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FROM "THE GLORY OF THE WORLD" TO "MUHAMMAD": WRITING ISLAMIC  
HISTORY IN THE LATE OTTOMAN AND EARLY REPUBLICAN ERAS

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by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

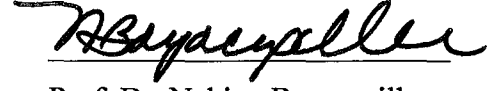
Master of Arts

Sabancı University

Spring 2004

14.07.2004

Approval of the Institute of Social Sciences



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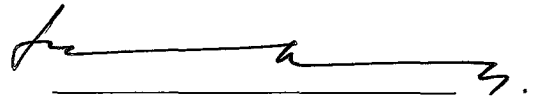
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## Abstract

History books from pre-Kemalist and Kemalist periods were examined to compare their narration of Islamic History, and the following narrations were comparatively studied: pre-Islamic Arabic society, revelation, formation of the early Islamic society and caliphate.

Regarding the Arabs prior to Islam, all the books except one convey similar ideas. While the majority's view emphasizes Arabs' material and non-material backwardness, only one source applauds pre-Islamic Arabs and their life-style.

Pre-Kemalist and Kemalist sources greatly differ in narrating the revelation. Stick to classical Muslim tradition, pre-Republican books interpret the advent of Islam as God's intervention, while Kemalist sources reject its supernatural character. Kemalist view equating prophethood with moral guidance and religion with moral teachings seem to be influenced by western scholarship.

Pre-Kemalist and Kemalist sources converge to each other in narrating the formation of the early Islamic society where both stress the role of the Prophet. The textbooks written in the late 1920s and early 1930s assess the Prophet as a social and military leader and a strategist which inevitably reminds the deeds of Mustafa Kemal in the formative era of the Republic. Pre-Kemalist books too emphasize in a similar fashion the leadership qualities of the Prophet.

While both sources remain loyal to classical Sunni tradition in narrating the caliphate, to legitimize the abolition of the caliphate, the Republican books claim that despite its initial necessity and success, caliphate failed to accord with the requirements of the modern world and proved to be a burden on the society. In the pre-Kemalist books, on the other hand, there is no such a legitimization effort for the caliphate was then a part of the religious and political life.

When the big picture is reviewed, positivism, one of the constituents of the Kemalist ideology, appears to be the actual reason for the huge chasm between the sources regarding the narration of the revelation. However, since positivism necessitates a rationalized religion for progress and unity of people, pre-Kemalist and Kemalist sources similarly account

particularly the formation of the early Muslim society and caliphate. Nationalism, another basis of Kemalism, determines Republican approach to pre-Islamic Arabs.



## ÖZET

İslam tarihi anlatımlarını karşılaştırabilmek amacıyla, Cumhuriyet öncesi ve Cumhuriyet döneminde yazılmış tarih kitapları incelendi. Araştırma dahilinde, tarih kitaplarında İslam öncesi Arap toplumu, vahy, erken dönem İslam toplumunun oluşumu ve halifelik konularının işlenişi karşılaştırıldı.

İslam öncesi Arap toplumu konusunda biri hariç tüm kitaplar benzer fikirleri ifade etmektedirler. Çoğunluğun görüşü diyebileceğimiz bu düşünce İslam öncesi Arap toplumunun madden ve manen geri olduğunu vurgularken, sadece bir kaynak Arap toplumu hakkında ovguyle bahsetmektedir.

Vahy konusunda Cumhuriyet öncesi kaynaklarla Cumhuriyet dönemi kaynakları büyük bir farklılık arz ettikleri dikkati çekmektedir. Klasik Sünni geleneğine sıkı sıkıya bağlı kalan Cumhuriyet öncesi tarih kitapları, İslamiyet'in ortaya çıkışına ilahi bir müdahale ile açıklık getirirken, Cumhuriyet dönemi ders kitapları bu vahy fikrine ve fikrin tabiat-üstü doğasına karşı çıkmaktadırlar. Peygamberlik kavramını ahlak öğreticiliğiyle, dini de ahlaki öğretilerle eş tutan bu düşünce, büyük ölçüde batılı tarihçilikten etkilenmiş görünmektedir.

Erken İslam toplumunun oluşumunda, hem Cumhuriyet öncesi hem de Cumhuriyet dönemi kaynakları Peygamber'in rolü konusunda birleşmektedirler. Geç 1920'ler ve erken 1930'larda yazılmış olan ders kitapları, Peygamber'i bir toplum lideri, askeri önder ve stratejist olarak değerlendirmekte, akıllara Mustafa Kemal'in Cumhuriyet'in kuruluş devrindeki faaliyet ve icraatlerini getiren bir tablo çizilmektedir. Cumhuriyet öncesi kaynaklar da benzer bir şekilde Peygamber'in liderlik vasıflarını vurgulamaktadırlar.

Halifelik konusunda ise her iki grup kaynak da klasik Sünni geleneğine sadık kalmakla beraber, Cumhuriyetçi ders kitapları halifeliğin kaldırılmasını meşrulaştırabilmek için hilafetin geçmişte başarılı olan fakat modern dünyanın gereklerini karşılamaktan uzak kalan ve toplumun sırtında bir yüke dönüşen bir kurum olduğu fikrini işlemektedirler. Cumhuriyet öncesi kaynaklarda ise halifelik o zamanki günlük siyasi ve dini hayatın bir parçası olduğu için bu kurumu meşrulaştırmaya çalışmamaktadır.

Ortaya çıkan tablo incelendiğinde, vahiy konusundaki temel ayrılığın sebebi olarak Kemalist ideolojinin üç sacayağından birini oluşturan pozitivist düşünce göze çarpmaktadır. Buna karşılık, aynı pozitivism aklileştirilmiş bir dini ilerleme ve toplum düzeni için gerekli gördüğünden, özellikle erken İslam toplumunun oluşumu ve halifelik konularında Cumhuriyet öncesi kaynaklarla Cumhuriyet kaynakları benzerliklere sahiptir. Kemalizm'in bir başka dayanağı olan milliyetçilik ise Kemalist kitapların İslam öncesi Araplara olan yaklaşımında belirleyici olmuştur.



## Acknowledgements

Had the staff of the library of Talim Terbiye Kurulu whose name I fail to remember not been, it would be impossible to complete this thesis. I was also fortunate enough to receive comments from my dear friend Hüsni Ada. It gives me pleasure to mention Nancy Karabeyođlu's invaluable assistance by giving many hours to reviewing and correcting the text. I am also indebted to Professor Hülya Canbakal for she provided me with her counselling throughout the writing of the thesis. My special thanks go to Professor Y.Hakan Erdem without whose guidance this thesis would not come into existence. Last but not the least, I am deeply grateful to my parents who never quit supporting me with their dearest love.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abstract

CHAPTER I	Introduction	1
	Primary Sources	2
	Methodology	5
CHAPTER II	Arabs Before Islam	7
	First Approach	8
	Second Approach	9
CHAPTER III	Revelation	19
	Pre-Republican Sources	20
	Republican Sources	26
CHAPTER IV	Formation of Muslim Society in Early Islamic History	38
	Brotherhood	39
	Constitution of Medina	44
	Battles	45
	Booty	53
CHAPTER V	Caliphate	57
	Pre-Republican Sources	62
	Republican sources	70
CHAPTER VI	Interpretation	81
	Nationalism	82
	Positivism	85
	Evolutionism or Social Darwinism	87
	The Big Picture	88
CHAPTER VII	Conclusion	94
APPENDIX I	List of Books Written in the 1910s and 1920s on Islamic History	102
APPENDIX II	Full Version of the Translation of <i>Tarih II</i>	104
APPENDIX III	Full Version of the Translation of <i>Tārīh-i Īslām</i>	110
PRIMARY SOURCES		112
SECONDARY SOURCES		113

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In the period stretching from the First Constitution to the First World War, Ottoman society witnessed an expansion in the writing and the translation of official and unofficial history books. Most of which nurtured by a centuries old Sunni tradition, some of these books were written in rejection of the anti-Islamic, anti-Ottoman, and anti-Turkish ideas disseminating among the 19<sup>th</sup> century European intellectuals. This, doubtless, indicated that Ottoman intelligentsia was following and sometimes feeling the need to intellectually oppose the ideas born in the West and diffusing into the Ottoman territories. In parallel to these developments, some history books written in the same period covered not only Islamic history, but also world history. The works of such western scholars as Seignobos were translated into Turkish, and these translations contributed to the intellectual world of Ottoman elite.

Heir to such an intellectual heritage, the early Republican Era, however, was very different from the previous period. History textbooks of the formative aeon, i.e., early 1920s, had been written prior to the Republic. However, these existing textbooks became a major source of contradiction with the philosophy of the new regime as a result of the reforms starting with the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate and accelerating in the second half of the 1920s. Inheritor of an Islamic past, these books were soon temporarily replaced by the books written by individuals in accordance with the Republican spirit. In the early 1930s, on the other hand, the four-volume *Tarih* written by a special commission and monopolizing the teaching of history throughout the decade came into existence in parallel to and as a consequence of the formation of the Turkish History Thesis. Unsystematically found in its rudimentary form in the previous Republican books, the Thesis discernibly and highly systematically became the frame of the *Tarih* series.

Unofficial and popular books written or translated during the Republican Era can also be added to history books basically divided as pre-Republican and Republican books. The intellectuals who wrote these books not only preserved their ties with Islamic culture, but also sympathized with some western thoughts observed among the Ottoman elites since Tanzimat Era and fully applied in the Republican Turkey. Approving some western ideas, these intelligentsia, nevertheless, partly bear a resemblance to the école of Mehmed Akif which

appreciated the scientific and technological development of the West but rejected the adoption of western notions.

Intellectual life in the Republican Era, particularly the early period until the end of the 1920s, was the arena where these currents conflicted, but this situation ended once the secular and nationalist Kemalist ideology promulgated its triumph in the beginning of the next decade. The first Congress of History in 1932 not only resolutely determined the route of Kemalist education, but also granted the Kemalist elite the opportunity to entirely realize the philosophy of “create your own history.” Nationalist understanding of history embraced in pursuant to this goal expunged the dominant *ümmet* oriented notion of the Ottoman elite. The Republican historian which supplanted his Ottoman colleague who saw his past no more than a chunk within the Islamic history and had an Islam-centric understanding and teaching of history now examined the history of Islam in a Turco-centric approach merely as a part of world history.

This thesis aims to analyze the teaching of Islamic history in the pre-Republican and Republican official and unofficial history books in a comparative manner. The reason for the focus on Islamic history is the possibility that Islamic history is the area on which secular Kemalist ideology and *ümmet* centered pre-Republican historiography differentiate the most. Rationalist, nationalist, evolutionist and deeply influenced by the Enlightenment, Kemalism largely differs from the traditionalist pre-Kemalist historiography which approached nationalism with suspicion and was based on the notion of revelation. The interpretation of this differentiation promises a perspective which might shed some light on the intellectual odyssey of the late Ottoman and the early Republican elite.

### **Primary Sources**

It is useful to divide the sources into three: first, primary sources written in the pre-Republican era, second, those written in the Republican era and last, non-Kemalist source. This division rests not only on chronology but also on content, ideology, and style. Although non-Kemalist primary source, namely *Sadr-ı İslām* of Ömer Rıza, was written in the Republican era, it bears substantial similarity to pre-Republican books in ideological terms. There seems to be great similarity between the books in each group. However, it would be misleading to conclude that these groups are monolithic blocks each supporting opposite ideas. Below is the detailed information on the primary sources:

#### **A. Pre-Republican Primary Sources**

1. *‘Asr-ı Sa‘ādet*: The book was written in Urdu by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī and translated into Turkish by Ömer Rıza (Doğrul) in 1928. Although its translation dates

to 1928, the book was written in 1914. Shiblī is a famous Muslim Indian thinker of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was known as ‘*Allāma*, i.e., most erudite, in colonial India. He is considered to be one of the most influential scholars in the colonial India, and he also was reputable among other Muslim states and societies. Therefore, he was invited to Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan in order to teach. His other works focus on the ‘great’ names of Islamic history, including the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Ma’mūn. Shiblī’s aim to write these books is “...to prove that the Muslims were not intolerant, to remind the Muslims of their glorious past, and to free them from a depressing inferiority complex.”<sup>1</sup>

2. *Tārīh-i İslām*: The book was written by Şehbenderzāde Filibeli Ahmed Hilmī in 1326 in response to the criticisms and ‘attacks’ on Islam by Western orientalist such as Dozy and Renan. The author informs the reader that even though a number of Muslim authors had written books in rejection of the likes of Reinhardt Dozy, none of these books bore scientific value.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, says the author, he took the initiative to write a rejection to Dozy’s *Essai sur l’histoire de l’Islamisme* which was translated by Abdullah Cevdet with the title *Tārīh-i İslāmiyet*. The title of the book may be misleading, since the content of *İslām Tārīhi* is not limited to the history of various Islamic societies, it also includes the position of religion in comparison to science as well as philosophy. Since the author, in writing this book, has intended to reject the ‘false’ allegations laid by Dozy, supernatural concepts such as *vahiy* and *nubūwa* castigated by the positivistic ideas are also advocated. Other books of the author are *Allah’ı İnkâr Mümkün Mūdūr?*, ‘*Asr-ı Hamīdī’de Ālem-i İslām ve Senūsīler, Muhalefetin iflası: Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* and *A’māk-ı Hayāl*. Mustafa Kemal noted in 1916 that he had read *Allah’ı İnkâr Mümkün Mūdūr?*<sup>3</sup>
3. *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām*: The book was written by İbnu’l-Cevad Efdāleddīn in 1328 (1912).
4. *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām*: The book was written by Esad in 1336 (1920) and it consists of 146 pages. Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī is also said to have written a book called *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām*,<sup>4</sup> but it is rather opaque whether the book used in this study was actually written by him.

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<sup>1</sup> Khan, Javed Ali. “Shiblī’s Studies in Islamic History”, in *Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture*, ed. by Mohamed Tahir, v.5, Anmol, New Delhi, 2003, p. 91

<sup>2</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. *Tārīh-i İslām*, İstanbul, 1326, p. 7

<sup>3</sup> Perinçek, Doğu. *Atatürk Din ve Laiklik Üzerine*, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 20-21

<sup>4</sup> Dönmez, Şerafettin. *Atatürk’ün Çağdaş Toplum ve Din Anlayışı*, İstanbul, 1998, pp. 61-62

5. *Tārīh-i 'Umūmī*: The book was written by Ahmed Refik (Altınay) in 1328 (1912). The author is a prominent historian of the late Ottoman and early Republican eras who has played a significant role in the popularization of history among Turkish people.
6. *Yeni Küçük Tārīh-i İslām*: The book was written by A. Nüzhet in 1330 (1914). The author may be Ali Nüzhet Göksel who wrote *Haritalı ve Resimli Tārīh-i İslām* of 1913. *Yeni Küçük Tārīh-i İslām* aims to inform students of small age about the brief history of the 'faithful.' In that respect, not only the accounts of numerous Islamic states, but also the gamut of prophets recited in the *Qur'ān* is mentioned. Without going into much detail, the book describes the virtuous but painful lives of the *Qur'ānic* prophets. A separate, longer and more detailed section is allocated to the prophet Muhammad. At the end of each section are study questions for students.

### **B. Non-Kemalist Primary Sources Written in the Republican Era**

1. *Sadr-ı İslām: Hazret-i Ebū Bekir*: The book was written by Ömer Rıza in 1928 as a continuation of Shibli's *Asr-ı Sa'ādet*. Ömer Rıza is a famous scholar of the Republican Era. He has written and translated various books about a great range of topics including Islamic history, Islamic politics, and psychology. *Rābi'atu'l-'Adeviyye* is among the books he wrote. His translations include but not limited to *Abul Farac Tarihi*, *İslamiyet ve Hükümet*, *Hazret-i Muhammed ve Kur'ān-ı Kerīm*, and *Qur'ān*.

### **C. Republican Primary Sources**

1. *Bakalorya Tarihi*: The book was written by Enver Behnan (Şapolyo) and published by Sühulet Kütüphanesi. The date of publishment was not indicated in the book. That the author's surname was not mentioned suggests that the book was published before the Surname Law that took place in 1934. The book's title indicated that it was prepared as an unofficial supplementary material rather than a textbook.
2. *Tarih*: Although the title suggests a direct link with the four-volume *Tarih* series, this book was written in 1929 by a group of authors upon the order of Ministry of Education. From the relatively small portion allocated to ancient Turkish civilization in the textbook, ten pages, and avoidance from an overemphasized attitude towards the role Turks have played in the world history, which is common in the other textbooks of the time, it is strongly possible to conclude that the textbook was written while the Turkish History Thesis was not in maturation yet.
3. *Tarih I*: The book is the first volume of the four-volume series of *Tarih*, history textbook of the 1930s and early 1940s. The series were written in 1931 by a number of

Kemalist historians under the umbrella of ‘Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti’ what later came to be known as ‘Türk Tarih Kurumu.’<sup>5</sup> Among the authors are Afetinan, a Republican historian largely influenced by Mustafa Kemal, M. Şemseddin (Günaltay), who became prime minister in the 1940s, and Yusuf Akçura, one of the leading historians of the Republican Era. The *Tarih* series came into existence as a result of a search for national history in 1927. Upon realizing that in a history textbook taught at Notre Dame de Sion in Istanbul Turks were demonstrated as a people of yellow race, Afetinan was encouraged by Atatürk to make studies on this issue.<sup>6</sup> The study was held by ‘Türk Tarih Cemiyeti’, and the first fruit of these studies was *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* which was written in 1930. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* had only one hundred copies and was published solely for a limited number of ‘distinguished’ readers among whom was Atatürk. Atatürk is said to have found the book unripe, and therefore the book never was taught at schools. However, the book functioned as a ‘guide’ for the upcoming history studies and textbooks.<sup>7</sup> The next step in the writing of a history textbook prepared in accordance with the Turkish History Thesis is the four-volume series of *Tarih* which is heavily loaded with the influence of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*. In the series are notes and corrections made by Atatürk.<sup>8</sup> Again in 1931, a shorter version, only with 87 pages, was published under the title of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları Medhal Kısmı*. The *Tarih* series remained the sole history textbook until 1941.

4. *Tarih II*: The book is the second volume of the four-volume *Tarih* series
5. *Umumi Tarih*: The book was written by Emin Ali and published by Kanaat Kütüphanesi in 1929.

### **Methodology**

Provided the limits and the scope of an M.A. thesis, it appears to be not only exhaustive but also impossible to examine the whole history of Islam. Therefore, this thesis focuses only on the life of Muhammad and the advent of Islam: the Arabs prior to Islam, the revelation, the formation of early Islamic polity and the issue of caliphate will be studied and analyzed.

The second chapter deals with the Arabs prior to Islam. The reason for including pre-Islamic Arabs to this study is to compare and assess the differentiation between pre-

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<sup>5</sup> Afetinan. *Atatürk’ ten Mektuplar*, Ankara, 1989, pp. 18-19

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* pp. 9-10

<sup>7</sup> Perinçek, Doğu. *Tarih I*, Introduction , pp. IV-V

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* p. V

Republican and Republican approaches to Arabs. Learning whether these different *modus operandi* are based on nationalistic or communitarian, i.e., pertaining the *ümmet*, sentiments will serve the evaluation of the relative conceptions on the notion of revelation.

The third chapter discusses the narration of the revelation. Revelation expectedly appears to be a major source of divergence between the pre-Republican and Republican sources due to the essential difference between the former's unshaken belief in the supernatural and the inherent rationalism of the latter. The comparative study of revelation will also indicate the place of Muhammad in the eyes of the historians.

Formation of early Islamic polity is the subject of the fourth chapter. In examining the teaching of the early Islamic polity in the sources, the aim is to figure out how the authors perceive the leadership of the Prophet. It will also contribute to understanding how the primary sources conceptualized Muhammad's role in Islam. In pursuant to this goal, the brotherhood established among Muslims, the Constitution of Medina, and the distribution of booty will be examined.

The fifth chapter is concerned with the election of the first caliph after the death of the Prophet. The caliphate is important because the manner Republican books and textbooks deal with the caliphate and the pattern of leadership in Islam may be a good indicator of how the Kemalist dichotomy between the rulers and the ruled was reflected in the textbooks.

The sixth chapter focuses on the findings; results of each chapter will be brought together in order to draw a 'big picture.' In order to thoroughly interpret, the findings will be evaluated in the light of the ideological background of the Republican and pre-Republican scholars.

## CHAPTER II

### ARABS BEFORE ISLAM

In analyzing the teaching of pre-Islamic Arabs in pre-Republican history books, Shiblī's *Asr-ı Sa'adet*, Ahmed Refik's *Tārīh-i 'Umūmī*, Ahmed Hilmī's *Tārīh-i İslām*, İbnu'l-Cevad Efdāleddīn's *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām* and Esad's *Tahlīl & Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām* will be used. Republican textbooks to be examined in the same manner are *Tarih*, *Tarih I*, *Tarih II*, Enver Behnan's *Bakalorya Tarihi*, and Emin Ali's *Umumi Tarih*.

The teaching of Islamic history in most of the textbooks examined begins first with an enormously detailed description of the geographical and climatical features of the Arabian Peninsula. Almost all the information the textbooks provide is of encyclopedical significance: the surface area of the Peninsula, names of the deserts, and of geographical regions and towns, both ancient and contemporary. Most of the information presented is of little or no relation to the advent or the political and economic role of Islam. It seems that this bombardment of students with excessive and irrelevant information on geography and climate may be attributed in part to geographical determinism, i.e., the belief that a people's social structure and therefore the country's economic and political structure are determined by geographical and climatical circumstances of a people which can be traced back to Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*.<sup>9</sup> These sentences from *Tarih I* and *Tarih II* exemplify such beliefs of the time: "...no matter how intermingled and mixed human groups are, similar climatical factors give rise to similar features [in human races]."<sup>10</sup> "That the climate [in India] is extremely hot causes laziness...The climatical effects have played a great role in the Indians' being lukewarm and benumbed,"<sup>11</sup> "...the severe climate and nature of Arabia has preserved primitiveness in the lives and customs of these nomads [Bedouins]."<sup>12</sup> It deserves notice that unofficial, popular history books do not present such claims even though they also mention about the climatical difficulties in the region.

The second noteworthy subject is the manner the Arabs and their history in the pre-Islamic era are examined in the textbooks and unofficial popular books. Most books focus on

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<sup>9</sup> Ibn Haldun. *Mukaddime*, hazırlayan Süleyman Uludağ, v.1, pp. 331-353. This and all other translations done by the author of this thesis are indicated as "my translation"

<sup>10</sup> *Tarih I*, 1931, p. 15, my translation

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 73, my translation

<sup>12</sup> *Tarih II*, 1931, p. 80, my translation



the characteristics of the Arab people, detailing their virtues and vices, and some give detailed historical information about Arabs, their ethnic and racial origins, the states they have founded in the past and sometimes even lineage of the tribe *Quraish*. It is possible to argue about two different approaches in these books in terms of their relative conceptions of Arabs.

### A. First Approach

The first approach mostly reflected in the work of Ahmed Refik, assumes a laudatory style, taking Arabs as part and a continuation of an enduring Semitic history, particularly linking them with the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian states.<sup>13</sup> Refik is far more convinced than any other author that Arabs have inherited an imperial tradition and even claims that “[t]he Arabs had formed an organized and excellent government in 3000 BC.”<sup>14</sup> Refik furthers his claims saying that following this ancient government the Arabs established, they made a major exodus to the north and into Africa, enabling the establishment of other civilizations in these lands.<sup>15</sup> That Refik allocated more than ten pages in his *Tārīh-i ‘Umūmī* to the pre-Islamic Arab history shows to what extent he attaches importance to this ‘heritage’. This notion that Arabs as a society are a part and heir to a wider Near Eastern history automatically prevents the reader to misjudge Arabs as a historyless people whose past is but a history of nomadic tribes with no significant achievements. Also noteworthy is that Refik usually interchangeably uses the words ‘Arab’ and ‘Semite’.

This positive attribution to Arabs is even furthered by Refik’s words: “[Arabs] have never lost independence, virile pride, inborn nobleness and lingual purity and chastity.”<sup>16</sup> Refik’s words bring to minds Rousseauian myth of ‘Noble Savage’. Akin to what Refik feels about the ‘primitive’ but ‘noble’ and ‘pure’ pre-Islamic Arabs, the romantics too acclaimed the ‘people of nature’ as ‘noble’, ‘uncontaminated by the ailments of the civilization’ and ‘sincere.’ As seen, besides their status as a people with a grand history, another positive feature Refik attributes to Arabs is their mastery in their language and literature, poetry in particular, adding “...their language has become perfect.”<sup>17</sup> Refik continues that: “...the arts that the Arab genius had invented are poetry, the art of kinship and rhetoric.”<sup>18</sup> In another of the primary sources used, Arabs are praised as intelligent, generous, courageous, loyal, and hospitable with self-esteem as well as commitment to literature.<sup>19</sup> Such aggrandizement of the

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<sup>13</sup> Ahmed Refik. *Tārīh-i ‘Umūmī*, İstanbul, 1327, pp 3, 6-10

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* p. 7, my translation

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* p. 7

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* p. 8, my translation

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p. 8, my translation

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* pp. 18-19, my translation

<sup>19</sup> Esad. *Tahlīl & Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām*, 1336, pp.44-5

Arab people and their culture in the books prompts the reader to imagine these people as a people of grandeur who have the ability to print their names to world history as they had done in their 'five-thousand year' history. The reader, thus, intellectually would not be puzzled and confused with the coming 'great achievements of Arabs' following the advent of Islam which could be achieved only by a people with a glorious past, refined tastes, and a virtuous character. Also noteworthy is that Refik is the least severe in criticizing the polytheistic practices of pre-Islamic Arabs. While other authors such as Shiblī bitterly and repeatedly rebuke the polytheist Arabs for their 'perversion' in their faith, i.e., idolatry, an attitude which is in total accordance with the Islamic historical tradition, Refik suffices by saying that "[e]veryone [pre-Islamic Arabs] was making a great error in their belief and worship; although they were worshipping His Majesty, they were at the same time giving sacrifices to idols."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Refik, in contrast to other authors examined, does not criticize the nomadic life-style of pre-Islamic Arabs which traditional Islamic historiography dislikes. However, that he only gives information about their idols without any comments should not mislead one to the immediate conclusion that he had assumed a secular attitude.

### **B. Second Approach**

The second approach reflected in almost all books, by writers such as Shiblī, İbnu'l Cevad Efdāleddin, Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī as well as the textbooks from the Republican era, is far less impressed by the deeds of the pre-Islamic Arabic people. As a matter of fact, as Refik's depiction of the pre-Islamic Arabs sets an illustrious picture of that society, the second approach, on the contrary, bitterly rebukes Arabs and their civilization. Arabs, as they claim, may not have established states; even if they did, these states must have been incomparably inferior to those in the highly civilized societies. For instance, *Tarih II* starts by telling their history with their subordination to the Sumer and makes no mention of their relation to Assyria and Babylon.<sup>21</sup> Emin Ali claims that: "The civilization of *Himyarī* is an ancient but a local civilization. Its remains are primitive and rude incomparable to those of Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea."<sup>22</sup> *Tarih II* puts forward that "[t]he people who used to live in Central Arabia and Hejaz were all nomads and they did not have an institution more sophisticated than clans."<sup>23</sup> Besides lacking a central authority, these Arabs, allegedly, were but nomads who "[are] observed to wander in the middle of deserts and live the life of a vagabond."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 26, my translation

<sup>21</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 80

<sup>22</sup> Emin Ali. *Umumi Tarih Ortazaman İkinci Kitap*, Kanaat, 1929, p. 9-10, my translation

<sup>23</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 82, my translation

<sup>24</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 10, my translation

Remarkably, these comments are in great accordance with the postulations of the western orientalist. Maxime Rodinson, for instance, in his *Mohammed* says that the pre-Islamic Arab society was crude and unstable<sup>25</sup>, half-starved and extremely anarchic.<sup>26</sup> Rodinson, admitting that pre-Islamic Arab society was not “in a state of total anarchy for the very good reason that no such conditions have ever existed anywhere”, adds that “...it must be admitted that the unwritten rules they followed were very often broken and that in the sphere of material culture their level was very low.”<sup>27</sup> As for the Republican sources, nomadic existence was equal to an absence of civilization and history, a notion which directly contradicts with their conceptualization and telling of ancient Turkish history. *Tarih I*, the first volume of the history textbook of the 1930s, states that once the natural and geographical conditions in Central Asia, that is, the fatherland of the ancient Turks, became unfavourable, some Turks had to switch to nomadism. However, leaving their fatherland, these newly Turkish nomads, claims *Tarih I*, had introduced civilization to the remotest parts of the world, including China, India and Europe.<sup>28</sup> The following anecdote of Mustafa Kemal also shows Kemalism’s apologetic viewpoint regarding nomadism:

[At a visit to a secondary school, Mustafa Kemal enters a class during the history course and asks a student what he learnt regarding Turkish history]

-Tell us what you have learnt?

-Err....Sir, Turks are nomads.

He cannot say anymore. Atatürk:

-Do not you have anything more to say?

He turns to the teacher:

-Mr. Teacher, you proceed.

Excited, the teacher such starts teaching:

-The motherland of Turks is Central Asia. Turks used to live out a nomadic life.

The Father [Mustafa Kemal] bitterly cut off his speech:

-Mister Teacher, this should not be the first thing to be taught regarding Turkish history to students. Have you not ever wondered why Turks were nomads and researched our ancestors’ situation prior to nomadism?

Then Atatürk starts teaching a brief Turkish history. One year later, the textbook which starts with the sentence “Turks are nomads” is expunged from the curriculum.<sup>29</sup>

While nomadic Turks are believed by Republican historians to be the bearer of the ‘flag of civilization’, pre-Islamic nomads of Arabia were disparaged by the same historians. Very far from being ‘civilized’, Arabic nomads and their remains are very much belittled for being

<sup>25</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *Mohammed*, Suffolk, 1973, p. 15

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p. 17

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 18

<sup>28</sup> *Tarih I*, pp. 26-27

<sup>29</sup> Banoğlu, Niyazi Ahmet. *Nükte, Yergi ve Fıkralarıyla Atatürk*, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 110-111, my translation

‘rudimentary’. The *Kā’bah*, believed in the Muslim tradition to have dated from the time of Abraham, for example, is described as: “In fact, the *Kā’bah* was a building as tall as a human being which comprised but four walls, its walls were constructed from ordinary stone without mortar. It did not have a roof.”<sup>30</sup> Emin Ali even says that “[t]hese places of worship were very primitive, roofless buildings with only four walls but nothing. One of those places was the *Kā’bah*...”<sup>31</sup>

As for the characteristics of Arabs, one common criticism these sources make is their debauched lives. “For Arabs had remained in ignorance...”<sup>32</sup>, “...as Arabs were primitive in life-style and art...”<sup>33</sup>, “Arabs who were Bedouins [nomads] in terms of art and savages in terms of character...”<sup>34</sup>, “...a people such as Arabs who are so low and with no spirituality...”<sup>35</sup>, “As a consequence of contacts with other societies, inhabitants of Mecca, Medina and Ta’if became civilized to some extent.”<sup>36</sup> Some even go as far to claim that Arabs used to eat insects, lizards and grasshoppers.<sup>37</sup> Not all sources but a few them, of which majority are unofficial sources, refer also to infanticide, especially girls, in order to get rid of the ‘unproductive’ and ‘inferior’ members of the society.<sup>38</sup> Rodinson too states that “[t]he Beduin do not seem to have had much time for the religion.”<sup>39</sup> He, however, does not think this as lowness, but rather considers it as a consequence of the geographical difficulties. One should also note that, some sources, including Shiblī, use the term *Jāhiliya* which means the time of ignorance to denote the pre-Islamic times.

It is only Ahmed Hilmī among pre-Republican authors who claims that despite the ‘noble’ qualities brought by Islam, great majority of Arabs returned to their previous ‘low’ and nomadic lives.<sup>40</sup> No other pre-Republican historian refers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arabs as such. It is possible that Ahmed Hilmī’s drive in saying these words is nationalism, but the extent of his nationalistic views is far less than that of Republican historians. Ahmed Hilmī believes that what resulted in this ‘regression’ is not inherent to Arabs; it is solely because they left the path of Islam and lost the prophetic spirit.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 85, my translation

<sup>31</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 11, my translation

<sup>32</sup> İbnu’l Cevad Efdāleddīn. *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām*, 1328, p. 11, my translation

<sup>33</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 127, my translation

<sup>34</sup> ibid. pp. 127-128, my translation

<sup>35</sup> ibid. p. 129, my translation

<sup>36</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 82, my translation

<sup>37</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu’mānī. *Asr-ı Sa’ādet*, transl. Ömer Rıza, 1928, p. 135, also *Tarih II*, p. 80

<sup>38</sup> Esad. op. cit., p. 44, *Tarih*, 1929, v.2, p. 4

<sup>39</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., p. 16

<sup>40</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 130

<sup>41</sup> ibid. p. 130

Even though the second approach casts severe criticism on the life-style of pre-Islamic Arabs, it also does praise the sophistication Arab literature has reached and the passion of Arabs for their language. Almost all sources, after depicting the ‘promiscuous’ Arabs, feel the need to mention their refinement in terms of poetry. The half-hearted compliment of *Tarih II* is that “Arabic language is the richest of the Semitic languages.”<sup>42</sup> Ahmed Hilmī in his *İslam Tarihi* contrasts the Arab way of life with their language: “Arabs who were Beduins in terms of art and savages in terms of character were more developed than any other society in terms of language and poetry.”<sup>43</sup> *Tarih* of 1929, a textbook, also mentions the same ‘inconsistency’: “...even though the material culture was so primitive, Arabic was a rich language. Almost all Arab clans had poets... [the poems] were rich in vivid expressions, short and sweet stories and eloquent words.”<sup>44</sup>

It is interesting to see that even though Arabs are visualized and imagined as an uncivilized people, most sources extol their use of language. The examination of this somewhat contradictory attitude requires one to focus on the ideological considerations behind each book. First, books written before the Reform of Scripture in 1928, which are all unofficial books, were mostly written with an Islamic orientation. Therefore, acclaiming the Arab taste in literature, which eventually would lead the reader to the conclusion that only Arabs who, by far, were literally the most cultivated could and did understand the divine message in the *Qur’ān*, very much suited the incentives of those authors.

Official textbooks written after 1928, on the other hand, did have neither the need nor the incentive to emphasize the significant role of the Arabic language in the advent of Islam. For that reason, why these books refer to the richness of Arabic needs more deliberation. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* alludes to E. Shouby’s article *The Influence of the Arabic Language on the Psychology of Arabs*<sup>45</sup> quoting the subtitles author has used.<sup>46</sup> Said says:

...Arabic is characterized by “General vagueness of Thought,” “Overemphasis of Linguistic Signs,” “Over-assertion and Exaggeration.” Shouby is frequently quoted as an authority because he speaks like one and because what he hypostasizes is a sort of mute Arab who at the same time is a great word-master playing games without much seriousness or purpose...The Arab [in the realm of orientalism], is a sign for dumbness combined with hopeless overarticulativeness, poverty combined with excess.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 86, my translation

<sup>43</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 128, my translation

<sup>44</sup> *Tarih*, 1929, v. 2, p. 5, my translation

<sup>45</sup> Originally published in *Middle East Journal* 5 (1951). Collected in *Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures*, ed. Abdulla Lutfiyye and Charles W. Churchill (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1970), pp. 688-703

<sup>46</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, New York, 1995, p. 320

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 320

Said's criticism regarding how orientalists have dealt with the relationship between Arab people and their language, I believe, is valid for the position of Republican historians of the late 1920s and early 1930s. How can Arabs, as a 'detestable', 'nomadic' and thus 'unsophisticated' people who have no 'significant' role in world history, who eat 'lizards' and bury their 'infant girls' can be word masters with so intricate and vivid expressions? The answer the textbooks provide is noteworthy: "...there are no vivid and refined imaginations in these poems."<sup>48</sup> The author of *Tarih* converges to Shouby in that, even though he, unreluctantly, admits Arabs' talent and passion for their language, he adds saying that these poems are but bombastic words with no significant essence or artistic value. *Tarih II*, on the other hand, justifies this contradictory situation in a very different way: "Arabic is the most developed language among the Semitic languages. This was possible due to the elaboration of Muslim poets and orators and particularly the Muslim Turks to Arabic language. He who comprised the Arabic dictionary<sup>49</sup> was a Turk named Cevherī."<sup>50</sup> The same allegation can be found in *Bakalorya Tarihi*, too.<sup>51</sup> That the, alleged, contributions of Turks to the Arabic language accounts for the richness of this language, and therefore a corpus of Islamic arts and sciences, was definitely a consequence of the Turkish History Thesis, the influence on the teaching of history of which will be examined in the next chapters as well. Also remarkable is the parallelism between Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī and the 'official' voice of the Republican era in pointing out the "...lack of use of imagination..."<sup>52</sup> in Arabic poetry. Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī's motives in saying so can be better understood after considering his words: "Arabs shared the lack of use of imagination with other Semitic societies."<sup>53</sup> His relative nationalistic view which distinguishes him from Shiblī shrinks the breach between the pre-Republican and Republican authors. Also noteworthy is that the praise of pre-Islamic Arab poetry also finds a place in the works of western historians. For example, Rodinson accentuates the contrast between the crude nature of the pre-Islamic Arab society and their passion for eloquence.<sup>54</sup>

Besides this 'linguistic' problem, there is yet another point which needs further study. To what do we owe the 'promiscuous' Arab image observed in almost all books, be it Republican or pre-Republican? What cement sticks to these ideologically different and

<sup>48</sup> *Tarih*, 1929, v.2, p. 5, my translation

<sup>49</sup> The dictionary referred here must be *Tācu'l-luġa* of İsmā'īl b. Cevherī which was comprised in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. The dictionary is also known as *al-Sihāh fi'l-luġa* or shortly *al-Sihāh*.

<sup>50</sup> *Tarih II*, p.86, my translation

<sup>51</sup> Enver Behnan. *Bakalorya Tarihi İlk Kurum I*, İstanbul, p. 189

<sup>52</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmet Hilmī. op. cit., p. 129, my translation

<sup>53</sup> ibid. p. 128, my translation

<sup>54</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 15-16

sometimes contradictory books to result in this coalition? Once again, to differentiate between Republican and pre-Republican books and to examine each in accordance with its own ideological background not only makes easier but necessary in analyzing this constant degradation of the pre-Islamic Arab. In pursuant to this goal, the books written before and after 1928 shall, again, be dealt separately.

The dominant ideological background which lies behind the writing of pre-Republican history books is relatively religious and *ümmeth* oriented as compared to the Republican, secular books and textbooks basis of which was more nationalist and secular, and some of which were largely shaped by Turkish History Thesis. In order to better understand how and why non-secular understanding constructs and portrays pre-Islamic Arabs so abhorrently, it would be useful to look at what Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī says: “What gave birth to moral values and virtues in Arabic society is Islam.”<sup>55</sup> As the author exemplifies, classical Islamic historiography interprets the pre-Islamic era as *Jāhilīya*, the age of ignorance, often depicted as a time when the polytheistic beliefs gave way to debauchery, corruption and oppression.<sup>56</sup> *Jāhilīya*, as almost all classical Muslim historians believe, is the perfect example of human perversion when humankind forgets the Creator. Therefore, they think, the advent of Islam through revelation is a rupture by divine intervention which aims to put an end to this decadence. This view can be observed in Shiblī’s words: “[In Arabia] it was conceived impossible to make a reformation and rejuvenation with human hands. Only Allah’s power could enable this. This will of Allah was performed by the prophethood of His Excellency Muhammad.”<sup>57</sup> Such an idea of divine intervention normally assumes that what is brought by the ‘will of God’, that is, the new religion, will eventually outlaw what is accepted intolerable by the new order. For that reason, infanticide, an unusual diet comprising insects, a vagabond’s life, deriving from nomadic life style that settled cultures always hate, and lewdness are widely used features by the Muslim historians to denote *Jāhilīya*. In order to highlight the merits of the new order, the legacy of the *Jāhilīya* thus had to be decried. This attitude of Muslim historiography is best described by Etienne Copeaux: “Classical Islamic sources generally are merciless to this [*Jāhilīya*] era, because the more blackened is the situation of what already exists, the more expanded is the impact of *wahy*.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 128, my translation

<sup>56</sup> Copeaux, Etienne. *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, İstanbul, 1998, p. 205

<sup>57</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 575, my translation

<sup>58</sup> Copeaux, Etienne. op. cit., p. 205, my translation

Shiblī, in order to support his bitter criticism of pre-Islamic Arabs, frequently quotes the *Qur'ānic* verses. The author has chosen such verses that depict and lament the 'false religion' and bad habits of the polytheist Arabs and others:

And they say: There is nothing but our life in this world; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time, and they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture.<sup>59</sup>

And if you ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient, they will certainly say, Allah. Whence are they then turned away?<sup>60</sup>

So when they ride in the ships they call upon Allah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo! they associate others (with Him).<sup>61</sup>

Another reason for Shiblī's frequent use of the *Qur'ānic* verses in his '*Asr-ī Sa'ādet* is to buttress the sacredness of the *Kā'bah*. For instance, in order to emphasize its primevalness, this verse is quoted: "Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka [ancient name of Mecca], blessed and a guidance for the nations."<sup>62</sup> Shiblī's position regarding the *Kā'bah* is very clear; resting his beliefs on the Scripture, he does not suspect who built it, for whom did he build it, and that it is holy. For that reason, he quotes this verse that mentions the *Kā'bah*'s construction and importance: "And when We assigned to Ibrahim the place of the House, saying: Do not associate with Me aught, and purify My House for those who make the circuit and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves."<sup>63</sup> However, classical Islamic historians, many postulations of whose are repeated by Shiblī in '*Asr-ī Sa'ādet*, seem to be in disagreement about the *Kā'bah*. Even though the *Qur'ān* does not mention pre-Abrahamic origins of the *Kā'bah*, F.E. Peters states that post-prophetic Muslim tradition by largely borrowing from Jewish and Christian sources had added many details to this 'antediluvian' origin. Peters says that:

Abu Salih related on the authority of Ibn Abbas: God gave a revelation to Adam: 'I have a sacred area opposite my Throne. Go and build me a House in it, and then encompass it as you have seen the angels encompass my Throne. There I will answer your prayers and the prayers of your children who will be obedient to Me.' Adam said: 'How can I do that? I do not have the power or the guidance to do that!' So God sent him the power, and he went to Mecca. Whenever he passed by a beautiful garden that delighted him, he would say to the angel (that was

<sup>59</sup> *Qur'ān*, 45:24, translated by M.H. Shakir and published by Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 1983, cited by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p.141

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* 29:61, M.H. Shakir, cited by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p.144

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* 29:65, cited by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p.144

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* 3:96, cited by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p.169

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.* 22:26, cited by Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p. 174



transporting him): ‘Bring me down here!’ The angel would then say: ‘Enough,’ until he arrived at Mecca. Every place at which Adam descended became populated, and every place that he passed over became a desert wasteland. Then, he built the House. When he had finished building it, the angel took him to Arafat and showed him all of the ritual stations that people visit today. Then he went to Mecca and circumambulated the House for a week. He then returned to the land of India and died on a fire.<sup>64</sup>

Abu Yahya Ba’i’ al-Qat said, Mujahid said to me: Abdullah ibn Abbas related to me that Adam settled somewhere in India and made 40 pilgrimages [to Mecca] by foot. But I said to him: ‘O Abu Hujjaj, didn’t he ride?’ He answered: ‘What kind of thing could he have ridden? By God, one of his strides equaled a distance of three days (of normal travel).’<sup>65</sup>

That was the beginning of the story of the *Ka’bah*, may God protect it. It remained in that state until the days of the Flood. During the days of the Flood, God raised it to the fourth heaven and sent Gabriel to conceal the Black Stone on mount Abu Qubays, preserving it from being submerged. The site of the House remained empty until the days of Abraham. At that time, God commanded Abraham to build Him a House and call His Name after the births of Ishmael and Isaac. But Abraham did not know where to build it so he asked God to make it clear to him [where to begin].<sup>66</sup>

Peters believes that

This, then, is how most later Muslims understood the proximate origin of the Ka’ba, alluded to in the Quran: to wit, that the patriarch Abraham, on a visit to his son Ishmael in Mecca, put down, on God’s command, the foundation of the House on a site already hallowed by Adam.<sup>67</sup>

Muslim tradition makes no attempt to disguise the fact that many of these stories came from men like Ibn Abbas, Wahb ibn Munabbih or Ka’b al-Ahbar, who were either well instructed on the traditions of the Jews, the oft-cited *isra’iliyyat*, or were themselves converts from Judaism to Islam.<sup>68</sup>

However, there is no mention of alleged pre-Abrahamic origins of the *Kā’bah* in ‘*Asr-t Sa’ādet*, but rather that the author had remained ‘loyal’ to the Scripture. It is useful to bear in the mind how *Tarih II* and other books of the Republican era approach the idea of the holiness of the *Kā’bah*. *Tarih II*, for instance, says: “The *Kā’bah* is ancient. It is unknown when and who did build it. Arab tales narrate that it was built by Prophet Abraham.”<sup>69</sup> Enver Behnan also says the same.<sup>70</sup> *Tarih II* states that:

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<sup>64</sup> Peters, F.E. *A Reader on Classical Islam*, Princeton, 1993, pp. 11-12

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 12

<sup>66</sup> Tha’alibi. *Tales of the Prophets*, 87, cited by Peters, F.E. *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13

<sup>67</sup> Peters, F.E. *op. cit.*, p. 20

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.* p. 13

<sup>69</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 85, my translation

<sup>70</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, p. 166.

[a]lthough the *Kā'bah* once was a local temple, the people of Mecca, in order to elevate its status to being a national temple, placed 360 idols reckoned as god all around the Peninsula in the *Kā'bah*.<sup>71</sup>

As the narration goes among Arabs, Abraham had brought his wife *Hajar* and his son *Ismā'īl* here[Mecca]; *Zemzem* had sprung for them, Abraham, with his son *Ismā'īl* had built the *Kā'bah*. Gabriel had brought them the Black Stone which then was white and brilliant; this stone later turned into black because of the touches of the sinful. These, of course, are all stories fabricated at a later date.<sup>72</sup>

...by saying that the *Kā'bah* was built by Abraham...<sup>73</sup>

In contrast to Shiblī's effort to emphasize the significance and holiness of the *Kā'bah* by quoting related the *Qur'ānic* verses, the history textbooks of the 1930s, thus, do not reckon the *Kā'bah* and the Black Stone as holy, but rather worldly. They consider them as nothing more than a simple building and a stone with no clear and sacred history. These words from *Tarih II* give a better understanding of how historians of the era approached this issue:

This story of Black Stone also existed among Frigians. The Black Stone which Frigians regarded as holy and, therefore, worshipped used to be in what is now known as Afyon...The story of its being sacred continued until the Roman conquest. Therefore, long before the Black Stone in a corner of the *Kā'bah* had acquired holiness and become a place of visit and circumambulation had the Black Stone of Frigia become a shrine and a place of visit.<sup>74</sup>

It is noteworthy that the 'story' of Black Stone is linked to an ancient polytheistic Anatolian practice, rather than a Semitic one. One should give serious thought on this alleged 'Anatolian origin', for the prevailing historical belief among Turkish scholars of the official school in the early 1930s held that almost all the ancient inhabitants of Anatolia including Hittites, Frigians, and Lidians were of Turkish origin.<sup>75</sup>

Such insinuation of Turkish involvement in the pre-Islamic Arab history in history books is infrequent; only in a few sources are Turks alleged to have exerted influence on Arabs. One of them, and possibly the most fictitious, is Enver Behnan. In his *Bakalorya Tarihi*, he alleges that "[p]rior to Arabic rule, Sumerian Turks had established their rule in the Arabian Peninsula."<sup>76</sup> He even claims that "[t]he Us [Aws] Turks used to live here [Hejaz]." First, the assertion that the 'Sumerian Turks' had existed in the Peninsula before the Arabs seems to be a product of the endeavours of the Republican historians in the 1930s under the

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<sup>71</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 85, my translation

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 85, my translation

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p. 86, my translation

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* p. 85, my translation

<sup>75</sup> *Tarih I*, pp. 137-141

<sup>76</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, p. 165, my translation

umbrella of the Turkish History Thesis. Their attempts to find a civilized ‘ancestor’ to Turks gave birth to the claims that this first ‘civilized’ society was of Turkic origin.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, that *Tarih I*, the dominant history textbook of the 1930s and 1940s, did not claim a Turkic origin to the Arabs may be attributed to the Republican historians’ belief that Arabs did not have a ‘civilized’ past. Therefore, the ‘meager’ Arab history did not attract Kemalist historians whose primary interests were the Ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations.<sup>78</sup> Their ‘great achievements’, as Republican historiography claimed, were realized due to highly sophisticated Turks who migrated *en masse* from Central Asia to the deltas of Nile, Euphrates and Tigris.<sup>79</sup> Even further is the endeavour in the heydays of Turkish History Thesis to ‘prove’ Turkic origin of Prophet Muhammad<sup>80</sup>, a theory which was discredited among the Kemalist elite.

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<sup>77</sup> *Tarih I*, pp. 87-88

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p. 105

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* pp. 103-106

<sup>80</sup> Egeli, Münir Hayri. *Atatürk ve Din IV-V*, “Millet” (Bilinmeyen Atatürk’ten Hatıralar), c. 4, sn. 2, sy. 90, 97; sh. 4, 23 Ekim 1947; 11 Aralık 1947, cited by Cündioğlu, Dücane. *Türkçe Kur’an ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, İstanbul, 1998, pp. 68-73

## CHAPTER III

### REVELATION

In *Qur'ānic* terms “...*vahiy* is presented as an exceptional modality of God’s speaking to His creatures.”<sup>81</sup> In terms of Islamic history, however, *vahiy* mostly refers to the communication between God and Prophet Muhammad. *Wahy*, or revelation, denotes a turning point for both Islamic and Republican historiographies. According to classical Islamic historiography, *vahiy* is the most evident sign of the end of an era, that is, *Jāhilīya*. Bernard Lewis and P. Holt state that:

Most Muslim historians saw a definite break in history in the coming of Muhammad and the events of his time; history could be divided into two great periods, the one before Muhammad, and the one after his coming, and historical works were organized in accordance with this theory.<sup>82</sup>

*Vahiy* is an irrevocable rupture from a past which not only Muslim historians but also most members of Islam detested. This past, epitomized in Islamic belief by ‘ignorance’, ‘debauchery’ and ‘oppression’, was ruptured by the revelation as if cut by a knife. The new era, Muslims believe, is characterized by just the opposite of everything that one could find in the *Jāhilīya*: ‘ignorance’ was replaced by ‘enlightenment’, souls ‘enlightened’ by the knowledge of the Divine Being, in lieu of ‘debauchery’ came ‘chastity’ and ‘modesty’ and ‘freedom’ ended the ‘reign of oppression’. Ja’far b. Abū Tālib’s speech to the Abyssinian king best reflects the Muslim view of *Jāhilīya*. He says that “O King! We were a people with the understanding of *Jāhilīya*; we used to worship idols, eat the flesh of dead [putrid] animals, commit fornication; ignore the ties of relationship, do evil to our neighbours; those who were powerful used to oppress the weak.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, in order to highlight the ‘meritous’ novelty brought by the new religion, Islamic historiography built its narration upon *wahy*, the ‘Divine harbinger of the commencement of a new era’. It is, then, not surprising to expect pre-Republican and non-secular history books assume a *vahiy* oriented style in their narration of Islamic history. Under the umbrella of pre-Republican primary sources, Shiblī’s *Asr-i Sa’ādet*, Ahmed Refik’s *Tārīh-i ‘Umūmī*, İbnu’l-Cevad Efdāleddīn’s *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām*

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<sup>81</sup> *EI*<sup>2</sup>, v. XI, *Wahy*\*, p. 53

<sup>82</sup> Rosenthal, Frank. *The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography*, by Lewis, B., Holt, P.M. (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Hishām, I, 335-336, cited by *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Diyanet Vakfı, c. 7, p. 18, my translation

and Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī's *İslām Tārihi* will primarily be examined and compared and *Yeni Küçük Tārīh-i İslām* will also be referred to.

### Pre-Republican Sources

On the great contrary to Muslim historians who theologically interpret and see the emergence of Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah as a part of God's involvement in the course of history of humankind, western scholars in explaining the emergence of Muhammad, and thus Islam, lay great stress on the internal and external conditions that affected the Arabian Peninsula prior to the *wahy*. As Bryan Turner states:

Two related socio-political types of conflict constitute the dominant material preconditions of the emergence of Islam. The first is the struggle for political control of the Arabian Peninsula by outlying states and the second is the continuous conflict between the town and desert, that is between urban trading groups and nomadic tribes.<sup>84</sup>

While the enduring wars rendered the neighbouring empires, Persia and Byzantium, feeble, the Arabian Peninsula gained an upper hand in the trade routes, for the way from Yaman through Mecca and Yathrib to Syria and Anatolia proved to be more secure than the Gulf and the Red Sea.<sup>85</sup> This increasing commercial activity, he says, in turn brought huge wealth to Mecca, paving the road to later social, political, and religious changes. Due to great accumulation of wealth in the hands of Meccan tradesmen, says Turner, individualism supplanted what Montgomery Watt calls 'tribal humanism'<sup>86</sup>, that is, the absolute importance of tribal solidarity. Turner interprets this moral and social dissolution as the triggering effect for the emergence of the religious seekers who sought a "...new set of values which would give coherence to social and personal life."<sup>87</sup> The then existing Jewish and Christian tribes in Hejaz are interpreted by orientalist as the originators of biblical stories and tenets in the revelations Muhammad had received. Rodinson, for instance, argues that "Arabs like Muhammad heard these stories, and reflected upon them."<sup>88</sup> "By their [Jews and Christians] light he gradually pieced together a picture of the world and its history. Jews and Christians told him about the same God, Allah..."<sup>89</sup>

Muhammad's first alleged travel to Syria during his childhood with his uncle Abū Tālib is of special importance, for Muslim historians believe that the future prophethood of

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<sup>84</sup> Turner, Bryan, S. *Weber and Islam*, New York, 1998, p. 28

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* p. 29

<sup>86</sup> Watt, Montgomery, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford, 1953

<sup>87</sup> Turner, Bryan, S. *op. cit.*, p. 30

<sup>88</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *op. cit.*, p. 64

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* p. 61

Muhammad was corroborated by a Christian monk during the trip. Tabarī, a reputable Muslim historian of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, gives the account of this incident such:

When the company halted at Bostra in Syria, there was a monk named Bahīrā, who dwelt in a hermitage there and who was well-read in the learning of the Christians. There had always been a monk in this hermitage, who used to extract this learning from a book which, they claimed, had been handed down as an heirloom from one to another. This year, when the caravan halted near Bahīrā, he prepared much food for them. While he was in his hermitage, he had seen the Envoy of Allah among his companions; and a cloud covered him with its shadow. They came forward, and halted in the shade of a tree that was near Bahīrā. He looked at the cloud, but the tree gave shade and its branches leaned down over the Envoy of Allah so that he was always in their shade. When Bahīrā saw this, he came out from his cell and sent word to invite them all. When Bahīrā saw the envoy of Allah, he watched him very closely, and noted the details of his person....When the party had finished eating and were about to take their leave, he questioned the Envoy of Allah about the things he felt when he was awake or asleep. The Envoy of Allah answered him. Bahīrā found all this according to the description which he had in his possession. Then he examined his back and found the seal of prophecy between his shoulders. Then Bahīrā said to his uncle Abū Tālib: "What relation is this boy to you?" And Abū Tālib answered: "He is my son." Bahīrā said to him: "He is not your son. This boy's father cannot be living." 'He is my nephew,' Abū Tālib told him then. The monk asked: "What became of his father?" "He died while his mother was pregnant." "You speak the truth. Go back then to your own land and keep him safe from the Jews. By Allah, if they see him and get to know what I know about him they will try to harm him."<sup>90</sup>

Ibn Ishāk of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, one of the earliest Muslim historians, also gives similar details.<sup>91</sup> Other classical Muslim historians such as Kastallanī, Balādhurī, Kalā'ī and Abū Nu'aym too provide the accounts of the incident in detail.<sup>92</sup> This incident is mentioned also in Shiblī's *'Asr-ı Sa'ādet*:

[...] the Most Honourable Messenger was twelve years old. According to most of the historians, the incident with the monk Bahīrā took place at this travel. According to what these [historians] say, when Abū Tālib reached Bostra he had come together with this Christian monk at the monastery, and once the monk had seen our prophet he said: "This is the master of the prophets!" When Bahīrā the monk was asked how he came to understand that, he replied: "I saw the stones and the trees prostrating while your caravan was coming down from the hill."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Tabarī, *Annales*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al., Leiden, 1897-1901, vol. I, 3, p. 1124, cited by Rodinson, Maxime. *op. cit.*, p. 47

<sup>91</sup> Ibn Hishām. *Hazreti Muhammed'in Hayatı (es-Siret' ün-Nebeviyye)*, compilation of the work of Ibn Ishāk, transl. Hasan, İzzet., Çağatay, Neşet. Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992, pp. 111-114

<sup>92</sup> Kastallanī. *Mevāhib-i Leduniyye*, v. 1, p. 28, cited by Çağatay, Neşet. *op. cit.*, pp. 111-114, Balādhurī. *Ansāb*, I, 97 f., Kalā'ī. *Iktifā'*, pp. 258 ff., Abū Nu'aym. *Dalā'il*, pp. 131 ff., cited by Crone, Patricia. *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Princeton, 1987, p. 220

<sup>93</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. *op. cit.*, p. 198, my translation

Remarkable is that a long commentary passage follows this narration in *'Asr-ı Sa'ādet*. However, it is not possible to know in exact whether the comments are original and thus belong to Shiblī or they were added by while translating the work into Turkish. Ömer Rıza Doğrul says that:

This narrative has been quoted in various ways, in believing this [accuracy of the narrative] the Christians inclined more than Muslims. Sir William Muir, Draper, Margoliuth and other various non-Muslim historians believe that this [alleged] meeting with the monk Bahīrā is a great victory of Christianity and say that the Prophet had learnt all the tenets of the religion [of Islam] from this monk and built his religion on what this monk had told him.<sup>94</sup>

However, this narrative is not veritable (*sahīh*). Because he who conveyed this narrative is *mursel*. No one among the transmitters (*rāvi*) had seen and witnessed the incident.<sup>95</sup>

The author of the above-mentioned comment does not follow the foot-steps of the early Muslim historians, and he is well informed by the postulations of the western orientalis about the incident of Bahīrā. His comment that the missing links in the chain of transmitters invalidate the narrative suggests that the whole incident may have been generated or fabricated by the later Muslim historians. In this fashion, the author of the comment converges to western scholars who argue that Muslim tradition added many legends to the early life of Muhammad.<sup>96</sup> Karen Armstrong, for instance, quoting Qur'anic verses which she believes to indicate the unexceptional nature of Muhammad prior to Islam, says that

[I]ater Muslim tradition embellished these bare facts with legendary details, rather as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke added legendary stories about Jesus' birth, infancy and childhood which are poetic versions of the theological truths: they reflect upon the nature of Christ's mission and indicate that he had been marked out for greatness in his mother's womb.<sup>97</sup>

Citing from Montgomery Watt that the story is "not true in the realistic sense of the secular historian,"<sup>98</sup> later scholar Patricia Crone too discredits the narrative.<sup>99</sup>

As almost all Muslim historians start narrating *vahiy* with the pre-revelationary psychology of the Prophet, so does Shiblī. That the Prophet isolated himself from the rest of the Meccan community constitutes the starting point in his *'Asr-ı Sa'ādet*: "His Excellency

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<sup>94</sup> *ibid.* pp. 198-199, my translation

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.* pp. 199-202, my translation

<sup>96</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48

<sup>97</sup> Armstrong, Karen. *Muhammad*, New York, 1992, p. 72

<sup>98</sup> Watt, Montgomery. *Muhammad at Mecca*, Karachi, 1979, p. 33

<sup>99</sup> Crone, Patricia. *op. cit.*, 1987, p. 220

Muhammad...used to go to the Mount Hira, and there he used to perform observation.”<sup>100</sup> İbnu’l Cevad Efdāleddīn too describes this period such: “...by selecting isolation and hermitage, he habituated to submission and worship with assiduous devotion to his God...”<sup>101</sup> Ahmed Refik also starts his narration in a very similar fashion: “As was His Excellency Muhammad’s wont, he used to go to the Mount Hira. His Excellency Muhammad used to spend all his nights in a pious observation (*murākabe-i dindarāne*) in the tranquill atmosphere of the Mount Hira.”<sup>102</sup> Although there is little mention in these sources of what the Prophet used to think while in seclusion, one can infer many things from what Shiblī and Refik say. Shiblī states: “Buhārī says that our Prophet used to perform works of devotion...If we are asked in what way did our prophet worship, we can say that his worship was contemplation (*tefekür*) and precepts (*ibret*).”<sup>103</sup> Refik further informs the reader that the Prophet: “used to... desire to save his fatherland from the savage situation it was in.”<sup>104</sup> The authors believe that the Prophet’s primary concern in his isolation was to find a remedy for the ills of his people, whereas the early works of Islamic historiography gives the impression that rather than contemplating the misdeeds of his Meccan fellows, the Prophet practised devotion and withdrawal during his solitude.<sup>105</sup> What is significant here is the deep belief in Muslims, including the authors being examined, that the Prophet, even though he was a part of the Meccan society, never was involved in the misdeeds of his fellows, including worshipping carved gods.<sup>106</sup> He, as all other prophets, is believed to be free of sins, a state called ‘*ismatu’l-anbiyā*’ or shortly ‘*isma*’, which was a sign from God of his prophethood.<sup>107</sup> Minor Muslim groups, namely *Fudaylīs* and *Hashāwīs*, however, have stated that the Prophet might have practised polytheism prior to his *nubūwa*.<sup>108</sup> In addition to that, western scholars find the notion of ‘*isma*’ suspicious.<sup>109</sup> Muhammad, believes western orientalis, “...shared some of the religious conceptions of his milieu...”<sup>110</sup> As for Shiblī, it is noteworthy that not only the Prophet but also some other individuals from Mecca are said to be engaged in deep thinking and isolation during their ascetic practices due to their deliberate avoidance of the ill habits

<sup>100</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 224, my translation

<sup>101</sup> İbnu’l-Cemal Efdāleddīn. op. cit., p. 47, my translation,

<sup>102</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 30, my translation

<sup>103</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 224, my translation

<sup>104</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 30, my translation

<sup>105</sup> Compare Ibn Hishām. *Sīra*, 151-152; Ibn Sa’d, i/I, 129.

<sup>106</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 222

<sup>107</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türk Diyanet Vakfı, cilt 23, ismetü’l-enbiyā\*, p. 141

<sup>108</sup> Fahru’l-Dīn ar-Rāzī. *Al-Muhassal*, p 223, cited by Bulaç, Ali. *İslam Düşüncesinde Din-Felsefe Vahiy -Akıl İlişkisi*, İstanbul, 2000, p. 364

<sup>109</sup> *EF*<sup>2</sup>, v. VII, Muhammad\*, pp. 362-363

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* v. VII, Muhammad\*, pp. 362-363



and polytheistic practices of the society.<sup>111</sup> This view, supplemented by the information that a group of monotheists, *Hanīfs*, were already in search of spiritual purification leads the reader to the conclusion that in his enduring isolation, the Prophet, like the *Hanīfs*, was avoiding committing sins and contemplating how the universe came into being.<sup>112</sup>

As the sources narrate, we learn that as a consequence of toiling contemplation and acknowledgement of existence of a Supreme Being, which he was destined to,<sup>113</sup> his prophethood came into realization: “As an introduction to prophethood, His Excellency Muhammad was presented secrets via his dreams.”<sup>114</sup> The primary sources at this point are in full harmony with the traditional such Muslim scholars as İbnu’l EsİR.<sup>115</sup> That the revelations came in the form of dreams is also told by Ahmed Refik and İbnu’l Cevad Efdāleddīn, although the latter does give more detail: “His prophethood had started with an authentic dream and from the beginning of the prophethood what he had dreamt came into realization for six months.”<sup>116</sup> “While His Excellency Muhammad was again in isolation at the Mount Hira, he had a dream of revelation and inspiration.”<sup>117</sup> Subsequently, “[w]hile one day His Excellency Muhammad was in deep observation, the angel of the Divine Secret said to him: Read!”<sup>118</sup> Then: “He had told [his wife Khadije] that he had Gabriel’s vision and once he had came to the middle of Mount Hira he heard a celestial message saying: O Muhammad, you are Allah’s messenger, and I am Gabriel.”<sup>119</sup> The prophet “...upon listening to these words, was trembling due to this manifestation of the Sublime.”<sup>120</sup> “What he had seen was an angel.”<sup>121</sup> Efdāleddīn seems to underline the nature of the role Gabriel played more than Shiblī and Ahmed Refik did: “His Excellency Gabriel had transmitted the evident revelation he bore as was his responsibility”<sup>122</sup> While all three sources emphasize the angelic involvement in the moment of revelation, *Yeni Küçük Tarihi İslam* does not go into detail, on the contrary, it suffices by saying: that “...our master [the Prophet] was brought prophethood when he was forty...”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu’mānī. op. cit., p. 223

<sup>112</sup> ibid. p. 147

<sup>113</sup> ibid. p. 224

<sup>114</sup> ibid. p. 225, my translation

<sup>115</sup> İbnu’l EsİR. *İslam Tarihi*, transl. Beşir Eryarsoy, İstanbul, 1985, v. 2, p. 49

<sup>116</sup> İbnu’l-Cemal Efdāleddīn. op. cit., p. 46, my translation

<sup>117</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 30, my translation

<sup>118</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu’mānī. op. cit., p. 225, my translation

<sup>119</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 30, my translation

<sup>120</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu’mānī. op. cit., p. 225, my translation

<sup>121</sup> ibid. p. 226, my translation

<sup>122</sup> İbnu’l-Cemal Efdāleddīn. op. cit., p. 47, my translation

<sup>123</sup> A.Nüzhet. *Yeni Küçük Tārīh-i İslām*, İstanbul, 1911, p. 25, my translation

Western historians have interpreted the issue of *vahiy* differently than does the Islamic tradition. Rejecting the divine nature of the revelation, a great number of scholars put their efforts forth to explain the revelations Muhammad had received by attributing these ‘revelationary moments’ to his psychological disorders. Maxime Rodinson in his *Mohammed* analyzes the Prophet’s psychology, and says that Muhammad was a “nervous, passionate, restless, feverish [man] – filled with an impatient yearning which burned for the impossible.”<sup>124</sup> An orphan, having lived an austere life and lacked a male heir, Muhammad, says Rodinson, was covetly desirous, desirous for an extraordinary success which only could extinguish his dissatisfaction with his life.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Rodinson thinks that “Mumammad no doubt considered himself an exceptional person from a very early age.”<sup>126</sup> Rodinson, furthermore, believes, like many other western historians, that accounts of Muslim historians about “...the angels who came and took him [Muhammad] and opened his heart while he was pasturing flocks (...) actually developed from accounts of some kind of seizure.”<sup>127</sup> Although Rodinson discredits the allegations that Muhammad suffered from epileptic attacks by saying that these allegations were put forth by hostile Christians, one of whom might be William Muir,<sup>128</sup> he too believes that Muslim accounts of the early life of Muhammad certainly indicate a pathological disorder.<sup>129</sup> His mental disorder, great dissatisfaction with life and his family, coupled with the biblical tales he heard from the Jews and the Christians of Mecca and Syria, Rodinson thinks, resulted in his emergence as a prophet who received revelations from God. Rodinson was not the first western scholar who disbelieved the involvement of *vahiy* in the case of Muhammad. Dozy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, is one of the well-known scholars who explained the *vahiy* Muhammad had received by attributing it to epilepsy. The visions he saw, therefore, were the hallucinations due to epileptic attacks he had often suffered. His trembling, fear, and other reactions demonstrated during the ‘revelationary moments’ were thus symptoms of this powerfull illness. These views, of course, were discredited by Muslim scholars even though the likes of Abdullah Cevdet, who translated Dozy’s work into Turkish, constituted a minority who adhered to them. Muslim scholars, for that reason, spent their efforts to disprove the claims of these Western scholars. Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī’s *İslām Tārihi* is one of those works which endeavor to present proofs in order to refute those claims. In his text Ahmed Hilmī does not give detailed

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<sup>124</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 53-54

<sup>125</sup> ibid. pp. 53-55

<sup>126</sup> ibid. p. 55

<sup>127</sup> ibid. p. 56

<sup>128</sup> Muir, William. *The Life of Mohammad*, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1923, pp. 6-7

<sup>129</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 53-56

information on early Islamic history, despite the title of the book suggesting the opposite. Rather, he focuses on controversial issues such as *vahiy* and wives of the Prophet. The author blames positivistic and materialistic ideas for they do not credit *vahiy* on the grounds that revelation is scientifically impossible. The narration of the very instant of *vahiy* does not differ from the other sources examined before: “*Nubūwa* of the Prophet started with a dream, [and] His Excellency Gabriel came and brought the verse Recite!”<sup>130</sup> Ahmed Hilmī first starts with the nature of *vahiy* by comparing concepts such as *nubūwa*, i.e., prophethood, as well as spiritualism, soothsaying, and vision. His main argument is that although Western scholars claim that *vahiy* is scientifically impossible, certain people may and can develop certain skills that modern science cannot explain. He claims that despite revelation’ difference from such skills, they also scientifically prove that *vahiy* does exist. However, he admits that “[i]t is impossible to deny that *vahiy* is supernatural.”<sup>131</sup> He also tries to prove that the reactions the Prophet developed against *vahiy* were not symptoms of epilepsy, since he was conscious during revelation. It is not only Ahmed Hilmī but also Shiblī who writes in order to disprove such positivist ideas. In the same token, Shiblī wants to elucidate the nature of revelation:

Indeed, His Excellency had said that he was scared. However, this hesitation, this trembling, this suffering was a sign of that sudden Glorious manifestation. The Prophet trembled during the invitation [to him] for the performance of the duty of *nubūwa* due to the onerousness of the responsibility he undertook.<sup>132</sup>

However, he does not accept the claims that the Prophet wanted to kill himself due to burdensome effects of revelation despite traditional accounts mentioning the non-realized suicide.<sup>133</sup>

### Republican Sources

As for the Republican textbooks, both the narration and the interpretation of revelation greatly differ from the pre-Republican books examined above. Naturally, the Islamic narration in the pre-Republican books which is based on firm belief in supernatural intervention and involvement would be substituted with a more positivistic approach in these secularly written textbooks. In this fashion, Republican books and textbooks seem to have largely been influenced by the western historians. For the purpose of assessing this approach in Republican history narratives, Emin Ali’s *Umumi Tarih*, Enver Behnan’s *Bakalorya Tarihi* and the official history textbook of 1930s *Tarih II* will be compared and examined.

<sup>130</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 108, my translation

<sup>131</sup> ibid. p. 115, my translation

<sup>132</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 226, my translation

<sup>133</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., pp. 226-7. Compare Tabarī, i, 1150; Ibn Hishām, 156, 166; Ibn Sa‘d, i/l, 131

In Republican historiography, *vahiy* constitutes a turning point as in classical Islamic historiography. For Republican historians, too, revelation denotes a rupture from the ‘savage’ past of the Arabs. However, Republican historiography has another turning point within the narration of history of Islam: conversion of Turks into Islam. This process of mass conversion, which is presented in Republican textbooks as the first step towards Turkish domination in the Islamic world, automatically thrusts revelation into a secondary position in these textbooks. Therefore, it would be useful to examine the narration of Islamic history in Republican books and textbooks in accordance with this two dimensional discourse.

Similar to pre-Republican history books, *Tarih II* also stresses the pre-revelationary situation of the Prophet, most particularly the mental and spiritual difference of the Prophet from his Meccan fellows. *Tarih II*, for instance, says: “In spite of the fact that Muhammad was reared within an atmosphere and under the influence of polytheism, his mind was deeply occupied by religious matters and thoughts.”<sup>134</sup> Also: “It appears that Muhammad in the beginning became subject to great excitement. He honestly saddened due to several religious concerns and conscientious thoughts.”<sup>135</sup> Noteworthy, however, is that even though religiously oriented books accept that prior to his prophethood the Prophet was not a polytheist at all, the narrative in *Tarih II* objects to this notion. The idea that the Prophet was free of all sins unlike other humans, i.e., ‘*isma*’, starts to be replaced by the notion that ‘Muhammad’ was also a human being who naturally trespasses and commits sins. This humanization process in *Tarih II* as well as other secular textbooks is taken one step further by dropping the formulas of “His Excellency,” “Our Master,” “The Most Honourable of All Human Beings” and “Pride of the Universe” unflinchingly used by pre-Republican books and instead referring to the Prophet merely as “Muhammad.” The notion that the Prophet too had sometimes been a ‘sinner’ in his pre-prophetic life can be considered in parallel to the postulations of the western historians that Muhammad was also a pagan in his early life. Maxime Rodinson states that even though the classical Muslim historiography firmly believes the opposite, “...there are clear indications in his later life to suggest that, like everyone else, he practised the religion of his fathers. We are told elsewhere that he sacrificed a sheep to the goddess al-‘Uzzā.”<sup>136</sup> Yet another advancement towards the humanization of the Prophet is in the narrative of his early life. *Tarih II* says that “[t]here are innumerable fictitious things

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<sup>134</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 89, my translation

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.* p. 91, my translation

<sup>136</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49

appended to the information about his childhood and youth.”<sup>137</sup> Most Western historians also posit the same argument in a similar manner. Maxime Rodinson, for instance, states that “[n]othing is known for certain about Muhammad’s childhood...”<sup>138</sup> He also says that following the death the Prophet, a great body of historical literature was created by the Muslims which were excessively inundated by legends upon the early life of Muhammad.<sup>139</sup> For that reason, Marshall Hodgson says that

[despite] the documentation transmitted among Muslims about his [Muhammad’s] life is rich and detailed; (...) we have learned to mistrust most of it; indeed the most respected early Muslim scholars themselves pointed out its untrustworthiness.<sup>140</sup>

Emin Ali makes the contribution that “[a]ccording to the tales, a priest on the road to Damascus had realized that Muhammad would be prophet.”<sup>141</sup> This incident is deliberated by the western historians in length, and most of them had come to the conclusion that while the story may or may not be true, the example shows the Judeo-Christian influence on Muhammad. Western scholars have argued that the trip to Syria and meeting Christian monks helped Mohammad to formulate his prophetic teachings.<sup>142</sup> The tenets of his teachings, as western orientalist believe, were largely influenced by what he was told by the monotheist monks of Syria. Their postulation continues saying that biblical tales such as the Genesis and the Flood were ‘dictated’ by these monks, and Muhammad ‘imbibed’ those legends along with the notion of a single god. The telling of this story by the classical Muslim historians is considered by western historians as hyperbolic, misleading and fictitious. Rodinson, for example, believes that:

There can be no doubt that some of the motives behind it [the manner in which the Muslim historiography narrates the story] are apologetic. It was important to have the Prophet recognized as such by one of the great monotheistic religions from which Islam claimed descent.<sup>143</sup>

Narration of the moment of revelation further widens the chasm between the attitude of pre-Republican historians who elevated the Prophet and the understanding of the secular and Republican historians who humanized him. *Tarih II*, for example, narrates revelation as such: “Once he [the Prophet] turned forty, he proclaimed his prophethood and started to invite

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<sup>137</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 89, my translation

<sup>138</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., p. 43

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.* p. 48

<sup>140</sup> Hodgson, Marshall, G.S. *Venture of Islam*, v. 1, Chicago, 1974, p. 160

<sup>141</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 33, my translation

<sup>142</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 61-63

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.* p. 47

his citizens to a new religion he himself had founded and wholeheartedly believed in its righteousness.”<sup>144</sup> Enver Behnan’s narration is very much akin to that of *Tarih II*: “Once Muhammad turned forty, he started inviting his citizens to a new religion he believed in.”<sup>145</sup> *Tarih II* adds, saying that “[i]n Islamic tales, it is accepted that these verses were brought to Muhammad by Allah through an angel named Gabriel.”<sup>146</sup> The great rupture from the classical Islamic narration here reaches its peak. Just as the classical sources and the pre-Republican books examined have a firm faith in the divine nature of *vahiy*, *Tarih II* and *Bakalorya Tarihi* refuse any possibility of a godly intervention and lay instead the radical postulation that Muhammad convinced himself of his status as a prophet. This rather worldly interpretation totally excludes God from the event of revelation and stresses the role of Muhammad. These words in *Tarih II* cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Qur’ānic* verses: “[t]here are numerous rumours regarding the beginnings of Muhammad’s prophethood. Actually, the first *Qur’ānic* verses the Prophet had said are not known for sure.”<sup>147</sup> *Tarih II*’s postulation greatly accords with the western approach that there exists a “...possibility that the very early revelations were not written down or memorized by Muhammad’s followers and thus have been lost.”<sup>148</sup> Similarly, some western scholars, referring to Tabarī’s accounts,<sup>149</sup> believe that once might have existed multiple versions of *Qur’ān* during the time of the Prophet, and it was the third caliph ‘Uthman who eliminated all versions but one.<sup>150</sup> On the other hand, it is not possible to find perfect harmony among Muslim scholars regarding the first verse. According to İbnu’l Esīr, the first verse the Prophet received from Gabriel might be “O you who are clothed!”<sup>151</sup> rather than “Recite!”<sup>152</sup> Only Emin Ali mentions a divine duty: “Muhammad told...he was given a duty by Allah...”<sup>153</sup> It should also be noted that neither *Tarih II* nor *Bakalorya Tarihi* detail the revelation; only Emin Ali accounts the very moment of revelation:

[o]ne night, just before wrapping a blanket about and sleeping, he heard horrible voices. Since it was dark and tranquil, he could not make a guess where these voices came from. Under immense stress; he thought he would die out of fear. At that very moment he heard a voice saying ‘recite.’ In vehement perturbation he

<sup>144</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 89, my translation

<sup>145</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., p. 167, my translation

<sup>146</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 90, my translation

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.* p. 91, my translation

<sup>148</sup> *ET*<sup>2</sup>, v. VII, Muhammad\*, p. 363

<sup>149</sup> Tabarī, *Ta’rikh*, I, p. 2952, cited by P. Crone., M. Cook. *Hagarism*, Malta, 1980, p. 17

<sup>150</sup> P. Crone., M. Cook. op. cit., p. 17

<sup>151</sup> *Qur’ān*, transl. by M.H. Shakir, 74:1

<sup>152</sup> İbnu’l Esīr. op.cit., v. 2, p. 50, my translation

<sup>153</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 34, my translation

replied ‘I do not know how to read.’ Thrice repeated this voice and an angel quoted to Muhammad the first *sūrah* of the *Qur’ān*.<sup>154</sup>

Interestingly, even though the author disbelieves the acknowledgement of the prophethood of the Prophet by a Christian monk, that is, Bahīrā, he narrates the revelatory moments in total accordance with the Islamic tradition, with no comment. Emin Ali continues detailing the subsequent events in a similar Islamic attitude:

Excited by these revelations, Muhammad returned to Mecca, his home. Trembling, he lied in the bed and asked that he be covered [with a blanket]... Muhammad told his wife Khadije about the incident. He had said ‘I am going insane; I fear that djinns will hold sway over me.’ His wife mitigated his distress and gave him the news that he became prophet...After a while his pains started again. In a great psychologic illness, Muhammad several times wanted to throw himself from rocks, saying that he could not find a solution other than committing suicide.<sup>155</sup>

Although according to Emin Ali, it is Khadije who told Muhammad that he became a prophet, classical Islamic sources and western scholars state in total harmony that Waraqa bin Nawfal was the one who gave Muhammad the news. For example, giving the account that Khadije had told the incident of *vahiy* to her nephew Waraqa, and he in turn had avowed that Muhammad was a prophet, both Ibn Ishāk<sup>156</sup> and Rodinson<sup>157</sup> emphasize Waraqa’s intellectual background: that he was a *Hanīf* and was well-informed about the monotheistic practices prior to Muhammad’s prophethood. Also noteworthy is that although the attempted suicide detail is included also in Shiblī, he refuses the claim. *Tarih II* continues its rupture from the traditional narration by adding that “[t]he new religion to which Muhammad began to invite was named ‘Abrahamic religion’ by making a resemblance to the *Hanīfs* of that time.”<sup>158</sup> This postulation that accentuates the link between Islam and already existing religious formations should be considered in combination with these words of *Tarih II*:

When examined from a historical angle, it becomes evident that Muhammad did not appear abruptly by saying that “I am the prophet of Allah.” He had realized that the habits and moral values of Arabs were very low, primitive and in need of rectification; in order to amend these, he isolated himself in secluded places and gave thought for years and as a consequence of years-long deliberation, in him was born a notion of *vahiy* and revelation. The concept of *vahiy* and revelation was familiar to Arabs prior to Muhammad. Arabs, as all primitive societies, used to believe that poets received revelation from forces they could not conceive. For Arabs, these forces were djinns. Djinns, as though, used to give in the form revelation to soothsayers the power of augury. Such beliefs were so vivid and

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<sup>154</sup> *ibid.* p. 33, my translation

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.* pp. 33-4, my translation

<sup>156</sup> Çağatay, Neşet. *op. cit.*, p. 151

<sup>157</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *op. cit.*, p. 73

<sup>158</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 89, my translation

deep in Arabia that even Muhammad himself wholeheartedly believed in the existence of djinns. He indeed believed that djinns used to incite revelation to poets. Arabs used to reckon poets as soothsayers. What Muhammad learnt from the religions of Moses and Jesus strengthened this understanding of his. These prophets had said that they received revelation through angels. In those religions too existed the concepts of djinn and angel. According to the religions, since djinns were evil, prophets would not have received revelation from them. Muhammad, like other prophets, cordially believed that the power that made him revelation was not a power that intended to deceive humans but a divine power which guided them to goodness and happiness.<sup>159</sup>

This passage suggests two related subjects: first, the concept of *vahiy* which was previously demurred to be of Divine nature is now presented as a product of Muhammad's own deliberation, the revelatory messages are interpreted as a humane reaction to the ills of the Arabic people; secondly, it is claimed that in the basis of Islam lies a Judeo-Christian tradition which results from Muhammad's borrowing religious concepts from these religions of salvation. If considered together, these implications put forward that as Muhammad felt sorrow for the debauchery of his people and wanted to rectify those sins, he came up with the notion of *vahiy* he borrowed from Judaism and Christianity and which had also long existed among Arabs. The postulation of the possibility of a Judeo-Christian root seems to be borrowed from western scholars. Emanating from the early orientalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there always existed the suggestion that Muhammad was largely influenced by previous monotheistic religions. Later scholars such as Patricia Crone and Michael Cook also contributed to this, suggesting that Islam was born as a Judaic sect and Muhammad appeared among Jews and Arabs with a messianic role.<sup>160</sup> The postulation continues saying that Muhammad was a poet and the verses that came out of his mouth were poems. There is a remarkable rapport between this postulation in history textbooks and the works of western scholars. For instance, this postulation is stated in the textbooks with these words:

The verses that belong to the first phase [verses of Mecca phase] are sentimental and of literary value. The verses told in Medina, even though more serious in terms of content, are less in literary value than those of Mecca.<sup>161</sup>

These [pre-Islamic poems] were the sole products of Arabic literature prior to the *Qur'ān*.<sup>162</sup>

Rodinson, similarly, puts forward that Muhammad, "...with no intention of producing a work of literature,"<sup>163</sup> had written numerous poems which later came to be known as the *sūrah*s of

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<sup>159</sup> *ibid.* p. 91, my translation

<sup>160</sup> See P. Crone and M. Cook. *op. cit.*

<sup>161</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 92, my translation

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.* p. 87, my translation



the *Qur'ān*. That the Meccan verses are more valuable in literary terms than the Medinese ones is alleged by western scholars also. Rodinson, referring to Leone Caetani's *Annali dell'Islam*, says that:

[...] the Qoran became a kind of newspaper, publishing the orders of the day to the troops, passing judgement on domestic affairs and explaining the ups and downs of the conflict. Moreover, Allah's style altered in consequence. Even in Mecca the disjointed verses of the early days – terse and abrupt to the point of considerable obscurity, full of striking poetic images – had become, in the accounts of the lives of the prophets of ancient times, much longer, more pedestrian and more precise.<sup>164</sup>

The process of humanization of the religion *Tarih II* imposes is taken one step further: the humanization of the Prophet is followed by humanization of revelation which subsequently ensues humanization of the Scripture. The same imposition that excludes divine involvement and leaves the initiative to Muhammad is observed in *Bakalorya Tarihi* too:

As Muslims say and believe, these verses were brought from Allah to Muhammad through an angel called Gabriel in the form of *vahiy* or revelation. Muhammad has generated the idea of revelation with the incentive to correct the corrupted morals of Arabs. Muhammad was a person who wanted to amend the low morals of the people around him. He said that he was a prophet of Allah.<sup>165</sup>

Stripping religion off the Divine Being and stressing the prophets eventually proposes that prophets are but teachers of moral values who create principles in order to correct and guide human beings to the direction they believe to be true. The curriculum of religion courses in the 1930s and 1940s exemplifies such an understanding. The education of religion which was largely forbidden in the 1930s and 1940s was allowed only at primary schools in villages; however, what the curriculum of these religion courses included is noteworthy:

[t]he principles of Islam were claimed to be contemporary moral principles. These principles were, not to interfere in anybody's religion and faith, to work hardly, to be a good person, to live with others in harmony, not to cheat, to keep away from fatalism and [religious] fanaticism.<sup>166</sup>

Among other books *Bakalorya Tarihi* says that “Muhammad acknowledged in his religion social and legal equality [among people].”<sup>167</sup> Emin Ali also applauds the same equalitarian idea:

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<sup>163</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 93-94

<sup>164</sup> Caetani, Leone. *Annali dell'Islam*, Milan, Hoepli, vol. I, 1905, p. 661; cf. Margoliouth, op. Cit., p. 217, cited by Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., p. 217

<sup>165</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., pp. 167-8, my translation

<sup>166</sup> Yamaner, Şerafettin. *Atatürkçü Düşüncede Ulusal Eğitim*, İstanbul, 1999, pp. 150-151, my translation

<sup>167</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., p. 167, my translation

Islam brought a new idea to Arabs. There were no captives, slaves and nobles anymore. Everyone was equal. A man was worth respect not because of the pride of his tribe or family, but his own merits. Muhammad had behaved the captives, the poors, noble and the rich equally.<sup>168</sup>

Interestingly, *Tarih II* suggests an evolutionary nature for the prophecy of the Prophet which explains that Muhammad, in order to reach his honourable aim, i.e., to rectify people, first gave improvised speeches as a *vā'iz*, then he promoted himself first to *nubūwwa* then to being the Prophet of Allah.<sup>169</sup> In the examination of this evolutionary scheme, two interrelated evolutionary notions should be taken into account.

The first assumption is the idea that, human beings, as plants and other animals, are a product of an evolutionary development; thus, some humans in time approach perfection to the detriment of others who fail to adapt these changes. This Darwinist idea has enormously affected the official textbooks of 1930s. For instance, "...the last ring of the chain of life is human."<sup>170</sup> "The high intelligence, understanding and power of today's human has come into being through [the evolution of] millions of generations."<sup>171</sup> This notion suggests that some humans evolutionize so that they become intellectually more sophisticated than the rest of people. These 'sophisticated' individuals who, by birth, are 'gifted' with certain qualities and talents continue their evolution during their lifetime. As *Tarih II* puts, the Prophet is among these leaders who by virtue and intelligence lead their fellows. The virtuous Prophet "...emerged as a decent [person] who did not seek advantage [of his leading position among Arabs]."<sup>172</sup> "His sole aim was to rectify the moral values, religion and social life of the people around himself."<sup>173</sup> "[People of Medina] were in the search of a leader who would bring them together."<sup>174</sup> The similarity between these words and what Rodinson suggests about the sincerity of Muhammad is noteworthy. While western scholars have not yet reached an agreement upon whether Muhammad was 'insincere' or not, the likes of Rodinson<sup>175</sup> and Hodgson<sup>176</sup> believe that he was not insincere in the verses that 'came out of his mouth'. Asking the question whether Muhammad was sincere in his 'poems' which came out from his sentiments or if he was a fraud who purposely fabricated this whole notion of *vahiy* in order to take advantage of the distinguished position he held among his fellows, Rodinson answers:

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<sup>168</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 53, my translation

<sup>169</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 91-2

<sup>170</sup> *Tarih I*, p. 5, my translation

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.* p. 6, my translation

<sup>172</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 91, my translation

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.* p. 91, my translation

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.* p. 90, my translation

<sup>175</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., p. 77

<sup>176</sup> Hodgson, Marshall, G.S. op. cit., p. 161

We have passed the period when incredulity towards any form of religious message seemed to make it obligatory to regard all those who transmitted them as liars. Eighteenth century rationalist philosophers for instance, like Christian apologists and theologians, looked on Muhammad as the example of a perfect fraud. It was even said of him, from certain dubious accounts of his life, that he actually resorted to conjuring tricks in order to impress his contemporaries. (...) some, like Voltaire, managed to find some extenuating circumstances for Muhammad in his legitimate ambition to raise his people to a less ignoble position on the stage of history. the times he lived in and the rough nature of Arabs he had to lead obliged him to resort to fraud if he was to make any impression on such people.<sup>177</sup>

[i]t is now generally understood and admitted that certain individuals can sincerely believe that they are recipients of visual, auditory and mental messages from the Beyond; and also that their sincerity is no proof that these messages really come from where they are claimed to come.<sup>178</sup>

It is therefore conceivable that what Muhammad saw and heard may have been the supernatural beings described to him by the Jews and Christians with whom he talked. It is understandable that, in the words that came to him, elements of his actual experience, the stuff of his thoughts, dreams and meditations, and memories of discussions that he had heard should have re-emerged, chopped, changed and transposed, with an appearance of immediate reality that seemed to him proof of some external activity which, although inaccessible to other men's minds, was yet wholly objective in its nature.<sup>179</sup>

Rodinson, while believing in the sincerity of the Prophet as *Tarih II* does, contradicts with *Tarih II* on the point that in claiming his prophethood, Muhammad did not plan to raise the 'level' of Arab people. Rodinson, like most other western scholars, believes that the Prophet was not 'ummī, whereas the classical Islamic historiography, he says, wrongfully interpreted the *Qur'ān*, and therefore assumed that Muhammad did not know to read and write.<sup>180</sup> There is a consensus among western scholars that Muhammad was literate, since he was a merchant. These scholars believe that Islamic tradition much after Muhammad purposely interpreted the word 'ummī as illiterate in order to inflate the miraculous portrayal of the Prophet.<sup>181</sup> *Tarih II* too states that it is misleading to think Muhammad as a man who could not read and write:

In order to understand Muhammad and what sort of a founder of a religion and leader of a religious state he was, it is particularly necessary to examine his military activities. Otherwise, one would be doomed to the failure of dimuniting him to the level of an 'ummī, ignorant, unemotional, static idol who received everything from an angel and transmitted these, without any change, to his surrounding. On the quite contrary, the great person called Muhammad was a

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<sup>177</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., pp. 75-76

<sup>178</sup> ibid. p. 77

<sup>179</sup> ibid. p. 77

<sup>180</sup> ibid. p. 49

<sup>181</sup> *ET*<sup>2</sup>. v. VII, Muhammad\*, p. 364

being who himself was emotional, who thought and proved through his deeds that he was an entrepreneur and the most distinguished person among his contemporaries.<sup>182</sup>

This laudatory portrayal of the Prophet which depicts him as a man of virtue and emphasizes his distinct qualities giving birth to his leadership among the Arab tribes in disunity seems to suggest a possible similarity between the characterization of the Prophet and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who also was depicted with similar qualities in a large corpus of official and unofficial history books in the Republican era. Atatürk, in that fashion, is the most 'sophisticated' and 'decent' Turk among Turks who have been at the top of the pyramid of sophistication in comparison to other peoples.<sup>183</sup> The virtuous life of the Prophet 'resembles' the righteous life of the founder of the Republic; both have seen the 'bad situation' their societies were in, both have long deliberated how to 'save' their people and both have unfailingly 'succeeded' in doing so. These words from Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* best exemplify how he conceived the situation and his position just before he himself 'took the initiative' in 1919:

The hostile states had launched material and non-material attack on the Ottoman state and territories. They had decided to annihilate and share it [among themselves]. The person who was the caliph and the *sultan* was thinking nothing but a way to save his life and comfort. His government was, too. People (*millet*), although having not realized their being headless, were awaiting in darkness and uncertainty what will become.<sup>184</sup>

Whosoever were those who assaulted the Turkish fatherland and the liberty of the Turk, it was as a nation necessary to resist them with arms and to fight with them. It would not, of course, be appropriate to reveal all the necessities of this significant decision in the beginning. It was necessary to divide the application into phases and, by making use of the events and the course of events, to prepare the sentiments and thoughts of people and, step by step, to strive to reach the objective. And thus was it. If our nine-year activities and what we have done are being reviewed in a logical sequence, it will automatically be understood that the overall direction we have followed so far never has deviated from the path drawn and the direction pointed by the first decision.<sup>185</sup>

I too [like the members of the royal family] had discerned this inevitable historical development [that as the National Struggle approached success, the national will would be realized].<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 93-94, my translation

<sup>183</sup> *Tarih I*, pp. 10-12

<sup>184</sup> Atatürk, M.Kemal. *Nutuk (sadeleştirilmiş)*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1998, p. 7, my translation

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.* pp. 10-11, my translation

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.* p. 11, my translation

I can thus summarize what I have recently said: bearing in my conscience as a national secret, I had to have the capacity of improvement I had felt in the conscience and the future of the nation gradually applied to the whole nation (*ben milletın vicdanında ve geleceğinde hissettiğim büyük gelişme kabiliyetini, bir milli sır gibi vicdanımda taşıyarak, yavaş yavaş bütün topluma uygulamak mecburiyetinde idim*).<sup>187</sup>

Taha Parla, using Atatürk's above-mentioned words, argues in *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları* that

[t]he person who fulfills and writes the history of the application of this decision-plan does not mature with the events; he [Atatürk] claims that, from the beginning it has been the same person, hitherto he knows the phases of the event and his objective. The nation is the one which will develop, or better, the one which will be developed by him. If we are to use a metaphor, the hero of this national *bildungsroman* is the nation; but the actual hero, the one who will develop it, the one who perceived in it the capacity to improve, the one who moulded, protected and created the work is 'I', Atatürk.<sup>188</sup>

These words of *Tarih II* introduce another dimension: "Islam still gives elation to the hearts even fourteen centuries after his [Muhammad] death."<sup>189</sup> The survival and the enduring effects of the new religion 'generated' by the Prophet bring into minds this quotation of Atatürk: "Of course my humble body will expire some day. However, the Turkish Republic shall last to the eternity."<sup>190</sup>

Secondly, the notion that Muhammad's prophethood followed an evolutionary scheme which started from being a *vā'iz* and ended up as the prophet of Allah results in the notion that religion also is a concept which evolves to achieve perfection. What *Tarih I* postulates on the evolutionary nature of religion is striking:

There was no trace of religious ideas in these [ancient and primitive] people.<sup>191</sup>

It is evident that the primitive people were afraid of ancestors (*ata*).<sup>192</sup>

The fear of *ata*, mysteriously, was replaced by the fear of tribal god (*kabile allahı*). People whose brains could not transcend this idea also saw the universe within the frame of family. Fear of *ata* was mixed with the fear of wild animals. In this way, the sanctified ancestor (*ulvileştirilmiş ata*), the incipient form of the concept of Allah, was figuratively depicted in the form of various animals.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *ibid.* p. 11, my translation

<sup>188</sup> Parla, Taha. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları*, 1994, p. 30, my translation

<sup>189</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 92, my translation

<sup>190</sup> Baydar, Mustafa. *Atatürk Diyor ki*, Varlık, İstanbul, 1998, p. 84, my translation

<sup>191</sup> *Tarih I*, p. 21, my translation

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.* p. 21, my translation

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.* p. 21, my translation

Humans, by talking to each other, have strengthened each other's fears, and have invented common sacred customs. Among these customs, the concepts of forbidden (*haram*) and detestable (*mekrūh*) constituted an important place; the fear of being excluded gave rise to the concern of purification (*tasfiye*). This concern of and need for purification caused the search for the ways of purification and begot the rituals for purification. This in turn gave rise to the people who exercised these rituals. Thus, with the first principles of religion and rituals emerged the class of priests and magicians.<sup>194</sup>

An evolutionary involvement is seen in the religious matters, likewise in all matters related to human life. Primitive men did not have any idea about Allah and religion. The human brain slowly had been accustomed to such sophisticated notions. The notion of religion becomes more sophisticated as human beings become engaged in social life, it converges to the concept of oneness (*wahdah*) and in the end it becomes a reality (*hakīkī*) which is understood better through the power and magnificence of the nature.<sup>195</sup>

It is the human intelligence which found the concept of Divine quality (*Tanrılık vasfī*) and discovered and still discovers the mysteries of this concept.<sup>196</sup>

Thus, the prophet of a monotheistic religion, Muhammad, whose religion is one of final steps in the evolution of the religion, is considered by *Tarih I* and *Tarih II* to have evolved in that he generated the ideas which the people of his time were in needed or the conditions of his time demanded.

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<sup>194</sup> ibid. p. 22, my translation

<sup>195</sup> ibid. pp. 23-24, my translation

<sup>196</sup> ibid. p. 24, my translation

## CHAPTER IV

### FORMATION OF MUSLIM SOCIETY IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY

The advent of Islam did not immediately result in a partition of the lives of the 'believers' and 'infidels'; these groups continued a long while to live together. The Prophet was the leader of his community, but Muslims did not seem to claim political supremacy over their Meccan fellows. Although Muslims were unsatisfied with Meccans' unfavourable attitude towards Islam, the 'believers' did have neither the priority nor the power to attempt establishing political domination in the city. Meccans too seemed at the beginning to pursue a loose policy over the emergence of Muslim community; they did not immediately apply harsh precautions against the 'believers'. However, as time passed and Muslims grew in number, tensions between the two blocks deteriorated; enduring economic and social sanctions compelled Muslims to seek first succor and later alliances with such various powers as the Medinese people. That the possibility that a non-Meccan people may welcome Muslims became realized did open a brand new page in the course of Islam. Muslims, with no apparent political claims so far, became the focal point of a new type of social formation; Muslims of Mecca became actively involved in social life and politics of the city, in sharp contrasts to their lives in Mecca. They made contracts, established alliances, waged wars, conquered towns and distributed booty, which were indicating a gradual formation of a state. One significant indicator was the shaping of a more sophisticated Muslim society that transcended previous *concitoyen* relationships and developed instead relationships based on varying interests among mercantilist and impoverished Meccan and agriculturalist Medinese members. Gathering them together and creating a Muslim community was no easy task since their interests were sometimes in conflict, yet Muhammad in time successfully drew their interests closer. Pointing out to the common 'enemy', i.e. Meccan pagans, and creating a fraternity between Meccan and Medinese Muslims were his most significant tools. This achievement of Muhammad's was the first step of a Muslim *ümmet* which later transformed the whole Arabian Peninsula. Marshall Hodgson in his *Venture of Islam* gives a hint of how the monotheistic religions expand their efficiency and impact:

The cults of the old gods of nature were superseded and even excluded by those of the new ethical and historical God. The difference was expressed in a tendency for the new cults to use less palpable symbols of the Transcendent,... rather than the old fleshy images, for the true symbol and expression of the divine presence was

the community itself. Monotheism might be defined by the worship of one God; it became effective in history when the worshippers formed one people.<sup>197</sup>

The idea that only after Muslims moved to *Yathrib* could they take the steps towards the construction of their own society can be supported by the fact that the Islamic calendar, launched by the second caliph ‘Umar, takes *Hijrah* and not the moment of the first *vahiy* as the starting point. What can be inferred from this fact is that, *Hijrah* was seen by the later Muslims as the true commencement of a Muslim society preparing to sow the seeds of a state. For that reason, this thesis too takes *Hijrah* as the starting point in examining the formation of Muslim society.

In that respect, how the popular history books of the pre-Republican era and the history books and textbooks of the Republican era narrated the society formation in the post-*Hijrah* Muslim community will be examined. In pursuant to this goal, of the pre-Republican popular books *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām* Shibli’s ‘*Asr-ı Sa‘ādet*, Ahmed Refik’s *Tārīh-i ‘Umūmī*, Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī’s *İslām Tārīhi* will be under examination, whereas *Tarih II*, Emin Ali’s ‘*Umūmī Tārīh*, and *Bakalorya Tarihi* of Enver Behnan will be largely used as the primary sources of the Republican era.

While examining social formation in the early Islamic history, it is reasonable to divide the entire process into two interrelated sections and study each in connection with one another. These two sub-sections are: Medinese fraternity and the Constitution of Medina, and the battles and the issue of booty.

### **Brotherhood**

As Meccan Muslims took refugee to Medina, they had left behind all of their personal belongings; not only their material properties such as herds of camels and sheep, houses and money but also most family members who refused to convert Islam were left by these refugees at Mecca. Penurious, these Meccan immigrants who were called the *Muhājirūn*, that is, The Emigrants, were in exquisite need of succor from their Muslim fellows in Medina who were named the *Ansār*, i.e., the Helpers. For that reason, the Prophet had found a solution which held that every Medinese Muslim would take a Meccan immigrant as his brother and equally share his property with his new brother. According to classical Islamic historiography, although such a tie of brotherhood, *mu‘ākhā*, had existed among first Muslims prior to *Hijrah*, this creation of ‘fraternity’ between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār* constitutes a very significant

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<sup>197</sup> Hodgson, Marshall, G.S. op. cit., p. 132



step towards the creation of a Muslim society.<sup>198</sup> *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām* for instance, narrates this incident with these words:

In the first year of *Hijrah*, His Excellency the Prophet concluded a contract between the *Quraishīs* of Mecca and the Medinese, using Islam as the medium of unity, which declared that they be one people (*millet-i wāhide*). By executing brotherhood among the members of the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār* first step was taken towards the construction of the Islamic state.<sup>199</sup>

Ahmed Refik, too, gives in account of the incident in a similar way: “Since the Prophet wished for the establishment of a relationship of brotherhood between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār*, he admitted each individual of the Emigrants a brother of a House Owner.”<sup>200</sup> Shiblī, on the other hand, narrates the incident in detail:

In Medina, the *Muhājirūn* used to benefit from all the property of the *Ansār*. However, in order the Emigrants to continue their lives and settle, it was necessary to establish a permanent equality. Because, the Emigrants could not stand making their lives through almsgiving and gifts. They were all used to making their lives through working. They were still working in order to live through their own toil; however, due to lack of means they were unable to. For this reason, The Most Honourable Prophet decided to establish brotherhood among the visitors and the House Owners...The Most Honourable Prophet invited his friends to gather...The number of the *Muhājirūn* was forty five. Our Prophet, speaking to the *Ansār*, said that ‘O *Ansār*, these emigrants are brothers of yours.’ Subsequently, he called one from the *Ansār* and one from the *Muhājirūn* and declared them brothers. Every one of the *Ansār* took his brother to his house and gave him half of his property.<sup>201</sup>

Sa’d bin Rabī’, after taking his immigrant brother to his house and giving him half of his property, said to his brother that, ‘O my brother, I have two wives. I shall divorce one of them and you marry her.’ However, ‘Abdu’l-Rahman bin ‘Awf refused this [proposal].<sup>202</sup>

What the *Ansār* had possessed were nothing but the lands at the oases...For that reason, the *Ansār* demanded that their lands also be shared. However, the *Muhājirūn* [in Mecca] were occupied with trade, and they did not know anything about agriculture. Our Prophet, in the name of *Muhājirūn*, declined this demand; however, when the *Ansār* said that they would be occupied with agriculture and they would share the produce with their brothers Our Prophet accepted this proposal.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Shakir, Mahmud. *İslam Tarihi*, transl. Ferit Aydın, v. 1, İstanbul, 1993, p. 374

<sup>199</sup> *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām*, 1336, p. 48, my translation

<sup>200</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 34, my translation

<sup>201</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu’mānī. op. cit., p. 307, my translation

<sup>202</sup> Ibn Hishām, p. 178, cited by Shiblī. op. cit., p. 307, my translation

<sup>203</sup> Buhārī, cited by Shiblī. op. cit., pp. 307-308, my translation

Shiblī portrays the relationship between the Emigrants and the Helpers as a brotherly one; he believes that solidaristic and altruistic incentives lie under their actions. Relying on a *hadīth* he quotes from Buhārī, Shiblī says that:

[t]his relationship [of brotherhood] was stronger than the actual brotherhood. To the extent that, when a person among the *Ansār* died, his brother among the *Muhājirūn* would inherit his property.<sup>204</sup> However, the actual brother would inherit nothing. This was such put by the *Qur'ān*.<sup>205</sup> 'Surely those who believed and fled [their homes] and struggled hard in Allah's way with their property and their souls, and those who gave shelter and helped-- these are guardians of each other.'<sup>206</sup>

Shiblī's postulation is supported by the tradition. Mahmud Shakir, for instance, states that economic reasons played a minor role in the establishment of the brotherhood claiming that the actual reason was to create a feeling of unity among the 'believers'.<sup>207</sup> Ibn Habīb states that "...this 'brothering' was made on the basis of right and of sharing and implied that if a man died, his 'brother' was to inherit from him in preference to his kinsmen."<sup>208</sup> The bounteousness of Sa'd bin Rabī' to his 'brother' 'Abdu'l-Rahman bin 'Awf is also accounted by early Muslim historians.<sup>209</sup> However, not every author thinks as optimistically as Shiblī. Quite contrary to Shiblī, Ahmed Refik is much more realistic in sketching the true nature of the relationship between the emigrant Meccans, the Prophet in particular, and the *Ansār*. Refik draws attention to the problem that "[the Prophet] had to treat those who wholeheartedly converted to Islam and those who converted to make advantage of this in the same sincere manner."<sup>210</sup> Besides this *munāfik*, i.e., hypocrite, problem the Prophet had to face, Refik emphasizes yet another complication which might cause tension:

Besides, the Prophet was under the obligation to provide sufficient answers to the questions he was frequently asked to verify his prophethood. The Most Honourable Prophet, almost all the time, used to recite verses from the *Qur'ān* in order to answer these questions...[Medinese] Arabs strictly controlled the deeds and the words of the Prophet. Since the Prophet's social life was under the meticulous scrutiny of the whole people, people were striving to detect in the Prophet's acts and words inconsistency and discrepancy in order to corroborate their doubts [about him] or to check his reliability. As The Most Honourable Prophet had to act appropriately and logically under this public inspection, he also felt the obligation to point against the close scrutiny of his enemies the leaders of Islam, such as Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Ali, as an epitome of Islam.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Buhārī, *Kitābu'l-Tafsīr*, cited by Shiblī. op. cit., p. 308

<sup>205</sup> *Qur'ān*, translated by M. H. Shakir, 8:72

<sup>206</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p. 308, my translation

<sup>207</sup> Shakir, Mahmud. op. cit., pp. 371-375

<sup>208</sup> Ibn Habīb, *Kitābu'l-Muḥabbar*, cited by *EF*<sup>2</sup>, v. VII, *mu'ākhatā'*, p. 254

<sup>209</sup> *EF*<sup>2</sup>, v. VII, *mu'ākhatā'*, p. 254

<sup>210</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 34, my translation

<sup>211</sup> *ibid.* p. 34, my translation

Although Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī does not mention the ‘fraternity of Muslims’, he draws the attention to the historical significance of *Hijrah* with these words: “The day His Excellency reached Medina was an important day which gave the tidings that the world had stepped into a successful phase of the biggest and the most significant revolution (*inkilāb*) of the mankind.”<sup>212</sup> By establishing a tie of ‘fraternity’ between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār*, Shiblī says, the Prophet had another objective:

When this contract of brotherhood was created, the Prophet’s concern was to concoct qualities, characteristic features and tastes shared by the spiritual guides and disciples of the future raised by the Emigrants and the Helpers so that these future generations might incorporate other people in the same Islamic values.<sup>213</sup>

As for the Republican primary sources, the establishment of ties of brotherhood between the Emigrants and the Helpers is not mentioned in these books. Rather, the sources narrate the emigration of the Prophet differently than do the pre-Republican popular books. *Bakalorya Tarihi* for instance, puts forward that “[t]he Jews of Medina in fact believed in the oneness of Allah. They found Muhammad’s religion similar [to their beliefs] and they promised that they would protect him.”<sup>214</sup> The claim that the prophet of Islam was invited to *Yathrib* by the Jews rather than Medinese Muslims and that he relied on their promise is noteworthy in that, no other primary source, pre-Republican or Republican, mentions a Jewish involvement in the *Hijrah*. For the classical Islamic sources that pre-Republican books rely on, such a claim is beyond the bounds of any possibility. This claim basically contradicts with an incident what is known as the *Bey’atu’l-‘Aqabah*, that is, the Act of the Pass (*Akabe Bi’ati*) which is unfailingly accepted by Muslim historians. The Act of Pass is the oath of allegiance to the Prophet made by the Medinese Muslims. The incident is narrated by Shiblī in great detail:

As he [the Prophet] was in ‘*Aqabah*, [in order to visit the tribes during the season of Pilgrimage and teach them Islam], upon seeing a few men, he asked them who they were, and they, in response, said that they were from [the tribe of] *Khazraj*. The Most Honourable Prophet had recited them a few verses and they [the Medinese], looking at each other, said: ‘Let Jews do not coincide with us on believing in this man (*Bu adama inanmak hususunda Yahudiler bize tevafik etmesinler!*).’ Among them six converted Islam right there...Next year, twelf people who came to Mecca from Medina converted Islam. They also demanded that someone accompany them [to Medina] in order to teach Islam.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 205, my translation

<sup>213</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 312, my translation

<sup>214</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., p. 167, my translation

<sup>215</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., pp 284-285, my translation

Next year seventy two people came to Mecca from Medina, these, *sub rosa*, left their friends and met our Prophet at 'Aqabah and subsequently converted Islam and presented him oath of allegiance (*bey'at*).<sup>216</sup>

[The Prophet to the Medinese pilgrims] From this time on, my blood is yours, and you are mine, and I am yours (*Bu günden itibaren benim kanım sizin kanınız, siz benimsiniz, ve ben sizinim*).<sup>217</sup>

Ahmed Hilmī, on the other hand, gives the accounts in less detail. Skipping the previous details, he mentions only the last *bey'at*:

In the thirteenth year of the Mohammedan prophethood, seventy three men and two women came from Medina to Mecca during the season of Pilgrimage. They met His Excellency Prophet and talked about the issue of emigration to Medina. They promised that they would protect the Most Honourable Prophet as they protect themselves, their own children and families. After that his Excellency gave the Noble Companions the permission to emigrate, [subsequently] the Companions emigrated one by one, the Prophet himself, with *Imām 'Ali* and *Sadīk* [Abū Bakr] remained at Mecca.<sup>218</sup>

Emin Ali's narration resembles that of Shiblī, since Emin Ali too details the developments before the *Hijrah*:

In the eleventh year of his prophethood, this desparate situation suddenly changed. A small group of pilgrims who came from the city of *Yathrib* attested the prophethood of Muhammad. Members of the group promised Muhammad at a place called 'Aqabah which was not far from Mecca; they promised that they would succour him if he came to *Yathrib*. Once the *Yathribians* made their return to their city, they made suggestions to their fellow citizens that supported Muhammad. Muhammad had sent a young man called *Mus'ab* in order to gain support in *Yathrib*. *Mus'ab* succeeded at *Yathrib* in converting many people Islam. One year later, he brought seventy three people to Mecca during the season of pilgrimage in order to make a precise contract with Muhammad. The group waited Muhammad at 'Aqabah. Muhammad came to 'Aqabah in the misnight, for he was avoiding from [being caught by the] *Quraishīs*. The two sides made a contract there in the night. *Yathribians* promised that in case Muhammad immigrated to their city, they would follow his orders. After the second *bey'at* of 'Aqabah, Muslims, one by one, started to emigrate *Yathrib*.<sup>219</sup>

*Bakalorya Tarihi*, on the other hand, contradicts with Emin Ali, for he does not accept Jewish involvement in the *Hijrah*: "The [Medinese] Jews accepted neither his [the Prophet's] leadership nor his prophethood."<sup>220</sup> Yet, *Tarih II* does not mention the incident of Pact, and suffices saying about the *Hijrah* that "[The Arabs of] Medina promised that they would

<sup>216</sup> *ibid.* p. 286, my translation

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.* pp. 286-287, my translation

<sup>218</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. *op. cit.*, p. 202, my translation

<sup>219</sup> Emin Ali. *op. cit.*, p. 39, my translation

<sup>220</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, p. 167, my translation

protect Muhammad and the Muslims, and Muhammad escaped from Mecca.”<sup>221</sup> “Muhammad started the Islamic organization, there [Medina] he became the political and military leader of the Muslim society...”<sup>222</sup> However, the postulation of *Tarih II* that “...only the tribe of Us (Aws) did not accept Islam with ease [...]”<sup>223</sup> contradicts with the narration of Shiblī:

The leader of the tribe Aws...was such an influential man that no man could oppose his word.... [the teacher sent by the Prophet to Medina in order to teach the Medinese Islam] had contacted also with him, but the leader had at the first contact told that he could not like Islam; however, once he listened to the *Qur’ānic* verses the teacher had recited, his heart softened and he became a Muslim. Consequently, the whole Aws tribe, by following their leader, did not hesitate in accepting Islam.<sup>224</sup>

### Constitution of Medina

If the establishment of brotherhood ties between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār* is the first step in the formation of a Muslim society and the organization of an Islamic state, the Constitution of Medina can be considered as the next one. Ibn Ishāq, an early Muslim historian narrates the Constitution in the following way: “The Messenger of God wrote a document between the Emigrants and the *Ansār*, and in it he made a treaty and covenant with the Jews, establishing them in their religion and possessions, and assigning to them rights and duties.”<sup>225</sup> The authenticity of the text, says Stephen Humphreys, is remarkably accepted by all Muslim and non-Muslim historians.<sup>226</sup> The historians agree that this piece of document constitutes the origin of the Islamic state. The Constitution is the harbinger of the commencement of the Islamic state not only because it enforced several duties and gave rights to the Muslims and the Jews of Medina, but also because the Prophet was its underwriter, which indicated that at the time of the agreement he was acknowledged by the *Muhācirūn*, the *Ansār* and the Jews not only as the leader of Muslims, but also the *ra’īs* of the whole city of Medina. It is also noteworthy that in the Constitution, all the believers, including Jews, are categorized as *ūmmet*.<sup>227</sup> However, the term has transformed in the later years of the Prophet so that it referred only to Muslims.<sup>228</sup>

Despite the significance of the Constitution of Medina, most of the primary sources used in this study simply ignore it. As the two of the three Republican sources, namely *Tarih*

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<sup>221</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 90, my translation

<sup>222</sup> *ibid.* p. 93, my translation

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.* p. 93, my translation

<sup>224</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. *op. cit.*, pp. 285-286, my translation

<sup>225</sup> *Strat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Wüstenfeld, pp. 341-344; trans. Guillaume, pp. 231-233, cited by Humphreys, R. Stephen. *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, London, 1991, p. 92

<sup>226</sup> Humphreys, R. Stephen. *op. cit.*, p. 92

<sup>227</sup> Ibn Kesir. *El Bidaye ve’ n-Nihaye*, transl. Mehmet Keskin, c. 3, İstanbul, 1994, s. 334

<sup>228</sup> Donner, Fred. *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, Princeton, 1998, pp. 160-166

*II* and *Bakalorya Tarihi*, do not mention the Constitution, neither do *İslām Tārīhi* of Ahmed Hilmī, *Tahlīl ve Tenkīd-i Tārīh-i İslām* and İbnu'l-Cevad Efdāleddīn's *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām*. As a matter of fact, Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī elaborately details the moment the Prophet enters Medina, but the incident of 'fraternity' and the Constitution are omitted in his *İslām Tārīhi*. It is only Shiblī and Ahmed Refik account this covenant, and Emin Ali only slightly mentions it. *Umūmi Tārīh* of Emin Ali narrates that "Both sides [Muslims and Jews] promised by making a contract that they would not attack at each other."<sup>229</sup> On the other hand, before mentioning the Constitution, Shiblī presents the reader a brief history of Jews of Medina, and then he says that:

[t]he [Jewish] tribes (...) used to live in the castles around Medina. Due to the civil war between the tribes of *Khazraj* and *Aws* to which the *Ansār* belonged, these [Arabs] diminished in number. Jews time and time were making effort to worsen the relations among the *Ansār*. For that reason, the very first thing to be done after the *Hijrah* was to be explicit about the relations between the Muslims and the Jews. In pursuant to that goal, the Prophet invited the Jews and the *Ansār* to his presence and approved the signing of a contract between them.<sup>230</sup>

Shiblī also provides the whole text. Ahmed Refik briefly mentions the Constitution saying that "[the Prophet] had given the Jews religious and economic liberties..."<sup>231</sup> Similar to Shiblī, other sources like *Tarih II* accuses Jews of exploitation of the Arabs. For instance, "[t]he Jews used to lend money to the Arabs in anticipation of interest, and they used to exploit the Arabs in every manner."<sup>232</sup> "The Medinese [Arabs] were, in economic terms, under the influence of the Jews."<sup>233</sup> "Arabs of Medina were a minority [compared to the Jews]."<sup>234</sup> "The resistance the Jews demonstrated against Muhammad was stiffer."<sup>235</sup>

## Battles

The battles constitute the next step towards the creation of a Muslim society and advancement in the evolution of the primitive tribal organization in Medina into a state with an army and capital. Muslims, by beginning to fight against the 'infidels', not only put an end to the tense but peaceful relations with their Meccan foes but also acquired other quality: the merit of dying for the life of another Muslim. These battles also intensified the already powerful solidarity among the members of the Emigrants and the *Ansār* created by the covenant of 'fraternity.' The advent of *jihād* is interpreted by the pre-Republican historians as

<sup>229</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 40, my translation

<sup>230</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., pp. 317-318, my translation

<sup>231</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 35, my translation

<sup>232</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 82, my translation

<sup>233</sup> ibid. p. 90, my translation

<sup>234</sup> ibid. p. 90, my translation

<sup>235</sup> ibid. p. 93, my translation

“...at this [second] year [of the *Hijrah*] Allah has granted the permission for *jihād*.”<sup>236</sup> This novelty of war against the ‘infidels’ is described by Ahmed Refik in the following words:

Upto that moment, those who accepted Islam used to give an undertaking that they would worship no gods but One God, that they would avoid from theft, adultery, killing the infants and slandering another human being, and that they would follow the orders of the Prophet. Now, fighting against the enemy was added to all these conditions.<sup>237</sup>

Shiblī advocates that Muslims were permitted to fight against the infidels on the condition that “...they are attacked by the infidels.”<sup>238</sup> Otherwise, the Muslims, says Shiblī, were prone to continue with the peaceful terms. Shiblī’s all endeavour is to refute the criticism that Muslims, once acquiring shelter from their Medinese fellows, dropped their peaceful manner they had assumed in Mecca previously and became belligerent. In order to support his view, Shiblī quotes two verses from the *Qur’ān*: “Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them.”<sup>239</sup> “But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”<sup>240</sup> Ahmed Hilmī too defends the Muslim attacks on Meccan caravans, and criticizes those who attack the way of life during the time of the Prophet, for the life-style has undergone a serious change since that time.<sup>241</sup> He says that, “[n]owadays, the way of giving response to the enemy is different.”<sup>242</sup> However, he believes that it should be questioned which way of fighting against the enemy is better for the humanity; that of the early Muslims or those used in today’s world. He neither hides nor feels the need to hide the fact that it was Muslims, who by interrupting the Syrian trade caravans, ignited the flame of war. However, like Shiblī, he too believes that the road which led to the first bloody confrontation of Muslims and ‘infidels’ was paved with the intolerant and belligerent attitude the Meccans assumed against Muslims while they were still in Mecca. Ahmed Refik, on the other hand, proposes that the Muslims took up arms since “[t]he battles were the most important solution which would enable the Muslims win over non-believers in material terms.”<sup>243</sup> The word ‘material’ suggests two different explanations: First, Muslims might have interpreted the battles as an opportunity to cripple the profits Meccan merchants made from trade caravans by launching attacks on these caravans. Thus pillaging the caravans would enrich the Muslim community. This interpretation is supported by the accounts of

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<sup>236</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 329, my translation

<sup>237</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 35, my translation

<sup>238</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., pp. 329-330, my translation

<sup>239</sup> *Qur’ān*, translated by M. H. Shakir, 22:39

<sup>240</sup> *ibid.* 2:192

<sup>241</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., pp. 207-208

<sup>242</sup> *ibid.* p. 208, my translation

<sup>243</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 35, my translation

‘Urwa ibn al-Zubair, the founder of historical study among muslims and one of the most reliable Muslim chroniclers.<sup>244</sup> ‘Urwa states that:

When the Messenger of God heard about them [a large caravan led by Abū Sufyān], he summoned his companions and told them of the great wealth they were bearing with them and how few were their numbers...They [Muslim warriors, in order to lay an ambush] set out not seeking to [attack] anyone other than Abū Sufyān and those who rode with him, with no thought in their heads but of the booty to be won from the *Quraishites*, and they did not expect the encounter to lead to any serious fighting. That was God’s revelation concerning it [in these terms]: You wished that the band unarmed might be yours [*Qur’ān* viii, 7].<sup>245</sup>

Second, by demonstrating their capability to attack armed caravans, Muslims might have considered to prove that they were not feeble anymore. The latter is rather militaristic, whereas the former approaches the issue more in economic terms. Ahmed Refik seems to synthesize both and advocate that “[t]he victories to be won in these battles would serve as a proof that Islam was the Divine order.”<sup>246</sup> The future victories would give the Muslim society an upper-hand; it would be easier to convince people that Allah was at the side of Muslims, thus more people would convert, which in turn strengthen the political power of the Muslim community. The more powerful Muslim armies were, the more people would convert Islam, the more converters, the less wealthy would be the Meccans, for “...the spread of Islam [would] be facilitated by these battles.”<sup>247</sup> In pursuant to this goal, “it was possible to make use of the commercial competition between Mecca and Medina.”<sup>248</sup> Rather worldly, Refik continues postulating that prior to the first confrontation with the enemy, certain religious injunctions were realized:

...some features such as *ezan* and the reorientation of the *kible*...These establishments were also politically very significant. Particularly, the *kible* which previously was the *Baitu’l-Muqaddas* [Jerusalem] was reoriented and changed to Mecca; therefore, the *Muhājirūn* were reminded their fatherland, and their enthusiasm to fight for Mecca was augmented.<sup>249</sup>

*Tarih II* and *Bakalorya Tarihi* are almost identical in their narration of the Muslims’ incentives to attack Meccan caravans:

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<sup>244</sup> *EP*<sup>2</sup>, v. 1, Badr\*, p. 867

<sup>245</sup> Tabarī, *Annales*, ed. cit., vol. I, 3, p. 1285, cited by Rodinson, Maxime. op. cit., p. 164

<sup>246</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 35, my translation

<sup>247</sup> *ibid.* p. 35, my translation

<sup>248</sup> *ibid.* p. 35, my translation

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.* p. 35, my translation



A merchant called Abū Sufyān was heading from Syria to [Mecca]. Muhammad learnt that. He gathered Muslims and they all together went to attack the caravan.<sup>250</sup>

As Muhammad settled at Medina and made his organization, attacks had started on the trade caravans traveling between Mecca and Syria. A caravan, accompanied by seventy cavalries all members of *Quraish* tribe, which went to Syria for commercial interests was making its return to Mecca. Their leader was Abū Sufyān... Muhammad learnt that. He also had learnt how much treasury the caravan was carrying and the insufficiency of their [armed] forces. Muhammad gathered the Muslims. He told them about the situation and in order to attack the caravan, and they left.<sup>251</sup>

As for Emin Ali, his *'Umūmi Tārīh* adds to the same narration the sentiment of revenge: “When people in Medina heard that an important Meccan caravan headed to Syria, Muslims applied to Muhammad in asking permission for attacking on the caravan. They said: ‘We would like to revenge our citizens who insulted and tormented us and repelled us from our fatherland.’”<sup>252</sup> What is remarkable is that *Tarih* of 1929 summarizes the developments which led to the battle of *Badr* using exactly the same narration but briefer version of Emin Ali.<sup>253</sup>

The battle of *Badr* is narrated by the pre-Republican popular books in much detail in accordance with the classical Islamic tradition which interprets the battle as a “great landmark in the history of Islam.”<sup>254</sup> There exists in Islamic historiography a separate genre called *maghāzī*, “...which from the time of the work on the subject ascribed to Wāqidī (d. 207/823), if not earlier, has signified in particular the expeditions and raids organized by the Prophet Muhammad in the Medinan period.”<sup>255</sup> Even though western scholars suspiciously interpret the validity of the accounts, the tradition goes saying that the battle of *Badr* was won due to Allah’s help.<sup>256</sup> The verses below are believed by Muslim scholars to definitely indicate Divine intervention in the battle<sup>257</sup>:

And Allah did certainly assist you at *Badr* when you were weak; be careful of [your duty to] Allah then, that you may give thanks. When you said to the believers: Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you with three thousand of the angels sent down? Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard, and they come upon you in a headlong manner, your Lord will assist you with five thousand of the havoc-making angels.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., p. 168, my translation

<sup>251</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 94, my translation

<sup>252</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 41, my translation

<sup>253</sup> *Tarih*, p. 8

<sup>254</sup> Ahmed, Gulzar. *The Battles of the Prophet of Allah*, Lahore, 1985, v. 1, p. 126

<sup>255</sup> *EL*<sup>2</sup>, vol. V, *maghāzī*\*, p. 1161

<sup>256</sup> *ibid.*, vol I, *Badr*\*, p. 868

<sup>257</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 5, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1992, p. 326

<sup>258</sup> *Qur’ān*, translated by M.H. Shakir, 3:123-125

When you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another. And Allah only gave it as a good news and that your hearts might be at ease thereby; and victory is only from Allah; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. When He caused calm to fall on you as a security from Him and sent down upon you water from the cloud that He might thereby purify you, and take away from you the uncleanness of the Shaitan, and that He might fortify your hearts and steady (your) footsteps thereby. When your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you; therefore make firm those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.<sup>259</sup>

So you did not slay them, but it was Allah Who slew them, and you did not smite when you smote (the enemy), but it was Allah Who smote, and that He might confer upon the believers a good gift from Himself; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing.<sup>260</sup>

The tradition also believes that the verse below signifies the visitation of God to the *Quraishites*<sup>261</sup>: “On the day when We will seize (them) with the most violent seizing; surely We will inflict retribution.”<sup>262</sup> The applausive style of Muslim historians is noticeable; while Muslim soldiers who die at the battlefield are called *shahīd*<sup>263</sup>, i.e., martyr, those deceased ‘infidels’ are labeled merely dead, or sometimes they are even more subjectively called ‘slain.’ As the meritorious Muslim soldiers are acclaimed as heroes, such as ‘the lion of Allah’<sup>264</sup> and ‘the sword of Allah’; most of the time the enemy receives criticism for acting ‘cowardly.’ In total accordance with this established style, Shiblī and Ahmed Hilmī elaborate an epic of *Badr* where a small band of Muslim soldiers valiantly defeat the outnumbered ‘infidel’ soldiers. Ahmed Hilmī, for instance, says that “[t]he battle of *Badr* is of exceptional quality of heroism and poetization that history can demonstrate.”<sup>265</sup> The battle itself is excessively detailed: from the configuration of both armies at the field to the tactics the Prophet gave to his Muslim fellows to the death of Meccan aristocrats every single event that took place in the battle is recorded. Another feature of the battle that Ahmed Hilmī strongly emphasizes is that the *Muhājirūn* soldiers in the rows of Muslim army were close relatives of the soldiers in the Meccan army.<sup>266</sup> Therefore, the epic narration gains a psychologic dimension; the son against his father, brother gainst his brother. Shiblī, without discrediting the Muslim endeavour

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<sup>259</sup> *ibid.* 8:9-12

<sup>260</sup> *ibid.* 8:17

<sup>261</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, v. 5, Bedir\*, p. 326

<sup>262</sup> *Qur’ân*, translated by M.H. Shakir, 44:16

<sup>263</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, M.E.B., 1992, Eskişehir, v. 11, şehīd\*, p. 390

<sup>264</sup> Şehbenderzâde Ahmed Hilmī. *op. cit.*, p. 217

<sup>265</sup> *ibid.* p. 212, my translation

<sup>266</sup> *ibid.* p. 212

during the battle, says that the Muslims were destined to victory, for Allah had sent his angels to help the 'faithful': "Although Allah had promised His Prophet the victory, the Most Honourable Prophet, in accordance with the laws of this nature (*bu ālem-i esbabın icabetine itbāen*), had ordered his soldiers to form rows."<sup>267</sup> Ahmed Refik, who does not detail the battle as do Shiblī and Ahmed Hilmī, contributes by quoting the Prophet's prayer at the battlefield:

The battle of *Badr* would either cause to the authentication of Islam in case of a Muslim victory, or lead to the total annihilation of Muslims. Upon seeing that the *Quraishīs*, in great number, were making their approach, His Excellency Muhammad took this situation [of the possibility of defeat] into consideration and prayed to Allah: 'My God! If You perish this group of *mujāhidūn*, there shall remain no one who worship You.' Subsequently, he encouraged the *mujāhidūn* in spiritual terms and enabled the battle of *Badr* result in an illuminous victory.<sup>268</sup>

While Emin Ali and *Tarih* say no more than that Muslims were the victorious and that Meccans perished, the battle of *Badr* is remarkably detailed in *Tarih II*. Besides the configuration of Muslim army at the field, the book provides a map of the battle, a significant feature lacking in all other primary sources. Interestingly, Enver Behnan's *Bakalorya Tarihi*, while giving a summary of the battle, mentions the Prophet's valor and details the dialogue of a soldier with a broken sword and the heroic Prophet, who gives his soldier a stick to fight with, which appears also in *Tarih II*.<sup>269</sup> In contrast to Shiblī's postulation which explains Muslim victory in terms of divine intervention, *Tarih II* attributes the victory to the military capabilities of the Prophet: "What brought success to Muhammad was that he had his soldiers taken the necessary precautions and that he himself wisely directed the battle."<sup>270</sup> That the book applauds the military merits of the Prophet brings again minds of the proposed 'similarities' between the prophet of Islam and the founder of the Turkish Republic. The Prophet is praised further with the following words: "The extraordinary courage Muhammad demonstrated during the battle puzzled and astonished Muslims; no one was as courageous as him and no one was able to approach to the enemy as much as he did."<sup>271</sup> Contrary to *Tarih II*; however, Shiblī and especially Ahmed Hilmī gratify the valiance of other Muslims, too. Shiblī, for example, narrates the duels between Muslims and the Meccans in detail.<sup>272</sup> Ahmed Hilmī adds to this picture the following colorful descriptions: "[Despite] His Excellency 'Ali

<sup>267</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., p. 338, my translation

<sup>268</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., pp. 35-36, my translation

<sup>269</sup> Enver Behnan. op. cit., p. 168

<sup>270</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 94-95, my translation

<sup>271</sup> *ibid.* p. 95, my translation

<sup>272</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. op. cit., pp. 340-341

had not taken part in such occasions before, it was evident from his face that he too was a juvenile lion.”<sup>273</sup> That *Tarih II* does not credit Muslim soldiers, but extol the involvement of the Prophet in the battle may be considered in paralell to the supercilious style used by Atatürk in *Nutuk*, where Mustafa Kemal, while understating the involvement of other ‘lesser’ soldiers, seems to have over-emphasized his meritorious commandership. Furthermore, quoting Afetinan, “Atatürk, upon perusing *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, had found what was written about the Islamic history insufficient, he had had the books regarding the history of Islam perused and particularly while examining the battles of Muhammad His Excellency, he himself drew the maps of these [battles].”<sup>274</sup> It is not misleading to suggest that the self-assertive style Mustafa Kemal uses in his *Nutuk* influenced the elaboration of the prophetic image embedded in *Tarih II*, which demonstrates the Prophet as a charismatic and heroic commander, as if he were a military leader equipped with noble characteristic qualities. The ‘humanized’ Prophet, who previously was stripped off the supernatural features such as *wahy*, contemplates his ‘uncivilized’ people and desires to revolutionize the ‘debased’ way Arabs used to live for centuries, and subsequently utilizes his military capabilities in order to attain his ‘noble’ target. This portrayal of the Prophet rather resembles the ‘sanitized’ and gratified self-characterization of Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk* in which he narrates how his revolutionary ideas thrived and flourished in the chaotic atmosphere of post-war Anatolia. The self-image of ‘the savior of the people’ that inundates *Nutuk* is recreated in the textbooks of the 1930s, but this time the Prophet appears as the ‘hero’, whereas the ‘dutiful’ and ‘passive’ people of Anatolia waiting for the order of the ‘commander’ were replaced by the image of ‘acquiescent’ Muslim who fulfills the orders of his prophet. This picture, however, remains incomplete without mentioning the Battle of *Uhud*, which is narrated by the Republican and the classical Islamic historiographies in a very similar fashion. The classical Islamic historiography attributes the defeat at *Uhud* to “the soldiers who violated the orders of the Prophet by leaving their positions ...”<sup>275</sup> Shiblī’s narration perfectly exemplifies how the classical Islamic historiography internalize the battle of *Uhud*:

In the morning the Prophet consulted the Companions. The *Muhājirs* in general, and the elders among the *Ansār*, suggested that the women should be sent away to safe castles out of the town, while the men should stay and stand a siege.<sup>276</sup>

<sup>273</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 217, my translation

<sup>274</sup> Afetinan. *Atatürk’ ten Mektuplar*, Ankara, 1989, p. 20, my translation

<sup>275</sup> *Tahlil ve Tenkid-i Tarih-i İslām*, p. 48, my translation

<sup>276</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. op. cit., p. 60

But the younger Companions, who had not been able to take part in the battle of *Badr*, insisted that they should march out and meet the enemy. The Holy Prophet went inside the house and come out with his armor on. The companions were sorry to think they had insisted on going out against his wish, and said, that they withdrew their suggestion. But the Prophet remarked that it did not behove a Prophet to put off arms once he had put them on.<sup>277</sup>

The rear being vulnerable to attack, fifty archers...were posted there with strict orders not to leave their positions even in the event of victory.<sup>278</sup>

The fearless ladies [of *Quraish*] who were encouraging the warriors fell back in confusion; and victory was clearly in sight. But the Muslim ranks fell to securing booty. Their example was followed by the archers who had been posted to guard the rear.<sup>279</sup>

Similar to the narration above, Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī too accuses the soldiers for negligence.<sup>280</sup> This rather apologetic explanation, interestingly, finds its place in Republican primary sources, too. Although *Bakalorya Tarihi* does not say more than that “Muhammad gathered the important men of Medina. They agreed on staying defensively in Medina. However, some people raising their sword shouting that they wanted a battle. Then Muhammad decided a battle.”<sup>281</sup> *Tarih II* details the incident which turns out to be disastrous for Muslims since they objected to their prophet’s previous decision:

Muhammad gathered the important men of Medina. He talked to them and suggested to stay in Medina for defense. His suggestion was accepted. However, some zealots, especially those rookies who had not participated in the battle of *Badr* wanted, at all costs, to go out of Medina and fight against the Meccans. Those whose fields were destroyed [by the Meccans] joined these and thus reigned the pandemonium. These came together at the mosque. They started a demonstration by raising their swords. Seeing all these, Muhammad was obliged to attack on Meccans.<sup>282</sup>

In order to ensure the safety of the left wing, there he placed a platoon of archers, warning them not to leave their positions.<sup>283</sup>

By taking measures, Muhammad rendered the enemy cavalry useless.<sup>284</sup>

Muhammad ordered to wait for the enemy to come closed and not to march through them. This ordered was disliked by many people, they objected. Muhammad did not care these objections and acted in accordance with his plan.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60-61

<sup>278</sup> *ibid.*, p. 61

<sup>279</sup> *ibid.*, p. 65, my translation

<sup>280</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. *op. cit.*, p. 224

<sup>281</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, p 169, my translation

<sup>282</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 96, my translation

<sup>283</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97, my translation

<sup>284</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97, my translation

...the battle was progressing exactly the way Muhammad had desired.<sup>286</sup>

Almost the victory of Muslims was guaranteed; however, the archers on the left wing left their positions in order to participate in the pillage (*yağma*) and went after other Muslims.<sup>287</sup>

*Tarih II*'s narration gives the impression that if the ordinary people object to the decisions of the 'wise' leader, disaster follows eventually. Therefore, what is incumbent on people is to follow the guidance of the 'sapient' leader who unfailingly knows what is best for people and the country. Kemalist elitism here once again worships the qualities of those who sway the 'flocks', while underlining the idea that crowds without a 'proper' head are doomed to failure.

### **Booty**

The issue of booty is another indicator that gives the reader an idea about the Muslim society in creation. The pattern of distribution of the loot says much about the perception of 'membership' among the members of any community. The question that 'which member shall get what share of the booty' gives rise to the ultimate question of 'on what grounds?' If the leader, assuming that there is one, monopolizes the whole booty for his personal use, how can this situation be legitimized in the eyes of the other warriors? If somebody comes out and decides on the distribution of the booty, does this not mean that the decision maker assumes position of leadership, while the others accept his superiority? Assuming a Weberian approach, does this superiority emanate from his military capabilities, charismatic personality or his supernatural powers, naturally excluding democratic orientation? The issue of distribution of the booty for sure indicates that the society in question assumes the decision maker as their leader, and this is no exception for the Muslim society in formation.

Not all the primary sources do mention the distribution of booty, although the huge load of personal belongings left at the battlefield by the defeated Meccans is narrated. Emin Ali, for example, is one of those authors who suffice by giving the information that Meccans left behind valuable belongings. The only place where he mentions booty is the battle of *Uhud*, and he still does not provide information on the pattern of booty distribution. *Tarih* of 1929, on the other hand, does not even mention that detail. Enver Behnan in *Bakalorya Tarihi* differentiates from these: "...and many goods were seized by Muhammad."<sup>288</sup> He, for the

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<sup>285</sup> *ibid.* p. 97, my translation

<sup>286</sup> *ibid.* p. 98, my translation

<sup>287</sup> *ibid.* p. 98, my translation

<sup>288</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, p. 168, my translation

battle of *Uhud*, adds that “Muhammad’s army left its position in order to collect booty.”<sup>289</sup> The first quotation suggests that only the Prophet enjoyed the booty ‘seized’ by him. The second quotation, on the other hand, insinuates the notion that a warrior might take as loot whatever he collects at the battlefield, rather than the piling of the booty in the hands of the Prophet. This idea is supported by Emin Ali and “Upon seeing the defeat [of the Meccans], Muslims yelled at each other saying: ‘O Muslims, Why are you standing here? [There is] the booty.’”<sup>290</sup> *Tarih II*: “[After the battle of *Badr*] many riches were seized by Muslims.”<sup>291</sup> *Tarih II* too gives the information that at the battle of *Uhud*, “...the archers, thinking that the victory was at hand, left their positions in order to participate in the pillage (*yağma*) and went after other Muslims.”<sup>292</sup> From these words, it is not wrong to reach to the conclusion that Muslim soldiers were free to pick the stuff left by the enemy at the battlefield. As for the pre-Republican primary sources, Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī does not mention the distribution of the booty. Actually, he does not even mention that there was booty. Ahmed Refik, on the other hand, puts an end to the obscurity saying that:

As a consequence of the battle [of *Badr*], many a chattel and good were seized by the *Mujāhidūn*. His Excellency Prophet had distributed the whole booty to all individuals evenly, he did not take over anything for himself.<sup>293</sup>

The obscurity caused by the lack of clarity in the expressions used by Republican authors is removed by this explanation. Another occasion where Ahmed Refik mentions booty is when the Jewish tribe of *Banī Nazīr* was expelled from Medina. He says that “all the property of the tribe was distributed among the *Ansār*.”<sup>294</sup> He also mentions the previous pattern of booty distribution among pre-Islamic Arabs: “According to the customs of the Arabs of the *Jāhiliyya*, the commanders used to take one fourth of the booty. The rest of the booty used to be distributed disorderly. Every warrior used to take whatever he seized.”<sup>295</sup> Then Shiblī details the practice that developed after the battle of *Badr*:

After the battle of *Badr*, the booty was accepted ‘property of Allah.’ One-fifth of that was ordered to be allocated to Allah, to the Prophet and to the people (*‘āmma*). The Holy *Qur’ān* says ‘They ask you about the windfalls. Say: The windfalls are for Allah and the Apostle. So be careful of (your duty to) Allah and set aright matters of your difference, and obey Allah and His Apostle if you are believers’<sup>296</sup> This means that, the booty does not belong to the soldiers; but

<sup>289</sup> *ibid.* p. 169, my translation

<sup>290</sup> Emin Ali. *op. cit.*, p. 42, my translation

<sup>291</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 95, my translation

<sup>292</sup> *ibid.* p. 98, my translation

<sup>293</sup> Ahmed Refik. *op. cit.*, p. 36, my translation

<sup>294</sup> *ibid.* p. 37, my translation

<sup>295</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu‘mānī. *op. cit.*, p. 654, my translation

<sup>296</sup> *Qur’ān*, translated by M. H. Shakir, 8:1

rather, the property should be spent for the benefit of the people. The *Qur'ān*, on the issue of one-fifth of the booty, says that 'And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things.'<sup>297</sup> The Most Honourable Prophet, in a few extraordinary incidents, had given the booty to the *Muhājirūn* and the new converts of Mecca, but other times he had distributed four-fifth of the booty to the soldiers. Of the one-fifth, an ignorable amount used to be taken by The Most Honourable Prophet for his own needs, and he used to distribute the remaining to the classes indicated in the noble verse.<sup>298</sup>

Muhammad Hamidullah states that according to the pre-Islamic practice in the Arabian peninsula, the commander used to take one-fourth of the *ghanīma*, and in addition to that what was seized before the public plunder and indivisible goods (*fudūl*) belonged to him.<sup>299</sup>

Migrating to Medina, the Prophet abrogated this *Jāhiliyya* practice and resting on the verse 'Eat then of the lawful and good (things) which you have acquired in war, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.'<sup>300</sup> he said that *ghanīma* was approved by God *halal* to him and his *ūmmet*...<sup>301</sup>

Apparently, the practise in the battle of *Badr* was replaced in the later battles by the new pattern of booty distribution in accordance with the verse:

And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and Allah has power over all things.<sup>302</sup>

It shows that, the Muslim community had accepted the leadership of the Prophet even before the battle of *Badr*, and he decided how to distribute the booty, and in the later periods, the *Qur'ānic* verses determined this distribution. The spiritual legitimacy of the Prophet was reinforced by the military success which, in turn, expanded his political and economic authority even further. Thus, the authority to decide the booty distribution pattern was used by the Prophet to bolster the social ties that adhered Muslims to each other. Such instrumental use of the booty was a clear sign that the society would not 'forget' its unfortunate members. The orphans, the poor and the needy, those misfortunates were all incorporated to the whole

<sup>297</sup> *ibid.* 8:41

<sup>298</sup> Maulānā Shiblī en-Nu'mānī. *op. cit.*, p. 655, my translation

<sup>299</sup> Hamidullah, Muhammad. *Hazreti Peygamberin Savaşları*, transl. Salih Tuğ, İstanbul, 1981, p. 264

<sup>300</sup> *Qur'ān*, translated by M. H. Shakir, 8: 69

<sup>301</sup> Hamidullah, Muhammad. *op. cit.*, p. 264, my translation

<sup>302</sup> *Qur'ān*, translated by M. H. Shakir, 8:41, cited by *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, v. 13, *ganīmet*\*, pp. 351-352



Muslim society through their shares on the booty. In that respect, the booty resembles almsgiving, while it is utilized as a remedy to social inequality; it is also presented by *Qur'ān* in the form of a 'right', rather than charity. One's getting his share from the booty is his right he derived from the words of the Scripture. For that reason, the distribution of booty had united Muslim society which sticks financially unequal members together.



## CHAPTER V

### CALIPHATE

The institution of Caliphate emerged after the Prophet had died; although his companion *Abū Bakr* had served as the *imām* in *salāt*, i.e., the daily prayer, prior his death, no successor had been designated by him. The terms *hilāfet* and *imāmet* are used to denote the institution which came into existence after the Prophet died. It is, then, necessary to make a distinction between these terms. Although used interchangeably with *imāmet*, the term *hilāfet* or caliphate, according to *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, is

terminologically used to denote the institution of presidency in the Islamic states after the Prophet. Caliph, *Halīfe*, is a person who succeeds and represents another person and is used to denote the president. *Imāmet* is the other name [of caliphate]. We see that the president is called *halīfe* for he rules society as the authorized representative, *vekīl*, of the Prophet, while he is called *imām* for being the leader and the head.<sup>303</sup>

The term *imām* has two meanings: one, as defined above, the person who undertakes the administration of the *ümme*; and second, the person who leads the *jama'ā* in the assembled *salāts*. For that reason, the administrative *imāmet* is also called *al-imāmettu'l-'uzmā* or *al-imāmettu'l-kubrā*, that is, the great *imāmet*. It is generally accepted that the term *hilāfet* is mostly used by the historians in a historical context in order to denote the de facto authority; whereas *imāmet* is generally used by the scholars of *kalām* and *fiqh* in order to connote leadership in theoretical context.<sup>304</sup> *Imāmet* has been chiefly used by the *Shi'ā*, whereas the Sunnite prefer *hilāfet*.<sup>305</sup> Another point which needs clarification is that who is being represented by the *halīfe* is bound to context and time. There is an ambiguity on whether Allah or the Prophet is represented by the caliphs. Historically, when the institution first emerged, it is believed by Muslim historians to be used to denote the successor of the Prophet<sup>306</sup>, but later on, during the Umayyad dynasty, the term *halīfe* gained the meaning of a representative of Allah.<sup>307</sup> “*Abū Bakr* disapproved a man who called him the caliph of Allah, saying that he was not the caliph of Allah but the Prophet of Allah.”<sup>308</sup> ‘*Ulamā* during the

<sup>303</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1998, *hilāfet\**, v.17, p. 539, my translation

<sup>304</sup> *ibid.* *imāmet\**, v. 22, p. 201

<sup>305</sup> *EI<sup>2</sup>*, v. IV, *halīfe\**, p. 939

<sup>306</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, Oxford, 1981, p. 14

<sup>307</sup> *EI<sup>2</sup>*, v. IV, *halīfe\**, p. 938

<sup>308</sup> Ibn Sa'd. III, 183; Müsned, I, 11, cited by *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p. 539, my translation

Abbasid reign too rejected the title of *halīfetu'l-Allah* on the same grounds.<sup>309</sup> It is also known that 'Umar, the second caliph, used the titles 'the caliph of the caliph of the Prophet of Allah' and '*amīru'l-mu'minīn*'<sup>310</sup>; however, the following caliphs abandoned the former title as impractical. Western historiography has not reached at a consensus whether Allah or the Prophet is represented by the caliph. Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, for instance, state that a caliph was a deputy of God, whereas traditional Islamic views reject this idea.<sup>311</sup> The initial use of the term *hilāfet* does not imply a spiritual guidance, but rather administrative and judiciary leadership.<sup>312</sup> He did not possess any authority to re-interpret the dogma, but he was its executer and protector.<sup>313</sup>

While the institution of caliphate is accepted by majority of the *Sunnite* and *Shi'āte* scholars *wājīb*, that is, necessary; some minor *Sunnite* currents decline this view, asserting that *hilāfet* is *cā'iz*.<sup>314</sup> Those who defend its necessity rest their view on two *Qur'ānic* verses and a *hadīth*:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth a khalif, they said: What! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know.”<sup>315</sup>

“O Dawood! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah; [as for] those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning.”<sup>316</sup>

He who dies without acknowledging the *imām* of his time, he dies upon the death of *Jāhilīya*.<sup>317</sup>

Besides the *Qur'ānic* basis for the creation of such an institution, early leaders of Muslim society, such as Abū Bakr and 'Umar, believed that *hilāfet* would certainly serve as a glue for the infant Muslim community whose unity largely depended on the Prophet. Marshall Hodgson states that

<sup>309</sup> Gibb, H.A.R. *al-Mawardī's theory of the caliphate*, in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed., Shaw, Stanford. and Polk, W.R., London, 1962, p. 158, cited by *ET*, v. IV, p. 948, \*halīfe

<sup>310</sup> Shaban, M.A. *Islamic History A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132)*, Cambridge, 1971, p. 56

<sup>311</sup> Crone, Patricia, Hinds, M. *God's Caliph*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 4-11

<sup>312</sup> *ET*, v. IV, halīfe\*, p. 948

<sup>313</sup> *ibid.* v. IV, halīfe\*, p. 948

<sup>314</sup> Özarlan, Selim. “Ebū'l-Muīn en-Neseffī'nin imāmet/Devlet Başkanlığı Anlayışı”, *İslami Araştırmalar*, c. 14, s. 3-4, 2001, p. 424

<sup>315</sup> *Qur'an*, 2:30, translated by M.H. Shakir

<sup>316</sup> *ibid.* 38:26

<sup>317</sup> Müslim. Ebi Hüseyin Müslim b. El-Haccac. *Sahih-i Müslim*, İmare, 13, hadis no: 58, (2/1478) Çağrı yay., İstanbul, 1992, cited by Özarlan, Selim. op. cit., p. 425, my translation

some men had a more ambitious conception of Islam and of the *ümmeth* community Muhammad had created. Islam was not merely a matter of each individual's obeying God; it was a compact in which all Muslims were bound to each other as well. This compact did not cease with Prophet's death; the pattern of life he had instituted could be continued under the guidance of those who had been closest to him.<sup>318</sup>

Furthermore, Hodgson believes that, caliphate not only saved the unity of the Muslim community but it also prevented possible degenerations following the death of Muhammad.

[By the creation of the institution of caliphate and thus election of Abū Bakr] Thus were ruled out two possible outcomes of Muhammad's challenge. One could have imagined a continuing wave of prophetic leadership, inspired men in the several tribes carrying on Muhammad's tradition in a Bedouin Arabia fragmented but confirming its cultural independence. Or one could have imagined an assimilation of Muhammad's mission to the Hebrew Bible, which would have led eventually to its submersion in a wider Jewish tradition. The affirmation of Muhammad's political construction meant instead that the Arabs would be both united and independent. But this unity could prove feasible only through carrying conquest into the lands about, for which central leadership was required.<sup>319</sup>

Apart from Hodgson's above-cited postulation, Crone and Cook, arguing about Judeo-Christian roots of Islam, state in *Hagarism* that Islam is greatly indebted the notion of caliphate to Samaritanism, that is, a Judaic sect:

The other major Samaritan calque was a rationale for political authority among the Hagarenes [Muslims]. Judaic messianism, quite apart from being Judaic, was inherently a religious legitimation of a climactic event, not of an on-going authority. Equally the Christian empire which the Hagarenes displaced was a mere adjunction of two distinct conceptual orders which provided no intrinsically religious rationale for imperial rule. What neither the Christians nor the Jews could contrive was an intrinsically religious legitimation of an on-going authority. And this, oddly enough, was precisely what the Samaritans could offer; the central political value of Samaritanism is the continuing legitimacy of the Aaronid high-priesthood. The eternal priesthood thus made it possible for the Hagarenes to abandon the millennium without collapsing into kingship.<sup>320</sup>

The office of caliphate remained as a major source of debate among Muslim scholars for centuries due to its significant role in the political, economic, and religious configuration of the *ümmet*. According to Shahrīstānī, the first and most significant problem in Muslim society was the issue of *imāmet* which was of political nature.<sup>321</sup> The very first disputation on *hilāfet* arose around the issue of legitimacy of the *halīfe*, which in turn resulted in the problem of determining the legitimate caliph. The definition of a legitimate caliph, the method to

<sup>318</sup> Hodgson, Marshall. op. cit., v.1, p. 197

<sup>319</sup> ibid. p. 198

<sup>320</sup> Crone, P. and Cook, M. op. cit., 1977, p. 26

<sup>321</sup> Shahrīstānī. *Al-Milal wa'n-Nihal*, I, pp. 21-27, citeb by Bulaç, Ali. op. cit., pp. 80-83

determine a caliph and the personal qualities which the office of *hilāfet* requires were among the first controversial topics that Muslim scholars attempted to elucidate. Therefore, the most significant question regarding caliphate was the identity of the person to administer the *ümme*.<sup>322</sup> Admittedly, the caliph was required to be a male member of the *Quraish*.<sup>323</sup> It is, however, stated by scholars that the *Quraishite* condition is due to political reasons, rather than religious ones, for it was believed that only *Quraish* would be acknowledged by the tribes as legitimate leaders of the Arab society.<sup>324</sup> Also essential was that, the caliph should be pious, just, adult, and personally meriting the office.<sup>325</sup> Sunnite scholars largely agreed that "...a caliph-to-be did possess neither religious privileges nor transcendent qualities, and he was religiously and legally responsible from his deeds."<sup>326</sup> Leaving out the *Shi'āte* notions that *imām* was infallible and he was selected by Allah, Sunnite scholars came to the agreement that the *halīfe* was to be determined either by election or *istikhlāf*, i.e., a caliph's determining his successor.<sup>327</sup> Later on, a third method emerged: the conditional acknowledgement of the legitimacy of those who usurp caliphate, i.e. *ghālibs*.<sup>328</sup> Yet another problematic issue was whether more than one caliph at the same time would be legitimate. Sunnite scholars initially rejected any possibility of coexistence of two or more caliphs, but after the Andalucian Umayyads assumed *hilāfet* during the Abbasid caliphate, some scholars acknowledged the legitimacy of a second caliph.<sup>329</sup> Sunnite doctrine recognized a distinction between the first four caliphs whom they called *hulafātu'l-rāshidūn*, the rightly guided caliphs of the Prophet, and the later caliphs, for the latter were considered to gain a character of worldly king.<sup>330</sup> In the course of time, the reverence to the first four caliphs gained a dogmatic nature, and 'Umar bin 'Abdu'l-'Azīz of the Umayyad dynasty was also included in the bevy of rightly guided *halīfes*.<sup>331</sup> The limit of caliph's authority was another problematic issue. Especially after the transformation of *hilāfet* from the Umayyad to the Abbasid, and the emergence of Andalucian Umayyads as rival caliphs, Muslim scholars started to concentrate on the power configuration of *hilāfet*. Most scholars such as Jāhiz (d. 255/868-9) seem to

<sup>322</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, imāmet\*, v. 22, p. 204

<sup>323</sup> Bağdādī. *Usūli'd-Dīn*, p. 277; Bağdādī, Abdulkahir. *El-Fark beyne'l Firāk*, (*Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar*), çev. E.Ruhi Fiğlalı, Ankara, 1991, s. 276; Bakillani. *Temhid*, s. 471, İbn Humam. *El-Musāyere*, s. 274-275, cited by Özarslan, Selim. op. cit., p. 426

<sup>324</sup> Buhārī. "Hudūd", 86; 'Abdu'l-Razzāk Al-San'ānī. V, 443; İbn Hishām, II, 657, cited by *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, c.22, p. 206, \*imāme

<sup>325</sup> *EF*, v. III, imāmet\*, p. 1165

<sup>326</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, imāmet\*, v. 22, p. 204, my translation

<sup>327</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, p. 18

<sup>328</sup> *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, imāmet\*, v. 22, p. 204

<sup>329</sup> *ibid.* imāmet\*, v. 22, p. 205

<sup>330</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, p. 17

<sup>331</sup> *EF*, v. III, imāmet\*, p. 1164

admit the need of a caliph, for the predatory nature of man, that is, the state of nature, requires the leadership and guidance of a wise man.<sup>332</sup> Mawardī (d. 450/1058), aware of the eroding authority of the caliph on the behalf of his *vezirs* and *ra'īses* and disturbed particularly by the Buyid domination over Abbasid caliphate while believing that caliphate was "...obligatory by revelation and, not by reason"<sup>333</sup>, allowed in *al-Ahkāmu'l-sultāniyya* the forfeiture of caliphs' political power and assigning these powers to the *wazīrs* and local mayors.<sup>334</sup> Therefore, according to Mawardī, the sole authority that remained in the hands of caliphs was the execution of *Sharī'a*, which placed him above the mayors and the *wazīrs*.<sup>335</sup> His sole domain comprised of:

the defence and maintenance of religion, the decision of legal disputes, the protection of the territory of Islam, the punishment of wrongdoers, the provision of troops for guarding the frontiers, the waging of *jihād*, the organization of the tax administration and the collection of taxes, the payment of salaries, and the administration of public funds, the appointment of competent officials, and personal attention to the details of government.<sup>336</sup>

Scholars of the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> centuries focused further on the delegation of power between caliphs, the supreme religious authority, and sultans who exerted political and military power on the realm of caliphs. Ghazālī of the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century laid the coercive power to sultans and rendered the caliphs powerless while acknowledging the symbolic religious supremacy of caliphs.<sup>337</sup> Once the Mongolian invasion in the 13<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the extermination of caliphate, scholars of the time began to wrestle with the problem of how to transfer the authority of caliphs, including the religious power which solely caliphs had enjoyed so far, to sultans.<sup>338</sup> While Ibn Jamā'a (d. 733/1333) legitimated the caliphate of those who forcefully seized it saying that "...the seizure of power itself gave authority,"<sup>339</sup> Ibn Taymiyya went further to deny the obligatory nature of the caliphate.<sup>340</sup>

In order to examine and compare how popular history books and history textbooks of the pre-Republican and Republican eras approached the issue of *hilāfet*, the primary sources will again be reviewed in two separate sections: Republican primary sources and pre-Republican ones while non-Kemalist historian Ömer Rıza's *Sadr-ı İslām* is included in the

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<sup>332</sup> *ibid.* v. IV, halife\*, p. 949

<sup>333</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. "Islamic Political Thought", *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. by Schacht, Joseph, and Bosworth, C.E., Oxford, 1974, p. 411

<sup>334</sup> Rosenthal, Erwin. *Ortaçağda İslam Siyaset Düşüncesi*, transl. Çaksu, Ali. İstanbul, 1996, pp. 48-49

<sup>335</sup> *EI*<sup>2</sup>, v. III, imāmet\*, p. 1165

<sup>336</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. "Islamic Political Thought", p. 412

<sup>337</sup> Rosenthal, Erwin. *op. cit.*, pp. 58-61

<sup>338</sup> *EI*<sup>2</sup>, v. IV, halife\*, p. 949

<sup>339</sup> Lambton, A.K.S. *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 1981, p. 139

<sup>340</sup> *ibid.* p. 145

pre-Republican sources although it was written in the Republican era. Under the title of pre-Republican sources will be examined Ömer Rıza's *Sadr-ı İslām: Hazreti Ebū Bekir Devri*, Ahmed Refik's *Tārīh-i 'Umūmī*, Ahmed Hilmī's *Tārīh-i İslām*, and *Muhtasar Tārīh-i İslām* of İbnu'l-Cevād Efdāleddīn. As for the Republican sources, *Tarih II*, *Tarih* of 1929, Emin Ali's *Umumi Tarih* and *Bakalorya Tarihi* of Enver Behnan will be examined. Since some text are too long to be quoted within the study, longer versions of Ahmed Hilmī's work and *Tarih II* are in Appendices II and III, respectively

### Pre-Republican Books

Almost all written before the abolishment of caliphate in 1924, pre-Republican popular books do not assume a defensive attitude towards the institution of caliphate. Feeling no need to legitimize *hilāfet* as an Ottoman office, these sources instead, as any other Sunnite work, endeavor to legitimize the first caliph, Abū Bakr, whose disputable election begot endless debates between the Sunnite and the *Shi'ate* throughout Islamic history. In their accounts, pre-Republican sources seem to remain loyal to classical Islamic tradition as expressed in the accounts of Ibn Hishām and Tabarī.<sup>341</sup> The narration in the pre-Republican books starts with the death of the Prophet, where the friendly relationship between the Prophet and Abū Bakr is emphasized. Ömer Rıza, for instance, demonstrates Abū Bakr as the wisest member of the Muslim community who had been the best companion of Muhammad in his life. Ömer Rıza provides a panorama of the chaotic situation in Medina prior to his depiction of Abū Bakr as the natural leader of early Muslim community:

His Excellency Abū Bakr saw that it was rather tumultuous outside while he was leaving the Prophet's room. The news that the Most Honourable Prophet had deceased shocked everyone. The faithful were weeping, and pondering; the hypocrites [on the other hand] were surreptitiously exhilarating; those elements, in whose souls the newly extinguished fire of idolatry [was still alive], and who, due to the [material] advantages their previous anarchic lives had provided them, were impatiently looking forward to return to that old life of theirs, were happy for the day they had been expecting had come. The faithful did not know what to do....The Most Honourable Prophet had constructed a unity, served to the [creation of] affection between people who [previously] had been dispersed like sand, had the tribes forget the feuds among themselves, established a thorough security in a geography where the words secure and faith (*emīn ve imān*) were unknown.<sup>342</sup>

His Excellency Abū Bakr confronted such a scene while leaving the room of the Prophet. The situation was extremely dangerous.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Ibn Hishām. *Sīret*, transl. Ege, Hasan. İstanbul, 1985, v. 4, pp. 411-419; Taberī. *Tārīh-i Taberī*, Konya, 1982, v.2, pp. 527-528, v.3, pp. 5-8

<sup>342</sup> Ömer Rıza. *Sadr-ı İslām: Hazret-i Ebū Bekir*, İstanbul, 1928, p. 42, my translation

<sup>343</sup> *ibid.* p. 43, my translation

Under these dire circumstances, says Ömer Rıza, only one man, Abū Bakr, could inhibit the ‘disastrous’ situation:

This day was the day in which a noble valiance, a virtuous determination, a solid will and a cordial faith would be victorious. All these were in Abū Bakr....His Excellency Abū Bakr was a man who could stand a disaster and crisis.<sup>344</sup>

His Excellency Abū Bakr had given what he possessed to the hands of holy mission. The mission was to make the reforms (*inkilāblar*) brought by Islam survive and rise (*yükseltmek*), to preserve the unity Islam had created and to prevent the *jāhilīya* Islam had abolished and exterminated...<sup>345</sup>

İbnu'l-Cevād Efdāleddīn, on the other hand, is very succinct in his account:

While His Excellency the Prophet was alive, he used to assume the [political] *ri'āsa*. After his expiration, someone was needed to fulfill this service. *Hilāfet* is the profane and religious *ri'āsa* of people. The institution of caliphate is an institution that all Muslims venerate....People were in great panic, some did not believe that the Prophet had deceased.<sup>346</sup>

People decided to elect a *halīfe*, and made consultation on who would be the caliph. The *Quraishītes* said that the caliph would be someone from them, while the *Ansār* said that the *halīfe* would be of *Ansārid* origin. Some suggested that two men be elected from the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār*. Then it was decided that, the *halīfe* would be determined by the consensus of the *ūmmet*. His Excellency Abū Bakr was elected by consensus.<sup>347</sup>

Ahmed Hilmī depicts the first moments following the death of the Prophet in a similar way:

“The decease of His Excellency Prophet had shocked all the Companions. Some of the Companions did not want to believe this, while some Companions were totally unconscious.”<sup>348</sup> Like Ömer Rıza, he too sees Abū Bakr as the sole person who could stop the turbulent course of incidents: “However, thanks to Abū Bakr who preserved his composure and temperance...”<sup>349</sup> Sketching the traumatic situation among Muslims, Ömer Rıza continues his account by emphasizing the significance of Abū Bakr in this perilous instant:

His Excellency ‘Umar declared that Muhammad was alive and that he who alleged the opposite would taste his sword. Upon hearing this, His Excellency Abū Bakr told His Excellency ‘Umar to stop talking. He [Abū Bakr] then said to people “Who he worships Muhammad should know that Muhammad had died. Who he worships Allah should know that Allah is immortal (*lā yamūt*).” Then, he recited these verses from the holy *Qur’ān*: “And Muhammad is no more than an

<sup>344</sup> ibid. p. 43, my translation

<sup>345</sup> ibid. p. 44, my translation

<sup>346</sup> İbnu'l-Cevād Efdāleddīn. op. cit., pp. 121-122, my translation

<sup>347</sup> ibid. p.123, my translation

<sup>348</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 322, my translation

<sup>349</sup> ibid. p. 322, my translation



apostle; the apostles have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful.”<sup>350</sup> These words pacified the whole gathering. This incident was the first victory of His Excellency Abū Bakr.<sup>351</sup>

After silencing the crowd with his ‘wisdom’, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar left the people and headed to the house of the Prophet in order to enshroud him. However, becoming frantic again, Muslims gathered to decide what to do next. Ömer Rıza describes these moments as such:

While His Excellency Abū Bakr and His Excellency ‘Umar were preoccupied with shrouding, (...) annoyance started among people again. As the Most Honourable Prophet had deceased, someone else should be the leader. Assembling, the *Ansār* wanted to pledge allegiance to someone among themselves. The most respected of the *Ansār* was Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda. Among the *Ansār* particularly *Khazraj* wanted to pledge allegiance to him.<sup>352</sup>

[Upon learning that the Helpers themselves would determine the new leader of the community], His Excellency Abū Bakr went there [the place of gathering]. That His Excellency Abū Bakr went there served as a prevention for the deterioration and tension of the situation. His Excellency Abū Bakr, by going there, prevented those elements who aimed at acquiring the *ri’āsa* and success but lacked unity and power to preserve the existence which were vital to achieve these aims to resurrect the old enmities, wraths and feuds. He saved the existence and the unity of Islam.<sup>353</sup>

When they [Abū Bakr and ‘Umar] went there, they heard that the *Ansār* was mentioning *ri’āsa*, leadership (*emāret*) and liberty (*istiklāl*). [These were out of possibility] since there was no unity in *Ansār*. [Evidently,] if one of the tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* acquired the general *ri’āsa*, the competitive sentiment of the other tribe would evoke and they would start opposition. This competition was evident also in the gathering. While *Khazraj* was ready to pledge allegiance to Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda, the leader of *Aws* was with Abū Bakr. Therefore, letting *Khazraj* to assume the leadership would eventually result in the resuscitation of the tribal ‘*asabiyya*.<sup>354</sup>

Ömer Rıza’s anachronistic mention of liberty at such an early date is noteworthy. What is even more interesting is his implication of the Meccan presence in Medina as something close to invasion. This view resembles Madelung’s following suggestion:

The idea of caliphate, the succession of Muhammad in all but his prophetic mission, had not yet been born. It is difficult to see how the *Ansār*, meeting alone themselves, could have aspired to it. Like so many of the Arab tribes involved in the *ridda*, the *Ansār*, while firm in their Muslim faith, no doubt considered their

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<sup>350</sup> *Qur‘ān*, 3:144, translated by M.H. Shakir

<sup>351</sup> Ömer Rıza. op. cit., pp. 44-45, my translation

<sup>352</sup> *ibid.* p. 46, my translation

<sup>353</sup> *ibid.* pp. 46-47, my translation

<sup>354</sup> *ibid.* p. 47, my translation

allegiance to Muhammad as lapsing on his death. Expecting the political community founded by Muhammad to fall apart, they met to restore their control over their own city. This is why they met without consulting the *Muhājirūn*. They assumed that these, having no longer any good reason to remain in Medina, would return home to Mecca. Those who might wish to remain in Medina would presumably accept the rule of the *Ansār*.<sup>355</sup>

The danger of the situation was evident for Ömer Rıza. He believes that if not stopped, the competition for *hilāfet* would culminate in a sharp division within the community. The claims of the *Muhājirūn* on caliphate and the later developments are such narrated by Ömer Rıza:

The situation was manifest. Muslims would gather under the umbrella of a *ri'āsa*. The objectives of this *ri'āsa* were to preserve the unity of Islam, the structure (*binā*) the Prophet had constructed and to rise this structure. The *Ansār*id suggestion to the *Muhājirūn* that “one *amīr* from us and one *amīr* from you” was not only worthless but it also served to disintegration rather than unity. *Ansār* began to mention its virtues: “We are the helpers of the Divine *da'wa*, the army of Islam, you *Muhājirūn* are a fragment among us. Do you intend to throw us away from our roots and totally exclude us from this issue?” Disorder reigned.<sup>356</sup>

His Excellency ‘Umar intended to respond. His Excellency Abū Bakr pulled him back, and started talking: “O *Ansār*! You are the possessor of all the virtues you have counted so far. However, the reality is that, Arabs will gather under the *ri'āsa* and rule of *Quraish*; they will not delegate this [authority] to any other tribe. I advise you to elect one of these men.” He held ‘Ubaida and ‘Umar and pushed them forward. These words of His Excellency Abū Bakr were a warning for the people. They [the *Ansār*] were not capable of providing the unity of Islam; on the contrary, the unity would be spoiled in their hands. This was the truth.

Ahmed Hilmī elaborately accounts the same incident stating that if the *Ansār* elected a caliph among themselves, this would be calamitous for the *ümmet*:

The *Ansār* had gathered (...) intending to elect a *halīfe* among themselves. If this election had been realized, from the possibility that many Arabs and tribes would abjure [Islam] and as a result of a possible slaughter in Medina, Islam would decline. The *Muhājirūn* and *Quraish* could not accept the *ri'āsa* of the *Ansār*.<sup>357</sup>

Besides the danger of abjuration, Ahmed Hilmī argues about yet another threat, the possibility of revival of pre-Islamic bonds and enmities:

However, if Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda would have been elected *halīfe* in pursuant to the *Ansār*’s intention, it would be highly possible that a slaughter between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār* would take place in Medina, since those who pledged allegiance him [Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda] would have been compelled to defend the caliph. Then, things would further be complicated due to the intrigues of Abū Sufyān and Umayyads, and the desire to resurrect the days of yore would be

<sup>355</sup> Madelung, Wilfred. *The Succession to Muhammad*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 31

<sup>356</sup> Ömer Rıza. op. cit., pp. 47-48, my translation

<sup>357</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 329, my translation

reintroduced, and the problems of *'asabiyya* which had not quenched yet would arise again. It was also highly probable that *Aws* would not accept *Sa'ad of Khazraj*. These possible, excruciating events were prevented due to cunning deed, firm commitment, and spiritual power of 'Umar who Distinguishes Truth from the Falsehood (*fārūq*).<sup>358</sup>

The author's negative attitude towards the Ummayyad family is striking; he is sure of their potential to foment disputes among Muslims at such a fragile atmosphere. It is highly probable that the author retrospectively interprets the situation. That familial problems arose around the issue of caliphate following the murder of 'Uthman, and the Umayyad family played a key role in the disputes inspires Ahmed Hilmī, and he believes that the Umayyad's intention from the beginning was to create a familial supremacy over Arabs. The author then effaces from the readers' minds the appropriateness of an *Ansārid* caliphate by quoting Abū Bakr:

This *ūmmet* used to worship idols made from stone and wood. Allah had sent them a prophet so that they worship Him and practice His unity. Arabs had difficulty in abjuring the religion of their fathers. God gave the *Muhājirūn* the privilege of faith. They became friends of the Prophet. And with him they endured the torments of the infidels. These are the first on the earth who worshipped Allah and had faith in His Prophet. They are the loyal friends and helpers of his, they are his tribe. For these reasons, it behoves them more than anyone to assume the leadership. For these reasons, no one but oppressors can oppose them. O *Ansār*, your virtues and services cannot be denied; Lord has selected you for the assistance of his religion and Messenger. And you were fortunate by Allah's will to take part in the *Hijrah* of the Messenger. For us, your place comes right after the *Muhājirūn*. For the sake of God's Messenger you were the helpers, you are indeed very virtuous. These are undeniable. However, regarding the issue of leadership, Arab tribes will accept no one but *Quraish* as leader. Because the tribe of *Quraish* is excellent in terms of descent. And their land is the middle of the Arabian Peninsula. We are the leaders and you are the *wazīrs*, you will not be excluded from consultation, unless your consent taken, no deed will be realized.<sup>359</sup>

He bolsters Abū Bakr's views with these powerful words of 'Ubaida, leaving no room for any further discussion: "O *Ansār*, you are the first helpers of this religion, mind! Do not let yourselves to be the first in corrupting it."<sup>360</sup> Ahmed Refik, on the other hand, does not flamboyantly account the "first disputation" among Muslims in contrast to Ömer Rıza and Ahmed Hilmī:

The *Muhājirūn*, leaving relationship aside, put forward that they emigrated with His Excellency Muhammad; while the Helpers claimed that they were assistant to His Excellency Prophet. The dispute between the *Ansār* and the *Muhājirūn*

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<sup>358</sup> *ibid.* p. 329, my translation

<sup>359</sup> *ibid.* pp. 330-331, my translation

<sup>360</sup> *ibid.* p. 331, my translation

became extremely alarming, even became a struggle and fight. At last, when His Excellency Abū Bakr reminded the Prophet's noble quote of "*hilāfet* belongs to *Quraish*", the dispute became pacified but not fully extinguished. This time, the subject of dispute was which great man of *Quraish* would be elected caliph.<sup>361</sup>

Once the *Muhājirūn* made it clear that caliphate belonged to them and that they would not give up their claim on *hilāfet*, Ömer Rıza and Ahmed Hilmī detail the incidents emphasizing the maturity and sagacity of 'Umar. Ahmed Hilmī for instance accounts that:

At that very moment, His Excellency Abū Bakr the Righteous said: "I have chosen for you these two men; offer your *bay'a* to one of them." He showed 'Umar who Distinguishes Truth from the Falsehood and Abū 'Ubaida. These two hesitated for a moment. Then they said: "Who can step forward while there is the one [Abū Bakr] whom His Excellency Prophet took forward." Then discord followed. Everyone started talking. Upon seeing this, His Excellency 'Umar who Distinguishes Truth from the Falsehood silenced the gathering and said to Abū Bakr: "The Most Honourable Messenger assigned you to lead the *salāt* which was one of the greatest pillars of Islam, he assigned you *imām* to all us. Give me your hand, and I shall pledge allegiance to you." When he with Abū 'Ubaida were ready to offer Abū Bakr their *bay'a*, someone from the *Ansār* appeared there and before them took Abū Bakr's hand pledging him allegiance. Once His Excellency 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaida too came and offered their allegiance, there came and pledged their allegiance the tribe of *Aws* following their leader.... Upon this, the alliance of *Khazraj* rendered useless. No one offered *bay'a* to Sa'ad bin 'Ibāda. Therefore, the whole *Muhājirūn* and *Ansār* came to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr.<sup>362</sup>

Ahmed Refik, again, accounts this incident without much detail.

Remarkably, all the primary sources examined see Abū Bakr's election as legitimate due to his 'outstanding' qualities which he had demonstrated during the tumultuous moments right after the death of Muhammad, even though 'Alī and his followers did not take part in the process of election. Since this situation bothers the authors, they try to explain why 'Alī was out of the whole process and Abū Bakr rather than 'Alī deserved caliphate. The similarities between these explanations and the Sunnite tradition are also remarkable. Ömer Rıza accounts that "[t]his election of Abū Bakr was totally legitimate," since "all representatives of the Muslim community appeared in this gathering."<sup>363</sup> That 'Alī and his companions did not take part in the gathering does not bother Ömer Rıza, because:

[t]he only reason why 'Alī, Zubair and 'Abbās did not appear there was their thought that they would not be elected for leadership and governance (*hukūma*).

<sup>361</sup> Ahmed Refik. op. cit., p. 123, my translation

<sup>362</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., pp. 332-333, my translation

<sup>363</sup> Ömer Rıza. op. cit., p. 49, my translation

That opponents such as ‘Alī and Zubair individually did not take part was not significant enough to influence a decision taken by a great majority of people.<sup>364</sup>

Ömer Rıza continues his argument implying that ‘Alī did have no right in caliphate, for he did not undertake appearing at the meeting place and extinguishing people’s inauspicious fervour, which the triumvirate did. So, believes Ömer Rıza, he that plays the key role is also the one meriting the post:

According to some accounts, His Excellency ‘Alī and his followers quarreled with Abū Bakr and his supporters because they were not consulted regarding the issue of *ri’āsa*; however, it is wrong to trust these accounts. Because Abū Bakr and ‘Umar did not go to *Saqīfa* and broach the subject willingly. They had to participate in this gathering since the *Ansār* took the initiative about this issue and they participated in order to prevent an internal and external problem and *fitna*. His Excellency ‘Alī and his companions could also have participated. That they had not is not because they were preoccupied with shrouding the Prophet. The reason that they did not appear there was their anxiety that they would not be elected. Although His Excellency Abū Bakr won the consensus of people in the gathering, there was no need to consult someone else. The substantial majority of people had decided so.<sup>365</sup>

Here Ömer Rıza cites classical historian Muhammad bin Sīrīn in order to develop a theory why ‘Alī and his companions remained at Fātima’s house rather than appearing at *Saqīfa*.

When His Excellency Abū Bakr was offered *bay’a*, ‘Alī was late to pledge allegiance to him, and therefore he remained at home. His Excellency Abū Bakr sent a man to ‘Alī to ask why he did not appear at *Saqīfa* and whether he was pleased at Abū Bakr’s *ri’āsa*. Saying that he was not unhappy from Abū Bakr’s leadership, ‘Alī further declared that he gave his word not to wear his outfit in any occasion other than *salāt* until he collects the pages of *Qur’ān*.<sup>366</sup>

Ömer Rıza then comments on this narrative reminding that Abū Bakr was the best choice:

This account immensely enlightens us, because besides giving the information that ‘Alī was not discontented about Abū Bakr, it also clearly elucidates that ‘Alī, in order to procrastinate his allegiance to Abū Bakr as much as possible, undertook a great responsibility such as gathering the *Qur’ān*. Thus, what prevented ‘Alī from offering his *bay’a* to Abū Bakr was not his ambition for *ri’āsa*. Actually, by transforming the issue of Islamic *ri’āsa* into a dynastic issue, *Hāshimīds* wanted ‘Alī, who was the Prophet’s son-in-law and nephew, to assume the institution of *hilāfet*; some of the supporters of ‘Alī claimed that they would not sheath their swords until ‘Alī was accepted [as leader]; but the congruence of the populace in solving the problem of *ri’āsa* had taken precedence over the spirit and understanding of tribalism, and while solving the issue of *ri’āsa* it had taken

<sup>364</sup> *ibid.* p. 50, my translation

<sup>365</sup> *ibid.* pp. 61-62, my translation

<sup>366</sup> Muhammad bin Sīrīn. *Tabakāt b. Sa’ad*, v. 2, p. 101 cited by Ömer Rıza. *op. cit.*, p. 62, my translation

such qualities as merit and worthiness into consideration, and had seen that all these qualities had existed in Abū Bakr.<sup>367</sup>

Ahmed Hilmī and Ahmed Refik do not differ much from the mainstream Sunnite views in elucidating the 'legitimate' basis of Abū Bakr's caliphate and inappropriateness of 'Alī's. Ahmed Hilmī's endeavor to show that except for a small number of people, almost all Muslims choiced other great Companions to 'Alī is noteworthy:

'Umar (...) preferred Abū Bakr to 'Alī; he even said during the mention assignment of the person which would succeed him ['Umar] that if 'Ubaida was alive he would prefer him to *Imām* 'Alī. As for Abū Bakr, he also showed by appointing 'Umar as his successor that he preferred 'Umar to 'Alī. Abū 'Ubaida preferred 'Umar and Abū Bakr. Such Companions as Sa'ad bin Abu Waqqās and Talhā have also demonstrated in their later actions that they did not support 'Alī.<sup>368</sup>

Reminding Abū Bakr's distinct place among other Companions, Ahmed Hilmī further implies that 'Alī's claims were illegitimate.<sup>369</sup>

It is then not wrong to say that the pre-Republican primary sources examined neither question the need for the institution of caliphate nor blemish the legitimacy of Abū Bakr's *hilāfet*. Having been deeply convinced that caliphate is a historically, religiously, and politically necessary office, and having accorded with the traditional view that the process in which Abū Bakr was elected caliph is legitimate, pre-Republican popular books seem to follow to a great extent the track of the Sunnite doctrine. Interestingly, western scholars such as Caetani, Lammens and Watt also converge to the Sunnite doctrine in their evaluation of the issue of succession.<sup>370</sup> Caetani, for instance, states that Abū Bakr was elected due merely to his outstanding personal qualities, both as a Muslim and a statesman, and he says that 'Alī and his supporters were motivated by personal ambition.<sup>371</sup> Moreover, Watt expresses that "[c]ertainly before Muhammad left Mecca for Medina Abū Bakr had established himself as his chief lieutenant and adviser; and this position he maintained to Muhammad's death, so that he was the obvious choice for successor."<sup>372</sup> However, such other scholars as Tyan and Madelung have challenged this pro-Sunnite attitude of western scholars. Rejecting the western view which was most sharply expressed by Lammens that Arabs loathed hereditary

<sup>367</sup> Ömer Rıza. op. cit., p. 63, my translation

<sup>368</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., p. 333, my translation

<sup>369</sup> ibid. p. 334

<sup>370</sup> Madelung, Wilfred. op. cit., pp. 3-5

<sup>371</sup> Caetani, L. *Annali dell' Islam*, Milan, 1905-1926, v. II/1, p. 542, cited by Madelung, Wilfred. op. cit., p. 4

<sup>372</sup> Watt, Montgomery. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, Oxford, 1961, pp. 35-36

succession,<sup>373</sup> Tyan put that hereditary succession was a rule especially in *Quraish*, therefore, ‘Alī might well be a choice.’<sup>374</sup>

### Republican Sources

As for the Republican textbooks, the picture is rather different. The caliphate is an important topic also for the Republican textbooks not because they too have firm faith in the institution, but because the Turkish Republic abolished it in 1924; therefore, the abolition of this long enduring institution had to be persuasively explained to young students. While explaining the reasons of the abrogation of the institution, Republican historiography at the same time assumed the mission to indoctrinate the young in that the institution had long proved useless; therefore, its abrogation exonerated the entire Muslim people and particularly Turks.

However, the Republican elite did not abruptly cut off its ties with caliphate; Mustafa Kemal and his milieu adopted a very diligent and gradual policy towards the abolition of caliphate. First, caliphate was separated from the sultanate and the sultan was blamed for treachery, ignorance and pursuing his self-interest, and only after the sultanate was abolished did Republicans broach the topic of abolishing *hilāfet*. To better convey this vigilant and insincere policy, it is useful to focus on two speeches regarding the position of caliphate and caliph in Turkey. The first one is a speech Mustafa Kemal gave to Turkish National Assembly in 29.10.1922, and the second one belongs to Yusuf Akçura, one of the many authors of *Tarih I* and *Tarih II*.

Mustafa Kemal’s speech<sup>375</sup> consists of a long and detailed history of caliphate. Emphasizing the extraordinary nature of the circumstances from which caliphate emerged, Mustafa Kemal, similar to pre-Republican sources, applauds Abū Bakr and especially ‘Umar for their composure and far-sightedness:

There emerged three different opinions. The first view demanded that the power and competence to merit the institution of *hilāfet* and to see the matters of the *ümmet* should be taken as a rule. In conformity with this, institution of caliphate would be the most powerful, influential and mature (*reşīd*) tribe’s (*kavim*). This view belonged to the majority of the Companions.

The second view was that the tribe which served Islam should be accepted meriting caliphate. This was the view of the *Ansār*. The third opinion was the emphasis of the power of kinship. And this one was the Hāshimīd’s view. It turned out to be impossible to elect one and apply the result of the election. At the

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<sup>373</sup> Lammens, H. *Le Berceau de l’Islam: l’Arabie occidentale à la veille de l’Hégire*, Rome, 1914, p. 314, cited by E. Tyan. *Institutions du droit public Musulman*, Paris, 1954-6, I, p. 97

<sup>374</sup> Tyan, E. op. cit., pp. 97-99, 114-116

<sup>375</sup> Atatürk, M.Kemal. *Nutuk*, c. III Vesikalar, Türk Devrim Tarihi Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 1982, pp. 1239-1251

end, under the influence of His Excellency ‘Umar, who believed in the necessity to avoid chaos, His Excellency Abū Bakr was offered allegiance.<sup>376</sup>

At this point, Mustafa Kemal starts reviewing and elucidating the need for caliphate among Muslims:

Apparently, private influence moulded the election of the first caliph, instead of the natural tendency of the public opinion. O Gentlemen let us think not that this opposition was unnecessary. Actually, caliphate is the most significant affair among Muslim nations (*millet*). Because Gentlemen, caliphate of the Prophet is an institution that serves as a connection among Muslims. And it enables Muslims to gather around the word of unity.<sup>377</sup>

Then Mustafa Kemal explains why ‘Umar’s decision was the right choice:

Leadership is such a mystery and wisdom of the Almighty that its formation is always requires power and influence. The actual reason for that is the elimination of viciousness, preservation of security, organization of *jihād*, organization and equality in public affairs. These can be possible only through power and influence, this is the manner Allah’s custom has always been. For that reason, of the three views we have elucidated above, it is no wonder that the first one –which was the view that the tribe, the nation with power and influence be the inheritor of caliphate- was the choicest and triumphant over others, and it proved to be wise that His Excellency Abū Bakr occupied the seat of *hilāfet*.<sup>378</sup>

Then Mustafa Kemal drags the topic to the divisions and problems within the *ümmet* and the ill-functioning of caliphate:

His Excellency ‘Umar, May Allah be pleased upon him, then fully realized that the rule under caliphate was inadequate for the administration of a state, that an individual, no matter how virtuous and powerful he is, is inadequate for the administration of a state. It was due to this anxiety that he could not designate a caliph after him.<sup>379</sup>

At this point, he describes the ‘illumination’ of ‘Umar that he does not appoint a caliph after himself: “At the end, taking a very reasonable step, ‘Umar entitled the affairs regarding leadership, state and nation to consultation (*meşveret*).”<sup>380</sup> Then Mustafa Kemal casts criticism both on ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya for they allegedly pursued their own interests at the expense of the chaos within the *ümmet*: “As it is seen, only after such a twenty five year short time span following the expiration of Allah’s Messenger, did the two greatest men of Islam not hesitate in the struggle for caliphate to leaving people of same race and religion who

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<sup>376</sup> *ibid.* p. 1242, my translation

<sup>377</sup> *ibid.* p. 1242, my translation

<sup>378</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1242-1243, my translation

<sup>379</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1244, my translation

<sup>380</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1244, my translation



followed them sunk into blood.”<sup>381</sup> The point Mustafa Kemal wants to proceed comes here when he starts talking about how Seljukid sultans, particularly Melik Shah, diminished the seat of caliphate to his benefit to a symbolic title with no real political authority or influence. Mustafa Kemal is delighted with the idea that a caliph remains loyal to a sovereign, even if the sovereign is an individual: “had Melik Shah wished he could have done in Baghdad what Sultan Selim did approximately five hundred years later. The only possible thing the aforementioned might have in his mind was to make sure that someone more loyal to Turkish (*Türkiye*) Seljukid state and more meriting the seat of caliphate be the successor of [the existing] Caliph....”<sup>382</sup> The next point Mustafa Kemal proceeds is to construct a bridge between his long speech on the history of caliphate and the current agenda:

Now Gentlemen! Preserving the seat of caliphate, institution of national sovereignty and rule –which is Turkish Grand National Assembly- of course lives in harmony, and of course it [caliphate] will be greater than he who was an impotent and insignificant title holder before Melik Shah. Because, it is Turkish Grand National Assembly which represents today’s Turkish (*Türkiye*) State. Because, Turkish nation as a whole directly and solely as a religious (*dīnī ve vicdānī*) mission does promise and sponsor with its all power to be the basis of that institution of caliphate.<sup>383</sup>

Thus, Mustafa Kemal suggests an interrupted continuum between the rulers of two Turkeys, the reigns of Melik Shah and the Assembly, or more accurately his, so that what the Seljukid ruler did not do should be done by the Assembly. Melik Shah receives applause for ‘taming’ the caliph, but the next step requires something ‘bolder’: while keeping *hilāfet* as a post, transforming the supremacy of sultanate over caliphate from Ottoman sultan to people. In order to legitimize his vital suggestion of divorcing caliphate from sultanate and abrogating the latter, he makes use of yet another powerful tool:

Turkish nation, which has been the noble representative of the notion of independence for thousands of years, is now wanted to be kicked down into this hole [of captivity]. However, in order to kick, a traitor, an unconscious, a fool traitor was necessary. Just as a creature devoid of such humane merits as heart and conscience is necessary even in order to pull the string of those who are legally punished to death. Those who give the decision of death penalty are in need of such a sordid means; who could he be? Who could be the one to put an end to the independence of the Turkish state, to destroy the life, pride and honor of Turkish people, to tend to accept the annihilation of Turkey by standing up?<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1245, my translation

<sup>382</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1246, my translation

<sup>383</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1247, my translation

<sup>384</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1249, my translation

Receiving from the representatives the ‘correct’ answer “Vahdeddin” he desired from the beginning, Mustafa Kemal pulls the trigger to kill Ottoman sultanate, without touching caliphate:

Unfortunately, [he is] Vahdeddin whom this nation keeps at the top as ruler, sultan, *pādīshah* and caliph. (People yelling out “may Allah perish him”), with this vile action of his, Vahdeddin has done nothing other than admitting a response no one but he deserved.

With this action, Vahdeddin killed himself and necessitated the obliteration of the ruling system he represented.<sup>385</sup>

Effacing any remaining pro-sultanist opinions from the minds of the representatives, Mustafa Kemal skillfully, elaborately and exaggeratedly points the new power holder, i.e., the nation:

The nation, Gentlemen, would never acquiesce being the victim of this treacherous action. Because, the nation was mature and capable enough to understand the nature of actions of those who happen to be at their top in accordance with the procedure.

The nation was sensitive and vigilant enough to apprehend the reasons of the calamities it has suffered for centuries.

The nation was mature and ripe enough to instantly apprehend the sorrowful results of the ignorance it suffered to the extent to forget its own identity due to being the means and power serving to the rapacious intentions of individuals, starting with their ambition for leadership, ruling and occupation, acquisition of interest and comfort, intensification of shamelessness and depravity, and vicissitudes. At the time to employ its most logical, legitimate and humane right, the nation hesitated no more.

By establishing a state directly in its name, the Turkish nation (...) this time acquired the post with the competence and power it brought into being against the calamities. The nation directly grasped its own fate and represented its national sultanate and sovereignty not in a single person but in the Grand Assembly which comprises all elected representatives.<sup>386</sup>

Mustafa Kemal very openly and elaborately puts that; the caliph would remain at the office as long as he derives his power from the Turkish state. He does not give a hint of what he and his circle will do one and a half years later; on the contrary, he states that “Turkish and Islamic State of Turkey” will be the source of two joys, both worldly and heavenly.<sup>387</sup> Remarkably, Turkish Republic had commenced her life in 1920 as an ‘Islamic State’ and it was only in 1928 that the word ‘Islam’ was effaced from the Constitution. Therefore, during this eight

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<sup>385</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1249, my translation

<sup>386</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1249-1250, my translation

<sup>387</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1251, my translation

year period, Mustafa Kemal did not hesitate in his orations to refer Islamic values along with the western ones.

Yusuf Akçura's oration in 1923 before caliphate was abolished skillfully conveys precisely the same point.<sup>388</sup> Akçura's oration is a part of long discussions and deliberations in the Assembly as a reaction to a publicly unveiled letter sent by Agha Khan and Emir Ali of colonial India to Mustafa Kemal and İsmet Pasha. In this letter, the institution of *hilāfet* is defended, and it is demanded that administrative, political and worldly powers be assigned to caliphate. It is further added that in case these powers are not given to caliphate, Islam would regress and the Muslim world would suffer from the diminished status of *hilāfet*. The alleged letter was revealed by newspapers before the president and the prime minister deliberate, inciting great anger in the Assembly. Speakers, among whom İsmet Pasha, unfailingly interpret this letter as the manipulative tactics of Britain on Turkey, alleged that it was written by non-Sunni spies at the command of the British in order to serve the colonial ambitions of Britain. Akçura in his speech not only voices his personal thoughts, but also provides his audience with a brief and rather reductionist narration of the history of caliphate. Stating that the office has been a toy and the caliph no more than a puppet in the hands of many colonial powers<sup>389</sup>, he claims that future existence of caliphate is unlikely to discontinue this servitude:

Gentlemen, international organizations generally attract external interventions....It is not only us who have international political and religious organizations. As you know, despite lack of similarity in many aspects, there exists in West Europe another international organization which demonstrates many a similarity [to caliphate]. While the Italian state in South Europe was preoccupied with acquiring its unity and freedom, the French had sent troops to succor the Pope in Rome. Consequently, French and Italian soldiers fought against each other. In the name of what? In the name of Catholicism. However, the matter was a political one at that time.

France did not want a strong Italy to exist. In order to solely realize this political objective, France, by making use of religious means, utilized an international organization, that is, the Papacy. As you see, the existence of an international organization within the boundaries of Turkey, which is accepted international and supranational by a society that is more or less tied with religious unity to one another, seems as if to give these men the right to intervene.... As long as caliphate remains at the hands of Turks, leans on the authority and sovereignty of the Turkish Assembly and State, it may prove a useful organization for us.

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<sup>388</sup> The exact day of the oration is 8 Kanunuevvel 1339, Cumartesi, altmış dördüncü ictima.

<sup>389</sup> *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, İş Bankası Yayınları, cilt. IV (2 Mart 1339/1923- 25 Teşrinievvel 1934), Ankara, 1999, p. 324

However, gentlemen, conditions should remain unchanged. If not, an organization that is useful for both us and the whole Muslim world may well be hazardous to both us and the whole Muslim world.<sup>390</sup>

Akçura's style against *hilāfet* is a bit harsher and more committed than that of Mustafa Kemal, and he openly argues the perilous nature of caliphate, leaving the door open for further discussions:

Germany [in the World War I] wants to make use of it [caliphate], and now we see that Britain tries to make use of it. Gentlemen (...) if the caliphate shall be an Islamic institution in the hands of Turks, then, yes, if it shall be a useful institution to Turco-Islamic commandership (*kā'ide*), then we should preserve it with our most strength. It must be ours. But in the other case, it will serve to the interests of France, Britain, Italy, Germany--historically we see that it indeed was--gentlemen, it shall be hazardous even to Islamic world.<sup>391</sup>

As the Republican textbooks examined in this study were written at least six years after this oration, the ruling elite, a faithful member of which certainly was Akçura, had long found the opportunity to write the history textbooks in accordance with the above-cited ideas regarding caliphate. To better see the germs of Republican notion of *hilāfet*, *Tarih II*'s approach in particular is of great significance. *Tarih II*'s exhaustive narration of the emergence of caliphate is exquisitely detailed in comparison to that of *Bakalorya Tarihi* and *Umumi Tarih*. *Tarih II* postulates that the ties between Arab tribes and Medina were a loose one life of which was bound to the existence of the Prophet. Once he died, asserts *Tarih II*, the tribes felt no more the need to stick to Medina, and thus emerged chaos among Muslims. This postulation resembles that of Ömer Rıza in that both emphasize the loose bonds between different Muslim groups:

As long as Muhammad was alive, no one from the Companions deliberated the future and accordingly measures to be taken in case of Muhammad's death; this situation was considered a problem incumbent only on Allah and His Messenger. However, the situation was totally different for the tribes politically yoked by Medina. Because, these became subject to Muhammad due to the fear of his political and military power, rather than religious sentiments; they accepted this subjugation captivity, and were looking forward the day they would become free. For that reason, Muhammad's sudden disappearance without giving Muslims any further advice begot a big shock among the Companions in Medina.<sup>392</sup>

Emphasizing the Prophet's position as a mediator among Muslims of varying interests, *Tarih II* argues that his death revealed what was temporarily entombed before: "The only authority these leaned on was Muhammad himself; for that reason, once the person who sticks them

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<sup>390</sup> *ibid.* p. 323, my translation

<sup>391</sup> *ibid.* p. 324, my translation

<sup>392</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 116, my translation

together vanished, they became headless, disorganized and without an ideology; they remained at their houses suspecting and begrudging each other.”<sup>393</sup> *Tarih II* then stresses and applauds the soothing role Abū Bakr played, and reveals its appreciation of his qualities as the new leader:

[Abū Bakr delivering to the audience] “O people, he that worships Muhammad should know that Muhammad had died. He that worships Allah should know that Allah is immortal.” Then, he said pulchritudinous words which influenced people in the desired way.<sup>394</sup>

Vigilant and contemplative, Abū Bakr began his words in a phlegmatic and compromising manner. He constantly flattered the Medinese. He pacified the riotous souls. Generally, an honest man of good thoughts reigns over agitated and sentimentally, rather than logically, acting mobs who are incapable of contemplating, and do not know anything other than yelling.<sup>395</sup>

It is ‘Umar who appears next and far-sightedly takes a further step: “‘Umar feared that the discord would result in a big fight, and he took the initiative taking Abū Bakr’s hand.”<sup>396</sup>

*Bakalorya Tarihi* is very brief in contrast to *Tarih II* in narrating the whole story of caliphate:

Abū Bakr emerged under the name of *halīfe* as the first *amīr* of Muslims. After him, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Alī in that order assumed caliphate. They were, to some extent, elected caliphs. None of these formed a dynasty which passed from father to son. These four people were named *Hulafā-i Rāshidīn*.

As soon as Muhammad died, they *sub rosa* buried him near the room of sun-dried bricks he used to live. Due to clamour of shovels, Muhammad’s wives in the adjacent room understood that a grave was being dug. The next day, Muslims came together at the mosque, ‘Umar, giving a speech, suggested that Abū Bakr be caliph. Later, Abū Bakr started talking and found supporters, subsequently he became the first caliph.<sup>397</sup>

Remarkably, the first paragraph cited above exactly appears in *Tarih II*, too.<sup>398</sup>

*Tarih* of 1929 is also brief in its narration of *hilāfet*, even without mentioning the unfavourable voices to Abū Bakr’s caliphate.<sup>399</sup> *Umumi Tarih* of Emin Ali gives not much detail than do *Bakalorya Tarihi* and *Tarih*. As a matter of fact, there is a great similarity between the narrations of Emin Ali and *Tarih*.<sup>400</sup> While the three books neglect the legitimacy problem of Abū Bakr’s caliphate, *Tarih II* argues about the legitimacy of Abu Bakr’s election

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<sup>393</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 117

<sup>394</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113

<sup>395</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114

<sup>396</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114, my translation

<sup>397</sup> Enver Behnan. *op. cit.*, pp. 171-173, my translation

<sup>398</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 118

<sup>399</sup> *Tarih*, p. 11

<sup>400</sup> Emin Ali. *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47

in great length. Having appreciated the composure of Abū Bakr, the book also extols ‘Umar: “In an ecstatic state of mind, people usually immediately take part in an unpredictable, impromptu movement. ‘Umar’s move [nominating Abū Bakr to caliphate] took place at exactly such a time.”<sup>401</sup> A common feature that *Tarih II* shares with the western scholars is the emphasis on the role of ‘Umar during the election. Rather exaggeratedly, Caetani states that ‘Umar was “the greatest statesman after the Prophet and in some respects even greater than the master himself.”<sup>402</sup> *Tarih II* argues that dire circumstances require exquisite precautions and only men of outstanding character such as Abū Bakr and ‘Umar can achieve this:

In the midst of the most perilous moments of the crisis that burst out as a result of Muhammad’s death, there were only two men who preserved their composure: ‘Umar and Abū Bakr.

However we endeavor to avoid ascribing the merits of historical deeds to individuals, in the final analysis, what saved the Muslim community from an immediate catastrophe was the political virtue of these two men.

These were the ones who conserved Muhammad’s legacy. ‘Umar and Abū Bakr’s decorum, absolute decency in their objectives and that they acted only through the inspiration from people became victorious over separatist ambitions and repugnant interests.

Abū Bakr was recognized by the Muslims in Medina the leader of Muslim community and the caliph of the Prophet due to his unadulterated moral virtues and functionality.<sup>403</sup>

What follows next is a review and interpretation of Abū Bakr’s caliphate. Conscious of the problematic nature of the election, *Tarih II* does not consider it illegitimate, nevertheless. On the quite contrary, ‘Alī and his companions are reprimanded for their ‘diffidence’:

‘Alī, who stayed at ‘Ā’isha’s house with Muhammad’s dead body, Zubair and Talhā’s actions were interesting. These could not demonstrate a political talent and firm character. They were mortified by the immensity of the loss [of Muhammad]; however, ‘Umar and Abū Bakr did not stay at their houses, on the contrary, they opposed the severe and unfavourable circumstances and overcame them.<sup>404</sup>

*Tarih II*’s stance is obvious; who takes the initiative first, who ‘saves’ the motherland, people and the values is the one deserving the leadership. There is no room for ‘cowards’ such as ‘Alī. Mustafa Kemal’s “he who serves this nation becomes its master,”<sup>405</sup> perfectly reflects

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<sup>401</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 114-115, my translation

<sup>402</sup> Caetani, L. *Annali dell’Islam*, Milan, 1905-1926, v. III, p. 123, cited by Madelung, Wilfred. op. cit., p.4

<sup>403</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 116-117, my translation

<sup>404</sup> *ibid.* p. 115, my translation

<sup>405</sup> *S ve D*, p. 195, cited by Baydar, Mustafa. op. cit., p. 137, my translation

Republican view, therefore neither Mustafa Kemal nor Abū Bakr can be accused for their 'problematic', 'anti-democratic' leadership. Leaders, argues *Tarih II*, derive legitimacy not from the number of people content to see them at top, but from the courage they demonstrate, the initiative and risk they take in times of anarchy. Mustafa Kemal's following words are very interesting in that they not only demonstrate how Mustafa Kemal legitimizes Abū Bakr's caliphate but also reflect his belief in the necessity of 'loyal' trustees to secure the system established by the 'father':

What to be done once the Prophet died was not to entomb him as soon as possible, but to ensure the reform he made. This could be done first by replacing him with a close friend of his who apprehended the reform he made...Neither 'Alī nor the other Hāshimīds could realize that. Only three great men realized this fact: Abū Bakr, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaida...These three figures of the reform are as great as its maker.<sup>406</sup>

It seems that Mustafa Kemal firmly believes that no reform achieved by a single man such as his could survive without the chain of trustees the leader can rely on. It is, therefore, unimportant for the sake of the survival of the reforms whether these trustees come to power in a democratic way or not. It also appears to be relatively unimportant whether the trustees rule democratically or not. What is important for Kemalist thought is to make sure that the reforms made by the 'wisest' and the 'natural' leader could survive.

Even though such Muslim caliphs as 'Umar and Abū Bakr are extolled for their 'virtues', *Tarih II* casts severe criticism on the institution of caliphate, seeing essential problems lying in caliphate as an office:

In this election, Muslims of Medina, in equipping Abū Bakr with the power and authority, unintentionally, had established a great political and religious institution such as famous Roman Empire and Papacy.

In reality, electors thought that they vested relatively more influence and authority to one of the members of a tribe than the rest; that is, they accepted Abū Bakr merely as a tribal chief. Nevertheless, Abū Bakr became the ruler of a significant region of Arabia. He simultaneously was a commander, a despotic sovereign and the highest ranked spiritual leader of the new religion. Electorates were unaware of that. Abū Bakr was declared the leader of Muslims without ever determining the nature of his responsibilities, and delineating his power and authority. What organized better the rights and responsibilities of *Hilāfet* developed later. Yet, the position and rights of caliphate did not in any way remain unchanged till the day the caliph was sacked and crushed by the horseshoes of Hulāgu's cavalry six centuries after the day it was formed (*ortaya çıkarıldığı*), and even after that.

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<sup>406</sup> Günaltay, Şemseddin. *Ülkü* dergisi, 1945, c. IX, sayı 100, s.3-4, cited by Perinçek, Doğu. op. cit., pp. 259-260, my translation

While undertaking administrative issues, Abū Bakr gave urgency to only one responsibility: taking Muhammad as an epitome in every aspect of life, executing the rules he made, and lastly, realizing his military and political ideas.

Abū Bakr loyally and exactly followed these issues. Although this manner might initially prove functional, it might later well obstacle the development of Islamic system. Because, Muhammad in his life used to successfully administer Islamic community taking and applying measures which befit the conditions of his time. If he had ever had contact with the societies outside Arabia, he would probably make numerous novelties and changes. Because, he had an exquisitely progressivist (*ilerici*) soul; he always stood ready to ameliorate and apply his system accordingly with conditions of time.

Muhammad did not think himself bound by anything, when it was necessary to make a reform whether in religious matters or social issues. He always walked ahead. Death abruptly ruptured this progress. When analyzing the reasons of the stagnation and regression in Islamic world, one should not put the blame on Muhammad, [on the contrary] but on that his successors adopted the literal meaning of his path, rather than its soul. This great reality was understood only at the time of Republic of Turkey, and necessary action was taken accordingly.<sup>407</sup>

In the last sentence, *Tarih II* very clearly puts that, as the institution of caliphate, a primeval institution that was ‘outdated’ hundreds of years ago, proved ‘infunktional’, therefore, the Republican cadres stood no hesitant to abolish this ‘burden’. Once ‘functional’ but ‘outdated’ very long ago, and prone to political manipulations, particularly to those from ‘outside’, caliphate long ‘deserved’ to be entombed into history, but it was the Republican cadres who came to realize and fulfill this ‘mission’. Therefore, listing first the initial necessity for caliphate in the callow Muslim community, and stating next that in the course of many a century Muslim community no longer needed it; students are indoctrinated with the evolutionary idea that as many other institutions, caliphate too became obsolete and thus abolished. What replaced caliphate is the will of people or, at least, the will of the leader who feels this will. The words “...they [‘Umar and Abū Bakr] acted only through the inspiration from people”<sup>408</sup> from *Tarih II* reminds Mustafa Kemal’s own words from *Nutuk*: “... by trusting only the nation’s affection and courage, and acquiring inspiration and power from its never-ending source of strength and success, we [Mustafa Kemal] continued our conscientious mission.”<sup>409</sup> Originally ‘created’ by ‘Umar and Abū Bakr in order to serve the will of the people, and to prevent separatism through intensification of community’s unity, *hilāfet* in time became obsolete, and Kemalist elite received the ‘mission’ to ‘feel’ this will

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<sup>407</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 117-118, my translation

<sup>408</sup> *ibid.* pp. 116-117, my translation

<sup>409</sup> Atatürk, M.Kemal. *Nutuk (sadeleştirilmiş)*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, pp. 47-48, my translation



and act accordingly. The Kemalist elite's attitude towards caliphate and caliphs is rather vacillating. Approving the electoral nature of the system and the personal qualifications of 'Umar and Abū Bakr, Republican elite at the same time sees caliphate a primitive version of the Republic, with inherent seeds of despotism. Emin Ali's criticism of caliphate and caliphs better reflects this Kemalist attitude:

The time of Abū Bakr and 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Alī, who were elected caliph after him, is called the era of *Hulafā-i Raṣīdīn*. For these four caliphs were, to some extent, elected and hence ruled, their era is also called the Republican Era. Nevertheless, one should not compare this republic with today's people's republics. The first caliphs were religious dictators possessing absolute and enormous power. Their authorities included dismissal and appointment of army commanders and all officers.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 54, my translation

## CHAPTER VI

### INTERPRETATION

In order to make an interpretation of the divergences and convergences between the historical approaches of pre-Republican and Republican sources examined so far, it is safe to examine them separately. The sharp ideological differences lying behind the sources necessitates such a categorization, although the time span between the publication dates of the earliest and the latest sources is no more than 20 years.

The dominant notion lying behind the Pre-Republican sources appear to be Islamism. Islamism in this context can be defined as the belief that history of mankind abruptly and positively changed with *vahiy*. Revelation is so central to Islamism that almost every positive attribute such as wisdom, modesty, and compassion is linked with God's intervention, while pre-revelationary era is considered to be marked by negative qualities. For that reason, any notion, person, or incident prior to *vahiy* is disliked. What is brought by revelation, on the contrary, is accepted as good. The notion of *ümmet*, therefore, is highly esteemed: first Muslim Arabs are praised for their 'high' character.

It is, however, important to note that the notion of *ümmet* was challenged by nationalistic views when pre-Republican sources were written. Actually, except for Ömer Rıza's *Sadr-ı İslām*, all sources antedate the First World War, when the *ümmet* notion collapsed despite Ottoman Empire's anticipations that religious fraternity would suffice to attract the support of Muslims including those living under colonial rule. What is later labeled by the Republican regime as the 'treachery of the Arabs' was not then realized. For that reason, pre-Republican sources do not propagandate against the Arabs, even though there are few implications, particularly in Ahmed Hilmî's *Tārīh-i İslām*, which may be attributed to nationalism. It is, however, not only difficult to assess whether these anti-Arabic sentiments really emanate from nationalistic thoughts, but also premature to conclude that Islamist thoughts were already dead at the time when Ahmed Hilmî wrote his book. It seems more possible that his anti-Arabic thoughts are a result of his conception that the 'glorious' days of Arabs was over.

In analyzing Republican history books and textbooks, it is necessary to focus on the influence of Kemalism on the formation of a notion of history among the Republican elite and consequently the generation of these history textbooks in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It is then necessary to scrutinize the ideological background of Kemalism, and examine how each

underlying tenet of Kemalist ideology has influenced the perception and writing of history. It is possible to argue that there stand two major inter-related ideologies behind Kemalism: nationalism and positivism, which jointly are nurtured by evolutionism, that is, social Darwinism. It is however important to note that Republican books also vary among themselves. That is, *Bakalorya Tarihi*, *Umumi Tarih* and *Tarih* were all products of the era just before Turkish History Thesis came into articulation. Therefore, despite their similar attitudes towards Islamic history, these three books are amateurish in comparison to *Tarih I* and *II*. Because, the latter are not only capacious in terms of content but also familiar and in harmony with western scholarship regarding Islamic history.

### **Nationalism**

Born in the Balkans where nationalistic sentiments had long been powerful among numerous ethnic groups and having a western style military education, Mustafa Kemal became familiar with western thought at an early age. The Committee of Union and Progress's (CUP) transformation of the already fashionable current of Turkism into Turkish nationalism<sup>411</sup> and increasing support of these ideas by the young army officers functioned as a whirlpool from which Mustafa Kemal could not escape. As a consequence of a concatenation of wars which followed each other and resulted in the annihilation of the already dead-born identity of Ottomanism, the notion of Turkish nationalism in Mustafa Kemal's mind was moulded with the territorial notion of a merely Turkish *patrie*. This can be viewed in Mustafa Kemal's own words from *Nutuk*; upon reviewing the occupation of the territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire and assessing alternatives to regain the liberty, including British and American mandate, he claims that:

O Gentlemen, I considered neither solution appropriate. Because, the proof and logic these decisions were based on were all rubbish. As a matter of fact, at the very moment we were in, the basis Ottoman Empire had been built on had expired. Ottoman lands had totally disjointed. There remained only a fatherland (*ata yurdu*) in which a fistful Turks were living....Gentlemen! There was only one decision under these circumstances. It was to establish an unconditionally new, independent Turkish state based on national sovereignty. That was the decision we had in our mind before we left Istanbul and began to implement as soon as we disembark Anatolian territories in Samsun.<sup>412</sup>

His notion of nationalism, in addition to a territorial dimension, comprised a mostly exaggerated and even fictitious historical aspect which bears substantial influence of romanticism. Already in 1924, before his nationalist views were institutionalized and became

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<sup>411</sup> *Türkiye Tarihi*, edited by Sina Akşin, İstanbul, 2000, v. 4, İstanbul, 2000, p. 47

<sup>412</sup> *Nutuk*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1998, p. 9, my translation

official ideology, Mustafa Kemal had a notion of primeval and majestic Turkish history: “Let us ponder the basis of our lives. This thought of course will drive us to centuries old Seljukid Turks who preceded six, seven century-old Ottoman Turckdom and to Grand Turkish Era (*Büyük Türk Devri*) which preceded that.”<sup>413</sup> Once establishing the republic, disqualifying any sort of oppositionary ideology and strengthening both his position in the Republican Party and the position of the party in the political realm, Mustafa Kemal’s nationalistic views became the dominant ideology of the late 1920s and 1930s till his death. Such institutions as Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Language Institution which were established respectively in 1931 and 1932 became the hotbed of Kemalist nationalism where Republican elites including Yusuf Akçura and Afetinan who contributed to the writing of *Tarih I* and *Tarih II* ‘generated’ on the order of Mustafa Kemal an illustrious Turkish history for the ‘use’ of new generations. The formation of the Turkish History Thesis in early 1930s was followed by the introduction of the Sun-Language Theory which contributed a lingual aspect to Kemalist nationalism. Nadir Özbek such describes Kemalism’s intention of fabricating the thesis: “Kemalist regime needed a new “theoretical” framework, a new history thesis in order to prove the eternal Turckdom of Anatolia, to demonstrate that Turks are also of a white race, and therefore it is plain that their European identity is indisputable and to legitimize the rupture from Ottoman sultanate and Islam.”<sup>414</sup>

Kemalist nationalism in particular and Turkish nationalism in general developed, undoubtedly, as a reaction to anti-Turkist sentiments in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The allegations that Turks were from an inferior race and had made no contribution to civilization and history but war, devastation, and murder was a popular theme among western scholars. For that reason, from the early phases of Turkism, political and intellectual figures such as Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa laboured to refute western allegations claiming a primordial, glorious Turkish history.<sup>415</sup> Kemalist nationalism is largely indebted also to such Ottoman intellectuals as Namık Kemal, Ahmed Rıza, and especially Ali Suavi.<sup>416</sup> Among these, Ahmed Rıza was of special importance for he assumed and advocated positivistic ideas from which Mustafa Kemal extensively benefited. Kemalist ideology also owes much to Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura in maturing its nationalistic views. Ziya Gökalp’s most important contribution to Mustafa Kemal’s ideology was his rejection in *Türkçülüğün Esasları* of the endeavors to

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<sup>413</sup> Afetinan, A. *Ellinci Yılda Tarihten Geleceğe*, Ankara, 1973, p. 11, my translation

<sup>414</sup> Özbek, Nadir. “Zeki Velidi Togan ve Türk Tarih Tezi”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Eylül 1997, p. 21, my translation

<sup>415</sup> Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa. *Les Turcs, anciens et modernes*, cited by Sina Akşin. op. cit., v. 4, p. 387

<sup>416</sup> Akşin, Sina. op. cit., v. 3, İstanbul, 2000, p. 353

unite eastern and western civilizations.<sup>417</sup> Defending that Turks should leave what he calls Ancient Greek sciences behind and absolutely adopt western civilization,<sup>418</sup> Gökalp's immense influence on Mustafa Kemal's later reforms is obvious. The nature of Mustafa Kemal's nationalism is also shaped by territorial demands of minorities in the aftermath of the First World War, and as a consequence it gained an aggressive style. These words of Mustafa Kemal best give a hint of his understanding: "Armenians have no single right in this virtuous (*feyizli*) country. The mother land is yours, of Turks. This motherland was Turkish throughout the history, therefore it is Turkish, and shall live as a Turk to the eternity... Armenians and others have no single right here. These blessed soils are genuinely Turkish mother land."<sup>419</sup> Taha Parla judges that Mustafa Kemal's message can be read in two ways:

[f]irst, if the expression that Armenians and others have no right in this country is interpreted as they have no right of territorial claims, it appears to be [the emphasis of] the geographical and political unity of Turkey. Second, if we interpret the expression that this country from the beginning to eternity is Turkish, and only Turks shall benefit from its riches more than ownership of land, it means that the riches of the country will belong to Turks and to 'others' only if they became assimilated. An ethnically monolithic motive of sovereignty which secretly conflicts with a culturally and legally wide nation and citizenship definition.<sup>420</sup>

This second interpretation can be strengthened by a speech of Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, one of the leading figures of Kemalist regime:

Because this party [People's Republican Party] has given its position back to Turkish Nation who is originally the master (*efendi*) on the basis of what it had done so far. It is my idea, my thought that, let both the friends and enemies listen, the master of this mother land is Turk. Those who are not Turk in origin have but one right in Turkey, which is to be servant, to be slave. We are at the most liberal (*hür*) country of the world. This is called Turkey.<sup>421</sup>

Such an exclusionist notion of nationalism was nourished by the historical 'facts' pointing out the primordial presence of Turks in Anatolia, as indicated by both speakers in their reference to history. 'Proving' that Turks had existed in Anatolia long before 'others' did would legitimize the present Turkish existence in Anatolia, and thus invalidate what Halil Berktaç calls the "Paradigm of old Orientalism intending to colonize Turkish History."<sup>422</sup> Therefore, Mustafa Kemal had mentioned consanguinity between the Balkan nations which he traced

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<sup>417</sup> Kaygı, Abdullah. *Türk Düşüncesinde Çağdaşlaşma*, Ankara, 1992, p. 169

<sup>418</sup> Gökalp, Ziya. *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 38-39

<sup>419</sup> "Adana Esnafıyla Konuşma", II, 1923, p. 126, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, pp. 200-201, my translation

<sup>420</sup> Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 207, my translation

<sup>421</sup> "Hakimiyet-i Milliye", 19.9.1930, p. 3, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 208, my translation

<sup>422</sup> Berktaç, Halil. *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi ve Fuat Köprülü*, Kaynak, İstanbul, 1983, pp. 14-23, my translation

back to common Central Asian ancestors.<sup>423</sup> It is again due to same assumption that Hittites, Sumerians and Lidians are counted as Turks in history textbooks of 1930s.<sup>424</sup> The following words of Mustafa Kemal show how he envisaged the education system as a means to indoctrinate the young generations with nationalistic views: “Our ancestors who established great states did also possess great and vast civilizations. It is our due to search and study this and to let Turkdom and the world know it.”<sup>425</sup>

### Positivism

Positivism is considered to enter Ottoman lands through the writings of Ahmed Rıza. Having adopted Comtean notion of order and progress, Ahmed Rıza exerted enormous influence on CUP’s embracing positivistic ideas.<sup>426</sup> That the young military students such as Mustafa Kemal had become affiliated with the CUP resulted in the spread of positivistic ideas among these students. Mustafa Kemal’s famous dictum “the most accurate guide in life is science, it is erroneous, ignorance, and absentmindedness to look for a guide other than science”<sup>427</sup> is an apparent sign of this positivistic influence. His notion of positivism is very much in congruity with the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers and Auguste Comte, particularly with his notion of *religion civic*. This belief can be observed in his following words: “Our religion is the most logical and natural religion. For that reason, it is the last religion. In order a religion to be natural, it needs to be congruous with reason, science (*fenn*), logic and art,”<sup>428</sup> “[s]hepherds do know nothing but sun, clouds and stars. Peasants too know only these. Because produce is dependent on the weather. The Turk sanctifies only nature....I cannot accept this absurdity (*muamma*). He that is worth sanctification is only the leader of society,”<sup>429</sup> “...if social life is full of certain useless and hazardous beliefs and customs which have nothing to do with reason and logic, then it is paralyzed,”<sup>430</sup> and “by expanding and upbringing sentiments and religious (*vicdānī*) progress through science and art...”<sup>431</sup> Kemalist ideology desires to manipulate religion, rather than to abolish it, because it is deeply

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<sup>423</sup> *S ve D*, II, 1931, pp. 272-273, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 198

<sup>424</sup> *Tarih I*, pp. 127-145

<sup>425</sup> Afetinan. *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler*, Ankara, 1968, p. 311, my translation

<sup>426</sup> Akşin, Sina. op. cit., v. 3, pp.355-356

<sup>427</sup> *Milli Eğitimle İlgili Söylev ve Demeçler*, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946, cited by Baydar, Mustafa. op. cit., p. 60, my translation

<sup>428</sup> *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, II, 1923, p. 90, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 271, my translation

<sup>429</sup> *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri (1918-1937)*, Ankara, 1989, III, pp. 124-125, cited by Cündioğlu, Düccane. op. cit., p. 62 my translation

<sup>430</sup> *Milli Eğitimle İlgili Söylev ve Demeçler*, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946, cited by Baydar, Mustafa. op. cit., p. 95, my translation

<sup>431</sup> “İstanbul Halkı Temsilcileriyle Konuşma”, II, 1927, p. 247, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., my translation

convinced of the need for a religion to achieve ‘order’, if not ‘progress’. Ahmed Hamdi Başar’s words perfectly exemplify this notion:

Instead of excluding religion from social life, we need to let it live by keeping it to serve the reforms. We shall never attain our goals by demolishing, leaving mosques and erecting people’s houses (*halkevleri*) in lieu. It is possible to have people gathering at mosques hear our voice, transform these places into modern people’s houses, annihilate the religious class, enable everyone to talk in the name of religion and world.<sup>432</sup>

However, it seems that nothing can indicate Kemalist view of religion which has gone beyond Comtean *religion civic* with its nationalistic elements, better than the following sentences from Reşit Galip’s thesis “*Müslümanlık: Türk’ün Milli Dini*” of 1932: “Humans cannot live without a religion. Perhaps a hundred thousand year-old custom had conveyed the need of a religion to human kind. Turkish nation too must have its own national religion. This is a must for Turkish nationalism, too.”<sup>433</sup> Mustafa Kemal’s unshaken belief in human capability and reasoning which he owes to Enlightenment thought is reflected in these words: “There is no single problem which reason and logic cannot solve,”<sup>434</sup> and “human intelligence, which is surely going to diffuse into heart of the nature that is full of mysteries for now, will reveal the expected realities.”<sup>435</sup> Besides assuming Comte’s *religion civic*, he, like the cadres of CUP, also believes the Comtean notion that progress should be realized in unity and order.<sup>436</sup> In pursuant to this notion, ‘different’ identities and political views that might harm the ‘unity’ of Turkish people are outlawed. The denial of the existence of Kurdish minority and the ban on political parties and labor unions are a part of this monolithic ideology. The People’s Republican Party program in 1931 strengthens the disciplinary, solidaristic, progressivistic and monolithic Kemalist ideology:

While showing dilligent care with affection and kind treatment to not to discourage students’ entrepreneurship capability, in order to prevent them being defective in life, it is our opinion that at every educational institution it is crucial to familiarize them with a serious order, discipline and a sincere moral reception.<sup>437</sup>

It is among our essential principles to consider people of Turkish Republic not as a conglomerate of different classes, but rather as a society divided into various

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<sup>432</sup> Başar, Ahmed Hamdi. *Atatürkle Üç Ay ve 1930’dan Sonra Türkiye*, İstanbul, 1945, p. 51, cited by Cündioğlu, Dücane. op. cit., p. 98, my translation

<sup>433</sup> Eski Bir Atatürkçü [Münir Hayri Egeli], *Atatürk ve Din IV-V*, “Millet” (*Bilinmeyen Atatürk’ten Hatıralar*), 23.10.1947-11.12.1947, c. 4, sn. 2, sy. 90, 97, p. 4, cited by Cündioğlu, Dücane. op. cit., pp. 72-73, my translation

<sup>434</sup> Afetinan. *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler*, p. 280, my translation

<sup>435</sup> ibid. p. 283, my translation

<sup>436</sup> Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 324

<sup>437</sup> 1935 CHP Parti Programı, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 74, my translation

professional sectors which is in cooperation for the sake of individual and social life....What our party aims in this principle is, instead of class struggle, to establish a harmony in interests that will provide social order and mutual support and avoid destroying each other.<sup>438</sup>

As with nationalism, positivism too found its way in the Republican education system. The Party program in 1935 carries a good hint regarding the implementation of positivistic dimension of Kemalism into the educational realm: “The aim of education is to make knowledge a means for the citizen to succeed in materialist life. Education should be free of any sort of superstition and foreign thought; it should be outstanding, national and patriotic (*yurtçu*).”<sup>439</sup> These articles clearly show that, knowledge itself bears no significance for Kemalism, it gains importance as long as it proves useful in terms of material acquisitions. As Taha Parla puts, this indicates that “Kemalism, in essence, is an ideology of ‘welfare and happiness’ or ‘happiness through welfare’. Its rationality is a positivistic ‘homo economicus’ rationalism.”<sup>440</sup>

### **Evolutionism or Social Darwinism**

That such 19th century European ‘scientists’ and politicians as Gobineau and Le Bon constructed racism as an ideology by borrowing evolutionary ideas from Darwin and revealed the ‘inferiority’ of the Asiatic people using racial terms,<sup>441</sup> naturally provoked reaction among the disparaged Ottoman elite. The notion that Turks were not among the ‘inferior’ races, but rather fathers of a big civilization is an idea which, starting from Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa, the Ottoman elite endeavored to prove. Kemalism was the heir of such a defensive nationalistic understanding, and it developed and institutionalized this understanding. What the Ottoman elite could not achieve, but Kemalist intelligentsia could, was using western thinkers’ own weapon, that is, science, and formulating through application of science a unique history thesis where Turks were placed in the center, and the new generations were accordingly indoctrinated. It is then safe to say that social Darwinism was the Kemalists’ bridge between positivism and nationalism. Such sciences as anthropology and biology were employed by Kemalist historians in order to validate the tenets of the Turkish History Thesis. Afetinan, one of the co-authors of *Tarih I* and *Tarih II*, was actively involved in skull measuring activities in 1930s with the intention of authenticating the alleged Turkic origin of early Anatolian settlers. History textbooks including *Tarih I* and *Tarih II* were written in accordance with the

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<sup>438</sup> 1931 CHP Parti Programı, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 36, my translation

<sup>439</sup> 1935 CHP Parti Programı, cited by Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 74, my translation

<sup>440</sup> Parla, Taha. op. cit., v. 3, p. 80, my translation

<sup>441</sup> Özdoğan, Günay, Göksu. “*Turan*” dan “*Bozkurt*” a Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 53-54



evolutionary ideas; Turks were claimed to have been perfected throughout the millenia of mankind, while such 'other' societies as Arabs, Indians and Europeans were disparaged due to their 'inferiority' to Turks in terms of technology, science, and social order. It was the Turk who best evolutionized and created civilization, who for the first time in history smelted iron and domesticated horse; it was again the Turk who introduced civilization to primitive peoples scattered on the earth. Without the involvement of 'superior' Turk, neither the Egyptians could have built the Pyramids nor the natives of the Indus valley could have established Mohenjo Daro civilization. Nafi Atif Kansu's oration upon the opening of the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in 1936 is loaded with such ideas:

As Saffet Arıkan has said: "searching Turkish lingual roots in what are today known as Chinese, Indian, Elamid, Sumerian, Hittite, Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek and Latin cultures which all were established by our Turkish ancestors is our not only a natural right bestowed us by history, but also a sacred duty."

As history and language, we ourselves also can make our geography.<sup>442</sup>

Yet another aspect of Kemalist ideology is extremely intense elitistic sentiments it owes again to evolutionism and positivism. Kemalism has no faith in the capability of people's, they are seen merely as 'hordes'. These 'hordes' are admitted incapable of realizing big achievements; they need to be organized, indoctrinated, manipulated and mobilized by those 'advanced' vanguards. These leaders are well educated, intelligent and 'virtuous' people born with these high, distinctive qualities. Kemalism's self-image is well reflected in Mustafa Kemal's words: "he who serves this nation becomes its master,"<sup>443</sup> and "no good reform can be achieved by popular vote except for those who can see the truth."<sup>444</sup>

### **The Big Picture**

Dripping with the nationalistic thoughts which are coupled with positivism, such a fictitious Turkish 'history' served the aims of Kemalism, since the 'glory' of a forgotten past could be and was used to legitimize such Kemalist reforms as the abolition of *hilâfet* and reforms regarding alphabet and dress. The disdainful attitude of Republican sources towards pre-Islamic Arabs can be explained in positivistic and nationalistic terms. The 'primitive' and 'vagabond' Arab who has not established even a state in history, let alone a civilization, is viewed as the anti-thesis of the Turk. Mustafa Kemal's argument on translation of the *Qur'ân* with Kazım Karabekir in 1923 reveals his thoughts regarding Arabs and the Prophet. "Yes,

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<sup>442</sup> *Ülkü Mecmuası*, Sayı 36, cilt 6, s. 401-402, Şubat 1936, cited by Afetinan. *Ellinci Yılda Tarihten Geleceğe*, pp. 95-96, my translation

<sup>443</sup> *S ve D*, p. 195, cited by Baydar, Mustafa. op. cit., p. 137, my translation

<sup>444</sup> Baydar, Mustafa. op. cit., p 74, my translation

Karabekir, I will have the *Qur'ān* translated into Turkish in order to teach the sons of the Turk the foolish talk (*yave*) of the son of the Arab. And I will have them read. So that they foolishly keep being deceived...”<sup>445</sup> Therefore, Arabs are belittled by Republican scholars, even though they admit that Islam has made substantial ‘contributions’ to those ‘nomadic’, ‘uncivilized’ people. Emin Ali’s postulation summarizes Kemalist view that despite the ‘great’ ideals Islam had imbued to Arabs, they never did fully succeed in applying those ‘high’ notions such as equality.<sup>446</sup> Arabs are seen merely not good enough to embrace such ‘noble’ ideals, it is only after the conversion of the Turks, the ‘most civilized’ society, did Islam find an atmosphere to expand and advance. It was Turks, not Arabs, who realized the intellectual and scientific developments in Islam: Abū Hanīfa, Ibn Rushd, Buhārī and even Ibn ‘Arabī were all ‘Turks’.<sup>447</sup> Thus, Islam was accepted by Atatürk as a Turkic religion.<sup>448</sup> For that reason, not only pre-Islamic Arabs but also Muslim Arabs were disparaged in Republican books and textbooks as studied in Chapter II.

What is noteworthy is, not only Republican historians but also pre-Republican scholars disdain the Arab of *Jāhilīyya*. This convergence is due to the ‘dislike’ of pre-Islamic Arabs common both in Republican and pre-Republican sources. However, the parallel is very loose; while pre-Kemalist historians belittle almost all *Jāhilīyya* practises, the moment when the first *vahiy* took place is accepted as a turning point: no Arabic, or Muslim, practise beyond this very point is disparaged. On the contrary, pre-Republican scholars accept post-revelationary Arabs as paragons for the next generations. As the extension of the centuries old body of Muslim ‘*ulamā*, pre-Kemalist scholars make a substantial distinction between Arabs before and after *vahiy*. While Republican scholars approach this issue with strong nationalistic sentiments, the drive of pre-Republican historians is more *ümmet* oriented. However, Ahmed Refik constitutes a substantial exception; he does not criticize Arabs of *Jāhilīyya* for being ‘primitive’. On the contrary, he expresses his appreciation of their life style and virtues, thus reminds the ‘Noble Savage’ image or a romantic’s longing for rustic life. Although Ahmed Refik’s appreciation of Arabs before Islam does not prevent him from softly reprimanding pagan practices, he does not raise his voice as much as Shiblī and Ahmed Hilmī.

The impact of positivism on Kemalism is best observed in Chapter III. While pre-Republican sources firmly stick to the traditional *Sunni* doctrine that Islam was revealed by

<sup>445</sup> Mumcu, Uğur. *Kazım Karabekir Anlatıyor*, Ankara, 1996, pp 84-87, cited by Perinçek, Doğu. op. cit., p. 253, my translation

<sup>446</sup> Emin Ali. op. cit., p. 53

<sup>447</sup> Eski Bir Atatürkçü [Münir Hayri Egel]. ibid. cited by Cündioğlu, Dücane. op. cit., p. 71, my translation

<sup>448</sup> Cündioğlu, Dücane. op. cit., p. 76

Allah to the Prophet through Gabriel, Republican historians sharply diverge from this view, converging with their western colleagues. Seeking Judeo-Christian influence and origins in the articulation of *Qur'ān*, Kemalist scholars repudiate super-natural involvement in the revelatory moments. In pursuit of that goal, they work on refuting the orthodox notion of Muhammad as the *übermensch*. Rejecting first the infallibility of prophets, the idea that Muhammad too was an ordinary man no different than his polytheist fellow citizens is introduced. *Primus inter pares*, Muhammad's superiority to his contemporaries, claims Republican historiography, lies not in his being 'selected by God' as claimed by the tradition, but in his outstanding character, intelligence and capabilities as a statesman. Humanizing the Prophet, his revelatory experiences are diminished by Republican books and textbooks to the level of one's judgement of his surrounding. The Prophet, according to Republican historians, felt deep sorrow for his 'debauched', 'primitive', 'vagabond', 'disrespectful' and 'disorganised' people, and maybe for himself, too, and decided to act. Thus divorces Republican historiography religion from divine involvement and postulates instead the 'human factor' as the causative for the emergence of religions. As for Muhammad, these scholars share with the western historians the idea that he came up with the words he borrowed from Jewish and Christian monks and claimed that these were the verses Gabriel had conveyed to him. Unlike most western orientalisks, Republican historians, do not accuse Muhammad of fraud; on the contrary, they believe his sincerity. Rather pragmatically, Kemalism holds that what is good for the society is acceptable, be it Muhammad's 'own' principles. The leader knows the best, and what he says is always appropriate, although some 'incapable' souls may fail to realize this.

Muhammad is also claimed to have gone through an evolution in which he started as Muhammad the Merchant and ended up with Muhammad the Messenger of Allah. Having outstanding qualities, he shines among his fellows; therefore, it does not surprise Kemalist historians that no other Arab but Muhammad emerges with great ideas and courage to rectify and unite his 'ill' society. In lieu of a prophet, Muhammad is, then, seen no different than a political or military leader; he is likened to Oğuz Han, Atilla, Alp Arslan, and especially Mustafa Kemal. Like these leaders, he too succeeded in introducing substantial transformation to his people. *Tarih II* bolsters this postulation particularly in the fourth chapter, where the military and political capabilities of the Prophet are extolled. Such demystification or humanization of religion, *vahiy* and prophet is followed by a strictly positivistic, materialistic and evolutionary interpretation regarding the notion of God. God, claims *Tarih I*, was a product of human mind: due to then inexplicable forces of nature; the primitive man of the

pre-Enlightenment era generated a super-natural being and attributed super-natural powers to it, and thus religion; but as humans release their minds from 'self-incurred tutelage', little phenomena has remained unexplained. Therefore, Kemalist historiography rather materialistically claims that humanity needs no more of super-natural beings such as God, prophets, and revelation. Science, reason, and faith in human capability are the new tools that will serve humanity. Mustafa Kemal's "[s]hepherds do know nothing but sun, clouds and stars. Peasants too know only these. Because produce is dependent on weather. Turk sanctifies only nature....I cannot accept this absurdity. He that is worth sanctification is only the leader of society"<sup>449</sup> gives the hints about the extent of his materialistic thoughts. It is safe to say that revelation is the most evident issue where pre-Kemalist sources and Kemalist ideology are in sharp contradiction.

What is also interesting is that by glorifying the qualities of Muhammad as a military and political leader, Kemalist ideology deducibly extols itself. Claiming that Muslims lost the Battle of *Uhud* due to soldiers' lack of order and yielding to the orders of Muhammad, Republican history books insinuate that when the flocks do not submit the orders of the leader, calamity inevitably follows. The leader's decisions are always to the best of people, even though they fail to see this. The battle clearly indicates and is a warning to Turkish people that it is not only unnecessary but also a big mistake to question the deeds and sayings of the leader. People are not for questioning, holds Kemalism, but they are the followers of he who is the embodiment of the people, politically, militarily, intellectually and spiritually. Therefore, Muhammad's 'high' qualities as a leader and the 'unwise' and 'recalcitrant' nature of his people set an example for Turkish people. Also interesting is that the stance of pre-Republican sources regarding Muhammad's leadership is very similar to that of Republican sources. The Prophet is the ultimate form of man, he is sent by God to rectify humankind and every action he does is an example for the 'believers.' His military ability, political engagements and intellectual proficiency are accepted as perfect without questioning. Infallible, his decisions, deeds and sayings are to the best of his *ümmet*. In case the 'believers' fail or object to follow his footsteps, calamity is the only result expecting them. Despite this similarity, the actual reason of pre-Republican acclamation of Muhammad's leadership significantly varies from that of Republican sources'. While Muhammad is the sole paragon of perfection in classical Islamic thought and pre-Republican views, Republican sources suggest a parallelity between the 'distinctiveness' of Muhammad and Mustafa Kemal.

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<sup>449</sup> *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri (1918-1937)*, Ankara, 1989, III, pp. 124-125, cited by Cündioğlu, Dücane. op. cit., p. 62 my translation

Although they seem to applaud Muhammad and later his Companions in the issue of caliphate, it is actually Mustafa Kemal and his ideology that Republican books extol. What these sources eulogize about Muhammad is his resemblance to Mustafa Kemal. Therefore, Mustafa Kemal is the role model of Republicans, while the Prophet is that of pre-Republicans.

As for the issue of caliphate, Republican books and textbooks make use of the 'constant progress' rhetoric. As already seen in Chapter V, *Tarih II* applauds the abolition of caliphate saying that

Muhammad did not think himself bound by anything, when it was necessary to make a reform whether in religious matters or social issues. He always walked ahead. Death abruptly ruptured this progress. When analyzing the reasons of the stagnation and regression in Islamic world, one should not put the blame on Muhammad, [on the contrary] but on his successors who adopted the literal meaning of his path, rather than its spirit. This great reality was understood only at the time of Republic of Turkey, and necessary action was taken accordingly.<sup>450</sup>

While the book mentions progress, it refers to a single figure, the Prophet, who has morally and intellectually advanced far beyond his fellows and undertakes the mission to improve the qualities of his people. The book asserts that at the time of Muhammad and the first four caliphs, the mission was accomplished through the 'establishment' of Islam and Islamic institutions such as the caliphate. It follows that the poorly functioning caliphate of the later centuries needed a substantial change, and it was only Turkish Republic under the rule of Mustafa Kemal which took this obligatory step. Abolition of the caliphate is seen as removal of an obstacle on the way of development: "Abū Bakr loyally and exactly followed these issues. Although this manner might initially prove functional, it might later well obstacle the development of Islamic system."<sup>451</sup> Thus, by abolishing the caliphate, the Republic 'got rid of' a 'burden' on the shoulders of all Muslims, and particularly Turks. In days of yore, when Muslims were more 'developed' than the rest, caliphate might have functioned well, but now was the time of reason and science, popular voting and adoption of modern notions. Therefore, Kemalism sees the caliphate as a redundant, old-fashioned institution that contradicts with the 'necessities' of the time. Mustafa Kemal's words perfectly reflect this view: "reform is destroying the institutions which caused Turkish nation to slip behind in the last centuries and placing instead new institutions that will enable the nation to progress in accordance with the highest requirements of civilization."<sup>452</sup> Comparison of Mustafa Kemal's words prior to and those of Republican textbooks after the abolition of caliphate indicates the

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<sup>450</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 117-118, my translation

<sup>451</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118, my translation

<sup>452</sup> Afetinan, A. M. *Kemal Atatürk'ten Yazdıkları*m, p. 7, cited by Baydar, Mustafa. *op. cit.*, p. 78, my translation

striking change in Kemalist view regarding caliphate. While Mustafa Kemal, as if he was a Muslim theologian, extols *hilāfet*, only less than ten years later, historians under the aegis of his regime accuse it of backwardness. As for the pre-Republican sources, it is more difficult to talk about a single viewpoint. It is possible to divide these sources into two; first group comprises the books written prior to the abolition of caliphate, while Ömer Rıza is the only member of the second one. The difference between these groups is that the authors of the first group do not have an agenda of caliphate; they do not effort to legitimize the caliph while Ömer Rıza faces the problem that caliphate was abolished. However, Ömer Rıza does not seem to back caliphate probably due to the authoritarian single-party regime which has strongly disliked any ‘regressionist’ attempt. It again due to the progressivist, anti-monarchist, anti-imperialist and ‘libertarian’ motives of the Republican Era that Ömer Rıza uses the term ‘liberty’ to denote the latent reason for the *Ansārid* opposition to *Quraishite* caliphate. It is then safe to say that, though non-Kemalist, Ömer Rıza’s *Sadr-ı İslām* bears the influence of the Republican regime.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to examine the patterns of Islamic history teaching in history books written in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. By studying the teaching of Islamic history, it would be possible to reach a conclusion regarding how the authors reflected their political stance in their works. The manner authors taught Islamic history in the books might also be a good indicator of their conception of religion in general and Islam in particular since the study of Islamic history cannot be detached from Islam.

In pursuant to this goal, two separate but not totally dissimilar group of books were examined. The first group comprised popular, unofficial books written in the pre-Republican Era. The time period labeled as 'pre-Republican' roughly stretches from the early 1910s to the late 1920s. Although the term is classed as 'pre-Republican' since all sources but one were written before the First World, *Sadr-ı İslām* can be labeled as non-Kemalist for it was written in the Republican Era without being affected by the Turkish History Thesis. Republican sources, on the other hand, were all written in the Republican Era. *Tarih I* and *Tarih II* date from early 1930s, and are the products of the Turkish History Thesis of the same era.

The result of the first part of the study dealing with the pre-Islamic Arabs turned out to be surprising for me: Before the study, I did not expect to see a coalition of 'anti-Arabic' voices, but during the conduct of the research it appeared that almost all sources examined were loaded with sentiments hostile to polytheism. I grouped these books under the umbrella of second approach, while Ahmed Refik was the only member of the first approach. The second approach can be characterized by its critical and reproval position against Arabs, whereas the first approach embraced a laudatory style. The second approach severely rebukes pre-Islamic Arabs being 'primitive', 'promiscuous' and 'ignorant.' Some books label Arabs as a people with no history. Republican sources claim that they were nothing more than nomads. Arabs were very rudimentary in terms of state and social structure with no significant role in world history. These claims harmonize with those of the contemporary western scholars. It was also interesting to see that Republican sources, particularly *Tarih I* and *Tarih II*, criticizing nomadic life-style of Arabs attributed excessive significance to historic involvement of Turks in accordance with the Turkish History Thesis. Turks are claimed to have pioneered in the birth and dissemination of civilization, despite their nomadic *modus vivendi*. This paradoxical approach to the correlation between nomadism and civilization is

explained both by the textbooks and the founder of the Turkish History Thesis by the claim that Turks were not born but later became nomads. As a natural consequence, it follows that long before their ‘involuntary’ but ‘inescapable’ shift to nomadism, pre-historic Turks were the fathers of not only the ‘ancient’ and ‘glorious’ Turkic civilization but also the entire set of civilizations known to men. At this very point pre-Republican and Republican sources differ: while the latter constructs such a splendid past, the former do not. The reason the pre-Republican sources degrade Arabs prior to Islam is Arabs’ pagan practices. These sources detest almost all pre-Islamic attributes: traditions, religion and life-style. Regarding that the advent of Islam was divine intervention to stop the ‘loathsome’ pagan customs, pre-Republican books dislike Arabs prior to Islam not because they were Arabs but due to their religious idolatrous practices and ‘immoral’ way of life. In full harmony with classical Muslim tradition, this ‘immorality’ is denoted by the term *Jāhiliyya*, that is, ignorance. Pre-Republican sources follow the path of centuries-old *Sunni* scholarship in their assessment of Arabs before Islam. Despisal of the Arabs in Republican books and textbooks, on the other hand, emanates from nationalistic sentiments. No matter they are pagans or Muslims, Arabs are the target of all criticism.

The second approach views Arabs as a part of a long-lasting Semitic history. Therefore, they are applauded for being ‘civilized’. Despite some negative implications regarding idolatry, Arabs are considered neither ‘promiscuous’ nor ‘ignorant.’ There is a striking congruity between the first and the second approaches in the manner they view Arabic language. The Arab receives applaus when it comes to their use of and passion for Arabic. Unfailingly, all books admit that they were the ‘masters of the words.’ However, Republican sources in particular comment that this mastery is of little or no significance. Orientalistically, the authors discredit the possibility that the ‘primitive’ Arab lacking an ‘august’ history can develop lingual skills well beyond the ‘civilized’ nations. Therefore, his use of language is labeled as ‘bereft of imagination’ and full of ‘grandiloquent words’ without a real ‘meaning.’ Another defensive feature of the same sources is claiming that only after Turks embraced Islam did Arabic language reach its zenith.

The major source of discrepancy between the pre-Republican and Republican books signals of which appeared first in their relatively different reasons to loathe the pre-Islamic Arabs blatantly occurs around the subject of revelation. Revelation, or *vahiy*, proves to be a real acid test for the sources examined. Nourished by such classical Islamic sources as Tabarī and Buhārī, pre-Republican popular books wholeheartedly believe in the revelatory nature of the *Qur’ān*. Some of these works also aim to challenge the 19<sup>th</sup> century western postulation



that Muhammad was an impostor suffering from epilepsy who faked ignorance to present the 'poems' he wrote as *Qur'ānic* verses. The pre-Republican sources purport that Muhammad bore distinctive and supernatural qualities endowed by God from his birth. Therefore, he was destined to prophethood. He never committed a sin, it is God's will and order that he remain innocent. It was not due to his sorrow for his people that he announced his prophethood. It is also another feature of pre-Republican sources to extol Muslim Arabs. There is no clear sign of nationalistic feelings. *Ümmet* is emphasized instead.

Republican sources in contradiction with pre-Republican ones do have a lot in common with the western historiography. Although believing that the Prophet was 'sincere' in the revelatory moments, Republican sources unshakenly claim that he purposely asserted an angelic involvement in the 'descending' of the Scripture. Because, they say, Muhammad, as a sensitive man deeply saddened by the 'primitiveness' of his people, shared with them the 'irrational' notion of supernatural beings. Contemplated much on the 'cures' to rectify his 'ill' people, Muhammad came up first with the idea of *vahiy* and then prophethood. In saying that he was God's Messenger and conveying His messages to the 'sinful', Muhammad's sole intention was to save his people from savagery. This situation does not trouble Republican sources, because they do not care much about the methods, their actual concern is the end. As Machiavellians, they believe that 'ends justify the means.' If the end is the rectitude and the organization of a 'low' people with no discipline, then Muhammad's 'poems' can be tolerated. He is not seen as a prophet but a moral leader. He is conceived as the most developed individual among Arabs who climbed up the evolutionary steps faster and better than his fellows. He is claimed initially to have been an ordinary Arab with no distinctive qualities, and prone to sins. However, as the individual sitting at the top of the pyramid of Arabs as a consequence of evolution, he merits to be the leader of his people. There in Republican books lies the implication that Mustafa Kemal and Muhammad bear a resemblance. Demonstrating superior qualities acquired in time and saving their people from the clutches of 'ignorance', both men are the most developed individuals of their own nations. Therefore, Mustafa Kemal deserves the place he is in, and so did Muhammad.

Republican sources demystify Islam as they over-emphasize Muhammad's role in its advent. Proposing that human mind has 'created' what has always been called God due to its fear of unexplainable incidents, Republican textbooks claim that mankind is not far from 'emancipating' itself from 'mental slavery.' Relying on the scientific developments that unveiled the haze of unknown, these sources believe that humans no more need supernatural beings to fear from. This, however, does not result in a total rejection of the religion; it is still

accepted as vital and necessary. However, while the 'irrational' features should be expurgated from the religion, it should serve the unity and progress of people. It is seen as a glue that keeps a society united, as a silencer that turns adverse voices shattering people and hindering development down. The Kemalist concept of religion, therefore, does not differ much from Comtean notion of civic religion. However, Kemalism adds to this concept yet another flavor: nationalism. Even though it was the 'unworthy' Arab who first embraced Islam, it was the Turk as a consequence of whose conversion Islam's transformation from a local religion to a world religion became a reality. Had Turks not adopted Islam, the other Muslim societies would have failed to raise industrious scientists, elegant and majestic artists, honourable warriors and reputable philosophes.

The insinuated and proposed parallelity between Mustafa Kemal and the Prophet is furthered when the figure of Muhammad as a moral guide is furnished with the notion of Muhammad as a military and political leader. His military skills advances his position in the eyes of Republican sources: he is not only the most developed Arab to lead his people but he is certainly the leader words of whom were inviolable. Republican sources provide examples where the 'disorganized', 'rapacious' and 'thickheaded' Arabs who chases after little personal gains inevitably meet calamity. Interestingly, pre-Republican sources emphasize almost the same points: the Prophet is viewed not only as the perfection of human beings and the Messenger of God, but also as a perfect commander and social leader who never fails. While pre-Republican elevation of Muhammad emanates from traditional Muslim concept of the innocent Prophet free from failure, Kemalist laud of Muhammad originates from the evolutionary and elitist notion that he who qualitatively surpasses his contemporaries deserves to rule the rest. For Republican textbooks, they were Muhammad among Arabs at his time, and Mustafa Kemal among Turks. Therefore, while praising the qualities of Muhammad, Kemalist sources secretly advocate Mustafa Kemal: what befell on Arabs in the past when they did not listen to Muhammad may happen to Turks if they disobey their 'savior.'

The teaching of the caliphate is also unexpectedly similar in pre-Republican and Republican sources. Except for non-Kemalist Ömer Rıza, no author had written after the caliphate was abolished. Therefore, they slightly mention or thoroughly skip its 'necessity' and 'merits.' Most of them confine themselves to saying that caliphate is an important office. In spite of the fact that caliphate was already abolished when Ömer Rıza wrote his *Sadr-ı İslām*, he does not criticize the abolition. This might be due to the significant obstacles before the freedom of speech and publication in the mid-1920s. All pre-Republican books, however, agree that Abū Bakr was the only person who merited the office of caliphate. Their method of

justification is similar to that of Republican books. Both sources emphasize his being the closest companion of the Prophet, that he never compromised Islamic principles, that he closely and loyally follows Muhammad's footsteps. It is quite normal for orthodox pre-Republican sources to aggrandize a person who sticks to orthodox principles and to legitimize his caliphate. For the Republican sources, the drive is similar. The elitist order established by Mustafa Kemal required that someone faithful inherit the 'office' which could not be left in the hands of the rabble. Therefore, if someone not 'deserving' the position would acquire it, many a discord and calamity would follow. Therefore, no matter democratically or not, the posts should be 'given' to those who would not sully the system, who are capable of understanding its true meaning. There is yet a significant point where the pro-Abū Bakrite coalition is disintegrated: Republican sources extol the merits of abolishing the caliphate. In doing so, their main argument is that the Republic has furthered Muhammad's novelties by transforming and adopting them in accordance with the modern world and the circumstances it necessitated. In a way, Republican books claim that it is the Republic which kept Islam alive by amputating a 'redundant' and 'malfunctioning' organ. This oscillation in the writing of the subject of caliphate deserves a closer inspection, and deeper interpretation.

The centuries-old religion-based uniting role of caliphate among Muslims is replaced by the Republic's nation-based role. The Republic acknowledged everyone living within its boundaries as Turkish, and thus such a supranational office as caliphate was announced both dangerous and unnecessary. For caliphate became a truly precarious concept as a consequence of the incorporation of laicism, the idea that it long proved obsolete and instead of being useful, it posed an obstacle on the social and scientific advancements is argued in the Republican sources. The message here is not that religion hinders progress; on the contrary the sources discuss that religion does not curb development. Religion is defined by these sources as a body of moral values regulating relations between God and man, thus personal rather than social. What hinders progress, argues the Republican books and textbooks, is not the religion, i.e., Islam, itself but caliphate, the political organ, which is alleged to carry Islam beyond these relations and rules. What strikes in this idea is the allegation that Islam's political organ established in the past due the necessities of that time dictated the religion and hence the believers certain 'regressionist' and 'conservative' qualities which originally did not exist in Islam. actually, Republican historians oppose or seem to oppose the politization of Islam. Yet another interesting point is the fact that the Republic will supplant caliphate is the harbinger of the future development that the religion will be under strict control of the state. Islam saved by the 'regressionist' caliph will find its deserved place among people through

the Republic that restored/will restore its actual position. What is significant here is that a manifest transformation in the understanding of religion is mentioned. The religion referred by the Republican elite who discusses in the sources the restoration of the religion is doubtless a national *religion civic* demystified, purified from 'superstitions' and God, and being congruent with logic. There in this religion can be no room for neither revelation nor supernatural beings; science is the only guide, and these 'superstitious' beliefs which were either added later or accepted at the time of Muhammad without questioning but scientifically 'refuted' after the Enlightenment should be cleansed away. Islam should be such placed that it will prove useful for the society and serve to the norm of 'progress in order' which is the ultimate goal of mankind, and such a placement means nothing but the control and hegemony of the state, or the Republican cadres, which direct the society, over the religion. Here lies the deep contradiction of the Republican elite which opposed the political organ of the religion. The caliph legitimacy of whom is alleged to emanate from God and His prophet is accused for making use of Islam in political matters, and causing the backwardness of Turkish people due to both the rules he himself created or his opposition to progress he could not adapt. On the other hand, the Republican cadres see no harm in judging Islam as a manipulative tool through which they can direct people in the way they want. Why the Republican elite does not problematize this can be explained through the manner these cadres legitimize themselves. The elite which opposed the divine legitimization of the caliph and accepted this totally fictive and invalid legitimizes its existence partly by the charismatic leadership pattern but largely through the notion that 'we established this state and we know how to administer it.' It is also possible to argue about an attempt to legitimize itself in divine terms if Mustafa Kemal's super-human self-image he composed in *Nutuk* is taken into account. Therefore, the caliph's self-legitimization is invalidated by the cadres on the grounds that there is no such a concept, but when it is the elite to hold sway on Islam, then search for any source of legitimization becomes permissible.

If it is so, why then the Republican sources quote and favor Sunni views on the subject of caliphate? Why Shi'ite views which stand as the the biggest alternative to Sunni stance are totally disqualified? The first explanation is that however positivist they are, the Republican elite too descends from a Sunni tradition. Ottoman state which recognized only the four Sunni schools of thought always assumed an orthodox view both in the writing and teaching of history, and closed its doors to the Shi'ite ideology of neighboring and rivalling Iran. For that reason, it is possible to say that the Republican elite too did or could not stay away from this Sunni ideology.

The second explanation is that Sunni views better suited the intentions and interests of the Republican cadres. First of all, it is easier for the elite, who had the essential and tough aim to transform religious understanding of a mostly Sunni society, to realize their aim in the existing set of beliefs among people. Along with secularization, the attempt to make people Shia would not only be impossible but also digressive from the initial aim for the cadres who themselves were not Shia. In addition to that, advocating Shiite arguments would make no positive contribution to the intended transformation. Advocating 'Alī 'the usurped' against Abū Bakr and 'Umar was unfitting to the Republican ideals. One should bear in the mind that the Republic does not intend to pose itself as the ideology of those who were oppressed, usurped and thrust behind by the powerful and wealthy people who had the say in the society. On the contrary, it is a social Darwinist system perfectly getting along with the feudal lords and big industrialists in which rights and interests of peasants and workers can be sacrificed for the sake of production, union, and progress. It is a system in which the powerful who is able to dictate his terms can remain standing. The weak are disliked for they can hinder constant progress, for that reason, the rabble are bodily and intellectually strengthened; their impregnation with Kemalist views is the recipe for their intellectual weakness, and mass sport is used to build burly flocks. They are strengthened not in order to protect them against the powerful, they become strong for weakness is considered ill, and they are melted into the powerful. Such an ideology has no expectation in the idealization of 'Alī 'the usurped,' on the contrary, bold and self-sufficient figures who think they can do everything, obtain what they want, and take the initiative when necessary better suit the aims of the Republican historians. For that reason, characterization of Abū Bakr and 'Umar who assume responsibility from difficult situations serves the interests of the elite. Moreover, the Republic which criticized caliph's role and tried to destroy its divine legitimization would show no desire in struggling with the concept of *imāmet* that passed from father to son, was based on a complete divine legitimization, and therefore accepting *imāms* to be infallible. Actually annihilating the concept of *hilāfet* was easier than destroying *imāmet* for such scholars as Ibn Taymiyya had declined centuries ago the imperative nature of caliphate, hence equipping Mustafa Kemal and his milieu with an intellectual argument facilitating its abolition, and emphasized the human aspect of caliphs underlining his fallibility, thus paved the Republicans' way to remove caliphs from the office who failed or betrayed. On the other hand, it would be much more difficult to destroy *imāmet* which had dressed in more of a mystical nature. *Imāmet* which came to a sudden stop a thousand year ago with the disappearance of the twelfth *imām* had no problem in restoring itself with each *imām* as it is with Sunni caliphate; *imāmet* has long

become mystical, unquestionable, and untouchable. Therefore the Shiite view which was more static than that of Sunni was not useful for the aims of the Republican cadres. In addition, although opposing the hereditary nature of imāmet would be an essential stance and thus would not find support among Shia circles, the late coupling of caliphate with sultanate could be criticized and used as a means in legitimizing its abolition. For all these reasons, the Republican historians strictly remained loyal to Sunni arguments as long as caliphate is considered.

The big picture tells that except for such supernatural and 'irrational' attributes as revelation which positivistic ideology would immediately reject, pre-Republican sources do not dramatically disagree with the Republican ones. However, this accord is possible due to differing reasons: pre-Republican sources have a close harmony with the *Sunni* tradition, they transfer the dogma from the older generations to younger ones. Republican textbooks, on the other hand, serve the Kemalist notion that mobs are in need of a belief system to keep them on the track. 'Purified', 'sanitized' and 'Turkified' Islam perfectly suits to the desires of the Republican elite. That is why revelation and similar 'fabricated' and scientifically 'impossible' notions are effaced, and Islam is being presented to the new generations as a set of moral values without 'dogmas' and 'irrationality,' and its Prophet as a moral leader whose principles evolve in accordance with the time.

APPENDIX I: List of Books Written in the 1910s and 1920s on Islamic History

- Ahmed Rāsım. *Küçük Tārīh-i İslām*, İstanbul, 1326 (1910)
- Seyyid Emir ‘Alī. *Musavver Tārīh-i İslām* terc. Mehmed Ra’ūf, İstanbul, 1329 (1913)
- ‘Alī Cevād. *Musavver Tārīh-i İslām ve Medh-i Medeniyet ‘Arabīstān*, İstanbul, 1332 (1916)
- Esad. *Tahlīlī ve Tenkīdī Tārīh-i İslām*, İstanbul, 1336 (1920)
- Şehbenderzāde Filibeli Ahmed Hilmī. *Tārīh-i İslām*, İstanbul, 1327 (1911)
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## APPENDIX II: The Translation of the Narration of Caliphate in *Tarih II*

The society that Muhammad established had many a social, religious and political need. As long as Muhammad was alive, no one from the Companions deliberated the future and accordingly measures to be taken in case of Muhammad's death; this situation was considered a problem incumbent only on Allah and His Messenger. However, the situation was totally different for the tribes politically yoked by Medina. Because, these became subject to Muhammad due to the fear of his political and military power, rather than religious sentiments; they accepted this subjugation captivity, and were looking forward the day they would become free. For that reason, Muhammad's sudden disappearance without giving Muslims any further advice begot a big shock among the Companions in Medina. All the souls were deeply shaken; disputes immediately emerged. It caused the crystallization of three blocks in Medina. These blocks which had previously been in good terms when the Prophet was alive, now thought nothing but to pursue their own material and non-material interests.

The first of these blocks was the *Muhājirūn*, the second was the *Ansār* and the third was that of people who came from different parts of Arabia and gathered around Muhammad.

The best organized of these blocks was the *Ansār*; they were capable of swiftly moving. The other two blocks lacked such an organization.

The only authority these leaned on was Muhammad himself; for that reason, once the person who sticks them together vanished, they became headless, disorganized and without an ideology; they remained at their houses suspecting and begrudging each other.<sup>453</sup>

Muhammad ordered Abū Bakr to perform *imāmette* in daily prayers. Muhammad at his last breath demanded that he be given stationery, but people did not give him what he demanded. The news that Muhammad had died incited great shock in the city. Some people did not want to believe this. Traumatized and agitated, 'Umar too did not want to believe it. Having learned about the death, Abū Bakr ran into 'Ā'isha's room. He saw Muhammad lying on the ground and being shrouded with a cloak; no one was in the room; 'Ā'isha had run out, as soon as she had realized that Muhammad was no longer alive, in order to give the bad news to other

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<sup>453</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 116-117, my translation

women. Abū Bakr approached the dead body and unveiled a part of the cloak; once he kissed Muhammad's face, he shrouded the cloak again, and left the room at a slow pace. Sad and shocked, 'Umar was giving a speech to people. Abū Bakr asked 'Umar to calm down telling him "Calm down! 'Umar! Harken me!" 'Umar did not want to assuage and listen. Abū Bakr did not let his composure be spoiled. He made a gesture indicating that he too wanted to speak. Respectful, people turned to him, and gave up listening to 'Umar. Upon this, 'Umar gave up his speech and began to listen to Abū Bakr. Abū Bakr began his speech while people were soundless and attentive: "O people, he that worships Muhammad should know that Muhammad had died. He that worships Allah should know that Allah is immortal." Then, he said pulchritudinous words which influenced people in the desired way.

Once Muhammad gave his last breath, Medinese Muslims, the *Ansār*, came together at the vestibule of a house. At that time, 'Alī, Talhā and Zubair went to 'Ā'isha's room. Meccan emigrant Muslims, the *Muhājirūn*, went to listen to Abū Bakr who was speaking to public. At that very moment, a man approached Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and said that the Medinese gathered around Sa'ad bin 'Ibāda and allied with him, adding that "if you want the leadership office, go there before things exacerbate."

Not buried yet, [body of] Muhammad was still at home. 'Umar and Abū Bakr, taking Abū 'Ubaida, ran to the vestibule where the Medinese gathered. Some people tried to change their minds fearing of a fight. Nevertheless, they went to the vestibule and entered among those who had gathered there; a distressed man wearing a cloak in the midst of people caught their attention. This sick man was Medinese nominee Sa'ad bin 'Ibāda of the *Khazraj*.

When Abū Bakr and 'Umar came, a Medinese orator was giving a speech. Sa'ad was saying in a low voice due to his illness, and that Medinese orator was loudly repeating his sayings. Among many other things, this Medinese orator was talking against Meccan emigrants and accusing them. Always boisterous, 'Umar wanted to reply the orator and argumentatively reject the accusations. Abū Bakr prevented 'Umar. Vigilant and contemplative, Abū Bakr began his words in a phlegmatic and compromising manner. He constantly flattered the Medinese. He pacified the riotous souls. Generally, an honest man of good thoughts reigns over agitated and sentimentally, rather than logically, acting mobs who are incapable of contemplating, and do not know anything other than yelling. Abū Bakr firmly insisted on the notion that it was insufficient to consider only Medinese or Meccan *Muhājirūn* in the issue of

the election of president, and that all Arabs would accept and obey the authority and presidency of only someone from the *Quraish*. He finished his words inviting people to pledge allegiance either to ‘Umar or Abū ‘Ubaida who were there with him.

Someone from the Medinese suggested that two leaders be elected: one from *Quraishītes* and one from the Medinese. Upon this incited a stormy argument; everyone was yelling at each other. ‘Umar feared that the discord would result in a big fight, and he took the initiative taking Abū Bakr’s hand. He renounced the honor he was offered, and pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr. He declared him the successor of the Prophet. Those who appeared there followed ‘Umar: many a Medinese under the leadership of ‘Usaid, the *ra’īs* of the ‘*Aws*, went to his [Abū Bakr] side. Upon that, it was declared that Abū Bakr was elected caliph.<sup>454</sup>

Abū Bakr and ‘Umar too [as many other Muslims] were not able to appear at the sepulture. Apparently, political preoccupations at that times were so momentous and challenging that no one neither could find time nor desired to be preoccupied with the funeral of the powerful sovereign and master of Arabia.<sup>455</sup>

Muhammad died ten years after the *Hijrah* in Medina. His death incited a great crisis among Muslims. Islam had created a new society in Arabia. Muhammad used to assume the leadership of this society when he was alive. He was the one who commanded the armies in the war, make peace, solve disputes, and determine legal and moral rules. Once he died, someone was needed to replace him. Muhammad had not said anything clear about whom his successor would be. Following his death, Muslims were shocked, and they did not know what to do. There emerged a dispute between the Muslims of Mecca and Medina, both sides insisted that the caliph, i.e., the person who would succeed Muhammad, be from their tribes. The dispute was overcome due to Abū Bakr’s nomination, and everyone admitted Abū Bakr’s caliphate. Since Abū Bakr was first to accept Islam, and spend all his wealth for the sake of Islam, and was a decent and virtuous man, his caliphate was enjoyed by all Muslims.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 113-114, my translation

<sup>455</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 116, my translation

<sup>456</sup> *Tarih*, p. 11, my translation

In an ecstatic state of mind, people usually immediately take part in an unpredictable, impromptu movement. ‘Umar’s move [nominating Abū Bakr to caliphate] took place at exactly such a time.

Apparently, Abū Bakr’s election took place in a highly obstreperous manner; this election was not realized by asking each Muslim’s personal opinion, but quite the contrary, it came into being as a consequence of boisterous and expeditious initiative of a small minority which spontaneously happened to gather at the vestibule of a house. Allegations were made that such an election could not be accepted proper and legitimate, and that a bunch of people with no authorization of representation could not do such a thing.<sup>457</sup>

Part of the Meccan emigrants who could not appear in the election, and of these, particularly such influential men as ‘Alī, Zubair and their likes were extremely unhappy.

Abū Bakr’s success derives especially from the old enmity between the ‘Aws and the *Khazraj*. For the Medinese nominated the leader of the *Khazraj*, the ‘Aws preferred the *Quraishītes*; Abū Bakr and ‘Umar while going to the gathering site, leader of the ‘Aws told them that they could trust the ‘Aws, and they acted in harmony. Therefore, Abū Bakr’s election is the work of Muslims of ‘Aws who were neither *Quraishītes* nor Medinese.

‘Alī, who stayed at ‘Ā’isha’s house with Muhammad’s dead body, Zubair and Talhā’s actions were interesting. These could not demonstrate a political talent and firm character. They were mortified by the immensity of the loss [of Muhammad]; however, ‘Umar and Abū Bakr did not stay at their houses, on the contrary, they opposed the severe and unfavourable circumstances and overcame them.<sup>458</sup>

In the midst of the most perilous moments of the crisis that burst out as a result of Muhammad’s death, there were only two men who preserved their composure: ‘Umar and Abū Bakr.

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<sup>457</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 114-115, my translation

<sup>458</sup> *Tarih II*, p. 115, my translation

However we endeavor to avoid ascribing the merits of historical deeds to individuals, in the final analysis, what saved the Muslim community from an immediate catastrophe was the political virtue of these two men.

These were the ones who conserved Muhammad's legacy. 'Umar and Abū Bakr's decorum, absolute decency in their objectives and that they acted only through the inspiration from people became victorious over separatist ambitions and repugnant interests.

Abū Bakr was recognized by the Muslims in Medina the leader of Muslim community and the caliph of the Prophet due to his unadulterated moral virtues and functionality.<sup>459</sup>

In this election, Muslims of Medina, in equipping Abū Bakr with the power and authority, unintentionally, had established a great political and religious institution such as famous Roman Empire and Papacy.

In reality, electorates thought that they vested relatively more influence and authority to one of the members of a tribe than the rest; that is, they accepted Abū Bakr merely as a tribal chief. Nevertheless, Abū Bakr became the ruler of a significant region of Arabia. He simultaneously was a commander, a despotic sovereign and a highest ranked spiritual leader of a new religion. Electorates were unaware of that. Abū Bakr was declared the leader of Muslims without ever determining the nature of his responsibilities, and delineating his power and authority. What organized better the rights and responsibilities of *Hilāfet* developed later. Yet, the position and rights of caliphate did not in any way remain unchanged till the day the caliph was sacked and crushed by the horseshoes of Hulāgu's cavalries six centuries after the day it was formed (*ortaya çıkarıldığı*), and even after that.

While undertaking administrative issues, Abū Bakr gave urgency to only one responsibility: taking Muhammad as an epitome in every aspect of life, executing the rules he made, and lastly, realizing his military and political ideas.

Abū Bakr loyally and exactly followed these issues. Although this manner might initially prove functional, it might later well obstacle the development of Islamic system. Because,

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<sup>459</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 116-117, my translation

Muhammad in his life used to successfully administer Islamic community taking and applying measures which befit the conditions of his time. If he had ever had contact with the societies outside Arabia, he would probably make numerous novelties and changes. Because, he had an exquisitely progressivist (*ilerici*) soul; he always stood ready to ameliorate and apply his system accordingly with conditions of time.

Muhammad did not think himself bound by anything, when it was necessary to make a reform whether in religious matters or social issues. He always walked ahead. Death abruptly ruptured this progress. When analyzing the reasons of the stagnation and regression in Islamic world, one should not put the blame on Muhammad, [on the contrary] but on that his successors adopted the literal meaning of his path, rather than its soul. This great reality was understood only at the time of Republic of Turkey, and necessary action was taken accordingly.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> *Tarih II*, pp. 117-118, my translation

### APPENDIX III: The Translation of the Narration of Caliphate in *Tārīh-i Islām*

The *Ansār* had gathered at *Saqīfa Nabī Sa‘āda* and had intended to elect a *halīfe* among themselves. If this election had been realized, from the possibility that many Arabs and tribes would abjure [Islam] and as a result of a possible slaughter in Medina, Islam would decline. The *Muhājirūn* and *Quraish* could not accept the *ri‘āsa* of the *Ansār*. However, if Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda would have been elected *halīfe* in pursuant to the *Ansār*’s intention, it would be highly possible that a slaughter between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Ansār* would take place in Medina, since those who pledged allegiance him [Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibāda] would have been compelled to defend the caliph. Then, things would further be complicated due to the intrigues of Abū Sufyān and Umayyads, and the desire to resurrect the days of yore would be reintroduced, and the problems of *‘asabiyya* which had not quenched yet would arise again. It was also highly probable that ‘Aws would not accept Sa‘ad of *Khazraj*. These possible, excruciating events were prevented due to cunning deed, firm commitment, and spiritual power of ‘Umar who Distinguishes Truth from the Falsehood (*fārūq*).

As the *Ansār*’s intention was learned, Abū Bakr, taking ‘Umar and Abū ‘Ubaida as companions, headed to *Saqf Nabī Sa‘āda*. At that moment someone from the *Ansār* said: “We are the helpers of the Prophet, we are the army of Islam. O *Muhājirūn*, you are a community who came among us and took refuge, it behoves us to assume the leadership.” However, whenever the Most Honourable Prophet appeared in a gathering, he would have Abū Bakr in his right and ‘Umar in his left. Regarding Abū ‘Ubaida, he [the Prophet] used to say “he is the *amīn* of this *ūmmet*.” Once these three reached at the gathering, their appearance made the impression on people as if the Prophet resurrected and came there. And all people watched them. As was the wont of the Most Honourable Prophet, His Excellency Abū Bakr the Righteous (*siddīq*) too began his words by praying Allah. Then, he said to people: “This *ūmmet* used to worship idols made from stone and wood. Allah had sent them a prophet so that they worship Him and practice His unity. Arabs had difficulty in abjuring the religion of their fathers. God gave the *Muhājirūn* the privilege of faith. They became friends of the Prophet. And with him they endured the torments of the infidels. These are the first on the earth who worshipped Allah and had faith in His Prophet. They are the loyal friends and helpers of his, they are his tribe. For these reasons, it behoves them more than anyone to assume the leadership. For these reasons, no one but oppressors can oppose them. O *Ansār*,

your virtues and services cannot be denied; Lord has selected you for the assistance of his religion and Messenger. And you were fortunate by Allah's will to take part in the *Hijrah* of the Messenger. For us, your place comes right after the *Muhājirūn*. For the sake of God's Messenger you were the helpers, you are indeed very virtuous. These are undeniable. However, regarding the issue of leadership, Arab tribes will accept no one but *Quraish* as leader. Because the tribe of Quraish is excellent in terms of descent. And their land is the middle of the Arabian Peninsula. We are the leaders and you are the *wazīrs*, you will not be excluded from consultation, unless your consent taken, no deed will be realized." His Excellency 'Umar gave a speech in confirmation of Abū Bakr saying that "prior to his expiration, The Most Honourable Prophet entrusted you to us; if you were destined to leadership he then would entrust us to you."

The *Ansār* could not say anything, therefore they started deliberating. ...[S]omeone among them said: "an *amīr* from us and an *amīr* from you..." His Excellency 'Umar who Distinguishes Truth from the Falsehood said: "two *amīrs* at the same time cannot function; and unless the *hilāfet* is given to Prophet's tribe, I swear in the name of Allah that Arabs will not accept and obey that." In response, someone from the *Ansār* said: "O Ansār, Arab people obeyed this religion through your swords, do not let others grasp your right." His Excellency 'Umar criticized these words, and severely replied him. Then 'Ubaida started talking: "O Ansār, you are the first helpers of this religion, mind! Do not let yourselves to be the first in corrupting it."<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Şehbenderzāde Ahmed Hilmī. op. cit., pp. 329-331, my translation



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