‘Abū Hurayra’ a Narrator of Ḥadīth Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Ḥadīth with special reference to Classical Islamic modes of criticism

Submitted by Usman Ghani to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Arab & Islamic Studies
In July 2011

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ..............................
Abstract

The task of preserving the Ḥadīth was undertaken, according to the classical Muslim view, by the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and, thereafter, the Tabi‘un (Successors), and then from generation to generation. Thus, we find this great amount of Ḥadīth in front of us today. From amongst these Ḥadīth we find as it is alleged a great proportion narrated by the Companion Abū Hurayra (d.57/58/59AH/681/682/683CE). He has narrated various kinds of narration, from those on creed to those on the ethics of Islam. However, his narrations have been looked upon with certain scepticism and criticism, as has his own personality, in both Classical Ḥadīth scholarship and Modern Ḥadīth scholarship.

This research, entitled: ‘Abū Hurayra’ a Narrator of Ḥadīth Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Ḥadīth with special reference to Classical Islamic modes of Criticism, will discuss specifically Abū Hurayra the Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad and his alleged status as a prolific narrator of the Ḥadīth. The aim of this study is to highlight how Abū Hurayra is depicted and perceived by both Classical Ḥadīth Scholarship and Modern Ḥadīth Scholarship. Furthermore, the central argument of this thesis is that the charge of Abū Hurayra being a Mukthir (a prolifically active narrator who embellished his reports) is unfair for the simple reason that those traditions he uniquely transmits are rather small in number. Most of the other traditions with which his name is associated have concomitant and parallel isnāds (Chains of Narration).

This study therefore sets out to critically examine and analyse the life and narrations of Abū Hurayra in view of the academic debates on the wider issues of the authenticity of the sources and how they affect the arguments put forward by this research.
Contents

- Acknowledgements 2-3
- Abstract 4
- Dedicated to 5
- A Note on Transliteration 6
- Table of Contents 7-9

Introduction 10-24
Methodology 12-20
Literature Review 20-24

Chapter 1: Biography of Abū Hurayra 25-166
  1.3.1 Abū Hurayra’s Lineage 25-27
  1.3.2 Abū Hurayra’s Name 27-34
  1.3.3 When did Abū Hurayra accept Islam? 34-40
  1.3.4 Abū Hurayra’s place of residence in Medina 40-47
  1.3.5 The Pre-eminence of Abū Hurayra as a transmitter and source for Prophetic traditions 47-48
    1.3.5.1 Abū Bakr and Abū Hurayra 48
    1.3.5.2 Abū Hurayra and ʿUmar 48-49
    1.3.5.3 Abū Hurayra and Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbayd Allah 49-51
    1.3.5.4 Abū Hurayra and Ubayy b. Kaʿb 51
    1.3.5.5 Abū Hurayra and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar 51-52
    1.3.5.6 Abū Hurayra and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās 52-55
    1.3.5.7 Abū Hurayra and Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī 55-56
    1.3.5.8 Abū Hurayra and Jābir b. ʿAbd Allah al-Anṣārī 56-57
    1.3.5.9 Abū Hurayra and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī 57-58
    1.3.5.10 Abū Hurayra and ʿAbd Allah b. al-Zubayr 58-59
    1.3.5.11 The Image of Abū Hurayra amongst the Tābīʿūn (Successors) 59-61
    1.3.5.12 The Image of Abū Hurayra amongst the the Followers of the Successors (Atbāʾ al-Tābīʿūn) 62-67
  1.4 Teachers of Abū Hurayra 67
Chapter 2: Abū Hurayra in Classical Ḥadīth Criticism 167-198

2.1 How the companionship of Abū Hurayra is highlighted in the biographical sources: A chronological listing of the various genres of rijāl texts 167-171

2.2 The Muʿtazilites 172-176
   2.2.1 Mutawwātir and Āḥād in Ḥadīth 176-177
   2.2.2 The Muʿtazilites position regarding Mutawwātir and Āḥād 177-178
   2.2.3 Ibn Qutayba’s Taʾwīl Mukhtalīf al-Ḥadīth 178-185
      2.2.3.1 The Theological, Legal and Ritual implications of these reports 185-188
      2.2.3.2 How have such traditions influenced the reception and promotion of ideas? 188-190

2.3 The distinction between Ahl al-Ray and Ahl al-Ḥadīth 190-197

Section Summary 197-198

Chapter Three: The Corroborations and Isolated reports of Abū Hurayra through the nine collections of Ḥadīth 199-252

Charts, Diagrams & sample traditions

Chapter Four: Abū Hurayra in Modern Ḥadīth Scholarship 253-294

4.1 Maḥmud Abū Rayya (d.1970) & Ṭabd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn (d.1957) 253-258
   4.1.1 The Length of Abū Hurayra’s Companionship 258-259
   4.1.2 Abū Hurayra’s Excessive Narrations 259-260
   4.1.3 Analysis of Abū Rayya’s Argument 260-266
   4.1.4 ‘Shaykh al-Muṭṭira Abū Hurayra awwal rāwiyyat uttuhim fī al-Islām’ Shaykh al-Muṭṭira Abū Hurayra the first narrator in Islam to be slandered 266-267
4.1.5 Abū Rayya’s Misconception  267-269
4.1.6 Why did Abū Hurayra narrate many Ḥadīth?  269-271
4.2 Ignaz Goldziher (d.1921) & Alfred Guillaume (d.1966)  271-277
4.3 Fāṭima Mernissi (b.1940)  277-290
4.4 Gautier Juynboll (d.2010)  290-292
Section Summary  293-294

Conclusion  295-301
Bibliography  302-328