A CONTRIBUTION TO AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRADITIONS CONTAINED IN THE FUTŪḤ AL-BULDĀN

BY

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Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī's Futūḥ al-Buldān is rightfully considered as one of the most important sources for the early Islamic history. The estimation of Balādhurī's work has by and large been positive. Already the historian, al-Mas'ūdī, who died in 956, mentions him as the best authority on information about the islamic expansion,[1] and the geographer Yaqūt (died in 1229) also talks about him positively.[2] The judgement of modern scholars is generally in agreement with this. Wüstenfeld writes that he as a "Historiker, Überlieferer und Dichter berühmt (war)."[3] Becker describes him in Enzyklopaedie des Islams as "einer der bedeutensten arabischen Geschichtsschreiber der dritten Jahrhundert," a point of view shared by E. Ladewig Petersen in his "'Alī and Mu'āwiya in early Arabic tradition."[4] Rosenthal, an exception, is the only less enthusiastic: "His value as a historical source has been occasionally overestimated in certain respects," and he refers to his frequent use of "ikhtiṣār." It is thus incorrect to assert that he always gives the original texts.[5]

[1] al-Mas'ūdī: Murūdj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādhin al-Djawahir, ed. Charles Pellat 5 vols. Beyrouth 1966 (Publications de l'Université Libanaise. Section des études historiques XI) vol. I p. 14.

[2] Yaqūt: Irshād al-Arīb, ed. Margoliouth 7 vols., London 1907–31 (Gibb Memorial Series 6) vol. VI,2 p. 127.

[3] F. Wüstenfeld: Die Geschichtsschreiber der Araber und Ihre Werke. Göttingen 1882 p. 25.

[4] E. Ladewig Petersen: 'Alī and Mu'āwiya in early Arabic tradition. Copenhagen 1964 passim.

[5] Encyclopedia of Islam vol. I p. 971.

The traditions contained in Futūḥ al-Buldān have never been satisfactorily analysed as regards Balādhurī's trustworthiness against his sources. It is, however, possible in the first main chapter of Futūḥ al-Buldān containing traditions on the conquest of the Arabian peninsula to separate traditions also known from older works, namely, Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra and al-Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī.[6] Besides, the traditions in question stating Ibn Isḥāq's name are all transmitted through the Iraqi jurist Yaḥyā ibn Adam,[7] In this way it is possible to compare the wording of the traditions at three stages of the transmission for traditions from Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra, and at two stages for the traditions from al-Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī. I have chosen as a basis for this article traditions concerning Khaybar, Banu al-Naḍīr, Fadak and traditions about some letters the prophet is supposed to have sent to al-Yaman.

Khaybar

Ibn Isḥāq has in his Sīra, p. 779 line 1–7, a piece of information telling how Khaybar was conquered (ʿanwatan). The same tradition is found in Yaḥyā ibn Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharādj (no. 18). Here the isnad runs as follows: Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah ibn Ṭufail[8] —Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—Ibn Shihāb.[9] The wording of the isnad is slightly changed in Yaḥyā's version[10] but this is due to the new context. The wording of the matn is identical apart from the very end, where Yaḥyā's version is shorter. Balādhurī has in the

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[6] Ibn Isḥāq (Ibn Hishām): Kitāb Sīrat al-Nabī, ed. F. Wüstenfeld 2 vols, Göttingen 1858–1860.

al-Wāqidī: Kitāb al-Maghāzī, ed. Marshden Jones 3 vols. London 1966.

[7] Yaḥyā ibn Ādam: Kitāb al-Kharādj, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Cairo 1347/1928.

[8] Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah, Iraqi traditionist. Died 799/800 cf. Ibn Ḥadjar al-Asqalānī: Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb 12 vols. Haydarabad 1907–09, vol. III p. 375f.

[9] Ibn Shihāb (al-Zuhrī) died in 741 cf. ibn Qutaiba: Kitāb al-Maʿārif ed. Tharwat ʿUkāsha, Cairo 1969 p. 491f.

[10] Ibn Isḥāq has:

قال ابن اسحاق وسالت ابن شهاب كيف كان اعطاء رسول الله صلعم يهود خيبر فاخبرنى .....

Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 23, line 9–14, the same tradition. The isnad here runs as follows: al-Ḥusain ibn al-Aswad—Yaḥyā ibn Ādam—Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah ibn Ṭufail—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—Ibn Shihāb. The text follows Yaḥyā's verbatim.[11]

Ibn Isḥāq informs us, p. 764, 4–7, about the siege of Khaybar. Yaḥyā has the same tradition in his Kitāb al-Kharādj as no. 104 giving this isnad: Ziyād al-Bakkāʾī—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—ʿAbdallah ibn Abī-Bakr. Compared to the Sīra the isnad has been prolonged backwards with an extra link. Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah was among the fifteen transmitters who were authorized by Ibn Isḥāq to transmit his Sīra in Iraq.[12] He died in Kufa in 799/800 where he spent most of his life.[13] It is known that he added minor things to the original Ibn Isḥāq text and the enlarged isnad is probably due to him. The text found in Yaḥyā's Kitāb al-Kharādj has again been slightly changed. He has "ḥaṣara" for "ḥāṣara" and places the two verbs يحقن يسير in parallel whereas Ibn Isḥāq has two separate sentences. The same tradition is found in Balādhurī's work, p. 25, 5–10, giving this isnad: al-Ḥusain ibn al-Aswad-Yaḥyā ibn Ādam—Ziyād al-Bakkāʾī—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—ʿAbdallah ibn Abī-Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥazm. Balādhurī quotes Yaḥyā ibn Ādam verbatim omitting only the last piece of information indicating the name of the go-between Fadak sent to the prophet when they received the news about Khaybar's Fall.[14] It is worthwhile to notice that Balādhurī carefully follows Yaḥyā's naming of the transmitters i.e. in the

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Yaḥyā ibn Ādam has: . . .

. . .عن محمد بن اسحاق قال سالت ابن شهاب عن خيبر

فاخبرنى انه بلغه . . . . . .

[11] The printed text (I have used de Goejes edition Leiden 1866) has indeed ". . . nazala man taraka min . . ." but one of the two manuscripts used by de Goeje has the same wording as Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, namely "nazala man nazala min . . ." – a wording the editor has placed in a note, i.e. note b) on p. 23.

[12] A. Guillaume: The life of Muhammad, London 1955 p. XXX.

[13] al-Asqalani op. cit. p. 375f.

[14] This piece of information is placed as an independant tradition with the same isnad in the description of Fadak's transition into Pax Islamica.

former example writes Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah ibn Ṭufail—in the latter only Ziyād al-Bakkāʾī.

Balādhurī uses al-Wāqidī's name twice in his description of the conquest of Khaybar. Talking about the partition of the spoils at Khaybar al-Wāqidī writes:[15]

اطعم رسول الله صلعم كل امراءة من نساءه ثمانين وسقا
ثمرا وعشرين وسقا شعيرا

Al-Wāqidī has this piece of information in a chapter entitled

ذكر طعم النبى صلعم فى الكتيبة ازواجه وغيرهم

Just after this al-Wāqidī lists all the persons recieving big payments in kind, the amount of which is stated also. Balādhurī has after the following isnad: Walīd ibn Ṣāliḥ—al-Wāqidī—his shaikhs the following text:[16]

ان رسول الله صلعم اطعم من سهمه بخيبر طعما لكل
امراءة من بساءه ثمانين وسقا من ثمر وعشرين وسقا
من شعير

In continuation of this Balādhurī brings a strongly abridged list of persons all of whom were granted large payments in kind. He has the same numerical statements as al-Wāqidī. This, in connection with the high degree of verbal agreement between the two texts, supports the supposition that the stated al-Wāqidī text is the source for this Balādhurī-tradition. The only difference between the two texts is the insertion found in the Futūḥ al-Buldān telling how Muḥammad provided the means to supply the payments in kind. It is not possible to trace the second al-Wāqidī tradition about Khaybar in Kitāb al-Maghāzī.

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[15] al-Wāqidī: Kitāb al-Maghāzī ed. Jones vol. I p. 378.

[16] Futūḥ al-Buldān p. 28 line 4–9.

Banu al-Naḍīr

Whereas the two examples quoted above both have been transformed into single traditions with only minor changes in the texts, the situation is somewhat different when we turn to a tradition telling about Banu al-Naḍīr. Yaḥyā ibn Ādam has as tradition no. 81 in his Kitāb al-Kharādj a tradition with the following isnad: Ibn Abī-Zā'ida[17]—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq. The tradition is clearly composed by information given by Ibn Isḥaq in his Sīra, pp. 652–661—in particular the pages 654 and 655. Yaḥyā's tradition is a careful rendering of Ibn Ishāq's text as to the legal reference to the Quran (Sura 59,8). On the other hand Ibn Isḥāq's reference to Sura 8.42 is omitted, just as the equality found in the Sīra between Sura 59.7 and the areas legally classified as conquered "'anwatan," is omitted. The relationship between Ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā ibn Ādam thus reflects a construction provided as an abbreviation of the original text. Balādhurī quotes, p. 18 line 19—p. 20 line 4, Yaḥyā ibn Ādam verbatim.

Al-Wāqidī is mentioned once in Balādhurī's description of Banu al-Naḍīr. Referring simply to al-Wāqidī Balādhurī writes:[18]

كان مخيريق احد بنى النضير حبرا وعالما فامن برسول الله صلعم وجعل ماله له وهو سبعة حوائط فجعلها رسول الله صلعم صدقة وهى الميثب والصافية والدلال والحسنى وبرقة والاعواف ومشربة ام ابرهيم ابن رسول الله صلعم وهى مارية القبطية

In his chapter on Banu al-Naḍīr al-Wāqidī has this text:[19]

وكانت صدقاته منها ومن اموال مخيريق وهى سبعة حوائط الميثب والصافية والدلال وحسنى وبرقة و الاعواف و مشربة ام ابرهيم

[17] Ibn Abī-Zā'ida Yaḥyā ibn Zakkariya died 799/800 cf. al-Asqalani op. cit. vol. XI p. 208f.

[18] Futūḥ al-Buldān p. 18 line 10–13.

[19] al-Wāqidī op. cit. vol. I p. 378.

It is particularly interesting to notice the total agreement as to the names and their succession. There can hardly be any doubt about the fact that this place in Kitāb al-Maghāzī is the source for the tradition found in Balādhurī's Futūḥ al-Buldān. Technically Balādhurī has placed in the beginning a notice explaining whom Muhairīq was, just as in the end he explains whom Ibrahīm was. As was the case with the al-Wāqidī-tradition about Khaybar quoted above, we have here another example where Balādhurī cites a source directly.[20] It is likely that parts of Balādhurī's anonymous tradition in the very beginning of his chapter on Banu al-Naḍīr is drawn from al-Wāqidī's description of the defeat of Banu al-Naḍīr. Thus this passage in Futūḥ al-Buldān:[21]

وكان يزرع تحت النخل فى ارضهم فيدخل من ذلك قوت
اهله وازواجه سنة وما فضل جعله فى الكراع والسلام

seems to have the following al-Wāqidī statement as its source:[22]

وكان يزرع تحت النخل زرعا كثيرا وكان رسول الله صلعم يدخل
منها قوت اهله سنة من الشعير والثمر لازواجه و بنى عبد
المطلب فما فضل جعله فى الكراع والسلام

Fadak

Yaḥyā ibn Ādam has as tradition no. 89 a ḥadīth telling how the jews at Fadak brought a message to Muḥammad, when he was fighting the people of Banu al-Naḍīr. Yaḥyā gives the following isnad: Ibn Abī-Zā'ida—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—al-Zuhrī, 'Abdallah ibn Abī-Bakr and some of Muḥammad ibn Maslama's sons. As tradition no. 104 Yaḥyā brings another ḥadīth about Fadak's surrender to the prophet. In this tradition we find the name of the go-between. The isnad runs as follows: Ziyād al-Bakkā'ī—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—'Abdallah ibn Abī-Bakr. Both

[20] The examples may be created by Walīd ibn Ṣāliḥ.
[21] Futūḥ al-Buldān p. 18 line 6–7.
[22] al-Wāqidī op. cit. vol. I p. 378.

traditions have their textual basis in Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra, p. 776 and 764, respectively. The verbal difference is bigger than was the case in the traditions about Khaybar mentioned above. Balādhurī follows in the Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 29 line 17—p. 30 line 1 and p. 30 line 1–4, Yaḥyā ibn Ādam verbatim. Al-Wāqidī is not found as an authority in Balādhurī's tradition about Fadak.

The letters to al-Yaman

Yaḥyā, in his book on Taxation, has as traditions nos. 380 and 381 two ḥadīth giving the words of some letters Muḥammad sent to al-Yaman. The isnad placed before the two traditions indicate the following transmitters: Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah ibn Ṭufail al-Bakkāʾī—Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq—.

The textual basis for these traditions are found in Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra, pp. 955–56 (no. 380) and pp. 961–62 (no. 381). Yaḥyā's version is in both cases a little bit shorter compared to the text found in the Sīra. In the first example some information about the payment of Ṣadaqa and Zakāt is omitted, and in the latter example Yaḥyā omits a long eulogy for Allah and his creation and some instructions about the ḥadjdj and ṣalāt. Balādhurī quotes Yaḥyā verbatim, p. 70 line 19—p. 71 line 6 (no. 380) and p. 70 line 13–19 (no. 381). Thus the abbreviations or if you prefer the constructions which can be proved by comparing the textual basis—Ibn Ishāq—with the wording of the traditions found in the works of Yaḥyā ibn Ādam and Balādhurī can be dated to the period between the death of Ibn Ishāq (767) and the death of Yaḥyā ibn Ādam (818) as was the case with the tradition concerning Banu al-Naḍīr (see above).

Balādhurī has clearly assumed his information from Ibn Isḥāq through Yaḥyā ibn Ādam. In the cases showing a difference between Ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā Balādhuri always follows the latter. In the traditions cited, the link between Yaḥyā and Ibn Ishāq is either Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah or Ibn Abī-Zāʾida. The former transmitted Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra in Iraq and there is no reason to presume that he changed the actual text. It may thus be concluded that Yaḥyā ibn Ādam himself has selected the information he wanted from Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra, the evidence for which are found in Kitāb

al-Kharādj as individual traditions transmitted from Ibn Isḥāq via Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah on to Yaḥyā ibn Ādam. This has been done in two ways: A) Pieces of information found in the Sīra have been taken directly and formed as individual traditions with no alteration of the original text at all. B) Yaḥyā ibn Ādam has "constructed" new traditions by selecting juridical references found in the Sīra as was the case in one of the traditions about Banu al-Naḍīr and in the two traditions giving the content of the two letters to al-Yaman. The original prose-text has in these examples been transformed from the original coherent text into separate traditions with isnad and matn. It has to be stressed that the text usually has been rendered verbatim for the part cited and changes are only found when the new context demanded another wording.

Yaḥyā ibn Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharādj contains yet another series of traditions, all supposed to come from Ibn Isḥāq[23] but not found in Balādhurī's Futūḥ al-Buldān. Their isnad have one feature in common—they all have just one link between Ibn Isḥāq and Yaḥyā ibn Ādam.[24] None of these transmitters are known to have had any connection with Ibn Isḥāq and it may be concluded that they have themselves in each case selected the information in question and created independant traditions out of a more coherent prose-text. They all lived in Iraq in the latter part of the eighth century as did Yaḥyā ibn Ādam. Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra has thus apparently been worked through by Iraqi jurists in these years and the original historical coherent text has been transformed into separated traditions as to the juridical information contained.

It is not possible to follow the textual basis of all the traditions

[23] All together 14 traditions.

[24] They are transmitted on to Yaḥyā ibn Ādam by:
Abū Shihāb—cannot be identified (no. 274).
ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Sulaimān—died 802/03 (nos. 275 and 312).
ʿAbd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb—died in Kufa 801/02 (no. 286).
Yūnas ibn Yazīd ibn Abī al-Nadjdjādj—died 775/76 (nos. 293 and 294).
Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz—year of death not indicated (nos. 310 and 354).
Abū Muʿāwiya Muḥammad ibn Khāzim—died 810/11 (no. 311).
Muḥammad ibn Fuḍail ibn Ghazwān—died 809/10 (no. 322).
ʿAbda ibn Sulaimān al-Kallābī—died in 804 (no. 442).

found in the Futūḥ al-Buldān back to the middle of the eighth century A.D. It is however possible to see how Balādhurī uses traditions from Yaḥyā ibn Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharādj. The following examples are all connected to Khaybar:

Balādhurī has, p. 25 line 10–13, a tradition about a quotation from the Quran and its possible relation to Khaybar. The isnad runs as follows: Al-Ḥusain—Yaḥyā ibn Ādam—ʿAbd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb—Shuʿba—al-Ḥakam—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī-Lailā.[25] The matn follows Yaḥyā's tradition no. 88 verbatim.[26]

On p. 26 line 8–12, Balādhurī has yet another tradition telling about the partition of the spoils at Khaybar. The isnad runs as follows: al-Ḥusain ibn al-Aswad—Yaḥyā ibn Ādam—Ḥammād ibn Salama—Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd—Bushair ibn Yasār.[27] The tradition has its textual basis in Kitāb al-Kharādj no. 90, but Balādhurī's rendering of the last part of the tradition has been abridged and the very last piece has been omitted (giving the number of the horses present at Khaybar). The partition of the eighteen parts is expressed in a more complex way, but the legal point of view is the same.[28] Just after this tradition Balādhurī states another ḥadīth concerning the partition of the spoils at Khaybar, the wording of which is almost identical with the one just cited.[29] Here the isnads runs: al-Ḥusain—Yaḥyā ibn Ādam—ʿAbd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb—Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd who heard Bushair ibn Yasār say . . . Yaḥyā has in tradition no. 91 the following isnad: ʿAbd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb—Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd who heard Bushair ibn Yasār say . . . In this case, too, Balādhurī's text has been abridged, but it is worthwhile to notice that the last part of Yaḥyā's tradition explicitly is stated as being a statement by Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd. It

[25] ʿAbd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb died 801/02 cf. al-Asqalani op. cit. vol. VI p. 316.

[26] Balādhurī has dual (ʿalaihima) whereas Yaḥyā ibn Ādam has singular (ʿalaiha). Yaḥyā has probably the right text as the words come from the Quran (Sura 48,21). The editor has placed the right text in a footnote cf. Futūḥ al-Buldān p. 25 note g).

[27] Ḥammād ibn Salama died 783/84 cf. Ibn Qutaiba op. cit. p. 563.

Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd died 760/61 cf. al-Asqalani op. cit. vol. XI p. 221f.

Bushair ibn Yasār is mentioned by both Ibn Saʿd and al-Asqalani, but there is no indication as to his death.

[28] Balādhurī has an addition, mentioning also the wufūd.

[29] Futūḥ al-Buldān p. 26 line 12–17.

does not belong to the first part of the tradition coming from Bushair ibn Yasār and is correctly omitted by Balādhurī. It must be emphasized that Balādhurī once again is very careful in rendering the isnad, i.e. writes "I heard" between the last two links in the isnad.

It may then be concluded that Balādhurī for the composition of his Futūḥ al-Buldān often used Yaḥyā ibn Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharādj. The analyzed traditions have all been rendered with great care. The traditions have now and then been abridged but it has to be stressed that his abbreviations never change the actual juridical meaning of the traditions.

Conclusion

The traditions analyzed above and contained in the first main chapter of Futūḥ al-Buldān are all the result of a transformation worked out by Iraqi jurists in the latter half of the eighth century. They seem to have chosen material either directly from Ibn Isḥāq's Sīra or from the one transmitted by Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallah with Ibn Isḥāq's permission. The material chosen is exclusively of juridical character. Hints to the historical course of events or religious assurances are consistently omitted. Although the original Ibn Isḥāq-text in this way now and then appears as an abridgement, the original wording has been maintained as far as possible. Balādhurī seems to know Ibn Isḥāq only through Yaḥyā ibn Ādam. He has selected his own Ibn Isḥāq-traditions from him, rendering them in the form they have been given by him. The abbreviations made by Balādhurī in the examples mentioned above follow a certain pattern. Balādhurī's main concern is traditions, which tell about the individual locality and how it was incorporated into the new Arab empire. It is this main concern that governs his use of the older sources, omitting traditions or parts of traditions which seem not to contain information about whether or not the locality in question was occupied ʿanwatan or ṣulhan. As to Balādhurī's use of al-Wāqidī, the pattern is the same. He has exclusively chosen juridical information from Kitāb al-Maghāzī, omitting all other information.

The isnads of the traditions mentioned are all carefully trans-

mitted and only once was it possible to see a prolongation backwards. The cited traditions have not been objects for the general antedating pointed out by Schacht.[30] Whether or not it is possible to find these traditions in a more perfect form in the existing hadīth collections can only be proved by a more profound analysis. But the fact that the juridical categories established by the local Medinese traditionists have been accepted by the Iraqi jurists can only mean

a) there has been no principal disagreement between the Medinese and the Iraqi fuqahā';
b) the Medinese jurists and traditionists had a theoretical fiqh-terminology that was as well developed as was the Iraqi.

In this rerpect this analysis is in opposition to the results reached by Joseph Schacht.

Generally it may be stated that Balādhurī's traditions do not live up to the demands usually asked for from traditions after Shāfi'ī's reform. Despite Shāfi'ī it has been clear for long that the muslim historians usually did not trace their isnads back to an eyewitness.[31] It is nevertheless surprising to see the many informal fiqh traditions contained in the first main chapter of the Futūḥ al-Buldān. The explanation may be that the historical works have not been worked through until about 800 A.D. Anyhow—if the transmission has been made with the same high degree of trustworthiness the tradition will be justified in considering Balādhurī's work as very important. It has to be emphasized, however, that Balādhurī's traditions in no way give a perfect picture as to the juridical points of view in his own time. Thus Futūḥ al-Buldān contains no traditions that go against the qatī'a-allotments made by Muḥammad. Only traditions telling when and to whom the prophet used to give such allotments are mentioned. In Yaḥyā ibn Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharādj—which was used by Balādhurī—you will find traditions telling that he did not give qatī'a to his supporters. These have been deliberatly omitted by Balādhurī.

[30] Joseph Schacht: The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence. Oxford 1950.
[31] E. Ladewig Petersen op. cit. p. 17.

The early decades of the eighth century are characterized by an intense process of arabization. The bigger part of Balādhurī's isnad have as their last link persons dying in the period between 720 and 740. This is no incident. From my point of view, this has been done deliberately. Balādhurī tries in this way to create an idealistic picture, thereby trying to hide the fact that the caliphate, founded by God's messenger, for a time was administered according to local Byzantine and Sassanid traditions. Using theoretical terms only in existence after ca. 700 they try to legalize the administration in work by means of traditions according to which the prophet himself established the rules to be followed for land conquered ṣulhan or ʿanwatan. The arabization begun around 700 A.D. was maintained during the eighth century. During the first half of the ninth century the muʿtazila threatened this process. Inspired by and supported by the increasing knowledge of hellenistic philosophy, the muʿtazila wanted a rationalistic approach to the existing islamic branches of scholarship inter alia a more rationalistic way of writing history. The opposition, however, was strong and during the reign of al-Mutawakkil the dogmas of al-Muʿtazila were abolished. This is very clearly the historical background for Balādhurī's work: In conscious opposition to al-muʿtazila, he chooses to use the ḥadīth-form for writing history. All pieces of information found in Futūḥ al-Buldān have the form of single traditions. Doing this Balādhurī achieves two things. Firstly, he retains the use of ḥadīth as the only way for writing history, and secondly, the reader is led to believe that the administration of the caliphate rests upon decisions made by the prophet himself. In both cases Balādhurī supports the views shared by all new-orthodox and in this respect Balādhurī is influenced by his age.[32]

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[32] It will be remembered that Balādhurī was al-Mutawakkil's nadīm in Baghdād cf. Yaqūt op. cit. vol. VI,2 p. 127.

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