

# THE MARKET OF THE PROPHET

BY

M. J. KISTER

The reasons given by the Arabic sources for the assassination of Ka' b b. al-Ashraf are that he stirred up the Meccans to fight the Prophet and to avenge their defeat at Badr, that he composed anti-Muslim verses defaming Muslim women or that he plotted with a group of Jews to kill the Prophet<sup>1</sup>). These reasons are also accepted or quoted in the works of scholars, analysing the attitude of the Prophet towards Ka' b b. al-Ashraf<sup>2</sup>).

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1) Ibn Hishām: *al-Sīra* III, 54-61, 206-210 (ed. al-Saqā'ī-Abyārī-Shalabī, Cairo 1936); al-Shaybānī: *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr* I, 270-77 (ed. Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid, Cairo 1957); al-Wāqidī: *al-Maghāzī*, 184-90 (ed. von Kremer, Calcutta 1856); Ibn Sa' d: *Ṭabaqāt* II, 31-34 (ed. Beirut 1957); Muḥ. b. Ḥabīb: *Asmā' al-mughtālin (Nawādir al-makhtūṭāt* VI, 144-46, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn); al-Balādhurī: *Ansāb al-Asbrāf* I, 284, 374 (ed. Muḥ. Ḥamidullāh, Cairo 1959); al-Bukhārī: *Ṣaḥīḥ* V, 115-16 (ed. Cairo, Muḥ. 'Alī Ṣubayḥ, n.d.); Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ* V, 184-85 (ed. Cairo 1334 AH); al-Ṭabarī: *Ta' rīkh* II, 177-80 (ed. Cairo 1939); Aghānī XIX, 106-107; al-Khaṭṭābī: *Ma' ālim al-Sunan* II, 336-38 (Sharḥ Sunan Abī Da' ūd, Cairo 1933); al-Bayhaqī: *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* IX, 81 (ed. Hyderabad 1356 AH); al-Maqdisī: *al-Bad' wa-l-Ta' rīkh* IV, 197 (ed. Huart, Paris 1907); Ibn Kathīr: *al-Bidāya* IV, 5-9 (ed. Cairo 1932); Abū Ḥayyān: *Tafsīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ* III, 135 (ed. Cairo 1328 AH.); al-Maqrīzī: *Imtā' al-Asmā'* I, 108-110 (ed. Maḥmūd Muḥ. Shākīr, Cairo 1941); Al-Suhaylī: *al-Rauḍ al-Unuf* II, 123-25 (ed. Cairo 1914); al-Suyūṭī: *al-Durr al-Manthūr* II, 107 (reprint Teheran 1377 AH); Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya: *Badā' i' c al-Fawā'id*, III, 210 (Cairo, Muniriyya Print, n.d.); Ibn Sayyid al-Nās: *'Uyūn al-Athar* I, 298-301 (ed. Cairo 1356 AH); Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī: *Majma' al-ṣawā'id* VI, 195-96 (ed. Cairo 1353 AH); 'Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Halabī: *Insān al-'uyūn* III, 181 (ed. Cairo 1354 AH); Dahlān: *al-Sīra* (on margin of *Insān al-'uyūn* II, 13-20); al-Ṭabarsī: *I'lām al-warā*, 56 (ed. 1312 AH); al-Majlisī: *Bihār al-Anwār* IX, 74; XX, 10-11 (ed. Teheran 1376-85 AH); al-Samhūdī: *Wafā' al-Wafā* I, 199 (ed. Cairo 1326 AH); al-Diyārbakrī: *Ta' rīkh al-Khamīs* I, 464-66 (ed. 1302 AH); al-Zurqānī: *Sharḥ al-Mawāhib* II, 8-14 (ed. Cairo 1325 AH).

2) L. Caetani: *Annali* I, 534-37 (ed. Milano 1905); H. Grimme: *Mohammed* I, 94 (ed. Münster i. W. 1892); A. J. Wensinck: *Mohammed en de Joden te Medina*, 152-55 (ed. Leiden 1908); R. Leszynsky: *Die Juden in Arabien zur Zeit Mohammeds*, 66-69 (ed. Berlin 1910); F. Buhl: *EI*<sup>1</sup>, s.v. Ka' b b. al-Ashraf; F. Buhl: *Das Leben Mohammeds*, 250-51 (transl. H. H. Schaeder, Heidelberg 1955, second ed.); H. Z. Hirschberg: *Yisra'el ba-'Arav*, 143 (ed. Tel-Aviv 1943); S. D. Goitein: *Ha-Islām shel Muḥammad*, 215 (ed. Jerusalem 1955); M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes: *Mabomet*, 135 (ed. Paris

A passage in Samhūdī's *Wafā' al-Wafā'*<sup>1)</sup> reveals another aspect of the enmity between Ka'b b. al-Ashraf and the Prophet and sheds some light on the economic activities of the Prophet and the Muslim community in Medina. The event recorded in this passage on the authority of Ibn Shabba<sup>2)</sup> runs as follows:

Ibn Shabba-Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān<sup>3)</sup>: "The Prophet pitched a tent in the *Baqī' al-Zubayr* and said: This is your market. Then Ka'b b. al-Ashraf came up, entered inside and cut its ropes. The Prophet then said: Indeed, I shall move it into a place which will be more grievous for him than this place. And he moved into the place of the "Market of Medina" (scil. the place which was later the Market of Medina -K). Then he said: This is your market. Do not set up sections in it and do not impose taxes for it".

The problem that faces us is why did Ka'b b. al-Ashraf cut the ropes of the tent of the Prophet. Some conclusion can be drawn from another fragment of this tradition<sup>4)</sup> of 'Umar b. Shabba, stating that al-Zubayr asked the Prophet to grant him *al-Baqī'* after the assassination of Ka'b<sup>5)</sup>.

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1957); M. Hamidullah: *Le Prophete de l' Islam*, index (ed. Paris 1959); W. Montgomery Watt: *Muhammed at Medina*, index (ed. Oxford 1956); M. Rodinson: *Mahomet*, 173 (ed. Paris 1961).

1) I 540.

2) See about him: Yāqūt: *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* XVI, 60-62 (ed. Cairo 1938); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: *Ta'rīkh Baghdad* XI, 208-210 (ed. Cairo 1931); Ibn Ḥajar: *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* VII, 460 (ed. Hyderabad 1326 AH); Saleh Ahmed al-Ali: *Studies in the Topography of Medina, I.C.* 1961, pp. 66-67; Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-'Alī: *al-Mu'allafāt al-'arabiyya 'an al-Madīna wa-l-Ḥijāz*, *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī*, 1964, pp. 131-134.

3) See about him: al-Dhahabī: *Mīzān al-i'tidāl* II, 299, No. 3823 (ed. al-Bijāwī, Cairo 1963); idem: *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* I, 148, No. 142 (ed. Hyderabad 1958); Ibn Ḥajar: *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* IV, 399-400; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: *Kitāb al-'Ilal* I, 359 (ed. Koçyiğit-Cerrahoğlu, Ankara 1963); and see E. L. Petersen: *'Alī and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, index (ed. Copenhagen 1964).

4) Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, II, 265.

5) About the topography of Baqī' al-Zubayr see S. A. al-Ali: *Studies*, p. 79; about grants of the Prophet to al-Zubayr see: Abū 'Ubayd: *al-Amwāl* p. 272 — No. 675; p. 279 — No. 691 (ed. Cairo 1353 AH); Abū Yūsuf: *Kit. al-Kharāj*, p. 61 (ed. Cairo 1382 AH); al-Hindī: *Kanz al-'ummāl* III, 524 — No. 4022 (ed. Hyderabad 1951); Ibn Zanjawayh: *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, MS. f. 99b-100a; al-Shaybānī: *Kit. al-Siyar al-Kabīr* II, 611.

This *Baqī'* became—of course later—known as *Baqī' al-Zubayr*. It is obvious that Ka'b tried to prevent the Prophet from establishing the market on his land. This was the cause of the clash between the Prophet and Ka'b.

Other traditions supply more details about the event of the establishment of the market, although the clash between the Prophet and Ka'b is not mentioned. Ibn Zubāla <sup>1)</sup> reports on the authority of Yazīd b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. Qusayt <sup>2)</sup> that the market (scil. of Medina) was in (the quarter of ) the Banū Qaynuqā' until it was moved afterwards (into another place) <sup>3)</sup>. A corroborative tradition reported by 'Umar b. Shabba on the authority of 'Aṭā' b. Yasār <sup>4)</sup> states that the Prophet decided to establish a market for Medina. He came to the market of the Banū Qaynuqā', then he went to (the place later known as -K) the market of Medina. He stamped its ground with his foot and said: This is your market; let it not be narrowed (*fa-lā yudayyaq*) and let no tax (*kharāj*) be taken on it <sup>5)</sup>. A tradition quoted on the authority of Ibn Asīd reports that the place of the market of Medina was proposed to the Prophet by a man (scil. one of the adherents of the Prophet); the Prophet visited the place, stamped the ground with his foot and uttered his saying that it might not be diminished nor might a tax be imposed on it <sup>6)</sup>.

A slightly different tradition is recorded by Ibn Mājah <sup>7)</sup> on the authority of Abū Usayd <sup>8)</sup>. The Prophet went to the market of the

1) See about him Ibn Ḥajar: *Tabdhīb* IX, 115-17; al-Suyūṭī: *al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a* I, 24 penult. (ed. Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya, n.d.); al-Dhahabī: *Miẓān al-i'tidāl* III, 514. No. 7380; S.A.: al-*Ali Studies* p. 66-67; idem: *Mu'allafāt*, pp. 127-29.

2) See about him Ibn Ḥajar: *Tabdhīb* XI, 342 (his name is Yazīd b. 'Abd Allāh (not 'Ubayd Allāh) b. Qusayt); al-Dhahabī: *Miẓān* IV, 430; al-Suyūṭī: *Is'āf al-mubatta' bi-rijāl al-Muwatta'*, p. 42 (printed with *Tannīr al-hawālik sharḥ 'alā Muwatta' Mālik*, Cairo n.d.).

3) al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 539 inf.

4) See about him: al-Dhahabī: *Tadkhkira* I, 90 (No. 80); idem: *Miẓān* III, 77 (No. 5654); Ibn Ḥajar: *Tabdhīb* VII, 217-18 (No. 399).

5) al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 539.

6) al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 540.

7) *Sunan al-Mustafā* II, 28 (ed. Cairo 1349 AH).

8) His name was Mālik b. Rabī'a al-Sā'idī; see about him: al-Nābulusī: *Dhakhbā'ir al-mawāriṭh* III, 91 — No. 6160 (ed. Cairo 1934); Ibn Ḥajar: *Iṣāba* IV, 23 — No. 7622; Ibn Sa'd: *Ṭabaqāt* III, 557-58 (ed. Beirut 1957).

Nabiṭ looked at it and said: This is not a market for you. Then he went to a market (i.e. to another market), looked at it and said: This is not a market for you. Then he returned to this market, circumambulated it and said: This is your market; let it not be diminished, and let no tax be levied on it <sup>1</sup>).

The place chosen by the Prophet was in the quarter of the Banū Sā'ida and served as a cemetery. The Banū Sā'ida objected at first but gave their consent later <sup>2</sup>). It was an open space and a rider could put his saddle in the market, go round the market in every direction and see his saddle <sup>3</sup>). Attempts to erect some buildings or to pitch tents in the market were prevented by the Prophet and later by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb <sup>4</sup>). It was Mu'āwiya who for the first time built two houses in the market: The *Dār al-Qaṭirān* and *Dār al-Nuqṣān* <sup>5</sup>) and levied taxes. Hishām built a big building which included the whole market; on the ground floor were shops, on the upper floor were rooms for letting. This building was demolished by the people of Medina when the news of the death of Hishām reached them <sup>6</sup>). The reason for this mutinous action seems to be that the people considered the building of the house in the market and the levying of taxes by the governor of the Caliph as unlawful innovations.

In fact the pious 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz is reported to have forbidden to levy any fee (*kirā'*) in the market on the grounds that "the market is a charitable endowment" (*al-sūq ṣadaqa*) <sup>7</sup>). The meaning of this utterance of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz is elucidated by a report of Ibn Zubāla and Ibn Shabba, told on the authority of Muḥammad b. 'Abd

1) The text has *fa-lā yuntaqaṣanna*; the commentator reads and explains *fa-lā yuntaqaḍanna*, which seems to be an error.

2) al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 540.

3) *ib.*, I 541.

4) *ib.* I, 540 inf. — 541 sup.; al-Hindī: *Kanz al-'ummāl* V, 488.

5) al-Samhūdī: *op. cit.*, I, 541; *Dār al-Qaṭirān* and *Dār al-Nuqṣān* appear to be pejorative nicknames coined by the people who objected to the principle of building the houses and levying taxes.

6) Saleh Ahmed al-Ali: *Studies*, p. 86-87.

7) Reported by Ibn Zubāla on the authority of Khālīd b. Ilyās al-'Adawī as recorded by al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 540; about Khālīd b. Ilyās see Ibn Ḥajar: *Tabḥīḥ* III, 80 and Dhahabī: *Mīzān* I, 627 (No. 2408).

Allāh b. Ḥasan<sup>1)</sup> stating that the Prophet granted the Muslims their markets as charitable endowment (*taṣaddaqa ‘alā ’l-muslimīna bi-aswāqihim*)<sup>2)</sup>. The letter of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz abolished apparently the levying of taxes imposed on the market by Mu‘āwiya.

The scanty reports about the market established by the Prophet in Medina seem to be trustworthy. They are recorded by ‘Umar b. Shabba and Ibn Zubāla, both competent authorities on the history of Medina. These reports were omitted in other sources because the event of the market was not enough important in shaping the image of the Prophet and the early community by later authors as the market itself did not survive and did not serve as place of devotion.

The establishment of the market by the Prophet a short time after his arrival in Medina<sup>3)</sup> seems to be of some importance. There is no indication of the intention of the Prophet; but the principle to establish a new market without taxes may imply that the Prophet intended to adopt the practice of the market at Ukāz where taxes were not levied. The later interpretation of this event was the idea of *al-sūq ṣādaqa*.

The clash with Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf<sup>4)</sup> seems to indicate that Ka‘b considered the establishment of the new market as competition to the existing one of the Banū Qaynuqā‘. The story of the market supplies us with an additional aspect of the contention between the Prophet and the Jews in Medina.

1) See about him: Abū ‘l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī: *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, index (ed. A. Ṣaqr, Cairo 1949); Ibn Ḥajar: *Tahdhīb* IX, 252; al-Dhahabī: *Mīzān* III, 591 (No. 7736).

2) al-Samhūdī, *op. cit.*, I, 540; comp. the utterance of ‘Alī: *Sūqu ’l-muslimīna ka-muṣallā ’l-muṣallīna, man sabaqa ilā shay’in fa-buwa labu yaumahu hattā yada‘abu* — al-Hindī: *Kanz al-‘ummāl* V, 488, No. 2688; and see al-Kulīnī: *al-Kāfī* II, 662 (ed. Teheran 1381 AH).

3) The date can be fixed by the date of the assassination of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf. See Jones: *The Chronology of the Maghāzī*, BSOAS, 1957 p. 248, 262.

4) Ka‘b was elected as chief of the Jews, replacing Mālik b. al-Ṣayf; see ‘Alī b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī: *Insān al-‘uyūn* II, 116.