

NOTES ON THE PAPYRUS TEXT ABOUT MUHAMMAD'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BANŪ AL-NAḌĪR

M. J. Kister, Jerusalem

Document No. 5 of the "Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri"¹ carefully edited by Professor Nabia Abbott contains a passage essential for the evaluation of the document, which deserves re-examination.

I

Verso lines 14—26 contain the account of the causes of the campaign against the Banū al-Naḍīr. Lines 14—16 give an account of the visit which the Prophet paid to the Banū al-Naḍīr and elucidate the reason for this visit; they are read by Professor Abbott as follows:

13. [امرئ] رمعونة بسم الله [لرحمن الرحيم] هذا كتاب حديث
 14. [أمرر] سول الله حين خرج الى بنى النضير يستعينهم في أمر الكلابين وكان حد [مجموع]
 15. [فيما] أجوا فيه فخرج رسول الله في رجال من أصحابه الى بنى النضير ليتعينوهم في الك [لا]
 بين الذ [ين]
 16. [كان]ا [س]لم [ا] الى قريش حين نزلوا بأحد فقال رسول الله فخصوهم على القتال وذلو [هم]
 ع [لى الغفال]
 17. [فلما] ك [مهم] رسول الله في غفل الك [لابين] قالوا اجلس يا ابا القاسم حتى تطعم ثم نوتيك
 بحاجتك

and are translated thus: "This is the book of the narrative (14) / of the affair of the M/essenger of God when he went to the Banū al-Naḍīr seeking their aid in the matter of the two men of Kilāb. It is a narrative / collected (15) from that which / has been related concerning it. The Messenger of God and some of his Companions went to the Banū al-Naḍīr to ask their help for the two men of Kilāb who (16) /had/ surrendered to the Quraish when they encamped at Uḥud. The Messenger of God said: 'They (Banū al-Naḍīr) accepted them (Banū Kilāb) as allies for battle and (then) dishonored /them by/ negligence'."

This passage is obscure. The two men from Kilāb killed by 'Amr b. Umayya are said to have surrendered to the Quraish, when they encamped at Uḥud. How could they, then, have been granted the protection of the Prophet as mentioned on Verso, line 11? In the accounts of the Prophet's

¹ Historical Texts, Chicago 1957.

campaigns the word "Quraish" denotes the unbelievers of Mecca and having surrendered to the Quraish at Uḥud they could not have received from the Prophet a promise of safety. Professor Abbott in order to find a solution for the two contradictory statements comments as follows: "The Quraish of 1.16 must be, in view of Verso 1.11—12 and the comments thereon, the Quraishites in Muḥammad's own camp and not the entire tribe as such. Muḥammad's remark at the end of the line 16 refers to the alliance between the Banū Kilāb and the Banū al-Naḍīr and the latter's reluctance to share in the indemnity of the two that were slain."² This explanation cannot, however, be accepted. The translation proposed for the crucial expressions *فخصّوهم على القتال وذلوهم على الغفال* "accepted by the Banū Naḍīr for battle and dishonoured by negligence", does not conform to Arabic style and idiom.

In order to elucidate this passage we must start with the correction of these two expressions, which form a clue for the understanding of the historical background of the account. The correct reading is *فحضّوهم على القتال وذلوهم على العورات* "and they spurred them on to fight and showed them the way to the gaps [in the frontier, not sufficiently defended]." The two expressions *فحضّوهم* and *وذلوهم* have as their subject the Banū al-Naḍīr; they spurred "them" on and incited "them" to fight and showed them the weak, undefended spots in the frontier. The object of *حضّوهم* (*دلوهم*, "them") refers to the Quraish, mentioned at the beginning of the line; the weak, undefended spots are the weak spots of the Muslim frontier.

We thus obtain an important clue for the understanding of the document: the Banū al-Naḍīr were in peaceful relations with the Quraish when the Quraish encamped at Uḥud. They plotted with them, stirred them up to fight the Prophet. The words at the beginning of the line have to be read: *وكانوا دسوا الى قريش* "they [the Banū al-Naḍīr] had sent secretly to the Quraish". The Banū al-Naḍīr urged them to fight the Prophet and showed them the weak spots in the frontier of the Muslims. *فقال رسول الله لقتال رسول الله* is a misreading; the correct reading is: *لقتال رسول الله*

The whole line has, therefore, to be read: *وكانوا دسوا الى قريش حين نزلوا بأحد لقتال رسول الله فحضّوهم على القتال وذلوهم على العورات*

(16) "and they sent secretly to the Quraish when they encamped at Uḥud in order to fight the Prophet and they incited them to fight and showed them the weak spots" . . . This line explains the reason why the Prophet came to the Banū al-Naḍīr asking them to help him to pay the indemnity of the two men of Kilāb killed by one of his adherents: the Banū al-Naḍīr were accused of cooperation with the Quraish when they attacked the Muslim army at Uḥud and their payment of a part of the

² Op. cit., p. 74 supra (Comments Verso, 1.15—17).

indemnity was a kind of retribution for their hostile attitude towards the Prophet.

There is a passage which closely resembles this line of the papyrus; it is a fragment of the account by Mūsā b. ʿUqba of the campaign against the Banū al-Naḍīr, quoted by al-Zurqānī in his "Sharḥ al-Mawāhib"³ and runs as follows: *وقال ابن عقبة في سبب الغزوة وكانوا قد دسوا الى قريش في قتاله صلى الله عليه وسلم فحَضَّوْهُم على القتال ودلوهم على العورة*

Verso, 1.16 is, in fact, a parenthetical sentence forming an explanation of the moral basis of the demand of the Prophet from the Banū al-Naḍīr to participate in the indemnity of the two men of Kilāb, protected by him and killed by one (or two) of his adherents. It is closely connected with the report of Mūsā b. ʿUqba; the author of the papyrus does, however, not follow Mūsā b. ʿUqba in the rest of his report or in his chronological order of the events: this is evident from the account quoted by al-Bukhārī on the authority of Mūsā b. ʿUqba. This account, traced back to Ibn ʿUmar, contains a version of the course of the events in the campaign of the Prophet against the Banū al-Naḍīr which is quite different from that given in the report of the papyrus.⁴ The account of the papyrus is a peculiar one: it combines the tradition about the conspiracy between the Banū al-Naḍīr and Quraish with the tradition of the payment of the indemnity. It is obvious that we have here a version hitherto un-recorded.

Verso 1. 17 is to be read: *دفلمّا كلمهم رسول الله في عقل الكلابيين قالوا*: And when the Messenger of God spoke to them about the indemnity for the two men of Kilāb they said . . .

II

In an elaborate chapter about the author of the papyrus, Professor Abbott suggests that the author of the papyrus is Maʿmar b. Rāshid.⁵ This conclusion is reached by a process of elimination and looks on the face of it plausible enough. A short notice, however, in al-Zurqānī's "Sharḥ al-Mawāhib" makes this suggestion hardly tenable. Al-Zurqānī, discussing the chronology of the Prophet's raid against the Banū al-Naḍīr, quotes a passage in al-Suhaylī's "Al-Rauḍ al-Unuf" to the effect that ʿUqayl b. Khālid and another (traditionist) transmitted on the authority of al-Zuhri, that the raid against the Banū al-Naḍīr took place 6 months after the battle of Badr.⁶ Al-Zurqānī remarks: "The other (scholar) is Maʿmar b. Rāshid."⁷ Al-Zurqānī quotes, in fact, a tradition on the authority of ʿAbd al-Razzāq — Maʿmar — al-Zuhri stating that the raid against the Banū al-Naḍīr took

³ II, 81, 1.12.

⁴ See J. B. Jones, *The chronology of the Maghāzī*, BSOAS 1957, page 249 n. 23 and p. 268.

⁵ *Op. cit.* p. 76.

⁶ "al-Rauḍ al-Unuf" II, 176 inf (ed. 1914).

⁷ Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāhib* II, 79 l. 18 (ed. 1325 A. H.).

place after the battle of Badr.⁸ The attribution of the text contained in the papyrus to Ma^cmar b. Rāshid must be rejected, since according to the correct reading of Verso l. 16 it is plainly stated in the text that the raid against the Banū al-Naḍīr took place after the battle of Uḥud.

III

There is a parallel passage to the account of the raid against the Banū al-Naḍīr contained in the papyrus: it is found in the "Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa" of Abū Nu^caym al-Iṣfahānī.⁹ The tradition quoted by Abū Nu^caym corresponds almost verbatim to the tradition of the papyrus. It is the only account—as far as I know—in which the story of the conspiracy of the Banū al-Naḍīr with the Quraish is combined with the tradition about the payment of the indemnity, exactly as in the account of the papyrus. The tradition in the "Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa" is told on the authority of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, and the chain of the transmitters is: Sulaymān b. Aḥmad — Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Khālīd — his father¹⁰ Ibn Lahī^ca¹¹ — Abu 'l-Aswad¹² — 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr. Both traditions are here reprinted. I am inclined to assume that the authorship of the papyrus can be attributed to Ibn Lahī^ca, who lived in Egypt, acted as Qāḍī (155—164 A. H.) and died there (ca. 170 A. H.)

⁸ Op. cit. p. 81.

⁹ Ed. Hyderabad, 1320 A. H., p. 176.

¹⁰ See his biography: Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb VIII, 25; his son Abū 'Ulātha Muḥammad transmitted his traditions; 'Amr b. Khālīd transmitted the traditions of Ibn Lahī^ca.

¹¹ See about his biography Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb V, 373—379; Al-Kindī "Al-Quḍāt" ed. Gottheil pp. 58—60; Ibn al-'Imād "Shadharāt" I, 283.

¹² I. e. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Naufal abu 'l-Aswad al-Madanī, "Yatīm 'Urwa". Ibn Lahī^ca transmitted his traditions. See his biography Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb IX, 307. A tradition with an isnād. Ibn Lahī^ca — abu 'l-Aswad — 'Urwa see Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb V, 379; and see: Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubī "Al-Intiqā'" page 26—27 (ed. Cairo 1350 A. H.).