THE MASSACRE OF THE BANÚ QURAYZA
A re-examination of a tradition

The story of the massacre of the Banú Qurayza (April 627 A.D./Dhū l-Qa'da 5 A.H.),¹ as recorded in various compilations of the Sīra-literature, is concerned with the final blow which the prophet Muḥammad struck at the last Jewish tribal group in Medina.

According to the widely current tradition, transmitted by the early Muslim scholars of hadith, biographers of the Prophet, jurists and historians, Qurayza are said to have concluded a pact with the Prophet in which they committed themselves not to help the enemies of the Prophet. But when the enemies of the Prophet (i.e. the Confederates, Quraysh and their Allies, the Ahzāb – K.) besieged Medina the Banû Qurayza are alleged to have aided the forces of the Prophet’s enemies, the Ahzāb. Huyayy b. Akhtab, a former leader of the exiled Jewish tribe of the Banû Naḍîr is blamed for having instigated Ka’b b. Asad, the leader of Qurayza, to violate the agreement with the Prophet and for having pressed him to negotiate with the leaders of the Ahzāb. The Prophet succeeded by stratagem to undermine the mutual confidence between Qurayza and the Ahzāb and to spoil their strategic plans against him and against the Muslim community at Medina. The failure of the siege of Medina by the Ahzāb and their disordered and hasty retreat marked a manifest victory for the Prophet and left Qurayza in a precarious position, facing the forces of the Prophet in isolation.

Immediately after the withdrawal of the Ahzāb the Prophet was actually summoned by the angel Jibril to march out against the Banû Qurayza. The siege laid by the forces of the Prophet on the stronghold of Qurayza brought about a deterioration of the situation of the besieged shortly afterwards. Their leader, Ka’b b. Asad put forward three proposals as solution: (a) that they should convert to Islam, (b) that they should kill the women and children and march out from the stronghold to fight courageously the besieging force of the Muslims, or (c) that they should

surprise Muhammad and his troops by a speedy and unexpected attack on the eve of Saturday. All the proposals were, however, rejected by the Banū Qurayza.

When the situation deteriorated Qurayza sent their messenger to negotiate with the Prophet the terms of their surrender. They proposed to surrender and depart leaving behind their land and property and taking with them movable property only, the load of a camel per person. When this proposal was rejected, the messenger returned asking that Qurayza be permitted to depart without any property, taking with them only their families; but this proposal too was rejected and the Prophet insisted that they surrender unconditionally and subject themselves to his judgment. Qurayza asked for Abū Lubāba, a Companion of the Prophet whom they trusted, to be sent to them in order to have his advice. Abū Lubāba indiscreetly pointed with his hand to his throat, a movement which clearly conveyed slaughter; he regretted his treason towards God and the Prophet, repented and the Prophet was glad to convey to him the joyous tiding of God's forgiveness, as it was revealed to him.

The Banū Qurayza, compelled to surrender, descended from their stronghold and were led to Medina. The men, their hands pinioned behind their backs, were put in a court (dar) in Medina; the women and children are said to have been put in another one. When the Prophet was asked by people of Aus, who were allies of Qurayza, to show leniency towards their allies the Qurayza, he proposed to appoint as arbiter a man from Aus, Sa'd b. Mu'ādh. Qurayza consented and so did the attending Muslims; among the Muslims were, of course, the Aus who in turn began to intercede with Sa'd for Qurayza; Sa'd's harsh answer was a bad omen for the fate of Qurayza. When all the parties agreed to abide by the judgment of Sa'd he gave his concise verdict: the men shall be put to death, the women and children sold into slavery, the spoils divided among the Muslims. The Prophet ratified the judgment and stated that Sa'd's decree had been issued as a decree of God pronounced from above the Seven Heavens. Accordingly some 400 (or 600, or 700, or 800, or even 900) men from Qurayza were led on the order of the Prophet to the market of Medina; trenches were dug in the place, the men were executed and buried in the trenches. The Prophet attended the executions, which were carried out by 'Alī and al-Zubayr. Youths who had not reached maturity were spared. Women and children were sold into slavery; a number of them were distributed as gifts among the Companions.
The story of the massacre of Qurayza, of which a short summary has been given above, was thoroughly studied and analysed by several western scholars, who severely criticized the Prophet for it. Although not unanimous in their assessment of certain details of the story, the scholars are in agreement concerning the cruelty of the judgment of Sa'd b. Mu'adh. Some Muslim scholars didn't deny the merciless character of Sa'd's judgment, but justified it pointing out that the Banu Qurayza had yielded to the treacherous activities of Huyayy b. Akhtab and had committed deeds of treason. Sa'd's decree, although severe and harsh, was a vital necessity as he regarded the fate of the Jews as a question of life and death for the Muslim community. The responsibility for the killing of Qurayza should be placed on Huyayy b. Akhtab who instigated the war-activities against the Prophet.

2 See e.g. Martin Hartmann, *Der Islam*, Leipzig 1909, p. 16: "Ein ewiges Schandmal bleibt die Ruchlosigkeit mit der Muhammed gegen den Stamm Quraiza verfuhr: 600 Männer erlitten den Tod durch Henkershand, die Weber und Kinder wurden verkauft." W. Muir, *Mahomet and Islam*, London 1895, p. 151: "The massacre of Banu Coreitza was a barbarous deed which cannot be justified by any reason of political necessity..." "But the indiscriminate slaughter of the whole tribe cannot be recognized otherwise than as an act of monstrous cruelty, which casts an indelible blot upon the Prophet's name..." J. Andrae, *Mohammed, Sein Leben und sein Glaube*, Göttingen 1932, p. 126: "Es war der letzte Jundenstamm in Medina, Banu Kuraiza, den er nun exemplarisch zu strafen beschloss wegen der Unzuverlässigkeit, die er während der Belagerung gezeigt hatte. Bei dieser Gelegenheit zeigte er wieder den Mangel an Ehrlichkeit und moralischem Mut, der einen weniger sympathischen Zug seines Charakters bildete..." F. Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, Transl. H.H. Schaeder, Heidelberg 1955, p. 275: "... Diesmal war Muhammad jedoch zu erbittert um Schonung zu gewähren: aber die Art wie er seinen Willen durchsetzte, hatte etwas in hohem Grade Raffiniertes und zeigt wieder seinen Charakter in einem sehr abstossenden Licht..." M. Guadelfroy-Demobynes, *Mahomet*, Paris 1969, p. 145: "L'incident des B. Qoraiza est une vilaine page de l'histoire de Mohammed, mais c'est un acte qui fut tres profitable à la gloire d'Allah et de son prophète..." W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford, 1956, p. 214: "Some European writers have criticized this sentence for what they call its savage and inhuman character..." Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed*, New York 1974, p. 213: "It is not easy to judge the massacre of the Qurayza. It must be remembered that the customs of the time were extremely primitive..." F. Gabrieli, *Muhammad and the Conquest of Islam*, London 1968, p. 73: "This dark episode, which Muslim tradition, it must be said, takes quite calmly, has provoked lively discussion among western biographers of Muhammed, with caustic accusations on the one hand and legalistic excuses on the other... In this case he was ruthless, with the approval of his conscience and of his God, for the two were one; we can only record the fact, while reaffirming our consciousness as Christians and civilised men, that this God or at least this aspect of Him, is not ours."

3 Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Hayât Muhammad*, Cairo 1358, p. 321. And see e.g. Häfiz Ghalam Sarwar, *Muhammad the Holy Prophet*, Lahore 1967, p. 247: "No one can dispute the justice of the sentence on the Quraiza... Traitors are always executed unless they ask pardon and circumstances justify the pardon being granted... Muhammad was absolutely
Odd assumptions appear in W.N. Arafat's article on this subject.\(^4\) Arafat tries to prove the unreliability of the account of the events of the massacre of Qurayza as recorded by Ibn Ishāq (d. 151 A.H.) and transmitted by later Muslim scholars, historians and biographers of the Prophet. The later historians "draw, and in most cases depend on Ibn Ishāq", states Arafat and comments: "But Ibn Ishāq died in 151 A.H., i.e., 145 years after the event in question".\(^5\) Arafat's severe criticism refers first of all to the way in which Ibn Ishāq collected his information: his sources were untrustworthy, uncertain and late; his account is in Arafat's opinion "a sum-total of the collective reports, pieced together". Arafat quotes thrice the opinion of Mālik b. Anas (from Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, 'Uyun al-athar) about Muḥammad b. Ishāq: "he was a liar", "an impostor" who "transmits his stories from the Jews"\(^6\) and stresses twice that "against the late and uncertain sources on the one hand, and the condemning authorities on the other must be set the only contemporary and entirely authentic source, The Qur'ān." (Sūra XXXIII, 26: "He caused those of the People of the Book who helped them (i.e. the Quraysh) to come out of their forts. Some you killed, some you took prisoner." [as quoted by Arafat]).\(^7\) If 600 or 700 people were killed there would have been a clearer reference to it in the Qur'ān; as only the guilty leaders were executed the reference in the Qur'ān is very brief — argues Arafat. He rejects without hesitation the widely circulated story about the massacre of the Banū Qurayza and reiterates his argument: the verse of the Qur'ān indicates clearly that only those men of Qurayza who were actually fighting were free from blame. The real culprit in this tragedy, for it was a most horrible tragedy... was Huyayy b. Akhtāb..." Ameer Ali, *A short history of the Saracens*, London 1961, p. 13: "It was considered unsafe to leave the traitorous Banū Koraiza so near the city, as their treachery might at any moment lead to the destruction of Medina... This was a severe punishment according to our ideas, but it was customary according to the rules of war then prevalent." Muhammad Hamidullāh, *Muslim Conduct of State*, Lahore 1961, §443: "...The females and children of the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraizah were, by the decision of the arbitrator nominated by themselves, enslaved and distributed as booty. This arbitral award was in conformity with the Jewish personal law..."; §497: "...In the case of the Banū Quraizah, it was the arbitrator of their own choice who awarded exactly what Deuteronomy provided...".


\(^6\) Arafat, *op. cit.*, pp. 101, l. 8, 102 ult. -103 l.1, 106 ll. 2-3.

\(^7\) Arafat, *op. cit.*, pp. 101 l. 20, 103 ll. 11-15.
executed; according to the rule of Islam only those responsible for the sedition were punished. Killing a large number of people is opposed to the Islamic sense of justice and the Qur'anic rule regarding prisoners, argues Arafat. Why should the Qurayza have been slaughtered, asks Arafat, while other Jewish groups which surrendered both before and after the Banu Qurayza were treated leniently and were allowed to go. If so many hundreds of people were indeed put to death in the market-place and trenches were dug for the operation, why, asks Arafat, is there no trace of all that and no sign or word to point to the place? “Had this slaughter actually happened”, contends Arafat, “the jurists would have adopted it as a precedent”; “in fact exactly the opposite had been the case” – asserts Arafat. Arafat stresses further that the details of the story imply inside knowledge, i.e. from the Jews themselves. Both the descendants of the Banu Qurayza and the descendants of the Medinan Muslims were eager to glorify their ancestors; it was one of the descendants of Sa'd b. Mu'adh who transmitted the judgment of Sa'd and the saying of the Prophet to Sa'd: “You have pronounced God’s judgment upon them [as inspired] through Seven Veils”. Finally Arafat raises some additional questions: how could many hundreds of persons be incarcerated in a house belonging to a woman of the Banu l-Najjar, and how can one explain the fact that some Jews are mentioned as remaining in Medina after the alleged expulsion of all the Jewish tribes?

Arafat draws a comparison between the story of Masada as recorded by Josephus Flavius and the story of the Banu Qurayza. Arafat's conclusions are surprising: the descendants of the Jews who fled to Arabia after the Jewish wars superimposed details of the siege of Masada on the story of the siege of the Banu Qurayza. According to Arafat, the mixture provided the basis for Ibn Ishaq’s story.

Arafat’s article was followed by another one by a certain Zaid. In his article entitled “The Masada Legend in Jewish and Islamic Tradition” the author reiterates Arafat’s arguments, arrives at the same con-

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8 Arafat’s rendering of this sentence is erroneous: min fauqi sa'idati arqi'atin does not mean “Seven Veils”. Guillaume translates: “You have given the judgment of Allah above the seven heavens.” Montgomery Watt, “The Condemnation of the Jews of Banu Qurayzah”, MW 42 (1952), p. 163: “You have judged their case with the judgment of God from above seven heavens.”

clusions and does not add any genuine opinion of his own. It seems thus that this article does not deserve any comment.

The daring assumptions put forth by Arafat and summarized above ought to be investigated. Data about the events surrounding the massacre of Banū Qurayza should be re-examined and certain traditions analysed and re-assessed.

II

Four of Arafat’s twelve arguments are of particular importance and have in fact a common denominator: the data of the story of Qurayza stand, according to Arafat, in contradiction to Muslim rules, Muslim law, Muslim justice and Qur’ānic principles. The rule in Islam, says Arafat, is to punish only those who are responsible for sedition (argument no. 2); killing such a large number of people is diametrically opposed to the Islamic sense of justice and to the basic principles laid down in the Qur’ān (argument no. 3); the slaughter of prisoners is against the Qur’ānic rule which orders that they either be granted their freedom or else be allowed to be ransomed (argument no. 4); had this slaughter actually happened, maintains Arafat, jurists would have adopted it as a precedent; in fact exactly the opposite has happened (argument no. 7). In order to strengthen arguments nos. 3 and 7, Arafat quotes Qur’ān XXXV, 18: “No soul shall bear another’s burden.” If these four arguments put forward by Arafat are valid and sound – they would prove convincingly that the reports about Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh’s judgment, its approval by the Prophet and the cruel massacre of the Banū Qurayza are all fictitious. If Arafat’s arguments are true, then indeed no Muslim jurist could have based his judgment on an account totally alien to the spirit of Muslim law and contrary to Muslim justice and Muslim ethics.

Arafat’s arguments are however unfounded, his conclusions incorrect and his opinion about Sīra tradition is misappreciative. Muslim jurists were well acquainted with the story of the Banū Qurayza and based themselves in their judgments and decrees on the account of the massacre. It was in fact al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204 A.H.) who with deep insight analysed the case of Banū Qurayza, defined the nature of their mischievous actions, assessed the character of the transgression committed by them and elucidated the problem of individual and collective punishment. In a passage entitled “Violation of an agreement” (naqdu l-ṣāḥdi) Shāfi‘ī says:
If the Imam concludes with a people an agreement of non-agression (wāda'a - K.) for a (certain) period or he receives from a people jizya and the person or persons who concluded the agreement of muwāda'a or of the jizya on behalf of the people belong to that people we shall not oblige them (i.e. those who concluded the agreement, scil. to carry out the stipulations of the agreement - K.) until we know that those who remained (i.e. the people who stayed in their abode while their leaders concluded the agreement - K.) approved of it and were satisfied with it (hattā na'lama anna man baqiya minhum qad aqarra bi-dhālika wa-radiyahu). If this is so, no one from among the Muslims is permitted to take from them (anything - K.) of their property or [harm them in their] body (literally: wa-daman, "of their blood"); if a Muslim commits it (a mischievous deed of this kind - K.) he has to be indicted for what he spent (from the property which he took unjustly) as long as the people (who concluded the agreement - K.) remain upright. If those who concluded the agreement violate it, or if a group from among them violate it and the people (who concluded the treaty - K.) do not oppose the violators by an open action or word (wa-lam yakhālifū al-nāqid bi-qoqlīn au fi'līn zāhirīn) before they (i.e. the righteous - K.) come to the Imam or leave the territory (in which the violators stay - K.) and inform the Imam that they are continuing to adhere to the agreement (innā 'alā ṣulhīnā); or if the violators go out to fight the Muslims or to fight the people under their protection (i.e. under the protection of the Muslims, ahl dhimmat li-l-muslimin) and aid thus the fighting men (i.e. of the enemy - K.) or help (the forces - K.) fighting them (i.e. those who fight the Muslims - K.) then the Imam is entitled to raid them. If he does it and there is nobody of the people (who opposed the violators - K.) who would (leave their abode - K.) and come out to the Imam - it is up to the Imam to (order to - K.) kill their fighting men (qatlu muqātilatihim), to enslave their progeny and to take their property as booty, whether they be in the dār al-islām or in the territory of of the enemy. So the Prophet acted in the case of the Banū Qurayza: he concluded with their leader an agreement of reconciliation on the basis of a truce (al-sulh bi-l-muhādana) and (their leader) violated it; but they did not abandon him (wa-lam yufāriquhu). The Prophet then went out to fight them in their own abode which was in the extreme part of Medina (wa-hiya ma'ahu bi-ṭarafi l-madīna) and killed their fighting men (fa-qatłatā muqātilatihum) and captured their property as booty; and (that while - K.) not all of them took part in aiding (scil. the Ahzāb - K.) against the Prophet and his Companions, but all of them remained in their stronghold and did not abandon the treacherous people from among them, except a small party (nafar) and this (action) saved their lives and kept their possessions in their hands.¹⁰

It is evident that according to the judgment of al-Shāfi‘ī the Muslim law enjoins punishing people who were not responsible for breaking the agreement, but who merely remained passive in the territory occupied by the transgressors; this rule contradicts Arafat’s argument no. 2. It is obvious that people who do not revolt against their iniquitous leaders and join the righteous party (i.e. the Muslim community – K.) may be put to death by order of the Imam; this is in fact contrary to Arafat’s argument no. 3. It is apparent that the Banū Qurayza who surrendered did not enjoy the status of prisoners of war; this is, of course, contrary to Arafat’s argument no. 4. Al-Shāfi‘ī considered the report about the slaughter of the Banū Qurayza reliable and sound and he based his judgment on it; this contradicts Arafat’s argument no. 7.

In order to reinforce his argument that Muslim jurists did not adopt the case of Banū Qurayza as a precedent and championed ideas totally opposed to those reflected in the story of the slaughter of the Banū Qurayza, Arafat quotes a judgment of al-Auzā‘ī as recorded in Abū ‘Ubayd’s *Amwāl*. But Arafat seems to have been unaware of the fact that it was the selfsame Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224 A.H.) who in his *Amwāl* recorded carefully the traditions about the “Day of Qurayza” with their *isnāds* and attached his own valuable legal comments. Abū ‘Ubayd records the tradition about the execution of Huyayy b. Akhtab: Huyayy concluded a treaty (*ṣiḥāda*) with the Prophet committing himself not to aid anybody against the Prophet. On the “Day of the Banū Qurayza” he was captured and brought into the presence of the Prophet. The Prophet ordered that he and his son be killed. Abū ‘Ubayd comments:

The Prophet declared the shedding of the blood of Qurayza lawful because they extended their help against him (*li-muzaharatihim*) to the Ahzāb, after they had concluded a treaty with him. The Prophet considered it a violation of their treaty (*fa-ra‘ā dhālika nakthan li-‘ahdihim*) although they did not kill anyone of his Companions (*wa-in kānū lam yaqtulu min ashābihi ahadan*). A verse concerning this was revealed in *Sūrat al-Ahzāb* (*wa-nazala bi-dhālika l-qur‘ān fi sūratī ‘l-ahzāb*).11

Arafat did not realize that the widely circulated traditions about the massacre of the Banū Qurayza (the report about the appearance of Ji-

brîl, the siege, the judgment of Sa'd b. Mu'âdh and details about the numbers of the killed) were recorded by Abî ʿUbayd:¹² it is precisely the material discussed by Arafat in his article and it clearly contradicts his assumptions; the contents of the reports are almost identical with those of the Sîra of Ibn Ishâq, the isnâds are different and Abî ʿUbayd, the great Muslim jurist, records those traditions as precedents as regards Muslim jurisdiction.

Another eminent Muslim jurist, al-Mawardi (d. 450 A.H.), elucidates the slaughter of the Banû Qurayza from a quite different aspect: it was a religious duty incumbent on the Prophet to order the slaughter of the Banû Qurayza. Al-Mawardi emphasizes, among the other virtues of the Prophet, his leniency, kindness and his disposition to forgive his enemies their sins. He then continues as follows:¹³

If it is argued: “He struck the heads of the Banû Qurayza deliberately during one day (fa-in qila: fa-qad daraba riqâba banî qurayzata sabran fi yau-min wahidin), their number being about seven hundred, so where is his disposition to forgive and pardon? After all he retaliated like a man who was not inclined towards them by mercy, nor had in his soul softness for them”, the answer would be: “He merely did it in order to carry out the rules of God (incumbent upon him) (... qila: innama fa-ala dhalika fi huquqi ilâhi ta'âlâ). The Banû Qurayza had consented to Sa'd b. Mu'âdh's arbitration in their case and he judged that those on whom the razors passed (i.e. those who reached puberty – K.)¹⁴ should be killed; those on whom the razors did not pass should be enslaved”. Then the Prophet said: “This is God’s judgment (issued - K.) from above the seven heavens”. Therefore it was not permitted (the Prophet – K.) to forgive (in a case of) God’s injunction incumbent upon them; he could merely forgive (transgressions, offences etc. – K.) in matters concerning his own person (fa-lam yajuz an ya'fiwa 'an haqqi wajaba llâhu ta'âlâ 'alayhim, wa-innamâ yakhtassu 'afwuhu bi-haqqi nafsihi).

It is thus obvious that the slaughter of the Banû Qurayza and the execution of those among them who had reached puberty was carried out ac-

¹² Al-Amwâl, pp. 129-130 (nos. 346-350), 167 (nos. 460-463).
¹³ Al-Mawardi, A'lam al-nubuwâ, Cairo 1319, pp. 146-147.
¹⁴ See the different versions: Barakat Ahmad, Muhammad and the Jews, New Delhi 1979, pp. 81-82.
According to the order of God revealed to the Prophet. Al-Māwardī's opinion apparently reflects the current Sunni view about the slaughter of the Banū Qurayza.

The report about the presence of the Prophet at the execution of the captives of Qurayza is fully confirmed by the great Muslim scholar Ibn Hazm (d. 456 A.H.): "It is impossible (to assume – K.) that people could have been killed in the presence of the Prophet, while he would not know whether the execution was right or not. A Muslim can never assume this, as the Qurayza people were killed in his presence and at his order. (Qala abū muhammadin: wa-mina l-muhālī l-muntani‘ī an tuqtala l-nāsu bi-hadrati l-nabiyyi sallā llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama, wa-huwa là ya‘lamu a-bi-haqqin am bi-batīlin; ḥadhā mā là yazunnahu muslimunnu l-battata. wa-qatlā qurayzata qutilū bi-hadrati l-nabiyyi (ṣ) wa-bi-amrihi.)

One of Arafat's arguments for the rejection of the story of the Banū Qurayza (argument no. 5) is that "it is unlikely that the Banū Qurayza should be slaughtered when the other Jewish groups who surrendered before Banū Qurayza and after them were treated leniently and allowed to go." The answer is plainly given by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya. He mentions the expulsion of the Qaynuqā and the Nadīr, and the confiscation of their possessions and states:

As to Qurayza, they were the strongest among the Jews in their hatred of the Prophet and the most persistent in their unbelief; therefore their fate differed from that of their brethren. (wa-ammā qurayzatu fa-kānāt ashadda l-yahūdī ‘adāwatan li-rasūli llāhi (ṣ) wa-aghlazahum kufran wa-li-dhālika jarā ‘alayhim mā lam yajri ‘alā ikhwānīhim.)

Since Arafat quotes in his article this compilation of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya, it is odd indeed that he should have overlooked this passage.

In order to strengthen his argument that the Prophet was lenient towards Jewish tribes, groups and clans Arafat mentions the case of the clan of Abu l-Huqayq: when the Prophet conquered Khaybar he promised the Jews of this locality safety (aman) on condition that they handed him over everything (of value – K.) in the stronghold. The utterance

of the Prophet quoted by Arafat indicates that in spite of the hostility of the clan of Abū l-Huqayq he would grant them safety, as he had granted their brethren, if they would hand him over all their property. In fact a treasure belonging to the Banū l-Huqayq was detected. The Prophet then ordered to torture one of the sons of Abū l-Huqayq and to kill the others. The women and children of the executed sons of Abū l-Huqayq were enslaved, and their property confiscated. The attitude of the Prophet towards the clan of Abū l-Huqayq can hardly be described as lenient although the Prophet’s order can formally be justified: as one of the sons of Abū l-Huqayq did not disclose the place of the family’s treasure he thereby violated the terms of the surrender; this was considered a violation of an agreement and the Prophet was entitled to have him put to death. It may be worthwhile to remark that Kināna b. Abī l-Huqayq, whom the Prophet ordered to torture and who was executed after the torture by al-Zubayr, was the husband of the captured woman Ṣafiyya whom the Prophet married on the night of her husband’s execution. Huyayy b. Akhtāb, killed by order of the Prophet during the massacre of the Banū Qurayza, was Ṣafiyya’s father.

The legal basis for the torture, the execution and the confiscation of the property of the Banū l-Huqayq is plainly outlined in one of the earliest compilations of Muslim law, the Siyar of al-Shaybānī (d. 189 A.H.). The case of the clan of Abū l-Huqayq is related in a special chapter entitled: “Safety (granted) on condition” (al-amān ʿala l-shart). Al-Shaybānī concludes that if the enemy is conditionally granted safety by the Muslims and then acts treacherously or conceals from them the object (scil. which was to be handed over under the terms of the agreement – K.) the imām is permitted to kill the enemy.
raises in his comment the question whether the Prophet issued this order of torture before or after he had uttered the prohibition of torture.  

The killing of the captured fighting men of the enemy is explicitly permitted. Al-Shaybānī records the case of the Banū Qurayza as a convincing precedent: they were put to death on the order of the Prophet after they had been captured and after hostilities had ceased. The problem discussed concerns the permissibility of killing the captured enemy while his hands are tied. Al-Shaybānī decrees that it is preferable to execute the captured enemy with his hands free; but if there is a danger that he may escape or kill a Muslim, he has to be executed with his hands tied. al-Shaybānī emphasizes that the suffering of the captured ought to be alleviated by providing them with food and water; here, too, al-Shaybānī has recourse to the precedent of the Banū Qurayza: the Prophet ordered that the Qurazi captives be provided with dates, be allowed to rest at mid-day and that their execution be delayed so as not to coincide with the hottest part of the day. The alleviation of the captives’ suffering is also recorded in the chapter dealing with the judgment of a Muslim to whom the fate of the captive ahl al-harb had been entrusted on the basis of their consent to his arbitration. The chapter deals in fact with the judgment of Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh and the Prophet’s approval of his decree. One of the problems touched upon is the age at which the fighting men of the enemy forces may be subjected to the death penalty. According to the decree of Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh (fighting) persons of Qurayza had to be put to death if they reached the age of puberty. Al-Shaybānī’s opinion is different: he points out that there are differences in the age of puberty between various peoples (for instance between Turks and Indians). But in the case of Banū Qurayza the
Prophet disclosed to Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh (on the basis of a revelation) that their age of puberty was the limit of their penal responsibility as fighting persons.29 Umar is said to have ordered the commanders of the (Muslim) troops to kill (as in the case of Qurayza – K.) every person on whom the razor had passed and to refrain from capturing anyone of the unbelievers.30 Al-Sarakhsi quotes a passage from the maghāzi-compilations (... wa-fī l-maghāzi ...) according to which ʿAlī and al-Zubayr carried out the execution of the captured Qurāzīs. He records two different versions concerning the number of those killed (700 men were executed; according to Muqātil: 450 were killed, 650 were enslaved) and mentions the place where the Qurāzīs were put to death: at the dār abi l-jahm; their blood flowed until it reached ahjār al-zayt.31 This in fact is the place which is mentioned by al-Waqīdī32 and al-Samhūdī.33 It is worthwhile to point out that al-Samhūdī quotes the report of Musa b. ʿUqba who stated that the execution of the Banū Qurayza was carried out at the dār abi l-jahm (it was close to the balāt; but – al-Samhūdī says – the balāt did not exist at that time): “some people claimed that their blood flowed and reached the ahjār al-zayt (the olive trees) which were in the market.”334

The references quoted above from the compilations of al-Shaybānī, al-Shāfiʿī, Abū ʿUbayd and al-Māwardī show that the early scholars of Muslim law and jurisprudence were well acquainted with the literature of the sīra and maghāzi. The early jurists availed themselves of the traditions of the maghāzi; having examined some of the chapters of the compilation of al-Shaybānī referring to the story of the Banū Qurayza we could see how every detail was closely studied and analysed. The events of this expedition served as precedents, conclusions were duly drawn and

29 Al-Shaybānī, op. cit., II, 591.
30 Al-Shaybānī, op. cit., II, 592: wa-dhukira ʿan ʿumara (r) annahu kataba ilā umarāʾi al-ajnādī an: uqtulū man jarat ʿalayhi l-mūsā wa-lā tasbū ilaynā mina l-tulūji ahadān.
31 Al-Shaybānī, op. cit., II, 592, sup.
32 Al-Waqīdī, op. cit., p. 513, ll. 6-7.
34 Al-Samhūdī, op. cit., p. 745 sup.
rules of the Muslim law of war were moulded according to these precedents. Al-Shaybānī was in fact a student of Abū Ḥanīfa, al-Awzā‘ī, Abū Yūsuf and Mālik b. Anas. He was a scholar of immense knowledge, penetrating mind and deep insight; yet in his Siyar he did not hesitate to base himself completely on the compilations of the maghāzī.

The close links between fiqh and maghāzī can be gauged from the fact that the famous qādī Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 A.H.) attended the council (majlis) of Muhammad b. Ishaq and heard from him the maghāzī. The report about the Banū Qurayza and Sā‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s judgment is given by Abū Yūsuf on the authority of Ibn Ishaq and is followed by a detailed discussion of the various possibilities of the decree of the arbiter. Mālik b. Anas had an interest in maghāzī-literature and recommended the maghāzī of Mūsā b. ʿUqba (d. 141 A.H.) whom he considered a reliable transmitter. Fiqh and maghāzī were even subjects of competition among Muslim jurists. In a mudhakara-competition between Mālik and al-Awzā‘ī in Medina, Mālik b. Anas beat Auzā‘ī on the subject of fiqh, but Auzā‘ī had the upper hand on the subject of maghāzī.

Arafat also raises some minor questions and dwells at length upon Ibn Ishaq’s transmission of the maghāzī tradition. As already mentioned Ibn Ishaq is accused of transmitting dubious traditions derived from unreliable authorities.

36 Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-kharaj, Cairo 1382, pp. 201-204.
39 How could so many hundreds of persons (scil. of the Banū Qurayza) be incarcerated in the house belonging to a woman of Banū l-Najār – asks Arafat (op. cit., p. 105, argument no. 11). But dār does not only denote “a house”; it often denotes a compound building, sometimes of considerable dimensions, containing in certain cases stores, workshops, magazines and even markets. (See M.J. Kister, “Some Reports Concerning Mecca,” JESHO XV (1972), 85-86 [about the dār <translated “courts”> bought by Mu‘āwiyah]; and see ib. p. 86, no. 1; and see e.g. Ibn Ḥajar, al-Isāba, V, 744, sup.: the court (dār) known as dār bani nasr in Damascus was a church (kanisat al-naṣārā); Mālik b. ʿAuf alighted there at the beginning of the Muslim conquest of Damascus; therefore the court was known as dār bani nasr.) It is quite possible that some hundreds of people could be incarcerated in such a dār. (See about the dār bint al-khārith: al-Suhaylī, al-Raud al-unuf, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Wakīl, Cairo 1390/1970, VI, 333-334).
In the case of the Banū Qurayza both the descendants of Sa'd b. Muqādh and the descendants of the Jews who converted to Islam are accused by Arafat of inventing tendentious traditions transmitted and recorded by Ibn Ishāq.\textsuperscript{40}

Concerning the judgment of Sa'd b. Muqāadh one may remark that Ibn Ishāq was certainly not the only scholar who transmitted this tradition. Montgomery Watt's important article "The Condemnation of the Jews of Banū Qurayzah"\textsuperscript{41} contains rich material about the transmitters of this tradition. A glance at the article shows convincingly that there existed not just one tradition, namely the one transmitted by Ibn Ishāq; there were in fact many. Moreover, the tradition is recorded in the very early compilations, some of them contemporary with that of Ibn Ishāq, in Qur'ān commentaries, in later compilations in which early sources were quoted, in compendia of fiqh and in hadith collections.\textsuperscript{42} It is obvious that there were many sources for the tradition about the Banū Qurayza. In his instructive article "The Materials used by Ibn Ishāq" Montgomery Watt rightly points out that "the criticism of Ibn Ishāq that he took material from Jews and Christians reflects the later attitude of suspicion towards such sources and the tendency to avoid them (at least in theory)."\textsuperscript{43} The utterance of Mālik b. Anas about Ibn Ishāq as it is recorded by Arafat from Ibn Sayyid al-Nās is in fact a combined saying blended together in a later period. The story about the enmity between Mālik b. Anas and Ibn Ishāq has it that Ibn Ishāq spoke with disdain about Mālik's compilation and said: "Lay the knowledge of Mālik before me, I will handle it as a surgeon". Thereupon Mālik said: "Look at this dajjal of the dajjalī, are my books to be in front of him?"\textsuperscript{44} Mālik's

\textsuperscript{40} Arafat, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 105, argument no. 10.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{MW} 42 (1952), 160-171.


\textsuperscript{43} B. Lewis and S.M. Holt (ed.) \textit{Historians of the Middle East}, London 1964, p. 33.

answer indicates his contempt of Ibn Ishâq and his lack of respect for Ibn Ishâq’s knowledge. According to another version Mâlik was informed that Ibn Ishâq prided himself on being the surgeon of the maghâzî; Mâlik commented: “He told you that he was a surgeon of it? We expelled him from Medina.” In this utterance Mâlik points to Ibn Ishâq’s ignorance, his lies, his lack of belief and other vices which caused the scholars of Medina to expel him from the city. Ibn Ishâq was indeed accused of many faults like: shi‘i leanings, qadari beliefs, transmission of sifât traditions, playing with cocks, ta’dîls in transmission, and of course transmission of unreliable traditions, especially traditions of the descendants of Jews who had embraced Islam. The only version in which the utterance of Mâlik about Ibn Ishâq as an impostor (dâjjâl min al-dajjâjîla) is coupled with the accusation that he transmitted traditions of the descendants of Jewish converts to Islam is the version recorded by Ibn Sayyid al-Nâs, and quoted by Arafât.

The assumption that the enmity between Mâlik and Ibn Ishâq was caused mainly (or even solely) by the fact that Ibn Ishâq disseminated traditions of Jewish converts to Islam seems an oversimplification. The main cause for the antagonism is indicated in the report of Ibn Sayyid


47 See al-Dhâhâbî, Tadhkîrat al-huffâz, I, 173.

48 Ibn Abî Hàtim, al-Jârî, VII, 194, 1. 1.

49 Ibn Sayyîd al-Nâs, Uyun al-athar fi funûn al-maghâzî wa-l-siyyar, Cairo 1356, I, 16 inf.-17 sup. (dajjâlûn mina l-dajjâjîla yarwî ‘anî l-yahûd); Ibn Sayyîd al-Nâs stresses that Mâlik did not find fault with Ibn Ishâq’s activity of transmission of hadîth, but he criticized severely his transmission of reports about the raids and expeditions against the Jewish tribes, based on the accounts of the “Children of the Jews” who converted to Islam. According to Ya’qût (op. cit., XVIII, 8) Ibn Ishâq used to transmit on the authority of Jews and Christians and used to refer to them in his compilations as “ahlû l-’ilmî l-awwâl”. A witty anecdote is recorded by Ibn cAdîyy: Ibn Ishâq said: “the reliable transmitter told me” (haddathâni l-thîqa). When asked about who was the transmitter he answered: “The Jew Ya’qûb” (Ibn cAdîyy, op. cit., III, 26b, sup.).
al-Nās: Ibn ʿIshāq surpassed every scholar in the Ḥijāz in his knowledge of the tribal strifes and tribal genealogy. He claimed that Mālik had to be counted as a maula of the Dhū ʿAṣbāḥ; Mālik stated that he was a genuine descendant of this clan. When Mālik completed the compilation of the Muwattaʿ Ibn ʿIshāq asked for it to be brought to him for examination, since he had said that he would be its surgeon. Mālik responded with the contemptuous comment quoted above. The genealogical discussion seems to have been heated, as it touched upon the status of Mālik and humiliated his ancestors: Ibn ʿIshāq claimed that these ancestors had come to Medina as a group of clients of Taym (mawātī), not as their allies (hulafāʾ).

Ibn ʿIshāq was, however, not the first scholar who questioned the truth of Mālik’s pedigree. He was preceded in this matter by the highly respected traditionist ʿĀbd al-Rahmān b. ʿĀuf, the distinguished companion of the Prophet. ʿĀbd’s criticism of Mālik’s pedigree brought about a clash between the two scholars. This fact can be deduced from a peculiar conversation with Ahmad b. Hanbal in which he said that Mālik did not transmit traditions reported by ʿĀbd b. Ibrāhīm because “there was a story between them” (kāna lahu maʿa ʿābd din qissatun); then Ahmad said: “ʿĀbd did not care that Mālik did not transmit his reports.” More details about the reasons for the enmity between the two scholars can be gleaned from the answer given by Yaḥyā (b. Maʿin – K.) who questioned whether the reason of Mālik’s reluctance to transmit ʿĀbd’s hadiths was not that ʿĀbd was suspect of being a believer in qadar. Yaḥyā explained: ʿĀbd did not believe in qadar; Mālik merely refrained from transmitting on his authority because he criticized the reliability of his nasab (li-annahu ta-
It is therefore that Malik did not transmit on his authority.\(^5\) It is evident that Ibn Ishaq did not invent the suspicions against Malik’s pedigree, but merely quoted earlier reports which had already gained currency in Medina.

The accounts saying that the only reason for the enmity between Malik b. Anas and Muhammad b. Ishaaq was the problem of Malik’s pedigree are verified by a report transmitted by the well-known scholar of hadith, Baqiyy b. Makhlad (d. 276 A.H.)\(^5\) and recorded in the compilation of Abū l-‘Arab (d. 333 A.H.) “Kitāb al-miḥan”.\(^5\) Baqiyy relates a question of Ya’qūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d (d. 208 A.H.)\(^1\) addressed to his father Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d b. Ibrāhīm (d. 183 A.H.).\(^5\) He inquired whether Ibn Ishaq was indeed affected by the vices and faults of which he was accused by the people of Medina. Ibrāhīm denied it; Ibn Ishaq had the misfortune to abide in Medina with its people. They charged him with foul deeds because he knew the pedigrees (of the people of Medina – K.); thus there was no clan in Medina the pedigree of which Ibn Ishaq did not impeach. Therefore the people of Medina were hostile towards him. He (i.e. the governor of Medina) therefore seized him and ordered to flog him 100 times. (qāla: wa-haddathani yahyā ‘an baqiyyi bni makhладin ‘an ya’qūba bni ibrāhīma bni sa’din qāla: sa’altu abi hal kāna fi muhammadī bni ishāqa mimmā yuḥaddithu bihi ‘anhu ahlī l-madinati; qāla: lā, wa-laḵinnahu buliya bi-ahlī l-madinati, kānū yushannī ‘īna ‘alayhī wa-kāna rajulān [text: rajul] ya’rifū l-ansāb, fa-łam yakunū fi ahli l-madinati baytun illā wa-qad adkhalā ‘alayhim fī ansābīhim shay’an, fa’ādāhu ahli l-madinati fa-akhadhahū (sic!) wa-darabahu mī’ata saut)

The report of Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d is credible. He was a student of Ibn Ishaq and he recorded 17,000 legal traditions on the authority of Ibn Ishaq in addition to traditions of maghāzī.\(^5\)

It is quite natural, on this background, for Qādī ‘Iyād to provide a list of several scholars denying the suspicions about the pedigree of Malik, asserting that he was a genuine scion of the genuine tribe of the Yemenite Dhū Asbaḥ and adding that his clan was not a client of the

\(^{5}\) Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-tahdhib, III, 465.
\(^{5}\) See on him F. Sezgin, GAS, I, 152, no. 97.
\(^{5}\) MS. Cambridge Or. Qq. 235(8), fol. 142b.
\(^{5}\) See on him: Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib al-tahdhib, XI, 380, no. 741.
\(^{5}\) See on him F. Sezgin, GAS, I, 95, no. 14.
\(^{5}\) Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, Ta’rikh baghdād, VI, 83.
Taym b. Murra. In the same vein, some distinguished members of Taym are said to have testified that the clan of Dhū Asbah, the ancestors of Mālik had an alliance with, and were no clients of, Taym.

It may be well to note that Mālik seems to have referred in his contemptuous comment merely to the faults of Ibn Ishaq’s Sīra compilation. This attitude on the part of a great scholar of Muslim law towards Sīra compilations in general and towards that of Ibn Ishaq in particular is by no means surprising. Ibn ʿAdiyy (d. 360 A.H.) emphasized that it was Ibn Ishaq’s virtue and merit to have engaged the kings in reading the maghāzī, the stories of the beginning of Creation and the beginning of the Prophecy (of Muhammad – K.), thus distracting them from reading books of no import (lā yahšulu minhā shayʿun). In this he outdid other scholars who fell short of his accomplishment. Ibn ʿAdiyy states in his concluding sentence that the many traditions transmitted by Ibn Ishaq became widely current (wa-qad fasihat ahādīthuhu l-kathīratu); he (i.e. Ibn ʿAdiyy – K.) could however find in his traditions nothing which might be characterized as “weak” (fa-lam ajid fi ahādīthihi mā yatahāyatu an yuqṭāʾa ʿalayhi bi-l-ḍafī). Ibn Duḥaym, a maulā of Mālik admitted that Mālik called Ibn Ishaq dajjāl merely because of the suspicion of his belief in qadar, not because of his transmissions of ḥadīth (qala abū zurʾa al-dimashqiyyu: ḥāḍartu duḥayman maulā mālikin fa-raʾa anna dhālika laysa li-l-ḥadīth, innamā huwa li-annahu taha-mahu bi-l-qadari). Ibn Ishaq may have erred or been mistaken like others, states Ibn ʿAdiyy; but reliable and distinguished transmitters of ḥadīth did not refrain from reporting his traditions. The mark granted him by Ibn ʿAdiyy is “la baʾsa bihi”.59

Rigorous Muslim scholars of jurisprudence and ḥadīth, who usually display a highly critical attitude, had indeed a very high opinion of Ibn Ishaq. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 A.H.), quoting a Sīra tradition recorded by Ibn Ishaq, marks him as a man possessing knowledge and a perceptive

55 See al-Qādi ʿIyād, op. cit., I, 104-105 (the readings Tamim b. Murra are erroneous: read correctly Taym b. Murra).
56 Ibid., p. 105.
57 Ibn ʿAdiyy, op. cit., III, 30b.
58 Al-ʿIrāqī, Ṭahr al-tathrib fi sharhi l-taqrib, Halab n.d., I, 98.
mind in this matter (wa-huwa dhū ‘ilmin wa-baṣiratin bi-hādhā l-sha’ni), a man who kept in his mind more (knowledge - K.) than anyone else. Ibn Ḥajar, in arguing against Ibn al-Jauzī who qualified Ibn Ishāq as majrūh (in connection with his transmission of a tradition with a clear Shi‘ī tendency about the death of Fātimah) states that Ibn al-Jauzī’s attack lacks substance; the leading scholars (of hadith - K.), according to Ibn Ḥajar, accepted Ibn Ishāq’s transmission and he was accused of nothing worse than that he had transmitted on the authority of some unknown persons (majhūlin) and that he was a mudallis. Ibn Ishāq himself was a truthful person and an authority in the field of maghāzī (hujjatun fi l-maghāzī) in the opinion of the people (scil. of hadith, ‘inda l-jumhūr). Ibn Ḥajar, in arguing against Ibn al-Jauzī who qualified Ibn Ishāq as majrūh (in connection with his transmission of a tradition with a clear Shi‘ī tendency about the death of Fātimah) states that Ibn al-Jauzī’s attack lacks substance; the leading scholars (of hadith - K.), according to Ibn Ḥajar, accepted Ibn Ishāq’s transmission and he was accused of nothing worse than that he had transmitted on the authority of some unknown persons (majhūlin) and that he was a mudallis. Ibn Ishāq himself was a truthful person and an authority in the field of maghāzī (hujjatun fi l-maghāzī) in the opinion of the people (scil. of hadith, ‘inda l-jumhūr). Ibn Ḥajar, in arguing against Ibn al-Jauzī who qualified Ibn Ishāq as majrūh (in connection with his transmission of a tradition with a clear Shi‘ī tendency about the death of Fātimah) states that Ibn al-Jauzī’s attack lacks substance; the leading scholars (of hadith - K.), according to Ibn Ḥajar, accepted Ibn Ishāq’s transmission and he was accused of nothing worse than that he had transmitted on the authority of some unknown persons (majhūlin) and that he was a mudallis. Ibn Ishāq himself was a truthful person and an authority in the field of maghāzī (hujjatun fi l-maghāzī) in the opinion of the people (scil. of hadith, ‘inda l-jumhūr). Ibn Ḥajar, in arguing against Ibn al-Jauzī who qualified Ibn Ishāq as majrūh (in connection with his transmission of a tradition with a clear Shi‘ī tendency about the death of Fātimah) states that Ibn al-Jauzī’s attack lacks substance; the leading scholars (of hadith - K.), according to Ibn Ḥajar, accepted Ibn Ishāq’s transmission and he was accused of nothing worse than that he had transmitted on the authority of some unknown persons (majhūlin) and that he was a mudallis. Ibn Ishāq himself was a truthful person and an authority in the field of maghāzī (hujjatun fi l-maghāzī) in the opinion of the people (scil. of hadith, ‘inda l-jumhūr).

One can hardly agree with Arafat as to the “glorification” of their ancestors by the descendants of Qurayṣa. They are described in the reports as wavering, undecided even in the most dangerous moments of their existence, stubborn and disobeying their leaders. Barakat Ahmad discussed the problem thoroughly in a lengthy passage in his book Muhammad and the Jews and concluded: “One might, however, ask in parenthesis if Mālik b. Anas’ charge was fair. It shows a latter-day prejudice against the Jewish converts. Why should they be less reliable than the sons of the pagan Arab converts?” etc. Watt is right indeed in his assessment of the reports about Qurayṣa: “About the primary matters, the broad outlines of events, there is practically no doubt. The Banū Qurayṣa were besieged and eventually surrendered; their fate was decided by Sa‘d: nearly all the men were executed; Muhammad did not disapprove.”

III

A closer examination of the various reports about the expedition against Qurayṣa and their massacre may provide us with a clue to a better understanding of some of the events and a deeper insight into the circum-

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63 Montgomery Watt, The condemnation, p. 171.
stances and causes which brought about the calamity of the Banû Qurayza.

Usually the Banû Qurayza are accused of having violated their treaty with the Prophet. This accusation is stated clearly in the commentary to Sûra VIII (al-Anfâl), 55 – 58:

Surely the worst beasts in God's sight are the unbelievers, who will not believe, those of them with whom thou hast made compact, then they break their compact every time, not being godfearing. So, if thou comest upon them anywhere in the war, deal with them with such wise as to scatter the ones behind them; haply they will remember. And if thou fearest treachery any way at the hands of a people, dissolve it with them equally; surely God loves not the treacherous.

(A.J. Arberry's translation)

Al-Ṭabarî comments on “those of them with whom thou hast made compact, then they break their compact every time”: “You, Muḥammad, took from them their bonds (mawâthiqahum) and compacts (ʿuhūdahum) that they would not fight you nor aid anyone who fights you (wa-lâ yuzâhirû ‘alayka muhāriban laka), like Qurayza and (people) like them, who had compacts (ʿahd) and treaties (ʾaqd); “then they break”... is glossed: “they fight you (ḥārabūka) and aid (zāharū) (your enemy – K.) against you”.64 The denunciation is defined more precisely by Mujāhid: the verse refers to Qurayza; they aided (malaʿū) the enemies of the Prophet on the “Day of the Ditch” against him.65 The expression “fa-sharrid bihim man khalfahum” (“to scatter through them those who are behind them”; or “... as to strike fear”... or “... punish them an exemplary punishment, so as to spread fear...”, or “to deter”) refers consequently to Qurayza.66 Verse 58 is also alleged to refer to Qurayza. The phrase: “And if thou fearest treachery then throw back to them (their treaty) fairly”... has to be re-interpreted according to the commentaries. “If somebody should say” argues al-Ṭabarî, “how is it permissible to violate a pact on the ground of (mere – K.) fear of treachery, while fear is (just – K.) a conjecture, not a certainty (... wa-l-khaufu zannun lâ yaqīnun), he may be answered: “the opposite of what

64 Al-Ṭabarî, Tafsîr, ed. Shâkir XIV, 21-22.
65 Al-Ṭabarî, op. cit., XIV, 22, no. 16210; and see Mujâhid, Tafsîr, ed. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Ṣurâti, Islâmābād n.d., I, 266-267.
66 Al-Ṭabarî, Tafsîr, XIV, 22-23.
you assumed is true: if the signs of the enemy’s treachery become apparent, and you fear that you may be affected by it, then throw back to them the keys of peace (treaties – K.) and announce war to them” (wa-ḍāhinhum bi-l-harbī). Al-Tabari argues that this was the case of Qurayza: they responded to the summons of Abū Suwayn and the unbelievers to help them against the Prophet and to fight on their side. This response followed the conclusion of a treaty with the Prophet based on peaceful relations (calā musālama) and (the promise) not to fight the Prophet. When the signs of their treachery became manifest the Prophet had the right to declare war against them, concluded al-Tabari. The same method of explanation is followed by Ibn al-Arabi, al-Qurtubi, and al-Suyuti.

The treaty itself between the Prophet and Qurayza is usually referred to as ‘ahd, walthu ‘ahdin, the already mentioned musālama and muwāda‘a and the verbs  cāhada and  qāda. In fact the expressions  aqd and  ahd do not define clearly the nature of the treaty and its contents. A more precise term is the muwāda‘a, usually concluded with the unbelievers; it denotes a treaty of non-aggression, of renunciation of violence. A compact of this kind would mean that Qurayza and the forces of the Prophet would both refrain from any hostile action and would not aid any attacking force acting against either of these two parties. Muwāda‘a is thus a treaty of peaceful co-existence. It is interesting to note the expression walthu ‘ahdin used by Ibn Sa‘d: a precarious, crude, incomplete agreement. How this kind of agreement was concluded can be learned from a report recorded by  Abd al-Razzāq on the authority of Mūsā b. Uqba. The Nadir and Qurayza fought the Prophet; the Prophet expelled the Nadir but agreed that Qurayza should stay. Later
Qurayza fought the Prophet. They were defeated, the men were executed, the women, children and property were divided among the Muslims. Some of the Jews received the amān (safety) of the Prophet and converted to Islam. This account is corroborated and elucidated by a report traced back to al-Zuhri: the Prophet, informed about the treacherous intentions of the Nadir, marched out against them with troops (bi-l-katā‘ib) and besieged them. He demanded that they conclude a compact with him; if they refused, he in turn would refuse to grant them an assurance of safety (...innakum la ta‘manīna ‘indī illā bi‘ahdin tu‘āhidūni ‘alayhi). They refused and the forces of the Prophet fought them (i.e. the Nadīr) throughout the day. Next day the Prophet left the Nadīr, went out with horsemen and troops against Qurayza and summoned them to conclude an agreement; they consented and concluded a treaty and the Prophet left them. He returned with his troops to the Nadīr and fought them until they surrendered on condition that they would be expelled.77 The agreement between Qurayza and the Prophet was thus, as it is called by Ibn Sa‘d, walthu ‘ahdin, a crude, not elaborated agreement of peaceful co-existence. It was probably of the muwāda‘a kind granting assurances of mutual safety.78

An interesting case of muwāda‘a is recorded in some of the commentaries of Sūrat al-nisā’ 87–89: fa-mā lakum fī l-munāfiqīna fi‘atayn... Suraqa b. Malik is said to have received information that the Prophet intended to send (after the battles of Badr and Uhud and after the conversion of the people of these localities to Islam) Khalid b. al-Walīd to the Banū Mudlij (sci! to attack them – K.). He went to the Prophet and said: “I heard that you intend to send to my people, but I would like you to conclude with them a muwāda‘a (... wa-ana uridu an tuwādī‘ahum); so if your people (i.e. Quraysh – K.) convert to Islam they (i.e. the Mudlij – K.) would embrace Islam; if they (i.e. Quraysh) would not convert to Islam they would not be harsh towards them (i.e. towards Mudlij – K.). The Prophet ordered Khalid to act according to Suraqa’s request; Khalid indeed concluded with them an agreement on the basis that they would not give (anyone) aid against the Prophet of God (an lā yūqīnū ʿalā rasūli llāhi) and they would embrace Islam after?

77 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, op. cit., V, 360, no. 9733.
78 Comp. EI², s.v. Kudā’a (vol. V, 316 sup.): fa-authiq lanā hattā na‘manaka wa- ta‘manānā.
the conversion of Quraysh.\textsuperscript{79} One of the versions recorded by al-Suyūṭī contains an additional clause according to which people who would join Mudlij will join the \textit{muwāda’a} of Mudlij (\textit{wa-man wasala ilayhim min al-nāsī kāna alā mithli ‘ahdihim}).\textsuperscript{80} It is thus an interesting case of a treaty concluded with unbelievers granting them security and allowing other people to join them on the basis of that treaty.\textsuperscript{81}

According to other traditions the verses of the Qur’an refer to another \textit{muwāda’a}: a group of Meccans, claiming to be \textit{muhājirūn}, came to the Prophet; however, having renounced Islam, they asked the Prophet’s permission to go to Mecca in order to bring their merchandise. Some believers, who had received information about the treacherous plans of the group, wanted to kill them. Then the group declared that they were proceeding to Hilāl b. Uwaymir al-Aslami who had concluded a treaty of alliance (\textit{hilf} or \textit{‘ahd}) with the Prophet; this kept them from the attack of the believers and they hoped to get security from both parties (\textit{wa-yurđāna bi-dhālika an ya’mānū hāhunā wa-hāhunā}). It is noteworthy that people “whose hearts were restricted” (\textit{hashirat sudūruhum}), who were reluctant to fight their own people and who consequently did not have the courage to join the Muslim force, were not forced at that early period to join the Muslim force.\textsuperscript{82}

The concise report recorded by al-Thalābī is of some interest: the Prophet concluded a \textit{muwāda’a} with Hilāl b. Uwaymir al-Aslami when he left Mecca. According to this \textit{muwāda’a} Hilāl made a promise to aid neither the Prophet nor his adversary against him (\textit{an lā yu‘inahu wa-lā yu‘īna ‘alayhi}).\textsuperscript{83} The following stipulation established that anyone of his tribe or others who joined his court or asked shelter could be granted...

\textsuperscript{80} Al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-Durr al-manthur}, II, 191.
\textsuperscript{82} Mujāhid, \textit{Tafsīr}, I, 168-169; and see al-Ṭabarī, \textit{Tafsīr}, IX, 9-10 (from Mujāhid); al-Suyūṭī, \textit{al-Durr al-manthur}, II, 190 inf. (from Mujāhid).
\textsuperscript{83} The clause following this stipulation: \textit{hattā yarā wa-yurā} (so vowelled in text) is slightly enigmatic; it probably means: until he would consider (the matter) and things would be considered.
the same protection (jiwār) as given to Hilāl (wa-man wašala ilā hilālin min qaumihī wa-ghayrihim wa-lajā'a ilayhim fa-lahum min al-jiwāri mithlu ilādhi li-hilālin).84

Al Jassās gives a concise comment on the legal status of Qurayza: both Nadir and Qurayza had no protection (of the Prophet and of the Muslim community – K.) at all; the Prophet expelled the Nadir and ordered to have Qurayza killed. If they had had protection he would not have expelled them nor killed them. Between them and the Prophet there was merely a treaty and a truce which they violated. (wa-ma'lu-mun anna bani qurayzata wa-l-nadīra lam takun lahum dhimmatus qattu, wa-qad ajlā l-nabīyyu (s) bani l-nadīri wa-qatala bani qurayzata; wa-lau kāna lahum dhimmatus lamā ajlāhum wa-lā qatalahum; wa-innāmā kāna baynahu wa-baynahum 'ahdun wa-hudbatun fa-naqādū-hā...”85 This corresponds exactly to what al-Shāfī‘ī described as al-ṣulḥ bi-l-muhādana.86 It is evident that a person or a tribal group, or a community could conclude a treaty of muwāda‘a (or muhādana) with two conflicting parties. Qurayza seem to have been in such a situation when Quraysh and their Confederates arrived: they had a favourable attitude towards the Prophet and the Muslims (who were their neighbours) and were not happy when the Ahzāb started the siege on Medina. Their attitude is described as follows by al-Wāqidi: “... they were at that time peacefully inclined towards the Prophet and disliked the arrival of Quraysh (... wa-hum yauma’idhin silmūn li-l-nabīyyi yakrahūna qudūma qurayshin).87 In fact, according to the report of al-Wāqidi, Qurayza lent the besieged Muslims many tools for digging the ditch (for the defence of Medina – K.) like shovels, baskets and axes.88 The fact that they adhered to the concluded treaty (the muwāda‘a or muhādana) is clearly reflected in a passage from the speech of Huyayy b. Akhtab in which he tried to convince Qurayza to abandon their neutrality and begin cooperating with the besieging Quraysh: You are not with Muḥammad nor are you with Quraysh (fa-lā antum ma‘a rasūli llāhi wa-lā ma‘a quray-

86 Al-Shāfī‘ī, al-Umm, IV, 107.
88 Al-Wāqidi, op. cit., p. 445; and see al-Samhūdī, op. cit., p. 1207, l.1: wa-sta‘ārū min bani qurayzata mithla l-ma‘āwili wa-l-fu‘ūs wa-ghayri dhaliqa.
The lending of the tools to the forces of the Prophet in order to enable them to dig the ditch was certainly a display of the goodwill of Qurayza towards the Prophet and his force. There is no report whatsoever about military actions of Qurayza against the force of the Prophet. The expedition against Qurayza and the severe punishment inflicted on them are justified in the Muslim sources by reference to the clandestine negotiations said to have been arranged between Qurayza and Quraysh, and the secret plan to attack the forces of the Prophet, a plan which failed however due to a stratagem of the Prophet carried out by Nu‘aym b. Mas‘ūd. As these negotiations were clandestine, the reliability of reports concerning them cannot be established.

What may however be assumed is that Qurayza had some commercial relations with the besieging Ahzāb. This can be deduced from a story about a clash between a group from among the besieged Muslims and a caravan of the besieging Ahzāb. According to the report, a group of the Banū ʿAmr b. ʿAuf who dwelt in Qubā’ asked the Prophet’s permission to arrange a funeral for one of their relatives. When they went out to the plain in order to bury the dead man they met .Dirār b. al-Khaṭṭāb with a group of unbelievers on camels loaded with wheat, barley, straw and dates. This group had been sent by Abū Sufyān on his camels to the Banū Qurayza in order to purchase provisions from them. They were on their way back to the camp of the besieging Ahzāb. In the encounter which ensued between the Muslims and the caravan of the unbelievers Dirār was wounded, the camel riders managed to escape and the camels loaded with the provisions were led to the Prophet’s camp; the booty proved a relief for the besieged, helping them in their expenditure. A more detailed version is recorded by Dahlān. A group of the Ansār, who went out to bury their deceased relative, met a caravan of twenty camels with loads of straw, barley and dates. The caravan, which

90 See e.g. al-Waqiḍi, op. cit., 480 seq.; but see the report recorded by al-Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, Tehran 1392, XX, 246, no. 11: The Prophet got information that Qurayza sent to Abū Sufyān and promised him to aid Quraysh in the case of an encounter between Quraysh and the Prophet. Then the Prophet stood up and addressed the Believers. He said: “Qurayza sent to us and promised us their aid and succour in the case of an encounter between us and Abū Sufyān.” When Abū Sufyān was informed about the speech of the Prophet he said: “The Jews betrayed (us).” And he departed from them.
91 Al-Samhūdī, op. cit., p. 304.
had been sent as succour and assistance (madadan wa-taqwiyatan) to Quraysh, was led by Huyayy b. Akhtab. The Ansār seized the caravan and brought it to the Prophet; it was a relief for the Muslims.92 We can probably gauge from this report that Qurayza had large warehouses with provisions which they could sell. This confirms the soundness of the data about the huge quantities of food, cattle, utensils, weapons and coats of mail seized in the stronghold of Qurayza after their surrender. The comparison of these data with those of the numbers of the fighting troops and the data about the executed Qurazīs and the enslaved women and children can help us to assess the details of the first stages of the clash and to evaluate properly the reports about the decisive period of the events. According to a widely current tradition the angel Jibrīl came to the Prophet, urged him to march out against Qurayza and promised him to crush their stronghold.93 The stronghold seems to have been fortified. According to a tradition recorded by al-Suyūṭī, the Prophet, urged by Jibrīl to raid Qurayza, asked him: “How can I conquer their fortress” (kayfa li bi-ḥisnīhim); Jibrīl assured him of his help in destroying their force.94 The aim of the raid is indicated in another tradition: Jibrīl ordered the Prophet to march out against Qurayza to kill the fighting men and to enslave their offspring, promising him that they would be a means of subsistence for him (fa-inna llāha ʿazza wa-jalla qad adhina laka fī dhālika, fa-hum laka tuʿmatun).95 Tuʿma was a well known politico-

92 Dahlān, al-Sīra al-nabawiyya, Cairo 1310, II, 8.
94 Al-Durr al-mantur, III, 178.
95 Muqāṭūl, Tafsīr, II, 90b.
economic term in the period of the Jāhiliyya and in the period of the Prophet.

The firm economic position of Qurayza enabled them to invite the so-called "hypocrites", the Medinan munāfiqūn, during the siege of Medina to seek refuge in their stronghold. The munāfiqūn were in fact a group of Medinans who had outwardly converted to Islam, but who had remained loyal to their former allies, faithful to their Jāhili ideals and their tribal relations; they cooperated with Qurayza and knew that they could rely on their help in times of need. They were reluctant to be involved in the conflicts of the Prophet with Quraysh or with other tribal groups. This attitude of the group of munāfiqūn can be gauged from a passage recorded by Ibn al-ʿArabī:

The munāfiqūn used to aid the Jews of Qurayza and the Christians of Najrān because they (i.e. the Jews and the Christians – K.) were people of cultivated land and used to supply them with provisions and lend them money. Therefore they said: "How are we to sever the bonds of friendship with a people who make our dwellings spacious when we are afflicted by a year of drought and are in need of them".

The close relations between Qurayza and the Aus, which had deep roots in the Jāhiliyya period, brought about the peculiar situation that several members of the Muslim Aus interceded with Saʿd b. Muʿadh, asking him to be lenient in his judgment of Qurayza. They were, of course, aware of being faithful believers, but they could not free themselves from the feeling that they should remain faithful to their Quraisy allies in accordance with their obligations from the period of the Jāhiliyya. This group is often referred to as "al-munāfiqūn".

The extent of the raid against Qurayza and its results can be judged by the number of the Muslim warriors who participated in the siege of the stronghold. Widely current reports give their number as three thou-

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96 Muqāṭīl, Tafsīr, II, 89a: wa-dhalika anna l-ydhūda arsalū ilā-l-munāfiqīna yauma l-khandaqi fa-qālū mādhā yahmilukum ʿalā an taqtulū anfusakum bi-aydi abī sufiāna wa-man maʿahu...innā la-nushfiqū ʿalaykum, innamā antum ʾikhwānunā wa-naḥnu jirānukum, fa-halumma ilaynā...; and see al-Qurtubi, op. cit., XIV, 152 sup.

sand warriors and thirty-six horsemen.\textsuperscript{98} The data about the length of the siege\textsuperscript{99} and the number of the executed Qurazi men and enslaved women and children are divergent.\textsuperscript{100} The large force which marched out against Qurayza seems to indicate that the Prophet was aware of the strength of Qurayza. The Prophet could draw some conclusions from the “Campaign of the Ditch”: he mobilized a great number of his troops. They could surround the stronghold of Qurayza and wait patiently until the besieged surrendered. There was some shooting,\textsuperscript{101} but there were no serious encounters and the number of killed from both parties was very small.\textsuperscript{102} The besieged Qurayza, forsaken by their allies, could not expect


\textsuperscript{99} See e.g. al-Qurtubi, \textit{op. cit.}, XIV, 139 (20 nights); al-Samarqandi, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 134b (15 nights); Muqtālī, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 90b, I, 143b (21 nights); Ibn Sa’d, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 74 (14 nights); Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Qurtubi, \textit{al-Durar fī khitṣārī l-maghāzī wa-l-siyar}, ed. Shauqi Daīf, Cairo 1386/1966, p. 189 (more than 20 nights); Ibn Kathir, \textit{Tafsīr}, V, 443 (25 nights); al-Diyārbakrī, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 493 (10, 15, 21, 25 nights); ‘Ali b. Burhān al-Dīn, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 357 (15 days, 25 nights, a month); Ibn Kathir, \textit{al-Bidāya}, IV, 124 (25 nights); al-ʿAynī, \textit{op. cit.}, XVII, 188 (more than 20, 15, 25 nights); al-Maqrizi, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 241 (25 nights, 15 days, a month); ʿĪsāmī, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 136 (15 nights, 25 nights, more than 10 nights); al-Balādhurī, \textit{Futūḥ al-buldān}, ed. ʿAbdallah and ʿUmar al-Ṭabbā, Beirut 1377/1957, p. 32 (15 nights); al-Kalāt, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 177 (25 nights); Ibn Hibbān, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 274 (25 nights); and see Barakat Ahmad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 73 (notes 7-8).


\textsuperscript{101} See e.g. al-Wāqidi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 500.

\textsuperscript{102} See e.g. al-Wāqidi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 529.
any success if they launched an attack against the besieging force. They could probably attack suddenly and cause some losses to the besieging force, but they could not save themselves. The speech of Ka'b b. Asad with his three proposals which were rejected by Qurayza is probably an invention, but it reflects the grave situation of Qurayza, their despair and the few alternatives left to them. The stronghold of Qurayza was not far from Medina; al-Katakanî reports that the abode of Qurayza was 2 miles from Medina; the place was called Bi'r Mu'ttalib. The besieging force received their supplies from Medina; Sa'd b. Ubâda supplied them with dates. As mentioned above, there is no reference to serious war activities; but there was a lively movement of Qurazi delegates who went down in order to negotiate with the Prophet the terms of their surrender. Finally they were compelled to surrender unconditionally. They probably still fostered some hopes that they would be expelled, losing all their possessions. There were in fact some of the Aus who dared to intercede with the Prophet, asking him to be lenient with Qurayza. The Prophet preferred to transfer the authority of arbitration and judgment to Sa'd b. Mu'âadh, a member of the Aus, who were the allies of Qurayza. The Prophet could indeed trust Sa'd b. Mu'âadh and rely on his decision: after all, he had been entrusted with arranging the murder of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf; it was Sa'd b. Mu'âadh who sent Muhammad b. Maslama to Ka'b b. al-Ashraf to slay him. As arbiter, hakam, Sa'd had to obtain in advance approval for his verdict from all the parties involved. Only then could he issue his judgment concerning Qurayza. The Prophet granted it his approval stating that it had been revealed from heaven.

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103 See Barakat Ahmad, op. cit., p. 72 seq. and his analysis of Ka'b's speech. And see al-Majlisi, op. cit., XX, 210-211.
104 Al-Katakanî, op. cit., III, 296; al-Majlisi, op. cit., XX, 217; but see al-Samhûdi, op. cit., p. 1141 (Bi'r Mu'ttalib 5 miles from Medina).
105 See e.g. al-Wâqidi, op. cit., p. 500; 6Ali b. Burhân al-Din, op. cit., II, 357.
107 See Barakat Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 77-78 (nos. VI-X) and the discussion pp. 79-82.
108 See Watt, The Condemnation; and cf. al-Dhahabi, al-'Ulûwî, p. 32; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Istî'âb, p. 603-604; and see al-Suyûtî, al-Durr, III, 178: the decree conveyed to the Prophet in the morning by an angel (fa-hakama [i.e. Sa'd] fihim an tuqtala muqâtîlatuhum wa-tusba
The order of the Prophet to stand up in honour of Sa'd, their sayyid, and the remark of 'Umar: "the sayyid is God" seem to combine two elements: the injunction to honour an eminent person of the community (or of the tribe - K.) by standing up, and the permissibility of naming this person sayyid; 'Umar had the courage to differ and to state that "sayyid", Lord, could only refer to God. The order of the Prophet to stand up in honour of Sa'd contradicts utterances attributed to the Prophet in which he is said to have forbidden standing up in honour of important persons and to have prohibited notables from asking their people to stand up in front of them, as it is a practice of the a'ājim.

See Watt, _The Condemnation_, p. 161; Barakat Ahmad, _op. cit._, p. 92.


See e.g. al-Zayjājī, _Amāli_, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo 1382/1963, p. 68 (lā taqūmū kamā taqūmū l-aʿājīm); al-Muṣafir b. ʿImrān, _op. cit._, fol. 246b (lā-taqūmū kamā tuʾaẓẓūmū (!) l-aʿājīmū baʾdumū baʿdan; laʿana llāhu man qāmat lahu l-ʿabīdūn sufīfan qiyāman; and see esp. ult.: lā yuqūmū li, innāmū yuqūmū li-l-llāhī; al-Bayhaqī, _Shuʿab_, fol. 148b inf. (ʿan anas: mā kāna shakhṣūn aḥabba ilayhim min rasūlī llāhī (s) wā-kānū idhā raʾsuhu lam yataharraḳū li-mā ʿaraṣū min karāḥiyyatihī li-dhālika); ib.: lā taqūmū kamā taqūmū l-aʿājīm...; al-Šaʿrānī, _Lawaqīḥ_, p. 834 (lā-taqūmū alā ruʾūsī aʿimmatikam kamā taqūmū l-aʿājīmu ala ruʾūsī mulikīhā; and p. 835: lā taqūmū kamā taqūmū l-aʿājīmu); ʿAlī b. Muhammad al-Muʿaddil, _Juzʿ_ al-awwal, al-Fawāʾid al-ḥisān, MS. Zāhirīyya 18, fol. 274a (ʿan anas: mā kāna shakhṣūn aḥabba ilayhim...; gūmū ilā sayyidikum...); Ibn ʿAdīyy, al-ʿKāmil fi duʿāʾāli l-nījāl, MS. Ahmed III, 2943/1. fol. 122b (innāmū halakān man kānā qabālūm bi-an ʿazzamū mulūkāhum bi-an gūmū wa qaʿadū...); Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd, ed., _Rasāʾīl_, p. 10 (lam yakūn shakhṣūn...).
The utterance *qūmu ilā sayyidikum* was commented in various ways in order to evade unnecessary polemics. *Qūmu* was in some of the commentaries interpreted as a summons to the people to stand up and aid the wounded Sa'd to alight.\(^{112}\) The word *sayyid* was explained as pointing to the idea of *sīyāda* inherent in his authority as appointed arbiter.\(^{113}\) According to some traditions, however, reflecting the ideas of conservative-ascetic circles in Islam, the Prophet himself forbade addressing people by the title *sayyid*: When 'Abdallah b. al-Shikhkhir came to the Prophet and addressed him by "*sayyidunā*" the Prophet said: "The *sayyid* is God."\(^{114}\) It was a plausible solution to record another version, which did not cause polemics: *qūmu ila khayrikum.*\(^{115}\) The phrase *qūmu ila sayyidikum*, which was in fact an expression of esteem and respect, seems to have been current in the period of the Prophet and became in later times a subject of politico-theological polemics.

The number of the besieging forces: 36 horsemen and 3000 foot-soldiers and the period of the siege generally given as lasting between 15 – 25 days indicates that the stronghold was fortified and that the population was numerous. The number of 400 Qurazi men able to fight, which is the smaller number recorded in all the versions about the surrender, seems to be plausible; nowhere in all the sources available is a smaller number mentioned. The different reports of Sa'd's decree vary in their wording as to those who were to be put to death: "men", "those over whom the razors had passed", "fighting men", "adults".\(^{116}\) The meaning of all the reports is the same: the men able to fight have to be beheaded; in many compendia of *fiqh* this is identified with the age of puberty or adolescence.

The details about the place of execution and its duration are divergent or even contradictory. The commentators claim that Sa'd issued his

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\(^{112}\) See e.g. al-Munāwī, *Fayd al-qadir*, Beirut 1391/1972, IV, 530, no. 6164: ... *wa-qila ma'nāhu qūmu li-iš'ānatīhī fi-l-nuzulī 'ani l-dabbati li-mā bihi min al-jarh...*

\(^{113}\) See e.g. al-Āyni, *op. cit.*, XVI, 269: ... *wa-immā bi-an yurāda bihi al-siyādatu l-khāṣṣatu, ay min jihāti takhimihi fi-ḥādhihi l-qadiyya...* and see the comment of Suhaylī, *al-Raud al-unuf*, VI, 368.


\(^{116}\) See Barakat Ahmad, *op. cit.*, 81-82.
Banū Qurayza

judgment in the mosque erected on the territory of Qurayza. Some other sources state that he uttered it in the mosque of Medina. All the reports agree, however, that the Qurayza were led to Medina and executed there.

There are diverse traditions concerning the exact place of execution. Several reports say that the Qurazis were beheaded in the market of Medina and buried there; some Shi'i sources report that the ditches were dug in Baqī', and the corpses of the executed Qurazis were buried there. The Baqī', according to some reports, was adjacent to the market of Medina; some reports mention it as forming part of the market. According to Shi'i sources the executions were carried out in the cool periods of the day: in the morning and in the evening, over a period of three days. This was in compliance with an explicit order of the Prophet not to increase the sufferings of the Qurazis by executing them in the hottest hours of the day; the Prophet also ordered that they be provided with sweet water and good food and that proper conditions for their captivity be maintained. Other reports say that the executions were carried out during one day and lasted until the evening when they were carried out at the light of firebrands. Shi'i reports say that 'Ali beheaded twenty Qurazi captives; each Companion beheaded one or two captives. Certain reports tell an interesting story about how the Aus, who had criticized the execution of the Qurazis, became involved in the operation: some captives were divided among the different clans of the Aus and each clan had to put to death their captives. Several accounts stress that 'Ali and al-Zubayr carried out the executions in the market of Medina. The number of women and children which is given in some sources is 1000. This seems to be trustworthy when it is compared with the num-

118 See above, and notes 31-34.
122 See e.g. al-Majlîsî, op. cit., XX, 238, II.1-2.
125 See Barakat Ahmad, op. cit., p. 91; M. Watt, Muhammad at Medina, 215 inf.-216; al-Zurqâni, Sharh al-mawahib, II, 137.
126 See e.g. Barakat Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 83, 85; M. Watt, Muhammad at Medina, p. 216.
number of executed men, which is said to have been 400. The women and children were sent to Syria and Najd and sold there in exchange for horses and weapons. Some of them were bought by the Jews of Khaybar, Wādī l-Qurā, Taymā, and by a Jew of Medina; others were bought by ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿAuf and ʿUthmān; these two are said to have made a profit; it was especially ʿUthmān who was successful in this commercial enterprise. Several women were divided among the believers in Medina; some accounts say that this was done in accordance with one of the injunctions of Saʿd b. Muʿādh: to kill the men and spare the women “in order that the believers might be aided by them” (i.e. by the women – K.).

The list of the booty of Qurayza which was collected by the believers after the surrender is of importance: 1500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 200 spears, 1500 shields; in addition to the weapons there were household goods, utensils, camels and cattle. The wine was, of course, poured out. The large quantities of weapons are disproportionate relative to the number of fighting men (i.e. men who reached puberty – K.): 1500 swords, 1500 shields and 2000 spears exceed the military needs of 400 men able to fight. The only possible conjecture is that Qurayza used to sell (or lend) some of the weapons kept in the storehouses in their stronghold. The title “ahlu l-ḥalqa” “the people of the weapons” by which Quraysh in their letter addressed the Jews is to be explained by reference to these storehouses, in which weapons were accumulated and stored. These weapons seem to have strengthened their position and prestige in the tribal society.

The suspicions that Qurayza attempted to plot with Quraysh against the Prophet would probably not justify the cruel punishment of execu-

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127 See al-Waqidi, op. cit., p. 523.
128 See Barakat Ahmad, op. cit., p. 88.
130 Abū ʿUbayd, op. cit., p. 130, no. 348; Ibn al-Athir, Jāmiʿ al-ʿusūl, IX, 202, no. 6088.
132 See e.g. ʿAbd al-Razzāq, op. cit., V, 359.
tion of the fighting men and the sale of the women and children; Qurayza repented of their deeds, the people of Aus beseeched the Prophet, asking him to pardon Qurayza. One might have expected the Prophet to pardon them. There must have been an additional reason for the hostility of the Prophet against Qurayza, not disclosed in the vague accounts about the violation of the treaty. This can be gauged from the passage in the commentary of Muqatil on Sūrat al-Anfāl, verse 57: “The Jews violated the compact between them and the Prophet and aided the unbelievers of Mecca by providing them with weapons with which to fight the Prophet and his Companions.”

Qurayza were, as mentioned, ready to depart with their families leaving the huge quantities of weapons as booty for the Prophet. The Prophet’s approval of the cruel judgment of Sa’d cannot be explained in this case. Never before had the Prophet inflicted such a punishment on any tribal group.

Current reports say that the land and booty of Qurayza were divided among the 3000 warriors and 36 horsemen; the khums was taken out of the booty. A different account reports that Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh ordered in his decree that the property of Qurayza be divided among the Muhājirūn only, not among the Anṣār. According to another report it was the Prophet who allotted land and immovable property to the Muhājirūn, emphasizing in his address to the Anṣār that they were living in their abode (and consequently did not need additional land – K.). There seems to have been some feeling of discontent among the Anṣār in connection with the division of the land of Qurayza. This is reflected in a report stating that Sa’d b. Mu‘ādh decreed that the land of Qurayza be allotted to the Muhājirūn (wa-takūna l-diyāru li-l-muhājirīn); the Anṣār

133 Al-Waqqāṭ, op. cit., p. 510.
134 Muqatil, op. cit., I, 147a: ...wa-dhā'ila ikhāna l-yahūda naqadū l-‘ahda llađhi kāna baynahum wa-bayna l-‘abīyyi (s) wa-‘a’ūnū mushrikī makkata bī-‘al-silāhī l-qālī l-‘abīyyi (s) wa-aš-‘ābihi thumma yaqūlūna nasnā wa-a-khṭa’nā, thumma yuqāhidūhum al-thāniyata fa-yaanqūdūna l-‘ahda.


objected, arguing that they had property shared with the Muhājirūn. Saʿd replied: “I wanted them (i.e. the Muhājirūn – K.) to become self-sufficient, and not need your aid”.138 More details about the division of the palm trees of Qurayza are given by Ibn Hājur: the Ansār helped the Muhājirūn by granting them palm trees for their use. After the conquest of the lands of Nadir and Qurayza the Muhājirūn were granted land and palm trees and could thus return the trees which the Ansār had given them.139

The division of the land and property improved the status of the Muhājirūn at Medina and helped them to gain their economic independence. The military strength of the Muslim community of Medina grew due to the weapons taken as booty; the sale of the captured women and children as slaves for horses and weapons enabled to enlarge the Muslim military force for further conquests.

The Jewish tribe of Qurayza ceased to exist.

139 Ẓafīḥ al-bārī, VII, 316.