, al-Qāḍī Ibn al-ʿArabī expressed astonishment at those who objected to the Umayyads' role in governance (Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, 1987), particularly since the Prophet passed away while they were still in charge of their respective posts and duties. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987). Their prominence continued under Abū Bakr, who, at the outset of the Syrian conquests, appointed Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān after dismissing Khālid ibn Saʿīd—both of whom were Umayyads. During the caliphate of ʿUmar, the entire governorship of Syria was entrusted to Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān following the death of his brother Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

If the Umayyads were more numerous and more experienced in political affairs, then their predominance in administrative appointments was a natural outcome, indeed one consistent with the principle of majority representation. The historian al-Maqrīzī observed that the Prophet's frequent appointment of Umayyads to positions of responsibility indicated that political authority would eventually incline toward them. (al-Maqrīzī, 1988).

This becomes even clearer in the Prophet's preference for Umayyads in administrative matters. Ibn Saʿd, in his *Ṭabaqāt*, records that the Prophet appointed al-ʿAlāʾ ibn al-Ḥaḍramī over Bahrain—al-ʿAlāʾ being an ally of the Umayyads though not himself an Umayyad. Later, when the delegation of ʿAbd al-Qays complained to the Prophet about al-ʿAlāʾ, he removed him from Bahrain and appointed Abān ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, an Umayyad, in his place. (Ibn Saʿd, 1968). Collectively, these reports demonstrate that the precedent for entrusting the Umayyads with governance was established by the Prophet himself, and subsequently continued under the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (may God be pleased with them).

Ibn Taymiyya states: "This transmission regarding the Prophet's employment of these individuals is firmly established and well known, indeed *mutawātir* among scholars, and *mutawātir* among the experts of ḥadīth. Some of it is widely recognized among scholars, and none of them deny it. Thus, the argument for the permissibility of appointing members of Banū Umayya rests upon the sound textual evidence from the Prophet." (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005).

During the caliphate of ʿUthmān, the expansion of the Islamic state necessitated an increase in the number of provincial governorships, which reached approximately forty

plus governors across the territories. It might be expected that the majority of these governors would be drawn from ʿUthmān's Umayyad kin, given his tribal affiliation. However, the historical record indicates otherwise: only seven of his governors were relatives. These included: Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān in Syria, who had already been appointed during the caliphate of ʿUmar; ʿAlī ibn Rabīʿa al-ʿAbshamī in Mecca; Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam in al-Yamāma and as his personal advisor; al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba in Kūfa before his dismissal; Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, who succeeded al-Walīd in Kūfa before also being dismissed; ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir in Baṣra; and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ in Egypt following the dismissal of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ. (Ibn Ḥayyāṭ, 1977).

The limited representation of the Umayyads within the state apparatus undermines the theory that Caliph ʿUthmān's relatives dominated the affairs of governance. Their number was comparable to that of the Umayyad officials appointed during the Prophet's lifetime. Despite their relatively small presence, ʿUthmān adhered to the principle of dismissing governors at the slightest complaint, as a means of preventing discord and calming public sentiment. This principle was applied to his relatives before others.

ʿUthmān dismissed ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ—his brother-in-law—from the governorship of Egypt, despite his distinguished role in its conquest, in order to forestall unrest. Ibn ʿAsākir records that ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sabaʾ incited the Egyptians against ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, and they obeyed him, subsequently presenting their grievances to ʿUthmān. Although ʿUthmān attempted to appease them, they persisted in demanding his removal and the appointment of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ. ʿUthmān responded: "We shall remove him from you, since you claim that he has caused corruption." (Ibn ʿAsākir, 1995).

ʿUthmān's rationale for this dismissal was clear, and his method of addressing public grievances was explicit. He said to ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ: "There is no benefit for you in remaining among those who dislike you." (Ibn Kathīr, 1997). This demonstrates that ʿUthmān sought harmony between governors and the people under their authority, believing that governors could not remain in office if the populace rejected them. The reason he did not regard such complaints as mere manipulation lies in the fact that Muslims were only beginning to encounter political maneuvering in regions beyond the Arabian Peninsula. In our view, the subtleties of Roman and Persian political intrigues

were not fully understood, nor their schemes effectively countered, until the era of Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān.

The newly incorporated subjects, who quickly realized Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān's responsiveness to complaints and his supportive stance toward public interests, repeatedly exploited this policy. In Kūfa, ʿUthmān appointed al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba, who was among the most beloved to its people and the most gentle in his dealings with them. He maintained open access to his residence without barriers and governed for five years. However, a murder incident during his tenure led him to enforce legal punishments against several perpetrators. Those punished resented him, fabricated an accusation of wine drinking, and presented their case to the Caliph. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987). ʿUthmān applied his principle of responding to public grievances: he dismissed al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba and, moreover, enforced the prescribed punishment for drinking, given the presence of witnesses. He said to him: "We establish the legal penalties, and the false witness shall bear the fire of Hell. Be patient, my brother!" He then ordered Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ to administer the flogging. (Ibn ʿAsākir, 1995). This action reflects ʿUthmān's impartiality in political application, regardless of kinship ties. He sent a message to the people of Kūfa: "From ʿAbd Allāh ʿUthmān, Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Kūfa: Peace be upon you. As for what follows, I appointed al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba over you, and he maintained your protection and upheld the right path. He was among the righteous of his family. I instructed him concerning you, but I did not instruct you concerning him. When he offered you his goodness and withheld his harm, you impugned his private conduct, though God knows you and him best. I have now appointed Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ as your governor." (Ibn Shabba, 1979).

The people of Kūfa eventually turned against their governor, Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, despite his good conduct, and demanded the appointment of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī. Saʿīd reported this to Caliph ʿUthmān, who responded by dismissing him and appointing Abū Mūsā in his place. ʿUthmān wrote to them: "I have appointed over you the one you chose, and I have relieved you of Saʿīd… Do not refrain from requesting anything you desire, so long as it does not involve disobedience to God, and do not hesitate to seek relief from anything you dislike, so long as it does not involve disobedience to God." (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

These incidents of dismissal demonstrate that ʿUthmān relied on his relatives only insofar as obedience in times of crisis required it. His removal of relatives did not provoke resentment among them, contrary to the claims of the Rāfiḍa that his kin dominated governance. In reality, ʿUthmān exercised authority over his governors and dismissed them in response to public grievances without objection from them.

ʿUthmān went even further in the matter of appointing relatives, refusing to grant his stepson, Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa, any position of authority, citing his lack of qualification. He said to him: "My son, if you were qualified, I would appoint you, but you are not." If kinship had carried weight in ʿUthmān's criteria, his stepson would have been the most deserving of appointment. This illustrates that kinship alone did not determine his administrative decisions. (al-Ṭabarī, 1987).

4 THE UMAYYADS AND THE RELATİVES OF ʿUTHMĀN İBN ʿAFFĀN BETWEEN THE CRİTİCİSM OF ORİENTALİSTS AND MODERN ARAB WRİTERS

During the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, a hostile current emerged against him and his relatives among the governors, and its influence persisted until the consolidation of Umayyad rule. Throughout the Umayyad period, numerous events occurred, yet they were often recorded by their adversaries. Although historical writing began during their reign, it remained limited in detail and did not become comprehensive until the second Islamic century, following the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the ʿAbbāsids, as noted by Fuat Sezgin. (Sezgin, 1991).

It was the misfortune of Umayyad history that its systematic documentation began under the ʿAbbāsids, resulting in most narratives being shaped by ʿAbbāsid perspectives, which led to widespread criticism of the Umayyads in historical works. Among the most prominent transmitters of that era was Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā (d. 170 AH), who compiled accounts of the turmoil during ʿUthmān's reign. His reports were later adopted by historians such as al-Ṭabarī, though Abū Mikhnaf himself was closely associated with the ʿAbbāsid court. (al-Yaʿqūbī, 1995). His writings marked the beginning of a more lenient use of historical chains of transmission, and his narratives reflected an Iraqi perspective sympathetic to ʿAbbāsid and Ṭālibid interests against the Umayyads. (al-Dūrī,

2001). While Sunni scholars unanimously regarded him as a partisan Shīʿī of unreliable standing (al-Dhahabī, 1995), Shīʿī circles considered him one of their foremost historians. (Qummī, 2008).

The influence of Abū Mikhnaf's accounts extended into Orientalist scholarship. Julius Wellhausen, for instance, treated his reports as authentic and free of fabrication, relying heavily upon them in his study of religious-political opposition in early Islam. (Wellhausen, 1902).

On the literary level, al-Jāḥiẓ employed part of his rhetorical talent to disparage the Umayyads. In his epistle entitled *al-Nābita*, he portrayed the Umayyads as a weakness afflicting the fabric of Islam and as a collection of fragile religious opinions. (al-Jāḥiẓ, 1964). He attacked the character of Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān, describing him as a despot who usurped the imamate by force and transformed it into a quasi-monarchical institution. Al-Jāḥiẓ went so far as to declare him an unbeliever, and even anathematized those who refrained from declaring him so. He argued that Muʿāwiya's companionship with the Prophet was not a merit sufficient to prevent his excommunication. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, the sins and errors of the Muslim community did not reach the level of outright disbelief until the era of the Umayyads and the Marwānids, which he characterized as an age of unbelief. (al-Jāḥiẓ, 1964).

This perspective reflects the broader stance of the Muʿtazila toward the Umayyads, which was, in general, one of hostility and rejection. (Amīn, 1936).

Orientalist scholarship has generally adopted a perspective on ʿUthmān's relatives and the Umayyads that closely parallels the Iraqi (Shīʿī) narrative, portraying them as usurpers of authority and depicting ʿUthmān himself as too weak to control the mechanisms of governance, leaving the state effectively in the hands of his kin.

Louis Sédillot argued that ʿUthmān's selection as caliph was orchestrated by the Umayyads, who had opposed the Prophet's mission for twenty years and embraced Islam only out of expediency. He maintained that ʿUthmān lacked the ability to manage power, and that the accumulation of his errors culminated in the catastrophe of his assassination. According to Sédillot, people suffered under his favoritism toward relatives and his inclination toward individuals lacking merit. (Amélie Sédillot, 1854).

Van Vloten contended that the Umayyads were intent on appointing officials who were immersed in luxury and accustomed to indulgence, without experiencing hardship.

Thus, he argued, it is unsurprising that the prevailing spirit among the Umayyads was irreligious. (Van Vloten, 1896). He further claimed that the Umayyads believed themselves to be the only true Muslims who had not deviated from the straight path, treating their opponents as unbelievers and elevating Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān to the status of "God's Caliph." (Van Vloten, 1894).

Julius Wellhausen advanced the view that ʿUthmān assumed leadership in a state of weakness—a condition advantageous to his family, since he willingly or unwillingly submitted to their influence. Wellhausen asserted that ʿUthmān's leadership was essentially the leadership of his household, pointing to his reliance on his cousin Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam as his secretary, who then filled administrative posts with his own relatives. According to Wellhausen, the Companions perceived their status as threatened by the rising prominence of the Umayyads, which he identified as the root cause of their hostility toward them. (Wellhausen, 1902).

Reynold Nicholson continues in the same Orientalist vein, arguing that the Umayyads had led the opposition against the Prophet. As for ʿUthmān, Nicholson portrays him as a pious elder of good intentions, yet a pliant instrument in the hands of his ambitious relatives, who quickly ascended to lucrative positions and lived off the rich resources of the lands. Their irreligious conduct, he suggests, often raised the question of whether these late converts to Islam remained pagans at heart. (Nicholson, 1970).

Carl Brockelmann reiterates Wellhausen's thesis, maintaining that ʿUthmān surrendered completely to his clan. In his view, the Umayyads reached the pinnacle of power during ʿUthmān's caliphate, which he characterizes as the era of his family and tribe. Brockelmann asserts that ʿUthmān delegated the administration of affairs in Medina to his kinsman Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, while appointing other relatives as governors over the principal provinces. This, he argues, caused the Companions to feel that their status was in jeopardy, prompting them to oppose him—especially since ʿĀʾisha, the Prophet's widow, sided with his adversaries. (Brockelmann, 1947).

Dwight Donaldson argues that the principal cause of discontent with Caliph ʿUthmān was his allowance of his relatives, in particular, to exploit other peoples freely. He is said to have drawn his kinsman Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam close to him, entrusting him with the reins of authority, while outwardly adopting a policy of favoring the Arabs. In general, however, the people did not hold him in esteem. (Donaldson, 1946).

The events of the civil strife during the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān were prominently reflected in the writings of Arab historians and intellectuals, and it is evident that they were influenced by the tendencies of Orientalists and proponents of the Shīʿī narrative.

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, for instance, maintained that the people resented ʿUthmān's policy of appointment and dismissal. He dismissed some of the Prophet's Companions and appointed figures such as al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba ibn Abī Muʿīṭ, thereby placing the Banū Umayya upon the shoulders of the people. When reproached for his governors, he did not remove them unless compelled to do so. Moreover, he singled out Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, granting him wealth and favor, and adopting him as his counselor and minister. Consequently, ʿUthmān's policy of appointment and dismissal was not suited to the covenant he had pledged, and those who rose against him were, without doubt, not mistaken. (Ḥusayn, 1947).

Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī contends that ʿUthmān was not, like Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, above external influences; rather, his family and clan prevailed upon him and appropriated the governorships for themselves. Although his policies did not justify his killing, they did justify his deposition. He squandered the prestige of the caliphate, submitted to the youths of the Banū Umayya such as Muʿāwiya and Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, relied on young men of little standing among the believers, and deprived the Companions of leadership. (Wajdī, 1971).

The political writer Rafīq al-ʿAẓm maintains that ʿUthmān's insistence on favoring the Banū Umayya and granting his relatives the governorships of the provinces was the principal cause of his assassination. Although he later recanted and repented of many of the actions for which he was reproached, his exclusive reliance on the Banū Umayya, to the exclusion of the early believers, and his preference for them in authority, unsettled the Emigrants and prompted the wise among the Muslims to warn of its consequences, fearing that the state might assume an Umayyad character. Even when ʿUthmān became certain of the Muslims' dissatisfaction with his submission to his clan and kinsmen, he remained determined not to abandon them, nor to heed the community's petitions regarding them. This stance may be explained by one of two possibilities: either his relatives found him pliant and weak, and thus overcame him, or he perceived, from the time when ʿUmar entrusted the matter of succession to the council of six, the

emergence of factions that might turn against him. He therefore feared that, if he acted independently and severed ties with his family and clan, the provincial governors might rise against him, leaving him without protection. For this reason, he insisted on clinging to his kin and turned his back on their critics. (al-ʿAẓm, 1973).

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal dismisses the notion that ʿUthmān's strong affection for his relatives stemmed from the weakness of old age and a need to rely on them. Rather, he argues that such affection was intrinsic to his character. Yet, the excess of this affection had the greatest impact on his life and on the events following his death. (Haykal, 1986).

Muḥammad Riḍā emphasizes the role of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam in the events surrounding ʿUthmān. He notes that ʿUthmān publicly declared his repentance at the request of ʿAlī, and had he been left without interference from his relatives, public discontent would not have been renewed. However, Marwān and his kin undermined this repentance, which required reconsideration of the people's grievances and the appointment of more suitable governors. This angered Marwān, who declared: "You want to strip our dominion from our hands." (Riḍā, 1982).

ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād interprets ʿUthmān's attachment to his relatives as rooted in hereditary and social factors. He inherited from the Banū Umayya their familial cohesion and practical disposition, which led him to exaggerate in preferring them. Nevertheless, al-ʿAqqād stresses that ʿUthmān possessed a purer soul and a more sincere faith than to be consumed by worldly inclinations. He criticizes the "leniency of historians" in placing blame upon ʿUthmān and his relatives, particularly Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, arguing that assigning full responsibility to Marwān is historically simplistic. Even had his counsel been disregarded, al-ʿAqqād contends, the course of events would not have changed. (al-ʿAqqād, 2005).

The philosopher ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār maintains that the caliphate was taken from ʿAlī twice, and on the third occasion it was entrusted to an aged and faltering elder who neither governed effectively nor upheld justice, and who handed authority over to the remnants of Quraysh's misguided faction. When the caliphate eventually passed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, matters became complicated and confused. Among those opposing him were the supporters of ʿUthmān and the Banū Umayya, who harbored deep hostility toward Islam and whose hearts were filled with resentment against the Prophet and his Companions. They exploited the blood of ʿUthmān merely to consolidate their own

power, though they had previously been nothing more than a group of freed captives and those whose hearts had been won over. (al-Nashshār, 1977).

Ibrāhīm Bayḍūn, on the other hand, attributes ʿUthmān's reliance on his relatives to a weak and hesitant personality, shaped by his sense that his selection as caliph was driven by hidden forces. Lacking trust in others, ʿUthmān turned to the "family apparatus," which enabled Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam to manage the caliphate and allowed Muʿāwiya to consolidate his rule in Syria. Bayḍūn suggests the possibility of coordination between Marwān and Muʿāwiya, noting that Muʿāwiya delayed in supporting ʿUthmān, while Marwān insisted on hardening ʿUthmān's stance against the demands of the rebels. Consequently, Bayḍūn argues that attributing responsibility for his assassination solely to the rebels of Medina and the Emigrants does not accurately reflect the reality. (Bayḍūn, 1983).

Muḥammad ʿAmārah considers ʿUthmān's compliance with the counsel of his Umayyad governors, together with their refusal to implement reforms during his caliphate, to be the principal cause of mounting discontent. In his view, the demands escalated from calls to replace governors to calls for change at the very summit of authority. (ʿAmārah, 2009).

The Tunisian historian Hishām Jaʿīt emphasizes the role of financial prosperity during ʿUthmān's reign, as well as the freedom of trade and enrichment that he extended to his relatives, in fueling the civil strife. ʿUthmān conceived of governance as generosity, which led to accusations that he distributed wealth to his kin through illegitimate means— for example, granting Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam one-fifth of the spoils from the conquest of North Africa, whereby Marwān became wealthy after poverty. Jaʿīt further highlights ʿUthmān's policy of appointing his relatives to major governorships while sidelining senior Companions. He argues that ʿUthmān's favoritism toward his family and his concessions to the Umayyads produced a contradictory structure within Islam, amounting to a form of dynastic rule. Jaʿīt concludes that Islam itself legislated against ʿUthmān, and that his assassination represented the triumph of Islam—deeply rooted in the Arab conscience—over the remnants of paganism embodied in the Umayyads. (Jaʿīt, 2000).

5 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the criticisms directed at Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, particularly those concerning his appointment of relatives to administrative positions, were considerably amplified and were largely shaped by political and sectarian considerations. The analysis indicates that ʿUthmān's decisions to appoint members of his kin fell within the legitimate scope of ijtihād available to a ruler. His administrative conduct did not substantially differ from that of the caliphs who preceded him. The appointment of individuals from the Umayyad clan was not without precedent, since comparable appointments had taken place during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad. These appointments were based on considerations of competence and loyalty, especially in the conditions that emerged in the aftermath of the Ridda Wars.

With regard to the claims that he provided financial support to his relatives, the evidence suggests that these expenditures were drawn from his personal wealth and did not involve the state treasury. The perception that ʿUthmān's rule was marked by weakness cannot be explained by advanced age. It appears instead to have been related to his inclination toward conciliation and to his generosity in responding to the demands of different groups. These qualities made it more difficult to contain the unrest that developed in a period characterized by rapid conquest and increasing social diversity within the expanding Islamic polity.

It also appears that Shīʿī narratives influenced contemporary historians, contributing to the distortion of ʿUthmān's image in certain strands of the literature. Moreover, the central argument advanced in this study, namely that the issue of appointing relatives was magnified and instrumentalized for political purposes, retains its relevance as a matter of historical and political debate. The continued invocation of th is issue in contemporary political discourse further supports the view that such criticisms were not entirely objective, but were instead largely shaped by underlying political agendas.

In conclusion, this study suggests the need for a careful and balanced reassessment of the history of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, undertaken with due attention to the historical context in which he governed a vast and rapidly expanding Islamic polity. Such a

reassessment requires close consideration of the administrative, social, and political challenges that characterized this formative period.

Within this perspective, many of the accusations directed against ʿUthmān appear to have emerged in contexts shaped primarily by political and sectarian rivalries. A significant portion of these claims rests on reports whose evidentiary basis is limited, whose transmission is uncertain or weak, and whose content does not always reflect the broader historical conditions of the time. The persistence of these narratives in later historiography and in contemporary discourse suggests that they have often remained useful for political and sectarian argumentation, and that, in many cases, they belong as much to the sphere of political polemic as to that of critical historical analysis.

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Authors' Contribution

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